

## **The Traditional Romancero in Mexico: Panorama<sup>1</sup>**

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A traditional genre possesses two principal characteristics: its power of conservation and its power of variation. Thanks to the first, it can preserve up to the present time themes, plots, motifs, and texts that were born centuries ago. Thanks to variation, the texts are able to adapt themselves to the place where they are received and to the people that adopt them. In this game of change and preservation is the reason for the long life of *romances*, *canciones*, proverbs, sayings, and stories.

The reasons that these texts take root in foreign lands are more difficult to explain, but it is evident that among the most important are their undeniable attractiveness, whether aesthetic or conceptual (or both); their language (if not always simple, at least within the capacity of everybody); and their style (topical and therefore familiar). When a traditional genre is accepted, it becomes a part of the culture of those communities, and its possessors do not feel that it is something foreign. Only the specialist is able to recognize the origin of the texts and place them within a broader cultural frame (Hispanic culture, Western culture, etc.), but for those who sing, recite, and tell traditional genres, the texts are as much their own as those created in their community, and they feel absolutely free to use them and to vary them as they choose.

Inherent in everything traditional is its diffusion, both spatial and temporal (and generally social as well). The *romancero*, as a traditional genre, has acquired broad diffusion in both of these aspects: several centuries of age and a vast territory that includes Spain, Portugal, Ibero-America, the Sephardic communities all over the world, and the nuclei of Spanish and Portuguese speakers within other countries. Although it is among the least privileged

classes socially that it circulates most widely, we also find it among the middle and even the upper classes. This is very noticeable as far as children's ballads and religious ballads are concerned, but texts of other kinds have been collected quite frequently among those classes.

The presence of the *romancero* in America today has not been studied in its totality, but there is proof of its existence in almost all of the American countries.<sup>2</sup> The American tradition is very similar to the Peninsular tradition, with logical adaptations to the speech of each region and to the idiosyncrasies of each human group as well as to each individual. It can be said, then, that the American *romancero*, with the characteristics that emanated from its different possessors, represents a series of manifestations of the same common phenomenon, which, together with the manifestations, also individual, of other communities of speakers of Hispanic languages, make up what Ramón Menéndez Pidal called in the title of his (1953) book: *El Romancero hispánico (hispano-portugués, americano y sefardí)*.

We understand by traditional *romances* those narrative songs with forms and themes common to the whole Hispanic tradition that have strong textual similarities. In this study of the Mexican *romancero*, I will not, of course, take into account narrative songs, whether traditional or not, created in Mexican territory or in Chicano nuclei, nor those that clearly do not derive directly from the Hispanic *romancero*, that is, songs for which there are no textual marks that relate them to a particular *romance*. Nevertheless, taking variation into account, which is characteristic of the *romance*, I shall consider as such texts of Hispanic origin interpolated with national motifs or formal influences of the same kind, or, and this is most important, texts with additions made by Mexican re-creators.<sup>3</sup>

The *romancero* came to the American continent with the *conquistadores*, and precisely the first piece of evidence comes from Mexico. Bernal Díaz de Castillo relates that in San Juan de Ulúa (Veracruz) in 1519 Alonso Hernández Portocarrero recited to Cortés these verses from an old *romance* (1928:1:113):

Cata Francia, Montesinos,  
cata París la ciudad,  
cata las aguas del Duero  
do van a dar en el mar.

Look at France, Montesinos,  
look at the city of Paris,  
look at the Duero's waters  
where they enter the sea.

The colonists must also have brought the traditional

*romancero* with them, at least during the sixteenth century when it enjoyed great popularity in Spain among all social classes. Books of *romances* were also imported, as well as broadsides destined for sale in the Colony (cf. Leonard 1953). When interest became centered on the new *romancero* toward the end of the century, it undoubtedly diminished the introduction of *romances* by the upper classes, who followed the literary fashion of the period, but not among the lower classes since the *romances* formed part of their cultural patrimony. After Independence, the influx of Spaniards did not cease, and it continues up to the present. The immigrants are usually country people, and we know that even today the *romancero* is alive for them. In addition to these emigrations, one must not forget the massive emigration that took place between 1939 and 1942 of Spanish Republicans defeated in the civil war of 1936-39, who had been brought up with an appreciation and liking of what was folkloric.

