

## INTRODUCTION

---

### NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF SPANISH LYRIC POETRY

IN the notes to the *Anthology* an endeavor has been made to indicate clearly the position occupied by each of the poets here represented, with respect to the literary movements of his time. This Introduction, then, need but serve the purpose of outlining those general movements in so far as they have been concerned with lyric production.

Of course we have to do only with the lyric tradition which has found expression in the language of Castile. It is not to be forgotten, however, that it is but one out of several lyric traditions that have flourished within the bounds of Spain; for the Spaniard can point with pride to a poetic production in Latin which extended from the Silver Age of Latin literature well into the Middle Ages, and he knows, too, that the Arabs and the Hebrews who settled on his soil composed and sang in their respective tongues. Those who desire more light upon these traditions will find an interesting account of them in the *Prólogo* to the first volume of Menéndez y Pelayo's *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos* (Madrid, 1890). Suffice it to say that the influence of Arabic and Hebrew literature upon composition in Castilian has been exceedingly slight, and that for literary expression the latter speech is a legitimate heir of Latin in the Iberian peninsula. The Catalan and Portuguese literatures have a tradition en-

tirely independent of that of Castile; we, therefore, disregard them here.

Literature, properly so called, did not appear in the vulgar tongue of Castile until the twelfth century. From that period we have preserved one of the greatest monuments of Old Spanish letters, the epic *Poema del Cid*. To heroic poetry as instanced by this poem on Roderick of Bivar, which, like most of the early epic legends or *cantares de gesta* of Castile, must have been produced under the influence of the French *chansons de geste*, there succeeded, in the thirteenth century, a body of religious and didactic verse, a good part of which is due to the industrious cleric, Gonzalo de Berceo. Very few lyric compositions in Castilian can be found in this century. One, and apparently the earliest of all, is the first piece in our Collection — the *Aventura amorosa*. Modeled on the French *pastourelle* or the Provençal *pastorela*, it shows, like the Spanish heroic legend, the influence of the region whence most of the mediæval Occident derived its first poetic inspiration. Another precious example of lyrism at this early date is a song with certain popular elements in it, — the *Cántica de la Virgen*, introduced by Berceo into his religious poem, *El duelo de la Virgen*.

One may marvel that there was so slight an output of Castilian lyric verse at a time when Castile had already begun to be quite active in a literary way. However, the reason is not far to seek. It is found in the fact that the poets of Castile, following what seems to have been a convention with them, wrote their lyrics in the language of an adjoining district, that of Galicia. Into this latter region, as into Portugal generally, the wandering troubadours from Provence had early penetrated, singing everywhere their erotic strains, until, at length, the native poets began to imitate the Provençal manner in their own language, the Galician-Portuguese. Of their amorous and other lyric verse quite an amount is preserved in various *Cancioneiros*, and these also contain the poems of Castil-

ians and southern Spaniards, who, like the monarch of Castile, Alfonso el Sabio, composed in Galician-Portuguese.<sup>1</sup>

The fourteenth century is marked by the advent of a Castilian poet who writes in his native speech only. This is Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita, the Villon of Spain and the most original Spanish writer of the whole mediæval period. His lyrics, interspersed among the narrative portions of his *Cantares*, have the note of personal experience. Much has been made of French influence upon Hita, but, when all is said and done, that influence is restricted to a small proportion of his work, and he remains eminently Spanish in manner, although, for his verse forms, he has had recourse to Galician-Provençal models. These same models were present to the mind of the Chancellor López de Ayala for the lyrics contained in his satiric and didactic *Rimado de Palacio*, written in the second half of the fourteenth century, and in the fifteenth century they were followed by a whole host of verse writers.

During the first half of the fifteenth century, literary activity was centered in the Court of John II., king of Castile. There, statesmen and courtiers of the type of Álvaro de Luna amused themselves by inditing verses in rivalry with the *trovadores* who lived by the trade; and a considerable number of their productions, — especially those conceived according to the stereotyped Provençal manner, as adopted formerly in Galicia and in later times in Catalonia, and imported from both regions into Castile, — may be found in the *Cancionero* of Baena.

