ANTONIO MACHADO AND THE POETRY OF RUINS

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BY all accounts, Antonio Machado's place in modern Spanish literature is secure; less certain, however, is his standing outside of Spain, for unlike other twentieth-century Spanish poets (Jorge Guillén and Federico García Lorca come to mind), Machado does not seem to travel well. Even if his writings often deal with philosophical issues of the widest interest, Machado is still primarily regarded as a national and even a local poet. Even today, when many of the social and political issues that concerned him have lost immediacy, he has not shed the image of being predominantly a chronicler of the Spanish condition. I believe that it is not inexact to say that, for most of his readers, Machado is above all the author of memorable verses about the Iberian ethos and the Castilian soul. Consequently, much of the criticism of his work continues to dwell on the well-trodden connections between the poet and his national *circunstancia*.[1] It seems to me, however, that it might be useful to take an "internationalist" look at Machado, a look that deliberately deflects—and even disregards—those aspects of his work most

[1] Because Machado belongs to a generation largely dominated by essayists (Ganivet, Azorín, Unamuno, Maeztu, D'Ors, Menéndez Pidal), his works have generally been studied with concepts related to the generational *idearío*, that is, concepts derived from—and especially applicable to—essays and other prose-works. But a poem may be susceptible to avenues of analysis to which an essay or even a novel may prove recalcitrant.

congenial to Spanish eyes. In the pages that follow, therefore, I will be arguing essentially for the non-Spanishness of Antonio Machado. My view is that, at least with regard to some poems that are usually thought central to Machado's canon, it is unnecessary—indeed, it is unproductive—to focus on the poet's preoccupation with Spain. Instead, my reading of these poems will concentrate on their participation in a poetic tradition that transcends national borders. By extracting these poems from Castilian soil, by unearthing them, I hope to show that they have roots that reach beyond the confines of Castile, and that Machado's poetry should interest us today for reasons other than his lyrical variations on the theme of *me duele España.*

I

"Campos de Soria," one of the best-known and most discussed poems in *Campos de Castilla,* marks a crucial moment in Machado's artistic development. Already included in the original edition of the book, "Campos de Soria" shows the attention to landscape and the sensitivity to human suffering that characterize Machado's mature poetry. For this reason, the poem is often cited as evidence of the poet's evolution from the *soledades* of introspective meditation to the *campos* of social engagement. Of the poem's nine parts, perhaps the sixth is the most memorable:

¡Soria fría, *Soria pura,*
cabeza de Extremadura,
con su castillo guerrero
arruinado, sobre el Duero;
con sus murallas roídas
y sus casas denegridas!
¡Muerta ciudad de señores
soldados o cazadores;
de portales con escudos
de cien linajes hidalgos,
y de famélicos galgos,
de galgos flacos y agudos,
que pululan
por las sórdidas callejas
y a la medianoche ululan
cuando graznan las cornejas!

¡Soria fría! La campana
de la Audiencia da la una.
Soria, ciudad castellana
¡tan bella! bajo la luna. (96)[2]

These moving lines have elicited diverse critical comment; most critics agree, however, about their central importance in "Campos de Soria." According to Geoffrey Ribbans, this section constitutes "the pivot of the poem, the point from which the whole of the *campos de Soria* become infused with personal emotion" (291). Echoing Ribbans, Nancy A. Newton regards this section as the "pivotal center" of the poem (24); and, most recently, Michael Predmore has remarked that this section "es la que otorga a 'Campos de Soria' su profunda significación y la que revela la elevada conciencia social de su autor durante este período" (151).

These critics' view of "Soria fría, Soria pura," it seems to me, is accurate but partial. Although I do not question the importance of "Campos de Soria" in Machado's poetry, I do think that, in an attempt to demonstrate the unity of this long poem, Machado's commentators have tended to downplay the extent to which the sixth section does not cohere with the other parts. Even though it is generally conceded that the sixth part contrasts with the others, this contrast is seen as harmonious or coherent, somewhat in the manner of a chiaroscuro. I want to argue, however, that by forcing "Soria fría, Soria pura" into the mold of "Campos de Soria," one perhaps "saves" the larger poem at the expense of the smaller one, many of whose interesting features do not come to light unless one views them detached from their immediate context. I want to argue, thus, that the sixth section represents a departure from the norm of "Campos de Soria" and even of *Campos de Castilla*, and that only by wrenching the Sorian cityscape from its usual surroundings can we come to appreciate it fully. For these are lines whose context is not only historical or political but also—and perhaps primarily—literary. Even if this small poem is the best and best-known fragment (and I will return to this term) in "Campos de Soria," it is less "central" than "eccentric" in relation to the larger work's overriding concerns.

