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CAROLINA MICHAËLIS DE VASCONCELOS' FORGOTTEN SKETCH OF AN UNFINISHED MONOGRAPH ON E(N)-ZEBRA 'WILD DONKEY'

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I

Isolated attempts to cut a swath through the tangled thicket of a notoriously tricky problem of Luso- and Hispano-Romance zoonymy, namely of the etymology of 'zebra', go back to the age of Humanism and the Renaissance.⁽¹⁾ By the start of the 20th century, however, with historical linguistics being in full bloom, scholars specializing in the Romance field had not made much headway, all of which may explain, without justifying it, why an etymologist of the caliber of W. MEYER-LÜBKE,

(1) S. de Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Madrid, 1611), here cited after M. de Riquer's critical edn. (Barcelona, 1943), pp. 397b and 1017b, offered his readers information under the main entry *cebra*, to which he farther down referred under the alternative graphy *zebra*. As an etymologist, he wavered between two explanations, both presented with commendable caution: either some (not further identified) Arabism, in tribute to the animal's African habitat, or metathesized Lat. *cerv*a (without, of course, bothering to justify the contradiction between the diphthong in Sp. *cierva* and the monophthong in *cebra*; see below). The plausibility of a Portuguese channel of transmission was not ventilated; no hint was dropped of any possible connection with the designation of the 'onager', an animal species which had meanwhile become extinct in the territory at issue; and the (to our thinking, closely related) toponym *Cebreros*, referring to a spot in the bishopric of Ávila, was recorded as a separate entry and explained differently. Interesting, by way of contrast to these naïvetés, is the figurative use reported by the pioneering lexicographer: «A la muger que es muy arisca y brava, dezimos que es como una *cebra*». To reconcile the abovementioned prosodic difficulty (*ie:e*) with the undeniable fact of occasional confusion, in various milieux, of the *cebr-* and *cerv-* families, the tactically smoothest modus operandi is to posit, as the locus of the initial contact, not the respective simplicia, but the derivatives, namely (*en*)*zebruno* and *cervuno*, with special attention to the feminines in *-una* serving to designate skins, hides, furs, and the like. This assumption would reduce, for Spanish, the obstacle of the diphthong.

so far as I can see, simply omitted the word from the original edition of his dictionary. (2) In the meantime, with the progress of biological sciences, *zebra* had gradually become an international word, with the side effect that reputable etymologists toiling outside the Luso-Hispanic corner of the far-flung Romance domain began to evince legitimate curiosity about its background. (3)

Gradually, from the 1920's in a steady crescendo until the mid '50s there occurred a wholesome revival of concern about the word which, in Portuguese, is spelled *zebra*; has, colloquially, acquired such secondary meanings as 'stupid person', 'prisoner's striped uniform'; and is surrounded by derivatives of varying degrees of commonness: *zebr-ar* and *-ado*, plus the adjectives ending in *-al*, *-ário*,

(2) *Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1911 [-20]).

(3) E. Gamillscheg, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der französischen Sprache* (Heidelberg, 1926-29), fasc. 15 (1928), p. 899a, reports, e.g., with a touch of skepticism: «Stammt angeblich aus einer Negermundart des Kongogebietes», referring his readers to the *Dictionnaire général*, for whose etymological verdicts, after some spadework done by A. Darmesteter, A. Thomas assumed final responsibility. The entry was completely recast in the rev. 2^d edn. of that dictionary (1966-69), fasc. 12 (1968), p. 907a, with mention of part of the more recent literature, except that any allusion to J. da Silva's key article remained excluded. Numerous details were badly distorted. One is left wondering why *equiferus* was supposedly stressed on the second *e*; why the epenthesis of the nasal must be traced to the Latin stage; what the wisdom was of starring Ptg. *enzebro*; what the relevancy is of mentioning North, rather than South Africa, in the context of this word history; and whether this animal, rather than merely its hide, was «imported by the Portuguese». Gamillscheg invokes an «im einzelnen nicht klare Weiterbildung» of *equiferus*. Welcome light might indeed have been shed on that elusive word through reference to F. Sommer's interpretation of the *caprifer*, *equifer*, *ovifer* series of «clipped» calques of Greek models (*hippagros*, etc.) and to M. Niedermann's observations on *furiferus* 'furens', as epitomized by A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *DÉLL*, rev. 4th edn. (Paris, 1959-60), p. 230b.

More skillful adaptations to the new way of thinking, even on the part of mentally agile oldtimers, are found in: B. Migliorini & A. Duro, *Prontuario etimologico della lingua italiana*, rev. 4th edn. (Torino, etc., 1950), p. 626a; in W. Mitzka's revision of the 19th edn. of F. Kluge's classic, *EWDS* (Berlin, 1963), p. 878b: *Zebra* (m.) = *afrikanisches Eselspferd* (A.D. 1761); O. Bloch & W. von Wartburg, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*, rev. 5th edn. (Paris, 1968), p. 681ab, with noteworthy datings of *zèbre*, *zébré*, *zébrure*.

The myth of the «Congolese» extraction of the word lives on, unfortunately, in the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, edd. C.T. Onions et al. (Oxford, 1966), p. 1022a. W. W. Skeat, in the 1882 edn. of his *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press), p. 726a, had opted instead either, in the company of É. Littré (1863-72), for Ethiopian as a source or, more vaguely, for «some African language». E. Weekley, *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (London, 1921; New York, 1967), col. 1658, quoting opportunely the older English by-form *zevera* beside *zebra*, favored descent, via Portuguese, from some «native West African name».

The elimination of the /w/ after velar stop and before front vowel, as in *èqui-* > /eki- is, of course, the same as in *coquère* 'to cook' > Ptg., OSp. *cozer*. *laqueu* > Ptg. *laço*, OSp. *laço* ~ *lazo*, etc.

-ino, and -bide, on the one hand; and, on the other, Sp. *cebra* and its satellites *cebr-ado* plus, overseas, -uno, mostly used in reference to a horse with a striped coat, since genuine zebras, visible in zoological gardens, happen not to be native to the New World.

The major break-through centered around the fact that there had become extinct, toward the end of the Middle Ages, a species either of wild donkeys (= Lat. *onager*), or of wild horses (= Lat. *equiferus*) repeatedly mentioned in medieval sources, particularly those of legal content, for the most part under such local names as *a-*, *e-*, *en-zebra*, with the apheresized variant *zebra* emerging sporadically as early as the year 1207 (Archivo Catedral de Toledo). Through a strange twist of circumstances, the disappearance of this animal species from the European arena coincided roughly with the exploration of the South African coastline by Portuguese sailors, whose minds were bent on the discovery of a maritime route to the fabulous 'Indies'. Given this overwhelmingly predominant slant of their mentality, finer details of the South African fauna and flora *per se* scarcely excited them, and so a confusion of (*e*)zebra, an inherited label for a rapidly vanishing animal, with the newly-discovered exotic 'equus zebra' (to cite its present-day scientific tag), ensued. We have then, before us, not just one problem, but two separate problems, of equal relevancy but entirely different scope: (a) the actual etymology of medieval *a-*, *e(n)-zebra*, shared by Old Portuguese and Old Spanish: almost certainly the Latin compound *equiferus*, lit. 'wild horse'; and (b) the transfer of one variant of this polymorphic label to an entirely different animal species, under historically verifiable conditions.

Neither problem is entirely isolated. The first is embedded in the broader issue of Latin compounding in its transition into Romance (4), and hinges on what can be established on the relative mobility, in Old Portuguese and cognate languages, of the word-initial segments *a-*, *e-*, and *en-* (5). The second yields another exemplification of the confusion, in general, by untutored, naïve speakers of superficially

(4) The latest monograph bearing on this topic is Kathryn A. Klingebiel's (unpublished) Berkeley dissertation (Dec. 1985): *Romance Reflexes of the Latin Derivational Type manūtenēre*.

(5) The insertion of a nasal after word-initial *e-* may be interpreted as an extension of lexical units shaped like OPTg. *e(n)xenpro*, OSp. *e(n)xiemplo* < *exemplu*, where trivial anticipation of a following nasal is involved; but a case of application of Ascoli's Law bearing on «dangling» word-initial front vowels, as in Gr.-Lat. *episcopu* 'bishop' < (*o*)*bispo*, is also involved. See my twin studies, «Conflicting Prosodic Inferences from Ascoli's and Darmsteter's Laws?», *RPh*, XXVIII: 4 (May 1975), 483-520; and «Six Categories of Nasal Epenthesis: Their Place in the Evolution from Latin into Romance», *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* (1984), pp. 27-46.

similar animal and plant species (6); in addition, it illustrates anew the likelihood of such anecdotal events where Europeans were transplanted to distant territories in America and Africa hitherto unknown to them and to their ancestors.

Much of the credit for the re-formulation of the entire many-pronged issue must go to A. CASTRO, in 1928, and to a temporarily self-exiled R. MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, a decade later (7); from that point on the debate remained in high gear, until the late 'forties. CASTRO's exemplary note, following upon an earlier exploration by P. MERÊA, was lexical, without trespassing on the domain of etymology proper, except that, after energetically rejecting the possibility of an Arabic base, he leaned toward extracting the word from a pre-Roman (i.e., substratal) language not further identifiable. With this self-imposed limit on his ambition and imagination, CASTRO collected the variant forms and correctly hierarchized them; assembled and neatly located on a geographic map the numerous toponyms involved: *Zebro*, *Azibral*, *Cebro(s)*, *Cebrones*, *Encebros*, *Encebras*, etc.; consulted Nebrixa's succinct definition (1492): «zebra 'mula Siria'», the glosses and comments provided by authors of prominent bilingual dictionaries (Oudin, 1616; Franciosini, 1620) as well as the exegetic remarks of a philologist of his own time as competent as A. BONILLA y SAN MARTÍN; gathered, from the study of relevant passages in older texts, that the animal called *a-*, *e(n)-zebra*, after domestication qualified as a mount, and that its meat qualified as food. CASTRO knew where to stop, and did not hesitate to publish his finely-chiseled paper despite his honest dissatisfaction with his own performance as etymologist; it sufficed him to have demonstrated that the medieval label *a-*, *e(n)-zebra* applied to a sort of wild donkey ('asno montés') entirely different from the present-day exotic 'striped horse' *zebra*. An immediate reward came from an addendum sent in by L. SPITZER, who — another surprise — volunteered no original solution either (8); he refrained from criticizing CASTRO, and was satisfied

(6) One thinks of different situations in this context, including one identified years ago by that great dialectologist Karl Jaberg in his short piece, «Wie der Hundedachs zum Dachs und der Dachs zum Iltis wird», *Festschrift für Ernst Tappolet* (Basel, 1935), pp. 111-21: apparently a case of chain reaction. It is rumored that in the fabularium of Juan Ruiz (ca. 1330), a poet otherwise known for his precision and perceptiveness, two small rodents, namely the mouse and the mole, have on one occasion been confused. Where European newcomers to recently discovered overseas countries were involved, it was not only plain confusion, through inattention to detail, of native and exotic species, that led to strange identifications, but also, as Leonardo Olschki and María Rosa Lida de Malkiel intimated, hazy reverberations of previous readings, often superficial, in classical authors.

(7) A. Castro, «La palabra *zebra*», *RFE*, XV (1928), 173-9; R. Menéndez Pidal, «*Zebra*, *cebra*», *RR*, XXIX (1938), 74-7.

