

Tried and True: Leonor de la Cueva y Silva's Tirso Connection

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Unlike her sister *dramaturgas*, Leonor de la Cueva y Silva has no contemporary commentary of her work with only two sonnets published in her lifetime. She does have something many women do not and that is an extant last will and testament, which I was able to locate in Valladolid (Voros 2009). In the inventory section, Leonor gives titles of her small collection of books, among them Juan Pérez de Montalbán's *Para todos*, a miscellany with his own plays and novellas and a list of writers and dramatists, including Tirso de Molina who wrote prefatory *decimas* for it. Leonor draws on several dramatic writers, Lope de Vega's *La corona merecida* (Voros 1999) and Montalbán's own *La más constante mujer* (Voros 2009). Jonathan Ellis has further commented on Leonor's indebtedness to Cervantes with the implementation of the test comparable to what occurs in "El curioso impertinente." This presentation explores still another aspect of Leonor's reading as an influence on her writing with Tirso de Molina. While Leonor certainly could have become familiar with him through the *Para todos*, I came to Tirso in a roundabout way. In reading French women dramatists, I found that Marie-Catherine Desjardins (1640-1683), known as Madame de Villedieu, based her play, *Le favori* (1665), on Tirso de Molina's *El amor y el amistad*. *Le favori* Moncade, the king's favorite, becomes despondent since he does not know if his friends and lady love are loyal to him for himself or for his power and influence. The king interprets Moncade's mood as treasonous and puts him in prison. In Tirso, Guillén de Moncada, *privado* to the Count of Barcelona, devises an elaborate test as a kind of play within a play to test the mettle of courtiers and ladies alike. Tirso calls this a "tribunal de amor," also a key phrase in Leonor's play (Voros 2008). In *La firmeza en la ausencia*, the lady Armesinda (also a name used by Tirso in *Cómo han de ser los amigos*) is the one tested, but she calls for justice through the "tribunal de amor." King Filiberto sends his best warrior Don Juan (her true love) into battle and then attempts to seduce Armesinda. While what she endures amounts to a trial of her *firmeza*, it is really an elaborate trap of a predator king. Not knowing that he has concocted lies about Don Juan's marriage, she calls for a Tirsian "tribunal de amor" as proof of her own faithfulness in the midst of despair. Armesinda finally has her day in court and reveals to the entire king's entourage that she loves Don Juan. The king then proposes marriage which she refuses, just as Don Juan appears triumphant from war with the French. This scene parallels Tirso's revelation scene also at the end of the play. Don Guillén de Moncada, imprisoned by the Count Barcelona, who is in on the ruse, wants see who still is loyal to him or who of the ladies of the court really love him after his feigned fall from grace. When the Count proposes to marry Estela (Guillén's lady love) himself, Guillén breaks the spell, steps out from behind the curtains of the discover space, and reveals his true love for her and his fear that the Count has betrayed him. All ends well as in Leonor's play. The famous "courts of love" or "tribunal de amor" are part of the courtly love tradition in which lovers' actions and true affections are submitted for scrutiny usually to a lady judge. Andreas Capellanus provides examples of these courtly proceedings, which had some influence in Cataluña,

the setting of Tirso's play, with early translations into Catalán of his treatise *The Art of Courtly Love* (Preface, 23). This presentation explores ways in which trials, revelation scenes and judgments provide the dénouement of each play and keys to the understanding of stage craft in both Tirso and Leonor.

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