[2] I am quoting from *Poesías Completas*. Subsequent page and poem numbers (the latter in Roman numerals) refer to this edition.

As several of the poem's commentators have pointed out, there are striking differences between the sixth and the other sections. First of all, this section's metrical scheme diverges from that of the rest of the poem. Unlike the other parts, all of which employ the *silva-romance* combination, "Soria fría, Soria pura" is composed almost entirely of octosyllables. Second, here is a cityscape in a poem, and a *poemario*, whose operative descriptive term is *campos*. Significantly, in the five sections that precede "Soria fría, Soria pura," the word *campo* or its synonym, *tierra*, appears in each of the first lines:

I: Es la *tierra* de Soria árida y fría.
II: Las *tierras* labrantías,
como retazos de estameñas pardas . . .
III: Es el *campo* ondulado, y los caminos
ya ocultan los viajeros que cabalgan.
IV: ¡Las figuras del *campo* sobre el cielo!
V: La nieve. En el mesón al *campo* abierto
se ve el hogar donde la nieve humea.

In every one of these poems the appearance of *tierra* or *campo* (and it is worth remembering that the first title of "Campos de Soria" was "Tierras de Soria")[3] serves to place the poem with respect both to its subject matter and to the collection where it appears. *Campo* and *tierra* function something like deictics; on the one hand, they orient the reader by placing the poem in a familiar locale; on the other, they create a certain continuity among the sections of the poem and among the different poems in the collection (and here one thinks of such titles as "La tierra de Alvargonzález" and "Por tierras de España" as well as of the title of the book, *Campos de Castilla*).

In view of this circuit of connections, the sixth section of "Campos de Soria" comes as something of a surprise. In this text the operative word, the "deictic," is not *campo* or *tierra* but *ciudad* (a word that appears only one other time in "Campos de Soria"). From the first lines it is clear that the setting has changed, for the speaker begins by enumerating diverse components in an urban

[3] See Carlos Beceiro 1006. The original version of the poem, which appeared in a Madrid newspaper in 1912, included sections I–VI and an additional poem (CXI in *Poesías Completas*) which Machado later removed.

landscape: fortifications, walls, houses. It is as if we were approaching the city from the outside, as if we were leaving the *campos* and entering an entirely different milieu: first, at a distance, we see the ruined castle; then, as we get closer, the walls of the city come into view; and finally, as we enter the city itself, the houses become visible. At the beginning of the second stanza these architectural fragments coalesce into a whole with the appearance of the word *ciudad,* which recollects and assembles the bits and pieces of the opening. In the verses that follow, the synthetic vision implicit in *ciudad* once again gives way to a segmental perception, as the city disintegrates into its constituent parts: portals, scutcheons, alleyways, and various kinds of inhabitants—*hidalgos,* dogs, crows. These scattered remnants, these architectural and living fragments once again coalesce into a unit with the reappearance of *ciudad* in the last two lines. As the reader advances through the second and third stanzas, he or she moves from plurality to wholeness, from the *cien linajes hidalgos* to the "one" of the courthouse belfry. By the end of the poem, Soria has been reduced to oneness, spatially as well as temporally.

