

RECASTING A *COMEDIA* BY
PEDRO CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA
PARALLEL ADAPTATIONS OF *EL MAYOR ENCANTO, AMOR*
IN BRUSSELS AND AMSTERDAM, C. 1670¹

REFUNDACIÓN DE UNA COMEDIA
DE PEDRO CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA
ADAPTACIONES PARALELAS DE *EL MAYOR ENCANTO,*
AMOR EN BRUSELAS Y ÁMSTERDAM, C. 1670

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Resumen. En este artículo, los dos adaptaciones paralelas en neerlandés de *El mayor encanto, amor* de Calderón son investigados por los cambios textuales y escenográficos. La adaptación primera es la comedia palatina *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe* del dramaturgo Claude de Griek, publicada en Bruselas en 1668. La tragedia *De toveres Circe* es la adaptación segunda. Es traducido por el dramaturgo Adriaen Bastiaensz de Leeuw en Ámsterdam en 1670. El argumento de este artículo es que los autores neerlandeses han cambiado elementos teatrales y escenográficos del original de Calderón en base a la ópera italiana *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* (representada en Bruselas en 1650 y otra vez en 1655) del compositor italiano Gioseffo Zamponi por una parte, y la tragedia horrorosa *Medea* del dramaturgo neerlandés Jan Vos por otra parte. Por eso, es argumentado que *El mayor encanto, amor* de Calderón es diseminado en Bruselas de otro modo que en Ámsterdam en relación con los efectos emocionales, las escenografías de las dos obras e ideas sobre una poética adecuada para emocionar los espectadores.

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Palabras clave. Adaptaciones neerlandesas; transmisión cultural; escenografía; *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*; *El mayor encanto, amor*; Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

Abstract. In this article, the two parallel adaptations in Dutch of Calderón's *El mayor encanto, amor* are discussed for their textual and scenographic changes. The first adaptation is the mythical play *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe* by the playwright Claude de Grieck, published in Brussels in 1668. The tragedy *De toveres Circe* is the second adaptation. It was translated by the playwright Adriaen Bastiaensz de Leeuw in Amsterdam in 1670. The main argument of this article is that the Dutch authors changed theatrical and scenographic elements of the original by Calderón on the basis of the Italian opera *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* (performed in Brussels in 1650 and another time in 1655) by the Italian composer Gioseffo Zamponi on the one hand, and the horrific tragedy *Medea* by the Dutch playwright Jan Vos on the other hand. Therefore, this article proposes that *El mayor encanto, amor* by Calderón was disseminated differently in Brussels than in Amsterdam with regards to the emotional effects, the scenography of both works and the ideas about an adequate poetics to move the spectators.

Keywords. Dutch adaptations. Cultural transfer. Scenography. *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*. *El mayor encanto, amor*. Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

The performance of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El mayor encanto, amor* on the island in the Estanque Grande of the Buen Retiro palace gardens in July 1635 had been a spectacular sight for the attendees. The whole spectacle was stage-managed by the Italian scenographer Cosimo Lotti. Calderón's *Segunda parte* (1637) mentions with good reason that the *comedia* was staged with *tramoyas*, which was one of the reasons for its enormous success². This success was also noticed in the Low Countries, where *El mayor encanto* was translated twice in parallel adaptations. The Brussels based playwright Claude de Grieck was the first to adapt Calderón's play in Flemish as *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe* ('Ulysses on Circe's Island') in 1668, where it was presumably performed at the Brussels Public Theatre. Two years later, in 1670, the Amsterdam playwright Adriaen Bastiaensz de Leeuw made a Dutch adaptation for the Amsterdam Public Theatre. De Leeuw dubbed his version *De toveres Circe* ('The Sorceress Circe').

Compared to that other famous Spanish author, Lope de Vega, Flemish and Dutch theatre visitors got to know Calderón's work relatively late in the seventeenth century, but once his plays were performed in Brussels

² See for a discussion of the original, e.g. De Armas, 2011; Neumeister, 2013; Ulla Lorenzo, 2014; De Armas, 2014.

his popularity quickly grew³. The role of individual agents —such as De Grieck and De Leeuw— proved crucial for Calderón to become popular in the Low Countries as was first discussed by Henry W. Sullivan in 1983⁴. In 1922, Jan van Praag already compared the two adaptations to the original by Calderón. He concluded that both adaptations are rather concise, but that De Leeuw's adaptation is a bit 'clearer' («un peu plus Claire») than De Grieck's⁵. According to Van Praag, De Grieck implemented the dramatic rules from French classicist theatre. The Flemish playwright turned the three *jornadas* into five acts, limited the action to twenty-four hours, fixed the location of every act to just one space, and rewrote the whole play in an alexandrine meter⁶.