Thus from the earliest days ballad texts could have circulated among Spaniards and Creoles and later among the Mexicans who spoke Spanish. As the use of the Spanish language spread, the different manifestations of traditional literature also spread, were absorbed, adopted, and, in this case, adapted by the Spanish-speaking Mexicans. The *romancero*, which was an important part of the aforesaid manifestations, continued its traditional life in these lands based on repetition and variation of what was received, nourished constantly by what emigrants from Spain brought in, and, above all, renourishing itself with the product of its own life in the country. All of that resulted in the *romancero*'s being deeply rooted today in the new land and forming part of the cultural stock of the Mexican.

The collection and study of this *romancero* has stimulated the interest of a number of folklorists and investigators since the beginning of the century. Menéndez Pidal, a pioneer in this field as in so many others, was the first to publish a Mexican version of a *romance*, *Hilitos de oro* (1906:72-111). Some years later, Pedro Henríquez Ureña included another in an article about the American *romancero* (1913:347-66). Antonio Castro Leal published two *romances*, *Las señas del esposo* and *Gerineldo + La condesita* (1914:237-44),<sup>4</sup> and in 1922, according to Mendoza (1939:349), the Universidad Nacional Autónoma of Mexico published a pamphlet with a version of *Delgadina*. The most important set of ballads of the twenties was prepared by Pedro Henríquez Ureña and Beltram

D. Wolfe for the *Homenaje ofrecido a Menéndez Pidal*, which contains twelve versions of five *romances* and several fragments of others (1925:2:375-90). Several folklorists continued to publish Mexican versions, for example, Manuel Toussaint (1927:101-104), Higinio Vásquez Santa Ana (1931), Gabriel Saldívar (1934), and Hector Pérez Martínez (1935). On the other hand, commercial publishers of popular music, like the Casa Vanega Arroyo, from the end of the nineteenth century, and Eduardo Guerrero, from the beginning of the twentieth, went on publishing broadsides for popular consumption which contained *romances*. In 1939 the volume by Vicente T. Mendoza came out, *El romance español y el corrido mexicano*, which brings together everything that had been published together with many versions collected by the author. The book contains fifty-five versions and several fragments of fifteen traditional *romances*, together with several *romances vulgares* and information about their publication in the eighteenth century. It has great importance, not only for the richness of its content, but also because it demonstrated without a shred of doubt the traditionality of the Hispanic *romancero* in Mexico. In addition, Mendoza's publication provided an impulse for those interested in the genre. From 1940 on, collections by folklorists, scholars, and amateurs multiplied, and publications followed one upon another until the middle of the century. Among them we can cite those of the aforementioned Mendoza (1951, 1952, 1956), of Andrés Henestrosa (1977), who collected versions published in periodicals or other works, and of Celedonio Serrano (1951).

The zeal for ballad collecting diminished during the following years, not only in Mexico but also in other countries, and publications were sporadic although they never completely ceased. The Seminario Menéndez Pidal (which has now become a university institute) did not give up, however, the publication of the thousands of versions from its archives (among them many from America) in its series of the *Romancero tradicional de las lenguas hispánicas* and, under the direction of Diego Catalán, organized several congresses for specialists<sup>5</sup> which have given a new impetus to ballad collecting and to ballad studies in Spain and have encouraged American scholars as well to continue their work. In Mexico a team of investigators from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma under my direction prepared a compilation of everything published up to 1980. This compilation, *El romancero tradicional de México* (designated henceforth *RTM*), to which was added a

number of versions collected directly by university investigators, will be out shortly. The book contains two hundred eighty-five versions (some very fragmentary) of twenty-nine *romances* collected in twenty-five states of Mexico, thus comprising an important addition to the general Hispanic corpus and, furthermore, enabling us to have at hand the results of several decades of ballad collecting.

