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EL REMEDIO EN LA DESDICHA

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*LOPE DE VEGA*

EL REMEDIO  
EN LA DESDICHA

Edited with Introduction

by

J. W. BARKER, Ph.D.

*Lecturer in Spanish in the  
University of Cambridge*

CAMBRIDGE  
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## PREFACE

LOPE FELIX DE VEGA CARPIO is said to have written 1800 plays and 400 *autos*. Despite his fame, the many details of his life given in most manuals of literature and the glorification of his achievements in prose and verse for 300 years, reliable texts of his works, with six or seven exceptions, have been available only in the large and expensive collections. *El mejor alcalde, el Rey*, already published in the Cambridge Plain Texts, is a representative example of the justice-loving King type of heroic play. *El remedio en la desdicha* is representative of the Chronicle group dealing with Moorish subjects, chiefly of the fifteenth century, and is now printed primarily for its interest as a reading text. More advanced students, however, will find it a very profitable study for other reasons. It is a starting point from which to follow Lope's rapidly developing powers of versification and dramatic construction. Some hints and suggestions are given on these points in the Introduction. Indebtedness to other workers is mentioned in the notes.

J. W. B.

*Downing College, Cambridge*

March 1931

*b*

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## INTRODUCTION

LOPE DE VEGA (1562–1635), the popular dramatist, treated the *romances moriscos*, *romances fronterizos* and the tales of Moorish life which were so common in the second half of the sixteenth century in various ways. In *El cerco de Santa Fe*, 1<sup>a</sup> parte 1604, his theme was the *romance* with the same title. *El primer Fajardo* (published 1617) deals with the famous game of chess, “*Jugando estaba el Rey moro*.” The substance or actual text of the *romances de Zaide* in the *Romancero* of 1600 is to be found in the *Guerras Civiles*<sup>1</sup>. In *La Dorotea* (1632), Act II, Sc. v, he included his early *romance*, “*Cautivo el Abindarráz Del Alcaide de Antequera*.” *Los Çegries y Bencerrajes* (a play written before 1603) and *La envidia de la nobleza* (a late play), called also *Prisión de los Bencerrajes*, dealt with the fall of that unfortunate tribe, while *El hijo de Reduán* and *El hidalgo Bencerraje* are an imaginative synthesis of popular literature and contemporary ideas.

But *El remedio en la desdicha* is Lope’s most complete treatment of a Moorish theme. As a background it has the conflict between Moor and Christian and the internal dissensions among the Moors of Granada which culminated in the *Degollación de los Abencerrajes* by Abul Hassán. In particular its subject is the troubled love of Abindarráz and Jarifa in close relation and contrast with the generosity and restrained passion of the Christian knight, Rodrigo de Narváez. The sub-plot, on a lower plane, rivals—perhaps outrivals—the main plot in interest. Rodrigo, who dominates the action, was an historical character, mentioned in Mariana’s *History*, Pulgar’s *Claros Varones*, Ferrant Mexia’s *Nobiliario vero* and the anonymous *Crónica del Rey Don Juan el Segundo*, Año 1410, cap. xxvi. “Roderick of Narvaez was

<sup>1</sup> Pérez de Hita, *Guerras Civiles de Granada*, ed. P. Blanchard Demouge, Madrid, 1913–15.

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## INTRODUCTION

left Governor of the City and Castle and took his oath accordingly" (Mariana, Book XIX, Ch. x. Trans. Capt. John Stevens, 1699).

“¿Quién fué visto ser más industrioso ni más acebto en los atos de la guerra que Rodrigo de Naruaes, cauallero fijoalgo, a quien, por notables fazañas que contra los moros fizo, le fué cometida la cibdad de Antequera, en la guarda de la cual, y en los vencimientos que fizo a los moros, ganó tanta honra y estimación de buen cauallero, que ninguno en sus tiempos la ouo mayor en aquellas fronteras? Y es de considerar, que como quier que los moros son omnes belicosos, astutos e muy engañosos en las artes de la guerra, e varones robustos e crueles, e aunque poseen tierra de grandes e altas montañas, e de logares tan ásperos e fragosos que la disposición de la misma tierra es la mayor parte de su defensa: pero la fuerça y el esfuerço destes caualleros, e de otros muchos nobles e fijosdalgos vuestros naturales, que continuaron guerra con ellos, siempre [los] oprimieron a que diesen parias a los reyes vuestros progenitores, e se ofreciesen por sus vasallos” (Pulgar, *Claros Varones de Castilla*, Título XVII). Lope’s version of Narváez’s love-story differs from that given in the *Inventario* of Villegas.

