

**THE ROYAL MASTER AND *EL VILLANO EN SU RINCÓN*
REVISITED: MORE THAN THE MOTIF
OF THE RELUCTANCE TO SEE THE KING**

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REVISADOS: MÁS QUE EL MOTIVO
DE LA RENUNCIA A VER AL REY**

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Abstract

In 1890, in an article titled “Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts”, the German scholar A.L. Stiefel solidly demonstrated the clear textual relationship between James Shirley’s *The Opportunity* and Tirso de Molina’s *El castigo del penseque*. In 2003, following an intriguing footnote in that article, which pointed to five more dramatic Spanish sources, I postulated another transtextual relationship concerning Shirley’s *The Royal Master* and Lope de Vega’s *El villano en su rincón*. My analysis focused on the specific motif that he named “the reluctance to see the king” in the character of the English fool Bombo and the Spanish farmer Juan Labrador. However, after a review of the two plays, it seems clear that there are more textual relationships than the one disclosed in my previous study. Relying on Gerald Genette’s category of transtextuality, this article widens further the scope of the motif, explores its relationship with the topic of court versus country life, unearths architextual transferences of elements of plot and characters, proposes affinities based on the palatine affiliation of both plays and the similarities in the use of the dramatic method of matchmaking, and, finally, reveals the creative use that the Caroline playwright made of his Spanish source.

Keywords: Lope de Vega, James Shirley, *El villano en su rincón*, *The Royal Master*, dramatic genres, transtextuality, palatine subgenre.

Resumen

En 1890, en un artículo titulado “Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts”, el erudito alemán A. L. Stiefel sólidamente demostró la clara relación textual existente entre la obra de James Shirley *The Opportunity* y *El castigo del penseque* de Tirso de Molina. En 2003, siguiendo una intrigante nota aparecida en ese artículo, que apuntaban a otras cinco fuentes españolas, yo mismo postulé la existencia de otra relación transtextual que implicaba a *The Royal Master*, de James Shirley, y la obra de Lope de Vega *El villano en su rincón*. Mi análisis se centraba en el motivo específico al que llamé “la renuencia a ver al rey”, visible en el personaje del gracioso Bombo y el campesino español Juan Labrador. Sin embargo, tras una revisión de las dos obras, parece claro que existen más relaciones textuales que revelé en su día. Basándose en la categoría de transtextualidad propuesta por Gerald Genette, este artículo amplía el ámbito del motivo, explora su relación con el tópico de la vida cortesana frente a la vida de aldea, desvela transferencias transtextuales de argumento y de personajes, propone afinidades basadas en la filiación palatina de ambas obras y la similitud en el uso del método dramático del “encarte de parejas” y, finalmente, pone de manifiesto el uso creativo que el dramaturgo carolino hizo de su fuente española.

Palabras clave: Lope de Vega, James Shirley, *El villano en su rincón*, *The Royal Master*, géneros dramáticos, transtextualidad, subgénero palatino.

1. Introduction

The question of the textual presence of Spanish literature in James Shirley’s dramatic works emerged as a critical issue in 1890 with the publication of the seminal article “Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts” by A.L. Stiefel. The publication of a second article in 1907, “Die Nachhamung spanischer Komödien in England unter der ersten Stuarts III”, established a firm claim in favour of Spanish sources which has been seconded by all Shirleian scholars and critics thereafter. In the 1890 article, besides establishing a sound argument for the textual relationship between Tirso de Molina’s *El castigo del penseque* and Shirley’s *The Opportunity*, Stiefel added a footnote extending the influence of Spanish literature to five more plays, namely: *The Wedding* (1627), *The Young Admiral* (1633), *The Humorous Courtier* (1631), *The Example* (1634) and *The Royal Master* (1637 or 1638 ns).

Although he did not mention which Spanish sources were related to each of these plays, his footnote has some credibility, for in the 1907 article he successfully substantiated one of these cases: *The Young Admiral* which, again, he demonstrated

was based on a Spanish play, Lope de Vega's *Don Lope de Cardona*.¹ Ninety-six years later, García published an article in *The Review of English Studies* in which he made a tenable case for an instance of transtextuality in *The Royal Master*, the last of the plays mentioned by Stiefel. This piece of textual presence is a motif which he termed "the reluctance to see the king" (García 2003: 368). It is something which appears marginally (free motif) in the English play, but which is central (bound motif) to the Spanish one.² Basically, it deals with the unwillingness of the fool Bombo to meet the King of Naples each time the sovereign is close at hand, which resembles the stubbornness of Juan Labrador in avoiding the King of France in *El villano en su rincón*. In his article, García gives a series of textual and contextual pieces of evidence which support the hypertextual relation between the two plays.³ However, some further textual connections which lend greater credibility to the relationship between the two plays appear to have been left out or overlooked.

