In his foundational essay, “Forms of Verse Translation and the Translation of Verse Forms,” James S. Holmes posits the dominance of the “content-derivative” methodology of “organic form” in poetry translation in the Anglo-American ambit since the early-twentieth-century advent of free-verse poetics. Using this approach, Holmes explains, “[t]he translator does not take the form of the original as his starting point, fitting the content into a mimetic or analogical form as best he can, but starts from the semantic material, allowing it to take on its own unique poetic shape as the translation develops.”¹ The method is almost the opposite of the previously prevalent strategy of “analogical form,” which it has largely replaced. With this “form-derivative” practice, almost universally in vogue during the heyday of rhymed, metrical verse, “[a] second school of translators has traditionally looked beyond the original poem itself to the function of its form within its poetic tradition, then sought a form that filled a parallel function within the poetic tradition of the target language.”² Holmes thus conceptualizes the aesthetic product of verse translation as a “metapoem” for its necessarily Janus-faced focus on both the qualities of the source-text poem and its coming-into-being as a new poem (also inevitably a kind of commentary). In so doing, he anticipates Willis Barnstone’s dictum in *The Poetics of Translation* that “[t]o translate a lyric poem is an art, and a lyric poem, an art object, must result.”³

John Rutherford adopts something of the same stance toward these warring strategies in his thoroughly delightful, artistically impressive, and academically insightful anthology, *The Spanish Golden Age Sonnet*, which contains in bilingual format 113 of his translations of this unique stanzaic form as it developed from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. Writing about earlier English-language renderings of the source texts he includes here, Rutherford states:

Most such translations are of two types. One prioritises content, and aims to be as semantically accurate as possible; these translations are in prose or in free or blank verse that approximates to a greater or lesser extent to sonnet form. The other type prioritises form, translating the content with great freedom in order to make it fit into the sonnet’s scheme of rhyme and rhythm, and the result is more properly called a version or a paraphrase than a translation. My aim has been to prioritise neither and to reproduce both, writing accurate translations that bring the originals to life in modern English as true sonnets, poems in their own right.”⁴
Rutherford falls squarely into the analogical-form camp, recasting the Spanish hendecasyllabic line into “its English near-equivalent, the iambic pentameter” and declaring confidently that “the losses in semantic accuracy of a verse translation need only be a little greater than those of a prose translation, and they are amply counterbalanced by the huge gains in rhythmic accuracy and in musicality.”

A good example of Rutherford’s word artistry may be viewed in one of his renderings from a lesser-known poet, Francisco de Aldana (1537–1578), whose work is, for this reviewer, the “discovery” of the volume. Born and bred in Italy, Aldana wrote sonnets uncharacteristic of this subgenre both for their colloquial register and their portrayal of women as non-passive participants in amorous relationships. The following are both versions of “Sonnet XVII”:

Mil veces digo, entre los brazos puesto de Galátea, que es más que el sol hermosa; luego ella, en dulce vista desdénosa, me dice: “Tirsis mio, no digas esto.”

Yo lo quiero jurar, y ella de presto, toda encendida de un color de rosa, con un beso me impide y presurosa busca atrapar mi boca con su gesto. Hágole blanda fuerza por soltarme, y ella me aprieta más y dice luego: “No lo jures, mi bien, que yo te creo.”

Con esto, de tal fuerza encadenarme viene que Amor, presente al dulce juego, hace suplir con obras mi deseo.

Hugged by my Galatea, I maintain a thousand times the sun’s less fair than she; with looks that mingle sweetness with disdain, “Dear Tirsis, don’t say that”, she says to me. And when I try to swear that it is true, she kisses me to hinder my design, her cheeks all glowing in a rosy hue, and hastens with her lips to capture mine. I struggle gently, try to break away, she hugs me closer still, and then declares, “Don’t swear, my sweet, I trust these things you say.”

This holds me so securely in her snares that in our gentle sport Love intercedes, ensuring my desire’s fulfilled with deeds.

