

LITERATURE, ARABIC

best that is known, thought, or practiced anywhere is less a debt than an enrichment.

PIERRE CACHIA

Notes

1. See al-Rikābī, D. *Al-Tabīʿa fī al-Shiʿr al-Andalusī*. Damascus, 1959. 43–49.
2. Pérès, H. *La Poésie Andalouse en Arabe Classique au XIe Siècle*. 2d ed. Paris, 1953. 473–75.
3. Monroe, J. T. “The Structure of an Arabic *Muwashshah* with a Bilingual *Kharja*,” *Edebiyyat* 1 (1976), 113–23, and “Prolegomena to the Study of Ibn Quzmān: The Poet as Jongleur,” in *El Romancero Hoy: Historia, Comparatismo, Bibliografía, Crítica* 4 (1979), 77–129.
4. Compton, L. F. *Andalusian Lyrical Poetry and Old Spanish Love Songs*. New York, 1976.
5. See Cachia, P. *Popular Narrative Ballads of Modern Egypt*. Oxford, 1989. 11–12.
6. Trans. with the subtitle *The Treatise of Familiar Spirits and Demons*, by J. T. Monroe. Berkeley, 1971.
7. *The Ring of the Dove*. Trans. A. J. Arberry. London, 1953.
8. The most recent translation is by L. E. Goodman. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, 1983.
9. Asín Palacios, M. *La Escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia*. Madrid, 1919.
10. Nykl, A. R. *Hispano-Arabic Poetry and Its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours*. Baltimore, 1946.
11. See, e.g., Gorton, T. J. “Zajal and Muwassah: The Continuing Metrical Debate,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 9 (1978), 32–40.

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LITERATURE, BASQUE

Basque literature possesses a series of specific characteristics that complicate any comparison. In the first place, the great periods that make up the history of the major Western literatures do not apply to their Basque counterparts. Secondly, Basque literature has been basically a servant of linguistic necessities. The primary protagonist of this literature has been *Euskara*, or the Basque language. It has been accepted as an axiom that the Basques have no literature, but Basque popular and oral literature is very rich, especially in its poetry.

Although the Basque language was not used for literary purposes in the Middle Ages, it exists in in-

scriptions, sentences, and short texts. The oldest sentences that we know about are called “Glosas Emilianenses” of the tenth century, which are in San Millán de la Cogolla. The most ancient testimonies of popular Basque literature date from the fourteenth century and are evidence of the medieval Basque language.

Poetical texts were kept by the oral tradition and were recorded in writing by some Basque historians (like Garibay, Zaldibia, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). These texts of medieval poetry are fragmentary except for some ballads, including “Song of Berreterretxe,” “Ballad of Urtsua,” and “Lady of Urruty.”

The themes of this epical and familial poetry are of two types and are constantly repeated. On one side are the family wars, bloody fights that destroyed all the Basque country, as much in the north (Agramonteses and Beamonteses) as in the south (Oacinos and Gamboinos), especially in the fifteenth century. Specifically, these poetical themes were related to the death of the chief and the defeat of the enemies. On the other hand there exists the theme of love and familial problems, as typified by the “Song of Berreterretxe.” This fifteenth-century song, a poem by an anonymous writer, deals with a murder that shocked and angered the Basque people of Zuberoa. The facts narrated in its fifteen stanzas can be presented in four sections: (1) the indignation and pain of the poet; (2) the arrest of Berreterretxe; (3) the anxious search of Marisantz, his mother; and (4) and the horror of the young Berreterretxe’s murder at the hands of the soldiers of the count of Lerín.

The rich oral Basque literature—including its *bertsolariak*, or troubadors; the pastorales; the *chiarivarriak*, or carnivals; ballads, proverbs; and masquerades—is a very unique patrimony of this small nation whose origins still remain unknown.

