



PREGONERO

"... contarte he maravillas ..."

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NEW CELESTINA MONOGRAPHS

Page-proofs have been read for Louise Fothergill-Payne's University of Cambridge Press (summer 1988) book, *Seneca and Celestina*. The author titles her volume thus so as to give equal prominence to the philosopher and the work that fictionalizes his message. We can eagerly await her analyses of how the *Comedia* focusses on Seneca's prose writings but incorporates more of the dramatic style into the interpolations and shape given to the *Tragicomedia*. There is a slightly different focus for the discussion of Act I and Seneca, since the author accepts the notion, widely-held, that Rojas is not responsible for it. One of the more original thrusts of this new approach deals with the realization that many modern critics would reject for *Celestina* a large role for Seneca, whose stern moralizing may be too unsympathetic to the human condition. Fothergill-Payne counters with a close study of just how Seneca was transmitted in the 15th century. I will quote briefly from an advanced typescript of the 'Foreward,' which the author kindly sent to me: "This study ... faces the double task of convincing the disbeliever that in the 15th century Seneca was considered to be the opposite of all the negative things he represents to many today and that *Celestina* is squarely rooted in a 15th-century Senecan tradition." This promises to be an important contribution to our increased understanding of the world of Fernando de Rojas: keep an eye out for it!

A second volume which may be slower in coming, but for which proof has been read is James R. Stamm's *La estructura de la 'Celestina'*. It is scheduled to appear from the University of Salamanca Press sometime in 1988.

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CELESTINA SPEAKS JAPANESE

A second translation into Japanese of the *Tragicomedia* has been completed and is being checked and revised and polished. The translator is Hajime Okamura of Kumamoto University of Commerce and he writes: "Ya está hecha mi traducción; la estoy repasando. Tendré que repasarla otra vez para hacerla más perfecta. Así que espero publicarla dentro de dos años."

There was a previous translation [no. 1075 in J. Snow's 1985 bibliography, *Celestina by Fernando de Rojas*] published in 1975 by Kyoto's Univ. of Doshisha and distributed by Hakuuisha (in Tokyo). The translation *Majo Celestina* [pronounced *mazho*] and meaning 'maga', the work of Tadashi Oshima, is out of print. I look ahead to adding such a rarity as Okamura's translation to the *Celestinesca* archivo: may it contain, too, some illustrations! Preferably by a Japanese artist, thus to enrich the iconographic history of the *Tragicomedia*.

CELESTINA SINGS IN FRENCH

Here, I simply transcribe from a concert programme sent along by Martyn Hitchcock of New Jersey, formerly of Athens, Georgia and designer of the "Celestinesca" used on the cover of this journal from vol. 4, no. 2 to vol. 9, no. 1 [the current design is by Erna Berndt-Kelly]. Jerome Rose was at the piano and Katherine Ciesinski, a mezzo-soprano, was singing.

"Katherine Ciesinski, the American mezzo-soprano, pursues a finely-integrated career, exploring the music of today's composers as well as the established classics of the lyric stage. This season [she] will appear in her first Wagnerian role ... [i]n March she will debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Nicklausse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, with Plácido Domingo, and in June she will create the title role in the world premiere of Maurice Ohana's *La Celestina* for the Paris Opera... ."

Celestinesca would appreciate receiving any information about or memorabilia from this production. Send c/o The Editor.

A VIDEO OF CELESTINA

Available now from many video outlets specializing in foreign films, but at a cost of near eighty dollars, is the 1979 Mexico film by Miguel Sabido, *La Celestina*. It is R-rated, and in Spanish [no sub-titles]. It runs about 90 minutes, is in full color and the sound is better-than-average. On the surface, it might seem that a relationship to the themes of the original is apparent; certainly all the sexual innuendo is developed

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(and then some!), and hints of a hellish collaboration between Celestina and the dark powers become an intrusive leit-motif, intercut 8-9 times during the film's action (to interpret the darker nature of the acts being performed?). A 'beata' appears briefly at major interstices of the action--like a shadow of morality looming over all the excess--and seems, at the close, to be pronouncing something like the restoration of moral order in the world, as she crosses herself in front of a gilded *retablo*, just as the screen credits begin to roll! For any reader of the *Tragicomedia*, this film will make little sense. It was shown recently at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference and some of the audience walked out: the constant harping on the sensual aspects of the story ultimately becomes tiresome and, especially when not well-acted and confusingly visualized, at cross-purposes with itself. For the well-heeled, it can be ordered from Tamarell's, 110 Cohasset Stage Road, Chico CA 95926. CAVEAT EMPTOR!

