

COTA, HIS IMITATOR, AND *LA CELESTINA*: THE EVIDENCE RE-EXAMINED

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In his recent article on Cota and Rojas (*HR*, 48 [1980], 37-55), Salvador Martínez assembles and examines the identified possible borrowings in *La Celestina* from Rodrigo Cota's *Diálogo entre el Amor y un Viejo* and the anonymous *El Viejo, el Amor, y La Hermosa*, and comes to the astonishing conclusion that Rodrigo Cota wrote Acts I-XVI of *LC*. He reaches this conclusion in four stages:

1) by assuming that Cota is the author of the anonymous poem, an opinion that he attributes to María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, who was tentative in suggesting this possibility;¹ 2) by assembling uncritically all supposed borrowings listed by Lida de Malkiel and by Elisa Aragone in her critical edition of the *Diálogo*,² and by adding a few more of his own; 3) by making the erroneous statement that all of these are found in the sixteen-act *Comedia*; 4) and, finally, by apparently assuming that Rojas's acrostic verses first appeared in the *Tragicomedia* twenty-one act versions. They were in fact printed in the Toledo 1500 sixteen-act *Comedia* (which may predate Burgos 1499?) before they appeared in the *Tragicomedia*. (I gather that he makes this mistake from his concluding paragraphs; he may simply be accusing Rojas of deliberately misleading us about the authorship of Acts II-XVI).

Martínez makes one fairly serious mistake in his reasoning; he fails to notice that entry no. 29, "El falso boezuelo con su blando cencerrar trae las perdices a la red; el canto de la serena engaña los simples marineros" (Act XI), is in fact an interpolation which first appears in the *Tragicomedia*; that is to say that it must be by Rojas. He also chooses to ignore María Rosa Lida de Malkiel's suggestion (p. 673 of *La originalidad artística de 'LC'*) that Areusa's curse on Calisto and Melibea's garden in additional Act XV of the *Tragicomedia* may have been suggested by the *Diálogo*.

More significantly he seems to imply that he can prove authorship by putative source material. On that basis one could make a much more plausible case for Petrarch's authorship of Acts II-XXI of *LC*, or, rather more convincingly, a good case for Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, the Archpriest of Talavera, and parts of *LC*.³

CELESTINESCA

Since Martínez has assembled all these Cota and pseudo-Cota 'sources' in one place, I propose to examine them closely to see which are real or probable sources, which are analogs or *topoi*, and which are old saws or proverbs with other distinguishable sources. I have indicated the provenance of the original suggestion in brackets, i.e. whether Lida de Malkiel, Aragone, or Aragone and one of her acknowledged predecessors. The reader should refer to Martínez's article for the full quotations; *D* indicates the Cota *Diálogo* and *A* the pseudo-Cota.

ACT I

1. The "Argumento del primer aucto" [Aragone; Riquer]. This was probably written by the editors of the original; Riquer has pointed out some similarity of circumstance but there is no real verbal similarity.

2. "¡Vete, vete de ay, torpe!" No verbal resemblance to either *A* or *D* apart from the imperative form of the verb *ir*.

3. "la llaga interior más emepe" [Aragone; 1911 ed]. Attributed to Seneca by the *Celestina comentada* (Madrid BN MS17631), fol. 15v.

4. "Antes lo haré cierto" [Aragone]. Looks more like a colloquialism than a borrowing.

5. "¡Ha, don malvado!" [Aragone]. No verbal resemblance.

6. "Y en su casa hazía perfumes . . ." [Aragone; FCG]. Rodrigo de Reinosa has been suggested as a more plausible source for this passage, which also seems to be topical.⁴

7. "¡O vejez virtuosa! ¡O virtud enuegecida!" [Aragone]. The influence of the *Diálogos*'s "¡O maldad envegecida!" looks probable.

8. "Y no solo en la humana especie" [Aragone; Cortina]. Although the verbal resemblance is not very close, there might be some influence of the *Diálogo*.

9. "ande la música" [Aragone]. No real resemblance other than the word *canciones*.

ACT II

10. "diga donayres." Other than the words *donayres*, *canciones*, *motos*, which aren't even in the same order, there is no real resemblance.

ACT IV

11. "la vegez no es sino . . . choça sin rama" [Aragone; Cortina]. No resemblance other than the words *choça* and *cayado*.

CELESTINESCA

12. "¿Pero quien te podría contar, señora . . .?" A *topos*, no real resemblance between these two examples.

13. "¡O angélica ymagen!" [Lida de Malkiel]. There seems to be a definite influence from the pseudo-Cota (A).

14. "¡Jesu! ¡No oyga yo mentar . . .!" No verbal resemblance.

15. "¡esto obra natura!" No verbal resemblance.

ACT V

16. "El propósito muda el sabio." No resemblance at all.

ACT VI

17. "¿Por qué cierras las orejas . . .?" [Aragone, Cortina]. No resemblance beyond this standard phrase.

18. "por que venga cargada de mentiras como abeja" [Aragone; 1911 ed.]. The word *abeja* is the only similarity.

19. "Yo te veo y no lo creo" [Lida de Malkiel]. This is an old saw; see Eleanor O'Kane, *Refranes y frases proverbiales y españoles de la edad media*, p. 92 (creer) and p. 228 (ver).⁵ However, the exact repetition suggests that A could be a possible source.

20. "que de los buenos es propio las culpas perdonar" [Aragone; 1911 ed.]. Attributed to Seneca by *Celestina comentada*, fol. 111v; verbal resemblance isn't very strong.

21. "nunca mucho costó poco" [Lida de Malkiel]. This is another old saw (O'Kane, p. 165, 'mucho').

ACT IX

22. "Aquella dulce y fiera llaga." The influence of A looks definite.