By the side of this very artificial Court verse, maintaining as it does the earlier lyric tradition that harks back ultimately to the land beyond the Pyrenees, there appear, in the fifteenth century, two other main divisions

<sup>1</sup> For an account of this Galician poetry see Menéndez y Pelayo, *l. c.*, *Prólogo*, to volume III, and the article on Portuguese literature prepared for Groeber's *Grundriss der romanischen Philologie*, vol. II, by C. M. de Vasconcellos.

of poetry showing new forces brought to bear upon Castilian letters. Of these, the one is chiefly governed by an Italian influence, especially by that of Dante, from whose *Divina Commedia* it derives the allegorical tendency which is its distinguishing mark; the other reveals the influence of the Renaissance in the attention which it pays to the works of classic antiquity, translating and imitating them. These new influences find expression, above all, in the poems of Imperial, Mena and the Marquis of Santillana. Untrammelled by conventions, Jorge Manrique stands somewhat apart from these three poetic movements in his best work, the mournfully melodious *Coplas* on the death of his father.

To the fifteenth and the following century belongs the great mass of short lyric-epic poems or ballads, called *Romances* — a term also applied to lyrics in quatrains having no epic character whatsoever. It was formerly believed that the ballads, most of which deal with subjects from the history of Spain and with the stories of Charlemagne and his peers, were of much greater antiquity; but the artificiality of the style and contents of the majority of them, and the introduction into them of elements of culture and courtliness much more recent than the times to which they relate, fix their composition as hardly earlier than the end of the fifteenth century. Still, the weight of authority ascribes to certain of them an early oral tradition, and even considers some as developed out of passages taken from the old epic *Cantares de gesta*.

With the sixteenth century, and as the famous *siglo de oro* (1550-1680) drew near, the number of lyric poets increased greatly, and the Italianizing influences grew in importance. Boscán, Garcilaso de la Vega and Mendoza were the leading champions of the exotic measures, and they thoroughly naturalized in Spain the sonnet, the hendecasyllable, the *ottava rima* and kindred forms, some of which had already been introduced in the time of Im-

perial and Santillana. Certain spirits, such as Castillejo and Silvestre, opposed, though not consistently, the endeavors of these innovators; but toward the end of the sixteenth century the Italian manner triumphed, particularly in the works of Herrera and his school at Seville.

Mysticism, ever a prominent characteristic of the Spanish temperament, finds most pleasing expression, during the sixteenth century, in the lyrics of a number of clerical writers. The most attractive of them all is Luis de León, deservedly ranked among the greatest Spanish lyric poets. In him an Italian influence, and the humanizing impress of the Renaissance are also visible.

The Italian manner is henceforth, and throughout the seventeenth century, the dominant one in Spanish verse. It is unnecessary to mention the numerous lyrists who adopted it. The great masters of the *siglo de oro* — Lope, Calderón, Cervantes — used the foreign measures, though, indeed, they constantly recurred to the older domestic forms, such as the *romance*, the *redondillas*, etc.

At the very outset of the seventeenth century there manifested itself in Spanish poetry the vitiating influence of Góngora, a writer whose bombastic and obscure style, termed Gongorism after its originator, wrought the same harm in Spanish letters that Marinism wrought in Italy and Euphuism in England. The mannerisms of Góngora were imitated by later poets, so that his school persisted throughout the century, despite the reaction to sanity attempted by the Argensolas, and the satirist Quevedo. Even the virile Quevedo himself yielded finally to the torrent and wrote, in his later period, verse and prose as extravagant of metaphor and as obscure in style as any that ever came from the pen of Góngora.

The *siglo de oro* was followed by a period of decline in things political, social and literary, which extended through a considerable portion of the eighteenth century. Poetasters abounded, good taste was at its lowest ebb.

When matters were at about their worst in the world of letters — and the satire of Jorge Pitillas will indicate how great the decay was — Luzán inaugurated a reform movement by proposing, in his *Arte poética*, to subject all poetic production in Spanish to rigid rules such as Boileau had imposed upon classic French verse. Luzán's ideas found favor and, despite the counter-efforts of García de la Huerta, a champion of the older Spanish methods and a bitter opponent of innovations, the disciples of Luzán began to compose dramas and lyrics according to the Gallic laws. The most important lyricist of the new movement was Meléndez-Valdés, about whom gathered the so-called Salamancan school of poets. Of these the best was Cienfuegos, who most nearly approached his master Meléndez in the skill with which he versified according to the precepts from abroad. The fabulists Samaniego and Iriarte also underwent French influence.

The opening years of the nineteenth century witnessed a passionate outburst of Spanish patriotism, which found poetic utterance in the odes directed against the Napoleonic invader by the Tyrtæan poet Quintana, by his friend Gallego and other authors. Although leveled against the French, these compositions were framed in obedience to the canons of the French poetic lawgivers. The rules of French classicism prevailed also in the works of the members of a school made up mainly of young clerics, who had their centre at Seville. Lista and Blanco were among the number of these poets, whose use of French methods was tempered somewhat by their imitation of the manner of Herrera, the leader of the school of Seville that had flourished in the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, and of that of his disciple Rioja.

With the third decade of the century the wave of Romanticism began to sweep over the land. Triumphant with the drama of Rivas, it reached its apogee of lyricism in the verse of that writer and in the works of the Byronic poet Espronceda and of Zorilla. Not the least attractive

among the authors of the Romantic period are the Cuban poets Heredia and Avellaneda.

The Romantic movement passed away and its unrestrained outpourings of the inner man ceased to be fashionable after the middle of the century. Realism, which has prevailed generally in literature since that time, is not too favorable to the composition of lyric verse, and the production of the latter during the last fifty years has been rather individual than characteristic of any school. Bécquer's Heinesque strains have not been echoed by any one of note; no one has imitated successfully the poetic philosophizing of Campoamor, the winning poet so lately deceased; Núñez de Arce, the author of the *Gritos del combate* and the *Vértigo*, has alone found any considerable following; while the humanism of Valera and Menéndez y Pelayo raises their verse to an intellectual level above the comprehension of ordinary men. The gentle mysticism of León, of which reminiscences are found everywhere throughout the works of Valera, is suggested by the lyrics of Carolina Coronado, who is also of the school of St. Theresa.

#### NOTES ON SPANISH PROSODY

The following rules are mainly drawn from the excellent *Ortología y métrica* of A. Bello, published in his *Obras completas*, Santiago de Chile, 1884, vol. V. Other treatises that may be consulted are E. Benot, *Prosodia castellana y versificación*, Madrid, 1892; F. Hanssen, *Notas á la prosodia castellana*, Santiago de Chile, 1900 (in the *Anales de la Universidad*); *Id.*, *Miscelánea de versificación castellana*, *ibid.*, 1897; *Id.*, *Zur lateinischen und romanischen Metrik*, Valparaiso, 1901 (reprint from the *Verhandlungen des deutschen Wissenschaftsvereins*, vol. IV, Santiago de Chile). Cf. also the remarks of E. Stengel in his *Romanische Verslehre* (pubd. in Gröbers *Grundriss*

*der romanischen Philologie*, vol. II, part I, Strasburg, 1893) and of G. Baist in his *Spanische Literatur* (pubd. *ibid.*, vol. II, part II, Strasburg, 1897).

### SYLLABIFICATION

The Latin quantitative principle in versification has given way in Spanish to that of syllabification simply. Account is taken, as a rule, not of the greater or less length of the vowel in the syllable, but of the number of the syllables in a line and of their rhythmical accent.

#### (a) VOWELS AND SYLLABLES WITHIN A WORD.

A problem of importance is to determine, when two or more vowels come together, whether they form one syllable or more. The vowels are either strong (*a, e, o*) or weak (*i, y, u*), and they come together under three chief conditions; viz., (I) the accent of the word may be on one of the contiguous vowels; (II) it may be on a preceding syllable; (III) it may be on a syllable following them.

