SANDRA CRISTINA DE JESUS BOTO (LOULÉ, PORTUGAL)

Expressions of Travelling in the Portuguese *Romanceiro*

Abstract: Travel themes in the Portuguese *romances* from the modern oral tradition are explored, supported by Di Stefano's concepts of *romance omega* and *romance alfa*. They can refer to past events not in the present narrative, but suggested by present events or by the characters' role or nature (a soldier that returns from war, for example). But travel can also assume a more direct role in the *alfa* type, as the narrative structure corresponds directly with the events narrated. Travel action, therefore, collides with the narrative present, and is reflected in a related detailed verbal structure.

Keywords: travel, Portuguese *romanceiro*, *romance omega*, *romance alfa*, narrative structure, Almeida Garrett.

This essay looks at expressions of travelling in a corpus of Portuguese traditional ballads. The narrative genres of traditional literature – the Iberian *romances* – frequently use "travelling" as a structuring device – as a restorer of balance, as the chosen space for the unusual to happen). In most cases, the motif of travelling is an ideal space, or situational context, for the unfolding of a narrated story. Partway through the song, there is often an imbalance caused by an encounter between the traveller and another character, leading to a need for compensatory, or repairing action.

It is, of course, impractical to analyze all of the nearly 7000 ballads in the Portuguese tradition (see Ferré and Carinhas for bibliography), I have selected some traditional versions from the writings of João Baptista de Almeida Garrett. In fact, the choice of these texts is deliberate. Besides his work being one of the pinnacles of the Portuguese Romantic literary movement, Garrett was also a pioneer of collecting and valuing oral traditional ballads in the Iberian context (for details on his life, see Amorim).

Besides *Adozinda*, the reference work in which Garrett published for the first time a Portuguese traditional ballad and the three volumes of the *Romanceiro* (1843 and 1851), which are wholly representative of the modern Portuguese tradition (not withstanding Garrett's romantic mediations), he left us handwritten materials of considerable importance for the study of the Portuguese ballad. These consist of more than a few loose pages others' hands and the occasional insertion of ballads in some of his theatre and prose manuscripts, especially the *Cancioneiro de Romances, Xacaras, Soláos*, an autograph notebook started in 1824, and the Futscher Pereira manuscripts, named after the family in whose possession they were found in 2004, a collection of sparse autographs also dedicated to the ballads most probably written between 1842 and 1853. These contain not only the final versions Garrett sent to press, but also many others which remained unedited today. These materials were most likely intended to become a part of ensuing volumes of the *Romanceiro* project and so a selection of these autograph texts have been used in this study, selected on the basis of their particular

oral style, as opposed to those which are clearly an author's poetic creation. Thus, Garrett's completely original *romances* were left out and, of those that are traditional in origin, where more than one version exists, those with less editorial intervention have been preferred. Most follow secular themes, but some deal with "miraculous" or religious matters though these, with the exception of "Sta. Irene", are unusual within the Garrett corpus. Ballads include,

1. "The Enchanted Princess + The Baffled Knight + The Lost Sister" (manuscript version included within Garrett *CR*, between pages 142 and 147);
2. "Sta. Irene" (manuscript version included within Garrett *CR*, between pages 149 and 154);
3. "The Maiden who Dies of Love" (printed version included within volume three of the *Romanceiro* (1851), between pages 89 and 93);
4. "The Queen and her Slave" (manuscript version included within Garrett *CR*, between pages 53-54 and 59-62);
5. "The Captive" (manuscript version included within Garrett *CR*, between pages 231 and 238);
6. "The Maiden Pilgrim and the Knight" (printed version included within volume three of the *Romanceiro* (1851), between pages 22 and 26);
7. "Count Claros Disguised as a Friar" (manuscript version included within Garrett *CR*, between pages 65 and 83);
8. "The Shepherd's Wife" (manuscript version included within Garrett *MIA*);
9. "The sailor's Temptation" (manuscript version included within Garrett *MIA*);
10. "The Blessed Mother's Girdle" (manuscript version included within Garrett *MIA*);
11. "The Ploughman and the Beggar" (manuscript version included within Garrett *MIA*);
12. "The Virgin and the Blind Man" (manuscript version included within Garrett *MIA*).