Something that must be paid attention to beforehand is that James Shirley did not follow the plot of *El villano en su rincón* in *The Royal Master*, but used some of the dramatic elements of this Spanish source for his own purposes in both the amount and the functionality of his material. This is indeed one of Shirley's features as a dramatist, so much so that he has been characterized as extremely original in his plots by Gifford and Dyce (1833, 1: lxiii) and Ward (1875: 333), although Stiefel rejected this assumption alleging precisely the debt of Shirley to Spanish sources (1890: 195-196). Perhaps the key to this question lies in reassessing the personal use that Shirley makes of his Spanish sources, even in *The Opportunity* and *The Young Admiral*. In both plays, Shirley exhibits independence of treatment in deftly manipulating characters, situations, and stretches of plot to his own context and purpose.

In the case of the two aforementioned plays, the task of adapting his models to the taste and conventions of the English stage was facilitated by the fact that both plays coincided with their Spanish hypotexts in terms of genre. Thus, in the case of *Don Lope de Cardona* and *The Young Admiral* the transfer goes from palatine tragicomedy to palatine tragicomedy, and in the case of *El castigo del pensequé* and *The Opportunity* the adaptation has taken place within the scope of palatine comedy.⁴ The process, however, is made more difficult in the case of hypertextual transference from *El villano en su rincón*, which is a palatine comedy (*comedia palatina cómica*), to *The Royal Master*, which could be described as a palatine tragicomedy.⁵ It must be underlined as a significant fact that this pair and the two previous pairs of related plays (in sum, all the cases of Spanish sources unearthed so far) present a palatine characterization, which explains much about the affinities, the possible reception and the kind of audience involved in the Spanish hypertextuality of James Shirley. This transformation from comedy into tragicomedy deserves an analysis of the plots and subplots of each play in order to determine how Shirley selected and

employed some dramatic elements which served his artistic purpose in what can rightly be called an architextual operation.

Two main plots can be distinguished in *El villano en su rincón*, though they are closely interweaved. The first is the stubborn and haughty refusal to see the King of France by Juan Labrador, who is finally forced by the king into recognizing the error of his ways and into accepting to live in the palace as his counsellor. The second plot revolves around the attraction that the courtly life exerts on his son Feliciano and daughter Lisarda, focusing mainly on the courtier Otón falling in love with the latter. In the end, Feliciano marries a country girl of his own class while the villainess Lisarda marries Otón, marshal of France.

In *The Royal Master* there are also two main plots. They are so closely knit that, as pointed out by Gayley (1914: 557), in essence, they are only one. The difference with *El villano en su rincón* is that one is tragicomic and the other could be envisaged as a romantic comedy.⁶ The tragicomic plot deals with the intrigues of Montalto, the King of Naples' favourite. In pursuing his ambition of preferment in the court, he tries to deftly manipulate the other character so as to finally come to marry Theodosia, the king's sister. So, his first action consists in frustrating the planned marriage of the princess to the Duke of Florence. He tries to divert the affection of the duke towards the young country girl Domitilla. The second plot deals precisely with the bringing to court of this young girl and her mother Simphorosa by the king's command. The king has sojourned briefly at Simphorosa's country house during a hunting day and, impressed by Domitilla's beauty, has commanded her to come to court. His intention is to marry her off to a high personage in the court, whose name he will not reveal and who later turns out to be Montalto. The innocent girl, however, takes it to be the king himself and becomes infatuated with the prospect of becoming a queen. Meanwhile, the young courtier Octavio has fallen in love with the girl and at the proper time steps up in defence of her honour when the King of Naples feigns an episode of sexual harassment as a way of curing her infatuation.

The number and arrangement of the *dramatis personae* show, in the first place, Shirley's adaptation of comedy to tragicomedy and the transfer of dramatic functions of the characters, as can be inferred from the following table:

The Royal Master plot Modality of action	The Royal Master characters	El villano en su rincón (Comic modality)
Tragicomedy + romantic comedy	KING OF NAPLES	EL REY DE FRANCIA
Tragicomedy	DUKE OF FLORENCE	(THE SPANISH KING) ⁷

The Royal Master plot Modality of action	The Royal Master characters	El villano en su rincón (Comic modality)
Tragicomedy	MONTALTO, the king's favourite	—
Tragicomedy	RIVIERO, a nobleman banished from the court, but who returns in disguise as the duke's secretary, under the name of PHILOBERTO	—
Tragicomedy + romantic comedy	OCTAVIO, a young courtier, son of RIVIERO	OTÓN, marshal of France.
Tragicomedy	GUIDO, ALOISIO, MONTALTO, ALEXIO	—
Romantic comedy	BOMBO	JUAN LABRADOR
Tragicomedy + romantic comedy	THEODOSIA, the king's sister	LA INFANTA
Romantic comedy	SIMPHOROSA, a noble widow	JUAN LABRADOR
Romantic comedy	DOMITILLA, her daughter	LISARDA FELICIANO

Table 1. Genre modality transference in *El villano en su rincón* and *The Royal Master*

As can be seen in Table 1, only the functions of *El villano en su rincón*, which were instrumental for constructing his play have been used by Shirley. He has not removed the character of Juan Labrador altogether, but has downgraded him from being the main protagonist and distributed the original character's thematic significance between Bombo, who retains the motif of the reluctance to see the king, and Simphorosa, who embodies the theme of the dispraise of a courtly life.⁸

The greatest portion of the play is taken up by the tragicomic component, i.e., the wicked plot of Montalto, his failure, and his final demise. Closely connected to this is the romantic plot: Domitilla's infatuation with the king. Shirley's option for tragicomedy and romantic comedy has precluded a broad use of Lope de Vega's main comic plot concerning Juan Labrador and his stubborn attempt to avoid the king. Due to its comic nature, it was of little use to either the tragicomic plot or to the romantic plot of the young girl's infatuation. We can arguably say that the transference from one genre to another implied an operation of demotion, at Shirley's creative convenience, of the main plot of *El villano en su rincón* from a central to a liminal position, where it was useful in the form of the comic interventions of Bombo, as García (2003) has discovered. However, the figure of Juan Labrador and the motif which accompanies him, being the reluctance to see the king, is not exhausted in Bombo. Part of the significance of Juan Labrador is

infused in the character of Simphorosa, as she herself shows reluctance to receive the king and wishes to leave the court as soon as possible (I.ii.72-80, 232-233, IV.i.14). Indeed, the figure of Simphorosa is instrumental in connecting the aforesaid motif with the theme of the dispraise of a courtly life. This theme, which is openly comic in Lope de Vega, is adapted in *The Royal Master* in a more serious way, as befits a tragicomedy. It acquires graver undertones since it is connected with Montalto's machinations and forms part of the general message of the play: the perils of the court whose inhabitants are exposed to pretty but delusive language, intrigues, and deception. James Shirley, as is consistent with the tragicomic nature of his play, deals seriously with this issue. Lope de Vega, on the contrary, while still dealing with it (see, for instance, the declaration of Juan Labrador in I.283-301) and the mischievous mockery by the villains of noblemen and on courtly manners in III.2017-2150), gives it a comical turn from which he extracts the moral of the story: the king is the source of all nobility and his presence should be desired and encouraged by his subjects.

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The plots of the wooing of Lisarda by Otón and the emerging love between Octavio and Domitilla constitute another instance of architextual transference. In Lope de Vega's play, this plot strand is prepared from the beginning (indeed, the play starts with Otón wooing Lisarda), going from being in the background throughout the main plot of the vicissitudes of the king and Juan Labrador (with the growing jealousy of Otón for the king) to being resolved in the finale with the dispelling of Otón's jealousy and his being married off to Lisarda by the king. This plot is transferred to Shirley's play as a strand of the tragicomic plot of Montalto's machinations inasmuch as Octavio is an active participant there and Domitilla is the involuntary instrument of Montalto. It is also part of the romantic plot element of the young girl's royal infatuation, for it provides a happy solution to an embarrassing situation. Thus, the love relationship between Octavio and Domitilla is inauspiciously presented at their first encounter in I.ii.165-218, disappears during act II, re-emerges briefly during the unsuccessful wooing of Domitilla by Octavio and immediately afterwards by the duke in III.ii.176-236, and finally concludes happily in the episode of the feigned sexual advances by the king (V. ii.202-264), the bold defence of the girl's honour by Octavio (V.ii.264-284), and the 'punishment' by marriage that the king imposes on them (V.ii.285-307).

Returning to the topic of the central position of the king in both plays, it is worthwhile to consider that they have in common their avowed publicization of the monarchy. Both the French and the Neapolitan monarchs are represented as models of noble and appropriate conduct, albeit both participate in innocent sexual involvements with the young girls: the King of France by committing the peccadillo of lightly flirting with Lisarda and, in quick succession, with Constanza and Belisa