(8) «*Zebro* 'onagre'», *RFE*, XV (1928), 375-6. Spitzer was in such unseemly hurry to send off his snippet of a note that he missed a point not unimportant: while we must indeed reckon with the existence of successive *zebra* tags used for two zoologically unrelated animal species, the

with supplying a bouquet of three additional passages from Old Valencian late-15th and early-16th century sources (*atzebra, enzebra, adzebruno*) — in part literary, in part glossarial — which confirmed CASTRO's data-gathering, extending it geographically toward the Southeast. MEYER-LÜBKE's revision of his *REW*, which fell between the two crucial dates of 1928 and 1938, no longer profited from this spurt of fresh interest⁽⁹⁾.

MENÉNDEZ PIDAL's note, not unfriendly toward CASTRO's and SPITZER's earlier gropings, aimed at the solution of three problems: (a) the narrowing-down of the chronological gap between *zebra* 1 and *zebra* 2; (b) the refutation of the myth of a Congolese or Angolan lexical cradle of the name for the newly-discovered exotic animal; and (c) the long-delayed identification of the actual etymon. MENÉNDEZ PIDAL brilliantly settled the first issue, demonstrating that in the early 16th century, for the poet Juan de Padilla, the medieval animal was still a part of living reality, while S. de COVARRUBIAS and his contemporaries were aware solely of the newcomer: so the zebras followed upon the wild donkeys in fairly quick succession, the two contenders being separated by a lacuna of decades rather than one of centuries. MENÉNDEZ PIDAL had no difficulty in proving the old travelers and the modern Bantuologists wrong, whose exotic etyma for *zebra* 1 carry no conviction⁽¹⁰⁾. But he failed the third test of furnishing a satisfactory starting point for the old *a-, e(n)zebra* whose name he correctly recognized as the source for the new label. Operating as he did with *zēphyrus* was, everyone granted, metaphorically suggestive enough (like the gazelle and the antelope, the zebra moves with the speed of the wind...), but forced him to regard the Atlantic Coast area as the birthplace of the name, since in Castile *zē-* would have produced a rising diphthong. Such a pattern of areal diffusion lacks any independent parallel; it is contradicted by the

fact that the old word *a-, e(n)-zebra* served as a frame of reference for the behavior of certain women, in late medieval Valencia, and that the new label of the colonial era *cebra, zebra*, as Covarrubias assures us, provided a similar service could have qualified to act as a bridge between the two usages.

(9) The Swiss comparatist did, however, slightly improve on the earlier version of his entry (§ 9600): *Ar. zarbatana* 'blowgun', which is here mentioned solely because its Luso-Hispanic reflexes likewise show wavering between *-rb-* and *-br-*, the alternative being the intercalation, in Portuguese, of an anaptyctic vowel, thus: Sp. *zarbatana, cerbatana, cebratana*; Ptg. *sara-batana, -vatana*. Other languages borrowed this Orientalism through one or the other of these Peninsular forms: Fr. *sarbacane*, It. *cerbottana*, older E. *sarbacane ... sarbican*, reached in part through blend with *cane*. The possibility of a measure of influence from the zoonyms here studied is not to be brushed aside.

(10) Menéndez Pidal's impressive roster of antagonists on this score ranges from J. Ludolf's *Historia Aethiopica* (Frankfurt, 1681) and J. Barlot's *A Description of the Coast of Guinea* (London, 1732) to F. Ortiz's *Glosario de afronegrismos* (Havana, 1924) and R. Loewe's crisp note, «Über einige europäische Wörter exotischer Herkunft», in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, LXI (1934), 114-9.

higher number of variants in the center of the Peninsula; and it runs afoul of the numerous toponyms assembled by CASTRO. Moreover, the segments *a-* and *e(n)-* remain unaccounted for.

