

“GLORIE OF SPAYNE:” JUAN RUIZ THROUGH THE EYES OF AN ENGLISHMAN*

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ABSTRACT

In 1849 G. Ticknor was the first to point out that the *Libro de Buen Amor*, a book by the famous Spanish fourteenth-century writer Juan Ruiz, presented some similarities with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Nevertheless, it was not after S. Honoré-Duvergé's 1955 article about the probable visit to Spain of the English poet, that the referred issue was researched seriously. Thus, at the end of the 1960s, T. J. Garbáty published a series of articles in which he gathered much information about the hypothetical connections between the *Libro de Buen Amor* and Chaucer, focusing on the latter's *Troilus and Cryseide*. Chaucer always showed great interest for the literature of the countries he visited. Mine is an attempt to collect the most relevant data on this topic to date and to offer new perspectives for approaching it.

KEY WORDS: Juan Ruiz, *Libro de Buen Amor*, Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Cryseide*, Constanza of Castile, Philippa of Lancaster, Pedro López de Ayala.

RESUMEN

En 1849 G. Ticknor fue el primero en señalar que el *Libro de Buen Amor*, obra del famoso escritor español del siglo catorce Juan Ruiz, presentaba algunas similitudes con los *Canterbury Tales* de Chaucer. Sin embargo, este aspecto no fue estudiado con seriedad hasta después de que S. Honoré-Duvergé publicase en 1955 un artículo sobre la posible visita del poeta inglés a España. Así, a finales de los sesenta, T.J. Garbaty publicó una serie de artículos en los que reunió abundante información sobre las hipotéticas conexiones entre el *Libro de Buen Amor* y Chaucer, centrándose en esta ocasión en *Troilus and Cryseide*. Chaucer siempre mostró gran interés por la literatura escrita en los países que visitaba. En este artículo recopiló los datos más relevantes referidos a esta cuestión, presentando al tiempo nuevas perspectivas para estudiar el tema.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Juan Ruiz, *Libro de Buen Amor*, Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Cryseide*, Constanza de Castilla, Philippa de Lancaster, Pedro López de Ayala.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1849 G. Ticknor was the first scholar to point out that there were some resemblances between the *Libro de Buen Amor*, a book by the famous Spanish fourteenth-century writer Juan Ruiz, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.¹ This suggestion was retaken by John W. Barker (1946: 610) who, taking into consideration some textual resemblances between the *Libro de Buen Amor* and the *Pardoner's Tale*² concluded that Chaucer did know the Spanish text and used it as a source of his tale. Nevertheless, it was not until S. Honore-Duverge's 1955 article about the English poet's probable visit to Spain, that the referred to influence was researched seriously. T.J. Garbáty published in 1967 an article in which he claimed that "the independent parallels between the *Libro* of Ruiz and the *Troilus*, which supplement those between the *Troilus* and the *Pamphilus*, strengthen the theory that the Spanish work had an influence on Chaucer separate and additional to that of the *Pamphilus*" ("Pampjilus" 466). Barker and Garbáty's studies remain, more than thirty years after, the only works in which a textual connection between Juan Ruiz and Chaucer has been claimed. Some other approaches have been made to the relationship between both poets,³ all of them concluding that there are resemblances, the result of both authors sharing a similar vision of the world: Western, Christian, middle-class

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¹ I have taken the following quotation from the 1965 American edition (Ticknor 92-93): "In this he [Juan Ruiz] is like Chaucer, who, wrote in the latter part of the same century. Indeed, the resemblance between the two poets is remarkable in some other particulars. Both often sought their materials in the Northern French poetry; both have that mixture of devotion and a licentious immorality, much of which belonged to their age, but some of it to their personal characters; and both show a wide knowledge of human nature, and a great happiness in sketching the details of individual manners. The original temper of each made him satirical and humorous; and each, in his own country, became the founder of some of the forms of its popular poetry, introducing new metres and combinations, and carrying them out in a versification which, though generally rude and irregular, is often flowing and nervous, and always natural. The Archpriest has not, indeed, the tenderness, the elevation, or the general power of Chaucer; but his genius has a compass, and his verse a skill and success, that show him to be more nearly akin to the great English master than will be believed, except by those who have carefully read the works of both."

