

REVIEW

Fernando de Rojas, 'La Celestina', ed. Dorothy S. Severin, notes in collaboration with Maite Cabello. Madrid: Cátedra, 1987. 353 pp. illus.

Dorothy Severin's long-awaited new edition of Rojas's *Celestina* replaces, to great advantage, Damiani's version in the "Letras Hispánicas" series. Severin's earlier edition, first published in 1969 by Alianza and frequently reissued (with occasional corrections) by that firm, quickly became the standard text in a very crowded field. The Alianza text was based fundamentally on the 1499 Burgos and 1514 Valencia editions carefully collated and included a few variants from the (at that time) recently rediscovered Zaragoza 1507 edition.

Now Severin has completely redone her edition and taken Zaragoza 1507 as her base text with preliminaries and "argumentos" drawn from Burgos 1499, Toledo 1500, and Sevilla 1501, for the *Comedia* version while preliminary, closing matter and "argumentos" for the *Tragicomedia* version come from Valencia 1514. Material deleted by the *Tragicomedia* interpolations is italicized, except for the five added acts, which are printed normally. Where miscellaneous gaps are evident in the base text, these are supplied by referring to Toledo 1500 and Valencia 1514.

The importance of Severin's effort is that hers is the first-ever mass-market edition based on the Zaragoza 1507 text, the earliest *Tragicomedia* surviving in Spain, since all of the purported "1502" texts were really printed some ten or fifteen or more years later than their ostensible date, as Norton showed long ago. Her edition is also important because it takes into account the significant (albeit controversial) editorial work of Miguel Marciales (1985). Severin's is not a critical edition nor does it claim to be, but it does offer a more authoritative text than previous student editions and it includes the most significant and interesting variant readings from early printings and, occasionally, from the mid-16th century MS generally known as the *Celestina comentada*.

An important improvement in this edition over Severin's previous effort is the more than twofold expansion in the number of explanatory notes. Her 1969 edition contained 346 notes to the text while this 1987 edition offers 732 such notes. The notes follow standard practice of clarifying difficult points in the text, indicating source usage, or identifying significant critical positions relative to controversial passages. A fair measure of the credit for the success of this expanded annotation must go to Severin's capable collaborator Maite Cabello.

Severin's new edition contains a 36-page introduction, eighteen pages of useful and current bibliography, seven pages of glossary, and five pages of woodcuts reproduced from period imprints. Her introduction and bibliography reveal the only noticeable shortcomings of this edition. In an innovative edition such as this, I would have liked to see Severin depart from tradition and refrain from entering the endless and insoluble debate over authorship of *Celestina* and the genre to which the work belongs. In my considered opinion, the evidence available on both points is meager, equivocal and insufficient to

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support any other conclusions than the sole authorship by Fernando de Rojas of an essentially dramatic work with a tragic conclusion. It is time, I believe, to put an end to these debates unless and until some genuinely weighty and decisive new evidence should surface. For anyone interested in a fuller treatment of these questions, see my "Observaciones pragmáticas sobre tres aspectos de la crítica celestinesca," in *Studia Hispanica Medievalia: Actas de las II Jornadas de Literatura Española Medieval*, ed. L. Teresa Valdivieso and Jorge H. Valdivieso (Buenos Aires: Universidad Católica Argentina/Editorial Ergon, 1988), pp. 71-79.

Errors typographical and otherwise are uncomfortably numerous in the introduction and bibliography, though none of them is ultimately serious or misleading to specialists. Severin is not careful to indicate systematically the original dates and reprints of works that she cites, and so Curtius' 1948 book is listed as 1985 and Manéndez Pelayo's classic study is cited as a 1947 work instead of 1910. Veteran scholars will not be troubled by such points but, in an edition aimed at students, I would have preferred to see more precision in this regard so as to set a good example of documentation. It is puzzling that Severin cites the 1906 Mir edition of Correas instead of the newer Combet (1967) edition, and it is a shame that she did not cite Ortega y Mayor's important 1907 *Celestina* edition--a first attempt at something like a truly critical text. Sometimes the typographical errors are ironic, such as when the second half of the reference to Severin's own study of memory is omitted and when the word *Discourse* is rendered as *Discoural* (*sic*) in a reference to Severin's forthcoming study of the *Tragicomedy*; at other times such errors can be humorous, such as when she speaks of anorexia nerviosa in the *Cárcel de amor*. It may be that Severin's collaborator is partly to blame for some of these infelicities. At any rate, they all remained uncorrected in the 1988 "segunda edición." When these errors are rectified this will be probably the most useful edition of the work yet published, whether for classroom or research purposes.

Because I do not have access to photostats of Severin's base text, I have not attempted a detailed reading for possible errors of transcription or typographical mistakes. A cursory inspection has turned up the dubious form *suendo* (*sic* for *siendo*, p. 142) and it is likely that a few more such errors may be scattered through the text. But they will almost certainly be minor and not ultimately cause any confusion. The text itself is attractively and legibly printed.

Despite the few deficiencies noted here, most of which commonly befall any ambitious new work when presented for the first time, this is an altogether admirable edition, one which should be welcomed by all who participate in the alternately joyous and frustrating adventure of studying Rojas's *Celestina*. Severin has facilitated our collective task by providing a much better text than was hitherto available, while she and her collaborator have furnished some of the most useful notes ever placed before readers of this classic. In my opinion, this new edition deserves to be the text of choice for serious readers and scholars for the next twenty years just as her Alianza edition has been the reference standard for the past two decades.

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