

Ángel-Luis Pujante and Keith Gregor, eds. 2017
Romeo y Julieta en España: Las versiones neoclásicas
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This volume is the third installment of learned monographs on the early Spanish neoclassical versions of Shakespeare plays that Ángel-Luis Pujante and Keith Gregor, of the Universidad de Murcia, have regaled us with so far. In 2010, the first installment was devoted to *Hamlet* and its four Spanish versions, made between 1772 and 1825, and based on the neoclassical French recastings by Jean-François Ducis initiated in 1769 (Pujante and Gregor 2010). A *Macbeth* volume followed in 2011, with two of the three Spanish versions of Ducis's adaptations (Gregor and Pujante 2011). Now is the turn for the so-called greatest "love story ever told," with three early Spanish play-texts that relate to it in different ways. The earliest monograph on *Hamlet* set a pattern, in both structure and accomplishment, that the subsequent volumes have followed: accurate modern-spelling editions, minimally annotated, constitute the bulk of the volume, and are preceded by thoughtful and well-documented introductions. The three early Spanish versions related to the Shakespearean story of the star-crossed lovers are: *Julia y Romeo, tragedia urbana*, premiered in 1803, and preserved in two manuscripts in Madrid; *Julieta y Romeo*, a verse opera, dated around 1805 by Pujante and Gregor (15), with two manuscripts containing its libretto and a vocal score respectively; and *Romeo y Julieta*, published in 1817. The first two versions are anonymous, and we only knew that the 1817 *Romeo y Julieta* was based on Ducis's adaptation.

A twenty-two-page "Introducción" displays the authors' meticulous detective work based on a complex and thorough investigation of sources, French (mostly) and German, and on a close comparative analysis of originals and translations-adaptations. Investigating the source(s) of the 1803 *Julia y Romeo* is quite a challenge. Pujante and Gregor have unravelled its intricate intertextual precedents to persuasively conclude that it is a free

version of Georges-Adam Junker's French translation (1785) of Christian Felix Weisse's German version *Romeo und Julie* (1768) (18–20). This is an unexpected finding since Ducis is the source for most of the early Spanish adaptations of Shakespeare plays such as *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth* (25). Pujante and Gregor painstakingly detail the matches in scene structure, plot development, character motivation and even verbal elements, and argue that they are so specific and so interrelated that the filiation with the French translation of Weisse is unquestionable (21). Written in rhymed verse, the Spanish *Julia y Romeo* has two different endings, a tragic one (in the manuscript at the Biblioteca Nacional) and a happy denouement (in the manuscript at the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid, which after the "FIN" trailer adds a transcription of the tragic denouement in the other manuscript). The happy ending is original, and Pujante and Gregor wonder if it derives from Rojas Zorilla's Bandello-inspired *Los bandos de Verona* (1640), which was performed in 1797 (27). An interesting lesson can be learnt from the fact that between Weisse and the Spanish *Julia y Romeo* stand two other French versions, and that Weisse's German tragedy is based not only on Shakespearean themes but also on situations present in the Italian antecedents by Luigi Da Porto (1524) and Matteo Bandello (1554): we cannot lay on Shakespeare the exclusive driving force behind the dissemination of the Romeo and Juliet story.

For the verse opera *Julieta y Romeo*, Pujante and Gregor conclude that it is a rewriting ("refundición") of Joseph-Alexandre de Ségur's libretto for *Roméo et Juliette*, which premiered in 1793 in Paris (34). They do not discuss the relationship between this French opera and Shakespeare's tragedy. They focus on the problem of dating *Julieta y Romeo*, for which they conjecture 1805 as a likelier date than 1815, which is recorded in the catalogue of the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid. This conjecture is based on the fact that the names in the *Julieta y Romeo* libretto coincide with those belonging to a company that performed in Madrid between Easter 1805 and Palm Sunday 1806 (36). The absence of references to a production in the periodical publications at that time make it likely that this opera was never performed, which makes this a case of "reception without dissemination" (36).

As for the 1817 *Romeo y Julieta*, Pujante and Gregor qualify it as a rewriting of Ducis's *Roméo et Juliette*, probably from its 1813 version

(28). After explaining the dramatic distinctiveness of this French neoclassical adaptation, they analyze its Spanish version, written in hendecasyllables with even lines rhyming with one another. Two features are worth highlighting: it corrects the unlikelihood of some situations in Ducis's version, and tries to depoliticize it and turn it into a domestic tragedy so as to avoid any reference to the political situation in Spain after Ferdinand VII resumed the throne in 1813 (in Ducis, the Duke of Verona is called Ferdinand) (31).

The "Introducción" is followed by ten pages of "Notas complementarias" on the texts and their authorship. Pujante and Gregor reinforce Emilio Cotarelo's attribution of *Julia y Romeo* to Dionisio Solís (also endorsed by Andioc and Coulon, against Par and other scholars) by pointing out the fact that the main players performed in this adaptation and in another adaptation, written by Solís and performed in 1800, of a play by August von Kotzebue; and the fact that both share the method of free translation in the "romance" versification form when their respective originals are in prose (50). They also suggest Dionisio Solís as a "fairly probable candidate" for the authorship of the spoken dialogue in the opera *Julieta y Romeo* (51). For the 1817 *Romeo y Julieta*, Pujante and Gregor clarify some confusions in earlier scholars that had assigned this version to Solís and concur with Cotarelo (1932) that it was written by Manuel García Suelto.

The "Note" on the texts also includes a statement on the choice of the base text (where appropriate) and a description of the editorial procedures for each version. As pointed out above, the editions are offered in modernized spelling and punctuation, without line numbers, and the emendations—limited to a minimum (12)—are silently incorporated in the text without any indication in textual notes or any critical apparatus. Pujante and Gregor add stage directions, between square brackets, of the kind that help visualize the stage action, and include minimal notes on textual issues. García Suelto's *Romeo y Julieta* is the most textually complex version, with four manuscript prompt-books at the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid, and two quartos published in 1817 and 1820, the latter being a reprint of the first one (43). Pujante and Gregor opt for the first quarto as the basis of their edition, since it is the fullest textual version (44). The edition of the 1803 *Julia y Romeo* is mainly based on the manuscript at the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid, prints the

cuts for omission in italics and includes the appended tragic ending. The edited text of the opera *Julieta y Romeo* combines the spoken dialogue and the sung sections (the latter being indented and in italics) in one single text, so that they alternate with the sung sections (45).

After the Bibliography section, the volume includes an updated table-list, compiled by Jennifer Ruiz-Morgan, of sixty-seven Spanish-language translations, adaptations, and selected derivative works (such as Jose María Pemán's 1936 *Julieta y Romeo: comedieta en prosa*), from which one might just miss the great poet Luis Cernuda's translation of the first act.

To conclude, this "*Romeo y Julieta*" en España monograph, like its *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* predecessors, is a welcome contribution to the scholarship on the presence of Shakespeare in Spain, both for having printed for the first time two of the early Spanish versions of the story of the lovers of Verona, and for their insightful analysis; but it would not be an exaggeration to qualify this monograph as exceeding its predecessors since the early *Romeo and Juliet* versions pose greater enigmas of provenance and authorship than the *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* versions, enigmas which Pujante and Gregor have been able to solve, or suggest solutions for, in a convincing way. One can only look forward to their planned volume on *Othello*.

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