The break-through came shortly after the conclusion of World War II through the successful reconstruction of *equi-*, **eci-* *fērus* (lit. 'wild horse' as the ultimate base, a commendable achievement of Joaquim da SILVEIRA⁽¹¹⁾ and one which deservedly received an exceptionally strong endorsement, not to say accolade, from a critic usually as morose as J. COROMINAS⁽¹²⁾, who also summarized and parenthetically assessed miscellaneous statements — in part helpful, in part misleading — made, over the past sixty years, by SANTOS AGERO, K. BALDINGER, M. COHEN, W. GIESE, L. SPITZER (at least twice, the second time in response to MENÉNDEZ PIDAL's elaboration), A. STEIGER, and several other investigators, not all of them drawn from the ranks of straight Romanists, as is shown by the participation of the Indianist G. FRIEDERICI in this debate⁽¹³⁾; I have no quarrel with the Barcelona critic on this score. The acceptance of *eq(u)ifērus*, among other advantages, enables us to dispense henceforth with *zēphȳrus* and other untenable rival suppositions, championed by less prestigious and less well-informed advocates⁽¹⁴⁾, and

(11) «Estudos sobre o vocabulário português: *zevro*, *zebra*», *RPF*, II (1948), 200-247, with mention of writings by Fray Martín Sarmiento, J. J. Nunes, P. Merêa, J. Leite de Vasconcelos, M. Rodrigues Lapa, and D. Alonso (among others).

(12) As early as Vol. 1 of that scholar's *Diccionario critico-etimológico de la lengua castellana* (Madrid & Bern [1954]), pp. 744a-745b, with the first set of additions and elaborations in the Supplement relegated to Vol. 4 (1957), p. 963b. Corominas profited enormously from the writings of his predecessors, especially Castro, Spitzer, and Menéndez Pidal, and added a slew of data newly ferreted out; but his organization of the lengthy entry, conceivably as a result of haste, was so loose that the reader still recognizes, underneath the veneer, the older version, in which the author concurred with Menéndez Pidal's verdict, alongside the re-orientation toward the radically different view of Joaquim da Silveira, whose name, embarrassingly, appears with two spelling errors.

It is bizarre that, after adopting practically unqualified and intact J. da Silveira's hypothesis in his own *Breve diccionario etimológico de la lengua castellana* (Madrid, 1961), p. 138b, Corominas should still refer to the problem as an unsolved enigma («origen incierto»).

(13) Santos Agero had the misfortune of attacking the problem by the narrowest of margins before Silveira; see his slender pamphlet, *Zebro 'onagro'*; una contribución al estudio de los representantes románicos de *sēparāre* y una tentativa etimológica acerca del nombre hispánico del onagre (Madrid, 1947). This conjecture (which actually operates with the attested var. *sēperāre*) was briefly accepted by M. Alvar (1951), but shrugged off by J. Corominas and subjected to painstaking criticism in K. Baldinger's formal review, a «Kabinettstück» of critical scholarship; see *ZRPh*, LXXI (1955), 314-8.

(14) J. da Silveira's interpretation has been accepted almost universally: in a formal review of his «Estudos sobre o vocabulário português, II» by W. Giese, in *ZRPh*, LXVIII (1952), 167-8; by V. García de Diego, *Diccionario etimológico español e hispánico* (Madrid, [1957]), p. 157a and § 2240b, with inconsistent starring of the etymon (actually, the form is attested by Pliny);

to disregard the Old French hapax legomenon *azoivre*, an exhibit dragged in rather pointlessly by SPITZER, later downgraded by COROMINAS.

While the etymological controversy was in full swing, it was, within the far-flung word-family of *a-*, *e(n)-zebra*, especially the adjectival offshoot in *-uno* that was subjected to close scrutiny in the framework of two successive suffix studies, mutually complementary (15).

