



**El Romancero: Tradicionalidad y pervivencia.**

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comic (p. 244). Walker does admit, however, that Lapesa's argument for a juxtaposition of the parodic and the serious is convincing. In sum, not only does Juan Ruiz present a series of arguments against sexual love, but he attempts to persuade us that it leads to death and dishonor.

The volume Professor Gybbon-Monypenny has put together is not only impressive for its erudition, soundness, and the significant advances it makes in elucidating the *Libro de buen amor*, but also for stemming a possible tide of dilettantism which might have ensued after the deaths of some eminent medievalists within the last decade.

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**Manuel Alvar. *El Romancero: Tradicionalidad y pervivencia*. (Barcelona, Editorial Planeta, 1970. 326 pp. + 24 maps).** FROM the fertile pen of Manuel Alvar comes this collection of studies on the *romancero*, a field traditional both by nature and as center of controversy. It should be noted from the outset that in preparing this volume Mr. Alvar has exercised his right to modify these earlier studies, in some cases extensively, in order to bring them up to date and to present them in a logical sequence, the latter a goal only partially realized.

The book is divided into an "Introducción metodológica," on which more shortly, and sections on "La frontera y la maurofilia literaria," "Tradicionalidad y geografía folklórica," and "El mundo sefardí." To take up the studies in the order of their value, the most important, in that it makes a definite contribution to the theory of the *romancero*, is the last, "Patología y terapéutica rapsódicas. Cómo una canción se convierte en romance," reproduced without change from *RFE*, 42 (1958-59), 19-35. Adapting a process known from linguistics, Mr. Alvar demonstrates how a "sick" song, which had lost much of its sense through evolution, is "restored to health" through the addition of elements drawn from many *romances*.

The longest study in the book, "El romance de Amnón y Tamar. A. La tradición peninsular," (from *CHA*, Nos. 238-240, pp. 308-376), is a geographic study of the variants discovered in 174 versions of this, the only Biblical *romance* found in the peninsula. After classifying and analyzing these, the results are presented in a series of 24 maps, which have been added in this reprinting. If this study, done with great care, is less valuable than the preceding, it is because the conclusions reached (the innovative character of Andalucía, the Asturian conservatism, the Catalan archaism, etc.), merely confirm the results of the classic study

of Diego Catalán and Alvaro Galmés, "La vida de un romance en el espacio y el tiempo,"<sup>1</sup> done with several times the number of texts, and taking into account the temporal factor, which Mr. Alvar, who relies exclusively, for most of Spain, on Menéndez Pidal's collections, was unable to do.

This study is followed by two notes, written earlier, on the Moroccan versions of this *romance* and on Lorca's reworking of it.<sup>2</sup>

The opening "Introducción metodológica," bearing the imposing subtitle of "La tradicionalidad en la escuela española de filología," is really nothing more than Mr. Alvar's study "Menéndez Pelayo y la poesía de tipo tradicional," *Boletín de la Universidad de Granada*, 5 (1956), 51-79, and is by no means an adequate introduction to either the study of the *romancero* or this book. Although revised for its republication, it remains basically a study of Menéndez Pelayo, whose contributions to the study of the *romancero* consisted of noting, in a fleeting clause, the importance of variant versions of a poem, and his capacity, to Mr. Alvar a singularly important virtue, for perceiving the contributions of others.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, one questions the appearance here of Mr. Alvar's "El romancero judeo-español de Marruecos," (originally an inaugural speech in the Universidad Internacional de Canarias, Las Palmas, 1966), particularly as an introduction to the final section of the book. An attempt to present a "visión de conjunto," a great deal said in it is either contained in or presupposed by the earlier studies in the book.

Finally, serious objections must be made to Mr. Alvar's discussions of the *fronterizo* and *morisco romances*. In "Pervivencia de las gestas en el romancero fronterizo," (taken from the prologue to his *Romancero fronterizo y morisco*, Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Romermar Ediciones),<sup>4</sup> Mr. Alvar takes the characteristics which Menéndez Pidal noted in the *Cid* (especially in the prologue to the "Clásicos castellanos" edition), and picks out examples of them in the *romancero fronterizo*. The dangers of this approach should be self-evident. It leads Mr. Alvar to claim for the earliest *romance* of this type, "Cercado tiene a Baeza," at one and the

<sup>1</sup> In the volume *Cómo vive un romance*, Anejo LX of the *RFE* (Madrid, 1954).

<sup>2</sup> "Amnón y Tamar en el romancero marroquí," *Vox Romanica*, 15 (1956), 228-235, and "García Lorca en la encrucijada," *Archivum*, 9 (1959), 231-232.

<sup>3</sup> "Hemos de elogiar—otra vez—el profundo respeto que a Menéndez Pelayo le inspira la obra ajena" (p. 40). Mr. Alvar's patriotism and *nihil nisi bonum* approach are tiring; even one innured to this type of criticism is slightly taken aback to find the Sephardic Jews described as "gentes que abandonaron [!] nuestro suelo hace casi quinientos años y guardan, todavía hoy, como sagrada herencia el patrimonio cultural de sus mayores" (p. 283).

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Alvar does not give the date of this volume and I have been unable to find any other reference to it.

same time the virtues of being historical in nature, since it was based on a real event, and of serving as a historical source, since it is from the poem we know the event it is based upon. Likewise, if we find in the *romancero fronterizo* an interest in spectacle, duels, and personal glory, all of which are foreign to the sober spirit of the *Cid*, this causes Mr. Alvar no concern; if the *romances* do not share these characteristics with the *Cid*, it is because they are instead, like the *Cid*, of "archeological value."

Mr. Alvar's study, "El romancero morisco" (taken both from the prologue just referred to and from his article "Romances de Lope de Vega vivos en la tradición marroquí," *Romanische Forschungen*, 63 [1951], 282-305), is an attempt to gerrymander the meaning of "tradicionalidad" so that it can apply even to these *romances*, the most unquestionably artistic and literary in origin. Although Mr. Alvar accepts Lope de Vega as founder of the *romancero morisco* (p. 103), in an inexplicable contradiction, which I can only attribute to the merging of the two sources of this article, he explains it as due to the interest in the moors which the Alpujarra revolt caused (p. 129). In some unexplained fashion, "el romancero fronterizo se actualizó y pesó sobre las maneras literarias que se estaban gestando" (p. 129), and Pérez de Hita "traditionalized" these romances by fitting them into logical places in his pseudo-history. To my knowledge only a small number of these new *romances* entered oral tradition, not the bulk of them, and the history of these few has been the subject of controversy too complex to go into here.<sup>5</sup>

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Francisco de Espinosa, *Refranero (1527-1547)*, ed. Eleanor S. O'Kane (Sister M. Katharine Elaine, C. S. C.). (Madrid: Imprenta Aguirre, 1967. [*Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, Anejo XVIII.] 255 pp.) MISS O'Kane has salvaged a rich collection of refrains compiled by Francisco de Espinosa during the years 1527-47. Her edition is a careful collation, arranged alphabetically according to the theme word of each entry, of four principal manuscripts. The more than four thousand Spanish refrains represent one of the great *refraneros* of the Renaissance, predating the celebrated compilations of Pedro Vallés [1547], Hernán Núñez [1555], and Juan de Mal Lara [1568]. Perhaps, as Miss O'Kane intimates, Espinosa never

<sup>5</sup> Paul Bénichou, *Romancero judeo-español de Marruecos* (Madrid: Castalia, 1968), pp. 261-262, 319-326.