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Shakespeare and the Mediterranean • 1

Romeo and Juliet

Edited by Silvia Bigliazzi and Emanuel Stelzer

Supplement to *SKENÈ. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*

ISBN 979-12-210-1706-9
ISSN 2464-9295

SKENÈ Theatre and Drama Studies
https://textsandstudies.skeneproject.it/index.php/TS
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Romeo and Juliet in Seventeenth-Century Spain: Between Comedy and Tragedy

Felice Gambin

Abstract

This article aims to offer a contribution to the study of some rewritings of the story of Romeo and Juliet in seventeenth-century Spanish theatre. On the one hand, I will focus on the story of the two young lovers from a comedic perspective, as in the case of Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses* and in Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona*, whose title reveals a strong link with the city of Verona. In both comedies, the protagonists survive and there is a happy ending. On the other hand, I will also consider a comedy with a tragic ending that testifies to the success in Spain of the story of the two Veronese lovers, showing a new taste and sensitivity on the part of Spanish audiences. A case in point is Cristóbal de Rozas' *Los amantes de Verona*, where the tragic end of the two lovers, Aurisena and Clorisel, no longer reflects family conflicts between the Capulets and the Montagues, but, more generally, political rivalry between the factions of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. The three plays also reveal profound differences in the representation of the power exercised by the lord of Verona.

¿es que Romeo y Julieta tienen que ser
necesariamente un hombre y una mujer para que
la escena del sepulcro se produzca de manera viva
y desgarradora?[1]

The theme of young lovers who have to contend with timeworn and unresolved family feuds is central to much seventeenth-cen-

1 "Must Romeo and Juliet necessarily be a man and a woman for the tomb scene to be as intense and as devastating as it is?" (García Lorca 1988, 170). If not otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

tury Spanish theatre. The authors were able to turn to classical mythology passed down to them through medieval tales and legends, and later the sixteenth-century Italian novellas *Giulietta e Romeo* by Luigi da Porto (1530) and Romeo e Giulietta by Matteo Bandello (1554) will be of still greater significance. The volume of Spanish literature and in this case theatre on the subject of love affairs in the context of family rivalry is particularly striking. I am thinking for example of *Los bandos de Salamanca; Monroyes y Manzanos* by Francisco Pérez de Borja (1646); *Los bandos de Vizcaya* by Pedro Rosete Niño (1660); *Los bandos de Rávena y fundación de la Camándula* by Juan de Matos Fragoso (1667); *Pachecos y Palomeques* or *Los bandos de Toledo* by Antonio García de Prado (1674), but the list could continue.

This theatrical genre begins with *Los bandos de Sena* by Lope de Vega, a play he wrote between 1597 and 1603, based on novella 49 from the first part of Bandello's work (Gentilli 2019). But there are other elements which should be included for a full understanding of the Spanish versions of the characters of Romeo and Juliet. We know that the French translation of Bandello of 1559 by Pierre Boaistuau collected in his *Histoires tragiques* widely circulated in Europe and that in 1589 fourteen of Bandello's novellas were published in Spanish (Bandello 1589). This version uses the French translation as a starting point but modifies the text at many points. It is interesting that in the title Bandello is said to be Veronese, and the same information is repeated in the edition of 1596 and 1603.[2] But besides the question of translations we know that Lope de Vega, as he proudly declares in a letter to the Duke of Sessa in 1613, was a competent reader of Latin, Italian and French (Vega Carpio 2018, 231).[3] The many forays carried out into the works of the Spanish playwright have revealed that he had read

2 Bandello's alleged Veronese origin can also be found in recent studies, including that of Muguruza Roca 2016.

3 The idea of Lope directly accessing Bandello's Italian text is well-established, although it is not shared by everyone. See, for example, Profeti 2016, 103: "direct fruition of the Italian editions is unlikely, if only because the Novelle had been placed on the Index; thus, it was undoubtedly a 'dangerous' or at least a source which could hardly be proclaimed without expecting potential repercussions".

one of the numerous copies of Bandello in circulation in Spain straight from the original Italian.[4]

It should be remembered that the case of Lope represents yet another confirmation of the cultural dialogue between the Italian and Iberian peninsulas, a relationship of reciprocal exchanges covering all cultural aspects. This relationship has distant roots and becomes increasingly evident from the sixteenth century onwards, especially under the rule of Charles V and Philip II also for political, imperial and religious reasons. Relations between the two peninsulas of the western Mediterranean were so intense that one can speak of a Spanish empire where the sun never set, stretching from West to East, from the Americas to northern Europe, but which had its political and cultural centre of gravity between Naples and Madrid, between Italy and Spain. In that empire, the Mediterranean Sea played a major role as a place where different cultures and religions met and clashed, a place teeming with a multiplicity of different sounds and voices, an area where humans and books circulated. The intimate political and cultural relations between Italy and Spain on the Mediterranean, which pervaded much of the literature between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – I am thinking of the many Spanish soldiers fighting on those waters with both sword and pen, writing reports, poems and novellas – are also testified by the influence of Bandello's text in many Spanish writers. They usually wrote their tales and comedies bearing in mind and reworking the themes and subjects of Italian authors such as Boccaccio, Giraldi Cinzio, Masuccio, Firenzuola, Straparola and many others, read in Italian or Spanish translations or through the mediation of French ones. And it is the familiarity and use of these Italian materials, the gap between the Italian and Spanish models, the transfer from a novella to a comedy, that become interesting also in the light of the changes imposed by the Counter-Reformation.[5]

4 On the importance of Bandello in Spain the bibliography is copious and there are numerous studies on the use of Bandello's *Novelle* by Lope in his drama. Also useful for the many and timely bibliographical references are Carrascón 2017 and 2018; Profeti 2016. The first comprehensive analysis of some relevance, however, dates back many decades ago and is that of Gasparetti 1939. On *Castelvines y Monteses*, see 17-31.

5 One might think that at times Bandello's text, presented to the Spanish

There are in fact three theatrical works from sixteenth-century Spain that centre on the lovers from Verona. These are in chronological order:

Castelvines y Monteses by Lope de Vega, written between 1606 and 1612;

Los bandos de Verona by Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla, staged for the first time for the inauguration of the Coliseo del Buen retiro on February 4, 1640;

Los amantes de Verona by Cristóbal Rozas (or Rosas), published in 1666 after being staged several years previously.[6]

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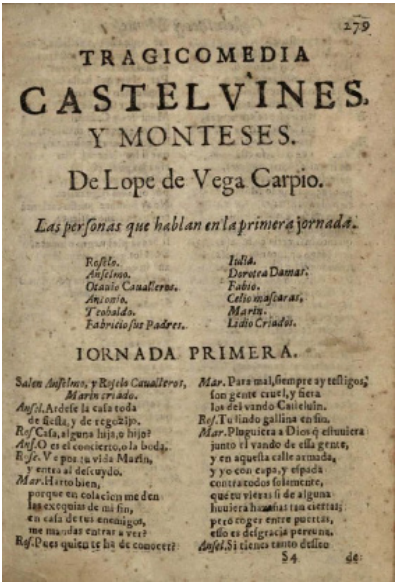

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TRAGICOMEDIA

CASTELVINES.

Y MONTESES.

De Lope de Vega Carpio.

Las personas que hablan en la primera jornada.

Rosilo. *Iulia.*
Anselmo. *Dorotea Damar.*
Otauio Caualleros. *Fabio.*
Antonio. *Celio mascarat.*
Teobaldo. *Martin.*
Fabricio sus Padres. *Lidio Criado.*

IORNADA PRIMERA.

Salen Anselmo, y Roselo Caualleros, Martin criado.

Ansel. Ardese la casa toda
de fiesta, y de regozijo.
Ros. Casa, alguna hija, o hijo?
Ans. O es el consierto, o la boda.
Ros. Vespos tu vida Martin,
y entra al descuydo.
Mar. Harto bien,
porque en colacion me den
las exequias de mi fin,
en casa de tus enemigos,
me mandas entrar a ver?
Ros. Pues quien te ha de conocer?
Mar. Para mal, siempre ay testigos;
son gente cruel, y fiera
los del vando Castelvin.
Ros. Tu viado gallina en fin.
Mar. Pluguiera a Dios q estuuiera
junto el vando de ella gente,
y en aquesta calle armada,
y yo con capa, y espada
contra todos solamente,
qué tu viera si de alguna
huuiera hazañas tan ciertas;
pero coger entre puertas,
esto es delgracia prouerbio.
Ansel. Si tienes tanto desseo

Fig. 1 By kind permission of Biblioteca Nacional de España R/23482

public as *Historias trágicas ejemplares* from the French translation recalled above, so steeped in moralising elements, was often transformed by Spanish writers into an anti-model, as evidenced, for example, by the deviation of the tragedy of the two Veronese lovers towards a happy ending.

6 As an introduction, see González Cañal 2006 and, even if sometimes limited to quick summaries of works of Spanish writers from the seventeenth to the twentieth century who have referred to the story set in the city of Verona, Torres Nebrera 2010.

Lope de Vega's *Castelvines y Monteses*, composed as we have seen between 1606 and 1612, was printed in 1647 in the twenty-fifth part of the writer's collected plays, when drama had by this point become a discreet source of income if it was published.[7] It is common knowledge that it was Lope who first defined the character of Spanish national theatre, employing formulas which would then be repeated by his contemporaries and then by his successors, but above all it was he who boosted the national dramatic patrimony, some saying by 1,800 works, the dramatist himself claiming 1,400 and ourselves inheriting 470 of what survived. Lope de Vega began to publish his works on his own in 1617, but his editorial activity ended in 1625 when the monarchy suspended the licences for printing works of entertainment in Castile. Too many works were published after his death, too many printed without his permission, too many, perhaps, those attributed to him in order to sell works by other authors, not to mention the countless instances of adaptations on the part of stage managers who very probably changed the original text to correspond to the number of actors in their various companies. The salvaging of Lope's original corpus that has been going on for years has also been able to rescue significant manuscripts and compare them with printed versions. Many of the versions of the same work show important variations such as the omission or the integration of certain lines of verse. The case of Lope, the most outstanding Spanish playwright, reveals itself unique indeed when we consider the fact that there is absolutely no reliable edition of his works. Only in 1989 was El Grupo PROLOPE founded by Alberto Blecua of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, now directed by Ramon Valdés. The main aim of this group is to conclude a critical edition of Lope's complete theatrical works, but they have not prepared a critical edition of *Castelvines y Monteses* yet.

However, since July 2004 a mise-en-scène of the work does ex-

7 The date of composition is uncertain, but should be placed between 1606 and 1612 according to the studies on the metrics of Lope de Vega's dramatic texts. On this, see Morley and Bruerton 1969, 299-300. The work was published posthumously on March 29, 1647: Vega Carpio, 279-331.

ist and has been staged on other occasions too.[8] The adaptation is by Darío Facal, the staging by Aitana Galán, then a young director, and the resulting theatrical operation is particularly interesting. A decision was made to reduce the number of characters, to intervene over the syntax of the Spanish and to change certain obsolete words and idioms. In other words, to modernise the text without missing out on the specific flavour of seventeenth-century Spanish, and in this way to enhance rather than to lose audience reception of Lope's characteristic humour and feeling. Obviously at this point some scenes have been reconstructed and some new ones have appeared, but when this happens the verse metre of the preceding or of the following passage is maintained and the language is midway between Lope's Spanish and that of today. Then again, the length of the play has been significantly reduced from the original 3,055 lines to the 2,212 of the new version, eliminating several of the characters and causing some of them to take on the traits of those who have been cut.

In the version of 2004 a new character is introduced: a prostitute, whose function is that of emphasising the inconstancy of Roselo, the male protagonist. In point of fact, the entire adaptation, though searching for a balance, swings between lyricism and humour, paying greater attention to Shakespeare's text than the original: certain love scenes of *Romeo and Juliet* are fundamental to the version of 2004, while they are absent in the original *Castelvines y Monteses*. Among other things, the adaptation opens with a Prologue in perfect Shakespearian style which is missing in Lope's, though here it is a character rather than a chorus that recalls the fact that once Verona was a peaceful and beautiful city and only now has it been transformed into a trouble spot by the enmity between the Castelvines and the Monteses (Vega Carpio 2005, 1-32). The whole adaptation and the rewriting, however, follows Lope's happy ending, even though it uses very different lines from those of the writer from Madrid:

8 The play was staged by the José Estruch-Resad company for the first time on July 12, 2004 at the *XXXVII Festival de teatro clásico de Almagro*. The adaptation can be read in Vega Carpio 2005. On the stage fortune of Lope's work in the twenty-first century, I refer to Di Pinto 2019, in particular 73-4.

> Así todo se resuelve
> para mostrarle a la historia
> que sin guerras ni muertes
> vuelve la paz a Verona. (Vega Carpio 2005, 2200-3)
>
> [Thus all is resolved / To show to history / That with neither war nor death / Peace returns to Verona.]

But what are the relevant features of Lope's original play? Transferring Bandello's novella onto the stage meant adapting it to the rules of composition demanded by new Spanish comedy.[9] It is of course by following these rules that the Spanish playwright changes the unhappy story of the Veronese lovers into a comedy with a happy ending and thus transforms tragic prose into comic drama.

The *incipit* sees the young Roselo Monteses – this is his name – strolling along a street in Verona, and, after admiring the beauty of his enemy Antonio Castelvin's house, putting on a mask and going in, accompanied by his servant and his friend Anselmo, to meet the lovely girls there. Marin, Roselo's servant and his *gracioso*,[10] is the character who informs the public of the feud between the Castelvines and the Monteses. Their enmity is so great that the *gracioso* presents the two families as dogs and cats going about the city or even other animals such as hens and cockerels:

> MARÍN No solo en cualquier persona
> me cansa, enoja y fastidia
> ver el odio que en vosotros
> es causa de tantos yerros.
> Pero el ver que hasta los perros
> se muerdan unos con otros,

9 In addition to the references cited in the preceding and following pages, see: Friedman 1989; Rodríguez-Badendyck 1991; Muir 1992; Rabell 2014 and Ruiz Morgan 2021, particularly the second chapter, in which *Castelvines y Monteses* by Lope de Vega, *Los bandos de Verona* by Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla and *Los amantes de Verona* by Cristóbal Rozas are discussed.

10 The *gracioso* is an impertinent and apprehensive character from the lower limits of the social scale, who usually has the function of creating a comic contrast with the male protagonist and a balance between the high style and a lower and more amusing one.

que es ver salir de las puertas
Monteses y Castelvines,
bravos gozques y mastines,
las bocas de furia abiertas;
que si los dientes sutiles
espadas pudieran ser,
bastaban a enriquecer
por horas los alguaciles.
No hay hombre que sin carlanca
traiga su alano valiente;
que parece linda muerte
sobre la piel negra o blanca;
pues los gatos, tan airados
andan en sus bandos juntos,
que hacen campaña por puntos
las cocinas y tejados.
Si maúllan, es por fin
de declarar su interés,
porque unos dicen Montés,
y otros dicen Castelvín.
Hasta en los gallos se ve
de aquestos bandos la furia,
porque tienen por injuria
que alguno cantando esté.
Y con tantos intereses,
que si un Castelvín primero
comienza en su gallinero,
responden treinta Monteses. (1.66-99)[11]

[MARÍN Well, for my part, not only has it pained me / as a man

11 For the Spanish text of *Castelvines y Monteses* I refer to the digital edition https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/castelvines-y-monteses--0/html/ (Accessed 5 May 2022). The English text is taken from Cynthia Rodríguez-Badendyck's translation published in 1998. In her introduction, Rodríguez-Badendyck interprets the happy ending from the perspective of the Catholic theology of free will: "the comedic ending is earned by passing through tragedy and beyond it" (41). The story of the two lovers could not end in tragedy because human love, when true, participates in divine love. The first English translation is that of Frederick William Cosens: Vega Carpio 1869, even though it must be said that at many points it constitutes a synthesis of numerous passages of the Spanish playwright.

> of sensitive feeling, / to see the hatred among you / breed mischief in human beings, / but you know your very dogs / will go and bite one another. / What a spectacle to see / the hounds of the Castelvins / and the mastiffs of the Monteses / come ravening out the doors, / their jaws gaping open with rage. / If only their sharp little pointed swords, / why, our constables would grow richer / by the hour with the added employment. / Not a man of you walks his dog / without buckling an armored collar – / for the elegant look, I'm sure, / against the black or white fur. / And the cats! Your cats, incensed, / all prowl in packs together, / and swiftly make battlefields/ out of rooftops and kitchenyards. / Their caterwauling battlecries / announce their allegiances: / these here will howl, "Montés!" / and those there will yowl, "Castelvín!" / until the roosters rally/ to the fury of your houses,/ affronted and outraged/ that any cock should crow/ for that other detested faction./ If one backyard fowl begins/ to sing out, "Castelvín!" / thirty others will squawk, "Montés!" (58-9)]

This adventure seems very risky, but in spite of this the two friends enter the Castelvines' dwelling. Roselo is so bold that he takes his mask off and Julia immediately falls in love with him, as does her cousin Dorotea with Anselmo. To cap it all, the maidservant falls in love with Marin. With the decision to meet one another at night in a *locus amoenus*, with Julia's fear when she discovers Roselo's identity, there is also a scene where his father, head of the Monteses, is shown worrying about Roselo's propensity for love affairs and gambling, and hoping he will soon marry.

The meeting takes place in the garden, where Julia greets her cousin Otavio, just before Roselo's arrival, after which he tells her he loves her and wants to marry her in secret:

ROSELO Sabe el cielo que lo hiciera
si pudiera obedecerte,
querida enemiga mía,
luz del alma que aborreces.
Mas, ¿cómo sera posible?,
pues será fácil volverte
el anillo y las palabras,
y el saltar estas paredes,
pero no dejaré de hablarte
y decirte que no pienses

que hay volver, si no hay peligro,
ni amor, que sin él se esfuerce.
Advierte pues, Julia mía,
que también de oírte y verte
te amé sin saber quién eras,
tú sabes si lo mereces;
y que cuando supe el nombre,
y vi el peligro presente,
amenazando mi cuello
si este mi amor se supiese,
procuré dejar de amarte,
mas amor, que siempre ofrece
industrias en imposibles,
y no hay mal que no remedie,
me dijo que no dejase,
Julia mía, de quererte,
pues de secreto, los dos,
si el amor nos favorece,
bien podremos, Julia mía,
bien, Julia mía.

