

Spanish themes found in eight books illustrated by Picasso

Because of his physical absence in Spain and his known protagonist role in the vanguard movements that were learned in the Paris School, Picasso came to be associated with French art. However, a careful study of his pieces clearly demonstrates that his work is rooted in Spanish tradition. Beginning in his early studies, he felt drawn to the Spanish classics: while facing the strict academic instructions, Velázquez was his escape mechanism when between 1897 and 1898 he regularly visited the Prado Museum (Madrid) to fervently analyze his works of art. In the museum he was able to study Goya and El Greco, two other artists whose paintings he also went to view in Toledo (trips that he would be repeat in the following years).

This period coincided with a flow of reinterpretations and a resurgence of interest in Velázquez's work and, first and foremost, El Greco due to Catalanian Modernism. His time in Madrid and his immersion in Barcelona's intellectual atmosphere undoubtedly contributed to his interest in these artists. In the words of Jonathan Brown, "El Greco and the rest of the Spanish painters make up a peculiar tradition in the history of European art, often recognized but never individually defined. This tradition was embraced by Picasso from his time as a student in Madrid and it provided him with a position at the centre of European art. By analyzing the works of El Greco, Velázquez and Goya he was able to understand how his famous precursors were able to critique and interpret the classic tradition."¹

Picasso moved to Paris when he realized that in Spain he could not fully develop his restless nature and that he was simply living off of what once had been the art capital of the world. A new era had arrived, one of modernity and vanguard and Picasso became its main character. Nonetheless, he never lost contact with his homeland, mainly due to his family and friends but also using it as an occasional place of refuge to rediscover himself again and brainstorm new ideas. In this way, *Gósol* (1906) represented the transition from the pink period to a new "Mediterranean" classicism and in *Horta de San Juan*, in 1909, the new path of cubism began.

During his first stays in Paris, Picasso worked in part as a Spanish artist offering painters his own images of the art of bullfighting. Throughout his career, except for the obvious reference made to classic artists which we have previously mentioned (Velázquez, El Greco, Goya), there are many references to his Spanish roots that are quite obvious - from the ever constant presence of bulls to the imaginary Spanish characters such as *La Celestina* or baroque knights, going through the influence of Iberian art and Catalanian Romanesque art in the birth of cubism, or *Noucentisme* during his classicist phase.

Picasso never detached from the events which occurred in Spain, and it was the outbreak of the Civil War which caused him to commit to the Republican cause

and the *Guernica* thus came to be its best exponent. The victory of Franco turned him into yet another exile and his affiliation with the Communist Party in 1944 only served to prove further his stance against the new regime. Moreover, Picasso publically and actively supported groups of Spanish exiles always presenting himself as an opponent of Franco who would not return to the country until freedom was reinstated. Despite it all, he did not lose contact with Spain as he continued to have friends and family in the country. His nieces and nephews visited him regularly, along with artists, writers, bullfighters... There was most definitely a strong circle of individuals who ensured that the Spanish language survived in those settings.

Gertje Utleij maintains that after the Second World War a national revindication of the unique artist tradition occurred in France which affected Picasso, turning him into the foreign painter who sabotaged his own values provoking the following reaction: "The *Picasso controversy* caused him to embark on a new journey of self-examination and reaffirmation with regards to his Spanish roots."ⁱⁱ His statements are well-known where he defends Spanish roots, his effort to preserve his nationality and his rejection towards the French one. During his final years, his longing grew, causing him to frequently recall memories of his childhood spent in Málaga as can be seen in some of his writings or in conversations with Alberti and other friends.

The Pablo Ruiz Picasso Foundation and Birthplace Museum, in celebrating the 124th anniversary since the birth of the painter, presents a sample of eight books from its own collection which reflect, each one in their own way, the spirit of everything Spanish that was palpable in Picasso's daily work. Within the artist's enormous graphic art collection, which occupies a considerable chapter in his artistic life, the printed illustrations for books are of notable importance. Among the 156 books in which he participated, there are frequent references to his country: we review the common themes of *Carmen*, *La Tauromaquia* (The Art of Bullfighting), *Toros y toreros* (Bulls and Bullfighters) or *El entierro del Conde de Orgaz* (The Burial of the Count of Orgaz), the front covers for the catalogues of Sala Gaspar in Barcelona, the illustration of texts by Spanish authors or the simple collaboration with them (Luis de Góngora, Eugenio d'Ors, Ramón Reventós, Jaime Sabartes, Marcos Jimenez de la Espada, Pepe Ilo, Luis Miguel Dominguin, Camilo José Cela, Palau i Fabre, Jacint Reventós i Conti, Fernando de Rojas), along with, finally, the important 1937 portfolio *Sueño y mentira de Franco* (Franco's Dream and Lie), which includes a personal entry by Picasso and two illustrations which portray his fierce political commitment. We will now describe in detail each of the books on display.

Dos contes: El centaure picador. El capvespre d'un faune.

Two narrations by Ramón Reventós, illustrated with 4 etchings with a burin by Pablo Picasso, completed in Paris between February 4th – 6th, 1947.

Paris-Barcelona: Albor, 1947. 33'6 x 26'4 cm

Etchings printed in Roger Lacourrière's workshop, Paris.

Run in 250 copies.

Deux contes: Le centaure picador. Le crépuscule d'un faune.

French edition of the two stories by Ramón Reventós, translated by Jaume Canyameres and illustrated with 4 drypoints by Picasso completed in Golfe-Juan on February 17th, 1948.

[Paris-Barcelona]: Albor, 1947 (actually 1948). 33'5 x 25'8 cm.

Etchings printed in Roger Lacourière's workshop, Paris.
Run in 250 copies.

The book *Dos contes*, which includes Ramón Reventós' stories, *El centaure picador* and *El capvespre d'un faune*, was published in the spring of 1947. If we were to exclude the portfolio *Sueño y mentira de Franco* (1937) – which contained a poem written by Picasso himself – only one of the other 42 books illustrated since then by him were written by a Spanish author, Eugenio d'Ors (who wrote it in Spanish and then had it published in French). *Dos contes* therefore represented the second time in which he was doing the illustrations for a Catalan writer. He also worked with *Els Quatre Gats*, but it was the first time he worked on a text not written in French. All the prior projects came from French editors (once again except for *Sueño y mentira...*, which we avoid calling it a book), and thanks specifically to the initiative of an editor in Barcelona, Picasso was able to play with another language, in this case Catalan, so important for him both from professional and a personal point of view. In fact, Ferrán Canyameres, a writer and editor dedicated to Catalan literature, was introduced to Picasso by a friend, sculptor Joan Rebull. Having mentioned his intention to publish Catalan authors in Paris, Picasso suggested that he should start with the two stories by Ramón Reventós and offered himself to illustrate the them.

