

Libro de buen amor

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Libro de buen amor

JUAN RUIZ

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Acknowledgments

ANYONE WHO PRODUCES AN edition of the *Libro de buen amor* is unavoidably indebted to a legion of predecessors, as am I. It would be very nearly impossible to say anything of value about the *LBA* without the important contributions of previous editors, critics, lexicographers, historians of literature, and classroom teachers who have enabled today's generation of readers to come closer to comprehending the skill, artistry, genius, and humor of Juan Ruiz.

My special thanks go out to Tom Lathrop who invited me to prepare this edition for his impressive series. He has shown admirable patience and forbearance with my unreasonable delays and he has favored me with many constructive suggestions for improvement of my original version.

To my wife and colleague Carol Bingham Kirby I owe deep gratitude for her constant encouragement, assistance with many stages of the project, and constructive comments on preliminary drafts. My dedication of the book to her is an attempt to repay her personal devotion which now approaches four decades in duration.

Despite all the kind and generous assistance received, any remaining shortcomings in the finished book are to be assigned to me alone.

STEVEN D. KIRBY
Eastern Michigan University
14 January 2007

For CAROL BINGHAM KIRBY,
my own personal *Buen Amor*.

Introduction to Students

THE LITERARY ENVIRONMENT OF MEDIEVAL SPAIN

BETWEEN THE YEARS OF A.D. 1200 and A.D. 1400 there emerged and evolved in medieval Spain a new style of poetry characterized initially by learned inspiration and meticulous poetic form. It was written in quatrains of fourteen-syllable lines with one, uniform rhyme throughout each stanza and told its stories in primarily narrative style. The favorite subjects of the first poets of this new style were religious, including saints' lives and works treating religious doctrine. Then came some works dealing with ancient themes, such as the legend of Apollonius of Tyre and the exploits of Alexander the Great, and eventually even the deeds of the Spanish warrior Fernán González. This new style and subject matter was variously designated as *nueva maestría* (new mastery) and *mester de clerecía* (clerkly craft). In the course of centuries, however, the *clerecía* designation has become the standard term for this style of poetry. Readers should be aware, though, that the mention of 'clerkly craft' does not really indicate only authors from the clergy, but rather a larger group of creators who were all well-educated people, some of whom might have been early lawyers. Their poetic stanza is called the *cuaderna vía* or 'fourfold way,' suggestive of the quaternion or gathering of leaves forming a quire in a book.

In its two centuries of existence and vogue among poets, the *clerecía* movement developed into a veritable school of poetic expression that crossed ethnic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. In due course, this school produced a poem on the biblical Joseph written in Spanish words but preserved transliterated into Arabic characters. It also gave us a series of *Proverbios Morales* written by a Jewish poet for Peter the Cruel (1350-69), a poem about the reign of Alfonso XI, and the social satire by the Chancellor of Castile, Pero López de Ayala, the *Libro rimado del palacio*, among numerous other

works preserved sometimes only fragmentarily. But the most important work of all from this school is the one printed in this book, the *Libro de buen amor* or Book of Good Love, which is a kind of poetic synthesis of all of the literary traditions being cultivated in medieval Spain up to the author's time. More will be said about this work in the following paragraphs.

But, before proceeding with that information, it is important that the reader understand that the efforts by some scholars to compartmentalize *clerecía* into two halves, (1) a thirteenth-century half with stricter versification and a narrower, more eous range of themes and (2) a fourteenth-century half with flexible versification, more creative rhymes, and a very wide array of themes, is in my view misguided. The case can certainly be made that there are differences but, to my mind, that is rather a mirage. What is most important about *clerecía* is its very flexibility and adaptability to a wide variety of themes. It is much more interesting to ponder why such a varied assortment of authors and cultures found *clerecía* an apt expressive medium for such a diversity of poetic works. In a sense, the vastly heterogeneous content of the *Libro de buen amor* is itself a sort of microcosm of the entire phenomenon of the *mester de clerecía*.

AUTHOR, DATE, AND IMPORTANCE OF THE *LIBRO DE BUEN AMOR*

Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, was an amazingly talented author of the early fourteenth century in Spain. He apparently began to create his highly entertaining *Libro de buen amor* (or *Book of Good Love*) around 1322 and the work seems to have been complete by 1330. Many scholars used to believe that the work was revised and enlarged in 1343. While this possibility cannot reasonably be altogether dismissed, most researchers today agree that the poem exists in a single fundamental version only, though there are three main distinct manuscript copies each with very different content and characteristics. Even with all three copies there are numerous gaps in the narrative line of the poem caused by scribal carelessness, accidental damage to manuscripts, censorship by early readers, or some combination of all of these problems.

What makes this poetic creation interest us today after nearly seven centuries? The basic answer to this question is that the poet created a unique, multi-faceted literary entertainment combining satire of social customs and attitudes, parody of earlier literary types and works, instruction in the art of love for a particularly inept would-be suitor, admirable models of varied literary types and genres, sly and subtle humor on various levels, extremely impressive use of both popular and literary language, an astonishingly exten-

sive and varied vocabulary, and evidence of sustained and sincere religious devotion. While this list of components might sound like an impossible conglomeration of mutually exclusive elements, the Archpriest's incredible talent has succeeded in blending all of them into a convincing poetic work which daily wins new readers and admirers.

The *Libro* consists of well over seven thousand poetic lines of which more than a thousand are in a variety of lyric meters. The narrative portions of the text are mostly expressed in quatrains of fourteen-syllable (occasionally fifteen-syllable or sixteen-syllable) lines. Such long lines could seem sluggish or boring in the hands of some medieval poets, but the Archpriest has a very lively style which lends an attractive spark to his narrative. There is also a lengthy prose commentary near the beginning of the work and some hundred-odd prose captions or headings scattered throughout. While the commentary is certainly the work of Juan Ruiz himself, scholars are today unanimous in attributing the captions or headings to one or more of the early scribes who copied the poem.

Narrative poetry was nothing new in fourteenth-century Spain, though the style and charm of Ruiz's lines were unmatched by earlier poets. One more thing that sets the Archpriest apart from others is that he was the first major lyric poet in Castilian Spanish. In prior centuries it had been customary to write love and other lyric sentiments in Galician-Portuguese (the language of Galicia in northwestern Spain) because of the perceived expressive advantages afforded by the unique sonority of that linguistic medium. The Archpriest had the talent to show how effective Castilian could be for expressing both secular love and religious devotion in lyric meters. His well over one thousand lines of lyrics in the *Libro* are therefore an important first step in the development of Spanish lyric poetry.

What sort of man was Juan Ruiz and how did he come to write this great book? Unfortunately, we have almost no external information about Juan Ruiz the man. Until the unanticipated appearance in 1984 of a mention of his name and position in a legal document of ca. 1330, we had no such information at all. But the content of the *Libro* permits us to deduce, cautiously, some of the probable circumstances of his life. It now appears certain that Juan Ruiz was in fact his real name (not a pen name as some had surmised) and that he was truly Archpriest of Hita in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. The post of Archpriest was a position of considerable responsibility involving vigilance over the personal conduct of other priests in his diocese or district. Assuming the validity of his own affirmation that

he was an archpriest, it is not difficult to conclude that such administrative responsibilities would provide much juicy material for the description and depiction of the amorous escapades that he presents in his poem. As a priest, Juan Ruiz would also logically be familiar with Church doctrine, biblical references, the ways of celebrating Church festivities, regulations concerning confession, penance and the like, and the various categories of sin. All of these elements are present in the *Libro*. But what made him want to blend such variegated elements into an entertaining literary work and for whom was it originally intended?

The obvious answer is that Juan Ruiz was fundamentally a teacher in the broadest possible sense. He was extraordinarily well educated in religion, Church and civil law, moral philosophy, and other traditional disciplines. But he was also a remarkable observer of human foibles and failings and he relished the opportunity to offer advice regarding redemption to the faithful who had gone astray or to those who might go astray. Essentially, the Archpriest sets out to teach his readers how to avoid sin and how to clean up their act if they have fallen into it anyway. What makes his advice most appealing is that it is presented in general in a most human and tolerant way, recognizing that temptation is everywhere and that sin is almost inevitable. He is no zealot threatening hell and damnation; he wins over his readers by admitting that all of us, including himself, fall victim to sin. He teaches, then, by example, by posing as a sinner himself, whose recounted history is a negative example to be avoided at all costs. This is the fundamental structuring principle of the *Libro*.

CONTENTS AND ELEMENTS OF THE *LIBRO*

At the beginning of his book the Archpriest calls upon the powers of Heaven to enlighten him and to enable him to create his work. He invokes God and the Virgin Mary in succession to help him. He then turns his attention to a sort of sermon or homily in which he analyzes a passage from the Psalms to show that man must use understanding, will, and memory to find his way to salvation. Yet, before the end of this lesson, the poet jolts the reader by noting that, since sin is all too human, those who prefer that alternative path in life will find some suggestions in his book as well. Naturally he adds the disclaimer that his intention is virtuous but the additional dimension has already been added to his argument. The net result is both humorous and complicating, providing a chuckle and the first major thread of ambiguity which he will exploit to its fullest throughout the book as a whole.

Another invocation to God follows as do several poems in honor of the Virgin Mary. Then the Archpriest gets to work and sets the tone for what is to come by telling the story of the Greeks and the Romans. The point of this tale is that interpretations of messages received can and do vary according to perspective and predisposition of the interpreter. Juan Ruiz then explicitly applies this telling lesson to his own book. This leaves the reader on notice that one must proceed carefully to understand the *Libro*.

In the stanzas that follow, the Archpriest launches into the theme of love, illustrating it with some fables and then offers a comical lyric about his treacherous messenger. After this he tells the story of the son of King Alcaraz. This new story is very important in perceiving the nature of the *Libro* because, unlike the Greeks and Romans, it shows that misinterpretation is not the only risk. It is also possible that multiple interpretations might all prove to be valid. The poet follows this section with a small treatise on astrology (which he both affirms and denies) and then discusses the risks of love.