It will prove useful to start by defining a basis for theoretical analysis: "Travelling" necessarily implies movement, but it goes further than that, otherwise any motion in space and time would imply travelling. That movement must, as Maria Alzira Seixo points out (12), be situated in a broader context which includes notions of departure, arrival, fulfilment, purpose, paths, crossings, and return. Spatial motion is one of the most prominent structuring elements of Portuguese *romanceiro* narratives; the characters move with startling frequency, which leads us into assuming that they are constantly travelling. Yes and no.

Let us consider a case of motion through space and time which I believe falls short of "travelling" in "The Enchanted Princess + The Baffled Knight + The Lost Sister", which tells the story of a knight who goes hunting and finds a bewitched damsel in the woods. Deciding to carry her back, he identifies her as his sister on the way. The text begins with a clear indication of spatial motion in relation to a departure point, probably the knight's home, "Hunting has the hunter gone/ Through a dark and shady grove" (all

translations are my own). There is mention of the return path, even detailing the distances, "Long was the road behind/ For the damsel who smiled". We also have information on the mode of transport, "I jest not of the horse/ Neither of its waywardness// But only of the knight/ And his cowardliness", and of the arrival itself. But can we find for this journey a motive, a purpose, which would define it as a travel, or a hint of the mantle of a traveller on the characters? The knight is, usually, the one who travels by land, with or without a set course, but always with a certain moral urgency, which is why the figure of the wandering knight is so firmly established in the imagination. This knight, however, is not following his "profession" here, but rather engaging in a leisure activity with no notion of travelling in its fullest sense, even though we acknowledge that there is a long road leading back home. The round trip itself, or "direct displacement", therefore, is not the defining characteristic of a travelling motif; more is required.

Menéndez Pidal divides the traditional ballads into the *romance cuento* (story song) and the *romance escena* (scene song), according to whether they present single or various actions (1968). Giuseppe Di Stefano later showed how imperfect these categories are (1972) because even those ballads which are poorer in action (*escenas*/the scenes) feature organized accounts of incidents which constitute a short story (*cuento*). Di Stefano thus proposed a new classification, one which takes into account the varying deep and surface structures. The first of these (*romance omega*) distinguish themselves by a superficial textual structure, which does not coincide with their deep structure, thereby demonstrating the non-linearity of the events. In the second type of ballad (*romance alfa*), there is a perfect correspondence between the structures; the song is logically and chronologically organized.

As soon as I began reading ballads for this study, I found that "travelling" was expressed everywhere, but mostly elliptically, as a suggestion. The narrative economy of traditional song allows the elision of facts which, though essential for the narrative flow, need no great verbal investment. It so happens, and not infrequently, that the motif of travel appears only within the ballad's "implied narrative" and not in the actual text. This "implied voyage" found in the *romance omega* therefore appears to be dislocated from the sequential organization of the song.

In the ballad "The Sailor's Temptation", for example, the sailor calls for help from the shipwreck – the entire romance consists of a dialog between the drowning sailor and the Devil, who wants his soul.

Crying goes the sailor
Crying for the drowned
What will you, seaman, give
To whom from the water will deliver you?

So begins Garrett's version – there has been a previous boat journey to mid sea which does not appear in the traditional ballad; it begins, characteristically, *in medias res*. If we were to outline this ballad's implied structure, it might look something like this:

a) The sailor sets sail
b) Shipwreck occurs in mid ocean
c) The sailor calls for help
d) The Devil intervenes and asks the sailor what he will give in exchange for rescue
e) The sailor makes an offer, which the Devil refuses
f) The sailor refuses to surrender his soul to the Devil
g) The sailor drowns

(a), (b) and (g) do not appear in the ballad's surface structure, but are easily inferred by singers and listeners. In this case, we can refer to an implied voyage, one that does not appear in the surface structure of the ballad.

