Lucas Fernández and Two of his Intertexts: Fernando de Rojas’s La Celestina and Diego de San Pedro’s Passión trobada

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To the memory of my dear mentor Paco Márquez Villanueva, who introduced me to the cancioneros and their religious poetry at Harvard in 1961-62

Lucas Fernández is the heir to both Fray Íñigo de Mendoza and Juan del Encina’s pioneering works, and as Maurizi points out, he developed the ludic and carnivalesque side of the shepherd’s play (84). In fact, over half of each of his Autos of the birth of Christ is devoted to humorous interchange and insult between the shepherds, before the religious theme is developed by the arrival of a hermit and/or another shepherd announcing the happy event. He fits nicely into the category of the converso authors who helped the proselytizing agenda of the Catholic Monarchs (Severin 2013), although no evidence of a converso background has yet emerged. However some of his sources, not just Fray Íñigo, but also Fernando de Rojas and Diego de San Pedro, are definitely conversos. Márquez Villanueva stressed the importance of the converso class as the civil servants of their day, serving the aristocracy in myriad functions (1965, 401-402). Fray Íñigo was, of course, both a member of the nobility on his father’s side and a scion of the famous Cartagena family of outstanding bishops and literati. Diego de San Pedro was teniente of Penafiel castle for the Girón family. Fernando de Rojas seems to have lived quietly as a lawyer and sometime mayor in Talavera after leaving university and abandoning the Puebla de Montalbán.

Valero Moreno’s recent re-edition is useful for its glossary of sayago terminology, when the reader is baffled by some of the interchanges; I use his information for my footnotes on meanings of the more obscure words. Some of these are downright crude, despite the religious intention, and make us wonder if they were produced inside church, or outside the western portals. The Égloga o farsa del nacimiento de Nuestro Redemptor, which introduces two shepherds –Bonifacio and Gil–, then the hermit Macario, and finally the shepherd Marcelo, bringing the good news, begins with a surprisingly frank series of exchanges between Bonifacio and Gil. Clearly the shepherds have a good knowledge of Celestina, which they cite at length, after Bonifacio admits that the hermit of San Bricio is his mother:

Bonifacio
Y aún es mi madre señora
la ermitaña de san Bricio.

Gil
Ésa es gran embaidora
gran diabro, encantadora.

Bonifacio
Muger es de gran bollicio.

Gil
Medio bruja asmo que es,
y aun a osadas,
que si buscarla querrés,
cada noche la topéis
por estas encrucijadas.
Una vez entré en su ermita,
y porque llegué a un altabaque,
corrió la vieja maldita
por me azotar muy afrita\(^1\).
Por huir le solté un traque\(^2\).
Dime si es caso del Papa
este pecado,
que allá me quedó la capa.

**Bonifacio**
De pecado ño se escapa
si se te soltó en sagrado.

**Gil**
¡Qué ojos tiene tan ñublosos,
manantiales de vino,
muy bermejos, pitañosos,
lamparosos\(^3\), lagañosos,
siempre le lloran contino.
Pichel, jarro o cangilón,
que ella toma
con muy sancta devoción,
le pega tal suspirón
que ño le deja carcoma.

**Bonifacio**
Sabe legar, deslegar,
hace cien mil bebedizos
para bienquerencias dar.
También sabe en cerco entrar;
sabe de agüero y de hechizos,
sabe de ojo y aun de estrella,
y es davina\(^4\).
¡Grolia habrás de conoscella!

**Gil**
¡Cuán gran puta vieja es ella!
Peor es que Celestina.

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\(^1\) Afligida.
\(^2\) Pedo.
\(^3\) Sucios.
\(^4\) Adevina, i.e., adivina.
Bonifacio
Sabe hacer bollo maimón,
y hace asbondo\textsuperscript{5} sahumerios
de las barbas del cabrón.
Toparla has hecha visión
De noche en los ceminterios.
Tiene soga de ahorcado,
y de sus dientes
las burras ha encomendado
y de los lobos librado (Fernández 2: 178-180).

The details from Celestina come from different parts of the original work, although a number of details are taken from Auto VII when Celestina describes her mentor Claudina’s powers to Claudina’s reluctant son Pármeno. In the first place Fernández’s witch is found at a crossroads, presumably collecting earth from this liminal place, like Claudina: “Y aun la una le levantaron que era bruja, porque la hallaron de noche con unas candelillas, cogiendo tierra de una encurucijada” (Rojas 124). From a later interpolation into the banquet scene of Auto IX Fernández takes the details of her excessive drinking (Fernández 2: 144). And also from Celestina’s description of Claudina’s practices, Fernández has her entering a magic circle to do her magic: “Pues entrar en un cerco, mejor que yo y con más esfuerzo” (Fernández 2: 123). Peter Russell pointed out the significance of magic in Celestina in his seminal article of 1963, although he defined her as a hechicera or sorceress who performed white magic, in this case a philocaptio spell capturing the will of Melibea through the skein of thread anointed with snake oil while she was in the circle. But Russell thought that she was not a bruja or witch, performing black magic and deserving of the death penalty, which the text hints was the fate of her mentor Claudina.