Here as throughout The Spanish Golden Age Sonnet, Rutherford successfully converts the Spanish eleven-syllable line into English syllabic-stress meter, although he sets forth the following proviso on his preferred method of rendering the sonnet’s dense poetic structure at the close of his useful “Introduction” on the history and prosody of the form:

In my translations I have used iambic pentameters and three sonnet structures: Petrarchan, Shakespearean, and a hybrid of the two that has a Shakespearean octave and a Petrarchan sestet. It is possible, of course, to write Petrarchan sonnets in English, despite this language’s rhyming difficulties … But the constraints this imposes on an English translation … are usually excessive … Consequently, English translations into Petrarchan sonnet form usually involve either extensive alteration of content or ugly distortion of syntax with the sole and sadly obvious aim of contriving the rhymes. Only a few of the translations in this book, therefore, are Petrarchan sonnets.
This turns out to be a wise choice for Rutherford, whose acute awareness of the sonnet’s poetic challenges guides his aesthetic practice. In a similar vein, he recognizes that “Góngora’s syntactical disruptions … reproduced in English, look like the clumsy manipulation to convey rhyme-words to the end of lines” and concludes that this “is a feature of Góngora’s poetry that cannot be well reproduced in English.”

The volume’s contents, spanning centuries and not merely the years from the early sixteenth century through the late seventeenth conventionally periodized as the Golden Age proper, nevertheless give pride of place to the era’s finest practitioners. Here they are in their entirety: one poem by Íñigo López de Mendoza, the Marquis of Santillana (1398–1458), who introduced the Italian sonnet form into the Spanish language; two by Juan Boscán Almugáver (c.1490–1542), one of whose claims to fame was his great influence on Garcilaso de la Vega (1503–1536), whose complete sonnet output published here (thirty-eight) represented the first successful incorporation of Italian poetics into Spanish (and is the surprise joy of the anthology); one by Fernando de Herrera (1534–1597), a scholar-poet who prefigured a later classicism; five by Aldana, the volume’s “find” quoted with appreciation above; four by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616), all burlesque sonnets that precede his Don Quixote; sixteen by Luis de Góngora y Argote (1561–1627), infamous for his culteranismo, “the widespread introduction into Spanish poetry of words, grammatical constructions and allusions from classical languages and cultures [that] resulted in an abundance of neologisms and much extreme hyperbaton, giving rise to a self-consciously artificial diction”; seven by Lope de Vega Carpio (1562–1635), whose primary success as a dramatist often lent his sonnets a popular touch; one by a late-sixteenth-century anonymous author on the contemplation of an image of the crucified Christ; thirty-one by Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Villegas (1580–1645), whose conceptismo, “the cultivation of the conceit, the extreme metaphor” stood in direct contrast to Góngora’s poetics; one by the dramatist Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681) from his play El príncipe constante (The Constant Prince), and six by the New World writer Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651–1695), three, interestingly enough, about roses.

The section on each author is prefaced by a brief introduction, and each sonnet is presented with both helpful background information and knowledgeable exegesis, making this volume a useful guide to virtuosic translational technique as well as a trove of scholarly analysis (including an excellent “Select bibliography”). The “Commentaries” on each poem are especially valuable regarding sourcing and historical reception. The piece on the Aldana sonnet quoted previously, for example, notes not only that “[t]he sonnet is an early attack on Petrarchan cliché,” but that “[i]t was not until some time later that Shakespeare wrote his sonnet ‘My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun’ and Quevedo his ‘Sol os llamó mi lengua pecadora’ [“You are the sun, my sinful tongue once said,” in Rutherford’s translation from this same volume].” Other than from Petrarch, the sonnets here take phrases or ideas from: Roman antiquity (Ovid’s Metamorphoses, Horace’s Odes, and Virgil’s Aeneid); Renaissance Italian poets (Pietro Bembo, Ludovico Ariosto, Bernardo Tasso, and Torquato Tasso); the French sonneteer Joachim de Bellay, and the Valencian poet Ausiàs March. It is eye-opening to see entire lines translated or reworked in Spanish.
and to realize how many of these sonnets are responses (sometimes parodic) to those from other nations, not to mention earlier ones included here. (Lope and Quevedo could be particularly sharp-witted toward Góngora.) The volume thus leaves the reader with a good sense of the trends and rivalries within Spain’s sonnet tradition.

