

The Literary Glocal: Sir Walter Aston between Staffordshire and Madrid

Alexander Samson

ABSTRACT England's ambassador in Madrid from 1620 to 1624 and from 1635 to 1638, Sir Walter Aston was a fluent speaker of Castilian and convert to Catholicism. His interest in Spanish literary culture, in circulation of poetry in manuscript, and in translation played a key role in his negotiation of the religious and political differences that affected him and his circle personally and divided the state he served. The Astons' ambivalent position made them valuable intermediaries and at the same time vulnerably peripheral. Alexander Samson identifies a key performance witnessed by Aston in Spain on the eve of the Spanish match that is linked with a sonnet found in Secretary of State Edward Conway's papers and with the later translation by Aston's secretary, Sir Richard Fanshawe, of Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza's play *Querer por sólo querer*. **KEYWORDS:** Walter Aston; Anglo-Spanish literary and cultural relations; English recusants; translation; Luis de Góngora; Spanish comedias

☞ **THE DEPENDENCE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS** on translation, on the representation and mediation of and through the figure of the ambassador, reminds us of the intimate relationship between diplomacy and cultural exchange. Political agents' effectiveness relies on their amphibious ability to inhabit monarchs' persons as their representatives while at the same time inhabiting the space of another country, by cultivating a cosmopolitanism poised between the personal and political. As Timothy Hampton has written, the ambassador "represents himself *while representing another*." Embassies depend, Hampton argues, on a double fiction: of the envoy being neither who they are nor where they are, since they also inhabit "the 'fictional' extra-territorial space that is the resident embassy," in an effacement of borders that makes international space possible.¹ These politico-cultural crossings became ever more

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1. Timothy Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2009), 9, 76. Italics in the original.

fraught in the increasingly divided sectarian atmosphere of the early seventeenth century, when political and religious identities might overlap with or diverge from cultural, social, or personal interests.²

The career of Sir Walter Aston, one of the most important diplomats mediating between England and Spain in the years 1619–38, illustrates perfectly how political allegiance, religious affiliation, and cultural interests might diverge from—and local, allegedly marginal, recusant English Catholic interests converge with—a cosmopolitan European internationalism. Aston was ambassador to Spain on two occasions: during the critical Spanish match negotiations of 1619–25, which ended in failure and war, and then between 1635 and 1638, to exploit the Franco–Spanish war that had broken out after Sweden’s defeat at Nördlingen. This essay explores the relationship between literary exchange and Aston’s diplomatic and political activities within the complex context of politico-cultural translation in the early seventeenth century.

An important aspect of diplomatic activity was attendance at prominent public celebrations, civic rituals, and court entertainments. On New Year’s Day 1623, Walter Aston attended a performance in the Royal Palace of Madrid showcasing the talents of the Spanish Infanta María, the object of Aston’s marital diplomacy. This essay identifies the performance as the play *Querer por sólo querer* (*To Love Only for Love’s Sake*) by court dramatist Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza. Aston’s secretary on his second embassy, Sir Richard Fanshawe, later translated the play, making it the only complete Spanish comedia to be translated into English before the eighteenth century. A manuscript copy, with translation, of one of the play’s most accomplished sonnets also made its way into the papers of the secretary of state with whom Aston transacted political business, Viscount Edward Conway. These connections demonstrate how diplomacy shaped ambassadors’ cultural interests, and they underline the central role played by translation—understood in the broadest sense—in political relations.

☞ A Diplomatic Life: Recusancy and Literature

Aston’s first embassy saw his whole family accompany him to Madrid; his daughter Constance was born there in 1621, and another daughter born in Spain, with the markedly Hispanicized name Honoria, died there in infancy.³ On Aston’s second

2. On the issue of religious difference and ambassadorial representation, see Niels F. May, “Staged Sovereignty or Aristocratic Values?: Diplomatic Ceremonial at the Westphalian Peace Negotiations (1643–1648),” in *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World, c. 1410–1800*, ed. Tracey A. Sowerby and Jan Hennings (London, 2017), 80–94; and Tracey A. Sowerby, “Richard Pate, the Royal Supremacy, and Reformation Diplomacy,” *Historical Journal* 54 (2011): 265–85.

3. Deborah Aldrich-Watson, *The Verse Miscellany of Constance Aston Fowler: A Diplomatic Edition* (Tempe, Ariz., 2000), xxi. The crucial evidence comes from documents about Gertrude, one of the daughters, at the convent of St. Monica’s in Leuven; see Helen Hackett, “The Aston-Thimelby Circle at Home and Abroad: Localism, National Identity and Internationalism in the English Catholic Community,” in *Region, Religion and English Renaissance Literature*, ed. David Coleman (Farnham, U.K., 2013), 123–38 at 134.

mission, he traveled with his younger son, Herbert, as well as with his secretary Fanshawe, later also an ambassador and a translator of Luís de Camões's *Os Lusíadas* (1655), along with *Querer por sólo querer* and other works. It is not known precisely when the Astons converted to Catholicism, although there seems to be a growing consensus that it was during the first embassy; some of the family may only ever have conformed outwardly with the Elizabethan settlement.⁴

The series of Catholic marriages of the Astons' children beginning in the 1620s, the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham, and the family's connections to recusant exiles from the Staffordshire area—especially Fathers William Southern and Francis Foster—all support an early date. Southern had been admitted to the English College at Valladolid on the same day as Foster in 1619, after they had both spent time in St. Omer; presumably they had traveled on to Valladolid together.⁵ In 1629, a government informer described “Francis Foster, newly come out of Spain. A Yorkshire man; was agent for the English Jesuits at the Court of Spain, when his Majesty was there; resorts much to London, and to the Lady Aston's house, Staffordshire.”⁶ Southern's hand has been identified by Helen Hackett and Cedric Brown in the poetic miscellany compiled between 1635 and 1640 by Aston's Madrid-born daughter Constance; Southern contributed strongly Catholic devotional material, including four poems by the Jesuit missionary Robert Southwell.⁷ By 1635, Aston's wife, Gertrude, was noted on a list of recusants for the county of Staffordshire and referred to in a “Hispaniolized” transposition of her name as “Gartrica,” along with a daughter named after her.⁸

The only direct evidence of Aston's change of religion comes from an undated letter to an unknown addressee: “My deare frend Where as there hath been much

4. A. J. Loomie's *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter ODNB] entry for Aston suggests that he converted in 1623; s.v. “Aston, Walter, Baron Aston of Forfar (1584–1639),” last modified January 3, 2008, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/828. Aston must have been a convert: his father, grandfather, and guardian were ardent Protestants. On such Nicodemite conformists, see Alexandra Walsham's classic study *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity, and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (London, 1993), esp. 36–37.

5. Helen Hackett, “Unlocking the Mysteries of Constance Aston Fowler's Verse Miscellany (Huntington Library MS HM904): The Hand B Scribe Identified,” in *Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England*, ed. Joshua Eckhardt and Daniel Starza Smith (Farnham, U.K., 2014), 101. I would like to pay warm tribute to Helen Hackett for sharing this fascinating research with me and offering invaluable comments on drafts of this essay. Much of what follows draws and depends on her work on the Constance Aston Fowler miscellany. See further references in notes 3 and 6.

6. Hackett, “Aston-Thimelby Circle,” 129, 133–34; Helen Hackett, “Women and Catholic Manuscript Networks in Seventeenth-Century England: New Research on Constance Aston Fowler's Miscellany of Sacred and Secular Verse,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 65 (2012): 1094–124 at 1112–13.

7. Hackett, “Unlocking the Mysteries,” 99.

8. Hackett, “Aston-Thimelby Circle,” 129; Jane Hampartumian, “Staffordshire Recusants in 1635,” *Staffordshire Catholic History* 22 (1984): 5–23 at 19.

friendship & kindnes betwixt us for so long a time I hope it shall not break of upon this occasion of my changing my Religion. . . . I did not rashly make this change, nor upon a suddaine but upon the best consideration & judgement that my will could reach vnto.”⁹ Friendship is placed above religion here, whether for Aston or for his nameless friend. He continued formulaically that his reading of holy scripture had informed him of a church founded by Christ and the apostles (a marginal note references Matthew 16), adding that nowhere had he seen any reference to Protestantism in historical chronicles and that Lutheranism was less than a century old.

After Aston’s death, his son, also named Walter, traveled to Spain fleeing persecution under Cromwell and in search of employment. His petition to the Spanish Crown argued that, because his father had “submitted himself to the Roman Catholic faith, he suffered many irreparable damages, not only the frustration of deserved rewards for his illustrious service but also the payment of his ambassadorial salary, which to this day remains unpaid.”¹⁰ In 1626, however, Charles had pardoned the debts incurred by his “dear Wat” for recusancy and had promised help with the debt related to Aston’s residence in Spain. Hackett argues that the title granted to Aston in 1627 in spite of his probable conversion in Spain—Baron Forfar of Angus—showed that Charles honored his promise.¹¹

Aston’s library does not offer evidence of reading that might have motivated his conversion, although there are volumes that attest to his interests in Spanish literary culture. He concluded his letter to the unknown friend, “Much more I could say out of those good books, which, since I left being a protestant, I have read.”¹² The Sotheby’s sale catalogue for the family seat’s library at Tixall from 1899, however, contains only one book that we might associate with this claim: Alfonso de Villegas’s *Flos Sanctorum*, in a Paris edition of 1634 that predates Aston’s second embassy.¹³ Although religious materials cannot be used to pinpoint a precise date of conversion, the other Spanish material in Aston’s library reveals his profound interest in Spanish literary culture, from chivalric romances to the first monolingual Spanish dictionary and a miscellany by Lope de Vega. Among the items auctioned off were a copy of the manuscript penned by Aston’s cantankerous and grumpy predecessor in Madrid,

9. British Library [hereafter BL], Add. MS 36452, fol. 14; reprinted in *Tixall Letters: Or, the Correspondence of the Aston Family and Their Friends during the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Arthur Clifford, 2 vols. (London, 1815), 1:63–64. There are nine volumes of the Aston family’s papers in the BL (Add. MSS 36444–52). There is a useful downloadable guide to the collection: http://hviewer.bl.uk/lamsHViewer/Default.aspx?mdark=ark:/81055/vdc_10000001047.0x00006d.

10. *Tixall Letters*, 1:64n. Translations are mine unless otherwise stated. The editor of the *Tixall Letters* claims that Aston converted during the second embassy and consequently lost his salary; this assertion also figures in Michael Greenslade’s *Catholic Staffordshire 1500–1850* ([Leominster, U.K., 2006], 89), citing G. E. Cokayne’s *Complete Peerage*.

11. Hackett, “Aston-Thimelby Circle,” 127.

12. *Tixall Letters*, 1:70.

13. *The Tixall Library: Catalogue of Valuable Books & Manuscripts, Late the Property of Sir F.A.T.C. Constable, Bart . . .* (London, 1899), 53.

Sir Charles Cornwallis, *A Discourse of the State of Spaine* (1607); manuscript materials about Katherine of Aragon; and such printed books as Francisco Bermúdez Pedraza's *Antigüedad y excelencias de Granada* (1608), Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra's *Espejo de príncipes y caballeros* (1617; famously translated by Margaret Tyler in 1578); and first editions of Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* (1611) and Lope de Vega's *La Filomena* (1621).¹⁴

The interest of *La Filomena* lay not only in its literary quality but also, and more significantly for the Astons, because it formed part of Lope's efforts to attract the patronage of Philip IV's prime minister and favorite, the Count-Duke of Olivares, and it was dedicated to Leonor Pimentel, lady-in-waiting to the Infanta María. Pimentel was the wife of the Count of Benavente, *mayordomo mayor* of Philip IV's queen, Isabel de Borbón, so the book was embedded within Spanish politico-literary patronage networks. The popularity and dissemination of Lope's works in the Aston family circle is further suggested by letters and verses from the pen of Herbert Aston, who dubbed his fiancée, Katherine Thimelby, "Seraphine" after a character in Lope's *El leal criado* (1621; *The Loyal Servant*) and *El hijo venturoso* (ca. 1588–95; *The Fortunate Son*). Meanwhile Constance Aston playfully called herself Celestina—also a name from Lope's plays—when acting as go-between for her brother.¹⁵

Aston's literary interests extended from his books and his own writing to the patronage of a large number of important English literary figures, including poets and dramatists. Born in 1584, Aston had become a ward of the famous legal theorist Edward Coke at fourteen, following his father's death in 1597. Aston was created knight of the bath at James I's accession, and he patronized the group of players who had previously served as the Admiral's Men over the crucial Christmas period of 1603–4. Two of their number, George Chapman and Michael Drayton, subsequently joined Aston as members of Prince Henry's household.¹⁶ Aston became gentleman of the privy chamber to Henry, and then, following the death of James's heir in 1612, to James's second son, Charles. An elegy written by Aston on Henry's death was included in a miscellany, *Lachrimae Lachrimarum* (1613), associated with John Donne and with Aston's neighbor and friend Sir Henry Goodere.

Aston and Goodere, who was another gentleman of the prince's privy chamber, were both patrons of Drayton, whose *Poly-Olbion* (1612) had been dedicated

14. *Tixall Library*, 10, 14–15, 23, 40, 53; Hackett, "Aston-Thimelby Circle," 133. A copy of Cornwallis's discourse is at BL, Add. MS 39853, fols. 26–29.

