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COMPETING IMAGES OF PEDRO I:

LÓPEZ DE AYALA AND THE FORMATION OF HISTORICAL MEMORY.

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Abstract: This article explores how Pero López de Ayala crafted the historical memory of Pedro I. By depicting him as a cruel tyrant, Ayala justified his deposition and murder at the hands of his half-brother, Enrique II, and he shaped the way that Pedro would be remembered by future generations. In the years following Pedro's death, numerous authors composed narratives that promoted competing images of the deposed king. These narratives were influenced by the continuing conflict between Pedro's descendants and Enrique's new dynasty, and they frequently supported specific political positions. By examining Ayala's depiction of four key moments from Pedro's reign against those of his contemporaries, this article places his narrative within its larger historical and literary context, highlights some of the ways that political concerns shaped his account, and also provides insight into how he was able to successfully promote his image of the former king.

The tumultuous life and violent death of Pedro I of Castile (r. 1350-1366, 1367-1369) captured the imagination of writers across Western Europe. During his life and in the years following his death, Pedro became a central figure in a wide range of historical narratives composed in Castilian, French, English, Catalan, Latin, and Arabic. These accounts present contrasting depictions of Pedro; however, as it is well known, the lasting image of the Castilian king would eventually be shaped by a chronicle written for his half-brother and bitter enemy, Enrique de Trastámara.

Before his death in 1379, Enrique, better known to history as Enrique II of Castile (r. 1366-1367, 1369-1379), asked Pero López de Ayala to write the history of his reign as well as that of his predecessor. In his account, the *Crónica del rey don Pedro y del rey don Enrique, su hermano, hijos de Alfonso Onceno* (henceforth, *CPE*), Ayala constructed an argument that supported Enrique's right to rule while de-legitimizing Pedro's claim to the crown.¹ In his attempt to justify Enrique's rebellion, Ayala crafted an image of Pedro as a cruel and immoral tyrant who was defined by his sinful behavior. Future writers, building upon this image, gave Pedro the epithet that would come to define him: Pedro el Cruel.²

By building his argument around Pedro's character, Ayala made it a central component of Enrique's legitimacy. Subsequent writers also focused on Pedro's character, and it became a determining factor within their narratives

¹ Some scholars have considered the *CPE* to be two separate chronicles: the *Crónica del rey don Pedro* and the *Crónica del rey don Enrique II*. However, there is significant evidence that Ayala intended his account of the reigns of Pedro I and Enrique II to be a single narrative (Orduna, *Arte* 180–85). To reflect this fact, this article adopts the title used by Orduna in his modern edition of the text. In addition, there are two distinct versions of the *CPE*. The first, the *versión primitiva* (also known as the *versión abreviada*), was begun late in the reign of Enrique II and may have been finished around 1383 (Valdalisio 151). The second, the *versión vulgar*, was started around 1388, revised throughout the 1390s, and was possibly still incomplete in the early years of the 1400s (García 158–66). This article primarily uses the later version of Ayala's history, the *versión vulgar*, which includes material missing from the earlier version as well as additional rhetorical elements such as embedded letters and an increased amount of direct discourse.

² According to Luis Vicente Díaz Martín, the epithet of "el Cruel" was coined in the fifteenth century by Lucio Marineo Sículo (14). Pedro's supporters had preferred the term "el Justiciero", but "el Cruel" has remained far more popular in subsequent accounts.

regarding whether the Trastámara rulers (Enrique and his descendants) or Pedro's descendants were the rightful rulers of Castile.³ Given its importance, depictions of Pedro's life and death quickly became extremely political and partisan, with Enrique, his allies, and his descendants promoting an image of the king as an evil tyrant who had to be stopped, while Pedro's former allies, especially those connected to his children, presented him as a noble king who was unjustly deposed (Marino 16).⁴

This article compares the image of Pedro I created by López de Ayala to those crafted by his contemporaries. In particular, it focuses on the way that Ayala represents four key moments from Pedro's reign: the execution of his half-brother, Fadrique, in 1358; the death of his wife, Blanca de Borbón, in 1361; the Battle of Nájera in 1367; and, most notably, the king's own death outside the walls of Montiel in 1369. By examining the depiction of these events in the *CPE* against those of various contemporary sources, already discussed by the historians of Pedro's reign, this article places Ayala's history within its larger literary and historical context. Moreover, it goes over these texts once more in order to provide concrete examples of how Pedro I's image was formed by historians and poets writing in support of competing political positions. In doing so, this article attempts to illuminate the historical character of the king by highlighting areas where authors from different perspectives agree in their depictions, and explores how Ayala was able to construct an image of the king that would shape the historical memory of future generations.

The Death of Fadrique

In 1358, Pedro I ordered the death of one of his half-brothers, Fadrique, the Master of Santiago.⁵ Although it was frequently omitted from foreign

³ The most intense period of this competition was from the time of Enrique II's initial invasion of Castile in 1366 until the marriage of Enrique III (Enrique II's grandson) to Catalina de Lancaster (Pedro's granddaughter) in 1388 (Echevarría 47).

⁴ See Covadonga Valdaliso and Óscar Perea's contributions to this same volume.

⁵ Pedro was the only son of Alfonso XI and his wife, María of Portugal. However, Alfonso had ten children with Leonor de Guzmán, his longtime companion and a member of a powerful Castilian noble family. These children included Fadrique as well as his twin brother, Enrique de Trastámara.

accounts,⁶ this event would become a key component of Trastámara propaganda.⁷ Within Castile, Pedro's murder of Fadrique was a central theme in contemporary Castilian ballads as well as forming an integral part of Ayala's chronicle. Although the ballads and Ayala represent Fadrique's death in strikingly different ways, both sources use this moment to support their larger claims regarding Pedro's fitness to rule.

Beginning with Enrique de Trastámara's invasion of Castile in 1366, *juglares* for both him and Pedro began to compose ballads, commonly referred to as *romances noticieros*, which focused on recent events (Entwistle 323).⁸ These were popular products and, according to some scholars, would have been far more effective in publicizing and promoting specific political positions in fourteenth-century Castile than written accounts (Mirrer-Singer 41). Although most of these ballads, being primarily oral, have not survived, there are nine extant works that are known collectively today as the *Romancero del rey don Pedro* (Mirrer-Singer 37). These ballads, written in support of both Pedro and Enrique, functioned as political propaganda for shaping public opinion and attempted to define for their audience the attitude they should take toward the events of the war (Mirrer-Singer 38).⁹ As instruments of political propaganda, the different ballads created a type of literary *guerra civil romancística* between those in favor of Pedro and those supporting Enrique (Catalán, *Siete siglos* 81).

Although fewer in number, the extant pro-Pedro ballads seek to justify

⁶ In fact, many contemporary accounts from outside the Iberian Peninsula – such as the ones produced by Walter of Peterborough, Jean Froissart, the Chandos herald, and Cuvelier – omit Fadrique entirely, claiming that Enrique only had two brothers, Tello and Sancho.

⁷ P.E. Russell notes that this propaganda was such a serious problem for Pedro that he gave his ambassador to the court of Edward III of England, Martín López de Córdoba, specific instructions to explain his behavior, especially his execution of Fadrique (38). Regarding the *CPE* in particular, Valdaliso asserts that the depiction of Fadrique's death is one of the areas where Ayala most clearly reveals Pedro's cruelty (87).

