
Notes on the "Amphitrion" and "Los Menemnos" of Juan de Timoneda

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Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Apr., 1914), pp. 248-251

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3713012>

Accessed: 24/06/2014 20:11

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However striking, masterly, and powerful this scene may be, it is not all made up of flimsy poetic fancy: at bottom it has its germ of truth. Such things as Hugo here describes did actually take place. The following seems to be a case in point, where we have the fire, the edifice, the patriarch, and his company celebrating their feast.

‘Albert Goffuin, chapelain, est condamné par sentence du 7 janvier 1513 sur la réquisition du promoteur du chapitre à huit jours de prison pour avoir jeté du feu du haut du portail où il était placé sur le patriarche et ses consors dans le temps qu’ils célébraient leur fête la veille de l’Épiphanie¹.’

May we not, with some show of truth say of Hugo what he himself said of his great model in the field of historical romance: ‘Peu d’historiens sont aussi fidèles que ce romancier²’?

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NOTES ON THE ‘AMPHITRION’ AND ‘LOS MENEMNOS’ OF JUAN DE TIMONEDA.

Three plays of Juan de Timoneda, *La Comedia de Amphitryon*, *La Comedia de los Menemnos* and *Comedia llamada Cornelia*, were published in 1559³. The *Comedia de Amphitryon* contains a prologue recited by Bromio, an old shepherd; Pascuala, his daughter and two young shepherds, Morato and Roseno. After an introductory song, Bromio urges Pascuala to declare her preference for one of her suitors, Morato or Roseno, both of whom have served her faithfully. The maiden replies that she will indicate her choice by a sign, and turning to the young men, says:

‘Sus: Toma, Roseno, esta mi guirnalda, y dame la tuya, Morato. Declarado queda ya, padre mio, a quien mas destos ama mi corazon.’

After her departure, the lovers dispute as to the meaning of her enigmatical reply. Each adduces good reasons why he should be

¹ Dom Grenier, *Introd. à l’hist. gén. de la Province de Picardie*, 1856—*Mém. de la Soc. des Antiquaires de Picardie; Docs. inédits*, III, p. 371, referred to by E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage* (I, 304), who mentions in the same connection, among others, Rigollot and Hide who note the same case. It is to the kindness of my friend and colleague, Professor C. P. Wagner, that I owe the transcript of the text as quoted.

² Hugo, *Walter Scott: à propos de Quentin Durward* in *Littérature et Philosophie Méliées*.

³ These three plays are re-published in the *Obras completas de Juan de Timoneda publicadas por la Sociedad de Bibliófilos valencianos*, Vol. I, Valencia, 1911. *Los Menemnos* was re-printed by Moratin, *Orígenes del teatro español*, Biblioteca de autores españoles, Vol. II, and by Ochoa, *Tesoro del teatro español*, Vol. I, Paris, 1838.

considered the favoured one, and Bromio finally suggests that they refer the question to the most subtle and enamoured wits in the land. The young shepherds agree, and Bromio addresses the audience as follows: 'Nobles y apasionados Señores y señoras: la quistion suso dicha dexamos en mano de vuestras mercedes para que declaren a qual destos dos zagala ama y quiere mas esta zagala; que mañana bolueremos por la respuesta.' Morato and Roseno then state the argument of the play, and the prologue ends with a song beginning:

Dinos, zagala, cuál de los dos
es el tu amado?

This casuistical discussion is derived from the first question in the fourth part of Boccaccio's *Filocolo*. It will be recalled that while searching for Biancofiore, Filocolo is obliged by reason of a storm to stop at Naples, where he is cordially received by Fiammetta and her merry companions. One afternoon, Fiammetta suggests that they amuse themselves by proposing *questioni d'amore* for solution to a king who shall be elected by her comrades. She herself, however, is chosen as queen, and thirteen subtle questions are offered of the same type as the troubadours discussed in their *tenzoni*. The first is identical with the subject treated in the prologue of Timoneda's *Amphitryon*.

In the Italian version, a young girl is urged by her mother to express her preference for one of her two suitors. 'Disse la giovane: ciò mi piace; e rimiratili amenduni alquanto, vide che l' uno avea in testa una bella ghirlanda di fresche erbette e di fiori, e l' altro senza alcuna ghirlanda dimorava. Allora la giovane, che similmente in capo una ghirlanda di verdi fronde avea, levò quella di capo a sè, e a colui che senza ghirlanda le stava davanti la mise in capo; appresso quella che l' altro giovane in capo avea ella prese e a sè la pose, e loro lasciati stare, si tornò alla festa,' etc. Except that Timoneda substituted the father for the mother of the maiden, the two versions agree in their essential parts¹.

¹ This theme is first suggested in the *Babylonica* of Iamblichus of the second century A.D. and was frequently treated in medieval and Renaissance poetry. See the interesting article of Signor Pio Rajna, 'Una questione d'amore,' published in *Raccolta di studii critici dedicata ad Alessandro D'Ancona*, Firenze, 1901, pp. 553-68, and Adolfo Gaspary, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Vol. II, *parte prima*, pp. 825-26. The *Congrega dei Rozzi* of Siena amused themselves with *Dubbi, Casi and Quistioni* of the same type, C. Mazzi, *La Congrega dei Rozzi*, Firenze, 1882, Vol. I, 124 ff., and similar games were popular in Italian society in the sixteenth century, Renier, *Giorn. stor. della lett. italiana*, Vol. XIII, 382 ff.

