

HOW MANY SISTERS HAD CELESTINA? THE FUNCTIONS OF THE INVISIBLE CHARACTERS

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Thirteen characters speak in the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, seven of them in Act 1 and six in the acts that are indisputably the work of Fernando de Rojas; a fourteenth, Centurio, is added in the *Tragicomedia*. Others are clearly present without speaking, and although it is obvious that the great majority of the speakers are more important than the great majority of the non-speakers, the frontier between speech and silence does not exactly correspond to the frontier between major and minor significance. Most notably, Crito, who contributes to Act 1 the words "Pláceme. No te congojes", matters little in comparison with the Devil's role in Acts 3 and 4 (and, I have suggested, in later acts), or with the equally silent Traso's part in causing Calisto's death in Act 19.¹

Some leading *Celestina* critics have seen the characters as existing, in general, only from moment to moment, within the flow of the dialogue. For Stephen Gilman, "Melibea has no fixed appearance, no

¹ Crito speaks in Severin 1969: 56. All subsequent *Celestina* quotations are from this edition, and an asterisk following the page number indicates material added in the *Tragicomedia*. In order to avoid an unnecessary expansion of the list of works cited, bibliographical references that are not necessary to my argument are given as numbers in Joseph T. Snow's *Annotated Bibliography* and the supplements to it published in *Celestinesca*. These numbers are enclosed in braces (thus, {750}), and numbers in the supplements are preceded by S. For the Devil's role in later acts, see Deyermond 1977.

objective reality apart from or beyond the dialogue" (1956: 65).² Sir Peter Russell observes that "casi todos [los] personajes carecen de pasado aparte del que van adquiriendo a consecuencia de lo que les acontece durante el desarrollo de la obra" (1991: 76), though he acknowledges one major exception: *Celestina*, whose biography is built up by herself and by Pármeno. He goes on:

Es verdad que, de cuando en cuando, sorprende al lector, cuando menos lo espera, un dato biográfico o autobiográfico mencionado al azar [...]. Lo extraño es que estos datos de última hora, por importantes que sean, no suelen tomarse en cuenta después. [...] Tanto la comunicación tardía de informes biográficos importantes como la desatención a sus consecuencias para la historia respresentan, desde luego, un modo de proceder muy contrario a las normas tradicionales de la novelística. (1991: 76-77)

We must, of course, remember that the "normas tradicionales de la novelística" were, when Rojas was writing, still far in the future, and that as they developed they owed much to Rojas's generic innovations. Russell is, nevertheless, right to draw attention both to the existence of these pieces of information and to the fact that they do not, in general, have an influence on the actions or the speech of the characters. They seem to me, however, to be more important than Russell allows, partly because of their frequency and, even more, because they introduce not only glimpses of the past lives of the speaking characters but also many other characters — a few who take a silent part in the action, some who are contemporary with it, and a greater number who are in the past. These characters, both in Act 1 and in the later acts, give an impression of historical solidity and of social and family context for *Celestina*'s main characters.

María Rosa Lida de Malkiel's breadth of reading and perspicacity made her see the relevance to *Celestina* studies, and the limitations, of the 1930s reaction against A. C. Bradley's attempt to treat Shakespeare's characters as real people whose lives could be explored (1962: 283n), a reaction exemplified by L. C. Knights's tongue-in-cheek enquiry about the number of Lady Macbeth's children (Knights 1933). I do not, of

² Gilman makes a valid point here, but some of the conclusions that he builds on this and other points are questionable, as María Rosa Lida de Malkiel (1962: 284-92) and Peter N. Dunn (1975: 106-07) have shown.