The first major section of the book includes what amounts to an art of love. The narrator, after belligerent attacks on Sir Love (who appears in a dream), receives instruction from him on the proper techniques to achieve success. These lessons are followed by supplementary instruction from Lady Venus, Sir Love's wife. Eventually the narrator applies the lessons received and succeeds, after a fashion, with the help of a picturesque go-between or matchmaker named Trotaconventos, in conquering Doña Endrina. This art of love is constructed on the basis of Æsopic fables, discussion of the Seven Deadly Sins, and a fine adaptation of *Pamphilus de Amore*, a twelfth-century Latin playlet about love.

A purported cautionary lesson to women about the treachery of men fills the next sixty or so stanzas. This episode also includes an unforgettable treatise on the many names applied to the bawd (or go-between) which can be highly offensive to her and counter-productive to her clients.

In the exact center of the book is an interlude of adventures in the Guadarrama mountains. Here the narrator goes in search of love in the mountains and finds himself the victim instead of the victor. Each colorful, highly suggestive episode is narrated twice, once in narrative meter and then in lyric form. There are clear overlaps and equally clear differences in the two versions of each encounter, challenging the reader's intelligence. At the end of this journey, the narrator makes a penitential pilgrimage to a nearby shrine in order to reflect on what he has learned from his trouble.

The second major segment of the *Libro* is devoted to a Disneyesque depiction of the transition from the regular year to the Lenten season. Juan Ruiz presents this change in the form of a mock-epic battle between the meaty forces of Sir Flesh and the fish and other sea creatures who defend Lady Lent. The temporary victory of Lent over Flesh provides an opportunity to discuss confession and penance. The triumphal return of Flesh, accompanied by Sir Love, at Easter furnishes material for a described celebration of the event, including the participation of many clergy with all other members of society. There is even a detailed description of the artistic allegory of the months and seasons of the year as depicted on Sir Love's tent.

With the arrival of spring, new love is in the air and the Archpriest-narrator attempts to win Doña Garoza (whose name is Arabic for 'bride'). In a courtship characterized by dueling Æsopic fables, the Archpriest eventually wins her (platonic) love but the relationship is cut short by the lady's untimely death.

This change of theme marks a key transition in the *Libro* back to a more doctrinal work. The Archpriest discusses death and its rigors. The death of Trotaconventos underscores his emphasis on this new theme and he writes a memorable lament for his faithful procuress in which he ironically declares her worthy to sit among the saints in heaven. After presenting a couple of penitential pieces on Christian virtues and the Arms of the Christian to defend against the World, the Devil, and the Flesh, the Archpriest makes his transition to the end of his book.

Juan Ruiz gives a very memorable series of stanzas on the appeal of little women, declaring them the least of all evils. He then profiles his latest love-messenger as being great but for fourteen character flaws, including such minor defects as thievery, drunkenness, stupidity and laziness.

To close his book, the Archpriest speaks of how it is to be understood and points out its remarkable features with no hint of false modesty. Juan Ruiz was always proud of his artistic achievement. Miscellaneous lyrics conclude the book, including songs to the Virgin Mary, student songs, and a lyric critical of Fortune. The Salamanca manuscript ends with a lengthy narrative about the clergymen of Talavera who protest when told that they must no longer have any contact with their mistresses. This is an adaptation of the medieval *Consultatio Sacerdotum*, or gathering or council of priests. The Gayoso manuscript concludes with two songs of the type sung by blind beggars to obtain alms.

UNIFYING PRINCIPLES AND AUDIENCE OF THE *LIBRO*

This variegated mass of material has often perplexed modern critics more accustomed to linear Aristotelian unity. But medieval conceptions of unity were more flexible than those of earlier and later times. Medieval authors unified their work by using parallel structure, associations (explicit and implicit), the personality of the author, and a technique called interlacing or the interlace mode. All of these methods and techniques are evident in the *Libro*. In particular, the Archpriest uses interlacing by presenting an instructional theme, then straying from it to tell entertaining tales, only to return to it later by reminding the reader of his original message. The Archpriest does this time and again in the poem. The Archpriest is artistically serious but he is never stuffy. He delights in being suggestive and racy, though he is never obscene.

Another suggested form of unity is the rising-falling (symmetrical) parallel structure posited attractively but controversially by one scholar. Admittedly the parallelisms are usually only approximate rather than absolute. But medieval authors normally worked by suggestion, not by blueprint and so the lack of precise correspondences between perceived parallel sections is not an insurmountable impediment.

The author's use of his personality as a source of unity is clear to all. He is the nominal protagonist of most of the amorous episodes either as himself or in the guise of Don Melón de la Huerta. Since he serves as a negative example of conduct he is able to preach his lessons with special authority, i.e. do not as I have done, but rather choose the better path of virtue, etc. Naturally, the *Libro* appears to incorporate not just one or some of these techniques but all of them to eloquent effect.

SOURCES AND CREATIVE PROCESS IN THE *LIBRO*

The Archpriest uses an extensive array of sources in his book. He draws from the Bible, Æsopic fables, Church doctrine and practice, civil and canonical law, vernacular works like the Old Spanish *Libro de Alexandre* (or *Book of Alexander the Great*), the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X, el Sabio, and numerous other writings in both Latin (such as the *Pamphilus de Amore*) and Spanish. Clearly, Juan Ruiz had a broad education whether it was acquired formally or through personal reading and study. This same breadth of source material raises issues of his intended audience. Was he writing only for intellectuals or did he mean to reach everyone? While some pas-

sages, such as the trial in Don Ximio's courtroom, would be fully intelligible only to well-educated readers or listeners, there is no doubt that what we today call "legal mumbo-jumbo" could be relished also by less-well-educated audience members. I believe that the Archpriest sought what we today call an inclusive audience, not an exclusive one. In order to accomplish this goal, he chose a tone of expression that could communicate substance and humor at the same time. His having achieved this approach is a tribute to his talent and to his efforts.

There is no denying that the Archpriest may have attempted too much thematically in his book and so it might appear (or even actually be) overloaded with material. But rather than fault the poet for being ambitious, we should commend him for in fact having succeeded so many times in such a diverse creation. The same extreme variety of topics may also be the result of what most critics agree was one of the Archpriest's work habits, that of adapting pre-existing materials that he had composed earlier to his new purpose in this work. We must remember that he does make reference in the prose introduction to having composed "este nuevo libro." No one knows with certainty what these words mean, but it is not irresponsible to conclude that he might indeed be referring to the creation of a larger work into which he fitted some or many earlier materials. The reader is invited to join the community of scholars and researchers who have spent literally centuries wrestling with the problems of this great masterpiece. The Archpriest himself, in a different context, gave, in my view, the very best possible description of the scholarly heritage of his work when he said:

Doctores más de çiento, en libros e en questiones,
con fuertes argumentos e con sotiles Razones,
tienen sobre estos casos diuersas opiniones....

Welcome to one of the most fascinating literary works anywhere. May you find it endlessly entertaining and challenging, but still accessible with the help of this student edition.

AIM AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS EDITION

My purpose in preparing this edition for students is to offer a text that can be readable to newcomers to medieval Spanish but still reflect a work belonging to another age. It has been a difficult challenge and, while I have attempted to succeed in good faith, I am certain that not everyone will agree

LIBRO DE BUEN AMOR¹

*Ihesus nazarenus rex Judeorum*²

*Ésta es oraçión^o qu'el Açipreste^o fizo a Dios
cuando començó este libro suyo³*

prayer, Archpriest

1. Señor^o Dios, que a los jodíos,^o pueblo¹ de perdiçión
sacaste de cabtivo, del poder de Faraón,^o
a Daniel sacaste del poço de Babilón,
saca a mí coitado,^o desta mala presión.^o

Lord, judíos, damned
Pharaoh

worried, prison

2. Señor, tú diste graçia a Ester la Reína,⁴
ant'el rrey Asuero⁵ ovo^o tu graçia digna;
Señor, dame tu graçia e tu merçed aína,^o
sácame desta lazeria,^o desta presión mezquina.^o

tuvo

soon

suffering, miserable

3. Señor, tú que sacaste al Profecta⁶ del lago,^o

dungeon

¹ Titles in the Middle Ages were much less absolute than they are today. Often, a work was known as “the book by [author’s name]” much as modern scholars refer to each other’s work. What we today commonly call the *Book of Good Love* was known in medieval times as *The Book of the Archpriest*, *The Little Book of Songs*, and *The Treatise of the Archpriest*. The manuscripts themselves have no clear indication of title at the beginning. Modern scholars have, since the second half of the nineteenth century, deduced the current title from several internal references in the text. But this widely used title, despite its apparent justification in the work itself, has detractors among other modern researchers.

² (Latin) JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS, a common epigraph, dedication, or opening quote at the beginning of many medieval texts.

³ Modern scholarship has shown that these headings were not composed by the Archpriest, but were added later, probably at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Since they are usually useful for locating and comprehending the main sections of the text, and are part of the most nearly complete manuscript, I include them in this reading edition.

⁴ Queen Esther who shrewdly prevented her husband Ahasuerus (Xerxes I, 485-464 B.C.) from killing the Jews who were living in the Persian empire. Her success led to the establishment of the Jewish festival of Purim. This story is recounted in the book of Esther, the seventeenth book of the Old Testament.

⁵ Ahasuerus (Xerxes I, 485-464 B.C.) wanted to kill all Jews living in the Persian empire but was prevented from doing so by the shrewdness of his queen Esther. See the Old Testament book of Esther.