#### I. Combinations of Two Vowels, one of which is Accented

(1) If one of two strong vowels (*a, e, o*) coming together has the accent, they do not form a diphthong, and therefore do not count as a single syllable in the verse. Dissyllables, for example, are *Jáén, nap, leal, León*; trisyllables are *azahar* (*h* mute), *creemos, canoa*.

Exceptionally, the two strong vowels are contracted: e.g., Samaniego has contracted them in the hendecasyllable,

*El León, rey de los bosques poderoso,*

and Espronceda in a tetrasyllable,

*Y no hay playa  
Sea cualquiera, etc.*

This contraction, called *synæresis*, is less harsh when the unaccented vowel is *e*. It is frequent, however, with the first two vowels of *ahora*.

(2) If two vowels come together, the first strong (*a, e, o*) and the second weak (*i, y, u*), and if the accent rests on the strong vowel, they regularly form a diphthong and count as one syllable; e.g., *cáuto, pêne, feudo, convoý, rey, soy*. The dissolution of this diphthong constitutes a very violent poetical license. When it occurs it is termed *diæresis* and is sometimes marked by the dots so called; e.g., *glorioso, suãve*.

(3) If the first of the contiguous vowels is strong, and the second weak and accented, they form separate syllables, as in *raíz, baúl, roído*. Contraction (*synæresis*) is rare and harsh in such cases: cf. Meléndez Valdés in the hendecasyllable,

*Cáido del cielo al lodo que le afea.*

(4) If the first of the contiguous vowels is weak and the second strong, and the accent is on the weak vowel, they naturally constitute separate syllables, as in *día, río, valúa, lloraríamos*.

*Synæresis* is more frequent and less harsh here than in (3); cf. Garcilaso:

*Que habúa de ver con largo acabamiento.*

Espronceda:

*Los ríos su curso natural reprimen.*

(5) If the first of two contiguous vowels is weak and the second is strong and accented, the vowels sometimes form one syllable and sometimes do not. Etymological conditions often determine the case; thus *fió* is a dissyllable, since it comes from a Latin source (*fidavit*) in which the *i* was in a syllable by itself, and *bien* is a monosyllable, since the *i* and *e* form a diphthong evolved out of a single Latin vowel (the *ë* of *bêne*).

The chief cases are as follows:

(a) *ie* and *ue* from Latin *e* and *o* form diphthongs absolutely indissoluble: *diēte*, *muēte*.

(b) In conjugation, analogy plays a part, and *fiamos* follows *fiar* (with the *i* and the *a* in distinct syllables), *cambiamos* follows *cambiar* (with the *i* and the *a* in the same syllable).

Synæresis readily takes place for vowels ordinarily in distinct syllables (*fió*, etc.); but diæresis hardly obtains for the vowels of a true diphthong (*cambió*, etc.).

(c) The combinations *io* and *ie* are usually diphthongs in the terminations of the preterite indicative, the future subjunctive, the past tenses of the subjunctive, and the gerund, of verbs of the second and third conjugations: e.g., *murió*, *muriere*, *muriēse*, *muriēra*, *muriēndo*. In *rió*, *deslió*, *rieron*, *deslieron*, the vowels seem to be considered as forming separate syllables, the *i* being treated as part of the stem and not of the suffix.

(d) The substantival ending *-ión* (*acción*, etc.) is generally a diphthong, and rarely suffers dissolution.

(e) In derivatives analogy operates: e.g., *naviero* and *brioso* with their *i* in a separate syllable because of *navío* and *brío* (cf. rule 4); but *gloriēta* and *ambiciōso* with a diphthong because of *gloriá* and *ambiciōn*. Ordinarily, such *ie* and *io* combinations permit of synæresis if they are properly dissyllabic, and if properly diphthongal they remain indissoluble. Still, adjectives in *-ioso* and *-uoso* sometimes dissolve their diphthong; e.g., as in Espronceda:

*El majestüoso río*  
*Sus claras ondas enluta,*

Garcilaso:

*El árbol de victoria*  
*Que ciñe estrechamente*  
*Tu gloriosa frente.*

(6) Two contiguous weak vowels with the accent on the first of them form an indissoluble diphthong; e.g.,

*muy*. *Cuita*, *cuido* and related forms once accented the *u*: cf. p. 134, l. 20, where Cervantes has *descuido* in assonance with *confuso*. So also, Meléndez Valdés assonated *tumba* and *cuidan*. *Viuda* was formerly *viuda*, and Tirso de Molina assonated it with *Lucía*, *pican*, etc.

