

JOSÉ DE CAÑIZARES, *Acis y Galatea*. Edición, prólogo y notas de María del Rosario Leal Bonmati. Madrid: Iberoamericana-Vervuert/Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. 2011. 251 pp.

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, there is a wall painting taken from the imperial villa at Boscotrecase, dated late 1st century BC. The scene depicts the cyclops Polyphemus sitting on a rocky outcrop, tending his herd of goats, holding a panpipe, perhaps distracted by the sea nymph Galatea seated on a dolphin below him. In Ovid's version of the story Galatea was listening to Polyphemus' song professing his love for her while she hid with her lover Acis, the son of Faunus and the river nymph Symaethis. The story tells us that the enraged and spurned Polyphemus killed his rival Acis with a boulder. Galatea, distraught, turned the blood of her slain lover into the river Acis. While the story does not appear in writing before Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, completed in 8 AD, it is repeated, transformed and metamorphosed repeatedly thereafter, in story, poetry, music, art and—the amalgamation of the four—in opera.

Perhaps the most familiar musical treatment of the story of Acis and Galatea for English-speakers will be Handel's scoring of John Gay's libretto. Their first version of the 'pastoral opera' premiered in 1718, ten years after Antonio de Literes put to music José de Cañizares' libretto, *Acis y Galatea*. This Spanish *zarzuela*, which enjoyed repeated performances at palace and in public *corrales*—from its premiere in Madrid in 1708 until 1727 (as well as twenty-two performances in Valencia and several in Lisbon)—until relatively recently has been unedited, and unperformed. While the early twentieth-century scholar of the *zarzuela*, Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, laid the groundwork for future editors, there seemed to be scant attention paid to either Literes' music or Cañizares' texts until late in the twentieth century, when the Spanish classical music group Al Ayre Español recorded *Acis y Galatea* (1999) and the Spanish scholar and musicologist, Luis Antonio González Marín, produced the first modern edition of both the music and text of *Acis y Galatea* in 2002. It might be surprising that, not even ten years later, María del Rosario Leal Bonmati would publish another critical edition of the work. But the two editions have quite different aims and purposes. González Marín provides both book and score, whereas Leal Bonmati concentrates only on the former. While González Marín stripped the libretto of scenographic apparatus in order to provide an overall idea of the drama, it is precisely the performative aspects of the work that Leal Bonmati strives to highlight.

One might well ask why anyone would study this particular work. Why *Acis y Galatea*? Simply answered, it is the example of this genre—a palace entertainment that was subsequently brought to the popular theatres—of which we possess the greatest number of manuscripts available for study and comparison.

In her introduction, Leal sets out her agenda. She begins with a review of the author and his times, and in particular the theatrical context of the first quarter of the eighteenth century in Spain, a most interesting and surprisingly under-studied period of dynastic and cultural change. Leal starts with 1700 and asks the question: How did political change affect theatre (and for that matter, aesthetics)? She ends with Felipe V's abdication in 1724. She then proceeds to review the subject of Acis and Galatea in antiquity, from Hesiod and Homer to Virgil and Ovid, moving on to the Spanish tradition: Cristóbal de Castillejo, Carrillo y Sotomayor, Góngora, Lope, Pérez de Montalbán, Sánchez Portolés and José de Cañizares. Leal painstakingly documents and traces the evolution and influence from one iteration to another, highlighting how Cañizares borrows but, more importantly, how he invents new elements that bring to the story a flavour of the old Spanish theatrical tradition while, at the same time, giving a nod to the new notions of what we now call Neo-classical tenets of unities and decorum.

Despite the comprehensiveness of this historical tour, Leal maintains that her greatest contribution is her focus on the performance elements of the dramatic text in the context of palace theatre at the beginning of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain (1700–1724). She examines stage directions and speculates as to how the production might have been mounted, cognizant

1384 *BSS*, XC (2013)

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of the complexity of the problem. Compiling information from manuscripts and well-known sources such as John Varey's 'Fuentes' series as well as previous studies by Cotarelo and others, Leal reconstructs the company of actors who would have performed the *zarzuela*, offers plausible options for set design and staging, as well as possible variations between performances in the palace and subsequent offerings in the *corrales*.

Leal's study is complemented by a rich bibliography of primary sources (manuscript and printed as well as online), by a thorough bibliography of general criticism, as well as specific works on José de Cañizares. Any scholar of the period will welcome this careful and thorough study, with a well-documented edition, enhanced with generous notes.

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