From amid the waning troubadour tradition and the beginnings of the Renaissance in Catalonia arose a great poet whose voice was to be heard throughout Spain for over a century. The verse of Ausiàs March,\(^1\) introspective and intense, gentle and lyrical, deals with the essential themes, often inseparable for him, of love, faith and death. His tone reflects the disillusionment and sorrow of a man who seeks pure love and happiness, knowing it cannot be found in this world, and the frustrated timidity of a lover who, for fear of rejection, refrains from speaking candidly to the lady who inspires him. He was in a sense a link between his great predecessors with whom he was familiar — the Provençal poets, Dante and Petrach — and the Castilians of the Golden Age — Garcilaso, Boscán, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Gutierre de Cetina and Fernando de Herrera — who so admired his poetry.

Ausiàs March was well-known and appreciated by his contemporaries and by poets of succeeding generations. In addition to the thirteen surviving manuscripts copied during the fifteenth and six-

\(^1\) I am adopting the spelling and accentuation preferred by Professor R. Aramon i Serra, Pere Bohigas and most other modern Catalan scholars, and which has been accepted by the Institut d’Estudis Catalans.
teenth centuries, his poems were collected and published five times during the sixteenth century: once in Valencia, once in Valladolid and three times in Barcelona. His poetry was also translated into Castilian by Jorge de Montemayor in 1560 and into Latin by Vincenti Marineri in 1634. He was highly praised by the Marqués de Santillana in his «Prohemio al Condestable de Portugal» (Santillana described him as a «gran trovador, y hombre de assaz elevado espíritu»), and by the Barcelonese Juan Boscán, who probably introduced March's work to his friend Garcilaso de la Vega.

The influence of Ausiàs March was felt during his lifetime and afterwards by a number of other Catalan poets, such as Lluís de Vilarrasa, Lleonard de Sors, Pere Torroella and Ramon Llull. Before March the troubadour spirit and Provençal language dominated; afterwards Catalan poetry reached a new vitality and new sensibilities through introspection, a striving for more personal forms of expression, and more confidence in the self and in the Catalan culture.

The most eloquent testimony left by Ausiàs March is his influence on the Renaissance poets of Castile. The influence on these poets by the Italians, especially Petrarch, has been well-studied and is universally accepted by scholars and students of Spanish literature. It is not my intention here to disregard or dismiss the importance of this well-known phenomenon; rather I intend to show that the Catalan poet Ausiàs March also exerted a considerable influence on those same poets, and that he may be considered a link between some of the Italian poets and the best poets of Renaissance Spain.

Joan Boscà Almugàver, or Juan Boscán as he is known to students of Castilian literature, is the first poet to use the work of Ausiàs March as a model for Castilian poetry. He is usually recognized as the man who introduced Italian poetry to the Castilian poets, especially to his friend Garcilaso de la Vega. Because of his admiration and imitation of Ausiàs March, and because he could understand and explain March without the linguistic or metric difficulties the Castilians must have experienced, he may also be
considered the most important transmitter of Catalan poetry to the rest of Spain.

In the dedication to the Duquesa de Soma of the second part of his works, Boscán refers to Ausiàs March: «... en loor del qual si yo agora me metiesse un poco, no podría tan presto volver a lo que agora traigo entre las manos.» The Barcelonese also dedicates a poem to March, comparing him to Catullus, Ovid, Cino da Pistoia, Juan de Mena, Garcilaso and others.

If the most sincere form of flattery is imitation, Boscán’s sincere admiration for March can be seen in much of the poetry he wrote. In addition to the «llaneza de estilo y las mismas sentencias» that, according to Fernando de Herrera, March inspired in Boscán, the two poets also have in common a certain philosophical framework in which they write their love poetry, as well as an attitude of sadness and pain associated with the timidity and unworthiness of the lover. Perhaps the most apparent aspect of the imitation is to be seen in the comparisons which are characteristic of March and later of Boscán, and which Menéndez y Pelayo describes as «más reflexivas que pintorescas».

Probably the best known and most widely imitated poem of Ausiàs March is Cant I. Since Boscán wrote at least six sonnets based on this poem, I reproduce several of its stanzas with the sonnets in order to examine and compare them:

«Així com cell qui-n lo somni-s delita
e son delit de foll pensament ve,
ne pren a mi, que-l temps passat me té
l’imaginar, qu- altre bé no-y habita,
sentint estar en aguayt ma dolor,
sabent de cert qu-en ses mans he de jaure.
Temps de-venir en negun bé-m pot caure;
aquell passat en mi és lo millor.»