In this rapid panorama of collecting in Mexico, it is unfortunately necessary to say that a part of the texts have been gathered and published by various folklorists who lack adequate scientific knowledge. Thus some texts have been retouched, others lack information about the informants, and in others this information is confused or erroneous. Even Mendoza himself occasionally presents texts with some of these signs of carelessness. All of this, naturally, affects the value of the collections, but it does not invalidate them since trustworthy texts surpass in number those that are not.

Studies on the *romance* in Mexico have been scarce and generally have served as a point of departure for the study of the *corrido*, for which reason little attention has been paid to the *romance* for its own sake. Mendoza himself attaches more importance to the music of the *romance* than to the texts (1939: 4-8, 15-32, 35, 39-57, 61).

### ***Romances and Texts in Mexico according to the Latest Compilation and their Relationship with other American Countries***

Out of the twenty-nine *romances* collected in Mexico based on the RTM, we must exclude a few that are not truly traditional for one reason or another or because we do not have complete versions of them.

*La conquista de Sevilla* and *La batalla de Roncesvalles*, in addition to being fragments, are more closely related to the new *romancero* than to the old; only the second has two verses from an old *romance*. *La mala suegra* and *El conde Olinos* have been taken from books; the same is true of *Gerineldo* + *La condesita*. *Los versos de la Parca* was built upon a text from the *Flor nueva de romances viejos* of Menéndez Pidal (1928), as Diego Catalán has demonstrated (1970:51-54); in any case it is semi-learned. For its part, *Román Castillo* is a *romance* created in Mexico without Spanish antecedents, although it is very interesting for the influence

of the *romancero* on its opening, rhyme, and form. *Doña Blanca*, although perhaps coming from a *romance* that is now lost, from the seventeenth century on has been a game song without a developed story (see Rodrigo Caro 1978:2:161). We have only four octosyllables of *El conde preso*, three of *La doncella guerrera*, and two of *Fontefrida*, all collected before 1940, and no further mention of these *romances* has been found. On the other hand, we have a two-verse fragment of *El conde Olinos* and two fragments of *Gerineldo* (of four and six verses respectively), but the only complete versions, as we have already said, are from books. Nevertheless, we can perhaps consider these last two *romances* as possibly having taken hold in Mexico.

Aside from those already mentioned, which we excluded for the reasons indicated above, we have seventeen *romances* in complete versions (fragments are not counted unless they fully reflect the plot and the gaps are minor). We have a single version of *La malcasada*, *La muerte de Prim*, *El marinero*, *La Virgen y el ciego*, *La buenaventura de Cristo*. There are not many examples of *La aparición*, *La dama y el pastor*, and *La monjita*. I believe, nevertheless, that this lack of versions is not so much because these themes did not have a foothold in Mexican territory as it is the result of scarce and sporadic searches by the also scarce and occasional collectors.<sup>6</sup> Nine *romances* exist that have circulated widely: *Hilitos de oro* (42 versions), *Delgadina* (29 versions), *Las señas del esposo* (21 versions), *Don Gato* (18 versions), *Mambrú* (15 versions), *Bernal Francés* (14 versions), *La adúltera* (13 versions), *La búsqueda de la Virgen* (5 versions), and *Alfonso XII* (5 versions). In addition to the foregoing there are two floating motifs, that is, motifs composed of several verses of traditional *romances* that are used, with slight variation, in the creation or re-creation of other *romances*: “No me entierren en sagrado . . .” (9 versions linked to different texts) and “De la corva al carcañal” (2 versions).<sup>7</sup>

This corpus of the *RMT*, which is the most complete, is, I believe, representative in that it contains religious ballads, children’s as well as “adult” ballads; on the other hand, although the majority are texts that we can classify as novelesque, we also find among them one historical *romance* (*La muerte de Prim*) and another that is historical-novelesque (*Alfonso XII*). As far as their antiquity is concerned, we can say that four of the *romances* had already been collected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

(*La aparición*, *Las señas del esposo*, *La adúltera*, and *Gerineldo*). Others were documented during those centuries, although we do not have complete texts from that period, as is the case of *Bernal Francés*, *Hilitos de oro*, and *La malcasada*. Likewise, we have versions of the first *romance* documented in writing in the fifteenth century (1421), *La dama y el pastor*, and one of the last *romances* to be created (1878), *Alfonso XII*.

