3. Cortesía and the Redemption of Sexual Sin in the *Libro de Apolonio* and the *Poema de Fernán González*

O happy race of mortals, if at all times
we might consider the eternal Good,
might fear the end which, though unseen, approaches
for nobleman and commoner alike.
We search out wealth in peril of our souls;
around our mortal eyes of deceitful glory
of action flies on wings of vanity.
In grasping at those honours now for sale,
we scour the sea’s billows and, in hatred
of our own lives, unto the tumid surge
commit our persons and our goods.
Gautier de Châtillon, *Alexandreis* (X.519-29)\(^1\)

I. Introduction

The *Libro de Apolonio* (*Apolonio*) and *Poema de Fernán González* (*PFG*) are, at first glance, an unlikely pairing. The first is the story of a pagan king turned pilgrim set in the eastern Mediterranean and based on a Latin romance, whereas the latter is a reworking of a lost vernacular epic that charts the battles of a decidedly local count.\(^2\)

Both texts are more likely to be compared to the *Libro de Alexandre* (*Alexandre*): the *Apolonio* as a celebration of a prominent, erudite figure of the ancient world, the Greek King Apollonius of Tyre (second–third century AD), and the *PFG* as that of a warrior of unusual drive and charisma.\(^3\) Nevertheless, both works are strongly influenced by

\(^{1}\)From Townsend (2007). “O felix mortale genus si semper haberet / Eternum pre mente bonum finemque
timeret / Qui tam nobilibus media quam plebe creates / Inprouisius adest. animae discrimine magno / Dum
queruntur opes, dum fallax gloria rerum / Mortales oculos uanis circumuolat alis, / Dum petimus profugos
qui nunc uenduntur honores, / Verrimus equoreos fluctus uitamque perosi / Et caput et merces tumidis
commitimus undis” (X.433-41; Colker 1978).

\(^{2}\)The Latin romance on which the *Apolonio* is largely based is the *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* (*HART*),
extant in more than sixty manuscripts, the oldest of which date to the ninth and tenth centuries (Corbella
2007: 18-19). The *PFG* is broadly thought to derive from a lost *cantar* of a poetic cycle on the Counts of
Castile.

\(^{3}\)For an interesting, if limited, list of commonplaces and borrowings within the canonical thirteenth-century
*mester de clerecía* in relation to the *Apolonio*, see Carroll Marden (1937: LIV-VII). With regard
hagiography and are dated to c.1250, closely following the period when Gonzalo de Berceo was most active as a writer (c.1221-c.1246 CE). Andrew M. Beresford notes that: “in the work of the Riojan . . . [Spanish] monastic interest in literary production reached its zenith”, and highlights the importance of hagiography for Berceo, the composition of which marks the beginning and latter days of his career (2004: 80-82).

The controversial Votos section of Berceo’s Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla (SM) portrays Fernán González in battle assisted by the saints Emilian and James, as also narrated in the PFG (sts.410-12, 545). The PFG is well known to begin with a stanza barely adapted from the beginning of the Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos (SD), and is closely associated with San Pedro de Arlanza, a monastery in northern Iberia in relatively close proximity with those of San Millán and Santo Domingo de Silos. Gene Dubois has argued that the worldview of the poet of the PFG is rooted at the monastery of Arlanza (2000), as also indicated by Itzíar López Guil (2001: 17), and Isabel Uría Maqua notes the salient praise of the saints, martyrs, and virgins in the introductory section of the poem (2000: 331; see sts.9-13, 154-55). The martial PFG is a narrative consonant with what William J. Purkis terms: “the ‘new monasticism’: the imitation of Christ and the apostolic life” (2008: 2), a movement most commonly associated with Saint Francis, canononised in 1228, whose juculatores Domini have been linked by

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4 As regards dating, the general critical consensus on the Apolonio is for c.1250 (Corbella 2007: 12-14). The case of the PFG is more controversial, although the argument is broadly limited to the latter half of the thirteenth century. I am inclined to the views of López Guil (2001: 27) and Coates (2009: 38n1), who both argue for c.1250.

5 PFG: “En el nombre del Padre, que fizo toda cosa, / del que quiso nasçer de la Virgen preçiosa, / e del Spíritu Santo, que ygual d’ellos posa, / del conde de Castiella quiero fer una prosa” (st.1); SD: “En el nomne del Padre, que fico toda cosa / e de don Ihesu Christo, fijo de la Gloriosa, / e del Spiritu Sancto, que egual dellos posa, / de un confessor sancto quiero fer una prosa” (st.1).
critics to Berceo’s *SD* in which he repeatedly refers to himself as a *juglar* (see Musgrave 1976: 132, Dutton 1984: 188).

Ronald Surtz (1980), Marina Scordilis Brownlee (1983a), Patricia E. Grieve (1998), and Matthew V. Desing (2013), have all argued for the pervasive hagiographic character of the *Apolonio*, the sole extant copy of which is found in a unique manuscript that also contains the *Vida de Santa María Egipciaca* and the *Libre dels tres reys d’Orient*, a miracle poem. Surtz and Grieve indicate that Apolonio’s story resembles that of a saint’s life (1980: 341; 1998: 150-51), and Scordilis Brownlee emphasizes that the work’s: “multiple adventures—calculated only to provide suspenseful entertainment in the antique text—have acquired a transcendent meaning in the Spanish romance” (1983a: 173). As Alan Deyermond describes, although the poet of the *Apolonio*: “no dice que sus personajes son cristianos . . . les retrata . . . dentro del sistema cristiano de valores, y les juzga . . . según dichos valores” (1989: 161). In the *Apolonio*, Tarsiana notably self-identifies as a martyr (st.382cd), and her escape from murder and prostitution to bring about the redemption of others while playing the role of an impoverished *juglaresa* identifies her as an apostolic figure who Desing notably associates with Oria of Berceo’s *SO* (2013). The homage to hagiography in the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* is further indication of the significance of the genre for the *mester de clerecía*.

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6 The sole extant manuscripts of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are held at the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain. The *Apolonio* is one of three texts that feature in K.III.4 (mid-fourteenth century), all of which are set in the Eastern Mediterranean, incorporate a lengthy stay in Egypt, and depict escaping protagonists who encounter many dangers on journeys which dramatize the struggle between virtue and vice (Deyermond 1989: 153). In b-IV-21 (c.1460-1480), the *PFG* is the last of five works. López Guil believes the highly irregular, messy, incomplete, and unadorned text, in which of 737 extant stanzas only 11 are regular, was: “copiado en una notaría, quizá en los ejercicios prácticos de algún aprendiz de notario o, incluso, en un examen de escritura e aquellos que todo estudiante del oficio notarial estaba obligado a realizar” (2001: 11-15).

7 Desing has also emphasized the clerical rather than hagiographic aspects of the *Apolonio* as an allegory rigged by references to the seven sacraments that centres on Tarsiana’s ministry (2012: 115-16).
Nevertheless, the narrative pivot of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* is two-fold. As well as utilizing the paradigms of pious didacticism, the works are the most novelesque of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía*, and the most readily entertaining in secular terms. Whereas the *Alexandre* and Berceo’s *Vidas* are models of the institutional erudition of the schools and the cloisters, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are a departure into the poetics of the courts and the wider world. At the centre of the *Apolonio* is the story of a *juglaresa* and the *PFG* is broadly thought to have minstrel roots in a lost *Cantar de Fernán González*. Accordingly, while drawing on the discourse of what Weiss terms the “marvellous reality” of the *mester de clerecía* (2006: 14)—the martial, exotic, and intellectual marvels of the *Alexandre* and the miracles of Berceo’s early *vidas*—the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* centre upon the ethical drama of the relatively quotidian: the relationships between men and women, romantic, familial, and dynastic, and commercial exchange.

Eschewing the lengthy digressions and narrative complexity of the *Alexandre* and the highly polished, enigmatic semantics of the *Vidas*, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* narrate the daring, faith, and failures of their protagonists in a more direct, readily accessible style. Deyermond and Scordilis Brownlee account for the second facet of the *Apolonio* by arguing for the influence of folkloric tradition and Greek romance, respectively. Although this chapter builds on their work, I am not convinced by their findings and am closer in my thinking to Grieve and Julian Weiss. For Grieve, the *Apolonio*: “exhibits the tensions between the Christian ideals of asceticism and the call to public life” (1998: 150), and Weiss detects: “an underlying tension in the poem between travel for the spirit and travel for the pocket” (2006: 202). The tenor of both of

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8 Corbella corroborates Scordilis Brownlee’s view as regards the generic dominants of the *Apolonio*: “el texto participa tanto de la novela de aventuras, del romance, como del poema hagiográfico y didáctico” (2007: 38).
the latter statements applies equally to the *PFG*. The *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are
generically indebted to pagan tradition and contain striking folk motifs, yet these
worldly aspects are ultimately subsumed within Christian doctrine.\(^9\) Both poems
propose what I will argue is a courtly orthopraxis for living profitably in the world
while securing Christian favour for the next, with which prostitutes, soldiers, hermits,
fishermen, kings, queens, tricksters, pimps, pilgrims, and musicians alike, all find the
proper use for their unique *mester*.

It is tempting to link the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* to the court of Alfonso X
(*r*.1252-1284), the *Apolonio* as a complement to the King’s culture and scholarship and
the *PFG* supporting his ambitions for Castile, *rex est imperator in regno suo* (Post
1954: 202), with the devotional character of both poems flattering claims for the divine
right of his rule. In the case of the *Apolonio*, a link to Alfonso may be suggested with
regard to central themes of travel for moral and territorial gain, and musical
performance. In the *Apolonio*, as the protagonist voyages in search of redemption, he
acquires popularity and kingdoms, bringing peace and prosperity to all he governs. The
poem begins with the line: “En el nombre de Dios y de Santa María” (st.1a; Corbella
2007), and at an important juncture at the court of Pentápolin, King Apolonio is
depicted as an unusually skilled musician who wins over his audience with elevated
song, thus sowing the seeds for the eventual redemption of himself, his family, and his

\(^9\) Deyermond observes that the story of incest so central to the *Apolonio* can be traced to the ancient
customs of matriarchal society (1989), as I discuss in more detail in section II of this chapter. Folk motifs
are equally important to the structure of the *PFG* as a clerical rewriting of epic. Using Thompson’s *Motif-
Index of Folk Literature* (1932-1936), Deyermond and Chaplin make the following associations: Fernán’s
humble upbringing by a *carbonero* with L113, “hero of unpromising occupation”, who reverses his
fortune; Fernán’s stumbling across the hermitage at Arlanza while lost on a hunt with N771, “King lost
on hunt has adventures” (note also that the Archpriest who tries to thwart Fernán and Sancho towards the
end of the poem is out hunting at the time); and Fernán’s deal with Sancho for the hawk and the horse
with K134, the “deceptive bargain”, as linked with K521, the hero’s escape from prison by deception later
on in the poem. As they underline in their concluding remarks: “the use of folk-motifs is as consistent
with a learned as with a popular origin of any poem” (1972: 40-52).
people through marriage to Luciana. As Joseph F. O’Callaghan notes, Alfonso and his court, of no fixed abode, embraced regular travel in order to promote and stabilize his reign: to “show himself to his people” (1993: 37). Moreover, in his most acclaimed poetic output, the Cantigas de Santa María, broadly acknowledged to represent the culture of his court throughout, Alfonso commemorates his skill in musical and poetic composition with his portrayal of himself as a troubadour of divine mission. Alfonso-astroubadour is an example to all who should, in hope of salvation, praise Mary through word and music (Snow 1990: 133-38). Apolonio’s faith and behaviour, like that of Alfonso, provides a model for kingship and governance that in extension applies to the citizens of the realm.10

As Alfonso describes in his Siete Partidas (c.1256), at court: “se allegan todos aquellos que han á honrar et guardar al rey et al regno . . . [el] logar do es la cura de todos los fechos de la tierra” (II.ix.27; 1807). A poet himself with a marked interest in historical writing, Alfonso is known for his knowledge of the liberal arts and promotion of Castilian over Latin throughout his written corpora.11 As Weiss details, Alfonso’s court was a major Iberian centre for debate on the nature of poetry and its composition (2005: 497), in the words of O’Callaghan, “a mecca for poets everywhere” (1993: 144), and the King was very much concerned with the education of his subjects (Salvador Martínez 2010: 546). Notably, his Estoria de España (1252-1284) contains a version of the story of Fernán González and traces Spanish origins from Noah to the contemporary period. Sharing the universalizing, Castile-centric vision of the Estoria de España, the

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10 Additionally, in the Setenario, an ethical manual for heirs to the crown in which Alfonso praises his father, Fernando III, for his talent in composition and singing, Alfonso’s name is considered linked to the divine continuum of Alpha and Omega by the first and last of the seven letters, “a” and “o” (See Gerli 2003a: 71; “Alfonso X, el Sabio, King of Castile and León, Poetry”, and O’Callaghan 1993: 135). The name “A-poloni-o” as that of a king likewise believed to be guided by the hand of God may refer to Alfonso.
11 As well as the Cantigas, Alfonso wrote some profane poetry in Galician (O’Callaghan 1993: 145).
first section of the *PFG* narrates Castilian history from Visigothic rule to the time of Fernán.\(^\text{12}\)

While they may have been written during the reign of Fernando III (Castile 1217-1252, León 1230-1252) or that of his son Alfonso, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are poems by writers who have not just: “el pie en el suelo y el ojo en el cielo” (Rico 1985: 7), as most applicable to the *Alexandre* and *Vidas* of Berceo, but, I argue, *la mano* juggling the fancies and appetites of a more worldly, less attentive audience as associated with the court.\(^\text{13}\) The distinct reception of the two works may be indicated by their less rigorous application of the principles of *cuaderna vía* than is the case in the *Alexandre* and Berceo’s poetry, as noted by Isabel Paraíso (2000: 227-28). Most notably distinct in the case of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are the racy plotlines devoted to clever, resourceful, physically tough, worldly women, namely Tarsiana and Sancha, with Luciana, the former’s mother, also playing a significant role.

