Proverbs and sentences in medieval Spanish literature[1]

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Abstract

The present study is an important contribution in the approach to proverbs and sentences through the most significant medieval literary texts written in Spain (the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Libro de Apolonio* in the XIII century; the *Libro de Buen Amor* by Arcipreste de Hita, the *Proverbios morales* by Don Sem Tob de Carrión, the *Tractado de la Doctrina*, the *Libro del Caballero Zifar* and *El Conde Lucanor* in the XIV century; the *Cancionero de Baena* and *El Corbacho* in the XV century). All these works, like many others of these centuries, are enriched throughout with proverbs, frequently introduced by some formula, manipulated for metric reasons, followed by others proverbs and not always cited in its complete form, accompanied by numerous biblical references of the *Old* and *New Testament* and of ancient authors. Many of these brief and sententious statements have lasted until our time sometimes in the same form, in other cases with some variations. Many are transmitted above all by women, repository of oral folklore, as it appears in the title of the Santillana's compilation of the 15th century, by "viejas tras el fuego".

Keywords: Paremiology. Proverb. Literature. Middle Age.

Resumen

Título: «Refranes y sentencias en la literatura medieval española».
El presente estudio es una aportación muy valiosa para el acercamiento a los refranes y sentencias a través de los más significativos textos literarios medievales elaborados en España (el *Libro de Alexandre* y el *Libro de Apolonio* en el siglo XIII; el *Libro de Buen Amor* del Arcipreste de Hita, los *Proverbios morales* de Don Sem Tob de Carrión, el *Tractado de la Doctrina*, el *Libro del Caballero Zifar* y *El Conde Lucanor* en el siglo XIV; el *Cancionero de Baena* y *El Corbacho* en el siglo XV). Todas estas obras, como otras muchas de estos siglos, se enriquecen con la presencia de refranes, introducidos con frecuencia por algunas fórmulas, manipulados por exigencias de métrica, seguidos inmediatamente de otros y no siempre citados en su forma completa, acompañados de numerosas citas bíblicas del *Antiguo* y del *Nuevo Testamento* y de autores antiguos. Muchos de estos enunciados breves y sentenciosos han llegado hasta nuestros días unas veces tal cual, otras con alguna variante. Muchos son transmitidos sobre todo por boca de mujer, depósito del folclore oral, como aparece en el título del repertorio de Santillana del siglo XV, entre «viejas tras el fuego».

Palabras clave: Paremiología. Refrán. Literatura. Edad Media.

Résumé

Título : « Proverbes et sentences dans la littérature espagnole du Moyen Âge ».
Cette étude est un apport très précieux à l'étude des proverbes et des sentences à travers les textes littéraires les plus représentatifs rédigés en Espagne au Moyen Âge (le *Libro de Alexandre* [Livre d'Alexandre] et le *Libro de Apolonio* [Livre d'Apolonio] au XIII^{e} siècle; le *Libro de Buen Amor* [Livre du Bon Amour] de l'Archiprête de Hita, los *Proverbios morales* [Proverbes moraux] de Don Sem Tob de Carrión, le *Tractado de la Doctrina* [Traité de la Doctrine], le *Libro del Caballero Zifar* [Livre du Chevalier Zifar] et *El Conde Lucanor* rédigés au XIV^{e} siècle ; le *Cancionero de Baena* [Chansonnier de Baena] et *El Corbacho* du XV^{e} siècle). Tous ces ouvrages, comme d'autres de l'époque,

Mots-clés: Parémiologie. Proverbe. Littérature. Moyen Âge.

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s'enrichissent de la présence de proverbes, introduits par des formules, altérés par des exigences métriques, suivis d'autres proverbes et pas toujours cités en entier, accompagnés de nombreuses citations bibliques de l'*Ancient* et du *Nouveau Testament* et d'auteurs anciens. Nombre de ces énoncés brefs et sentencieux sont arrivés jusqu'à nos jours tantôt tels quels, tantôt avec une variante. Beaucoup de ces proverbes sont transmis para les femmes, creuset du folklore oral, comme le signale par le titre du répertoire de Santillana du XV^{e} siècle, « vieilles devant le feu ».

INTRODUCTION

In 1959, the magnificent study by the Irish researcher Eleanor O'Kane entitled *Refranes y frases proverbiales españoles de la Edad Media* (Spanish Proverbs and proverbial phrases of the Middle Ages) appeared as annex 2 of the publications of the Bulletin of the Spanish Royal Academy. Its publication constitutes a very valuable contribution to the knowledge of our immensely rich medieval proverbs. This great collection of proverbs is preceded by an interesting –although sometimes debatable– study of the medieval Spanish proverb collection.

For a proper study of our medieval Paremiology, it is natural to resort to sources. It is therefore necessary to carefully examine the proverb collections developed at that time, and also to carefully read our medieval literary texts in order to detect their paremias and to study the why and how of their use, their meaning and their value.

A simple and quick reminder of our most significant medieval proverb collections:

a. the *Romancea proverbiorum*, which offers us a hundred and a half proverbs collected in the middle of the 14th century by an Aragonese student among his notes or notes of grammar and philosophy, [hw. Hist. Acad. Published by A. Ríus Serra. *Revista de Filología Española*, XIII, 1926].
b. the Glossary of another student also from Aragon, and as well from the middle of the 14th century, which gathers 85 proverbs between proverbs in incorrect Latin and humorous notes.
c. the *Fragmento del programa de un juglar cazurro*, created by an Andalusian juggler at the beginning of the 15th century (year 1410).
d. the famous *Seniloquium*, from the middle of the 15th century, with its 497 proverbs, most of them popular. [Nat. libr. hw. 19.343. Published by F(rancisco) N(avarro) S(antín). Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, X, 1904].
e. the *Refranes famosíssimos y provechosos glosados*. Collection of 279 proverbs. Although published in 1509 in Burgos, there seems to have been an earlier edition, already in 1490.
f. The *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego*, attributed to the Marquess of Santillana, as it appears in its first edition in Seville in 1508. It should be noted that a hundred of his 728 proverbs coincide almost exactly in some cases or are very similar in others with proverbs from the previous collection.

There could be added some Spanish collections of aphorisms and sentences that appeared during the first half of the 13th century, such as the *Bonium* (or *Bocados de Oro*) and also *Poridad de poridades* (or *Secreto de los secretos*) or as well *Flores de la filosofía*.

For some authors, the number of medieval Spanish proverb collections is lower than their counterparts in France and Germany. Less curiosity in the medieval Spain about these collections than seemed to be felt in other European countries? Maybe so. But it is also possible that, because the proverb is very familiar here, one does not feel the need to have collections in which they were collected.

Without disregarding these collections, no way, for this conference we have preferred to focus our attention on our medieval literary texts, a true mine of proverbs and an authentic quarry of popular knowledge collected and used by our writers.

