

IMAGES OF GARCILASO: HIS VERSE AND HIS FIGURE IN MODERN SPANISH POETRY FROM THE 1920s TO THE POSTWAR PERIOD

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From the 1920s on, extending into the period after the Civil War, Spanish poets were very conscious of Garcilaso de la Vega, not only of his verse, but also of his life and his figure. The different and shifting ways in which they envisioned this poet, soldier, and courtier, and in which they reflected his work in theirs, both confirm his continuing appeal and his influence on modern Spanish poetry and offer fascinating insights into the different poetics and cultural moments of this time.

The early 1920s marked a great flowering of Spanish verse. Major works of the "Generation of 1927" were written at that time: the first books of Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, and Pedro Salinas; the first version of Guillén's *Cántico*, Cernuda's *Perfil del aire*. As has frequently been noted, these poets as well as their colleagues Dámaso Alonso and Gerardo Diego were profoundly knowledgeable of, and profoundly affected by, Spanish poetry of the Renaissance and Golden Age. Both their scholarly orientation and their poetics of the text as embodiment of universal experiences led them to connect back to the writers of that era. Initially it was Luis de Góngora who most attracted their attention and their fealty, influencing their work in both direct and indirect ways. He represented for them the values of a pure art that transcended ordinary reality, and motivated a series of critical studies and a well-known celebration of his anniversary in 1927 (Dehennin; Alonso, "Una generación"). Yet Garcilaso was not totally absent from this generation's work and poetics, and he would become more central for it some ten years later, when the aesthetic climate shifted.

The first direct reference we find is in a short poem—a *copla*—from Rafael Alberti's *Marinero en tierra* (1924), which begins as follows:

Si Garcilaso volviera,
yo sería su escudero;
que buen caballero era.
Mi traje de marinero

se trocaría en guerrera
 ante el brillar de su acero;
 que buen caballero era. (Alberti 69)

Focusing on the figure of Garcilaso as courtly soldier rather than on his poetry, this text forms part of a series of imaginative evocations, in popular-style verse, that characterize the whole book. But it also introduces a view of the Renaissance poet which will reappear, paradoxically, in works composed twenty years later.

The poet of the group most affected by Garcilaso's work was Luis Cernuda; as Víctor García de la Concha has noted (47-48), Cernuda published an homage to Garcilaso in the magazine *Carmen* in December 1927, and, in a volume of memoirs, referred to him as the poet he most liked. García de la Concha also indicates that Cernuda's "Égloga," published in *Égloga, elegía, oda* (1927-28) was modelled on Garcilaso's *Égloga segunda*. Reading over the two works, one indeed notes how Cernuda develops, in a long series of classical-sounding heptasyllabic and hendecasyllabic lines, a vision of an idyllic landscape, a timeless "locus amoenus" with adjectives as well as images of softly flowing water, that creates effects similar to those traced by Salicio in lines 39-94 of Garcilaso's poem. I quote but a few lines:

Entre las rosas yace
 El agua tan serena,
 Gozando de sí misma en su hermosura;
 Ningún reflejo nace
 Tras de la onda plena,
 Fría, cruel, inmóvil de tersura. (. . .)
 Sobre el agua benigna,
 Melancólico espejo
 De congeladas, pálidas espumas,
 El crepúsculo asigna
 Un sombrío reflejo
 En donde anega sus inertes plumas. (Cernuda 29-31)

A similar tone and effect can be seen in several other texts of this book, as well as *Un río, un amor* (1929) and later poems, confirming the affinity between the two writers. It should not surprise us: Cernuda's nostalgic quest for deeper meanings in the face of a hostile environment would naturally draw him to Garcilaso. His use of nature images to simultaneously stylize and make concrete his themes picks up and continues the tradition of his favorite Renaissance poet.

Garcilaso's presence in modern Spanish poetry becomes more evident and more important from 1930 on. The year 1936, of course, marked the three-hundredth anniversary of the poet's death, triggering

various gatherings and homages and calling attention to him. But even earlier in the decade, Garcilaso was seen and referred to as an example of a poet who embodied and conveyed artistically human emotions, and especially romantic love and its loss. To some extent, this view of and interest in his work was part of the renewed interest in emotive and subconscious meanings and a shift away from Góngora, as Dámaso Alonso noted in 1932 (Alonso 1960, 588).¹ The formalist focus that had led to an emphasis on Góngora was giving way to a concern with poetry's expressive possibilities, and Garcilaso was read in the light of that shift.

This can be seen in Alberti's "Elegía a Garcilaso" from *Sermones y moradas* (1929-1930). In the long free verse form typical of this book, Alberti weaves a series of nightmarish irrational images to create a sense of loss and decay which might begin based on Garcilaso's death but extends to a generalized mood picture:

Hubierais visto llorar sangre a las yedras cuando el agua
 más triste se pasó toda una noche velando a un yelmo ya sin alma,
 a un yelmo moribundo sobre una rosa nacida en el vaho que
 duerme los espejos de los castillos
 a esa hora en que los nardos más secos se acuerdan de su vida. (313)

The references to helmet and castle, reinforced later in the poem by mentions of "almenas" and an "inmóvil armadura vacía," evoke the world of Garcilaso the soldier as a base image for the larger surrealist vision of death and decay. In addition, however, Alberti prefaces the poem with a quotation from Garcilaso's *Égloga tercera* ("antes del tiempo y casi en flor cortada," v. 229); this reference to the nymphs' mourning for a lost companion in the eclogue adds an evocation of Garcilaso the poet to that of the soldier, and also connects Alberti's lament in the face of death with the elegaic vein of Garcilaso's work.

Equally evident and probably more fundamental is the presence of Garcilaso in Pedro Salinas's love poetry, and especially in his *La voz a ti debida* (1933). The title is taken from line 12 of the *Égloga tercera*, and forms part of Garcilaso's dedication to his patroness. Although Salinas uses the phrase to stress his beloved's role in inspiring his own poem, he is evidently also calling our attention to Garcilaso's love poem as his source and as the mode in which he is writing. (This is evident from his repetition of the phrase, with the attribution to Garcilaso's work, at the head of the text.) Like most of Garcilaso's poems, *La voz a ti debida* emphasizes the poet-protagonist's shifting emotions toward the beloved, his continued efforts to reach her while exploring various dimensions of his love and their relationship. Salinas's style and the form of his writing are not at all similar to Garcilaso's, and we cannot

speak of textual influence of the kind that will be evident in the later works of Germán Bleiberg or Jesús Juan Garcés. But in my opinion there is a profound relationship between the works of the two poets, as Salinas parallels the Renaissance poet's verbal exploration and embodiment of the "dolorido sentir."

This relationship becomes even clearer when we take into account Salinas's criticism, and especially his essay on Garcilaso. "The Idealization of Reality: Garcilasso [sic] de la Vega," based on a lecture at Johns Hopkins in 1937 and included in his *Reality and the Poet in Spanish Poetry*, is not only a critical masterpiece, but sheds much light on his view of his predecessor. After telling, in compelling fashion, the story of Garcilaso's life, Salinas went on to discuss his work in the light of its theme of love: "Garcilasso is a poet of love. That same sentiment of melancholy and hopeless love pervades his whole work" (77). He examined Garcilaso's use of the pastoral as a way of balancing realistic emotional impulses with intellectualizing and stylizing goals, and suggested that "poetry is nothing but that miracle of converting the unidimensional of brute reality into the multidimensional of spiritual creation" (87). Perhaps even reading his own poetics into Garcilaso's quest, Salinas defined his Renaissance predecessor as a model for the expression of human love feelings in poetic form.