The import of family, namely the appropriate Christian bonds between men and women, is signalled in the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* for a healthy lineage and a prosperous kingdom. Although the poems take as a central focus the life and times of their eponymous heroes, Apolonio and Fernán, the narratives equally hinge on the character, decisions, and actions of the protagonists’ female counterparts. Tarsiana, who instigates the process of her father’s return to worldly glory after a long period of trials and decline, and Sancha, who saves her husband from imprisonment and death and reunites him with his people, are both instrumental in safeguarding dynastic ties. However, the

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\(^\text{12}\) As Coates notes, the *Estoria de España, Crónica de 1344, Crónica de veinte reyes, and Crónica geral de Espanha de 1344*, all describe the life of Fernán (2008: 203n1). See also Uria Maqua (2000: 344). Early to mid-thirteenth-century Iberian historiography tends towards an universal depiction of history, as also in Lucas de Tuy’s *Chronicon Mundi*, and Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada’s *De rebus Hispaniae*.

\(^\text{13}\) Rico is glossing the *Planeta* (1218), written by the chancellor to Alfonso VIII, Diego García de Campos (1985: 6-7).
decisive actions of such women also give rise to titillating and challenging scenes of a relatively explicit sexual nature. The regulation and appropriate channelling of desire is a major theme of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* in relation to that of the hagiographic. Indeed, the redemption of the sexual misdemeanour of a monarch past circumscribes the action of both narratives, redemption only possible, I will argue, due to adherence to the tenets of a shared *cortesía*.

II. *Confonda Dios tal rey*: Sexual Sin as the Impetus of Both Poems

The *Apolonio* begins with the tale of King Antioco and his unusually beautiful daughter (st.4bcd), who he rapes following the death of his wife (sts.7cd, 12a). The tale is strongly resonant of the founding myth of the rape of Count Yllán’s (Julian’s) daughter by Rodrigo, last king of the Goths, which brought about the fall of Christian Spain to the Moors in 711, as featured in the *PFG* and to which I will return later. The narrative of Antioco’s sin introduces the young, bookish Apolonio as an ill-fated suitor who solves the riddle designed by Antioco to conceal the incest and prevent his (unnamed) daughter from marrying. As Deyermond suggests, the topic of incest is a far more important aspect of the *Apolonio* than its sources. In the *Apolonio*, the relationship between Antioco and his daughter: “llega a ser subtexto de los episodios que siguen” (1989: 155), namely those involving Apolonio and his daughter Tarsiana, and Tarsiana and her adopter and husband Antinágora, who also has a daughter of his own (st.414), as described by Grieve (1998: 158).

For Deyermond, the central, folkloric theme of incest is matched by that of religious devotion as a reflection of the genetic and codicological contexts of the *Apolonio*, the former emphasizing sex between father and daughter within a matrilineal
society and the latter as regards the content of manuscript Esc. K.III.4 (1989: 153-54). Within primitive matriarchal societies, on the death of the leader, the husband would only be able to maintain power if he married the next in line, namely his own daughter. In my view, Deyermond overly emphasizes incest as a folkloric theme of the *Apolonio*, although he also gestures at the poem’s wider, Christian significance: “lo que es constante en el Libro de Apolonio es el sistema cristiano de valores”. He notes that the reunited, prosperous family at the end of the narrative: “parece ser un antecipo del reino de Dios”, and that inappropriate sex is also a strong theme of the *Vida de Santa María Egípciaca* (1989: 153-62), as it is of many hagiographic writings including the lives of the prostitute saints Pelagia of Antioch and Mary Magdalene, and the tale “La abadesa preñada” of Berceo’s *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*. Adapting the parameter of hagiographic literature whereby the consummate sinner is redeemed through penance and contact with the divine, the *Apolonio* presents sexual misdemeanour in the courts of the kings and the wider world. In the words of Surtz, the Apolonio communicates, “an ideal of peculiarly lay piety . . . [emphasizing] that salvation is attainable even by those who choose not to renounce the *siglo*” (1980: 337).

Apolonio’s relationship with Tarsiana echoes that of Antioco and his daughter, with both kings left to care for their gifted offspring after the death of their wives (or so it would seem for Apolonio until he learns otherwise). Geraldine Hazbun pointedly describes the interaction of Tarsiana with Apolonio as: “suggestive of inherited, uncontrollable fault” (2013: 111)—resonant of the concupiscence of original sin, as formulated by Augustine (Le Goff 1988: 97). However, Tarsiana and Apolonio do not succumb to an incestuous relationship, even when the former visits her father as an

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14 Geraldine Hazbun (née Coates). I refer to her work with the surname under which it was originally published.
unknown, morally dubious *juglaresa* after many years of separation and hardship towards the end of the tale. Inherited fault is not uncontrollable in the *Apolonio* for those of Christian faith, and I will argue that it is precisely the degree to which concupiscence can be regulated and channelled appropriately within society that motivates and defines the *Apolonio*, as is also the case for the PFG.

The *Apolonio* is fundamentally concerned with how one should best cope with worldly loss, principally that of one’s nearest and dearest. In stanza two of the *Apolonio*, the story of Apolonio’s life is neatly summarized and the audience informed that, despite all the trials he suffered, he remained very loyal to his wife and daughter. Apolonio’s closest relationships are set up in contrasting, edifying example to that of Antioch and his daughter, and the detailed narration of the latter begins in the following stanza. Antioco is first presented as a figure worthy of empathy: he has lost his wife and, consequently: “si estonçe fuese muerto nol’ deuiera pesar” (st.3d). His psychological state leaves him highly vulnerable to the predations of evil, and the poet assures his audience: “bien ssé que tanto fue ell enemigo en el rey encarnado, / que non auìa el poder de veyer el pecado” (st.13ab). Antioco is blindly drawn to his daughter in a manner reminiscent of Lot, who lay with his daughters after they plied him with wine (Genesis 19: 30-38) and, indeed, the poet of the *Apolonio* cites the widespread medieval legend of the hermit who commits adultery after drinking wine as a parallel story (st.55; Corbella 2007: 91n55). However, the grave nature of the sin for the community and Antioco’s soul: “que es para en conçejo vergüença de deçir”, “se queria por su amor perder” (sts.5d, 6d), and the persistence of the King in incest, marks his behaviour as an example of drastic corruption of salacious appeal and didactic impact.
Like her father Antioco, the young princess is initially portrayed sympathetically for the public, concejo, of the poem as: “enuergonçada / que por tal que muriese non quería comer nada” (st.8b), yet she is all too quickly convinced by her servant to absolve herself of guilt, culpa (sts.8d, 9b), and maintain her sorry circumstances. She has lost her faith in God as a consequence of the violation: “bien ueo que fuy de Dios desemparada” (st.12c), and rather than asking for his help she turns to her servant, who twice iterates: “vos más non pudiestes” (st.9bd). The daughter should view herself as a victim of fortune, uentura (st.9c), and avoid bringing scandal on the family, the servant argues (sts.9-10). Antioco, meanwhile, composes his riddle, an argumente cerrado (st.15b), “por fincar sin vergüença, que non fuese reptado” (st.15a), a piece of intellectual trickery as circular in purpose as fortune itself.

On hearing the riddle, Apolonio, a man of great secular learning (st.22), quickly understands the nature of the King’s relationship with his daughter, “como si lo ouiese por su ojo prouado” (st.22d), a phrase reminiscent of that describing the mappa mundi in the Alexandre, in which the land is depicted by its maker: “como si la oviesse con sus piedes andada” (st.2576d). As Harriet Goldberg records in the context of Hispanic folklore and literature: “riddling, associated with the mysteries of the universe and with cosmological questions, involves a transfer of power (real or symbolic) from poser to responder” (1991: 59; as quoted in Desing 2012: 113). Apolonio’s knowledge gives him a penetrating understanding of the world that matches the worldliness of Antioco’s sin, by which he is nevertheless confounded, confondido (st.33d). He shuts himself away to verify his analysis with his books, “encérrase” (st.31a), and ultimately becomes frustrated that his desires have been thwarted: “cerró sus argumentos, dexóse de leyer, / en laçerio sin fruto non quiso contender” (st.32cd). Although his life is under threat
from Antioco, shame is a primary motivation for Apolonio’s subsequent self-exile from Tyre: “non podìa la vergüença durar, / mas querìa yr perdersse o la uentura mudar” (st.34ab).

At this stage in the narrative, Apolonio’s reactions to what befalls him troubleingly emulate those of Antioco and his daughter. All three characters are overwhelmed by shame, vergüenza, and seek to avoid the penance necessary in this Christian tale to overcome such a state, caring little whether they live or die. Like Antioco’s daughter, Apolonio views himself as a victim of fortune. Nevertheless, rather than concealing the incest like the father and daughter and leaving himself vulnerable to further wrongdoing—“contesçe de todos los pecados: / los hunos con los otros son todos enlaçados” (st.54ab)—he speaks of it to the court at Antioch (sts.24, 25).

Apolonio’s incisive solution to the riddle evokes the fall of Adam and Eve: “Tú eres la rayz, tu fija el çimal; / tú pereces por ella, por pecado mortal, / ca la fija ereda la depda carnal” (st.25abc). Although Apolonio is not without fault, the poet clearly signals to the audience that, compared to Antioco, he is a man of virtue and understanding: “Confonda Dios tal rey, de tan mala mesura . . . / que querié matar al omne que dixera derechura” (st.51ac).

Over the course of the narrative, Apolonio faces many further challenges that strengthen his faith in God. The Apolonio is a development of the Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri (HART), which, as a tale of familial love rather than eros, is: “quite atypical of Greek romance” (Scordilis Brownlee 1983a: 161). As Surtz notes, the Apolonio also closely resembles: “those narratives known to the Latin and vernacular Middle

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15 As Carroll Marden indicates, the only reference to sources in the Apolonio is when introducing Teófilo, Tarsiana’s would-be murderer: “su nombre fue Teófilo, so lo saber queredes, / catatlo en la estoria si a mi non creyedes” (st.372ab). The estoria alluded to is likely the HART, in which Teófilo is known as Theophilus (1937: LIII).
Ages which preserved most clearly the Greek romance pattern . . . the lives of such saints as Eustace and Clement”. Features of these hagiographic narratives include shipwrecks, kidnappings, and the separation of protagonists who are a family rather than a pair of unmarried lovers, the vicissitudes of which are ultimately attributed to Providence. The life of Eustace appeared as a hagiography and in secular version, both of which were known in medieval Iberia (Surtz 1980: 334-35; see also Walsh 1977).

In order to manage his despair at many losses over the course of the poem, which include his wife and daughter, all his belongings, his ships, crew, health, and confidence, Apolonio becomes a penitent pilgrim, *pelegrino* (st.151c) and, at one stage, lives as an ascetic in Egypt for thirteen years (sts.347-48). The stay in Egypt is also a feature of the *HART* and Deyermond believes it to be a structural defect of both works only explicable: “tipológicamente, ya que Apolonio se refiere a menudo a sus pecados, y el exilio de los judíos en Egipto se suele interpretar como figura del pecado” (1989: 160). To my mind, the unusually devout behaviour of Apolonio not only reflects the concern of the poem with penitence, but specifically with penitence for sexual corruption between king and daughter, the central theme of the poem. Apolonio’s good treatment of Tarsiana is absolutely fundamental for his legitimacy as a ruler. He must demonstrate that he is in control of his desire, the *depda carnal* (st.25c) to which the human race is subject, and not a danger to his people, like Antioco, who is reported as having perished along with his daughter by “hun rayo del diablo” (st.248c) shortly after Apolonio’s marriage to Luciana.

At sea, believing Luciana to have passed away during childbirth, Apolonio returns to Tarsus, a city associated with Saint Paul, to entrust his daughter to her nurse,

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16 Apolonio is referred to as a pilgrim—*peregrino, romero, palmero*—on ten occasions in the poem. See Scordilis Brownlee (1983a: 169n17).
Licorides, and two guardians, Dionisa and Estrangilo, before travelling to Egypt. There he lives, not cutting his hair or nails, until he can provide a suitable marriage for Tarsiana (st.346), as told to Tarsiana by her nurse on her deathbed:

Díxol’ cómo su padre fizo tal sagramento,
fasta qu’él a la fija diese buen casamiento,
que todo su linage ouiese pagamiento,
que non se çerçenase por null falagamiento. (st.362)

Rather than stay with his daughter and risk her growing up in circumstances similar to those that he discovered in Antioch, Apolonio entrusts her to a married couple and her nurse with careful instructions for her education.

As well as being unusually beautiful (st.353c), like Antioco’s daughter (st.4bcd), Tarsiana is raised to be as well-educated as her father: “sabia todas las artes, era maestra complida” (st.352b). She is thus far better equipped than Antioco’s daughter to face the trials of worldly existence and Tarsiana, like her father, will take responsibility for depda carnal (st.25c) leading up to the major denouement of the poem. While Tarsiana blossoms in relative security, Apolonio must face his sins and try to overcome them through penance, stating shortly before he leaves for Egypt: “a Dios non podemos reptar, / lo que él a puesto, todo deue pasar, / lo que él dar quisiere, todo es de durar” (st.345bcd). In his grief, he has forgotten how to conduct himself and must begin anew from within: “los sus dichos corteses auíyalos ya oluidados” (st.330c). The unusually devout thinking and behaviour of this supposedly pagan king, along with the recuperation of his wife as a reward towards the end of the tale, distinguishes him sharply from his precedent, Antioco, and consolidates his right to an expanded reign.

The story of Antioco’s sin would surely have resonated at the courts of Ferdinand III or Alfonso X as resembling the legend of Rodrigo and the violation of the daughter of his tribute collector, Yllán. Rodrigo’s error is described in detail in the
Estoria de España and is a key event within the teleology of the PFG. The rape is described in abstract terms of *culpa* in the PFG (st.35d), alluding to the concupiscent *felix culpa* of the fall of mankind as an analogous transgression (*culpa* [sts.8d, 9b] and *depda carnal* [st.25c] in the Apolonio). Following the opening prayer of the poem (sts.1-2), stanzas three to five briefly summarize the state of Spanish society from the Moorish invasion to the rule of Fernán González, in anticipation of the detailed history to follow. Stanza six begins with Rodrigo (b), juxtaposing his reign with that of Fernán (st.5d) as the beginning and end of a temporal sequence of great Christian and Castilian significance. This sequence is recognized explicitly by the young Fernán, just before he leaves home to begin fulfilling his life’s purpose: “Perdieron castellanos sonbra e grand abryo / la ora que murió mi ermano Rodrygo, / . . . sy de aquí non salgo, nunca valdré un fygo” (st.182abd; López Guil 2001). The long historical introduction, which spans nearly a third of the poem, would likely have been extremely entertaining for the court of thirteenth-century, emergent España.

The downfall of Spanish Christendom, which “fue de los profetas . . . profetizado” (st.77d; see also st.80), is a punishment shared by king and people alike. Conscious of a generalized state of sin amongst the population, the Spanish Christians rail: “diéranos Dios España, guarder non la sopimos; / sy en grand coyta somos, nós vyen lo meresçimos” (sts.98bc). The dynasty of the pious Visigoths has been broken, those who: “fueron de Sancty Spyritus . . . espyrados” (st.20a), and thus: “tod’el vyen de los godos por end’ es confondido” (st.100d).

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17 In the Estoria de España, the girl, “muy fremosa”, was taken by the King: “por fuerça, et yogol con ella; e ante desto fuera ya fablado que auie el de casar con ella, mas non casara aun. Algunos dizen que fue la muger et que ge la forço; mas pero destas dos qualquier que fuesse, desto se leuantó destroymiento de Espanna et de la Gallia Gothica” (554). Prefacing the rape in the text is a violation of symbolic architecture: a sacred palace in Toledo kept locked by many generations of kings that Rodrigo perceives to contain “algun grand auer”. After breaching the palace walls he reads of the promise of invasion written in “letras ladinas” (Latin or vernacular script) and illustrated with images of: “omnes de caras et de parescer . . . como agora andan los alaraues” (553).
The death of Christ to redeem original sin is broadly forgotten under Muslim rule due to the preaching of Mafomat (st.8), the aim of Yllán who, when plotting the invasion with Vusarván: “dixo cómmo podrya cristianos confonder” (st.43c). Instead of turning to God in distress at his daughter’s mistreatment, Yllán channels his rage into treachery and enables the devil, pecado (st.101a), to regain footing in holy Spanish tierra. His will to deliberately obfuscate Christian truth can be likened to Antioco’s desire to confound the court with his riddle and silence Apolonio, “que dixera derechura” (st.51c), and Antioco and Yllán’s persuasion of others in bad faith alludes to the cunning words of the serpent in Eden. Due to their poor judgement, mal sentydo, the Spanish Christians fall into a state of grand yerro (st.98d), in which they are luridly reported to be cooked and fed in significant numbers to the marauding invader (sts.91, 93).

Despite the exceptional loyalty of the Castilians to Christ (st.103b), who, within the language of trade and economy of the poem beg, “‘¡Val’nos, Señor, . . . ond’ seamos cobrantes!’” (st.103d), they are required to pay a tribute of one hundred virgins to Almozor (st.104), as echoed in the SM.\footnote{In the SM, Abd-ur-rahman III (891-961): “mandó a los christianos el qe mal sieglo prenda, / qe li diessen cadaño tres vent’ dueñas en renda” (st.370ab; see sts.369-74).} The importance of the holy virgins to Christianity is detailed early on in the poem (st.11), along with that of the martyrs, a santa mesnada (sts.10c, 11d). Rodrigo’s transgression has exposed a morally languishing population, most pointedly to the mandatory rape of young women, a crime that returns to threaten the destiny of Castile and Spain towards the end of the PFG when a corrupt Archpriest tries to have his way with the future Queen Sancha (sts.634-46). The sexual transgression of Rodrigo, like that of Antioco in the Apolonio, circumscribes the narrative of the PFG and conditions the redemption of Spain under
Fernán González. In a rousing speech to his men before battle towards the end of the narrative, Fernán depicts España as subject to continuous violation by the infidel: “heredan nuestra tierra e tyénenla forçada” (st.435b).

Fernán is a Christ-like figure, as detailed by Geraldine Coates (2009: 52-53, 62-63), for whom the introductory section is a tripartite “sweep of redemptive history” and the poem more broadly centres upon justification for “the regeneration of the sinner”.

She associates the introduction with three stages of the hero’s life through ignorance and endurance to sonship of God, ante legem, sub lege, and sub gratia, according to Christian teaching, namely that of Paul in his letters to the Romans, and suggests that this ideological coherence extended to the lost conclusion with the death of Fernán, Castilian hegemony, and the celebration of the recuperated worldly and spiritual territory of the Visigoths (2008: 206-15).

Coates’s findings intersect closely with those of Taran Johnston, whose focus is the way in which hagiographic imagery links the historical, martial, and novelesque material of the PFG, the latter two categories constituting what she terms the: “action of the work” (2008: 410). Both Coates and Johnston point to the profoundly Christian, teleological schema of the PFG, a narrated pilgrimage, romería (st.231d), closely associated with the peregrinatio vitae. The biblical concept of peregrinatio vitae casts post-lapsarian man as a wandering exile until he returns to God, as in Luke 9.58, and also resonates strongly in the Apolonio, as noted by Scordilis Brownlee (1983a: 169-

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19 Notably, Fernán echoes Christ on the cross when he begins to doubt he will triumph over Almoçor: “yo non te falesciendo, ¿por qué me falesciiste?” (st.540d; Coates 2009: 62-63; see Matthew 27.46, Mark 15.34).

20 Uria Maqua notes as regards the Reconquest: “en la realidad histórica, fue iniciada por los reyes caudillos de Asturias y continuada por los reyes de León, en el PFG se atribuye a los castellanos, y a ellos se otorga la gloria de ser los que llevan la iniciativa en las batallas contra el pueblo infiel” (2000: 335).
Johnston duly notes the repeated use of the lexicon *via*, ‘pathway’, of San Millán to Fernán in a vision at the hermitage (sts.408-12) on the eve of battle (2008: 401, 397), as demonstrating the commonplace associations between warfare, pilgrimage, and monasticism of the period (Purkis 2008: 2). She also points out that the hunting episode which leads Fernán to the hermitage of San Pedro de Arlanza resembles one in the life of Saint Eustace, which Surtz likens to the *Apolonio* (1980: 334-35), and that as a religious exile, as well as a warrior, the protagonist: “fulfils the claims of the introductory material” (2008: 394-95, 410). I would add that the hunt as a courtly pursuit seamlessly leads the hero into contact with the divine, a representative example of the role of worldly activity, both celebrated and elevated, in the *PFG*.

Both Fernán and Apolonio undertake penitent journeys, physically and psychologically, to transform the past for themselves and their people. Over the course of these journeys, the heroes face all manner of challenges, and both poems are striking within the corpus of the *mester de clerecía* for the emphasis they place on worldly competence and even cunning as the foundation for worldly and spiritual wealth. Central to the ethics of both poems is the proper use of money to promote Church, State, and individual piety for the life to come, a topic that closely intersects with the central theme of sexual sin.

In what Weiss terms the “mercantile morality” of the *Apolonio*, during his early travels to Tarsus, Apolonio tries to purchase friendship and safety from the citizens he meets. Through their rejection of such moral prostitution, as in the case of Elánico, who advises: “quien bondat da por precio malamiente se denuesta” (st.76d), Apolonio learns

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21 ‘And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head’, “et ait illi Iesus / vulpes foveas habent et volucres caeli nidos / Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet” (Luke 9.58; *The Bible; Biblia Sacra* vol. 2). On pilgrimage in the *Apolonio*, see also Deyermond (1989: 153-64).
to transform expedient commerce into an exchange for the benefit of all, materially and morally (2006: 205). He sells another resident, Estrángilo, wheat, “a conpra, pero de buen mercado” (st.87a), and with the profits builds the town a wall, becoming a patron much loved by the people (sts.86-87, 95). Later on in the tale, Apolonio’s daughter, Tarsiana, enslaved as a prostitute in her early adult life, must use her education and cunning, “como Dios lo quiso, ella fue bien artera” (st.406c), to win her freedom, not only for the benefit of her soul, but also for the future of her father and his kingdom. The ethics of trade are closely connected to those of desire in the Apolonio, and when faced with a man who has a commercial right to rape her, Tarsiana resorts to unusual tactics such as working as a minstrel to protect what really counts i.e. her virginity, as I will return to later.

In the PFG, while Fernán piously donates any booty secured in battle to the Arlantine hermitage, he demonstrates himself to be paradoxically adept at usury yet in control of his passions when recovering Castile from the King of León. With a gesture that bodes well for his scheme, Fernán manages to kiss Sancho’s hand at court in accordance with custom: “muy fiera cosa” (st.560b). On first impression, the affair of the horse and the hawk seems a rather incidental way to resolve the dispute over Castilian rule, yet it is a key episode that, along with the prevented rape of Sancha, culminates with the redemption of Spain at the end of the extant text. The motif of the animals, “un mudado açor” and “un cavallo que fuera d’Almançor” (st.564ac), can be traced in both romance and Arabic sources, and is closely associated with unbridled desire, notably that of Rodrigo, last King of the Goths, as reported by L.P. Harvey and David Hook.
Harvey and Hook find the earliest attested version of the horse and hawk motif in the *Ta’rikh iftitah al-Andalus* by the historian Ibn al-Qutiyya al-Qurtubi (d. Córdoba 977), which was written at around the time when the historical Fernán González lived (d. 970), and narrates the fall of Spain to the Moors. Ibn al-Qutiyya describes Rodrigo as coveting the finest horses and falcons, as were brought to him by a merchant from Africa, Yulyan (Yllán in the *PFG*). While abroad, Yulyan leaves his daughter in the King’s care, and when he finds out that he has violated her, he uses the excuse of returning to Africa to find some exquisite animals in order to rally Muslim forces in revenge. Covetousness and immoderate sexual desire are closely associated sins committed by Rodrigo. A later example of the motif occurs in the medieval Castilian didactic romance, *Libro del cavallero Zifar* (c.1300; *Zifar*), in which Roboán’s desire for a hunting dog, a hawk, and a horse proves his undoing (1982: 841-45).

In the *PFG*, King Sancho’s intense desire to possess Fernán’s hunting animals is a weakness exploited by the hero that results in his loss of Castile, the heartland of Spain, just as Rodrigo’s lack of measure lost España. Sancho’s “mui gran sabor” for the horse and hawk is twice iterated (st.564d, 565a), and, in striking rejection of Fernán’s offer of them as a gift (st.565), he insists upon buying them (sts.565-66). He thus engages with Fernán in an exorbitant mercado (sts.567-69), “assaz avié el rey buen cavallo conprado / . . . con el aver de França nunca serié pago” (st.569ac), that brings to mind the trade to which Yulyan is dedicated in Ibn al-Qutiyya al-Qurtubi. Central to the success of the deal is Fernán’s capacity to participate in the dubious exchange without becoming corrupt: his actions have a societal and higher Christian purpose in contrast to those of Sancho, a man confounded by base desire. The concupiscent land in

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22 Harvey and Hook note that good horses and hawks are reported to have been of enormous value in medieval Spain (1982: 840). In Europe more generally, huge amounts were paid for the Arabian horse, considered noblest of all because of its speed (Bumke 1991: 178).
which Fernán comes to prominence, where virgins are offered as tribute and the remaining autochthonous monarchs are his enemies, requires a flexible approach to Christian morality

Harvey and Hook posit that the hawk and the horse are of superficial significance in the *PFG* as: “prestige objects and status symbols” (1982: 846). I more than agree with Weiss that this is an overly-cautious conclusion (2006: 173): as symbols of immoderate desire that lead to the loss of a kingdom metonymic of the old territory of the Visigoths, they refer back to Rodrigo’s *culpa* as described in the historical introduction. As such, the hawk and horse episode is a reversal of the events of 711 that brings about the redemption of Spain, although this is not without its complications for Fernán. In order to ensure the purgation of past error, Fernán must appropriately navigate the roles of both intemperate ruler (Rodrigo) and treacherous outsider (Yllán).

Flexibility in Christian morality extends to the battlefield. Prior to the recuperation of Castile, the Spanish Christians describe themselves as lambs preyed on by the wolfish Muslim (st.99d), the wolf traditionally a symbol of the devil in contrast to Christ the lamb, as associated with sexual sin in the *Apolonio* (st.406b), and later in the *LBA* (see Giles 2009: 62). Yet when fighting the enemy, Fernán encourages his troops to identify with the wolf’s ferocity to aid them against the odds: “matarién treinta lobos a tryenta mill ovejas” (st.223b). Furthermore, the Count’s nephews are known as “los lovos carniçeros” (st.447d) and the poet describes Fernán as: “faziendo lo que faze el lovo en las grueys” (st.495b). Fernán is also known as “vueytre carniçero” (st.174d), and, notably, “más bravo que serpyente” (st.512a), in a further allusion to original sin.

Fernán is wolfish and penitent, usurious and God’s vassal (st.389-91): a challenging, fallible hero. His legitimacy is questioned by Dubois, who perceives the
“demythification of the count” in the *PFG* (2000: 126). Coates, however, links the imagery of Fernán as a vulture and a wolf with his courtly hunting of the boar when he stumbles across San Pedro de Arlanza, noting that: “hunting is a common emblem of the trickster’s talents” and “cunning, knavery, and trickery are possible facets of heroism” (2009: 61-62). Fernán’s morally troubling behaviour is essential for his full participation in worldly, societal affairs, and I concur with Coates that he contributes to: “deception and uncertainty in the hope of establishing a more worthy order” (2009: 63), an order ultimately founded in *caritas* rather than *cupiditas*. Like Apolonio, Fernán is on a transformative journey subject to the vicissitudes of fortune, over the course of which, in accordance with his destiny as King, he intends to prosper both materially and spiritually for the sake of secular society as well as his future in the next life.

III. *Cortesía*

The ethics of courtliness, *cortesía*, is a topic of keen interest in the *Apolonio* and one resonant in the *PFG*. According to the Martín Alonso dictionary, the thirteenth-century term circumscribed: notable happenings, such as miracles, as in the *SD*, “Fiço otra vegada una grand cortesía” (st.376a); a mode of behaviour, as in the *Apolonio*, “del buen rey Apolonio y de su cortesía” (st.1d); and a gift or service to others, as in the *MNS*, “Todo omne del mundo fará grand cortesía” (st.115a). *Cortesía* as a social act: “con que se manifiesta la atención, respeto o afecto que tiene una persona a otra”, is a concept held from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, from works as diverse as Berceo’s *Sacrificio de la misa* to Inigo de Mendoza’s *Vita Christi* (1986: 798; “Cortesía”). Alonso refers to behaviour only with regard to the *Apolonio*, suggesting perhaps the machinations of a royal court. However, it is clear from the semantic field
he identifies that *cortesía* has strong associations with devotional writing in thirteenth-century Iberia. Although the term *cortesía* is not used in the *PFG*, the clerical poet was clearly very familiar with hagiography such as the *SD* and steeped in the mores of his time.

As José Antonio Maravall describes, *cortesía* embodies a tension between ethical and social concerns, and is rooted in clerical culture: “de cortés y cortesía no hablan sólo los poetas, ni son éstos los que han creado tales conceptos, sino los moralistas, lo que denuncia ya el fondo doctrinal que en aquéllos se da”. Maravall traces the semantic links between *clerecía* and *cortesía*, associated throughout the Middle Ages (1983: 257-67; see also Weiss 2006: 198), as evident in the third miracle of the *MNS*, “El clérigo y la flor”. Here, *cortesía* is a synonym of *mester (de clerecía)*:

 Todo omne del mundo fará grand cortesía  
 qui fiziere servicio a la Virgo María;  
 mientras que fuere vivo, verá plazentería,  
 e salvará el alma al postremero día. (st.115)

Joachim Bumke, broadly concerned with twelfth- and thirteenth-century French and German courtly culture, corroborates Maravall’s findings, noting that the Latin *curalitas*, “courtliness”, was used to describe the social interaction of bishops and court clerics from the end of the eleventh century (1991: 322). Both Maravall and Hazbun define *cortesía* in relation to the *Zifar* (1983: 261-62; 2013: 104), which provides a markedly doctrinal definition. In the section, “De commo el rey de Menton demonstraua a sus fijos que sienpre vsasen del bien e que sienpre fuesen muy corteses”, the *Zifar* provides a distillation of what is assumed to be familiar in the *Apolonio*, and resonates in the *PFG*.

 The three verbs in the title to the relevant section, *demonstraua, vsasen, fuesen*, summarize *cortesía* as a concept that teaches both how to *act* outwardly and how to *be*
within oneself. *Cortesia* is an orthopraxis, a process and a product, for a life of both worldly and spiritual wealth: “el auer es vida de la cortesia e de la linpieça, vsando bien del, e la castidat es vida del alma”. The principles of *cortesia* in the *Zifar* apply in such striking detail to the example of King Apolonio (in contrast to that of Antioco), that it is tempting to think that they were modelled upon him:

Suma de cortesia es que el ome aya verguença a Dios e a los omes e a sy mismo; ca el cortes teme a Dios, e el cortes non quiere fazer en su poridat lo que non faria en consejo. Cortesia es que non faga ome todas las cosas de que ha sabor. Cortesia es que se trabaje ome en buscar bien a los omes, quanto podiere. . .el vagar es vida de la paçiençia. Cortesia es sofrir ome su despecho e non mouerse a fazer yerro por ello; e por eso dizen que non ha bien syn lazerio. (González 1983: 288)

*Cortesia* emphasizes humility, the opposite of the *soberbia* that characterizes Alexander in the *Alexandre*, the restraint of desire, forbearance, and working for the good of others. *Cortesia* also enshrines bringing one’s public and private selves into harmony for the understanding of one’s purpose in secular society in relation to the life to come.  

Apolonio and Fernán must demonstrate all of these qualities in order to redeem their respective kingdoms. As Alfonso X states in his *Siete Partidas*: “las bondades et los otros buenos enseñamientos, á que llaman cortesia, siempre los fallaron et los preciaron en las cortes” (II.ix.27).

The concept is one with which Apolonio struggles at first. A breakthrough in his thinking occurs when he is shipwrecked on Pentápolin and loses his crew and all his belongings, as willed by God (sts.111-14). Arriving in the town, his desperate state is emphasized with reference to his clothing. The King, formerly draped in rich garments, is now: “mesquino de vestir y calçar” (st.112c), “menguado de vestido” (st.114b), “mal

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23 Maravall links the definition of *cortesia* in the *Zifar* with one very similar in the thirteenth-century *Libro de cien capítulos*, in which: “*cortesia* reclama una disposición desde dentro, que emana de la misma ‘puridad’ del hombre, de la zona interior de su secreta conciencia, y se proyecta en su conducta social, poniendo ambos planos de conformidad” (1983: 261-62).
adobado” (st.145a), “mal vestido” (st.152c); “non tenié vestido ni adobo de prestar” (st.154b). This highlighting of Apolonio’s altered appearance is no coincidence. He is laid bare physically and psychologically by the storm: “non fue bien por dos días en su recuerdo tornado” (st.113c), a treacherous form of maritime baptism that enables his renewal, both private and public, as a hero.24

Apolonio’s reaction to what has befallen him is perhaps surprising. Rather than ruing his fortune, as he was wont on leaving Tyre, he begs help from a passing fisherman and excoriates himself telling his story (sts.123-30).25 He then concludes: “todo lo he perdido por mis malos pecados” (st.130d), a penitent reflection, as indicated by Scordilis Brownlee. Scordilis Brownlee believes Apolonio’s penitence to be “totally incongruous” with the events of the narrative, and only attributable: “to the recognition on the part of Apolonio of man’s post-lapsarian state of sinfulness”, a comment that implies a clash of what she formulates as the generic dominants of the Apolonio, hagiography and romance. She argues that Apolonio’s departure from Tyre: “was motivated by one (or more) of three entirely unreproachable impulses”. While fear of being slaughtered by Antioco’s men, revulsion at the incest he exposed, and frustration with his narrow, bookish experience of life, are indeed good reasons for him to have fled (1983a: 165), I suggest that they are also indications of weakness in a Christian hero. The martyrs, hermits, and milites Christi (those wielding their arms in service to

24 In the Apolonio, the sea is emblematic of the ravages of fortune, including those of commerce (Weiss 2006: 208), and of the shifting nature of sin: “tanto pudo el malo bolue y rebolue” (st.6b). As Apolonio himself laments when he is shipwrecked on Pentápolin: “nunqua deuìa omne en las mares fiar, / traen lealtat poca, seben mal solazar, / saben al receber buena cara mostrar, / dan con omne ayna dentro en mal logar” (st.120). Desing details the importance of the sacrament of baptism in the Apolonio and for him the sea symbolizes the Church (2012: 116). In both the Apolonio and the PFG, the sea and wind are cited as instruments of the Christian God (sts.656a, 230c, respectively).
25 As Desing notes, citing García Blanco, this scene in the Apolonio is more than twice as long as the equivalent passage in the HART (2012: 99).
the Church), embraced death, and the saints were not frightened of sin or frustrated with an often closely limited worldly existence. Apolonio is a worldly character with whom his audience can relate, yet he also carries the moral responsibility of a saint.

The trials Apolonio endures and the humble attitude he is brought to assume pertain to him very personally. As detailed in the previous section, the primary motivation of the poem is that Apolonio demonstrate control over inherited concupiscence. He is certainly a post-lapsarian penitent working for the salvation of mankind, yet his personal assumption of this responsibility, through which he must distinguish himself from Antioco, enables a process of what in today’s language is termed “self-realization”, as necessary for his just and prosperous future leadership of a number of territories in the Eastern Mediterranean. Stripped of material comforts, Apolonio, pelegrino (st.151c), learns the truth of worldly existence according to Christian doctrine. As the fisherman, a purveyor of primary Christian principles, consoles: “e toller y en dar es todo su sentido, / vestir al despoiado y despoiar al vestido” (st.134cd). The fisherman also indicates that, as a man of education, Apolonio will acquire a nuanced level of understanding from his trials such that he will eventually be able to instruct others on the complexities of life:

Nunqua sabrién los omnes qué eran auenturas,  
   si no perdiessen pérdidas ho muchas majaduras;  
   quando an passado por muelles y por duras,  
   después sse tornan maestros y cren las escripturas.26 (st.136)

The fisherman then symbolically shares his meagre clothing, which he rips in half from his own back, little food (sts.138-39), and shelter with Apolonio, and on the following morning directs him on his way, via (st.141c), to the court of Pentápolin: from his

26 In the PFG, when in great distress, the Castillian troops: “dezién del Cryador mucha fuert’ majadura” (st.596b; my italics).
private self laid bare, back to society: “metiólo en la carrera, / demostróle la vía, ca bien acérrqua hera” (st.143ab).

The fisherman’s generosity emulates that of those on the road to Emmaus as read in Luke 24.13-35: Cleophas and another (perhaps Luke) are joined by a pilgrim who helps them to relate Christ’s miracles to scriptural prophecy; after offering to share their food and shelter, they recognize him as Christ risen. In the Apolonio, Apolonio seeks help to relate his experience to God’s will, yet he also receives the hospitality of a pilgrim and, in imitatio Christi, will one day use escriptura to guide others (st.136d). Both the fisherman and Apolonio are manifestations of Christ in the Apolonio and Apolonio repays the fisherman for his hospitality lavishly at the end of the tale, earning the highest praise: “Dios que biue y regna, tres y huno llamado, / depare atal huéspet a tot ome cuytado” (st.635ab). As Johnston describes in relation to the PFG, the story of Emmaus is detailed in sculpture in churches and cathedrals along the Camino de Santiago, as at Santo Domingo de Silos, and was important for the theology of Gregory the Great (2008: 403-05). In his homily on the Emmaus story, Gregory underlines: ‘the disciples set the table, they offer food, and the God whom in the exposition of scripture they did not know, now in the breaking of bread they recognize’. The humility, forbearance, and faith of the pilgrim, a purveyor of hospitality, are characteristics shared by the thirteenth-century Iberian hombre cortés.

In the PFG, Fernán’s two visits to San Pedro de Arlanza evidence a series of scenes of striking resemblance to Apolonio’s engagement of the fisherman. Stumbling upon the hermitage for the first time, Fernán states: “aquí non entraría, / synon por dar

27 See Moore and Spaccarelli for a line drawing of the Emmaus story as depicted in the cloister of Santo Domingo de Silos, dated to the late eleventh or early twelfth century (2008: 8).
ofrenda or por fer romería” (st.231d), and is subsequently offered a meagre meal and shelter by the monk Pelayo, who helps him to resolve his troubles (st.235). While at the humble residence, Fernán implores his Señor in penance for his sins: “anpara a Castyella de la gent’ descreúda: / si Tú non la anparas, tén gola por perduda” (st.232cd), a prayer that is developed further during his second visit:

Sea por Ty Castyella defenduda;

anparar non la puedo, Señor, syn tu ayuda.

Por fuerça nin por seso que yo podies’ aver,
non la podryé por guisa ninguna defender. (sts.397-98)

Fernán is subsequently blessed with a vision in which the deceased Pelayo appears, prophesizes his victory over the Muslim invader with the help of the saints, indicates that he is held in unusual favour by God: “tú eres su vasallo e Él es tu Señor; / con los pueblos paganos lidias por su amor” (st.403bc), and admonishes him: “ve tu vya” (sts.401c), as then reiterated by the disembodied voice of Millán: “ve tu vya” (sts.408c, 409a, 412a). Fernán takes comfort and insight from his interaction with God’s humblest servants, in this case a monk and a saint, before he resumes his passage, vía, through the world.

The characterization of both Apolonio and Fernán as penitent pilgrims indicates the continual assessment of their worldly deeds in relation to the standards of heaven, in short, a striking integration of secular and devout traditions in both poems.29 In keeping with the worldly, societal dimension of cortesía, the Apolonio and the PFG also conceive of human existence as a game of fame and fortune, trebeio. The protagonists must come to understand the respective roles of linear Christian and circular pagan time

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29 Fernán’s penitential attitude extends to discourse with his vassals. When defending his absence to them on return from the second visit to the hermitage, he articulates a lack of confidence in his virtue: “aguardarvos querrya, a todo mi poder, / de por mengua de mi en yerro non caer” (st.427cd).
in the life of man, both of which are attributable to God: “El rey de los ciellos . . .
trebeia con los omnes a todo su placer” (Apolonio sts.93a, 94d); “De Dios e de los
omnes mester nos ha consejo, / sy non los afyncamos, fernos han mal trebejo” (PFG
st.428ab). ³⁰

Grieve’s research points to the relation between theology, poetics, and play in
the Apolonio, and she reads the words of the fisherman within the context of such play
al despoiado y despoiar al vestido” (st.134cd), thinking echoed in martial terms by
Fernán shortly after his second visit to San Pedro de Arlanza: “de dar e de quitar Él es el
fazedor; / por entender qu’Él es sobre todos mejor, / el que suel’ ser vençido, será el
vencedor” (st.437bcd). Grieve’s findings link closely with the development of cortesía
in medieval Iberia.

Bumke notes that the first court manual, the Disciplina clericalis, was written by
a Spaniard as an “educational curriculum” based on clerical training. ³¹ The Disciplina
clericalis refers to a letter of Aristotle to Alexander the Great, in which training in the
liberal arts, etiquette, and other skills such as chess, sports, and poetic composition is
recommended (1991: 322-23). Surtz argues that, in view of his excellent education,
generosity to others, and athletic skills, Apolonio is a: “model prince” (1980: 331).
However, it is Apolonio’s will to channel his competences in service to the Christian
community and God, notably as a musician, which marks him as an exceptionally adept
practitioner of cortesía. The same is true for Fernán, who is God’s vassal as well as a
warrior and political leader.

³⁰ In the SD, Domingo is patient and resilient when he is cast out of the monastery of San Millán, viewing
such vicissitudes as a game of sorts: “él toda esta coita vediéla por trebejo” (st.170c).
³¹ Petrus Alfonsi (fl. early 12th century), author of the Disciplina clericalis, was a converted Jew born in
the former Kingdom of Aragon.
The thorough education of Apolonio in the liberal arts, notably grammar, rhetoric, and music, links him with Alexander as portrayed in the *Alexandre*.

However, the *Alexandre* is a poem concerned with martial and philosophic exploration in which few stanzas are lost on leisure activities such as games and musical performance, events central to the action in the *Apolonio*. Such activities, though ostensibly entertaining and light-hearted, reveal the truth veiled by appearances in the *Apolonio*, and connect the characters, as well as the audience of the poem, with extra-textual Christian truth. To give a preliminary example: after being shipwrecked on Pentápolin, Apolonio manages to ingratiate himself with the courtly folk of the town with his ball skills, whereby to the King: “semeiól’ omne bueno, de buen entendimiento” (st.149c).

The King subsequently invites Apolonio to his court where he is provided with rich clothing: “los meiores que fueron en su casa trobados” (st.157b). In relief at this act of generosity, such that his appearance newly reflects his innate value, “non podié Apolonio las lágrimas tener” (st.160c), yet he steadies himself to engage with Architartres and his daughter, Luciana, another father and daughter pairing in the poem. Apolonio’s courting of Luciana is an important juncture in the poem in which the protagonist demonstrates his musicianship for the solace of all along with his elevated understanding of the divine, in short, his exquisite *cortesía*.

In the words of Grieve: “music is one art practiced by human beings that approximates the creation of the cosmos” (1998: 159). The concept of the harmony of the celestial spheres, whereby through an understanding of music one gains insight into

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32 As Alexander states to his teacher, Aristotle: “me enseñaste las artes todas a entender. / Entiendo bien gramática; sé bien toda natura; / . . . Retórico só fino: sé fermoso fablar; / . . . Sé por arte de música, por natura cantar” (sts.39-44). In a scene with a musical tree, the poet of the *Alexandre* displays his musical knowledge (sts.2132-42).
the structure of the universe, is credited to Plato’s *Timaeus* (fourth century BC). The *Timaeus*, a favourite text of twelfth-century French intellectuals, was influential across the Middle Ages and likely known by the poet of the *Alexandre*, as I detail in Chapter 1 of this thesis. As Plato remarks on the blending of sounds high and low in pitch: “This, a source of mere pleasure to the mindless, delights the intelligent as a representation of divine harmony in mortal movements” (*Timaeus* 80a-b; Waterfield 2008: 82).

As Uría Maqua writes: “a principios del siglo XIII, los conocimientos musicológicos adquieren un nivel relativamente muy alto, con el descubrimiento y desarrollo de nuevas técnicas que permiten enriquecer las melodías. Es el caso del cromatismo, los temblantes semitones que ejecuta Apolonio en el concierto del palacio de Architrastes” (2000: 247). In her book on music in the thirteenth-century European university, Nancy van Deusen underlines the function of music as the subject that exemplified all the quadrivial arts. The *quadriovium* brought “measurable objectivity” to the primary principles taught by the *trivium*, and the end of all seven liberal arts was the understanding of God. Van Deusen takes as her case study the writings of the English bishop Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175-1253), notably his *De cessatione legalium* (1230s), in which the theologian relates discord and concord in scripture to music (1995: xii, x).

The concept of musical performance as a demonstration of cosmic order when executed according to esoteric laws is important for the *Apolonio*. Of note is the analogy Grosseteste makes between written and aural discord: ‘But now consider the case of two conflicting scriptural texts, as if they were two pipes blown by the Holy Spirit . . .

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33 On sound and hearing: “attunement, whose movements are naturally akin to the circular motions of our souls, is useful to the man who makes intelligent use of the Muses not for mindless pleasure (which is nowadays taken to be the point of melody), but for the disharmony of the soul’s revolutions that has arisen in us: attunement is an ally, provided by the Muses for the soul in its fight to restore itself to order and harmony. Rhythm also was given for the same purpose by the same benefactors, to support us because for the most part our internal state is inconsistent and graceless” (*Timaeus* 47d-e; Waterfield 2008: 38). Musical harmony is an important aspect of Berceo’s *MNS*, notably the introduction, on which see Devoto (1980) and Marchand and Baldwin (1994).
pipes can be made to bring forth discord concordantly, and concord in discord’. Such a concept of music is of considerable importance when considering the relation of poetic skill, musical virtuosity, and juglaría in the Apolonia, as primarily explored at the court in Pentápolin.

At court, it becomes a matter of urgency for the King to find out Apolonio’s true identity: “contra éll que sepamos cómo nos captener” (st.166d). When pressed to disclose his story by Luciana, Apolonio weeps again, and she tries to cheer him by playing the vihuela (st.178b). Luciana is a skilled musician, knowing how to tune her instrument “en hun son natural” and to modulate her voice (sts.178-79). Moreover: “fazia a la viuela dezir puntos ortados, / semeiaua que eran palabras afirmadas” (st.179cd). As Dolores Corbella notes, quoting D. Devoto, ortados, “executed with wisdom”, is a scientific rather than musical adjective and features in the Alexandre applied to different maestros (2007: 133n179c). Luciana’s music seems to tell important truths: a feat, fazannya (st.180c), which is also described as entertainment, depuertos (st.180d).

Despite Luciana’s competence in musical harmony, Apolonio’s reaction is, notably, in discord with the keen response of the court, which grates the King: “demandóle y díxol’ que se marauellaua, / que con todos los otros tan mal se acordaua” (st.181cd). Apolonio is unimpressed by Luciana’s skills, citing himself as a far superior musician who plays “más con razón” (st.182d). This tense moment in the narrative, which leads Luciana to request Apolonio to prove his worth, “si no, asme dicho

34 “Sed numquid inter hos duos scriptores sacros, inter has duas Spiritus Sancti fistulas . . . faciunt per artem duas fistulas concorditer discordare et discordanter concordare” (De cessatione legalium, 164f; Van Deusen 1995: ix).
35 In Cañas’ vocabulary of the Alexandre, ortado is listed as “fino, culto”, as at st.838c, and st.1209a: “un maestro ortado” (2000: 646).
soberuia y enemiga” (st.184d), is in fact the discord necessary for a more profound concord to be revealed in Pentápolin society through Apolonio’s musicianship.

The occasion of Apolonio’s performance is fraught with imagery of violent desire, recalling the sin of Antioco’s court. Luciana is passionately engaged while watching Apolonio: “abés cabié la duenya de gozo en su pelleio”, “fue la duenya toquada de malos aguigones” (sts.188d, 189d); the King has “gran sabor” (st.186a) for Apolonio’s request to borrow a crown before he plays, and the verb violar (st.185c) and noun violador (st.186d), as associated with Apolonio, suggest violation as well as playing the viuela: not only the rape of Antioco’s daughter but the potential of the protagonist’s performance to penetrate the truths of God and Nature. If he misuses his maestria, Apolonio could be guilty of soberuia as is Alexander in the Alexandre. In development of the themes of the Alexandre, Apolonio must be dressed appropriately, with Antioco’s best crown (st.186c), in order to carry out his mester: his skill requires a careful balance of societal and personal, secular and devout affiliation, as appropriate to his place in the earthly and divine hierarchies. Furthermore, his playing initiates a love story, the conduct of which is a demonstration of cortesía of radical importance for the redemption of the societies of the poem. As I have indicated, according to the tenets in the Zifar, to be courtly one must restrain one’s sabor.