Our seventeen *romances* do not correspond exactly to the *romances* that are most widespread in America.<sup>8</sup> Only seven of them coincide with witnesses from the other American countries: *Hilitos de oro*, *Delgadina*, *Las señas del esposo*, *Bernal Francés*, *Mambrú*, *Don Gato*, and *La adúltera*. Although much less widespread than in the rest of the American continent, six others exist in Mexico: *La búsqueda de la Virgen*, *Alfonso XII*, *La aparición*, *La dama y el pastor*, *El marinero*, and *La Virgen y el ciego*. Still no trace has been found in Mexico of *Blancaflor y Filomena* or *Santa Catalina*, and only fragments of *Gerineldo* and *El conde Olinos*; these four are, on the other hand, common in the rest of the Americas. Mexico coincides with other countries in the scarcity of *La malcasada* and *La muerte de Prim* and also *La monjita*, which is found in only a few countries, albeit with an average number of versions.

It seems appropriate to note that there still have not been found in Mexico versions of *La bastarda*, *Carabí*, *Silvana*, *Las hijas de Merino*, *La muerte de don Juan*, *Isabel*, *La bordadora*, and *La mala yerba*, which exist in some countries of the American continent, although in a reduced number. Neither do we have versions of *El conde Alarcos*, *La muerte ocultada*, *El quintado*, *Las tres cautivas*, *La infantina + La hermana perdida*, *La condesita*, *El duque de Alba*, *Misa de amor*, *La muerte de Elena*, or several more of which there are examples in the rest of America. Nevertheless, we have a version of *La buenaventura de Cristo*, which apparently is not to be found in any other American tradition.

The two floating motifs deserve special mention, the first of which, “No me entierren en sagrado . . .” (Don’t bury me in a cemetery), is very widespread in all of the Americas as well as in Mexico. It is in our country where, apparently, it has been integrated into a greater number of songs (not texts), since it is found in one traditional *romance* (*Don Gato*), in one *romance vulgar* (*La cantada de Isabel*), in a *corrido* (*El hijo desobediente*), and in a folkloric dance (*El caballito*). About the second motif,

“De la corva al carcañal” (From the back of the knee to the heel of the foot), which comes from the old *romance* of *La muerte de don Beltrán*, for the moment we can say that it appears to be the only example on the American continent.

As for the number of texts collected (176), Mexico is high on the list among the various American countries and, as far as traditional *romances* are concerned, it is also important since it is only surpassed by Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Santo Domingo. If one takes into account the aforementioned fact that ballad collecting has been carried out in Mexico only in a sporadic way by a few folklorists, we can say that the foregoing statistics seem to indicate that there exists in Mexico a great wealth of ballads waiting to be brought to light.

### **Mexican Versions<sup>9</sup>**

In the corpus that we mentioned there are three principal types of versions: (1) those that are very similar to the common Spanish versions; (2) those that have strong points of contact with the former but show some form of local adaptation; and (3) those that have crossings, signs, and national re-creations of importance, whether because of their frequency or because of their significance.

Among the first we can cite the only versions collected of *La Virgen y el ciego*, *El marinero*, *La muerte de Prim*, and *La buenaventura de Cristo*, all the versions of *La monjita*, *La aparición* and *La búsqueda de la Virgen*, just as almost all the versions of *Mambrú* of the type “Mambrú se fue a la guerra . . .” and several versions of *Alfonso XII*, *Don Gato*, *Hilitos de oro*, and *Mambrú* of the type “En Francia nació un niño . . . .” These versions are an example of the phenomenon of textual repetition, which preserves with little or no variation a text that has been received.

