pean literature to the Renaissance. She then proceeds to show how, while the other European countries discontinued Dido’s defense, Spain becomes her defender. She feels this is so because certain essential characteristics of the Middle Ages—predominance of the didactic point of view over the purely esthetic and historic truth over poetic, as well as the ecclesiastic tradition—‘‘explican el desplazamiento de lo artístico a lo vital, la reivindicación de Dido y condena de la poesía que le había dado vida, ya en pleno Siglo de Oro’’ (p. 138).

The prologue by her husband, Yakov Malkiel, who is responsible for the publication of the book, gives the background on its development—some thirty years—and is beneficial in understanding some of the pseudonyms for Dido and her family, not well explained by Prof. Lida. After finishing the prologue, the intention of the book is more easily understood. I strongly recommend it as a complete guide for anyone interested in this legend, from the poetical or historical point of view. 

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The publication of this book only four years after Gredos issued the study of Marcos Marín, who defends the Arabic origins of Castilian epic poetry, illustrates well how new theories about the epic, confusing in their diversity and often exclusive of each other, are being explored after the death of Menéndez Pidal, to whom Martínez makes a presumably obligatory genuflection in the introduction. Prof. Martínez’s thesis, certainly incompatible with the theories of Pidal, can be easily summarized: there existed in Spain a semi-popular Latin epic poetry, distinct from the Classical Latin epic and sharing some of the stylistic features of vernacular poetry, and this Latin epic is a more immediate and far more probable source for the Castilian epic than are either the Arabs or the Goths, whose oral poetry in Spain is completely hypothetical.

Martínez defends his thesis by a study of the “Poema de Almería,” the surviving Hispano-Latin text most similar to the vernacular epic. He provides a bilingual edition of the poem. Although this text has been known to medievalists for many years, Martínez assigns it new value by establishing it as earlier in date than the Cantar del Mio Cid; therefore the apparent reference in the “Poema de Almería” to vernacular poems about the Cid could not refer to the Cantar, and the unhistorical association of Alvar Fáñez with the Cid could not have been taken from the Castilian poem. Martínez suggests that Alvar Fáñez was first linked with the Cid by the author of the “Poema de Almería”—identified as Arnaldus, bishop of Astorga—in a deliberate attempt to create a pair of heroes in imitation of the “Roland-Olivier” couple of the Chanson de Roland.

Martínez’s theory is attractive and carefully constructed. That it will be universally accepted is unlikely, both because there are so many scholars who vigorously espouse different positions and because, like most writers on the origins of the epic, he moves from the very finite number of hard facts and known texts to a series of suppositions and hypotheses. What is true about the “Poema de Almería”—that, for example, it was born immediately following the events it discusses—need not have been true about other texts which have been lost. That Martínez’s “tradición épica latina medieval” was born as a result of the Moorish invasion (p. 397) seems to this reviewer both unproven and unlikely.

What Martínez has done, however, by examining the concept of a popular Latin epic and the “Poema de Almería” is to reconstruct another important link of a chain which is still too incomplete to allow any firm conclusions about the order in which the links were arranged. This itself is no mean accomplishment, and Martínez’s well-written and erudite study is a substantial contribution to our knowledge of twelfth-century literature and a step forward in the search for the origins of the epic in Spain.

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According to the author, this book is the first full-scale literary study of the Libro del Caballero Zifar. Obviously some time in press, into its writing have gone several years of preparation, a number of quantitative studies, and some intelligent literary analysis coupled with a good bit of speculation. Walker is quite consciously trying to defend and praise the Zifar, which he feels to have been slighted by twentieth-century critics.

The first section discusses “Semitic Elements in the Zifar,” and in it Walker tries to establish that the work comes from an Arabic background, or even from a missing Arabic original. Some of the evidence is persuasive: the proper names, for example, are unquestionably of Semitic inspiration. The stylistic evidence Walker uses to support his thesis is, in a word, inconclusive. The parallels between Arabic literary style and that of the Zifar are there, but Walker does not consider whether the same stylistic ele-