After quite a few hesitations, we have decided to follow a chronological order, focusing our attention on the following texts:

1. two from the 13th century: 1.1. the *Libro de Alexandre.* 1.2. the *Libro de Apolonio*
2. five of the 14th century: 2.1. the *Book of Good Love* by the Archpriest of Hita. 2.2. the *Proverbios morales* by Don Sem Tob de Carrión. 2.3. the *Tractado de la Doctrina.* 2.4. *The Book of the Knight Zifar.* 2.5. *Tales of Count Lucanor*
3. three from the 15th century: 3.1. the *Cancionero de Baena,* especially the compositions by Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino. 3.2. *El Corbacho.* 3.3. *La Celestina.*

1. *LIBRO DE ALEXANDRE* [first half of the 13th century]. ***LIBRO DE APOLONIO*** [mid-13th century]

I must confess that I really enjoyed reading the *Libro de Alexandre* again in preparation for this conference. Among other reasons because it has made me relive my already distant times as a student of Semitic Philology in which my teacher of Arabic, García Gómez, made us live the beauties of his stunning work *Un cuento árabe de la leyenda de Alejandro* (An Arab tale of the legend of Alexander). And much more recently, it reminded me of my readings and re-readings of the legendary history of Alexander the Great in ancient French and also, and above all, that, which was written in what is commonly called, following Ascoli, 'Franco-Provençal', and which, for my part, and for very obvious reasons, I prefer to call 'Italianfrancoprovençal'. And even of *Alexandre le Grand* by Racine (1665).

We have collected about thirty paremias from the Spanish *Libro de Alexandre* from the middle of the 13th century. They are frequently introduced by very significant formulas, like: 'como diz el proverbio' (1905a) 'como diz el vierso' (1478b) 'el escripto lo diz' (1854d), 'los proverbios viejos siempre son verdaderos' (2240c), 'si quisieras creer los proverbios antigos' (1650c), 'diz la escriptura' (1847a y 2209c), 'como diz' el escripto de Dios nuestro Señor' (2664a), 'como diz el salmista en esto grantverdat' (2464a), whose add-on 'en esto gran verdad' was required because of the need to complete the verse and to have an easy rhyme with 'vanidat', 'voluntat' and 'la meitat' of the verses that complete that stanza.

Of the about thirty paremias that we have collected from the *Libro de Alexandre*, only three will be cited now. And in all three cases we do so mainly because of their coincidence with those found in other Spanish literary works from the Middle Ages.

In the first place the one that appears in the stanza 1905 (verses ab): "Como diz el proverbio que non ha encubierta / Que en cabo de cosa a mal non se revierta", which we can also find in *The Book of Good Love* by the Archipriest of Hita, whose stanza 63 says as follows: "Como dize el proverbio –y es palabra bien cierta– / Que mal resulta siempre toda cosa encubierta".

Secondly, we will remember verse d of the stanza 63, which reads as follows: "El dar fiende las peñas e lleva todo prez".

This proverb appears twice in *La Celestina*. Once said by Celestina in the act III "El dinero las peñas quebranta", and another in the most used form "Dádivas quebrantan peñas" (Traso, in the appendix).

We must add, that Correas offers us a second part, where he rhymes 'peñas' with 'greñas': "Dádivas quebrantan peñas y hacen venir las greñas".

In *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* the proverb can be found in a real short form "Dádivas quebrantan peñas" (no. 186), reminding this one to another with a very similar philosophy: "Quien dinero tiene, alcanza lo que quiere" (no. 628). And finally the stanza 1854 goes in its verses ab as follows: "Cortemos yerva mala que non ha encubierta / Que en cabo de cosa a mal non se revierta", that immediately remind us of the stanza 17 of the *Libro de Apolonio*, where we can read: "La verdura del ramo es como la rayz, / De carne de mi madre engrueso mi cerviz".

And since we have just mentioned the *Libro de Apolonio*, let us point out, in addition to this paremia, the one that says: "Commo dize el proverbio que suele retrayer, / Que la cobdigia mala saco suele romper" (57 ab); paremia that obviously reminds us of the very well known "La codicia rompe el saco", which appears in *Refranes* by the Marquess of Santillana under following form "Cobdigia mala, saco rompe" (no. 148).

Commenting *Proverbios morales* by Don Sem Tob de Carrión we remember his stanza 206, which also alludes to the consequences of the greed. And then we will also add a testimony of the *Tractado de la Doctrina* censoring greed.

2. *THE BOOK OF THE GOOD LOVE* [14th century]

A moment ago, we quoted the passage from *The Book of Good Love* in which we read: "Como dize el proverbio –y es palabra bien cierta– Que mal resulta siempre toda cosa encubierta", suggested by its coincidence with another from the *Libro de Alexandre*.

In his *Book of Good Love*, Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, not only displays his mastery of the language with an extraordinary lexical richness, but also –and this is precisely what interests us now– reveals a great mastery in the use of proverbs as well as, above all, sentences, in many cases of his own harvest.

Among the many advices and norms that Juan Ruiz uses in this work, quite a few are proverbs of great interest for Paremiology.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, not at all, we have recorded up to a hundred and a half paremias taken from the *Book of Good Love*.

It is true that in quite a few occasions it is difficult to determine whether the paremia provided by the Archpriest is an already used paremia or if it is a creation of his own.

Even in the cases in which the paremias taken by him are of more or less current use and familiar at his time, it is evident that very often the Archpriest, apparently at least, "deforms" them to give them a special form, among other reasons, because it is so demanded by the necessities of the metric.

So, for instance, he writes in the stanza 526 (verses ab): "Es el agua muy blanda y da en piedra muy dura, / Mas, si da muchas veces, hace gran cavadura".

In *La Celestina* the same idea appears in the form: "Una continua gotera horadará una piedra" (Sempronio, act VIII). And in *Crónica* by Don Alvaro de Luna this proverb can be found in a very expressive form: "La gotera cava la piedra cayendo en ella por continuas veces". Correas, for his part, will take it over by proverb: "La gotera dando, hace señal en la piedra", adding afterwards the following interpretation: "Así acaece porfiando hacer mella en la dama o en su fama".

In the Spanish from nowadays we can find this paremia under the five following forms: "La gota de agua horada la piedra", "La gotera cava la piedra", "Continua gotera horada la piedra", "Dando la gotera, hace señal en la piedra", "Tantas veces da la gotera en la piedra que hace mella".

Very close to this philosophy, we find these other two testimonies in the same *Book of Good Love*: "Cavando el hombre mucho, la grande peña acuesta" (613 d); "La roca más pesada de la peña mayor / Con nuestra maestría y arte arráncase mejor" (617 cd), immediately drawing very practical conclusions in the stanza below:

Con arte se quebrantan los corazones duros,
Tómanse las ciudades, derríbanse los muros,
Caen las torres altas, álzanse pesos duros:
Por maña juran muchos, por maña son perjuros

A moment ago, when we were talking of the *Libro de Alexandre*, we pointed out some formulas used in it to quote or to introduce a paremia. It is interesting to observe how they are introduced in the *Book of Good Love*. We have registered following formulas in their order of appearance: "lo dice Jesucristo" (90 a); "dice el proverbio antiguo" (93 a); "como dice la fábula" (95 a); "dícelo Salomón y dice la verdad" (105 a); "la fábula lo dice" (109 a); "lo dice Tolomeo y dícelo Platón, / otros muchos maestros en este acuerdo son" (124 ab); "dícelo la escritura" (160 b); "así entended, por cierto, los proverbios antiguos" (165 c); "como bien dice el sabio" (166 a); "como dice el proverbio y es palabra bien cierta" (542 b); "proverbio es repetido" (580 a); "dijo la buena vieja" (796 a); "sé que bien dice verdad el vuestro proverbio chico" (869 a); "acordaos de una hablilla" (870 a); "ya lo dice la fábula que del sabio se saca" (919 a); "aquesta chica hablilla" (921 a) "como dice el proverbio" (928 a); "dice la fábula" (955 c); "como dice la vieja» (957 a); "como dice el proverbio" (977 a); "por ello cada uno de este refrán se entere" (1200 a); "según dice el filósofo" (1518 a); "como dice el cuento" (1622 a).

