

Folk poetry and the projects to create a Catalan Folk Songbook*

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ABSTRACT

Folk poetry, which originally meant folk songs, were a subject of interest and study by Romantic scholars. In Catalonia, the scholars Manuel Milà i Fontanals and Marià Aguiló i Fuster theorised on the concept and collected folk songs with a primarily literary interest. Based on modern postulates, the Orfeó Català promoted the collection of folk songs with a more musical than literary interest, and they disseminated these songs after developing careful harmonies. From the vantage point of folklore studies, Rossend Serra i Pagès worked actively to promote the need to create a Catalan folk songbook. All these efforts led to carry out the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya* (Folk Songbook of Catalonia) project, promoted and financed by Rafael Patxot i Jubert.

KEYWORDS: folk poetry, folk song, songbook, Catalonia, folklore

INTRODUCTION

'Folk poetry' is a name that was originally tantamount to folk songs. The German philosopher and literary critic Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) developed the concept in the introduction to the second part of his opus, *Volkslieder* (1778-1779).¹ Herder, who viewed 'folk' as synonymous with 'nation', conceived of folk poetry as truly national poetry, the kind that is part of the mindset particular to the spirit of a nation, just as languages are.² Based on this idea, Herder instigated two branches of study which attracted the interest of subsequent scholars. The first focused on studying 'folk poetry' as 'folk song from the oral tradition'. The second, in contrast, studied 'folk poetry' as the 'popular lyric poetry from the written tradition' which has been found in European literatures since the Middle Ages.³

This article focuses on the first of these branches of study, the one that views 'folk poetry' as 'folk song from the oral tradition', and it is limited to the activity carried out from when the interest in folk poetry first blossomed in Catalonia until the 1930s.

First, we analyse the characteristics of folk poetry as described by the most prominent Catalan scholars who took an interest in it during the Romantic period; in Catalonia, this period is known as the *Renaixença*, or cultural Renaissance, because it also sought to restore the use of the Catalan language in the country's literary and cultural life after it had been replaced by Spanish as the prestige language. Then, we study some of the most important actions by both individuals and groups aimed at creating a Catalan Folk Songbook, driven by their conviction that Catalan folk songs were about to disappear.

CATALAN FOLK POETRY: THE IDEAS OF THE PIONEERING SCHOLARS

The branch of study that views 'folk poetry' as 'folk song from the oral tradition' was introduced in Catalonia in the 1830s primarily by two eminent Romantic writers and scholars: the philologist and Universitat de Barcelona chair Manuel Milà i Fontanals (Vilafranca del Penedès 1818-1884) and the linguist and librarian Marià Aguiló i Fuster (Palma 1825-Barcelona 1897).

From an academic standpoint, Milà theorised on the topic in his study entitled 'De la poesia popular' (On Folk Poetry) published in the book *Observaciones sobre la poesia popular con muestras de romances catalanes inéditos* (1853). In contrast, even though Aguiló did not publish any studies on the topic, he reflected on it throughout his entire lifetime, as shown by the many annotations in his personal archive, which were compiled and systematised

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by Joan Puntí i Collell in the book *Ideari cançonístic Aguiló*⁴ edited by Josep Massot i Muntaner in 1993 with an invaluable introductory study.

The first part of Milà's book was devoted to the study 'De la poesia popular' (On Folk Poetry), which examines the concept of folk poetry in general and the characteristics of Latin, French, Provençal, Castilian, written Catalan and traditional Catalan folk poetry. The second part, entitled 'Romancerillo catalán o muestras de canciones tradicionales' (Catalan Folk Ballad Collection or Samples of Traditional Songs), includes 70 songs in Catalan, most of them ballads, with discussions by the author but no musical notation. Finally, the book concludes with the part entitled 'Cuentos infantiles (rondallas) en Catalunya' (Children's Tales [Folk Tales] in Catalonia), which is much briefer than the previous sections. This collection of Catalan folk tales, the first to be published in the Catalan-speaking lands, is actually a compilation of the plots of folk tales (some of them quite brief) written in Spanish, with a few words and rhymed formulas in Catalan. Even though including the plots of folk tales at the end of a song compilation may seem surprising, the decision can be explained by the thematic relationship between traditional ballads and folk tales from the oral tradition, as noted by the historian and archivist Agustí Duran (Cervera 1887 – Barcelona 1975).⁵

