DID LOPE DE VEGA WRITE THE EXTANT *EL PRÍNCIPE MELANCOLICO?*

LOPE de Vega claimed a play entitled *El príncipe melancólico* in his first *Peregrino* list.¹ As far as is known it was never printed in his lifetime or included in any of the posthumous publications that appeared shortly after his death in 1635. Indeed, the play was published for the first time in *Obras de Lope de Vega publicadas por la Real Academia Española* (Nueva edición) (Madrid, 1916). The editor, Cotarelo, dismisses the play with a brief statement in the introduction: "*El príncipe melancólico* no inscribe el nombre de su autor en la comedia, si bien está registrada con el propio título en la repetida lista de 1603."² His text is probably based on a manuscript copy found in the Biblioteca de Palacio, listed by Morley and Bruerton.³

No one has ever questioned Lope's authorship of *El príncipe melancólico*. Morley and Bruerton, however, have expressed doubts about the authenticity of the text: "Though no one has challenged this play, and the verse structure can be paralleled in early Lope (e.g. *La ingratitud vengada*, *El hijo venturoso*, *El lacayo fingido*), the many Andalusian rimes (cf. Cotarelo's notes) lead one to wonder if this MS text has not suffered considerable alteration." They then call attention to one evident transposition of lines: "*Acad. N.*, I, 361b, lines 25-30, 'jamás puede haber engaños' through 'De como te hice callar,' should be inserted after line 1 of the same column."⁴ Despite their reservations, Morley and Bruerton continue to list *El príncipe melancólico* as an authentic Lope play.

A careful study of the *Academia* text of *El príncipe melancólico* reveals, first, that it is marred by many more imperfections than the shift of lines pointed out by Morley and Bruerton; second, that Cotarelo did not indicate all the false Andalusian rhymes that

¹ S. G. Morley, "Lope de Vega's *Peregrino* lists," *Modern Philology*, XIV (1930), 354.

² *Acad. N.*, I, viii.

³ S. G. Morley and C. Bruerton, *The Chronology of Lope de Vega's Comedias* (N. Y.-London, 1940), p. 150.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

plague it; third, that it contains an inordinately high number of autorhymes, handled in a very unimaginative fashion; fourth, that in general the rhyme lacks the facility and exuberance characteristic of Lope de Vega, and in specific instances it reflects mediocre techniques foreign to him; and finally, that some details of the orthoëpy differ so radically and extensively from Lope's practices that this play very probably is not his.

The text of *El príncipe melancólico* is definitely defective. Cotarelo emends it at times; on other occasions he simply records the difficulties without offering any explanation; and other times he either overlooks or ignores the defects. He did not notice, for example, the evident shift of lines underscored by Morley and Bruerton. Neither did he notice that the verse: "Señor, ¿que no come ya?" (p. 348b) is used simultaneously in two adjoining *redondillas*. He records two instances of verses with incorrect syllabic count⁵ but makes no mention of the fact that the following line contains nine syllables: *estoy*.)/(*Calla, ¿qué se ha de hacer?*) (p. 351b). He notices the imperfect rhymes *tiempo-contemplo* (pp. 349-350), *digo-vivo* (p. 357a-b), *dijo-quiso* (p. 364a), and belatedly in the section of *Erratas, adiciones y enmiendas*, *mitigue-vive*, and *habla-palabra* (p. 714b), but makes no reference to *está-queda* (p. 348a), *quede-hiciere* (p. 352a), *entregue-leve* (p. 355b), *alegre-pebre* (p. 356a), and *entre-accidente* (p. 367b). It is difficult to determine whether these imperfections should be attributed to the author, to the copyist of the only manuscript extant, or to the modern editor. At any rate, it is obvious that the text is extremely defective.

As in the case of *El lacayo fingido*, whose attribution to Lope de Vega I recently refuted,⁶ my first doubts about the authenticity of the text of *El príncipe melancólico* were aroused by certain aspects of the rhyme that do not conform to Lope's practices.

In addition to the imperfect rhymes just listed *El príncipe melancólico* contains the following false Andalusian rhymes: *rapaz-más* (p. 338b), *paz-más* (p. 340b), *pasa-traza* (pp. 340-341), *reposo-gozo* (p. 343b), *interesas-cabezas* (pp. 344-345), *esas-cabezas* (p. 345a), *tristeza-esa* (p. 346b), *prieta-pieza* (p. 352b), *esposo-gozo* (pp. 356a, 361a), *vez-es* (p. 357b), *profesas-cabezas* (p. 357b),

⁵ *Acad. N.*, I, 350a, 350b.

⁶ *Studies in Philology*, LI (1954), 42-53.

grandeza-aquésa (p. 358b), *firmeza-empresa* (p. 361b), *conozco-tosco* (p. 366a), *vez-mes* (p. 366b), *empieza-promesa* (p. 367b), and *esa-empieza* (p. 367b). I have shown in my article on "Defective Rhymes and Rhyming Techniques in Lope de Vega's Autograph *Comedias*"⁷ that there is not a single authentic instance of the use of false Andalusian rhymes in any of Lope's autograph manuscript plays. Therefore, the presence of eighteen such rhymes in the text of *El príncipe melancólico* is a strong indication that it is not Lope's handiwork.

I have also shown in my study on "The Use of Autorhymes in the XVIIth Century *Comedia*"⁸ that, although Lope de Vega indulged freely in the use of autorhymes, there is no play in his huge repertoire that contains more than sixty-four of them. *El príncipe melancólico* contains the following one hundred and seventy autorhymes:⁹ *acá* (p. 346a), *acude* (p. 337b), *alma* (p. 340a), *bien* (pp. 337b, 359a), *bueno* (p. 360a), *cara* (p. 363b), *cielo* (p. 362a), *cierto* (p. 345a), *comer* (p. 349a), *comida* (p. 365a), *cuenta* (p. 351a), *culpa* (pp. 341a, 368b), *cura* (p. 366b), *debo* (p. 363a), *dice* (p. 354a), *dicho* (p. 366a), *digo* (p. 364b), *Dios* (p. 344b), *él* (pp. 338b, 338-339, 339a), *ella* (p. 367b), *ellos* (pp. 351a, 364a), *encierra* (p. 353b), *enojo* (p. 353b), *entren* (p. 338a), *esos* (p. 364a), *espero* (p. 365a), *esposa* (p. 368a), *está* (p. 344a), *falta* (p. 354a), *fuerza* (p. 338a), *gente* (p. 338b), *gusto* (p. 342b), *hablalla* (p. 362a), *hablando* (p. 338a), *hecho* (pp. 355a, 363a, 368a), *hermano* (p. 338b), *hizo* (p. 365a), *hora* (p. 340b), *intento* (p. 352a), *libro* (p. 337a), *medio* (p. 339b), *miedo* (p. 352a), *míos* (p. 367b), *muerdos* (pp. 352-353), *mundo* (p. 350b), *nueva* (p. 361b), *otro* (pp. 351a-b), *padre* (p. 345a), *parta* (p. 340a), *parte* (pp. 340a, 341b, 341b, 355b), *pena* (pp. 352a, 353a), *prima* (p. 357b), *queda* (p. 361b), *quejas* (p. 337b), *reina* (p. 359a), *reino* (pp. 338b, 359a), *responde* (p. 357a), *ronda* (p. 338b), *sabe* (p. 351b), *seña* (pp. 337a, 341b), *señor* (p. 349a), *sospecha* (p. 361b), *tanto* (p. 337a), *temo* (pp. 354a, 360a), *tengo* (p. 347b), *tiempo* (p. 357b), *tiento* (p. 347a), *ventura* (p. 340b), *vida* (p. 360a), *voy* (p. 361b), *yo* (p. 348b).

⁷ *Hispanic Review*, XXIII (1955), 108-128.

⁸ *Ibid.*, XXI (1953), 273-301.

⁹ We must bear in mind in counting autorhymes that each of the words listed counts double and in some instances, three times.

The autorhymes used in *El príncipe melancólico* are not only extraordinarily excessive, but they do not correspond to Lope's preferences. Twenty-two of them do not appear in any other authentic Lope play.¹⁰ Twelve more appear but once in other plays and only in texts that are not entirely reliable. Besides, as I have indicated in the previously mentioned study, the poets generally made a conscientious effort to establish some distinction, although far fetched at times, in meaning or grammatical usage between the repeated rhymes. Most of the autorhymes in *El príncipe melancólico* are clumsy repetitions of words with identical meanings and in identical constructions. In one instance, for example, Cotarelo is forced to remark: "Aunque es frecuente en estas comedias repetir como consonante una misma palabra, creemos que en el presente caso el primer 'acude' debe reemplazarse por 'recude'."¹¹

