# MODERN SPANISH LYRICS

*EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION, NOTES AND VOCABULARY*

**BY**


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## PREFACE

The present volume aims to furnish American studentsof Spanish with a convenient selection of theCastilian lyrics best adapted to class reading. It wasthe intention of the editors to include no

poem whichdid not possess distinct literary value. On the otherhand, some of the most famous Spanish lyrics do notseem apt to awaken the interest of the average student:it is for this reason that scholars will miss thenames of certain eminent poets of the *siglo de oro*.The nineteenth century, hardly inferior in merit andnearer to present-day readers in thought and language,is much more fully represented. No apology is neededfor the inclusion of poems by Spanish-American writers,for they will bear comparison both in style andthought with the best work from the mother Peninsula.

The Spanish poems are presented chronologically,according to the dates of their authors. The Spanish-Americanpoems are arranged according to countriesand chronologically within those divisions. Omissionsare indicated by rows of dots and are due in all cases tothe necessity of bringing the material within the limitsof a small volume. Three poems (the *Fiesta de toros* ofMoratín, the *Castellano leal* of Rivas and the *Leyenda*of Zorrilla) are more narrative than lyric. The *romances* ivselected are the most lyrical of their kind. Afew songs have been added to illustrate the relationof poetry to music.

The editors have been constantly in consultation inall parts of the work, but the preparation of the *Prosody*,the *Notes* (including articles on Spanish-American literature)and the part of the *Introduction* dealing with thenineteenth century, was undertaken by Mr. Hills,while Mr. Morley had in charge the *Introduction* priorto 1800, and the *Vocabulary*. Aid has been receivedfrom many sources. Special thanks are due to ProfessorJ.D.M. Ford and Dr. A.F. Whittem ofHarvard University, Don Ricardo Palma of Peru,Don Rubén Darío of Nicaragua, Don Rufino Blanco-Fombonaof Venezuela, Professor Carlos Bransby ofthe University of California, and Dr. Alfred Coesterof Brooklyn, N.Y.

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[Transcriber's note a: The vocabulary section has not been submitted for transcription.}



# INTRODUCTION

## I

## SPANISH LYRIC POETRY TO 1800

It has been observed that epic poetry, which is collectiveand objective in its nature, always reaches its fulldevelopment in a nation sooner than lyric poetry, whichis individual and subjective. Such is certainly the casein Spain. Numerous popular epics of much merit

existedthere in the Middle Ages.[1] Of a popular lyric there arefew traces in the same period; and the Castilian lyric as anart-form reached its height in the sixteenth, and again inthe nineteenth, centuries. It is necessary always to bear inmind the distinction between the mysterious product calledpopular poetry, which is continually being created butseldom finds its way into the annals of literature, and artisticpoetry. The chronicler of the Spanish lyric is concernedwith the latter almost exclusively, though he willhave occasion to mention the former not infrequently asthe basis of some of the best artificial creations.

**Footnote 1:** (return) The popular epics were written in assonating lines of variable length.There were also numerous monkish narrative poems *(mester de clereçia)*in stanzas of four Alexandrine lines each, all riming *(cuaderna vía)*.

If one were to enumerate *ab origine* the lyric productionsof the Iberian Peninsula he might begin with the vaguereferences of Strabo to the songs of its primitive inhabitants,xii and then pass on to Latin poets of Spanish birth, suchas Seneca, Lucan and Martial. The later Spaniards whowrote Christian poetry in Latin, as Juvencus and Prudentius,might then be considered. But in order not to embracemany diverse subjects foreign to the contents of this collection,we must confine our inquiry to lyric production in thelanguage of Castile, which became the dominating tongueof the Kingdom of Spain.

Such a restriction excludes, of course, the Arabic lyric, ahighly artificial poetry produced abundantly by the Moorsduring their occupation of the south of Spain; it excludesalso the philosophical and religious poetry of the SpanishJews, by no means despicable in thought or form. Catalanpoetry, once written in the Provençal manner and of latehappily revived, also lies outside our field.

