

THE LOST GENRE OF MEDIEVAL SPANISH LITERATURE

Hispanists have frequent occasion to refer to the loss of much medieval literature, and to recognize that the extant texts are not necessarily typical. There is no Hispanic equivalent of R. M. Wilson's *The Lost Literature of Medieval England*¹, but a similar, though less extensive, work could undoubtedly be compiled for Spanish, and Ramón Menéndez Pidal showed us how evidence for the content, and sometimes the actual words, of lost epics could be discovered by close attention to chronicles and ballads. The study of literature which no longer survives has obvious dangers, and the concentration of Hispanists on lost epic and lost drama has occasionally gone further than the evidence justifies, leading to detailed accounts of poems or traditions, which, in all probability, never existed: for example, the supposed epic on King Rodrigo and the fall of Spain to the Moors, and the allegedly flourishing tradition of Castilian drama between the *Auto de los reyes magos* and Gómez Manrique. Nevertheless, many lost works can be clearly identified and set within the pattern of literary history.

The study of lost literature can produce important modifications in that pattern, but changes of equal importance may result from a reassessment of extant works. There is a growing realization that medieval literature has been very unevenly studied, and the contrast between widespread interest in a few works and almost universal neglect of many others is especially acute in Spanish². I propose to deal here with a particularly striking example of that neglect, which has been carried to the point where the existence of an important genre is overlooked. That genre is the romance: not the *romance*, or ballad, but the dominant form of medieval fiction.

If we consider the types of narrative to be found in the Middle Ages, the discrepancies referred to above become painfully apparent. The bound-

¹ London, 1970 (first edition 1952).

² The point has been eloquently made for English by WILLIAM MATTHEWS, «Inherited Impediments in Medieval Literary History», *Medieval Secular Literature: four essays*, ed. Matthews (Contributions of the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies 1, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1965), 1-24; and for Spanish by KEITH WHINNOM, *Spanish Literary Historiography: three forms of distortion* (Exeter, 1967).

less energy and unchallenged prestige of Menéndez Pidal ensured intensive study of epics, ballads and —although to a lesser extent— chronicles. Vision-allegories of the fifteenth century and collections of *exempla* are now receiving their fair share of attention. The novel's sole representative in medieval Spain, *La Celestina*, has for the past twenty years been the subject of concentrated research. Even such apparently unpromising material as Biblical and apocryphal narrative has begun to yield significant results. But in hagiography we find that attention is concentrated almost exclusively on poems (Berceo, *Vida de Santa Maria Egipcíaca*) at the expense of prose works; there is undoubtedly a difference in quality, but is it enough to justify so great an imbalance? The *fabliau* is not recognized as a genre in Spanish, except perhaps in the *Libro de Buen Amor*, and for that reason its development has been neglected, yet such neglect need not continue, as the example of German reminds us³. The neglect of the romance is, however, the worst case of all.

The romance existed in late antiquity: a strong Greek tradition was taken up in Latin and transmitted to the Middle Ages [43, 44, 70]⁴. The chief development, however, came in twelfth-century France, and the French romances spread to Castile, Catalonia, Portugal, England, Germany, Italy and Norway, combining in each case with other influences, and stimulating the growth of autonomous traditions in most countries. From the thirteenth century until well into the sixteenth, the romance had no serious rivals in European fiction.

Since the term «romance» is so little used in Hispanic studies, and since its validity may be questioned, it is necessary —even at the risk of seeming platitudinous— to indicate the sense in which I use the term. The definitions offered by the great scholars of an earlier period, such as George Saintsbury and W. P. Ker [72, 53, 54], are no longer thought adequate, but during the past fifty years there has been increasing agreement on the main characteristics of the genre. This agreement may be traced from the articles of Nathaniel E. Griffin (marred by an attempt to widen the boundaries of the genre) and Dorothy Everett, through the contributions of the two greatest authorities, Albert C. Baugh and Eugène Vinaver, to Gillian Beer's newly-published manual [39, 26, 82, 5, 87, 88, 91, 92, 36, 7]. Even the dissenting voice of Dieter Mehl accepts in

³ DAVID BLAMIRE, «Recent Work on Medieval German *Märendichtung*», *Modern Language Review* lxx (1970) 78-93.

⁴ Bold-type numbers in brackets refer to the Bibliographical Note at the end of this article. This is confined to studies available in English and French: studies of individual romances are mostly excluded.

practice the utility of the term and the general accuracy of its definition [59].

The romance is a story of adventure, dealing with combat, love, the quest, separation and reunion, other-world journeys, or any combination of these. The story is told largely for its own sake, though a moral or religious lesson need not be excluded, and moral or religious connotations are very often present. A commentary on the meaning of the events is normally given, with special attention to the motives of the characters, and descriptions are fairly full. The audience aimed at is generally more sophisticated than the audience for the epic.

The marvellous is frequently used by the writers of romances [11], and the world in which the action is set is remote from the audience in time, space or social class, and very often in all three. However, the medievalization of unfamiliar material—its presentation in terms of European Christendom— makes it intelligible and usually dilutes the element of mystery. The romance creates its own world, which is not that of our direct everyday experience; it may be applied symbolically, but not directly, to ordinary life. It does, however, deal with real emotions, reaching (often by the use of archetypal patterns and motifs) very deep levels of emotional experience. Within this area fall both the romances with a happy ending (*Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, *Libro de Apolonio*) and those which end tragically (the stories of Alexander, Troy, and Arthur; the Spanish sentimental romances).

Romances vary in their structure: they can be episodic, or have a unitary linear structure, or follow the more complex pattern of interlacing described by Vinaver [89,91], one type of structure predominating in one language or at one period. Similarly, verse is the characteristic medium for romances at one period (usually only one or two types of verse are used in any language), and later tends to be replaced by prose. Romance as a whole has, then, neither a distinctive structure nor a distinctive medium, but romances of a particular time and language are frequently made more homogeneous by both medium and structure.

Over fifty medieval Spanish romances are extant; if we added those in Catalan and Portuguese, and the two new categories which arose in the sixteenth century, the pastoral romances and the descendants of *Amadis de Gaula*, the total would be much higher. Spain cannot compete in numbers with England (well over a hundred extant romances) or France (over two hundred), though the discrepancy is far less than in the case of extant Spanish and French epics. Other Spanish romances undoubtedly remain to be discovered by a systematic search of libraries and archives.

The aims of the Spanish and French romance writers are substantially the same, and may even be expressed in the same way⁵. The Spanish works, even when they do not derive from the French, fall into similar categories. Spain has half a dozen romances on Troy⁶, and other classical subjects are well represented: several versions of the stories of Alexander and of Apollonius, the *Estoria de Tebas*, and others. Of the three branches of romance listed in the familiar lines of Jean Bodel,

Ne sont que trois matières à nul home attendant,
de France et de Bretagne et de Rome la grant,

the *matière de Rome* —works whose action is set in classical antiquity— is thus an important element in medieval Spanish literature, not only in quantity, but also in quality. The Arthurian romances, or *matière de Bretagne*, are almost as numerous: eight texts or fragments survive in Castilian, and one in Aragonese (Portuguese and Catalan add another half-dozen). In quality, however, they cannot compete with several of the previous group: *Libro de Alexandre*, *Libro de Apolonio*, or *Historia troyana polimétrica*. It is only when we turn to neo Arthurian romance that we find an original creative effort: in Spain as in England, the Arthurian story had so powerful an attraction that it stimulated the composition of one of the best of medieval romances, but whereas *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* transfers familiar characters to a wholly new situation, *Amadis de Gaula* uses Arthurian plot-patterns and characters in a reworking of the story which is masked by changes of name⁷. The *matière de France*, or Carolingian group of romances, is less significant, though it does have some Spanish representatives, such as *El noble cuento del enperador Carlos Maynes*.

Jean Bodel's classification has sometimes been blamed for lacking universal validity, but in fact Bodel was merely listing the types of romance that the late twelfth-century French public preferred. A high proportion of romances continued to fall within Bodel's categories even at a later period and in other countries, but these were joined by other groups and

⁵ IAN MICHAEL, «A Parallel between Chrétien's *Erec* and the *Libro de Alexandre*», *Modern Language Review* lxii (1967) 620-8.

⁶ A. G. SOLALINDE, «Las versiones españolas del *Roman de Troie*», *Revista de Filología Española* iii (1916) 121-65; AGAPITO REY and A. G. SOLALINDE, *Ensayo de una bibliografía de las leyendas troyanas en la literatura española* (Indiana University Publications, Humanities Series 6, Bloomington, 1942).

⁷ G. S. WILLIAMS, «The *Amadis* Question», *Revue Hispanique* xxi (1909) 1-167; MARÍA ROSA LIDA DE MALKIEL, «El desenlace del *Amadis* primitivo», *Romance Philology* vi (1952-3) 283-9 (reprinted in *Estudios de literatura española y comparada*, Buenos Aires, 1966, 149-56), shows that the Troy romances were also drawn on.

by a number of unattached miscellaneous works. Some Middle English romances on national themes have been classified as the Matter of England; in most cases, these have an Anglo-Norman original. Works so strongly English in subject naturally have little influence elsewhere, but romances of more general interest which are nominally set in England are—even apart from the Arthurian tradition—represented in Spain. *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, sometimes attributed to Chrétien de Troyes, has two separate Spanish versions, though none in Middle English⁸; and the story of Guy of Warwick, which exists in both French and English, is a major source of *Tirant lo Blanch*. By analogy with the Matter of England, we might expect to find a Matter of Spain, but Spanish national themes are in general dealt with by the epic and the ballad. Romances of this kind are not, however, totally lacking: the most striking example is the *Crónica sarracina* of Pedro del Corral, a romance in the guise of history, whose popularity and influence are largely responsible for the belief in an epic on the fall of Spain. It is possible that one or two other apparently epic stories which are preserved in chronicles, such as *El abad don Juan de Montemayor*, are in fact romances, but the available evidence is inadequate for any decision.

Many of the medieval Spanish romances cannot be classified within any of the Matters discussed above. It is customary to label most of them *novelas* (or *libros*) *de caballería*, even when they have little or nothing to do with chivalry; Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín protested long ago against such a label for *Flores y Blancaflor*⁹, but his protest has had little effect. Some of these romances—*Paris y Viana*, *El conde Partinuplés*—are, like *Flores y Blancaflor*, stories of separated and reunited lovers. Others, such as the *Cuento de un cavallero Plácidas* and the two versions of *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, deal with families also separated and reunited, but have hagiographic as well as folklore connections; the same is true of the *Libro del cavallero Zifar*, though here folklore is stronger and hagiography weaker. Classification by theme cuts across Bodel's categories, and some romances set in Rome—*Cuento muy fermoso del enperador Otas de Roma*, *Fermoso cuento de una sancta enperatriz*—are Spanish representatives of the important group where a false accusation of adultery plays a major part in the separation¹⁰. In another group of romances, the dominant factor is the transformation of characters into animals, as in *La historia*

⁸ HOWARD S. ROBERTSON, «Four Romance Versions of the William of England Legend», *Romance Notes* iii, 2 (Spring, 1962) 75-80.

⁹ On p.vi of his edition (Madrid, 1916).

¹⁰ MARGARET SCHUCH, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (New York, 1927).

de la linda Melosina, and the *Caballero del cisne* embedded in the *Gran conquista de Ultramar*.

