Cárcel de amor
Introduction and translation by
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INTRODUCTION

At first glance, the plot of Cárcel de amor may seem like the most enticing aspect of the work. First printed in 1492, the text spins a tale rife with the paradoxes of unrequited love: a knight in a far-away land, named Leriano, falls hopelessly in love with a royal heiress to the throne, named Laureola, who does not return his affections. The two exchange letters of love and rejection, confront mounting suspicions in the court, spark a rebellion in order to save the lady from a corrupt trial, and end their correspondence in the lovesick death of the knight. Such a plot certainly revels in the melodramas that made the moralists of its time rail. And yet, the work does much more than tantalize readers with unfulfilled desires: the author, Diego de San Pedro, twists what often look like typical themes of courtly love in ways that greatly energized the so-called “woman question” across cultures in medieval and early modern Europe.

A best-seller of its time, Cárcel pushed the boundaries of prose, politics, and especially female authority among contemporary societies by drawing on the strengths of its genre in historic ways. Modern-day scholars tend to situate Cárcel within a network of writing known as ficción sentimental, or sentimental fiction as it is usually translated into English.¹ This often-elusive genre does not come with a clear set of definitions or ever-present traits. Rather, it connects similar works according to their ambiguity, according to their very resistance to classification.² One of the genre’s signature

¹ For the situation of Cárcel de amor within the genre of sentimental fiction, see Gómez Redondo, “Presentación.”
² The generic boundaries of sentimental fiction have been subject to vigorous
traits is, in fact, its flexibility. Sentimental fiction is perhaps best known for the way it weaves together more traditionally defined genres and modes such as the chivalric, the allegorical, and the epistolary in order to debate the status of gender, sexuality, and desire in society. For Cárcel, this flexibility gives the room necessary to create a powerfully hybrid work. It allows for debates concerning the tumultuous rise of Isabel the Catholic to power and with her the tumultuous rise of the Spanish empire.

Diego de San Pedro creates a pseudo-autobiographical character named the “Author” to not only act as an intermediary between the knight Leriano and his beloved lady Laureola, but also to provide the framework to question the shifting status quos of his time. Allegorical embodiments bring the psychological dangers of desire to life, letters articulate the oppressive position of women in contemporary society, and political counsel attempts to persuade the king against upholding a corrupt system of justice. It is this skillful interweaving that makes Cárcel an innovative work. It is this narrative reflection that contributed to the rise of the novel. It is this representation of female authority that helped invigorate incredibly important debates in the long-standing querelle des femmes across languages. It is also why the text continues to prove valuable for cross-cultural feminist studies today.

debate due to this complexity. For thorough overviews of those debates, see La Corónica’s forum on “The Genre of the Sentimental Romance” and the introduction to Miguel-Prendes’s Narrating Desire.
4 Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1468–69; Ihrie, “Rhetoric, Didactic Intent, and the ‘Cárcel de Amor,’” 5–6 and 11. Gómez Redondo emphasizes how the “Author’s” agency in Cárcel permits a rigorous analysis of his surroundings, while Ihrie takes this a step farther in claiming that the text actively encourages such an analysis of society among its readers.
5 For the dangers of allegorical embodiments in the text, see Ruiz Casanova, Cárcel de amor, 21. For the complicated position of women in society represented by Diego de San Pedro, see Miguel-Prendes, “Las cartas de la Cárcel de amor,” 18 and Minic-Vidovic, “La mujer mediadora en Siervo libre de amor.” For a summary of the text’s juridical and political valences in criticism, see Francomano, The Prison of Love, 10.
Cárcel de amor experienced tremendous levels of success that warrant its study by scholars across fields. Researchers debate the timeframe of its initial composition, likely in the latter decades of the fifteenth century, but the earliest extant copy printed by the *cuatro compañeros alemanes* in Seville dates to 1492. The preface to this version already reveals the work’s initial influence among the Iberian courts and Diego de San Pedro’s broader movements among them. Nobles like the original dedicatee el Alcaide de los Donzeles and the lady-in-waiting to Isabel, Marina Manuel, would have been Cárcel’s first readers, if not Isabel herself, but they certainly did not remain the only ones. The book’s influence rapidly expanded in the following years. Joyce Boro has found that it went through at least twenty-nine editions in Spanish over the sixteenth century, and Fernando Gómez Redondo notes that its diffusion exceeded the print distribution of all other works of sentimental fiction put together. Cárcel’s success was not limited to the Iberian Peninsula, either. One can easily discern its wide-reaching influence in subsequent continuations by other authors, numerous translations into other languages, and even conversion into a variety of other forms. Nicolás Núñez’s continuation, printed in 1496, arguably rejects its source’s representations of female authority. Bernardí Vallmanyà translated the work into Catalan in 1493 with the addition of elaborate

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7 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos*, 1467–68.
8 Boro, *The Castell of Love*, 14; Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos*, 1466. For a complete list of the relevant production history, see Grupo Clarisel’s *Catálogo de obras medievales impresas en castellano*. The database confirms twenty-eight individual editions printed in Castilian from 1492–1598.
9 Francomano, *The Prison of Love*, 140; Boro, *The Castell of Love*, 17. Francomano and Boro both contend that, at least in the English translations of Núñez, the continuation fashions Laureola as a negative exemplar for women.
woodcut illustrations. An Italian version followed in 1515. A French version came out in 1525. Several English versions combined and continued to expand upon these in 1548, 1552, and 1555. A German version arrived significantly later in 1625 under its own title. Manuscript, multilingual, pocketbook, prestige, and even luxury tapestry versions also appeared over these years for language learners, polyglots, and affluent consumers alike.

Indeed, it is clear that the function and readership of Cárcel varied widely across languages and forms. The English translation suggests a range of sometimes contradictory uses, for example. Some editorial additions highlight its potential function as a guide to courtly manners at a time when upward social mobility was becoming more and more possible. Other changes emphasize its usefulness as a manual for rhetorical debate and an example for the praise of women. Still others market it as frivolous entertainment.

10 For the history of the woodcuts in the Catalan translation and how they shaped the textual experience for readers, see Francomano, “Re-reading Woodcut Illustration in Cárcel de amor.”
15 Francomano, The Prison of Love, 4. This is not uncommon among works of sentimental fiction: some highly popular texts like Grisel y Mirabella were not only translated at great rates like Cárcel de amor, but were also used as linguistic and cultural manuals. For this broader pedagogical context, see Boro’s “Multilingualism, Romance, and Language Pedagogy.” For evidence concerning the circulation of Cárcel in manuscript form, see Parrilla, “Un testimonio manuscrito antiguo de Cárcel de amor,” 174.
16 Boro, The Castell of Love, 50. For the general market of works like Cárcel during the early reign of the Tudor dynasty, see Wang, “Caxton’s Romances and Their Early Tudor Readers,” 176–77, 180, and 188.
17 For the framing of the text in terms of rhetorical debates, see Boro, The Castell of Love, 75–76. For the framing of the text in terms of female readership, see Francomano, The Prison of Love, 220–21. For an example of the praise of women, see the frontispiece to the 1525 Prison d’amours under reference number ark:/12148/cb39336809h at the Bibliothèque Nationale
for women despite the English translator’s as well as dedicatee’s connections to the notorious court of Henry VIII. One humorous case even claims that a courtly lady caught her suitor trying to pass off one of Cárcel’s letters as his own.

This flexibility in readership and usage likely contributed to Cárcel’s widespread influence. The book’s rapid success may be connected to the renewal of the genre that, according to Gómez Redondo, Cárcel represents. While previous works of sentimental fiction were written for women of the court to expose courtiers’ lies or the damaging conditions of love, Cárcel takes aim at a male readership as well. This change in audience leads to a series of interpretative changes concerning the destructive force of love that affect the internal construction of the text. It is men, and not women, who must learn the boundaries and perils of love, and, to this aim, the author inserts himself in the story, not as a mere witness, but as an active participant to analyze its tragic effects through Leriano’s example.

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19 Boro, *The Castell of Love*, 76.
21 *Ibid.*, 1467. The prologue of the text indicates that the book has been written for the noble *Alcaide de los Donzeles* and other knights of the court, but this does not necessarily mean the work is wholly disconnected from female readership. As will be discussed later, readers may note that the request was submitted for a work in the style of another text written for the doña Marina Manuel.
22 This potentially destructive force of love stems from a long tradition of amorous pedagogy based on readings of Ovid and various consolation texts. If young men failed to willfully turn their earthly desires into higher forms of spirituality and ethics, they risked falling prey to their own *amor heroicus*, or obsessive lovesickness. For the narrative effects of love’s destructive power specifically within Cárcel, see Miguel-Prendes, *Narrating Desire*, 258–64 and Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos*, 1467–69. For the broader pedagogical context, see the full chapter on “The Consolation of Schoolmen” in Miguel-Prendes’s *Narrating Desire*. 
Nonetheless, Cárcel was still widely read by women and later dedicated to women. According to Gómez Redondo, this is due to the absence of any sort of moral assessment of Laureola’s behavior.23 Indeed, as Keith Whinnom argues in his classic translation, Cárcel holds up Laureola as a “model of strength and rectitude” and makes a sort of proto-feminist book out of the text.24 Gómez Redondo shares this view, stating that “Cárcel is one of the most important feminist defenses in the production of sentimental fiction, a defense containing, at the same time, a sentimental story that renounces the feminine model of Boccaccio and Ovid in order to recover one of the most popular profiles among sixteenth-century audiences of fiction: that of the slandered queen, here infanta, subjected to an unjust persecution.”25

The degree of “feminism” or “proto-feminism” that one can find in late medieval or early modern texts likely depends on the ever-changing definitions and accounts of feminism itself. Even so, Laureola reflects her contemporary moment in important ways for the study of gender: she pushes against many of the social expectations that historical women of her day were indeed challenging. Laureola is no merely passive character subjected to the desire of a male character and to the conventions of courtly love put forward in previous works of troubadour poetry or even sentimental fiction itself. On the contrary, she is active and conscious of her future political role in ways that resonated across cultures.26

23 Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1469.
25 Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1469 (translation ours). The original quotation reads: “La Cárcel es uno de los alegatos feministas más importantes de esa producción tratadística y, a la vez, contiene una historia sentimental que renuncia al modelo de fémina acuñado por Boccaccio y por Ovidio, para recuperar uno de los perfiles favoritos de los oyentes de la ficción del siglo XIV: el de la reina calumniada, aquí necesariamente infanta, y sometida a una injusta persecución.”
26 For more on Leriano’s “emotional blackmail” and Laureola’s strategic as well as subtle marriage proposal, see Munjic, “Leriano’s Suffering Subjectivity,” 216.
It is for this reason in particular that we see the importance of translating *Cárcel* anew. Students and scholars of the history of gender, sexuality, politics, and prose across cultures may now have access to a newly framed, twenty-first-century, bilingual edition of a book that presents an innovative form of what might be called proto-feminism. It presents a character who does not submit to the desire and emotional blackmail of her suitor but who strategizes to decide her own future. This may seem logical for many modern readers, but such a literary representation was not necessarily the norm even though numerous women had already risen into political power across late medieval Europe. The book was written in a moment of great political and social change that continues to shape the world as we know it today.

**The Political Environment**

Diego de San Pedro and his contemporaries witnessed a number of complicated shifts in politics that resonate among *Cárcel*'s many rhetorical debates—especially those concerning Laureola’s agency as future queen. In the Iberian Peninsula, these shifts largely centered around the succession of Isabel the Catholic to the Castilian throne. The young but future queen was locked away for years in a remote castle by her elder half-brother, King Enrique IV, in order to stifle her potential ambitions for the crown.27 This did little to mitigate Isabel's desires, however, and her mother made a point of filling her youth with an education in rhetoric, mathematics, spirituality, and other important subjects that would later define her rule.28 Meanwhile, noble leaders across Castile seethed under Enrique’s reign and plotted to replace him with a leader they viewed as rightful and favorable to them.29 After the death of Isabel's full brother, she quickly became a favorite among the rebellious nobility and utilized this attention to her advantage with Enrique. She struck a deal with the king and secured her place in line to the throne under one condition. She was

to marry whomever Enrique selected for her. When he attempted to out-maneuver her with an unfavorable match, though, she chose Fernando of Aragon in secret and united the two kingdoms in what would become the beginnings of the Spanish empire.\textsuperscript{30}

While researchers can easily outline this relevant political landscape in detail, they know little of Diego de San Pedro himself. He remains an elusive figure, even for an author of the time. He likely moved among the circles of Isabel’s courts, but researchers only know with reasonable certainty that he worked in the service of the noble don Juan Téllez-Girón when San Pedro was twenty-nine years old—presumably as his secretary—and that at some point in his life he lived in the town of Peñaflor.\textsuperscript{31} Though this information is scant, it does shed important light on the development of Diego de San Pedro’s writing and particularly \textit{Cárcel}.

During the civil war that devastated Castile between 1475 and 1479, the Téllez-Girón family, along with many members of the Castilian aristocracy, supported Isabel’s rivals for the crown, Juana of Castile and Afonso of Portugal. Afterwards, Téllez-Girón fought alongside Queen Isabel and King Fernando in the efforts to conquer Granada, the last Islamic enclave in the Iberian Peninsula. Such changes highlight the political instability of the period and its characterization by ever-shifting allegiances. In this climate, \textit{Cárcel de amor}, as Emily Francomano explains, “was part of a campaign of ingratiation with the Catholic Monarchs on the part of San Pedro’s patrons.”\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, Whinnom claims that this

\textsuperscript{30} See Liss, \textit{Isabel the Queen}, 51–68 for an overview of Isabel and Enrique IV’s complex peace negotiations and strategies concerning the young royal’s marriage.

\textsuperscript{31} Modern editors often lament the lack of available information concerning Diego de San Pedro’s life. For an overview of known facts related to Diego de San Pedro and the famous figures he served, such as the Téllez-Girón family and Marina Manuel, see the introduction to Volume I of Diego de San Pedro’s \textit{Obras completas} edited by Whinnom. For the speculation surrounding Diego de San Pedro’s potential Jewish heritage as a \textit{converso}, which Whinnom debates, see Márquez Villanueva’s “Cárcel de amor, novela política” and Costa Fontes’s “Writing under Persecution.”

\textsuperscript{32} Francomano, \textit{The Prison of Love}, 35.
“ardently feminist” work praises one feminine figure in particular: Queen Isabel, in what he calls Isabelline feminism. In this sense, Francomano argues that Diego de San Pedro not only wrote this book as a “courtly service” to el Alcaide de los Donzeles and others, but also to Isabel’s lady-in-waiting Marina Manuel and perhaps to Isabel herself.

This highlights the heavy influence of Isabel’s court among writers of the time. Isabel has long been known for her strong character, and she showed that she would not accept any sort of imposition over her from her first appearances in court. Even during her contentious ascent to the throne that led to civil war, her power required a discourse of legitimacy from a cultural point of view—a discourse frequently reflected in the use of propagandistic literature promoted by herself as well as her rival Juana. Once Isabel secured her power through victories in the civil war and the conquest of Granada alike, she then initiated a process of administrative and religious reforms that were again reflected in the literature of the court. This period saw the consolidation of the Castilian language through the publication of Antonio de Nebrija’s now-famous Gramática de la lengua castellana, the proliferation of religious treatises, the formulation of a new chivalric ideal, a renewed interest in travel books, and the solidification of sentimental fiction as the main genre in prose.

33 Whinnom, “Introduction,” xi. For an example of this particularly “Isabelline feminism,” see Diego de San Pedro’s panegyric in her honor reproduced in Volume I of Diego de San Pedro’s Obras completas edited by Whinnom.
34 Francomano, The Prison of Love, 36.
35 Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 24. For more details concerning Isabel’s character, see Tremlett’s Isabella of Castile and Downey’s Isabella: The Warrior Queen.
36 Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 31. For the discourses surrounding Isabel’s legitimation, see also Guardiola-Griffiths, Legitimizing the Queen. For counter-currents to her legitimation, which were often steeped in male anxiety, see Weissberger’s Isabel Rules.
37 Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 33.
38 Ibid., 34.
The year of Cárcel’s first print publication is, of course, notorious for its own kind of consolidation as well. The year of 1492 witnessed the initial contact between early modern European explorers and indigenous populations in the Americas that would create the legacies of colonialism that still affect the world today. It witnessed the final battle for Christian control over Granada. It witnessed the decree mandating the expulsion of the Jews in much of the Iberian Peninsula. And it is into this context that the first readers of Cárcel would have taken their own weary steps home from “last year’s war.”\(^{39}\) When seen in the turbulent times of its circulation, its representations of desire and authority therefore grow much more complicated than the initial plot may indicate to the modern reader. Cárcel’s desire is not simply about amorous feelings, nor are its destructive effects limited to the enclosed gardens of love. Its authority is not simply about authorship, nor are its intermediaries and women powerless to intervene in the events around them.

**Diego de San Pedro and the Question of Authority**

Readers will quickly note how the historical figure of Diego de San Pedro blends into his own fictional “Author” and how the historical context blends into the fictional world of the text along with them. The preface immediately situates the book within Diego de San Pedro’s courtly environment. The author clearly dedicates his work to the Castilian noble Diego Fernández de Córdoba, refers to his prior work written for one of Isabel’s courtly ladies, and apologizes for any unwelcome repetitions from his former writing.\(^{40}\) This consistently frames Cárcel with an “I” connected to the historical author himself, perhaps an unsurprising frame in many ways to modern readers.\(^{41}\)

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40 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos*, 1462 and 1472.
41 Francomano, *The Prison of Love*, 28. Unlike modern-day prefaces, late medieval and early modern paratexts did not necessarily address the common reader. Rather, as Francomano explains, their often-noble dedications reveal
Yet the worlds inside and outside of the text begin to blur as Diego de San Pedro continues to use the first person in the story proper. When the narrator declares “I saw” a knight while returning from “last year’s war”—an apparent reference to the campaigns in Granada in which Diego de San Pedro likely participated—the lines between the author and “Author” blur. These efforts to create verisimilitude then continue to hold the reader in suspense as the “I” becomes a mediator for all the characters in the story before seamlessly drawing back into Diego de San Pedro’s historical context. When the “Author” finally returns home at the end, he returns to Diego de San Pedro’s home city of Peñafiel and kisses the hands of “your” majesty. Again, the pronouns blur the lines between the internal and external worlds of the text, with the final “you” simultaneously addressing the nobleman don Diego de Fernández as well as the book’s many readers past and present.

It is not necessarily the entanglement between “Author” and author alone that makes Cárcel a noteworthy and innovative work, however. The vocal ambiguities also help push the genre’s boundaries into political commentary as much as amorous speeches. Desire represents the dangerous margins of the court on various levels. an intimate network of interconnected audiences and the movement of texts among friends, clients, and patrons.

42 Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1450 and 1473; Ruiz Casanova, Cárcel de amor, 65. As Ruiz Casanova notes, all prior editors and commentators conclude that the first line refers to the war effort to conquer Granada from the Moors beginning in 1482.

43 Francomano, The Prison of Love, 41.

44 While this ambiguity allowed later translators and readers to associate Cárcel’s debates with their own socio-political contexts—likely contributing to the popularity of the work overall—it also contributed to Diego de San Pedro’s virtually unknown status among modern readers. For example, Francomano notes that the removal of his name from many of the translations’ title pages allowed editors to encourage cross-cultural readings of the book. At the same time, however, it detracted from Diego de San Pedro’s own fame. For a more detailed account of this process, see Francomano, The Prison of Love, 40.
This *caballero salvaje*, or “savage knight,” incarnates desire outside the bounds of the court’s propriety, marks life outside the purview of the court’s law, and delimits the frontiers between the supposedly civilized spaces of the city and the absence of culture in the wild forest.\(^{45}\) What is more, as Simone Pinet argues, he brings sentimental fiction to its “breaking point.” Along with other representations at the time, Diego de San Pedro’s *caballero salvaje* turns the sentimental political in important ways for his peers.\(^{46}\)

Indeed, the appearance of the wild man produces a crisis in both morality and social order for the “Author.” The prisoner Leriano asks for help in his sorrowful situation, and Maureen Ihrie argues that this question begins a descent into a quest entangled with the very purpose of Classical rhetoric in the Ciceronian tradition—to civilize and control chaos.\(^{47}\) The “Author” must decide whether or not to leave his path in order to save this strange man from his destruction, and he becomes the mediator in a series of amorously and politically charged letters once he decides to intervene. Leriano begs for Laureola’s pity and favor; Laureola sharply denies his request due to society’s rules concerning women; another knight challenges Leriano after misinterpreting a gesture toward Laureola with jealousy; the king places Laureola in a bitter prison under the influence of corrupt witnesses as well as his own rage; and numerous characters attempt to persuade him to release her.\(^{48}\) As Ihrie and others state, one could read these as a compilation of position papers on the dangers of desire


\(^{47}\) Ihrie, “Rhetoric, Didactic Intent, and the ‘Cárcel de Amor,”’ 2 and 4; Torrego, “Convención retórica,” 332. For the broader powers of rhetorical persuasion and performance across late medieval Europe, see the collection *Rhetoric Beyond Words* edited by Carruthers. For the broader powers of rhetorical persuasion in the Iberian context, see Brownlee’s *The Severed Word*.

\(^{48}\) For these instances, see, respectively, chapters 8, 11, 18–19, 23, and 30–35.
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and proper rule. The topics range from the most effective forms of sovereignty, to the corruption of justice, to the societal constraints placed upon women, to the justification of rebellion against a king. Each gives voice to topics actively in question during the tumultuous years of Isabel’s strategic rise to the throne that went hand in hand with the formation of the modern nation-states we know today.

The “Author” is no mere mediator in these issues, either. Auctoritas had as much to do with language as it did with political power at the time of Cárcel’s circulation. This is, in part, due to a heavy investment in the twinned ideas of translatio studii and translatio imperii throughout medieval and early modern Europe. Roughly translated into English as the transfer of knowledge and the transfer of empire, these two concepts represent the long-standing belief that the Roman empire’s political prowess and knowledge would transfer to the next chosen empire in part through its written works. Classical Latin and Greek authors such as Virgil and Aristotle were therefore empowered with a literary authority over texts written in vernacular languages such as English or Spanish.

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49 Ihrie, “Rhetoric, Didactic Intent, and the ‘Cárcel de Amor,’” 1. For a breakdown of rhetorical structures in Cárcel de amor, see also Miguel-Prendes, “Las cartas de la Cárcel de amor,” 1–2. For relevant changes in the monarchy’s distribution of justice, see Gerli, “Confictive Subjectivity and the Politics of Truth and Justice,” 158. For further connections between the Classical resonances of Diego de San Pedro’s cruel King Gaulo and the royal court of Isabel and Fernando, see Hidalgo, “La crueldad literaria del rey gaulo,” 156–57.

50 José Manuel Hidalgo links the imagery of Leriano’s tower to the biblical Tower of Babel and the Catholic monarchy’s attempts to impose a singular, mono-lingual rule upon their varied and newly conquered subjects. While he does not argue that Cárcel presents a clear stance on the imperialist project, Hidalgo argues that Diego de San Pedro’s work does invite critical participation in the issue among readers. For these readings, see Hidalgo, “La exégesis babélica,” 35–36.

51 For an overview of the relationship between translation and the rise of European imperial powers, see Robinson’s Translation and Empire.

52 For further information on the relationship between translation and literary authority, see the entry for “To Translate” in Auvray-Assayas et al.,
This Classical *auctoritas* was, importantly, in the midst of its own great upheavals during Cárcel’s circulation. Across late medieval and early modern Europe, vernacular writing began to gain its own sense of authority. Writers like Chaucer and Erasmus, Dante and Boccaccio, began to garner their own power as glory began to come with the translator rather than the translated.53 This shifting status quo also helped usher in shifting status quos in politics, religion, and prose itself. Vernacular editions of the Bible went hand in hand with the crumbling of the Catholic Church into numerous denominations. Vernacular treatises and grammar guides went hand in hand with the early formations of the modern nation-state as well as the assertion of supposedly civilized societies over others. Vernacular literature went hand in hand with the development of prose as we know it today.54

As an influential vernacular source text itself, Cárcel engages with this context through its innovative representation of the “Author” and his agency in the text. The “Author” actively affects the rhetorical debates throughout the work, shaping the other characters’ decisions and with them the arc of the story as a whole.55 He also frequently narrates his own internal struggles, drawing the reader into his tormented thoughts as he struggles to determine the right course of

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*Dictionary of Untranslatables.*

53 Francomano, *The Prison of Love*, 48 and 84; Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*, 2, 186, and 211. Copeland has shown how medieval translators often used their craft to fashion themselves as inventors and lend themselves authority, although their methods differ from the sixteenth-century writers at hand.

54 For information concerning the importance of vernacular languages in Iberian humanism, see Lawrance’s “On Fifteenth-Century Spanish Vernacular Humanism.” For an overview of the consequential shift to vernacular writing in the early modern world more broadly, see Waswo’s “The Rise of the Vernaculars” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*. For the effects of these changes in the development of nationalism, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 67–82.

55 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos*, 1471.
action. He even admits his own misreadings and how they affect the narrative, developing an interiority often credited to the rise of the novel—an interiority that becomes quite literal when Leriano finally ingests the letters from Laureola in order to save her from the dangerous gaze of society. Indeed, Cárcel actively engages with the

56 Miguel-Prendes draws on Michael Gerli’s past work to argue that Diego de San Pedro uses devices typical of poetry, such as plays on words, dynamic cutting, and parallelism, in order to analyze the oscuro mundo del deseo, or the “dark world of desire.” For these stylistic details, see Miguel-Prendes, “Las cartas de la Cárcel de amor,” 6 and 9–17.

57 In his critical anthology Theory of the Novel, editor Michael McKeon asserts that the use of free and indirect discourse has been crucial to the formation of the modern novel. He also specifically argues for the importance of the movement between internal and external perspectives: “As a method of internalization, free indirect discourse does not, strictly speaking, reach a ‘deeper’ level of consciousness in characters than that already accessible through first-person narration (whether epistolary or autobiographical) and third-person ‘omniscience.’ Rather, the effect of greater interiority is achieved by the oscillation or differential between the perspectives of narrator and character, by the process of moving back and forth between ‘outside’ and ‘inside,’ a movement through its narrative objectification” (485). While this characteristic is typically attributed to Cervantes at the earliest, one may find the development of such traits in prior works like Cárcel. As Gómez Redondo writes, Diego de San Pedro’s “Author” is no longer a simple mediator between courtly reality and sentimental fiction like his predecessors. Rather, he launches himself into the world of fiction and moves the reader back and forth alongside him. Readers of this edition might therefore consider Diego de San Pedro’s oscillation between the various internal and external worlds of the text in relation to the creation of interiority in the modern novel. For an overview of critical perspectives concerning subjectivity and character development, see McKeon, Theory of the Novel, 485–91. For an overview of the “Author’s” movements between the internal and external worlds of the text, see Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1471–73. For an explanation of the “Author’s” systematically doubled role as character and narrator throughout the work, see Torrego, “Convención retórica,” 331–32. For a broader history of the novel in Spanish, see J. A. Garrido Ardilla’s
specific intersections of gender and society of its time through the interventions of the “Author.”

Desire, Female Authority, and the Querelle des femmes

As outlined by Peter Goodrich in The Laws of Love, questions of desire and its potentially harmful effects were rigorously debated throughout medieval and early modern Europe. In medieval France, for example, authorities established courts with a rich legal history in which male and female judges alike would hear cases ranging from monetary disputes between spurned lovers to the duties of mediators like Diego de San Pedro’s own “Author.” In Cárcel’s more immediate context, members of the Castilian courts and even royals themselves indulged in illicit affairs that often wreaked havoc among them. Some contemporaries even doubted the parenthood of Enrique IV’s royal child due to his wife Juana of Portugal’s relations with the nobleman don Beltrán de la Cueva. It may come as no surprise, then, that Diego de San Pedro’s work generally presents intemperate love as a destructive force that consumes those who desire as well as those who are desired, those who identify as men as well as those who identify as women.

Unlike much of Diego de San Pedro’s prior writing, such as the Sermón he created for Marina Manuel, Cárcel is, again, ostensibly directed to a male audience. Addressed to the Alcaide de los Donzeles,

58 Critics have often attempted to categorize Cárcel as either a primarily “political” or “sentimental” text, but the most recent work has emphasized how they in fact go hand in hand. For a summary of critiques concerning such “political” versus “sentimental” readings, see Munjic, “Leriano’s Suffering Subjectivity,” 204.
60 Ibid., 17–18.
61 Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1401–3.
62 Ibid., 1404.
63 Ibid., 1488.
64 Ibid., 1466.
a noble in the Castilian courts, the text clearly warns against love as a destructive force within its desiring male readers. The “Author” opens the narration with Leriano’s imprisonment to his own savage incarnation of Desire after being condemned by a trial within his own mind: his “Understanding,” “Reason,” “Memory,” and “Will” agree that he should suffer, and so Love deals out a perilous sentence of torture complete with a twisted crown of thorns.\textsuperscript{65} Even after the auctor aids him enough to release him from this prison, the knight becomes embroiled in a duel over his relations with Laureola, mounts a rebellion against the king, and ultimately consumes her letters in a final act of perverse martyrdom.\textsuperscript{66} As Gómez Redondo summarizes, it functions as a clear warning against the effects of love in the bonds of male friendship as much as the desiring subject himself.\textsuperscript{67} The true ends of desire lie in the continuation of desire itself and can therefore only truly end in death.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{65} Readers may note the consistent mixture of the sacred and the profane throughout Cárcel, such as the “Author’s” winding paths through gloomy mountain valleys, the structural resonances between contemporary cathedrals and the prison of love, the use of a thorned crown to torment Leriano, and the general theme of penitence and martyrdom in the name of desire. This seemingly strange combination stems, in part, from the influence of troubadour poetry at a time when allegorical “pilgrimages” were also becoming increasingly popular. The mixture would not necessarily have been taken as overly blasphemous at the time of print, however. For more on the structural mixture of the sacred and the profane, see Miguel-Prendes’s “Reimagining Diego de San Pedro’s Readers at Work” and the introduction to Cárcel de amor edited by Báez. For more on the vogue of internal pilgrimages, see Beceiro Pita’s “De las peregrinaciones al viaje interior” and Chorpenning’s “The Literary and Theological Method of the Castillo Interior.” For more on sentimental fiction’s broader and often-distorted relations to penitential traditions, see the chapters “Recanting Love” and “Orpheus in Hell” in Miguel-Prendes’s Narrating Desire.

\textsuperscript{66} Gerli, “Leriano’s Libation,” 416.

\textsuperscript{67} Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1467.

\textsuperscript{68} Munjic, “Leriano’s Suffering Subjectivity,” 212 and 217.
Even so, Leriano and the “Author” are far from alone in their suffering. Diego de San Pedro may overtly address his work to a male readership, but he highlights the devastating societal destruction wrought in the midst of Leriano’s desires while making a bold statement for women at the time.69 The *querelle des femmes*, or “woman question” as it is commonly known in English, formed a heated debate on the consequences of gender and sex in the medieval and early modern European worlds.70 Political tracts, medical manuals, and other works of sentimental fiction all debated the idea that women were a biologically lesser form of man, that they were unfit to rule in politics or their own households, and that they were either honorably pure and virginal or morally corrupt and untrustworthy, among other disputes.71 Indeed, readers will note that Cárcel creates a strong opposition to such ideas in its own debates.72

69 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos*, 1488; Damiani, “The Didactic Intention of the ‘Cárcel de Amor,’” 42.
70 For overviews of the *querelle des femmes* across medieval Europe, see Zimmermann’s “The *Querelle des Femmes* as a Cultural Studies Paradigm” and the introduction to Fenster and Lees’s edited volume *Gender and Debate*. For the specific situation of these debates in the Iberian context, see Weiss’s “¿Qué demandamos de las mugeres?” as well as his complete list of Spanish *querelle* texts included in the “Bibliography of Primary Texts in Spanish, CA. 1430–1520” in *Gender and Debate*.
71 For Classical medical debates on the supposed biological superiority of men over women that continued well into early modern European thought and beyond, see Laqueur’s *Making Sex*. For the complex landscape of politics and gender at the time of Cárcel’s publication, see Levin and Sullivan’s *Political Rhetoric, Power, and Renaissance Women*. For the concept of female versus male honor and their connections to sexual purity in the late medieval and early modern Hispanic world, see Anahory-Librowicz, “Las mujeres no-castas en el romancero.”
72 It should be noted that Isabel of Castile was not the only woman to accumulate great power during this period. The sixteenth century saw an increase in influential women who, to varying degrees, held authority over their territories. For a more detailed overview of this topic, see Sharon L. Jansen’s *Debating Women, Politics and Power* and Sarah Gristwood’s *Game of Queens*. 
The “compilation” of rhetorical position papers noted by Ihrie reveals how political questions of sovereignty were (and are) inevitably entangled with questions of gender and sex. The exchanges between Leriano, the “Author,” and Laureola reveal a complex array of social issues that torment the female protagonist even as she attempts to defend herself from misinterpretations and ensure her rise to the throne. When the “Author” first comes to present Leriano’s case, for example, he asks her to show compassion if not love; in response, Laureola clearly outlines why she cannot offer her pity. Her direct reply articulates the fact that women do not have the luxury of writing freely. They were paradoxically bound to be charitable—and therefore give hope to Leriano—as well as clean from any suspicion—and therefore remain in silence. In her words, she could not free Leriano from his suffering without condemning herself. Even the mere rumor of her supposed corruption would make her guilty in society’s eyes.

The “Author” and the subsequent events certainly prove her right. Laureola is not only misinterpreted by Leriano’s jealous rival Persio but by nearly everyone. While critics past and present have often viewed her coldness as a front for some hidden affection, readers can only truly guess her feelings through the lens of the “Author.”

73 For clear examples within the politically and amorously charged negotiations between Leriano and Laureola, see Munjic, “Leriano’s Suffering Subjectivity,” 204 and 217–18. See also Weiss, “Alvaro de Luna, Juan de Mena and the Power of Courtly Love” to appreciate, through the analysis of another work from the same period, how mastering language, expressed by way of praising women, enacts male domination while stating the importance of women as a locus of power.

74 In sentimental fiction, the language of compassion has not only religious and emotional values, but sexual connotations as well, which explains Laureola’s reaction to the initial approach of Leriano.

75 For an example, see chapter 11.

76 Critics past and present have often viewed Laureola’s demeanor negatively, with interpretations describing her responses to the “Author” and Leriano as “cruel,” if necessary, fronts despite her signs of love. As Sanda Munjic notes, however, the “Author” acts as “an interested observer who manipulates readers by mediating the text for them through his own
may show some signs of love, but she firmly states that neither the
“Author”—or, by his extension, the reader—should take any hope
in her words. The “Author” even admits that he has misinterpreted
her in a retrospective aside: “I say compassion because, without
doubt, according to what she showed later on, she experienced these
alterations more from pity than love.”77 Ultimately, such insistent
mischaracterizations condemn her to death and a prison full of
“rough torments.”78

The text then enters perhaps most boldly into the querelle des
femmes when the “Author” rallies together a range of characters in her
defense and with it the defense of women in politics and love more
broadly. Alongside the queen and cardinal’s attempts to free Laureola,
the female protagonist herself eloquently utilizes rhetorical strategies
to articulate her impossible position in society; admonishes those
who attempt to persuade her into dangerous straits; crafts a direct
letter of political counsel to the king that draws on Senecan ideals of
compassionate rule; and indirectly looks forward to her future rule
as queen when she can bestow rewards upon whomever she wishes.79
When she is ultimately freed through rebellion, Leriano then issues
his own defenses against those who would slander women. Making
a direct entrance into the debate concerning the value and place of
women in society, he admonishes a fellow knight for his spiteful
words against Laureola with a total of thirty-five reasons why men
should honor women, complete with subsequent examples from

interpretations.” The reader thus encounters Laureola and her supposed signs
of love through his lens alone. For a modern account of Laureola’s supposed
cruelty, see Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1475.
For contemporary reactions to Laureola’s negative exemplarity in the Spanish
continuation and English translation, see Francomano, The Prison of Love,
140. For a discussion of the “Author’s” manipulation of the discourse, see
Munjic, “Leriano’s Suffering Subjectivity,” 216.
77 For these issues, see lines 311–13.
78 For these issues, see line 836.
79 For these issues, see, respectively, chapters 11, 35, and 41. For the broader
Senecan influences of Laureola’s self-defense, see Gómez Redondo, Historia
de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos, 1482.
the Bible and history alike. His reasoning is certainly modest by modern standards of intersectional feminism—often emphasizing the ways in which women bolster men rather than the strengths of women from a variety of backgrounds in and of themselves—but it made important contributions to the “woman question” at the time. Diego de San Pedro may show how desire can be a destructive force for his male readership, but he also shows how society’s treatment of women can be a destructive force for all.

Cárcel not only characterizes a female protagonist with a bold, clear voice and rigorously analyzes the concept of courtly love, however, but also reveals networks of readerly desires throughout late medieval and early modern Europe. The circulation of the text across the Iberian Peninsula indicates a hunger for its representations of love, the *querelle des femmes*, and political debates just as Isabel was shaping the future of the Spanish empire. The dozens of editions in other languages suggest similar cravings for rhetorical forms that debate the “woman question” further afield. Readers could take Diego de San Pedro’s work as a flexible model for understanding the strategic rise of the bold Queen Isabel to power as well as the many other bold women coming into their own across late medieval and early modern Europe.

