

MEDIOEVO ROMANZO

RIVISTA QUADRIMESTRALE

DIRETTA DA D'ARCO S. AVALLE, FRANCESCO BRANCIFORTI, GIANFRANCO
FOLENA, FRANCESCO SABATINI, CESARE SEGRE, ALBERTO VARVARO

VOLUME IX · 1984

SOCIETA EDITRICE IL MULINO BOLOGNA

Brevedad, oscuredad, synchysis
in *El Conde Lucanor* (Parts II-IV)

Don Juan Manuel begins the *quinta parte* of *El Conde Lucanor* by assessing what he has done in the previous parts of the book:

Sennor conde Lucanor — dixo Patronio —, ya desuso vos dixie muchas vezes que tantos enxienplos et prouerbios, dellos muy declarados et dellos ya quanto mas oscuros, vos avia puesto en este libro, que tenia que vos cunplia assaz, et por affincamiento que me feziestes oue de poner en estos postremeros treynta prouerbios algunos tan oscura mente que sera marabilla si bien los pudierdes entender, si yo o alguno de aquellos a qui los yo mostre non vos los declarare; pero seet bien çierto que aquellos que parescen mas oscuros o mas sin razon que, desque los entendieredes, que fallaredes que non son menos aprouechosos que quales quier de los otros que son ligeros de entender. Et pues tantas cosas son escritas en este libro sotiles et oscuras et abreuizadas ...¹

Indeed, in the *cuarta parte* we find the culmination of this sought after obscurity. Eighteen maxims out of thirty are logogriphs of this type: «Grand vengança para menester luengo tienpo encobrir la madurez a seso es»; or «Errar para perdonar a de ligero da atreuimiento los omnes»; or «Mas tienpos aprouechea paral continuando deleyte, que a la fazienda pensamiento e alegria»². Maria Goyri found these puzzles to be an infantile game³; but Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcellos⁴ provided their solution by arranging their word order in a new way. The sentences we just quoted should be read as follows: «Para encobrir luengo tienpo la gran vengança menester es madurez a seso», or perhaps

¹ Don Juan Manuel, *Obras completas*, ed. J. M. Blecua, Madrid 1983, vol. II, p. 467. All quotations hereafter are taken from this edition.

² All these maxims are at p. 465.

³ «El procedimiento verdaderamente infantil que empleó D. Juan Manuel para hacer oscuros estos proverbios [...] consiste sólo en tener barajadas y revueltas las palabras. Por ejemplo [...] “El seso por que guía non es su alabado et el que fía mucho de su seso descubre (su) poridat al de qui es flaco”. Las mismas palabras dan: “El que [se] guía por su seso non es alabado, et el que descubre su poridad al de qui non fía mucho es de flaco seso”». *Romania* 29 (1900): 601 (review of Knust's edition of *El Conde Lucanor*).

⁴ «Zum Sprichwörtertschatz des Don Juan Manuel», *Bausteine zur romanischen Philologie. Festgabe für Adolfo Mussafia*, Halle 1905, pp. 594-608.

even better «Gran madurez de seso es menester para encobrir luengo tiempo la vengança»⁵; «Perdonar de ligero da atreuimiento a los omnes para errar»; «Paral continuado deleyte mas aprouecha pensamiento e alegría que tienpos e fazienda», or preferably, «A la fazienda mas aprovecha tienpos paral pensamiento que continuado deleyte e alegría»⁶. This new word order arrangement fully restores the sense from which ensues that «provecho» which Juan Manuel promised his readers.

These relatively simple interpretative solutions open the way to a more complex problem, namely, understanding the artistic need that causes such a perverse way of formulating *sententiae*. María Rosa Lida de Malkiel pointed out the right direction in which to proceed in order to explain Juan Manuel's puzzles. For the eminent medievalist, parts two, three and four of *El Conde Lucanor* are in their entirety the fruit of a stylistic experimentation which is quite unusual in fourteenth-century Castilian prose. It is an experimentation «que delata a voces el letrado ducho en la retórica latina»⁷. It is precisely in this context of experimentation that we must understand those obscure sentences which concern us here. If one can find the name for the rhetorical device which best describes the construction of these puzzles, he will readily see the rhetorical tradition behind them.

The alteration of word order used by Juan Manuel falls under the general pattern of hyperbaton. Juan Manuel occasionally resorts to it as a device that enhances his style. In the first *exemplo*, for instance, we find a construction such as «Et asi oviera a sser aquel priuado engannado» (p. 37) or, in the *moraleja*: «Non vos engannedes, nin creades que, endonado, faze ningun omne por otro su danno de grado» (p. 37). These hyperbata present a moderate degree of difficulty (the hyperbaton is, after all, suggested for the *ornatus difficilis*⁸), but in no way

⁵ The second solution is that of F. J. Sánchez Cantón in his ed. of *El Conde Lucanor*, Madrid 1920; cfr. D. Devoto, *Introducción al estudio de Don Juan Manuel y en particular de El Conde Lucanor. Una bibliografía*, Paris 1972, p. 476.

⁶ Both solutions are proposed by C. Michaëlis de Vasconcellos, art. cit. p. 607. Since two solutions are possible, we have here a case of *amphibolia*.

⁷ «Tres notas sobre don Juan Manuel», first published in *RPH* 4 (1950-51): 155-94, then reprinted in *Estudios de literatura española y comparada*, Buenos Aires 1966, pp. 92-133. The quotation is from p. 131.

⁸ See, for instance, Geoffroi de Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, 1051-60, in E. Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XII^e et XIII^e siècle*, Paris 1924, pp. 230-1.

do they attain the obscurity of the sentences which concern us here. We must remember, however, that there are several types of hyperbaton. According to Donatus, «hyperbaton est transcensio quaedam verborum ordinem turbans, cuius species sunt quinque, hystero-logia anastrophe parenthesis tmesis synchysis»⁹. For Charisius there are four types of hyperbaton: «anastrophe, diacope, dialysis, synchysis»¹⁰. The same is true for Marius Plotius: «Hyperbaton est oratio non servans ordinem mox, sed postea, huius species sunt IIII, parenthesis hystero-logia synchysis tmesis»¹¹. The progression represents different degrees of deviation from the normal word order, synchysis being the most confusing one: «ex omni parte confusum est»¹². Grammarians¹³ are fond of quoting a line from Virgil as an example of synchysis: «saxa vocant Itali mediis quae in fluctibus Aras» (*Aen.* I, 109), which is intelligible if rearranged as «Itali vocant Aras saxa quae [sunt] in mediis fluctibus». There are verses, however, which are still more difficult. Diomedes the Grammarian quotes the following lines from Virgil as an example of synchysis: «Vina bonus quae deinde cadis onerarat Acestes | litore Trinacrio dederatque abeuntibus heros | dividit» (*Aen.* I, 195-8) and construes them in the following way: «deinde heros dividit vina quae bonus Acestes onerarat cadis et de Trinacrio litore abeuntibus dederat»¹⁴. Bede follows Donatus' definition and subdivision of the hyperbaton, but his examples are drawn from the Holy Scriptures. As an example of synchysis, he quotes a passage of a Psalm and indicates all of its possible constructions and meanings¹⁵.

Synchysis is that «mixture verborum» which Quintilian¹⁶ condemns as an obscure *cacozelia*. But it is precisely this strong effect of estrangement that makes synchysis a sought-after device by the great *rhetoriques* of the tenth and twelfth centuries who were inspired by the teachings of Vergilius Maro, the gram-

⁹ *Ars grammatica*, III, 6; ed. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, vol. IV, p. 401.

¹⁰ *Grammatica*, III, ed. Keil, vol. I, p. 275.

¹¹ *Artium grammaticarum libri tres*, I, 168, ed. Keil, vol. VI, p. 466.

¹² Pompeius, *Commentum artis Donati*, ed. Keil, vol. V, p. 310.

¹³ See, for instance, Charisius, loc. cit.; Diomedes, *Ars grammatica*, ed. Keil, vol. I, p. 461.

¹⁴ Op. cit., p. 461.

¹⁵ *De schematibus et tropis*, ed. K. Halm, *Rhetores Latini minores*, Leipzig 1863, p. 614.