Some works are on the borderline between romance and another genre. Those dealing with the siege of Troy have some of the qualities of a chronicle, but the nature of the treatment, including the medievalization and the emphasis on courtly love (seen at its clearest in the poems of the *Historia troyana polimétrica*), shows these works to be romances¹¹. Pedro Manuel Ximénez de Urrea's *Penitencia de Amor* mingles the features of the romance and the novel, because of its double source, the *Cárcel de Amor* and *La Celestina*. The *Libro de Alexandre* could be regarded as a literary epic, but it is closer in nature to a romance; here again, one of the major sources falls into each category. *El conde Dirlos*, whose 1300 lines make it the longest Spanish ballad, is also on the borderline, but here, although the subject is that of romance (it belongs to the *matière de France*), the treatment, as well as the versification, is characteristic of the ballad¹². It might be argued that the existence of such borderline cases makes it unreasonable to regard the romance as a genre, but the cases are relatively few, and every genre contains some works that are partly within another orbit. The *exemplum*, for instance, overlaps the categories of *fabliau*, romance, hagiography, bestiary and wisdom literature, yet no-one doubts the existence of this genre, or the utility of studying *exempla* as a whole.

One other kind of borderline case deserves mention: the works that base themselves on a romance tradition for the sake of parody. *Don Quijote* is certainly of this type, and so, perhaps, is the *Libro de Buen Amor*¹³. Cervantes and Juan Ruiz bring the romance into painful conflict with the realities of everyday life, creating in one case a novel, and in the other a work so diverse and ambiguous as to defy categorization. It is possible to show the same conflict more subtly, thus remaining within the bounds of the romance, as is done in *Aucassin et Nicolette*¹⁴; it is also possible

¹¹ There are medieval Spanish works on Troy which are not romances, including a version of Homer (see the Rey-Solalinde *Ensayo*).

¹² On the use of romance material in ballads, see DIEGO CATALÁN, «La novela medieval y el romancero oral moderno», *Por campos del romancero* (Madrid, 1970) 77-117. Cf. RAYMOND CANTEL, «La persistencia de los temas medievales de Europa en la literatura popular del Nordeste brasileño», *Actas del III Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas* (México, 1970) 175-85.

¹³ G.B. GYBON-MONYPENNY, «Autobiography in the *Libro de buen amor* in the Light of Some Literary Comparisons», *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* xxxiv (1957) 63-78; BRUCE W. WARDOPPER, «Don Quixote: story or history?», *Modern Philology* lxiii (1965-6) 1-11. See, on the other hand, L.G. SALINGAR, «Don Quixote as a Prose Epic», *Forum for Modern Language Studies* ii (1966) 53-68.

¹⁴ Several studies have been published on this aspect of *Aucassin*: for a comprehensive view, see JUNE HALL MARTIN, *Love's Fools: Aucassin, Troilus, Calisto and the parody of the courtly lover* (London, Tamesis, in press).

to write an obvious and broadly humorous parody of the genre, as Chaucer did in *Sir Thopas*.

The earliest Spanish romances are in *cuaderna vía*, but the majority are in prose. The medium, however, makes no difference to the nature of the work: the thirteenth-century *Libro de Apolonio*, in *cuaderna vía*, and the fifteenth-century prose *Historia de Apolonio* are versions of the same story within the same genre.

From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, French romances exercised a powerful influence in Spain, though some part was also played by Latin and oriental works, and to a slight extent by romances from other European countries, but in the sixteenth century the influence was reversed. Some Spanish romances, in particular *Amadis de Gaula* and the *Cárcel de Amor*, were translated and imitated in a number of European languages¹⁵. The most important effects are, however, to be found within Spain itself. The popularity of the chivalresque romances in sixteenth-century Spain is well known, largely thanks to Cervantes, but the popularity and influence of the genre as a whole in late medieval Spain is less often realized. The extent to which writers on other genres drew on the romances has yet to be fully explored, and inventories of libraries show that some rather surprising names must be included among the devotees of this genre: Fernando de Rojas, for instance, possessed, among his forty-nine vernacular books, seven chivalresque romances and four of other types¹⁶. The *moriscos* took over the genre, apparently with considerable enthusiasm: there are extant texts —though these, like virtually all *morisco* texts, are from the sixteenth century— of *Paris y Viana*, an *aljamiado* Alexander, and a group of Islamic battle-narratives retold as romances¹⁷. The effect of the genre on life was even stronger than its literary influence. Martín de Riquer has shown that knight-errantry was accepted as part of late medieval society¹⁸, and men of considerable eminence allowed the pattern of their lives to be dictated by the romances, as we may see from the *Victorial* and the *Libro del passo honroso*. Perhaps the most important influence, however, was on the men who organized and led the overseas

¹⁵ JOHN J. O'CONNOR, *Amadis de Gaula and its Influence on Elizabethan Literature* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1970).

¹⁶ FERNANDO DEL VALLE LERSUNDI, «Testamento de Fernando de Rojas, autor de *La Celestina*», *Revista de Filología Española* xvi (1929) 366-88.

¹⁷ *El libro de las batallas (narraciones caballerescas aljamiado-moriscas)*, ed. Álvaro Galmés de Fuentes (Oviedo, 1967); *Historia de los amores de Paris y Viana*, ed. Galmés (Madrid, 1970).

¹⁸ *Caballeros andantes españoles* (Madrid, Austral, 1967). See also JOLE SCUDIERI RUGGIERI, «Per uno studio della tradizione cavalleresca nella vita e nella cultura spagnola medioevale», *Studi di Letteratura Spagnola*, ed. Carmelo Samonà (Roma, 1964 [1965]) 11-60.

expansion of Spain and Portugal, and on their chroniclers. The chronicles of Zurara, which present the acquisition of African trade and colonies as chivalresque adventure, reflect the attitude of Henry the Navigator; and the belief of the *conquistadores* that they were re-enacting the romances on American soil is matched by the literary influence of *Amadís* on Bernal Díaz del Castillo¹⁹.

