

# **THE SOURCES OF EL CAVALLERO CIFAR**

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The Sources of El Cavallero Cifar by Charles Philip Wagner

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OF  
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Extrait de la *Revue Hispanique*, tome X.

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PARIS

1903



TO MY MOTHER

131 440





# THE SOURCES OF *EL CAVALLERO CIFAR*

## I

### INTRODUCTORY<sup>1</sup>

The indifference with which the *Historia del Cavallero Cifar* has been treated since the discovery of the extremely rare edition of 1512, is doubtless traceable to the disparaging notices given of it by two eminent authorities. After Brunet's description of the copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris<sup>2</sup>, in which

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1. This article, which is an attempt to classify some of the notes brought together by the writer while working on a new critical edition of the Cifar, was presented in June 1902, in slightly different form, to the faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut, U. S. A.), as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

My thanks for valuable help and suggestions are due to Professor Henry R. Lang of Yale University, to Professor Todd of Columbia University, and to Sr. D. Ramón Menéndez Pidal of Madrid.

2. *Manuel du Libraire*. Graesse (*Trésor de livres...*) and Escudero (*Tipografía Hispalense*, Madrid 1894) cite Brunet, as does Gallardo (*Ensayo de una biblioteca...*). The Cifar is not mentioned by Salvá or Nicolás Antonio.

The copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale is the only one I have seen, and indeed, the only one I have seen described. It was bought for 250 francs at the sale of the Cardinal Loménie in 1792. It now bears the library number *Inv. Rés. Y<sup>2</sup> 259*. It is a thin folio (283 × 203 mm.) of 100 leaves, in a green morocco gold-tooled binding of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The back bears vertically the inscription *Historia del Cavall Tifar* (sic) *Sevilla Cronberger 1512*.

the work is referred to as a *roman mystique*, we first find mention of the Cifar in Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*. We read :<sup>1</sup>

Of those (romances of chivalry) originally Spanish, it would not be difficult, after setting aside the two series belonging to the families of Amadis and Palmerin, to collect the names of about forty, all produced in the course of the sixteenth century. Some of them are still more or less familiar to us, by their names at least, such as « Belianis of Greece » and « Olivante de Laura », which are found in Don Quixote's library, and « Felixmarte of Hircania », which was once, we are told, the summer reading of Dr. Johnson. But in general, like « The Renowned Knight Cifar », and « The Bold Knight

Leaves are numbered on the recto in Roman numerals; incorrectly, folios 13, 14, 15, 16, 81, 82, 83, and 91. On folio 1<sup>ro</sup> there is a large woodcut (172 × 139 mm.), representing the Knight Cifar on horseback, preceded by his two sons, and followed by the Ribaldo. Each figure is surmounted by a placard with the name. Gallardo's statement that this woodcut is the same as that on the title-page of the *Amadis* of 1519, is not quite accurate. The measurement is the same, and the position of the figures as well; but an examination of the details shows that one cut is an ingenious modification of the other. Under the cut is the title, beginning, *Coronica d'el muy esforçado y esclarecido cauallero Cifar nueva mente impressa*, etc. On the vuelto of f. 1, are a prologue, and a more extended title (see Appendix A.). Beginning with the recto of f. 2, the pages are of two columns each. The work is divided into three parts or books, the first of which, beginning on f. 2, treats the adventures of Cifar. The second book, beginning fol. 48<sup>ro</sup>, consists of advice given by Cifar, who has become King of Menton, to his two sons Garlin and Roboan. The third book contains the adventures of Roboan, the younger son of the Knight, and begins on fol. 71 v. On fol. 99 v., is a table of contents, and on fol. 100v., second column near the bottom, is the colophon :

Fue impressa esta // presente historia del cauallero Cifar // en la muy noble e muy leal Cibdad // de Scuilla por Jacobo cronberger. // alemã. E acabosse a. IX. dias d'el mes // de Junio año de mill. d. e. XII años.

The character is Spanish Gothic, and the words are very close together. Punctuation consists of period, colon, and inverted semi-colon.

1. George Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, London 1849, vol. I, p. 219. The translators of Ticknor have not modified this judgement. A. de los Rios (*Historia crítica de la literatura española*, Madrid, 1861-1865, 7 vols.) does not mention the Cifar.

Claribalte », their very titles sound strangely to our ears, and excite no interest when we hear them repeated. Most of them, it may be added — perhaps all — deserve the oblivion into which they have fallen : though some have merits which, in the days of their popularity, placed them near the best of those already noticed.

Gayangos is not much more encouraging. Speaking of the Claribalte he says :<sup>1</sup>

It is more to be recommended for the jauntiness of its style than for its plot, which is poor and trivial. We can say little more for the *Cronica del Caballero Cifar*, printed in 1512, and in which we can perceive the moral element that later played such an important part in the confection of this class of book.

There is nothing here to stimulate to a closer examination of the book. It is probable that both Ticknor and Gayangos, assuming that the Cifar was one of the imitations of the *Amadis*, gave it a hasty and inadequate reading, and its importance was not suspected until the beautiful manuscript of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*<sup>2</sup> was brought to light. Later Michelant, in his edi-

1. *Libros de Caballerias*, ed. D. Pascual de Gayangos, Madrid 1857, p. XLVII.

2. The ms. in question bears the number *Esp. 36* in the *Nationale* (see the *Catalogue des Manuscrits espagnols de la Bib. Nat.*, par A. Morel-Fatio, n<sup>o</sup> 615). It is a large folio (415 × 272 mm.) in a mottled brown calf binding of the first Empire. The back is of red leather, with the title *Roman de Cifar*.

The ms. consists of 192 fols., the first of parchment, the rest of a good quality of laid paper with various watermarks. On some sheets the watermark is the same as in the Madrid ms. of the Cifar (below). The writing is in two columns of from 30 to 45 lines each, and occupies a space 295 × 195 mm. Folios are numbered in pencil in upper right corner of recto, and incorrectly in ink, in the hand of the copyist, in lower corner. There are a few slight worm holes in the last leaves. In addition to having many large initial letters of two colors, the ms. is luxuriously illuminated with 242 extremely interesting miniatures of varying degrees of excellence. At the top of the first folio is a miniature much more finished than the rest, of the Pope and two Cardinals, and a kneeling clerk. Under this is the shield of Castile and Leon. On folios 99 v. to 141 v., there are 48 miniatures of the King of Menton and his two sons, all different. The text is divided into 220 chapters, all of which have rubricated