I will partly distance myself from Van Praag's judgement, explaining that at times it is unjust with regards to De Grieck's adaptation. It is striking that Van Praag is not of the same opinion about the Amsterdam adaptation by De Leeuw, although this playwright did the same as De Grieck in my opinion. In general, Van Praag discusses De Leeuw's adaptation with more attention to specific details and he tries to understand the Amsterdam play in a broader perspective of contemporary poetical debates⁷. This is sadly the result of a limited focus on the theatre in Amsterdam in Dutch scholarship, whereas cities like Brussels and Antwerp were neglected for a long time. Echoing Van Praag, Sullivan is of the opinion that De Grieck made more mistakes in translation than De Leeuw. Meanwhile, he believes that De Leeuw's changes are minor⁸. Throughout this article, I will nuance the analyses of both Van Praag and Sullivan and I will rather focus on how De Grieck and De Leeuw accommodated their audience by making changes to the original, which are not the result of translation but are demonstrably the effect of emotional acculturation.

Acculturation —and specifically emotional acculturation— is already evident in how the adaptations were designated as specific genres: the original is often referred to as a 'fiesta'. De Grieck interpreted

³ See for a complete overview Van Praag, 1922a; De Keyser, 1925; De Baere, 1945; Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom, 2016; Van Marion and Vergeer, 2016; Blom and Van Marion, 2017.

⁴ Sullivan, 1983, pp. 2-5.

⁵ Van Praag 1922b, p. 14.

⁶ Van Praag, 1922b, p. 9.

⁷ Van Praag, 1922b, pp. 9-12.

⁸ Sullivan, 1983, pp. 52-54.

Calderón's play as a 'Hof-spel', a *comedia palatina*, while De Leeuw decided that it should be a "Treurspel", or roughly translated: a tragedy. This tells us already how both playwrights marketed their respective adaptations, how they anticipated the spectators' tastes, and how they regarded their own work. The designation of the Brussels adaptation as a court play and the Amsterdam adaptation as a tragedy reflects respectively De Griek's baroque dramaturgy and De Leeuw's dramatic theory based on the work of Amsterdam's theatre director Jan Vos: emotions and spectacle function differently in both plays.

Building on Van Praag and Sullivan, I will discuss in this article how Calderón's *comedia mitológica* was adapted to the theatre contexts of the Low Countries. This is already attested by how Calderón's original is a true example of theatre for the eyes; Denise M. DiPuccio wrote, for example, that «from the moment the curtain rises on *El mayor encanto, amor* the characters and audience witness numerous events that suspend intellectual logic and challenge sensorial perceptions»⁹. In both adaptations, this feature is retained but specifically adapted to the performance situations of the theatre buildings in Brussels and Amsterdam. Using information about the mise-en-scène and the scenography, I will offer a more coherent analysis of the two parallel adaptations. I will show that the introduction of the opera in Brussels in 1650 was decisive for how the play was adapted by De Griek, but also for how De Leeuw dealt with the *comedia de tramoya* henceforth.

THE ROAD FROM MADRID TO BRUSSELS

On 24 February 1650, the first opera of the Low Countries premiered at court in Brussels, during the rule of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, who was Governor of the Spanish Netherlands between 1647-1656: *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* by the composer Gioseffo Zamponi and the librettist Ascanio Amalteo. Like Calderón's *El mayor encanto*, the Italian opera took the myth of Circe and Odysseus as its plot.

Zamponi's opera was an extraordinary event. Therefore, it was not just performed in the ordinary palace theatre in the Galerie des Empeurs of the Coudenberg Palace, but in the more impressive Sala Regia. The Archduke even hired the architect Giovanni Battista Angelini

⁹ DiPuccio, 1987, p. 731.

to specifically construct a temporary theatre, complete with stage machinery. The whole spectacle was intertwined by the *Ballet du monde* by the choreographer Giovanni Battista Balbi. In 1655, the opera was performed four times more at the palace¹⁰. In the following, I argue that *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* likely influenced both adaptations in Dutch, but initially the Flemish version by De Grieck. The influence of the opera on the two adaptations is not textual, but solely scenographic in nature.

In 1990, Ángeles Cardona, Don Cruickshank, and Martin Cunningham hypothesized that Zamponi's opera has a possible link to Calderón's *El mayor encanto*. They say that the play got special attention in the Low Countries with the two parallel adaptations, which according to them must have influenced the choice of making the opera in the first place¹¹. Although I do not contest that Zamponi's opera was indeed written and performed in Brussels because of the traction that Calderón's play received in Madrid¹², I assert to the contrary that the two adaptations were, in fact, influenced by the opera. The libretto of Zamponi's opera was richly illustrated and got much recognition beyond the Habsburg Netherlands. Like Lotti's *tramoyas* in Madrid, the spectacle by Angelini for *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* drew people's attention and made the opera popular. The success of Zamponi's opera offered an extraordinary example for Flemish playwrights to implement the Italianate spectacle into their Spanish adaptations.

Zamponi's opera shows similarities with Calderón's *El mayor encanto*. Yet, a direct relation between the works is impossible to make, as Piotr Urbański said in a 2015 article¹³. If one looks at the plots of the works by Amalteo and Calderón it shows that certain aspects are similar, but that both dramatists made different choices in retelling the story of Odysseus and Circe. It is not unthinkable that De Grieck saw the opera in 1655, when the citizens of Brussels were free to attend¹⁴. Perhaps inspired by the opera, De Grieck decided to make his own version of the love story of Odysseus and Circe. That he decided on Calderón's play and did not

¹⁰ Langvik-Johannessen and Porteman, 1996, p. 284.