The versions of the second type faithfully follow the inherited model; nevertheless, among the slight variations that they present are to be found lexical changes that consist of replacing some words with similar local terms. This does not affect the story or its narrative presentation, but it reveals a certain liberty in the handling of the text and constitutes a visible sign of its belonging to a specific community. This type of version is scarce, since the handling of the text generally brings with it, in addition to lexical changes, re-elaborations of different kinds (type 3). From type two we have several versions of *Las señas del esposo*, *Hilitos de*

*oro*, *Mambrú*, *Don Gato*, and the version of *La malcasada* that includes words like *zaragüato* (a kind of monkey), *Hernán Cortés*, *sarape*, *desconchinflado* (disjointed), *tapanco* (a large platform that forms a small room between the roof and part of an interior room), *boruca* (noise), *pelona* (a pejorative term), *chile*.

Within this same class, there are two cases that stand out, which are versions of *Mambrú* (“Un niño nació en Francia . . .”) and of *Hilitos de oro*, both having national re-creations that do not disturb the story. In fact, in *Mambrú* the local re-creations are in the refrain, an imitation of a burlesque refrain of other Spanish versions, but slightly different, and which, in addition, contain some expressions like *trompudo* (large-nosed), *babosa* (idiot), *zonceses* (stupidities), etc. The re-creation places the versions in Mexico, but it does not affect the text, which is a quite faithful reproduction of the Spanish text.

*Hilitos de oro* also has, at times, specific traits that one could consider to be outside of the story even though related to it. It is a matter of an enumerative amplification (often repetitive and generally parallelistic) which presents maternal recommendations and makes profuse use of local terms, for example:

No me la sienta en el suelo  
síntemela en un cojín  
que aunque la ve trigüeñita  
es hija de un *gachupín*.

Don't have her sit on the floor  
seat her on a cushion  
for though she is fair-skinned  
she is the daughter of a Spaniard  
(pejorative).

No me la sienta en el suelo  
síntemela en un *petate*  
que aunque la ve trigüeñita  
es hija de un *pinacate*.

Don't have her sit on the floor  
seat her on a mat  
for though she is fair-skinned  
she is the daughter of a smelly  
black bug (i.e., mulatto).

(RTM XVI. 34)

I have said that the elaboration is outside of the story because it is a game of rhymes that has to do with the childish, playful character of the *romance* and in no way modifies what was inherited. It is a kind of appendix stemming from the use to which the *romance* was put, and not from the *romance* itself. It could be said that these two cases are halfway between versions of the second and third types.

The third class of versions, that is, those that have important re-creations, can be divided into four groups: (a) those that do not modify the plot but which present it differently from the majority of the Spanish versions; (b) those that do not change the theme or the nucleus of the plot, but amplify it; (c) those that affect the

story;<sup>10</sup> and (d) those made in a way that differs from the usual one, since they do not use traditional style and language but instead the more polished style and language of the urban middle classes. It is in this third category of versions (and in all of its four groups) that national re-creation is exercised with most vigor, for which reason I shall examine some of these texts more closely in order to give an idea of what they are like.

### **Group a: Different Presentation of the Same Plot**

In this section there are included texts with the same narrative sequence as the common versions and a similar outcome. The variants are to be found in the details, in abundant use of the national lexicon, and, at times, in the re-creation of an episode or scene without change of meaning within the story.

For example, in *La adúltera* we have two types of openings that differ from those of the common Hispanic versions. The latter present a lady on the balcony who accepts the proposition of a passer-by, or even solicits it. A variant that abounds in the Canaries presents first a suitor who adorns the lady's doorway with branches. In Mexico the beginning of the story is put in the lover's mouth. In the oldest versions a man tells about his encounter with a woman "a las orillas del mar" (along the seashore), her invitation to go to her house, and the husband's arrival while they are chatting (a common euphemism); afterward the usual dialogue between husband and wife follows. In more modern versions, products of a re-creation made by a singer of *rancheras*, it is the husband who tells us the story of the betrayal of his wife—

Quince años tenía Martina	Martina was fifteen
cuando su amor me entregó	when she gave me her love
a los dieciséis cumplidos	when she became sixteen
una traición me jugó.	she betrayed me.

—and the scene continues between the married couple.