JULIA Detente,
detente pues; y no digas,
Julia mía, tantas veces,
que temo que harás en mí
los efetos que quisieres.
Que el nombre, en ajena boca,
alegra, enternece y mueve.
Mas di, ya que hablaste, cómo
podrás hablarme y quererme.
¿Qué intento llevas?, ¿qué fin?,
¿qué procuras?, ¿qué pretendes?

ROSELO Que nos casemos los dos,
luz mía, secretamente,
en vuestra parroquia un día;
que con quien hacer lo puede,
yo tengo estrecha amistad;
y si el peligro le ofende,
bien podemos engañarle.

JULIA Tiemblo de oírte.

ROSELO ¿Qué temes?

JULIA Mil desdichas.

ROSELO ¡Ay, señora!,
¿qué desdicha te detiene,
si puede ser que estos bandos
con tu casamiento cesen?
Mira que por dicha el cielo
nos provoca ocultamente
a este amor honesto y santo,
con que todos en paz quede. (1.931-86)

[ROSELO Heaven knows that I would do it; / if I could, I would obey you, / my beloved enemy, / light of the soul you abhor. / But how is it possible? / It would be an easy thing / to return the ring and the words, / and to leap the walls again, / but how can I not speak, / not tell you there's no turning back / without turning back toward danger? / Without it no love is proved. / Then know, my Julia, that I, too, / only seeing and hearing you, / loved you without knowing who you were / (as you know you are worthy to be loved). / Then when I learned your name / and saw the danger present, / menacing my throat / if my love were to be found out, / I tried not to love you any longer. / But love, who is most industrious/ in what is impossible, / and remedies all ills, / love told me not to let go, / my Julia, not to stop loving you. / In secret the two of us, / if love will smile on us, / we two, my Julia, may well, / well, my Julia . . . // JULIA Stop. / Stop now, and please don't say / "my Julia" quite so much. I'm afraid you may have the effect / on me that you wish to have; / my name in the mouth of a stranger/ makes me happy, and tender, and moves me. / But now that you've spoken, tell me, / haw can you see me or speak to me? / What are your intentions? / What do you want from me? // ROSELO That the two of us should be married, / my light, here in your parish, / in secret, on day soon. / I know someone who can do it, / a close and trusted friend; / and if he's dismayed by the danger / we can, if need be, deceive him. // JULIA I'm afraid when I hear you. // ROSELO Of what? // JULIA Of a thousand mischances. // ROSELO Ah, lady! / What mischance can hold you back / when it may well be that these factions / can be brought to an end by your marriage? / Only see, it may be that heaven/ is prompting us secretly / to this honest and only love, / so we all may live in peace. (85-7)]

Act 2 opens in a church where some of the women of one of the feuding families have taken the seats usually occupied by the

women of the other one. This affront is the harbinger of violent consequences. Roselo meets his friend Anselmo in church too and reveals the fact that his marriage to Julia has already taken place and he has been meeting Julia for several weeks every night after her conversations with her cousin Otavio. Roselo tells Anselmo that as soon as Otavio leaves the garden of the house at midnight, he comes there with a ladder and climbs up to Julia's room where he stays until the first light of dawn:

ANSELMO ¿Puede dejar entenderse,
Roselo, tu pensamiento,
ya paseando de día
su calle, a su reja atento,
ya, como agora, en la iglesia?
ROSELO En eso, Anselmo, procedo
con la cordura que basta.
ANSELMO ¿Pues hay hombre, amando, cuerdo?
ROSELO No paseo yo su calle,
y de milagro a este templo
vengo a misa.
ANSELMO ¿De qué suerte
os veis?
ROSELO Sin peligro, Anselmo.
ANSELMO ¿Cómo?
ROSELO Poniendo una escala,
las más noches con silencio,
a la pared del jardín
de los naranjos y cedros,
bajo; y Celia, que me espera,
me guía hasta su aposento,
donde primero que el alba,
peine esos rubios cabellos.
Ya doy la vuelta a la escala,
donde Marín llega presto,
subo, y diciendo, y en casa
de día descanso y duermo.
ANSELMO ¿Y eso no tiene peligro?
ROSELO No, Anselmo, que cuando llego
todos duermen en Verona. (2.167-93)

[ANSELMO Roselo, have you wholly abandoned the process of ra-

> tional thought? / You walk down her street in broad daylight, / loiter under her window, / and now, like this, in the church? // ROSELO I proceed in this, Anselmo, / with all necessary prudence. // ANSELMO Is a man in love ever prudent? // ROSELO But I don't walk down her street, / and I come to this church today/ by a miracle. // ANSELMO Then how is it/ that you manage to meet? // ROSELO Quite safely. // ANSELMO But how? // ROSELO By leaning a ladder / to the garden wall, and then softly / many a night I climb down, / through the orange trees and cedars. / And when at first light the dawn / combs out her shining hair, / I turn again to the ladder, / when Marín is prompt to meet me. / I climb up, and I descend, / and by day, at home, I sleep. // ANSELMO And there's no danger in that? // ROSELO No. By the time I arrive, / every soul in Verona is sleeping. (93-4)]

And even if young Roselo intends to go on in this way until the hatred between the two families has ended, as soon as the two friends are outside the church the predicted fight between the Castelvines and the Monteses takes place. Even after swords have been drawn, the young Roselo tries to clarify what happened in the church and to end everything peacefully, but Otavio will not listen to reason, he attacks Roselo and Roselo kills him. On the arrival of the Duke of Verona, with a company of soldiers and their captain, all present affirm that everything had begun because of Otavio's attitude and that Roselo had tried to solve the matter peacefully. Julia, too, who was not even there at the time and has no cause to testify bears witness in Roselo's favour, just so that she can save him:

VERONA Roselo, ¿mataste a Otavio?
ROSELO Si es muerto, digo que sí,
provocado y con agravio,
y defendiéndome a mí.
VERONA Mira que está aquí presente
una prima del difunto,
que le amaba tiernamente.
ROSELO Y yo a la misma pregunto
si le maté, justamente.
JULIA Aunque en Otavio perdí
gran señor, primo y marido,
digo que mil veces sí,

porque obligada he nacido
a esta verdad contra mí.
VERONA ¿Vístelo?
JULIA Desde la puerta
de la iglesia; y en aquesto
toda Verona concierta
que ese hombre estaba dispuesto
a la paz segura y cierta,
cuando Otavio le importuna
a que se maten los dos,
soberbio desde la cuna.
¡Ay Celia, mal me haga Dios
si he visto cosa ninguna! (2.392-415)

[VERONA Roselo, did you slay Otavio? // ROSELO If he's dead, then yes, I did, / but under provocation /, in the act of defending myself. // VERONA Observe that there is here present / a cousin of the deceased, / and one that loved him dearly. // ROSELO I put it even to her / if I was not justified. // JULIA Although in Otavio I lost, / great lord, both cousin and husband, / I say a thousand times yes. / I was born bound to the truth/ though it be against myself. // VERONA Did you see it? // JULIA I did, from the portal / of the church. Everyone in Verona / concurs with what I've said: / that this man's sole intention/ was a firm and enduring peace, / when Otavio pressed upon him / that they should kill one another. / He was always, from the cradle, proud. / *(Aside to Celia)* (Oh, Celia, may God strike me) if I ever saw a thing! (101-2)]

The result of this is that Roselo is not condemned to death but exiled by the Duke of Verona until the hostility between the two families has cooled down. Before his exile, Roselo and his servant Marin meet up with Julia and Celia. As a contrast to the conventional Petrarchan language of love which requires a vow of mutual fidelity ("Y como en presencia he sido, / el mismo seré en ausencia" (2.564-5) ["and as in presence I have been, / so shall I be in absence" (106)], we have the *gracioso* Marin's dialogue with Celia as a counterpoint in a comic vein which also demonstrates the servant's cowardice. This Act ends with Julia's father's desire to console his daughter by having her marry count Paris; with Roselo who realises that his secret marriage to Julia is compromised when he learns the contents of a letter read to him by Paris (his loy-

al friend) who is accompanying him to Ferrara and with the same Roselo who suspects he is being tricked by Julia and for this reason decides to avenge himself by marrying the first woman he sees when he arrives at his destination.

The third and final Act opens with the young Julia's promise to her father to accept count Paris's hand. Then, when she is alone with her servant, as she is ready to die rather than to marry another man, she drinks the potion prepared by Aurelio and asks for Roselo to be informed of her death. He has already reached Ferrara, and has just fought a duel with other admirers of the lovely Silvia whom he is courting to forget the suffering caused by the news of the plans for Julia's marriage to count Paris when he learns from his friend Anselmo who has just arrived from Verona, that Julia has taken poison and died and that the funeral has already been held and that her body is lying in the family crypt. As different from the Shakespearian version, however, Roselo is informed by Anselmo that the poison taken by Julia has only caused her to fall into a deep sleep which will last for two days and will permit him to join her and flee with her to France or Spain.