Next, let us turn out attention to "The Queen and her Slave":

To war, to war, Moors, away to the wide sea,
A blonde white Christian captive I want for me.
Some downstream, others upward. –
Bring me a Christian captive to be our queen.
Those who went downward no captive found,
[...] those who went upstream
Found Count Flores coming from pilgrimage,
Coming from Santiago, Santiago in Galicia.

The story tells of two sisters separated in childhood, one of whom is sold to the Moors and transformed into a queen. The other, a pregnant Christian woman, is captured when returning from Santiago de Compostela with her husband to become a slave to this same Moorish queen, who is also with child. Only at the moment they deliver do the women identify themselves as sisters. The *incipit* of the Garrett version points to the call for the capture of a slave by the Moors and a subsequent departure to travel the seas. They intercept Count Flores and his wife, also travelling. So, we face the two movements, corresponding to two different voyages with different objectives: the Moors', which runs with the narrative, and that of the Count and his wife whom we encounter when they are already on the return leg. We are fully aware of Count Flores's motives for travel, the religious pilgrimage, which was a common inspiration for medieval travel and we know the full implications of "coming from Santiago".

The deep structure of this ballad, however, requires that Count Flores and his wife have travelled to Galicia before the ballad begins, a fact we understand, but which is not stated. Theirs is therefore an implied voyage, contrary to that of the Moors which actually occurs in the text within the chronological order of events.

Travelling (active) characters are a usual motif in the Portuguese *romanceiro*. They accidentally cross with static (passive) characters, so called because they just interact with the traveller in the course of the narrative incidents without moving themselves. Notwithstanding their passivity, these characters often approach travellers, act-

ing – with more or less awareness – in such a way that those passing by feel obliged to address them. "The Shepherd's Wife" is one obvious example:

As I stood by my door,
In a remnant of sunshine
There came by a knight
On a speedy horse.
He asked me: are you married?
I answered: yes, sir.

The woman, static as a portrait, stands outside in the last sunshine, a picture appealing strongly to the male character. In opposition to her immobility, the traveller in mid route, riding a fast horse, stops to speak. The paucity of information about such deep structure travel is not questioned, yet the meeting is made possible by this movement. The mystery surrounding it informs the outsider's enigmatic tone. Other ballads corroborate this line of thought, only this time with mysterious or religious themes: "The Ploughman and the Beggar", "The Blessed Mother's Girdle" and "Sta. Irene". The first two, also unedited, within Garrett's *Romanceiro*; the third is transformed for inclusion by the author in his own novel, *Viagens na Minha Terra* (*Travels in my Country*), to explain the origins of the Portuguese town of Santarém. Once more, let us look to their incipits:

"The Ploughman and the Beggar"
The fortunate farmer coming from his plough,
Saying his rosary, riding his little mule.
On the side of the road a beggar sees,
Weary of the way, half asleep [on the ground] lay.

"The Blessed Mother's Girdle"
Standing at my doorway three hours into the evening,
I saw our lady pass with a golden bough in her hand.

"Sta. Irene"
As I stood at the window with my pin cushion,
My gold needle, my silver thimble,
A knight rode by, asking for shelter.
My father denied him, how hard it was for me!
Night draws near, lonely is the road.

In both "The Blessed Mother's Girdle" and "Sta. Irene" we find something very much like what we had in "The Shepherd's Wife": a character whose immobility is verbally stated in the use of the gerund *estando*. In contrast, the travelling character in "The Blessed Mother's Girdle" is a woman whose ostentation is evident. The woman lets herself be seen and, not contented with that, calls attention to herself. One of them stands by the door at night, "three hours into the evening", quite late; another, by the window, does needlework with gold and silver tools (bright, extremely appealing elements). Once we acknowledge that the passing woman in "The Blessed Mother's Girdle" is the Virgin Mary on her wanderings, we can see the underlying structure of the encounter by the window.

a) The Virgin Mary wanders
b) The maiden sets herself by the window
c) The Virgin Mary rides by the maiden's house and the latter strikes up a dialog

Much same structure applies to "Sta. Irene", in which a knight begins his journey. When the encounter takes place with Iria at her window – the narrative segment which opens the ballad at speech level – night is falling, the knight must be tired. The circumstances are hardly the most auspicious: the day is near its end, the road deserted and danger lurks, which leads Iria to be sorry for the traveller and she attempts to take him in for the night. Even though she makes the wrong choice (the travelling knight reveals himself a dangerous murderer), this ballad offers an impression of what travelling like until the nineteenth century: dangerous and deserted roads and travellers who ask for hospitality at the end of the day's journey, in short, a real adventure.

