

Two Spanish renderings of Philip Sidney's "First Song" from *Astrophil & Stella* (1591): a reappraisal and a new proposal¹

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ABSTRACT

Translating poetry has always been a difficult, hard and complex task. If a translator decides to use prose when rendering a poetic text, he is opting for a completely justifiable approach to translation, although it seems perhaps an option too frequently adopted nowadays. An attempt to translate poetry into poetry should always be made when rendering a poetic text. The aim of this note is to discuss the question of poetic translation through a brief comparative analysis of the only two published Spanish translations of Philip Sidney's *Astrophil & Stella* (1591), made by Fernando Galván (1991) and Sonia Hernández (2002). I will focus on a sample case, the translation of the "First Song" from *Astrophil & Stella*, to revise the translator's techniques, to discuss problems and solutions and to offer my own proposal: a verse translation that keeps a rhyme pattern similar to that of Sidney's text.

1. Preliminary words

On the issue of poetic translation and its related topics, that is, is it possible to translate poetry?, is it better to use prose or poetry when translating poetry?, Samuel Taylor Coleridge stated his well-informed opinion as follows: "I do not admit the argument for prose translations. I would, in general, rather see verse in so capable a language as ours." This quotation from Coleridge's *Table Talk* allows Paul Selver (1966: 13) in his classic monograph *The Art of Translating Poetry* to elaborate arguments for and against both critical stances, which in the end just expressed the old question that has been worrying translators of poetry all over the world since the very beginning of literary translation: should poetry be translated into

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prose or into poetry? In the Spanish academic community such a question was also tackled and summarized by Garcia Yebra's (1983: 139) old aphorism on translation: "vale más una buena traducción en prosa que una mala traducción en verso, pero una buena traducción en verso vale más que una buena traducción en prosa." Selver (1966: 13) sums up the question with a quotation from Alexander Fraser Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, which clearly favoured the "poetry into poetry" option:

To attempt, therefore, a translation of a lyric poem into prose, is the most absurd of all undertakings; for those very characters of the original which are essential to it, and which constitute its highest beauties, if transferred to a prose translation, become unpardonable blemishes.

In my opinion, what Tyler's quotation, Coleridge's statement, Garcia Yebra's aphorism and Paul Selver's own book have in common is that they all defend the same: an attempt – at least an attempt – to translate poetry into poetry should always be made. It is a difficult, hard and complex task, but when someone decides to translate a poem, it is an option that should not be just abandoned at the very beginning of the process. If a translator decides to use prose when rendering a poetic text, he is opting for a completely justifiable approach to translation, although it seems perhaps an option too frequently and blithely adopted nowadays. If when rendering poetry we could abide by the formal requirements of poetry, the results will definitely be better.

The aim of this note is to keep on discussing the question of poetic translation through a brief comparative analysis of the only two published Spanish translations of Philip Sidney's *Astrophil & Stella* (1591): the first and most quoted one, composed by Fernando Galván (1991) and the most recent and problematic one written by Sonia Hernández (2002). To be more precise, it is my intention to focus on the translation of the "First Song" from *Astrophil & Stella*, revising thus every stanza to point out the merits and the weaknesses of the translator's techniques, to discuss problems and solutions and, above all, to offer my own verse translation as a proposal that tries to keep on defending that the option of translating poetry into poetry must be taken into account, or at least, must be attempted by translators.

2. Galván (1991) and Hernández (2002): a reappraisal and a new proposal

2.1 *The translators' task: decisions adopted beforehand*

I think that the best way to start revising the translations is by having a look at the poetics guiding the translator's task in both versions. It is in such an important issue when the first significant difference could be found. Fernando Galván (1991: 58-60) states his approach to translation and his translating technique from the very beginning:

La traducción que contiene esta edición está concebida, pues, y en primer término, como apoyo para leer el original ... El fin último de la traducción ha sido ofrecer una versión "legible", que preservara la simplicidad, la fluidez, la soltura y la gracia del original ... y por ello he renunciado a forzar el significado y la naturalidad del lenguaje para buscar una rima o un número de sílabas determinado ... Un equivalente completo del texto inglés requeriría desde luego – como en alguna ocasión se ha hecho muy bien con los sonetos de Shakespeare o de Donne – una versión en endecasílabos y en sonetos españoles; pero ello forzaría, desde luego, el significado.

Galván adopts a hybrid procedure by offering a sort of blank verse that aims at transmitting the meaning of Sidney's poetry and supporting the reading of the original text. Galván also states (1991: 57) that his edition reproduces Sidney's text as edited by William A. Ringler, Jr. in his 1962 edition but without the critical apparatus "que está fuera de lugar en una edición de las características de ésta." So, translation prevails over edition in Galván's text, and his notes constitute in all cases an explanation of his translation: cultural and historical concepts, ideas, words, etc. Thus, the editorial procedure and the translating approach have been clearly defined and well defended by the translator.

Surprisingly enough, these two crucial aspects are omitted by Hernández in her work. She presents a volume that attempts to produce a new translation and a new revised edition of Sidney's original text. It seems, though, that from both aims Hernández favours the first one, or so she says (2002: 57) in the introduction: "El principal objetivo de esta edición revisada de *Astrophil & Stella* es la de acercar al lector a los manuscritos y las ediciones tempranas a través de un elaborado aparato crítico que proporciona las distintas versiones del texto." As far as the translation procedure is concerned,

there is no reference whatsoever to the style of translation she wants to produce. As Maria José Mora (2003: 153) has pointed out in her thorough revision of the volume:

Al explicar los objetivos de esta “edición revisada de *Astrophil & Stella* [la autora] no consigue aclarar qué aporta esta revisión sobre ediciones anteriores, en particular, la de Ringler (1962), que suele considerarse como texto de referencia. [La autora] obvia totalmente el problema de la traducción; de hecho, sorprende que entre la lista de ediciones consultadas no figure la de Galván, pues al tratarse de la única traducción española cabía esperar al menos una mención.

I am not interested in mentioning the problems that her edition may have, though from the reading of the volume I agree with Mora’s evaluation. As far as the issue of translation is concerned, the fact that Hernández does not explain her approach to translation is almost unbelievable. She does mention Galván’s translation, but I understand why Mora says she does not. It is a reference difficult to find, as Hernández does not locate it in the section where she indicates the editions used. Rather, she hides it in the final bibliography – in fact it is the only translation she mentions in the whole bibliographical section – with Sidney’s works, as follows (2002: 580): “Sidney, P. (1991) *Astrophil y Stela*, Galván, F. trad. Letras Universales. Edición bilingüe. Madrid: Cátedra”. Anyway, Mora is totally right when she states that Hernández avoids mentioning any reference not only to translation but also – and mainly – to *her* translation. So, what kind of approach is she adopting? Guessing, then, is our only hope as her approach can be deduced exclusively by having a look at what she translates. Again, I agree with Mora (2003: 154) when she states that:

En cuanto a la traducción, aunque la autora nunca nos aclara cómo ha abordado esta tarea, es evidente que su método y su objetivo coinciden con los de Galván: ofrecer un texto paralelo lo más literal posible que sirva de apoyo para leer el original.

It is clear that – with great differences in the final results, as we shall see later on – both translations aim at being literal and avoid any attempt to keep the verse patterns or the rhyme of the original. I agree with Galván when he says that “el desigual reparto silábico de las dos lenguas ... obliga normalmente a acortar el sentido del original,” but I think that we could abide at least by some of the

formal requirements of poetry. If in this case it is difficult to select a given Spanish verse pattern, we could perhaps try to keep rhyme and rhythm. That is, then, my verse proposal: to obtain a hybrid text that keeps a rhyme pattern similar to the original text. It is true that to offer such a translation we will have to make some changes, but I think the final result will produce a text faithful to Sidney's form and content. Let's proceed then with the main aim in this note: to offer a brief revision of "First Song" in both translations and to give my own version of it.

2.2 *The translated texts*

From a formal point of view it is obvious that both published renderings do not want to reproduce the rhyme pattern of the poem. A quick glance at the first stanza² is enough to see this fact:

Doubt you to whom my muse these notes intendeth, Which now my breast, o'ercharged, to music lendeth? To you, to you. all song of praise is due; Only in you my song begins and endeth.	<i>My proposal</i> ¿Acaso dudas a quién mi musa estas notas envía, esas que mi triste pecho da a la música en garantía? A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema así, solo en ti comienza y concluye mi melodía.
<i>Galván (1991)</i> ¿Dudas quién es al que estas notas mi Musa dirige, que presta ahora a la Música mi pecho afligido? Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción, sólo en ti mi canción comienza y concluye.	<i>Hernández (2002)</i> ¿Dudáis a quién mi Musa estas notas dedica, que mi pecho abrumado a la Música cede? A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se debe, sólo en vos mi canción comienza y culmina.

The internal rhyme of the third line, "you" and "due", is also avoided. Leaving this aside, the content is appropriately rendered in both versions, with acceptable variants like "afligido", "abrumado" for "o'ercharged", or "concluye", "culmina", "comienza" for "begins and endeth". I prefer, though, Galvan's syntax, as it is clear and coherent with his approach. I think that it is also more successful to

² When commenting the translations I will include in all cases the original text as it appears in Katherine Duncan-Jones 1989 edition. The four texts (Duncan-Jones 1989, Galván 1991, Hernández 2002 and my own) are listed in the appendix.

use “tú” instead of “vos”, which in Spanish has excessively formal implications that are not expressed by the original “you”. My proposal also follows this trend as far as the vocabulary selection is concerned, exception made of “song”, which I prefer to render as “melodía” to keep the rhyme structure. I think both rhyme structures could be kept, with a slight change though. In my proposal, “ti” and “así” are a good solution to obtain internal rhyme in line 3, and we only have to make a minor variation in line 2 to get the appropriate rhyme with “garantía”. Of course, in my effort to abide by the rhyme pattern some minor alterations like this one will have to be made.

The lexical selection in the second stanza is also acceptable in both versions:

<p>Who hath the eyes which marry state with pleasure, Who keeps the key of Nature's chiefest treasure? To you, to you, all song of praise is due; Only for you the heav'n forgat all measure.</p>	<p><i>My proposal</i> ¿Quién tiene ojos tales que a estado y placer emparejan? ¿Quién guarda la llave del más preciado bien de la Naturaleza? A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema así, solo por ti se olvidaron los cielos de su grandeza.</p>
<p><i>Galván (1991)</i> ¿Quién tiene los ojos en que estado con placer confluyen, quién guarda la llave del más grande tesoro de Natura? Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción, sólo por ti olvidóse el cielo de toda medida.</p>	<p><i>Hernández (2002)</i> ¿Quién posee esos ojos que aúnan ansiedad y placer, quién guarda la llave del escogido tesoro de Natura? A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se debe, sólo por vos el cielo olvidó la medida.</p>

“Nature's chiefest treasure” is adapted into “más grande tesoro de Natura” and “escogido tesoro de Natura.” I prefer Galván's option again as it keeps the superlative, so I render this as “máspreciado bien de la Naturaleza,” choosing “Naturaleza” and not “Natura” for metrical reasons. The same causes drive my selection of “grandeza” instead of “medida” in the final line. However, it is in the first line where I disagree with the version given by Hernández. I am referring to “which marry state with pleasure.” Galván offers an appropriate reading, “estado con placer confluyen.” I render the line as “a estado y placer emparejan” for metrical and lexical reasons: rhyme is kept, and the double meaning of the verb “to marry” is better expressed. There is only one

difference between Galván's reading, my own and the version given by Hernández: the word "state". Why does she render "state" as "ansiedad"? Hernández (2002: 469) defends this reading in the explanatory notes offered in the second part of the volume:

5 the eyes which marry state with pleasure ... El término *state*, según las acepciones del OED 1b (*a dirty, disorderly or untidy condition*) y 7b (*an agitated, excited or anxious condition of mind or feeling*) se refiere al sufrimiento y la ansiedad que los ojos de Stella causan en el enamorado. Por otra parte, estos son también motivo de placer. Por tanto, en este verso, el poeta proclama la propiedad de los ojos de Stella de provocar sufrimiento y gozo a la vez.

This argument seems correct. But if you check the entry "state" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which by the way has 41 meanings listed in 7 pages, and scan the whole list you get to meaning 18a, which reads as follows:

18. a. Dignity of demeanour or presence; dignified appearance, stateliness of bearing. Now *rare*. a 1586 SIDNEY *Astroph & Stella* Song 1.ii, Who hath the eyes which marrie state with pleasure!

Surprisingly enough, this definition not only explains a meaning of the word that is totally suitable for its rendering in Spanish as "estado" but it does so by making an explicit reference to this very line of *Astrophil & Stella*. It is very strange that Hernández makes no reference at all to this particular meaning, especially after mentioning meanings 1b and 7b of the same entry, which at least in the 1989 edition of the OED do not appear as Hernández says. This could be one of the many "errores de diccionario" spotted by Mora (2003: 156-157) all over the text rendered by Hernández. Mora does not mention the case of "First Song" but she lists many lexical misconceptions in the sonnets that could be similar to the one I have noted here.

The rest of the stanzas follow similar patterns with minimum variations – more conservative and prosaic in tone in the selections that Hernández made³ – acceptable in all cases. The style of both translations is very clearly defined by the comments I made on the

³ The already mentioned use of "vos" to translate "you" or the use of "poseer" to render "hath" are two very appropriate examples of linguistic options that, in my opinion, raise the style of the tone in the Spanish version.

first two stanzas and by the reading of the three texts that have been included in the final appendix. However, I think that it is interesting to comment briefly on some translation units that present worth mentioning aspects:

a) Stanza 3, “both decks and staineth.” Both versions offer a variation of the same idea: “a la vez engalana y mancilla” (Galván) and “engalana a la vez que mancilla” (Hernández). My proposal is forced by verse structure, “a un tiempo mancilla y enjaeza,” but I consider it appropriate and poetic, not only for using “a un tiempo” – to render “both” it is a more powerful option than “a la vez” from an stylistic point of view – but also for including “enjaeza”. This word keeps the rhyme structure and could be used in Spanish as a metaphoric synonym for “engalanar”, “adornar” (Seco et al. 1999 and DSA 1996).

b) Stanza 5, “when it chides doth cherish?” Although both renderings offer a direct version, Hernández presents a more prosaic and expansive line: “que cuando regaña es toda ternura.” Galván opts for a line with a rhythm closer to the original text: “que cuando riñe acaricia.” My proposal plays more with the content of the phrase than with the literal faithfulness of the terms in order to keep the rhyme structure in a somewhat uncertain but poetically powerful line: “que respeto abriga en la censura.”

c) Stanza 6, “long dead beauty with increase reneweth?”. This example is similar to the previous one. Both versions respect the literal meaning of the text, although Galván is again more successful when respecting the literal meaning of Sidney’s verse – “quién belleza largamente muerta con añadidos renueva?” – than Hernández who modifies the essential significance of the line by disregarding the meaning of “long dead”: “quién antiguas bellezas con creces renueva.” Perhaps, using “con añadidos” to translate “with increase” is not a very successful option but it is far more adequate than turning “long dead beauty” into “antiguas bellezas.” My proposal offers a more poetic alternative to render both translation units – “¿Quién con medro renueva la belleza muerta antaño” – and marks the rhyme pattern for the whole stanza in the Spanish version.

d) Stanza 6, “all envy hopeless rueth.” This line is another example of how excessively prosaic verse may sound in a prose version. Galván again offers a more stylistically appropriate text: “la envidia toda sin esperanza se arrepiente.” To avoid reproducing Galván’s translation, Hernández is forced to render “hopeless” as

“desesperanzada”, a term that breaks the internal rhythm of the line: “la envidia, desesperanzada, se arrepiente.” If “hopeless” has to be odified, my option will keep the rhyme and abide by the poetic structure: “la envidia toda abjura en desengaño.” The meaning of the Spanish sentence does not deviate too much from the content of Sidney’s verse, and the result is undoubtedly poetic.

e) Stanza 7, “hair which, loosest, fastest tieth.” This example stresses the importance of maintaining a certain rhythmical pattern when translating verse even in prose renderings. Galván manages to keep a very interesting rhythm in his version and, as it has been the case in previous lines, his “¿Quién tiene el cabello más suelto que más firme sujeta” is more rhythmical than the prosaic and arrhythmic alternative presented by Hernández: “¿Quién posee esos cabellos que cuanto más sueltos, atán más.” In my proposal I prefer to offer a direct rendering of the line with the intention of using it as rhythm and rhyme marker for the rest of the stanza: “¿Quién tiene cabellos que cuanto más sueltos más fuerte atan?” The next line – “Who makes a man live, then glad when he dieth? – will abide by the structure proposed: “¿Quién hace vivir a un hombre alegre si lo matan?”

f) Stanza 7, “flatterer never lieth.” My proposal for this line has to maintain the rhyme structure previously presented. It could be done by saying what Sidney wants to convey but with a different selection of vocabulary. Instead of “the flatterer never lies,” I opt for “the flatterer always tells the truth.” Thus, the whole verse will be “solo de ti al zalamero verdades le sacan.” I prefer “zalamero” and not “adulador” because, though the latter would not change the rhythm of the line, the former seems a more poetic word for the context of the poem and it is well documented in Spanish as a synonym for “adulador” (e.g. Moliner 1999). In the prose versions, though both translators render the end of the line with the same words, Galván obtains a more rhythmical version by using “de ti” instead of “acerca de vos” to render the “only of you” from the beginning of the line. Although both endings are the same, if you compare both versions, the rhythm of the prose changes drastically because of that first part of the line: “sólo de ti el adulador nunca miente” / “sólo acerca de vos el adulador nunca miente.”

3. “Verse in so capable a language as ours”: final comments

The translations I have revised in this note – with their defects and merits – are coherent with their initial premises: to offer a parallel

text, as literal as possible, that could be used as a guide to read the original English text. However, it is also true that, though with identical initial assumptions, Galván's final result seems to be more successful at all levels than the rendering offered by Hernández. Although it could be improved on, my own verse proposal offers a model that could be defended as an accurate poetic rendering of Sidney's text. My aim has just been to keep on defending the poetic translation of poetry. Sidney himself began his *Astrophil and Stella* by stating: "Loving in truth and faine in verse my love to show." It is "verse" what he is using to express himself, and "in verse" all renderings should be made or, at least, attempted in "verse in so capable a language as ours." Although it was not the model he followed, Galván (1996: 59) declared in the introduction to his translation that, as I previously mentioned, there had been some satisfactory verse translations in Spanish:

Un equivalente completo del texto inglés requeriría desde luego – como en alguna ocasión se ha hecho muy bien con los sonetos de Shakespeare o de Donne – una versión en endecasílabos y en sonetos españoles; pero ello forzaría, desde luego, el significado.

In spite of being an incidental commentary, since he explicitly mentions Shakespeare and Donne, I think that he might be referring to two magnificent instances of verse translation into Spanish: the excellent rendering of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* by Agustín García Calvo (1974) and the equally brilliant translation of John Donne's *Songs and Sonnets* by José Benito Álvarez-Buylla (1986). These are two very good examples of the fine results that can be obtained by adapting not only the content but also the external form of the poem. Just to mention a brief example, if you compare Álvarez-Buylla's translation of "The Expiration" with the rendering of that poem that appears in one of the most recent translations of John Donne's *Songs and Sonnets* – made by Purificación Ribes (1996) – the differences between both rendered texts are remarkable:

The Expiration

So, so breake off this last lamenting kisse,
Which sucks two soules, and vapors Both away,
Turne thou ghost that way, and let mee turne this,
And let our selves benight our happiest day,
We ask'd none leave to love; nor will we owe
Any, so cheape a death, as saying, Goe;

Goe; and if that word have not quite kil'd thee,
Ease mee with death, by bidding mee goe too.
Or, if it have, let my word worke on mee,
And a just office on a murderer doe.
Except it bee too late, to kill me so,
Being double dead, going, and bidding, goe.⁴

La expiración, una despedida

Rompamos este beso lastimero,
Que aspiran nuestras almas, y
evapora;
Tú, sombra, ve, yo vuelvo a mi
sendero,
Apaguemos tu y yo esta feliz hora.
A nadie debo carta para amarte,
Ni tan barata muerte decir: "Parte".

Si tal palabra no te ha muerto a ti,
Dame muerte mandándome al camino;
Oh, si así es, mi palabra obre en mí,
Y haga justicia con este asesino;
Si no ya es tarde para así morir,
Muerto dos veces: yendo, y por
mandarte ir.
(Álvarez-Buylla 1986: 107)

La expiración

Así, sí, interrumpe este ultimo beso de
lamento,
que a dos almas absorbe, y a ambas
evapora.
Vuélvete, espectro, hacia ese lado, y
vuélvame yo hacia este otro,
y oscurezcamos nuestro día más dichoso.
A nadie pedimos venia para amar; y a nadie
muerte tan vulgar adeudaremos como el
decir: "Partid".

Parte, y si esa palabra aun no te ha matado,
alíviame con muerte, al pedirme que me
vaya.
Si ya lo hubiere hecho, actúe mi palabra
sobre mí,
y justo proceder sobre un verdugo muestre,
a menos que para matarme así sea ya muy
tarde,
estando doblemente muerto, porirme y
pedirme que te vayas.
(Ribes 1996: 183)

It is evident that, though both approaches are defensible and appropriate, the two translators differ in the aim of their renderings. Although Ribes does not explain her approach to translation, it is very clear that she only wanted to offer an explanation of the original text, avoiding any poetical attempt, just as it was the case with the *Astrophil and Stella* text offered by Hernández. However, which of both renderings is closer to the poetic expression of John Donne? In my opinion, Álvarez-Buylla's, which surprisingly enough does not appear in the list of the Spanish translations of *Songs and Sonnets* included by Ribes (1996: 73) in her volume.

This poetic approach to translation could still be applied to Renaissance English Poetry with very good results, especially when rendering texts as easily adaptable as for example Thomas Wyatt's

⁴ I am quoting Donne's text as it appears in Álvarez-Buylla's bilingual edition.

poem LXX. Since I have not found any Spanish version of this poem, I would like to offer my own rendering of it as a supplement to the comments I have made in this note. In this case it is possible to keep both the rhyme structure and – increasing the number of syllables – the syllabic distribution in the rhythmical structure of the Spanish verse:

<p>Like as the swan towards her death Doth strain her voice with doleful note, Right so I sing with waste of breath: I die! I die! And you regard it not.</p>	<p>Como el cisne hacia su muerte Su voz eleva con triste sonido, Canto así, malgastando mi suspiro: Muero, muero, y no te importa mi suerte.</p>
<p>I shall enforce my fainting breath That all that hears this deadly note Shall know that you doth cause my death: I die! I die! And you regard it not.</p>	<p>Y sabrán que causas tú mi muerte Todos los que oigan el mortal sonido. Así lo contará mi débil suspiro: Muero, muero, y no te importa mi suerte.</p>
<p>Your unkindness hath sworn my death, And changed hath my pleasant note To painful sighs that stops my breath: I die! I die! And you regard it not.</p>	<p>Mas tu maltrato maldijo mi muerte, Y trocado ha mi dulce sonido En grave lamento que sesga el suspiro: Muero, muero, y no te importa mi suerte. En lágrimas se funde mi cruel muerte. Han forjado tus culpas mi sonido.</p>
<p>Consumeth my life, faileth my breath; Your fault is forger of this note. Melting in tears, cruel death I die! I die! And you regard it not. My faith with me after my death Buried shall be, and to this note I do bequeath my weary breath, To cry, "I died! And you regard it not!".⁵</p>	<p>Se consume mi vida, se va el suspiro: Muero, muero, y no te importa mi suerte. Esta mi fe, conmigo tras mi muerte Será enterrada, y a este sonido Le lego mi fatigado suspiro Que dirá. "He muerto. No te importa mi suerte."</p>

Before going straight to the "good prose translation" – as García Yebra (1983: 139) stated – as a substitute of the "bad verse," I think we should try to find the "good verse" first, no matter how discouraging such a task could be. In the vast majority of the cases, verse translations obtain better final results, or at least, they offer a more accurate combination of form and content. To translate a text does not only mean to offer the rendering of the text itself. It also implies to foster a cultural context to understand the rendered text.

⁵ I am quoting Wyatt's text as it is edited by González et al. (1989: 80-81).

This is something accomplished in critical bilingual editions such as those I revised here. But as far as the quality of the translation offered in such editions is concerned, not all of them are equally successful.

I think we should keep on trying to combine both form and content when translating poetry. The work done by the author of a very good critical edition can be totally spoilt if the translation offered does not tally with the quality of the critical comments. This should be a key aspect of modern editorial practice because we should not forget that the text is vital, as it is what the reader – whether he is an expert on the text or not – will read to fully appreciate the quality of the translated author. To get that accurate combination of form and content should be the main aim of every verse rendering into any given language. If we do not strive enough to offer good verse renderings we will be giving a very bad treatment to all the authors – and therefore to all their readers – who, like Donne, Shakespeare or Sidney, wanted to “show in verse” the expression of their art and their innermost feelings.

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Appendix: Verse Renderings of "First Song" from *Astrophil & Stella*

Text from Duncan-Jones (1989: 178-179)

Doubt you to whom my Muse these
notes intendeth,
Which now my breast o'ercharged to
music lendeth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only in you my song begins and endeth.

My proposal

¿Acaso dudas a quién mi musa estas
notas envía,
esas que mi triste pecho da a la música
en garantía?
A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema
así,
solo en ti comienza y concluye mi
melodía.

Who hath the eyes which marry state
with pleasure,
Who keeps the key of Nature's chiefest
treasure?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only for you the heav'n forgat all
measure.

¿Quién tiene ojos tales que a estado y
placer emparejan?
¿Quién guarda la llave del más
preciado bien de la Naturaleza?
A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema
así,
solo por ti se olvidaron los cielos de su
grandeza.

Who hath the lips, where wit in fairness
reigneth,
Who womankind at once both decks and
staineth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only by you Cupid his crown
maintaineth.

¿Quién tiene labios donde tiento reina
con belleza?
¿Quién lo femenino a un tiempo
mancilla y enjaeza?
A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema
así,
solo por ti Cupido preserva corona y
riqueza.

Who hath the feet, whose step all
sweetness planteth,
Who else for whom Fame worthy
trumpets wanteth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only to you her scepter Venus granteth.

¿Quién tiene pies que al pisar siembra
toda dulzura?
¿A quién sino a ti dignas trompetas
Fama le asegura?
A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema
así.
Solo a ti Venus otorga su cetro de
hermosura.

Who hath the breast, whose milk doth
passions nourish,
Whose grace is such, that when it chides

¿Quién tiene pechos cuyo jugo sustento
a la pasión procura,
cuya gracia es tal que respeto abriga en

<p>doth cherish? To you, to you, all song of praise is due; Only through you the tree of life doth flourish.</p>	<p>la censura? A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema así. Solo por ti da el árbol de la vida fruto sin mesura.</p>
<p>Who hath the hand which without stroke subdueth, Who long dead beauty with increase reneweth? To you, to you, all song of praise is due; Only to you all envy hopeless rueth.</p>	<p>¿Quién tiene manos que todo lo someten sin hacer daño? ¿Quién con medro renueva la belleza muerta antaño? A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema así. Solo ante ti la envidia toda abjura en desengaño.</p>
<p>Who hath the hair which, loosest, fastest tieth, Who makes a man live, then glad when he dieth? To you, to you, all song of praise is due; Only of you the flatterer never lieth.</p>	<p>¿Quién tiene cabellos que cuanto más suelos más fuerte atan? ¿Quién hace vivir a un hombre alegre si lo matan? A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema así. Solo de ti al zalamero verdades le sacan.</p>
<p>Who hath the voice, which soul from senses sunders, Whose force but yours the bolts of beauty thunders? To you, to you, all song of praise is due; Only with you are miracles not wonders.</p>	<p>¿Quién tiene voz tal que separa del sentido la conciencia? ¿Quién logra que los rayos de la belleza truenen con violencia? A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema así. Solo contigo los milagros ni saben de su existencia.</p>
<p>Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth, Which now my breast o'ercharged to music lendeth? To you, to you, all song of praise is due; Only in you my song begins and endeth.</p>	<p>¿Acaso dudas a quién mi musa estas notas envía, esas que mi triste pecho da a la música en garantía? A ti, solo a ti, que mereces un poema así, solo en ti comienza y concluye mi melodía.</p>
<p><i>Galván (1991: 153-155)</i> ¿Dudas quién es al que estas notas mi Musa dirige, que presta ahora a la Música mi pecho afligido? Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción, sólo en ti mi canción comienza y</p>	<p><i>Hernández (2002: 187-189)</i> ¿Dudáis a quién mi Musa estas notas dedica, que mi pecho abrumado a la Música cede? A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se debe,</p>

concluye.	sólo en vos mi canción comienza y culmina.
¿Quién tiene los ojos en que estado con placer confluyen, quién guarda la llave del más grande tesoro de Natura? Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción, sólo por ti olvidóse el cielo de toda medida.	¿Quién posee esos ojos que aúnan ansiedad y placer, quién guarda la llave del escogido tesoro de Natura? A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se debe, sólo por vos el cielo olvidó la medida.
¿quién tiene los labios donde con belleza ingenio reina, quién a la mujer a la vez engalana y mancilla? Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción, sólo por ti <i>Cupido</i> su corona mantiene.	¿Quién posee esos labios, donde ingenio sobre belleza reina, quién a la mujer engalana a la vez que mancilla? A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se debe, sólo por vos <i>Cupido</i> su corona mantiene.
¿Quién tiene los pies, cuya pisada toda dulzura siembra, quién más hay para que Fama precise dignas trompetas? Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción, sólo a ti <i>Venus</i> su cetro concede.	¿Quién posee esos pies, cuyos pasos toda dulzura siembran, por quién más la Fama requiere preciadas trompetas? A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se debe, tan sólo a vos su cetro <i>Venus</i> cede.
¿Quién tiene el pecho cuya leche pasiones alimenta, cuya gracia es tal, que cuando riñe acaricia? Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción, sólo a través de ti el árbol de la vida florece.	¿Quién posee ese pecho cuya leche pasiones alimenta, quién gracia tal posee que cuando regaña es toda ternura? A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se debe, sólo a través de vos el árbol de la vida florece.
¿Quién tiene la mano que sin golpear somete, quién belleza largamente muerta con añadidos renueva? Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción, sólo ante ti la envidia toda sin esperanza se arrepiente.	¿Quién posee esa mano que sin golpes somete, quién antiguas bellezas con creces renueva? A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se debe, sólo ante vos la envidia, desesperanzada, se arrepiente.
¿Quién tiene el cabello más suelto que mas firme sujeta, quién hace que viva un hombre alegre	¿Quién posee esos cabellos que cuanto más sueltos, atan más, quién hace al hombre al morir vivir

cuando muere?

Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción,
sólo de ti el adulator nunca miente.

¿Quién tiene la voz que el alma de los
sentidos separa,
quién más fuerza que tú para que los
rayos de la belleza truenen?
Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción,
sólo contigo ni los milagros sorprenden.

¿Dudas quién es al que estas notas mi
Musa dirige,
que presta ahora a la Música mi pecho
afligido?
Tú, tú, que mereces toda loa y canción,
sólo en ti mi canción comienza y
concluye.

contento?

A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se
debe,
sólo acerca de vos el adulator nunca
miente.

¿Quién posee esa voz que el alma de los
sentidos aparta,
qué fuerza sino la vuestra hace a los
rayos de belleza tronar?
A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se
debe,
sólo en vos los milagros maravillas no
parecen.

¿Dudáis a quién mi Musa estas notas
dedica,
que mi pecho abrumado a la Música
cede?
A vos, a vos, todo canto de alabanza se
debe,
sólo en vos mi canción comienza y
culmina.

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