² The exact passages to which Barker refers are 13 stanzas from the *Libro de Buen Amor* (296, 528, 294, 545, 547, 546, 547[1st line], 548, 549, 528[1st and 2nd lines], 554, 555, 470) and lines 483-487, 505-509, 549-565, 589-602 from *Pardoner's Tale*. Barker concludes in the following manner: "Una correspondencia tan exacta de palabras, orden de ideas e incidentes no puede ser un accidente fortuito" (609).

³ M.F. HODAPP, "El Arcipreste y Chaucer," *El Arcipreste de Hita: el libro, el autor, la tierra, la época. Actas del I Congreso Internacional sobre el Arcipreste de Hita*, ed. M. Criado de Val (Barcelona: SERESA, 1973) 285-308; C. GARIANO, "Juan Ruiz, Boccaccio and Chaucer," *Explicación de Textos Literarios* 13.2 (1984-1985).

and late Medieval. My intention is to review this long ago assumed statement and put scholars on the hunt again by illustrating different circumstances in which Chaucer might have had access to a manuscript containing Juan Ruiz's *Libro de Buen Amor*.

2. DID CHAUCER COME TO SPAIN?

Honoré-Duvergé concluded in 1955 that “Geffroy de Chanserre, escuier englois”, the name appearing in a safe-conduct issued by Charles II of Navarre in 1366—allowing him and three companions to pass through his lands—was in fact that of Geoffrey Chaucer and, therefore, “Sa [Chaucer’s] présence en Navarre à cette date, si elle est inattendue, n’a rien d’in vraisemblable en soi” (Honoré-Duvergé 10).⁴ The Navarra document was issued in Olite and its exact date was “le xxiiie jour de Fevrier lan de grace mil CCClxx et cinq” (Crow and Olson 64), a date generally assumed to be “February 22, 1365 [i.e. 1366]” (Baugh 1968: 55). Its validity was of three months and two days, that is, until May 24, 1366. Strictly speaking, the name of the poet in this document does not conclusively demonstrate that Chaucer was ever in Spain; it simply proves that there were plans for him to come. However, since the receiver of the safe-conduct was not a very important person, it is not reasonable to suppose it had been issued in advance (Honoré-Duvergé 10), rather than for an imminent journey. The truth remains that the name of the poet has not appeared so far in any other Spanish or English document of the time.⁵ Nevertheless, most Chaucerians agree that the poet visited Spain in 1366, an assumption that is echoed in the introduction (Crow and Leland XIII) to *The Riverside Chaucer*.

Unfortunately, the document did not make explicit the purpose of Chaucer’s journey, so that several explanations have been suggested to account for it. Honoré-

⁴ The story of this document is well known for Chaucerians, especially Spanish Chaucerians. Now preserved in Navarra (in a chancery register known as the Cartulary of Charles II), it had been published in 1890 by Jean-Auguste Brutails, but no scholar had paid any attention to it: the publisher had transcribed the name of the English esquire as Geffroy de Chanserre or Sancerre (Crow & Olson 64-5).

⁵ During the reign of the Castilian King Pedro I el Cruel (1350-69), the monarchy and the nobility again came into violent conflict. Challenging the king’s right to rule, his half brother, Enrique de Trastámara, an illegitimate son of Alfonso XI, appealed to France for support. Backed by a mercenary army commanded by the Frenchman Bertrand du Guesclin, Enrique was able to eject Peter from the kingdom in 1366. In order to recover his throne, the king enlisted the help of Edward, Prince of Wales, and a combined Anglo-Castilian army defeated Enrique de Trastámara at Nájera on April 3, 1367. After Edward’s withdrawal, however, Henry and du Guesclin defeated and killed Pedro at Montiel in 1369. Then John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, claiming the Castilian throne as the husband of Peter the Cruel’s daughter, Costanza of Castile, landed in Galicia in 1386. Though aided by the Portuguese, he was unsuccessful and came to an arrangement in 1388. The marriage of his daughter Catharine to Henry III, the eldest son of John I, put an end to hostility between the two branches of the Castilian royal family.