Even the Galician poetry, which flourished so freelyunder the external stimulus of the Provençal troubadours,can be included only with regard to its influence uponCastilian. The Galician dialect, spoken in the northwestcorner of the Peninsula, developed earlier than the Castilianof the central region, and it was adopted by poets in otherparts for lyric verse. Alfonso X of Castile (reigned 1252-1284)could write prose in Castilian, but he must needsemploy Galician for his *Cantigas de Santa María*. ThePortuguese nobles, with King Diniz (reigned 1279-1325) attheir head, filled the idle hours of their bloody and passionatelives by composing strangely abstract, conventional poemsof love and religion in the manner of the Provençal *canso,dansa, balada* and *pastorela*, which had had such a luxuriantgrowth in Southern France in the eleventh and twelfthcenturies. A highly elaborated metrical system mainlyxiiidistinguishes these writers, but some of their work catchesa pleasing lilt which is supposed to represent the imitationof songs of the people. The popular element in the Galicianproductions is slight, but it was to bear importantfruit later, for its spirit is that of the *serranas* of Ruiz andSantillana, and of *villancicos* and eclogues in the sixteenthcentury.

It was probably in the neighborhood of 1350 that lyricsbegan to be written in Castilian by the cultured classes ofLeon and Castile, who had previously thought Galician theonly proper tongue for that use, but the influence of theGalician school persisted long after. The first real lyric inCastilian is its offspring. This is the anonymous *Razónfeyta d'amor* or *Aventura amorosa* (probably thirteenthcentury), a dainty story of the meeting of two lovers. Itis apparently an isolated example, ahead of its time, unless,as is the case with the Castilian epic, more poems are lostthan extant. The often quoted *Cántica de la Virgen* ofGonzalo de Berceo (first half of

thirteenth century), withits popular refrain *Eya velar*, is an oasis in the long religiousepics of the amiable monk of S. Millán de la Cogolla. Onemust pass into the succeeding century to find the nextexamples of the true lyric. Juan RUIZ, the mischievousArchpriest of Hita (flourished *ca*. 1350), possessed a geniussufficiently keen and human to infuse a personal vigor intostale forms. In his *Libro de buen amor* he incorporatedlyrics both sacred and profane, *Loores de Santa María* and*Cánticas de serrana*, plainly in the Galician manner and ofcomplex metrical structure. The *serranas* are particularlyfree and unconventional. The Chancellor Pero LÓPEZ DEAYALA (1332-1407), wise statesman, brilliant historian and xivtrenchant satirist, wrote religious songs in the same styleand still more intricate in versification. They are includedin the didactic poem usually called *El rimado de palacio*.

Poetry flourished in and about the courts of the monarchsof the Trastamara family; and what may be supposed arepresentative collection of the work done in the reigns ofHenry II (1369-1379), John I (1379-1388), Henry III(1388-1406) and the minority of John II (1406-1454), ispreserved for us in the *Cancionero* which Juan Alfonso deBaena compiled and presented to the last-named king.Two schools of versifiers are to be distinguished in it. Theolder men, such as Villasandino, Sánchez de Talavera,Macías, Jerena, Juan Rodríguez del Padrón and Baenahimself, continued the artificial Galician tradition, now runto seed. In others appears the imitation of Italian modelswhich was to supplant the ancient fashion. Francisco Imperial,a worshiper of Dante, and other Andalusians suchas Ruy Páez de Ribera, Pero González de Uceda and FerránManuel de Lando, strove to introduce Italian meters andideas. They first employed the Italian hendecasyllable,although it did not become acclimated till the days ofBoscán. They likewise cultivated the *metro de arte mayor*,which later became so prominent (see below, p. lxxv ff.).But the interest of the poets of the *Cancionero de Baena* ismainly historical. In spite of many an illuminating side-lighton manners, of political invective and an occasionalglint of imagination, the amorous platitudes and wire-drawnlove-contests of the Galician school, the stiff allegories of theItalianates leave us cold. It was a transition period andthe most talented were unable to master the undevelopedpoetic language.xv

