LEWIN BRECHT, MIGUEL VENEGAS,
AND THE SCHOOL DRAMA:
SOME FURTHER OBSERVATIONS

In two articles published some years ago, I attempted to give a brief outline of the life and work of the Castilian Jesuit Miguel Venegas (b. Ávila 1531, entered order Alcalá de Henares 1554, expelled 1567). The purpose of those articles was to shed some light on the very early years of the Jesuit school drama. (1) Venegas, it had become clear, was an able Latinist and a dramatist of distinction. He appeared also to have played some part in shaping both the style and the subject-matter of a whole generation of Jesuit playwrights. It seemed likely at the time of writing that more information about him would come to light in due course, and that more manuscripts of his works would be discovered, especially as he travelled widely in Europe during the 1560s. This has proved to be the case. In addition, a great deal has been written about the Jesuit drama since those two short articles appeared. It would now seem proper to bring the Venegas dossier up to date, and to comment in passing on some of the other recent scholarly work which has a bearing on what I set out to do in the early 1970s. (2)

Except where otherwise indicated, all references in this article to manuscript sources are to the Archivio Romano Societatis Jesu (ARSI). Where a document from that archive has been edited elsewhere, I have in every case followed the original manuscript, noting


(2) 48 of the 477 items listed in GRIFFIN, Jesuit School Drama: A Checklist of Critical Literature (London: Grant & Cutler, 1976 [Research Bibliographies and Checklists, XII]) were published in the 1970s. A further c. 350 items — books and articles — have appeared since that list was compiled.
for reference purposes the place(s) where edition(s) of it may be found. (3) Any document I have not seen in the original is denoted by an asterisk.

I

Venegas was in Alcalá de Henares for some ten years (c. 1544-54) as both student and teacher. Like any young man with a lively interest in rhetoric, he would have seen plays while he was at University and may even have taken part in them. (4) His first contact with the Jesuit drama as such was, however, not in the university city of Alcalá but rather at Plasencia in south-western Spain. It was his first posting as a member of the order and, during the time he was there (1555-56), the college was still involved in the lengthy process of acquiring a permanent home in the city. (5) Even though a lot of his time would have been taken up with the day-to-day problems of working in an expanding college, and with the menial tasks traditionally allotted to new recruits, Plasencia was an ideal studium for a tyro dramatist. (6) For, even at this early period when it had no settled quarters, the school was busily earning for itself a reputation as a centre of dramatic activity.

One reason for this was that its principal paymaster, Gutierre de Vargas y Carvajal, bishop of Plasencia from 1524 until his death in 1559,

(3) I am grateful to Fr Edmond Lamalle S.I. for allowing me access to the vast arsenal of documentation in the ARSI, and also the Fondo Gesuitico (= FG) housed alongside it.

(4) On theatre at Alcalá, see: Justo García Soriano, El teatro universitario y humanístico en España: Estudios sobre el origen de nuestro arte dramático: con documentos, textos inéditos, y un catálogo de antiguas comedias escolares (Toledo, 1945), 344, 373-74. Venegas was at Alcalá, for example, when a play was staged in 1546 for the installation of Martinez Siliceo as Archbishop of Toledo (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale [= BNP], Fonds latin 8762).

(5) The foundation-stone was laid 17 April 1555. The bishop claimed that the college had cost him more than 30,000 ducados (FG 1537 [Collégial]1/1([Plasencia]/8, unfol., [I]r; further copies in FG 1537/1).

(6) Griffin, ‘Miguel Venegas…’, 798. Gutierrez was carrying on a family tradition: his uncle Cardinal Bernardino, who had preceded him as bishop of Plasencia, had resided for most of his life in Italy where he held a number of important ecclesiastical offices and where he patronized expatriate Spanish dramatists (Joseph E. Gillet [ed.], ‘Propalladia’ and Other Works of Torres Naharro, 4 vols. [Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Banta (I-III); Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press (IV), 1943-61], IV, 406, etc.).
was a keen follower of the fashion for plays. He spent a good deal of his time in the palace he had built on the ruins of a Moorish castle at Jaraicejo in the foothills of the Sierra de Guadalupe, sheltering from the violence which characterised the life of the city. (7) Some of the earliest Jesuit plays were staged there. The Jesuits had originally used the bishop's town house as their temporary headquarters but by the end of 1555 they were in a position to open the doors of their new studium. (8) It grew very rapidly indeed and thirty years later could boast some four hundred full-time pupils. Already in the late 1550s it had a large number of extern students (convictores) on its books. (9) The diary kept by Baltasar Loarte S.I. (1512-80), a man very much involved in the financial affairs of the college, records several plays and dialogues that were written and performed by teachers and students at the Plasencia studium. Others are described at length in the four-monthly and annual reports that were sent from each Jesuit house to the Generalate in Rome. (10) It is obvious that, despite the college's very real financial problems, many of these plays were lavishly staged.

But perhaps the most telling evidence we have for the extent to which the craze for plays took hold of the Plasencia community comes in two lengthy despatches from the consultor of college Pedro Rodríguez. The first of these was written at the end of 1564, the other in the summer

(7) Marcos Salinas S.I. from Plasencia, 1 May 1556: 'el Señor obispo vino la semana santa de xarayzejo en donde a estado este imbierno que es recamara deste obispado' (Hist. Soc. 173, 235[375]-v[n.° 124] at 235r). For details of the bishop and of life at Plasencia, see: GRIFFIN, 'A Curious Document: Baltasar Loarte S.I. and the Years 1554-1570', Archivum Historiae Societatis Jesu (= AHSI) [Rome], XLV (1976), 56-94; also the unpublished MS history of the college (Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia [= RAHM], Papeles varios de Jesuitas, vol. 53 [9-3627], item [16], fols 161r-200r).


(9) Martín Gutiérrez S.I. to Diego Laínez S.I., Plasencia, 29 October 1559 (His. 96, 449[118]-r-450v at 449r). See also: Hisp. 98, 13[346]-r-14v, repr. in: Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu (= MHSI), Litterae Quadrimestres (= LQ), VII [1932], 15-17, letter 458, at 17; Annuae litterae Societatis Jesu Anni M.D.LXXXV. Ad Patres et Fratres eiusmod Societatis (= AL, 1585) (Rome, 1587), 142; FG 1537/1/9.

of 1568. It was part of the task of a consultor — an office modelled on the traditions of Habsburg statecraft — to advise the Rector of college on all matters of policy and discipline and also to keep the General abreast of any developments or departures from established practice. Rodríguez, who was not an educated man, having studied only at Belmonte and Yepes and heard the odd lecture at Alcalá, but who was concerned for the spiritual well-being of college, was unhappy about the Plasencia devotion to the drama, and he did not hesitate to say so. (11). It may be that his lack of formal education in rhetoric was a significant factor in shaping his attitude. (12) So, too, may be the fact that he did not arrive in Plasencia until the end of 1563 and was not accustomed to the climate of conspicuous consumption which had surrounded bishop Gutierre wherever he went and which established a tradition his successors would follow. But from what Rodríguez says it is clear that the bishop’s death had done nothing to dampen the Plasencia enthusiasm for drama, (13) and his letters contain a great deal of useful information about the ways in which a Jesuit college was affected by preparations for the public performance of a play:

Doc. (i): Pedro Rodríguez S.I. to Diego Lainez S.I. in Rome; 31 December 1564.

Pax christi etc.
lo que de presente se ofrece dar a Vuestra Paternidad quenta de lo que por las Reglas de consultor somos obligados es, que gloria a nuestro Señor el padre Rector (14) a procedido y proçede muy

(11) Born Belmonte 1532; assisted his merchant father as a small boy; SI Alcalá March 1558; at Valladolid (Simancas professed house), Belmonte (which he helped to found), Plasencia, and Toledo where he died 29 May 1596 (Hist. Soc. 43, 70r; Tolet. 12a1, 32v[p. 40], 142v[p.108(152)], 148v[p.111(158)], 150v[p.159], 152[723]r [p.160], etc.; Tolet. 37, 270r; FG 77/IV, 355[486]r-356[487]v; FG 650a/480, unfol., [14(173)]r).

(12) His other correspondence (FG 650a/480, etc.) reveals his concern with the spiritual side of the religious life.

(13) The new bishop, Pedro Ponce de León (translated from Ciudad Rodrigo; bishop until his death in 1573) was less well disposed to the college but appears to have encouraged the maintenance of its dramatic tradition (below, doc. (iv)).

(14) Juan de Castañeda, b. Guadalajara c. 1531; studied Alcalá and Salamanca universities; SI Alcalá 1553 (a Villanueva recruit like so many at the Plasencia college; see: Griffin, ‘A Curious Document…’, p.77n.37 etc.); posted to Ocaña and, later,
bien en su oficio, y de cada día se conoce en el el cuidado que tiene de ayudarse de las constituciones, y avisos del padre maestro nadal, (15) ayudando a todos con ejemplo y doctrina a la observancia de las Reglas.

Vna cosa se me ofrece que proponer a Vuestra Paternidad y es, que en este collegio se an Representado en los Años pasados Algunas tragedias de las cuales se a seguido mucha costa Al collegio y y [sic] a los hermanos gran trabajo y turbación, y la causa desto es, que en esta ciudad la yglesia mayor (que tiene siete mill ducados de fabrica) las hace hazer casi todos los Años y Algunas vezes gasta 400. ducados, y mas, porque procuran hazer los adereços (16) muy Al propio, Y para abur de agradar lo que en nuestro collegio se hace al pueblo que esta enseñado a esto no podemos según nuestra profesion y pobreza satisfazer. de mas desto, los vestidos y otros aparejos, los an de buscar los nuestros, porque los particulares quieren ganar gracios con nosotros y aun muchas veces averlos de pedir los confesores a las mugeres que con ellos se confiesan que no es poco indecente. (17) y lo que peor es que se solia dar de

Plasencia where he was a very popular Rector (Dec. 1563-Nov. 1567) and teacher during the Rectorate of Valderrábano (Nov. 1567-); finally predicador to the Valldolid college where he died 12 July 1575 (Tolet. 12al, 84[312]r, 149[158]r, 153v[p.161]; Hisp. 106, 197[620]v; Hisp. 141, 351[342]r; FG 77[III], 75[135(282)]r-v; Hisp. 123, 74r; Hist. Soc. 42, 41r).

(15) Jerome Nadal, b. Palma de Mallorca 11 Aug. 1507; met Ignatius Paris 1535; SI 29 Nov. 1545; solemn vows Rome 25 March 1552; Vicar General of Jesuits 1554-56 and again 1571-72 (Ital. 57, 331r; Ital. 3, 11r). One of the most important figures in the early history of the order, he issued several sets of instructions for the Spanish and Portuguese colleges, and visited the Toledo Province as commissarius Jan.-Feb. 1554 and again on a special recruiting drive for the Collegio Romano Feb. 1556 (when he twice visited Plasencia). He was again in Spain in 1561 (at Plasencia briefly in the October). Died Rome 3 April 1580 (Hist. Soc. 42, 7v). See: M. NICOLAUSI, Jerónimo Nadal S.I. (1507-1580): Sus obras y doctrinas espirituales (Madrid: CSIC, 1949); Guy PHILIPART S.I., 'Visiteurs, commissaires et inspecteurs dans la Compagnie de Jésus de 1540 à 1615. I: 1540-1572', AHSI, XXXVII (1968), 3-60 (with ed. of texts at 61-128); Manuel Ruiz JURADO S.I., 'Cronología de la vida del P. Jerónimo Nadal S.I.', AHSI, XLVIII (1979), 248-76.

(16) This term was widely used to refer to the decor and costumes at Jesuit ludi; see, e.g., Hisp. 141, 384[350]r.

(17) The reference to the high expectations of the Plasencia citizenry is an oblique allusion to the efforts of the rival Dominican foundation (GRIFFIN, 'A Curious Document...'; 56-60; Hisp. 102, 297[29(414[345])]r; Hisp. 115, 111[34]r). In some
comer en nuestro Refectorio a todos los Representantes y músicos, y servirles todos los de casa (avunque esto a cessado este Año) (18) y finalmente lo que en otros collegios es causa de credito y auctoridad, aquí es de perderles porque muchas personas de prudencia, dizen que por una parte publicamos pobreza y por otra lo gastamos etc. (19) ofreceseme que en este lugar (A lo menos por Algun tiempo hasta que se oluidasen los excesos pasados) se exerçitasen los estudiantes en otros exerczíos, como declamaciones colloquios en sus mismas clases, sin mezclar entremeses de bobos en Romance, (20) pues tratando destas cosas los maestros, no pueden dexar de ganar con ellos sus discípulos mucha libertad y perderlos el Respetto. Estas y otras causas e Representado Al padre provinciá (21) y su Reuerencia dexo ordenado que no se hiziesen sin su
licencia, (22) pero después por condeçender con el apetito de alguno de los lectores la torno a dar. Vuestra Paternidad vera lo que en el Señor nuestro mas conviene. [...] (23)

