



"FONS CURARUM, FLUVIUS LACHRYMARUM:" THREE VARIATIONS  
 UPON A PETRARCHAN THEME  
 (CHRISTINE DE PISAN, FERNANDO DE ROJAS AND FRAY LUIS DE GRANADA)

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The passage in which Pleberio gives vent to his feelings about the hostile and treacherous nature of the world in Act XXI of *Celestina* has more than once been compared with its Petrarchan source in *De rebus familiaribus*.<sup>1</sup> Petrarch's letter contains well over one hundred phrases, but Rojas selected Pleberio's utterances from among the first three dozen of these:<sup>2</sup>

Videtur mihi uita haec dura quaedam	
arca laborum: palaestra discriminum:	
scoena fallaciarum: labyrinthus	
errorum: circulatorum ludus: desertum	me pareces vn laberinto de
horribile: limosa palus: senticulosa	errores,vn desierto espantable,
regio: uallis hispida: mons praeruptus:	vna morada de fieras, juego de
caligantes speluncae: habitatio	hombres que andan en corro,
ferarum: terra infoelix: campus	laguna llena de cieno, region
lapidosus: uepricosum nemus:	llena de espinas, monte alto,
pratium herbidum plenumque	campo pedregoso, prado lleno
serpentibus: florens hortus ac	de serpientes, huerto florido
sterilis: fons curarum: fluuius	y sin fruto, fuente de cuydados,
lachrymarum: mare miseriarum:	rio de lagrimas,mar de miserias,
quies anxia: labor inefficax:	trabajo sin provecho,
conatus irritus: grata phrenesis:	dulce ponçoña, vana esperança,
pondus infaustum: dulce uirus:	falsa alegria, verdadero dolor.
degener metus: inconsulta	
securitas: uana spes: ficta	
fabula: falsa laetitia: uerus	
dolor: risus inconditus:	
fletus inutilis...	

A study of the adaptations made by Rojas is in itself interesting; but its interest is much enhanced by taking into account two other works of literature which show the influence of this Petrarchan vision of the world: a

*rondeau* by Christine de Pisan<sup>3</sup> and the *Guia de pecadores* of Fray Luis de Granada.<sup>4</sup> The handling of the Petrarchan material by these two authors throws some light upon Rojas' use of his source, and emphasises his sensitive treatment of borrowed ideas.

The *rondeau* by Christine de Pisan contains the briefest of all the borrowings from Petrarch to be examined here, consisting of a single image:<sup>5</sup>

Source de plour, riviere de tristesse,  
Flun de doulour, mer d'amertume plaine  
M'avironnent, et noient en grant peine  
Mon povre cuer qui trop sent de destresce.

Si m'affondent el plungent en asprece;  
car parmy moy queurent plus fort que Saine  
Source de plour, riviere de tristesse.  
Et leurs grans flos chéent à grant largece,  
Si com le vent de Fortune les maine,  
Tous dessus moy, dont si bas suis qu'à peine  
Releveray, tant durement m'opresse  
Source de plour, riviere de tristesse.

Christine's first two lines instantly bring to mind Petrarch's "fons curarum, fluuius lachrymarum, mare miseriarum"; her reworking, as is perhaps inevitable in a poetic rendering, is relatively free. Petrarch's triple progression *fons-fluuius-mare* becomes a quadruple sequence, with *fluuius* replaced by both *riviere* and *flun*; Christine thus preserves the increasing size of the aquatic elements whilst drawing the image out by one intermediate stage and still ending with the sea. However, the emotional states associated with each stage of the progression are different from those in Petrarch. Christine's first element of grief is *plour*, corresponding to Petrarch's second, *lachrymarum*; *curarum* and *miseriarum* find at best approximate equivalents in *tristesse* and *doulour*, while *amertume* is original to Christine. To some extent Petrarch's gradual crescendo of emotional states is disturbed by the transposition of *plour* to first place, though the other three elements in Christine do constitute a possible progression of intensity culminating in *amertume*. It is also noteworthy that the concrete terms of the Petrarchan passage, which described emotional states by implication through reference to plural external factors (cares, miseries) have been replaced, in Christine's version, by singular abstract nouns (sadness, grief, bitterness) describing internal emotional states. This, of course, accords well with the shift from the philosophical reflections of Petrarch's world picture to the purely personal grief being described by Christine. Nonetheless, her sympathy with the Petrarchan imagery was clearly strong, for her poem is basically a gloss upon the concepts which occupy its opening lines, and these also provide the refrain.

