

“JUAN RUIZ, ARCIPRESTE DE HITA”
AS TEXTUAL AUTHOR AND ONOMASTIC PUN

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During the last two decades I have followed a conscious program of rereading the *Libro de Buen Amor* (=LBA, or *Libro*) within the dialogic context of the interactions, or heteroglossia, of medieval orality and textualization. As part of this larger project I have shown in an interrelated series of articles on naming conventions in the *Libro* that semantic transparency is so pervasive in the work that there is likely no personal or topographic name, even that of the author “Juan Ruiz”, which is *not* mined for its rich traditional connotations in carnivalesque culture. I have tried to document that the bakergirl Cruz, Trotaconventos-Urraca, the weasely male go-between Don Furón, the *serranas* La Chata and Gadea de Riofrío, as well as Don Melón and Doña Endrina, are all anthroponyms which belong to the process of the *Libro*’s textualization of oral culture (to avoid excessive bibliographic citations, I remit readers to Haywood & Vasvari, *A Companion*, for a list of my publications on the the *Libro*).

Ludic onomastics is part of language play, one of the most beloved forms of human activity, and part of oral-carnavalesque culture. It is one the (paraliterary) “little genres of oral discourse” (Bakhtin), such as lying, bragging, and insult competitions, ludic fables and fabliaux, *sermons joyeux*, the *antipastourelle* (Bec), and what I have called perverted proverbs. All of these also occur in the *Libro*, as I have studied elsewhere, in the context of the tale of the *asno y blanchete*, the *hijo del molinero*, the *serranillas*, and the episode of the *dos perezosos*, among others.

On the model of *textual femininity* (rather than necessarily authorial femininity), applied to women’s songs, whether or not the actual written texts we possess were written by genetic females or males, I want to speak today about Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita, as *textual author*. While of course we cannot avoid dealing with whether an actual Juan Ruiz “existed” historically, my concern today will be exclusively with this textual author, embedded in his text as *textualized voice*, or more elegantly, *vox intexta*, where the narrator poses as author. Following Roger Dragonetti (*Le mirage des sources*) I will discuss this textual author as a *scriptor ludens* or *poeta mendax*, where, to cite also Paul Zumthor, “Le poète est situé dans son langage plus que son langage en lui” (quoted in de Looze, “Signing Off”: 163). On the concept of Juan Ruiz and other contemporaries as textualized authors see also in more detail Laurence de Looze’s *Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth Century*).

The indifference in medieval culture to the role of authorship is matched only by the insistence of many scholars from positivism to the present in seeking historical authorial attribution as a precondition for understanding medieval works. It has also led critics not infrequently to accept as factual names that were pseudonyms or stereotyped literary inventions. All this did have antecedents in the Middle Ages itself, as, for example, in the narrative biographies or *Vidas* of the troubadours. More recent studies in this tradition

relative to the *LBA*, many of which continue to be preoccupied with the didactic intent and/or supposed mimetic realism of the work, attempt to find in the text autobiographical details about the author’s place of birth, the geographic exactitude of his itinerary through the Guadarrama mountains in the *serranas* episodes, or, most doubtfully of all, about his supposed imprisonment. Other studies have attempted to identify the author with any one of a number of similarly named clerics, investigations fatally hampered both by renewed uncertainties about the dating of the work and the extreme unreliability of naming conventions in the Middle Ages, as well as a lack of systematic documentation in *Libros parroquiales* until the fifteenth century. As de Looze wittily remarks (*Pseudo-Autobiography* 45), “the author seems to be discovered and then lost again with each new article on the subject in the journal *La Crónica*” (on the complex history of the scholarship on authorship, see Louise Haywood, 24-5, 26, 30; see Márquez Villanueva, who although he accepts Juan Ruiz as the historical author, he does call his narrative *alterego novelesque* and *carnavalesque*).

To complicate naming conventions further, in the Middle Ages a given patronymic could exist in multiple heteroglossic variants, from Latin or Latinate forms to shortened vernacular versions, so that, for example, *Ruiz* was one of some two dozen variants of one name, including *Rodrigo*, *Roderici*, *Rodericus*, *Roderigo*, *Roidricro*, *Roygo*, *Roy*, *Ruy*, *Roderiquiz*, *Rudeiriquiz*, *Rodriguez/s*, *Rodrigue* and *Roiz* (Godo y Alcantara 39, 59-60; Criado de Val in this volume). At the same time, there were relatively few patronymics available, which gave place for the popularity of another oral genre of discourse, the abusive *apodo* or *mote*, centered on physical defects, illness, and scatological and sexual insults, such as the Fr. *boiteux* ‘lame’, *bossuet* ‘hunchback’, *grant cul*, *gros cul*, *trou de cul*, *poile au cul* ‘big ass, asshole, hair on the ass,’ *couille* ‘balls,’ and many more (as documented in French and English between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries by Carrez 49-50). David Gilmore (76-90) discusses the continued proliferation of such disparaging terms, often scatological, obscene, and always embarrassing in the Andalucía of today, where it functions as a genre of covert verbal, mostly male-on-male aggression, much as gossip does for women. Gilmore documents how in one agricultural town of 1,570 households there are only 217 patronymics to go around, all common Castilian ones, compounded by only a handful of Christian names. To compensate for this paucity of official names, he found 400 nicknames, 40 to 1 of them attached to men, including ones such as *Manolillo el Chocho* ‘Big Twat,’ *Joseillo el Cagachino* ‘Shit on the Floor,’ *La Rogelia*, a feminine distortion of a male’s name applied to a man, and *Maripepa Caramelo*, applied to another unfortunate man who was not effeminate but had a high-pitched voice.

Several critics, most importantly the much lamented John K. Walsh, in two 1979 studies, proposed that, lacking any solid historical evidence to the contrary, we can do no more than consider the figure of the bungling archpriest author-narrator as a literary fiction. Walsh also proposed that the nucleus of the of the *LBA* is in the Melón-Endrina episode, where the poet for the first time also finds a major character to be later adopted as the “bogus first person narrator”, “dithering voluptuary”, and the “bungling Archpriest”, who gradually became the narrator of the poet’s earlier pieces, was invented only later, along with the autobiographic frame, as well as the added parody and vague pretense of preaching” (“Genesis” 8). Developing further an idea that Manuel Criado de Val had proposed as early as 1960, Walsh was the first to suggest potential documentary evidence that the name Juan Ruiz was selected precisely *because* of its common and even

vulgar ring (such as *Juan Pérez* might sound today). It should be added that at the present conference, forty-seven years later, Criado supports the same hypothesis, starting his study with the affirmation that the author's main stylistic aim "es dar a cada palabra su máxima expresividad, su mayor grado de polisemia y especialmente su doble sentido" ("Sobre el arcipreste").

