



Tradition and Technique in "El Libro del Cavallero Zifar"

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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. FRANKLIN M. WALTMAN
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MARTÍNEZ, H. SALVADOR. *El "Poema de Almería y la épica románica*. Madrid: Gredos, 1975. Paper. 478 pp.

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 in 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.

Florida State Univ. DANIEL EISENBERG

WALKER, ROGER M. *Tradition and Technique in "El Libro del Cavallero Zifar"*. London, Tamesis, 1975. xvi + 252 pp. £9.50.

According to the author, this book is the first full-scale literary study of the *Libro del Cavallero 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-

ments could not be found in the Bible, or in works with no possible Semitic inspiration, nor whether there are any alternative sources for the stylistic elements. The beginning of sentences with a conjunction, to take an obvious example, is a stylistic feature which was nearly universal in the Middle Ages and does not necessarily indicate an Arabic origin for the *Zifar*.

The most satisfying part of *Tradition and Technique* is the central part, in which Walker defends the unity of *Zifar*. Drawing on previous discussions by Ruiz de Conde and Scholberg, in the first of the two chapters devoted to the *Zifar*'s unity Walker discusses the parallel structure, common themes, and structural links which join the three books of adventures of the *Zifar*. In the second chapter, he directs the reader's attention to the "Castigos del rey de Mentón," showing how the moral principles are not blindly taken from the *Flores de filosofía*, but instead are carefully selected to summarize the moral lessons of the preceding books I and II, and to outline those of the following Book IV.

In the final section of the study Walker returns to the question of the *Zifar*'s style. Basing himself on a discussion by Ruth Crosby of stylistic features indicating oral delivery in medieval English poetry (address to the audience, excessive repetitions, formulas), Walker finds the same features in the *Zifar*, and concludes that the book was intended for oral or semi-private presentation rather than private reading. Surprisingly, using some unconvincing parallels between the descriptions of battle scenes in the *Zifar* and formulas used to the same effect in the *Cid*, he equates the use of oral devices with a debt to the Castilian epic poets. It is true, as Walker points out, that the author of the *Zifar* had no tradition of vernacular fiction to draw upon, but whether he would not have drawn on the vast repertory of medieval Latin narrations is a question Walker does not examine. In the final, primarily descriptive chapter, Walker examines and classifies the numerous synonymous pairs found in the *Zifar*. He sees three possible sources for the abundant and inventive use of this stylistic device: medieval literary theorist, Arabic wisdom literature, and perhaps a contact with earlier vernacular literature in Castilian.

This reviewer has a certain sympathy for the problems Walker faced in trying to study the *Zifar*'s sources. Yet I cannot avoid a certain confusion at the abundance of possible sources which Walker points to, and his repeated failure to convince one that these possible sources were in fact *the* sources. Not even a man of the learning of Alfonso el Sabio would have been acquainted well enough to be influenced by all

the works Walker points to: the humble oral epic, the more learned vernacular works such as the *Libro de Alexandre*, the Latin *Artes Poeticæ*, Arabic wisdom literature, the *Koran*, and French romances. Which one or ones of these were really used by the author of the *Zifar*? Just what was the nature and extent of its Arabic inspiration? These questions remain as challenges to future students of the *Zifar*.

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PARKER, JACK HORACE. *Juan Pérez de Montalván*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975. 168 pp. \$7.95.

Juan Pérez de Montalván (the dramatist was inconsistent in spelling his own name; Parker prefers this spelling to Montalbán, although both variants are used by modern critics) is known primarily as a minor dramatist and as Lope de Vega's first biographer. Parker here offers an engaging panoramic view of Montalván and his literary production which goes far beyond the sketchy treatment traditionally accorded to this significant Golden Age figure. Although Parker himself has previously made significant contributions to Montalván studies (*La Gitanilla*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1941, and "The Chronology of the Plays of Juan Pérez de Montalván," *PMLA*, LXVII (1952), 186-210), he generously identifies Victor Dixon and María Grazia Profeti as the leading *Montalvanistas* and quotes extensively from their works.

Following an initial biographical chapter which emphasizes in its account of the short, frenzied existence of Montalván (1601/2?-1638) the life-long friendship shared with Lope de Vega following their meeting in the Madrid bookstore of Juan's father, Parker devotes the remainder of the volume to Montalván's varied literary production. In discussing Montalván's theater (chapters 2-5), Parker eschews the presentation of plays by categories, choosing instead to consider them in the order of their chronological appearance: the four *comedias* and two *autos* of the miscellany *Para todos* (1632), the twelve *comedias* which comprised his *Primer tomo* (1635), and the nine authentic titles of the posthumous *Segundo tomo* (1638). Although this method of presentation does not classify the major thematic emphases of Montalván's theater, it does permit Parker to distinguish between authentic works which constitute Montalván's undisputed canon and attributed and spurious titles associated with the dramatist's name. Parker discusses separately, first the three spurious titles included in the *Segundo tomo* and, subsequently, nineteen plays attributed to Montalván in collections or published as *sueltas*,