In Auto III, when Celestina conjures the devil, we get the detail of the whiskers of the Billy goat, when Elicia is ordered by Celestina: “baja la sangre del cabrón y unas poquitas de las barbas que tú le cortaste” (Rojas 85), and also the dead man’s noose “la soga que traje del campo la otra noche cuando llovía y hacía escuro” (Rojas 84). The cemetery also comes from the description of Claudina: “Tan sin pena ni temor se andaba a media noche de cimenterio en cimenterio, buscando aparejos para nuestro oficio, como de día” (Rojas 122). In my book on the topic of witchcraft and Celestina, I argued that the conjuration was far more than a mere philocaptio spell as it conjured up the devil to help Celestina, thus the use of the circle to protect herself from the devil’s power. It is interesting that Fernández, or at least his mouthpiece Gil, agrees with me and says of Bonifacio’s mother “Medio bruja asmo que es”. In fact, Fernández has selected the passages from Celestina that will underline the witchcraft rather than the sorcery.

Finally in the penultimate stanza, the epithet “puta vieja” comes from a famous passage of Auto I, when all the workmen and their tools, all the animals and surroundings, sound out “puta vieja” when Celestina passes by, according to her stepson Pármeno.

Luckily, the devout hermit Macario arrives in search of the manger, and breaks up this not-very-edifying exchange. Fernández is an excellent example of how the early theatre is rapidly

\textsuperscript{5}Abundante.
developing, and the intertexts are beginning to mount up. His other auto of the birth of Christ is less original and interesting, and more unsurprising, as Pascual, cold and complaining, meets first Llorenti, then Juan, who recounts the visit of the angel, and finally Pedro Picado and Mingo who join the villancico at the end of the piece.

Of much greater interest is Fernández’s Auto de la Pasion, which seems to be directly influenced by the almost-lost original ending of Diego de San Pedro’s Passion trobada, version which survives only in the Cancionero de Oñate-Castañeda (HH1),\(^6\) and consists of the Apostles reuniting after the Passion, repenting their cowardice and recounting their tales (Severin 1990). Although there was some question-mark over Diego de San Pedro’s converso origins when Keith Whinnom pointed out that the Diego de San Pedro in the documentation produced by Cotarelo was unlikely to be the author San Pedro on account of the datings, on the other hand as our author seems to have been teniente de Peñafiel for the Girón family, like the man in the documents, it would be stretching a point to presume that the two were not relatives (Whinnom 255-288). Márquez Villanueva himself interpreted the Cárcel de Amor as a hidden criticism of despotic rulers (Márquez Villanueva 1966, 198-199), perhaps not many miles distant from the Reyes Católicos themselves. Lately, Fontes has argued on the topic of Diego de San Pedro writing in the face of persecution.

In Fernández’s version of the post-Passion scene, we only get the apostle Peter, then St Dionysus, St Matthew the Evangelist, the prophet Jeremiah, and the three Mary’s. Therefore, as in some of Juan del Encina’s autos, the setting is both diachronic and synchronic at the same time, and combines present, past and future. Peter laments his denials of Christ, Dionysus reports the earthquake after the Passion and cannot understand how this contradicts his laws of astronomy, Matthew recounts the Passion, Jeremiah simply laments as is his wont in the Old Testament, the Marys add their lamentations to his, and the final villancicos are “Adorámoste, Señor”, and “¡Ay, que por ti, pecador!”

The closest analogues between Fernández and Diego de San Pedro’s work are the words of Peter in Passión trobada as he repents his cowardice:

\begin{verbatim}
[Peter Repents]
Pedro dixo vergonçoso,
Puestos los ojos en tierra,
Llorando muy amargoso,
Que se non dava reposso
Como faze aquel que yerra;
Y las barvas se mesando
Llamávase pecador,
Y consigo en tierra dando
Ante todos confesando:
Yo negué a mi Señor (Severin 1990, Passión Trobada: 259A; San Pedro 1979, 3: 236).
\end{verbatim}

It is piquant to reflect that conversos often took the name of the saint or apostle to whom they were related by their Judaic lineage, and for Diego de San Pedro his lamentations of Saint Peter would have had a particular poignancy and relevance. Of course we know nothing of Fernández’s background, but his Saint Peter is also very moving:

\(^6\) I use Dutton’s ID system to locate songbooks mentioned in this article.
San Pedro
Oíd mi voz dolorosa,
Oíd los vivientes del mundo,
Oíd la pasión rabiosa
Que en su humanidad preciosa
Sufre nuestro Dios jocundo.
Salgan mis lágrimas vivas
Del abismo de mis penas,
Pues que de ansias tan altivas,
Tan esquivas,
Mis entrañas están llenas.

