Two decades ago Dorothy Severin (1978-79 [1989]) proposed that La Celestina’s contemporary readers understood it as a funny book—“a comic work with a tragic ending” (276)—, but that readers today often miss this humor. She classified four levels of humor—the verbal, parodic, dramatic, and satirical, specifying the first as one of the most important facets of the work, making a distinction between what she deemed as surprisingly few verbal obscenities versus comic erotic scenes, citing in the first category the examples of Celestina’s scabrous joke about Pármeno’s cola de alacrán and Calisto’s clumsy rejoinder to Melibea’s complaint that his desonestas manos are tearing at her clothes: Señora, el que quiere comer el ave, quita primero las plumas (this last studied by Alan Deyermond [1985]).1 María Eugenia Lacarra (1990: 45, 146; 1995: xii-xiii) reaffirmed that it is in particular the first, the simples chistes groseros which are today ignored by critics, who are more interested in parody and irony. Like Severin, she distinguished the chistes fáciles from what she called el lenguaje de doble lectura (see also her discussion in Lacarra 1995, 2000). Louise Fothergill-Payne (1993: 31, 36) also returned to the concept of La Celestina “as a funny book”, offering a Bakhtinian reading, buttressed by Freudian joke analysis, classifying the work in Bakhtin’s category of “joyeuse litterature recreative des écoliers,” or, in more contemporary terms, as the laughter of solidarity of the Monthly Python “wink, wink, [...] say no more,” variety.2 In a seminal study on humor E. Michael Gerli (1995: 26) pointed out that although earlier studies saw laughter as something residing only in the reader, in fact, the laughter of the characters themselves serves as a paralinguistic gloss to signal the presence of a double-voiced or heteroglossic discourse of desire in the text.

At the International Congress in Commemoration of the Quincentennial Anniversary of La Celestina, held in New York City in 1999 (Vasvari 2005), I presented what I proposed as the first installment of a “vocabu(r)lario” of the Celestina, glossing two equivocal terms, la cola de alacrán and landrecillo, from the well-known scene of the seduction of Pármeno by Celestina in the Primer Auto. Here, almost a decade later, on the occasion of Dorothy Severin’s retirement from the Gilmour Chair of Spanish at Liverpool, I offer these additional

1 Carmelo Gariano (1975) had also categorized verbal humor into direct vulgarities, such as vieja puta, meant to be insulting rather than humorous, versus what he dubbed obscene juego conceptista, such as the cola de alacrán joke.

2 See Fothergill-Payne for a review of important earlier scholarship on humor in the work, such as that of Peter E. Russell, Alan Deyermond, and June Hall Martin.
notes as glosses on the work’s léxico equivoco. Linguistically, equivocal humor might be defined as a sort of verbal and psychological short circuit, which allows —through the complicity between the text and those members of the audience with adequate linguistic competence— to economize by what linguistics call relexicalization, uniting two ideas in a single word, thus creating linguistic ambiguity, as, for example, typically in the punch line of a dirty riddle. Much verbal humor is obscene, a kind of agonistic verbal game of verbal striptease, with emphasis on a simultaneous hiding and uncovering, but always meant ultimately to reveal rather than to conceal. Such inherently teasing and seductive linguistic performance cannot occur in a linguistic vacuum but is a complex sociolinguistic and socio-cultural structure with attention to audience, setting and context. Gerli’s study focusing on the laughter of the characters gives us guidance precisely in what contemporary audience with linguistic competence found funny.

