A CRITICAL EDITION OF

CONTRA VALOR NO HAY DESDICHA

BY

LOPE DE VEGA

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<td>Correas</td>
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<td>Cov.</td>
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PLOT SUMMARY

Act I

In the opening scene of *Contra valor no hay desdicha*, Ciro is introduced as the son of Mitridates the peasant, and we learn that he has a thirst for knowledge that his father regards with scepticism. Through a conversation with his friend, Bato, it is soon revealed that Ciro is in love with Filis, a lady of high rank who is the sister of the king’s *privado*, Arpago. Ciro courts her and is met with cautious encouragement, despite their social incompatibility and the fact that he has made romantic promises to Flora, a *villana* who bemoans his betrayal of her love.

A scene comprising a group of young men from the village, Ciro’s friends, follows, and it soon becomes clear that Ciro is superior in all tests of strength and wit; as the result of his victory in these competitions the group crowns him ‘king’. Taking advantage of his position as ‘rey de burlas’ of the village, Ciro orders Fineo, a local man’s son, to be flogged when Fineo refuses to recognize his ‘kingship’ by bowing down to him. This outrages Fineo’s father, Evandro.

The following scene opens at the royal court; through the monologues of king Astiages and conversation with his *privado* Arpago, we discover that Astiages was warned in a dream that his grandson (by his daughter Mandane) would grow up to overthrow him and take the throne. Terrified by this prophecy, the king married Mandane to a lowly Persian, and when she had a son he ordered Arpago to kill the baby boy by leaving him out to be devoured by the wild animals. At this point, Evandro arrives at court to make his complaint to the king about the unjust flogging of his son on Ciro’s orders. Astiages, immediately fearful of the idea of a peasant playing at being a king, demands to see the boy and sends Arpago to fetch him.

Ciro and his friends continue their kingship game, although the pretence has taken a serious turn as they are now being directed by Ciro into training for battle with a nearby village. A royal standard has been
improvised and Ciro demonstrates to his ‘soldiers’ how to wave it. Arpago arrives and summons Ciro to the court of Astiages; Mitridates vows to accompany his son, having an intimation that something is wrong.

**Act II**

Astiages suspects the truth about Ciro’s identity before he arrives. During the interview at court, the king’s fears are realized as it becomes clear through Ciro’s looks and innately kingly manner that Ciro is in fact his grandson, the child of Mandane. Astiages doesn’t reveal the truth to Ciro himself, but asks Mitridates to tell his story when the young man has left. The account confirms that Ciro was the baby whose death Astiages had ordered so many years previously. Astiages dissimulates and claims that he is happy that Arpago disobeyed him by not killing the baby as instructed, inviting his privado to dine at court as a reward. However, Astiages’ theatrical asides reveal that he is full of murderous rage, and he soon tells Evandro privately to ambush Ciro and kill him.

Ciro is convinced by the king’s show of benevolence, and delighted that he has found favour with Astiages. Mitridates is suspicious, however, and in answer to his father’s fears, Ciro makes his first declaration of the ethos of the play summed up in its title: ‘contra valor no hay desdicha’. Evandro and Fineo arrive with other soldiers to ambush Ciro as he and Mitridates are crossing the mountain at night. Ciro orders his father to hide and after a hard-fought battle Ciro kills Fineo and emerges victorious.

Mitridates searches for his son as Bato and Filis arrive on the scene. A tender reunion with all three is interrupted when Arpago appears with some soldiers. Filis is aghast to see her brother and hides from him. However, Arpago’s intentions are benign: he begins by telling Ciro the true story of his identity and birth, hitherto unknown by the young man. Arpago finishes by recounting the terrible punishment

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1 ‘supposed father’: in the play, Ciro believes Mitridates to be his real father until the moment at the end of Act II when he is told by Arpago about his true origins. Therefore, it would be more accurate to refer to Mitridates as Ciro’s ‘supposed’ or ‘adoptive father’ in reference to him. However, given that Ciro himself does not realise that Mitridates is not his biological father for much of the play, I have chosen to refer to Mitridates simply as his ‘father’. I will draw the distinction when speaking of his ‘biological father’, the Persian, Cambyses, when necessary.
inflicted on him personally by Astiages for disobeying his orders regarding the infant Ciro. The king had invited Arpago to dinner, but after the meal revealed to the *privado* that he had in fact just eaten his own son, cooked in a pie on the king’s orders. Arpago therefore swears his dedication to Ciro’s cause in overthrowing his grandfather and claiming his rightful place on the throne. The act ends with both men vowing their mutual friendship and resolving to take up arms against Astiages.

**Act III**

The first scene of Act III opens with Bato informing Flora of Ciro’s most recent movements: training an army and preparing for war against his grandfather. There are intimations of romantic feeling toward Flora on Bato’s part, but the *villana* does not entertain them.

Ciro arrives with his followers and there is a touching exchange with Filis. The roles, ironically, have been reversed somewhat, and now Filis worries about her lowliness in comparison to the royal-blooded Ciro, but he assures her of his enduring love despite his change in social status. Ciro asks for a volunteer to take a letter to Astiages, and in an unlikely turn of events it is Bato who steps forward.

At court, Arpago reports to Astiages the news of Ciro’s preparations, emphasizing the absurdity of the idea of a peasant attempting to lead an army in an effort to lull Astiages into a false sense of security. Bato delivers the letter from Ciro, the demands and tone of which enrage Astiages. The king in his ire wishes to kill the impudent Bato, who is cleverly defended by Arpago and returns unscathed.

Back in the village, Ciro suffers a public fall from his horse. This is greeted with much dismay by those around him, given that such an incident was commonly regarded as a bad omen. In order to nullify the negative connotations, Ciro cuts off the front legs of his horse, reasoning that the supposed bad luck has therefore been transferred from himself to the animal. Nevertheless, the confidence of his followers has been shaken, and when Bato arrives with the news that Astiages has not accepted his proposals for a peaceful settlement, both Mitridates and Filis plead with Ciro not to go into battle. This suggestion is met
with a steely refusal to concede defeat, even when Arpago arrives to tell Ciro of Astiages’ huge army.

Arpago personally has no hope for victory, but he vows at least to die with Ciro.

A soliloquy from Ciro follows, wherein he articulates his fears. A mysterious voice is heard: it transpires that it is the ghost of his biological, Persian father, warning him against going to war. Ciro defiantly rejects this advice, declaring again that ‘contra valor no hay desdicha’ and unceremoniously dismissing the spirit. Even when a comet passes through the sky, this additional recognized portent of disaster is not enough to deter him.

The battle begins badly with Ciro’s troops deserting him. Despite this, after their womenfolk shame them and Arpago arrives with reinforcements, Ciro’s army finally wins out against that of Astiages. The king is humbled, and kneels before Ciro, begging for clemency. After a short speech in which he outlines the reasons for his decision to show mercy to his grandfather, Ciro gives Arpago the opportunity to take revenge for the murder of his son. However, inspired by his new king’s forgiving attitude, Arpago relinquishes his right to justice and Astiages is sentenced to live out his days kept by Ciro in a city where he cannot again infringe on his grandson’s right to power. Filis is chosen as Ciro’s queen and the play ends with a repetition of the proclamation, ‘contra valor no hay desdicha’.
HISTORY AND SOURCES

Accounts of the life and deeds of King Cyrus the Great are found primarily in sources such as the cuneiform documents (principally the Cyrus Cylinder), the Greek Historians (such as Herodotus, Xenophon and Ctesias), and the Old Testament books of II Chronicles, Ezra and Isaiah.²

The history of his reign as king of Persia is well-documented, although accounts of his earlier years are fewer and less reliable; it is this period of his life upon which Lope de Vega draws as the subject matter for Contra valor no hay desdicha, making ‘Ciro’ his protagonist. As is often the case with great heroes and warriors of the past, descriptions of the birth and childhood of Cyrus have become a mixture of myth and legend, and are therefore to be viewed as having more of a cultural and societal significance than historical accuracy.

An important account of Cyrus’s early life appears in Book I, sections 107-130 of the Histories by the Greek Herodotus, a seminal work written in c.450-420 BC that gives an account of the rise of the Persian empire and the Greco-Persian wars, in addition to providing much additional information of cultural interest. Marcus Julianus Justinus, or Justin, also tells of the early life of Cyrus in Book I, sections 4-6 of his summary of the writings of Pompeius Trogus, the Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' 'Historica Philippica', thought to have been written in the late second century AD (although there is no consensus as to the exact date). Albeit more brief, Justin’s account is in many ways very similar to that written by Herodotus, and it is clear that Lope used the accounts of both of these historians as the source material for his play, as will be shown. Conversely, Lope’s narrative line differs greatly from other histories of Cyrus’ early life, such as those previously mentioned by Ctesias (Persica) or Xenophon (The Education of Cyrus), and we are therefore able to discount them from amongst his possible sources. Moreover, we can conclude through

² The Cyrus Cylinder is a large clay vessel originally inscribed and buried in the foundations of a wall after Cyrus the Great captured Babylon in 539 BC. The Cylinder is written in Babylonian cuneiform script by a Babylonian scribe; it was found during a British Museum excavation at Babylon in Iraq in 1879, and has been housed in the British Museum since that time. The Greek historians are Herodotus Histories, Xenophon Cyropaedia and The Education of Cyrus; Ctesias On Persia. The Old Testament references are II Chronicles 36.22-23; Ezra 1; Isaiah 44.24-28; Isaiah 45.1-13.
analysis of certain significant divergences between the accounts in question that Lope relied more heavily on Herodotus as his source for \textit{Contra valor}.\footnote{Lope was familiar with Herodotus’ work. In Victor Dixon’s article ‘La huella de Lope en la tradición clásica: ¿honda o superficial?’, in \textit{Anuario Lope de Vega} 11 (2005), 83-96 (p. 92), fn. 43, he states: ‘...los vv. 3173-3175 [de \textit{La dama boba}] aluden a un pasaje de Herodoto, Libro V, iv.’ Additionally, a reference to Herodotus is found in l. 709 of Lope’s \textit{El villano en su rincón}.} This is certainly the view taken by Menéndez y Pelayo in his introduction to the play for the sixth volume of the fifteen-volume collection, \textit{Obras completas de Lope de Vega}, which has the sub-title ‘Comedias mitológicas, comedias históricas de asunto extranjero’, first published by the \textit{Real Academia Española} in 1896 (264-65):

In this section, I shall demonstrate that Lope used the work by Justin more than is implied here, although I support Menéndez y Pelayo’s conclusion that Herodotus was a key source for the dramatist.\footnote{Giuseppe Grilli, in his article ‘El héroe desdichado en Lope’, in \textit{Anuario Lope de Vega} 6 (2000), 125-146 (p. 138), cites Mexía’s \textit{Silva de varia lección} as a possible source for \textit{Contra valor}. However, the account found therein (1989, 470-71) is nothing more than a brief summary of Herodotus’ version. Given that details are found in \textit{Contra valor} that correspond with Herodotus but do not appear in the \textit{Silva}, it is possible to discount the latter as a credible source. It is, of course, likely that Lope had also read the account of Cyrus in the \textit{Silva}, but not that it formed his main source material.}

Lope would have had no trouble in acquiring a copy of the works by both historians. In Spain, \textit{Herodotus’ Histories} was widely available in Latin translation from at least the early sixteenth century. The original Latin text of Justin’s \textit{Epitome} abounded all over Europe from the early 1500s; additionally, an edition of the text was printed in Spanish by Juan de Brocar in Alcalá de Henares as early as 1540, and also by Martin Nutius (Antwerp) in 1586.

Tal es la leyenda que nos ha transmitido Heródoto, y que Lope tomó principalmente de su \textit{Historia}, y no de Justino, que también la trae, aunque abreviada y con algunas variantes, en el lib. I de su epitome de Trogo Pompeyo. Así nos lo persuade el nombre del vaquero \textit{Mitridates} (\textit{Mitridates} [sic] en Lope), que está en Heródoto, pero no en Justino;\footnote{Justin says, at the start of book 1 section 6, ‘Cyrus, after reading the letter [from Harpagus, telling him all that Astyages had done], was exhorted in a dream to make the same attempt’ (i.e. ‘to raise an army, and march directly to seize the throne’ - Justin, book 1, section 5). Menéndez y Pelayo argues that this is at the root of Lope’s scene in Act III, 2352-87 where Ciro interacts with the spirit of his dead father and as a result resolves to go to war (despite being urged to the contrary).} el que Ciro mande azotar a un solo muchacho, y no a varios, como dice el compendiator latino, y algunas otras diferencias que entre ambos textos se notan. No queremos decir con esto que Lope, cuya lectura, como ya hemos visto, era muy extensa y variada, dejase de consultar también a Justino. El germen, por ejemplo, del sueño de Ciro, de que Lope sacó tan admirable partido dramático, está en Justino.\footnote{See Act I, fn. to line -1; Menéndez y Pelayo renders this name as a proparoxytone, despite the fact that the scansion of certain lines in Act II (1138-43; 1188-89) shows that it is preferable to use the more common paroxytone version.}
Having established that the play *Contra valor* has a generally historical basis insofar as the majority of its protagonists did exist and can be traced from historical records of the time, it is important to keep in mind that the events depicted in the play are those which are the most historically unreliable and the closest to legend. Possible motivations for Lope opting to dramatise this particular narrative obviously include a shrewd eye for a compelling and exciting plot. The story is inherently dramatic, and although Lope adds to this further by introducing episodes of his own invention, such good source material for a play must have made it an easy choice to make.

As Otto Rank shows through his inclusion of the story of Cyrus’ early life in his work *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* it is (initially at least) reminiscent of other legendary tales. These include the stories of the birth and rearing of Oedipus, and that of Romulus and Remus, where noble-born individuals are exposed to the elements, rescued, and brought up as foundlings only to discover their true origins at a later date.

Certain features are common to both of the historians’ accounts and to the plot of Lope’s play. These features are as follows: Astiages (*Astyages*), the king of the Median empire, has a dream in which a vine issues forth from his daughter that is fertile enough to cover the whole of Asia. The king’s daughter is named Mandane in both Herodotus’ account and in Lope’s play, although she is not named in Justin’s account. Upon consulting his Magian advisers who interpret the dream, Astiages is informed that it foretells the birth of a grandchild who will grow up to overthrow him as king. Terrified, he marries Mandane to a lowly and less worthy Persian husband, because he fears that, as Justin puts it, ‘noble parentage on both the father’s and the mother’s side would strengthen the grandson’s spirit.’ (I.4).

Astiages then orders his trusted minister Arpago (*Harpagus*) to take his daughter’s firstborn child and leave it out to die in the wilderness. Arpago, reluctant to have the blood of the rightful heir on his hands,

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8 I will, for the sake of clarity, use the Spanish versions of the character names in my references to the play and its background, although I have indicated in parentheses when these differ from the English versions. Citations from other sources may include the English names.
9 In Herodotus’ account (although not in Justin’s, nor in *Contra valor*) this dream is preceded by one in which Mandane passes water (‘orina’ in the Spanish translation) that inundates all of Asia. Menéndez y Pelayo suggests that perhaps this would have been too crude a detail for Golden Age sensibilities which is why Lope omits it from his play.
decides he cannot commit the deed himself, especially as he anticipates the wrath of Mandane should Astiages die and she succeed her father, so instead he enlists the services of a lowly cowherd to abandon the child.

Here, the accounts of the Greek and the Roman historians diverge. Herodotus reports that the cowherd, who is named ‘Mitradates’ or ‘Mithridates’ in English (and its Spanish variant ‘Mitridates’ in Lope’s play) upon telling his wife of the task he has been appointed to carry out, is urged by her to leave out the body of their newly still-born child instead so that they can bring up the infant Ciro as their own in its place. This he does, and Ciro is raised as the son of the peasant. Later, when his grandfather has discovered his true identity, Ciro is sent ‘home’ to Persia to live with his mother, Mandane, and his Persian father, Cambyses. Once there, he speaks so much of his adoptive mother, Mitridates’ wife Cyno (a Greek name related to the word for dog, whose equivalent in the Median language, Spako, sounds like ‘spax’, also the Median word for dog), that Mandane and Cambyses decide to perpetuate the myth that he had been raised by a dog ‘thinking thereby to make the story of his saving seem the more marvellous to the Persians.’ (Herodotus, I.122)

However, Justin’s account of the circumstances surrounding Ciro’s exposure takes in earnest this ‘more marvellous’ line. According to the Roman historian, Arpago gives the task of getting rid of baby Ciro to an unnamed herdsman of the king’s cattle who leaves Ciro out in the wilderness as instructed, and then returns to his wife to inform her of what he has done. She, having recently given birth to a son, wears her husband down with entreaties that he bring the king’s son to her. When the herdsman returns to the place where he left the child, he is astonished to find ‘a bitch at the infant’s side offering the child her teats and keeping away wild animals and birds’ (4.10). The herdsman’s wife is so taken with the child that she actually begs her husband to take their own (living) newborn son and leave him to die in the wilderness in Ciro’s place, so that she can bring up the royal baby instead. This exchange is effected and Ciro’s life is saved.
What we find in Lope’s play is an amalgamation of these two accounts. Lope opts to include a report of the events as outlined by Justin, having the child exposed in the wilderness and subsequently protected and nourished by a bitch who suckles him:

Una perra le daba (¡extraño caso!)
piadosa el pecho por piedad del cielo,
y de aves y animales defendía,
que en torno dél la muerte conducía.  

(Act II, 1078-81)

This is included in Mitridates’ account of events as relayed to Astiages in Act II of the play (ll. 1034-1105).

He clarifies that this is the reason why the child was called Ciro:

Crióle mi mujer, púsole Ciro
por la perra que el pecho le había dado
(que así se llama en nuestra lengua)  

(Act II, 1090-92)

Details found in both Herodotus and Justin are present in Lope’s account: Herodotus makes mention of the child being ‘decked out with gold and many-coloured raiment’, which Lope renders ‘entre mantillas|ricas’ (II, 1035-36); Justin reports that, ‘the affectionate child’s smile’ was ‘so winsome’ that it prompts the cowherd’s wife to offer her own baby in his place. In Lope’s play, Mitridates refers to this in the context of Ciro’s innocence:

Apenas le tomé, cuando con risa
de su inocencia me mostró señales,
porque fuese testigo en su inocencia
el recibir con risa la sentencia.  

(Act II, 1046-49)

As mentioned, in Justin’s version the wife of the herdsman gives her own living son as a replacement for Ciro in order that he may be saved and brought up by her instead. This detail would be repugnant to the audience, and it would also have caused some difficulty to the playwright to attempt to portray it as a reasonable and sympathetic decision on her part. In Herodotus’ account a substitution does take place, but the baby replacing Ciro has been stillborn. Mitridates’ wife says to him,

I, too, have given birth, and the baby I bore was dead. Take then the dead boy and expose it, and let us bring up, as our own, this child of Astyages’ daughter... the dead child will have a royal burial, and the survivor will not lose his life. (I.112)
However, the denial of a decent burial for the newborn would itself have been offensive to seventeenth-century sensibilities. Perhaps for this very reason, Lope’s depiction in *Contra valor* avoids the issue of a substitution at all, describing merely the grief of Mitridates’ wife at having had a stillborn baby, ‘un hijo muerto malparido había’ (Act II, 1069), and how she convinces Mitridates to rescue the infant Ciro from the wilderness as a consolation for her in her grief. This, perhaps, leaves the audience to infer the idea that the dead child be left out as a substitute for the living, but Lope does not go so far as to express it explicitly, thus presenting a much less disturbing solution for the audience. This, as a consequence, makes the rescue of Ciro altogether more palatable and positive in Lope’s play.

Moving on to other similarities and divergences between Lope’s plot and the source material, Arpago’s motives for not carrying out the king’s command to abandon Ciro are presented more nobly in *Contra valor* than in the story as told by Justin and Herodotus, who attribute the decision solely to self-interest and the fear that Mandane, if she became queen after the death of her father, Astiages, ‘unable to avenge the infant’s death by taking action against her father, would do so by punishing his henchman’ (Justin I.4). In Lope’s play, however, Arpago articulates his motives as being rather loftier than mere self-preservation:

\[
\text{No quise ser yo verdugo de un ángel; que galardona la piedad el cielo, tanto la inocencia le enamora.} \quad \text{(Act II, 1598-1601)}
\]

The chronology of *Contra valor* is such that all of these occurrences are reported via second-hand accounts by different characters throughout the development of the plot. When the play opens Ciro is already a young man, and the first time that the plot converges with action from the historians’ accounts is midway through Act I, when we see Ciro showing clear signs of natural authority and superiority as he interacts with other youths from the aldea. In Herodotus’ account Ciro is ten years old at this time, while Justin also describes him as a ‘boy’.

In *Contra valor* the village lads challenge each other to tests of strength through wrestling, and tests of wits through a word game which, as Menéndez y Pelayo convincingly outlines, has its source in the apocryphal book of Esdras:
Hay un episodio en esta comedia que no procede de la leyenda de Ciro, pero sí de una tradición muy antigua también, y, al parecer, de origen persa. Es la disputa entre Ciro y otros mancebos sobre cuáles son las tres cosas más fuertes. Este enigma se halla en los capítulos III y IV del libro III de Esdras (llamado también de Zorobabel), libro excluido hoy del canon de las Sagradas Escrituras, pero que todavía siguió estampándose en muchas Biblias del siglo XVI, aun después de haberle rechazado como apócrifo el Concilio de Trento.  

Although, as Menéndez y Pelayo states, the books of Esdras III and IV were not cited by the Council of Trent among their list of canonical scripture, they were included in the main Vulgate Bible until 1592.

When Pope Clement VIII brought out his revised edition of the Vulgate in that year these books along with some others were included as appendices, the introduction advising that they were included ‘lest they perish entirely’ (ne prorsus interirent). In a version of the Vulgate printed in Antwerp by Jan Moretus in 1603, Esdras III and IV are included along with the Prayer of Manasseh, appearing after the texts considered canonical by the Council of Trent, so it is safe to assume that Lope would have had as much access to these books as to other parts of Scripture.

Chapter three of the first book of Esdras recounts a competition arranged between three of king Darius’ young guardsmen, with a prize of great riches, status and renown to be won. They are each to write a ‘dicho excelente’ on a piece of paper for the king to read, and the youth showing the most wisdom as he defends his statement will win. The three claims are as follows: ‘Poderosísima cosa es el vino’, ‘Poderosísima cosa es el rey’, and ‘Poderosísimas son las mujeres, mas a todas las cosas sobrepuja la Verdad.’ The third statement is the winning one, and the youth in question is pronounced an heir of Darius and given whatever he requests as a reward, which is to remind the king of his promise to rebuild Jerusalem. In Contra valor, each youth taking part in the game chooses three things that he deems to be ‘la cosa más fuerte’. All three of the examples from Esdras appear in different forms: Bato chooses ‘el vino’ as one of his three selections (Act I, 436), Riselo cites ‘un tirano’ (l. 433) and Ciro finishes his winning list with ‘la mujer y su hermosura’ (l. 458).

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After the tests of strength and wits, Ciro, having been crowned king by his friends, proceeds to allocate positions of authority to them. In Lope’s play he makes Albano governor of his kingdom and household, ‘Quiero dar traza | en lo que importa al gobierno | de mi reino y de mi casa.’ (Act I, 489-91); he makes Silvio ‘capitán de la guarda’ (l. 501); he appoints Riselo to the post of ‘presidente en la sala | de mis Consejos’ (ll. 503-04); and, finally, he makes Bato his secretary, telling him ‘Despachos, decretos, cartas | y audiencias, corran por ti.’ (ll. 509-10).\(^\text{12}\)

In Herodotus’ account this allocation happens too:

Then he set them severally to their tasks, some to the building of houses, some to be his body guard, one (as I suppose) to be the King’s Eye; to another he gave the right of bringing him messages; to each he gave his proper work. (I. 114)\(^\text{13}\)

Ciro orders one of his village companions to be flogged as punishment for his lack of deference to him when he is crowned ‘king’ by his friends. In Justin, a number of boys receive the punishment but in Herodotus it is just one, the son of Artembares, a ‘notable Median’. Lope also uses a single boy, but names him Fineo and changes his father’s name to the more accessible Evandro. In both of the historians’ accounts and in Lope, a complaint is made to king Astiages about this young upstart, and when Ciro is summoned to the court his precociously wise and confident bearing reveals the true nature of his identity to his grandfather.

One of the more shocking scenes in Lope’s play is also sourced directly from the historical accounts. At the end of Act II, Arpago meets Ciro and in a long speech tells him of his true origins. The privado also describes the recent punishment dealt out to him by Astiages as revenge for Arpago’s failure to carry out the king’s instructions regarding the death of the infant Ciro many years before. When the old king

\(^{12}\) This last decision is discussed in the ‘Characterization’ section.

\(^{13}\) The King’s Eye: This, as Briant articulates (Briant, Pierre, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*, trans. by Peter T. Daniels (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), p. 344, was something akin to a royal spy, informing the king as to what was going on in the kingdom. Xenophon (quoted in Briant) claimed that it was not just one position but many ‘eyes’ were appointed; in his article ‘Eye of the king’ published on the ancient history website, *livius.org*, the Dutch historian Jona Lendering outlines the role in a more positive light than mere spying to ensure conformity to the laws of the country: ‘The Persian Eyes were appointed by the king to inform him of what was going on in the empire. They supervised the payment of tribute, oversaw how rebellions were suppressed, and reported evils to the king… Even when the monarch was not present, people knew that he would be informed of their actions and anxieties.’ ([http://www.livius.org/es-cz/eyes/eyes.html](http://www.livius.org/es-cz/eyes/eyes.html)) Consulted on 25/04/2011.
realized that Ciro was alive and well, he invited Arpago to dine with him and served him a meat pie that in fact contained the flesh of his own son, as Arpago relates:

Astiages, viéndote [Ciro] vivo,
de tal manera se enoja,
que me convida a comer,
¡ay, Dios!, con alma traidora.
Como, y después me pregunta
si fue espléndida y sabrosa
la comida; yo, ignorante,
le agradezco tantas honras.
Enséñame luego... ¡ay, cielo!
¡Qué lágrimas y congojas
el prólogo quieren ser
de mi tragedia llorosa!
Me enseña, ¿díje?... ¡Ay de mí!
¿Cómo diré? ¿De qué forma?
En una sangrienta fuente
vi la cabeza amorosa,
pies y manos de mi hijo. (Act II, 1620-36)

Certain details from this account are found in Herodotus. For example, Astiages’ enquiry as to whether Arpago is enjoying the food, and the critical moment when the head, hands and feet of Arpago’s son are revealed to his appalled father both appear in Herodotus’ graphic description of the scene:

So when it came to the hour for dinner and Harpagus was present among the rest of the guests, dishes of sheeps’ flesh were set before Astyages and the others, but Harpagus was served with the flesh of his own son, all but the head and hands and feet, which lay apart covered up in a basket. And when Harpagus seemed to have eaten his fill, Astyages asked him, “Are you pleased with your meal, Harpagus?” “Exceeding well pleased,” Harpagus answered. Then those whose business it was brought him in the covered basket the head and hands and feet of his son, and they stood before Harpagus and bade him uncover and take of them what he would. Harpagus did so; he uncovered and saw what was left of his son: this he saw, but he mastered himself and was not dismayed. Astyages asked him, “Know you what beast’s flesh you have eaten?” “Yes,” he said, “I know, and all that the king does is pleasing to me.” (I.119)

Justin’s account, on the other hand, is typically brief:

But he [Astyages] was furious with his friend Harpagus. To repay him for saving the grandchild, he killed Harpagus’ own son and served the flesh to him as a meal. Harpagus concealed his anguish for the moment and postponed venting his hatred for the king until an opportunity for revenge should present itself. (I.5)

The story is reduced to its essential elements, and it is easy to see why Lope opted to use the more dramatic details found in Herodotus’ account in his retelling of the scene.
It is at this point that the historians’ accounts of the tale and Lope’s depiction diverge most drastically. The action in Lope’s play takes place over some days or weeks at most, which means that the time between Ciro’s visit to the court and the final battle with Astiages is very short. In the accounts of both Herodotus and Justin, the boy Ciro goes to live with his birth parents in Persia for a number of years before leading the uprising against his grandfather. Arpago has to get a secret message to Ciro, whom he sees as his best hope for revenge against Astiages, and his inventive solution is to put a letter inside an eviscerated hare which is delivered to Ciro by a slave disguised as a huntsman. Lope, however, has Arpago visit Ciro in person just hours after the youth’s appearance at Astiages’ court. Arpago outlines the situation, asks Ciro for aid in exacting revenge on Astiages, and encourages him to take his rightful place on the throne. In accordance with the historians’ accounts, Arpago assures Ciro that if he wages war on Astiages the Median army will join him. Ciro responds positively, and gathers his troops.

Herodotus recounts how Astiages sends for Ciro before the final battle, and Ciro responds with a message of his own:

> But when Astyages heard that Cyrus was at this business, he sent a messenger to summon him; Cyrus bade the messenger bring back word that Astyages would see him sooner than he desired. Hearing this, Astyages armed all his Medians, and was so infatuated that he forgot what he had done to Harpagus, and appointed him to command the army. (I. 127)

This is, perhaps the inspiration for Lope’s scene wherein the peasant Bato is sent to the court of Astiages to bring a message from Ciro to the king (Act III, 1975-2113). Astiages is incensed by the rebellious tone of Ciro’s message, and the scene is important for revealing further his tyrannical rage and ruthless attitude toward those weaker than himself (in this case, Bato).

One of the most significant pieces of evidence for the claim that Lope did not rely solely on Herodotus for his source material is the point near the end of Act III when Ciro is aghast to find his soldiers are deserting him when faced with the might of Astiages’ troops. He challenges them:

> Capitanes, yo soy Ciro; 
> cesse la infame desorden: 
> soldados, yo soy el rey,
vivo estoy: ¿qué os descompone?
Las mujeres os infaman
con afrentosas razones;
¿quién hay que oiga sus afrentas
y a la batalla no torne?

(Act II, 2492-99)

This reflects the moment when Justin recounts:

The Persian line was hit hard and was gradually giving ground when the mothers and wives of the men came running to meet them, begged them to return to battle and, as the men hesitated, lifted up their dresses and revealed their private parts, asking if they wanted to seek refuge in the wombs of their mothers or wives. Checked by this rebuke, the Persians returned to the field, made an assault and forced into flight the enemy from whom they had themselves been fleeing.

(I. 6)

In line with Justin’s account, in Contra valor Ciro observes that the women’s challenge has the desired effect, and the men return to battle:

Mi gente vuelve; que, en fin,
no hay cosa que los provoque
como ver que las mujeres
los afrenten y deshonren.

(Act II, 2521-25)

The conclusion of the play is the last point at which Lope diverges somewhat from the historians’ accounts. At the end of Act III, Ciro, finding Astiages at his mercy, refuses to take revenge on him, instead saying, ‘que ningún hombre venció | si no supo perdonar’ (Act III, 2542-43). He states his intention to keep Astiages safely in a city where he can be closely monitored to prevent any future threat to Ciro’s reign (Act III, 2590-99). Notwithstanding, he allows Arpago the last word on this decision, given that Arpago has the most cause for complaint against the old tyrant. Arpago decides to take Ciro’s lead, and also show clemency to Astiages, saying:

Antes agravio me hicieras
en no darme parte a mí
de la piedad y grandeza
con que has perdonado al Rey;
y te suplico que seas
tan piadoso, que me des
de aquesta piedad la media
para que perdone al Rey.

(Act III, 2615-22)

14 It is worth noting that, although this detail about the women shaming their men into fighting is taken from Justin, it would no doubt have appealed to Lope. A similar scene occurs in Fuente Ovejuna (ll. 1723-93), where Laurencia’s tirade against the men of the village results in them rising up against their oppressors.
Justin’s account says nothing of Arpago’s reaction to Astiages’ defeat, focussing on Ciro instead:

Astiages was captured in this battle, but Cyrus merely deprived him of his kingdom, and then behaved towards him more like a grandson than a victor, setting him over the mighty nation of the Hyrcanians (since Astyages himself did not want to return to the Medes). (I. 6)

However, Herodotus paints a rather different picture. Cyrus takes the same approach with his grandfather in Herodotus as in Justin, which is the approach that Lope’s Ciro also adopts (‘As for Astyages, Cyrus did him no further harm, and kept him in his own house till Astyages died.’ 130). Nevertheless, the difference in Arpago’s character at the end of Herodotus and at the end of Lope’s play is striking. In Herodotus’ account, Arpago gloats over the defeated Astiages, reminding him of his cruelty toward Arpago’s son:

He [Astyages] being then a captive, Harpagus came and exulted over him and taunted him, and with much other bitter mockery he brought to mind his banquet, when Astyages had fed Harpagus on his son’s flesh and asked Astyages what it was to be a slave after having been a king. (I. 129)

Astiages responds by challenging Arpago on the wisdom of his actions which have resulted in the Median empire being lost to a Persian king, and seems to have the last word on the matter (I. 131). Thus, we see that Lope has significantly changed Arpago’s attitude here in order to make his character more generous and sympathetic. There is, perhaps, room for suggesting that out of all of the characters who appear in both the accounts of the historians and in Lope’s play, Arpago is the one with whom Lope has taken the most liberties, and this is a key moment for making that claim. 15

Having looked at elements from Lope’s play that are congruent with one or other of the two historians examined, it is now appropriate to focus more closely on those moments in Contra valor that are original to Lope, and have been inserted into the play as new additions to the basic story of Ciro’s rise to power.

Of course, the most obvious is the presence of figures such as Filis, Ciro’s love interest, and Bato, his friend and confidant, which can be easily explained by the need for a drama to have a wide range of characters and to be engaging on many different levels, including appealing to the vulgo sector of the public.

15 For more on Arpago’s character, see ‘Characterization’.
audience. Additionally, in practical terms, adding such characters enabled the full cast of the acting troupe to take part in its production. The Golden Age audience expected to see certain stock figures such as the *primera dama* and the *gracioso* in each play they saw, and so Lope habitually created characters that fulfil these roles.

Aside from this, the most significant alteration is that of Ciro's age when he first encounters Astiages and subsequently discovers his true identity. In the historians’ accounts of the kingship games he is portrayed as a boy much younger than the character in Lope's play who is a young man with romantic inclinations and an interest in philosophy. The alteration serves to unify the action in the drama; by beginning with an older Ciro there is no need to portray (or avoid portraying) the time lapse between Astiages' discovery of his grandson and the latter's uprising against him. This is in keeping with the rules for drama set forth in Lope's *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, that the action of the play ‘pase en el menos tiempo que ser pueda’. In addition, the character of a young man can be developed to greater effect than that of a young boy; as mentioned, Ciro’s love for Filis adds romance to the play (a staple element of Golden Age drama of this type). Obviously the accounts of the historians progress chronologically, but Lope avoids the need for this by using various characters to retell parts of their history as remembered events.

As already discussed, Lope also adds to the tale the playful tests of strength and wits in which Ciro and his friends compete. The historians make reference to games in which Ciro is crowned king, but neither of them suggest that the appointment is made as a direct result of him coming out victorious in such competitions. Justin mentions the young Cyrus' natural authority in the same breath as his being chosen as king by lot, but this is as far as it goes:

> Later on, because he had an air of authority with the herdsmen, the boy was given the name Cyrus. Soon afterwards, he was chosen king by lot while playing with his friends and he mischievously gave a whipping to those who disobeyed him. (I. 5)

Herodotus merely states that, ‘The boys in their play chose for their king that one who passed for the son of the cowherd.’ (I. 114)

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Lope, however, decides to insert not only a game of wrestling from which Ciro emerges as the physically strongest member of the group, but also the test of wits that takes its source from the book of Esdras (see above). The reasons Lope had for doing this may be various, and the entertainment afforded by depicting these sorts of interactions should not be underestimated, but it is clear that by showing Ciro surpassing his friends in tests of different skills his innate superiority is underlined. This perhaps predisposes the audience to forgive or at least understand better his orders for the flogging of Fineo; it is no passing fancy that has seen him crowned king, but a position that has been achieved through proving his merits and with the consensus of his friends.

In the accounts of both Herodotus and Justin, Astiages is convinced, either through his own reasoning (Justin, I. 5), or through the advice of his Magian interpreters (Herodotus, I. 120), that the dream prophecy of Cyrus’ rise to power has already been fulfilled by the kingship game in which he took part, and therefore any real threat to the old king’s throne has been annulled. This means that he is able to let the boy Cyrus go, and will not encounter him again until his grandson returns with an army to take his throne.

In Lope’s play, however, Astiages immediately resolves that his grandson must be killed, outlining his reasoning thus:

Pero ya el cielo, aplacado de sacrificios, me ha dado remedio piadosamente, pues que vino a mi poder cuando en su primera edad intentó la majestad, reino que pudiera ser verdadero, aunque fingido, de los juegos de la aldea, en que puede ser que sea el pronóstico cumplido. Por lo menos, con secreto haré matar al villano: sin ser abuelo inhumano, hoy he de matar mi nieto. (Act II, 917-31, emphasis mine)
The very fact that Astiages mentions the possibility of the prophecy already being fulfilled through the kingship game (ll. 924-27) makes his abrupt and ruthless decision to have his grandson murdered anyway all the more alarming for the audience. It confirms his tyrannical nature and reduces sympathy for him yet further. If the thought had not occurred to him, he could perhaps have been forgiven in part for panicking and trying to carry out what he intended so long ago (no matter how inhuman). The fact that there is a chance for him to reason himself out of following this course of action and yet he does not take it makes his decision all the more callous.

The ambush of Ciro carried out by Evandro and Fineo (Act II, l. 1382 onward) is ordered by Astiages upon Ciro’s departure from the palace after his initial visit, and is another scene introduced by Lope into his version of events. As has been mentioned, this has relevance for the character of Astiages and his portrayal as a tyrant-king, but its main effect is that of adding further dramatic excitement to the proceedings. The ambush adds an immediacy and tension to the plot that captures the audience’s attention in anticipation of its conclusion. It also provides the chance for Ciro to show off his almost superhuman prowess in battle, as he single-handedly takes on and defeats a group of men on a dark mountainside, killing Fineo among others. In addition, the touching reunion between Ciro and Mitridates, Filis and Bato is occasioned by this night scene, the latter three characters all initially terrified that Ciro has been killed.

One of the more significant scenes that Lope has included in his play which does not appear in either of the historians’ accounts is the moment in Act III when, after a fall from his horse (commonly seen within the context of Golden Age drama as a portent of a moral fall or of future misfortune), Ciro ‘annuls’ the omen by cutting off his horse’s two front legs. In his own words,

\[
\text{Él es muerto y yo soy vivo} \\
\text{conque el agüero cesó;} \\
\text{que no hay fortuna contraria} \\
\text{que no la venza el valor.} \quad \text{(Act III, 2158-61)}
\]

17 The ominous symbolism of a fall from one’s horse in Golden Age drama is fully explored in A. Valbuena Briones, ‘El emblema simbólico de la caída del caballo’, in Calderón y la comedia nueva (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1977), pp. 88-105. A well-known example of its use in this way is Enrique’s fall from his horse in the opening scene of Calderón’s \textit{El médico de su honra} (1637).
Although by this reasoning we are given an explanation for Ciro’s actions, and in one sense it serves to prove yet again his bravery and the contrast between him and his superstitious grandfather, the brutality of the action against his steed is still shocking. This incident does not appear in the accounts by Justin or Herodotus of Ciro’s early life, and therefore there is no prerequisite for its inclusion; we must conclude that Lope considered and chose to incorporate it for his own dramatic purposes. The significance of this moment for our reading of his personality is discussed in the section on ‘Kingship’ in this introduction, and it is noteworthy that such an ambiguous action should purposely be inserted into the plot (unlike the comparably problematic flogging of Fineo, which has precedent in the historical source material).

Another key moment created by Lope is Ciro’s visitation by the spirit of his dead father later in Act III (ll. 2352-87). Again, the full implications of this scene are discussed in the ‘Characterization’ section, but it is noteworthy that Lope alters the relationship of Ciro with his biological father in such a way. In the historians’ accounts, Cyrus goes home to live with his Persian father (named in Justin as Cambyses\(^{18}\)) after meeting Astiages, but the exchange between Ciro and this spectral manifestation of his father is antagonistic. Lope has taken the figure of Ciro’s true father and highlighted the way in which Astiages used him as a pawn in his scheme to thwart the prophecy surrounding Mandane and her child. Ironically, here Ciro’s father himself attempts to influence his son and dissuade him from fulfilling his destiny, but Ciro refuses to be swayed and as a result Astiages’ fears are realized.

Given that this episode does not feature in any of the historical accounts of Cyrus, it is clear that Lope’s purpose was to develop the character of Ciro further in his play through it. Although at first glance it may seem inappropriate for a son to display such a lack of filial piety, the point is that in rejecting his low-born father Ciro is rejecting the idea that he (Ciro) is not qualified to reign. In the rest of this speech, Ciro speaks of how he wished he had been born ‘todo sol sin faltarme parte alguna’ (ll. 2376-77), thus claiming that the only features he would have inherited would have been those given to him by his royal mother, without any taint of lowliness from his paternal side. This resonates once again with the gist of

\(^{18}\) In Lope’s version of events, Ciro’s biological father is not named. According to Justin, this man was ‘Cambyses, a man of humble birth who belonged to the as yet undistinguished Persian race.’ In the play, Astiages merely describes him as ‘el hombre más bajo que hallar pude’ (Act I, 602). In not identifying Ciro’s father, Lope increases the sense of mystery about his life which facilitates the inclusion of the ghostly visitation scene.
the play’s title; by overcoming even the circumstances of his birth, Ciro shows that ‘contra valor no hay desdicha’.

Traditionally, supernatural warnings in the *comedia* are to be taken seriously as they are most often accurate: one need look no further than Lope’s own *El caballero de Olmedo* to see that.19 Thus, the attitude taken here by Ciro, ignoring and even scorning the ghostly visitor, is striking because it does not end in disaster.20

To conclude, Lope used Herodotus as his main source for *Contra valor no hay desdicha*, but the details he takes from Justin are not insignificant, and are specific enough to show that he drew upon both accounts for the plot of his play. However, he was not limited to these ancient historians, also drawing inspiration from the apocryphal book of Esdras, and furthermore he added elements to the plot that were purely of his own invention. These elements served various purposes: to add drama to the action; to develop the characters; to make a politically relevant point; and to adhere to the norms of the *comedia nueva* that he had helped to forge. This, in fact, is typical of the way in which Lope treats his historical sources, as McGrady outlines in his edition of *Fuente Ovejuna*:21

…el Fénix respeta la historia en general (y otra vez conviene subrayar las profundas diferencias entre unas perspectivas y otras), pero lo que más le importa no es la exactitud histórica, sino la verosimilitud dramática, y a este fin introducirá los cambios que le parezcan necesarios.

Ever the master of the *comedia*, Lope knew exactly which elements to take from other sources, and what should be added to them to produce a play with the right blend of suspense, drama and human interest.

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19 In Act III of this play, the hapless Don Alonso is visited by a ‘Labrador’ (often interpreted as a ghostly apparition) along with other omens that foreshadow his death. He ignores them and it ends in disaster for him.

20 For more on this, see the ‘Kingship’ section of this Introduction.

THE THEME of KINGSHIP

‘I am Cyrus, King of the world, the Great King, the legitimate king, King of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad, King of the four corners of the earth’

- Portion of the text on the Cyrus Cylinder

Contra valor no hay desdicha could be described as a ‘tale of two kings’; Rozas says of it, ‘Contra valor no hay desdicha, de historia clásica, en este caso sobre Ciro el Grande, [es] de verdadera importancia para el concepto de la realeza del teatro lopiano.’ However, it has not previously been included in any study of the subject of kingship in Golden Age drama. In her influential work on the topic, Playing the King, Melveena McKendrick states:

Kingship is merely a particular manifestation of political and social governance which in all ages and societies centres on the same issues – the right of those who govern to govern and the suitability of those who govern to govern.

In Contra valor, the protagonist Ciro shows that, at least by the end of the play, he not only has the right to the throne but also possesses the necessary qualities to reign, while his grandfather Astiages cannot be said to fulfil either of these conditions.

McKendrick has broken ground in this area, her main argument being that the theatre of Golden Age Spain, and specifically that of Lope de Vega, has been underestimated to a large extent in modern criticism. Traditionally, scholarship has viewed the output of many Golden Age dramatists (and Lope in particular) as being uncritical of contemporary society, and even propagandist in its support of state values and authority. Works by Maravall and Díez Borque were seminal in perpetuating this view, which

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McKendrick’s work on kingship in Lope’s drama seeks to prove that in fact it contains much more political insight and many more subversive elements than have been attributed to it hitherto. To do this, she analyses numerous Lope plays and the monarchical characters in them, showing that often the portrayal of rulers and governance in Lope’s drama cannot be said to conform to an unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. That is not to say that Lope goes so far as to criticize the monarchy as a system of government, but rather that he does not shy away from addressing difficult issues surrounding a king-character’s ‘suitability...to govern’ through his drama. McKendrick’s approach is convincing, and has become a springboard for many subsequent studies in this field.

Kingship is a crucially important theme in *Contra valor no hay desdicha*, although the play was not included in McKendrick’s study. Writing when he did (c. 1625-30; see ‘Dating and Authorship’) Lope would have been very conscious of the new king Philip IV who had acceded to the Spanish throne in 1621. Philip III was widely regarded as having been an ineffectual monarch, too much swayed by advisers: his favourite, the Duke of Lerma, is described by Feros as having ‘risen to power as the result of Philip’s many political and personal weaknesses.’ This was a source of concern for many Spaniards, and often dramatists in particular felt it was their duty to contribute to the education of the new monarch through the medium of art. Philip IV was already showing personality traits which were less than ideal: his privado the Duke of Olivares held sway over the king even more totally than his predecessor Lerma had done over his father, indulging the young prince and encouraging his ‘extra-marital adventures’.

If Lope chose to use his drama to comment on such behaviour it would obviously have to be presented with some care, but, as McKendrick points out, the theatre was an ideal vehicle for making subtle yet meaningful points about genuine political concerns of the time through the ‘utopian and fictional discourses’ it employed. This was because a dramatist could write a play about a fictional or historical

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25 It should be noted that McKendrick was not the first to focus on the political subtlety apparent in Lope’s work. See, for example, William Blue’s article, ‘The Politics of Lope’s *Fuenteovejuna*’, *HR* 59 (3), published in 1991.


27 McKendrick, *Playing the King*, p. 84.

28 McKendrick, *Playing the King*, p. 17.
subject with a setting distanced from his or her own society (in this case seventeenth-century Spain), and through it comment on or question contemporary political issues without drawing attention from the censors. It is a common practice throughout literary and theatrical history, from Shakespeare - who even included a metatheatrical example of the strategy through the play-within-the-play in Hamlet (III.2) - to the modern day (in the work of playwrights such as Arthur Miller for example), and therefore it is not implausible that such techniques could also have featured in the celebrated drama of Golden Age Spain.

In his *Companion to Golden Age Theatre*, Jonathan Thacker writes,

> It was common, for example, to displace the action of the kingship play geographically or historically (transforming events for a particular purpose, in the case of historical kings) so that any obvious relevance to contemporary events might be denied. [...] In some ways dramas on kingship might be seen as popular versions of the more esoteric treatises. Scholarly tradition has tended to deny that the theatre is part of the theoretical literature aimed at correcting the behaviour of the errant monarch, but issues of good kingship were well known even to the illiterate members of the corral audience, via the pulpit, refranes and romances, and so dramatic works could be understood by the audience as mirrors for princes.\(^{29}\)

In addition, McKendrick claims that it is entirely appropriate for a modern reader to assume that these inferences would have been intentional on the part of the playwright and perceived by the audience. Given the political situation of the period and concerns for the monarchy as outlined above, it is likely that any play depicting a monarch would have invited comparison with contemporary monarchy. Taking this approach to *Contra valor no hay desdicha*, then, it will be demonstrated that this play in particular can be classed as much more than merely entertaining, and indeed is politically thought-provoking. Although, as discussed in the ‘History and Sources’ section, the play is essentially a fictional tale about the mythical early life of an historical figure and depicts a nation both geographically and temporally distant from Golden Age society, the issues addressed through its representation of different kings would have been regarded as entirely relevant to its Golden Age audience.

That said, much of Lope’s attraction to the mythical early life of King Cyrus the Great was, in all probability, the fact that it made such a good story. Lope was a consummate entertainer and did not hesitate to seek out and use stories he felt would be attractive to his theatre audience. The story of Cyrus’

rise to power more than meets the criteria. Its exotic setting is coupled with a desperate struggle for justice against the odds which drives the tale, and into which could be woven a love story; Lope certainly would not have been blind to its possibilities.

However, more pertinently to this discussion, Ciro’s ‘struggle for justice’ is in fact his striving to take his rightful place on the throne, opposed at every turn by his grandfather, the tyrannical monarch Astiages. Throughout the course of the play the audience is invited to consider Ciro’s merits relative to Astiages’ shortcomings, weighing them against each other and against the ideals for kingship in contemporary Spanish society. As a result of this process it is not inconceivable that thoughts also would have turned to the reigning monarch, Philip IV, against the backdrop of Ciro’s strengths and virtues and Astiages’ negative traits. Therefore, this subject matter allows the playwright to deal with issues surrounding kingship through his drama, adding a political element to an already intriguing plot.

King Cyrus II of Persia enjoys the epithet ‘the Great’ because he is credited with being the founder of the Persian empire, and during the course of his reign (c.559-530 B.C.) he transformed Persia from a relatively minor nation under subjugation from its Median neighbours, into a vast empire, whilst retaining a personal reputation for ‘justice and clemency’.  

Cyrus was a well-known figure in early modern Spain. The treatise writers of the time, using monarchs from history as examples in their expositions on the nature of kingship, were wont to mention Cyrus in the same breath as leaders such as Alexander, Caesar, and even Moses. Cicero in his *De re publica* spoke of Cyrus as ‘the most just and wisest of kings’ and cited him as a pre-eminent example of an absolute ruler (as opposed to a tyrant), even describing him as ‘the tolerable, or, if you like, the lovable King Cyrus’. Cicero was held in high regard by political theorists throughout early modern Europe, and his view of Cyrus is therefore significant.

30 *EB*, vol. 6, ‘Cyrus’.
31 Cicero, *De re publica*, English trans. by Clinton Walker Keyes (London: Heinemann, 2000), XXVII (43) and XXVIII (44).
However, not all of the instances where Cyrus is mentioned in the sixteenth-century treatises are positive.

At one point in Juan de Mariana’s *De Rege et Regis Institutione*, he is used as an example of an illegitimate king, who, rather than countering tyranny, performed nothing more than robbery despite the high regard of the common people:

> Así obraron Nino, Ciro, Alejandro, César, que fueron los primeros en fundar y constituir grandes y dilatadosísimos imperios, que fueron reyes, pero no legítimos, que lejos de domar el monstruo de la tiranía y extirpar los vicios, como al parecer deseaban, no ejercieron otras artes que las del robo, por mas que el vulgo celebre aun sus hechos con inmensas y gloriosas alabanzas.  

Although this is an ambivalent take on the Persian king, such a view is not consistent throughout Mariana’s treatise and he does frame Cyrus positively on other occasions.

Mariana also mentions Cyrus in his *Historia de España*, first printed in 1601, in the context of the permanence of history as contrasted with the intransience of physical testaments to greatness; again he lines Ciro alongside Alexander and Caesar as an example of a powerful ruler:

> la grandeza de España conservará esta obra […] La historia en particular suele triunfar del tiempo, que acaba todas las demás memorias y grandezas. De los edificios soberbios, de las estatuas y trofeos de Ciro, de Alejandro, de César, de sus riquezas y poder, ¿qué ha quedado? […] El sol que produce a la mañana las flores del campo, el mismo las marchita a la tarde. Las historias solas se conservan.

The average early modern Spaniard had reason to be well-disposed towards the figure of Cyrus purely because of his appearance in the Old Testament books of II Chronicles, Ezra and Isaiah. Here, Cyrus is used by God for His own purposes in liberating the Israelites from captivity in Babylon, and much is made of him being, in this regard, a type of Christ. Rivadeneyra, in his treatise *Tratado de un príncipe cristiano* (1595) states:

> Y a los persas idólatras los llama el Señor sus santificados y sus fuertes y poderosos, porque con ellos quería destruir a Babilonia… Y a Ciro llama su pastor y su Cristo [Isaías XLV], y a Nabucodonosor su siervo.  

---


Cyrus was a striking example of the far-reaching might of God which was powerful enough to use even a Gentile king to further the purposes of God for His children, the people of Israel. This is a relevant factor in an assessment of Ciro in *Contra valor*, as although he is technically a pagan character within the play, his inner qualities often mirror the ideals for a Christian prince.

Rivadeneyra also mentions Cyrus in the context of the clemency that he shows to Croesus, the king of Lydia, and the political sense that this approach made. In addition, López Bravo speaks of his goodness and modesty in the section ‘Sobre la moderación y otras virtudes’ of his kingship treatise *De rege et regendi ratione*, (1616):

>Cierre a las virtudes del príncipe la benignidad y la modestia, y apréndales de Cyro, y en los pasos, vestidos y rostro las enseñe a todos y procure, con gran cuidado, que ninguno salga de su presencia descontento… (Book I)\(^{35}\)

Thus, although *Contra valor no hay desdicha* makes no reference whatsoever to the ‘Biblical Cyrus’, his name would have been associated in the minds of seventeenth-century Spaniards not just with military might and strong leadership, but also with virtue and many of the early modern ideals for kingship.

Most interesting is Mariana’s section ‘De la gloria’ when, discussing the love of glory being a natural inclination of man, he points out, ‘Era aun muy niño Ciro, rey de los persas, cuando según se cuenta, ardía tanto en deseo de verse aplaudido, que por satisfacerlos se sentía inclinado a arrostrar toda clase de peligros.’\(^{36}\) Mariana makes the point that this type of ambition is a part of human nature, and is therefore to be expected in princes, but that, like all things, it must be managed carefully to prevent it getting out of control. This mention of Cyrus also links him to the idea of valour, the foremost quality attributed to his character in *Contra valor*.

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\(^{36}\) Mariana, *De Rege*, p. 525.
Lope himself refers to Cyrus on various occasions in his drama.\(^{37}\) One of the most pertinent is in his play _La vida de San Pedro Nolasco_ (1635), wherein he is used as an example of a positive king figure:

\[
\text{O Rey para todos bueno,} \\
\text{cuyas excelentes partes} \\
\text{y virtudes merecieron,} \\
\text{que Ciro Español te llamen:} \\
\text{(Act III, 312-15)}
\]

Additionally, in Cent. I, Emblem 98 of Sebastián de Covarrubias’ _Emblemas morales_, the story of Cyrus showing mercy to Croesus is recounted, providing yet another example of Cyrus as a merciful king which would have been well-known by Lope and by wider Golden Age society.\(^{38}\)

Cyrus is a compelling figure in world history; a great leader, a type of Christ, a liberator of oppressed peoples under his rule. J. M. Cook says of him, ‘Few great rulers have left so good an impression with posterity as Cyrus.’\(^{39}\) Modern scholarly perception of Cyrus remains predominantly positive; his release of the Jews from captivity in Babylon has been widely hailed as forward-thinking and liberal by the standards of his time, and his military conquests invite admiration.

Turning to _Contra valor no hay dediaha_ then, it becomes clear that Cyrus, or Ciro, is a generally positive yet complex character. Lope was not oblivious to the dramatic potential afforded by the well-known tales or figures he chose to dramatize, but it would be naive to think that this was the only consideration in his mind as he came to write his plays.\(^{40}\)

As a whole, the play fulfils Rivadeneyra’s requirement that both good and bad examples of kingship should be included in the education of a young prince,

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\(^{37}\) _El cerco de Santa Fe_ (1604), II, 24-25; _El mayorazgo dudoso_ (1609), II, 604-07 and III, 121-22; _Las mudanzas de Fortuna, y sucesos de don Beltrán de Arozín_ (1612), II, 666-69; _La octava maravilla_ (1618) I, 80-82; _El príncipe perfecto, parte primera_ (1618) II, 202-09; _El triunfo de la humildad, y soberbia abatida_ (1618), I, 247-57; _El bobo del colegio_ (1620) [Preliminares de la obra]; _La inocente Laura_ (1621), [Preliminares de la obra]; _Don Juan de Castro, parte segunda_ (1624); _El hijo de los leones_ (1624), I, 650-66; _El hombre por su palabra_ (1625), I, 443-446 and III, 376-380; _La vida de San Pedro Nolasco_ (1635), III, 312-15; _El desprecio agradecido_ (1637); _Las bizarrías de Belisa_ (1637), [Preliminares de la obra]; _Barlaán y Josafat_ (1641), I, 76-79; _El bastardo Mudarra_ (1641), I, 265-27. All TESO.

\(^{38}\) For more on the influence of Covarrubias’ _Emblemas morales_ on Lope’s drama, and specifically how this _emblema_ involving Cyrus links to _El villano en su rincón_, see Dixon, ‘Los emblemas morales de Sebastián de Covarrubias y las comedias de Lope’, in _Actas del II Congreso Internacional de Hispánistas del Siglo de Oro_, ed. Manuel García Martín (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1990), 299-305, p. 302.


\(^{40}\) For more on the sources upon which Lope drew for _Contra valor_, see ‘History and Sources’.
This is the basis of McKendrick’s assertion that ‘drama, by providing examples of both suitable and unsuitable behaviours, acted as a mirror for princes’. Although McKendrick is here referring to drama in general, the criterion is met in this one play through the contrasting portrayals of Astiages, the overthrown Median ruler, and Ciro, his triumphant grandson and rightful heir.

Jonathan Thacker in *Role-play and the world as stage in the comedia*, summarises the high standards for kingly behaviour as perceived at the time Lope was writing:

> In addition to the two fundamental tenets of the role of the king already explored (viz. the need to act as God’s earthly representative and the importance of taking counsel) the successful monarch should maintain a dignified appearance (the outer shell of a dominated self), always seek the truth, be suspicious of surface impressions, rewarding and punishing where appropriate, act decisively, honour and respect his servants (in order to retain the cohesion of the social hierarchy), put the good of the state before the good of the individual, and as a consequence, suppress his own potentially disruptive desires. Of course, for all of these interdependent requisites of kingship to be met, the incumbent must grasp the superiority of role-play over self-expression. Failure to act, to subjugate self to role, can be said to be the single most significant factor in the disastrously misguided machinations of our unsuccessful kings.

We see Ciro in the earliest stages of the action displaying a precocious authority and evident richness of character. He excels at all manner of games with his peers from the village, including tests of strength and philosophical debates, and is consequently crowned by them as ‘king’. Thus, in his own small way, he already fulfils many of the treatise writers’ requirements for the behaviour of a young prince, despite not yet being aware of his royal blood:

> han de establecerse para el príncipe todo género de luchas entre iguales, en las que ha de intervenir, no ya solo como espectador, sino como parte activa, procurando por contado que sea

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41 Rivadeneyra, p. 585ª.
42 McKendrick, *Playing the King*, p. 27.
44 The philosophical element of their games is congruent with Mariana’s invocation of Plato: ‘Divino Platon, no sin motivo solías tú decir que no habían de ser felices las repúblicas hasta que empezasen a gobernarlas los filósofos o a filosofar los reyes. Nadie tampoco puede ignorar cuanto y con cuanta frecuencia recomiendan las sagradas letras a los príncipes el estudio de las ciencias.’ *De Rege*, p. 15.
This account of Ciro’s early life ties in with the already-established literary topic of mocedades which originates in the French epic tradition from works such as Le chanson de Guillaume; the development of young boys to manhood is seen in such Golden Age plays as Lope’s Las mocedades de Bernardo el Carpio (1599-1608), Guillén de Castro’s Las mocedades del Cid (1618), and Juan de la Cueva’s La libertad de España por Bernardo el Carpio (1583). Wrestling and struggles en route to becoming a good and worthy king had long been a crowd-pleasing subject; an epic poem from the thirteenth century, Las mocedades de Rodrigo, charts the life of el Cid as youth, much more rebellious and rash than his later mature incarnation.

Ciro displays many other admirable traits throughout the course of the play, including his love for his father Mitridates, his devotion to Filis his beloved (for more on this see the ‘Characterization’ section), his wisdom and learning, especially with regard to kingship, his independence of thought and, of course, his ‘valor’. These, in addition to his natural aptitudes and abilities, and the high praise accorded Ciro by his friends would have constituted the portrayal of a monarchical ideal to the Golden Age audience. Lope himself, in the second part of his play El Príncipe perfecto (which McKendrick has cited as ‘the nearest Lope came to writing a treatise on kingship’46 outlined the qualities an ideal monarch should have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alberto:</th>
<th>El mismo nombre perfecto</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dentro en sus letras encierra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lo que ha de tener un Rey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Para que perfecto sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vos tenéis las siete partes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Que piden las siete letras;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pero ha sido imperfección</td>
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<td></td>
<td>El faltaros la postrera.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Por la P sois propio, en fin,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sois portugués, sangre nuestra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Por la E sois entendido,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y mucho, en todas materias.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Por la R sois resuelto,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y por la F á la Iglesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fiel en las obras y fe,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y fuerte en el defenderla.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vos sois por la E segunda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estudioso, honráis las letras;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

45 Mariana, p. 505 and 508ª.
46 McKendrick, Playing the King, p. 55.
Por la C compuesto y grave,
Como es bien que un Rey lo sea.
Por la T temido sois;
La O, que es letra postrema,
Y olvidado decir quiere,
Os falta, y queda imperfecta.

Rey: Pues ¿olvidado ha de ser
Un rey?

Alberto: Sí, de las ofensas
Y de cosas ordinarias,
Que el ejemplo manifiesta.

(Act III, 739-66)

The seven qualities of a perfect king according to this – admittedly rather contrived – mini-treatise, then, are that he should be *propio*, that is, native or belonging to the nation he governs; *entendido*, wise; *resuelto*, resolute or strong-willed; *fiel* and *fuerte*, faithful and firm when defending the (Catholic) faith; *estudioso*, studious; *compuesto y grave*, serious and composed in demeanour; *temido*, feared in the sense of being respected or held in awe by the people; and *olvidado...de las ofensas*, or merciful. As we shall see, Ciro displays many of these seven qualities. However, supporting the assertions made by McKendrick in the first chapter of *Playing the King* that, ‘close reading of the Spanish plays themselves suggests not an ideologically monolithic and complacent drama, but one which is multivalent, and which potentiates ambiguities and subversive readings’ (p. 2), Lope is not content merely to portray an uncomplicated ‘good king’ in direct contrast to the ‘bad king’ Astiages. This would be an altogether too clear-cut approach, and would perhaps add weight to the traditional criticism levelled against Lope that he is ‘el gran poeta de la conformidad’.47

On the contrary, certain elements of Ciro’s personality revealed throughout the course of the action are in fact rather dubious, and add to the complexity of his character. For instance, the moment in which he orders the scourging of Fineo in Act I because the boy does not play along with the kingship game he is enacting with his friends seems like a rather extreme overreaction at first, especially given the fact that, at this moment in the play, Ciro is only pretending to be king. He later explains his actions to king Astiages, saying that he ordered the whipping in order to make an example of Fineo to others:

echéle toda la ley
para ejemplo de los otros
 [...] 
porque si un delito es grave
y éste el rey no castiga
mucho al cielo desobliga
y al reino, que ya le sabe.  

(Act II, 954-55; 976-79)

This pronouncement that justice is part of the monarch’s responsibility not only to his country but to
God is a key concept that rings throughout both contemporary kingship treatises and Lope’s own work.

Dispensing justice is one of the king’s main responsibilities, and this sentiment is echoed in other plays by
Lope such as El Duque de Viseo:

EGAS  Castigar la justicia al que es culpado
es imitar a Dios

(Act I, 1081-82)

The following recommendation from Rivadeneyra is perhaps one example of how Ciro’s punishment of
Fineo can be explained or excused; he is putting Fineo in his place, even within the context of their
youthful games, so that no element of rebellion or disrespect toward the ‘king’ is fostered:

El príncipe valeroso debe ser juntamente manso y benigno, para que por la mansedumbre sea
amado, y por la fortaleza temido; manso para los rendidos y para los buenos y desvalidos, severo
y grave para humillar a los soberbios y altivos; en perdonar sus injurias fácil y piadoso; en castigar
las de Dios, terrible y celoso.48

Ciro’s order and his explanation thereof would have made sense to a Golden Age audience had he already
been king when he issued it. However, at the time of the scourging, Ciro’s position was not invested with
the necessary actual power to warrant the harsh punishment ordered by him. This incident forms part of
the original historical narrative (see ‘History and Sources’), and is a catalyst for Ciro’s important meeting
with Astiages, but still it rings slightly hollow as one of Ciro’s first actions.

Indeed, as many of the contemporary political thinkers argued, the royal enforcement of justice had to be
tempered by self-restraint and mercy. Rivadeneyra states:

48 Rivadeneyra, p. 570b.
Bien es verdad que el príncipe debe mirar mucho qué delitos perdona, y a quién y cómo los perdona; porque, como el perdonar y el castigar han de tener siempre por blanco y fin el bien de la república, lo uno y lo otro con este fin se debe regular; castigando cuando conviene castigar, y perdonando cuando conviene a la misma república que se perdone. Y a este propósito escribe el mismo Séneca que no es menos crueldad perdonar a todos que no perdona a ninguno.

Pero siempre debe el príncipe ser de suyo más inclinado a clemencia que a rigor, [...] y cualquier castigo que hiciere, hacerle de manera que se entienda que es celo de justicia, y no saña y venganza; porque la ira arrebatada y la cólera en el príncipe es muy fea y dañosa.49

It is clear that a balanced approach to justice and mercy is called for from an ideal monarch, and if Ciro seems to err on the side of harshness while playing at being king, it is perhaps a reminder to the audience that they are watching a character who has not yet proved himself to be ready to reign; this in turn provides the opportunity to watch how he grows into the role over the course of the play.

In his speech about kingship, which is indicative for the audience of his innate perception of the issues surrounding it and therefore his inherently kingly status, Ciro defends his own actions. He articulates the idea of both fear and love for the king being necessary elements in the hearts and minds of a king’s subjects, and links good governance with a balance of these two. We see his wisdom through his detailed and comprehensive understanding of the nature and demands of kingship in his discussion with Astiages over the responsibility of kings (Act II, 846-985). Irony is heavy in this scene, especially with hindsight, as it is clear that the young man has a much better grasp of the issues at stake and the responsibilities of a king than his grandfather, the actual king. He argues:

Temer y amar ha de ser
la ley del buen gobernar:
con beneficio el amar,
y con castigo el temer,
que aunque el beneficio hallo
por la ley más provechosa
un buen castigo es gran cosa
para que tema un vasallo.50

(Act II, 968-75)

This reasoning is in exact accordance with many of the political theorists of the day, taking Rivadeneyra again as an example, ‘No ha de dejar el justo príncipe ningún servicio sin premio, ni delito sin castigo; porque el premio y la pena son las dos pesas que traen concertado el reloj de la república’.51

49 Rivadeneyra, p. 456b.
50 Interestingly, such sentiments contain echoes of Machiavelli: see End Note to line 971 (Act II).
Mariana, writing on the same subject, was adamant that being benign in the eyes of one’s people was better than coming across as a harsh ruler, but that at times punishment was necessary,

[...] mas será siempre mejor que el príncipe aparezca a los ojos de la república dispuesto a ser benigno; y si conviniere castigar los crímenes, infundir temor, dar algún ejemplo de severidad, procúrese que vean todos que se inclina solo al castigo y a la venganza impelido por la fuerza de las cosas.52

In Lope’s play Querer la propia desdicha, the issue surfaces in an exchange between the king and his gracioso,

TELLO  Señor, decir mucho mal 
y hacer siempre poco bien. 
En estos dos polos solos 
se mueve, aunque injusta ley, 
una corte.

REY  Pues el rey 
tiene diferentes polos.

TELLO  ¿Quién, señor?

REY  Premio y castigo. (Act II, 269-75)

Returning to Contra valor, it is ironic that Ciro should speak of kingly virtues in such a way to his grandfather (although as yet he is unaware of their relationship). His clear-mindedness contrasts sharply with Astiages' paranoia, and his ideals throw the old king's cruelty and insecurity into sharp relief.53 The insights and behaviour that are in accordance with the ideas of the Golden Age political treatise writers, however different the form by which they are conveyed, would have been recognizable kingly qualities to contemporary audiences and are a further sign of Ciro’s eventual suitability to reign.

51 Rivadeneyra, p. 531b.
52 Mariana, De Rege, p. 522.
53 Even in the Libro de Alexandre, a late thirteenth-/early fourteenth-century clerical poem on the life of Alexander, we see the literary trope of the younger man overtaking his elder teachers (in this case Alexander and Aristotle) as an early indication of the exceptional nature possessed by the youth:

El padre, de siet’ años, 
diól’ maestros honrados, 
los mejores que pudo 
quell en las siete artes 
que venció los maestros 
metiólo a leer, de sen e de saber, 
en Grecia escoger, 
sopiessen enponer. 

Aprendié de las artes 
de todas cada día 
tant’ aviá buen engeno 
que venció los maestros 
cada día liçion, 
fazié disputación; 
e sotil coraçón 
a poca de sazón.

Another possibility is that Fineo’s punishment is designed to be exemplary; Ciro states himself that a new ruler must exert his authority:

No tengáis por nueva cosa
mi exceso, si se reprueba,
porque la justicia nueva
entra siempre rigurosa.
Después que pase algún mes
de juez y de señor,
templarán este rigor
el amor o el interés.  