¡Ay de mi desconsolado!
¿Para que quiero la vida?
¿Qué haré ya, desdichado?
Ya mi bien es acabado,
Ya mi gloria es fenecida,
¿Cómo pude yo negar
Tres veces al Señor?
Mi vida será llorar
El pesar
De mi pecado y error (Fernández 2: 233-234).

These lamentations continue for another four stanzas, rather suggesting those other lamentations of the Virgin that Diego de San Pedro wrote in both Passión trobada and Siete Angustias de Nuestra Señora:

[Virgin]
¿Adónde iré, que haré
hijo, bien de los mortales?
¿A quién me querellaré?
¿Con quién me consolaré?
¿A quién quexaré mis males? (Passión Trobada 212; San Pedro 1979, 3: 202).

As we know, Passión trobada was the most popular Spanish Passion poem of the early modern period and continued to be printed in chapbooks until the nineteenth century, as well as being incorporated into Alonso del Campo’s Auto de la pasión, one of our earliest surviving examples of Castilian Passion theatre. Even more intriguing is the question of whether Lucas Fernández was familiar not just with the printed tradition of Passión trobada, but with the almost-lost manuscript tradition with its unique ending, which does not owe anything to the traditional apocryphal versions of the Passion which were used in the long mystery and Passion plays of England, France and Germany.

A connection with the Passión Trobada of Diego de San Pedro’s most famous protagonist, Leriano of the Cárceel de Amor, and his bereaved mother, is also present in these lamentations (Severin 1988). As Miguel-Prendes has pointed out, the contemplative tradition of the devotio
moderná is foremost in the Cárcel de amor (Miguel-Prendes 32), which is itself first presented as a retable of suffering.7

Lucas Fernández proves himself an versatile and fearless poet, mining not only the possibly heterodox and dangerous tradition of witchcraft as found in Celestina for his humorous treatment of the birth of Christ, but also the stately tradition of the lamentations of the Virgin for his more orthodox treatment of the Passion. His poetic invention is quite daring and he does not perceive any incongruity in incorporating quite coarse material into the traditionally humorous representation of the shepherds that had previously been developed by Fray Íñigo de Mendoza and Juan del Encina. Similarly, he is happy to use non-traditional apocryphal material without qualm for his treatment of the tragic Passion tradition, and to invent and embroider on this use by devising new characters and situations—Dionysus, Jeremiah from the Old Testament—alongside the more traditional Evangelist Matthew and the three Marys.

7 Also see Sharrer for the effigy of the beloved and its religious overtones.
Works Cited


Fernando de Rojas' play *Celestina* has been a pivotal work of European culture since 1499, when it was first performed, and the character of the ever resourceful procuress Celestina has inspired artists from Goya to Picasso. This version of *Celestina*, translated by John Clifford, was first performed at the King's Theatre, Edinburgh, in August 2004, as part of the Edinburgh International Festival. This edition of the play, in the Nick Hern Books Drama Classics series, includes an introduction by John Clifford. Performing Arts. Diego de San Pedro (c. 1437 – c. 1498) was a Castilian writer. Little is known about him, besides what is included in his works. Scholars also rely on what they infer from the context in which he wrote and the many nobles to whom he has been linked. According to San Pedro's prologues in *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda* (The Love Between Arnalte and Lucenda), *Cárcel de amor* (The Prison of Love), and *Desprecio de la Fortuna* (The Disdain of Fortune), San Pedro could not have written before 1470. La Celestina. Author. Fernando de Rojas. Adapted by. Margarita Barberá Quiles. *La Celestina* is a story from the Renaissance that stands out from the crowd, which prefers a more authentic portrayal of reality instead of the sentimental approach typical of the period. A young man, Calisto, infatuated by the splendid Melibea, asks for help from the greedy and shrewd Celestina, who organises a romantic meeting between the two. A romance blossoms, however, it ends quickly in tragedy. La fuerza de las palabras. El casamiento engañoso - El coloquio de los perros. El sueño de Goya. Haciendo Camino. Prev 2 volumes ; 20 cm. Celestina is the most remarkable work produced in 15th century Spain and its influence has been enduring and profound. It is a prose dialogue divided into 21 'acts', starting in comedy and ending in tragedy. The story tells of a bachelor, Calisto, who uses the old procuress Celestina to start an affair with Melibea, an unmarried girl kept in seclusion by her parents. Though the two use the rhetoric of courtly love, sex - not marriage - is their aim. When he dies in an accident, Melibea commits suicide after confessing to her father.