¹¹ Cardona, Cruickshank, and Cunningham, 1990, p. 140.

¹² See also Castillo Pascual, 2016, n. 73 (p. 258). Castillo Pascual supposes that Amalteo could have known Calderón's play, for Mercury calls Odysseus 'effeminate' (Act. III, Sc. III, p. 38). In *El mayor encanto, amor*, Achilles' spectre does the same: 'Dunque ancora si teme / Effeminato Ulisse?' (Act. III, v. 801).

¹³ Urbański, 2015, p. 126.

¹⁴ Porteman and Smits-Veldt, 2008, p. 452.

adapt the opera is understandable, for he was a playwright and not a librettist. The language could have been another obstacle. We know that De Grieck knew Spanish, but whether he was fluent enough to translate from Italian is unclear. Besides, De Grieck had proven himself to be a productive adaptor of Spanish *comedias* with five other adaptations¹⁵.

How De Grieck exactly knew about Calderón's play is a matter for conjecture, since it is unlikely that Calderón's play was also performed at court in Brussels. One explanation could be that word of a possible reprise of *El mayor encanto* in Madrid around 1668 reached De Grieck. Though, there is no mention of the event in Dutch newspapers¹⁶. He more likely adapted Calderón's original from the 1641 reprint of the *Segunda parte*. This edition was transported to the Habsburg Netherlands sometime before 1665 and circulated there in the period that De Grieck made his adaptation¹⁷. A speaker of Spanish, De Grieck was in the perfect position to translate the play¹⁸. It seems likely that via this route, Calderón's play was translated in Dutch.

THE ITALIAN INFLUENCES ON THE BRUSSELS ADAPTATION

De Grieck's play *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*—although a rather concise translation of Calderón's original—shows nevertheless influences of Zamponi's opera: the titles already demonstrate a strong relationship between the two works, for when translated into English the titles of both productions are *Ulysses on Circe's Island*; the subtitle of De

¹⁵ See also Sullivan, 1983, pp. 40–41.

¹⁶ For a 1668 reprise, see Fernández Mosquera, 2008, p. 132; Rodríguez-Gallego, 2008, p. 312. In 1635, Felipe IV had sent messages to other European courts about the performance of *El mayor encanto*, see Neumeister, 2013, p. 818. The Dutch newspaper database *Delpher* does not return any references for *El mayor encanto, amor*.

¹⁷ The provenance of a copy of the *Primera* and *Segunda parte*, now held by the Royal Library of Brussels, states that the convolute belonged to Karel van den Bosch—bishop of Bruges between 1650–1660 and of Ghent between 1660–1665. See Calderón, *Primera parte de comedias de don Pedro Calderón de la Barca; Segunda parte de las comedias de don Pedro Calderón de la Barca, 1640/1641*: 'Soc Jesu Brug dd. Illmus Carolus vanden Bosch Ep. gand 1665'.

¹⁸ According to Van Praag, De Grieck adapted his version through a French intermediate text. Yet, he acknowledges that De Grieck translated Calderón's *La gran Cenobia* directly from Spanish in 1667, one year before he delivered his adaptation of *El mayor encanto*. See Van Praag, 1922b, pp. 9–10.

Griek's play is, however, a direct reference to the Spanish source: «Geen grooter Tooverij als Liefde» ('No greater Enchantment than Love').

De Griek did not make extensive adaptations to the dialogue of Calderón's original; we can even go as far as to say that in many regards De Griek made a translation and not an adaptation. The first *jornada* of Calderón's *El mayor encanto* is, for one, almost literally copied by De Griek. Even the scene in which Ulysses attacks two trees was translated by De Griek from the *Segunda parte* of 1641 — a detail not present in other editions¹⁹. The first *jornada* of the *comedia* corresponds with the first act in the Brussels adaptation, but the second *jornada* is divided between the second and third act, while the third *jornada* is covered by the fourth and fifth act. In this, De Griek indeed seemed to follow the French classicistic model of playwriting. This is, however, not unique to De Griek's way of working: Under the influence of theatre director Jan Vos, next to every adaptation from Spanish was restructured into five acts and this should, therefore, not be considered as a solely classicist interference²⁰. Moreover, other aspects of the classicistic model were not implemented by De Griek, whatever Van Praag argued. Likewise, Sullivan stated that De Griek somewhat adheres to a unity of place, for he «has a single setting for each act, where Calderón's scenes change location continually»²¹. If we rely on the information provided in the preliminary pages, this seems indeed to be the case:

*The Stage represents the Island of Trinacria, and on its grounds, the Palace, and the garden of Circe, with part of the sea*²².

It is mostly true that De Griek does not switch between places throughout the acts. However, it is incorrect to say that the Flemish play only represents one location, since the first act takes place at a forest

¹⁹ De Griek, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, p. 4. See also Fernández Mosquera, 2008, pp. 129, 131–132.