The memory of Reventós, who prematurely died in 1923, caused flashbacks to Picasso's childhood in Barcelona at the beginning of the century when the brothers, Ramón and Jacinto ("Moni" and "Cinto") were among their closest friendships from the group that used to gather at the pub "Els Quatre Gats". The Reventós family home, owned by Sir Isidre – an architect and theatre critic – was the meeting point of intellectuals and artists, which Picasso often frequented. Picasso painted portraits of both brothers (in 1899 and 1900, approximately) and there is another famous picture done of Ramón, a photograph from 1906 in which he appears with Pablo and his girlfriend, Fernand Olivier. Cinto Reventós became a renowned doctor specialising in respiratory illness (while a medical intern he allowed Picasso to visit the hospital which would become his inspiration for certain pieces during the blue period). Ramón worked as a writer although his works were rarely published and with little success. Nonetheless, Picasso enjoyed his style and humour. Many years later, Jacint Reventós i Conti, Conti's son, sent us the following words said by the painter in reference to *El centaure picador* and *El capvespre d'un faune*: "I loved your uncle so much that, when it occurred to me to make him acknowledged here, in Paris, because this boy did not enjoy the success that he deserved, it was during the war [1939-1945]. I often went to the National Library, on foot, with all of the dangers that this entailed, in order to copy these two stories, and I copied them all by hand. Someday I will show you in my own handwriting."ⁱⁱⁱ

Picasso's interest in these stories is understandable because besides the emotional connection with the author, their subject matter was related to the Greco-Roman mythology and the Mediterranean theme which were a constant presence in the Spanish artist's work. In this way, *El centauro picador* shows a centaur from Greece whose mother died by giving him birth and whose father descended at Hades, drowning in sorrow. The narrator is a Catalan poet who is successful in bringing the centaur to Catalonia but then argues with the creature and they go their separate ways. The creature then tests his luck as part of a bullfight in a bullring in Barcelona and fails. At the end of the story, the narrator uses the creature as a tutor for his children.

In *El crepúsculo de un fauno*, the last of these creatures, being surprised that he did not disappear along with his peers, he wants to die of yearning, he cannot go on any longer because the verse that a clever faun translates for him is dragging him down: "Si parléssiu català / Sabríeu què és enyorança". Determined to learn this language, he leaves Italy for Catalonia where he ends up working as a model for artists and is so successful that he provokes a return to pagan art. Afterwards, he becomes a gardener but his natural instincts rise to the surface. He ends up destroying the park and attacking the nannies whom he believes to be nymphs. Then he joins a goatherd and battles with the males for the female goats. Hired as a flautist in a cabaret, he falls in love with a dancer and one day he finds her in the arms of a human causing him to retreat to the forest, where, in the evening twilight, he dies of sadness while singing.

These stories were reflections of the aesthetic theories of *Noucentisme*, a cultural movement led by Eugenio d'Ors at the beginning of the 20th century. D'Ors attempted a cultural renewal in Catalonia through the return to the Mediterranean and anti-Romantic classicism, which coincided with a similar movement taking place in France. An echo of such ideas can be traced back to Picasso between 1905 and 1906. His love of order and severity is potent even in cubism and the use of models from Antiquity, (with which he was familiar due to his academic training), would continue to appear after his trip to Italy in 1917. The illustration of books such as *Las Metamorfosis* by Ovidio or *Lisístrata* by Aristófanes (in 1931 and 1934, respectively), would do nothing more than reinforce such a presence. In the 1930s, Picasso used the character of the minotaur in order to create a sort of personal mythology, no longer possessing the sort of majesty and balance of earlier days, being instead violent and dark, its echo resonating all the way to the *Guernica*. Between December of 1937 and January of 1938, a drawing and various oil paintings create a sequence in which we seem to witness the agony and the "rebirth" of the minotaur as a human being, much more calm, almost transforming into a faun. In fact, two of these mythical creatures seem to be the new focus of an oil painting which closes the series on the 7th of January.

If during the German occupation of Paris Picasso hand copied the two stories by Reventós, we must assume that his characters and his bucolic world along with his lovingly absurd and ironic approach would have been swirling around Picasso's mind. Nonetheless, almost nothing confirms this – an oil painting from 1942 (Z.XII, 155), a cut-out of a piece of paper for his daughter, Maya (S. 259) in 1943 –and two watercolours completed at the end of August 1944 which were variations of *The Triumph of Pan* by Poussin (Z.XIV, 34 and Z.XIV, 35). While the streets of Paris were the stage of the final battles for freedom, Picasso seemed to anticipate the joy of victory in this impassioned celebration, whose representation would continue to recur during the following years.

In the second work the central figure is Françoise Gilot, whom he had met in 1943, depicted as a dancing nymph. As the relationship with this young lady (there was a 40 year age difference between the two) grew stronger, and coinciding with Picasso's stays in Antibes during the fall of 1945 and summer of 1946, we can notice a return to the fauns, centaurs and scenes in which she dances to the sounds of flute. In the end, by accepting the invitation to be the Museum of Antibes' curator, he is able to use some of the empty rooms for his study and, between October and

November he comes up with an idyllic and pagan world, a series of seventy pieces which are called *Antipolis* (the original Greek name given to Antibes).

