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The *Romance* as Seen by Cervantes

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Cervantes' familiarity with the corpus of poems known as the *romancero viejo* is just as exceptional as is his knowledge of the *libros de caballerías*. Only the other authors of *comedias*, like Juan de la Cueva and Lope, show comparable knowledge, and just as no other author comments so extensively on the *libros*, no one offers the perspective on and discussion of the *romance* that we find in *Don Quixote*. It has not been possible to find a single book which Cervantes used as a source, though he mentions one, the *Romancero general* ("La gitanilla", I, 43, 13). When he mixes, apparently without deliberate intent, verses from different versions of the same poems, including verses which are not known to have been published, we must conclude that he knew *romances* well, learned some from hearing them sung, and quoted from memory.

We can, I believe, conclude the same for the *romances* as for the *libros de caballerías*: Cervantes' extensive knowledge of the texts indicates that he received pleasure from them. Yet some scholars go beyond this, and assume that at the time of composition of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes' enthusiasm for the *romance* had no qualifica-

tions. For example, Morley, apparently the first to bring together the various references to *romances* in Cervantes' works, simply says: "it was to be expected that Cervantes...would take delight in *romances* as well [as in *refranes*], and in fact the *Quijote* is filled with examples of these two kinds of popular Spanish expression".¹ As Morley goes on to suggest, Cervantes has given certain *romances* considerable modern popularity. I would like to argue, however, that Cervantes viewed the *romance* as similar to the *libro de caballerías*: that the *romances* mentioned in *Don Quixote*, whatever their attractions, had serious defects, and he wanted to expose these to his readers.

The first step in determining Cervantes' view of the *romance* is to ascertain what he understood by the word, which he does use, and this is a complicated matter, as it is part of a complex family of terms,² and the texts called such have been quite diverse. A further

¹S. Griswold Morley, *Spanish Ballads* (New York: Henry Holt, 1938; first edition 1911), p. xxix. Menéndez Pidal, taking Morley's position a step further, saw the influence of *romances* on *Don Quixote* as a result of Cervantes' use of the *Entremés de los romances*; thus Cervantes was claimed to see *romances* as "admirable", and not deserving a burlesque attack ("Un aspecto en la elaboración del *Quijote*", most accessible in Pidal's *De Cervantes y Lope de Vega*, Colección austral, 120, segunda edición [Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1964; la primera ed. es de 1940], pp. 9-60). However, the priority of the *Entremés* has been disproven by Luis Andrés Murillo, using data from Asensio's study of the genre, in his "Cervantes y el *Entremés de los romances*", *Actas del VIII Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas* (Madrid: Istmo, 1986), II, 353-57.

²I know of no comprehensive discussion of the term "romance", tracing its evolution from a language of literature to a feeling or attitude (Vivian Gornick's *The Romance of American Communism*) to a love affair; the volume "*Romantic*" and its Cognates. *The European History of a Word*, ed. Hans Eichner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), is limited to a modern portion. Previous discussions of its meaning in Spain include Ludwig Pfandl, "La palabra española 'romance'", *Investigaciones lingüísticas*, 2 (1934), 254-64 (in German on pp. 242-53); Werner Krauss, "Novela-Novella-Roman", in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Literatur und Sprachwissenschaft* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1949), pp. 50-67); Miguel Garci-Gómez, "Romance según los textos españoles del Medioevo y Prerrenacimiento", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1964), 35-62; and Russell P. Sebold, "Lo 'romancesco', la novela y el teatro romántico", in his *Trayectoria del romanticismo español. Desde la ilustración a Bécquer* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1983), pp. 137-63. I have not seen the article of Manuel Alvar, "La palabra romance en español", in *Estudios románicos dedicados al Prof. Andrés Soria Ortega* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1985), pp. 17-25.

hindrance is that the *romance* in the sixteenth century, the time of its greatest popularity, has been little studied, as investigation of the *romance* has been focused on the medieval period,³ its hotly-debated link to the medieval epic,⁴ and on the links between the medieval period and a modern oral tradition.⁵ What attention the sixteenth century has received has been focused on the publication of texts, and even on them, fundamental bibliographic work has been published only recently.⁶ Little attention has been paid to how, in Cervantes' day, the *romance* was seen.

It is, in the first place, abundantly clear that *romance*, in the

³On the origins of what is today called the *romance*, a valuable recent contribution is Dorothy Clotelle Clarke, "Juan Ruiz: A *romance viejo* in the *Libro de buen amor (la mora)?"*, *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 31 (1984), 391-402.

⁴On this debate, see Samuel Armistead, "Epic and Ballad: A Traditionalist Perspective", *Olifant*, 8 (1981 [1983]), 375-88, who provides references to predecessors, and the articles cited in note 39, *infra*.

⁵It is curious that many modern informants do not know the term *romance* as a name for their texts: "La palabra *cantar*...es la única empleada entre los judíos españoles de Marruecos residentes en Orán para designar los *romances*, término que ignoran" (Bénichou, cited by Garci-Gómez, p. 62). "In most cases, there is no point in asking [an informant] for 'romances', since nowadays the word means little or nothing...in the majority of the farming communities that preserve them" (Manuel da Costa Fontes, "*Voces nuevas: A New Spanish Ballad Collection*", *Journal of Hispanic Philology*, 8 (1983 [1984]), 49-66, at p. 51); however, Samuel Armistead stated that "*romance* as a popular term for an 8-syllable narrative poem is in traditional use in some of the most archaic lateral areas: *romansa* (Eastern Sephardim), *rimance/remanse* (Trás-os-Montes), *romance* (Venezuela/Extremadura)" (personal communication, 1983). The term is found repeatedly in the titles of *The Judeo-Spanish Ballad Chapbooks of Jacob Abraham Yoná*, ed. Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970).

⁶F. J. Norton and Edward M. Wilson, *Two Spanish Verse Chap-books: Romance de Amadis (c. 1515-19), Juyzio hallado y trobado (c. 1510). A Facsimile Edition with Bibliographical and Textual Studies* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969); Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino, *Diccionario bibliográfico de pliegos sueltos poéticos (Siglo XVI)* (Madrid: Castalia, 1970), and *Manual bibliográfico de cancioneros y romanceros impresos durante el siglo XVI* (Madrid: Castalia, 1973). Brian Dutton, *Catálogo-Índice de la poesía cancioneril del siglo XV* (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1982), includes imprints through 1520.

sixteenth century and to Cervantes, was not a metrical term and did not imply the use of octosyllabic verse, although *romances* were most commonly written in such meter. An identification of the *romance* with octosyllabic meter is found nowhere in the Spanish Golden Age,⁷ and is, surprisingly, unknown before the nineteenth century, when it is dated by Martín Alonso in his *Enciclopedia del idioma* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1958).⁸ The collection which defined the