Another aspect of the rhyme of *El príncipe melancólico* that differs considerably from Lope's practices is the mixture of consonantal and assonantal rhyme in the same stanza. I pointed out in my study on "Defective Rhymes and Rhyming Techniques in Lope de Vega's Autograph Comedias" that he studiously avoided this defect. Twenty-one of his wholly autograph and five partially autograph plays are entirely free of this defect. In eleven of the remaining fourteen it appears only once in each play and twice in each of the other two. There are forty instances of the mixture of consonantal and assonantal rhyme in *El príncipe melancólico*: -eros-ento (p. 336b), -emos-ero (p. 336b), -ibro-ivo (p. 337a), -ando-ano (p. 338a), -ista-ías (p. 339b), -aba-alma (p. 340a), -eles-eche (p. 340b), -ase-ante (p. 341a), -era-encia (p. 344a), -ento-elo (p. 344a), -ando-acio (p. 344b), -ino-igo (p. 345a), -esas (or -ezas) -ena (p. 345a), -erto-esto (p. 345a), -elos-eso (p. 346a), -ar-á (p. 347a), -ete-eres (p. 347b), -ando-ado (p. 349a), -ego-eto (p. 349a), -é-er (p. 350a), -ertos-eo (p. 351b), -ar-al (p. 352a), -edo-entos (p. 352a), -esa-ena (p. 353a), -ento-ero (p. 356b), -ata-ana (p. 357a), -esta-ena (p. 358a), -ino-ío (p. 358b), -engas-ena (p. 361a), -ena-ensa (p. 361b), -echa-esa (p. 361b), -ebo-ento (p. 363a), -igo-ijo (p. 364o),

¹⁰ *acude, comida, cura, debo, encierra, esos, esposa, hablalla, hablando, hizo, libro, miedo, muertos, mundo, parde, parta, responde, ronda, sabe, seña* (used twice), *temo* (used twice), *tiento*.

¹¹ *Acad. N.*, I, 714b.

-ento-echo (p. 365b), -elo-echo (p. 366a), -echo-ego (p. 366a), -ada-arba (p. 366b), -es-er (p. 366b), -oy-or (p. 367a), -ella-enta (p. 367b).

If we now turn our attention from the rhyme imperfections to the orthoëpy of the text of *El príncipe melancólico*, we shall discover equally marked differences between it and Lope's practices. In his study of the internal line-structure of thirty autograph plays of Lope de Vega, referring to the treatment of aspirate *h* before an atonic syllable, Walter Poesse says that "there are 2176 examples of synalepha compared to three of hiatus."¹² The reverse seems to be the normal practice of the author of *El príncipe melancólico*. In the following twenty-two examples, chosen from all three acts of the play, there is no possibility of avoiding hiatus. They are all octosyllabic verses:

por lo que hacer espero, (p. 336a)
 No hará./Haceldo ansí.—(p. 339a)
 No hagáis más resistencia. (p. 339b)
 aquese lobo hambriento (p. 341a)
 el Infante lo hacía? (p. 341b)
 Lo que supiere haré. (p. 341b)
 cual me la hacéis pasar! (p. 342b)
 gusto mucho de hablar (p. 351a)
 la pregunta que hiciere. (p. 352a)
 Y para éste hirviendo (p. 352b)
 para poderla hablar, (p. 353a)
 ingrata, yo te haré . . . (p. 354b)
 que ya se hará tu boda. (p. 358a)
 ya sé hablar como rey. (p. 359a)
 y verás que la haré (p. 359a)
 Conde, hacelda callar. (p. 359a)
 mas déjame tú hacer. (p. 359b)
 de verte tanto hablar (p. 361b)
 ¡ Oh, hideputa, ladrón, (p. 365b)
 (¡ Oh, hágate mal provecho!) (p. 365b)
 Al fin, que haré mi cura, (p. 367a)
 ¿ Conde?/(¿ Qué querrá hacer?) (p. 367a)
 Nada no haré sin ella. (p. 367b)

¹² Walter Poesse, *The Internal Line-Structure of Thirty Autograph Plays of Lope de Vega*, Indiana University Publications, Humanities Series No. 18 (Bloomington, Ind., 1949), p. 63.

If we add to these the following fifteen examples in which failure to aspirate *h* would result in a violent hiatus elsewhere in the verse, we would have a total of thirty-seven instances of the aspiration of *h* contrary to Lope's practice.