Picasso lives life to the fullest, with a youthfulness which allows him to imaginarily embody the wild yet innocent figures of the flautist, the faun or of the centaur. The companionship of a new love, which would bring him two children between 1947 and 1949, the return to peace and the proximity of the Mediterranean Sea all enabled him to express a deep “love of life” by updating the classic myths which the historic past of Antibes – palpable in the archaeological remains displayed in the museum – brought to his mind. Authors such as Patrick Cramer^{iv}, John Richardson^v or Gertje Utley^{vi} acknowledged the important role that the reading of the *Dos contes* (during the war, according to Picasso) had in the genesis of this iconography. Also, Utley insists in other reasons: on the one hand, the discontent of Picasso, a feeling widely shared during the period, with a technology and modernity which made the disaster of the two World Wars possible. This made him evoke a pre-classic Golden Age and throw himself into pottery as a craft. On the other hand, there were fierce critics that advocated the return to a traditional “French” style of art and criticized Picasso for destroying the values of the Western world along with being the exponent of a “foreign” and damaging form of art. For these reasons he might have felt inclined to implicitly honour France in the tribute that he paid to Poussin in 1944 with his version of *The Triumph of Pan*.

This was the background for the illustration of *Dos contes*. Picasso engraved four etchings with a burin between the 4th and 6th of February, 1947. Since 1945, his work with graphic art became intensely rooted in lithography, but in this case, he preferred an etching technique. (It is important to highlight the existence of three lithographs from this period containing scenes of fauns and centaurs, dated January 26th and February 2nd). The illustrations are faithful reproductions of the story at hand with two dedicated to each story. In both cases, the second engraving is divided into three frames which summarize the main events just as was done in the old “broadheets”. The drawing tends to be extremely simplified in approach, giving the images a light, airy, innocent feel which is in keeping with the text. It might be useful to recall that in 1945 and 1946, Picasso visited two children’s art expositions whose “primitive purity” of the pieces once again resurrected his interest in all that was archaic and reinforced his rejection of a modern, technologised society. Simplicity is not an obstacle when approaching certain problems related to perspective and how the characters fit within the given space, such as those who catch a glimpse of the centaur as a picador (one of the many characters in a bullfight) or pulling a cart; the death of the faun, in the final image, is resolved with great elegance and tenderness.

On the 9th of February, Picasso drew in a notebook, for no one but himself, a few pages of drawings of centaurs, satyrs and some sketches for the frontcovers. *Dos contes* was published in the spring of 1947 with the same cover and the book’s sleeve adorned by the artist. The book received enough acclaim for the editor, Ferran Canyameres, to decide to have the book translated to French. In the summer of the same year, the text went to print (including the colophon, dating the book with the same date), but Picasso’s illustrations would have to wait because he was busy with another book, *Vingt poèmes de Góngora* (Twenty Poems by Góngora). The first prints for this book began on the 26th of February and were not complete – due to various

interruptions – until February 6th, 1948. A few days later, on the 17th of February of the same year, he undertook all four prints for *Dos contes*.

This time he exchanged the burin for drypoint, and he gave up narrating the story in frames in order to focus on four specific images: the centaur yoked to a cart and stabbing a bull, and a faun playing the flute while agonizing to death. The characters have more humanizing and expressive traits, they seem more real and close, they are less abstract. Once again, we are witnessing the bullfighting scene in its most complex representation. Picasso also drew the cover in Chinese ink, along with the title and the the initial letters of each story, and also an illustration that he inserted within the text – a poster announcing the bullfight.

In March of 1948, the artist dedicated himself to the creation of more fauns which he represented in various lithographs. He continued on with this theme using other mediums, (pottery, sculpture, drawings and paintings) for many years. Jacinto Reventós, the writer's brother, would visit him regularly from 1956 up until his death in 1968. Two books would finally be printed, albeit late, edited by the publishing company located in Barcelona, Gustavo Gili, and would be the last testimonial of a long friendship: *Recordant el doctor Reventós* (Remembering Doctor Reventós) (1969) which his son, Jacint, published in his memory and in which Picasso made a contribution by providing a frame from 1951, and *L'Hospital de Santa Creu i de Sant Pau* (1971), which also contains a watercolour signed by the artist. This last piece makes reference to the hospital where Cinto Reventós worked. The proceeds from the sale were given to the Picasso-Reventós Foundation created by Jacint at the suggestion of Picasso himself in order to manage new endeavours related to the health system. Picasso also donated *La mujer muerta* (The Dead Woman) to the same cause. This was an oil painting from the blue period inspired by the visits he made with his friend to the morgue seventy years before.

Vingt poèmes de Góngora.

Twenty poems by Luis de Góngora y Argote, with translation to French by Zdislas Milner, and illustrated by Picasso with 41 etchings and sugar aquatints, completed between February 1947 and March 1948.
Paris: Les Grands Peintres modernes et le Livre, 1948. 38'5 x 28'7 cm.
Engraving done in the Roger Lacourrière workshop, in Paris.
Run in 275 copies.

As we have already pointed out, further to the two versions of Reventós' book, Picasso also commenced the illustrations to accompany some of Góngora's poems. With this project, the artist would become closer to Spain and perhaps even to his Andalusian roots. His friend, photographer Roberto Otero^{vii}, provided us with this secret many years later: "All Andalusians are a bit surrealist (...) such as Don Luis de Góngora y Argote".

Picasso was very interested in poetry (both reading and composing it), and the case of the author from Córdoba should have caught his attention ever since the Generation of '27 recognised him at the tricentenary of Góngora's death in 1927. In fact, the artist collaborated on a special edition of the Malaguenian magazine, *Litoral*,

published in memory of Góngora in October of the same year, by including a drawing from 1924 (a still life). The heavy and elaborated style, full of complicated metaphors of this writer that was contemporary to El Greco (also making a comeback during these years), was appreciated by the French surrealists. Proof of this appreciation might be that "Editions Cahiers d'Art" would publish in 1928 twenty sonnets by Góngora translated by Zdislas Milner and illustrated with drawings by Ismael G. de la Serna.

These same sonnets, (except for one which was replaced), were selected for a new edition, to be illustrated by Picasso. The final print of *Dos contes* dates back to February 6th, 1947. Between the 26th and 27th of the same month, the artist began to work on the book about Góngora by completing twelve prints. Nonetheless, he would not reinitiate the task until June 12th, breaking once again on July 2nd and finishing off the project on the 4th and 6th of February, 1948 with 10 prints. He would have to add the last one later on, completed on the 9th of March: the name "Góngora" inscribed on the book's cover. Brigitte Baer^{viii} stated that the sudden death of the publisher that initiated the project might have been the cause for these interruptions. However, one cannot exclude other explanations that might explain the on-and-off rhythm of work. For instance, personal circumstances such as the birth of his son Claude, in May of 1947. Also, since 1945, he intensely dedicated himself to lithography and in August he had commenced his work in pottery. In any case, *Vingt poèmes* ...at the last moment, the project would receive financial backing from the association of bibliophiles who had it published in September 1948.