Apolonio’s crowned, virtuoso playing brings him immense relief: “fue cobrando el seso” (st.187c), and gladdens the hearts of all his listeners (st.189c). He plays better than Apollo and Orpheus (st.190b), is named by the King, who: “non seria más pagado / sy ganasse hun regno ho hun rico condado” (st.191ab), as a “cuerpo tan acabado” (st.36). On his voyage to the Antipodes, Alexander descends into the depths of the sea in a glass barrel. His philosophical investigations within acquire a “hint of rape” (Deyermond 1996: 152): personified Nature is aontada (st.2326d); “en las cosas secretas quiso él entender, / . . . quisolas Alexandre por fuerça coñecer” (st.2327ac).
Apolonio’s learned goals are societal cohesion and piety, not the exposure of forbidden knowledge, as in the cases of Adam and Eve, Alexander in the *Alexandre*, and Antioco. He is paid handsomely with gold and silver for his services as teacher, as well as waited on by servants, and fed copious food and wine (st.195), the material reward for his newly affirmed value. The ultimate reward is, however, a suitable bride: Luciana; and the pair develop a close relationship as teacher and pupil that is happily sanctioned by Architartres. Their marriage is notably founded in passion as well as the intellect, as necessary for a prosperous union: “Entró entre los nouyos muyt gran dilecçión, / el Criador entre ellos metió su bendición” (st.241ab), and Luciana quickly becomes pregnant with Tarsiana (st.242d), ensuring the continuation of the dynasty of Tyre. Despite his status as a maestro, however, Apolonio still has much to learn, and most notably from his daughter.37

In the *PFG*, Fernán’s status as the rightful, Christian leader of the Castilians and, thus, his innate worth, is publicly confirmed when the prophecies revealed to him at San Pedro de Arlanza become a reality. As I have detailed, the time Fernán spends privately

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37 Desing asserts Luciana’s importance in the *Apolonio*, alleging that: “her reading, writing, and interpretive abilities outshine those of her husband” (2011:4). His argument centres around Luciana’s note to her father in which she covertly refers to the man she wishes to marry i.e. Apolonio (st.223). I believe that Desing greatly overemphasizes Luciana’s skill without taking into account the plural nature of maestria in the *Apolonio* as most notably demonstrated through musicianship, and also medicine (see sts.284-324). Music and medicine are higher subjects in the medieval curriculum than grammar or rhetoric, through which one learned to read and write effectively. I believe that it is Tarsiana rather than her mother who is an unusually skilled composer and performer of text and music, as I will argue.
at the hermitage enriches his understanding of the world and prepares him for his
greatest public challenges, which include a lengthy, horrifying battle with Almoçor. In
the series of gripping scenes that narrate the apocalyptic fight, Fernán and his men come
extremely close to death. Their struggles are elevated by the divine presence implicit in
Fernán and explicit with the eventual coming of the saints to vanquish the enemy. In the
heat of the fray, all gaze at Fernán, “commo ángel de Dios”: “quando oyén ‘Castyella’
todos se esforçaban, / todos en su palabra grand esfuerço tomavan” (st.520bcd).

The heroism and tragedy of the battle is narrated in affecting and gruesome
detail, while emphasizing the immense skill of salient warriors. At a critical point, the
loyal Gustïo Gonçález (st.521a), who facilitates the passage of the Castilians in the field
(st.521b), is swiftly cut down by a valiant African king: “Capyello e almófar e cofya de
armar / óvolos la espada ligero de cortar; / ovo fasta los ojos la espada passar”
(st.522abc). The count’s nephew falls in the same spot as Gonçález, along with his
opponent: “non avié y de moros más extraño bracero” (st.523d), and news reaches
Fernán that: “eran los mejores de los suyos fynados” (st.525b).

At this precarious stage of the fighting, the language notably shifts to describe
the Castilian economy of fortune, simultaneously undercutting and emphasizing the
poignancy of the scene of worldly devastation: “eran desbaratados” (st.525d), “el conde,
por end’ fue muy quejado, / . . . falló de mala guisa revuelto el mercado” (st.526c). As
the tension mounts, the African king who took down *don Gustio* engages Fernán,
plotting: “sy lo guisar podiera, mejor lo varatara” (st.531c), but is summarily executed
by the hero (st.533). This action brings a wave of reprisal to the Castilians, whereby
Fernán begins to anticipate his death and call out to God mid-battle:

“Pues non só venuturoso d’esta lid arrancar,
Señor, ¿por qué nos tyenes a todos fuerte saña?
Por los nuestros pecados non estruyas España:

Señor, pues es el conde de Ty desanparado,
que por alguna culpa eres dél despagado,

Pero yo non morré así desanparado,
antes avrán de mí los moros mal mercado:
tal cosa fará antes este cuerpo laçrado,
que quant’ el mundo dure siempre será contado.” (sts.537-42)

Note Fernán’s recognition that fortune may not be on his side and his penitence in acknowledgement of alguna culpa, then the swift shift to an attitude of determined faith and defiance of his fate: he will do his duty as vassal, even if God has forsaken him. The hero’s forbearance and daring is quickly rewarded, for above him appears the Apostle James, calling him in return and accompanied by a huge heavenly army (st.546).

The incredulity of Almançor at the spectacle emphasizes Fernán’s elevated understanding: the African king cannot grasp the nature of “atan fuerte poder” (st.549b), which renews the energy of the flagging Christian army (sts.550d, 551a). The battle sequence concludes by highlighting the Muslims’ unenlightened fear of death as they flee the field (st.552ab) and the agreement between Fernán and his men to bury their dead at San Pedro de Arlanza (sts.555-58), before Fernán is summoned to court by King Sancho. At court, the hero is welcomed by the people for his trusted counsel with private and public gatherings. There he shows off the horse he has acquired from Almançor as well as the coveted hawk (sts.563-64), evidence of his increasing status i.e. cortesia.

As indicated in the Zifar, cortesia entails bringing one’s private and public selves into harmony for the realization of one’s purpose in secular society in relation to the life to come, a very difficult endeavour at which Fernán excels in the PFG.
Committing himself to God as a lowly sinner, he embraces the path to redemption for himself and his people and channels all his worldly skill into the creation of a Castilian society of marked cohesion and piety. The *PFG* is usefully described as a courtly epic—an epic enshrining the tenets of *cortesía* as intended for a learned audience at court—and Fernán is the ideal knight, the image of which: “fused traditional concepts of lordship, the religious idea of knighthood of the reform movement, Christian ethical notions, and the modern code of good manners”, as indebted to the contemporary cleric. As Bumke indicates, medieval epics were often circulated at court before they were completed (1991: 321-22, 519-20), a compelling explanation for the abrupt ending of the *PFG*, and a further indication that the poem was intended to entertain as much as instruct.

IV. *Otro mester sabía*: Women, Sex, and Redemption

As I have been arguing, the central theme of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* is the regulation and appropriate channelling of desire. In both poems the redemption of the sexual misdemeanour of a monarch past is central to the legitimacy of the hero, who must safeguard his dynasty. Particularly distinctive to this pair of poems are the plotlines devoted to worldly women, namely Tarsiana and Sancha, who outdo both of the heroes with their insight and skill, proving themselves instrumental in such redemption. Both women are threatened with rape at key stages of the narrative progression and, rather than eschewing sexual sin, as is possible for Apolonio and Fernán, both face the problem physically and morally in a series of highly engaging and challenging scenes.

In the case of Tarsiana in the *Apolonio*, left by her father for thirteen years in Tarsus while he travels to Egypt, grows up an exceptionally well-educated and socially
adept young woman, “de muy gran parescer” (sts.392a, 395b). She is, however, betrayed by those entrusted with her guardianship, Dionisa and Estrángilo, following the death of her beloved nurse, Licorides. When carrying out her morning ritual for Licorides at the cemetery, “rezando los salmos del salterio”, “leyé su matinada” (sts.375d, 377a), Tarsiana must save herself from murder at the hands of a thug sent by Dionisa, Teófilo, through prayer to God: “yo, mal non meresciendo, he a ser martiriada; / Senyor, quando lo tú sufres só por ello pagada” (st.382cd). Teófilo notably suffers from a debilitating laçerio, which he erroneously hopes to alleviate with the reward for carrying out the crime, later dying in servitude (st.390).

Due to God’s mercy (st.384c), pirates spot the attempted murder from their ship and chase down Teófilo, yet when he flees they turn their interest to Tarsiana, who is subsequently captured and put up for sale at market in Mitalena. There a bidding war ensues for her virginity between a pimp and Antinágora, the town leader, who: “ouo tal amor della que s’en quérié perder” (st.395c). As noted by critics including Corbella, who cites C.C. Phipps, Antinágora’s destructive passion for Tarsiana echoes that of Antioco for his daughter (2007: 206n395a), for whom: “se querìa por su amor perder” (st.6d). It is important to note, however, that Antinágora’s desire is not incestuous.

Although he does have a daughter of his own, in echo of the paradigm of vulnerable father-daughter relations in the Apolonio and is later described as loving Tarsiana like a daughter (st.431ab), Tarsiana also inspires such love in the population of Tarsus as a whole (st.365cd). Antinágora’s passion more closely resembles that of Rodrigo for Yllán’s daughter, a girl left vulnerable by her father in a foreign city, as portrayed in the PFG and the Estoria de España.
Despite his unseemly lust, Antinágora’s relative goodness to present company is indicated during the bidding war for Tarsiana’s virginity (note that, in the PFG, Rodrigo is described as “el vuen rey” st.49a, in relation to Yllán, “el mesquino” st.47c). His moral position receives no comment, yet the pimp is referred to as an “homme malo” (st.396a), “garçón malo” (st.397b), “malo fidiondo” (st.397d), “mal auenturado” (st.398a), and a “traydor” (st.399b). In a salacious few verses, Antinágora gives up his bidding so as to rent Tarsiana later at a cheaper price (st.399d), while the pimp: “el que no deuié huna muger valer; / aguisóse la çiella para ‘l mal menester, / escriuyó en la puerta el preçi del auer” (st.400bcd). As the poet indicates, the marketing of Tarsiana’s body against her will, a “barata mala” with which she is forçada (sts.402b, 405d), is partly attributable to the fortune of an imperfect world (st.402a), as was the fall of Rodrigo: “un rey de grand natura, / el que perdió la tierra por su desaventura” (PFG st.84cd).

While Tarsiana prays for God’s mercy, Antinágora demonstrates himself to be confused about the nature of love and to whom he should pray: “rogó al traydor de firme voluntat, / que le diese el preçio de la virginidat, / que gelo otorgase por Dios, en caridat” (st.404bcd). Mistaking commercial exchange for the satiation of his desire for caritas, Antinágora is undoubtedly a sinner, yet he is surprisingly also described as an apòstol (st.405c) in relation to Tarsiana, a word usually reserved for the twelve diciples of Christ and the saints Paul and Barnabus. Critics dispute the word as found in the manuscript (see Corbella 2007: 210n405c), although I am inclined to consider it an intentional reference to Paul. In the LBA, I. Thessalonians 5.21-22 is twice referred to in justification of lust (at st.76cd, and st.950a, “Provar todas las cosas el Apóstol lo manda”), and the association may well have been current earlier than the fourteenth
century. Certainly, the discourse on sex and love in these scenes of the *Apolonio* calls to mind the contention of the *LBA*, a link that may also extend to the versification of the poems. As Paraiso observes: “tanto el *Poema de Fernán González* como el *Libro de Apolonio*, el Arcipreste de Hita o Pero López de Ayala, usan una versificación fluctuante en el tetrástrofo” (2000: 227-28).

In keeping with the concept of worldly life as a game ultimately controlled by God, Tarsiana is able to use cunning to persuade Antinágora not to violate her: “como Dios lo quiso, ella fue bien artera, / con sus palabras planas metiólo en la carrera” (st.406cd). Note that *artera* is a term also used to describe the pimp’s plotting (st.421a). Despite her desperate situation, Tarsiana uses her skill in oratory (sts.412d, 415b) to instruct Antinágora onto the right moral and physical path, *carrera*, in the manner of the fisherman and the saints in the *PFG*. Her triumph at doing so, in which she appeals to Antinágora’s *nobleça* and *precio* (sts.408d, 409c), and he, with his daughter in mind (st.414), pledges Tarsiana the money he paid for her virginity to help her escape, stating “el Criador uos quiera ayudar y valer” (st.417c), is a decisive moment which initiates Tarsiana’s protagonism as a Christ-like redeemer of (incestuous) concupiscence in the *Apolonio*. As written in *The Rule of Saint Benedict*: ‘whether slave or free we are all one in Christ, and should bear alike the weapons of service under one Lord’ (Ch. 2).38

Despite his flaws, Antinágora is highlighted as a potential Christian leader. Tarsiana, martyr for all she suffers who regularly prays to God and *maestra complida* who commands the favour of all of Tarsus, possesses all the qualities pertaining to *cortesía* necessary to enable his transformation. She evades rape due to her own faith, determination, and competence, in striking distinction to Yllán and Antioco’s daughters.