CELESTINA ON STAGE

I. In summer of 1987, Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival presented the 11th Festival Latino, directed by Oscar Ciccone and Cecilia Vega (August 1-23). Their aim since 1976 has been to get American audiences to savor and appreciate the high level of artistic achievement attained in Latin America, through the invitation to film and stage directors to come and exhibit their products. One of the great excitements of the 1987 edition, other than the celebrated Argentine actress Norma Aleandro's performance in Vargas Llosa's "La señorita de Tacna," was the return of Venezuela's Grupo Rajatabla, directed by Carlos Giménez, which showcased a version of the *Tragicomedia* of Fernando de Rojas. The interpretation is that of two Mexican authors, Miguel Sabido and Margarita Villaseñor (who were, not incidentally, also responsible for the 1979 film, *Celestina*, starring Ofelia Guilmain as Celestina).

It was given, in Spanish and--on two occasions--in simultaneous translation [English] as well, during the week of August 10-17. The program gave this as a thumbnail description: "When Celestina opens a peephole into hell, she disrupts the fine balance between good and evil in the universe. To restore order there must be sacrifice, and Calisto and Melibea become victims. In the ritual of sacrifice, music, dance, gesture, and word do not illustrate, but rather express mutable passions." This description might also serve for the 1979 film version, although the images there are not quite so clear as in this prose description of the stage version. In part, this is attributable to the fact that, here, the director, Carlos Giménez, made his own version from the adaptation. The action of the original is reduced now to two acts and one reviewer liked the "schizy blend of baroque pomp and soft-core porn" provided by the

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staging (of Rafael Reyeros) and the lighting (of David Blanco): it seemed appropriate for the mad excesses and liberties with which the actors, particularly Javier Zapata (Calisto) and Mariu Favata (Melibea), played out their brief lives. Celestina--and not for the first time--was played by a male actor, Alexander Milic. Sensuality and self-interest seem to rule in this universe; male-female attractions are lust; friendship and loyalty are mere tools of hypocritical manipulation, and everyone seems to be doing it. These include: Aníbal Grunn (Sempronio), Jorge Luis Morales (Pármeno), Ylia Popescu (Elicia), Ana Gato (Areúsa), and Lucrecia (José Tejera). Exception: the unfortunate Pleberio (both Cosme Núñez and Sergio Petrocelli).

This version, as noted by one of my correspondents, was very visual. The setting was conceived as rather oriental, and some characters were robed and wore burnoose-style headwear. Calisto and Melibea were occasionally transported on stage in sedan chairs. Many of the costumes were brown-toned and effectively set off by complementary lighting which bathed the set with burnished browns and golds. Tastefully integrated nudity (as to both the action and the style of the production) was used and included Calisto's receiving a sponge bath on stage. Melibea's breasts are bared in a parallel scene, with Lucrecia attending. A bird-like shadow figure flits around the stage, almost, as it were, as a figure of death or evil, perhaps a manifestation of the Devil himself.

To conclude this précis of the production with further word as to its imaginative design, I reproduce from the *Playbill* (August 1987, Vol. 87, no. 8), pp. 26-27, these statements of M. Sabido: "The corruption ... comes from the 'impersonations.' Calisto generates one kind of spiritual force perverting order by seeing Melibea as God. Melibea is the proud one. In the work, we descend from the highest moral stance ... down to [the lowest] the Celestina. The world is corrupted when people overstep their boundaries or when Celestina is simultaneously Melibea and Calisto. For Rojas the Devil exists and he is the avenger. He avenges but does not convince; Melibea redeems us. The bed is the battlefield. It is the moment when someone opens the doors to corruption that only sacrifice becomes capable of closing [them]. Melibea dies in order to restore order in the world... ."

II. The long-awaited and eagerly anticipated *Celestina* stage adaptation of Gonzalo TORRENTE BALLESTER is ready. It has been cast. Carmelo BERNAOLA has provided the music for the interludes. The talented Argentine Carlos CYTRYNOWSKI, has created sets, costumes and lighting. The founder of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico, Adolfo MARSILLACH, directs at Madrid's Teatro de la Comedia (Calle del Príncipe). Tickets went on sale April 11 in anticipation of the premiere on April 18. Most of the Madrid papers carried feature articles

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on April 15th heralding the play, and the monthly magazine of the Centro de Documentación Teatral, *El Público*, made the production the main story for its April issue, devoting the cover and pages 3-9 to it [generously illustrated with ten black and white photographs].

