Fray Inigo de Mendoza, fra Jacobo Maza, and the affiliation of some early Mss of the «Vita Christi»

It was Mr F.J. Norton who drew my attention to a forgotten little quarto volume of which the title-page runs as follows:

Tractato pervitile & deletabile no-minato amatorii acto ad ordinare lo amore humano alli dei biti virtu & deuiario (sic) de omne illicito amore in che soli costante virtu nonamete composte da fratre Jacobo mala de rhego ad instantia de Dom ramuldo de Cardona: Uice re del regno Neapolitano.

The colophon indicates that it was «Impresso in Napoli per Madona Caterina qual fo mogliere de magistro Sigismondo Mayr. Nel anno del Signor M.D.XVII. a di xxx. de Decembre». I have been unable to discover anything about the author beyond the information which he himself supplies at the end of his so-called «Prologus» (which comes, in fact, at the end of the book). There he writes: fratre Iacobe Maza de la cita de Regio & prouincia de Calabria & ordine minore de la obseruaria: lo quale molti fatighi pigliai I coponer la dicta opera. ad utilita de li degenti & ad honor de Dio lo quale in secula seculorum sia laudato».

This curious moralizing work, in which Fra Jacobo supports his points with quotations from a wide variety of sources, may well merit further study; but for the present I confine my attention to a passage which occurs at the conclusion of a chapter entitled «Como la bona còuersatione preservua lìoho del las. amore» (Part II, Book V, Chapter 5). Here Fra Jacobo thought it apposite to quote from the work of his fellow Franciscan of the Observance, Fray Inigo de Mendoza: «Certi uersi che un fratre spirituale nominato fratre Ynigo de Mendoza Castigliano me li parse qua ponere: & adteso omne lingua ha alchuna cosa propria che non ha unaltra: & pero ab-

1. I am indebted to Mr Norton not only for informing me of his find but for xeroxes of his own copy of it. There is a specimen in the British Library, 232.g.13, and there are doubtless others in Italian libraries, but it is not to be found either in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, or in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid. Neither is it noticed by Benedetto Croce: La Spagna nella vita italiana durante la Rinascenza, Bari, Laterza 1915 (4th revised ed. 1949), by Arturo Farinelli: Italia e Spagna, 2 vols, Turin, Bocca 1929, by J.L. Laurenti: Relaciones literarias entre España e Italia: Ensayo de bibliografía de literatura comparada, Bostou, G.K. Hall 1972, nor Franco Meregalli: Presenza della letteratura spagnola in Italia, Florence, Sansoni 1974; I have not attempted to search further.
surda pare omne cosa per bona che sia facta in la sua lingua trasposta in altra lingua» (f. Qlr)².

Fra Jacobo then proceeds (folios Qlr and v) to quote eight stanzas from the *Vita Christi*. The mangled form in which they appear can no doubt be attributed to Fra Jacobo’s handwriting, a compositor who knew little or no Spanish, and the failure of the author, usual in this period, to proof-read his work. I transcribe them as they are printed (resolving the abbreviations of *que*, *qui*, and the nasal, and changing only the long *s*) and print alongside them the reconstructed Spanish from which I assume them to derive³. I give these stanzas the numbers which they have in the critical edition of Rodríguez-Puértolas⁴.

16. Col tenor dela maldat  Con temor dela maldad
  del uicio que aqui non nombro  del uicio que aqui non nombro
  en tan flacca humanidad  siempre la uerginidad
  sempre la uergindad  este la barua en ell ombro
  este la barua e nellombro  que las que quieren guardarse
  que las que quieren guardarse  de enturuyar tan claro nombre
  de enturuyar tan claro nombre  asi deuen encerrarse
  asi deuen enterrarse  que puedan marauellarse
  que puedan marauellarse  qn (*sic*) uieren algun ombre
  qn (*sic*) uieren algun ombre.

18. La estoppa non esta segura  La estopa no esta segura
  en ablas con los tizones  en ablas con los tizones
  ni la uirginidad tura  ni la uirginidad tura
  in la muger que procura  en la muger que procura
  la abla con los uarones  la habla con los uarones
  ghaylla *que* non esperalla  huylia que no esperalla
  tal guerra de mi conseyo  tal guerra de mi conseyo
  do ualen menos sin falla  do ualen menos sin falla
  los arneses de mi salla  los arneses de Misalla
  que las armas del conejo.