²⁰ In the foreword to his 1667 play *Medea*, Vos had said that the Dutch plays are generally full of such amounts of confusion that the auditor, weary from listening and watching, needed time to imprint the things he had witnessed. Vos had still lauded the Spaniards for dividing their *comedias* in three acts; and yet, he said that the Dutch mind-set urged every playwright to divide their plays into five acts. Vos, *Medea*, fol. *3r.–v.

²¹ Sullivan, 1983, p. 42.

²² De Griek, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, fol. *4v. I have translated these longer block quotes to English without providing the original Dutch.

and wilderness according to the stage directions, but it becomes clear that the characters are still on board of the ship and only disembark during the first scene. Here, we actually are witness to travel within the act, something that Dutch classicistic dramaturgs from the Amsterdam society of poets *Nil Volentibus Arduum* had prohibited in their *Onderwys in de tooneel-poëzy* (c. 1678, 'Education in Dramatic Poetry'). In their opinion, every scene had to represent one location at a time and the changes of locations between the scenes should remain limited in general. De Grieck deviated from these classicistic rules by allowing for large changes in location between the different acts²³.

With regards to the stage setting, the Flemish text offers more information than the 1641 edition of *El mayor encanto*. In the Spanish of the *Segunda parte*, De Grieck could read how a clarion sounds and a ship is revealed («*tocan un clarín y descúbrese un navío*»). The Flemish playwright gives his own interpretation and makes several elements explicit in his adaptation: first, the stage directions state that the stage represents a forest and wilderness («*Het Thonneel verbeeldt Bos ende Wildernis*»—'The Stage represents Forest and Wilderness'). This is conspicuously similar to the description that can be found in Zamponi's *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*, for the first scene of the Italian opera is set at a «*Bosco, con Grotte, & Ruine, con il Mare in lontananza*» ('Forest, with grottos, and ruins, with the sea in the distance')²⁴.

The stage directions, which De Grieck added, cannot be found in the two printed editions of the *Segunda parte* from 1637 and the reprint of 1641²⁵. Only the edition by Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch from 1848 states that the stage represents «*Mar y costa de Trinacria*»²⁶; this is still a rather vague description compared to the stage setting of *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* and *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*. Though, this is understandable: the 1637 and 1641 editions of the *Segunda parte* state explicitly that *El mayor encanto* is a «fiesta que se representò à su Magestad noche de S. Juan del año de seis cientos y treinta y cinco, en el estanque del Real Palacio del buen Retiro»²⁷. With the Estanque Grande in their mind, the

²³ Nil Volentibus Arduum, 1989 [c. 1678], p. 245.

²⁴ Amalteo, *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*, p. 1.

²⁵ Cf. Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, 1637, fol. 1r; Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, 1641, fol. 1r.

²⁶ Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, 1848, p. 390.

²⁷ See Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, fol. *2r; Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, 1641, fol. *2r.

Spanish reader of the *Segunda parte* would be able to reimagine the stage setting without much effort²⁸. This was different for De Grieck, who only had the version on paper to work with. He had to draw from other sources to recreate the scene, since the island in the Estanque Grande was, furthermore, demolished before 1665. Although the island can still be seen on Pedro Teixeira's 1656 map of Madrid (fig. 1), the original performance situation did not any longer exist by the 1660s judging by an engraving of the Estanque Grande made sometime between 1665–1668 (fig. 2). In my opinion, Zamponi's opera was a good alternative source for inspiration for the stage setting of the first act: it was not only in De Grieck's mind, but also in the mind of his Flemish audience.



Fig. 1. Pedro Teixeira Albernaz and Salomon Savery, Detail of: *Tpographia de la Ville de Madrid*, 1656, 1.78 x 2.86 m, Engraving in 20 folios, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain, INVENT/23233.

²⁸ Arellano, 2000 and Ulla Lorenzo, 2015 discuss how 'space' is constructed in Calderón's plays.



Fig. 2. Louis Meunier and Nicolas Bonnart I, *Vue du grand estang du Retire*, 1665-1668, 10.5 x 22 cm, Engraving, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Spain, ER/5824 (13).

The further stage directions in the first act do correspond with what happens according to the 1641 edition of *El mayor encanto*. We can read that a trumpet sounds under the rumour of thunder and lightning. Although this is not mentioned as a stage direction in the text, it is something we learn from the dialogue in Calderón's original. The information that the Greeks are aboard a ship is omitted in Flemish, but we can quickly deduce that the spectator should have seen them aboard a ship, as the text says that they disembark²⁹.

Both the second *jornada* of Calderón's play and the second act of De Grieck's play take place at Circe's palace and the language used to describe the scene is the same: «descúbrese un palacio muy suntuoso» versus «Daer ont-dekt sich een heerelyk Paleys» ('There reveals itself a majestic palace')³⁰. As regards the third act of De Grieck's adaptation, it opens with Clarín, who is looking for Brutamonte, which is still part of the second *jornada* in the Spanish original. In the Spanish edition of 1641, the stage directions tell that Clarín enters stage («Sale Clarín»)³¹. No more information is provided than this, whereas the adaptation explicates that the stage represents a wildlife park with cypresses: «Het Thooneel verbeeldt

²⁹ De Grieck, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, pp. 1-2.