⁷It is also unknown with that meaning in the Spanish Middle Ages through the middle of the fifteenth century, as is discussed by Garci-Gómez, who points out “cuán urgente es revisar las definiciones de *romance*, que corren por nuestros diccionarios y manuales de literatura, donde no sólo se han desatendido más de dos siglos de uso del término—cuando éste nació y se desarrolló—, sino que se han ocasionado lamentables errores en la interpretación de algunos textos tan importantes en las letras castellanas como el del marqués de Santillana” (p. 35). Juan Ruiz refers to his entire book as a *romance* (14b, 1148c); he “did not use the term *romance* in the modern sense or to designate any specific metric pattern” (Clarke, “Juan Ruiz”, p. 400, n. 2). A prose chronicle of the Cid was called a *romanz* in 1429 (Garci-Gómez, “The Reaction Against Medieval Romances. Its Spanish Forerunners”, *Neophilologus*, 60 [1976], 220-32, at p. 231, n. 6). Alan Deyermond argued, in “The Lost Genre of Medieval Spanish Literature” (*Hispanic Review*, 43 [1975], 231-59), for the existence of the medieval Spanish romance (in the English sense of a type of fictional narrative), even though Spanish did not have a word for it. One of the consequences of Deyermond's influential article is that Gonzalo Sobejano asked “que la crítica española, cualquiera que fuere su estimación de la narrativa heroica, se habituase a usar el término 'romance' para designar toda narrativa de ese tipo—medieval y posterior—a distinción de 'novela'” (“Sobre tipología y ordenación de las *Novelas ejemplares*”, *Hispanic Review*, 46 [1978], 65-75, at p. 66).

The meaning of *romance* during the latter part of the fifteenth century and early sixteenth century is also less than clear, as Clarke points out, though closer to the meaning commonly accepted today; the only firm metrical definition is Nebrija's problematical identification of the *romance* with 16-syllable verse. See on this problem (chronologically) Dorothy Clotelle Clarke, “The Spanish Octosyllable”, *Hispanic Review*, 10 (1942), 1-11; “Remarks on Early *Romances* and *Cantares*”, *Hispanic Review*, 17 (1949), 89-123, especially the last page; Florence Street, “Some Reflexions on Santillana's 'Prohemio e carta'”, *Modern Language Review*, 52 (1957), 230-33; and Clarke, “The Marqués de Santillana and the Spanish Ballad Problem”, *Modern Philology*, 59 (1961), 13-24.

⁸Although in the introductory chapter (I, §2) defining the scope of his *Romancero hispánico* (Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1953) Menéndez Pidal equates the *romance* with “[una] composición monorríma, asonantada en un octosílabo no y otro sí,” in the chapter on “Métrica de los romances” he does admit that, somewhat to his surprise, when working with the Sephardim he found it impossible to limit collecting to octosyllabic verse (IV, §17). He criticizes both sixteenth-century and

romance to nineteenth-century scholarship was Martín Nucio's *Cancionero de romances* (late 1540's), yet while his poems are all octosyllabic, he speaks in his prologue of the "metros" in which the "diversidad de historias...dichas...con mucha brevedad" are found.⁹ In his prologue to a *romancero* much more popular in the sixteenth century, the *Romances nueuamente sacados de historias antiguas de la cronica de España* (about 1550), Lorenzo de Sepúlveda says that he has written in "metro Castellano", although in "tono de Romances viejos, que es lo q̄ agora se usa".¹⁰ Six-syllable meter could be used for a *romance*, as a theorist like Juan Díaz Rengifo (1592) points out,¹¹ and Cervantes, in "La gitanilla" (*I*, 33, 27), calls

twentieth-century collectors for limiting themselves, but this qualification of his definition of the *romance* has had little impact.

⁹Ed. Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino (Madrid: Castalia, 1967), p. 109; *Manual*, I, 190. Cervantes probably did not know Nucio's collection directly, but the same prologue is found in Esteban de Nágera's *Primera parte de la Silva de varios Romances*, Zaragoza, 1550 (*Manual*, I, 322; p. 99 of Rodríguez-Moñino's edition, *Silva de romances [Zaragoza 1550-1551]. Ahora por vez primera reimpressa desde el siglo XVI en presencia de todas las ediciones* [Zaragoza: Publicaciones de la Cátedra Zaragoza a expensas del Excmo. Ayuntamiento de la inmortal ciudad, 1970]).

¹⁰Ed. Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino (Madrid: Castalia, 1967), p. 43; *Manual*, I, 230.

It is hard to say just why Sepúlveda's collection was more popular; it is, however, part of the dichotomy in the later sixteenth century between books of poetry published within and outside of Castile. Within Castile the only poet today studied who had substantial popularity was the soldier-poet Garcilaso; aside from him it was Sepúlveda, Lucas Rodríguez' *Romancero historiado*, and the religious poetry of López de Úbeda and Pedro de Padilla. Outside Castile, where Boscán was repeatedly published (and where, of course, Garcilaso's works first appeared) these latter authors were rarely published; there was a greater variety of poetry, of much greater literary value by the standards of everyone except, it would seem, contemporary Castilians. That some official guidance played a part in the choice of works to publish in Castile is very likely; I have suggested in *A Study of "Don Quixote"* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 1987), pp. 32-38, that such influence can be detected in the publication patterns of *libros de caballerías* during this period. Yet if the books of authors such as Sepúlveda and Rodríguez had not satisfied Castilian tastes they would never have been reprinted as often as they were. What is clear is that both with *romances* and, to a lesser extent, with *culto* poetry there was substantial circulation of texts in other than book form.

¹¹*Arte poética española* (1606; rpt. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), pp. 38-41.

a poem in that meter a *romance*. (The modern label of *romancillo* for such a poem was unknown in the Golden Age.¹²) In contrast with, say, sonnets, which were never written in octosyllables, the *romance* was taken in the seventeenth century as permitting the use of eleven-syllable verse, and we find this meter mentioned in the *Diccionario de autoridades*.¹³

Cervantes' most important source for literary theory, Alonso López Pinciano (1596), shows little interest in eight-syllable verse, and does not mention *romance* in connection with it; his one reference to a *romance viejo* is found in discussing a six-syllable poem, and he uses *romance* as a translation for the Italian "romanzo" or chivalric poem.¹⁴ While in the 1737 edition of Luzán's *Poé-*

¹²It is not found in the comprehensive presentation of verse types in *La pícaro justina*, is missing in all dictionaries through *Autoridades*, and is not dated, nor are examples given, in the modern historical dictionaries (Corominas, Martín Alonso). The quotations from theorists supplied by José Domínguez Caparrós, *Contribución a la historia de las teorías métricas en los siglos XVIII y XIX*, Anejo 92 of the *Revista de Filología Española* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 481-82, suggest that the term came into use in the nineteenth century, when the *romance* was identified with octosyllabic meter. When this term is found in editions of Golden Age poetry (for example, Pedro Espinosa, *Poesías completas*, ed. Francisco López Estrada, Clásicos castellanos, 205 [Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1975], p. 50), it is a label applied by modern editors (cf. Francisco Rodríguez Marín, *Pedro Espinosa, 1578-1650* [1907; rpt. Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1970], p. 357).