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38 “Quia sive servus sive liber omnes in Christo unum sumus et sub uno Domino aequalem servitutis militiam baiulamus” (Venarde 2011).
In the *Estoria de España* and the *Apolonio* the daughters must take their share of the blame for their ordeal: in the former her role is described ambivalently (554) and, in the latter, her lack of faith and general acquiescence is critiqued, as I detail in section I of this chapter. The portrayal of Tarsiana, who dissuades and even benefits materially from her potential violator is potentially, on the one hand, a misogynist confirmation that women sufficiently pure and resourceful don’t get raped, and, on the other, a triumph of one woman’s unusual will and skill in a world that often grants her little respect. As well as recalling the female saints and martyrs so popular in thirteenth-century Iberia, Tarsiana’s distinction points to the important roles women may have played at court in the period. I am inclined to view Tarsiana as feminist: she is a role model in charge of the execution of her own story quite unlike, for example, Berceo’s Oria in the *SO*, and she pointedly helps and honours other women less able, morally upright, and privileged than she to escape sexual slavery. Towards the end of the narrative, releasing her fellow “duenyas que él tenié conpradas”: “dioles buenos maridos, ayudas muy granadas, / sallieron de pecado, visquieron muy onrradas” (st.569abc), an event which is also a fitting counterpoint to the tribute of virgins reportedly paid to Almoçor in the *PFG* (and *SM*).

Sexual purity is almost as highly valued in the men as the women of the *Apolonio*. Along with Antinágora, many men are converted by Tarsiana and leave their money with her: “tanto fue la duenya sauia y adonada, / que ganó los dineros y non fue violada” (st.418cd), more than enough to buy her freedom (st.420). When her pimp declares that she has found a “buena carrera”, believing her to be enjoying her

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39 Desing highlights the Christian import of Tarsiana’s assistance to her fellow prostitutes who, in the *Apolonio* are enabled to: “leave behind their sin and to find honor through marriage, whereas the emphasis in the Latin *Historia* is solely on Tarsiana’s purchasing their freedom from slavery” (2013: 251). See Archibald (1991: 170–71).
prostitution (st.421), Tarsiana turns her rhetorical training to “un sermon tan tenprado” (st.422a), “tan bien adonado” (st.425a), entreated him:

“Otro mester sabía qu’ es más sin pecado, que es más ganançioso y es más ondrado.

Si tú me lo condonas, por la tu cortesía, que meta yo estudio en essa maestría, quanto tú demandases, yo tanto te daría; tú auriés gran ganançia y yo non pecaría.” (sts.422-23)

The mester sin pecado, maestría, which Tarsiana advocates to the pimp, ambitiously appealing to his cortesía, concerns the work of a juglaresa, as closely associated with prostitution. With the consent of her jailer, she rises early the next day to go to market and, there, with “huna viola buena y bien tenprada” (st.426c), she plays songs as a virtuoso, “que trayén grant dulçor y eran naturales” (st.427b). Her music is harmonious in relation to nature i.e. the music of the spheres, as in the lesser case of her mother, Luciana, who tuned her instrument “en hun son natural” (st.178b), and that of her talented father. Her audience soon exceeds the capacity of the town squares and people begin climbing ledges to glimpse her (st.427cd). First, Tarsiana must give adequate solace to the crowd with her song, but when she has accomplished this she then tells them her story with: “hun romançe bien rimado, / de la su razón misma” (st.428).

Tarsiana’s performance using her musical and rhetorical skills is a further example of erudition employed for social cohesion in the Apolonio. All who hear Tarsiana love her and try to help her gain her freedom (st.430). Even though she is working as a juglaresa, Tarsiana’s virtue, education, and social skills, in short, her cortesía, enable her to simultaneously profit from and transcend her circumstantial difficulty for the spiritual betterment of all.
The relevance of Tarsiana’s latter speech to her pimp and pursuit to the opening verses of the *Alexandre* is well known, and is examined closely by Deyermond. He argues that, in light of Tarsiana’s portrayal, “it is difficult to believe in the accepted picture of a school-founding manifesto issued by the *Alexandre* poet”, who notoriously asserts: “mester trayo fermoso: non es de joglaría; / mester es sin pecado, ca es de clerezía” (st.2ab). As Deyermond details, both the poet of the *Alexandre* and Tarsiana practice an erudite, “sinless” *mester* for the pleasure of a public involving a skilled use of rhyme. The poet of the *Apolonio* is likely making: “ironic use of the emphatic statements that open *Alexandre*” (1965: 115-16). To extend Deyermond’s commentary: although the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* may not be products of a poetic school, their composers were members of the same textual community, between whom an intellectual rivalry is palpable in the portrayal of Tarsiana. In re-writing the terms and conditions of the opening verses of the *Alexandre* to correspond rather to the tenets of *cortesía* and a distinguished *juglaresa*, it may be the case that the *Apolonio* poet is performing an intellectual and social coup, albeit a little distant in time and space, of a courtly sophisticate over a rather more bookish cleric.

At issue is whether Tarsiana’s *juglaría* compromises her or whether the office is dignified by her portrayal. J.C. Musgrave complicates Deyermond’s stance and argues

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40 As Deyermond notes, the only other poem to echo the opening verses of the *Alexandre* is the fourteenth-century *Libro de miseria de omne* (1965: 112): “Onde todo omne que quisiere este libro bien pasar / mester es que las palabras sepa bien silabificar, / ca por sílavas contadas, que es arte de rimar, / e por la quaderna via su curso quïer finar” (st.4; Cuesta Serrano 2012: 84).

41 Grieve argues that aspects of Tarsiana’s character and her stint in the brothel may be based on one of Seneca’s *Controversiae*, “The Prostitute Priestess”, in which a virgin, captured by pirates and sold to a pimp, is reported to have requested alms from the men who visited her to conserve her chastity. When one soldier visitor tried to rape her, she killed him, and although accused, was acquitted, thenceforth seeking a life as a priestess (1998: 159-60). Tarsiana’s priestly characteristics are also explored by Desing, although in the medieval Christian context. Citing the work of the historical theologian Gary Macy, he notes that in 1210 Pope Innocent III railed against the activities of abbesses in Burgos and Palencia such as public preaching and hearing the confessions of their nuns. Female holy figures in early thirteenth-century, northern Iberia may have had a more important role in the ministry of the Church than has since
that the poet of the *Apolonio* is: “contrasting the standard *juglaresa* with his noble heroine, and so distinguishing between the office and the product”. This is a distinction made by Tarsiana herself: “non só juglaresa de las buen mercado, / nin lo é por natura, más fágolo sin grado” (st.490cd; 1976: 129-30), perhaps unsurprisingly given her place in the naturalized hierarchy of the dynasty of Tyre. Overall, Musgrave advocates the maintenance of the tag “mester de clerecía” “in the sense of a high vocation” for the thirteenth-century *cuaderna via* poems, advocating that *juglaría* be considered a trade rather than a literary genre (1976: 138).

Throughout his article, Musgrave refers to numerous thirteenth-century sources that express an ambivalent attitude towards the minstrel, including Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* (1259-1264), Alfonso X’s *Siete Partidas*, Berceo’s writing such as the *SD*, and even the *Alexandre* itself.\\footnote{Musgrave also cites the Occitan poet Guiraut Riquier’s *Declaratio*, a work presented to Alfonso X, in which the *juglar* is associated with narrative performance rather than original lyric composition, the pursuit of the higher-esteemed *trovador* (1976: 137-38). Based on the hierarchy of poets of Riquier’s *Supplicatio* and *Declaratio* (Weiss 2005: 497-98), Tarsiana’s skill as a musician and poet seems closer to the *trovador*, although her social status as a *juglaresa de buen mercado*, unattached to a court, defines her otherwise.} The *Siete Partidas*: “denounced those *juglares* who earned their living as public entertainers” (VII.vi.4), yet considered those “who performed for their own pleasure, or that of their friends, or to solace kings or lords . . . above reproach, as were those, by implication, who sang the *gestas*” (II.xxi.20). As is well known, Berceo repeatedly refers to himself as a *juglar* in the *SD*, and beyond those well-known opening lines, the *Alexandre* includes the portrayal of a “*joglar de grant guisa*” who plays for the king (st.232), as well as a dismissal of the office by the Amazonian Queen Talestris to Alexander: “non vin’ ganar averes, ca non soy *joglaressa*” (st.1884b; 1976: 130-32; see also sts.699-700). Moreover, I have noted that the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* incorporate images of pious *juglares*, such as at *cantigas*...
eight and five, “Milagro de la virgen en favour de un juglar” and “Juglares y danza en una vigilia religiosa” (Esc.T-i-1).\textsuperscript{43} Juglaría, both despite and because of its status as a trade, is closely associated with cortesía.

The attitude to juglaría in mid- to late-thirteenth century Iberia is thus somewhat dependent upon context, along with the talent and faith of the individual minstrel, as reflected in the Apolonio. The minstrel is clearly elevated in association with Tarsiana, yet her entire portrayal is of someone exceptional. In my view, the significance of the portrayal of Tarsiana as juglaresa should more readily be considered within the grand scheme of the narrative, in which she also takes on the roles of Christian martyr (st.382cd) and redeemer of men. Tarsiana, due to her unusual virtue and intelligence, is a suitable candidate to navigate the depths of man’s concupiscence in striking scenes of salacious and devout content that surely delighted audiences. She and her father, Apolonio, must be tested before they can be reunited and her morally questionable role as juglaresa is the catalyst for the emancipation of their dynasty from inherited culpa at the principal denouement of the poem.

Still enslaved, Tarsiana is sent by Antinágora to cheer her ailing father: he suspects their relation to each other, although they are none-the-wiser. Addressing Apolonio as “romero o mercante” (st.489b), Tarsiana embarks on a lengthy performance, trying to solace him with her music, and then, when this has little effect, with an ingenious set of nine pious riddles. The riddles, however, also fail to draw Apolonio from his dejection, and the overriding riddle of the relationship of this estranged father and daughter remains unsolved. Frustrated and feeling a strong connection with Apolonio, Tarsiana subsequently flings her arms around his neck

\textsuperscript{43} With thanks to Dr Geraldine Hazbun for drawing my attention to these images.
(st.527) in a reprise of the configuration of incest/riddle that opens the poem. Unlike in the case of Antioco and his daughter, however, both Apolonio and Tarsiana are vigilant not to fall into sin: he strikes her away and she, shocked and hurt, delivers a long lament in which she tells her story and affirms her virtue. Tarsiana’s juglaría leads her to her father’s bedside, while her persistence, faith, and passion brings about their definitive mutual recognition. The combination of these attributes amounts to cortesía. When she finally confirms her identity to Apolonio, he leaps out of bed and declares his daughter to be walking proof of God’s grace: “¡eres vertut vera!” (st.543d).

In the Apolonio, the trade of juglaría is honoured as a vehicle with which Tarsiana can restore her family to their rightful position in society. The vicissitudes of fortune of the fallen world are a game through which man achieves the goals of cortesía, both worldly and divine. The mester of cortesía is far more diverse than the mester de clerecía extrapolated from the opening verses of the Alexandre, in the case of Tarsiana alone comprising martyr, princess, daughter, prostitute, trickster, musician, poet, and, eventually, wife, yet maintains a fundamental emphasis on piety, and on education for the most able. Tarsiana as juglaresa personifies cortesía in its ideal form as an orthopraxis: worldly to the point of cunning in process, while prosperous both spiritually and materially in product, as she laconically summarizes when performing for Apolonio: “busco menester que pueda al sieglo enganyar” (st.493d).

As I have argued, the theme of sexual wrongdoing is as central to the PFG as it is the Apolonio. The character of Sancha, whose relationship with Fernán develops in the latter stages of the narrative, is instrumental for the long-term redemption of Castile. I thus develop Hazbun’s stance on Sancha, believing her to stand with Fernán at the centre of: “the political and providential destinies of Castile”, as well as by his
“extension” (2011: 35). The audience of the *PFG* is likely to have identified strongly with Sancha: as Bumke reports: “given the level of education within lay society, potential readers of courtly epics would have been, apart from the court clerics, almost exclusively noble women” (1991: 525).

The sequence of scenes that leads to Sancha and Fernán’s first meeting and on to their union in marriage begins with a visit to the Count’s castle cell in Castro Vyejo. There he languishes as a prisoner of the Navarrans, having been tricked by the vengeful Queen Teresa of León, sister to Sancho, with a promise of marriage to her niece, Sancha (sts.571-72). A Lombard count undertaking a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela hears of the Count’s fame (st.601) and wishes to aid him: “que tal omne non era por en cárcel tener” (st.605c). As Coates writes, the: “motif of pilgrimage provides ideological support for the linear dynamic of the poem” (2009: 68). The Lombard is wealthy and can buy his way in to see Fernán with a minimal guard (st.606); he talks with him extensively and they part in tears (sts.607c, 608a). Emotionally invested in the Count’s fate, the Lombard subsequently pursues Sancha on his behalf. She, like Tarsiana in the *Apolonio*, is a woman of unusual beauty (st.610ab), virtue, skill, and resourcefulness, and is thus a fitting heroine to carry the destiny of Castile through the murky waters of sexual sin.