2. From Herrera’s commentary on the works of Garcilaso.
3. Antología de poetas líricos castellanos, XIII (Madrid 1908), 299.
4. March’s poetry will be quoted from the Bohigas edition of Poesies (Barcelona 1952).
Sonnet 68 of Boscán repeats from the first stanza the image and the idea of escaping into the remembrance of the past rather than thinking about the present and its realities:

«Como aquel que en soñar gusto recibe,
su gusto procediendo de locura,
así el imaginar con su figura
vanamente su gozo en mí concibe.

Otro bien en mí triste no se escribe,
si no es aquel que mi pensar procura;
de cuanto ha sido hecho en mi ventura
lo sólo imaginado es lo que vive.

Teme mi corazón de ir adelante,
viendo estar su dolor puesto en celada,
y así revuelve atrás en un instante
a contemplar su gloria ya pasada.
¡Oh sombra de remedio inconstante,
ser en mí lo mejor lo que no es nada!»

The first strophe of the sonnet is almost a direct translation of March, and the second expands the idea that for the author, thoughts of the past must replace the sad emptiness of the present. The sonnet's next four lines reiterate the rest of what March has said in his first stanza — that his heart fears to move on to other thoughts knowing that his sorrow is there waiting to overtake him. The last line in both poems is a declaration and repetition that the best part of life has already passed. This first strophe of Cant I was imitated by many other Golden Age poets, including Garcilaso de la Vega, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Gutierre de Cetina and Fernando de Herrera.

5. This and other quotations from Boscán are from Obras completas (Madrid 1944).
6. Many commentators have mentioned the influence of Ausiàs March on Golden Age poets; for Garcilaso, see Rafael Lapesa, La trayectoria poética de Garcilaso (Madrid 1948); for Gutierre de Cetina, see Alfred Miles Withers, The Source of the Poetry of Gutierre de Cetina (Philadelphia 1923).
The second strophe in March’s Cant I deals with the same theme of longing for the past:

«Del temps present no-m trobe amador,
mas del passat, qu-és no-res e finit;
d’aquest pensar me sojorn e-m delit,
mas quan lo pert, s’esforça ma dolor
sí com aquell qui és jutgat a mort
he de lonch temps la sab e s’aconorta,
e creure-1 fan que li serà estorta
e-1 fan morir sens un punt de recort.»

Boscán wrote two sonnets based on this: in Sonnet 69 (Pensando en lo pasado, de medroso) he finds love and repose thinking of the past; in Sonnet 71 (Como el triste que a muerte está juzgado) he translates the image of a condemned man who finally accepts his fate and then is pardoned.

In Sonnet 72 (O si acabasse mi pensar sus días) Boscán borrows from the third strophe of Ausiàs March, echoing the wish for an end to his thoughts since «No es bien vivir, trayéndome el sentido / pesadas y continuas chismerías». In this same sonnet he repeats the image of a mother who cannot refuse her infant anything he demands, even something as harmful as poison. Several other poets after Boscán repeated this powerful image as well. March’s version is an follows:

«Plagués a Déu que mon pensar fos mort,
e que passàs ma vida en durment!
Malament viu qui té lo pensament
per enamich, fent-li d’enuyts report;
e com lo vol d’algun plaer servir
l’n pren així com dona-b son infant,
que si verí li demana plorant
ha ten poch seny que no-l sab contradir.»

The fourth stanza of Ausiàs’ poem develops the theme central to the entire poem:

«Ffóra millor ma dolor sofferir
que no mesclar pocha part de plaher
entre-quells mals, qui-m giten de saber
com del passat plaer me covë-xir
Las! Mon delit dolor se converteix;
doble's l'affany après d'un poch repòs,
sí co-l malalt qui per un plasent mos
tot son menjar en dolor se nodreix.»

This thought is found in Boethius,7 as well as in the Divine Comedy, when Francesca da Rimini explains to Dante (Inf., V, 121-123), «... Nessun maggior dolore / che ricordarsi del tempo felice / nella miseria...» Boscán repeats this poetic theme in Sonnet 83 (Si en mitad del dolor tener memoria) but he adds the rather optimistic obverse that if remembering past joy intensifies one's sorrow, remembering the sorrowful past can also enhance one's present happiness.8 In another Sonnet Boscán reemphasizes the negative aspect of this theme:

«Como, después del tempestuoso día,
la tarde clara suele ser sabrosa,
y después de la noche tenebrosa,
el resplandor del sol placer envía;

Así en su padecer el alma mía
con la tarde del bien es tan gozosa,
que se entrega, en una hora que reposa,
de todos los trabajos que tenía.

Mas este bien no suele ser barato;
mucho cuesta tan fuerte medicina,
y es lo peor que presto ha de pagarse.

Es reposar de un hombre que camina,
que a la sombra descansa un breve rato,
para luego volver a más cansarse.»

7. De consolatione philosophiae.
8. This idea is also found in March’s Cant XV. The sea imagery in Sonnet 86 also appears frequently in March.
Ausiàs March further strengthens his theme in the fifth strophe with the image of a recluse who is contented in his solitude until an old friend visits him. The friend reminisces with the hermit for a while and then goes his way, leaving him alone again, reminded of the things he left behind, and with the task of readjusting to his solitude. Boscán takes this image and develops it into Sonnet 74 (Soy como aquel que vive en el desierto). Ausiàs March closes stanza five with a general statement reiterating the imagery «lo bé com fuig, ab grans crits mal apella». Boscán drops this poetic generality and instead ends the sonnet by personalizing the image, saying that the hermit now must tremble every time he reenters his cave.

It is perhaps in Sonnet 61 that Boscán, this time without translating directly, most successfully captures the spirit of escapism and sadness with which March begins his first poem:

«Dulce soñar y dulce congojarme,
cuando estaba soñando que soñaba;
dulce gozar con lo que me engañaba,
si un poco más durara el engañarme;

dulce no estar en mí, que figurarme
podía cuanto bien yo deseaba;
dulce placer, aunque me importunaba
que alguna vez llegaba a despertarme:

¡oh sueño, cuánto más leve y sabroso
me fueras si vinieras
que asentaras en mí con más reposo!

Durmiendo, en fin, fui bienaventurado,
y es justo en la mentira ser dichoso
quien siempre en la verdad fue desdichado.»

Boscán read, appreciated and was inspired by many other specific poems and images of Ausiàs March, and by several general aspects of his work. He wrote many sonnets and coplas with the pain-pleasure / approach-avoidance motif of love which is so often
found in March, although he usually doesn’t reach the deep pessimism so pervasive in the Valencian. March says in Cant XIX:

«Hohiu, hohiu, tots los qui bé amats,
e planyeu mi si deig ésser plangut,
e puys vcheu si és tal cas vengut
en los presents ne-n los que són passats.
Doleu-vos, donchs, de mi, vostre semblant
en soferir la dolor delitable,
car tost de mi se dolrò lo diable
com veurà mi semblant mal d’él passant.

¿Qui és l’om viu, tal dolor suffertant,
que desig ço de què se desespera?
Aytant és greu que no par cosa vera
desiar ço de qu-és desesperant.
.............
Una sabor d’agr-e dolç Amor lança
que lo meu gust departir-le’s no sab:
dins mos delits dolor mortal hy cap,
e tal dolor ab delit ha ligança.»

Boscán echos in his coplas:

«Mi alma se favorece
si padece,
y toma por mejoría
que crezca la pena mía;
mas a ratos mucho crece.

IV
A la tristeza
Tristeza, pues yo soy tuyo,
tú no dejes de ser mía,
mira bien que no destruyo
sólo en ver que el alegría
presume de hacerme suyo...»

and in the sonnet:

«... oíd, oíd, los hombres y las gentes
un caso nuevo qu’n amar s’offrece:
Amor en mí con su deleite crece,
mientras más males tengo y más presentes.»

In several other sonnets as well, Boscán seems to be inspired by the Marchian love death duality, such as in Sonnet 1 (¡Oh, vosotros que andáis tras mis escritos), which is reminiscent of Cant XXXIX. Sonnets 3 (Por el ancho camino por do fueren) and 4 (Los que tras mí vernan, si se perdieren) remind one of Cant LXXV, in which March laments his lack of will power to resist temptations he knows to be harmful, and Sonnets 71 (Si con armas Amor acostumbradas) and 87 (Vime sano después en un momento) are also statements of the poet’s effort to avoid the pitfalls of worldly pleasure and love. Sonnet 33 (Antigua llaga que en mis huesos cría) describes how this ephemeral kind of pleasure, once attained, is inevitably disappointing since it is a product of this lowly earth. In Sonnet 9 (Como suele en el aire la cometa) Boscán claims that the usual state of affairs on earth is so awful that good always surprises, and in Sonnet 6 he reaches a pessimistic low point in saying, «De ver otro hemisferio no he esperanza / Y así donde una vez me ha anochecido / allí me estoy sin esperar el día.» Boscán reaches these depths rather less often and more artificially than does March, whose normal and sincere state seems to be ‘tristor i dolor’.

