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The Fernán Núñez Collection

I selt, that sweltering day last August, as though I had stepped back two hundred years from the steaming asphalt streets of New York into the elegantly appointed eighteenth-century private library of a great Spanish family. I had been retained by the firm of H. P. Kraus, dean of American rare bookdealers, to help identify the individual items in a large collection of Spanish manuscripts, mostly of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Now, as I stepped into the presence of the two hundred and twenty-odd manuscripts comprising the collection, I stepped also into the presence of the Gutiérrez de los Ríos family. Tracing its ancestry back to the conquest of Cordova in 1236, the family was ennobled in 1639 with the title, counts of Fernán Núñez; various members held important posts as servants of the Spanish Crown in the seventcenth and eighteenth centuries. The collection itself was apparently assembled primarily by the sixth count of Fernán Núñez, Spanish ambassador to Portugal and France, philanthropist, art collector, and bibliophile; but it seems clear that many of the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century materials came from the library of Juan Fernández de Velasco, duke of Frías and count of Haro, hereditary constable of Castile and viceroy of Milan between 1592 and 1612.

I approached the leather- and vellum-bound volumes with a sense of eager anticipation. First, of course, there was the thrill of the chase. Who knows what unsuspected treasures, what unknown texts, lie hidden between the covers of the most innocent-looking tomo de varios? More importantly, the library of such a family opens like a window into their