(Act II, 956-63)

One may balk at the idea of Fineo being beaten for not playing along with a village game, but in the context of the play as a whole one should, perhaps, recognize that Ciro’s innate kingliness and his eventual accession to the throne retrospectively justify the action he took against Fineo before he became aware of his true identity.

It is, of course, possible that Ciro’s punishment of Fineo is simply the result of rash immaturity, explained away by his confident eloquence before king Astiages. However, this would not necessarily negate his usefulness as a positive example of kingship; it could be inferred that Ciro’s character matures throughout the course of the play, and although as a peasant youth he is hot-headed in his exercise of justice, he grows into a king worthy of the respect and love of his subjects. In summary, it is clear from this episode and his analysis of it that Ciro understands kingship; justice must be seen to be done, and in this instance he plays (or at least claims to play) the role of the king perfectly. Ciro could be censured for the fact that he is not yet king when he takes the actions he does against Fineo; however when he finally does come to the throne his kingly judgement and the entitlement he has to act upon it are reconciled.

Something that seems to corroborate the idea of Ciro’s development throughout the course of the play into an admirable monarch occurs at the end of *Contra valor* when the conquering Ciro has his grandfather Astiages at his mercy and must decide how to deal with him. Rather than use his position to punish Astiages for his wrongdoing, Ciro chooses to show him mercy, in his own words,

es tan alta la gloria
de perdonarte vencido,
Although he was in a position to have taken full revenge against his grandfather, Ciro asserts that he has the true victory over Astiages precisely because of the forgiveness he chooses to show him. This is a key feature of much of the writing on kingly virtues; clemency was held up as the sign of a superior character both in common men and monarchs. Both Rivadeneyra and Mariana write extensively on the subject, with the former succinctly summarizing his view on the matter by quoting St Isidore:

Gran virtud, dice san Isidro, es no ofender a quien os ofendió; gran fortaleza es perdonar al que os ha injuriado; gran gloria es poderse vengar y no quererse vengar.⁵⁴

Indeed, there are parallels here with Calderón’s *La vida es sueño* (1636), in which Segismundo as the heir to the throne who was deprived of his birthright (also as the result of a prophecy) by his father king Basilio, claims his rightful position as king at the end of the play but chooses to show mercy and forgiveness to Basilio instead of taking revenge.⁵⁵

Another example from Lope’s drama of a king admirably showing mercy and discretion is in the final scene of *El poder en el discreto*, when the king, struggling with his own desires and those actions that will be for the benefit of his subjects finally settles on mercy rather than self-serving control,

\[
\text{La discreción y el poder} \\
\text{conmigo están compitiendo} \\
\text{[…]} \\
\text{no quise vengar soberbio} \\
\text{sino discreto vencer.} \\
\]  

(Act III, 2895-96; 2916-17)⁵⁶

There is a clear link between this sentiment and Ciro’s statement, ‘que ningún hombre venció | si no supo perdonar.’ (Act III, 2543)

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⁵⁴ Rivadeneyra, p. 570ª.
⁵⁵ It should be noted that Basilio’s intention was to protect his country, as it had been prophesied that Segismundo would be a cruel king. Astiages has no such mitigating factors justifying his decision to take action with the aim of preventing his grandson from coming to the throne. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know if there were any connection between these two depictions of princes who are initially ignorant of their true identity but who finally ‘come good’. However, their similarity is indubitable, and parallels have been drawn between the two plays by Siliunas (‘El gran arquitecto amor’, 2007, pp. 230-31), who calls them ‘situaciones casi idénticas’.
An almost identical situation is found in another of Lope’s plays, *La sortija del olvido* (1619). At the end of this play, the king Menandro, when faced with the grave betrayal of his sister Arminda and her lover Adriano, is about to sentence them to death when Sinibaldo, a respected member of his court, steps in to counsel restraint,

> **MENANDRO** ¿No lo merece el delito?

> **SINIBALDO** Sí, merece; mas advierte que quedas muy ofendido, pues la gloria del perdón suele quitar el castigo.

> **MENANDRO** Yo dejo, Duque, en tus manos y pongo en tu libre arbitrio esta causa.  

(Act III, *TESO*)

This scene is very similar to the end of *Contra valor* when Ciro shows mercy to Astiages on his part, yet gives the bereaved Arpago the option of deciding on a suitable punishment for the murderer of his son. Arpago, inspired by the new king’s example, chooses to be merciful also, saying,

> …te suplico que seas tan piadoso, que me des de aquesta piedad la media para que perdone al Rey.  

(Act III, 2619-22)

This is also reminiscent of Mariana’s admonition that a king had a responsibility to provide a positive example to his subjects with regard to the punishment of wrongdoing (see above).

Returning to the more troublesome aspects of Ciro’s character, his betrayal of Flora, which is revealed early in the action, is something that forces the audience to consider their judgements on his personality carefully. This peasant girl loved and was loved by Ciro in earlier days, and we are led to believe that he made promises to her in order to secure her affection, as she outlines:

> Finalmente me quería, por dejarme de querer, hay, Filis, voluntades que no llegan a verdades y se quedan en favores.  

(Act I, 285-86; 292-94)

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57 The *Teatro Español del Siglo de Oro* database [*TESO*] is found at: http://teso.chadwyck.co.uk/.
However, Ciro later falls for Filis, the noble daughter of Arpago, leaving Flora bereft. As many have
previously observed, in the world of the *comedia*, a broken promise is indicative of a deeper character flaw,
and even as a metaphor for 'princely unreliability' when seen in royal personages.\(^{58}\) Flora’s character is
not strictly necessary for the plot, although in practical terms she does serve as a second female character
in what is otherwise a markedly male cast. The question for the audience is whether Ciro's betrayal and
rejection of Flora after expressing his love for her is a misdemeanour grave enough to cast doubt upon
his potential worth as a monarch. However, his behaviour here is explained to some extent by the events
that follow: Ciro is evidently being influenced by his essential (regal) nature when he shifts his affections
from Flora to the high-born Filis. Ciro’s father Mitridates comments on the discrepancy between their
social status at the start of the play, ‘Y, siendo tan principal, | la sirves [a Filis][...]| ¿puede haber locura
igual?’ (Act I, 69-70, 72). However, as soon as Ciro's real parentage is revealed it is clear to the characters
and to the audience that Filis is a much more suitable match for him, and that Ciro had unwittingly pre-
empted this discovery in his pursuit of her. Perhaps this is justification enough for Flora’s presence in the
play and even for Ciro’s treatment of her, at least from an objective point of view.

Finally, the episode in which Ciro mutilates his horse by cutting off its legs after he falls from it is a
shocking moment for the audience. As we have seen, it is not an event that appears in the historians’
accounts of Ciro’s early life, and is therefore something that Lope chose to add to the plot. It is possible
that our modern sentiments are more offended by such an incident than those of the Golden Age
audiences who first saw the play. However, good horses were prized in the seventeenth century, and one
of the requirements of a noble king was that he should be a competent, confident horseman. This may
indicate another motivation for Ciro’s actions, however much he protests that his reaction is based on a
desire to counteract a bad omen. McKendrick has examined extensively the socio-linguistic phenomenon
of ‘face’, as coined by Brown and Levinson, in the context of Golden Age drama.\(^{59}\) Applied here, it is the
concept that a monarch and his subjects had to conform to certain behaviour that would result in the
preservation of that monarch’s reputation, self-esteem, or ‘face’. McKendrick cites ‘acting foolishly’ on

\(^{58}\) McKendrick, *Playing the King*, p. 94.

the part of the king among actions that could result in a loss of face, and also ‘expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusation and insults, irreverence and the raising of dangerously emotional or divisive topics’ on the part of his subjects as among those that threaten face.\(^6\) So we see that at this moment when Ciro’s self-esteem has been dented by the fall from his horse, despite the generally respectful reactions of his friends and fellow-soldiers, Filis comes dangerously close to a response that could constitute a loss of face for Ciro:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{ALBANO} & ¡Válgame Júpiter santo! \\
\textbf{SILVIO} & Tan presto se levantó que pienso que no ha caído. \\
\textbf{RIELO} & No hay pájaro tan veloz. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & Paso; no es nada, soldados. Bueno estoy, no hagáis rumor.
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textit{Sale Filis.}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{FILIS} & ¿Cómo no? Caer, corriendo un caballo, cuando con tanta atención te aplauden y aclaman rey tus soldados a una voz, ¿No es agüero de caer del puesto a que te subió tu fortuna? \\
\textbf{CIRO} & Espera, Filis; que a ver si es agüero voy. \\
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textit{Act III, 2114-29}

Filis is motivated by concern for her love, but her unambiguous analysis of the incident and its negative connotations is evidently too much for Ciro to bear, and he leaves directly to carry out the act of barbarism on his horse that will simultaneously counteract the omen about which Filis is anxious and ‘save face’.

These problematic moments in the development of Ciro’s character are troublesome to the audience, but could be interpreted as showing the scope for personal development through education and experience that results in Ciro, at the end of the play, being viewed as a worthy monarch, especially in comparison with his grandfather.

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\(^6\) Ibid., p. 123.
Another potential motivation for making Ciro’s character less than perfect is that of demonstrating the fallibility of human kings. By taking the figure of Cyrus, the great king, and showing him to have been a man like any other who needed to develop his strengths and suppress his weaknesses, Lope is providing a motivation for change to the reigning king, as well as a timely reminder that no matter how much the position of monarch is revered, the men who fill that position are not divine and cannot be viewed as such. This links with the political and theological paradox of the king’s ‘two bodies’, one human and one divine. In contemporary political thought in England, this was articulated in terms of the king’s natural body and his ‘body politic’; by this reckoning, the flaws of a king were evidence of the king’s dual persona, his aura being greater than his person, and his flaws a part of his human nature.61

If one accepts that Lope was capable of subversion, it is entirely in keeping that Ciro should not be held up as a straightforward ‘good king’ as opposed to the ‘bad king’ Astiages. He is, as all humans are, a multifaceted character, showing moments of less than perfect and even disturbing behaviour, but he is still the only viable kingly figure when set against the tyranny of his grandfather at the end of the play. That said, Ciro displays enough noble personality traits, according to the standards put forward by the political theorists of the time, to be recognised as a positive example of kingship overall. One example of this which is carefully crafted by Lope, is Ciro’s conversation with the ghostly voice of his biological father that occurs just before he enters into battle with Astiages. Here, we see him being warned by this spirit not to go ahead with the attack on his grandfather. He boldly ignores the warning, even rebuking the phantom and insulting it on the grounds of his father’s low status compared to that of his mother:

61 Kantorowicz examines this in his book *The king’s two bodies: a study in mediæval political theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 9, citing Edmund Plowman, a law apprentice of the Middle Temple in London, whose reports on judgements made in the royal court are found in his *Commentaries or Reports* (London, 1816), of which this is one example: ‘although he [the king] has, or takes, the land in his natural Body, yet to this natural Body is conjoined his Body politic, which contains his royal Estate and Dignity; and the Body politic includes the Body natural, but the Body natural is the lesser, and with this the Body politic is consolidated. So that he has a Body natural, adorned and invested with the Estate and Dignity royal; and he has not a Body natural distinct and divided by itself from the Office and Dignity royal, but a Body natural and a Body politic together indivisible; and these two Bodies are incorporated in one Person, and make one Body and not divers, that is the Body corporate in the body natural, et e contra the Body natural in the Body corporate. So that the Body natural, by this conjunction of the Body politic to it, (which Body politic contains the Office, Government, and Majesty royal) is magnified, and by the said Consolidation hath in it the Body politic’ (p. 213). Jonathan Thacker, in *Role-Play and the World as a Stage in the Comedia* gives a useful summary of the various opinions on this regarding its relevance to the Spanish stage (pp. 164-165).
Por tu bajeza deslustras
la majestad de mi madre

[...]
vete, sombra, a tu descanso,
vive la fúnebre tumba
de hombre vil, pues no mereces
como rey doradas urnas

(Act III, 2357-58; 2380-83)

Given that this episode does not feature in any of the historical accounts of Cyrus, it is clear that Lope’s purpose was to develop the character of Ciro further in his play through it. It has relevance when we consider that, throughout the play, Ciro is on his journey toward the throne. He is a king in the making, and it is not a straightforward process; nor is it clear that he is ready for the role until the last scenes of the play. Thus, the independence of mind displayed here, rejecting even supernatural advice because it goes against what he believes to be right, is a politically pertinent moment. In Spain at the time Lope was writing, Philip III’s over-reliance on his favourite Lerma had proved extremely detrimental to the country as a whole, and Philip IV appeared to be following the same pattern with his valido, the Count-Duke Olivares. Given the history of unhealthy adviser-monarch relationships in recent Spanish experience, the relevance of this example of a king who knows his own mind and is prepared to act on the courage of his convictions would not have been lost on the audience. This ideal, far from evident in the workings of the actual monarchy hitherto, is propounded in this scene of Contra valor to great dramatic effect. In fact, as discussed below, it is the tyrant king in this play who has the official advisor, the cruelly-treated Arpago.

Other examples of characters ignoring the warnings of supernatural visions do occur in Lope’s work (for example, El caballero de Olmedo, El Duque de Viseo), but, significantly, these all end in tragedy. Here, however, we see that Ciro is right to stick to his original intention and his valour is rewarded with triumph in battle. This unusual outcome is necessary to prove the play’s title, but, more than this, it serves even to emphasize its truth by setting up yet another ‘desdicha’ which must be overcome by the ‘valor’ of the protagonist.

The premise of the play, that ‘no misfortune shall prevail against valour’ is displayed most clearly in this section. It is perhaps one of the reasons why the occurrence of bad omens is insisted upon, in addition to
the stark fact that the odds are stacked against Ciro in attempting to overthrow the reigning monarch with a band of self-trained soldiers. Ciro’s personal valour, displayed in this exchange and in numerous other moments throughout the play (often with direct reference to its title), was an essential quality in a monarch. Rivadeneyra states, ‘Y finalmente, debe el príncipe cristiano ser esforzado y valeroso, para que sea respetado de los suyos y temido de sus contrarios y enemigos’. Mariana, too, highlights the importance of valour in the character of a king: ‘El rey, pues, si es verdaderamente digno de este nombre, […] no retrocede ante ningún peligro, […] es fuerte e impetuoso en la guerra, templado en la paz’. It is possible that the focus on personal valour in the play was reflecting an element of nostalgia for the ‘warrior monarchs’ Ferdinand and Isabella, and Charles V. Philip IV, in common with his father and grandfather, was much more of a figurehead monarch than an active leader, and Ciro’s energy and decisiveness in leadership and battle would have been in stark contrast with Philip’s weakness, reliance on his privado and relative distance from his subjects.

In addition, this emphasis on valour was to a certain extent designed to set the king apart from his subjects, and ties in with the idea previously discussed of ‘saving face’. It was vital that a king was viewed as exceptional in almost every way, and bravery in the face of danger, especially when validated by triumph over that danger, is powerful evidence in favour of Ciro being seen eventually as a worthy monarch in the context of Contra valor.

Ciro himself, speaking to his father in the opening scene of Act I and defending himself from accusations of getting above his station, says,

¿Qué causa os he dado yo para tratarme tan mal, si este valor natural conmigo mismo nació? (Act I, 13-16)

This implies that this (kingly) characteristic is something innate to him, an idea which ties in with the important ‘nature versus nurture’ debate that preoccupied many of the treatise writers of the day. The

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62 Rivadeneyra, p. 596b.
63 Mariana, De Rege, p. 503b.
general feeling was that noble blood was an essential quality in a monarch, but that it was not a sufficient qualification to reign in itself and had to be enhanced by training in the form of education, the development of physical skills and exercise, and spiritual direction.

As an example of this, Rivadeneyra states that, ‘Ante todas cosas, [el príncipe] debe estimar el arte militar’ and this is something Ciro does, as when asked how he has learned how to exercise the villagers in military training, he replies,

Naturaleza me enseña
la inclinación; lo demás
he aprendido de un poeta
que arte militar escribe. (Act I, 769-72)

This neatly captures the concept of an intrinsic kingliness that prompts Ciro to train an army at all, and the learning he needs in order to hone his skills in the area.

Astiages also touches upon the issue of kingliness itself as an inherent and even inherited characteristic, when speaking of Ciro’s similarity to his mother Mandane and his resultant regal attributes:

porque son precisas leyes,
de que tengo claras señas,
que peñas engendran peñas,
y reyes producen reyes. (Act II, 900-03)

This idea of royal blood being something which is passed on from generation to generation is discussed in Mariana,

De tanta importancia es que descienda un príncipe de abuelos y bisabuelos reyes. La nobleza como la luz deslumbra, no solo a la muchedumbre, sino hasta a los magnates, y sobre todo enfrena la temeridad de los que tengan un corazón rebelde…

Mariana even goes on to say, with an astonishing degree of relevance to Ciro’s own situation (although the point being made is a general one), ‘siendo muy de observar, que sobrellevan mejor los hombres al

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64 Rivadeneyra, p. 582.
65 Mariana, De Rege, p. 473.
que nació infeliz del seno de una reina que al que menos desgraciadamente fue elegido.\textsuperscript{66} Ciro’s mother was regal, although the circumstances of his birth were blighted by his grandfather’s paranoia. It certainly seems that Ciro’s lineage contributes to his more overt kingly attributes such as ‘valor’ and the skill he shows when fighting, or philosophizing with his friends.

Astiages undoubtedly represents the epitome of the ‘unsuitable behaviour’ described by McKendrick, and which could be equally valuable for challenging and instructing princely behaviour as could a positive depiction of a ruler.\textsuperscript{67} Rivadeneyra’s statement that ‘el tirano no tiene otra ley sino su voluntad’ is a fair description of Astiages’ general attitude in Lope’s play.\textsuperscript{68} From the moment it is mooted that his grandson may be a threat to his kingdom, Astiages acts purely out of self interest, disregarding the natural order of hereditary kingship, and attempts to destroy Ciro, the rightful heir to the throne.

Mariana outlines the difference between a king and a tyrant thus,

\begin{quote}
Es propio de un buen rey defender la inocencia, reprimir la maldad, salvar a los géneros de bienes; mas no del tirano, que hace consistir su mayor poder en poder entregarse desenfrenadamente a sus pasiones, que no cree indecorosa maldad alguna, que comete todo género de crímenes, destruye la hacienda de los poderosos, viola la castidad, mata a los buenos, y llega al fin de su vida sin que haya una sola acción vil a que no se haya entregado. Es además el rey humilde, tratable, accesible, amigo de vivir bajo el mismo derecho que sus conciudadanos; y el tirano, desconfiado, medroso, amigo de aterrorar con el aparato de su fuerza y su fortuna, con la severidad de las costumbres, con la crueldad de los juicios dictados por sus sangrientos tribunales.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{quote}

The differences outlined here are so clear cut that it is tempting to draw simplistic parallels with the characters in Contra valor. Astiages, certainly, displays many of the characteristics of a tyrant as described above. He is constantly fearful, does whatever will further his own purposes and is prepared to secure his place on the throne whatever the cost. As we have seen, though, Ciro’s character is altogether more complex, and it is difficult to pigeonhole him unreservedly as the ‘humilde, tratable, accesible’ ideal king volunteered here; a fact that only serves to add realism to his character and spice to the plot, as Lope was well aware.

\textsuperscript{66} Mariana, De Rege, p. 473ª.
\textsuperscript{67} McKendrick, Playing the King, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{68} Rivadeneyra, p. 532.
\textsuperscript{69} Mariana, De Rege, p. 477ª.
When Astiages discovers that Ciro is alive and well, he is gripped by a renewed urgency to dispose of him, despite the reasoning which he himself articulates that the game played by Ciro’s fellow villanos could have fulfilled the demands of the prophecy. As previously mentioned, this is the reasoning followed by Astiages in Justin’s account of the tale. Lope, therefore, paints a more negative picture of Ciro’s grandfather than given even by the historical sources; a weak and paranoid ruler who, as soon as the threat to his throne is identified, resolves to murder his grandson in secret.

This attempt at self-justification and the claim that, despite desiring to murder his grandson he is not an ‘abuelo inhumano’, come across as laughable, the irony brought out well by Lope’s verse. Moreover, the rapidity with which he makes the decision places Astiages decisively in the category of evil tyrant in contrast with Ciro as worthier king. The old king’s weakness is his fear of being deposed by his grandson, which leads to his increasing desperation to see Ciro killed,

[…]
por verlo muerto, muero.
¡Oh cielos, no os canséis de asegurarme,
de un hombre que nació para matarme! (Act II, 1201-03)

Again, the very language used is carefully chosen to illustrate Astiages’ intense desire to protect himself at any cost; ‘por verlo muerto, muero’ at first sounds like an absurdity, but it emphasizes the strength of his feeling while simultaneously providing insight into the irrationality of his perception of this threat to his throne. Ironically of course, Ciro was not in fact born to kill Astiages, merely to overthrow him as king. Astiages has been so overcome with fear over the prophecy that he is prepared to believe anything to justify his desire to kill Ciro. This pre-emptive and unjustified appeal to reason of state is something to which we shall return later.

The depiction of Astiages as an out-and-out tyrant is compounded in Act III of the play when, enraged by Bato’s impudence in delivering a message from Ciro’s camp he says to Arpago, ‘¿Que importa matar a un hombre?’ (Act III, 2101). Arpago argues skilfully to save Bato’s life and he is spared, but this offhand attitude toward the life of one of his subjects is further proof that Astiages has descended into tyranny.
In a similar vein, Sinibaldo’s words in Lope’s *La sortija del olvido* (1619) make a striking contrast with the actions of Astiages here: ‘advierte que un Rey justo | la ley de la virtud prefiere al gusto’ (Act II, 926-27).

According to these general outlines, it is possible to conclude that *Contra valor* is, among other things, an attempt to portray dramatically this stark difference between kingly virtues, as embodied in Ciro, and tyrannical vices, as displayed by Astiages.

Arpago himself was convinced of Astiages’ tyranny at a much earlier point in the play, when he attends the king’s banquet and unwittingly eats the flesh of his own son cooked into a pie and served to him on the king’s orders. The action is vindictive and callous in the extreme, producing nothing but revulsion in his servant who nevertheless dissimulates and remains in service to the king until the right moment arrives to defect to Ciro’s side. The method of punishment is found in other literary works, notably Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*, wherein Titus gives orders for Chiron and Demetrius to be cooked in a pie and served to their mother Tamora as a means of punishing all three. The deceitful and underhand nature of the punishment is particularly odious, and Arpago articulates his disgust at Astiages’ actions thus:

\[ \text{¿Qué león de Albania, qué sierpe de Libia, qué tigre, qué onza hiciera tan gran crueldad cuando los hijos le roban? (Act II, 1652-55)} \]

Interestingly, this echoes terminology used by Erasmus in his discourse on the nature of tyrants as contrasted with kings, when he advises that a tyrant be described to a young prince as ‘a terrible loathsome beast; formed of a dragon, wolf, lion, viper, bear and similar monsters’. Most of Erasmus’ work had been placed on the Inquisition’s index of prohibited books in 1559, and therefore it is not possible to be categorical in citing him as a direct influence for this moment in the play, but it is useful in showing that Lope was tapping an already-existing tradition of depicting tyrants by comparing them to wild animals.

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71 For more evidence of this, see fn. to line 1655.
Astiages’ chosen punishment is unjust, because by it he not only punishes his privado but also makes a victim of an innocent child.\textsuperscript{72} This behaviour is evidently unacceptable for a monarch, as justice is emphasised in contemporary kingship treatises and throughout Lope’s drama time and time again.

Interestingly, Arpago’s continued service to Astiages after the murder of his child is arguably an on-stage example of what Lope does in real life through his drama.\textsuperscript{73} Arpago feigns conformity and obedience, which facilitates his purposes of eventually undermining the authority of the crown, just as the carefully-structured subversions which I believe are present in Lope’s drama could allow him the freedom to make political comment without drawing the attention of the censors.

Arpago, in his role as the king’s privado however, is not entirely guiltless in fostering Astiages’ tyrannical behaviour. When, in the play’s pre-history, the king initially ordered that his new-born grandson be left out to die in the wilderness, Arpago, although claiming that he did not want to be the child’s ‘verdugo’ himself, nevertheless made provisions for the king’s orders to be carried out by Mitridates. In not attempting to influence the decision of Astiages and instead letting him get away with even the most barbaric of orders, he created a climate wherein the king’s whims were pandered to, whatever form they took, and this, ironically, is eventually shown most destructively in the punishment of Arpago himself. In Lope’s El rey sin reino (1625), Huniades, speaking of privados of this type, declares that all are traitors or betrayers in two key areas:

\begin{quote}
la una en que jamas al rey le acuerdan que ha de morir; la otra, que le encuben por su gusto las cosas en que yerra. \hspace{1cm} (Act II, TESO)
\end{quote}

It was thought that by taking guidance from wise advisers a king would avoid ruling unjustly. Ciro also touches on this topic during his conversations with his village friends before his journey toward the throne begins:

\textsuperscript{72} Note the contrast with the equivalent scene in Titus Andronicus whereby the two sons of Tamora are punished for their rape and mutilation of Titus’ daughter Lavinia, along with Tamora for her part in the outrage.

\textsuperscript{73} McKendrick, Playing the King, ch. 5, ‘Decir sin decir’.
Tener un amigo es fuerza;
quien esto niega se engaña,
porque yo no puedo solo
gobernar provincias tantas.

(Act I, 492-95)

Rivadeneyra and Mariana deal with this in very similar ways in their respective treatises, Rivadeneyra putting his thoughts as follows:

Cualquiera hombre, aunque sea persona particular, tiene necesidad, en los casos graves y dificultosos, de consejo y de no fiarse de sí, por la flaqueza de su entendimiento y por la fuerza de las pasiones, que se suelen cegar, y arrebatar la voluntad y llevarla en pos de sí.

(XXIV – De la necesidad que tiene el príncipe de consejo)\textsuperscript{74}

A vital part of the duty of a privado was to be honest with the king regarding his decisions and behaviour. This would help to ensure that the king did not follow his own will and desires without reference to others, a key element in ensuring that his rule did not descend into tyranny. Arpago arguably failed in this duty, and it is a cruel irony that one of the most extreme results of Astiages’ tyranny is eventually inflicted upon Arpago’s own child.

Astiages’ ruthless act signals the end of Arpago’s duty to serve the king. As has been mentioned, he feigns enduring loyalty (and it is another indication of the levels of inhumanity reached by Astiages that he imagines that a subject could continue in his service after such a deed), but Arpago feels entirely justified in defecting to Ciro’s side and betraying his old king. This could at first glance cause problems for a Golden Age audience for whom loyalty to the king was expected at all costs, but in fact, many contemporary political theorists had made provision for such a situation, when loyalty to a ruler who has proved to be a tyrant is not expected.\textsuperscript{75} As Mariana states: ‘El poder de los príncipes se destruye y se debilita desde el momento en que les falta el apoyo del respeto y del amor en los súbditos.’\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{74} Rivadeneyra, p. 553.

\textsuperscript{75} This subject also has resonance with Calderón’s \textit{La vida es sueño}, as Segismundo is deemed unfit to reign when he proves himself to be unnecessarily cruel in Act II. Only when he has shown that he has the wisdom and compassion required of a king is his father content for him to reign. His treatment of the rebel soldier raises similar questions as Ciro’s treatment of Fineo (although the latter is obviously less extreme); however, as Heiple outlines in his article ‘The tradition behind the punishment of the rebel soldier in \textit{La vida es sueño},’ \textit{BHS} 50 (1973), pp. 1-17, there is a danger of allowing modern sensibilities to cloud our view of behaviour which may have been much more acceptable to the first audiences of a play. This is something that should also be kept in mind when considering Ciro’s behaviour in \textit{Contra valor}.

\textsuperscript{76} Mariana,\textit{ De Rege}, p. 112.
This ‘momento’ is, for Arpago, the one in which he experiences personally the cruelty of his king. He is therefore able to tell Ciro,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ya no es tiempo de callar;} \\
\text{que cuando la verdad sobra,} \\
\text{aunque rompa mi palabra,} \\
\text{más que me infama, me honra.} \\
\text{[...]} \\
\text{antes el cielo se sirve} \\
\text{de que a un tirano la rompa.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Act II, 1552-55; 1562-63)

Astiages, in sacrificing the respect and love of his privado orchestrates his own downfall, and is eventually put at the mercy of Arpago by Ciro at the end of the play.

Significantly, \textit{Contra valor no hay desdicha} shares similarities with some of Lope’s other kingship plays. These can often be classed as linguistic: for example, the gracioso figure Bato,\textsuperscript{77} in his advice to the indignant Flora after Ciro has dismissed her protests at his kingship game in Act I, counsels her to ‘Oye, mira y calla.’ (Act I, 587). This seems to be a standard tactic of Lope’s characters when dealing with royalty, as Camilo also shows in \textit{La sortija del olvido}. He has misgivings over king Menandro’s order to kill Sinibaldo and says,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mas no quiero replicar,} \\
\text{sino vivir y callar} \\
\text{que es a quien sirve importante.} 
\end{align*}
\]

(Act II, 615b)

Again, in \textit{El poder en el discreto}, one of the characters, Celio, has to submit his own personal wishes and opinions to the will of the king: ‘El Rey es Rey; yo soy yo. | Servir, morir y callar.’ (Act I, 617-18). All three of these examples cite different requirements in addition to ‘callar’, but it is significant that remaining silent is the key condition, with the implication that it is the duty of the subject to follow his king’s orders without comment. As we have seen, this was a widely held attitude at the time, and other examples of it appear in plays such as the anonymous \textit{La Estrella de Sevilla}, where the noble Sancho Ortiz is ordered to kill the brother of his fiancée Estrella and, torn between his duty to his monarch and his love for Estrella and the innocent Busto, carries out king Sancho’s command.

\textsuperscript{77} Although, for various reasons Bato cannot be classed as a typical gracióso; for more on this see ‘Characterization’.
Similarly, Astiages’ desperate reasoning when attempting to justify his unjustifiable decision to murder Ciro in secret, uses the argument of reason of state:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{que no es justicia que a maldad se arguya} \\
\text{que, a quien quiere matarme al mediodía} \\
\text{le mate yo a la aurora.} \\
\end{align*}
\]  

(Act II, 1178-80)

This rationale is also used by the king Juan in *El Duque de Viseo* when in the similar position of wanting to kill an innocent man without any real evidence against him. Don Juan is warned against using this tactic by his *privado* Don Egas,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{No quiera Dios que por razón de estado,} \\
\text{que muchas veces el demonio inventa,} \\
\text{el inculpable Duque tu cuñado} \\
\text{pierda la vida, o dale alguna afrenta} \\
\end{align*}
\]  

(Act I)\textsuperscript{78}

but the king does not heed his adviser. Astiages we feel, had he been offered the same advice, would have reacted correspondingly; as we have seen, however, no-one does advise him well.

Reason of state was widely viewed as being an evil promoted by Machiavelli, and was condemned by the Spanish political theorists. Although it is not explicitly mentioned in *Contra valor*, it is clearly implied by Astiages’ attitude towards the infant Ciro, categorically classifying the king as a tyrant. Jonathan Thacker says of the king in *El Duque de Viseo*, ‘His [King Juan’s] desire to be rid of Viseo, with scant evidence to suggest that he is guilty of high treason, unsurprisingly appears to Egas as diabolic in its Machiavellian logic.’\textsuperscript{79} He elaborates:

Juan’s evidence - a partially overheard conversation, reports of a peasant’s game in which Viseo naturally enough played the king, and an astrological prediction - is hardly the conclusive proof which would demand the Duke’s execution. The king’s jealousy dislocates his ability to separate the real from the apparent, and thus reflects badly on his performance of the role.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{78} *El duque de Viseo*, ed. Francisco Ruiz Ramón (Madrid: Alianza, 1966), p. 64. \textsuperscript{79} Thacker, *Role-Play and the World as Stage*, pp. 160-61. \textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 161, fn. 36.
It is clear from this assessment that *El Duque de Viseo* has much in common with *Contra valor* in this regard; Astiages’ intention to have Ciro killed is based on similarly unsubstantiated reasoning, and in this latter play it also affects our judgement of the king’s suitability to reign.

In addition, some of the scenes themselves from *Contra valor* are comparable to those in other plays. In particular, in the game which results in Ciro being crowned king among the villagers, his friend Riselo says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mas justo es coronarte la cabeza} \\
\text{de este verde laurel,} \\
\text{que envidie Apolo…} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act I, 393-95)

A very similar scene also takes place in *El duque de Viseo*, when Viseo has been banished from the court and takes refuge among villagers who as part of their games crown him as king:

DORENA dando al Duque, mi señor,  
la corona  
[...]
Aquí de un verde laurel  
y las flores que abril pinta  
la haré.  

(Act III)\(^8\)

These games ring a similar warning bell in the mind of the reigning monarch in both plays. The king in each is struck by the ominous nature of such games, seeing them as foreshadowing an actual usurpation of power by their participants, and subsequently each takes action against the pretending ‘king’. The crucial difference between them is that in *Contra valor* the play king is ultimately crowned as king in earnest, while in *El duque de Viseo* the Duke is killed by the jealous king, don Juan.

George Irving Dale discusses the origins of these kingship games in his article ‘Games and Social Pastimes in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age’, stating that they are first seen in Herodotus’ account of Ciro’s early life (p. 239), but also citing where they appear in other Spanish literature and comparing the depiction of Ciro in Lope’s *Contra valor* with the depiction of another Persian monarch, Tamerlane the

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\(^8\) *El duque*, ed. Ramón, p. 156.
Great, in *La nueva ira de Dios y gran Tamorlán de Persia* by Luis Vélez de Guevara, *El vaquero emperador* by Matos Fragoso, and *El villano gran señor y gran Tamorlán de Persia* by Rojas, Villanueva and Roa.\(^82\)

In Lope’s play *El Príncipe perfecto (Primera Parte)*, the eponymous perfect prince, Juan de Portugal, is substantially praised by Don Juan de Sosa who extols, among other things, the fact that the king abides by the laws of the country,

\[
\text{Guarda las leyes que hizo}
\text{como si fuese sujeto}
\text{a las leyes el que es Rey},
\]

(Act II, 96-98)

Although to modern ears this may sound rather basic, it was a pertinent issue in Golden Age Spain and reflects Mariana’s thinking on the subject, ‘*Es además el rey […] amigo de vivir bajo el mismo derecho que sus conciudadanos.*’\(^83\) Ciro also addresses it, taking it further by claiming that a king works harder than the labourers in his kingdom,

\[
\text{Pues ¿qué labrador trabaja}
\text{como un rey? Y yo he leído}
\text{que un sabio a los reyes llama}
\text{de la república esclavos},
\]

(Act I, 481-84)

This idea resonates with a section in Chapter XIII of Quevedo’s kingship treatise *Política de Dios y gobierno de Cristo* (1625) which deals with, among other things, ‘*¿Qué ha de ser el descanso de los reyes en la fatiga penosa del reinar?*’. Quevedo states:

\[
\text{Que el reinar es tarea; que los cetros piden más sudor que los arados, y sudor teñido de las venas;}
\text{que la corona es peso molesto que fatiga los hombros del alma primero que las fuerzas del cuerpo; […] así lo escribió la antigüedad.}\(^84\)
\]

Once again, then, Ciro’s views on kingship echo very clearly contemporary thinking on the matter, which is evidence for seeing him as an example of a creditable and commendable monarch at the end of the play.

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\(^83\) Mariana, *De Rege*, p. 477b.

Kingly rhetoric is employed by Ciro when he meets Astiages to emphasize his respect for the old king, and to reinforce the idea that he has no intention of causing trouble. This manner of speech was in itself an important technique in the writing of plays about kings, as McKendrick has argued. She states that ‘the deployment of the rhetoric of majesty could thus be the most impertinent subversion of all, because proclamation brought into question the very thing proclaimed.’ Thus, when Ciro addresses Astiages saying,

\[
\text{Es verdadera en ti solo,} \\
\text{gran señor, la majestad;} \\
\text{sólo tu imperio es verdad,} \\
\text{que, como en el cielo Apolo,} \\
\text{eres único monarca,} \\
\text{cuya vida de justicia,} \\
\text{como al ave de Fenicia,} \\
\text{siempre respeta la Parca.} \\
\text{(Act II, 852-59)}
\]

it is not only ironic within the context of the play, given that Astiages is in fact an evil tyrant who has already tried to have Ciro killed once and who fully intends to try again, but it could also be interpreted as ironic within the context of the contemporary monarchy in which Lope was writing, with its weak ruler, Philip IV. Philip, as the fourth king of this name, was known as the ‘rey planeta’, the sun being the fourth ‘planet’ from the earth in the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. He had been described as ‘the young Apollo’ by Hurtado de Mendoza, yet it was patently clear by the time Lope was writing Contra valor that the high hopes the Spanish people had held for his reign would not be realized.

This type of rhetoric is found in various other plays by Lope, such as Porfiando vence amor (1624-30, probably 1624-26).

| CARLOS | Siempre están mis deseos prevenidos 
|        | a tu servicio, como dueño solo 
|        | del alma, que gobierna mis sentidos. |

---

85 McKendrick, Playing the King, p. 117-18.
86 Brown and Elliott, A Palace for a King, pp. 40 and 160.
88 MB, p. 600.
Único rey, como en el cielo Apolo,
das luz a todo orbe de mi vida.
Su movimiento es tu dorado polo.  (Act I, TESO)

The idea that kings were to be distantly glorious is one that arises in Bato’s statement to Flora in Act II, during his visit to the court of Astiages with Ciro. Giving Ciro his assessment of their exchange, Bato says,

los reyes son como el sol,
que han de deslumbrar sus rayos;
que es tener en poco el cetro
mirarlos de claro en claro.  (Act II, 1002-05)

This idea is also presented in Lope’s *Querer la propia desdicha* (1621),

TELLO  Rayos, como el sol, ofrecen
los reyes, cuando los miran;
mas, ¿por qué causa me admiran,
si tanto a Dios se parecen?  (Act II, TESO)

Mariana addresses it too, claiming that it is of the utmost importance for kings to be set apart from their people, to the point where they actually seem divine. Significantly, of course, he is not making the claim that they actually are divine, or even divinely appointed, merely that they should seem to be so,

Hemos de procurar que se manifieste en todos los actos de su vida benévolo para los ciudadanos,
templado, lleno de respeto por la religión y por las leyes, cualidades todas que han de ser agradables a Dios, decorosas para él y saludables para toda la república. Hemos de procurar que todos le amen, le admiren y le adoren, no como un ser hecho del polvo de la tierra, sino como un ser de estirpe divina, dado por el cielo como la mas clara estrella del orbe.89

López Bravo touches upon this idea too,

Alcánçase la facultad del gobierno (como todas las demás) con naturaleza, arte y exercicio; y ansí el príncipe noble en ingenio, doctrina y experiencia será (como persona más que humana) amado de los suyos, temido de los enemigos y venerado de unos y otros.90

Philip IV had carefully cultivated an aloof majesty in his public persona, and this was not appreciated by all of his subjects. McKendrick speaks of the ‘powerful nostalgia for a more personal form of rule’ among

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89 Mariana, *De Rege*, p. 491.
90 López Bravo, *De rege et regendi*, p. 99.
the people and indeed the dramatists of the period; Ciro's popularity and willingness to interact with his followers - encouraging and leading them in battle throughout his rise to power - could be seen as a comment on this issue.

Closely linked to this is the awareness bordering on preoccupation that kings had to have with public opinion. Mariana said that the prince should carefully guard his majesty because empires rested more on public opinion than on military might. This is clearly illustrated in the behaviour of Astiages up to a point, as despite his desire that Ciro should be dispensed with, he hesitates over what damage taking such action could do to his own reputation,

\[
\begin{align*}
porque no quiero \\
parecer tan severo \\
a los ojos del pueblo, aficionado \\
a ese mancebo loco y alentado. \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act II, 1184-87)

Ultimately, though, Astiages is willing to take the risk of losing the esteem of his people in his desperation to retain his throne. This is yet further proof of his tyranny, flying in the face of all of the contemporary political opinion that a monarch should nurture his people's love and loyalty to him by carefully balancing punishment and mercy.

To conclude this section, we can justify the claim that *Contra valor no hay desdicha* fits very comfortably within the corpus of Lope's kingship plays. It is not only consistent with many of Lope's other kingship plays in terms of style and characterization, but it also fulfils the requirements of Melveena McKendrick's thesis on Lope's status as a playwright of the Spanish Golden Age. Far from being a 'lackey of the system' as some critics have perceived him in the past, Lope was, as evidenced by this play among others, entirely capable of portraying not only one-sided examples of kingship, but in Ciro's case a positive yet complex monarch whose character must be seen to mature over the course of the play before the audience can accept him as the worthy king he ultimately represents.

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91 McKendrick, *Playing the King*, p. 47.
92 Mariana, *De Rege*, p. 545: 'Ha de conservar cuidadosamente el príncipe la majestad real, pero ha de estar persuadido de que los imperios descansan mas en la opinión pública que en las fuerzas.'
93 McKendrick, *Playing the King*, p. 12.
THE WORLD OF THE PLAY:

THE PLAY’S TITLE

The words ‘contra valor no hay desdicha’ appear in one form or another a total of four times throughout the play. They occur once in Act II and twice in Act III exactly as they stand in the title, and once more in Act III with altered syntax. Each time, they are declaimed by the protagonist, Ciro, in response to some setback or discouragement from one of the other characters. Given the use of the title in this way, not just as a descriptive phrase but also as a sentiment which is key in the development of both play and protagonist, it is worth investigating exactly what it means to be able to appreciate fully its significance.

The title is heard in the first instance in Act II when Ciro and his father Mitridates are making their way back to the village after their meeting with king Astiages. Mitridates voices his concerns over Evandro’s paternal outrage and desire for revenge, and draws Ciro’s attention to the ominous physical darkness that has settled around them. Ciro, however, refutes such fears with a series of rhetorical questions listing the different threats that have no power to disconcert him (‘¿Qué monte, qué padre airado, | qué cielo tempestuoso…?’ et cetera), before concluding,

\[\text{Venga el mundo contra mí;}\]
\[\text{que si con valor nací,}\]
\[\text{contra valor no hay desdicha.}\]  

(Act II, 1359-61)

Mitridates’ worries are not given weight, despite the fact that soon after this he and Ciro are indeed ambushed by a group of men led by Evandro. Ciro wins out, however, proving his confidence to be well-founded.

The next time he utters this refrain, which becomes his own personal motto, Ciro has been visited by the ghost of his dead father.\textsuperscript{94} Despite the portentous connotations of this visitation, added to the spirit’s

\textsuperscript{94} For more on this, see the sub-section on ‘Religion and Superstition’.
message that Ciro should not by any means go to war against his grandfather, Ciro is undaunted and finally banishes the ghost with the words,

Mientras que la vida dura,
contra valor no hay desdicha.
Déjame, sombra importuna.  (Act III, 1385-87)

The third instance of the title within the text is the moment when Filis pleads with Ciro not to go into battle with his grandfather. She employs all manner of argument, including appealing to his love for her in an effort to dissuade him from a mission that it seems will almost certainly prove fatal. Ciro is adamant, however, that he will do battle, despite recognising how costly it may be:

Filis, morir o vencer;
porque es imposible haber desdicha contra el valor.  (Act III, 2439-41)

With his refrain, Ciro has defied first his adoptive father, then the ghost of his dead (biological) father, and finally his lady as they voiced their various fears over his endeavours. At the end of the play, Ciro’s faith in himself is vindicated, as he does indeed take the throne against all the odds. In the final lines of the play he reiterates his motto, incorporating it into the traditional playwright’s appeal to the audience:

Y aquí dio fin el poeta,
(que aun vive para serviros)
a su historia verdadera
fiado en vuestro valor,
por que llamarse merezca
Contra valor no hay desdicha;
y el primero Rey de Persia.  (Act III, 2629-35)

It is worth dwelling on the key words contained in the title, starting with ‘valor’. This word is used a total of twenty-nine times throughout the play, the first of these within the first fifteen lines. It is an ambiguous word, particularly in Spanish. Deriving from the Latin valēre ‘to be strong’, the Minsheu Spanish-English dictionary of 1599 translates the word as meaning ‘valour, worth, courage, fortitude’. Volume VI of the Autoridades from 1739 defines it as ‘La calidad, que constituye una cosa digna de estimación, u aprecio’ also stating, ‘Se toma asimismo por ánimo, y aliento, que desprecia el miedo, y temor en las empresas, o revoluciones’. Modern definitions list both aspects of this word too, the RAE explaining it in the first instance as ‘Grado de utilidad o aptitud de las cosas, para satisfacer las necesidades o proporcionar
bienestar o deleite’ and in its fourth listing as ‘cualidad del ánimo, que mueve a acometer resueltamente grandes empresas y a arrostrar los peligros.’ Interestingly, it does not appear in Covarrubias’ *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* (1611), despite its ambivalence of meaning.

In English its most obvious translation is the word ‘valour’ most commonly used to mean bravery. However, it also has connotations of ‘value’; its first listing in the OED defines it as meaning ‘worth or importance due to personal qualities or to rank’, and the second, ‘worth or worthiness in respect of manly qualities or attributes’. Only its third listing mentions courage, ‘the quality of mind which enables a person to face danger with boldness or firmness; courage or bravery, esp. as shown in warfare or conflict; valiancy, prowess.’

In the context of the title of this play, then, it is possible to argue that both of these interpretations of the word ‘valor’ could be applicable. As the section on ‘Kingship’ shows, Ciro’s intrinsic kinglyness is an important factor in his identity. It emerges before he discovers his true origins, showing that he is royal by nature even without the nurture of a princely upbringing in his early years, and it lends weight to his mission to overthrow Astiages. Indeed, the first time ‘valor’ is mentioned, it is in Ciro’s response to his supposed father Mitridates, who has upbraided him for his impudence. Ciro protests,

\[\begin{align*}
\text{¿Qué causa os he dado yo} \\
\text{para tratarme tan mal,} \\
\text{si este valor natural} \\
\text{conmigo mismo nació?} \\
\end{align*}\]  

(Act I, 13-16)

It is not convincing to read the term simply as ‘bravery’ here; Ciro’s response suggests that his intrinsic character is emerging in the behaviour to which Mitridates objects (which includes his fascination with learning, and his courtship of the noblewoman Filis) on the grounds that it does not suit his station in life. Thus, the term ‘valor’ here, while lending itself to the idea of vigour and spirit, also carries the connotation of value or worth of the individual.
Having examined all twenty-nine of the occurrences of the word ‘valor’ in the play, I have concluded that in total five of these can be said to subscribe to this usage (of ‘worth’ as opposed to ‘valour - bravery’).\textsuperscript{95}

On the other hand, there are instances where the term leans more definitely toward the ‘valour - bravery’ end of the spectrum. An example of this is Bato’s assessment of Ciro which appears in his conversation with Flora at the opening of Act II:

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushright}
Pero de Ciro el valor  
tan animoso le espera,  
que no pienso que pudiera  
ser el de Marte mayor.  
\end{flushright}
\textit{(Act II, 1802-05)}
\end{quote}

The comparison with Mars, the Roman god of war, and the use of the term ‘animoso’ (\textit{Ant. ‘valeroso, bizarro, alentado, esforzado’}) shows unequivocally that ‘valor’ can refer here solely to bravery or courage: ‘valour’ in the common English usage. A further ten occurrences of the term in this context can be found in \textit{Contra valor}, outweighing the times it is used in the sense of ‘worth’ or ‘value’ by over 100 per cent.\textsuperscript{96}

Of further interest are the cases in which the term ‘valor’ can be read ambiguously, as encompassing aspects both of intrinsic value, and valour. These can be weighted towards the former or the latter shades of meaning, and I have thus categorised them as ‘worth-valour’ and ‘valour-worth’, according to their emphasis. An example of ‘worth-valour’ is the moment when Mitridates speaks to Astiages in Act II of Ciro’s rescue from exposure as an infant. He recounts,

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushleft}
Critóle mi mujer, púsole \textit{Ciro}  
por la perra que el pecho le había dado  
(que así se llama en nuestra lengua), y miro  
el cielo a su favor determinado,  
porque cuando fingido rey le admiro,  
y saber su \textbf{valor} te da cuidado,  
conoces que es el niño que ha vivido  
para hacer verdadero el rey fingido.  
\end{flushleft}
\textit{(Act II, 1090-97, emphasis mine)}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{95} ‘valor’ as ‘worth’: Act I: 15, 323, 631; II: 1360; III: 2632.

\textsuperscript{96} ‘valor’ as ‘valour’: Act II, 1361, 1363, 1394; III: 1802, 1894, 1922, 2325, 2355, 2390, 2424, 2441, 2634.
It is not just Ciro’s confident bearing to which Mitridates refers as being worrisome to Astiages here, but also his inherent (and regal) qualities of character that pose a threat to the old king. As Ciro has not yet had a chance to show his bravery in the face of danger, I would argue that the latter is the more significant connotation. There are two other instances where this same emphasis is seen.\(^{97}\)

Finally, the moments where ‘valor’ leans towards ‘bravery’ but also incorporates connotations of ‘worth’ can be seen seven times throughout the play.\(^{98}\) An example of this is the scene already mentioned where Ciro banishes the ghost of his dead father. Oblivious to its warnings and thereby reaffirming his intention to go into battle against his grandfather he states,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mientras que la vida dura,} \\
\text{contra valor no hay desdicha.} \\
\text{Déjame, sombra importuna.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act III, 2385-87)

Ciro rejects the idea of flight here, as suggested to him by the spectre; he shows no sign of shrinking from the enormity of the task and therefore his statement is defiant and final. Thus, ‘valor’ can be seen to be a declaration of his bravery in the face of discouragement. However, in this exchange it is not just his courage that has been in question but also his provenance as the child, not just of the princess Mandane, but also of the low-born father he describes as a ‘vil hombre’. Ciro rejects the idea that he shares any of his biological father’s ignobility, and laments not being born with two regal parents to give him blood that is royal through and through:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Naciera yo todo sol,} \\
\text{sin faltarme parte alguna} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act III, 2376-77)

Thus, the element of ‘worth’ in the meaning of ‘valor’ is relevant here too.

On the whole, therefore, despite the potentially ambiguous nature of the term ‘valor’, its usage in *Contra valor no hay desdicha* is most often connected to the idea of ‘valour’, and this should be kept in mind when deciding on the sense of the title.\(^{99}\)

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\(^{97}\) ‘valor’ as ‘worth-valour’: Act I, 666; II, 1095; III, 1747.

\(^{98}\) ‘valor’ as ‘valour-worth’: Act II, 934, 1696; III, 1907, 2161, 2386, 2397, 2428.

\(^{99}\) By my calculations, the term has connotations of either ‘valour’ or ‘valour-worth’ (i.e. weighted toward valour in
The second keyword in the play’s title is ‘desdicha’. This is altogether more straightforward than ‘valor’; it is defined in Covarrubias as ‘la ruin suerte’ and in Autoridades as ‘ininfelicidad, desgracia, infortunio’. Es voz compuesta de la preposición Des, y el nombre Dicha, Lat. Infelicitas. Infortunium’ (1732, tomo III).

‘Desdicha’ therefore means misfortune, ill-luck or adversity.

The word appears twelve times throughout the play, and more generally in Lope’s work it appears much less frequently but in almost as many plays as ‘valor’.100 In Contra valor it can be translated variously as ‘misfortune’, ‘adversity’ or ‘obstacle’ a total of nine times, and a further three times it is more appropriately rendered as ‘woe(s)’ or ‘unhappiness’.101

Moving toward a literal translation of the play’s title, then, and taking into account the various instances where the nuance of each keyword falls, the most appropriate rendition would be ‘No misfortune (or adversity) shall prevail against valour’, or, positively, ‘Valour conquers all adversities (or misfortunes)’.

One possibility for a paraphrase of the title could be ‘Fortune favours the brave’, although this, perhaps, does not convey the certainty of Ciro’s conviction that success is measured not just by good fortune, but also by being impervious to the effects of misfortune.102 Neither does it convey the dual connotation of ‘valor’ as ‘worth’ as well as ‘bravery’.

It is of interest to consider the sentiment expressed here. Was such a belief pertinent to contemporary culture? Both economically and politically, by the 1620s and 30s Spain’s power on the world stage had left behind its heyday of influence, and at home and abroad the country had begun its decline. The days of the sense of bravery) a total of nineteen times, as opposed to connotations of ‘worth’ or ‘worth-valour’ (i.e. weighted toward valour in the sense of worth or value) a total of eight times. Only once it carries neither of these meanings, translating as ‘of value’ (Act II, 1540). Being a matter of personal judgement, this is obviously not an exact science, especially in the moments when the word is a blend of both aspects of meaning, but it is useful in attempting to come to a conclusion as to how it is most commonly employed.

100 The word ‘valor’ appears in 294 Lope plays, 4215 times in total, while ‘desdicha’ appears in 272 Lope plays, a total of 1297 times, according to the TESO database.


102 ‘Fortune favours the brave’ or ‘fortis fortuna adiuvat’ was first seen in the play Phormio (l. 205) by the second-century BC Roman playwright Terence. It also appears in the works of other ancient writers such as Cicero and Virgil.
active, warrior monarchs such as Ferdinand and Isabella were long gone, and the weakness of the current
king, as discussed in the ‘Kingship’ section of this introduction, was a very real issue for the Spanish
people. It is perhaps not too much to suggest that there existed a feeling in society that bravery was
necessary when faced with the decline of the nation and the weak leadership of Philip IV. Equally, ‘contra
valor no hay desdicha’ (both the title and the play) could be read as an exhortation to the current king to
be more decisive and valorous in his conduct leading the country.

It should be noted that over the years alternative titles for the play have been recorded. These records are
discussed in the ‘Dating and Authorship’ section, but here it is worth considering the titles themselves.
The variations include:

Contra valor no hay desdicha (with variations in spelling)
Contra el Valor no ay desdicha
Contra valor no hay desdichas
Ciro, hijo de la perra
Ciro, hijo de la persa
Primer rey de Persia
Gran rey de Persia
Ciro y Arpago

Evidently, some of the different titles originate from the relatively commonplace mis-readings or
misplacement of letters in the early-modern printing process. The second and third entries on the list
above are most probably the result of this.

The title ‘Ciro, hijo de la perra’ originates from the story of Ciro’s exposure in the wilderness, and is, in fact,
the alternative last line in the three eighteenth-century sueltas of the play which read:

Contra valor no hay desdicha
y el noble Hijo de la Perra. (Act III, 2634-35 C, D, E)\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{103} See bibliography for a summary of the abbreviations listed here. For more on the various editions of the play
This probably explains the fifth variant on the list, ‘Ciro, hijo de la persa’, which is technically erroneous (Ciro’s mother Mandane was Median) and is therefore almost certainly a misreading of ‘perra’ which, on first glance and without knowledge of the story of Cyrus, could seem illogical.

In both of the editions from 1638, as well as MyP and H1, the last line reads ‘y el primero Rey de Persia’, another of the alternative titles listed by the catalogues. ‘Gran rey de Persia’ is not a title used of Ciro within the play, but it follows logically from the ‘primero rey de Persia’ already cited.

Finally, Varey and Shergold assert that the play listed under the name of ‘Ciro y Arpago’ is in all probability the same play as that entitled Contra valor no hay desdicha.\textsuperscript{104} This alternative title shows the significance of Arpago’s character, a topic discussed in the ‘History and Sources’ and ‘Characterization’ sections of this introduction.

THE WORLD OF THE PLAY:

RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION

Although in early seventeenth-century Spain the state religion was fiercely protected through censorship from slight or criticism on the stage or the page, it did not necessarily follow that it had to be actively promoted at every opportunity, and often dramatists chose to set their plays in contexts other than Catholic societies. Just because the society represented was a pagan one, however, did not mean that anything less than a stringent moral code was acceptable in order for a play to be approved by the censors. In any play, the range of characters usually comprised those who were exemplary in attitude and behaviour, and those who represented the foolish, baser elements in society, whose concerns centred on the worldly rather than the spiritual. This was on a sliding scale, with varying degrees between these two extremes, and was as true for those plays set in pagan societies as those in Christian ones. Undoubtedly it was in the interest of dramatic entertainment to include such variety of character, but often there was also a point to be made.

A complex aspect of *Contra valor no hay desdicha* in general is the nature of the religious references it contains. It is clear that Lope’s main concern in the play is not religious, as discussed in the ‘Kingship’ sub-section above. Given that the action is set in Persia, in order to be historically accurate the religion depicted should have been what has come to be known as Zoroastrianism which was prevalent in that area at the time of Cyrus the Great. Lope decides to opt for a vaguely ‘pagan’ slant for his play, but one that is based on the Roman gods, having Bato exclaim in his first lines on stage, ‘¡Gracias a Júpiter santo | que vengo a topar contigo!’ (Act I, 103-04). This terminology has the effect of establishing for the audience that they are not watching a play set in a Christian country, despite the fact that it is not entirely accurate from an historical point of view.

This type of anachronism is not uncommon in Lope, and neither is it confined to religious inconsistencies. For instance, see Ciro’s reference to the dark sky as being draped with ‘paños de luto’, in Act II, l. 1419, which evoked the black wall hangings that were put up in seventeenth-century Spanish churches as a sign of mourning when a dignitary died.¹⁰⁶

Other religious references later in the play are more generalised, or have Christian overtones, although they are never overtly Christian. Ciro makes statements such as, ‘la perfección del alma, | sólo se la debo a Dios’ (Act I, 35-36), and,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dios penetra pensamientos,} \\
\text{Dios los corazones juzga,} \\
\text{Y a quien las vidas quitaré,} \\
\text{Dios le quitará la suya.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Act III, 2398-2401)

The latter clearly resonates with the verse in Old Testament book of 1 Samuel 16.7, ‘et dixit Dominus ad Samuhel ne respicias vultum eius neque altitudinem staturae eius quoniam abieci eum nec iuxta intuitum hominis iudico homo enim videt ca quae parent Dominus autem intuetur cor’ (‘But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his [Jesse’s son, Eliab’s] countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.’ KJV), and words from Genesis 9.6, ‘quicumque effuderit humanum sanguinem fundetur sanguis illius ad imaginem quippe Dei factus est homo’ (‘Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.’ KJV).¹⁰⁷

To assess the significance of the various religious references in Contra valor, it is useful to consider the different categories into which they fall. The most basic has already been mentioned, that of exclamations containing the names of pagan gods, that are generally used to situate the play in a non-Christian context, or to remind the audience of the exoticism of the setting. There are no less than nine instances when the

¹⁰⁷ Quotations in Latin from the Vulgate Bible.
name of the Roman god ‘Júpiter’ is used in this way, in addition to one usage of the generic term ‘dioses’ (Act I, 657), and one moment when Ciro prefaces a statement with ‘Por Dios’ (Act I, 738).108

In addition to these exclamations, throughout the play various characters make references to worshipping pagan gods, or make statements indicating their earnest belief in these deities. Such sincere declarations are interesting, as they potentially affect our reading of the characters who make them (especially given the strictly Catholic context in which the play was written and first performed), and help us to judge them accordingly.

For instance, Astiages’ references to the gods are always unequivocally pagan. He either speaks of Jupiter by name, or of ‘the gods’, an intrinsically un-Christian reference. They also show us something of his personality as his attempts to secure Jupiter’s protection of his [Astiages’] crown lead to a bloodbath of sacrifice:

A Júpiter divino satisfago
la sucesión que reparé perdida,
con víctimas, por quien, deshecho en llanto,
mancho las aras de su templo santo.                    (Act I, 592-95)

His tyranny, therefore, even finds outlet in his religion, as he is prepared to sacrifice numerous victims to satisfy the god in his own interest. Astiages follows this by saying that although he had been tormented by dreams and worries about his throne, now ‘gracias a los dioses’, the fear of his kingdom being taken over by Persian rule has gone (ll. 596-99).

Another example of Astiages invoking the gods whom he worships in the context of violence is his sinister threat to Arpago and Mitridates after having heard the story of Ciro’s origins. He warns them not to tell Ciro under any circumstances,

advirtiendo que ha de estar secreto,
porque, por todo el coro
de los dioses que adoro,
que si le declaráis quién es, que luego
abrase a los dos en vivo fuego.                    (Act II, 1128-32)

This phrase ‘por todo el coro de los dioses que adoro’ is an approximation of ‘Por Dios’, and has the similar effect of emphasising the statement that is being made, but it is such an ominous message and such a specific invocation that it shows Astiages’ relationship with religion once again closely linked with bloody violence.

An interesting moment occurs in Act III when Bato has been sent to Astiages to bring a bellicose message from Ciro. As shown here, Bato’s reference to ‘Dios’ is within the range of traditional Christian vocabulary, but Astiages’ response is scathing as he directs his rage toward the gods upon whom he has called and who he feels have let him down:

```
BATO ¡Vive Dios, si no le dais
tuyo reino y restituís…!

REY ¡Dioses! ¿Aquesto sufrís?
¿En qué entendéis? ¿Dónde estás?
Blasfemo de vuestro nombre. (Act III, 2094-98)
```

This is an extremely significant moment. Although Astiages subscribes to pagan religion more unambiguously than any other character in Contra valor, and although this has been closely associated with his bloodthirsty nature, this overt blasphemy against the gods is the final evidence for his tyranny. Earlier in the play, Riselo, in the game of wit and words, had cited the following as one of the three most powerful things in the world in his opinion:

```
y sin temor de los dioses,
un tirano de su patria. (Act I, 432-33)
```

A tyrant without fear of the gods is effectively what Astiages has become. He no longer has even his piety (which was admittedly principally self-serving) to preserve his character, and in blasphemy against the gods as he does here he shows himself to have taken one more step toward total corruption.

Bato’s only mention of what could be considered pagan ‘gods’ comes when he urges Ciro to speak to Filis, saying, ‘Hablaron hombres | mortales a diosas: ¿qué temes?’ (Act I, 173-74). This is a reference to Greek and Roman myths with which a Golden Age audience would have been familiar, such as that of Selene for example, where a goddess falls in love with a mortal man. It seems to be simply an
encouragement to Ciro rather than an indication of Bato’s belief in such ‘diosas’, an idea underlined by his use of the preterite ‘hablaron’ which distances his statement from any current reality.

Bato’s other references to God, on the other hand, seem to lean toward a Christian understanding of the word and concept. Often, the word is seen with a capitalised first letter when in this context. This could be significant, although it should kept in mind that such a practice was probably ingrained for the typesetters, who, upon seeing a phrase like ‘Vueso nieto, que Dios guarde’ (Bato to Astiages, Act III, 1987) would automatically have given it an upper case initial whatever the playwright’s intention. This is supported by the fact that even the words ‘dioses’ and ‘diosas’ are rendered with a capital letter by the typesetters of editions A and B from 1638 (e.g. in Act I, 47, 74 and 221).

More compelling are those examples where the application of a Christian sentiment fits with the reference to God. In the previous example of Astiages’ blasphemy against the gods, his ‘¡Dioses! ¿Aquesto sufrís?’ exclamation is immediately preceded by Bato saying, ‘¡Vive Dios, si no le dais [a Ciro] el reino y restituis…!’ Framed as an oath, the use of ‘Dios’ contrasts sharply with Astiages’ ‘Dioses’ in the next line, indicating that this is not just a stand-off between two rival powers, but most definitely a battle between the good and the bad, represented by Ciro (and, by association, Bato) and Astiages respectively.

Later, Bato discusses Astiages’ short-sightedness in trusting Arpago after what the old king did to Arpago’s son:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Pero ¡mira cómo Dios,} \\
\text{cuando los hombres castiga} \\
\text{por algún notable error,} \\
\text{les ciega el entendimiento!} \\
\end{align*}
\] (Act III, 2181-84)

It seems that the Christian God is being invoked here, as Bato’s imagery resonates with Biblical passages: ‘excaecavit oculos eorum et induravit eorum cor ut non videant oculis et intellegant corde et convertantur et sanem eos’ (‘He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.’ KJV), Isaiah 6.10, as quoted in St John 12.40.
Ciro is also capable of such Christian-oriented references:

Padre, no penséis que vos
solo mi artífice fuistes;
porque si el cuerpo me distes,
las almas infunde Dios.
Este pensamiento honrado
nace del alma; y así,
lo que Dios infunde en mí,
¿cómo puede ser culpado?
Corta un escultor un leño
y señala una figura,
que acabar después procura
por las líneas del diseño.
Este leño os debo a vos,
figura muda y en calma;
que la perfección del alma,
sólo se la debo a Dios.  

(Act I, 21-36; emphases mine)

The aforementioned reference to God ‘looking upon the heart’ (see above) was also Ciro’s (ll. 2398-401).

In addition, in his speech to Astiages at the close of Act III, Ciro revisits the theme of God being the source for men’s souls even if their earthly father gives them physicality (echoing his words to Mitridates in Act I, 20-24),

CIRO (al REY)

Que aunque es en la formación
el padre primera forma,
Dios, que las almas informa,
trocó la primera acción
en su vientre.  

(Act III, 2570-74)

This anachronistically supports the Christian idea of God being the ultimate source of men, as expressed in Psalm 139, ‘quoniam tu possedisti renes meos orsusque es me in utero matris meae’ (‘For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.’ KJV). All of these moments could be read as an attempt on the part of the playwright to endow his protagonist with the type of Christian piety that would have confirmed for the audience that Ciro was the model of a Christian prince, despite the necessity of setting the play in a pagan society. Not only does Ciro show an innate kingship, he also shows an innate Christianity, as it were, that shines through even his culture.

109 Psalm 139.13 (138.13 in Vulgate).
However, not all of Ciro’s references to God are of such a Christian tenor. In fact, there are some instances where Ciro shows a confusing deference to the pagan gods. For example, in response to Arpago’s speech revealing Ciro’s true origins, that has made such sense of his identity and his impulses toward rule, Ciro remarks,

\[
\text{Lo que Júpiter ordena,}
\text{resistir intenta en vano}
\text{la más poderosa mano;}
\text{porque es mortal desatino}
\text{contra el decreto divino}
\text{oponerse intento humano.}
\]  

(Act II, 1702-07)

Obviously, the name ‘Júpiter’ could easily be substituted with ‘Dios’ here without any discrepancy with the Christian world view (God being ultimately in control of the lives and fate of humans). It may be simply a case of ‘Júpiter’ fitting with the décimas rhyme scheme that has led Lope to choose it over the term ‘God’, although, admittedly, an alternative such as ‘el mismo Dios’ could have been used to the same effect.

In another instance, Ciro, speaking to Filis, tries to convince her that he is worthy of her because of his soul, a part of him that, being eternal, can align him with the gods.

\[
\text{Alma soy, Filis: el alma,}
\text{por inmortal, te merece,}
\text{y prenda que con los dioses}
\text{en la eternidad conviene.}
\]  

(Act I, 219-22)

He also uses this term in response to the order that he accompany Arpago to Astiages’ court at the end of Act I. Ciro accurately surmises that he is in trouble because of Fineo’s flogging, and says that, although he could try to defend himself with his people,

\[
\text{no quieran los dioses, no,}
\text{que a la corona suprema,}
\text{aunque aventure la vida,}
\text{el justo respeto pierda.}
\]  

(Act I, 780-83)

Although using the word ‘dioses’ which can only be a pagan term, Ciro nevertheless employs a Christian sentiment here, that of submitting to earthly authorities. The first letter of Peter states, ‘subiec...
omni humanæ creaturae propter Dominum sive regi quasi praecellenti sive ducibus tamquam ab eo missis ad vindictam malefactorum laudem vero bonorum’ (‘Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.’ KJV).\textsuperscript{110} Ciro’s respect for the authority of the king adds further weight to the audience’s perception of him as a good character, as it shows that he is not out to assume power from the beginning of the play. Only when the king’s actions contravene the laws of righteousness (if not the Christian God, here), is Ciro justified in rebelling against him.

Further references to the pagan gods appear when Ciro himself is compared to a deity. He himself states,

\begin{center}
Aunque parezco vencido, 
no lo estoy mientras informe
el alma esta vida. Tengo 
justa esperanza en los dioses. 
\textbf{Dielos soy hijo}; estas flechas 
te dirán que no soy hombre. 
Diamantes tengo por alma 
en pecho y manos de bronce, 
ninguna dellas me ha herido, 
Marte detuvo sus golpes; 
no pasan mortales flechas 
a divinos corazones. 
\end{center}

(Act III, 2510-21; emphases mine)

Of course, it is only acceptable for Ciro in this instance to be speaking of himself as the son of pagan gods; anything that remotely hinted at him speaking of the Christian God would have been nothing short of extreme blasphemy. The implication is that by surviving the attacks from Astiages’ army, despite coming so close to injury that he has ‘\textit{algumas flechas clavadas en la rodiela}’ (Act III, 2471+) he has proved that he is somehow untouchable, akin to the child of the gods. At this point, such a comparison supports his attempt to take the throne from Astiages, but it is not the first time in the play that Ciro has been associated with a deity. As previously quoted, Bato, speaking to Flora at the beginning of Act III and having recounted Ciro’s recent activity, makes reference to ‘Marte’ (Act III, 1802-05). Mars was the Roman god of war, and Ciro is compared to him at various points throughout the play. Here Bato claims

\begin{footnote}
110 1 Peter 2.13-14.
\end{footnote}
that Ciro’s bravery could not be matched by Mars himself, but later in the play he goes further, calling Ciro ‘nuestro Marte’ (Act III, 1834). Indeed, Ciro himself says to Filis,

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Yo soy en la guerra Marte,} \\
&\text{tú Venus en la belleza.} \\
&\text{Coronaré tu cabeza} \\
&\text{si la victoria me dan} \\
&\text{los cielos.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act III, 2414-18)

Comparing them both to gods is not just flattering rhetoric, but also serves to transcend, verbally at least, the social differences that have always dogged their relationship. At the start of the play the peasant Ciro was too lowly for the noblewoman Filis, and in the early part of Act III Filis worries that Ciro’s new-found regal identity would make him of too high a status ever to marry her (ll. 1854-81). Here, Ciro puts them both on a scale that supersedes human hierarchies, and promises to crown her as his wife if he is victorious.\footnote{It should be noted that the relationship between Mars and Venus in Roman mythology was adulterous; however it does not follow that Ciro’s choice of this god and goddess was necessarily alluding to this aspect of their relationship which was also associated with passionate love.}

Moving from the realm of religion (however inconsistent and anachronistic the references to it may be), it is useful to consider superstition as a feature of the play separate in part to religious sentiment. Something immediately apparent is that some of the superstition that appears in \textit{Contra valor} is in fact present in the historical source material. Astiages’ reliance on his magian advisors, and the prophecy that provokes his attempt at murdering Ciro both appear in the accounts by Herodotus and by Justin. He believes he can counteract fate by taking his own measures against its decrees, but it is clear that this is a futile exercise.

Other elements in the play that fall into the category of superstition rather than religion include those omens that assail Ciro as he makes his metaphorical journey toward the throne. The first minor example of these is in Act II when Mitridates has a premonition of impending danger as they travel home from their interview at the court because he notes, ‘haberse el cielo turbado’ (l. 1329). This moment of pathetic fallacy serves also as a sign, then, of the battle that is to come from which Ciro emerges victorious against the odds.
When Ciro falls from his horse to the general horror of those who witness it, Filis exclaims, ‘¿No es agüero de caer | del puesto a que te subió | tu fortuna?’ (Act III, 2126-28). As discussed in the ‘Kingship’ section, a fall from one’s horse was often used in Golden Age drama as a bad omen, or to signify some kind of moral failure. Filis immediately assumes it foretells a negative outcome of the battle, and to counteract this Ciro responds by cutting off his horse’s legs.

The next omen is that of the comet, which was traditionally associated with famine, plague and war.\(^\text{112}\)

Earlier in Act III, Mitridates had mentioned such an occurrence when counselling caution to Ciro, before the comet had even appeared:

\[
\text{Conozco y todos conocen} \\
\text{tu valiente corazón;} \\
\text{pero cuando avisa el cielo,} \\
\text{¿quien no ha de tener temor?} \\
\text{¿Qué rey murió sin cometa?} \\
\text{¿A qué fatal destrucción} \\
\text{no precedieron presagios?} \\
\text{¿Qué infante en el pecho habló} \\
\text{que no sucediesen guerras?} \quad \text{(Act III, 2162-70)}\(^\text{113}\)
\]

Thus, when a comet does pass through the theatre (l. 2397+), the audience has been prepared to realize its full import, as does Ciro: ‘Todo parece que acusa | mi temerario valor’ (Act III, 2389-90). Finally, Ciro’s visitation by the ghost of his dead father (discussed in full in the ‘Kingship’ section) is the most overtly ominous of the events. The ghost articulates a warning to Ciro not to go into battle, yet even this fails to weaken his resolve.

Ciro’s reaction to all these events is significant in terms of our assessment of his character; his disregard for negative portents is an indication of his single-mindedness and fundamental suitability to reign. This is the main reason behind the omens that appear in Contra valor. Despite their number and the weight they carry for the other characters, they have no effect on the outcome of the events, Ciro’s victory over Astiages. In fact, they serve to reinforce perfectly his claims that ‘contra valor no hay desdicha’, and thus his position within the play.

\(^{112}\) EB, vol. 6, ‘Comets in Ancient Times’.  
\(^{113}\) See text and footnotes for further explanation of the images contained in this section, including the comet and the speaking infant.
To conclude, there is undoubtedly a mixed, largely anachronistic approach to religion within the play

*Contra valor no hay desdicha*. References to the Classical gods (Jupiter, Mars, Venus, as well as ‘dioses/diosas’) situate the play in a pagan country, but generic mentions of ‘Dios’ by various characters are often in contexts that carry Christian connotations, which probably would have inclined the contemporary audience to view the characters who make such statements (principally Bato and Ciro) in a favourable light. Additionally, they add weight to the idea of Ciro as a model of kingship. However, in line with the ambiguous nature of his journey toward becoming a ‘suitable’ monarch, there are also moments where Ciro seems to articulate faith in the pagan gods too.

Ciro himself is often spoken of in a ‘god-like’ context, compared frequently to Mars himself, and he describes himself as a child of the gods after emerging unscathed from battle. However, these descriptions should not be taken in earnest, merely serving as further proof of his superiority and regal nature.
CHARACTERIZATION

In his influential work *The approach to the Spanish drama of the Golden Age*, published in 1957, A. A. Parker described Golden Age theatre as 'essentially a drama of action and not of characterization', adding that it 'does not set out to portray rounded and complete characters.' This view affected how much of Spanish drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was perceived. J. B. Hall in his introduction to *Fuenteovejuna*, states,

> His [Lope’s] deliberate technique was to present characters who, even when they are full of energy and dominate the play as Fernán Gómez does, still remain types. They are not complete in the sense of being full or rounded, but are simple or flat rather than multi-faceted.

Dixon, in *Characterization in the comedia of seventeenth-century Spain*, goes some way to refute such an assessment. Acknowledging that the characters in Golden Age drama often adhered to a particular ‘type’, Dixon argues that this does not necessarily mean that they are less ‘lifelike’ or psychologically plausible. He uses *Fuenteovejuna* to show that some of Lope’s characters, in particular Mengo and Laurencia in that play, are in his own words ‘magnificently complex’ (p. 28). Dixon quotes Horace, in a passage particularly relevant to the consideration of this aspect of Lope’s work:

> The experienced poet, as an imitative artist, should look to human life and character for his models, and derive from them a language that is true to life. Sometimes a play that has a few brilliant passages showing a true appreciation of character, even if it lacks grace and has little depth or artistry, will catch the fancy of an audience.  

(*Ars poetica*, 317-21)

Ruano de la Haza also addressed the issue in his article from 2004 on the way in which the study of characterization in Spanish drama has been neglected over the years, in contrast with scholarship on the drama of England or France.  

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116 Ruano de la Haza, José María, ‘Trascendencia y proyección del teatro clásico español en el mundo anglosajón’ in *Proyección y Significados del Teatro Clásico Español*, coordinadores, José María Díez Borque y José Alcalá-Zamora (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior, c. 2004), pp. 233-244.
Naturally, when set in the context of modern dramatic theory, it must be remembered that Golden Age drama was not working to the same criteria as plays today. Indeed, the concept of characterization itself as an important element of a narrative literary work (prose writing as well as drama) is one that has developed only since the seventeenth century. This should be kept in mind when approaching Lope’s drama. However, I agree with Dixon that it would be unwise to categorize all Spanish Golden Age comedias as two-dimensional in terms of their characterization.

Contra valor no hay desdicha contains many of the character types common to Golden Age drama, such as the galán, the dama, the gracioso, and the barba. In this section, each of these characters will be examined and it will be shown that, even within the framework of set dramatic figures, Lope could achieve a portrayal of character that was both effective and sensitive. The order in which the characters are examined will take into account those that appear in the historical source material (that is, Ciro, Astiages, Arpago and Mitridates), and those that have been added by Lope (Filis, Flora and Bato). It is important to remember that Lope is beholden to his sources for his main characters, and as we shall see many of their characteristics spring from the historical material he uses. However, there are departures from these sources too, and this section, in conjunction with the ‘History and Sources’ section, will outline the playwright’s divergences from the historical accounts and possible reasons for them. It will also show the extent to which Lope adheres to stock characters for those figures he has invented.

**CIRO**

Turning to the protagonist of the play, then, Ciro is undoubtedly a strong lead and has one third of its total lines (32.9%), appearing in seven out of the play’s ten salidas. His claims regarding the unassailable nature of true valour give the play its title, and the action of the play revolves around him, his identity and his progression toward the throne. Indeed, his name is mentioned in every scene: Ciro is truly the central character.

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117 As an illustration of this, recent studies of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* that focus on the relationship between Don Quixote and Sancho (such as E.C. Riley, *Cervantes’s Theory of the Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962)) show how groundbreaking this idea was.
Given that this play is based on mythical-historical events, certain criteria must be met in terms of plot development, but within these potential constraints it is clear that Lope has given thought to the finer points of each character.

It is Ciro’s innate kingliness (one later realizes) that seems to be causing friction as the play opens in medias res; Ciro’s supposed father Mitridates berates his son for some perceived effrontery, with the implication that impertinence is something that has featured in Ciro’s personality hitherto (Act I, 9-12). Ciro’s response is a spirited protest that his love of books and learning is not something of which he should be ashamed, but is rather an exalted and worthy part of his personal makeup. This is exactly Mitridates’ problem, as he feels that Ciro has been led astray by the accounts of war and love about which he reads (Act I, 57-64), but Ciro is adamant that they are only beneficial. Thus the audience’s first encounter with the play’s protagonist unfolds. Throughout the play, Ciro proves to be as impetuous, authoritative and decisive as one would guess from these early lines, although as the plot develops the audience realizes that he has more of a right to these characteristics because of his real identity as a royal prince. The very incongruity of a peasant character displaying such traits would have been a clue to the audience that Ciro was more than he appeared.

Similarly, the revelation about Ciro’s true role in life makes his courtship of the noblewoman Filis acceptable to Golden Age minds, and excuses somewhat his rejection of Flora (discussed further below). Thus, what his father sees as recklessness or imprudence turns out to be not only natural but further proof of Ciro’s regal identity.

Montesinos speaks of this very phenomenon in a passage in Estudios sobre Lope de Vega that is remarkably pertinent to our discussion of Ciro’s identity:

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118 For a further discussion of this, including an analysis of Ciro’s inherent kingly nature and flaws, see ‘Kingship’.
119 The character of Mireno in Tirso de Molina’s El vergonzoso en palacio provides another among many examples of this situation in Golden Age theatre.
Pero es la sangre heredada la que determina la trayectoria de la voluntad. La sangre heredada hace al héroe serlo. Podrá éste encontrarse en las circunstancias más desfavorables, desconocido, apartado del mundo; podrá desconocer él mismo la alteza de su condición; no importa. El más leve rumor de guerra hará que el arco de su voluntad se dispare; será diestro en la batalla, ordenará las hazañas según una refinada ciencia no aprendida. Es la sangre. Tendrá inquietudes espirituales más vivas y complicadas que las de los otros que no son de su condición. El amor encontrará en él una sensibilidad más despierta que la de ningún otro, porque la sensibilidad para el amor es un atributo de la nobleza, y ese amor tenderá a nobles objetos. Es la sangre.  

One of the few moments in which we see Ciro wavering from his usual decisive confidence is early in Act I when he turns to his friend, the villano Bato (a character discussed below) to ask what he should do when he sees Filis near the village (Act I, 171-73). It is perhaps significant that Ciro’s only early sign of vulnerability, then, is when dealing with matters of love. This proves to the audience not only the strength of his feelings for Filis, but also that he has a human side which would have made his character more attractive to them. It also ties in with a common feature of the galán-gracioso relationship that the gracioso is asked for and gives advice to his master (especially in his later incarnations).

Ciro’s other moment of ‘weakness’ comes much later in the play, when he believes he has been abandoned by his troops in Act III, 2288-2351. His soliloquy is full of emotion and confusion; in it we see his self-doubt for perhaps the first time in the whole play:

Apenas sueños despiertos
la imaginación confusa
fabrica por divertirme,
cuando el temor me deslumbra.
Tocan cajas.
¿Cajas de guerra? ¿Qué es esto?
[…]
¡Qué confusiones, qué dudas!

(Act III, 2332-36; 2351)

It is noteworthy that such a vulnerable speech should be reserved for a moment so close to the end of the play, but with reference to the discussion of kingship that precedes this section we may conclude that it is necessary for Ciro in terms of personal development to undergo this crisis before he can be deemed (by

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121 As discussed in the End Notes for line 173, the interrogative element of this line was an editorial decision to make sense of Bato’s answer. This is, incidentally, an instance that illustrates perfectly the significance of even seemingly minor adjustments to punctuation when editing texts.
the audience) a worthy king. It is only, after all, through overcoming such weakness that he can be said to have true strength.

An interesting point here is the episode in which the voice of Ciro’s dead father intervenes in the middle of the mental and emotional crisis Ciro is undergoing to warn him not to continue the attack on his grandfather Astiages. This has already been discussed in the earlier ‘Kingship’ section, but it is worth considering Ciro’s reaction as a character to this ghostly visitation. As Montesinos writes in his study of supernatural intervention in Lope’s plays which prefaces his edition of *El marqués de las Navas*, such visitations are not uncommon in Lope, and are usually to warn the hero of impending disaster, or to give them encouragement in a seemingly hopeless situation.122 Here, however, the shadow’s warning has the opposite effect on Ciro to that which could have been expected; rather than taking the advice of his supernatural visitor, he defies it and in fact it spurs him on in his endeavour. As previously discussed, the reasons for this are complex, but Montesinos identifies at least one in his assessment of the scene:

La sombra no interviene como en los ejemplos anteriores, no es estímulo, sino obstáculo. El padre de Ciro, plebeyo, representa para el héroe una enorme rémora, rémora no sólo exterior, en cuanto que perjudica su buen nombre, sino también interior; la mala sangre heredada es siempre obstáculo. El padre de Ciro es para éste su espíritu maligno. Tal concepción, complicadamente entrelazada con todo un aspecto de la ideología de Lope, no explica el tono de la escena y la reacción del personaje.123

As with many other examples of such phenomena in Golden Age drama, it is not clear whether the ‘voz’ is meant to be taken literally or could be seen as the product of Ciro’s overworked imagination; there is precedent for this as E. C. Riley explains in his article on the ‘pensamientos escondidos’ written about by Cervantes in relation to his drama, where allegorical figures are used to give ‘external dramatic form to what is going on in the mind of a character.’124 This uncertainty, however, does not detract from the psychological interest it brings to the play, especially given that it was not an element of the original story as told by Justin or Herodotus.

123 Ibid., p. 151.
In terms of romance, Ciro is typically devoted to his lady, Filis. He is bold and eloquent in his pursuit of her (Act I, 175-222); overwhelmed with love for her (II, 1457-97); desperate at the thought of separation from her (III, 2280-83), and finally keeps his promise to her by marrying her at the end of the play, despite the fact that at that stage he is of a higher social standing than she. All of these traits line him alongside the typical noble galanes of the Golden Age theatre.

Assessed by the other characters in the play, Ciro is reckoned to be entendido, discreto, and valiente by Filis (Act I, 326-8); the performer of hechos valerosos and the possessor of dignidad by his friend Silvio (I, 409-10); having the naturaleza de Alcides (which would have implied strength and courage), hermosura, being apacible and discreto as well as being feared by men and loved by women, according to his enemy Fineo (I, 668-685). All this added to the insight, intelligence, persuasiveness and authority that are displayed through his speeches to Astiages on the nature of kingship (II, 846-91; 953-79), in addition to his consistent bravery in battle show a protagonist worthy of the title of king by the end of the play.

Although Ciro displays kingly traits even when he is no more than a peasant lad, as he learns more about himself and his unfortunate past he is seen to grow into his role as monarch. The game he plays with his friends in Act I after which he is crowned ‘king’ (Act I, 365-587) is arguably the beginning of this transformation; through it he gets his first taste of authority over others after earning the right to be their master, and he is also first challenged on his orders (by Fineo and later Flora), thus learning that he cannot expect unhesitating obedience. This is a lesson that he relearns at the end of the play when it seems that his troops have deserted him; it is clear from Contra valor that ruling as king was by no means easy.

His complexity and the personal journey he undergoes make the character of Ciro psychologically convincing and would provide ample opportunity for an actor to engage with the part on this level. Successfully performing him as a character both with personal flaws yet one who develops throughout the play to finally become a creditable king would be a satisfying challenge in this regard and this serves as
further proof that Lope’s drama does not sacrifice stimulating characterization to the demands of the plot.

ASTIAGES

The character of Astiages probably would have been played by the actor normally playing the barba in a Golden Age theatre troupe, while Filis would have been the primera dama and Ciro the primer galán.

As discussed in the Kingship section of this Introduction, Astiages is from the outset a tyrannical character, leaving us in no doubt as to his bloodthirsty, ruthless and paranoid nature (Act I, 592-5). He is also, like many a tyrant, astute, immediately suspecting from Evandro’s words that his son’s attacker could be the grandson he had tried to dispose of so many years previously (I, 656-63).

The underlying violence in Astiages’ nature cannot remain hidden despite his best efforts; in an exchange with Mitridates and Arpago, his at first seemingly reasonable request to hear the full story of Ciro’s upbringing is undermined by his loss of control as he threatens them:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Este Ciro,} \\
\text{¿es tu hijo? ¡Por el santo} \\
\text{Júpiter que, si me engañas,} \\
\text{que de Agrigento el tirano} \\
\text{no ha de haber formado toro} \\
\text{que te abrase a fuego manso} \\
\text{como le haré para ti!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act II, 1022-28)

Subsequently, his deceitfulness in responding to Mitridates and Arpago after hearing the former’s story (Act II, 1106-80) is further proof of his corruption, rendered all the more sinister in the context of what he eventually does with Arpago’s child. He claims to be repentant of his past actions in ordering Ciro’s death, and reassures his privado that he has nothing to fear:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Oh Arpago, ¿de qué temes, cuando siente} \\
\text{tu pecho que mi amor te ha perdonado} \\
\text{no haber ejecutado} \\
\text{mi necio mandamiento?} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Act II, 1110-13)
However, as soon as he is left alone, we see that Astiages’ real emotions are far from those he has revealed to his subjects:

\[\text{¿Habrá maldad que como aquésta sea?}\]
\[\text{¡Oh, fementido Arpago!}\]
\[\text{¿Así mi imperio tu traición desea?}\]
\[\text{Pero yo te daré tan justo pago}\]
\[\text{que sea más dolor que el darte muerte.}\]

(Act II, 1167-71)

This approach of speaking outwardly with false clemency and compassion is one that is Machiavellian in its basis, a fact that serves to underline our view of Astiages as a tyrant. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli counsels,

A prince, then, must be very careful not to say a word which does not seem inspired by the five qualities I mentioned earlier. To those seeing and hearing him, he should appear a man of compassion, a man of good faith, a man of integrity, a kind and a religious man.\[Emphasis mine\]

It is very clear that the appearance of goodness is not at all matched to the underlying reality of Astiages’ emotions.

The cowardly way in which Astiages proposes to deal with Ciro (sending Evandro to kill him under cover of darkness), only serves to provide a contrast with Ciro’s own valour as the play develops (Act II, 1188-1203). Not willing to be outwitted a second time, he demands Ciro’s head as proof of his death:

\[\text{Pero a pensar disponte}\]
\[\text{que has de traerme su cabeza fiera,}\]
\[\text{que el frontispicio de mi templo espera,}\]
\[\text{como del oso o jabalí le adorna}\]
\[\text{el cazador que torna}\]
\[\text{alegre de la presa.}\]

(Act II, 1193-98)

This request would have immediately called to mind the beheading of John the Baptist by King Herod Antipas to a Golden Age audience, in addition to the link to the hunting imagery used by Astiages himself.\[126\]

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126 Mark 6.14-29.
Further examples of Astiages’ tyranny, including his heinous punishment of Arpago are discussed in the ‘Kingship’ section.

**ARPAGO**

Arpago, as Astiages’ *privado*, is an important character in the play. He appears in six out of the play’s ten *salidas*, the same number as Mitridates and Filis, but carries the second highest percentage of its lines (14.1%) after Ciro himself; his part would potentially have been taken by the actor normally playing *segundo galán* in a Golden Age theatre troupe. As discussed in the ‘Play’s Title’ section of this introduction, one of the alternative titles for *Contra valor* was *Ciro y Arpago*, showing just how important this figure was in the play.

Arpago was responsible for Ciro’s initial survival as an infant, as it was he who went against Astiages’ orders to kill the child. His revelatory speech recounting this (Act II, 1548-1696) is the longest single speech in the play and the first time Ciro is made aware of his true identity. The latter part of his revelations concern the punishment Astiages inflicted upon him for his past disobedience; that Arpago’s son be cooked in a pie and fed to his unwitting father. The implications of this act and Arpago’s long-term reaction to it are discussed in the ‘Kingship’ section, but here it is worth noting that Arpago’s deep emotion upon recounting the tale is portrayed with the utmost sensitivity through Lope’s writing (Act II, 1624-55). Feelings of grief (1628-31), shock (1632-36), revulsion (1637-39), shame (1641-43), horror (1652-55) and a desire for vengeance (1691-95) are all manifest in the words he speaks. This is certainly not a two-dimensional grief reaction; it is conceivable that Lope could here have depicted Arpago merely as an angry father demanding retribution for his wrong, or as purely grief-stricken. However, as this scene shows, Lope is not content to depict a narrow field of human emotion, especially in cases where such complexity can exist.

Arpago shows himself to be an admirable figure in many respects throughout this play. Having urged Ciro to take his rightful place on the throne, he promises to fight and die with him if necessary (Act III,
Significantly, this loyalty even in the face of impending defeat is something that Machiavelli warns a prince should not expect, given the weakness of men’s resolve in the face of disaster:

They [that is, men in general] would shed their blood for you, risk their property, their lives, their sons, so long, as I said above, as danger is remote; but when you are in danger they turn away. Any prince who has come to depend entirely on promises and has taken no other precautions ensures his own ruin; friendship which is bought with money and not with greatness and nobility of mind is paid for, but it does not last and it yields nothing. Men worry less about doing an injury to one who makes himself loved than to one who makes himself feared. For love is secured by a bond of gratitude which men, wretched creatures that they are, break when it is to their advantage to do so; but fear is strengthened by a dread of punishment which is always effective.\(^{127}\)

Ciro’s experience proves this to be true in part; his men do indeed desert him as the battle commences in Act III of the play but, flying in the face of this (and thereby proving his worth as a character), Arpago does not break his ‘bond of gratitude’ with Ciro, so Ciro’s trust in his promise proves to be well-founded.

At the end of the play however, he shows that his drive to see Astiages overthrown was not motivated solely by a selfish desire for vengeance. Ciro, with his grandfather at his mercy, decides that rather than kill him as it would be within his right to do, he will rather show him clemency and let him live, under guard, in a city in his kingdom. As is his duty as king and dispenser of justice, however, Ciro offers Arpago the option of avenging the death of his son. Arpago’s refusal to do this, inspired as he is by Ciro’s example, shows us his integrity (Act III, 2615-22), and provides a stark contrast to Evandro’s bloodthirsty desire to take revenge for the beating of his son at Ciro’s command earlier in the play (I, 628-31).

Such characterization points to a moral message as well as a political one for the play as a whole; despite the fact that Arpago may have been well within his rights to demand a harsh punishment as justice for his son’s murder, the response of both the new king and the man most directly injured by Astiages to the tyrant who is now at their mercy is almost startling in its unexpected grace.

As a character, Arpago provides scope for an actor to explore a figure at once humane and full of integrity, yet also by necessity deceiving his king for the greater good. His grief over his dead son would

\(^{127}\) Machiavelli, \textit{The Prince}, p. 54. Ch. XVII: ‘Cruelty and compassion; and whether it is better to be loved than feared, or the reverse’.
have been a harrowing moment in the play, and would require a great deal of acting skill to convey effectively, making this a desirable role for any actor.

MITRIDATES

Mitridates fulfils a useful function for us as his presence, words and actions are illustrative of the care taken by Lope in characterization even with more minor characters. He is a relatively important figure in the play, appearing in six out of its ten salidas. As Ciro’s adoptive father, we often witness his concern for the young man, especially regarding Ciro’s seeming rashness over his courtship of Filis (Act I, 79-80). When he is called to the court by Arpago to meet Astiages for the first time, Mitridates insists on accompanying his adopted son (I, 789-794), prompting Ciro’s touchingly family-oriented response ‘Matarán las dos ausencias | a mi madre’ (I, 793-4).

Mitridates shows strength of character when faced with Astiages’ almost maniacal threats in Act II (mentioned above). Rather than be intimidated by the king’s wrath he replies:

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En la lealtad de vasallo
pienso que hallaré mejor
la respuesta, que en el daño
que me puede suceder
de no respetarte airado.                  (Act II, 1029-33)
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In saying this, Mitridates responds to Astiages’ threats with dignity, humbly protesting that his truthful answer will be conditioned more by his loyalty to his king than by fear of the harmful repercussions that the king threatens. This serves not only to highlight the personal nobility of which even a peasant could boast in Lope’s world (reminiscent of the idea of *honra* dealt with in Lope’s *Fuenteovejuna* and *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña*, and in Calderón’s *El alcalde de Zalamea*), but also to provide a contrast with Astiages’ less than ideal behaviour in this scene. Even though the king has no sense of his responsibilities as a monarch to be just, fair and reasoned, his subject will not be frightened or coerced into behaving in an unseemly way.
An interesting scene for Mitridates is in Act II in which he discusses with Ciro the likelihood of Fineo’s father, Evandro, taking a strong line of protest with Astiages over Ciro’s treatment of his son. Mitridates is not convinced that Evandro will be satisfied with Astiages’ (purported) decision not to punish Ciro, and he cites his knowledge of the all-consuming nature of a father’s love as the reason for his concerns, saying:

No hay satisfacción que cuadre a injuria tan afrentosa,
y ya sabes que es la cosa más ciega del mundo un padre; que el amor con que le viene a estimar su pensamiento, le quita el entendimiento; pues ¿qué hará si no le tiene?
   Temo, al fin, un padre airado (Act II, 1318-26)

It turns out that this assessment of the situation is entirely accurate, despite Ciro’s blasé attitude toward his father’s fears. The general assessment of Mitridates’ character should include the fact that he is consistently honest with his adopted son, even when this means straight talking that is not always welcomed by the youth. He shows support for Ciro when he needs it, and Ciro returns his affection by continuing to call him ‘padre’ (Act III, 2171) even after he has discovered the true identity of his biological father.

**FILIS**

Interestingly, this name is listed in Morley, Bruerton and Tyler under ‘Nombres que evita Lope, bien que corrientes en su época’ under the subheading ‘Bastante raros son: Filis (nombre poético de su querida, Elena Osorio).’¹²⁸ Lope used the name often in his early poetry to denote his first love, Elena Osorio, but it was not commonly used by him in his drama. In fact, although the name Filis is mentioned in five of Lope’s plays, it does not feature as a character name in any other but *Contra valor.*

In the play, Filis fulfils the traditional role of *dama* to the letter. Beautiful, of noble birth, spirited and devoted to Ciro both when he is a peasant and when his kingly status is revealed, she is a recognizably admirable female character within the play. Interestingly, she also displays characteristics of the *mujer varonil*, disguising herself in men’s clothes to give her more freedom to act as she wants, and going against her brother’s wishes that she flee to safety in order to remain near to Ciro in battle.

The first important scene in terms of Filis’ character delineation is between her and Flora in Act I, which will be discussed further when examining Flora’s character below. Filis shows in this scene that she is well aware of Ciro’s qualities but also of his social status (Act I, 325-331), and she states that she does not intend to blemish her reputation either in public or in private. This whole scene is a notable outworking of female psychology, as the progression from amiability to a steely resolve regarding the claims of each woman on Ciro unfolds. Filis explains the situation to Flora, showing that although she can see Ciro’s qualities, the lowliness of his social status necessarily means that she cannot entertain thoughts of becoming involved with him. However, she ends with a warning to Flora that in future she should not try to dissuade people from loving others as it can often lead to the opposite of the desired effect:

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...pedir te asombre
celos, aunque haya razón,
que es dar imaginación
de los méritos de un hombre;
que la de más casto nombre
quiere ver lo que no viera
sin la celosa tercera;
y si le estorban el ver,
por tema querrá querer
lo que le quitan que quiera.  (Act I, 345-54)
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This carefully wrought exchange is, in terms of its psychology, reminiscent of Lope’s most famous play on the twin themes of love and jealousy, as well as that of love across the social divide, *El perro del hortelano* (1618).129

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Filis’ readiness to follow Bato to the scene of the battle at night (II, 1292-4) and later to don masculine clothing in order to be near Ciro as he prepares for (and fights in) war (III, 1837+) fits with the popular character of the *mujer varonil* as outlined by Melveena McKendrick in her study *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*. Masculine disguise was a popular feature in the Golden Age theatre, not least, as McKendrick outlines, because it was titillating for many of the male audience members to see a woman dressed in men’s clothing which was more revealing than the bulky women’s skirts of the time.

Filis is touchingly insecure about Ciro’s new status when his royal blood is revealed; she assumes that it will affect their love by raising him too far above her social rank (III, 1866-69), and has to be reassured by Ciro. She in turn puts to rest the idea that she is only interested in his new found status (III, 1879-81), a sign of her own nobility as much as that of Ciro, which shows their compatibility and justifies his marriage to her at the end.

Finally, a significant scene in showing that Lope was not only interested in stock characters but took time to add the psychological finish to his creations comes in Act III when Filis is trying to convince Ciro not to go into battle (III, 2402-71). They almost squabble here, as Filis’ heartfelt entreaties that if Ciro really loved her he would not go to war clash with Ciro’s unwavering resolve that he must do as he sees fit, echoing the topical poetic battle between love and war. The exchange is a convincing one, and Filis’ bravery is displayed in her decision to stay with him rather than escaping to safety as her brother wishes.

The interactions between Filis and the other characters, mostly notably Ciro but also Flora and Bato, show a well-developed female character who is psychologically believable as well as admirable for her strength of character, independence and loyalty to Ciro throughout. She does not directly influence the plot, but her exchanges with the protagonist are key to the audience’s understanding of his character. She is evidently secure in her own position and the scene in which she clashes with Flora could be played to great effect, tapping into all of the jealousies and insecurities felt between two love rivals, to which an audience could relate. An actress playing Filis would have the opportunity to draw out the these different

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elements of her personality to portray a compelling character, especially in the scenes where she challenges Ciro (Act III, 2120-29, following the fall from his horse, and later in that scene, III, 2402-71, when she begs with him not to go to battle employing her feminine wiles in order to convince him, yet all the while dressed in man’s attire showing her willingness to follow him into the fray).

BATO

Bato appears in nine out of the play’s ten salidas, even more than Ciro. He is described in the list of characters that prefaces the first edition of Contra valor as ‘Bato, gracioso’. The term gracioso used as a noun in this way was not favoured by Lope who preferred figura del donaire, using gracioso more commonly as an adjective to describe these comic figures. As discussed in the section on the different editions of the play, this does not necessarily mean that Lope himself used this label for Bato; it may have been the decision of the printer to insert this extra piece of information about Bato’s character in the character list. The adjectival use of the term gracioso is shown within the play in Act III, when Bato enters in the first scene dressed ‘de soldado gracioso’.

Typically, graciosos were stock figures; of lower social status than the protagonist, and often performing the role of a servant in relation to them, they were a foil for the main (noble) character, and their approach to life threw the behaviour of the main character into relief. Graciosos or figuras del donaire were generally cowardly, preoccupied with basic urges such as a love of food and drink, witty and often wise even in their supposed simplicity. Thus far, therefore, Bato fits the bill on more than one count.

In Act I, just as Ciro finishes his beautifully-wrought sonnet on his love for Filis, Bato first appears with the bathetically exuberant greeting, ‘¡Gracias a Júpiter santo | que vengo a topar contigo!’ (Act I, 103).

From this moment the nature of Bato’s character is clear to the audience. His name alone is indicative of

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132 For more on the topic of the gracioso, see Gómez, Jesús, La figura del donaire o el gracioso en las comedias de Lope de Vega (Sevilla: Ediciones Alfar, 2006), and Montesinos, ‘Algunos observaciones sobre la figura del donaire’ (1967), 21-64.
his role, as, according to Morley, Bruerton and Tyler, the name ‘Bato’ was used twenty times in Lope’s plays and was always employed for characters who were villanos, criados, gracioso or labradores.\textsuperscript{133} It appears in Los nombres de personajes under the heading ‘Los nombres que nunca o casi nunca son de caballeros’. It also appears under the heading ‘Los nombres exclusivamente de villanos (algunos de uso raro)’ (p. 22). It is listed under ‘Gracioso’, with the proviso that ‘Claro está que cualquier criado y cualquier villano puede servir de gracioso en una comedia...’ (p. 22).

Bato’s humour pervades the play, and some of his more typical gracioso traits come to the fore during his participation in the game of wit and words among the village youths in Act I. Ciro and his friends are discussing what the three most powerful things in the world are, and, predictably, Ciro’s answer is deemed by all to be the most insightful and wins the contest. Bato’s response is telling, however, as he decides that wine, hunger and honour are the three things with most influence in the world (Act I, 434-48). He provides comic justification for the first two, although he does not say much about his third choice which is the most surprising one, as honour was more usually the concern of the nobility in Golden Age drama. As noted in the footnotes to this section, this is perhaps an early indication that Bato is not a completely typical gracioso figure.

Bato’s loyalty to Ciro is evident throughout the play too; this faithfulness of a servant to his master was sometimes a trait of the stock gracioso, although often in comedias he was a less than trustworthy character.\textsuperscript{134} Although Bato is not, initially at least, in an official position of service to Ciro but rather is his friend, this changes over the course of the play as Ciro assumes his kingly role and gradually leaves the peasant world behind. The first intimation of the necessary shift in their relationship comes when Ciro, as ‘play king’ following the contests of strength and wits with his friends, appoints them to various positions within his imagined court. Bato is appointed as secretary, as Ciro says,

\begin{quote}
Mi secretario has de ser.
Despachos, decretos, cartas
y audiencias, corran por ti.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{135} (Act I, 508-10)

\textsuperscript{133} Morley, Bruerton & Tyler, Los nombres de personajes, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{134} Montesinos deals with the loyalty of the donaire in ‘Algunos observaciones’, pp. 26-27.
\textsuperscript{135} This was also a role Lope held himself for the Duke of Sessa from 1605 until the end of his life; the idea that this
This effectively makes Bato Ciro’s *privado* in contemporary terms which, as discussed in the ‘Kingship’ section, was a pertinent issue at the time. It is possible that appointing the *villano* Bato to such a position could be construed as a comment on seventeenth-century Spanish society’s cynicism about the role, given its abuse by the *privados* of Philip III and IV. It is equally possible, however, that by appointing Bato to such a position Ciro is recognizing the worth of his friend, irrespective of his lowly status. Throughout the play, Bato serves as a link to Ciro’s early life, a reminder of his roots that Ciro never despises, despite his rise to power.

Bato’s advances to Flora in Act III, 1738-1837, as discussed below, are appropriate for a *gracioso* figure, whose function was often to mirror the actions of his master even in matters of love, and provide a counter-point to the noble love story acted out among the protagonists. In this instance, his courtship proves fruitless, but nevertheless it develops the characters of both Bato and of Flora for the audience. His exchange with her is useful in filling in the audience on developments in the plot (1758-69; 1794-1805), providing a commentary for the actions of the main characters (1770-79; 1786-93) and adding comic relief, especially in terms of the presumptuousness of Bato’s proposals to Flora (1780-85) and his reaction to her rejection (1830-33).

However, Bato at times shows himself to be an atypical *gracioso*. The main example of this comes in Act III when Bato volunteers to be Ciro’s ambassador to the court of Astiages. Despite his extreme (and predictable) fear over such a venture, he independently decides to carry it out, even after Ciro has expressed surprise at the idea. Bato replies with simplicity and insight in a response that nicely combines comedy and resolution:

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Señor,
los avisos de la guerra
no requieren calidades,
sino personas resueltas.
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When Ciro has given his blessing for his friend to be his messenger, Bato replies that he will be inspired by Ciro's own bravery to accomplish this task of his own, showing too that he understands the gravity of the undertaking:

Ciro

Pues parte, Bato, adonde las cajas suenan, y ten buen ánimo.

Bato

Basta que a tu valor me parezca. Hoy no volveré con vida, o te traeré la respuesta.

This instance in addition to others in the play where Ciro’s nobility has a positive effect on those around him is important, as it ties in with the seventeenth-century view of kingship that the king should and could be a good influence on his subjects in precisely this way. It is also reflected in the decision of Arpago at the end of Act III to follow Ciro’s lead and show mercy to Astiages, even when given the opportunity for retribution.

In Astiages’ court, Bato’s boldness is still in evidence, to the point where Arpago has to intervene on his behalf to prevent Astiages executing Bato for his impudence (Act III, 2068-2111). None of this valour is typical of a grazioso figure, more used to looking out for themselves and their master than taking an even remotely dangerous course of action at any time.

Additionally, in a scene with Filis in Act II (1257-83), Bato speaks of the nature of court life as opposed to country life, concluding that he would much prefer a simple lifestyle than to have the trappings of wealth:

Porque los contentos, Filis, (si hay en el mundo contentos) no están en las ceremonias, sino en el gusto y el sueño. (Act II, 1280-83)
To an extent (as mentioned in the footnotes), this attitude is reminiscent of the *Beatus ille* topos, and even of other Lope plays where such an outlook is in keeping with the low social status of a character, such as *El villano en su rincón*. However, a commonly recognizable *gracioso* trait is that of materialism, and therefore this is another instance when Bato does not conform to expectations of his character.\(^{137}\)

Thus we see that Bato’s part in the play is not straightforward in terms of his *gracioso* role. Although such figures were stock characters in the *comedia*, instances such as those cited show that it would be inadvisable to dismiss them as totally predictable or uncomplicated characters. The part of Bato would be an attractive one for any actor used to playing the standard *gracioso* role, going, as it does, beyond these boundaries.

**FLORA**

The name Flora is listed in Morley, Bruerton and Tyler’s *Los nombres de personajes* under the heading ‘Nombres que sirven para damas y criadas indiferentemente, y para villanas’ (p. 23-24). It is the eleventh most common name for a female character in Lope’s drama: a popular choice of Lope’s as twenty personajes in his plays are named Flora, with four additional references to the name.

In *Contra valor*, Flora’s main interactions are with Ciro and Bato. From the outset, her character is presented in the context of her past relationship with Ciro. Her first appearance is when she eavesdrops on the conversation between Ciro and Filis (Act I, 226), and her reactions to the sight of the couple show her extreme jealousy which verges on violence (Act I, 233-236; 248-251). Lines 241-44 give an interesting psychological insight into her character and the nature of love and jealousy in general (as already stated, a topic that features heavily in Lope’s *El perro del hortelano* and many other plays).

Later, Flora challenges Ciro about his behaviour towards Fineo:

¿Qué es esto, Ciro? ¿En qué locuras andas? (Act I, 566-7)

Although Ciro rebukes her for openly objecting to his actions in this way, he does not take action against her, making her the only character in the play who speaks to him in such a brusque manner and does not suffer the consequences.

Flora later gives up on her love for Ciro after the ill-fated conversation with Filis (see above). Eventually, she spurns love altogether, as her words in the scene with Bato at the start of Act III show:

\[
\text{Ni de ti ni de otro alguno de cuantos Dios ha criado, estimaré su cuidado, ni le tendré de ninguno.} \quad \text{(Act III, 1814-17)}
\]

These words fit in the tradition of the *mujer esquiva*, a popular character in Golden Age drama who for various reasons was ‘averse to the idea of love and marriage’. In Flora’s case it is her bad experience with Ciro that has led her to such a conclusion, and this frustrates Bato who has tried to court her. With regard to both of the female characters in *Contra valor*, it can be concluded that, although Flora and Filis each display traits of female roles familiar to Golden Age audiences (Flora as the *mujer esquiva* and Filis as the *mujer vestida de hombre/soldado*), neither of them plays this role consistently enough for it to be considered their defining feature within the play. As shown most clearly through their responses to Ciro’s changing social status, they are characters first and types second.

*Contra valor no hay desdicha*, whilst a mythical-historical play that by necessity contains certain historical characters, also presents stock characters such as are found in many Golden Age plays. Bato as a *gracioso* figure, Filis as a *dama*, Ciro as the hero-protagonist and Flora as a *mujer esquiva* all show qualities that would have been expected of their types. However, each and every one of them also displays characteristics that are either inconsistent with their type, or more subtle than merely a broad brush-stroked character delineation. Thus, the play is populated by characters who are more plausible than some

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traditional criticism would have us believe of Golden Age drama in general. As Dixon puts it when writing of *Fuenteovejuna* (although the quotation maps beautifully onto this reading of *Contra valor*):

> En ésta [Fuente Ovejuna] y otras obras, por otra parte, no son ni más ni menos importantes que la historia que se cuenta el “mensaje” que conlleva o la caracterización de sus personas; las mejores comedias de Lope mantienen un justo equilibrio entre trama, tema y personajes, y si éstos, en cualquier corpus tan inmenso como el suyo, se prestan a una clasificación en tipos y subtipos, se caracterizan también, de obra en obra, como seres más o menos complejos y diferenciados entre sí.\(^{139}\)

Especially when staged by seasoned actors, Lope’s creations are often entertaining, sometimes predictable, at times evoke our sympathy, and are at times even lovable, but they certainly cannot be written off as two-dimensional.

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A performance of *Contra valor no hay desdicha* is cited by M. A. Buchanan as having taken place in the Buen Retiro palace in 1636. Additionally, Hugo Albert Rennert records it as having been put on by the well-known *autor de comedias* Pedro de la Rosa on 6 April of that year. To the best of our knowledge this, or soon after, was the last time the play was staged under its original name as there is no record of its performance in more recent times. In this section, some thought will be given to how the play may have been staged originally, with some additional thoughts on possible interpretations in the modern theatre.

Chapter five of Jonathan Thacker’s *Companion to Golden Age Theatre* gives an enlightening overview of the theatre-going experience in Golden Age Spain, dealing with such issues as the typical audience demographic, the construction of the stage itself, and the use of stage properties and costume. In addition, J. M. Ruano de la Haza’s *La puesta en escena en los teatros comerciales del Siglo de Oro* is an invaluable resource for those wishing to delve deeper into the practicalities of performances in the *corrales* of seventeenth-century Spain.

The Buen Retiro palace was constructed for Philip IV in 1633, and plays were often performed there on portable stages in courtyards, in the *saloncillo*, or even on the lake itself after 1635. The permanent theatre there, the *Coliseo del Buen Retiro*, was not finished until 1640. Some of the performances at the Buen Retiro were lavish and extravagant in their use of scenery and special effects, although as McKendrick reminds us this was not necessarily always the case. Despite this, it is safe to assume that the bar would have been higher for these performances than for those in the commercial theatres. Often plays first

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142 Varey and Shergold, *Comedias en Madrid* (1989), p. 131, cite it as having been performed in 1680 under another name, ‘Hijo de la perra’. For the full quotations, see ‘Authorship and Dating’.
performed at court would be transferred to the corrales later, and Contra valor is a good example of a play that could work equally well with all the trappings of a court production as well as on the more restricted scale of the commercial theatres. It is sufficiently exotic and action-packed to be elaborately staged if necessary, but it does not require special effects for its key moments of action, and it has the textual substance necessary to carry a more limited staging. This limitation should not be overestimated, however, as the sets and props of the Golden Age corral stage had the potential to be more complex than is often thought. Doubtless, some plays (most notably the comedias de capa y espada) could be performed with minimal extraneous material, but it would be unwise to assume that the corrales could meet none but the most basic scenic demands, especially as the seventeenth century went on.

The consideration of the staging of Contra valor no hay desdicha in this introduction will take into account the fact that the play was put on at the Buen Retiro palace with all the potential for lavish set decoration and costume which that context provided (albeit in the pre-Coliseo days involving somewhat simpler staging than later became the norm). However, it is worth considering that Contra valor may also have made this journey from court to corral, or indeed more probably, from earlier corral performances to the court theatre. As mentioned, the play is perfectly suited to such a progression in either direction, as shall be seen from the following analysis, although it is the standard corral staging which will be examined here.

Stage directions in Golden Age plays were generally minimal and basic, as dramatists expected that the autor de comedias would glean all they needed from the text itself, given that clues to props, costume and staging were often written into the dialogue. This analysis of the play’s staging, then, in imagining how the play may have first been performed, must follow much the same process as that undertaken by a seventeenth-century autor de comedias.

The first scene of Contra valor opens in medias res with the emergence on stage of the characters of Ciro and Mitridates. The setting is, as mentioned by Mitridates in l. 65 and later expanded upon by Bato in ll. 107-08 an aldea, and, more specifically, a prado. This rural setting (Bato also mentions trees, flowers and

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birds in his later speech extolling Filis’ virtues, ll. 115-34) would probably have been represented onstage by the presence of branches, leaves and possibly even some painted canvases depicting natural scenes. It is possible that the fuente to which Ciro refers in l. 172 would have been painted on one of these canvases, as they were commonly used in Golden Age theatres, being practical, effective and easy to transport.145

The stage directions in the original printed edition of the play that are used in this edition (see sections on ‘Editorial Norms’ and ‘Other Editions’ for more on this topic) refer to the first appearance of the characters as ‘Sale Ciro en hábito de villano, y Mitridates, ganadero viejo.’ Aurelio González, in his book Texto y representación en el teatro del siglo de oro, outlines the relationship between characterization and staging that is so neatly illustrated here, showing that a character is often enhanced and intensified through being performed onstage precisely because thought must be given to their outward appearance, the props they use and the movements they make to accompany the dialogue, in addition to other elements such as special effects,

Estos elementos [de vestuario o de utilería], directamente relacionados con el actor o su apariencia, no son, desde luego, los únicos recursos caracterizadores que posee la puesta en escena, ya que también en ésta se apelará a los efectos sonoros o de tramoya para crear una situación determinada, que también puede ser caracterizadora del personaje.146

So then, the emergence of Ciro and Mitridates onto the stage would have immediately established their social status and occupation. Mitridates probably would have been brandishing a shepherd's staff, as explicit reference is made to it by Ciro in l. 2 (“Tened, padre, la cayada...”), and their garments would have been of the rough, simple type associated with peasants and farmers. Ruano de la Haza has taken care to point out that these clothes were not meant to reflect reality with absolute accuracy, but were rather a kind of signifier for the audience, a general symbol indicating how, socially at least, a particular character could be pigeonholed as soon as they stepped onto the stage:

Cualquier parecido entre estos vestidos y los que llevaban los verdaderos campesinos de la época debía de ser pura coincidencia. La indumentaria teatral era, pues, artificial, concebida no tanto

145 Ruano de la Haza, La puesta, p. 211, ‘Bastidores y lienzos pintados eran bastante comunes en la Comedia, sobre todo los segundos, ya que podían ser transportados sin mucha dificultad en el hato de las compañías’.
Ciro, dressed in his peasant’s clothing, asks in exasperation, ‘¿Todo ha de ser cultivar | la tierra y seguir dos bueyes?’ (ll. 45-46) in response to Mitridates’ frustration over his adopted son’s enthusiasm for learning. Ciro has previously made reference to books which he gets from the city (ll. 37-40) and it is possible that he is carrying some of these as props at this juncture, items recognizable to the audience as being from a world other than that in which this scene is set. Through this exchange and its very incongruity with the lowly clothing Ciro and his father wear, the audience is alerted early in the play to Ciro’s ‘higher calling’; his reach, as yet unconsciously, above the social sphere in which he lives and which is a preparation for the revelation about his kingly status later in the play. Thus we see that establishing occupation through costume is not only relevant to the play in a general sense, but crucial to this opening scene in helping the audience to grasp quickly the wider import of the issues discussed by the characters.

The other characters who appear in Act I are similarly described in terms of their status in the original stage directions, which would have informed their costume for visual clues as to their character. Bato is described simply as ‘villano’ (Act I, +103), while Filis is a ‘dama Persiana’ (Act I, +175).

Golden Age theatre managers were not so concerned as a modern filmmaker might be in accurately reflecting the historical period or geographical location in which a play was set (in this case Ancient Persia), but, as Thacker states,

> Although inaccuracies and anachronisms were no doubt common enough, particularly in historical drama, […] autores de comedias and actors would often have attempted to suggest distinctiveness, foreignness or remoteness in time, through costume.148

Ruano de la Haza also gives examples of playwrights, readers and audiences in the seventeenth century who did concern themselves with historical accuracy, although perhaps not to any extreme.149 He writes of the purpose and the power of costume,

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147 Ruano de la Haza, *La puesta*, p. 78.
148 Thacker, *Companion*, p. 137.
Además de informar sobre la condición del personaje, la indumentaria teatral podía servir para situar el lugar de la acción, el tiempo en que se desarrollaba y otros detalles similares; es decir, para transmitir al público información que, aunque pudiera hacerse por medio del diálogo, dramática y visualmente surtía más efecto a través de la indumentaria.\textsuperscript{130}

Thus we can assume that some attempt would have been made to show that Filis was not only an upper-class \textit{dama}, but was also Persian with all the exoticism that could imply. This would be of additional importance in setting the play, especially as the title makes no mention of the location.\textsuperscript{151} Mitridates makes reference to Ciro by name in l. 11 of Act I, and this mention of the well-known Persian king would have alerted the audience to the remote historical and geographical setting of the play before the appearance of Filis, but no mention is made in the dialogue of the location of the action until Ciro himself addresses his friends in Act I as ‘persiana juventud valiente’ (l. 383).

Women in early-modern Spain, unlike in England’s Elizabethan theatre, were allowed to act onstage. Many actresses became as well-known as their male counterparts, and some even had parts written specifically with them in mind. The other female character in the play, Flora, is a \textit{villana}, first introduced to the audience as she eavesdrops on the conversation between Ciro and Filis in Act I. These two ‘\textit{hablan aparte}’ (l. 226+) when Flora enters the stage to provide in an aside a commentary of sorts on what is passing between the sweethearts. This gives the audience an insight into her thoughts and feelings on the matter, as well as confirming for us more of the details of Ciro and Filis’ relationship. It is likely that the lovers would have moved off to one side of the stage, allowing Flora to stand at a distance from them on the other side to make her observations. Often, such overheard conversations would have been effected ‘\textit{al paño}’, which involved the character who was eavesdropping appearing at one of the ‘doorways’ at the back of the stage, pushing aside a curtain to be seen to be listening in. However, here the stage direction would imply that Flora appears onstage: ‘\textit{Hablan aparte. Sale Flora, villana.}’ (l. 226+). This may have facilitated some more animated acting than would have been possible \textit{al paño}; Flora’s speech is anguished and fiery, and would probably have required some gesturing to add emphasis to her words. After Flora’s

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{149} J. M. Ruano de la Haza, \textit{La puesta}, p. 96.
\item \textsuperscript{150} Ibid., pp. 90 - 91.
\item \textsuperscript{151} It should be noted that some alternative titles of the play do make mention of its Persian setting, e.g. ‘\textit{Gran rey de Persia}, ‘\textit{El primer rey de Persia}’. See the ‘Play’s Title’ and ‘Other editions’ sections of this introduction for more on this.
\end{itemize}
speech, Ciro’s words are once again ‘heard’ by the audience (l. 253) as he takes his leave of Filis and exits the stage with Bato in tow.

The difference in social status between Flora and Filis in the heated discussion about Ciro that ensues would have been visually striking to the audience. Costumes in Golden Age theatre were often costly and elaborate, and the actress playing Filis would probably have made the most of the outward signs of her social superiority and wealth provided by her exotic Persian garb when countering the claims of Flora to Ciro’s affections. Similarly, Ciro himself is obviously of a different class to Filis at this early stage in the play, a fact visually evident from their dress and underscored verbally by Mitridates’ worries over their interaction. However, as Ciro grows ever closer to his rightful position as king, his costume and the props he uses change to reflect this. In the first change of salida (or cuadro) in Act I, he is crowned with a ‘corona de laurel’ (l. 396+) as part of the games with his village friends, and at the end of this act the villagers dress up as soldiers ‘con chuzos, espadas y banderas’ (l. 699+).\(^\text{152}\) Both of these props recur later, with Ciro taking up his sword to fight Evandro and Fineo during Act II (l. 1305+, ‘Sale Ciro con espada...’) and keeping it throughout the remainder of the play, and wearing the laurel wreath as a sign of his leadership of the rebel army in Act III (l. 1837+). This transition from the use of both of these props in jest (as ‘props’, in fact), to their use in earnest is an excellent visual illustration of the journey made by Ciro from believing he is a peasant to realizing he is a prince.

Aside from the laurel wreath prop, the actors playing Ciro and his friends in the games scene in Act I would have had much scope for adding visual interest to the scene through their physical interactions. In addition to creating the impression that they had been competing in rustic field sports just before the scene begins, Bato and Ciro actually wrestle as part of the competition, with Bato coming off very poorly. This would undoubtedly have had a comic edge onstage. Much show could have been made in moments such as Silvio’s command, ‘Hincad todos la rodilla’ (l. 468). Later, Riselo tells Ciro ‘Siéntate sobre estas

\(^{152}\) On the matter of salidas/cuadros, I refer to Dixon, ‘The Study of Versification as an Aid to Interpreting the Comedia’, p. 388: ‘the unit of both poetic and dramatic construction within each of the comedy’s three acts was the cuadro, or as I prefer to call it, the salida, whose conclusion was signalled by the emptying of the stage. It might fill the whole act or be very short; within it, the author might use a single metrical form or many, but at its end he would almost invariably change to a new one for the next (in Lope’s case, notoriously, drawing a line across his manuscript between them).’ For more on this see ‘Versification’.
ramas’ (l. 475), and although Ciro refuses the suggestion, it is likely that Riselo would have been gesturing towards one of the ‘trees’ on the stage. Ruano de la Haza states that trees were likely to have been represented by the posts that supported the first balcony, or by painted cloths on frames. Adding to the theatricality of this scene, Fineo is carried offstage by Riselo (who does not reappear until later in this act) for a beating at Ciro’s command (l. 533+), before Flora storms onstage to confront her former lover about his behaviour (l. 566+).

The second salida occurs some six hundred lines into Act I. Here, the action shifts to the court of king Astiages. Scene changes, and possibly every other significant moment in the play such as the entrance or exit of important characters, would have been signalled with some music. In this case, given the court setting, the music would have been of a suitably stately nature:

La entrada de reyes y emperadores era precedida generalmente por el sonido de cajas y trompetas [...] Pero no es ésta una norma invariable en la Comedia. La entrada de los Reyes Católicos en La serrana de la Vera, de Vélez de Guevara, se anuncia con atabalillos (fol. 18r); y la de Enrique VIII en la escena de la jura de La cisma de Inglaterra, de Calderón, con chirimías y clarines (fol. C6v).

The costumes and props of the characters would have confirmed for the audience that the scene was to take place in a court. Astiages himself would almost certainly have worn a crown in addition to his royal robes, and Arpago’s costume would have been similarly costly to denote his position as the king’s adviser. Often, a canopy (dosel) was used to denote a throne room onstage, and it is possible that Astiages would have been seated on a throne throughout all or part of this scene, despite the fact that it is not mentioned in the stage directions.

Much of the characterization of the king Astiages is developed through the use of asides to show what is going on underneath his seemingly reasonable exterior; similar to Flora’s aside earlier in Act I, these would probably have been effected by the actor playing Astiages turning away from the other characters onstage and addressing the audience (although not explicitly so), thus signalling that his words reflect his

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153 Ruano de la Haza, La puesta, p. 189.
154 Ibid., p. 116. See also the Versification section for the change in metre here to octavas reales which has a similar effect.
155 Ibid., p. 169.
genuine feelings. In Act II he shows his true colours by pretending to be happy with Mitridates’ disclosures about Ciro’s true provenance, while the audience is apprised through his asides of his feelings of horror as the true realization hits him, and of the murderous thoughts that ensue (ll. 928-31).

After this court scene, a new salida sees the action return to the aldea, when Ciro and the village labourers reappear dressed up as soldiers (‘de soldados’), carrying ‘chuzos, espadas y banderas’ (l. 699+). Props would have represented all of these weapons, and the flag assumes particular importance as Ciro shows his friend how to wave it properly (l. 725+), in another example of his natural talents in the art of war and leadership. As yet, these soldiers are only playacting, but, as we have seen, it soon becomes clear that Ciro’s training of them is significant.

Filis appears in this scene at the window of a house in Act I (l. 727+) from which she has to withdraw hastily when her brother arrives. In a corral this effect would have been achieved by using the balconies on the first level above the stage.

Act II opens in the royal court, with Astiages and Arpago awaiting the arrival of Ciro. Astiages takes advantage of Arpago’s momentary absence as the latter summons Ciro to voice his fears over Ciro’s real provenance; this is a very brief soliloquy, but it serves very well to show the audience the canny insight and even paranoia (however justified) of the ageing king.

In a new salida situated back in the aldea near Filis’ house (Act II, 1298), Bato and Filis discuss the events at court. Evidently Bato is supposed to have left the court before Ciro and Mitridates, because when he and Filis leave the stage after their exchange (l. 1305+), Ciro and his father enter in another new salida, Ciro this time wearing a sword. It transpires that they are still on the return journey from the court, and between the court and the village lies a mountain, as articulated earlier by Bato (‘A no estar el monte en medio’, l. 1295). Thus, Ciro and Mitridates find themselves on the mountain in the dead of night.
A side note must be added here, as it should be remembered that, given the fact that plays in the corrales were performed by natural light, it was impossible to create darkness artificially in the theatre when a night scene was being played. These would in fact have taken place before the audience’s eyes in broad daylight, and thus it was necessary for the dramatist to ensure that the audience were aware of the time of day in which a scene was supposed to be taking place by other means. These could be through pointers in the dialogue itself, the way in which the actors moved around onstage and perhaps through the clothing worn or props used by the characters.

Mitridates’ words are crucial here in creating an atmosphere of mounting tension and ominous pathetic fallacy,

\begin{verbatim}
y aumenta mi pena,
saliendo en noche serena,
haberse el cielo turbado;
[...]
Las nubes, rotos los senos,
las estrellas amenazan,
que el campo desembarran
del cielo, huyendo los truenos.
Alguna desdicha temo
entre tanta oscuridad.  
\end{verbatim}

(Act II, 1327-29; 1334-39)

The thunder to which Mitridates refers (Act II, 1337) would perhaps have been created by the use of a stone-filled, rotating barrel, as described in Thacker’s Companion as having been found in the recently re-discovered theatre at Alcalá de Henares. This whole scene is one in which the audience’s imagination would have to have been engaged by the words of the actors, especially, as previously mentioned, given that Mitridates’ references to the ‘cielo turbado’ (l. 1329), ‘las nubes’ (l. 1334), ‘las estrellas’ (l. 1335), and finally ‘tanta oscuridad’ (l. 1339) would all have been spoken in broad daylight.

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156 There is evidence that artificial lighting was used in the Buen Retiro, where one performance in 1640 of a play by Calderón is recorded as having finished at midnight (McKendrick, Theatre in Spain, p. 220). It was not used in the corrales, however.

157 For more on this, see Varey, J. E., “The staging of night scenes in the ‘comedia’, The American Hispanist, 2, 15 (1977), 14-16 (p. 14).

158 Thacker, Companion, p. 138.
The mountain itself was a fairly common feature in Golden Age plays, and was at times represented by a large ramp running from the main stage to the first level balcony above the vestuario.\textsuperscript{159} One of the most well-known examples of this in use is in the opening scene of Calderón’s \textit{La vida es sueño}, when Rosaura appears onstage and delivers her first lines as she descends from the ‘mountain’, ‘Sale en lo alto de un monte’\textsuperscript{160} Additionally, the first level balcony could be decorated with rocks made from cardboard and small shrubs to denote a mountain top. Ruano de la Haza cautions,

\begin{quote}
la palabra ‘monte’, y más comúnmente ‘montaña’, alude, en ocasiones, al primer corredor, adornado con ramas y quizá rocas, que representaba la cima de una montaña. Si los personajes aparecen en lo alto del ‘monte’ pero no descienden al tablado, lo más probable es que se tratase de un decorado de ‘montaña’ en el primer corredor.
\end{quote}

However, given the fact that the stage direction for line 1406+ reads, ‘Súbese por el monte’, it is likely that both of these stage decorations would have been employed; the ramp to provide a mountain that could be scaled, and the rock and shrub decorations on the first floor balcony as a location for the extended dialogue which is meant to be taking place on the mountain. Filis’ ‘window’ is not needed in Act II, and it would have been possible to add the necessary adornments to the first level balcony between acts for this scene to work. Ciro, Evandro and Fineo probably disappear backstage during the course of their combat, Evandro and Fineo fleeing with Ciro in pursuit, as Mitridates indicates ‘Huyendo van por el monte’ (Act II, 1393) Fineo calls from offstage (‘dentro’), ‘Padre, ¡muerto soy!’ (l. 1395). Mitridates scales the ramp to find out what has happened to his son, and Ciro appears from the other side of the balcony, ‘sangriente, con la espada desnuda’. They do not find each other immediately as it is night, with Ciro insistent upon the darkness that surrounds him as much for the benefit of the audience as for the intimation of doom conjured by his words,

\begin{quote}
¡Qué terrible obscuridad! 
Si ignorar pudiera el cielo
que no habían de matarme,
pensara que lo había hecho
por cubrir su gran teatro
de paños de luto negro.
\end{quote}

(Act II, 1414-19)

\textsuperscript{159} Ruano de la Haza, \textit{La puesta}, pp. 192-98.
\textsuperscript{161} Ruano de la Haza, \textit{La puesta}, p. 206.
This gives way to the almost comical situation whereby Ciro’s father, lady love and best friend call to him ‘dentro y lejos’ (ll. 1419+; 1423+; 1428+), unbeknownst to each other and to him, before appearing ‘por tres partes a un tiempo, Filis, Mitridates y Bato’ (l. 1439+), much to Ciro’s delight and astonishment. These ‘tres partes’ could have been, as suggested, the ramp, perhaps scaled by Mitridates; the left entrance to the first floor balcony used by Filis; and the right entrance used by Bato. Any combination of these would have been possible to effect the simultaneous appearance of Ciro’s loved ones.

At the end of this scene, Arpago appears with some soldiers and after it has been established that he comes in peace, he speaks with Ciro, revealing the true story about the young man’s provenance, Arpago’s role in his survival, and the heinous punishment inflicted upon Arpago by the tyrant Astiages as a result.

Interestingly, Horace refers to an almost identical scene from Greek mythology in On the Art of Poetry to illustrate his argument against staging anything too horrific,

> But you will not bring onto the stage anything that ought properly to be taking place behind the scenes, and you will keep out of sight many episodes that are to be described later by the eloquent tongue of a narrator. Medea must not butcher her children in the presence of the audience, nor the monstrous Atreus cook his dish of human flesh within public view…

This latter reference is in relation to Atreus’ revenge on his brother Thyestes for his adultery with Atreus’ wife Aerope. Atreus kills and cooks Thyestes’ sons, tricks Thyestes into eating them and then tauntingly shows him their hands and their feet.

The fact that Arpago recounts these events in retrospect rather than them being portrayed in the play in ‘real time’ as it were, is no doubt to simplify the staging for the theatre company, as well as being in line with Horace’s directions for such events. It avoids the need for elaborate props to recreate a banquet scene, and the grisly body parts needed for the gruesome revelation. Similarly, when Mitridates tells

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Astiages earlier in Act II of the circumstances around his discovery of Ciro, it would perhaps have been too much to ask that a theatre company portray the dog that was suckling the infant when he was found, and the animals and birds who surrounded him to protect him from harm (ll. 1078-80). This shows Lope’s sensitivity to the demands of putting on the plays he produced, a sensitivity which is often made explicit in his stage directions for other plays. Here too then is a case of ‘words painting a thousand pictures’, to overhaul the well-known phrase. Golden Age theatre audiences were known as ‘oyentes’ which underscores the fact that they listened to the plays they attended, enjoying the rhetorical flourishes in good dramatic writing as much as the visual spectacle of the actors onstage.

Act III begins with an exchange between Flora and Bato, the latter dressed ‘de soldado gracioso’ (l. 1738). This costume would have been obviously comical, an outlandish twist on the usual soldier’s garb to reinforce the idea of Bato as a gracioso figure and also to underline the unlikely nature of Ciro’s undertaking. With Bato as a representative of his soldiers, how could the young man hope to wage a successful campaign against the king’s armies? Yet Bato’s words to Flora here are full of optimism for the success of the campaign, and the exchange is a light-hearted one. Flora rebuffs his attempts at romance, and soon shouts of ‘¡Rey Ciro, rey Ciro!’ are heard from offstage (l. 1837).

The direction preceding the next scene would have resulted in much pomp onstage, ‘Tocan cajas, y sale Ciro con laurel, Filis en hábito corto, soldados, y músicos cantando,’ (l. 1837+). Musicians sing a song praising Ciro; the words are bellicose, and the drums played ‘a rebato’ (sounding the alarm for an attack) would have been a recognizable call, heightening the expectation of approaching conflict.

---

Cantan.
Coronad, soldados,
la ilustre cabeza
del valiente Ciro,
nuevo rey de Persia.
¡Al arma, al arma, al arma; guerra, guerra!
Toca la caja, y ríndase la tierra.

Ruano de la Haza, *La puesta*, p. 279, on Lope’s stage directions that provide alternatives to having a horse on stage.

See Lope’s *Peribáñez*, l. 2213+ ‘Entra una compañía de labradores, armados graciosamente, y detrás Peribáñez con espada y daga’.
The music would undoubtedly have been military in flavour, and Ciro’s laurel wreath is a visual indication of his new kingly status.

As mentioned in the ‘Characterization’ section, a female character dressing up as a man ‘en corto’ was a feature that was relatively common in Golden Age plays and popular with audiences. Lope, in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* makes mention of this: ‘suele | el disfraz varonil agradar mucho’ (ll. 282-83). Here, Filis’ male attire has significance in that it shows her to be totally involved in the action, ready to stand by Ciro and even fight with him; further proof that she will make him a good future queen.

There follows a scene in which Bato appears at Astiages’ court, having volunteered to be Ciro’s ambassador. He hands over a letter written by Ciro for Astiages to read, another minor prop that would have been necessary for a staging of this play. Interestingly, Bato is described as being dressed ‘de soldado’ here (l. 1975+) rather than ‘de soldado gracioso’ as at the beginning of Act III. This change of costume reflects the seriousness of his purpose, and even his own personal development in having stepped up to the mark in taking on the dangerous mission to the tyrant king.165

At the end of the scene, Astiages storms off followed by his entourage and Bato is left onstage alone to utter his final words, which would have rung out at once futile and defiant in the empty throne room:

\[
\text{Ya no es Ciro labrador; rey es Ciro, y rey será.} \quad \text{(Act III, 2112-13)}
\]

Immediately following this, the action in a new *salida* returns to the *aldea* for a scene that is crucial in developing the complexities of the protagonist, but poses some interesting problems in terms of staging. We are told that there is, ‘Dentro ruido de soldados, como que ha caído Ciro de un caballo, y él sale luego.’ This racket would have taken place offstage, probably consisting of a simulation of horse hooves, the sound of a fall and the shouts of soldiers. It seems that the discussion about Ciro’s accident between Albano,

---

165 For further analysis of Bato’s character development and importance to the action, see ‘Characterization’.

---
Riselo and Silvio takes place offstage. While they remain out of sight, Ciro appears in time to say his lines,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Paso; no es nada, soldados.} \\
\text{Bueno estoy, no hagáis rumor.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\text{(Act III, 2118-19)}

Filis now rushes onstage, expressing her concerns to Ciro that the fall is a bad omen, and Ciro then exits, leaving her alone with the intention of proving this wrong. We are told that after this, ‘Salen los soldados’, and the soldiers who previously discussed Ciro’s fall offstage enter to give an account to Filis of what he has done to annul the omen by cutting off his horse’s front legs (Act III, 2130-53).

Ciro and Mitridates soon enter the stage, and various exchanges follow. Mitridates and Filis both urge Ciro to acknowledge the bad omens he has already experienced, but to no avail, and Arpago arrives to give a report of Astiages’ activities. The picture he paints is far from encouraging, yet he vows to support Ciro’s endeavours against the king. Ciro is then left alone onstage for a soliloquy that gives the audience an insight into his state of mind at this point in the play. Despite his protests to the contrary, it seems that Ciro is in fact struggling with doubts and confusion. In lines 2336-51 he describes what he sees in the distance, conjuring a mental image for the audience of the Persian troops fighting with Astiages’ army. The language is vivid and immediate:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ya con lanzas, ya con rayos,} \\
\text{ya con espadas desnudas,} \\
\text{unos con otros pelean.} \\
\text{Ya se esparcen, ya se ocultan.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\text{(Act III, 2344-47)}

Soon, however, he is interrupted by a supernatural visitation. The voice of his dead biological father addresses him, although there is no indication that the spirit takes any visual form throughout the exchange. The voice would probably have been produced by someone offstage speaking in a suitably sombre tone. The actor playing Ciro obviously would have played on the uncanny nature of the event, and it may have been accompanied by appropriate music, as often music would have sounded during moments of supernatural visitation (both benevolent and otherwise).\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{166} Ruano de la Haza, \textit{La puesta}, p. 18.
Immediately after Ciro dismisses the spirit in no uncertain terms a comet passes through the theatre. This, an instantly recognizable bad omen, would perhaps have been represented by painted cardboard, rigged up to pass above the stage as were lightning bolts in other plays, although it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that a flaming torch of some kind was used to represent the comet.\textsuperscript{167} It is an undeniably dramatic moment, especially given that Ciro disregards completely its disastrous significance, and is the only real \textit{tramoya} that features in the play at all.

