

LA MOZA DE CÁNTARO

POR

LOPE DE VEGA

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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PREFACE

The vast number of the works of Lope de Vega renders the task of selecting one of them as an appropriate text for publication very difficult, and it is only after having examined a large number of the works of the great poet that the editor has chosen *La Moza de Cántaro*, not only because it is one of the author's most interesting comedies, but also because it stands forth prominently in the field in which he is preëminent—the interpretation of Spanish life and character. It too is one of the few plays of the poet which have continued down to recent times

in the favor of the Spanish theater-going public,—perhaps in the end the most trustworthy critic. Written in Lope's more mature years, at the time of his greatest activity, and probably corrected or rewritten seven years later, this play contains few of the inaccuracies and obscure passages so common to many of his works, reveals to us much of interest in Spanish daily life and in a way reflects the condition of the Spanish capital during the reign of Philip IV, which certainly was one of the most brilliant in the history of the kingdom.

The text has been taken completely, without any omissions or modifications, from the Hartzbusch collection of *Comedias Escogidas de Lope de Vega* published in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* and, where it varies from other texts with which it has been compared, the variation is noted. The accentuation has been changed freely to conform with present usage, translations have been suggested for passages of more than ordinary difficulty and full notes given on proper names and on passages that suggest historical or other connection. Literary comparisons have been made occasionally and modern forms or equivalents for archaic words and expressions have been given, but usually these have been limited to words not found in the better class of dictionaries commonly used in the study of such works.

The editor is especially indebted to Sr. D. Eugenio Fernández for aid in the interpretation of several passages and in the correction of accentuation, to Professor J. D. M. Ford for valuable suggestions, and to Sr. D. Manuel Saavedra Martínez, Professor in the Escuela Normal de Salamanca, for information not easily accessible.

M. S.

INTRODUCTION

I. LIFE OF LOPE DE VEGA

The family of Lope de Vega Carpio was one of high rank, if not noble, and had a manor house in the mountain regions of northwestern Spain. Of his parents we know nothing more than the scanty mention the poet has given them in his works. It would seem that they lived a while at least in Madrid, where the future prince of Spanish dramatists was born, November 25, 1562. Of his childhood and early youth we have no definite knowledge, but it appears that his parents died when he was very young and that he lived some time with his uncle, Don Miguel del Carpio.

From his own utterances and those of his friend and biographer, Montalvan, we know that genius developed early with him and that he dictated verses to his schoolmates before he was able to write. In school he was particularly brilliant and showed remarkable aptitude in the study of Latin, rhetoric, and literature. These school days were interrupted once by a truant flight to the north of Spain, but at Astorga, near the ancestral estate of Vega, Lope, weary of the hardships of travel, turned back to Madrid.

Soon after he left the Colegio de los Teatinos, at about the age of fourteen, Lope entered the service of Don Jerónimo Manrique, Bishop of Ávila, who took so great an interest in him that he sent him to the famous University of Alcalá de Henares, where he

seems to have spent from his sixteenth to his twentieth year and on leaving to have received his bachelor's degree. The next five years of his life are shrouded in considerable obscurity. It was formerly believed, as related by Montalvan, that he returned from the University of Alcalá to Madrid about 1582, was married and, after a duel with a nobleman, was obliged to flee to Valencia, where he remained until he enlisted in the Invincible Armada in 1588, but recent research¹ has proved the case to be quite otherwise. It would seem that, on leaving the University about 1582, he became Secretary to the Marqués de las Navas and that for four or five years he led in Madrid a dissolute life, writing verses and frequenting the society of actors and of other young degenerates like himself and enjoying the favor of a young woman, Elena Osorio, whom he addressed in numberless poems as "Filis" and whom he calls "Dorotea" in his dramatic romance of the same name. In the latter work he relates shamelessly and with evident respect for truth of detail many of his adventures of the period, which, as Ticknor says, "do him little credit as a young man of honor and a cavalier."