In his study 'De la poesia popular', Milà outlined the characteristics of folk poetry and reflected on the difficulties of setting its boundaries. In terms of its characteristics, he noted the following: (1) it has a literary and therefore aesthetic value; (2) it is traditional, in that it is passed down from generation to generation; (3) it is beloved by the people, whose memories and feelings are represented in it; (4) it is anonymous, in that it seems to have been created by the people as a whole, who participate in composing it by creating different versions; (5) it is the natural property of the country, just like the trees and mountains; (6) it lacks any indication of a date or author; and (7) its language changes according to the way each person speaks. In terms of its boundaries, Milà distinguished folk poetry from vulgar poetry, as the latter, unlike the former, lacks artistic value. He also made the distinction between a ballad and what is called a *romanç* in Catalan. While ballads are true traditional folk poetry (that is, orally transmitted), the term *romanç* refers to narrative songs contained in printed copies (which are therefore transmitted in writing). In Milà's opinion, each people has its own folk poetry through which they can evoke their memories and express their feelings using simple melodies and their own linguistic features (prosody, intonation and vocal inflections).

In 1882, Milà published a second edition of *Observaciones sobre la poesia popular* with the title of *Romancerillo catalán. Canciones tradicionales*. This second edition did not contain the study 'De la poesia popular', but the collection of songs published notably increased, with a total of 580, including many variations and 46 tunes. In the

prologue, the author justified the new title because of the orientation of that new edition (it was primarily a song collection) and defended the inclusion of the term 'canciones' (songs) in the subtitle because its content differed from other kinds of versified folk poetry, such as four-line verses (*coples*), games, riddles, etc. With this explanation, Milà expanded the scope of 'folk poetry' to genres which today we would call folk literature or oral literature, instead of restricting it solely to folk songs.

The other Romantic scholar who took an interest in folk poetry and reflected on it his entire life was Marià Aguiló.⁶ Even though Aguiló did not publish any theoretical studies like Milà did, he did leave many written annotations and unpublished personal reflections on folk poetry which were compiled after his death by Joan Puntí i Collell in the study *Ideari cançonístic Aguiló*.⁷ When he died, Aguiló left a vast trove of documents that are currently conserved in three different collections: the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya* (Abadia de Montserrat), the collection of Rossend Serra i Pagès (Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona) and the one assembled by Josep M. de Casacuberta (Biblioteca de Catalonia).⁸

The first of these collections conserves the *Ideari cançonístic Aguiló*, which, according to Joan Puntí i Collell, secretary of the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya* office, is actually a complete doctrine on folk songs. As Josep Massot i Muntaner says, Aguiló's work was ready to be published in volume IV of the materials of the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya*, a volume that was supposed to go to press in July 1936, but it was never issued because of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.⁹ Aguiló wrote a plethora of notes throughout his lifetime in the form of drafts or simply personal notes not meant for publication. Puntí culled and organised the texts and grouped them into sections. He then interspersed his own comments in order to bring unity to the whole and make it more understandable for readers.¹⁰

The chapter entitled 'Poesia popular' (Folk Poetry) reflects the general theoretical qualities of what Aguiló viewed as folk poetry. In his opinion, the most intimate and spontaneous expression of the character of a people can be found in its folk poetry; therefore, if one wants to learn about the soul of a people, one must learn its folk poetry. On this point, his coincidence with Milà is clear. However, Aguiló also asserted another characteristic of folk poetry which has to do with its purpose. In his opinion, folk poetry serves an educational purpose because through it workers can learn lessons, yet it also serves a redemptive purpose for the language of the fatherland as the means by which the people express their love for their own language.

In addition to these general principles, Aguiló also listed the following features as inherent to folk poetry, which he also applied to the ballad (which he calls the *romanç*). These features are: (1) universalism, due to the similarities found in all folk literatures; (2) repetitions or resemblances, shown by the formulas it contains and the words

it uses; (3) particularism, in that it is the unique product of a people; (4) simplicity, which makes it ingenuous and humble; (5) monotony, which he considers valuable and favourable; (6) narrative vagueness, which stimulates the imagination, as it eliminates anything that can be implicitly understood; (7) the fact that it is the outcome of a culture based on the love of the language, whose author is unknown (the author is the people as a whole); (8) efficacy, because its internal values make it powerful; (9) delight, because thinking is embodied in its most natural form in folk poetry; (10) fluidity, as it seems to have been composed effortlessly; that is, the poet's effort cannot be noticed; (11) the power of attraction, which provides it with natural grace; and (12) religiosity, in the sense that it is faithful but not fanatical and easily adapts to each religion. All of these features, which number more than those listed by Milà, reveal a profound reflection on the behaviour of folk poetry, not only aesthetically but also functionally.

In addition to mentioning its characteristics, Aguiló also reflected on the role of folk poetry throughout history and conferred on it qualities like the fact that it has better withstood the influence of Spanish, an influence which erudite poetry was unable to avoid. He also attributed it the role of serving the needs of the people, who narrate the memorable events in their lives in verse. Therefore, he assigns it what today we would call an identity-related function.

In addition to theorising on folk poetry, Aguiló also travelled around the Catalan-speaking lands in search of folk songs¹¹ and included them in an extensive collection. His intention was to publish a great Catalan folk songbook, although he only managed to publish the volume entitled *Romancer popular de la terra catalana. Cançons feudals i cavalleresques* (1893). Aguiló also received many songs from different associates, such as the poet Jacint

Verdaguer.¹² Yet despite the vast number of songs he collected, Aguiló's individual attempt to publish a great Catalan folk songbook never came to fruition.

THE ORFEÓ CATALÀ AND THE CATALAN MUSIC FESTIVALS CONTESTS

Over time, between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the individual act of collecting folk songs to create a songbook led to organised actions via entities and associations. One of them was the Orfeó Català. Founded in 1891 by the musicians Lluís Millet i Pagès (El Masnou 1867 – Barcelona 1941) and Amadeu Vives i Roig (Collbató 1871 – Madrid 1932), the Orfeó Català became a prestigious choral society and a symbol of Catalan-ness. It was created within the parameters of Modernisme, a movement which in Catalonia was associated with the desire to revive Catalan culture and modernise the country that had begun in the *Renaixença*. Just as there was Modernisme in fields like architecture, the decorative arts and literature, so there was a Catalan musical Modernisme which can be situated between 1888 and 1910 and included musicians like Enric Morera, Lluís Millet and J. Lamote de Grignon.¹³ One feature of this Modernisme was its interest in folk music, associationism and the dissemination of music, especially choral and chamber music.¹⁴

One of the goals set by the founders of the Orfeó Català was for it to perform traditional songs. With this goal in mind, it sought to draw musical attention to the songs that had inspired the collectors from in an earlier period, the *Renaixença*, for literary reasons: they had annotated the lyrics but seldom the music, as they were primarily driven by an interest in recovering the Catalan language.¹⁵

Millet upheld the need to recover and share folk songs and to study them by comparing them with those from



FIGURE 1. Miquel Blay's sculptural group (The Catalan Song) symbolising Catalan music on the corner of the façade of the Palau de la Música Catalana (1909).

other countries, with the spotlight always on the music itself. The Festes de la Música Catalana (Catalan Music Festivals) contests were used to help recover folk songs. These festivals were inspired by the Jocs Florals de la Llengua Catalana, poetry events which had been restored in 1859, inspired by the Jocs Florals de la Gaia Ciència instituted by King John I in 1393. The Catalan Music Festivals sought to be for music what the Jocs Florals de la Llengua Catalana were for language and poetry.¹⁶ The first Catalan Music Festival held in August 1904 established a section of awards devoted to folk song, which was maintained in subsequent editions. The next festivals were held in 1905, 1906, 1908, 1911, 1915, 1917, 1920 and 1922. As the outcome of this initiative, around 2,000 folk songs and dances were collected. The Orfeó Català thus promoted the compilation of folk songs and then embellished them through painstaking harmonisations and disseminated them through its choral groups and its magazine, *Revista Musical Catalana*.

We do not know whether the ultimate goal of the Orfeó Català was to draw up a Catalan folk songbook with all the songs presented to the Catalan Music Festivals contests. Yet in any case, the Orfeó Català undertook a major effort to collect and disseminate Catalan folk songs. Many choral societies in Catalonia, following in the footsteps of the Orfeó Català, popularised songs from the oral tradition after first adapting and harmonising them. This act, which consisted in aesthetically modifying the folk songs, correcting them linguistically and musically and then disseminating and popularising them, corresponded to the idea of folklorism, a concept introduced by the German anthropologist Hans Moser¹⁷ and disseminated by the ethnomusicologist Josep Martí.¹⁸

FOLKLORE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY AND COLLECTION OF FOLK SONGS

The study of folklore, which became a scholarly discipline in around the mid-nineteenth century,¹⁹ gained in popularity in Catalonia and was particularly productive in the late nineteenth and first third of the twentieth centuries. Around that time, there were both intense efforts to collect folklore and many spaces to teach it. As Josefina Roma points out, folklore was taught in two different spheres: (1) excursionism, or outings in nature, with the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya at the forefront, and (2) academia, with the Escola d'Institutius i Altres Carreres per a la Dona. The first sphere, with the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya, is where Josep M. Batista i Roca learned how to work with folklore questionnaires designed to collect materials. In the second sphere, Rossend Serra i Pagès started teaching a folklore class in 1901 as a formal subject within the curriculum of an academic institution. In academia, there were efforts to bring in folk culture, stimulate research into folklore and create an archive that would preserve the materials for subsequent



FIGURE 2. El Noi de la Mare (The Child of the Mother) is a traditional Catalan Christmas carol.

study. These efforts were undertaken by the Chair of Ethics at the Universitat de Barcelona, Tomàs Carreras i Artau (Girona 1879 – Barcelona 1954), with the creation of the Ethnography and Folklore Archive of Catalonia in the university's Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities.²⁰ The archive later hired his assistant and disciple, Josep M. Batista i Roca.