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80 For these issues, see chapters 43–45.
81 Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos*, 1469. In large part, Cárcel’s contributions to the “woman question” stem from highly specific interventions in the debates. While prior defenses of women would frequently rely on the virtue of Classical women—specifically rooting their exemplarity in unusual manifestations of masculinity—the women of Leriano’s lists include contemporary women from the Iberian Peninsula without claiming their virtuosity stems from any particular kind of masculinity or femininity. For more on the specific situation of Cárcel within medieval gender debates, see “The Defenses” in Robert Archer’s *The Problem of Woman in Late-Medieval Hispanic Literature*.
83 Ibid., 118, 131, and 134.
84 The destructive portrayal of love in Cárcel might seem entirely negative to the modern reader, but, as Miguel-Prendes argues, it was incredibly productive for the development of fiction as well as the “woman question.”
letters moreover fall into an ever-multiplying and never-quite-final destination for further debate—the readers’ and now “your” hands.85

Translators’ Note

Diego de San Pedro uses highly stylized prose throughout his work that reveals his connections to the humanist traditions of his day as well as creates a range of somewhat unique translation problems. Although Spanish generally lends itself to more winding and fluid sentence structures than English—particularly due to English’s often more rigid demands concerning word order—Cárcel’s syntax remains complex even by modern standards.86 The “Author” not only interlaces clause after clause that require commas, semi-colons, and colons, but also utilizes a number of typically poetic techniques that could still confound audiences today: his prose is often marked by what Sol Miguel-Prendes calls dynamic cutting between opposing interpretations through the use of parallel structure as well as lengthy phrases that describe painful indecision before quickly turning into moments of resolution.87 Take, for example, the narration following Leriano’s request for help. The “Author” cuts back and forth between the idea that “There, I began to curse my fortune; there, I despaired

The rules of love needed to change in a court where women held real power, and Leriano’s character had to perish because “such a vibrant, complex, ever-changing world has no place for his static character.” Furthermore, according to Miguel-Prendes, the narrator observes “multiplicity of human existence and interprets its mutability in plot form.” It is precisely this variety that drives the form and content of the novel. For more precise details concerning this argument, see Miguel-Prendes, Narrating Desire, 243, 254, and 282–84. 85 For further information on the doble-destinario, or double-destination of the text, see Miguel-Prendes, “Las cartas de la Cárcel de amor,” 6. 86 Whinnom notes that Diego de San Pedro’s highly rhetorical style can sometimes render Cárcel’s prose difficult even for native Spanish speakers. Whether or not readers enjoy this style steeped in medieval rhetoric, however, he states that there would be no Diego de San Pedro without it. For further details regarding this argument, see the section “La retórica” in Volume II of Diego de San Pedro’s Obras completas edited by Whinnom. 87 Miguel-Prendes, “Las cartas de la Cárcel de amor,” 14.
of all hope; there I hoped for nothing but my death; and yet there, in the middle of my suffering, none of it weighed on me.” Such turning back and forth is not for a lack of writerly ability for clarity by any means, either. Amidst the narrator’s constant moral struggles reflected in his twisting syntax, Laureola’s words often shine through with a sharp sense of precision.

Considering the importance of such stylistic differences to Cárcel, especially in light of the text’s use as a manual for courtly eloquence in its day, we have attempted to reproduce the same effects in our English version. Wherever possible, we retained the same sentence structures in English as long as the word order did not heavily obscure the meaning or create an awkwardness not present in the source text. In these cases, we would either rearrange the order of the clauses, paraphrase them, or break them into multiple sentences. Readers should therefore still find that the narration’s moments of vivid emotion, sharp speeches, and rich allegorical incarnations come through in addition to the “Author’s” sometimes tormented thought processes.

The sometimes beautiful and sometimes confounding syntactical effects are also compounded by Diego de San Pedro’s often ambiguous vocabulary and the simple passage of time. More than five centuries have come and gone since Cárcel’s first publication in 1492, and his word choices are often marked by courtly styles, concepts, and social hierarchies particular to his day. Voluntad, for example, would typically translate to “will” in the movement from modern Spanish to modern English. Yet, voluntad here could mean both “heart” and “will” in modern English due to the late medieval belief that one’s soul, one’s life force could reside in the heart rather than the mind, depending on the philosophical school of thought. Allegorical embodiments of the psyche, titles for nobility, and details concerning armed confrontations all prove similarly complicated in translation.

88 For these issues, see lines 68–69.
89 For these schools of thought, see Pinedo Cantillo and Yáñez Canal, “Las emociones,” 22 and Serés, Historia del alma, 145.
Wherever possible, we have used the most direct modern English words for the Spanish. In the cases above, however, our strategies varied. For *voluntad*, we used “heart,” “will,” or similar alternatives depending on the word that would make the most sense with its meaning in the immediate context. For the titles of nobility, we kept some in Spanish and utilized footnotes due to the differences in hierarchical structures that underlie potential English equivalents from the time. For descriptions of armed confrontations, we used close equivalents drawn from the *Oxford English Dictionary* despite their now obsolete usage in English. Again, we hope the reader finds the choices as rich and vivid, if at times as stylized, as the courtly source.

**Transcription Notes**

As indicated above, the 1492 print edition by the *quatro compañeros alemanes* remains the earliest known version of *Cárcel de amor* to date. Happily for the modern editor, this version has not only survived the passage of time but has remained well conserved. A complete extant copy resides in the Biblioteca Nacional de España under the signature INC/2134 in addition to a facsimile prepared by Antonio Pérez Gómez in 1967 in Valencia for the series Incunables Poéticos Castellanos XIII. Indeed, the modern editor Ivy Corfis notes that all modern editions of the text have closely followed this copy for their transcriptions. And, indeed, we have

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90 Other variations might include words such as “intention” and “willpower” to capture the purposeful force needed for writing and treating difficult cases of love.

91 Corfis, *Cárcel de amor*, 47. See Corfis's full “Catalogue of Editions” for a complete list of fifteenth- to seventeenth-century editions and translations as well as twentieth-century editions and translations up to 1987.
decided to follow suit. We have based our transcription on the same incunabulum as well as taken recent modernization strategies into account — namely breaking paragraphs where sensible, spelling out abbreviated words in full, and correcting for the use of potentially confusing orthography such as the obsolete use of i as a consonant.92 We based these decisions on rigorous comparisons with the most recent critical edition of the text by José Francisco Ruiz Casanova, in addition to transcriptions by other foundational editors like Carmen Parrilla and Keith Whinnom, drawing on their emendations where we saw most fit for a balance between readability and fidelity to the source.93 We highly recommend the consultation of these editions and the incunabulum for in-depth research on the Spanish text.

92 For more on these editorial approaches, see the section “Esta edición” in the introduction to Ruiz Casanova’s edition.
93 Due to damage in the original incunabulum, some words and letters are occasionally obscured in the source text. In order to facilitate comparisons between the translation and transcription for non-specialists, we have also followed Ruiz Casanova’s decisions to include the full version of these obscured words without extra notation. For a transcription that rigorously notes these issues, see Volume II of Diego de San Pedro’s Obras completas edited by Whinnom. For a transcription that rigorously notes variations with subsequent copies, see the edition by Corfis. For direct comparisons with the original text, see the high-quality digital reproduction of the incunabulum available online through the Biblioteca Nacional de España’s Biblioteca Digital Hispánica.
El siguiente tractado fue hecho a pedimento del señor don Diego Hernández, Alcaide de los Donzeles, y de otros cavalleros cortesanos: Llámase Cárcel de Amor. Compúsolso San Pedro.

Comiença el prólogo assí

Muy virtuoso señor:

Aunque me falta sofrimiento para callar, no me fallesce conocimiento para ver cuánto me estaría mejor preciarde de lo que callase que arrepentirme de lo que dixiese; y puesto que assí lo conozca, aunque veo la verdad, sigo la opinión; y como hago lo peor, nunca quedo sin castigo, porque si con rudeza yerro, con vergüenza pago. Verdad es que en la obra presente no tengo tanto cargo, pues me puse en ella más por necesidad de obedecer que con voluntad de escrivir; porque de vuestra merced me fue dicho que devía hacer alguna obra de estilo de una oración que embié a la señora doña Marina Manuel, porque le parecía menos malo que el que puse en otro tractado que vido mío. Assí que por complir su mandamiento pensé hazerla, aviendo por mejor errar en el dezir que en el desobedecer;” y también acordé de endereçarla a vuestra merced porque la favorezca como señor y la emiende como discreto. Comoquiera que primero me determinase estuve en grandes dubdas, vista vuestra discreción temía, mirada vuestra virtud osava; en lo uno hallava el miedo, y en lo otro buscava la seguridad; y en fin escogí lo más dañoso para mi vergüenza y lo más provechoso para lo que devía.
THE PRISON OF LOVE

The following treatise was written at the request of señor don Diego Hernández, Master of the Light Cavalry, and other courtly gentlemen: it is called the Prison of Love.¹ It was composed by San Pedro.

Here Begins the Prologue

Most virtuous señor:

Although I lack the patience to remain silent, I do not lack the wisdom to see how much better it would be to treasure what I could keep quiet than regret what I could say. Yet, even understanding this, despite seeing the truth, I obey my impulse; and, since I always choose the worst option, I will never be free from punishment. If I am making a mistake with this crudeness, I must certainly pay with shame. It is true that I can claim little liability in the present work, seeing how I began out of a need to obey rather than a desire to write. I was told that I should compose a work for your grace in the style of a sermon that I sent to the señora doña Marina Manuel, because it did not seem as bad to her as what I had written in another treatise of mine.² And so, I determined to carry out the request after seeing it would be better to err by writing rather than by disobeying; and, moreover, I determined to address it to your grace so that you would favor it as someone lordly and correct it as someone discreet.³ Although I found myself in doubt at first, trembling in view of your discretion, daring in view of your virtue, finding fear in the one, and looking for security in the other, I chose what was
Podré ser reprehendido si en lo que agora escrivo tomare a dezir algunas razones de las que en otras cosas he dicho; de lo cual suplico a vuestra merced me salve, porque como he hecho otra escritura de la calidad désta no es de maravillar que la memoria desfallesca; y si tal se hallare, por cierto más culpa tiene en ello mi olvido que mi querer.

Sin dubda, señor, considerado esto y otras cosas que en lo que escrivo se pueden hallar, yo estava determinado de cesar ya en el metro y en la prosa, por librar mi rudeza de juizios y mi espíritu de trabajos, y paresce, cuanto más pienso hacerlo, que se me ofrecen más cosas para no poder complirlo. Suplico a vuestra merced, antes que condene mi falta juzgue mi voluntad, porque reciba el pago, no segund mi razón, mas segund mi deseo.

[1] Comienza la obra

Después de hecha la guerra del año pasado, viniendo a tener el invier-
no a mi pobre reposo, pasando una mañana, cuando ya el sol quería esclarecer la tierra, por unos valles hondos y escuros que se hazen en la Sierra Morena, vi salir a mi encuentro por entre unos robledales do mi camino se hazía un cavallero, assí feroz de presencia como espantoso de vista, cubierto todo de cabello a manera de salvaje. Levava en la mano izquierda un escudo de azero muy fuerte y en la derecha una imagen femenil entallada en una piedra muy clara, la cual era de tan estrema hermosura que me turbava la vista. Salían della diversos rayos de fuego que levava encendido el cuerpo de un ombre quel cavallero forzible-
mente levava tras sí. El cual con un lastimado gemido de rato en rato dezía: “En mi fe se sufre todo.”

Y como emparejó comigo díxome con mortal angustia: “Cami-
nante, por Dios te pido que me sigas y me ayudes en tan grand cuita.”

Yo, que en aquella sazón tenía más causa para temer que razón para responder, puestos los ojos en la estraña visión, estove quedo, trastor-
nando en el coraçón diversas consideraciones. Dexar el camino que levava parecíame desvarío; no hazer el ruego de aquel que así padecía fig-
urávaseme inumanidad; en siguille avía peligro; y en dexalle, flaqueza. Con la turbación, no sabía escoger lo mejor; pero ya quel espanto dexó
most shameful for my reputation and what was most fruitful for what I was obliged to do.

I could be reprimanded if I were to repeat what I have said on other occasions, in which case I would beg your grace to save me, because, seeing how I have written another book of this kind, it is no great marvel that my memory might fail me. And if you do find such fault, certainly my forgetfulness is more to blame than my intention.

Without a doubt, señor, having considered this and other things that may be found in my work, I was determined to abandon verse and prose at last to free my artlessness from judgment and my spirit from suffering, though it seems the more I consider the task the more things present themselves to keep me from accomplishing it. I beg you, your grace, to judge my intention before you condemn my faults so that I may be rewarded not according to my words but rather according to my desire.4

[1] The Story Begins

After the end of last year’s war, while I was returning home to spend the winter in my own poor rest, and was passing one morning, just as the sun was straining to brighten the land, through the deep and gloomy valleys of the Sierra Morena, I saw emerge from a thicket of oak trees along my path a knight as ferocious in bearing as shocking in appearance, all covered in hair like a savage.5 He carried a strong, steel shield in his left hand and a pale stone carved with the image of a woman in his right, a thing so extreme in its beauty that it bewildered my eyes.6 Radiating from it were numerous beams of fire that held the body of a man aflame as he was being dragged against his will behind the knight. He cried with a pained groan from time to time: “In my faith, all is suffered.”7

And, as he came upon me, he told me with a mortal anguish: “Traveler, for God’s sake, I beg you to follow me and aid me in such great sorrow.”

I, who had more reason to fear than sense to answer at the time, eyes fixed on the strange sight, went still as my heart twisted in disparate thoughts. Leaving the path I was taking seemed mad; denying the appeal of the man who was suffering so much felt inhumane; following him meant danger; and leaving him, weakness. In my confusion, I did
mi alteración en algun sosiego vi cuánto era más obligado a la virtud que a la vida; y, empachado de mí mismo por la dudba en que estuve, seguí la vía de aquel que quiso ayudarse de mí.

Y como apresuré mi andar, sin mucha tardanza alcancé a él y al que la fuerça le hazía, y así seguimos todos tres por unas partes no menos trabajosas de andar que solas de placer y de gente; y como el ruego del forçado fue causa que lo siguiese, para cometer al que le llevaba faltáame aparejo y para rogalle merescimiento, de manera que me fallecía consejo; y después que rebolví el pensamiento en muchos acuerdos, tomé por el mejor ponerle en alguna plática, porque como él me respondiese, así yo determinase; y con este acuerdo supliquéle con la mayor cortesía que pude me quisiese dezir quién era.

A lo cual assí me respondió: “Caminante, segund mi natural condición, ninguna respuesta quisiera darte, porque mi oficio más es para secutar mal que para responder bien; pero como siempre me crié entre ombres de buena criança, usaré contigo de la gentileza que aprendí y no de la braveza de mi natural. Tú sabrás, pues lo quieres saber: yo soy principal oficial en la Casa de Amor; llámame por nombre Deseo. Con la fortaleza deste escudo defiendo las esperanças, y con la hermosura desta imagen causo las aficiones, y con ellas quemo las vidas, como puedes ver en este preso que llevo a la Cárcel de Amor, donde con solo morir se espera librar.”

Cuando estas cosas el atormentador cavallero me iva diciendo, sobíamos una sierra de tanta altura, que a más andar mi fuerça desfallecía, y ya que con mucho trabajo llegamos a lo alto della, acabó su respuesta. Y como vido que en más pláticas quería ponelle yo, que comenzava a dalle gracias por la merced recibida, súbitamente desapareció de mi presencia; y como esto pasó a tiempo que la noche venía, ningund tino pude tomar para saber dónde guió; y como la escuridad y la poca sabiduría de la tierra me fuesen contrarias, tomé por propio consejo no mudarme de aquel lugar.

Allí comencé a maldezir mi ventura, allí desesperava de toda esperança, allí esperava mi perdimiento, allí en medio de mi tribulación nunca me pesó de lo hecho, porque es mejor perder haziendo virtud que ganar dexándola de hazer; y así estuve toda la noche en tristes y trabajosas contemplaciones; y cuando ya la lumbre del día descubrió los campos vi cerca de mí, en lo más alto de la sierra, una torre de altura tan grande que me parecía llegar al cielo. Era hecha por tal artificio que
not know how to choose the best way; but then the shock left me with
a kind of calm that showed me how much more obliged I was to virtue
than to life. So, sickened by my doubts, I went down the path of the
man who requested my aid.

And as I quickened my pace, I managed to reach him and the
knight who was taking him without much delay so that the three of
us pressed through places that were no less difficult to cross than de-
void of any comforts or other company. Despite the very purpose of
my presence for the plight of the prisoner, though, all ideas of counsel
failed me. It seemed that I lacked the strength to make any demands of
his captor and the merit to beg for any of his mercy. Turning over the
many possibilities in my mind, I decided it would be best to engage
him in conversation first: he would respond, and so I would decide. I
thus beseeched him with the greatest of courtesy to tell me who he was.

To which he replied: “Traveler, if I were to speak according to my
natural condition, I would not tell you anything at all. It is more my
profession to do evil than to respond with courtesy. But, because I was
raised among men of good breeding, I will use the gentility of my up-
bringing and not the ferocity of my nature with you. You will know,
because you want to know: I am the principal official in the House of
Love; they call me Desire by name. I fend off hope with the strength of
this shield, I incite affections with the beauty of this image, and I burn
lives with these affections, as you can see in this captive I am carrying
to the Prison of Love, where he can only hope for freedom in death.”

As the knightly tormentor was telling me these things, we were
scaling a mountain so high that my strength was failing with every step,
and, because I struggled to reach the peak, he ceased responding. Yet,
seeing how I began to thank him for his mercy and wanted to press the
conversation further, he vanished at once. In the coming night, not a
single sign could tell me where he went, and I decided it was best not
to move from that place while the darkness and unknown nature of the
land were setting themselves against me.

There, I began to curse my fortune; there, I despaired of all hope;
there I hoped for nothing but my death; and yet there, in the middle
of my suffering, none of it weighed on me. I knew it was better to lose
by doing good than win by leaving good undone. I spent the whole
night in sad and laborious contemplations; and, when the light of day
found its way over the nearby fields at last, I saw close to me, in the
de la estrañeza della comencé a maravillarme. Y puesto al pie, aunque el tiempo se me ofrecía más para temer que para notar, miré la novedad de su lavor y de su edificio.

El cimiento sobre que estaba fundada era una piedra tan fuerte de su condición y tan clara de su natural cual nunca otra tal jamás avía visto, sobre la cual estavan firmados cuatro pilares de un mármol morado muy hermoso de mirar. Eran en tanta manera altos, que me espantava cómo se podían sostener. Estava encima dellos labrada una torre de tres esquinas, la más fuerte que se puede contemplar; tenía en cada esquina, en lo alto della, una imagen de nuestra umana hechura, de metal, pintada cada una de su color: la una de leonado y la otra de negro y la otra de pardillo. Tenía cada una dellas una cadena en la mano asida con mucha fuerça. Vi más encima de la torre un chapitel sobrel cual estaba un águila que tenía el pico y las alas llenas de claridad de unos rayos de lumbre que por dentro de la torre salían a ella; oía dos velas que nunca un solo punto dexavan de velar. Yo, que de tales cosas justamente me maravillava, ni sabía dellas qué pensase ni de mí que hiziese; y estando conmigo en grandes dubdas y confusión, vi travada con los mármoles dichos un escalera que llegava a la puerta de la torre, la cual tenía la entrada tan escura que parecía la sobida della a ningund ombre posible. Pero, ya deliberado, quise antes perderme por sobir que salvarme por estar; y, forçada mi fortuna, comencé la sobida, y a tres passos del escalera hallé una puerta de hierro, de lo que me certificó más el tiento de las manos que la lumbre de la vista, segund las tinieblas do estava. Allegado, pues, a la puerta, hallé en ella un portero, al cual pedí licencia para la entrada, y respondiéme que lo haría, pero que me convenía dexar las armas primero que entrase; y como le dava las que levava segund costumble de caminantes, díxome:

“Amigo, bien paresce que de la usança desta casa sabes poco. Las armas que te pido y te conviene dexar son aquéllas con que el coraçon se suele defender de tristeza, assí como Descanso y Esperança y Contentamiento, porque con tales condiciones ninguno pudo gozar de la demanda que pides.”

Pues, sabida su intención, sin detenerme en echar juizios sobre demanda tan nueva, respondíle que yo venía sin aquellas armas y que dello le dava seguridad. Pues como dello fue cierto, abrió la puerta y con mucho trabajo y desatino llegó a lo alto de la torre, donde hallé
highest part of the mountain, a tower so tall that it seemed to reach the heavens. It was made with such artifice that I began to marvel at its strange features. Standing at the bottom, even though the moment gave me more reason to fear than observe, I gazed at the novelty of its craftsmanship and structure.

The base of its foundation was a stone so naturally strong and bright that I had never seen anything like it before, with four pillars of purple marble, beautiful to behold, fixed upon it. They were so tall that it frightened me to think how they could remain standing. The tower rose above these as well and had three corners as fortified as one could imagine. In the highest part of each, there were three metal figures in human form, individually painted with their own particular color: one tawny and one black and one brownish. All three gripped a chain with great force in their hands. Then, above the tower itself, I saw an eagle perched on a spire; I saw rays of light coming from within the structure to illuminate its beak and wings; and I heard a pair of sentinels that never ceased their vigilant watch for a second. I, who rightly marveled at such things, did not know what to think of them nor what to do with myself. And standing as I was in doubt and confusion, I noticed a set of stairs carved into the marble foundation working their way up to an entrance so shrouded in gloom that it seemed no man could climb them. Even so, already resolved to find the suffering man, I knew I would rather lose my life by going up than save it by staying down. So, casting my fortune to the wind, I moved toward the stairs until I came upon an iron gate that I could sense with the touch of my hands more than the sight of my eyes in the twilight of that place. Having arrived at the door, then, I discovered a doorkeeper and requested permission to continue. He said he would allow it, but it would be best for me to relinquish my weapons before entering. When I gave him all the usual arms carried by travelers, though, he said:

“Friend, it is quite clear that you know little about the ways of this house. The weapons that I am requesting and that you ought to relinquish are the defenses of the heart. I mean what it uses to protect itself from sadness, such as Rest and Hope and Contentment, because no one could be granted the entrance you are requesting with them in mind.”

Understanding his meaning, without stopping to judge this strange demand, I told him I carried no such arms and of that gave
otro guardador que me hizo las preguntas del primero; y después que supo de mi lo que otro, diome lugar a que entrase, y llegado al aposentamiento de la casa, vi en medio della una silla de fuego, en la cual estaba asentado aquel cuyo ruego de mi perdición fue causa. Pero como allí, con la turbación descargaba con los ojos la lengua, más entendía en mirar maravillas que en hacer preguntas; y como la vista no estaba despacio, vi que las tres cadenas de las imágines que estavan en lo alto de la torre tenían atado aquel triste, que siempre se quemaba y nunca se acababa de quemar. Noté más, que dos dueñas lastimeras con rostros llorosos y tristes le servían y adornavan, poniéndole con crueza en la cabeza una corona de unas puntas de hierro, sin ninguna piedad, que le traspasavan todo el celebro; y después desto miré que un negro vestido de color amarilla venía diversas vezes a echalle una visarma y vi que le recebía los golpes en un escudo que súbitamente le salía de la cabeza y le cobría hasta los pies. Vi más, que cuando le truxeron de comer, le pusieron una mesa negra y tres servidores mucho diligentes, los cuales le davan con grave sentimiento de comer; y bultos los ojos al un lado de la mesa, vi un viejo anciano sentado en una silla, echada la cabeza sobre una mano en manera d’ombre cuidoso. Y ninguna destas cosas pudiera ver, segund la escuridad de la torre, si no fuera por un claro resplandor que le salía al preso del corazón, que la esclarecía toda. El cual, como me vio atónito de ver cosas de tales misterios, viendo cómo estaba en tiempo de poder pagarme con su habla lo poco que me devía, por darme aquund descanso, mezclando las razones discretas con las lágrimas piadosas, comenzó en esta manera a dezirme:

[2] El preso al auctor

Alguna parte del corazón quisiera tener libre de sentimiento, por dolerme de ti segund yo deviera y tú merecías; pero ya tú vees en mi tribulación que no tengo poder para sentir otro mal sino el mio. Pídate que tomes por satisfacción, no lo que hago, más lo que deseo.

Tu venida aquí yo la causé. El que viste traer preso yo soy, y con la tribulación que tienes no as podido conocermee. Torna en ti tu reposo, sosiega tu juizio, porque estés atento a lo que te quiero dezir. Tu venida fue por remediarme, mi habla será por darte consuelo, puesto que yo del sepa poco. Quién yo soy quiero dezirte, de los misterios que vees
him assurance. Once he was certain of this, he opened the gate, and with many struggles and efforts I arrived at the top of the tower, where I encountered another guard who asked me the same questions as the first. When he discovered the same answers, he allowed me to enter. Making my way into the house’s entrance hall at last, then, I saw a flaming chair in the middle of the chamber and, seated in it, the very man whose request for aid had caused me to stray. There, in my own bewildered state, before my tongue could make any movement to speak, my eyes darted about the room in an attempt to understand its marvels by gazing rather than questioning. Since sight is no slow thing, I saw how the same three chains held by the figures on the tower bound that sad man, who was always burning and never ceased to burn; I saw a pair of sorrowful women with tearful faces, who were adorning him cruelly with a crown of iron thorns that pierced through his brain; I saw a black man dressed in yellow, who struck him various times with a pike; I saw a shield, which emerged from his head and spread to his feet to protect him from the blows; I saw three diligent servants, who laid his food on a black table with a grave air; and I saw a withered old man next to the table, who sat with his head resting on one hand in a deep and pensive way. And I would not have been able to see any of these things in the murkiness of that tower if not for the bright light radiating from the captive’s heart and illuminating everything. The captive, seeing how I was stunned by such mysterious things, realized there might be time to repay me what little he owed me with an explanation and some consolation. Mixing discreet reasons with pious tears, he thus began to speak to me in the following manner:

[2] The Prisoner to the Author

I wish I had some part of my heart free enough from sorrow to feel compassion for you as I ought to and as you deserve; yet, you can see in my hardships that I do not have the strength to feel anyone’s pain but my own. I ask you to take as compensation, not what I do, but what I desire. I am the reason you came here. I am the prisoner you saw, though in your turmoil you could not recognize me. Compose yourself, soothe your mind so that you can listen to what I want to tell you. You came here to remedy me, and my words will give you consolation even though I do not know such a feeling myself. Who I am, I want to tell
quiero informarte, la causa de mi prisión quiero que sepas, que me delibres quiero pedirte, sí por bien lo tovieres.

Tú sabrás que yo soy Leriano, hijo del duque Guersio, que Dios perdone, y de la duquesa Coleria. Mi naturaleza es este reino do estás, llamado Macedonia. Ordenó mi ventura que me enamorase de Laureola, hija del rey Gaulo, que agora reina, pensamiento que yo deviera antes huir que buscar; pero como los primeros movimientos no se puedan en los ombres escusar, en lugar de desviálos con la razón confirmélos con la voluntad, y así de Amor me venci, que me truxo a esta su casa, la cual se llama Cárcel de Amor; y como nunca perdona, viendo desplagadas las velas de mi deseo, púsome en el estado que vees. Y porque puedas notar mejor su fundamento y todo lo que has visto, deves saber que aquella piedra sobre quien la prisión está fundada es mi fe, que determinó de sofrir el dolor de su pena, por bien de su mal. Los cuatro pilares que asientan sobre ella son mi Entendimiento y mi Razón y mi Memoria y mi Voluntad, los cuales mandó Amor parescer en su presencia antes que me sentenciase, y por hacer de mí justa justicia preguntó por sí a cada uno si consentía que me prendiesen, porque si alguno no consentiese me absolvería de la pena. A lo cual respondieron todos en esta manera:

Dixo el Entendimiento: “Yo consiento al mal de la pena por el bien de la causa, de cuya razón es mi voto que se prenda.”

Dixo la Razón: “Yo no solamente do consentimiento en la prisión, mas ordeno que muera, que mejor le estará la dichosa muerte que la desesperada vida, segund por quien se ha de sofrir.”

Dixo la Memoria: “Pues el Entendimiento y la Razón consienten porque sin morir no pueda ser libre, yo prometo de nunca olvidar.”

Dixo la Voluntad: “Pues que así es, yo quiero ser llave de su prisión y determino de siempre querer.”

Pues oyendo Amor que quien me avía de salvar me condenava dio como justo esta sentencia cruel contra mí. Las tres imágenes que viste encima de la torre, cubiertas cada una de su color, de leonado y negro y pardillo, la una es Tristeza y la otra Congoxa y la otra Trabajo. Las cadenas que tenían en las manos son sus fuerzas, con las cuales tienen atado el corazón porque ningund descanso pueda recibir. La claridad grande que tenía en el pico y alas el águila que viste sobre el chapitel es mi Pensamiento, del cual sale tan clara luz, por quien está en él, que
you; of the mysteries you see, I want to inform you; of the reasons for
my imprisonment, I want you to know; and to free me from this place,
I want to ask of you, if it seems right to you.

Know that I am Leriano, son of the Duke Guersio—may God hold
him in His Glory—and of the Duchess Coleria. I am from the realm
in which you now stand, a realm called Macedonia. My fortune com-
pelled me to fall in love with Laureola, the daughter of King Gaulo,
who reigns at this time. I should have fled from this feeling rather than
pursue it; but, as the first signs of love cannot be refused among men, I
strengthened them through my will instead of diverting them through
my reason. And so, Love conquered me. He brought me to this place,
his home, which is called the Prison of Love; and because Love never
forgives, seeing how the sails of my desire unfurled, he placed me in the
state you see now.11 For you to understand the foundation of this place
and everything you have perceived, you should know that the bedrock
of this prison is my faith, which decided that I should suffer the pain of
my sorrow for the good of its ill. The four pillars that are fixed upon it
are my Understanding, my Reason, my Memory, and my Will, which
Love ordered to appear before his presence before sentencing me. And,
to give me a fair trial he asked each of them if they would consent to
my imprisonment because, if any of them would not allow it, he would
absolve me of the verdict. To which they all replied in this way:

Understanding said: “I consent to the evil of the sentence for the
good of the cause, and so my vote is that he be taken.”

Reason said: “Not only do I consent to his imprisonment, but also
order that he should die, for a happy death will be better for him than
a desperate life considering for whom he suffers.”

Memory said: “Since Understanding and Reason agree that free-
dom would be the death of the prisoner, I promise to never forget.”

Will said: “Given this is so, I wish to be the key to his prison and
resolve to desire forever.”

Seeing those who ought to save me condemning me, Love handed
down this cruel sentence as just against me. The three images that you
saw over the tower, each covered in their colors of tawny, black, and
brown, are Sadness, Anguish, and Tribulation. The chains they grip in
their hands are the forces with which they have tied my heart so that it
can receive no relief. The great brightness in the wings and beak of the
eagle you saw over the spire is my Rumination, a light that is so clear,
basta para esclarecer las tinieblas desta triste cárcel; y es tanta su fuerza que para llegar al águila ningund impedimento le hace lo grueso del muro, assí que andan él y ella en una compañía, porque son las dos cosas que más alto suben, de cuya causa está mi prisión en la mayor alteza de la tierra. Las dos velas que oyes velar con tal recaudo son Desdicha y Desamor; traen tal aviso porque ninguna esperança me pueda entrar con remedio. El escalera obscuro por do sobiste es el Angustia con que sobí donde me vees. El primero portero que hallaste es el Deseo, el cual a todas tristezas abre la puerta, y por eso te dixo que dexases las armas de plazer, si por acaso las traías. El otro que acá en la torre hallaste es el Tormento, que aquí me traxo, el cual sigue en el cargo que tiene la condición del primero, porque está de su mano. La silla de fuego en que asentado me vees es mi justa afición, cuyas llamas siempre arden en mis entrañas. Las dos dueñas que me dan, como notas, corona de martirio, se llaman la una Ansia y la otra Passión, y satisfazen a mi fe con el galardón presente. El viejo que vees asentado, que tan cargado pensamiento representa, es el grave Cuidado, que junto con los otros males pone amenazas a la vida. El negro de vestiduras amarillas, que se trabaja por quitarme la vida, se llama Desesperar. El escudo que me sale de la cabeza, con que de sus golpes me defiendo, es mi juizio, el cual, viendo que vo con desesperación a matarme, dízeme que no lo haga, porque, visto lo que merece Laureola, antes devo desear larga vida por padecer que la muerte para acabar. La mesa negra que para comer me ponen es la Firmeza con que como y pienso y duermo, en la cual siempre están los manjares tristes de mis contemplaciones. Los tres solícitos servidores que me servían son llamados Mal y Pena y Dolor: el uno trae la cuita con que coma y el otro trae la desesperança en que viene el manjar, y el otro trae la tribulación, y con ella, para que beva, trae el agua del corazón a los ojos y de los ojos a la boca.

Si te parece que soy bien servido, tú lo juzga; si remedio he menester, tú lo vees. Ruégote mucho, pues en esta tierra eres venido, que tú me lo busques y te duelas de mí. No te pido otro bien sino que sepa de ti Laureola cuál me viste, y si por ventura te quisieres dello escusar, porque me vees en tiempo que me falta sentido para que lo agradezca, no te escuses, que mayor virtud es redemir los atribulados que sostener los prósperos. Assí sean tus obras que ni tú te quexes de ti por lo que no heziste, ni yo por lo que pudieras hazer.
because of the one who resides in it, that it is enough to illuminate the darkness of this gloomy prison. It is so strong that not even these thick walls can prevent it from reaching the eagle in such a way that eagle and light accompany each other, the two things that can rise the highest, the reason for my prison’s position in the tallest place on earth. The two sentinels you hear guarding with such diligence are Misfortune and Heartbreak. They keep cautious watch so that no hope may bring a remedy. The dark staircase you took is the Distress that brought me here where you see me. The first gatekeeper you saw is the Desire that opens the door to all sorrows, and for that reason he asked you to leave your arms of comfort in case you possessed any. The other gatekeeper you found up here in the tower is the Torment that also brought me here and keeps the same condition as the other. The chair of fire where you see me sitting is my just affliction, whose flames burn my entrails. The two women who gave me the crown of martyrdom are called Longing and Passion, and they reward my faith as you see. The old man you perceive in such concentrated contemplation is grave Thought, who, together with other evils, threatens my life. The black man dressed in yellow clothes who also tries to take away my life is called Despair. The shield that comes out of my head and defends me from his strokes is my judgment, which, seeing I would kill myself out of desperation, commands me to defend myself because, considering what Laureola deserves, I should want to live long in pain rather than die to put an end to it. The black table they set for me is the Determination where I eat, think, and sleep. The three diligent servants who were serving me are called Evil, Sorrow, and Pain: one brings me grief with which to eat, another brings me the despair that bears the exquisite feast, and another serves me hardship, and with it, so that I drink, brings water from my heart to my eyes and from my eyes to my mouth.¹²

If it seems I am well served, you must judge; if I need a remedy, then you must see it. I urgently beg you, since you have come to this realm, to look for that remedy and to feel compassion for me. I do not ask you for anything but to tell Laureola how you saw me, and, if by any chance you would like to excuse yourself from this because you think I will not be able to reward you, do not do it, because it is more virtuous to redeem those in hardship than to support those in prosperity. Let your acts be such that you do not regret what you did not do and I do not grieve for what you could have done.
[3] Respuesta del auctor a Leriano

En tus palabras, señor, como mostrado que pudo Amor prender tu libertad y no tu virtud, lo cual se prueba porque, segund te veo, deves tener más gana de morir que de hablar, y por proveer en mi fatiga forçaste tu voluntad, juzgando por los trabajos pasados y por la cuita presente que yo ternía de bevir poca esperança, lo que sin dubda era assí; pero causaste mi perdición como deseoso de remedio y remediástela como perfeto de juizio.

Por cierto no he avido menos plazer de oírte que dolor de verte, porque en tu persona se muestra tu pena y en tus razones se conosce tu bondad. Siempre en la peior fortuna socorren los virtuosos, como tú agora a mí heziste; que vistas las cosas desta tu cárcel, yo dudaba de mi salvación, creyendo ser hechas más por arte diabólica que por condición enamorada. La cuenta, señor, que me has dado te tengo en merced; de saber quién eres soy muy alegre; el trabajo por ti recibido he por bien empleado; la moralidad de todas estas figuras me ha plazido saber, puesto que diversas vezes las vi, mas como no las pueda ver sino corazón cativo, quando le tenía tal conocíalas, y agora que estava libre dúbávalas.

Mándasme, señor, que haga saber a Laureola cuál te vi, para lo cual hallo grandes inconvenientes, porque un ombre de nación extraña ¿qué forma se podrá dar para negociación semejante? Y no solamente ay esta dúbda, pero otras muchas: la rudeza de mi engenio, la diferencia de la lengua, la grandeza de Laureola, la graveza del negocio. Assí que en otra cosa no hallo aparejo sino en sola mi voluntad, la cual vence todos los inconvenientes dichos, que para tu servicio la tengo tan ofrecida como si oviese seído tuyo después que nascí. Yo haré de grado lo que mandas. Plega a Dios que lieve tal la dicha como el deseo, porque tu deliberacion sea testigo de mi diligencia. Tanta afición te tengo y tanto me ha obligado amarte tu nobleza, que avría tu remedio por galardón de mis trabajos. Entre tanto que vo, deves templar tu sentimiento con mi esperança, porque cuando vuelva, si algund bien te truxere, tengas alguna parte biva con que puedas sentillo.
[3] Answer from the Author to Leriano

In your words, señor, you have shown that Love took your freedom but not your virtue. This is certain because, seeing you, you must have more of a desire to die than to speak. You pressed your will to aid me in my affliction, judging that because of my past suffering and present grief, I have but a small expectation to live, which is true. You caused my perdition by looking for your cure, and yet you remedied it with your perfect judgment.

Surely, I have had no less pleasure in hearing you than I have had sorrow in seeing you, because your appearance manifests your pain and your reason shows your virtue. The virtuous always lend help to those in the worst times, as you have just done for me; for in the strange things that I have seen in your prison, I doubted my salvation, since I believed that such sights were more likely to be the work of the diabolic art than of human love. For your account I owe you my service; to know who you are makes me happy; the trouble I have taken for your sake I count well spent; the meaning of all these figures I am pleased to know. I saw them many times, yet, since only a captive heart can see them, when mine was in such a condition I recognized them, but because my heart is now free, I was unsure of them.