Walsh cited as potential corroborative documentation on the folkloric origin of the name Juan Ruiz, a Galician *cantiga de maldezir* attributed to Alfonso X, which features a folkloric character "Juan Rodríguez". In 1986 I analyzed in more detail how the "Juan Rodríguez" of the *cantiga* suggested by Walsh was a carnivalesque figure whose obscene *gap*, or boast, was a monologue of exaggerated lies about the supposed sexual capacity of his *madeira* 'sexual organ'. I also suggested that this priapic Juan Rodríguez could have been an apt generic and onomastic model for the protagonist of the *Libro*. At the same time I also proposed that the name "Juan Ruiz," was an onomastic joke imbedded into the rhyme scheme of the text, as was common in the *jongleur* tradition. Just as Walsh's earlier hypothesis, my work was also presented at the M.L.A. but has remained for these two decades unpublished, although its abstract is listed in *La Corónica* of that year; the part pertaining to Alfonso X's text, did, however, eventually appear as "La Madeira certera". Two years later, I published another study, showing that the Melón and Endrina episode, which Walsh had posited as the genesis of the *Libro* is also an onomastic game, featuring vegetal-genital names. The present study further attempts to support Walsh's initial hypothesis and my further series of onomastic studies by proposing possible semantic motivation for *all* four elements of the name "Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita," the ecclesiastical title, Christian name, patronymic, and toponym. The onomastic pun posited will be examined within the systematic network of equivocal punning onomastics of the whole work, as well as of its many folkloric and literary sources and analogues, particularly in troubadour poetry, the *poemas d'escarnho*, the *fabliaux*, and in the clerical and university tradition of agonistic and ludic wordplay. Onomastic analysis of the *Libro* will be further supported by consideration of other overlapping literary cueing devices within the text, such as lexical ambiguities, equivocal rhymes, use of stock themes and characters, as well as structural and generic cues, which together form a concatenation of textual signals for deciphering the tone of the total work.

Before proceeding with the semantic analysis, it will be helpful to begin by examining the appearance of textually embedded author's names in several medieval works from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, especially where there is no historical evidence about that person outside the work. Due to limitations of space, I will forgo detailed discussion of Marie de France, who has been identified with some half a dozen English, Norman, or Flemish women of noble birth, but whose name, along with that of Chrétien de Troyes, is likely symbolically inscribed to represent Christian, and in Marie's case, also female textual identity and, as Foucault might argue in his "Que'est-ce qu'un auteur", a certain strategy of discourse (Bruckner). I can also do no more than cite the names of the troubadour *Gautier Le Leu*, author of an encomium of the *con 'cunt'*, whose own name is homonymous both with the masculine sign 'wolf' and the feminine 'place, hole', or of Bernard de Ventadour, whose toponymic name also means 'farther', giving origin to scatological jokes. François Villon is another author who also takes up his name in rhyme thirteen times in one *ballade* alone. His name inscribed in the body of his work, forms the contradictory and discordant voice of *François* 'frank, noble' and *Villon*, a version

of *Guillon/Guillaume*, but which popular etymology associated with Old French *guile* ‘buffonerie, deception,’ akin to Sp. *bellaco*. Villon’s fictitious father, *Guillaume de Villon*, turns out to be nothing but a doublet of the same name, so that the poet’s name can also be read as ‘son of trickery’ or ‘son of his own work,’ testimony to the parentage that fiction as *jeu* has with deceit and trickery (Cholakian).

Of particular potential relevance to the consideration of Juan Ruiz, is the acoustic play in the names of two poets, the *Conte de Poitiers*, identified with Guillaume IX and presumed to be the first troubadour poet, and Rutebeuf. Faral (*Fongleurs*), who was astonished how many poets in the thirteenth century had the title of nobility, like *roi* and *comte/cons* associated with their names (e.g., *Huon le roi*, *Adenet le roi*, *le Roy Capenet*, *Compte de Poitiers*) tried to provide social justifications, whereas the nobility of these troubadours was simply part of their artistic self-creation, comparable to, say, King Oliver, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie. In addition, *roi*, homonymous with *roi* ‘ass’ as well as *roid* ‘stiff, erect’, sometimes in combination with *cons* ‘count’, itself homonymous with *con* ‘cunt’ provided the source of endless obscene wordplay.

A corpus of eleven poem which the manuscripts attribute only to a presumed author, a *Compte/Cons/Corns* of de Poitiers have been attributed to Guillaume IX, duke of Aquitaine, for no other reason than that he also held the title of count of Poitiers, although no contemporary documents speak of him as a troubadour. Actually, it is the acoustic double entendre of *con-* of the poet’s title ‘count/cunt’ and endless words containing this syllable in his poetry, which obsessively connects his poetry. The conte de Potier’s most obviously obscene piece, the *Companho, tant ai aqutz d’avols conres*, often suppressed in anthologies, is particularly useful in illustrating how the obscene pun binds the poet’s name with his text. The poem literally forms a circle beginning and ending with the same equivocal syllable *con*, the source of both the author’s nobility and that of his subject, a burlesque panegyric of the *con* ‘female organ’, homonymous with the author’s name, with a discussion of its “royalty,” and of its feudal sovereignty over a *con-frerie* of males, the *con-panho* to whom the poem is directed. Ultimately the connection among the eleven poems is that the manuscripts place all the pieces under not the biographic but the *acoustic* authority of the *corns/cont*, thus giving *con* as the origin of all *fin’ amor* and for designating the origin of all literature (Nichols, Gumbrech, to cite recent research).

Rutebeuf is another medieval poet on whom no independent documentation exists. In several poems he puns on his own name in equivocal rhymes. In the example below *ruste* -rhymes with homonymous *ruste/rude* ‘crude’ and *-bues* with *bues* ‘ox’, as well as ‘vagabond, thief, trickster, active homosexual’. The poet also declares outright that he lies and that the game begins with his very pseudonym inscribed in the text, that is, it is part of the literariness of his poetic art (Regalado 190-1):

Et Rustebues en un conte a
 Mise la chose et la rima,
 Or dist il que, s’en la rime a
 Chose ou il ait se bien non,
 Que vous resgardez a son non:
 Rudes est et rudement oeuvre:
 Li rudes horn fait la rude oeuvre.
 Se rudes est, rudes est bues:
 Rudes est, s’a non Rudebues.

Rustebues oeuvre rudement,
sovent en sa rudece ment

(‘And Rutebeuf composed a story from the material and put it in rhyme. He says that in his rhyme [poem] that if there is anything of value you should pay attention to his name: he is crude and he works crudely. A crude man creates a crude work. /If he is crude, the ox is crude. He is crude and his name is ‘*Rudebues Crude Ox*.’ Rutebeuf works crudely, often in his crudeness he lies’).

