

# The three manuscript copies of Robert Ashley's *Of Honour* and Sebastián Fox Morcillo's *De honore*. Study of a translation plagiarism

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## ABSTRACT

Robert Ashley's *Of Honour*, edited in 1947 by Virgil B. Heltzel, has become a reference work in studies on honor in English literature, but we have known since 2016 that it is a translation plagiarism of Sebastián Fox Morcillo's *De honore* (1556). In this paper the authors analyze and compare the three existing manuscripts of *Of Honour* (two of them recently identified), discuss Ashley's possible intentions in producing it, and make a complete comparative study of *De honore* with Robert Ashley's translation.

KEYWORDS: honor; Robert Ashley; Sebastián Fox Morcillo; Shakespeare studies; translations.

**Las tres copias manuscritas de *Of Honour*, de Robert Ashley, y *De honore*, de Sebastián Fox Morcillo. Estudio de un plagio de traducción**

RESUMEN: *Of Honour* de Robert Ashley, editado en 1947 por Virgil B. Heltzel, se ha convertido en una obra de referencia para los estudios sobre el honor en la literatura inglesa, pero desde 2016 sabemos que es una traducción plagiada de *De honore* de Sebastián Fox Morcillo (1556). En este trabajo los autores analizan y comparan los tres manuscritos existentes de *Of Honour* (dos de ellos descubiertos recientemente), valoran las posibles intenciones del autor y realizan un completo estudio comparativo de *De honore* con la traducción de Robert Ashley.

**As três cópias manuscritas de *Of Honour*, de Robert Ashley, e *De honore*, de Sebastián Fox Morcillo. Estudo de um plágio em tradução\*\***

RESUMO: *Of Honour*, de Robert Ashley, editado em 1947 por Virgil B. Heltzel, tornou-se numa obra de referência em estudos sobre honra na literatura inglesa, mas sabemos desde 2016 que se trata de um plágio em tradução de *De honore* de Sebastián Fox Morcillo (1556). Neste artigo, os autores analisam e comparam os três manuscritos existentes de *Of Honour* (dois dos quais recentemente identificados), discutem as possíveis intenções de Ashley, e levam a cabo um estudo comparativo completo de *De honore* com a tradução de Robert Ashley.

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\*\* Translation into Portuguese by Miguel Ramalhete.



PALABRAS CLAVE: honor; Robert Ashley; Sebastián Fox Morcillo; estudios shakesperianos; traducciones.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: honra; Robert Ashley; Sebastián Fox Morcillo; estudos de Shakespeare; traduções.

## Robert Ashley: Biography, work, and library<sup>1</sup>

The library at Middle Temple, one of the four Inns of Court, was formally established in 1641 with a bequest of books made by Robert Ashley (1565–1641), a member of the Inn. Ashley was variously educated at home, different grammar schools, and Oxford Halls, before graduating BA from Magdalen Hall in 1583 when he was eighteen. He was confirmed as a fellow at Magdalen College when he was twenty, obtained his MA, and was briefly assigned to give public lectures in geometry before being admitted to Middle Temple in 1588. He did not take his law studies too seriously, and was not Called to the Bar until 1595, having spent some time away from the Temple studying music, languages, and politics, and travelling to France with the help of Sir Henry Unton, directed by Sir Francis Walsingham. Prior to his Call, in 1589 he published two translations, both published by John Wolfe: *L'Uranie ou muse celeste*, dedicated to Sir Henry Unton, and *A Comparison of the English and Spanish Nation*, dedicated to Sir William Hatton. He also spent almost two years in the employ of Sir John Puckering, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, as one of his secretaries. While secretary to Puckering in 1594 he dedicated to him another of his translations, *Of the Interchangeable Course*.<sup>2</sup>

Ashley's early thirties were most likely spent practicing as a lawyer, and in 1607, in a further bid for patronage, he wrote to the Earl of Salisbury asking to be considered successor to his brother, Sir Anthony, as Clerk of the Privy Council, but was refused (Hertfordshire, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 123/149). In 1611 his elder sister Jane was arrested and imprisoned for an unknown reason, and she died in prison.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a full biography of Robert Ashley see: Kelsner, Nelson, and Satterley (2021).

<sup>2</sup> Ashley wrote marginal comments and made corrections to his original language copy, Louis Leroy's *De la vicissitude ou variete des choses en l'univers* (1579).

<sup>3</sup> Jane's first husband was Francis Langley (1548–1602), builder of the Swan Theatre and litigant against William Shakespeare (Greg 1932, 218).

Ashley travelled to the Netherlands in 1617, as evidenced by a letter from Sir Dudley Carleton to Sir Ralph Winwood (Dorchester 1775, 172–174), and Ashley’s book marginalia (the trip was omitted from his autobiography, *Vita* [London, British Library, Sloane MS 2131]), where he recounts a visit to St. Peter’s church, Leiden.<sup>4</sup> In the following year Ashley visited France and Spain, where at the Escorial library he saw “a glorious golden librarie of Arabian bookes” (Ashley 1627, sig. A1r). Travels closer to London included a visit in 1622/1623 to the Bodleian Library, and a medical-astrological consultation with Richard Napier in 1628 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, e.532, fol. 12v; Kassell et al., eds. [n.d.], CASE66846).

In 1626 he contributed a poem to a memorial volume honoring Sir Francis Bacon (Rawley 1626, 15) and was granted a full chamber to himself, for life, *gratis* (Trice 1904–1905, vol. 2, 707). In 1627 he published *Almansor*, a partial translation of Miguel de Luna’s *Verdadera historia del rey Don Rodrigo*, dedicating his translation to Charles I, and in 1633 a partial translation of Cristoforo Borri’s *Cochin-China*,<sup>5</sup> dedicated to Sir Maurice Abbot, governor of the East India Company. In 1634 he took on a second chamber (alone and for life) to house his growing collection of books (Trice 1904–1905, vol.2, 829). Finally in 1637 he published *David persecuted*, a translation of Virgilio Malvezzi’s *Davide perseguitato*.<sup>6</sup>

At an unknown date in the seventeenth century, Ashley compiled the only known manuscript in his own hand (apart from his *Vita*), a miscellany entitled *The Book of Magical Charms* (Chicago, Newberry Library, MS 5017), containing excerpts from manuscripts and printed books on the themes of charms, magic, medical recipes, and other miscellaneous topics (Satterley 2021, 268). It is not signed but most of the text is clearly in his distinctive hand.

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<sup>4</sup> Ashley’s marginal notes regarding this are found in two of his library books: Thomas Brugmann’s *Quadratura circuli nova* (1608), and Justus Lipsius’s *Mellificium duplex ex media philosophia petium* (1591).

<sup>5</sup> