Notes on Three Sonnets Attributed to Francisco de Figueroa

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Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Apr., 1907), pp. 223-227

Published by: [Modern Humanities Research Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3713083>

Accessed: 28/06/2014 13:04

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NOTES ON THREE SONNETS ATTRIBUTED TO FRANCISCO DE FIGUEROA.

Little is known of the life of the poet, Francisco de Figueroa. He was born at Alcalá de Henáres, probably about the year 1536¹, he attended the University of Alcalá, and while still a youth, went to Italy. There he gained renown, not only by his studies, but also by his career in the army, as Lope de Vega wrote in his *Canción á las obras de Don Francisco de Figueroa* :

A tí, del siglo solo
Unica luz, que con espada y pluma
Fuiste Marte y Apolo,
El tiempo rinda innumerable suma
De aplausos y laureles,
Con que en sus alas inmortales vuelles².

On August 20, 1560, he wrote a letter from Chartres to Ambrosio de Morales, in which he sends his best wishes to Antonio Perez, whom he no doubt knew at the University of Alcalá³. We do not know the date of his return to Spain, but on February 14, 1575, he married Doña María de Vargas, at Alcalá de Henáres⁴. In the year 1579, he accompanied D. Carlos de Aragon, first Duke of Terranova, to Flanders. He died at Alcalá sometime before the year 1618⁵, and on his deathbed,

¹ Figueroa's sonnet on the death of Garcilaso de la Vega *el Mozo*, was probably written soon after the latter's death, in 1555. As it is likely that Figueroa was at least twenty years old when he wrote the poem, he must have been born before the year 1536. This sonnet was first published in the *Floresta de varia poesia* of Diego Ramirez Pagan, in 1562. See Ticknor, *Historia de la literatura española*, Vol. II, p. 494.

² *Rimas humanas*, Part II, in the *Biblioteca de Autores españoles*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 348.

³ D. Martin Fernandez de Navarrete, *Vida de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, Madrid, 1819, p. 568.

⁴ See Mr Fitzmaurice-Kelly's note in the English translation of the *Galatea*, published at Glasgow in 1903, p. 288.

⁵ The exact date of Figueroa's death is not known. In Lope de Vega's *comedia, Virtud, Pobreza y Mujer*, Act I, sc. iv, two of the characters lament the fact that Pedro Liñan and Pedro Lainez had been forgotten because their works had not been printed, and Hipólito adds that Figueroa had suffered the same fate :

ordered that all his poetry should be burned. Those poems which escaped the flames were published by the historian, Luis Tribaldos de Toledo, at Lisbon, in 1625¹. A number of verses were added to the second edition which appeared at Lisbon, in 1626. Mr Archer M. Huntington published a reprint of this edition in 1903². Another edition appeared at Madrid in 1785, edited by D. Ramon Fernández. This edition was based on the Lisbon edition of 1626, and is far from satisfactory. It was published again at Madrid in 1804, forming Volume XX of the *Coleccion de poetas españoles*.

Figueroa enjoyed the friendship of many of the most famous poets of his time. He used the poetical name of Tirsi in his sonnets, and with this name, he was introduced as one of the characters into the pastoral romance, *El Pastor de Filida* by Luis Gálvez de Montalvo³. The latter speaks of him as follows: 'Unas *Coplas* sé yo, dijo Pradelio, que hizo *Siralvo* a su Deseo, aprovadas por dos clarissimos ingenios, uno el culto *Tirsi*, que de *Engaños*, i *Desengaños de Amor* va alumbrando nuestra nacion Española, como singular maestro dellos⁴.'

It is certain that the Tirsi of Cervantes' *Galatea*, is Figueroa, for in the second book, Cervantes ascribes to Tirsi, two sonnets and a *Canción* by Figueroa⁵. Lope de Vega praised him highly in his *Laurel de Apolo*, and according to La Barrera, he introduced him as the venerable Tirsi in his *Arcadia*⁶. He was mentioned with praise by many of his contemporaries, and his tender verses gained for him the title of 'el divino.'

The edition of Figueroa's poetry, published at Madrid, in 1785, contains 58 sonnets, besides a number of *estancias*, *elegías*, *sestinas* and *canciones*. This collection includes three sonnets, to the authorship of which Figueroa's claim is, at best, very doubtful. The first of these is Sonnet xxxii⁷:

Hoy Henáres lo lamenta
Del divino Figueroa.

Figueroa must have been dead when this play was written, and as Lope includes it in the list of his comedias published in *El Peregrino* in 1618, we must believe that Figueroa died before that date.

¹ Salvá, *Catálogo*, I, p. 228, also Gallardo, *Ensayo de una biblioteca*, Vol. II, Col. 1071.

² I have been able to examine Mr Huntington's reprint through the courtesy of the Yale University Library.

³ See Mr Fitzmaurice-Kelly's introduction to the English version of Cervantes' *Galatea*, Glasgow, 1903, p. xxxi.

⁴ *El Pastor de Filida*, compuesto por Luis Gálvez de Montalvo, Valencia, 1792, p. 154.

⁵ See Mr Fitzmaurice-Kelly's introduction to the English translation of the *Galatea*, p. xxxi.

⁶ *Nueva biografía de Lope de Vega*, p. 69.

⁷ *Poesias de Francisco de Figueroa, llamado el Divino*, Madrid, 1785, p. 17.