As we can see from the preceding examples, it is precisely in poetry that the poetic potential of names can be most fully realized through various kinds of intensification that call attention to the form of the message. It is evident from “Juan Ruiz’s” boast early in the text where he tells us that he also composed the work as *lección de metrifícar e rrimar e de trobar* that one of his major claims of individual artistry was in having stretched the technical bounds of versification and composition of the *mester de clerezia* verse. In the final stanza of the narrative proper of the poem (1632 ab; 1634bd), he reiterates the same idea but also adds that the work is full of word games, *mas de juego e burla es chico breviarío*.

To understand the full meaning of Juan Ruiz’s boast it is important to remember, as we have already seen in the French examples, that medieval poetry was a formalistic art which placed a high value on the clever manipulation of certain canons or techniques, which had their origins in the clerical tradition of Latin wordplay and in the agonistic and ludic function of medieval rhetoric, which Zumthor (203) called the “*caractère vocale de la production textuelle du moyen age*”, and which was censured by conservative Churchmen, who associated it with frivolity of the goliards and jongleurs. Rhyme was the most important single element, but of similar importance were various forms of repetition, from simple lexical repetition to the clever repetition and juxtaposition of root variants, or of equivocal rhymes (whether homophonic or polysemic), or the repeated word concealed by being embedded as the stressed syllable of a longer word.

A very common form of foregrounded rhyme was that of placing in verse final position a series of equivocal or outright obscene words, perhaps interspersed with other words which echoed the tabued word in their stressed syllable. This is an extremely frequent technique across languages and genres and in particular becomes a stock in trade of obscene poetry (see further, Liu). Typical cliché rhymes in French verse include [*re*] *membre* ‘remember’ / *membre* ‘genital member’, *vis* ‘alive’ / *vit* ‘phallus’, *combattre* ‘combat’ / *con battre* ‘beat, ie. copulate with the cunt’, *convient* / *con vient*, *confesse* ‘confesse, with *con* + *fesse* ‘cunt ass’, *baron* ‘baron’ / *bas rond* ‘round ass’. For example, the climax of a *fabliau* by the aforementioned Gautier Le Leu, about a man who takes revenge on a priest who cuckolded him by castrating him, turns on the triple homonymy of *vi* [*t*] ‘saw,’ *vie* ‘life,’ and *vit* ‘phallus,’ and that of *cous* ‘cuckold’ and ‘balls’. The plot of another *fabliau* turns on the acoustic equivalence of *faucon* ‘falcon’ and *faux con* ‘false cunt’.

For the *Libro* Kenneth Adams has shown how rich in variety of rhymes it is compared to earlier *cuaderna vía* texts. Further, compared to these, it has a superabundant vocabulary, with more than 700 words which appear only in rhyme, 500 of them only once. In an article that complements Adams work, Yndurain (1973) studied in some detail many examples in the *Libro*, where the last strophe of a stanza receives the main emphasis, a technique recommended by Vinsauf (“*jocus... ad finem materiam*”) as most apt place “ad

jocum excitandum”. Yndurain traces how this technique is used to give meaningful lines of doctrine in end lines. However, in addition to the utilizations noted by Yndurain, like acrostics or anagrams, end lines, and especially the end rhyme can be used to put coded messages to which the audience is supposed to pay special attention. Under this category would fall equivocal end rhymes with erotic connotations, where the placement proves that the non-innocent meaning is meant to be the climax of the joke. See several examples, as in 1255d, where nuns offer overnight hospitality to Don Amor with the words: *prueva nuestro celiçio*, where the end rhyme *celiçio* is ‘hair shirt’/‘pubic hair’. Cf. also Trotaconventos’ subversion of a well-known proverb in her apt description of her profession (705d): *muchos panderos vedemos q’non suenan las sonaias*, where *pandero* is also ‘hymen’.

Adams (26) also pointed out but did not develop in detail that a host of humorous place and personal names appear in the work exclusively in rhyme. To cite one example, as I have documented elsewhere, Don Melon’s patronymic *de la Huerta* is a pun on *buerta* ‘female pudendum’. The joke is carried one step further when in the last appearance of Don Melon’s name (88ld) he is called *Melón Ortíz* (a name which in the Middle Ages was believed to derive from Lat. *bortus*), an equivocal punch line which is set up by the atrociously difficult rhyme in 88lab *...codorniz/...diz/...cocatriz*. Similarly, the Christian name of the go-between, (919c) Urraca ‘magpie,’ rhymes with (920d) *vellaca* ‘lowlife female’, after which the protagonist immediately further appropriately describes her as a *picaza parlera*, a clear case of *nomen ist omen*.

In the foregoing selected examples I have tried to illustrate that all names in the LBA appear to be humorously semantically transparent. In some cases this is still evident to modern readers, e.g. *Urraca*, *Trotaconventos*, but in other cases the semantic transparency is only misleading, as that more obvious meaning is part of a polysemic obscene pun, whose humor, obvious to the work’s original audience needs to be retrieved, such as *Don Pepiñón*, *Don Furón*, *Don Melón de la Huerta*. Further, most names appear in rhyme, usually in their first occurrence, and for maximum effect many equivocal terms, puns, etc., including names appear in rhyme in the last verse of the strophe. Additional attention is brought to the foregrounded rhyme by having the rhyme scheme be very unusual and/or having it include highly unusual words. Words that rhyme with the foregrounded rhyme word may also have a *double entendre* and/or may be homophonous, that is, form an acoustic pun with the foregrounded word. Why is all this relevant? Because after referring to himself in the invocation (13b) as *açipreste*, the author/narrator introduces himself in full in rhyme (19):

Porque de todo bien es comienzo e raiz Santa Maria Virgen, por end yo,
 Juan Ruiz, Açipreste de Fita, dello primero fíz
 Cantar de los sus gozos siete,
 qui assi díz.

It is obvious here that the acoustical pun based on the near-homonymy of *raíz/ Ruíz* is deliberate, and as Adams (26) already noted, it seems evident that the first line was composed with the second line in mind, and not vice versa. This type of near-homonymy, which involves distorting both phonological and orthographic shape of words is used with frequency in the *Libro* ([104cd *mal va/ malva*; [384bcd] *artemanga, arremanga, remancra*, to cite only two examples).

Acoustically perfect homophones and orthographically identical homographs are not necessarily the best for puns, and what is called in French *l'á-peu-près*, as opposed to the perfect *calembour* is to be preferred, as it allows for the performer to distort phonological shape of the word through pseudo-Freudian slips of the tongue. For example, in English it needs only a slight vowel shift in *fox* to produce the obscene *fucks*, or, as I have suggested elsewhere in the *Cruz* episode, to turn the already semantically ambiguous *conejero* into *coñejero*. Such phonological combined with orthographic distortion for shock appeal is a frequent technique today to attract audience attention in advertisements, as in the ads in *Playboy* "He's got socks appeal" (for interwoven socks), and "Makes a rich man pour" (for E&J Brandy), or in *Vogue*, "A melody of blossoms in every scentuous drop" (for a perfume).