⁶ The prophet alluded to is Daniel, whose faith rescued him from the lions’ den in chapter 6 of the Old Testament book of Daniel, twenty-seventh book of the Old

de poder de gentiles sacaste a Santiago,⁷
 a Santa Maryna⁸ libreste^o del vientre del drago,
 libra a mí, Dios mío, desta presión do^o yago.

freed
 where

4. Señor, tú que libreste a Santa Susaña⁹
 del falso testimonio de la falsa conpañía,^o
 líbrame, mi Dios, desta coita^o 'tan maña,^o
 dame tu misericordia, tira de mí tu saña.^o

company, cronies
 suffering, so huge
 rage

5. A Jonás¹⁰ el profecta^o del vientre de la ballena,
 en que moró tres días dentro en la mar llena,
 sacástelo tú sano así commo de casa buena;
 Mexías,^o tú me salva sin culpa e sin pena.

prophet

Messiah

Testament.

⁷ Saint James the Apostle, killed by Herod, making him the second recorded martyr after Stephen. This reference alludes to the transfer of his remains to Spain where the great Cathedral in his honor was eventually constructed to attract pilgrims from all over the world.

⁸ A puzzling substitution for Santa Margarita = Saint Margaret of Antioch, who was a virgin martyred for the cause of Christianity. She was lusted after by a governor who, when rebuffed, tossed her into a deep hole where she was swallowed by Satan in the guise of a huge dragon. She managed to escape by using a cross to pierce the creature's abdomen. Her saint's day is 20 July. Her story is told in detail in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* which is a sort of medieval encyclopedia of saints. Voragine's account gives both the 20 July date and a 13 July date for her martyrdom. She is frequently linked (as in the *Libro de buen amor*) with Santa Marina whose saint's day is 17 July and with Santa Marina de Galicia (also devoured by a dragon and who likewise escaped from its belly), patron saint of Orense, whose saint's day is 11 July. Perhaps the proximity of saint's days and of somewhat similar names and situations produced the widespread confusion. A similar confusing reference occurs in the Old Spanish *Poem of Fernán González* which provides support for a conclusion that the confusion was cultural and maybe ecclesiastical rather than purely scribal.

⁹ Saint Susanna was falsely accused of adultery by two elders who had lusted after her. She was saved by young Daniel who separately interrogated her accusers, discovered their contradictory testimony, and caused them to suffer the death by stoning that they had wanted for her.

¹⁰ God commanded Jonah to preach in Ninevah but Jonah left instead for Tarshish in order to get far away from God. During the journey, a terrible storm arose which threatened to sink the ship. Realizing his blame for the storm, Jonah asked to be thrown overboard to propitiate God. Jonah was then swallowed by the whale. Jonah prayed to God for liberation and, after three days, the whale vomited Jonah up. When God again asked Jonah to preach in Ninevah, Jonah this time wisely complied.

6. Señor, a los tres niños¹¹ de muerte los librate,
del forno del grand fuego sin lisió^o 'los saqueste,^o
de las ondas del mar a Sant Pedro tomeste:^o
Señor, de aquesta coita saca al tu Açipreste.

injury, rescued them
tomaste

7. Aun tú, que dixiste a los tus servidores
que con ellos serías ante Reys^o dezidores,^o
E les dirás palabras que fabrasen^o mejores,
Señor, tú sey^o comigo,^o guárdame de traidores.

reyes, when speaking
hablasen
be; conmigo

[.....]¹²

8. El nonbre profetizado fue grande Hemanuel^o
fijo de Dios muy alto, salvador de Ysrael;
en la salutaçión el ángel Grabiel¹³
te fizo çierta desto, tú fueste çierta dél.

Emmanuel

9. Por esta profeçía e por la salutaçión,
por el nonbre tan alto, Hemanuel, salvaçión,
Señora, dame tu graçia e dame consolaçión,
'gáname del tu^o fijo graçia e bendiçión.

get for me from your

10. Dame graçia, 'Señora de todos los señores,^o
tira de mí tu saña, tira de mí Rencores,
faz que todo se torne sobre los mescladores:^o
¡Ayúdame, gloriosa madre de pecadores!

Lady of all lords

troublemakers

Intellectum tibi dabo, et instruam te in via

¹¹ Daniel's three companions, renamed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Babylonia, refused to obey Nebuchadnezzar's order to worship a golden image he had made. Accordingly, they were placed in a fiery furnace to die. But God protected them and when Nebuchadnezzar saw that they had survived, he promoted them and decreed severe punishment for anyone who might speak against their God. The story is told in chapter 3 of the book of Daniel.

¹² An uncertain number of stanzas are missing at this point, where this introductory section stops speaking about God and begins speaking about the Virgin Mary. The cause for this omission is only speculative.

¹³ The Archangel Gabriel who performed the annunciation by appearing to the Virgin Mary to inform her that she would be the mother of God's son Jesus Christ. This is told in the Gospel according to Saint Luke.

*hac cua gradieris: firmabo super te oculos meos.*¹⁴

El profecta David, por Spíritu Santo fablando, a cada uno de nós dize en el Psalmo triçésimo primo^o del [5] verso dezeno,^o que es el que primero suso^o escreví.^o

thirty-first

tenth, above, escribí

En el cual verso entiendo yo tres cosas, las cuales dizen algunos doctores philósophos que son en el alma e propiamente suyas; son estas: entendimiento, voluntad e memoria. Las cuales, digo, si buenas son, [10] que traen al Alma consolaçión e aluengan la vida al cuerpo e danle onrra con pro^o e buena fama. Ca

benefit

por el buen entendimiento entiende onbre el bien e sabe dello el mal. E por ende una de las petiçiones que demandó David a Dios porque sopiese la su ley [15] fue esta: *Da mihi intellectum e cetera.*¹⁵ Ca el ome,^o

hombre

will have

entendiendo el bien, havrá^o de Dios temor, el cual es comienço de toda sabidoría, de que dize el dicho profecta *iniçium sapiençie, timor domini.*¹⁶ Ca luego es el buen entendimento en los que temen a Dios.

[20] E por ende sigue la Razón el dicho David en otro logar

en que dize: *intellectus bonus omnibus façientibus eum e cetera.*¹⁷ Otrosí^o dize Salamón en el Libro de la Sapiençia¹⁸: *Qui timet dominum, façiet bona.*¹⁹ E esto se entiende en la primera rrazón^o del verso que yo

also

word, reason

¹⁴ This lengthy prose introduction was probably added later, since it appears only in the most modern of the three primary manuscripts. This passage is cast in the form of a medieval sermon which simultaneously explicates a biblical text and purports to justify the poet's allegedly moral purpose. But, when he reaches line 116, the author (or commentator) curiously adds that those who are inclined to the mad love of the world will find some examples of how to practice it. This may be either a clever witticism or a sly way of undercutting his alleged moral purpose. Whether it is the work of the original author or of a later hand, this prose introduction remains a source of controversy among scholars and readers. *Intellectum ... meos:* (Latin) I shall give you understanding and instruct you in the way you are to take; I shall fix my eyes upon you (Psalm 31, 8 [Latin Vulgate Bible]).

¹⁵ (Latin) *Give me understanding,* etc (Psalm 118, 34).

¹⁶ (Latin) *The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom* (Psalm 110, 10).

¹⁷ (Latin) *All those who practice it [i.e. fear of God] have good understanding* (Psalm 110, 10).

¹⁸ This is a reference to the Biblical Book of Ecclesiastes which offers some practical wisdom for living one's life well and successfully amid all the toil and challenges that it can bring.

¹⁹ (Latin) *He who fears God will do good.*

[25] començé, en lo que dize: *Intellectum tibi dabo*. E desque^o está informada e instruyda el alma que se ha de salvar en el cuerpo linpio, e piensa e ama e desea omne el buen amor de Dios e sus mandamientos. E esto atal^o dize el dicho profecta: *e meditabor in mandatis tuis* [30] *que dilexi*.²⁰ E otrosí desecha e aborresçe el alma el pecado del amor loco deste mundo. E desto dize el salmista^o: *Qui diligitis Dominum odite malum, e cetera*.²¹ E por ende se sigue luego la segunda rrazón del verso que dize: *E instruum te*.²² E desque el Alma, con el buen [35] entendimiento e buena voluntad, con buena rremenbrança escoge e ama el buen amor, que es el de Dios, e pónelo en la çela^o de la memoria porque se acuerde dello e trae al cuerpo a fazer buenas obras, por las cuales se salva el ome. E desto dize Sant Juan apóstol en el Apocalipsi;²³ [40] de los buenos que mueren bien obrando: *Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur, opera enim illorum secuntur illos*.²⁴ E dize otrosí el profecta: *Tu redis unicuique justa opera sua*.²⁵ E desto concluye la tercera rrazón del verso primero que dize: *In via hac cua gradieris, firmabo super* [45] *te oculos meos*. E por ende devemos tener sin dubda que obras sienpre están en la buena memoria, que con buen entendimiento e buena voluntad escoje el alma e ama el Amor de Dios por se salvar por ellas. Ca^o Dios, por las buenas obras que faze omne en la carrera de [50] salvaçión en que anda, firma sus ojos sobre él. E esta es la sentençia del verso que enpieça primero, breve.

as soon as

precisely

i.e. King David

cell

For

²⁰ (Latin) *And I shall meditate upon your commandments, which I loved* (Psalm 118, 47).

²¹ (Latin) *Those of you who love the Lord, hate evil* (Psalm 96,10).

²² (Latin) *I will instruct thee*.

²³ This is a reference to the Biblical Book of Revelation which offers a succession of disturbing symbolic images about God's wrath, including seven letters of warning, seven seals on a heavenly scroll, seven trumpets of warning, and seven bowls of God's final wrath. Scriptural scholars still debate the meaning of these symbols but the power of the images is undeniable and forceful, hence the reference here and later in stanza 1011 (to the mountain woman).