In the context of obscene humor it is useful to recall Keith Whinnom’s (1967) Spanish Literary Historiography: Three Forms of Distortion, where he pointed out that it is an anachronism, first, to consider “Spanish literature” before the XVI century as a separate native tradition, second, to study the supposedly serious Golden Age tragedies instead of the far more numerous comedies, and, third, but more likely really a subdivision of the second distortion, to disregard obscenity and pornography, which is rampant in many medieval and premodern texts, such as La Celestina and Cancionero love poetry. He called these fallacies “distortion of history by literary appreciation” (23), for which he blamed the prudishness of both modern Spanish editors and critics and that of foreign Hispanists. Ignacio Díez Fernández (2000: 32-34; cf. also Montero Cartells 2000) adds that while every Spaniard knows from oral tradition that certain passages in Celestina are erotic, there are nevertheless a dearth of studies on the subject, for which he blames the tradition of Francoist repression and a too strict religiosity. While I am in accord with these judgments, I would add that the scholarly ignorance of verbal humor is not due merely to prudery, but also because most obscenities circulate in oral culture, their textualization in works like the Libro de Buen Amor or La Celestina may slip by today unrecognized, particularly when in the intervening centuries they may have lost their connotative value, at least in the linguistic milieu in which most scholars live. Here Whinnom’s first distortion of literary historiography comes into play, the fallacy of studying medieval literatures along national lines, demonstrating that all three distortions, are in fact, inseparable. As I have tried to show in my work on the Libro de buen amor, much of the equivocal vocabulary of medieval texts can only be recuperated with the comparative tools of a folklore-oriented comparative philology, which seeks analogues in other languages and in visual culture, and where, pace some of my recalcitrant colleagues, it is not only not anachronistic but imperative to also consider examples later than the text being studied. I have utilized this methodology, which I call a linguistic archeology, in my earlier vocabu(r)lario

1 Márquez Villanueva (2005: 154-55, esp. n. 37) cites some dozen studies on eroticism in the Celestina, from which it is evident that except for an occasional piece, the majority of the work has been done by scholars in the Anglophone world, whether native born, or, like himself and Eukene Lacarra, having spent the major part of their academic career in such a milieu.
study, where I also included several visual examples. Here I have space to discuss only Calisto’s feigned dolor de muelas in Act IV.

There exist several studies on dolor de muelas, usually in the context of the equally equivocal cordón, with which it is paired in same episode. While I will follow the lead of these studies, I shall also provide folkloric and literary evidence on the continuation of this and related equivocal term in Spanish and in other languages. My aim is to illustrate that La Celestina’s double entendres are so widespread geographically, chronologically, and across discourses that it becomes impossible to consider them anything as fanciful as textual juegos conceptistas, as claimed by Gariano. Although they can also be studied as literary wordplay, their roots are in pan-european folk culture, and as Michele De Fillipis (1998: 13) documented, their most pronounced characteristic is obscenity. Any speaker with native linguistic competence would recognize such verbal play, not the least a twenty-year old woman like Melibea—who under the tutelage of her streetwise maid is given to singing dirty ditties at midnight (whose lexicon is explicated by Montero Cartelle 2000:124).

M. Dominica Legge (1950) was the first to discuss toothaches in medieval literature, citing a number of examples from French literature, where they are compared the pangs of love, including erotic insomnia. Legge concluded in positivistic fashion that in a time when barbers extracted teeth with pincers and without anesthesia such a comparison was realistic, and that therefore the Middle Ages would not have seen the incongruity than we do in the association of toothache and courtly love.

George Shipley (1975: 326-328) judged that Melibea was initially innocent, reacting as a “correct maiden” should to Celestina’s proposal but that then she was steered into complicity by the linguistic ruse of the toothache, which allowed the two speakers to replace an indecorous and offensive line of communication by the fictious but respectable substitute. Now, using dolor de muelas (and cordón) in this way is precisely the linguistic definition of a euphemism: an alternate to a dispreferred term in order to avoid possible loss of face for the speaker and/or the listener (Allen & Burridge 1991: 26-27). However, as I shall try to show in the second part of this paper, the hilarity of the episode is precisely that the supposed euphemistic dolor de muelas is actually far more obscene in folk tradition than what it replaces, so that it is really a dysphemism, as are terms like cola de alacrán. That’s what makes them funny, as is often signaled by the laughter of the characters in the text. Here, however, both Celestina and Melibea pretend they are speaking euphemistically and it is the audience who laughs to hear that incongruous language in the mouth of a pseudo-innocent girl. They understand, as Lacarra (2000: 129) has said: “Melibea muestra conocer bien el léxico erótico, descodifica las palabras de Celestina y subraya la intención que encubren”.