Filis emerges onstage, her short male tunic now complemented with ‘espada, botas y espuelas’ (Act III, 2401\textsuperscript{+}). It is clear that she intends to take part in the battle which is unfolding, although she argues with Ciro over the wisdom of going into battle at all. He is unmoved, and soon draws his sword in the middle of an exhortation to his soldiers (l. 2462\textsuperscript{+}) before entering the fray. Things do not go well, however, as the stage direction (l. 2471\textsuperscript{+}) implies: ‘Tocan y dase la batalla, huyendo los soldados de Ciro de los del Rey. | Sale Ciro con algunas flechas clavadas en la rodela, cayendo al teatro.’

Arrows were sometimes used rather more graphically than merely lodging in a shield as they do here; Ruano de la Haza quotes another of Lope’s stage directions for \textit{El Brasil restituido} that would give the impression of the character himself being impaled by an arrow, ‘Acercándose al vestuario, le pongan una flecha en un corcho que traerá debajo de la ropilla (Fol. 15v).’\textsuperscript{168}

Ciro’s fall to the stage is observed by both Filis and Bato in some implicit stage directions that merit extended quotation:

\textbf{FILIS} \par ¡Ay, Júpiter, que del monte,\textsuperscript{169} cubierto de flechas, baja Ciro entre peñas y robles! \par \textit{Sale Bato.}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 319: ‘El rayo podía ser pintado, como el que baja en \textit{El prodigio de los montes}, de Guillén de Castro (p. 631b). Según Rodríguez G. de Ceballos, el rayo estaba ‘fabricado de cartón pintado de oro reflejante, [que] se colgaría de un hilo atado en uno de sus extremos’.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Ruano de la Haza, \textit{La puesta}, p. 319.
\item \textsuperscript{169} It is worth noting that no actual monte would have been needed here; Filis describes Ciro as having fallen from one which would have been understood by the audience as happening onstage, and he falls to the ground as he enters.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
It is evident that the heat of battle has affected Ciro’s mental state, which is further troubled by the apparent desertion of his soldiers. It is only with the arrival of Arpago and the promise of help he brings that victory is finally attained, and the stage direction for the final battle shows the frenetic energy of this climactic moment in the play’s action: ‘Éntranse. Tocan y vuélvese a dar la batalla, saliendo y entrando como suelen, y últimamente Ciro, y el Rey, y todos.’ (l. 2529+)

The use of the term ‘como suelen’ shows that it was common to depict such battle scenes in a particular way on the Golden Age stage, and that the direction of this scene could be safely left to the experience of the autor de comedias. In order to create the illusion of more men than were physically present, the actors would have rushed about, disappearing and reappearing on the stage to create a whirl of activity suitable for the portrayal of a battle. As Ruano de la Haza observes, in the prologue to Shakespeare’s Henry V the audience is reminded of the limitations of theatre and urged, therefore, ‘Into a thousand parts divide one man’. This is, then,

lo que los autores de comedias españoles esperaban de su público cuando, para recrear una batalla, les bastaba con hacer un poco de ruido en el ‘vestuario’ y sacar a media docena de soldados luchando sobre el tablado.\textsuperscript{170}

After a time of fighting at the discretion of the autor, Ciro, Astiages and all those who form part of the final scene (certainly Arpago, Filis and Bato, but probably also Mitridates and Ciro’s friends, Silvio, Riselo and Albano) gather onstage. This ‘calm after the storm’ reassures the audience that Ciro has won, and provides an opportunity for the characters to wrap up the loose ends of the plot, such as Ciro being recognized as king, the punishment (or lack of) assigned to Astiages, and Ciro officially declaring Filis as his queen.

As we have seen, there is much in *Contra valor no hay desdicha* to have made it an engaging and exciting play for Golden Age audiences, be they in the court or in the *corrales*. Considering a modern staging, it is possible to imagine a theatre director using the exoticism of its location to create evocative costumes and elaborate sets, or alternatively focussing on the universality of its themes to produce a pared-down production that allows for more attention to be paid to the play text than the visual spectacle.

The mountain, set between the simple and even idyllic surroundings of the *aldea* and the sinister court of the tyrant king, would not need any kind of realistic representation but could rely on effects such as lighting to denote it as a place of conflict, a no-man’s land. The *aldea-corte* contrast was a *tópico* in Golden Age literature more generally, and, as outlined above, the scenery used for each would have made the distinction quite striking in the *corral* setting. In a modern production, the fundamental connotations of the *aldea* as a place of peace and harmony contrasted with the court as the scene for fear, betrayal and tyranny could be effected again through lighting and perhaps some sound effects (birdsong and bubbling brooks twinned with dappled sunlight effects for the *aldea*; echoing sounds with dim, or intense lighting for the *corte*).

In terms of the characters themselves, much scope is afforded by Ciro’s complexity to portray his fundamental courage and integrity set against the moments of darkness in his character which are ever problematic to the (modern, particularly) audience, such as Fineo’s flogging and the mutilation of his horse. The abominable aspects of Astiages’ character could be reflected in the stage setting of his throne room, Arpago’s breakdown in the speech about the loss of his son is a rich mine for psychological performance, and Filis’ transformation from prim lady to feisty combatant could all be capitalized to produce a play as fresh as the day it was first performed.
 act I

Salidas and verse form: breakdown of plot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salida/cuadro</th>
<th>Verse form</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.) Aldea</td>
<td>redondillas (ll. 1-88)</td>
<td>Conversation between Ciro and Mitridates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>soneto     (ll. 89-102)</td>
<td>Ciro's sonnet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>redondillas (ll. 103-170)</td>
<td>Ciro and Bato discuss Ciro’s love for Filis, a noblewoman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>romance [é-e] (ll. 171-274)</td>
<td>Meeting between Ciro and Filis. Ciro’s declaration of love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>décimas    (ll. 275-364)</td>
<td>Filis and Flora. Flora’s complaint and Filis’ response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.) Aldea</td>
<td>silvas     (ll. 365-411)</td>
<td>Ciro, Bato, Albano, Riselo and Silvio. The village lads undertake playful trials of strength, wrestling to see who is the strongest. Ciro wins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ll. 365-587</td>
<td>romance [á-a] (ll. 412-587)</td>
<td>The test of wit and words; Ciro wins again and is crowned ‘king’ among his friends. Fineo refuses to recognise his authority and is beaten. Flora berates Ciro for his rashness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ll. 588-699</td>
<td>redondillas (ll. 628-699)</td>
<td>Evandro and his son Fineo complain to the king about Ciro’s treatment of Fineo. Astiages promises them justice, and voices suspicions that Ciro is his grandson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.) Aldea</td>
<td>romance [é-e] (ll. 700-799)</td>
<td>Ciro, training the villagers to be soldiers. Arpago arrives in the aldea and summons him to an audience with Astiages the king.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ll. 700-799</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Act II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salida/ cuadro</th>
<th>Verse forms</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| i.) Corte  
ll. 800-1203 | redondillas  
(ll. 800-991) | Ciro at the royal court; exchange between Ciro and Astiages. |
| romance [á-o]  
(ll. 992-1033) | Exchange between Mitridates and Astiages. |
| octavas  
(ll. 1034-1105) | Mitridates’ account of finding and adopting Ciro. |
| silvas  
(ll. 1106-1203) | Astiages’ feigned and true reactions to Mitridates’ revelations; interactions between the king, Mitridates and Arpago, and the king, Evandro and Fineo. |
| ii.) Aldea  
ll. 1204 - 1305 | romance [é-o]  
(ll. 1204-1305) | Bato and Filis: Bato’s account of the visit to the court. |
| iii.) Montaña  
ll. 1306-1737 | redondillas  
(ll. 1306-1393) | Ciro and Mitridates; the fight between Ciro and Evandro/Fineo. |
| romance [é-a]  
(ll. 1394-1437) | Mitridates, Bato and Filis independently search for Ciro on the dark mountainside. |
| décimas  
(ll. 1438-1497) | The reunion between Ciro and Mitridates, Bato and Filis. |
| romance [é-a]  
(ll. 1498-1547) | The arrival of Arpago. |
| décimas  
(ll. 1608-1737) | Arpago’s revelation to Ciro about his identity, the true circumstances of his birth and details of Astiages’ punishment of Arpago. |
| décimas  
(ll. 1608-1737) | Ciro’s response to Arpago’s speech and their mutual vows of loyalty. |
# Act III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salida/ cuadro</th>
<th>Verse forms</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.) Aldea ll. 1738-1921</td>
<td>redondillas (ll. 1738-1837)</td>
<td>Bato and Flora; discussion of Ciro’s latest activities and Bato’s advances to Flora rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONG (ll. 1838-1843)</td>
<td>Song in praise of Ciro as the ‘new king of Persia’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>romance [ó-a] (ll. 1844-1851)</td>
<td>Ciro’s response to the song.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONG (ll. 1852-1853)</td>
<td>Reprise of the call to war.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>romance [ó-a] (ll. 1854-1921)</td>
<td>Exchanges between Ciro and Filis where Filis expresses her fears over the effect of Ciro’s new status on their relationship. Bato volunteers to be Ciro’s messenger to Astiages.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.) Corte ll. 1922-2113</td>
<td>redondillas (ll. 1922-2113)</td>
<td>Arpago updates Astiages on Ciro’s campaign; Bato gives Astiages the letter from Ciro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.) Aldea ll. 2114-2635</td>
<td>romance [ó] (ll. 2114-2207)</td>
<td>Ciro falls from his horse and cuts off its legs to annul the omen. Bato returns from the court. Mitridates expresses concern over the omens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>octavas reales (ll. 2208-2287)</td>
<td>Arpago arrives and informs Ciro of the situation with Astiages’ army; warns him that victory is impossible but swears to die alongside him.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>romance [ó-a] (ll. 2288-2401)</td>
<td>Ciro’s soliloquy and exchange with the ghost of his dead biological father.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>décimas (ll. 2402-2471)</td>
<td>Filis and Ciro; Filis tries and fails to convince Ciro not to go to war.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>romance [ó-e] (ll. 2472-2529)</td>
<td>The battle begins; Ciro’s troops desert him. Arpago arrives just in time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>décimas (ll. 2530-2609)</td>
<td>Ciro, Astiages and the rest of the characters after the battle; Ciro tells Astiages that he is going to show him clemency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>romance [ó-a] (ll. 2610-2635)</td>
<td>Ciro gives Arpago the chance to exact revenge on Astiages for the murder of his son; Arpago decides to follow Ciro’s example and show mercy. Ciro states that he will marry Filis. The play ends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Characters appearing in salidas**

BATO - 9/10 *(i.e. appears in 9 out of 10 salidas in total)*

CIRO - 7/10

MITRIDATES - 6/10

ARPAGO - 6/10

FILIS - 6/10

ASTIAGES - 4/10

FLORA - 3/10

SILVIO - 3/10

ALBANO - 3/10

EVANDRO - 3/10

FINEO - 3/10

RISELO - 2/10

**Breakdown:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACT I</th>
<th>ACT II</th>
<th>ACT III</th>
<th>TOTAL salidas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BATO</td>
<td>i, ii, iv = 3</td>
<td>i, ii, iii = 3</td>
<td>i, ii, iii = 3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIRO</td>
<td>i, ii, iv = 3</td>
<td>i, iii = 2</td>
<td>i, iii = 2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITRIDATES</td>
<td>i, iv = 2</td>
<td>i, iii = 2</td>
<td>i, iii = 2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARPAGO</td>
<td>iii, iv = 2</td>
<td>i, iii = 2</td>
<td>ii, iii = 2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILIS</td>
<td>i, iv = 2</td>
<td>ii, iii = 2</td>
<td>i, iii = 2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASTIAGES</td>
<td>iii = 1</td>
<td>i = 1</td>
<td>ii, iii = 2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLORA</td>
<td>i, ii = 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>i = 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILVIO</td>
<td>ii, iv = 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>iii = 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBANO</td>
<td>ii, iv = 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>iii = 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVANDRO</td>
<td>iii = 1</td>
<td>i, iii = 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINEO</td>
<td>ii, iii = 2</td>
<td>iii = 1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RISELO</td>
<td>ii = 1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>iii = 1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VERSIFICATION

No discussion of versification in a play by Lope de Vega would be complete without reference to his own Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo (1609), in particular the eight-line section that highlights the significance and potential of polymetric versification to contribute to the reception of a play by its audience. It would be too simplistic to conclude that these statements were meant to be prescriptive in an absolute sense, but they nevertheless show Lope pioneering the idea that one verse form could be more ‘appropriate’ than another depending upon the situation depicted through its medium:

Acomode los versos con prudencia
a los sujetos de que va tratando:
las décimas son buenas para quejas;
el soneto está bien en los que aguardan;
las relaciones piden los romances,
aunque en octavas lucen por extremo;
son los tercetos para cosas graves,
y para las de amor las redondillas.  
(Adarte nuevo, ll. 305-12)

These recommendations are broadly in accordance with what Lope was practising as a playwright at the time he wrote the Arte nuevo, but of course he never ceased to experiment, and his technique evolved considerably over the next twenty-six years of his life.

An analysis of the versification of Contra valor no hay desdicha is not only necessary for our better understanding of the play, particularly with regard to its original staging, but also has implications for our conclusions regarding its dating and authorship. Much statistical work has been done on versification in identifiably authentic Lope plays by Morley and Bruerton (or ‘MB’, referring throughout this section to their Cronología unless otherwise stated), Diego Marín, and Victor Dixon. I shall refer to all three in my study of Contra valor from this perspective.171

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As a side note, I observed in the ‘Staging’ section that I am using Dixon’s terminology of ‘salidas’ to refer to scene changes. The tables preceding and following this section provide a breakdown of each salida according to its locus, verse form, character, and plot development. In the context of the versification of the play, it is interesting to note that all of the scene changes in Contra valor, except for the first in Act I, follow the criteria put forward by Ruano de la Haza:

una acción escénica ininterrumpida que tiene lugar en un espacio y tiempo determinados. El final de un cuadro ocurre cuando el tablado queda momentáneamente vacío y siempre indica una interrupción temporal y/o espacial en el curso de la acción, interrupción que va a veces acompañada por un cambio de adornos o decorados escénicos […]

Generalmente, el final de un cuadro es también marcado por un cambio estrófico.172

Antonucci summarises this view:173

En esta definición…se otorga la primacía a los criterios escénico (tablado vacío), espacial (cambio de lugar) y cronológico (interrupción temporal), quedando postergados los criterios métrico y escenográfico. (p. 208)

Antonucci argues that metrical criteria should be higher up the list than the criteria of an empty stage and changes of place and time when defining scene divisions. Contra valor satisfies to some extent both demands, as the metre changes for every scene change according to the criteria of Ruano de la Haza, in addition to one scene change (the first in Act I), which doesn’t show any change of location. I chose to define it as a scene change because it displays a different verse form and a different mix of characters in a very distinct action from that which has passed previously; the conversation between Filis and Flora gives way to Ciro and a group of high-spirited village lads engaging in lively horseplay.

Contra valor is listed in Morley and Bruerton’s Table III of ‘Comedias que probablemente son de Lope’.174 They add, ‘Aunque nadie ha puesto en duda la autenticidad de esta comedia, el que aparezca publicada en la Parte XXIII no es ninguna garantía de autenticidad. Por ese motivo la incluimos en la Tabla III’.175

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173 Antonucci, Métrica y estructura, p. 208.
174 MB, p. 603.
175 MB, p. 439. For more on this, see ‘Authorship and Dating’, where Morley and Bruerton’s assessment of Contra valor is quoted in full.
Later, however, they conclude, ‘La comedia es de Lope.’ After the analysis of its metre, the date assigned to it in this work is ‘1620-35 (probablemente 1625-30)’. In order to determine how comfortably Contra valor sits within the rest of Lope’s corpus, it is useful to analyse its versification with reference to the work already done by MB, bearing in mind their proposed date, and showing clearly how this conclusion has been reached.

Contra valor no hay desdicha contains in total six different verse forms, three traditionally Spanish (redondillas, romance, and décimas) and three Italianate (soneto, silvas, and octavas reales), plus a canción. Their usage within the play is summarised in the versification table (see below). The Spanish verse forms comprise 86.7% of the play’s total lines, and the Italianate comprise 13.3%; this ratio, weighted heavily toward the Spanish verse forms, is congruent with Lope’s common practice throughout but especially in his latter work, according to MB (p. 206). In this section, each verse form will be studied in turn, in the order in which it appears in the play.
Redondillas

The play opens in redondillas, a Spanish, octosyllabic verse form with full consonantal rhyme in ABBA.\textsuperscript{176} Redondillas have the advantages of being a lively, fast-paced metre, and their use at the beginning of acts would mean a rapid audience engagement with the dialogue as it developed on the stage. MB also cite redondillas as ‘la estrofa más estable de Lope cuando consideramos que se encuentran en todas las obras conservadas y generalmente en todos los actos’, going on to add that ninety-eight plays before 1604 and all those dated definitely after 1603 have them in every act (p. 102). In \textit{Contra valor}, redondillas feature in 7 passages in the play, making up 30.4\% of play’s total lines. MB tell us that, in 1620-25, redondillas form on average 8.8 passages and 34.5\% of the lines in verifiably authentic Lope plays, and in 1626-35 this averages as 10.1 passages and 29.2\% of lines. Thus, \textit{Contra valor} fits relatively well with the average statistics for this verse form around the time the play is thought to have been written.

In the \textit{Arte nuevo}, Lope cites redondillas as being ‘para las [cosas] de amor’ (l. 312), and Victor Dixon describes them as his [Lope’s] ‘favourite form, his work-horse, especially for the beginnings of acts.’\textsuperscript{177} Redondillas, according to MB, are used for the opening of 50\% of the acts of Lope’s authentic plays written between 1620 and 1625, and 67.77\% of the acts in those written between 1626-35.\textsuperscript{178} In \textit{Contra valor} they open all three acts, used for conversations between Ciro and Mitridates, Ciro and Astiages, and Bato and Flora respectively. In addition, they are employed when Ciro and Bato discuss Ciro’s love for Filis in Act I (ll. 103-70), and for the scene later in the same act in the court of Astiages, when Evandro and his son Fineo complain to the king about Ciro’s treatment of Fineo (ll. 628-99). In Act II, aside from the opening scene at the court where Ciro communicates his account of his behaviour and his thoughts on kingship to Astiages, redondillas are also used for Ciro’s fight on the mountainside with Evandro, Fineo and their men, and his conversation with Mitridates that precedes it (Act II, 1306-93). In Act III, the

\textsuperscript{176} Details of verse forms have been taken from Thacker’s \textit{Companion}, Appendix 1 (pp. 179-85), on versification.
\textsuperscript{178} These figures, as MB explain, are based on an analysis of those plays that are ‘certainly authentic’ and datable. For the year grouping of 1620-25, this includes a total of 14 plays (40 acts, as two of these plays contain just two acts), and for the years 1626-35 it includes 10 plays (30 acts).
opening scene sees Bato and Flora discussing Ciro’s latest activities (and Bato making advances to Flora which are resoundingly rejected) in *redondillas*, and then later Arpago updates Astiages on Ciro’s war campaign, and Bato plays the part of ambassador to Astiages’ court in the same metre (Act III, 1922-2113).

Thus we see that, although *redondillas* are not solely employed for ‘matters of love’ as Lope seems to indicate in his *Arte nuevo*, their actual usage in this play fits with the idea of them being useful for dialogue of varying types. Marín states,

> Su uso más característico es para el diálogo factual, en estilo conversacional ordinario, tanto con tensión o conflicto dramático como armonioso y humorístico, pero hacia el final el *romance* compite con la *redondilla* y aún supera en esta función. Asimismo, es el metro favorito para el diálogo con “razones” generales, hasta la época final en que comparte tal función con el *romance* y la *décima*.179

This synopsis corresponds not only with the use of *redondillas* in *Contra valor*, but also of *romance*, as shall be seen below.

**Sonnet**

The first departure from *redondillas* in the play is Ciro’s sonnet, which appears just 89 lines into Act I:

> Las altas luces, despeñado en ellas,  
> para que con sus rayos se confronte,  
> en el carro del sol pisó Factonte  
> con los diamantes de sus ruedas bellas.  
> Del fulgurante ardor formó querellas  
> del Erídano claro el horizonte,  
> viendo correr por el celeste monte  
> extraño sol, atropellando estrellas.  
> Así, mi dulce pensamiento honrado,  
> ¿quién te podrá negar que al sol subiste,  
> aunque mueras de Filis abrasado?  
> Con gloria mueres si atrevido fuiste;  
> pues ya que no eres sol, has confirmado,  
> muerto en el cielo, que del sol naciste.  

(Act I, 89-102)

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179 Marín, *Uso y función*, p. 12.
Here, Ciro draws a comparison between his love for Filis and Phaëton’s ill-fated desire to drive the chariot of the sun across the heavens. Although Phaëton’s flight ended in disaster, Ciro concludes that the attempt of loving Filis is glory in itself, whatever the outcome of his suit.

The sonnet is spoken immediately after Ciro’s father Mitridates departs after voicing his grave misgivings over Ciro’s pursuit of Filis on the grounds that they are socially mismatched. The choice of subject matter in the sonnet is significant: Phaëton was the son of the sun god Helios and approached his father for confirmation of his parentage, to which Helios replied by offering Phaëton anything he wished. His naïve desire to drive the chariot of the sun which ended so disastrously was Phaëton’s response to this offer. Thus Ciro, using the myth of Phaëton to illustrate his desire to approach Filis, is implicitly identifying himself with this son of a god (or king?) and, while acknowledging the risks of such aspiration that seems so unsuitable to his station, accepts them because he argues that in itself his courtship is glorious.180

In addition, as Dunn has outlined, ‘one of the most striking threads in the sonnet’s tradition is the personification - the dramatisation - of warring passions, of feelings, memories, desires and other inhabitants of the mind.’181 The sonnet was a recognisably sophisticated Italianate form, and to hear the ‘peasant’ Ciro speaking in such erudite terms so early in the play is yet another indication that Ciro is not merely the simple peasant implied by his costume and asserted by his father.

The sonnet itself follows an ABBA ABBA CDC DCD structure, which accords with MB’s sonnet type ‘A’ (p. 40). This is significant, as MB have shown that until 1604 Lope favoured type B (that is, with the sextet following the pattern CDECDE), but that, thereafter, type A ‘hasta tal punto que el cambio proporciona un criterio cronológico definido’ (p. 156). Indeed, between 1615-35, of the 70 sonnets that appear in MB’s authentic Lope plays, 66 are type A and only four are type B.

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180 For more on Lope’s use of the myth of Phaëton, see end note to line 91.
Romances, a Spanish octosyllabic verse form with assonance on even lines in a variety of vowel patterns, constitute 14 passages of Contra valor and 43.1% of the play’s total lines. This is in keeping with Lope’s average for the time, and, if anything, places the estimated date for Contra valor later in the chronology of Lope’s writing. According to MB, in 1620-25 the average occurrence for romances in authentic Lope plays was 9 passages and 37% of lines, and in 1626-35 this average went up to 11 passages and 43.5% of lines. MB states ‘Así, el rom. que había ido creciendo constantemente desde 1604, acaba componiendo prácticamente la mitad de los versos de las comedias de la última época’ (p. 125).

The verse form closes two out of the play’s three acts (I and III, with décimas closing Act II), which also fits with the average for the time, as in Lope plays dated from 1620-25, romances close 92.5% of the acts studied, and from 1626-35 they close 96.7% (MB, p. 203).

In terms of the assonances used, there are nine different patterns in total, with [é-a] and [é-o] the most common (three passages each); two passages of [á-a], and a passage each of [é-e], [á-o], [ó-a], [ó], [ú-a], and [ó-e]. MB states that ‘In 1629-34, 5 plays out of 6 show 7 and 8 assonances’ (p. 68), thus putting Contra valor into the average for this time period. Additionally, the assonances chosen reflect Lope’s common practice, as ‘é-a, é-o and á-a son, con mucho, las más populares’ (MB, p. 128).

In terms of the use to which romances are put in Contra valor, Lope’s statement that ‘las relaciones piden los romances’ (Arte nuevo, l. 309) is endorsed by the first scene in which it is used in Act I, that of the meeting between Ciro and Filis, which includes Ciro’s declaration of love to her. Thereafter, the romance verse form is employed for many of the key scenes within the play. These include the test of wits and words among the village lads after which Ciro is crowned king and orders the beating of Fineo (Act I, 412-587); Arpago revealing to Ciro the true nature of his identity and the circumstances of his birth (II, 1548-1697); the exchanges between Ciro and Filis where Filis expresses her fears over the effect of Ciro’s new royal
status on their relationship (III, 1854-1921); the moment when Ciro falls from his horse and then cuts off its legs to annul the omen (III, 2114-2207); Ciro’s soliloquy, and his exchange with the ghost of his dead father (III, 2288-2401); and, finally, the last scene in the play when Ciro gives Arpago the chance to exact revenge on Astiages for the murder of his son but Arpago decides to follow Ciro’s example and show mercy (III, 2610-35).

The disparate and dramatic nature of these scenes, and their crucial importance to the plot shows that romances were a verse form diverse enough to be used in a variety of situations. It has been shown that Lope used them increasingly throughout his career until in his latter years they overtook redondillas as the predominant verse form in his work.

**Décimas**

Décimas, a relatively complex verse form, are octosyllabic, with an ABBAACCDDC rhyme scheme, a break after the fourth line, and obligatory enjambment between lines 5 and 6.

According to MB, Lope’s use of décimas increased over the years. The statistics for 1620-25 are that 4.8 passages and 14.4% of lines were in décimas, and in 1626-35 this changed to an average of 5.3 passages and 12.5%.\(^{182}\) MB conclude, ‘Así la déc., desarrollada en los últimos 20 años de la carrera de Lope, asume en el período final casi el aspecto de una estrofa mayor’. Admittedly, they were not often used to close acts, as they are in Act II of *Contra valor*; MB reports that they close just one act out of the forty studied (in fourteen plays). However, Lope’s generally increasing tendency to use décimas in his writing during this time makes this point less problematic than it may otherwise be.

‘Las décimas son buenas para quejas’ (*Arte nuevo*, l. 307), and this is certainly borne out in the first instance where they occur in *Contra valor*: Flora’s complaint to Filis over Ciro’s inconstancy, and Filis’ barbed response to her jealousy, followed by Flora’s despairing lament over her plight (Act I, 275-364).

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\(^{182}\) MB, p. 116.
Thereafter décimas are used for the reunion between Ciro and Mitridates, Bato and Filis on the mountainside after Ciro’s fight with Evandro and Fineo (II, 1438-97), and Ciro’s response to Arpago’s revelations about his origins and their mutual vows of loyalty (II, 1608-1737). In Act III décimas appear when Filis is trying to convince Ciro not to go to war (2402-71) and finally, very close to the end when the characters take stock after the battle is over and Ciro tells Astiages that he is going to show him mercy (III, 2530-2609).

**Silvas**

Silvas, an Italianate verse form with free rhyme in seven- and eleven-syllable lines, are the only verse form in Contra valor not mentioned in Lope’s Arte nuevo. According to Dixon, however, they were a ‘more leisurely’ form and often had ‘connotations of greater elegance and artifice’ than the Spanish octosyllabic metres.183

Dixon continues:

Their use by Lope, Diego Marín has argued, is determined by the lofty nature of the sentiments expressed in them, whether by refined or by plebian characters, and thus they should always arouse our interest. […] In Fuente Ovejuna […] Lope appears to employ Italianate forms to enhance the role and dignity of the peasants.

This latter point is of significance in the context of Contra valor, as one of the two moments in which silvas are employed in the play is when we meet Ciro and Bato’s friends from the village, Albano, Riselo and Silvio. They undertake playful trials of strength, wrestling each other to see who emerges victorious. Naturally Ciro wins, and after proving his mental capacity too (in the romances passage that follows) he is crowned king (Act I, 365-411). The use of silvas to enhance the ‘role and dignity’ of these particular peasants is more noteworthy given the fact that Ciro eventually does become king with his friends fighting by his side.

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The other *silva* passage appears in Act II, when Astiages’ feigned and true reactions to Mitridates’ revelations emerge, and then interactions follow between Astiages, Mitridates and Arpago, and Astiages, Evandro and Fineo (Act II, 1106-1203).

Both of these passages follow the *silva* 2° pattern as outlined in MB (‘versos de 7 y 11 sílabas agrupados irregularmente, algunos ABBA, AXA, otros versos sin rima’, p. 140). In fact, as Williamsen points out, MB ‘reject any play attributed to Lope if it contains a passage of *silva* of the first type (regularly alternating seven and eleven syllable verses rhymed in couplets).’ Importantly, MB assert that ‘El comienzo real de la *silva* 2° parece hallarse en 1623 […] A partir de ese momento es frecuente, y en cantidad considerable que sigue aumentando’, (p. 140-41). This, again, fits with a late dating for *Contra valor*, in a relatively less frequently-used verse form.

**Octavas Reales**

*Octavas reales* are a hendecasyllabic metre, following the rhyme scheme ABABABCC. They are, according to MB, ‘la estrofa más consistente de Lope, y, después de las *red.*, la más estable. Aparecen en…13 de las 14 de 1620-25, y en las 10 de 1626-35 ’ (p. 141). From 1620-25 they make up 2.8 passages and 6.6% of lines, and from 1626-35 this drops to 2 passages and 4.4% of lines. Given their connotations of loftiness and gravitas, the presence of kingly characters and court scenes in *Contra valor* would account for its slightly higher than average use of *octavas* (3 passages and 7.3% lines). Indeed, MB go on to observe, Aparentemente, Lope usó oct. en m.n. [monólogo narrativo] después de 1604 - particularmente a partir de 1615 - no sólo cuando deseaba una gravedad especial, sino cuando sentía que hacía falta una cualidad más lírica de la que podía dar un rom. (p. 144)

In *Contra valor* they are used once in each act. In Acts I and II they are employed (predictably) for scenes that unfold within the court of Astiages. The first of these is also the first time we see king Astiages on stage, and the change of metre to *octavas reales* along with the change of *salida* (almost certainly

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185 MB, p. 142.
accompanied by some appropriately regal music) would have made it very clear to the audience that their sphere of reference is no longer the simple countryside that it has been hitherto.

As intimated in the quotation from MB above, the use of *octavas reales* is not confined to regal or courtly scenes. Marín and Rugg, in the introduction to *El galán de la Membrilla* (1962), state:

> su uso [octavas reales] no está determinado por el rango social de los personajes ni la gravedad de la situación, sino por el deseo de dar ‘una mayor cualidad lírica’ a la escena, como observan Morley y Bruerton, y, sobre todo, de expresar sentimientos nobles y emociones dignas de respeto o simpatía en una de las formas métricas consagradas por la moda renacentista. (p. 65)

This is borne out in *Contra valor*, where the last passage in which they are used is in Act III when Arpago arrives at the *aldea* and informs Ciro of the situation with Astiages’ approaching army. He warns him that victory is impossible but swears to die alongside him. This is an emotive scene, and use of *octavas* in the context of the quotation from Marín and Rugg is appropriate. However, additionally their use can be seen as a signal to the audience of Ciro’s growing authority. The only other character to whom Arpago has spoken in *octavas* previously is Astiages, and to hear him doing so with Ciro now shows just how close the youth has come to realising his right to rule. The situation seems hopeless, but this choice of verse form may intimate to the audience that all is not yet lost.

To summarise, as this analysis of the versification of *Contra valor* shows, the play not only fits well from a technical point of view with Lope’s corpus, but also, as we shall see, with the date of 1620-35 (25?-30?) as proposed by Morley and Bruerton.

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186 This is also dealt with by Antonucci, ‘Apéndice: Más sobre la segmentación de la obra teatral’, in *Métrica y estructura*, p. 203, using examples from *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*. 
## Versification summary

### ACT I

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The number of lines in my summary varies with Morley and Bruerton’s total of 2626, because they did not include the song in their calculations. Also, my total for the *silvas* verse form is one more than MB’s (145 as opposed to MB’s 144).

Changes per act: 9, 10, 9.
### Salidas and verse form: summary

**ACT I**

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AUTHORSHIP:

Morley and Bruerton, in their seminal work *Cronología de las comedias de Lope de Vega* (1963, first published in English in 1940), classed *Contra valor no hay desdicha* as a play of ‘incierta autenticidad’, due to the lack of an extant authorial manuscript. Their own criteria for including plays in their canon of authentic works read as follows:

…excluimos de nuestra lista todas las comedias que no estén comprendidas en las siguientes categorías: A) autógrafas; B) títulos incluidos en P y P2; C) comedias incluidas en los volúmenes de la colección particular de Lope que fueron editadas después de ser revisadas por él, es decir, los volúmenes del IX al XX, inclusive; D) comedias de aquellos volúmenes de la misma colección que fueron publicados por personas próximas a él, es decir, los volúmenes I, II, IV, VI, VII, VIII, XXI, XXII (Madrid, 1635); E) comedias que se encuentran en otros volúmenes auténticos […] F) comedias para las que hay un testimonio externo válido; G) comedias que llevan el nombre de Lope en los versos finales del texto. (pp. 23-24)

Given that *Contra valor* does not fulfil these criteria, it is listed in ‘Tabla III’ with plays deemed to be ‘dudosa o de incierta autenticidad’. Morley and Bruerton admit, however, that ‘esta Tabla contiene, debido a nuestros criterios tan estrictos, muchos títulos que se aceptan generalmente como auténticos.’ (p. 27).

The label of ‘incierta autenticidad’, has surely affected the reception of a play with such artistic merit and a potentially politically relevant sub-text, but reading further it is clear that it is not meant to be a dogmatic judgement; in their summary of its features, Morley and Bruerton also say of it ‘La comedia es de Lope’:

Aunque nadie ha puesto en duda la autenticidad de esta comedia, el que aparezca publicada en la *Parte XXIII* no es ninguna garantía de autenticidad. Por ese motivo la incluimos en la Tabla III [Comedias dudosas o de incierta autenticidad].

En la última elocución de la comedia aparecen estos versos:

y aquí dió fin el poeta
que aun vive para serviros.
Los comentadores han deducido que la comedia fue una de las últimas que escribió Lope. Permítasenos el afirmar que cualquier escritor de más de 60 años podría haber incluido dicha frase. Fue representada por Pedro de la Rosa el 6 de abril de 1636 (El Averiguador, 1, 1871, 1, IIa., serie, pág. 107), lo cual es un dato de escaso valor...pero que señala hacia el mismo lugar.

Sólo se halla el m.n. en déc. en ¡Ay, verdades, que en amor...! (1625) y Del monte sale (1627). 5 pasajes parecen de 1620, o una fecha más tardía, cosa que confirman el porcentaje de rom., y la cantidad de sil. 2.°. La comedia es de Lope.

Fecha: 1620-35 (probablemente 1625-30).

In their appendix featuring chronological lists of Lope plays, however, Morley and Bruerton cite Contra valor in the group which ‘Probablemente son de Lope’, giving it the date of 1625-30? (Cronología, p. 603).

When the play was printed in 1638 it was included in Parte XXIII of Lope’s plays, the first in the collection of twelve that also incorporates Las Batuecas del Duque de Alba, Las cuentas del gran capitan, El piadoso veneciano, Porfiar hasta morir, El robo de Dina, El saber puede dañar, La envidia de la nobleza, Los pleitos de Inglaterra, Los palacios de Galiana, Dios hace reyes, and El saber por no saber, and vida de S. Julián de Alcalá de Henares. All of these plays are classed as either ‘auténticas’ or, like Contra valor itself, ‘probablemente...de Lope’ in the appendix to Morley and Bruerton’s study, apart from the last play in the parte which is listed under ‘Textos que no son de Lope’. This in itself adds weight to the argument for Lope’s authorship of the play.

Many other catalogues have attributed Contra valor to Lope de Vega over the years. Varey and Shergold, in part IX of the Fuentes series (1989), cite it thus:

**Hijo de la perra, El:**
3 de octubre de 1680. Martín de Mendoza. Representación palaciega (Fuentes I).
Probablemente la comedia atribuida a Lope de Vega y mejor conocida con los títulos de Contra valor no hay desdicha, o Ciro, hijo de la perra, (así, Fajardo y Medel). En toda probabilidad es la misma comedia que Ciro y Arpago; pero Fajardo no da este título como alternativo de Contra valor no hay desdicha (a despecho de la aseveración de Morley y Bruerton, 269), sino los de Ziro, hijo de la perra, y Gran Rey de Persia. Se publicó en la Parte veinte y tres de las comedias de Lope de Vega (Madrid, 1638), fols. 1 r. - 22 r.¹⁸⁷

The recently completed ArteLope database at the University of Valencia provides further confirmation that Lope is the accepted author of Contra valor; whilst recognising that Morley and Bruerton class it as ‘de

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incierta autenticidad’, ArteLope says that the play is ‘de autoría probable’.\textsuperscript{188} In this section, I shall make my own case for this being an accurate conclusion. It is important to note at this stage that there are no serious contenders to Lope as creator of the play; in its history no-one has made any suggestions for alternatives to his authorship.

I shall now detail the instances where \textit{Contra valor no hay desdicha} appears in various classic catalogues of early-modern Spanish drama, in order of the date of their publication, starting with the earliest. Each catalogue is cited in the bibliography.

\textbf{Arteaga (ART)},\textsuperscript{189} 1716:

70r: ‘Ciro hijo de la perra = Primer rey de Persia = Gran rey de Persia = Contra valor no hay desdicha = con el 4º título - Lope’

82v: ‘Contra valor no hay desdicha’…Lope

\textbf{Fajardo (FAJ)}, 1735:

p. 25: ‘Contra el Valor no hay desdicha - de Lope.’

\textbf{García de la Huerta (GaH)}, 1785:

p. 46: ‘Contra Valor no hay desdicha. de Lope.’

\textbf{Mesonero Romanos (MeR)}, 1859:

xxviii: ‘Ciro, hijo de la perra - Gran rey de Persia. - Contra valor no hay desdicha. - LOPE.’

xxix: ‘Contra valor no hay desdichas. - Ciro, hijo de la persa. - LOPE.’

\textsuperscript{188} \url{http://artelope.uv.es/} Consulted 10:30 09/02/12.

\textsuperscript{189} I employ the abbreviations for catalogues used by the ArteLope project at the University of Valencia, from which much of the information was sourced.
Barrera y Leirado (BL), 1860:

p. 538 (doc p. 552): ‘Contra valor no hay desdicha (y primero rey de Persia. - Ciro, hijo de la perra.) Ciro y Arpago. - LOPE.’

Salvá y Mallén (Sal), 1872:

p. 414 (doc p. 451): ‘Contra valor no hai desdicha - Lope’

p. 546 (doc p. 583): ‘Contra valor no hai desdicha’ Lope de Vega


p. 583 (doc p. 620): ‘Contra valor no hai desdicha. - LOPE. P. XXIII., y en la XXXI de las de afuera, impresa en 1638.

Barrera añade: y primero rei de Persia, suponiendo ademas que se conoce por los titulos de Ciro hijo de la perra, y Ciro y Arpago.’

In addition, modern bibliographies have recorded the play thus:

Proferí (Pr), 1988:

pp. 99-101 (doc pp. 53-56): ‘Parte treynta una de las meiores comedias que hasta oy han salido.’ ‘La gran comedía de Contra valor no ay desdicha’

Urzáiz Tortajada (UT), 2003:


p. 658: ‘Contra valor no hay desdicha. Escrita entre 1625-1630; representada por Pedro de la Rosa el 6 de abril de 1636. Impresa: 1638 (Parte 23).’

190 *1181* - Parte treynta una, de las meiores comedias, qve hasta oy han salido. Recogidas por el Dotor Francisco Troiuio Ximenez. Y a la fin va la Comedia de Santa Madrona, intitulada la viuda tirana, y conquista de Barcelona. En Barcelona; Jaime Romeu, Año. 1638. 4." 4 hojas preliminares y 277 fols.*

191 ‘Parte veinte y tres de las Comedias de Lope Felix de Vega Carpio. Madrid, Maria de Quiñones, 1638.’
In addition, Rennert, in his article ‘Notes on the Chronology of the Spanish Drama’, redirects from his ‘Contra valor no hay desdicha - Lope de Vega’ listing to ‘Ciro y Cartago [sic] - Lope de Vega?’. The entry reads as follows:

Represented by Pedro de la Rosa in the Gallinero del Retiro, Aug. 9, 1636. Perhaps this is Lope’s *Contra Valor no hay Desdicha y Primer Rey de Persia*, to which Barrera adds the title, *Ciro y Arpago*, the latter are two characters in Lope’s play. It was printed in 1638. According to Fajardo the alternative title is *Ziro, hijo de la Perra*. Medel mentions an anonymous play called *Ziro*.192

Thus, we see that *Contra valor no hay desdicha* (under various titles), has been attributed to Lope without exception since the earliest catalogue. To summarise the information above, no fewer than eight different titles have been attached to the play (not particularly unusual for Golden Age plays), with *Contra valor no hay desdicha* by far the most common:

**Contra valor no hay desdicha** (with variations in spelling): ART, FAJ, GaH, MeR, BL, Sal, Pr, UT

**Ciro, hijo de la perra**: ART, MeR, BL, Sal

**Ciro y Arpago**: BL, Sal, UT

**Gran rey de Persia**: ART, FAJ, MeR

**Primer rey de Persia**: ART, BL,

**Ciro, hijo de la persa**: MeR

**Contra el Valor no ay desdicha**: MC

**Contra valor no hay desdichas**: MeR

In addition to these specific catalogue listings attributing *Contra valor* to Lope, there are many examples in more recent literary criticism where he is credited with writing the play. These examples bear weight, as they often come from the work of well-respected Golden Age scholars. Invariably the point they are making is not about the play’s authorship, but the fact that they ascribe it to Lope is significant for our purposes here.

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For example, in their 1971 publication *A Literary History of Spain: the Golden Age, Drama, 1492-1700*, Wilson and Moir include a reference to the play which not only assumes that it is written by Lope, but also praises it highly,

Lope wrote several other excellent plays drawn from ancient history. The best of these is *Contra valor no hay desdicha* (M and B: 1620-35, probably 1625-30), on the rise of the great and arrogant Cyrus of Persia, drawn from Herodotus. This *comedia* is constructed with great skill and shows Lope at the height of his maturity as a dramatic poet.\(^{193}\)

Another noteworthy reference to *Contra valor* as being Lope’s work is Montesino’s reference to it in the notes on his 1925 edition of *El marqués de las Navas*:

> Enteramente distinta es aquella escena de *Contra valor no hay desdicha*, en que Ciro dialoga con la sombra de su padre, pero todavía corresponde a esta serie; la comedia parece ser de las últimas de Lope, y, sin embargo, la manera de estos versos recuerda otras más antiguas, tipo *El ganso de oro*. (pp. 151-152)

Victor Dixon refers to the moment in the play when Ciro alludes to Phaëton in his sonnet early in Act I:

> …similarly, in the first scene of *Contra valor no hay desdicha*, Ciro could apostrophise his ambitious love for Filis: ‘Con gloria mueres, si atrevido fuiste;| pues ya que no eres Sol, has confirmado,| muerto en el cielo, que del Sol naciste’ (BAE XLI, 1).\(^{194}\)

Although Dixon does not directly claim that *Contra valor* is by Lope here, he inserts this reference to it in the middle of an article about Lope’s use of the myth of Phaëton, and the conclusion is inferred.

More recently, in 2000 Grilli published an article in the *Anuario Lope de Vega* (6, 2000), entitled ‘El héroe desdichado en Lope’. Although his discussion of the sources for *Contra valor* contains some erroneous material (see ‘History and Sources’ section for a more in-depth discussion of this), he has no doubt in attributing the play to Lope (p. 138). In the same year, Ruano de la Haza twice refers to *Contra valor* as ‘de Lope’ in *La puesta en escena en los teatros comerciales del Siglo de Oro* (pp. 304 and 317).

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Jack Sage, in his article for a collection edited by R. O. Jones (1973), includes a reference to Contra valor in a piece that discusses Lope’s plays:

Even in plays in which the orthodox belief in inborn nobility predominates, the other side of the argument is not ignored. So, for example, in Los prados de León or the rather more thoughtful Contra valor no hay desgracia [sic]:

El ingenio
lo alcanza todo: y así
muchos hombres que subieron
en brazos de la fortuna
a ocupar honrosos puestos,
saben presto ser señores. 195

Additionally, in a personal email correspondence with Jonathan Thacker on 23 March 2009, Sage wrote of the play, ‘Contra valor no hay desdicha is clearly good Lope and kingship is a perennially important issue.’

George Irving Dale, in his article Games and Social Pastimes in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age (1940), also discussed in the ‘Kingship’ section of this Introduction, deals with Contra valor in the context of the tests of strength and wits in which Ciro engages with the youths from his village. He says,

it is of interest to note that in Lope’s Contra valor no hay desdicha, the riddle propounded is: “What are the three strongest things?” which recalls the questions put by Darius the Persian, i.e. which is the strongest of all things: wine, kings, women or truth? 196

On this same theme, Rozas in 1983 refers to Contra valor as being of ‘verdadera importancia para el concepto de la realeza del teatro lopiano.’ 197

Other brief mentions of the play as Lope’s work include J. Gómez Ocerin in the introduction to his edition of Vélez de Guevara’s El rey en su imaginación, who says, ‘Lope, al poner en acción la leyenda de Ciro, no dejó de aprovechar este gracioso episodio’. 198 Schevill, writing in 1933, said ‘Vélez [de Guevara]

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195 Sage, ‘The context of comedy’ (p. 258).
197 Previously mentioned in ‘Kingship’: Rozas, ‘La obra dramática…’ (p. 304).
may have been acquainted with Lope’s *Contra valor no hay desdicha*, written in his latter years; see Menéndez y Pelayo *Estudios sobre el teatro de Lope de Vega* II, 234ff.\(^{199}\)

Finally, in a note for his article ‘A footnote on Lope de Vega’s *barquillas*’ (1952-53), Edwin Morby states,

> The *barca* or *nave* is much more frequent in Lope than I have suggested. […] Almost any nautical context can suggest a personal application: a description of a ship among waves brings to mind “el mar de mis fortunas” in *Contra valor no hay desdicha* III (*BAE*, XLI, 30a)\(^{200}\)

In fact, the proliferation of technical nautical terms in the soliloquy cited here (Act III, 2289-2319) is in itself typical of Lope’s writing, adding further to the weight of evidence for his authorship of the play.\(^{201}\)

As we have seen, scholars seem unanimously to have taken the view that *Contra valor* is by Lope de Vega. There is, moreover, evidence from the play itself that supports this idea. Perhaps the strongest proof lies in the last line of Ciro’s sonnet in Act I which reads, ‘muerto en el cielo, que del sol naciste.’ (l. 102). This line is identical with the last line of Lope’s sonnet 91, ‘A la caída de Faetón’, which appears in his *Rimas* from 1602, and is therefore, if not incontrovertible, at least compelling evidence that Lope is also the writer of *Contra valor*\(^{202}\).

As has been shown in the ‘Versification’ section of this introduction, the use of different verse forms within *Contra valor* corresponds not only statistically but also stylistically with Lope’s common practice at around the time it is thought to have been written (1620-35). In fact, more evidence for the play being written in the latter half of this estimate exists, when the use of *redondillas*, *romances*, *silvas*, and the sonnet is taken into account. It is therefore reasonable to assume that Morley and Bruerton’s time frame of 1620-35 (25?-30?) is correct, and that this play was written by Lope de Vega.

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\(^{199}\) Schevill, Rudolph, ‘*Virtudes vencen senales* and *La vida es sueño*.’ *HR* 1:3 (1933: July), 181-195, (p. 195).


Vern G. Williamsen in *Editing the comedia*, counsels caution in determining positive authorship based on the evidence of versification alone, however:

We must be extremely careful in using the positivistic evidence provided by the versification of a given work in making any firm conclusions [...] even with the mountain of facts they [MB] had at hand, they were very careful about accepting any attribution of a work to Lope on the positive hypothesis. Much more certain as a procedure is the proof of the negative. We cannot say now, and perhaps we never will be able to do so, that a given text was written by a certain poet on evidence provided by its versification. We can say, however, that there is logical basis to be found in the data for concluding that a given poet probably did not write the text at hand. In this case, the more different a text at hand is from a poet’s usual habits of versification as judged from the works we know to be his, the more certain we can be that he did not write it.\(^{203}\)

This is a wise observation, and from its perspective we can say that the versification in *Contra valor* does not point strongly away from Lope’s authorship and toward the authorship of any other playwright. If the versification were the only piece of evidence at our disposal, it may indeed perhaps be too bold to assert that Lope is the author (despite the weight of evidence in favour of such a conclusion). However, as we have seen, there are many other factors also pointing toward *Contra valor* being written by Lope, and assessing all of these in the light of each other gives weight to this conclusion.

For instance, J. H. Arjona’s studies on the incidence of defective rhyme in forty of Lope’s authentic plays found that of all of the defective rhymes that appear, full consonantal rhyme appearing where it should not (such as in *romances*, for example) is by far the most common occurrence in Lope, followed by instances of assonantal rhyme used instead of consonantal rhyme.\(^{204}\) In *Contra valor*, the only instance of an unacceptable rhyme that appears is a full consonantal one in ll. 258 and 260 (‘agradecerle…fuerte’), in a *romances* section. Furthermore, there are no instances of false Andalusian rhyme in the play. Arjona’s research showed that in none of the forty autograph plays that he studied did any example of this type of defect appear. He concludes that, ‘it would seem logical to assume that any play attributed to Lope de Vega that contains false Andalusian rhymes is not his, or that its text has been altered.’\(^{205}\) Thus, the fact

\(^{203}\) Williamsen, ‘Editing the comedia’, p. 141.


that Contra valor does not contain any defect of this type is a strong piece of evidence to support the claim that the play was written by Lope.

This is further supported when we examine linguistic evidence from the play, such as the use of the -ra form of the imperfect subjunctive rather than the -se form. In the introduction to his edition of El sufrimiento premiado, Victor Dixon points out that Lope prefers the -ra form of the imperfect subjunctive, and in Contra valor it is used 41 times in total as opposed to just one instance of the -se form (‘viese’, Act II, 877).

The commonly-cited tendency of Lope toward leísmo (using ‘le’ rather than ‘lo’ for direct masculine pronouns) is also in evidence Contra valor: ‘le’ appears in this context no less than 85 times throughout the play, with ‘lo’ never used for this function.

Dixon also lists words that are rendered specifically in Lope according to the number of syllables they contain. These are:

criado: usually a tri-syllable in Lope, in Contra valor the only five times it appears it is always trisyllabic.

cruel: usually disyllabic in Lope, in Contra valor it is disyllabic eight times out of the eleven times it appears, and monosyllabic the other three times. In Act II, 1654 ‘crueldad’ is tri-syllabic, and in Act II, 1595 it is disyllabic.

león: usually disyllabic in Lope, in Contra valor it is disyllabic twice out of the three times it appears.

mío: usually disyllabic in Lope, it follows this pattern all of the six times it appears in Contra valor.

traer: usually disyllabic in Lope, it is disyllabic once and monosyllabic once in the play.

vea/veas: usually disyllabic in Lope, it is disyllabic all of the three times it appears in Contra valor.

In his edition of Viuda, casada y doncella (2006), Donald McGrady lists forms of words that are well known as being favoured by Lope. These include efeto, estremo, agora and desto, and in fact all of these words are

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208 Another key study of Lope’s practice in syllable-counting is Walter Poesse’s The Internal Line Structure of Thirty Autograph Plays of Lope de Vega (Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1949).
rendered as such in *Contra valor*. McGrady points out that ‘notable’ is a word often used by Lope too, borne out in *Contra valor* where it appears five times.\(^\text{210}\)

As discussed in ‘Characterization’, many of the character names in *Contra valor*, aside from those taken from the historical accounts, appear commonly throughout Lope’s work. The exception to this is the name Filis, which occurs often in Lope’s early love poetry but not as a character name anywhere else in his drama.

Finally, *Contra valor no hay desdicha* deals with one of Lope’s favourite themes, that of kingship, as well as following his rules for good drama in terms of plot development, as laid out in the *Arte nuevo*. It also contains many of the ingredients most often found in his drama including intrigues of love and jealousy, and strong characterization. All of the evidence discussed hitherto points strongly toward Lope’s authorship of *Contra valor*.

**DATING THE PLAY:**

Turning to the dating of the play, the estimate given by Morley and Bruerton of 1620-35 (25?-35?) is based on their analysis of the trends in metres employed (for example, the percentage of lines in a particular metre, and whether this fits with Lope’s practice at any time). I would agree with them, as my analysis of the play’s versification shows a consistency with Lope’s later writing. Additionally, as we have already noted, a report exists of the play being performed in the Buen Retiro in 1636.\(^\text{211}\) According to the prefatory material in the first printed edition of the play (Madrid 1638, A), its *aprobación* and *licencia* were granted in 1636, two years before it was finally printed, and only one year after Lope’s death in 1635. Therefore, the posthumous date for the first printed edition is less problematic than it may otherwise seem. This is further supported by the fact that in the ten years between 1625 and 1635 the printing of

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\(\text{\textsuperscript{209} Viuda, casada y doncella, eds Ronna S. Feit and Donald McGrady (Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 2006).}\)


\(\text{\textsuperscript{211} Urzáiz Tortajada, *Catálogo*, p. 568.}\)
comedias in Castile was banned by the Junta de Reformación, set up by Philip IV in 1621. In that time, the Consejo de Castilla did not give permission for any plays to be printed, although their performance was not banned. As a result, Lope’s Parte XX was printed in January 1625, but his Parte XXI was not printed until May 1635. It would be foolish to imagine that he did not have in mind the preparation of plays for his subsequent Partes, especially because in the eight years between 1617 and 1625 when Lope took charge of the publication of his comedias a total of eleven Partes had been produced.212

A final point to make in favour of Contra valor being one of Lope’s (later) plays, is that of its similarity to other works by Lope written around the same time. One of the most striking of these is El hijo de los leones. This is thought to have been written between 1620-22, and was first published by Juan Gonçalez in Madrid as one of the plays in Lope’s Parte XIX, in 1624.213 It is classified by Morley and Bruerton as one of the ‘comedias auténticas, sin fechar’ by Lope.214 There is no discernible source for the play, although it draws on various tropes (such as the salvaje phenomenon) for its subject matter.

On a purely technical point, the first line of El hijo is ‘¡Quitarme tengo la vida!’, an exclamation by Fenisa’s father Tebandro. Contra valor opens with an almost identical line from Ciro’s supposed father Mitridates, ‘¡Quitarte tengo la vida!’ In addition, the plays share three character names: Bato, Flora and Riselo. They are undeniably stock peasant names, but the presence of all three in both of the plays is worthy of note.

One of the character names in El hijo de los leones, that of Leonido’s adoptive father Fileno, appeared erroneously in the list of dramatis personae in various editions of Contra valor, once in the first printed edition from 1638 and again in the other edition printed that same year.215 It was also reproduced in an edition of the play from 1780.216 The actual character name appearing in the play itself is ‘Fineo’, but it is significant that, given this mistake, the list of characters prefacing the first printed edition of each play would have contained no less than four identical names (Bato, Flora, Riselo and Fileno).

212 For a full discussion of the ban on publishing comedias, see Moll, Jaime, ‘Diez años sin licencias para imprimir comedias y novelas en los reinos de Castilla’, Boletín de la RAE, 54 (1974), 97-103.
213 Urzáiz Tortajada, Catálogo, p. 665.
214 MB, Cronología, p. 337.
215 María de Quiñones, Madrid; Iayme Romeu, Barcelona.
216 Pedro Escuder, Barcelona.
In terms of plot, the most fundamental similarity between the two plays is the foundling scenario.

Leonido in *El hijo de los leones* is left out by his mother in the wilderness to die, found and suckled by a lioness, and brought up by a hermit. In *Contra valor*, Ciro’s exposure in the wilderness is ordered by his grandfather, he survives because he is suckled by a bitch and he is found and brought up by the peasant Mitridates. In both cases, the foundling child is the grandson of the king, and in both the child is unaware of his true origins until he is fully grown.

An authentic Lope play with such similarities to *Contra valor* can only add weight to the idea that Lope wrote both works. Additionally, Dale’s article (previously mentioned) draws attention to the similarity between the scene where Ciro and his friends engage in the game of wit and words in *Contra valor* and a scene in *El saber puede dañar*, which was also published along with *Contra valor* in Parte XXIII of Lope’s plays,

So in Lope’s play [*Contra valor no hay desdicha*] Cyrus is chosen king in fun after giving the most satisfactory answer to the questions asked. In Lope’s *El saber puede dañar*, a prince who is waiting to keep a rendezvous whiles away the time by posing five riddles which his two male companions answer.217

Further similarities with other Lope plays have been highlighted throughout in the footnotes to this edition, such as the moment when Ciro is crowned king ‘de burlas’, and an equivalent scene in Act II of *El duque de Viseo* (see End Note 396+).

Having examined the linguistic, stylistic and documentary evidence, as well as scholarly authority and the context of *Contra valor* among Lope’s other plays, I would argue that the case for Lope’s authorship of this play is very strong to the point of being indubitable. While Morley and Bruerton had to hold to their self-confessedly ‘severe (‘estricto’)’ criteria for authenticating plays and were not able to place it categorically in Lope’s corpus due to the lack of an extant autograph manuscript, I feel that we can now say with a degree of certainty that it is the work of the ‘Fénix de los ingenios’.

THE TEXTUAL JOURNEY:

OTHER EDITIONS of Contra valor no hay desdicha

No manuscript of Contra valor no hay desdicha is known to exist, therefore, to set about settling upon a version of the text for use in this edition, it was necessary to rely solely on early printed editions of the play. All of the seven previous printed editions are valuable in the light they shed on the play’s text; each will be examined in detail here to show the journey of Contra valor from its first run off the press to the most recent digitised version.

As mentioned in the previous section, Contra valor no hay desdicha was first printed in 1638 in Madrid by María de Quiñones, as the first play in Parte XXIII of Lope’s comedias. I have examined three copies of this edition in detail: one held in the British Library [A], another in Cambridge University Library [A2], and one an online digital facsimile from the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid [A3]. These three copies of the text proved to be identical in terms of layout, punctuation and orthography, noteworthy in itself when dealing with an early modern printed edition as it allows for the assumption that all three copies were printed from one forme of set type, as part of the same print run from the press. I have taken this edition

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218 Presotto has compiled a full collection of the extant autograph manuscripts by Lope de Vega, Contra valor not being one of them. Presotto, Marco, Le commedie autografe di Lope de Vega: Catalogo e Studi (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2000).

219 Of course, the problems caused by the errors and, at times, intervention of early-modern printers in the work they were printing are well-documented, and it is important to bear this in mind when approaching the play. For more on this, see Profeti, Maria Grazia, ‘Editar el teatro del Fénix de los ingenios’, in Anuario Lope de Vega, 2 (1996), 129-151 (pp. 134-36). Also, see chapters 2 and 3 of Imprenta y crítica textual en el Siglo de Oro, eds. Pablo Andrés Escapa & Sonia Garza Merino, (Valladolid: Fundación Santander Central Hispano, Centro para la Edición de los Clásicos Españoles, 2000).

220 Bibliographical descriptions of editions A, B, C and E are included at the end of this section.

221 The copies of Parte XXIII are located in: British Library, 11726.l.6; Cambridge University Library, f163.d.8.18; Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, R/30631, T/55553/9; Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, R(8)-8-334. Pérez y Pérez also lists it as being in the Casanatense in Rome (Pérez y Pérez, Maria Cruz, Bibliografía del teatro de Lope de Vega (Madrid: CSIC, 1973), p. 66).

222 Of course, the problems caused by the errors and, at times, intervention of early-modern printers in the work they were printing are well-documented, and it is important to bear this in mind when approaching the play. For more on this, see Profeti, Maria Grazia, ‘Editar el teatro del Fénix de los ingenios’, in Anuario Lope de Vega, 2 (1996), 129-151 (pp. 134-36). Also, see chapters 2 and 3 of Imprenta y crítica textual en el Siglo de Oro, eds. Pablo Andrés Escapa & Sonia Garza Merino, (Valladolid: Fundación Santander Central Hispano, Centro para la Edición de los Clásicos Españoles, 2000).

223 The desirability of examining as many different examples of the same early edition as possible is expressed by recent works on the edition of texts by such scholars as Alain Riffaud, who, in his study of seventeenth-century printed dramatic works in France claims that, ‘comme un exemplaire n’est pas le reflet d’une édition mais le simple témoin d’un état de cette édition, il faut consulter le plus possible d’exemplaires’, ‘since a copy is not the reflection of an edition, but merely testimony to a single state of that edition, as many copies as possible must be consulted.’ Riffaud, Alain, La ponctuation du théâtre imprimé au XVIIe siècle (Genève: Droz, 2007), p. 197. Ignacio Arellano, too, has commented on the subject, adopting a pragmatic approach to the idea of examining all the copies of a given edition, ‘Algunos críticos suelen exigir la compulsa de todos los ejemplares conservados de cada edición: dado el sistema de
princeps as my base text and point of comparison for all other editions of the play, and explain in the
‘Editorial norms’ section below how my own version of the text relates to A.

The prefatory material shows that this Parte was given its aprobación by ‘Maestro Ioseph de Valdieuelse’ on
8 July 1636, and subsequently its licencia by Andrés Pérez de Vargas y Pulgar, ‘Inquisidor y Vicario general’
of Toledo, on 17 July 1636 in Madrid, two years before it was first printed. Its privilegio is dated 16 January
1638, and its fe de erratas 15 August 1638. Finally, its tassa is dated 23 August 1638. It was dedicated to don
Gutierre Domingo de Terán y Castañeda, ‘señor de la antigua Casa de Teran del valle de Yguna en las
Montañas de Burgos’, by Manuel de Faria y Sousa, a ‘Cauallero del Abito de Christo, y de la Casa Real’.
The parte was published by Pedro Coello through the printing house of María de Quiñones, a widow who
had inherited her husband, Pedro Madrigal’s, printing press when he died.224 She remarried to Juan de la
Cuesta, and in the last thirty five years of her life was extremely active in the printing business before her
death in 1669. The mercader de libros, Pedro Coello’s, prologue to the collection is an effusive homage to
Lope’s greatness as a dramatist, and is evidently influenced by the playwright’s comparatively recent
death. It is recorded that, after the Parte IX of his comedias was printed, Lope took an active interest in
their publication. This influence means that we can be more certain of his authorship of comedias in later
Partes. When the ban on the printing of comedias in Castile between 1625-34 was lifted, Lope obtained
privilegios for three more Partes, which he used to print Partes XXI and XXII before his death in 1635.225
His son-in-law Luis de Usátegui oversaw this, and Parte XXIII was the last collection of Lope’s plays in
which he could possibly have had a hand.226

A collection of plays containing Contra valor was also published later in 1638 by Iayme Romeu in
Barcelona [B]. None of the plays in this collection were attributed to any author, so Lope’s name does not

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224 For more on the work of María de Quiñones, see Casado, Diccionario de impresores españoles (Siglos XV-XVII), II,
225 See Dixon, Victor, ‘La intervención de Lope en la publicación de sus comedias’ in Anuario Lope de Vega, 2 (1996),
pp. 45-63.
226 See Moll, Jaime, ‘De la continuación de las partes de comedias de Lope de Vega a las partes colectivas’, en
Homenaje a Alonso Zamora Vicente, III, 2 (Madrid: Castalia, 1992), 119-211 (pp. 201-202).
appear beside *Contr' valor*. This compilation forms part of a long-running collection of *partes* listed by Profeti in her 1986 work, *La collezione 'Diferentes Autores'*.\(^{227}\) The printer is Iayme Romeu and the *mercader de libros* is Iuan Sapera. The *aprobación* for the collection is dated 22 June 1638 and granted by Fray Francisco Palau of the ‘orden de Predicadores’; the *licencia* is given by the ‘Comte de Santa Coloma’, and dated 8 November 1638. Both of these are written in Catalan, but the *dedicatoria al lector*, written by Dotor Francisco Toriuito Ximénez who collected the plays for publication (as stated on the title page), is in Castilian.

In terms of the main body of text the Barcelona 1638 is very similar to the Madrid edition. One point of interest is that the name of the youth whom Ciro orders to be flogged, which appears in the dialogue as ‘Fineo’, is rendered erroneously in the *dramatis personae* of both *A* and *B* as ‘Fileno’, despite appearing in the text of both as ‘Fineo’. This is a reasonable error, as Fineo’s part in the action is small (albeit significant in terms of plot development). Given that *B* probably took its material from *A*, the appearance of Fineo in Act I comes sufficiently later than the character list prefacing the play for it to be possible for the name not to be cross-checked.

Two lines are inserted into *B* that do not appear in *A*; immediately after l. 439 ‘que en diversas lenguas hablan’ during Bato’s speech about the power of wine in Act I, *B* contains the extra lines,

\[
\text{haze reuelar secretos,} \\
\text{que en los tormentos se callan}
\]

These undoubtedly fit with what Bato is saying, but they are not crucial to the comprehension of this speech. It is hard to tell exactly why they may have been inserted; perhaps they are the work of an over-zealous printer, or perhaps they were originally included in the play and have been inadvertently omitted from *A* but included in *B*. There is no evidence to show that they were employed elsewhere in Lope’s work, and they do not affect the *romance* verse form at this point.

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\(^{227}\) Profeti, Maria Grazia, *La collezione 'Diferentes Autores'* (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 1988), provides bibliographical descriptions of each *parte*, in addition to cataloguing where they can be found (see bibliography).
One line from $A$ is omitted in $B$: l. 751 in Act I, ‘que hoy en servirlos se emplea’. This comes at the end of a short speech from Ciro to Filis, and although it is not vital for the sense of the section it is necessary for the continuation of the [é-a] romance verse form at this stage (something I took into account when deciding to include it in my version of the text).

In addition to these more significant variations, there are some differences of orthography and some variations in vocabulary used at times, but none of them are vital to the meaning of the text as a whole. In general, the stage directions prove to be most variable in terms of wording and word order, but none of these variants is significant enough to affect interpretation of the text.

*Contra valor* was next printed in 1760 [C]. As the edition is a *suelta*, there is no prefatory material, but at the end of the play details are given as to the printer: ‘Con licencia: En Sevilla, en la Imprenta de JOSEPH PADRINO, Mercader de Libros, en calle de Genova.’

This version was combined by the nineteenth-century Spanish scholar John Rutter Chorley into a collection of different *sueltas* by Lope which he bound together, and which can be found in the British Library [11728.h.1.(6.)]. Chorley’s handwritten notes in Spanish appear prefacing each play in the collection, and Chorley notes in the margin any typographical errors he has observed.\(^{228}\) Significantly, he has prefaced this play with Justin’s source (in Latin) of the story. He notes that Herodotus also includes the account in his histories ‘con algunas diferencias de la de Justino’.\(^{229}\)

In textual terms, this 1760 *suelta* [C] generally follows the vocabulary and punctuation of the 1638 Madrid [*A*] (the extra lines found in $B$ are not present in $C$, for example), but there are differences of orthography between the two editions. The spelling of the 1760 is Latinized, with *ph* often being used instead of *f* (e.g. ‘Phaetonte’, I.91, and ‘delphin’, II.868), for instance. More notably, a large portion of thirty lines of the original text in Act I is omitted from this edition of the play. This comes at the end of the exchange.

\(^{228}\) See end of this section for reproduction of Chorley’s prefatory writings.

\(^{229}\) As we have seen, Menéndez y Pelayo, in the general introductory notes to his edition of Lope’s complete works for Rivadeneyra in 1896 claims that Herodotus is the main source for Lope (for more on this, see ‘History and Sources’).
between Flora and Filis (Act I, 335-64). It is possible that this was effected for reasons of economy in order to make the play fit perfectly onto fourteen leaves (twenty-eight sides of quarto), and, once made, the changes were adopted by the subsequent suelta printers as outlined below. Naturally, some of the fine psychological development of these two women is lost through omitting the conclusion of their interaction, but it does not detract at all from the development of the plot. This is one of the few places that such a substantial chunk of text could have been cut out without doing so, perhaps showing the sensitivity of the printers to the material, despite the constraints that forced such drastic measures in the first place.

Another section of around 10 lines in the same act is rewritten. The scene is that when Ciro and his friends are engaged in laddish horseplay, through which it becomes clear that Ciro is superior to his village friends in every test of skill and strength. Below, the original and the altered sections are shown with the differences highlighted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A, B, H, MyP:</th>
<th>C, D, E (text taken from C, although form followed by D and E (for more on these latter editions, see below):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ciro.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ay (mancebos) en el prado,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¿quien luche, corra, salte, ó quien esgrima?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A todos desanima</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu fuerça, ligerezà, y gentileza:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mas justo es coronarte la cabeça</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deste verde laurel, que embidie Apolo,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>por siempre vencedor, vnico y solo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyro.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ay (mancebos) en el prado,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quien luche, corra, salte, ó quien esgrima?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sì, que mi valor me anima</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>à la lucha valiente de mi espada.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bató</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y si te zurra?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No se me dá nada,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As we can see, this alteration of the text of the first printed edition takes the form, not only of insertion of lines, but also requires a rather subtle re-working of single words within lines that are not otherwise altered. It shows a deliberation that raises questions as to what the eighteenth-century printers were trying to achieve in making these changes. Perhaps by adding in the exchange between Bato and Riselo, C draws out the bantering, boyish nature of this scene, adding some extra comedy (with Bato’s blunt comment), or emphasizing yet further Ciro’s unrivalled prowess at the rustic sports in which he excels. This is all, of course, speculative, and it is likely that the layout of the text on the page played a large part in such alterations. Once again, though, we see a certain sympathy for the portion of text being modified.