Along the way, Rutherford provides examples of several themes central to this subgenre, proceeding from Petrarchan courtly love (a holdover from medieval times) to “a great variety of other kinds, such as moral, philosophical, religious, encomiastic, necrological, burlesque and even pornographic.” Neoplatonism, which “teaches that through woman’s beauty man can progress from the physical plane up to the intellectual and spiritual,” and neo-Stoicism, which “insisted on the prime importance of desengaño, undeception, the unremitting application of cold reason to distinguish between the pleasant appearances of things and people in this wicked world and the ugly realities underpinning them [so that b]y not being misled by the feelings and the passions, one can order one’s daily life so that it is a preparation for a good death,” warrant special attention. There are also examples here of the carpe diem, sic transit gloria mundi, and memento mori types. Perhaps, so that this last kind will not be lost on the casual reader, Rutherford explicates “y no hallé cosa en que poner los ojos/que no fuese recuerdo de la muerte,” the final two lines of Quevedo’s well-known “Miré los muros de la patria mía” (“I looked upon the walls that guard my town”), which may be literally rendered as “and I did not find a thing on which to put my eyes/that was not a remembrance of death,” as “And not one thing on which I cast my eye/failed to proclaim ‘Remember, you shall die.’”

Rutherford is no less thorough about the hendecasyllable itself. This reviewer was taken aback to learn that a syllabic line could have so many stress variations. In addition to one on its tenth syllable, Rutherford explains, the hendecasyllable “must have a stress either on its sixth syllable or on its fourth and eighth syllables, a rule making for a duple rhythm in the second half of the line ... One of its first three syllables is usually stressed. Most frequently the second ...” This type of hendecasyllable is called “heroic”; one with the fourth or sometimes third syllable stressed is called “emphatic,” and one with the third stressed is called “melodic.” The particular type of line used often merits mention in the “Commentaries,” as with respect to the opening phrase of Quevedo’s “Sonnet IV, II, xxxvii” from El Parnaso español (The Spanish Parnassus), “Cargado voy de mí,” which may be rendered literally as “Loaded down I go [along] with my own self.” Rutherford expounds professorially: “Hyperbaton helps give these words their impact. The normal order, ‘Voy cargado de mí’ is metrically correct, but has the jaunty triple rhythm of the first half of a melodic hendecasyllable, whereas the duple rhythm of the heroic hendecasyllable with five stresses suggest plodding.” The reader will no doubt concur.

If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, this side-by-side taste test of versions of the first quatrains of Garcilaso’s “Sonnet X” may provide some idea of how Rutherford’s rendering positions itself against two of its recent rivals. Garcilaso’s speaker, unexpectedly coming across keepsakes from a now absent love, writes: “¡Oh dulces prendas por mi mal halladas,/dulces y alegres cuando Dios quería:/juntas estáis en la memoria mía/y con ella en mi muerte conjuradas!” Edith Grossman’s 2006 effort eschews rhyme altogether (“O sweet mementoes,
to my sorrow found,/so dear and joyous when it was God’s will!/Joined forever in memory
and mind,/together you conspire to see my death.

As does John Dent-Young’s 2009 offering (“O sweet mementoes, unfortunately found,/sweet and also, when God willed it, happy!/You live together in my memory/a
nd, with memory conspiring, plot my end.”)

At the close of his “Introduction,” Rutherford states: “My immodest and perhaps absurd aim has been to rewrite these sonnets as I imagine their authors would have written them had they been twenty-first-century English poets.” While George Steiner has called such an aim a “projective fabrication,” the modernity of Rutherford’s English shines through in his favor, counterbalanced somewhat by the vintage veneer of his translating in meter and rhyme. Thus, as opposed to the other translations presented here, Rutherford’s is the only one whose first line sounds like it was composed originally in English; the fourth sounds distinctly contemporary: “Sweet tokens it was my mischance to find,/so sweet and joyful when it was God’s will,/all gathering together in my mind,/conspiring with it, plotting for the kill!”

Rutherford accomplishes this tricky feat while managing not to dehistoricize or depoeticize the sixteenth-century original. Grossman and Dent-Young, in contrast, seem to revert to post facto excuses on this front: Grossman, for instance, stating vaguely that she “had to ponder very carefully the question of how [she] defined the essence of a poem” and that “although separating rhyme form rhythm might well be barbarous,” she ultimately (and unsurprisingly) does so, while Dent-Young concludes dubiously of his own versifying: “Modern taste likes more surprises and spikier rhythms.”

