



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (194)

TITLE: *Songs of The Cid (English Translation)*

AUTHOR: Anonymous

TRANSLATOR: Dan Veach

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PUBLISHER: Stockcero

I. OVERVIEW & SIGNIFICANCE

This volume presents a groundbreaking English translation of the epic *Cantar de mio Cid*, enriched by the inclusion of *Romances of the Cid* and the Latin *Carmen Campidoctoris*. Translated by award-winning poet Dan Veach, this edition has been lauded by *The Times Literary Supplement* for its "poetic" and "elegant" rendition, making this medieval masterpiece accessible and enjoyable for students. It is part of a unique three-volume set, offering unparalleled pedagogical flexibility for comparative studies.

A particularly salient feature of this edition, meticulously maintained across the entire three-volume series, is the faithful preservation of the original versification. This means that readers can observe a precise line-by-line, verse-by-verse correspondence between the English translation, the Modernized Spanish text, and the Original Medieval Castilian text. This structural fidelity transforms the set into an extraordinary tool for in-depth linguistic, poetic, and comparative literary analysis.

II. CONTEXT & CRITICAL APPROACHES

This volume provides a rich foundation for exploring various aspects of medieval literature, translation theory, and the construction of national epic narratives.

Translation as Poetic Interpretation:

Analyze Dan Veach's approach to translating the *Cid*. How does his poetic background influence his choices in conveying the "fast-paced, galloping rendition" and the epic's spirit?

Discuss the challenges and rewards of translating medieval epic poetry into modern English. What are the compromises and triumphs in balancing accessibility with fidelity to the original's rhythm, meter, and oral tradition?

Crucially, examine how the maintained line-by-line versification aids in understanding Veach's interpretative choices and facilitates direct comparison with the original and modernized Spanish versions.

The Cid as a Multilayered Narrative:

Discuss the significance of pairing the epic poem with the *Romances of the Cid*. How do these ballads, as "Star Wars spinoffs" (Fenton), expand, foreshadow, or reframe the epic's narrative? What does this tell us about the fluid nature of medieval storytelling and the evolution of a national hero's myth?

Explore the role of the Latin *Carmen Campidoctoris* as a historical and poetic artifact. How does its inclusion contextualize the Castilian epic and offer insights into the Cid's reception during his lifetime?



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The "Useful Kit for the Student":

James Fenton notes this edition is "assembling a useful kit for the student." Discuss the pedagogical value of having multiple versions (English, Modernized, Original) and supplementary materials (Romances, Carmen Campidoctoris) readily available.

How does the English translation serve different student populations (e.g., those in comparative literature, those new to Hispanic literature, or those primarily focusing on English literary traditions)?

The Epic Tradition in Comparative Literature:

Position *El Cid* within a broader context of world epic poetry (e.g., *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, *Song of Roland*). How does Veach's translation allow English readers to appreciate the unique characteristics of the Castilian epic in a comparative framework?

Consider the oral origins of epic poetry and the Romances. How does the translation capture elements of oral performance and memory?

III. ADVANCED DISCUSSION & RESEARCH PROMPTS

These prompts encourage deep engagement with the text, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary connections suitable for graduate-level seminars or research projects.

Translation as Re-creation: Compare Dan Veach's translation with other existing English translations of *El Cid* (e.g., versions by Burton Raffel, Lesley Byrd Simpson, W.S. Merwin). Analyze how different translators grapple with the linguistic, cultural, and poetic challenges of the original. How does Veach's poetic background inform his distinctive approach?

The Poetics of Fidelity and Accessibility: Given the line-by-line versification, conduct a close reading of selected passages, comparing Veach's English translation with the original Castilian and the modernized Spanish. Discuss the specific linguistic and poetic decisions Veach makes to maintain the original's rhythm and meaning while ensuring readability for a contemporary English-speaking audience.

The Cid's Evolution in English: Research the history of *El Cid* in English translation. How has its reception and interpretation changed over time? Where does Veach's translation fit into this lineage, and what does it contribute to the ongoing engagement with *El Cid* in the English-speaking world?

Intertextuality and Heroic Myth: Analyze how the *Romances of the Cid* interact with the epic poem. Do they reinforce, challenge, or expand the heroic image of the Cid presented in the epic? How does the inclusion of the *Carmen Campidoctoris* add another layer to this intertextual dialogue?

Pedagogical Applications: Design a hypothetical graduate seminar or undergraduate module that utilizes this English volume in conjunction with the modernized and original Spanish texts. Outline specific activities, assignments, and discussion topics that leverage the unique features of this multi-volume set, particularly the line-by-line correspondence.

The "Crib" Debate Revisited: Reflect on James Fenton's opening remarks about the "crib." How does the "Songs of The Cid" (English Translation) act as a sophisticated "crib" that enhances rather than detracts from the understanding and appreciation of the original, even for non-Spanish speakers?



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IV. SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

This section complements the study of *Songs of The Cid (English Translation)*, providing avenues for deeper research.

Primary Text:

- Anonymous. *Songs of The Cid (English Translation)*. Translated by Dan Veach. Stockcero. (TK ORDER: 194)

Key Secondary Scholarship (as referenced or implied by the TLS review):

- **Fenton, James.** Review of *Songs of The Cid*. *The Times Literary Supplement*. (Specifically the full text of the review if available).
- **Montaner Frutos, Alberto.** Critical works on *Cantar de mio Cid*, particularly his RAE edition introduction.
- **Veach, Dan.** Interviews or statements on his translation philosophy and methodology.
- **Eliot, T.S.** "Dante." *Selected Essays*. (For context on translation and literary understanding).
- **Cohen, J.M.** Introduction to *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse*. (For discussion on prose translation as an aid).

Additional Resources:

- Critical editions and studies of *Cantar de mio Cid* in Spanish (e.g., Menéndez Pidal, Michael).
- Comparative studies of epic poetry and medieval literature.
- Theories of literary translation, particularly of poetry.
- Historical and cultural studies of medieval Spain.

V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

- [El Cid: The Complete 3-Volume Reference Kit.](#)
- [Cantares de mio Cid – Textos Originales.](#)
- [Cantares de mio Cid – Textos Modernizados.](#)

Interested in adopting this text for your course?

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