Roselo and Marin go back to Verona and enter the crypt just as Julia, frightened and bewildered, wakes up. The following 150 lines turn into a really comic sequence: everything is happening in darkness as the torch has gone out, the fault of the terrified and clumsy servant. Julia wanders about the vault unsure whether she is alive or dead and all three characters keep coming into contact with skulls and bones, while the exchanges between Roselo and Marin reveal the servant's proverbial pusillanimity in the pervading gloom. Finally, however, the two lovers meet and Roselo tells Julia that Aurelio' potion was not a deadly one. The three characters, on Julia's advice, leave Verona dressed up as peasants and retire to the family's country estate.

In this way Lope de Vega is creating the conditions for a happy ending. In the country house, they are preparing a wedding for the old Antonio Castelvines with his brother's young daughter, his own niece, Dorotea, so that in the light of the recent happenings, the family inheritance is not lost to far-off relations (cf. 3.702-7). Castelvines arrives at his house apparently to be met with his daughter's ghost: Julia pretending to be a heavenly spirit talks to

him from an upper room and manages to get him to promise to forgive Roselo for the murder of Otavio and above all to put an end to the enmity between the two families. The conclusion is inevitable and the play ends with the union of three couples: Julia with Roselo, Anselmo with Dorotea and Marin with Julia's maid Clelia.

At this point I should like to emphasise several details. In the first place this is a particular version of Bandello's tale, skillfully adapted according to the canons of the *comedia nueva*. Furthermore, Lope theorises his own theatrical practice in the volume *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* of 1609. In this work, this too written in verse, he argues above all for the need for a variety of themes and of mixing tragedy with comedy. He underlines the importance of the ordinary public (for it is they who buy tickets for a performance), together with the codification of polymetry, the use of different metres in the same piece, which lends variety to the lines and which is a typical and essential feature of drama at this time.[12]

12 As is well-known, the use of a certain metre was the cause of a system of expectation on the part of the audiences of seventeenth-century Spanish theatre. The lines often uttered even before the entrance of the actors were already indicative whether the public should expect an epic moment, a lyrical effusion or a love scene. Another relevant aspect of this theatre is its capacity to unite the different social classes without mixing them. There were places for standing and sitting, covered places and others in the open air, with ushers who managed to fit all the spectators into a noisy space. It must be remembered that performances took place in the afternoon: going to the theatre meant watching a long and multipart performance, with a prologue (*loa*) which presented the company and caught the public's attention, followed by the first act of the play. After that there would be an intermezzo before the second Act, and then a dance. Then came the third Act, followed by a *mojiganga*, which brought the occasion to a lively, festive conclusion. All of this would last at least three hours. We should also recall the figure of the *gracioso*, a real *alter ego* of the *galán*, that is, a servant who in contrast to the 'high' values of the protagonist represents the 'low' ones; fear and avidity, for example; and it is often he, as it is in the case of Marin, who becomes the fulcrum of the action and who also relieves the dramatic tension with his cunning pranks. A final detail: there did not exist any fixed practice of printing and circulation of the dramatic literary text. Lope's plays began to be published, as we have said, in an adventitious way. The work was sold by the writer (who lost any copyright) to the manager, who then was free to adapt, mo-

In the case of *Castelvines y Monteses* we do not need to know if the public was aware of the existence of the work of Bandello, the French translation or Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, all things of difficult access to the public, but it is certain that Lope got hold of a story, modelled it following the taste of his public and reworked it so it ended happily.

A few further points deserve to be made clear. Julia is a character who, as different from her counterpart in Bandello, is often the real *deus ex machina*. It is she who makes the appointment with Roselo, who witnesses in his defence, although she is perjuring herself as she was not present, that it was Otavio who provoked the bloody events: she it is who pretends to feel sorry for her cousin's death and who hides her secret marriage with Roselo from her father. Again it is Julia who makes Roselo, who has been exiled to Ferrara, visit her clandestinely every night that he can, thus disobeying the orders of the Duke of Verona:

JULIA Que vengas
con gran secreto a Verona
todas las noches que puedas,
hasta que llegue ocasión
que nos vamos a Venecia,
dando a estas paredes paso,
los de la escala de cuerdas,
que hasta que viva contigo,
¿cómo puedo estar contenta?
¿Cumplirasme esta palabra? (2.653-62)

[JULIA Come to Verona / with the greatest secrecy / as many nights as you can, / until the time is ripe / for us to flee to Venice, / scaling these garden walls / with the ladder as you have before. / Till I live my life with you/ how can I be happy? / Will you keep your word to me? (109)]

It is Julia indeed, who in the crypt proposes going to the Castelvines' country estate (and perhaps her name itself renders her more authoritative, compared to the nickname Julieta):

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dify or manipulate it according to the wishes of the public or the number of the actors in the company, situations which could lead to significant cuts.

JULIA Si procuras
que estemos más encubiertos,
hasta que la suerte cumpla
sus términos en nosotros,
y aquellas venganzas duran,
en la hacienda de mi padre
nos librarán de su injuria
dos hábitos de villanos. (3.666-73)

[JULIA Unless / you've a better way to hide us, / until such time as fortune / has fulfilled its plans for us – / if this vendetta continues / at my father's estate in the country / two simple peasant costumes / will help us elude its mischief. (143)]

And it is the wise and enterprising Julia who, pretending to be a heavenly spirit, saves Roselo's life and creates the conditions that will open a new period of friendship between the two rival families of Monteses and Castelvines. When considering the difference between Lope's Julia and Bandello's, we have only to think that Fra Lorenzo has great doubts about whether the young woman would have courage enough to lie in the same tomb as her cousin Tebaldo, as his body would "sicuramente putire" ("surely stink") and be full of "serpe e mille vermini" ("snakes and many little worms").[13]

In other words, Lope casually dismantles and rewrites the story of the two lovers of Verona. Even the most sinister situations, like the visit to the crypt, in Lope become comic occasions, or at least mingle the tragic with the comic. Deviation and elimination are the basic elements of his comedy. Even in the title it is very probable that the Spanish author distances himself from tradition. Castelvines and Monteses have a vaguely Catalan ring, and seem to recall family feuds of that time and place. And it is noticeable that there are no references to "*Pietosa morte*" (Da Porto) ["pitiful death"] or "*sfortunata morte*" (Bandello) ["unlucky death"]. Certainly, however, the references to Verona and to the Duke are plainly visible. The transformation of the name from Romeo to Roselo is something of a surprise and to be seen nowhere else in the multiplicity of reworkings of this story, and yet another thing

13 I am summarising here some of the indications of the interesting and documented work of Gentilli 2020.

to signal is the taste for duplication or even triplication of the couples. There are not only Roselo and Julia, but also Anselmo and Dorotea and then the servants Marin and Celia. They are all happily married and the two servants even receive a thousand ducats:

ANTONIO No es tiempo, dale las manos.
MARÍN ¿Y a mí no hay quien me consuele?
¿No hay quien me paga el sacar
esta muerte?
JULIA Razón tiene.
Celia es suya y mil ducados.
ROSELO Senado, pues ya se entiende
lo demás, aquí dan fin
Castelvines y Monteses. (3.1013-20)

[ANTONIO Not now; give him your hands. // MARÍN And for me, have I no consolations? / Don't I get someone in payment/ for retrieving this corpse? // JULIA He's right. / Take Celia and thousand ducats. // ROSELO Now you know, grave assembly, the rest. / And here is ended the play / *Castelvins and Monteses*. (155)]

In this extreme case of *variation in imitando* it is clear that there is a refusal of the fortuity of events and the arbitrary nature of fortune. Again, many are the instances of motives which are re-proposed or revisited only in part: from the hostility between the two families to the meeting between the young lovers, from the secret marriage to the use of the narcotic, from the apparent death to the macabre re-awakening, even though this is rewritten in a comic vein. Yet another feature already noticed by some observant critics, is the comic degeneration of the prototype, its turn from tragedy to comedy (cf. Gentilli 2020, 146). And not least Lope's ability to smoothen the many traps of the story: no on-stage concessions to the wedding-night. On the contrary: the two months of nocturnal assignations, after their wedding, although it was clandestine, had been celebrated, are never referred to with the slightest trace of false *pruderie*. Those two months have been transformed into a dutiful *ménage* between husband and wife. The union of the bodies of two lovers, that has been repeated night after night, is indeed never staged but is perceptible in Roselo's replies to his friend Anselmo's questions on the second day:

ROSELO Otavio la quiere bien,
pero el peregrino ingenio
de Julia sabe engañarle.
ANSELMO ¿Cómo?
ROSELO Por el mismo huerto,
desde las diez a las doce,
habla con él, y él con esto
vase acostar a su casa.
ANSELMO Ingenioso pensamiento;
con eso andará seguro.
¿Pero tú no tienes celos
de que hable con tu esposa?
ROSELO No, porque los oigo y veo
muchas veces, escondido,
y sé que es lenguaje honesto
el que pasa entre los dos.
ANSELMO ¿Y el tuyo?
ROSELO Licencia tengo
de marido.
ANSELMO ¿Luego ya
en la posesión te ha puesto?
ROSELO Pues si ya estamos casados,
¿quién nos obliga a respeto?
ANSELMO Tiemblo de lo que me dices.
ROSELO Yo con el calor no tiemblo.
ANSELMO ¿No te da miedo la casa?
ROSELO Nada, Anselmo, me da miedo,
porque amor y posesión
son valientes en estremo.
ANSELMO Ya no sé qué aconsejarte.
ROSELO Mi bien no quiere consejo,
porque es llover en la mar
dar consejo a casos hechos. (2.195-224)