This major genre is virtually unrecognized in Spanish literary history. The best works are often discussed at some length, but nearly always in isolation; sub-groups within the genre —chivalresque romances, sentimental romances— are studied, but their wider connections are usually overlooked; the lesser works are omitted from most histories of literature, and at best they receive a brief listing, normally in misleading categories. Above all, there is an almost universal reluctance to accept the existence of the genre and to study its characteristics. In the remainder of this article, I propose to illustrate and account for this neglect, to examine its consequences, and to give some indication of the tasks that await us and of the help that is available from specialists in other literatures.

The reader who consults two recent, and exceptionally useful, histories of medieval Spanish literature, Várvaro and the second edition of Alborg, will search in vain for most of the romances. The general histories, such as that by Del Río, also omit the great majority of romances, but this time without any worthwhile discussion of the few that are mentioned. Hurtado and González Palencia list most romances, but usually very briefly, and their categorization is often inaccurate. Only Pedro Bohigas, in the first two volumes of the *Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas*, approaches an adequate listing with comments, and even he does not recognize that he is dealing with a single genre. Things were better a hundred years ago: Amador de los Ríos, though he too overlooks the existence of the genre, does discuss a number of the lesser romances at reasonable length. Perhaps most disconcerting of all is the absence of a number of romances, including such interesting works as *Otas* and *Melosina*, from Simón Díaz's bibliography.

Some of the texts have been well edited, notably by Knust and Bonilla, but even these may need to be re-edited. Others exist only in poor editions, or have no modern edition at all. Only in a few cases have there been edi-

¹⁹ P.E. RUSSELL, *Prince Henry the Navigator* (Diamante xi, London, 1960); STEPHEN GILMAN, «Bernal Díaz del Castillo and *Amadís de Gaula*», *Studia Philologica: homenaje ofrecido a Dámaso Alonso* ii (Madrid, 1961) 99-114.

tions using the resources of modern scholarship (Marden's *Libro de Apolonio*, Wagner's *Cavallero Zifar*, Place's *Amadis*, and Willis's *Alexandre* are obvious examples), whereas nearly all French and English romances are available in relatively scholarly and reliable editions, often in one of the major series of texts, Société des Anciens Textes Français, Classiques Français du Moyen Age, and the Early English Text Society. The discrepancy in treatment may be seen with particular clarity in the case of *Mélusine*. This late fourteenth-century French prose romance by Jean d'Arras was abridged and reworked in verse by La Coudrette, and both versions were translated into English. The four French and English versions have long been available in editions which, though sometimes imperfect, can be used with reasonable confidence, and studies have been published on various aspects of these romances. In contrast, there is no scholarly edition of the *Historia de la linda Melosina*, it receives no more than a passing reference in an occasional history of literature or other work, and as far as I am aware there is no mention by any Hispanist of the existence —recorded in the printed catalogue of the British Museum— of two Spanish versions of Jean d'Arras's work. This is an extreme case, but it is a symptom of a general weakness.

There are articles, and now even books, on most of the best Spanish romances, and on the chivalresque and sentimental sub-groups, but only a few of these²⁰ recognize that they are dealing with representatives of a genre and exploit that recognition fruitfully. Study of the sentimental romances has been hampered by a general belief that they are novels, but recognition of their existence as a group has produced some valuable articles on individual works, Regula Langbehn-Rohland's book on Diego de San Pedro, and Varela's penetrating reappraisal of the sub-genre as a whole²¹. There is still, however, scarcely any serious study of the minor romances. They may be dealt with in a survey of a European tradition, as in Krappe's study of the Fustace-Placidus story, or Robertson's note on William of England²², but Köhler's article on the *Cuento del enperador*

²⁰ E.g., IAN MICHAEL, *The Treatment of Classical Material in the Libro de Alexandre* (Manchester, 1970); ROGER M. WALKER, *A Literary Study of the Libro del cavallero Zifar* (to be published in Colección Tàmesis).

²¹ REGULA LANGBEHN-ROHLAND, *Zur Interpretation der Romane des Diego de San Pedro* (Studia Romanica 18, Heidelberg, 1970); J. L. VARELA, «Revisión de la novela sentimental», *Revista de Filología Española* xlviii (1965) 351-82. A good recent study on the chivalresque romances is ARMANDO DURÁN, «La amplificación en la novela caballescica española», *Modern Language Notes* lxxxvi (1971) 123-35.

²² A. H. KRAPPE, «La leggenda di S. Eustachio», *Nuovi Studi Medievali* iii (1926-7) 223-58; for Robertson, see note 8, above.

*Carlos Maynes*²³ is very much an exception, and the predominant impression remains one of neglect and of lost opportunity.

It can scarcely be argued that this neglect is due to lack of material: the extant romances far outnumber not only the extant epics, but also the total number including the lost epics which can be traced in the chronicles; and almost every literary historian feels obliged to deal with the hypothetical drama between the *Auto de los reyes magos* and Gómez Manrique. Nor is it due to a failure of quality: a genre that includes *Amadis de Gaula*, the *Libro de Apolonio*, the *Cárcel de Amor*, *Grisely Mirabella*, the *Alexandre* and the *Zifar* can stand comparison with most others in medieval Spanish. The neglect cannot be due to the derivative nature of most of the works: Middle English, like Spanish, romances are mostly translations or adaptations from French²⁴, yet their study has not been impeded. Most medieval vernacular works in any country are at least partly adaptations of other works, and medievalists have long been accustomed to studying the relationship between a work and its source as a means of establishing the distinctive qualities of the work in question. *Roncesvalles* and the *Vida de Santa María Egipcíaca* have quite rightly been the subject of intensive study by Hispanists, although their relationship with their French sources is as close as that of any romance. If, then, the neglect of the romances as a genre cannot be explained by lack of quantity or quality, or by the dependence of most romances on other works, the causes must be sought elsewhere. They are, I believe, twofold: linguistic and psychological.