By comparison with this free treatment of Petrarch, Rojas' handling of the same image is quite conservative; he preserves both the progressive increase in the size of the watercourse and the emotional crescendo in a faithful rendering of Petrarch's Latin: "Fuente de cuydados, rio de

lagrimas, mar de miserias". This contrasts markedly with his treatment of other parts of the Petrarchan passage, in borrowing from which he was extremely selective. It also contrasts with the situation encountered in Fray Luis de Granada:

Pues según esto, qué otra cosa es este mundo, sino (como dijo un Filósofo) un arca de trabajos, una escuela de vanidades, una plaza de engaños, un labirinto de errores, una cárcel de tinieblas, un camino de salteadores, una laguna cenagosa, y un mar de continuos movimientos? ¿Qué es este mundo sino tierra estéril, campo pedregoso, bosque lleno de espinas, prado verde, y lleno de serpientes, jardín florido, y sin fruto, río de lágrimas, fuente de cuidados, dulce ponzoña, fábula compuesta, y frenesí delectable? ¿Qué bienes hay en él, que no sean falsos, y qué males, que no sean verdaderos? Su sosiego es congojoso, su seguridad sin fundamento, su miedo sin causa, sus trabajos sin fruto, sus lágrimas sin propósito, sus propósitos sin suceso, su esperanza vana, su alegría fingida, y su dolor verdadero.

It will be noted that Fray Luis omits *mare miseriarum* altogether, and that he reverses the order of the other two phrases to read "río de lagrimas, fuente de cuidados", thereby destroying both the physical and the emotional progression of the original. His handling of the image is little short of inept when compared with that of Rojas and Christine de Pisan. Even Christine's rendering, however, can be criticised for diluting Petrarch's compact and intense imagery by the addition of an intermediate stage. Petrarch describes three quite distinct phenomena: spring, river, and sea, each with its own characteristics; Christine adds another element which is little different from the next except in size. Though effective in its own terms in the context of her poem, it does not have the grandeur of the Petrarchan model. Only Rojas retains this in his literal rendering.

A comparison of the treatment of the passage as a whole in Rojas and in Fray Luis is illuminating in other respects. Luis de Granada clearly did not base his version upon that in the last act of *Celestina*, since he lists the three elements at the beginning which are omitted by Rojas, and since his text also includes other phrases drawn from the later part of Petrarch's letter from which Rojas made no borrowings. Thus Petrarch's *foedus carcer* becomes "cárcel de tinieblas" in Fray Luis, and his *procellosum pelagus* may have given rise to the latter's "mar de continuos movimientos"; while "sus lágrimas sin propósito" in the *Guía de pecadores* may derive from Petrarch's *fletus inutilis*, which is two phrases further into the text of the letter than the final phrase taken up by Rojas.<sup>6</sup> Fray Luis is far freer in his handling of the original than is Rojas. The latter retains the Petrarchan structure of a simple list, while Fray Luis turns the text into a succession of three rhetorical questions two of which contain a list, and then furnishes a final statement. His third rhetorical question ("¿Qué bienes hay en él, que no sean falsos, y qué males, que no sean verdaderos?") seems not to derive from Petrarch at all, though there would be a possible model for its basic opposition in Petrarch's *falsa laetitia, verus dolor*, which both Fray Luis and Rojas adopted in its entirety. Fray Luis is also far less faithful than Rojas

to the order of the original. Neither author adheres exactly to the order of Petrarch's phrases; but whereas Rojas appears to have begun his list and worked selectively through the first dozen phrases in his source, retaining only three before returning to the material which he had passed over and taking up a further four of the first dozen phrases before continuing his rather selective course through the remainder of the first thirty-two of Petrarch's phrases,<sup>7</sup> taking his remaining borrowings in the order in which they appeared in the original, it would appear that Fray Luis is far more random in his arrangement of the material he borrowed. His first rhetorical question is composed of elements drawn from the beginning and middle of Petrarch's letter; the second is made up of material taken largely in its original order from the second dozen phrases in Petrarch, but ending with three phrases in a different order from that of the original; and his final statement is a jumbled selection of material derived from the third dozen or so phrases in Petrarch's list. Nonetheless, in general terms both Rojas and Fray Luis retain the most noticeable feature of Petrarch's letter: the shift from phrases descriptive of the harsh and hostile nature of the world in the opening lines to those which express its misery and treachery through opposition and oxymoron.