Another poet of the "Generation of 1927," Manuel Altoaguirre, published a biography of Garcilaso in 1933; his overall vision of the poet is ultimately similar to Salinas's (García de la Concha 48; Altoaguirre). Although Altoaguirre begins his work linking Garcilaso's military and poetic achievements ("tomando ora la espada, ora la pluma, dibujó una de las vidas más hermosas y atrayentes de su época," ["Garcilaso" 17]), his book stresses the love in Garcilaso's career. Poetically, almost melodramatically, he emphasizes how the poet's love connects his life and his work:

Su amor crecía. Todas las bellezas que veía en el mundo las transmitía al ser interno, a esa creación suya inexistente, pero tan verdadera. Isabel de Freyre vivía en el jardín de su alma, en el castillo de su pecho; se asomaba a las ventanas de su pasión y se veía en las corrientes aguas de sus acciones. ("Garcilaso" 61-62)

Garcilaso es un poeta romántico, no sólo por su obra, sino también por sus amores y por su vida. ("Garcilaso" 63)

Altoaguirre goes on, in similar vein, to describe Garcilaso's love for Isabel, evoking a possibly imaginary scene in which the latter, one time only, responds positively to the former's passion (86); later sections of the book comment on the poet's isolation and suffering. At one point, the writer fuses Garcilaso's life and his work as he envisions—

or fantasizes—a meeting between Garcilaso and the nymphs of the *Égloga tercera* who console him as he cries at Isabel's tomb (129-34). The book constructs the most elaborate and extreme version of Garcilaso's portrayal as a romantic figure that managed to poetically express his feelings.

Altolaquirre stated, in a preface to his poems in Gerardo Diego's anthology, that Garcilaso was one of his preferred poets, together with Juan Ramón Jiménez and San Juan de la Cruz (*Poesías completas* 9). His own poetry can be thematically linked to Garcilaso's, in its abundant portrayal of natural scenes, often reflecting love themes. But his language and style are totally different, more akin to popular Spanish verse and to the spare poetry of Juan Ramón.²

Dámaso Alonso's critical studies also shed light on the way in which Garcilaso's work was perceived by the "Generation of 1927." In his classic "Garcilaso y los límites de la estilística," in *Poesía española*, Alonso, after offering a brilliant and painstaking formal analysis of nine stanzas of the *Égloga tercera*, concluded by offering to abandon stylistics, because it cannot fully explain the intense feeling of love which motivated the text and which the text communicates (104-05).³ Alonso thus shared, to a great extent, Salinas's view of Garcilaso as an artful love poet who captured feeling in form. And both these poets shared with Alberti and Altolaquirre the interest in the emotive aspect of Garcilaso's poetry. It is obvious that after 1930 Garcilaso became, for the "Generation of 1927," a kind of complement, balance, and antidote to Góngora and to this group's earlier quest for pure and formal art. He was for them a leading example of the expression of feeling, and of the relationship between life and poetic expression. His direct influence on their poetry is limited: his value is that of model and symbol.

Garcilaso's poetry had a more specific influence on the verse written in the 1930s by a younger (and just then emerging) group of poets, generally referred to as the "Generation of 1936," and consisting of Germán Bleiberg, Luis Rosales, Dionisio Ridruejo, Luis Felipe Vivanco, Leopoldo Panero, and a few others.⁴ As Juan Marichal noted in his introduction of Bleiberg's verse, most of them studied letters at the University of Madrid at a time when their professors, and especially Américo Castro, called detailed attention to the work of Garcilaso and stressed it as an example of the Spanish European-style literary splendor (Bleiberg 8). At the same time, they started their poetic careers seeking the embodiment of personal emotions in elegant form. Their first books appeared, for the most part, within two years of the 1936 anniversary that highlighted Garcilaso's work. Although their view of the poet did not differ markedly from the one which their predecessors

had developed by the 1930s, they became much more directly influenced by his verse in their own compositions.

Germán Bleiberg's *Sonetos amorosos* (1936) offer the best example. Prefaced by quotations from Garcilaso's first and third eclogues, the volume consists entirely of love sonnets very much in his tradition. Bleiberg's syntax, vocabulary, and imagery indicate a conscious effort to follow the Renaissance poet's path: frequent, balancing adjectives; references to "rosa" and "azucena" within one text; the stylization of love through color play (red/white); phrases like "honesto temblor" and images of fire; the use of hyperbaton—all these make us feel that we are reading a modern follower of Garcilaso—though also a good original poet. Sonnet X offers the closest thematic connection, as it expresses, Garcilaso-like, the speaker's suffering at the beloved's absence. A few lines make clear both the thematic and the stylistic relationship:

Comprende este dolor que ahora siento
viendo tu grata plenitud distante,
comprende y mira mi vivir delante
de los aires que llevan su contento. (20)

Bleiberg's sonnet XII is explicitly built on a line from Garcilaso's sonnet II, which is quoted at the head of the text and then used as the modern poet's last line:

"Mi vida no sé en qué se ha sostenido"

Garcilaso, soneto II

Por duras sendas siempre te he buscado
con la esperanza firme de encontrarte,
y ahora, frente a ti, si quiero amarte
recuerdo el llanto que por ti he llorado.

¡oh mi dolor en tu visión cegado,
cuando mi voz se esfuerza por llamarte,
y dar la luz que no puede olvidarte
al agua del olvido deseado!

Por duras lejanías, siempre esbelto,
al aire del azul resplandeciente
—Castilla sola en pájaro afligido—

en esta primavera está resuelto.
Si no pensando en ti tan lentamente,
mi vida no sé en qué se ha sostenido. (21)

Despite the use of Garcilaso's line, despite the similarity (and the echoes) in style and imagery, the poem is in no way a copy: its theme, the speaker's dependence on the beloved and thoughts of her, contrasts with the theme of Garcilaso's sonnet II, which laments rejection by the beloved (Garcilaso 202). Bleiberg seems to consciously, deliberately, use Garcilaso's "repertoire" to create his own original love poetry. But in doing so he follows the model of the Renaissance master in capturing feeling in artful form.

Soon after the publication of *Sonetos amorosos* came the Civil War. Bleiberg fought on the Republican side, was jailed after the war, and ultimately went into exile in the United States. His later poetry of the 1940s portrays nostalgic evocations of nature and an awareness of time and mortality. No direct resonances of Garcilaso appear, yet the poet's elegaic verse and his mastery of tone owe much, to my mind, to the sense of language developed in his Garcilaso phase.

Luis Rosales's *Abril* (1935) also reveals an important though perhaps less obvious influence of Garcilaso's themes and style. A major critic as well as an important poet, Rosales's main scholarly interest was the Baroque, the theme of disillusion in Baroque writing, the poetry of Villamediana. But the sonnets of the third section of *Abril* reveal many echoes of Garcilaso: in imagery (color contrasts, "nieve," light), in the use of contrasts, in parallel phrasing. As Felix Grande notes in his introduction to Rosales's complete poetry, *Abril* leaves behind the stress on imagistic creation of preceding poets to emphasize lyric expression, elegantly conveyed (Rosales 47). Garcilaso's work, among that of other classic Spanish poets, offers him both a guide and a repertoire on which he can draw. Less imitative than Bleiberg, Rosales makes use of these sources as he charts his own path, which will lead him later to the masterfully evocative poetry, in free verse, of *La casa encendida* (1949).

Dionisio Ridruejo's *Primer libro de amor* (1935-1939) reveals frequent echoes of Garcilaso—which may seem surprising to some, since many of its poems were written during the Civil War, in which Ridruejo was an active participant. García de la Concha, quoting Ridruejo, notes that for the poet Garcilaso was, precisely, a way of transcending the details of life and war, of reaching for timeless themes and values (G. de la Concha 77; Ridruejo 16). Some Ridruejo sonnets which contain echoes of Garcilaso express, precisely, the theme of elevating suffering to a higher perception and expression:

Acudo a mi dolor, como la nieve
ancho y deshabitado en la llanura
sobre una germinante primavera.

Él pulirá la forma que me lleve,
 en seno tibio y en palabra pura,
 hacia el olvido de mi sangre fiera. (#31, 78)

Other sonnets in the book deal with love, and the portrayal of the beloved's effect on the speaker makes us think explicitly of Garcilaso, as do some telling images and structural patterns. But even in those poems the specific experience and situation generally lead to a more transcendent quest. In sonnet 113, for example, the contemplation of the beloved leads him to envision all of nature, and, ultimately "plena la creación, hermosa y mía" (156). If the Garcilaso-style sonnet led Bleiberg to embody love experiences themselves in form, it allows Ridruejo to make love and other experiences forge wider visions of life.

