

The Cantigas d'Amigo: An English Translation

The *cantigas d'amigo* are five hundred lyric poems composed in Galician-Portuguese between about 1220 and 1300 by eighty-eight male authors. They are characterized by relatively simple strophic forms (normally with refrain), a rhetoric of repetition and variation, tightly regulated combinatory possibilities of speaker and addressee (in a world of mainly feminine discourse), and a limited but generous complex of situations and actions. They constitute the largest body of female-voiced love lyric in medieval Europe; and they may well contain the oldest organized sequences of love songs in any (Indo-European) vernacular language in the middle ages. The social matrix of the *cantigas d'amigo* probably reflects wooing customs of non-noble women in the Northwest corner of the Iberian peninsula, providing a source for the history of female speech, sexuality, and mentality. This rendering into modern English verse is the first complete translation in any language.

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