

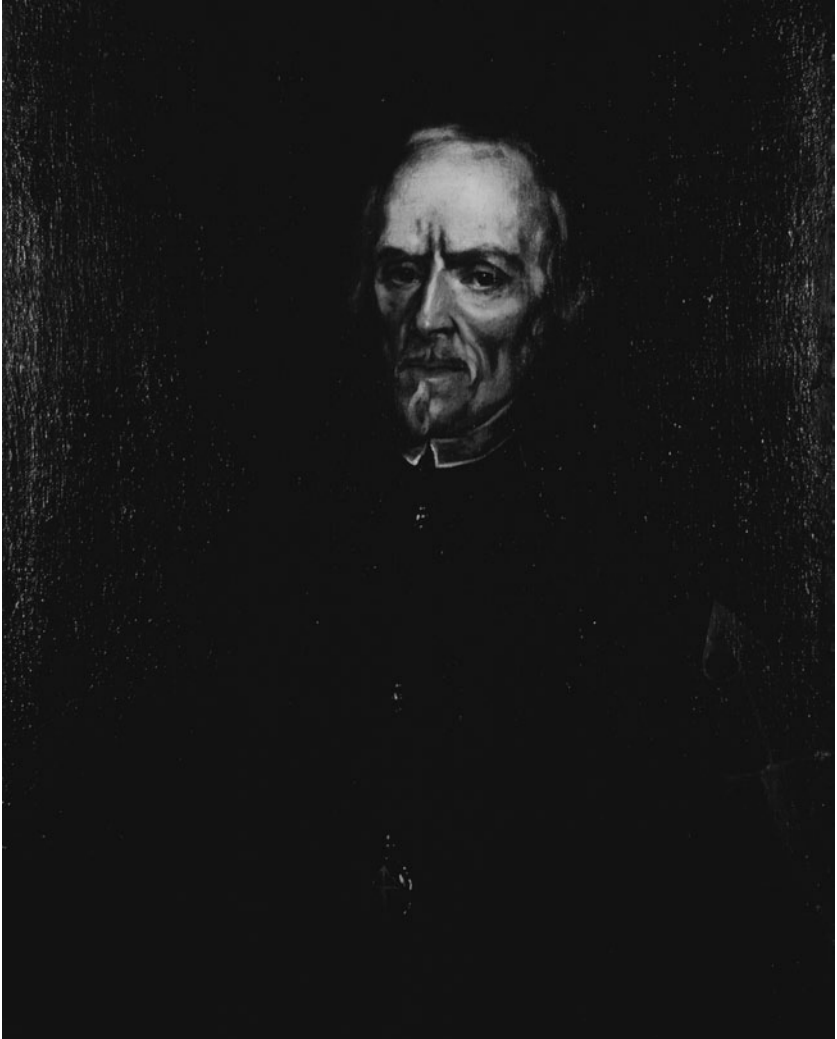
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DON PEDRO CALDERÓN

Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681) is Spain's most important early modern dramatist. His varied career as a playwright, courtier, soldier and priest placed him at the heart of Spanish culture, and he reflected on contemporary events in his plays, most famously *La vida es sueño* (*Life is a Dream*). In the first scholarly biography of Calderón in English, Don W. Cruickshank uses his command of the archival sources and his unparalleled understanding of Calderón's work to chart his life and his political, literary and religious contexts. In addition, the book includes much fresh research into Calderón's writings and their attributions. This elegant, erudite work will bring Calderón to a new audience both within and beyond Spanish studies. With illustrations, extensive notes and detailed indexes, this is the most comprehensive English-language book on Calderón, and it will long remain the key work of reference on this important author.

DON W. CRUICKSHANK is Emeritus Professor of Spanish at University College, Dublin. He has published widely on Calderón and on Spanish literature and has edited several editions of Calderón's works.

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Juan de Alfaro, *Don Pedro Calderón*, ?c. 1675 (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid)

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*To the Memory of
Edward Meryon Wilson
1906–1977*

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Preface

For *interpretation* if not *assessment* of a work biographical knowledge is often useful and sometimes most valuable.

(David Daiches, *Critical Approaches to Literature*)

Not so long ago, one branch of critical theory held that the identity of the author was irrelevant: what mattered was the text. Had its proponents carried this point of view to its logical conclusion, they should have remained anonymous. The contrary view, that the facts of authors' lives and the events they lived through as they wrote, can help us interpret their texts, is inherently more plausible. That view is the basis of this biography. We can justify the view from the way Calderón composes his work: we shall find it harder to penetrate the allegory of *La segunda esposa* (1649) if we know nothing of Philip IV's second marriage. Contemporary events provided sources of inspiration and points of reference, and the plays are full of allusions to them and to other works, from Classical to contemporary, including the poet's own.

Producing a biography of Calderón is a daunting task, especially in the light of the unlucky precedents. Don Juan de Vera Tassis, Calderón's first editor, who published nine volumes of his plays, had planned to publish ten, and even supplied titles of the plays to be contained in the tenth: he listed fourteen of them in the *Novena parte* of 1691. But although he was still alive in 1716, and although his second edition of the *Verdadera quinta parte* (1694) benefited from his continuing efforts to find better texts, the *Décima parte* never saw the light. No doubt good texts, or any texts at all, had proved elusive for some plays, but he must have had several of them, since printed editions of a few still existed in the eighteenth century. Only one of the fourteen, *El acaso y el error*, survives today. Referring to Calderón's works in the *Verdadera quinta parte* of 1682, Vera Tassis wrote that 'sus obras las venera, y guarda la Libreria del Colegio Mayor de Oviedo en Salamanca' ('his works are revered and preserved by the library of the Colegio Mayor de Oviedo in Salamanca'). Whether these were manuscript or printed, they

should have been transferred, with the college's other holdings, to the university's main library. No trace of them has been found so far.

After Vera Tassis, the first attempt to produce a critical edition of Calderón's plays was made by Juan Jorge Keil, who explained in a prospectus how he intended to provide textual variants and commentary for all of the plays, including those not printed by Vera Tassis. Keil managed to produce a complete edition, in four volumes, of the 108 plays in Vera Tassis's nine *partes* (1827–30), but the original grand plan was never realised.

The first scholar to prepare the way for a serious Calderón biography was Cristóbal Pérez Pastor, the author of *Documentos para la biografía de don Pedro Calderón de la Barca* (1905). The title-page proclaims that this is Volume I, and Don Cristóbal's prologue explains that so many documents have turned up since the book was sent to press that 'hemos decidido reservar los datos últimamente encontrados para un segundo tomo que además llevará las ilustraciones necesarias para aclarar algunos puntos dudosos' ('we have decided to keep the data recently discovered for a second volume, which will also include the illustrations needed to clarify some doubtful points'). Volume II never appeared; Don Cristóbal died in 1908. We may take comfort from the likelihood that many of the documents referred to have since been discovered by others, and that those which have not still await rediscovery.¹

The first biographer to take advantage of Pérez Pastor's unfinished work was Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, in his *Ensayo sobre la vida y obras de D. Pedro Calderón de la Barca* (1924). One is alarmed, but by this time not entirely surprised, to discover the words 'Parte Primera' on the title-page. Cotarelo had planned four volumes: the *Biografía*, the *Fama póstuma*, the *Crítica* and a *Bibliografía*. Only the first was published. Now, over eighty years later, all four would be out of date, but they would have been enormously useful to later *calderonistas*.

In 1960 (to judge from the dates of the works he cites), the late Edward Wilson began to write a biography of Calderón. He produced eighty pages of typescript, two chapters, around 20,000 words, which ended in 1651. Although it was clearly his intention to continue to 1681, he apparently wrote no more after 1960: the handwritten revisions do not extend to a work which appeared in 1961, and which he saw prior to publication. As Wilson's literary executor, I still have that typescript. While my biography is very different from the one he planned (it is bound to be, with half a century of published Calderón research to help), I have found the typescript enormously useful from the point of view of references. Wilson had numerous friends and contacts in the world of Hispanic studies, and the amount of

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information he received from them indicates that his preparation for what he wrote extended back for years.² One cannot thank a long-dead mentor, but I dedicate this book to his memory, in recognition of the fact that it could not have been written without his work on Calderón, the vast majority of which he did publish.

Calderón's huge output has certainly contributed to the difficulties of his biographers, but these misfortunes have extended even to his mortal remains. In his will, Calderón had asked to be buried in the church of San Salvador, and this was done, in the manner in which he had specified.³ Cotarelo provides a list, in the last chapter of his *Ensayo*, of the five occasions on which the remains were moved, beginning in 1841 and ending in 1902 in San Pedro, near the Glorieta de Quevedo. San Pedro was one of the churches sacked in the Civil War, and the remains were never recovered.

This biography tries to avoid promising too much: it deals mainly with Calderón's secular career, the first half of his writing life, up to 1650, when he took the first steps to becoming a priest. It is also an old-fashioned, traditional biography. That is, it tries to set the subject in his political and cultural context, while dealing with the events of his life, and significant events which happened during that life, in chronological order. The chronology also extends to his writings, to the development of ideas and techniques, as far as the known facts allow. If this old-fashioned approach requires justification, it lies in the fact that the traditional biography of Cotarelo has been badly in need of revision for many years. Cotarelo was wealthy enough to conduct research on a full-time basis, and his favourite topic was the drama of the Golden Age. Modern scholars owe a great deal to him. Since 1924, however, much new research has been done on Golden-Age drama in general, and on Calderón in particular, thanks in large measure to the stimulation provided by two centenaries within twenty years (1981, 2000). The new research has revealed new documents, new facts and new dates, but only one scholar has attempted to draw the information together to write a new Life: Felipe Pedraza Jiménez, in his *Calderón: vida y teatro* (2000). His stated aim, in his 'Declaración de intenciones', is very similar to my own:

Mi trabajo se ha limitado a contar la vida, tal y como puede deducirse de los documentos que conservamos, a intentar perfilar el carácter, sin juicios previos, y a ir pasando las páginas de sus dramas, comedias, autos y piezas menores.

(My work has been limited to recounting the life, to the extent that it can be inferred from the documents we possess, to attempting to sketch the character, without prejudgements, and to going through the pages of his dramas, comedies, *autos* and minor pieces.)⁴

Pedraza's book is very useful, but despite this usefulness and the similarity of intention, the result is rather different. Here, there are pictures, notes, and an index. That is, I want readers to see, as far as possible, what the people and places referred to looked like, the physical appearance of the documents quoted, as well as the sources of information and conclusions. When necessary, I have gone back to documents which were known, as well as looking for new ones. Finally, I want this to be a reference book, in which readers searching for information about a single play, or a single character, can find it without having to guess at my estimate of the play's date of composition.

Pedraza quotes Ángel Valbuena Prat's famous remark that Calderón's life-story is 'la biografía del silencio' ('the biography of silence'), but rightly points out that this remark is really true only when we compare his with that of Lope de Vega (p. 11). Lope was an egotist, an emotional extrovert who not only left behind some 500 personal letters, but constantly used his own life as a source for his art, most notably in the *Dorotea*; he even created a character, Belardo, to be his mouthpiece in his plays. In Calderón, we may complain, there is none of this. But there is none of this in Shakespeare, in Marlowe, in Tirso, in Luis Vélez, in Corneille ... In fact, we know far more about Calderón than we do about Tirso or Marlowe, more even than about Shakespeare, although no author has been more thoroughly investigated. Lope is unique: it is Calderón who is typical. We should remember, too, that his work is full of personal references: there are self-mocking jokes about poets, advertisements for his other plays, remarks about studying in Salamanca, and so on. There are, indeed, scores of occasions when national or personal events provide certain or plausible inspiration, either for whole works, for scenes or for passages. What we do not find is an obvious mouthpiece for the author, and we soon learn that remarks which may seem autobiographical need to be supported from other sources.

Calderón's first biographers were Don Juan de Vera Tassis (in his edition of Calderón's *Verdadera quinta parte*, 1682) and Gaspar Agustín de Lara (in his *Obelisco funebre, pyramide funesto que construía a la inmortal memoria de D. Pedro Calderon de la Barca*, 1684). Vera Tassis's reference to himself as the dramatist's 'mayor amigo' ('greatest friend') has often been derided. There is evidence, though, that he discussed with Calderón his plans to publish a complete edition of Don Pedro's plays, and that Calderón supplied him with information and perhaps even some texts. Vera Tassis's chief defect as a biographer was akin to his shortcomings as an editor: excessive intervention. Not, unlike his subject, a *madrileño* (he calls Salamanca 'amada patria mía' ('my beloved homeland') in the *Verdadera*