⁸ Due to the fact that most of these ballads come from manuscripts from the second half of the fifteenth century, some scholars have questioned this date of composition. However, this article follows the arguments developed by William Entwistle, Diego Catalán and others, who have proposed a fourteenth-century date of composition.

⁹ In particular, Froissart mentions that the English nobles were hesitant to support Pedro because they had heard accounts of his cruelty and misdeeds (6: 201-02).

Pedro's actions, especially his murders of Fadrique and Blanca de Borbón. One of the best examples of this, the *Romance de doña Blanca*, places the blame firmly on Fadrique and Blanca by not only depicting them as lovers, but also claiming that they had a secret child together.¹⁰ The ballad reads:

Entre las gentes se suena, - y no por cosa sabida,
que de ese buen Maestre - don Fadrique de Castilla
la reina estaba preñada; - otros dicen que parida. (131)

Later in the poem, after she has sent her son away, the queen accepts full responsibility for what has happened and also anticipates the eventual vengeance perpetrated by Pedro:

Muy triste queda la reina, - que consuelo no tenía;
llorando de los sus ojos, - de la su boca decía:
-Yo, desventurada reina, - más que cuantas son nascidas,
casáronme con el rey - por la desventura mía.
De la noche de la boda - nunca más visto lo había,
y su hermano el Maestre - me ha tenido en compañía.
Si esto ha pasado, - toda la culpa era mía.
Si el rey don Pedro lo sabe, - de ambos se vengaría;
mucho más de mi, la reina. (132)

In this account, rather than being innocent victims, Fadrique and Blanca have betrayed Pedro.¹¹ Thus, rather than being representative of his cruelty, the pro-Pedro poets make the king's executions of Fadrique and Blanca not only understandable, but examples of the king behaving appropriately.

As mentioned above, there are more extant ballads that support Enrique than Pedro. In many of these, the death of Fadrique is emphasized as a prime example of Pedro's immorality and cruelty. For instance, in the *Romance del*

¹⁰ Although the ballad is found in a later manuscript, Louise Mirrer-Singer argues that the *Romance de doña Blanca* would have been composed for the children of Pedro I during the reign of Enrique II or Juan I (43-44). Entwistle places the composition of another version of this ballad, which begins "Entre la gente se dice", during the invasion of Castile by Constanza's husband, the Duke of Lancaster: 1386-1388 (319).

¹¹ The focus on the romantic relationship between Fadrique and Blanca may also reflect the genre in which it was composed. Ballads were intended to be performed orally, and the personal themes may have made these works more compelling and memorable to a contemporary audience, which would also help account for their survival.

rey don Pedro el Cruel, the poet states:

- Morirás, el rey don Pedro,
que mataste sin justicia - los mejores de tu reino:
mataste tu propio hermano - el Maestre, sin consejo. (128)¹²

Even in these few lines, the poet implies several reasons why Pedro had to be overthrown and killed. The poet also reinforces the idea that the king is unjust in killing many of the best and most noble members of his realm. In addition, he emphasizes that Pedro acts on his own, ignores the counsel of his advisors, and behaves like a tyrant rather than like a king.

The clearest example of the prominence of Fadrique in the contemporary ballads, however, comes from the *Romance de don Fadrique, maestre de Santiago, y de como le mandó matar el rey don Pedro su hermano*.¹³ Written from Fadrique's point of view in the first person, the poet emphasizes how the Master was betrayed by his brother at the instigation of María de Padilla:

Yo, como estaba sin culpa, - de nada hube curado;
fuíme para el aposento - del rey don Pedro mi hermano:
- Manténgaos Dios, el rey, - y á todos de cabo á cabo.
- Mal hora vengáis, Maestre, ...
Vuestra cabeza, Maestre, - mandada está en aguinaldo.
- ¿Por qué es aqueso, buen rey? - nunca os hice desaguísado,
ni os dejé yo en la líd, - ni con moros peleando.
- Venid acá, mis porteros, - hágase lo que he mandado. -
Aun no lo hubo bien dicho, - la cabeza le han cortado;
á doña María de Padilla - en un plato la ha enviado. (125)

From the beginning of the ballad, the poet has Fadrique attest to his own

¹² Like the previous example, this ballad comes from a sixteenth-century manuscript, but it is believed to have been composed earlier. Entwistle contends that the ballad, along with the others in the *Romancero de don Pedro*, was probably composed in the period between 1374 and 1388 (316)

¹³ Similarly, this ballad is from a sixteenth-century manuscript, although it is believed to have been composed earlier. Entwistle argues for a more precise date than the majority of the other compositions, claiming that it probably was composed between 1386-1388 during the Duke of Lancaster's occupation of Galicia. In particular, he posits that the beginning of the poem, "- Yo me estaba allá en Coimbra", references the Portuguese city of Coimbra, which was an important site during the Castilian invasion of Portugal, 1384-1385 (318-19).

innocence and state that he is without guilt. Immediately afterward, he uses Fadrique to highlight the unexpected nature of the event. Within the ballad, the Maestre has been loyal to his brother, and he goes to him with no idea that he is any danger. By making Fadrique narrate these events in the first person, the poet allows the audience to experience his perspective of events, and he makes them feel as though they are the one being betrayed.

In addition, by attributing the cause of Fadrique's death to a request made by María de Padilla, the poet reinforces a negative image of the king in multiple ways. First, he depicts Pedro as being ruled by his lover. He does not want to kill Fadrique, who he recognizes as serving him well, but he is unable to say no to María. Second, he shows Pedro placing his personal desires above the needs of the kingdom. Fadrique is a prominent public figure and crucial to the war against the Crown of Aragon, but he is less important to the king than his lover. Finally, the poet links the death of Fadrique to the biblical story of Salome by having his head sent to María on a platter, thereby creating a connection between Pedro and Herod that supports the image, developed in many of the ballads that favored Enrique, of the king as a cruel tyrant.

Although the *CPE* does not place the audience within Fadrique's point of view in the same way as some of the ballads, his death is still one of the most dramatic and emotional moments of the history. As at other key moments of the text, Ayala focuses the audience's attention by switching from an impersonal third person narration to a more personal style that includes the extensive use of direct discourse between various characters. By switching between literary styles in this way, Ayala creates short, dramatic vignettes within his larger narrative that make these events more memorable and exciting for his audience. Incorporating direct discourse in these crucial moments also allows Ayala to utilize other characters to shape the image of the king.¹⁴

In his account, Ayala relates how Pedro ordered Fadrique to leave the frontier,

¹⁴ Clara Estow argues that the direct discourse, along with the large number of characters and their movement within the narrative, created a sense of drama in the *CPE* similar to that found in later works of Spanish theater (35).

where he had been successfully fighting for Castile against the Crown of Aragón, and call upon him in Seville. After his arrival, Fadrique is given several warnings that he is in danger. While he is visiting María de Padilla, Ayala states that María, knowing of the king's plans for his brother, could not hide her sadness.¹⁵ Shortly afterward, Fadrique is explicitly warned to flee by one of his men. However, he trusts in the king, rejects these warnings, and goes to meet Pedro with only one other companion, Diego García de Padilla (the brother of María de Padilla). Upon seeing his half-brother, Pedro immediately orders him to be killed. Within the *CPE*, this scene conveys the completely unexpected nature of the event:

Dixo el rrey a Pero Lopez de Padilla, su vallestero mayor: "Pero Lopez, prendet al maestro". E Pero Lopez le dixo: "¿A qual dellos, sennor, prendere?". E el rrey le dixo: "Al maestre de Santiago". E luego Pero Lopez de Padilla traou del maestre don Fadrique, e dixole: "Seed preso". E el maestre estudo quedo muy espantado. E luego dixo el rrey a vnos vallesteros de maça que estauan ay: "Vallesteros, matad al maestre de Santiago". (1: 270)¹⁶

In Ayala's persuasive narrative, it is not only Fadrique who fails to realize that he is in danger from the king; Pedro's own guards do not know which one of the two men the king wants them to seize.