Duvergé (10) claimed that Chaucer came to Spain with the purpose of joining the forces of Enrique de Trastámara: “Il est plus probable que Geoffrei Chaucer et ses trois compagnons inconnus rejoignaient par la Navarre les troupes anglaises qui se préparaient à entrer en campagne, aux côtés de Du Guesclin, pour le compte d’Henri de Trastamare”. This assumption was not reviewed until ten years later, when Crow and Olson published *Chaucer Life-Records* (1966), a text that opened the way to three years of serious discussion on Chaucer and Spain. Crow and Olson (65) pointed out that the sympathy of the English court at the time seemed to favour Don Pedro’s cause, rather than Enrique’s. However, they did not clearly reject Honoré-Duvergé’s reading of events. What they did was to offer another plausible reason: “they [Chaucer and his three companions] may have been taking the overland route from France on a pilgrimage to this famous shrine in Galicia” (Crow and Olson 65). Garbáty (“Chaucer” 85) remarked the diplomatic dimension of Chaucer’s trip to Spain: Edward was surely suspicious about Carlos II’s attitude towards the conflict between Don Pedro and Enrique de Trastámara, so that he “was gathering as much intelligence as he could from confidential messengers” (Garbáty “Chaucer” 85), such as Chaucer whose official capacity was not mentioned in his safe-conduct. In his 1968 article, Baugh concluded that Chaucer crossed Navarra in “a last minute attempt to make contact with the Gascon knights and seek to detach them from the enterprise. Whether he ever caught up with them is doubtful” (69). More recently Brewer concluded that “The trip to Spain might then have been a normal minor diplomatic mission of a familiar kind from the Black Prince’s Court [in Aquitaine since 1362] to that of Navarre, or, passing through Navarre, to the court of Pedro [I of Castile]” (69). Still another possibility is that Chaucer was doing the arrangements in advance for the passing of English troops through Navarre into Castile to face the Trastamarian army in the battle of Nájera (Crow and Leland XIII). A few years ago, Serrano Reyes retook Baugh’s suggestion and concluded that the poet had indeed been successful in his mission. This he proves by referring to the only Spanish historical source of the epoch, the so called *Crónicas* by Pedro López de Ayala. Ayala reports how when the English knight Sir Hugh Calveley got to know his lord the Black Prince would be on the other side, not only did he leave Enrique de Trastámara, but fought against him in the battle of Nájera; this, according to Serrano Reyes, was the result of Chaucer’s mission (Serrano Reyes 121).

The possibility of a second visit to Spain was suggested by Garbáty (“Chaucer” 85), who stated that the poet might have taken part in the battle of Nájera (April 3, 1367), where the Black Prince defeated the Trastamarian forces. We know Chaucer was back in England by June 20, 1367, as a *valettus* in the king’s household (Brewer 64), just in time to receive a royal annuity of twenty marks from the king (Brewer 74-75). In order to support his theory, Garbáty (“Chaucer” 85) claims that “four noble friends with whom he [Chaucer] was to share several diplomatic journeys in later years” were at Nájera: Thomas Percy, William Beauchamp, John Deveraux and Guichard d’Angle.