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4 See also my “Fowl Play,” whose analysis of the verbal and visual double entendre of cock across European languages also demonstrates this methodology. Although I do not mention La Celestina there, that pun is also applicable to Celestina calling Pármeno galillo, more precisely, un putillo, gallillo, barbiponiente... que en tres noches no se le demude la cresta. (VII).
5 The dolor de muelas game is, in fact, inseparable from analysis of cordón, hilado, and related terms, on which see especially the Index of Euphemisms and Metaphors in Fontes (2000: 313-15), which references his series of earlier studies and those by others. See also Márquez Villanueva (2005: n. 7, 11).
Geoffrey West (1979), following on Shipley’s work, also proposed that since the symptoms of Calisto’s feigned toothache were synonymous with those of love sickness, they were a handy linguistic subterfuge for Celestina in persuading Melibea to accede to Calisto’s request for her girdle. West posed again the linguistically relevant question if Rojas and his readers would have been aware of the double meaning of the toothache ruse, and, second, if readers were meant to understand that Melibea was so naive that she would have been deceived by Celestina’s verbal subterfuge, or if, in fact, she, too, was in on the game. One of West’s examples attesting to the equivocal use of ‘toothache’ from a seventeenth-century villancico, where two women plan a threesome with the barbero while their husbands are away:

Pues llamemos al barbero
Que nos saque sendas muelas,
Y arrímalle las espuelas
Si no anduviere ligero.

If we look at the full text (Alzieu 1983, no. 92) we can see that, other words also lends themselves to obscene understanding, such as espuela ‘penis’, as well as andar ‘to be in the act of copulating’. At beginning of the poem one of the woman declares that she has sent her husband off to Cervera, a bit of folkloric geography that plays on that town’s homonymic association with ciervo and hence suggests her husband’s cuckolding. Continuing the same wordplay, her companion adds that her husband will bring back a ciervo de montería, to which the first woman counters that hers has been instructed to bring her a madera (on the phallic associations of which see Vasvari 1997) to make calzadores, where the shoe trees to be fitted into shoes allude to the still current expression calzar a una mujer, suggesting that the impotent husband, unlike the barber would need a prosthetic device to service her. Such a deeper folkloric reading of the text cited by West shows that, he is too cautious in concluding that doubts remain concerning Melibea’s awareness of the dolor de muelas subterfuge. As West himself illustrates, a girl like her could not have been ignorant of the suggestiveness of cordón, the other key equivocal term of the episode, because of the suggestiveness of the well-known popular refrain, Por mi mal me lo tomaste, caballero, el mi cordón, but in which case, however, she would also have been familiar with the equally widespread connotations of dolor de muelas. In a similar vein to West, Joaquín Casalduero (1986: 79) in a note suggested that

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6 On espuela compare LBA 612c and 1,085d, and recall also el capón accused in rhyme of having chiquito el espolón. Andar, like llegar describe stages of the sex act, as in another poem (Alzieu 1983: no. 90, 25-6), which combines llegar with sacar una muela, in a scene where a man addresses his lover, who is progressing faster than he is:

sacarte puedes tres muelas
mientras que a Francia llegamos

In Alzieu (172, no. 9) see also hacer(se) una sangría as synonym for sacarse una muela.

7 Handy (1983: 17-27, esp. 16) offers further insights on the ‘rhetorical and psychological defloration of Melibea,’ but no corroborative linguistic evidence outside of the text. Herrero (1986) does not add further documentation on ‘toothache’ to that of West. Fontes (1998: 16), on the other hand, explicates, with examples from Portuguese tradition on folkloric erotic connotations of barbers, whose professional activities included serving as doctor and dentist, visiting patients in bed, wielding a phallic knife, all potential overdetermined semantic fields for erotic lexicalization. Botta (1994: 57-58) relates muelas, along with the hilar semantic field of equivocal terms, to magical practices, at the same time as a euphemism for the sex act, signifying frustrated erotic desire, and quitar un diente o sacarse una muela as ‘goce sexual’, but also without examples.
Melibea should have been suspicious of Calisto’s feigned dolor de muelas, because she would have been expected to be familiar with still another proverb, which he cites in Italian: dolere a qualcuno qualche dente meaning to feel intense desire, usually not reciprocated. Ángel Gómez Moreno and Teresa Jiménez Calvente (1995) are critical of West for accepting the interpretation, originally adduced by Legge, that the relationship between love and toothache is that both cause intense pain, cites still another still living popular proverb relating to toothaches: mal de muelas, mal de amores.