Among the most memorable of Ausiàs March’s poetic comparisons are those having to do with the sea, and apparently these images impressed Boscán too. March strongly evokes tempestuous seas in Cant IV, «Si com la mar se plany greument e crida / com dos forts vents la baten egualment...» and several times in Cant XLVI:

«Bullirà-l mar com la caçola-n forn,
mutant color e l’estat natural
e mostrarà voler tota res mal
que sobre si atur hun punt al jorn; ...

Los pelegrins tots ensemps votaran
e prometran molts dons de cera fets;
la gran paor traurà-l lum los secrets
que al confés descuberts no seran.
En lo perill no-m caureu del esment,
ans votaré hal Déu qui-ns ha ligats,
de no minvar mes fermes voluntats
e que tots temps me screu de present...»

He begins Cant II by describing the serene beauty of a quiet sea which suddenly becomes stormy, keeping the captain from port just as he was about to arrive. Boscán adapts sea imagery from Cants II and XLVI to form Sonnet 70:

«Como el patrón que en golfo navegando
lleva su nao, y viendo claro el cielo
está más lejos de tener recelo
que si estuviese en tierra paseando...

Pero después, si el viento mueve guerra,
y la braveza de la mar levanta,
acude al nunca más entrar la barca,

y el voto de ir a ver la casa santa,
y el desear ser labrador en tierra
mucho más que en la mar un gran monarca.»

And he uses similar imagery successfully in Sonnet 65:

«En la alta mar rompido está el navío
con tempestad y temeroso viento;
pero la luz que ya amanecer siento,
y aun el cielo, me hacen que confío.

La estrella con la cual mi noche guío,
a vueltas de mi triste lasamiento,
alzo los ojos por miralla atento,
y dice que si alargo, el puerto es mío.

Da luego un viento que nos da por popa,
a manera de nubes vemos tierra,
y ha rato ya que dicen que la vimos.

Ya comenzamos a enjugar la ropa,
y a encarecer del mar la brava guerra,
y a recontar los votos que hicimos.>>
There are a good many other examples of Boscán’s borrowing from March, or at least of March’s probable influence, both in imagery and in attitude. Each poet compares himself to a wounded stag, March in Cant LXXXIX and Boscán in Sonnet 58. Both claim special privileged information about love, thus expressed by March in Cant XVIII, «Ffantasiant, Amor a mi descobre / los grans secrets c’als pus sup tils amaga... and by Boscán in Sonnet 18:

«Tanto en amar extiendo mi camino...
que según sé de amor grandes secretos,
ya no soy sabidor, sino adevíno.»

When one compares the body of works of the two poets, it becomes clear that this attitudinal example is indeed borrowed rather than felt by Boscán. March’s poetry has the constantly strong sense of personality that makes his claim to privileged knowledge believable; he often refers to himself in his work, saying such things as ‘I am the one who calls himself Ausiàs March’ (Cant CXTIV), ‘I am like the man who...’ or ‘Like the one who ... so it is with me.’ Boscán uses this kind of line only to introduce borrowed images or ideas, and his own personality escapes us. He becomes in a sense a reflection of those he admired, and many of his sonnets are the reworkings of the poetry of others.

That the most important role of Boscán has been that of transmitter has been generally recognized. After receiving the suggestion from Andrea Navagiero to try his hand at Italian poetry he became the one to introduce it to the Spanish poets. Because he was a Catalan, he found himself in a particularly good position to do this. The hendecasyllable he had to adopt in his imitation of the Italian forms was not at all foreign to him since the eleven syllable line was normal in Provençal and Catalan poetry, although with a different accentuation. Ausiàs March uses either a ten syllable aguda (masculine) line or an eleven syllable llana (feminine) line in nearly all of his poetry, with the first accent on the fourth syllable, followed by the caesura. Boscán’s one known Catalan poem, itself inspired by March’s Cant IV, is considered by Martín de Riquer to be something of a transition between the normal Catalan-Provençal line and the Italian, since
«... los diez endecasílabos que componen el poema son de un ritmo mucho más yámbico que el corriente en las escuelas poéticas catalanas; es decir, todos ellos pueden ser leídos tanto según el uso catalán — hijo del provenzal —, o sea con acento en la cuarta sílaba seguida de cesura, como a la italiana, o sea con acento en la sexta o cuarta y octava sílabas...»

