

CELESTINESCA

John S. Miletich, ed. HISPANIC STUDIES IN HONOR OF ALAN D. DEYERMOND: A NORTH AMERICAN TRIBUTE (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1986).

Alan D. Deyermond's professional generosity and influential contributions to the field of medieval Hispanic studies have prompted his North American colleagues to honor him with a collaborative volume of twenty-two articles on the literature of medieval and Golden Age Spain. Contributions were solicited from mid-career scholars who had benefitted directly from Deyermond's advice and encouragement, and their esteem and appreciation can be gauged by the consistently high quality of their work. The scope of the articles is impressive, and the majority of them will undoubtedly have an appreciable impact on the topics they treat. Although an adequate review of the volume would require an individual with the breadth of knowledge of Deyermond himself, the following general observations may be useful to future readers.

Several contributions are noteworthy for their insight and clarity of presentation. In a perceptive reading of Berceo's Sacrificio de la Misa, Gregory Peter Andrachuk sets the work against a European background of heretical movements and mendicant orders, arguing that it was written in order to instruct priests in the ceremony and symbolism of the liturgy and thereby combat the decline in clerical literacy and the concomitant threat of heterodoxy. An equally enlightening study of Berceo's literary sophistication is John K. Walsh's examination of the genesis of the Vida de Santa Oria, whose transcendental character, he shows, owes more to Berceo's adaptation of medieval transmundane visions (especially Túngalo) than to Munio's hypothetical Latin vita.

Three studies of later medieval texts similarly approach the questions of authorial motivation and intent through an analysis of source adaptation. Derek C. Carr compares the proemio of Fernán Pérez de Guzmán's Generaciones y semblanzas with Enrique de Villena's Castilian translation of the Aeneid and argues that Pérez de Guzmán knew and exploited the latter work and that the Generaciones convey both an opposing view of historiography and a veiled criticism of Villena's letrado attitudes. Employing a more generalized comparative methodology, José Luis Coy shows that the first part of the Rimado de palacio (stanzas 1-704) is based on the confessor's manual, though one section of the poem (stanzas 603-26) cannot be accommodated to this model. And highlighting the stylistic indebtedness of the Triunfo de las donas to the Filocolo, Olga Tudorica Impey demonstrates Juan

Rodríguez del Padrón's paradoxical respect for Boccaccio's literary genius and contempt for his anti-feminist morality.

Still other articles offer new critical perspectives on canonical texts or refocus long-debated issues. In an impressively-argued study, Steven D. Kirby shows that the serrana sequence of the Libro de Buen Amor can be seen as an intricate blend of folkloric, carnivalesque and pilgrimage motifs which are loosely structured around the liturgical calendar for 1329. A similarly rigorous methodology is employed in Daniel Eisenberg's review of Cervantes' income, in which he suggests that books were affordable and thus probable possessions. And in a study with far-reaching ramifications, E. Michael Gerli provides a learned discussion of the genre and themes of the Constable of Portugal's Sátira de infelice e felice vida, underscoring its potential importance in the development of late medieval courtly romance.

Other successful attempts at re-interpreting stale evidence include Jerry R. Craddock's incisive discussion of the origin of the Siete Partidas, in which he argues that the law code was originally divided into four parts which were re-organized on the fallibility of employing certain aesthetic criteria, chiefly image patterns, for distinguishing written and orally composed epic. Two Golden Age articles are also important: James F. Burke links the banquet scene in Alarcón's La verdad sospechosa to the Renaissance topos of the fall of man's reason into sensuality; and George A. Shipley argues that the verbal austerity of Part VI of Lazarillo de Tormes represents a deliberate attempt to disguise the pejorative connotations of being a water-carrier--an interpretation that reaffirms an ironic view of the novel.

