

Prologue to the Cantigas das Festas de Santa Maria

*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*

And as I take great pleasure
in serving her, so will I serve her
and I will strive with all my might
to publish her miracles.
*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*

So I will first speak out to tell
of her five most noble feast days
and I will give an account of them
to please whoever hears it.
*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*

Holy Church established
five feast days, because of the
five letters in her name
as I will now explain.
*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*

M makes the first,
and shows how with her birth
our faith was born and stands
strong, for all who think on it.
*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*

A is for the greeting
Ave that Gabriel spoke
and said that she would bear a son
who was God and man
*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*

R shows how she **re**igned
over all maidens, and loved
her maidenhood and preserved it
to be complete in virtue.
*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*

I is how she went on
to offer to God her son
our Saviour, with great joy
in showing us the way to Heaven.
*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*

A also shows the path
by which she rose to Heaven
from this earthly life
so that we can rise there too.
*Whoever serves the Virgin Mary
will never lack her favour.*