17. La liebre per non encourarse  La liebre per no encourarse

2. Fra Jacobo acknowledges his source as «sancto Thomasi: xxxviii. distintione capitulio. Loquitio», but I have been unable to locate this. St Thomas Aquinas expresses similar ideas (deriving from 1 Cor. 14) in his *Summa theologica*, 1. q. 39, 3 and 2, and II-2, q. 176, i.

3. Note that I have made no emendation in the Spanish which is not absolutely necessary, leaving orthographical inconsistencies, the imperfect rhymes -at/-ad, and some possibly surprising forms such as *per*, *vergen*, *forcada*, etc., about which I have more to say below. I have changed *non* to *no* where the syllable-count demands it, but only because this particular error yields no useful information about the origin or affiliation of our fragment. No doubt some minor points of my reconstruction may be arguable, but I base no arguments on such points.

4. Julio Rodríguez-Puértolas: *Fray Íñigo de Mendoza y sus «Coplas de Vita Christi»*, Madrid, Gredos 1968. The numbering here corresponds with the order of the stanzas in the early printed editions.
alaueyes perden la uida
la uergen por demostrarse
hauemos uisto tornarse
de uergen encorumpida
por salgar de la errerra
muchos muren tristamente
la uergen mucho placyera
es impossible que fuera
non quiebre elasa e la frente.

Prosegua poniendo exemplo de Dina
fiya de Iacob: & de Bersabe i mu-
yer de Vrias.

Exemplo.
19. Ca / Dina sy non saltara
asr de gentes mirada
ny deser uergen perdiera
ny menos per ella fuera
tanta sangre derramada
Bersabe syse lleuara
de no la uiera David
ny el con ella peccara
ny ad su marido mactara
con mano agena en la lid

Otro Exemplo.

20. Sela formosa Thancar
su hermana de Absalon
leemos perse apatar
a solo dan de yantar
aotro su herman Amon
ser del dicho fortada
y con grand auyltanyento
luego presto desechada
cia dela qual errada
fue su myo appartamyento

Es en gratioso partido
el que traiben todas ya
de traher por appellido
y las mas dellas fingido
primo aca: primo aculla
pues sy deudo tam certano
a Thamar fiyo burlarse
es un conseyo muy sano
con el mas lexos que hermano
ni con el nunca appartarse

22. Por que parentera damas
guandes nuestra castilla
en acha que de nuestra

auezes pierde la uida
la uergen por demostrarse
hauemos uisto tornarse
de uergen en corumpida
por salgar de la errerra
muchos muren tristamente
la uergen mucho placyera
es impossible que fuera
non quiebre elasa e la frente.

Prosigue poniendo exemplo de Dina
fiya de Iacob: & de Bersabe muger
de Vrias.

Exemplo.
Ca Dina sy non saltara
a ser de gentes mirada
ny de ser uergen perdiera
ny menos per ella fuera
tanta sangre derramada
Bersabe sy se lleuara
do no la uiera David
ny el con ella peccara
ny a su marido matara
con mano agena en la lid.

Otro Exemplo.
Dela fermosa Thamar
su hermana de Absalon
leemos per se apatar
a solo dar de yantar
a otro su herman Amon
ser del dicho [Amon] forcada
y con grand auyltamyento
luego presto desechada
causa dela qual errada
fue su nezio appartamyento.

Es un graciosasso partido
el que traiben todas ya
de traher por appellido
y las mas dellas fingido
primo aca: primo aculla
pues sy deudo tan cercano
a Thamar fizo burlarse
es un conseyo muy sano
con el mas lexos que hermano
ni con el nunca appartarse.

Porque parentera dama
sewnd es nuestra Castilla
en achaque de nuestra
que en la fama
siempre regocije manzella
cha o tiega o pierde el tiento
fasta dar consigo en menganas
orrestiuie detrumento
en su fama y casamiento
con lo que diyen las lenguas

24. Assi que dieue euitar
con esquido continent
la doncella por carar
el parlar y el cartear
del pariente y no pariente
pero la uergen doncella
en que uien tales ademanes
fallan buena cara en ella
desde entonces fiar della
un bon bacho de alacranes

que en la cama que en la fama
siempre rescue manzella
cia o ciega o pierde el tiento
fasta dar consigo en menganas
o rescuye detrumento
en su fama y casamiento
con lo que dizen las lenguas.

