

Diego de Torres Villarroel



TORRES RÁMILA

where the servants are dominated by the chief steward, a corrupt, thieving who has risen from scullion by devious

media *Jacinta* is an elegant entertainment for Isabella d'Este (called here who visited Rome in the winter of

o's four comedias a fantasia are *Sera-Himena* (in the 1517 edn.), *Colonia* (in 1518), and *Apollonia* (in the 1524 edn.). is an extravaganza set in Rome, Arián has just married the Italian Valencia he had promised to marry who comes to Rome and challenges to make good his vow. The deceitful agrees to try to annul his marriage, Floristán's brother, suddenly the hope of marrying his former wife, and the problem is resolved. The main interest of the play is the Leñón, a sketch of the coward and recur in *Lope de Vega* (q.v.) and *en el dedo* by Moreto (q.v.).

success is due partly to that of the and 15th acts of *La Galatea* (q.v.), it is drawn, Hinceno is the rather callat vye, consumed with romantic 'Eben, while his cynical servants torais exploit his weakness for their Naharro's innovation is a brother for this *lunar* element makes *Himena* the *sonatas comedias de copla y epodo* that the theatres a hundred years later, hández de Moratín (q.v.) praised its of the three unities, and the verse twelve-line stanzas, the eleven in is equally successful.

were considered too Erasmus for and so were put on the index of 1573, but after slight changes they were

1573- poetry is traditional, and it has any commentators that this innova- did not introduce the Italian ble into Spanish long before Rosà turro's poetry, published in the consists of four ballads, three es de amor', and 'Palmo en la era que los españoles ovieron pecianos'.

RÁMILA, PEDRO DE (1583-1658), s, Burgos. Professor of Latin at was taken as the model for the Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa's *pasajeros* (q.v.) and—possibly at egation—waged a literary war de Vega (q.v.) in his virulent satire *Lope's friend Francisco López de*

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Aguilar Costiño replied as 'Franciscus Antididascalia' in *Petro de Torres Ramilar* (1617) and again, with Alfonso Sánchez de la Rallena (Professor of Hebrew at Alcalá), and possibly with Lope himself, in *Expositado Spangue a Petro Torriano Ramila super exagatas* (1618), written under the collective pseudonym 'Julio Columbario'. The attack on Lope was so scurrilous that all the copies (some printed as by Juan Pablo Martín Rino' and others as by 'Petrus Ruitanus Lamira', his Latin anagram) were sought out and destroyed by Lope's allies. The episode has been documented by Joaquín de Entrambasaguas in 'Una guerra literaria del Siglo de Oro' in *Estudios sobre Lope de Vega*, vol. 1 (1946).

Sánchez's view is that the arts are based on the observation and delineation of nature, that the rules of art are susceptible to change, that Lope has changed them and in so doing has not only created a new art-form (see *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*) but has also excelled every other poet past or present.

There is an allegorical treatment of this battle in Lope's *La Filomena* (1611), in which the nightingale represents Lope and the thrush Torres Rámila: 'Pero los dioses luego decretaron / la sentencia en favor de Filomena, y a su eterno silencio condenaron / el tordo, que hoy con tal vergüenza sueña; / y que si hablare, por piedad mandaron / que sólo sea, del delito en pena, / lo que aprendiere con mortal fatiga, / sin saber lo que dice, aunque lo diga'.

TORRES VILLARROEL, DIEGO DE (1603-1770), b. Salamanca. Autobiographer, satirist, and poet. One of eighteen children, he studied little but took to the road, becoming in turn apprentice hermit in Tras os Montes, dancer in Coimbra, bullfighter in Lisbon, musician, and failed smuggler. He took minor orders in 1714, but abandoned his clerical career (though he was to be ordained later, in 1745). In 1721 he began to print a series of *Almanacs* under the name 'el Gran Picador Salaminino', and though in later life he ridiculed these *provisões* and those who consulted them, he made a great deal of money from their sale, especially after he predicted the death of Luis I in the almanac of 1724, and the French Revolution in a *décima* in the almanac of 1756. He wrote extensively on witchcraft and was employed by the Condesa de Arcos in exorcizing her house in 1723, after which he was invited to remain there as her guest for two years.

In 1726 Torres won the open competition for the vacant chair of Mathematics at Salamanca University, and though he was deprived of the chair for several years pending investigation into allegations of dishonesty, he regained it in 1731.

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His first collection of poetry, *Obras póstumas, en poemas de varios metros* (1746), includes some of the best burlesque poetry since his acknowledged master Quevedo (q.v.), together with religious *silencios* (such as *Al nacimiento de Jesús*, at odds with the tradition of simplicity connected with this theme), and many sonnets of varying quality. L. A. de Cuesta collected these poems in vol. 61 of the RAE (1869). Quevedo's influence was even more marked in the *Sueltas morales* (1727 and 1728), which he subtitled *citadas y citadas de Torres en Francisco de Quevedo*. These are based almost entirely on the style and attitudes of the *Sueltas* (q.v.) of Quevedo, denouncing doctors, lawyers, and the moral iniquities of the period. The first is *La hora de Apurarse*, recently published by Guy Mercadier (Paris, 1969), from an autograph MS. dated 1731 in which the devil interrupts the narrative to describe Torres in scathing terms: 'The remaining *Sueltas* are *Residencia infernal de Plinio*, *Corro del otro mundo*, *Sacramento de monicatos*, *Historia de historias*, and *El suplo de la justicia*. Torres's severity is the more cynical for his own avowal of thieving and chicanery, and whereas Quevedo's denunciations are bitterly righteous, Torres adds caricature to caricature as though his motive were pure mockery. As the *Diario de los Literatos de España* (q.v.) wrote of his prose, 'también se desazonan los manjares por abundancia de sal, que, en siendo mucha, muere y no sazona'.

Among his many other works in prose collected in the 14-volume edition of Torres's *Obras* published by subscription (Salamanca, 1752), were the life *Sor Gregoria de Santa Teresa* (1738) and a dialogue *El ermitaño y Torres*, in which the protagonists discuss alchemy, chemistry, and medicine, and Torres offers a favourable opinion of the *Quijote* of Avellaneda (q.v.).

Several short plays collected as *Juquetes de Tula* (1738) fall through a lack of action or plot and an excess of long-winded dialogue.

His main claim to fame is an autobiography considered among the most important in the Spanish language. This is the *Vida, ascendencia, nacimiento, crianza y aventuras del doctor don Diego de Torres y Villarreal*, divided into six *tramos*, of which the first four (each describing a decade in his life) appeared in 1743, the fifth in 1751 or 1752, and the sixth in 1756. Torres's *Vida* has to be read in the context of the picaresque novels so popular in the preceding century; of the reforming literature of *lala* and Feijóo (q.v.) contemporary with Torres; and of the *Confessions* of Rousseau which were to dignify the genre some years later. Again, the model is the 'disillusion' of Quevedo, and nobody is given any significance apart from the author, who shows scant respect even for himself. He bewails the ignorance, corruption, and superstition of the

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Page 575 from an unknown book. Looks like an encyclopaedia of some sort, maybe
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