¹³Menéndez Pidal (*Romancero hispánico*, I, §2) furnishes several examples of texts called *romances* yet not *romances* as we understand that term today, and points out that publications dedicated to *romances*, both *pliegos sueltos* and book-length collections, sometimes included other types of verse. (Although there are 40 poems not *romances* included in the *Romancero general* of 1600, and "cien folios de poesías en metro endecasílabo" in the 1605 edition, he calls this a "rare" phenomenon.) Dorothy Clotelle Clarke dates endecasyllabic *romances* from "the late Golden Age", and discusses eighteenth-century *romances* in a variety of meters in *A Chronological Sketch of Castilian Versification together with a List of its Metric Terms*, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 34, No. 3 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1952), 34, No. 3 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1952), 279-382, at p. 306. See also Domínguez Caparrós, pp. 479-81.

¹⁴*Philosophía antigua poética*, ed. Alfredo Carballo Picazo (1953; rpt. Madrid: CSIC, 1973), II, 225; II, 261; and II, 165, respectively. On the importance of El Pinciano for Cervantes, see also "Cervantes and Tasso Reexamined", in the present volume.

tica it would seem that *romances* were always octosyllabic, in the 1789 edition this position is qualified.¹⁵ Those who do have a name for this meter, and a sense of its tradition, identify it with the *redondillo(a)*, “que de tiempo inmemorial, hasta hoy, se usa en España”, as it is put by Martín Sarmiento in the first history of Spanish poetry (mid-eighteenth century).¹⁶ Gonzalo Argote de Molina (1575), who has a clear bias and claims that the *romance* existed in Visigothic times, discusses it, similarly, as made up of *coplas redondillas*,¹⁷ and the same position is taken by Luis Alfonso de Carballo (1602),¹⁸ Juan Díaz Rengifo,¹⁹ and Gonzalo Correas.²⁰ *Redondilla*, like *romance*, had a different meaning than today; it was the general term for octosyllabic verse written in stanzas, as *romances* were believed to be.²¹

¹⁵Ed. Russell P. Sebold (Barcelona: Labor, 1974), pp. 352 (1737), 137 (1789) and 366 (1789). On Luzán's authorship of the revisions and additions of 1789, see Sebold's introduction, pp. 64-76.

¹⁶*Memorias para la historia de la poesía y poetas españoles* (Madrid, 1775), §§402-03.

¹⁷“Discurso...sobre la poesía castellana contenida en este libro”, published in Argote's edition of the *Conde Lucanor* (1575; rpt. Barcelona: Puvill, 1978). I have used the edition in Menéndez Pelayo's *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos*, edición nacional, IV (Madrid: CSIC, 1944), 65-74, in which the *romance* is discussed on pp. 66-67.

¹⁸*Cisne de Apolo*, ed. Alberto Porqueras Mayo (Madrid: CSIC, 1958), I, p. 212: “el Romance es de una Redondilla multiplicada” (pp. 38-39).

¹⁹In its “metro...toda es una Redondilla multiplicada” (pp. 38-39).

²⁰“El verso de à ocho silabas de rredondilla maior...de que se componen las rredondillas en cuartillas i quintillas i dezimas i los rromanzas” (*Arte de la lengua española castellana*, ed. Emilio Alarcos Llorach, Anejo 56 de la *Revista de Filología Española* [Madrid, 1954], p. 462).

²¹“Aunque el consonante deue durar todo el Romance, hasta acabarse, con todo esso va diuidiendose el sentido de quatro en quatro versos, a manera de quartilla, quiero dezir, que en cada quatro versos se ha de perficionar el sentido, como si fuera una copla” (*Cisne de Apolo*, I, 213); “aun los romances suelen yr de quatro en quatro pies [versos]” (Juan Carlos Temprano, “El *Arte de la poesía castellana* de Juan del Encina (Edición y notas)”, *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 53 [1973], 321-50, at p. 339, with notes on p. 349). For discussion and references,

To the extent that the *romance* was understood in terms of its form, it was taken to be a rhyme scheme, with a single rhyme on even-numbered lines only; all of Cervantes' *romances* are of this form, and this is the definition given by Carballo, Díaz Rengifo, and *Autoridades*. Yet we must remember that in the Golden Age, versification was less important, and content more important, than today.²² Many saw verse and poetry as quite different: it was a basic principle of neo-Aristotelian literary theory,²³ found in "todos nuestros buenos tratadistas" (Díez Echarri, p. 85), that poetry and verse were distinct. Both López Pinciano and Cervantes believed that poetry did not require verse, nor did the use of verse imply that what was written was therefore poetry.²⁴ *La Galatea*, Cervantes stated in the prologue, was an eclogue, and the *Persiles* was a prose epic in imitation of that of Heliodorus.²⁵

It is from this perspective that we need to examine the *romance*, universally recognized as a narrative genre, which resembles prose

besides the second article of Clarke cited in note 8, see Emiliano Díez Echarri, *Teorías métricas del siglo de oro*, Anejo 47 of the *Revista de Filología Española* (Madrid, 1949), p. 204.

²²On the primacy of content in Golden Age poetry before Góngora, see the important article of David Darst, "Las palabras y las cosas en la iniciación del culteranismo español", in *Studies in Honor of William C. McCrary* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 1986), pp. 91-113.

²³"In nearly all documents of Renaissance criticism [we find that] Lucan's *Pharsalia* is history although it is written in meter" (Alban Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the "Persiles"* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970], p. 70). Alquife, fictitious "coronista" of Feliciano de Silva's *Amadís de Grecia*, refers in his prologue to "las elegantes prosas del poeta Homero" (Cuenca, 1530, fol. +2"). Medievalists may recall that Berceo (*Santo Domingo*, 2a), Juan Ruiz (*Libro de buen amor*, 11c, 33e, 1631b), and the author of the *Poema de Fernán González* (1d) all declared in their verse that they were writing *prosas*.

²⁴Slightly later, Lope wrote that his *Dorotea* is "poesía...aunque escrita en prosa" ("Al teatro", in the edition of Edwin S. Morby [Madrid: Castalia, 1968], p. 51; see the annotations of Morby for comments of López Pinciano and others on the difference between verse and poetry).