³⁰ Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, 1641, fol. 9r; De Grieck, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, p. 23.

³¹ Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, 1641, fol. 13r.

een' warande van Cypresse-boomen»³². According to the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (Dictionary of the Dutch Language), the Dutch word *warande* can also refer to a *locus amoenus*, when used in poetical language. Again, this could be taken from the Italian opera, since the third mutation of the scenes («*mutazioni di scene*») reveals that a part of the opera represented the delightful garden of Circe («*Giardino delizioso di Circe*»)»³³. A few pages later it becomes clear that the third act of De Grieck's adaptation indeed takes place at a wildlife park or pleasure ground, when the text makes clear that within the coulisse there is rumour of a hunting party³⁴. The 1637 and 1641 editions of *El mayor encanto* do not include such elaborate stage directions, and only the edition of 1848 says that the encounter between Clarín and Brutamonte plays out at a «*monte*»³⁵. Depending on the specific definition of *monte* in the *Diccionario de la lengua española*, it can mean 'mountain' («*Gran elevación natural del terreno*») or more generally a wilderness («*Tierra inculta cubierta de árboles, arbustos, matas o hierba*»). The difference between the Spanish edition and the Flemish adaptation could not be greater.

A surprising incorporation from the opera is the scenic change of Circe's palace and garden into a ruin during the fifth act: «*Den Thuyn en 't Paleys verandert in eene ruïne*» ('The Garden and the Palace change into a ruin')³⁶. This happens quite the same way as in the opera through a *changement à vue*:

At this moment, the scene of the courtyard disappeared, the scene changed into a ruin in an instant, and the sea, where he [Ulysses] spotted a series of various ships, which with favourable wind came to land at those beaches [...]

(Transl. of *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*, p. 44)

Once again, the stage directions in the Spanish original offer no indication that such a thing happened. This time, however, the dialogue spoken by Circe makes clear that, in fact, she conjures a volcano, lies waste to her own palace, and destroys her gardens. In Spanish, we read the following:

³² De Grieck, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, p. 37.

³³ Amalteo, *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*, p. 1.

³⁴ De Grieck, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, p. 37.

³⁵ Calderón, *El mayor encanto, amor*, 1848, p. 399.

³⁶ De Grieck, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, p. 75.

Estos palacios
 que mágico el arte finge,
 desvanecidos sin polvo
 sola una voz los derribe.
 Su hermosa fábrica caiga
 deshecha, rota y humilde,
 y sean páramo de nieve
 sus montes y sus jardines.
 Un Mongibelo suceda
 en su lugar, que vomite
 fuego que a la luna abrase
 entre humo que al sol eclipse.

(*El mayor encanto, amor*, 2001,
 III, vv. 1039-1050)

As such, De Grieck actually follows the original text. And yet, there is a difference. Circe says in De Grieck's adaptation that «for these gardens will appear a horrific hole, / A Mount Gibel will only spew flame and sulphur, / So the moon will burn, the sun will eclipse»³⁷. Strangely enough, this happens after the scenic change and there appears no volcano on the stage according to the text. The volcano had also been absent in the opera.

De Grieck quite literally translated the text of Calderón's *El mayor encanto*, but he gives the stage setting more colour than he could find in the Spanish, while possibly drawing on *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*. From the perspective of De Grieck, he actually added—or explicated—more places than he could find in his source. Van Praag's and Sullivan's judgement about the French classicistic nature of De Grieck's adaptation is, therefore, simply wrong.

Which reasons did De Grieck have for adding so many distinctive locations? I think that he specifically made his adaptation with the performance situation in mind. The specificity of the here discussed stage directions suggest that this is the case. Since the original text was printed in Madrid, a Spanish audience could imagine how the Estanque Grande and the island in it looked like. Meanwhile, De Grieck had to reimagine the spectacle of the original. Since *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* was performed at a theatre and not in the open air such as Calderón's original, the opera could serve as a model for the stage setting of the Flemish

³⁷ De Grieck, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, p. 75.

adaptation. In Brussels, the Italian influences made the spectacle play *El mayor encanto* a guaranteed success, while in terms of how emotions were rendered nothing changed. But what did become of the *comedia de tramoya* in the Northern Netherlands?

ALTERATIONS IN AMSTERDAM

News of the spectacle at the Brussels court was also received in the Dutch Republic, among whom notably Constantijn Huygens, secretary to the Princes of Orange³⁸. Zamponi's opera was renowned in the Northern Netherlands and likewise influenced the Amsterdam version. Yet, both adaptations differ substantially. First and foremost, the Sephardic Jew Jacob Baroces delivered a prose translation of Calderón's *El mayor encanto*, which De Leeuw put to Dutch alexandrine verses³⁹.

Like De Grieck, De Leeuw changed the stage setting of several scenes according to Zamponi's opera, but also following the example of De Grieck. As such, Sullivan is right that De Leeuw knew about De Grieck's adaptation⁴⁰. Unlike Sullivan did, parts of De Leeuw's adaptation should not be regarded as an improvement on De Grieck's play, but rather as an imitation. To make this clear, the encounter between Clarín and Brutamonte has to suffice here: We read in the Amsterdam adaptation that «*Het Tooneel verbeeld een sierlyk Bosch, daar in 't verschieft Bergen en Hoolen gezien worden*» ('The stage represents a graceful forest, where mountains and dens can be seen from afar')⁴¹. We learn again that a pleasure ground is meant here, for the forest is graceful and there are animal dens, lairs, and holes in the area. The «*giardino delizioso*» of the Italian opera fits this description to a large degree.

We can explain this, when we realize that Baroces already made his translation in 1664⁴². This prose translation had been lying around for six years when *De toveres Circe* premiered in Amsterdam. Did word of the success of De Grieck's play in Brussels reach the directors of

³⁸ As is attested by the letter Huygens sent to Zamponi. See Huygens, 2019 [28 February 1650].

³⁹ As can be read in the preface of the play. De Leeuw, *De toveres Circe*, fol. *3r. See also Jautze, Álvarez Francés, and Blom, 2016, pp. 32–35.

⁴⁰ Sullivan, 1983, pp. 53–54.

⁴¹ De Leeuw, *De toveres Circe*, p. 38.

⁴² De Leeuw, *De toveres Circe*, fol. *3r.

the Amsterdam Public Theatre? And did they, therefore, decide to let De Leeuw make Baroces' translation ready for a performance in the Amsterdam Public Theatre? To me, this seems to be the most plausible explanation.

For every similarity, there are also differences between both adaptations. These are mostly the result of the poetical ideals that De Leeuw had. De Leeuw belonged to a generation of Dutch playwrights active between 1640 and 1670, who realized that the audience wanted spectacle. In that regard, *El mayor encanto* was already the perfect play, but De Leeuw decided to emphasize the spectacle already present, following the example of the late theatre director Jan Vos, who had fully utilized the potential of Amsterdam's newly renovated Public Theatre in his horror play *Medea* (1667)⁴³. Vos wrote in the preface to his play that: «He who wants to keep the people in the theatre, has to bind their eyes to the stage by the means of appropriate and enchanting strings»⁴⁴. Perhaps for this reason, the title page of De Leeuw's *De toveres Circe* states that it was performed «Met Konstwerken en Gedierten» ('With Artifice and Animals'). Specifically, the addition of «With [...] Animals» to the title page of the Amsterdam adaptation might suggest that Baroces or De Leeuw knew about the original environment of the Buen Retiro gardens where *El mayor encanto* was performed. The gardens were inspired by the menageries of Italy, including the grottos, aviaries, and lakes, which all contained a few animals. In this form, the garden also functioned as a theatre from 1637 onwards⁴⁵. As regards the artifice, the publisher writes in the 1690 reprint of *De toveres Circe*:

It is hoped that this tragedy by the famous poet Don Pedro de Calderón, translated from Spanish, and by *A. Leeuw* artfully rearranged and rhymed, with newly made music, new ballets, etc. adorned, will please the devotees [...] The successful outcome that *Medea* of Jan Vos had some months ago has been a great stimulus to take in hand with enthusiasm a work of such elaborate action and to stage it with zeal.

(Transl. of *De toveres Circe*, 1690, fol. *2r)

⁴³ Harmsen, 2016.

⁴⁴ Vos, *Medea*, fol. *4r.

⁴⁵ Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier, 2002, pp. 46–48, 50.

While De Grieck delivered an almost literal translation of the Spanish, De Leeuw took more liberties, including the new music and new ballets mentioned explicitly above. Sullivan said that «the musical scores and choreography for the Buen Retiro performances were obviously not available for Amsterdam». This explains, according to Sullivan, their novelty⁴⁶. On the other hand, Cardona, Cruickshank, and Cunningham said that the inclusion of new and extra music in the Amsterdam version shows that the performance of Zamponi's opera in Brussels influenced De Leeuw, when he adapted the play for the Amsterdam Public Theatre⁴⁷. Both Sullivan and Cardona, Cruickshank, and Cunningham make two important observations here. Since the playwrights could not know how the original was staged in Madrid, I presume that they had to reinvent certain aspects of the performance, whether they took them from Zamponi's *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* or invented them themselves. Furthermore, what Cardona, Cruickshank, and Cunningham say for the music can also be said for the ballets in *De toveres Circe*. Likewise, the Italian opera was interlarded with a series of ballets devised by Balbi, showing the peoples of the world, which were collectively called *Ballet du monde*.

CIRCE IS ANOTHER MEDEA

Apart from the opera *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*, De Leeuw also took much inspiration from Jan Vos. Although one of the new ballets in De Leeuw's *De toveres Circe* was inspired by Balbi's *Ballet du monde*, it was equally introduced in imitation of the closing dance in Vos' *Medea*. This new ballet included by De Leeuw can be found in the closing scene of *De toveres Circe*. In the original, Calderón had chosen for a happy dénouement, which was delivered by the sea nymph Galatea. She stresses the good fortune that the sea brings and celebrates Ulysses' escape by sea:

CIRCE	Cuantos espíritus tuve presos, sujetos y humildes, inficionando los aires huyan a su centro horrible. Y yo, pues de mis encantos
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⁴⁶ Sullivan, 1983, p. 54.