Given that the near homonymy *raíz/ Ruiz* rhyme is intentional, we still need to see why this is humorous semantically, but I aim to get there, perversely, or, climactically, as it were, for my last explication, making first a discursus to discuss in some detail the folkloric antecedents and the semantic play in the other three terms, in turn, of the protagonist's name, *Arcipreste*, *Hita*, and *Juan*.

In medieval literature where all characters arouse certain expectations, clerics were constantly depicted as superior lovers. While in the genre of love debate, they were always the sexual winners, in folklore and in humorous genres dissolute clerics, and especially unlearned country clerics, among them archpriests, were stock characters, with whom many negative characteristics, but principally lasciviousness, were associated. One of the major themes of the *fabliaux* is also the corruption of ecclesiastics, with about half of the tale having unsavory clerical characters without a trace of spirituality, who are accused of laziness, greed and gluttony, but above all of uncontrolled sexual appetite, with over three-quarters of the clerics, especially those in the lower orders, depicted as seductors engaging or attempting to engage in illicit sex. The lascivious 'merry priest' also becomes a medieval trickster character, playing the role of the antihero that the *pícaro* came to represent later.

Archpriests specifically were also represented as stereotypically lascivious. In the *Roman de Renart* the ass Bernard as archpriest gives a mock sermon in defense of sexual intercourse as an end in life, asking that the King proclaim that all who abstain from sex shall go to Hell. The comical figure of Bernard the Archpriest lived on independently as a prototypical figure of ridiculous excess. For example, among the numerous medieval French variants of the Aesopic fable of the ass and the lapdog, some of which have been posited as sources for the *Libro's* version of the same fable in one, the ass, in his foolish attempt to imitate the antics of the lapdog by putting his "feet" on his master's shoulders, is dubbed "Messires Bernart l'Archevrestre" (Faral & Bastin I, xx).

The earliest documented literary example of the stereotyped dissolute archpriest in Spanish literature is the episode in Fernán González of the *mal arcipreste* who tries to rape dona Sancha, and like a number of his *fabliau* analogues, pays for it with his life. The folkloric character of the fragment is evident from the derogatory epithets applied to the cleric, as *malo*, *falso*, *descreído*, *traidor*. The folkloric roots of the episode are apparent also in the figure of the *hombruna* doña Sancha, depicted not unlike one of the *serranas* in the *Libro*, as being able to carry Fernán González on her back. The dissolute folkloric archpriest figure also continues in Spanish literature well after, as in the example of Juan de Mena's comical *arcipreste malvado* in his "Coplas a un macho que le vendio un arcipreste".

Libidinous clerics and archpriests figure most prominently in the episode of *Carnal* and *Cuaresma*, which, along with the *serranas* episodes, forms the sections with the strongest direct folkloric roots. At the very beginning of the lengthy episode *Cuaresma*'s letter of challenge is addressed (1069c) *a todo pecador: a todos los açiprestes e clérigos con amor*. In the spring celebration in which *Carnal* and *Amor* are welcomed as conquering heroes, a multiple parody full of licentious references, the parade of faithful worshipers of numerous religious orders is headed by (1245b) *açiprestes y dueñas*, where *dueñas* 'nuns'. Still later in the *Carnal-Cuaresma* episode *açiprestes* continue to have a prominent sexual role in one of the most obscene passages in the work, the description of the months of the year depicted on *Amor*'s tent. There is pictured the vegetal, animal and sexual resurgence of spring, where a group of devils are charged with exciting *omnes, aves e bestias* (1281d). While the first devil causes women pain *do la muier es buena* (1283):

el segundo diablo remece los abades:
açiprestes e dueñas fablan sus poridades
con este compañón que les da libertades
que pierdan las obladadas e fablen vanidades.

The devil, or "evil companion", who tickles the clerics really emanates from their own *compañones* 'testicles', which makes them forget their vows and commit asnería. The gross comparison between the sexual behavior of the clerics and the ass, the most priapic of all animals, is further emphasized by having another devil, in turn, excite the asses (1285b) *en las cabeças e en otro lugar*.

The stock burlesque characterization of lascivious clerics, as illustrated in the foregoing examples ranging from the *fabliaux* to the *Libro* itself, is so pervasive that the emphasis on their libido and well-endowed physical attributes leads by synecdoche of *totum pro parte* and the superimposition of the rhetorical process of personification, whereby their names and titles become equated with their sex organs, in what in psychoanalytical terms has been referred to as the "genitalization" of the whole body. The imagery is made even more inventive by various imagined fanciful homologies between clerical hairstyles and headgear and the "head" of the penis. For example, Ger. *Mönch* and Fr. *moineaux* 'monk', like the Eng. *bald hermit*, plays on the comparison between the clerical tonsure and the prepuce. Compare also Eng. *beat the bishop*, *box the Jesuit*, both 'masturbate', parallel to the "secular" *beat your little brother*, at the same time that bishop's, and especially cardinal's hats, because of their shape or color, provide stock associations with the bulbous red "head" of the male organ.

So far we have seen that clerics in general and archpriests in particular are often depicted as burlesque priapic characters and that in a *poema d'escarnio* we have at least one attestation of a secular "Juan Ruiz" with similar attributes. Let us now look in more detail on why that Archpriest might be from Hita, and why a name like Juan Ruiz might have more vulgar connotations than its mere John Doe commonness.

Related to the attempt to determine the relation of the narrative to the poet's personal life have been the numerous scholarly discussion to determine the exactitude of the geography portrayed in the *Libro*. Much has been made, for example, of the one line where *Trotaconventos* speaks of the narrator's double, *Melón de la Huerta* as being from Alcalá (1510a), for some critics preferably the very Alcalá where this conference is being

held, forgetting that in folklore *ir a Alcalá* also might be a proverb meaning simply being skilled in the arts of the procuress (Márquez Villanueva “La Celestina”: 440).

In studying the place of toponyms in the *Libro*, it is useful to recall Chevalier’s (67-70) important discussion on the reconstruction of a folkloric geography of the Spain of the past through Golden Age texts, which is equally applicable to all residually oral cultures. While “geography” for modern literate people is a science based on maps and measurements, in traditional culture the same word suggested a popular mythology repeated in everyday conversation, where the mention of a particular place name automatically suggests the nickname epithets applied to its inhabitants. Such syntagms, like the one about Alcalá, which function as idioms or proverbs, can be partially reconstructed from their eventual textualization in proverb collections and in their embedding in literary texts. Among examples suggested by Chevalier are the following: *A Belmonte, calderos, que dan iubones y dineros; el diablo anda en Cantillana y el obispo en Brenes; la vieja honrada de Alcobillas, caldo de los de Orgaz*. Compare in the *Libro: tomar senda por carrera, como faz el andaluz*, where *andaluz* ‘fool,’ or Am. Eng. *show me, I’m from Missouri*.