Luis de Granada's rendering of Petrarch is thus marked by structural innovation, and the addition of material not found in the original. It could be argued that his adaptations have turned Petrarch's forceful accumulation of negative images into a neatly rhetorical tour-de-force, but have destroyed much of the impact of the original. Rojas, on the other hand, has produced a compact and economical rendering, with fewer borrowings than Fray Luis, and which is, in most cases at least, extremely faithful to the literal form of the Latin. Some aspects of Rojas' version can, of course, be criticised. In particular, "prado lleno de serpientes" seems to have weakened Petrarch's image by omitting *herbidum* and thereby destroying the structural parallel with the following image, "huerto florido y sin fruto". Here the advantage lies with Fray Luis, for once, with his more faithful "prado verde, y lleno de serpientes". On the other hand, Rojas has undoubtedly strengthened the effect of his images in "laguna llena de cieno, region llena de espinas" by the creation of a neat parallelism and the emphatic value of the "llena" absent from Petrarch. Similarly, there can be no doubt that in his treatment of the progressive image *fons curarum, fluvius lachrymarum, mare miseriarum*, Rojas has, by preserving the exact form of the Petrarchan phrases, produced a more effective version than either of the other two examined here.<sup>8</sup>



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> F. Castro Guisasola, *Observaciones sobre las fuentes literarias de 'La Celestina'* (RFE Anejo V, Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1924; rpt., Madrid: CSIC, 1973), p. 130; A.D. Deyermond, *The Petrarchan Sources of 'La Celestina'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961; rpt., Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Petrarch is cited from the 1496 Basel edition: *Librorum Francisci Petrarcae Basileae Impressorum Annotatio...* (Basileae, Ioannem de Amerbach, 1496), sig. K6r (letter 122); the copy used was British Library, 86. R.13 (there is another copy in the British Library, IB 37389). *Celestinesca* is cited from the edition by Manuel Criado de Val and G.D. Trotter (Madrid: CSIC, 3rd ed., 1970), p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Varty (ed.), *Christine de Pisan's Ballades, Rondeaux and Virelais: An Anthology* (Leicester: University Press, 1965), p. 90, no. 88 (rondeau LXII).

<sup>4</sup> *Guia de pecadores, en la qual se contiene una larga, y copiosa exhortacion a la virtud, y guarda de los divinos mandamientos* (Madrid: Manuel Martin, 1768), p. 392b-393a (I, xxix, 7). There is also an edition by Justo Cuervo (Valladolid: Imprenta de Andrés Martín, 1901), I, p. 322. The passage is cited, though without relating it to Petrarch, by Rebecca Switzer, *The Ciceronian Style in Fr. Luis de Granada* (New York: Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos, 1927), p. 44, where it is used as an example of "Accumulation". Alicia de Colombí, "Las visiones de Petrarca en el Barroco español (II): en la huella de Fray Luis", *NRFH*, 29 (1980), 151-164, deals with Fray Luis de León, and has nothing on Fray Luis de Granada.