Also useful in the context of equivocal toothaches is an article by David Kunzle (1989: 29-30) on the art of pulling teeth in the XVII and XIX centuries, which has not been cited in Celestina scholarship. He discusses how toothache has always been considered as a sign of moral corruption, earlier for sexual guilt, and how even today medical science warns that decay results from excessive indulgence in sweets. It was still common in XVII century German illustrated “sociology” of trades and professions, to read under the Dentist epigraph: “sin will not come out without pain and suffering” and “evil lust clings like a tooth in the vein-root and causes pain in the conscience. Out wit it or the pain will grow flesh must be crucified for the heart to rest in peace.” The popular preacher Abraham sancta Clara using the same engraving said “we unfortunate humans/ we all have toothache and suffer ever and always from teeth with which Adam bit the forbidden apple. Kunzle also discuss the inordinate role of teeth-pulling in art, greater than that of any other operation, with the theme reaching status of subgenre in XVII Netherlands art. However, neither he nor the website containing a number of illustrations (http://www.fisterra.com/human/3arte/pintura/temas/sacamuelas/sacamuelas/asp) deal with the potential erotic implications of, as the website states under one illustration, “el paciente que abre desmesuradamente su boca y extiende su brazo en un gesto inequívoco de dolor insoportable.”

After the foregoing overv iew of studies on the humorous equivocal vocabu(l)rio of the Celestina in general and on the dolor de muelas specifically, in this second half of my study I will cite corroborative evidence for the widespread erotic relexicalization of the semantic field of ‘tooth,’ ‘toothache’ and and ‘toothlessness’ from texts earlier than the Celestina through twentieth-century xerox-lore.

Note another different, although related erotic use of diente/dentera, such as when Celestina, voyeuristically envious of Pármeno and Areusa’s foreplay, says voyme, que me hazes dentera en besar y retocar, or when Lucrecia says the same thing in observing Calisto and Melibea (on female voyeurism, see Gerli 2003). In this context the association is between hunger and sexual excitement, akin to the burlesque beggar’s lament (in Alzieu 96.11) about el pobre a diente/ de carne cruda y caliente who asks for alms indiscriminantly from doncellas, casadas, viudas, and beatas caritativas, to give shelter to his niño alegre y juguetón who will sweep out every rincón.

In a Boccaccio story (Decameron VII 9), better known as the pear tree story because a young wife dupes her husband into believing that a tree in their garden has the magical qualities that from its perch one only imagines what one sees. With this ruse she can openly have sex with her lover literally in front of her credulous husband. However, preliminary to the
actual adultery she performs a bogus dental operation on him. Having convincing him that his mouth stinks because he has a rotten tooth, she painfully pulls out one of his good tooth, substituting for it a rotten one she had hidden in her hand. Tooth pulling as a pantomime of sex is repeated in many later texts following Boccaccio, as, for example in the story a prostitute gets her client to pull out a tooth to give her a memento. When he tries to get it back, he finds she has a whole bag filled with client’s teeth, and she will tell him contemptuously: “I don’t know which one is yours, so you’ll have to pick it out yourself” (Rotunda 1942: J2331.2).

The sixteenth-century French carnivalesque hagiography *Sermon Joyeux de Saint Jambon et de Sainte Andouille* ‘Saint tripe sausage/penis’ and ‘Saint Ham/Buttocks’ (Koopmans 1984: 211ff.), recounts in two parts the life, miracles, martyrdom, and canonization of two carnivalesque saints. The two came to a bad end, as, not unlike their alimentary relatives *doña Cecina con el Tocino* (LBA S1125-4), they were killed, one by being salted, the other hung, after which they are sold in the marketplace. *Andouille* undergoes further multiple martyrdom by being boiled, roasted on coals, cut up into pieces, and stuffed into the mouths of women, who later complained of “toothache”, and subsequently developed a more serious “stomachache”.