In the light of the recent information cited above, we know also that Lope's career immediately after 1587 was quite different from what his contemporary Montalvan had led the world long to believe. In the *Proceso de Lope de Vega por libelos contra unos Cómicos*, it is shown that the poet, having broken with "Filis," circulated slanderous verses written against her father, Jerónimo Velázquez, and his family. The author was tried and sentenced to two years' banishment from Castile and eight more from within five leagues of the city of Madrid. He began his exile in Valencia, but soon disobeyed the decree of banishment, which carried with it the penalty of death if broken,

and entered Castile secretly to marry, early in 1588, Doña Isabel de Urbina, a young woman of good family in the capital. Accompanied by his young wife, he doubtless went on directly to Lisbon, where he left her and enlisted in the Invincible Armada, which sailed from that port, May 29, 1588. During the expedition, according to his own account, Lope fought bravely against the English and the Dutch, using, as he says, his poems written to "Filis" for gun-wads, and yet found time to write a work of eleven thousand verses entitled *la Hermosura de Angélica*. The disastrous expedition returned to Cadiz in December, and Lope made his way back to the city of his exile, Valencia, where he was joined by his wife. There they lived happily for some time, the poet gaining their livelihood by writing and selling plays, which up to that time he had written for his own amusement and given to the theatrical managers.

Of the early literary efforts of Lope de Vega, such as have come down to us are evidently but a small part, but from them we know something of the breadth of his genius. In childhood even he wrote voluminously, and one of his plays, *El Verdadero Amante*, which we have of this early period, was written at the age of twelve, but was probably rewritten later in the author's life. He wrote also many ballads, not a few of which have been preserved, and we know that, at the time of his banishment, he was perhaps the most popular poet of the day.

The two years following the return of the Armada, Lope continued to live in Valencia, busied with his literary pursuits, but in 1590, after his two years of banishment from Castile had expired, he moved to Toledo and later to Alba de Tormes and entered the service of the Duke of Alba, grandson of the great soldier, in the capacity of secretary. For his employer he

composed about this time the pastoral romance *Arcadia*, which was not published until 1598. The remaining years of his banishment, which was evidently remitted in 1595, were uneventful enough, but this last year brought to him a great sorrow in the death of his faithful wife. However, he seems to have consoled himself easily, for on his return to Madrid the following year we know of his entering upon a career of gallant adventures which were to last many years and which were scarcely interrupted by his second marriage in 1598 to Doña Juana de Guardo.

Aside from his literary works the following twelve years of the life of Lope offer us but little of interest. The first few years of the period saw the appearance of *La Dragontea*, an epic poem on Sir Francis Drake, and *Isidro*, a long narrative poem on the life and achievements of San Isidro, patron of Madrid. These two works were followed in 1605 by his epic, *Jerusalén Conquistada*, an untrustworthy narration of the achievements of Richard Cœur-de-Lion and Alfonso VIII in the crusade at the close of the twelfth century. Lope left the service of the Duke of Alba on his return to Madrid, or about that time, and during the next decade held similar positions under the Marqués de Malpica and the Conde de Lemos, and during a large part of this period he led a more or less vagabond existence wherever the whims of his employers or his own gallant adventures led him. About 1605 he made the acquaintance of the Duque de Sessa, who shortly afterwards became his patron and so continued until the death of the poet about thirty years later. The correspondence of the two forms the best source for the biography of this part of Lope's career. From 1605 until 1610 he lived in Toledo with his much neglected wife, of whom we have no mention since their

marriage in 1598. But in 1610 they moved to Madrid, where Lope bought the little house in what is now the Calle de Cervantes, and in this house the great poet passed the last quarter of a century of his long and eventful life.

