Abstract.

The history of literary criticism concerning Vida y sucesos de la Monja Alférez, the autobiography of the 17th-century novice Catalina de Erauso, illustrates the power of intellectuals and academics to place, misplace or even ignore a text within literary canons. This article explores the period between 1939 and 1975 when Vida was politically appropriated under the Franco Regime. Erauso was claimed as a cultural icon by both those who wanted to define a Basque identity as well as those who wished to reassert patriotic sentiments in Spain. Literary critics have throughout the ages utilized the Vida text for their own purposes, but during the Franco years critics often engaged in particularly twisted machinations to make the text fit their needs. The history of literary criticism concerning Vida has in fact failed to locate the text within literary parameters, and the text has therefore remained lost in terms of its significance in the history of Spanish literature and autobiography.

Resumen

La historia de la crítica literaria en relación a Vida y sucesos de la Monja Alférez, la autobiografía de Catalina de Erauso, novicia del siglo XVII, revela el poder que intelectuales y académicos poseen para situar, descuidar, o incluso ignorar un texto dentro de cánones literarios. Este artículo explora el período entre 1939 y 1975, cuando Vida fue apropiado políticamente bajo el Régimen Franquista. Erauso se convirtió en un símbolo cultural, tanto para aquéllos quienes querían definir una identidad vasca, como para los que querían reafirmar ciertos sentimientos patrióticos en España. Durante el Régimen, críticos literarios crearon maquinaciones especialmente retorcidas en torno al texto para satisfacer sus propias necesidades. La historia de la crítica literaria referente a Vida ha fracasado en la tarea de localizar el libro dentro de específicos parámetros literarios, y por tanto el texto ha permanecido perdido en cuanto a su significado en la historia de la literatura y de la autobiografía española.

1 A shorter version of this article was read at the Eighth Biennial Conference of the Asociación de Escritoras de España y las Américas (1300–1800) at the University of Houston, 21–23 September 2004.
The text of *Vida y sucesos de la Monja Alférez doña Catalina de Erauso* has been cast in themes of truthfulness, from the pronouncement of its main character in the summary of her life to the questions of critics as to the very existence of the author and the period of the text’s actual publication. The subject matter of the text — a sensational story about a cross-dressing, transgressive nun who joined the army, fought in Spain’s colonial wars and breached the rules of her religious order, her gender, and her society — has generated intense debate since its prominence in seventeenth-century Spain, the Golden Age of Spanish literature.

The history of literary criticism concerning the text of *Vida y sucesos de la Monja Alférez doña Catalina de Erauso* illustrates the power of intellectuals, scholars, academics and artists to place, misplace or even ignore a text within the canons of literature. The text, its sensational story and legendary author were popularised during her lifetime and have been reviewed during a variety of literary trends — from the discovery of the text at the onset of French Romanticism, to its rediscovery by modern Contemporary Literature. However, the text is neither Romantic nor Contemporary. The text has been utilized by those promoting fascism under Franco’s Dictatorship, nationalists supporting a Basque identity, and feminists promoting a cross-dressing woman who took the interesting step of leaving a convent to fight in the Spanish wars of colonization. And yet the text is not fascist, nationalistic, or perhaps even feminist. Over the centuries, critics have commented on the text, speculated about the text and sometimes analysed the story and authorship of the text. Yet, while *Vida* is everywhere, it is also nowhere — lost or misplaced within the Literary Canon.

*Vida*’s misplacement is the result of a history of literary criticism that has failed to locate the text within specific literary parameters. Rather, critics have viewed the text through a diversity of lenses and have focused on the political and social implications of the authorship of the text. The debate over the importance of Catalina de Erauso’s authorship of the text and her importance to political and social causes has meant that the author and the story have received broad attention, but the text has been lost in terms of its significance in the history of autobiography and women’s writing.

This article explores the period between 1939 and 1975 when the text was politically appropriated under Franco’s Regime. Political, social and military events in Spain transformed the debate over the Erauso text from a literary discourse on the merits of the female author and the history of the mysterious manuscript to a rigorous tug-of-war over the icon of a woman. Erauso was of cultural importance to both those who wanted to define a Basque identity as well as those who wished to reassert patriotic sentiments in Spain. Between 1931 and 1975, the trend among literary critics was in favour of Erauso’s authorship and supportive of the veracity of the text as a seventeenth-century original. However, this argument in favour of the text was overwhelmed by the political, social and military struggles of the time. Any discussion of literature was simply taken up by the conflicts between fascism and democracy; Basque identity versus Spanish
unity. While established Spanish writers, such as Cervantes and Lope de Vega, the greats of the Golden Age, had already been accepted into the Literary Canon, any new approaches to Spanish literature were subsumed and transformed by the greater battles of the day.