Antonio Salas Barbadillo in his burlesque *Novela dialogada, La hija de Celestina* (1612) gives Celestina three long monologues where she speaks literally *ex cathedra*. In the second lesson she explains what characteristics are best for lovers, explaining parodically her preference for old lovers over younger ones, defending her choice in the following terms (Cao 1992: 52):

Si están sin dientes me agrada,  
Porque en cualquier pendencia  
Mal pueden mostrar los dientes  
Quien tiene la boca yerma...  
Nada a la murmuración  
Hombres semejantes pecan,  
Que mal hablará entre dientes  
Quien apenas tiene muelas

The main verbal game in the foregoing quote is between the metaphorical meanings of *mostrar los dientes* and *hablar entre dientes*, but the sexual play enters also in that it is precisely ‘toothless’ old men who are powerless to do these things, because they are impotent.  

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8 Toothlessness can of course just be a sign of old age but even in women it is associated with their unseemly libidousness, as in the fifteenth century poem about the old woman suffering from erotic insomnia (West 1979:7):

Sospira como moçuela,  
Dice que amor le desvela;  
Non tiene diente ni muela  
Rumia al comer como oveja

Let us recall that Celestina is of course also toothless, but, unlike the *vieja* above, she can still ‘eat’. How she achieveddo this is clarified in a story by Giovanni Sercambi about a widow who without teeth can swallow a raw ‘sausage’ in one gulp, a sausage like *Sainte Andouille*, above (Rossi 1974: II, 59-60):

Ella in un boccone [la salsiccia]  
Cruda nella bocca senza denti si mettea
the same joke in the old men who pine for sex in the German proverbs *Der muss kein Nüsse knachen, der hoble Zähne hat* ‘he who has hollow teeth should not crack nuts’ and *Taube Nuss und bohler Zahn, Junges Weib und alter Mann* ‘silent nut and hollow tooth, young wife and old man’ (Aigremont 1908: 91; on ‘cracking nuts’ as copulation see Vasvari 2008b). This kind of toothlessness was still alive in New York joke collected in 1937 of the elderly Jewish gentleman who says to his wife in bed on their golden wedding anniversary, “Becky, hand me my teeth out of that glass – I want to bite you!” (Legman 1975: 527).

In contrast to ‘toothless’ old men, young men in German Carnival plays have names such as the adolescent *Pilzan* ‘foal’s (first) tooth’ and the more mature *Eberzahn* ‘wild boar tooth’. These examples illustrate that the *dolor de muelas*, above and beyond the associations with lovesickness, gets its inescapable obscene connotations because teeth, like bony and erect fingers, are a common corporal metonymy for the male organ. The obvious reason is the fascination with the ‘bone on’ qualities of the penis, which, nevertheless, doesn’t possess a bone. This is also why the penis bone of the very few animals (such as the stone marten) sporting these are considered good-luck charms and aphrodisiacs, as are the horns of various real and imaginary animals. Compare also *young bones* ‘youth’ in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, *Eng. Boner* / bone on, *It. Aver ossi in panza* ‘have an erection’ (Cantagalli). The phallic associations of teeth is also the like reason for the custom in many cultures, both primitive and in twenty-first century urban ghettos, of ablating, filing, ornamenting the teeth, and wearing decorative gold caps.

In a British jestbook (Hazlitt 1864: 48; Zall 1963: no. 29) we have a dialogue between a gentleman and a lady about his toothache, not so different from the pseudo-euphemistic interchange between Celestina and Melibea, but here there can be no doubt that lady is herself fully in command of this double discourse:

A gentleman and a gentlewoman sat together talking—which gentleman had great pain in one of his teeth, and happens to say to the gentlewoman thus: “I wis [‘know’], mistress, I have a tooth in my head which grieveth me very sore, wherefore I would it were in your tail.” She, hearing him saying so, answered thus: “In good faith, sir, if your tooth were in my tail, it could do but little good—but if there be anything in my tail that can do your tooth good, I would it were in your tooth.” By this, ye may see that a woman’s answer is seldom to seek.

