

NOTAS

ALBRECHT VON EYB'S 'MARGARITA POETICA':  
WHAT EVERY 'CELESTINISTA' SHOULD KNOW

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The *Margarita poetica* of Albrecht von Eyb (1420-75) is one of those works to which, from time to time, scholars have tried to call our attention—Marcelino Menéndez

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[Keith Whinnom promised *Celestinesca* an article triggered by Ivy A. Corfis' article of 1984 (see note 1, below), and he refers to it in his "El género celestinesco: origen y desarrollo," in *Literatura en la época del Emperador*, ed. V. García de la Concha, Acta Salmanticensia, Academia Literaria Renacentista, 5 (Salamanca: Universidad, 1988), pp. 119-30, at p. 123, n. 15. He worked on the article at some time during 1985, but at his death in March 1986 it was left unfinished. As his literary executor, I am preparing for publication various unfinished projects, including a book on *Celestina* (of which I shall give an account in a later issue of this journal). The present article cannot be in any way completed: there are two typed pages of text, and one and a half of notes, all with some emendations, but no handwritten drafts of the remainder, or even an outline. Either Keith got no further, and any draft of this part was destroyed once he had transformed it into typescript, or a draft of the whole has been lost; I suspect that the former is the case. Whichever is the correct explanation, although Keith clearly states what he intends to do in the article, there is no possibility of discovering exactly what he would have said. My intervention has therefore been confined to copy-editing, without any change in either content or style, and to the provision of a few bracketed notes. I am grateful to Dr. Leslie P. Turano for verifying a bibliographical reference.]

Pelayo, María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, and, most recently, Ivy A. Corfis<sup>1</sup>—but it has not, even now, received the detailed study it deserves. We know, of course, that Fernando de Rojas had acquired a copy of the book before he died,<sup>2</sup> but we cannot be certain that he owned his own copy when he undertook to complete the *Comedia*. It is doubtful that we shall be able to say with entire confidence whether or not he knew it as early as 1498 (?) before someone has done a great deal of work on the subject, not merely listing all the coincident *sententiae* but checking the possible alternative sources for them. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the *Margarita* was a widely diffused and readily accessible manual,<sup>3</sup> and it may be suggestive that the anonymous author of *Celestina comentada* used it—as Corfis shows—to identify many of the *flores* with which Rojas clearly felt obliged to decorate his text.

There seem still to be a great many copies of the early editions of the *Margarita* lying around, there is at least one book on Albert, of which forty-odd pages are devoted to the *Margarita*,<sup>4</sup> and the Corfis article contains some extensive parallel citation of Albert—and texts quoted by Albert—and *Celestina*. However, it is clear that most *Celestina*-scholars are not familiar with the *Margarita*, summary descriptions of it can be, I have found, highly misleading, and it has finally occurred to me (having had microfilm of the work for over ten years) that a simple account of it might be of some use to *celestinistas*, who may decide either that it contains nothing of any possible interest to them or that here is a book worth checking on certain specific points, especially, perhaps, the extent of Rojas' reading.

First of all, it should be noted that the "poetica" of von Eyb's title has nothing to do with poetry, and depends on the antique senses of *poesis* and *poeta*, and means merely "pertaining to creativity, particularly literary" (just as Rojas describes Petrarch, in the prologue to the *Tragicomedia*, as a "poeta," alluding, we may suppose, to his prose writing in

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<sup>1</sup> Menéndez Pelayo, *Orígenes de la novela*; in the Madrid, 1943 and 1962 reprints, III, 326-27, note 1. Lida de Malkiel, review of *Polidorus*, ed. José María Casas Homs (Madrid: CSIC, 1953), in *NRFH*, 10 (1956), 415-39, at p. 423. Corfis, "Fernando de Rojas and Albrecht von Eyb's *Margarita poetica*," *Neophilologus* 68 (1984), 206-13.

<sup>2</sup> See Fernando del Valle Lersundi, "Testamento de Fernando de Rojas, autor de *La Celestina*, otorgado en la villa de Talavera, el 3 de abril de 1541," *RFE* 16 (1929), 366-88.

<sup>3</sup> Corfis, using only Brunet and Graesse, counts fifteen editions before 1503. The first edition appeared in Nuremberg in 1472. Corfis quotes the edition of Venice, 1493, which happens to be that used by the author of *Celestina comentada* (BNM MS 17631), whereas I shall refer to that of Rome, 1475, printed by Ulrich Hahn ("Udalricus [*sic*, for 'Udalricus'] Gallus alias Han Alamanus ex Ingelstat"), Cambridge University Library, Inc. 2.B.2.2 (1139).

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Anthony Hiller, *Albrecht von Eyb, Medieval Moralist* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1939), pp. 69-111. [There is an earlier book by Max Herrmann, *Albrecht von Eyb und die Frühzeit des deutschen Humanismus* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1893), which deals with the *Margarita* on pp. 174-214. See also the brief but important comment on Albrecht's use of Petrarch's *De remediis* by C.N.J. Mann, "Petrarch and the Transmission of Classical Elements," in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500-1500: Proceedings of an International Conference Held at King's College, Cambridge, April 1969*, ed. R.R. Bolgar (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), pp. 217-24, at p. 222.]

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Latin rather than to his verse in Italian).<sup>5</sup> "*Margarita*" provides a useful abbreviated reference for von Eyb's book, but in fact we have to do with a "Summa oratorum omnium: poetarum ac philosophorum autoritates in unum collecte ... que margarita poetica dicitur." And this descriptive clarification in turn requires interpretation: an *autoritas* is a *sententia*, synonymous, as we shall see, with *flos* (Rojas' *flor*) and *familiar locutio*; and *orator* clearly embraces both *poeta* and *philosophus*, even though numerous authors anthologized in the *Margarita* would hardly be described as "creative writers" or "philosophers" in modern usage.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>5</sup> [The distinction is less clear-cut than this suggests. Petrarch also wrote Latin verse--the literary epic *Africa*, the pastoral *Bucolicum carmen*, and *Epistolae metricae*--so that Rojas could have had his poetic achievement in mind without going outside his Latin works. The general validity of Keith Whinnom's argument is, however, unaffected by the qualification just expressed. Rojas' words, "aquel gran orador e poeta laureado," are a standard way of referring to Petrarch, and very similar words are used in the Basel 1496 edition of the *Opera*, as headings to *Bucolicum carmen* and to Book II of *De remediis*.]

<sup>6</sup> I observe that George A. Shipley, "Authority and Experience in *La Celestina*," *BHS* 62 (1985), 95-111, has failed to notice, or chosen to ignore, my remarks on *auctor* and *auctoritas* in "Autor and Tratado in the Fifteenth Century: Semantic Latinism or Etymological Trap?," *BHS* 59 (1982), 211-18, which were partly provoked by Barbara F. Weissberger's "'Habla el auctor: L'elegia de Madonna Fiammetta as a Source for the *Siervo libre de Amor*," *JHP* 4 (1979-80), 203-36. She returns to the theme in "Authority Figures in *Siervo libre de Amor* and *Grisel y Mirabella*," *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* (Puerto Rico), 9 (1982 [1984]: *Homenaje a Stephen Gilman*), 255-62. *Celestinistas* will recall that Rojas also calls Petrarch an "orador;" Francisco Rico, prologue to Joan Rois de Corella, "*Tragedia de Calesa*" i altres proses, ed. Marina Gustà, *Les Millors Obres de la Literatura Catalana*, 50 (Barcelona: Edicions 62 & La Caixa, 1980), p. 18, argues that *orador* is precisely equivalent to "humanist," but even if we allow the term to embrace classical writers, the writers pillaged by von Eyb seem to spill over that semantic area.

[Apart from the typescript printed above, Keith's file for this project contained only two small-format pages of jottings. Most of these are crossed out in red (Keith's practice when he incorporated material into his text). Of the few that remain, all but one turn out to be brief summaries of sections of Corfis' article (e.g. "*Cel. com.* attributes many other *Cel.* commonplaces to *Marg. poet.*"), but the one exception, "Gilman *The Spain* says not-- pp. 431-32," merits commentary. Gilman's words are: "*The Margarita poetica* is nothing more than a compendium of rhetoric followed by an enormous commonplace book which, as far as I can determine, Rojas never bothered to use." He adds in a footnote: "This statement is based on three long days spent checking for commonplaces from *La Celestina* both in the text and in the copious index. My search was hardly exhaustive, but a complete lack of positive results led to the above conclusion." Gilman's conclusion is examined, and shown to be wrong, by Corfis; but he was not alone in error: in *The Petrarchan Sources of "La Celestina"*, 2nd ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), p. viii, I say that: "My own check of Petrarchan material in von Eyb, made in 1960, supports Gilman." It is clear that we both, sampling the *Margarita poetica* extensively, chose the wrong samples; moreover, neither of us had the good sense to check *Celestina comentada*, a task that Corfis was to carry out many years later.]

**"Hojas recuperadas..."**

Un ensayo teatral dio a España, a la mitad del siglo XV, el autor del primer acto en prosa de la comedia intitulada *La Celestina*, por otro nombre *Calixto y Melibea*. Dicese en su Prólogo que Juan de Mena es su autor, o más bien Rodrigo de Cota. A los fines del mismo siglo, tomó a su cargo el empeño de acabarla el jurisperito Fernando de Rojas, pero lo hizo, de modo que se conoce bien la diferencia de una mano a otra; además de concluir en tragedia lo que empezó en comedia, por cuyo motivo vino a quedar monstruosa y desarreglada, intitulándola tragicomedia. En el primer acto sobresale la elegancia del estilo, la pureza de la lengua y la diestra facilidad del pincel en retratar los caracteres al natural. De este modo, aseguró en él, su autor, la gloria de ser el primer trozo de composición teatral que en España se vio hasta entonces, siendo capaz de competir con las comedias griegas y latinas. *La Celestina* fue traducida, desde luego, en latín; varias veces en francés, muchas veces en italiano y se imprimió también en Toledo el año de 1538 y en Sevilla en 1539. La edición que yo tengo en dozavo es de 1599, de la oficina Plantiniana, compuesta de veintiún actos, con los versos de Rojas al principio y al fin de ella que quiso sirviesen de clave al lector.

José Antonio de Armona y Murga. *Memorias cronológicas sobre el teatro en España (1785)* Prólogo, edición y notas de Emilio Palacios Fernández, Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos y María del Carmen Sánchez García. Victoria: Deputacion Foral de Alava, 1988.