²⁴ (Latin) *Blessed are those who die in the Lord because their works shall follow them* (Revelations 14, 13).

²⁵ (Latin) *You will give to each one his due, according to his works* (Psalm 61, 13).

Comoquier que 'a las vegadas^o se acuerde pecado e lo
 quiera e lo obre, este desacuerdo non viene del buen
 entendimiento, nin tal querer non viene de la buena
 [55] voluntad, nin de la buena obra non viene tal obra; ante
 viene de la flaqueza de la natura humana que es en el
 omne, que se non puede escapar de pecado. Ca dize
 Catón²⁶: *Nemo sine crimine uiuit.*²⁷ E dízelo Job: *Quis
 potest fazere mundum de immundo conceptum semine?*
 [60] *Cuasi dicat*²⁸: “Ninguno, salvo Dios.” E viene otrosí de la
 mengua del buen entendimiento, que lo non ha estonce,^o
 porque ome piensa vanidades de pecado. E deste tal
 pensamiento dize el salmista: *Cogitationes hominum
 vane sunt.*²⁹ E dize otrosí a los tales mucho disolutos
 [65] e de mal entendimiento: *Nolite fieri sic equus e mulus
 in quibus non est intellectus.*³⁰ E aun digo que viene
 de la pobledad^o de la memoria que non está instructa^o
 del buen entendimiento, así que non puede amar el
 bien nin acordarse dello 'para lo obrar.^o E viene otrosí
 [70] esto por rrazón que la natura umana que más aparejada
 e inclinada es al mal que al bien, e a pecado que a bien;
 esto dize el Decreto.³¹ E éstas son algunas de las rrazones
 porque son fechos los libros de la ley e del derecho e
 de castigos e constunbres^o e de otras çiençias. Otrosí
 [75] fueron la pintura e la escriptura e las imágenes
 primeramente falladas por rrazón que la memoria del
 ome desleznadera^o es; esto dize el Decreto. Ca tener todas

at times

then

poverty, instructed

to do it

costumbres

fallible

²⁶ This reference is to a collection of maxims called the *Distichs of Cato* attributed erroneously to a Dionysius Cato who never lived. The use of Cato in the title probably tries to capitalize on the reputation for stern morality of Cato the Censor who was a Roman statesman. The collection circulated widely in many versions during the medieval period.

²⁷ (Latin) *No one lives without sin.*

²⁸ (Latin) *Who can make clean one who was conceived of unclean seed? (Job 14,4).*

As if to say... [the sense of the phrase continues with the Spanish *Ninguno, salvo Dios.*]

²⁹ (Latin) *The thoughts of man are vain (Psalm 93, 11).*

³⁰ (Latin) *Do not try to do as the horse and the mule, which do not have understanding (Psalm 31, 9).*

³¹ A compilation of decrees of papal authority prepared by Gratian ca. 1140. They are the basis of all subsequent Canon law. Many of the citations given here are not actually found in the *Decretum*.

las cosas en la memoria e non olvidar algo, más es de la divinidad que de la humanidad; esto dize el Decreto.

[80] E por esto es más apropiada a la memoria del alma, que es espíritu de Dios criado e perfecto e vive^o sienpre en Dios. Otrosí dize David: *Anima mea illius vivet*.³²

querite Dominum e vivet Anima vestra.³³ E non es apropiada al cuerpo umano, que dura poco tiempo. Et

[85] dize Job: *Breves dies hominis sunt*. E otrosí dize *Homo natus de muliere, breves dies hominis sunt*.³⁴

E dize sobre esto David: *Anni nostri sicut aranea medibuntur e cetera*.³⁵

Onde^o yo, de mi poquilla çiençia e de mucha

[90] e grand rrudeza,^o entiendo cuántos bienes fazen perder el alma e al cuerpo. E los males muchos que les aparejan e traen el amor loco del pecado del mundo, escogiendo e amando con buena voluntad salvaçión e gloria

del paraíso para mi ánima,^o fiz esta chica escriptura [95] en memoria de bien. E compuse este nuevo libro

en que son^o escriptas algunas maneras e maestrías e sotilezas engañosas del loco Amor del mundo,

que usan algunos para pecar, las cuales, leyéndolas e oyéndolas ome o muger de buen entendimiento

[100] que se quiera salvar, escogerá e 'obrarlo ha.^o E podrá dezir con el Salmista: *Veni veritatis e cetera*.³⁶ Otrosí

los de poco entendimiento non se perderán; ca leyendo e coydando^o el mal que fazen o tienen en la voluntad

de fazer, e los porfiosos de sus malas maestrías, e

[105] descubrimiento publicado de sus muchas engañosas maneras que usan para pecar e engañar las mugeres,

acordarán la memoria e non despreçiarán su fama; ca mucho es cruel quien su fama menospreçia; el

derecho lo dize. E querrán más amar a sí mesmos

[110] que al pecado que la ordenada caridad de sí mesmo comiença; el Decreto lo dize. E desecharán e

vive

Therefore

lack of knowledge

alma

están

will do it

pondering

³² (Latin) *And my soul will live for Him* (Psalm 21, 31).

³³ (Latin) *Seek God and your soul will live* (Psalm 68, 33).

³⁴ (Latin) *Man born of woman: short are the days of man* (Job 14, 1 and 5).

³⁵ (Latin) *Our years are considered like the fragile web of a spider* (Psalm 89, 9).

³⁶ (Latin) *The way of truth* (Psalm 119, 30).

aborresçerán las maneras e maestrías malas del loco amor que fazen perder las almas e caer en saña de Dios, apocando la vida e dando mala fama e [115] deshonorra e muchos daños a los cuerpos. Enpero, ° porque es umanal ° cosa el pecar, si algunos— lo que non los consejo—quisieren ° usar del loco amor, aquí fallarán algunas maneras para ello. E ansí este mi libro a todo omne o muger, al cuerdo e al non [120] cuerdo, al que entendiere ° el bien e escogiere ° salvaçión e obrare ° bien amando a Dios, otrosí al que quisiere el amor loco en la carrera que andudiere ° puede cada uno bien dezir: *Intellectum tibi dabo e cetera.* °

E rruego e consejo a quien lo leyere ° e lo oyere ° que [125] guarde bien las tres cosas del Alma: lo primero, que quiera bien entender e bien juzgar la mi entençión, por qué lo fiz ° e la sentençia de lo que y ° dize, e non al son feo de las palabras. E segund derecho las palabras sirven a la intençión e non la intençión [130] a las palabras. E Dios sabe que la mi intençión non fue de lo fazer por dar manera de pecar nin por maldezir, mas fue por Reduçir a toda persona a memoria buena de bien obrar e dar ensienpro ° de buenas constunbres e castigos ° de salvaçión; e porque [135] sean todos aperçebidos e se puedan mejor guardar de tantas maestrías como algunos usan por el loco amor. Ca dize Sant Gregorio que menos firien ° al onbre los dardos que ante son vistos, e mejor nos podemos guardar de lo que ante hemos visto. [140] E compóselo ° otrosí a dar algunos leçión e muestra de metrificar e rrimar e de trobar; ca trobas e notas e rrimas e ditados e versos que fiz conplidamente, segund que esta çiencia Requiere.

E porque de toda buena obra es comienço e [145] fundamento Dios e la fe cathólica, e dízelo la primera Decretal de las Clementinas, que comiença: *Fidey catholiçe fundamento,* ³⁷ e do éste non es çimiento, non se puede fazer obra firme nin firme hedifiçio, ° segund ° dize el apóstol.

however, human

might wish

might understand, might

choose; might act

might walk

see note 14

might read, might hear

hice, allí

ejemplo

lecciones

hieren

I composed it

edificio, según

³⁷ (Latin) *The basis of the Catholic faith.*

Por ende començé mi libro en el nonbre de Dios e tomé el
 [150] verso primero del salmo que es de la Santa Trinidad
 E de la fe cathólica, que es: *Quicumque vul*,³⁸ el verso
 que dize: *Ita Deus pater, Deus filius e cetera*.³⁹

*Aquí dize de cómo el Açipreste rrogó a Dios
 que le diese graçia que podiese fazer este libro*⁴⁰

11. Dios Padre, Dios Fijo, Dios Spíritu Santo,
 el que nasció de la Virgen 'esfuérçenos de tanto, °
 que sienpre lo loemos en prosa ° e en canto, °
 sea de nuestras almas cobertura ° e manto. °

give us such strength
 poetry, song
 covering, mantle

12. El que fizo el çielo, la tierra e el mar,
 Él me done su graçia e me quiera alunbrar,
 que pueda de cantares un librete ° Rimar,
 que los que lo oyeren ° puedan solaz ° tomar.

librito
 might hear, solace

13. Tú Señor Dios mío que 'l omne ° crieste, °
 enforma e ayuda a mí 'el tu ° açipreste,
 que pueda fazer un libro de buen amor aqueste,
 que los cuerpos alegre e a las almas preste.

hombre, created
 your

14. Si queredes, señores, oýr un buen solaz, °
 escuchad el rromanze sosegadvos en paz;
 non vos diré mentira en cuanto en él yaz,
 Ca ° por todo el mundo se usa e se faz.

entertainment

For

15. E 'por que ° mejor de todos sea escuchado,
 'fablarvos he ° por tobras ° e cuento rrimado;
 es un dezir fermoso e saber sin pecado,
 rrazón más plazentera, fablar más apostado. °

para que
 os hablaré, trovas =
 poems
 elegant

³⁸ (Latin) *Whichever that*

³⁹ (Latin) *God the father, God the son, etc.*

⁴⁰ This section is an invocation to God, asking for inspiration (12bc) "Él ... me quiera alunbrar / que pueda de cantares un librete Rimar;" cf. (13bc) "enforma e ayuda a mí el tu açipreste / que pueda fazer un *libro de buen amor* [note title] aqueste" to create his book. This is a traditional element used throughout Antiquity (when the invocation was to muses) and the Middle Ages (when God and Saints were invoked).