(7) If the second of two contiguous weak vowels is accented, there is a diphthong sometimes indissoluble and sometimes dissoluble; e.g., indissoluble are *fuí* and, in modern usage, *cúita*, *cúdo* and their derivatives; dissoluble are *ruin*, *ruina*, *ruido*, *viudo*. These later, however, readily admit synæresis.

Analogy operates in verb forms; thus *u* is in a syllable apart in *huyo*, *arguyo*, and so also in *huimos*, *argüimos* (but in such cases synæresis is always possible). In cases of a repetition of the same vowel, synæresis hardly obtains; therefore *púsimo* and *duúnviro* have four syllables each.

## II. Combinations of Two Vowels with the Accent Preceding them

(1) Two contiguous strong vowels after the accent naturally form two syllables: e.g., *Dánao*, *héroe*, *temiéndoo*. Yet the poets usually make diphthongs of them; e.g., Moratin:

*Los héroes que la fama*  
*Coronó de laureles,*

and only exceptionally treat them as dissyllabic; e.g., Samaniego:

*Cuando á un héròe quieras*  
*Coronar con el lauro.*

(2) If the first of two contiguous vowels after the accent is strong and the second is weak, they form a diphthong, as in *amabâis*, *temierâis*. But it is frequently dissolved with ease, since in many cases the vowels stood

originally in separate syllables; thus *amábades* and *temiérades* were good forms down to the seventeenth century.

(3) If the first of two contiguous vowels after the accent is weak and the second strong, there is a diphthong usually indissoluble; e.g., *injuriá*, *limpió*, *continúo*. Dissolution is possible, however, where *u* is the first vowel (as in *continuo*, *estatua*).

### III. Combinations of Two Vowels before the Accent

(1) Two contiguous strong vowels before the accent naturally form two syllables; e.g., *lealtad*, *roedor* are properly trisyllabic. But synæresis is possible, especially where *e* is one of the vowels.

(2) If the first of two contiguous vowels before the accent is strong and the second is weak, they naturally form a diphthong; *váivén*, *peinado*. They are regularly in distinct syllables, however, when the first vowel (except *a*) is part of a prefix, as in *preinserto*, *prohijar*, *rehusado* (prefixes *pre-*, *pro-*, *re-*). Nevertheless, synæresis is here permitted, and the diphthong is normal where *a* is the vowel of the prefix, as in *airado*, *ahumado*.

(3) Usage varies when of two contiguous vowels before the accent the first is weak and the second strong. The derivative follows the simplex; thus the *i* and the *a* are in separate syllables in *criador* and *criatura* because they so stand in *criar*, they form one syllable in *cambiamiento* because they do so in *cambiar*. But synæresis is always possible where the diphthong does not already exist.

(4) If both the contiguous vowels before the accent are weak, they naturally form a diphthong, as in *ciudad*, *ciudad*. Derivatives of words of variable syllabification may imitate their simplex: thus *viudo* may be either dissyllabic or trisyllabic (cf. I, rule 7) and *viudez* has the same liberty.

### IV. Combinations of Three or more Vowels

(1) Three contiguous vowels with the accent on the first. These offer two possible forms of combinations, viz., one of two vowels with the first accented plus one of two vowels after the accent. To these apply the rules already stated. Thus in *lóaos* we have *óa* in two syllables according to I, rule 1, and *ao* which may be in two syllables by II, rule 1, therefore all three vowels may be in separate syllables. So, too, in *iríais* we have *ía* in two syllables by I, rule 4, and *ai* which forms a diphthong by II, rule 2, therefore the combination *íai* forms two syllables.