[ROSELO It's true he's in love with her, / but Julia's peregrine wit/ knows the way to dupe Otavio. // ANSELMO How? // ROSELO In the very same garden / in the hours between ten and midnight, / she converses with him, and then/ he takes himself to bed. // ANSELMO What an ingenious idea! / Well then, she's secure, / but what about you? Aren't you jealous / of a man that talks with your life? // ROSELO No, since I often hide there / and see and overhear them. / I know it's honest language / that passes be-

tween the two. // ANSELMO And yours? // ROSELO Well, I have the licence / of a husband. // ANSELMO Then she's already granted you / marital possession. // ROSELO Well, if we are married, / whose will should we wait upon? // ANSELMO It terrifies me to hear this. // ROSELO I tremble, but not with terror. // ANSELMO But aren't you afraid of her household? // ROSELO I am afraid of nothing. / Love and possession, Anselmo, / are valiant in the extreme. // ANSELMO I have no more advice to give. // ROSELO My happiness needs no advice. / For things already accomplished / advice in rain in the ocean. (94-5)]

Roselo's affirmations are confirmed by Julia herself on the third day. This is the moment when the girl declares her wedding, even though it was clandestine and therefore not really in line with post-Tridentine opinion, to be within the Catholic tradition, as it has been blessed by the priest, Aurelio:

JULIA Cualquier hombre te dijera,
por vil y bajo que fuese;
y no puede el que me dio
para marido mi suerte.
Casome Aurelio con él,
que hasta tanto que tuviese
la bendición de la iglesia,
no fue posible moverme.
Dos meses fue mi marido.
ANTONIO ¿Que no se supo en dos meses? (3.881-90)

[JULIA I'd have told you of any man, / however vile and low, / but I could not name to you / the man Fate gave me for a husband. / Aurelio married us, / for until I had received / the blessing of the Church, / I would not consent to be moved. / Two months he was my husband. // ANTONIO And I didn't know for two months? (150-1)]

I shall not go into the details of the probable, presumed and hypothetical relationship between *Romeo and Juliet* and *Castelvines y Monteses*. Much has been said and written since in 1874 Julius Klein claimed that Lope's play was written before 1603, sustaining his hypothesis first by postulating the existence of a dramatic source, since lost, common to both plays, then perhaps the possibility of copies of Lope's work which had reached England before

the composition of *Romeo and Juliet*, and so on and so forth (Klein 1874, 955-84). Critics have taken various sides on this issue. There is an interesting hypothesis in a 2015 article by Agnese Sammanca del Murgo, even though it is not supported by convincing data, where she maintains that the clues disseminated in *Castelvines y Monteses* would suggest that Lope knew about the existence of Shakespeare's masterpiece.

According to her, if the intertextual dialogue between the two works, the duplicates, assonances and echoes on a textual level are taken into account, it would be possible to justify familiarity with *Romeo and Juliet* on Lope's part by basing this familiarity on historical situations. The hypothesis finds its origins in the fact of the presence of "two people close to Shakespeare who were in the streets and the places dear to Lope" (2015, 203; my translation) and concludes that "there is a direct and genetic relationship that makes *Romeo and Juliet* the subtext of *Castelvines y Monteses*" (209). This underlying hypothesis is based on the circumstance that a translator, John Mabbe, who was accompanying the English ambassador to Madrid, John Digby, Earl of Bristol, was a competent Spanish scholar and admirer both of Shakespeare and of Lope, and this would have permitted the Spanish playwright to exploit Shakespeare's text in its entirety (ibid.). This is without doubt a very intriguing conjecture, but in the end it is indeed only a suggestion, one which would, moreover, mean that the date of the composition of Castelvines y Monteses would have to be moved to 1616-17, and that is a long time after the period established by the analysis of its polymetry which allows us to set the time of its writing to 1606 or soon after. What is certain is that the English ambassador John Digby was in fact in Madrid between 1611 and 1616 a few blocks down from the house Lope had bought in 1610.

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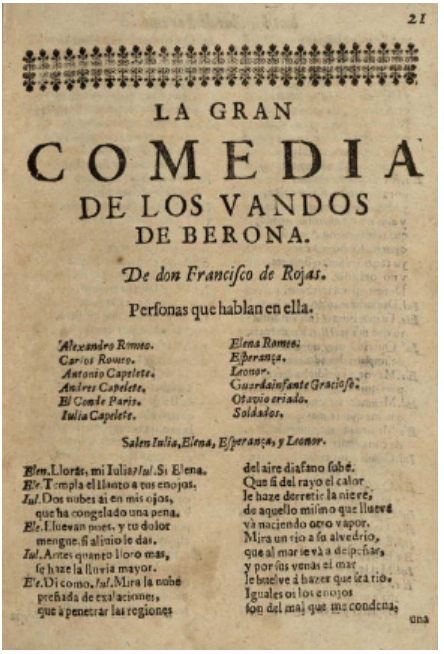

21

LA GRAN

COMEDIA

DE LOS VANDOS

DE BERONA.

De don Francisco de Rojas.

Personas que hablan en ella.

Alexandro Romeo.
Carlos Romeo.
Antonio Capelete.
Andres Capelete.
El Conde Paris.
Iulia Capelete.
Elena Romeo.
Esperança.
Leonor.
Guardainfante Gracioso.
Otavio criado.
Soldados.

Salen Iulia, Elena, Esperança, y Leonor.

Elen. Llorás, mi Iulia? *Iul.* Si Elena.
Ele. Templa el llanto a tus enojos.
Iul. Dos nubes ai en mis ojos,
que ha congelado una pena.
Ele. Lluevan pues, y tu dolor
mengue, si alivio le das.
Iul. Antes quanto lloro mas,
se haze la lluvia mayor.
Ele. Di como, *Iul.* Mira la nube
preñada de exalaciones,
que à penetrar las regiones
del aire diafano sube.
Que si del rayo el calor
le haze derretir la nieve,
de aquello mismo que llueve
và naciendo otro vapor.
Mira un rio a su alvedrio,
que al mar se và a despeñar,
y por sus venas el mar
le buelve à hazer que ès rio.
Iguales os los enojos
son del mal que me condena,

una

Fig. 2 By kind permission of Biblioteca Nacional de España TI/64

The second play I shall briefly analyse was written by Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla, an author who enjoyed so much recognition at that time that it was he who inaugurated the theatre space, since destroyed, of the architect Cosimo Lotti's Coliseum of the Buen Retiro, with his play *Los bandos de Verona*.[14] At this point the story of the lovers of Verona moves from the *corral*, usually internal inn-yards, or the courtyards of hospitals or religious associations, to the theatre of the royal court, indoors, with artificial lighting, curtain and perspective backdrops.

The work was published five years later, and from what we have managed to glean from the evidence, the text that has reached us must be the one that was performed in the corrales, not the one, therefore, that was staged in the Coliseum in 1640.[15] Even

14 For a modern edition see Rojas Zorrilla 2012, 169-321, with a detailed introduction by Pardo Molina and González Cañal 2012, 171-203.

15 The first edition of this play appeared in 1645 in Segunda parte de las

though it is true that the play does not present many difficulties from the point of view of its staging, there can be no doubt that between the first court performance and the fortunate and continuous performances following this in the corrales we may only hypothesise that there must have been various different scenic solutions.

Los bandos de Verona by Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla proved to be a text with not only a great theatrical fortune, but also an editorial one.[16] In some editions it appears with the subtitle *Montescos y Capeletes*, and in one edition the title is simply *Montescos y Capeletes* tout court. It was twice translated into German (in 1839 and 1953) and partially into English by Frederick William Cosens in 1874 with the aim of comparing it to Romeo and Juliet. It is worth recalling some of the translator's unenthusiastic comments:

> *Los bandos de Verona Montescos y Capeletes* has been bracketed by Shakespearian commentators with another Spanish play, the *Castelvines y Montescos* of Lope de Vega, as illustrative of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*; the author, Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla, has certainly to some extent availed himself of the Italian tradition dramatized by Shakespeare, but has ignored the tragic aspect of the history of the hapless lovers of Verona, whom he marries in the end, and makes happy ever afterwards. . . . I am inclined to think that English students of Shakespeare will scarcely value, as German commentators appear to do, this Spanish play; it is inferior in every way to the '*Castelvines y Monteses*' of Lope de Vega . . . His works vary in style, in language, and in merit; certainly *Los bandos de Verona* is not one of his best productions. . . . I have only translated at length such portions of his play as bear some reference to Shakespeare's tragedy, connecting the scenes so as to render the whole work intelligible to those who feel an interest in every scrap that in the slightest degree can claim to be illustrative of the great dramatist's work. (Consens 1874, vii-viii)

comedias de don Francisco de Rojas, *21r-42v*.