Along with giving the order to kill his half-brother, who is loyal to him within the narrative, Ayala uses the moment to deepen his criticism of the king. First, having discovered that Fadrique had survived being attacked by his guards, Pedro gives his own knife to a servant and tells him to finish off the Master of Santiago (1: 271). Immediately afterward, "Assentosse el rrey a comer donde el maestre yacia muerto en vna quadra que dizen de los Azulejos" (1: 271). In the *CPE*, Ayala not only makes Pedro responsible for the death of a close family member, but he also has the king violate any

¹⁵ Ayala's treatment of María de Padilla is a major departure from the contemporary ballads. Rather than being responsible for his death, she is not only innocent, but also saddened that he is going to die. As Gloria Chicote notes, this change may reflect the fact that Ayala was writing at a time when María de Padilla's descendants were in positions of authority at court (136). Even in his earliest versions of the *CPE*, however, Ayala seems to focus his blame for the death of Fadrique on his half-brother, Pedro.

¹⁶ All quotations from the *CPE* will be taken from Germán Orduna's edition of the text unless otherwise noted.

standard of rational and Christian behavior by sitting down and eating in the same room as the body of his dead brother.¹⁷ Finally, after the account of Fadrique's death, Ayala uses Pedro's disrespectful treatment of the corpse as an indication of the unnatural disposition of the king toward rage, hatred, and cruelty. In fact, Ayala shows how Pedro keeps punishing his enemies, even after their deaths, throughout the *CPE*.¹⁸

Like many of the pro-Trastámara ballads, Ayala uses the death of Fadrique to emphasize the unnatural cruelty of Pedro. Although he does not blame María de Padilla, who is generally depicted positively in his history, Ayala does include dramatic and evocative details –such as Pedro subsequently eating in the same room as Fadrique's dead body– to reinforce a negative image of the king that would be memorable for his audience. Ayala also refrains from criticizing Pedro directly, instead using the reactions of various characters as well as the events themselves to convey the idea that the king is behaving outrageously to his audience. In doing so, Ayala promotes a negative image of Pedro while maintaining the appearance of objectivity.

The Death of Blanca de Borbón

A few years after Pedro I's execution of Fadrique, his wife, Blanca de Borbón, died in mysterious circumstances in 1361. Since she was a member of the French royal family, this event became a key component in contemporary French accounts of Pedro's reign. In these narratives, Pedro is directly responsible for Blanca's death, and his actions justify the French support

¹⁷ A scene featuring a tyrannical figure who eats in front of the dead bodies of his victims has a classical antecedent in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which was translated into Castilian in the thirteenth century. In the poem, Julius Caesar sets up a table to eat on a battlefield covered with the dead bodies of his former enemies.

¹⁸ In addition to Pedro's treatment of the corpse of Fadrique, he also disrespects the bodies of Garcilaso de la Vega and the Infante Juan of Aragón. Like Fadrique, Garcilaso had no idea that he was going to be killed and willingly appeared in front of the king. After being executed without any sort of deliberation or trial, Pedro throws the noble's corpse out into the street to be run over by bulls (1: 38–41). Similarly, Pedro tricks the Infante Juan into surrendering his weapons and then has him executed. Afterward, the king orders the prince's body to be thrown out the window of his inn, and later into a river (1: 275). These examples illustrate how Ayala used Pedro's treatment of his enemies' corpses as evidence of his irrational and cruel behavior.

of Enrique II. Although he is more circumspect in his depiction than the French writers, Ayala also attributes responsibility for Blanca's death to Pedro and uses this event as a crucial component of his negative depiction of the king.

A notable example of the French perspective is Cuvelier's depiction of Pedro in *La chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*, which he composed on behalf of one of Enrique's most important allies, the Breton knight Bertrand du Guesclin. Intended primarily for an elite French audience, Cuvelier's narrative offers an explicitly negative image of Pedro,¹⁹ emphasizing the king's faults from the very first time that he is mentioned in the narrative. In particular, Cuvelier is explicit that Pedro, acting on the advice of his Jewish counselors, is responsible for Blanca's death (157). This claim is one of his most significant attacks against the king, and it is this action that provides the primary justification within the poem for the involvement of du Guesclin and the other French nobles in Enrique de Trastámara's revolt.²⁰ By emphasizing Pedro's crime against Blanca, and the affront to the French royal family that it represents, Cuvelier circumvents the question of Enrique's own legitimacy to focus on the need for du Guesclin and his captains to get revenge against the Castilian king.

Cuvelier repeatedly mentions Blanca's death, and he uses the event to justify the actions of his patron, du Guesclin, following his defeat at the hands of Pedro and his English allies at the Battle of Nájera in 1367.²¹ After the battle, while negotiating his ransom, Cuvelier includes this exchange between du

¹⁹ Cuvelier most likely composed his poem in the mid-1380s. There is also a prose translation of the poem that has been dated to 1387 (Taylor 27). The first time that he mentions the Castilian king, Cuvelier claims that Pedro was overly preferential toward Jews and Muslims, stating, "Il amoit mieulx assez Juifs ou Sarrazin" (152).

²⁰ Cuvelier also claims that Pedro was not the son of Alfonso XI, but rather the son of a Jewish servant. Therefore, he asserts that Enrique is the rightful king by birth as well as due to Pedro's misdeeds (161). Although this claim was developed elsewhere in Enrique's propaganda (Valdeón Baruque 460-61), it is never specifically articulated by Ayala in the *CPE*.

²¹ In his account of the battle, Cuvelier praises the bravery of du Guesclin and Enrique de Trastámara. Immediately afterward, he explains how Pedro's alliance with the Prince of Wales and the English fell apart due to the king's treacherous behavior.