Even a third visit of Chaucer to Spain was suggested by Serrano Reyes (132). The Treaty of Windsor (May 9, 1386) raised the Anglo-Portuguese connection to the status of a firm, binding, and permanent alliance between the two crowns. John

of Gaunt duly went to the Peninsula to claim the throne of Castile, arriving at La Coruña (Galicia) on July 25, 1386, with all his family. From there he attempted an invasion of the kingdom in conjunction with Dom João de Portugal, whom he met in Braganza, at the end of March, 1387 (Armitage-Smith 323). If Philipa Chaucer was at the service of the Duke's Spanish wife and the poet himself was working for John of Gaunt, Serrano Reyes claims that Chaucer might have been a member of the English expedition: "it is not less true that Chaucer might be necessary. Negotiations between the Duke of Lancaster and the King of Portugal had just started on arriving at Galicia" (Serrano Reyes 134).

3. CHAUCER, SPANISH AND SPANISH LITERATURE

One issue is whether or not Chaucer came to Spain, and another is to discern if this is relevant for Chaucerian criticism. Chaucer's visits to Italy or France, apart from being very well documented, are considered a main topic in Chaucerian criticism, not simply for their own sake, but also for providing a meaningful context for the influence of Italian and French literature on the poet. Is it possible to make a similar claim for Spain and Spanish literature?

One initial problem has to be first solved: did the poet have any notions of Spanish, or better, Castilian? We know Chaucer did acquire some notions of Latin grammar in his school days, probably at St. Paul's (Brewer 39-40) and this knowledge was further improved while studying Law at the Inner Temple, where he also learnt French; there, he was probably a full-time student (Brewer 64-65). In any case, Chaucer's training was not limited to legal skills, but included any accomplishment necessary for a courtier. This period in the life of the poet (1360-1366), marked by a complete absence of records,⁶ was only interrupted by the famous safe-conduct issued by the King of Navarre. If this was one of Chaucer's first diplomatic missions, would it be too daring to suggest that Chaucer received some tuition on Spanish previous to his journey? In 1976 Waller suggested that the poet might well have learnt Castilian, with the view that he might have to deal with Spaniards:

The man who could learn enough Italian on his two brief visits to Italy (six and twelve years later) to read Boccaccio and Dante ought, on the basis of his knowledge of French and Latin, to have been able to acquire some command of Spanish relatively rapidly, especially since he would still have been in his early or middle twenties in 1366. If, on the other hand, Chaucer was sent to Italy because he had already learned some Italian, it could be argued that he was chosen to lead the group to Spain because he had already picked up some Spanish. (305).

⁶ I am excluding Master Buckley's reference to the fact that he, as keeper of the archives of Inner Temple, saw a record "where *Geoffrey Chaucer* was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscane fryer in Fleetstreet" (Thomas Speght, quoted in Brewer 64).

Waller needed Chaucer's familiarity with Spanish if she was to prove that the poet had read and used as a source for his "Physician's Tale", a Spanish version of Aegidius Romanus' *De regimini principum*. Nevertheless, as Galván Reula pointed out, French was the language used by both Spanish and English diplomats to communicate orally (106), so the poet did not need Castilian for his mission.

Another issue that must be touched upon is how familiar was Chaucer with Spanish literature. Brewer (69, 70) is categorical in his assertion that there is no sign that Chaucer knew any Spanish literature, since Spain (as England) was marginal to the French and Italian core of European culture in the fourteenth century. This statement, nevertheless, might be given a second thought.

4. CHAUCER AND *EL LIBRO DE BUEN AMOR*

When Chaucer crossed the kingdom of Navarre, Juan Ruiz had been dead for, at least, fifteen years. Two historical characters compete for the honor of being Juan Ruiz: Juan Ruiz de Cisneros (Criado Val, "Historia" 122) and a certain "Johanne Roderici archipresbitero de Fita" (Blecua XXI). The *Libro de Buen Amor* was very popular during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries (Criado de Val, "Historia" 154). This is testified by the relatively high number of copies that have been preserved to this day, all named after the city in which they are kept: Salamanca (S), Toledo (T) and Gayoso (G). This leads us to conclude that there existed other manuscripts in the fourteenth century which contained *El Libro de Buen Amor*, something that is further supported by the existence of scattered fragments of this work in several mss (Criado de Val and Naylor "Introducción" XX-XXIV). To these we must add "the Portuguese translation, a copy of his work in the library of King Duarte, the references to it in the *Cancionero de Baena*, his place in the repertoire of the wandering minstrel, its influence on the *Corbacho*" (Moffat 43) and the reference to "el Libro del Archypreste de Hita" by the Marqués de Santillana.

