

GARCÍA GARCÍA, Luciano. *Sonetos y Querellas de una amante. William Shakespeare. Edición en inglés, traducción y notas*. Valencia: JPM Ediciones, 2013. ISBN: 978-84-15499-08-4. 408 pp.

This review explores the main achievements and shortcomings of the latest bilingual edition of William Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint*, by Luciano García (2013). After an introductory approach to these two Shakespearean poems, briefly attending both the history of their reception and interpretation (especially in Spain), and their major formal and thematic features, an analysis of García's edition is offered. This exploration addresses the depth of the book's introduction, the metrical and rhyming solutions offered, and the lexical choices made, with also a passing reference to the latest and previous translation of the same works.

Since they appeared into print in 1609 together with *A Lover's Complaint*¹, Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, contrary to what it may seem given Shakespeare's current status, have received varied critical responses from readers and scholars. In fact, it was only in the late 18th century that they started to consolidate the prestige they enjoy today, thanks to, primarily, the 1790 referential edition of the *Sonnets* and the *Complaint*: Edmond Malone's *Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*. To be sure, Bernard Lintott's *A collection of poems, in two volumes*, of 1711, had achieved some popularity, but it required a serious revision which, although partially carried out in 1766 by Edward Capell's *A collection of poems... of Mr William Shakespeare*, does not appear to have been sufficient to dispel the misapprehensions surrounding the sonnets. Indeed, the reputed editor George Steevens wrote, still in 1793, that "the strongest act of Parliament that could be framed, would fail to compel readers into their [the sonnets'] service" (Foster, 1997: 3304); and it is well known that William Wordsworth described some of the sonnets as "abominable harsh, obscure, and worthless", while he claimed to find all of them full of "sameness, tediousness, quaintness, and elaborate obscurity" (Foster, 1997: 3304).

However, and central as it once was, the debate about their literary merit is only one of the many controversies surrounding the composition, publication, interpretation and reception of William Shakespeare's 154 sonnets (and, to a much lesser extent, of the *Complaint*). Indeed, published in 1609 by a certain "T.T." (in all likelihood Thomas Thorpe, the London printer), prefaced by an enigmatic dedication (the exact meaning of which is, to this day, unclear), apparently addressed to some unspecified and still unidentified objects of desire and repulsion (the so-called young boy, the dark lady and the rival poet), dedicated to some enigmatic patron (the celebrated "Mr. W.H.") and attributed (not without some opposition from

¹ The full title was: "Shakes-peare Sonnets. Neuer before Imprinted". Interestingly, Shakespeare is hyphenated, and the genitive case is used instead of the more frequent, at the time, "Shakespeare. His Sonnets".

outside the academia²) to the poet, playwright and theatrical impresario from Stratford called William Shakespeare, the *Sonnets* have received continuing critical and commercial attention, partially derived from this ambiguity that, intra and extra-textually, seems to surround them. To give just one example (and focusing on the dedication) it has been argued that if, on the one hand, it is reasonably clear that “T.T.” was Thomas Thorpe, the respected printer from London who between 1600 and 1625 published various works by, among others, Ben Jonson, John Marston and George Chapman, the rest of the references appearing in the dedication of the book remain decidedly ambiguous:

TO.THE.ONLIE.BEGETTER.OF.
THESE.INSUING.SONNETS.
Mr.W.H. ALL.HAPPINESSE.
AND.THAT.ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET.
WISHETH.
THE.WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTURER.IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.
T.T.

In this sense, it is a telling indication of the complexity of the sonnets that even these prefatory lines have not been interpreted, so far, in an entirely satisfactory or uncontested way. Thus, the most widely accepted version reads: The “well-wishing adventurer” (i.e. “T.T”), in bringing to the readership (“setting forth”) these ensuing sonnets, “wisheth” to the only “begetter”, “Mr W. H.” (Henry Wriothesley? William Herbert?)³, all happiness, and that eternity promised by our ever living poet (i.e. Shakespeare, the author of the sonnets). However, although this paraphrase has been generally accepted by critics and translators (e.g. Ehrenhaus, Atkins), it seems to introduce some further problems, like the precise meaning of “begetter”⁴, or the identity of “Mr W.H.” Consequently, this interpretation of the dedication is not the only one. Thus, Walter Cohen, a prestigious and authoritative Shakespearean scholar, suggests in the *Norton Shakespeare* edition of the *Sonnets* that the phrase “the onlie

² See, for example, the Monument Theory of the Sonnets: <http://www.shakespearesmonument.com>.

