

## CLARA CAMPOAMOR IN THE LIGHT OF COPLAS AND LOVE

Beatriz Ledesma has compiled and written the prologue for the Cuadernos de Obra Fundamental "*Del amor y otras pasiones. Artículos literarios*", a review of the literary desires of the politician and writer in her exile in Argentina.

Clara Campoamor is known as one of the pioneering politicians and speakers of Spanish democracy, apart from being one of the most pungent and passionate essayists of the Republic, of which she was one of the first three parliamentary representatives, as well as playing a leading role in obtaining the female vote in the 1933 elections. Now, Fundación Banco Santander rediscovers her essayist articles on poetry and lyricism written in the early 1940s during her exile in Argentina. A poetic and pedagogical journey that demonstrates the knowledge, passion, depth and educational commitment of one of the great thinkers and activists of our 20th century.

Book trailer on *You Tube*: <https://youtu.be/aBstrxpGfbg>

"*Del amor y otras pasiones. Artículos literarios*", by Clara Campoamor (Madrid 1888-Lausanne, 1972) is a new issue of the Cuadernos de Obra Fundamental Collection, published by Fundación Banco Santander [www.fundacionbancosantander.com](http://www.fundacionbancosantander.com). Beatriz Ledesma Fernández de Castillejo, researcher and doctor in Hispanic literature from the Autonomous University of Madrid and one of the greatest specialists in her figure and that of other Spanish authors in exile, has compiled the anthology and foreword to the new volume. At the presentation, along with the researcher, the writers Carmen Posadas and Marta Robles, who supported the book and the figure of the writer, also took part.

Clara Campoamor was undoubtedly a pioneer, not only in Spain, but throughout the world with her fight for women's vote, first implemented in the 1933 elections, although she was already a parliamentarian for Madrid since the 1931 elections, being one of the first three in our country. She was a speaker, a lawyer, an activist, "a heart that always remained true to itself, above the conventions of her time and the interests of the parties," explains Beatriz Ledesma.

She spent years of exile in Argentina, from where she collaborated in various magazines, one of which was *Caras y Caretas*, from which we have recovered two interviews with Clara that until now had not been found and where she speaks about the role of women in their social and political context. political. In addition, Beatriz rescues the hitherto unknown articles from *Chabela*, a monthly women's magazine published by *Sopena*, in which from 1943 to 1945 she published short essays in the form of reflections and text commentaries on poetry that we collect in this volume for the first time, and which

demonstrate, very clearly, the breadth and accuracy of the literary knowledge of the Madrid lawyer and politician, who, as Beatriz Ledesma says in the prologue, sometimes used her encyclopaedic memory to bring many of her poems to paper in the absence of her library in exile.

In Beatriz Ledesma's opinion, in these texts "Clara speaks to us of the feelings that were the vital substance of many of the great poems of our language", and we can find in them desire, obsession, betrayal, suffering or abandonment, and of course, Beatriz continues, "love in its multiple forms: platonic, passionate, conjugal, mystical", almost as if, in her comments, Campoamor "is giving us her intimate, confidential presence", both because of the thematic choice and because of the authors and anecdotes or poems chosen.

There is no doubt that these essays offer a genuine look, far from ideologies and conventions; for Francisco Javier Expósito, head of the Fundamental Work Collection, this is "a revealing journey through the poetry of the Golden Age and the Romantics that enlightens us with some of the most well-known poems and poets of our literature with a transversal theme that runs through them all: love." Campoamor also "puts before our eyes the gaze of the feminine and the stereotypes of authors from the Golden Age, Romanticism or the end of the 19th century".

Not only is she "a woman ahead of her time and unjustly forgotten for too many years," says writer Carmen Posadas, but "her approaches remain valid," something that is very present in all the articles in the book that is published. Marta Robles, a writer and journalist, who has always been interested in politics in Madrid from the beginning, and for whom she expresses her admiration, understands that this is an essential book, because "beyond the combative Clara Campoamor, without whom the history of Spanish women would be written in a different way, we find the sensitive Clara Campoamor, who is capable of analysing literature and enjoying poetry with her own, always critical, view, and her way of telling stories that is so enriching".

### **This volume**

"Del amor y otras pasiones" includes twenty-nine articles from the Argentine magazine *Chabela*, authentic and very personal essays "diaphanous and categorical" in the words of Beatriz Ledesma, an expert on her Argentine exile, and which she was able to access due to the intellectual and emotional bond that Campoamor had with Ledesma's uncle, the politician and scholar from Córdoba, Federico Fernández de Castillejo.

Clara addresses resonant Golden Age poets such as Quevedo, Góngora or Garcilaso, Renaissance poets such as Fray Luis de León or Cristóbal de Castillejo, or even earlier ones such as Juan de Mena or the Marqués de Santillana, as well as troubadours from a world of coplas, in which we also find various poets from the Spanish Romantic period such as Espronceda, Zorilla, Bécquer, Federico Balart, Bartrina, etc. Not to mention figures greatly admired by Campoamor such as Juan de la Cruz or Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the Mexican poet who is the only woman Clara addresses in the volume. We can also highlight the presence of the Mexican Amado Nervo or Manuel Machado among the more recent poets.

The essayist and politician confessed in one of the interviews given to José María Salaverría for *Caras y Caretas*, that "if life has given me the gift of flowers, it is also true that it has not forgotten the thorns", and she emphasized that her life could be expressed in one word: "work". For her, her great political struggle, women's suffrage, meant that "with the direct intervention of women in politics, it will be deeply and radically transformed. In another 1933 interview with the same Argentine weekly, she defended the idea that "only a profound reform of the laws will lead us to the desired identity of political and civil rights with man".

Analysing the poems by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, her tenth muse, she highlights how she sees "the inconsistency of men in judging the behaviour of women," indeed, "there is a sort of cry from the soul, bathed in mockery, as it strikes that duality between intimate yearning and male social judgment.

Of Amado Nervo, dreamer, visionary, she affirms that "we are more interested in the essentially good man in him". Regarding Garcilaso, she talks about "loneliness, detachment from the world and distance from vanities". Concerning Juan de la Cruz, she declared, "his spirit was like a lily that sprouted from a marble throne", just as she speaks of the Marqués de Santillana as one of the first authors to have, in her time, glimpses of feminism. As for Góngora, "his lyre has two notes for women: pleasant and singing for the young girls, dour and mocking for the old women".

All this and much more awaits you in this book which is but a journey through poetry and a popularizing homage to the favourite Spanish poetry of one of the most brilliant and convincing thinkers of the Spanish 20th century.

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In all our programmes we strive to create networks of collaboration with the third sector in

order to face the main global challenges together.