⁴⁷ Cardona, Cruickshank, and Cunningham, 1990, p. 140.

a saber que es mayor vine
 el amor, pues el amor
 a quien no rindieron rinde,
 muera también, y suceda
 a mi fin la noche triste.

GALATEA

Pues seguro el mar por donde
 venturoso corre Ulises,
 tormentas ve de la tierra,
 el mar con fiestas publique
 su vencimiento; y haciendo
 regocijos y festines,
 sus tritones y sirenas
 lazos formen apacibles,
 pues fue el agua tan dichosa
 en esta noche felice
 que mereció ser teatro
 de soles, a quien humilde
 el poeta, entre otras honras,
 perdón de las faltas pide.

[...] *Acabada la comedia, al rededor del carro se hacía una danza de pescados.*

(*El mayor encanto, amor*, 2001, III, vv. 1055-1078)

In his Amsterdam adaptation, De Leeuw omitted these final verses spoken by Galatea, instead giving Circe the last word. By this, De Leeuw's intervention is more extensive than anything that De Grieck had done. For his adaptation, De Grieck decided to omit the final dance of fish in this scene, which is surprising in itself considering how similar the use of spectacle is in *El mayor encanto* and *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*. However, De Grieck replaced the dance of fish with the motto «Dat liefd' op aerde doet de grootste toovery» ('That love on earth deals the greatest enchantment'), reinventing the old rhetoricians' tradition of writing a play on a motto⁴⁸.

In the case of De Leeuw, Sullivan had said that the playwright did cut several scenes, including the opening shipwreck, but he never asks what the effect of these omissions could have been⁴⁹. When looking at the new ballet, it becomes clear that it is nothing like the «danza de

⁴⁸ De Grieck, *Ulysses in't eylandt van Circe*, p. 76.

⁴⁹ Sullivan, 1983, p. 54.

pescados» in the original. De Leeuw made a compilation out of Circe's proclamation that the previously incarcerated spirits should infect the air, that she is dying of lovesickness, and the dance of fish in the original. Yet, the ballet is not performed by fish, but as befits Circe, by ghosts. These ghosts enter the stage with torches in their hands. Except for adding a gloomy sensation to the whole spectacle, at least in two of the twelve different ballets in Balbi's *Ballet du monde* the dancers also used torches⁵⁰. After the dance, Circe and the ghosts sink under the stage into a pit of fire. The Amsterdam adaptation reads:

CIRCE

Appear, You Ghosts, who have been incarcerated together,
So that we depart for the Depths of Misery.

*Eight ghosts come from beneath, above, and aside,
With torches in both hands, and they surround Circe.*

That not even the black Night denies me a funeral,
While the pale Death prepares me a grave,
In this vortex, which vomits fire and flames,
And drags us simultaneously to the deepest Caverns;
Because dying I understand the truthful saying:

No bigger Enchantment than the Enchantment of Love.

*Immediately when Circe has spoken the last verse, a ballet is performed around her
by the ghosts, which after they have finished it, sink down into a pit of fire together
with Circe.*

(Transl. of *De toveres Circe*, pp. 87-88)

The importance of De Leeuw's appropriation is immediately clear if we compare *De toveres Circe* with Vos' *Medea*. As discussed previously, De Leeuw even refers to *Medea* in his introduction to *De toveres Circe*. In *Medea*, we come across another dance of ghosts, which Medea had summoned to impress Charon, the guard of the Underworld. The comparison is uncanny. I suspect that De Leeuw 'copied' the dance from *Medea* and replaced the dance of fish with it in *De toveres Circe*. This is not strange as Circe and Medea are often considered to have similar

⁵⁰ See Amalteo, *Ulisse all'isola di Circe*.

destructive magical powers, for Circe was also Medea's aunt. Furthermore, the similarities between both witches is attested by Frederick A. de Armas, when he compares *El mayor encanto* with *Los tres mayores prodigios*—the «fiesta» performed at the Buen Retiro the year after *El mayor encanto* in 1636. In this *comedia*, Medea is also one of the main characters. De Armas asserts that both sorceresses try to control nature with their magic, which only results in the destruction of both lands respectively⁵¹.

De Leeuw's explicit comparison between Circe and Medea could be regarded in the same way. In his *Medea*, Vos had already brought out Medea's worst character traits, making her a ruthless and revengeful sorceress, more evil than she had ever been presented before by Sophocles and Seneca, who by comparison had only made her an angry shrew⁵². Following Vos, De Leeuw emphasizes the same character traits in Circe as in Medea, after Ulysses was scared into leaving Circe's island by the ghost of Achilles. And thus, she is more arrogant than Calderón's Circe in her reply to Galatea, when she comes to sooth the seas in order for Ulysses to escape:

GALATEA	Sí habrá; y quien serene el mar manso, quieto y apacible, le dé paso en sus esferas.
CIRCE	¿Quién eres tú, que saliste desas humildes alcobas en triunfal carro sublime a serenar de mis iras hoy la cólera apacible? (<i>El mayor encanto, amor</i> , 2001, III, vv. 989-996)

GALATEA	She is already there who tames the Tempestuous billows, and puts down the storm.
CIRCE	Who are you, who seated in a chariot, Dares to approach me? And, thus, arrogantly and boldly Soothes the dismayed billows? Resists me? Obstructs the complete design of my wrath? (Transl. of <i>De toveres Circe</i> , p. 85)

⁵¹ De Armas, 2016, p. 256.