It is curious –although we want to assume that it is by chance– that the formulas are not repeated, although some –it is true– offer a great resemblance between them.

Up to 23 formulas! We have intentionally failed to mention one more formula and now present it, giving it all the importance that we believe it deserves.

In our medieval literature it is common to find quite a few cases of introducing a proverb by means of some formula. However, never with such a great variety as is done in the *Book of Good Love*.

Speaking of the month of November, the Archpriest of Hita says in the stanza 1273 (verse d): "Las viejas tras el fuego ya cuentan sus patrañas".

In the stanza 796 (verse a) he wrote "dijo la buena vieja". And in the 957 (verses ab): "Como dice la vieja, al tejer su madeja: 'De mala gana el hombre, siempre, morir se deja'".

When you read this, how can you not think of that precious proverb collection attributed –rightly or wrongly, rather rightly and very much– to the Marquess of Santillana, whose title is *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego*!

In the stanza 160 (verses bcd) we can read: "dícelo la escriptura que / 'El buen esfuerzo vence a la mala ventura' / Y 'a toda pera dura gran tiempo la madura'", as well as in the stanza 804 (verse c) in the praise of effort with these words: "El esfuerzo consigue cuantos deseos son".

This praise of effort is repeated over and over again by our medieval writers: "Buen esfuerço quebranta mala ventura", says no. 125 of the *Refranes* of the Marquess of Santillana, who also uses it in his *Cancionero Castellano* edited by the French Hispanist Foulché-Delbosc (I, 198 a), and which also appears in the other *Cancioneros*.

And in a very similar way we read it in the *Libro de Alexandre* (71 a) and in *Caballero et escudero* (XXXV, 243 a) by Don Juan Manuel. And we also find it in *Las Siete Partidas* (II, XXVII, 1) in the form of "Vence el buen esfuerzo la malandancia". And it would be possible to continue contributing examples of this paremia that had such a good predicament in our medieval writers.

By the chaining of three proverbs or proverbial phrases in a witty dialogue between an old lady and the Archpriest, we will bring up the stanza 946 which says so:

Con su pesar la vieja díjome muchas veces:
'Arcipreste, es más grande el ruido que las nueces'.
Díjele: '¡Oíosme el diablo malas vejas con creces!'
Dijo: 'Bebido el vino, hablan mal de las heces'.

We will only comment, and very briefly, on that locution "más es el ruido que las nueces" that can be found in *Vocabulario de refranes* by Correas, where it appears with the addition of "cagajones descabeces". We also find it as it tripped of the lips of Celestina (*Celestina*, act IX) and in the *Cancionero Castellano* from the 15th century edited by Foulché-Delbosc (II, 562 b). It was also used by Álvarez Gato in the form: "Son (...) las nueces más que el ruido".

And since we have stopped for a few brief moments in this paremia "más es el ruido que las nueces", we will reproduce the stanza 907 of this same *Book of Good Love* in which it is reminded that "de una chica nuez nace gran árbol de noguera" in a beautiful stanza that says so:

Huya de habla dañosa la mujer placentera;
Pues un grano de agraz produce gran dentera,
De una chica nuez nace gran árbol de noguera,
Muchas espigas nacen de un grano de cibera.

Our Spanish proverbs –of such extraordinary richness– also possess different proverbs for the same idea. We will limit ourselves to mentioning some of those that are easy to locate in the Spanish-French volume of our *Selección de refranes y sentencias*: "De pequeña centella, grande hoguera" (757), "Con pequeña herida se puede perder la vida" (585), "Por un punto ruin, perdió su asno Martín" (2313), "Por carta de más o de menos, se pierden los juegos" (2260), "Por un clavo se pierde una herradura; por una herradura, un caballo; por un caballo, un caballero; por un caballero, un campo; por un campo, un reino" (2309) [and also: (...) por un caballero, una batalla; por una batalla, una guerra"].

How shall we not remember, among others, the following passages from this same *Book of Good Love*: "Dice el proverbio antiguo: 'quien quiere matar al can / Achaque le levanta; y, así, no le da pan'" (93 ab), "Cuidad no ser indolente, acordaos de una hablilla: / 'Cuando te den la vaquilla, átala con la soguilla'" (870 ab). The proverbs of *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* use them on a very similar way: "Quando te dieren la vaquilla, acorre con la soguilla" (603).

What medium-cultured Spanish reader is unfamiliar at the dawn of the 21st century with the following proverbs and proverbial phrases written by the Archpriest of Hita seven very long centuries ago?: "Pagan alguna ocasión los justos por pecadores" (667 a), "A pan de quince días, hambre de tres semanas" (1491 b), "Ave vieja no suele en red ser apresada" (1208 d), "¡Qué buen manjar, si no fuese el pagar!" (944 d).

And so, we could continue mentioning and commenting on quite a few of the many proverbs that appear in the *Book of Good Love*. But, if we did so, the hour would run out without having abandoned our good Archpriest of Hita. We will pass, therefore, to Don Sem Tob, although later on we will meet again with proverbs from the *Book of Good Love* when commenting on some of those that we will find in other writers.

3. *PROVERBIOS MORALES* BY DON SEM TOB DE CARRIÓN [14th century]

As its very name indicates, this work constitutes a long series of advices of moral doctrine in which quite a few paremias are collected. Like the following: "Quien quiere tomar trucha / Aventúrese al rrío" (154 cd), paremia that is quoted in *La Celestina* with a simple insinuation: "No se toma trucha, etc.", taking for granted that the end is well known.

This very same paremia is written in *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* in the form of: "Quien peces quiere, el rabo se remoja" (no. 591). Let us recall the other stanza of the *Proverbios morales*, where Don Sem Tob criticizes the greed:

Quando lo poco viene,
Cobdiçia de más cresçe.
Quanto hombre más tiene,
Tanto más le fallesçe (206)

which can be put in relation to a paremia that we have already commented on when speaking of the *Libro de Apolonio* and also with this stanza of the *Tractado de la Doctrina*: "Cobdiçias desordenadas / Trahen pérdidas dobladas, / E causan a las begadas / Muerte segura", after advising: "Non cobdiçies la casada, / Parienta ni consagrada, / Por ty non sea quebrantada / Lealtad". Let us see now the stanza of *Proverbios morales*:

Cierto es y non fallesçe
Proverbio toda la vía:
El huesped y el peçe
Fieden al tercero día (526)

Nowadays, we usually say: "El huésped y el pez, al tercer día hiede", "El huésped y la pesca, a los tres días apesta". That is why he uses another proverb collected by Correas: "El güesped y el güevo, fresco". Let us also mention these other stanzas of Don Sem Tob:

Tomar del mal lo menos
Y lo más del bien,
A malos y a buenos
A todos les convien (135)

Quien por un solo tiento
Quiere acabar su fecho,
Una ves entre ciento
Non sacará provecho (146)

And this other one, so pretty:

En lo que Lope gana
Pelayo emprobrese,
Con lo que Sancho sana
Domingo adolese (60)

We cannot fail to point out that in *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* the following appears (with no. 149): "Con lo que Sancho sana, Domingo adolece". Nor will we fail to note that in Correas we find the following: "Con lo que Sancho sana, Marta cae mala", "Con lo que Pedro adolece, Sancho convalece", "Con lo que Pedro adolece, Domingo convalece", "Con lo que Pedro sana y convalece, Domingo adolece", "Con lo que sana el hígado, enferma el bazo".

In *Diálogo de la lengua* it will appear in these forms: "Con lo que Pedro sana, Domingo adolece", "Con lo que sana el hígado, enferma la bolsa". Let us not forget in this regard that also in the 16th century, in the *Lazarillo de Tormes* we can read how the blind man says to his young companion: "lo que te enferma, te sana y da salud". And to finish with *Proverbios morales* by Don Sem Tob de Carrión, this other stanza:

¿Quién puede coger rosa
Sin tocar sus espinas?
La miel es muy sabrosa,
Mas tiene aguas besinas (110)

4. *TRACTADO DE LA DOCTRINA*

Although attributed by Amador de los Ríos to Rabbi Don Sem Tob de Carrión, in codex IV, 6, 21 of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, the following stanza appears as a colophon: "Malos biçios de mi arriedro, / E con todo esto non medro, / Sy non este nombre Pedro / de Beraguer" [See "Biblioteca de Autores Españoles" volume LVII: *Poetas Castellanos anteriores al siglo XV*. Madrid, 1952].

A dozen of stanzas of *Tractado de la Doctrina* constitute genuine paremias. The no. 115 says as follows: "Fasle firme çerradura / A tu lengua, de figura / Que te abise a la cordura / Lo que digas".

In our medieval texts appears the wise advice to know how to be quite over and over again. That is why an old proverb, collected by Correas, says: "La mala llaga sana, y no la de palabra".

The subject of knowing how to keep quiet in Spanish Paremiology is worth a monographic study that we will very possibly undertake in the immediate future. We shall now stop by this observation. But we will come back to it when we comment on the proverbs that appear in the *Book of the Knight Zifar* and also when we talk about *La Celestina*.

Continuing with the *Tractado de la Doctrina* we will mention its stanza 145: "Dize la antigua conseia: / La mal ganada oueja, / Mala fyn ha la pelleja / Y su duenno". We will also mention the stanza 132 that goes as follows: "De parientes y sennor, / Dime qual es el mejor? / Respondió el sabidor: / Pasar sin ellos".

There is a reason why a wise advice says: "Del superior y del mulo, cuanto más lejos, más seguro", whose philosophy corresponds to these other proverbs that we have collected in volume II of our *Selección de refranes y sentencias*: "Cabe señor ni cabe igreja no pongas teja", "Donde está el rey, a tres leguas".

More radical is the way in which it is expressed in the proverb collected by Correas, for, instead of 'a tres leguas', it says 'a cien leguas'.

We will as well mention the stanza of the *Tractado de la Doctrina*, that goes as follows: "Con una honça de miel / Buelven syete de fiel. / Bed que xarope cruel / Este mundo".

And we will end our indications in relation to this interesting work by remembering one of its first stanzas, the number 3, when it is still in a sort of introduction: "Esto pensé ordenar / Para al ninno administrar / Porque es malo despulgar / El çamarro".

Eleanor O'Kane, by the way, relates it with the proverb that goes "Home viejo de castigar y pellón prieto de espulgar malo es" from the *Seniloquium* and with "Si al viejo castigaste, espurga tu gamarrón" from the *Cancionero* by Fernan Pérez de Guzmán.

For our part we will not fail to point out that in *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales* by Correas there is the one that says: "Malo es el zamarro de espulgar y el viejo de castigar y enderezar".

5. *THE BOOK OF THE KNIGHT ZIFAR*

Because of its richness in proverbs and proverbial locutions, the *Book of Good Love,* just as especially this one of the *Knight Zifar*, and even more *La Celestina* offer more than enough material to be able to dedicate to each one of them at least one hour, without exhausting the matter.

Since the *Book of the Knight Zifar* is a prose work, proverbs can be quoted as they are commonly used. There is no need to give them a special shape to adapt them accordingly with metric needs. They can maintain, instead, their own rhyme.

For example: “Quien se arrebata, su pro non cata” (f. 131 v), “La mala fama, antes descubierta que la buena sea cierta” (f. 135 r), “Más vale a ome andar señero que con mal compañero” (f. 136 v), “Quien con perros se echa, con pulgas se levanta” (f. 136 v), “Fas bien, y non cates a quien” (f. 139). Let us see as well the one that goes “Pierde el lobo los dientes, mas no las mientes” (133 r), which, together with no. 547, appears in *Refranes* by Marquess of Santillana in the form of “Pierde el asno los dientes, mas no las mientes”.

In the *Book of the Knight Zifar*, a kind of concatenation similar to the beautiful one we mentioned in the *Book of Good Love* is repeatedly given. “Por un clavo se pierde una herradura; por una herradura, un caballo; por un caballo, un caballero; por un caballero, un campo; por un campo, un reino” (2309) [and also: (...) por un caballero, una batalla; por una batalla, una guerra”].

Let us see some examples: “Ca de la mentira nasçe discordia, e de la discordia, despegamiento, e del despegamiento injuria, e de la injuria despartamiento de amor, e del despartamiento aborrençia, e de la aborrençia guerra, e de la guerra enemistad, e de la batalla crueldat, que estraga todos los ayuntamientos e las compañías de los omes” (f. 123 r).

And he follows short after (in the same page 123): “Mas debe el rey sienpre dezir verdat, ca de la verdat nasçe temor de Dios, nasçe justicia, e de la justigia conpañía, e de la conpañía franqueza, e de la franqueza solás, e del solás amor, e del amor defendimiento”.

And another example: “Ca la verdat sienpre quiere estar en plaça e non ascondída, porque la verdat es raís de todas las cosas loadas; e de la verdat nasçe temor de Dios, e del temor de Dios nasçe justiçia, conpañía de la franqueza, e de la franqueza solás, e del solás amor, e del amor defendimiento, así como de la mentira, que es contraria de la verdat, nasçe despagamiento e discordia, e de la discordia injuria, e de la injuria enamistad, e de la enamistad batalla, e de la batalla crueldat, destruimiento, daño de todas las cosas del mundo” (f. 136 r and 126 v).

Given the great variety of proverbs and sentences contained in this work, there could be many comments. We shall confine ourselves to a few observations.

In the first place, a few that are related to the wisdom of knowing how to keep quiet and the inconvenience of speaking at the wrong time. It seems almost an obsession of quite a few of our medieval writers. And they are right. There is a reason why the wise author of a well-known devotion book or, more precisely, of religious formation, says: “Muchas veces me arrepentí de haber hablado, ninguna de haber callado”. It is not exactly like that, since in some occasions it is appropriate to speak, deserving censorship to shut up for cowardice. That is why it would be better to say: “Muchas veces me arrepentí de haber hablado; y muy pocas de haber callado”.

Twice, in *The Knight Zivar*, the prudent observation “El mucho favlar non puede ser syn yerro” (ff. 116 and 160 v) appears, in accordance to this other one, collected in *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego*: “Mucho fablar, mucho errar” (no.427).

And on pages 116 v and 117 r of the manuscript of *the Book of the Knight Zifar* these other very wise paremias appear in a kind of concatenation relating to this same subject: “Como faze buen callar al que fabla sabiamente, así non faze buen fablar al que fabla torpemente”, “Mejor es al ome que sea mudo que non que fable mal”, “Non puede ome aver peor enfermedat que ser mal fablado é mal corado”, “Contesçe a las vegadas por el coraçón grandes yerros e por la lengua grandes enpieços”, “A las vegadas son peores llagas de lengua que los golpes de los cuchiellos”.