16 Cf. García Lorenzo 2007 and González Cañal 2009. The staging of the work, its political symbolism and the political concerns of the Spanish court, at war with France, that can be seen in the clashes between *Monteses y Capuletes* have been discussed by Doménech Rico 2000.

The cuts and paraphrases make the Spanish playwright's work completely incomprehensible – a useless editorial operation, indeed. And yet, from the very beginning, Rojas Zorrilla's *Los bandos de Verona* reveals some interesting peculiarities. The work does not open with parties or masked balls but a scene where we listen to Julia and Elena confide their love difficulties to one another as one is a Capeletes and the other a Montescos. Julia tells of her unlucky love for Alejandro Romeo and the impossibility that she will ever be able to marry him: her father wants to wed her to her cousin Andrés Capelete: Elena, Alejandro Romeo's sister, on the other hand, wants to marry count Paris who is in his turn in love with Julia (Rojas Zorrilla 2012, 1.1-378).

It is thanks to the recounting of their unhappy loves that we understand about the feud between the two families: Julia was present at the tourney when her brother was killed by Elena's father. So the first meeting between Julia and Alejandro Romeo Montesco is not staged – funnily enough here Romeo becomes a surname so that we end up with two Romeos in the play: Alejandro Romeo and Carlos Romeo. Another important difference is that of the wedding ceremony between the lovers – who are quite grown-up – which takes place in public at the happy ending. Yet another difference is to be noticed at the scene in the crypt which takes place in Act 2 and which Rojas Zorrilla transforms into comedy. Antonio Capelete, Julia's father, orders her to marry count Paris or alternatively her cousin Andrés while she insists she wants to marry Alejandro Romeo and from this comes the decision to poison herself. Listening to the discussion between the two is Alejandro Romeo's servant, Guardainfante, who had come to the house to give Julia a letter in which the young man asks her to flee with him. Fortunately, he had been able to hide beneath a table before the arrival of Antonio Capelete. Julia's father, meanwhile, believes his daughter to be dead, and with count Paris's help carries her to the family tomb. But when Guardainfante informs his master Alejandro Romeo of what has happened the young man expresses total disbelief about Julia's demise: and why does he not believe his loved one is dead? Because, as her lover, and turning to Neoplatonic philosophy for proof (2.1732-72), he knows that if he, Alejandro Romeo is still alive, it

is because she too is still alive. So Alejandro Romeo, guided by his Neoplatonic vision of love, goes down into the crypt.

His servant's fears accompany Alejandro Romeo's laments as he does so, almost as if he were a new Orpheus who is descending into the underworld to rescue his Eurydice. All this until Guardainfante realises that Julia is not dead and at this point sets off the beginning of a comic sequence: calling her name over and over again while blessing her with an aspergillum, he sprinkles water over her until she awakes (2.2067-123). When the two lovers are ready to escape, Elena and Julia's cousin Andrés arrive. He knows she is not dead because he had procured the poison – which is only a strong narcotic – for her. He now wants to capture her to avenge himself for her refusal of his hand. In the confusion and darkness of the crypt there is an exchange of couples: Alejandro Romeo flees with Elena and Andrés with Julia.

It is above all in the third and final Act that Rojas Zorrilla rewrites the story of the two lovers of Verona in a completely different manner. Everything takes place outside the city walls, on an unnamed mountainside, in a dark wood which fittingly represents the absolute lawlessness and chaos of this world. Julia manages to escape after her cousin attempts to rape her – a situation which is narrated, not staged (3.2303-86).

While she is wandering in the mountains, she meets her father Antonio and count Paris. At first, she manages to convince her father that she is a ghost, but then count Paris disabuses him of this idea and Antonio comes to the drastic decision that he will imprison his daughter for the rest of her life in a tower room in his castle, hidden from the eyes of the world, and given up for dead by all except count Paris.

The action of Act 3 becomes more and more complicated: the Capeletes hide with Elena, Julia and Carlos, Alejandro Romeo's friend, in their castle, while the Montescos begin to besiege and bombard it. It is no good for Antonio Capeletes to ask for mercy and admit that he was the only one responsible for the feud; Alejandro Romeo's anger at the supposed death of Julia, murdered by her father on the mountainside, is so fierce that the capitulation of the Capeletes is not enough: he wants to annihilate the lot of them.

His anger is not to be placated by Elena's words neither by those of his friend Carlos who talk to him from the top of the tower: his only intent is to set fire to the whole castle. But then Julia appears there too and asks Alejandro Romeo for forgiveness and mercy (3.3092-114). Once he has gained permission from her father to marry her and for count Paris to woo Elena the performance ends happily with the unanimous intention of uniting the two families in a close and friendly relationship.

There are many other striking things about this play. It is love that triumphs over social obligations. In fact the power represented by the Duke of Verona is completely absent, only being briefly recalled when Alejandro Romeo and his servant go into the crypt and see his tomb with the inscription which reads "Bartolomé de la Escala / señor de Verona" ("Here lies Bartolomeo della Scala, / Lord of Verona"; 2.1969-70). There is no trace of the apotheosis of the power of a lord and no Leviathan re-establishes order. In fact, there is no authority in the city superior to that of the Capeletes and the Montescos. Count Paris no longer has the role of a neutral agent with no trace of involvement in the feud between the families, as is his position in Bandello, Lope and Shakespeare. In Rojas Zorrilla he takes on a relevant part in the Capeletes faction. Again, there is no reference to any exile.

But it is Julia who is the most fascinating figure. She asks help of no one – in this play there are no characters like Friar Laurence in Shakespeare or Aurelio in Lope. Above all, she takes the poison without knowing it is only a powerful narcotic, so she does not pretend to die as is the case in Lope and in Shakespeare. Julia is the real heroine: not in the slightest degree docile, she is determined, her character is really a strong one and just before she drinks what she is convinced is real poison she defends her identity, her choice in love which goes beyond the codes of honour. Standing before her father she claims her own free will in a line of enormous strength "Yo soy mia" (2.1537) ("I am mine"). Much could also be said about the more than three thousand lines of the play: their metrical diversity, the way they are presented in a variety of styles typical of the period by the playwright who inaugurated with *Los bandos de Verona* Cosimo Lotti's Coliseo del Buen Retiro.

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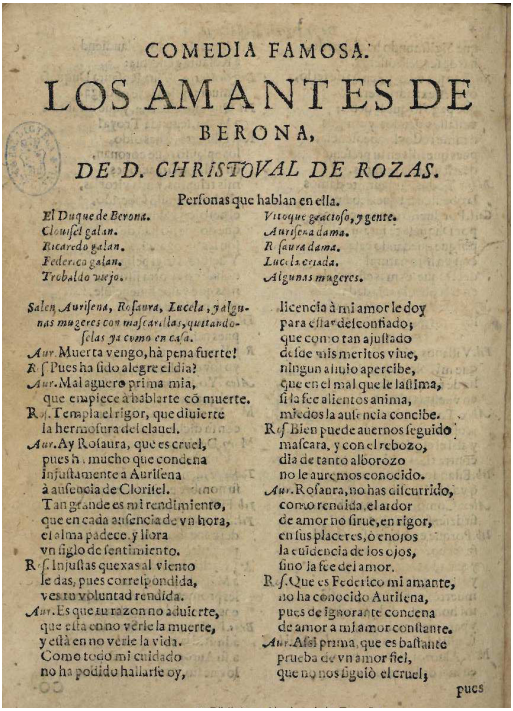

COMEDIA FAMOSA.

LOS AMANTES DE BERONA,

DE D. CHRISTOVAL DE ROZAS.

Personas que hablan en ella.

El Duque de Berona.
Clouisel galan.
Ricaredo galan.
Federico galan.
Trobaldo viejo.
Vitoque gracioso, y gente.
Aurisena dama.
Rosaura dama.
Lucela criada.
Algunas mugeres.

Salen Aurisena, Rosaura, Lucela, y algunas mugeres con mascarillas, quitandoselas ya como en casa.

Aur. Muerta vengo, hà pena fuerte!
R. ſ Pues ha ſido alegre el dia?
Aur. Mal agüero prima mia,
que empiece à hablarte cõ muerte.
R. ſ. Templa el rigor, que diuierte
la hermoſura del clauel.
Aur. Ay Roſaura, que es cruel,
pues ha mucho que condena
inſuſtamente a Aurisena
à auſencia de Cloritel.
Tan grande es mi rendimiento,
que en cada auſencia de vn hora,
el alma padece, y llora
vn ſiglo de ſentimiento.
R. ſ. Inſuſtas quexas al viento
le das, pues correſpondida,
ves tu voluntad rendida.
Aur. Es que tu razon no aduierte,
que eſtà en no verle la muerte,
y eſtà en no verle la vida.
Como todo mi cuidado
no ha podido hallarle oy,
licencia à mi amor le doy
para eſtar deſconſiado;
que como tan ajuſtado
deſde mis meritos viue,
ningun aliuio apercibe,
que en el mal que le laſſima,
ſi la fee alientos anima,
miedos la auſencia concibe.
R. ſ. Bien puede auernos ſeguido
maſcara, y con el rebozo,
dia de tanto alborozo
no le auremos conocido.
Aur. Roſaura, no has diſcurrido,
como rendida, el ardor
de amor no ſirue, en rigor,
en ſus placeres, o enojos
la cuſidencia de los ojos,
ſino la fee del amor.
R. ſ. Que es Federico mi amante,
no ha conocido Aurisena,
pues de ignorante concena
de amor a mi amor conſtante.
Aur. Aſsi prima, que es baſtante
prueba de vn amor fiel,
que no nos ſiguiò el cruel;

pues

Fig. 3 By kind permission of Biblioteca Nacional de España TI/16<24>

Cristóbal de Rozas' play *Los amantes de Verona* is of particular interest. Only one witness remains to us, printed in 1666 in the volume entitled P*arte veinte y cuatro de comedias nuevas escogidas*, ff. 126*v*-44*v* [Part XXIV of Selected New Comedies]. The volume, dedic6vted to a woman (Guiomar María Egas Venegas de Córdoba), also presents the endorsement of Pedro Calderón de la Barca who in a few lines declares the worth of the publication of 12 plays which had been published after he had seen them performed.