## THE DATE OF COMPOSITION

Literary references, date of publication, style, versification and type of *gracioso* seem to indicate the year 1596, or the years immediately following, as the date of composition. *El remedio* was first published in the “Trecena parte de las comedias de Lope de Vega, Procurador Fiscal de la Cámara Apostólica en el Arzobispado de Toledo. Dirigidas, cada una de por sí, a diferentes personas. Año 1620. Con privilegio. En Madrid. Por la viuda de Alonso Martín. A costa de Alonso Pérez, mercader de libros.” This thirteenth part was licensed for publication in 1619. But Nicolás de los Ríos, the noted actor-manager, put the play on the stage and he had died in 1610. In *El Peregrino*, a mis-

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cellany licensed for publication in 1603, Lope gives a list of his dramatic works, and among them is *Abindarráez y Narváez*: this is generally accepted as our play. Lope was accustomed to gather the outstanding lyrics from his plays to publish in collections. Thus the sonnet, "*Bañaba el sol la cressa y dura cresta*," ll. 438–51, spoken by Narváez, had been included as early as 1602 in *Las Rimas* with *La Hermosura de Angélica*. Further, ll. 937–9, 950, 952, *Sola esta vez quisiera...* take us back another step. They are quoted in the *Romancero General* of 1600, and were taken from the *Arcadia* of 1598. The lines were originally written in Toledo in 1588<sup>1</sup>. *El remedio*, therefore, seems to have been written during the period 1588–98, and a more precise date can be assigned from a consideration of the sources of the play.

## SOURCES

Of the various Spanish themes that have caught the popular imagination in Spain, France and England, few have had a more wide-spread appeal than the picturesque, romantic love of Abindarráez and Jarifa in its setting of Christian and Moorish exploits culminating in the feuds of the beleaguered Granadinos. Voiture, Mme de Lafayette, Mlle de Scudéry, Chateaubriand and Sir Walter Scott abroad, with Martínez de la Rosa and Zorrilla, among others, in Spain, have all been attracted. The story of the young lovers may well be true in substance, though serious historians do not mention it until the end of the sixteenth century. The literary history of the story seems to be as follows. In the fifteenth century grew up a series of *romances* of which a fragment has been preserved in Villegas, Montemayor and Lope:

Nascido en Granada,  
Criado en Cártama,  
Enamorado en Coín,  
Frontero en Alora.

<sup>1</sup> Lope de Vega, *Poetas Líricas*, 2 tomos: *Clásicos Castellanos*, t. II, p. 19.

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Out of these *romances* grew a popular novel of which is preserved:

“*Parte de la Crónica del inclito infante D. Fernando, que ganó a Antequera: en la qual trata como se casaron á hurto el Abendarraxe Abindarréez con la linda Xarifa, hija del Alcaide de Coín, y de la gentileza y liberalidad que con ellos usó el noble Caballero Rodrigo de Narbaez, Alcaide de Antequera y Alora, y ellos con él.*”

Narváez was not Alcaide de Alora, so this *Crónica* is possibly posterior to 1492<sup>1</sup>. On this *Crónica* is certainly based the story in the *Inventario* of Villegas<sup>2</sup> which was ready for the press in 1551. In the 1562 edition of Montemayor’s *Diana* the editor inserted the same story, based on Villegas, but with sundry omissions.

During the second half of the sixteenth century the story became still more popular and was reproduced in prose and verse. The source of each of the following versions seems to be Montemayor or Villegas with additions from popular sources, or from ‘Histories.’

*Un romance artístico* in Timoneda, *Rosa de Amores*, 1573.

Two poems in Henares Lucas Rodríguez, *Romancero Historiado*, 1579.

An anonymous ballad, *Ya llegaba Abindarréez—a vista de la muralla*.

Francisco Balbide Correggio, *Historia de los amores del valeroso moro Abinde-Arraez y la hermosa Xarifa Abencerases*, Milan, 1593 (10 cantos of *octavas reales*).

Jerónimo de Covarrubias Herrera, *Romance de Rodrigo de Narvaez*, 1594.

<sup>1</sup> Menéndez y Pelayo, *Orígenes de la Novela*, t. I, pp. cclxxv–ccclxxxviii; *Antología de Poetas Líricos Castellanos*, t. XII, pp. 245–59; *Obras de Lope de Vega*, ed. Real Acad. Española, t. XI, pp. xxx–xli. See also for texts *Bib. de Autores Españoles*, t. XLI, and *Clásicos Castellanos*, vol. XXXIX.