²⁵Cervantes' preference for prose over verse is used to argue that his lost *Bernardo* would have been in prose (*A Study of "Don Quixote"*, pp. 54-55).

more than does any other type of verse. Most *romances*, and especially the *romances viejos* mentioned in *Don Quixote*, were not *poesía* (literature), but *historia* (the telling of events). This is the meaning which the early bilingual lexicographers give: a *romance* was a song, but one which contained *historia*. Cesar Oudin, in his *Tesoro de las dos lenguas francesa y española* (1607), translates *romance* as “Histoire, mise en Romant [vernacular language] et en verse de langage vulgaire”. Lorenzo Franciosini, in his *Vocabolario italiano e spagnolo* (1620), offers “canzona in Spagnolo, che contiene un historia”. And John Minshieu, in his *Vocabularium hispano-latinum et anglicum* (1617?), translates *romancero* as “a historie in Rime”.²⁶

Furthermore, since the term *historia* had a broader meaning than today,²⁷ it must be added that the *historia* included in *romances* is to be understood as history, not story; this is especially valid for the second half of the sixteenth century, and is certainly how Ginés Pérez de Hita viewed the *romances viejos* he included in the *Historia de los vandos de los Zegríes y Abencerrajes*, commonly known as the *Guerras civiles de Granada*.²⁸ Many new *romances* were written on historical topics: the conquest of America²⁹ and the

²⁶It is revealing to see how the early translators of *Don Quixote* rendered the term *romance*. Franciosini uses only “canzona”. Oudin and Rosset usually translate it as “roman(t)”, occasionally as “vers”. Shelton, who did not use Minshieu as a source (see James Fitzmaurice-Kelly's introduction to his edition of Shelton's translation [London, 1896], I, xl), translates it most often as “romaunce”, “romant(e)”, or “song” (prefixing “olde” to these on occasion), and rarely as “ballad” or “dittie”.

²⁷A *Study of “Don Quixote”*, pp. 81-82; also the classic article of Bruce Wardropper, “*Don Quixote*: Story or History?”, *Modern Philology*, 63 (1965), 1-11.

²⁸For example, “Este romance [“En las huertas de Almería”] lo dizen de otra manera, diziendo que Galiana estava en Toledo. Y es falso, porque la Galiana de Toledo fue grandes tiempos antes que los Abenamares viniessen al mundo.... Esta Galiana, de quien aquí tratamos, era de Almería, y por ella se dize el romance, y no por la otra.” (Ed. Paula Blanchard-Demouge [Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1913-15], I, 36-37.)

²⁹For an introduction and references, see Winston Reynolds, *Romancero de Hernán Cortés* (Madrid: Alcalá, 1967).

war in northern Europe,³⁰ for example; Juan Timoneda used that form to describe many important events he witnessed, and then published them in a collection to answer “continuas preguntas, de saber, quando fue esto, y acontescio tal negocio”.³¹ *Romances* were seen as a way of disseminating historical information among the culturally underprivileged; Lorenzo de Sepúlveda explains in his prologue that he has published his collection so that readers can “leerlas [historias] en este traslado, a falta de el original [the chronicle of Ocampo] de donde fueron sacados: que por ser grãde volumen, los que poco tienen careceran del por no tener para comprarlo”.³² This was, however, even the intention of Nucio. I have already quoted him on the “historias” in his collection, which, his prologue points out, are arranged by subject. When Sepúlveda’s collection appeared, Nucio quickly reprinted it, adding a prologue in which he said, approvingly, that Sepúlveda had done “lo mesmo” as he, “seguí[endo] el intento con que esto comence y trabaje”.³³ Nucio’s collection, then, was published for its historical content, rather than poetic qualities, and he was unaware of, or gave little importance to, the difference modern scholars perceive between the poems he published and those of Sepúlveda.

Considering *romances* as *historia*, it is understandable that just as they were, by and large, excluded from the great fifteenth-century *cancioneros*, they are not found in Golden Age poetry anthologies, such as Pedro de Espinosa’s *Flores de varia poesía* (1605),³⁴ nor are *romanceros* included in the poetry section of Don

³⁰Pedro de Padilla’s *Romancero* (1583) contains “algunos successos que en la jornada de Flandres los Españoles hizieron. Con otras historias y poesias diferentes” (*Manual*, I, 681; italics mine).

³¹*Rosa real* (Valencia, 1573; ed. Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino as part of the volume titled *Rosas de romances* [Oxford: Dolphin, 1963], fol. i^r; *Manual*, I, 576).

³²P. 43 of Rodríguez-Moñino’s edition; *Manual*, I, 230.

³³P. 53 of Rodríguez-Moñino’s edition of Sepúlveda; *Manual*, I, 240.

³⁴This is the most famous poetry anthology of Cervantes’ day, whose mediocre reception (only one edition; the second part unpublished until 1896) shows that contrary to myth, “modern” poetry enjoyed no more general acceptance then than today. The edition of this anthology in *Biblioteca de autores españoles*, 42, is

Quixote's library. It is also understandable that the *romance* was given superficial treatment, or none at all, by writers on poetry.³⁵ To the extent that there was interest in *romances viejos*,³⁶ the belief that they contained historical information explains it; viewing them as *historia* also helps explain the anonymity of the genre,³⁷ and the concern some sixteenth-century editors showed with the accuracy of their texts. And this is the point from which we can begin our examination of Cervantes' view of the *romance*, focusing on its content; the verse form was secondary. What kind of *historias* do these *romances* tell?

Chivalric *historias* is what they tell, and the name may well

incomplete; the only complete modern edition is that of Juan Quirós de los Ríos and Francisco Rodríguez Marín (Seville, 1896).

³⁵Miguel Sánchez de Lima never mentions *romances* in the body of his *Arte poética en romance castellano* (1580), a work surely read by Cervantes; the only octosyllabic verse is *coplas redondillas* (ed. Rafael de Balbín Lucas [Madrid: CSIC, 1944], p. 50). At the end, however, in the *Historia de los amores que vuo entre Calidonio, y la hermosa Laurina*, he decides to "contaros mi historia...en verso", and uses it as an "exemplo para los romances Castellanos, que tan agradables son, porque saben a *aquella compostura antigua Castellana*, que ta[n]to en los tiempos passados florecio" (p. 112); the italicized words imply that the term *romance* is applied to modern texts, not older ones.

³⁶Nucio was, of course, interested in *romances viejos*, though it is not clear how old he thought his texts were or whether, like Argote ("Discurso", pp. 66-67), he believed them contemporaneous to the events narrated. However, some authors and readers found new texts more interesting. There are several instances in which, in preference to a *romance* described as *viejo*, a new version or *contrahechura* was published in its place. (There are five such examples in the *Cancionero general*; see Rodríguez-Moñino, *Manual*, I, 38-40, Nos. 437, 447, 451, 469, and 482.) In the first half of the sixteenth century, many *romances* were published with a description like *nuevamente compuestos*; Sepúlveda, and the compilers of many collections of the end of the century, indicated in their titles that their texts were *nuevos*. Pérez de Hita (*Guerras civiles de Granada*, Part I, Chapter 13; the quotation is reproduced in Menéndez Pidal's *Romancero hispánico*, XIV, §7) felt obliged to justify his use of *romances viejos*.

³⁷There was no prestige in versifying history. Thus, Nucio on the author of the additions to his edition of Sepúlveda: "el nombre del autor de los añadidos se calla porq̄ se guarda para cosas mayores q̄ cõformen cõ su persona y habito" (Rodríguez-Moñino's edition, p. 53; *Manual*, I, 240).

have been given to them for this reason.³⁸ The *romances viejos* known in the sixteenth century are full of kings and queens, knights and ladies, enchantments, battles, swords, all the elements that one finds in the chivalric world (believed to be historical) and in the *libros de caballerías*. Like the *libros*, the *romances viejos* are stories of heroes: the Cid, Roland, Bernardo del Carpio, and so on.