¹⁶ *Inst.* VIII, II, 14.

marian from Toulouse. Vergilius Maro wrote at length on the *scinderatio phonorum* in his *Epitomae*. Breaking up words and their order — he says — is a practice which is advisable for three reasons: «prima est ut sagacitatem discentium nostrorum in inquirendis atque inveniendis hiis quae obscura sunt approbemus; secunda est propter decorem aedificationemque eloquentiae; tertia ne mystica quaeque, et quae solis gnaris pandi debent, passim ab infimis ac stultis facile repperiantur, ne secundum antiquum proverbium sues gemmas calcent»¹⁷. The first step in upgrading the style is to alter the normal order of a sentence: «Scindérationis autem triplex effectus est ordo: primus quo versus scindimus, Catone dicente: *mare oceanum | classes quod longae | sepe turbatur | simul navigant*; hoc enim dicere debuit: *mare oceanum | sepe turbatur, | classes quod longae | simul navigant*»¹⁸. Vergilius Maro's precepts are applied by writers such as Attus of Vercelli and Ratherius of Verona. Attus' *Polypticum* is one of the most obscure works ever written in Latin because of its systematic application of the *scinderatio* and synchysis in almost every sentence. Angelo Mai, the text's first modern editor, published a second redaction of this work containing glosses without which the text would be incomprehensible¹⁹. Ratherius is proud of his «difficillima porro et valde implexa syntaxis», which presents long sentences and a «transpositio vocum inusitata»²⁰ which requires repeated readings before any sense emerges. In his *Phrenesis* we read a sentence such as this: «Cuius

¹⁷ Ed. G. Polara, *Epitomi ed epistole*, Naples 1979, epit. x, 1.

¹⁸ Epit. x, 2.

¹⁹ Here is an example of synchysis: «Hanc unde congruit Augusti caveat qui potiri censuram ut nomine parat». The same author, in his second redaction, constructs this sentence as follows: «Unde congruit ut qui parat potiri nomine Augusti, caveat hanc censuram». Mai's text was reprinted by Migne, *PL* cxxxiv. The sentences quoted here are respectively at col. 880 and 893. On Atto's style see J. Ghellinck, *Littérature latine au Moyen Age*, Bruxelles 1939, vol. II, pp. 38-9; A. Viscardi, *Le Origini*, Milan 1957, pp. 91-2.

²⁰ So say the Ballerinis who edited Ratherius' work (Verona 1765, Preface, xxi). This edition is reprinted by Migne, *PL* cxxxvi, 365ff. Ratherius clearly states his intention of writing in an obscure manner in the *proemium* to his work. The statements which are contained there have been discussed by E. Auerbach, who is the author of the best essay on Ratherius' style, in *Literary Language and its Public*, trans. from German by R. Manheim, New York 1965, p. 143ff. On the problem of the word-construction in the period considered here, an indispensable work is A. Scaglione's *The Classical Theory of Composition. From its Origins to the Present: A Historical Survey*, Chapel Hill 1972, pp. 118-22, from which I have freely drawn a good deal of data.

non approprians intempestivitas, sed proximans aevi afferre coeperat, ista dum conderet, maturitas canos». The Ballerinis, the first editors of this work, restore the normal word order as follows: «Cui [in the manuscript it was *cuius*] non intempestivitas approprians sed maturitas aevi proximans coeperat afferre canos, dum conderet ista»²¹. What is even more impressive is that in this *tragica coniugatio*, Ratherius echoes Boethius' lines: «Venit enim properata malis inopina senectus | Et dolor aetatem iussit inesse suam. | Intempestivi funduntur vertice cani». (*De cons. phil.*, I, 1, 9-11).

The impact that this hermetic style had on the vernacular *trobar clus* is fairly well known²². The synchysis, however, was not widely applied because vernacular languages could not rely, as Latin did, on a flexional system which, to a large extent, allowed the restoration of a logical word order through the indication of the cases which defined the logical function of each word. The closest resemblance to a synchysis appears in the *versus rapportati*²³ of this kind by Raimbaut d'Aurenga:

Cals flors? Neus, gels e conglapis
Que cotz, destrenh e trenca²⁴

Here by a «transpositio vocum inusitata», we have three subjects taken together and separated from their respective predicates. Daring *trajectiones* can be found in Guittone's poetry and in that of his followers such as Panuccio del Bagno. Here in an example:

ché, qual ten om più franco
di lealtade, perso
tosto fa, se veder se pò, del bianco²⁵.

These lines should be arranged «qual omo tiene più franco di lealtade, tosto fa perso del bianco, se veder si può». These hyper-

²¹ Migne, *PL* cxxxvi.

²² See A. Del Monte, *Studi sulla poesia ermetica medievale*, Naples 1953, especially chapter 2, «Introduzione all'ermetismo medievale. Stile oscuro latino e *trobar clus*», pp. 23-53.

²³ See H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, Munich 1960, vol. I, § 716, who sees in the *versus rapportati* «eine systematisation der *mixtura verborum*» (the corresponding Latin term for synchysis).

²⁴ *The Life and Works of the Troubadour Raimbaut d'Orange*, ed. by W. T. Pattison, Minneapolis 1952, n. xxxix v. 3-4.

²⁵ Text in G. Contini, *Poeti del Duecento*, Milan-Naples 1960, vol. I, p. 313, from the poem «Lasso di far più verso», v. 4-7.

bata do not constitute a synchysis; although they deviate strongly from a direct word order, especially through the *parenthesis*, the text remains quite intelligible at a first reading. Moreover, the hyperbata are more frequent in poetry than in prose because they respond to prosodic needs. The Latin model of *transmutatio* is certainly present in the «prosa legata» or «prosa numerosa» of Dante, Boccaccio²⁶ and of many other authors who use the hyperbaton, the anastrophe and the parenthesis. Who can forget Cervantes' «pidió las llaves a la sobrina del aposento»²⁷? But I am not familiar with any instance of *perversio* of word order that attains the high degree of obscurity which characterizes synchysis. Juan Manuel's case seems to be unique. It is the fruit of his extraordinary experimentalism.

Having completed the series of fifty exempla, Juan Manuel takes the alternative road left to a didactic writer. He composes three new parts of *El Conde Lucanor* by assembling short sentences, unrelated to each other, which he calls proverbs. Thus Juan Manuel adopts the role of a gnomic writer, a *praeceptor* who dispenses his wisdom not through transparent exemplary stories but through pithy sentences.

Are they really proverbs? Not really, despite the author's definition²⁸. In his work Juan Manuel often resorts to proverbs, and shows an appreciation for sayings «que dizen las viejas en Castiella»²⁹. These proverbs — like proverbs in general — combine a thought (*sententia*) with a locution (*brevitas*) and with a metaphor (*figura*). The *proverbios* of the three new parts make

²⁶ See A. Schiaffini, *Tradizione e poesia nella prosa d'arte italiana dalla latinità medievale al Boccaccio*, Rome 1969 (first edition, Genoa 1934), pp. 89ff. For a broad view of word order in the Romance languages see E. Richter, *Zur Entwicklung der romanischen Wortstellung aus der Lateinischen*, Halle 1903. For the French see L. Foulet, *Petit syntaxe de l'ancien français*, Paris 1967³, the fourth part, «L'ordre des mots», pp. 306-44.

²⁷ *Don Quijote*, I, 6.

²⁸ It seems, however, that Juan Manuel's definition was the only possible one in Castilian, since «proverbio» meant what we may call maxim or learned saying like the biblical «proverbia». The difference between «proverbio» and «refrán» (which corresponds to the English «proverb») was to come only in the fifteenth century according to E. S. O'Kane, «On the Names of the refrán», *HR* 18 (1950): 1-14, and by the same author, *Refranes y frases proverbiales españolas de la Edad Media*, Madrid 1959.

²⁹ *Exemplo* IV, p. 68. It may be worth noting that these «palabras que dizen las viejas en Castiella» recall the «aniles fabellae» of Horace, *Sat.* II, 6, 77-8.

no use of *figura*, and they should rather be called maxims, sentences or axioms. There is only one exception which may help to clarify the very subtle distinction between a proverb and a sentence. This exception is the proverb «meior seria andar solo que mal acompañando»³⁰. It is possible to give corresponding proverbs in many other languages; but it would be impossible to find in another language a maxim that corresponds to one of Juan Manuel's. In other words: proverbs are anonymous and poligenetic creations, whereas maxims are often traceable back to their author and have no spontaneous equivalent in other languages. But leaving aside more sophisticated points of difference between proverbs and maxims, we can say that maxims belong to a higher stylistic level than proverbs do: the former spurn the simple and homey metaphors which are a trait of the low style, and shun the most catchy and simple rhetorical devices such as rhymes or repetition. Behind each maxim lies the *gravitas* and *dignitas* of its coiner, whose thoughts are expressed with lapidary concision, and, above all, with a precision that cannot be extenuated by analogical or metaphorical elements: the success of a maxim is entrusted entirely to the poignancy of its language. Although there were some rules in the classical world and in the Middle Ages³¹ to distinguish a maxim from a proverb, the distinction is not always possible. Only literary *discretio*³² — that second nature acquired through the rumination of the classics — can capture the difference when it is not so sharply defined by rules. Undoubtedly, Juan Manuel possessed this *discretio*, as an analysis of some of his maxims will show.