16. Non tengades° que es libro neçio de devaneo,°
 nin creades° que es chufa° algo que en él leo,
 Ca segund buen dinero yaze en vil correo,°
 así en feo libro está saber non feo.

tengáis, raving
 creáis, jest
 purse

17. El axenuz° de fuera más negro es que caldera,
 es de dentro muy blanco más que la peñavera:°
 blanca farina está so° negra cobertera;
 açúcar negro e blanco está en vil cañavera.°

caraway seed
 ermine
 under
 sugar cane

18. Sobre la espina está la noble Rosa flor;
 en fea letra está saber de grand dotor:°
 como so mala capa yaze buen bevedor,
 así so el mal tabardo° está buen amor.

doctor
 cloak

19. E porque de todo bien es comienço e Raíz
 la Virgen Santa Maria, por ende yo Juan Rroíz
 Açipreste de Fita, della primero fiz
 cantar de los sus gozos° siete, que así° diz.

joys, as follows

Gozos de Santa María

20. ¡O Santa María
 luz del día
 tú me guía
 'toda vía°!

always

21. Gáname graçia e bendición,
 e de Jhesú° consolación,
 que pueda con devoçión
 Cantar de tu alegría.

Jesus

22. El primero gozo que s° lea:
 en çibdad de Galilea,
 Nazarec° creo que sea,
 oviste° mensajería

que se

Nazareth
 tuviste

23. del ángel que a ti vino,

Grabiél⁴¹ santo e digno;
tróxote^o mensaz^o divino,
díxote: «Ave María.»

Grabiél = Gabriel
te trajó, mensaxe

24. Tú, desque el mandado oíste,
omilmente^o rresçebiste;
luego virgen conçebiste
al fijo que Dios en ti enbía.

humbly

25. En Belém^o acaesçió
el Segundo, cuando nasçió
e sin dolor apareçió
de ti, Virgen, el Mexía.

Bethlehem

26. El terçero cuentan las leyes
cuando venieron^o los Reyes
E adoraron al que veys
En tu braço do yazía.

vinieron

27. Ofreçió 'l mira^o Gaspar,
Melchior fue ençienso^o dar,
oro ofreçió Baltasar
al que Dios e omne seía.^o

myrrh
incense

was

28. Alegría cuarta e buena
fue cuando la Madalena^o
te dixo goço sin pena,
qu'el tu fijo vevía.^o

Magdalene

vivia

29. El quinto plazer oviste
cuando al tu fijo viste
Sobir al çielo e diste
graçias a Dios ó^o subía.

donde

30. Madre el tu gozo sesto,^o
cuando en los discípulos presto

sexto

⁴¹ Another reference to the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary's pregnancy with God's son Jesus Christ as presented by the Archangel Gabriel. See note 13, above.

fue Spíritu Santo puesto
en tu santa compañía.

31. Del Septeno, ° Madre Santa
la Iglesia toda canta;
sobiste con gloria tanta
al çielo e quanto y avía.

seventh

32. Reynas con tu fijo quisto, °
nuestro Señor Jhesu Xpisto;⁴²
por ti sea de nós visto
en la gloria 'sin fallía. °

querido

without fail

Gozos de Santa María

33. Tú, Vírgen del çielo Reína
e del mundo melezina, °
quiérasme oír, muy digna
que de tus gozos aína °
escriba yo prosa ° digna
por te servir.

medicina

right away

poem

34. Dezir de tu alegría
rrogándote toda vía
yo pecador,
que a la grand culpa mía
non 'pares mientes, ° María,
mas ° al loor. °

look

but rather, praise

35. Tú siete gozos ° oviste: °
el primero cuando rresçebiste
salutación
del ángel, cuando oíste:
«Ave María», conçebiste
Dios, salvaçión.

joys, tuviste

⁴² This is one of several distinctive spellings of the name Jesus Christ in medieval Spanish. Particularly the abbreviation for Christ is interesting since it is represented by X = Greek letter *chi* (χ); and p = Greek letter *rho* (ρ) which, transliterated equal *Chr*.

36. El Segundo fue conplido
cuando fue de ti nascido
e sin dolor;
de los ángeles servido,
fue luego conosçido
por Salvador.

37. Fue el tu gozo terçero
cuando vino el luzero^o
a demostrar
el camino verdadero
a los rreyes; compañero
fue en guiar.

star

38. Fue tu cuarta alegría
cuando te dixo, 'Madelena María,^o
que el tu fijo vevía
e por señal te dezía
que viera a Él.

Mary Magdalene

39. El quinto fue de grand dulçor,
cuando al tu fijo Señor
viste sobir
al çielo, a su Padre Mayor,
e tú fincaste^o con amor
de a Él ir.

were left

40. Este sexto non es de dubdar;
los diçípulos vino alunbrar
con espanto;
tú estavas en ese lugar,
del çielo viste y entrar
Spíritu Santo.

41. El septeno non ha par,
cuando por ti quiso enbiar
Dios tu padre;
al çielo te fizo pujar,^o
con él te fizo asentar

ascend

comme a madre.

42. Señora oy'° al pecador,
que tu fijo el Salvador
por nós diçió°
del çielo, en ti morador;
el que pariste, blanca flor,
e por nós murió.

oye

descended

43. Por nosotros pecadores non aborescas,°
pues por nós ser merescas
Madre de Dios;
ant'Él connusco° parescas,°
nuestras almas le ofrescas,°
Ruega'l por nós.

aborrezcas

con nosotros, parezcas

ofrezcas

*Aquí fabla de cómo todo ome° entre 'los sus° cuidados
se debe alegrar e de la disputaçión que los Griegos
e los Romanos 'en uno° ovieron°*

hombre, his

together, tuvieron

44. Palabras son de sabio e díxolo Catón,
que omne a sus coidados, que tiene en coraçón,
entreponga plazer e alegre la rrazón
que la mucha tristeza⁴³ mucho pecado pon'.

45. E porque de buen seso° non puede omne Reýr,
habré° algunas bulrras° aquí a enxerir:°
cada que las oyerdes non querades comedir⁴⁴
salvo° en la manera del trobar e del dezir.

sense

I shall have, burlas; to

insert

except

46. Entiende bien mis dichos e piensa la sentençia:°
non me contesca° contigo comme al doctor de Greçia
con el rribaldo° Romano e con su poca sabiençia,°
quando demandó Roma a Greçia la çiençia.°

meaning

happen

rogue, knowledge

learning

⁴³ This word *tristeza* does not mean sadness, but rather (Latin) *tristitia* or the sin of Sloth, a sort of paralysis of the will to do good (or indeed, anything of value at all). Hence the following phrase "mucho pecado pon."

⁴⁴ *Cada que...* whenever you hear them do not ponder

47. Así fue que rromanos las leyes non avien,
fuéronlas demandar a griegos que las tenien;
rrespondieron los griegos que non las meresçien
nin las podrían entender pues que tan poco sabien.

48. Pero si las querien para por ellas usar,
que ante les convenia con sus sabios disputar
por ver si las entienden e meresçian levar:°
esta rrespuesta fermosa davan por 'se escusar.°

llevar = take away
avoid the debate

49. Respondieron rromanos que les plazia de grado;
para la disputaçion pusieron 'pleito firmado:°
mas, porque non entenderien° el language° non usado,
que disputasen por señas,⁴⁵ por señas° de letrado.°

signed agreement
entenderian, language
hand signals, learned man

50. Pusieron dia sabido todos por contender;
fueron rromanos en coita, non sabian que se fazer
porque non eran letrados nin podrían entender
a los griegos doctores nin al su mucho saber.

51. Estando en su coita, dixo un çibdadano
que tomasen un rribaldo, un bellaco° Romano;
Segund Dios le demostrase fazer señas con la mano,
que tales las feziere:° fueles° consejo sano.

rogue

hiciese, it turned out to
be

52. Fueron a un bellaco muy grand e muy ardid:°
dixieronle: «Nós havemos° con griegos nuestra conbit°
para disputar por señas; lo que tú quisieres pit°
e nós 'dártelo hemos:° escúsanos desta lid».

bold

we have, agreement

pide

te lo daremos

53. Vistiéronlo muy bien, paños° de 'grand valia,°
commo si fuese doctor en la filosofia;
subió en alta cathreda° dixo con bavoquia°:
«D'oy más° vengan los griegos con toda su porfia°».

robes, great value

cátedra, arrogance

whenever they want,

debate

54. Vino ay° un griego, doctor muy esmerado,°

ahí, prepared

⁴⁵ In some medieval monasteries and convents, a vow of perpetual silence made necessary such communication by hand signals. The inherent and inevitable ambiguity of such communication is what the Archpriest exploits and satirizes in this passage.

- escogido de griegos, entre todos loado:°
 sobió° en otra cathreda, todo el pueblo juntado,
 e començó sus señas commo era tratado. praised
 subió
55. Levantóse el griego, sosegado, ° 'de vagar, °
 e mostró sólo un dedo, que está çerca del pulgar;
 luego se asentó en ese mismo lugar;
 levantóse el rribaldo, bravo, 'de mal pagar. ° calmly, slowly
 in a bad mood
56. Mostró luego tres dedos contra el griego tendidos,
 el polgar° con otros dos que con él son contenidos,
 en manera de arpóm,° los otros dos encogidos;
 asentóse el neçio, catando° sus vestidos. pulgar
 harpoon
 looking at
57. Levantóse el griego, tendió la palma llana
 E asentóse luego con su memoria sana;
 levantóse el bellaco con su fantasía vana,
 mostró puño çerrado, 'de porfia ha gana. ° he feels like fighting
58. A Todos los de Greçia dixo el sabio griego:
 «meresçen los rromanos las leyes yo non gelas⁴⁶ niego»;
 levantáronse todos con paz e con sosiego,
 grand onrra ovo Rroma por un vil andariego. ° man of low class
59. Preguntaron al griego sabio qué fue lo que dixiera°
 por señas al rromano e qué le rrespondiera:°
 diz, «yo dixe que es° un Dios; El rromano dixo que era
 uno en tres personas e tal señal feziera. ° » had said
 had responded
 there is
 had made
60. «yo dixe que era todo a la su voluntad;
 rrespondió que en su poder tenié° el mundo e diz verdat
 desde vi que entendíen° e creíen° la Trinidad,⁴⁷
 entendí que meresçíen de leyes çertenedad. ° » tenía
 entendían, creían
 without doubt

⁴⁶ The Latin demonstratives *illi illum* (= 'to someone that', as in "I give that to someone"), *illi illas* (= to someone those) evolved into *ge lo, ge la* in medieval Spanish, eventually becoming the modern *se lo, se la*, etc.

⁴⁷ Christians believe, of course, that the single deity is manifested in three persons: God the Father, Christ the only Son, and the Holy Spirit.

61. Preguntaron al bellaco cuál fuera su antojo;
diz, «Díxome que con su dedo que me quebrantaría el ojo;
desto ove grand pesar e tomé grand enojo,
e Respondíle con saña, con ira^o e con cordojo.^o
- rage, anger
62. «que yo le quebrantaría ante todas las gentes
con dos dedos los ojos, con el pulgar los dientes;
díxome luego 'a pos^o esto que 'le parase mientes,^o
que me daría grand palmada en los oídos Retinientes.^o
- after, he think
ringing
63. «Yo le Respondí que le daría una tal puñada
que en tienpo de su vida nunca la vies^o vengada
desque vio que la pelea tenía 'mal aparejada^o
dexóse^o de amenazar do non 'gelo preçian^o nada.
- viese
looking bad
se dejó, fear him
64. Por esto dize la 'pastraña vieja^o ardida^o :
«Non ha^o mala palabra 'si non^o es a mal tenida
verás que bien es dicha si bien fuese entendida
entiende bien mi dicho^o e avrás dueña garrida.^{o48}
- old story, shrewd
hay, si no
message, pretty girl
65. La bulrra que oyeres non la tengas 'en vil,^o
la manera del libro entiéndela sutil,^o
que saber 'bien e maldezir^o encobierto^o e doñeguil,^o
tú non fallarás uno de trobadores mill.
- in a bad way
de manera sutil
biendecir y maldecir,
hidden; elegant
66. Fallarás muchas garças,^o non fallarás un uevo:^o
rremendar bien non sabe todo alfayate^o nuevo;
a trobar con locura non creas que me muevo,
lo que buen amor dize con rrazón te lo pruevo.
- herons, huevo
tailor
67. En general a todos fabla la escriptura,^o
los cuerdos con buen seso entenderán^o la cordura,
los mançebos livianos^o guárdense de locura,
escoja lo mejor el de buena ventura.^o
- written word
entenderán
frivolous
luck

⁴⁸ After some debate among modern scholars regarding the apparent contradictions between an allegedly moral work and the promise of a good-looking woman as a reward for attentive reading and reflection, more recent scholarship has shown the rightness of this debated reading by means of such readings in other medieval manuscripts.

68. Las del buen amor son Razones encubiertas,^o
trabaja dó fallares las sus señales çiertas;
si la rrazón entiendes o en el seso açiertas,
non dirás mal del libro que agora rrefiertas.^o
69. Dó coidares^o que miente dize mayor verdat,
en las coplas pintadas^o yaze la falsedat;
dicha buena o mala por puntos^o la juzgat,^o
las coplas con los puntos^o load o denostat.
70. De todos instrumentos yo, libro, só^o pariente,
bien o mal cual puntares^o tal te dirá çiertamente;
cual tu dezir quisieres y faz punto, y tente:^o
si me puntar^o sopieres, sienpre me havrás en miente.⁴⁹
- Aquí dize de cómo segund^o natura^o los omes
e las otras animalias^o quieren haver compañía con las fenbras^o*
71. Commo dize Aristótiles, cosa es verdadera,
el mundo por dos cosas trabaja: por la primera,
por haver^o mantenencia: la otra cosa era
por haver juntamiento^o con fenbra plazertera.
72. Si lo dixiese^o de mío, sería de culpar;⁵⁰
dízelo grand filósofo, non só yo de Rebtar:^o
de lo que dize el sabio non devemos dubdar,
que por obra se prueba el sabio e su fablar.

hidden

you criticize

you think

elegant

in detail, juzga

notas

soy

toques

stop

play

según, Nature

animales, hembras

to have, nourishment

sexual contact

dijese

culpar

⁴⁹ This stanza is one of the most controversial in the entire poem. Scholars have found a convincing basis for at least two different interpretations. The first interprets the word *instrumentos* as musical instruments and *puntar* as plucking the strings (and therefore interpreting) a piece of music. The other interpretation holds that *instrumentos* refers to legal documents and that *puntar* is a reference to punctuation (and therefore interpretation) of said legal texts. Both versions are interesting and attractive and I can find contextual support for both views in the text. The Archpriest, for instance, shows familiarity both with music and with law in his poem. In my marginal glosses I have only referred to the musical view, for simplicity's sake. The reader can choose which is preferable.

⁵⁰ **Si lo dixiese...** if I said it myself, it would be blameworthy.

73. Que diz verdat el sabio claramente se prueba;
 omnes, aves, animalias, toda bestia de cueva
 quieren segund natura compañia sienpre^o nueva,
 e cuánto más el omne que a toda cosa se mueva.⁵¹

siempre

74. Digo muy más del omne que de toda creatura;
 todos a tiempo çierto se juntan con natura;
 el omne de mal seso, todo tiempo sin mesura,
 'cada que^o puede e quiere fazer esta locura.

cada vez que

75. El fuego sienpre quiere estar en la çeniza,
 commoquier que más arde quanto más 'se atiza:^o
 el omne quando peca bien vee^o que desliza,
 mas non se parte^o ende^o ca natura lo enriza.^o

is stoked

ve

stop, that, stimulates

76. E yo como soy omne commo otro, pecador,
 ove^o de las mugeres a las vezes grand amor;
 provar omne las cosas non es por ende peor,
 e saber bien e mal, e usar lo mejor.

tuve

De como el Arcipreste fue enamorado

77. Así fue que un tiempo una dueña me priso,^o
 de su amor non fuy en ese tiempo rrepišo,^o
 sienpre avía della buena fabla e buen rriso^o
 Nunca ál^o fizo por mí nin creo que fazer quiso.

captivated

regretful

laughter

anything else

78. Era dueña en todo e 'de dueñas señora:^o
 non podía estar solo con ella una ora:^o
 mucho de omne se guardan allí adó^o ella mora,
 más mucho que non guardan los jodíos la Tora.⁵²

a lady over all other ladies

hora

donde

79. Sabe toda nobleza de oro e de seda,

⁵¹ E cuánto más... and much more so man than any other thing that moves.

⁵² The Hebrew word *Torah* means essentially "teaching" or "instruction" and by extension "law." In the early stages of Judaism, the Torah meant, roughly, the Pentateuch, or first five books of the Old Testament. But the term is broad and, in essence, it refers to the entire body of Jewish belief, including stories, oral elements and interpretations of scripture.

conplida de muchos bienes anda mansa e leda:°
 es de buenas constunbres, sosegada e queda,
 non se podría vençer por pintada moneda.

contented

80. Enbiéle esta cantiga que es de yuso° puesta,
 con la mi mensajera que tenía enpuesta:°
 dize verdat la fabla,° que la dueña conpuesta,
 si non quiere el mandado, non da buena rrepuesta.

below
informed
proverb

81. Dixo la dueña cuerda a la mi mensajera:
 «Yo veo otras muchas creer a ti parlera,°
 E fállanse ende mal castigo en su manera,
 bien commo la rraposa en 'agena mollera°».

chatterbox

another's head

*Enxiemplo de cómo el león estava doliente°
 e las otras animalias lo venían a ver*

sick

82. «Diz que yazíe doliente el león de dolor;
 todas las animalias vinieron ver su señor;
 tomó plazer con ellas e sentióse° mejor;
 alegráronse° todas mucho por su amor.

se sintió
se alegraron

83. «Por le fazer plazer e más le alegrar,
 conbidáronle todas que 'l darían a yantar:°
 dixieron que mandase cuáles quisiese matar;
 mandó matar al toro, que podría abastar.

dine

84. Fizo partidior al lobo e mandó que a todos diese;
 el apartó lo menudo para el leon que comiese,
 e para sí la canal,° la mejor que omne viese;
 al león dixo el lobo que la mesa bendixiese.°

body
bless

85. «"Señor," diz "tú estás flaco; esta vianda liviana
 cómela tú, señor, que te será buena e sana;
 para mí e a los otros la canal que es vana;"
 el león fue sañudo, que 'de comer avía gana.°

he felt like eating

86. «Alçó el león la mano por la mesa santiguar,
 dio grand golpe en la cabeça al lobo por lo castigar;

el cuero con la oreja del caxco^o le fue arrancar;
el león a la rraposa^o mandó la vianda^o dar.

the head
vixen, meat

87. «La gulpeja^o con el miedo, e commo es artera,
toda la canal del toro al león dio entera;
para sí e los otros todo lo menudo era;
maravillóse el león de tan buena igualadera^o

vixen (a different term)

distributor

88. «El león dixo: “Comadre, ¿quién vos mostró a fazer partiçión
tan buena tan aguisada^o tan derecha con rrazón?”
Ella dixo: “En la cabeça del lobo tomé yo esta liçión,
en el lobo castigué qué feziese o qué non.”

appropriate

89. «Por ende yo te digo, vieja e non mi amiga,
que jamás a mí non vengas nin me digas tal enemiga,
sinon yo te mostraré cómmo el león castiga,^o
que el cuerdo e la cuerda en mal ageno castiga^o »

enseña

recibe una lección

90. E segund diz Jhesu Xpisto, non hay cosa escondida
que a cabo de tienpo non sea bien sabida;
fue la mi poridat luego a la plaça salida,
la dueña muy guardada fue luego 'de mí partida.^o

me abandonó

91. Nunca desde esa ora yo más la pude ver;
enbióme mandar que punase^o en fazer
algún triste ditado que podiese ella saber,
que cantase con tristeza 'pues la non podía haver.^o

I might try

I couldn't have her

92. Por conplir su mandado de aquesta mi señor,⁵³
fize cantar tan triste commo este triste amor;
cantábalo la dueña, creo que con dolor,
más que yo podría ser dello trobador.

93. Diz el proverbio viejo: «Quien matar quisier su can
achaque le levanta porque non le dé del pan»;
los que quieren partirnos, como 'fecho lo han,^o
mescláronme^o con ella e dixiéronle del plan.

lo han hecho

me pusieron mal

⁵³ Señor in medieval Spanish served for both genders, = modern **señora**.

94. Que me loava della commo de buena caça,
E que profaçava^o della commo si fuese çaraça⁵⁴
diz la dueña sañuda: «Non hay paño sin rraça^o
nin el leal amigo non es en toda plaça».
- spoke badly
defect
95. Commo dize la fabla: «Quando a otro sometem
cual palabra te dizen, tal coraçón te meten»
posiéronle grand saña, desto se entremeten;
diz la dueña: «Los novios non dan quanto prometen».
96. Commo la buena dueña era mucho letrada,
sotil, entendida, cuerda, bien mesurada,
dixo a la mi vieja, que le avía enbiada,
esta fabla conpuesta, de Ysopete⁵⁵ sacada.
97. Diz: «Quando quier' casar omne con dueña mucho onrrada,
promete e manda mucho 'desque la ha cobrada,^o
de quanto le prometió o le da poco o nada;
faze commo la tierra quando estava finchada.^o
- once she is conquered
swollen
- Ensiemplo de cuando la tierra bramava^o*
- made much noise
98. «Ansí fue que la tierra començó a bramar;
estava tan finchada que quería quebrar:^o
a cuantos la oíen podíe mal espantar;
commo dueña 'en parto,^o començóse de coitar.
- break
in labor
99. «La gente que tan grandes bramidos oía,
coydauan que era preñada, atanto se dolía,
pensavan que grand sierpe o grand bestia pariría,
que a todo el mundo conbríe^o e estragaría.
- comeria
100. «Quando ella bramava, 'pensavan de foír,^o
- began to flee
- ⁵⁴ Çaraça refers to a sort of dog poison, usually ground glass mixed with some chopped meat.
- ⁵⁵ Ysopete = Aesop, the author of the famous animal fables that have circulated widely since Antiquity and offered valuable lessons to readers everywhere across many centuries. The Archpriest here is indicating the source of his fable. In the Middle Ages, especially in France, fable collections were frequently known as Ysopets.

Spanish-English Glossary

Norms Followed and Suggestions for Use

In developing this glossary I have attempted to include all words glossed in the margins of the edition or explained in footnotes. With relatively few exceptions, I have attempted to exclude words used by Juan Ruiz which are identical to modern Spanish forms; the chief exceptions are limited to words which, despite their form, have a rare or distinctive meaning or usage by the poet. Please bear in mind that this is a selective glossary only, not a complete lexicon of the *Libro de buen amor*. With regard to forms of words, I have tried to save space by using parentheses to indicate variant spellings of the same basic word. Accordingly, *ab(b)ad* means that Juan Ruiz (or the medieval scribe) uses the word spelled *abad* and *abbad* and I have indicated with the parenthetical abbreviation (VS) that these are variant spellings of one word. Entries such as *pleitesía / pletesía / pletisía* means that all three recorded spellings are encountered in the text at different points. I hope that these (VS) indications will prove helpful to the users of this edition and not a hindrance or burden. With regard to alphabetical order, I have retained the older Spanish alphabet in which **Ç**, **CH**, and **LL** are considered separate letters. Entries in **Ç** and **CH** follow in sequence all entries in **C**. Words beginning with **LL** follow all entries in simple **L**. Words beginning with **R** or **RR** (even those which represent cases of variant spellings) are grouped together in a single list. Words beginning with **Ç** would equate to words beginning with **Z** in modern Spanish, but I have left them right after the section of words in **C**. Within each letter I have allowed my computer's sort function to alphabetize the entries; this decision may account for some occasional oddities in the resulting alphabetical order.

A
a las vegas at times
a legem prescribes laws (Latin)
a to
aba, aba cry of alarm, help!, look out!

ab(b)ad abbot, prior (VS)
aballar to knock down, to lay
abarcar to grab, to take control of, to
seize

- abarredera** dragnet, mover, destroyer, broom, sweeper, scourge
- abastado** supplied
- abastar** to supply, to suffice
- abatido** hunted
- abatir** to hunt, to descend on, to swoop
- abatis** of the abbot
- abaxar** to crouch, to go down, to diminish, to go out (i.e. a candle or flame)
- abbatis** of the abbot
- abbuelbola** scream of joy, joyful noise
- abdiência** courtroom
- abebrar** to satiate (i.e. one's thirst), to give drink to, to quench
- abeitar / aveitar** to trick, to deceive (VS)
- abeite** bait, trap, deception
- abejón** bumble bee
- Abel** Cain's brother (from the Bible)
- abenencia** agreement or settlement of a legal dispute, compromise
- abenir** to reach a settlement or agreement, to compromise
- abeyte** trick, deception
- ábito(s)** habit(s) (clerical attire for priests or nuns)
- abiudad vos** out loud
- abivarse** to excite oneself, to arouse
- ablaçar** to coil around, to hug (figurative)
- ablandar** to calm, to make submissive
- ablenar** to winnow (to separate wheat from chaff by tossing it into the air)
- ableujar** to abbreviate, to shorten
- abolverse** to entangle, to mix with, to associate with
- abondar** to supply, to furnish, to suffice, to abound, to satiate
- abondo** abundance, abundant, sufficient
- aborescas** you abhor, despise
- aborrençia** abhorrence, hatred, aversion
- aborreçer** to abhor, to despise
- aborrido, -a** abhorred, hated, despised
- aborrir** to abhor, to hate, to despise, to detest
- abraçar** to embrace, to hug
- Abrahán** Abraham (biblical personage)
- abrebar** to satiate (i.e. one's thirst), to give drink to (VS)
- abreujar** to abbreviate, to shorten (VS)
- abril / abryl** April (VS)
- abrir** to open
- absoluer** to absolve, to forgive
- abta** apt, appropriate, suitable
- aburrir** to hate, to shun, to abhor
- abutarda** bustard (bird)
- abyvar** to urge
- acabado, -a** finished, completed, accomplished, serious
- acabar** to finish, to complete, to accomplish
- acabesçer** to succeed, to accomplish, to obtain
- acae(s)çer** to happen, to occur (VS)
- acaesçimiento(s)** occurrence(s)
- acalañar** to calumny, to malign, to prohibit, to accuse falsely
- Açebín / Açelín / Açelýn (Rabí)** a fictitious character in the poem (a Rabbi) (VS)

- açedia** Sloth (one of the seven deadly sins), worse than laziness, idleness
- açedo** sour, disagreeable
- açenia / açeña** water wheel (farm implement)
- açerca** near by
- açertar** to get something right, to guess, to find, to conclude
- achacar(se)** to be accused, to accuse oneself, to claim, to attribute to oneself, to persist
- achaque** pretext, illness
- açidente** accident, chance occurrence
- acidia / açidia / açidya** Sloth (one of the seven deadly sins), worse than laziness (VS)
- açina** chance for love (VS)
- Acipreste / Açipreste de Fita / Hita** Archpriest of Hita (the author / protagonist of the poem) (VS)
- acoger(se) / acojer(se)** to guard against something, to shelter oneself (VS)
- acomendar** to commend, to dedicate
- acordar (en)** to remember, to recall, to agree on, to settle
- acordado** agreement, agreed upon
- acorrer** to aid, to help, to rescue
- acostar** to smooth, to approach, to situate, to tilt, to incline, to bury
- acostunblado / acostunbrado, -a** accustomed, familiar, knowing (VS)
- acta** apt, appropriate, suitable, done properly
- acusioso / açuioso / acuzioso** busy, diligent, eager to work (VS)
- acuerdo** agreement, accord
- acusación** accusation
- adalid** leader, scout
- adama** idea, notion, means
- adamar** love potion, lovers' gifts
- Adán** Adam (from the Bible)
- adáraga** leather shield (oval in shape)
- adefina(s)** Jewish meal(s) on the eve of the Sabbath
- adelantado** judge appointed by the king, governor of a frontier province
- adelantar** to advance, to move forward
- adelfinas** Jewish meals on the eve of the Sabbath (VS)
- adeljñar / adelyñar** to fix, to arrange, to aim, to guide (VS)
- adestrar** to lead, to guide
- adevñar / adeujñar** to divine, to guess (VS)
- adevino** seer, soothsayer
- adó** to where, to where?
- adobar** to prepare, to arrange
- adólo (to)** where did it go?, where to now? (poetic license)
- adonado, -a** adorned
- adonar(se)** to adorn (oneself)
- adorar** to worship, to adore, to pray to
- adormirse** to get sleepy, to weaken, to fall asleep
- adraguea** small treat (sugar paste), bon bons
- aducho, -a** gift, something brought
- aducir** to bring
- aduxo** gift, present, brought
- adyvas** vives (throat inflammation common to farm animals)
- afán** toil, care, suffering, struggle
- afeytadas** adorned, made up (i.e. using makeup)

- afeytar** to make up (using cosmetics)
afeyte make-up
afertar to spy on (?)
afilado slender, thin
afinar to finish, to tune (i.e. a musical instrument)
afincado, -a / affyncado, -a pressured, inconvenienced (VS)
afincamiento pressuring
afincar / afynar to pressure, to inconvenience, to beg insistently (VS)
afiuizjar / afiuzar to promise, to pledge (VS)
afogar(se) to suffocate
aforrar(se) to liberate, to set free
afrae alarm, tumult, conflict
afrecho bran
afruenta affront, insult, disgrace
afuziado, -a promised, pledged, trusting (VS)
afuziar to promise, to pledge, to trust (VS)
afyncarse to stay fixed in
ageno, -a alien, someone else's
agorar to augur, to predict
agorero augurer, reader of auguries, diviner
agosto August
agra rough (to the touch)
agranizar to hail (i.e. ice pellets falling from the sky)
agraujado(s) aggrieved, wronged, insulted, injured
agraz green (unripe), bitterness
agrillo sour, bothersome, bitter
aguaducho brought by the water, canal, aqueduct
aguardar to await, to guard
aguas waters
agudo, -a sharp (point or blade), (tongue), high-pitched
agüero augury, prediction, omen
agujjar to spur on (a horse), to stimulate, to incite, to hurry
agujjón spur (for a horse), goad, prod
agujla eagle
agujsado, -a appropriate, just, wisely, complimentary
agujsar to be right, to be suitable or appropriate
agujar to spur, to goad, to prod (VS)
Agustino Augustinian
aguzadera sharpening stone (for weapons), whetstone
aguzar to stimulate, to prepare, to sharpen
ahe(vos) here (you have), behold
ahorrar to save (i.e. to economize)
aína soon, quickly, right away
airado angry, annoyed
airar to anger, to annoy
aja`n let's have (i.e. *hayamos* in shortened form, poetic license)
ajenuz fennel seed
ajeuío fool, dolt (uncertain definitions)
ajobar to carry on one's back, dowry, marriage portion, to mate with
ajobo load, weight, burden
ajuar dowry (figurative usage)
ál something else, something different
ala wing
alahé in faith, indeed
alana mastiff bitch
alanes mastiffs
alano mastiff

- Alarcos** a city in Spain, near Ciudad Real, site of a famous battle
- alarde** show, ostentation
- alardo** show, ostentation, bold move (variant form)
- alardoça** islamic bride
- alaúd** affectionately, lovingly (arabism)
- aluarda** packmule
- alvardán / aluardán, -a** fool, dunce, dolt (VS)
- Alberche** tributary of Tajo River
- albillo** white
- albogón** large recorder (type of flute)
- albugue** recorder (type of flute)
- alboroçar(se)** to rejoice, to be agitated, to make noise
- albuébola** scream of joy, racket, noise
- albures** dace (a kind of fish)
- alcahueta** go between, matchmaker, procuress
- Alcalá** a major city near Madrid, site of an important university
- alcalde** judge (not *mayor*, as in modern Spanish)
- alcalle** judge (VS)
- alcançar** to reach, to catch up to
- alcándora** tunic, white shirt, dressing gown
- Alcántara** an important Spanish city, headquarters of a major military order
- Alcaraz / Alcares** the name of a Moorish king (VS)
- alcaría** farm, country house, grange
- alçamiento** uprising, arrogance
- alçar(se)** to raise, to rise up
- alcayata** type of nail
- alcoholera** a vessel to hold cosmetic eye liner
- Alcudia** a city in southern Spain near Ciudad Real
- Alda(ra)** name of one of the mountain women
- alegrança** joy, pleasure
- alegrarse** to rejoice, to be happy (about something)
- alegre e pagado** happy and pleased
- alevoso, -a** treacherous
- Alexandre** Alexander the Great
- Alexandria** Alexandria, the great city in Egypt
- alexar** to keep away, to go away, to withdraw
- alfaja** jewel, ornament for a woman, thing of value
- alfajeme** bloodletter, barber
- alfámar** rugs, carpets, cloths
- alfayate** tailor
- alfenique** almond paste (a confection), aromatic sugar barley paste
- alférez** standard-bearer, lieutenant, cup bearer
- Alffonsus Paratinen(sis)** Alfonso de Paradinás, scribe of the Salamanca manuscript
- alfoz** district, area, lot of land, narrow valley
- algarear** attack from afar, skirmish, to show affection, to shout
- algo** property, wealth (not modern Spanish *something*)
- alguaçil** bailiff, constable, guard
- Algueva** likely proper name of one of the serranas
- alhaonar** to stir emotions, to move (i.e. emotionally), to bother

- alheles** pins (variant of *alfileres*)
- alheña** henna (a reddish-brown dye used as a cosmetic)
- alhiara** a drinking vessel made of cow's horn, used by shepherds
- alholí** granary
- alhorre** falcon (?), hawk
- alhoz** district (VS)
- Alí** an islamic proper name
- aliara** lunch to celebrate a pact or agreement
- alimpiar** to clean
- aliso** alder tree
- alixandria** from Alexandria
- Alixandría** Alexandria, the great historical city of Egypt (VS)
- aljaba** / **aljaua** quiver (carrying case for archer's arrows), bag (figurative) (VS)
- allegarse** to gather up treasure
- almadana** hammer for breaking rocks, heart breaker (figuratively)
- almagra** iron oxide more or less of claylike consistency, red ochre
- almajar** cloth cloak woven in Almería, silk mantles
- almario** variant form of *armario*, wardrobe (i.e. storage closet), book chest
- almorçar** / **almozar** to eat breakfast (not *lunch*, as in modern Spanish)
- almohalla** army, force, troops
- almohaza** busybody, meddling person, curry comb
- almueça** / **almueza** the hollow of the hand(s) to hold a quantity of something (food)
- Almuerzo** (**don**) Sir Breakfast, one of the poet's fictional characters
- alo** halloo, a cry to urge on a hunting dog
- alongado** far away, distant
- alongar** to elongate, to prolong, to be distant from
- alrote(s)** idle, wicked tramp(s)
- altaba** doornocker, bolt lock
- alteza** highness
- altibaxo** a type of dance requiring much jumping
- altra** other
- alualá** love letter
- alva** dawn, daybreak, sunrise
- aluañar** drain, sewer
- alvardán** buffoon, fool
- aluardana** strummed musical instrument, decorated
- Aluerche** tributary of Tajo River (VS)
- alu(jill)o** (little) white (VS)
- alunbrar** to illuminate
- Alý** (**don**) generic name for Islamic foe
- alympiar** to clean
- amans(s)ar** to tame (VS)
- amargo**, **-a** bitter
- amargote(s)** pretense(s), bitterness(es)
- amarillo,-a** / **amariello,-a** yellow (VS)
- amas** both
- amata** scribal error for **atama** = to finish, to end
- amatar(se)** to go out, to put out, to suffocate, to finish, to extinguish
- ambicia** ambition
- amen** Amen (the request that a prayer be answered) (Latin)
- amidos** reluctantly, against one's will

- amigança** friendship
- amigote(s)** false, treacherous friend(s)
- amistança** friendship
- amodor(r)ido, -a** sleepy, drowsy, unconscious, comatose (VS)
- amolado** sharpened
- amondar** to prune, to thin out (i.e. plants), to clean, to clear
- Amor (don)** Sir Love, one of Juan Ruiz's fictional characters
- amor (Libro de buen)** title of the poem according to internal evidence
- amoroso, -a** amorous
- amorte(s)cer** to swoon, to pass out, to lose consciousness, to near death, to grow dim (VS)
- amos** both
- amparanza** shelter, protection
- amuerzo** breakfast (VS)
- amugronador** layer of vine shoots
- amxy** go away, get lost (Arabic word)
- añadir** to add
- añafil / añafyl** Moorish trumpet (VS)
- añal** one year old (i.e. a farm animal)
- ambiçia** ambition (VS)
- ambos** both (VS, see **amos**)
- ancheta de caderas** slightly broad in the hips
- añçiano** aged, old, elderly
- andaluz** Andalusian (from southern Spain)
- Andaluzja** Andalusia (southern Spain)
- andanza** fortune (good or bad, when used respectively with **buen** or **mal**)
- andariego, -a** roving, prowling, runner, messenger
- andeluya** Hallelujah (Latin)
- andit** I walked (irregular preterite of **andar**)
- andudiere** he might walk (irregular future subjunctive of *andar*)
- andudiese** he might walk (irregular imperfect subjunctive of **andar**)
- andudo** he/she walked, crossed (irregular preterite of **andar**)
- añejo** old, aged (i.e. wine)
- angostillo** a little narrow, a bit thin
- angosto** narrow
- angostura (cogido en)** straits, duress (caught in, figurative language)
- angujlla** eel
- ánima** soul
- animalja / animalya** animal (VS)
- anparança** help, aid, assistance
- áns(s)ar(es)** goose (geese) (VS)
- ans(s)arones** large geese (VS)
- ansí / ans(s)ý** thus, so, in this/that way (VS)
- antaño** last year
- ante** before (in space or time), in the presence of
- ante facien onium** in the presence of the rest (Latin)
- antipara** dissimulation, concealment, caution, reticence
- antojado, -a** longed for, fondly desired, obsessed with
- antojar** to long for, to desire fondly
- antojo** whim, fancy, longing
- Antón (Sant)** Anthony (Saint)
- antre** before (VS)
- añafil / añafyl** Moorish (musical) pipe (VS)
- añal** yearling
- anzuelo** hook, i.e. fishhook