⁵² Harmsen, 2016. See also Castillo Pascual, 2016, p. 82, who asserts that Ovid had similarly turned Circe in a more evil sorceress in his *Metamorphoses* than she had been before in Homer's *Odyssey*.

After Galatea's response, Circe destroys her own island in a sudden outburst. For the scenography of this destruction, De Leeuw might have taken inspiration from Vos' *Medea* as well, because there Medea also destroys her island, which makes place for a pit of fire and flames, comparable to the one we find in *De toveres Circe*. The Chorus of Corinthian Women describes the destructions in detail:

The court that, a minute ago, was still beautiful,
With high walls and a deep moat,
Has now drowned in fire and flames.

(Transl. of *Medea*, p. 62)

In *De toveres Circe*, a similar spectacle is described as per the words of Circe herself:

May my beautiful Gardens of Delight,
Which were created by my Magic,
Vanish altogether in thin air; and may the fires of hell
Vomit Fire and Flame, such as the Etna does.

(Transl. of *De toveres Circe*, p. 86)

Circe's ladies do not know what is happening to them when witnessing these destructions, but they are more scared of their queen than their Spanish counterparts. Compared to the Spanish, De Leeuw embellishes what is happening with Circe's courtiers, stressing how Circe has lost all her reasonable qualities and all of her former kindness. In their responses to the destruction, the people of Circe's court demonstrate that all that is left of the sorceress-queen in the Dutch is a destructive, ruthless, and wrathful woman:

ASTREA	¡Qué confusión tan notable!
LIBIA	¡Oh, qué asombro tan terrible!
FLÉRIDA	¡Huye, Libia!
LIBIA	¡Huye, Astrea!
ASTREA	¿Dónde estar podemos libres?

(*El mayor encanto, amor*, 2001, III, vv. 1051-1054)

ASTREA Oh Gods! See how all things lose their splendour!
 LYBIA What is this for a wondrous event?
 FLORINDE What a chaos among us!
 ARSIDAS What a dreadful vortex!
 LYCIDAS What hellish devastations!
 FLORINDE We should flee this danger.
 LYBIA Astrea, flee.
 ASTREA Flee, Thisbe,
 THISBE Flee, Dianira.
 DIANIRA Flee, Syrena.
 SYRENA Flee, Clorisbe.
 CLORISBE Come then, Florinde, flee.
 FLORINDE Flee, Lycidas, come quickly.
 LYCIDAS Prince, Arsidas, be fleeing.
 ARSIDAS I am following you, Prince Lycidas.
 (Transl. of *De toveres Circe*, p. 87)

This repeated use of the word *flee* only aggravates the situation in contrast to the Spanish; in the Dutch, the destruction of Circe's island is at least twice as long and twice as terrifying it seems. After her display of power, Circe sinks down into a comparable pit of fire and flames, like the palace did in Vos' *Medea*. This event was also represented in a print to an edition of *De toveres Circe*.

In doing this, De Leeuw appropriated Calderón's *El mayor encanto* to fit the Dutch theatre environment and catered his adaptation to his audience. Emotionally speaking, De Leeuw's horrific conclusion leaves the spectator in complete awe. But from the perspective of the dominant literary discourse in the Dutch Republic at that moment, De Leeuw's dance of ghosts is a concession to Vos' preference for horrific and spectacular scenes.



Fig. 3. Coloured frontispiece by Adriaan Schoonebeek in a copy of Adriaen Bastiaenz de Leeuw's *De toveres Circe* (1670).
Leiden University Libraries, 1092 G 1 3.

CONCLUSION

Calderón's *El mayor encanto* offers an excellent example of how one text was disseminated differently in both Brussels and Amsterdam. In Brussels, De Grieck had a baroque aesthetics and, thus, his adaptation *Ulysses in't Eylandt van Circe* leaves the essentially baroque emotions intact. His adaptation is rather a translation than anything else, as he follows Calderón's original closely. Yet, he clarified several aspects of the stage setting for performance in the Brussels theatre. For this, he looked at the Italian opera *Ulisse all'isola di Circe* and changed the stage setting accordingly.

In Amsterdam, De Leeuw did roughly the same, but also followed the example of theatre director Jan Vos. We see that De Leeuw alters the ending scene more extensively in the case of *De toveres Circe*. In Dutch, *El mayor encanto* becomes a Spanish play in the vision of Vos' *Medea*. One thing is, however, very clear: the theme that love is the greatest enchantment piqued the interest of both the spectators in Brussels and Amsterdam. The fact that the play was staged with as much spectacle as possible meant that *El mayor encanto, amor* could become a box-office success in Brussels and Amsterdam.

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