(2) Three contiguous vowels with the accent on the second. There are two combinations possible, one of two vowels with the accent on the second and one of two vowels with the accent on the first. Apply the rules to these: e.g., *fiáos* has *ía* in two syllables by I, rule 5 b and *áo* in two syllables by I, rule 1, so that the combination is trisyllabic; again, *cambiáos* has *ía*, a diphthong by I, rule 5 b, and *áo* in two syllables by I, rule 1, therefore the combination has two syllables; *buey* has *ue*, a diphthong by I, rule 5 a, and *ey*, a diphthong by I, rule 2, so that the whole combination is linked together and forms one syllable as a triphthong.

(3) Three contiguous vowels with the accent on the last. The combinations are one of two vowels before the accent plus one of two vowels accented on the last. So, applying the rules to *rehuí*, for example, we find *eu* (*h* mute) to be a dissyllable by the exception to III, rule 2, and *uí* to be probably a dissyllable by I, rule 7, so that the combination probably forms three syllables.

(4) Combinations of more than three vowels may be decomposed in a similar way. Thus, *decaíais* has *ai* with four contiguous vowels in three combinations, viz., *ía*, a dissyllable by I, rule 3; *úa*, a dissyllable by I, rule 4; *ai*, a diphthong by II, rule 2, so that the combination has three integral elements and three syllables.

N.B. — Despite all these rules, it should be noted that the tendency of the language is toward synæresis.

(β) THE VALUE OF CONTIGUOUS VOWELS IN SEPARATE WORDS.

Between the vowels of separate words there may occur *synalœpha* or *hiatus*. *Synalœpha* is the contracting into a single syllable of the vowels ending one word and those beginning the next word, as in *hombre ilustre, soberbio edificio, Si á un infeliz la compasión se niega*.

The vowels thus contracted are still pronounced separately, except in cases of the repetition of the same vowel, where only a single prolonged sound is heard, as in *casa ajena*. As *synalœpha* may take place where *synæresis* would be impossible, it is governed by somewhat different rules.

*Hiatus* — which corresponds to *diæresis* within a word — occurs when there is no contraction of the final vowel of one word and the initial vowel of the next; as in *la hora, bella obra*.

The following general observations are necessary:

(1) Mute *h* is disregarded in the verse and does not prevent *synalœpha*.

(2) An unaccented weak vowel between two other vowels prevents *synalœpha* of these latter; thus, *comercio y agricultura*, in which the *io* is kept apart from the *a*; so also *Sevilla ú Oviedo* with the *a* in one syllable and the *uo* in another. Some writers have violated this rule, but most have observed it.

(3) *ó* prevents *synalœpha* and forms a syllable with the following vowel; *Lupercio de Argensola*:

*El orbe escucha atónito ó atento.*

(4) The conjunction *é* generally prevents *synalœpha*; *Lupercio de Argensola*:

*Pues he de retratarme, dónde ó cómo  
Me pueda yo estar viendò é imitando.*

*Synalœpha* is not wholly inadmissible.

(5) Two similar contiguous vowels form *synalœpha*, and the sound is a single prolonged one: *el voluble elemento*.

Three similar contiguous vowels may form *synalœpha*, but the combination is a harsh one; as in *Maury*:

*No su palanca á Arquímedes le diera.*

(6) A pause due to a break in sense does not prevent *synalœpha*.

*Rules for Synalœpha*

(1) *Synalœpha* is necessary where two or more unaccented vowels come together (unless a weak unaccented vowel, or the conjunctions *ó, é, intervene*); *Meléndez Valdés*:

*Yo vi correr lá asoladora guerra*

*Por lá Europa infeliz.*

*Quintana*:

*El odio á un tiempo y el amor unirse.*

*Calderón*:

*Aunque el negocio he ignorado.*

The *synalœpha* of five vowels is very rare.

(2) When the vowel at the end of the first word is accented, *synalœpha* is natural; *Quintana*:

*Se heló la risa y se tornó en gemido.*

(3) When the accent is on the last word, *synalœpha* is the general rule, especially when *e* is the first vowel; *grande hombre, esta alma*. Upon occasion *hiatus* sounds better, and especially so under a strong accent.

(a) *Hiatus* is preferable when there is a close syntactical connection between the vowel before the accent and the accented vowel, as, e.g., between the definite