Thus, the movement of the poem is recollective, in both senses of the word. Just as the ruined cityscape incites the poet to recollect Soria's past glory, the poem itself recollects the different components of Soria into a whole, a *ciudad.* And indeed, if one accepts Machado's description of the city, it is no small feat to make these bits and pieces coalesce. To call this ruinous, ghostly, hound-infested place a *ciudad* is almost fanciful, a pious gesture of poetic edification symptomatic of the speaker's nostalgia for the city's lost grandeur. Machado compensates for Soria's decay by turning the city into a beautiful verbal monument. Considering Soria's sad state, one might well construe the poem's final exclamation—"Soria, ciudad castellana/¡tan bella! bajo la luna"—as referring as much to the verbal Soria as to the actual place. That "tan bella" is certainly an evaluation of the city, but it can also be taken as a metalinguistic comment on the poem itself, a *civitas verbi* whose beauty few readers would contest. With that parenthetical aside the poem modulates from description to commentary, as if Machado's invisible *flâneur,* prompted by the proximity of the courthouse, decided to pass judgement on the scene he has just rendered. In one last act of recollection, the speaker concentrates all of the emotional charge of the poem into two short words.

The point I would like to stress, however, is simply that this scenery is quite unlike anything else in "Campos de Soria" and even in *Campos de Castilla.* The closest thing to it in *Campos de Castilla* is the poem entitled "El hospicio," with its initial description of a building in ruins:

> Es el hospicio, el viejo hospicio provinciano,
> el caserón ruinoso de ennegrecidas tejas
> en donde los vencejos anidan en verano
> y graznan en las noches de invierno las cornejas.
> Con su frontón al Norte, entre los dos torreones
> de antigua fortaleza, el sórdido edificio
> de grietados muros y sucios paredones
> es un rincón de sombra eterna. ¡El viejo hospicio! (C; 80)

Nonetheless, although there are a number of similarities—both in content and phrasing—between this poem and the sixth section of "Campos de Soria," the tone of the two poems is strikingly different, since the morbid, pessimistic ambience of "El hospicio" contrasts sharply with the loving description of the beautiful, albeit devastated, Sorian cityscape. In effect, as several critics have pointed out, perhaps the most jarring element in "Soria fría" is the speaker's admiration for decay, the pleasure he takes in ruins, for this attitude clashes with the general outlook of "Campos de Soria" and *Campos de Castilla.* In this poem Machado adopts an aesthetic perspective toward a phenomenon that is elsewhere seen in social, political, or historical terms. The aesthetic enjoyment of Soria's decrepitude, embedded in the "¡tan bella!" of the last line, seems a denial of, or at least a lapse in, Machado's social conscience. To the extent that "Soria fría, Soria pura" is "aestheticist," it contains still another act of recollection, this time Machado's own recollection of the *moderna estética* (as he puts it in "Retrato") of his earlier poetry. The poem, whose subject is anachronistic survivals, would itself be a sort of anachronism. Seen under this lunar light, the cawing crows of Soria and the "aves del gay-trinar" of the self-portrait are not as different as they might at first appear.

But just as the poem's commentators have attempted to explain away its other eccentricities, they have tried to smooth over the anomaly of the final exclamation by reading a sarcastic edge into the comment. Hence, Predmore asks: "¿Cómo puede ser bella tanta sordidez? Es la luz de la luna de la noche, naturalmente, la que esconde la fealdad del día y permite esta exclamación romántica.

Pero la visión de Machado no deja de ser satírica e incluso burlona" (153). Even though it is true that one way to make the tone of this section mesh with that of the others is to read the last line as a mocking remark, this interpretation emerges from the pressure on the poem of its surroundings rather than from the poem itself. I see no evidence in the text that Machado's appreciation of ruins is anything but sincere. While the last lines may be inconsistent with his general outlook at this time, they are certainly consistent with the other inconsistencies in the poem; and taken together, recollected, these inconsistencies suggest a somewhat different reading of this fragment than the ones that have been proposed thus far.

For me, the proper context for "Soria fría, Soria pura" is not political or historical but literary. I see this poem as belonging to the tradition of the poetry of ruins, a tradition whose founding texts are such works as Edmund Spenser's *The Ruines of Time*, Du Bellay's *Les Antiquitez de Rome*, or, in Spain, Rodrigo Caro's "A las ruinas de Itálica."[4] More specifically, Machado's poem belongs to the Romantic moment in that tradition. When Predmore defines the speaker's summation of Soria as a "romantic exclamation," he is situating the text rather precisely, for the aesthetic enjoyment of ruins is essentially a Romantic invention; the antecedents to Machado's poem would then be such works as Shelley's "Ozymandias," Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage," Novalis' "Ans Kloster in Ruinen," or even Bécquer's unfinished *Historia de los templos de España*.[5] One might go a bit further still and venture that the poem's eerie midnight atmosphere, its baying hounds and cawing crows and tolling clock, and particularly the sonorous *ululan-pululan* rhyme, take us back to certain poems by Edgar Allan Poe, to a poem like "Ulalume," for instance, which also describes a visit to what Poe calls a "legended tomb" (953).[6]

[4] For a useful review of the poetry of ruins in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Wardropper. On the poetry of ruins generally, see Mortier, Goldstein, and McFarland.