23. "corriendo caballos" [Aragone]. No real resemblance; see no. 10.

24. "su orden es mudanças." Proverbial; cf. Juan de Mena, *Laberinto de Fortuna*, st. 10.

ACT X

25. "Sin te romper las vestiduras se lançó en tu pecho el amor. The influence of D or A (or even a combination of the two) looks possible; the clothing is not torn despite the wound.

CELESTINESCA

26. "Es un fuego escondido." Yes, a strong verbal resemblance to A's "fuego escondido . . . sabroso venino . . . llaga dulce y fiera." But also Petrarchan; see A. D. Deyermond, *The Petrarchan Sources of 'LC'*,⁶ p. 58 (*De remediis utriusque fortunae*, i.69.A 2-3).

ACT XI

27. "assi se suelen dar las çaraças . . ." [Lida de Malkiel; Aragone; FCG]. A definite influence of A.

28. "engañando nuestra voluntad" [Lida de Malkiel; Aragone; FCG]. Again, a definite influence of A.

29. "El falso boezuelo" [Lida de Malkiel; Aragone; FCG]. No real resemblance other than the topical 'canto de la serena'.

ACT XII

30. "esta donzella ha de ser para él ceuo de anzuelo" [Lida de Malkiel]. Possible influence of D.

31. "Justicia hay para todos." Proverbial.

ACT XIV

32. "O angelica ymagen . . . ante quien el mundo es feo" [Lida de Malkiel]. Definite influence of A.

33. "Mira que nunca los ausentes" [Aragone]. No resemblance other than the word *ausente(s)*.

ACT XX

34. "Vencida de su amor." No resemblance other than the two words *Amor* and *vencido*.

ACT XXI

35. "¡O mundo, mundo!" Traditional exclamation against the world; no verbal resemblance beyond "O mundo."

36. "yo, por triste experiencia." No verbal resemblance at all.

37. "pues agora, sin temor" [Lida de Malkiel]. Practically all Petrarchan (FCG, pp. 130-31; ADD, p. 73). Possible influence of A's last lines, "con que pagas los servicios / de los que a olor de tus vicios / van a caer en tus redes . . . En el prometer sin rienda." "Quebrar el ojo" [Aragone, Cortina]. An old saw; O'Kane, p. 173 ('ojo').

CELESTINESCA

38. "O amor, amor." No verbal resemblance other than the verb *matar*.
39. "Herida fue de ti." No verbal resemblance.
40. "Ni sé si hieres" [Aragone]. No verbal resemblance.
41. "Hazes que feo amen." No verbal resemblance; Rojas glosses an old saw.
42. "¿Quién te dio tanto poder?" [Lida de Malkiel]. Considerable influence of A: "te pusieron nombre de dios . . . la leña para tus llamas . . . siendo moço, pobre y ciego."
43. "Del mundo me quexo." A's "quexarte / del mundo" is the only similar phrase and is another commonplace.

After this examination we can conclude that the following are probable borrowings: 7, 13, 22, 26, 27, 28, 32, 42. Possible borrowings include [4], 8, [19], 25, 30, 37. We can see them best if set out by act and source. Items in brackets are highly dubious.

PROBABLE

I-D (7)
 IV-A (13)
 IX-A(22)
 X-A (26)
 XI-A(27, 28)
 XIV-A(32)
 XXI-A(42)

POSSIBLE

I-D(8) [A(4)]
 [VI-A(19)]
 X-A/D (25)
 XII-D(30)
 XXI-A(37)

The really startling conclusion seen from this chart is that whereas the *Diálogo* seems the definite source for the anonymous Act I, the anonymous *El Viejo, El Amor y la Hermosa* seems to be the definite source for Rojas' own Acts IV, IX, XI, XIV, XXI. While not totally ruling out the possibility that Rojas had the *Diálogo* in mind as well while dealing with Acts X and XII, it is only a possible source at two points. So unlike the primitive author, Rojas seems to have known the pseudo-Cota and to have turned to it frequently while he was writing Act IX-XI of the *Comedia*, and again for Act XXI (old XVI). The fact that he doesn't use it for additional Acts XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX is not particularly disturbing. He didn't use it for II, III, V, VII, VIII, XIII, or XX (old XV) either, and may not have used it for VI or XII. The extremely low incidence of

CELESTINESCA

possible or probable *Diálogo* sources in Act I also casts doubts on the theories of others who, like Miguel Marciales,⁷ assign authorship of anonymous Act I of *LC* to Cota.



NOTES

¹ "muy probablemente sea del mismo Cota . . .," *La originalidad artística de LC* [Snow-Schneider-Lee *LCDB* reference no. 60, p. 267, note 1].

² Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1961, pp. 48-54. She unites suggestions found in studies by Martín Riquer, F. Castro Guisasola sigla [FCG], Alonso Cortina, and F. Holle's 1911 edition.

³ E. M. Gerli in fact suggests him as a possible author for Act I in "LC, Act I, Reconsidered" [*LCDB* reference no. 395 (I)].

⁴ See the two articles on this topic, Stephen Gilman and Michael J. Ruggiero's "Rodrigo de Reinosa and *LC*" [no. 439], and G. D. Trotter's "The *Coplas de las comadres* of Rodrigo de Reynosa and *LC*" [no. 480].

⁵ *BRAE*, Anejo II (Madrid, 1959).

⁶ Reference no. 47 [sigla ADD]. My thanks to Professor Deyermond for reading and commenting on this article.

⁷ In his "Carta al Profesor Stephen Gilman sobre problemas rojanos y celestinescos a propósito del libro *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*." [no. s6].



Celestina con Calisto, al salir éste de la Magdalena. Aucto XI.
De la traducción alemana de C. Wirsung (1520).