You have asked me, señor, to tell Laureola how I found you. To do so I find great obstacles, because a man from a foreign realm, well, how could he conduct such a business? And this is not the only concern I have, but many others: the crudeness of my natural disposition, the difference between our languages, Laureola’s greatness, the seriousness of the matter. The only tool I find is my will, which defeats all the dangers I have just mentioned and which is ready for your service, as if I had been your servant since I was born. I will do what you have asked of me gladly. Pray, may it please God, that my luck matches my desire so that your deliverance bears witness to my diligence. Such is the affection that I have for you and so much am I bound to love your nobility that I would take your remedy as a reward for my efforts. In the meantime, you must moderate your passion by putting faith in me, so that when I come back, if I bring good news, you still have some part of you alive enough to enjoy it.
[4] El auctor

E como acabé de responder a Leriano en la manera que es escrita, informéme del camino de Suria, cibdad donde estaba a la sazón el rey de Macedonia, que era media jornada de la prisión donde parti; y puesto en obra mi camino, llegué a la corte y, después que me aposenté, fui a palacio por ver el trato y estilo de la gente cortesana, y también para mirar la forma del aposentamiento, por saber dónde me complía ir o estar o aguardar para el negocio que quería aprender. Y hize estos ciertos días por aprender mejor lo que más me conviniese; y cuanto más estudiava en la forma que ternía, menos disposición se me ofrecía para lo que deseava; y buscadas todas las maneras que me avián de aprovechar, hallé la más aparejada comunicarme con algunos mancebos cortesanos de los principales que allí veía. Y como generalmente entre aquéllos se suele hallar la buena criançá, assí me trataron y dieron cabida que en poco tiempo yo fui tan estimado entre ellos como si fuera de su natural nación, de forma que vine a noticia de las damas. Y assí de poco en poco ove de ser conocido de Laureola, y aviendo ya noticia de mí, por más participarme con ella contávale las cosas maravillosas d’España, cosa de que mucho holgava. Pues viéndome tratado della como servidor, parecióme que le podría ya dezir lo que quisiese; y un día que la vi en una sala apartada de las damas, puesta la rodilla en el suelo, díxele lo siguiente:


No les está menos bien el perdón a los poderosos cuando son deservidos que a los pequeños la vengança cuando son injuriados; porque los unos se emiendan por onra y los otros perdonan por virtud; lo cual si a los grandes ombres es devido, más y muy más a las generosas mugeres, que tienen el corazón real de su nacimiento y la piedad natural de su condición.

Digo esto señora, porque, para lo que te quiero dezir, halle osadía en tu grandeza, porque no la puedes tener sin magnificencia. Verdad es que primero que me determinase estove dubdoso, pero en el fin de mis dubdas tove por mejor, si inumanamente me quisieses tratar, padecer pena por dezir que sofrilla por callar.
[4] The Author

When I finished my answer to Leriano in the manner that is written, I learned the way to Suria, the city where the king of Macedonia resided, which was half a day’s journey from the prison where I departed. And with my journey underway, I arrived at the court and, once settled, went to the palace so that I could observe the manners and style of the courtiers and study the form and situation of the palace, so that I could know where I should stand or go or await the matter I wished to address. I did this for some days to discover what would be the most convenient way; and the more I studied this place, the fewer opportunities presented themselves for what I desired. When I had searched out all the ways I thought could help me succeed, I found the most suitable path would be to befriend some of the young courtiers there. As generally among them can be found the good manners of the nobility, they treated me in a courteous way and in a short period of time I was esteemed as if I were no stranger to the place. In this way, the ladies came to know of me. Hence, little by little, Laureola came to know of me. And once she knew who I was, to get closer to her, I told of the wonders of Spain, which she enjoyed. Thus, seeing that she was treating me as her attendant, I thought that I could say what I wanted at last. And so, when I saw her in a room separated from her ladies one day, I knelt down on one knee and told her the following:

[5] The Author to Laureola

It is no less worthy for the powerful to pardon when they are ill served than for the weak to avenge themselves when they are insulted, because the latter are remedied by honor, and the former forgiven by virtue. And, if this is owed to great men, it is owed even more to generous women whose hearts are royal from birth and whose piety is natural to their being.

I tell you this, señora, hoping that what I dare to say might find favor in your greatness, because you cannot have such high nobility without generosity. It is true that I was in doubt before I resolved to talk to you; but, at the end of these doubts, I realized it was better to endure the punishment for speaking rather than for keeping quiet if you do wish to treat me without compassion.
Tú, señora, sabrás que caminando un día por unas asperezas desiertas, vi que por mandado del Amor levaban preso a Leriano, hijo del duque Guersio, el cual me rogó que en su cuita le ayudase; de cuya razón dexé el camino de mi reposo por tomar el de su trabajo. Y después que largamente con él caminé vile meter en una prisión dulce para su voluntad y amarga para su vida, donde todos los males del mundo sostiene: Dolor le atormenta, Pasión le persigue, Desesperança le destruye, Muerte le amenaza, Pena le secuta, Pensamiento lo desvela, Deseo le atribula, Tristeza le condena, Fe no le salva. Supe del que de todo esto tú eres causa. Juzgué, segund le vi, mayor dolor el que en el sentimiento callava que el que con lágrimas descubría, y vista tu presencia, hallo su tormento justo. Con sospiros que le sacavan las entrañas me rogó te hiziese sabidora de su mal. Su ruego fue de lástima y mi obediencia de compasión. En el sentimiento suyo te juzgué cruel, y en tu acatamiento te veo piadosa, lo cual va por razón que de tu hermosura se cree lo uno y de tu condición se espera lo otro.

Si la pena que le causas con el merecer le remedias con la piedad, serás entre las mugeres nacidas la más alabada de cuantas nacieron. Contempla y mira cuánto es mejor que te alaben porque redemiste que no que te culpen porque mataste. Mira en qué cargo eres a Leriano, que aun su pasión te hace servicio; pues si la remedias te da causa que puedas hazer lo mismo que Dios, porque no es de menos estima el redemir quel criar, así que harás tú tanto en quitalle la muerte como Dios en darle la vida. No sé qué escusa pongas para no remediallo. Si no crees que matar es virtud, no te suplica que la hagas otro bien sino que te pese de su mal; que cosa grave para ti no creas que te la pidiría, que por mejor avrá el penar que serte a ti causa de pena.

Si por lo dicho mi atrevimiento me condena, su dolor del que me embía me asuelve, el cual es tan grande que ningund mal me podrá venir que iguale con el que él me causa. Suplicote sea tu respuesta conforme a la virtud que tienes, y no a la saña que muestras, porque tú seas alabada y yo buen mensajero, y el cativo Leriano libre.
You, señora, must understand: as I was walking through rough and deserted parts one day, I saw Leriano, the son of the Duke Guersio, being taken prisoner under the command of Love. He begged me to help him in his sorrow, for which I left the path to my repose to take up that of his suffering. After walking a long while with him, I saw him thrown into a prison that was pleasing for his heart and bitter for his life, where all the ills of the world now hold him: Sorrow torments him, Passion pursues him, Despair destroys him, Death threatens him, Pain sentences him, Rumination stirs him, Desire commands him, Sorrow condemns him, and Faith does not save him. I learned from him that you are the cause of all of this. I also saw, as I watched him, greater pain in the feelings that he kept quiet than in the tears that he showed, and now, in your presence, I find his torment justified. With sighs that tore apart his insides, he begged me to convey his ills to you. His plea was made from sorrow, my obedience from compassion. I judged you cruel on account of his feelings and I find you compassionate in your countenance, and as such one might believe the former based on your beauty and hope for the latter based on your nature.

If the pain your excellence caused him can be remedied with your mercy, you will be the most praised woman out of all women who were ever born.¹⁵ Reflect and consider how much better it is to be praised by others for redeeming than blamed by them for killing. See what kind of authority you hold for Leriano, whose very passion does you service. If you remedy this, then you have reason to believe that you can do the same as God, because it is no less worthy of esteem to redeem than to create and because you will do as much good avoiding death as God does giving life. I do not know what excuse you could make for not curing him if you do not believe that killing is a virtue. He is not asking you to do any other good than take pity on his ills: do not think that he would request anything more serious of you, for it would be better for him to suffer than to be the cause of your suffering.

If my boldness condemns me for what I have said, then I am absolved by the pain of the one who sends me here, a pain so great that no evil could arise to equal the misery that his suffering causes me. I beg that your answer match the virtue you hold within, and not the rage you show, so that you will be praised and I will be called good messenger, and the captive Leriano set free.
[6] Respuesta de Laureola

Así como fueron tus razones temerosas de dezir, así son graves de perdonar. Si, como eres de España, fueras de Macedonia, tu razonamiento y tu vida acabaran a un tiempo. Assí que, por ser estraño, no recibirás la pena que merecías, y no menos por la piedad que de mí juzgaste, como quiera que en casos semejantes tan devida es la justicia como la clemencia, la cual en ti secutada pudiera causar dos bienes: el uno, que otros escarmentaran, y el otro, que las altas mugeres fueran estimadas y tenidas segund merecen. Pero si tu osadía pide el castigo, mi mansedumbre consiente que te perdone, lo que va fuera de todo derecho, porque no solamente por el atrevimiento devías morir, mas por la ofensa que a mi bondad heziste, en la cual posiste dubda. Porque si a noticia de algunos lo que en mí hallaste que por la pena que en Leriano viste, lo que con razón así debe pensarse, viendo ser tan justo que mi grandeza te posieses miedo como su mal osadía.

Si más entiendes en procurar su libertad, buscando remedio para él hallarás peligro para ti; y avísate, aunque seas estraño en la nación, que serás natural en la sepoltura. Y porque en detenerme en plática tan fea ofendo mi lengua, no digo más, que para que sepas lo que te cumple lo dicho basta. Y si alguna esperança te queda porque te hablé, en tal caso sea de poco bevir si más de la embaxada pensares usar.

[7] El auctor

Cuando acabó Laureola su habla, vi, aunque fue corta en razón, que fue larga en enojo, el cual le empedia la lengua; y despedido della comencé a pensar diversas cosas que gravemente me atormentavan. Pensava cuán alongado estava de España, acordáveseme de la tardança que hazía, traía a la memoria el dolor de Leriano, desconfiava de su salud, y visto que no podía cumplir lo que me dispuse a hazer sin mi peligro o su libertad, determiné de seguir mi propósito hasta acabar la vida o levar a Leriano esperança. Y con este acuerdo bolví otro día a palacio
[6] Laureola’s Reply

Just as your words were dreadful to speak, they are grave to pardon. If, as you are from Spain, you were from Macedonia, your cause and life would end at once. Yet, being a foreigner, you will not receive the punishment you deserve—and no less due to the compassion you perceived in me—even though justice is owed as much as mercy in such cases. Meted out upon you, justice would bring about two good things: the first, that others would be warned, and the second, that high-born women would be esteemed and considered as they deserve. But if your boldness calls for punishment, my docile nature allows for your pardon, a pardon which goes against everything that is right: you should not only die for such audacity, but also for the offense against my virtue, which you put in doubt. If what you have said made its way into the ears of others, they might believe that this was due to the disposition you found in me more than the pain you witnessed in Leriano, which they might rightly think, seeing how it would be just for my greatness to strike more fear in you than for his pain to inspire audacity.

If you attempt to procure Leriano’s liberty any further, you will find danger for yourself by searching for his remedy. So, I warn you, even though you are a stranger in these lands, you will become a native in your grave. But, because being detained in such ugly talk offends my tongue, I shall say no more. What I have said is enough for you to know what you need. If any hope somehow remains because I have spoken to you, that hope will be short-lived if you think to continue with this mission.

[7] The Author

When Laureola finished her speech, I saw that, although it was brief in words, it was extensive in anger, which hampered her tongue. Once I departed, I began to think of various things that tormented me gravely. I thought of how far I was from Spain, remembered how long I had been delayed, brought back the memory of Leriano’s pain to my mind, worried for his health, and so—seeing how I could not fulfill what I set out to do without risking either myself or his liberty—determined to persist in my purpose until either my life was finished or I brought
para ver qué rostro hallaría en Laureola, la cual, como me vido, tratóme de la primera manera, sin que ninguna mudanza hiziese: de cuya seguridad tomé grandes sospechas. Pensaba si lo hiziese por no esquivarme, no aviendo por mal que tornase a la razón comenzada. Creía que disimulaba por tomar al propósito para tomar emienda de mi atrevimiento, de manera que no sabía a cuál de mis pensamientos diese fe.

En fin, pasado aquel día y otros muchos, hallava en sus apariencias más causa para osar que razón para temer, y con este crédito aguardé tiempo convenible y hízele otra habla, mostrando miedo, puesto que no lo tuviese, porque en tal negociación y con semejantes personas viene fengir turbación; porque en tales partes el desempacho es avido por desacatamiento, y parece que no se estima ni acata la grandeza y autoridad de quien oye con la desvergüenza de quien dize; y por salvarme deste yerro hablé con ella no segund desempachado, mas segund temeroso. Finalmente, yo le dije todo lo que me pareció que convenía para remedio de Leriano.

Su respuesta fue de la forma de la primera, salvo que ovo en ella menos saña, y como, aunque en sus palabras avía menos esquividad para que deviese callar, en sus muestras hallava licencia para que osase dezir, todas las veces que tenía lugar le suplicava se doliese de Leriano, y todas las veces que ge lo dezía, que fueron diversas, hallava áspero lo que respondía y sin aspereza lo que mostrava; y como traía aviso en todo lo que se esperava provecho, mirava en ella algunas cosas en que se conosce el corazón enamorado. Cuando estaba sola veíala pensativa; cuando estaba acompañada no muy alegre; érale la compañía aborrecible y la soledad agradable. Más vezes se queixava que estaba mal por huir los plazeres. Cuando era vista, fengía algund dolor; cuando la dexavan, dava grandes sospiros. Si Leriano se nombrava en su presencia, desatinava de lo que dezía, bolvíase súpito colorada y después amarilla, tornávase ronca su boz, secávasele la boca; por mucho que encobría sus mudanzas, forçávale la pasión piadosa a la disimulación discreta. Digo piadosa porque sin dubda, segund lo que después mostró, ella recebía estas alteraciones más de piedad que de amor. Pero como yo pensava otra cosa, viendo en ella tales señales les tenía en mi despacho alguna esperança, y con tal pensamiento partíme para Leriano, y después que estensamente todo lo pasado le reconté, díxele que se esforçase a escrevir a Laureola, proferiéndome a dalle la carta, y puesto que él
The Prison of Love

hope to Leriano. With this decided, I returned another day to the palace to see what kind of disposition I would find in Laureola, who, when she saw me, treated me like before without any change at all: an immovability that I began to deeply suspect. I thought she might be maintaining such an attitude to avoid the necessity of evading me, perhaps believing that it would not be so bad if I took up what I had already begun. Then again, I believed she might be feigning this in order to return to her purpose of correcting my audacity, such that I did not know which of my thoughts to put my faith in.

In the end, after this day and many others had passed, I found more cause to dare than reason to fear in her bearing. And with this belief, I bided my time and spoke to her again, feigning fear though I had none, because it is better to make a show of it in these kinds of negotiations and among these kinds of people. In such parts, unchecked boldness is taken for irreverence, and it seems that no one esteems or respects the grandeur and authority of those who listen to the shamelessness of someone who speaks in such a way. To save me from this error, I thus spoke to her not according to boldness, but according to fear. In the end, I told her whatever seemed favorable for Leriano's remedy.

Her answer came in the same form as the first, except that she was less angry. And, even though her words took fewer pains to keep me quiet and in her gestures I found license for what I feared to say, I begged her to feel Leriano's pain. And all the times that I spoke with her, which were many, I found her responses full of bitterness and yet her gestures devoid of it; and since this contained the trace of everything I hoped to find, I saw the signs of an enamored heart in her. When she was alone, I found her pensive. When she was with others, unhappy. Company was horrible to her but solitude agreeable, and many times she pretended to be ill in order to avoid amusement. When she was seen, she feigned some pain. When she was left alone, she let out great sighs. If Leriano was named in her presence, she strayed from what she was saying, blushing and then becoming jaundiced, her voice growing rough, her mouth drying, for however much she dissembled her alterations, compassion forced her into discreet dissimulation. I say compassion because, without doubt, according to what she showed later on, she experienced these alterations more from pity than love. But, as I thought otherwise then, such signs in her brought me some
estaba más para hacer memorial de su hacienda que carta de su pasión, escribió las razones, de la cual eran tales:

[8] Carta de Leriano a Laureola

Si toviera tal razón para escribirte como para quererte, sin miedo lo osara hacer; mas en saber que escrivo para ti se turba el seso y se pierde el sentido, y desta causa antes que lo comenzase tove comigo grand confusión; mi fe dezía que osase, tu grandeza que temiese; en lo uno hallava esperança y por lo otro desesperava; y en el cabo acordé esto. Mas, guay de mí, que comenzé temprano a dolerme y tarde a queixarme, porque a tal tiempo soy venido, que si alguna merced te meresciese no ay en mí cosa biva para sentilla, sino sola mi fe. El corazón está sin fuerça y el alma sin poder y el juizio sin memoria. Pero si tanta merced quisieses hazarme que a estas razones te plugiese responder, la fe con tal bien podríe bastar para restituir las otras partes que destruiste. Yo me culpo porque te pido galardón sin averte hecho servicio, aunque si recibes en cuenta del servir el penar, por mucho que me pagues siempre pensare que me quedas en deuda.

Podrás dezir que cómo pensé escribirte: no te maravilles, que tu hermosura causó el afición, y el afición el deseo, y el deseo la pena, y la pena el atrevimiento; y si porque lo hize te pareciere que merezco muerte, mándamela dar, que muy mejor es morir por tu causa que bevir sin tu esperança. Y hablándote verdad, la muerte, sin que tú me la dieses, yo mismo me la daría por hallar en ella la libertad que en la vida busco, si tú no ovieses de quedar infamada por matadora; pues malaventurado fuese el remedio que a mi librase de pena y a ti te causase culpa. Por quitar tales inconvenientes te suplico que hagas tu carta galardón de mis males, que, aunque no me mate por lo que a ti toca, no podré bevir por lo que yo sufro, y todavía quedarás condenada. Si algund bien quisieres hazerme, no lo tarde; si no, podrá ser que tengas tiempo de arrepentirte y no lugar de remediarme.
hope, and with that I departed for Leriano. After extensively recounting everything that had happened, I told him he should bring himself to write to Laureola, even offering to give her the letter myself. Given that he was in more of a state to write his last will and testament than a letter for his passion, he wrote the following words:

[8] Letter from Leriano to Laureola

If I had as much reason to write to you as to love you, I would take such a risk without fear. But, knowing that I am writing to you unsettles my mind and dulls my wits, and so, even before I began, I was confused: my faith told me to act boldly, your high nobility to fear; I found hope in one, but discovered despair in the other; and I settled on writing this letter in the end. But alas, woe is me! I realized that I had begun to suffer too early and complain too late. Even if you were to grant me some mercy, I have come to a point where my faith would be the only thing left alive in me to feel it. My heart is without strength and my soul without power and my mind without memory. If you were to grant me such a mercy and respond to these words, though, it might be enough for my faith to rebuild what you have destroyed. I should blame myself for requesting any kind of favor without having done you any service. Yet, should you count my suffering as service, I would think you in my debt no matter how much you paid.

You might say, how could I have even thought to write to you: do not marvel, because your beauty caused my affection, and the affection my desire, and the desire my pain, and the pain my boldness. If you think this merits my death, then command my execution. It is much better to die by your order than live without your hope, and, in truth, even if you did not order my death, I would kill myself in order to give me the liberty I seek in life, if this would not cause you to be defamed as a killer. But, unlucky is the remedy that sets me free from pain but makes you guilty of it. To escape such contradictions, I beg you to make your letter a reward for my suffering. Even if I cannot die due to what it would do to you, I cannot live because of my suffering, and you will still be condemned. If you want to do me some good, do not delay; if not, you may have time enough to regret your decisions but none to cure me.
Aunque Leriano, segund su grave sentimiento, se quisiera estender usando de la discreción y no de la pena, no escribió más largamente, porque para hazer saber a Laureola su mal bastava lo dicho; que cuando las cartas deven alargarse es cuando se cree que ay voluntad para leellas quien las recibe como para escrivillas quien las embía; y porqué él estaba libre de tal presunción no se extendió más en su carta, la cual, después de acabada, recebí con tanta tristeza de ver las lágrimas con que Leriano me la dava que pude sentilla mejor que contalla. Y despedido dél, partíme para Laureola; y como llegué donde estaba, hallé propio tiempo para poderle hablar, y, antes que le diese la carta, díele tales razones:

Primero que nada te diga, te suplico que recibas la pena de aquel cativo tuyo por descargo de la importunidad mía, que dondequiera que me hallé siempre tove por costumbre de servir antes que importunar.

Por cierto, señora, Leriano siente más el enojo que tú recibes que la pasión que él padece, y éste tiene por el mayor mal que ay en su mal, de lo cual quería escusarse; pero si su voluntad, por no enojarte, desea sufrir, su alma, por no padecer, querría que lojas. Lo uno le dize que calle y lo otro le hace dar bozes; y confiando en tu virtud, apremiado del dolor, quiere poner sus males en tu presencia, creyendo, aunque por una parte te sea pesado, que por otra te causará compasión. Mira por cuántas cosas te merece galardón: por olvidar su cuita pide la muerte; porque no se diga que tú la consentiste, desea la vida; porque tú la hazes, llama bienaventurada su pena; por no sentirla desea perder el juizio; por alabar tu hermosura querría tener los agenos y el suyo. Mira cuánto le eres obligada que se precia de quien le destruye; tiene su memoria por todo su bien y ese ocasión de todo su mal.

Si por ventura, siendo yo tan desdichado, pierde por mi intercesión lo quel merece por fe, suplícate recibas una carta suya, y si leella quisieras, a él harás merced por lo que ha sufrido y a ti te culparás por lo que le has causado, viendo claramente el mal que le queda en las palabras que embía, las cuales, aunque la boca las dezía, el dolor las ordenava. Assí te dé Dios tanta parte del cielo como mereces de la tierra que la
Even though Leriano, because of his deep feelings, would have liked to extend his letter using his acuity and not his quill, he stopped when he saw that he had written enough to make Laureola understand his sorrows. Letters should only be extended when one believes that the receiver wants to read them as much as the writer wants to send them. Free from such a presumption, he wrote no more and handed it to me in tears. The sight of his weeping made me receive it with a sadness far deeper than I could express, but I took my leave and departed to find Laureola. Having arrived where I had been once more, I waited for the appropriate time to speak with her and say the following words before I gave her the letter:

Before all else, I must beseech you to accept your captive’s suffering in order to exonerate my own importunity, because I am accustomed to offering service rather than importuning wherever I find myself.

Leriano certainly feels your anger more than his own painful passion, señora, and he considers this the worst of all his afflictions, for which he would like to excuse himself. His heart desires to suffer so that you do not grow angry, but his soul yearns to express his suffering. The one tells him to be quiet, but the other to cry out. So, trusting in your virtue, pressed by his pain, he intends to admit his ills in the hope that his letter will move you in one way even if it is a burden in another. Look how much he does to deserve your favor. Forgetting his pain, he asks for death; preventing others from saying you consented to it, he desires life; knowing you cause his suffering, he calls it good fortune; striving not to feel it, he wishes to lose his senses; but he would like to use his own and others’ senses to praise your beauty. Look how obliged you are to him, since he values the one who destroys him. He has his memories of you for all his happiness, and yet they are the cause of all his ills.

If by chance, being so wretched myself, that my intervention has not achieved what his faith so deserves, then I beg you to receive his letter. Simply reading it could bring him mercy for everything he has suffered and reveal everything that you have caused. You might admonish
recibas y le respondas, y con sola esta merced le podrás redemir. Con ella esforzarás su flaqueza; con ella aflojarás su tormento; con ella favorecerás su firmeza; porásle en estado que ni quiera más bien ni tema más mal. Y si esto no quierieres hazer por quien deves, que es él, ni por quien lo suplica, que soy yo, en tu virtud tengo esperanza que, segund la usas, no sabrás hazer otra cosa.


En tanto estrecho me ponen tus porfías que muchas veces he dubdado sobre cuál haré antes: desterrar a ti de la tierra o a mí de mi fama en darte lugar que digas lo que quisieres; y tengo acordado de no hazer lo uno de compasión tuya, porque si tu embaxada es mala, tu intención es buena, pues la tracas por remedio del querelloso; ni tampoco quiero lo otro de lástima mía, porque no podría él ser libre de pena sin que yo fuese condenada de culpa.

Si pudiese remediar su mal sin amanzillar mi onra, con menos afición que tú lo pides yo lo haría; mas ya tú conoses cuánto las mujeres deven ser más obligadas a su fama que a su vida, la cual deven estimar en los menos por razón de lo más, que es la bondad. Pues si el bevir de Leriano a de ser con la muerte désta, tú juzga a quién con más razón devo ser piadosa, a mí o a su mal. Y que esto todas las mugeres deven assí tener, en muy más manera las de real nacimiento, en las cuales assí ponen los ojos todas las gentes, que antes se ve en ellas la pequeña manzilla que en las baxas la grand fealtad. Pues en tus palabras con la razón te conformas, ¿cómo cosa tan injusta demandas? Mucho tienes que agradecerme porque tanto comunico contigo mis pensamientos, lo cual hago porque, si me enoja tu demanda, me aplaze tu condición, y he placer de mostrarte mi excusación con justas causas por salvarme de cargo.

La carta que dizes que reciba fuera bien escusada, porque no tienen menos fuerça mis defensas que confiança sus porfías. Porque tú la tracas plázeme de tomarla. Respuesta no la esperes ni trabages en pedirla, ni menos en más hablar en esto, porque no te quexes de mi saña como te
yourself when you see the residue of agony among his words, words which, although the mouth spoke them, were sent forth by his pain. May God grant you as much of the heavens as you deserve on earth by receiving the letter and responding to him; it would be a mercy that could redeem him, that could strengthen his weaknesses, ease his torments, bolster his spirits, and put him in such a state that he would neither ask for more good nor fear more evil. If you do not want to do this for the one who needs it—that is to say, him—or for the one who begs it—that is to say, me—I place my hope in your virtue. It will show you no other way.

[11] Laureola’s Response to the Author

Your insistence puts me in such a strait that I have doubted what I will do first: banish you from this land or myself from my reputation by giving in to your request. I have decided not to do the former out of compassion for you because, even if your mission is evil, your intentions are good since you are bringing a remedy for a suffering man. I also refuse the latter out of sympathy for myself, because Leriano could not be freed from agony without me being found in contempt.

If I could remedy his ills without threatening my honor, I would have done so with far fewer efforts on your part. You already know how women are more obliged to their reputations than their lives, which they must value the least for the sake of what is greatest, which is honor. If Leriano’s life depends on the death of my integrity, judge for yourself whether I should be more compassionate to myself or to his affliction. And all women must bear this in mind, especially those of royal birth, because people see the slightest of blemishes in the highest-born before seeing the greatest ugliness in the lowest. Since you supposedly conform your words to reason, how could you make such an unjust demand? You should thank me many times for even conveying these thoughts to you. I only do so because your nature pleases me, even if your demand angers me, and because I have the pleasure of proving myself innocent with just causes.

The letter that you ask me to take would be rightly rejected, because my defenses are not less strong than his demands. Because you bring it, I am pleased to take it. But do not expect an answer, nor bother to ask for it, nor should you expect to talk about this anymore, so
alabas de mi sufrimiento.

Por dos cosas me culpo de averme tanto detenido contigo: la una porque la calidad de la plática me dexa muy enojada y la otra porque podrás pensar que huelgo de hablar en ella y creerás que de Leriano me acuerdo; de lo cual no me maravillo, que como las palabras sean imagen del corazón, irás contento por lo que juzgaste y levarás buen esperança de lo que deseas. Pues por no ser condenada de tu pensamiento, si tal le tovieres, te torno a requerir que sea ésta la postrimera vez que en este caso me hables; si no, podrá ser que te arrepientas y que buscando salud agena te falte remedio para la tuya.

[12] El auctor

Tanta confusión me ponían las cosas de Laureola, que cuando pensava que más la entendía menos sabía de su voluntad. Cuando tenía más esperança, me dava mayor desvío; cuando estaba seguro, me ponía mayores miedos; sus desatinos cegavan mi conocimiento. En el recibir la carta me satisfizo; en el fin de su habla me desesperó. No sabía qué camino siguiese en que esperança hallase, y como ombre sin consejo partíme para Leriano con acuerdo de darle algund consuelo, entretanto que buscava el mejor medio que para su mal convenía, y llegado donde estaba comencé a dezirle:


Por el despacho que traigo se conoce que donde falta la dicha no aprovecha la diligencia. Encomendaste tu remedio a mí, que tan contraria me a sido la ventura que en mis propias cosas la desprecio, porque no me puede ser en lo porvenir tan favorable que me satisfaga lo que en lo pasado me a sido enemiga, puesto que en este caso buena escusa tovieras para ayudarte, porque si yo era el mensajero, tuyo era el negocio.

Las cosas que con Laureola he pasado ni pude entenderlas ni sabré dezirlas, porque son de condición nueva. Mill vezes pensé venir a darte remedio y otras tantas a darte la sepoltura. Todas las señales de voluntad vencida vi en sus apariencias; todos los dessabrimientos de muger sin amor vi en sus palabras. Juzgándola me alegrava, oyéndola me en-
you will not have motives to complain about my rage as much as you praise my patience.\textsuperscript{18}

I blame myself for taking so much time with you for two things: first of all, because the content of the conversation makes me angry, and second of all, because you may think that I enjoy it and you will assume that Leriano is in my thoughts, which does not surprise me, because, since words mirror the heart, you will go your way happy for what you understood and you will carry with you the hope of what you desire. Thus, to avoid being condemned by your judgment, if you had it, I ask you again for this to be the last time that you talk to me about this matter. Otherwise, you may regret it, and it may be that in looking for the health of another you find the need for a remedy of your own.

[12] The Author

Laureola’s words put me in such confusion that the more I thought that I understood her, the less I knew of her will. The more hope I had, the more she diverted me; the safer I felt, the more fears she instilled in me; her indecision blinded my judgment. By receiving the letter she pleased me, but her final words put me in despair. I did not know which way to follow to find hope. And thus, as a man without resolution, I departed and I went to meet Leriano thinking to console him while searching for the best cure for his affliction. When I arrived where he was, I said to him:

[13] The Author to Leriano

By the news I bring, one can see that diligence cannot replace luck. You trusted me to find your remedy, but fortune has been so contrary in my own affairs that I despise it: it could not show me enough favor in the future to compensate for all of the wrong that it has done me. However, in this case, fortune would have good reason to help you, because, even though I was the messenger, yours was the business.

I could neither understand the things that took place with Laureola nor know how to talk of them, because such things are new to me. A thousand times I thought of coming to give you a remedy, and many other times I thought of giving you a burial. I saw all the signs of a conquered will in her appearance; I saw all the moroseness of a woman
tristecía. A las veces creía que lo hazía de sabida y a las veces de desamorada. Pero con todo eso, viéndola movible, creía su desamor, porque cuando amor prende, haze el corazón constante, y cuando lo dexa libre, mudable. Por otra parte pensava si lo hazía de medrosa, segund el bravo corazón de su padre. ¿Qué dirás? Que recibió tu carta y recibida me afrentó con amenazas de muerte si más en tu caso le hablava. Mira qué cosa tan grave parece en un punto tales dos diferencias.

Si por estenso todo lo pasado te oviese de contar, antes fallecería tiempo para dezir que cosas para que dixiese. Suplicote que esfuercen tu seso lo que enflaquece tu pasión, que, segund estás, más as menester sepoltura que consuelo. Si algund espacio no te das, tus huesos querrás dexar en memoria de tu fe, lo cual no deves hazer, que para satisfacción de ti mismo más te conviene bevir para que sufras que morir para que no penes. Esto digo porque de tu pena te veo gloriar. Segund tu dolor, gran corona es para ti que se diga que toviste esfuerço para sofrirlo. Los fuertes en las grandes fortunas muestran mayor corazón. Ninguna diferencia entre buenos y malos avría si la bondad no fuese tentada. Cata que con larga vida todo se alcança; ten esperança en tu fe, que su propósito de Laureola se podrá mudar y tu firmeza nunca.

No quiero dezirte todo lo que para tu consolación pensé, porque, segund tus lágrimas, en lugar de amatar tus ansias, las enciendo. Cuanto te pareciere que yo pueda hazer, mándalo, que no tengo menos voluntad de servir tu persona que remediar tu salud.

[14] Responde Leriano

La dispusición en que estó ya la vees, la privación de mi sentido ya la conoces, la turbación de mi lengua ya la notas; y por esto no te maravilles si en mi respuesta oviere más lágrimas que concierto, las cuales, porque Laureola las saca del corazón, son dulce manjar de mi voluntad. Las cosas que con ella pasaste, pues tú, que tienes libre el juizio, no las entiendes, ¿qué haré yo, que para otra cosa no le tengo bivo sino para alabar su hermosura? Y por llamar bienaventurada mi fin, éstas
without love in her words. Seeing her cheered me, but listening to her saddened me. Sometimes I thought she was doing it on purpose and sometimes because she was not in love. With all of this, when I saw that she was changeable, I believed in her disdain, for when love takes hold, the heart becomes constant, but when the heart is freed, it becomes mutable. However, I thought that she may have been acting out of fear, since her father has a ferocious heart. What will you say? She took your letter, and once she took it, she affronted me by threatening me with death if I spoke to her again about your case. Look how grave things appear when two such differences are found at the same time.

If I were to tell you extensively of everything that happened, time would be extinguished before I could say all of the things I would tell you. I ask that your wit strengthen what your passion weakens, because the way I see it, you are more in need of a grave than of consolation. If you do not give yourself some rest, you may want to leave your bones in memory of your faith, which you should not do. For your own satisfaction it is more in your interest to live in order to suffer than to die so you do not suffer. I say this because from your sorrow I see you are proud. Because of your pain, a great crown you will have so it will be said that you were strong enough to endure the pain. The strong reveal their braver hearts in greater tribulations. There would be no difference between good and evil men if virtue were not tempted. See how everything can be achieved with a long life; have hope in your faith, because Laureola’s intentions might change, but your determination never will.

I do not want to tell you all I know for your consolation, because, as your tears show, instead of killing your longing I am igniting it. Whatever you think I can do, ask for it, as I do not have any less good will to serve you than to mend your health.

[14] Leriano Responds

The state I am in you can see, the loss of my judgment you already know, the discomfiture of my tongue you already note. Therefore, do not be amazed if in my response you find more tears than coherence. Such tears, because Laureola extracts them from my heart, are a sweet feast for my will. If you, whose mind is free from bewilderment, do not understand the things that you experienced with her, what will I do if mine is only alive to praise her beauty? And so, to call my ending a
querría que fuesen las postrimeras palabras de mi vida, porque son en su alabanza. ¿Qué mayor bien puede aver en mi mal que querello ella? Si fuera tan dichoso en el galardón que merezco como en la pena que sufre, ¿quién me podiera igualar? Mejor me es a mí morir, pues dello es servida, que bevir, si por ello ha de ser enojada. Lo que más sentiré cuando muera será saber que perecen los ojos que la vieron y el corazón que la contempló, lo cual, segund quién ella es, va fuera de toda razón. Digo esto porque veas que sus obras, en lugar de apocar amor, acrecien-
tan fe.

Si en el corazón cativo las consolaciones hiziesen fruto, la que tú me as dado bastara para esforçarme; pero como los oídos de los tristes tiene cerraduras de pasión no ay por donde entren el alma las palabras de consuelo. Para que pueda sofrir mi mal, como dizes, dame tú la fuerça y yo porne la voluntad. Las cosas de onra que pones delante conózcolas con la razón y niégolas con ella misma. Digo que las conoz-co y apruebo, si las ha de usar ombre libre de mi pensamiento; y digo que las niego para comigo, pues pienso, aunque busque grave pena, que escogí onrada muerte.

El trabajo que por mí as recebido y el deseo que te he visto me ob-
ligavan a ofrecer por ti la vida todas las veces que fuere menester; mas, pues lo menos della me queda de bevir, séate satisfacción lo que quisiera y no lo que puedo. Mucho te ruego, pues ésta será la final buena obra que tú me podrás hazer y yo recebir, que quieras levar a Laureola en una carta mía nuevas con que se alegre, porque della sepa cómo me despido de la vida y de más dalle enojo; la cual, en esfuerço que la levarás, quiero comenzar en tu presencia, y las razones della sean éstas:

[15] Carta de Leriano a Laureola

Pues el galardón de mis afanes avíe de ser mi sepoltura, ya soy a tiempo de recebirlo. Morir no creas que me desplaze, que aquél es de poco juizio que aborrece lo que da libertad. Mas ¿qué haré, que acabará conmigo el esperança de verte? Grave cosa para sentir. Dirás que cómo tan presto, en un año ha de poco más que ha que soy tuyo, desfallesció mi sofrimiento: no te deves maravillar que tu poca esperança y mi mu-
cha pasión podían bastar para más de quitar la fuerça al sofrir. No pud-
blessed one, I would like these to be the last words of my life, because they praise her. What could be better than my pain if she wishes it? If I were as fortunate in the reward that I deserve as I have been in the pain that I suffer, who could match it? It is better for me to die, since she would be served by my death, than to live, if it would anger her. What I will regret the most when I die is that the eyes that saw her and the heart that contemplated her will perish, which, considering her perfection, extends my grief beyond measure. I say this so you see how her acts increase my faith rather than reduce my love.

If consolation could benefit the captive heart, what you told me would be enough to strengthen me. But, since the sad ears are locked by passion, there is no way to be found through which words of comfort can enter the soul. To endure my illness, as you ask me, give me the strength and I will put forth my good will. As for the things of honor that you show me, I recognize them with my reason and I also deny them with the same reason. I would say that those things I know and approve, if they were to be used by a man free from my thoughts; but I also say that I deny them for myself, because I think that, even if this all brought me grave sorrow, I chose an honorable death.

The trouble that you went through for my sake and the desire I see in you forced me to offer you my life as many times as needed; but since there is but little life left in me, take as satisfaction what I would like to do, and not what I cannot do. Since this shall be the last good deed that you may do for me and that I may receive, I tenaciously beg you to take this letter to Laureola with such news that she may be glad of, so she shall know how I say goodbye to life and anger her no more. This letter, that with sacrifice you will carry to her, I want to start in your presence. And these are its words:

[15] Letter from Leriano to Laureola

Since the reward for my ambitions shall be my sepulcher, I am ready to receive it. To die does not displease me, because the man who abhors the things that freedom provides is a man of poor judgment. But, what will I do knowing that this will end my hopes of seeing you? That is a painful thing to feel. You may ask how I could lose my endurance so quickly since I have been your servant just one year—or little more. It should not surprise you that the scarce hope you gave me and my great
iera pensar que a tal cosa dieras lugar si tus obras no me lo certificaran.

Siempre creí que forçara tu condición piadosa a tu voluntad porfiada, comoquiera que en esto, si mi vida recibe el daño, mi dicha tiene la culpa. Espantado estó cómo de ti misma no te dueles: dite la libertad, ofrecite el corazón, no quises que nada mío por sello del todo tuyo. Pues ¿cómo te querrá servir ni tener amor quien sopierre que tus propias cosas destruyes? Por cierto tú eres tu enemiga. Si no me querías remediar porque me salva, yo, devieraslo hacer porque no te condenarás tú. Porque en mi perdición oviense algund bien, deseo que te pese della; mas si el pesar te avía de dar pena, no lo quiero, que pues nunca bivien-do te hize servicio no sería justo que muriendo te causase enojo.