Doc. (ii): Pedro Rodríguez S.I. to Francisco Borja S.I. (24) in Rome; Plasencia, 30 June 1568.

pax christi etc

En los Años pasados viujendo nuestro padre laynez de buena memoria (25) me acuerdo aver escripto acerca de Algúas representaciones que en este collegio se suelen hazer y por ser mayor el daño que el prouego que dellas se sigue me paresço dar querta a Vuestra Paternidad dello, y es, que en esta çibdad mas particularmente que en ninguna destos Reynos se toman tan de proposito estas cosas que es muy ordinario gastar la yglesia mayor en vna

[Madrid: Juan García Infançòn, 1710], I, 68-69). Prof., 13 Jan. 1560; moved to Valladolid as confessor and ministro (later Rector), and thence to the Rectorate at Monterrey. Early in 1562 he was appointed as the first Provincial of Toledo, a task at which he did not excel, partly, no doubt, because of increasing deafness (Tolet. 12a1, 31r, 155v; MHSI, Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal [= EN], II [1899], 332, 483; MHSI, Lainii Monumenta [= LM], VIII [1917], 249, 309). Already described in 1569 as 'Rector y es para nada', he was eventually removed to become, successively, Rector at Plasencia (1567 and again 1576), Huete (1574), and Caravaca (1575); d. Plasencia 13 Sept. 1585 (Tolet. 12a1, 153v[p.161], 155v[p.164]; Hist. Soc. 42, 62v; FG 77/III, 285[212r-v][pp. 502-3]).

(22) Even as late as 1574-75, the Toledo Province, to which Plasencia belonged, was making special pleas for a careful regulation of such performances (Congr. 41, 194[339(201)]v-195[340(202)])


(24) Born Gandia (Valencia) 28 Oct. 1510; Duke of Gandia and Marquis of Lombay; Viceroy of Catalonia (1541); SI 9 October 1546; commissarius to Spain 1554-61, to Italy 1562-64; General of the order 1565-72; d. Rome 30 Sept. 1572. See: MHSI, Sanctus Franciscus Borgia (= MFB), 5 vols (1894-1911), esp. vol. 1. There is a mention of a key event in Borja’s spiritual life—his rôle in the funeral cortège of the Empress Isabel of Portugal (d. 1539), wife of Charles V — in Geoffrey PARKER, Philip II (London: Hutchinson, 1979), 6n.

fiesta destas .300. y .400. ducados por hazer los vestidos y aparejos muy al propio y preciarse como digo tanto dello, aviendo este colegio de hazer algunas so color de aprovechar los estudiantes para que aya de paresçer algo respecto de lo mucho que aqui se vsa a de ser tan trabajoso y costoso, que por edificar desedificamos, y por aprovechar los estudiantes quedan pervertidos y pierden el respecto a sus maestros y la casa profanada de seglares (26) y los padres y hermanos molidos y corridos vn mes antes y ocho dias despues. (27) En otras partes es cosa muy prouechosa y edificativa hazer la compañía semejantes exerçioçios [sic], pero en plasencia entiendo por muy cierto que si a vuestra paternidad le constase de lo que pasa no solo no daría licencia para ellas pero por propia perputuo Silencio en actos semejantes, porque el colegio a de dar imprimis todos los aparejos y bestidos que an de llevar y para esto los padres en los confesionarios y los hermanos por toda la cibdad an de andar pidiendo las sayas, tocas, joyas etc que muchas vezes oyen a sus oydos cosas murmuruando de nosotros por que nos ponemos en ello que bueue [sic] corridos y avergonçados y despues se desvergunçan los discípulos con sus maestros dizienáo que si no les dan vestido de brocado o de tal seda que no saldran alla. daseles ansimismo de comer a todos a nuestra costa que aconteçe ser mas de .60. personas y avn .80. y muchos dias de merendar por que se vengan a ensayar, pues lo que se padesçe con la gente principal y la que no lo es sobre pedir que se les señalen asientos en casa para donde lo vean ellos y sus mugeres y las quexas que sobre ello fundan es cosa que espanta finalmente nos tienen por liujanos y profanos y dize [sic] que queremos competir con la yglesia mayor etc. (28) Algunas vezes (29) e propuesto que sería