Initial critical reaction was favorable without being overly laudatory (*El País, Ya ...*): most of the kudos are directed at the "limpia" version Torrente has produced and at the vision of Marsillach, who himself declares that he has drawn a fine line in his direction: "Abordo el clasicismo con temor, con descaro y, a la vez, con muchísimo respeto" [*El País*, 15 abril, 1988, p. 16]. Most of the initial criticism seems to take to task some mis-castings: Juan Gea and Adriana Ozores have not generated much enthusiasm for their portrayals of the lovers, and some have liked Amparo Rivelles' presence as a less-than-demonic Celestina at the same time that others lament that she may be too refined an actress to find within herself the necessary baseness to support the swirl of carnal activity in her vicinity. We learn that Sempronio is featured in this adaptation and that he is made into a figure akin to the *gracioso*, here deftly played by Jesús Puente. El reparto incluye también a César Diéguez en Pármeno/Tristán, Resu Morales en Elicia, Pilar Barrera en Areúsa, y Enrique Navarro en Centurio (papel que se recupera en esta adaptación a la vez que se suprime el planto de Pleberio). Otros que figuran son: Antonio Carrasco (Tristán/Pármeno), Charo Soriano (Alisa), Blanca Apilánez (Lucrecia), Félix Cascales (Sosia), Vicente Gisbert (Pleberio), Joaquín Climent, Carlos Alberto Abad, y Carlos Moreno (Traso y rufianes), y Angel García Suárez (Crito).

III. We have one further production of *Celestina* waiting in the wings. When finally produced it will be a collaborative Anglo-American effort, staged and directed by PAMELA HOWARD (of London's Central School of Art & Design) from the new English-language adaptation of her American collaborator, ROBERT POTTER, of the University of California at Santa Barbara's Theatre Arts division. A first draft was completed and an informal reading took place to test its aural effects in September of 1987, with the collaboration of volunteers from among the members of the British Theatre Association. The aim is to prepare a true English-language "version", one that will overcome the theatre-going public's expectation of a Shakespearian, or Jonsonian-type play [it's likely first audiences would be in the U.K.].

The script follows, basically, the shorter 16-act *Comedia*, with assorted information from the longer *Tragicomedia* included. One noteworthy feature will be the deployment of a single trysting scene in Melibea's *huerta*. Information from the prologue materials is also designed for inclusion at various appropriate points in the structure of the new adaptation. Some incidental music is being introduced for crucial

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scenes and, in addition, the set will be designed to accommodate some projected visuals, as reminders of major themes and for emphases in select moments of the play's advancing action. As of this writing, no further information is available. I hope that in the Fall 1988 issue of *Celestinesca* greater detail can be provided.

CELESTINA EN LOS CONGRESOS

1. REGULA LANGBEHN, Univ. de Buenos Aires, "Calixto, el juez, y la cuestión de los conversos." II Jornadas Internacionales de Literatura Española Medieval, Buenos Aires, 20-22 agosto, 1987.
2. STEVEN D. KIRBY, Niagara Univ. (USA), "Observaciones pragmáticas sobre tres aspectos de la crítica celestinesca." II Jornadas Internacionales de Literatura Española Medieval, Buenos Aires, 20-22 agosto, 1987.

Recomienda que la crítica preste bastante menos atención a las cuestiones de la localización de la acción, de quién escribió cual parte y de la determinación de un exacto género para *Celestina*.

3. DAYLE SEIDENSPINNER-NUÑEZ, Univ. of California--Irvine, "Omnia Secundum Litem Fiunt": The Rhetoric of Conflict in *Celestina*." 21st Annual Conference, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, SUNY-Binghamton, Nueva York, USA), 16-18 octubre, 1987.
4. JANE MORRISON, Univ. of New South Wales, "Reader Response to *Celestina*, 1500-1987, or Subversive Feminism: Reading *LC* Through the Ages." XIV Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Sydney, Australia, Febrero (?), 1988.
5. JOSEPH T. SNOW, Univ. of Georgia, "Miguel Sabido's Film of *Celestina*: Updated Bawdy, or Boring Bodies?" Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, Lexington, Kentucky (USA), 21-23 abril, 1988.

Después de la presentación del video de la película, rodada en México en 1979, esta ponencia señaló cuán difícil es captar la textura de la obra de Rojas en ésta--y en otras muchas--presentaciones de nuestro siglo, sean cinematográficas o escenificadas.

6. F. J. PEÑAS-BERMEJO, Univ. of Georgia, "El progresivo desarrollo lingüístico de Melibea como resultado de su evolución psicológica." 41st Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, Lexington, Kentucky (USA) 21-23 abril, 1988.

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Melibea evoluciona psicológica y lingüísticamente a lo largo de su experiencia amorosa. La Melibea ingenua y sumisa del inicio de la obra se transforma en una joven experimentada en el amor, y rebelde contra los valores sociales de la época. Ambos aspectos van acompañados por un desarrollo progresivo de su competencia lingüística. Para la nueva Melibea, el lenguaje no será reflejo de convencionalismos sino vehículo de expresión de sentimientos auténticos. [FJB-P]

7. DOROTHY S. SEVERIN, Univ. of Liverpool, "Is Melibea a Tragic Heroine?," KFLC, Lexington, Kentucky, 21-23 abril, 1988.
8. SHIRLEY BRUTON, Duke Univ., "Pármeno's Search for Identity," KFLC, Lexington, Kentucky, 21-23 abril, 1988.