The metaphorical use of geographical terms, as well as of personal names, has from ancient times had a place in sexual humor. In the same way in both medieval folklore and literature proper nouns are as liable to lose their denotative character, to name one unique place or person, and to function instead with other names in the work as “onomastic texts”, ie., as structuring webs within story texts. An apparently universal acoustic-semantic process across languages is that the mention of any words even partially homophonous with words with negative connotations become automatic ways to elicit laughter, e.g., in Spanish *Castro* becomes a frequently cited place solely because of its association with *castrado* ‘castrated,’ while *Cornvalla* becomes the perfect hometown or destination of all *cornudos* ‘cuckolds.’ *Calvino*, *Calvario* play on *calvo* ‘bald,’ while *culo* ‘ass’ contaminates not only *culantro*, but *calcular*; *especular*, and virtually any word with the tonic syllable *cul-*.

Topographical imagery and place names have always been standard in bawdy humor to connote the genitals of either sex, but in particular the female genital area, e.g. Lat. *mons veneris*, Sp. *Países Bajos, camino oscuro, camino real, puerta de España*, all connoting the female genitals, or *puerta de Italia* ‘ass.’ Compare the title of the the hit musical *Oh, Calcutta!*, a joke on the homonymy of that city’s name, if pronounced in French, with *oh, quel cul t’á!*, ‘what an ass you’ve got’.

In the *Libro*, where by the author’s own declaration we have to assume that (1631c) *sobre cada fabla se entiende otra cosa*, before automatically assuming that Hita, the most important toponym in the work, must be a realistic historical reference to the town of that name, we have to consider if it too may be a semantically transparent speaking name. Before considering this, let us compare some secondary place names in the work, which although less central to the reconstruction of the author’s biography, have also been interpreted as realistic. For example, if two different towns named *Castro* are mentioned in preference to other equally or more important cities and seaports, with all references in the episode of Carnal-Cuaresma, where it makes an appearance three times, it is likely for its humorous connotations. Not surprisingly the largest number of acoustical toponymyms occur here and in the narrator/protagonist’s adventures with the *serranas*, the two parts of the work most deeply dependent on folk tradition. Let’s also look at another toponym, *Valdevacas*, which has been taken by at least one critic as

an arcane tribute by the author to his birthplace. It appears in the comic punchline of the interchange of letters of challenge between Carnal and Cuaresma, a parody of every rhetorical technique, from inflated titles and salutatory invectives, and full of obscene allusions (1197d): \Dada en Valdevacas [S: Tornavacas], nuestro lugar ameno. What more appropriately "fleshy" sounding resting place for Carnal could be invented, both in the alimentary and the sexual sense?

Corominas (DCELC) conjectures that the place name Hita meant 'mosquito', ostensibly because mosquitos prick. *Fita/Hita* is related to OSp. *bito* 'clavado, hincado', with secondary meanings 'fijo, persistente', as in *mirar en fito* (cf. Eng. 'piercing look'), and *fito* 'target', i.e., that which is pierced. The word goes back to Vulg. Lat. *fixtus*, Classical *fixus*, past participle of *figere* 'to fix, nail'. Corominas, who gives examples like *dexa una tienda fita* 'plantada' (*Cid*), also cites *bita* as 'especie de clavo pequeño', and *infito* 'fijo, firme'. All this is on the denotative level, but it needs to be taken into account that it is a universal of obscene metaphors that words for long sharp objects such as all sort of weapons, as well as nails connote the phallus and that the act of striking, blowing, hitting, piercing connotes copulation from the point of view of the male in heterosexual intercourse, and from the point of view of the active partner is homosexual intercourse. Compare Lat. *clavus*, Fr. *clou*. Am. *prick*, all 'phallus', Sp. *clavársela*, Fr. *river son clou*, Ger. *Bobren*, Eng. to screw, all 'to copulate'. In the *Libro clavo* and the expression *súpome echar el clavo* 'he deceived me/he got to copulate with the girl' is the central polysemous metaphor on which the the whole Cruz episode is based. Compare the Eng. poem of the jovial tinker who mends ladies' "pots" or cauldrons" (T. R. Smith 189):

You merry Tinkers...
Drive your nails to the very head, / and do your work profoundly,
And then no doubt your Mistresses/ will pay you soundly

Luis Beltrán (249-50) was the first scholar to hint that *Hita* was related to *fito* 'nail' and that it has erotic connotations in 845 and 977, but he offered no detailed analysis. Let's look at the more obviously suggestive example in 977d, where *cayada...fita* refers to the long, hard shepherd's crook with which the aggressive and manly *serrana* threatens the cowering protagonist. In 854b, *amor de Fita* has always been taken to mean 'suitor from the town of Hita', an interpretation that has caused critics no end of difficulties, since the protagonist here is not the Archpriest but his alter ego, Don Melón de la Huerta. In fact, the syntagm is ambiguous and can also be read to mean something like 'pricking sex'. *Hita*, then, fits neatly into that system of folklorictopography (Nicolaisen) empty of denotative meaning that is needed to put narratives in place, a sort of onomastic underpinning, a structural element, akin to proverbs and other little genres of oral discourse, all of which are composed of formulaic language and offer free for the play for erotic lexicalization. It goes without saying that if the author really was from the actual town of Hita as discussed in Criado de Val's *Historia de Hita* the obscene pun just becomes an even more hilarious inside joke.

In the Middle Ages a few very common Christian names tended to be used with great frequency, especially among the lower classes, among which by far the most common masculine name was *John* and its parallels in other languages. Similarly, the number of surnames derived from John is very large, for example, in English: *John[s][on]*, *Jones*,

Jackson, Jake, Jenkin[s], Jennings, Hankin, Hancock. Because of their very popularity in folklore and literature all of the most frequent names in a language became *John Doe* names, standing for ‘any man’ and to denote types without individualizing, to fulfill whatever role the story or story teller has in mind (e.g., Eng. “any Tom, Dick or Harry;” in the *Libro* 486a, c *otro Pedro*) But this very versatility and “almost slippery many sidedness” (Mustanoja 56) of such names means that the name cannot stand alone but must be accompanied by a reference to a character trait, summary of an action, a location, etc., which goes along with the medieval convention that the second name be descriptive, e.g., *John Bigear*; *John Longnose*, or, on occasion truly offensive, as in *Juan Rasca Viejas* ‘John Scratch Old Women’, a name actually recorded in Leon in 1247 (Nicolaisen “Names & Narratives” 262; Frago García). Or, compare the number of names listed in the fourteenth century John Ball’s letter to the peasants of Essex, with a list of typical peasant names: *Johan Schep*, *Johan Nameless*, *Johan the Mullere*, *Johan Cartere*, *Hobbe the Robbere*, *Johan Trewman* (Mustanoja: 57).

