

Women Writers of Spain

An Annotated Bio-Bibliographical Guide

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*SAAVEDRA, Anna Maria de (1905-).

Born in Vilafranca del Penedes, she has published poetry in periodicals such as Helix, L'amic de les arts, La revista, Revista de poesia.

KM

SABUCO DE NANTES BARRERA, Oliva (1562-ca. 1622).

Born in Alcaraz (Albacete), daughter of Bachiller Miguel Sabuco and his first wife, Francisca de C6zar, she was married to Acacia de Buedo at age 18, but used her two baptismal godmother's last names. The coexistence of contemporary educated women makes her case unusual in that her field was medicine. In another sense, her controversially work is unique. Nueva Filossoffa and Vera Medicina give the author as Doña Oliva Sabuco. However several male historians in this century claim that the first book was written by her father who signed with his daughter's name "to give her honor:" Allusions regarding Vera medicina center on her possible Moorish blood, which make historians' claims of the godfather's authorship--himself reputedly Moorish--more incomprehensible. Given the persecution of women, "moris os," a false physicians in sixteenth-century Spain, these arguments raise additional questions not answered to date.

Nueva filosofia de la naturaleza del hombre. Ed. Pedro Madrugal con privilegio. Madrid: 1587. Ed. Pedro Madrugal, Madrid: 1588. Ed. Joao Lobo D'Albito, Imprenta de Fructuoso Louren o de Basto, Braga: 1620. Ed. Mart3n Martfnez, incomplete edition, Madrid: 1728. Ed. Rivadeneira, Biblioteca del P. Rivadeneira, Obras escogidas de fil6sofos espa1oles, vol. LXV, selected chapters, Madrid: 1847.

Ed. Dr. Guardia, incomplete edition in French, Paris: 1886. Ed. Octavio Cuartero, Imprenta de Ricardo F3, Madrid: 1888, 437 pp.

The work is divided in four "coloquios" where three shepherds argue the merits of empirical training and self knowledge against Galenic Hippocratic and Arabic theories. In addition to a Preface stressing the value of knowledge and ethical behavior, there is a dedicatory letter to King Philip II and another to the Count of Barajas soliciting protection against plagiarists. A Glossary in Latin and in two parts titled "Dicta Brevia" recapitulates the work. It is in the dedication to King Philip where we find: "As unusual and new is this book as it is its author." Some modern historians claim that it was written by her father. The first two chapters establish the cosmological framework of human existence. The third and fourth directly deal with medical issues. More intuitive than

strictly scientific, these chapters are observations on nature, anatomy, nutrition, laws, and social structure. Of interest to scholars, particularly medical historians.

Vera medicina y vera filosofía, oculta a los antiguos, en dos diálogos. Ed. Pedro Madrugal, Madrid: 1587. 2nd ed., Pedro Madrugal, Madrid: 1588. 3rd ed., Ed. Joao Lobo D'Albito, Imp. de Fructuoso Louren o de Basto, Braga: 1620. Last known edition, Ed. Octavio Cuartero, Imp. de Ricardo Fé, Madrid: 1888.

Divided into 25 small chapters in dialogue form, it is a polemical attack on contemporary medical practices and theories. Possibly this work, included in most editions as part of the Nueva filosofía (pp. 222-344), was considered by its author as a separate one. Vera medicina enjoyed a revival in the nineteenth century that recognized its pioneering hypotheses about the physiology of the nervous system which predate Bichat, George Enst, Warton, Charles Lepois, and others. Perhaps the work's greatest contribution is the discovery, albeit not systematized, of the psychosomatic relationship between passions and emotions. It is also a striking document about the Spanish society as it was in the second half of the sixteenth century. Some male historians recently claim that this book was written by Doña Oliva's godfather because "it couldn't have been written by a woman." Of interest to scholars, feminists and historians.

PFCG

SAENZ-ALONSO, Mercedes (1917-).

From a noble family of San Sebastián, Sáenz-Alonso credits her lettered father as her mentor. Her studies in Filosofía y Letras were interrupted by the Civil War. She began as a journalist then went on to write post-war realistic novels. Best known for her book on Don Juan, she is also a professor (U. Navarra) and international lecturer (art, history, literature), literary critic, founder of radio programming, director of cultural and professional organizations (often in her home region) and newspaper correspondent. She has won prizes for her essays, criticism, short stories, and journalism.

Altas esferas. Barcelona: L. de Caralt, 279 pp.

During World War II, Loretta Sheridan, a minor character in Bajos fondos, moves through a troubled Europe with undercover agents and a Tite, making her way to high places. Embittered by the misery she suffered as a child, she betrays England and commits parricide. The author acknowledges the critical help of Cela and others in her dedication. The theme of home and family prevails. Available in a few U.S. libraries.

Bajos fondos. Barcelona: L. de Caralt, 1949, 291 pp.

Set in London before World War II, this first novel of Sáenz-Alonso takes place in a poverty-stricken neighborhood. Four very different family groups live in the same building, giving the work its labyrinthine collection of characters, some of them monstrous. Altas esferas is the companion piece to this work. As in all her novels, the theme of the family is dominant. Very hard to find.

Breve estudio de la novela española. San Sebastián: Caja de Ahorros Provincial de Guipúzcoa, 1972, 157 pp.
Critical study.