From the methodological standpoint, the Ethnography and Folklore Archive of Catalonia developed specialised questionnaires that helped guide its associates on how to collect material systematically. Twenty-two questionnaires were made, one of them devoted to Catalan folk songs, and through this system it managed to collect a wealth of materials.²¹

The Ethnography and Folklore Archive of Catalonia had associates from a variety of fields, such as the musician Felip Pedrell (Tortosa 1841 – Barcelona 1922), the folklorist and linguist Antoni M. Alcover (Manacor 1862 – Palma 1932) and the folklorist Rossend Serra i Pagès (Gràcia 1863 – Barcelona 1929). Serra i Pagès was extremely important in the study of Catalan folk song; he went to great efforts to convince his contemporaries that the extensive, systematic collection of songs was needed before they disappeared as a consequence of the lifestyle changes that were taking place in society, which were largely threatening their survival.

Serra i Pagès worked as a professor of folklore at Barcelona's Escola d'Institutius i altres Carreres per a la Dona from 1901 to 1917, when the school was closed. He also taught different classes on folklore at the Societat de Ciències Naturals de Barcelona (Club Muntanyenc) and a course at the Institut de Cultura i Biblioteca Popular per a la Dona in 1915. He founded the Folklore Section of the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya, was the president of the Archaeology, Folklore and Philology Section of the Societat de Ciències Naturals in Barcelona and was the correspondent of the Société de Traditions Populaires in Paris, among other posts.²² Throughout his lifetime, he combined his interest in studying folklore with active dissemination of it through lectures, classes and publications.

Serra i Pagès published theoretical studies on the concept of folklore and its genres; he advocated treating it in a scholarly fashion and provided criteria on the methodology to be used to collect and later disseminate materials. His student Sara Llorens defined him as a man with a modern spirit who was devoted to the study of folklore as a scholarly discipline that inquires into the traditional elements of peoples in order to explain their transformations and survivals.²³

In 1917, Serra i Pagès published the article 'El cançoner musical popular català'²⁴ in the *Butlletí del Centre Excursionista del Bages*, which expanded upon the content of a previous study of the same name which he had published in the magazine *Renaixement*.²⁵ In this 1917 article, Serra i Pagès outlined the need to carry out the noble, patriotic enterprise of collecting songs for the extraordinarily rich Catalan folk songbook, just as other cultivated nations had done, and he highlighted the urgency of doing so to avoid losing this great poetic, musical and folkloric treasure which defined the Catalan personality.²⁶ The idea was that all the thousands of songs originally in Catalan had to be saved to avoid condemning future generations to having to sing foreign songs. In order to undertake an endeavour of such a magnitude, a great deal of time and money was needed, along with a method. The method proposed by Serra i Pagès consisted in having two-person teams made up of a musician and a folklorist who were familiar with the subject and worked with diligence, dedication and enthusiasm, with a clearly laid-out, long-term plan to reach the hiddenmost and most far-flung corners of Catalonia.²⁷

Throughout his article, which was organised into eight sections, Serra i Pagès broke down his idea of how to make this songbook, a task he believed was so essential. He upheld the need to collect, study and publish the immense trove of folk songs which were being lost because of people's lack of interest, but he also noted that this had to be done within the parameters of the new field of folklore, because those who had published Catalan folk songs in the past were often experts on literature or music, but seldom folklore. He claimed that a poet could be inspired by and remake the text of a folk song and a musician could modify a folk tune, but under no circumstances should

they claim that this is folklore. This distinction between folklore and the use of folklore as a source of literary inspiration is quite timely today. In fact, the US American folklorist Richard M. Dorson, who was so influential in updating folklore as a scholarly discipline in the 1960s, expressed something similar. Dorson, the creator of the term 'fakelore', did not criticise the poets and scholars who used folklore as a source of inspiration for their literary works, but he did reject the actions of those who created these materials and later disseminated them as if they were authentic folklore.²⁸

Serra i Pagès claimed that it was essential to accurately note both the lyrics and the music of the song and to publish all the possible variations, including individual ones, that is, those produced by the same singer performing the same song different times. Only by considering all the variations is it possible to appreciate more details of the song. Once the lyrics and music of the thousands of songs from all over Catalonia were properly recorded, then they had to be classified and studied.