This author is the only one of our three seventeenth-century playwrights who returns to the story of the lovers from Verona while proposing a tragic ending. He alters the names of the feuding factions as well as the names of the protagonists. The rivalry

is between Guelphs and Ghibellines and the names of the young couple change. No longer Julia or Julieta but Aurisena who belongs to the Guelphs, no longer Romeo or Roselo but Clorisel, the Ghibelline chief. The first scene sees Aurisena, already in love with Clorisel, conversing with her cousin Rosaura on the occasion of a masked ball. In a bold and contemptuous manner, Clorisel, his servant Vitoque and his friend Ricaredo arrive masked at the ball and are discovered. They manage to hide in some of the secret rooms of the palace thanks to the help of Aurisena and Rosaura.

The person who is most annoyed by their presence at the ball is the Duke of Verona, who during the course of the play reveals himself to be decidedly on the side of the Guelphs. In the general confusion the two young people have time to affirm their love for one another. Despite the searches for them, the three Ghibellines manage to escape by climbing down from a balcony by means of a rope (Rozas 1666, 1. 131*r*-2*r*).

The second Act of the play opens with Federico, who is also in love with Aurisena. Having heard the conversation between the lovers, he decides to murder the young Ghibelline and thus avenge himself for his cousin's ingratitude. The action is no longer taking place in the city but in a country-house owned by Teobaldo, Aurisena's father. Once again, the Duke of Verona appears, on a visit to Teobaldo on the way back from a hunting trip, and tells him he has organised Aurisena's marriage to the marquis Teodoro (2. 132*v*-3*r*). The second day is spent among woods and mountains as we follow the fruitless search for Clorisel on the part of Teobaldo and the Duke of Verona, and the duel between Clorisel and Federico, who dies by the Ghibelline's sword (2. 134). The Act ends with Clorisel managing to escape from a cave where he had been hiding, helped by Aurisena.

The most interesting aspect of this second Act besides the actual events and the complicating of the story, is the increase in the references which announce the tragedy. Fatality and references to death are the bases upon which the dramatic tension is constructed.[17] Premonitions increase and the public realises that the solution of a happy ending is impossible. Uneasiness and melan-

17 See in this regard González Cañal 2006, 413-17, one of the very few studies of this play.

choly become the keynotes of all the lyrical moments of the meetings between Clorisel and Aurisena. The meeting between them outside the cave, with the metaphors of nature and descriptions of the countryside, is filled with a lyricism thick with the premonition of death; a sparrow that dies in Aurisena's hands, a jasmine bush withered and dying (2. 137*v*-8*r*). The same things happen to Clorisel who has seen a goldfinch captured by a kite-hawk and a lamb devoured by a wolf (2. 134*v*). Even the song sung by the maid, on the subject of the unhappy Pyramus and his love for Thisbe, is ominous and Aurisena asks her at once to stop singing (2. 136*r*).

In Act 3 the tragedy occurs. The action moves to the city where Aurisena's wedding to the marquis Teodoro will take place. It is Ricaredo, Clorisel's friend, in a conversation with Aurisena, who takes on the role that in Bandello and in Shakespeare belongs to Fra Lorenzo. Ricaredo tells the girl that both he and Clorisel, who had once studied together, understand the secrets of natural philosophy and how to distil poisons and medical potions from herbs and other plants. He proposes to prepare a potent sleeping-draught which will cause a death-like state for two days and assures her that both he and Clorisel will be in the crypt when she wakes up (3. 139*v*-40*r*). But too many things go wrong. Ricaredo proposes warning Clorisel only after Aurisena has taken the poison, as he does not count on her resolution. Aurisena drinks the potion at eleven at night, an hour before midnight thus ignoring Ricaredo's instructions (3. 141*r*). Even Clorisel's servant, who has reached the city, learns of Aurisena's death, but Ricaredo does not trust him and few people know about the trick. He gives a letter to the servant to give to Clorisel but it will never reach him because of the episode of the bandits in the forest. When he is found naked, hiding behind a cork oak tree, the servant tells Clorisel only that Aurisena is dead and that her repentant father had decided he would permit her to marry whom she wished. The desperate young man immediately sets out for the city to say farewell to Aurisena for the last time.

Clorisel's entry into the crypt with his servant Vitoque at half-past ten at night, is full of macabre *elements* and is influenced by the notorious fear on the part of the *gracioso* which tends to min-

gle tragic with comic. The text has a very precise set of stage directions describing the sleeping girl:

> Córrase una cortina y aparezcan unas paredes como de bóveda, una peaña baja con paño carmesí o blanco donde estará Aurisena, el cabello suelto y atado con una cinta, el vestido blanco o plateado, y sale Clorisel con la luz. (3. 143v)
>
> [A curtain opens to reveal a vaulted crypt, in which there is a low bench with a crimson or white cloth where Aurisena is laid, her hair loose and tied with a ribbon, her dress white or silver, and Clorisel going out holding the light.]

Clorisel gazes at the luminous beauty of his sun which has set and takes out a phial of poison just before Aurisena wakes up. The two lovers have a brief and intense dialogue, which allows them to understand what has happened and the girl asks for his dagger so she can kill herself before he dies from the poison (cf. 3. 144*r*). Ricaredo's arrival with Rosaura, Teobaldo, and the Duke of Verona is too late: the two lovers of Verona die in each other's arms.

***

Before commenting on the aspects that unite the three plays I should like to comment on what they have in common on a formal level. In the first place they are all written in verse and the diversity of these verses is a constant. It is also functional to the situations on stage and to the diversity between the various characters. Among the many verse forms adopted is the *redondilla*, that is the strophe of four octosyllabic verses, with consonant rhymes used in the treatment of many themes, even though Lope advised its usage in themes concerning love. Then we have the *romance*, or the lyrical composition of a popular type, made up of an indeterminate series of octosyllabic lines with assonant rhymes in the even lines, while the odd lines remain free; the *lira*, or the strophe of five lines constituted of three septenaries and two hendecasyllables with two consonant rhymes; the *décima* made up of ten octosyllab-

ic lines with consonant rhyme; the *silva*, with its varied combinations of hendecasyllables and septenaries; the *ottava rima* formed of eight hendecasyllabic lines used to express the most tragic parts of the work, the laments, the moments of greatest tension and intense lyric emotivity, and again the hendecasyllables of some sonnets. Specifically, in Lope, Julia recites a sonnet referring to many anguishing love stories, Portia, Lucretia, Dido, Iphis, Sophonisba, Hero, Thisbe:

JULIA Porcia puede buscar ardiente fuego;
yerro Lucrecia; Dido, espada en mano,
reliquias dulces del traidor troyano,
que al mar de Italia dio su llanto y ruego.
Ifis cordel, por Anaxarte ciego,
y por las amenazas del romano.
Veneno Sofonisba, y agua en vano
Hero en la torre, y arrojarse luego
la punta al pecho, y el aliento en calma.
Tisbe en la sangre mísera resbale,
del que muriendo fue de amantes palma,
que a mí, ni fuego ni cordel me vale,
pues un acto de amor degüella el alma,
y no hay cuchillo que al dolor se iguale. (3.77-90)

[JULIA Portia could reach out for burning fire; / for steel, Lucretia; Dido, sword in hand, / who gave the Italian sea her plaint and prayer, / could seize sweet relics of the Trojan traitor; / Iphis, cord before blind Anaxarte; / Sophonisba, poison in the face / of vaunting Roman threats; and Hero vainly / in her tower watched, but then might leap. / The point against her breast, her breast at peace, / unhappy Thisbe, bloody, missed her tryst / with dying Pyramus, the palm of lovers. / Yet for me, there's neither cord nor fire, / for the deed that hacks my soul is an act of love, / and no knife can strike as deep as such a sorrow. (123)]

And this sonnet, a real lyrical soliloquy on the girl's part, takes place just before she drinks the narcotic prepared for her by Aurelio. And again, when she awakens in the crypt and thinks she is dead the monologue is constructed on the *lira*, that is, as we said, on stanzas formed of septenaries and hendecasyllables. The use of these metres lends huge emotive power to Julia's awakening:

JULIA ¿Adónde me ha traído
mi desventura? ¿Cómo, si soy muerta,
hablo y tengo sentido?
¿Adónde estoy?, ¡o, sin ventana, o puerta,
en tinieblas escuras!
Me niega el cielo ver sus lumbres puras.
Que soy muerta es sin duda.
Mas, ¡ay de mí!, ¿cómo no estoy agora
de carne y voz desnuda?
¿Qué casa es esta, y quién en ella mora?
Mas, tan escura y fuerte,
sin duda que es la estancia de la muerte.
Paréceme que toco
cuerpos aquí y allí. ¡Cielos!, ¿qué es esto?
Vuestra piedad invoco.
Si a caso no soy muerta, ¿quién me ha puesto
donde los muertos viven,
y en sus heladas cuevas me reciben?
Y si, como me acuerdo,
Aurelio me mató con aquel pomo,
¿cómo, cielos, no pienso
este cuerpo mortal que tengo; y cómo
hablo y siento, y me asombro,
todas las veces que la muerte nombro?
Allí una lumbre veo:
mira yo si en el infierno vivo,
si he pasado el Leteo,
y aquí la pena de mi amor recibo.
La luz se va acercando,
si no soy muerta, moriré temblando. (3.507-36)

[JULIA Where has misfortune brought me? / And how does it come to be if I'm now dead, / that I speak and I have senses? / What is this place I'm in, without doors or windows, / all dark and murky shadows, / where heaven withholds the sky's pure light from me? / Surely I must be dead. / But oh, ah me! How is that I speak, / not stripped of flesh and voice? / What house is this; whose dwelling could it be / so gloomy and so strong? / No, surely it is, is the house of Death. / Here and there I feel / that I've touched bodies. / Oh, sweet heaven, what's this? / Oh, pity me and defend me! / If by any chance I am not dead, who put me where dead people live, / who put me where they receive me in their icy caverns? / And if,

> as I recall, / Aurelio with that venomous cordial poisoned me,/ how is it I have not lost / this mortal – God help me! – body that I retain? / How do I speak, and tremble/ whenever I speak the terrible name of Death? / Over there I see a light. / Now I shall learn if I live in infernal regions, / if I've crossed the river Lethe, / and if I'm now to be punished for my love. / The light is coming nearer. / If I'm not dead already, I'll die of fright. (139)]

The variety of versification, as we have said, gave rise, both in spectators (and readers), to a system of expectations and when they heard the play being performed or read it the public knew already whether they were to expect a love or an epic moment. To give some idea of this, Castelvines y Monteses presents seven different sorts of metric strophes and thirty changes of versification during the course of three acts and of the resulting 3055 lines (see Julio 2010).

To all this, it should be added that the language reveals an intense experimentalism moving in multiple directions and employing diverse stylistic devices, including the usual figures of paronomasia, alliteration, dilogy and amphibology that result in lexical and morphosyntactic innovations.

One thing is certain: playtexts, including those considered here, thanks to their elaborate versification, showing a whole variety and sundry combinations of verse forms which are not fortuitous, constituted the great source of Spanish poetry and its diffusion among the public, even among people of little formal culture who went to see and hear the plays. Drama speaks its verses to everyone and everyone can gain something from it, even if this in some way affords different possibilities of interpretation to the individual spectator.

I do not think that it is simply by chance that the story of the lovers of Verona was reworked constantly and in different waves in seventeenth-century Spanish culture. This was a century which revised even the classical myths, as in the emblematic case of Luis de Góngora, a century that loved to challenge and overturn codes continually, that reworked themes and experimented new formal conventions. The instance of *admiration* as an aesthetic principle was of absolute priority as was the union of comedy and tragedy in three-Act texts, an evident transgression of Aristotelian norms.

As we have seen, there are many differences between the three works here discussed and the models to which they are referring. The roles of the characters change (only think of count Paris), as do the names of the characters, and the spaces. Sometimes the two lovers already know each other, at others their first meeting is at the ball; the potion makers are different, and this potion is sometimes taken by the female protagonist without her knowing that it is a narcotic and not a poison; sometimes the marriage is a secret one, and sometimes the wedding happens at the end of the play.[18] The differences between the three plays also include the number of characters. In Lope we have 24 individual characters and four groups, whose number is not specified (ladies, knights, soldiers, musicians, servants, people); in Rojas Zorrilla there are 11 individual characters and one group (soldiers); in Cristóbal Rozas we find 9 characters and two groups (people, some women).

But there is one aspect that deserves more attention than others. In Lope, the Lord of Verona is the incarnation of human and divine justice. It is he who makes the decisions not to transform the city into a hell where personal injustice prevails. Roselo's exile to Ferrara is functional to the order that the Lord of Verona wants to restore in the city. That order is re-established thanks to his valuable intervention that leads to the concluding wedding and the relative peace between the two families.

Very different is the role of power in Rojas Zorrilla's work. On the contrary, it could be defined as inexistent. The only reference is to be found, as we saw, when Alejandro Romeo and his servant go into the crypt and find the epitaph on Bartolomeo della Scala's tomb (2.1969-70). Power *qua* civic authority is absent and therefore there is nowhere to be exiled to if not through a flight to the mountains. Peace and order are the logical consequence of the

18 Some of these changes should be studied keeping in mind the new cultural horizon produced by the Counter-Reformation. For example, it was not very appropriate for a clergyman to prepare the poison, as we read in Bandello, Shakespeare but also in Lope. In Rojas Zorrilla, it is Julia's father who prepares the poison, in Rozas his friend Ricaredo. Likewise, the presence or absence of a secret wedding should be studied taking into account the decrees of the Council of Trent: in Lope there is a secret wedding (and a man of the Church: Aurelio), but we do not find it in Rojas Zorrilla and Rozas.

love between tenacious Julia and Alejandro Romeo. Not only does love triumph over social norms, over paternal impositions, but it is the entity that actually recreates social order and gives peace to the warring factions in Verona. In this work, Bartolomeo della Scala, the Lord of Verona, is simply a simulacrum of the past and the events represented happen after his death.

From this point of view the play *Los amantes de Verona* by Cristóbal Rozas becomes even more interesting. It should be noted that in this play too, as in that of Rojas Zorrilla, there is no exiling of the protagonist because in point of fact there is no power to wield justice, and also in this case the presence of bandits and the forest seems to shroud the story in a world without rules, a world in chaos. Or better still: in Cristóbal Rozas' play power is alive and an integral part of the wanderings of the two lovers. But in any case, the Duke of Verona does not create order, rather contributing decidedly to disorder, injustice and death. As we have seen he participates in the party and his order to Clorisel to remove his mask is what causes the successive search in the palace and the flight from the balcony. The duke of Verona appears again in Act 2, in Aurisena's father's country house and he informs him that he has arranged the marriage of his daughter with the marquis Teodoro. He is also very much a partisan of the Guelphs and exhorts everyone to search for Clorisel in the forest (Rozas 1666, 138*r*). In Act 3 he even enters the crypt and before he leaves he tells Aurisena's father that he will be waiting outside for news of what has happened. The Duke of Verona of Rozas, as different from the one in *Romeo and Juliet*, fails to consider the problem of administering justice, of punishing those responsible for the deaths of the two lovers. And it is not fortuitous that the destiny of the characters, as the *gracioso*, Vitoque, reminds us in the closing words of the play, is all played out on personal choice, that of Aurisena's father to leave for the desert and those of the other characters to shut themselves up in monasteries.

It may seem problematic, but it is not impossible for the different roles of the Duke of Verona in the three plays to be seen as reflecting elements linked to the history of the Spain of this period. Above all, from the early Thirties of the seventeenth century, the country can be seen to fall into a power vacuum and lose the

prestige that at both a national and an international level that for many years it had enjoyed in the Europe of the time. These were in fact the years that saw power in the hands of the *privados*, i.e. the all-powerful favourites to whom sovereigns incapable of governing delegated all powers of decision and command: first with Philip III (1598-1621) in those of Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas, Duke of Lerma, then with Philip IV (1621-1655) in those of the very powerful Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimentel, Count-Duke of Olivares, and Luis Méndez de Haro y Guzmán. These were decades marked by corruption, cronyism, unsuccessful attempts at reform, economic crises, and military defeats with the enemies of all time, France, England, and the United Provinces. And if illicit enrichments are at the root of the discontent that led to the fall of the Duke of Lerma in 1618, even more emblematic is that of the Count-Duke of Olivares in 1643. He was a *favorito* who for more than twenty years governed the monarchy with ambitious measures to bring order to the world. The three comedies, to a different degree, are rich in political symbolism, especially Rojas Zorrilla's play, performed in 1640, the same year in which the Spanish monarchy was confronted with internal wars: the one that would lead to the independence of Portugal, thus putting an end to the union of the crowns of the Iberian peninsula after sixty years, and the one in Catalonia, supported by the French army, which would lead to the subsequent partition of the region with the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659. But the same can be said of Rosas' comedy, where the dramatist decrees that the figure of the lord of Verona is no longer the embodiment of human and divine justice, as he is in Lope's work, but has become the true author of the disorder that transforms the city into a hell where there is no room for clemency and magnanimity but only for the death of the two lovers of Verona.

Translation by Susan Payne

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