In the majority of the versions of *Delgadina*, the traditional opening "Un rey tenía tres hijas . . ." (A king had three daughters) has changed to present Delgadina walking "de la sala a la cocina" (from the living room to the kitchen) showing off her figure: "con un vestido de seda / que su pecho lo ilumina" (in a silken dress / which highlights her breast). Before the incestuous paternal proposition, a small scene has been created in which the

father asks her to get ready to go to mass, and it is after mass that the proposition takes place. The *romance* goes on in the usual way with the variants of the Hispanic versions except that in some there is no answer from the mother to her request for water, a variant that is not found in any other version that I know of (cf. Díaz Roig 1986:202-3). Although the same story is being told, all of these details separate these texts from the more common ones. To the foregoing one must add the many national words like *nagüas*, *Morelia*, *pápa*, *máma*, etc., which give these versions characteristics of a specific milieu. Also in *Hilitos de oro* the usual Spanish opening, “De Francia vengo, seõra, / de por hilo portugués” (I come from France, my lady, / for Portuguese thread) is changed to “Hilitos, hilitos de oro, / que se me vienen quebrando” (Little threads, little golden threads, / which are always breaking for me) or “Angel de oro, / arenitas de un marqués” (Golden angel, / sands of a marquis) and their variants, but similar openings are found in other regions of Spain and in several American countries.

Individual versions of *Mambrú*, *Alfonso XII*, and *Don Gato* include the Mexican motif of the burial taken from “La cucaracha” (see note 7), which, without changing the plot, gives the version a burlesque tone that is incompatible with the meaning of the text (except for *Don Gato*). We can consider it to be a crossing provoked by the mention of a burial in the text which the informant included automatically without considering the text itself, or a burlesque addition appropriate to children for whom the *romance* is sung. In my opinion, the first case would apply to *Alfonso XII*, in which, in addition to being a version re-created in romantic language, the burlesque tone is even more out of place, and the second case to *Mambrú*, a children’s ballad. In *Don Gato* its inclusion does not stand out since it is a *romance* with animal protagonists. This version then enters perfectly into the group 3a, but the other two would constitute a special case of tone change more in accord with group 3c.

### **Group b: Significant Amplification of the Plot**

This is not very common. Nevertheless, one of the most widespread *romances* in Mexico, *Bernal Francés*, presents this phenomenon. Here it has to do with a preliminary scene or episode that relates the suspicions of the husband and his

determination to prove them:

	Su marido maliciaba que Elena era preferida que cuando ausente él estaba de un francés era querida.	Her husband suspected that Elena was wanton that when he was away she was courted by a Frenchman.
5	Su marido fingió un viaje para poderla agarrar en el hecho en que se hallaba y poderla asegurar.	Her husband feigned a trip in order to catch her at what she was doing and to ensnare her.
10	Al punto de medianoche a su casa se acercó, con bastante sentimiento a Elena la recordó: —Abre las puertas, Elena, ábre las sin desconfianza,	At exactly midnight he approached his house, with great passion he woke Elena up: “Open the doors, Elena, open them without fear,
15	que soy Fernando el francés que vengo desde la Francia. (RTM VII. 1)	for I am Fernando the Frenchman who has come from France.”

The structure is altered in the foregoing since the final surprise is removed and the public is informed about what really is going on, while in the common versions the listener is deceived as well as the wife. This little scene is enlarged in many versions to create an entire episode in which the husband meets the lover, kills him, and afterwards goes home to entrap his wife.

With all of these elaborations the plot, in fact, has not been changed, since what has been created corresponds to what is not specifically said in other versions, that is, the suspicions and intentions of the husband. The addition of the lover's death does not change the nucleus of the story, but it does enrich it. The lover's punishment lies within the possible variations of a *romance* about adultery, and so it is not surprising that it can be found in many versions of *La adúltera* (cf. Martínez-Yanes 1979:132-53).

We do not know for sure if these important variations in the ballad of *Bernal Francés* are of Mexican origin, since they are also found in other American texts (from Texas, New Mexico, Guatemala, and Nicaragua), but the predominance of that structure in Mexico is notable (14 out of 21 complete texts), suggesting that it probably is Mexican.

### **Group c: Re-creations that Affect the Story**

Despite what is generally thought, this is a phenomenon found with some frequency in the Hispanic *romancero*. A careful examination of the versions of a single *romance* shows us that in

some cases crossings, elisions, re-creations, and truncated endings change the meaning of the story being told and even its theme. *Delgadina* without an incestuous proposal turns into a *romance* about parental cruelty (cf. Díaz Roig in press); *Las señas del esposo* without the identification of the husband sometimes causes the theme of the faithful wife to become that of the unfaithful wife (cf. Díaz Roig 1979:121-31); *La infantina* and *El caballero burlado* are transformed when the ending of *La hermana cautiva* is included, and the original stories either are lost or become diluted; *El conde Olinos* in a truncated version changes its theme from that of “love that is more powerful than death” to the much more common “death for love” (see Díaz Roig 1986:118, 126).

In Mexico there are versions of other *romances*, which, like *La adúltera*, when they have a truncated ending (perhaps as a result of the bad memory of the informants) and conclude with her excuses, present the story of adultery that is not found out. In fact, when there is no answer given to the wife’s words, it would seem that the husband has allowed himself to be deceived, accepts the invented excuse, and has his suspicions dispelled. This ballad of successful deception, the product of truncated versions, is completely realized in other versions in which it is made explicit that the adulterous wife convinces her husband and, in addition, flaunts it (see *RTM* VI. 8 and Espinosa 1953:64).

The two versions that we have of *La dama y el pastor* have an important elaboration also found in the Chicano versions. It is a question of the final motif, which affects the plot since the shepherd does not finally reject the lady; rather it is the lady who rejects the shepherd in vengeance for the insult she received:

	—Oye, pastor adorado, bien te puedes retirar, mis palabras no comprendes, tú te puedes ir alla.	“Listen, dear shepherd, you may well retire, you don’t understand my words, you may go away.”
5	—Oye, joven blanca y bella, tus palabras no entendí, mi ganado está en la sierra, pero yo me quedo aquí.	“Listen, fair maid, I didn’t understand your words, my flock is in the mountains, but I’m staying here.”
10	—No hay perdón para el que yerra, mucho menos para ti, tu ganado está en la sierra, bien te puedes ir de aquí.	“There is no pardon for one who errs, much less for you, your flock is in the mountains, be gone from here.”
	( <i>RTM</i> III. 1)	

Finally, it is necessary to take note of the fact that the

versions of *Las señas del esposo* follow the above-mentioned model, that is, they accept the death of the husband and, in some of them, the wife is presented as lascivious because she is thinking only about marrying again (Díaz Roig 1979:121-31). As I indicated, this changes the theme of the ballad.

All of these re-creations have their own characteristics, either because they are crossed with texts of other Mexican songs like “Juana Luna” (*La adúltera*), “La mujer abandonada” (*Las señas del esposo*), or because of the very high frequency of vocabulary of Mexican origin. One version of the latter *romance* can be cited as an example in which the following terms appear within ten verses: *güero* (blond), *costeño* (coast dweller), *Cuautla*, *tápalo* (shawl), *café* (brown), *me vi* (I looked at myself), *chula* (pretty).

#### Group d: Re-creations in Non-Traditional Style

Two *romances* present versions with re-creations in a style that is different from that of the base text. One is a version of *Don Gato*, which has characteristics of a learned version: an abundance of adjectives, unusual nouns, careful syntax, detailed story, perfect sequence. Nevertheless, the text has maintained its traditional air in that the re-creator has kept all the motifs, has added no new ones, uses a good part of the original vocabulary, and is discreet in his work. In this way, the text turns out to be only slightly different from the usual ones, and perhaps only a specialist can detect the learned hand of the re-creator.