Tu gusto se hará; espera, (p. 338a)
 que he de hablarte./En buen hora. (p. 340b)
 que he de hablar sin pepita. (p. 343a)
 y la otra presto hallada, (p. 345a)
 ¡Quién te hincara un puñal! (p. 346a)
 y estáse el otro holgando, (p. 348b)
 Señor, di, ¿qué has de hacer? (p. 350a)
 Ya mi padre está hablando, (p. 356b)
 Pues ¿cómo lo has de hacer (p. 358a)
 y él lo hará llanamente (p. 359b)
 ¿Tal, Infante, has de hacer (p. 360a)
 muy bien de hacienda ajena (p. 361b)
 que el Rey lo hará por mí.) (p. 363b)
 de hacerle algo comer, (p. 364a)
 ¿Qué he de hacer, sino pedirle al cielo (p. 340a)
 (hendecasyllabic)

Poesse also tells us that *harto* and the Arabic *hasta* are always joined in synalepha.¹³ Compare the following examples from *El príncipe melancólico*:

mil befas, que ha sido *harto*, (p. 341a)
 Pero *hasta* que esté sano (p. 354b)
 os sobraré sitio *harto*. (p. 356a)

The almost systematic aspiration of *h* before an atonic as well as before a tonic syllable seems to indicate that the author of *El príncipe melancólico* was of Andalusian origin. This hypothesis is reinforced not only by the presence of the false rhymes already listed but by the various instances in which the poet drops the final *d* in the plural of the informal imperative.

Gozá estas glorias, gozaldas, (p. 339a)
 Infante, quedá con Dios. (p. 343a)
 Señor, mirá lo que digo. (p. 348b)
 ¿Quién es un muerto, decí, (p. 350b)
 Gozaos y tomá placer, (p. 355a)
 Ea, mi rey, abrazá (p. 359a)

¹³ Op. cit., p. 77.

While some of these forms are occasionally found in Lope, they are usually included in the speech of the lower classes. In *El príncipe melancólico* they appear in the speech of royal characters. The vulgarism *quíes* for *quieres* used seven times in the play (pp. 343b, 345a, 349b, 350b, 352a, 358a, 358a) is further indication of Andalusian influence.

Finally, Poesse has discovered that "in words in which a weak tonic is combined with a strong atonic vowel, there is syneresis to any great extent only in *había* (*habían*, *habías*). *Tenía* is a disyllable twice, trisyllabic within the verse seventeen times."¹⁴ The following seven examples indicate that the author of *El príncipe melancólico* did not observe such distinction:

Y que no quería enojarte, (p. 341a)
 y me traías engañado (p. 354b)
 ¿Querías tú que lo negara (p. 361b)
 Aunque no lo tendría a poco, (p. 362a)
 me traía secretamente (p. 363a)
 lo que tenía dentro el pecho, (p. 364b)
 de que darías por bien hecho (p. 368a)
 Pero es tu gusto, y el mío te obedece. (p. 340a)
 (Hendecasyllabic)

La mía vea consumida, (p. 348a) Syneresis in *mía* or *vea*.
 Either is abnormal in Lope de Vega.

En que me harían comer, (p. 351b) If *h* is aspirate as in
 above examples, syneresis takes place in *harían*.

By way of contrast with these unusual cases of syneresis it should be observed that almost every page of the text of *El príncipe melancólico* is marred by violent hiatuses seldom found in a facile poet. Both the instances of hiatus and syneresis betray the hand of a wretched poetaster who stopped at nothing to obtain the right syllabic count for his verses and as has been noticed earlier, he did not always succeed.

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing analysis of the rhyme and orthoëpy of *El príncipe melancólico* reveals marked differences from Lope's practices. Although this study is far from exhaustive, the differences noted are substantial and extensive enough to preclude

¹⁴ Op. cit., p. 49.

the possibility of a mere alteration of a Lope original. The abundance of false and imperfect rhymes, the undue mixture of consonance and assonance, the flagrant abuse of autorhymes, the indiscriminate use of hiatus and syneresis to obtain the correct syllabic count by force, the repeated aspiration of *h* in almost any position, and the inclusion of Andalusian vulgarisms and other pronunciation traits, all betray the hand of a bungler from Southern Spain whose poetic and technical deficiencies are altogether too apparent. We must, therefore, conclude that the existing text of *El príncipe melancólico* is not the one claimed by Lope de Vega in his first *Peregrino* list.

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