The same may be said, in general, of the whole fifteenthcentury. Although the language became greatly clarifiedtoward 1500 it was not yet ready for masterly originalwork in verse. Invaded by a flood of Latinisms, springingfrom a novel and undigested humanism, encumbered stillwith archaic words and set phrases left over from the Galicians,it required purification at the hands of the real poetsand scholars of the sixteenth century. The poetry of thefifteenth is inferior to the best prose of the same epoch; itis not old enough to be quaint and not modern enough tomeet a present-day reader upon equal terms.

These remarks apply only to artistic poetry. Popularpoetry,—that which was exemplified in the Middle Ages bythe great epics of the Cid, the Infantes de Lara and otherheroes, and in songs whose existence can rather be inferredthan proved,—was never better. It produced the lyrico-epic*romances* (see *Notes*, p. 253), which, as far as one mayjudge from their diction and from contemporary testimony,received their final form at about this time, though in manycases of older origin. It produced charming little songswhich some of the later court poets admired sufficiently togloss. But the cultured writers, just admitted to the splendidcultivated garden of Latin literature, despised thesesimple wayside flowers and did not care to preserve themfor posterity.

The artistic poetry of the fifteenth century falls naturallyinto three classes, corresponding to three currents of influence;and all three frequently appear in the work of oneman, not blended, but distinct. One is the conventionallove-poem of the Galician school, seldom containing a freshor personal note. Another is the stilted allegory with xvierotic or historical content, for whose many sins Dante waschiefly responsible, though Petrarch, he of the *Triunfi*, andBoccaccio cannot escape some blame. Third is a vein ofhighly moral reflections upon the vanity of life and certaintyof death, sometimes running to political satire. Its rootsmay be found in the Book of Job, in Seneca and, nearerat hand, in the *Proverbios morales* of the Jew Sem Tob(*ca*. 1350), in the *Rimado de Palacio* of Ayala, and in afew poets of the *Cancionero de Baena*.

John II was a dilettante who left the government of thekingdom to his favorite, Álvaro de Luna. He gained morefame in the world of letters than many better kings byfostering the study of literature and gathering about hima circle of "court poets" nearly all of noble birth. Onlytwo names among them all imperatively require mention.Iñigo LÓPEZ DE MENDOZA, MARQUIS OF SANTILLANA (1398-1458)was the finest type of *grand seigneur*, protector ofletters, student, warrior, poet and politician. He wroteverse in all three of the manners just named, but he willcertainly be longest remembered for his *serranillas*, thefine flower of the Provençal-Galician tradition, in whichthe poet describes his meeting with a country lass. Santillanacombined the freshest local setting with perfection ofform and left nothing more to be desired in that genre. Healso wrote the first sonnets in Castilian, but they are interestingonly as an experiment, and had no followers. Juande MENA (1411-1456) was purely a literary man, withoutother distinction of birth or accomplishment. His workis mainly after the Italian model. The *Laberinto de fortuna*,by which he is best known, is a dull allegory with much ofDante's apparatus. There are historical passages where xviithe poet's patriotism leads him to a certain rhetoricalheight, but his good intentions are weighed down by threemillstones: slavish imitation, the monotonous *arte mayor*stanza and the deadly earnestness of his temperament. Heenjoyed great renown and authority for many decades.

Two anonymous poems of about the same time deservemention. The *Danza de la muerte*, the Castilian representativeof a type which appeared all over Europe, shows deathsummoning mortals from all stations of life with ghastlyglee. The *Coplas de Mingo Revulgo*, promulgated duringthe reign of Henry IV (1454-1474), are a political satire indialogue form, and exhibit for the first time the peculiarpeasant dialect that later became a convention of the pastoraleclogues and also of the country scenes in the greatdrama.