<sup>2</sup> Villegas, *El Abencerraje*, Cambridge Plain Texts.

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Lope de Vega, *La Dorotea*<sup>1</sup>; “*Cautivo el Abindarráez Del Alcaide de Antequera.*”

But the most interesting recompilation of all the attendant circumstances was the *Guerras Civiles de Granada* by Ginés Pérez de Hita. He made use of *El Cancionero de Romances de Amberes*, *La Silva de Zaragoza*, *La Rosa Española* de Timoneda, *La Flor de Romances* de Moncayo, the historian Garibay, *La Diana*, etc. This semi-history was published in 1595. Lope based *El remedio* on the story in *La Diana*. In the dedication to his daughter he says: *Escribió la historia de Jarifa y Abindarráez, Montemayor, ...de su prosa, tan celebrada entonces, saqué yo esta comedia en mis tiernos años.* But *El remedio* shows a knowledge of details in Villegas which are omitted in Montemayor. More especially it shows an awareness of the fuller background of the *Guerras Civiles* of 1595; as may be seen, for example, in Act II and especially in ll. 1500–4 which recall Part I, Chs. III and IV. *El remedio*, therefore, appears to have been written between 1595 and 1598, dates which are confirmed by a consideration of the *gracioso* and of the versification.

## THE GRACIOSO IN LOPE DE VEGA

Lope used the *gracioso* mainly as a critic of extravagances in customs, dress, literature and thought, as the voice of common sense, and as the materialistic, timid, plebeian, gross-feeding foil of his romantic, proud, noble and gallant master. But the *gracioso* developed as a character throughout Lope's extended dramatic production, and it is possible, to some extent, to distinguish when the above-mentioned and other characteristics were introduced. Lope himself declares that he first introduced the *gracioso* into *La Francesilla*, performed, as he says, before Montalván's birth in 1602<sup>2</sup>. The first dated play, however, in

<sup>1</sup> Lope de Vega, *La Dorotea*, Biblioteca Renacimiento, Madrid, 1913, pp. 90–2.

<sup>2</sup> Rennert y Castro, *Vida de Lope de Vega*, Madrid, 1919, pp. 376 *sqq.*

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which a kind of *gracioso* (Cornejo) appears is *El maestro de danzar* (1594).

Nuño in *El remedio* seems to be a *gracioso* of the transition period, a rudimentary *gracioso* lacking many of the developed characteristics of satire and comic relief seen in plays written after 1598. Nuño is a talkative braggart, a messenger who discusses and furthers his master's love affair. He is sly, sensual in his appetite, makes evident his master's bravery and danger, and praises his generosity by implication. *Calla, loco*, is Narváez's own comment. In a word, Nuño has the characteristics of an elementary, undeveloped, non-satiric *gracioso*, appropriate to the year 1596 or thereabouts, though, by his disguise, he gives a hint as to the fool's future development. This element of disguise became conventional, but it was natural in Nuño's case and had historical precedent.

## THE LYRIC ELEMENT IN

*EL REMEDIO*

"*Famoso Alcaide de Alora*" and "*Llegó a Cartama Celindo*" are two of the best *romances moriscos* in spirit, language and narrative power. A consideration of Lope's lyric power and inspiration leads us to what is the essence of his dramatic appeal. Lope, like Góngora, is the poet of the senses, appealing directly to eye and ear by sensuous images: he is the poet of spectacle. The possible relations between this play and the early *romances moriscos* of Góngora (*circa* 1585), or even a comparison, lie beyond our province here, though it would be interesting and profitable to compare Góngora's technique with that of Lope in *Dame una marlota rica*. Lope builds on the sure ground of popular poetry, popular story and a theme that is universal in its appeal. His comparisons are graphic without undue straining after metaphorical elaboration. Goethe in *Die Geschwister*

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does not allow his lovers to discover their non-relationship until the end of the play, and Schiller uses a similar method in *Die Braut von Messina*. Lope, however, solves the problem of relationship in the first few moments. Thus *El remedio*, rather than a psychological study or a tragedy, becomes a romantic spectacle of frontier customs, temporarily thwarted love, jealousy and generosity, themes eminently suitable to the sentiments and passions of a Spanish audience. These he expressed in rapid changes of metre.