After these considerations about the prudence of knowing how to remain silent, he goes on to talk about patience, using very soon, among others, this paremia: “Cuando uno non quiere dos no pelean”, that in the *Diálogo de la lengua* by Juan de Valdés appears as follows “Quando uno no quiere, dos no barajan”.

Of the many proverbs that we find in *The Knight Zifar*, we will mention only a few that are more familiar nowadays, refraining us –in spite of ourselves– from making general comments.

"Quien se muda, Dios le ayuda" (f. 15 v), "Piedra movediza non cubre moho" (f. 15 v), "Quien buen árbol se allega, buena sombra le cubre" (f. 54v), "Del dezir al fazer mucho ay" (f. 79 r), "Quien todo lo quiere, todo lo pierde" (f. 79 v), "De pequeña centella se levanta gran fuego si ome no pone y consejo" (f. 84 r), "La yerva mala aína cresçe" (f. 96 v), "De los escarmentados se fazen los arteros" (f 104 v), "Más val poco fecho con seso que mucho sin seso" (f. 145 v), "Mal de muchos, gozo es" (f. 186).

Several of these proverbs are also used by other medieval writers. Some of them can be found in the *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego*. And quite a few of them appear in *Vocabulario* by Correas.

Thus, for example, the proverb "Piedra movediza non cubre moho" is also found in the *Refranes* of the Marquess of Santillana in the form of: "Piedra movediza no la cubre moho" (no. 548).

And the proverb "Quien buen árbol se allega, buena sombra le cubre" (f. 54v) appears in *La Celestina*, where Parmeno just insinuates it by proverb: "Quien a buen árbol se arrima…", taking for granted that anyone will be able to grasp the continuation: "buena sobra le cobija", as we will mention later on. Furthermore, the paremia "Quien bien sea non lieve" (f. 15 v) appears sometimes as a tag line of "ca mudándose a menudo pierde lo que ha". And in *Count Lucanor* it can be found as follows: "Quien bien se siede, non se lieve", which means "Quien bien se sienta, no se levanta".

6. *TALES OF COUNT LUCANOR* [14th century]

The second, third and fourth part of this work by Don Juan Manuel constitute an authentic repertoire of medieval sentences and aphorisms. In addition, in the first and fifth part some twenty expressions between proverbs and sentences appear here and there.

We will limit ourselves to recall an interesting paragraph from example XVI, entitled *From the answer that Count Ferrant González gave to his relative Ñuño Laínez*. Thus says the passage that interests us to highlight: "(...) más les contesçería comino dezía el vierbo antigo: 'Murió el ombre e murió el su nombre'; mas si quisiéremos olbidar los viçios e fazer mucho por nos defender e levar nuestra onra adelante, dirán por nos después que muriéremos: 'Murió el omne, mas non murió el su nombre'".

As a simple curiosity, we will mention that in the example XLVII (*De lo que contesçió a un moro con una su hermana que dava a entender que era muy medrosa*) appears a proverb in rejoicing that, translated into Spanish, goes as follows: "Ahá, hermana, despantádesvos del sueño de la tarrezuela que faze boc, boc, e non vos espantávades del desconyuntamiento del pescueço". Then, he adds "este proverbio es agora muy retraído entre los moros".

The witty proverb "Otro loco hay en Chinchilla", also known as "Otro loco hay en el baño" is in a way evoked in the 2nd part of example XLIII (*(De lo que contesçió al bien e al mal, e al cuerdo con el loco).*

Most of the sentences and aphorisms in the second, third and fourth part originate from various collections that appeared in Spain during the first half of the 13th century, such as the *Bonium* or *Bocados de Oro* and also *Paridad de paridades* (or *Secreto de los Secretos*} and *Flores de la filosofía*.

Some of these sentences are still present today, often slightly modified in their external appearance. For example, the one that says: "Mejor sería andar solo que mal acompañado" (316), that instantly remind us of the present "Más vale solo que mal acompañado".

It can also be related to our proverb "Dime con quién andas y te dire quién eres" where we read in the second part of *Tales of Count Lucanor*: "Omne es, con tales se acompaña" (317).

It is quite a good sentence, the one that affirms: "El que sabe, sabe que non sabe; el que non sabe, cuida [es decir, piensa, del latín *cogitare*] que sabe" (318).

A few sentences that contain two parts and that seem to be contradictory attract attention.

For example the following: "Del fablar viene mucho bien; del fablar viene mucho mal" followed by this one: "Del callar viene mucho bien; del callar viene mucho mal".

A little before, we can read this other one: "El mejor pedaço que ha en el omne es el coraçon; esse mismo es el peor" (2nd part). And it is true to raise the issue of the proverb that initially goes "Refrán mentiroso no hay" and "No hay refrán que no sea verdadero" because "Los refranes son evangelios chiquitos". But there are contradictory proverbs as well. For example, in contrast to that one that teaches us "A quien madruga Dios le ayuda"; there is another that points out "No por mucho madrugar amanece más temprano" (o "más aina").

7. *CANCIONERO DE BAENA* [15th century]

The *Cancionero de Baena* is also a rich mine of proverbs, as can easily be seen in the magnificent edition of professors Brian Dutton and Joaquín González Cuenca. Above all, the *Cancionero* (songbook) by Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino who, in addition, is distinguished by his mastery of proverbs and proverbial locutions. We will limit ourselves to very few examples.

In the first place, when in his 're-question' (no. 122 of the mentioned edition) he writes "E por su venida mi barva repelo, echad en remojo essa que rapades", he writes a clear allusion to the proverb, that goes: "Cuando la barba de tu vecino veas pelar, echa la tuya a remojar" (or "pon la tuya a remojo").

This proverb appears as well in *El Corbacho* (I, XVII, 54) and Correas also collects it in his *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales*. We will not fail to point out that in *La Celestina*, Pleberio says in the act XVI: "Debemos echar nuestras barbas a remojo y aparejar nuestros fardeles".

Let us also mention the two verses: "Más vale 'tomo' çiento que mill 'te daré' mesquino", in his *Dezir d'estribot pediéndole merçed al Rey* (no. 219, verses 25-26 of the mentioned edition). These verses instantly remember us of the proverb "Más vale un 'toma' que dos 'te daré'.

In another in *Dezir al rey don Enrique* (no. 58 of the mentioned edition; verses 5-6) he writes: "Quien mal fado ha en la cuna non le viene sin çoçobra", which of course reminds us of the proverbs: "Quien nace con malas fadas, tarde las puede perder", "Quien hadas malas tiene en cuna, o las pierde tarde o nunca", which can be found in *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* (no. 583), where appear as well these two: "Lo que en la leche se mama, en la mortaja sale" (406), "Cabra va por viña: qual madre, tal fija" (166).

Proverbs that, in turn, remind us of these others that we can find in volume II of our *Selección de refranes y sentencias*: "Lo que se aprende en la cuna, siempre dura" (1599), "Lo que se ha por natura, hasta la fuesa dura" (1600), "Genio y figura, hasta la sepultura" (1220), "Lo que entra con el capillo, sale con la mortaja" (1578), "Lo que con el capillo se toma y pega, con la mortaja se deja» (1574), "Lo que en la leche se mama, en la mortaja se derrama" (1577), "Aunque muda el pelo la raposa, su natural no despoja" (379), "El que nace lechón, muere cochino" (2487).