Somewhat similar questions are discussed in the *Clareo y Florisea* of Núñez de Reinoso, *Biblioteca de autores españoles*, Vol. III, pp. 442-43. See the interesting article

The episode of the Thirteen Questions was translated into Spanish by D. Diego López de Ayala, assisted by Diego de Salazar. This translation was published at Seville in the year 1546 with the title *Laberinto de Amor*, and again at Toledo the same year with the title, *Trece questiones muy graciosas sacadas del Philoculo del famoso Juan Bocacio*. It has already been pointed out that the anonymous Spanish *Question de Amor*¹ treats a subject analogous to the second and fifth questions of the *Filocolo*. The theme of the gifts recalls Lope de Rueda's *Coloquio llamado Prendas de Amor*.

La Comedia de Amphitruon purports to be a translation, or rather an adaptation, of the *Amphitruo* of Plautus. It is certain, however, that Timoneda simply made a stage version of the translation of the *Amphitruo* by Francisco López de Villalobos which first appeared in the year 1515. The two versions agree textually in many places and the last scene of Timoneda's play is derived with unimportant changes from the *complimiento de la comedia, sacado de otro original*, in which Villalobos aims to offer a more satisfactory ending to the Latin play².

The *Comedia de los Menemnos* is preceded by a prologue in which Cupid and three shepherds, Ginebro, Climaco and Claudino, are the characters. The shepherds, enamoured of the shepherdess Temisa, present themselves before Cupid, asking him to decide which of them the maiden should prefer. Claudino has boasted to Temisa of his physical strength, Climaco has assured her of his sincerity and generosity, while Ginebro has urged his suit on the plea of his prudence and wisdom. Cupid asks which of the lovers she has chosen, and Climaco replies that Ginebro has been the favoured one. Cupid approves this choice, declaring that neither the strength of Hercules nor the generosity of Alexander the Great will satisfy a discreet woman, but only the fruits of real knowledge. The rejected suitors are satisfied with this decision, and recite the argument of the play.

The subject of this prologue is identical with the theme treated in the third *questione d'amore* of the *Filocolo*. One of the ladies tells Fiammetta that from among her suitors, she has chosen three as most worthy of her love: 'de' quali tre, l' uno di corporale fortrezza credo

of Professor Rudolph Scheyll, *Some Forms of the Riddle Question and the Exercise of the Wits in Popular Fiction and Formal Literature, University of California Publications in Modern Philology*, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 228. Certain *casos de amor* are proposed in the prologue to Timoneda's *Comedia llamada Cornelia*, and a *question de amor* forms the subject of the prologue to Alonso de la Vega's *Comedia de la Duquesa de la Rosa* (1589).

¹ Pio Rajna, *Le Questioni d'amore nel Filocolo, Romania*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 28—81, and Menéndez y Pelayo, *Orígenes de la novela*, Vol. I, pp. ccc—cccl and cccxxvii—cccxxx.

² The version of López Villalobos is re-published in Vol. xxxvi of the *Biblioteca de autores españoles*.

che avanzerebbe il buono Ettore, tanto è ad ogni prova vigoroso e forte; la cortesia e la liberalità del secondo è tanta, che la sua fama per ciascun polo credo che suoni; il terzo è di sapienza pieno tanto, che gli altri savii avanza oltra misura.' She concludes by asking the advice of Fiammetta, who decides the question in favour of the learned man, as is done by Cupid in Timoneda's prologue.

The *Comedia de los Menemnos* purports to be a translation of the *Menaechmi*. As a matter of fact, Timoneda simply borrowed the most important incidents from Plautus and gave the new version a Spanish setting and atmosphere. The parasite Peniculus has become the conventional *simple* and the scenes in which he takes part show the widest divergences from the Latin original. The figures of the doctor Auerroyz and his servant Lazarillo were probably borrowed from Ariosto's *Il Negromante*, which is also the chief source of Timoneda's *Comedia llamada Cornelia*. The *Amphitruon* and *Los Menemnos* are interesting as the first attempts to produce Plautus on the Spanish stage, and the relation of the prologues to Boccaccio's *Filocolo* offers additional proof of the dependence of the Spanish pastoral drama upon Italian models.

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RUMANIAN 'GEANĂ.'

In Rumanian we find *geană* < *gena* and *gene* < *genae* beside *bine* < *bene*, *tinăr*¹ < *teneru*. The difference between *geană* and *gene* is normal, due to the influence of the final vowels²; but that between *gene* and *bine* seems strange, the *i* of *bine* being a regular development. Tiktin assumes that Latin *gena* had long *e*³; but it is hard to see how that would help matters, in view of normal *i* < *ē* before *n*: *cindă* < *cēna*, *plindă* < *plēna*, *vine*⁴ < *uēnae*. The difficulty can be explained, however, if we assume that quantity was distinguished in early Rumanian. Italian has long stressed vowels in *vedo* and *vidi*, but short ones in *vedono* and *visto*, free vowels being long in paroxytones but not elsewhere⁵. Something of this kind must have once existed in Rumanian

¹ Also *tinăr* with vowel-harmony; compare *inimă* for **inimă* < *anima*, *femeie* < *familia*, *norod* = Slavonic *narod* 'folk.'

² Tiktin, *Rumänisches Elementarbuch*, Heidelberg, 1905, p. 32.

³ Tiktin, *l.c.*, p. 24.

⁴ Singular *vină*, with *i* (a sound like Polish *y*) due to *v*; compare *văz* < **vedzu* < *uideo*.

⁵ Malagòli, *Ortoepia e ortografia italiana moderna*, Milano, 1905, p. 164.