In 1934, two Basque publishing houses, Itxaropena and Beñat Idaztiak, revived the Vida text with editions entitled Historia de la Monja Alférez. The annotated edition released by Beñat Idaztiak (Basque Themes) was part of a series known as the Zabalkundea Collection, which was intended to promote the history of the Basques. The collection was described as having the following mandate:

Es una colección que pretende difundir por nuestra tierra y, aún fuera de ella, el conocimiento del pasado de nuestro pueblo, dedicando un estudio breve, pero completo, a cada tema, abarcando también una acabada descripción del estado actual de la vida euskalduna,...] Sus autores se han seleccionado entre las más destacadas firmas de la intelectualidad vasca y aun extranjera [...] (Erauso 1934: 11)

Bernardo Estornes Lasa was one of the leading Basque intellectuals who was recruited by the publishing house Beñat Idaztiak to work on the Zabalkundea Collection and specifically to write the notes and prologue for their 1934 edition of the Historia de la Monja Alférez.

Estornes Lasa was clearly taken by the icon of Catalina de Erauso as is exposed in the following revelatory words:

A través de sus memorias se ve un alma y temple varonil y varias veces nos encontramos gratamente sorprendidos viendo los labios de la heroína pronunciar el verbo de la raza, el euskera. (Erauso 1934: 7)

Although the original manuscript was supposedly written in Spanish, it is important to remember that Erauso recounted that the Basque language was a critical factor in several of her escapes. For example, when Erauso was taken prisoner in Trujillo, she was put in chains attached to her belt. She tells how her guard, who was also Basque, instructed her to escape:

Y oído que vizcaño, me dijo en vascuence que al pasar por la iglesia mayor le soltase la pretina, por do me llevaba asido y me acogiese. (Erauso 2000: 107)

Estornes Lasa viewed Erauso as a source of pride for the Basque culture and although Erauso was fighting for the Spanish military he recognized her patriotism and military fervour as virtues of a Basque character. Estornes Lasa linked these Basque virtues to other sources of Basque pride. Specifically, his prologue refers to an event in 1576 when the parliament of Navarra confronted the Spanish Viceroy who was attempting to have the image of the King of Spain impressed on the coinage. A statement from the parliament included the following declaration:

Porque en este Reino nunca en la moneda, que se ha batido por vuestra Majestad, y por el Emperador, y Rey Católico su Padre, Ábuelo y los demás Reyes, que han sido en este Reino (en el de Navarra), se ha puesto sino reyes de Navarra y no de España [...] (Erauso 1934: 122)
Estornes Lasa placed Erauso and her virtues in a line of history that upheld a pride in the Basque identity and he held those virtues in opposition to the dictates of the Spanish authority. Estornes Lasa elevated the icon of Catalina de Erauso and claimed her for the cause of the Basque.

The Basque sense of independence was problematic for the new dictator as he seized power in 1939. While Franco was ruthless in his aims for power, having taken control over the Basque Country in 1937 and suggested to Adolf Hitler that he could test his bombs on the historical Basque town of Guernica, he also understood the need to win the hearts and minds of the people, either through intimidation or assimilation. It is interesting that as Franco consolidated his control over the country, the exotic tale of Erauso, a tale that was being utilized for purposes of promoting Basque pride, was never banned as so many other Basque books would be. During Franco’s dictatorship, more than two hundred thousand books, magazines, television and radio programmes were banned. The censors may have seen value in the Erauso text because it had supposedly been written in Spanish and promoting the Spanish language in the Basque Country and Catalonia was an important aim of the Franco regime.