Lope's lyric style shows periods of development, as Professor Buchanan<sup>1</sup> has shown, and *El remedio* can with some reason be assigned to the period before 1602. From 1602 Lope develops the *seguidilla*, employs *culto* ideas and phrases and begins to employ the *romance* line as the predominant metre. There are no *seguidillas* here, though he once uses *cuartetas asonantadas* (ll. 2458–81). Only 10.5 per cent. of the lines are in *romance*, while *redondillas* occupy 56 per cent. After 1602 Lope tended to desert *Petrarquismo* which is patent in *El remedio*. Positive evidences of the transitional style of 1595–1600 are many. The *esdrújulas* in continued octaves of ll. 2081–128, probably written with verses from *La Diana* in mind, are artificial, unsuccessful and never repeated by Lope in such circumstances. Three of the four groups of *versos sueltos* are open to criticism on technical grounds. The excessively precise parallelism (stichomythia) of the first eighty lines is only once approached in later plays (*Peribáñez*, before 1614), while the antiphonic repetition of the following lines, 79–91, is rarely equalled in quantity, except for dramatic irony or comic effect, until we reach the antithetical cross-talk of Calderón's lovers.

<sup>1</sup> M. A. Buchanan, *Chronology of Lope de Vega's plays*, 1922 (Univ. of Toronto Studies, Phil. Series, 6). This painstaking study reaches definite conclusions. Lope probably used *décimas* first in 1593 in *Los Comendadores* and gradually used them more. *Redondillas* are used in every play. The *terceto* is almost absent after 1600. *Quintillas* become less frequent after 1600. The *romance* line definitely triumphed over the *redondilla* from about 1622.

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## INTRODUCTION

- ABIND. ¡Jarifa!  
 JARIFA. ¡Abindarráez!  
 ABIND. ¡Hermana!  
 JARIFA. ¡Hermano!  
 ABIND. Dame esos brazos dichosos.  
 JARIFA. Dadme vos los vuestros caros.  
 ABIND. ¡Ay, ojos bellos y claros!  
 JARIFA. ¡Ay, ojos claros y hermosos!  
 ABIND. ¡Ay, divina hermana mía!  
 JARIFA. ¡Ay, hermano mío gallardo!  
 ABIND. ¡Qué nieve cuando más ardo!  
 JARIFA. ¡Qué fuego entre nieve fría!  
 ABIND. ¿Qué esperas, tiempo inhumano?  
 JARIFA. Tiempo inhumano, ¿qué esperas?  
 ABIND. ¡Ah, si mi hermana no fueras!  
 JARIFA. ¡Ah, si no fueras mi hermano!

Another mannerism of this period, especially seen in non-dramatic works, which foreshadows one of the characteristics of Calderón's style, the accumulation of parallelistic nouns, adjectives or verbs in one line, may be seen in the following examples:

l. 205. Boca, manos, gusto.

ll. 1663-7. Si las aves, los peces, si las fieras,  
 Si todo sabe amor, si todo teme  
 Perder su bien, y con sus celos propios  
 Defiende casa, nido, mar y cueva,  
 Lloro, lamenta, gime y brama....

l. 2371. Ira, gusto, amor y Marte.

Lope gradually abandoned this mannerism after 1598.

THE DRAMATIC VALUE OF *EL REMEDIO*

In this discussion of *El remedio* as characteristic of the year 1596 emphasis has been laid on the weaker and more apparent devices of style and construction. To these may be added the



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frequent changes of metre and rhythm, the overlong list of characters, disconcerting changes of scene, and a characteristically weak final scene. But the test of a play is its fitness for the stage, and *El remedio* emerges well from the test. It is one of the best constructed and artfully contrived of his plays. The exposition is quiet yet arresting and beautiful: the dialogue is at times rapid: the three chief characters are clearly defined: the story is a dramatic contrast of Moor and Christian, love and jealousy, poverty and generosity, *desdicha* and *remedio*, and honour twice in conflict with love. The inevitable letter of his Moorish plays is introduced in a natural manner. There is little that is episodic, except Scene I of Act II, unless the whole of the sub-plot be considered as such.

The sentimental novel has not been used by a mere imitative plagiarist. Sources do not make a play though dramatic possibilities may be inherent in the material. In Lope's hands the love-story has not developed into stage sentimentality. Using the material in his own way he has rearranged the order of events and placed them in contrast. The two plots are simple, parallel but almost interdependent. There are evidences that he corrected the text before printing it in 1620. The poet's vision and sense of beauty have tempered the apparent exuberance of his own expanding imagination with more mature philosophic judgment.