Other examples where words or lines have been changed appear in this edition, but the final major alteration comes at the very end of the play. Below, the original and the altered sections are shown with the differences highlighted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A, B, H, MyP:</th>
<th>C, D, E:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ciro.</td>
<td>Ciro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y aquí dio fin el poeta,</td>
<td>Y aquí dio fin la Comedia,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>que aun vive para serviros,</td>
<td>Contra Valor no ay Desdicha,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a su historia verdadera</td>
<td>y el noble Hijo de la Perra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiado en vuestro valor,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>por que llamarse pudiera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contra valor no hay desdicha;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y el primero Rey de Persia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This change cuts out the lines about the play’s author still being alive to serve his public, which, incidentally, have been taken by Menéndez y Pelayo as evidence that *Contra valor* was written toward the end of Lope’s life. If this is the case, it would make sense that such a statement should be omitted from a suelta published over one hundred years after his death. The alteration of the last line is important, as *Contra valor* was also known as ‘Ciro, hijo de la perra’ (see ‘Dating and Authorship’). Such a citation of its alternative title here could indicate that the play was still in performance under another name, perhaps, although no evidence for this has been forthcoming.

Interestingly, although Chorley adds a note at the end of the suelta indicating that the play was first published in 1638 in Madrid, he does not make any reference to where C diverges from the first printed edition in his marginal notes.

A fourth edition of the play’s text was published in Barcelona in 1770 by Francisco Suriá y Burgada [D], held as a suelta in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid. Regarding orthography, the 1770 Barcelona is a combination of both of the other eighteenth-century editions; it does not show the Latinate spelling of C, but it has more updated orthography than E (see below), which follows very closely the norms of the first printed edition. However, the 1770 D follows C very closely in terms of content, and corresponds to C in every significant divergence from the first printed edition, even down to changes of single words. There are one or two instances where D shows unique variants, but these are so minor as to be probable mis-readings on the part of the printer rather than editorial decisions: for example, in Act I, 144 D reads ‘estoy discreto contigo’ rather than ‘si estoy discreto contigo’ as in all other editions.

A fifth edition of the play’s text was published in Barcelona in 1780 by Pedro Escuder [E]. This was also a suelta, bound into a collection to be found at the British Library [T.1738.(12.)]. It is a rather intriguing addition to the play’s textual journey, as in terms of spelling, punctuation and character titles it is the closest of all the editions mentioned so far to the Madrid 1638 (A), including the edition also published in 1638 in Barcelona (B). The 1780 edition E even reproduces an obvious spelling mistake from the original *dramatis personae* (‘Fileno’ instead of ‘Fineo’) which appeared in both editions A and B from 1638 and
which was corrected in the 1760 and 1770 *sueltas* C and D (respectively). Curiously, however, this 1780 edition E follows the same actual content of the other two eighteenth-century editions, C and D, with the same major omissions and additions to the text, as mentioned above. It is as though the editor of 1780 has gone to the most recent edition (that of 1760) for his text, while simultaneously adopting the typographical and presentational features of the *princeps*. Although the text of this edition E finishes on the recto side of the last page (rather than being perfectly fitted to the verso as with the 1760 C), on the verso side, the printer has included a number of other *sueltas* printed by him, prefaced by the words, ‘NOTICIA DE LAS COMEDIAS, QUE SE HALLAN en Barcelona, en la Imprenta de Pedro Escuder, en la calle Condal, impressas en su misma Imprenta’. This is perhaps the reason for retaining the omissions of the 1760 C in order to fit the material onto the right number of pages.

There are many instances where all three eighteenth-century editions agree in their differences from the base text; however, where differences between the eighteenth-century editions do exist, these are most often between [C and D] against [E].

The most recent editions to be published include a version of the play produced by Eugenio Hartzenbusch for Rivadeneyra in 1857 (reprinted by the Biblioteca de Autores Españoles in 1950), [H], and Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo’s edition for the Real Academia Española in 1896 (reprinted by Atlas in 1966), [MyP]. The format of the text is altered significantly in Hartzenbusch’s edition, with acts divided into numbered scenes and more elaborate stage directions inserted, as was his wont. It uses A as a base text, but updates the orthography and considerably changes the punctuation. MyP includes some introductory notes and also alters the stage directions slightly, but does not utilise H’s structure and scene division. Menéndez y Pelayo’s edition is evidently influenced by the earlier H edition, as evidenced by their correlation in terms of stage directions, and at least one instance where Hartzenbusch’s straightforward misreading of a word is also present in MyP (Act I, 619 ‘la fría zona’ H MyP, versus ‘la Frigia zona’, A B C D E. For more on this, see end note to this line).
As I have mentioned, the two nineteenth-century editors of the play, Menéndez y Pelayo and Hartzenbusch, have both made significant alterations to such features as stage directions and asides, one area where my edition certainly diverges from their version of the text. The comparatively sparse stage directions of the original are, I feel, sufficient to convey the information necessary for a reader or director of this play to have a mental image of what should or could be happening onstage. This is especially true given that, as we have seen, much stage direction in Golden Age theatre was provided through the text itself. In this respect, I am following more modern, sensitive tendencies in the editing of Golden Age drama, which have developed over the last century. Editors of note such as Dixon and McGrady also employ this approach, as does the ProLope group in Barcelona.

To give an example, in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editions of Contra valor, the first act is prefaced by the stage direction: ‘Sale Ciro en abito de Villano, y Mitridates Ganadero viejo.’ Hartzenbusch however embellishes this somewhat, preceding Act I with, ‘La acción pasa en la corte de Astiñges y en otros puntos’, before going on to add: ‘Prado y arboleda cercanos á un pueblo. ESCENA PRIMERA. CIRO Y MITRIDATES, los dos en hábito de villanos.’ MyP strikes a balance somewhere between the two with ‘Ciro y Mitridates, los dos en hábito de villanos’.

It is interesting to note that neither of the two most recent editors have taken on board the fact that Mitridates is described as a ‘ganadero viejo’ in the first stage direction of the original edition, a fact which immediately tells us about his age and occupation in a much more specific way than merely that he is dressed as a peasant (in fact, a feature which in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editions is ascribed only to Ciro). This is despite the fact that Hartzenbusch adds in details of his own, admittedly developed from a reading of the play, but not to be found in the editio princeps.

There are various possible reasons for this. To his mind, Hartzenbusch may have been catering to a different audience than Lope, or the first printer of the play. Hartzenbusch perhaps felt that the modern reader, lacking the visual spectacle of the play in performance, is in need of more information for a full enjoyment of the play than merely the relatively sparse stage directions of the original. He may also have
it in mind that a theatre company producing the play for the stage needs such details too (despite the fact that such a company would doubtless read the play carefully for themselves and make such decisions as were necessary regarding the extraneous detail). The net result, however, is that the reader of the play is fed a mental image of the scenery which is informed by details provided by the editor, not the author.

As shown here, Hartzenbusch’s treatment of the stage directions of the original is also inconsistent in terms of the amount of information conveyed. He embellishes the text with background detail about the setting of the scene, but, on the other hand, at times he omits details about individual characters, despite the brevity and the simple descriptive effectiveness of the original stage directions.
Having examined the approaches of past editors of the play, I shall now outline my own editorial norms for this edition. They include:

- Modernization of the orthography (including expansion of assimilations), insofar as the phonology of the words is not affected by such action.
- Modernization of punctuation, accentuation and use of capitals.
- Expansion of abbreviations (including the abbreviation of character names).
- Placing the speech of different speakers on different lines when more than one speaker shares just one verse.
- Evident misprints corrected without being noted.
- Verses numbered in groups of five, signalling verses with half indentation.
- Theatrical asides indicated in parentheses.
- Moments where my edition has amended the text of the princeps because it did not give a satisfactory reading are listed in footnotes.

Not having a manuscript upon which to base my edition of the text, I have worked closely with the printed first edition of the work, taking into account the work of the later editors, Hartzenbusch and Menéndez y Pelayo. On the whole, however, I have attempted to bring the text back to a version more closely related to the 1638 first edition than these later editions. This was especially pertinent in relation to the stage directions, which had been altered significantly by the nineteenth-century editors: my edition uses mainly the stage directions of the editio princeps, and those which have been altered are noted.

I should make clear, however, that the definitive version of my text in this edition does not correspond exactly to the princeps. Much of the punctuation in the early printed editions is not natural to the modern reader. This is added to the orthography of early modern Spanish, which, although not overly problematic
to modern eyes is neither of any real advantage in the context of a critical edition. Furthermore, at some points the reading of the princeps was not satisfactory from a grammatical or logical point of view (Act I, l. 202 and l. 791, for example), and I have amended these moments in my edition, mentioning in the footnotes where I do so.

It is evident from these comments that I have made the decision to modernize both the punctuation and orthography of my edition of the text. This is based on careful consideration of the relative merits of both conservation and modernization, informed by a reading of various scholars on the theory of the critical edition. Arellano, Cañedo and others have made a strong case for the modernization of text for a number of reasons including those I have just outlined. It is also the strategy adopted by the editorial group ProLope for their new series of editions of the complete works of Lope de Vega.

It has been mooted in the past that preservation of the original punctuation, orthography and even format could be of interest to textual or linguistic historians, but as Arellano points out, such specialists will not use a palaeographic edition as their source material, they will rather go to the original document. This point is particularly pertinent in this age of the internet, as I have found in my own research, being able to look up a digital facsimile of an early printed edition held in a library in Madrid from my own desk here in Oxford. That said, although it is easy to go to the facsimile of an original document online, this ease does mean that more people are looking at the same single copy. Thus, it is crucial that modernizing the play text does not mean omitting to include textual variants in the critical apparatus of an edition, because that way, the full range of variants is easily accessible to readers who might be interested in (but unable to access) as many copies as the editor has done.

The decision to modernize does, however, create a dilemma: which of the changes made for the modern text should be chronicled in the edition? To record every change made would be too cumbersome for the

230 For more on these issues of orthography and punctuation, see Arellano, Ignacio, ‘La edición de textos teatrales del Siglo de Oro. Notas sueltas sobre el estado de la cuestión (1980-1990)’ in La comedia, ed. J. Canavaggio (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1995), 13-50 (pp. 36-42).
edition, and so I have decided not to record those changes which relate to punctuation, orthography and 
the expansion of abbreviations, unless they have significant bearing on the meaning of the text.
Bibliographic Description of 1638 Madrid edition of Parte XXIII [A]

British Library 11726.l.6

Title Page:

Format:
8+A-Nn8 (+Oo4r) $4 signed

Pagination:

233 Intricate crest, shield design surrounded by feather or waves motif. Crest divided into four parts. Top left: box with alternating diagonal (top left-bottom right) dark and light stripes surrounded by three larger and two smaller heads of creatures with forked tongues, possibly some sort of reptile. Top right of crest divided into two: on left, a cross motif with a curling design at each point; on right, what appears to be a severed left hand spurting blood at the wrist above a circular motif containing curved lines. Bottom left, diagonal stripes (top left-bottom right) containing what looks rather like a clover with a feathery stem. Bottom right, what could be a staircase seen straight on, or the edge of a cog, beside a two-pronged flag, and a pot with a handle. Between the bottom two sections of crest, a smaller crest appears, again split into four parts. The top two have five dots (L) and five leaves (R) (arranged as on a die). The bottom left has a tree with what resembles a four-legged creature underneath, and the bottom right has two heads of dogs or reptiles (similar to others on crest) pulling something in opposite directions.
Technical Notes:

Catchwords appear regularly at the lower right-hand corner of each page, even on unsigned pages.

Type employed: Roman - upper case 3mm, lower case 2mm; 40 lines

The page layout varies between one and two columns per page, with two columns being the most common format. One column = up to 70 mm approx.; two columns = up to 55 mm approx. per column.

This variation seems to be for reasons of space in accordance with line length, with metres containing hendecasyllabic lines appearing in one column, and metres containing less syllables formatted in two columns.

Woodcut initial ‘E’ on P8r

Woodcut patterned lines at start of play and for division of acts (A1r, A7r, B7r); woodcut pattern in a diamond shape (square with one triangle pointing outwards on each flat side) at end of play (C6r). This occurs throughout the volume.

Leaf size (having been cut and rebound at least once): approximately 190 x 140 mm.

Binding: Brown leather, raised bands on spine, with gilt lettering: "LOPE DE VEGA | COMEDIAS' on a red background and "PARTE XXIII" on a green background in the upper section of the spine, and a small ‘1638’ in the lower section. Not original binding, with the (?binder’s) name ‘Cedric Chivers. 1991’ in small gilt letters on inside back cover.

Contents:

P1r Title page

P2r List of contents ‘Titulos de las Comedias deste Tomo.'
P2º Suma del privilegio:

Tiene Priuilegio Luis de Vsastigui, por tiempo de diez años, para poder imprimir este libro intitulado la veinte y tres parte de Frey Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, que son doze Comedias, con las penas contenidas en el dicho priuilegio à la persona ó personas que en el dicho tiempo le imprimieren sin su licencia. De que dá fe Francisco de Arrieta Escrituano de Camara del Rey nuestro señor. Dada en el Pardo a 16. de Enero de 1638.

Suma de la Tassa.

Los Señores del Consejo tassaron este libro intitulado la 23. parte de Frey Lope Felix de Vega Carpio á cinco marauedis cada pliego, el qual tiene 75. pliegos, que al dicho precio monta onze reales en papel, como parece por la Fè que dello dio Francisco de Arrieta Escrituano de Camara. En Madrid a 23. de Agosto de 1638.

Fe de erratas.

Este Libro intitulado la veinte y tres parte de Comedias de Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, está bié y fielmente impresso con su original. En Madrid a quinze de Agosto de 1638.

El Licenciado Murcia de la Llana.

P3º Licencia del Ordinario.

Nos el Licenciado Andres Perez de Vargas y Pulgar, Inquisidor y Vicario general de la Ciudad Arçobispado de Toledo, juez de residencia de la Audiencia Arçobispal desta Villa de Madrid, y Vicario general della y su partido. Por la presente, por lo que a nos toca, damos licencia para que se pueda imprimir, y imprima el libro intitulado, doze Comedias exemplares, compuesto por Frey Lope de Vega Carpio, atento nos consta no ay en él cosa contra nuestra santa Fè Catolica, y buenas costumbres. Dada en Madrid à diez y seis dias del mes de Iulio de mil seisientos y treinta y seis años.

El Licenciado Perez de Vargas y Pulgar.

Por su mandado, || Diego de Ribas.

P3º Aprobacion del Maestro Josep de Valdiuelso.

Estas doze Comedias que me remitio el señor Licenciado Perez de Vargas y Pulgar Vicario general en el Arçobispado de Toledo, y que escriuio Frey Lope de Vega Carpio, he leido con respeto y ternura, porque le admirè viuo, y le venero muerto: por portento de los ingenios, y ingenio con dudas de impossible en todas edades: cuyas alabanças no son deste lugar, ni de mi estudio, deste lugar, porque es de censura de mi estudio, porque me confieso poco Orador, à varon tanto. Y solo digo, que sus versos son su fama, y su nôbre su inmortalidad; y que no hallo en ellas cosa no ajustada à la verdad Catolica de nuestra sagrada Religion, y que todas se encaminan à la reformacion de las costumbres, si se saben desfrutar sus auisos, desengaños, y escarmientos: por lo que merece Luis de Isastigui su yerno la licencia que suplica. Este es mi parecer, Saluo, &c. En Madrid 8. de Iulio 1636.

El Maestro Josep de Valdiuelso.
P4v–P7v A Don Gutierre Domingo de Teran y Castañeda…

P8v Prologo

A (fol.1) Contra valor no hay desdicha

C6v (fol.22) Las Batuecas del Duque de Alva

F8v (fol.42) Las Cuentas del gran Capitan

K1v (fol.73) El Piadoso Veneciano

M8v (fol. 96) Porfiar hasta morir

P6v (fol. 118) El Robo de Dina

S8v (fol. 156) El Saber puede dañar

X7v (fol. 179) La Embriaguez de la Nobleza

Bb2v (fol.206) Los Pleitos de Inglaterra

Ec2v (fol.230) Los palacios de Galiana

Hh6v (fol. 258) Dios haze Reyes

Ll5v (fol. 281) El saber por no saber, y vida se S. Iulian, de Alacala de Henares.
**Bibliographic Description of 1638 Barcelona edition (Diferentes Autores)** [B]

**British Library 11725.d.12**

**Title Page:**

PARTE | TREYNTA | VNA, DE LAS | MEIORES COME- | DIAS, QVE HASTA OY | han salido.

| RECOGIDAS POR EL DOTOR FRAN- | cisco Torriuio Ximenez. Y a la fin va la Comedia de Santa Madrona, | intitulada la viuda tirana, y conquista de Barcelona. | 71. | Año, [crest divided horizontally with a pear (?fig) tree at the top, and three pears on a branch with four leaves at the bottom] 1638. | CON LICENCIA, Y PRIVILEGIO, | En Barcelona: En la Emprenta de Iayme Romeu, de- | lante de Santiago. | A costa de Iuan Sapera Mercader de libros.²³⁴

**Format:**

4+A-Nn8 (+Oo2v) $4$ signed [except S (S1 only signed, followed by blank, followed by T); Ii (Ii1 and Ii2 only signed, followed by two blanks, followed by Kk); Oo (Oo1 only signed followed by blank)]

**Pagination:**


**Technical Notes:**

Catchwords appear regularly at the lower right-hand corner of each page, even on unsigned pages.

**Type employed:** Roman upper case 3mm, lower case 2mm; 40 lines.

²³⁴ This transcription corresponds exactly with that which appears in Profeti’s *Diferentes Autores*, p. 99. Profeti describes the crest as that of ‘J. Sapera’.
The page layout varies between one and two columns per page, with two columns being the most common format. One column = up to 80 mm approx.; two columns = up to 55 mm approx. per column.

This variation seems to be for reasons of space in accordance with line length, with hendecasyllabic lines appearing in one column, and lines with fewer syllables formatted in two columns.

**Leaf size:** approximately 202mm x 150mm.

**Binding:** Vellum binding, library marking on spine (‘11725’ on upper part, ‘d12’ on lower.) Two string knots protruding through front and back covers near open edge.

**Contents:**

P1r Title page

P1v Blank, with British Museum stamp and pencil markings in a circular format, ‘11 46 13 136’ (clockwise from 9 o’clock)

P2r List of contents ‘Titulos de las Comedias.’

P2v ‘Lo Comte de santa Coloma’

P3v- Aprobación

P4v Dedicatoria al lector.

P4v Blank

A1r – C5r (fol. 1) La gran Comedia de darles con la entretenida.

D1r [sic C signatures abnormal] (fol. 22) La gran Comedia de con quien vengo vengo.

G4r (fol. 49) La gran Comedia de zelos, honor, y cordura.

I8v (fol. 69) La gran Comedia de contra valor no ay desdicha.

M5v (fol. 90) La gran Comedia de silencio agradecido.

P4v (fol. 113) La gran Comedia del Conde de Sex.

T1r (fol. 136) La grã Comedia del valeroso Aristomenes Messenio.
X6v (fol. 157) La gran Comedia del valiente negro en Flandes.

Aa4v (fol. 179) La gran Comedia de los amotinados en Flandes.

Dd3r (fol. 202) La grã Comedia de santa Ysabel Reyna de Portugal.

Gg2r (fol. 225) La gran Comedia de los trabajos de Iob.

Kk1r (fol. 244) La gran Comedia de la viuda, y muerte de santa Madrona, intitulada la Viuda Tirana, y conquista de Barcelona.
Bibliographic Description of 1760 Sevilla suelta [C]
(with manuscript notes by J. R. Chorley)

British Library – 11728.h.1.(6.)

WHOLE VOLUME:

Title Page:
COLECCION DE COMEDIAS SUELTAS, con algunos Autos y Entremeses, DE LOS MEJORES INGENIOS DE ESPAÑA, DE LOPE DE VEGA HASTA COMELLA, hecha y ordenada por I. R. C. TOMO I. (Pte 1ª) LOPE FELIX DE VEGA CARPIO. [handwritten]

Pagination:
1 pastedown (?) + 11 leaves (prefatory material, handwritten) + 17 plays, each prefaced by one to two pages of handwritten notes (all either sueltas or taken from larger collections, therefore of varying pagination) + 1 pastedown.

Contents:
'Tabla de las piezas contenidas en este 1r Tomo. Parte 1ª

LOPE DE VEGA Pte I.

Angelica en el Catay. † {Fragmento de la Pte VIII de las C. de L., Barcelona 1617}

La boba para los otros, y discreta para sí.

Bernardo del Carpio: - Las mocedades de Bernardo el Carpio.
- El casamiento en la muerte. †

El castigo sin venganza. (Fragm.º de un libro de C. publº en Lisboa. 1647)

Contra valor no ay desdicha.
Dineros son calidad.

Las doncellas de Simancas.

La fianza satisfecha.

La fuerza lastimosa.†

Los Guanches de Tenerife: y conquista de las Canarias. † (MS.)

Los milagros del desprecio.

El molino.†

Obras son amores, y no buenas razones.†

El perro del hortelano.† (ó Amar por ver amar.)

Sembrar en buena tierra (Fragm.° de la Pte X. de Lope. Madrid 1618)

Valor, lealtad y ventura de los Tellos de Menses. Ptes I y II.

Las señaladas con una † se hallan en la lista de Comedias que insertó Lope en el prólogo de su ‘Peregrino’ - Madrid. 1604. - y después (añadida,) en 1618.
**Technical Notes for Contra valor no hay desdicha** [NB not entire collection]:

The copy of the play that features in this collection is a *suelta*; at the top right hand corner of the title page appears ‘Num. 219’.

**Title page:**

[TOP RIGHT] Num. 219  
[CENTRE] COMEDIA FAMOSA. | CONTRA VALOR | NO AY DESDICHA. | DE LOPE DE VEGA CARPIO. | Hablan en ella las Personas siguientes.

Cyro.  
Arpago.  
El Rey Astiages.  
Evandro.

Fineo.  
Albano.  
Filis.  
Flora, villana.

Bato, Gracioso.  
Mitridates.  
Riselo.  
Silvio.

JORNADA PRIMERA.

[…Play begins.]

**Format:**

1+A-D2 $2 signed [except D (D only signed, followed by blank for leaf on which play ends)]

14 leaves, each side numbered 1-28 in top outer corner of page.

**Catchwords** appear regularly at the lower right-hand corner of each page, even on unsigned pages.

**Font:** Roman - upper case 2mm, lower case 1mm; 52 lines.

The page layout is consistently two columns per page varying between 35-55 mm approx. per column.

**Leaf size** (having been cut and rebound at least once): approximately 145x210mm.
**Binding:** Nineteenth-century binding: red leather with gilt edges, raised bands on spine. From top to bottom of spine: library mark ‘11728’; gilt lettering: "COMEDIAS SUELTAS | Tom I. | LOPE DE VEGA | PTE | I.’; library mark ‘h1’. Marbled paper on front and back outside cover, and same marbled pastedown on inside covers.

*Ms. notes prefacing play (J. R. Chorley):*

“Contra valor no ay desdicha.

En el argumento de esta hermosa comedia sigue Lope á Justino; (Hist. Philipp. Lib. I.C.4.5.6) cuyas palabras son:-


Cuenta Heródoto esta historia con algunas diferencias de la de Justino. Aquel, (Clio. c.107-130) dize que Cambyses fue noble Persiano: - y que Cyro, en vez de perdonar á su abuelo, le echó en prisiones, en que quedó mientras vivía.

Va esta Comedia en el Tomo XXIII de las Comedias de Lope. Madr. 1638.
At end of play [printed]:

Con licencia: En Sevilla, en la Imprenta de JOSEPH PADRINO, Mercader de Libros, en calle de Genova.

[Finishes perfectly on page 28 (at the end of a verso side of fourteen leaves).]
Bibliographical description of the 1770 Barcelona suelta [D]

Author’s own copy.\textsuperscript{235}

Technical notes

This is a suelta; at the top right hand corner of the first page appears ‘Num. 163’.

Title page:

[TOP RIGHT] Num. 163

[CENTRE] COMEDIA FAMOSA. | CONTRA VALOR NO HAY DESDICHA. | DE LOPE DE VEGA CARPIO. | HABLAN LAS PERSONAS SIGUIENTES.


El Rey Astiages. Filis. Riselo.


JORNADA PRIMERA

[…Play begins.]

Format:

A-D2v $2 signed

14 leaves.

Catchwords appear regularly at the lower right-hand corner of each page, even on unsigned pages.

\textsuperscript{235} The 1770 Barcelona suelta (printed by Francisco Suriá y Burgada) [D], is also held in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid [T-5.011; T-14.802-8; T-14.809-16; T-14.970].
Type employed: Roman - upper case 2mm, lower case 1mm; 51 lines.

The page layout is consistently two columns per page, varying between approx. 50-65mm per column.

Leaf size: 147x260mm.

Binding: None; this is an unbound *suelta*, although there is evidence that it has been previously bound with other plays and subsequently separated.
Bibliographical description of the 1780 Barcelona suelta [E]

*British Library T.1738.(12.)*

**Binding:** Brown material on front and back covers embossed with crown in middle of front cover only. Reddish-brown leather spine with gilt bands, and ‘TRACTS.’ written in second section from top, on a bright red leather background. In the section below that, ‘1738.’ Appears in a black oval, the border of which is a gilt line surrounded by small gilt dots.

Collection of *sueltas* (no prefatory material). Handwritten numbers in pencil appear at the top right hand corner of the first page of each play:

**Contents:**

P1r - 2r Blank

P2v ‘T1738’ written in blue colouring pencil (library mark)

P3r Blank

P3v ‘13MMh’ written above ‘1738’ in lead pencil.

1. El animal de Ungría
2. El animal de Ungría (two copies)
3. Antes que te cases, mira lo que haces, y examen de maridos
4. Arauco domado (handwritten title page, ‘Comedias de Lope de Vega perteneciente a el tomo 20’)
5. Las bizarrias de Belisa
6. La boba para los otros y discreta para sí
7. La boba para los otros y discreta para sí
8. La boba para los otros y discreta para sí
9. La buscona, o El anzuelo de Fenisa
10. La buscona, o El anzuelo de Fenisa
11. El casamiento en la muerte, y hechos de Bernardo del Carpio
12. Contra valor no hay desdicha

13. La creación del mundo, y primer culpa del hombre

14. La dama melindrosa

15. David perseguido, y montes de Gelboe

16. David perseguido, y montes de Gelboe

17. El desprecio agradecido

18. Dineros son calidad

19. Dineros son calidad

20. Las donzellas de Simancas

21. La escalava de su galan

22. La escalava de su galan

23. El ejemplo mayor de la desdicha, y Capitan Belisario

24. El ejemplo mayor de la desdicha, y Capitan Belisario

25. La fianza satisfecha

26. La fuerza lastimosa

27. La fuerza lastimosa

28. La hermosa fea

29. El Luzero de Castilla, y Luna de Aragon (de Luys Velez de Guevara) [last two pages handwritten]

Technical Notes for *Contra valor no hay desdicha* [NB not the entire collection in this volume]:

**Format:**

A-D4 §2 signed; 16 leaves (1-12, 16, 14, 15, 13, 17-29, 18, 19) [the last two are numbered wrong; previous numerical mix up is because the pages have been bound in the wrong order]

The copy of the play that features in this collection is a *suelta*, at the top right hand corner of the title page appears ‘Fol. I’
Title Page:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Rey Astiages.</td>
<td>Filis Dama.</td>
<td>Riselo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Catchwords appear regularly at the lower right-hand corner of each page, even on unsigned pages.

Type employed: Roman - upper case 3mm, lower case 2mm; 48 lines.

The page layout is consistently two columns per page up to 60 mm approx. per column.

Leaf size (having been cut and rebound at least once): approximately 145x205mm.

On recto side of sixteenth leaf, the play ends in top third of page. Below is written:

‘CON LICENCIA. Barcelona: En la Imprenta de PEDRO ESCUDER, en la calle Condal, En donde se hallaran Libros, Comedias, Historias, Romances, Relaciones, y otros diferentes Papeles muy curiosos.’

On verso side of sixteenth leaf, the page is filled with an advertisement for other sueltas by various authors published by Pedro Escuder’s print house:
‘NOTICIA DE LAS COMEDIAS, QUE SE HALLAN en Barcelona, en la Imprenta de Pedro Escuder,
en la calle Condal, impressas en su misma Imprenta.

Afectos de odio, y amor
Agradecer, y o amar.
Amor vencido de amor.
Antes que todo es mi Dama.
Antioco, y Seleuco, o a buen Padre mejor Hijo.
A secreto agravio, secreta vanganza.
Bernardo del Carpio en Francia.
Cumplirle a Dios la palabra
[...] La vida es sueño

[...] Yo me entiendo, y Dios me entiende.’
CONCLUSION

Before producing a critical edition of Contra valor no hay desdicha, the decision first had to be made over whether it was ‘worth’ editing. At first glance, the work shows potential: a fast-paced and gripping plot is populated with strong characters, and the inspiring maxim of the title contributes an easily identifiable ethos to the play. However, its merit does not lie merely in its value as a comedia. It is not simply a Spanish Golden Age play; it is a Lope play. This I feel I have proved through my analysis of the versification, linguistic features, and vocabulary of Contra valor, in addition to the various themes and characters which have the ‘ring’ of Lope about them. In fact, as this critical study of Contra valor no hay desdicha has shown, the play fits extremely comfortably within Lope’s corpus.

Lope’s use of the source materials from both Herodotus and Justin and his development thereof shows an appreciation of the entertainment value afforded by the plot, but the emphasis on kingship within it indicates an underlying seriousness of purpose. His contrasting portrayal of the two monarchs, Ciro and Astiages, is an exemplar of the dangers of the negative aspects of ‘bad’ kingship, and the positive effects of ‘good’ kingship, not just for the individuals concerned but also for their kingdom, and this aim outweighs the demands of historical accuracy. Yet Lope does not fall into the trap of caricature and, as we have seen, Ciro’s character is problematic enough to warrant scrutiny and careful consideration of the messages encoded in this drama. Although a lack of awareness or attention to the political points he makes does not detract from the potential entertainment value of the play itself, a consciousness of them can only serve to enhance our appreciation of Lope’s subtlety and skill as a playwright, as well as adding another dimension to our own reception of the work. Through the medium of a drama based on a mythical tale and set centuries previously, Lope is able to make relevant general points about the political situation of his day. Its relevance and importance for modern scholarship on kingship in Lope is also clear.

The position of Lope de Vega within the study of Golden Age drama makes him one of the most influential playwrights in Spanish literature. However, due to the prolific nature of his output and the
popularity and success of a small number of his more well-known plays, some have been overlooked.

This edition of *Contra valor* contributes towards redressing this balance.

*Contra valor no hay desdicha* is a compelling and engaging play on many levels, but its value goes beyond simply entertainment to embrace the sphere of political comment, the interplay between historicity and diversion, and a presentation of psychologically plausible characters. It is the work of one of the most celebrated craftsmen of the Golden Age *comedia*, and this fact lends it weight and significance that outstrip even its intrinsic merit as a dramatic piece.
Contra valor no hay desdicha

Lope de Vega

PERSONAS

CIRO.
ARPAGO.
EL REY ASTIAGES.
EVANDRO.
FINEO.
ALBANO.
FILIS, dama.
FLORA, villana.
BATO, gracioso.
MITRIDATES.
RISELO.
SILVIO.
UN CAPITÁN.
UN CRIADO.
VILLANOS.
MÚSICOS.
SOLDADOS.
ACOMPAÑAMIENTO.

Acto primero

Sale Ciro en hábito de villano, y Mitridates, ganadero viejo.

MITRIDATES
Quitarte tengo la vida.

CIRO
Tened, padre, la cayada;\textsuperscript{237}
que la sufro, levantada,
pero no podré caída.\textsuperscript{238}

MITRIDATES
¿Tú tienes atrevimiento
para responderme así?

CIRO
Más sufrimiento hay en mí,
que hay en vos entendimiento.\textsuperscript{239}

\textsuperscript{236} Menéndez y Pelayo (Introduction to \textit{Contra valor no hay desdicha} in \textit{Obras completas de Lope de Vega}, 6, (Madrid: RAE, 1896), 80-95) rendered this name ‘Mitridates’, but it is clear from certain occurrences within the dialogue of Act II (1138-43; 1188-89) that the original ‘Mitridates’ of the 1638 version is preferable for metrical reasons.\textsuperscript{6}


\textsuperscript{238} Note the dramatic irony in lines 2-4 here, with the endings ‘cayada…levantada…caída’. Ciro is born to power, and these lines gesture toward that even at this early stage in the play.
MITRIDATES

A cabóse: ya perdiste
la vergüenza; mas ¿perder,
Ciro, cómo puede ser,
cosa que nunca tuviste?240

Ciro, déme la causa que vos
me distes de mal tratar,
si este valor natural

Acabóse: ya perdiste
la vergüenza; mas ¿perder,
Ciro, cómo puede ser,
cosa que nunca tuviste?240

Ciro, déme la causa que vos
me distes de mal tratar,
si este valor natural

CIRO

¿Qué causa os he dado yo
para tratarme tan mal,
si este valor natural241

¿Qué causa os ha dado yo
para tratarme tan mal,
si este valor natural241

connigo mismo nací?

¡Un honrado pensamiento,242
que me habéis de agradecer,
viene con vos a perder

¡Un honrado pensamiento,242
que me habéis de agradecer,
viene con vos a perder

su justo merecimiento!

Padre, no penséis que vos
solo mi artífice fuistes,243
porque si el cuerpo me distes,
os infinites almas Dios.

Este pensamiento honrado
nace del alma; y así,
lo que Dios infunde en mí,
¿cómo puede ser culpado?

Este pensamiento honrado
nace del alma; y así,
lo que Dios infunde en mí,
¿cómo puede ser culpado?

Corta un escultor un leño
y señala una figura,
que acabar después procura
por las líneas del diseño.

Este leño os debo a vos,
figura muda y en calma;
que la perfección del alma,

Este leño os debo a vos,
figura muda y en calma;
que la perfección del alma,

sólo se la debo a Dios.244

Sí traigo de la ciudad
algunos libros que leo,
decís que mi vida empleo

Sí traigo de la ciudad
algunos libros que leo,
decís que mi vida empleo

en tan loca vanidad;

en tan loca vanidad;

y hombre de bien os ofendo.

¿Todo ha de ser cultivar
la tierra y seguir dos bueyes?

¿Todo ha de ser cultivar
la tierra y seguir dos bueyes?

¿No tienen los dioses leyes

¿No tienen los dioses leyes

239 vos: Ciro uses the usual form of address between family members in the Golden Age comedia with Mitridates, who addresses him as tú.

240 This implies that Ciro has grown up with ideas above his station, the ‘vergüenza’ of which Mitridates speaks being more to do with a sense of humility rather than shame. As the audience soon suspects, however, the attitude that his adoptive father Mitridates sees as arrogance actually stems from the fact that Ciro possesses an innate nobility which is coming to the fore.

241 For an exploration of this key term ‘valor’, see ‘The Play’s Title’; for more on Ciro’s inherently regal nature, see ‘Kingship’.


243 Ciro reminds Mitridates that he is not solely responsible for Ciro’s life: he may have given Ciro his physical form (an ironic statement, given the later revelation that Mitridates is not his biological father), but his soul has been imparted by God.

244 These lines prefigure the well-known speech in Calderón’s El alcalde de Zalamea (ed. Valbuena-Briones, 2007) wherein Pedro Crespo, articulating his beliefs about his own intrinsic ‘honor’, says: ‘Al Rey la hazienda, y la vida | se ha de dar; pero el honor | es patrimonio del alma, | y el alma sólo es de Dios.’ (Act I, 874-76).
para saberlos honrar?
¿No es bien saber los secretos
naturales de las cosas
a la labranza forzosas
para acertar los efectos?
¿Qué se pierde por saber
el celestial movimiento?

MITRIDATES
Ese desvanecimiento,
Ciro, te ha echado a perder.
Esas guerras que has leído,
y esos amores, te han hecho
caballero a mi despecho,
y por tu daño, arrevido.
Todas estas caserías
quieres gobernar; muy necio,
haces de todos desprecio:
tales pensamientos crías.
Vive Filis esta aldea,
de Arpago hermana, privado
del Rey, por no dar cuidado
a su madrastra Dantea;
y siendo tan principal,
las sirves, y eres contrario
de nuestro príncipe Dario:
¿puede haber locura igual?

CIRO
Padre, si a Filis servi,
no toda la culpa fue
mía; que no la miré
sin que me mirase a mí.
Nace de habernos criado
juntos este noble amor.

MITRIDATES
Tan grande competidor,
Ciro, me pone en cuidado;
que el peligro a que te pones
es el que debo temer.

CIRO
Yo me sabré defender
con excusar ocasiones
en que le pueda dar celos.

MITRIDATES
De tu discreción lo fío.

MITRIDATES
Id seguro, padre mío.

Guarden tu vida los cielos.

Vase.

245 te ha echado a perder: ‘has ruined you’.
246 Filis: a name often used by Lope in his poetry, and associated with Elena Osorio, with whom he had an affair in the 1580s. Its connotations are pastoral, in keeping with these sections of the play. See also ‘Characterization’ section. The preposition ‘en’ is missing in this line, in accordance with the demands of meter, although vivir was at times used with a direct object (see Act III, l. 2381, ‘Vive la fúnebre tumba’). chorley has added ‘en’ at this point as a manuscript marginal note on the 1760 suelta [C] of Contra valor held in the British Library (see ‘Other Editions’).
247 privado: office of the king’s adviser, of importance in seventeenth-century Spain, especially given the controversy surrounding the advisers of King Philip III and Philip IV, and their perceived influence over their monarch. See ‘Kingship’.
248 Dario: A reference to Darius I (‘The Great’), who became king of Persia from 522-486 BC, after Cyrus’ death. Although in modern Spanish the name is usually rendered as ‘Darío’, for metrical reasons the unaccented ‘Dario’ is used throughout this play.
Las altas luces, despeñado en ellas,\(^{249}\)
para que con sus rayos se confronte,
en el carro del sol pisó Faetonte\(^{250}\)
con los diamantes de sus ruedas bellas.

Del fulgurante ardor formó querellas\(^{251}\)
del Eridano claro el horizonte,\(^{252}\)
viendo correr por el celeste monte
extraño sol, atropellando estrellas.

Así, mi dulce pensamiento honrado,\(^{253}\)
¿quién te podrá negar que al sol subiste,
aunque mueras de Filis abrasado?\(^{254}\)
Con gloria mueres si atrevido fuiste;
pues ya que no eres sol, has confirmado,
muerto en el cielo, que del sol naciste.\(^{255}\)

*Sale Bato, villano.*

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\(^{249}\) *despeñado*: ‘thrown down headlong’ (*M*). The insertion of a sonnet here not only heralds a change in the action onstage, but also gives us an example of Ciro’s educated and intelligent mode of speech, which would have been incongruous with his peasant status in the view of the audience and therefore an important clue as to his true, noble origins. See ‘Verseification’.

\(^{250}\) This is a reference to the Greek myth concerning Phaëton (meaning ‘shining’), the son of Helios and his mistress Clymene. Phaëton approaches the sun, Helios, seeking confirmation that he is his true father. To dispel his son’s doubts, Helios swears by the River Styx that he will give Phaëton anything he requests. The young boy quickly but naively asks permission to drive the sun’s chariot for a day, with catastrophic results. He is unable to manage the horses, and large swathes of the earth are burnt as the chariot careers out of control. Phaëton is finally killed by the thunderbolts of Jupiter in an effort to stop the trail of destruction. The river Eridanus receives and bathes his body, and he is buried by nymphs. This tale is recounted in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, 1.747-79, 2.1-366. There are obviously some parallels here between Ciro’s situation and that of Phaëton: Ciro too is of questionable parentage and will seek to rise to power before the end of the play. The main difference between the two figures is that Ciro’s attempt is successful.°

\(^{251}\) *fulgurante*: this culto and arguably Gongorine word meaning ‘brightly shining’ also appears in prefatory material to Lope’s *Las bizarrias de Belisa* (1637), *querellas*: ‘complaints’ (*M*).

\(^{252}\) *Eridano*: the river Eridanos of Greek mythology, now commonly identified with the Po in northern Italy.

\(^{253}\) For more on the frequency of such apostrophes of the lover’s ‘pensamiento’ and their history, see *El perro*, ed. Dixon, p. 40 (foot). Dixon also writes, ‘At least twenty-five short poems by Lope relate to Icarus or Phaethon, and at least ten of these contain an apostrophe to the lover’s pensamiento. Of course, this apostrophe also occurs in verse unrelated to the theme’, *El castigo sin venganza: the Artistry of Lope de Vega*, Studies in Spanish Literature of the Golden Age, presented to Edward M. Wilson, ed. R. O. Jones (London: Tamesis, 1973), 63-81p. 68, fn. 13).

\(^{254}\) Here, Lope seems to include an allusion to the Greek myth of Icarus, wherein Daedalus, a craftsman, fashions wings for his son so that he can fly. The youth flies too close to the sun, however, and the wax holding his wings together melts, resulting in him plummeting to his death.”

\(^{255}\) *muerto en el cielo, que del sol naciste*: This line is identical with the last line of a Phaëton sonnet by Lope, no. 91 in his *Rimas* from 1602 (ed. Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez (Ciudad Real: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1993), p. 385). This is a very strong piece of evidence toward Lope’s authorship of *Contra valor*.

\(^{256}\) The presence of such references to pagan gods in *Contra valor* is explored in the ‘Religion and Superstition’ section.
BATO

Que salía hoy para alegrar el día,
y el alba en sus ojos vi.

Di luego la norabuena
a la selva; y a la fe,
que donde estampaba el pie
quedaba de flores llena.

Cantaban los ruiseflores
de árbol en árbol a coros,
y los arroyos sonoros
los bajos entre las flores.257

Llegué con mi reverencia,
y la dije: «Venus bella258
teguardé, aunque de su estrella
le ofenda la competencia.»

Y ella, que apenas con risa,
«Bien vengas», me respondió,
del clavel con que me habló
cerró las hojas aprisa;

que, a tardarse, no lo ignores,
tan bellas perlas mostrara,
que el alba se las tomara
para aljófar de las flores.259

CIRO

Parece que se ha mudado
tu rústico entendimiento.260

BATO

¿No has visto, en el aposento
que el príncipe Dario ha entrado,
querer olor por un rato
del guante de ámbar? Así,261
en después que a Filis vi,262
has de imaginar a Bato;
porque habrá sido ocasión,
que traigo el ámbar conmigo263
de su rara discreción.

Mas aunque agora me precio

257 los bajos: ‘the basses’ or ‘the low notes’. A typically pastoral image of all nature in harmony, complementing the beauty of Filis. References to a beautiful woman beautifying the countryside were common; an example in Lope is Act II of La dama boba, ll. 1165-84.

258 Venus was the Roman goddess of beauty, love and marriage. It is therefore an appropriate, if perhaps rather exaggerated, way for Bato to address Filis here, invoking the goddess to protect her but suggesting that there will be some competition between them because of Filis’ beauty.

259 Clavel […] perlas: Petrarchan imagery was often used in Golden Age Spanish literature to describe the idealized beauty of the beloved, and instances in Lope’s drama are numerous. Bato compares Filis’ mouth to a red carnation and her teeth to pearls; he says that, had she not closed her mouth so quickly the ‘petals’ of her lips would have revealed her ‘pearls’ of teeth so perfect that the dawn might use them as dew drops for the flowers.

260 The bathos of Ciro’s reply to Bato’s poetic speech reminds us that Bato is merely a peasant (and a gracioso figure; see ‘Characterization’ section for further discussion of the gracioso type in relation to Bato). He may wax lyrical over Filis, but it is Ciro who has a true claim on her affections.

261 en después: an archaism, meaning ‘después que’. According to the CORDE database it seems to have fallen out of common use in the sixteenth century, but it does appear in Lope’s drama on various occasions, including in Los embustes de Celauro (1614), La arcadia (1620), La piedad ejecutada (1623), four times in Las famosas asturianas (1623), and El labrador venturoso (1635).

262 Ambergris was highly prized, hard to come by and expensive, making Bato’s reference to it significant in highlighting the social divide between Filis’ noble suitor and the peasant Ciro.
de discreto embajador,\textsuperscript{264} luego que cese el olor
verás que me vuelvo a necio.\textsuperscript{265}

CIRO

¡Oh, Bato, mil años goces
la nueva sabiduría;
que aun te dura todavía
el ámbar, pues te conoces!

Pocos hombres hallarás
que conozcan lo que son;\textsuperscript{266}
pero es esta imperfección
piedad del cielo en los más.

Con esto, cielos, bicistos
que no haya tales desprecios;
que a conocerse por necios,
muchos anduvieran tristes.\textsuperscript{267}

¿Distele mis versos?

BATO

tus versos.

CIRO

Y ¿los leyó?

BATO

Los leyó y agradeció.

CIRO

Y ¿qué te dijo de mí?

BATO

Que se admiraba de ver
tan honrados pensamientos.

CIRO

El estar tan desatentos,
daño nos pudiera hacer.

Ella pasa por el prado:
si en la fuente se detiene,\textsuperscript{268}
yo, ¿la hablo?\textsuperscript{269}

BATO

Hablaron hombres
mortales diosas: ¿qué temas?\textsuperscript{270}

Sale Filis, dama persiana.

CIRO

A tu pie, Filis divina,
dice Bato que florecen
las selvas; yo, que las haces

\textsuperscript{264} Bato's seemingly throwaway description of himself as a 'discreto embajador' here prefigures his actual promotion to this position in Act III (see ll. 1971-2113).

\textsuperscript{265} Bato's eloquence is deemed to be the result of being near Filis' nobility and beauty. The qualities of noble people influencing or inspiring the more base characters who come into contact with them was another common Golden Age theme (see Act III, fn. to l. 2529).

\textsuperscript{266} Pocos hombres...: This statement is ironic in retrospect given that at this point in the play it applies to Ciro himself. It has resonances with the ancient Greek aphorism 'know thyself', which was inscribed in the forecourt of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, further indicating Ciro's superior wisdom and learning.

\textsuperscript{267} Fools are happy in not knowing that they are foolish (see \textit{La dama boba}, ll. 2621-26 and 2951-58). This moment shows Ciro's precocious wisdom and is possibly linked to the \textit{locura del mundo} topos, which was a prevalent theme in Golden Age literature and present in many of Lope's works. For further discussion, see Thacker, Jonathan, 'Lope de Vega, \textit{El cuerdo loco}, and "la más discreta figura de la comedia"', \textit{BHS} 81, 463-78.

\textsuperscript{268} This is a typical example of a \textit{locus amoenus}, common in Lope's pastoral literature. The fountain is traditionally a meeting place for lovers, and its connotations of beauty and love contrast sharply with the formality and cruelty of Astiages' court, where some of the later action takes place. Lope has his lovers meet in places of natural beauty elsewhere in his work, for example the meeting between Federico and Casandra beside the river in Act I of \textit{El castigo sin venganza}. There too, such a location contrasts with the sterility and harshness of the court in which the rest of the action occurs.

\textsuperscript{269} The editorial decision taken here with regard to punctuation has a significant effect on our reading of the text. For a detailed discussion of this decision and its consequences, refer to End Notes.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{270} The usage of \textit{hablar} with a direct object is common in Lope.
campo de estrellas celestes.
No espera la blanca aurora,
en el nido donde duerme
el pájaro, con más ansias
para ver las ramas verdes
que tiñe de horror la noche
y en mudo silencio envuelve,
que yo tus hermosos ojos. 271

FILIS
Ciro discreto y valiente,
Dario vino de la corte:
peligro en hablarme tienes.
Mira que estimo tu vida.

CIRO
Si tanto la favoreces,
tendréla en mucho por ti.

FILIS
A tus nobles partes debe 272
este amor mi obligación.

CIRO
Si de esa suerte engradeces
un villano como yo,
no será mucho que piense
que estas selvas, estos montes,
a ver los amores vuelven
de Endimión y la Luna, 273
permitiendo que contemple
los rayos de tu hermosura,
que el primer cielo enriquecen, 274
la humilde bajeza mía.
¡Ay, cielos! ¿Qué culpa tienen
las almas de que los cuerpos
naciesen humildemente?
El cielo no pudo errar
la infusión del alma: advierte
que en ella están las virtudes,
por quien el cuerpo merece.
Mírame todo por alma,
de la manera que suele
mirar las perlas el alba
por el agua transparente, 275
sin reparar en las conchas 276

271 As Dixon outlines in his edition of Lope’s El perro del hortelano, the image of the bird waiting anxiously for the dawn is likely to have originated in the Classical topos of the bereaved nightingale, via Garcilaso’s First Eclogue, 324-37. For more see El perro, ed. Dixon, ll. 895-96 and note on p. 194.

272 nobles partes: Also used, for example, in Lope’s Los españoles en Flandes (1620) to refer to the heart, or higher emotions.

273 Reference to the Greek myth of Endymion, a young shepherd of extraordinary beauty who is loved by the Moon, Selene (EB, vol. 8, ‘Endymión’). Ciro’s reference to this couple is telling, as the social gap between the goddess and the lowly mortal has a clear parallel in the difference in social status between Filis and himself at this stage in the action.

274 Edition A1 reads ‘enriquece’. This has been changed to make the line grammatically correct. According to Ptolemaic astronomy, the ‘primer cielo’ was the sphere of the moon, linking to the previous reference to Endymion and Selene.

275 Lines 211-18 carry an echo of the ancient belief that pearls were produced by dew drops taken up by the shell of an oyster, as recounted by Pliny (Historia Naturalis, ed. H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1947), IX, 54). Góngora also uses this image: ‘cuyo bello contacto puede hacerlas [sin concebir rocío parir perlas’ (Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea, ed. Alexander A. Parker (Madrid: Cátedra, 1983), ll. 375-76.

276 reparar: ‘Suspenderse o detenerse por razón de algún inconveniente o tropiezo […] Pararse, detenerse o hacer alto en una parte.’ [Diccionario de la RAE]
naturaleza por armas
que las cubre y las defiende.
Alma soy, Filis: el alma,
por inmortal, te merece,
y prenda que con los dioses
en la eternidad conviene.

FILIS
Ciro, si mi hermano Arpago
y mi fortuna quisieren
disponer de mí, te doy
la palabra..... Escucha.....

FLORA (Aparte)
¿Puede
llegar a más mi desdicha?
¿Puede el rigor de mi suerte?
Hablando están..... ¿Qué lo dudo?
¡Oh Filis! Si tú supieses
qué es celos, dudo que amor
to dispusiesse a ofenderme!
Celos es enfermedad279
que el mismo que la padece,
con vergüenza de decirlo,
no quiere que la remedien.
Pero yo, ¿por qué me quejo,
cuando Ciro me aborrece,
cuando de verme se espanta,
cuando mi nombre le ofende?
Pero pienso que es la causa
que más en el alma duele,
ver que Ciro quiera a Filis,
quien no el ver que no me quiere.
Pidiéndola está un favor,280
y le dio una cinta verde,281
para mis celos azul.282
¡Mal fuego la cinta queme!
¡Mal fuego el favor abrase!
Y si lo invisible puede,
queme también la esperanza.
Ya se va. ¡Cielos, tenedme!

277 This line is rendered differently by the nineteenth-century editors of the play. For a full discussion, see End Note.°
278 See ‘Staging’ for a discussion of this stage direction.
279 Celos es enfermedad: this topos of love as an illness and its possible cures, including how jealousy both precedes and
aggravates it is also explored, for example, in Lope’s El perro del hortelano (1618, MyB: 1613-15).
280 Pidiéndola: This grammatical error could be a printer’s error, or it could have been Lope’s intention to include a
vulgarism because the line is spoken by the villana, Flora. It is also seen in Mitridates’ speech in Act II (l. 1070),
‘Contéla el caso’. Such usage was very widespread in popular speech in Madrid until the mid-twentieth century.
281 Love tokens such as the ribbon given to Ciro here frequently formed a part of the courtship ritual in Golden Age
drama.
282 celos azul: metaphorically, to Flora’s jealous eyes, the ribbon given to Ciro by Filis appears blue rather than green.
According to the colour symbolism used in Spanish literature from medieval times, the colour of jealousy was blue
and that of hope was green (see Griswold Morley, citation in end notes). Hence, Filis’ presentation of a green ribbon
to Ciro provokes Flora’s jealousy.°
CIRO

Estaré, Filis divina,
siempre a tu gusto obediente;
que en tanta desigualdad,
el alma que favoreces
apenas me da palabras
con que pueda agradecerte
la esperanza desta cinta,
dulce prenda, lazo fuerte, \(^\text{283}\)
que hará que mi obligación
dure en ella eternamente.
Yo me voy; tú, Bato amigo,
ven conmigo, y no me dejes;
que si hay muertes para tristes,
también las hay para alegres. \(^\text{284}\)

BATO

¡Oh, Ciro! ¡Prega a los cielos
que este favor no te cueste,
cuando no la vida, el seso! \(^\text{285}\)

Vanse Ciro y Bato. \(^\text{286}\)

FLORA

¿Dasme licencia que llegue
para hablarte dos palabras?

FILIS

¡Oh Flora! ¿En qué te detienes?
Yo soy tu amiga.

FLORA

Y yo soy
tu esclava. Escucha. \(^\text{287}\)

FILIS

¿Qué quieres?

FLORA

Filis, hoy hace dos años
que, para tantos enojos,
en Ciro puse los ojos,
como él en mí sus engaños.
Referirte aquí los daños
que me ha costado llegar
a merecer sujetar
su rigor a mis querellas,
será contar las estrellas
o las arenas del mar.
Finalmente, me quería
por dejarme de querer;
que tanto suele vencer
una amorosa porfía.
En estas selvas hoy día
suenan fuentes, viven flores,
testigos destos amores. \(^\text{288}\)

\(^{283}\) ‘agradecerte […] fuerte’ (ll. 258, 260): this is an instance of full consonantal rhyme, unusual in this metre (romances).

\(^{284}\) There are possible sexual connotations in this line, particularly in the use of the word ‘muerte’, a common euphemism for orgasm in medieval and early-modern literature throughout Europe. It is possible that the gift of the cinta is reminiscent of Melibea’s gift of her girdle to Calisto in La Celestina.

\(^{285}\) This link between love and madness is a topos in seventeenth-century drama and was a common reference throughout Lope’s dramatic work, as was the situation of the gracioso despairing of his master’s sanity when the latter fell in love.°

\(^{286}\) A1 reads ‘Vanse los dos’, which I have changed to specify ‘Ciro y Bato’ to avoid confusion.

\(^{287}\) Flora responds to Filis’ warm statement that Flora is her amiga by stating that she is Filis’ esclava rather than her friend. By doing this, she re-establishes their true relationship and underlines the social difference between them, a useful tactic as this very difference is the basis of her argument against the relationship between Filis and Ciro.
pero hay, Filis, voluntades que no llegan a verdades y se quedan en favores.

Después, Filis, que viniste de la corte a nuestra aldea,\footnote{There is a tangible sense of resentment in these lines, and the \textit{corte} - \textit{aldea} dichotomy is one that features at various other points in the play.} celos me mandan que crea que de mi mal causa fuiste. Veneno pienso que diste desde tus ojos a Ciro.\footnote{The idea of love affecting a person like poison is a common image in Lope’s work, and ties in with contemporary views of love as expressed through literature. For more on this topic, see Parker, A. A., \textit{The Philosophy of Love in Spanish Literature} (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1985).}\footnote{Flora urges Filis to protect her honour by not pursuing a relationship with someone of a lower social status than her.} Ya se enfada si le miro: tanto me pierde el decoro, que se aburre si le adoro, y me llego y me retiro.

Está ya tan caballero, el que era ayer labrador, que le respeto señor y cortesano le quiero. De tu discreción espero que de sus locos intentos vengarás mis sentimientos; que pierdes de lo que vales si a prendas tan desiguales humillas los pensamientos.\footnote{\textit{mancebo}: This is the term used to describe a young, adolescent male. It derives from the Latin \textit{mancpus}, meaning ‘slave’ and carries with it connotations of a youth still under the jurisdiction of his father.}

FILIS

Flora, esa misma razón te ha de obligar a pensar que yo no le pude dar para quererme ocasión. Su buena conversación, mi soledad entretiene; mas si a darte celos viene, mira que es necio rigor pensar que de mi valor alguna esperanza tiene. Ciro, entre esta humilde gente, es un mancebo entendido,\footnote{\textit{mancebo}: This is the term used to describe a young, adolescent male. It derives from the Latin \textit{mancpus}, meaning ‘slave’ and carries with it connotations of a youth still under the jurisdiction of his father.} a los demás preferido por lo discreto y valiente. Pero no creas que intente en público ni en secreto perderme, Flora, el respeto; que ese día, fuera poco que castigara por loco a quien escucho discreto. Pero toma en tus desvelos un cuerdo consejo agora: y es que nunca pidas, Flora,
de tu amor a nadie celos.\textsuperscript{293}
Porque de aquellos recelos
y las penas que refiere,
que lo merece se infiere;
y siéndonos natural
la envidia, por hacer mal
queremos lo que otra quiere.\textsuperscript{294}
Así que pedir te asombre
celos, aunque haya razón,
que es dar imaginación
de los méritos de un hombre.
Que la de más casto nombre
quieres ver lo que no vieras
sin la celosa tercera;
y si le estorban el ver,
por tema querrá querer\textsuperscript{295}
lo que le quitan que quiera.

\textit{Vase.}

\textbf{FLORA}
¡Por qué notable camino\textsuperscript{296}
castigó mi atrevimiento!
Despertó su pensamiento
mi celoso desatino.
Tarde su consejo vino,
y vino mi muerte en él;
mas no piense la cruel
salir con lo que desea,
que he de revolver la aldea
si la vuelvo a ver con él.

\textit{Vase.}

\textit{Sale Ciro, Bato, Albano, Riselo, y Silvio - villanos.}\textsuperscript{297}

\textbf{ALBANO}
Ciro ha ganado a todos.
\textbf{BATO}
¡Victor, Ciro!
\textbf{CIRO}
La honra os agradezco:
que bien sé que por mí no la merezco.

\textsuperscript{293}`pedir…celos` es `querellarse de quien bien quiere, por hablar con otro.' Correas, Gonzalo, \textit{Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales}, ed. Louis Combet (Bordeaux: Institut d'études ibériques et ibéro-américaines de l'Université de Bordeaux, 1967), p. 721b.
\textsuperscript{294}This image of \textit{celos} giving birth to \textit{amor} (or at least desire) is richly explored in Lope’s \textit{El perro del hortelano} (1618). Filis explains to Flora that hearing that someone else is jealous of one’s relationship with a person can inspire one to think more highly of that person than may otherwise have been the case. The implication is that Flora’s jealousy means that Ciro is worth fighting for.
\textsuperscript{295}tema: \textit{RAE} 8 - Actitud arbitraria y no razonada en que alguien se obstina contra algo o alguien. 9 f. - Idea fija que suelen tener los dementes.'
\textsuperscript{296}Ar1 reads ‘Porque notable camino’, which I have changed to ‘Por qué’. Dixon, in \textit{El sufrimiento premiado} (London: Tamesis, 1967), has noted ‘Lope solía abusar bastante del adjetivo \textit{notable},’ stating that in \textit{El sufrimiento} it appears five times, the same number of times that it appears in \textit{Contra valor} (Act I, 355; Act II, 397, 1698; Act III, 2183, 2272). In other plays the total is even higher, for example, \textit{El alcalde mayor} (1620) with twelve instances, and \textit{El príncipe despeñado} (1617) [ed. Henry W. Hoge (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955)] with thirteen.
\textsuperscript{297}Here there is a change of \textit{salida}; although the rural setting does not change, the stage has emptied and there is a definite shift in scene with a different set of characters. Time, too, seems to have moved on a little, especially given Flora’s reappearance at the end of this scene.
RISELO

La ligereza, como el salto, admiro.

SILVIO

Valiente ha sido de la barra el tiro.\textsuperscript{298}

ALBANO

No hay mozo que igual sea a Ciro en el aldea.

BATO

Si no soy yo, que lo que habéis saltado, miré sentado en la mitad del prado.

ALBANO

Sólo resta luchar\textsuperscript{299}.

BATO

Pues si hay quien quiera, con los brazos abiertos Ciro espera.

CIRO

Si no soy yo, que lo que habéis saltado, miré sentado en la mitad del prado.

BATO

Mira que soy tu amigo. Pero ven con un brazo.

BATO

Para darte un abrazo.

---

La lucha Ciro con Bato.\textsuperscript{300}

SILVIO

Con Bato dio en el suelo, asíéndole del brazo solamente.

BATO

Una costilla me ha quebrado. ¡Ay, cielo!

CIRO

Ea, persiana juventud valiente, ¿quién lucha? ¿o quién me tuerce aqueste brazo?

BATO

No yo, que estoy sin mí del batacazo.\textsuperscript{301}

CIRO

Bato, dame esa mano si ver quieres milagros.

BATO

¡Ay, que me ha quebrado la mano!

CIRO

Muestra, no temas. ¿No hay, mancebos, en el prado quien luche, corra, salte o quien esgrima?

BATO

A todos desanima tu fuerza, ligereza y gentileza. Mas justo es coronarte la cabeza deste verde laurel, que envidie Apolo, por siempre vencedor, único y solo.

ALBANO

Tu digna frente adorne, para que cuando del ocaso torne,

\textit{Pónenle una corona de laurel}\textsuperscript{302}

en sus amadas hojas amanezca.\textsuperscript{303}

RISELO

¿Quién hay que, como tú, laurel merezca?

\textsuperscript{298} These terms refer to various rustic field sports, in all of which Ciro has excelled. Something akin to tossing the caber, \textit{tirar la barra} is described by the \textit{DRAE} (1726) as, ‘Género de diversión que para exercitar la robustez y agilidad suelen tener los mozos: y es desde un puesto señalado despedirla de diferentes modos y maneras, y gana el que mas adelanta su tiro, suponiendo que para que lo sea ha de prender en la tierra por la punta o parte inferior’.

\textsuperscript{299} \textit{luchar} wrestling.

\textsuperscript{300} \textit{A1} reads ‘Lucha con Bato’ which I have changed to ‘Lucha Ciro con Bato’ to avoid confusion.

\textsuperscript{301} \textit{batacazo}: ‘golpe fuerte y con estruendo que da alguna persona cuando cae’ (RAE).

\textsuperscript{302} \textit{A1} reads simply ‘Pónenle un laurel’, which I have made more specific. The laurel wreath was a traditional sign of victory or prowess from the times of Ancient Greece and here it is a precursor to Ciro being crowned ‘king’. It is used in Lope’s \textit{El Duque de Viso} to very similar effect.\textsuperscript{9} A similar scene appears in Luis Vélez de Guevara’s \textit{El rey en su imaginación}, and the tradition of the ‘rey de burlas’ in other plays including is discussed in Ocerin’s edition of that play (Madrid, 1920), pp. 117-22.

\textsuperscript{303} \textit{amadas hojas}: A reference to the myth of Daphne in Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses} (I, 452+); the nymph was turned into a laurel tree by the gods to escape Apollo’s amorous pursuit, and he consequently crowned his head with its leaves.
BATO
Hagamos algún juego
ya que estás coronado, porque luego
celebremos alegre tu victoria.

CIRO
Jugemos al reinar con la memoria
deste laurel divino.

ALBANO
Pues quién ha de ser rey?

BATO
Yo.

ALBANO
¡Desatino!

CIRO
Echad suertes, mancebos generosos,
y a quien la suerte caiga obedeciendo,
el juego podréis ir entreteniendo.

SILVIO
Si fuera por los hechos valerosos
y por la dignidad de tu persona,
tú sólo merecieras la corona.

RIESELO
El que dijere tres cosas
las más fuertes, que ése salga
por rey.\textsuperscript{304}

CIRO
Bien dice Riselo,
y comience Silvio.

SILVIO
Vaya.
La cosa más fuerte digo
que es la fortuna, contraria
para todas sus acciones,
en un discreto que calla.

La necesidad es fuerte,
pues obliga a cosas bajas;
y la muerte, pues los reyes
son hierba de su guadaña.

CIRO
Diga Albano.

ALBANO
La porfía,
la ambición, que nunca para,
y el diamante, pues que sólo
con otro como él se labra.\textsuperscript{305}

CIRO
Diga Riselo.

RIESELO
La mar
con tormenta, o cuando baja
el rayo, rompiendo el viento,
a dar en sus torres altas;
y sin temor de los dioses,
un tirano de su patria.\textsuperscript{306}

CIRO
Diga Bato.

BATO
La más fuerte
es la que a los hombres saca
de sentido, que es el vino,
tan poderoso monarca
que hace a muchos de su nombre
que en diversas lenguas hablan;
y con dormir siempre en cueros,\textsuperscript{307}

\textsuperscript{304} This type of word game is common in literature throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. Menéndez y Pelayo points out that it relates closely to a section in the apocryphal book of Esdras, chs III and IV.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{305} The representation of a diamond as the hardest natural material is extremely common, and this particular idea is
found in other plays by Lope.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{306} The use of the word ‘tirano’ is significant here; see ‘Kingship’.

\textsuperscript{307} en cueros: ‘sin vestido alguno’ (RAE). This is a pun as it refers not only to being naked, but also to ‘wineskins’, as
wine, being alcoholic, never freezes.
entre la nieve y escarcha,
jamás amanece helado;
pues si un hombre se desmaya,
con un traguito de gloria
vuelve lo amarillo en grana.\textsuperscript{308}
La hambre es cosa muy fuerte;
y porque de veras haya alguna cosa, es la honra,\textsuperscript{309}
si la tiene a quien agravian.

ALBANO
Diga Ciro.

CIRO
Lo más fuerte
que en el cielo y tierra se halla,
es la voluntad, divina
forma en la materia humana;\textsuperscript{310}
el amor, en cuyo triunfo
tantas letras y armas tandas
y tantas coronas rinden libros, laureles y palmas.
La mujer y su hermosura
son fortaleza que basta
a rendir los altos dioses,
de quien en historias tandas desde el principio del mundo
sangrientas memorias hablan.

ALBANO
Ciro venció.

BATO
¡Victor, Ciro!

SILVIO
El sacro laurel que enlaza
su frente, con verde auspicio
pronosticó su esperanza.
Hincad todos la rodilla.

ALBANO
¡Viva el rey!

TODOS
¡Viva!

CIRO
Por tanta fiesta, vasallos, hoy queda
mi voluntad obligada.
Yo os haré merced a todos.

BATO
¡Oigan qué presto nos manda,
con ser rey por madurar!

RISELO
Siéntate sobre estas ramas.

CIRO
Quien ha de velar, vasallos,
una república varia
de guerra y paz, no es razón
que se siente.

BATO
¡Buena entrada!
Pues ¿ha de ser grulla un rey?\textsuperscript{311}

---

\textsuperscript{308} Amarillo was the colour of despair, while grana (‘garnet’ or ‘scarlet’) had various meanings within the code of colour symbolism (see Griswold Morley, ‘Color symbolism’ (1917) p. 81). It often symbolized joy, which seems most logical in this example. Here Bato, extolling the power of wine, lists among its other properties its potential for turning despair into joy for the man who is dismayed or discouraged.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{309} Bato’s three proposals comically reflect some of the typical concerns of the gracioso: drink and food. The last of his three, the reference to honour, is the most unusual in that it reflects the concerns of the ruling classes rather than the peasantry to which he belongs. Perhaps this is an indication (as later in the play) that some elements of Bato’s character surpass the audience’s expectations for a gracioso figure, especially when compared to other graciosos in Golden Age drama.\textsuperscript{°}

\textsuperscript{310} This statement has resonances with the Aristotelian concept of ‘form’ and ‘matter’, as well as the Biblical idea of man being formed in God’s image.\textsuperscript{\textdagger}

\textsuperscript{9} For more on this, see ‘Characterization’.

\textsuperscript{°} For more on this, see ‘Characterization’.

\textsuperscript{\textdagger} For more on this, see ‘Characterization’.
CIRO Pues ¿qué labrador trabaja como un rey? Y yo he leído que un sabio a los reyes llama de la república esclavos,\(^{312}\) y que por eso se pagan las rentas, que se le deben por ley divina y humana.

ALBANO Ya somos vasallos tuyos. ¿Qué mandas?

CIRO Quiero dar traza en lo que importa al gobierno de mi reino y de mi casa. Tener un amigo es fuerza; quien esto niega se engaña, porque yo no puedo solo gobernar provincias tantas. Quiero que éste Albano sea; que lo que el rey quiere y ama, no lo ha de escoger el pueblo, sino su gusto y su gracia.\(^{313}\)

ALBANO Beso tus manos mil veces.

CIRO Mi capitán de la guarda será Silvio.

SILVIO Soy tu esclavo.

CIRO Mi presidente en la sala de mis Consejos, Riselo, pues la falta de las canas suplirá su entendimiento.

BATO Luego ¿a mí no me das nada?

CIRO Mi secretario has de ser.\(^{314}\) Despachos, decretos, cartas y audiencias, corran por ti.

