

"The Knotty Wrong-Side": Another Spanish Connection to the First Folio

by Gabriel Ready

Translations (as says a witty Spaniard) are, in respect of their Originals, like the knotty wrong-side of Arras-Hangings: by his wits leave, as the fair outside could ill be seen, without help of the knots within; no more can the fame of well-deserving Author be far spread, without the labor of a Translator.¹

Leonard Digges, *Gerardo the Unfortunate Spaniard*, 1622

Secondary literature on Shakespeare is replete with commentary about Ben Jonson's address "To the Reader," though it is difficult to find an analysis that goes beyond its message and the hypnotic power of the Droeshout engraving it faces. For a few, the small poem conceals a cryptographic message awaiting a worthy codebreaker; for others, it is folly to look too deeply into the ten-line poem. What is remarkably absent in the commentary is an attempt to analyze the poetic form used by Jonson.

One may be tempted to dismiss the metrics in Jonson's poem because there was no established tradition in England of a ten-line eight-syllable stanza. However, that would make it an anomaly among poems of its day, which were known to pay obeisance to precedent and to European models, ancient and modern.

Imitation and varying degrees of translation were the standard practice among Jonson and his peers at this time, a period marked by what Sidney Lee called a "mosaic of plagiarisms, a medley of imitative or assimilative studies" (Lee 170). The dream of poetic regulation was so enveloping that generations of scholars have said that the shorter poetic works of the early modern period were but mere exercises in form to demonstrate a poet's facility, as if repetition was an end in itself.

It so happens that there is a Spanish verse form with identical metrics to Jonson's address. The verse form is called the *décima* and it is a stanza of 10 eight-syllable lines.² Could the shared metrics between Jonson's "To the Reader" and the Spanish *décima* be intentional or was it just a coincidence?

In the early modern period England was ever watchful of its rival, Spain, and during the years preceding 1623 the level of anxiety was acute, as the Stuarts in London and the Habsburgs in Madrid were negotiating to finalize the Spanish Match, a proposal to marry Charles, Prince of Wales to King Philip’s sister, the Infanta Maria. A dynastic marriage between Protestant and Catholic families would mean a prolonged peace while the alternative would most assuredly mean war. England was sharply divided over the direction of King James’s foreign policy, which led to a parliamentary crisis from 1621 to 1623 and widespread Protestant fears that the country would revert to Catholicism.

Knotty cultural politics drove the two European empires into a public match of social criticism and commentary. England, for its part, was utterly transfixed with Spain: Catholic Spain became a subject of importance in English pamphlets and served as the subtext for the private letters of diplomats and spies. Jacobean writers were plagiarizing wholesale from their Spanish counterparts, a phenomenon that resulted in an overabundance of Hispanic inventions and motifs: plotting Spaniards, Jesuitical Spaniards, Machiavellian Spaniards, Roguish Spaniards, Spanish Bawds. The dramatist and poet Ben Jonson satirically mocks London’s Hispanic turn³ in his play, *The Alchemist* (1610) where he portrays “the fashion for all things Spanish... a play in which even pretending to be a Spaniard guarantees success” (Fuchs 141).

Playwrights such as Thomas Middleton and John Fletcher both appropriated Spanish plots, despite Protestant affiliations. Protestant families, hedging their bets, sent their children for Spanish lessons (Pérez Fernández 10-11). Wealthy families politically opposed to King James’ Spanish policy saw to it that their names were promoted in prefaces of translated Spanish literary works.⁴ In 1623 alone there were approximately 30 English translations of Spanish texts (Samson 91). Just one year earlier Jonson’s commendatory verse for James Mabbe’s translation of Mateo Alemán’s picaresque novel *Guzmán de Alfarache* was published in English as *The Rogue*. Professor Barbara Fuchs, quoted above, describes the English encounter with Spain during this period as *translatio writ large* (Fuchs 23).

What if the Spanish *décima* is a model for Jonson’s first poem in the *First Folio*? What if the number of lines of the stanza is not an accident? Even

Gabriel Andrew Ready is a civil servant in Canada’s federal government, working in research and public policy. He received a B.A. from Laurentian University and an M.A. from the University of Ottawa in English Literature. In volume 17 of *The Oxfordian* (2015) he published his review of the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson. His research interests focus on Ben Jonson and the *First Folio*.

when considering the English fixation with Spain (Samson 100), it is nonetheless surprising that an English classicist such as Jonson would draw inspiration from another modern language, a vulgar tongue, in order to introduce the face of Shakespeare, the English bard.

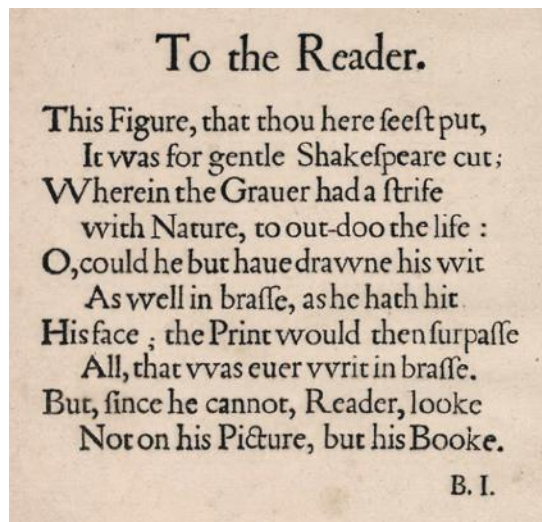
Between mid-October and early November 1623, the prefatory material to the First Folio, including Jonson's ten-line poem, was prepared for printing by Isaac Jaggard in his shop at exactly the same time that English Protestants were breathing a sigh of relief that the Prince of Wales returned safely from an eight-month sojourn in Madrid. So, why would Jonson look to Spain for inspiration at a time when the relationship between his country and Spain was so strained and when the consequences of the failed Spanish Match were not yet fully known?

Jonson wrote a second poem about Shakespeare in the preface to the First Folio as well, entitled "To the Memory of My Beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare." The two poems were designed with a purpose. "To the Reader" is very different from Jonson's eulogy, "To the Memory of My Beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare," with the latter's verse in heroic couplets and classical intonations, seemingly a poem for the omnipresent and "all time."

The English octosyllabic couplet in 1623

"To the Reader" appears on the first page of the First Folio, on the left page, opposite the Droeshout engraving. When analyzing the meter of Jonson's poem, two basic aspects of its construction are relevant: (1) the total of ten lines in each stanza, and (2) the verse, with each line having eight syllables with an iambic beat which, when paired in a rhyme, form octosyllabic couplets.

Jonson was an individualist in that he frequently wrote in octosyllabic couplets despite a prevailing view among contemporaries that such verse was old-fashioned and belonged to a previous epoch. Jonson used octosyllabic couplets in 18 of his works before 1623, and coincidentally, two songs in his play *Poetaster* (sung by Crispinus and Hermogenes, 2.2) have the same dimensions as "To the Reader."⁵



The French invented the octosyllabic couplet in the 10th century and it was quickly adopted by the English, Italians, Spanish and Portuguese. The Middle English poet Geoffrey Chaucer wrote two important poems using octosyllabic couplets: *The Book of the Duchess* and *The House of Fame*. Chaucer’s near contemporary John Gower wrote his religious epic *Confessio Amantis* in octosyllabic couplets.

The octosyllabic couplet was typically used in the miracle and morality plays, and in hymns and songs. Even Shakespeare used octosyllabic couplets in his plays; *Pericles* has the most octosyllabic lines of any of his plays and Jonson described it as moldy and stale.⁶ The primary source for the play is Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*. Well-known in the Elizabethan period, Gower was fittingly resurrected by Shakespeare for the choral role, speaking in a pastiche of clunky octosyllabic couplets: “To sing a song that old was sung, / From ashes ancient Gower is come” (*Pericles*, 1.1.1-2). Jonson admired Gower’s low mimetic style, his plain vernacular; thirty-two of the 118 quotations in Jonson’s *English Grammar* come from *Confessio Amantis* (Yeager 229-30).

Around the 15th century the octosyllabic couplet was overtaken by a longer line, the ten-syllable line, or pentameter. While the English octosyllabic couplet did not fall entirely into desuetude, it was endangered by delimited categorization, predominantly used in the pastoral mode, as the newer verse line gained in popularity in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁷

Among English treatises on versification of the early modern period, the octosyllabic couplet receives little attention. In 1575, George Gascoigne, championing verse that was as English in origin as possible, announced the supremacy of the iambic pentameter verse line for English poets in his poetic manual *Certain Notes of Instruction*. Among his precepts, the ten-syllable rhyme royal verse line is especially good for “grave discourses,” whereas ballads, with fewer syllables per line (e.g. the octosyllabic line), are for “light matters” (Gascoigne 471). On the Sonnet in particular, Gascoigne writes:

Then have you Sonnets: some think that all Poems (being short) may be called Sonnets, as in deed it is a diminutive word derived of *Sonare*, but yet I can best allow to call those Sonnets which are of fourteen lines, every line containing ten syllables... . There are Dizaines, and Sixaines, which are of ten lines, and of six lines, commonly used by the French, which some English writers do also term by the name of Sonnets. [spelling modernized] (Gascoigne 471-472)

Alluding to the Latin meaning of *sonetta*, “a little sound or song,” Gascoigne considers poetic stanzas totaling ten or even six lines to be “sonnets.” The French *dizain* is defined by Gascoigne in the context of the longer ten-syllable line, even though examples of the French *dizain* using shorter eight-syllable

lines were extant. Gascoigne was possibly thinking of Maurice Scève's *Délie* (1544), which was a collection of 449 influential *distichs*; each of Scève's stanzas has 10 lines of 10 syllables, sometimes referred to as the 10 X 10.

Similarly, in 1591, English courtier, author and translator Sir John Harington equated the sonnet with other small poems in his glossary of literary terms, *Brief Apology of Poetry*. Harington writes that "As for the Pastoral with the Sonnet or Epigram, though many times they savour of wantonness and love and toying..." (Harington 197). For the unromantic Jonson, the operative word here is "toying".⁸ In 1602 Samuel Daniel, in his *Defense of Ryme*, writes that the sonnet is "ordered in a small-room," and that even smaller stanzas, as few as 7-8 lines, share a common "happiness" with the traditional fourteen-line sonnet (Daniel 45-46).

George Puttenham in his *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) captures the prevailing attitude best when writing about Gower, but clearly makes a critical late 16th-century value judgement of octosyllabic couplets:

Saving for his [Gower's] good and grave moralities, had nothing in him highly to be commended, for his verse was homely and without good measure, his words strained much deal out of the French writers, his rhyme wrested, and in his inventions small subtlety. (Chapter XXXI) [spelling modernized]

The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics lists the following recognized stanzas for the octosyllabic line: quatrain (various languages, four lines); triolet (French, eight lines); *redondilla* (Spanish, four lines); *décima* (Spanish, ten lines); and the Pushkin Onegin stanza (Russian, fourteen lines) (970). By the early 17th century the octosyllabic couplet verse appears to have been primarily linked to the pastoral and as a stand-alone stanza, loosely categorized as a sonnet. As noted above, English poems using octosyllabic couplets are quite often based on quatrains.

The quatrains can be stuck together to form one stanza and appear as a sonnet, as is the case for Jonson's poem titled "A Sonnet" (published in 1640):

Though I am young, and cannot tell
Either what Death, or Love is well,
Yet I have heard they both beare Darts,
And both doe aime at humane hearts.
And then againe I have beene told,
Love wounds with heat, and death with cold,
So that I feare they doe but bring
Extreams, to touch and meane one thing.
As in a ruine we it call,
One thing to be blowne up and fall,

Or to our end like way may have
By a flash of lightning, or a wave:
So Loves inflamed shaft, or band,
Will kill as soone as Deaths cold hand:
Except Loves fires the vertue have.
To fright the frost out of the grave.

Note that Jonson’s “sonnet” does not follow the fixed form of the Petrarchan-English sonnet.

Not all English “sonnets” were constructed using iambic pentameters of fourteen-line stanzas. Again, in *Hymns of Astræa* (1599), Sir John Davies presents twenty-six poems, each titled “sonnet.” The acrostic poems of sixteen eight-syllable line stanzas were dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. Davies does not use the expected quatrain, though. Thematically, “Sonnet XII: To her Picture” (1599) is not unlike Jonson’s address:

Extrême was his Audacitie;
Little his Skill did finisht thee,
I am asham’d and Sorry,
So dull her counterfait should be,
And she so full of glory.
But here are colours red and white,
Each lyne, and each proportion right;
These Lynes, this red, and whitenesse,
Hauve wanting yet a life and light,
A Majestic, and brightnesse.
Rude conterfait, I then did erre,
Even now when I would needs inferred
Great boldnesse in thy maker;
I did mistake, he was not bold,
Nor durst his eyes her eyes behold:
And this made him mistake her.

Octosyllabic couplets in prefaces up to 1623

In the sub-genre of English prefaces, poems using octosyllabic lines or verse with octosyllabic couplets were extremely rare. A survey of *Paratexts in English Printed Drama to 1642* contains only two poetic examples of octosyllabic couplets out of hundreds of prefaces published prior to 1623. Neither of these two examples has a ten-line stanza, and only one of those examples is actually an address to the reader. The only explanation for the prejudice against the octosyllabic couplet is that it was not as new as the ten-syllable line. Prefaces were a relatively new genre in literary history—a genre fundamental to the marketing and selling of books. The octosyllabic couplet represented

the previous epoch, before the printing press, associated with scribal culture and even oral cultures (Birge Vitz and Kittay).

When the eight-syllable couplet was used in a preface, there was a reason for it. In the collected works *The Posies of George Gascoigne Esquire* (1575) there is a commendation of the author by the printer (though it is believed to be written by Gascoigne himself) where the explicit mention of Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower determined the length of the line.

Chawcer by writing purchast fame,
And *Gower* got a worthie name:
Sweete *Surrey*, suckt *Pernassus* springs,
And *VVyat* wrote of wondrous things:
Olde *Rochfort* clambe the stately Throne,
VVich *Muses* holde, in *Hellicone*.
Then thither let good *Gascoigne* go,
For sure his verse, deserueth so.
(Berger 537)

What we are given here is a list of poets long dead: Chaucer (died in 1400), Gower (1408), Henry Howard Earl of Surrey (1547), Sir Thomas Wyatt (1542), and George Boleyn 2nd Viscount Rochford (1536).

Commendations to dramatic works before 1623 were often in verse rather than prose and used the more modern ten-syllable line, or pentameter. What we expect to find in prefaces is verse like that found in *The Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster, published in 1623. The three commendations from Thomas Middleton, William Rowley and John Ford are all in heroic verse, the preferred longer rhymed iambic lines. Gascoigne's 1575 commendation is the only one among all commendations of dramatic works of the period that uses an octosyllabic line.

In the genre of prefaces to dramatic literature published prior to 1623, the addresses to the general reader and most dedications were almost exclusively in prose. For instance, in Jonson's published works, the addresses to readers were exclusively in prose for *Sejanus his Fall*, *Catiline his Conspiracy*, *Poetaster*, *The Alchemist* and *The Staple of News*. Though they are not given the title "address to the reader," the "epistles" in his *Hymenaei* and *Volpone* as well as the "induction" in *Bartholomew Fair* are essentially addresses to the reader, as opposed to speeches given to a spectator. In a survey of Jonson's early published works, all of his addresses to a general reading public were in prose. Even for Jonson, "To the Reader" in the First Folio is exceptional. Not to be overlooked, the First Folio also contains a second address to the reader, in what was the standard prosody, prose, entitled "To the great Variety of Readers," undersigned by John Heminges and Henry Condell but often attributed to Jonson.

In published plays of the period, there is only one example of an octosyllabic couplet verse being used in an address to the reader—an eighteen-line stanza in the preface of *The Masque at Lord Hay’s Marriage* by Thomas Campion, published in 1607. The masque celebrated the aristocratic wedding of Scotsman Sir James Hay and Englishwoman Honoria Denny, daughter of Edward, Lord Denny. The joining of the Scottish and English houses was not without controversy, but King James was still credited with the peaceful union where “bloods devided mixe in one... bring together two separate lands into one, and make them forever one in name and fact” (Berger 330-332). Campion’s address “To the Reader” hints at a specialized function of the octosyllabic couplet.

Neither buskin now, nor bayes
Challenge I, a Ladies prayse
Shall content my proudest hope,
Their applause was all my scope
And to their shrines properly
Revels dedicated be:
Whose soft eares none ought to pierce
But with smooth and gentle verse,
Let the tragicke Poeme swell,
Raising raging feendes from hell,
And let Epicke Dactils range
Swelling seas and Countries strange.
Little roome small things containes
Easy praise quites easy paines.
Suffer them whose browes do sweat
To gain honour by the great.
It’s enough if men me name
A Retailer of such fame.
(Berger 330-332)

Campion created two categories of readers based on gender. He wants to solicit the “Ladies prayse” rather than “gain honour by the great” poets and actors who are men. Campion’s reference to prosody hints at why he chose octosyllabic couplets rather than the far more popular verse options that use a ten-syllable line. Rather explicitly, Campion will not write in “Epicke Dactils” but rather in a “gentle verse” for a “Little roome small things,” an obvious echo of Daniel’s metaphor, sonnets being “ordered in a small-room.”

Thus, the octosyllabic couplet had a reputation among English poets in the late 16th and early 17th century as being less serious, a toy, a light verse, possessing a low, base, plain and homely style. Whereas a verse line that is for “the great” and the “heroic,” indicative of the high elevated style, and even modern, required the longer ten-syllable pentameter verse.

The Spanish *décima* before 1623

Spanish for tenth, *décima* also refers to the number of lines in a Spanish stanza:

A stanza consisting of ten octosyllabic lines, rhyming ABBAACCD-DC. It is sometimes referred to as an *espinela*, after Vicente Espinel (1550-1624), who is usually credited with its invention, though it is used by Juan de Mal Lara in a poem written before 1571. Espinel's own term for this kind of stanza was "redondilla de diez versos": it consists, in fact of two *redondillas* of the ABBA type joined by two link-verses. (Terry xlix)

The Spanish also call the *décima* a "little sonnet" because of its diminutive size in comparison to the traditional sonnet of fourteen lines of fourteen hendecasyllables (*Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 255). The Spanish little sonnet was more versatile and concise than the traditional fourteen-line sonnet, and before 1623 it was widely used in epigrams, addresses, dedications, glosses on other literary works, devotional pieces, and interludes in novels. While it could be seen as a countrified version of the "learned poetry" associated with the Italian-inspired sonnet (Bleiberg 485), this was not always the case.

The *décima* was used to comment on philosophical, religious, lyrical, and political subjects and themes.⁹

Partly because of its size and partly because of its haphazard use among Spanish poets, the *décima* was not that well known in the English world. English literary dictionaries such as *The Harper Handbook to Literature* (Harper Collins, 1985) and *A Handbook to Literature* (Odyssey Press, 1960) provide definitions of *débat* (an obsolete verse form popular in the Middle Ages) and *the divine afflatus* (doctrine of divine inspiration for poets advocated by Plato, also obsolete) but leave out a Spanish verse form that continues to be used in Latin America today.¹⁰

Playwright and poet Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio wrote an instructional manual entitled, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (*New Rules for Writing Plays at This Time*, 1609), describing *décimas* as good for complaints (*buenas para quejas*). He contrasts the *décima* with other verse forms of various sizes, providing brief descriptions of the sonnet (fourteen lines), ottava rima (eight lines), quatrain (four lines), and triplets or tercets (three lines):

*Acomode los versos con prudencia
a los sujetos de que va tratando;
las décimas son buenas para quejas,
el soneto está bien en los que aguardan,
las relaciones piden los romances*

*aunque en octavas lucen por extremo,
son los tercetos para cosas graves,
y para las de amor las redondillas.*

[Shrewdly select the verse-forms you employ
to fit the various matters that you deal with.
The *décima* is suited to complaints,
the sonnet’s fine for characters left waiting;
narrative speeches call for ballad-metre,
though they sound splendid in *ottava rima*;
tercets will serve for solemn, weighty matters,
and *redondillas* for romantic scenes.]
(Trans. Victor Dixon, 2009)

Lope de Vega’s thumbnail definitions illustrate that the selection of the verse form was a fundamental creative decision strongly governed by basic metrical elements, such as stanza size and verse line. The genre-based poetics was typical during the Renaissance and practiced in England too, where the poetic form was supposed to impart meaning and circumscribe expectations. It provided a program for the poet and reader alike: how poems were to be written and how they were to be read. A banality of metrics thrive on “numbers and measures.” It is in numbers and measures that we get precepts such as blank verse is for tragedy (Daniel) or rhyme royal is for grave discourses (Gascoigne).

The Spanish *décima* and the 1623 event honoring Prince Charles

My literary investigation focuses on the year 1623, which leads us to humor-laden, satiric *décimas* that were used as vehicles for attacking other persons.

Many festivities were held in honor of Prince Charles during his eight-month visit to Spain, one of the most significant being the *juego de cañas* that took place at the Plaza Mayor in Madrid on 21 August 1623. The *juego de cañas* turned out to be the climax of Charles’ extraordinary trip. It was a large scale, one-day festivity that captured the attention of writers and politicians from across the continent. One of the many Spanish *relaciones*,¹¹ or news pamphlets, was immediately translated into English and published in London by Henry Seyle in 1623: Dr. Juan Antonio de la Peña’s “A relation of the royall festiuities and juego de cañas (a turnament of darting with reedes after the manner of Spaine).” (Peña STC19594)

Translated literally as “game of canes,” the *juego de cañas* was a popular merrymaking activity in early modern Europe that typically featured noblemen on horseback participating in mock battles using replica spears made

of reeds. The spear-shaking game was reminiscent of tournaments of the medieval period and was intended to:

Recreate an idealized battlefield on which nobles and the urban patri-
 ciate, all of them caught up in the feverish revival of courtly culture
 and enchanting romances, could show their mettle without risk of fall-
 ing victim to a peasant's arrow, a lance, or distant artillery. (Ruiz 195)¹²

Juan de la Corte's painting *Fiestas en la Plaza Mayor de Madrid, 1623* provides a detailed depiction of the historical event. In the center foreground are two sets of ushers, in black and red plumage representing the Spanish and English. The ushers are holding sets of reed-spears (*un juego de cañas*) for their lords; two of the ushers point in the direction of reed-spears (barely visible) lying on the ground and the larger action in the courtyard. The man holding a reed-spear while sitting on a light-colored chestnut horse (left foreground) is the guest of honor, Prince Charles. For added detail, numerous arras hangings are affixed to the balconies. There are many other servants needed to stage the event and mentioned in the news reports but not depicted in the painting: grooms of the stable, farriers, pages and officers.



Fiestas en la Plaza Mayor de Madrid, 1623, by Juan de la Corte.

Coincidentally, the *juego de cañas* of 21 August was the cause of a major literary incident involving the most important writers living in Madrid at the time. One of the central political figures vying for the King's attention was aristocrat Don Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Padilla, Count of Ampudia and Duke of Cea. With the objective of ingratiating himself with King Philip IV, the Count commissioned the poetic services of one Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza. The Count envisioned a collection of poems, *con motivo del famoso*

juego de toros y cañas celebrado en Madrid en Agosto de 1623, on the occasion of the famous game of bulls and canes celebrated in Madrid in August 1623.

Alarcón accepted the commission but outsourced the actual work and soon became an object of ridicule within the writing community. Some ghost-writers were allegedly not paid and some may have even purposely submitted shoddy work, thereby sabotaging the collection. Alarcón did not realize the full extent of the fiasco until it was too late. In the end, Alarcón became the poet broker and “writer” of a horrible collection of 72 ottava rimas entitled “Elogio Descriptivo” (Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, editor’s note #2, online edition). More humiliation was to follow.

Alarcón’s peers attacked him severely for the authorship deception and his unscrupulous management of the poetic material in a collection of follow-up poems entitled *Las Décimas de la academia de don Francisco de Mendoza*. The satiric *décimas* circulated just days after the August 21 event, featuring a “who’s who” of the Spanish literary scene. Amescua, the writer who provided the foolhardy advice to Alarcón, contributed a *décima*, as did the famous Lope de Vega. Even rivals Luis de Góngora and Francisco de Quevedo were momentarily united against the folly of Alarcón. Góngora, the representative of the style that the “Elogio Descriptivo” failed to imitate, was so offended that he wrote a *décima*. Quevedo, the leader of the group, was strongly opposed in principle to the Gongorismo style but even more emphatic was his prejudice towards Alarcón, a Novohispanic and therefore an outsider.¹³

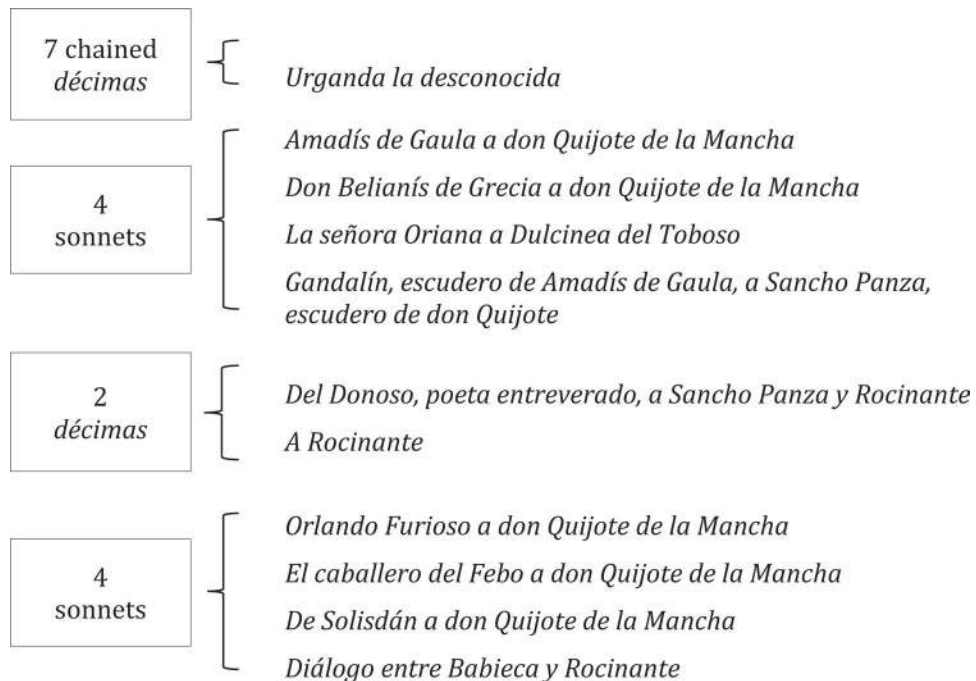
Several of the *décimas* mock Alarcón’s physical deformity: his hunched back. One wrote that *todo un juego de cañas te cupiese en la córcova*—“a whole set of spear-reeds could fit on his hump” (Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, online edition, *décima* by Luis Vélez). The subtext of the criticism is twofold: Alarcón’s body reflects the poor quality of the octavo verse in the “*Elogio Descriptivo*.” At the same time, poets and dramatists of the period often referred to physical impairments as an indication of moral fault (e.g., thieves were often characterized as physically deformed). All the writers connected Alarcón’s deformity with his purported stealing. Alarcón is given all sorts of names that translate loosely as dwarf camel, cucumber, tortoise, bag of bones, swimmer with pumpkins, and owl face.

The English contingent in Madrid, especially the Spanish-speaking members of Prince Charles’ entourage, would likely have been fascinated by the squabble and the airing of dirty laundry.¹⁴ Presumably this juicy collection of *décimas* was carried back to England along with Dr. Juan Antonio de la Peña’s *relation* and other Spanish reports that also covered the spear-shaking game. Setting sail for home on 18 September, Prince Charles landed on English shores on 5 October (Redworth 136-138), a cache of Spanish writings in the ship’s hold—well in advance of the printing of the preface and title page of the *First Folio*, which was printed in mid-November.

Two *décima* in the preface to *Don Quixote*

Sometimes within a preface a variety of verse forms are used as foils to highlight their innate attributes. The contrast between the traditional sonnet (fourteen-line stanza) and the little sonnet (ten-line stanza) was used to comic effect by Miguel Cervantes in the preface to *Don Quixote* (1605). In Cervantes' preface there is a catalogue of burlesque sonnets—traditional fourteen-line stanzas and ten-line *décimas*—that follow the prologue written in prose. After the sorceress Urganda's 70 lines of chained *décimas*,¹⁵ there are ten sonnets that include two *décimas*, one for the squire Sancho Panza and one for Quixote's horse Rocinante.

While the fourteen-line stanza is perceived to be more refined, residing on a moral high-ground of romance and love, the ten-line stanza is situated on less dignified, dubious ground. Figuratively speaking, as the sonnets appear in this preface, the *décima* is a verse for squires, the lower class and herdsmen, while the traditional fourteen-line sonnet is a verse for hidalgos and courtiers, whom readers associate with learned poetry. Five of the eight traditional fourteen-line sonnets are dedicated to Don Quixote. The organization of the dedicatory poems (under the heading *elogios*) is outlined below.



The juxtaposition of the longer sonnet stanzas and the *décimas* is not arbitrary. In a subversive twist on the formula, further heightening the burlesque tone, Cervantes injects a fourteen-line sonnet for the squire Gandalín addressed

to his counterpart Sancho Panza, and in one final exaggerated parody of the prefaces of his day, there is the traditional sonnet for the talking horses, Babieca and Rocinante.

Cervantes’s parody illustrates that verse forms in the genre of dedications were class-conscious and calibrated according to social authority. The overall design of the dedicatory poems in the preface to *Don Quixote* is governed by kinship and social protocol, where knights address knights, ladies address ladies, squires address squires, and even horses address horses. An approach that would be no different in England occurs in Edmund Spenser’s *Fairie Queen*, which has 12 dedicatory sonnets arranged in order of the dedicatees’ political importance and hereditary rank, from highest to lowest.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the verse form has a moral function. The themes of commerce and thievery evoked by the allusions to Celestina and Lazarillo are reserved for the *décimas* of Sancho Panza and Rocinante, respectively. On the other hand, the traditional fourteen-line sonnets addressed to Quixote focus on the themes of love and chivalry.

Del Donoso, poeta entreverado, a Sancho Panza y Rocinante

*Soy Sancho Panza, escudero
del manchego don Quijo.
Puse pies en polvoro,
por vivir a lo discreto
que el tácito Villadiego
toda su razón de esta
cifró en una retira,
según siente Celesti,
libro, en mi opinión, divi-
si encubriera más lo huma-*

[I’m Sancho Panza, squire by right
To Don Quixote, La Mancha’s knight;
I took flight, and beat retreat
To live the life of one discreet,
Light taciturn Villadiego,
Whose sum of bliss it was to find
A spot retired and to his mind;
‘Tis Celestina tells us so –
A book divine, I humbly take it,
Were human things in it less naked.]

*A Rocinante
Soy Rocinante, el famosísimo
bisnieto del gran Babieca.
Por pecados de flaquea,
fui a poder de un don Quijo.
Parejas corrí a lo flojo;
mas, por uña de caba,
no se me escapó ceba;
que esto saqué a Lazarillo
cuando, para hurtar el vino
al ciego, le di la pa-*

[I’m Rozinante, steed of fame,
Great Baviaca’s grandson I;
Into one Quixote’s power I came
For sin of being lean and dry.
A coupled race I idly ran,
But never by the merest span
Did I my barley ever miss;
From cunning Lazarillo this
I cribbed, and left him but the straw
Through which the blind man’s wine
to draw.]

(Trans. James H. Montgomery, 2009)

The contrast in verse forms in this preface clearly reinforces the prejudice that avarice and gluttony are sins belonging to the servile class.

Jonson could only have read these *décimas* in the original Spanish because Thomas Shelton omitted the unfamiliar verse form from part one of his translation, *The History of the Valorous and Wittie Knight-Errant Don-Quixote of the Mancha* (1612).¹⁶ While it is possible that Jonson had seen other *décimas* in the original Spanish that were written prior to 1623, those examples are unlikely sources of influence for his “To the Reader” address. There is Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s collection *A San Isidro* (composed c. 1620–1622) and his undated *A la Muerte* (1620s?). There are a number of *décimas* in Céspedes y Meneses’ novel *Poema trágico del español Gerardo, y desengaño del amor lascivo* (1615), but these too are unlikely to be connected with Jonson’s small poem.

It is undeniable that a poetic form with identical metrics to Jonson’s poem was used in Spain and appears in the preface of the most famous of Spanish publications, the novel *Don Quixote*—part one published in Spanish in 1605 and part two in 1615. It is remarkable that the width and length of Jonson’s “To the Reader,” a form of address not found in any preface for English dramatic works of the period, happens to have the same dimensions as the verse form used in *Don Quixote*, published many years before the First Folio. The English translations were published in 1612 (part one) and 1620 (part two)—though Jonson was familiar with *Don Quixote* in the original Spanish. Professor Martin Hume notes that Jonson “knew Spanish well, constantly refers to *Quixote* before Shelton’s translation was published in 1612” (Hume 276). *Quixote* is referenced in *The Silent Women* (1609) and *The Alchemist* (1610) (Hume 154). Jonson’s knowledge of the celebrated prose prologue in Cervantes’ *Quixote* would have to be more than cursory.

As a respected verse form in its own right, the *décima* was probably not very well known or understood by the English. Indeed, Leonard Digges may have been referring to the *décima* verse form when he wrote pejoratively in his preface, “Some of the Verses in the Spanish Copie... [are] vnworthy to bee ranked with the Prose.” The *décimas* in Digges’ 1622 translation of *Gerardo the Unfortunate Spaniard* are nearly unrecognizable. For example, the “Vile Pandora” interlude in the original Spanish verse contains five linked *décimas* (a total of 50 lines on signature pages D5v–D6r), whereas Digges provides an abbreviated, loose translation of the interlude, adopting the octosyllabic couplet rhyme scheme (26 lines on page 52 of the English translation). Digges’ transmission of the poetic form was haphazard, but at least Digges made an effort at translation, something generations of translators had denied the *décimas* in *Don Quixote*.¹⁷

Discussion

A number of points stand between the *décima* and Jonson’s address in the First Folio. The eight-beat line has a common European literary tradition via French poets, so it is only natural that Jonson’s poem would share characteristics with the *décima*. By 1623 the octosyllabic couplet was considered old-fashioned, but Jonson was a noted champion of the verse and used it often. Also, the octosyllabic couplet verse was commonly used when the speaker occupied a lower social rank, a hallmark verse of the pastoral and its social relationships, though this type of usage cannot be called exclusive.

It is also true that the rhyming pattern is wrong. Jonson’s rhyming couplets bear no resemblance to the sophisticated *décima*’s pattern of ABBA:ACCD-DC. Nevertheless, whenever a poetic form was adopted by English poets they changed the pattern to accommodate the natural restrictions of the English language, and this often meant simplifying the pattern, as witnessed by Digges’ rendering of Céspedes y Meneses’ *décimas* into the English straight-jacket of rhyming couplets. The transmission of the Petrarchan sonnet form to English represents another case of simplifying rhyme schemes to accommodate the English language.¹⁸

Another argument is that Jonson’s poem “To the Reader” clearly draws on structural components from a well-established sonnet tradition in England. By 1623 the vogue for English sonnets had already passed and its construction was almost a fixed entity. At fourteen lines it was organized around quatrains and an end couplet; in contrast, the Petrarchan sonnet was divided into an octave and sestet. Jonson’s poem follows an English construction, using the familiar quatrains and requisite English end couplet. The quatrains themselves are often seen in English octosyllabic verse, joined and in separated stanzas. There is also a sonnet-like movement, an unfolding in thought, that culminates with a *volta*, or turn, found in the ingenious instruction, “do not look at the picture.” If England did have a fixed “little sonnet” form such as Spain’s “little sonnet,” we could easily nominate Jonson’s epigrammatic address as a prime example.

Finally, my investigation uncovered no explicit verbal fingerprint that would lock “To the Reader” down in a Spanish key. However, the scope for identifying a source is not so finite. Conscious and unconscious borrowing associated with source studies has been augmented by intertextuality, which goes beyond recognizable sources and analogues, and considers texts in relation to other texts. Intertextuality was first described by literary theorist Julia Kristeva in 1966 to signify the interdependence of literary texts, and soon it was the currency of post-structuralist criticism:

the word [intertextuality] originates in the Lat. *intertextos*, ‘intertwined,’ and derives from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Ovid tells how the female

weaver Arachne challenges the goddess Athena to a weaving contest by producing a tapestry woven with stories of gods and mortals: “The edge of the web with its narrow border is filled with flowers and clinging ivy intertwined [*intertextos*]” (6.126-127). For [N.K.] Miller, Kristeva, and others [post-structuralists], intertextuality becomes a term for speaking about the *wovenness* of texts, their *interconnectedness*, their participation in a *web* of discourse... (*Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 717)

While there are arguments against the original hypothesis, the fact is there was no recognizable fixed English poetic form with a ten-line stanza that used eight-beat lines. In a word, there was no English tradition that would decisively eliminate the Spanish *décima* from the discussion. When talking about the transmission of poetic forms across different European languages, the number of lines is a crucial aspect of identification. The number of lines in the stanzaic form is much more important than, say, the rhyming pattern or inner structural components. In fact, most stanzaic forms derive their names from the number of lines. Numbers and measures are deceptively simple and rarely arbitrary. For a serious, authorized folio edition, the choice of the opening verse form, octosyllabic couplets, appears wholly inappropriate. One thing is certain, in England octosyllabic couplets lacked the gravity that a folio publication should have demanded. For an introduction to England’s national poet, a traditional sonnet would have been much better suited. At the same time, it was almost impossible that Jonson landed on the number of lines accidentally.

English knowledge of the Alarcón incident and *Las Décimas de la academia de don Francisco de Mendoza* fits perfectly within the timeline of 1623.¹⁹ Given the historical context and the atmosphere around London in the autumn of 1623, English awareness of the Spanish imbroglio seems more than highly probable. In many ways the Alarcón incident recalls London’s *Poetmachia*, or War of the Theatres, that took place between 1599 and 1602, featuring Jonson’s *Poetaster*, among other plays. Obviously, Jonson could identify with a foreign literary controversy because he played such a central role in one at home. A manuscript of *Las Décimas* would have been of particular value, especially among English diplomats, because the poems offer a keyhole view into the world of the Spanish court,²⁰ delicious intelligence on the internal politics behind the “shaking of spears” event that was held in honor of England’s dynastic heir.

Both sides of the political debate in England would have been interested in the Alarcón incident. For unflattering news *about* Spain, Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham could use *Las Décimas* as evidence of poor etiquette, thus underwriting their revisionist history of a debacle that was of their own making. For unflattering news *from* Spain, those opposed to the

Spanish Match in the first place, such as the Pembrokes (dedicatees of the First Folio), could view the Alarcón incident as further proof that Prince Charles had completely misjudged the Spanish position: underneath all the highly ritualized formalities was a teeming energy of Mediterranean sycophancy so reminiscent of past Popish abuses.

There are a number of ways *Las Décimas* and news about the Alarcón incident would have circulated in London in the fall of 1623. Certainly, informal reports would have been communicated within Hispanist circles, which must include Leonard Digges and James Mabbe,²¹ Jonson’s co-contributors to the preface of the First Folio. All three would have had their own motives for seeking out authoritative sources related to the most recent news from Spain. For his part, Jonson was preparing to write, or had already started writing, a masque for the upcoming 1623/24 Christmas holidays entitled *Neptune’s Triumph for the Return of Albion*, a symbolic representation of Prince Charles’ return to England (subsequently cancelled for political reasons). It is hard to imagine that such an extraordinary example of Spanish satiric verse would not be shared with England’s pre-eminent satirist.

It is also possible that a manuscript of *Las Décimas* was circulated via Hugh Holland, author of a traditional sonnet praising Shakespeare printed in the First Folio, and one-time putative servant of court favorite Buckingham, Prince Charles’ traveling partner. Buckingham was one of the main reasons the Prince’s surprise visit to Madrid failed. The incentive for Buckingham to spread gossip was especially high because it would deflect attention away from himself. Also, Peña’s news report (mentioned above) was published by Seyle, whose print shop was in the same district as Isaac Jaggard’s, another possible point of dissemination. Finally, Edward Blount, publisher of the First Folio and no less than 17 Spanish works, could have viewed a copy of *Las Décimas* as a commercial investment opportunity, thereby sharing it with Jonson.

In short, Jonson could have acquired direct and immediate knowledge of *Las Décimas* and the Alarcón incident from his close proximity to multiple recognized authorities with whom he was working, at a time when Spain was at the forefront of public discussion, and in the weeks when we would logically expect Jonson to be composing his “To the Reader” address and orchestrating the prefatory material for the First Folio. That is to say, Jonson would not have acquired his knowledge of *Las Décimas* from a travelling merchant in the Mermaid Tavern.

The Shakespeare authorship issue provides us with a number of startling relationships.

There is the latent symbolism of the *juego de cañas*. The spear-shaking game is an allusion to Edward de Vere’s *nom de plume*, Shake-speare. In Spain, the

spear-shaking game instigated its own short-lived authorship question. The poet broker Alarcón here corresponds to the play broker from Stratford. Even the physiognomy of Alarcón is not without meaning and has an uncanny correspondence to the deformity of the Droeshout engraving.²²

The two *décimas* among the catalogue of dedicatory verses in *Don Quixote* are teasingly suggestive. One might see the practical-minded Sancho Panza's service to his hidalgo and his subsequent return to his wife and children as evocative of Shagspere's service to an earl and his retreat to the comforts of Stratford. Sancho Panza is inspired by the commerce of the infamous bawd Celestina, who is well known for taking financial advantage of her aristocratic clients. Sancho Panza swears by the book of Celestina. Celestina is one of the Renaissance's most celebrated villains, a "humanist's nightmare" (Pérez Fernández 28, Introduction). There is also the subject of theft in the Rociante *décima*, represented by Lazarillo, who steals from his blind master.²³

Spanish connections to the First Folio

In the years leading up to 1623, when accommodation of Spain was a guiding principle for much of England's affairs, authorities were prone to turning a blind eye to acts of recusancy. Pardons for Catholics were dispensed and English subjects were at liberty to read such passages as "O *Spaine, Spaine*, my beloved Country, Faith's true keeper, God uphold thee with his hand." Such a sentiment printed in 1622 is not, as some orthodox scholars would have us believe, reckless and troublesome, a signal of dangerous impetuosity or a confession of faith (Yamamoto-Wilson 329-331).

If Jonson's "To the Reader" is an abstraction of the *décima*, the case for a Spanish connection to the First Folio grows ever stronger. It is rare for orthodoxy to note the political context of the First Folio—there is, for example, no reference to the Spanish Match policy in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio* (2016). Yet the preface as a whole and Jonson's address in particular can only be appreciated in the political context. I think Jonson was addressing not just any reader but the Infanta herself, thereby transforming the First Folio into an epithalamium, an ode to a bride and bridegroom. The Infanta would thus join a long list of Jonson's preferred addressees, the wives of powerful patrons: throughout his career, Jonson addressed ladies of the court repeatedly, including Henrietta Maria, Queen consort of England, Scotland and Ireland (Sanders 260). Digges and Mabbe, for their part, could have fulfilled the role of ceremonial attendants when the time came to present a copy of the First Folio to the Infanta.

Orthodoxy would deny the historical context for the First Folio but thanks to advances made by post-Stratfordian scholars Peter Dickson and Roger Stritmatter, we can now see innumerable Spanish connections to the First Folio.

While very few in orthodoxy have taken notice of these connections, Gary Taylor is an exception.

In “The Cultural Politics of Maybe,” Professor Taylor examines the correspondence of Mabbe, Blount, diplomat William Trumball and George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury. Some of the correspondence in Taylor’s essay appears in publication for the first time, with a number of subsequent academic papers responding to his essay. Taylor makes the arresting conclusion that Mabbe was a Catholic spy, that he found the “smoking gun” and that “we can be certain about Maybe” (Taylor 251).