15. The latter is based on Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*; see E. H. Templin, "The Source of Lope de Vega's *El hijo venturoso* and (Indirectly) of *La esclava de su hijo*," *Hispanic Review* 2 (1934): 345–48; Jorge Checa, "Engendrado por la guerra: *El hijo venturoso* de Lope de Vega," *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 63 (2011): 1–17; and Hackett, "Women and Catholic Manuscript Networks," 1102, 1115–19.

16. Michael Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance: The Pembroke Family* (London, 1988), 125.

to Prince Henry, and who dedicated five works to Aston between 1602 and 1607.¹⁷ Drayton—along with Samuel Daniel—was seen as an heir to Sidney and Spenser and was a crucial player in the post-1612 Spenserian revival. According to Michael Brennan, “The origins of some of [the revival’s] most important characteristics—the sense of a lost golden world, a disillusionment with court life and a scepticism towards monarchic authority—lay in the views formulated by its father-figures, Daniel and Drayton, during the first three years of James’s reign.”¹⁸ In the *Poly-Olbion*, Drayton referred to a literary culture associated not solely with Aston but more broadly with the Aston family’s country house Tixall, “Which oft the Muse hath found her safe and sweet retreat.”¹⁹ Another dedication to Aston, “that noble and true louer of learning,” from the culturally Hispanophilic playwright John Fletcher in his 1609 play *The Faithful Shepherdess*, reinforces Aston’s links to London’s literary scene and particularly to figures like Donne and Fletcher who had interests in Spain.²⁰

The Aston family’s broader networks suggest that these literary connections were sustained over considerable periods of time. Lady Dorothy Shirley (for example) contributed a poem to Constance Aston’s miscellany, testifying to her friendship with Katherine Thimelby, Constance’s future sister-in-law. Their intimacy was perhaps grounded in geographical propinquity: Dorothy’s brother owned Chartley Castle near to Tixall. Yet Dorothy—the youngest daughter of Philip Sidney’s widow, Frances Walsingham, and Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex—was also dedicatee of a life of St. Francis Xavier and may have been a Catholic like the Astons. She was the dedicatee, too, of *The Chances* (1632) by James Shirley (no relation), the only playwright before the Restoration to adapt Spanish comedias wholesale.²¹

Aston’s own interest in Spanish is also apparent from his excellent command of the language. This is evident in the letters he wrote to his foreign correspondents, as well as in transcriptions in his commonplace book, now in the Staffordshire Record Office. This book includes a series of entries in Spanish: on imports and exports; commodities; Spain’s size, population, and nobles; its fleets; and its debts (160 million ducats); as well as a letter purporting to be from the Holy Virgin Mary to Messina in Sicily.²² In one letter dated August 16, 1626, following his return from

17. Dennis Kay, “Poems by Sir Walter Aston, and a Date for the Donne/Goodyer Verse Epistle *Alternis Vicibus*,” *Review of English Studies*, n.s., 37 (1986): 198–210 at 200–201. My thanks to Daniel Starza Smith for this reference.

18. Brennan, *Literary Patronage*, 115.

19. Quoted in Hackett, “Aston-Thimelby Circle,” 128.

20. John Fletcher, *The Faithful Shepherdess* (London, 1610?), sig. ¶1r. See also Bernard Henry Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and His Circle* (Oxford, 1941; repr., 1961 [1962]), 153.

21. John Loftis, *Renaissance Drama in England & Spain: Topical Allusions and History Plays* (Princeton, N.J., 1987), 249–52; Hackett, “Women and Catholic Manuscript Networks,” 1097, 1103. The dedication is in *The Admirable Life of S. Francis Xavier. Deuided into VI. Bookes* (St. Omer, France, 1632; STC 24140).

22. MS D988, Staffordshire Record Office, Stafford. He had probably transcribed some of this information from his copy of Cornwallis’s *A Discourse of the State of Spaine* (1607).

his first embassy, Aston addresses Doña Maria Lande—whom he describes as “chief mother of the maids [*meninas*],” or young ladies of the court—in the warmest terms and in fluent Spanish. After a suitably formal opening that underlines his and his family’s indebtedness to her, he alludes to his suffering from “tertian fevers,” and then to Gertrude’s being “with the little ones in the country” while he pursues his “ambitions at court which I hope will with his Majesty’s favor bear fruit”—presumably the fruit of his title, Baron Forfar, granted the following year.²³ The heading in the copy book makes it clear that the letter came with King Charles’s explicit approval (“To Doña Maria Landi with his M:ts consent and leaue”), and the letter attests to prior exchanges between Charles and Lande that had been channeled through Aston: “having given his Majesty your grace’s message, he ordered that I respond that he remains satisfied and obliged for the love and good will which your grace showed him and that the memory of it is most pleasing to him.”²⁴

The seamless elision of the personal and the political in Aston’s letters fails to disguise the importance of these exchanges. They constituted an informal network and back channel by which Charles continued to communicate with the Spanish court and receive intelligence even after the outbreak of war. As Aston writes to Lande:

furthermore, his Majesty instructs me to inform your grace that if others proceeded with him with the same truth and good heart that you do, things would be in a very different pass from that in which they are now. In truth, my lady, he speaks always of the person of the Infanta with the utmost respect, and it appears to me that the mistrust of his person on his return, having undertaken such an enterprise to serve his Highness, has caused the feeling that afterwards came upon him, and he lost hope that any true thing might be hoped for from Spain—but the past is incurable.²⁵

Although the reference to the disingenuousness of “others” is clearly a barb aimed at Olivares, the ambassador nevertheless also recalls his obligation to the count-duke’s wife, “mi Señora la Condesa Duquesa.”²⁶ Aston’s value to Charles depended in part on his Catholicism and the access and connections this gave him.

The Prince of Wales’s sudden appearance in Madrid in 1623 had raised hopes that a notable conversion was imminent, comparable in significance to Henry IV’s conversion to Catholicism in 1593. Aston had noted on April 8, 1623, at the outset of Holy Week, that the “processions of the Disciplinants was far greater then hath been

23. Aston Papers, vol. 6, “Letter-books of Sir Walter Aston, Baron Aston, the first during his first embassy to Spain, 1620–1625,” BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 188r.

24. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 188r.

25. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 188r–v.

26. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 188v.

of many years before and with diuers new invencions of martyrizing themselves they haue seemed to stryve much at this tyme to give extraordinary Demonstrations of their zeal”—implying a comparative understanding of the rituals and an appreciation of their present aim, to impress the English visitors.²⁷ As time had worn on, the hopes of Olivares, the king, and others at court that Charles intended to convert had dissipated. In his letter to Lande in 1626, Aston underlined his desire to retire to his country house, making a pointed allusion to the deceits of the world, which would no longer sorrow him there, and drawing—despite the scrutiny to which it was subject—on an anticourtly aesthetic shared in both England and Spain.²⁸

Aston’s usefulness as a diplomatic agent was inexorably tied to his crossing of linguistic and religious borders, not least through his interest in cultural production. Of course, such malleability could equally be ground for suspicion, as was the case for the intercultural agent James Mabbe, foremost translator from Spanish beginning in the Jacobean period, who fell afoul of the archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, around this time.²⁹ The change in the relative status of James’s ambassadors to Spain on October 8, 1623, when Aston was raised to the same status as the former lead negotiator, John Digby, Earl of Bristol, reflects Aston’s effectiveness in maintaining the trust of all parties despite such pitfalls; meanwhile Digby was made a scapegoat for Charles and Buckingham’s diplomatic blunders.³⁰ Charles instructed Aston not to deliver his proxy for going ahead with the marriage—even after the arrival of the long-awaited papal dispensation—until he received further instructions. Thomas Cogswell has suggested that Aston’s “close connection to Buckingham and his Warwickshire neighbor, Secretary Conway, counterbalanced his embarrassing Catholic sympathies and ensured that he would recollect a word in his ear from the heir apparent.”³¹

Conway had taken over from Calvert as secretary of state in the spring of 1623 and also acted as the “most influential benefactor” of the Spanish Protestant exile Tomás Carrascón de las Cortes y Medrano, who was in London by 1621 and had produced a Spanish translation of the *Book of Common Prayer*. For use in the event of the Spanish match’s successful conclusion, this version displayed the influence of Casiodoro de la Reina’s and Cipriano de Valera’s vernacular biblical translations. Under the pseudonym Fernando Texeda, Carrascón de las Cortes y Medrano also

27. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 45r.

28. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 188v.

29. Gary Taylor, “The Cultural Politics of Maybe,” in *Theatre and Religion: Lancastrian Shakespeare*, ed. Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay, and Richard Wilson (Manchester, 2003), 242–58.

30. On the negotiations, their origins, progress, and failure, see Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta: The Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* (London, 2003); and *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles’s Journey to Madrid, 1623*, ed. Alexander Samson (Aldershot, U.K., 2006).

31. Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621–1624* (Cambridge, 1989), 61, 107.

published a number of works of religious polemic, beginning with *Texeda Retextus: Or the Spanish Monke His Bill of Diuorce against the Church of Rome* (1623), which was dedicated to Conway.³² Despite the divergent political positions of figures like Conway and Aston, and Fletcher and Donne, they shared an interest in Spanish cultural goods in this crucial period after the conclusion of peace in 1604, and this interest continued to be diplomatically valuable, even after the resumption of war in 1625.

 **Politics and Performance: Witnessing *Querer por sólo querer***

In the Conway papers is a manuscript copy, with translation into English, of a sonnet from the court dramatist Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza's play *Querer por sólo querer*, first performed in 1622 or perhaps early 1623. A printed edition of the play from Juan de la Cuesta appeared in 1623, soon after its original performance(s), alongside the *relación* of the festivities of which it had perhaps originally been intended to form a part, *Fiesta que se hizo en Araniuez*. The 1653 translation of the play by Aston's secretary, Fanshawe—one of only four English translations from Spanish comedias before the Restoration and, as noted above, the only complete one—was based on this 1623 print edition, including its dedication and preliminaries, as well as the attached *Fiesta*.³³ The subtitle of the print edition (“performed by the young ladies-in-waiting at court for the birthday of the queen our lady”) suggests that the first performance had taken place on the occasion of the queen's birthday on November 22, 1622. However, George Peale has argued that a series of financial documents shows that the work did not premiere until January 1, 1622/3, in the Salon de Actos of the Royal Palace of Madrid. An Italian ambassador referred to that performance, but neither his reference nor any of the evidence mentions the work by name.³⁴ The details of the production cited by Peale (for example, giants) might equally have referred to *La gloria de Niquea* by Juan de Tassis y Peralta, Count of Villamediana. *Niquea*, along with Lope de Vega's *El vellocino de oro*, had been performed the previous May as part of the Fiesta de Aranjuez—although it is unlikely to have been revived after Villamediana's assassination, in August 1622, almost certainly with the connivance of Olivares or the young king. Although Aston, like the Italian ambassador, does not name the comedia, his account, which I discuss below, provides the only definitive evidence that Hurtado de Mendoza's play was the one performed on New Year's Day 1623.

32. Rady Roldán-Figueroa, “Tomás Carrascón, Anti-Roman Catholic Propaganda, and the Circulation of Ideas in Jacobean England,” *History of European Ideas* 39 (2012): 169–206 at 172, 182; Daniel Starza Smith, *John Donne and the Conway Papers: Patronage and Manuscript Circulation in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 2014), 74–75.

33. Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza, *Querer por solo querer: To Love only for Love Sake: A Dramatick Romance Represented at Aranjuez before the King and Queen of Spain to Celebrate the Birth-Day of that King, by the Meninas*, trans. Richard Fanshawe (London, 1670).

34. George Peale, “*Querer por sólo querer*: Un hito en la historia materialista del teatro cortesano,” in *Dramaturgia y espectáculo teatral en la época de los Austrias*, ed. Judith Farré (Madrid, 2009), 123–45 at 125, 128.

The Spanish queen's love of professional theater drove forty-three palace performances, on Thursdays and Sundays, over the winter of 1622–23, at a cost of 13,500 reales, and at least two performances of *Querer por sólo querer* followed its premiere.³⁵ One subsequent staging is apparent from differences between the *relaciones* (“accounts”) intercalated in different printings of the play.³⁶ In addition, and significantly, there was a professional performance in the Royal Palace on May 11, 1623, by the company led by Juan de Morales, who received 200 reales in payment. This performance was almost certainly designed to entertain Prince Charles and his English entourage during the visit intended to conclude the marriage with the Spanish Infanta.³⁷ Intriguingly, an account book in the Real Academia de la Historia also alludes to the performance of a play by Hurtado de Mendoza in 1623, acted by the *meninas*, with Olivares's daughter María de Guzmán taking the leading role. The performance was lavish, with 16,000 ducats spent on costumes and almost 50,000 spent in total. Although the title in the accounts is given as *Triunfo de la hermosura* (Triumph of beauty)—not a known play by Hurtado de Mendoza—this would be “an admirable alternative title” for *Querer por sólo querer*, as Gareth Davies suggests.³⁸ A carefully prepared scribal copy of the play within a miscellany of dramatic entertainments, under the heading “Entertainment performed in the Royal Palace of his Majesty,” provides additional evidence for this second palace performance in Madrid in July.³⁹ The manuscript is followed by a copy of the first opera ever performed in Spain, on December 18, 1627: *La selva sin amor* by Filippo Piccinini, with a libretto by Lope de Vega.