Los que ponen los ojos en el sol cuanto más lo miran más se cie-gan: y así cuanto yo más contemplo tu hermosura más ciego tengo el sentido. Esto digo porque de los desconciertos escritos no te maravilles. Verdad es que a tal tiempo escusado era tal descargo, porque, segund quedo, más estó en disposición de acabar la vida que de desculpar las razones.

Pero quisiera que lo que tú avías de ver fuera ordenado, porque no ocuparas tu saber en cosa tan fuera de su condición. Si consientes que muera porque se publique que podiste matar, mal te aconsejaste, que sin experiencia mía lo certificava la hermosura tuya. Si lo tienes por bien porque no era merecedor de tus mercedes, pensava alcançar por fe lo que por desmerecer perdiese, y con este pensamiento osé tomar tal cuidado. Si por ventura te plaze por parecerte que no se podría remediar sin tu ofensa mi cuita, nunca pensé pedirte merced que te causase culpa. ¿Cómo avía de aprovecharme el bien que a ti te viniese mal? Solamente pedí tu respuesta por primero y postrimero galardón.

Dexadas más largas, te suplico, pues acabas la vida, que onres la muerte, porque, si en el lugar donde van las almas desesperadas ay algúin bien, no pediré otro sino sentido para sentir que onraste mis huesos, por gozar aquel poco espacio de gloria tan grande.
passion could be enough to weaken my resistance to suffering. I could never have thought that you would allow such a thing, if your acts had not proved it to me.

I have always believed that your pious condition would bend your obstinate will. In any case, if my life is harmed, then my good fortune is the one to blame. I am astonished to see how you do not sorrow yourself: I gave you my freedom, I offered you my heart, I have not retained anything for myself so everything is yours. Who would want to serve you and love you knowing you destroy what is yours? Certainly you are your own enemy. If you do not want to remedy my pain to save me, you should do it so you do not condemn yourself. If any good is to come from my death, it is your sorrow for it, yet I would not want that sorrow to pain you; I never served you while I lived, so it would be unjust if my death should cause you sorrow.

Those who look at the sun, the more they look, the more they blind themselves. In the same manner, the more I contemplate your beauty, the more I blind my judgment. I say this so you do not marvel about my disconcerted words. It is certain that in this instance, such an excuse is unnecessary, because, as I feel, I am more inclined to end my life than to excuse my words.

Yet, I would like for whatever you wish to be commanded so that you do not occupy your mind in things that are not of its concern. If you let me die so that it can be made public that you were able to kill, you have been advised badly, because even without my experience this was already certified by your beauty. If you think I deserve death because I was not worthy of your kindness, I thought of achieving by means of faith what by lack of merit I could lose. And with this thought, I dared to take up such a concern. If by any chance you are pleased, thinking that my pain cannot be remedied without offending you, know that I never thought of asking for a favor that could bring you any guilt. How could I benefit from any good that is bad for you? I only asked you for your answer as the first and last reward.

To be brief, I beg you, since you are ending my life, that you honor my death, for if there is any good in the place where desperate souls go, I will not ask for anything but the knowledge that you honored my bones, so that I may enjoy that little portion of such great glory.
Acabada la habla y carta de Leriano, satisfaciendo los ojos por las palabras con muchas lágrimas, sin poderle hablar despedíme dél, aviendo aquélla, segund le vi por la postrimera vez que lo esperava ver. Y puesto en el camino, puse un sobrescrito a su carta, porque Laureola en seguridad de aquél la quisiese recibir. Y llegado donde estaba, acordé de ge la dar, la cual creyendo que era de otra calidad, recibió, y comenzó y acabó de leer; y como en todo aquel tiempo que la leía nunca partiese de su rostro mi vista, vi que cuando acabó de leerla quedó tan enmudecida y turbada como si gran mal toviera; y como su turbación de mirar la mia no le escusase, por asegurarme hízome preguntas y hablas fuera de todo propósito; y por librase de la compañía que en semejantes tiempos es peligrosa, porque las mudanzas públicas no descubriessen los pensamientos secretos, retráxose y assí estuvo aquella noche sin hablarme nada en el propósito. Y otro día de mañana mandóme llamar y después que me dixo cuantas razones bastavan para descargarse del consentimiento que dava en la pena de Leriano, díxome que le tenía escrito, pareciéndole inhumanidad perder por tan poco precio un ombre tal; y porque con el plazer de lo que le oía estaba desatinado en lo que hablava, no escrivo la dulceza y onestad que ovo en su razonamiento. Quienquiera que la oyera pudiera conocer que aquel estudio avíe usado poco: ya de empachada estaba encendida, ya de turbada se tornava amarilla. Tenía tal alteración y tan sin aliento la habla como si esperara sentencia de muerte; en tal manera le temblava la boz, que no podía forçar con la discreción al miedo. Mi respuesta fue breve, porque el tiempo para alargarme no me dava lugar, y después de besalle las manos recibí su carta, las razones de la cual eran tales:

La muerte que esperavas tú de penado merecía yo por culpada si en esto que hago pecase mi voluntad, lo que cierto no es assí, que más te escrivo por redemir tu vida que por satisfacer tu deseo. Mas, triste de mí, que este descargo solamente aprovecha para complir comigo, porque si deste pecado fuese acusada no tengo otro testigo para salvarme sino
With Leriano’s speech and letter finished, my eyes filling up with tears at his words, unable to speak a thing myself, I departed thinking that, as I looked at him, it was the last time I expected to see him. And so, set on my way, I put a new cover on the letter so that Laureola would willingly accept it. Indeed, once I arrived at the place where she was, I decided to give it to her: thinking it was another kind of thing, she received it, and began it, and finished it. Her face never went out of my sight the whole time she was reading it, and I saw how it left her dumbfounded and distressed as if she had some grave illness. Because her worries at seeing my own distress could not excuse it, she asked me questions and talked of things out of all sense. To free herself from the company that was so dangerous at such times and attempting to keep her visible alterations from divulging secret thoughts, she left me without speaking of my purpose at all. In the morning the next day, though, she ordered me to call on her and expressed many reasons to excuse herself from consenting to Leriano’s pain, and she told me that she wrote a letter for him since she thought it inhumane to lose such a great man for such a small thing. But, because I was pleased to hear her, I became confused by what she was saying and so cannot write about the sweetness and honesty that were in her words.

Indeed, whoever heard her would think that she had little experience in such matters: already out of shyness, she was inflamed with blushes; already from distress, she was turning yellow. She became so altered and so breathless in her speech that it was as if she were waiting for a death sentence, set in such a state that her voice was shaking, that she could not conceal her fear with her discretion. My answer was short, because the time did not allow for more. And so, after kissing her hands, I received her letter with the following arguments:

The death you were expecting as a consequence of your suffering I would deserve as a consequence of my guilt if what I am doing were immoral, which it most certainly is not. I am writing to you in order to redeem your life more than to satisfy your desires. But alas, in my misery, this liberation from guilt would only be ruin for myself, because,
mi intención, y por ser parte tan principal no se tomaría en cuenta su dicho. Y con este miedo, la mano en el papel, puse el corazón en el cielo, haziendo juez de mi fin Aquél a quien la verdad de las cosas es manifiesta.

Todas las veces que dudé en responderte fue porque sin mi condenación no podías tú ser asuelto, como agora parece, que puesto que tú solo y el levador de mi carta sepáis que escriví, ¿qué sé yo los juizios que daréis sobre mí? Y digo que sean sanos; sola mi sospecha me amanzilla.

Ruégote mucho, cuando con mi respuesta en medio de tus placeres estés más ufano, que te acuerdes de la fama de quien los causó; y avísote desto porque semejantes favores desean publicarse, teniendo más acatamiento a la vitoria dellos que a la fama de quien los da. Cuánto mejor me estoviera ser afeada por cruel que amanzillada por piadosa tú lo conoses, y por remediarle usé lo contrario. Ya tú tienes lo que deseas y yo lo que temía. Por Dios te pido que embuelvas mi carta en tu fé, porque si es tan cierta, como confiesas, no se te pierda ni de nadie pueda ser vista; que quien viese lo que te escrivo pensaría que te amo y creería que mis razones antes eran dichas por disimulación de la verdad que por la verdad. Lo cual es al revés, que por cierto más las digo, como ya he dicho, con intención piadosa que con voluntad enamorada. Por hazerte creer esto querría estenderme, y por no ponerte otra sospecha acabo, y para que mis obras recibiesen galardón justo avía de hazer la vida otro tanto.

[18] El auctor

Recebida la carta de Laureola acordé de partirme para Leriano, el cual camino quise hacer acompañado, por levar conmigo quien a él y a mí ayudase en la gloria de mi embaxada; y por animarlos para adelante llamé los mayores enemigos de nuestro negocio, que eran Contentamiento, y Esperança, y Descanso, y Plazer, y Alegría, y Holgança. Y porque si las guardas de la prisión de Leriano quisiesen por levar compañía defenderme la entrada, pensé de ir en orden de guerra, y con tal
if I were accused of such a sin, I would have no other witness to save me than my intention, and, after playing such a principal part, no one would ever take it into account. So, with this fear in mind, hand on paper, I place my heart in the heavens and let Him above, to whom the truth of all things is known, be my judge.

Every time I wavered in responding to you was because, as it seems now, you cannot have your freedom without my condemnation. Though you and the messenger of my letter alone know what I wrote, how can I predict the judgments that will be cast upon me? Even if such judgments are good, suspicion alone tarnishes me.

I beg you deeply, when you are in the middle of your contentment and smug with my answer, to remember the reputation of the one who gave you that contentment. I am telling you this because such favors tend to be made public, with more reverence paid to the victory of those who receive them than to the reputation of those who grant them. You understand how much better it is to be smeared as cruel than tarnished as compassionate, and yet I have done the worst of the two in order to remedy you. Now you have what you desired and what I feared. By God, I beg you to enclose my letter in your faith if it is as secure as you confess. Do not lose it, or allow anyone to look at it, because whoever could see what I write to you would believe that I love you and that my prior reasons were used as a dissimulation of the truth rather than as the truth itself. It is, in fact, the opposite. I say it all, as I have said before, with a pious intention rather than amorous intent. To make you believe this, I wanted to extend my words; to deter any other suspicion in you, I will stop; and to make sure my actions are given their just reward, my life would have to reward itself as well.

[18] The Author

With Laureola’s letter received, I departed for Leriano. I wished to follow the path back with some company—with someone to help him and me in the glory of this mission—and so I encouraged and called upon on the greatest enemies of this affair, that is, Contentment, and Hope, and Rest, and Pleasure, and Joy, and Leisure. If the guards of Leriano’s prison wished to defend against my entrance because of such company, I would go in the manner of war. And with this thought, I
pensamiento, hecha una batalla de toda mi compañía, seguí mi cami-
ño; y allegado a un alto donde se parecía la prisión, viendo los guar-
dadores della mi seña, que era verde y colorada, en lugar de defenderse
pusiéronse en huida tan grande que quien más huía más cerca pensava
que iva del peligro. Y como Leriano vido a sobreora tal rebato, no sabi-
endo qué cosa fuese, púsose a una ventana de la torre, hablando verdad
más con flaqueza de espíritu que con esperanza de socorro. Y como me
vio venir en batalla de tan hermosa gente, conoció lo que era, y lo uno
de la poca fuerza y lo otro de súpito bien, perdido el sentido cayó en el
suelo dentro de la casa.

Pues yo, que no levava espacio, como llegué al escalera por donde
solía sobir, eché a Descanso delante, el cual dio estraña claridad a su
tiniebra; y subido a donde estaba el ya bienaventurado, cuando le vi en
manera mortal pensé que iva a buen tiempo para llorarlo y tarde para
darle remedio. Pero socorrió luego Esperança, que andava allí la más
diligente, y echándole un poco de agua en el rostro tornó en su acuerdo,
y por más esforçarle dile la carta de Laureola; y entretanto que la leía,
todos los que levava comigo procurava su salud: Alegría le alegrava el
coraçón, Descanso le consolava el alma, Esperança le bolvía el sentido,
Contentamiento le aclarava la vista, Holgança le restitutía la fuerça,
Plazer le abivava el entendimiento; y en tal manera lo trataron que
cuando lo que Laureola le escrivió acabó de leer estaba tan sano como
si ninguna pasión uviera tenido. Y como vido que mi diligencia le dio
libertad, echávame muchas vezes los braços encima, ofreciéndome a él
y a todo lo suyo, y parecíale poco precio, segund lo que merecíe mi
servicio. De tal manera eran sus ofrecimientos que no sabía responderle
como yo devía y quien él era.

Pues después que entre él y mí grandes cosas pasaron acordó de
irse a la corte, y antes que fuese estuvo algunos días en una villa suya
por rehazerse de fuerças y atavíos para su partida; y como se vido en
disposición de poderse partir, púsolo en obra, y sabido en la corte como
iva, todos los grandes señores y mancebos cortesanos salieron a receibirle.
Mas como aquellas ceremonias viejas toviesse sabidas, más ufana le
dava la gloria secreta que la onra pública, y así fue acompañado hasta
palacio.

Cuando besó las manos a Laueola pasaron cosas mucho de notar,
en especial para mí, que sabía lo que entre ellos estaba: al uno le sobrava
turbación, al otro le faltava color; ni él sabía qué dezir ni ella qué re-
made a battalion of my company and went down my path. Once we ar-
rived at a high point where the prison could be seen, though, its guards
noticing my banner of green and red, one could see how, instead of
defending themselves, they set off in such great flight that anyone who
was closer would have thought that they were fleeing from some dan-
ger. And Leriano, seeing such an unexpected alarm, not knowing what
was happening, went up to the window of the tower with a weakness
of spirit more than a hope of rescue, to tell the truth. And yet, seeing
me in the company of such beautiful figures, he understood what was
happening and, with little strength on the one hand and unexpected
good on the other, fell senseless to the floor inside.

So I, not far away, seeing the stairs where I used to enter, sent forth
Rest, who lent a strange clarity to the twilight of that place. And once
we arrived where the fortunate man had been before, I saw him in such
a mortal state that I thought I had come just in time to mourn him and
too late to remedy him. But Hope, who was the most diligent among
us, came to his rescue, and doused his face with water. He began to
come to himself, and I handed him Laureola’s letter to lend him even
more strength. As he was reading it, the company that I brought with
me began to restore his health: Joy lightened his heart, Rest consoled
his soul, Hope brought back his senses, Contentment cleared his sight,
Leisure returned his strength, Pleasure revived his understanding. They
healed him in such a way that, when he finished what Laureola had
written, he was as healthy as though he had never suffered any pas-
sion. And, seeing how my diligence gave him liberty, he threw his arms
around me many times. Offering himself and everything he owned to
me seemed a small price for what my service deserved, though it was so
much that I did not know how to respond according to my duty and
his person.

So, after great things passed between him and me, he decided to
leave for court. But, before he did so, he spent several days in a villa of
his own to regain his strength and gather what he needed for his de-
parture. When he saw himself in such a disposition that he could leave,
he did so; and when the court knew he was on his way, all of the great
señores and gentlemen went out to receive him. But, since he already
knew those old ceremonies, the secret glory gave him more joy than the
public honor and thus went accompanied to the palace.
sponder; que tanta fuerza tienen las pasiones enamoradas que siempre traen el seso y discreción debajo de su vandera, lo que allí vi por clara experiencia.

Y puesto que de las mudanzas dellos ninguno toviese noticia por la poca sospecha que de su pendencia avía, Persio, hijo del señor de Gavia, miró en ellas trayendo el mismo pensamiento que Leriano traía; y como las sospechas celosas escudriñan las cosas secretas, tanto miró de allí adelante las hablas y señales del que dio crédito a lo que sospechava, y no solamente dio fe a lo que veía, que no era nada, mas a lo que imaginava, que era el todo. Y con este malvado pensamiento, sin más deliberación ni consejo, apartó al rey en un secreto lugar y díxole afirmadamente que Laureola y Leriano se amavan y que se veían todas las noches después que él dormía, y que ge lo hazía saber por lo que devíe a la onra y a su servicio.

Turbado el rey de cosa tal, estovo dubdoso y pensativo sin luego determinarse a responder, y después que mucho dormió sobre ello, tóvolo por verdad, creyendo, segund la virtud y auctoridad de Persio que no le diría otra cosa; pero con todo eso, primero que deliberase quiso acordar lo que devíe hazer, y puesta Laureola en una cárcel mandó llamar a Persio y díxole que acusase de traición a Leriano segund sus leyes, de cuyo mandamiento fue mucho afrontado. Mas como la calidad del negocio le forçava a otorgarlo, respondió al rey que aceutava su mando y que dava gracias a Dios que le ofrecía caso para que fuesen sus manos testimonio de su bondad. Y como semejantes autos se acustumbran en Macedonia hazer por carteles y no en presencia del rey, embió en uno Persio a Leriano las razones siguientes:

[19] Cartel de Persio para Leriano

Pues procede de las virtuosas obras la loable fama, justo es que la maldad se castigue porque la virtud se sostenga; y con tanta diligencia deve ser la bondad amparada que los enemigos della, si por voluntad no la obraren, por miedo la usen.
When he kissed Laureola’s hands, many notable things occurred, in particular for me, who knew everything that lay between them: one was overwhelmed with distress, the other was drained of all color; he did not know what to say to her, nor did she know what to respond; so much is the force of enamored passions that they always bring the mind and discretion under their banner, which I saw clearly through my own experience there.

Though these alterations roused no concern considering the little suspicion surrounding them, Persio, the son of the señor of Gavia, saw them with the same mind as Leriano. Because the suspicions of jealousy scrutinize secret things, he watched all of the talk and signs so closely that from then on he gave credit to what he was suspecting and not only put faith in what he saw, which was nothing, but also in what he imagined, which was everything. And with this evil thought, without more deliberation or counsel, he met with the king in a secret place and told him without a doubt that Laureola and Leriano loved each other and that they saw each other every night after he, the king, went to sleep, and he, Persio, was duty and honor bound to report it.

Distressed by such a thing, the king was doubtful and pensive without determining how to respond. After much deliberation, he slept on it, taking it as truth, believing that, according to the virtue and authority of Persio, the knight would not say anything other than the truth. With all of this, he wanted to decide what he should do before he settled the matter; and so, with Laureola placed in prison, he summoned Persio and told him to accuse Leriano of treason according to his laws, whose order was much affronted. Thus, seeing how the nature of the business forced him to do so, he told the king that he would comply with his commands so that his hands could be the testimony of his goodness. Since such decrees are customarily done by cartels in Macedonia and not by the presence of the king, Persio sent a challenge to Leriano with the following arguments:20

[19] Cartel from Persio to Leriano

Because virtuous works lead to honorable fame, it is just for evil to be punished in order for virtue to be sustained. Goodness should be protected with diligence so that its enemies, even if they do not strive for it with their hearts, will use it out of fear.
Digo esto, Leriano, porque la pena que recibirás de la culpa que cometiste será castigo para que tú pagues y otros teman; que, si a tales cosas se diese lugar, no sería menos favorecida la desvirtud en los malos que la nobleza en los buenos. Por cierto, mal te as aprovechado de la limpieza que eredaste; tus mayores te mostraron hacer bondad y tú aprendiste obrar traición; sus huésped se levantarían contra ti si supiesen cómo ensuciaste por tal error sus nobles obras. Pero venido eres a tiempo que recibieras por lo hecho fin en la vida y manzella en la fama. ¡Malaaventurados aquellos como tú que no saben escoger muerte onesta!

Sin mirar el servicio de tu rey y la obligación de tu sangre, toviste osada desvergüenza para enamorarte de Laureola, con la cual en su cámara, después de acostado el rey, diversas veces as hablado, escureciendo por seguir tu condición tu claro linage; de cuya razón te repito por traidor y sobrello te entiendo matar o echar del campo, o lo que digo hacer confesar por tu boca; donde cuanto el mundo durare seré en ejemplo de lealtad; y atréveme a tanto confiando en tu falsía y mi verdad. Las armas escoge de la manera que querrás y el campo yo de parte del rey lo hago seguro.

Respuesta de Leriano

Persio, mayor sería mi fortuna si tu malicia si la culpa que me cargas con maldad no te diese la pena que mereces por justicia. Si fueras tan discreto como malo, por quitarte de tal peligro antes devieras saber mi intención que sentenciar mis obras. A lo que agora conozco de ti más curavas de parecer bueno que de serlo. Teníéndote por cierto amigo, todas mis cosas comunicava contigo, y, segund parece, yo confiava de tu virtud y tú usavas de tu condición. Como la bondad que mostravas concertó el amistad, así la falsedad que encubría causó la enemiga. ¡Oh enemigo de ti mismo!, que con razón lo que puedo dezir, pues por tu testimonio dexarás la memoria con cargo y acabarás la vida con mengua. ¿Por qué pusiste la lengua en Laureola, que sola su bondad bastava, si toda la del mundo se perdiese, para tornarla a cobrar? Pues tú afirmas mentira clara y yo defiendo causa justa, ella quedará libre de culpa y tu onra no de vergüenza.
I say this, Leriano, because the sentence that you will receive from the guilt of your doings will be the punishment that will make you pay and others fear. If such things were allowed here, the twisted would be no less favored among the evil than nobility among the good. Indeed, you have taken evil advantage of the purity you inherited: your elders taught you to do good, but you learned to work treason. Their bones would rise up against you if they knew how you sullied their virtuous works with such error. Yet, here you are, in time to make an end of your life and a stain on your honor in exchange. Unfortunate are those who, like you, do not know how to choose an honest death!

Without considering your service to your king and your obligation to your blood, you had the bold shamelessness to fall in love with Laureola, with whom, in her chambers, after the king retired to bed, you spoke many times, darkening the light of your lineage by following that of your nature. For this reason, I challenge you for being a traitor, and for that I intend to kill you or banish you from the field, or make you confess what I say with your own mouth; thus, however long the world lasts, I will be an example of loyalty. I dare as much because I believe in your falsehood and my truth. You may choose the arms as you wish, but, on behalf of the king, I will ready the field.

[20] Leriano’s Reply

Persio, my fortune would be greater than your maliciousness if the guilt that you wickedly charge me with did not deal the sentence that you deserve through justice. If you were as discreet as you are evil, you would discover my intentions before you decried my works in order to keep yourself out of danger. From what I know of you now, you have striven to seem good rather than embodying it. Holding you as a true friend, I spoke of everything with you and yet, it seems, confided in your virtue while you used your wicked nature. Just as the goodness you showed begat the friendship, so the falseness you concealed provoked the enmity. Oh enemy of yourself! I can say it rightly, because, by your own testimony, you will leave your memory in ignominy and end your life in dishonor. Why did you set your tongue against Laureola, whose goodness is so great that, if the world lost all of its virtue, hers would be enough to recover it? Since you declare a clear lie and I
No quiero responder a tus desmesuras porque hallo por más onesto camino vencerte con la persona que satisfazerte con las palabras. Solamente quiero venir a lo que hace al caso, pues allí está la fuerza de nuestro debate. Acúsasme de traidor y afirnas que entré muchas veces en su cámara de Laureola después del rey retraído. A lo uno y a lo otro te digo que mientes, comoquiera que no niego que con voluntad enamorada la miré. Pero si fuerza de amor ordenó el pensamiento, lealtad virtuosa causó la limpieza del; así que por ser dama favorecida y no por ál lo pensé. Y para más afearte te defenderé no sólo que no entré en su cámara, mas que palabra de amores jamás le hablé. Pues cuando la intención no peca salvo está el que se juzga, y porque la determinación desto ha de ser con la muerte del uno y no con las lenguas dentrambos, quede para el día del hecho la sentencia, la cual fío en Dios se dará por mí, porque tú reutas con malicia y yo defiendo con razón y la verdad determina con justicia.

Las armas que a mí son de señalar sean a la brida, segundo nuestra costumbre; nosotros, armados de todas piezas, los cavallos con cubiertas y cuello y testera, lances iguales y sendas espadas, sin ninguna otra arma de las usadas, con las cuales, defendiendo lo dicho, te mataré o haré desdezir o echaré del campo sobrello.

[21] El auctor

Como la mala fortuna, embidiosa de los bienes de Leriano, usase con él de su natural condición, diole tal revés cuando le vido mayor en prosperidad. Sus desdichas causavan pasión a quien las vio y combidan a pena a quien las oye.

Pues dexando su cuita para hablar en su reuto, después que respondió al cartel de Persio, como es escrito, sabiendo el rey que estavan concertados en la batalla aseguró el campo, y señalado el lugar donde hiziesen y ordenadas todas las cosas que en tal auto se requerían, según las ordenanzas de Macedonia, puesto el rey en un cadahalso, vinieron los cavallos cada uno acompañado y favorecido como merecía. Y guardadas en igualdad las honras dentrambos, entraron en el campo; y
defend a just cause, she will be left free from guilt but your honor not so free from shame.

I do not want to respond to your insults because I see a more honest way through defeating you in body than in word. I only want to come to the heart of the matter, since the force of our debate lies within. You accuse me of treachery and assert that I entered Laureola’s chambers many times after the king had retired. To both the one and the other I say that you lie, however much I do not deny that I looked upon her with an enamored heart. But, if the strength of love ordered the thought, virtuous loyalty caused its purity. To be favored by her, and not for any other reason, I did so. And, in order to reproach you further, I will defend myself by saying that I never entered into her chambers or spoke amorous words to her. When intention does not sin, saved is the one who is judged; and because this matter must be determined with the death of one and not with the tongues of both, I will leave this matter until the day of sentencing. I trust God will rule in my favor, because you challenge with malice and I defend with righteousness, and truth determines with justice.

The arms that I choose are those of the joust, according to our customs. Fully armed in all possible pieces, horses with coverings and reins and faceplates, ourselves with the same lances and long swords, without any other arms, using only these to defend what has been said, I will either kill you or force you to retract your words or duly cast you from the field.

[21] The Author

So adverse fortune, envious of Leriano’s goods, treating the knight according to its nature, sent him a reversal when it saw his life coming into better prosperity. His misfortunes provoked suffering in those who saw them and compassion in those who heard his pain.

Now, though, I will leave his sorrows in order to tell of his duel. After Leriano responded to Persio’s challenge, as is written, the king was informed that they would be summoned once the field was secured—the site determined and all things required by decree according to the ways of Macedonia, the king seated upon a platform, the knights accompanied and favored as they deserved, entering the field in equal honor. Their supporters then left them, and they set against each other
como los fieles los dexaron solos, fuéronse el uno para el otro, donde en la fuerza de los golpes mostraron la virtud de los ánimos; y quebradas las lanças en los primeros encuentros, pusieron mano a las espadas y así se combatían que quienquiera oviera embidia de lo que obravan y compasión de los que padecían.

Finalmente, por no detenerme en esto que parece cuento de historias viejas, Leriano le cortó a Persio la mano derecha, y como la mejor parte de su persona le viese perdida, díxole: “Persio, porque no pague tu vida por falsedad de tu lengua, déveste desdezir.” El cual respondió: “Haz lo que as de hazer, que aunque me falta el braço para defender no me fallece coraçón para morir.” Y oyendo Leriano tal respuesta diole tanta prisa que lo puso en la postrimera necesidad; y como ciertos cavalleros sus parientes le viesen en estrecho de muerte, suplicaron al rey mandase echar el bastón, que ellos le fiavan para que dél hiziese justicia si claramente se hallase culpado; lo cual el rey así les otorgó. Y como fuesen despartidos, Leriano de tan grande agravio con mucha razón se sentió, no podiendo pensar por qué el rey tal cosa mandase. Pues como fueron despartidos sacáronlos del campo iguales en cerimonia, aunque desiguales en fama, y así los levaron a sus posadas, donde estuvieron aquella noche; y otro día de mañana, avido Leriano su consejo, acordó de ir a palacio a suplicar y requerir al rey en presencia de toda su corte le mandase restituir su honra, haziendo justicia de Persio, el cual, como era malino de condición y agudo de juizio, en tanto que Leriano lo que es contado acordava, hizo llamar tres ombres muy conformes de sus costumbres, que tenía por muy suyos, y juramentándolos que le guardarasen secreto, dio a cada uno infinito dinero por que dixesen y jurasen al rey que vieron hablar a Leriano con Laureola en lugares sospechosos y en tiempos desonestos, los cuales se profirieron a afirmarlo y jurarlo hasta perder la vida sobrello.

No quiero dezir lo que Laureola en todo esto sentía, porque la pasión no turbe el sentido para acabar lo comenzado; porque no tengo agora menos nuevo su dolor que cuando estaba presente. Pues tornando a Leriano, que más de su prisión della se dolía que de la vitoria dél se gloriava, como supo que el rey era levantado fuese al palacio, y presentes los cavalleros de su corte, hízole una habla en esta manera:
in such a way that the force of their blows showed the virtue of their souls. Lances broken in the first attacks, they put their hands to their swords and battled so that anyone would have envied them for what they did and felt compassion for what they suffered.

In short, to avoid becoming caught up in what seems like a tale of old: Leriano cut off Persio’s right hand and, as the better part of his opponent’s body was clearly lost, said to him: “Persio, so that you do not pay for the falseness of your tongue with your life, you must retract what you have said.” He responded: “Do what you must do: even though I do not have the arm to defend myself, I do not lack the courage to die.” Leriano, hearing such a response, attacked him with such energy that he drove him to his last breath; yet, as certain knights among Persio’s relatives saw him in the throes of death, they begged the king to set peace between them because they trusted him to do justice if he clearly found the knight guilty—all of which the king granted. And once they had parted, Leriano took great offense and rightly so, unable to think of why the king would order such a thing. Separated, they were escorted from the field in equal ceremony, although in unequal reputation, and taken to their quarters where they spent the night. The next day in the morning, having made his decision, Leriano went to the palace to supplicate the king and ask him to restore his honor before the court by doing justice to Persio, who, being evil in nature and sharp in mind, while Leriano was doing what has already been recounted, called upon three men well accustomed to his ways. Knowing their deep loyalty, making them swear to keep the secret, Persio gave each of them an infinite sum of money so that they would say and pledge to the king that they saw Leriano speak with Laureola in suspicious places and at dishonest times, which they offered to affirm and swear upon their lives.

I do not want to say what Laureola felt in all of this, because passion might unsettle my senses so that I could not finish what I have begun, and because even now the pain is no less fresh than when she was present there. So, turning to Leriano, who suffered more for her in her prison than he gloried in his victory, when he learned that the king had risen, he went to the palace and, with all the knights of the court present, gave a speech in this manner:
[22] Leriano al rey

Por cierto, señor, con mayor voluntad sufríera el castigo de tu justicia que la vergüenza de tu presencia, si ayer no levara lo mejor de la batalla, donde si tú lo ovieras por bien; de la falsa acusación de Persio quedara del todo libre; que puesto que a vista de todos yo le diera el galardón que merecía, gran ventaja va de hizieralo a hizolo. La razón por que despartirnos mandaste no la puedo pensar, en especial tocando a ti mismo el debate, que aunque de Laureola deseases vengança, como generoso no te faltaría piedad de padre, comoquiera que en este caso bien creo quedaste satisfecho de su descargo. Si lo heziste por compasion que avías de Persio, tan justo fuera que la uvieras de mi onra como de su vida, siendo tu natural. Si por ventura lo consentiste por verte aquí donde de la suplicación de sus parientes, cuando les otorgaste la merced devieras acordarte de los servicios que los míos te hizieron, pues sabes con cuánta costançe de corazón cuántos dellos en muchas batallas y combates perdieron por tu servicio las vidas. Nunca hueste juntaste que la tercia parte dellos no fuese.

Suplicote que por juizio me satisfagas la onra que por mis manos me quitaste. Cata que guardando las leyes se conservan los naturales. No consientes que biva ombre que tan mal guarda las preeminencias de sus pasados, porque no corrompa su venino los que con él participaren. Por cierto no tengo otra culpa sino ser amigo del culpado, y si por este indicio merezco pena, dáme la, aunque mi inocencia della asuelva, pues conservé su amistad creyéndole bueno y no juzgándole malo. Si le das la vida por servirte del, dígote que te será el más leal cizañador que puedas hallar en el mundo.

Requiérote contigo mismo, pues eres obligado a ser igual en derecho, que en esto determine con la prudencia que tienes y sentencias con la justicia que usas. Señor, las cosas de onra deven ser claras, y si a éste perdonas por ruegos o por ser principal en tu reino, o por lo que te plazerá, no quedaré en los juzios de las gentes por desculpado del todo, que si unos creyeren la verdad por razón, otros la turbarán con malicia. Y digo que en tu reino lo cierto se sepa; nunca la fama leva lexos lo cierto. ¿Cómo sonará en los otros lo que es pasado si queda sin castigo público? Por Dios, señor, dexe mi onra sin disputa, y de mi vida y lo mío ordena lo que quiseseres.
[22] Leriano to the King

Alas, my lord, if I had not won yesterday’s battle—where, if you had wished, I could have been freed from Persio’s accusations—I would have rather suffered the punishment of your justice than my embarrassment in your presence. Everyone saw that I could have given him what he deserved, but there is a great distance between having the power to do something and doing it. I do not know why you ordered the battle to end, especially since our disagreement touches you so closely. Even though you wanted to be avenged for Laureola, as a generous person, you will not lack a father’s pity and I believe you have been satisfied by the absence of her guilt in this case. If you did it because you felt compassion for Persio, it would be just for you to feel as much for my honor as you did for his life since I am one of your own. If, by chance, you consented because you were hastened by the pleas of his relatives, you should have remembered the services my vassals have done for you when you granted those relatives your favor. You know how, with determination in their hearts, many of them lost their lives in many battles and combats for you. You never gathered an army in which at least one third of it were not my men.

I beg you, by your authority, to satisfy the honor that you took from my hands. See how respect for the law keeps one’s people loyal. Do not preserve the life of a man who esteems the greatness of his ancestors so poorly, but rather keep his poison from corrupting those who are close to him. Certainly, I do not hold any other guilt than being a friend of the guilty. And if I deserve a sentence for this presumption, then give it to me, even if my innocence will absolve me because I maintained his friendship thinking him good and not judging him bad. If you grant him his life so that he serves you, I say that he shall be the most loyal snake that you will find in the world.

I request, since you are obliged to be equal in applying the law, that you resolve this matter with the prudence you possess and that you sentence with the justice you command. Señor, issues of honor must be crystal clear, and if you forgive Persio because of his pleas or because of his power in your realm, or for any other reason that pleases you, I will not be considered completely innocent by the judgment of the people. If some will rightly believe the truth, others will contort it maliciously. And I say that in your realm the truth must be known; fame never takes
Atento estuvo el rey a todo lo que Leriano quiso dezir, y acabada su habla respondióle que él avría su consejo sobre lo que deviese hazer, que en cosa tal con deliberación se avíe de dar la sentencia. Verdad es que la respuesta del rey no fue tan dulce como deviera, lo cual fue porque si a Laureola dava por libre, segund lo que vido, él no lo estaba de enojo, porque Leriano pensó de servilla, aviendo por culpado su pensamiento, aunque no lo fuese su entención. Y así por esto como por quitar el escándalo por que andava entre su parentela y la de Persio, mandóle ir a una villa suya que estaba dos leguas de la corte, llamada Susa, entretanto que acordava en el caso. Lo que luego hizo con alegre corazón, teniendo ya a Laureola por desculpada, cosa que él tanto deseava.

Pues como del rey fue despedido, Persio, que siempre se trabajava en ofender su onra por condición y en defenderla por malicia, llamó los conjurados antes que Laureola se delibrase, y díxoles que cada uno por su parte se fuese al rey y le dixese como de suyo, por quitarle de dubdas, que él acusó a Leriano con verdad, de lo cual ellos eran testigos, que le vieron hablar diversas vezes con ella en soledad; lo que ellos hicieron de la manera que él ge lo dixo, y tal forma supieron darse y así afirmaron su testimonio que turbaron al rey, el cual, después de aver sobrello mucho pensado, mandólos llamar. Y como vinieron, hizo a cada uno por sí preguntas muy agudas y sotiles para ver si los hallaría mudables o desatinados en lo que respondiesen. Y como devieran gastar su vida en estudio de falsedad, cuanto más hablavan mejor sabien concertar su mentira, de manera quel rey les dio entera fe, por cuya información, teniendo a Persio por leal servidor, creía que más por su mala fortuna que por su poca verdad avía levado lo peor de la batalla. ¡O Persio, cuánto mejor te estoviera la muerte una vez que merecella tantas!

Pues queriendo el rey que pagase la inocencia de Laureola por la traición de los falsos testigos, acordó que fuese sentenciada por justicia; lo cual, como viniese a noticia de Leriano, estovo en poco de perder el seso, y con un arrebatamiento y pasión desesperada acordava de ir a la corte a librar a Laureola y matar a Persio o perder por ello la vida. Y
it far. How will others know what has happened if this goes unpunished? By God, señor, leave my honor without dispute and order my life and everything else as you please.

[23] The Author

Attentive to everything Leriano wished to say, and the speech now finished, the king replied that he would convene his council in order to decide what to do, for such a sentence must be handed down with deliberation. It is true that the king’s answer was not as kind as it should have been, because, even though he saw that Laureola was free from guilt, he was not free from anger: because Leriano thought of serving her, his thoughts were guilty even if his intentions were not. And because of this, and to avoid a scandal between his relatives and those of Persio, the king decided to send Leriano to a villa of his own that lay two leagues from the court, a villa called Susa, while the matter was being resolved. Leriano thus left with a happy heart, thinking that Laureola had been exonerated, the very thing he desired so much.

Once Leriano bade farewell to the king, the other, Persio, who was always finding ways to tarnish his honor and yet defend it with malice, called his accomplices to his side before Laureola was freed. He told them to go to the king on their own and, as if it were their own idea, say that he, Persio, had truthfully accused Leriano beyond any doubt—a truth that they had witnessed when they saw Leriano speaking privately to Laureola many times. And so, they did as Persio told them. They gave their testimony and affirmed it in such a way that they troubled the king, who, after much thought, called them to his presence. When they came, he asked each of them shrewd and subtle questions to see if they would alter their accounts or fumble their answers. But, because they must have spent their whole lives in the study of such falsity, the more they spoke, the more they harmonized their lies. The king thus put all his faith in them, seeing Persio as a loyal servant based on their information and deciding that he was dealt the worst hand in battle because of his misfortune rather than the lack of truth in his claims. Oh Persio, how much better it would have been for you to die once than deserve it many times!