This is not the case in two versions of *Alfonso XII* in which the re-creators intercalate verses with a completely different style, verses which are out of character:

	Ella, triste y solitaria, dicen que de amor murió, pues tu rango y tu nobleza ella nunca ambicionó.	She, sad and lonely, they say died of love for your rank and nobility she never coveted.
5	Hoy la cantan los troveros como ejemplo de un amor y recuerdan a Mercedes, muerta ya como una flor, ¿Dónde vas, Alfonso XII,	Today troubadours sing of her as an example of love and they recall Mercedes, now dead like a flower. Where are you going, Alphonso XII,



*adúltera*, *Alfonso XII*, *Delgadina*, *Hilitos de oro* (with predominance of the original rhyme), *Don Gato* (in which monorhymed versions predominate), *La búsqueda de la Virgen*, and *Bernal Francés* (without the predominance of any particular rhyme). Also, some *romances* keep their monorhymed versions: *La malcasada*, *La aparición*, *Mambrú*, and *La Virgen y el ciego*.

The influence of the lyric song and the *corrido* also manifests itself in the direct intervention of the singer who addresses the public at the beginning or at the end. This presence is noteworthy in the versions of *Bernal Francés*, less frequent and only at the end of *Delgadina*, and occasional in *La adúltera* and *Don Gato*.

There are, of course, many other characteristics that deserve mention and are part of the phenomenology of the traditional song: fragmentary texts, texts with a changed structure (this occurs quite frequently in *Bernal Francés*), texts with badly integrated crossings, texts reworked with more or less coherency, and so forth. Here I have only wanted to present a few examples of the most outstanding examples of *romances* from the Mexican tradition and show how the handling of the texts confirms that they have been propagated and taken root in this country. The particular characteristics of these versions present to us some of the many forms that textual re-creation can adopt in the open road of its traditional life.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Translated from the Spanish by the editor.

<sup>2</sup>Up to now, as far as I know, no *romance* texts have been published from Bolivia, Honduras, Panama, or Paraguay, but their existence is assumed.

<sup>3</sup>That is to say, I shall not take into account *corridos*, *bolas*, *valonas*, etc., but I shall consider, for example, the versions of *Bernal Francés* that have been re-created both formally and thematically.

<sup>4</sup>The latter, however, was taken from the *Almanaque de la Ilustración* (1888). See *Romancero tradicional* (1976:8:312).

<sup>5</sup>Madrid, 1971; Davis, CA, 1977; Madrid, 1982; and a meeting during the congress of the Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas (Venice, 1980). These congresses stimulated in turn other international meetings like the one organized by the University of California (Los Angeles, 1984) and by the Rijkuniversiteit (Utrecht, 1985).

<sup>6</sup>For example, in recent months, Professor Aurelio González has collected several texts, among them two versions of *El marinero*, of which there is only one in the *RMT*, and I have just collected a new version of *La Virgen y el ciego* which reinforces my comment about the lack, not of tradition, but of ballad collecting.

<sup>7</sup>There is another floating motif that is strictly Mexican which did not come from a *romance* but from a popular song, *La cucaracha*: “. . . ya lo llevan a enterrar / entre cuatro zopilotes / y un ratón de sacristan,” (they are taking him off to be buried / between four buzzards / and a rat as sacristan), which is intercalated in versions of three *romances*: Don Gato, Mambriú, and Alfonso XII.

These are: *Las señas del esposo*, *Delgadina*, *Hilitos de oro*, *La búsqueda de la Virgen*, *Don Gato*, *La adúltera*, *Bernal Francés*, *Mambriú*, *El marinero*, *La dama y el pastor*, *Alfonso XII*, *El conde Olinos*, *Blancaflor y Filomena*, *La Virgen y el ciego*, *La aparición*, *Santa Catalina*, and *Gerineldo*. For this and other data about the American tradition, I base my remarks on some eight hundred texts from the principal collections. It is clear that, even though the corpus is important, my conclusions should not be taken as definitive.

<sup>9</sup>I have treated the Mexican tradition in several studies (1983:44-47; 1986:159-223); likewise in a paper presented in the XXIII Congreso del Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana (Madrid, 1984), and I have touched upon the subject in several articles and notes.

<sup>10</sup>Generally the versions of groups a, b, and c are apt to present a high percentage of lexical variants from Mexican speech, not only in the re-created parts but also in the inherited ones.