(26) See below, p. 32.
(27) The implication of this seems to be that plays were in rehearsal for at least a month. Many did, indeed, include long speeches that would take time to get by heart. See: GRIFFIN, Two Jesuit Ahab Dramas (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1976 [Exeter Hispanic Texts, XIII]), 112 etc. But compare: MHSI, LM, VIII, 446-47 and 478, Supplementary letters 26 and 37; also below, p. 69. Some idea of rehearsals at a later period can be gleaned from: Charles PORÉE S.I., Tragoediae editae opera P. Cl. Griffet... (Paris: Bordelet, 1745).
(28) Loarte certainly saw the 1561 play (La transmigración de Babylonia) in terms of competition with the Cathedral (GRIFFIN, 'A Curious Document...', 80-81).
(29) I have not traced any mention of this matter in letters written by Rodriguez to Rome between Dec. 1564 and June 1568.
speeches testify to the willingness of Jesuit colleges to modify successful
dramas to meet specific sets of local circumstances. (244)

(b) As well as this hitherto unknown manuscript of *Saul Gel-
boaeus* there is at least one new poem by Venegas in a manuscript
miscellany now in the Biblioteca Comunale in Bologna (MS A. 642).
The date of the other poems and dialogues in this collection — pieces
by Ignatius’s secretary André des Freux S.I. (c. 1510-1556) and several
directly anti-Lutheran verses — would seem to indicate that these are
early Venegas efforts. (III. 8bis in the 1971-72 list). (244bis)

VI

Professor Claude-Henri Fréches, to whose valuable studies of
Venegas’s plays one returns time and again, dates the first performance
of the *Tragoedia cui nomen inditum Achabus* to the period 1560-64,
and hazards that it may have been staged as early as 1560. (245) In 1973,
I tentatively ascribed it to the year 1561, a date retained two years later
in the introduction to an edition of the play itself. (246) It now seems
that its premiere can be fixed with confidence in the late summer of 1562;
not long, in fact, before Venegas was to leave Coimbra (and Portugal)
for good. He may have been increasingly unhappy at the Colégio das
Artes, and some of his less savoury personal traits may have begun to
worry his colleagues and superiors. But of his poetic gifts there could
never be a moment’s doubt, and in the four-monthly letter describing
his latest triumph in detail his talents as both playwright and director
were warmly applauded. The presence in the audience of many official-
s of the University affords further evidence of the degree to which
the bitter battles of the 1550s between the University and the college
had been forgotten. Much of the credit for this must go to the energetic

(244) Griffen, ‘A Portuguese Jesuit Play...’.
(244bis) Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell’Archiginnasio, MS A.642, 240r-
294v, 318r-334v. The poem beginning ‘Quid nouus ignotae...’ ([277]r-v) is certainly
by Venegas; some or all of the eight which follow ([277]v-[283]v) may well be. On Des
Freux see: Griffen, ‘A Portuguese Jesuit Play...’, 63-64 n.15.
(245) Le Théâtre néo-latin au Portugal (1550-1745) (Paris: Nizet & Lisbon:
Bertrand, 1964), 191.
(246) ‘Miguel Venegas...’, 803; Two Jesuit Ahab Dramas, viii.
and diplomatic protégé of Cardinal Enrique, Jorge de Almeida. (247)

But a little of it at least must be given to the teaching-staff at the college,
and to the Spanish-born humanist whose dramatic essays on the perils
of heresy could always be counted on to draw large and distinguished
audiences prepared to forget their differences for a day:

Doc. (xxxv): Four-monthly letter from the Coimbra college, signed
by Francisco Álvarez S.I. (248) and sent to Rome; Coim­
bra, 1 September 1562.