In a Venetian song it is not the man, but as he explains, his beloved who invents the ‘toothache’ rose to get him into bed (Corso 1914: 172):

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9 Anthony Cárdenas (1986: 33) mentioned the possible equivalence of molar-phallus in the *Celestina* and in the *Corbacho* but without giving details.

10 The fascination with such ‘horniness’ shows deep-seated sexual anxieties about personal deficiency and is thus pervasive in male folklore, as in the following example collected in the twentieth century; a doctor excuses himself for being late to a banquet by saying that he had to amputate a man’s penis. “Did you have to saw through the bone?” the hostess interrupts, whereupon everyone gets up and bows to her husband. A World War II variant of the story has a Duchess visiting a veteran’s hospital asking the same question of a wounded soldier, who answers, “My compliments to the Duke” (I long ago acquired these tales from the aptly titled, *Grim Hairy Tales* (1966: 8) but which I am now unable to retrieve.
La mia morose per farme despeto
la se despoggia e la se ne va in letto,
e la fa finta che ghe dola un dente
e pain bel belo la se mi tira arento.

(‘My beloved gets undressed, and to anger me, goes to bed and pretends to have a toothache, and then very nicely pulls me to her and pulls me inside (her).

In a Galician folksong we again have women’s toothaches, here, in addition, and paired with a cintura, serving the same function as Melibea’s cordón (Ballesteros I, 35.9):

As mulleres que son boas
Dios lles dé dolor de moas
Ortigas pol-a cintura

But, we may ask, why is the cintura made of the seemingly improbable ortigas? I can offer no written documentation but can attest from my own Hungarian culture I recall when one of my female friends was very offended when a male guest at a party made jokes about young girls kneeling down to piss in the woods and being ‘stung’ by nettles. Manuel Costa Fontas (personal communication) informs me that in Portuguese, as well, ortigas still have a sexual suggestiveness.

In a Flemish story (Anonymous 1901: no. 6) still another woman keeps on complaining of a toothache. Her husband suggests that she get it pulled out by the doctor but she claims that only the curé can perform the operation. The husband agrees but sends their son to spy on the couple from a treetop. An hour later the boy returns with the news that the cleric has pulled a very long tooth from the mother’s trou, illustrating once again the in-out equivalence of carnivalesque dentistry. Another version of this story is in Samaniego’s El jardín de Venus, here with the more conventional barbero, and with the added pornographic detail that the voyeuristic chico is visually recapitulating the sex act by looking through the agujero de la llave (‘el Raigón”, no. 89).11

Mientras ausente estaba
Un pobre labrador de su alquería,
Su mujer padecía
Dolor de muelas. Esto lo causaba
Un raigón que, metido
En la encía, tenía carcomido.
En el lugar hacía de barbero
un mancebo maulero
a quien ella quería,

11 In the text the barber will also be referred to as rapahbarbas, which in toszy-turvy carnivalesque logic also suggest his talent for ‘trimming’ that lower body barba featured in the Curban pirepe: vieja, muéstrame la de Fidel! (Dundes & Suárez Oropeza 1987: 131). Since his is also a mancebo maulero it is obvious that his only skills reside in his ‘equipment,’ as a XVI century carnival song by Lorenzo de Medici, “La canzone de cavadenti” describes their ferri duri e grossi.
por lo cual mandó a un chico que tenía
le buscase y dijese
que a sacarla un raigón luego viniese.
El rapabarbas, como no era payo,
Vino con el recado como un rayo,
Y para hacer la cura
Se encerró con la moza. ¡Que diablura!...
Digo esto porque nunca se sabría
Lo que el barbero con la moza hacía
A no ser por el chico marrullero,
Que curioso atisbo en el agujero
De la llave la diestra sacadura
Del raigón. Repitamos:¡Qué diablura!
La operación quirúrgica acabóse
Y el barbero marchóse
Dejando a la paciente mejorada,
Mas del tirón bastante estropeada.