The very frequent real and imaginative use of John and its abbreviated forms means that they inevitably become reduced to a wide variety of disparaging connotations, most often accompanied by an appropriate epithet of negative characteristics connoting words for fool, bumpkin, and associated adjectives connoting stupidity, laziness, gluttony, and any other basic negative characteristics. Pejoratively used names tend to be the same ones in all of Middle and Western Europe because of the common heritage of Catholic name giving after saints, which leads to the frequency of the same names, and hence their inevitable parodic use. Sp.: *Juan Palomo* ‘egoist’, *Juan Lanas*. *Juan de las Viñas*, *Juan de buena alma*. *Juan Bimbo* ‘common man’, *Juan Bobo*, *Juan Blanco*, both ‘fool’. From the designation of ‘common man’ to ‘fool’ “John” names easily come also to connote those who are laughed at because of their cuckoldry, as well as characters who play such roles in popular genres, as in Sp. *Juan Gallardo*, *Juan San Juan* ‘youth who courts nuns’, Fr. Jeannot ‘fool, cuckold’, *Jennin* ‘a simpleton, a character who plays the obscene and scatological fool in farce’, *Jeanneton* ‘servant girl, girl of easy virtue’, *Jean Farine* ‘a character in popular farces and whose name has strong folkloric associations with *farine* ‘semen’, *Jeanin Landore* and *Jehan de Lagny*, favorite rogue characters in farce and also apparently names taken up by several generations of actors (Harvey). Compare also the proverb in *Celestina* (IV.47): *Cuatro hombres he topado, a los tres llaman Juanes e los dos son cornudos*.

In the Middle Ages John was also the prototypical name for any priest, in English often prefixed by the title *sir* or *daun*. This is well illustrated in the Nun’s Priest’s Prologue in the *Canterbury Tales*, where the Host Harry Bailey “with rude speche and boold” derisively addresses the Nun’s Priest with the familiar thou: “Com neer, thou preest, com hyder, thou sir John!”. The name with erotic connotations *par excellence*, for clerics and ordinary men alike, is most often a form of John. For example, in one ME collection of lyrics which contain fourteenth-century erotic poems (Luria Hoffman:71-91) of eight protagonist only one has a different name (Hogyn), while seven have names that are variants of John – *Jenet*, *Jack [el]*, *Jakke*, *Jankin*, and two poems are about the cleric *Ser John*. In one the priapic role of the eponymous *Ser John* is further emphasized by the common technique in obscene poetry of having his name foregrounded in rhyme, along with a series of erotic calembours (Stemmler 105-6) :

Hey noyney, I will loue our ser John...
 Ser John to me is proferyng
 for hys plesure ryght well to pay,
 and in my box he puttes hys offryng...
 Ser John ys taken in my mouse-trappe:
 fayne would I haue hem both nyght and day.
 He gropith so nyslye a-bought my lape
 I haue no pore to sa[y] hym nay.

Compare the early sixteenth-century Spanish verse in which a girl complains that if her parents wait too long to find her a husband, she'll run off with well-endowed *fray Juan* (Alzieu 108):

No me iré yo con soldado,
 Ni menos con rufián;
 Mas quiero yo a mi fray Juan
 que tener al Cid al lado;
 y quizá mi desposado
 no tendrá tan buen tamaño
 yo me iré con un fraile otro año [refrain]

As already discussed under terms for clerics, all of the most common names (Eng. *Peter*, *Dick*, *John Thomas*, *Willie*), but especially *John*, further degenerate by genitomorphic synechdoche and personification to designate the male organ, as in Fr. *Jacques*, *Jacquot*, *Jean Choant*, *Jean Feudi*, *Jean Fesse*, *Jean-Foutre*, *Jean nu-tête*, *Jacquemard*, *Janotus de Bragomardo*, *Jean Pipi* ‘impotent organ’, *cousin Jacques* ‘the phallus of a cuckold maker’; [el prestel] *Juan Lanzarote*, a personification which plays both on clerics as priapic figures and on the erotic connotations of *lanza*; Eng. *Master John Goodfellow*, *Jack in the orchard* ‘to copulate’, *John* ‘prostitute’s customer/ toilet’, and also cf. *to jack off* ‘masturbate’, the phallic connotations of “he’s a real jock”, and *jockstrap*.

Sometimes in festive genres *John* as the prototype of the priapic male and *John[my]*, his inalienable genital possession, become impossible to distinguish. In the two variants of the following Galician song, for example, it is not at all clear what part of his anatomy *John[ny]*’s very peculiar *perniñas* ‘legs [dimin.]’ actually describe (cf. terms like Eng. *the third leg* ‘male organ’ (Ballesteros I: no. 62):

Xaniño, Xanio, Xan
 perniñas de carabullo
 andas engañando as nenas
 de noite, po-lo escuro

(‘Johnny, Johnny, John/ legs like a twisted stick / you run around deceiving the girls/ at night, in the dark’)

Xaniño, Xaniño, Xan
 perniñas de gabilán,
 andas engañando as nenas
 domingo po-la mañan

(‘Johnny, Johnny, John/ legs like an eagle,/ you run around deceiving the girls/ on Sunday mornings’).

While the erotic appeal of such verses is precisely in their deliberate ambiguity, contrast the opposite technique in a Spanish Golden age poem featuring another diminutive *Joanín*, which beats its audience on the head with multiple cues to its obscene intention. Juanín’s “master,” speaking in the first person, is an itinerant peddler, the eroticized version of another Common John, the *Jack-of-all trades*, who peddles his wares or services to female clients in macaronic Spanish, itself a sure sign, as in the Pitas Pajas episode, that sexual absurdity is intended (Alzieu: no. 81):

Moé clavar vuestro molín
y untar bien el batán
sin que dés pedás de pan
nin torresne de tosín;
y mon criate Joanín
portarvos cosas tan bellas

Note that *all* the words in rhyme have a genital *double entendre*, with the male *Joanín* and *batán* rhyming with female *molín* and *pan*, and with *tosín* ‘ass.’ All these are stock erotic connotations, used with identical connotations in the *Libro*, where *pan* is one of the central terms in the episode of the loose bakergirl Cruz, which relexicalizes the semantic field of breadbaking, and *molino* the keyword in the tale of the young man who wanted to marry three women but soon ended up sexually worn out with only one. Finally, it is even possible to make the connection among all these stock folkloric types, identical across languages, that I have been discussing. While in the *Libro* the miller’s son remains nameless, in an English limerick also featuring a very fanciful folkloric toponym useful for its rhyme possibilities with the obscene punchline, he is called John (Anon. *the Limerick*):

There was a young girl from Aberystwyth
Who took grain to the mill to get grist with.
The miller’ son Jack,
Laid her flat on her back,
And united the organs they pissed with.

In still another French verse the miller’s son, like Lazarillo de Tormes, is so dissolute as to be the husband of the Archpriest’s mistress (Molho 168): *Fils de meunier et mari de maîtresse d’archiprêtre*.

Let us now, in this final section, finally turn to the question of why the forced rhyme of *Ruiz* with *raiz* would have been familiarly hilarious to its contemporary audience. Tracing *raiz* back to Greek, and to its Latin etymon, *radix* ‘root, radish, horseradish’, we find that, along with other appropriately shaped roots and vegetables from the semantic field of agriculture, such as *cucumis*, *ramus*, *palus*, *rutabulum*, and the most common of the group, *mentula*, it is a common term for the male organ (Henderson, Adams, *Latin Sexual*, and especially Aigremont, who gives several hundred phallic-vegetal terms in Latin and German culled from every imaginable little genre of folk culture). Lewdly [mis]shaped vegetables are overdetermined metaphors for their multiple phallic or testicular associations due to their form, their rapid growth, sometimes, as in the case

of melons and cucumbers, by becoming gorged with liquid, by their association with spring resurgence, and, not least, by being comestible. Compare, among many other terms, Eng. [*the old*] *root*, Ger. *Wurze*, *Rübe*, and the obscene Fr. male-on-male taunt, *et ta soeur*; *aime-t-elle les radis?*, akin to Eng. also obscene *take a carrot*, *orchids to you*, and more modern *have a banana*, all only comprehensible in this context. The law of similarity works also in the opposite direction, as in the name of such plants as *cojón de perro*, *dogstone*, *couillon de chien*, or tubers with simple bulbs called in Lat. *orbites satyriion* were considered penile and those with a double bulb, called *orbirtes testiculata*, *testiculus*, were considered testicular.

It is this vegetal-genital symbolism which makes sense, for example, of the ancient Greek practice, whereby an adulterer could be punished by having a large radish being forced up his anus, thus subordinating him in the eyes of society to the man he had wronged (Dover 106), or, for that matter, of the bloody cucumber episode in the *Infantes de Lara*. The same imagery is widespread in subliterate genres such as the riddle, as in the Anglo-Saxon riddle in the late tenth-century *Exeter Book*, a covert description of the erect male organ (*rooted I stand on a high bed*), whose “clean” or “official” answer is “onion”, which plays on the shaggy “hair” and red skin of both (Williamson 38, 82). In Latin, in Plautus’s comedy *Casina* (V.ii.31ff) when a foolish old man, Olympio, tries to seduce a girl, who is actually a man in drag, he wonders what the enormous “thing” is under her dress, which he at first takes to be a sword. He later discusses the problem with another character, wondering whether it was a [horse]radish (*radix*, or perhaps a cucumber (*cucumis*), and deciding that there’s no telling what it was, but that it wasn’t any kind of vegetable.

In traditional societies, where the distinctions between what is now called medicine proper, folk-remedies, and faith healing are inappropriate, the magical and aphrodisiacal qualities of roots and herbs were not clearly differentiated from their pharmaceutical qualities. Aphrodisiacs were considered medicines, and because formal similarity was of overriding importance in the traditional concept of sympathetic magic, genitally shaped roots and vegetables could take on the same importance as the actual genitals of animals in recipes for aphrodisiacs and as amulets worn to promote fertility. Because of the supposed medicinal qualities of herb and roots it was easy to make sexual jokes on the effectiveness of copulation itself as a medicine, either by insertion of the penis or by the effect of ejaculation. Perhaps the earliest example which could be called literary is Rutebeuf’s *Les Dits de l’Herberie*, where an itinerant peddler, akin to early twentieth-century American patent medicine snake oil peddlers, advertises his medicine (Faral, *Mimes* 63.v.62-3):

J’ai l’herbe qui les veiz redresce
Et cele qui les cons estresce

(‘I have a herb/plant to make cocks stand /And one to make cunts tighten’). Or, compare the scene in the fabliau *Aloul* (Du Val & Eichman 219), where a bourgeois wife, walking in her orchard, meets her next-door neighbor, a priest, to whom she comments on the salutary effects of the early morning dew, to which he responds recommending some health hints of his own - a certain herb with a short, fat root as the best breakfast medicine for a woman’s body:

Mes l'en se doit desjeuner
 D'une herbe que je bien conois;
 Vez le la pres, que je n'i vois!
 Corte est et grosse la racine,
 Mes molt est bone medicine;
 N'esteut meillor a cors de fame

(‘But one ought to have breakfast/ On an herb that I know well./ Look at it closely, for I can’t go there!/ The root is short and fat,/ But the medicine is very good;/ There is no better for a woman’s body’). This scene also alludes to the belief that medicinal and aphrodisiacal plants are particularly efficacious if they are picked while still covered with early morning dew, which, in turn, could become amusingly confused with the healthful effects of early morning copulation. Vestiges of this belief still reflected in the Sp. expression *coger la verbena* ‘gather vervein/ to rise early and go out for a walk’. Also, the slippery transfer from the medicinal effects of phallic roots to the healthful effects of copulation itself is found across languages. The “playing doctor in the orchard” topos is also frequent in erotic lyrics. However, some are so brief and allusive that often collectors no longer understand them, as in the Portuguese verse, in which a male speaker is vaunting his own prowess with the stock description: *Teño unha herba n’a horta /que pica como pementa* (Braga, no. 42).

In Spanish tradition *raíz*, *rábano*, and, especially, *nabo* are the most frequent vegetal-genital relexicalizations, as, for example, in the proverbs which maliciously lauds the appropriate pairing of the *nabo* with *col* or *berza* ‘cabbage/vulva’ (Molho 182): *El nabo y la col, bien haya quien los casó; berzas y nabos, para uno son ambos; nabos y col, para en uno son*. Compare the several occurrences of *nabo* in this sense in the *Lozana andaluza*, for example, where in the middle of a celebrated sex scene (Mamotreo XILV) Aldonza’s lover Rampín, whom she also dubs the phallic *Diego Mazorca*, swears *¡mal año para nabo de Jerez!* Later, after sleeping off his exertion Rampín continues the botanical terminology with: *aquel cardo me ha hecho dormir*. In another scene Aldonza also prepares an *olla* ‘stew,’ in which *nabo* is one of the prized ingredients (Mamotreo xiv). In her culinary endeavors Aldonza is following the “recipe proverb” *la olla sin cebolla es boda sin tamborin*, where *olla* [‘stew]pot/woman/prostitute’, *cebolla* has the testicular connotations already illustrated in the Anglo-Saxon riddle, and *tamborin* ‘tambourine/ hymen’. Such “recipes” are found in every festive genre; compare the German popular riddle, collected in the nineteenth-century in a children’s book, its erotic connotation was no longer recognized (Aigrement 137):

Ri Ra Ripfel
 Gelb ist der Ripfel
 Schwarz ist das Loch
 Wo man die Ri Ra Ripfel drin kocht

(‘Ri Ra Root/ Yellow is the root/ Black is the hole/ in which the ri ra root is cooked’).