Now I come to the central concern of the present paper. I would like to develop four different ways in which Juan Ruiz's text might have come to be known by the English poet.

4.1. ORAL RECITATION

"Agora comencemos del libro del Açipreste". In this way, ten badly jumbled lines from *El Libro de Buen Amor* were introduced, in what seems to be the program of an early fifteenth century Spanish jongleur, discovered by Menéndez Pidal in a fourteenth century ms. of the *Crónicas Generales*. The Spanish scholar goes on to say that this brief reference provides good proof of the popularity of Juan Ruiz's text, whose lines would revive the attention of the audience, should it be flagging (Moffat 37). The possibility of Chaucer having heard the *Libro de Buen Amor*, either entirely or —most probably— a part of it, was first suggested by Garbáty in 1967. He explicitly referred to the so-called Endrina episode and concluded: "That

he might have heard the account seems a strong possibility, since he was characteristically interested in foreign literature” (“Pamphilus” 463). The main objection that could be made to this hypothesis is that, if Chaucer was to understand the oral presentation he needed to know Castilian, something that, as I have said, is hard to demonstrate. Garbáty (“Pamphilus” 463, n.14), while admitting this, argues that Chaucer did follow the narration of the Endrina episode for he knew its source (the *Pamphilus*) and probably somebody helped him in translating some passages from the minstrel’s recitation. One final comment is to be made concerning this possibility. If the *Libro de Buen Amor* was popular in Spain, this vogue of the Archpriest might be particularly intense in his land, Hita and its surroundings. We do not know how far Chaucer went in his Spanish journey, but I consider it a relevant detail that the so called “Camino Real de Navarra” passed through Hita (Criado de Val, “Historia” 182).

4.2. ACCESS TO COSTANZA’S LIBRARY

Costanza of Castile, Pedro I’s daughter, married the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt, in September 1371, at Roquefort. In her retinue, there were Spanish knights “and a train of Spanish ladies-in-waiting” who remained with her until her death (Armitage-Smith 94, 358). This pious princess was, in Waller’s words, “bookish” and “literate” (305): an autograph by her addressed to the Chancellor of the University of Oxford has survived, showing in a way “her regard for learning” (Armitage-Smith 358). The Queen might have had a copy of Juan Ruiz’s work in her library (Garbáty, “Pamphilus” 463); or, maybe, it was owned by one of her Spanish knights or ladies of attendance.⁷ Chaucer most probably had access to the Queen’s household (Waller 306), since his wife, Philippa, was among the ladies in personal attendance on the Duchess from 1372 to 1387 (Waller 306). In England, and with the help of any of the Spaniards in Costanza’s court, Chaucer might well have enjoyed the *Libro de Buen Amor*, without needing a solid knowledge of Castilian.

After three centuries of silence on Juan Ruiz, Tomás Antonio Sánchez published in 1790 an edition of his book: in the prologue to the fourth volume he makes reference to D. Gabriel de Sancha, a book dealer, who claimed to have seen in 1789, and in London, a copy of the *Libro de Buen Amor* owned by a certain Huith in his book shop (Brey Mariño 18). It would be both pleasing and fanciful to think that the source of this copy was, ultimately, a ms. brought to England at the end of the fourteenth century.

⁷ John of Gaunt’s court was literally swarming with Spaniards. For the names of some of these knights, merchants, friars..., see Savage (372, n. 32) and Russell (175-82). Some of these knights were Portuguese, and they might also own a copy or know about the text.