Let us mention as well the ones that go: "Lo que se ha por natura, hasta la fosa dura", "Lo que se mama en la cuna, no acaba hasta la sepultura", and many more relating to the one that says: "De tal palo, tal astilla".

In *Diálogo de la lengua* these two examples are given: "El que malas mañas ha, tarde o nunca las perderá", "Cual la madre, tal la hija; y tal la manta que las cobija".

Let us remember the proverb already mentioned from the *Knight Zivar*: "Pierde el lobo los dientes, mas no las mientes".

Wonderful are the stanzas 3 and 4 in his *Réplica contra el Adelantado Perafán*! (no. 112 of the above-mentioned edition). They go like this:

Mi señor Adelantado,
un exemplo ay aldeano:
que más val' pardal en mano
que buitre muy embolado.
Todo bien considerado,
aquí yaze otro mal:
non dar buitre nin pardal
e profanar el bien dado.

Mi señor Adelantado,
otro exemplo ay antigo:
que dizen que da Dios trigo
en algunt ero sembrado.
Yo como rudo azedado
que nunca aprendí derecho,
quise fruto con provecho
non teniendo barvechado.

There are up to four allusions to the proverbs in these two stanzas. Furthermore, the are the double indication 'un exemplo ay aldeano' in the third and 'un exemplo ay antigo' in the fourth stanza. If the adjective 'antigo', that describes the noun 'exemplo' in the 4th stanza is interesting, the more interesting and especially more significative is the adjective 'aldeano' in the 3rd stanza, that describes the same noun 'exemplo', used with the meaning of 'refrán'.

Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino is not averse to resorting to the proverb, even if its origin, sometimes at least, is so popular that it can be described as 'aldeano'.

A quick reading of these two stanzas brings immediately to mind a whole series of proverbs that are strung one with the other.

In first place, the 'exemplo aldeano' whereby "Más val' pardal en mano que buitre muy embolado" reminds us of the contemporary "Más vale pájaro en mano que buitre volando", "Más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando", which also reminds of the volume II of our *Selección de refranes y sentencias*: "Más quiero huevos hoy que mañana pollos" (1687), "Más vale buena posesión que larga esperanza" (1701), "Más vale 'tengo un ochavo' que 'préstame un cuarto'" (1759), "Más vale un 'toma' que dos ,te daré'" (1766), "No dejes lo ganado por lo que has de ganar" (1911).

We need to point out that it also appears in *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego*: "Más vale páxaro en mano, que bueytre [sic] volando" (422).

Next we read: "Aquí yaze otro mal: / Non dar buitre nin pardal / E profanar el bien dado", that immediately makes us think of our proverbs: "A caballo regalado, no le mires el diente", "A caballo regalado, no le mires la boca", "A caballo regalado, no le guardes el pelo", "A borrico presentado, no hay que mirarle el diente", "A quien dan, no escoge".

In the 4th stanza it says: "Otro exemplo ay antigo: / Que dizen que da Dios trigo / En algunt ero sembrado" which reminds us of: "Dios da el frío conforme al vestido", "Dios aprieta, pero no ahoga", "Dios consiente, pero no para siempre", "Dios que da la llaga, da la medicina», «El frío sabe a quien se arrima". And the 4th stanza finishes by stating: "Quise fruto con provecho / Non teniendo barbechado", which clearly remind us of the proverb that goes: "Quien no barbecha, no cosecha".

And also of the following two that appear in volume II of our *Selección de refranes y sentencias*: "Más vale sazón que barbechera ni binazón" (1747), "Sazón hace trigo, que no barbecho mollido" (2633). And another in a slightly different way: "Quien no llora, no mama".

Although we have limited ourselves to proverbs, sentences and proverbial locutions in the *Cancionero* by Alfonso Alvarez de Villasandino, we cannot resist the desire to quote at least the verses of Juan Álvarez Gato in which, in a beautiful game, he alludes to his own surname without expressly citing it:

Las coplas de mis querellas,
Que vistes vuestras casas,
Vos fuestes la causa dellas,
Aunque pasaste por ellas
Como yo sobre la brasa

Assuming that the locution "Pasar como gato sobre brasas" would jog our memory, locution that, we must remember, also appears in *El Corbacho*.

8. *EL CORBACHO* OR *REPROBACIÓN DEL AMOR MUNDANO* [15th century]

El Corbacho is very rich in proverbs. With great skill the Archpriest of Talavera manages to combine them with numerous biblical quotations, from the *Old* as well as the *New Testament*, and also from different authors of Classical Antiquity, while sometimes resorting to more recent testimonies, such as those of Francisco Petrarca and even the Archpriest of Hita.

On numerous occasions he introduces the proverb with words such as "segund diz el antigo proverbio", or "como dize el enxiemplo", or others of a similar nature, the one that says "Por ende dize el enxiemplo vulgar", which he employs on several occasions.

The last paragraph of chapter IV of the second part is extremely interesting to be able to know the use of proverbs by the Archpriest of Talavera in *El Corbacho*. It is worth reading. It goes like this: "¡O locas syn seso, faltas de entendymiento, menguadas de juyzio natural! Creed, pues, syn dubdar que el que más vos loa es por vos engañar, como dize Catón: 'Dulcemente canta la caña quando el caçador dulcemente cantando con tal engaño toma el ave'. Piense, pues, la muger que con dulces palabras la han de tomar, que non con ásperas; y esto al comienço, que después paresce a lo que le viniere, que dulce es la entrada, mas amarga es la estada; como miel fue la venida, amarga después la vida. Por ende, dixo Salomón: 'Non por comienco la loor es cantada, mas por la fin syenpre fue comendada'. Asy que muchas cosas tyenen buenos comienços que sus fines son diversos. Por eso dise el enxienplo bulgar: "Quien adelante non cata, atrás cae". Por ende, cada qual guarde qué faze o qué dize, que la palabra asy es como la piedra, que salida de la mano non guarda do fiere".

Along with a quotation from Caton and another from Solomon, he brings up to five proverbs, to finish proverb: "E como dize el Sabio: 'Buela la palabra: desque dicha non puede ser rrevocada: desdezirse della sy, mas que ya non sea dicha, ynposible sería'".

One of the most surprising aspects of the use of proverbs in *El Corbacho* as well as in *La Celestina* and also in some of our other literary jewels from the Middle Ages, is that kind of stringed proverbs that are linked with each other as part of the same chain.

Shortly after the example we have just remembered, in the first paragraph of chapter V of that same second part, a new series of proverbs can be found:

> Non guarda vez de molino de forrno nin de honrra, que al primero faze postrero e al postrimero primero; todo va en el dinero. E demás, oy te dirá uno la muger, a cabo de ora otro; sy a uno dize de sy, a otro dize de non; al uno ya fabel, al otro alfilel; al uno da del ojo, al otro por antojo; al uno da del pie, al otro fiere del cobdo; al otro aprieta la mano, al otro tuerce el rrostro.

Short after, another example:

> Toma enxemplo del proverbio antiguo: Perezoso nin tardinero non seas en tomar, muchas cosas prometidas se pierden por vagar; quando te dieren la cabrilla, acorre con la soguilla; quien te algo prometiere, luego tomando fiere.

And so we could continue to provide example after example of series of proverbs that are linked to each other.