FINEO Ciro, tu padre te llama: deja las fiestas y juegos.

RISELO Con más respeto le habla. Hinca la rodilla en tierra: míra que la mano alarga porque se la beses.

FINEO ¿Yo? ¡Un tigre puede besarla! Astiages es mi rey;

---

\(^{311}\) *grulla:* crane. Pliny recounts that the crane sleeps standing on one foot and holding a stone in the other, so that if it falls asleep, the stone drops and wakes up the bird.\(^9\)

\(^{312}\) *un sabio:* such unspecific references to ‘sabios’ and ‘filósofos’ were commonly used in Golden Age literature to add weight to a statement, and it is often impossible to trace the exact source to which they refer (if any). See *El sembrar en buena tierra*, ed. William L. Fichter (New York: Modern Language Association, 1944), fn. to ll. 1100 and 1121 (p. 193).

\(^{313}\) Here, Ciro effectively makes Albano his court favourite, or *privado*, a key role in the running of the court. This would have resonated significantly with the Golden Age audience: for a further discussion of controversy surrounding the role of the *privado* in seventeenth-century Spain, see ‘Kingship’.

\(^{314}\) As mentioned in the footnotes to the ‘Characterization’ section, Lope was himself a secretary to the Duke of Sessa for many years. For more on the role of secretary in society, Lope as *secretario* to several nobles, and such characters in his plays, see *El perro*, ed. Dixon, pp. 21-22.
que de Ciro la arrogancia
ya debe de ser locura.

¡Al rey desa suerte tratas!

Presidente.....

Gran señor.

De pies y de manos ata
este villano a aquel roble,
y hasta que la sangre salga,
dos labradores le azoten.

(Rielseo)\(^\text{315}\)

Camina.

¿Sabes que hablas
con un hijo de un criado
del Rey?

¿Para qué te cansas?

Mándalo el rey, y ha de ser.

¿Qué rey o qué calabaza?\(^\text{316}\)

Llevadle de aquí.

¿Hay tal insolencia?

Camiña.

Llévanle.

Ciro, ya tengo edad
para casarme.

¿Eso tratas
tan presto?

A la sucesión
importa, para que vaya
en aumento mi corona,
y por que a la guerra salga\(^\text{317}\)
en teniendo quien me herede.
Pero decímeal: ¿qué dama
estará mejor al reino?\(^\text{318}\)

Lucinda es bella zagala.

Es necia, y saldrán mis hijos
necios.

Pues ¿salen del alma?\(^\text{319}\)

Aunque morena, es hermosa
y discreta Felisarda.

No la quieras, porque tiene
una madre temeraria,
vieja, loca y socarrona.

Mejor me parece Antandra.

---

\(^{315}\) I have inserted ‘(A Fineo)’ to clarify whom Riselo is addressing.

\(^{316}\) *calabaza* (lit. ‘gourd’ or ‘pumpkin’) an insulting term commonly used to mean an ignorant or inept person.°

\(^{317}\) ‘por que’ is equivalent to ‘para que’ here, and in the other instances where it appears within the play. This usage of ‘por que’ is common in Golden Age Spanish.

\(^{318}\) This section where Ciro reviews potential brides is reminiscent of other scenes in Golden Age drama, for example, that found in Tirso de Molina’s *La venganza de Tamar* (1634) (ed. Paterson, 1969), Act I, 113-40, wherein Absalón lists possible partners for his brother Amón from the ladies at court, all of whom are similarly rejected on superficial grounds as those suggested to Ciro.

\(^{319}\) As a result of this brief exchange, we see Ciro’s grasp of the concept of hereditary character traits, which is possibly the result of his education. Albano, lacking this knowledge, cannot perceive the potential consequence of choosing a wife whose *necesidad* could be passed on to one’s children.°
sino que es un poco roma.\textsuperscript{320}

ALBANO
Belisa tiene mil gracias.

BATO
Belisa es flaca.

ALBANO
¿Qué importa?

BATO
¿No importa una reina flaca?
A Semíramis, Camila
y otras, las pintan las caras
como un tamboril, a quien
la nariz sirve de flauta.\textsuperscript{321}

CIRO
Si os digo verdad, vasallos,
solamente a mí me agrada
la hermana de Arpago, Filis.

BATO
¿No importa una reina flaca!
¿Siendo hija de un privado
del Rey?\textsuperscript{322}

SILVIO
Flora se olvidaba.....
pero ella viene.

\textit{Sale Flora.}\textsuperscript{323}

FLORA
¿Qué es esto,
Ciro? ¿En qué locuras andas?
A Finco, dos pastores,
atado al tronco de una haya,
le han dado tantos azotes
que el suelo de sangre baña.
Dicenme que te haces rey;
eso sólo te faltaba.
Filis te ha quitado el seso.

BATO
Mira, Flora, cómo hablas,
que te mandará azotar
si le replicas palabra.

CIRO
En las cosas de los reyes.
Flora necia, o avisada,\textsuperscript{324}
ingún discreto se meta.
Yo lo mando, y esto basta.

Sale.

FLORA
¿Hay semejante locura?

BATO
Flora, mucho te adelantas.
Tres cosas te importan, Flora,
si quieres morir lograda,
que en tres palabras se encierran.

FLORA
¿Y son?

BATO
Oye, mira y calla.\textsuperscript{325}

\textsuperscript{320} \textit{roma}: ‘a woman with a flat nose’ (M).
\textsuperscript{321} Using this rather unflattering comparison, Bato compares the faces of many of the women to painted tambourines, and their noses to flutes. Tambourines had been decorated since the Middle Ages, and in Spain they were traditionally played along with a \textit{flauta de tres agujeros}. These instruments could both be played by the same musician, and were associated with the peasantry so the allusion is an appropriate one.
\textsuperscript{322} Bato dissimulates here, covering up the fact that Ciro has already begun courting Filis.
\textsuperscript{323} In \textit{AI} the stage direction ‘\textit{Sale Flora}’ occurs after l. 655, while Silvio is still speaking. I have moved it to what I feel is a more logical position in the middle of l. 656.
\textsuperscript{324} necia o avisada: ‘whether stupid or well-informed’.
\textsuperscript{325} This perception of the subject’s position in relation to his king is common in Golden Age literature, and is found
Vanse.

Salen el Rey Astiages, y Arpago.\textsuperscript{326}

REY

Hoy hace algunos años, noble Arpago,
que vi mi reino libre, con mi vida,
de la desdicha del fatal estrago,\textsuperscript{327}
por los sabios de Media prometida.\textsuperscript{327}
A Júpiter divino satisfago
la sucesión que reparé perdida,\textsuperscript{328}
con víctimas, por quien, deshecho en llanto,
mancho las aras de su templo santo.\textsuperscript{590}
Sueños me atormentaban cada día;
ya, gracias a los dioses, me dejaron
sombras que nuestra antigua monarquía
al imperio de Persia trasladaron.
Casé a Mandane, sucesora mía
(tanto los adivinos me obligaron),\textsuperscript{595}
con el hombre más bajo que hallar pude,
porque a los hados el decreto mude.
Y no sólo con esto satisfecho,
a mi primero nieto eché a las fieras,
en cuyos dientes rígidos deshecho,
no salgan mis sospechas verdaderas.
Los altos cielos inmortal han hecho,
como en su cielo están las once esferas,\textsuperscript{329}
mi reino en Dario, pues de aquí se arguye
que eterno en su valor se constituye.\textsuperscript{600}

ARPAGO

Aplacar a los dioses, sacro Astiages,
es inviolable ley contra sus iras:
así corre del mundo en los linajes\textsuperscript{330}
que tantos siglos propagados miras.
Con esto, sin mudanzas, sin ultrajes,
de mármoles fabrica eternas piras
la sucesión de la imperial corona,
desde la Frigia a la abrasada zona.\textsuperscript{331}
Muerto aquel niño, que cumplió a los hados
el decreto cruel contra tu imperio
de quitarte el laurel, y los sagrados
cercos romper con tanto vituperio,\textsuperscript{615}

\textsuperscript{326} Here is a definite change of \textit{salida}, from the \textit{aldea} setting to the court.
\textsuperscript{327} This refers to the Median empire, of which Astiages was king. See ‘History and Sources’.
\textsuperscript{328} \textit{reparar}: ‘considerar’ (\textit{Aut}).
\textsuperscript{329} This reference to the \textit{once esferas} draws on Ptolemaic astronomy.\textsuperscript{9}
\textsuperscript{330} The nineteenth-century editors changed this line to ‘así corren del mundo los linajes’, which affects the meaning of the verse; as it stands, the sense here is that the earthly obligation to placate the gods runs throughout ages and generations.
\textsuperscript{331} \textit{Frigia}: Phrygia, ancient district in west-central Anatolia (modern day Turkey), named after a people whom the Greeks called Phryges and who dominated Asia Minor between the Hittite collapse (twelfth century BC) and the Lydian ascendancy (seventh century BC). It was not known to be cold, in particular, but it is perhaps because of its phonetic associations with the word ‘fría’ that Lope couples it with ‘abrasada zona’. It is also referred to in Act II of Lope’s \textit{Las grandezas de Alejandro} (1621) (see end note).\textsuperscript{9} Halstead, Frank G., ‘The Attitude of Lope de Vega toward Astrology and Astronomy’, \textit{HR}, 7:3 (1939: July), p. 212, cites various instances where Lope speaks of ‘zonas’ in his plays, as evidence for his knowledge of what were then viewed as astronomical phenomena, although they would now be classed as geographical.
pacíficos quedaron tus cuidados
que fue del cielo singular misterio,
y asegurada la fortuna adversa,
de trasladar de Media el reino al persa.

Salen Evandro y Fineo.

EVANDRO

Si no castiga, señor,
tu justicia esta maldad,
ociosa la majestad
y asegurada el valor.

Pues has sido padre, advierte
qué sentirán mis enojos
mirando a un hijo a mis ojos
maltratado desta suerte.

Un mozuelo, labrador
del monte en que tus ganados
 tengo, con bríos soldados
y corazón de traidor,

fingido en un juego rey,
mi hijo mandó azotar
porque no quiso guardar,

sospechos, su ley.

¡Vive Júpiter sagrado,
que, como no le castigues,
al monte en que se ha criado!

De agravado el seso pierdo,
y con los locos me igualo.
Soy padre, y no hay hijo malo;
es hijo, y no hay padre cuerdo.

Mas fío de tu piedad
que vengarás su malicia;
que en la paz y la justicia
consiste la majestad.

REY (Aparte)

¡Por los dioses soberanos,
que me has causado temor!
¿Rey fingido un labrador?
No son pensamientos vanos;

porque no sin fundamento
en hombre tan bajo y vil
cupiera lo varonil
de tan alto pensamiento.

Dime, mancebo, su nombre.

FINEO

Ciro se llama, señor.

REY

¿Es fuerte? ¿Tiene valor?
¿Es bien hecho? ¿Es gentil hombre?

FINEO

Es tal, que en su compostura

---

332 *asegurada*: not 'confirmed' here, but 'assured against, protected from'.
333 *A1* omits the 'a' here, reading 'mirando un hijo'. I have inserted it to make the line grammatically correct; it does not affect the syllable count, as synaloepha merges it into one syllable with the vowels adjacent on either side of it.
334 *bríos soldados*: 'spirited soldiers'. This is one example of Lope's common practice of using nouns as adjectives (see also Act III, l. 2239 'sol mentira').
335 For further discussion of these ideas about the factors which contribute to the *majestad* of a monarch, see 'Kingship'.
336 Here Astiages perceives, in advance of meeting Ciro, the implications of his innate majesty.
trasladó naturaleza,
de Alcides la fortaleza,\footnote{Alcides: another name for Hercules (the Roman god Hercules), the divine hero of Greek mythology, famed for his strength and courage. Hercules was also associated with Philip IV of Spain.} y de Adonis la hermosura.\footnote{Adonis: in Greek mythology, a youth of great beauty, beloved of the goddess Aphrodite.}

Ni hay hombre en toda la aldea que no le tema, señor, ni por fuerza o por amor moza que suya no sea.

El goza, sin que con él ruego o justicia aproveche, de las ovejas la leche, de las colmenas la miel. El come lo que no ara, y coge lo que no siembra; un oso a brazos desmiembra, y una tigre desquijara.

Verdad es que, por lo hablado, es apacible y discreto.

REY (Aparte)
¡Cielos! ¿Si es éste mi nieto, que habéis, por mi mal, guardado para quitarme el imperio? Mas quiero disimular;\footnote{This idea of dissimulation is a feature of the kingship debate: Machiavelli had advocated dissimulation as a useful tool for a ruler and it therefore had negative associations. However, there were some treatises which argued that sensible dissimulation could be an attribute of a wise king. Put into the mouth of Astiages here, it is safe to assume that we should view his wish to hide his true feelings as being from sinister motives (indeed, a ‘Bellaco disimulado [... él que encubre su malicia’, according to Covarrubias [Cov.], found under Disimular, p. 719). For a further discussion of this subject, see ‘Kingship’.}

que mandarle yo matar y vivir, no es sin misterio. Parte con Evandro, Arpago, y a Ciro me trae. ¿Que estás suspenso?

ARPAGO Yo voy.

REY Verás, Evandro, si satisfago con mi ofensa tu venganza.

EVANDRO Así lo espero, señor.

REY (Aparte) ¡Cielos, quitadme el temor, pues que me dais la esperanza!

Vanse.

\textit{Salen Ciro, y los labradores de soldados, con chuzos, espadas y bandera.}\footnote{chuzo: ‘palo armado con un pincho de hierro que se usa para defenderse’ (Diccionario de la RAE). The action changes here from the court setting to the village for the fourth and final salida in this act.}
demás de que esto es de burlas,
y Filis es muy discreta.

**BATO**

Yo la dije esta mañana
que querías hacer guerra
a los vecinos mancebos
de la contrapuesta aldea,
no sólo para enseñarte,
mas por castigar la afrenta
de entrarse por nuestras viñas
y desfrutar nuestras huertas.\(^{341}\)

Dijela cómo cazaban
por las vedadas dehesas,\(^{342}\)
con redes nuestros conejos,
nuestras perdices con percha,
y parecióla muy bien.

**CIRO**

Juega, Albano, esa bandera
con aire y donaire.

**ALBANO**

¿Cómo?

**Ciro**

Mirame a mí.

**ALBANO**

Toma.

**Ciro**

Muestra.

Toca a rebato la caja,\(^{343}\)
pón el pie desta manera,

\( \text{Juega la bandera.} \)

y vuelve y revuelve.

**ALBANO**

¿Quién
te enseñó?

**Ciro**

Naturaleza.

\( \text{Sale Mitridates, y Filis se pone a la ventana.} \(^{344}\) \)

**MITRIDATES**

¿Qué es esto, loco? ¿Qué haces?
Suelta la bandera, suelta.

¿No hay más que quitar de casa
esta cortina de seda
que dejó olvidada Evandro?
Rómpeola, y vendrán por ella,
y será buena disculpa
que en tus locuras la empleas.

**Ciro**

Padre, temerario andáis
conmigo.

**MITRIDATES**

Déjala, deja.

**Ciro**

Por Dios, que creo que habemos
de atropellar la obediencia.\(^{345}\)

**FILIS**

Dádsela, Ciro; que yo
daré una cortina nueva,
que en la bandera pongáis.

---

\(^{341}\) This line appeared in Menéndez y Pelayo’s edition of the play as ‘*disfrutar nuestras huertas*’. For a full discussion, refer to End Notes.\(^{9}\)

\(^{342}\) *vedadas dehesas*: pastures wherein hunting was prohibited.

\(^{343}\) *toca a rebato la caja*: sound the alarm, make a sudden stir with the drums.

\(^{344}\) See ‘Staging’.

\(^{345}\) *atropellar*: ‘to tread underfoot’ (M).
CIRO
En un libro de una guerra
he leído que es deshonora
que la bandera se pierda.\textsuperscript{346}
Mi padre se irá en buen hora,
y vos, mi dueño y mi reina,
veréis en esta campaña
cómo su ejército ordena
este capitán de amor
que hoy en serviros se emplea.

\textit{Sale Arpago, Evandro y Fineo.}

ARPAGO
¿Cuál es Ciro?

FINEO
Aquel que tiene
en la mano la bandera.

FILIS (Aparte)
¿Mi hermano! ¿A qué viene al monte?
Irme quiero, no me vea.

\textit{Quítese de la ventana.}

ARPAGO
¿Eres Ciro?

CIRO
Yo soy Ciro.

ARPAGO
¿Qué gente de guerra es ésta?

CIRO
Los mozos deste lugar,
que para tiempos de veras
se ejercitan en las burlas.\textsuperscript{347}
Por eso, cuando se ofrezca
en qué sirvamos al Rey,
no hayais miedo que nos vean
bíosños, sino enseñados.\textsuperscript{348}

ARPAGO
¿De qué doctrina y escuela
has aprendido a ordenar,
Ciro, ese campo que llevas,
y que tan diestro conduces?

CIRO
Naturaleza me enseña
la inclinación; lo demás\textsuperscript{349}
he aprendido de un poeta
que arte militar escribe.\textsuperscript{350}

ARPAGO
El Rey te llama: no seas
rebeldes a su mandamiento.

CIRO
Por dicha le ha dado quejas
de mí el padre deseo mozo;
y supuesto que pudiera
defenderme con mi gente
de que castigarme pueda,
no quieran los dioses, no,
que a la corona suprema,

\textsuperscript{346} \textit{libro de guerra}: most probably this is another vague reference to an unidentified source; see fn. to Act I, 484.
\textsuperscript{347} This statement is equally relevant to the kingship game won by Ciro earlier in Act I; then, too, the activities carried out in jest serve as useful experience for when they occur in earnest.
\textsuperscript{348} \textit{bíosños}: ‘a new-come soldier, a novice’ (M).
\textsuperscript{349} This statement is significant as it demonstrates Ciro’s own sense of his innate kingliness and ability.
\textsuperscript{350} \textit{un poeta...que arte militar escribe}: It is impossible to be categorical in concluding to whom this might refer, if anyone (see again fn. to Act I, 484). However, if a specific writer was in mind when Lope wrote this line, a contender would be the Roman Flavius Vegetius Renatus, who wrote \textit{De Re Militari} in 390 AD. This work contains much advice on the selection and training of troops.
aunque aventure la vida,
el justo respeto pierda.

Oye, Ciro.

¿Qué queréis, padre?

MITRIDATES

CIRO

¿Qué queréis, padre?  

MITRIDATES

CIRO

Si es que tema, perdonadme.

MITRIDATES

CIRO

¿Por qué?

MITRIDATES

CIRO

Si allí vas, hijo, no espero que vuelvas.

¿Por qué?

MITRIDATES

CIRO

Si me echasen a las fieras o me diesen dos mil muertes....

SI MARES

CIRO

Pues no pienses que me dejas,\textsuperscript{351} que allá tengo de ir contigo.

MITRIDATES

CIRO

Matarán las dos ausencias a mi madre.\textsuperscript{352}

MITRIDATES

CIRO

No lo excuso.

Dejad, soldados, la guerra, deponed todos las armas. 
Tú, Bato, avisa a la reina de que se va el rey de burlas porque le llama el de veras.

\textsuperscript{351} \textit{Al} read ‘no piensas’; this has been changed to the grammatically correct ‘no pienses’.

\textsuperscript{352} This is one of the few references to Ciro’s adoptive mother in \textit{Contra valor}; she is named as Lisarda in Act II, 834.
Acto segundo

Salen el Rey Astiages, y Arpago.

REY  ¿Tan obediente ha llegado, Arpago, el fingido rey?

ARPAGO Merece, por justa ley, la muerte si está culpado.\textsuperscript{353} pero cuando a pensar llego que esta villana invención no ha sido conspiración, sino sólo burla y juego, libre le siento de culpa, y el venir sin resistencia declara más su inocencia.

REY (Aparé) Mi temor no le disculpa. No me atrevo a declararme con éste, porque he pensado\textsuperscript{354} que le disculpa culpado para volver a engañarme. No ha de penetrar mi intento hasta que sepa si ha sido cómplice en el rey fingido.

ARPAGO (Aparé) Algún grave pensamiento molesta al Rey con temor de tales fingidos nombres.

REY (Aparé) Fue siempre el alma en los hombres el adivino mejor. \textsuperscript{355} ¿Cuántos, por no haber creído su divina profecía, lloraron, cual yo la mía, después de haber sucedido! Que cuando el temor en calma\textsuperscript{356} teme un pensamiento, impreso se ve pintado un suceso en el espejo del alma.\textsuperscript{357} ¿Quién viene con él?

ARPAGO Su padre, que allá tus ganados guarda.

REY Y ¿tiene madre?

ARPAGO Lisarda\textsuperscript{357} se llama, señor, su madre, labradora como él.

\textsuperscript{353} This refers to the death penalty for instances of treason or conspiracy against the king. If Ciro were thought to be an earnest pretender to the throne, he would be guilty of this and therefore deserve to die. For more on the significance of this game of kingship, see Act I, fn. and end note to line 396+.

\textsuperscript{354} \textit{éste}: here, Astiages is speaking of Arpago, whom he suspects has disobeyed and therefore betrayed him.

\textsuperscript{355} \textit{en calma}: stressed or anxious, like the crews of sailing ships becalmed.

\textsuperscript{356} \textit{espejo del alma}: this phrase is also used in Lope’s El halcón de Federico (1620), Act I [TESO].

\textsuperscript{357} The name of Ciro’s adoptive mother has been added by Lope as it does not appear in the historical sources (see ‘History and Sources’). It does not seem to have any significance other than being vaguely pastoral and, of course, fitting with the \textit{redondilla} rhyme scheme here.
Diles que entren.

Vase Arpago.

REY
Vil temor
me oprime, porque en rigor
no siento malicia en él,\(^{358}\)
pues padres tiene en su aldea,
tan rústicos labradores.

840

\textit{Sale Arpago, Ciro, Mitridates y Bato.}

CIRO
Padre, no temas ni llores.
Entrá, y lo que fuere sea.

MITRIDATES
¡Ay, Ciro! Temblando voy.

ARPAGO
Ya están, señor, a tus pies.

REY
\textit{A Ciro.}^{359}
¿Eres tú el rey?

845

¿No me ves?
Rey de los mancbos soy,
que se juntan en mi aldea
a jugar y entretener;
porque, ¿cómo puede ser
que de otra manera sea?
Es verdadera en ti solo,
gran señor, la majestad;
sólo tu imperio es verdad,
que, como en el cielo Apolo,\(^{360}\)
eres único monarca,
cuya vida de justicia,
como al ave de Fenicia,\(^{361}\)
siempre respeta la Parca,\(^{362}\)
Reina entre los animales
el león; el campo alegra
del aire el águila negra
con plumas y alas reales,\(^{363}\)
el sol, de sus luces bellas
reina; la luna en la noche,
que de su argentado coche
son vasallas las estrellas;
el delfín, en el rigor\(^{364}\)

850

\(^{358}\) An unusual instance of autorhyme 'él' (ll. 836 and 839).
\(^{359}\) \textit{A1} omits ‘\textit{A Ciro}’ here. I have inserted it to avoid confusion.
\(^{360}\) \textit{Apolo}: perhaps the most widely revered of the Greek gods, after Zeus. In Greek mythology, Apollo was feared
even by the other gods.
\(^{361}\) \textit{ave de Fenicia}: (lit. ‘bird of Phoenicia’) a reference to the phoenix, a mythical bird to which was attributed long life
and eventual renewal through death. It had strong connotations of uniqueness.
\(^{362}\) \textit{la Parca}: originally a goddess of birth, the Roman goddess Parca (Parcae) appeared under three different guises
who were equivalent to the Greek Moirae, or ‘Fates’, and who determined the span of human life, becoming closely
associated with death. The idea here is that Astiages’ life of justice is respected by Parca as was that of the phoenix,
and he is therefore to live for a long time unchallenged as king.
\(^{363}\) The eagle is described by Pliny as ‘the most honourable and also the strongest’ of the birds, saying of the black
eagle in particular that it is ‘of outstanding strength.’ \textit{Historia Naturalis} (X, 3) It was also associated with the Spanish
monarchs, and Charles V used it as his personal symbol, having coins minted bearing the image of an eagle (\textit{Cov.}, p.
64b).
\(^{364}\) \textit{princeps} (\textit{A1}, plus B, C, D, E) read, ‘\textit{el delfín del rigor}’. I have amended this to ‘en el rigor’, in agreement with
del mar, que asombra a las naves;\textsuperscript{365}
y entre domésticas aves
el gallo, madrugador.\textsuperscript{366}
De sierpes, naturaleza
al basilisco le dio\textsuperscript{367}
imperio, y así nació
coronada la cabeza;
y porque las monarquías
del tiempo más claras vieses
mayo es el rey de los meses\textsuperscript{368}
y el jueves rey de los días\textsuperscript{369}
En las flores, el clavel,\textsuperscript{370}
y en las semillas, el trigo,\textsuperscript{371}
y el tiempo, de cuanto digo,
donde está sujeto a él.
Reinan, con mucha razón,
de los humanos despojos,
en las facciones, los ojos,\textsuperscript{372}
y en el cuerpo, el corazón.\textsuperscript{373}
De las pasiones mayores
rey quieren que el amor sea,
y yo también en mi aldea
soy rey de los labradores.

\textbf{REY (Aparte)}

¡Vive Júpiter sagrado,
que tanto a Mandane imita,
que tiene en el rostro escrita
la verdad de mi cuidado!
Este sin duda es mi nieto;
que en aquel rudo horizonte
no fuera el parto de un monte\textsuperscript{374}
tan atrevido, y discreto;
porque son precisas leyes,
de que tengo claras señas,
que peñas engendran peñas.\textsuperscript{375}

\textsuperscript{365}Dolphins were well-known for their interaction with men, and were seen as a symbol of speed and agility (\textit{Cen.}, p. 673b).\textsuperscript{9} The association of the word \textit{delfín} with the French \textit{dauphin} (used for the heir apparent to the French throne) is also significant in this context.

\textsuperscript{366}In Pliny’s \textit{Historia Naturalis} (X, 24), he speaks of the farmyard cock wakening the household, and says, ‘they lord it over their own race, and exercise royal sway in whatever household they live. This sovereignty they win by duelling with one another, seeming to understand that weapons grow on their legs for this purpose, and often the fight only ends when they die together [...] even the lion, the noblest of wild animals, is afraid of the cock.’

\textsuperscript{367}basilikos: basilisk, from the Greek \textit{basilikos} meaning ‘little king’, the basilisk, or cockatrice: ‘in the legends of Hellenistic and Roman times, a small serpent, possibly the Egyptian cobra, known as a \textit{basilikos} (‘kinglet’) and credited with powers of destroying all animal and vegetable life by its mere look or breath.’ (\textit{EB}, vol. 3, ‘Basilisk’).

\textsuperscript{368}Mayo: the Spanish word for the month of May comes from the name of the Roman goddess Maia.

\textsuperscript{369}The Spanish word for Thursday, \textit{jueves}, comes from the term \textit{jovis dies}, ‘Jove’s day’ or ‘Jupiter’s day’, hence Ciro’s claim here that it is the ‘king’ of the days of the week.

\textsuperscript{370}The \textit{clavel}, or carnation, is a flower described by Covarrubias as a ‘flor conocida por su excelencia’ (p. 555a).\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{371}With wheat as the basis for flour which is in turn used to make bread, its importance is evident. It is also significant that Ciro includes such commonplace references in his speech here as it reminds the audience (as well as Astiages) of his background in farming.

\textsuperscript{372}ojos: The eyes were said to be the ‘windows of the soul’ and the most beautiful of all the facial features.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{373}The heart was thought to be the well-spring of life.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{374}This is a reference to the brief fable by Aesop about a mountain in labour, which, after much fearful agitation that drew the attention of many, gave birth to a mouse (Aesop, \textit{Aesop’s Fables}, trans. George Fyler Townsend (London: Routledge, 1874), p. 22).
y reyes producen reyes.
No le quisieron matar
traidores que me engañaron,
o los dioses le guardaron
porque les quiso estorbar
el intento que tenían
de que me matase a mí:
oráculo que temí,
y adivinos me decían.
Mas no salió muy adversa
entonces la astrología,
de que éste trasladaría
mi cetro y corona al persa,
quitándola de mi frente.
Pero ya el cielo, aplacado
de sacrificios, me ha dado
remedio piadosamente,
pues que vino a mi poder
cuando en su primera edad
intentó la majestad,
reino que pudiera ser
verdadero, aunque fingido,
de los juegos de la aldea,
en que puede ser que sea
el pronóstico cumplido.\footnote{primera edad: man’s life was commonly perceived as comprising various stages, either three (‘la edad verde [...] la adulta [...] la vejez’, or seven; ‘niñez, puercia, adolescencia, juventud, virildad, vejez, decrepitud’ (Cov., p. 741a). Here, probably, the former is implied, as Astiages has come into contact with Ciro again while his grandson is still a young man.}
Por lo menos, con secreto
haré matar al villano:
sin ser abuelo inhumano,
hoy he de matar mi nieto.\footnote{sin ser [...] nieto: The irony here is devastating, and serves to highlight the cruelty and self-delusion of the old king.}
Dime tu nombre, mancebo.

CIRO
Ciro me llamo, señor.

REY
¡Breve nombre!

CIRO
A mi valor
y virtud pienso que debo
hacerle con obras grande.

REY
Con notable libertad
hablas. Ello fue verdad.

(Aparte)
¿Que lo que su rey le mande
no cumpla un vasallo? ¡Ah, cielo!
mas yo me sabré vengar.\footnote{sabré vengar: this is our first intimation of Astiages’ intention to have his revenge upon Arpago for his disobedience.}
¿Por qué mandaste azotar,
bañado de sangre el suelo,
un labrador inocente?

\footnote{reyes producen reyes: the conclusion here is that the offspring of royalty will be inherently royal. The phrase ‘peñas engendran peñas’ is unique to this play, and probably used to link with the image of the mountain in labour in the previous verses.}
Porque no me obedecía,  
ni como a rey me tenía  
el respeto conveniente.  

Dos acciones de los reyes  
on premiar y castigar.²⁸⁰

¿Y se han de moderar  
con justa piedad las leyes,  
como lo hacemos nosotros?²⁸¹

Había poco que era rey,  
y echéle toda la ley  
para ejemplo de los otros.  

No tengáis por nueva cosa  
mi exceso, si se reprueba,  
porque la justicia nueva  
tiene el gobierno, pasadas  
del amor la condición,  
que es más fuerte en las entradas.  

Tener y amar ha de ser  
la ley del buen gobernar:  
y con castigo el temer;²⁸²  
que aunque el beneficio hallo  
por la ley más provechosa,  
un buen castigo es gran cosa  
para que tema el vasallo;  
porque si un delito es grave  
y éste el rey no le castiga,  
muchos al cielo desobliga  
y al reino, que ya le sabe.²⁸³

¿Adónde aprendiste, Ciro,  
estas razones de estado?²⁸⁴

Los libros me han enseñado.²⁸⁵

Tu virtud e ingenio admiro,  
porque cavas y lees²⁸⁶  
no caben en un sujeto.  

¿Qué dudo de que es mi nieto,  
y de que pudiera ser  
mi muerte, si la piedad  
del cielo no me libra,

---

²⁸⁰ Here begins Ciro’s significant kingship treatise. His ideas on the responsibilities of kings expressed here are not only of import because of their contrast with the actions of Astiages, but also, to contemporary audiences, because they contributed to the kingship debates current at the time. See ‘Kingship’ section.

²⁸¹ This comment is also ironic, given Astiages’ bloodthirsty intentions towards his grandson and his privado Arpago.

²⁸² As discussed in ‘Kingship’, making an example of those who rebelled and striking the balance between rewarding and punishing one’s subjects was a key issue in the kingship debates of the time, dating from Machiavelli.⁹

²⁸³ Ciro’s reasonings here show an understanding of royal governance not to be expected in one from his social background. Astiages has good reason to question where he has learnt such things.

²⁸⁴ Los libros: see again Act I, 484 (referencing Fichter, El sembrar en buena tierra, fn. to lines 1100 and 1121).

²⁸⁵ cavas y lees: ‘digging/hoeing and reading’. The implication here is that these two activities are not usually done by the same person.
y el pronóstico cesara
fingiendo la majestad?
¿Tu padre?

MITRIDATES
Yo soy, señor.

REY
Quedaos aquí tú y Arpago.
Llevad a Ciro vosotros
donde, con mucho regalo,
quiero que tenga aposento
algún tiempo en mi palacio.

CIRO
Beso tus reales pies.

(Aparte) 386
¿Qué te ha parecido, Bato,
de lo que le he dicho al Rey?

BATO
No te quisiera tan sabio,
los reyes son como el sol,
que han de deslumbrar sus rayos;
que es tener en poco el cetro
mirarlos de claro en claro. 387

CIRO
Engañaste, que yo sé
que me queda aficionado,
Así son los hombres hombres;
que, letrados o soldados,
sin favor del Rey, ¿qué importan?

BATO
¿Por azotar un villano
quieres que te dé favor?
Yo me holgaré que volvamos
al monte como venimos.

Vanse los dos.

REY
Solos habemos quedado,
porque me importa el secreto.

MIT. (Aparte)
En el pecho me está dando
mil saltos el corazón.

REY
Dime, labrador honrado,
tu patria y tu nombre.

MITRIDATES
Soy
tu ganadero, y me llamo
Mitridates.

REY
Este Ciro,
¿es tu hijo? ¡Por el santo
Júpiter que, si me engañas,
que de Agrigento el tirano
no ha de haber formado toro 389
que te abrase a fuego manso
como le haré para ti!

---

386 ‘(Aparte)’ here does not appear in A1. I have inserted it in the interests of clarity.
387 Bato shows his rustic sagacity here once more by warning Ciro that a king should be given a certain respectful
distance in order to preserve his honour. Ciro does not heed his warning, but it is later proven to be well-founded; if
Ciro had been perhaps a little less confident in manner and learned in his pronouncements, his grandfather may not
have been so appalled at the perceived threat posed by him.
388 Here, we see again Ciro’s youthful confidence, exposing him as rather naive compared with Bato’s more realistic
view of the situation.
389 Agrigente: a Sicilian town which fell under the rule of the tyrant Phalaris c.570-c.549 BC. Phalaris’ name became a
by-word for cruelty. The invention of the brazen bull is attributed to Perillos of Athens who proposed it to Phalaris
as a new means of executing criminals. A hollow bronze bull was fashioned with the victim placed inside, and a fire
was lit under it, resulting in the condemned man being roasted alive.
MITRIDATES

En la lealtad de vasallo
pienso que hallaré mejor
la respuesta, que en el daño
que me puede suceder
de no respetarte airado.

Arpago está presente, que a mi aldea,
trajo un niño, señor, entre mantillas
ricas, en quien naturaleza emplea
pinceles de sus altas maravillas,
como suele en la copia de Amaltea,
azucena entre humildes florecillas,
así, entre los pájaros primitivos,
del rostro en el marfil dos soles vivos.

Llegó, en efecto, con secreto y prisa,
y me mandó que a fieros animales,
adonde planta de pastor no pisa,
le echase entre peñascos y jarales.

Apenas le tomé, cuando con risa
de su inocencia me mostró señales,
porque fuese testigo en su inocencia
el recibir con risa la sentencia.

¡Cruel decreto, dar la muerte a vida
que de la ejecución se está riendo!
Pero como de mí no fue admitida
la apelación, calló, perlas vertiendo.

Fuese Arpago, señor; yo, infanticida,
levéle al monte, aunque entre mí diciendo:
¿Qué más fiera que yo? Pues no pudiera
ninguna de aquel monte ser más fiera.
Echéle entre dos peñas, que parece
que piadosas entonces se abrazaban;
- ¡jaun ahora decirlo me enternece! -
y entonces ellas piensas que lloraban.

La hierba así que en sus espacios crece,
y las flores, parece que ocultaban
el tierno niño, en ocasión tan fuerte,
porque no le pudiese ver la muerte.

Volví a mi casa, que con tierno llanto
la senda apenas de aquel monte vía,
donde hallé mi mujer, ¡oh cielo santo!,
que un hijo muerto malparido había.

Contéla el caso, y afligióse tanto,
que me dijo, llorando que tendría
consuelo si aquel niño le trujese,

390 Here there is a shift in verse form to octavas reales, again appropriate to the courtly setting and the weighty nature of the account Mitridates gives to Astiages.
391 *Amaltea*; this probably refers to the 'horn of plenty' which was associated with this nymph. However, Amalthea was originally known as the goat (in later versions made into a nymph) who 'suckled Zeus after his birth when he was hidden in a cave to prevent his father Cronus from devouring him' (*OCD*, *Amalthea*). The parallels with this story and that of Ciro are apparent, even though this reference is relatively fleeting.
392 This beautiful image compares the baby of royal blood wrapped in crude blankets to the stately Madonna lily among more humble flowers. The comparison of the eyes with suns is a common one in Golden Age literature.
393 *jara*: places where the rockrose (*jara*) grows. These are usually in dry, rocky, mountainous areas, where the *jara* grows abundantly to form a dense thicket of foliage.
394 This metaphorical usage of *perlas* to mean tears is a common poetic image in Golden Age literature.
395 Contéla: See note to Act I, l. 245.
si Júpiter vivir le permitiese.

Al monte parto con ligero paso,
que apenas con los pies tocaba al suelo,
cuando al bordar el sol de oro el ocaso,
hallo mi niño y mi dolor consuelo.
Una perra le daba - ¡extraño caso! -
piadosa el pecho por piedad del cielo,
y de aves y animales defendía,
que en torno dé la muerte conducía.

Álzole en brazos de la dura tierra,
imprimiendo en su cara tiernos besos.
Voy por el monte, súgeme la perra
entre las peñas y árboles espesos.

Llego a mi casa, en fin... ¡Oh cuánto yerra
quien piensa que impedir puede sucesos
que tienen ya los cielos decretados,
ni reprimir la fuerza de los hados!

Crióle mi mujer, púsole Ciro
por la perra que el pecho le había dado
- que así se llama en nuestra lengua - y miro
el cielo a su favor determinado,
porque cuando fingido rey le admiro,
y saber su valor te da cuidado,
conoces que es el niño que ha vivido
para hacer verdadero el rey fingido.

Conociase bien que era tu nieto
en tanta discreción y valentía,
que no pudiera ser menor efeito
el que tan alta causa producis.
Ya de los cielos se cumplies el decreto
en el reino de burlas que fingía;
si el haberle criado culpa ha sido,
de mi inocente error perdón te pido.

REY

Dame tus brazos, dignos justamente
de un rey; pues por piedad ninguno ha sido
castigado en el mundo, ni ha perdido
el premio de librar a un inocente.

Oh Arpago, ¿de qué temes, cuando siente
tu pecho que mi amor te ha perdonado
no haber ejecutado
mi necio mandamiento?

ARPAGO

Señor, yo le cumplí; que sólo siento

---

396 This account of events differs from the source in Justin, where Ciro’s surrogate mother gives her living newborn baby as a replacement for Ciro. See ‘History and Sources’.
397 The shift from past to present tense here adds immediacy to Mitridates’ account, drawing in the listener (both onstage and in the audience) to his reminiscences.
398 One of the alternative titles to the play is listed as ‘Ciro, hijo de la perra’ (Varey y Shergold, Fuentes IX, p. 131); for more on this, see ‘Dating and Authorship’ and ‘The Play’s Title’.
399 This protection of the baby by the natural world around him, including his suckling by a dog, echoes the story of Romulus and Remus who were suckled by a wolf.
400 This exclamation is reminiscent of the story of Oedipus; among others, one of the abandonment legends in the same genre as Contra valor, where attempts to defy what fate has decreed prove futile. Other Lope plays that use this idea include El hijo de los leones, and Calderón employed similar plot lines in La vida es sueño and La hija del aire.
401 Ciro’s name is said by Herodotus (who omits the element of the story in which Ciro is suckled by a bitch) to stem from the name of Mitridates’ wife, Cyno which in Median is Spako, from spax meaning ‘dog’. See ‘History and Sources’.
no verte el alma ahora.

**REY**

Pues ¿puede ser traídora
alma de un rey?[^402]

**ARPAGO**

El pensamiento humano
sólo del cielo se defiende en vano.[^403]

**REY**

Por mi corona, que te debo, Arpago,
la vida, y que te pago
con la verdad que debo,
agradecido a sucesor tan nuevo.
Y porque lo que digo verdad sea,
vuélvase Ciro, vuélvase a la aldea;[^404]
váyase libremente
hasta que llegue tiempo conveniente
que pueda declararle por mi nieto;
pero advirtiendo que ha de estar secreto,
porque, por todo el coro
de los dioses que adoro,
que si le declaráis quién es, que luego
os abrase a los dos en vivo fuego.
¿Daisme aquesta palabra?

**ARPAGO**

Yo la juro
a Marte, protector del patrio muro.

**MITRIDATES**

De mí no tengo yo que asegurarte;
que bien puede obligarte
lo que he tenido tanto tiempo oculto.

**REY**

Pues ya no dificulto
que con estar secreto
haré jurar por sucesor mi nieto.
Tú parte, Mitridates,
por que de volver trates[^405]
con Ciro al monte donde se ha criado.

**MITRIDATES**

¿Diréle alguna cosa?

**REY**

Que me he holgado
de conocer en rústico sujeto
un mozo tan valiente y tan discreto.

**MITRIDATES**

Guarde tu vida el cielo.

_Vase._

**REY**

De tu piadoso celo
satisfecho, con justa confianza,
Arpago generoso,
te quiero dar de Ciro la crianza;
que espero harás un rey tan belicoso,
que ponga nuestra media monarquía[^406]
en los últimos límites del día.[^407]

[^402]: This is not only an ironic question for Astiages to ask in the circumstances, but is also important in the light of contemporary debates on kingship.

[^403]: Arpago wisely counters Astiages’ dissimulation with the argument that no-one but God can see into the thoughts of men.

[^404]: In the historians’ accounts, the young Ciro is sent back to the home of his biological parents, where he remains until he overthrows Astiages (see ‘History and Sources’).

[^405]: _A1_ reads ‘de volver te trates’. The ‘te’ is unnecessary, and also negatively affects the syllable count of the line (making it one syllable too long), so I have omitted it.

[^406]: _media_: although technically the correct term for ‘Median’ in this context should be ‘meda’, the context would imply that this is what the term ‘media’ signifies here.
ARPAGO
Tan justas confianzas
puedes tener de mí como de Ciro,
manejo, de tal altas esperanzas
que al resplandor de tus hazañas miro
águila caudalosa. 408

REY
Para pagarte la amistad piadosa
que con él has usado,
hooy, Arpago, serás mi convidado;
hooy comerás conmigo, que es muy justo.

ARPAGO
Beso tus reales pies.

REY
Por este gusto
no sé qué honras hacerte,
llámame a Evandro.

ARPAGO
Voy a obedecerte.

Vase.

REY
¿Habrá maldad que como aquésta sea?
¡Oh, fementido Arpago! 409
¿Así mi imperio tu traición desea?
Perió, yo te daré tan justo pago
que sea más dolor que el darte muerte.
Villano, ¿esta suerte
obedece tu Rey? ¡Viven los cielos,
que la sangre sosiegue mis desvelos
del labrador valiente
que quiere los laureles de mi frente
traslada a la suya!
Que no es justicia que a maldad se arguya
que, a quien quiere matarme al mediodía,
le mate yo a la aurora. 410

ARPAGO
Beso tus reales pies.

REY
Por este gusto
no sé qué honras hacerte,
llámame a Evandro.

ARPAGO
Voy a obedecerte.

Vase.

EVANDRO
¿Qué manda Vuestra Alteza?

REY
Evandro, ahora
mandé partir a Ciro sin castigo.

EVANDRO
¿Así guardas justicia?

REY
Evandro amigo,
nó fue sin ocasión, porque no quiero
parecer tan severo
a los ojos del pueblo, aficionado
da ese manco loco y alentado.
Hoy se parte, y hoy quiero que le mates.
Sólo va con el viejo Mitridates:
síguele con soldados de mi guarda,
y de noche le aguarda
al paso más oculto deste monte.

407 Astiages asserts his desire that Ciro should rule the Median empire and broaden its boundaries.
408 This is an appropriate metaphor to use here as it links to the antiquated idea that among all the birds, the eagle was the only one not to be harmed by lightning, and that it could look at the sun's rays directly.°
409 fementido: deceitful, untrustworthy.
410 This idea of pre-emptive punishment is extremely controversial, closer to the reviled ideas of Machiavelli than to any well-received kingship treatise of the day. Astiages, in trying to defend his approach here, only cements our view of his tyrannical character.
Pero a pensar disponte
que has de traerme su cabeza fiera,
como del oso o jabalí le adorna
el cazador que torna
alegre de la presa.

EVANDRO
De que se tarde el claro sol me pesa,
de partirse al ocaso.

REY
Ya te espero:
por verle muerto, muero.
¡Oh cielos, no os canséis de asegurarme\textsuperscript{411}
de un hombre que nació para matarme!

\textit{Vanse.}

\textit{Sale Bato, y Filis.}\textsuperscript{412}

FILIS
Como si fuera la ausencia
fácil pena al sentimiento,
añadieron mis desdichas
el peligro a mis deseos.
¿Cómo dejas, Bato, a Ciro?
Que amor, en tales sucesos,
del mal temiendo lo más,
del bien espera lo menos.

BATO
Aunque el Rey le recibió
por enojo o por costumbre
(el que es la majestad en ellos
como un vínculo real),\textsuperscript{413}
después, con rostro risueño
templó la deidad; que mueve
mucho al airado el discreto.
Así diez años Ulises,\textsuperscript{414}
matador de Polifemo,
(aquel gigante de un ojo)
anduvo por varios reinos.
Oh, si le vieras hablar
con atrevido despejo,\textsuperscript{415}
¡pensaras que era Sibila\textsuperscript{416}
or el oráculo de Delfos!\textsuperscript{417}
Finalmente, le mandó
regalar; y así, le dejo
en un cuarto de palacio

---

\textsuperscript{411} \textit{asegurar}: ‘Preservar o resguardar de daño a alguien o algo; defenderlo e impedir que pase a poder de otra persona.’ (RAE, 6).

\textsuperscript{412} The scene shifts here from the court to the aldea, for the second salida of Act II.

\textsuperscript{413} Bato implies that Astiages’ initial severity could be a characteristic trait of royal figures.

\textsuperscript{414} \textit{Ulysses}: Known in Greek as Odysseus, the legendary Greek hero’s notable characteristics were courage, resourcefulness, wisdom and diplomacy (in addition to shrewd trickery at times). Bato’s use of these learned examples adds to our view of him as an atypical \textit{gracioso}. We may infer that he has acquired knowledge of such references from Ciro himself.

\textsuperscript{415} \textit{despejo}: ‘Claro entendimiento, talento’ (RAE, 4).

\textsuperscript{416} \textit{Sibila}: Sibyl, originally a prophetic woman, the name later became a generic term for a wise prophet.

\textsuperscript{417} \textit{el oráculo de Delfos}: the Delphic oracle became the most important Greek oracle, and was said to have belonged originally to Apollo.
tan metido a caballero,
que parece que lo ha sido
toda su vida.

FILIS
El ingenio
lo alcanza todo: y así,
 muchos hombres que subieron
en brazos de la fortuna
da ocupar honrosos puestos,
saben presto ser señores.

BATO
Y aún saben serlo tan presto,
que cuanto fueron humildes,
parecen después soberbios.
Finalmente, por quitarte,
Filis, del peligro el miedo,
me ha enviado a que te diga
que no le tengas en esto;
porque aunque lamenta Evandro
los azotes de Fineo,
espera Ciro del Rey
en vez de castigo, premio.418

FILIS
¿Qué dice mi hermano Arpago?

BATO
¡Por Júpiter, que no entiendo,
Filis, si verdad te digo,
el alma destos enredos!
Él y el Rey y Mitridates
andan hablando en secreto.
Ayer comió con el Rey.419

FILIS
¿Con el Rey! ¿Qué dices?

BATO
Puedo
asegurar lo que vi,
y que entré a verlos comiendo.
¡Tanta plata, tantos platos,
de tantos manjares llenos,
tanto servicio y criados,
éste entrando, aquél saliendo,
todos atentos al Rey,
y alguno, por dicha, atento
más al capón que comía420
que a la deidad del imperio!
¡Oh, bien haya, dije yo,
debajo de un pobre techo
la olla de un labrador,
los rotos manteles puestos
sobre una tabla de pino,
y aquel ver salir hirviendo
el repollo en el verano,
los nabos en el invierno,
a su lado su mujer

418 Here, Ciro shows his naive optimism in thinking that the king will forgo punishing him. This idea goes against
even that which Ciro himself has stated regarding the responsibilities of a monarch (see l. 949).
419 Here, Bato tells Filis that Arpago ate with the king ‘ayer’, a clue to the audience that a day has passed between
the end of the first and second salidas in this Act. For more on this, see ‘Versification’.
420 capón: capon, a castrated male chicken, prepared for its tender meat (still a delicacy in some countries). See
Fichter, El sembrar, p. 163, fn. to ll. 61-68 for a note on Lope’s use of this meat as an example of a luxury food in the
same class as perdiz (partridge) and faisán (pheasant), of which it was proverbially said that one could tire.
con el hijo tierno al pecho,  
el gato por mayordomo,  
y por maestresala el perro!  
Porque los contentos, Filis,  
(sí hay en el mundo contentos)  
no están en las ceremonias,  
sino en el gusto y el sueño.

FILIS  ¡Bueno vienes de la corte!
BATO  Filis, este poco seso  
de acá le llevé; que allá  
no venden entendimientos.
FILIS  Y ¿cuándo piensas volver?  
BATO  Esta noche volver pienso;  
que sólo a verte he venido.
FILIS  Escucha un atrevimiento.
BATO  ¿Cómo?
FILIS  Yo he de ver a Ciro;  
que secretamente quiero  
irme contigo esta noche.
BATO  A no estar el monte en medio,  
fuera fácil la jornada  
con secreto y con silencio.
FILIS  Entra, y despacio en mi casa  
la venida trataremos;  
que amor no permite espacio  
donde le lleva el deseo.
BATO  Miralo, Filis, mejor.
FILIS  No gusta amor de consejos.
BATO  Pues ¿de qué gusta el amor?
FILIS  De ejecutar los remedios.

Vanse.

Sale Ciro con espada, y Mitridates.

CIRO  Apenas de la licencia  
del Rey, padre, me informé,  
cuando, de la corte fue,  
y para siempre, mi ausencia.  
Bien haya mi pobre aldea,  
que me falte o que me sobre,  
porque no hay contento pobre,  
ni bien que sin él lo sea.

MITRIDATES  Sólo me causa cuidado,  
Ciro, de Evandro la queja,  
pues sin venganza le deja,

---

421 This speech of Bato’s extolling the joys of simple living in contrast to the life of the court falls into the tradition of Horace’s Beatus ille, a common topos in Golden Age literature. It has resonance with other Lope plays in which the simple life of rural communities is championed, for example Act I of Peribáñez where Casilda describes her marital bliss with the peasant Peribáñez, despite their basic existence (ll. 703-61).

422 espacio: tardiness, delay.

423 The third salida of Act II begins, shifting the scene from the aldea to the mountain. For more on how this would have been represented in the corral, see ‘Staging’.

424 Ciro blesses his village here, returning to his rustic roots with gladness after his visit to the court. His attitude reflects that which Bato has just expressed on the Beatus ille theme, reassuring the audience that Ciro’s character has not been corrupted by his apparent favour with the king.
el Rey, del hijo azotado.

No hay satisfacción que cuadre
a injuria tan afrentosa,
y ya sabes que es la cosa
más ciega del mundo un padre;
que el amor con que le viene
a estimar su pensamiento,
le quita el entendimiento;
pues ¿qué hará si no le tiene?

Temo, al fin, un padre airado,
Ciro, y aumenta mi pena,
saliendo en noche serena,
haberse el cielo turbado.

que, aunque no está del aldea
este monte muy distinto, no
hay Creta ni laberinto que como su centro sea.

Las nubes, rotos los senos,
las estrellas amenazan,
que el campo desembraran
del cielo, huyendo los truenos.

Alguna desdicha temo
entre tanta oscuridad.

CIRO

Si vos, de tan larga edad llegando, padre, al extremo,
teméis, con mayor razón temiera mi juventud
la muerte, no la virtud,
que es alma del corazón.

¿Qué monte, qué padre airado,
qué cielo tempestuoso,
qué enemigo poderoso
en obscura noche armado;
qué voraz actividad

del fuego, ni qué violencia
de agua o viento, o negra ausencia
de la solar claridad;

qué relámpagos y truenos,
qué rayos ni qué centellas?

Que, si huyeren las estrellas,
estará firme a lo menos
la que nació con mi dicha.

Venga el mundo contra mí;
que si con valor naci,
contra valor no hay desdicha.
¡Ay, hijo! ¿Qué estás diciendo? Al valor con que te armas,
y al furor de gente de armas está el monte estremeciendo.

Piensos que sale verdad, Ciro, el rigor que temí.

¿Es Ciro?

¿Cómo te diré quién eres antes que mueras, pues mueres?

¿Tienes, hombre, revestida la furia de Flegetonte, en ese pecho?

¡Villanos, mal conocéis estas manos!

Huyendo van por el monte.

¿Quién pensara tal valor?

---


432 The autorhyme ‘te armas’ and ‘gente de armas’ (ll. 1633-34) could be explained here by the fact that the former is a verb and the latter is a noun.

433 *Flegetonte*: Phlegethon, one of the fiery rivers of hell in Greek mythology, is described in Covarrubias as, ‘río del infierno, que está hirviendo en pez y piedrazufre’ (brimstone) (p. 914b).
¡Padre, muerto soy!  
Fineo es aquél. No es éste Ciro. Marte, de su quinto cielo\(^{434}\) debió de bajar armado de diamante. Ya no siento las voces. ¡Ay de mí, triste!  
¿Sí por dicha Ciro es muerto? ¡Ciro!... Nadie me responde. Sólo, de lástima, el eco repite su amado nombre. Subir por el monte quiero. ¡Ánimo, caducas fuerzas!  

\textit{Sube por el monte.  
Sale Ciro, sangriento, con la espada desnuda.}  

Tres de los villanos dejo entre las peñas tendidos, y los demás van huyendo. Herido estoy; pero poco. Sólo de mi padre siento la pena, porque habrá sido la espada con que le han muerto. ¡Qué terrible oscuridad! Si ignorant pudiera el cielo que no habían de matarme, pensara que lo había hecho por cubrir su gran teatro de paños de luto negro.\(^{435}\)  

\textit{Bato, dentro y lejos:}  

¿Ciro!... ¿Qué voz es aquella?  
Pensara que destos cerros era pastor si mi nombre no pronunciara tan presto.  

\textit{Dentro Mitridates:}  

¡Ciro!... Otra voz diferente: que es de mi padre sospecho.  
Por acá, por acá, padre. No responde: mi deseo debió de burlarme.  

\textit{Filis, dentro y lejos:}  

¿Ciro!... ¡Júpiter santo! ¿Qué es esto?  

\(^{434}\) \textit{Marte, de su quinto cielo:} according to Ptolemaic astronomy, Mars was in the fifth sphere (see end note for line 609 of Act I).  
\(^{435}\) \textit{paños de luto:} this image is reminiscent of the black wall-hangings that were put up in Spanish churches during this period for the funeral (or memorial) service of a dignitary. Such an anachronistic reference (given this play’s setting in ancient Persia), is typical of Lope (see Schevill, \textit{Lope de Vega} (1935), p. 261).
Parece voz de mujer, y si el alma no hace enredos (porque no es mujer el alma, si en el nombre, no en los hechos),\footnote{This refers to the fact that ‘alma’ is a feminine noun, despite looking like a masculine one. The unreliability of women was a common topos in Golden Age literature, and therefore Ciro claims here that his soul is not like them in deeds, although it technically is in ‘nombre’. Therefore he can trust his judgement that Filis is indeed the one calling out to him.} Filis es la que me llama. ¡Qué pensamiento tan necio! En un monte... ¡a media noche!\footnote{For a discussion of how this scene would have been played out, see ‘Staging’.}

\emph{Dentro Filis:}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{FILIS} & ¿Ciro!...
\textbf{CIRO} & Más cerca la siento. \\
& Quiero responder. ¿Quién es? \\
& ¿Quién llama a Ciro?
\end{tabular}

\emph{Salen por tres partes a un tiempo, Filis, Mitridates y Bato.}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{FILIS} & Yo. \\
\textbf{MITRIDATES} & Yo. \\
\textbf{BATO} & Yo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Cielos! ¿Quién respondió? \\
\textbf{FILIS} & Yo soy. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¿Filis? \\
\textbf{FILIS} & ¿No me ves? \\
\textbf{MITRIDATES} & Si hay para un padre después brazos, aquí estoy contigo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Padre! \\
\textbf{BATO} & Y después un amigo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Bato! ¿Es posible que os veo, o es burla de mi deseo que los tres estéis conmigo?
\textbf{FILIS} & ¡Ay, mi bien, ¿herido estás?
\textbf{CIRO} & De tu amor, Filis hermosa.
\textbf{FILIS} & ¡Ciro!... ¿No me ves? \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¿Filis? \\
\end{tabular}

¡Cielos! ¿Quién respondió? ¿Quién llama a Ciro?}

¿Quién llama a Ciro?

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{FILIS} & Yo. \\
\textbf{MITRIDATES} & Yo. \\
\textbf{BATO} & Yo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Cielos! ¿Quién respondió? \\
\textbf{FILIS} & Yo soy. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¿Filis? \\
\textbf{FILIS} & ¿No me ves? \\
\textbf{MITRIDATES} & Si hay para un padre después brazos, aquí estoy contigo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Padre! \\
\textbf{BATO} & Y después un amigo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Bato! ¿Es posible que os veo, o es burla de mi deseo que los tres estéis conmigo?
\textbf{FILIS} & ¡Ay, mi bien, ¿herido estás?
\textbf{CIRO} & De tu amor, Filis hermosa.
\textbf{FILIS} & ¡Ciro!... ¿No me ves? \\
\end{tabular}

¿Quién llama a Ciro?

¿Quién llama a Ciro?

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{FILIS} & Yo. \\
\textbf{MITRIDATES} & Yo. \\
\textbf{BATO} & Yo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Cielos! ¿Quién respondió? \\
\textbf{FILIS} & Yo soy. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¿Filis? \\
\textbf{FILIS} & ¿No me ves? \\
\textbf{MITRIDATES} & Si hay para un padre después brazos, aquí estoy contigo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Padre! \\
\textbf{BATO} & Y después un amigo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Bato! ¿Es posible que os veo, o es burla de mi deseo que los tres estéis conmigo?
\textbf{FILIS} & ¡Ay, mi bien, ¿herido estás?
\textbf{CIRO} & De tu amor, Filis hermosa.
\textbf{FILIS} & ¡Ciro!... ¿No me ves? \\
\end{tabular}

¿Quién llama a Ciro?

¿Quién llama a Ciro?

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{FILIS} & Yo. \\
\textbf{MITRIDATES} & Yo. \\
\textbf{BATO} & Yo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Cielos! ¿Quién respondió? \\
\textbf{FILIS} & Yo soy. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¿Filis? \\
\textbf{FILIS} & ¿No me ves? \\
\textbf{MITRIDATES} & Si hay para un padre después brazos, aquí estoy contigo. \\
\textbf{CIRO} & ¡Padre! \\
\textbf{BATO} & Y después un amigo. \\
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\textbf{CIRO} & De tu amor, Filis hermosa.
\textbf{FILIS} & ¡Ciro!... ¿No me ves? \\
\end{tabular}

¿Quién llama a Ciro?
hurtando a tu voz el son,
hablaba dentro de mí.
¿Cómo vienes desta suerte?

FILIS
Llevando a Bato por norte,
me llevaban a la corte,
Ciro, las ansias de verte.
Era el estruendo tan fuerte
de las armas y las voces
de tus contrarios atroces,
que en hielo me transformaron,
y aun pienso que se espantaron
los animales feroces.

Y si en esta ocasión
vives, yo pienso que fue
porque tu vida pasé

1470
desde el campo al corazón;
que entre aquella confusión,
fiero y bárbaro tropel
de tanta gente cruel,
con el alma enternecida,
dije: «Aquí estará su vida,
y me matarán por él.»

CIRO
Con este favor, mi bien,
que amor trujo a mis oídos,
los que huyeron, van vencidos;
los demás, muertos se ven.

1480
Pero pelear tan bien
no fue mucha valentía
si Filis me defendía;
que si más cerca llegara,
con los ojos los matara,
y yo descansar podía.

Padre, gran pena me distes.

MITRIDATES
Ninguna a mi pena iguala,
ni pensé volver a verte,
perdido por la montaña.

1490
CIRO
Bato amigo, mucho debo
a tu amor.

BATO
Si me le pagas,\(^{440}\)
claro está que no le debes.

FILIS
¡Ay de mí! Gente con armas
discurre el monte.

1495
BATO
Ellos vuelven.

CIRO
Esta espada
no sabe huir: todos juntos
os poned a mis espaldas.

1500

Salen Arpago y soldados.

ARPAGO
Pisando voy cuerpos muertos,
que la misma luz del alba
nos enseña por las sendas.

\(^{440}\) This use of *le* rather than *lo* for direct masculine pronouns is typical of Lope (see *El sufrimiento premiado*, ed. Dixon (1967), xxi-xxii).
Sangrientas están las ramas.

¡Ay de mí! ¿Si es muerto Ciro?

¡Ay, Filis, gran mal me aguarda!

Arpago, tu hermano, es éste.

Detrás de estas altas hayas
es fuerza que os escondáis.  

¿No estás, fortuna, cansada
de perseguirme?

Señora, no temas aunque haya causa;
que quien ha muerto a los otros
se dará bien buena mañana
que hará de aquéstos lo mismo.

Vanse los tres.

Arpago, yo soy. ¿Qué aguardas?

Esperaba a conocerte;
que tan poco a poco baja
el alba, que se ve apenas
si es la noche o la mañana.

Si a matarme vienes, ¿cómo
tienes la espada en la vaina?

No vengo a matarte, Ciro:
Ciro, en que he sido repara,
quien dos veces te dio vida
a costa de sus entrañas.

¿Qué dices?

Retiranse los soldados.

Que escuches la historia larga
de tu vida y mi desdicha.

Dime, Arpago, si me engañas,
porque no será valor.

Antes que del monte salgas
sabrás si te engaño: escucha.

Yo escucho en tu confianza,
pero más en mi virtud;
porque, si a traición me matas,
volveré del otro mundo
y sabré tomar venganza.

Ciro valiente, de quien
pende la corona toda
del Asia, aunque te quitaban
con la vida la corona,
yo no es tiempo de callar;

---

441 Filis is dismayed that her brother has arrived, and the other characters counsel her to hide because it would not have been deemed appropriate for a single woman to be out on the mountainside at night with three men. Filis is shown to disregard social norms on more than one occasion (for more, see Act III, and the ‘Characterization’ section), however she is aware that her honourable reputation is important and must be protected by secrecy in these instances.

442 porqué no, será valor: ‘porque no [hacerlo] será valor’.

443 en tu confianza: this is the common objective genitive, and so should be read as ‘confiando en ti’.
que cuando la verdad sobra,
aunque rompa mi palabra,
mas que me infama, me honra.444

No es la causa que yo tengo
para vengarme tan poca;
que no pedirá palabras
quien hace tan malas obras.
El cielo me manda hablarte,
que rompérsela no importa;
antes el cielo se sirve
de que a un tirano la rompa.445

El rey Astiages, de Media,
tuvo por hija la hermosa
Mandane, de cuyo vientre
soñó que con verdes hojas,
entre fértiles racimos,
salía una vid frondosa
que toda el Asia cubría,
por cuyo temor se informa
de los sabios que en su reino
guaracen talares togas.446
Todos dicen que su hija,
- y unánimes se conforman -
pariría un bello infante,
que con fuerzas belicosas
el reino le quitaría;
y de suerte el Rey se asombra,
que en Persia casa a Mandane
con la más pobre persona,
- aunque noble - que halló en Persia,447
pensando que al cielo estorba
el poder, a quien están
sujetas todas las cosas.

Pero no hay fuerzas humanas
que a las divinas se opongan:
antes, resistido el cielo,
a más rigor se provoca.

Preñada Mandane, el Rey
la vuelve a su casa, y toma
el niño que della nace
y a su marido la torna.
Este me entrega, y me manda
- ¡qué crueldad! - que en una sola
selva le deje a las fieras,
que le devoren y coman.
No quise yo ser verdugo

444 The time when it was justified to rebel against the king was a much-debated question in contemporary treatises on kingship. The use of the term ‘tirano’ in l. 1563 is of great significance in this regard (see ‘Kingship’).

445 In the list of priorities, obedience to heaven comes before obedience to a tyrannical monarch.

446 This means that the ‘sabios’ in question are adorned by togas that reach their heels (presumably a sign of their importance). See María Moliner, Diccionario de uso del español, ‘talar’ (2) vol. 2, p. 1172a.

447 In both of the historians’ accounts, Mandane’s husband is named as Cambyses.

448 sola: this usage of sola as an adjective meaning ‘desolate’, ‘isolated’ or ‘lonely’ has its root in the Latin adjective solus (sola, solum) meaning both ‘alone, lonely’, and ‘solitary, uninhabited’. This usage is unusual but not without precedent; an example of it can be found in the 1549 translation of ‘Orlando Furioso’ by Jerónimo de Urrea, a highly latinized piece: ‘muy brevemente en una sola via, | pusó la mano en él’ (paragraph 42, emphasis mine).
de un ángel; que galardona
la piedad el cielo, tanto
la inocencia le enamora.
Con esto, aquel mismo día
con tierno llanto le arroja
mi ganadero a las fieras;
después le vuelve a su choza,
donde por suyo le cría,
en cuya rústica ropa
aquél ánimo real
no de otra manera brota
- volviendo en coturnos de oro
las que eran abarcas toscas -
que del conducto la fuente,
por la superficie rota,
bullendo las arenillas,
revienta menudo aljófar.
Este fuiste, fuerte Ciro,
que de burlas rey te nombras,
porque te enseñaba el cielo
que a las veras te dispongas.
Astiages, viéndote vivo,
de tal manera se enoja,
que me convida a comer,
¡ay, Dios!, con alma traidora.
Cómo, y después me pregunta
si fue espléndida y sabrosa
la comida; yo, ignorante,
le agradezco tantas honras.
Enséñame luego... ¡ay, cielo!
¿Qué lágrimas y congojas
el prólogo quieren ser
de mi tragedia llorosa!
Me enseña, ¿díje?... ¡Ay de mí!
¿Cómo diré? ¿De qué forma?
En una sangrienta fuente
vi la cabeza amorosa,
pies y manos de mi hijo.
Tanto mueve y alborota
el alma ver que su cuerpo
su mismo padre devora.
En mi llanto y en su sangre
mis tiernos ojos se mojan,
por ver si pueden lavar
la misma engañada boca.
Volví el ser que di a mi hijo
a mi ser, como quien cobra
lo que ha dado, y de mi carne

449 *coturnos*: a stylish, high-soled slipper; the cothurn (or buskin) was first used on stage in Ancient Greek tragedy to give stature to the actors, and is closely associated with that genre.
450 *abarcas*: a type of rustic footwear, either made of wood (like clogs), or made from rough leather tied to the feet with string.
451 This image depicts seed pearls bursting forth from a spring bubbling up from under the sand.
452 This grisly episode is found in both of the historical sources, where Astiages has Arpago’s son cooked and fed to Arpago without his knowledge of the nature of the meat that he is eating.
se aumenta mi carne propia.

Así me dijo: «En tu hijo
tomar venganza me toca
de no haberte obedecido,
pues vive mi nieto ahora.»

¿Qué león de Albania, qué sierpe
de Libia, qué tigre, qué onza
hiciera tan gran crueldad
cuando los hijos le roban?

Disimulé cuanto pude,
y el Rey, con falsas lisonjas,
te deja volver al monte
para que sus peñas, sordas
y mudas, fuesen testigos
de tu muerte lastimosa.

Apenas lo supe, Ciro,
cuando quiere que socorra
dos veces tu vida el cielo;
pero cuando ya la aurora
abre las puertas al día,
veo en la florida alfombra
del monte tres hombres muertos,
y esa mano vencedora
de la crueldad de tu abuelo.

Vuelve, Ciro, a la memoria
sus agravios; que los cielos
con su mano poderosa
te defienden, y te llaman
al hecho de mayor gloria
que en eterno bronce anima
de la alta fama la trompa.

Honra a tu madre Mandane,
tu imperio heredado cobrá
de quien mil veces te ha muerto
con fieras, hierro y ponzoña.

Aunque para no matarte
defenderte el cielo sobra;
que es querer matar en él
del sol la dorada antorcha.

Consagra al templo inmortal

---

453 Libia: see Salembien, BH, 35 (1933), p. 54. ‘Libia’ was one of the geographical terms used by Lope, often in the context of hyperbole, e.g. La Circe, ‘No hay aspid de la Libia que derrame | mayor veneno’, stanza 129 [ed. Aubrun and Muñoz Cortes, 1962, p. 89]. Ouzge, a snow leopard, native to the mountain ranges of Central Asia. The RAE adds in its definition, ‘En Persia se empleaba para la caza de gacelas.’

454 See Salembien, BH, 34 (1932), p. 297, on animal imagery in Lope, especially lions and tigers representing cruelty, and serpents representing treachery: ‘un lion ou un tigre [représenté] un être cruel, un serpent ou un aspic un traître.’ Dixon (El sufrimiento, fn. to line 2901), recalls Dido’s lament against Aeneas (‘duris enuit te cautibus horrens | Caucasus Hyrcanaeque admirant ubera tigres’, Aeneid, IV, 366) and quotes from Adonis y Venus, ¿En qué montañas ásperas naciste? | ¿Qué tigres te dio leche, qué leona? | ¿Qué Cáucaso engendró tu basilisco?’. Dixon in his edition of El sufrimiento premiado (fn. to ll. 1121-22), and El perro del hortelano (fn. to ll. 1763-67), also recalls Pliny on tigers and their young which is pertinent here (Historia Naturalis, VIII, 25).

455 Arpago implies that Ciro’s deeds in overthrowing Astiages will be immortalized in bronze, traditionally a material used for long-lasting monuments (as evidenced by Horace’s use of it in the first line of his Ode 3.30: ‘Exegi monumentum aere perennius’, ‘I have built a monument more long-lasting than bronze’).

456 This is a reference to Astiages who wishes Ciro dead. Arpago’s speech is aimed at inciting Ciro to take revenge upon his grandfather, and, thus, ends with a rhetorical flourish.
Esta verdadera historia;
tu mismo imperio restaura,
tu frente de lauro adorna.
Yo te ayudaré. ¿Qué esperas?
Pelea, mata, despoja,
atropella, venga, rinde,
tala, quema, vence, roba;
rey te llama, gente junta,
las banderas enarbola.
Valor tienes, di quién eres;
que Dios te dará victoria.

CIRO

¡Notable historia! Y tan llena
de prodigios, que me ha dado
contenido como cuidado,
y como esperanza, pena.
Lo que Júpiter ordena,
resistir intenta en vano
la más poderosa mano;
porque es mortal desatino
contra el decreto divino
oponerse intento humano.
No sin causa me ponía
el alma en el pensamiento
ser rey; que este fingimiento
de aquella verdad nacía.
Esforzándose va el día;
si nos ven, perdido soy.
Palabra de rey te doy,
si me ayudas, de vengarte,
escribiéndote en qué parte
gente levantando estoy.
Mi padre (aunque no lo ha sido),
y un amigo que venía
conmigo, buscar quería,
que en el monte se han perdido;
que por eso, me despido
de ti con tanto recelo.457
Dame tus brazos.

ARPAGO

El cielo
confirmé nuestra amistad.

CIRO

Tú verás mi voluntad.

ARPAGO

Tú mi favor.

CIRO

Tú mi celo.458

ARPAGO

Seré tu esclavo.

CIRO

Tu amigo
seré yo.

ARPAGO

Mi rey serás.

CIRO

Arpago, tu amigo es más,
y cumpliré lo que digo.

ARPAGO

Presto me veré contigo.

CIRO

Cielos, escribaste en vos
esta amistad de los dos.

457 recelo: fear. This word often has connotations of mistrust or suspicion, but here, given the warm exchange which follows, it is most likely to mean that Ciro is worried for the safety of his father and his friend.
458 celo: 'Interés extremado y activo que alguien siente por una causa o por una persona' (RAE, 2).
ARPAGO: Ya la guerra me provoca.
CIRO: Toca al arma.
ARPAGO: Al arma toca.
CIRO: Arpago, adiós.
ARPAGO: Ciro, adiós.
Acto tercero

Salen Flora, y Bato de soldado gracioso.

BATO ¿No vengo bizarro, Flora?  
Y galán tan singular,  
que te pudiera envidiar  
el que lo fue de la aurora.  
Bien es que en esta jornada  
del más gallardo presumas;  
porque no hay galán sin plumas  
ni valiente sin espada.  
A lo gallardo he pensado  
que has de igualar el valor,  
porque del ruin labrador  
sale siempre el buen soldado.  
Entre cuanta gente viene  
por varias partes a Ciro,  
sólo te alabo y te admiro  
de cuantos soldados tiene.

FLORA  
Y galán tan singular,  
que te pudiera envidiar  
el que lo fue de la aurora.  
Bien es que en esta jornada  
del más gallardo presumas;  
porque no hay galán sin plumas  
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A lo gallardo he pensado  
que has de igualar el valor,  
porque del ruin labrador  
sale siempre el buen soldado.  
Entre cuanta gente viene  
por varias partes a Ciro,  
sólo te alabo y te admiro  
de cuantos soldados tiene.

BATO Díceslo, Flora, burlando;  
mas, pues ya no puede ser  
que a Ciro puedas querer,  
que me quieres voy pensando.  
Ya Ciro es rey, ya goberna  
ejércitos, no ganados;  
ya camina entre soldados  
a conquistar fama eterna.  
Ya, en vez del rudo jumento,  
ferez caballo corrige  
con duro freno, y le rige  
entre la tierra y el viento.  
Ya no hay bueyes que administre  
la aguijada del arado;  
armas viste, y fresno herrado  
pasa de la cuja al ristre.

459 bizarro: Corominas, Juan, *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana*, (Madrid: Gredos, 1954) identifies this word as being of Italian root and indicates that in the Golden Age it came to mean ‘elegante, hermoso, gallardo, garboso, generoso, cortés’. See Dixon *El sufrimiento*, fn. 383-85.

460 This could be a play on the goddess Aurora, who had various lovers including Cephalus, a handsome youth whom, according to Boyse (*The pantheon* (1787), ch. V, p. 5) ‘some suppose to be the same with the sun’, and by whom she had Phaëton.

461 Bien es que en esta jornada del más gallardo presumas: ‘Bien es que en esta jornada presumes de [ser el] más gallardo’.

462 This refers to the fashionable seventeenth-century practice of adorning one’s hat with feathers.

463 This is a clue to the audience that enough time has passed between Acts II and III for Ciro to have established himself with the title of ‘king’ over his troops and supporters. Technically, of course, he is still a pretender to the throne, having not yet defeated Astiages.

464 With this list of contrasts, Bato shows not only how dramatically Ciro’s old life has been altered, but also how it has prepared him in a way for the new tasks ahead.

465 jumento: donkey, ass.

466 fresno herrado: ash wood tipped with iron. Ash was commonly used to make lances because of its strength.

467 pasa...al ristre: the image here is of the ash-wood lance being hoisted to the ready (al ristre) from its resting place on
Con esto, de las crueldades
de su abuelo se defiende:
imperios Ciro pretende,
no labranzas ni heredades.
No busca Ciro las tierras
donde los ganados pacen;
que las majestades nacen
enseñadas a las guerras.\textsuperscript{468}
Ya, con más altos intentos,
aspira a reinar, no a ti:
quiere él, Flora, a mí,
y juntemos pensamientos.
Llevaré (si me quieres)
al lado por esas guerras;
verás mares, verás tierras,
que es condición de mujeres.\textsuperscript{469}
Ea, ¿qué lo estás pensando?
Que Filis, con ser quien es,
a Ciro sigue, después
que ha visto a Ciro reinando.
Y tenemos copia inmensa\textsuperscript{470}
contra el viejo Rey cruel,
aunque nos han dicho que él
no se duerme, en la defensa.
Que sabiendo que vivía
su nieto, y que gente armaba,
de Júpiter blasfemaba
y a Arpago matar quería.\textsuperscript{471}
Y así, de varias naciones
tan grande campo ha formado,
que cubre el más dilatado
de banderas y escuadrones.
Pero de Ciro el valor
tan animoso le espera,
que no pienso que pudiera
ser el de Marte mayor.\textsuperscript{472}
FLORA
Yo, Bato, desengañada
de que era bárbara ley
querer un nieto de un rey.\textsuperscript{473}

\textsuperscript{468} This idea of innate knowledge of warfare and leadership being something with which kings were born has been partly displayed in Ciro in Acts I and II; however, it should be remembered that Ciro himself has spoken of reading and learning the art of leadership.

\textsuperscript{469} condición de mujeres: See \textit{Porfiando vence amor} (1637): 'Si es condición de mujer | querer lo que ve querido', (Act II, TESO). There seems to be an implication here that it is a part of women’s nature to desire to be with their men rather than be left behind. Filis’ character in \textit{Contra valor} certainly gives weight to this idea. An alternative reading could be that the journeying from place to place reflects the inherent flightiness and inconstancy of women, an accepted trope in Golden Age literature.

\textsuperscript{470} The use of ‘copia’ here (which might be taken to mean ‘an abundance of’), does not have an adequate rejoinder in this phrase, and therefore it could be surmised that it is a misreading on the part of the printer. A possible alternative could be the noun ‘tropa’, for example, which would fit well with Bato’s boasts about the might of Ciro’s army.

\textsuperscript{471} de Júpiter: This reaction to the pressure of Ciro’s actions counts doubly against the character of king Astiages; blasphemy and murderous thoughts towards his courtiers (albeit one who has betrayed him) are not in keeping with the virtuous nature that an ideal monarch would have.

\textsuperscript{472} Bato claims that Ciro’s spirited bravery could not be matched by Mars, the Roman god of war himself.
entre estos montes criada,
de pensamientos mudé;
que era loca fantasía,
y aquel amor que tenía,
como se vino se fue.\textsuperscript{474}

Ni de ti ni de otro alguno
de cuantos Dios ha criado,
estimaré su cuidado,
ni le tendré de ninguno.

Hayan los hombres nacido
en buen hora, cuantos fueren,
para quien ellos quisiern;
logren su amor o su olvido;
que yo los doy desde aquí
a las que no los conozcan,
y muchos años los gocen
sin darme celos a mí.

Siempre nos causen desvelos
los firmes y los más justos:
¡mal año para sus gustos
si tengo de ver mis celos!

\textit{Vase.}

\textbf{BATO} \hspace{2cm} 1830

Dejarás de ser mujer,
sérás piedra, y no persona;\textsuperscript{475}
que la más fuerte amazona\textsuperscript{476}
hombres hubo menester.

Mas ya nuestro Marte miro,
que con la divina rama\textsuperscript{477}
del sol su gente le aclama
por rey.

\textbf{DENTRO} \hspace{2cm} 1835

¡Rey Ciro, rey Ciro!

\textit{Tocan cajas, y sale Ciro con laurel, Filis en hábito corto, soldados, y músicos cantando.}\textsuperscript{478}

\textbf{MÚSICOS} \hspace{2cm} 1840

\textit{Cantan.}

Coronad, soldados,
la ilustre cabeza
del valiente Ciro,
nuevo rey de Persia.
¡Al arma, al arma, al arma; guerra, guerra!\textsuperscript{479}
Toca la caja, y ríndase la tierra.

\textit{Tocan la caja a rebato.}

\textbf{CIRO} \quad No desdice a mi laurel
la música, pues se cuenta
de Aquiles que se incitaba
con la música a la guerra.\textsuperscript{480}
Por incapaz el caballo
del dulce son de las cuerdas,
al de la caja se anima,
y a la voz de la trompeta.

\begin{flushright}
1845
\end{flushright}

\textbf{MÚSICOS} \quad ¡Al arma, al arma, al arma; guerra, guerra!
Toca la caja, y ríndase la tierra.

\textbf{FILIS} \quad Bien pareceis laureado;
pero no sé cómo pueda
pensar que me ha estado bien,
Ciro, tu inmensa grandeza.
Alégrame de mirarte
príncipe de Persia y Media,
y de ver que con justicia
tan grande imperio pretendías;
el aplauso que te han dado
las escuadras que gobiernas,
la fama de tus principios,
las armas de tus banderas;
pero no puedo alegrarme
que contra mí te engranzezcas.\textsuperscript{481}
Reina me hiciste en las burlas
para no serlo en las veras.

\begin{flushright}
1855
\end{flushright}

\textbf{CIRO} \quad Filis, aquel mismo soy
que antes de ser rey. No temas;
que obligaciones honradas
son en las almas eternas.\textsuperscript{482}
Bajos pensamientos tiene\textsuperscript{483}
quien los amigos desprecia
que tuvo cuando era humilde,
por vanidad y soberbia.
Para mí siempre serás
lo que fuiste.

\begin{flushright}
1870
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{479} \textit{Alarma, alarma, alarma…}. Also l. 1852.
\textsuperscript{480} Ciro, to pre-empt the criticism that the music of the drums wasn’t appropriate for an army on the verge of war, cites the example of Achilles who he says had music played before going into battle. This is perhaps not the most appropriate choice, however, as Achilles was actually refusing to fight and had withdrawn to his tent when he consoled himself with music (Homer, \textit{Iliad}, Book I).
\textsuperscript{481} Here, Filis expresses her fear that through Ciro’s new position the tables have turned on their relationship, and he has overtaken her in terms of status.
\textsuperscript{482} Ciro is quick to reassure Filis that his commitment to her remains unaltered by his new circumstances, however this rings slightly hollow given his earlier ‘obligaciones’ to Flora. He proves his word at the end of the play by marrying Filis.
\textsuperscript{483} See Act I, l. 17; the claim that those who take power and go on to forget the friends they had before they achieved high status have ‘bajos pensamientos’ contrasts with Ciro’s insistence on his ‘honrados pensamientos’ in the early stages of the play.
FILIS
No desea
mi alma tus reinos, Ciro;
tú solo en mi pecho reinas.

Sale Mitridates.

CIRO
¿Mitridates?

MITRIDATES
¿Hijo mío?
Perdona, que no quisiera
perder aquel nombre amado
que trasladaron las fieras
a mis entrañas el día
que pude librarte dellas.

CIRO
Esta carta al Rey, mi abuelo,
escríbo para que crea
el ánimo con que estoy.
Tú la has de llevar.

MITRIDATES
Mis fuerzas
ya no son para embajadas.
A un soldado la encomienda
que tenga tanto valor.

BATO
Aunque locura parezca,
yo se la pondré en las manos.

CIRO
Pues ¿qué dirán si la lleva
hombre como tú?

BATO
Señor,
los avisos de la guerra
no requieren calidades,
sino personas resueltas.
Yo soy loco, y le daré
la carta, cuando el Rey fuera
Júpiter.484

CIRO
Pues parte, Bato,
adonde las cajas suenan,
y ten buen ánimo.

BATO
Basta
que a tu valor me parezca.
Hoy no volveré con vida,
o te traeré la respuesta.

Vase.

CIRO
Bella Filis, ven conmigo:
verás la gallarda muestra485
que hoy he mandado que haga
mi ejército en tu presencia.

FILIS
Los cielos te den victoria.

CIRO
Llevándote por estrella,486
es poco ganar un mundo.
¡Hola, capitán! Apresta

484 Bato is understandably fearful over this mission (see ‘Characterization’). Although technically he should be covered by the law protecting ambassadors, Astiages, as a tyrant, has proved himself to be cruel and unpredictable.
485 gallarda muestra: Ciro is pleased that his army will put on a ‘gallant show’ in the presence of his lady as a sign of his regard and devotion to her.
486 estrella: stars have long been used for navigation, and here Ciro places Filis in the position of his ‘guiding star’. 
un caballo.

CAPITÁN

Ya te aguarda
con paramentos de tela.\textsuperscript{487}

CIRO

Mi virtud es mi fortuna;
que la virtud no se hereda.\textsuperscript{488}

Vanse.

Salen el Rey Astiages, y Arpago.\textsuperscript{489}

REY

¿Que muestra tanto valor?

ARPAGO

Partí, señor, a la aldea,
patria (si es bien que lo sea),
de aquel monstruo labrador;
y antes, señor, de llegar,
onaba de la manera
el estruendo, como altera
montes de espumas el mar.
Pregunté a un pastor que hallé,
del estruendo la ocasión,
y dijome: «Este escuadrón
que mal formado se ve,
es la gente del rey Ciro,
que de varias partes viene.»
«Ciro», respondí, ¿previene
gente? ¡Su locura admiro!
Pues un villano, ¿a qué efeto,
que ayer ovejas guardó?»
«No es villano», replicó;
«que es del rey Astiages nieto.
Su historia le ha referido
un hombre que le ha criado.
Temióse apenas soldado;
¿qué hará después de nacido?
Que si antes de ser su ser
le da el ser temor igual,
después de ser, y ser tal,
¿querrá que deje de ser?\textsuperscript{490}
De su poder engañado,
iensa que el del cielo excede,
porque aun el cielo no puede
quitar el ser que no ha dado.»
Entro en el lugar, y veo
las flautas vueltas templadas,\textsuperscript{491}
cajas, lanzas las azadas,
y el cavar, galán paseo.\textsuperscript{492}

\textsuperscript{487} *A1* reads ‘páramos’, which I have changed to ‘paramentos’ to satisfy both the demands of metre and the sense of the line.

\textsuperscript{488} Here, Ciro makes the distinction between his status, which has been inherited, and his ‘virtue’. By this he implies that his ‘fortuna’ is self-made, not being an inherited quality.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{489} The scene changes here from the village to the court for the second *salida* of Act III.

\textsuperscript{490} ‘ser’ (ll. 1946 and 1949): auto-rhyme.

\textsuperscript{491} Flutes were a popular lower-class instrument. *Cov.* states, ‘La música de flauta no es ejercicio ni entretenimiento de hombre noble’ (p. 913b).

\textsuperscript{492} This portrait of a rustic army with weapons improvised from farming tools is designed to allay Astiages’ fears over his grandson.
Hallo a Ciro, finalmente,
entre estas bárbaras sumas,
mas coronado de plumas
que de laureles la frente;
y hablándole de tu parte,
le digo cómo desca
tu amor que el reino posea,
dándole a Dario su parte.\footnote{Arpago reports that he explained to Ciro that Astiages, who reigns over the kingdom, plans on giving it to Ciro, but for Dario also to have a share. Also, ’parte’ (ll. 1962 and 1965) is an admissible auto-rhyme because of the difference in meaning of the two words.}

\footnote{Arpago, from necessity, is disparaging about Ciro’s leadership of such a motley group of soldiers. With the punctuation used here (found in A, B, C, D and E) there is heavy sarcasm evident in this question, ’Do you not fear the general of such a crew?’ \textit{H} and \textit{MyP} chose to render this as a statement, Arpago urging Astiages not to fear Ciro’s leadership. However, the lack of subjunctive to support such a reading informed my decision to keep these lines as a question.}

Dice con vana arrogancia
dos mil locuras, señor;
y es repetirlas error,
porque no son de importancia.
¿No le espantas, general
desta empresa?\footnote{’(Aparte)’ not present in \textit{A1}. I have added it in the interests of clarity.}

\footnote{\textit{albarda}: packsaddle. This is a joke on the idea that Bato has progressed from sitting in a packsaddle to contemplating sitting in the presence of the king (something that would not have been at all appropriate in such a circumstance and thus shows Bato’s naivety). It includes a pun on the word ‘silla’, which was also the word for a saddle; Bato is no longer a peasant with a packsaddle, but an ambassador. That said, it is evident from these first moments of Bato’s encounter with Astiages that he is woefully inexperienced in performing official duties. This leads to some comedy (such as these very musings), but also throws a favourable light upon his simple bravery and loyalty to his master Ciro, despite his lack of finesse.}

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si pida silla, que en pie
al Rey con Arpago miro.
Mas no será maravilla
la que el jumento me dio;
que muchos hay como yo,
que pasan de albarda a silla.\footnote{Bato (Aparte)\footnote{\textit{albarda}: packsaddle. This is a joke on the idea that Bato has progressed from sitting in a packsaddle to contemplating sitting in the presence of the king (something that would not have been at all appropriate in such a circumstance and thus shows Bato’s naivety). It includes a pun on the word ‘silla’, which was also the word for a saddle; Bato is no longer a peasant with a packsaddle, but an ambassador. That said, it is evident from these first moments of Bato’s encounter with Astiages that he is woefully inexperienced in performing official duties. This leads to some comedy (such as these very musings), but also throws a favourable light upon his simple bravery and loyalty to his master Ciro, despite his lack of finesse.} ¡Buen soldado!}

\footnote{\textit{albarda}: packsaddle. This is a joke on the idea that Bato has progressed from sitting in a packsaddle to contemplating sitting in the presence of the king (something that would not have been at all appropriate in such a circumstance and thus shows Bato’s naivety). It includes a pun on the word ‘silla’, which was also the word for a saddle; Bato is no longer a peasant with a packsaddle, but an ambassador. That said, it is evident from these first moments of Bato’s encounter with Astiages that he is woefully inexperienced in performing official duties. This leads to some comedy (such as these very musings), but also throws a favourable light upon his simple bravery and loyalty to his master Ciro, despite his lack of finesse.} Desta traza,
deste talle, desta ley
son los demás.

Señor Rey...

Hablad.

Todo me embaraza.\footnote{\textit{albarda}: packsaddle. This is a joke on the idea that Bato has progressed from sitting in a packsaddle to contemplating sitting in the presence of the king (something that would not have been at all appropriate in such a circumstance and thus shows Bato’s naivety). It includes a pun on the word ‘silla’, which was also the word for a saddle; Bato is no longer a peasant with a packsaddle, but an ambassador. That said, it is evident from these first moments of Bato’s encounter with Astiages that he is woefully inexperienced in performing official duties. This leads to some comedy (such as these very musings), but also throws a favourable light upon his simple bravery and loyalty to his master Ciro, despite his lack of finesse.}
REY
Dejad la espada, y decíd.498

BATO
Vueso nieto, que Dios guarde,
me dio esta carta ayer tarde.499

REY
En lo demás proseguid.

BATO
Lo demás se me ha olvidado;
pero todo viene ahí.

REY
¿Sois soldado?

BATO
Señor, sí.

REY
Y ¿ha mucho que sois soldado?

BATO
Soldado y embajador
soy desde ayer.

ARPAGO
(Aparte a Bato.)500

¿Para mí
traes alguna carta?

BATO
Sí;

luego os la daré, señor.

REY
Lee,502

«Ciro a su abuelo.» (¿Arrogante502
 título!) «Tu gran crueldad
(que no hay hombre ni deidad
que en cielo y tierra no espante,
pues antes de tener vida
me la quisiste quitar)
me obliga solicitar
verla de ti defendida.
Para esto, y no perder
el reino de mis pasados,
hice levas de soldados503
contra tu injusto poder.
El dinero que traía
de Persia tu tesorero
tomé, porque es lo primero
que mayor falta me hacía.
Verdad es que le dejé
hace un resguardo firmado
de cómo estaba bien dado,
y que a cuenta lo tomé
de lo que he de haber; que en todo
es bien la cuenta y razón.»

BATO
Y a mí en la misma ocasión
me lo dijo dese modo.
es Ciro muy puntual.

REY
¿Mi tesoro? ¡Hoy le destruyo!

BATO
De lo que no fuere suyo
no ha de tomar un real.

REY
Lee.

«Si quieres, como mi abuelo,
Volverme el reino que es mío

---

497 embarazar: to impede, entangle or trip up.
498 Dejad la espada: it was required of ambassadors from another court to leave their weapons at the door when entering the king’s presence.
499 ayer tarde: Bato’s words here show that it is now the following day.
500 ‘…a Bato.’ not present in A1. I have added it in the interests of clarity.
502 Arrogante título: Astiages objects to being called ‘grandfather’ rather than ‘king’ by Ciro here.
503 levas: drafts, conscriptions. This would imply that Ciro has conscripted soldiers from his area.
(que matarme es desvarío
»cuando me defiende el cielo),
»yo te prometo de darte,
»y como rey lo prometo)
»donde vivas con secreto,
»de mi reino alguna parte.) 
Torres en el viento labra.

¿Oye, señor?

Todo lo que viene ahí
me lo dijo de palabra.

Si mandarte castigar
mi grandeza permitiera,
villano, tu muerte fuera
la que te hiciera callar.

Señor, si a tan vil sujeto
humillas la majestad,
la suprema autoridad
padece la indigno efecto.

¡Qué gentil Héctor, qué Aquiles!
¿El Rey de los animales
desangrará las reales
uñas en las liebres viles?

Demás de ser labrador
y desigual enemigo,
le reservan del castigo
las leyes del embajador.

Cause risa a tu grandeza
ver los soldados que tiene
Ciro, pues éste a dar viene
la muestra de su bajeza.

Arpago, no le imagines
tan vil; que de no temer
los principios, suelen ser
tan desdichados las fines.

Que, aunque no es Aquiles griego
para ponerme desmayo,
de un vapor se engendra un rayo,
y de una centella un fuego.

tú, villano, vete, y di
que yo mismo a verle voy.

Capitán de Ciro soy
aunque villano nací.

504 Here Ciro states his offer to Astiages that he will, if his grandfather hands him the throne which is rightfully his, keep him safe in a secret location.

505 Torres en el viento labra: This is a variation on the saying 'Armar torres en el viento', which meant to let oneself be carried along by foolish thoughts and crazy ideas (Cov., p. 1481a). Lope uses a variation of the saying in Act I of El ausente en el lugar (1617).

506 This reference to lions not harming hares (or other defenseless creatures) is a topos; see Lope's El villano en su rincón, ll. 774-76. Also, see Dixon, “Beatus…nemo”: El villano en su rincón, las “polianteas” y la literatura de emblemas’, Cuadernos de Filología 3, 1-2 (1981), pp. 279-300 (p. 289).

507 This refers to the accepted code which prevented ambassadors from being harmed as a result of the message they brought.

508 Astiages warns against underestimating his opponent, saying that lightning is produced from smoke and a fire from a small spark.

509 This defiant statement is an indication of the weighty issues that underpin this play. See 'Kingship'.
y por allá nos veremos;
que de la hoz a la espada
no es muy larga la jornada,
aunque parezcan extremos.
No os fíéis en escuadrones,\(^{510}\)
que hay mancebo por allá,
que con la honda os hará\(^{511}\)
ir trompiqueando terrones;
Porque si Ciro tuviera
cuatro mozos como yo,
no digo este imperio, no,
mas toda el Asia rindiera.
Que es imposible criar
tantos ejércitos vos,
como puede matar Dios,
y yo ayudarle a matar.\(^{512}\)
Sólo de haberme mirado
Ciro he quedado tan fuerte,
que puedo matar la muerte
si fuese vuestro soldado.\(^{513}\)
¿Pensáis que viene enseñado
este fuerte capitán
al regalado faisán
y al vino aromatizado?\(^{514}\)
¡Vive Dios, si no le dais
el reino y restituís...!\(^{2095}\)
REY
¡Dioses! ¿Aquesto sufrís?
¿En qué entendéis? ¿Dónde estáis?
Blasfemo de vuestro nombre.\(^{515}\)
¡A mí un villano...!
ARPAGO
Señor,
que es loco y embajador.
REY
¿Qué importa matar un hombre?\(^{2516}\)
BATO
Téngase allá todo, Rey;
que no me envían a mí
para que me mate así.

---

\(^{510}\) This has resonances with the Biblical sentiments regarding putting one’s trust in mortal might: ‘Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help’ (Psalm 146.3) and ‘Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God’ (Psalm 20.7) \(^{KJV}\).

\(^{511}\) This is an allusion to the Biblical story of David and Goliath, found in 1 Samuel 17; the mancebo, David, killed the giant Goliath with nothing but a slingshot and stone. The parallels with the young Ciro attempting to overthrow the might of Astiages’s army with little experience and limited resources are clear, as are the implications of success on the part of the underdog.

\(^{512}\) Here, Bato explicitly aligns Ciro with God and the side of the good (although it is too much to conclude that he is equating the two; see ‘Religion and Superstition’). His point is that no matter how many troops Astiages raises they will all be defeated by God (and Ciro), and Bato, his loyal follower.

\(^{513}\) Ciro’s valour has inspired his followers to the extent that even fearful Bato has been affected positively by it. For more on Bato’s character, which is interesting insofar as he is an atypical gracioso as evidenced here, see ‘Characterization’ section.

\(^{514}\) Pheasant and spiced wine symbolize wealth and luxurious living here. In pointing out that Ciro has not grown up accustomed to such things, Bato not only reminds the king of his unjust treatment of his grandson, but also makes the distinction between the hardy existence of peasant life and the pampered life of the court.

\(^{515}\) Bato here has overstepped the mark and actually seems to threaten Astiages. The king, through his blatant blasphemy, again shows his unsuitability to reign.

\(^{516}\) ¿Qué importa matar un hombre?: This is one of the most stark examples of Astiages’ inherent cruelty and disregard for the value of human life, especially when he is threatened, and has echoes of ruthless Machiavellian logic (see ‘Kingship’).
REY
Válgame, Arpago, la ley,
   no de embajador, de loco.\[^{517}\]
   Di, villano, al otro infame
   que mi nieto no se llame;
   que a más furor me provoco.
   Y que me espere: verá
   quién es rey y quién traidor.
   2105

   2110

   Vase.

BATO
   Ya no es Ciro labrador;
   rey es Ciro, y rey será.

   Vase.

   Dentro ruido de soldados, como que ha caído Ciro de un caballo, y él sale luego.\[^{518}\]

   2115

ALBANO
   ¡Válgate Júpiter santo!\[^{519}\]
SILVIO
   Tan presto se levantó
   que pienso que no ha caído.
RISELO
   No hay pájaro tan veloz.
CIRO
   Paso; no es nada, soldados.
   Bueno estoy, no hagáis rumor.

   Sale Filis.

   2120

FILIS
   ¿Mal agüero?\[^{520}\]
CIRO
   Si es agüero
   no para mí.
   ¿Cómo no?
   Caer, corriendo un caballo,
   cuando con tanta atención
   te aplauden y aclaman rey
   tus soldados a una voz.
   ¿No es agüero de caer
   del puesto a que te subió
   tu fortuna?
CIRO
   Espera, Filis;
   que a ver si es agüero voy.

   Vase.
   Salen los soldados.

   2125

ALBANO
   Donde al furioso caballo

\[^{517}\] Madness was accepted as an excuse for certain kinds of behaviour in the presence of a king which would otherwise be viewed as unacceptable. See J. Thacker, ‘La autoridad de la figura del loco’, in Autoridad y Poder en el Siglo de Oro, eds I. Arellano, C. Strosetzki, and E. Williamson (Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 2009), especially pp. 179-180.

\[^{518}\] The court scene ends with Bato alone on stage and the action shifts back to the aldea for the final salida of the play.

\[^{519}\] Ll. 2114, 15, 17 and 18 are preceded by ‘Dentro’ in all previous editions of the play, including A1. I have omitted it here because it is implicit in the stage direction that precedes the scene ‘Dentro, ruido de soldados…’ (2114+). Their exclamations take place offstage just before Ciro strides out for his exchange with Filis. When he leaves again, his friends appear on stage for further discussion of the event.

\[^{520}\] See Introduction for more on the negative connotations of a fall from one’s horse, often used in Golden Age drama as symbolic of future misfortune.
le detuvo el resplandor
de las espadas que, huyendo,
tan velozmente corrió
que no se quejaba el prado
que le lastimase flor
- tanto puede aún en un bruto
librarse de la prisión,
- bañado en sudor el cuerpo
de aquella furiosa acción,
y el freno de espuma y sangre,
el fuerte Ciro llegó.

RISELO
La espada saca.

FILIS ¿A qué efeto?

SILVIO
Las dos piernas le cortó,\(^{521}\)
con aire y airada mano,
de un revés.

ALBANO ¿Bravo rigor!

RISELO
Sentóse en tierra sin ellas
el que las puso mejor
al parar en la carrera.

SILVIO
Y el animal que formó
Naturaleza más bello
para dar envidia al sol;
porque, a tenerle su carro,
no despeñara a Faetón.\(^{522}\)

Salen Ciro y Mitridates.

CIRO
Ya, vasallos, el agüero
en mi caballo cayó:
tal es el temor y engaño
de la humana condición.
Él es muerto y yo vivo:
conque el agüero cesó;
que no hay fortuna contraria
que no la venza el valor.\(^{523}\)

MITRIDATES
Conozco y todos conocen
tu valiente corazón;
pero cuando avisa el cielo,
¿quién no ha de tener temor?
¿Qué rey murió sin cometa?\(^{524}\)
¿A qué fatal destrucción
no precedieron presagios?
¿Qué infante en el pecho habló
que no sucediesen guerras?\(^{525}\)

---

\(^{521}\) A1 erroneously reads ‘das’, which I have corrected to ‘dos’. A similar example of such an event in a play attributed to Lope can be found in *El rey don Pedro en Madrid y el Infanzón de Illescas.*

\(^{522}\) See Act I, fn. to line 91.

\(^{523}\) Ciro, in symbolically cutting off his horse’s forelegs, has transferred the significance of the ill omen away from himself and onto the animal. This is just one example of many within the play of Ciro defying what is commonly accepted as fate and, as it were, directing his own destiny. See ‘Religion and Superstition’.

\(^{524}\) As is intimated here, comets were viewed as bad omens, specifically foretelling the death of a king. This belief was widespread through Europe from medieval times, a famous example being Halley’s comet which was seen as a portent of doom for Harold of England (who died at the Battle of Hastings in 1066), and which appears in the Bayeux tapestry (*EB*, vol. 3, ‘Bayeux tapestry’, plate II).
CIRO

Pues, padre, en la guerra estoy.

Sale Bato.

BATO

Dame tus reales pies,  
Capitán, cuyo blasón  
ya le temen los dos polos.

2175

CIRO

¡Oh, Bato, mi embajador!  
¿Diste la carta al tirano  
de mi vida?

2176

BATO

Y respondió,  
con injuria de los dioses,  
que dará satisfacción  
presto a tu loca arrogancia.  
Pero ¡mira cómo Dios,  
cuando los hombres castiga  
por algún notable error,  
les ciega el entendimiento!  
Pues la memoria perdió  
del hijo muerto de Arpago,  
y vienen juntos los dos,  
fiándole la más parte  
del ejército, que yo  
vi formar en escuadrones,  
que pudiera dar temor  
a los feroces gigantes  
de la torre de Nembrot.  

2180

FILIS

¡Oh, fuerte Ciro! No esperes  
este primero furor.  
Retira tu gente adonde  
puedas; con la dilación  
hace mayor tu defensa  
y su peligro menor.  

2195

CIRO

Por mirar a un caballero  
que de un caballo feroz  
se apea, no te respondo.  
De paz las señales son.

Sale Arpago.

FILIS

¡Ay, Ciro! Mi hermano es éste.  
Escóndete.

Vase.

CIRO

¿Qué ocasión  
te ha dado, noble Arpago,  
para hacerme este favor?

2205

525 The idea of the suckling child speaking at the breast as a bad omen is one that appears elsewhere in Spanish literature, for example the Romance del rey don Pedro el Cruel (‘Por los campos de Jerez a caza va rey don Pedro’), El Romancero viejo, ed. Mercedes Díaz Roig (Madrid: Cátedra, 1995), pp. 132-33.

526 Bato reports that Astiages has forgotten the harshness of his punishment of Arpago (or at least, we assume, underestimates its devastating effect on his privado), and thus is trusting him with the king’s army.

527 Nembrot: Nimrod, traditionally thought to be the king who oversaw the building of the Tower of Babel. For a further discussion of this, and of the gigantes which are mentioned, see End Notes.
ARPAGO

El Rey tu abuelo, Ciro valeroso,
no sólo airado de que no eres muerto,
mas de entender que intentas animoso
de dalle la batalla a campo abierto;
con saber que del tuyo numeroso
el dilatado monte está cubierto,
por ser bisoña gente, determina
ver a qué parte Júpiter se inclina.⁵²⁸

Y ardiendo en ira de que tú dijeses
que una parte del reino le darías
en que viviese luego que rey fueses
pues el justo respeto le perdías,
como de espigas las doradas mieres
de julio miran los postreros días,
cubrió los campos de la gente propia,
conducida a la gente de Etiopía.⁵²⁹

Treinta mil hombres tuvo en breve plazo,
de a caballo los diez, de a pie los veinte,
de alfánje al lado y arco persa al brazo,⁵³⁰
o el fresno al ristre del arnés luciente.⁵³¹
Las varias plumas en diverso lazo
compiten a la fénix del Oriente;
de suerte que, confusas las colores,⁵³²
parecen campos de diversas flores.

Como primero que a la blanca aurora
enrubie el sol las cándidas guedejas,
de sus vivientes átomos colora⁵³³
los blandos aires escuadrón de abejas,⁵³⁴
asi a la voz del atambor sonora
y a la trompa marcial marchan parejas
las armadas hileras, y el sol mira
en cada morrón un sol mentira.⁵³⁵

De fogosos aligeros bridones,
que la máquina elevan corpulenta,
encintan lazos, crines y cordones;
que al más bruto animal la gala alienta:

528 This shows Astiages’ superstition, as he determines to consult the stars before going into battle with Ciro. It
demonstrates his continued reliance on the gods, even after blaspheming them.
529 Lope scans ‘Etiopia’ as three syllables elsewhere in his work; for example, La corona merecida (1620, TESO): Pedro:
De un ángel copia. | Manrique: Mucho temo que este sol a nuestro Rey Español nos le ha de hacer de Etiopía. (Act II);
La hermosa Ester (1621, TESO): Assuero: Cesen los instrumentos, los bailes cesen, cuya dulce copia enamoró los
vientos, | principes de la India, y la Etiopia, hoy por último día. (Act I).
530 alfánje: scimitar. arco persa: a Persian bow.
531 o el fresno: ‘or the (ash-wood) lance at the ready on the shining harness’. Al erroneously reads ‘riste’ which I have
corrected to ‘ristre’.
532 confusas las colores: In his Historia Naturalis (X, 2), Pliny describes the phoenix as having plumage of many different
colours, including gold, purple, azure and red (see also Cov., p. 889).
533 átomos: although the seventeenth-century understanding of this word differs in technicality from our modern
usage, it is nonetheless used to denote a similar idea, here being that of the specks of dust or hair which are seen to
move in sunlight.
534 escuadrón de abejas: bees were thought to gather the dew of the morning, hence the image of them as a swarm of
‘living atoms’ in this context. Covarrubias describes them as an ‘animalito conocido, insecto que vuelta, y cogiendo el
roció de una y otra flor, nos cria un licor tan dulce como es la miel’ (p. 21b).
535 Arpago paints an evocative picture of the multitudinous and impressive troops of Astiages, their feathers rivalling
the plumage of the phoenix, and their rows of shining helmets reflecting the sun.
el que le sigue con destreza tanta,
que no cubre más tierra que la planta. 536
En medio, las banderas son el alma
deste cuerpo que digo, donde el viento, 537
cuando respeta las divisas, calma,
y luego las convierte en su elemento.
El Rey detrás, como la verde palma 538
resiste al tiempo, de su ley exento;
que la venganza, si en los años crece,
la más caduca edad rejuvenece.

Por no cansarte, digo que pudiera
el Rey de Media conquistar a Troya,
si con Agamenón a Grecia fuera
por la venganza de la hurtada joya. 539
No es inconstancia la que el alma altera;
que la mitad del corazón apoya
nuestra amistad, sino saber que es cierto
que no te has de librar de preso o muerto.

Esto será, si esperas enemigo
ten poderoso con tan flaca gente;
que yo sólo podré morir contigo
cuando tu pecho intrépido lo intente.
Será la fe de verdadero amigo
polo en que estribes amor eternamente,
que en competencia del que sufre Atlante, 540
donde fuere cristal, seré diamante.

Y porque en un estrago tan notable,
dicen que no ha de haber viva persona,
quiero llevar mi hermana donde entable
justa defensa a lo que el Rey blasona;
porque es la guerra parca inexorable, 541
que a ninguno respeta ni perdona, 542
que si la pongo con defensa fuerte,
luego contigo abrazaré la muerte.

Vase.

BATO Huye, señor; ¿qué esperas?
CIRO No he sentido,
Bato, que venga el Rey tan poderoso;
siento la ausencia con temor de olvido

536 Here, the image is one of troops marching in such a way that each row steps precisely into the footprints of the row ahead. The message is clearly that Astiages’ army is not only large but also alarmingly disciplined.
537 The army is so unified that it is likened to a single body, with the fluttering banners serving to represent its soul.
538 la verde palma: the palm is evergreen and long-lived, making it a suitable comparison with the old king who seems to be defying old age in his vigorous vengeance against Ciro.
539 la hurtada joya: A reference to Helen of Troy. In Greek mythology Helen was abducted by the Trojans and the ensuing efforts of the Greek armies to win her back led to the Trojan war. Agamemnon was the leader of the Achaean forces, and was renowned as a fearsome leader.
540 In Greek mythology, the result of mutual attempts at trickery between Atlas and Heracles was that Atlas had to support the earth on his shoulders eternally, and with great effort. It is the difficulty of this task to which Arpago probably refers here with the verb ‘sufre’.
541 parca: as in Act II, one of the three fates. Here Arpago means that the devastation caused by war will bring unavoidable death. He fully expects widespread massacre of Ciro’s troops, and wishes to send his sister Filis away to safety before bravely facing the prospect of his own death at Ciro’s side.
542 Al reads ‘que ninguno’ here; I have added ‘a’.
de aquel amor que conquisté dichoso.

¿Ahora, Ciro, amor?

¿Tienes sentido?

Mira, señor, que es el huir forzoso.

Dejadme solo aquí, porque recelo que de vuestro temor se ofende el cielo.

Vanse todos menos Ciro.  

CIRO

Cuando la nave en el mar con fiera tormenta sulca

las ondas, que con el viento

arenas y estrellas juntan,

¡Qué de varios pensamientos en la bitácora turban

al piloto, que contempla
tocada de imán la aguja!

¡Qué cuidadosa que sirve,
y por todas partes cruza,
más turbada que obediente,
la mal prevenida chusma!

Cuál dice «amaina», cuál «vira»,

para que de presto acudan a la troza, al chafaldete,
a la triza y a la amura,
entre los cables y amarras

no hay cosa que no confunda el temor, y no, aprovechan filácigas ni ataduras.

Con remolinos pretende el mar que la nave suba,
a la que argenan estrellas,

por escalas de agua turbia;

hasta que, tranquilo el mar, quiere el cielo que descubra aquel brillador diamante que paz en la gavia anuncia;  

543 A1 simply reads ‘Vanse’, here; I have added ‘todos menos Ciro’ to avoid confusion.

544 This is an extended metaphor, based on the topical idea of misfortune as a stormy sea. Ciro is at a point of crisis here.

545 sulcar el mar: ‘navegar’ (Correas, p. 646).

546 bitácora: binnacle (a box or case on the deck of a ship near the helm, in which the compass is placed). The proliferation of nautical terms is something typical of Lope’s writing: see Jameson, ‘The Sources of Lope de Vega’s Erudition’, p. 138.

547 amainar: to ease up. virar: to tack, turn.

548 chafaldete: clew line.

549 amura: bow.

550 amarra: mooring rope.

551 filácigas: Fernández Gómez’s Vocabulario de Lope de Vega cites this word as appearing in three other works by Lope: La Circe, I, 38; Jerusalen Conquistada, I, 298; Vínculo, casada y doncella, II, 467. He also has an entry under the word ‘filágiza (filáciga)’ as appearing in Contra valor. ‘filagiza’ is how the word appears in A1.

552 remolino: whirl, eddy.

553 gavia: topsail. The ‘brillador diamante’ is a reference to St Elmo’s fire, a phenomenon whereby discharges of atmospheric electricity appear at the tops of pointed objects (such as a ship’s mast) during stormy weather, creating a glow of bluish light. The occurrence was often taken as a good omen by sailors as it is most pronounced near the end of a storm. Lope mentions it frequently, for example in El perro del hortelano, l. 29; in this instance it is used to reproach a character who has turned up once trouble has passed ‘¡Muy lindo Santelmo hacéis!’.
y aquel celestial topacio\textsuperscript{554} tiende la melena rubia, formando círculos de oro entre las nubes purpúreas. Así corre mi esperanza con desesperada furia, tormenta de pensamientos en el mar de mis fortunas. Sentémonos, pues, cuidados, porque no deis en la dura tierra con el grave peso, aunque hay valor que le sufra. Hable el alma, que preside a las potencias, e infunda\textsuperscript{555} su luz al entendimiento, que oprimen sombras oscuras. Apenas sueños despiertos la imaginación confusa fábrica por divertirme, cuando el temor me deslumbra.

Toran cajas.

¿Cajas de guerra? ¿Qué es esto? Que por la región segunda\textsuperscript{556} tocan del aire, y los ecos a los dos polos resultan. Las negras nubes se apartan dando lugar que discurran tropas de armados persianos, que vanas sombras figuran. Ya con lanzas, ya con rayos,\textsuperscript{557} ya con espadas desnudas, unos con otros pelean. Ya se esparcen, ya se ocultan. Allí suenan instrumentos, en cuyos ecos pronuncian victoria los claros aires. ¡Qué confusiones, qué dudas! Ciro, no esperes al Rey; huye, que es mejor que huyas que no que la vida pierdas. ¿Quién eres?

DENTRO

CIRO

Mucho mi valor injurias.\textsuperscript{558}

LA VOZ

Tu padre soy.\textsuperscript{559}

Ciro, no esperes al Rey; huye, que es mejor que huyas que no que la vida pierdas.\textsuperscript{558}

A1 reads ‘y infunda’; corrected here.

This links to the Aristotelian idea that the earth was surrounded by concentric spheres of water, air and fire. Thus, air is the second region to which Ciro refers here, imagining that the drums of war will reverberate throughout its entire region, the sound reaching all around the globe and even to the poles.\textsuperscript{556}

This type of vivid description was common in Golden Age drama, as through practical constraints much of the more technical action had to be evoked through the speech of the characters. See ‘Staging’.\textsuperscript{557}

This is a supernatural visitation; similar scenes are found in other Lope plays such as El duque de Viseo, El caballero de Olmedo, and El Marqués de las Navas.\textsuperscript{558}

A1 reads ‘deslustra’ here.
la majestad de mi madre,
pues mi empresa dificultas.
¡Mal haya el tirano abuelo,
que por temor - pues me escuchas -
le dio a tan bajo caballo
yegua de tanta hermosura!
Que si me diera un Aquiles,
¡viven las deidades sumas,
que aun ellas mismas no estaban
de mis hazañas seguras!\textsuperscript{560}
Si tuviera al sol por padre,
como por madre la luna,
su fénix me viera el cielo
sin abrasarme la pluma.\textsuperscript{561}
¡Mal haya el tirano abuelo,
mal haya una vez y muchas
que un sátiro y una ninfa\textsuperscript{562}
puso a una misma coyunda!
Naciera yo todo sol,
sin faltarme parte alguna,
con que, sin mojar los rayos,
bebiera del mar la espuma.\textsuperscript{563}
Vete, sombra, a tu descanso,
vive la fúnebre tumba
de hombre vil, pues no mereces
como rey doradas urnas.\textsuperscript{564}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{LA VOZ}  \\
Grandes desdichas te aguardan. \\
\textbf{CIRO}  \\
Mientras que la vida dura, \\
\textit{contra valor no hay desdicha}.\textsuperscript{565} \\
Déjame, sombra importuna. \\
\end{tabular}

\textit{Pasa un cometa por el teatro,}\textsuperscript{566}

¡Qué fiero cometa pasa!
Todo parece que acusa
mi temerario valor,
y es lo que más me disculpa.

\textsuperscript{560} Ciro here claims that he is disadvantaged by the lowly station of the man to whom Astiages married his daughter, Ciro’s mother Mandane. He asserts that had his father been like an Achilles, the gods themselves would not have been safe from his brave feats.

\textsuperscript{561} This is a reference to the topoi of the phoenix reborn from flames and ashes (see Pliny, X, 2, and \textit{Cor.}, pp. 889-90).

\textsuperscript{562} In comparing the union of his father and mother with that of these two creatures from Greek mythology, Ciro reiterates the inequality of the match, his mother’s social status far outdoing that of his father.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{563} In another statement about what could have been had he not been the product of an unequal match, Ciro wishes that he had been born ‘todo sol’, as he would then have been completely noble by blood. He implies that this would have resulted in him having a god-like status, l. 2378-9 being an allusion to the sun-god Apollo and Aphrodite, who was born from the foam on the sea. Thus, according to this image, if he had been born ‘todo sol’ he wouldn’t have had to mix with the sea (representing the natural) but rather he would have been able to take just the foam from it, the part from which Aphrodite was born.

\textsuperscript{564} \textit{doradas urnas}: this makes the distinction between the honorific funeral of a king (with gilded funerary casket) and the lowly tomb which Ciro declares is all his father deserves.

\textsuperscript{565} See Act II, fn. to line 1361.

\textsuperscript{566} \textit{cometa}: As Mitridates has already pointed out (Act III, 2166) comets were considered an ill omen, a portent of the death of the king. However, rather than being worried by it for his own part, Ciro proceeds to interpret the comet to mean that Astiages will be killed (or at least overthrown) by him, as God’s agent of justice, to avenge the murder of Arpago’s son. For more on how the comet would have been effected in the \textit{corral}, see ‘Staging’. 
Parece que allí me nombra,
etre sangrientas angustias,
el hijo de Arpago muerto.
¿Qué cosa, cielos, más justa
que vengar un inocente?
Pues, valor, o muere o triunfa.
Dios penetra pensamientos,
Dios los corazones juzga,
y a quien las vidas quitare,
Dios le quitará la suya.

Sale Filis en corto con espada, botas y espuelas.

FILIS
Ciro, de mi hermano huyendo
por que no me hallase, fui
alejándome de ti
y acercándome volviendo.
Él se fue ya, presumiendo
que me volvi de temor
a la corte, y no era error
si yo la vida estimara:
pero no hay cosa tan cara
que no la desprecie amor.

FILIS
Pienso que están
cortos a tu fortuna,
si puede temer alguna
tan ilustre capitán.
El Rey viene poderoso,
cajas y trompetas suenan;
todos el valor condenan
con que esperas animoso.
El retirarte es forzoso
hasta prevenir mejor
quien esfuerce tu valor.

FILIS
Filis, agravio me hicieras
si tal consejo me dieras
menos que con tanto amor.
Las cajas se acercan ya:
yo voy a ordenar mi gente.

FILIS
¿Oyes?

FILIS
Detente:
tu vida en peligro está.

FILIS
El cielo la guardará.

567 These two statements have their basis in Biblical teaching, aligning Ciro in the eyes of the audience with a godly king, despite the fact that this play does not have a Christian setting. See ‘Religion and Superstition’ and End Notes.
568 A1 reads ‘las suyas’; I have corrected this so that the line makes grammatical sense.
569 A1 reads ‘Decente’, which I have amended to ‘Detente’.
Muévate, Ciro, mi amor.

No puedo más.

¡Qué rigor!

Filis, morir o vencer,
porque es imposible haber
desdicha contra el valor.

¡Oh amor! ¿Cómo temes tanto
siendo todo corazón?

Suspende, que no es razón,
Filis, amorosa, el llanto.

No puedo decirte cuánto
tengo en los ojos impresos
sus atrevidos excesos.

Quejaréme ¡oh luces bellas!
que quieran vuestras estrellas
pronosticar mis sucesos.

Si fueras, señor, tan mío
como yo tu esclava soy,
yo sé que dejaras hoy
ese loco desvarío.

Con justa razón confío.

Sin ella, muerte me das.

¿Puedo ya volver atrás
en hechos malos o buenos?
Déjame intentar lo menos,
que el cielo hará lo demás.

Soldados, hoy quiero ver
lo que me habéis prometido.

Yo he de morir o vencer:
llavad siempre en la memoria
la fama, el triunfo, la gloria
de la alta empresa que sigo;
que un poderoso enemigo
hace mayor la victoria.

¿Así dejáis vuestro rey
y vuestro amigo, traidores?
¿Así cumplís la palabra?
¿Falta amor, la fe se rompe?
¡Cobardes, huyendo vais!

Tocan y dase la batalla, huyendo los soldados de Ciro de los del Rey.
Sale Ciro con algunas flechas clavadas en la rodela, cayendo al teatro.

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570 This is a play on the word ‘corazón’, which is symbolically linked to ideas both of love and courage. See end note to line 887.

571 Ciro compares Filis’ eyes to stars, which was a common image in Golden Age literature. Lope used it himself on various occasions, including in his poetry.

572 This amounts to little more than emotional blackmail on the part of Filis, although it is inspired by her love for Ciro and her fear for his life. She claims that if he loved her as much as she does him, he would not go into battle against his grandfather. Ciro remains unmoved by her pleas.

573 See ‘Staging’.
FILIS  ¡Ay, Júpiter, que del monte,  
cubierto de flechas, baja  
Ciro entre peñas y robles!

Sale Bato.

BATO  Su gente cobarde huye,  
y él la sigue dando voces.  
Cayó en tierra. ¿Si está herido?

CIRO  Persas, ¿dónde vais sin orden?  
Mataré...

FILIS  Detén la espada.  
Fílis soy, ¿no me conoces?

CIRO  ¡Oh Fílis! Mi gente infame,  
las espaldas vueltas, corre;  
que nunca fueron las obras  
a las palabras conformes.  
¿Estás herido?

FILIS  No siento  
eridas, sino traiciones.  
Capitanes, yo soy Ciro;  
ese la infame desorden:  
soldados, yo soy el rey,  
vivo estoy: ¿qué os descompone?  
Las mujeres os infaman  
con afrentosas razones;  
¿quién hay que oiga sus afrentas  
y a la batalla no torne?

Sale Arpago.

ARPAGO  Ánimo, valiente Ciro,  
que ya Arpago, te socorre;  
mi gente paso a la tuya:  
los escuadrones recoge;  
que, aunque publica victoria  
el Rey, si al paso te pones  
del monte, harás por lo menos  
que no los rinda y despoje.

CIRO  Oh Arpago amigo, ¡cumpliste  
la palabra como noble!  
Aunque parezco vencido,  
no lo estoy mientras informe  
el alma esta vida. Tengo  
justa esperanza en los dioses.  
Dello soy hijo; estas flechas  
te dirán que no soy hombre.  
Diamantes tengo por alma  
en pecho y manos de bronce,

574 Ciro is deserted by his soldiers here. See ‘Kingship’.  
575 A similar situation where women shame their men into going into battle also appears in Lope’s play  
Fuenteovejuna,  
although in that play the women actually lead the fight.  
576 This is, perhaps, a dangerous statement in the eyes of the Golden Age audience, as it seems that Ciro is claiming  
to be a child of the gods rather than just being protected by them. He is at least right to attribute his success to  
them, however.

250
ninguna delas me ha herido.\textsuperscript{577} Marte detuvo sus golpes; no pasan mortales flechas a divinos corazones. Mi gente vuelve; que, en fin, no hay cosa que los provoque como ver que las mujeres los afrenten y deshonren. ¡Ea, soldados, al arma! ¡Ah, cómo vuelven feroces! León capitán de liebres, hará las liebres leones.\textsuperscript{578}

ARPAGO

*Entranse. Tocan y vuelvese a dar la batalla, saliendo y entrando como suelen, y últimamente Ciro, y el Rey, y todos.*\textsuperscript{579}

REY

Midió mi soberbia el suelo. La espada, Ciro, detén, que no puede estarte bien matar a tu mismo abuelo. En vano se opone al cielo poder mortal; no me des la muerte, pues ya no es venganza, sino bajeza, pues siendo yo tu cabeza,\textsuperscript{580} me estás mirando a tus pies.

CIRO

Levántate.

REY

Para estar de rodillas.

CIRO

Eso no; que ningún hombre venció si no supo perdonar.\textsuperscript{581}

REY

Aun no me dejan hablar las lágrimas para darte las gracias.

CIRO

Fuera olvidarte de que antes me has obligado rendido, porque me has dado ocasión de perdonarte; porque es tan alta la gloria de perdonarte vencido, que hasta este punto no ha sido verdadera la victoria. Que puesto que la memoria de tus crueldades pedía la pena que merecía, ¿cómo quitarte podré

\textsuperscript{577} This line is one syllable overlong, unless ‘me ha he’ is scanned, unusually, as a single syllable.

\textsuperscript{578} This is a succinct description of the effect of Ciro’s valour on his men: being a lion capturing an army of (timid) hares, he makes lions of the hares through his leadership. See Salembien, ‘Le vocabulaire de Lope de Vega,’ (1932), p. 297 on Lope’s use of animal imagery; also quotation from *El villano en su rincón*: ‘Todos los leones son fuertes, y todas medrosas| las liebres’ (Act III, 2230-32), ed. Marín (1987).

\textsuperscript{579} *como suelen*: See ‘Staging’.

\textsuperscript{580} Astiages is Ciro’s ‘cabeza’ in the sense of being both his king, his grandfather and his senior. This makes his position of helplessness all the more momentous here.

\textsuperscript{581} Ciro displays his true power in his capacity to show mercy to the grandfather who has so wronged him.
aquel vida que fue el principio de la mía?\textsuperscript{582}

Casaste con hombre vil mi madre porque lo fuera el que della procediera, que fue prevención sutil; mas yo en su pecho gentil, como el alma lo sabía, viendo que hombre vil nacía, dejé la del padre aparte, y sólo saqué la parte que de mi madre tenía.\textsuperscript{583}

Que aunque es en la formación el padre primera forma, Dios, que las almas informa, trocó la primera acción en su vientre. Tu intención tanto al cielo se declara, que desde entonces me ampara; porque, a no nacer a ley de todo príncipe o rey, allá dentro me quedara.\textsuperscript{584}

De suerte que habérme dado padre humilde entonces, es más agravio que después mi muerte has solicitado.\textsuperscript{585} En fin, lo que no me has dado, que es vida, abuelo, te doy;\textsuperscript{586} vive, pues que vivo estoy; no dejes de ser por mí, pues finalmente por ti soy todo aquello que soy. Para que pases la vida una ciudad te daré de mi reino, donde esté tu persona bien servida, y la mía defendida de algún loco desvarío; que ya de ti no me fió, porque estás a toda ley más enseñado a ser Rey que no a ser abuelo mío.

¿Qué nombre a tus hechos das? ¿Qué historia, qué fama esperas, pues hallé piedad en fieras,

\textsuperscript{582} Despite the fact that Astiages has carried out many deeds deserving of punishment, Ciro is restrained by the fact that the old king is his grandfather, a blood relative from whose line Ciro was born.

\textsuperscript{583} Ciro claims here that he somehow purged himself of the lowliness of his father, and only retained his mother’s nobility.

\textsuperscript{584} Ciro claims that had he not been born a full-blooded prince he would have refused to come out at birth and stayed inside the womb.

\textsuperscript{585} \textit{has}: although it does not appear in any of the other editions of the text, the insertion of ‘has’ in this section is a grammatical necessity.

\textsuperscript{586} Ciro’s treatment of his grandfather is generously merciful, as he would have been justified in taking the life of the tyrant. This is arguably a judicious resolution on Lope’s part, given the political climate in which he wrote (see ‘Kingship’).
y en tus entrañas jamás?
Pero con esto no más,
que te da mi confianza;
que, aunque el cuerpo no lo sienta,
eto de palabra afrenta,
toma del alma venganza.

REY
Yo daré con humildad
a tu imperio la obediencia
que verá el mundo.

CIRO
Ya, Arpago,
llegó ocasión a tus quejas,
pues no he vengado a tu hijo.\textsuperscript{587}

ARPAGO
Antes agravio me hicieras
en no darme parte a mí
con que has perdonado al Rey,\textsuperscript{588}
y te suplico que seas
tan piadoso, que me des
de aquesta piedad la media
para que perdone al Rey.

CIRO
¡Palabras de tu nobleza!
¿Dónde está Filis?

BATO
Aquí,
con esta banda cubierta.

FILIS
Yo soy tu esclava.

CIRO
Soldados,
la hermana de Arpago es reina.

FILIS
Pagaste mi amor.

ARPAGO
Y el mío.

CIRO
Y aquí dio fin el poeta,
(que aun vive para serviros)\textsuperscript{589}
a su historia verdadera
fiado en vuestro valor,
por que llamarse merezca
\textit{Contra valor no hay desdicha;}
\textit{y el primero Rey de Persia.}

\textsuperscript{587} \textit{A1} reads ‘o tu hijo’. Amended here.
\textsuperscript{588} In another instance of Ciro’s example inspiring others to do likewise, Arpago forgoes his right to see Astiages punished for murdering his son and begs to be allowed to show him the same mercy as Ciro has done.
\textsuperscript{589} These lines have been taken by Menéndez y Pelayo (Introduction to \textit{Contra valor}, p. 271) as evidence that Lope wrote the play at the end of his life, and that it was perhaps one of his last.
**END NOTES**

**ACT I**

**0- Mitridates**

The appearances of the name ‘Mitridates’ within the dialogue of Act II make it clear that this spelling of the name is preferable to the *esdrújula* form chosen by Menéndez y Pelayo (‘Mitídates’). This is most evident in the following examples where the ending to the line demands a _llano_ stress:

```
REY        Pues ya no dificulto
           que con estar secreto
           haré jurar por sucesor mi nieto.
           Tú parte, Mitridates,
           porque de volver trates
           con Ciro al monte donde se ha criado.  (Act II, 1138-43)
```

and,

```
REY        Hoy se parte, y hoy quiero que le mates.
           Sólo va con el viejo Mitridates:  (Act II, 1188-89)
```

**15 valor natural**

This idea of the intrinsic, natural quality of valour is also seen in other Lope plays:

*El favor agradecido* (1621)

```
CLARIDENO        Es tu entendimiento tal,
                 y la noticia también
                 de tu valor natural,
                 que a ninguno estará mal
                 lo que has de escoger tan bien.  (Act I, TESO)\(^{590}\)
```

It is also seen in the prefatory material of the play *El Rey sin reino* (1625), in verses which Lope addresses to the dedicatee, the captain Frey Alonso de Contreras:

```
Puso el valor natural
Pleito al valor heredado
Por más noble, más honrado,
Mas justo, y más principal:
Siendo la verdad Fiscal
Probó el natural valor
```

\(^{590}\) The *Teatro Español del Siglo de Oro* database [TESO] is found at: http://teso.chadwyck.co.uk/.
There are numerous references to Phaëton throughout Lope’s dramatic work (thirty-two in all, according to the TESO database which covers three hundred and fourteen of his plays), including those in Peribáñez, El perro del hortelano and El castigo sin venganza; see Santolaria, ‘Pervivencia de los clásicos en el teatro de Lope de Vega’. Santolaria also states here: ‘en La dama boba, vv. 548-9, el Comendador menciona el “carro del Sol” en clara alusión al mito de Faetón, contado por Ovidio en Metamorphoses, II, 1-400’ (p. 179).

The figure of Phaëton usually carries a negative connotation as an impetuous young man, reaching above his station. Pertinent examples from Lope include:

*Obras son de amores* (1618)

Felisardo: Quien el coche del Sol lleva
Cerca está de despeñarse como de Faetonte cuentan (Act I, TESO)

*El saber puede dañar* (1638) – [Parte XXIII]

Carlos: En que confusiones quedo?
seguir quiero el coche, ay Dios!
sin ser Faetonte me atrevo
al carro del Sol, quien duda que me mate por soberbio? (Act II, TESO)

*La villana de Getafe* (1620)

pues como le mata Júpiter con su rayo, si fue solo Endimión por las selvas, y no por el cielo Faetonte? (Preliminares de la obra, TESO)

In his section on ‘Faetón’, Covarrubias makes reference to the negative connotations of the tale:

Otros quieren que sea doctrina moral, dándose a entender que los gobiernos de reinos, repúblicas y cosas de gran consideración, no se debe cometer a hombres mozos, imprudentes y

---

poco experimentados, a penda de que ellos perecerán, dejando abrazadas y destruidas las provincias. (p. 875b)

Lope frequently confused or conflated the myths concerning Phaëton and Icarus, two young men whose respective (and literal) downfalls were often attributed as the result of their own overreaching ambition and arrogance. The lines quoted here link to the Icarus myth when the youth flew too close to the sun. The rest of the sonnet refers to Phaëton’s disastrous attempt to drive the sun’s chariot. Lope’s imprecision with regard to these figures is explored by Turner in *The Myth of Icarus in Spanish Renaissance Poetry*. Examples include a stanza from Lope’s *La Filomena*, the last in the section entitled *La Andrómeda*:

> Clarísima Leonor, si castigarse merece un amoroso atrevimiento, mi musa puede en piedra transformarse, por este de Faetón mayor intento; pero, pudiendo, quien se atreve, honrarse, a vuestro celestial entendimiento, no es mucho que abrasar mi amor presuma en tanto sol tan atrevida pluma.593

Also, tercets such as this where the reference to ‘wings’ mixes an allusion to Icarus into lines about Phaëton:

> Subí, Faetón, subí; llegué, abraséme, mas donde el alma salamandra vive, ¡qué importa, Lope, que las alas queme!594

**guante de ámbar**

Ambergris is a solid, waxy substance originating in the stomach of a sperm whale. Covarrubias describes it in his entry *Ámbar*:

> Una pasta de suavísimo olor, tan estimado como a todos es notorio, pues se vende por onzas, y la onza en buenos ducados. (p. 150a)

---

References to the guante de ámbar are also found in Lope’s *El blazon de los Chaves de Villalva* (1618), *El desprecio agradecido* (1697), *Las pobrezas de Reinaldos* (1617), and *Los Tellos de Meneses* (1635). In addition, in Tirso de Molina’s *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, the lacayo Caramanchel describes a previous employer thus:

un médico muy barbado,  
belfo, sin ser alemán,  
guantes de ámbar, gorgorán,  

(Act I, 275-77)\(^5^9^5\)

In Part I, chapter 47 of Cervantes’ *Don Quijote*, Sancho, describing don Fernando, states ‘éste huele a ámbar de media legua’.\(^5^9^6\) Also, in Velázquez’s ‘Retrato de Felipe IV a caballo’, the king is shown on horseback with a ‘guante de ámbar’ on his right hand. This painting was undertaken by Velázquez to decorate the Salón de Reinos in the Buen Retiro palace, in around 1635-1636:

\[\text{Diego Velázquez}^5^9^7\]

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\(^{597}\) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ADiego_Velázquez_053.jpg.
This painting is also reproduced in Brown and Elliott, *A Palace for a King*, p. 154 (fig. 101), discussed on p. 156.

¿la hablo?

In the 1638 rendering of this comment, Ciro’s decision to speak to Filis is portrayed as a statement:

\[
\text{si en la fuente se detiene} \\
\text{yo la hablo.} \quad \text{(Act I, 172-73)}
\]

However, in both Hartzenbusch’s and Menéndez’s version, his words form a question:

\[
\text{si en la fuente se detiene,} \\
\text{yo, ¿la hablo?}
\]

This obviously has consequences for the reading of Ciro’s character, given that in the first instance his words come across as strong and decisive, and in the second they seem to seek reassurance from his friend, one of the few instances in the play where we see such wavering on his part. I have decided to render this line as a question, as did Hartzenbusch and Menéndez y Pelayo. This makes better sense of Bato’s response, which seems to be urging Ciro to overcome his fears:

\[
\text{Hablaron hombres mortales a diosas: ¿qué temes?} \quad \text{(Act I, 173-74)}
\]

que les dio contra los peces

Due to a presumed misreading of this line, Hartzenbusch and Menéndez y Pelayo both rendered it thus: ‘que les dio, cauta, a los peces’. The original line makes more sense in context, which is why I have chosen to return to it. As it now stands, the section reads:

\[
\text{Mirame todo por alma,} \\
\text{de la manera que suele} \\
\text{mirar las perlas el alba} \\
\text{por el agua transparente,} \\
\text{sin reparar en las conchas} \\
\text{que les dio contra los peces,} \\
\text{naturaleza por armas} \\
\text{que las cubre y las defiende.} \quad \text{(Act I, 211-18)}
\]
In paraphrase, Ciro is urging Filis to look at his soul in the same way as the dawn sees through the clear water to rest upon pearls, without getting sidetracked by the oyster shells that have been given to the pearls by nature as a defence against the sea creatures who may be a threat to them.

247  **una cinta verde | para mis celos azul**

Herbert A. Kenyon, in his article ‘Color symbolism in early Spanish ballads’, outlines the comprehensive system of colour symbolism which adds significance to Flora’s words here.\(^598\) Kenyon’s article deals mainly with the Spanish ballads of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but the symbolism contained in them would also have been familiar to the theatre audiences, to the point where the exact connotations of a particular colour (as in the case of the ‘cinta verde’ here) did not have to be explicitly outlined within the text. Griswold Morley’s article ‘Color symbolism in Tirso de Molina’ affirms that, in the context of theatre, green meant hope and blue denoted jealousy.\(^599\) See also note on l. 445 of this play.

Ángel Valbuena Prat also highlights the connection between jealousy and the colour blue in his 1969 work *El teatro español en su siglo de oro*,\(^600\) surmising that the connection between the two was probably originally due to a play on words (*celos, cielos*, the sky being blue), and is frequently used in Lope’s work, even in ironic passages such as this from *El sembrar en buena tierra* (1618):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRUDENCIA</th>
<th>Los puños que ayer llevé</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dijo que celos tenían.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INÉS</td>
<td>Por lo azul le enfadarían,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>que en el almidón eché.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Act I, *TESO*)

Another example of Lope using this is in Act I of the *Primera Parte* of *El Príncipe perfecto*, when Doña Leonor is sent a packet of love letters from a potential suitor tied up with a ‘cinta verde’. She is not impressed, however, and says: ‘Quita esa cinta verde; | Que a quien engañan, la esperanza pierde’ (*TESO*).

---

The love and madness topos was common throughout Golden Age literature. It is dealt with by Jonathan Thacker, among others:

En cuanto al amante, locura y amor son casi sinónimos en el teatro de Lope, pero el uso del término es hiperbólico.\(^{601}\)

This imagery is, for example, also used in Lope’s *Amar sin saber a quién* (1635):

\[\text{LISENA} \quad \text{pues don Juan veneno ha dado al corazón por los ojos.} \quad (\text{Act III, 2138-39})^{602}\]

These games produce a similar dread in the reigning monarchs of both plays, and consequently the significance of the kingship games in each play is also comparable.

Chapters III and IV of the apocryphal book of Esdras (here cited from the King James Version) closely correspond with this episode in the play. Here, three young men in the court of king Darius decide that

\[\text{Él que dijere tres cosas | las más fuertes}\]

\(^{601}\) Thacker, Jonathan, ‘La locura en las obras dramáticas tempranas de Lope de Vega’ in *Actas del VI Congreso de la AISO*, eds María Luisa Lobato y Francisco Domínguez Matito (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2002), 1717-29 (p. 1719).


\(^{603}\) *El duque*, ed. Ramón, p. 156.
each shall put to the king a wise saying, and the one whose saying is most wise will receive the king’s reward. Their sentences are:

‘Wine is the strongest.’ (III.10)
‘The king is the strongest.’ (III.11)
‘Women are the strongest: but above all things Truth beareth away the victory.’ (III.12)

Evidently, the first and last of these statements bear closest resemblance to the episode in *Contra valor*, with Bato’s arguments for wine and Ciro’s for the love of women echoing those put forward in chapters II and III of the apocryphal book. 504

426-7 *el diamante, pues que sólo con otro como él se labra.*

This idea is also found elsewhere in Lope’s work:

*La pobreza estimada* (1623)

LEONIDO: ...y así vendrán a labrarse como un diamante con otro. (Act I, *TESO*)

*La vengadora de las mujeres* (1621)

ALEJANDRO: Venza mujer a mujer, dije, y lábrese un diamante, con otro. (Act II, *TESO*)

445 *vuelve lo amarillo en grana*

See also end note on l. 247 of this play. Kenyon (1915) attributes despair to the colour yellow and joy to red in some cases, although the meaning attributed to various shades of red (*carmesí, colorado, escarlata* among others) varies. Although Griswold Morley (1917) cites Lope as attributing cruelty to the colour red (specifically *encarnado* in Lope’s *El Marqués de Mantua*), there are other examples in his work and that of other poets where *grana* and other shades of red are associated with joy and good humour:

Lope de Vega, *Ángelica en el Catay* (1617)

BELARDO: y él, que agradecido está, se viste de verde, y grana. (Act II, *TESO*)

504 For further discussion of this section, see the Menéndez y Pelayo introductory notes to *Contra valor*, (RAE, 1896), 87-90.
Tirso de Molina, *Tanto es lo de más como lo de menos* (1631)

LIBERIO  
Yo quiero salir de verde  
y encarnado, que es color  
que conforma con mi humor.  

(Act II, *Tesoro*)

(It should be noted that Liberio’s *humor* here is carefree and happy.)

**448  la honra**

We should compare Bato’s reference to honour as one of the ‘cosas las más fuertes’ to the attitude of *gracioso* figures in other plays. For example, Coquín in Calderón’s *El médico de su honra* advises his master that he should ignore the demands of his honour in order to stay out of prison, revealing his lack of regard for superficial honour when it became a threat to personal security:

COQUÍN  
¿Y hême de dejar morir  
por sólo bien parecer?  

(Act II, 1279-80)\(^{605}\)

Interestingly, this view extends even to English drama of the time, as in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV* (c.1597) we see Falstaff (an equivalent of the *gracioso* figure of the Spanish *comedia*) expressing his disdain for what he sees as the futility of a preoccupation with honour:


(Act 5, scene I, 131-36)

**452-53  la voluntad, divina | forma en la materia humana**

This idea of free will being ‘divine form in human matter’ resonates with the Aristotelian concept of form and matter (see, for example, *De Anima*), as explored in Aquinas (*On Human Nature*).

It also has a basis in the Biblical idea of man being created in God’s image, with free will: ‘et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam ad imaginem Dei creavit illum masculum et feminam creavit eos’ (‘So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.’ *KJV*), Genesis 1.27. This is reflected in the modern Catechism of the Catholic Church:

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‘God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions. "God willed that man should be 'left in the hand of his own counsel,' so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him." (Gaudium et spes 17)

Man is rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will and is master over his acts.606

480 Pues ¿ha de ser grulla un rey?

Cranes were associated with watchfulness and wakefulness, as Covarrubias outlines in his entry on the

grulla in the Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española:

De noche, mientras duermen [las grullas], y de día, en tanto que pacen, tienen sus centinelas que las avisan si viene gente. (p. 1004a)

Pliny’s account of the crane’s habits is found in his Historia Naturalis (X, 30):

‘excubias habent nocturnis temporibus lapillum pede sustinentes, qui laxatus somno et decidens indiligentiam coarguat.’

(They maintain a watch all night long, holding in one foot a little stone, which is released if they sleep and, falling down, reproves their negligence.)

Pliny’s Historia Naturalis was available as a Latin text in seventeenth-century Spain, but had also been translated into Spanish and published in Spain between 1624-29 by Luis Sánchez.

Other examples of the crane used in this context in Lope’s work appear in:

Las ferias de Madrid (1609):

PATRICIO

No descanso;
más velo que grulla o ganso. (Act II, 559-60)607

El galán Castrucho (1614):

CASTRUCHO

posible es que duerma ahora
la que era grulla en velar. (Act II, 1514-15)608

606 http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a3.htm. Part three, section one, chapter one, article three, ‘Man’s Freedom’.


¿Qué rey o qué calabaza?

Also found in other plays by Lope:

**Las cuentas del Gran Capitán** (1638):

GARCÍA de PAREDES  Está aquí un Auditor, o calabaza...  (Act II, TESO)

**El valor de las mujeres** (1623):

LISARDA  Ya os digo que yo no soy, ni Conde, ni calabaza.  (Act II, TESO)

**La boba para los otros, y discreta para sí** (1635):

DIANA  No faltaba otra cosa  
son que ellos vengan a burlarse tanto; ¿qué Duquesa decís, o calabaza?  (Act I, TESO)

See also Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis divi Claudii* (‘The Pumpkinification of the divine Claudius’) – a political satire with *apocolocyntosis* punning on the traditional idea of the *apotheosis* (‘deification’) of Roman Emperors.

545  saldrán mis hijos necios

Ciro’s insight into this subject, as outlined in the footnote, is probably the result of his education. Works such as Huarte de San Juan’s *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias* (1575) could have been Lope’s inspiration for his protagonist’s statement.\(^\text{609}\)

609  once esferas

Brewer’s *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* gives an explanation of this under the heading for ‘Primum Mobile’:

According to Ptolemaic astronomy, the eleven spheres are: (1) Diana or the Moon, (2) Mercury, (3) Venus, (4) Apollo or the Sun, (5) Mars, (6) Jupiter, (7) Saturn, (8) the starry sphere or that of the fixed stars, (9) the crystalline, (10) the primum mobile, and (11) the empyre'an. Ptolemy himself acknowledged only the first nine; the two latter were devised by his disciples.\(^\text{610}\)

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The line containing this reference to Phrygia was read by the nineteenth-century editors Hartzenbusch and Menéndez y Pelayo as ‘desde la fría a la abrasada zona’. I believe that this change was the result of a misreading or an error of judgement, and have therefore returned to the 1638 reading of ‘Frigia’. In addition, Phrygia is mentioned in Lope’s play Las grandezas de Alejandro (1621), proving that it was within his sphere of reference:

MENÓN: ya el reino de Frigia pasa
sin que ciudad se lo estorbe. (Act II, TESO)

A polyvalent symbol standing for virtue, strength, princely status and the conqueror of discord, Hercules had long been associated with the kings of Spain, and Philip IV was no exception. As it is stated in Brown and Elliott:

Philip IV, following the path blazed by his great-grandfather the emperor, naturally identified himself with Hercules Hispanicus. In Philip’s case, the association was exceptionally appropriate because Hercules, like the king, was also identified with the sun, itself another symbol of Virtù.

This is significant, given that Lope was writing during the reign of Philip IV. In making a comparison between Ciro and the king of Spain through the Herculean imagery, Lope perhaps states more clearly his intention that Contra valor is to be seen in connection with the monarchy of the day with Ciro as an exemplary figure. For a further discussion of this, see the ‘Kingship’ section.

This line was rendered by the nineteenth-century editor Menéndez y Pelayo as ‘disfrutar nuestras huertas’. The term disfrutar, to enjoy or take pleasure in, obviously makes sense (although grammatically it would necessitate the insertion of de after the verb), but is not preferable to the original term desfrutar, used in all other editions, which conveys the idea of the orchards being stripped of fruit by the other villagers. It is unclear whether Menéndez y Pelayo misread or overlooked the original reading, or deliberately chose to use another term, but I have decided to utilize the line which appears in editions A - E and H.

Covarrubias writes of the dolphin,

El delfín es símbolo de la ligereza y presteza, por cuanto (como tenemos dicho) es el más ligero de los peces y de los cuadrúpedes, y aun casi de las aves, según lo afirma Plinio en el lugar alegado. (p. 673b)

This reference is to Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia* (IX, 7), where Pliny, in fact, asserts that dolphins are swifter even than birds.

In addition to being esteemed in their own right, clavel (carnations) were associated with the eyes (c.f. the French term for the flower, ‘œillet’), a fact that fits well with Ciro’s claim that the carnation is principal among the flowers as are the eyes among the facial features.

Covarrubias writes,

...son los ojos la parte más preciosa del cuerpo, pues por ellos tenemos noticia de tantas cosas. Ellos son las ventanas adonde el alma suele asomarse, dándonos indicios de sus afectos y pasiones de amor y de odio. Son los mensajeros del corazón y los parleros de lo oculto de nuestros pechos. (p. 1322a)

See also *El sufrimiento*, ed. Dixon, note to line 140, ‘Vidriera (ventana, o cristales) del alma se llamaban con mayor frecuencia los ojos’.

The heart has traditionally been viewed as the seat of the emotions, and Covarrubias outlines its connection with valour,

No hay animal sin corazón, en el cual el corazón es el primero que se forma o lo que le es proporcional, y así como el corazón es el primero que se mueve y tiene vida, es el postrero de todas las partes en morir, es como un centro, principio y fin de todo movimiento…
and,

Y así tener gran corazón un hombre o un animal, cuando le loamos de animoso, no es tenerle materialmente grande en cantidad, sino en fuego, animosidad y determinación. (p. 605b)

971 con beneficio el amar,  
y con castigo el temer

Machiavelli addresses the issue of the balance between reward and punishment in ch. XVII of *The Prince*, ‘De crudelitate et pietate, et an sit melius amari quam timeri, vel e contra’ (‘Of cruelty and pity; and whether it is better to be loved than feared, or the contrary’):

Consequently, a prince must not care about the infamy of cruelty in order to keep his subjects united and faithful; because with very few examples he will be more merciful than those who, because of too much mercy, allow disorders to go on, from which spring killings or depredations: because these normally offend a whole collectivity, while those executions which come from the prince offend an individual. And among all princes, it is impossible for the new prince to escape the name of cruel, since new states are full of dangers.

This point is also dealt with by Rivadeneyra and Mariana; for more, see ‘Kingship’ section.

1025 de Agrigente el tirano

Covarrubias writes about Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigento in Sicily:

Falaris. Tirano crudelísimo de Agrigento, que entre otros generos de tormentos tuvo un toro de metal fabricado por Perilo, dentro del cual el que era atormentado, dando gritos parecía imitar los bramidos del toro, y el primero que lo experimentó fue el Perilo en pago de haber presentado al tirano este nuevo género de tormento. Y el mismo Falaris al cabo murió en él porque el pueblo, no pudiendo sofrir su grave crueldad, le acometió y metiéndole vivo dentro del toro experimentó la pena que a otros había dado. (p. 877a-b)

It is significant that Astiages invokes the name of Phalaris when threatening Mitridates here, given the supposed fate of the Sicilian tyrant, and even more so when viewed in the light of Astiages’ eventual defeat by Ciro (although the protagonist of this play does not repay his grandfather like with like). The ‘toro de metal’ is also mentioned in Act II of Lope’s *El argel fingido y renegado de amor* (1617).

1080 Romulus and Remus

The story of Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of Rome, has obvious parallels with that of Ciro’s early life. The twins were born to Rhea Silvia, a Vestal virgin and the daughter of the deposed king
of Alba Longa, after she was violated by the god Mars. Amulius, the despot who had seized the throne from Rhea’s father, ordered the babies to be thrown into the river Tiber, but as the river was in flood the receptacle into which the infants had been placed floated downstream until it drifted ashore to safety.

There, a she-wolf looked after the babies and suckled them until they were found by the royal herdsman Faustulus and brought up by him and his wife. They grew in strength and stature, eventually reclaimed the throne for their grandfather, and founded the site of what was to become Rome. (OCD, p. 1335)

1159 águila caudalosa

Covarrubias, writing about the eagle, says:

Fingen los poetas ser la armígera del dios Júpiter, que le ministra los rayos, y dio ocasión a esta fábula la naturaleza suya, por cuanto, según algunos autores, entre todas las demás aves, ella sola no es herida del rayo, y los del sol mira de hito en hito. (p. 61a)

1352-3 negra ausencia | de la solar claridad

Ciro lists a darkening of the sun among the ill omens which are not enough to perturb him. Covarrubias, writing about the phenomenon of the solar eclipse, says: ‘Eclipsarse, el sol o la luna, escurecerse; metafóricamente suele significar morírsenos algún príncipe de cuya vida pendía nuestro remedio’ (p. 740b).
This term ‘virtud’ comes from the Latin *virtus*, and in this context means the idea of physical strength, vigour or bravery (*Ant.*, p. 496), rather than the concept of ‘moral excellence’, as in modern English usage.

Las dos piernas le cortó

In *El rey don Pedro en Madrid y el Infanzón de Illescas*, attributed to Lope, King Pedro falls from his horse early in Act I and reacts by cutting off its legs and thereby killing it:

> Da una voz.

GINESA ¿Válgate el cielo!

ELVIRA ¿Qué es esto?

GINESA Fogoso, espumoso y fiero, A un bizarro caballero Un caballo ha descompuesto.

BUSTO En los ijares le ha puesto Las piernas con tal furor Que muerto cayó.

ELVIRA Señor…

DON PEDRO, de camino, con la espada en la mano.

DON PEDRO Ansí he de dejarretallo.

BUSTO Ya queda muerto el caballo, Que es la venganza mayor. (*Éntrase*)

ELVIRA Si estáis fatigado, aquí Descansad.

DON PEDRO No hay cosa en mí Que darme fatigo pueda. Temió el caballo bajar Esa cumbre y yo arriméle La espuela para que vuele; Quisome precipitar, Y no dando lugar A que otro Faetón me hiciese, Le hice que en mis pies cayese. (*Act I, 111-20; 128-37*)

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Although the authorship of the primary tradition of this play is not conclusive, Kirby states that ‘sufficient positivistic evidence - the metrical data provided by versification and the orthoëpy - exists to argue for possible authorship by Lope. I, therefore, have published the primary tradition of RDP as “Attributed to Lope de Vega.”’ (p. 112) She also concludes that ‘1623-26 is the likely date of composition of the primary tradition’ (p. 68), a time frame that places it near to that of Contra valor no hay desdicha. It is therefore significant that such a similar scene to this should appear in Contra valor, along with a reference to Phaëton which is also resonant of the latter play. It should be noted that the motives for Pedro’s slaughter of his steed differ from those of Ciro; he speaks of ‘venganza’, and Kirby concludes that the incident displays ‘the existence of some dark and violent recess of the soul.’ Ciro, on the other hand, seems much more focussed on counteracting the bad omen produced by his fall.

2192-3 Nembrot

Although it is not specified in the Biblical account of the Tower of Babel (found in Genesis 11.1-9), that Nimrod was its overseer, he is cited as being the king of Babel in Shinar (Genesis 10) and has therefore been traditionally accepted as being the instigator of the building work. He was also traditionally thought to be a giant, although the account in Genesis does not overtly state this:

> And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.\(^613\)

The Septuagint used the Greek word for ‘giant’ to describe Nimrod, and giants are mentioned in earlier chapters of Genesis (6.4, for example) hence the reference to ‘gigantes’ in l. 2192. Indeed, in ‘Giants and Tyrants in Book Five of the Faerie Queene’, Iredale writes of Regius’ commentary on Ovid,

> In a note on the description of the war of the giants against Jupiter, Regius asserts that the poets of old mixed up and confounded one story with another, and, as the result, he postulates that the story of the giants against Jove actually has its origin in the story of Noah’s posterity, who built the tower of Babel.\(^614\)

Covarrubias links the idea of giants with impious or rebellious men in his summary of the subject:

\(^613\) Genesis 10.8-10.

Bien es verdad que como hemos dicho, podemos llamar gigantes metafóricamente a los soberbios desalmados, blasfemos, tiranos y hombres sin Dios y sin conciencia, por ser hijos de la tierra y no considerar que hay Dios en el cielo.  

This makes it very appropriate that Bato should compare the fearsomeness of Astiages’ forces with the giants of Nimrod.

2226

arco persa

http://www.trocadero.com/101antiques/items/747531/item747531store.html

The above photo shows a Persian composite bow, the like of which was made in Turkey and Persia from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. It was made of different components including horn, wood and sinew.

2234

átomos

átomos – (Minsheu) ‘Moates or hairies in the sunne.’

The seventeenth-century concept of “atoms” was informed largely by Epicurean thought and forms the basis of our modern scientific understanding of the term. Covarrubias describes them thus,

Vale cosa tan pequeña que no es divisible [...] comúnmente llamamos átomos aquellas moticas que andan en el aire y solo se perciben por el rayo del sol [...] también se llaman átomos los elementos, porque todas sus partes son homogéneas…  

(p. 246b)
The other example of Lope using this term is found in *La villana de Getafe* (1620). The *labrador* Hernando says:

Pues primero en las aguas harán nido los ruiseñores, que en las selvas suelen, y el Fénix nunca visto, y siempre oído, y antes verás que tras los sacres vuelen contra razón las temerosas garzas, que al aire la región segunta impelen: y antes verás las intricadas zarzas en vez de espinas, fértiles de fruta, cuando la vista a tu cercado esparzas: y antes verás cuando de sombra enluta la noche el rostro, el Sol como en Oriente la tierra estéril, y la mar enjuta, que yo te olvide, ni olvidarte intente, Por mayores agravios que me hagas. (Act I, 558-71)

The idea here is that impossible things will have to happen before he forgets his love for Inés, including herons (*garzas*, which were often hunted with falcons, *sacres*) chasing falcons into the *segunda región* of the air; a very unlikely reversal of the natural order.

**un sátiro y una ninfa**

Ciro’s comparison of the match of his father and mother to that of these mythological creatures is simultaneously insulting toward his father and complimentary toward his mother. Satyrs were traditionally thought of as being half-man and half-goat. Covarrubias describes them as,

Un género de monstruos, o verdaderos o fingidos, que es lo más cierto, aunque Plinio, lib. 7., cap. 2, dice ser unos animales cuadrúpedes, que se cría en los montes subsolanos de las Indias, los cuales tienen rostros de hombres y corren en dos pies. (p. 1432b)

Nymphs were the mythical spirits of a particular object or location, such as a stream or a wood. They were traditionally very beautiful and were often pursued by satyrs in Greek mythology.
The Biblical basis for these two statements are found in both the Old and the New Testament; 1 Samuel 16.7 (as quoted in ‘Religion and Superstition’), and Hebrews 4.12:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.  

(KJV)

2450

vuestras estrellas

Lines 12-14 of Lope’s *Soneto LXXXI* use this common idea of the beloved’s eyes as stars, powerful in their beauty:

Pero si las estrellas daño influyen,
y con las de tus ojos nací y muero,
¿cómo las venceré sin albedrío?²⁶¹⁶

The metaphor was so common that Góngora was able to use it in his *Polifemo*, skewing its expected meaning by making a play on the double meaning of the word ‘ojos’ as the eyes on the feathers of a peacock as well its normal usage, enabling him to make a point about Galatea’s extreme beauty as a result:

Son una y otra luminosa estrella
lucientes ojos de su blanca pluma  
(l. 101-02)²⁶¹⁷

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The initial number of each entry indicates the corresponding line, or, if followed by a ‘-’ or ‘+’ sign, to the stage direction which precedes or follows that verse. The first word (or words) corresponds to the reading of my edition. Variations in punctuation have not been noted (including accents and preceding inverted interrogation/exclamation marks), except in the cases where they significantly affect the meaning of the text (for example usage of interrogation versus exclamation marks.) Variations in capitalization have not been noted. General, consistent differences of orthography and capitalization between the editions have been noted in the ‘Other Editions’ section of the introduction. Cases of ‘hay’ rendered as ‘ay’ in the 1638 ed. [A1, 2] have not been noted.

**eds A1, A2, B, C, D, E, H, H2, MyP, MyP2**

A1 María de Quiñones, Madrid, 1638 (held in the British Library, London)

A2 María de Quiñones, Madrid, 1638 (ff. 1r-22r with prefatory material) (held in Cambridge University Library); text identical to A1. For this reason, allusions to A2 will not be repeated.

A3 María de Quiñones, Madrid, 1638 (held in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid); text identical to A1. For this reason, allusions to A3 will not be repeated.

B Iayme Romeu, Barcelona, 1638

C Joseph Padrino, Sevilla, 1760

D Francisco Suriá y Burgada, Barcelona, 1770

E Pedro Escuder, Barcelona, 1780

H Hartzenbusch, 1857

H2 Hartzenbusch, BAE, Madrid, 1950, pp. 1-16; text identical to H. For this reason, allusions to H2 will not be repeated.

MyP Menéndez y Pelayo, RAE, 1896

MyP2 Menéndez y Pelayo, Atlas, Madrid, 1966; text identical to MyP. For this reason, allusions to MyP2 will not be repeated.

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618 Except in the cases of ‘dios’/‘Dios’ which are pertinent for points made in the ‘Themes - Religion and Superstition’ section.
ACT I

0- Fineo: Fileno A1 B E

1- om : La acción pasa en la corte de Astiages y en otros puntos H

0+ Sale Ciro en hábito de villano, y Mitridates, ganadero viejo : Sale Ciro en abito di Villano, y Mitridates Ganadero viejo A1; Salen Ciro en hábito de Villano, y Mitridates ganadero viejo. B D; Prado y arboleda cercanos á un pueblo. | ESCENA PRIMERA. | CIRO Y MITRIDATES, los dos en hábito de villanos H; Ciro y Mitridates, los dos en hábito de villanos MyP

1 Quitarte: Quitar te A1 B C D E

5-6 ¿Tú…responderme así?: ¡Tú…responderme así! H MyP

17-20 ¡Un honrado…merecimiento!: merecimiento? A1 C D E; merecimiento B

39-40 vanidad; | si : vanidad. | Si A1 B C D E

47 dioses : Dioses A1 B C D E

52 para acertar : para saber B

88+ Vase. : (Vase.) | ESCENA II. | CIRO. H; Vase. MyP

98-99 ¿quién…abrasado?: ¿? om. abrasado. A1 B C E

99 mueras : fueras D

102+ Sale Bato, villano : Sale Bato villano A1 B E; Sale Bato de villano C D; ESCENA III. | BATO.-

103-4 ¡Gracias…contigo!: ¡! om A1 B C D E

111 preguntarles : preguntalles A1 B C E H MyP

124 & 126 dije: «Venus…competencia»: dije: Venus A1 B C D E

131 que, a tardarse, no lo ignores : Que a tardarse (no lo ignores) A1 B C D E

136 entendimiento.: entendimiento? D

138 que el…entrado : (que el…entrado) B

144 Si…contigo, : (Sí…contigo) A1 C E; (estoy…contigo) D

151 ¡Oh, Bato, : O Bato, A1 D; O Bato! B; ¡Oh Bato! H
conoces! : conoces.  

yo, ¿la hablo? : yo la hablo.  

mortales diosas : mortales a Diosas  

Sale Filis, dama persiana : Sale Filis Dama Persiana.  

FILIS. – DICHOS.  

rayos : om.  

que…enriquecen : (que…enriquece)  

¡Ay, cielos! ¿Qué culpa : Ay cielos, qué culpa tienen  

las conchas : la concha  

que les dio contra los peces : que les dió, cauta, á los peces  

por armas : por arma  

dioses : los Dioses  


Hablan bajo. ESCENA V. Flora, sin ser vista de Ciro, Bato ni Filis. –DICHOs.  

¡Oh Filis! Si tú : O Filis, si tú  

dudo que amor : Dudo, Amor  

aborrece : aborrece  

espanta, : espanta?  

quiera a Filis : que era a Filis  

que no me quiere : que no quiere  

¡Mal fuego…queme! | ¡Mal fuego…abrase! : … queme, | … abrase,  

Ya se va. ¡Cielos, tenedme! : ya se va, cielos, tenedme.  

| FILIS. – DICHOS.  

| de esa A1 C E; de essa B; desa H MyP  

| por armas : por arma H MyP  

| los dioses : los Dioses A1 B C D E  

| ¿Puede… : Puede A1 B E; Puede ap. C D; (Ap.)  

| ¿Puede H; ¿Puede (Aparte.) MyP  

| que es celos, : qué es zelos? A1 E; que es zelos! D  

| ofenderme. : ofenderme! MyP  

| aborrece : aborrece? A1 C D E  

| espanta, : espanta? A1 C D E  

| que no me quiere : que no quiere E  

| ¡Mal fuego…queme! | ¡Mal fuego…abrase! : … queme, | … abrase, A1 B C D E  

| Ya se va. ¡Cielos, tenedme! : ya se va, cielos, tenedme. A1 B C D E; Ya se va. Cielos, tenedme. H
267 ¡Oh, Ciro! ¡Plega : O Ciro, plega A1 C D E; O Ciro! plega B

269 el seso! : el seso. A1 B C E

269+ Vanse Ciro y Bato. : Vanse los dos. A1 B C E; Vanse. D; (Vanse Ciro y Bato.) ESCENA VI. | FÍLIS,

FLORA. H

272 ¡Oh Flora! : O Flora, A1 B C D E

280 que me ha costado llegar : que me ha llegado a costar B

304 y me llego : si me llego D

354+ om. : ESCENA VII. | FLORA H

353-364 : om C D E

355 ¡Por qué : Porque A1 B ; om. C E

364+ Salen Ciro, Bato, Albano, Riselo, y Silvio - villanos. : Salen Ciro, Bato, Albano, Riselo, y Silvio villanos. A1 C D E; Salen Ciro, Bato, Albano, Riselo, y Silvio labradores. B; ESCENA VIII. | CIRO, BATO, ALBANO,

RISIELO, SILVIO, VILLANOS. H; Ciro, Bato, Albano, Riselo, Silvio y villanos. MyP

365 ¡Victor, : Vitor A1 E; Victor D; ¡Vitor, H

378+ [no stage direction] : Lucha con Bato. B

379+ Lucha Ciro con Bato : Lucha con Bato. A1 D; (Lucha Ciro con Bato) H; Lucha Ciro con Bato. MyP

382 ¡Ay, cielo! : Ay, cielo? A1 E; ay cielo! B; ay Cielo! C; ay cielo. D; ¡Ay cielo! H

384 ¿O quién me : o quién me A1 B C D E; Quién me H; ¿Quién me MyP

388-9 ¡Ay, que me ha quebrado | la mano! : ay, que me quebrado | la mano. A1 E; ¡ om. B; Ay que me ha quebrado | la mano! D; ¡Ay! que...mano. H

389 ¿No hay, mancebos, : No ay (mancebos) A1 C D E

391 In C, D and E:

1.391 'A todos desanima' omitted and replaced by:

Rise.

Si, que mi valor me anima

A la lucha valiente de mi espada.

Bato.

Y si te zurra?
Rise.

No se me da nada,

Y ya que a todos vence

En fuerza, ligereza, y gentileza…

393 Mas justo es coronarte: justo es coronarte C D; justo es coronarte E

396 Tu digna frente adorne: om. C D

396+ Pónenle una corona de laurel: Pónenle un laurel. A1 C D E; om. B; (Pónenle una corona de laurel.) H

399 tú, laurel: tú el laurel H MyP

402 celebremos alegres: celebremos alegre B H MyP

405 ¡Desatino!: Desatino. A1 B C D E H

422 los reyes: los Reyes A1 C D E; sus Reyes B

439 lenguas hablan: habla B

439 Edition B adds in the couplet ‘haze reuelar secretos | que en los tormentos se callan’ (ll. 439 a+b)

453 Line omitted. C D E

454 [ ] el amor…: la segunda el amor C D E

460 dioses: Dioses A1 B C D E

464 ¡Víctor, Ciro!: Víctor, Ciro. A1 B C D; Vitor Ciro. E; ¡Vitor Ciro! H

468 la rodilla: las rodillas B

469 ¡Viva el rey! ¡Viva!: Viva el rey. Viva. A1 B C D E; ¡Viva el Rey! ¡Viva! H

484 se pagan: le pagan D

510+ Sale Fineo, villano: Sale Fineo villano. A1 B; Sale Fineo de Villano. C D E; ESCENA IX. | FINEO. –

DICHOS. H; Fineo. MyP

516 ¿Yo?: ¡Yo! MyP H

517 ¡Un tigre…besarla!: Un tigre…besarla. A1 B C D E H MyP

521 ¡Al rey…tratas!: Al Rey…tratas? A1 B C D E; ¡Al Rey…tratas! H

522 Presidente…..: Presidente. A1 B C E; Presidente? D

523 Gran señor: Gran señor? C D E; Gran Señor H

526+ (A Fineo): om A1 B C D E; (A Fineo.) H; Á Fineo: MyP
528 de un criado | del Rey? : de vn privado del Rey? C; del privado del Rey? D


533+ Llévanle. : (Riselo y otros villanos se llevan á Fineo.) | ESCENA X. | CIRO, BATO, ALBANO, SILVIO,
VILLANOS. H; Riselo y otros villanos se llevan á Fineo. MyP

545 Pues, ¿salen del alma? : No salen del alma? C D E

557 las pintan : la pintan D

565 Rey! : Rey? A1

565+ om : Sale Flora. A1

566+ Sale Flora. : om A1; ESCENA XI. | FLORA. – DICHOS. H; Flora. MyP

566 ¿Qué es esto | Ciro? ¿En qué… : Que es esto? | Ciro, en que A1 B C D E

579 Flora necia, o avisada, : (Flora necia, o avisada) A1 C D E; Flora necia o avisada, H MyP

582 ¿Hay semejante : Ay tan semejante B

587+ Vanse. | Salen el Rey Astiages, y Arpago. : Vanse, y salen el Rey Astiages, y Arpago. C D E; (Vanse.) | Sala
en el palacio de Astiáges. | ESCENA XII. | EL REY ASTIÁGES, ARPAGO. H; Vanse. | El rey
Astiages y Arpago. MyP

588 años, noble Arpago, : años (noble Arpago) A1 B C D E

597 gracias a los dioses : (gracias a los Dioses) A1 C D E

607 no salgan…verdaderas : (Ap. no salgan…verdaderas.) H; no salgan… verdaderas. (Aparte.) MyP

609 como…once esferas, : (Como…once Esferas, A1 D [sic: no closing parenthesis]; (Como…once
Esferas) C; (Como…once Esferas) D E

612 sacro Astiages : (sacro Astiages) B

614 Así corre del mundo en los linajes : así corren del mundo los linajes H MyP

619 desde la Frigia a la abrasada zona : desde la fría á la abrasada zona H MyP

625 que fue…misterio : (que fué…misterio) H MyP

627+ Salen Evandro y Fineo. : ESCENA XIII. | EVANDRO, FINEO. – DICHOS. H; Evandro y Fineo
MyP

634 mirando a un hijo : mirando un hijo A1 B C D E

635 suerte. : suerte? A1 C D E
...monte en que... | Tengo, : ...monte (en que...) tengo A1 B C D E

creado! : criado. A1 B C D E

656-7 (Aparte) | Por... | ...temor! : Por... | ...temor: A1 B C D E; Por... | ...temor. H

¿Rey...labrador? : ¡Rey...labrador! H MyP


693 ¿Que estás | suspenso? : ¿Qué estás suspenso? H MyP

694 Yo voy. : Ya voy. MyP

698 (Aparte.) ¡Cielos, quitadme el temor, : Cielos, quitadme el temor, A1 B C D E; (Ap.) Cielos, quitadme el temor, H; ¡Cielos, quitadme el temor, (Aparte.) MyP

699+ Vanse. | Salen Ciro, y los labradores de soldados, con chuzos, espadas y bandera. : Vanse. | Salen Ciro, y labradores soldados con chuzos, y espadas, y bandera. B; Vanse (Vanse.) | Calle ó plaza del pueblo en que vive Ciro, con vista exterior de la casa que habita Filis. | ESCENA XIV | CIRO, ALBANO, SILVIO, BATO, Y VILLANOS, de soldados, con chuzos, espadas y bandera. H; Vanse. | Ciro, Albano, Silvio, Bato y villanos, de soldados, con chuzos, espadas y banderas. MyP

701+2 reina : Reina A1 B C D E

703 Pues ¿ha de haber rey sin reina? : ¿Pues ha de haber rey sin reina? H

715 desfrutar nuestras huertas: desfrutar nuestras tierras B; disfrutar nuestras huertas MyP

716 Díjela : Dixele B

719 percha : perchas D

720 parecióla : parecióle B

725+ Juega la bandera : om. B; (Juega la bandera) H

727+ Sale Mitridates, y Filis se pone a la ventana. : Salgan Mitridates, y Filis se ponga a la ventana B; ESCENA XV. | MITRIDÁTES, en la calle, FÍLIS, á la ventana. –DICHOS. H; Mitridates en la calle, Filis á la ventana MyP

742 que en la bandera : que por bandera D

751 : Line omitted. B

751+ Salen Arpago, Evandro y Fíneo. : ESCENA XVI. | ARPAGO, EVANDRO, FINEO. – DICHOS. H; Arpago, Evandro y Fíneo MyP
281


754+ Quitese de la ventana. : Quitase A1 B E; Retírese C D ; (Quitese de la ventana.) | ESCENA XVII. | CIRO, ARPAGO, MITRIDÁTES, EVANDRO, FINEO, BATÓ, SILVIO, ALBANO, VILLANOS. H; Quitese de la ventana. MyP

768 tan diestro conduces : tan fiero conduzes B
770 la inclinación : e inclinación D
780 quieran : quieren B
782 aunque…vida, : (aunque…vida) A1 B C E
791 no pienses : no piensas A1 D
ACT II

800- Salen el Rey Astiages, y Arpago. : Sala en el palacio de Astiáges. | ESCENA PRIMERA. | EL REY,

ARPAGO, ACOMPAÑAMIENTO. H; El Rey, Arpago y acompañamiento MyP

801 Arpago, : Arpago) A1 [sic: opening parenthesis omitted]; (Arpago) B C D E

824 & 827 ¿Cuántos...sucedido! : Cuantos...sucedido A1 C D E; sucedido? B; ¿Cuántos...sucedido! H MyP

829 tene : tiene H MyP

837 om. : REY (Aparte) H MyP

837+ Vase Arpago. : Vase Arpago | ESCENA II. | EL REY, ACOMPAÑAMIENTO H


844 ¡Ay, Ciro! Temblando voy. : Ay, Ciro, temblando voy A1 C D E

845 Ya están, señor, a tus pies : Ya están a tus pies C D E


850 porque, ¿cómo… | …sea? : porque, como… | …sea. A1

864 de sus luces : en sus luces H MyP

867 vasallas : vasallos B

868 el delfín, en el rigor : el delfín del rigor A1 B C D E

892 REY (Aparte.) ¡Vive : REY ¡Vive... (Aparte.) B C E MyP; Ast. Vive D; REY (Ap. ¡Vive... H

895 cuidado! : cuidado. A1 C D E; cuidado? B

896 Este sin duda es mi nieto : Este es sin duda mi nieto D

925 de la aldea : del aldea B

931 nieto. : nieto.) H

934-5 valor | y virtud : valor, y virtud, C D

939-40 ¿Que lo que... | …vasallo? : ¡Que lo que... | …vasallo! H MyP

957 se reprueba : ser reprueba C D E

961 de señor : de ser señor C D
pasadas…|…opinión : (passadas…|…opinión) B; pesadas…|…opinión, C E

del amor la condición : y de amor la condición D

el vasallo : un vasallo H MyP

admiro, : admiro! C E

nieto : nieto? A1 B C D E

librara, : librara? C D E

majestad?: : Magestad. B

(Aparte.) ¿Qué… : om. A1 B C D E; ¿Qué… (Ap. á él.) H; (Aparte a él.) MyP

No te… : No te… (Ap. á Ciro) H; (Aparte a Ciro) MyP

¿Por…|…favor?: El azotar…|…favor? C D; Azotar…|…favor? E; Por…|¡quieres…favor? H; ¡Por…|…favor! MyP

Vanse los dos.: Vanse Ciro, Bato y el acompañimiento. | ESCENA IV. | EL REY, ARPAGO, MITRIDÁTES. H; Vanse Ciro, Bato y el acompañimiento MyP

1017 el corazón.: el corazón! B

¡Por…para ti!: Por…para ti. A1 B C D E H

N.B. As of this line, the suelta copy E has been bound in the wrong order.

¡Cruel decreto, dar… : Cruel decreto… B ; ¡Cruel decreto! Dar… H

¡aún…enternece! : Aun …enternece, A1 C D E H MyP

no le pudiese : no pudiesse C E

¡oh cielo santo!: (oh cielo santo!) A1 B C D E

parto con: parto, y con C

¡extraño caso!: ¡extraño caso! H MyP

imprimiendo : E imprimiendo C D; Y imprimiendo B E MyP

monte, sigueme: y sigueme C D

en fin… ¡Oh : en fin; o A1 B C D E

ni reprimir: no reprimir B

y miro | el cielo : y | miro el cielo E
Conociase bien: Conociôse mui bien C, D; Conociose E

menor efecto: menos efecto H MyP

pues por piedad: que por piedad H MyP

Oh Arpago, ¿de qué...: O Arpago, que temes D; ¡Oh Arpago! ¿De qué... H MyP

te ha perdonado: me ha perdonado D

verte: vertyte C – Ms. note ‘te’ in margin; verterle D

alma de: el alma de C, D, E

volver trates: volver te trates A1, B; volverte trates C, D, E

¡Oh Arpago, que temes...: ¡Oh Arpago! ¿De qué... D; ¡Oh Arpago! ¿De qué... H MyP

no sé que honras: no se honras E

¡Oh, fementido Arpago!: o fementido Arpago? D

¡Viven...suya!: Viven...suya; A1, B, C, D, E

malad: crueldad B

Sale Evandro.: ESCENA VII.| EVANDRO. – EL REY. H; Evandro. MyP

le aguarda: la aguarda A1

torna de la presa: torna| alegre de la presa A1, B, C, D, E, H MyP

¡Oh cielos, no...: O Cielos, no... |... matarme. C, D, E; (Ap. ¡Oh cielos!, no... |... matarme! H; ¡Oh cielos... (Ap.) |... matarme! MyP

¡Oh, si...|¡pensaras...|...Delfos!: O si... | Delfos. A1, B, C, D, E; ¡Oh, si...|...Delfos! H MyP

Filis: (Filis) A1, C, D, E
miedo : medio B

¡Por Júpiter...enredos! : Por Júpiter...enredos. A1 B C D E H; ¡Por Júpiter...enredos! MyP 1254 Él,
y el Rey, y Mitridates : el Rey, el, y Mitridates B

¡Con el Rey! : Con el Rey? A1 B C D E

¡Tanta plata, tantos… : ¡Tanta plata! tantos… A1

llenos, : llenos! A1

imperio! : Imperio. A1 B C D E

¡Oh,…perro! : Oh…perro: A1 B C D E

dije yo, : (dije yo) A1 B C D E

aquel ver salir : aquel versal yr B

maestresala : maestre sala B

(sí hay…contentos) : si hay… contentos H MyP

¡Bueno vienes…corte! : Bueno vienes…Corte. A1 B C D E

verte : ver te B

con secreto : con recato H MyP

la venida : de la ida C D

el amor? : el amor! E


(Monte.) | ESCENA IX. | MITRIDÁTES; CIRO, con espada. H; Vanse. | Mitridates y Ciro con espada. MyP

padre, : (padre) B

Bien haya… | él lo sea : ello lo sea C D E; ¡Bien haya… ¡él lo sea! H MyPsea.: /

aumenta : aumentó B

monte monte [sic] A1 B C D E

Creta : creta A1 B D

no la virtud : sin la virtud H MyP

286

1350 voraz : veraz A1 E

1357 a lo menos : alomenos B

1361 contra valor… : Contra valor H; contra valor MyP

1362 ¡Ay, hijo! : Ay, hijo, A1 C D E

1363 Al valor con que te armas : Aunque de valor te armas H MyP

1364 y al furor de gente de armas : con rumor de gente de armas H MyP

1369 entre aquella oscuridad : en aquella oscuridad D

1374-7 ¡ojalá…defender! : ojalá…defender. A1 D


1384 Y aquí está : Aquí está B

1386 ¡Mueran! : Muera. A1 B C D E

1386 ¡Ay,…vida! : Ay,…vida. A1 B C D E

1386+ Riñen. : om. B

1387 om. ¿Cómo te diré… : (Ap. ¿Cómo te…) H; ¿Cómo te… (Aparte.) MyP

1391-2 ¡Villanos… | …manos! : Villanos,… | …manos. A1 D

1392+ Mételos a cuchilladas. : om. B; (Mételos á cuchilladas) | ESCENA XI. H

1395 ¡Padre, muerto soy! : Padre, muerto soy. A1 B C D E; ¡Padre! muerto soy! H

1401 muerto? : muerto! B

1402 ¡Ciro! : Ciro, A1 E; Ciro? B C D

1406 ¡Ánimo, caducas fuerzas! : Ánimo, caducas fuerzas. A1 B C D E H

1406+ Súbese por el monte. | Sale Ciro, sangriento, con la espada desnuda. : Como sube por el monte, sale Ciro con la espada con sangre. B; (Súbese por el monte.) | ESCENA XII | CIRO, sangriento, con la espada desnuda. H; Súbese por el monte. | Ciro, sangriento con la espada desnuda. MyP

1413 le han muerto : me han muerto C D E

1419+ Bato, dentro y lejos. : Dentro Bato, y lejos. A1 B C D E; ESCENA XIII. | BATO; y luego, MITRIDÁTES, ambos dentro. – CIRO. | BATO (Dentro y lejos.) ¡Ciro!..... H; Dentro y lejos. MyP

1420 ¡Ciro!... : Ciro. A1 B E; Cyro? C D
Dentro Mitridates. : Dentro, y lejos Mitridates. B; MITRIDATES (Dentro) H; Dentro. MyP

¡Ciro!... : Ciro. A1 B E. Cyro? C D

burlarme : bularme C [NB Chorley’s ms. note in margin ‘burlar’]

Filis, dentro y lejos. : Dentro Filis lejos. A1 C D E; Dentro, y lejos Filis. B; ESCENA XIV. | FÍLIA, dentro.
– DICHOS. | FILIS (Dentro y lejos.) ¡Ciro!.....; Dentro y lejos. MyP

¡Ciro!... : Ciro. A1 B E; Cyro? C D

¡Júpiter santo!: Iupiter santo. A1 B C D E

¡Qué pensamiento…!: Que pensamiento… A1 B C E

En un monte… ¡a media noche!: en un monte a media noche! A1 D; en un monte a media noche. B; En un monte…..a media noche! H; ¡En un monte…..a media noche! MyP

¡Júpiter santo!: Iupiter santo. A1 B C D E

¿Quién llama a Ciro?: [NB Positioning of this line differs from that in A1 C D and E, where it appears after the stage direction which sees Filis, Mitridates and Bato come onstage.]

¡Júpiter santo!: Iupiter santo. A1 B C D E

¿Quién llama a Ciro?: [NB Positioning of this line differs from that in A1 C D and E, where it appears after the stage direction which sees Filis, Mitridates and Bato come onstage.]

¡Júpiter santo!: Iupiter santo. A1 B C D E

Cielos, quien respondió?: ¡Filis! MyP

¡Padre!: Padre. A1 B E; Padre? C D; ¡Padre!..... H MyP

¿Quién llamó a Bato?: Bato, es posible que os veo?...conmigo. A1 B C E

¡Bato! ¿Es posible que os veo…conmigo?: Bato, es posible que os veo…conmigo. A1 B C E

¡Ay, mi bien, ¿herido estás?: ¡Ay, mi bien! ¿Herido estás? H MyP

¡oh Ciro!, : o Ciro, A1 D; (o Ciro) B

¡Ay, bellísimos luceros!: ¡Ay, bellísimos luceros. A1 B C D E

enternecida : enterdecida E

dije : dit B
«Aquí… | …por él.» : Aquí… | … por él. 

van vencidos : van huidos B

tan bien : también B

Ni pensé volver a verte : Ni pensé volverte a ver H MyP

huir: todos… : huir. Todos… H MyP

a mis espaldas : a las espaldas B

Saken Arpago y soldados : ESCENA XV | ARPAGO, SOLDADOS. –DICHEROS. H; Arpago y soldados. MyP

¡Ay de mí! ¿Si es muerto Ciro? : ¡Ay de mí si es muerto Ciro! H MyP


¡Ay, Filis, gran mal me aguarda! : ¡Ay, Filis! Gran mal me aguarda! B; ¡Ay, Filis! Gran mal me aguarda. 


Vanse los tres: om. B; Retíranse Filis, Mitridates y Bato. | ESCENA XVI. | CIRO, ARPAGO, SOLDADOS. H; Retíranse Filis, Mitridates y Bato. MyP

¿Qué dices? : Que dices. A1 E

Retíranse los soldados. : om. B

No es la causa : Que la causa C D E

para vengarme tan poca : para vengarme, es tan propia C D; para vengarme, tan propia E

que rompérsla : y assí el romperla C D E

y unánimes se conforman - : (profecía misteriosa) C D; (profecía misteriosa) E; y unánimes se conforman H MyP

- aunque noble - : (aunque noble) A1 B C D E; aunque noble H MyP

- ¿qué crueldad! - : (que crueldad) A1; (que crueldad!) D; ¡qué crueldad! H MyP

- volviendo en coturnos… | … toscas - : volviendo en coturnos… | … toscas B; (volviendo coturnos … | … toscas) C D

¡ay, Dios! : ay, Dios! A1 [sic: opening parenthesis omitted]; (ay Dios!) B C D E

luego...¡ay cielo! : luego, (ay, cielo!) A1 B C D E
1631 tragedia llorosa! : llorosa) $A1 C D E$; llorosa!) $B$ [sic: opening parentheses omitted]

1632 Me enseña, ¿dije?... ¡Ay de mí! : Me enseña, dije? ay de mí! $A1 C D E$; Me enseña, dije (ay de mí) $B$;

Me enseña dije.... ¡Ay de mí! $H MyP$

1633 ¿Cómo diré? ¿De qué forma? : Como diré: de que forma, $A1 D$; Como diré: de que forma, $B$;

¿Cómo diré?...¿De qué forma? $H MyP$

1636 hijo. : hijo? $A1 C D E$

1639 mismo padre devora : mismo padre le coma $H MyP$

1648 & 1651 «En...|...ahora» : En...|...ahora $A1 B C D E$

1652-55 Albania, |...Líbia, qué tigre,... : Albania? |...Líbia? qué tigre?... $A1 C D E$

1655 roban? : roban. $C D E$

1674 te defienden : le defienden $MyP$

1693 vence, roba, : vence, postra, $C D E$

1698 ¡Notable historia! : Notable historia, $A1 B C D E$

1701 pena, : pena! $A1 C D E$

1712 Esforzándose : esforzando se $A1 C E$

1718 (aunque...sido), : aunque...sido $H MyP$

1736 Toca al arma.| Al arma toca.: Toca alarma.| Alarma toca. $A1 B C D E$
ACT III

1738- Salen Flora, y Bato de soldado gracioso : Salen Flora, y Bato en hábito de soldado gracioso. B;

Camp. | ESCENA PRIMERA. | FLORA; BATO, de soldado gracioso. H; Flora y Bato, de soldado gracioso.

MyP

1743 más gallardo : más bizarro B

1767 aguijada : quijada B

1782 (si me quieres) : si me quieres, B H MyP

1783 al lado : allado B C D E

1786 ¿qué...pensando? : que...pensando, A1 C D E

1787 con ...es, : (con...es) A1 B C D E

1796 de Júpiter : del Júpiter H MyP

1797 a Arpago : a Evandro B

1802 Pero de Ciro : Peor el de Ciro B

1821 o su olvido : y su olvido C D

1828-29 ¡mal año...celos! : mal año...zelos. A1 B C D E

1829+ Vate. : (Vate.) | ESCENA II. H

1837 DENTRO: | ¡Rey Ciro, rey Ciro! | Tocan cajas, y sale Ciro con laurel, Filis en hábito corto, soldados, y músicos cantando. : Dentro: | Rey Ciro, Rey Ciro. | Tocan cajas, y sale Ciro con laurel, y Filis en hábito corto, y soldados, y los músicos. B; Dentro. | Viva Ciro, viva Ciro. | Tocan cajas, y sale Ciro con laurel, Filis en hábito corto y los músicos cantando. C E; Dent. | Viva Ciro, viva Ciro. | Tocan cajas, y sale Ciro con laurel, Filis en hábito corto, Soldados y los músicos cantando. D; (Tocan cajas dentro.) | ESCENA III. | CIRO, con laurel; FÍLIS, en hábito corto;

MITRIDÁTES, SOLDADOS, MÚSICOS. –BATO. | SOLDADOS ¡Rey Ciro, rey Ciro! H; Tocan cajas dentro. Ciro, con laurel; Filis, en hábito corto; Mitridates soldados y músicos. | SOLDADOS ¡Rey Ciro, rey Ciro! MyP

1838 Cantan. : (Cantando.) H; Cantando. MyP

1842 & 1852 ¡Al arma, al arma, al arma; guerra, guerra! : Alarma, alarma, alarma, guerra, guerra. A1; Al arma, al arma, guerra B C E; Alarma alarma, guerra guerra D
toca la caja, y ríndase: toca la caja, ríndase B

*Cantan* : *om.* B

*om.* : *Toquen* B

me ha estado: me está B

el aplauso: Y el aplauso *C D E*

en las veras: de veras B

almas: armas *C*

*Mitridates*: *om.* *H MyP*

¿Mitridates?: ¿Hijo mío?: Mitridates…..|Hijo mío….. *H MyP*

volveré: volverá B

*Vase.*: *(Vase.)* | ESCENA IV. | CIRO, FÍLIS, MITRIDATÉS, SOLDADOS, MÚSICOS. *H*

un mundo: el mundo B

¡Hola, capitán! Apresta…: Ola, capitán, apresta… *A1 B C D E*

con paramentos de tela: con paramos de tela *A1 D E*; con passamanos de tela *C*

*Vanse.*: *(Vanse.)* | *Sala en el palacio de Astiáges.* | ESCENA V. | EL REY, ARPAGO. *H*; *Vase.* | El Rey, y Arpago. *MyP*

(sí es bien que lo sea),: (si es bien que lo sea…|…labrador) B; si es bien que lo sea, *H MyP*

el mar: del mar *H MyP*

del estruendo la ocasión: de la entrada la ocasión B

que…se ve: (que…se ve) B

¿Ciro, respondí,…: Ciro (respondí) *A1 B C D E*

¡Su locura admiro!: su locura admiro *H MyP*

replicó: (replicó) *A1 B C D E*

temióse apenas soldado: temióle antes de engendrado *C D E*; Temióse apenas formado *H MyP*

porque aún el cielo no puede: porque aun el cielo no quiere *C D*; pues aun el cielo no quiere *E*

que no ha dado: que le ha dado *C D E*

¿No le espantas General|desta empresa?: *No le espantas general|desta empresa. *H MyP*
Sale un Criado. | UN CRIADO. – EL REY, ARPAGO; después, BATO. H; Un

1971+ Sale un Criado. | MyP

1973 a quien…igual: (a quien…igual) | A1 B C D E

1975 om.: Yendo a avisar. | H MyP

1975 Sale Bato de soldado. | om. B; (Sale Bato.) H; Sale Bato. MyP


1984 los demás: los mas B

1995 Aparte a Bato: Aparte. A1 B C D E

1998 (¡Arrogante|título!): | título arrogante! B; ¡Arrogante|título! | H MyP

2000-18 ‘s’: om. | A1 B C D E

2000 (que no hay…|…quitar): que no hay…|…quitar B

2023 ¿Mi tesoro? ¡Hoy le destruyo! | Mi tesorero? B; Mi tesorero? oy le destruyo. A1 D; ¡Mi tesorero! Hoy le
destruyo. H MyP

2026- Lee.: om. A1

2031 (y como…prometo): y como…prometo H MyP

2032 con secreto: con respecto C D E

2032+ om.: Representa. Bø

2034 ¿Oye, señor?: ¿? om. A1 B C D E

2046 ¿Qué gentil Héctor, qué Aquiles, | Que gentil Hector! qué Aquiles! A1 C D E; ¿? om. B

2047 El Rey de: qué rey de H MyP

2093 vino aromatizado: vivo oromatizado E

2094 ¡Vive Dios,…|…y restitúis…!: Vive Dios,…|…restituí; A1 B C D E; …restituís!….. H MyP

2096 ¡Dioses!: Dioses, A1 B C D E

2099 ¡A mí un villano…!: a mi un villano A1 C D E; …un villano!….. H MyP

2101 ¿Qué importa matar a un hombre?: Que importa matar un hombre A1; Que importa un hombre? C E

2104 mate así: mate ansi B

2107 al otro infame: al infame C D E
Vanse. : om. H MyP

2113+ Vase. | Dentro ruido de soldados, como que ha caído Ciro de un caballo, y él sale luego. A1 C D E; Vase. | Sale Ciro como que ha cabido de vn caballo, y soldados tras él, y digan dentro. B; (Vanse.) | ESCENA VII. | ALBANO, SILVIO, RISELO; después CIRO. H; Vanse. | Albano, Silvio, Riselo y Ciro. MyP

2114, 15, 17, 18- 'Dentro' omitted : Dentro A1 C D E H MyP

2119 Sale Filis. : ESCENA VIII. CIRO, FÍLIS. H; Ciro y Filis. MyP

2129+ Vase. | Sale los soldados.: Vase, y salen los Soldados. B; (Vase.) | ALBANO, RISELO, SILVIO, SOLDADOS. – FÍLIS. H; Vase. | Albano, Riselo, Silvio y soldados. MyP

2132 & 2140 () om. : () H MyP

2138 bañado : bañando B

2141 el fuerte Ciro : al fuerte Ciro C; [NB ms. note in margin, ‘el?’] E

2143 dos : das [sic] A1 E

2144 con aire : con ira C D

2146 en tierra sin ellas : en tierra, y en ella B

2147 que las puso : que los puso B

2148 al parar en : al pararse en B

2153+ Sale Ciro y Mitridates : Sale Ciro. A1 B C D E; ESCENA X. | CIRO, MITRIDÁTES. –DICHOS. H; Ciro y Mitridates. MyP

2161 que no la venza el valor : que no le venza el valor B; [line omitted] C D E

2168 presagios : persagios E

2171 Sale Bato. : ESCENA XI. | BATO. -DICHOS. H; Bato. MyP

2175 ¡Oh, Bato, mi embajador! : O Bato mi embajador? A1 D E

2181 & 2184 ¡mira… | …entendimiento! : ¡ ! om. A1 B C D E

2194 ¡Oh, fuerte Ciro! : O fuerte Ciro A1 C D E

2197 puedas; : ; om. A B C D E H MyP

2201 de un caballo : en un caballo C D E

2202 se apea, no te respondo : aunque no te respondio D

¡Ay, Ciro! Mi… : Ay, Ciro, mi…


Vase. : om. D E H MyP


Ciro valeroso : (Ciro valeroso) A1 B C D E

reino le : rey no le B

la gente de : la empresa de B

breve plazo : breve espacio : C D E

ristre : riste A1 B D E

y a la : y la B

y el sol : si el sol B

un sol mentira : un sol que admira C D

le sienta : le asienta B

la verde palma : al verde palma H MyP

corazón apoya : corazón se apoya B

que en competencia : si en competencia H MyP

del que sufre : del que fuere C; del que fue D

que a ninguno : que ninguno A1 B C D E

defensa suerte : defensa fuerte B C D

¿Ahora, Ciro, amor? : ¡Ahora, Ciro, amor! H MyP


Vanse todos menos Ciro. : Vanse. A1 B D; om. C E

¡Qué... | ...aguja! : Que... | ...aguja. B

chusma! : chusma. B

«amaina»…«vira» : amaina…vira A1 B C D E

filácigas : filagizas A1 E

a la que argentan estrellas, : à la que argente de estrellas D
e infunda : y infunda

¿Cajas de guerra? : ¡Cajas de guerra! H MyP

¿Qué es esto? | …resultan. : ¿Qué es esto | …resultan? H MyP

esparcen, ya se ocultan : esparcen…, ya se ocultan H MyP

¡Qué confusiones, que dudas! : Que confusiones! que dudas! A1 B C E

DENTRO. : ESCENA XIV. | LA VOZ DE UNA SOMBRA. –CIRO. H; La voz de una sombra.

MyP

bajeza deslustra : bajeza deslustra A1 E

¡Mal haya… | …hermosura! : Mal haya… | …hermosura A1 D

por temor : por temer H MyP

(pues me escuchas) : pues me escuchas H MyP

[viven… | …seguras! : viven… | …seguras A1 B C D E

¡Mal haya…|…coyunda! : Mal haya…|…coyunda A1 C D E

vive la fúnebre : vive en la funebre C E

Pasa un cometa por el teatro. : 2388+ B

disculpa. : disculpa! B

me nombra : me nombran B

Line repeated in E

un inocente? : un inocente! B

la suya : las suyas A1 B C D E

Sale Filis en corto con espada, botas y espuelas. : Sale Filis en corto con espada, botas espuelas. D; ESCENA XV. | FÍLIS en corto, con espada, botas y espuelas; SOLDADOS. –CIRO. H; Filis, en corto, con espada, botas y espuelas, y soldados. MyP

yo soy : que soy C

con que esperas : con que vienes B

las cajas : las cajar C (ms. note ‘ar’ in margin)

Detente. : Decente A1 C

que no… | …amorosa : (que no… | …amorosa) B

¡oh luces bellas! o luces bellas. A1 C D E

sucesos : sucesos? B

yo sé : ya sé H MyP

Puedo ya : Puedo yo B

Tocan y dase la batalla, huyendo los soldados de Ciro de los del Rey. | Sale Ciro con algunas flechas clavadas en la rodela, cayendo al teatro. : Acuérdate y bágase la guerra, huyendo los soldados… B; (Tocan, y dase la batalla, huyendo los soldados de Ciro de los del Rey, y entranse.)| ESCENA XVI. | FÍLI, BATO; después, CIRO. H; Tocan, y dase la batalla, huyendo los soldados de Ciro de los del Rey, y entranse. | Filis y Bato. MyP

‘Dentro’ omitted : Dentro. H MyP

¿Así… | …traidores? : ¡Así… | …traidores! H MyP

Cobarde, huyendo vais! : Cobarde, huyendo vais? A1 B C D E


Sale Bato. : Bato dentro, y luego sale. B; om. H MyP

Sale Ciro con algunas flechas clavadas en la rodela. H MyP

en tierra. : en tierra! B

Mataré… : Mataré. A1 B C E; mataré:- D

¡Oh Filis! : O Filis, A1 C D E; O Filis? B

Pero retire Filis a lo intricado del monte. C D E [two inserted lines]

oiga : oyendo C D E

y a la batalla no torne?: a la batalla no vuelve? C D E

Sale Arpago. : ESCENA XVII. | ARPAGO, SOLDADOS. – CIRO, FÍLIS, BATO. H; Arpago y soldados. MyP

Oh Arpago, amigo, ¡cumpliste | …noble! : O Arpago amigo, cumpliste | …noble. A1 C D E; O Arpago amigo! cumpliste | …noble, B; ¡Oh Arpago amigo! cumpliste | …noble. H

vida. : vida! H MyP
manos de bronce: braços de bronze B

herido. : herido, A1 B C D E H MyP

¡Ea, soldados, al arma! : Ea soldados, alarma: A1 E ; ...al arma B C

¡Ah, como… : o como… B; ha, como… C

Éntranse. Tocan, y vuélvase a dar la batalla, saliendo y entrando como suelen, y últimamente Ciro, y el Rey, y todos. : Tocando se haga la batalla, saliendo al teatro como suelen, y últimamente Ciro, y el Rey. B; (Éntranse. Tocan, y vuélvase a dar la batalla, saliendo y entrando como suelen.)|ESCENA XVII.| CIRO, EL REY, ARPAGO, FÍLIS, con el rostro cubierto; MITRÍDÁTES, BATO, SOLDADOS. H; Éntranse. Tocan, y vuélvase a dar la batalla, saliendo y entrando como suelen, Ciro, el Rey, Arpago, Filis, con el rostro cubierto, Mitridates, Bato y soldados. MyP

¿cómo… | ...mía? : cómo… | ...mia. A1 E

[C - ms. note in margin: ‘ya?’]
padre aparte : padre a parte C

has: om. A1 B C D E H MyP

que es vida, : (que es vida) A1 B C D E

¿Qué historia, que fama esperas,| ...jamás? : Que historia? que fama esperas?| ...jamas: A1 B E; Que historia? que fama esperas?| ...jamas? C D

a tu hijo : o tu hijo A1 E [sic]

para que perdone al Rey : para perdonarle yo. C D E

¡Palabras de tu nobleza! : Palabra es de tu nobleza. C D E

Y aquí dio fin el Poeta : Y aquí dio fin la comedia C D E

¡Y aqui dio fin el Poeta: Y aqui dio fin la comedia C D E

Omitted in C, E

(llamarse merezca : llamarse pudiera H MyP

y el primero Rey de Persia : y el noble Hijo de la Perra C D E

(que aun vive para serviros) : que aun…serviros, H MyP

Y aquí dio fin el Poeta : Y aquí dio fin la comedia C D E

Omitted in C, E

(llamarse merezca : llamarse pudiera H MyP

y el primero Rey de Persia : y el noble Hijo de la Perra C D E

Omitted in C, E

(llamarse merezca : llamarse pudiera H MyP

y el primero Rey de Persia : y el noble Hijo de la Perra C D E

Omitted in C, E
Previous editions of *Contra valor no hay desdicha*:

Vega Carpio, Lope de

—, Madrid: María de Quiñones, 1638 [A]

—, Barcelona: Iayme Romeu, 1638 [B]

—, Seville: Joseph Padrino, 1760 [C]

—, Barcelona: Francisco Suriá y Burgada, 1770 [D]

—, Barcelona: Pedro Escuder, 1780 [E]

—, *Comedias escogidas de Frey Lope Félix de Vega Carpio*; juntas en colección y ordenadas por don Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch, *BAE* 3 (Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1857) [H]

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A critical edition of
Contra valor no hay desdicha,
by Lope de Vega

Naomi Walker, Exeter College
D.Phil. in Modern Languages
Submission: July, 2012

SHORT ABSTRACT

Contra valor no hay desdicha was first published in 1638 by María de Quiñones, and appeared in Parte XXIII of the comedias of Lope de Vega.

As no modern edition of the play exists, my work has been to produce a scholarly study of it that encompasses the elements necessary for a modern critical edition. These include: a synopsis of the play; a study of its historical sources; an exploration of its characterization, imagery and themes; a discussion of its original and contemporary staging; a analysis of its versification; and an in-depth examination of previous printed editions of the play and the date of its composition (including an investigation into its authenticity).

In terms of the text itself, the version settled upon in this edition is the result of consideration and comparison of all seven previous printings of Contra valor (two from the seventeenth, three from the eighteenth and two from the nineteenth centuries). I have also identified and corrected some errors in the text that have crept in through transmission and are present in the most widely-used edition, that of Menéndez y Pelayo (RAE, 1896). Footnotes and endnotes have been added to the text, and a list of textual variants is included.

Through this undertaking, I have been able to identify key themes within Contra valor - in particular that of kingship - which place it comfortably alongside recent scholarship on Lope’s drama. In addition, my analysis of the play’s versification and linguistic data in addition to its thematic content show it to be almost certainly the work of Lope de Vega. This conclusion is significant given Morley and Bruerton’s previous classification of Contra valor as a play of ‘doubtful authenticity’ (due in part to the lack of a manuscript copy).
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LONG ABSTRACT

Contra valor no hay desdicha is based on the early life of King Cyrus the Great of Persia (Ciro), the narrative taken from sources by both the Greek historian Herodotus (fifth century BC) and the Roman historian Justin (c. second to third century AD). Cyrus is a genuine historical figure, but the action of the play follows the largely mythical accounts of his early life, from his humble beginnings, having been abandoned in the wilderness by his paranoid grandfather King Astiages and brought up by the peasant Mitridates, to his eventual accession to the throne, proving that, as the title of the play suggests, ‘no misfortune can prevail against valour’ (or ‘fortune favours the brave’).

Although kingship is a predominant theme within Contra valor, the play was omitted from Melveena McKendrick’s highly-acclaimed study of kingship in Lopean drama.619 Her work, amongst others, highlights the growing realization in modern scholarship that many of the playwrights of Lope’s day drew on the debates of contemporary treatise-writers on the subject of kingship as they wrote their plays. The portrayal of the young heir to the throne and the development of his character from supposed simple country lad to king of Persia is by no means a straightforward positive contrast with the negative portrayal of the ruler Astiages. It is much more complex than that, and as such makes a valuable contribution to the study of kingship in Golden Age drama which has grown in prevalence in recent years.

My work has been to produce a scholarly study of Contra valor no hay desdicha that encompasses the elements necessary for a modern critical edition. This includes an in-depth examination of: the historical sources for the play; a critical discussion of the work including analysis of its themes, imagery and characterization; its staging; its versification; early printings of the play; the date of its composition; and the other, earlier, printed editions of the play. I devote a section of the introduction to each of these areas, exploring them as independent topics yet bearing in mind the context of the play as a whole.

In the ‘History and Sources’ section I explore Lope de Vega’s use of the historical source material by Herodotus and Justin, and analyse those scenes which are of the playwright’s own invention to assess their significance for the plot, themes and characterization.

The section on ‘Kingship’ is a substantial study of this topic and how Contra valor fits with previous work on it by critics such as Melveena McKendrick. I investigate where the play stands with regard to the contemporary treatise-writers of Lope’s day, and draw conclusions about the political significance of characters such as Ciro and Astiages as royal figures.

Further sub-sections follow in the ‘World of the Play’ section, covering both the subjects of religion and superstition within the play and a study of the title ‘Contra valor no hay desdicha’.

The ‘Characterization’ section examines the spread of characters within Contra valor generally, and discusses how they fit with the norms of the Golden Age theatre. A more in-depth examination of each character’s development and importance to the plot follows.

619 McKendrick, Melveena, Playing the King: Lope de Vega and the Limits of Conformity (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2000).
The ‘Staging’ section is principally concerned with constructing a picture of how the play could or would have been staged in the seventeenth century; I consider such things as props, special effects and stage directions to this end. There is also some discussion of the options open to a hypothetical modern director of a production of Contra valor, and a table containing a breakdown of the various salidas in the play.

In the ‘Versification’ section, the different metres that appear in the play are broken down and presented in a table by line number, and in a narrative section there is a discussion of each verse form and how it may have affected the play as received by its Golden Age audience.

The ‘Authorship and Dating’ section considers the various ways in which the play conforms to Lope’s norms for writing comedias. These include its linguistic features and vocabulary, as well as looking at the various attributions of Contra valor to Lope over the years by numerous critics and scholars of Golden Age drama.

The section on ‘Other Editions’ attempts to unravel the puzzles thrown up by the various different printings of the play through the years, examining the similarities and differences between them and trying to find links where they exist. I also outline my Editorial Norms in this section, based on the most up-to-date scholarship on this subject.

Turning to the play itself, no manuscript of Contra valor no hay desdicha is known to exist; therefore, to set about defining a version of the text for use in this edition, it was necessary to rely solely on early printed editions of the play. In this critical edition, I have settled upon my own definitive version of the text by comparing all seven previous printings of the play (two from the seventeenth century, three from the eighteenth, and two from the nineteenth century). I added line numbers, footnotes and endnotes to this base text, and compiled a list of the textual variants.

On the whole, I have attempted to bring the text back to a version more closely related to the 1638 first edition than the later editions from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The last of these was by Menéndez y Pelayo, published in 1896. This approach was especially pertinent in relation to the stage directions and punctuation, which proved particularly variable from edition to edition. The stage directions had been altered significantly by the nineteenth-century editors: my edition uses mainly the stage directions of the editio princeps, and those which have been altered are noted. However, I have made the decision to modernize both the punctuation and orthography of my edition of the text. This is based on careful consideration of the relative merits of both conservation and modernization, informed by a reading of various scholars on the theory of critical edition.

This critical edition of Contra valor no hay desdicha is thorough and broad in scope, contributing to our understanding of Lope’s drama and helping to place this play firmly within the corpus of the ‘Fénix de los ingenios’.

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620 Presotto, Marco, Le commedie autografe di Lope de Vega: Catalogo e Studio (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2000), compiled a full collection of the plays existing in autograph manuscript by Lope de Vega, Contra valor not being one of them.

621 Menéndez y Pelayo, ed., Obras de Lope de Vega: Comedias mitológicas y comedias históricas de asunto extranjero, 6 (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1896).