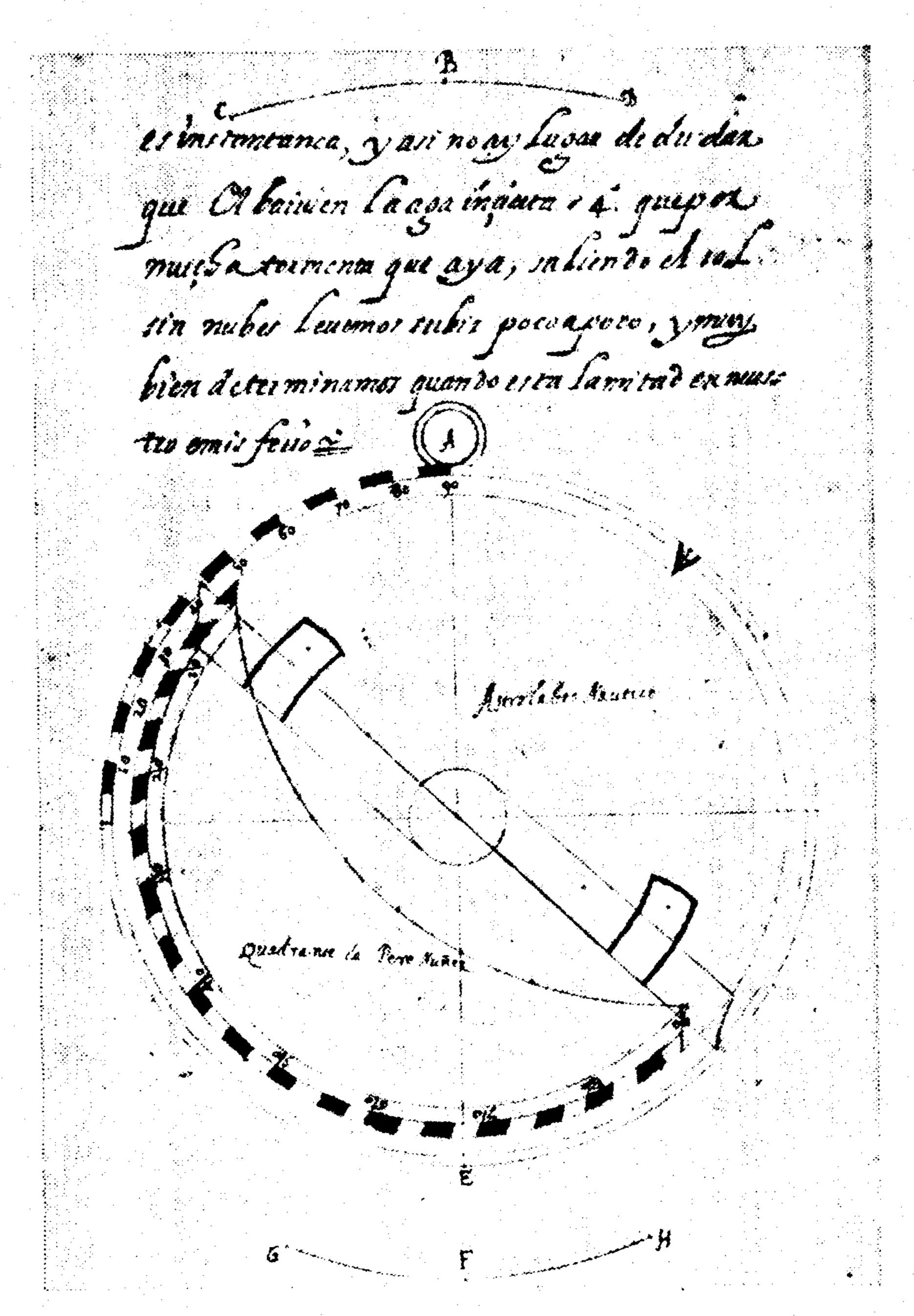


Diagram of a nautical astrolabe and quadrant from the Cosmographia Nautica by Antonio Parisi Moreli, a seventeenth-century Spanish manuscript included in the 225 volumes of the Fernán Núñez archives.

lives. It throws light decade by decade on their intellectual interests, literary tastes, professional duties, artistic sensibilities, illuminating the whole spectrum of their activities. The intellectual context provided by the collection as a whole increases the value of the individual manuscripts many times over as research and instructional tools. Such a collection is a movable archaeological site in which the scholar can trace the intellectual interests of a Spanish

insluence. One can study the literary works Portuguese lyric poetry. This poetry, written against the background of the theological and between the end of the twelfth century and the political texts in the same library, and juxta- middle of the fourteenth, has survived in only pose the theological works with those on three other manuscripts, one from the fourphilosophy. The whole is very much greater—teenth century and two, of Italian origin, from than the sum of the parts.

To most students of Spanish literature he is a larger and more significant. The Crónica del major poet of the seventeenth century, one of rey don Rodrigo or Crónica sarracina, one of two the brightest stars in the literary pleiad of fifteenth-century manuscripts in the collec-Spain's Golden Age. But for his contempo- tion, is a fictionalized history of the conquest raries he was first and foremost a professor of of Spain by the Moors. The work, which theology at the University of Salamanca, a should actually be considered as a chivalric Hebrew scholar—which got him into trouble romance, has not been published since 1587. It with the Inquisition—and an accomplished is in fact the longest fictional text from fifbiblical exegete. The Fernán Núñez collection teenth-century Spain and potentially one of shows both sides of Fray Luis, for it contains the most important, although its true place in an early manuscript of his poetry and one of the evolution of Spanish literature has been his commentaries on the Summa theologica of obscured by the lack of a modern edition. The St. Thomas Aquinas.

days of intensive study I devoted to it, one manuscript after another revealed sophisticated concern for Spanish history and genealogy.

The literary manuscripts are of signal importance. The manuscript of Fray Luis de León and others of Francisco de Figueroa will have los Reyes Católicos of Fernando de Pulgar, folto be taken into consideration in any future lowed by continuations gathered together editions of those poets. There is also a poetic from a variety of sources and in turn continued miscellany compiled in Zaragoza during the until the beginning of the reign of Charles I by period ca. 1610-1625 which reflects the inter- Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal, who makes ests and tastes of the Aragonese poets of that some interesting parenthetical observations on period, of whom the most famous are the the writing of history during the period. In brothers Bartolomé and Lupercio Leonardo addition there are three volumes of the history de Argensola. Regional poetic schools are an of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem by Juan important seature of the Spanish literary land- de Foxa (unpublished?), the Crónica de Ferscape of the period; this manuscript is a key nando IV attributed to Fernando Sánchez de document of the Aragonese school.