Not only were the *romances* chivalric in their content, they had other similarities to the pseudo-historical *libros de caballerías* as well, and Cervantes must have noticed some of these. Like the *libros*,³⁹ they provided *pasatiempo*, as historical reading was understood to do.⁴⁰ Although many *romances* dealt with national history,

³⁸“Romance” as a term for a chivalric story is and has been widely used, for which reason the Spanish *libros de caballerías* have been given the English label of “romances of chivalry”. (The use of this term has led to distortions, as it gives the chivalric books a fictional classification which they did not have in the Golden Age, and overstates their resemblance to Italian *romanzi*; see my “Cervantes and Tasso Reexamined”, in this volume.) Yet its application to the Spanish verse *historias* under examination has never been explained. That it was used for its chivalric overtones is a strong possibility; Nebrija, the only early Spanish lexicographer to give other than the linguistic meaning of “vernacular language”, defines it as “carmen heroicum” (cited by Corominas).

López Pinciano, as already cited, used the term as a translation for the Italian “romanzo”, and Pigna, first writer on the *romanzo*, called Spanish ballads by that name (the passage is cited in Forcione, *Cervantes, Aristotle, and the “Persiles”*, p. 25, n. 32; see also my “Cervantes and Tasso Reexamined”, in this volume). On Italian influence on the early *romance* see Charles Aubrun, “Romances y opinión pública en el siglo XVI”, in *Essays on Narrative Fiction in the Iberian Peninsula in Honour of Frank Pierce*, ed. R. B. Tate (Oxford: Dolphin, 1982), pp. 1-14; “Le Cancionero general de 1511 et ses trente-huit romances”, *Bulletin Hispanique*, 86 (1984), 39-60; “Les premiers romances dits carolingiens”, in *Iberia. Literary and Historical Issues. Studies in Honour of Harold V. Livermore*, ed. R.O.W. Goertz (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 11-20; and to a lesser extent Harold Livermore, “The 15th Century Evolution of the Romance”, *Iberoromania*, 23 (1986), 20-39. The evidence is not overwhelming, but the change in the term *romance's* meaning is striking, and no other explanation has been suggested.

³⁹While Cervantes attacks the entertainment of the *libros* as scanty and morally and esthetically deficient, he does state that that was the *libros'* proper function in society, and that many readers did use them that way. See *A Study of “Don Quixote”*, pp. 7, 85, 91-92, and 94.

⁴⁰Nucio, in the prologue to his own collection: “qualquiera persona para su recreacion y passatiempo holgaria delo tener” (p. 109; *Manual*, I, 190); Sepúlveda in his prologue: “Considerando quan prouechosa sea la lection de las historias

a large number, like the *libros*, featured foreign heroes.⁴¹ Many of both were published anonymously, or were the product of undistinguished authors⁴²; neither told a complete story.⁴³ Just as the *libros* were the most abundant kind of prose entertainment in the sixteenth century, the *romances* were the most abundant kind of verse. As the great popularity of the *libros* is stressed in Part I of *Don Quixote*,⁴⁴ so is that of *romances*: the *romance viejo* of Lanzarote (*I*, 64, 15-16, I, 2) is “tan sabido...y tan decantado en nuestra España” (*I*, 168, 1-2, I, 13). Because both were so abundant (the many imprints) and so popular (the heavy use made of those imprints), there exists today in both cases only a poor representa-

antiguas, amicissimo señor, ansi para tenerla como por espejo deláte de los ojos, en que se veã los altos y heroycos hechos de los antepassados, para dar recreacion a nuestro entendimiento como para imitarlos...” (p. 43; *Manual*, I, 230); Juan de Escobar, *Hystoria, del my noble y valeroso cavallero el Cid Ruy Diez de Bivar: en Romances: En lenguaje antiguo* (Lisbon, 1605): “Las hystorias prophanas suelen dar mucho contentamiento a los lectores” (ed. Rodríguez-Moñino [Madrid: Castalia, 1973], p. 120; *Manual...siglo XVII*, I, [Madrid: Castalia, 1977], 122); also Juan Hidalgo's *Romances de germania* (before 1605?), in *Manual...siglo XVII*, I, 214. *Romances* are associated with *entretenimiento* at *Don Quixote*, *IV*, 14, 4-5, II, 38; the pleasure caused by the reading of (prose) history is a *topos*.

⁴¹A Study of “*Don Quixote*”, pp. 62-63.

⁴²The names of many little-known authors are found with *romances*: Pinar, Quirós, Soria, and so on. There has been little study of *romances* with authors indicated (the first to study them is Kathleen Kish, “Los romances trovadorescos del *Cancionero sin año*”, in *Actas del Sexto Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas* [Toronto: University of Toronto, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, 1980], pp. 427-30), because of the assumption that those with no name attached are older and better. Perhaps this is so, but the demonstration remains to be made.

⁴³This is, of course, a well-known characteristic of the *romances viejos* (on its origin, see Keith Whinnom, “Desde las coplas hasta el romance de la reina de Nápoles”, in *Aspetti e problemi delle letteratura iberiche: studi offerti a Franco Meregalli*, ed. Giuseppe Bellini [Roma: Bulzoni, 1981], pp. 371-83, at p. 382), yet the same inconclusiveness is universal in the *libros de caballerías*; see my “The Pseudo-Historicity of the Romances of Chivalry”, *Quaderni Ibero-Americani*, Nos. 45-46 (1974-75), 253-59, now in *Romances of Chivalry in the Spanish Golden Age* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 1982), pp. 119-29.

⁴⁴*Don Quixote*, *I*, 38, 5-7, I, Prologue; *II*, 346, 27-347, 2, I, 48; *II*, 370, 7-12, I, 50.

tion of a large body of works, and, consequently, bibliographical difficulties. While both existed earlier, both profited spectacularly from the spread of printing, and had a burst of popularity, and much new composition,⁴⁵ at the beginning of the sixteenth century, reaching their peak during Carlos V's reign.

Just as the *libros de caballerías* were read by “todo género de personas” (*Don Quixote*, II, 370, 11, I, 50), the *romance* of the Marqués de Mantua, by which Don Quixote sets such store, is known to everyone: “niños, mozos y viejos” (I, 88, 9-11, I, 5, adapted). Thus both were read by young people as well as adults,⁴⁶ and this was particularly troublesome, because some popular *romances* were, like the *libros*, quite lascivious.⁴⁷

Considering the many parallels between the *romance* and the *libro de caballerías*, an aspect of *Don Quixote* which puzzles modern readers,⁴⁸ that the protagonist models his existence on *romances* as well as *libros*, becomes less perplexing. The error of doing so is pointed out in the work. Don Quixote's oath to imitate “el grande Marqués de Mantua” and not “comer pan a manteles, ni con su muger folgar” (I, 140, 7-10, I, 10), is inappropriate, as Sancho points out to him; all the same, it is the origin of his intent to steal⁴⁹ a helmet like that of Mambrino (I, 140, 24-32, I, 10).

⁴⁵See the first article of Aubrun cited in note 39.

⁴⁶Rodríguez-Moñino, *Diccionario*, pp. 18-19, presents evidence of their use in school.

⁴⁷“La gitanilla”, I, 35, 27-30; I, 41, 5-6; probably *Don Quixote*, IV, 166, 14-16, II, 51. I presume Cervantes is pointing this out to us by quoting lines like “con su muger folgar” (*Don Quixote*, I, 140, 10, I, 10) and “Ya me comen, ya me comen / por do más pecado avía” (*Don Quixote*, III, 414, 8-9, II, 33); he may also be alluding to it by indicating, through Maese Pedro's boy, that Charlemagne's fathership of Melisendra is only “putativo” (*Don Quixote*, III, 328, 2-3, II, 26). See C. C. Smith, “On the Ethos of the *Romancero viejo*”, in *Studies on the Spanish and Portuguese Ballad*, ed. N. D. Shergold (London: Tamesis, and [Cardiff:] University of Wales Press, 1972), pp. 5-24, at pp. 20-23, and the comment of Armistead and Silverman, *Hispanic Review*, 37 (1969), 409.

⁴⁸Though, of course, not the author of the *Entremés de los romances*, who enlarged on the negative effects of reading *romances*.

⁴⁹“Quit[ar] por fuerça” (I, 140, 26, I, 10).

Sancho's attempt to imitate his master and apply the *historia* of Lanzarote (*III*, 378, 12, II, 31) to the care of his *ruzio* earns him only anger and harsh words (*III*, 377, 28-378, 21, II, 31). Don Quixote himself points out, in purely chivalric terms, the error of Diego Ordóñez' *reto a Zamora*, found in chronicles, but featured in *romances* (*III*, 346, 4-13, II, 27).

To use either these *romances* or the *libros de caballerías* as a basis for one's conduct is dangerous, and for the same reason: they are not truthful, but rather full of *mentiras*⁵⁰; it is no more logical to think that King Rodrigo would have been placed "vivo vivo en una tumba llena de sapos, culebras y lagartos" (*III*, 414, 4-5, II, 33) than that a knight would "arroja[rse] en un lago [lleno de] serpientes, culebras y lagartos" (*II*, 370, 24-371, 15, I, 50, adapted). The *historia* of the Marqués de Mantua is "celebrada y aun creída", the text tells us, and, for all that, it is "no más verdadera que los milagros de Mahoma" (*I*, 88, 10-13, I, 5). This is strong censure, for what could be more untruthful, and more dangerous, than the object of this comparison?⁵¹

Two episodes featuring *romances*, Don Quixote's description of his visit to the cave of Montesinos and Maese Pedro's puppet show, illustrate their deficiencies, and the near-juxtaposition of the two episodes also underscores the *romances'* unreliability: in one Durandarte is a knight, in the other Durindana a sword, an obvious contradiction. Don Quixote's recounting of his experiences in the

⁵⁰On Cervantes' concern about the untruthfulness of the *libros de caballerías*, see *A Study of "Don Quixote"*, pp. 40-44.

⁵¹This is a proverbial expression for something untruthful or meaningless (see Rodríguez Marín's annotation of the passage), yet its selection parallels the religious imagery used in the condemnation of the *libros* (see Stephen Gilman, "Los inquisidores literarios de Cervantes", in *Actas del Tercer Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas* [Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1970], pp. 3-25).

Cervantes was not the only one to criticize *romances* for their untruthfulness. Sepúlveda points out in his introduction (p. 43; *Manual...siglo XVI*, I, 230-31) that his *romances*, "obra...verdadera y sacada de hystoria la más verdadera que yo pude hallar", can be used in place of others "harto mentirosos"; Juan de Escobar said that since "muchas dellas [historias profanas] [son] ficciones, y mentiras, quanto mas sabor dara la obra presente, pues...es verdadera" (p. 120; *Manual...siglo XVII*, I, 122). Sarmiento, who mentions *Amadís* in the same breath, complains that "todos los referidos Poemas...han hecho mucho daño a nuestra Historia" (§§542-43).

cave is called by Cide Hamete a “máquina de disparates” (*III*, 302, 26, II, 24), the same terms applied to *libros de caballerías* in Part I (*I*, 38, 4-5, I, Prologue; *II*, 341, 10-11 and 17, I, 47). How could Montesinos have cut out Durandarte’s heart and carried it to France? What condition would the heart have been in on its arrival (*III*, 291, 5-9, II, 23)? And who would have wanted to stick his hands in Durandarte’s bloody *entrañas* (*III*, 290, 28-291, 9, II, 23)? This is an example of the excesses of courtly or chivalric love, which Cervantes attacks repeatedly in *Don Quixote*.⁵²

Even more clearly focused on *romances* is the *retablo* of Maese Pedro, who not only deceives the credulous with his monkey, but is identified with the “embustero y grandísimo maleador” Ginés de Passamonte.⁵³ There are several parallels between his *retablo* and the treatment of *libros de caballerías* in Part I. The *retablo* is presented at an inn, the setting used in Part I for, among other things, discussion of the defects of *libros de caballerías*; the unnamed innkeeper of Part II is just as enthusiastic over the *retablo* (*III*, 317, 21-318, 24, II, 25) as Juan Palomeque was over his *libros*. In the *retablo*, the treatment of *romances* is combined with comment on drama (*III*, 332, 19-24, II, 26), just as *libros* and drama were discussed together in Part I (Chapter 48).

What Maese Pedro presents is always *historia conocida* (*III*, 341, 30-31, II, 27; *III*, 318, 22, II, 25); probably, then, he always used *romances* as sources.⁵⁴ Yet when his boy tells the listeners, and us the readers, that the *historia* being presented is “verdadera”, Cervantes is alerting us to be critical, and implying that it is no

⁵²See *A Study of “Don Quixote”*, pp. 162-65.

⁵³*III*, 73, 13-14, II, 4. An *embustero*, a term also applied to Ginés in Part I (*I*, 307, 27, I, 22; *I*, 495, I, 23, interpolated passage), is someone who creates an “embuste”, defined by *Autoridades* as a “mentira disfrazada con artificio, para engañar y enredar”. For further discussion of Ginés de Pasamonte and the real Gerónimo de Passamonte on whom he is based, see “Cervantes, Lope, and Avellaneda”, in the present volume.

⁵⁴Dorothy S. Severin studies the sources of the story: “Gaiferos, Rescuer of his Wife Melisendra”, in *Medieval Hispanic Studies Presented to Rita Hamilton*, ed. A. D. Deyermond (London: Tamesis, 1976), pp. 227-39.

such thing.⁵⁵ The claim that it was “sacada al pie de la letra de las corónicas francesas” (*III*, 327, 13-15, II, 26) is an obvious reference to the notorious chronicle of Turpin.⁵⁶ Maese Pedro’s *historia* is no more reliable for being based on “los romances españoles que andan en boca de las gentes y de los muchachos por esas calles” (*III*, 327, 15-17, II, 26).⁵⁷ The consequent deficiencies of the story are implicit in the boy’s own words: “ay autores que dizen” that Carlomagno gave Gaiferos “media dozena de coscorrones”, and Carlomagno’s parental relationship with Melisendra is “putativo” (*III*, 328, 2-8, II, 26). But the admission of these problems (a device to increase belief in the remainder) should not mislead us. From the point of view of historical truth, the *retablo* is a disaster from beginning to end. Melisendra, if she existed at all, was never in Spain. Gaiferos, whose existence is similarly doubtful, never went to get her. Zaragoza was never called Sansueña. Are these not *disparates*?

⁵⁵“Acuérdate del verdadero cuento del licenciado Torralva, a quien llevaron los diablos en bolandas por el aire, cavallero en una caña...y en doze horas llegó a Roma...y por la mañana ya estava de buelta en Madrid” (*Don Quixote*, IV, 40, 2-9, II, 41).

⁵⁶In which, significantly, the story of Melisendra is not found. This is Rodríguez Marín’s note to *Don Quixote I*, 98, 26-27, I, 6, where Turpin is called “verdadero historiador”: “Irónicamente llama Cervantes *verdadero historiador* a Juan Turpín, arzobispo de Reims, a quien se atribuyó dos siglos después de su muerte una mendosísima historia de Carlomagno, tan plagada de cuentos y disparates, que para siempre dio fama de embustero a su supuesto autor”. Pedro Mantuano, in his *Advertencias a la historia del padre Juan de Mariana* (Madrid, 1613), said that “la Historia del Arçobispo Turpino...es libro de Cavallerias, indigno de que persona grave le tome en la boca” (p. 111). For further information on Turpin, see my *A Study of “Don Quixote”*, pp. 51-52, n. 20.

Turpin’s chronicle may be read in Spanish translation in *Liber Sancti Jacobi “Codex Calixtinus”* (Santiago de Compostela: CSIC, Instituto Padre Sarmiento de Estudios Gallegos, 1951), pp. 403-86; it is studied by Adalbert Hämel, *Überlieferung und Bedeutung des Liber Sancti Jacobi und des Pseudo-Turpin*, in *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 1950, Heft 2.

⁵⁷Cervantes was quite hostile to “muchachos por las calles”. See *Don Quixote*, III, 346, 20, II, 27; IV, 277, 20-21, II, 61; IV, 118, 26-28, II, 48; IV, 217, 10-13, II, 56; IV, 390, 16-22, II, 73; “Licenciado Vidriera”, II, 87, 30-88, 12; “Illustre fregona”, II, 325, 26-326, 19.

If this flawed *historia* were merely presented as entertainment—it is indeed “alegre y regozijado” (*III*, 341, 31-32, II, 27; adapted)—it would be less problematical. But, like the *libros*,⁵⁸ it is presented as truth, and like them, it causes the protagonist to lose touch with reality and act in an insane and destructive manner.⁵⁹

It is widely recognized today that Golden Age playwrights seeking to please an unlearned public used material from the *romancero*; the leading example is Lope.⁶⁰ Cervantes, like Don Quixote “aficionado a la carátula” (*III*, 147, 2, II, 11; *Adjunta al Parnaso*, 124, 13-16; Prologue to *Ocho comedias*), surely noticed this connection. The similarity of his comments on the *comedia* and the *romance* suggests that Cervantes believed that to the extent this was true, it was the origin of the *comedia*'s problems, and he,

⁵⁸See my article cited in note 44.

⁵⁹Although the evidence in the text is weaker, there is another episode in which a mad act of Don Quixote may be attributable to a *romance*. The canon (*II*, 363, 23-24, II, 49) recommended to Don Quixote as a model Don Manuel de León, a famous Sevillian knight of the late fifteenth century who has an important role in Pérez de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada* (see Part I, Chapter 8). Don Quixote's challenge to the lions, called “temeridad” (“recklessness”; *III*, 213, 23, II, 17), may well have been inspired by León's least admirable but most celebrated deed, his entry into a lion cage to retrieve a lady's glove; at least, that is who he is compared to by Cide Hamete (*III*, 217, 6, II, 17). This story is told in the *romance* “Ese conde Don Manuel/ que de León es nombrado”, published in Juan Timoneda's *Rosa gentil* (Valencia, 1573; ed. in *Rosas de romances*, fols. lv^v-lvii^r) and reprinted in Juan de Medaño's *Segunda parte de la Sylva de varios Romances* (Granada, 1588; ed. Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino [Oxford: Dolphin, 1966], fols. 28^v-30^r); the text is also found in Agustín Durán's *Romancero general, Biblioteca de autores españoles*, 10 and 16 (1851; rpt. Madrid: Atlas, 1945), II, 134. From Medaño, one of his basic sources, Pérez de Hita took another *romance* which includes an allusion to the episode (included in Part I, Chapter 17). Numerous other versions of the famous anecdote are studied by M. A. Buchanan, “The Glove and the Lions”, in *Estudios dedicados a Menéndez Pidal* (Madrid: CSIC, 1950-62), VI, 247-58, who, however, erroneously specifies Argote de Molina as Cervantes' probable source.

⁶⁰Menéndez Pidal, *Romancero hispánico*, Chapter XV; Jerome Allen Moore, *The “Romancero” in the Chronicle-Legend Plays of Lope de Vega* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1940), reviewed by S. Griswold Morley in *Hispanic Review*, 9 (1941), 507-09. Lope's use of the *romancero nuevo* is studied by Antonio Carreño, “Del *romancero nuevo* a la *comedia nueva* de Lope de Vega: Constantes e interpolaciones”, *Hispanic Review*, 50 (1982), 33-52.

of course, did not base his plays on *romances*. Just as the authors of *comedias* compromise their art for money (*Don Quixote*, II, 351, 27-352, 14, I, 48), so do the authors of *romances* (“La gitanilla”, I, 32, 23-29). The *comedias* present miracles inaccurately, “en perjuizio de la verdad y en menoscabo de las historias” (*Don Quixote*, II, 350, 13-23, I, 48); so do the *ciegos*, and most of their miracles “son fingidos, en perjuizio de los verdaderos” (*Don Quixote*, IV, 166, 20-21, II, 51).⁶¹ The *romances* distorted history, as we have seen; so did the *comedia* (*Don Quixote*, II, 349, 29-350, 9, I, 48). *Romances* are lascivious; the *comedia* is too (*Don Quixote*, II, 349, 10, I, 48). Maese Pedro defends a *disparate* of his *retablo* by referring to the *comedia* (III, 332, 19-21, II, 26).

The theme of *romances* is, of course, less developed in *Don Quixote* than is that of the *libros de caballerías*, and I believe this is because Cervantes saw the former as a less serious problem; *romances* did not claim veracity as consistently, or with the elaborate, misleading conventions of the *libros* (the fictitious historian, the translator). Equally important is the class difference between the two types of works. Although this division was not clear-cut in the second half of the sixteenth century, the *romances* were of the people,⁶² the *libros* of the nobility (*hidalgos*), and what the nobility read and believed was a much more serious matter.

A final observation. I am sure that Cervantes, rightly or wrongly, believed that *romances* were of written rather than oral origin. Nowhere in his writings, nor, for that matter, anywhere

⁶¹This is the same comment Diego de Miranda makes about *libros de caballerías*: they are “en perjuizio y descrédito de las buenas historias” (III, 200, 20-21, II, 16). The role of the *ciegos* will be discussed shortly.

⁶²*Romances* are consistently associated with lower-class or less than noble people in Cervantes' works. The canon, the priest, Diego de Miranda, the Duke and Dutchess never cite verses or include lines in their conversation. It is, rather, Sancho, Doña Rodríguez (*Don Quixote*, III, 414, 1-12, II, 33), the *labrador* in El Toboso (*Don Quixote*, III, 125, 26-27, II, 9), gypsies, and Juliana la Cariharta of “Rinconete y Cortadillo” (I, 282, 11-12) who exhibit familiarity with them. The only exception, besides *Don Quixote*, is very significant: the narrators in *Don Quixote* (I, 49, 8-9, I, 1; I, 217, 9-10, I, 17; III, 122, 3, II, 9; III, 156, 9-12, II, 12; IV, 405, 10-13, II, 74).

prior to the nineteenth century, is there the slightest suggestion that *romances* were or had been composed among the *pueblo*, that it was anything other than the consumer of texts composed by the literate, or that there was or had been any attempt to collect and publish texts from oral, in preference to written, tradition.⁶³ Nuncio, it is true, does tell us that some of his texts were, of necessity, taken from the memory of informants; it is now realized that this number was much smaller than previously believed.⁶⁴ However, he tells us this because it was so unusual and so contrary to accepted publishing practice, as part of an apology for the defects of his texts.

It is possible that *romances* might have been found worthy of publication because their poetry was popular; *refranes* were published because they were believed to contain popular wisdom. However, evidence for this view of the *romances* is lacking, and when one considers how many published *romances* and *romanceiros* there were in the sixteenth century, the lack of documentation is hard to dismiss. The contrast with the well-documented esteem for *refranes* is considerable.⁶⁵

This, of course, is not proof of anything. Yet Cervantes' silence on the allegedly popular nature of *refranes* is not to be casually dismissed. He traveled extensively through Andalucía, the region where the *romance* was most popular. He spent much time in rural

⁶³The comment of Esteban de Nágera at the end of the first part of his *Silva de varios romances* is significant: when people heard of his publication, they brought him *romances* to be included, obviously a reference to written texts (Rodríguez-Moñino's edition, p. 266; *Manual...siglo XVI*, I, 322). The abundance of written, but uncollected and often unpublished verse in the sixteenth century is pointed out by Rodríguez-Moñino, *Construcción crítica y realidad histórica en la poesía española de los siglos XVI y XVII*, segunda ed. (Madrid: Castalia, 1968); it is certainly implied by the comments of Timoneda, collecting his own *romances* (*Manual...siglo XVI*, I, 558, 566), and Pedro de Moncayo and Sebastián Vélez de Guevara, collecting those of others (*Manual...siglo XVI*, II, 44 and 70).

⁶⁴Menéndez Pidal's figure is 18 *romances* dictated, out of a total of 150 (*Romancero hispánico*, XIII, 5). For further discussion, see Rodríguez-Moñino's edition, pp. 13-23.

⁶⁵See "refranes" in the index to Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, trans. Antonio Alatorre, 2nd Spanish ed. (Mexico: Colegio de México, 1966).

areas, and both from his biography and his works we can see that he had considerable contact with farmers, soldiers, criminals, and other lower-class types, for whom he displays considerable interest and some sympathy. He enjoyed *romances* and knew them well: he was, in short, an ideal informant. Yet he shows no awareness of contemporary or past oral or popular composition.

What Cervantes has left us instead is a description of the process by which texts passed from written into oral form. It is found in “La gitanilla”, the protagonist of which, Preciosa, is so competent at singing *romances* that her grandmother commissions them from appropriate poets, and Preciosa thinks it normal to receive them copied from books (*I*, 32, 22-29; *I*, 43, 12-16). That texts were composed and *then* sung is suggested not only in the Marqués de Santillana’s famous comment,⁶⁶ but in the headings of sixteenth-century *romanceros*. The surviving fragment, a second or later edition, of the oldest collection, the *Libro de cincuenta romances*, says that “entre los quales ay muchos dellos nueuamente añadidos: que nunca en estas tierras se han oydo”; the implication is that these texts are of greater interest to the potential purchaser because they are “nunca oydo[s]”, and that they will be used orally.⁶⁷ And Sepúlveda, in the prologue to his *Romances nueuamente sacados de historias antiguas de la cronica de España*, says that his collection, besides providing accurate history, will serve “para prouecharse los que cantarlos quisieren”.⁶⁸

What Cervantes, careful observer and commentator, does point to, and I believe a profitable direction for future research, are those unstudied *juglares* of Golden Age Spain, the *ciegos*. It is the *ciegos* who, like Preciosa’s grandmother, obtain texts from undistinguished poets (“La gitanilla”, *I*, 32, 24-27), and who sing untruthful and lascivious songs (*Don Quixote*, *IV*, 166, 14-21, *II*, 51).⁶⁹ It was

⁶⁶Clarke, “Marqués de Santillana”, p. 17.

⁶⁷Rodríguez-Moñino, *Manual...siglo XVI*, I, 172.

⁶⁸Rodríguez-Moñino's edition, p. 43; *Manual...siglo XVI*, I, 230.

⁶⁹A complaint about the “milagros nunca sucedidos” of the printed “menudencias” sold by *ciegos* is found in the “Memorial dado por Joan Serrano de Bargas maestro impresor de libros en Sevilla en julio de 1625 sobre los excesos en materia de

the *ciegos* who sang and sold *pliegos sueltos*, at least from the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁷⁰ The role which *ciegos* might have played in using formulas, creating variants, and perhaps oral composition as well, has not been studied.⁷¹

libros,” *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, 3ª época, 47 (1926), 224-27, at p. 226.

⁷⁰E. M. Wilson, “Samuel Pepys's Spanish Chapbooks”, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, II, 2 (1955), 127.

⁷¹Rodríguez-Moñino, *Diccionario*, pp. 85-126, has collected a number of texts dealing with the participation of *ciegos* in the dissemination of *pliegos sueltos*. Menéndez Pidal, *Poesía juglaresca y orígenes de las literaturas románicas* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1957), pp. 27-28, 220-21, 232, 332 (in Italy, 329) has a number of references to *ciegos juglares*. Julio Caro Baroja, in his *Romances de ciego* (Madrid: Taurus, 1966), presents more modern texts, with a brief introduction; Isabel Segura has published *Romances de señoras. Selección de los romances de ciegos relativos a la vida, costumbres y propiedades atribuidas a las señoras mujeres* (Barcelona: Alta Fulla, 1981). In his *Zapatera prodigiosa*, Lorca included a presentation of a “romance verdadero” with a “historia de ciego”.