Guesclin and the Prince of Wales:

- Et ge le vous diray, dist Bertran haultement.
 Nous trouvasmes dam Pietre, qui le corps Dieu cravent!
 Qui la roïne avoit fait mourir maisement;
 C'estoit vostre cousine, fille vostre parent
 Le bon duc de Bourbon, qui tan tot d'escient,
 Qui du sanc saint Loys par nature descent;
 C'est vo meilleur costés de sanc et de jouvent.
 Ge m'arestay pour lui et prendre vengeance,
 Et pour tant que je scay et le cray fermement
 Que Henry doit tenir le droit couronnement
 Et qu'il doit estre roys d'Espagne droitement. (286)

In this passage, Cuvelier utilizes the dialogue between du Guesclin and the English prince to offer a clear, and damning, depiction of Pedro. Not only does du Guesclin condemn Pedro for the murder of Blanca de Borbón, who he claims comes from the most noble lineage in the world, but he also declares Enrique de Trastámara to be the rightful king. Most notably, however, Cuvelier has the Prince of Wales agree with de Guesclin, “Bertran, vous avez droit, se me doint Dieu pardon!” (286). In *La chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*, not only Pedro's enemies condemn him as an immoral and illegitimate ruler, but also his allies.

Within the *CPE*, Ayala repeatedly uses Pedro's treatment of Blanca de Borbón as a means of exposing the king's character, which is un-chivalrous and cruel toward his wife. For example, Ayala describes how Pedro abandons Blanca almost immediately after their wedding to be with María de Padilla (1: 98–99). Later in the chronicle, Ayala states that Blanca, although imprisoned in Toledo, convinces the noble women of the city that she is in physical danger from her husband (1: 155–57). Eventually, Ayala claims that these women are able to persuade enough members of the nobility of Pedro's immoral actions that they spark a revolt, which culminates with the capture of the king at Toro in 1354 (1: 189–90). Through his depiction of these events, one can see how Ayala uses Pedro's relationship with his wife to highlight the king's misdeeds. In addition, it becomes clear that Ayala utilizes the other characters within his narrative to construct a negative image of Pedro, rather

than listing his misdeeds directly.

The clearest example of this process is Ayala's account of Blanca's death. Following Pedro's defeat of the rebel forces that had gathered on the queen's behalf at Toro, he imprisons Blanca. While she is imprisoned, in 1361, Ayala describes how the king receives a prophecy that claims that Pedro has to return to Blanca in order to remain in power. In the prophecy, a man who the king had encountered while out on a hunt tells him:

Dios le enbiaba dezir que fuesse çierto que por el mal que el fazia a la rreyna doña Blanca su mugger, que le auia de seer muy acaluñado e que en esto no pusiesse dubda; pero si quisiesse tornar a ella e fazer su vida como deuia, que avria della fijo que heredasse su rregno. (2: 40)

Shortly after giving the message, the man disappears. Ayala makes the divine provenance of the message clear, "E segund esto paresçe que fue obra de Dios, e assi lo touieron todos los que lo vieron e oyeron." (2: 40). Everyone is able to interpret the prophecy correctly: Pedro needs to return to Blanca. In fact, the prophecy makes it clear that Pedro's own position is dependent upon his relationship with the queen.

In the same chapter, however, Ayala describes how the king has Blanca killed by ordering the queen's jailor to poison her (2: 39–40). When he refuses, Pedro sends one of his own bodyguards to do it. Immediately after her death, Ayala claims that the people were very upset with Pedro's actions, and then he embeds a short *semblanza* of Blanca.²² There, Ayala stresses her lineage, youth, beauty, and the great suffering she had endured with patience (2: 39–40). Although it is not as central to his claims as it is in Cuvelier's narrative, Ayala makes Pedro guilty in wrongfully killing an innocent woman of exalted lineage, and his culpability in this deed helps to justify the later rebellion against his rule.²³ Furthermore, by embedding this

²² A *semblanza* was a short biographical sketch of a historical figure, which Ayala embedded into the CPE following the death of major figures. According to Robert Folger, these *semblanzas* were similar to literary devices used by classical authors (52).

²³ Ayala reiterates Pedro's guilt in killing Blanca in the earlier, *versión primitiva*, redaction of the CPE. In this version, during an exchange of letters between Enrique de Trastámara and the Prince of Wales before the Battle of Nájera in 1367, Ayala has Enrique claim that people would marvel at all that the inhabitants of Castile have endured at the hands of Pedro, and

moment along with the prophecy that connected Pedro's future as king to his relationship with his wife, Ayala utilizes Blanca's death to have the king condemn himself.

As these depictions of the murder of Blanca suggest, contemporary authors focused considerable attention on the deaths of important individuals in Pedro's court, and these moments became central in their representations of the king.²⁴ Unlike Cuvelier and other contemporary French writers, however, Ayala does not criticize Pedro for the death of Blanca directly. Instead, he uses characters within the *CPE* to illustrate the importance of the event and to show the audience how it reveals the inner character of the king. By taking this approach, Ayala presents his history as more objective and unbiased than those of his contemporaries. In addition, the use of prophecy directly links Pedro's legitimacy to his treatment of his wife within the *CPE*. By creating this connection, Ayala is able to claim that Pedro destroys his own right to the crown when he kills Blanca.

The Battle of Nájera

Following the death of Blanca, Pedro allied Castile more closely with England. Consequently, France began to support Enrique de Trastámara. This development transformed the civil and fraternal war between Pedro and Enrique into a part of the larger struggle of the Hundred Years' War.²⁵

then provides a list of some of his crimes, the first of these being, "él mató en este Reyno á la Reyna Doña Blanca de Borbon, que era su muger legítima". Quotation taken from Rosell's edition of the text (555). In the *versión vulgar*, however, Ayala does not mention specific victims who were killed by Pedro. For more information regarding the different versions of the *CPE* and their relationship to the contemporary political climate consult the work of Orduna, Michel García, and Bretton Rodríguez.

²⁴ Another event that captured the attention of contemporary writers was Pedro's execution of Muhammad VI, referred to as Bermejo in the *CPE*, in 1362. Contemporary Muslim writers, such Ibn al-Jatib, related the event (148-49), although without the criticism that marks Ayala's depiction of Pedro. Instead, many contemporary Muslims saw the event positively. Muhammad V, for instance, justifies Pedro's actions in his personal correspondence, emphasizing the fact that Muhammad VI had travelled to Seville without seeking or being granted any type of safe passage (*Correspondencia* 350).

²⁵ For more information regarding the Battle of Nájera, Castile's role in the larger Hundred Years' War, and the importance of foreign support in determining the outcome of the conflict between Pedro I and Enrique II, consult the work of Russell, Estow, and Julio Valdeón Barquce.

Following Enrique's early successes, which temporarily drove Pedro out of Castile in 1366, the two brothers and their international allies met at the Battle of Nájera on April 3, 1367. In the battle, Pedro and his forces defeated Enrique de Trastámara and his allies to temporarily retake Castile.²⁶ Due to the importance of this battle not only for Castile, but also within the larger conflict of the Hundred Years' War, it became an important part of numerous contemporary narratives.²⁷ Despite agreeing on the outcome of the battle, pro-Pedro sources use this as a moment to glorify the king while pro-Trastámara histories, including that of Ayala, utilize their accounts of the battle to highlight Pedro's deficiencies.

Writing in support of the English position, and therefore in support of the idea that Pedro was the rightful king of Castile, the herald of Sir John Chandos,²⁸ known as the Chandos herald, included a description of the battle in his life of the Prince of Wales, *Le Prince Noir*.²⁹ Although it was written over a decade after Pedro's death, the Chandos herald provides a firsthand account of the events surrounding the battle from the perspective of a major

²⁶ Enrique initially invaded Castile with international support in 1366, and Pedro fled with his children rather than risk a major military encounter. In 1367, after Enrique had dismissed much of his army (Estow 237), Pedro returned with the support of Edward of Woodstock, the Prince of Wales, and a combination of English and Gascon forces.

²⁷ The Battle of Nájera forms an important part of numerous historical accounts, including Jean Froissart's *Chroniques*, Cuvelier's *La chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*, and the Chandos herald's *Le Prince Noir*. In addition, although probably not personally present, Walter of Peterborough wrote an account of the battle from the English perspective. His poem, the *Victoria belli in Hispania*, was composed shortly after the event in 1367 (Carson 84), and was a short (around 560 lines) panegyric to Edward III and his sons, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Lancaster. Peterborough presents Pedro in a very positive light; stresses that he is the rightful king, "Petrus, legitimus haeres" (qtd. in Wright 102); celebrates the fact that he has reclaimed his father's kingdom; and even beseeches the audience to pray for his health, "Petri tutamen, Petre, precamur. Amen" (qtd. in Wright 122).

²⁸ Sir John Chandos was one of the Prince of Wales' most prominent supporters, and he was present at the Battle of Nájera as well as throughout the prince's time in Castile. Following the battle, Chandos was promised extensive territories by Pedro, but he was never able to take possession of them.

²⁹ The Chandos herald is believed to have been with Chandos from around 1360s onward and to have composed *Le Prince Noir* around 1385-1386 (Carlson 78). In addition to its prominence as a literary and historical document, *Le Prince Noir* was also an important source for Froissart's chronicles (Palmer 8).

English nobleman who fought to help Pedro regain his throne. In *Le Prince Noir*, the Chandos herald introduces Pedro after a brief description of the events that precipitated the crisis, namely Enrique de Trastámara's successful invasion of Castile in 1366. Introducing Pedro, the Chandos herald is mostly positive, stating:

Cil, qui fut orgoillous et fiers,
Et qui poy cremoit les daungiers
Auxi ne de ceux ne d'autrui,
En prist en son coer grant anui,
Et dit que poy se priseroit
S'envers ceux gentz obéissoit. (115)

Throughout his narrative, the Chandos herald reinforces the image of Pedro as a strong and resolute king while depicting Enrique as a bastard with no legitimate claim to the crown. For instance, he includes an exchange of letters between Enrique de Trastámara and the Prince of Wales, which present the prince supporting Pedro's position and dismissing Enrique's claims.³⁰

In his account of the battle itself, the Chandos herald does not praise Pedro directly, but he does positively describe his behavior after the battle. In *Le Prince Noir*, the Prince of Wales is able to convince Pedro to set aside his anger and ransom the noble Castilian prisoners rather than executing them:

Sire, du vostre ne voil rien;
Mais je vous counseille pur bien,
Se ester voillez roy de Castelle,
Que par tout mandez la novelle
Que otroié avez le doun
De doner à touz ceux pardoun
Que ont encontre vous esté ...
Lui roy daun Petro ottoier

³⁰ Different versions of these letters also appear in the contemporary chronicles composed by Cuvelier, Froissart, and Ayala. In addition, in the appendix to the third volume of his history of the French king, Charles V, Roland Delachanel published independent versions of these letters, written in French, which he believed were copied from the originals in fourteenth century. The letters found by Delachanel are mostly similar to those found in the account of the Chandos herald and the French authors; however, they are strikingly different from those embedded by Ayala in the *CPE*.

Le volt, mais ce est à grant payne. (238–39)

Here, Pedro is willing to accept the counsel of the prince and to offer mercy to those who have fought against him. By depicting the king listening to advice and showing mercy, the Chandos herald represents Pedro as a considerate king who accedes to his allies' suggestions and attempts to rule justly.

Even though the Chandos herald is mostly positive in his depiction of Pedro throughout *Le Prince Noir*, he does seem to eventually become disappointed with the king's behavior. At the end of his account of the Prince of Wales' deeds in Castile, after Pedro sends a letter asking the prince to leave the kingdom so that the king could collect the money he owed, the Chandos herald explains that:

Luy Prince ad bien apercéu
Qu'ensi le roy Petre ne fu
Pas si foiaux come il quidoit. (251)

Even in this final assessment, in which the prince realizes that Pedro was not as trustworthy an ally as he had thought, the Chandos herald offers a fundamentally positive perspective.

On the contrary, Ayala uses the buildup to the Battle of Najera as a space to reiterate his negative presentation of Pedro. After relating how Pedro was forced from Castile by his half-brother in 1366, Ayala describes how the king arranged English aid by offering them numerous Castilian territories. For instance, Pedro bestows the province of Vizcaya upon the Prince of Wales (2: 153), as well as the cities of Vitoria and Logrono on the king of Navarre (2: 155–57). Shortly before the battle, Ayala embeds an exchange of letters between Enrique de Trastámara and the Prince of Wales. Ayala utilizes these missives, particularly the message sent by Enrique to the English prince,³¹ to offer one of his clearest and most damning indictments of Pedro:

Don Enrrique por la graçia del Dios, rrey de Castilla e de Leon al muy alto

³¹ As mentioned above, Ayala's versions of these letters are significantly different from those found in contemporary French sources as well as in the independent letters discovered by Delachanel. This suggests that Ayala manipulated these documents to promote his larger argument concerning the character of Pedro.

e muy poderoso prinçipe don Eduarte, fijo primo genito del rrey do Ingla terra ... Non nos paresçe que vos auedes seydo bien enformado commo esse nuestro adversario, en los tienpos que touo estos rregnos, los rrigio en tal manera que todos los que lo saben e oyen se pueden dello marauillar por que el haya tanto a seer sofrido en el señorio que touo. E todos los de los rregnos de Castilla e de Leon, con muy grand trabajo e daño e peligros de muertes e de manzillas, sostouieron lo que el fizo fasta aqui e non las pudieron mas encobrir nin sofrir, las quales cosas serian luengas de contar: Dios por su merced ouo piedad de todos los de estos rregnos por que non fuesse este mal cada dia mas ... en la çibdad de Burgos, Dios dio su sentençia contra el que el de su propia voluntad los desanparo e se fue. (2: 175)

In this letter, Ayala has Enrique articulate many of his criticisms against Pedro and to contribute to his image as an immoral ruler and the cause of suffering throughout Castile. This presentation directly encapsulates the larger image of Pedro that Ayala designs throughout the *CPE*. Toward the end of the letter, Enrique emphasizes that it is God's will that Pedro lose his *señorio*, his rule, because of his decision to abandon Burgos, which echoes the earlier depiction of the king trading away Castilian cities and territories in exchange for military support.

Pedro is not presented in negative terms during the battle itself, but Ayala returns to the theme of the king's cruelty and immoral behavior immediately afterward.³² To do so, Ayala implicitly contrasts Pedro's behavior with that of his ally, the Prince of Wales, by relating how the prince behaved nobly with his prisoners, especially Arnoul d'Audrehem and du Guesclin.³³ Following these descriptions, and Ayala's explicit praise of the prince's actions for being

³² Immediately before the battle, Ayala describes how the Prince of Wales knights Pedro. Although this might not seem to be negative, it is very different from the actions of his father, Alfonso XI, who had arranged to be knighted by a statue of St. James (Valdaliso 129). Moreover, Valdaliso points out that Ayala contrasts Pedro being knighted by the Prince of Wales with Enrique knighting others immediately before Nájera (131).