The next few years following this return to the capital were made sorrowful to Lope by the sickness and death of both his wife and his beloved little son, Carlos Félix, in whom the father had founded the fondest hopes. Then it was that Lope, now past the fiftieth year of his age, sought refuge, like so many of his contemporaries and compatriots, in the protecting fold of the Church. Before the death of his wife he had given evidence of religious fervor by numerous short poems and in his sacred work, *los Pastores de Belén*, a long pastoral in prose and in verse relating the early history of the Holy Family. Whether Lope was influenced to take orders by motives of pure devotion or by reasons of interest has been a question of speculation for scholars ever since his time. From his works we can easily believe that both of these motives entered into it; in fact he says as much in his correspondence with the Duque de Sessa. Speaking of this phase of the poet's life, Fitzmaurice-Kelly says: "It was an ill-advised move. Ticknor, indeed, speaks of a 'Lope, no longer at an age to be deluded by his passions'; but no such Lope is known to history. While a Familiar of the Inquisition the true Lope wrote love-letters for the loose-living Duque de Sessa, till at last his confessor threatened to deny him absolution. Nor is this all: his intrigue with Marta de Navares Santoyo, wife of Roque Hernández de Ayala, was notorious." But later, speaking of those who may study these darker pages of Lope's career, he adds: "If they judge by the standards of Lope's time, they will deal gently with a miracle of genius, unchaste but not licentious;

like that old Dumas, who, in matters of gaiety, energy and strength, is his nearest modern compeer." We may say further that Lope, with no motive to deceive or shield himself, for he seems to have almost sought to give publicity to his licentiousness, was faithful in the discharge of his religious offices, evincing therein a fervor and devotion quite exemplary. Yet neither does his gallantry nor his devotion seem to have ever halted him for a moment in the years that succeeded his ordination. His dramatic composition of this period is quite abundant and other literary forms are not neglected.

Two interesting incidents in the poet's life are never omitted by his biographers. They are the beatification, in 1620, of San Isidro and his canonization, two years later, with their accompanying poet "jousts," at both of which Lope presided and assumed a leading rôle. Before this time he was known as a great author and worshiped by the element interested in the drama, but on both these occasions he had an opportunity to declaim his incomparable verses and those of the other contesting poets, revealing his majestic bearing and versatility to the great populace of Madrid, his native city. He was thereafter its literary lion, whose very appearance in the streets furnished an occasion for tumultuous demonstration of affection.

The last decade of the life of Lope de Vega saw him seeking no rest or retirement behind the friendly walls of some monastic retreat, but rather was it the most active period of his literary career. Well may we say that he had no declining years, for he never knew rest or realized a decline of his mental faculties. He did not devote by any means all his time to his literary pursuits, but found time to attend faithfully to his religious duties and to

the cares of his home, for he had gathered about him his children, Feliciano, Lope Félix and Antonia Clara, of whom the last two and Marcela, in a convent since 1621, were the gifted fruit of illicit loves. In 1627 he published his *Corona Trágica*, a long religious epic written on the history of the life and fate of Mary, Queen of Scots. This work won for him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, conferred with other evidences of favor by Pope Urban VIII. Three years later appeared Lope's *Laurel de Apolo*, a poem of some seven thousand lines describing an imaginary festival given on Mount Helicon in April, 1628, by Apollo, at which he rewards the poets of merit. The work is devoted to the praise of about three hundred contemporary poets. In 1632 the poet published his prose romance, *Dorotea*, written in the form of drama, but not adapted to representation on the stage. It is a very interesting work drawn from the author's youth and styled by him as "the posthumous child of my Muse, the most beloved of my long-protracted life."^[2] It is most important for the light it sheds on the early years of his life, for it is largely autobiographical. Another volume, issued from the pen of Lope in 1634 under the title of *Rimas del licenciado Tomé de Burguillos*, contains the mock-heroic, *La Gatomaquia*, the highly humorous account of the love of two cats for a third. Fitzmaurice-Kelly describes this poem as, "a vigorous and brilliant travesty of the Italian epics, replenished with such gay wit as suffices to keep it sweet for all time."

Broken in health and disappointed in some of his fondest dreams, the great poet was now rapidly approaching the end of his life. It is believed that domestic disappointments and sorrows hastened greatly his end. It would appear from some of his works that his son, Lope Félix, to whom he dedicated the last volume

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