“Enbarraganad a Francia” [“Make France your concubine”]: Matrimonial Strategies in The Deeds of Young Rodrigo

FINAL REPORT

1. Description of grant-supported activity

The goal of this grant was the study on the political implications of mediated marriages or quasi-marriages (barraganías) in the The Deeds of Young Rodrigo poem.

2. Where you able to complete the project? Describe any difficulty you had.

The answer to this question has to be nuanced. As my work progressed it became very clear the importance of a particular concept which had not received attention in previous studies of Spanish epic: “amparo,” which can be translated as “protection” but refers in particular to the protection of something over which a person has legal jurisdiction. Exercising “amparo” over that object generates or reinforces jurisdiction; failing to exercise it weakens or voids the legitimacy of jurisdiction.

This concept relates to the goal of the grant: “amparo” applies to people too, and particularly to women who are under the “amparo” of their husbands or fathers. I observed that, in Castilian epics, giving or withdrawing protection to “one’s women” (daughters, wives, concubines) results in gain or loss of status and has an effect on the ability of an individual to act in the political body. More, I observed that this point was critical to interpret some parts of the most studied Castilian epic poem, The Lay of el Cid. It became clear that the discussion of this issue in a text more widely studied would have more impact, and that I could continue later with The Deeds of Young Rodrigo.

3. Did, or will, the project result in a specific product -- a manuscript, composition, syllabus, etc? If so, please describe and indicate state of development.

The first result was a paper, delivered at the 48th International Congress on Medieval Studies (May 9-12, 2013), which defined the problem addressed by this grant: “‘Enbarraganad a Francia’: Estrategias matrimoniales en las Mocedades de Rodrigo” [“‘Make France your Misstress’: Marriage Strategies in The Deeds of the Young Cid”]. The second was an article, considering how a hidden biblical quote stresses the importance of “amparo” in The Lay of el Cid. This article was published in the most important journal of Spanish Medieval Literature, La corónica (41.2 (2013): 69-86; note that the date “2013” actually describes 2014: the journal issues are published half a year behind their nominal date). Those studies, however, just begin the exploration of a problem that my research will address in the future.