II

Years, perhaps decades, before an unhurried Américo CASTRO bethought himself of breathing life into this elusive word biography — a patch of ground which, so he could legitimately assume, had been lying fallow for centuries — a scholar of great versatility and of the highest intellectual distinction, namely Carolina Michaëlis de VASCONCELOS, had also been at work, on and off, on a lexical vignette devoted to the same enigmatic word. From the pathetically fragmentary information available to us at this prohibitive distance from the events, we cannot possibly determine whether her manuscript (or, at least, an accurate, unabridged copy thereof), reported to have run to 13 crowded sheets, is at all extant and, if such is the case, whether it has survived somewhere in Portugal (in the Coimbra University Library? as a family heirloom?) or in far-off Berlin, where it allegedly was in the hands of a private party as late as 1925 (which is the date of her death). We do not know for sure whether the author, in addition to having marshaled copious evidence of the diversified uses of the signifier and of the animal so designated, actually supplied any etymological solution as the *raison d'être* of the inventory studiously compiled, although there is no doubt that the temptation to do so must have haunted her mind; and, most regrettable, we cannot even approximately date the final version.

by K. Baldinger (see *supra* and *infra*); and, on second thought, by Menéndez Pidal himself (in *RPF*, II, 234).

Baldinger's highly-concentrated piece derives some of its importance from the fact that he reports not only proposals of new solutions but also endorsements of earlier guesses. The reader thus learns how late (C. de Figueiredo; 1936 edn. of the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy) F. Diez's conjecture found supporters (a Germanic base, recognizable in mod. G. *Un-geziefer*); who opted for the extraction of *zebra* from an indigenous African language (Götze's revision of Kluge's dictionary, 1951, 1953); who was willing to espouse Menéndez Pidal's ill-fated hypothesis (Wartburg, hesitatingly, in 1950; A. Prati, 1951); etc.

(15) Y. Malkiel, «The Latin background of the Spanish suffix *-uno*: Studies in the genesis of a Romance formative», *RPh*, IV:1 (1950), 17-45; Id., «Nuevas aportaciones para el estudio del sufijo *-uno*», *NRFH*, XIII (1959[-60]), 241-90, plus the critique of the latter piece by H.L.A. van Wijk, *Lingua*, XVI (1966), 332-4. The sections on *ceb(o)runo ... cerbuno* invite a revision.

let alone the preceding draft(s) which she must have destroyed at once, although we may take it for granted that she invested an extended period of time in the fact-finding inquiry. Judging from a single passage that has been salvaged (see *infra*), this piece, which might have formed a *pendant* to D. Carolina's celebrated monograph on *a saudade portuguesa*, was worded in her native German, a circumstance which independently militates in favor of fairly early dating. We are free to speculate that she was not entirely satisfied with the results of her own dissection of the abundant material she had sedulously assembled over the years, because no persuasive, defensible etymology had occurred to her, and that these residual doubts prevented her from offering this particular study, its wealth of documentation notwithstanding, for publication in a learned journal as was her wont — unlike her usual *modus operandi*, to be sure, not hasty but, at least, free from idle inhibitions.

Fortunately, rather than discarding this doomed piece she showed it, no doubt in a deprecating mood, to a friend and junior visitor from Germany, Ernst GOLDBECK, the son of D. Carolina's former favorite high school teacher credited with having, in the first place, discovered her talent and guided her opening gambits as a researcher. (Already on her way to Oporto in 1875-76, as a newly-married young woman, she had gleefully dedicated to that inspired and inspiring teacher and tutor her first major book, *Studien zur romanischen Wortschöpfung*.) In Spring 1879, less than four years after Karoline's, or Carolina's, transfer from Berlin to northern Portugal, young Ernst, as a prelude to his freshman experience at Berlin University (admittedly, he was barely 18 years old at that pivotal turning point), paid his father's former intellectual protégée and her art-oriented husband a two-month visit, as a house guest, with the enthusiastic consent of his parents. This pilgrimage of the young Berliner to Oporto (and its environs) appears to have deeply impressed both partners, sharpening his memory for details of what he saw, heard, and understood, despite the marked difference in age. Carolina and Ernst were to remain «pen pals» for almost a half-century.

