



## The Specifics and Composition of the Novelistic Genre of the Spanish Language

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**Abstract:** Spanish literature usually refers to literature (Spanish poetry, prose and drama) written in Spanish. It coincides and often intersects with the development of literary traditions from regions of the same territory, in particular Catalan literature, Galician also intersects with Latin, Jewish and Arabic literary traditions of the Iberian Peninsula. The literature of Spanish America is an important branch of Spanish literature, with its own characteristics dating back to the earliest years of the conquest of Spanish America.

**Key words:** culture, identity, novelistic genre, religion, Moorish style, Arabic letters, Latin.

To understand the specifics and composition of the novelistic genre complex of Spain of the XIV-XVI centuries, we need to understand the peculiarities of the Spanish mentality of this period.

The conquest of Spain by the Arabs provoked cultural isolation from other Romance cultures, so the processes taking place in the literary space of the country are significantly different from those that took place in other Western European countries. The Spanish ethnos acquires its identity precisely during the period of the Spanish conquest and the Reconquista following it. This situation resembles the Russian one: the geographical positions of Spain and Russia are similar: one country closes Europe from the east, the other from the south. In both countries, Christianity, which had just been adopted to unite the nation, was suppressed by another culture (the Tatar-Mongol yoke in Russia, the Moorish conquest in Spain).

The formation of national identity takes place in the context of the struggle against foreign influence. Naturally, during this period Spain absorbs Arab culture, but at the same time, under the banner of Christianity, there is a fierce opposition to this culture, which is perceived as hostile (although in fairness I must say that, just like at the other end of Europe - in Russia - the relations between the two ethnic groups were not so unambiguous: there are frequent cases of strong friendship, love, marriages, which were also reflected in the literature). Nevertheless, the long process of liberation from foreigners of other faiths does not pass without a trace for both nations.

According to the research of Yu.M. Lotman [1] regarding the semiosphere and Russian culture, which we can probably extrapolate to Spanish culture due to the similarity of their historical situations, long cultural isolation from other Christian cultures has led to the fact that the existing reality acquires a certain ghostly and unreality. Culture in the period of the rule of the conquerors is perceived as wrong, spoiled by its own, and the real, authentic one is placed in the distant past.

Arab culture has indeed largely determined the face of Spain. And we are talking here not only about the external side, although in the "large cities of Andalusia began to develop manufacturing, paper, silk, cotton. The cities of Muslim Spain have acquired a new look – mosque towers, palaces, arcades,

flat roofs. All this creates the so-called Moorish style (combining features of Muslim and Byzantine architecture)” [2, p. 46].

The spiritual component of Arab culture also played an equally important role. If at first the Arab origin was initially perceived as hostile, then later, during the Reconquista, many Spaniards begin to give preference to Arab culture. This phenomenon is especially widespread in the former Muslim Spain. "In the middle of the XIII century in Christian Toledo, Arabic was almost everywhere accepted as an official language. Almost all documentation was kept in Arabic, even the priests signed themselves in Arabic letters.

Many Christian princes: the ruler of Barcelona Berenguer, the founder of the Aragonese state Sancho Ramirez and King Alphonse the Warrior could read and write only in Arabic. Latin, after the Arab conquest, retained its significance mainly as a language of worship, having lost the significance of a literary language. Since Latin is inextricably linked with the church in the minds of Christians and newly converted Muslims of Andalusia, the Arabic language with its rich literature attracts them mainly by its secular character. Gradually, Arabic is becoming the only literary language of Muslim Spain, despite the protests of the clergy.

The words of Alvaro of Toledo (IX century) are known, complaining that educated young people from noble families do not know and do not want to study Latin and are interested only in Arabic and Arabic literature. This speaks not so much about the wide spread of the Arabic language in Andalusia, as about the fact that part of the population of Andalusia found in the Arabic language and literature what the remnants of the ancient literature that reached it, could not give a coherent and logical system of presentation (largely borrowed by Arab authors from the Hellenistic philosophers of the Alexandrian school), the compositional richness, the system of images and the inexhaustible richness of the plot material (part of which got into the artistic Arabic prose from Indo-Iranian sources and was easily subjected to a variety of treatments) [2, p. 62].

It is quite natural that the composition of the novelistic genre complex in Spain was largely determined by the Arab influence and differed, in particular, from the French. If we compare the books of “examples” that appear at the same time, say, in France, we will find a curious thing: a certain Frenchman Chevalier de la Tour Landry in the same XIV century compiles a book of short stories - examples, as he points out in the preface, with a pedagogical purpose, namely: the teachings of their daughters, generally the teachings of young people. But it is curious that stories that, in accordance with the existing canon of examples, should end with a kind of moralizing finale, in fact, do not have one, and the content of the examples, concerning mostly the relationship between men and women, is often very piquant, if not obscene, and is much more suitable as entertaining adult fiction the public, not young girls. In this case alone, we observe a qualitative difference in the pictures of the world that existed in France, Italy and Spain.

In Spanish literature, the type of anecdote has never appeared, from which such genres as Italian novellino, French fablio or German schwanki emerged. Even if such narratives penetrated Spanish soil as part of Italian or French collections, these texts were simply not printed, and the collections themselves were reduced to a few short stories of decent content.

So, in 1589, a collection entitled “Historias trágicas ejemplares sacadas de las obras de Bandello” (“Tragic edifying stories from the works of Bandello”) was published in Salamanca with a preface by the publisher A. Martin Idiakes, in which he wrote the following: “... of all the stories, I chose fourteen that are the best, as it seems to me, will strengthen the young people of our time in matters of virtue and will rid their minds of sinful thoughts”. Further, in the “Prologue to the Reader”, he adds that he had to edit even these stories, adding something, removing something, because French liberties are not accepted in Spain [6]. This point of view is echoed by the position of the French researcher P. Marsan, who in his work [4] argues that before 1260 the French and Italian literary influence was negligible, and during this period Spanish minor prose was exclusively influenced by the decent Arabic tradition. Confirmation of this thesis, according to p. Marsan, can serve as the work of the Catalan writer and philosopher Raimundo Lull (Ramon Lull), in fact, who rewrote with

minor changes the oriental collection “Kalila and Dimna” (the Arabic version of “Panchatantra”) under the title “Book about animals”.

According to the Spanish researcher M.R. Lida de Malkiel, Juan Manuel was under the obvious literary influence of Raymond Lull and, undoubtedly, got acquainted with many examples of Arabic literature in the interpretation of his predecessor. Whether the acquaintance with the Eastern tradition went only through the medium of Lull or directly, since Juan Manuel himself knew Arabic and could read many Arabic short stories and novellas in the original, it is not completely known.

It is not surprising that the influence of Arabic literature is evident in the collection of the Spanish writer and is manifested not only in the choice of plots and characters (who came from oriental collections), but in the compositional organization of the material. The Spanish ethnic picture of the world during this period - the “hiding” of one's own culture, the desire to escape from the existing “alien” reality either into the absolute past or into some other - ideal, fabulous - space, on the one hand, and coexistence with this “alien” culture, on the other hand, determined the composition of novelistic genre complexes in Spain in the XIV-XVI centuries: a parable, a fable, a chronicle, an oriental tale, a fairy tale, an allegory, a story about a miracle.

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