Indeed, deciding that Laureola’s innocence must pay for the treason of the false witnesses, the king determined to sentence her by law;
viendo yo ser aquel consejo de más peligro que esperanza, puesto con él en razón desvielo del. Y como estaba con la aceleración desacordado, quiso servirse de mi parecer en lo que oviese de delibrar, el cual me plego dale porque no dispusiese con alteración para que se arrepintiese con pesar; y después que en mi flaco juizio se representó lo más seguro, díxele lo que se sigue:

[24] El auctor a Leriano

Assí, señor, querría ser discreto para alabar tu seso como poderoso para remediar tu mal, porque fueses alegre como yo deseo y loado como tú mereces. Digo esto por el sabio sofrimiento que en tal tiempo muestras, que, como viste tu juizio embargado de pasión, conociste que sería lo que obrases, no segund lo que sabes, mas segund lo que sientes; y con este discreto conocimiento quesiste antes errar por mi consejo simple y libre que acertar por el tuyo natural y empedido. Mucho he pensado sobre lo que en esta tu grande fortuna se deve hazer, y hallo, segund mi pobre juizio, que lo primero que se cumple ordenar es tu reposo, el cual te desvía el caso presente.

De mi voto el primer acuerdo que tomaste será el postrero que obres, porque como es gran cosa la que as de emprender, assí como gran pesadumbre se deve determinar. Siempre de lo dubdoso se ha de tomar lo más seguro, y, si te pones en matar a Persio y librar a Laureola, deves antes ver si es cosa con que podrás salir; que como es de más estima de onra della condenada y a ti desonrado. Cata que los ombres obran y la ventura juzga; si a bien salen las cosas son alabadas por bunenas, y si a mal, avidas por desvariadas. Si libras a Laureola diráse que heziste osadía, y si no que pensaste locura.

Pues tienes espacio daquí a nueve días que se dará la sentencia, prueba todos los otros remedios que muestran esperança, y si en ellos no la hallares, disponas lo que tienes pensado, que en tal demanda, aunque pierdas la vida, la darás a tu fama. Pero en esto ay una cosa que deve ser proveída primero que lo cometas y es ésta: estemos agora en que ya as forçado la prisión y sacado della a Laureola. Si la traes a tu tierra, es condenada de culpa; dondequiera que allá la dexes no la librarás de pena. Cata aquí mayor mal que el primero. Paréceme a mí para sanear
when the news reached Leriano, he nearly lost his mind and with a sudden fury and desperate passion he decided to go to court in order to free Laureola and kill Persio, or to lose his life in the attempt. But, seeing how the plan was more dangerous than hopeful, I dissuaded him from it. Quickly descending into a senseless anger, he wanted my advice and begged for my counsel so that he would not make any decisions in his rage that he might regret in his sorrow. My humble judgment having found the safest way, I told him the following:

[24] The Author to Leriano

In this, señor, I would like to be wise in praising your wit as well as powerful in remedying your ills, so that you may be as happy as I hope and as praised as you deserve. I say this because of the wise suffering you show in these times: when you saw how your judgment was seized by passion, you recognized that you would act according to what you feel rather than what you know; and with this discreet knowledge you decided to trust in my simple and free advice instead of staying righteous in your own blind counsel. I have thought a great deal about what you should do in this great matter of yours, and I find, according to my humble judgment, that the first thing is rest, which will divert your attention.

In my opinion, the first plan you have made must be the last thing you do. You must undertake a great task, and so you must make your decision with great thought. In the face of uncertainty one should always choose the most certain thing, and if you plan to kill Persio and save Laureola, you must consider the consequences. Laureola's honor is worth more than your life. If you cannot accomplish your mission, you will leave her condemned and yourself dishonored. Keep in mind that men act but fortune judges: if things go well, they are praised, but if they go wrong they are taken as insane. If you free Laureola, it will be said that you did an audacious deed, and if not, that you thought only madness.

You have the space of nine days from now until a sentence is given. Try all the possible remedies that might bring hope and then, if you do not find a solution in them, do what you have planned. Even if you lose your life in such a case, you will win fame. Still, there is one thing that must be considered beforehand, and it is this: let us imagine that
esto, obrando tú esto otro, que se deve tener tal forma: yo llegaré de tu parte a Galio, hermano de la reina, que en parte desea tanto la libertad de la presa como tú mismo, y le diré lo que tienes acordado, y le suplicaré, porque sea salva del cargo y de la vida, que esté para el día que fuieres con alguna gente, para que si fuere tal tu ventura que la puedas sacar, en sacándola la pongas en su poder a vista de todo el mundo, en testimonio de su bondad y tu limpieza; y que recibida, entretanto que el rey sabe lo uno y provee en lo otro, la ponga en Dala, fortaleza suya, donde podrá venir el hecho a buen fin. Mas como te tengo dicho, esto se a de tomar por postrimero partido. Lo que antes se conviene negociar es esto: yo iré a la corte y juntaré con el cardenal de Gausa todos los cavalleros y perlados que aí se hallaren, el cual con voluntad alegre suplicará al rey le otorgue a Laureola la vida. Y si en esto hallare remedio, suplicaré a la reina que con todas las onestas y principales mugeres de su casa y cibdad le pida la libertad de su hija, a cuyas lágrimas y petición no podrá, a mi creer, negar piedad. Y si aquí no hallo esperança, diré a Laureola que le escriva certificándole su inocencia. Y cuando todas estas cosas me fueren contrarias, proferirme al rey que darás una persona tuya que haga armas con los tres malvados testigos. Y no aprovechando nada desto, probarás la fuerça, en la que por ventura hallarás la piedad que en el rey yo buscava. Pero antes que me parta, me parece que deves escrevir a Laureola, esforçando su miedo con seguridad de su vida, la cual enteramente le puedes dar; que pues se dispone en el cielo lo que se obran en la tierra, no puede ser que Dios no reciba sus lágrimas inocentes y tus peticiones justas.

[25] El auctor

Sólo un punto no salió Leriano de mi parecer, porque le pareció aquél propio camino para despachar su hecho más sanamente; pero con todo eso no le aseguraba el corazón, porque temía, segund la saña del rey, mandaría dar antes del plazo la sentencia, de lo cual no me maravillava, porque los firmes enamorados lo más dudoso y contrario creen más aína, y lo que más desean tienen por menos cierto. Concluyendo, él
The Prison of Love

you have broken into Laureola’s prison and freed her. If you bring her to your land, she will be condemned with guilt; you will not free her from her sentence no matter where you take her. See how this evil is greater than the other. It seems that in order to resolve this, your plan must be done in the following manner: I will visit Galio, the brother of the queen, on your behalf. He wants the prisoner’s freedom as much as you do, so I will tell him what you are planning, and I will beg him, in order to save her life and honor, to be present the day you go with your people. If fortune is with you and you can free her, then you may hand her off to him in public as proof of her virtue and your integrity; and, when he receives her, while the king learns about this and determines the sentence, Galio will take her to Dala, his own fortress, where the matter can come to a good end. But, as I have told you, this should be the last resort. Before that, it would be best to negotiate: I will go to the court and gather all the knights and prelates there with Cardinal Gausa, who will happily beg the king to give Laureola her life. If I do not find remedy in this, I will beg the queen, together with all the honest and noble women of the city, to ask the king for her daughter’s freedom. I believe that he will not be able to resist taking pity on her tears and grant her petition. And if I do not find hope there, I will tell Laureola to write to the king herself in order to confirm her innocence. And if all of these things prove contrary to me, I will propose to the king that you choose one of your vassals to fight, in arms, the three wicked witnesses. And if none of this works, you will do it by force and, with fortune, find the pity I looked for in the king. But, before I leave, I believe you should write to Laureola and assuage her fears with assurances of her life, which you can give to her entirely. Since Heaven mandates what happens on earth, God must receive her innocent tears and your just petitions.

[25] The Author

Leriano agreed with me in all but a single point, because it seemed it would resolve the matter the most directly; yet, it did not calm his heart, because he feared that the king, following his rage, would give the sentence before it was due. This did not surprise me, because resolute lovers firmly believe what is most doubtful and damaging to them. And whatever they desire, they see as uncertain. To conclude, he wrote
escriví para Laureola con mucha duda que no querría recibir su carta, las razones de la cual decían así:

[26] Carta de Leriano a Laureola

Antes pusiera las manos en mí para acabar la vida que en el papel para comenzar a escribirla, si de tu prisión uvieran sido causa mis obras como lo es mi mala fortuna, la cual no pudo serme tan contraria que no me pusiera bajo de bien morir, segund lo que para salvarte tengo acordado; donde, si en tal demanda muriere, tú serás libre de la prisión y yo de tantas desventuras: así que será una muerte causa de dos libertades.

Suplícote no me tengas enemiga por lo que padeces, pues, como tengo dicho, no tiene la culpa de ello que yo hize, mas lo que mi dicha quiere. Puedes bien creer, por grandes que sean tus angustias, que siento yo mayor tormento en el pensamiento de ellas que tú en ellas mismas. Pluguiera a Dios que no teuviera conocido, que, aunque fuera perdido de mi bien en esta vida, que es verte visto, fuera bienaventurado en no oír ni saber lo que padeces. Tanto he usado bevir triste, que me consuelo con las mismas tristezas por causallas tú. Mas lo que agora siento ni recibe consuelo ni tiene reposo, porque no deixa en el corazón en ningún sosiego. No acreciente la pena que sufres la muerte que temes, que mis manos te salvarán della. Yo he buscado remedios para templar la ira del rey. Si en ellos faltare esperanza, en mí la puedes tener, que por tu libertad haré tanto que será mi memoria, en cuanto el mundo durare, en ejemplo de fortaleza. Y no te parecez gran cosa lo que digo, que, sin lo que tú vales, la injusticia de tu prisión hace justa mi osadía. ¿Quien podrá resistir mis fuerzas, pues tú las pones? ¿Qué no osara el corazón emprender, estando tú en él? Sólo un mal ay en tu salvación, que se compra por poco precio, segund lo que mereces, aunque por ella pierda la vida; y no solamente esto es poco, mas lo que se puede desear perder no es nada.

Esfuerza con mi esperanza tu flaqueza, porque si te das a los pensamientos de ellas podría ser que desfallecieses, de donde dos grandes cosas se podrían recer: la primera y más principal sería tu muerte; la otra, que me quitarias a mí la mayor onra de todos los ombres, no podiendo salvarte. Confía en mis palabras, espera en mis prometimientos, no seas como las otras mugeres, que de pequeñas causas reciben grandes temores. Si la condición mugeril te causare miedo, tu discreción te dé
to Laureola doubting that she would want to receive his letter. The ten-
or whereof was the following:

[26] Letter from Leriano to Laureola

I would rather lay my hands on myself in order to end my life than lay
them on paper in order to begin writing to you if I knew that my acts
were the cause of your prison as much as my ill fortune, which is so
contrary to me that it does not allow me to die with honor, a death that
I would accept in order to save you. If I were to die in such a dispute,
you would be free from prison and I from many misfortunes: and so
my death would be the cause of two liberties.

I beg you not to take me as your enemy for your suffering, since,
as I said before, my acts are not the cause. My fate is to blame. Believe
that however great your anguish may be, I feel more tormented think-
ing about it than you do enduring it. I wish to God that I had not met
you, because even though I would lose the greatest good of my life,
which is seeing you, I would be blessed with not hearing or knowing
of your suffering. I am so accustomed to living in sorrow that I find
comfort in my grief, for you are the one who caused it. But, what I feel
now does not let me take any consolation or rest, because it does not
let my heart find any calm. Do not let the death you fear increase your
pain, because my hands will save you from it. I have searched for every
remedy to ease the rage of the king. If you do not trust these solutions,
you can trust me, because I will do so much for your freedom that I will
be remembered for my strength as long as the world lasts. Do not think
that this is a great thing, for, even putting aside your worth, the injus-
tice of your prison makes my boldness just. Who can resist my strength
since I possess it because of you? What can the heart not accomplish if
you are in it? There is only one evil in your salvation: that it is bought
for a small price according to what you deserve, even if I will lose my
life for it. Not only is this not enough, but whatever I desire to lose is
nothing.

Strengthen your weakness with my hope, because if you give in to
sorrowful thoughts, your life could give out, which would bring about
two great consequences: the first, and more important, would be your
death; the second is that you would take the greatest honor that any
man can have from me if I am unable to save you. Trust in my words;
fortaleza, la cual de mis siguridades puedes recibir; y porque lo que haré será prueba de lo que digo, suplícte que lo creas. No te escrivo tan largo como quisiera por proyeer lo que a tu vida cumple.

[27] El auctor

En tanto que Leriano escribía ordené mi camino, y recibida su carta partíme con la mayor prisa que pude; y llegado a la corte, trabajé que Laureola la recibiese, y entendí primero en dárgerla que ninguna otra cosa hiziese, por dalle algún esfuerço. Y como para vella me fuese negada licencia, informado de una cámara donde dormía, vi una ventana con una rexa no menos fuerte que cerrada; y venida la noche, doblada la carta muy sotilmente púxela en una lança, y con mucho trabajo echéla dentro en su cámara. Y otro día en la mañana, como desmuladamente por allí me anduviese, abierta la ventana, vila y vi que me vido, comoquiera que por la espesura de la rexa no la pude bien devisar. Finalmente ella respondió, y venida la noche, cuando sintió mis pisadas echó la carta en el suelo, la cual recibida, sin hablarle palabra por el peligro que en ello para ella avía, acordé de irme, y sintiéndome ir dixo: “Cataqui el gualardón que recibo de la piedad que tuve.” Y porque los que la guardavan estavan junto comigo no le pude responder. Tanto me lastimó aquella razón que me dixo que, si fuera buscado, por el rastro de mis lágrimas pudieran hallarme. Lo que respondió a Leriano fue esto:

[28] Carta de Laureola a Leriano

No sé, Leriano, qué te responda, sino que en las otras gentes se alaba la piedad por virtud y en mí se castiga por vicio. Yo hize lo que devía, segund piadosa, y tengo lo que merezco, segund desdichada. No fue por cierto tu fortuna ni tus obras causa de mi prisión, ni me querello de ti ni de otra persona en esta vida, sino de mí sola, que por librarte de muerte me cargué de culpa, comoquiera que en esta compasión que te uve más ay pena que cargo, pues remedié como inocente y pago como culpada.
put hope in my promises; do not be like other women, who from a small cause feel great trembling. If your feminine condition provokes your fear, let your discretion give you strength, strength that you can receive from my assurances. And, because my actions will be the proof of what I say, I beg you to believe it. I do not write as much as I would like in order to provide what your life requires.

[27] The Author

As Leriano wrote the letter, I arranged my journey. When I received it, I departed with all the haste I could; and, when I arrived at court, I toiled so that Laureola could receive it and strove to give it to her before anything else so as to lend her some strength. Since I was prohibited from visiting her yet informed of the room where she slept, I saw a barred window, made no less fast than it was secure. When the night came, I folded the letter and carefully put it on a spear and threw it into her room with great effort. Then, the next day in the morning, as I walked by, her window was open. I saw her and realized that she saw me even if, because of the thickness of the bars, I could not perceive her well. Finally, she replied and threw the letter to the ground once night fell and she heard my steps. When I received it, without speaking a word because of the dangers it would involve for her, I decided to leave. And when she heard me leaving, she said: “Here is the reward I received for the compassion I showed.” I could not answer her because the guards were close to me. But this tone caused me so much pain that I could have been found by the trail left by my tears. This is what she answered to Leriano:

[28] Letter from Laureola to Leriano

I do not know, Leriano, what to reply. In other people compassion is praised as a virtue, but, in my case, it is punished as a vice. I did what I had to do as a compassionate woman, and I received what I would deserve as someone wretched. Surely, neither your fortune nor your acts were the cause of my prison. I do not begrudge you or any other person in this life. I only mourn for myself, for to free you from death I took the blame. There is more pain than responsibility in the compassion I had for you, because I remedied as innocent and yet I pay as guilty.
Pero todavía me plaze más la prisión sin yerro que la libertad con él; y por esto, aunque pene en sofrilla, descanso en no merecella.

Yo soy entre las que biven la que menos deviera ser biva. Si el rey no me salva, espero la muerte; si tú me delibras, la de TI y de los tuyos: de manera que por una parte o por otra se me ofrece dolor. Si no me remedias, he de ser muerta; si me libras y lievas, seré condenada; y por esto te ruego mucho te trabajes en salvar mi fama y no mi vida, pues lo uno se acaba y lo otro dura. Busca, como dizes que hazes, quien amanse la saña del rey, que de la manera que dizes no puedo ser salva sin destruición de mi onra. Y dexando esto a tu consejo, que sabrás lo mejor, oye el galardón que tengo por el bien que te hize.

Las prisiones que ponen a los que han hecho muertes me tienen puestas porque la tuya escusé; con gruesas cadenas estoy atada, con ásperos tormentos me lastiman, con grandes guardas me guardan, como si tuviese fuerza para poderme salir. Mi sofrimiento es tan delicado y mis penas tan crueles, que sin que mi padre dé la sentencia, tomará la venganza, muriendo en esta dura cárcel. Espantada está como de tan cruel padre nació hija tan piadosa. Si le pareciera en la condición no le temiera en la justicia, puesto que injustamente la quiera hazer.

A lo que toca a Persio no te respondo porque no ensuzie mi lengua, como ha hecho mi fama. Verdad es que más querría que de su testimonio se desdixese que no muriese por él. Mas aunque yo digo, tú determina, que, segund tu juizio, no podrás errar en lo que acordares.

[29] El auctor

Muy dudoso estuve cuando recebí esta carta de Laureola sobre embialla a Leriano o esperar a levalla yo, y en fin hallé por mejor seso no embiárgela, por dos inconvenientes que hallé; el uno era porque nuestro secreto se ponía a peligro en fiarla de nadie; el otro, porque las lástimas della le pudieran causar tal aceleración que errara sin tiempo lo que con él acertó, por donde se pudiera todo perder.
Regardless, I prefer to remain in prison free from sin than freed with it. And for this reason, although I painfully suffer this prison, I take comfort because I do not deserve it.

Among those who live, I am the one who ought to live the least. If the king does not save me, I expect to die; if you free me, I expect it for you and your people instead. In any case, it will bring me pain. If you do not remedy me, I will be killed; if you free me and take me, I will be condemned. For this reason, I insistently beg you to labor in clearing my name and not saving my life, because the latter ends but the former lasts. Find, as you say you are doing, someone who can appease the rage of the king. In the plan you have laid out, I cannot be saved without the destruction of my honor. And, leaving this to your wisdom since you know what is best, see the reward that I received for the good I did to you.

The prison they give to those who have murdered has been given to me because I excused your death. With thick chains they tie me, with rough torments they hurt me, and with great guards I am guarded as if I had the strength to escape. My suffering is so arduous and my pains so cruel that, even if my father would not sentence me, he would have his vengeance by my death in this harsh prison. I am surprised that a pious daughter was born from such a cruel father. Though I might seem like him in nature, I do not fear him in justice, since he does it unjustly.

Regarding Persio, I do not answer you so that I do not sully my tongue as he did my reputation. Of course, I would prefer him to take back his accusations rather than die because of it. But, even though I say this, you must resolve the matter because, if you follow your judgment, you will not err in your decision.

[29] The Author

I was in great doubt, when I received this letter from Laureola, about whether or not to send it to Leriano or wait until I could carry it myself. I decided it was wisest not to send it in the end, for I could see two disadvantages in this way: the one, because the secret made it dangerous to entrust it to anyone, and the other, because its sorrows could cause such an acceleration in Leriano that he might undo what he had
Pues volviendo al propósito primero, el día que llegué a la corte tenté las voluntades de los principales della para poner en el negocio a los que hallase conformes a mi opinión, y ninguno hallé de contrario deseo, salvo a los parientes de Persio. Y como esto uve sabido, supliqué al cardenal que ya dixe le pluygiese hazer suplicación al rey por la vida de Laureola, lo cual me otorgó con el mismo amor y compasión que yo ge lo pedía. Y sin más tardanza, juntó con él todos los perlados y grandes señores que allí se hallaron, y puesto en presencia del rey, en su nombre y de todos los que ivan con él, hízole una habla en esta forma:

[30] El cardenal al rey

No a sinrazón los soberanos príncipes pasados ordenaron consejo en lo que uviesen de hazer, segund cuantos provechos en ello hallaron, y puesto que fuesen diversos, por seis razones aquella ley deve ser conservada: la primera, porque mejor aciertan los ombres en las cosas agenas que en las suyas propias, porque el corazón de cuyo es el caso no puede estar sin ira o cobdicia o afición o deseo o otras cosas semejantes para determinar como deve; la segunda, porque platicadas las cosas siempre quedan en lo cierto; la tercera, porque si aciertan los que aconsejan, aunque ellos dan el voto, del aconsejado es la gloria; la cuarta, por lo que se sigue del contrario, que si por ageno seso se yerra el negocio, el que pide el parecer queda sin cargo y quien ge lo da no sin culpa; la quinta, porque el buen consejo muchas veces asegura las cosas dudosas; la sesta, porque no dexa tan aína caer la mala fortuna y siempre en las adversidades pone esperança.

Por cierto, señor, turbio y ciego consejo puede ninguno dar a sí mismo siendo ocupado de saña o pasión; y por eso no nos culpes si en la fuerça de tu ira te venimos a enojar: que más queremos que arrepentido nos condenes porque te dimos consejo.

Señor, las cosas obradas con deliberación y acuerdo procuran provecho y alabança para quien las haze, y las que con saña se hazen con arrepentimiento se piensan. Los sabios como tú, cuando obran, primero delibran que disponen y sonles presentes todas las cosas que
resolved with so much time in no time at all, an error in which everything would be lost.

So, returning to my first purpose, the very day I arrived at court, I probed the hearts of its principal members in order to bring those who shared my opinion into the matter. I did not find a contrary desire in any of them, except among the relatives of Persio. And, with this understood, I supplicated the cardinal to implore the king for Laureola's life. Indeed, he rewarded me with the same love and compassion that I asked of him. And, without any delay, alongside all the prelates and grandees he could find, in the presence of the king, and in his own name and of all those that went with him, the cardinal crafted a speech in this form:

[30] The Cardinal to the King

Not without reason did the sovereign princes of the past request counsel in their affairs. Considering how many advantages they found in it—and indeed there were many—the custom should be maintained for six reasons: the first, because men are often more correct in the affairs of others than in their own, because the heart cannot be free from wrath, or greed, or affliction, or desire, or other such things in its own case and therefore cannot determine what it must; the second, because what is discussed is always more certain; the third, because if the ones who provide counsel are correct, even if they are the ones who give the judgment, the one they counsel is glorified; the fourth, following the contrary situation, because if the counselor commits some error in the affair, the one who requested the counsel is left without charge and the one who gave it is not left without guilt; the fifth, because good counsel often reassures in doubtful cases; the sixth, because such counsel does not let ill fortune fall easily and in turn gives hope in the face of adversity.

Indeed, señor, no one should ever give confused and blind advice to oneself when filled with rage and passion. For that, do not blame us if, in the force of your wrath, we disturbed you: we would rather be reprehended in anger because we irritated you than have you condemn us in regret because we did not advise you.

Señor, things that are done out of deliberation and understanding bring advantages and praise for the ones who do them, and things
pueden venir, así de lo que esperan provecho como de lo que temen revés. Y si de cualquiera pasión empedidos se hallan, no sentencian en nada fasta verse libres; y aunque los hechos se dilaten hanlo por bien, porque en semejantes casos la prisa es dañosa y la tardanza segura; y como han sabor de hazer lo justo, piensan todas las cosas, y antes que las hagan, siguiendo la razón, establecen le secución onesta. Propiedad es de los discretos provar los consejos y por ligera creencia no disponer, y en lo que parece dubdoso tener la sentencia en peso, porque no es todo verdad lo que tiene semejanza de verdad. El pensamiento del sabio, agora acuerde, agora mande, agora ordene, nunca se parta de lo que puede acaecer, y siempre como zeloso de su fama se guarda de error; y por no caer en él tiene memoria del pasado, por tomar lo mejor dello y ordenar lo presente con templanca y contemplar lo porvenir con cordura por tener aviso de todo.

Señor, todo esto te avemos dicho por que te acuerdes de tu prudencia y ordenes en lo que agora estás, no segund sañudo, mas segund sabidor. Assí, buelve en tu reposo, que fuerce lo natural de tu seso al acidente de tu ira. Avemos sabido que quieres condenar a muerte a Laureola. Si la bondad no merece ser justiciada, en verdad tú eres injusto juez. No quieras turbar tu gloriosa fama con tal juizio, que, puesto que en él uviese derecho, antes serías, si lo dieses, infamado por padre cruel que alabado por rey justiciero. Diste crédito a tres malos ombres; por cierto tanta razón avía para pesquisar su vida como para creer su testimonio. Cata que son en tu corte mal infamados; confórmanse con toda maldad, siempre se alaban en las razones que dizen de los engaños que hazen. Pues, ¿por qué das más fe a la información dellos que al juizio de Dios, el cual en las armas de Persio y Leriano se mostró claramente? No seas verdugo de tu misma sangre, que serás entre los ombres muy afeado; no culpes la inocencia por consejo de la saña.

Y si pareciere que, por las razones dichas, Laureola no debe ser salva, por lo que deves a tu virtud, por lo que te obliga tu realeza, por los servicios que te avemos hecho, te suplicamos nos hagas merced de su vida. Y porque menos palabras de las dichas bastavan, segund tu clemencia, para hazello, no te queremos dezir sino que pienses cuánto es mejor que perezca tu ira que tu fama.
done out of rage are considered with regret. Wise men like you, when they do something, they deliberate before they act and contemplate everything that could come to pass—the fruits of their hopes as much as the misfortunes of their fear. And if they find themselves impeded by any passion whatsoever, they do not judge anything until they see that they are freed from the sentiment. Even if the matter is prolonged, it is taken as good, because hurrying in such cases is harmful while delay is sure. So, with the taste for what is just, they think of everything, and, before they do anything, following reason, they establish an honest execution. It is a characteristic of the discreet to consider counsel and not to make decisions based on passing beliefs, and in what seems doubtful, to think deeply about the sentence, because not everything that seems true is true. The mind of the wise now resolves, now commands, and now orders, and should never part from what could occur next, therefore always guarding reputation from error. And so, not to fall into such error, he must make the most out of memories from the past and decide on the present with temperance and consider the future with good sense attained by the good knowledge of all.

Señor, we have told you all of this so that you remember your prudence and decide on the current issue not as one who is outraged, but as one who is wise. So, return to your tranquility, which will bring back the natural state of your mind from the tumult of your wrath. We have heard that you want to condemn Laureola to death. If goodness does not deserve to be executed, then you are in truth an unjust judge. You do not want to sully your glorious reputation with such a judgment that, if you sentenced her, even if you were correct or had the right to do so, you would be smeared as a cruel father rather than praised as a just king. You gave credit to three evil men when there was as much reason to investigate them as to believe their testimony. See how ill reputed they are among your court; they conform to all kinds of evil, always praising themselves when they speak of their deceptions. So, why do you put more faith in their information than in the judgment of God, which revealed itself clearly in Persio and Leriano’s weapons? Do not be the persecutor of your own blood, which will make you the most tarnished among men; do not blame innocence in the counsel of wrath.

And, if it seems to you that, for the said reasons, Laureola should not be saved: we beg you to have mercy on her life for what you owe to your own virtue, for what your royalty requires, and for the services we
[31] Respuesta del rey

Por bien aconsejado me tuviera de vosotros si no tuviera sabido ser tan devido vengar las desonras como perdonar las culpas. No era menester dezirme las razones por que los poderosos deven recevir consejo, porque aquéllas y otras que dexastes de dezir tengo ya conocidas. Mas bien sabés cuando el coraçon está embargado de pasión que están cerrados los oídos al consejo; y en tal tiempo las frutuosas palabras, en lugar de amansar, acrecientan la saña, porque reverdecen en la memoria la causa della; pero digo que estuviese libre de tal empedimento, yo creería que dispongo y ordeno sabiamente la muerte de Laureola, lo cual quiero mostrareos por causas justas determinadas segund onra y justicia.

Si el yerro desta mujer quedase sin pena, no sería menos culpante que Leriano en mi desonra. Publicado que tal cosa perdoné, sería de los comarcanos despreciado y de los naturales desobedecido, y de todos mal estimado, y podríá ser acusado que supe mal conservar la generosidad de mis antecesores; y a tanto se estendería esta culpa, si castigada no fuese, que podríá amanzillar la fama de los pasados y la onra de lo presentes y la sangre de los por venir; que sola una mácula en el linaje cunde toda la generación. Perdonando a Laureola sería causa de otras maldades que en esfuerzo de mi perdón se harían; pues más quiero poner miedo por cruel que dar atrevimiento por piadoso, y seré estimado como conviene que los reyes lo sean.

Segund justicia, mirad cuántas razones ay para que sea sentenciada: Bien sabéis que establecen nuestras leyes que la mujer que fuere acusada de tal pecado muera por ello. Pues ya veis cuanto más me conviene ser llamado rey justo que perdonador culpado, que lo sería muy conocido si, en lugar de guardar la ley, la quebrase, pues a sí mismo se condena quien al que yerra perdona. Igualmente se deve guardar el derecho, y el coraçon del juez no se ha de mover por favor ni amor ni cobdicia, ni por ningún otro acidente. Siendo derecha, la justicia es alabada, y si es favorable, aborrecida. Nunca se deve torcer, pues de tantos bienes
have done for you. And, because fewer words than what I have already said would have been enough to do it, according to your clemency, we do not wish to say anything more but that you consider how much better it is for your wrath to perish than your reputation.

[31] Answer from the King

I would consider myself well advised by you, if it were not true that a dishonor must be avenged as much as an offense pardoned. It was not necessary to tell me the reasons for which the powerful should receive counsel, because I already know those reasons and the others you left unsaid. But you know well that when the heart is filled with passion the ears are closed to counsel. In such times, fruitful words, instead of calming, only make the wrath grow stronger because they make one's memory resound with all its causes. But I say that even if I were free from such blindness, I would still believe that I decree and command Laureola's death wisely, which I want to show you with just causes determined according to honor and justice.

If the crime of this woman were left without punishment, I would be no less guilty than Leriano in my dishonor. With the news of such a pardon spread abroad, I would be discounted among the people and disobeyed among the vassals and ill esteemed by all, and I could be accused of not knowing how to conserve the generosity of my ancestors. So much would this guilt extend, if she were not punished, that I could stain the reputation of those past and the honor of those present and the blood of those to come, such that a single blemish in the lineage could spread to the whole generation. Pardoning Laureola would be the cause of many greater evils that would be done with the effort of such a pardon. So, I would rather instill fear as a cruel king than invite insolence as a merciful one, and thus I will be esteemed as it is right for kings to be esteemed.

According to justice, see how many reasons there are for her to be sentenced: you know well how our laws state that a woman who is accused of such a sin must die for it. So, you already see how much more sensible it is to be called a just king than a guilty pardoner, which I would be considered if, instead of upholding the law, I broke it, which in itself condemns the person who pardons the one who errs. So, too, should the law be upheld, and the heart of the judge should not be
es causa: pone miedo a los malos, sostiene los buenos, pacifica las diferencias, ataja las cuestiones, escusa las contiendas, aviene los debates, asegura los caminos, onra los pueblos, favorece los pequeños, enfrena los mayores, es para el bien común en gran manera muy provechosa. Pues para conservar tal bien, porque las leyes se sostengan, justo es que en mis propias cosas las use.

Si tanto la salud de Laureola queréis y tanto su bondad alabáis, dad un testigo de su inocencia como ay tres de su cargo, y será perdonada con razón y alabada con verdad. Dezís que deviera dar tanta fe al juicio de Dios como al testimonio de los ombres: no's maravilléis de assí no hazello, que veo el testimonio cierto y el juicio no acabado, que, juzgar el medio y no saber el fin. No respondo a todos los apuntamientos de vuestra habla por no hazer largo y en el fin embiaros sin esperança. Mucho quisiera acutar vuestro ruego por vuestro merecimiento. Si no lo hago, aveldo por bien, que no menos devéis desear la onra del padre que la salvación de la hija.

La desesperança del responder del rey fue para los que la oían causa de grave tristeza; y como yo, triste, viese que aquel remedyo me era contrario, busqué el que creía muy provechoso, que era suplicar a la reina le suplicase al rey por la salvación de Laureola. Y yendo a ella con este acuerdo, como aquella que tanto participava en el dolor de la hija, topéla en una sala, que venía a hazer lo que yo quería dezille, acompañada de muchas generosas dueñas y damas, cuya auctoridad bastava para alcanzar cualquiera cosa, por injusta y grave que fuera, cuanto más aquélla que no con menos razón el rey deviera hazella que la reina pedilla. La cual, puestas las rodillas en el suelo, le dijo palabras así sabias para culpalle como piadosas para amansallo.

Dezíale la moderación que conviene a los reyes, reprehendíale la perseverança de su ira, acordávale que era padre, hablándole razones tan discretas para notar como lastimadas para sentir, suplicávale que, si tan cruel juizio dispusiese, se quisiese satisfazer con matar a ella, que tenía
moved by favor or by love or by greed, or by any other accident. If fair, justice is praised; and if partial, abhorred. Never should it be twisted, because it causes so much good as it is: it strikes fear in those who are evil, sustains those who are good, pacifies differences, contains problems, excuses contentions, calms debates, makes the roads safe, honors the people, favors the meek, restrains the great, and for the common good is advantageous in many ways. So, to conserve such good, and for the laws to sustain themselves, it is just to use it in my own affairs.

If you so hope for Laureola’s health and you so praise her goodness, present a witness for her innocence just as there are three who accused her, and she will be rightly pardoned and praised in the light of truth. You say that the judgment of God should be given as much faith as the testimony of men: do not marvel that I do not do so, that I see the testimony as certain and the judgment as unfinished, that, because Leriano was winning the battle, we can judge the middle and not know the end. I do not respond to all the points of your speech so that I do not make the process lengthy and, in the end, send you away without hope. I truly would like to grant your supplication for your merits. If I do not do so, take it as good, because you should desire the honor of the father no less than the salvation of the daughter.25

[32] The Author

The hopelessness provoked by the king’s response was a cause of great sorrow for those who heard it. Seeing, distressed, how my remedy worked against me, I searched for another that I believed would be beneficial—begging the queen to beg the king for Laureola’s salvation. While going to her with this in mind, given that she shared so much in her daughter’s pain, I came across her in a room where she was already in the midst of what I wanted to ask of her, accompanied by many generous ladies and damsels whose authority was so great that they could achieve anything at all, however unjust and grave. Thus, considering the reason for their request, the king should grant it even more readily. Indeed, knees bent on the floor, the queen spoke words so wise as to reproach him and so pious as to calm him.26

She told him of the moderation fit for kings, reprehended him for the persistence of his wrath, reminded him that he was a father, gave him reasons that were as discreet in observation as they were painful
los más días pasados, y dexase a Laureola, tan dina de la vida, provávale que la muerte de la salva mataría la fama del juez y el bevir de la juzgada y los bienes de la que suplicava. Mas tan endurecido estaba el rey en su propósito que no pudieron para con él razones que dixo ni las lágrimas que derramó; y así se volvió a su cámara con poca fuerça para llorar y menos para bevir.

Pues viendo que menos la reina hallava gracia en el rey, llegó a él como desesperado, sin temer su saña, y díxele, porque su sentencia diese con justicia clara, que Leriano daría una persona que hiziese armas con los tres falsos testigos, o que él por sí lo haría, aunque abaxase su merecer, porque mostrase Dios lo que justamente deviese obrar. Respondiéome que me dexase de embaxadas de Leriano, que en oír su nombre le crecía la pasión.

Pues volviendo a la reina, como supo que en la vida de Laureola no avía remedio, fuese a la prisión donde estaba y besándola diversas vezes dezíale tales palabras:

[33] La reina a Laureola

¡O bondad acusada con malicia! ¡O virtud sentenciada con saña! ¡O hija nacida para el dolor de su madre! ¡Tú serás muerta sin justicia y de mí llorada con razón! Más poder ha tenido tu ventura para condenarte que tu inocencia para hazerte salva. Beviré en soledad de tu y en compañía de los dolores que en tu lugar me dexas, los cuales, de compasión, viéndome quedar sola, por acompañadores me diste. Tu fin acabará dos vidas, la tuya sin causa y la mía por derecho, y lo que biviere después de ti me será mayor muerte que la que tú recibirás, porque muy más atormenta desealla que padecella. Plugiiera a Dios que fueras llamada hija de la madre que murió y no de la que te vido morir. De las gentes serás llorada en cuanto el mundo durare. Todos los que de ti tenían noticia avían por pequeña cosa este reino que avíes de eredar, segund lo que merecías. Podiste caber en la ira de tu padre, y dizen los que te conocen que no cupiera en toda la tierra tu merecer. Los ciegos desean vista por verte y los mudos habla por alabarte y los pobres riqueza
in sentiment, and begged him that, if he must make such a cruel judgment, he satisfy himself with killing her, who has most of her days behind her, and leave Laureola, who is so worthy of life. She showed him how the death of an innocent woman would kill the reputation of the one who judges and the life of the one who is judged and the good of the one who begs for it. Yet, the king was so hardened in his purpose that she could not stop him with the reasons she spoke nor the tears she spilled. And so, she returned to her chambers with little strength to cry and less to live.

Seeing how little grace the queen found in the king, I went to him in desperation. Without fearing his rage, I told him, so that he would pronounce his sentence with clear justice, that Leriano would appoint someone to fight against the three false witnesses, or do so himself, even though it was beneath what he deserved, so that God could show what the king should justly do. He told me I must stop my embassies for Leriano, that hearing his name made his rage grow.

So, to return to the queen, knowing that there was no remedy for Laureola’s life, she went to the prison where her daughter was and, kissing her many times, told her:

[33] The Queen to Laureola

Oh goodness accused with malice! Oh virtue condemned with contempt! Oh daughter born for the sorrow of her mother! You will be unjustly executed and rightly mourned! Your luck had more power to sentence you than your innocence to keep you safe. I will live in loneliness without you and in company with the pains that you leave in your place, the pains which, out of compassion, seeing me alone, you gave as companions. Your end will be the end of two lives, your own without cause and mine by rights. And, what I will live afterwards will be a greater death than you will receive, because it is much more tormenting to desire it than to suffer it. I wish to God that you were called the daughter of the mother that died and not the daughter of the mother who saw you die. You will be mourned by the people for however long the world lasts. All those who know you realize that the kingdom you stand to inherit is a little thing in comparison to what you deserve. You may be bounded within the wrath of your father, yet those who
por servirte. A todos eras agradable y a Persio fuiste odiosa. Si algund tiempo bivo, él recibirá de sus obras galardón justo, y aunque no me queden fuerzas para otra cosa sino para desear morir, para vengarme del tomellas he prestadas de la enemistad que le tengo, puesto que esto no me satisfaga, porque no podrá sanar el dolor de la manzilla la secución de la venganza.

¡O hija mía! ¿Por qué, si la onestad es prueva de la virtud, no dio el rey más crédito a tu presencia que al testimonio? En la habla, en las obras, en los pensamientos, siempre mostraste corazón virtuoso. Pues ¿por qué consiente Dios que mueras? No hallo por cierto otra causa sino que puede más la muchedumbre de mis pecados que el merecimiento de tu justedad, y quiso que mis errores comprendiesen tu inocencia. Pon, hija mía, el corazón en el cielo; no te duela dexar lo que se acaba por lo que permanece. Quiere el Señor que padezcas como mártir porque gozes como bienaventurada. De mí no leves deseo, que si fuere dina de ir do fueres, sin tardanza te sacare del. ¡Qué lástima tan cruel para mí que suplicaron tantos al rey por tu vida y no pudieron todos defendella, y podrá un cuchillo acaballa, el cual dexará el padre culpado y la madre con dolor y la hija sin salud y el reino sin eredera!

Deténgome tanto contigo, luz mía, dégote palabras tan lastimeras que te quiebren el corazón, porque deseo que mueras en mi poder de dolor por no verte morir en el del verdugo por justicia, el cual, aunque derrame tu sangre, no terná tan cruales las manos como el rey la condición. Pero, pues no se cumple mi deseo, antes que me vaya recibe los postrímeros besos de mí, tu piadosa madre; y así me despido de tu vista y de tu vida y de más queren la mía.

El auctor

Como la reina acabó su habla, no quiso esperar la respuesta de la inócente por no recebir doblada manzilla; y así ella y las señoras de quien fue acompañada se despidieron della con el mayor llanto de todos los que en el mundo son hechos. Y después que fue ida, embié a Laureola un mensajero, suplicándole escriviese al rey, creyendo que avría más
know your worth understand that all the earth could not contain it. The blind wished for sight to see you and the mute for speech to praise you and the poor for riches to serve you. You were agreeable to all yet wretched to Persio. If I live for some time, he will receive a just reward for his works. And, even though I do not have the strength left for anything but desiring death, I will use the enmity I have against him to avenge myself, though this does not satisfy me, because the pain of the wound cannot be soothed by the execution of vengeance.

Oh daughter of mine! Why, if honesty is the proof of virtue, did the king not give more credit to your presence than the testimony? In speech, in deeds, in thoughts, you always showed a virtuous heart. So, why does God consent that you die? Certainly, I do not find another cause but that the abundance of my sins overcomes the merit of your justice, and that He wanted my errors to shroud your innocence. Place your heart in the heavens, daughter of mine, do not take sorrow in leaving what ends for what lasts forever. The Lord above wants you to suffer as one martyred so that you may have joy as one blessed. Do not envy me, because if I were worthy of going where you may go, I would take you without delay. What a cruel sorrow for me that everyone would beg the king for your life, and that everyone would be unable to defend it, and then the knife would be able to take it, thus leaving the father with blame and the mother with pain and the daughter without life and the kingdom without successor!

I linger so long with you, light of my life, and I tell you such sorrowful words in hopes that they break your heart because I would rather you die from sorrow in my arms than see you die in the justice of the executioner, whose hands, though they spill your blood, will not be as cruel as the king’s nature. Yet, seeing my hope is not fulfilled, receive these last kisses from me, your pious mother, before I go. So I bid farewell to your sight and to your life and to my own life’s wishes.

[34] The Author

As the queen finished her speech, she did not want to wait for the innocent lady’s reply because she did not want to deepen the wound; and so, she and her accompanying ladies said their goodbyes with the greatest cries of all those that are made in the world. After she was gone, I sent a messenger to Laureola, begging her to write to the king, believ-
fuerça en sus piadosas palabras que en las peticiones de quien avía tra-
bajado su libertad, lo cual luego puso en obra con mayor turbación que
esperanza. La carta dezía en esta manera:

[35] Carta de Laureola al rey

Padre: He sabido que me sentencias a muerte y que se cumple de aquí
a tres días el término de mi vida, por donde conozco que no menos de-
ven temer los inocentes la ventura que los culpados la ley, pues me tiene
fortuna en el estrecho que me podiera tener la culpa que no tengo, lo
cual conocerías si la saña te dexase ver la verdad.

Bien sabes la virtud que las corónicas pasadas publican de los
reyes y reinas donde yo procedo; pues, ¿por qué, nacida yo de tal san-
gre, creíste más la información falsa que la bondad natural? Si te pla-
ze matarme por voluntad, obra lo que por justicia no tienes, porque
la muerte que tú me dieres, aunque por causa de temor la rehúse, por
razón de obedecer la consiento, aviendo por mejor morir en tu obedi-
encia que bevir en tu desamor. Pero todavía te suplico que primero ac-
uerdes que determines, porque, como Dios es verdad, nunca hize cosa
por que mereciese pena. Mas digo señor, que la hiziera, tan convenible
te es la piedad de padre como rigor de justo. Sin dubda yo deseo tanto
mi vida por lo que a ti toca como por lo que a mí cumple, que al cabo
so hija. Cata, señor, que quien cruza hace su peligro busca; más seguro
de caer estarás siendo amado por clemencia que temido por crudeldad.
Quien quiere ser temido, forçado es que tema. Los reyes crueles de to-
dos los ombres son desamados, y éstos, a las bezes, buscando cómo se
venguen, hallan cómo se pierdan. Los súditos de los tales más desean la
revuelta del tiempo que la conservación de su estado; los salvos temen
su condición y los malos su justicia; sus mismos familiares les tratan y
buscan la muerte, usando con ellos lo que de ellos aprendieren.

Dígote, señor, todo esto porque deseo que se sostente tu onra y tu
vida. Mal esperança ternán los tuyos en ti, viéndote cruel contra mí;
teniendo otro tanto les darás en exemplo de cualquier osadía, que qui-
en no está seguro nunca asegura. ¡O cuánto están libres de semejantes
ocasiones los príncipes en cuyo corazón está la clemencia! Si por ellos
conviene que mueran sus naturales, con voluntad se ponen por su sal-
vación al peligro; vélándolos de noche, guárdanlos de día. Más esper-
ança tiene los beninos y piadosos reyes en el amor de las gentes que en
ing that there would be more force in her pious words than in the petitions of those who had worked for her liberty, which she later put in motion with greater unease than hope. The letter spoke in this manner:

[35] Letter from Laureola to the King

Father: I have learned that you are sentencing me to death and that my life will end in three days’ time, a discovery that has taught me how the innocent should fear fortune no less than the guilty should fear the law. My fortune, after all, has brought me into the same narrow straits as the guilt I do not possess, which you would know if rage would let you see the truth.

You know the virtue of my ancestors, of the kings and queens recorded in the chronicles, from whom I descend. So, if I am born from such blood, why do you believe false information more than the natural grace of our line? If it pleases you to kill me out of your own volition, then do what you cannot have with justice. Though I reject it out of fear, I would agree to such a death because my reason tells me it is better to die obeying you than live without your love. But still, I beseech you to regain your senses before you decide, because as much as God is true, I never did a thing to deserve such a punishment. But I say, señor, that even if I had done so, the piety of a father is as fair as the rigor of justice. Without a doubt, I desire to live for your own sake as much as my own, since I am your daughter in the end. Look, señor, how those who persecute merely seek their own persecution: you will be much safer in the love of your compassion than in the fear of your cruelty. Whoever wants to be feared, will inevitably come to fear as well. Cruel kings are unloved by all, and so, sometimes, they find their end by looking for their revenge. Their subjects yearn to riot more than preserve their status; the saved fear for their grace and the condemned for their justice; and the very kin of such rulers mistreat them and undertake their deaths with the lessons learned by their own example.

I am telling you all of this, señor, so that you maintain your life and honor. An ill faith will turn among your followers when they witness your cruelty toward me; and, fearing this, you will give them any kind of cruel example, because those who are the least sure can be reassured the least. Oh, how free from such risks are princes with compassion in their hearts! If their people have to die for them, they would willingly
la fuerza de los muros de sus fortalezas. Cuando salen a las plaças, el que más tarde los bendize y alaba más temprano piensa yerra. Pues mira, señor, el daño que la crueldad causa y el provecho que la mansedumbre procurea; y si todavía te pareciere mejor seguir antes la opinión de tu saña que el consejo propio, malaventurada sea la hija que nació para poner en condición la vida de su padre, que por escándalo que pornás con tan cruel obra nadie se fíará de ti ni tú de nadie deves fíar, porque con tu muerte no procure alguno su seguridad. Y lo que más siento sobre todo es que darás contra mí la sentencia y harás de tu memoria la justicia, la cual será siempre acordada más por la causa della que por ella misma. Mi sangre ocupará poco lugar y tu crueza toda la tierra. Tú serás llamado padre cruel y yo seré dicha hija inocente, que, pues Dios es justo, él aclarará mi verdad. Assí quedaré libre de culpa cuando aya recibido la pena.

[36] El auctor

Después que Laureola acabó de escrivir, embió la carta al rey con uno de aquellos que la guardavan; y tan amada era de aquél y todos los otros guardadores que le dieran libertad si fueran tan obligados a ser piadosos como leales. Pues como el rey recibió la carta, después de avella leído mandó muy enojadamente que al levador della le tirasen delante. Lo cual yo viendo, comencé de nuevo a maldezir mi ventura, y, puesto que mi tormento fuese grande, ocupava el coraçón de dolor, mas no la memoria de olvido para lo que hazer conveñia. Y a la ora, porque avía más espacio para la pena que para el remedio, hablé con Galio, tío de Laureola, como es contado, y díxele cómo Leriano quería sacalla por fuerça de la prisión, para lo cual le suplicava mandase juntar alguna gente para que, sacada de la cárcel, la tomase en su poder y la pusiese en salvo, porque si él consigo la levase podría dar lugar al testimonio de los malos ombres y a la acusación de Persio. Y como no le fuese menos cara que a la reina la muerte de Laureola, respondióme que acetuava lo que dezía; y como su voluntad y mi deseo fueron conformes, dio prisa en mi partida, porque antes quel hecho se supiese se despachase, la cual
face danger for their salvation, watching them by night and guarding them by day. Good and pious kings hold much more hope in the benevolence of their people’s love than in the strength of their fortress’s walls. When walking out onto the plazas, the last one to praise feels like the first to misjudge. Look then, señor, on the pain that cruelty causes and the prosperity that docility procures. If it still seems better to follow the counsel of your ire rather than good advice, unfortunate is the daughter born to endanger the life of a father because, for the scandal you will create with such cruelty, no one will ever have faith in you nor should you in them lest your death procure someone else’s security. And, what pains me most about this matter, is that you will deliver my sentence and commit it to your memory as a justice, which will always be remembered by its cause and not by the justice itself. My blood will occupy but a little space, but your cruelty will fill the whole earth. You will be called a cruel father and I an innocent daughter, as God is just and will illuminate my truth. So I will be freed from guilt when I have suffered my sentence.

[36] The Author

When Laureola finished writing, she sent the letter to the king through one of the guards who watched her; and she was so loved by him, and all of the guards, that they would have freed her themselves if only they had been obliged to be as compassionate as they were to be loyal. When the king received the letter, and after he read it, he commanded angrily that the messenger be thrown from his sight. Seeing this, I began once again to curse my fortune, and since my torment was great, it filled my heart with pain but did not fill my memory with oblivion over what I needed to do. And so, one hour later, because there was more time for sadness than for finding a remedy, I talked to Galio—Laureola’s uncle, mentioned above—and told him how Leriano planned to free her from prison by force. For this, I begged him to gather some of his people so that, when she was liberated, he could take her into his custody; because, if Leriano took her, it could give weight to the testimony of the evil men and Persio’s accusation. And, because Laureola’s death took no less a toll upon him than the queen, he replied that he accepted what I said. And, since his will and my desire were in agreement, I
puse luego en obra.

Y llegado donde Leriano estaba, dile cuenta de lo que hize y de lo poco que acabé; y hecha mi habla, dile la carta de Laureola, y con la compasión de las palabras della y con pensamiento de lo que esperava hazer traía tantas revueltas en el corazón que no sabía qué responderme. Llorava de lástima, no sosegava de sañudo, desconfiava segund su fortuna, esperava segund su justicia; quando pensava que sacaríe a Laureola alegrávase; quando dudava si lo podríe hazer enmudecía. Finalmente, dexadas las dubdas, sabida la respuesta que Galio me dio, comenzó a proveer lo que para el negocio complía; y como ombre proveído, en tanto que yo estaba en la corte juntó quinientos ombres damas suyos sin que pariente ni persona del mundo lo supiese. Lo cual acordó con discreta consideración, porque si con sus deudos lo comunicara, unos, por no deservir al rey, dixieran que era mal hecho, y otros, por asegurar su hazienda, que lo devía dexar, y otros, por ser el caso peligroso, que no lo devía emprender; así que por estos inconvenientes y porque por allí pudiera saberse el hecho, quiso con sus gentes solas acometello. Y no quedando sino un día para sentenciar a Laureola, la noche antes juntó sus cavalleros y díxoles cuanto eran más obligados los buenos a temer la vergüenza que el peligro. Allí les acordó cómo por las obras que hizieron aún bibía la fama de los pasados; rogóles que por cobdicia de la gloria de buenos no curasesen de la de bivos; tráxoles a la memoria el premio de bien morir y mostróles cuánto era locura temello no escusarlo. Prometióles muchas mercedes, y después que les hizo un largo razonamiento, díxole para qué los avía llamado, los cuales a una boz juntos se profirieron a morir con él.

Pues, conociendo Leriano la lealtad de los suyos, túvose por bien acompañado y dispuso su partida en anocheciendo; y llegado a un valle cerca de la cibdad, estuvo allí en celada toda la noche, donde dio forma en lo que avía de hazer. Mandó a un capitán suyo con ciento ombres damas que fuese posada de Persio y que matase a él y a cuantos en defensa se le pusiesen. Ordenó que otros dos capitanes tuviesen con cada cincuenta cavalleros a pie en dos calles principales que salían a la prisión, a los cuales mandó que tuviesen el rostro contra la cibdad, y que a cuantos viniesen defendiesen la entrada de la cárcel, entretanto que él con los trezientos que le quedavan trabajava por sacar a Laureola. Y al que dio cargo de matar a Persio díxole que en despachando se fuese a ayuntar con él; y creyendo que a la vuelta, los caballos no recibiese
immediately set out so that the plan could not be discovered before it was done.

And once I arrived where Leriano was, I informed him of what I had done and of the small result I had achieved; and when I finished speaking, I gave him Laureola’s letter; and with the compassion of her words and the thought of what he hoped to do, his heart gave so many turns that he did not know what to say. He wept out of sorrow; he could not soothe his rage; he doubted his fortune; and he had hope in his justice. When he thought that he would free Laureola, he brightened; when he doubted if he could do it, he fell silent. Finally, leaving all doubts aside, informed of Galio’s reply to me, he started to look after what was necessary to carry out the matter. And, as the resourceful man he was, while I was at court, he had gathered five hundred armed men without letting it be known to any relative or other person in the world. He decided to do this with discreet consideration, because, if he had communicated it to his relatives, some, to avoid being disloyal to the king, would have said that it was ill done; others, to protect their fortunes, would have said that he should leave it; and others, considering it was a dangerous act, that he should not do it. Therefore, due to these inconveniences and to avoid anyone learning of the matter, he decided to do it only with his own people. And so, when there was but one day left before Laureola’s sentence, he gathered his knights and told them how virtuous men should fear shame more than danger. There, he reminded them that the memory of those of the past was still alive because of what they had done. He begged them to covet the glory of good men rather than the glory of the living. He brought to their memory the prize of dying with honor, and he showed them how it was madness to fear death, for it could not be avoided. He promised them many favors, and after presenting a lengthy reasoning, he told them why he had called them. And they, with one single voice, said that they would die with him.

Thus, seeing the loyalty of his people, Leriano knew he was in good company and decided to leave at dusk. When he arrived at a valley close to the city, he remained there all night so as to find a secret lookout site. There, he planned what should be done. He commanded one of his captains to take one hundred armed men and go to Persio’s lodgings to kill him and all the men who defended him. He then appointed two other captains to take fifty knights each on foot and secure the
daño, mandó aquel mismo caudillo quél y los que con él fuesen se adelantasen a la celada a cabalgar, para que hiziesen rostro a los enemigos, en tanto quél y los otros tomavan los caballos, con los cuales dexó cincuenta ombres de pie para que los guardasen. Y como acordado todo esto començase amanecer, en abriendo las puertas movió con su gente, y entrados todos dentro en la cibdad, cada uno tuvo a cargo lo que avía de hazer.

El capitán que fue a Persio, dando la muerte a cuantos topava, no paró hasta él, que se començava a armar, donde muy cruelmente sus maldades y su vida acabaron. Leriano, que fue a la prisión, acrecentando con las saña la virtud del esfuerzo, tan duramente peló con las guardas que no podía pasar adelante sino por encima de los muertos quél y los suyos derribavan; y como en los peligros más la bondad se acrecienta por fuerça de armas, llegó hasta donde estaba Laureola, a la cual sacó con tanto acatamiento y ceremonia como en tiempo seguro lo pudiera hazer; y puesta la rodilla en el suelo, besóle las manos como a hija de su rey.

Estava ella con la turbación presente tan sin fuerça que apenas podía moverse: desmayávelle el corazón, falleciále la color, ninguna parte de biva tenía. Pues como Leriano la sacava de la dichosa cárcel, que tanto bien mereció guardar, halló a Galio con una batalla de gente que la estaba esperando y en presencia de todos ge la entregó; y comoquiera que sus cavalleros peleavan con los que al rebato venían, púsola en una hacenca que Galio tenía adereçada, y después de besalle las manos otra vez, fue a ayudar y favorecer su gente, volviendo siempre a ella los ojos hasta que de vista la perdió, la cual, sin ningún contraste, levó su tío a Dala, la fortaleza dicha.

Pues tornando a Leriano, como ya ell alboroto llegó a oídos del rey pidió las armas, y, tocadas las trompetas y atabales, armóse toda la gente cortesana y de la cibdad. Y como el tiempo le ponía necesidad para que Leriano saliese al campo, començólo a hazer, esforçando los suyos con animosas palabras, quedando siempre en la reçaga, sufriendo la multitud de los enemigos con mucha firmeza de corazón. Y por guardar la manera onesta que requiere el retraer, iva ordenado con menos priesa que el caso pedía, y así, perdiendo algunos de los suyos y matando a muchos de los contrarios, llegó adonde dexó los caballos; y guardada la orden que para aquello avía dado, sin recibir revés ni peligro cavalaron y todos sus cavalleros, lo que por Ventura no hiziera si antes no
two main streets. He commanded them to turn their backs to the city, so that they could defend the entrance of the prison from whomever might come. Meanwhile, he would try to free Laureola with the three hundred remaining men. And Leriano commanded the man charged with killing Persio to rejoin him after finishing the mission. Thinking that if he could accomplish his objective, he would have to leave fighting and so, to avoid being hurt while taking the horses, he commanded to the very same leader that he and his men should go before him on horseback to the look-out site, facing the enemies while Leriano and the others could take their horses, which he left with fifty footmen to guard them. And with all of this decided the day began to dawn; and with the gates of the city walls opening, he moved with his men; and with all inside the city, everyone took charge of what they had to do.

The captain who went after Persio, killing everyone he encountered, did not stop until he found the man, who was already arming himself. There, his life and his wickedness came to their most cruel end. Leriano, who went to the prison, increasing the virtue of his effort with his ire, fought so hardly with the guards that he could only advance over the bodies of those whom he and his men struck down. And, since in dangerous situations goodness increases by the force of arms, he arrived where Laureola was. He took her with the respect and ceremony that time permitted: with one knee bent to the floor, he kissed her hands as the daughter of his king.

She had so little strength left due to the disconcertment of the moment that she could barely move: her heart wilting, her color failing, not a part of her was left with life. When Leriano took her from that fortunate jail, which kept such good within its walls, he found Galio with a battalion of people who were waiting for her and, in their presence, Leriano handed her to him. Since his men were fighting those who repelled the attack, Leriano placed her upon a nag that Galio had saddled for her. After kissing her hands again, he went to help and favor his men, turning always his head toward her until he lost sight of her. And she was taken by her uncle without any problems to the fortress of Dala.

Returning to Leriano, the commotion came to the ears of the king, who asked for his arms, and when the trumpets and drums were played, all the people of the court and the city armed themselves. Because of the scarcity of time, Leriano rushed to leave the city. He started to go, strengthening his people with encouraging words. He stayed always at
proveyera el remedio.

Pues todos, como es dicho, a caballo, tomó delante los peones y siguió la vía de Susa, donde avíe partido. Y como se le acercavan tres batallas del rey, salido de paso apresuró algo ell andar, con tal concier-

to y orden que ganava tanta onra en el retraer como en el pelear. Iva siempre en los postreros, haziendo algunas vueltas cuando el tiempo las pedía, por entretener los contrarios, para levar su batalla más sin congoxa. En el fin, no aviendo sino dos leguas, como es dicho, hasta Susa, pudo llegar sin que ninguno suyo perdiése, cosa de gran mar-

villa, porque con cinco mil ombres darman venía ya el rey embuelto con él, el cual, muy encendido de coraje, puso a la ora cerco sobre el lugar con propósito de no levantarse de allí hasta que dél tomase ven-

gança. Y viendo Leriano que el rey asentava real, repartió su gente por estancias, segund sabio guerrero: donde estava el muro más flaco, ponía los más rezios cavalleros; donde avía aparejo para dar en el real, ponía los más sueltos; donde veía más disposición para entralle por traición o engaño, ponía los más fieles; en todo proveía como sabidor y en todo osava como varón.

El rey, como aquel que pensava levar el hecho a fin, mandó for-
talecer el real y proveó en las provisiones; y, ordenadas todas las cosas que a la hueste cumplían, mandó llegar las estancias cerca de la villa, las cuales guarneció de muy bona gente, y pareciéndola, segund le acuciava la saña, gran tardança esperar a tomar a Leriano por hambre, puesto que la villa fuese muy fuerte, acordó de combatilla, lo cual provó con tan Bravo coraçón que uvo el cercado bien menester el esfuerço y la diligencia. Andava sobresaliente con cient cavalleros que para aquello tenía diputados: donde veía flaqueza se forçava; donde veía coraçón alabava; donde veía mal recauso proveía. Concluyendo, porque me alargo, el rey mandó apartar el combate con pérdida de mucha parte de sus cavalleros, en especial de los mancebos cortesanos, que siempre buscan el peligro por gloria. Leriano fue herido en el rostro, y no menos perdió muchos ombres principales.

Passado así este combate, diole el rey otros cinco en espacio de tres meses, de manera que le fallecían ya las dos partes de su gente, de cuya razón hallava dudosu su hecho, comoquiera que en el rostro ni palabras ni obras nadie ge lo conociese, porque en el coraçón del caudillo se
the back, enduring a multitude of his enemies with a firm heart. And because keeping honor was required in a retreat, he acted with less haste than the situation required. And in this way, losing some of his men and killing many of the opposing side, he arrived where he had left the horses. And keeping the order that he had given, without encountering any mishaps or danger, he and all his knights rode on, which he would not have been able to do by fortune without first providing the remedy.

All of them on horseback, as was said before, Leriano sent the foot-soldiers in front and so took the way back to Susa. Since three battalions of the king were approaching him, he, stepping out of line, forced his pace with such harmony and order that he was winning as much honor in retreating as in battlling. He remained at the end of the armed retinue the whole time, turning back when he needed to distract his enemies in order to carry out the battle more smoothly. Finally, since, as it was said before, there were just two leagues of distance remaining to Susa, he arrived there without losing a single one of his own. This was rather a wonder, because the king was following them with five thousand armed men. The king, inflamed with ire, besieged the town within an hour with the purpose of not leaving until he could take his revenge on Leriano. When Leriano saw that the king was preparing his siege, he wisely split his men in different places: where the wall was weakest, he placed the stronger knights; where there were the means to hit the royal camp, he placed the most skillful ones; where he saw the city could be entered by tricks or treacheries, he put his most loyal ones. He wisely anticipated everything, and he manfully dared to everything.

The king, thinking to bring the matter to an end, commanded the fortification of the royal camp and provided it with supplies. With everything necessary for his army in good order, he commanded the placement of the camp near the town and manned it with very virtuous people. Spurred on by his anger, he thought that it would be too great a delay to wait and make Leriano surrender through famine, because the town was strong of will. Therefore, he decided to attack it, which he tried with such a courageous heart that the one besieged had to use his strength and diligence. Leriano fought brilliantly with the one hundred knights that he had readied for such an attack. Where he saw weakness, he exerted himself; where he saw strength, he praised it; and
esfuerzan los caudillados. Finalmente, como supo que otra vez ordenaban de le combatir, por poner corazón a los que le quedaban hizolos una habla en esta forma:

[37] Leriano a sus cavalleros

Por cierto, cavalleros, si como sois pocos en número no fuésetedes muchos en fortaleza, yo ternía alguna duda en nuestro hecho, según nuestra mala fortuna. Pero como sea más estimada la virtud que la muchedumbre, vista la vuestra, antes temo necesidad de ventura que de cavalleros, y con esta consideración en solos vosotros tengo esperanza; pues en puesta en nuestras manos nuestra salud, tanto por sustentación de vida como por gloria de fama nos conviene pelear. Agora se nos ofrece causa para dexar la bondad que eredamos a los que nos han de eredar, que malaventurados seríamos si por flaqueza en nosotros se acabase la eredad. Assí pelead que libréis de vergüenza vuestra sangre y mi nombre. Oy se acaba o se confirma nuestra onra. Sepámos defender y no avergonçar que muy mayores son los galardones de las vitorias que las ocasiones de los peligros. Esta vida penosa en que bevimos no sé por qué se deva mucho querer, que es breve en los días y larga en los trabajos, la cual ni por temor se acrecienta ni por osar se acorta, pues cuando nascemos se limita su tiempo; por donde es escusado el miedo y devida la osadía. No nos pudo nuestra fortuna poner en mejor estado que en esperaça de onrada muerte o gloriosa fama. Cudicia de alabança, avaricia de onra acaban otros hechos mayores quel nuestro. No temamos las grandes compañías llegadas al real, que en las afrentas lo menos pelean; a los simples espanta la multitud de los muchos y a los sabios esfuerça la virtud de los pocos. Grandes aparejos tenemos para osar: la bondad nos obliga, la justicia nos esfuerça, la necesidad nos apremia. No ay cosa por
where he saw problems, he helped. To conclude, because I am drawing out my tale, the king ordered his retreat from the battle, losing many members of his army, especially young courtiers who are always looking for glory in dangerous situations. Leriano suffered an injury on his own face, and he also lost many noble men.

After this battle, the king assaulted him five more times within three months. Thus, people from both sides perished, and because of this, Leriano doubted the whole affair. However, no one could discern such doubts, neither in his face nor in his words nor in his actions, because those who are led take strength in the heart of the one who leads them. Finally, as he knew that they would have to fight again, he made a speech to the survivors in this manner:

[37] Leriano to His Knights

Certainly, my knights, as you are but few in number, I would have some doubt in this matter due to our ill fortune if you were not so great in strength. But, since virtue is more esteemed than numbers, in seeing your goodness I fear the need for good fortune more than the need for knights. And, with this consideration, in you alone I have put all my hope. Our health is in our hands. To sustain our life, and for the glory of our names, we should fight. Now, we are being offered the chance to pass the goodness that we have inherited on to those who must inherit it from us. We would be ill-fortuned people if, because of our weakness, such an inheritance would finish with us. Fight so that you free your blood and my name from shame. Today, we confirm, or end, our honor. We must know how to defend ourselves and not to shame ourselves, for the rewards from victories are far greater than the chances of our dangers. I do not know why we should love this arduous life which we live. It is brief in days and long in difficulties. Life does not grow longer for fear nor shorter for boldness, since, from the time we are born, it is always diminishing. Because of this, fear is useless and daring demanded. Our fortune could not have put us in a better place than in the hope of an honored death or glorious fame. Hunger for praise and greed for honor have ended greater matters than ours. Let us not fear the great company that has arrived at the royal camp, because the lowliest of them fight in the battles. The foolish tremble before the multitudes of many, but the sagest take courage in the virtuosity of the
qué devamos temer y ay mill para que devamos morir.

Todas las razones, cavalleros leales, que os he dicho, eran escusadas para creceros fortaleza, pues con ella nacísteis; mas quisélas hablar porque en todo tiempo el corazón se debe ocupar en nobleza, en el hecho con las manos, en la soledad con los pensamientos, en compañía con las palabras, como agora hazzemos, y no menos porque recibí igual gloria con la voluntad amorosa que mostráis como con los hechos fuertes que hazéis. Y porque me pareze, segund se adereça el combate, que somos costreñidos a dexar con las obras las hablas, cada uno se vaya a su estancia.

[38] El auctor

Con tanta constancia de ánimo fue Leriano respondido de sus cavalleros que se llamó dichoso por hallarse dino dellos; y porque estaba ya ordenado el combate fuese cada uno a defender la parte que le cabía. Y poco después que fueron llegados, tocaron en el real los atavales y trompetas y en pequeño espacio estavan juntos al muro cincuenta mil ombres, los cuales con mucho vigor comenzaron el hecho, donde Leriano tuvo lugar de mostrar su virtud, y, segund los de dentro defendían, creía el rey que ninguno dellos faltava.

Duró el combate desde mediodía hasta la noche, que los despartió. Fueron heridos y muertos tres mil de los del real y tantos de los de Leriano que todos los suyos no le avían quedado sino ciento y cincuenta, y en su rostro, segund esforçado, no mostrava aver perdido ninguno, y en su sentimiento, segund amoroso, parecía que todos le avían salido del ánima. Estuvo toda aquella noche enterrando los muertos y loanando los bivos, no dando menos gloria a los que enterrava que a los que veía. Y otro día, en amaneciendo, al tiempo que remudan las guardas, acordó que cincuenta de los suyos diesen una estancia que un pariente de Persio tenía cercana al muro, porque no pensase el rey que le faltava corazón ni gente; lo cual se hizo con tan firme osadía que, quemada la estancia, mataron muchos de los defendedores della.

Y como ya Dios tuviese por bien que la verdad de aquella pendencia se mostrase, fue preso en aquella buelta uno de los damnados que condenaron a Laureola, y puesto en poder de Leriano, mandó que todas las maneras de tormento fuesen obradas en él, hasta que dixese por qué le-
few. Great tools we have to dare against them: goodness obliges us, justice strengthens us, necessity urges us. We have no reason to fear but thousands to die for.

All the words I have spoken to you, loyal knights, were unnecessary for inspiring strength of will in you, because you were born with it. But, I wanted to speak of it because the heart should always occupy itself in virtue, in deeds with one’s hands, in solitude with one’s thoughts, in company with one’s words, as we are doing now, and no less because I receive the same glory from the amorous will that you show as from the great deeds you do. And, because I think the time of battle is growing close, we are forced to leave words for acts. Each of you, go to your place.

[38] The Author

Leriano was answered by his men with such determination that he considered himself lucky to be worthy of them. And, because the battle was arranged already, they went to defend the zone assigned to them. Right after they arrived, the royal camp played the drums and trumpets, and, in a short time, there were fifty thousand men against the wall who started the battle with great vigor, so that Leriano had the chance to show his virtue. Those inside defended in such a way that the king believed not one of them was missing.

The battle lasted from noon until night, which halted them. Three thousand men were dead and injured on the king’s side, and so many on Leriano’s that only one hundred and fifty of his own were left. But in his countenance, like the valiant man he was, he did not show any losses, yet in his feeling, according to his love for them, it seemed as if all the losses were coming out of his soul. He spent all that night burying the dead and praising the living, giving no less glory to those he buried than to those he saw. And another day, at sunrise, at the time that the guards changed turns, he decided that fifty of his men should go to a tent that a relative of Persio had next to the wall so that the king would not think that he was lacking either heart or people. It was done with such a firm audacity that, when the tent was burned, they killed many of its defenders.

And, since God wanted the truth of the issue revealed, in that raid, one of the damned who condemned Laureola was apprehended. Taken by Leriano, he ordered the application of all kinds of torments until he
vantó el testimonio, el cual sin premia ninguna confesó todo el hecho como pasó. Y después que Leriano de la verdad se informó, embióle al rey, suplicándole que salvase a Laureola de culpa y mandase justiciar aquél y a los otros que de tanto mal avíen sido causa. Lo cual el rey, sabido lo cierto, aceutó con alegre voluntad por la justa razón que para ello le requería. Y no por detenerme en las prolixidades que en este caso pasaron, de los tres falsos ombres se hizo tal la justicia como fue la maldad.

El cerco fue luego alçado y el rey tuvo a su hija por libre y a Leriano por desculpado, y llegado a Suria, embió por Laureola a todos los grandes de su corte, la cual vino con igual onra de su merecimiento. Fue recebida del rey y la reina con tanto amor y lágrimas de gozo como derramaran de dolor. El rey se desculpava, la reina la besava, todos la servían, y assí se entregavan con alegría presente de la pena pasada.

A Leriano mandóle el rey que no entrase por estonces en la corte hasta que pacificase a él y a los parientes de Persio, lo que recibió a graveza porque no podría ver a Laureola; y no podiendo hazer otra cosa, sintiólo en estraña manera. Y viéndose apartado dalla, dexadas las obras de guerra, bolvióse a las congoxas enamoradas; y deseoso de saber en lo que Laureola estaba, rogóme que le fuese a suplicar que diese alguna forma onesta para que la pudiese ver y hablar, que tanto deseava Leriano guardar su onestad que nunca pensó hablalla en parte donde sospecha en ella se pudiese tomar, de cuya razón él era merecedor de sus mercedes.

Yo, que con placer aceutava sus mandamientos, partíme para Suria, y llegado allá, después de besar las manos a Laureola supliquéle lo que me dixo, a lo cual me respondió que en ninguna manera lo haría, por muchas causas que me dio para ello; pero no contento con dezír-gelo aquella vez, todas las que veía ge lo suplicava. Concluyendo, respondióme al cabo que si más en aquello le hablava que causaría que se desmesurase contra mí.

Pues visto su enojo y responder, fui a Leriano con grave tristeza, y cuando le dixe que de nuevo se començavan sus desaventuras, sin duda estuvo en condición de desesperar. Lo cual yo viendo, por entrenelle díxile que escriviese a Laureola, acordándole lo que hizo por ella y estrañándole su mudança en la merced que en escriville le començó a hazer.

Respondióme que avía acordado bien, mas que no tenía que acordalle lo que avía hecho por ella, pues no era nada, segund lo que merecía, y también porque era de ombres baxos repetir lo hecho; y no menos me dixo que ninguna memoria le haría del galardón recibido, porque
explained why he gave false testimony. He rapidly confessed everything as it had happened. And after he was informed of the truth, Leriano sent him to the king, begging him to save Laureola from guilt and to order the execution of this man and those who had caused so much evil. The king, knowing the truth, accepted this with a happy heart because of the just reason that was required. To not delay in all the prolific details that happened in this case, I say justice was done to the three deceptive men.

The siege was raised, and the king declared his daughter free of guilt, and Leriano was excused. When he—the king—arrived at Suria, he sent all the principal men of his court to take Laureola, who came with the honor that she deserved. She was welcomed by the king and the queen with as much love and tears of joy as those spilled in pain. The king apologized, the queen kissed her, everyone served her, and so everything restored with the happiness of the present the grief of the past.

The king ordered Leriano not to enter the court until he could bring peace between him and Persio’s relatives, which Leriano took gravely because he wanted to see Laureola; and, because he could not do anything about it, he lamented it in a strange manner. Seeing himself away from her, and leaving behind the deeds of war, he returned to the anguish of the enamored. Desirous of knowing what Laureola was doing, he asked me to go and beg her to arrange an honorable and decent way in which to see her and talk to her. Leriano desired so much to guard her virtue that he never thought of speaking to her alone, so that no suspicion could be drawn upon her. Because of this, he was worthy of her kindness.

Because I always accepted his requests with pleasure, I left for Suria; and when I arrived there, kissing Laureola’s hands, I pleaded her for what he told me to. To this, she answered that she would never comply for many reasons that she gave me. Unsatisfied with this, I begged her every time I saw her. Finally, she replied that if I spoke to her about it anymore, she would lose her composure with me. Seeing her anger, I went to Leriano with grave sadness; and when I told him that once again his misfortunes would begin, he doubtless became desperate. I realized this and, so as to keep him distracted, I told him to write to Laureola and remind her of what he had done for her, and to tell her of how estranged he felt when she moved away from
se defiende en la ley enamorada escrevir qué satisfacción se recibe, por el peligro que se puede recrecer si la carta es vista. Así que, sin tocar en esto, escribió a Laureola las siguientes razones:

[39] Carta de Leriano a Laureola

Laureola, segund tu virtuosa piedad, pues sabes mi pasión, no puedo creer que sin alguna causa la consientas, pues no te pido cosa a tu onra fea ni a ti grave. Si quieres mi mal, ¿por qué lo dudas? A sinrazón muerdo, sabiendo tú que la pena grande así ocupa el corazón que se puede sentir y no mostrar. Si lo has por bien, pensando que me satisfazes con la pasión que me das, porque, dándola tú, es el mayor bien que puedo esperar, justamente lo harías si la dieses a fin de galardón. Pero, ¡desdichado yo!, que la causa tu hermosura y no hace la merced tu voluntad. Si lo consientes, juzgándome desagradecido porque no me contento con el bien que me heziste causa de tan ufano pensamiento no me culpes, que, aunque la voluntad se satsfase, el sentimiento se querella. Si te plaze porque nunca te hize servicio, no pude sobir los servicios a la alteza de lo que mereces.

Cuando todas estas cosas y otras muchas pienso, hálome que dexas de hazer lo que te suplico porque me puse en cosa en que no pude merecer, lo cual yo no niego; pero atrevíme a ello pensando que me harías merced, no segund quien la pedía, mas segund tú, que la avíes de dar. Y también pensé que para ello me ayudaran virtud y compasión y piedad, porque son acetas a tu condición, que cuando los que con los poderosos negocian para alcançar su gracia, primero ganan las voluntades de sus familiares. Y parézome que en nada hallé remedio; busqué ayudadores para contigo y hallélos por cierto leales y firmes, y todos te suplican que me ayas merced: el alma por lo que pasa, el sentido por lo que siente. Pues no niegues galardón a tantos que con ansia te lo piden y con razón te lo merecen. Yo soy el más sin ventura de los más desaventurados. Las aguas reverdecen la tierra y mis lágrimas nunca tu
the favor she began when she first wrote to him.

He answered that I had reasoned well, but that he did not need to
remind her of what he had done for her, because it was nothing, com-
pared to what she deserved; and also because only the base-born would
repeat what had been done. He also told me that he would not remind
her of any reward received, because the law of love forbids mentioning
in writing any favors received due to the danger that can arise if the
letter is seen. So, without mentioning this, he wrote to Laureola the
following words:

[39] Letter from Leriano to Laureola

Laureola, according to your virtuous mercy, and since you know my
torment, I cannot believe that you consent to it without any reason,
since I do not ask for anything that is unsightly for your honor or grave
for your person. If you wish for my harm, why do you doubt this?
Without reason I die, and yet, you know that I have great pain in my
heart, which I can feel but cannot show. If you had good intentions,
thinking that you could satisfy me with the torment you give me—be-
cause, since it comes from you, it is the greatest good I could have—
you would indeed give it to me justifiably as a reward. But, unfortunate
me! The torment is caused by your beauty rather than the reward of
your will. If you consent to my suffering, judging me as ungrateful be-
cause I do not content myself with the good that you did in giving me
the cause of this happy agony, do not blame me, because even if the
intention can be satisfied the sentiment cries out. If you are pleased
because I never did anything for you, it is because I could not raise my
efforts to the nobility of what you deserve.

When I think about all of these things—and many others—I find
that you do not do what I beg of you because I aspired to something
that I could not deserve, which I do not deny. But, I found the courage
to do it thinking that you would concede me that reward, not according
to who was asking for it, but to you, who would grant it. I also thought
that your virtue, compassion, and piety would help me, because these
are natural to your sex, and when one attempts to reach the grace of
the powerful, one must first win over the heart of their families. Yet, it
seems to me that I found no remedy in anything. I searched for aides
to help me with you, and I found them, loyal and constant, and all of
esperança, la cual cabe en los campos y en las yerbas y árboles, y no puede caber en tu coraçón.

Desesperado avría, segund lo que siento, si alguna vez me hallase solo; pero como siempre me acompañan el pensamiento que me das y el deseo que me ordenas y la contemplación que me causas, viendo que lo vo a hazer, consuelanme acordándome que me tienen compañía de tu parte; de manera que quien causa las desesperaciones me tiene que no desespere. Si todavía te plaze que muera, házmelo saber, que gran bien harás a la vida, pues no será desdichada del todo: lo primero della se pasó en inocencia y lo del conocimiento en dolor; a lo menos el fin será en descanso, porque tú lo das, el cual, si ver no me quieres, será forçado que veas.

[40] El auctor

Con mucha pena recibió Laureola la carta de Leriano, y por despedirse del onestamente respondióle desta manera, con determinación de jamás recibir embaxada suya:

[41] Carta de Laureola a Leriano

El pesar que tengo de tus males te sería satisfacción dellos mismos, si creyeses cuánto es grande, y él sólo tomarías por galardón, sin que otro pidieses, aunque fuese poca paga, segund lo que me tienes merecido; la cual yo te daría, como devo, si la quisieses de mi hazienda y no de mi onra.

No responderé a todas las cosas de tu carta, porque en saber que te escrivo me huye la sangre del coraçón y la razón del juizio. Ninguna causa de las que dizes me hace consentir tu mal, sino sola mi bondad, porque cierto no está dudosa dél, porque el estrecho a que llegaste fue testigo de lo que sofriste. Dizes que nunca me hiziste servicio: lo que por mí has hecho me obliga a nunca olvidallo y siempre desear satisfa-
them begged you to be generous with me: the soul that grieves, the life that suffers, the heart that aches, and the senses that feel. So, then, do not deny the reward to so many who yearn for it and who deserve it. I am the least fortunate of the unfortunate. Water makes the land bloom but my tears never make your hope blossom, which has room to grow in the fields and the herbs and trees, but not in your heart.

I would be desperate, for how I feel, if I were alone; but, since I am always accompanied by the thoughts you give me, the desire that you order me, and the contemplation that you cause me—seeing what I am about to do—they console me, reminding me that they keep me company on your behalf. In this way, the same person who causes my desperation helps me not to be desperate. If you still want me to die, tell me, for you would do a great deed for my life, for it will not be completely wretched: the first part of it went in innocence, and the stages of understanding in pain. At least the end will be my rest, because you will give it to me, which, if you do not want to see me, then you will be forced to see.

[40] The Author

Laureola received the letter from Leriano with great sadness, and to say goodbye to him in an honest manner, she answered him in this way, with the determination to never receive an embassy on his behalf ever again:

[41] Letter from Laureola to Leriano

The sorrow I feel for your ills would be enough to compensate for them if you were to believe how great it is, and you would take my sorrow as a just reward, though you would consider it a small payment according to what you think you deserve from me. And I would give it to you, as I should, if you wanted it from my wealth, and not from my honor.

I will not answer to all the things you say in your letter, because just thinking that I am writing to you, the blood runs from my heart, and reason from my judgment. None of the things you say makes me consent to your pain, except my virtue. Certainly I do not doubt your pain, because the difficulties you have been through are a testimony to what you have suffered. You say that you never did any service for
zerlo, no segund tu deseo, mas segund mi onestad. La virtud y piedad y compasión que pensaste que te ayudarían para conigo, aunque son aceptas a mi condición, para en tu caso son enemigas de mi fama, y por esto la hallaste contrarias. Cuando estaba presa salvaste mi vida y agora que estó libre quieres condenalla. Pues tanto me quieres, antes devrías querer tu pena con mi onra que tu remedio con mi culpa. No creas que tan sanamente biven las gentes, que, sabido que te hablé, juzgasen nuestras limpias intenciones, porque tenemos tiempo tan malo que antes se afea la bondad que se alaba la virtud; así que es escusada tu demanda. Porque ninguna esperança hallarás en ella, aunque la muerte que dizes te viese recebir, aviendo por mejor la crueldad onesta que la piedad culpada.

Dirás, oyendo tan desesperança que so movible, porque te comencé a hazer merced en escrevirte y agora determino de no remediarte. Bien sabes tú cuán sanamente lo hize, y puesto que en ello uviera otra cosa, tan convenible es la mudanza en las cosas dañosas como la firmeza en las onestas.

Mucho te ruego que te esfuerces como fuerte y te remedies como discreto. No pongas en peligro tu vida y en disputa mi onra, pues tanto la desees, que se dirá, muriendo tú, que galardono los servicios quitando las vidas; lo que, si al rey venço de días, se dirá al revés. Ternás en el reino toda la parte que quisieres, creceré tu onra, doblaré tu renta, sobiré tu estado, ninguna cosa ordenarás que revocada te sea; así que viviendo causarás que me juzguen agradecida y muriendo que me tengan por mal acondicionada. Aunque por otra cosa no te esforçases sino por el cuidado que tu pena me da, lo devrías hazer.

No quiero más dezirte porque no digas que me pides esperança y te do consejo. Pluguiera a Dios que fuera tu demanda justa, porque vieras que como te aconsejo en lo uno te satisfiziera en lo otro; y así acabo para siempre de más responderte ni oirte.
me: what you have done obliges me to never forget it, and to always desire to satisfy it, not according to your desire, but to my honesty. The virtue and the piety and the compassion that you thought would help you with me, even though they are natural to my sex, in your case are enemies of my name, and for this reason they are against you. When I was in prison you saved my life, and now that I am free, you want to condemn me. Since you love me that much, you should want your pain with my honor more than your remedy with my guilt. Do not believe that people live so straightforwardly that, if they knew I talked to you, they would judge our intentions pure, because we live in such an evil time that goodness is slandered before virtue is praised. And so, your demand is declined, for you will not find any hope in it, even if, as you say, you would die otherwise, since I consider an honest cruelty better than a condemned compassion.

Hearing such despair, you will say that I am fickle, because I rewarded you at first by writing to you and now I am determined not to remedy your pain. You know well how sincerely I did so, but seeing how you had other intentions, it is as sensible to change when things are harmful as it is to be firm when they are honest.

I insistently beg you to gird yourself with strength and remedy yourself with discretion. Do not endanger your life and do not call my honor into question, because, since you desire it so much, it will be said, if you die, that I reward service by taking people's lives. But, if I survive the king, the contrary will be said. You will have whatever you want from the kingdom. I will increase your honor, I will double your fortune, I will raise your status, and not a thing that you order will ever be revoked. Thus, by your life I will be judged as grateful, but by your death I will be taken as an ingrate. If you do not want to make an effort, just for the pain that this causes me, you should do it.

I do not want to say anything more so that you do not say that you ask me for hope but I give you counsel. I wish to God that your demand were just, so you could see how I advise you in one way while I satisfy you in the other. And so, I am finished with answering you and hearing from you ever again.
Cuando Laureola uvo escrito, díxome con propósito determinado que aquella fuese la postrimeva vez que pareciese en su presencia, porque ya de mis pláticas andava mucha sospecha y porque en mis idas avía más peligro para ella que esperança para mi despacho. Pues vista su determinada voluntad, pareciéndome que de mi trabajo sacava pena para mí y no remedio para Leriano, despedíme della con más lágrimas que palabras, y después de besalle las manos salíme de palacio con un nudo en la garganta, que pensé ahogarme por encobrir la pasión que sacava. Y salido de la cibdad, como me vi solo, tan fuertemente comencé a llorar que de dar bozes no me podía contener. Por cierto yo tuviera por mejor quedar muerto en Macedonia que venir bivo a Castilla, lo que deseava con razón, pues la mala ventura se acaba con la muerte y se acrecienta con la vida. Nunca por todo el camino sospiro y gemidos me fallecieron, y cuando llegué a Leriano díele la carta, y como acabó de leella díxele que ni se esforçase, ni se alegrase ni recibiese consuelo, pues tanta razón avía para que deviese morir; el cual me respondió que más que hasta allí me tenía por suyo, porque le aconsejava lo propio; y con boz y color mortal començó a condolerse.

Ni culpava su flaqueza ni avergonçava su desfallecimiento: todo lo que podíe acabar su vida alababa, mostrávase amigo de los dolores, recreava con los tormentos, amava las tristezas; aquéllos llamava sus bienes por ser mensajeros de Laureola; y por que fuesen tratados segund de cuya parte venían, aposentólos en el coração, festejólos con el sentimiento, combidólos con la memoria, rogávales que acabasen presto lo que venían a hazer, por que Laureola fuese servida. Y desconfiado ya de ningún bien ni esperança, aquexado de mortales males, no podiendo sustenerse ni sofrirse, uvo de venir a la cama, donde ni quiso comer ni bever ni ayudarse de cosa de las que sustentan la vida, llamándose siempre bienaventurado porque era venido a sazón de hazer servicio a Laureola quitándola de enojos.

Pues como por la corte y todo el reino se publicase que Leriano se dexava morir, ívanle a veer todos sus amigos y parientes, y para desviálle su propósito dezíanle todas las cosas en que pensavan provecho; y como aquella enfermedad se avía de curar con sabias razones, cada uno aguzava el seso lo mejor que podía. Y como un cavallero llamado Tefeo fuese amigo de Leriano, viendo que su mal era de enamorada pasión,
When Laureola finished writing, she told me with a firm intent that this should be the last time I appeared in her presence, because our conversations had caused great suspicion, and because in my comings and goings there was more danger for her than hope for my purpose. Thus, seeing her determined will, and thinking that my work was causing me pain rather than bringing remedy to Leriano, I said goodbye to her with more tears than words, and after kissing her hands, I left the palace with a lump in my throat. And I thought I would choke for hiding the sadness I felt. And when I left the city, seeing that I was alone, I started to cry so hard that I could not restrain myself from crying out loud. Surely, I thought it better to die in Macedonia than to return alive to Castile, which I rightly desired, knowing how ill fortunes end with death but grow with life. Throughout all the way back, my sighs and moans never ended, and when I arrived at Leriano’s, I gave him the letter. I told him not to encourage himself when he finished reading, nor to be happy, nor to take solace, because there were many reasons for him to die. He answered that he considered me one of his own loyal men, because I advised him in what was appropriate. And with a deathly color and voice, he began to bemoan his fate.

Neither did he blame his weakness nor was he ashamed of his failure: he praised anything that could end his life, he showed himself as a friend of his pains, he delighted himself with his torments, he loved his sadness; these, he called his goods for being Laureola’s messengers. And so, to treat them according to the one they came from, he housed them in his heart, celebrated them with his emotions, invited them with his memory, and begged them to quickly finish what they came to do, so that Laureola would be served. And distrusting any good or hope, afflicted by a deathly illness, being unable to stand or to suffer, he was forced to take to his bed, where he neither wanted to eat, nor to drink, nor to help himself with any of those things that sustain life. And he called himself blessed because the time had come to do service to Laureola by freeing her from troubles.

Since it came to be known throughout the court and the whole kingdom that Leriano was letting himself die, all of his friends and relatives went to see him. And to divert him from his purpose, they told him things that they thought could be helpful. Since his illness
puesto que quién la causava él ni nadie lo sabía, díxole infinitos males de las mugeres, y para favorecer su habla truxo todas las razones que en disfamia dellas pudo pensar, creyendo por allí restituille la vida. Lo cual oyendo Leriano, acordándose que era muger Laureola, afecó mucho a Tefeo porque en tal cosa hablava. Y puesto que su disposición no le consentiese mucho hablar, esforçando la lengua con la pasión de la saña, comenzó a contradezille en esta manera:

[43] Leriano contra Tefeo y todos los que dizien mal de mugeres

Tefeo, para que recibieras la pena que merece tu culpa, ombre que te tuviera menos amor te avíe de contradezir; que las razones mías más te serán en exemplo para que calles que castigo por que penes. En lo cual sigo la condición de verdadera amistad, porque pudiera ser, si yo no te mostrara por bivas causas tu cargo, que en cualquiera plaça te deslenguaras, como aquí has hecho; así que te será más provechoso emendar-te por mi contradición que avergonçarte por tu perseverança.

El fin de tu habla fue segund amigo, que bien noté que la dexiste porque aborreciese la que me tiene cual vees, diciendo mal de todas mugeres; y comoquiera que tu intención no fue por remedarme, por la vía que me causaste remedio tú por cierto me lo as dado, porque tanto me lastimaste con tus feas palabras, por ser mujer quien me pena, que de pasión de averte oído beviré menos de lo que creía; en lo cual señalado bien recebí, que pena tan lastimada mejor es acaballa presto que sostenella más. Assí que me truxiste alivio para el padecer y dulce descanso para ell acabar, porque las postrimeras palabras mías sean en alabança de las mugeres; porque crea mi fe la que tuvo merecer para causalla y no voluntad para satisfazella.

Y dando comienço a la intención tomada, quiero mostrar quinze causas por que yerran los que en esta nación ponen lengua, y veinte razones por que les somos los ombres obligados, y diversos enxemplos de su bondad.

Y cuanto a lo primero, que es proceder por las causas que hazen yerro los que mal las tratan, fundo la primera por tal razón: todas las cosas hechas por la mano de Dios son buenas necesariamente, que según
needed to be cured with wise words, each of them sharpened their ideas the best they could. Then, a knight called Tefeo, who was Leriano’s friend, seeing that his illness was due to passionate love, and seeing that nobody knew who had caused it, regaled him with infinite evil stories about women, recounting all the reasons to defame women that he could think of, thinking that, in that way, he could restore his life. When Leriano heard this, remembering that Laureola was a woman, he censured what Tefeo was saying. And because his disposition did not let him talk much, charging his tongue with the passion of his rage, he started to contradict his friend in this way:

[43] Leriano Against Tefeo and All Who Slander Women

Tefeo: For you to receive a fitting punishment for your offense, even a man who loves you less than I would have to challenge what you have said. May my words serve as an example to silence you, then, more than a sentence to chastise you. If I do show you the gravity of your error, following the conditions of true friendship, just imagine how you might foully unleash your tongue publicly, as you have here. It will benefit you far more to correct you myself than allow you to shame yourself by persevering.

I can see how you spoke to me as a friend, how you said such things because you abhor the woman who has pained me, and how you thus defamed all women. And even if your intention was not to remedy me, you certainly have: because I suffer for a woman’s sake, your foul words pained me so much that the distress they provoked has shortened my life even further, a welcome brevity considering how much better it is to end such agony quickly than continue sustaining it. You have also brought some relief to my suffering and sweet rest to the end of my days by allowing my last words to be in praise of women. She who was worthy of inspiring my love, but not willing to accept it, will have proof of my devotion.

Returning to my intention, then, I want to show you fifteen reasons why slanderers against women are wrong, twenty reasons why men are the ones obliged to women, and various proofs of women’s goodness.

Beginning with the first of these goals, to proceed through the errors of the slanderers, I will lay down the first reason: all things made by the hand of God are fundamentally good, as creations follow in the
el obrador han de ser las obras; pues siendo las mugeres sus criaturas, no solamente a ellas ofende quien las afea, mas blasfema de las obras del mismo Dios.

La segunda causa es porque delante del y de los ombres no ay pecado más abominable ni más grave de perdonar quel desconocimiento. ¿Pues cuál lo puede ser mayor que desconocer el bien que por Nuestra Señora nos vino y nos viene? Ella nos libró de pena y nos hizo merecer la gloria, ella nos salva, ella nos sostiene, ella nos defiende, ella nos guía, ella nos alumbra; por ella, que fue mujer, merecen todas las otras corona de alabança.

La tercera es porque a todo ombre es defendido, segund virtud, mostrarse fuerte contra lo flaco, que si ventura los que con ellas se deslenguuan pensasen recibir contradición de manos, podría ser que tuviesen menos libertad en la lengua.

La cuarta es porque no puede ninguno dezir mal dellas sin que a sí mismo se desonre, porque fue criado y traído en entrañas de mujer y es de su misma sustancia, y después desto por el acatamiento y reverencia que a las madres deven los hijos.

La quinta es por la desobediencia de Dios, que dixo por su boca que el padre y la madre fuesen onrados y acatados, de cuya causa los que en las otras tocan merecen pena.

La sesta es porque todo noble es obligado a ocuparse en autos virtuosos, así en los hechos como en las hablas, pues si las palabras torpes ensucian la limpieza, muy a peligro de infamia tienen la onra de los que en tales pláticas gastan su vida.

La séptima es porque cuando se estableció la caballería, entre las otras cosas que era tenudo a guardar el que se armava cavallero era una que a las mugeres guardase toda reverencia y onestad, por donde se nosce que quiebra la ley de nobleza quien usa el contrario della.

La oitava es por quitar de peligro la onra: los antiguos nobles tanto adelgazavan las cosas de bondad y en tanto la tenían que no avían mayor miedo de cosa que de memoria culpada; lo que no me parece que guardan los que anteponen la fealdad a la virtud, poniendo mácula con su lengua en su fama, que cualquiera se juzga lo que es en lo que habla.

La novena y muy principal es por la condenación del alma: todas las cosas tomadas se pueden satisfacer, y la fama robada tiene dudosa la satisfacción, lo que más complidamente determina nuestra fe.
light of their creator. Since women are His creatures, those who defile them not only offend women themselves but also blaspheme the very work of God.

The second is that, before Him and all men, there is no sin more detestable or grave than ingratitude. What could be worse than failing to recognize the good of Our Lady, who came to our aid first and continues to do so? She freed us from sin and made us worthy of glory. She saves us; she sustains us; she defends us; she guides us; she illuminates us. Through her, a woman, all other women deserve a crown of praise.

The third is that all men, according to virtue, are prohibited from using their strength against the weak. If, by chance, those who slander women think that they could meet such opposition by force, then the liberty of their tongues should be restricted.

The fourth is that no one can speak foully of women without dishonoring themselves. All have been raised and brought into the world by women, all are composed of the same substance as women, and all, even beyond these reasons, must show the obedience and reverence that sons owe their mothers.

The fifth is that slander disobeys God. Through His own mouth, He declared that mothers and fathers should be honored and respected, and, therefore, anyone who abuses the former deserves punishment.

The sixth is that all nobles must occupy themselves in virtuous work, as much in actions as in words. Foul speech spoils one’s purity, and those who waste away their lives in such talk live in great danger of damaging their honor.

The seventh is that, when chivalry was established, reverence and honesty toward women were set forth as two of the tenets to uphold and guard. Whoever goes against these laws of nobility breaks them.

The eighth is to keep one’s honor out of danger: the ancient nobles placed such a high value on goodness and held it in such great esteem that they feared nothing more than a damaged reputation. It seems to me that memory is not honored by those who put ugliness before virtue, staining their reputations with their tongues, thereby allowing anyone to judge them by their words.

The ninth and very principal reason is that slander condemns the soul: all things taken can be regained, but a lost reputation has a rather complicated solution, which more completely affects our faith.
La dezena es por escusar enemistad: los que en ofensa de las mugeres despienden el tiempo, házense enemigos dellas y no menos de los virtuosos, que como la virtud y la desmesura diferencian en propiedad, no pueden estar sin enemiga.

La onzena es por los daños que de tal auto malicioso se recrecía, que, como las palabras tienen licencia de llegar a los oídos rudos tan bien como a los discretos, oyendo los que poco alcanzan las fealdades dichas de las mugeres, arrepentidos de averse casado, danles mala vida o vanse dellas, o por ventana las matan.

La dozena es por las murmuraciones que mucho se deven temer, siendo un ombre infamado por disfamador en las plaças y en las casas y en los campos y dondequiera es retratado su vicio.

La trezena es por razón del peligro, que cuando los maldicientes que son ávidos por tales tan odiosos son a todos que cualquier les es más contrario, y algunos por satisfacer a sus amigas, puesto que ellas no lo pidan ni lo querían, ponen las manos en los que en todas ponen la lengua.

La catorzena es por la hermosura que tienen, la cual es de tanta ecelencia que, aunque copiesen en ellas todas las cosas que los deslenguados les ponen, más ay en una que loar con verdad que no en todas que afear con malicia.

La quinzena es por las grandes cosas de que han sido causa: dellas nacieron ombres virtuosos que hizieron hazañas de dina alabança; dellas procedieron sabios que alcançaron a conocer qué cosa era Dios, en cuya fe somos salvos; dellas vinieron los inventivos que hizieron cibdades y fuerças y edificios de perpetual ecelencia; por ellas uvo tan sotiles varones que buscaron todas las cosas necesarias para sustentación del linage umanal.

[44] Da Leriano veinte razones por que los ombres son obligados a las mugeres

Teofo, pues as oído las causas por que sois culpados tú y todos los que opinión tan errada seguís, dexada toda prolixidad, oye veinte razones por donde me proferí a probar que los ombres a las mugeres somos obligados. De las cuales la primera es porque a los simples y rudos disponen para alcanzar la virtud de la prudencia, y no solamente a los torpes hazen discretos, mas a los mismos discretos más sotiles, porque si de
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The tenth is to avoid feuds: those who offend women waste their
time and make enemies with them, and with the most virtuous men
not the least, since virtue and excess are such opposing forces that they
can only create enmity.

The eleventh is the harm that springs from that malicious act.
Words have a license to spread to crude ears as much as discreet ones,
and some might hear the slanderers’ ugly cries against women and re-
gret their marriages, leading them to make their wives miserable or
leave them, or perhaps even kill them.

The twelfth reason is that it creates rumors that a man should fear,
because slanderous rumors can turn you into a slandered man among the
plazas and houses and fields, and wherever such vice might be depicted.

The thirteenth is that it provokes danger. Slanderers are so greedy
for hateful things that everyone opposes them, and some will do any-
thing to defend their female friends, though they neither ask for it nor
desire it, by using their hands to injure those who cause injuries with
their tongues.

The fourteenth is the beauty of women. Even with the paint of
every evil rumor, their perfection is so exquisite that there is more in
truth to praise in one single woman than there is to criticize malicious-
ly in them all.

The fifteenth reason is that they have been the root of many great
deeds: they have brought forth men who performed feats of high
praise; they have engendered sages who discovered the nature of God,
in whose faith we are saved; they have delivered inventors who built
cities and fortresses and buildings of perpetual excellence. Because of
them, there have been clever men who sought out the necessary things
to maintain the very human race itself.

[44] Leriano Gives Twenty Reasons Explaining Why Men Are Indebt-
ed to Women

Tefeo, since you have heard the reasons for which you and all those
who follow your erroneous opinions are to blame, leaving behind any
unnecessary talk, now hear twenty reasons through which I will prove
that men are obliged to women. The first is that women lead the simple
and the crude to reach the virtue of prudence—and not only by mak-
ing the clumsy discreet, but also those who are discreet even subtler.
la enamorada pasión se cativan, tanto estudian su libertad, que avivan-
do con el dolor el saber, dizen razones tan dulces y tan conciertadas que alguna vez de compasión que las an se libran della; y los simples, de su natural inocentes, cuando en amar se ponen entran con rudeza y hallan el estudio del sentimiento tan agudo que diversas vezes salen sabios, de manera que suplen las mugeres lo que naturaleza en ellos faltó.

La segunda razón es porque de la virtud de la justicia tan bien nos hazen sufrientes que los penados de amor, aunque desigual tormento reciben, hanlo por descanso, justificándose porque justamente padecen. Y no por sola esta causa nos hazen gozar desta virtud, mas por otra tan natural: los firmes enamorados, para abonarse con las que sirven, buscan todas las formas que pueden, de cuyo deseo bien justificadamente sin eceder en cosa de toda igualdad por no infamarse de buenas costumbres.

La tercera, porque de la temperanza nos hazen dignos, que por no selles aborrecibles, para venir a ser desamados, somos templados en el comer y en el bever y en todas las otras cosas que andan con esa virtud. Somos templados en la habla, somos templados en la mesura, somos templados en las obras, sin que un punto salgamos de la onestad.

La cuarta es porque al que fallece fortaleza ge la dan, y al que la tiene ge la acrecientan: házennos fuertes para sofrir, causan osadía para comer, ponen corazón para esperar. Cuando a los amantes se les ofrece peligro se les apareja la gloria, tiene las afrentas por vicio, estiman más ell alabanza del amigo quel precio del largo bevir. Por ellas se comiençan y acaban hechos muy hazañosos; ponen la fortaleza en el estado que merece. Si les somos obligados, aquí se puede juzgar.

La quinta razón es porque no menos nos dotan de las virtudes te-
ologales que de las cardinales dichas. Y tratando de la primera, ques la fe. Aunque algunos en ella dudasen, siendo puestos en pensamiento enamorado creerían en Dios y alabarían su poder, porque pudo hazer a aquella que de tanta eccelecia y hermosura les parece. Junto con esto los amadores tanto acostumbran y sostienen la fe, que de usalla en el corazón conocen y creen con más firmeza la de Dios; y porque no sea sabido de quien los pena que son malos cristianos, ques una mala señal en el ombre, son tan devotos católicos, que ningún apóstol les hizo ventaje.

La sesta razón es porque nos crián en el alma la virtud del esperança, que puesto que los sugestos a esta ley de amores mucho penen, siempre esperen: esperan en su fe, esperan en su firmeza, esperan en la piedad de
This is because, if they are captivated by a passionate love, they look for their liberty so much, sharpening their knowledge through pain, that they give reasons so sweet and so ordered that, sometimes, due to the compassion they feel for women they free themselves from it. And the simpletons, in their natural innocence, may begin with such crudity when they fall in love but find the study of feelings so pointed that they often end as wise men. In this way, they are supplied by women what they lack in nature.

The second reason is that, due to the virtue of justice, they make us such great sufferers that those agonizing in the pain of love, although they receive unequal torments, take such pain as a relief, justifying themselves because they suffer justly. And it is not only for this reason that they make us enjoy this virtue, but for also another just as natural: constant lovers, in order to gain favor with the women they serve, look for every possible way they can do so, living evenly by this desire without exceeding it in anything so that they do not defame themselves from good habits.

The third, that they make us worthy of temperance, since to avoid being despicable to them, and so not be loved by them, we are tempered in eating and in drinking and in all other things that conform to this virtue. We are tempered in speech, we are tempered in courtesy, we are tempered in works, not in any point straying from honesty.

The fourth is that they give strength to those who lack it and increase it for those who have it: they make us strong enough to suffer, lend us boldness to act, give us heart to hope. When lovers confront danger, they prepare themselves for glory, they hold affronts to be vices, and they esteem the praise of a female friend more than the price of a long life. Through them are begun and finished many daring deeds; women put strength where it belongs.

The fifth is that they give us theological virtues no less than the cardinal ones already stated. And, considering the first, which is faith, even though some doubt it, when thinking enamored thoughts, they would believe in God and praise His power, because He was able to create the one they see endowed with great excellence and beauty. Together with this, lovers become so accustomed to and supportive of faith, that keeping it in their hearts they know and believe more firmly in the heart of God. And so that they are not slandered by those who make them suffer
quien los pena, esperan en la condición de quien los destruye, esperan en la ventura. Pues quien tiene esperanza donde recibe pasión. ¿Cómo no la terná en Dios, que le promete descanso? Sin duda haziéndonos mal nos aparejan el camino del bien, como por experiencia de lo dicho parece.

La setena razón es porque nos hacen merecer la caridad, la propiedad de la cual es amor: ésta traeamos en la memoria, ésta firmamos en el corazón y comoquiera que los que amamos la usemos por el provecho de nuestro fin, d él nos redunda que con biva contrición la tengamos para con Dios, porque trayéndonos amor a estrecho de muerte, haziéndonos limosnas, mandamos dezir misas, ocupám osnos en caritativas obras porque nos libre de nuestros cruels pensamientos; y como ellas de su natural devotas, participando con ellas es forçado que hagamos las obras que hazen.

La otava razón, porque nos hacen contemplativos, que tanto nos damos a la contemplación de la hermosura y gracias de quien amamos y tanto pensamos en nuestras pasiones, que cuando queremos contemplar la de Dios, tan tiernos y quebrantados tenemos los corazones que sus llagas y tormentos parece que recibimos en nosotros mismos, por donde se conoce que también por aquí nos ayudan para alcanzar la perdurable holgança.

La novena razón es porque nos hacen contritos, que como siendo penados pedimos con lágrimas y sospiros nuestro remedio acostumbrado en aquello, yendo a confesar nuestras culpas, así gemimos y lloramos que el perdón delas merecemos.

La dezena es por el buen consejo que siempre nos dan, que a las veces acaece hallar en su presto acordar lo que nosotros con largo estudio y diligencias buscamos. Son sus consejos pacíficos si ningund escándalo: quitan muchas muertes, conservan las pazes, refrenan la ira y aplacan la saña. Siempre es muy sano su parecer.

La onzena es porque nos hacen onrados: con ellas se alcanzan grandes casamientos con muchas haziendas y rentas. Y porque alguno podría responderme que la onra está en la virtud y no en la riqueza, digo que tan bien causan lo uno como lo otro. Pónennos presunciones tan virtuosas que sacamos delas las grandes onras y alabanças que deseamos; por ellas estimamos más la vergüenza que la vida; por ellas estudiamos todas las obras de nobleza; por ellas las ponemos en la cumbre que merecen.
as bad Christians, an ill sign for mankind, they are such devoted Catholics that no apostle ever had any advantage over them.

The sixth reason is that they raise the virtue of hope in the soul because, even though those who are subjected to the law of love suffer much, they always hope: they hope in their faith, they hope in their constancy, they hope in the mercy of those who make them suffer, they hope in the condition of those who destroy them, they hope in fortune. Having hope where they receive passion, how could they not have it in God, who permits them rest? Without a doubt, by doing us ill, women prepare us for the path of good, as through the experience of what was said is shown.

The seventh reason is that they make us deserving of charity, whose feature is love: this we have in the will, this we put in the mind, this we bring in the memory, this we sign in the heart. And, however those we love use it for the benefit of our own end, it redounds to us with lively contrition for God. With love bringing us to the straits of death, we give alms, we order to give Mass, we occupy ourselves in charitable works because it frees us from our cruel thoughts; and, as women are devoted by nature, being involved with them forces one to do the works that they do.

The eighth reason, because they make us contemplative, for that much we take to the contemplation of the beauty and grace of whom we love so much, and we think about our passions so much, that when we want to contemplate the beauty of God our hearts are so broken and tender that it seems we receive His wounds and torment in ourselves, which one knows must aid us in reaching everlasting peace.

The ninth reason is that they make us remorseful, that as we are suffering we ask with tears for our remedy. Used to this, when we go and confess our sins in the church, we moan and weep in such a way that we deserve their pardon.

The tenth is for the good counsel they always give us, for they easily discover with their quick minds what we seek in long study and diligence. Their advice is harmonious without scandal: they avoid many deaths, they conserve peace, they refrain from ire and they calm rage. Their countenance is always highly moral.

The eleventh reason is because they make us honorable men: with them, we reach great marriages with many estates and incomes. And because some could reply that honor lies in virtue and not in riches, I
La dozena razón es porque apartándonos del avaricia nos juntan con la libertad, de cuya obra ganamos las voluntades de todos; que como largamente nos hazen despender lo que tenemos, somos alabados y tenidos en mucho amor, y en cualquier necesidad que nos sobrevenga recibimos ayuda y servicio; y no sólo nos aprovechan en hazernos usar la franqueza como debemos, mas ponen lo nuestro en mucho recaudo, porque no ay lugar donde la hazienda esté más segura que en la voluntad de las gentes.

La trezena es porque acrecientan y guardan nuestros averes y rentas, las cuales alcanzan los ombres por ventura y consérvanlas ellas con diligencia.

La catorzena es por la limpieza que nos procuran, así en la persona como en el vestir, como en el comer, como en todas las cosas que tratamos.

La quinzena es por la buena crianza que nos ponen, una de las principales cosas de que los ombres tienen necesidad. Siendo bien criados usamos la cortesía y esquivamos la pesadumbre, sabemos onrar los pequeños, sabemos tratar los mayores; y no solamente nos hazen bien criados, mas bienquistos, porque como tratamos a cada uno como merece, cada uno nos da lo que merecemos.

La razón deziséis es porque nos hazen ser galanes: por ellas nos desvelamos en el vestir, por ellas estudiamos en el traer, por ellas nos ataviamos de manera que ponemos por industria en nuestras personas la buena disposición que naturaleza a algunos negó. Por artificio se en-dereçan los cuerpos, poniendo las ropas con agudeza, y por el mismo se pone cabello donde fallece, y se adelgazan o engordan las piernas si conviene hazello; por las mugeres se inventan los galanes entretales, las discretas bordaduras, las nuevas invenciones; de grandes bienes por cierto son causa.

La dezisiete razón es porque nos conciertan la música y nos hazen gozar de las dulcedumbres della. ¿Por quién se asueñan las dulces canciones? ¿Por quién se cantan los lindos romances? ¿Por quién se acuerdan las bozes? ¿Por quién se adelgazan y sotilizan todas las cosas que en el canto consisten?

La dizeochena es porque crecen las fuerças a los braceros y la maña a los luchadores, y la ligereza a los que voltean y corren y saltan y hazen otras cosas semejantes.
say that they are so good that they cause the one as much as the other. In us they place convictions so virtuous that we gain the great honors and praise we desire; by them we esteem modesty more than life; by them we study all the works of nobility; by them we set them on the pedestal they deserve.

The twelfth reason is that they part us from avarice by joining us with generosity, in whose work we gain the will for all. Because they make us spend in abundance what we have, we are praised and held in much love, and in whatever necessity might come unexpectedly we receive help and service; and not only do they take advantage in making us use our frankness as we should but also put our own honesty in safekeeping, because there is no place where fortune is more secure than in the will of the people.

The thirteenth is because they grow and guard our goods and incomes, which men win with luck and they conserve with diligence.

The fourteenth is that they make us keep clean, as much in our persons as in our clothing, as in our eating, as in all the things that we do.

The fifteenth is for the good upbringing they provide in us, one of the principal things that men need. Being well raised, we use courtesy and avoid any lack in social grace, we know how to honor the young, we know how to treat the old. And, not only do they make us well mannered but also well liked, because, by treating each one as they deserve, everyone gives us what we deserve.

The sixteenth reason is that they make us gallant: for them we take care in how we dress, for them we study comportment, for them we adorn ourselves in such a way that we industriously fashion the good disposition that nature denied to some of us. Through artifice, men strengthen their bodies, they dress more sharply, and, for the same purpose, they place more hair where it is lacking and thin or fatten their legs if they find it more attractive. For gallants, women invent laboriously visible stitching, discreet embroidery, new witticisms. To be sure, they cause great good.

The seventeenth reason is that they inspire us to compose music and make us enjoy the sweetness of it. For whom are their sweet songs sung? For whom do they sing lovely ballads? For whom do they make their voices audible? For whom do they refine and perfect all things of which their song consists?
La dezinueve razón es porque afinan las gracias: los que, como es dicho, tañen y cantan, por ellas se desvelan tanto que suben a lo más perfecto que en aquella gracia se alcanza; los trovadores ponen por ellas tanto estudio en lo que troban que lo bien dicho hazen parecer mejor, y en tanta manera se adelgazan que propiamente lo que sienten en el corazón ponen por nuevo y galán estilo en la canción o invención o copla que quieren hazer.

La veintena y postrimera razón es porque somos hijos de mugeres, de cuyo respeto les somos más obligados que por ninguna razón de las dichas ni de cuantas se puedan dezor.

Diversas razones avía para mostrar lo mucho que a esta nación somos los ombres en cargo, pero la disposición mía no me da lugar a que todas las diga. Por ellas se ordenaron las reales justas y los pomposos torneos y las alegres fiestas; por ellas aprovechan las gracias y se acaban y comienzan todas las cosas de gentileza. No sé causa por qué de nosotros devan ser afeadas. ¡O culpa merecedora de grave castigo, que, porque algunas ayan piedad de los que por ellas penan, les dan tal galardón! ¿A qué muger deste mundo no harán compasión las lágrimas que vertemos, las lástimas que dezimos, los ospiros que damos? ¿Cuál no creerá las razones juradas? ¿Cuál no creerá la fe certificada? ¿A cuál no moverán las dádivas grandes? ¿En cuál voluntad no hará mudança la firmeza cierta? ¿Cuál se podrá defender del continuo seguir? Por cierto, segund las armas con que son combatidas, aunque las menos se defendiesen, no era cosa de maravillar, y antes devrían ser las que no pueden defenderse alabadas por piadosas que retraídas por culpadas.