The second half of the century continues the same tendencieswith a notable development in the fluidity of thelanguage and an increasing interest in popular poetry.Gómez Manrique (d. 1491?) was another warrior of a literaryturn whose best verses are of a severely moral nature. Hisnephew JORGE MANRIQUE (1440-1478) wrote a single poemof the highest merit; his scanty other works are forgotten.The *Coplas por la muerte de su padre*, beautifully translatedby Longfellow, contain some laments for the writer's personalloss, but more general reflections upon the instabilityof worldly glory. It is not to be thought that this famouspoem is in any way original in idea; the theme had alreadybeen exploited to satiety, but Manrique gave it a superlativeperfection of form and a contemporary applicationwhich left no room for improvement.

There were numerous more or less successful love-poets xviiiof the conventional type writing in octosyllabics and theinevitable imitators of Dante with their unreadable allegoriesin *arte mayor*. The repository for the short poemsof these writers is the *Cancionero general* of Hernando deCastillo (1511). It was reprinted many times throughoutthe sixteenth century. Among the writers represented init one should distinguish, however, Rodrigo de Cota.His dramatic *Diálogo entre el amor y un viejo* has real charm,and has saved his name from the oblivion to which most ofhis fellows have justly been consigned. The bishop AmbrosioMontesino (*Cancionero*, 1508) was a fervent religiouspoet and the precursor of the mystics of fifty years later.

The political condition of Spain improved immenselyin the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella (1479-1516) and thecountry entered upon a period of internal homogeneity andtranquility which might be expected to foster artistic production.Such was the case; but literature was not the firstof the arts to reach a highly refined state. The first halfof the sixteenth century is a period of humanistic study,and the poetical works coming from it were still tentative.JUAN DEL ENCINA (1469-1533?) is important in the historyof the drama, for his *églogas, representaciones* and *autos* arepractically the first Spanish dramas not anonymous. As alyric poet Encina excels in the light pastoral; he was a musicianas well as a poet, and his bucolic *villancicos* and *glosas* instanzas of six-and eight-syllable lines are daintily writtenand express genuine love of nature. The Portuguese GILVICENTE (1470-1540?) was a follower of Encina at first, buta much bigger man. Like most of his compatriots of thesixteenth century he wrote in both Portuguese and Castilian,though better in the former tongue. He was close to the xixpeople in his thinking and writing and some of the songscontained in his plays reproduce the truest popular savor.

The intimate connection between Spain and Italy duringthe period when the armies of the Emperor Charles V(Charles I of Spain: reigned 1516-1555) were overrunningthe latter country gave a new stimulus to the imitation ofItalian meters and poets which we have seen existed in apremature state since the reign of John II. The man whofirst achieved real success in the hendecasyllable, combinedin sonnets, octaves, *terza rima* and blank verse, was JuanBOSCÁN ALMOGAVER (1490?-1542), a Catalan of wealthand culture. Boscán was handicapped by writing in atongue not native to him and by the constant holding offoreign models before his eyes, and he was not a man ofgenius; yet his verse kept to a loftier ideal than had appearedfor a long time and his effort to lift Castilian poetryfrom the slough of convention into which it had fallen wassuccessful. During the rest of the century the impulsegiven by Boscán divided Spanish lyrists into two opposinghosts, the Italianates and those who clung to the nativemeters (stanzas of short, chiefly octosyllabic, lines, for the*arte mayor* had sunk by its own weight).

The first and greatest of Boscán's disciples was his closefriend GARCILASO DE LA VEGA (1503-1536) who far surpassedhis master. He was a scion of a most noble family,a favorite of the emperor, and his adventurous career,passed mostly in Italy, ended in a soldier's death. Hispoems, however (*églogas, canciones*, sonnets, etc.), take usfrom real life into the sentimental world of the Arcadianpastoral. Shepherds discourse of their unrequited lovesand mourn amid surroundings of an idealized Nature.xx

The pure diction, the Vergilian flavor, the classic finish ofthese poems made them favorites in Spain from the first,and their author has always been regarded as a master.