If Taylor had ended his investigation here he would have had to change the title of his essay—“The Cultural politics of Definitely Maybe”?—and thus abandon his original project. So enamored with the noun and adverb “maybe,”²⁴ Taylor turns his attention to the publisher Blount and declares that he cannot categorize Blount as an underground Catholic the way he can with Mabbe. Apparently the “Maybe” of his article’s title is now in reference to Blount, not the translator James Mabbe at all, as in “maybe Blount is a Catholic or an atheist; maybe he is not; how can I know?” (254).²⁵ Anticipating a rebuttal that he is upholding religious essentialism, Taylor argues that Blount “demonstrates the fragility and fungibility of the categories Catholic and Protestant. After all, many men and women in early modern England, in early modern Europe, moved from one category to another” (252).

Taylor wants to argue two points about the complex personalities at work on the First Folio project. First, he wants to place a crypto-Catholic agent on the inside of the First Folio publication, transforming the preface into “crypto-Catholic preliminaries” (250). Second, Taylor wants to depict Blount as a materialist above the religious fray, a savvy agent of commodification, someone who recognized the future commercial value of Shakespeare in a secularized world, stripped of explicit religious affiliations, something akin to Michelangelo’s David, a work of art disrobed of its religious aura. Taylor writes that Blount was a spectator, ambivalent about religion, someone objective enough to see that England’s playwright had successfully transformed “religious trauma” into a “secular affective commodity” (255).

Where does Taylor’s Bard come to rest? Is Taylor’s Shakespeare an active crypto-Catholic like Mabbe or is his Shakespeare an intelligent spectator and go-between like Blount? Taylor’s premonition is that the secret Catholic messages that the plays “may have had” were encrypted and now lost. Taylor chastises the playwright for the macro historical movement towards secularization (à la Blount), making the execrable claim that the Bard is the embodiment of a “falsification” and “misrepresentation” of the religious debate during the Counter-Reformation. Taylor concludes his essay by contending

that the religious beliefs of the Bard “himself” count for nothing and “what is within does not matter, if it does not come out” (256). The operative phrase in this most slippery of orthodox essays is, “if it does not come out.”

Taylor’s essay appeared in an orthodox publication investigating the idea that the playwright was embedded as an operative within a crypto-Catholic network in northwest England during his formative years. Following E.K. Chambers’s suggestion made in 1944—that the young Shakespeare was possibly “William Shakeshaft,” a player or musician working in Lancashire in the 1580s—Ernst Honigmann published *Shakespeare: The Lost Years* (1985), speculating that his Shakespeare/Shakeshaft was a schoolmaster for a noble Catholic family in Lancashire. The Lancashire theory has attracted adherents in some circles because it helps explain one of the central mysteries about the traditional biography: the whereabouts of William of Stratford in the mid-1580s. The belief is that a Catholic Shakespeare is a Shakespeare with a worldview and an inner life, something more than the meager documentary record that exists.

Apparently for Taylor and other adherents to the Lancashire theory, there is the promise of a Catholic codebook for the plays in the First Folio. A revival in ciphers provides Shakespearean studies with an amusing sense of history repeating itself, as if the antiquated fight with Baconians in the 19th century has now come full circle, with one small faction of 21st century traditionalists resorting to methods of decryption to uncover their long buried Catholic candidate. Of course, the suspicions of these Stratfordians, like the Baconians before them, are warranted.²⁶ They know that there is something deeply unsatisfactory about the traditional history.

Untangling the religious turmoil from the cultural politics and emerging internationalism²⁷ is an unenviable task. It seems impossible to discuss the politics of the failed Spanish Match and its impact on the publication of the First Folio without the issue of religious affiliation muddying the waters. Religious affiliation is only one of the many identities that any individual possesses. The mysterious master translator Mabbe is a case in point. Whether it is Mabbe or Blount or the Bard himself, each individual possesses multiple intersecting identities, each one changing over time, often in unpredictable ways. I propose that religious belief was less furtive and more fluid. While the religious question no doubt occupied much of the authorities’ time, it was often used as an excuse for righting a political wrong or as a power play, a means to an end.

On religion specifically, the placement of *The Tempest* at the beginning of the collection of plays in the First Folio remains a vital piece of evidence. As Professor Stritmatter did before him, Taylor cites the placement of *The Tempest*, linking it to the planned dynastic marriage of Charles and the Infanta.

What Taylor does not say is that this most Spanish²⁸ of Shakespeare plots is framed by an interfaith wedding, between Alonso’s daughter Claribel and the King of Tunis—Tunis being the geographic symbol of Islam (*Tempest* 2.1). Alonso’s wedding party were crossing the Mediterranean from North Africa when the storm landed them on Prospero’s island. As such, *The Tempest* is a symbolic break with endogamy, against religious reification and the zero-sum game of competing worldviews. The First Folio is woven of much finer stuff.

Epilogue

It was the age of tapestries. For years European aristocrats resided in cold and drafty castles, and even as they moved into more comfortable manors in the 16th and 17th centuries, arras hangings, as they were called, remained symbols of power and prestige, warmth and belonging. Tapestries continued to be used as insulation on walls and shown on special occasions such as weddings, entertainments, and pageants. Artists used them for the backgrounds of portraits and for the recording of important events such as the signing of treaties. As portable artifacts, they were prized gifts. As manufactured works, they were difficult to make and required a team of skilled craftsmen. As commodities they were immensely expensive.²⁹

At the zenith of this most esteemed art form were the Raphael Cartoons, a set of drawings trumpeting papal supremacy. Though normally referred to as drawings, the Raphael Cartoons are really a series of large scale paintings (they were painted in a glue distemper medium on many sheets of paper glued together and today are mounted on a canvas backing). The Raphael Cartoons are 10 feet high and 10 to 16 feet wide, with the figures being larger than lifesize.

In January 1623 Prince Charles had made up his mind, as his father had before him, to travel to the Continent to retrieve his intended bride. One month before setting out for Spain, however, he attended to important business. So it was that England’s very Protestant prince issued a directive on 18 January to purchase from a Genoese collection Raphael’s very Catholic drawings depicting the Acts of the Apostles.³⁰ The supposition is that England’s new Mortlake Tapestry Works on the Thames would later produce the series of 16 tapestries using the templates (“drawings”) of the Raphael Cartoons.

After weeks in disguise Charles arrived in Madrid on 7 March. The Spanish court was stunned at Charles’ audacity and the lengths to which England was willing to go to win the heart of Spain and her Infanta.³¹ Needing time to prepare for the festivities of the official ceremonial entry into the city of Madrid, a public procession was arranged a few days after Charles’ arrival. The parade featured the exhibition of one of Europe’s finest collections of

tapestries. Charles was undoubtedly impressed. Shortly after the event, in a letter dated 28 March (Brotton 13), Charles wrote to Sir Francis Crane about an urgent matter, asking about the ongoing negotiations to purchase the Raphael Cartoons. The drawings must be bought immediately, regardless of price.

We can surmise why Charles was set on becoming the grand possessor of these particular religious drawings. His actions of 1623 were those of a young man intent on enacting a chivalric romance, and what better way to solicit favors from a love than to offer a token as magnificent as the Raphael Cartoons? Such an acquisition would impress the in-laws and their friends in Rome and, more critically, appeal to his very devout wife. Perhaps it was even going to be a wedding gift, an example of art being used to dispel the harsh realities ahead, which living in Protestant England would certainly represent for the Infanta. The drawings were not yet tapestries, but they held the promise of what could be.

Unfortunately, the intention behind many of Charles' efforts in 1623 was lost on the knotty wrong-side. Much like his escapade to Spain, the purchase of the Raphael Cartoons was another impolitic scheme of mixing business with pleasure. For the Spanish, Charles' eagerness was perceived as a signal that England was converting back to the old faith, an augur of a reunified Christendom. The Spanish could not be more wrong. Today the Raphael Cartoons in the British Royal Collection are curated and publicly exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, largely as Charles had conceived them, secular artifacts stripped of their religious aura. The Catholic messages are neither buried nor encrypted. The messages are there, unchanged from 1623, for all who care to see them.

Endnotes

1. The “witty Spaniard” is the title character Don Quixote. In Part II (62) of Cervantes’ novel, Don Quixote uses the translation-tapestry analogy in a Barcelona printing house. In the same scene, he also expounds on self-published authors, copyright, religious books, and the expectation that books of fiction adhere to verisimilitude.
2. I am not a Hispanist and I cannot read Spanish. Since a good deal of Spanish lyric poetry from the period is not available in English translation, it was an inauspicious undertaking having to first rely on Google Translate to learn about the *décima*. With much gratitude, many of the *décimas* were retranslated by Professor Emeritus José María Ruano de la Haza of the University of Ottawa. I am very grateful to Professor de la Haza, who read an earlier draft of this paper and provided much needed direction. In late 2016, I also had a brief email exchange with Hispanist Professor Rafael Iglesias of the Benedictine University in Chicago, the editor of *Las Décimas* for the Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes. Professor Iglesias concurred that the Spanish-speaking English contingent would have been aware of the Alarcón incident and *Las Décimas*.
3. A “Catholic turn” in Shakespeare studies emerged in the late 20th century as interest peaked in the theory that William of Stratford was in Lancashire during his “lost years.”
4. Juan de Luna’s picaresque novel *The Pursuit of the History of Lazarillo de Tormes* (1622) was dedicated to William Earl of Derby and Countess Elizabeth, “a fruitful branch of the Ancient and Illustrious House of Oxford.” The novel was translated by David Rowland and published by Thomas Walkley. Also in 1622 Walkley published Q1 *Othello*.
5. Chronologically arranged in the print edition of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, the following pre-1623 works have some octosyllabic couplets: *Cynthia’s Revels*; *Poetaster*; *Entertainment at Althorp*; *A Private Entertainment at Highgate*; *The Masque of Blackness*; *Eastward Ho!*; *Hymenaei*; *Volpone*; *An Entertainment at Theobalds*; *The Masque of Beauty*; *The Masque of Queens*; *Epicene*; *Oberon*; *Love Freed*; *Love Restored*; *The Irish Masque at Court*; *The Forest*; *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*.