³³ The Prince of Wales was upset at Arnoul d'Audrehem, the Marshall of France, for fighting against him without having completed his ransom payments from the Battle of Poitiers in 1356. However, once d'Audrehem explains that he has not broken the terms of his ransom because he was fighting primarily against Pedro, the prince sets aside his anger (2: 181–83). Second, Ayala includes a long account of how the Prince of Wales had not wanted to ransom du Guesclin, but is eventually convinced to do so to adhere to the contemporary chivalric norms (2: 191–94).

courtly and just, he returns his attention to Pedro and describes how the Castilian king killed one prisoner and wanted to punish all of the remaining Castilian prisoners who had fought against him (2: 195–97). Unlike in the account of the Chandos herald, Pedro is not convinced by the arguments of the prince. Instead, the English heir has to force him to stop executing the prisoners. Moreover, by including his description of Pedro's actions immediately after those of the Prince of Wales, Ayala creates a clear contrast that encourages the audience to interpret the actions and character of the king negatively.

At this point in the narrative, the Black Prince realizes that Pedro is not going to honor either part of their deal –to pay for the invasion or to give the previously specified territories– and he prepares to leave Castile. However, he first offers Pedro advice on how he might preserve his rule:

E yo vos consejaria çesar de facer estas muertes e de buscar manera de cobrar las voluntades de los señores e caualleros e fijos dalgo, e çibdades e pueblos de vuestros rregnos, e si de otra manera vos gouernades segund primero lo faziades, estades en gran peligro para perder el vuestra rregno e vuestra persona e llegarlo a tal estado que ni mi señor e mi padre, el rrey de Inglaterra nin yo, avn que quisiessemos, non vos podriamos valer. (2: 196)

Despite the fact that Pedro has failed to keep his word, the Prince of Wales still advises him on how he might be able to maintain his throne. In addition to providing one more example of the chivalric and noble behavior of the prince, Ayala utilizes this moment to reinforce his negative presentation of Pedro.

The Battle of Nájera provided contemporary writers with an opportunity to strengthen their presentation of Pedro. For the Chandos herald and other writers who sympathized with his position, or that of his descendants, the battle offered an opportunity to praise the king's bravery and even to show him behaving mercifully to his enemies. In addition, they were able to use one of the most famous figures of the day, the Prince of Wales, to praise Pedro. For Ayala, the battle offered the chance to have Enrique articulate his larger argument against the king, which damned him for his previous immoral actions. In addition, Ayala was also able to use the Prince of Wales

to criticize Pedro, first by offering him as a contrast, and subsequently by having the prince personally criticize the king's actions. As he had done with the death of Fadrique and Blanca, therefore, Ayala uses other characters within the *CPE* to articulate and shape a negative image of Pedro.

The Death of Pedro I

Having been victorious at the Battle of Nájera, Pedro I was able to re-establish control over Castile. However, his alliance with England quickly fell apart, and Enrique II returned to Castile in 1367 with a new army.³⁴ Two years later, in 1369, the decisive confrontation between Pedro and Enrique occurred near Montiel. Following Enrique's victory, Pedro was besieged and then either tricked into leaving or captured as he tried to escape. Either way, Enrique was able to capture and kill his rival. Given the dramatic nature of this event, as well as its political importance, Pedro's death became a key component of contemporary historical narratives, as either a tragedy or as the deserved punishment for his previous misdeeds. Both pro-Pedro and pro-Trastámara writers, however, utilized this moment to crystalize their depictions of the Castilian king.

In England, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote one of the most explicitly favorable accounts of the Castilian monarch. Although his connection to Castile has not attracted much scholarly attention, Chaucer visited the Iberian Peninsula in the 1360s, and it is possible that he would have been present at the Battle of Nájera in 1366.³⁵ In addition, the life and death of Pedro would have been of great personal importance to Chaucer as a member of the entourage of the Duke of Lancaster.³⁶ It is this relationship that likely influenced his decision

³⁴ Díaz Martín proposes that the Prince of Wales' abandonment of Pedro was one of the defining moments in the conflict between the two brothers (262). One brother, Enrique, was supported by France, while the other, Pedro, was abandoned by England.

³⁵ Chaucer received a safe-conduct through Navarre for February 2 to May 22, 1366 (Olivares Merino 147), which attests to his presence in the Iberian Peninsula during this period. Although it is not clear how long he stayed, Chaucer could have been present for over a year as the next recorded date for him is June 30, 1367 (Yaeger 191). In fact, Chaucer may have been at the battle of Nájera with many of his future companions, who are known to have been present (Garbáty 85).

³⁶ Chaucer had a close relationship with the Duke of Lancaster and his family. In fact,

to present Pedro as a noble king who had been unjustly deposed.³⁷

Chaucer recounts the death of Pedro in the *Monk's Tale*, one of the collected stories found in the *Canterbury Tales*.³⁸ In this account, the Castilian king is represented as a hero and martyr:

O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of Spayne,
Whom fortune heeld so hy in magestee,
Wel oughten men thy pitous deeth complayne!
Out of thy lond thy brother made thee flee;
And after, at a sege, by subtiltee,
Thou were bitrayed, and lad un-to his tente,
Wher-as he with his owene hond slow thee,
Succeeding in thy regne and in thy rente. (246)

For Chaucer, there is no question that Pedro was the rightful and legitimate king of Castile who was cruelly overthrown by Enrique. Although he is not commonly treated as an overtly political writer, Chaucer had a clear political motivation to present Pedro as the rightful king of Castile. In particular, his account would have supported the political claims of his patron, the Duke of Lancaster, as he attempted to make himself king of Castile.

Notably, Chaucer's account shares many details with that found in Ayala's *CPE*. In both narratives, Pedro is tricked by du Guesclin into abandoning the protection of Montiel, which leads to his capture and subsequent death at the hand of Enrique himself. The detail regarding du Guesclin is particularly significant as it is missing from most of the contemporary accounts. Both

Chaucer's wife, Philippa, was the sister of Lancaster's long-time mistress and third wife, Katherine Swynford. John of Gaunt's claim to the throne of Castile was predicated upon the fact that Pedro had been the legitimate ruler and Constanza was his oldest surviving legitimate child.

³⁷ Similarly, the context may have encouraged Chaucer's negative depiction of du Guesclin – presented in the *Monk's Tale* as a traitor – who was a hero to the French and fought repeatedly against the English during the Hundred Years' War, both in the Iberian Peninsula and throughout France.

³⁸ Derek Pearsall contends that internal evidence from the sections of the *Monk's Tale* that treat contemporary figures (including Pedro), if not the entire tale, suggest a composition date of after 1385 (5). Given this date, it is possible that Chaucer wrote his account of Pedro either during or shortly after the Duke of Lancaster's invasion of Galicia in 1386.

writers may have independently composed similar accounts of the same event, but it is also possible that Chaucer had access to an early version the *CPE* as a source for his narrative.³⁹ Either way, the fact that the two accounts share so many details while providing such disparate impressions of Pedro's character illuminates the way that writers were able to manipulate their sources to shape narratives that supported their larger arguments along with the political position of their patrons.