As Ridruejo notes in his introduction, "Elejía y égloga del bosque arrancado," included as the first text of *Primer libro de amor*, was written for an issue of a periodical in honor of Garcilaso (17; the text appears on 37-54). An eclogue reminiscent of Garcilaso's first, though composed in a combination of *liras* and sonnets, evokes a world of pastoral harmony but also laments of abandoned lovers; it is framed by two elegies which point to the destruction of this harmony. A language, style, and imagery based on Garcilaso express this vision of a world in tension. I quote just two stanzas to illustrate the echoes of the Renaissance poet, which are most apparent in the adjectivation, the imagery, and the personification of natural elements:

Bajo alegre enramada,
 en el prado subido a lecho puro
 de la paz arbolada,
 bajo el día trigal y bien maduro,
 junto a la fuente undosa
 que calmaba en sí misma hiedra y rosa . . . (41)

Ásperos animales,
 aves tan delicadas como lirios,
 plantas casi carnales
 y aguas en luz espían sus delirios
 mientras la hierba crece
 a sofocar el aire que enmudece. (43)

Ridruejo continued writing sonnets in other books of poetry; particularly noteworthy are the magnificent *Sonetos a la piedra*, written during the Civil War and published in 1943. These sonnets, however, evoke Quevedo, the Baroque, and Gerardo Diego rather than Garcilaso,

as they meditate on time and timelessness (but also beauty) against the backdrop of buildings, sepulchers, and ruins.

Another poet for whom nature and poetry offered a way of rising above the circumstances of war and social upheaval was Juan Gil-Albert (G. de la Concha 155-60). In "Otoño," from *Son nombres ignorados*, he echoes Garcilaso's perspective and style as he evokes nature's patterns:

Apenas si unas lluvias repentinas
precedidas por truenos estivales
pregonan que el otoño
ya en su carro de hiedras
retumba en las afueras
llamando está al umbral de los calores. (119)

After writing some humorous and vanguardist verse in the 1920s, Luis Felipe Vivanco composed, in the 1930s, religious and meditative poems that García de la Concha identifies with the ascetic-mystic tradition (64-65). Although a conscious influence of Garcilaso is not apparent, the syntax and vocabulary of some texts (for example "Soneto 3" of *Cantos de primavera*, Vivanco 29) offer echoes of his poetry. And in the poetry of Leopoldo Panero, despite its vanguardist imagery and style, we can see images of the beloved as transcendent ideal which hark back to Renaissance visions (García de la Concha 70). For the poets of this group Garcilaso served, to a greater or lesser degree, as a symbol for the stylization and expression of emotive experiences on the one hand, and as a model for the forms, vocabulary, and syntax with which they constructed their poetry. His work profoundly influenced their early development, although their work, undoubtedly affected by the circumstances of the Civil War as well as other factors, shifted to different themes and styles in later years.

One is led to wonder why this group of poets followed Garcilaso's style so much more closely than their predecessors of the "Generation of 1927". Both groups, after all, shared a deep understanding of and admiration for the Renaissance poet, and both viewed his work in a similar way. Yet only the latter revealed a direct influence in their poetry, verging on imitation. One might speculate that while the "27" poets developed their intense interest in Garcilaso somewhat late, after their gongorine phase, and after their own poetic styles had been formed, the "36" writers began their writing careers influenced by the vision (even myth) of Garcilaso as the poet of nature and of love feelings embodied in form, and hence built their early forms of expression on his work and style.

We might also think of the great poets of "27" — Lorca, Guillén, Cernuda, Salinas — as "strong" writers, who quickly developed highly

individual styles: their voices and their poetry can never be confused with those of others.⁵ The younger poets that I have been discussing, for all their talent and achievements, seem less “strong,” less unique. Maybe this explains why they began building their work on previous styles and traditions, and needed Garcilaso’s specific models to develop and give form to their amatory and emotive verse.