Humour plays a small but very significant part. Nuño's more vulgar sallies are almost negligible in quantity, but the dramatic irony, unconscious in the letter-writing scene of Act I, conscious and unconscious in the Moorish garden of Act III, is real theatrical as well as dramatic material. Two fights on the stage, two Christian victories, a conversion and two well-known songs might well carry away the Spanish *mosqueteros*. They hardly atone for the tame contests of flattery and generosity which compete for the final applause of the *gran senudo*.

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THE METRES USED  
IN *EL REMEDIO EN LA DESDICHA*

Act I

Lines

- 1– 79 Canciones de 10 versos heptasílabos  
y endecasílabos.  
80– 255 Redondillas.  
256– 355 Quintillas.  
356– 398 Tercetos.  
399– 437 Sextinas con remate de tres versos<sup>1</sup>.  
438– 451 Soneto.  
452– 895 Redondillas.  
896– 936 Verso suelto.  
937–1014 Canciones de 13 versos.

Act II

- 1015–1302 Redondillas.  
1303–1316 Soneto.  
1317–1332 Redondillas.  
1333–1392 Décimas.  
1393–1516 Redondillas.  
1517–1526 Quintillas.  
1527–1642 Romance.  
1643–1741 Verso suelto.  
1742–1816 Quintillas.

<sup>1</sup> See “*Si hebras de oro son vuestros cabellos*,” *La Diana*, Book IV, Lope’s model here.

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## METRES USED

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## Lines

- 1817–1896 Redondillas<sup>1</sup>.  
 1897–1936 Octavas reales.  
 1937–2052 Romance.  
 2053–2080 Verso suelto.

## Act III

- 2081–2128 Octavas esdrújulas<sup>2</sup>.  
 2129–2224 Redondillas.  
 2225–2256 Octavas reales.  
 2257–2381 Quintillas.  
 2382–2457 Redondillas.  
 2458–2481 Cuartetos asonantados con  
     estribillo de 7 y 11.  
 2482–2589 Redondillas.  
 2590–2673 Romance.  
 2674–2857 Redondillas.  
 2858–2921 Verso suelto.  
 2922–3017 Redondillas.

<sup>1</sup> See *La Diana*, Book IV.<sup>2</sup> See *La Diana*, Book I.

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## EL REMEDIO EN LA DESDICHA

COMEDIA DE LOPE DE VEGA

DIRIGIDA

A DOÑA MARCELA DEL CARPIO

SU HIJA

*Escribió la historia de Jarifa y Abindarráez, Montemayor, autor de la Diana, aficionado a nuestra lengua, con ser tan tierna la suya, y no inferior a los ingenios de aquel siglo: de su prosa, tan celebrada entonces, saqué yo esta comedia en mis tiernos años. Allí pudiérades saber este suceso, que nos calificaron por verdadero las Corónicas de Castilla en las conquistas del reino de Granada; pero si es más obligación acudir a la sangre que al ingenio, favoreced el mío con leerla, supliendo con el vuestro los defetos de aquella edad, que en la tierna vuestra me parece tan fértil, si no me engaña amor, que pienso que le pidió la naturaleza al cielo para honrar alguna fea, y os le dió por yerro; a lo menos a mis ojos les parece así, que en los que no os han visto pasará por requiebro. Dios os guarde y os haga dichosa, aunque tenéis partes para no serlo, y más si heredáis mi fortuna, hasta que tengáis consuelo, como vos lo sois mío.*

VUESTRO PADRE

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## PERSONAS

Abindarráez.	Espinosa, <i>soldado</i> .
Jarifa, <i>hija de Zoraide</i> .	Alvarado, <i>soldado</i> .
Zoraide, <i>Alcaide de Cartama</i> .	Cabrera, <i>soldado</i> .
Alborán, <i>moro</i> .	Ortuño, <i>soldado</i> .
Narváez, <i>Alcaide de Alora</i> .	Peralta, <i>soldado</i> .
Nuño, <i>soldado</i> .	Zara, <i>esclava morisca</i> .
Alara, <i>mora, mujer de Arráez</i> .	Maniloro, <i>criado de Abindarráez</i> .
Darín, <i>puje de Alara</i> .	
Páez, <i>soldado</i> .	Celindo, <i>moro</i> .
Bajamed, <i>moro</i> .	Mendoza, <i>sargento</i> .
Arráez, <i>moro cautivo, marido de Alara</i> .	Ardino, <i>moro</i> .
	Zaro, <i>moro</i> .

*Representóla Ríos, único representante.*