Another contemporary writer who focused on the death of Pedro I was Pedro IV of Aragón, *el Ceremonioso* (r. 1336-1387).⁴⁰ Pedro IV had a long and antagonistic relationship with his Castilian counterpart. In particular, Castile and the Crown of Aragon had been at war since 1356, causing significant damage to the Aragonese side. During this conflict, Pedro IV offered asylum and support to Enrique in the early years of the war, and subsequently helped to fund his invasion of Castile in 1366.⁴¹ Not surprisingly, Pedro IV's treatment of Pedro I in his *Crònica* seems to reflect his negative feelings toward his rival.⁴²

Throughout his narrative of the war with Castile, Pedro IV emphasizes the righteousness of the Aragonese position along with their military victories against Castile. Discussing Pedro I in particular, the Aragonese king details his cruelty and lists the various family members that he kills throughout his reign, reinforcing this image of a cruel monarch. However, he also provides a somewhat positive depiction of Pedro I's ability as a warrior. After relating

³⁹ Eugenio Olivares Merino has explored the possibility of direct contact between Chaucer and Ayala. He proposes various opportunities for a meeting between the two authors, including a possible encounter following the Battle of Nájera, and he raises the possibility that Ayala wrote portions of his *Rimado del palacio* in England (493).

⁴⁰ Pedro IV of Aragón is also known as Pere the Ceremonious; Pere III, Count of Barcelona; Pere II of Valencia; and Pere I of Sardinia and Corsica.

⁴¹ According to Russell, Pedro IV had agreed to support Enrique's invasion in 1366 in exchange for recovering not only the territory lost to Pedro I, but also extensive territories in Castile, which included up to 1/6 of the total area of the kingdom (42). Although he did not support Enrique's second invasion in 1367, Pedro IV would eventually develop a stronger relationship with the new king, and he arranged a marriage between his daughter, Leonor, and Enrique's son, the future Juan I of Castile (r. 1379-1390).

⁴² Pedro IV probably composed the *Crònica* between 1378 and his death in 1387 (Aurell 91).

how Pedro I was defeated at Montiel, Pedro IV states:

E el dit rei Enric, sabent que era a mà sua lo dit rei Pere e dins un hostel en què el trobà, mès mans conta ell per alciure'l. E el dit rei Pere féu continent de defendre's, e, finalment, los que eren ab lo dit rei don Enric ociïren-lo. E, com l'hagren mort, tolgueren-li lo cap, lo qual lo dit rei don Enric féu portar a Sibília. E ab açò fon finada la guerra dels dits dos reis, romanent lo dit rei Enric senyor e rei del dit regne de Castella. (282)

Significantly, Pedro IV claims that Enrique needs the help of his men to kill his half-brother. In doing so, he presents Pedro I as at least as strong a warrior as Enrique.

Shortly thereafter, however, *el Ceremonioso* is explicit that it is Pedro I's immorality and sins that have led to his destruction (283). Following the king's death, Pedro IV summarizes the life of Pedro and specifically condemns him as a cruel and immoral ruler. In fact, he claims that God had sentenced Pedro I to lose his kingdom twice due to his misdeeds, although given his personal interactions with Pedro I, it is impossible not to attribute some aspect of this negative representation to the harm and injuries that Pedro IV had suffered at the Castilian king's hands.

Another contemporary writer, Jean Froissart, includes Pedro I as a major character in his history of the Hundred Years' War, the *Chroniques*.⁴³ Although he wrote for patrons who supported both the English and the French positions, Froissart constructs a mostly negative image of Pedro.⁴⁴ In particular, in his account of the period leading up to the Battle of Montiel and the king's death, he relates how Pedro raises a large army by allying with the rulers of Granada and North Africa, emphasizing also the large number

⁴³ Froissart blames Pedro for initiating conflict with Enrique by confiscating his land; emphasizes that he killed numerous members of the nobility, including his wife, Blanca de Borbón; claims that he acted against the Catholic Church, both through his actions and alliances with infidel kings; and states that he was excommunicated by the Church (6: 185-87). At this point, Froissart even asserts directly that Pedro is not worthy to be king, "et fu dit qu'il n'estoit mies dignes de porter nom de roy et de tenir royaume" (6: 187).

⁴⁴ Froissart worked on Book I of his *Chroniques*, including his account of events in Castile and Pedro's death at Montiel, throughout the 1360 and 1370s, and he revised his history during the 1380s and early 1390s, which is probably when he finished his definitive version of the different editions of the text (Palmer 8-12).

of Jews and Muslims in Pedro's army. However, despite his overall negative presentation, Froissart was able to acknowledge Pedro's courage in battle.

In the climactic confrontation between the two half-brothers, for instance, Froissart describes how Pedro insults Enrique, and, like Pedro IV, he gives him the advantage in their combat:

Sitost que li rois Henris entra en le camber où ses frères li rois dans Piètres estoit, li dist ensi par tel langage: "Où est li fils de pute juis, qui s'appelle rois de Castille"? Adonc s'avança li rois dans Piètres, qui fut moult hardis et crueuls homs. "Mès tu es filz de putain, car je aui fiulz dou bon roy Alphons." Et à ces mos il prist à bras le roy Henri son frère et le tira à lui en luitant, et fu plus fors de li y l'abati desous lui, sus une ambarde, que on dist en françois une coute de matelas de soie. Et mist main à sa couille, et l'eüst là occis san remède, se n'eüst esté li viscontes de Rokerbertin, que prist le piet dou roy don Piètre, et le reversa par desous, et mist le roy Henri par deseure, liquelz traist tantost une longe couille de Castille, que il portoit à escerpe, et li embara ou corps, tout en affillant desous en amont, et tantost sallirente cil que li aidierent à partuer ... Ensi fina li rois dan Piètres de Castille, que jadis avoit régné en si grant prospérité. (7: 81-82)

Froissart utilizes direct discourse along with a question and answer format to make this moment particularly dramatic within his narrative. However, he does not present an entirely negative view of Pedro. Instead, Froissart depicts Pedro as a better warrior than his brother, Enrique, who he would have killed if not for external interference. Despite his earlier negative views on Pedro, Froissart presents the former Castilian ruler as a successful warrior, if not a good king.

In the *CPE*, Ayala briefly describes Pedro's military defeat at Montiel, which leads the king to take refuge in the fortress. Subsequently, Ayala relates how Pedro arranges with du Guesclin to escape in exchange for extensive territories in Castile. Once the king leaves the fortress; however, the knight betrays him to his half-brother, Enrique, who immediately rushes to confront his rival:

E assi como llego el rrey don Enrique, trauo del rrey don Pedro, e non lo conosco, ca auia grand tienpo que non lo auia visto. E dizen que le dixo vn cauallero de los de mossen Beltran: "Catad que este es vuestro enemigo." E el

rrey don Enrrique avn dubdaua si era el. E dizen que dixo el rrey don Pedro: “¡Yo so! ¡Yo so!” E estonçes el rrey don Enrrique conosçiollo, e feriolo con vna daga por la cara. E dizen que amos a dos, el rrey don Pedro e el rrey don Enrrique, cayeron en tierra. E el rrey don Enrrique lo firio, estando en tierra de otras feridas. E alli morio el rrey don Pedro a veynte e tres dias de março deste dicho año. (2: 290)

Due to the way that Ayala structures this scene, the fact that Enrique is able to defeat Pedro in single combat –unlike in the accounts of Pedro IV and Froissart– is particularly notable. Within the *CPE*, Enrique’s ability to defeat and kill Pedro without the help of his men demonstrates that he is the better warrior. It also allows the audience to interpret this fight as a type of trial by combat, which marks one more way that Pedro is an unworthy king.