Serra i Pagès reflected on the work of collecting songs undertaken to date, specifically focusing on the efforts of Manuel Milà i Fontanals, Marià Aguiló and Francesc Pelai Briz i Fernández. He mentioned Milà's *Observaciones sobre la poesía popular con muestras de romances catalanes inéditos* (1853) and *Romancerillo catalán. Canciones tradicionales* (1882), which he considered the starting point of the traditional Catalan songbook,²⁹ even though they were written for literary purposes. Regarding Aguiló, who had begun to collect songs in 1835, he cited the *Romancer popular de la terra catalana. Cançons feudals i cavalleresques* (1893), the only volume actually published of those Aguiló had planned, although it does not include the musical notation of the songs. Therefore, in his viewpoint, both Milà and Aguiló should be considered two eminent men of letters who were concerned with folk poetry but were not folklorists. Finally, he mentions Briz's publication of the five volumes of *Cançons de la terra* (1866-1877) with a total of 175 songs, most of them with their tunes. The first of these volumes, made in conjunction with the musician Càndid Candi, garnered international recognition after it won an award at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair.

Next, Serra i Pagès treated songs as folklore. On this point, his contribution is truly innovative for the era and once again remains thoroughly modern today. He explains that when noting down a song, the lyrics and music are not enough, as other features must also be taken into account: when it is sung, the circumstances around it and the expression and feeling with which it is sung. Therefore, he also showcased the performance or interpretation of the song and its proper context.

In this sense, Serra i Pagès explained the most important points that emerged from the third Congrès Excursionista Català held in Tarragona in April 1914. This congress discussed the fact that the literary, musical, ethnological (referring to customs), historical and philo-

logical aspects of the songs should be considered, and that their origin, geographic area, musical transformations (if any) and variations should also be studied. Finally, it stated that the lyrics must be recorded with complete accuracy; the provenance of the song should be noted; where the singer learned it, what the purpose or function of the song was and the psychological moment when it was sung (that is, everything surrounding the way it is performed or interpreted) should be described; and a phonographic recording should be made to get an accurate transcription.

To illustrate the idea that the songs should be noted down following the criteria of folklore, Serra i Pagès highlighted the importance of a folk songbook telling the purpose of the songs. He believed that it is not enough to classify the songs according to thematic criteria and instead stressed the idea of presenting them in all their complexity, properly annotated linguistically, musically and ethnologically (referring to the customs behind them). He believed that one criterion for organising the songbook is via the music, not the lyrics, and he suggested creating two main groups: rhythmic songs and melodic songs. Rhythmic songs would include those used to accompany manual or mechanical labour, and melodic ones would be songs for a specific holiday, such as Christmas.

Serra i Pagès ended the article by analysing the way folk songs had been abandoned by some people and pointed to the causes: the widespread introduction of machines into production processes, which put an end to work songs; the replacement of old dances with couples dances, which led the songs accompanying the former to be forgotten; the advent of new entertainment venues, like cinemas, theatres, cafés, casinos and dance halls; the imitation of city customs, which side-lined the rural customs that were accompanied by song; and people moving away to find better jobs, which was leading to the loss of the local songs.

One of Serra i Pagès' keenest concerns was that Catalan folk songs were gradually being replaced by their Spanish counterparts. To reverse this process, he suggested different actions: introducing the recovered folk songs at school, having choral societies sing them, getting musicians to use them as a source of inspiration, promoting the publication of songbooks, granting awards to those who know the most songs and publishing a folk music songbook of Catalonia, which would be one of the best proofs of love of Catalonia.³⁰

Five years after the publication of this article, on 12 January 1922, Serra i Pagès delivered a lecture on the same topic at the opening of the course organised by the Arxiu d'Etnografia i Folklore de Catalunya at the Universitat de Barcelona. In that lecture, entitled 'El Cançoner popular català' (The Catalan Folk Songbook),³¹ he shared his views on how a future folk songbook should be made just when the industrialist and patron Rafael Patxot i Jubert (Sant Feliu de Guíxols 1872 – Geneva 1964) had launched a project of this kind. That lecture was important because some of Serra i Pagès's ideas on what the folk songbook

should be like were adopted by Patxot and applied to the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya* project which had started just six days before, on 6 January 1922.