The volume presents each of the twenty poems hand-written by Picasso in Spanish preceded by a full-page etching and followed by the typographed French translation. In the same year, he illuminated *Chants des Morts*, by his friend, Pierre Reverdy. This was a collection of poems that went to print in the author's own handwriting and which Picasso decorated with beautiful arabesques to reinforce the abstract beauty of the penned calligraphy. Most likely following this example, the painter wished that Góngora's verses to be also handwritten, convinced of the aesthetic beauty that this effort would thus provide to the pieces. A notebook^{ix} has been preserved containing preliminary works that consisted in several sonnets handcopied in ink and coloured crayons.. However, the technical process rightfully began with writing the poems on special stencils using Chinese ink. Lacourière was able to reproduce these stencils on copper plates using the technique of heliogravure (which requires the separations of the stencils). Picasso decorated the borders these plates with drawings and decorations, he corrected and completed the texts, and added his signature and date (it is interesting to note that only one sonnet was not decorated: "Al sepulcro de Dominico Greco"; perhaps a sort of respectful silence for the renowned painter?). The complexity of the process explains why this final project would not take shape until June 18th, 1947.

On the 26th and 27th of February, 1947, as mentioned before, Picasso had already committed to the execution of some individual illustrations, two of which would end up unedited in the end (figures of men, one of which Brigitte Baer^x compared to a possible portrait of El Greco). In the end, and until the completion in February 1948, there were twenty prints which accompanied the poems, offering an authentic lesson in the art of drawing. Excepting the first one, which is a portrait of Gongora, the rest of the drawings depict women of different characterization. Not

only their physiognomy, but also the way in which they are represented is out of the norm: refined lines abound, while stains are also commonplace. The women seem to be lost in thought or completely calm, however, in three cases the drawings have a similar formal tone but they are portrayed in movement (writing, reading or primping with a mirror held in one hand). All of the drawings have an aura of extraordinary elegance and daintiness. Their refined "classicism" contrasts with Góngora's baroque, exuberant syntax whilst borrowing his majestic approach and, most importantly, providing the perfect visual accompaniment to the manuscripts. The portrait of Góngora (February 27th, 1947) accompanies a burlesque sonnet, called *A un excelente pintor extranjero, que le estaba retratando* (To a wonderful foreign painter, of whom I was painting a portrait), which brings us to contemplate a small, ironic game of mirrors. This has to do with a version of an oil painting by Velázquez from 1622, which, according to Bernd Rau^{xi}, was the first of the many versions done by Picasso during his graphic art. This might be an explanation for why the portrait seems to be done in a different style compared to the rest, using strokes attempting to cause a more pictorial texture. Picasso also did a lithography of a very similar bust, but inverted, on the 5th of March.

In these twenty prints, the artist brilliantly used the technique of sugar aquatint. In a book of memoirs entitled *Vivre avec Picasso* (Living with Picasso), by Françoise Gilot^{xii}, Picasso himself explains her- and explains it to us - this process, which had already been explored in a prior book, *Histoire Naturelle* (Natural History), by the Count of Buffon, but which Gilot mentions especially in the case of Góngora. It involves applying paint directly to the copper plate with a paintbrush soaked in a solution which contains sugar. In the areas where the solution is applied, the varnish or glaze is unable to adhere. Then, the entire plate is covered with the solution. This causes certain areas to be unprotected resulting in the acid eating away the material. Last, the ink is applied and the final work is printed. The final product is more subtle, lush and varied than an etching or an ordinary aquatint. Picasso mentions that a second phase might be necessary in order to improve results and the solutions which he describes reveal his masterful techniques and his inventiveness. However, in *Vingt poèmes de Góngora*, he did not wish to resort to them. Gilot, while recounting the part of this project done in Golfe-Juan (and perhaps confusing the dates in question) told us that Picasso etched various pieces at a time and, because he was missing the necessary material, he would let Lacourière, in Paris, complete the varnishing process and immerse them in acid. She also mentioned that in some portraits he would use his thumb along with the paintbrush and a piece of handkerchief dipped in the sugary mixture which, when applied directly, would suggest the texture of a piece of fabric or clothing.

The final etching - which would go down as No. 41 - was completed on March 9th, 1948. It was the name "Góngora", paintbrushed, as the title of the frontpage and reproduced on the book cover. He also used the poet's name to design the watermark, sketching an owl on the initial "G". The copper plates (410 x 310 mm) were larger compared to the paper used (382 x 280 mm), meaning that margins were missing. Also they were not dated. Out of the 275 copies which were printed, 15 included a "suite" or folder with the 41 aquatints aside. These were printed from the copper plates with the date inscribed in the bottom corner. This allowed researchers to reconstruct in detail the order in which the pieces were completed which does not match the order in which they appear.

Vingt poèmes de Góngora is for many one of the best illustrated works done by Picasso. It is, of course, a point of departure for his comings and goings, his playful nature and glances toward the multifaceted world of the Spanish Baroque, which often served as his inspiration in the following years.

Carmen.

Regarding the text by Prosper Mérimée, illustrated by Picasso with 38 chiseled engravings in the regular editions and a special edition (11 copies) including 4 sugar aquatints completed between May 6th, 1948 and May 2nd, 1949.

Paris: La Bibliothèque française, 1949. 33'1 x 26'2 cm.

Engraving printed in Roger Lacourière's workshop, in Paris.

Run in 320 copies.

Almost immediately following the book about Góngora, a new project would find him working on another Spanish theme. The initiative stemmed from La Bibliothèque française, a publishing company with close ties to the French communist movement to which Picasso was very committed to since 1944. La Bibliothèque française was a very active organization during these years with various projects such as *Les Septs poèmes d'amour en guerre* (The Seven Poems of Love During War) by Paul Eluard (published in secrecy), various volumes by Louis Aragon about communism and resistance, a few Soviet authors, history books or a collection of drawings completed in the Buchenwald Concentration Camp by Boris Taslitzky. Among the novels, the only "classics" that can be mentioned are of Romain Rolland and Prosper Mérimée. The latter published *La Jacquerie* in 1946, with illustrations by André Fougeron.