In 1937, the patriotic Spanish newspaper La Voz de España published an article on the dangers of Basque separatism and the importance of the Spanish language in upholding the virtues and values of Spain. The article was written by a censor working for the Spanish government and he argued for the importance of the Spanish language:

Sin embargo, se dice, y es verdad, que la lengua es el medio de realizar el Imperio. Parece esto un contrasentido. Y no lo es. Lo que con ello se quiere decir es el Imperio necesita un idioma cultural; un medio de comunicación que sea verdadero vehículo de cultura; que sea el verbo tangible del pensamiento imperial. En nuestro caso, el idioma castellano es el que tiene a su cargo esas funciones [...] (Abellán 1980: 139)

Even though the censors may have seen value in allowing a Spanish written text from the Basque Country, it is curious that the Erauso story did not run afoul of their stringent criteria, which included sexual morality, political opinion contrary to the government, use of provocative or improper language and speaking against the Catholic Church (Abellán 1980: 88–96). Rather than banning the Erauso tale, the intellectuals who gravitated towards Franco were encouraged to claim her icon for their own purposes, holding her up as the symbol of a strong Spain. Perhaps the government simply recognized the importance of the Erauso history as a tool for winning the people’s allegiance.

In 1941, Cristóbal de Castro published Mujeres del Imperio. It is a biography written about eight women who Castro puts forth as examples of service to the notion of a unified country. Una España Unida was the primary slogan of Franco’s propaganda of the time and it was used as a counter to the nationalist movements in the Basque Country and Catalonia. Castro’s book profiles both Spanish and foreign women as examples of those who upheld the virtues of their respective empires. In the prologue to the book, he re-introduces Queen Isabel the Catholic as the woman who unified Spain in the fifteenth century, invested in
Columbus to assert a Spanish empire, and expelled the Moors in order to preserve the strength of Spain. With the background of Queen Isabel as a protagonist of Spanish national history and in the context of Spanish unity and strength, the fourth woman profiled by Castro is none other than Catalina de Erauso.

Castro upholds the authorship of Erauso and the legitimacy of her story. In his profile, he refers to those who had doubted the veracity of Erauso’s autobiography:

Hay escritores que rechazan precipitadamente todas las noticias que aquellas pretendidas Memorias ofrecen sobre nuestra biografía. Pero al compulsar datos y confrontar documentos contemporáneos hemos podido confirmar muchos de los sucesos que figuran en la titulada autobiografía. Otros más ya se habían contrastado por los críticos más exigentes. (Castro 1941: 170)

Castro wished to present Erauso in the service of Isabel’s notion of a unified Castile, but he was also compelled to recognize her Basque heritage:

Aquella condición de vasca ha de valerla mucho en adelante y salvarle la vida en más de una ocasión, por esa especie de solidaridad de nuestros septentrionales, que se ayudaban — y se ayudan — entre sí, fuera de la Península, con una fe que desconocen los naturales de otras regiones. (Castro 1941: 173)

By emphasising her Basque virtues ‘outside the Peninsula’ Castro made sure that his readers viewed Erauso in the context of her duties to the Spanish army and in the service of the Spanish conquests. While Estornes Lasa claimed the icon of Erauso by linking her to key events in the development of an independent Basque identity, Castro made his own claim on her icon and kept her solidly in line with a proud Spanish history that had been inaugurated with Queen Isabel.

Into this tense debate stepped the respected Basque writer and biographer Luis de Castresana. As a young writer in his late twenties, Castresana made an awkward attempt to enter the debate regarding Catalina de Erauso by publishing an article for the Journal Pueblo in 1953. The article was entitled ‘¿Un gigantesco fraude literario? Catalina de Erauso no fue la Monja Alférez’ (‘A Gigantic Historical Fraud? Catalina de Erauso was not the Lieutenant Nun’). The first word that Castresana used in the article was España, calling attention to a view that the Lieutenant Nun belonged to a common Spanish history of legendary characters. Castresana begins his strange and sometimes erratic argument with a claim that the autobiography of the Lieutenant Nun is based on a true history. In Castresana’s words:

[…] por la multitud de hechos históricos que contiene, por la correspondencia de las épocas y personajes que cita, y, sobre todo, por el simplísimos lenguaje con que está escrito, llevaba el sello de la verdad […] (Castresana 1953: 14)

However, Castresana asserted that the Lieutenant Nun was not Catalina de Erauso, but rather a fraud who appropriated the identity of this woman of noble Basque heritage after they had met in the Indies. He rejected Erauso’s authorship (i.e. she was not the Lieutenant Nun who was the author) and concluded his
article by quoting Cicero’s admonition that ‘the first law of history is not to dare lie; the second, not to be afraid of speaking the truth.’ (Castresana 1953: 14)

Curiously, Castresana did not himself abide by Cicero’s admonition; the argument and the words claiming the Lieutenant Nun was a fraud were not Castresana’s. One hundred and twenty four years earlier, Joaquín María Ferrer, the first to publish a copy of the Erauso manuscript, had made the very same arguments with the very same words. In his prologue to the 1829 edition, Ferrer argued:

[...] por el lenguaje sencillo en que estaba escrito, por la multitud de hechos históricos que contiene, la correspondencia de las épocas y personas que cita, me convencí que llevaba en sí impreso el sello de la verdad [...]. (Erauso 1829: xxiii)

Castresana replicated each of the four phrases written by Ferrer (compare the two quotations above), simply moving the first sentence to third in order, adding ‘sobre todo’ and deleting the words ‘me convencí’ and ‘impreso’. Castresana had joined the Erauso debate without engaging in his own original research, but nevertheless the Lieutenant Nun had apparently captured his longer term interest as he would later publish a prize-winning biography about her in 1968.

However, before Castresana returned to the story of the Lieutenant Nun another prominent Basque intellectual, José Berruezo, published an edition in 1959 entitled La Monja Alférez. It was produced by the Gómez Publishing House, a Basque publisher located in Pamplona. Increased Basque interest in the story followed Berruezo’s publication. In the same year of 1959, the conservative Basque newspaper La Gaceta del Norte published a two-day comic strip of the adventures of the Lieutenant Nun with the title La Monja Alférez.² Both the edition and the comic were written in Spanish as Basque language publications were banned during the dictatorship which would endure until 1975.

In the prologue to Berruezo’s 1959 edition, he presented Erauso as an authentic autobiographer and argued against previous claims made by the prominent Spanish literary critic Menéndez Pelayo. At the turn of the century, Menéndez Pelayo had claimed that the Erauso text was a fraud and had actually been written by the playwright Cándido María Trigueros (1736–98). Menéndez Pelayo’s negative opinion about Erauso had been reinforced by Castresana’s article only four years before Berruezo chose to write on the subject, but Berruezo decided not to mention Castresana and focused on the literary giant Menéndez Pelayo. Berruezo was a frequent visitor to the United States and he relied on American references in order to give weight to his opinions. In particular, he cited the research of an American professor, Malcolm K. Burke, in order to take on the arguments of the respected Menéndez Pelayo. In his prologue, Berruezo introduces the research that had been conducted by Burke and announces a forthcoming critical edition that the two were going to publish.

Pero la ‘vehementísima sospecha’ de don Marcelino [Pelayo] ha sido recientemente desvanecida por el trabajo de Malcolm K. Burke, tenaz investigador estadounidense

— con quien preparé una edición crítica de aquella obra —, el cual recorriendo el itinerario americano y europeo de la Monja Alférez ha encontrado constancia documental de la existencia de gran parte de las ciento y pico personas que aparecen en la Historia. (Berruezo 1959: 13–14)

Berruezo wrote about how Burke had recreated the journeys taken by Erauso and that he had verified most of the characters that had appeared in Erauso’s text. He combined Burke’s on-the-ground research along with the historical documents that support Erauso’s story in order to give the reader confidence in her authorship.

In 1964, Berruezo continued his argument in support of Erauso’s authorship with an article he wrote for Los Vascos en la Hispanidad, a publication prepared for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Basque Institute of Hispanic Culture. In his article, Berruezo gave an account of Erauso’s life and reminded the reader of Erauso’s autobiography and Pelayo’s opinion of the text. Again, Berruezo relies upon an American reference, Burke, in order to give weight to his opinions. Burke claimed to have discovered in the New York Public Library a previously unknown relación from the period of Erauso’s life. He claimed that the relación predated what was previously thought to be the first relación on the Erauso subject and that he had found a copy of the document. According to Berruezo, it was entitled Capítulo de una de las cartas que diversas personas enviaron desde Cartagena de las Indias a algunos amigos suyos a las ciudades de Sevilla y Cádiz. Berruezo claimed that the document belonged to a collection of papers owned by Gallardo (1776-1852), but while this collection was housed in the Spanish National Library in Madrid, this particular relación could no longer be found there. As a service to his readers, he reproduced the words of the relación in his article, presenting the story of Erauso’s meeting with the Bishop of Guamanga where she recounted the story of her life.