Another caucionero of religious poetry appears to have been put together over a period of years in the important Madrid convent of the Discalced Carmelites (las Descalzas Reales) as a record of the poems composed by members of the convent for the various celebrations of the liturgical year, especially Christmas and

Perhaps the most important poetic manuscript of all—pending a more leisurely study of the collection—is a sixteenth-century Italian

noble family during the period of its greatest copy of the corpus of medieval Galicianthe sixteenth.

Consider the example of Fray Luis de León. The collection of historical works is even manuscript, written in a formal round gothic As I began to work my way through the book hand and probably dating from the third collection, my excitement grew. In the five quarter of the fifteenth century, is an important witness to the textual tradition. It has an interesting provenance, since it was owned in literary and historical interests, with a special the seventeenth century by Bernardo de Alderete, the first historian of the Spanish language.

Other historical texts include the Crónica de Valladolid and last edited in the nineteenth century, several copies of the Crónica de João by Fernão Lopes, the greatest historian of medieval Portugal, a copy of the Crónica de Navarra of Carlos, prince of Viana, and an unpublished (?) history of the town of Medina del Campo, which among other things purports to tell the "true" story of the caballero de Olmedo, the hero of a famous play of the same name by Lope de Vega.

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some obviously prepared as ammunition in lawsuits over inheritances, others elaborately deal with architecture, economics, royal houseilluminated "coffee-table books" celebrating hold expenses and personnel in the seventeenth the nobility and antiquity of a given family. Among the former are a respectable number etc., etc. of earlier—mostly fifteenth-century—documents, both originals and copies. Some of alerted my colleagues to the collection. They, these genealogical materials are extant in holo- especially Arthur Askins, former chairman of graph copies prepared by José Pellicer v Osau the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Ovar, the greatest genealogist of seventeenth- explored with Anthony Bliss and James D. century Spain.

manuscript of relectiones (lectures) given by a ularly History and Comparative Literature, number of well-known Salamancan theolo- added their support. Our fund-raising efforts gians—e.g., Francisco de Vitoria, Gregorio were crowned with success, thanks to the gen-Gallo-during the 1530s and '40s, including crosity of Chancellor Heyman and Professor several on the theological problems raised by John T. Wheeler, director of Summer Session; the Spanish conquest of the New World. Some and the collection arrived at the Bancroft at of these lectures are entirely unknown; others, while known, have never been published. They are primary sources both for the history of the University of Salamanca and for Spanish policv toward the Indians.

century materials in detail, but a cursory in- late directly to the research interests of the spection revealed that some of them deal with faculty. For example, Arthur Askins has althe American colonies. There is also a collec- ready begun to study the collection of medition of original letters to and from Ricardo eval Galician-Portuguese poetry, and has dis-Wall, minister of finance under Charles III. covered that the Berkeley manuscript is Nor did I look at the sixty-five tomos de varios original and therefore considerably more imin detail, but the ones I did examine looked as portant than if it were a copy of one of the potentially interesting as the rest of the collection. As the name indicates, they are primarily composite manuscripts of the most hetero- likewise already attracted the attention of Bangeneous materials. The first volume, for ex- croft research associate Helen Rand Parish and ample, contains an immense collection of late Thomas Izbicki, research fellow at Boalt Hall's sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century materials: a fifteenth-century Spanish translation by Martín de Avila of a speech given by the French humanist Jean Jouffroy de Luxeuil, ambassador of the duke of Burgundy, to departments investigate its importance and Afonso V of Portugal in 1449; original docu- relevance for understanding Spanish history, ments of Ferdinand and Isabelle, Joanna the Mad, and Charles I; inventories of books acquired in Italy during the 1530s and '40s; a compilation of citations from classical and medieval authors, particularly canon and civil lawyers, organized alphabetically by subject teaching Spanish codicology (the study of

There are also many manuscripts in Portuguese, a smaller number in Italian, one in and its evolution), is obvious. The collection

There are extensive genealogical materials, Greek, together with several sixteenth-century commentaries on Aristotle. Other manuscripts century, astrology, mathematics, navigation,

When I returned to Berkelev this fall, I Hart the possibilities of acquiring it for Berke-Among documentary sources I found a ley. Colleagues in other departments, particthe end of September, barely a month after we first brought it to the attention of the campus.

The broad support mobilized for the acquisition of the Fernán Núñez collection reflects its value both for research and for instruction. I was not able to examine the eighteenth- A large number of individual manuscripts rethree other extant manuscripts. The manuscript of Salamancan theological materials has Institute of Medieval Canon Law.

This collection will also provide starting points for dozens of doctoral dissertations in the coming years as students in a number of literature, society, politics, and fine arts.

It is a superb teaching collection as well, an unparalleled resource for training graduate students in medieval and Renaissance Spanish literature and history. Its value as a tool for manuscripts as physical objects) and the related science, paleography (the study of handwriting

contains representative samples of the most common types of codices found in Renaissance Spain and of all the important book and secretary hands used there from the second half of the fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth. Thus codicology and paleography can now be taught on the basis of first-hand examples rather than from photographs and facsimiles, making it possible to set realistic manuscript exercises for students. Before, students often avoided many interesting and important dissertation topics simply because they lacked experience in handling primary materials. Now we can introduce students to the kinds of problems they will face while working with manuscript sources in Spain or Latin America, and thereby broaden the range of research that they are qualified to do.

While one does not normally think of the Bancrost as a resource for undergraduate instruction, it can and should serve that purpose as well. Manuscripts and early printed books convey to students more vividly than any lecture the reality of literature in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: the way texts circulated and how they were perceived by their readers. Direct contact with a physical object three or four hundred years old is light years distant from the sanitized version of literature found in anthologies and modern editions. Exposure to primary sources as artifacts helps students to perceive the difference between 1585 and 1985, and gives them a sense of history. Moreover, manuscript work is exciting; it gives the student a sense of the difficulties, and rewards, of original research in a way that nothing else can.

This collection dovetails neatly with the Bancroft's strength in manuscript materials from colonial Latin America and from medieval Catalonia. In contrast to those materials, which are mostly archival in nature, this collection is much more diverse, with a good representation not only of archival materials from Castile, but also of literature, history, philosophy, theology, fine arts, science, politics—in sum, of the entire range of human achievement during the Spanish Renaissance. We are fortunate indeed to have the Fernán Núñez manuscripts in The Bancroft Library.