A maxim must contain a universal thought whose perspicuity is one and the same with the inalterable way in which it is expressed. A strong reason for this inalterability is a maxim's

³⁰ P. 444. This exception has been pointed out by M.R. Lida de Malkiel, «Tres notas», cit., whose second note is devoted to «Los refranes en las obras de don Juan Manuel, in *Estudios*, cit., p. 103-11.

³¹ The best study to date is still F. Di Capua's *Sentenze e proverbi nella tecnica oratoria e la loro influenza sull'arte del periodare*, Naples 1947, reprinted in D. Capua's *Scritti minori*, Rome - Paris - Tournai - New York 1959, pp. 41-188. Di Capua studies both the theory and the practice from Aristotle to Dante.

³² For this very subtle concept one must again refer to F. Di Capua, *Insegnamenti retorici medievali e dottrine estetiche moderne nel «De vulgari eloquentia» di Dante*, the chapter «La teoria della *discretio*», in *Scritti minori*, cit., pp. 289-300.

numerositas, a certain rhythm which distinguishes it from any ordinary expression which may very well contain a universal truth. Let us consider the first maxim of the *segunda parte*: «En las cosas que ha muchas sentençias, non se puede dar regla general»³³. This maxim consists of two sentences of equal length which have the structure of hendecasyllables, both of them maintaining the arsis on the sixth syllable and caesura after the same syllable. These hendecasyllables, however, are not well wrought, because a good hendecasyllable would not have an accent on the third and on the sixth, unless the first syllable were stressed, forming a dactylic rhythm. What we really have is prose with an anapestic rhythm: the *numerositas* is there but it does not elevate itself to music. And there are other elements of calculated prosastic rhythm. Both sentences, for example, end with a trisyllable, but one is a paroxitone and the other is an oxitone; both end with a noun and an adjective but their correspondence is deceptive because these couples are arranged in a chiasmus. All these elements give the maxim a structure which is quite distant from the linear formulation of an ordinary sentence; yet its rhythm is such as to avoid any lapse into the facile musicality of proverbs. Let us consider the second maxim: «El mas complido de los omnes es el que cognosce la verdat et la guarda»³⁴. There is a certain rhythm created by the equal length of two sentences: 1) «el mas complido de los omnes» and 2) «el que cognosce la verdat». They are rhythmically separated and yet united by the copula to form a relative clause. This parallelism creates the expectation that the sentence would be completed by the word «verdat»; but Juan Manuel adds «et la guarda». By using this epiphraſis he places the last verb outside of the rhythmic sequence and succeeds in emphasizing the most important word for the «sententia». The transgression from the *numerositas* emphasizes what matters most. Let us see a last example, taken from the *tercera parte*: «Por seso se mantiene el seso. El seso da seso al que non ha seso. Sin seso non se guarda el seso»³⁵. It is a maxim formed by three *cola* which we could organize as three verses. They would all have the same rhyme, but it would be an equivocal one since «seso» means once «entendi-

³³ P. 442.

³⁴ P. 442.

³⁵ P. 455.

miento» and then «sensatez». The *colas* have almost the same length, two of nine syllables enclosing the middle one of eleven syllables. The iambic rhythm prevails over any other, and this fact is certainly favored by the almost systematic alternation of monosyllables and bisyllables. In all cases we have a hint of a poetical elaboration but upon closer scrutiny we see rhythmic prose. We could not alter it without destroying the pithiness of the maxim, which is reinforced by the anadyptosis at each *colon* and by the *traductio* of the rhyme words.