ESPARSE

«Dos pensaments ma pen(n)ssa-n tant torbada,
determinar no sse qual d’ells saguesca;
a tots seguir no puch sens no fenesca,
per gran dolor ma vida tribulada.
Deixar a tots és cosa imposible
se puga fer pus mon poder noy basta,
tant per ygual lo meu voler contrasta
los dos camins que més no és posible
Forssat serà divisió d’ells fassa
pus altrament és traure-l mal en plassa.»

Lines 6, 7 and 9 are especially susceptible to being read with the Italian accentuation, according to Riquer.

Also probably due to his Catalan heritage Boscán did a better job of imitating Ausiàs March than he did of imitating Petrarch. As Menéndez y Pelayo writes in concluding his study of Boscán,

En general, puede decirse que Boscán entendió mejor la índole de la poesía de Ausiás March que la del Petrarca, y la imitó con más acierto y desembarazo, fuese por afinidad de raza o de talento poético, aun siendo el suyo de muchos menos quilates que el del gran poeta de Valencia.»

It is fortunate that Boscán was in a good position to imitate great poets, both Italian and Catalan, and at the same time that he was a close friend of and had an influence over as talented a poet as

9. Relaciones entre la literatura renacentista castellana y la catalana en la Edad media, in Escorial, II (1941), 45.
10. Antología de poetas líricos castellanos, 305.
Garcilaso. Perhaps these coincidences contribute as much as any factor to the glory of Spanish Renaissance poetry.

The poets who wrote their verses in Castilian paid homage to Ausiàs March, as they did to the great Italian bard. The Catalan Boscán not only introduced March's poetry to his Castilian friends and contemporaries, praised him in the letters and sonnets he wrote, and then based a number of his own compositions on March's Cants: he also inspired his close friend Garcilaso to use Marchian ideas and metaphors, and Garcilaso did so much more successfully than did Boscán. Too original to be considered mere imitations, Garcilaso's poems nevertheless show many instances of borrowings from the Catalan.

Other soldier-poets of the day followed suit. Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza's strong sense of self and his preference for the abstract made it easy for him to find inspiration in March. His traditional Spanish verse, as well as his Italianate compositions, show this heritage. Gutierre de Cetina borrowed more extensively than any other Golden Age poet, basing at least forty of his poems, mostly sonnets, on the work of March.

Fernando de Herrera, well-known as a critic and an historian as well as a poet, commented on the writings of his contemporaries, including Garcilaso and Cetina, with great knowledge, respect, and critical judgment. He too was an admirer of Ausiàs March, and in many of his love poems we see March's influence. Herrera, like March, displays a somber imagination and often finds himself in a state of depression because of unrequited love, or in a state of helplessness because he can neither be successful in love, nor avoid loving.

Other Golden Age poets admired and borrowed from Ausiàs March. Jorge de Montemayor, Fray Luis de León, Lope de Vega and others were drawn by the austere and powerful verses of the Catalan. But after Herrera, though a few traces of Ausiàs' poetry can occasionally be found, they are not clear instances of borrowing, with the exception of the repetition of the opening lines of Cant XXXIX, «Qui no és trist, de mos dictats no cur», which became a formula for the Golden Age poets. The Catalan's po-
pularity was finally waning, and the elements we glimpse of his work had by that time been copied and recopied from his original imitators, and had become poetic conceits.

Ausiàs' poetry, which Boscán happily characterized as his «fuerte, sabroso y dulce llanto»,\textsuperscript{11} inspired the greatest poets of Spain's Golden Age for over a century. It did so because of its strong and original character, its introspection and analysis of the psychology of the lover, the rejection of self-deception, the austere beauty of its images, and the dignity and strength of the personality of its author, which appears so clearly and so lyrically in all of his poetry.

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\textsuperscript{11} Quoted from Manuel de Montoliu, \textit{El alma de España en la literatura del Siglo de Oro} (Barcelona 1942), 414.