[...] Este año acabaron el curso y se hizieron maestros en artes
9. hermanos de casa, muy prouechos en la facultad de las artes.
tuieronse tambien las conclusiones generales de logica y philosophia,
hallandose á ellas muchos maestros de la Universidad y algunos
dotores y leyentes della, esto con mucho [sic] satisfacion, no sola­
mente de los discipulos que respondian, mas aun de la doctrina
y erudicion de los maestros de casa, que a ellas asistian y presi­
dian. / hizose asimismo una tragedia que compuso el padre Venegas
muy elegante y artificiosa, de la persecution de helias, y muerte
del Rey Acab, la qual se represento con grandissimo fausto y
apparato, no solamente de muchos y diversos instrumentos de
musica, que causauan grande gusto a los oyentes, y ornauan mucho
la misma tragaeidia, (249) mas aun con uestidos muy ricos y de

(247) Mário BRANDÃO, O Colégio das Artes, 2 vols (Coimbra: Univ. of Coim­
bra, 1924-33), II, 141, etc.

(248) There was an 'Irmão francisco alvarez' at Coimbra in Aug. 1558 and
Jan. 1559 (Lus. 43I, 65r, 68[162(271)]r). Another, admitted Évora 24 Nov. 1561,
was at Coimbra from 1563 (Lus. 43I, 187[180(323)]r, 192[182(325)]r, 211[486(190
[333)]r, Lus. 43II, 333r[p. 435]). See also: FG 77/II, 70[130(254)]r-v.

(249) The use of music as an integral part of the Jesuit ludi literarii has begun,
in recent years, to receive scholarly attention. See: GOSSETT, 'Drama...', 62, 78-80;
Thomas CULLEY S.J., 'The Influence of the German College in Rome on Music in
German-Speaking Countries during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', Analecta
Musicologica: Veröffentlichungen der Musikabteilung des Deutschen Historischen
Instituts in Rom [Rome], VII (1969), 1-35; CULLEY, Jesuits and Music. I: A Study
of the Musicians Connected with the German College in Rome during the Seventeenth
Century and of their Activities in Northern Europe (Rome and St Louis, 1970 [Sources
and Studies for the History of the Jesuits, III]); CULLEY and Clement J. McNASPY S.J.,
'Music and the Early Jesuits (1540-1565)', AHSl, XL (1971), 231-245; CULLEY,
'Musical Activity in some Sixteenth-Century Jesuit Colleges, with Special Reference
to the Venerable English College in Rome from 1579 to 1589', Studien zur Italienisch-
gran premio y sobre todo las figuras eran tam propias y naturales cada una en lo que representaua que causauan grande admiracion en todos, y asy quedaron muy satishechos y contentos, specialmente el Rector (250) y doctores de la Universidad, tambien se dieron los premios, segun la costumbre de cada año, con un dialogo muy lepido y gracioso. (251) asy mismo se hizo la fiesta de la Reyna sancta que es la del collegio (252) armandose la yglesia con muchos paños y cartas de los studentes, y muchos enigmas muy buenos y bien pintados, con la oracion que se tuuo (253) con mucha satisfacion de todos. [...] (254)
Frèches it was also who suggested that another play, *Tobias*, a copy of which appears in a Lisbon miscellany alongside plays by Venegas, (255) might just possibly be from his pen also. In 1973, I advanced some reasons for reserving judgement on this. (256) We can now go further, as evidence has come to light which shows that Venegas did not write the play. Yet, when Frèches claimed to see close parallels between *Tobias* and the three known Venegas dramas, he was not so wide of the mark. The similarities are there, and their presence is perhaps accounted for when one realises that the author of the play was one of Venegas’s own pupils:

Doc. (xxxvi): *Four-monthly letter from the Évora college, signed by Hernando Navarro S.I., (257) and sent to Lainez in Rome; Évora, 31 August 1563.*

[...] Juntose la vniuersidad dia del spiritu santo, (258) confessando y comulgando los studiantes, y auiendo sermon como se acostum-bra. El dia segumente se pusieron muchas y muy ricas cartas,


(256) ‘Miguel Venegas ...’, 801. Similar reservations had already been expressed by Ermelinda Emília Barbosa Couto, ‘Saul Gelboaeus de Miguel Venegas’, unpubl. doct. diss. (University of Coimbra, 1968), 34.