The mention of *traductio* brings us to the notion of *emphasis* which, in turn, brings us to the rhetorical device Juan Manuel explicitly pursues, namely «brevedad»³⁶. Brevity is essential to a maxim. The classical «ne quid nimis» or «nosce teipsum» are perhaps the most illustrious examples of how efficacious brevity can be. Brevity exacts the most of language because it is supposed to convey complex information with a minimal use of signs. The ensuing condensation can lead either to perspicuity or to obscurity. *Perspicuitas* is attained when the «sententia» is revealed in a fulgurating and luminously intense way. The literal sense is limpid but the connotative field becomes progressively wider as one meditates on the implication of the axiom. The perspicuity of a maxim should not, therefore, be confused with the *humilitas locutionis* which offers the highest degree of literal

³⁶ Besides the «cosas . . . sotiles et oscuras et abreviadas» mentioned at the beginning of the fifth part, there are several instances in which Juan Manuel talks about the pursuit of brevity in his style. For example, in the *Libro enfenido*, chap. I, we read: «Et si todas estas cosas vos oviese a-dezir conplidamente, avria a seer el libro muy luengo . . . por ende dezir uos he lo que entiendo en las menos palabras que yo pudiere» (vol. I, p. 150f.). Important too are the declarations made in pt. I, ch. 63 of *Libro de los estados*: here the ideal of perspicuity («hablar declaradamente») is combined with that of *brevitas* («en las menos palabras que vos pudiesedes», vol. I, p. 318). The same ideal is repeated in pt. I, ch. 90, during a discussion of the *Libro del cavallero et del escudero*, which is written with «fermosos latines» and «poniendo declaradamente et conplida la razon que quiere dezir, pone lo en las menos palabras que pueden seer» (p. 389). The brevity of which Juan Manuel speaks in these instances must be taken to mean a stylistic device opposite to the prolixities of the *amplificatio*, which indulges in digressions, *determinationes*, etc. Such brevity, however, is not yet the fruit of the *abbreviatio* which leads to the composition of the maxim. Nor is it identical with the technique which guides the composition of the *Cronica abreviada*, for that kind of *abbreviatio* is done at the level of the *inventio* and *dispositio* (*narratio*), not at the level of *elocutio*. On this technique of epitomizing, see A. D'Andrea, «Il sermo brevis. Contributo alla tipologia del testo», in his *Il nome della storia. Studi e ricerche di storia e letteratura*, Naples 1983, pp. 86-97.

clarity without any connotative implications. Obscurity consists in the blurring of the signs, and the receiver must decipher the *littera* before he has a chance to perceive the *sententia*. Obscurity can be a vice which betrays the clumsy imitators of Sallust or Seneca, for example; but it can also reach the dignity of a style if it follows the precepts for *brevitas*. Juan Manuel knows these precepts and through them he tests the versatility of Castilian as well as the limits to which he can carry his own experimentation. One should not forget that he was the author of a work on the *Reglas de trobar* which, alas, it lost to us.

The most important devices used by Juan Manuel for the abbreviation³⁷ are *emphasis*, *articulus* and *asyndeton*. All three of them are recommended by the classical rhetoricians as well as by the masters of the *artes dictandi*.

Emphasis, if we take Quintilian's³⁸ definition, can be of two types: one «*quae plus significat quam dicit*»; the other which means more than what is not even said. Emphasis, thus, is the epitome of a brachylogy by which a word acquires an intensive meaning. We have a typical case of emphasis when we say «one must be a man» («*virum esse oportet*») in which «man» implies all the virtues of a man. Another typical example is: «Demosthenes and Homer are the greatest poets ever; yet they are men», where «man» means «with all the defects of a man». Juan Manuel gives several splendid examples of emphasis. He can take a proverb like «dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres» or «mejor sería andar solo que mal acompañado» and transform their «*sententia*» into this maxim: «Qual omne es con tales se acompaña»³⁹, where we perceive that «*omne*» acquires a special meaning through emphasis. Sometimes Juan Manuel may emphasize a noun by repeating it as if it were a nominal predicate, e.g.: «El rey rey reyna»⁴⁰ which means: «el rey que es verdadero rey, reyna». The elimination of the copula creates an *asyndeton* which reinforces the *brevitas*. In the following

³⁷ For the principles ruling the abbreviation (they vary from four to seven) see E. Faral, *Les arts poétiques*, cit., p. 85. Martín de Córdoba, a contemporary of Juan Manuel's, in his *Breve Compendium Artis Rhetorice*, indicates eight methods of abbreviation (see Ch. Faulhaber, n. 50, p. 133).