Berruezo’s efforts to promote Erauso set the stage for Castresana to return to the scene and publish a biography of the Lieutenant Nun in 1968. The book was entitled Catalina de Erauso, la Monja Alférez. In the prologue, Castresana apologized for previously doubting the veracity of Erauso as the Lieutenant Nun. He went further to say that Erauso was in fact the author of her memoirs, either directly writing her own words or dictating them to a scribe. He blamed Pelayo for suggesting that the Historia de la Monja Alférez was a pastiche created by Trigueros and he blamed Ferrer for creating the hypothesis that the Lieutenant Nun had stolen the identity of Catalina de Erauso (Castresana 1968: 10). Castresana did not take any responsibility for re-presenting Ferrer’s arguments without citation in 1953. What is more, Castresana excused his mistake by admitting that he did not know of the documents housed in the Archivo de Indias when he wrote the article. Fourteen years later, following Berruezo’s efforts, with the historical documents in hand, and still in the middle of a brutal dictatorship, Castresana’s biography recovered the historical character of Catalina de Erauso and carefully presented her as a Spanish woman with a Basque heritage. In Castresana’s words:
Como ex incrédulo escritor vizcaín en deuda con mi paisana (al fin y al cabo, ‘vizcaínos’ llamaban en tiempos de Catalina a todos los vascos), me ha parecido un deber corregir esa omisión, llenar ese hueco. (Castresana 1968: 11)

Castresana was presenting his own Basque pride and vindicating his culture and identity. It was a brave statement in the context of dictatorship and one that could only be made by an author such as Castresana who had already established his Spanish credentials.

Castresana’s biography won the Fastenrath Spanish literary prize as the best Spanish written biographical or historical published work. The critical reviews of the biography were likewise positive. The conservative Spanish newspaper ABC was perfectly admiring in its review:

Una auténtica biografía, en la que la desconcertante y cautivadora personalidad de la monja alférez surge plena de vida, agitándose en su época y entre los personajes de su entorno. 3

One of the central reasons for Castresana’s success and popularity with the critics may have been his careful presentation of historical support for Erauso’s historicity. Like others before him, Castresana presented the historical documents that gave evidence to Erauso’s story, but he also supported his biography with the latest discoveries of American scholar Malcolm K. Burke — the same supposed friend of Berruezo — the one who had travelled around the Americas and Europe, following Erauso’s itinerary and checking successfully most of the names that appeared in her autobiography. According to Castresana:

No hay duda de que esta ‘Historia’ fue, en efecto, escrita o dictada por ella. Lo acaban de demostrar una vez más (si no bastaran ya los numerosos, unánimes testimonios de su tiempo) las recientes investigaciones del profesor estadounidense Malcolm K. Burke, quien ha recorrido el itinerario americano y europeo de Catalina y ha encontrado constancia documental de casi todos los personajes y sucesos citados por nuestra protagonista en sus memorias y que sólo ella, que trató a esos oscuros personajes y vivió esos sucesos, podía conocer. (Castresana 1968: 12)

Castresana’s reference to Professor Malcolm K. Burke reinforced the veracity of the Erauso story. It seems that both Berruezo and Castresana saw the need to enhance their publications with foreign research that could give some weight to the historicity of the story and put into question Menéndez Pelayo’s previous negative opinion on the text.

Castresana and Berruezo were writing during a particularly confusing time in Spanish history and their solicitation of US support for their literary positions mirrored sentiments that were forming in the political sphere. Both writers began their explorations of Erauso during the later years of what is known as the autarchical period of the Franco dictatorship (1939-59). It was during these years that government power was concentrated in the hands of General Franco and the culture, personality and heritage of the Spanish people were heavily influ-

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3 The author of this article is indebted to Dr. John O’Neill of the Hispanic Society of America in New York for the information provided to obtain this quote.
enced by the dictator’s whims. During these years, the country was isolated from the surrounding European countries and the resulting economic disaster made a poor country even poorer. Franco’s Spain was not invited to join the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), better known as the Marshall plan, designed for the rebuilding of Europe after the Second World War. In the context of Spain’s isolation from Europe, Franco recognized the need to build relations with the ever more powerful United States. From the end of World War II in 1945, Franco strengthened his anti-communist stance and became even more solicitous of US support upon the election of a fellow military general, Dwight D. Eisenhower, to the US presidency in 1952. In 1953, Franco was rewarded with a package of US assistance totalling $243 million and the establishment of US military bases in Spain.

