

Lope de Vega

# LA QUINTA DE FLORENCIA

A Critical, Annotated Edition  
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## FORWARD

Despite the centuries that have passed since Lope's death, scholarship on his prodigious legacy of plays remains hampered by a lack of reliable critical editions. Some plays have warranted the attentions of numerous editors, yet others of comparable literary value have been largely ignored because of a long-standing reluctance to edit works for which the original manuscript has been lost. *La quinta de Florencia* stands out as a play most undeserving of such neglect. The quality of its verse, the simplicity of its uncluttered plot lines and their metatheatrical interplay with classical tales evoked by artwork have caught the attention of many, as has its status as the possible precursor of *Fuenteovejuna* and *El mejor alcalde*, yet such interest has sadly not garnered it a full-length study or a rigorously-executed edition in a single-play volume.

My intent has been to make available a text as close as possible to what Lope may have written, faithfully but not blindly reproducing the Madrid 1609 printing of the *Segunda parte*. While the term "critical" has come to have varied meanings, I use it here to refer to the level of scrutiny given the relationships between the surviving versions of the play. The present edition seeks to foster interest in the work through an introduction thorough enough to help readers understand the complexities of the play, yet not so comprehensive as to obviate the need for future scholarship devoted to the piece. I have sought to produce a work accessible and helpful to younger scholars of Lope, yet still with much to offer senior colleagues.

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## INTRODUCTION

### DATE OF COMPOSITION

Lope complained both frequently and bitterly about the state in which his plays arrived at publishing houses following their often lengthy circulation among members of the theatrical troupes who performed them. The years that could easily elapse between the time he finished a *comedia* and its first appearance as a printed text raise questions about everything from its date of composition to its very authenticity. While the authorship of *La quinta* has never been doubted, its exact chronology has been problematic. As a play that offers neither a dated manuscript in Lope's hand nor allusions to biographical or historical events that might delineate its chronological parameters, it joins the ranks of the many works for which scholars have turned to the lists of *comedia* titles Lope included in the 1604 (P) and 1618 (P<sup>2</sup>) editions of his novel *El peregrino en su patria*. The lists can both help and hinder efforts to establish a work's chronology, however, for many pieces on P were subsequently given new titles on P<sup>2</sup>, making it hard to distinguish the early plays from those written in the intervening years. Such is the case with the play at hand.

The relationship between *La quinta de Florencia* of P<sup>2</sup> and *El primer Médicis* of P has eluded more than one distinguished Lope scholar over the years. Failing to connect the earlier title with the political backdrop of *La quinta*, Barrera (428, 431) classifies *El primer Médicis* as *inédita* ("decididamente por no impresa," a designation he gives those plays that appear on P and/or P<sup>2</sup> but not on the lists of Medel, García de la Huerta or Fajardo) and *¿Perdida?*, a term he uses for plays "del todo desconocida," although he does recognize that many of those so marked are simply known by another title. The confusion fostered by the two titles also plagued Hennigs's classification of Lope's *comedias*, which lists the earlier among the "comedias de asunto histórico de otros países" and the latter among the "novelas de italianos y españoles" (Gasparetti 73). Stiefel, in his review of Hennigs's work, noted the error and pointed out that Mesonero Romanos

had already established the singular textual identity of the two in his *Catálogo cronológico* (xlix). While subsequent bibliographers (Restori 31-32, Gasparetti 73) have assumed that *El primer Médicis* of P and *La quinta de Florencia* of P<sup>2</sup> are the same work and have been quick to point out Barrera's error, the only evidence seems to be the play's final lines: "¡Viva el gran Duque Alejandro! / Con que da fin la comedia / del gran Médicis famoso, / primero Duque en Florencia" (emphasis added). Lope's tendency to evoke a work's title in its last verses does corroborate the theory that he wrote but a single play which he first dubbed *El primer Médicis* before changing it to *La quinta de Florencia*.

*El peregrino* provides further external evidence relevant to the play's approximate date of composition, for both pieces contain the sonnet "Ni sé de amor, ni tengo pensamiento" (ll. 1262-75), with only the slightest variations between them<sup>1</sup>. References to historical events of 1598, 1599 and 1600 as newly-transpired lead Avalle-Arce (15-16) to deduce that Lope wrote the novel in 1600 and first published it in 1604 after some finishing touches the previous year. Montesinos has proposed that Lope first wrote the sonnet as part of the play and reproduced it shortly thereafter for inclusion in the novel ("Contribución" 301) – arguing that if the sonnet had been done long ago, Lope would have followed his usual pattern of revising it before including it in a new work – although Morley and Bruerton have questioned the weight we can give the dual appearance of this poem in nearly identical form. Curiously, all of them have neglected to use the evidence supplied by examining the sonnet in the respective contexts: for which piece was the sonnet originally written, as determined by its thematic integration within the two pieces? The sonnet's diatribe against Love is wholly consistent with the views of the play's female protagonist, whereas the counterpart in the novel falsely espouses such ideology to discourage the unwanted attentions of a suitor. In the prose work, moreover, Lope prefaces the poem with a lengthy catalogue of classical precedents for the ideas therein contained, suggestive of a deliberate transition that would pave the way for his pre-existing verses. The sonnet's more na-

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1 *El peregrino* reads "de espejo" (l. 6), whereas all editions of *La quinta* read "de espejos." While the novel corresponds to the earliest texts of the play at l. 2, both reading "me incline," the later (1618) Z reads "se incline."

tural integration in the play strengthens Montesinos's argument that Lope first wrote the verses for *La quinta* and later incorporated them into the novel.

Using the more objective internal evidence provided by versification patterns, Morley and Bruerton (151) include *La quinta* among the "plays of vague spread," situating it between 1598-1603 and probably ca. 1600. Taking into consideration the findings of these scholars, the use of the sonnet elsewhere by 1604, and the appearance of *El primer Médicis* on P that year, we agree with their assignation.

#### HISTORY OF THE TEXT

Several years clearly elapsed between the time *La quinta de Florencia* was written and its publication in the *Segunda parte de las comedias de Lope de Vega Carpio* in Madrid in 1609. Like so many other Golden Age plays whose holograph has been lost, *La quinta* survives in the adulterated and perhaps incomplete state characteristic of works that wended their way through the hands of directors, prompters and actors before arriving at a publishing house plagued by all the vicissitudes of which Lope complained so bitterly. Despite the many printings of the *Segunda parte*, no extant form of the play contains more than one or two lines that differ from the Madrid 1609 text: no passages are present elsewhere to fill in its gaps or provide alternate readings of garbled strophes, and no subsequent intervention prior to its publication in the Real Academia series did more than attempt to correct what were probably basic compositor errors in the first printing. Even with the occasional odd verse or incomplete strophe in the *parte* text, however, the play has survived in a form that hinders neither comprehension nor enjoyment, and it is most assuredly *de Lope* in every sense of the phrase.

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While many bibliographers have identified the dates and places of publication for the *Segunda parte*, they have tended simply to record the editions in perceived chronological fashion with no regard for the relationship between the given texts. The