If the performance of *Querer por sólo querer* on New Year's Day 1623 was not its first, it was likely a sumptuous revival of a domestic celebration repurposed for an international audience, intended to show off the Infanta María to Charles's English proxies and demonstrate the centrality of the Olivares family to royal power. However, whether it was a grand premiere or an extravagant revival, we can now affirm definitively that *Querer por sólo querer* was the play performed for Digby and Aston on New Year's Day. That much is clear from previously unstudied evidence given in

35. Martin Andrew Sharp Hume, *The Court of Philip IV: Spain in Decadence* (London, 1907), 61.

36. On the vexed question of dating the original and later performances, see G. A. Davies, “A Chronology of Antonio de Mendoza's Plays,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 48 (1971): 97–110 at 101–3; and Esther Borrego Gutiérrez, “Poetas para la corte: Una fiesta teatral en el sitio real de Aranjuez (1622),” in *Memoria de la palabra: Actas del VI Congreso de la Asociación Internacional Siglo de Oro*, ed. Francisco Domínguez Matito and María Luisa Lobato López (Madrid, 2004), 337–52 at 342–43.

37. N. D. Shergold and J. E. Varey, “Some Palace Performances of Seventeenth-Century Plays,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 40 (1963): 212–44 at 236.

38. Davies, “Chronology,” 102; the original account is in “Papeles variados de Jesuitas” 129, no. 70, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.

39. MS 3661, fol. 1r, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

Aston's lengthy account of the play in his dispatch to Secretary Calvert of January 22, 1623, sent with Charles's arrival just two months away.

In that January dispatch, Aston recounts "the entertainments with which this King hath passed these holydays,"⁴⁰ lingering over details of staging, costume, casting, the disposition and adaptation of the space for performance, and the way in which the audience members were arranged. These aspects may have been foreign performance traditions unfamiliar to his addressee ("the way that the maske was presented [was] different from what I haue ever seen before," he notes). More importantly, these details bristled with diplomatic and political significance: the access and privacy of the English ambassadors' audience position reflected the warming relations and growing intimacy between England and Spain. Their "private" view of the performance paradoxically underlined their visibility as favorites set apart from the other ambassadors.

Welcoming the English envoys into the heart of the royal family's Christmas celebration was the culmination of successive signs of exclusive favor. A carefully choreographed series of increasingly high-ranking Spanish nobles attended to them. These ranged from the Count of Gondomar, who, as ambassador in London, had been instrumental in promoting the match, to the Count-Duke of Olivares, who, Aston explained, was "as absolute with this King, as the Duke of Lerma was with his father [Philip III]":

we repayred thither and found the Conde of Gondomar and Juan Insausti ready to receave us by whome his Lo: was conveyed unto a convenient roome prepared for vs. The Conde of Olivares came presently vnto his lo: and haueing past divers kynde complements with him left the Duke of Villa hermosa and the Bishop of Segovia to keep him company.⁴¹

During the performance, another one of the king's intimates, Antonio de Laso, appeared to inquire how they liked it.

Aston provides a lengthy account of the festivities, so that Calvert might "better vnderstand what follows." The bulk of his description concerns the disposition of space and the placement of the Council of Castile, the other foreign ambassadors, the English party, and the royal family themselves, who were carefully placed behind partial screens, or *celosías* (lattice-work), and drapery:

the Mask and Comedy were represented in a large roome within the Pallace att the upper end there was a building in forme of a Castle to which were adioyned 2 stages, that which was next the Castle was

40. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 34r.

41. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 34r.

for those that were to act the Comedy. The other which was some 3 steps lower was to present the Mask on; att the lower end there were 3 roomes built or particions, wherof the one almost tooke up all that end, where the President of Castill was placed acompanyed with the Consejo Real on each syde ioyning to that Roome was a kynd of half Gallery built, which came a good way further into the Hall then that Place where the President was; in the one of these were my lo: of Brissoll and myself; in the other which was of equall bignes were placed altogether the Nuntio, the Alman French and Venetian Ambrs. There were celosias built before all these particions, by which wee vnseen might very well see al that past; for in respect that divers yong Ladyes of great Byrth acted in the Comedy. howsoever the king pleased to call vs thether wee were to vnderstand it as a private entertaynment for his Ma:tie and were privatly to sitt: The king as it seems willing that my Lo: of Bristol should finde a difference betwixt his Ma:ts respects vnto his Lp: and the rest of the Emb:s commanded that whosoever his Lp: would haue acompany him should be lett in w.out any exception, wch the Conde of Gondomar saw punctually performed for the Nuntio & he gave strict order that they should only bee lett in themselves, and there was not a Creature of any of theirs admitted to enter with them: Not long after that wee were sett the king came in accompanied with the Queen and the Infantes Don Carlos and the Cardinall his Ma:tie entred in at a dore which opened upon the lower stage which he past over to a seat provided for him on the other syde which was hunge in such manner that dureing the Mask hee was only seen of the Maskers and the Ladyes of the Pallace who attended the Queen, and were placed on that stage.⁴²

Aston's detailed description plays with the paradox of the visibility/invisibility of the royal family, whose seating on the lower stage is precisely described, despite the king's being visible only to the performers. The letter in this way offers a privileged view that actual presence at the event could not, and reflects the importance of this sort of ceremonial information for ascertaining and conveying status.

Aston then recounts the masques that preceded the play:

Presently after his Ma:tie was sett the masks entred which consisted of 10 Ladyes devided into payrs, wherof the Infanta Doña Maria was the leader. Her Hygh:ss presented her Masks cross the Hall, which was towards the Place where the King sate that being the longest way of the stage: The Infanta and the rest of her Company were richly clothed

42. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fol. 34r-v.

and all alyke on their heads they wore hatts and great feathers which are only worne here by women when they travayl upon the way, so that I hope this habitt was to tell vs that her High:ss and her Company were prepared for a longer iourney; there were divers changes in the Mask some of which were performed dancing altogether some in payres and some in single passages; which I conceive was so contrived that the Infanta's dancing might bee as well singly looked on, as in the crowd; and without all partiality her Highn: did much exceed the rest of her Company in all that shee did, and performed every thing in such manner, and so graciously that all that saw her were infinitely taken with her carriage. The Masks ended the Infanta being next the King so that shee concluded it pulling of her Mask with which she had danced her face coverd to make a low reverence vnto the King and Queen who rose to meet her Highn: and so taking her a long with them past to an other seat which was in the midst of the lower stage. The King and Queen satt them down, haueing the Infanta on the left hand and the Infante on the right they satt in chayrs that were seven in a row one by an other with their backs towards the lower part of the hall and their faces towards the Castle from whence the Comedie was to come forth.⁴³

The Infanta performed solo as well as part of a group, before meaningfully removing her mask so that she would be clearly identifiable. Aston pointedly observes that the costumes were those typically worn for travel, foreshadowing (perhaps) the long journey back to England. However, comparing his account with Hurtado de Mendoza's report of the masques performed for the Fiestas de Aranjuez on April 8, 1622, to celebrate the king's birthday (a report translated by Fanshawe along with his version of the play), suggests that the dances Aston saw were a revival of earlier performances. At the Fiestas, similarly, "The Queen, the *Infanta*, the Lady *Anna Maria Manrique*, the Ladies *Isabella of Arragon*, *Antonia de Mendoza*, and *Donna Francisca de Tabara*, Dancing the *Turdion* with Swords and Hats, gave an End to the Festival."⁴⁴ Despite his clear interest in Spanish literature, Aston focused on the political information conveyed symbolically through the performance and the relative precedence of members of the audience, rather than on the literary or dramatic qualities of the text.