Medieval literary terminology is notoriously imprecise. The lack of any tradition of descriptive criticism prevented the development of a common vocabulary with widely-accepted meanings, in Spanish as elsewhere²⁵. Thus the virtual absence from medieval Spanish of a term for «romance» is no argument against the existence of the genre; nor is the observation by Dieter Mehl [S⁹, p. 15] that medieval Englishmen might call almost anything a romance. In fact, Middle English «romance» quite often has the modern meaning of the term, though Old Spanish *romanz*, *romançe* seems to mean simply a poem in the vernacular. When

²³ ERICH KÖHLER, «Ritterliche Welt und villano. Bemerkungen zum *Cuento del enperador Carlos Maynes e de la enperatriz Seuilla*», *Romanistisches Jahrbuch* xii (1961 [1962]) 229-41.

²⁴ The distinction between translation and adaptation is clear enough today, but it is doubtful whether it had much meaning in the Middle Ages.

²⁵ For examples, see JOAQUÍN ARTILES, *Los recursos literarios de Berceo* (Madrid, 1964) 13-18, and LOUIS CHALON, «De quelques vocables utilisés par la *Primera Crónica General de España*», *Le Moyen Age* lxxvii (1971) 79-84. I borrow the terms descriptive and (in note 27) legislative criticism from GEORGE WATSON, *The Literary Critics: a study of English descriptive criticism* (Harmondsworth, 1962), Chapter 1.

the term is occasionally applied to a romance, as in *Libro de Apolonio* 1c, this is probably the result of sheer chance²⁶. As is well known, few works before the fifteenth century were given titles by their authors, and when either the author or a copyist does supply a title, it is likely to be *libro*, *estoria* or something equally unhelpful. Any attempt to classify medieval works on the basis of terminology used at the time is, with very few exceptions, doomed²⁷: even a scholar as knowledgeable and experienced as Anna Krause could group sentimental romances and allegorical vision-poems with sermons and theoretical treatises, and label them *tractados*²⁸.

The Spanish words used to describe romances in nineteenth- and twentieth-century criticism show considerable variety. P. J. Pidal, adopting the term used in the poem itself, calls the *Libro de Apolonio* «un Romance»²⁹, but other scholars have been more easily deterred by the fear of confusion with *romance* «ballad». Amador de los Ríos uses *ficciones romancescas*, *iradiciones romancescas*, *caballeresca leyenda*, *novela caballeresca* and *ficciones de la caballería*³⁰. Twentieth-century critics and literary historians generally use *novela* for a prose romance, varying it occasionally with other terms, and *poema* for a verse romance. This usage has spread into English, with the result that «novel» is widely used, and only a minority of scholars (including, it must be said, such distinguished names as Sir Henry Thomas, W. J. Entwistle and María Rosa Lida de Malkiel) employ the correct term.

It is easier to point to the prevailing confusion than to suggest a satisfactory Spanish term. *Romance* cannot be used; it is a pity that Spanish ballads are not called *baladas* (especially since the use of *romances* for them and *baladas* for foreign representatives of the genre gives the impression of a much wider difference than really exists), but the term has been fixed for centuries and cannot now be changed³¹. The present article could not, of course, have been written in Spanish, because of this lack of the necessary word. The solution may in the future lie in the adaptation of a

²⁶ A prose romance, the *Cuento muy fermoso del enperador Otas de Roma*, begins with a reference to *romances*: «Bien oyestes en cuentos et en romances...», but the meaning here is almost certainly «verse narratives», as opposed to *cuentos*, «prose narratives».

²⁷ The exceptions are nearly all terms for verse-forms, since the attention given to techniques of versification, and the amount of legislative criticism available, led to a clear and stable vocabulary over most of this field. The same is true of rhetorical terms.

²⁸ «El *Tractado* novelístico de Diego de San Pedro», *Bulletin Hispanique* liv (1952) 245-75.

²⁹ *Estudios literarios* i (Madrid, 1890) 155.

³⁰ *Historia crítica de la literatura española* iv (Madrid, 1863) 26n. 28; v (1864) 95, 97.

³¹ This point is made by WARDROPPER. «Don Quixote», I. The confusion is exemplified in *RFE* li (1968) 436, where Perry's *The Ancient Romances* [70] is listed under «Cancioneros v romancescos».

foreign word; but although it is possible for a foreigner to see that some words will not do (for example, *novela caballescica*, whose general use would double the confusion), only a Spaniard can usefully propose a term. Moreover, the successful innovator would need to be a Spaniard whose prose style was matched by his skill in literary history, literary criticism and history of the language; he would, in short, have to be very like Rafael Lapesa.

The linguistic difficulty is serious, but it need not have been insurmountable: French, after all, lacks a specific term for romance, yet French scholars have been able to recognize and study the genre. Only when allied with a psychological obstacle does the linguistic difficulty prove nearly fatal. That obstacle exists in the case of Spanish literary history, and is in large measure the result of Spain's experiences in the nineteenth century. Through a desire to combat the *leyenda negra* and the insistence of the Generation of 1898 on a revaluation of the country's past, Spain's history, language and literature have been interpreted in the light of national characteristics which have, supposedly, continued unchanged for hundreds, and even for thousands, of years. Although the Generation of 1898 proclaimed its intention of modernizing Spain through this reassessment, its practical influence on the writing of literary history was to strengthen most of the assumptions that had shaped the nineteenth-century views of the subject³². Paradoxically, the professedly Europeanizing tendencies of the men of 1898 were less powerful than the implicit but strong European interests of Amador de los Ríos; hence, the situation prevailing a hundred years ago was more favourable to a study of the romances than that which we find today. Two additional factors have confirmed the 1898 influence. First, George Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*—for many decades the best foreign treatment of the subject—was dominated by the intellectual attitudes current among the New England aristocracy in Ticknor's formative years, and those attitudes happened to coincide with those of the Generation of 1898 in some crucial respects³³. Secondly, the study of medieval Spanish literature within the country and to a large extent outside it has been, throughout the present century, profoundly affected by the deserved pre-eminence of Ramón Menéndez Pidal; and Menéndez Pidal's thought was, as a number of recent studies have shown, closely linked to that of 1898. Consequently, the idea of fundamental and enduring

³² P. E. RUSSELL, «The Nessus-Shirt of Spanish History», *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* xxxvi (1959) 219-25.