In the fall of 1936, the year of Garcilaso’s centenary, the course of Spanish culture and literature was transformed by the irruption of the Civil War, which lasted for more than three years. What poetry was written during the war (with exceptions such as the ones noted in Ridruejo and Gil-Albert) tended to reflect political concerns: much of it, on both sides, was propagandistic and transitory. In such circumstances, Garcilaso’s verse and even his image as a kind of proto-romantic poetry would not seem central. We should also note that the triumph of the Nationalists led to the exile of a number of poets, including Alberti, Salinas, Guillén, Cernuda, and Bleiberg—Lorca had been assassinated early in the contest.

After the war, however, a new view of Garcilaso emerged on the literary scene, that of a representative of Spain’s heroic imperial past. As García de la Concha has noted, this vision had some precedents even before the war: an article by José Montesinos in February of 1936 combined a romantic and a heroic view of the poet (356-57).⁶ It was picked up by a group of young falangist writers during the war, who memorized Garcilaso’s text, admired his style, but primarily stressed his vigorous, heroic figure, which they contrasted to what they considered the “decadent” writings of surrealism and the vanguard. Calling themselves “Juventud Creadora,” these writers, led by Jesús Revuelta, started publishing in 1942 the magazine *Juventud*. They were joined by José García Nieto, who, as we shall see, had a different perspective on Garcilaso, but who collaborated in their publication. Almost all of these writers were born between 1910 and 1920 (García Nieto in 1914), and thus formed part of the same generation as Rosales, Bleiberg, and Ridruejo, although they had published little prior to the war. They were conscious of their role as a rising generation, and accepted the tag of “Generation of 1936” (see Rubio 141)—and the connection to Garcilaso created by that date of his anniversary, even as their image of him differed from that of the poets previously examined.

Out of this group emerged the monthly magazine/journal *Garcilaso*, subtitled “Juventud Creadora,” the first issue of which appeared in May of 1943 (the last one, no. 35-36, was for March/April 1946). This issue listed as founders José García Nieto (who served as editor throughout), Pedro de Lorenzo, Jesús Revuelta, and Jesús Juan Garcés.

It began with an editorial titled “Siempre ha llevado y lleva Garcilaso,” of which I quote some key sections:

En el cuarto centenario de su muerte (1936) ha comenzado de nuevo la hegemonía de Garcilaso. Murió militarmente como ha comenzado nuestra presencia creadora. Y Toledo, su cuna, está ligada también a esta segunda reconquista, a este segundo renacimiento hispánico, a esta segunda primavera del endecasílabo.

Bautizada con su nombre, aparece hoy esta revista, bajo la influencia estelar de su vida, su verbo y su ejemplo. (. . .)

De Garcilaso, ya en su tiempo, se dijo que era una encarnación de *El Cortesano*, de Castiglione. Nosotros, convencidos por su paso militar y renaciente, actual y clásico, levantamos su nombre. . . . Y afirmamos que lo cortés no quita lo valiente, ni lo valiente excluye lo cortés. (*Garcilaso* 1:1)⁷

Despite some attention to Garcilaso’s writing, the emphasis is clearly placed on his figure as model, with an unmistakable political slant. Fanny Rubio reports that this editorial was written by Revuelta (145)—it would fit perfectly the attitude of Revuelta and de Lorenzo. She also observes that it would be balanced off, as the magazine was created, by another: a concern with art for its own sake (“el arte por el arte”) and with elegance of form, which would represent the perspective of García Nieto and Garcés (see Rubio 131-41). This latter perspective would in fact dominate the magazine.

Examining the different issues of the magazine, it becomes apparent that it was more eclectic than its lead editorial, or even its two initial directions, would suggest. García Nieto encouraged unsolicited submissions, and saw the magazine as a way of opening doors; his editorial in the second issue states: “nuestras puertas están francas: somos contrarios a toda barrera, a todo grupo cerrado” (2: [1]). The magazine would publish poetry and prose by many major writers of diverse orientations; it would include works by Dámaso Alonso, Gerardo Diego, Dionisio Ridruejo, José Luis Cano, Camilo José Cela, Carmen Conde, Vicente Aleixandre, and Carlos Edmundo de Ory, among others; it also regularly published translations of foreign poets (Verlaine, Rimbaud, Kipling, Cabral do Nascimento, Japanese poets). Nonetheless, artfully-crafted verse predominated; the combative/political focus promised by the first editorial was rarely apparent, generally in essays by de Lorenzo. The well-constructed sonnet, on the other hand, seems to have been the center of gravity of the publication. Reviewing the magazine’s issues (and index) we find that its most frequent poetry contributors were García Nieto himself, Jesús Juan Garcés, Rafael Montesinos, Rafael Romero Moliner, and

José María Valverde, each with more than ten separate contributions (which often included several poems each). All of them, and a number of other contributors, offered sonnets; their themes range from evocations of places, natural scenes and objects, to expressions of love, to religious expressions, to laments on the passing of time and the loss of love. Rarely does the imagery or vocabulary directly echo Garcilaso, and some images, such as Romero Moliner's prosaic ones, would have horrified the Renaissance poet. For me, a good sonnet most akin to Garcilaso's work might be this one by Garcés:

Jardín

Perdida infancia del jardín lejano
 con un pájaro ciego y una fuente
 estática y sonora, eternamente
 elevando al aire su frescor pagano.

¡Oh tranquilo jardín! dorado y vano,
 de elemental estanque transparente.
 ¿Por qué ahora te recuerdo nuevamente
 y no siento tu tierra entre mi mano?

Todo ha caído, todo fue viento
 que se llevó la hoja adolescente,
 arrebatada viva a la doliente

rama. Me queda aún el pensamiento
 y el mudo corazón, trágicamente
 propicio a este recuerdo ceniciento. (*Garcilaso* 1: [7])

This text does not follow Garcilaso's style as closely as many poems by Bleiberg; what it does do is echo Garcilaso's tradition of capturing a basic theme in a well-structured composition, leading the reader from the evocation of the first quartet, to the painful question at the end of the second, and then to the emotive commentary in the tercets. The rhythm, the use of parallelisms and dualities, the spare imagery, the *topos* of the wind, and the controlled tone all give the poem a timeless, even classical feeling which for me places Garcés in the tradition of Garcilaso. This poem exemplifies how some of the authors publishing in the magazine followed Garcilaso's lead in forging feeling in form, with a greater emphasis on formal concerns than their more romantically-inclined predecessors. All this, of course, might also explain why in the post-Civil War setting the poetry of this magazine was criticized for being escapist.

García Nieto himself was the most recognized poet among the *garcilasistas*, and his verse, whether published in the journal or in books, stands the test of time rather well. Tightly-constructed love poems abound, and often achieve far more intensity than critics have allowed: the stress is on the speaker's feelings, and the beloved tends to be generalized. Emotional religious works are also much in evidence. Renaissance and Golden Age poetry underpins García Nieto's verse, but, to my surprise, specific references to and echoes of Garcilaso are no more frequent than those of San Juan or Góngora. García de la Concha aptly summarizes the work as a crossing of neoclassicism with neoromanticism (399, 401). García de la Concha (385) also noted a surprising fact about *Garcilaso*: although each issue of the magazine included texts by a Spanish poet of the past, Garcilaso's work was never presented, while Lope, Quevedo, Juan del Encina, Santillana and even Meléndez Valdés appeared. The magazine did publish one critical article about a Garcilaso sonnet.