Carmen is a very well known story: a crook, Don José, tells the author how his lover, a gypsy called Carmen, caused him misfortune by making him desert from the army and become a smuggler, bandit and murderer. Published in 1847, it was one of the novels in which French Romanticism carved out the typical cliché of Andalusia (and, furthermore, of Spain) as a land of unbridled passion, captivating women, bullfighters, bandits, gypsies and flamenco dancing. The enduring success of Bizet's opera (1875) did little but reaffirm this view and solidified Carmen as one of those international characters who achieve their own category as a literary prototype.

Nonetheless, and despite what the publishing companies perhaps thought, it is clear that Picasso felt very distanced from this legend because in his engravings which illustrate the pages of the book, he blatantly avoided the images which conformed to such an idea. Actually, nothing directly relates to the story at hand except for the first image of a woman wearing a typical Spanish hair decoration and a few bull heads. It is possible that the artist, who had recently reconnected with his Spanish roots through Reventós' Mediterranean and Catalanian Arcadia and the baroque Andalusian poetry of Góngora, might have seen this French drama of *amour fou* as false and artificial, perhaps even in total contrast to his deep understanding of everything Spanish. What is true is that he brought this work to his own territory, where his aesthetic interests lay at the time. He attempted to calm the overwhelming sentiments and the tumultuous events appearing in the text with strictly formal research, radically simplistic and distant, mainly focusing on the appearance of the human face.

His work on *Carmen* stretched out over time, but actually most of the work was done in very few days: May 6th and May 30th, 1948 (in Golfe-Juan, reaching the completion of 36 prints in only two days), on November 19th of the same year (in Paris, 2 prints) and May 2nd, 1949 (Paris, 4 aquatints for the special edition).

Chiseled engravings and aquatints are very distinct as well as distant in time. The first ones, created in 1948, are, in one aspect, very simple representations of faces: a disparaged woman with a Spanish-style decoration in her hair, men and women portrayed in a box or a circle, plays on oval shapes, two minotaur heads, one of a bull etc. They outline gestures and attitudes with a minimum use of lines, sometimes not free from complicated constructions. We could compare these works to some of the ceramic work done during this era, oval or rectangular bowls and plates, decorated with extremely simple images of fauns. They could also be compared with pencil drawings (dainty flowers and still nature) and lithographs (again, heads of fauns and a series of portraits of Françoise Gilot, tending towards the abstract). The schematic outlines are done with the help of the calcographic technique (in a process that will be repeated in his following books *Élegie d'Ihpétonga*, *Poésie de mots inconnus* and *Corps Perdu*). The chiseled engravings present, on the other hand, some of the chapters' letters and the decorated margins of the text that take us back to the calligraphic experiences of *Le Chant des Morts* and *Vingt poèmes de Góngora*.

As we already have said, the four aquatints with sugar were created on May 2nd 1949, one year after his first chiseled engravings; it was also established that only 11 were made for the special edition, interspersed as illustrations in the book, and another 11 in the 'suite' part that accompanied it. Its nature is very distinct to those engraved with a chisel: the technique already makes the images warm and rich in shade; and its subject matter falls into the Spanish cliché, as such they present two beautiful female heads with their *mantilla*, a scene in which a picador, and the head of a bull fighter and his cap. In the women's faces, it is worth mentioning the grace of their flirtatious expression and the delicacy in which the veils are fit in. It had been a long time, perhaps since the portrait of Olga in a *mantilla* in 1917, that Picasso hadn't used stereotypes so clearly Spanish like the women and the bull fighter. As far as the picador in the bullring, it is a theme that came back to his attention probably from the illustrations of "*El centauro picador*" by Reventós in February 1947. In March of that year he executed three aquatints of the lance, and between March and April of 1949 various lithographs include them. Picasso's vision of bullfighting is no longer the symbolic one from the 30s, but rather a vision that was clean and straightforward, admiring and festive; since 1948 he often attended such festivities organized in the south of France. Perhaps because of this recovered pleasure he finally wanted to reflect *the small world* in his latest engravings for *Carmen*.

This book experienced a sort of curious re-edition: in 1957, Picasso offered for a charity sale a an exemplary adorned by him with original drawings of different people and decorations. Marcel Duhamel, its buyer, published in 1964 a facsimile of the book, and the artist made new engravings for him: four aquatints, a drypoint and a lithograph.

Les ménines et la vie.

Text by Jaime Sabartés. Translated from Spanish by Alfred Rosset. Illustrated by Picasso with 1 chiseled engraving, drypoint, and copper wheel engraving, signed in colored pencil.

Paris: Cercle d'Art, 1958. 32.8 x 25.5 cm.

Engraving printed in the Lacourière workshop Paris.

Run in 120 copies.

Les Menines et la vie was edited in 1958 by Cercle d'Art in Paris. It is composed of a preface by Jaime Sabartés, the reproduction of the fifty-eight works that are part of the *Las Meninas* series by Picasso and a chiseled engraving, expressly created to illustrate this book.

It's necessary to return to 1895, in order to see the first contact that Picasso had with *Las Meninas* by Velázquez. When returning to Málaga after a stay in La Coruña with his parents and his sister Lola, the family stopped in Madrid for an almost obligatory visit to the Prado Museum. On this compulsory visit, Picasso had his first contact with one of the works of art that would most change his life. Two and a half years later, when the few visits that provided a relief from his worn out stay in the capital, studying at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, he was able to learn all the subtleties of the museum. After his arrival in Barcelona in 1895, he made frequent references to the painter from Seville, but in a less devotional way. There was a trend, tied to a critical spirit of art, which probably served to unite Picasso to this city. Among its usual artistic movements, the city had a resurgence of Velázquez as well as a reencounter with El Greco, where through introspection, one can see the paradoxical nature of the painting, giving rise to numerous interpretations, leaving aside the naturalistic value of the piece¹³. The last time that he was able to contemplate the piece was in Geneva¹⁴, in the fall of 1938. He went there to check the artwork that had been evacuated during the Spanish Civil War, as the director of the Prado Museum—a job that he carried out while the republic was in power in Spain.