³³ THOMAS R. HART, «George Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*: the New England Background», *PMLA* lxi (1954) 76-88.

Spanish characteristics, most eloquently and cogently expressed in Menéndez Pidal's essay «Caracteres primordiales de la literatura española»³⁴, has been widely accepted. What is more, the uniquely Spanish has been equated with the realistic and the popular, and these qualities have been seen as the most desirable in a work of art. This belief led to the neglect or the repudiation of whole areas of Spanish literature, including some works of the highest quality³⁵. There has, of course, been a reaction against this neglect in some areas, but much remains to be done, and one of the largest remaining areas of neglect is the romance. It is understandable that a genre which emphasizes Spain's European heritage, and which lacks local realism, should have suffered in this way, but its neglect has led to serious consequences, which must now be outlined.

First of all, many romances which deserve the attention of the critic, and of readers in general, have been for all practical purposes overlooked. A number have been published, often in the nineteenth century, but without much to guide the reader, and have been alone ever since. Access to these works has thus been made unnecessarily difficult, or—in the considerable number of cases where the romance remains unedited—virtually impossible.

Secondly, scholars have been handicapped by the widespread unawareness of a general tradition of medieval Spanish romance with which individual works could be compared. A further, and perhaps an even more serious, handicap has been an inability to take account of the work done on analogous romances on other languages. Familiarity with such work could have stimulated fresh lines of enquiry into the Spanish versions of the story, and could also have saved a good deal of time and energy. Hispanists studying individual romances have sometimes, I suspect, worked hard to arrive at a point which had already been reached by previous investigators (my own experience in one project), or may in some cases have abandoned a line of research which could, with the available bibliographical help, have proved fruitful.

Thirdly, if romances are not recognized as such, and are thought to belong to another genre, the critic will expect to find in them qualities which they never sought to possess. He will, for example, blame them for not having the qualities of the novel. Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo's dis-

³⁴ In *Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas*, ed. Guillermo Diaz-Plaja, i (Barcelona, 1949); reprinted as *Los españoles en la literatura* (Buenos Aires, Austral, 1960).

³⁵ DÁMASO ALONSO, «Escila y Caribdis de la literatura española». *Ensayos sobre poesía española* (Madrid, 1944).

cussion of chivalresque, sentimental and other romances in *Origenes de la novela* is, of course, an essential point of departure for any Hispanist concerned with these works, yet many of Menéndez y Pelayo's observations are vitiated by his search for the wrong qualities, and fall far below the critical level he attains when he really is, in his chapter on *La Celestina*, dealing with a novel. The same difficulties persist today: all too often, clumsiness of structure, ironic intent, or a breakdown of realism is alleged in works where none of these is present, since the critic has taken as a novel (or occasionally an epic) what the author composed as a romance.

Fourthly, the general outline of literary history has been distorted. The failure to take account of the really very large bulk of extant romances has artificially inflated the percentage of medieval Spanish literature represented by lost works, and especially by lost epics. Thus, although the concept of the *estado latente* has proved a useful tool in medieval literary studies (and even more useful in linguistic studies), it may have acquired a disproportionate importance. Moreover, the neglect of one of the major genres of medieval Spanish literature has inevitably given a misleading picture of the literary tastes of the age; since that genre is also one of the dominant ones of medieval Europe, this neglect has concealed an important area in which Spain is part of the European tradition, and has contributed to the mistaken belief that Spanish literature can be viewed in isolation from its European roots³⁶. At this point, the results of neglecting the romances merge into the causes of the neglect: certain assumptions about the nature of Spanish literature make it hard to recognize the existence of the romance as a genre, and the distorted picture arising from that lack of recognition reinforces the original assumptions.

It may be useful at this stage to give some indication of the bibliographical aids available to Hispanists who study the romances. It is far from being my intention to suggest that the items in the appended Bibliographical Note are totally unknown to my fellow-Hispanists. On the contrary, some of them have been used most effectively in recent studies. Their use has, however, been almost entirely confined to English-speaking Hispanists³⁷, who are for two reasons more likely to recognize the exist-

³⁶ This belief has, of course, been countered by such works as OTIS H. GREEN'S *Spain and the Western Tradition: the Castilian mind in literature from El Cid to Calderón* (4 vols., Madison, 1963-66).

³⁷ The study of Spanish romances by French Hispanists, which flourished in the nineteenth century (Alfred Morel-Fatio on the *Libro de Alexandre*, Gaston Paris on the *Gran conquista de Ultramar*), has almost died out, though it is to be hoped that this is a temporary loss. It is noteworthy that non-Castilians (Pedro Bohigas, Martín de Riquer, María Rosa

ence and importance of the romances: they possess a word for the genre, and they come into more frequent contact with colleagues whose speciality is Middle English literature and who are therefore accustomed to discussions of romances. There is thus some tradition of romance-study among Hispanists in Britain and the United States³⁸, even though it has had to compete with a much stronger tradition of Hispanic studies in general which finds no place for consideration of the romances as a genre. It is, therefore, probably safe to conclude that the majority of the books and articles listed in the Bibliographical Note are unfamiliar to the majority of medievalists in the Hispanic field. I have found them both interesting and helpful, and the list is offered in the hope that those to whom they are as yet unfamiliar may find them so. One cautionary word should be added: the list is deliberately and necessarily selective, but it may also be incomplete through my own ignorance.