Indeed, quite a number of lovely “modern” lines may be found throughout The Spanish Golden Age Sonnet, among these: “if I stopped being mad I’d be insane,” from Garcilaso’s “Sonnet XXXVI”; “some man’s made money writing poetry!” from Lope’s “To a rich poet, which seems impossible,” and “Hey, life! There’s no reply at this address?” from Quevedo’s Spanish Parnassus, II, xxvi. The occasional rhyme may seem odd—“blunderhead”/“discomfited” and “absurdity”/“cautery”—but why quibble? The back cover of the volume identifies the author/translator as an “Emeritus Fellow of The Queen’s College, Oxford,” so geographical origin must doubtlessly explain the “door”/“saw,” “reborn”/“Dawn” pairings. (Do you remember why Mock Turtle says he and his fellow students in Alice in Wonderland called their old schoolmaster, who was a Turtle, “Tortoise”? “[B]ecause he taught us.”) No matter. John Rutherford’s anthology remains both a master class in analogical-form translation and an erudite tome for Renaissance scholars.

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NOTES

1. Holmes, “Forms of Verse Translation and the Translation of Verse Forms,” 96.
2. Ibid., 95.
3. Barnstone, *The Poetics of Translation*, 232.
4. Rutherford, *The Spanish Golden Age Sonnet*, xi.
5. Ibid. 2.
6. Ibid., 12.
7. Ibid., 100.
8. Ibid., 101.
9. Ibid., 15–16.
10. Ibid., 13.
11. Ibid., 9–10.
12. Ibid., 9.
13. Ibid., 106.
14. Ibid., 3.
15. Ibid., 8.
16. Ibid., 10–11.
17. Ibid., 178–79.
18. Ibid., 2.
19. Ibid., 192.
20. Ibid., 220.
21. Ibid., 40.
22. Grossman, “Sonnet X,” 45.
23. Dent-Young, “Sonnet X,” 35.
24. Rutherford, *The Spanish Golden Age Sonnet*, 16.
25. Steiner, *After Babel*, 333.
26. Rutherford, *The Spanish Golden Age Sonnet*, 41.
27. Grossman, “Translator’s Introduction,” xxvii.
28. Dent-Young, “Introduction,” 23.
29. Rutherford, *The Spanish Golden Age Sonnet*, 67.
30. Ibid., 157.
31. Ibid., 175.
32. Ibid., 59.
33. Ibid., 155.
34. Ibid., 53.
35. Ibid., 125.
36. Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*, 79.

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_____. trans. “Sonnet X.” By Garcilaso de la Vega. *Selected Poems of Garcilaso de la Vega*. Edited and translated by Dent-Young. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, 35.

GROSMAN, EDITH. “Translator’s Introduction.” *The Golden Age: Poems of the Spanish Renaissance*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, xv–xviii.
The essays in Olga Castro and Emek Ergun’s edited collection Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives range from broadly theoretical discussions of what feminist translation might mean, to detailed analyses of specific translation projects. Authors include José Santaemilia, Damien Tissot, María Reimóndez, Lola Sánchez, Rahul K. Gairola, Cornelia Möser, Justine M. Pas and Magdalena J. Zaborowska, Annarita Taronna, Elena Basilio, Sergi Mainer, Ruth Abou Rached, Rebecca S. Robinson, Pauline Henry-Tierney, and Serena Bassi. The book is divided into three sections: “Feminist Translation in Theory,” “Feminist Translation in Transition,” and “Feminist Translation in Action.” The book’s second section takes the form of a roundtable discussion. The editors contribute both an introduction and a co-authored essay on feminist translation pedagogy.

As described in the editors’ introduction, the collection seeks both to highlight the role of translation in the making of transnational feminisms and to re-envision “the transnational as a polyphonic space where translation (as a feminist praxis) is embraced as a tool and model of cross-border dialogue, resistance, solidarity and activism in pursuit of justice and equality for all.” Essays in the first section focus on theoretical frameworks, while essays in the third detail case studies. The emphasis on activism is evident throughout, starting with the preface contributed by Patricia Hill Collins, “On Translation and Intellectual Activism.”

The collection addresses an impressive variety of projects, including an analysis of the inclusion of translations in a Spanish feminist book series, a corpus-based analysis of terminology employed in gender and translation research, and a discussion of the role of translation in the movement of the idea of “consciousness-raising” from the United States to Italy. Several essays focus on the personal investment and possibilities of the translator. For instance, offering a possible outline of an ethics of translation, Tissot argues that “translation is an opportunity for the translator to reflect on and change themselves by revealing the historicity and the contingency of the norms by which their subjectivity is shaped.” Henry-Tierney’s essay on the translation of Catherine Millet’s La vie sexuelle de Catherine M. offers one example of such reflection. Drawing on the reflections of