³ But they were, respectively, Earl of Southampton and Earl of Pembroke, and consequently could not be addressed as “Mr”.

⁴ It is not clear whether it alludes to a) the person who inspired the poems; b) the one who wrote them; or c) the middle man who –through whatever means- obtained them (from the author himself?) for the printer.

begetter of these insuing sonnets Mr. W.H.” may not allude to the person who obtained or inspired the poems (and consequently could not be either the Earl of Southampton or the Earl of Pembroke), but rather to the author (i.e. the person who almost literally ‘begot’ or created them), it being “probably a misprint for ‘Mr. W.S.’ or ‘Mr. W. SH.’” (Cohen 1997: 1923). So, for Cohen, the “onlie begetter” is no other than William Shakespeare, the person who actually composed the sonnets.⁵ Consequently, the “ever living poet” who promises “all happinesse and [...] eternitie” could not be Shakespeare now, but –interestingly- God.

However, it is not clear that, fascinating as it may be, biographical speculation (the so called question of autobiography) may lead us far in terms of reinforcing our critical appreciation of the sonnets or, for that matter, of the *Lover’s Complaint*. In this respect, it must be remembered that any reader of Shakespeare’s poetry needs to know that Shakespeare was writing in the tradition of the sonnet form, that most prestigious and sophisticated poetic vehicle of the European Renaissance. This means that some basic background knowledge of the early modern poetic tradition, both in Italy and England, is required to fully appreciate Shakespeare’s poetry. Actually, the sonnet (in its various forms) was the final product of a poetic evolution that, probably starting with Ovid, advanced through French medieval romances and became almost perfect with the lyrical poetry written by the Italian Francesco Petrarch. Consisting of fourteen lines, the standard sonnet must present a regular rhyme scheme and a specific organization into stanzas. Then, the Petrarchan division of the sonnet as a structure consisting of an octave plus a sestet became, in Elizabethan England, and through the transformations due to Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard, and Shakespeare himself, a significantly different form: eventually, the Shakespearean sonnet consisted of three quatrains with alternate and different rhymes (abab cdcd efef) plus a final rhyming couplet (gg), and employed a very characteristic meter, the iambic pentameter: a line consisting of five metrical feet, each foot consisting of a binary succession of unstressed and stressed syllables.

In terms of content, the standard narrative dealt with an unreachable, cruel, chaste, goddess-like, and beautiful lady who disdains her love-sick, desperate, admirer-poet (Atkins 2009: 11-12). In this sense, Shakespeare’s sonnets did introduce relevant differences with this Petrarchan pattern, since in Shakespeare’s sequence we find a triangular relationship that involves the poet (traditionally identified as Shakespeare himself), a young boy (the object of the poet’s love and praises), and a ‘dark’⁶ lady (a sensuous and attractive, although ethically inferior, woman, to whom both young boy and poet feel occasionally, and passionately, attracted). And although much has been written about the order in which the poems

⁵ For some authors, the “onlie begetter” would be the person who obtained the manuscript for Thorpe; thus, Rowse (1984: ix-xi) suggests that it could refer to William Harvey, the third husband of the Earl of Southampton’s mother. Why or in what capacity should either Harvey or Southampton’s mother be in possession of the manuscript of the sonnets is not clarified.

⁶ It must be noted that Shakespeare never referred to her as ‘dark lady’ in any of the sonnets.

should be read, it appears that the 154 sonnets, read as they were originally published in 1609, conform a 'sonnet sequence'. In other words, and according to this Elizabethan poetic convention, the sonnets conform a narrative in which we may find some kind of thematic (although not necessarily chronological) progression, in the fashion of other similar early modern poetic 'sequences' of the same period, like Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (1595) or Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti* (1591). Thus, Shakespeare's sonnets 1 to 126 deal with the expression of the tormented love (be it understood as close friendship or –more likely- homoerotic love) between the poet (a mature man) and his young (but socially higher) lover; then, in sonnets 127 to 152 there appears the only female presence, the 'dark lady' (it is never clarified if this implies dark-haired, black-skinned, or simply morally deficient), who introduces heterosexual desire, eroticism, lust, and dissension between the three lovers. Finally, sonnets 153 and 154 (more so the latter), because of their uncommon nature in terms of subject matter, and versification are generally considered either exercises in style, failed, or, simply, not by Shakespeare. Also, we may find smaller narratives (microsequences) encapsulated within these sections: in sonnets 1 to 17 the poet specifically urges the young boy to 'procreate'; throughout sonnets 78-86 a rival poet appears who tries to obtain the favours of the young boy; or, in a discontinuous way, sonnets 27-28, 43-45, 48 and 50 deal with the suffering produced by travelling and the separation of the lovers.

For its part, *A Lover's Complaint* consists of 47 stanzas using, again, the iambic pentameter, and following the precepts of the so-called rhyme royal, or Chaucerian stanza: a seven-lined stanza rhyming ababbcc. In terms of subject matter, it also stemmed from a long-established European tradition of love poetry in a rural setting, and belongs to the genre of the Complaint, popular in the 1590s in England. The *Complaint*, then, develops the sad story of an abused and mistreated female lover, a shepherdess. The seduced and then abandoned girl retells her "plaintful story" (#I, 2) to an old shepherd (a "reverend man", #IX, 1, unmentioned after this), in a situation that seems to reproduce, to some point, the triangular relation of the sonnets, especially as the portrayal of the cruel lover resembles some of the features of the equally fascinating, merciless and cold young boy of the sonnets⁷. However, this poem is clearly undeveloped, immature, and trivial compared to other Shakespearean poetry, which –linked to the fact that it contains many words not found elsewhere in Shakespeare- make some critics consider it not part of the Shakespearean canon. However, and although it is not completely clear to what extent we should read the *Complaint* in connection with the preceding sonnets, it seems evident to me that there are obvious links, intertextual references, and thematic similarities between both texts.

⁷ Compare, for example, the somewhat androgynous description of the young boy in the *Sonnets*: "Which steals men's eyes, and women's souls amazeth" (#20,8); with that appearing in the *Complaint*: "sexes both enchanted" (#19, 2).

In Spain (like in most European countries) Shakespeare's poetry was introduced (i.e. read, translated and studied) much later than the plays. The first published translation into Spanish of the sonnets of which we have notice is Matías de Velasco y Rojas' *Breve estudio de los Sonetos de Shakespeare* (1877), where the Cuban Marqués de Dos Hermanas used thirty seven translated sonnets as quotations for his introductory study. It must be noted that De Velasco translated the sonnets into prose, but, as Pujante states "with very few exceptions, the Spanish renderings that followed up to the early 1920s were not only in verse, but cast in the sonnet mould." (1) Eventually, Angelina Damians translated all 154 sonnets in verse, for the first time in Spanish, in 1944. Since 1990 there have been at least fifteen different translations of Shakespeare's sonnets into Spanish, some of them in bilingual editions and, occasionally, including the *Complaint*.⁸

It is in this context that Luciano García García's bilingual edition of the *Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint* should be received, as a valuable contribution to English studies (in terms of translation and philological analysis) in Spain. The book consists of a reasonably lengthy introduction followed by the bilingual presentation of the poems, with footnotes (clarifying both textual dilemmas and content ambiguities) appearing in both, the English original (left page) and the Spanish translation (right). The 'Introduction' (García 2013: 9-40), which places the readers in the context of the composition (between –probably– the 1590s and 1609) and reception of the sonnets, provides the reader with 'models' (in the author's words: *modelos para a(r)mar*) to interpret these poems. In a wise move, García offers a choice of the most widely accepted approaches to the sonnets and the *Complaint*, allowing the reader to choose freely among various contrasted interpretations, but honestly showing the translator's own stance and –also– limitations. Likewise, García succinctly but convincingly justifies his decision to include the *Complaint* in this edition; it must be noted that this poem has frequently been excluded from most Spanish translations of Shakespeare's poetry on account of its not being considered, by some, part of the Shakespearean canon (Boyce 1990: 376-76); however, García clearly (if only too briefly) clarifies how this poem is connected with the *Sonnets* both thematically and generically, to the point that he considers it an integral part of the 1609 Quarto and, consequently, should be edited (and, in this case, translated)

⁸ These are the Spanish translations of which I am aware of: *Sonetos* (translated by C. Pujol); *Los Sonetos* (translated by Pablo Mañé Garzón); *Sonetos* (translated by Mario Reyes Suárez); *Sonetos* (edited and translated by José María Álvarez); *Los Sonetos de Shakespeare* (edited and translated by Alfredo Gómez Gil); *Sonetos* (translated by Fernando Marrufo); *Sonetos Completos* (translated by Miguel Ángel Montezanti); *Sonetos* (translated by William Ospina); *Sonetos* (translated by Antonio Rivero Taravillo); *Sonetos* (translated by Ariel Laurencio Tacoronte); *Monumento de amor. Sonetos de Shakespeare* (edited and translated by Carmen Pérez Romero); *Sonetos* (translated by Pedro Pérez Prieto); *Sonetos* (translated by Christian Law Palacín); *Sonetos de amor* (translated by Ignacio Gamen); *Sonetos y Lamento de una amante* (bilingual edition and translation by Andrés Ehrenhaus).

with it (García 2013: 23-24). The 'Introduction' also engages in a discussion of the various autobiographical theories about the sonnets, and tries to clarify the most sensible approaches to the question of the identity of Mr W.H., of the young boy, of the dark lady, and of the rival poet. It aptly summarizes this controversy (undoubtedly of interest to some readers, especially the non-specialized), but perhaps at the cost of not leaving enough space for what really matters, that is, the poetry itself: the actual analysis of the socio-historical context, and the poetic and literary content, of the *Sonnets* and the *Complaint*. Furthermore, whereas the poems are analysed in some depth in terms of subject matter (sequence, topics, tradition etc.), their metrical and rhyming characteristics are not, I believe, sufficiently studied. Thus, the reader interested in such central qualities of the Shakespearean sonnet, and of Shakespeare's poetry in general, as metre and rhyme will need to look for additional information elsewhere if s/he wants to know, for instance, the main characteristics of the Shakespearean iambic pentameter, what are feminine endings (appearing in sonnets #20 and #87, for example), eye rhymes, or the occasional use, by Shakespeare, of less frequent feet like, for example, the trochee, or the spondee (see for example the astounding metrical variation of sonnet #107).

The 'Introduction' also offers an interesting and convincing explanation of the most important decisions and choices concerning the Spanish translation. Thus, García explains that he has taken the important decision of employing the Spanish alexandrine verse (fourteen syllables) to express the contents of the Shakespearean pentameter, both in the *Sonnets* and in the *Complaint*. This is done, as the author aptly explains (García 2013: 35-37), in order to avoid leaving out elements that, in the transition from the English pentameter to a Spanish hendecasyllable (eleven syllables, the immediately obvious choice from a strictly metrical perspective) would have necessarily been, for material reasons, omitted. This is not a surprising decision: after all, most recent translators of Shakespeare's sonnets have proceeded in this way, even though there are some very successful ones (see for example Andrés Ehrenhaus' 2009 translation) which avoid the alexandrine because it would involve, in its turn, using too many syllables (Ehrenhaus 2009: 49-50).

In terms of rhyme, García's translation, again unlike Ehrenhaus's or Pérez Prieto's, avoids free verse or assonant (slant) rhyme, employing instead -consistently throughout the poems- perfect rhymes. In the case of the *Complaint*, this implies successfully introducing, probably for the first time, English rhyme royal in Spanish and alexandrine verse. This choice of perfect rhyme, a questionable one for many translators, is successfully accomplished most of the times, not least because of this translator's deep and intimate knowledge not only of Shakespearean and English early modern poetry in general (Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, or Spenser) but also of Spanish sixteenth century sonneteers such as Lope de Vega, Fray Luis de León, Joan Boscán, and, especially, Garcilaso de la Vega. This gives his translation a sixteenth century lyrical flavor difficult to find in other Spanish translations of Shakespeare's sonnets that I know of (Ehrenhaus, Pérez Prieto, or Gamen). It is, indeed, one of the

most significant differences between García's translation of Shakespeare's sonnets and the *Complaint* and other, otherwise excellent, recent ones: Prof. García explicitly opts for a translation that can be read as "contemporánea del original" (García 37), a choice that contrasts with most recent translations of Shakespeare, unfortunately (to my view) devised as "contemporáneas del lector" (García 2013: 37). To illustrate this, one example may suffice: the rhyming couplet in sonnet #45 ("The other two, slight air, and purging fire"), which reads: "This told, I joy; but then, no longer glad,/I send them back again, and straight grow sad", has been translated by García as "Esto sabido, yo me huelgo, mas, feliz apenas/Diligente a ti los envío y vuelven mis penas", which not only translates the full sense of the two lines but also reproduces, with remarkable success, the Spanish sixteenth century poetic register. For its part, Andrés Ehrenhaus' (otherwise excellent) translation simply reads: "lo cual me alegra un rato pero luego/vuelvo a mandártelos y me entristezco". In the case of the *Complaint*, several lines witness prof García's proficient rendition of 16th Spanish poetic discourse, and a couple of examples should suffice to show this. Thus, in the opening stanza: "Desde un monte cuyo cóncavo vientre eco daba" ("From off a hill whose concave womb reworded", #I,1); or, when describing the wicked young male lover: "Con librea de franqueza la falsedad vestía" ("Did livery falseness in a pride of truth", #XV,7).

Regarding the explanatory notes accompanying this edition, most of them are necessary and useful, although sometimes important issues remain unresolved, unclarified, or are simply not mentioned at all, especially in the *Complaint*. Thus, when presenting and translating the celebrated sonnet #130 ("My mistress eyes are nothing like the sun"), there is no reference to the reasonably well-known sonnet #7 from Thomas Watson's *Passionate Century of Love* (1582), to which Shakespeare's sonnet #130 is clearly linked and probably indebted, and about which the inquisitive reader would most likely want more information: about the two sonnets' different responses to Ariosto and to the Petrarchan sonnet tradition, or the strikingly similar lexical and topic selection of both poems:

...
 Coral is far more red than her lips red
 ...
 I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks
 And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks
 ...
 Shakespeare's sonnet # 130

...
 On either cheek a Rose and Lily lies;
 Her breath is sweet perfume, or holy flame;
 Her lips more red than any Coral stone;

...
 Watson's sonnet # 7

As has already been claimed, I find most of García's translations notable in terms of, both, faithfulness to the various meanings of Shakespeare's verse, and attentiveness to musicality in Spanish: see, as a few examples among many, sonnets #1, #2, #36, or, very notably, #129: "Todo esto el mundo bien conoce, mas nadie evita/Este cielo que a un infierno precipita" ("All this the world knows, yet none knows well/To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell"). However, in such a long and complex translation there inevitably are some questionable choices. The controversial and well known sonnet #135 is a case in point. As all translators of Shakespeare's poetry know, sonnet #135 ("Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy *Will*") is probably the greatest challenge given the multiplicity of senses that the term "will" may have, and that Shakespeare exploits. According to Atkins, we have five different senses, namely: "(1) William (2) wish (3) power of choice (4) sexual desire (5) sexual organ" (García 2013: 333). García mentions seven senses, but only because he discriminates between the male and the female sexual organs and adds the auxiliary verbal function. In any case, too many senses for any translation to cover fully, which probably justifies the reasonable option, adopted by, for instance, Ehrenhaus, consisting of keeping the term in English and allowing the reader the contextual decodification of some of, or all, the other meanings: "Algunas tienen ansias; tú, a tu *Will*". García, however, has tried to capture as many of these senses as possible by creating another pun, with questionable, almost clumsy, results: "Si otras tienen su antojo, tú tienes tu William Tojo".⁹ There are other minor objections to the translation, like the omission of "tyrants crests" in sonnet #107 ("Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul"); the translation of the parallel structure "So long.../So long..." in the rhyming couplet of sonnet #18 ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"); Malone's well-known and reasonable possibility for "master mistress" in sonnet #20 ("A woman's face, with Nature's own hand painted"), which García translates as "dueño-dueña" but could be understood as "sovereign mistress" (Atkins 72); or (what is especially striking considering the previously discussed efforts to render all the meanings of 'will' in sonnet #135) the silent translation, in the *Complaint*, of the lines "Catching all passions in his craft of will" and "Asked their own wills and made their wills obey" (*Complaint*, XVIII,7 and XIX, 7), in which the obvious sexual pun is left unexplained.

⁹ García (2013: 403-405) introduces, in an appendix, an alternative version of this sonnet, but with similar problems.

To conclude, and all things considered, the present bilingual edition of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and *A Lover's Complaint*, by Luciano García, can be doubtlessly considered as a worthy addition to an already much visited area, that of Shakespearean translation. García proves to be not only an excellent translator, with an acute ear for both Spanish and English metre and rhyme, and an exhaustive knowledge of English and Spanish early modern poetry; he is also a sound and lucid scholar, whose rigorous, yet accessible, explanations permeate the volume. All these elements, I am persuaded, provide this work with an extraordinary interest that makes it a more than welcome addition to the field.

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[JESÚS LÓPEZ-PELÁEZ CASELLAS]

LÓPEZ FOLGADO, Vicente – RIVAS CARMONA, María del Mar (eds.) *Essays on Translation. Multilingual Issues*. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2012. ISBN: 978-3-8300-6262-2. 269 pp.

El volumen *Essays on Translation. Multilingual Issues* (número 5 de la serie *Translatologie. Studien zur Übersetzungswissenschaft* de la editorial alemana Dr. Kovač) trata en profundidad las distintas aproximaciones a la traducción de textos literarios en distintas lenguas, principalmente inglés/alemán/francés/italiano-español, así como las principales dificultades que se dan en el proceso de traducción en dicho ámbito. También se incluyen en un último apartado aproximaciones a otros ámbitos traductológicos.

Los contenidos se estructuran en cinco apartados, cuatro de ellos relativos a la traducción de textos literarios y, como hemos comentado, un último apartado en el que se recogen aproximaciones a la traducción histórica, la traducción parlamentaria o la didáctica de la traducción.

Los cinco primeros trabajos conforman el primer bloque dedicado a la traducción literaria de textos originales en inglés. Encabeza el bloque el artículo de Vicente López Folgado, “Joseph Conrad’s complex style: a translational perspective” (pp.1-24), en el que el autor analiza las traducciones al español de *The Secret Agent*, prestando atención a la correspondencia entre el estado psicológico de los personajes y el contexto en el que se desarrolla la acción. En el segundo capítulo, “Parnell and Walpole, Pioneers of Gothic Literature: Translation Analysis of ‘A Night Piece on Death’ and the Prologue to *The Castle of Otranto*” (pp. 25-42), Cristina Huertas Abril analiza dos textos que reúnen las características más representativas de sus autores, Thomas Parnell y de Horace Walpole, junto a la traducción de dichos textos al español. El tercer trabajo, “A cognitive perspective in the translation of Graham Greene’s *The Third Man*” (pp. 43-54) de M^a del Mar Rivas Carmona, analiza desde una perspectiva pragmático-cognitiva varios pasajes de la citada obra junto a una versión en español publicada en Alianza Editorial en 2004. A continuación, Juan de Dios Torralbo Caballero ofrece en “*Lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit: the literary career of John Dryden*” (pp. 55-76) un repaso de la trayectoria literaria de Dryden, prestando atención a sus escritos sobre traducción. Por último, el estudio de