There are available for our study reliable texts of most of the sources and analogues of Spanish romances. There are also many separate studies of sources and analogues: to select just three of the best, Newstead is indispensable for *El conde Partinuplés*, Krappe for *El cuento de un caballero Plácidas*, and Goepf for the *Libro* (and the *Historia*) *de Apolonio*³⁹. The light that such editions and studies can shed on individual themes or episodes of otherwise unrelated Spanish romances is equally important: major aspects of the *Apolonio* and *Caballero del cisne* cannot be fully understood without the help of Schlauch's monograph on accused queens, and Krappe's article on the St. Eustace legend is equally necessary for some aspects of the *Zifar*. The work that has been done on groups of sources and analogues is in general better known to Hispanists. There is, for instance, no need to give detailed references to the studies of Cary and Ross on the Alexander romances, since the best recent work on the *Libro de Alexandre* and on the Alexander material in the *General estoria* (Lida de Malkiel, Michael) takes these studies into account. Similarly,

Lida de Malkiel) are prominent among the native speakers of Spanish who have contributed most to research on the romances in the past fifty years, and who have been aware of the works' European connections.

³⁸ This is perhaps the best place to acknowledge my deep indebtedness to Professor P. E. Russell, whose Oxford lectures on Spanish sixteenth-century fiction taught me from the beginning to think of the chivalresque and sentimental romances as romances and not as novels.

³⁹ HELAINE NEWSTEAD, «The Traditional Background of *Partonopceus de Blois*», *PMLA* lxi (1946) 916-46; PHILIP H. GOEPP, «The Narrative Material of *Apollonius of Tyre*», *English Literary History* v (1938) 150-72; for Krappe see note 22. Krappe is the author of numerous other studies which are of great interest to the student of Spanish romances: a collection of his articles, or failing that an annotated and indexed catalogue of them, would be an important research tool.

the books of Bruce and Loomis, the collaborative *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, and the *Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society* are part of the basic equipment of those few Hispanists who are concerned with the Arthurian romances⁴⁰. Only in the case of the Troy romances does a major work of comparative scholarship [73] clearly seem to have escaped attention.

Some general studies of the romance were referred to earlier (p.000, above); to these may be added Pearsall's article on the evolution of the Middle English romances [69], and Uitti's exploration —stimulating, though sometimes obscure— of the nature of the genre [84]. In addition, there are numerous and most useful studies of particular groups, whether the grouping is by language, metre or treatment [2, 9, 21, 43, 44, 57, 70, 79], and some investigations may reveal hitherto unsuspected affinities [65]. The major themes —love, war, chivalry, the hero and morality— have been thoroughly treated [17, 18, 33, 37, 64, 76, 81, 86], and among minor themes there have been significant studies of original sin, predestination, treason and punishment [1, 10, 55, 71]. The presentation in the romances of history and geography, and of such aspects of civilized life as costume and the arts, has been explored by several scholars [25, 47, 67]; this type of study may result only in a catalogue, but its utility is not thereby impaired.

Discussions of the origins of the romance are, of course, to be found in several of the general studies, but they also occur in more concentrated form [20, 24, 32, 42, 77, 87, 91]. The sources of Arthurian romance have been so often and so fully discussed, and constitute so clearly separate a question, that any detailed references would be out of place here, except that Fiore's recent article [28] opens up a line of enquiry that is of particular interest in a Spanish context. The source-studies of greatest general relevance are, however, the classic investigations by Faral and Hibberd [27, 46], and Gallais's discussion of attitudes to sources [34].

Questions of narrative and structural technique, the structural investigations being above all those of Vinaver, have been raised and at least provisionally resolved by several scholars, mostly writing within the past ten years [11, 22, 29, 40, 63, 74, 89-91]; the use of rhetoric [50], and of descriptive techniques [16, 58] has also received attention. Technique of a different kind, the use of formulas, is another recent field of study [4,

⁴⁰ A disquieting sign is, however, the virtual absence from journals published in Spain of reviews of FANNI BOGDANOW, *The Romance of the Grail: a study of the structure and genesis of a thirteenth-century Arthurian prose romance* (Manchester-New York, 1966).

34, 35]; the inspiration here comes from the work of Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord on the Yugoslav oral epic, but it does not follow that the presence of formulas in the romances implies oral composition⁴¹. Discussions of authorship [3, 5], and of the audience for romances and their reception of them [5, 13, 34, 41], have begun and are likely to grow more intense, linked as they are to the oral-formulaic question and to the controversy over possible hidden meanings in medieval literature. The application to apparently secular works of the techniques of Biblical exegesis must (like the question of oral composition) be largely excluded from this article and its Bibliographical Note on grounds of scope and complexity⁴². It should, however, be noted that one of the earliest and most influential of such studies was based on romances⁴³. More recently, Rosemond Tuve's last book included a chapter on the inner meaning of romances [83]. Some of those who have warned against the attempt to read predetermined patterns into medieval literature have also chosen the romances as the battle-ground [45, 61]. The application of folklore, and the techniques of the folklorist, to romances is now almost beyond dispute, although extreme statements of the case, such as that by John Speirs [79], have incurred the same kind of objections as have the claims of the Robertsonians⁴⁴. Despite such skirmishes on the frontiers of folklore, the standard works of reference by Aarne and Thompson are now regarded as essential equipment for the student of romances⁴⁵. For the English metrical romances, Thompson has now been superseded by Bordman [12], but he remains indispensable for other groups of romances, and for analogues to the folklore content of the English poems. The value of the folklorists' technique in the study of Arthurian romances has been lucidly assessed by Utley [85], and there have been studies of folklore material in other types of romance⁴⁶, and of the use of myth [6, 48]. To round off this

⁴¹ Cf. R. A. WALDRON, «Oral Formulaic Technique and Middle English Alliterative Poetry», *Speculum* xxxii (1957) 792-804; and Baugh [4]. It is also true that such a conclusion does not follow for the epic, but that is an issue that cannot be pursued here.