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LITERATURE, CATALAN

The Late Middle Ages produced the best of Catalan literature, which, after a period of decline, underwent a strong renewal during the nineteenth century and flourished again in the twentieth. Medieval Catalan writers were subjects of the Crown of Aragón (Aragón, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Valencia), a Spanish kingdom that reached its period of greatest power in

the second half of the thirteenth century. The Crown of Aragón actually existed until 1714, although after the beginning of the sixteenth century it was absorbed by the new kingdom of Spain. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Aragónese monarchs, although ruling a plurilingual country, showed a clear preference for the Catalan sector of their possessions; Catalan medieval literature is consistently linked to the royal house. Thus, the first significant Catalan literary texts are four chronicles of contemporary events endowed with epic inspiration. Two of them are written in the form of a royal autobiography: the *Llibre dels feits*, narrating the life of King Jaime I the Conqueror (1208–1276), the true founder of Aragón; and the *Crònica* of Pedro III (1336–1386). The latter work is a political tract written by officers of the chancellery and supervised personally by the king; we presume that Jaime I used a similar method. The other two Catalan chronicles were the work of Bernat Desclot and Ramon Muntaner. The first mainly narrated the life of Pedro II the Great (1276–1285), who conquered Sicily and turned back a French invasion. Muntaner compiled a very colorful narrative of events from the reigns of all the monarchs he had personally known (Jaime I, Pedro II, Alfonso II, and Jaime II). The most powerfully original writer of the Catalan Middle Ages was Ramon Llull (1232–1316), who left the king's court in Mallorca to become a Christian apologist and missionary. He wrote more than 260 works in every discipline and literary genre, and he was the first in Europe to use a vernacular language for philosophical subjects. His *Art* is a complex system designed as a weapon of controversy against unbelievers, one that attempts to explain logically the truths of Christian dogma. Llull also wrote didactic novels that describe the contemporary world (*Blaquerna*, *Fèlix o Llibre de Meravelles*), poetry (*Desconhort*, *Plany de la Verge*, *Cant de Ramon*), and other mystical, apologetic, and didactic works (*Llibre de contemplació en Déu*, *Llibre del Gentil e dels tres savis*, *Llibre d'amic e Amat*, *Llibre de santa Maria*, *Arbre de Ciència*). Moreover, Llull wrote Catalan verse for moral purposes at a time when nobody was doing so in the Catalan-speaking regions. Catalan poetry, in fact, was born as a local branch of the troubadour lyric. Guillem de Berguedà and Guillem de Cabestany in the twelfth century and Cerverí de Girona in the thirteenth had strong personalities and produced very good poems, but wrote them in Occitanian. The Occitanian of the troubadours, with a gradual admixing of Catalan, remained the linguistic vehicle of Catalan poets until the emergence of the Valencian Ausiàs March (ca. 1425). The annual poetry competition of Toulouse, the Jocs Florals (begun in 1324), and the poetical treatise *Las leis d'amors*, con-

ceived as a tool for writing verse, had a long success in the Crown of Aragón to the extent that in 1393 King Juan I instituted Jocs Florals in Barcelona. Thus Andreu Febrer, Gilabert de Pròixita, Pere March, Jaume March, Jordi de Sant Jordi, and other minor poets, whose poems are collected in the Catalan *Cançoners*, attempted to follow the troubadours' path. The Occitanian-Catalan hybrid language they used was also the vehicle for anonymous religious poetry (the oldest metrical Catalan text is the vernacular *Planctus Mariae*, in the early thirteenth century), as well as of narrative verse. Borrowing from Occitanian and French literature the idea of the *roman courtois*, Catalan writers produced a certain number of minor fourteenth-century novels in verse, dealing with courtly and allegorical subjects; the best are the anonymous *Fraire de Joi* and *Sor de Plaser* (a literary version of the "Sleeping Beauty" folktale), the *Faula* of Guillem de Torroella (in which King Arthur is located in a sort of earthly paradise) and the also anonymous *Salut d'amor*. In 1460 the Valencian doctor Jaume Roig produced a long misogynous treatise written in quadrisyllabic verse, containing an interesting pseudo-autobiography of the author, *l'Espill* or *El llibre de les dones*, the last narrative poem of the Catalan Middle Ages. The greatest medieval Catalan poet, Ausiàs March, possessed an enormously tortured lyric temperament. He not only wrote in a pure Catalan of Valencia, but also fashioned his own new poetry, both metrically and rhetorically, from the troubadour tradition even though he was in a continuous ideological struggle against it. Ausiàs March died in 1459 and most of the minor poets of the second half of the century modeled their verse on his.