In his lecture, Serra i Pagès described the object of study. By Catalan folk songbook he meant an organised, methodical collection of traditional songs in the Catalan language which people currently sing or have sung. He uses the term 'traditional' in this description as Milà i Fontanals had used it, which we should view as equivalent to 'folk'. He then makes a distinction between folk songs and popular songs. The former, which would become the future content of the songbook, should be traditional and have lasted over time, while the latter encompassed circumstantial, ephemeral songs that may have been fashionable at a given time but immediately disappeared. In Serra i Pagès' opinion, folk songs are the expression of all aspects of a people's collective soul, the way they feel and think, an idea that reflected the previous contributions by the Romantic scholars and the motivation of the musicians of the Orfeó Català.

In a clear reference to the songbooks which had already been published, Serra i Pagès claimed that the Catalan folk songbook should not be a poetry anthology or a collection made for choral societies or glee clubs but 'a set of folkloric documents of the Catalan-speaking people who, while singing, working and having fun, worshipping God and educating their children, glorify their heroes and, through a series of acts enshrined by custom, add links to the long chain of the Catalan tradition, which unites us with all our ancestors'.³² As in his previous article, he acknowledged the work done by his predecessors, but he also noted the many shortcomings: the lyrics of songs had been emended to suit the taste of those publishing them; the transcribed tunes were not as definite as they should be because the singer, removed from his or her usual environs, sings in an inhibited, vacillating fashion and this leads them to lose rhythm and expression; many volumes present the lyrics of the songs but not the music, and vice-versa, some contain the tune but not the lyrics; and finally, they lack any folkloric comments or information on where the song was collected and who sang it, with only a handful of exceptions. This entire analysis led Serra i Pagès to determine that the following aspects had to be borne in mind when compiling songs as folkloric documents:

1. Write down the lyrics exactly as the singer utters them, without adding, removing or emending anything.
2. After having chosen a good singer, transcribe the tune as it is sung and forget conservatory learning. This means bearing in mind the following aspects about the singer: making sure they have a good ear and singing voice; checking whether they are suitable and the right age to sing the song; and if they are inhibited, trying to get them to centre themselves, not lose the beat, not rush and therefore express themselves properly.
3. Find out how the song is used, that is, whether it is sung to accompany work or a lullaby, a walking song, etc.

4. See if the song is for a specific holiday or season, as many songs are only sung on certain days or at certain times.

5. Take note of anything that is inherent to the song. Note whether it is a song for a game, dance, gang, etc. And add the circumstances: games, music, bouquets of flowers, special clothing, food or drink.

6. Learn about the singer's affiliation (name, age, profession, provenance, etc.), try to find out from whom they learned the song and write down the day and place where it was collected.

All of these criteria are part and parcel of the science of folklore, as is the need to collect as many variations as possible, a criterion that some of the early collectors had not borne in mind. In order to achieve the accuracy required when using oral sources, Serra i Pagès stated that these variations should be transcribed directly onto the musical score and printed on the phonograph plate.

Once the songs had been collected in line with these criteria, the songbook should be made, which should include the songs grouped into sections according to a criterion that bears in mind the way the people use them. On this point, Serra i Pagès suggested starting with the tune, not the lyrics. In short, he noted that form is a stabler element than content, because, in his own words, 'people sing a historical tune, a love song, a satirical ditty or a song about a chilling crime all with the same tune'.³³ Therefore, Serra i Pagès prioritised two fundamental elements when studying songs: form and use, quite modern criteria that renowned folklorists such as Vladimir Propp³⁴ and Heda Jason³⁵ consider indispensable when studying folklore.

Serra i Pagès proposed a classification that incorporated yet another section besides those mentioned in his 1917 article. He suggested establishing the following three groups of songs: rudimentary songs, rhythmic songs and melodic songs. Rudimentary songs are those that children sing or that adults sing to children to make them laugh or go to sleep or to distract them. They are songs with simple lyrics and very easy tunes (often recited rhythmically, with many breaks and a final cadence). Rhythmic songs are those in which rhythm predominates (slow, moderate or brisk); they encompass work songs and dances. Finally, melodic songs are those in which melody stands out in an effort to arouse emotions or moods, such as ballads. Furthermore, Serra i Pagès believed that the songbook should also include: (1) calls used to herd livestock; (2) traditional tolls of bells, trumpets and dulzainas, along with the way people interpret them; and (3) the voices of travelling salesmen as they hawk their wares.