In the 50s Picasso had a reencounter with the past, creating a synchronicity in his artistic program with the masters Delacroix, Velázquez, Manet, Daumier, which he recovered and brought to the present.

There is an important bond between *Las Meninas*, Picasso and his secretary and friend, Jaime Sabartés. As it is told in *Las menines et la vie*¹⁵, the revision that Picasso carried out of Velázquez's piece was a project that was thought out many years before. The project, for him contained a very attractive figure and history, and without a doubt was a project that became more interesting as he got older. In fact in 1950 Picasso defined the project like this: "Let's say that if one were to copy *Las Meninas*, in good faith, and if I were the one to copy it, that arriving at a certain point, I would say to myself: what would it be like if I put that a little to the right or to the left? And I would try to do it in my own way, forgetting about Velázquez [...]. Like this, little by little, I would start painting some *Meninas* that looked horrible to a professional copier. They wouldn't be the same ones that he thought he had seen on Velázquez's canvas, but they would be *my Meninas*..."¹⁶ It is in 1957 in an ideal place chosen by the artist, a Mediterranean enclave in the Ville Californie (Cannes), on some uninhabited second floor, where he faces a moment of personal and artistic maturity. This, for the painter, was going to be a pending question in his professional

career, the study and analysis of one of the most important pieces in the history of art. The series, carried out in a period of four months (from August 17th to the December 30th), is composed of forty-five paintings based directly on Velazquez's piece as well as thirteen other connected pieces. For Picasso a determining factor in this work was the workshop, the place where the artist from Seville developed the captured scene. Because of this, the Malaganian artist chose an isolated place to work in order to be able to become completely absorbed in his endeavour. He did this to face alone, without interruptions this dialogue where Picasso is going to use his own language, a dialogue that will take place between the people from the XVII century and their XX century versions. The *meninas* are transforming, the artist performs an X-ray of each figure, granting them their own life, completely analyzing them. Here, the painter found the isolation he wished for in his required solitude, but in the middle of this process he needed to take a deep breath, and he opened his workshop. It was then that he captured on his canvases the sight of a birdhouse on a balcony, stuck out over the Mediterranean. He went back to the original theme with the new offensive, until the end of 1957 when the idea of *las meninas* started to tone itself down.

Sabartés notes that he never directly discussed *las meninas* with the Malaganian artist¹⁷. He discovered what Picasso thought about it through his work; he insists that the really important part of the book was the contemplation Picasso's studies, and the contemplation of Picasso's work, which means seeing Velazquez's work from another perspective.

The artist's decision to donate the complete series of fifty-eight variations of Velazquez's work, in 1969, to the Picasso Museum in Barcelona (formed thanks to a first donation by Jaime Sabartés) stands as an evidence for the relationship that his friend and collaborator had with this work for so much time. It was a tribute to his friend who died on February 13th of the same year. The museum would always be, for Picasso, a continuation of his friendship with Sabartés.

As for the illustration that Picasso did for the book *Las meninas y la Vida*, it consists of a chiseled, drypoint and copper wheel engraving, that presents clear geometric motives as well as an obvious surrealistic treatment and a free utilization of the same geometric vocabulary that he used in some of the variations of *Las Meninas* (specifically numbers 28,31,33 and 34), dated 9.9.58 and signed in red in the margin. It consists of a divided piece, in one side the painter, and on the other side the model (that might be Princess Margarita), evoking a union where the lines are misleading and causing a confusion in perceiving one or two figures, keeping clear the changing nature of reality. The forms remain dissected in a tangle of lines.

Picasso: Toreros.

Text by Jaime Sabartés, illustrated with 4 original lithographs by Picasso, carried out between March and April 1961, with the reproduction of 103 watercolors.

George Braziller: New York, 1961. 25.2 x 32.5 cm.

Lithographs printed by Fernan Mourlot, in Paris.

Run in 2000 copies neither dated or numbered.

The Picasso Foundation has among its collection *Picasso: toreros*, the English language edition of the French illustrated book, *A los toros avec Picasso* (from an unknown print run) published by André Sauret in 1961. In the same year George Braziller brought to light in New York an edition for the United States.

This book, with text by Jaime Sabartés and in which are reproduced 103 watercolors done between 1959 and 1960, is completed with four lithographs, made by Picasso expressly for this publication. In the introduction¹⁸, Sabartés describes the bullfight, presenting the figures that make it up, going more in depth on the bull and the picador. These are the figures that have a special relevance to the series of 103 watercolors, dated exactly between July 11th of 1959 and June 26th of the following year, and appear in the body of the book. These watercolors, in which the artist used ink mixed with water to draw on paper, were exhibited with huge success in the Galerie Louise Leiris in December 1960, this fact being probably the reason for the publication of the book.

The original illustrations are carried out on lithograph, a technique which, as we are told by Rosa Vives¹⁹, utilizes a limestone as its medium which makes the process possible. Due to its absorbing nature, it retains the fatty substances, maintaining the moisture. One draws on the rock with pencils or lithographic ink, then this drawing is fixed and makes rest of the surface that does not contain the image impervious, so that the moisture rejects the ink and only penetrates the drawn image. The four lithographs in the book were created between March and April 1961 and correspond to certain moments of a bullfight. In the lithographs there is the development of sketchy and outlined drawings that capture images of bulls in which there are: a picador that attacks a bull, the passing of a cape over a bull, the placement of *bandilleras* (little flags), all in front of the watchful audience that completes the scenes. From this group the second lithograph stands out, where the drawing is more defined. It shows the picador in the foreground, outside of the ring, ready to intervene. It is also worth mentioning that when Mourlot²⁰ went to show the artist the tests of the engravings, he commented on the lack of color in the illustrations. Picasso used this opportunity to use an entire box of crayons to illuminate the stamp, which caused an enormous problem for the printer due to the lithograph technique in which one needs to make a mould for every tone, if color is used²¹.