Forty-six years later, shortly after Carolina Michaëlis de VASCONCELOS' death (16), Ernst GOLDBECK — by then a *Gymnasialprofessor* of Greek and Latin in Berlin approaching retirement (17), published, in a German feminist monthly of severely limited circulation in philological circles (18), a brilliant and substantial necrological

(16) On C. Michaëlis de Vasconcelos' life, in general, and intellectual growth qua historical linguist, in particular, see my contribution, supported by a lengthy bibliography, to the forthcoming miscellany, edited by Jane H. Hill: *Distinguished Women in Twentieth-Century Linguistics*.

(17) I owe information on this detail to the courtesy of Professor Henry Kahane (Urbana) who, as a teenager in the distant past (ca. 1920), happens to have been Goldbeck's direct pupil in Berlin.

(18) The 1926 volume of *Die Frau* contained, in addition to Goldbeck's piece, parallel evocations of C. M. de V. by the editor-in-chief, Helene Lange, and by the well-known *lusófila*

essay based in large part on his vivid recollections of the 1879 visit to Oporto (19); in my estimate, by far the most penetrating of the many pieces dedicated to that goal (20). Toward the end of that two-part essay, he reminisces about the unpublished monograph on the zebra, which the author apparently had authorized him to take with him on his return trip to Berlin (or had shortly thereafter mailed to his Berlin address), permitting either him or, more plausibly, his more experienced father to extract just the aroma of it for publication (under GOLDBECK's name?) of an entertaining, light-winged article, a sort of *feuilleton* shorn of any display of heavy erudition, in a local daily newspaper not further identified; it might well have been the *Vossische Zeitung* (21). I understand that the article rewritten in a popular vein, in the end, made its appearance and that GOLDBECK, in nostalgic retrospect, was less than proud of his achievement. It certainly made no splash, so that A. CASTRO, in 1928, and later L. SPITZER and R. MENÉNDEZ PIDAL must not be blamed for having remained ignorant of it (and, above all, of the data-saturated unpublished original monograph by D. Carolina, behind it). When CASTRO's learned note, which did produce a splash, made its appearance, Carolina Michaëlis de VASCONCELOS had been dead for three years.

Even though today's reader of the above-mentioned sparkling obituary essay learns practically nothing about the elusive (possibly mediocre) surrogate article, he is offered an adequate, if brief, description and digest of Carolina's original monograph which in 1925, I repeat, turned out to be still in Berlin, spread out on Ernst's desk. What GOLDBECK Jr. himself reports and what one can read between the lines jointly suffice to give one, *grosso modo*, an idea of what the original author had succeeded in clarifying and what remained to be accomplished along that line. In light of these insights, it would almost seem that A. CASTRO, blissfully ignorant of having had a talented predecessor, by and large repeated, or reënacted, her exploration of 35 years before. Characteristically (though with a brief apology to this

from Blankenese (near Hamburg), Luise Ey. This unusual degree of posthumous attention is due, in part, to the circumstance that Carolina and Helene had been close friends in Berlin in the early 1870's, before the former's marriage and departure for Oporto; for details see Helene's memoirs: *Lebenserinnerungen* (Berlin, 1921).

(19) See «Karoline Michaëlis de Vasconcellos: ein Bild aus ferner Jugendzeit», pp. 204-13, 268-76, at 275.

(20) Specifically, it surpasses by a wide margin, as regards plasticity of portrayal and finesse of psychology («Einfühlung»), W. Meyer-Lübke's item («Carolina Michaëlis und die romanische Sprachwissenschaft») published in *Lusitania*, IV (1927), 7-15, and other invitational pieces contributed to that volume.