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quinta parte), Vera Tassis was born much later, probably in the 1630s. There is no evidence that he met Calderón until the 1670s, but he was unwilling to leave blank those areas about which his information was scanty. As for Lara, he evidently recalled personal information contributed by Calderón; his information, when we can check it, is accurate. However, there is no evidence, in either case, for any ordered attempt to supply (on Calderón's part) or to record (on the part of Vera Tassis and Lara) such details as might be used in a biography. Vera Tassis did consult Don Pedro's sister Dorotea, but the only piece of information attributed to her is the remark that she had often heard her parents say that her brother had cried three times while still in the womb: evidence, supposedly, of precocity. Not until the *Documentos* of Pérez Pastor was there any systematic effort to gather information about the dramatist. Pérez Pastor was a priest and a 'doctor en ciencias' who spent much of his life hunting through archives for information about the classical theatre of Spain. His volume is the starting-point for this biography. As was normal a century ago, his transcriptions of documents tend to modernise; occasionally one finds minor errors, and it has often been necessary to check documents which he merely summarises. Without his preliminary labours, however, the amount of research required simply to discover material would have been enormous.

As the words 'secular career' suggest, this study not only deals with the writer's life before he became a priest, but also concentrates on his secular works. The *autos* are not ignored, especially when they are based on *comedias* or on current events, or when there is reliable information about their date of composition. However, the *autos* present more dating problems than the plays, particularly before 1650, as well as less biographical information.

My thanks are due to the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, for the funding which enabled me to devote a complete academic year to this project; to the staffs of the Archivo de Villa, Madrid; the Archivo del Ayuntamiento de Santillana del Mar; the Archivo del Ayuntamiento de Yepes; the Archivo Histórico de Protocolos, Madrid; the Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid; the Audio Visual Centre, University College, Dublin; the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich; the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome; the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal, Madrid; the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid; the Biblioteca Universitaria, Universidade de Santiago; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the British Library; Cambridge University Library; the Hispanic Society of America; the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid; the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek,

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Abbreviations

AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid
AHP	Archivo Histórico de Protocolos Notariales, Madrid
<i>AL</i>	<i>Anuario de Letras</i>
BAE	Biblioteca de Autores Españoles
<i>BBMP</i>	<i>Boletín de la Biblioteca Menéndez y Pelayo</i>
<i>BCom</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Comediantes</i>
<i>BH</i>	<i>Bulletin Hispanique</i>
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Bulletin of Hispanic Studies</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>Burlington Magazine</i>
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid
<i>BRAE</i>	<i>Boletín de la Real Academia Española</i>
<i>BRAH</i>	<i>Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia</i>
<i>BSS</i>	<i>Bulletin of Spanish Studies</i>
CSIC	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas
<i>FMLS</i>	<i>Forum for Modern Language Studies</i>
<i>Hisp</i>	<i>Hispania</i>
<i>HR</i>	<i>Hispanic Review</i>
IEM	Instituto de Estudios Madrileños
<i>JHP</i>	<i>Journal of Hispanic Philology</i>
<i>MLN</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>MLR</i>	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
<i>NRFE</i>	<i>Nueva Revista de Filología Española</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
<i>RABM</i>	<i>Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos</i>
<i>RBAM</i>	<i>Revista de la Biblioteca, Archivo y Museo del Ayuntamiento de Madrid</i>
<i>RBPH</i>	<i>Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire</i>
<i>RCEH</i>	<i>Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos</i>

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Abbreviations

<i>RevHisp</i>	<i>Revue Hispanique</i>
<i>RFE</i>	<i>Revista de Filología Española</i>
<i>RHMC</i>	<i>Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine</i>
<i>RLit</i>	<i>Revista de Literatura</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Renaissance Quarterly</i>
<i>RR</i>	<i>Romanic Review</i>
<i>ZRP</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie</i>

*Note on measurements, currency,
translations and dates*

The *pie castellano* (Castilian foot) was about 28 centimetres, or 11 inches. References to money in Golden-Age Castile mention *maravedís*, *reales*, *escudos* and *ducados*. The *ducado*/ducat was a money of account: with 34 *maravedís* per *real* and 11 *reales* per ducat, there were supposedly 374 *maravedís* in a ducat, but to make calculation easier, the ducat was often reckoned as 375 *maravedís*. The *escudo* was a real coin, but its relationship to the others varied. Minsheu (1599) rated it at 11¾ *reales* (400 *maravedís*), or 5/10½d in English money (for him, a *real* was sixpence); in Spain, after 1609, it was reckoned at 440 *maravedís*. Since inflation and currency manipulation caused the purchasing power of Castilian coins to vary hugely in the seventeenth century, readers will find it easiest to think of *escudos* and ducats as roughly equal. Translations are supplied for all quotations, in whatever language. Translations of all Calderón titles referred to are given in the Appendix. All dates are New Style, unless followed by the abbreviation OS.