In Picasso's works of art, the bull-related theme is constant in a number of drawings, engravings, paintings, ceramics, and sculptures. Bulls charging, humanized, in agony, with wings (and including fried), the horse, the bullfighter adorned in many different ways, sometimes hurt, some as women, picadors, *bandilleros*...All of the characters that make up the bullfight world have a place in Picasso's work, playing a very important role. Since his birth, the national day was for Picasso an excuse for his paintbrush which was hungry for movement. He portrayed the event in his own way, being that in the 30s when the fights became violent, ferocious, lost the classicism that characterized it up until then. In the 40s the bull became more passive, the images take on a calmer air, and he introduced techniques (like linocut), he worked with ceramics and always with a fast and fluid brushstroke he created scenes of elegant dynamism, arriving at a point where he created sketches with little definition.

El entierro del Conde de Orgaz (The burial of the Count of Orgaz)

Poems by Picasso with a prologue by Rafael Alberti, illustrated by the artist with

1 chiseled engraving (dated on the plate June 9th 1939) and 12 engravings on copper plates, dated between November 1996 and April 1967; 18 copies and 3 other aquatints exist, without a signature, dated in 1966.

Engravings printed in the Gustavo Gili's workshop in Barcelona.

Run in 263 copies. 37.5 x 47 cm.

A second volume facsimile of Picasso's original manuscripts accompanies this book.

El Entierro del Conde de Orgaz produces an interrelation of the art that fascinated Picasso; letters accompanied by images that create a whole. For the artist, writing is a different form of drawing. He abandoned the brush to illustrate with letters, and in this way, created fresh and spontaneous pieces, where a great dynamism interlaces people, memories and sensations described in an automatic form.

The comfort that Picasso feels results in a flow of words that bring to surface scents, tastes, and lingering feelings in his memory of his days living in Málaga. "Diving into his own memory, Picasso writes like he paints: he selects his cultural baggage and associates them with the supreme adventure of liberty", says José Caballero Bonald in *Leer a Picasso*, published by the Pablo Ruiz Picasso Foundation in 1990²². In his poetry there is always an escape to the past, and there are many snippets of his childhood to be found in the text. The written work is an exercise in automatic structuring, a clear surrealist experiment, although probably carried out more for feelings than for respect of a technique (it took him two and a half years to finish it, from January 1957 to August 1959).

This homage that the Malaganian painter brought to El Greco is nothing less than a gesture of worship towards the artist that had accompanied Picasso in his entire artistic career. Connected to him since he was young, the Cretan had a palpable influence on Picasso's work starting in the beginning of the century, during his blue period. Although Picasso never carried out a study nor variation of El Greco's work like other's that he admired, such as Velázquez, Delacroix or Manet, the features of the mannerist artist, with his daring differentiation between observed reality and imagined reality, were very present in Picasso's work and were always the cause of his admiration, according to Jonathan Brown in *Picasso y la tradición española*²³.

El Greco was a painter sadly forgotten about until the beginning of the XX century at which point he was recovered. It is after this moment that various expositive projects are carried out, crucial for the circulation of the author of *El Entierro del Conde de Orgaz*; perhaps the most important is the showing exhibited in the Prado Museum in 1902. Already by this date, Picasso had visited Toledo on two occasions in order to contemplate El Greco's masterpiece on display in the Church of Santo Tomé (in 1897 with his teacher Moreno Carbonero and in 1901 with the writer Francisco de Asís Soler). It was also the responsibility of the modernist Catalan artists to revive the work of the Cretan painter with articles in the diverse vanguard magazines of the time. They did this by insisting fundamentally in the timelessness of his art, which constituted at that moment a cultural recuperation, and contributed to

the formation of a national identity, so hoped for by the Catalan bourgeois of that time (Robert S. Lubar²⁴). The date August 11th, 1966 is crucial for this project of both writing and illustration; that day (as we are told by Pierre Cabanna²⁵) in Mougins, Picasso and Gustavo Gill, Catalan editor and friend of the painter, met. The painter showed Gill his writings and, without hesitation, the editor proposed their publication, with the condition on Picasso's behalf, that Rafael Alberti writes the prologue.

The front of the book stands out, the poem *Trozo de almíbar* as a chiseled engraving, beautifully framed by clearly geometric figures, where feminine faces play simultaneously, a reoccurring theme in Picasso's work. The literary work would be accompanied by 12 engravings created in one year, using the technique of etchings on copper plates. The circus scenes, frequently seen in the rose period, are repeated, acquiring more space: dwarves, acrobats and tightrope walkers take part in the scenes with a great sexual charge. The figure of the spectator (so frequent in this artistic stage), sometimes more than one, minotaur, contemplative dames, armed men with violent attitudes, including mythological figures, make up this compendium of scenes that don't have anything to do with the text nor the title, that only serve as an explanatory of the homage that Picasso pays to El Greco.

La Célestine

Tragicomedy by Fernando de Rojas, 1499. Illustrated by Picasso with 66 aquatints and etchings, of different sizes and dated between April 11th and August 18th, 1968, on copper plates, without a signature.

Paris: Atelier Crommelynck, 1971. 21.7 x 17.5 cm.

Engravings printed at the Crommelynck Workshop.

Run in 400 copies, all signed in pencil by the painter.

If the Spanish presence can be confirmed in Picasso's work by the influence of other great artists, no other artist does in quite like Picasso. Since he portrayed La Celestina (Picasso Museum, Paris) in 1904, with a clearly inexpressive and grotesque face due to the look that comes across, this character is constant, above all in Picasso's last stage. This is the stage in which the old matchmaker, always present in brothels, becomes the voyeur, the old blind and dark woman, with a reoccurring presence in the sex scenes, generally in the graphic work.

The classic by Fernando de Rojas, with engravings by Pablo Picasso, can be considered the last great work illustrated by the painter. This is because although the graphic work was made in 1968, the edition of the book wasn't finished until 1971. The tragicomedy of Calisto y Melibea is a dramatic novel split in twenty-one acts. It was published in Burgos in 1499. What attracted Picasso most to this story, with a notable description of Spanish customs from the time of the Catholic Monarchs, during the transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, was it's well developed characters, the lovers meetings in the presence of the Celestina, the abductions of the women, and the duel between the knights. Picasso turns representations into theatrical scenes, where the actors are young, courtesans, knights as musketeers, little princesses, dwarves, flutists... a cast of characters, where in a game of transformation, the result is sometimes fun and no less grotesque. Although Picasso had the idea of illustrating this classic in his mind for a long time, it was a proposal by the printers Crommelynck²⁶ that initiated the work. For the project

they sent plates, of a smaller format, that they habitually used, which forced the artist to work with a few centimetres. On their individual wrapping, he wrote the word "Celestina", for their intended end result. The 66 engravings that make up the book, dated between April 11th and August 18th of 1968, are part of the Series 347, which make up, by themselves, their own piece of work. The Series, which contains this group, makes up a dizzying masterpiece, carried out between March and August of hectic 1968, with a very diverse subject matter, and a blend of characters and situations of Picassos last stage. Contrary to what happens with other illustrated books, here one can find a harmony of text and illustrations. It was in 1970 when the artist, together with the engravers, chose the engravings that were definitely going to illustrate the text, translated into French by Pierre Heugas.