One thing remains to be said, though: if, as Criado de Val has shown, Juan Ruiz's Don Carnal is Pedro I ("Historia" 138-39), sensual and violent, might Constanza, so loyal to her father's memory, or anyone at her household keep such parodic account of the dead king?

4.3. THE PORTUGUESE CONNECTION

One of the most outstanding pieces of evidence that illustrate the popular vogue of Juan Ruiz's text at the end of the fourteenth century is the fact that we still preserve a Portuguese two folio translation of one fragment (Porto Library, ms. 785). Written in a late fourteenth century hand, these two folios might be a) the fragment of a copy of the Portuguese translation of the whole text known to have existed in the Library of King D. Duarte (Criado de Val and Naylor xxi); b) a fragment from this very translation (Solalinde 165); or c) a fragment of another translation (Moffat 108). These Portuguese excerpts of *Libro de Buen Amor* provide us with solid evidence that this text "was well enough known and thought of, to be translated into Portuguese a few years after its final redaction in Spanish" (Moffat 36).

We only know about King Duarte's copy of the text from an inventory of his library of "Tower of Tumbo" in which reference is made to "O acypreste de Fisa" (Solalinde 165).⁸ One detail is of primary importance for my present purpose: this King D. Duarte was the son of D. João and Philippa of Lancaster, from whom he probably inherited the above mentioned translation (Moffat 108), which could be dated back to the latter years of the fourteenth century (Solalinde 166). D. João and Chaucer's patron John of Gaunt had permanent negotiations from 1386 onwards; but contacts between the hero of Portuguese independence and England went back to August 14, 1385, when English archers helped him to achieve the victory of Aljubarrota (Armitage-Smith 298). The relationship between John of Gaunt and João I was particularly intense during the period in which both attempted the second invasion of Castile. In an illustration preserved in the British Museum (MS. 14 E. Iv. F. 245), the artist depicted the Portuguese king entertaining his English ally in Troncoso (Armitage-Smith 316).

Philippa of Lancaster, daughter of John of Gaunt, was a permanent link between the Portuguese and Lancastrian courts long after the attempts at invasion of Castile failed. She was to stay in Portugal, from her arrival at Galicia with her family, until her death (July 18, 1415). On November 11, 1386, she was sent to a Franciscan Abbey at Oporto, and there she remained until her marriage on February 2 of the next year. From the careful education that she gave to her sons, to

⁸ "Ainda constam do catálogo a *Confessio Amantis*, de Gower, em tradução do cónego lisbonense Roberto Paine, a obra poética do Arcipreste de Hita, e o *Livro del Conde Lucanor*, de D. João Manuel" (Cidade 93).

whom she taught “a love for more humane pursuits”, apart from the practice of arms (Armitage-Smith 336), we might infer that, like her step-mother Constanza, she was also interested in letters. As J.M. Manly (472) and R.W. Hamm (20) suggested, she played an active role in the process that culminated in the rendering into Portuguese of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*. The fact that she spent so much time in Oporto is an interesting detail, taking into account that the only extant Portuguese copy of the *Libro de Buen Amor* is the one kept in the library of that city.

A Portuguese copy of Juan Ruiz’s text might have ended up in the hands of Chaucer after so many contacts between both countries. John of Gaunt, who knew of Chaucer’s literary concerns, his daughter Philipa or any of the Portuguese knights that stayed with Constanza once she returned to England might have been the channel of transmission.