course, wish to adopt a Bradleian attitude to the text, yet it is necessary to recognize that, whereas some critics have speculated pointlessly on the basis of inadequate evidence, both Rojas and the author of Act 1 provide us with a good deal of background information. We can never know whether Lady Macbeth had more than one child, because all that she says is "I have given suck", but we do know — more accurately, we ought to know — how many sisters Celestina had, because she tells us.³ I say "we ought to know" because in practice we often do not: the information is given in passing and, because it is usually not mentioned again (Russell 1991: 77), we forget it as we forget most of the information we are given in the course of our lives. I was alarmed to discover, as I reread *Celestina* when preparing the present article, how many of the invisible characters I had forgotten. Even more alarming were the cases — Celestina's sisters, for example — where I could not even recall having seen the information before. It may be that I am abnormally forgetful and unobservant, and any readers wishing to check their own powers of recall may wish to turn at this stage to the Appendix (p. 27, below) and answer the fifteen questions asked there (I should have scored only five before I began my rereading).

It is not easy to find a definition of "invisible characters" that is both clear and generally acceptable. The most obvious and most controversial case is that of the supernatural. God is invoked or referred to a number of times, but is He a character in the work? Rojas, as a Catholic (itself a controversial statement), would have seen God as ever present in the work, but He is not shown as intervening directly in the action. The Devil, however, is addressed by Celestina (85 & 90*) and — as I have already said in the opening paragraph — intervenes in the action (90 & 95), though he never speaks. I should describe that intervention, on which Celestina comments ("Por aquí anda el diablo aparejando oportunidad", 90), as undeniable, were it not for the fact that it is denied by some scholars whom I respect (for a recent treatment of the problems raised by the witchcraft material, see Severin 1995).

A different kind of problem is raised by references to literary, Biblical, and historical personages. Authors who are quoted or referred to cannot reasonably be regarded as characters in the work, but what of

³ She may, of course, be lying, as may any fictional character or any person in real life, but I think it reasonable to assume that, unless we are shown a motive for a lie, what we are told is — within the fictional world created by the author — true. If we assume the contrary, and disbelieve everything that we are told, reading becomes an obstacle race.

Calisto's reference (52) to Aristotle's and Virgil's humiliation by love? If we take into account references to the grandparents of the main characters, why not Aristotle and Virgil? Any line that is drawn must be arbitrary, but it is necessary to draw one, and it seems to me that people who are closely related to main characters or have been involved in their lives form an acceptable category of invisible characters in *Celestina*, and that literary, Biblical, and historical personages do not. The function of the latter group is different; certainly not unimportant, but different: it is exemplary, both because of the direct meaning of the *exemplum* and because it shows the characters as — to adapt St Paul's words to a new context — compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses.

There are strong arguments for including characters in the material that frames the work (for instance, "un su amigo", 35, and the "antiguo autor", 37, who, Rojas tells us, together provided the impulse for his writing of the *Comedia*; or the friends who urged Rojas to expand the *Comedia*, 43-44*). There are equally strong arguments for including groups who have an effect on the action, such as Areúsa's "vecinas envidiosas" (129). I have, however, decided that their inclusion would expand the present article unduly, and I therefore confine myself on this occasion to differentiated individuals who are mentioned in the dialogue.

Then there are the characters whose reality is suspect, who seem to have been invented on the spur of the moment — most frequently in Act 1 — to explain a suspicious circumstance. Thus, when Sempronio comes to Celestina's house while Elicia is entertaining Crito (56), he hears a noise upstairs:

- SEMP. ¿Qué pasos suenan arriba?
 ELIC. ¿Quién? Un mi enamorado.
 SEMP. Pues créolo. [...]
 CEL. ¡Anda acá! Deja esa loca [...] ¿Quiéreslo saber?
 SEMP. Quiero.
 CEL. Una moza, que me encomendó un fraile.
 SEMP. ¿Qué fraile?
 CEL. No lo procures.
 SEMP. Por mi vida, madre, ¿qué fraile?
 CEL. ¿Porfías? El ministro, el gordo.
 SEMP. ¡O desaventurada y qué carga espera! (57)

There is no doubt that Celestina is lying, since we know that the person upstairs is Crito. It is natural to conclude that she has invented not only the presence of the unnamed girl, but also her existence. If so, the deception is systematically maintained in Act 3:

- CEL. Dime, ¿está desocupada la casa? Fuése la moza, que esperaba al ministro?
- ELIC. Y aun después vino otra y se fue. (84)

We are thus left in doubt as to whether the first girl (see {750}), the fat friar, and the second girl are characters whose existence is used to give colour to the deception of Sempronio, or whether they are mere code-words. It is likely that the fat friar was among those who came frequently to Celestina's house, and was a running joke there, but it is possible that he is a spur-of-the-moment invention, in which case Sempronio's "¡O desaventurada [...]!" is revealed as a pathetic attempt to appear knowledgeable. These three characters are, then, another of the work's unresolvable problems. Another, much vaguer, character is, however, clearly an invention: Areúsa, to extract information from the susceptible Sosia, says that "vino a mí una persona y me dijo que le habías tú descubierto los amores de Calisto y Melibea" (211*).

A larger group of characters exists primarily to provide a solid historical background for the main characters (see Selig 1979). Dorothy S. Severin has shown the importance of memory in the work (1970), and the memory of the speaking characters gives us a good deal of information about figures in their past.⁴ One of these, Claudina, is vividly evoked, others are shadowy. Claudina is first mentioned by Pármeneo, in Act 1: "Días grandes son pasados que mi madre, mujer pobre, moraba en su [Celestina's] vecindad" (60), and is first named soon afterwards — in response to Pármeneo's naming of his father, "Alberto tu compadre" (67) — by Celestina: "¿Y tú eres Pármeneo, hijo de la Claudina?" (67; see {S169}). Celestina rapidly takes advantage of this exchange by lying to Pármeneo about the fortune that Alberto had supposedly left with her, in trust for his son (67-68; see {885}). Pármeneo mentions his parents again in Act 7 (122), and awareness of this fictitious fortune stays with him (131). Claudina is, however, a much more important figure than Alberto. Celestina reminisces about her to Sempronio in Act 3 (80-81, the reminiscences being much expanded in the *Tragicomedia*), and then again, to Pármeneo, in Act 7 (122-23), in words

⁴ Jerry R. Rank says that: "In Calisto's case, much as in Melibea's, it is the 'history' of the family within the realities and context of late fifteenth-century urban Castile which must be accounted for if we are to understand the fullness of both characterizations. Calisto's father has no role within the dialogic structure of the work, but the text informs the knowledgeable reader — that is to say, the reader who lived the urban life which surrounded Calisto — through Calisto about his father's work within the urban network" (1993: 162).

that raise the possibility that she died at the hands of the Inquisition (Severin 1995: 25-28). Claudina emerges as a dominant and even violent figure, as Joseph Snow has shown (1986), and Snow argues (1989) that her son has inherited the violence of her nature. If he is right, then this invisible character exercises a decisive influence on the development of the action. It is, in any case, clear that the recollection of Claudina that Celestina uses, not only for tactical purposes but also to build up her own sense of identity (Rank 1986: 242-43; see also [S420]), rebounds fatally when the old woman tries to use it to bring Pármemo to heel in Act 12 (181 & 183). Another and more constructive aspect is that the recollection of Claudina gives a history to the female micro-society dominated by Celestina, and plays its part in demonstrating the almost matrilinear continuity and resilience of that society, blending with Celestina's memory of being taught by Elicia's grandmother (133). Though Celestina is unsuccessful in persuading Elicia to acquire the skill, Elicia does become the old woman's successor in one way, just as Areúsa does in another.⁵