Together with *Le Chant des Morts* it is the book with the most illustrations, and it also constitutes an innovation in its reduced size, which is something quite unusual for the artist. While he worked on the engravings he commented his printer and friend Aldo Crommelynck the possibility of making a huge print run and selling the books for the price of "a loaf of bread". This idea remained just that, because the definitive print run consisted of 400 copies. Without a doubt, this was a pleasurable job for the artist.

The copper plates were very elaborated with skill and liveliness, with a labor that was not very detailed, but very effective. This resulted in etchings and aquatints in which "everything was used: sugar on a well oiled plate (which gives it a bubble-like texture and dreamlike characters), diluted varnish with turpentine, grinded powder, sandpaper, etc"²⁷. The stamping was done on Canton de Moulin Richard-de-Blas laid paper, with a watermark "La Celestine", and always with the artist's signature in pencil. The preparation of the sheets was also unusual: double sheets were uncut and folded for the engravings (in order to not have to print the text on the same page as the illustration), alternating with a page of text printed on both sides.

ⁱ BROWN, Jonathan. "Picasso y la tradición pictórica española". En BROWN, Jonathan (coord.). Picasso y la tradición española. Hondarribia (Guipúzcoa): Nerea, 1999, p. 15.

ⁱⁱ UTLEY, Gertje. "Picasso y la Renaissance francesa de posguerra: una nacionalidad en discusión". En BROWN, Jonathan, op. cit., p. 129.

ⁱⁱⁱ REVENTÓS I CONTI, Jacint. Picasso i els Reventós. Barcelona: Gustau Gili, [1972], p. 20.

^{iv} GOEPPERT, Sebastian, GOEPPERT-FRANK, Herma, y CRAMER, Patrick. Pablo Picasso. The illustrated books: catalogue raisonné. Genève: Patrick Cramer, 1983, p. 124.

^v RICHARDSON, John. "Picasso y Ramón Reventós: el origen catalán de Antípolis". En TINTEROW, Gary (ed.). Picasso clásico. [Sevilla]: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura y Medio Ambiente, 1992, p. 158 y 168.

^{vi} UTLEY, Gertje, op. cit., p. 111 y 129.

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- vii OTERO, Roberto. *Lejos de España: encuentros y conversaciones con Picasso*. Barcelona: Dopesa, 1975, p. 86.
- viii BAER, Brigitte. *Picasso peintre-graveur, tome IV. Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre gravé et des monotypes, 1946-1958. Suite aux catalogues de Bernhard Geiser*. Berne: Kornfeld, 1988, p. 30.
- ix GLIMCHER, Arnold, y GLIMCHER, Marc (eds.). *Je Suis le Cahier: los cuadernos de Picasso*. Madrid: Mondibérica, 1986, p. 331 (cuaderno nº 114).
- x BAER, Brigitte, op. cit., p. 73 (nº 779).
- xi RAU, Bernd. *Pablo Picasso: obra gráfica*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1982, p. 80.
- xii GILOT, Françoise, y LAKE, Carlton. *Vida con Picasso*. Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1996, p. 270-272.
- ¹³ PALAU I FABRE, Joseph. *El secreto de Las meninas de Picasso*. Barcelona: Polígrafa, 1982, p. 9.
- ¹⁴ INGLADA, Rafael. *Picasso: 30 revisiones*. Málaga: Arguval, 2003, p. 219.
- ¹⁵ SABARTÉS, Jaime. *Las meninas et la vie*. Paris: Cercle d'art, 1958, p. 7.
- ¹⁶ SABARTÉS, Jaime, op. cit., p. 7.
- ¹⁷ SABARTÉS, Jaime, op. cit., p. 9.
- ¹⁸ SABARTÉS, Jaime. *Picasso: toreros*. New York: George Braziller: Nueva York, 1961.
- ¹⁹ VIVES, Rosa. *Del cobre al papel: la imagen multiplicada. El conocimiento de la estampas*. Barcelona: Icaria, 1994, p. 66.
- ²⁰ CABANNE, Pierre. *El siglo de Picasso*. Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1982, vol II, p. 310.
- ²¹ VIVES, Rosa. op.cit., p. 67.
- ²² CABALLERO BONALD, José. *Leer a Picasso*. Málaga: Fundación Pablo Ruiz Picasso, p. 8.
- ²³ BROWN, Jonathan, op.cit., p. 18.
- ²⁴ LUBAR, Robert. "Narrar la nación: Picasso y el mito de El Greco". En BROWN, Jonathan, op.cit, p. 48.
- ²⁵ CABANNE, Pierre, op. cit., vol II, p. 399.
- ²⁶ CROMMELYNCK, Aldo. "Recollections on printmaking with Picasso". En COHEN, Janie (ed.lit.). *Picasso inside the image*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 16.
- ²⁷ BAER, Brigitte. "Picasso burlón". En *Picasso Suite 347*. Valencia: Bancaja, 2000, p. 24.

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Suite aux catalogues de Bernhard Geiser. Berne: Kornfeld, 1989. ISBN 3-85773-023-4.

Picasso peintre-graveur, tome VI. Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre gravé et des monotypes, 1966-1968.

Suite aux catalogues de Bernhard Geiser. Berne: Kornfeld, 1994. ISBN 3-85773-031-5.

Picasso peintre-graveur. Addendum au catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre gravé et des monotypes, 1899-1972. Suite aux catalogues de Bernhard Geiser. Berne: Kornfeld, 1996. ISBN 3-85773-033-1.

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