[5] I do not mean to suggest that these works are similar in subject matter, but only that their diverse thematic concerns are all elaborated within the framework of a meditation on ruins.

[6] Given Machado's statement that modern poetry begins with Poe (in "Poética," *Poesías Completas* 20), these reminiscences are not surprising. Poe's influence on Machado has been studied—though not definitively—by T. Labrador Gutiérrez.

I want to argue, moreover, that the poem's incongruities, its incompatibility with the other sections of "Campos de Soria," allow us to consider it a fragment, understanding the term in the generic sense that it has in Romantic and Modern literature. According to Friedrich Schlegel, for instance, a fragment is an entity "separated from the surrounding world and complete in itself" (as quoted in McFarland 45). These twin criteria, separation and completeness, are certainly met by Machado's poem, which, as we have seen, is both detached from its surroundings and complete in itself. In addition, by selecting the genre of the fragment, Machado has fit the form of the poem to its matter, for fragments are, of course, the textual correlates of the ruin.

I would then like to read "Soria fría, Soria pura" as a fragmented evocation of fragments, as a poem about ruins that builds-in some of the qualities of the things it describes. Needless to say, the author of *Juan de Mairena* was no stranger to fragmentariness, and implicit in my discussion is an attempt to establish a formal (rather than thematic or contentual) continuity between some of Machado's poetry and his later prose writings. Before proceeding to read the poem from this perspective, however, it might be useful to review briefly the presence of ruins in the rest of Machado's poetry, for this will help to reconstruct the context that is largely missing from "Campos de Soria."

II

The ruin sentiment is a minor but persistent theme in the poetry of Machado, which is peppered with references to *ciudades decrépitas, plazas muertas, calles viejas,* and the like. The presence of this motif is not surprising, given Machado's concern with temporality. The ruin, as we shall see in more detail a bit later, has a peculiar relation to time, for it is evidence both of time's withering action and of the resistance to temporal decay. Because the ruin both succumbs to and survives the ravages of time, it is a more ambiguous symbol than many others also employed by Machado to express temporality. The *camino,* for example, is almost invariably an emblem of time's passage, of impermanence; but the ruin is a symbol of impermanence and its opposite, of the triumph of time as well as of the triumph over time.

The presence of the ruin sentiment in Machado is also not surprising in view of Machado's links to Romanticism. Indeed, the ruin can serve as a concrete marker of Machado's debt to Romantic aesthetics. The following poem, with its unmistakable Becquerian resonances, offers a good illustration of Machado's concern with ruination as it intertwines with an explicitly romantic sensibility:

> ¡Tocados de otros días,
> mustios encajes y marchitas sedas;
> salterios arrumbados,
> rincones de las salas polvorientas;
> daguerrotipos turbios,
> cartas que amarillean;
> libracos no leídos
> que guardan grises florecitas secas;
> romanticismos muertos,
> cursilerías viejas,
> cosas de ayer que sois el alma, y cantos
> y cuentos de la abuela! . . . (LXXI; 66)

Here the ruin motif appears pointedly in the *salterios arrumbados* and more diffusely in the atmosphere of decay that permeates the whole poem. Like "Soria fría, Soria pura," this poem consists of an enumeration of vestigial objects followed by an emotional assessment of their significance to the speaker; indicating that the value of these objects is primarily symbolic or spiritual, the phrase "cosas de ayer que sois el alma" functions in much the same manner as the "¡tan bella!" of the Sorian text. Equally pertinent, the catalog of relics assumes the form of an incomplete sentence, a fragment, since the speaker's apostrophe lacks a verb. The poem itself is vestigial, incomplete, ruinous—as is suggested also by the ellipsis at the poem's conclusion.

Machado's most explicit treatment of the ruin motif before "Campos de Soria," however, is found in another brief poem from *Soledades, galerías y otros poemas:*

> La casa tan querida
> donde habitaba ella,
> sobre un montón de escombros arruinada
> o derruida, enseña
> el negro y carcomido
> maltrabado esqueleto de madera.

La clara luna está vertiendo
su clara luz en sueños que platea
en las ventanas. Mal vestido y triste,
voy caminando por la calle vieja. (LXXII; 66)

The fundamental trope of this poem is to assimilate architectural and human remains, a conflation that will recur in "Soria fría."[7] This merging of the human and the architectural is clear in the use of the term "skeleton" to describe what is left of the edifice. The phrase "esqueleto de madera," by projecting the condition of the loved one onto the house she inhabited, gives the building human form. A similar displacement is already evident in the first line of the poem, for "casa querida" again displaces a human quality (in this instance the speaker's love) onto the inanimate house. One suspects that the purpose of these tropes is to avoid having to confront the absence of the loved one directly. The speaker, apparently unable to face his loved one's absence or death, evokes it by focusing his emotions on the house the woman used to inhabit. The key word in this respect is *enseña*, the one verb of the first stanza of the poem, for the speaker, in the process of describing the ruined house, does indeed "reveal" what is really on his mind; the house becomes a sign, a *seña* that conveys the absence or loss of his loved one.

In addition, the reference to *enseñar* reminds us that ruin poetry often has a didactic intent. By insinuating the didactic function that is such an important aspect of the poetry of ruins, this verb connects the poem with the literary tradition to which it belongs. The description of the beloved house reduced to a wooden skeleton instructs us about the evanescence of wordly things: "La casa tan querida . . . enseña . . . [el] esqueleto de madera." Like the lover herself, the literary tradition to which the poem belongs is present only by inference, but its impact on the poem is unmistakable. As we will see when we return to "Soria fría," this stress on inference rather than assertion is very much a part of the poetry of ruins, for ruins themselves are not all there; they also are signs that point to absent objects, "cosas de ayer que so[n] el alma."

[7] For a somewhat different reading of this poem, see Debicki. Debicki's essay also contains perceptive remarks on the use of point of view in "Soria fría, Soria pura."

III

Although "Soria fría, Soria pura" appears to be a realistic description of the Sorian cityscape, from the first lines the reader becomes aware of how much this picture leaves out, of the extent to which the speaker focuses on absent objects. If this is descriptive poetry, it is of things and people that aren't there. The poem's opening couplet already makes this clear: if Soria is the head of Extremadura, where is the body? The poem will deal with bodiless heads or headless bodies; it will deal, more generally, with mutilated wholes, with fragments. In the following verses the speaker goes on to enumerate partial objects, bits and pieces that metonymically evoke a missing whole—the vestiges of a castle, crumbling walls, decrepit houses. The attention to what is not there continues into the second stanza, which contrasts the absent *hidalgos* with the proliferating *galgos*, a contrast made more evident by the rhyme; here again the description develops by metonymy, for the existence of the noblemen is attested to only by the scutcheons on the doorways. The nobility itself is nowhere to be seen; in its place, one finds only hounds that breed like microbes.

The second stanza thus confronts proliferation, on one hand, and absence, on the other, though the distinction is tenuous, since the famished hounds are really not all there. They too are ruinous. There is not much difference between the crumbling walls and the cadaveric hounds; all of these pieces are of a piece. The affinity between the city and its animal residents is clearly indicated by the adjectives with which the speaker describes them: *arruinado, roídas, denegridas, muerta, famélicos, flacos, agudos, sórdida.* These qualifiers are nearly interchangeable, since they all signify decay and ruin, whether of flesh or stone. "Soria fría, Soria pura" is very much an adjectival poem. One might say that the poem exhibits a certain *pulular* of adjectives comparable to that of the hounds. If we look at the middle verses in the second stanza—the exact middle of the poem, in effect—we can observe this proliferation taking place:

> y de famélicos galgos,
> de galgos flacos y agudos

The "famélicos galgos" of one line become the "galgos flacos y agudos" of the next; "famélicos" fragments into a semantically equiv-

alent dyad, "flacos y agudos." The first adjective geminates, splits into two in the next line.

The impression of Soria's inertness is created in large measure by this proliferation of adjectives, several of which are past participles.[8] In fact, the first finite verb in the poem—*pulular*—does not occur until well into the second stanza, and, interestingly, the action of proliferation—the first, and essentially the only action in the poem—is contained in a verse line that is shorter by half than all the rest: "que pululan." The hounds do certainly proliferate; they proliferate even lexically, as in the repetition of *galgos* and the sundering of *famélicos*. But the equivocal nature of these duplications is rendered by the shortness of the verse line that inscribes them: Machado doubles the words but halves the syllables. With its tacit juxtaposition of metrical lack and semantic abundance, "que pululan" is itself a kind of fragment, and the disparity between this line and the other verses in the poem may serve—paradoxically—as an emblem for the poem as a "whole." In its incongruity, the half-line is to "Soria fría, Soria pura" as the poem itself is to "Campos de Soria."

What seems beautiful about Soria, then, is that everything about it is fragmentary—much as the two lines of the poem's opening are a fragment of a traditional rhyme, and much as the poem itself is a fragment from "Campos de Soria." The central structuring principle of this text is a peculiar cohabitation of presence and absence whose corresponding rhetorical figure is the metonym, whose corresponding architectural figure is the ruin, and whose corresponding metrical figure is the so-called *verso de pie quebrado*. Or, to put it in the philosophical language that Machado employed in his "Poética" of 1931, the subject of the poem is the fusion of *esencialidad* and *temporalidad*, of permanence and impermanence. The fact that Machado regarded these two concepts as the "imperatives" of modern poetry suggests the thematic importance of ruins in his poetry.[9] The ruin, because it combines *temporalidad* and *esencialidad*, can be regarded as an inherently poetic object,

[8] Is it licit to look upon past participles as vestigial verbs, as the syntactic equivalents of ruins?

[9] "La poesía moderna que, a mi entender, arranca, en parte al menos, de Edgardo Poe, viene siendo hasta nuestros días la historia del gran problema que al poeta plantean estos dos imperativos, en cierto modo contradictorios: esencialidad y temporalidad" (*Poesías Completas* 20-21).

as a stony *palabra en el tiempo.* One might also infer the converse: every poem, because it is fraught with temporality and yet endures, would share the characteristics of a ruin. In its verse version, Machado's famous definition of poetry asserts:

> Ni mármol duro y eterno,
> ni música ni pintura,
> sino palabra en el tiempo. (CLXIV; 223)

The first line of this epigram refers to—and rejects—the Parnassian view of poetry as an unchanging icon; but in the context of my discussion, the image is pertinent because it evokes an object that seems the very antithesis of ruins. The "hard and eternal marble" is a sort of anti-ruin, an architectural entity invulnerable to time's ravages. And it is also that which a poem is not (hence the rhyme-induced, meaning-charged clash between *eterno* and *tiempo*). For Machado, a poem is less eternal marble than withering stone. His aesthetic evaluation of the ruined city as "so beautiful" is perhaps a recognition of this equivalence between poetry and ruins.

"Soria fría, Soria pura" thus turns on the play of whole and hole. The poem, one might say, is a whole of holes, a partial evocation of a reality, a past, that lie beyond its reach. Now this, it seems to me, is a condition not only of Machado's text but of all poetry about ruins. A description of ruins always carries within itself the seeds of self-contradiction, for the impulse to see and render that motivates descriptive poetry finds in ruins objects whose significance cannot completely be seen, objects whose vestigial status sends us to another time, and perhaps also to another place. Speaking of Bécquer in *Juan de Mairena,* Machado states: "En su discurso rige un principio de contradicción propiamente dicho: *sí, pero no; volverán, pero no volverán*" (240). Mairena's principle of contradiction describes rather precisely the ambiguous ontological status of ruins.