Finally, for our climax example, let us look at a joke in the form of an extended riddle, collected in three version (in Quito in 1965, with English versions in World War II and in Indiana in 1970) which describes what seems like the sex act but is actually a dentist taking out a molar from a girl’s mouth (Dundes & Pagter 1987: 226-7). I will quote the scene in its entirety because it illustrates beautifully how the suggestiveness to readers of La Celestina of the dolor de muelas episodes, from the equivocation of love sickness or toothache keeping the girl awake, to her pseudo-innocent lamentation and initial resistance, her “opening wide”, and, when it was over, immediately wanting more:

Con un suspiro se recostó ella, y, los músculos de su bien formado cuerpo, se aflojaron. Por un instante, se resistió a él; pero, deseando de todo corazón que no hiciera caso de sus protestas... Eso que le había quitado el sueño tantas noches era lo que ella quería; pero, ahora había llegado el momento y tenía miedo. Ciertó que él era un hombre con mucha experiencia, mas era la primera vez solos en esa piecita, ella se sintió nerviosa; él le ofreció no lastimarla. Le puso mano sobre aquel lugar que ella escondía mientras trataba de convencerla. Le quitó la mano, pero, él se la volvió a poner; y, esta vez, apretando. Ella dirigió los ojos, desmesuradamente abiertos, hacia la cosa que él tenía en la otra mano; sus protestas se acentuaron, más todavía cuando él estuvo cerca sintiendo su aliento junto a su boca... la colmó de palabras dulces al oído. Le dijo: “que era muy práctico y que no tuviera miedo, que no le iba a doler nada...” convencida, dejó que el maniobrara, aflojó los músculos y abrió bien para dar cabida a aquello... Su cuerpecito frágil se estremecía; quería luchar, pero sus fuerzas la abandonaban... Sintió correr algo caliente... SANGRE... SANGRE. Una emoción viva la envolvió, entonces gritó: No, por favor...ahora no aguanto más... No aguanto más. AH, AY, NO ME LA SAQUE, SE LO RUEGO...

As Eukene Lacarra pointed out (1989: 19) what Celestina so crudely said about all women proved absolutely true for Melibea:
Coxquillosillas son todas; mas despues que una vez consienten la silla en el enves del lomo, nunca querrían holgar... muertas si; cansadas no. Si de noche caminan, nunca querrían que amaneciese.

We could also add here Celestina’s later words to Sempronio about women who cautivanse del primer abrazo, ruegan a quien rogó. But then if Celestina’s prognostications prove to be “true” it is only because it articulates a collectively held fantasy on the nature of women. This is the way patriarchal culture insists on ever [re]telling the story, and what it insists on finding funny in all this hasn’t changed in five centuries. And if the fantasy is that all women want and need sexual intercourse then folklore requires it to be even more so for young unmarried women who supposedly suffer from what the Elizabethans called the “green sickness”. Virginity, as the saying goes, is curable (Frantz 1989: 57).

Now it could be argued that in the foregoing examples, it is not only men but as often females who are having teeth extracted. It is certainly relevant, as Freud suggested that pulling teeth can represent a symbolic form of castration (cited in Dundes 198a: 180; see also Legman 1975: 519, 521 on neurotic fantasies of the barber or doctor as castrator), which certainly makes sense for the cuckolded husband in the Boccaccio story, and might also further highlight Calisto’s passivity. However, simultaneously there is also another imagery at work here, that of a woman’s open mouth in public, which is a sign for female transgression. What is being graphically being played out here is that these women are presenting indiscriminantly one or the other of their wide open viscous oral cavities for penetratation. The equivalence of the upper and lower buccal cavities, both large and rimmed by dark labia, one with teeth and the other without (if not for the vagina dentate), is also illustrated in an obscene riddle in Strapapola, whose official answer is “the pot” (Toscan 1981: 111):

Me vergogno di dir qual nome io m’abbia
E sono aspro al toccar, rozza al vedere;
Gran bocca ho senza denti, ho grosso labia,
Negra d’intorno...

While in a tooth extraction in the real world a tooth is taken out, in the topsy turvy world of carnivalesque dentistry it is instead the male ‘tooth’ that is being showed in. This is graphically illustrated in the cartoon below of a dental procedure where after a man’s “tooth” is pulled out, the dentist says “all root”, a pun on still another common term for the testicles/penis.

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