In Serra i Pagès' opinion, it was essential for the songbook to present the songs with their associated folkloric explanations, because otherwise it would be impossible to fully understand what they mean. Therefore, the songbook should be comprised of songs that have been compiled folklorically in accordance with the customs and mores of the people who live in a territory with unique

features. As a result, Serra i Pagès believed that a songbook should be made for each county or major natural region based on the song-collecting activity that was underway, such as in the county of Ripoll, where almost 500 songs had been collected. Serra i Pagès had overseen this collecting venture between 1903 and 1922, and the folklorists who participated were Tomàs Raguer, Salvador Vilarrassa, Josep Maideu, Manuel Cavalleria, Ramir Mirapeix and Damià Torrents, among others.³⁶ Another county where Serra i Pagès oversaw the song-collection efforts was Bages. The songs collected were published in the *Butlletí del Cente Excursionista del Bages* between 1906 and 1930 under the oversight of Blai Padró and Joaquim Pecanins.³⁷

Serra i Pagès believed that making the songbook was a task that had to be done immediately, when the survival of traditional songs was endangered and they could disappear, and he related this endeavour with love of the fatherland and the need to transmit this legacy to future generations. Rafael Patxot made this possible, as he had decided to finance the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya*, take over the direction of the Orfeó Català and get personally involved in both planning and overseeing the project. Even though Patxot fully adopted Serra i Pagès' postulates, the idea of making a songbook based on work conducted county-by-county was not the formula chosen to compile the songs. The *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya* did not fully follow Serra i Pagès' suggested guidelines, but it did draw from some of his methodological underpinnings.

OBRA DEL CANÇONER POPULAR DE CATALUNYA

The project to create the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya* came to fruition thanks to the patronage of Rafael Patxot i Jubert via one of the foundations he had created, specifically the Fundació Concepció Rabell i Cibils, which he had set up thanks to the funds he had inherited from his sister-in-law for the purpose of cultivating Catalan culture. As the administrator of the foundation, Patxot decided to promote the long-discussed project of creating a folk songbook, one of whose prime defenders was Rossend Serra i Pagès. Thus, steadfastly determined to move the project ahead, on 28 October 1921 Patxot suggested to Lluís Millet that the Orfeó Català oversee it. This decision may have been based on the fact that the Orfeó Català was a prestigious musical society and that the awards created by Patxot's father, Eusebi Patxot i Llagostera, in 1919 were announced and awarded at the Orfeó Català.³⁸ Millet's affirmative response allowed the project to get underway. The opening session was held on 6 January 1922, and representatives of different Catalan cultural institutions attended, including Agustí Duran i Sanpere (Centre Excursionista de Catalunya), Jaume Massó i Torrents (Institut d'Estudis Catalans), Tomàs Carreras i Artau and Josep Maria Batista i Roca (Arxiu

d'Etnografia i Folklore de Catalunya), Antoni Nicolau (Escola Municipal de Música), Francesca Bonnemaïson (Institut de Cultura i Biblioteca Popular de la Dona), Rosend Serra i Pagès (Folklore Section of the Club Muntanyenc), Joan Tomàs i Joan Amades (Folklore Section of the Ateneu Enciclopèdic Popular) and other personalities.³⁹ The director of the project was Francesc Pujol i Pons (Barcelona 1878 – 1945), and the secretary was Joan Puntí i Collell (Manlleu 1886 – Barcelona 1962). It also had an advisory board made up of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans, the Centre Excursionista de Catalonia and the Arxiu d'Etnografia i Folklore de Catalunya.

The purpose of the project was to collect and study the songs from the Catalan-speaking lands and publish them in a songbook, but in 1939 it was interrupted because of the end of the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent Franco dictatorship. Despite this, there was still some sporadic activity in 1940, such as the voluntary research mission undertaken by Palmira Jaquetti in Setcases, Manyanet and Anglès, and Vall d'Aran.⁴⁰

The first task to create the songbook was writing a circular addressed to 'all Catalan folk song lovers' which explained the goals and characteristics of the project and recruited participants. It also outlined what was going to be collected: songs; children's songs; children's games set to music; ballets, dances and Mardi Gras songs; traditional serenades and calls; and all kinds of folk music.⁴¹ This call for collaboration came with 'General rules for collecting songs',⁴² which sought to methodologically guide the collecting efforts. In brief, these rules were:

- The entire song should be copied (lyrics and tune), as well as all the variations that can be found of both the melody and the text, no matter how minor they may be.
- The song should be copied accurately, presented just as the people sing it, even with its imperfections.
- If possible, write down the circumstances of the song: the place where it was collected; the age, sex and prove-

nance of the singer; in children's games, the way they are played; in ballets, dances and Mardi Gras songs, and in traditional serenades or calls, the holidays or seasons when they are sung; their traditional meaning; the way they are presented and executed; and the instruments used.

These rules are similar to the criteria that Rosend Serra i Pagès had developed to create the Catalan songbook. Therefore, in this respect, the methodology used in the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya* was in line with the one he proposed based on the science of folklore.