Because ruins are inscriptions on a landscape, because they are more sign than scene, the perception of ruins involves a two-step process of cognition that combines observation and inference, *ver* and *entrever.* This is why ruin poems generally tend toward the mode of commentary; the ruin is a sign that requires decipherment, a point of departure for the poet's moral or metaphysical lucubrations. Machado's poem, which begins not as a description of Soria

but as a *commentary* on the motto of the city, demonstrates the prevalence of commentary in ruin poetry. Rather than as a first-hand description of Soria at midnight, the poem can be seen as a gloss of the initial fragmentary quotation. More than a portrait of Soria, the poem is an inscription, or the amplification of an inscription, for what Machado does is fill out the quotation, shore it up with matter that turns this fragment into a whole.[10] It is not just the tone of the poem that is "edifying"; Machado's very technique might be defined by this term.

One can say, then, that descriptions of ruins tend toward intensiveness rather than extensiveness, since the incompleteness of ruins precludes an extensive, totalizing apprehension; instead, one needs to approach the ruin intensively, by looking into it and beyond. Here again the contrast between this poem and the other sections of "Campos de Soria" could not be sharper, for what prevails in these other sections is an extensive appreciation of landscape. To illustrate, let me cite a typical descriptive moment from the third section, where the speaker asks the reader to accompany him in scaling a hill:

> Mas si trepáis un cerro y veis el campo
> desde los picos donde habita el águila,
> son tornasoles de carmín y acero,
> llanos plomizos, lomas plateadas,
> circuidos por montes de violeta,
> con las cumbres de nieve sonrosada. (95)

This passage illustrates the extensive vision that characterizes most of "Campos de Soria" and much of *Campos de Castilla.* The speaker occupies a vantage point from which he can command a large prospect, well-illuminated by the light of the afternoon sun.[11] No such

[10] "Soria fría, Soria pura" thus bears some relation to the inscriptive mode of much descriptive poetry, on which see Geoffrey Hartman. Hartman argues that Romantic nature poetry originates in the classical and neo-classical genre of the inscription. The fact that in the original version of Machado's poem the speaker addressed Soria (the *su* of lines three, five, and six was originally *tu*) cements the connection with inscriptive verse, since, as Hartman points out, many inscriptions are apostrophes. On Machado's revisions of "Soria fría, Soria pura," see Beceiro 1011-12.

[11] As Philippe Hamon has explained, this securing of an outpost from which to see is a fundamental condition of descriptions. Arthur Terry has written lucidly on the importance of the vantage-point in *Campos de Castilla* (24-25; 34-35).

encompassing point of view is possible when contemplating ruins, whose intelligibility depends less on visual than on interpretive acuity: with ruins, sight is less important than insight, an eagle-eye of less use than the mind's eye. Thus, the setting of "Soria fría, Soria pura" is the middle of the night and the only illumination is that provided by moonlight. Even if the moon were not one of the favorite Romantic icons for the creative imagination, one could still distinguish between the plain, daytime perception of the passage I have just quoted and the intensive, recollective evocation of the Sorian cityscape. The transfiguration of Soria under the moonlight is Machado's version of the movement away from the particular that usually accompanies ruin poetry; a poem about ruins is always lunatic in this sense, for such poetry, disdaining the here and now, strives for illuminations beyond the light of day.

"Soria fría, Soria pura" is indeed a "central" poem, but not in relation to "Campos de Soria." The poem's significance emerges rather from Machado's perceptive use of a rich and long literary tradition. The beauty of the verbal Soria, like that of the real city, goes beyond what the eye can see. For this reason, it is not quite true that the poet of "Campos de Soria" is, as Sánchez Barbudo has put it, "sólo ojos" (207).[12] Machado's rumination on ruination is not for your eyes only, as is intimated by the repeated auditory appeals: the baying of the hounds, the cawing of the crows, the tolling of the bells. And if the reader is willing to listen to the poem, to give it a fair hearing, he or she will perceive—with the eyes of the mind and the ears of the imagination—resonances that originate and extend far beyond the *campos* of Castile.

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[12] It is interesting that Sánchez Barbudo's emphasis on the visual aspect of "Campos de Soria" finds an echo in his own critical approach. In the introduction to his study he states: "Pero con mayor modestia y claridad, y con mayor exactitud, diré simplemente que lo que he tratado de hacer es lo que aconsejo otros hagan: ver lo que hay" (15). The shortcoming of this approach is that, when it comes to ruins and to poems about ruins, one has to do just the opposite: "ver lo que *no* hay."

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