



Very sincerely yours
C. Carroll Manden

President of the Modern Language
Association of America
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CHARLES CARROLL MARDEN
1867–1932

ON May the 11th the honored and beloved President of the Modern Language Association died after a brief and unexpected illness. It is impossible to express here the deep sense of loss that this event brings to all members of this Association, in which the deceased had so long been an active figure. We are grateful to know that he was spared any prolonged suffering. Apparently in the vigor of health, with a mental grasp and alertness undimmed by advancing years, he was taken—as one fancies he himself wished to be—in the midst of his scholarly activity with an uncompleted piece of research still beckoning as his goal. For the departed, an unfinished column remains the happiest symbol of life. For us, who survive him, there is the example of an unusually rich and useful career: a delightful family circle, as all who ever visited the house on Mercer Street will recall; devoted friends, one of whom was literally his “Oliver” in the battle of books and scholarly ideals; an enviable success as a teacher of Spanish; and an international reputation as America’s foremost hispanist.

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Charles Carroll Marden was descended from English, Scotch, and Irish ancestry of our colonial period. He was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on December 21, 1867. He received his bachelor of arts degree from the Johns Hopkins University in 1889, and his doctorate from the same institution in 1894. This was the heyday of the Johns Hopkins influence on the budding scholarship of America. Among his friends and contemporaries at Hopkins were Edward C. Armstrong, Charles H. Haskins, Frederick Warren, John Matzke, Newton Baker, and T. Atkinson Jenkins. But influential beyond all others was A. Marshall Elliott by the encouragement he gave his pupils, as professor of Romance Languages at Hopkins, in the quest of exact truth. The great critical power that Marden showed later in testing the validity and the value of linguistic documents had its birth here, at his master’s feet. In 1889 he accepted his first teaching position at the Norfolk Academy; in 1890–91 he was instructor in French at the University of Michigan; and in 1894 he entered the staff of his alma mater, where in 1905 he was finally ad-

vanced to a professorship of Spanish. Upon the creation of the Emery L. Ford Chair of Spanish in 1916, Marden was called to Princeton University as its first incumbent. During seven summer quarters he gave graduate courses in Old Spanish language and literature at the University of Chicago, and in 1928 he crowned his teaching career by lecturing at Spanish universities as the Carnegie Visiting Professor. In America, he was a fellow of the Mediaeval Academy and of the Hispanic Society. In Spain, he received official recognition by his election to a corresponding membership in the Spanish Academy and the title of Knight Commander in the Order of Isabel la Católica. He was also active as managing editor of *Modern Language Notes* (1911–15) and, in this Association, as a member of the Executive Council (1924–26).

The quality and temper of Marden's work appears early in his published doctor's dissertation, *The Phonology of the Spanish Dialect of Mexico City* (Baltimore, 1896). The first important study by a North American of a Spanish-American dialect, this treatise—within its range—is still authoritative today. Indeed, Marden's interest in this field of study never lapsed, as is shown by his *Notes for a Bibliography of American Spanish* (Baltimore, 1911), to which he later added an article in the *Homenaje a Menéndez Pidal*, where the subject is brought up to date for 1911–25.

Marden's outstanding distinction is as an editor of Old Spanish texts. To work in this field had been one of his earliest ambitions, but with characteristic scruple he was unwilling to undertake a critical edition until after subjecting himself to a rigid apprenticeship lasting many years. Unlike other graduate instructors, Marden stuck to the belief that a critical text was no fitting subject for a doctor's dissertation even by the best students. Years of preparation must first precede. With his edition of *El poema de Fernan Gonçalez* (Baltimore, 1904), he gave a definitive text of this important clerical epic of the Middle Ages, and his reputation as a scholar was established. Here again he was a pioneer: the first American scholar to edit an Old Spanish poetical text.

No less an achievement was his edition of *El libro de Apolonio* (Baltimore, 1917). Comparing this text with that of *Fernan Gonçalez*, one notes even greater conservatism of method. Hesitating to dogmatize on mooted points regarding synalepha and hiatus in the *cuaderna vía*, Marden refused to make many emendations that would appear desirable to rasher and less critical editors.

In 1925, while in Spain, a happy discovery turned his attention toward Berceo, the earliest known Castilian poet. With his usual self-effacement

he writes: "In the spring of 1925 the Royal Spanish Academy acquired an incomplete codex of the poems of Berceo. Concerning the previous history of this manuscript we know that it was purchased in a second-hand bookstore of Madrid and that the dealer had obtained it from Logroño." Few readers would divine from this that it was Marden himself who unearthed and bought the manuscript and later generously donated it to the Academy—a *rasgo de hidalguía* much appreciated by the most chivalrous of modern peoples. Marden felt that the manuscript was too important to leave the country of its origin. It never occurred to him to profit by the resale of this priceless possession. Nor did he yield to what to most scholars would have been an even stronger temptation: to own personally a valuable manuscript.

The fruit of this discovery was *Cuatro poemas de Berceo: Milagros de la iglesia robada y de Teofilo y vidas de Santa Oria* (Madrid, 1928). But as the newly found text was obviously incomplete, Marden determined to supply the defect if possible. In the summer of 1928 he returned to Spain and succeeded in recovering a substantial section of the missing portion. The first discovery had had its element of luck; the securing of the remainder was due to enterprise and tact. After considerable detective scouting in the mountain-province of Logroño, Marden found what he sought, and, after diplomatically negotiating with the owner, purchased the rest of the manuscript; and this again he presented to the Academy. This second discovery was published under the title, *Berceo, Veintitres milagros* (Madrid, 1929). Finally, his Berceo studies were completed with the appearance of "Berceo's *Martirio de San Lorenzo* from an Unpublished Manuscript," *PMLA*, XLV (1930), 501–515.

A First Spanish Grammar (Boston, 1926), in collaboration with F. C. Tarr of Princeton, succeeds in giving a clearer and more scientific statement of the principles of Spanish grammar than do other textbooks, and this without sacrificing practical pedagogic effectiveness. With undergraduates, Marden always preferred to teach a class in elementary grammar. In his advanced teaching, aside from linguistics, he devoted himself to the history of the older Spanish drama, the epic, and balladry. Numerous monographs and notes testify to his wide interests. As a reviewer he was thoroughgoing, uncompromising, reliable, yet unflinchingly kind and appreciative. When praise came from so honest an authority it was known to be deserved and the recipient of it felt correspondingly encouraged. In this regard no other American scholar has maintained so high a standard. To Marden a review was, what it should be, an impartial contribution to the subject. The last title listed in his bibliography, the

fourteen pages in *MLN*, XLVII (1932), on Solalinde's edition of Alfonso's *General Estoria*, is a lasting confirmation of this fact.

At the time of his death, Marden was associated with his colleagues at Princeton upon a comprehensive study of the *Alixandre* romance. Many will regret that his share in the Alexander Project, in which his efforts were linked with those of his life-long comrade, Edward C. Armstrong, did not reach fruition. Yet it has been vouchsafed to few scholars to leave behind them a finer series of published works. They are the permanent record of a modest, steadfast, generous American, a man of strong faith and unshakable character, a scholar who eschewed the bypaths of rhetoric and took immeasurable pains in searching out the truth. Such men are always rare; and as time passes the scholars among us will gather fresh inspiration from his memory.

W.A.N. and G.T.N.