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"Mirando estoy un espejo / de mi trágico placer": Reflections on Mira's *Los carboneros de Francia y la Reina Sevilla*

Mira de Amescua's *Los carboneros de Francia y la Reina Sevilla* treats a very old Charlemagne and his marriage to the young and beautiful Sevilla, daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople; the Count of Maganza's attempt to seduce Sevilla—which she powerfully rebuffs—and his consequent treachery as he accuses her of cuckolding the king with one of her own servants. From that dramatically promising opening, Mira offers a curious story filled with loss and recovery, death and rebirth, disguise and revelation leading to reunion and reconciliation, to an ending tinged with recognizable, though fleeting, wistfulness through the acknowledgement of losses that can never be recovered. The plot line moves the characters and the audience through brushes with tragedy—seen in serious speeches, high-born characters, and desperate events—, and comedy—seen in rustic characters and language, bawdy jokes, and disguise—, from "gran melancolía" to "las altas maravilla", that is to say, it follows the design of a romance. My paper will explore the romance form through the example of Mira's play and how notions of honor, authority, trust, and fidelity play out in the characters..