True paremiological erudition –nothing easy to achieve– is what *El Corbacho* offers us in chapter 8 of the third part, when, just after affirming that "byen se le devyera menbrar que a buen callar Sancho", (locution that we will comment later) he writes: "Dize el proemio de las Clementinas sobre aquella palabra sylencio", dize:

> 'El favlante sea discreto en favlar', Dize más Ovidio: 'Non ay menor trabajo que callar e mayor pena que mucho favlar, porque trae consygo el mucho errar'. Dize Catón que la primera virtud créese refrenar la lengua. Dize Sócrates: 'Dezir me pesó; callar nunca'. Díze el Arcipreste: 'Sabyeza tenprado callar; locura, demasyado fablar'.

Thus, after a quotation from the proem of *Clementinas*, he brings another from Ovid, followed by another from Caton, which precede one of Socrates and finally another from the Archpriest of Hita.

9. *LA CELESTINA* [end of the 15th century]

La Celestina is a real mine of proverbs. Very advanced is already our elaboration of a "proverb collection of *La Celestina*" in alphabetical order or –as it was said– "in order of the a.b.c.", accompanied by the pertinent commentaries and with an index of all the key words.

No wonder *La Celestina* has aroused the interest of several paremiologists. Among them, José Gella Iturriaga (with his "Refranes de *La Celestina*" [Acts 245-268]) and Anita Bonilla Ernouf (with her doctoral thesis "Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases in *La Celestina*" [Columbia University. 1970]). Without forgetting, from another point of view, the magnificent study by Francisco Castro Guisasola *Observaciones sobre las fuentes literarias de 'La Celestina'* [R.F.E. Anejo V. Madrid. 1924. Reprint 1973].

In *La Celestina*, Fernando de Rojas reveals himself as a true artist in the correct use of the proverb that he handles with exquisite skill and great mastery. And he puts them in the lips of all his characters; mainly in the lips of Celestina, Sempronio and Parmeno; and also, quite a few in the lips of Calisto and Melibea.

In what we could almost call a display of logical paremic knowledge, he offers us throughout his work, a very rich treasure of proverbs. We have collected more than three hundred and a half, in addition to ten biblical quotations, which are in some way paremiological. And about twenty quotations which, according to Castro Guisasola, correspond to Petrarch's Latin works, mainly to his *De remediis*. And also some quotations from Aristotle (his *Physics*), Virgil (the *Aeneid*), Ovid (*Ars amandi*), Seneca (*Letters to Lucilius*), and even from Pseudo-Seneca (*Proverbs*).

Reading *La Celestina*, more than once it may seem to us that its author "thinks in proverbs". So well does he master the proverbs and so familiar it must seem to him, that many times he simply insinuates the proverb. This also makes us think that for Fernando de Rojas the proverb is something very familiar. And also for his audience, since he assumes that a simple insinuation is enough; and he does not think it is necessary to quote the whole proverb or to the letter.

From this we can deduce the vitality and validity of the proverbs used by our people at the end of the 15th century. Just a few quick examples of these simple insinuations of proverbs:

> a. "no se toma truchas, etc." (*Celestina*, act VII) assuming that everyone knows how to conclude it by adding "a bragas enjutas".
> b. "quien a buen árbol se arrima..." (Parmeno, act VIII), which would be completed by proverb "buena sombra le cobija", as we can read, for example, in *Diálogo de la lengua* by Juan de Valdés. Let us remember that we have already found this same proverb, albeit in other words, in the *Book of the Knight Zifar*.
> c. "y a buen entendedor..." (Sempronio, act VIII), which would be easy to complete by thinking "pocas palabras bastan", as we say today and as you can read in *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* (no. 78).
> d. "el ajuar de la frontera" (Centurio, act XVIII), which is completed by adding "dos estacas y una estera", as Correas says "por el poco ajuar de los presidios de soldados de fronteras".

Such is his mastery of the proverbs of his time that sometimes the author of *La Celestina* seems to resort to the curious artifice of dividing a proverb between two interlocutors, as hinting at it with the first and completing it with the one who responds or replies.

Eleanor O'Kane brings two more or less debatable examples in this regard. One of them is very significant, although it is not really a proverb, but a locution. When Areusa, in the act VII, addressing Celestina, says to her: "Tía señora ¿qué buena venida es ésta tan tarde? Ya me desnudaba para acostar", Celestina replies to her by proverb: "¿Con las gallinas, hija? Así se hará la hacienda". We, of course, instantly think of the locution "Acostarse con las gallinas".

Very interesting topics, and to which it would be worth dedicating two studies, are, on the one hand, the possible relations between the proverbs used in *La Celestina* and those of the proverb collection known as *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* attributed to the Marquess of Santillana; and on the other hand, the possible relation of the proverbs of *La Celestina* with those of *Don Quixote*.

The proverbs of *La Celestina* give rise to multiple and very interesting considerations. And they offer more than enough material to dedicate them not only one, but even several hours. We will limit ourselves to a brief mention.

In the first place we will remember how *La Celestina*, in act III, affirms "El dinero las peñas quebranta", while Traso in the part that usually appears as an appendix expresses the same idea by the expression that today is even more familiar to us of "Dádivas quebrantan penas".

Let us state that in the stanza 497 of the *Book of Good Love* –within a long series of stanzas devoted to money– it says so:

> El dinero quebranta las cadenas dañosas,
> Quita cepos y grillos, prisiones peligrosas.
> Al que no da dinero pónenle esposas.
> Hace por todo el mundo cosas maravillosas

Thus concluding:

> Por dinero se muda el mundo en su manera.
> La mujer que codicia dinero, es placentera:
> Por joyas y dinero corre cualquier carrera:
> El dar quebranta peñas, hiende dura madera.

And in *El Corbacho* (II, 1) from the Archpriest of Talavera we can read these two significant paremias: "A dádivas no ay azero que rresysta, / Quanto más persona que es de carne», «Si el dar quiebra las peñas, / Doblegará una muger que non es como piedra".

Let us also remember –as we indicated when we commented on the *Libro de Alexandre*– that in the *Refranes* of the Marquess of Santillana you can read "Dádivas quebrantan penas". And let us also point out –as was done then– that in the *Vocabulario* of Correas it appears with a significant addition, resulting thus: "Dádivas quebrantan peñas y hacen venir de las greñas".

In the act VII, Celestina shows her great mastery of popular proverbs and her ability and mastery to handle them, because for a thing as simple as emphasizing the singularity she brings up to nine proverbs in a row: "No hay cosa más perdida que el mur que no sabe sino un horado" which in *Di*álogo *de la lengua* figures as "Al mur que no sabe más que un agujero, presto lo toma el gato", "Una ánima sola ni canta ni llora", "Un solo acto no hace hábito", "Un fraile solo, pocas veces lo encontrarás en la calle", which recalls the one that says: "Monjas y frailes andan a pares". "Una perdiz sola, por maravilla vuela", "Un manjar solo contino, presto pone hastío", which corresponds to the ones that says: "Todos los días gallina amarga la cocina", "Una

golondrina no hace verano", "Un testigo solo no es entera fe", "Quien sola un ropa tiene, presto la envejece".

And naturally he does not exhaust the possibilities, nor does he seem to intend to do so because in the same book of *La Celestina* some others are quoted that are not listed here. It would not be difficult for us to find more examples in our rich medieval proverb collections. But for Fernando de Rojas it is more than enough to quote those nine, as it might also be excessive to continue adding proverbs to those already mentioned.