The ambassador takes a similar approach to the main comedia that followed, deciding to "forbear trobling" Calvert "with any relation touching the Passages of the

43. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fols. 34v–35r.

44. Hurtado de Mendoza, *Querer por solo querer: To Love only for Love Sake*, trans. Fanshawe, sig. Bb3r. The original: Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza, *Fiesta que se hizo en Araniuez* (Madrid, 1623), sig. B7v.

Comedy”: “the whole frame consist[ed] of enchantments wherin I confes I haue no gift.” Instead, he focuses on the noble participants, costumes, scenery, and special effects:

There remainys only to tell your ho:r that the Author as they call it here which is the person that vndertakes the presenting of the Comedy and whose Guests the Auditory is was the Conde of Olivares Dawghter, a Lady about 12 yeares of Age shee lykwyse and other ladyes most of the lyke quality and about her age, represented the Comedy, shee herself had a longe part and there were 2 other Ladys vnder 16 that has to the longest parts and the fullest of action that I ever saw vpon a stage and were dicharged with the lyfe and readynes that their parts requyrd // in conclution the whole Comedy was performed in so excelent a manner as if they had chosen the prime Acters of the Comedians of Spaine to represnte it which I confes I much wondred at, considering who the Actors were the Comedy was intermixt with divers Dances of the Ladyes with many songs of Musitians and such aparances and visions as were necessary to uphould the authority of the subject some of which propertyes were exceeding well sett forth.⁴⁵

Aston’s account makes clear that María de Guzmán was the “Author as they call it here” and “had a longe part,” just as she did in the performance of the play by Hurtado de Mendoza referenced in the accounts held in the Real Academia de la Historia, which was almost certainly this one, although given a different title. The 1623 edition of *Querer por sólo querer*, like Fanshawe’s translation, included a cast list detailing that María de Guzmán had played the princess Zelidaura, one of the play’s main parts. Hurtado de Mendoza’s account of the earlier Fiesta de Aranjuez detailed that in the Count of Villamediana’s *Amadís*-inspired comedia *La gloria de Niquea*—the only other play that fits the details Peale cites in relation to the New Year’s Day performance—María de Guzmán had played Darinel,⁴⁶ the *escudero* (squire) of Amadís. Isabel de Aragón had played Amadís, accompanied by the court dwarf, Miguel Soplillo, depicted with Philip IV in the famous portrait by Rodrigo de Villandrando from around 1620–21.⁴⁷ Members of the audience had included Leonor Pimentel and the same Doña Maria Lande to whom Aston wrote in 1626. Since Darinel was a minor role, the play Aston saw on January 1, 1623, must have been *Querer por sólo querer*. The evidence from the Aston papers proves that Digby and Aston were privileged spectators, elevated in precedence above all others, at the Christmas

45. Aston Papers, vol. 6, BL, Add. MS 36449, fols. 35v–36r.

46. Hurtado de Mendoza, *Querer por solo querer: To Love only for Love Sake*, trans. Fanshawe, sig. Aa1v.

47. Teresa Ferrer Valls, *Nobleza y espectáculo teatral (1535–1622): Estudio y documentos* (Valencia, Spain, 1993), 283–97 at 289.

performance, perhaps premiere, of court dramatist Hurtado de Mendoza's mythological romance—a lengthy, ostentatiously lavish entertainment interspersed with dances and masques that showed off the Infanta María to the English diplomats and foregrounded the centrality of Olivares and his family to power.

 **Literary and Political Crossings of *Querer por sólo querer***

Critics have speculated as to why Sir Richard Fanshawe might have translated a work by Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza that, at 6,300 lines, may be the longest Golden Age play ever written yet is far from the most celebrated.⁴⁸ The translation's publication was posthumous, appearing four years after Fanshawe's death in 1666, but the translation had been completed much earlier, around March 1653, while Fanshawe was resident at Tankersley Park in Sheffield, where he also produced his great translation of Luís de Camões's *Os Lusíadas*, published in 1655. A prefatory poem by Fanshawe in the 1670 edition of *Querer por solo querer: To Love Only for Love's Sake* links the play with another translation from around the same time, that of Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1609) into Latin, which appeared in 1658 as *La Fida Pastora*. In that poem—entitled “Sir R. F. upon this *Dramatick Romance*, Paraphrased by him during his Confinement to *Tankersly Park in York-shire*, by *Oliver*, after the *Battail of Worcester*”—Fanshawe claimed that he “Purloin'd some Hours, to Charm rude *Cares* with *Verse* / Which flame of FAITHFULL SHEPHERD did rehearse.”⁴⁹ Fletcher's play had been dedicated to Aston and had been influenced by Juan Bautista Guarini's *Il pastor fido* (1590), which Fanshawe had also translated. It is telling that another text associated with Aston also formed part of Fanshawe's translation activity at this time, suggesting that Fanshawe's interest in *Querer por sólo querer* was informed by his diplomatic work, in keeping with wider evidence of transnational poetic influence and transmission surrounding Aston's embassies.

When serving as Aston's secretary during his second embassy, from 1635 to 1638, Fanshawe visited Tixall bearing messages from Herbert Aston to his fiancé, Katherine Thimelby, and sharing three poems with Constance Aston, which were included in her miscellany. Two were of his own composition, and one was a free translation of Luis de Góngora's sonnet “Con diferencia tal, con gracia tanta,” entitled “The nightingall”:

48. Ángel M. García Gómez, “Sir Richard Fanshawe y *Querer por sólo querer* de Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza: El cómo y el por qué de una traducción,” in *La comedia española y el teatro europeo del siglo XVII*, ed. Henry W. Sullivan, Raúl A. Galoppe, and Mahlon L. Stoutz (London, 1999), 120–42.

49. Hurtado de Mendoza, *Querer por solo querer: To Love only for Love Sake*, trans. Fanshawe, sig. A2r; and see *ODNB*, s.v. “Fanshawe, Sir Richard, first baronet (1608–1666),” by Peter Davidson, last modified September 23, 2004, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/9149.

