

*Cantiga 268: the Woman who coughed up a snake*

*As the Blessed Virgin sends us on our journeys, so can she show us how to be free of ill*

Following this truth, I will tell of a great miracle performed by the Virgin, who I hope will see fit to have me walk in her company, and to send the Devil off to lie in Hell, where we may never see him.

A woman lived close to the church of St Mary the Great in Cordoba, and bore her name, and thought and believed that she had a snake in her body, a fearful thing.

And in this distress she travelled right through Estremadura, and came to Castile, and it befell that she dreamed and heard a voice saying "Folly it is that you are not going to Silos, where we dwell

and where we were the Abbot; we will advise you how you can be healed, for we are not playing when we say this, for She who is the mirror of all the saints, and whom we watch as our Lady

will guide your ways, and lead you to health." And she went to Silos, and when she had completed the journey she heard again in her dreams "You have not yet finished your pilgrimage, as we see it

but if you wish to be free of pain and grief go to the town of Santa Maria which lies between two seas, which they call the great Port, and when you arrive there you will soon have guidance, of this we have no doubt."

The next day the woman set off and when she arrived at the Port of our true Lady she made her vigil and as she lay alone asleep she had a dream in which she heard: "Let us go

to Cadiz, just as soon as it is dawn, to the Cathedral which has the name of the Holy Cross on which they hung the son whom I carried in my womb, and you will be healed, for we will intercede for you."

The next day she did exactly as she had been commanded and immediately took a boat, and she and others set to sea, and when they spied Cadiz and saw the church they said "Praise be to God

and to his Virgin mother, who has no peer." And the woman opened her mouth and out came a bright red snake, the size of a fat eel, believe this as a fact.

All who saw it were amazed and gave praise to God and his Mother, and when they had returned from Cadiz to El Puerto they gave hearty thanks to the Virgin, on whose favours we wait.