6. From Jonson's "Ode (to Himself)," assigned the date 1629:
 No doubt some mouldy tale,
 Like Pericles; and stale
 As the Shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish—
 Scraps out of every dish
 Throwne forth, and rak't into the common tub...
7. A comprehensive survey of poems using octosyllabic couplets is beyond the scope of this paper. I have not considered the "rounding couplet," for example, which was used to "round off" a scene or idea in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Even a cursory glance at anthologies and miscellanies reveals the level of unpopularity at the time with the verse. For example, less than one in ten of the 150 poems in the miscellany collection *Englands Helicon* (1614) use octosyllabic couplets.
8. Harington likens the transmission of poetic inventions (e.g. the sonnet) to translation: "But I had rather men should see and know that I borrow all than that I steal any: and I would wish to be called rather one of the worst translators then one of the meaner makers, especially since the Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt, that are yet called the first refiners of the English tongue, were both translators out of Italian" [spelling modernized]. Surrey and Wyatt were known for translating from their European model, Petrarch.
9. On the *décima* in general, I have consulted a number of reference works (Hirsch 153-154; Bleiberg 485, 559-60; Terry xlix; Ward 148, 191).
10. Today, the *décima* is an important folk verse, giving voice to the concerns of the lower classes, and in rural settings in Latin America. In Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Mexico, it is often improvised as a song, accompanied by *cuatro*, guitar, and *güiro*; it can feature two or more singers in a mock duel or a test of wits. These spontaneous performances verge on the point of buffoonery (Ihrie 283, Bleiberg 485).
11. It is difficult to overstate the impact of Prince Charles' trip to Spain on news publishing in Britain. Professor Henry Ettinghausen has written extensively on what was once described as the greatest news story since the Resurrection. He noted "there were at least five news pamphlets published in England on Charles' visit to Spain" (Ettinghausen 62, How).
 At the same time, Calderón's debut as a playwright saw *Amor, honor y poder* performed at the Royal Palace on 29 June 1623, with Prince Charles believed to be in attendance.

12. In *A King Travels* Professor Ruiz writes that shaking spears in mock battle has Moorish origins. In addition to spear-reed battles, the day’s festivities would include dances, mummary, running of bulls, banquets, largesse and theatrical skits (*entremeses*). The battles themselves were conducted with background music, featuring trumpets and drums (Ruiz 218).
13. Benedictine University’s Rafael Iglesias edited a new Spanish version that can be freely accessed on the Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes. Professor Iglesias used as his textual source volumes 20 and 52 of the *Biblioteca de autores españoles* (pages XXXII-XXXIV and 587-8 respectively). <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/poemas-satiricos-creados-por-diversos-autores-como-parte-de-un-conocido-vejamen-literario-contrario-a-juan-ruiz-de-alarcon-y-a-su-elogia-descriptivo/>
14. Editor Iglesias believes that the Spanish-speaking Englishmen would have been aware of the Alarcón incident (email correspondence dated November 17, 2016).
15. In the Spanish edition edited by Riquer, he categorizes them as *décimas* in footnotes 2 and 3, and the stanzas are indented, as we find in the English translation by Edith Grossman for HarperCollins. The Penguin edition translated by John Rutherford also refers to them as *décimas* in the footnote.
16. The translator Shelton would have been challenged by the comic twist of *versos de cabo rato*, lines with unfinished endings. The earliest English translators neglected these stanzas: Thomas Shelton (1620), Charles Jarvis (1742) and Tobias Smollett (1755) did not translate Cervantes’ *décimas*. Based on my research it appears that John Ormsby (1885) was the first English translator to tackle these particular *décima* verses. Ormsby wrote dismissively in a footnote that the Cervantes’ *décimas* possess no meaning. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Don_Quixote_\(Cervantes/Ormsby\)/Volume_1/Commendatory_Verses#cite_note-13](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Don_Quixote_(Cervantes/Ormsby)/Volume_1/Commendatory_Verses#cite_note-13)
17. Prominent early 20th century Hispanist James Fitzmaurice-Kelly wrote of English attitudes towards the Spanish that there is “little or no interest taken in Spanish lyrical poetry” (Fitzmaurice-Kelly 24-5).
18. When a poetic form is transmitted into a foreign tongue, a departure from the rhyming scheme is the rule, not the exception. English’s appropriation of the Italian fourteen-line sonnet saw several evolutions in the rhyming scheme, from Thomas Wyatt to Philip Sidney to Shakespeare. Sidney Lee observed, “His [Shakespeare’s] sonnets aim at far greater metrical simplicity than the Italian or the French” (Lee 165; for a more recent discussion see Hurley 76-7).

19. Prince Charles arrived in London in early October just as the long printing schedule for the First Folio was ending. The last sections to be printed were *Cymbeline* (early November), Preface and Title page (mid-November?), *Troilus and Cressida*, and then *Troilus and Cressida* plus prologue (Higgins 44).
20. King Philip and court favorite Olivares were “on friendly terms with many of the writers of the time” (Terry xvi).
21. The Magdalen College Register records a series of long-term leaves granted to Mabbe, including a three month leave starting on 16 February 1623: “Although it is tempting to speculate that Mabbe coincided in Madrid with Charles and Buckingham, we lack any evidence that can prove or even suggest it other than these records” (Pérez Fernández 8, a theory also posited by Russell 80).
22. Prince Charles arrived in London in early October and the printing of the engraving took place around the same time, perhaps even a few weeks later. It is likely that the Droeshout engraving was inspired by a well-established superstitious belief in physiognomy. In the literature of the period, and art in general, physiognomy was a significant aspect of characterization where physical malformations could be linked with purloining, pinching and pilfering. In the “The Tale of Beryn,” a 15th century addition to *The Canterbury Tales*, one of the earliest definitions of the term in English reads: “I knowe wele by thy fisnamy, thy kynd it were to stele” (OED). In *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1886), Charles Darwin put to rest the “science” of physiognomy and turned to quoting who else but Shakespeare to illustrate the power of simulation.
23. Jonson’s chameleon-like persona in the First Folio preface is encapsulated in Cervantes’ pseudonymous *poeta entreverado*, variously translated into English “motley” (Ormsby 1885), “eclectic” (Grossman 2005), “bifurcated” (Montgomery 2009).
24. “His given name was James; his family name was usually spelled Mabbe (or Mebbe), but he at least apparently pronounced it ‘Maybe’; his regular pseudonym ‘Puede-Ser’ means ‘maybe’, and is apparently a pun on his surname” (Taylor 242).
25. Professor Stritmatter is more decisive about Blount’s Protestant sympathies (Stritmatter 32, Small).

26. In his capacity as general editor of the new Oxford University edition of Shakespeare, Taylor’s cryptographic proclivities have been realized through stylometry.
27. Stritmatter alludes to an animating spirit of internationalism behind the preface of the First Folio: “they were internationalists, sharing an appreciation of literature and great arts that was fundamentally humanist and broadly ecumenical” (Stritmatter 33, Small). Hispanist Alexander Samson counts Mabbe among a cadre of “intercultural agents” (Samson 11).
28. See Stritmatter and Kositsky’s *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare’s The Tempest*: “Less obvious, especially to the modern reader, is that *The Tempest* (among other things) is a play about Spain and dynastic Spanish politics” (Stritmatter and Kostisky 55).
29. I have consulted the works of Alan Haynes and Thomas P. Campbell on tapestry, as well as the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts website: “In England, from the 16th century onwards, the noble classes left their cold and draughty feudal homes for more comfortable palaces and manor houses, however, the importance of tapestries as status symbols did not diminish.” (<https://sites.google.com/site/splendor319/sarah/the-last-supper-vmfa>, accessed October 15th, 2017)
30. On Charles’ “often overlooked artistic investment” in the Raphael Cartoons, I have used the research of Professor Jerry Brotton: “Charles’ renewed interest in the cartoons needs to be seen in the context of the early stages of the diplomatic negotiations concerning his marriage to the Infanta” (Brotton 13). Not mentioned by Brotton, though certainly a backdrop, the Spanish might have interpreted the purchase of the Cartoons in the context of the Council of Trent (1545-63) that aimed at elevating art to serve Catholic objectives.
31. For the dates of Charles’ visit to Spain, I have used Glyn Redworth’s standard history on the subject, *The Prince and the Infanta*. The collection of essays in *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles’s Journey to Madrid, 1623*, edited by Alexander Samson, has also been invaluable.

Works Cited

- Berger, Thomas and Sonia Massai. *Paratexts in English Printed Drama To 1642: Volume 1, Single-Text and Collected Editions to 1623*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Birge Vitz, Evelyn. "Rethinking Old French Literature: The Orality of the Octosyllabic Couplet," *Romanic Review*. New York: 77:4 (Nov. 1, 1986), 307-321.
- Bleiberg, Germán, Maureen Ihrie and Janet Perez, Eds. *Dictionary of the Literature of the Iberian Peninsula (A-K)*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993.
- Brotton, Jerry. "Buying the Renaissance: Prince Charles's Art Purchases in Madrid, 1623." *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623*. Ed. Alexander Samson. London: Ashgate Publishing, 2006.
- Campbell, Thomas P. "European Tapestry Production and Patronage, 1400–1600" and "European Tapestry Production and Patronage, 1600–1800". Essays published on the Metropolitan Museum of Art website, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tapb/hd_tapb.htm
- Cervantes, Miguel. *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Ed. Martín de Riquer. Barcelona: Classicos Universales Planeta, 1990.
- Corn, Alfred. *The Poem's Heartbeat: A Manual of Prosody*. Washington: Copper Canyon Press, 2008.
- Daniel, Samuel. "Defense of Ryme." *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel*, Volume 4. Ed. Alexander B. Grosart. 1885-96.
- Dickson, Peter W. *Bardgate: Shakespeare and the Royalists Who Stole the Bard*. Mt. Vernon, Ohio: Printing Arts Press, 2016.
- Ettinghausen, Henry. "The greatest news story since the Resurrection? Andres de Almansa y Mendoza's coverage of Prince Charles' Spanish trip." Ed. Alexander Samson. *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623*. Ashgate Publishing, 2006.
- . *Prince Charles and the King of Spain's Sister: What the Papers Said*. Inaugural lecture. University of Southampton. 28 February 1985.

- . . *How The Press Began: the Pre-Periodical Printed News in Early Modern Europe*. (2015). http://www.academia.edu/16941871/HOW_THE_PRESS_BEGAN_THE_PRE-PERIODICAL_PRINTED_NEWS_IN_EARLY_MODERN_EUROPE_http_www.janusdigital.es_anexos.htm2015_.Digital_free_304_pp_80_ills
- Fernández, José María Pérez. “Translation, Diplomacy and Espionage: New Insights Into James Mabbe’s Career”, *Translation and Literature* 23 (2014), 1-22. Accessed via the University of Grenada, Repositorio Institucional de la Universidad de Granada.
- . . “Introduction.” *James Mabbe: The Spanish Bawd* published by MHRA Tudor & Stuart Translations. Vol. 10. Ed. José María Pérez Fernández. London: MHRA (MHRA Tudor & Stuart Translations), 2013.
- Fitzmaurice-Kelly, James. *The Relations Between Spanish and English Literature*. 1910. Reprint. London: Forgotten Books, 2013.
- Fuchs, Barbra. *The Poetics of Piracy: Emulating Spain in English Literature*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.
- Gascoigne, George. “Certayne Notes of Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse.” *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*. Volume 1 (Cambridge English Classics series). Ed. John W. Cunliffe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907.
- Greene, Roland et al, Eds. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, 4th Edition*. “Espinela” (255); “Intertextuality” (716); “Octosyllable” (970); “Sonnet” (1318).
- Harington, Sir John. “A Preface, or rather a Briefe Apologie of Poetrie”, *Orlando Furioso*, in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, Volume 2. Ed. G. Gregory Smith. Oxford UP, 1904.
- Haynes, Alan. “The Mortlake Tapestry Factory: 1619 to 1703,” *History Today*. Volume 24:1 (January 1974).
- Higgins, B.D.R. “Printing the First Folio.” *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare’s First Folio*. Ed. Emma Smith. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Hirsch, Edward. “Octosyllable,” *A Poet’s Glossary*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.
- Honigmann, Ernest. *Shakespeare: The Lost Years*. NY: Macmillan, 1985.

- Hume, Martin. *Spanish Influence on English Literature*. Haskell House, 1964.
- Hurley, Michael D. and Michael O'Neill. *Poetic Form: An Introduction*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Ihrie, Maureen and Salvador A. Oropesa. *World Literature in Spanish: An Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2011.
- Kittay, Jeffrey. "On Octo: Response to 'Rethinking Old French Literature: The Orality of the Octosyllabic Couplet,'" *Romanic Review*. 78: 3 (May 1, 1987): 291-298.
- Lee, Sidney. *A Life of William Shakespeare*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1917.
- Lope de Vega, Félix. *New Rules for Writing Plays at This Time*. Translated by Victor Dixon. http://emothe.uv.es/biblioteca/textosEMOTHE/EMOTHE0116_NewRulesForWritingPlaysAtThisTime.php
- Matas Caballero, Juan. *Góngora y el epigrama: Estudios sobre las décimas*. Eds. Matas Caballero, Juan, Micó, José María, Ponce Cárdenas, Jesús. Madrid, Spain and Frankfurt, Germany: Iberoamericana—Vervuert, 2013, 167-187.
- Peña, Dr. Juan Antonio de la. *A Relation of the Royall Festiuities, and Juego de Cañas [A Turnament of Darting with Reedes after the manner of Spaine] made by the King of Spaine at Madrid, the 21 August this present yeere, 1623. To Honour the Espousall Treaties of the Illustrious Prince of Wales, with the Lady Infanta Maria of Austria*. (London, Printed for Henry Seyle, 1623) [STC19594]. Accessed *Early English Books Online*. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A09280.0001.001?view=toc>
- Redworth, Glyn. *The Prince and the Infanta: The Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Ruiz, Teofilo F. *A King Travels: Festive Traditions in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- Russell, Peter. "A Stuart Hispanist: James Mabbe", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 30 (1953), 75-78.
- Samson, Alexander. Ed. *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623*. Ashgate Publishing, 2006.
- . "Maybe Exemplary? James Mabbe's Translation of the Exemplarie Novells (1640)." *Republic of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts*. 4:2 (March 2015).

Sander, Julie. “Jonson, King and Court” *Early Modern English Poetry: A Critical Companion*. Ed. Patrick Cheney et al. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Scève, Maurice. *Emblems of Desire: Selection from the ‘Délie’ of Maurice Scève*. Edited and translated by Richard Sieburth. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.

Stritmatter, Roger A. “‘Small Latine and Lesse Greeke’: Anatomy of a Misquotation (Part 1: Setting the Stage),” *The Oxfordian*, 19 (October 2017), 9-44.

———. “Publish We This Peace: A Note on the Design of the Shakespeare First Folio and the Spanish Marriage Crisis,” *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, 34:3 (Fall 1998), 16-17. Reprinted in *Brief Chronicles* “The 1623 Shakespeare First Folio: A Minority Report,” 2016, 111-115.

———. “Bestow, How and When You List: Susan Vere, William Jaggard, and the 1623 Folio,” *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, 34:3 (Fall 1998), 18-19. Reprinted in “The 1623 Shakespeare First Folio: A Minority Report,” 2016, 89-93.

Stritmatter, Roger A. and Lynne Kositsky. *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare’s The Tempest*. Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland and Company, 2013.

Taylor, Gary. “The Cultural Politics of Maybe.” *Theatre and Religion: Lancastrian Shakespeare*. Ed. Richard Dutton et al. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 242-258.

Terry, Arthur. *Seventeenth-Century Spanish Poetry: the power of artifice*. Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Thompson, Elbert N.S. “The Octosyllabic Couplet,” *Philological Quarterly*, 18 (January 1, 1939), 257-268.

Trapero, Maximiano. *Publicado en las actas del VI Encuentro-Festival Iberoamericano de la Décima y el Verso Improvisado*. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Universidad de La Palmas, Cabildo de Gran Canaria y Acade, 2000: I, *Estudios*, 117-137.

Turco, Lewis. *The Book of Forms: A Handbook of Poetics*. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2000.

- Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Walters, D. Gareth. *The Cambridge Introduction to Spanish Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Ward, Philip, Ed. *The Oxford Companion to Spanish Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Wilson, Edward M. "Calderón and the 'Décimas a la muerte'." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 48 (1971) 301-313.
- Yamamoto-Wilson, John. "Mabbe's Maybes: A Stuart Hispanist in Context", *Translation and Literature*, 2 (2012), 319-42.
- Yeager, R.F. "Ben Jonson's English Grammar and John Gower's Reception in the Seventeenth Century." *The Endless Knot: Essays on Old and Middle English In Honor of Marie Borroff*. Eds. Tavormina, M. Teresa and Yeager, R.F., Cambridge: Brewer, 1995, 227-239.