Fanshawe's Translation

The nightingall
 With such variety and dainty skill
 yond nightingale deuids her mournfull song,
 As if ten thousand others through one bill
 Did sing in parts, the story of their wrong:

 yea she accuses with that life and flame
 Her rauisher, I thinke she would incline
 The conscous groues to register his name
 vpon the leaues, and barke of yt tall pine:

 But happy she that may her sorrow leaue,
 since hauing wings to wander through the woods,
 And bill to publish it shee may deceaue

 Her payne: but let him powre forth silent floods
 whom his medusa turn'd in to a stone
 That he might neither change, nor make his moane.⁵⁰

Luis de Góngora's original

Con diferencia tal, con gracia tanta
 aquel ruiseñor llora, que sospecho,
 que tiene otros cien mil dentro del pecho
 que alternan su dolor por su garganta;

 y aun creo que el espíritu levanta
 —como en información de su derecho—
 a escribir del cuñado el atroz hecho
 en las hojas de aquella verde planta.

 Ponga, pues, fin a las querellas que usa
 pues ni quejarse ni mudar estanza
 por pico ni por pluma se lwe veda,

 y llore solo aquel que su Medusa
 en piedra convirtió, porque no pueda
 ni publicar su mal ni hacer mudanza⁵¹

Fanshawe published a variant of this sonnet in a subsequent issue of his translation of *Il pastor fido*, in 1648, along with seven other sonnets by Góngora and two by Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola.⁵²

Fanshawe's visit to Aston's family also saw him convey a translation by his master. On August 17, 1636, Constance thanked her brother Herbert for sending those "most admireable verses of my Lords translateing,"⁵³ almost certainly poem 62 in the collection, headed "A stranslation" and subscribed "L W A" (Lord Walter Aston):

sometimes by Aprill arrogantly deckt
 Thènameld mountaine shewes her curled head
 And sometimes by Noumbers rigors check'd
 Appears as naked desolate and dead
 her desert bosome Iuly sets on fire
 which Ianuiaries frosts and snowes doe fill
 But though she uary in her state and tire
 In her true nature she is mountaine still
 Euen so my bosome by thy changes tride
 still in one state of heavenly loue remaines

50. Aldrich-Watson, *Verse Miscellany*, 148.

51. Luis de Góngora y Argote, *Sonetos*, ed. Biruté Ciplijauskaitė (Madison, Wisc., 1981), 256–57, no. 71.

52. Henry Thomas, *Three Translators of Góngora and Other Spanish Poets during the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1918), 51–64; García Gómez, "Sir Richard Fanshawe," 123.

53. Quoted in Hackett, "Unlocking the Mysteries," 107.

though sometimes sadd and sometimes satisfied
 For what inports thy fauours or disdaines
 Loue beinge the true essence of my brest
 And but exterieur accidents the rest. L W A⁵⁴

The punning title (Aston/A stranslation) calls into question its status as a translation, despite the markedly Góngorine language and syntax. The poem is a contrafact rewriting of a meditation on spiritual love with erotic undertones, reminiscent of writing by figures like Lope de Vega, whose *Filomena* Aston owned. As yet no original has been identified, but Aston's literary interests, fluency in Spanish, and Catholicism make the suggestion that it is an "A stranslation" by him hard to dismiss.

More intriguingly still, a sonnet from *Querer por sólo querer* made its way from Spain to England long before Fanshawe's translation of the play. The poem is transcribed and translated in Secretary Conway's papers, in his own hand—its inclusion perhaps inspired by Aston's lengthy account of the play's performance—and it exemplifies the highly political nature of cultural engagement in this period. Conway was dead by 1631, so the poem's transcription and translation must predate Fanshawe's work in Spain. The transmission of the sonnet from the play that Aston and Digby had witnessed on New Year's Day 1623 seems most likely to be associated directly with Aston himself and the first embassy.

BL Conway Papers Transcription

12

Amable Solidad, Muda alegria
 que ni escarmientos ves ni ofensas lloras
 segunda habitation de las auroras
 de la verdad primera compañia

Tarde buscada paz de l'alma mia
 que la vana inquietud del mondo ignoras
 adonde \no/ l'ambition hurta las horas
 y entero nasce para un hombre el dia

dichosa tu que nunca das vengança
 ni del palacio ves con propio daño
 La ofendida verdad de la mudança

ni la sabrosa me[...]ra del' engaño

Sweet solitarines lowly dumb ioy
 wch needs no warnings how to grow more wyse
 by other mens mishapps nor the annoy
 wch by sadd wrongs donne to awfulnes aryse

The Mornings second Mansion Trenths \first frend/
 never acquaynted wth the worlds vayne broylls
 where the whole day to our own vse wee spend
 and our deare tyme no fow[...]ambition spoyles

Most Happy state wch never feelist revevings
 for iniuryes reported nor dost feare
 the Courts great Earthquake the greeved teenth \of
 thangs/

noe none of falshoods sauory lyes dost heare
 nor knowst hopes sweet defeats that bane of sence
 nor its sad cure, deere bought experience⁵⁵

54. See Aldrich-Watson, *Verse Miscellany*, 146.

55. BL, Add. MS 23229, fols. 74r-75v. I would like to thank Daniel Starza Smith for drawing my attention to this reference and for his invaluable help subsequently fleshing out the

1623 Madrid Print Edition

Amable soledad, muda alegría,
que ni escarmientos ves, ni ofensas lloras,
segunda habitacion de las auroras,
de la verdad primera compañia.

Tarde buscada paz del alma mia,
la vana inquietud del mundo ignoras,
donde no la ambicion hurta las horas,
y entero nace para un hombre el dia.

Dichosa tu, que nunca das vengança,
ni de palacio ves con propio daño,
la ofendida verdad de la mudança.

La sabrosa mentira del engaño,
la dulce enfermedad de la esperança,
la pesada salud del desengaño.⁵⁶

Fanshawe's 1670 Translation

Sweet *Solitude!* still *Mirth*, that fear'st no wrong,
Because thou *doest* none! Morning all day long!
Truth's Sanctuary! Innocency's Spring!
Invention's Limbeck! Contemplation's Wing!

Peace of my Soul, which I too late persude!
That know'st not the *Worlds vain Inquietude*:
Where *Friends* (the Thieves of Time) let us alone
Whole days; and a *Mans Hours* are all his own.