There are other recollections of parents besides Pármemo's. Areúsa, furious with Centurio, invokes "los huesos del padre que me hizo y de la madre que me parió" (198*). Her father's name, Eliso, had already been given by Pármemo (70), and though we do not learn the name of her mother we do soon learn her trade: "no me hayas tú por hija de la pastelera vieja, que bien conociste, si no hago que les amarguen los amores" (202*).⁶ Celestina mentions her own mother, though only in the context of referring to her elder sisters: "de cuatro hijas que parió mi madre, yo fui la menor. Mira cómo no soy vieja, como me juzgan", she says to Melibea (93). Both Calisto's mother and his father are mentioned, though we do not learn the name of either. Celestina refers to the former in passing ("le vido nacer y le tomó a los pies de su madre" (99; the most interesting aspect of her words is her claim to have been midwife to Calisto's mother). Calisto himself mentions his father, saying that the judge who summarily tried Pármemo and Sempronio had been one of his father's retainers: "¡O cruel juez, y qué mal pago me has dado del pan que de mi padre comiste!" (194*, also 195*). In one case, the relative mentioned is not a parent but a sister: "mi hermana, su mujer de

⁵ María Eugenia Lacarra speaks of "la importancia de la transmisión cuasi hereditaria" (1990: 82). I discuss this matter at greater length in Deyermond 1993: 18 and 1995: 81.

⁶ "Pastelera" may not be what it seems: Lacarra says that it was "uno de los numerosos vocablos utilizados para denominar a rameras y alcahuetas" (1990: 83).

Cremes", says Alisa (89; Celestina mentions her later, 110). It is curious that Alisa gives her brother-in-law's name but not her sister's, though we should not read too much into that. All we know of her is that she is ill. Her illness proves to be one of the turning-points of the action (a question discussed below).

A character may acquire solidity of background by recalling an early employer as well as, or instead of, a parent or other relative. Pármeno's sharp-edged memories of his childhood in Celestina's house are one of the best known passages of the work. He does not mention an individual employer after this, though when he and Sempronio are waiting outside the gate of Pleberio's house in Act 12 we learn that "nueve años serví a los frailes de Guadalupe" (176). However, Sempronio — of whose parents we do not hear a word — names three employers in reply to Pármeno: "¿Y yo no serví al cura de San Miguel y al mesonero de la plaza y a Molléjar, el hortelano?" Only the first of these is mentioned in the *Comedia*, and what is added in the *Tragicomedia* greatly increases the interest of the memory, for after the mention of Molléjar or Mollejas (early editions differ on the form of the name) Sempronio continues: "Y también yo tenía mis cuestiones con los que tiraban piedras a los pájaros, que asentaban en un álamo grande que tenía, porque dañaban la hortaliza" (176*). It is well known that Stephen Gilman linked Sempronio's words to the inclusion of a "huerta de Mollegas" in the Rojas family estate in the Puebla de Montalbán, concluding that the Molléjar or Mollejas to whom Sempronio referred was a real person, and that Sempronio's memory of a childhood incident probably reflects a memory of Rojas's own. One of the invisible characters, if Gilman is right — and I think he is —, thus comes to life in a remarkable way, taking his place in the everyday history of late-medieval Castile as well as in *Celestina*.⁷

Some characters, however, are recalled not from memory of direct contacts but from gossip, and are mentioned for satirical or abusive purposes: "Lo de tu abuela con el ximio, ¿hablilla fue?", Sempronio asks Calisto, and continues: "Testigo es el cuchillo de tu abuelo" (51).⁸ A little later in Act 1, Pármeno, describing Celestina to

⁷ The point was first made in 1956: 218n16. Two years later Fernando del Valle Lersundi took up the idea and carried it much further, (1930); see Gilman's comments, 1972: 216n). Gilman returns to the matter in 1966, and deals with it in detail in 1972: 213-17. His hypothesis, to which there was at first a good deal of resistance, is now gaining ground (e. g. Russell 1991: 470n63).

⁸ Studies have concentrated on the significance of the words "ximio" {31, 127, 411, & 944} and "cuchillo" {107}.

Calisto, says of her husband: "¡O qué comedor de huevos asados era su marido!" (60).⁹ Tristán, trying to bring the lovestruck Sosia to his senses, reminds him that "te llaman Sosia, y a tu padre llamaron Sosia" (219*). This is probably true, whereas Centurio's assertion of a traditional family name, "por ella [his sword] le dieron Centurio por nombre a mi abuelo, y Centurio se llamó mi padre, y Centurio me llamo yo" (216*), seems more like an invention, coming as it does at the end of ten ridiculous boasts (see, however, Lacarra 1990: 83).

Other invisible characters are not summoned up from the past of the visible ones, but are contemporary with them; they provide not a diachronic but a synchronic, not a historical but a social, context. I have already discussed the case of the girl, the very possibly invented girl, who was waiting for the fat friar. Another example from Act 1 is related to Celestina's skill in repairing broken virginities: Pármeneo tells Calisto that "cuando vino por aquí el embajador francés, tres veces vendió por virgen una criada, que tenía" (62). That skill recurs in Act 7:

ELIC. Que has sido hoy buscada del padre de la desposada, que llevaste el día de pascua al racionero; que la quiere casar de aquí a tres días y es menester que la remedies, pues que se lo prometiste, para que no sienta su marido la falta de la virginidad. (132)

Thus, in two passages of a few lines each, six characters are mentioned: two young women with frequently recycled virginities, the employer of one (the French ambassador, whose morals are revealed in a few deadly words) and the father of the other (the father is no more concerned by his daughter's activities than the ambassador was by his servant's, and, it seems, is equally ready to profit by them), the deceived bridegroom of the second young woman, and the prebendary who had most recently enjoyed her. Another character mentioned in passing is the captain of the troop in which Areúsa's cohabiting lover has enlisted (the lover himself comes into a different category, and is discussed below): "se partió ayer aquel mi amigo con su capitán a la guerra" (128). A further character is of a different kind, since he has no contact with any of the visible, or indeed with any other of the invisible, ones. He is the maker of Calisto's clock: "¡O espacioso reloj [...]! Que si tú esperases lo que yo, cuando des

⁹ The significance of "huevos asados" has been much discussed: {343, 368, 396, 492, S594, & S834}.

doce, jamás estarías arrendado a la voluntad del maestro que te compuso" (196*). This is, like the discussion between Calisto and Sempronio about the untuned lute (48-49), one of the rare recognitions that there are external laws — as it happens, mathematical ones in both cases — that form part of the divinely ordained plan of the universe and that cannot be adjusted to fit Calisto's desires (see Meyer-Baer 1970 and Cherchi 1996).

An invisible character who profoundly influences the action, the long-dead Claudina, has already been discussed, since the references to her also serve to fill out the historical background. She is not the only one by whom the action is influenced: Alisa's sister is another, though the influence is exerted in a different way. Alisa says in Act 4 that:

ya me parece que es tarde para ir a visitar a mi hermana,
su mujer de Cremes, que desde ayer no la he visto, y
también que viene su paje a llamarme, que se le arreció
desde un rato acá el mal. (89-90)

As we have seen, Celestina is convinced that this is the work of the Devil, "aparejando oportunidad" (90), and the evidence for that interpretation is indeed strong, but the Devil works through human agents, and there are two immediate causes for Melibea's being left alone with Celestina. One is, of course, Alisa's extraordinary folly (a product of her contact with the skein of thread: see Deyermond 1977).¹⁰ The other is the illness of Alisa's sister and the arrival of the pageboy with the news that she has taken a turn for the worse (see {154}). These two invisible and unnamed characters, Cremes's wife and the pageboy, are the efficient cause of Alisa's departure and of all that follows from it.

One other invisible character affects the course of the action, though only briefly and without the far-reaching consequences of Alisa's sister's illness. In Act 7, Areúsa gives two reasons for not wishing to allow Pármeneo into her bed. One is loyalty to her established lover:

Sabes que se partió ayer aquel mi amigo con su capitán
a la guerra. ¿Había de hacerle ruindad? (128)

and the other is fear of him:

¹⁰ Michael Harney (1993), while accepting the importance of the diabolic element, argues that "a cue to [Alisa's] behavior may be sought in the feminine subculture — or counterculture — of traditional patrilineal societies" (1993: 34).

¿cómo quieres que haga tal cosa, que tengo a quien dar cuenta, como has oído, y si soy sentida, matarme ha? Tengo vecinas envidiosas. Luego lo dirán. (129)

I have suggested elsewhere (1993: 12), in the light of María Eugenia Lacarra's research (1990: 28-29), that her lover's reaction may not be the only, or even the main, thing that Areúsa fears, but this does not eliminate the lover as an influence, albeit transitory, on the action. What we learn in Act 15 of Areúsa's relationship with Centurio makes it tempting to identify him as the cohabiting lover, but that identification is ruled out when Areúsa threatens to have her lover beat Centurio:

No te vea yo más, no me hables ni digas que me conoces; si no, por los huesos del padre que me hizo y de la madre que me parió, yo te haga dar mil palos en esas espaldas de molinero. Que ya sabes que tengo quien lo sepa hacer y, hecho, salirse con ello. (198*)

Another group is made up of the invisible characters who take part in the action. The pageboy who comes to see Alisa in Act 4 is one of these. Another, this time of little importance, is Centurio's servant at the beginning of Act 18 (213*). An important group of such characters is responsible for the summary execution of Pármeno and Sempronio. The constable arrests them: "¡Guarte, guarte", cries Sempronio at the end of Act 12, "que viene el alguacil!" (184), and Sosia tells Calisto in Act 13 that "saltaron de unas ventanas muy altas por huir del alguacil" (187).¹¹ They are brought before the judge, who swiftly condemns them. Calisto — now replete after his conspicuous consumption of Melibea's virginity (see Deyermond 1985) — devotes much of his soliloquy to the judge's action and motives (194-95*), dwelling, as we have already seen, on the obligations to Calisto imposed by "el pan que de mi padre comiste" (194; see Rohland de Langbehn 1988 and Rank 1993). The sentence is swiftly carried out by the executioner, whose duties include that of crier: Sosia tells Calisto that

la causa de su muerte publicaba el cruel verdugo a voces, diciendo: "Manda la justicia que mueran los violentos matadores." (187)

¹¹ It is not clear whether this is the same constable as the one whose arrival Sempronio fears as he and Pármeno are waiting outside Pleberio's house (176).

and Calisto, in his soliloquy, recalls the double function: "el verdugo y voceador" (195).

Another who takes part invisibly in the action is Traso, the lame, whose intervention is as momentous in the destruction of Calisto's and Melibea's affair as that of Cremes's page is in its inception. Centurio, as cowardly as he is boastful, decides at the end of Act 18 to delegate to Traso the carrying out of the vengeance which Areúsa had entrusted to him:

Quiero enviar a llamar a Traso, el cojo, y a sus dos
compañeros y decirles que, porque yo estoy ocupado
esta noche en otro negocio, vaya a dar un repiquete de
broquel a manera de levada, para ojeear unos garzones,
que me fue encomendado [...]. (217*)

Traso duly appears in Act 19, though only to make a noise: "no era sino Traso el cojo y otros bellacos, que pasaban voceando", Tristán tells Calisto (224*). We have heard Sosia's words to Traso and his companions:

¿Así, bellacos, rufianes, veníades a asombrar a los que no
os temen? Pues yo juro que si esperarades, que yo os
hiciera ir como merecíades. [...] ¿Aun tornáis?
Esperadme. Quizá venís por lana. (223-24*)

but we never hear a reply. Perhaps the escape of Traso was as silent as his arrival was noisy; that is something that we shall never know. What we do know is that Tristán's dismissive words, "no era sino Traso [...]", are almost the last that Calisto hears in this world, for he too has heard the noise made by Traso and his companions, and he rushes, fatally, to the aid of servants who need no aid. His death has deep and complex roots, but its efficient cause is the noise made by a character who is invisible to us.

Traso's invisibility does not last, for in the Toledo 1526 edition of *Celestina* a new Act 19 is inserted (Marciales 1985: II, 295-300, with woodcut, 289), and he is the principal character.¹² As Traso emerges

¹² For the place of the *Auto de Traso* in the history of *Celestina* editions, and for its origins (according to its *argumento*, "fue sacado de la Comedia que ordenó Sanabria", Marciales 1985: II, 295), see Hook 1978-79 and Marciales 1985: I, 139 & II, 273n).

from the shadows he brings with him two new characters, not mentioned in the 21-act *Tragicomedia*: "Tiburcia, su amiga", and "Terencia, tía de Tiburcia, mala y sagaz mujer" (295). Moreover, the *Auto de Traso* has its own invisible characters, three named and three anonymous, who equal in their number the visible characters of this act: Cremón, el tuerto (296 & 300, who is to Traso as the Traso of the *Tragicomedia* is to Centurio), his companion (296), Crudelio (296), Claudio (299, defined as "el criado de Caldorio", 300), and the Archdeacon (296). To take this matter further would lead us into the question of invisible characters in *Celestina* sequels, which is a major subject in itself. We should therefore return to the characters of the *Comedia* and the *Tragicomedia*.

This article has divided the characters into the visible and the invisible, and the difference between them is, of course, obvious to anyone who has read the work, just as it must have been to Rojas's contemporaries when they had read it or heard it read aloud. Yet as their first experience of the work progresses, readers encounter invisible characters who will later — though the readers cannot know this — become visible. Areúsa is mentioned in Act 1 and again in Act 3, but does not appear until Act 7. Sosia, mentioned in Act 2, waits until Act 13 before appearing. Most notably, Pleberio, alluded to near the beginning of Act 1 ("inspira en el plebérico corazón", 47) and mentioned in Acts 3, 4, and 11 — generally as a menacing figure — does not appear until Act 12, and then only briefly.¹³ When he plays a major part (Acts 15 and 16 of the *Comedia*, Acts 16, 20, and 21 of the *Tragicomedia*) there is no sign of the expected menace: he is dominated by anxiety and then by grief. Why should first-time readers or hearers, who have waited so long for the appearance of Areúsa, Sosia, and above all Pleberio, not expect Alberto or Traso or Alisa's sister to become visible? It was probably such an expectation that led to the writing of the *Auto de Traso*.

The invisible characters, unlike Godot, are not the work's centre of interest, but I hope that I have demonstrated their importance, sometimes their crucial importance. Cosmologists tell us that ninety per cent. of the universe's mass is dark matter, imperceptible to even the most powerful telescopes and detectable only by its effect on the visible ten per cent. In *Celestina* the disparity is less, but there are three invisible characters to every visible one (and that is without counting groups such as Areúsa's prying neighbours). More important, the gravitational pull

¹³ On "plebérico corazón", see {792, 887, and 957}. I am not convinced by the contention of Miguel Garci-Gómez (1983) that the words are unconnected with Pleberio.

of the invisible characters — of the historical and social context that they represent — on the visible ones may be very strong (Claudina's influence on both Celestina and Pármeno is a striking instance), and their intervention, as in the cases of Cremes's page or Traso, can be decisive.¹⁴

Appendix

Assuming — perhaps imprudently — that the information given by the characters is both accurate and complete:

1. How many elder sisters had Celestina?
2. How many younger ones?
3. What was the name of Areúsa's father?
4. What was the trade of her mother?
5. What was the name of Pármeno's father?
6. What was the name of Sosia's father?
7. What was the name of Centurio's grandfather?
8. Who was Calisto's mother's midwife?
9. What was the name of Alisa's brother-in-law?
10. How many masters did Sempronio have before Calisto?
11. Whom did Pármeno serve before Calisto?
12. How many times had Celestina already recycled the virginity of the young woman who was to be married?
13. How long did she have for a further recycling?
14. Who taught her this trade?
15. Who was lame?

Celestina.



De la ed. de Salamanca 1529.

¹⁴ I am very grateful to Professor David Hook for an illuminating discussion of the aspects studied in this article.

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