⁴² On the application of these techniques to medieval Spanish literature, see my «Exemplum, Allegoria, Figura», to be published in *Iberoromania*.

⁴³ D. W. ROBERTSON, «Some Medieval Literary Terminology, with Special Reference to Chrétien de Troyes», *Studies in Philology* xlviii (1951) 669-92.

⁴⁴ For example, ROSSELL HOPE ROBBINS, «Middle English Misunderstood: Mr. Speirs and the Goblins», *Anglia* lxxv (1967) 270-81.

⁴⁵ ANTTI AARNE and STITH THOMPSON, *The Types of the Folktale* (2nd ed., Folklore Fellows Communications 184, Helsinki, 1961); STITH THOMPSON, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (2nd ed., 6 vols., Copenhagen-Bloomington, Ind., 1955-8).

⁴⁶ E.g. MARY H. FERGUSON, «Folklore in the *Lais* of Marie de France», *Romanic Review* lvii (1966) 3-24. It is also necessary to take into account the process by which cultured material, including romances, can be incorporated into folklore.

aspect of romance studies, it should be added that scholars have recently investigated critical attitudes to the genre as displayed in the eighteenth century and in the past few decades [51, 78, 88].

The romances are not primarily concerned with the depiction of character, but they do give some attention to it in various ways [19, 52, 62], and it is even possible to find a realistic strain in some of them, although it is not as frequent as the size of Fourier's first volume would suggest—his definition of realism is a fairly wide one [31]. Much more frequent in French and English, though not in Spanish, romances is humour, either direct [60, 81], or in the form of irony or parody [8, 38, 66].

Other studies of great interest deal with the borderlines between romance and hagiography [49, 56], and romance and the epic [11, 14, 53, 87], with the impact of romances on real life [16], with their reduction from verse to prose [23], and with the adaptation of the French romances into German [48]. In three of these four fields, the corresponding work still remains to be done for Spanish.

Perhaps most important of all for Hispanists, there are now reliable works of reference covering most aspects of the medieval romances. Even such impressionistic work as that of Spence would be a fruitful novelty for Spanish [80], but one may now turn to scholarly and largely up-to-date bibliographies for both English and French [75, 94], to a motif-index [12], and to comprehensive listings of proper names [30, 93].

The work to be done in Spanish would occupy many scholars for several decades. Critical and other editions need to be undertaken⁴⁷; a collected edition of Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan Arthurian texts has never been attempted, though the relatively modest extent of the texts makes it a practical possibility, whereas a French equivalent would be hopelessly unwieldy. As to studies of individual texts, scarcely anything has been done outside the sentimental romances, *Amadis*, *Alexandre*, *Libro de Apolonio* and *Zifar*, and even within these texts much remains unexplored; it is, however, a sign of changing attitudes that two books in the *Zifar* have been completed within the past year, and that at least two theses on the *Apolonio* are in progress⁴⁸. Comparison of the Spanish romances with their sources has been carried out in a few cases—Willis's two monographs

⁴⁷ Several are now in preparation or in press: *Libro de Alexandre* (Ian Michael), *Olas de Roma* (Roger M. Walker), *Cárcel de Amor* and *Arnalte e Lucenda* (Keith-Whinnom), *Grisel y Mirabella* (Pamela Waley), *Triste deleytación* (Regula Langbehn-Rohland), *Apollonius romances* (A. D. Deyermond).

⁴⁸ The *Zifar* books are that by Walker (see note 20, above), and James F. Burke's study of the religious background to the romance; the *Apolonio* theses are being prepared by Susan J. McMullan and Mary Taylor, for the Universities of London and Manchester, respectively.

on the *Alexandre* are an admirable example—, but the great majority of the texts still await this treatment. Another type of comparison that has scarcely been attempted is that between different Spanish versions of a romance: the two adaptations of *Guillaume d'Angleterre*: the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *General estoria* and *aljamiado* versions; the medieval verse and prose Apollonius romances and Timoneda's sixteenth-century *parrña*; and the two versions of *Melosina*⁴⁹. Motif-indexes are virtually unknown in this field, and there has never been an attempt to trace a single theme throughout the romances. Even the basic bibliographical work is lacking, and it will probably be necessary to begin in a humble way with a straightforward checklist which can be revised and amplified at intervals.

It is dangerous to write this kind of article, since it must inevitably seem platitudinous to those who are familiar with the accessible but (among Hispanists) largely neglected facts which it sets out, while seeming exaggerated and paradoxical to those who have not had occasion to consider the issues involved. To both groups, it may seem ungracious in its insistence on opportunities missed and facts overlooked, but it is not intended in this spirit: it is, indeed, more an exercise in self-criticism, for I have in the past neglected a great deal of the accessible material. Research that I have undertaken in the past few years on the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*, and the still more recent task of writing a history of medieval Spanish literature, has convinced me that one cannot adequately understand or appreciate the literature of Spain in the Middle Ages, or even a number of widely-read works, without taking account of the romances as an important Spanish manifestation of a major European genre. Rafael Lapesa has redrawn the map of Spanish literary history at a number of points (the relationship between Garcilaso and his predecessors, and between Santillana and his contemporaries: the status of the *Auto de los reyes magos*), and he will continue to do so. He has taught us by his example to join in the work of reassessment, and it is my aim to collaborate in the present tribute to him by suggesting one way in which that work can be carried on⁵⁰.

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⁴⁹ I hope to deal elsewhere with *Melosina*.

⁵⁰ I am very grateful to my colleague Dr. Roger M. Walker for helpful comments on the first draft of this article.

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