
Translation’s life-giving potential is persistently underscored in the prologue to Hilaire Kallendorf’s text, in which Eduardo Espina suggests that the translator has given not only “una vida lujosa a las silvas de Quevedo” (18), but indeed an afterlife to the poet himself “Quevedo ahora es un ser moderno…” (15) An understanding of translation as a dialogue with illustrious antecedents is a thematic seam running through Espina’s prologue and the chapter “Conversations with the Dead: Quevedo and Statius Annotation and Imitation,” which is based on a co-authored study with Craig Kallendorf previously published in the Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes in 2000, and revised here to incorporate recent scholarship. This article, revealing the existence of a copy of Statius’ *Sylvae* annotated in Quevedo’s hand in Princeton University library, contributed to existing discussions of the importance of Statius within Quevedo’s work. Contemporary readers certainly identified the importance of Statius in Quevedo’s *Silvas*; Lope de Vega’s epistle “Al Doctor Gregorio de Angulo,” which Millé y Giménez dates at 1608, contains the lines: “Veréis otro Francisco que renueva / con más divino estilo que el de Estacio / las silvas, donde ya vencerle prueba.”

In more recent years, parallels with the Statian *Thebaid* in Quevedo’s verse were observed by commentators including Blecua (1963), who noted that Quevedo listed Statius as one of a number of undervalued poets in his *Anacreonte castellano*: “Como se ve en Homero, Virgilio, Estacio y Hesiodo, de quien tácitamente dice que los alaban muchos, y los entienden pocos, y los leen menos, por faltarles la hermosura y alegría y brevedad de los líricos.”

---


2 Francisco de Quevedo, *Obras completas*, ed. by José Manuel Blecua, Clásicos Planeta, 4 vols. (Barcelona: Editorial planeta, 1963), IV, 261. Regarding Quevedo’s access to the Statian texts, Jauralde speculates “No se conocen impresiones de traduc-
Senabre (1982) has examined the relationship between the Thebaid and a number of Quevedian sonnets, as well as the Poema heroico a Cristo resucitado, while Crosby and Schwartz (1986) have analyzed the intertextual relationship between Statius’ Somnus and Quevedo’s El sueño. However, the acknowledged reliance on Jauralde (1991) for dates (58) suggests the Kallendorfs could be kinder elsewhere regarding this critic’s conclusions, which only appear “misguided” in the light of their discovery of the Statian text.

Not only does the study present compelling evidence of Quevedo’s familiarity with the Statian model, it also affords a glimpse of artistic process. The textual evidence serves as the lynchpin of the presentation of Quevedo’s corpus as a “discrete collection,” akin to the Statian text (85), permitting the critics to trace the thematic and stylistic strands that bind the poems together. It’s in this “binding” that the contribution of Hilaire Kallendorf’s study is, arguably, to be found, taking its place alongside Cacho (2012) who assesses the poems as a coherent collection. New additions to the study include a table presenting Quevedo’s annotations to Statius’s Silvae, which allows the reader to perceive the synthesis of classical and Christian ideas as they emerge. In light of this evidence for Quevedo’s interaction with the Latin text, more might have been made of these correspondences, although they should prove useful for future poetic analysis. Unfortunately, the subsequent translation of the poems themselves is hampered by an over-literal approach, producing a frequent jarring effect but also, at times, revealing a misunderstanding of the source text. In Quevedo’s “silva sexta” or La Farmaceutria, for example, we encounter an exceptionally macabre vision of communication beyond the grave, wherein the speaker draws blood from an anonymous cadaver:

---

Si ayer, antes de darle sepultura,  
mordiéndole los labios a un difunto,  
antes que el postrer yelo le cubriese,  
le murmuré un recado que te diese. (121-26)

This is rendered as:

Yesterday, before giving him burial,  
Chewing the lips of a defunct,  
Before the final ice covered him,  
I murmured to him a message to give you.

The translator appears to conceive of the translation of Quevedo’s *Silvas* primarily as a resource for poets, offering herself as a conduit between the early modern Spanish poet and the modern reader. Nonetheless, this English rendering lies lifeless on the page, devoid of the mordancy of the Spanish original.


This detailed and well-documented book, the fruit of a doctoral dissertation at the University of Glasgow, traces the relationship between Isabella d’Este and her husband Francesco Gonzaga through Isabella’s massive correspondence (ca. 16,000 letters in copybooks and 9,000 received) that is preserved in the State Archives of Mantua. The letters were carried in sealed pouches by couriers and, in a small state like Mantua, they were the basic means for exchanging information. Earlier studies using the same source, which the author cites, focused on Isabella alone, while the author here perceives a partnership between husband and wife in governing their state. The turn of the sixteenth century was a difficult period in Italian history between the French invasions of King Charles VIII and King Louis XII in the 1490s and the Hapsburg invasions of Emperor Charles V in the 1520s that eventually made much of Italy a colony of Spain. Isabella d’Este (born 1474) was the eldest daughter of Ercole I d’Este, Duke of Ferrara. As