³⁸ *Inst.* VIII, 3, 83.

³⁹ P. 446.

⁴⁰ P. 448.

example, «Del callar biene mucho bien; del callar biene mucho mal»⁴¹, Juan Manuel uses *emphasis* by *not* saying something, which may be «tiempo oportuno», so that the plain sentence would be «Del callar *en tiempo oportuno* biene mucho bien; del callar *en tiempo inoportuno* viene mucho mal».

For the definition of the *articulus* we can use the one given in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (IV, 19, 26): «articulus dicitur, cum singula verba intervallis distinguuntur caesa oratione» [we have «an *articulus* when single words are set apart by pauses in staccato speech» (transl. by H. Caplan, Loeb Classical)]. From the examples given in rhetorical treatises, we see that the *articulus* is also a *congeries* (combined with the asyndeton) of nouns or adjectives or verbs having the same logical function. In Juan Manuel the best example of *articulus* is the following: «Guiaimiento de nave, vencimiento de lid, melezianamiento de enfermo, sembramiento de qualquier semiente, ayuntamiento de novios, non se pueden fazer sin seso de omne et voluntad et gracia special de Dios»⁴².

The most frequently used device in Juan Manuel's maxims is the asyndeton. The examples are so numerous that one can quote them at random. One finds asyndeton which can be called «commatic», that is, made of word-clusters, e.g., «Lo caro es caro, cuesta caro, guardasse caro, acabalo caro; lo rehez es rehez, cuesta rehez, guardasse rehez, acabalo rehez; lo caro es rehez, lo rehez es caro»⁴³. One also finds the asyndeton that is called *summativum*, which retains for the end of the sentence the concept that capsulates the cumulative sense of all preceding clauses. An example is, «Largueza en mengua, astinencia en abundamiento, castidat en mancebia, omildat en grand onra, fazen al omne martir sin escarmiento de sangre»⁴⁴, where, again, *articulus* and asyndeton are combined. Finally, one finds the asyndeton *adversativum* of this type: «El que sabe, sabe que non sabe; el que non sabe, cuyda que sabe»⁴⁵, or «El rey rey reyna; el rey non rey, non reyna, mas es reynado»⁴⁶.

⁴¹ P. 449.

⁴² P. 450.

⁴³ P. 454.

⁴⁴ P. 457.

⁴⁵ P. 448.

⁴⁶ P. 448. For all these types of asyndeta see H. Lausberg, *Elemente der literarischen Rhetorik*, Munich 1967, § 328.

The examples cited indeed «delatan a voces al letrado ducho en la retórica latina». If space would allow us to show all the other devices Juan Manuel uses to impart *gravitas* to his maxims (epizeusis, epanadiplosis, etc.), his rhetorical training and his commitment to excel in would be fully revealed. Nevertheless, our analysis, limited though it is to the devices of abbreviation which are an essential feature of the maxim, clearly shows that Juan Manuel's experimentation is eminently linguistic. Language, when challenged to progress into a higher and higher level of expressiveness, can become an end in itself. Juan Manuel identifies such expressiveness with obscurity, which means either subtlety of thought and diction or outright incomprehensibility. The central three parts of *El Conde Lucanor* are ordered in progression from one type of obscurity to the other. The very arrangement of the materials points to this: one-hundred maxims in the *segunda parte*, fifty in the third, and thirty in the fourth⁴⁷. There are also other indications: the length of the maxims decreases in passing from the second to the fourth part. Moreover, in the second and third parts we find enthymemes which are missing in the fourth part. An enthymeme, as everyone knows, contains an *epichereima* or *ratiocinatio* which gives the cause or the rational connection between two statements, e.g. «Meior es perder faziendo derecho, que ganar por fazer tuerto: ca el derecho ayuda al derecho»⁴⁸. Enthymemes therefore represent a lesser degree of obscurity when compared to other axiomatic statements.

When we come to the puzzling maxims of the *cuarta parte*, we realize that they are created by parthenogenesis, as it were. A language which has become an end in itself must produce obscurity by *itself*. These maxims reach the ultimate degree of obscurity which rhetoricians assign to the *aenigma*. But Juan

⁴⁷ See J. G. Casaldueiro, «El Conde Lucanor: composición y significado», *NRFH* 23 (1975): 10-12. Juan Manuel repeatedly states his intention of writing each «libro» (part) «mas avreuiado et mas oscuro» than the previous one (p. 453 and 461), and of saying «cosas mas oscuras que fasta aqui» (p. 462). The number of maxims is also pointed out by Juan Manuel but, oddly enough, modern editors do not present a text coinciding with the author's account. On this discrepancy and on a way to remedy it, see D. A. Flory, «A Suggested Emendation of *El Conde Lucanor*, Parts I and III», in *Juan Manuel Studies*, edited by I. Macpherson, London 1977, pp. 87-99. Blecua's edition takes into account this study (p. 453 n. 1) and modifies the arrangement given in his *editio minor* (Madrid 1969).

⁴⁸ P. 446.

Manuel's maxims are not *aenigmata* in the technical sense. The *aenigma* is the fruit of a non-transparent metaphor, or perhaps even better, it is an allegory⁴⁹ having a referent which is very remote from the *littera*, and its obscurity consists in that distance. Juan Manuel's puzzles instead have no other referent than the one which will appear clear only when its signs are rearranged in a linear logical order. Their enigmatic quality depends exclusively on the alteration of the word order, so that their obscurity is neither in the «sententia» nor in any form of allegory but exclusively in their syntactical order. This is the outcome of the most daring linguistic experimentation which brings Juan Manuel to repeat in the vernacular the boldest artifices of the Latin *rhetoriqueurs*. For all of them, the «ex omni parte confusum» is the synchysis, not the *aenigma*. Synchysis is an unmistakable indication of the total mastery of the *signa* which takes one as far away as possible from the *humilitas elocutionis*. It is a device which bears an aristocratic seal. Juan Manuel's experimentation and the ultimate control of his expressive means are shown in the *cuarta parte*: half of the maxims demonstrate how language reaches *perspicuitas*, and the other half shows how it can attain *obscuritas*. After such experimentation, Juan Manuel returns to more traditional ways of expression, where his rhetorical training manifests itself in a more discrete way.

Perhaps it is not insignificant that Juan Manuel places this rhetorical feat between two parts which, by comparison, have a gloss of *humilitas elocutionis*. The *exempla* of the first part, as well as the sermon-like discourse of the fifth part, aptly use the *stylus gravis*. The first part deals mostly with the problem of living up to the expectations of the «estado»; the fifth part is concerned with the problem of eternal salvation. Rhetorical education seems to constitute the link between the two: rhetorical education as the proper means to understanding both

⁴⁹ Quintilian, *Inst.* VII, 6, 52, speaks outrightly of allegory: «allegoria, quae est obscurior, aenigma dicitur». Bede is more prone to see a metaphor: «Aenigma est obscura sententia per occultam similitudinem rerum» (*De schematibus et tropis*, ed. Halm, *Rhetores Latini minores*, cit., p. 616). Matthew of Vendôme defines the *aenigma* as «sententiarum obscuritas quodam verborum involucrum occultata» (*Ars versificatoria*, III, 44, ed. E. Faral, *Les Arts Poétique*, cit., p. 177).

goals and to giving them a formulation worthy of their social and religious values⁵⁰.

PAOLO CHERCHI
University of Chicago

P.S. While reading the proofs of this article I saw the book by Martha Ana Diz, *Patronis y Lucanor: la lectura inteligente "en el tiempo que es turbio"*, Patomac 1984, who, on pages 148-55, treats the problem of synchysis with results very similar to those reached here.

⁵⁰ On the importance of Rhetoric as an «ennobling» discipline see E. Caldera, «Retorica, narrativa e didattica nel *Conde Lucanor*», *Miscellanea di studii ispanici* 14 (1966-67): 5-120. Fine observations on Juan Manuel's sustained attention on rhetorical matters can be found in L. Terracini, «Tradizione illustre e lingua letteraria nella Spagna del Rinascimento», in *Studi di letteratura spagnola*, Rome 1964, pp. 61-98, especially pp. 78ff.; and in I. Macpherson, «Don Juan Manuel: The Literary Process», in *Studies in Philology* 70 (1973): 1-18. For a survey of rhetorical theories in Juan Manuel's day, see C. Faulhaber, *Latin Rhetorical Theories in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Castile*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1972.