(*Villano*, II.1891-1964); the King of Naples by inadvertently awakening Domitilla's infatuation and by 'curing' her through a simulated unwelcome sexual advance (*Royal Master*, V.211-290). Apart from these shows of harmless frailty, the two kings are represented as the centre from which all nobility radiates and is communicated to their subjects. No doubt this was one of the doctrinal points present in the play by Lope de Vega which most likely caught the interest of Shirley, especially when, as a court champion (Young 2003: 192), Shirley was obliged to uphold the principle of the monarch's right to rule in the hazardous contexts of Charles I's Personal Rule. *The Royal Master* is the first of five Irish dramas which he wrote for the Dublin theatre at Werburgh Street under the protection of the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Thomas Wentworth, and the unofficial Master of the Revels for Dublin, John Ogilby. It was dedicated to George Fitzgerald, the Earl of Kildare, one of the richest landowners in Ireland. It is clear that the Royalist convictions of Shirley were in play. Thomas Wentworth, who saw himself as a viceroy of Ireland (Williams 2010: 25, 27, 55, 61-62, 210, 217) and John Ogilby, probably Shirley's close friend (Williams 2010: 19), had the self-appointed mission of 'civilising' the Irish population, which was one of the causes for the construction of the theatre and, of course, part and parcel of their 'civilising' task was to promulgate ideas about kingship (Williams 2010: 14, 28). It also seems most likely that the play had been composed before Shirley moved to Ireland and it was originally meant for and addressed to a London audience concerned with the royalist thesis of the play (Young 2003: 323-325; Williams 2010: 135-138). In this respect, it is very interesting to note that starting in 1634-1635, a French acting troupe had been operating in London for approximately ten months under the patronage of the Queen Henrietta Maria. This is two years before Shirley travelled for his long sojourn in Ireland. Apparently, there was resentment among the native London players (Shirley included) for the treatment of favour dispensed upon this troupe (Britland 2008: 66-72) and this may have been an inducement for Shirley to decide to leave England (Williams 2010: 39-42). But no doubt there must have been connections, attendance and exchanges between actors and playwrights of both nations. As is well known, Shirley was close to Queen Henrietta Maria and conversant in French (Bas 1973: 276-279; Hueber 1986: 121, note; García García 1998: 476, 502). Thus, part of his taste for the palatine subgenre and royalist affiliation might have come from these circumstances and could even have been boosted by this encounter.⁹ Of course, in this specific thematic content generally coinciding with Lope de Vega, Shirley shows his independent power of creativity in working out an independent story embodying his own nuanced royalist theory of state.¹⁰

Dramatically both kings are the characters who 'master' all the other characters and the action, either throughout the play (*Villano*) or at the conclusion (*Royal Master*) of the play. Their control of the situation responds to slightly different

theories of kingship. In the case of Lope de Vega, it is the absolute authority of the monarch that brings the self-sufficient Juan Labrador to learn that the most desirable state is not, as he believed, that of country retirement but to live as close as possible to the royal person, the centre from which all power and nobility stems. In the case of Shirley, the title serves to ensure that, no matter the tragicomical upheavals brought about by treacherous advisors, the king finally keeps everything under control and reinstates order and justice. Thus, ‘royal master’ is an appropriate term to refer not only to the King of Naples in this eponymous play, but also to the King of France in *El villano en su rincón*. Indeed, the expression ‘señor soberano’, which appears twice (II.998 and II.1793), would be a good translation of ‘royal master’, and one wonders whether it might have inspired Shirley for the title of his work.

Another point of contact between the two plays lies in the plot of *El villano en su rincón* concerning the willingness of Juan Labrador’s children to live in the court. This could be related to Domitilla’s infatuation with the King of Naples and her illusory perception that she is about to become queen. In effect, while Lisarda, from her first appearance, shows her fondness for life at court and agrees with Feliciano in his criticism of Juan Labrador’s attitude (II.425 ff.), Domitilla, from her first appearance in the play, manifests her attraction to the court (I.ii.97-160), and will increase her contentedness to be there as she becomes immersed in the life of the palace. In general, we can say that both girls have a latent desire to become ladies-in-court and that they finally achieve it, though with a slight difference in the respective denouements: whereas Lisarda marries the man she has intended to from the very beginning (the marshal Otón), Domitilla does not marry the king as she had first imagined, but instead the young and noble courtier Octavio in recognition of his brave defence of her honour. In marrying Octavio, Domitilla equals Lisarda in marrying Otón.

These female protagonists’ climbing of the social ladder is played out through the dramatic resource of what García calls “encarte de parejas” (1998: 430), and which will be referred to here as the matchmaking or marriage matching method. This is a prominent resource in Spanish Golden Age comedy also observable in James Shirley’s plays (García 1998: 430-436).¹¹ The device consists of presenting a number of male suitors versus a number of eligible ladies and playing upon the different possible combinations or matches. The situation is ultimately solved through a final reordering of the courting in which each male suitor matches his appropriate partner. Most times, the number of suitors and marriageable women squares, so that everybody ends up more or less happily matched. But other times there are more male suitors than available female partners and one or two of the males remain single, usually as a kind of punishment due to some fault or deficiency

of character (Serralta 1988: 88-89; Zugasti 2013: 12-16). There are even cases in both Spanish and English comedies in which two males end up partnerless and so they marry one another for fun. Lope de Vega excelled in the matchmaking method, up to the point that his immense productivity to a great extent resides in his ability to permute the different possible matches. Tirso de Molina did the same and, tellingly enough, his *Castigo del penseque* relies heavily on this resource. As could be imagined, Shirley's hypertext, *The Opportunity*, fully exploits this Tirsian matchmaking. But in no way does Shirley limit the use of this convention to this hypertext, for he resorts to marriage matching in no less than twenty plays.¹²

The uncertainty remains whether, on account of Shirley's extensive use of the resource in other works, this might be a case of parallel conventions rather than a case of architextuality. My contention is, however, that we are indeed dealing with the latter case. If this is so, it would exemplify the acquisition of a generic trait proper to the Spanish tradition by Shirley, which he was subsequently prone to using extensively.¹³

In *El villano en su rincón*, the marriage matching schema is rather simple and unproblematic since it only contains three pairs which are straightforwardly designed to marry:¹⁴

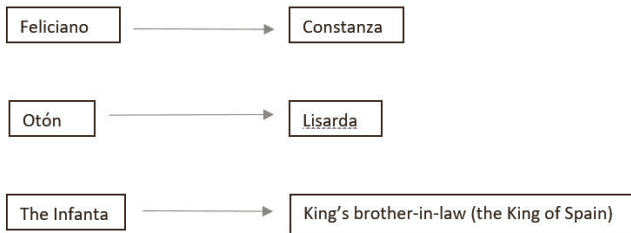


Figure 1

However, the king's suspicious gallantry towards Lisarda in III.2720-2775, which provokes the jealousy of Otón, might be represented as the potential concurrence of a second suitor in the competition to marry Lisarda. It could be represented schematically:

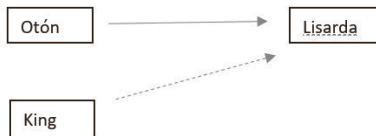


Figure 2

The same happens in *The Royal Master*, though here the situation is more complex due to the tragicomic action that, most likely, drew Shirley to convey a more prominent role in Theodosia, the king's sister:

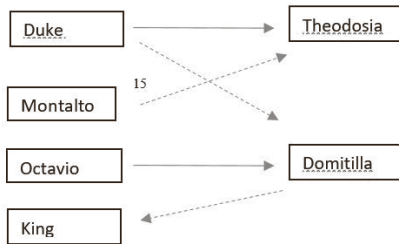


Figure 3

At this point it is necessary to underline that the plot sequence which concerns the appearance of the Infanta, i.e., the king's sister, in acts I and III of *El villano en su rincón* is rather incidental. She accompanies him on his visit to Juan Labrador's village in Act I (679-750, 846-879); makes remarks supporting or nuancing the king's words, is absent during the whole of Act II and, finally, re-appears in Act III to enhance the royal magnificence which the king has designed to impress the villagers (III.2873 s.d. - 2978). Before this final role, however, she is presented shortly before departing abroad to marry the king's brother-in-law (*mi cuñado*), seemingly the king of Spain (III.2486-2528). This marriage, significantly, has been arranged by the king, as also happens with Theodosia in *The Royal Master*. The duke and Theodosia's relationship mirrors the marriage matching of the Infanta and the king's brother-in-law. Again, the tragicomic nature of the play led to a more complex treatment by Shirley, since the completely unfunctional passage in *El villano en su rincón* is turned into a pivotal element which is employed in both the tragic and in the comic actions.¹⁵

Finally, the parallel element concerning the marriage matching that has been hinted at before deserves a more detailed analysis. In III.2720-2775 of *El villano en su rincón*, the king seems to be courting Lisarda to the jealousy of Otón, who thinks that his master might have brought her and her family to the palace with a view to philandering with her (III.2550-2626, 2732-2741). Otón has good reasons to mistrust the king, for, during his incognito stay at Juan Labrador's house, he had already been presented as something of a wanton character in his comic close succession of unsuccessful bedtime flirtations with Lisarda, Constanza, and Belisa (II.1891-1965).¹⁶ Besides, the Infanta had acknowledged that he had been much taken with Lisarda the first time they met her: "KING. Gods, how her

carriage is gorgeous!// INFANTA. I'm afraid you can't keep your eyes off her (I.874-875, my translation).¹⁷

The King of France's apparent courting of Lisarda in III.2720-2775 in *El villano en su rincón* evidently parallels the King of Naples's feigned indecorous proposition to Domitilla in V.ii.203-284 of *The Royal Master*. After previous accord with the latter's mother, the King of Naples feigns to ask the daughter to be his mistress as a cure for her infatuation. The dramatically functional outcome is that it provokes Octavio to step up in defence of the young girl's honour (V.ii.267-276), paralleling the way in which in *El villano en su rincón* Otón, stung by jealousy, tries to divert the supposed courting of the king by reminding him of his supper (III.2749-2775) and the king's amusing retorts. However, the kings in both plays are above the contingencies of mere wilful individual desires: "Never be afraid of power/ where power is wise" (V.ii.2762-2763, my translation),¹⁸ says the king of France. In a parallel way, "You have been a royal master" is heard from the lips of Montalto when acknowledging the justice of the sentence that condemns him to death (V.ii.193). In this the Machiavellian courtier recognizes the king's impartial judgement going beyond personal passions or whims just after the king had uttered "I must not, dare not pardon; 'twere a sin/ In me, of violence to Heaven and justice" (V.ii.191-192). The common message in both plays seems to be that the two kings are the embodiment of justice and nobility and all their endeavours have been for the good of their subjects, renouncing their own selfish passions. Indeed, no matter what they might appear to be (either out of the harmless flirting of the King of France in *El villano en su rincón* or the feigned sexual insinuation of the King of Naples in *The Royal Master*), they are royal masters in the sense that they are also able to master themselves. That is why, as part of their final providential action, they become the true matchmakers of their respective plays in accordance with current historical practice, which gave them control over the marriage of courtiers:

KING. Clear the table and let my sister
Tell to which of all our vassals
She wants to marry off Lisarda.

INFANTA. This, my Lord, let them say,
Since both her dowry and beauty
and your favour are such a prize.

OTÓN. Before anybody speaks,
I sue to be her husband.

KING. Otón, I would have sworn it
Since first you felt jealous.
Ana before your depart from here,

You and I will be together
witnesses of this glad wedding. (*El villano*, III.292-264, my translation)¹⁹

KING. You owe much to
His confidence; nor is there any punishment
Beyond your love and liking of his boldness.
You two should make a marriage with your follies.

OCTAVIO. Let Domitilla make Octavio
So blest!

DOMITILLA. My lord, you now deserve I should
Be yours, whom, with the hazard of the king's
Anger and your own life you have defended. (*Royal Master*, V.ii.285-293)

Additionally, as can be observed in the above excerpt, in the case of *The Royal Master* the king happily resolves to 'punish' the boldness of Octavio for defending Domitilla against his own sexual advances. This penalty of marriage is undoubtedly a mock punishment which ultimately is a reward.²⁰

The aim has been for this comparative analysis of *El villano en su rincón* and *The Royal Master* to show to the reader that the hypertextual relationship between the two plays is greater than has been thought thus far, since it is not restricted to the figure of Bombo, but includes more complex and subtle aspects that impinge on the domain of long stretches of plot, genre transformation, and Shirley's dramatic method.

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Fifty years ago, George Bas, discussing the Spanish connection of *The Royal Master*, commented:

A.L. Stiefel having simply asserted that Shirley borrows his subject from a Spanish work, it is unclear whether this was a general source or a model for only a portion of the action (131). We regret this lack of precision all the more since we would like to know whether the ambiguous genre of the whole comes from the fact that it was inspired by a "comedia", or if it resulted from an intimate fusion of two distinct ingredients, the machinations of Montalto and the chimeras of Domitilla. (1973:156, my translation)²¹

This article may well be an answer to the questions posed by Bas, at least as long as no new Spanish hypotexts are unearthed. In *The Royal Master*, Shirley shows his artistic power in his skill to closely fuse several different ingredients taken from one Spanish play (the reluctance to see the king, the dispraise of a courtly life, his royalist vindication of the personal rule of the king) with concurrent elements from the English tradition. In this way, he creates an original play integrating and interpreting some elements learnt from a foreign play. Part of his originality consists in the transference between subgenres, from Spanish comedy to English tragicomedy and romantic comedy, and the apt distribution of the imported

material between the tragic and the comic dimensions. Moreover, all his artistic manipulations take place within the palatine subgenre, which throws light on Bas's question concerning whether Shirley found inspiration in a *comedia*. What can be elucidated here is that the source of some of his textual components was a Spanish palatine comedy (or, as Zugasti calls it, a *comedia palatina cómica*). Further considerations regarding the plays of James Shirley reveal that the two assured sources of inspiration presented by Stiefel (*El castigo del penesque* and *Don Lope de Cardona*) are a palatine comedy and a palatine tragicomedy (*comedia palatina seria*), respectively. What is more, *The Humorous Courtier*, another of the six Shirleian plays alleged by Stiefel to be related to Spanish hypotexts, belongs to the subgenre of the palatine (romantic) comedy. The Spanish subgenre constitutes more than half of the total of the suspected Spanish hypotexts.²² This says much about the importance of the palatine modality as a popular exportable European subgenre. It is within this context in vogue at the time in Spain, France, and England, that we must envisage not only *The Royal Master*, but many of Shirley's romantic comedies and tragicomedies.²³ The present analysis of the textual relationships between *El villano en su rincón* and *The Royal Master* will additionally show that Shirley, when confronted with Spanish dramatic texts, operated both locally and generally, at the level of motif and at the level of genre transference, always preserving his own artistic integrity.

Notes

1. Indeed Stiefel went as far as saying that around half of the total Shirleian production points to Spanish sources (1890: 196). Bas, although recognizing that not even four of the aforementioned list of Shirley's plays had been substantiated as having connections with Spanish models, gave credit to Stiefel's assertion (1973: 114).

2. For free and bound motifs, see Tomashevski (1965: 68-70).

3. I will use here the theoretical framework provided by Gérard Genette for the categorization of textual relationships (1982: 8-14). He distinguishes five main classes of textual relationships to replace the general term intertextuality (which he calls transtextuality): intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypertextuality. Here only

two of these five categories are pertinent: hypertextuality and architextuality. The former consists of any relationship uniting a text B (hypertext) to an earlier text A (hypotext), "upon which it is grafted" neither through commentary nor explication nor as a literal ("eidetic") reproduction (Genette 1982: 11-12); the latter covers the area of the taxonomic relationship that literary works maintain with the different abstract categories commonly accepted as literary, such as genres and subgenres (Genette 1982: 11).

4. The question of the palatine subgenre deserves an explanation here. In Spanish criticism the term *comedia palatina* acquired currency since the early publication of Weber de Kurlat (1975). Numerous studies, both devoted to the subgenre and to

individual playwrights, have followed, delineating a repertoire of characteristics and a corpus of "palatine plays" (see Oleza 1997; Yoon 2002; Zugasti 2003, 2013, 2015; Rodríguez García 2015; Zugasti and Zubieta 2015; Gutiérrez Gil 2021). On the English side, this alleged subgenre is more problematic. The name seldom appears in the many studies on tragicomedy and romantic comedy. García García (1999) seems to be the only scholar who has noted that a number of English and French tragicomedies fit well within the palatine domain and constitute together with their Spanish counterparts a true pan-European set of palatine tragicomedies. He even proposes an incipient catalogue (1999: 134-138). More recently, Zugasti (2003 and 2015) has proposed the name of *comedia palatina seria* (which I have adopted here) for Spanish palatine tragicomedy while reserving the name of *comedia palatina cómica* to term the kind of Spanish palatine comedy which would assuredly match a subset of Fletcherian romantic comedies as practiced by Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Shirley, etc. Accomplished instances of palatine tragicomedy, to mention just a few English and Spanish examples, would be *King and No King* (Beaumont and Fletcher), *The Great Duke of Florence* (Massinger), *The Doubtful Heir* (Shirley), *La ocasión perdida* (Lope de Vega), *Amar por razón de estado* (Tirso de Molina) and *Cuán to se estima el honor* (Guillén de Castro). As to instances of palatine comedy, we can cite *The Woman Hater* (Beaumont and Fletcher), *The Gentleman Usher* (George Chapman), *The Humorous Courtier* (Shirley), *El perro del hortelano* (Lope de Vega), *El vergonzoso en palacio* (Tirso de Molina) and *Nadie fie su secreto* (Calderón de la Barca).

5. *El villano en su rincón* is unanimously acknowledged as a comedy. *The Royal Master* bears no description regarding its genre in the two 1638 simultaneous editions (Dublin and London). Editors and critics have not always shown accord as to the dramatic genre of this work. In passing Gifford and Dyce (1833, 4: 102), Gayley (1914: 561), and Ward (1914: 556) call it a comedy. Nason (1915: 292, 303) calls it a romantic comedy, whereas Forsythe (1914: xiii) and the majority of modern critics assign to it the label of

tragicomedy: Herrick (1955: 300), Bas (1973: 876, although with qualifications on 155-156), Luow (1981: 108 and 149), and Williams (2010: 153, 251).

6. The nature of this second plot is, no doubt, what has made several critics (see the previous note) incline to label the play as a romantic comedy or even simply as a comedy. As Young has noticed, "the play is yet another attempt by Shirley to craft a tale of court intrigue and romance, a formula that he used in the past to cover his political and social commentaries" (2003: 327).

7. The Spanish king is not part of the *dramatis personae*. He is indirectly alluded to ("mi cuñado") as the impending husband of the infanta in III: 184-186, II. 2486-2529.

8. This is the English counterpart to the well-known Spanish theme of *menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*. The theme, which has its roots in classical literature, was first dealt with by Baldassare Castiglione in his highly influential *Il Cortegiano* (1528) and so became current in European Renaissance literature as part of the anti-court satire. In Spain, Fray Antonio de Guevara, a widely read author in Europe and especially popular and influential in Tudor England, devoted a book to this theme under the title of *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* (1539). This book was translated by Sir Francis Bryan in 1548 under the title of *Dispraise of the Life of a Courtier and a Commendation of the Life of the Labouring Man* and by Henry Vaughan in 1651 as *The Praise and Happiness of the Country Life*. Although the theme is more frequently invoked by Spanish literary critics in its Spanish coinage, I have used the present English wording as taken from Sir Francis Bryan.

9. A Spanish company led by someone called Juan Navarro (possibly Juan Navarro Oliver) was operating at the same time and place as the French company (Ward 1875: 418-419, note; Hume 1905: 284, 279; Bentley 1968: 94; Britland 2008: 72; and Williams 2010: 39). What kind of Spanish plays were performed before the King and Queen? Considering the royal nature of their hosts it is not unlikely that they had resorted to palatine plays (and, why not?, to *El villano en su*

rincón). If the comedy was performed in Spanish, and we must remember that Shirley shows himself familiar with Spanish language and culture (García García 1998), the most apparent traits to be grasped by a non-native Spanish audience were those partial ones that Shirley used in *The Royal Master*: the reluctance of Juan Labrador to see the king, the general mechanism of marriage matching and the centrality of the radiant figure of the king.

10. For Shirley's connection with the court and his royalist affiliation and theory of state, see Bas (1973: 305-338), Morillo (1961), Lucow (1981: 18-26, 66), Burner (1988), Clark (1992), Williams (2010: 144-171, 210-211), and Young (2003: 192-195 and 325-329).

11. While marriage and marriage closure has received a good deal of attention in Elizabethan scholarship, there are no studies on the pattern of actions conducive to the final marriage or marriages as viewed from the perspective of the "encarte de parejas". Future research on this area would be extremely productive.

12. These plays are: *The Wedding, The Witty Fair One, The Grateful Servant, The Humorous Courtier, Love in a Maze, Hyde Park, A Contention for Honour and Riches, The Ball, The Example, The Opportunity, The Coronation, The Duke's Mistress, The Constant Maid, The Imposture, The Sisters, The Court Secret, and Honoria and Mammon*. In *Love Tricks* and *The Brothers* we witness the comic marriage of two men, something that can be seen in the Spanish *comedia*, too, as in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *Los empeños de una casa*, Andrés de Claramonte's *De lo vivo a lo pintado*, Lope de Vega's *Lo que pasa en una tarde*, etc.

13. This fact strengthens my appeal for further research on the issue of the match-making resource in Early Modern English comedy.

14. The same type of schema as in Zugasti (2013) is used here.

15. The scene announcing the Infanta's marriage (III.2486-2528) is extraneous to the main matter of the comedy, as pointed out by Bataillon (1949: 10-11). It is indeed an incidental celebratory allusion to the double

marriage of 1612, between the Spanish Anne of Austria and the French King Louis XIII, on the one side, and Elisabeth of France and the Spanish King Philip IV (Bataillon 1949: 8-12; Marín 1987: note on page 185).

16. It is most likely that Otón had been witness to this episode of dalliance, since immediately after the king has been turned down and teased by the three girls, he discovers his marshal hidden behind a curtain as the latter's way to escape his detection by the villagers after his thwarted assignation with Lisarda.

17. "REY. *El talle es, por Dios, gallardo. INFANTA. Que os lleva los ojos temo.*" We can appreciate here and in the whole scene (I.840-879) the Infanta's subtle misgivings about Lisarda, which is mirrored much more patently in the rivalry between Theodosia and Domitilla as seen in IV.i169-221. In the end both women in each play make friends with each other (*El villano* III.2540-2549; *Royal Master*, IV.i.200-221 and V.i.1-4).

18. "Never be afraid of power/ where power is wise"

19. "REY. *Quitad la mesa, y mi hermana/ diga a cuál vasallo nuestro/ le quiere dar a Lisarda./ INFANTA. Eso, señor, digan ellos,/ pues el dote y la hermosura/ y tu gracia es tanto premio./ OTÓN. Antes que ninguno hable,/ a ser su esposo me ofrezco./ REY. Otón, juráralo yo,/ desde los pasados celos./ Ana, primero que os vais,/ deste alegre casamiento/ seremos los dos padrinos.*"

20. The reward by marriage under the cloak of a punishment sometimes appears both in the Golden Age comedies of Spain and in Jacobine-Caroline comedies. More frequently, it is a real although comic punishment, typically involving the binding of one character to a socially inferior partner as part of the mechanism of poetic justice. There are examples in the Spanish *comedia* (Salas Barbadillo's *Galán, tramposo y pobre*) and in Shirley's works (*Love in a Maze, The Brothers, The Witty Fair One, The Imposture*).

21. "A.L. *Stiefel ayant simplement affirmé que Shirley emprunts son sujet à une oeuvre espagnole, on ne sait si ce fut là une source globale ou un modèle pour une portion seulement de l'action (131). On regrette*

d'autant plus cette absence de précision que l'on aimerait savoir si le genre ambigu de l'ensemble vient de ce qu'il fut inspiré par une "comedia", ou s'il résulte d'une fusion intime de deux ingrédients distincts, les machinations de Montalto et les chimères de Domitilla."

22. As to *The Ball and The Example*, both can be defined as comedy of London life/comedy of manners. If there are any Spanish hypotexts preceding them, they must probably be cloak and sword comedies from which Shirley has borrowed some episodes redolent of Spanish themes and conventions.

23. Despite an absolute dearth of studies on the European palatine genre in the Early Modern Period, in Spain this scarcity has been somewhat remedied from 1975 onwards (see footnote 4). As regards studies of tragicomedy and comedy in England, France and Italy from a palatine approach, only partial references are to be found scattered in the works of Herrick (1955), Doran (1961), Ristine (1963), Lancaster (1966), Guichemerre (1981), Hirst (1984), and Cohen (1987).

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