All told, more than 1,500 copies of the circular were sent out to all the choral societies and folk orchestras in the Catalan-speaking lands. The responses came quickly, and by 1922 several compilations of songs and other materials related to folk songs (such as books, articles, etc.) had reached the *Obra del Cançoner* offices. In addition to these materials, which were sent by private individuals, the unpublished compilations of folk songs from the Catalan Musical Festivals contests organised by the Orfeó Català also expanded the *Obra del Cançoner* collection.

The *Obra del Cançoner* also had its own mechanisms to expand its collection. It specifically promoted two of them: contests and research missions. The contests awarded prizes for the best compilations of songs, both qualitative and quantitative. The research missions consisted in collecting songs through what today we would call fieldwork, and they were remunerated. Two people participated in the missions: a folklorist and a musician, which reflected the methodological approach outlined by Serra i Pagès in his works. They pledged to collect the lyrics and tune of the song, as well as any associated folkloric aspects; they could also make a phonographic recording of the song and take pictures of the singers, if appropriate. Along with this material, they had to submit a report containing their personal impressions of how the mission went. Between 1922 and 1936, 65 research missions were conducted on assignment from the *Obra del Cançoner*,



FIGURE 3. Joan Tomàs i Parés (1896–1967) with the *flabiolaire* Pau Orpí i Gili 'Mataporç' in Sant Llorenç d'Hortons, Tarragona. Arxiu de l'Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya, Abadia de Montserrat.

and in 1940 Palmira Jaquetti undertook her voluntary mission mentioned above. Even though the project did not include systematic, exhaustive research by county or natural regions, as Serra i Pagès had proposed, the research missions did reach broad swaths of the different Catalan-speaking lands. While it was active, the *Obra del Cançoner* also received donations. For example, its document collection contains materials from the personal archives of Marià Aguiló and Rossend Serra i Pagès.

Between 1926 and 1929, the Fundació Concepció Rabell i Cibils published three volumes of materials from the *Obra del Cançoner*. The Civil War and the Franco regime led to the interruption of the publications planned and prevented materials from being consulted, but the efforts made by the Abbey of Montserrat with the descendants of Rafael Patxot allowed this important archive, conserved partly in Switzerland and partly in Barcelona, to be recovered.⁴³ In 1991, the Patxot family donated the *Obra del Cançoner* archive to the Abbey of Montserrat, and one copy was made for the Centre de Promoció de la Cultura Popular i Tradicional Catalana⁴⁴ and another for the Biblioteca de Catalunya so that the documentation would be available for consultation. Between 1993 and 2011, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat published 19 volumes of materials (from volumes IV to XXI), a continuation of the first three published before the Civil War, in an edition overseen by Josep Massot i Muntaner; between 2013 and 2014, it reissued the first three volumes of materials (vol. I, fasc. 1 and 2, vol. II and vol. III), which had originally been published between 1926 and 1929.

CONCLUSIONS

From the dawn of the interest in folk poetry in Catalonia in the 1830s until practically one century later, the study and compilation of folk songs was driven by the patriotic zeal to safeguard the language and personality of the nation. The Romantic scholars Manuel Milà i Fontanals and Marià Aguiló i Fuster theorised on the concept of folk poetry and determined its characteristics and limits. Their collections of songs, driven primarily by a literary interest, focused on the texts and seldom included musical notation.

These individual actions were followed by the collective actions promoted by societies and institutions, which shared the objective of collecting Catalan folk songs before they disappeared but differed in the way they collected and disseminated them. Thus, the musicians associated with the Orfeó Català encouraged folk songs to be collected through contests, such as the Catalan Music Festivals, and they then harmonised and modified them before disseminating them to confer greater aesthetic and musical quality on the songs. Rossend Serra i Pagès, however, tailored the song-collection efforts to the parameters of the new science of folklore, with respect for the oral sources and a scholarly treatment of the materials. His teachings and dissemination efforts had a major influence

on the efforts of the folklorists from the counties of Ripoll and Bages to develop songbooks for those counties. Serra i Pagès was very active in the efforts to create a Catalan folk songbook, and he laid the theoretical and methodological foundations that were mostly applied in the *Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya* project promoted and financed by Rafael Patxot i Jubert.

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- [43] Regarding the story of how the *Obra del Cançoner* was recovered, see, among others, the following works published by Josep MASSOT I MUNTANER: 'L'Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya, avui'. *Llengua i literatura* 5, 1992-1993, pp. 739-751; and 'L'Obra del Cançoner Popular de Catalunya, font de recerques'. *Llengua i literatura* 14, 2003, pp. 549-561.
- [44] This is currently the Documentation Centre of the Direcció General de Cultura Popular, Associacionisme i Acció Culturals.

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