Apart from the fact that Fray Inigo de Mendoza is now another name to be added to the list of Spanish writers known and quoted, copied or imitated in sixteenth-century Italy, the discovery of this fragment assumes an unexpected importance when it is set in the context of the several known versions of the *Vita Christi*. It clearly does not derive from any of the printed editions, and, as I shall show, an inspection of the variant readings appears to oblige us alternatively to posit yet another redaction of that seemingly much reworked poem, or, still more surprisingly, to isolate three of the earliest MSS in a stemma which would have to be regarded as aberrant and unreliable.

It is well known that, even though the work was never completed, there are four distinct versions of the *Vita Christi*, which of the moment I identify as *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, to avoid confusion with my subsequent hypothetical renumbering.

*a*) In the primitive version, which is most nearly represented by the text in the *Cancionero de Oñate-Castañeda*, Fray Inigo confused and made one episode of the Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2.22-39, in which the priest

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5. For a very much fuller account see Rodríguez-Puértolas, pp. 84-117, and his most useful table of concordances, pp. 285-286. I have not followed Rodríguez-Puértolas's system of *siglas* for reasons which will soon become apparent.

6. It should be noted that Rodríguez-Puértolas was most unfortunately denied access to the *Cancionero de Oñate-Castañeda*, which was in private hands when his book was printed, and indeed came to light in a Sotheby's sale after his manuscript was handed to the printer. Oñate-Castañeda is now in the Houghton Library of the University of Harvard, but since the microfilm to which I had access lacked folios 315v and 316r because of a photographing error, I am indebted to the kindness of Michel García of the Casa de Velázquez for a transcription of the relevant stanzas in that codex.
is named as Simeon) and the Circumcision, even identifying the circumcising priest as Simeon: «Esse cultre, Simeon, / un poco solo deten».

In addition he included two violent and remarkably explicit diatribes, one attacking by name Enrique IV, the Archbishop of Toledo, and many of the grandees, and the other assailing the Dominicans for their refusal to accept Franciscan views on the Immaculate Conception.

b) In the second stage of the text’s history, the offensive stanzas about the grandees were excised. This version is represented by two MSS, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. Esp. 395, and British Library, MS. Egerton 939, although the scribe of the Paris text, presumably later, also had access to a manuscript of the primitive version, since he was able to copy the deleted stanzas at the end of the poem, with a note to indicate where they were to be inserted.

c) A third and more thorough-going revision is represented by MS. Escorialense K-III-7. The Presentation and the Circumcision are now clearly distinguished, there is an apology to the Dominicans instead of an attack on them, and there are many additional stanzas, changes in the order of the stanzas, and evidence of extensive rewriting.

d) A final version, with further sundry changes, was given to the press of Centenera in Zamora in 1482 (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Incunable 1290). All later editions are simply copies of this.

There are, of course, other MSS of the Vita Christi: in the Cancionero de Vindel in the Library of the Hispanic Society, New York (an extract of seventy-one stanzas), another in the Library of the University of Salamanca, one in the Biblioteca Nacional (MS. 4114, a fragment), and one in private hands; but no one has as yet attempted to ascertain to which of the redactions a, b, c or even d, they should be assigned.

In his critical edition of the Vita Christi, Rodríguez-Puértolas distinguished clearly the three major stages, grouping as a (a, a1, and a2) my a and b. Being denied access to Oñate-Castañeda, he used the earliest printed edition as his base text and noted variant reading in Paris, Egerton, and Esc. K-III-7. However, while he established beyond doubt the relationship of the Paris and Egerton manuscripts and clearly refined the stages through which the Vita Christi passed, he did not attempt to work out a detailed scheme of affiliation. In order to determine, however, whether the Fra Jacobo fragment derives from the a, b, c or d redaction of the work, we are obliged to examine closely the variant readings; and the most cursory inspection shows that are faced with some surprising difficulties.

8. As I have shown elsewhere (see note 7), the other works of Mendoza copied in Esc. K-III-7 derive from printed sources. The proof lies not merely in the coincidence of the readings but, more unusually, in the scribe’s scrupulous following of the compositors’ orthographic preferences.
In the first place, there can be no question but that the fragment quoted in the Italian Tractato belongs in one respect to stage a or b. The sequence of stanzas, 16, 18, 17, 19-22, 24, with the inversion of 17 and 18 and the omission of 23, is precisely what we find in Oñate-Castañeda a), Paris, and Egerton b). It is in redaction c), represented by the Escorial manuscript, that we first find them as the 16-24 of the later printed version. But in a series of very distinctively different readings Fra Jacobo’s fragment agrees with Escorial and Zamora (the first printed edition) against Oñate-Castañeda, Pris, and Egerton ⁹. For example, in 16-7, "de enturbiar tan claro nombre" is what we find in Esc. and Za, whereas OC, P, and Eg. have "densuziar (OC) / de suizar (P) / de ensuziar (Eg.) tan limpio nombre (all)". We might, therefore, propose a scheme of affiliation and series of redactions like this:

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\[\text{Redaction } 1 = a \longrightarrow 2 = b \longrightarrow 3 \longrightarrow 4 = c \longrightarrow 5 = d\]
\[\text{OC} \quad \text{P} \quad \text{Eg.} \quad \text{FJ} \quad \text{Esc.} \quad \text{Za.}\]
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The variant readings will support this hypothesis, provided we introduce into the schema a MS. (which I have labelled 2a) between the second redaction and the MSS P and Eg., which share several readings which conflict with the readings of OC and FJ. But this superficially simple solution has two very unsatisfactory features. One is the number of separate redactions of the work which we must posit. Fray Inigo was a busy preacher, and later courtier, who found time to compose a number of other quite substantial work ¹⁰, and it is difficult to believe that he would have spared time to rewrite his original no fewer than four times, while not extending his life of Christ beyond the Massacre of the Innocents. It is equally difficult to suppose that when, for instance, he drafted redaction 4, he would have adopted certain readings from redaction 3 if redaction 3 had been the work of someone else, an inaccurate copyist, or even a presumptuous friend who thought he could improve on his original. And the second difficulty is that, although some of the variants are substantial enough to rank as significant (e.g. "de ensuziar tan limpio nombre" / "de enturbiar tan claro nombre"), the retouching viewed as a whole does not, in FJ, constitute a substantial revision of the text of redactions 1 and 2, the changes are not obviously improvements, and it is again hard to understand why Fray Inigo

⁹. From this point on I refer to the various texts by the following abbreviations: OC, Oñate-Castañeda; P, the MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Eg., the British Library MS. in the Egerton collection; Esc., MS. Esc. K-111-7; FJ, Fra Jacobo’s fragment; Za, the first printed edition by Centenera of Zamora.

¹⁰. For Fray Inigo’s life and other works see Rodríguez-Puértolas, Cap. 1, "Biografía", pp. 13-65, and II, "Obras", pp. 66-83.
should have rewritten a very long poem of almost 4,000 lines in order to make such very minor changes.

It is, of course, not impossible that if someone had requested a copy of the work, Fray Íñigo might have written in some minor emendations in his own copy of the poem before lending it for copying, and used it when it was returned as the basis for redaction 4. The hypothetical affiliation I have set out above cannot be definitively discarded. But there is another possible scheme which will solve our immediate problem of the variant readings, as well as some others, even though its consequences are somewhat disconcerting.

The scheme I shall propose (to which the reader will at once perceive one major objection) is as follows:

I shall return to the variants in a moment. While this scheme will account for the data provided by stanzas 16 to 24, the one major discrepancy which requires explanation is the deletion from P, Eg., and Esc., but not from oc, of the stanzas attacking the grandees. The only way of accommodating this anomaly is to suppose that the offending stanzas directed against the grandees were twice excised independently, by the copyist of the hypothetical z, and by Fray Íñigo himself when he drafted redaction 2. A closer inspection of the facts suggests that there are sundry points which favour this hypothesis.

The hypothetical z, represented by Eg. and by P (minus the appendix of excised stanzas which must derive from a different source), gives us the simple deletion of some alarming stanzas which name, amongst others, Enrique IV («¡guay de vos, Enrique el Quarto!» 107), the Archbishop of Toledo, Don Alonso Carrillo (108), Pedro Girón and Juan Pacheco (115B), the Duke of Albuquerque (115C), the Count of Plasencia (115D), and the Marquis of Santillana (115F)11. But the deletions are effected as follows: the three stanzas 107 to 109, naming Enrique IV, the Archbishop, and an unidentified «Duque» are deleted, but then the copyist goes back to his text, conserving the more generally worded «reprehensiones» (from 110 on) until

11. I follow Rodríguez-Puértolas's system of identification: he employs letters for the stanzas in P and/or Eg. which cannot be matched in the printed editions.
Fray Íñigo again begins to cite individual grandees by name. At this point the copyist does not merely excise the libellous stanzas, but gives up entirely and moves on to next section, cutting out 115a to 115v, i.e. twenty-two stanzas, even though a majority of these stanzas are relatively innocuous, naming no specific persons. Whoever our censor was, it would seem that he began tentatively, intending to preserve the stanzas critical of the aristocracy in general, but then, either afraid of some disjointedness (though it would not have been especially evident) or simply losing patience, decided to make his task easier by removing all the remainder of the passage.

Fray Íñigo also, of course, deleted the offending stanzas, but, in the text with which we know he was certainly involved, namely redaction 2, represented by Esc., his procedure contrasts in every particular with the pruning methods of the copyist of our hypothetical z. In the first place, he refers to the offending stanzas and offers his excuses for composing them in the first instance: «Desculpase del aver nombrado en el primero trasunto...» (rubric to stanza 109; and note that he mentions only one earlier redaction, «el primero»), and goes on to substitute newly composed stanzas attacking the rapaciousness, irresponsibility, and impiety of the great nobility. He has repented only of singling out certain individuals by name. Secondly, and in a similar spirit, he apologizes for his unchristian attack on the Dominicans and removes those stanzas also.

The stanzas about the grandees which Fray Íñigo was persuaded to delete are alarming. Even a modern reader must sense the temerity of his uninhibited condemnation of some of the most powerful figures in the land, and it is not hard to imagine that the copyist of z, possibly transcribing the Vita Christi for an aristocratic patron, was sensitive enough to exercise his own censorship—which in the event did not coincide with Fray Íñigo’s own. If he knew that the Dominicans were also grievously offended (162 to 162e: «¡O frayle preycedor / daqui comença a temblar!» etc.), he clearly did not care. One may fairly conclude, I believe, that the independent, and not entire identical, removal of some of the stanzas attacking the grandees does not lead us to a scheme of affiliation involving an intimate relationship of P, Eg., and Esc. We have, of course, no means of knowing whether Fray Jacobo read these stanzas in the ms. to which he had access, but on the scheme of affiliation proposed above it must be supposed that he did.

Before examining the variants proper, we need to consider which it is legitimate to take into account. As is well known, copyists’ practices vary widely. Some will quite uniformly impose their own spelling-preferences; others will slavishly follow their text; while a majority fall somewhere between these extremes. The number of alternative spellings available in the fifteenth-century—and even in the seventeenth—are such that total

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12. The best illustration of the use to which a study of compositors’ spelling-preferences can be put is undoubtedly Robert M. Flores: The Compositors of the First and Second
coincidence of the orthography of two texts is conclusive evidence of the dependence of one upon the other. On the other hand, enormous orthographic discrepancies will not serve to demonstrate that two texts are unrelated. If, therefore, FJ is a crucial document for reconstructing even a fragment of the original redaction of the *Vita Christi*, we must distinguish the layers of interference. First, although the compositor employed by Madona Caterina Mayr is almost certainly guilt of some typographical errors, it would be fair to assume that, since his copy was in a foreign language, he would have followed it more closely than a Spanish compositor; but how far we can distinguish his errors from Fra Jacobo's is not easy to determine, even though Fra Jacobo allows it to be inferred that he was familiar with Castilian. To one or other of these Italians we must attribute such Italianisms as *che, sagli*, *nuestra*, *ad, in, tristemente*, etc., the rendering of intervocalic *i/j* as *y* (*conseyo, fya, contyo*) and the misreadings of long *z* as *y* (*fyo, veyes, manyilla*) and of *c* as *t* (*tiega, rrestiue, tama, fortada*). But it might be unwise to attribute to Fra Jacobo or the Italian compositor other inconsistencies or departures from «normal» Castilian orthography, word-division, and phonology. Even the ultracorrections like *dieue* and *pierdiera* could be attributed to an earlier Catalan scribe, and there are other features which seem to point to the hypothetical ms. x’s being of eastern provenance. The vowels of *vergen, maravella*, etc. could be ascribed to Catalan influence, and *per* certainly occurs with some frequency in Castilian tests copied in Aragon in the fifteenth century. Is is also suggestive that in one style of Aragonese hand current around 1500 it is difficult and sometimes impossible to see any difference between *t* and *c*, and that some Aragonese copyists will as frequently write *alcanca, lanca, pieca, etc. as alcança, lança, peça, etc.*. Since Fray Íñigo himself was unequivocally Castilian, almost certainly born and brought up in Burgos, we shall be justified in ignoring all variants which can be attributed to interference by Aragonese or Italian copyists or composers. I therefore reconvert the Spanish which can be reconstructed from the FJ fragment to a neutral Castilian in what follows.

The scheme of affiliation I have proposed leads us to assume that in his original redaction of the *Vita Christi*, Fray Íñigo wrote: stanza 16, *Con temor de (line 1), que las que quieren guardarse (6), de enturbiar tan claro (7), asi devar encerrase (8), quando vieren algun ombre (10); stanza 18, en fablas (2), la virginidad no tur (3); stanza 17, muchos mueren triste-


13. See note 8.

14. An unpublished piece of fifteenth-century fiction, *La coronación de la señora Graciela*, the recently acquired Biblioteca Nacional ms. 20020, provides abundant evidence to support these assertions (*per, forcada*, etc.).

15. See Rodríguez-Puértolas, especially pp. 37-38.
mente (7); stanza 19, a ser de gentes mirada (2), levara (in error for lavara, 5), ni su marido (9), con man agena (10); stanza 20, a otro su hermano Amon (5), luego presto desechada (8); stanza 21, es un gracioso partido (1), de traer por apellido (3), ni con el nunca apartarse (10); stanza 22, la muy parentera dama (3), que en la cama que en la fama (4), ca (6); stanza 24. Así que deve esquivar (in error, by anticipation of esquivo, for evitar, 1), con esquivo continente (2), en quien tales ademanes (7), desde entonces fiad della (9), un buen saco (10).

The copyist of X, from which the FJ fragment derives, altered 18-3 from «la virginidad no tura» to «ni la virginidad tura», in 19-5 emended «levara» incorrectly to «llevara», inverted lines 1 and 3 of stanza 22, in 24-1 made the intelligent change from «esquivar» to «evitar», and in 24-9 altered «fiad» (or possibly «fiat») to «fiar». The copyist of X was, in short, remarkably faithful.

It would take too much space to list all the variants of oc, p, and eg, but the relationship of these three extant Mss and the hypothetical y and z can be adequately illustrated from the first stanza of our fragment. In 16-1, y, oc, z, and p correctly copied «Con temor», while eg. miscopied it as «Por temor». P, on the other hand, made nonsense of 16-2 as «del vicio que qua qua no nombre». 16-6 was correctly copied by y and oc, but miscopied in z, and consequently in p and eg. as «ca las que...». y, and consequently all the texts dependent on it, changed the original reading of 16-7 to «de enturbiar tan limpio nombre». And so one might continue stanza by stanza.

In the whole of the passage we have been examining there are only two details in the whole list of variants which do not fall automatically into place. Instead of the logical «lavara» for David and Bathsheba in 19-6, p has «levara», uncomfortably close to FJ's «llevara»; and in 24-7, eg. has «quando», as in esc. and all the printed editions, in place of the «en quien» of FJ, oc, P, and so also the hypothetical X, Y, and Z. But if these readings are not regarded as purely coincidental, no scheme of affiliation will accommodate them. Certainly the hypothesis of five redactions helps us here no more than the scheme I have argued for.

The consequence of all this is that the primitive version of the Vita Christi which Rodriguez-Puértolas reconstructed from P and eg. and printed alongside the final revised version in his critical edition does not appear to be valid, or, to rephrase that conclusion in a way which does more justice to Rodriguez-Puértolas's invaluable labours, his otherwise legitimate reconstruction appears to be invalidated by the fresh evidence afforded by oc and FJ. There are still four Mss to take into consideration which so far no Mendocian scholar has even looked at, and it may well be that some yet more complex system of relationships will have to be worked out. Meanwhile, since no one has even suggested a scheme of affiliation, I offer this tentative solution to the problem.
Criado de Val has argued that in editing medieval works which went through successive stages of elaboration (he refers specifically to the Poema del Cid, the Libro de buen amor, and Celestina), we should devote our attention to the final definitive version. But there are also cogent reasons for paying some attention to a writer’s first redaction, and in the case of the Vita Christi the problems presented by a series of revisions can be drastically reduced if we are able to discard the interventions and errors of a series of copyists. The whole problem is less daunting if we can suppose that there was one primitive redaction of the Vita Christi, one second and thorough-going revision, and what amounts to only some rather minor tinkering (2a) with the text which was given to the press. In the elucidation of these problems, it may well prove that an obscure Italian Franciscan had a not insignificant rôle to play.