We will not fail to point out that in the very same Celestina there appear these other paremias: "Un solo maestro de vicios dicen que basta para corromper un gran pueblo" (Melibea, act IV), "En una hora no se ganó Zamora" (Celestina, act VI), "El buen atrevimiento de un solo hombre ganó Troya". (Calisto, act IV), "Un solo golpe no derriba un roble" (Sempronio, act VIII).

Let us also remember that in the act XVII, Fernando de Rojas puts in Areusa's lips the following observation: "Para esto te dio Dios dos oídos y dos ojos, y no más de una lengua, porque sea doblado lo que vieres y oyeres que no el hablar".

Castro Guisasola –according to Antonio Prieto– points out about this paremia "cómo Diógenes Laercio atribuye este pensamiento a Xenócrates y a Zenón, y fue sentencia que se apropiaron diversos escritores medievales y renacentistas".

When we talk about paremias in *The Knight Zifar* we observe their insistence on providing paremia after paremia to justify the appropriateness of being very prudent in speaking. And we said that this advice is like an obsession in many of our medieval writers.

In addition to the comments that have already been made, we will remember the stanzas 551 and 552 of the *Proverbios morales* of Don Sem Tob de Carrión, which say so:

Pero la meioría
Del callar non podemos
Negar, mas toda vía
Con bien que le contemos.

Porque le meatad quanto
Es el oyr fablemos
Una lengua, por tanto,
Dos orejas tenemos.

And then he adds, within the series of stanzas that he dedicates to the convenience of knowing how to remain silent:

Sy fuese el fablar
De plata figurado,
Deve ser el callar
De oro afynado.

After these considerations, it is well worth remembering two very prudent counsels from the *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego*: "Tras pared ni tras seto no digas tu secreto" (685), "Di tu secreto a tu amigo, e serás siempre su cativo" (199).

Since we have dedicated this observations to number 'one', let us remember two of *La Celestina* talking of number 'three': "A tres tales aguijones no terna cera en el oído" (Sempronio, act XII), "Tres veces dicen que es lo bueno y honesto" (Sempronio, act IX).

Given the natural limitation of time, we renounce to the desire to make considerations regarding the value of the number 'three' in different civilizations as well as in the Middle Ages and in Antiquity, limiting ourselves to remember the triple toast in honor of the three Graces, which sometimes multiplied by three others, result then in 'nine' in honor, in that case, of the nine muses. And we finish these considerations on numbers remembering that in the act I Sempronio exclaims: "¡En sus trece está este necio!" Due to the time limitation to which we alluded

a moment ago, we will only say that there are two possible explanations for this Spanish locutions "estar en sus trece" or "mantenerse en sus trece". On the one hand, it may be an allusion to our Pope Benedict XIII, Pope Luna (late XIV and early XV). But, on the other hand, we can also think of the thirteen articles of the Jewish faith written by Maimonides in the second half of the 12th century.

10. *REFRANES QUE DICEN LAS VIEJAS TRAS EL FUEGO*

And we will end with a few brief considerations about *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego*, attributed to the Marquess of Santillana. Authentic jewel of our Paremiology, with which you can enjoy and learn at the same time. This work could be described as an anthology of popular medieval philosophy compiled at the dawn of the Modern Age. In somewhat peculiar alphabetical order, although it says that "they are ordered by a.b.c.", it is curious to see how some of them are repeated. In particular, the one that says "antes quebrar que doblar" (no. 104) is then included in no. 626 in the form of "quebrar, mas no doblar".

The Marquess of Santillana, in Eleanor O'Kane's opinion, is critical with the use of proverbs, excluding these from his religious and amorous lyrical compositions and in most of his classic or Italianizing works, appearing only in his familiar verses and his satires. Eleanor O'Kane herself offers a very significant example of the *Doctrinal de privados*, a very harsh satire on the occasion of the execution of his enemy Don Alvaro de Luna.

Here is the example we refer to:

> Fize grazias y mercedes,
> Non comí solo mi gallo;
> Mas ensillo mi caballo
> Solo, como todos vedes.

This is a clear allusion, not only ironic but also cruel, of the proverb that says: "Quien solo come gallo, solo ensilla su caballo", which appears with no. 598 in *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego*, where we can also find these others: "Uno piensa el vayo, y otro el que lo ensilla" (no. 702), which Juan de Valdés would later use as an example in his *Diálogo de la lengua*: "Aun no ensillays, y ya cavalgays" (no. 30).

Quite a number of proverbs that we have been quoting from different renowned writers can be found in this *Refranes* by the Marquess of Santillana. Remember, for example, the proverb "Agua vertida, no toda cogida" (no. 91), that we will find later on in *Diálogo de la lengua* by Juan de Valdés, and that corresponds in *Rimado de Palacio* to: "Del agua que se vierte, la medio non es cogida" (445). It should also be remembered that the locution "A buen callar, llaman Sancho" which we found in *El Corbacho*, appears here with no. 2 and is also collected later on in *Diálogo de la lengua*.

Talking of this paremia, we must mention the last verses of the romance *Morir vos queredes, padre. San Miguel os haya el alma,* which alludes to the partition of his kingdom by the king Don Fernando, when he was going to die in the castle of Cabezón in the year 1065, whose final verses go as follows: "Todos dicen amén, amén, / Menos don Sancho que calla", which gave rise to the proverb "Al buen callar llaman Sancho".

In order not to underline, not even with a pencil, nor to write absolutely anything in books, nor in one's own, and even less in those of others, be they private or public, I have as a rule to make photocopies of the texts on which I must work with greater insistence. In the photocopy of these *Refranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* I began to underline in red those that I considered more remarkable, to be able to return with greater facility on them. After a second and then

a third reading, it turned out that the underlining was of little use, because it was too abundant. That is why I had to resort to other colours and other signs with notes and indications in the margin and footnotes. This reveals the enormous importance of this collection, which a moment ago we described as an authentic jewel of Spanish Paremiology, collected on the threshold of the 16th century.

AS EPILOGUE

Many of the proverbs used by our medieval writers have survived to this day and are still very much alive. Sometimes they have arrived as they are; some others with some slight variation. Women have often been not only the best repository of oral folklore, but also the ones who have known how to transmit it from generation to generation. "Por boca de madre" is a graphic expression that we usually use when we refer to the survival of the Judeo-Spanish for five long centuries. That is why the title of R*efranes que dicen las viejas tras el fuego* is very significant. The same as when the Archpriest of Hita in his *Book of Good Love* introduced a proverb with some of the indications that we already gathered above: "dijo la buena vieja", "como dice la vieja", and, above all, that so significant verse that said: "las viejas tras el fuego ya cuentan sus patrañas".

Talking of which, it is obligatory to state that in *Diálogo de la lengua* (1533), when Valdés answered Coriolano's question about whether our proverbs "are like the Latins and Greeks", he affirms that "the Castilians are taken from vulgar proverbs, the most of them born and raised among old women after the fire, spinning their spinning wheels", while "the Greeks and Latins (...) are born among educated people and are celebrated in books of much doctrine".

And finally, I am going to make a confession: it has taken me many, many hours to prepare this conference. I have never needed so much time to prepare a lesson or an hour-long conference. But I must also confess that I have rarely enjoyed it as much as I have in those many hours dedicated to this research. The collection of Spanish proverbs is a real wonder. The popular wisdom contained in these proverbs is truly amazing.