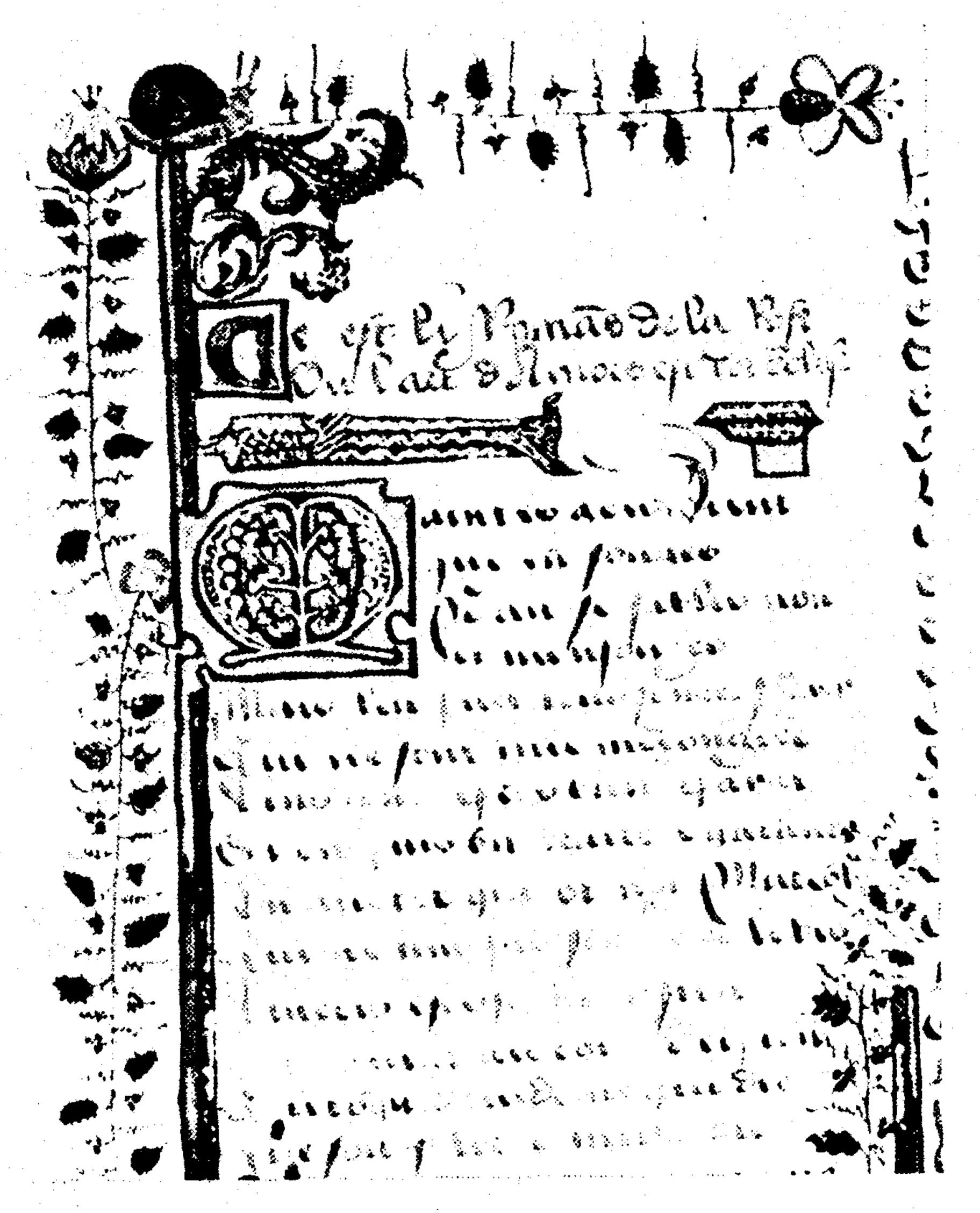
Charles B. Faulhaber
Professor of Spanish

Many Happy Returns: Le Roman de la Rose

To honor the eightieth birthday of their mother, Elinor Raas Heller, Alfred E. Heller, Clarence E. Heller, and Elizabeth H. Mandell presented to The Bancroft Library a beautiful fifteenth-century manuscript of Le Roman de la Rose. This extraordinary gift of a gift adds an important text to our holdings of medieval manuscripts in French, already one of the

major collections in the country.

Of all the works of medieval literature, the allegorical poem Le Roman de la Rose was perhaps the most popular, the most influential, and the most ambiguous. It comprises two distinct parts. The first—by Guillaume de Lorris, who completed the initial 4000 lines in about 1230—represents the "courtois" tradition in its tale of a lover's pursuit of his lady, personified as the Rose. The second—by Jean de Meung, who completed his work between 1268 and 1285—is quite separate and indeed antithetical. It belongs to a bourgeois tradition of skepticism mingled with didacticism in its encyclopedic treatment of diverse subjects. The Roman de la Rose had something for every



Initial page of the French manuscript, Le Roman de la Rose, ca. 1475.