[45] Prueba por enxemplos la bondad de las mugeres

Para que las loadas virtudes desta nación fueran tratadas segund merecen avíese de poner mi deseo en otra plática, porque no turbase mi lengua ruda su bondad clara, comoquiera que ni loor pueda crecella ni malicia apocalla, segund su propiedad. Si uviese de hazer memoria de las castas y vírgines pasadas y presentes, convenía que fuese por divina
The eighteenth reason is that women inspire strength in lancers and skill in fighters, and litheness in those who are bold and run and jump and leap and do other such things.\textsuperscript{30}

The nineteenth reason is that they refine our talents: those who, as is said, play instruments and sing work so hard for women that they rise to the highest perfection that can be reached in such a skill. The troubadours study singing so much for them that they make what is already well said even more so, and so much do they refine what they feel in the heart that they put new and gallant styles in the song or witticism or couplet that they wish to create.

The twentieth and last reason is because we are the sons of women, in which respect we are more obliged to them than any of the reasons said before or however many could be said.

There were many reasons to show how much men are obliged to women, but my condition does not give me time to say them all. By them are the royal jousts and grand tournaments and joyous festivals arranged; by them are the graces made advantageous and all things of gentility finished and begun. I do not know any reason why they should be slandered by us. Oh guilt deserving of a grave punishment! Because one woman may show mercy to a sufferer, should all women receive such a reward?\textsuperscript{31} What woman of this world will not be moved by the tears we spill, the sorrows we speak, the sighs we give? Which of them will not believe the oaths we swear? Which will not believe certified faith? Which will not be moved by great gifts? In which heart will deserved praise not bear fruit? In which heart will not change-ability become certain firmness? Who will be able to refrain from this continual service? Certainly, according to the arms with which they are fought, even though the minority of them defend themselves, it is not a marvel, and those who cannot defend themselves should be praised as merciful rather than be seen as guilty.

[45] Proof of the Goodness of Women

In order for the celebrated virtues of this genus to be treated as they deserve, I must turn my passion to another subject so that my tongue does not sully women’s clear virtue, even though praise could not make it greater nor malice make it smaller due to its nature. If one had to recall all of the chaste women and virgins of the past and present, it
revelación, porque son y an sido tantas que no se pueden con el seso humano comprender; pero diré de algunas que he leído, así cristianas como gentiles y judías, por enxemplar con las poca la virtud de las muchas. En las autorizadas por santas por tres razones no quiero hablar. La primera, porque lo que a todos es manifiesto parece simpleza repetillo. La segunda, porque la Iglesia les da devida y universal alabança. La tercera, por no poner en tan malas palabras tan ecelente bondad, en especial la de Nuestra Señora, que cuantos doctores y devotos y contemplativos en ella hablaron no pudieron llegar al estado que merecía la menor de sus ecelencias; así que me baxo a lo llano donde más libremente me puedo mover.

De las castas gentiles comenzaré en Lucrecia, corona de la nación romana, la cual fue muger de Colatino, y siendo forçada de Tarquino hizo llamar a su marido, y venido donde ella estava, díxole: "Sabrás, Colatino, que pisadas de ombre ageno ensuziaron tu lecho, donde, aunque el cuerpo fue forçado, quedó el corazón inocente, porque soy libre de la culpa; mas no me asuelvo de la pena, porque ninguna dueña por enxemplo mío pueda ser vista errada." Y acabando estas palabras acabó con un cuchillo en su vida. Porcia fue hija del noble Catón y muger de Bruto, varón virtuoso, la cual sabiendo la muerte dél, aquexada de grave dolor, acabó sus días comiendo brasas por hazer sacrificio de sí misma. Penélope fue muger de Ulixes, e ido él a la guerra troyana, siendo los mancebos de Itaca aquexados de su hermosura, pidiéronla muchos dellos en casamiento; y deseosa de guardar castidad a su marido, para defenderse dellos dijo que le dexassen cumplir una tela, como acostumbravan las señor as de aquel tiempo esperando a sus maridos, y que luego haría lo que le pedían; y como le fuese otorgado, con astucia sotil lo que texía de día deshazía de noche, en cuya labor pasaron veinte años, después de los cuales venido Ulixes, viejo, solo, destruido, así lo recibió las casta dueña como si viniera en fortuna de prosperidad. Julia, hija del César, primero emperador en el mundo, siendo muger de Pompeo, en tanta manera lo amaba que trayendo un día sus vestiduras sangrientas, creyendo ser muerto, caída en tierra súbitamente murió. Artemisa, entre los mortales tan alabada, como fuese casada con Mausol, rey de Icaria, con tanta firmeza lo amó que después de muerto le dio sepoltura en sus pechos, quemando sus huesos en ellos, la ceniza de los cuales poco a poco se bevió, y después de acabados los oficios que en el auto se requerían, creyendo que se iva para él matóse con sus manos.
would be suitable if it were done with divine revelation, because there are and have been so many that the human brain cannot comprehend it all. But, I will speak of some that I have read about, Christians as well as gentiles and Jews, to exemplify the virtue of the many with the few. Of those women canonized as saints I do not want to speak for three reasons. The first, because what is known by all seems crude to repeat. The second, because the Church gives them rightful and universal praise. The third, so as not to put into poor words such excellent virtue, particularly that of Our Lady, because the many sages, devotees, and mystics who speak of her have never reached the rightful status of even the least of her excellencies. So, I lower myself to where I can maneuver more freely.

Among the chaste gentiles I will begin with Lucretia, crown of the Roman people, who was the wife of Collatinus. She, after being ravished by Tarquinius, calling to her husband, him coming to her, said: “You must know, Collatinus, that the footsteps of another man have tarnished your bed, where, even though my body was ravished, my heart was left innocent, because I am free from guilt; but I do not absolve myself from punishment, because no lady should be seen erring by my example.” And, finishing these words, she finished her life with a knife. Portia was daughter of the noble Cato and wife of Brutus, a virtuous man. Learning of her husband’s death, afflicted with grave pain, she finished her days by eating hot coals to make a sacrifice of herself. Penelope was the wife of Ulysses. With him gone to the Trojan war, the young men of Ithaca, beset by her beauty, requested her hand in marriage. Desirous of guarding her chastity for her husband, defending herself from them, she said she must complete a shroud, as was the custom among the women of the time who were awaiting their husbands, and then she would do what they asked of her: and as this deal was set, with subtle astuteness, whatever she weaved by day she undid by night, a labor in which she spent twenty years, after which Ulysses returned, old, alone, destroyed, received by the chaste lady as if coming into the prosperity of fortune. Julia, daughter of Caesar, first emperor of the world, and wife of Pompey, loved her husband so much that seeing his bloodied clothing and believing him dead, she fell at once to the ground and died. Artemisia, among mortals so praised, married to Mausolus, King of Caria, loved him so fiercely that she gave him a funeral upon her breast when he died, burning his bones there, drink-
Argia fue hija del rey Adrastro y casó con Pollinices, hijo de Edipo, rey de Tebas; y como Pollinices en una batalla a manos de su hermano muriese, sabido della, salió de Tebas sin temer la impiedad de sus enemigos ni la bravura de las fieras bestias ni la ley del emperador, la cual vedaba que ningún cuerpo muerto se levantase del campo; fue por su marido en las tiniebras de la noche, y hallándolo ya entre otros muchos cuerpos levólo a la cibdad, y haziéndole quemar, segund su costumbre, con amargosas lágrimas hizo poner sus cenizas en un arca de oro, prometiendo su vida a perpetua castidad. Ipo la greca, navegando por la mar, quiso su mala fortuna que tomasen su navío los enemigos, los cuales, queriendo tomar della más parte que les dava, conservando su castidad hízose a la una parte del navío, y dexada caer en las ondas pudieron ahogar a ella, mas no la fama de su hazaña loable. No menos dina de loor fué su muger de Admeto, rey de Tesalia, que sabiendo que era profetizado por el dios Apolo que su marido recibiría muerte si no uviese quien voluntariamente la tomase por él, con alegre voluntad, porque el rey biviese, dispuso de se matar.

De las judías, Sarra, muger del padre Abraham, como fuese presa en poder del rey Faraón, defendiendo su castidad con las armas de la oración, rogó a Nuestro Señor la librase de sus manos; el cual, como quisiese acometer con ella toda maldad, oída en el cielo su petición enfermó el rey; y conocido que por su mal pensamiento adolecía, sin ninguna manzilla la mandó librar. Débora, dotada de tantas virtudes, mereció aver espíritu de profecía y no solamente mostró su bondad en las artes mugeriles, mas en las feroces batallas, peleando contra los enemigos con virtuoso ánimo; y tanta fue su excelencia que juzgó cuarenta años el pueblo judaico. Ester, siendo levada a la catividad de Babilonia, por su virtuosa hermosura fue tomada para mujer de Asuero, rey que señoraba a la sazón ciento y veinte y siete provincias; la cual por sus méritos y oración libró los judíos de la catividad que tenían. Su madre de Sansón, deseando aver hijo, mereció por su virtud que el ángel le revelase su nacimiento de Sansón. Elisabel, muger de Zacarías, como fuese verdadera sierva de Dios, por su merecimiento uvo hijo santificado antes que naciese, el cual fue san Juan.

De las antiguas cristianas más podría traer que escrevir; pero por la brevedad alegaré algunas modernas de la castellana nación. Doña María Cornel, en quien se comenzó el linaje de los Corneles, porque
ing the ashes little by little, and then, once the necessary rites were finished, killing herself with her own hands in the belief that she would go to him. Argia was daughter of the King Adrastus and married to Polynices, son of Oedipus, the King of Thebes. When Polynices died in battle at the hands of his brother, his wife, learning of this, left Thebes without fearing the impiety of his enemies or the ferocity of the wild beasts or the law of the emperor, which prohibited the removal of any dead bodies from the field. She went for her husband in the darkness of the night and, finding him at last among the many bodies, carried him to the city and burned his body, according to custom, put his ashes into an ark of gold with bitter tears, promising her life to perpetual chastity. Ipo the Greek, while navigating upon the sea, was beset by misfortune and her ship was overtaken by enemies. Seeing how they wanted to seize more than what she would give, conserving her chastity, she went to one side of the vessel and let herself fall into the waves that drowned her but not the honor of her celebrated deed. No less worthy of praise was the wife of Admetus, King of Thessaly, who, knowing that it was prophesied by the god Apollo that her husband would be killed if no one would willingly take their own life in his stead, killed herself with a happy heart so that the king would live.

Among the Jewish women, Sarah, wife of father Abraham, was a prisoner in the power of King Pharaoh. Defending her chastity with the arms of prayer, she begged Our Lord to free her from his hands; and, as this man wished to commit all evil with her, her request was heard by the heavens above, striking him ill. Knowing that he suffered for his evil thoughts, without causing her any shame, Pharaoh ordered for her to be set free. Deborah, blessed with so many virtues, deserved to have a prophetic spirit and not only showed her goodness in the womanly arts but also in ferocious battles, fighting against enemies with a masterful spirit. So great was her excellence that she presided over the Jewish people for forty years. Esther, being carried in captivity to Babylon, was taken for her virtuous beauty as the wife of Ahasuerus, a king that reigned over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces; and Esther, by her merits and prayers, freed the Jews from their captivity. The mother of Samson, wishing to have a son, was so deserving because of her virtue that an angel brought forth the birth of Samson. Elizabeth, wife of Zacharias, being as she was a true servant of God, by her
su castidad fuese loada y su bondad no escurecida, quiso matarse con fuego, aviendo menos miedo a la muerte que a la culpa. Doña Isabel, madre que fue del maestre de Calatrava don Rodrigo Téllez Girón y de los dos condes de Hurueña, don Alonso y don Juan, siendo biuda enfermó de una grave dolencia, y como los médicos procurasen su salud, conocida su enfermedad hallaron que no podría bivir si no casase; lo cual, como de sus hijos fuese sabido, deseosos de su vida, dixéronle que en todo caso recibiese marido, a lo cual ella respondió. “Nunca ple- ga a Dios que tal cosa yo haga, que mejor me es a mí muriendo ser dicha madre de tales hijos que biviendo muger de otro marido.” Y con esta casta consideración assí se dio al ayuno y disciplina que cuando murió fueron vistos misterios de su salvación.

Doña Mari Garci la Beata, siendo nacida en Toledo del mayor lin- age de toda la cibdad, no quiso en su vida casar, guardando en ochenta años que bivió la virginal virtud, en cuya muerte fueron conocidos y averiguados grandes milagros, de los cuales en Toledo ay agora y avrá para siempre perpetua recordança.

O, ¡pues de las vírgenes gentiles qué podría dezir! Eritrea, sevila nacida en Babilonia, por su mérito profetizó por revelación divina much as cosas advenideras, conservando limpia virginidad hasta que mu- rió. Palas o Minerva, vista primeramente cerca de la laguna de Tritonio, nueva inventora de muchos oficios de los mugeriles y aun de algunos de los ombres, virgen vivió y acabó. Atalante, la que primero hirió el puerco de Calidón, en la virginidad y la nobleza le pareció. Camila, hija de Metabo, rey de los bolsques, no menos que las dichas sostuvo entera virginidad. Claudia vestal, Clodia romana, aquella misma ley hasta la muerte guardaron. Por cierto, si el alargar no fuese enojoso, no me fall- ecerían d’aquí a mill años virtuosos enxemplos que pudiese dezir.

En verdad, Tefeo, segund lo que as oído, tú y los que blasfemáis de todo linage de mugeres sois dinos de castigo justo; el cual no esperando que nadie os lo dé, vosotros mismos lo tomáis, pues usando la malicia condenáis la vergüença.
merit had a son who was sanctified before he was born, who was Saint John himself.

Of the old Christians I could call more to mind than I could write; but, for brevity, I will put forward a few modern ladies of the Castilian people. Doña María Cornel, foundress of the line of the Corneles, who wanted her chastity praised and her virtue known, chose to kill herself by fire, fearing death less than sin.32 Doña Isabel, who was the mother of the Grand Master of Calatrava don Rodrigo Téllez Girón and of the two Counts of Hurueña, don Alonso and don Juan, became sick with a dire pain when she was widowed.33 When the doctors could not save her, knowing her malady, they found that she could not live without marrying; once this was known among her children, desirous of her life, they told her to take a husband in any case, to which she responded: “God forbid that I do such a thing, because it is better for me to be called the mother of such children in death than the wife of another husband in life.” And with this chaste consideration, she gave herself over to such fasting and discipline that mysteries were seen in her salvation when she died.

Doña María García la Beata, born in Toledo to the greatest lineage of all the city, did not want to marry at all in life, and so guarded her virginal virtue for the eighty years that she lived, that great miracles were known and discovered in her death, which are now and forever will be of perpetual remembrance in Toledo.34

Oh, what could I say of the virgin gentiles! Eritrea, Sybil born in Babylon, by her merit prophesied in divine revelation many things to come, preserving a virginal cleanliness until she died. Pallas or Minerva, first seen close to the lagoon of Tritonis, inventor of many new trades for women and even some for men, lived and died a virgin. Atalanta, the first to wound the Calydonian Boar, first appeared to him in virginity and nobility. Camilla, daughter of Metabus, King of the Volsci, no less than the others described here, sustained a lifelong virginity. Vestal Claudia, Roman Claudia, until death guarded that same law. Indeed, if extending this speech were not so tiresome, I would not fail to give virtuous examples that I could repeat from today to a thousand years hence.

In truth, Tefeó, according to what you have heard, you and those who blaspheme this lineage of women are worthy of just punishment; a punishment to which, since no one metes it out to you, you sentence yourselves, since your malice itself condemns your shamelessness.35
[46] Buelve el auctor a la estoria

Mucho fueron maravillados los que se hallaron presentes oyendo el concierto que Leriano tuvo en su habla, por estar tan cercano a la muerte, en cuya sazón las menos vezes se halla sentido; el cual, cuando acabó de hablar, tenía ya turbada la lengua y la vista casi perdida. Ya los suyos, no podiéndose contenter, davan bozes; ya sus amigos començavan a llorar; ya sus vasallos y vasallas gritavan por las calles; ya todas las cosas alegres eran bueltas en dolor. Y como su madre, siendo absente, siempre le fuese el mal de Lariano negado, dando más crédito a lo que temía que a lo que le dezían, con ansia de amor maternal, partida de donde estaba llegó a Susa en esta triste coyuntura; y entrada por la puerta todos cuantos la veían le davan nuevas de su dolor más con bozes lastimeras que con razones ordenadas; la cual, oyendo que Leriano estaba en ell agonía mortal, falleciéndole la fuerça, sin ningún sentido cayó en el suelo, y tanto estuvo sin acuerdo que todos pensavan que a la madre y al hijo enterrarían a un tiempo. Pero ya que con grandes remedios le restituyeron el conocimiento, fuese al hijo, y después que con traspasamiento de muerte con muchedumbre de lágrimas le vivió el rostro, començó en esta manera a dezir:

[47] Llanto de su madre de Leriano

¡O alegre descanso de mi vegez, o dulce hartura de mi voluntad! Oy dexas de dezirte hijo y yo de más llamarme madre, de lo cual tenía temerosa sospecha por las nuevas señales que en mí vi de pocos días a esta parte. Acaescíame muchas vezes, cuando más la fuerça del sueño me vencía, recordar con un temblor súpito que hasta la mañana me durava. Otras vezes, cuando en mi oratorio me hallava rezando por tu salud, desfallecido el corazón, me cobría de un sudor frío, en manera que dende a gran pieça tornava en acuerdo. Hasta los animales me certificavan tu mal. Saliendo un día de mi cámara vínose un can para mí y dio tan grandes aullidos, que assí me corté el cuerpo y la habla que de aquel lugar no podría moverme. Y con estas cosas dava más crédito a mi sospecha que a tus mensajeros, y por satisfazerme acordé de venir a veerte, donde hallo cierta la fe que di a los agüeros.
All of those present were amazed listening to the harmonious order of Leriano’s words, for he was so close to death and in such straits where sense is rarely found. And when he finished speaking, his tongue began to fail, and his sight was almost lost. His people, not being able to refrain themselves, began to cry out; his friends started weeping; his vassals, women and men alike, went shouting through the streets; all joy turned to pain. And his mother, being absent, had had no news of Leriano’s suffering. Giving more credit to her fears than to what she was told, she departed with the longing of a loving mother from the place where she resided and arrived in Susa amidst these sad circumstances. And when she entered through the door, everyone who saw her gave her the news of his pain with mournful cries rather than clear words. When she heard that Leriano was in a state of mortal agony, her strength failed and so she fell to the floor, losing consciousness. And she remained so long in such a state that everyone thought they would have to bury them both at the same time. With great remedies they restored her to consciousness, and she went to her son. And when she saw him in the throes of death, she bathed his face in the abundance of her tears. And she began to speak in the following manner:

Oh, happy comfort of my old age, sweet plenitude of my will! Today you cease to call yourself son, and I to call myself mother, which I fearfully suspected by the new signs I saw in myself these last days. It occurred to me many times that, when I was about to fall deeply asleep, I thought of you with a sudden shivering that would last until dawn. Other times, while praying for your health in my chapel, with my heart weakened, a cold sweat would overcome me in such a manner that it would take a long time for me to recover my senses. Even animals told me of your woes. One day, while I was leaving my room, a dog came to me and howled in such a way that I stopped, motionless and speechless, and I could not move from that place. Because of these things, I gave more credit to my suspicions than to your messengers, and to soothe myself, I decided to come to see you, where I find confirmed the trust that I put in the omens.
¡O lumbre de mi vista, o ceguedad della misma, que te veo morir y no veo la razón de tu muerte; tú en edad para vivir, tú temeroso de Dios, tú amador de la virtud, tú enemigo del vicio, tú amigo de amigos, tú amado de los tuyos!

Por cierto oy quita la fuerza de tu fortuna los derechos a la razón, pues mueres sin tiempo y sin dolencia. Bienaventurados los baxos de condición y rudos de engenio, que no pueden sentir las cosas sino en el grado que las entienden, y malaventurados los que con sotil juicio las trascenden, los cuales con el entendimiento agudo tienen el sentimiento delgado. Pluguiera a Dios que fueras tú de los torpes en el sentir, que mejor me estuviera ser llamada con tu vida madre del rudo que no a ti por tu fin hijo que fue de la sola.

¡O muerte, cruel enemiga, que ni perdonas los culpados ni asuelves los inocentes! Tán traidora eres que nadie para contigo tiene defensa. Amenazas para la vejez y lievas en la mocedad. A unos matas por malicia y a otros por embidia. Aunque tardas, nunca olvidas. Sin ley y sin orden te riges. Más razón avía para que conservases los veinte años del hijo moço que para que dexases los sesenta de la vieja madre. ¿Por qué volviste el derecho al revés? Yo estaba harta de ser biva y él en edad de bevir. Perdóname porque así te trato, que no eres mala del todo, porque si con tus obras causas los dolores, con ellas mismas los consuelas levando a quien dexas con quien levas; lo que si conmigo hazes, mucho te seré obligada. En la muerte de Leriano no ay esperança, y mi tormento con la mía recibirá consuelo.

¡O hijo mío! ¿Qué será de mi vejez, contemplando en el fin de tu juventud? Si yo bivo mucho, será porque podrán más mis pecados que la razón que tengo para no bivir. ¿Con qué puedo recibir pena más cruel que con larga vida? Tán poderoso fue tu mal que no tuviste para con él ningund remedio, ni te valió la fuerza del cuerpo, ni la virtud del corazón, ni el esfuerzo del ánimo. Todas las cosas de que te podías valer te fallaron. Si por precio de amor tu vida se pudiera comprar, más poder tuviera mi deseo que fuerza la muerte. Mas para librarte della, ni tu fortuna quiso, ni yo, triste, pude. Con dolor será mi bevir y mi comer y mi pensar y mi dormir, hasta que su fuerza y mi deseo me lieven a tu sepultura.
Oh, light of my eyes, oh blindness of my sight, I see you are dying and I do not know the reason for your death; you, at an age for living, you fearful of God, you lover of virtue, you enemy of vice, you friend of your friends, you beloved by your people!

Certainly, the force of your destiny takes away the rights of reason today, since you die before your time and without illness. Fortunate are those of humble birth and crude wit, for they can feel only in the degree of their understanding; and unfortunate those who can transcend things with their subtle minds, for those who are sharp in judgment are refined in feeling. I wish to God that you were one of the inept, because it would be better to be called the mother of a crude man than for you to be called, because of your ending, the son of a lonely woman.

Oh, death, cruel enemy, you neither forgive the guilty nor absolve the innocent! You are so treacherous that no one has defenses against you. You are a threat of old age, and yet you take in youth. Some you kill in malice, others in envy. Although you delay, you never forget. You act without law and order. It would be more just to preserve the twenty years of this young man than to spare the sixty years of the old mother. Why did you turn the law backwards? I was already tired of life, but he is at an age for living. Forgive me for treating you in this way. You are not all bad, because, if you cause pain with your acts, you console them with those same acts by carrying away the ones left behind with the ones who go; which, if you do so with me, I will be very grateful. Lerianno’s death leaves no hope for me, and my torment would be remedied with my own demise.

Oh, my son! What will become of my old age, contemplating the end of your youth? If I live long, it will be because my sins were stronger than the reasons not to live anymore. How can I receive a greater pain than a longer life? Your affliction was so powerful that you could not find any remedy. You could neither use your body, nor your virtue, nor the strength of your spirit. Everything that could have been of value to you failed. If your life could be bought with love, then my desire would have more power than death would have strength. But, neither would your fortune let you free yourself from death nor could I, sorrowfully, help you. With much pain, I will live, eat, sleep, and think, until the moment that the strength of my pain and my desire take me to your grave.
El lloro que hazía su madre de Leriano crecía la pena a todos los que en ella participavan; y como él siempre se acordase de Laureola, de lo que allí pasava tenía poca memoria. Y viendo que le quedava poco espacio para gozar de ver las dos cartas que della tenía, no sabía qué forma se diese con ellas. Cuando pensava rasgallas, parecíale que ofendería a Laureola en dexar perder razones de tanto precio; cuando pensava ponerlas en poder de algún suyo, temía que serían vistas, de donde para quien las embió se esperava peligro. Pues tomando de sus dudas lo más seguro, hizo traer una copa de agua, y hechas las cartas pedaços echólas en ella; y acabado esto, mandó que le sentasen en la cama, y sentado, bevióselas en el agua y así quedó contenta su voluntad. Y llegada ya la ora de su fin, puestos en mí los ojos, dixo: “acabados son mis males.” Y así quedó su muerte en testimonio de su fe.

Lo que yo sentí y hize ligero está de juzgar. Los lloros que por él se hizieron son de tanta lástima que me parece crueldad escrivillos. Sus onras fueron conformes a su merecimiento, las cuales acabadas, acordé de partirme. Por cierto con mejor voluntad caminara para la otra vida que para esta tierra: con sospiros caminé, con lágrimas partí, con gemidos hablé, y con tales pasatiempos llegué aquí a Peñafiel, donde quedo besando las manos de vuestra merced.

Acabóse esta obra, intitulada Cárcel de amor, en la muy noble e muy leal cibdad de Sevilla, a tres días de marzo, año de 1492, por cuatro compañeros alemanes.
The weeping that Leriano’s mother made swelled the sorrow of all those who took part in such sadness; and since Leriano was always thinking of Laureola, he had little idea of what was happening around him. But seeing that he did not have much time left to enjoy gazing at the two letters he held from Laureola, he did not know what to do with them. When he thought of tearing them up, it seemed that he would offend her by losing those prized words; when he thought of leaving them to someone among his own people, he feared that they would be seen by others, which would bring danger to the one who had sent them. Then, finding the most certain way out of all his hesitations, he asked for a glass of water; and then, he tore the letters into pieces and dropped them into the water. Having done this, he asked his servants to sit him up in the bed, and once seated, he drank the letters, and thus was his determination satisfied. And when his time arrived, he turned his eyes to me and said: “My sufferings have ended.” And thus, his death remained a testimony of his faith.

What I felt and what I did right after his death is yet to be judged. The mournful cries made for him were so sad that it seems cruel to write about them. His last rites were just as he deserved, and, once they had ended, I decided to leave. Certainly, I would rather walk toward the other life than to this land: with sighs I walked, with tears I traveled, with moaning I spoke, and with such ways to pass the time I arrived here at Peñafiel, where I remain kissing the hands of your grace.

This work, entitled The Prison of Love, was completed in the very noble and very loyal city of Seville, the third day of May, in the year of 1492, by the partnership of the four Germans.
Endnotes

1 Diego de San Pedro quickly imbues the first sentence of his text with the rank and file of the late fifteenth-century Iberian courts through the use of señor, don, and Alcaide de los Donzeles. Don refers to a general rank of honor in the Iberian courts. Antonio de Nebrija claims in his Vocabulario español-latino that it stems from the Latin dominus, roughly translated as master, while Sebastián de Covarrubias’ Tesoro de la lengua castellana o Española later specifies that the title would have been granted to both noblemen and knights. Like don, Nebrija notes the definition of señor as dominus. Covarrubias clarifies their distinction, however, by noting that señor would have been specifically used for landowners by vassals and any others who traveled within their lands. Land ownership, of course, would have also been connected to nobility at the time. Alcaide de los Donzeles refers to a master of light cavalry who would have been a central member of the royal court and key player in the wars against the Moors. According to Keith Whinnom in Volume II of Obras completas, this particular don Diego Hernández de Córdoba helped Isabel and Fernando lead their campaign to victory by imprisoning the last sultan of Granada in 1483 (27).

2 As noted in the introduction, the author is likely referring to his prior work Sermón [Sermon] addressed to the noble women of Castile. This reference continues to reveal Diego de San Pedro’s movements within the upper ranks of society. Though not Isabel herself, Marina Manuel served as a noble lady in her court. For Marina Manuel’s connections to the royal family, see Gómez Redondo, Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Ccatólicos, 1462–64 and the introduction to Volume I of Diego de San Pedro’s Obras completas edited by Whinnom.

3 The word merced would have been used to indicate dignity in a more general sense than the titles don and señor. According to Covarrubias in Tesoro, in particular, the term would have been appropriate for any deserving man of honor. We have therefore decided to translate it into English as “grace,” calling on the antiquated sense of respect noted by the Oxford English Dictionary. See definition 8.a. in the OED for the latter usage.

4 While razón most readily translates to “reason,” we have decided to use “words” in order to follow Covarrubias’s definition of the term in the Tesoro: “un concepto declarado por palabras,” or “a concept declared through words.”

5 The word salvaje could easily translate to “wild” as well as “savage.” While the latter choice could risk an anachronistic association with colonialist views of indigenous populations that would not develop until decades later, we have decided to use it for its stronger delimitations between the supposedly
civilized spaces of society and those outside the purview of its norms. For more on the complex significance of wild men in late medieval Europe, see page 15 in the introduction.

6 While “image of a woman” provides a formal equivalent for imagen femenil, no direct translation can convey the cultural associations that the phrasing would likely have provoked in fifteenth-century readers. The womanly image radiating flames calls on pagan representations of an enflamed Venus as well as contemporary Christian iconography of the illuminated Virgin Mary, immediately contributing to the mixture of the sacred and the profane that will develop throughout the text. For more details regarding this association, see Sharrer’s “La Cárcel de amor de Diego de San Pedro.”

7 The use of fe draws on a rich history of associations here. According to the Diccionario de autoridades, contemporary definitions would have ranged from a sense of religious belief to the promise of one’s word to the authority of a good reputation. While the modern formal equivalent “faith” does convey some of these valences, readers may note that the lover’s dedication to the beloved functions as a kind of worship continually developing the thematic mixture of the sacred and the profane. For example, in the cancionero poetry of the period, one can find some instances in which faith refers to the lover’s fidelity to his lady.

8 While the word torre quite easily translates to “tower” in modern English, its contemporary religious associations do not transfer as easily. Diego de San Pedro’s use of torre draws on medieval representations of castles as a kind of hellscape for troubadour poetry and a place of productive penitence for religious transformation. This multi-layered reference likely contributed to the sixteenth-century English translation of the Cárcel de amor as The Castell of Love rather than The Prison of Love. For more on these associations, see Clemente Rodríguez Sánchez’s “El castillo y la cárcel” and Miguel-Prendes’s Narrating Desire, 168.

9 The term pardillo could refer to a variety of colors. According to the entries in the Diccionario de autoridades, it could be the color of the bird by the same name pardillo, the mixture of black and white named pardo, a general darkness named pardo, or the animal pardo that the dictionary defines as a kind of tiger. We have strived to strike a balance between these with the use of “brownish.”

10 We have decided to translate the use of negro [black] with its most immediate formal equivalent in English, a “black man,” but readers may note that the first sixteenth-century French translations used More [Moor] while the first English translations used “black mor” and “black morion” respectively in the first and second sections. This is among the first recorded uses of Moor in English and would have charged the text with a particularly racialized mean-
ing not necessarily present in the Spanish. For more on this, see Boro, The Castell of Love, 40.

11 Like most words in English, “Love” does not come with any particular gender. This automatically permits embodiments ranging from male to female to unspoken expressions of sex or gender. Given this potential, we have chosen to use the masculine pronoun to remain as close as possible to the source in two ways. In the Spanish side of the text, readers may note that the word amor is specifically accompanied by the masculine pronoun. Additionally, one of the most common representations of human love is Eros, or Cupid, who has historically been depicted as a male god.

12 Although the allegorical tableau does not explicitly render any of these terms as a Man of Sorrows, readers may note the similarities between Leriano’s allegorical embodiments and the religious tableau of the “Man of Sorrows.” For more on this connection, see Miguel-Prendes, “Reimagining Diego de San Pedro’s Readership at Work,” 19–20.

13 Although the word nación readily translates to “nation” in modern English, readers may note that the late medieval concept would have differed slightly. According to Nebrija’s Vocabulario, a nación would not have necessarily referred to a discrete political entity as it does today. Rather, like the Latin term natio or the word “nation” in late fifteenth-century English, it would have typically referred to a group of people in broader cultural terms or would even have been used as a way to identify foreigners.

14 As noted above, the concept of nación or “nation” would have differed slightly from modern usage at the time of Cárcel’s publication. That said, its first readers would have been bearing witness to the early formation of the political entities known today. The unification of Iberian kingdoms under Isabel and Ferdinand helped seal the foundation of what would become the modern-day nation of Spain over the years to come.

15 In the development of the thematic mixtures of the sacred and profane, readers may note how the text adds a gendered element as the text oscillates between a “mercy” from Laureola that would be seen as virtuous (i.e., showing a sense of charity) and a “mercy” from Laureola that would be seen as sexual (i.e., giving into the lover’s desires). This duality will become particularly pertinent toward the end of the text in chapter 44.

16 Laureola specifically uses the word piedad to refer to the virtue noted by the Author. While piedad does have a formal equivalent in English, namely the broadly religious word “piety,” we have decided to use “compassion” in order to refer to the more specific virtue at hand.

17 As noted in the introduction, the late medieval use of voluntad may be translated in a variety of ways depending on the context and school of thought. While prior instances have warranted more modern formal equivalents like
“will” and “willpower,” we have decided to use “heart” in this case due to the intense emotions referenced here in conjunction with Leriano’s ability to act and reason.

18 Nebrija’s *Vocabulario* lists the word *sufrimiento* alongside *tolerantia* in Latin, which would mean patience, fortitude, and the ability to bear and endure pain and adversity in modern English.

19 The use of *enemigos* (enemies) renders the Author’s already Latinate syntax even more obscure. Although enemies might seem to refer to the enemies of Leriano’s cause, who would certainly not help the Author, the word actually refers to those who oppose his torments. We have mimicked this usage in order to reflect the Latinate style of the Spanish source, but Whinnom eases understanding in his earlier translation, *The Prison of Love* (1492), by using “allies” instead.

20 According to Nebrija’s *Vocabulario* and Covarrubias’s *Tesor*, a *cartel* would have referred to an official challenge from one knight to another. Now obsolete, the same word in English would have been used to describe such a “written challenge” or “letter of defiance” according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

21 In this context, the expression “spoke to her” may be insinuating a sexual contact between Leriano and Laureola. This interpretation is confirmed by the rage of the king when hearing about it.

22 This would have referred to the delimitation of the field where the joust will take place.

23 According to Gili y Gaya, the use of “old stories” (*istorias viejas*) likely refers to the chivalric novel. The “Author,” he continues, may be making a differentiation between the chivalric and sentimental genres. In this way, he can justify the scant description of the joust’s development. Modern readers should keep in mind that chivalric novels were seen by many as pernicious in their day. For further detail, see Ruiz Casanova, *Cárcel de amor*, 96.

24 As Ruiz Casanova points out, by “handing” Laureola to Galio, Leriano would avoid the accusation of kidnapping, which would make his desired marriage to her impossible according to the law. Ruiz Casanova, *Cárcel de amor*, 103.

25 The king’s shifting approaches to justice point to similar changes in the historical context. The first attempt to determine Laureola’s innocence through a duel relies on the religious reading of divine will, as manifested through victory in combat, while the second attempt represents the increasingly secularized determination of truth through witness reports. Indeed, as Michael Gerli explains, this representation “resonates with a certain disquietude, an intimation of apprehension resulting from the radical transformations in the implementation of the law in Castile during the last quarter of the fifteenth century”
These radical transformations moreover reveal an early symptom of modernity’s split subjectivities as the characters negotiate “impossible choices between private desires and public obligations” (164). For these readings and a critical overview of the political issues at hand, see Gerli, “Conflicitive Subjectivities and the Politics of Truth and Justice.”

This exchange bears a striking resemblance to another exemplar of sentimental fiction: in Juan de Flores’s *Grisel y Mirabella*, debates ensue around the case of another falsely accused princess and another queen-mother who humbles herself before the king to ask for his mercy. For these specific connections, see Juan de Flores, *Historia de Grisel y Mirabella*, 79–83. For a broader overview of the intertext, see the introduction to Emily Francomano’s critical edition and translation *Three Spanish Querelle Texts*.

The adjective *salva* here stems from the verb *salvar*, generally meaning to save from some kind of harm. Following in Whinnom’s footsteps, who rendered the word as “blameless” in *The Prison of Love* (1492), we have translated this highly unusual form as “innocent.”

Even as Cárcel uses the debates over Laureola’s innocence to portray historical issues of justice, the Author and *auctor* are ever keen to represent the affective and psychological dimension of the scene. As Michael Gerli explains, the genre’s “emphasis invariably falls upon the resonance of events rather than upon the events themselves.” As such, he claims, “we come one important step closer to the comprehensive synthesis of both action and psychology, interiority and exteriority, which in the seventeenth century gave rise to the modern novel” (481). For these readings, see Gerli, “Toward a Poetics of the Spanish Sentimental Romance.”

*Invención* presents a particularly difficult issue of cultural as well as linguistic translation. While the *Diccionario de autoridades* defines the word in terms that would easily resonate with today’s readers—essentially the result of making something new or weaving a fictional story with the rhetorical arts—this particular instance of the word calls on a poetic tradition. *Invenciones* were also a part of aristocratic pageantry. As Ian Macpherson explains, they would usually be a colorful piece of clothing or jewelry with an enigmatic combination of a brief poem and a visual emblem. We have therefore decided to translate the word with “witticism” to convey the multivalent nature of the reference. For more information on the tradition of *invenciones*, see the introduction to Macpherson’s *The “Invenciones y letras” of the “Cancionero general.”*

According to the *Diccionario de autoridades*, the term *bracero* could indicate two early modern professions. The first refers to “El que dá el brazo à otro para que se apóye en él, y camíne con seguridad,” or a person who gives his arm to another so that the latter may lean on him and walk safely. The second
refers to a person who hurls lances and other such weapons with “esfuerzo y valentía,” or “force and courage.”

31 As noted earlier in the text, the question of “mercy” draws on the dual representations of the sacred and profane. Here, it becomes clear that the “mercy” would mean to sleep with a man dying of lust.

32 Doña María Cornell is a reference to Doña María Coronel, a mysterious figure in Iberia who was supposedly so tempted by the sins of the flesh that she killed herself in order to avoid succumbing to them. See Ruiz Casanova, Cárcel de amor, 144 for the different versions of this legend.

33 As Ruiz Casanova also notes on page 144 of his edition, doña Isabel belonged to the Téllez-Girón family to whom Diego de San Pedro lent his services.

34 While scholars have debated the exact identity of this figure, she likely founded a community of virtuous and beatified women in Toledo in the early fifteenth century. See Ruiz Casanova, Cárcel de amor, 144–45.

35 According to the Diccionario de autoridades, vergüenza in the early modern period is charged with many meanings such as shame, modesty, prudence, shamelessness, or honor.
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