Holding counsel with Sancha, the Lombard explains Fernán’s circumstances and admonishes her for the *manziella* (st.610) she has unwittingly caused, a “mal syn mesura” for the Castilians (st.611d):

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Dueña syn pyedat e syn buen conosçer,
de fazer byen o mal tú tienes el poder:
sy al conde non quieres de muerte estorçer,
avers’ ha por tu culpa Castyella a perder. (st.612)
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Sancha’s innocent yet catastrophic *culpa* marks her as a thirteenth-century Eve and a central figure in the redemptive drama of the *PFG*. The Lombard vilifies her for abetting the enemy (st.613) and, in further effort to persuade her to marry Fernán, describes the consequences of her pending decision with reference to God and society: “eres de tu buen precio mucho menoscabada” (st.614a). If she refuses her duty: “serás por este hecho de muchos denostada; / . . . está culpa será toda a ty echada” (st.614bd); yet if she embraces it: “tenerte yen las dueñas por byen aventurada; / de todos los d’España series mucho onrada” (st.615bc).

Sancha and Fernán are portrayed as courtly lovers by the Lombard, she the aristocratic lady in distress and he the heroic knight: “más deves amar éste que non enperador; / non ha cabero d’armas en el mundo mejor” (st.616cd). The object of their union is a Christian marriage, yet the pair’s courting in such desperate circumstances, with the assistance of one of Sancha’s most loved *dueñas*, lends itself very well to high romance. Sancha soon receives a message from Fernán on behalf of her servant that casts her as a kind of *belle dame sans merci* in the shadow of her associations with Eve: “contra vós al Señor se es a querellar / que vós sola l’ queredes d’este mundo sacar, / e sy vós lo quisyedes él podryé escapar” (st.619bcd). Sancha’s *dueña* who, like the Lombard, is turned to the Count’s favour through encounter with him, urges her mistress to make amends for what may well otherwise amount to a “gran pecado” (st.620d).

Sancha’s approach to the relationship is penitential, wise, and passionate. Describing herself in terms related to pilgrimage as “mal andante” and “pesante” (st.621bc), she understands that fortune may allow her to put things right: “mas venir á sazón que l’ veré byen andante” (st.621d), and formulates a bold and dangerous plan:
“al su fuerte amor dexarme yo vençer; / quiero m’ aventurar e yrmelo a ver, / todo mi coraçón fazerle entender” (st.622bcd). Her discourse with Fernán portrays romantic love channelled for societal and Christian purpose and thus elevated as an act of cortesía. Notable is the free reign Sancha is permitted with her passion as a force that, in reverse of Rodrigo’s lust for the daughter of Yllán, forges a dynasty anew: “buen conde—dixo ella—esto faz’ buen amor, / que tuelle a las dueñas vergüença e pavor, / olvidan los paryentes por el entendedor” (st.624abc). Sancha and Fernán are guarida and guarido of their lovesickness in each other’s presence (sts.623c, 628a).

In development of the argument of the persuasive Lombard, Sancha admonishes Fernán of his options and their consequences. If he wishes she help him escape, he must declare his love to her and to God: “pleyto e omenaje en mi mano faredes / . . . conmigo vendiciónes e misa prenderedes” (st.626bd). If he decides against this he will die alone in prison, mesquino, and bear the responsibility of the culpa weighed against her (st.627). Fernán responds equally passionately and with overriding reference to their union as willed by God:

Quien d’esto vos falliere sea de Dios fallido,
faléscale la vyda com’ falso descreydo;
..........................

nunca mientras vysquiéredes abré otra esposa:
sy d’esto vos falliere, falesca m’ la Gloriosa. (sts.629-30)

Their mutual declarations made, Sancha helps Fernán to escape from prison and, due to the chains binding his legs, must carry him to relative freedom, “a cuestas” (st.632d). A strong and capable woman, Sancha’s actions recall those of the lusty serranas pilloried in the LBA, an association reinforced by the previous dialogue on buen amor. Sancha is a trickster as well as a princess, as indicated by Coates (2009: 68), and the couple make their way from the Camino Francés, through an oak grove, and into the mountains to
hide. It is there, amongst the brambles, that Sancha and Fernán face their greatest trial, as she must defend herself from a corrupt Archpriest who is hunting with his hounds in the area (st.534), a scene comic, salacious, violent, and an affirmation of Christian values, in turn.

The hounds detect the lovers and reveal them to the Archpriest, who gleefully considers the circumstances to offer a varata (st.635c) more valuable than the Castilian city Fernán would donate in exchange for secrecy: “plogol’ más que ganar a Acre e Damiata” (st.635d). Varata is a term that Coates associates with Yllán’s treacherous deal to bring down España (2009: 69), and is employed by an enemy African king who engages Fernán in battle: “sy lo guisar podiera, mejor lo varatara” (st.531c). The Archpriest intends to have his way with Sancha should the couple wish to remain hidden, and he equates sexual opportunity with commerce in the manner of Tarsiana’s pimp and clients in the Apolonio. He treats the couple like dogs (st.638b), and his impiety and poor tradesmanship, that is, his lack of cortesía, is declared by an enraged Fernán: “Par Dios—díxole—pydes cosa desaguisada, / por poco de trabajo demandas grand soldada” (st.639cd).

In a surprising turn of events, Sancha reveals herself to be far more cunning than previously indicated: hartera (st.640a), like Tarsiana (and the pimp) in the Apolonio (sts.406c, 421a), a quality that, crucially, aligns her with the old Visigothic dynasty of Iberia as described in the introductory portion of the PFG: “omnes fueron arteros, Dios los quiso guïar” (st.19d). As those chosen to rule Spain under the Christian God, the Visigoths knew how best to survive in a fallen world of fame and fortune, as must Sancha and Fernán, the rightful inheritors of their legacy. Persuading the Archpriest that she sees the logic of his plan: “más val’ que ayunemos todos tres el pecado” (st.640d),
Sancha commands him to undress and follow her (st.641). The Archpriest’s reaction is one of satisfaction that echoes that of the lovers: “tovo s’ por guarydo” (st.642), underlining both the genuine lust that underpins the couple’s relationship and the distinction of their sentiments, channelled for Christian purpose, from the lower-order, destructive desire of the Archpriest. Far from compliant, however, Sancha has conceived a plan to rid herself of her violator-to-be, a man symbolic of the scourge of a corrupted Castile.

The rape of women, whether by the infidel, their fathers, guardians, or as commercially organized, is a metonym for societal and spiritual corruption in the Apolonio and the PFG. When the Archpriest attempts to forcibly embrace Sancha, he is met by a force of nature attuned who pulls his beard and swears revenge: “dueña tan mesurada, / nunca byo omne nado dueña tan esforçada” (st.644ab). While Fernán lies partially immobilized by his prison chains, Sancha must wrestle with the Archpriest, assumedly dragging him to the spot where she left her lover, “ya quanto apartar” (st.643a), so that, between them, they can stab him to death (st.645). Such a violent crime is sanctioned by God in this significant context: “nunca merçed le quiera aver el Cryador” (st.646b).

Eradicating the sexual corruption that threatens to maintain the state of sin brought about by the lust of Rodrigo, last king of the Goths, Fernán and Sancha also gain in material terms from their actions. The Archpriest leaves behind a mule, cloth, and nothing less than a mudado açor (st.646c): “quiso Dios que ovyessen más onrado señor” (st.646d). In the context, I suggest that the açor, a symbol of immoderate desire, further contributes to the understanding of this scene as a recuperation of Castile in spiritual terms by two guardians who can appropriately manage their desire. The
mudado açor references the deal made earlier in the narrative by which Castile is regained as a territory, as indicated at the end of the sequence with the Archpriest:

“Dexemos aquí ellos entrados en carrera, / por llegar a Castyella, que ya muy cerca era” (st.648ab). The task of Fernán, Sancha, and the Castilian troops is almost complete.

Most striking in this sequence of scenes is the depiction of Sancha not only as physically strong enough to be a match for a member of the male sex, but as a woman of intellectual measure. She is the counterpoint, an anti-Eve, to the Archpriest with his errant lust and, in a feat of quick wit, turns his deception back upon him: “confonder cuydó otro mas él fue confondydo” (st.642d). The use of confonder recalls the exclamation of the Apolonio poet about the behaviour of Antioco: “Confonda Dios tal rey” (st.51a), and three earlier employments of the term in the PFG, as regards the treachery of Yllán, the generalized state of sin that led to the fall of the Goths, and betrayal by the Navarrans, who are reported to have ravaged Castilian territory after Fernán and his men arrive in Burgos (sts.43c, 100d, 282b). The Archpriest is closely associated with treachery and concupiscence: both Sancha and the narrator describe him as a traydor (sts.644d, 645d, 646a), distinguishing her use of trickery and violence as elevated by societal and Christian purpose. Sancha triumphs over sexual corruption in the PFG.

Sancha’s role in the PFG is unusually prominent for a woman in the mester de clerecía and echoes that of Tarsiana in the Apolonio. Like Tarsiana, Sancha (princess, pilgrim, trickster, lover, wife, and Christian), personifies cortesía as an orthopraxis: worldly to the point of cunning in process, and prosperous materially and spiritually in product. The cortesía advocated by the Apolonio and the PFG distinguishes itself markedly from the mester de clerecía articulated in the Alexandre and the early works
of Berceo. It requires that members of both sexes seek autonomous roles in society in preparation for the life to come, yet equally to foster ethical familial and commercial relations for a life both pleasant and prosperous while here on earth.

V. Conclusion

I have argued that the Apolonio and the PFG are profitably read in conjunction as founded on the values associated with thirteenth-century Iberian cortesía. Although they are in some respects very different works of mester de clerecía—the Apolonio considerably more erudite than the martial PFG—inherited sexual sin is the thematic backbone of both narratives, the redemption of which is essential for the ultimate prevailing of both male protagonists. The Apolonio and the PFG also share a prominent female character without whom such redemption would not be possible and who is a force to be reckoned with in her own right. The depictions of Tarsiana and Sancha mark an important development in the characterization of the corpus that looks forward to the roles women play in the fourteenth-century LBA.

The Apolonio and the PFG promote the values of aristocratic lineage and power and a patriarchal social structure, yet the characters Tarsiana and Sancha are indications of the shifting ideological sands within such social edifices. The portrayal of the two women as chaste guardians and progressive, intelligent defenders of the societal and spiritual wellbeing of their people, places them on an equal footing with the heroes of the poems. The issues their stories bring to light as regards sexual exploitation, particularly in the case of Tarsiana, are still relevant to women today.

I believe that Tarsiana’s stint as a juglaresa is of particular relevance to readings of the LBA, which, as explored by Elizabeth Drayson, depicts: “musical performance as
an apt trope for readers’ interpretative performances”, in line with prevalent strands of twelfth-century thought (2010: 28; see st.70 of the LBA). Learning to play and perform with an instrument is also usefully considered analogous to cortesía as an orthopraxis: a learned, pious, and social process of worldly and spiritual product. High attainment in such a competence is fundamentally rooted in study of the seven liberal arts and, virtuosity in music, one of the subjects of the superior quadrivium which bring “measurable objectivity” to the primary principles taught by the trivium (Van Deusen 1995: xii), is a sign of sophistication. Musical practice may be considered a particularly effective didactic trope within the Apolonio, simultaneously illustrative of a hermeneutic theory and an ethical and social code.

Throughout the majority of this chapter the Apolonio is the primary point of reference, a poem I consider to be of notable coherence, poetic grace and dense semantic patterning in relation to the rather more rough-and-ready, fragmentary PFG. This is not to denigrate the PFG: it is a highly engaging, affecting, significant poem and historic document in its own right, and both works are important witnesses in what I believe to be a new stage in the flowering of the mester de clerecía at the mid-point of the thirteenth-century, the beginning of what Charles Faulhaber describes as: “the period of liveliest scientific and didactic activity in medieval Spain”, under Alfonso X (1972: 140).

Building on the work of prominent critics, I have endeavoured to navigate the complex generic textures of the Apolonio and the PFG. I have sought to illustrate that the pious examples of the protagonists of both poems are informed and extended by their roles in society, mesteres that sometimes require recourse to trickery, as in the episodes of Tarsiana’s enslavement in the Apolonio and the encounter with the
Archpriest in the PFG. Accomplished generic hybrids, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* impressively adapt profane and sacred tradition alike and portray worldly, often ostensibly sinful pursuits as potential forms of secular sacrament. As such, they articulate the most outward-facing configuration of “mester de clerecia” of the thirteenth-century, canonical poems.