<sup>5</sup> The similarity of this image to that in Petrarch, together with the association of progressively larger expanses of water with states of emotion, suggests that Christine may well have known the work of the Italian humanist, who died two decades before her literary output began. Christine shows a knowledge of other Italian authors including Dante (see A. Farinelli, "Dante nell'opere di Christine de Pisan", in *Aus romanischen Sprachen und Literaturen: Festschrift Heinrich Morf* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1905), pp. 117-152, and Yvonne Batard, "Dante et Christine de Pisan (1364-1430)", in *Missions et démarches de la critique: mélanges offerts au Professeur J.A. Vier* (Publications de l'Université de Haute-Bretagne; Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1973), pp. 345-51. See also Suzanne Solente (ed.), *Le livre de la mutacion de Fortune par Christine de Pisan* (SATF, Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1959), I, xxx-xcviii; for Dante and other Italian sources, see especially pp. xlv-1) and Boccaccio (see A. Jeanroy, "Boccace et Christine de Pisan: le *De claris mulieribus* principale source du *Livre de la cité des dames*", *Romania*, 48 [1922], pp. 93-105). Christine does not, however, appear to mention Petrarch by name. Nonetheless, that she was aware of him is suggested, though without any specific textual support, by Marie-Josèphe Pinet, *Christine de Pisan, 1364-1430: étude biographique et littéraire* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1927), p. 396; and a possible reminiscence of the Petrarchan passage from the *De remediis* which was later to be used

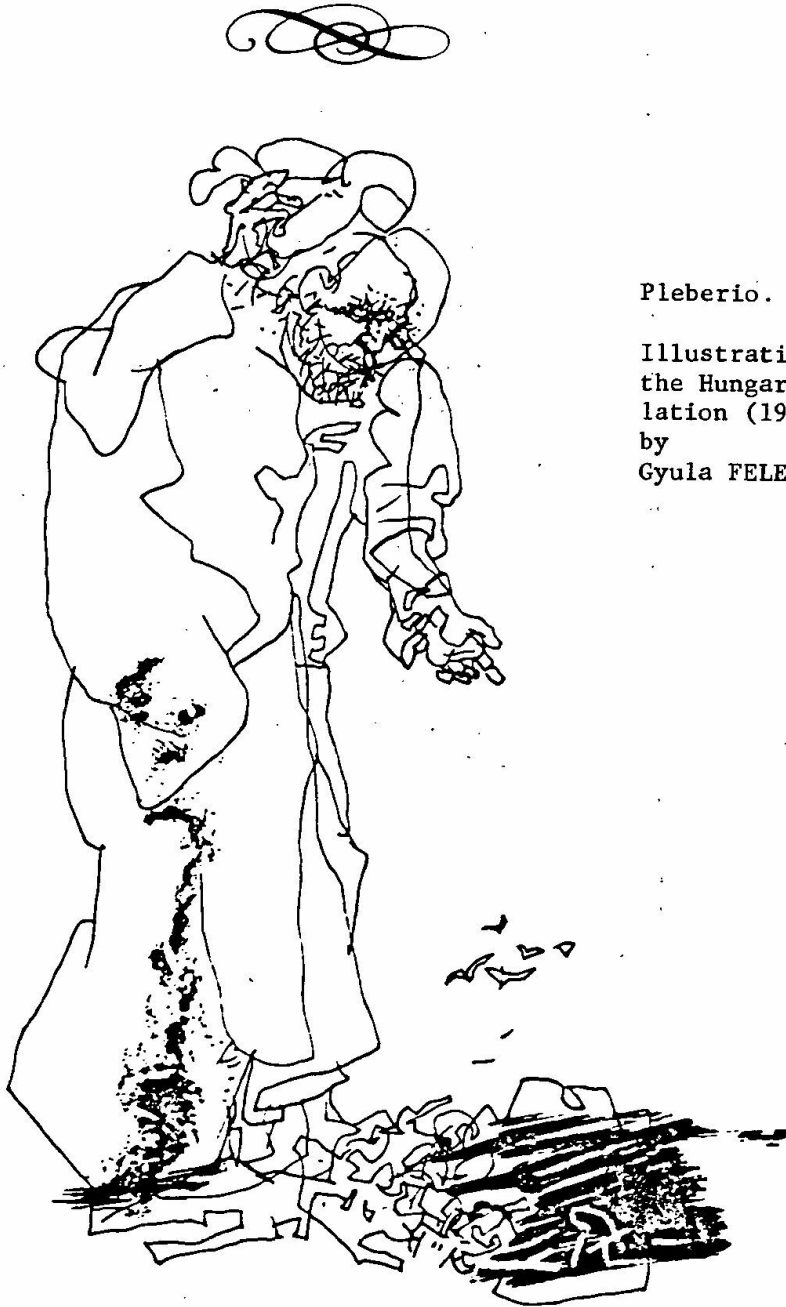
by Rojas in the prologue to *Celestina* may be found in Christine's "dessoubz le ciel tout maine guerre" (farinelli, *art. cit.*, p. 133), though it must be pointed out that the sentiment is ultimately drawn from Heraclitus. Although proven Petrarchan material is thus sparse in Christine, it would not be surprising if she had known his works. The *De remediis* had been translated into French in 1378 by one Jean Daudin at the invitation of Charles V (France Simone, "Note sulla fortuna del Petrarca in Francia nella prima metà del Cinquecento", *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, 127 (1950), 1-59, at pp. 13-14). Petrarch's Latin translation of Boccaccio's *Griselda* from the *Decameron* was itself translated into French by Philippe de Mézières between 1384 and 1389 (Elie Golenistcheff-Koutousoff, *L'histoire de Griseldis en France au XIV<sup>e</sup> et au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Droz, 1933), pp. 17-53); this was sufficiently well-known to be the basis of a dramatic adaptation by 1395 (Golenistcheff-Koutousoff, pp. 118-124), while towards the end of the fourteenth century there also appeared a Latin poem by Pierre de Hailles based upon Petrarch's translation (*idem*, pp. 115-118). It has, indeed, been suggested that Christine de Pisan herself made use of the translation by Philippe de Mézières in her *Livre de la cité des dames* (A. Jeanroy, *art. cit.*, p. 99; Golenistcheff-Koutousoff, pp. 126-130). Petrarchan elements have been traced in various French literary figures of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, including Gontier Col, Jean de Montreuil, Nicolas de Clamanges (or Clémanges) and others (see Ezio Ornato, "La prima fortuna del Petrarca in Francia", *Studi Francesi*, 5 (1961), pp. 201-17 and 401-414; Alfred Coville, *Gontier et Pierre Col et l'humanisme en France au temps de Charles VI* (Paris: Droz, 1934), pp. 146-148). It would be surprising if Christine, in view of her Italian origin and her court patronage, were untouched by contemporary interest in Petrarch in her adopted country.