For those who are not good enough cooks to follow such skimpy recipes, the more detailed procedure for obtaining as well as preparing root vegetables is spelled out in verse, in the following Spanish *romance*, that, as will be seen below, plays on the popular erotic relexicalization across languages of ‘grafting/planting/sticking in’ or ‘pulling up/

out’ roots, tree stumps, and the like. Teresa begins by going out to handpick *hierbezuelas* in May, pulling up one enormous *nabo* with such force that it makes her fall down on her back, but she is so content with her fall that before getting up she addresses it with the following sacriligious words, which can only be dubbed a “recipe prayer” (Alzieu, no. 137):

!Oh nabo de mi contento,
bendito el que os ha criado,
bien haya la simienta
de que fuistes engendrado!
Echaros he en mi puchero
entero y sin quebrantos
y para que no os peguéis,
procuraré menearos
No quiero para mi olla
más especies ni recados
solo, para daros gusto,
os echaré dos garbanzos

where *puchero* and olla ‘female sex organ’ and *garbanzos* ‘testicles’ (cf. the “cooking directions” in the *LBA* 437d *hierve men or la olla con cobertera* ‘the pot boils better with the lid on/ the prostitute is hotter with the help of the go-between’). The fact that the girl picks the *nabo* in question in May adds to the humour because such a late root, allowed to grow until summer so it would produce seeds, was considered harder and fatter than those harvested in winter (Alzieu p. 239, n.11). Teresa, after having lauded the saintly and the culinary aspects of the *nabo*, proceeds to advise her girlfriend of its medicinal attributes:

Olalla, no hay medicina
que me de mayor consuelo
como el nabo de mi majuelo...

In Spanish Golden Age poetry there are many other documented examples of *raíz* and its synonyms used with identical meaning, but in another, much more directly obscene Golden Age poem, a *rábano* is no longer a sexual metaphor but an actual “stand-in” for the real thing for a widow, who addresses it affectionately as a *visopija*, and *lugarteniente de un carajo* and *mi marido... legumbre mía*. However, she soon realizes that while a radish can be a stand-in for a husband, it can’t hold a candle to a *fraile* (Alzieu, n.20):

las hojas entren y ojala viniera
el ramal de fray Lucas, de solapo,
y dierase mi coño un gentil verde

The same erotic desire is more succinctly expressed by a newlywed girl in the following verse: *Desposado, dadme un nabo/ cuerpo de mi, con tanto regalo* (Frenk, no. 1731). Of particular relevance to the *Libro* is a sprightly Sephardic ballad, whose boastful vegetable peddler combines two traditional eroticized themes: erotic vegetal symbolism and the eroticized cries of itinerant peddlers who wander the land, loudly hawking their services

and satisfying their female customers. The tinker bangs his *ollas*, the chimney sweeps by cleaning out deep, dark, and dirty “chimneys”, the locksmith fits keys into female *baules*, and let us not forget Alfonso X’s carpenter, *Juan Rodríguez* and his enormous *leña* (Armistead & Silverman 1979:109):

Me llaman Juan de la Huerta;
 mi oficio es arrancar nabos,
 las mozas, que van por coles,
 todas me piden el nabo.
 A las que son de mi gusto,
 se los doy de los más largos.
 A las que son pequeñitas,
 se los doy de los medianos.
 Aparejo mi burrico
 y me voy para el mercado.
 En el medio del camino,
 me robaron los gitanos.
 Me robaron el burrico;
 tan solo el nabo ha quedado.

As I have already tried to document in my earlier “vegetal-genital” onomastic analysis of the Melón and Endrina episode in the *Libro*, I believe that it is clear that all resemblances between the priapic vegetable vendor *Juan de la Huerta* and *Don Melón de la Huerta*, with the identical patronymic are not coincidental but that both “rooty” young men clearly belong to the same folkloric tradition. At the same time, I have tried to show that *Juan de la Huerta*’s first-person phallic boasts also illustrate his genetic consanguinity with that other folkloric boaster, the galaic-portuguese *Juan Rodríguez*, who in turn is a close ancestor of *Juan Ruiz*. My onomastic analysis of the folkloric origins of all the names in question reinforces and expands Walsh’s conjecture that *Don Melón de la Huerta* was merely Juan Ruiz’s alterego, The much discussed “slip” made by *Doña Endrina*, where ostensibly talking about her swain *Don Melón*, she admits that she would do anything for *mi amor de Fita*, is but one more clue that in the author’s imagination the two narrator/protagonists are but onomastic variants of the same folkloric character, “firmly rooted” in vegetal-genital tradition.

Much of what I have said here may seem excessive, even in bad taste because it goes against everything we have been trained to believe about “values” in literature and in life. I believe that this is only because we moderns, perhaps sometimes especially scholars, have lost touch with two important aspects of traditional, residually oral society, folk humor and folk metaphors. Today for the most part only mass-culture writers, like cartoonists, pop singers, drag queens and kings, headline writers and advertising copywriters, and the oral humor of children indulge in such humor. As examples, note the names of drag kings such as *Muff E. Oso* (a play on *muff* ‘female sexual organ’ and *Mafioso*) and *Pelvis Parsley* (see many examples in a special issue of the *Journal of Homosexuality*). On the same level of humor, note the jokes on book titles and their authors, whose humor resides in the homophonic clashes of their binary juxtaposition along the likes of *The Open Kimono*, by Seymour Hare, and *The Tiger’s Revenge*, by Claude Balls (Rennick), or in Spanish names like *Benito Cámelas* ‘ven y tócamelas’ or *Federico Jones* ‘Federi + cojones’ (Anon.

"Chistes"), or the pseudo-Japanese names *Minabo Tadduro*, *Mipicha Tikabe*, *Nojoda Migatta*, etc. (Jiménez). The comprehension of such oral humor, may be impeded when presented in written form because spelling unduly emphasized the "straight" readings.

The *Libro de Buen Amor* is not primarily a social document, a veiled confession of a sinful life, or a moral allegory full of arcane allusions. The author's ingenuity resides in the clever manipulation –*de juego e de burla*– of stock themes, formulas, metaphors, which are retrievable from the medieval European literature and popular culture. Too often, analogues have been sought exclusively in "high" literary sources, with total disregard for folkloric elements derived from oral genres and "low" forms of literature derived from them, in both of which obscenity is the rule. Juan Ruíz, the rogue author, about whom ultimately we know nothing historically deflates the inherited authority of everything to the corporal level while he appropriates the author role for himself only through self-inscription. For all we know, he is just as imaginary as his folkloric antecedent Juan Rodríguez and the folklore-spouting Marcolf, rechristened as the Roman *ribaldo* in the LBA, who makes a fool of the the Greek scholar who doesn't understand street language. On the other hand, as I've already said in reference to the place name *Hita*, if one Juan Ruíz, whether an actual cleric or perhaps a jongleur who took up a clerical persona, really wrote the *Libro*, then, if anything, the whole joke becomes even funnier.

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