(257) Born Trasmiera (Vizcaya, Spain); like Carrillo (n. 98, above), in service as a young boy as page and scribe (to the Duke of Nájera and the Count of San Esteban del Puerto in Seville); comprador of the Évora college 1563 (another of the menial tasks traditionally allotted to recent entrants), and also a student of humanities and, therefore, probably an actor in the play. He had gone to America, an experience which had, in his own words, «terrified» him into taking up the religious life; SI Lisbon, c. 1562. He expressed a desire to go to the Indies, which was required when he perished of fever on board the *Chagas* in 1571 (*Lus. 431, 203[478]r–; FG 77[II], 339[65(148)]v–v at 339r, item 29; Josef Wicki S.I., ‘Liste der Jesuiten-Indienfah-rer 1541-1758’, Sonderdruck aus *Portugiesische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft* [Münster], VII (1967), 274, 343; Wicki, ‘Die Todesfälle und ihre Ursachen in der Indischen Provinz der Gesellschaft Jesu, 1541-1574’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Missions-wissenschaft* [Beckenried, Switzerland], XVII (1961), 257-79 at 270).

(258) Sunday 30 May.
cercado todo el patio de las classes con paños de armar. Pusieronse cinco Enygmas, de los quales se aduinaron dos. hizosse esto este dia, y tuvieronse las conclusiones que en el principio del año se solian tener, por parecer assy mas comuiente para authoridad desta vniuersidad. Al otro dia se represento una Comedia de la historia de Tobias que compuso el maestre de la primera classe, que no causo poca admiracion y deuoción a los oyentes, por ser muy sentenciosa, y las figuras hazerlo tam bien que no se podia mas esperar. Mouieronse a lagrimas muchos hombres nobles y religiosos. Hallosse presente grande copia de gente assi Ecclesiasticos como seglares, y religiosos de todas las ordenes que ay en esta ciudad, los quales todos mostraron contentarse en estremo. [...] (259)

The letter goes on to furnish details of an eclogue given as part of the ceremonies, 'la qual era una traça y figura de los premios que se auian de dar', and also mentions several 'oraciones' especially written for the occasion (one of which was in Greek and probably the work of one of the Province's leading Grecians: Diogo Fernandes or Melchor Lobato (260)). But it is from the extract above that we can track down the author of Tobias, for the Évora college catalogue for 1 September 1563 identifies as teacher of the most advanced class one 'Magister Franciscus Gomes [...] Lusitanus'. (261)

Gomes had entered the order around the age of fifteen in the summer of 1555, and had studied Latin, Greek, and theology at Coimbra. Described in one of the early catalogues as 'de muyto boa abelidade', he was, apparently, a model pupil. Principal among his teachers was Venegas, and he took over Venegas's classes when the latter left for Rome. He transferred to Êvora in 1563, this performance of Tobias being possibly the first taste the Êvora public had had of their new teacher of rhetoric. (262) It proved as too be his swansong: he was already seriously ill of the disease (perhaps tuberculosis) to which

---

(259) Lus. 52, 55[447r-57[449v at 55v.
(260) See, e.g.: BNL, MS 3308, pp. 387, 437, 454, 467.
(261) Lus. 43I, 202[249r][p. 476].
(262) Born Viana de Alvito (Alemtejo) c. 1540; SI 16 July 1555 (Lus. 43I, 14v[p. 38], entry 118; 26v[p. 8]; FG 77/II, 99[85(104)]r-v[pp. 162-63]. On his under-studying Venegas: Lus. 43II, 292[r. 363] (Coimbra catalogue, ?Easter 1561) 'A dias que el padre francisco anda para desocuparle [Venegas] de leer letras'.

Versão integral disponível em digitalis.uc.pt
he was to succumb the following August. Indeed, his transfer from Coimbra to the «drier» climate of the Alemtejo may have been part of a vain attempt to prevent any further deterioration in his condition. (263)

Francisco Gomes’s *Tobias* is an example of a «second generation» Jesuit play. Despite the growth of studies on Jesuit drama, we are still a long way from understanding just how individual dramatists came to write the kind of plays they did. It is at least clear that their youthful experiences as actors and as spectators played some part in forming their conceptions of theatre and of spectacle. Subtler men than the Plasencia *consultor* Pedro Rodríguez elected to adapt popular festivals and entertainments to their own propagandistic purposes rather than indulge in futile essays in suppressing them altogether. (264) If we are to talk at all meaningfully of a «Jesuit style» we shall have to look much more closely at the ways in which such festivals were adopted and adapted, and also at the influence of one generation of teacher-dramatists upon the next. (265)

(263) *Lus.* 52, 118[496]r. It is not easy to identify Francisco Gomes with any certainty, as there were at least three Jesuits of this name alive in the 1560s. It would seem, however, that it is the Évora playwright whose illness and death are recorded in the Lisbon (São Roque) four-monthly letter dated 1 Sept. 1564 (*Lus.* 52, 140[455]r-142[457]v at 140r). Another was the author of a Lisbon dialogue in 1565 (Garzón-Blanco, ‘The Inaugural Production...’, 17), and a third taught at Cordoba in southern Spain (AL for the Cordoba college signed (on behalf of rector Zárate) by Diego de Vaena (Baena), 14 December 1567; *Hisp.* 141, 137[329]r-138v at 137v). For examples of the transfer of personnel to «cure» diseases attributed to unfamiliar climatic conditions, see: Griffin, ‘A Curious Document ...’, 72n.21; *Hisp.* 100, 165[286]r; 351[220]r; *Hisp.* 106, 220[576]r; *Hisp.* 107, 151[159]v.

(264) e.g. Acosta’s suggestion that one should ‘borrar unas ceremonias con otras’ (Mateos, Obras..., 565); and Johann Adler’s advice that, as with the spiritual direction of individuals, a low-key approach of «accommodation» was more likely to prove successful than one of evangelical reforming zeal (letter to Lainez, Prague, 24 October 1556; MHSI, Epistolae Mixtae (Madrid, 1898-1901), V [1901], 471-77, letter 1197, at 471-72).

Venegas inherited a tradition which had its roots in the neo-Latin university pieces of the turn of the century. He and his contemporaries delighted in performances of Brecht's *Euripus* that foreshadowed so much of what they were themselves to attempt. Venegas's own plays were in turn performed, like *Euripus*, in different parts of Europe, and pieces such as *Tobias*, the work of his pupil and immediate successor, reflect these influences, as do Luís da Cruz's dramas, published at Lyons and performed in such distant cities as Munich and Cologne. (266) Da Cruz had himself been a Venegas pupil in the early 1560s. (267) A similar «pedigree» remains to be traced through Gnapheus and Acevedo to some of the Medina and Salamanca plays of the 1570s and 1580s. (268)

The sixteenth-century world of letters exemplifies perfectly Sebastian Munster's observation of 1552 that 'formerly regions were bound by mountains and rivers [...] but today [...] the limits of a region are the limits of its language'. Like the fifteenth-century humanists before them, the Jesuits conducted their operations, wherever possible, in Latin. They may have studied local ideas and attitudes with a view to turning them to their own purposes, but theirs was an international community of scholars operating in a language that was understood throughout Europe and even beyond, and for them political and linguistic frontiers were of limited importance. (269) A Spanish-born dramatist could compose plays and poems for his pupils in Portugal, obtain a transfer to France and, after abandoning his teaching-post in Paris, find himself asked to supervise new performances of them in a

---

(266) GRIFFIN, 'A Portuguese Jesuit Play...'.
(268) See the RAHM material studied by GRIFFIN, 'Some Aspects...', esp. I, 193-225; *Two Jesuit Ahab Dramas*, ix-x, 119-70; and by GARCÍA SORIANO, *El teatro ..., passim*. The *Acolastus* was purchased by Jesuit librarians at Mons, Antwerp, and elsewhere (see the dissolution sale-catalogues: Mons, 6 July 1778 [Brussels: J.B. Jorez, and Mons: Henri Bottin]; Antwerp, 26 May 1779 [Louvain: J.P.G. Michel]); it was performed in colleges as far apart as Lisbon, Innsbruck, Cochim (S. India), and Lima (Peru) (Lisbon, Biblioteca da Academia das Ciências, *MS Cartas do Japão III*, 233v-234r; GRIFFIN, 'Some Aspects...', II, 404).