<sup>6</sup> Although this use of material not found in Rojas' version proves that Fray Luis did not use the *Celestina* rendering of this passage from Petrarch, there are nonetheless some curious coincidences between his version and that of Rojas. For instance, both Spanish texts omit *ficta fabula* between *vana spes* and *falsa laetitia*, and have as their last three phrases "vana esperanza, falsa alegría, verdadero dolor" (Rojas) and "su esperanza vana, su alegría fingida, y su dolor verdadero" (Fray Luis). It is interesting that both should end in this way at this point, when Petrarch's letter continued with scores more phrases. There is also the presence in Fray Luis' version of an image, "camino de salteadores", for which the nearest equivalent in Petrarch appears to be *caminus irarum*. If this is indeed the phrase Fray Luis was following at this point, there is perhaps added interest in the resemblance between his version and Pleberio's words "como caminante pobre; que sin temor de los crueles salteadores va cantando en alta voz" (Act XXI). This image, according to Castro Guisasola (*Fuentes literarias*, p. 48), is derived from Juvenal, but also occurs in Petrarch's *Invective contra medicum* (Basel, 1496, sig. aa3; ed. Pier Giorgio Ricci, Francesco Petrarca, *Invective contra medicum* [Storia e Letteratura: raccolta di studi e testi, 32; Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1950], p. 27). It is also curious that whilst Petrarch's images are applied to life (*vita*), both Spanish versions speak of *mundo*.

CELESTINESCA

<sup>7</sup> Rojas retains only eighteen of the first thirty-two phrases in Petrarch's letter (though Deyermond, *Petrarchan Sources*, p. 73, mentions thirty-four); Fray Luis has twenty-seven phrases (excluding the sentence beginning "¿Qué bienes hay en el...") drawn from a longer section of the Petrarchan passage.

<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to Professor A. D. Deyermond for his kindness in commenting on an early draft of this note.



Pleberio.

Illustration to  
the Hungarian trans-  
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