Garcilaso triggered a great deal of criticism, as Spanish poetry took a strong turn to social and existential themes in the 1940s. The magazine *Espadaña* (1944 on), the appearance of the dramatic existential poetry of Blas de Otero, Dámaso Alonso's *Hijos de la ira*, and a whole current of what Carlos Bousoño termed "postcontemporary" poetry in everyday language came to dominate Spanish verse over the next ten to fifteen years. Given this new direction, *Garcilaso* came to be seen negatively, as irrelevant escape literature. There is a degree of truth in this characterization: as García de la Concha noted, a reader of the magazine could remain ignorant of the then ongoing World War and of the abysmal conditions of life in Spain (389). That should not, however, obscure the journal's role and value in recreating a climate for literature, opening possibilities for publication by diverse authors, and publishing valuable texts, some of them in Garcilaso de la Vega's tradition.

Garcilaso's presence is hardly visible in Spanish poetry of the later 1940s and 1950s. The social and existential vein that dominated poetry in that period, and the avoidance of any traditional poetic vocabulary and form of expression, made that inevitable. There were, to be sure, some aestheticist countercurrents, perhaps best represented by the "Cántico" group of Córdoba, ably studied by Guillermo Carnero. But these poets, writing for the most part in beautifully-controlled free verse in which the love theme was predominant, drew, for the most part, on other traditions. Only Pablo García Baena, in *Rumor oculto* (1946), has some poems that recall Garcilaso. By the end of the 1950s, Spain saw the publication of the first books of several new major poets, mainly Claudio Rodríguez, Ángel González, and José Angel Valente.

Though they were deeply knowledgeable of Garcilaso's poetry, it did not inform their style or expressive language in the way that San Juan de la Cruz or Quevedo did. The next echoes of Garcilaso's work, to my mind, would not become apparent until the later 1970s, and then very faintly, in poets like Antonio Colinas; some connection can also be established between Garcilaso and the "poetry of silence" and the essentialist vein of the 1980s. But all that lies beyond the scope of this essay.

Looking back at the period extending from the 1920s through the 1940s, it is evident that Garcilaso loomed large, and that his verse affected significantly the poetry and poetics of many. As all great poets tend to be, he was read in rather different ways. His image extended from that of the noble hero, to the icon of imperial grandeur, to the ill-fated lover, to the first great craftsman of Spanish poetry—with many permutations of these traits. More importantly, his verse offered modern poets several models: of intense yet controlled love poetry (adopted in different ways by Salinas, Bleiberg, Ridruejo, and others), of a unique way of using natural imagery for larger visions of life (Cernuda, Rosales, Gil-Albert), of formal and stylistic excellence (Bleiberg, Garcés, García Nieto). Suffice it to say that he lived on in their poetics and in their work—as he lives on in the experiences of our readings today.

Notes

¹In the 1932 addition to his original 1927 essay, Alonso notes the end of a "gongorismo combativo" and the shift to more emotive writing, including surrealism, and a return to "la raíz subterránea de la inspiración poética" (588).

²Another poet whose work we might have expected to show connections to Garcilaso is Gerardo Diego, author of some of the best sonnets in twentieth-century Spanish verse. But Diego's tensive and dramatic sonnets, whether dealing with landscapes or love themes, are much more akin to Góngora's and Quevedo's.

³*Poesía española* was not published until 1950, and hence postdates the "Generation of 1927" texts of the 1930s which I discuss. The critic's interest in the emotive experience embodied in poetry, however, corresponds to the shift Alonso already noted in the late 1920s and the 1930s, as I indicated above.

⁴Generational groupings are complex and debateable: the existence of a new generation 10 years after that of "27" strikes me as questionable. But there is clearly a new group of writers, with a different background and orientation, most of whom studied literature at the University of Madrid in the early 1930s, and whose relationship to Garcilaso needs to be examined separately from that of the older poets.

⁵One can object that Lorca and Alberti's early work echoed popular poetry, that the latter imitated Góngora, that Guillén connects with Juan Ramón. But even in those cases the relationship does not seem to me as close as, for example, that of Bleiberg or Ridruejo with Garcilaso. Rosales, perhaps the "strongest" poet of this second group, seems less imitative of the Renaissance predecessor.

⁶This view could even be related, paradoxically, to Alberti's portrayal of Garcilaso as hero/victim in the poem previously discussed, much as that might have dismayed the author.

⁷The pages of the magazine were not numbered.

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