(21) Failing to bear, as it does, C. Michaëlis de Vasconcelos' signature, this piece, of ephemeral value, was absorbed neither into J. Leite de Vasconcelos', nor into G. Moldenhauer's, bibliography of D. Carolina's writings (of the years 1912 and 1933, respectively).

effect), he had no qualms about publishing his annotated dossier even in the absence of any sensational etymological break-through.

Although visibly unfamiliar with the paleontological background of *onager* (or *equiferus*) in European Antiquity, the author vaguely sensed a tenuous connection between modern South Africa's *zebra*, the striped horse, and medieval Southwest Europe's *a-*, *e(n)-zebro*, *-a* (plus variants and derivatives). Apparently, if we can trust an aging GOLDBECK's fuzzy recollections and impressions, she drew from this hunch the — by present-day standards, unwarranted — conclusion, or suspicion, that the zebra (or, at least, its ancestor or close cognate?) must once have inhabited sections of Europe, including the Iberian peninsula. More original, one gathers, was her surmise, eventually confirmed through A. CASTRO's spadework, and undoubtedly based on ample textual evidence (GOLDBECK hints at extra-heavy documentation), to the effect that the *e(n)-zebra* had served Moor and Christian alike as an intermittently domesticated, but temperamentally still wild, animal, on a par with, and in the company of, either the horse and the mule (why not also *asinus*, the donkey?), because it lent services as a mount; or cattle, goats, sheep, and quarry (*venado*) as a purveyor of venison, to the extent that, after its slaughtering, it provided good meat and solid leather.

Judging from the abstract here still further condensed and translated, this small-scale monograph — the length of a medium-sized journal article — was stronger on the side of exhaustive documentation, perhaps (but not demonstrably) especially so from Old Galician-Portuguese sources not always easily accessible, than on the side of straight etymological analysis, and derived considerable charm from being interspersed with witty formulations and sharply-pointed side remarks in the author's (I repeat) native German, over which she had truly artistic command (22). Despite these fireworks, she was — rightly — convinced of serious gaps in her dossier and, conceivably, also in her reconstruction and thus, all told, acted judiciously in deciding against immediate publication, via some learned medium, of the piece in its entirety, a step which might have been, to say the least, premature. If my conjectural dating (c. 1878-79) is felicitous, this was apt to have been her first etymological venture engaged in after her transfer to Oporto, where the sources of information, particularly on older Spanish usage, must have flown parsimoniously.

(22) The following passage, set off by quotation marks in Goldbeck's brief summation, is apt to convey an inkling of her style: «... daß der von der grauen Schwester Theorie ausschließlic nach Südafrika verwiesene *equus tigris* Jahrhunderte lang — nachweislich bis ins 14. Jh. und traditionell noch viel länger auf der pyrenäischen Halbinsel — als Haustier gelebt, mit Pferd und Maultier einerseits und andererseits mit Rind, Kleinvieh und Wild rivalisiert, d.h. Christen und Mauren lebend als Reittier gedient und sie nach dem Tode mit gutem Fleisch und derbem Leder versorgt hat». This specimen reminds one of Carolina's spontaneous style ca. 1875-1880.

It would then be unrealistic to assume that D. Carolina, assailed by gnawing doubts over a century ago, came close in her gropings to the elegant solution which Joaquim da SILVEIRA was privileged to advocate in 1948. On the other hand, it would be grossly unfair to question her intuition and *élan*, which prompted her to construct, presumably for the first time ever, a sort of fragile bridge linking the exotic modern-day *zebra* with medieval Europe's gregarious *a-, e(n)-zebra*. Bracketing Carolina Michaëlis de VASCONCELOS' pioneering role, decades ahead of A. CASTRO, in, at least, recognizing the actual contour of a deceptively simple problem with Joaquim da SILVEIRA's stroke of luck in winning out against an opponent as formidably erudite as MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, one can truly speak, in this adventuresome case history, of a philological Aljubarrota.