Franco’s solicitation of US support even formed the basis for a satirical film entitled Bienvenido Mr. Marshall. The film was created by Luis García Berlanga and presented at the Cannes Festival in 1953. The film is set in the Spanish town Villar del Río, where the people are waiting for the arrival of American officials, including the famous George Marshall, the author of the Marshall Plan for Europe. In the hopes of securing money from the United States, the villagers present their Castilian town in the exaggerated characteristics of Andalusia, playing to the American stereotypes of Spanish people. Their efforts go to waste as the American troops pass by without stopping and needless to say Mr Marshall never arrives. Surprisingly, Franco’s censors did not fully register in their minds the pointed sarcasm directed at the dictator’s efforts to curry favour with the Americans. The Spanish people in the film never received the American largesse and while the money flowed to Franco’s regime, the American populist dream was kept away from the Spanish shores.4

By the time Berruezo and Castresana were fully ensconced in the Erauso debate, Franco had created the idea in Spain that American resources and opinion were critical to the success of his Spanish project. It is no wonder that the two writers turned their attention westward and found the popular Professor Burke. However, according to my own exploration of archives in the United States, United Kingdom and Spain, there are no publications on the subject of Erauso by a Professor Malcolm K. Burke. Furthermore, the critical edition promised by Berruezo and to be published in collaboration with Professor Burke, never appeared. Like Berlanga’s portrayal of a Mr. Marshall who never arrived in Villar del Río, the promise of Professor Malcolm K. Burke would also never be realized.

During Franco’s dictatorship, the character of Catalina de Erauso was a prominent part of the social, cultural and political debate, but the dialogue about

4 Spain and United States commenced diplomatic relations in 1950, and the American Congress approved to aid Spain with 125 million dollars. However, they were never transferred because of the recommendations of the UN. Later, and following a secret plan of acceptance of North American military bases in Spain, the United States gave a total of 500 million dollars to Spain between 1954 and 1957. See Biescas and Tuñón de Lara (1981, 43–46).
her was shrouded and contained within the parameters of the dictatorship. The debate occurred during a difficult, repressed, chaotic and confusing time in Spanish history. In 1970, the official chronicler of San Sebastián, José María Donosty, wrote an article on the Pacheco portrait of Eras. He noted how the authorship of the controversial Basque character had been accepted even during dictatorship and he recognized the importance of Berruezo and Castresana for keeping her story in the public consciousness. According to Donosty:

El hecho de haberse publicado más o menos recientemente, por escritores tan conocidos en nuestra tierra como don José Berruezo y don Luis de Castresana, sendas reediciones y glosas de la vida, hazañas y aventuras de la donostiarra más famosa de todos los tiempos, me exime de hablar de la Eras en cuanto a su vida se refiere, así como del famoso libro en el que nos la cuenta, libro, al parecer, escrito por ella misma, y cuya periepica editorial constituye una efemérides un tanto confusa de nuestra historia literaria. (Donosty 1970: 63)

But the debate about Eras had taken some dubious turns and had relied upon some questionable sources. Spain had been isolated politically and while Eras maintained a presence in Spain, she would be lost to the outside literary world — a world confused by the complexities and oddities of Spanish dictatorship and the twists and turns that Spanish writers had to take in order to publish. Nevertheless, the Golden Age is forever shaping the literary, social and political parameters of Spanish society. Franco himself recognized this and in his 1950 New Year's address he stated:

Sé que la España auténtica, la eterna, la que triunfó en el Siglo de Oro de nuestra historia y la que triunfará de nuevo, si la hora difícil de la etapa futura nos la demandase, está ahí, en estos hogares españoles a los que quiero hacer llegar mi voz [...] (La Vanguardia 1950: 7)

Perhaps it is in this continuous return to the Golden Age, for some to the glory of expansionary power for others to the wisdom of words and characters, that the magnetic story of Catalina de Eras finds its strength and continues to exist through the ages.

Franco died in 1975 and dictatorship in Spain ended. In that same year, José Berruezo published another edition entitled Catalina de Eras La Monja Alférrez. Professor Burke was not mentioned. One year later, in 1976, the publishing house of Gero, Euskal Liburuak presented an edition entitled Katalin Eras. It was the first Basque language edition in the history of the Vida text. In 1996, American authors Stepto and Stepto published a version of the Eras story emphasizing her possible lesbianism. Numerous authors in the 80s and 90s took up the emphasis on her possible sexual preferences as an important factor in her place in history. Indeed, in the post Franco era, the character of Catalina de Eras continues to fascinate and captivate many audiences and serves as an emblem of many causes and interests, often varied, often conflicting, often far removed from the core contributions of her writing in the Golden Age.
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