Estos, y bien serán pasos cuitados
 Quanto los dió jamás pie doloroso,
 Que agora dexaré triste y penoso
 Con mis amargas lagrimas regados:
 Por los mas dulces me serán contados
 De quantos en mi duro y trabajoso
 Viage dado habré: breve reposo,
 En vano procurando á mis cuidados.
 No porque Amor, ó mi fortuna fiera
 Alce de mí su mano ayrada y fuerte,
 O ablande un punto la crueldad pasada:
 Sino porque á morir parto, y la muerte
 Tan cerca va, que á la primer jornada
 La alcanzaré, ya que al partir no muera.

Lope de Vega, in his *Laurel de Apolo*¹, speaks as follows in praise of Marco Antonio de la Vega:

Pero ¿quien se levanta revestido
 De álamo blanco, y de laurel ceñido?
 Parece al claro Henares caudaloso.
 Oh rio venturoso!
 Padre de ingenios célebres al mundo,
 Que laurear solias
 Tus doctos hijos los felices dias
 Del siglo que jamás tendrá segundo
 Cierto será que llega
 A la voz de la fama sonora
 Aquel ingenio, universal, profundo,
 El docto Marco Antonio de la Vega,
 Ilustre en verso y erudito en prosa,
 Cuya pluma quejosa
 Parece que hoy escribe en los cuidados
 De su estilo amoroso:
 'Estos, y bien serán pasos contados
 Cual no los dió jamás pié doloroso.'

It will be noticed that these last two lines correspond closely to the first lines of the sonnet attributed to Francisco de Figueroa. Little is known of Marco Antonio de la Vega. Some of his verses are found in the *Cancionero General de la Doctrina Christiana*, of Juan López de Úbeda². Cervantes praised him in the *Canto de Calíope*³, but gives us no facts about him. Owing to our lack of information in regard to this poet, it is difficult to decide definitely as to the authorship of this sonnet. It was included in the editions of 1625 and 1626, of the works of Figueroa, which is a strong argument in favour of his authorship. However, the fact that Lope de Vega attributed the first two lines of it to Antonio de la Vega, in 1630, at least introduces an element of doubt into the matter.

¹ *Biblioteca de Autores españoles*, Vol. xxxviii, p. 201.

² Salvá, *Catálogo*, Vol. i, No. 1299.

³ Sedano, *Parnaso Español*, Vol. viii, p. 294.

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The second sonnet in question is found on page 66 of the edition of Madrid, 1785, of the *Obras de Francisco de Figueroa* :

En una selva al asomar del día,
Estaba Endimion triste y lloroso
Contra el rayo del sol, que presuroso
Por la falda del monte descendía :
Mirando al turbador de su alegríá,
Contrario de su bien y su reposo,
Tras un suspiro triste y congojoso
Tales palabras contra el sol decía :
Luz clara, para mí triste y oscura,
Que con furioso curso apresurado,
Mi sol con tu tiniebla oscureciste ;
Si te pueden mover en tal altura
Las quejas de un Pastor enamorado,
No tardes en volver á do saliste.

In the edition of Lisbon, 1626, of the works of Figueroa, this sonnet is preceded by the word, *ageno*, that is, the sonnet was the work of some other poet, and Figueroa merely glossed it in *lyras*, commencing,

Entre doradas flores.

We find this same sonnet published in the works of don Hernando de Acuña¹, which proves conclusively that he, not Figueroa, was the author of it. I copy it here, as it offers a few variants from the text as published in the works of Figueroa :

En una selva al parecer del día
Se estaba Endimion triste y lloroso,
Vuelve al rayo del sol, que presuroso
De la cumbre de un monte descendía :
Mirando el turbador de su alegríá,
Contrario de su bien y su reposo,
Tras un grave suspiro doloroso,
Tales palabras contra el sol decía :
Luz clara, para mí triste y oscura,
Que con furioso curso apresurado,
Mi sol con tu tiniebla escureciste :
Si te pueden mover en tanta altura
Las quejas de un pastor apasionado
No tardes en volver donde salistes.

The third sonnet in question, is the *Epitafio á la muerte de Tirsi*² :

Crezca con el licor del llanto mío
La verde yerba de este fértil prado :
Enfrene el triste son de mi cuidado
El presuroso curso de este río :
Resuena el bosque cavernoso y frío,
Ya es muerto Tirsi, Tirsi es ya acabado,
En el dolor terrible sepultado,

¹ *Varias poesias compuestas* por Don Hernando de Acuña, Madrid, 1804, p. 178.

² *Poesias de Francisco de Figueroa, llamado el Divino*, Madrid, 1785, p. 37.

Que tuvo de él entero señorío.
Sola esta solitaria selva umbrosa,
Y aquesta tan gentil verde ribera
Del lamentable fin fueron testigos.
Aquí cerró sus ojos muerte fiera,
Y el miserable cuerpo aquí reposa,
Llorándole Damon su firme amigo.

This sonnet is not found in either of the early Lisbon editions of the works of Figueroa, and was first published by Sedano in his *Parnaso Español*¹. We know that Figueroa's poetical name was Tirsi, and it is probable, that one of Figueroa's friends, under the name of Damon, wrote the above sonnet at the time of Figueroa's death. For this reason it was included in the manuscript collections of Figueroa's poetry, and later was published under his name.

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¹ Vol. iv, p. 89.