The conclusions of other studies, though equally competent, may not command universal assent. Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux's examination of courtly love elements in the Islas Dotadas episode of the Libro del cavallero Zifar requires greater elaboration, as does the iconographical study of the miniatures in the Paris manuscript. And although Marilyn Olsen points to the mesura/cobdicia dichotomy as the ideological foundation of the Zifar, her supporting evidence is inconclusive (e.g., the rigid structural analysis is vitiated by the lack of a critical text). In a generally useful study of the Alhotba arrimada, B. Bussell Thompson occasionally adduces sources and analogues which are not always as clear as he maintains, and, regrettably, Harriet Goldberg fails to establish successful criteria for distinguishing popular proverbs in the cuaderna vía corpus. Moreover, although Eric W. Naylor proposes an ingenious (and likely) solution to problems surrounding the textual transmission of Pero López de Ayala's Castilian translation of Boccaccio's De casibus illustrium virorum (including the assertion that García de Santa María did not write the last section), his conclusions will need verification through further textual and stylistic analyses. Two final studies are of lesser value. Colbert I. Nepaulsingh's summary of his plans for a study of medieval Hispanic wisdom literature is schematic and lacks scholarly method, while Heanon M. Wilkins' survey of the dramatic character of the Milagros de Nuestra Señora could have added more to our appreciation of Berceo's narrative art.

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For readers of Celestinesca, three articles, of uneven merit, warrant particular attention. In a study of the anonymous Dutch translation of Celestina (first printed in 1550), Kathleen V. Kish offers a competent survey of the text's printing history and a short list of some of its sources (the 1545 Coci edition for the Spanish and probably Christof Wirsung's 1534 German translation). She focusses her attention on three points: (1) the privilege, whose appearance in this early edition makes it historically significant; (2) Pleberio's lament, which is altered to accommodate a Christian message of hope and to make Pleberio into an exemplum for other parents; and (3) the list of Celestina's wines (Act IX), which is expanded, not unexpectedly, to incorporate material more familiar to an audience in The Netherlands. Although the importance of the privilege seems overemphasized (by contrast, a more penetrating analysis of Pleberio's lament would have been welcome) and a significant study not accounted for (G. Behiels, "La primera traducción de la Celestina en los Países Bajos," Linguistica Antverpiensia, 16-17 (1982-83), 289-331), this article throws light on a topic unfamiliar to most Celestina students and demonstrates the potential usefulness of a complete edition of the work.

In a study of "narrativity" in Celestina, Jerry R. Rank discusses the work from a modern theoretical perspective, arguing for an essential difference between dialogue per se and dialogue with a narrative character. He maintains that the autobiographical stance of certain passages (particularly Celestina's addresses) foreshadows the novel of realism (e.g., Lazarillo), and he discusses, inter alia, character development through the manipulation of memory (favorably reviewing Severin), the significance of changes in grammatical tense, and the creation of a fictive world through referential devices such as enumerations. Some of Rank's points get lost amid the jargon of latter-day structuralist criticism (more than one reading may be necessary before the point is grasped), making the extraction of meaningful information frequently frustrating.

By far the most thought-provoking study of Rojas' work is that by Joseph T. Snow, who analyzes in detail the character of Claudina as a creation of Celestina's imagination. Snow shows how the image of Claudina becomes a tool in the bawd's struggle to manipulate Pármeno (Celestina proffers herself as a surrogate mother and through the deliberate distortion of memory controls Pármeno's perception of a loved one), and how, coupled with her greed, Celestina's underestimation of Pármeno's assertiveness and aggression contributes to her eventual downfall (like his mother, Pármeno has a violent temper, which erupts to take Celestina by surprise). Despite occasional overstatement (p. 274): "a masterstroke of the art of fine characterization") and a slightly unfocussed style, this essay manages to provide a thorough and sensitive exposition of a neglected aspect of Rojas' characterization, along with a large degree of insightful incidental comment.

The Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies has done a typically admirable production job, and John S. Miletich deserves generous praise for a scrupulously edited text (misprints are few and self-evident). Contributors, subscribers and publishers can be confident that this volume measures up to the high standards of scholarship and

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professionalism which Professor Deyermond maintains in his own work. Whether it, or any volume of its kind, can adequately express his friends' and colleagues' appreciation is another matter.

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Escena celestinesca. Engraving by
Master E. S. (worked ca. 1460)
German