Un estudio psicológico de Pármeno que busca aclarar los estados anímicos por los que pasa Pármeno hasta llegar a ser (o darse cuenta de) quien es.

Los siguientes (9-20) fueron leídos como plenarias en Salamanca durante la celebración de la IX ACADEMIA LITERARIA RENACENTISTA, 10-12 de marzo de 1988. [Ver, pp. 65-68, el reportaje especial sobre este Simposio.]

9. CARMEN CODOÑER, Univ. de Salamanca, "El teatro humanístico en España" (el contorno de LC).
10. JOSEPH T. SNOW, Univ. de Georgia, "Estado actual de los estudios celestinescos" (incluía recomendaciones para el estudio futuro).
11. PEDRO CATEDRA, Univ. de Salamanca, "Amor y pedagogía en el trasfondo celestinesco."
12. PETER E. RUSSELL, Univ. de Oxford, "LC como 'floresta de philospos'."
13. EMILIO DE MIGUEL, Univ. de Salamanca, "Fernando de Rojas y el primer auto de la *Celestina*" (sobre la posible autoría de Rojas).
14. MICHELE FEO, Univ. de Pisa, "El nacimiento y renacimiento de lo cómico."
15. VICTOR GARCIA DE LA CONCHA, Univ. de Salamanca, "Calisto y Melibea: De la comedia humanística al teatro."
16. DOROTHY SEVERIN, Univ. de Liverpool, "Melibea, ¿heroína trágica?"
17. EUGENIO DE BUSTOS, Univ. de Salamanca, "El léxico de la *Celestina*."

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18. GONZALO TORRENTE BALLESTER, Real Academia Española, "Mi versión teatral de la *Celestina*" [V. t. la sección del PREGONERO, '*Celestina* en las tablas,' para más sobre esta adaptación].
19. ALAN DEYERMOND, Westfield Coll.- Univ. de Londres, "Fernando de Rojas de 1499 a 1502: ¿una doble conversión?"
20. FRANCISCO RICO, Univ. Autónoma de Barcelona; Real Academia Española. "El problema estilístico de la *Celestina*."
21. KATHLEEN V. KISH, Univ. of North Carolina--Greensboro, "On Editing *Celestina* Translations: Marginalia, *Rezeption*, And Not So Trivial Pursuits." Mid-Atlantic Hispanic Medieval Seminar, Charlottesville, Virginia (USA), 16 abril, 1988.

The speaker attempts to explain not only the importance of foreign-language progeny of the *Tragicomedia*, but also her abiding interest in these descendants of Rojas' masterwork. Focusing on the adaptive, rather than the interpretive aspects of these works, she ranges widely in her case for valuing *Celestina* translations and sequels in their own right, which includes their significance as cultural artifacts of their particular time and place. After an introduction, which makes reference to her initial scholarship in this area (devoted to the 1506 Italian translation), the speaker organizes her remarks into a tripartite division, with the central topic, *Rezeption*, also informing the other two (viz., the arts and the trials and rewards of an editor). Having addressed topics as diverse as Picasso *qua Celestina* illustrator and a would-be *Celestina* operatic collaboration of Stefan Zweig and Richard Strauss, the fate of *Celestina* in Nazi-controlled Europe, Calisto as an illegitimate self-flagellator, etc., the speaker concludes with a status report on the edition of the Dutch 1550 *Celestina* translation.

22. LOUISE FOTHERGILL-PAYNE, Calgary Univ., "Laughing With Seneca in *Celestina*." Pomona College (California, USA), 29 abril, 1988.
23. IVY CORFIS, Univ. of Pennsylvania, "Dark Laughter: Irony in *Celestina*." 23rd International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan (USA), 5-8 mayo, 1988.

A la luz de su visión mundial de la vida como 'contienda o batalla,' la obra de Rojas utiliza distintas formas de la ironía para demostrar que no hay orden global que valga, y que nace de su descomposición un nuevo orden bastante menos integrado.

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24. JAMES R. STAMM, "New York University, "*Celestina* and the *Libro de buen amor*: Connections?," 23rd International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan (USA), 5-8 mayo, 1988.

Sobre paralelos estructurales y lingüísticos entre las dos obras maestras.



RAZON Y PASION
DE ENAMORADOS

TRAGICOMEDIA CELESTINESCA
EN TRES ACTOS

POR

FERNANDO DE TORO-GARLAND

ESCELICER

1973