4.4. PEDRO LÓPEZ DE AYALA AND HIS IMPRISONMENT

Pedro López de Ayala, the main source for the study of the historical events in the period I am dealing with, was taken prisoner after the Battle of Nájera (Russell 105) and retained by the English. For long, it was assumed that he spent his captivity in England (Barker 607, Ticknor 107-08), though it is much more reasonable to suppose that he was taken to Bayonne (an English city at the time) or did not leave Spain at all. We know of his poetic concerns. He was the author of the *Rimado de Palacio*, part of which might have been written during his imprisonment. As Ticknor (108) himself pointed out, in “some of its subdivisions, particularly in those that have a lyrical tendency, the Rimado resembles some of the lighter poems of the Archpriest of Hita”; no doubt he knew well Juan Ruiz’s text (Barker 607). His status as great Chancellor of Castile would probably grant him certain privileges in his captivity as, for example, taking along with him some written Spanish texts for his hours of solitude, the *Libro de Buen Amor* among them. If, as Garbáty claimed, Chaucer had taken part in the Battle of Nájera, he probably moved along with the English army to Bayonne... Be it as it may, to imagine a conversation between Chaucer and Pedro López de Ayala (either in Bayonne or along the journey towards that city) might sound ludicrous, even taking into account Honoré-Duvergé’s suggestion that both poets had met during Chaucer’s journey through the Iberian Peninsula.⁹

⁹ “Au cors de son voyage, il a pu connaître le futur chroniqueur de Castille, Pedro Lopez de Ayala [Sic], qui se rallia à la cause de Trastamare, à Tolède, en mai 1366. C’était un homme de son âge, poète et courtisan comme lui —quoique de plus haute volée-, comme lui passionné de culture classique, comme lui sensible à l’influence italienne, et dont la carrière littéraire n’est pas sans analogie avec celle du grand Anglais” (Honoré-Duvergé 12). If Chaucer ever met Lopez de Ayala in his captivity, the encounter of both poets had to take place short after April 1367, for the English master was back in England by June 20th, 1367 (Honoré-Duvergé 12).

CONCLUSION

I have, of course, proved nothing. Nor am I claiming, from everything I have shown, that Chaucer in some way or another must have had access to the *Libro de Buen Amor*. My sole purpose is to revive the interest of Chaucerians in certain issues of the poet's literary creation, mainly, his knowledge of Spanish literature. Textual resemblances are generally considered fundamental, so much so that any approach to the relationship between authors needs to bring out close literary similitude if it is to be conclusive. This has not been my task here: I have instead tried to provide a context for Barker and Garbáty's conclusions. One can always point out, as Brewer (69) did concerning the present topic, that there "was a scope for temperaments like Chaucer's in the fourteenth century", that mixture of devotion, satire, humour and immorality. It is obvious that the weight of Italian or French literature in Chaucer's poetic creation can easily be traced, but the link between the Spanish author Juan Ruiz and Chaucer might not be simply a matter of shared temperaments. At the present time, I am not in a position to conclude that the English poet shaped the *Canterbury Tales* or *Troilus and Criseyde* bearing in mind certain episodes or the general tone of the *Libro de Buen Amor*, among his many European sources. However I do suggest that these general similitudes between the English and the Spanish texts, at times located in precise passages, might not simply be the result of both poets sharing the same Gothic milieu, but of Chaucer having read or listened to Juan Ruiz's text, either partially or entirely, either in Spain or in England, either in Spanish or in Portuguese. This is by no means a remote possibility and I have tried to illustrate different contexts in which this might have taken place.

All in all, though the poet's visit to Spain seems to be an issue widely agreed on, the possibility of the poet listening to the *Endrina* —or any other— episode from the *Libro de Buen Amor* while in Spain is not necessarily the only alternative if we are to claim a Spanish influence on the English poet. Taking into account the chronology (Benson 1988: xxv) of *Troilus and Criseyde* (1382-86) and the *Canterbury Tales* (1388-1400), the four possible channels of transmission to which I have made reference are prior to the dates of composition of the *CT*; in the case of *TC*, the Portuguese connection must be ruled out, as being too late. Be it as it may, I feel myself inclined to think that Chaucer was able to read Juan Ruiz's work in England, in a Spanish or Portuguese manuscript and with the help of somebody familiar with the language of the text. A manuscript might well have got to him from Constanza's library or through the many contacts between João I and John of Gaunt, or from the latter with his daughter Philipa. Manuscripts and ideas circulated in Medieval Europe faster than we are ready to admit.

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