Significantly, Ayala claims that Enrique does not immediately recognize Pedro, despite expecting to see him. Ayala may be using this lack of recognition to imply that in the years since the last time the half-brothers had seen each other, Pedro has become so transformed through sin that he is unrecognizable. Another possibility, however, is that Ayala used this question and answer format to increase the dramatic tension of the scene.⁴⁵ Since Enrique does not recognize his enemy, Pedro is forced to identify, and thus condemn, himself. This creates a number of parallels between the king’s death and that of a different half-brother, Fadrique, who was also identified by Pedro and thereby condemned to die.⁴⁶ Ayala’s use of this type of question and answer structure is also strikingly similar to the technique utilized by Froissart in his *Chroniques*. As mentioned above, this technique helped Froissart to make the death of Pedro into a highly dramatic and memorable moment within his larger narrative. Interestingly, this version of Ayala’s account is far more dramatic than the one found in the initial version of the

⁴⁵ Ayala further increases the dramatic tension of this moment through the dialogue between the brothers and the repetition of a single word, *rrey*, which reinforces the stakes of their conflict for the audience.

⁴⁶ Estow notes that there are strong similarities between the death of Fadrique and Pedro (36). By having the half-brothers die in similar ways –both killed by the knife of their king/brother– Ayala reinforces the personal and familial nature of this event. He also further justifies Enrique’s actions by having him avenge his twin brother’s death.

CPE, the *versión primitiva*.⁴⁷ This suggests that Ayala –who spent a significant amount of time on diplomatic missions in England and France during the period between the compositions of the two versions of his history– may have been influenced by Froissart's account and adapted his narrative to compete with the more rhetorically sophisticated and memorable account depicted in the *Chroniques*.

Following his account of Pedro's defeat and death, Ayala embeds a *semblanza*, much as he had done for Blanca de Borbón, which provides him with the opportunity to promote his own image of the dead king:

E fue el rrey Don Pedro assaz grande de cuerpo e blanco e rruuio, e çeçeaua vn poco en la fabla, e era muy caçador de aues e fué muy sofridor de trauajos. E era muy tenprado e bien acostunbrado en el comer e beuer, e dormia poco e amo mucho mugeres, e fue muy trabajadora en guerra e fue cobdiçioso de llegar tesoros e joyas ... E mato muchos en su rregno, por lo qual le vino todo el daño que auedes oido. E por ende diremos aqui lo que dixo el Profeta Daud: 'Agora los rreyes aprendet, e seed castigados todos los que judgades el mundo'. (2: 291)

Unlike elsewhere in the *CPE*, the *semblanza* allows Ayala to speak directly to the audience –even using the first person, *diremos*, which he almost never does throughout his narrative– and to assert his authority as the historian to support his presentation of Pedro. This is one of the only places in his narrative where Ayala criticizes Pedro directly, which makes his comments all the more impactful for his audience. And although he gives Pedro a number of positive qualities, especially presenting him as a strong and dedicated warrior, he also stresses again his presentation of Pedro as a greedy, cruel and immoral king who is ultimately the source of his own misfortunes.

The death of Pedro I provided contemporary writers with a highly significant and dramatic scene, which they could use to reinforce the image of the monarch that they had created throughout their narratives.

⁴⁷ In the original version, found in the *versión primitiva*, Ayala describes the encounter between the two half-brothers and relates that Enrique kills his brother in single combat. However, he does not include any direct discourse between the two men, and the dramatic question and answer format is entirely missing.

For his supporters, Pedro's death was a moment in which they could reiterate their praises and present the king as a noble ruler. For writers with conflicting loyalties, such as Froissart, Pedro's death was a dramatic moment that highlighted the king's personal bravery, if not offering support to his rule as a whole. For Ayala, meanwhile, the death of Pedro was the culmination of his larger project, which crafted a negative image of the king and transformed his death from a tragedy into the just and foreordained consequence of his own actions.

Conclusion

The death of Pedro I in 1369 marked the end of the direct conflict between him and his half-brother, Enrique de Trastámara. However, as this article has explored, it did not mark the end of the competition over Pedro's image in the historical record. Writing on behalf of Enrique II, López de Ayala made Pedro's immorality the prime factor in justifying Enrique's actions and legitimizing Trastámara rule. Either independently or in response, contemporary writers also focused on Pedro's character as a means of supporting their own position or attacking that of a rival. For many contemporary writers, their representation of Pedro was linked to whether they, or their patrons, supported England or France in the Hundred Years' War. For English writers, such as Chaucer, Pedro was a noble and legitimate ruler who was unjustly overthrown. Therefore, his descendants, especially the children of Constanza and the Duke of Lancaster, were the rightful rulers of Castile. For French writers, such as Cuvelier, who had benefitted or who wrote for those who had benefitted from Pedro's fall, the former Castilian king was an immoral tyrant who had lost any legitimacy he might have had due to his own actions. For them, Enrique and his descendants were the rightful rulers of Castile.

Examining these narratives –all written by individuals who had a connection to Pedro, his allies, or his rivals in the late fourteenth century– reveals how the historical accounts of the life and death of Pedro I served diverse political ends. The narratives of authors such as the Chandos herald promoted and reinforced the positions of their patrons. By manipulating

their representation of Pedro I, these authors were able not only to support their perspective on the former monarch, but also to justify the specific actions of their patrons and any subsequent benefits that they might have received.

Despite the political nature of these narratives, however, analyzing the representations of four critical moments from Pedro's life reveals a dynamic portrait of the king. In general, these accounts depict a man who could be sinful and cruel, but who was also fierce and resolute in battle. Even Ayala admits that Pedro was a strong and determined warrior. However, for him, as for the other pro-Trastámara authors, any positive qualities that Pedro possessed were undone by his sinful actions, which led him to destroy himself and his own reign.

Reading these narratives together also reveals the context within which Ayala crafted his narrative and the singular skill with which he constructed his image of Pedro as an immoral tyrant. Ayala was one of a number of authors –many of whom may have known each other personally, or at least who had read one another's narratives– who attempted to define the character of Pedro, but his account would prove to be the most durable and significant in shaping the historical record. Ayala primarily used characters within his narrative to articulate his criticisms of Pedro's character, which allowed him to present himself as a less biased source and made the *CPE* appear to be more objective and therefore also more authoritative than many of his contemporaries. This apparent objectivity helped Ayala to craft the historical memory of Pedro I and, along with his continuators and imitators, to ensure that he would be known to history as Pedro el Cruel.

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