The first four verses of "The Ploughman and the Beggar" present an initial situation somewhat different from those discussed so far, but one which eventually conforms to the idea of the implied voyage. Here, instead of a moving character meeting a static one, setting off a series of incidents, we can see two spatial movements: that of the farmer returning from his ploughed plot (an understated two-way journey) and that of the beggar, found by the farmer lying on the floor, weary of his own travels. According to our definition of travelling, the farmer's focused movement can be seen as a product of the ballad's deep structure, a cyclical movement related to his profession and to the rhythms of nature. It therefore does not allow for the freedom, the chance and the unknown that lead to adventure. On the other hand, the beggar's wandering is full of characteristics related to travelling, such as weariness, lack of direction and being permanently on the road. In this case also, the chance encounter between farmer and beggar, the first incident in the ballad, does not constitute the *de facto* first segment. It is thus necessary to posit a previous narrative segment in which the beggar begins wandering (implied voyage), a *sine qua non* for the characters to come across each other.

Turning now to the voyage present in the text, as in "The Queen and her Slave", let us see if all such journeys correspond to detailed description in the songs, just as implied voyages correspond to sparse semantic investment. Is it essential that the travelling movement be told with cinematic minutiae?

In the *Cancioneiro de Romances, Xacaras, Soláos*, Garrett points to "Count Claros Disguised as a Friar" and several other variations on the same theme from different parts of Portugal. With several different openings, "Count Claros" deals with a character of high social status who impregnates a young maiden. When her father becomes aware of this, he resolves to have her burned at the stake the following day. She, however, is able to send a letter to the Count informing him of the pregnancy and asking for his help. He rushes into action and, on the way, disguises himself as a friar and intercepts the escorts are bringing the damsel to the stake. Under the pretext of hearing

her confession, they meet alone, she recognizes him, he releases her and they elope together.

Concerning the stanzas in which Count Claros hears the news and decides to save his beloved, Garrett presents a variant from Castelo Branco:

> Aye, aye, my servants,
> Get the horses ready,
> A fortnight journey
> This night shall be rode

This is a traditional formula from the sixteenth century, at least, which expresses the need for a journey speedily undertaken by means of condensed speech. This acquires another, more concrete meaning, literally and analytically. The productivity of this formula is remarkable; it is present in most Portuguese versions of "Count Claros" and has spread to other ballads, a fact which attests its efficacy (see Boto for more detail). The formula is also the way oral tradition tells us of the details of the journey the count is about to undertake. The following reference to the rescue expedition, as presented by Garrett in his notes, is the Count's moment of arrival, when he encounters the damsel:

> Clothed in friar's garments,
> By the road he awaited her
> And, in reaching by her side,
> The servants he addressed.

The expressions of "travelling" in this narrative segment are limited to the formulae of preparation and little else. Short on words? Evidently. Short on meaning? No. First, these two verses report the Count's intentions. Next, they bear witness to the long task which lies ahead. The idea of "travelling" is thus absolutely asserted. The end of the journey is also focused on here, though there are versions in which tradition omits the moment of arrival. Traditional discourse, constrained by meter and rhyme, limited by variable memory, concentrates on discursive efficiency, selecting those facts which are essential for the transmission of meaning (see Menéndez Pidal). The concept of travelling goes well beyond the movement itself, as Alzira Seixo points out, for that can be elided to bring verbal focus on the moment of arrival (pp. 22-23). Tradition tends to emphasize events by using the most economic narratives possible, rejecting that which can be assumed or which is superfluous, often using formulae, particularly within expressions of "travelling", in the narrated voyages.

On the same theme, let us examine what happens in the religious ballad "The Virgin and the Blind Man".

> There goes Our Lady from Egypt to Bethlehem;
> The Child in Her arms, how lovely it becomes them!
> In the middle of the way, to the side she casts her gaze,
> An apple tree orchard she sees, rich apples it displays!

Within the first four verses of this unedited version copied by Garrett, we are introduced to the ballad's main content and central characters. Though it opens with a travelling scene, a common trope, "The Virgin and the Blind Man" uniquely starts with a narrated voyage, in contrast with such ballads as "Sta. Irene", "The Ploughman and the Beggar", "The Sailor's Temptation", "The Queen and her Slave" and "The Shepherd's Wife", whose first narrative segments consist of implied structures. The travels of the Virgin and child, initiating the action, are expressed both in the deep structure and on the text's surface, contrasting with the *incipit* of another religious ballad, "The Blessed Mother's Girdle".

If the way tradition uses cinematic technique is curious, turning the camera to frame the Virgin travelling with her son (the expressive "There Goes Our Lady"), so is the unusual way it locates the journey in precise geographical, if not Biblical, terms, a rare case within the Portuguese *romanceiro*. It seems that narratives which include Biblical characters require special attention in tradition in order to avoid possible disjuncture between the characters and their contexts. The preservation of Biblical place names was a priority for Garrett who, when editing this version, substituted "from Egypt to Bethlehem" (a reversed flight into Egypt, the traditional form for this ballad), for the original, "from Bethlehem to Nazareth". This change intensifies the seeming integrity of the ballad and the miracle narrated, that of the blind orchard keeper who, at the request of the Virgin, presents the Child Jesus, weary and thirsty from the long journey, not an apple but all that is needed. As a reward for his kindness, the miracle takes place and the blind man wins back his sight.

The delineation of a precise route is not an essential attribute of the narrated voyage, though it does show a greater disposition to it than the implied voyage, explained, I believe by the specificity required by the presence of Biblical characters. "The Maiden Who Dies of Love" provides proof of this, a perfect "travelling ballad" in which the journey underlies all the action. Spatial motion and distance configure and condition the behaviour of the characters, the wandering driven by the search beyond space and time of a love unresolved and lost in the past.

Though the version edited by Garrett does not excel in its faithfulness to the Portuguese oral tradition (it shows a strong authorial touch), it draws on a clearly traditional textual model. Note the motive for the journey.

> Pilgrim, pilgrim on pilgrimage
> Searching a knight that went away from her, woe!
> In the afternoon at a towered castle arrives.
> Sure signs, known of the castle, she finds.
> 'Does the knight live here? Here he must abide.'
> A maid answered her, discretion in her speech.
> 'The knight's away, but surely won't delay.'
> Words not yet said, the knight arrives.
> 'My lady, why are you here, what brings you to this place?'
> 'The love of a knight hither as made me wander.

He promised me a speedily return, never I saw him back;
My father, my house I've left behind, I've wandered land and sea,
Searching a knight whom I've never found.'
'Dark fate, my lady, that late has made you arrive!
From your father I ran, for he wanted my life.
I ran land and sea, and to this castle arrived.
Before a year and a day, so you made me swear,
To no other lady or damsel I should be wed.
Year and day were past, without word from you,
So the lady of the castle yesterday I went and wed!'
Words not yet said, the pilgrim expires."

First, we meet the main character, immediately defined as a "pilgrim", not on the literal sense of a religious motivation for her journey, but metaphorically, because the damsel departs, moved by impulses of the heart, conflated here with religious passion. The text begins with the female character's pilgrimage; she wanders until she arrives at a turreted castle in the afternoon (the tower detail appears as Garrettian invention, providing the ballad with a mediaeval atmosphere). The suspension of movement – the arrival – sets off the events of the story. This is the place where the man she is searching for lives, though he is already married and unable to resume his relationship with the pilgrim. We see, therefore, a narrated account, perfectly and logically inserted into the flow of the text. We are given no further details about the voyage, but we may draw certain conclusions. For starters, to "arrive" implies a wandering, one which is suspended the afternoon she finds the castle. We find no definite geographical reference here – a castle, an undefined path – but in fact the text does not need one to be effective. The anonymous pilgrim herself requires no concrete spatial data, as opposed to that required by Biblical characters. Somewhat later, when the pilgrim explains the motives of her journey some imprecise data is can be deduced which helps define the path she followed; "I've wandered land and sea" suggests a lengthy and perhaps rather time-distended journey. The searched-for knight immediately tries to justify his behaviour: "From your father I ran, for he wanted my life. / I ran land and sea, and to this castle arrived." We may thus infer that he is the main character in another long and weary journey, only this time the mentioning of a past voyage is dislocated within the structure of the ballad. This was the trigger of the pilgrim's journey (implied voyage). So, in summarizing the ballad's deep structure, we abstract a line as follows (NB the first two items do not correspond to the surface structure):

a) The knight is chased by the princess's father, because of their relationship
b) The knight runs from her father and goes far away
c) The princess decides to leave in search of her beloved
d) After long wandering, the princess arrives at a castle where her beloved lives; he is no longer available for a relationship

Having outlined the two modes of travel in Portuguese balladry, the narrated and the implied, we may now look at another more general topic.

Let me include one more example; the ballad "The Maiden Pilgrim and the Knight", in a version Garrett locates in the Portuguese region of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, begins in the following way:

Through those green hills
A pilgrim descended;
So honest and beautiful
No other like her came to pilgrimage.

This pilgrim was stalked by a knight who attempts to rape her near a sacred place. She is able to defend herself and kill the rapist with his own weapon. The end of this version, which I believe is of Garrettian invention for I cannot find it within the Portuguese tradition, points to the damsel's pardoning.

So, travelling – in this last case due to religious devotion – is the engine for generating events. The voyage causes determinant actions which condition the flow of the narrative. Travelling often invokes the notion of impending danger (judging by what happens in "The Sailor's Temptation", "Sta. Irene", "The Queen and her Slave", as well as "The Maiden Pilgrim") or, on the other hand, the only way to re-balance situations which require compensation (as in "Count Claros" or "The Maiden Who Dies of Love").

Let us conclude with a brief look at the role played in traditional balladry by spatial indication. We have already seen how they can be more or less precise and their contexts. Geographical precision is directly tied to the perceived need for sources of credibility in the narrative (as is the case in the ballads peopled by biblical characters who practice miracles), though it can also serve the purpose of illustrating that a certain character has travelled a long way in order to arrive at the place where he now stops.

One such instance is found in "The Captive", which tells of a young man who, during a sea voyage, is captured by the Moors and enslaved. Eventually he escapes, due to the piety of the Moor's daughter. The *incipit*, according to a version noted by Garrett in his *Cancioneiro de Romances, Xacaras, Soláos*, runs:

My father was from Hamburg,
My mother from Hamburg was;
The Moors enslaved me,
Twixt war and peace.

Besides the evident conflict of someone born in Germany who finds himself a slave in lands with completely different climate and customs, these initial verses tell, first, of the scale of the journey made. The reference to Hamburg, more than denoting a geographical value, or lending credibility to the narrated story, adds more weight by the relative value it conveys than by historical and geographical precision.

Spatial indications also bring with them implicit chronological meanings. The economic tendencies of traditional balladry do not allow these meanings to be unpacked,

but the magnitude of the journey brings with it assumptions of duration and the passage of time. "Travelling" in the Portuguese traditional *romanceiro*, and the way that oral tradition exploits it, is one of the crucial ways that traditional poetry manages, to convey deeply expressive content with an amazingly limited number of words.

References

Amorim, Francisco Gomes de. *Garrett. Memórias Biographicas*. 3 vols. Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1881-84.

Boto, Sandra. "O 'Conde Claros en Hábito de Fraile' na Tradição Oral Moderna Portuguesa. Entre a Recriação e a Memória." Diss. Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Sociais, Universidade do Algarve, 2003.

Di Stefano, Giuseppe. "Tradición Antigua y tradición moderna. Apuntes sobre poética e historia del Romancero." *El romancero en la tradición oral moderna: 1er Coloquio Internacional*. Ed. Diego Catalán and Samuel G. Armistead. Madrid: Cátedra Seminario Menéndez Pidal/Rectorado de la Universidad de Madrid, 1972: 277-96.

Ferre, Pere, and Cristina Carinhas. *Bibliografia do Romanceiro Português da Tradição Oral Moderna (1828-2000)*. Madrid: Instituto Universitário Seminário Menéndez Pidal, 2000.

Fontes, Manuel da Costa. *O Romanceiro Português e Brasileiro: Índice Temático e Bibliográfico*. 2 vols. Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1997.

Menéndez Pidal, Ramón. *Romancero hispánico (Hispano-portugués, Americano y sefardí)*. 2nd edn. Obras Completas de Ramón Menéndez Pidal, IX: Teoría e Historia, tomo I. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1968.

Seixo, Maria Alzira (coord.). *Poéticas da Viagem na Literatura*. Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 1998: 11-40.

Garrett Sources, MS

Garrett *CR*: Biblioteca da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, João Baptista da Silva Leitão de Almeida Garrett, *Cancioneiro de Romances, Xacaras, Soláos*.

Garrett *MIA*: Lisbon, Futscher Pereira Spoil, Box 1, 184?-1853/54, João Baptista da Silva Leitão de Almeida Garrett, *Manuscritos Inéditos Autógrafos de Almeida Garrett Relativos ao Romanceiro*.

Garrett Sources, Printed

Garrett, João Baptista da Silva Leitão de Almeida. *Adozinda Romance*. London: Boosey & Son; de V. Salva, 1828.

——. *Romanceiro e Cancioneiro Geral*. I. Lisbon: Soc. Propagadora dos Conhecimentos Uteis, 1843.

——. *Viagens na Minha Terra*. 2 vols. Lisbon: Gazeta dos Tribunaes, 1846.

——. *Romanceiro*. II and III. Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1851.

SARA REITH (ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND)

"Born into the Ballad" – Journey and Movement in Three Scottish Traveller Songs

Abstract: Stanley Robertson (1940-2009) was a Scottish Traveller, a singer, storyteller and lecturer of remarkable ability. He drew upon the experience of a series of family mentors – Maggie Stewart, Elizabeth MacDonald, Jeannie Robertson – to show how tradition can serve as a resource, shaping a worldview that provides resilience in the face of prejudice and a deep appreciation for landscape, history, and environment.

Keywords: Scottish Travellers, learning, family tradition, environment, Elizabeth MacDonald, Jeannie Robertson, Maggie Stewart.

> Strangely, many non-Traveller people believe that Travellers just up and leave as the notion takes them, but that is far from the truth. Like ancient matriarch elephants of the Namibian dessert, they have memorised well-trodden paths and they know instinctively exactly where they are going. They do not wander aimlessly but rather they have somewhere to go and these people live their lives as they have done for eons. (Robertson *Reek Roon a Campfire* 191)

These words of North East Scottish Traveller Stanley Robertson (1940-2009), written as he concluded his book of family tales, may appear idealistically nostalgic in consideration of his life, the majority of which he had spent as a "settled Traveller" in the city of Aberdeen, but the songs and themes discussed here suggest otherwise. Although Stanley was long settled, his understanding of "journey", a deeply held ideal and self-defining principle within Travelling culture, embraced not only physical and geographic mobility, but the idea of progression in a personal, educational and spiritual sense, which was key to his life-long sense of evolution as a "tradition-bearer" (von Sydow 12-13). In this paradigm, songs which appear to be about, or contain, movement and journey turn out to be about attachment and anchoring – to landscape, to daily life, to family – and, instead of telling of life on the move, they situate Travellers in their world, their home, and a network of relationships and connections.

Founded upon the learning process which Stanley called "the stepping steens to knowledge",[1] journey serves as an educative mechanism, performed through the medium of traditional lore. Stanley saw his own life and progression, and his people's history, as a journey of perpetual renewal, endorsed by a series of early family prophecies which predicted and served as guidance to his future success. As Alice Binchy suggests, "Not being able to 'practice' their nomadism does not mean that Travellers become settled people. It means that nomadism becomes part of what is maintained by

---

[1]   All quotes, unless otherwise cited are from the Elphinstone Institute Archives, University of Aberdeen (=EI).