Around 1380, Italian cultural developments began to change the Catalan literary scene. Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio were read and admired, and a local tradition of intellectuals at the service of the royal chancellery (scribes, notaries, secretaries, lawyers) learned a new elegant and refined prose style. Bernat Metge (1324–1413) was a very talented, if not very honest, servant of the crown who produced a masterpiece of artistic prose, *Lo Somni* (1398). In it, Metge compiled a brilliant self-apology, borrowing from Cicero, Ovid, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and the Church Fathers. This work, a fictitious dialogue between the author and three dead men who come to him while he is asleep in prison, contains solemn and elegant pages mixed with others that are coarse and very funny. Translation from Latin and Italian was the actual source of the new Catalan artistic prose: Antoni Canals, a severe Dominican inquisitor, produced some versions of Seneca, Valerius Maximus, and Petrarch for moral purposes. Other translators were interested in history (the

Decades of Livy, the *Historia Troiana* of Guido delle Colonne), or in literature (the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, the *Decameron* of Boccaccio). The two long chivalric novels of the fifteenth century, the *Tirant lo Blanch* of Joanot Martorell (1460, printed 1490) and the anonymous *Curial and Güelfa*, benefited from this artistic prose writing. Although the authors of both books borrowed from the romance narrative tradition (the French prose *roman*, the troubadours, Dante), as well from that of Catalonia itself (Ramon Llull, the chroniclers Desclot and Muntaner, verse narrative novels), they created quite a new narrative pattern, with no exact parallels in their age.

Some outstanding Catalan writers of the late Middle Ages, however, ignored and even opposed this learned fashion. They were intellectuals of the Mendicant orders, devoted to their pastoral concerns. Thus Francesc Eiximenis, a Franciscan vernacular encyclopedist, and Vicent Ferrer, a Dominican popular preacher, found their literary way through scholasticism and the mendicant homiletic tradition. The same is true of the only woman writer of the Catalan Middle Ages, the abbess Isabel de Villena, who wrote a *Life of Christ* in a beautiful colloquial Catalan. Anselm Turmeda, a Franciscan friar converted to Islam, wrote very successful moral poetry and prose; the knight Ramon de Perellós narrated in colloquial prose his travel to the Purgatory of Saint Patrick in Ireland. The last great Catalan writer was a Valencian theologian and preacher, Joan Roís de Corella. He translated devotional works into Catalan and used printing to disseminate some of his writings. He was also a lyric poet, and in a rhetorical narrative tradition deeply indebted to Boccaccio, he produced some retellings of Ovid's tragic stories.

The extant texts of medieval Catalan theater belong to the Easter and Christmas cycles, or develop themes from the Old Testament. A liturgical drama on the Assumption of Mary (the *Misteri d'Elx*), which originated in the fifteenth century, is still performed each year in the city of that name.

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LITERATURE, HEBREW See HEBREW LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

LITERATURE, LATIN See LATIN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

LITERATURE, LOST

The farther we go back in time, the greater the proportion of written literature that is lost (oral literature—works composed and transmitted orally—has always had a very high rate of loss, regardless of its age). Yet lost works often leave traces, and it is important for us to know as much as we can about what has been lost. If we do not—if we attend only to the texts that have survived—our picture of the literature of the past will not only be incomplete, it may be seriously misleading. This is especially true of genres where the rate of loss is above average: the medieval epic, for example.

Tomás Antonio Sánchez, in the preface to his great collection of medieval Spanish texts, wrote, “Siempre he creído que un gran caudal de nuestra lengua, de nuestra historia, de nuestras costumbres y literatura antigua, yacía como mudo entre las tinieblas del más profundo olvido y abandono.” (I have always believed that a great wealth of our language our history, our customs and ancient literature lay silent, Forgotten, and abandoned amid the darkness). That was in 1779, and it remains true today. The fact that so many works survive today in a single, and sometimes incomplete, manuscript or copy of an incunable (the *Cantar de Mio Cid*, the *Libro de Apolonio*, the *Vida de Santa María Egipcíaca*, for instance) shows how easily a work could disappear from view. Sánchez mentioned “el tiempo, los incendios, la polilla” (time, fire, and vermin) as the main causes of loss; the causes are numerous, and may be classified as follows:

1. Fires in libraries and archives: more than four-thousand manuscripts were destroyed in the fire in the Escorial Library (1671), a loss perhaps even greater than that of the most disastrous English equivalent, the Cotton Library fire of 1731.
2. War and revolution: the library of one of Spain's greatest scholar-bibliophiles, Bartolomé Gallardo, was sacked in the Seville riots of 1823.
3. The dissolution of the monasteries in 1835–1836.
4. Theft of manuscripts and incunables by readers—and also by underpaid librarians. The Biblioteca Colombina in Seville, founded by Hernando