Happy art thou, that, *unsupplanted, plantest*;
Nor seest in COURT (which to thy *Harm* thou *hantest*)
Th' *undoing Truth of rigid Honesty*;

The *profitable Lye of Flattery*;
The *sweet Disease of Hope*, the *Potion*,
And *bitter Health of Undeception*.⁵⁷

The Spanish version of the poem in the Conway papers is notable for its omission of the final two lines of Hurtado de Mendoza's original. The transcriber may have been tricked by the repeating line ending “-engaño” into excluding the final couplet, which the translation, nevertheless, does include with its elegant, idiomatic “deere bought experience.” Aspects of the transcription render the Spanish Italianate and suggest an Italian speaker. The translator of the sonnet for the Conway papers cannot have been Fanshawe for reasons of timing, and the treatment of the text is in any case very different: the late seventeenth-century version from Fanshawe's translation of the play is a freer, more performative rendering that crackles with strong command of the language. The manuscript translation in the Conway papers is also notably literary, with its alternate rhyme scheme and touches that emphasize an engagement with the poetry, even though at times it strays from the Spanish in search of communicative equivalents. It has been suggested that this translation may have been Conway's, since the original and translation are written in his own hand.⁵⁸ While the translation is the work of a native English speaker (confident with such vernacular vocabulary as “broils”), however, the translator's clear fluency in Spanish points

context of this manuscript. See the summary of this volume in his *John Donne and the Conway Papers*, 165–66. He also pointed out that there is a volume of Fanshawe's poems in the Conway papers, a volume that must date from after the first viscount's time but is nevertheless another suggestive connection; see MS Firth c. 1, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

56. Hurtado de Mendoza, *Querer por sólo querer* (Madrid, 1623), sig. E3v.

57. Hurtado de Mendoza, *Querer por solo querer: To Love only for Love Sake*, trans. Fanshawe, sig. T4r–v.

58. James Knowles, “The ‘Running Masque’ Recovered: A Masque for the Marquess of Buckingham (c. 1619–20),” *English Manuscript Studies* 8 (2000): 79–135 at 90.

to a figure from among the English party's linguists and interpreters, such as Aston himself.

Daniel Starza Smith has suggested that the number preceding the Spanish sonnet implies that it once formed part of a booklet of poems, presumably a presentation copy, and the dirt on the verso of the English translation indicates that it was the outer leaf and so followed the Spanish, reversing the order of its current binding. Starza Smith also notes the coincidence of the opening phrase of this translation, "Sweete solitarines," with a poem in Mary Wroth's 1621 *The Countesse of Mountgomerie's Urania*—implying that the translator had been reading this roman à clef about Wroth's adulterous relationship with her cousin William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, a work imbued with her profound engagement with Iberian chivalric romances.⁵⁹ The truncated transcription of the Spanish, however, may offer another possibility: that the Spanish may have been copied into the manuscript after the English translation, reflecting the compiler's desire to study the linguistic texture of the Spanish poem through its literary translation, and the final lines were left out.

While *Querer por sólo querer* may not have set pulses racing—either then or now, being largely notable for the political significance of its earliest performances—the sonnet that found its way into the Conway papers was discussed as an exemplar of literary *copia* and variety by Baltasar Gracián. The Jesuit political and literary theorist was a friend of Hurtado de Mendoza and wrote in his 1642 *Agudeza y arte de ingenio*:

Uniformity closes in, variety opens out; a thing is that much more sublime according to the multiplicity of its noble perfections. Not so many stars shine in the firmament, nor flowers bloom in the meadow, as subtleties pass through a fecund mind. In just such a way that seasoned poem by Antonio de Mendoza from *Love for Love's Sake* is replete with conceits.⁶⁰

Fanshawe's interest in the play and its eventual translation may even have been filtered through engagement with the *Agudeza y arte de ingenio*.

Literary and Political Crossings between the Local and the Global

The literary transmission of a sonnet from Hurtado de Mendoza's play, whose performance Aston witnessed over Christmas 1622–23, demonstrates how cultural engagement followed the contours of politics. The original literary production was itself political, commissioned by the queen, and it involved many of the chief *meninas*. The

59. Private communication; see U9 in *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts (Baton Rouge, La., 1983), 151–53; and Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge, 2000), 159–82, esp. 159, 164.

60. Baltasar Gracián y Morales, *Agudeza y arte de ingenio* (1642), ed. Evaristo Correa Calderón, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1969), 1:56.


setting and plot mirrored courtly taste, its lavish and exorbitant staging an attempt to dazzle England's envoys and their European counterparts. It was a vehicle to showcase not only the Infanta but also the patterns of court power and influence orbiting around Olivares, through his daughter's prominent role in the performance. The extracted sonnet's transmission reflected the sustained English aristocratic engagement with the greatest poets and poetry in Spanish, motivated by both political and literary interests, which Fanshawe perpetuated with his translation of Hurtado de Mendoza's mythological courtly fantasy.

Hackett has argued that Constance Aston's poetic miscellany highlights the way in which families like the Astons were involved in a "constant interplay between local identities and national or international contexts," where "the sense of where and what 'England' might be was particularly complex," for while their "enclaves of Catholicism [in places such as Lancashire, Warwickshire, Yorkshire, and Staffordshire] were sometimes regarded as alien bodies within the Protestant English state . . . [they] regarded themselves as sanctuaries of true Englishness, preserving ancient and rooted native traditions and beliefs that had been violently disrupted by the Reformation."⁶¹ In Aston's case, his family's place within these Catholic networks overlapped with his role as England's ambassador to Spain, which was a haven for English Catholics in exile, an island and outpost of Englishness, and a breeding ground for priests who would return to attempt to keep English Catholic communities going in the face of official persecution and repression. The Astons' Catholicism was both a problem and an opportunity. They were pursued for recusancy—although shielded at times by the king, who used Aston as a conduit and back channel to continue his diplomatic contact with Spain and the Spanish court, even after the collapse of the Spanish match and during the pursuit of a French marriage instead.

The Astons' engagements were both religious and cultural. The influence of the incarnational aesthetic of the Counter-Reformation on Constance's poetic miscellany sits alongside the incorporation of material by Góngora, an act at once of resistance and inclusivity. While the religious contours of early modern England did undoubtedly distance certain places from the "center" and move them closer to international nodes of influence and exchange, cultural goods—like Hurtado de Mendoza's sonnet—moved across these borders, undoubtedly distributed among friends and colleagues whose cultural interests connected them even when their religion and politics divided them. These literary and cultural translations frequently had immediate political contexts, such as recusant ambassador Aston's openness to the poetic culture of the Spanish court; or Conway's vested interest in possessing a series of high-prestige Spanish poems with translations, expressing a specific moment of Anglo-Spanish engagement; or Fanshawe's completion of his translation of a Spanish dramatic romance while in prison following his capture at the Battle of Worcester.

61. Hackett, "Aston-Thimelby Circle," 123; see also John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics, 1603–1707* (Oxford, 2008).

Hurtado de Mendoza's poetry—whether experienced in the context of the New Year performance Aston described, or perhaps in its revivals in May and July the same year—filtered into the cultural world of Aston's circle. His secretary eventually published a complete translation, and another manuscript was found in the papers of one of his political masters. The Astons were without doubt one of the conduits for the reception of Spanish poetic culture in England. They exemplify the cosmopolitan Hispanophilia and internationalism that was typical of some parts of the recusant community in Britain in this period and specific to that community's local networks and geographies. In this sense, the Astons' cosmopolitanism reflected their role as “trans-local” agents, an early modern example of the “glocal.”

 **ALEXANDER SAMSON** is a Reader in Early Modern Studies at University College London. He is the author of *Mary and Philip: The Marriage of Tudor England and Habsburg Spain* (2020) and directs the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters.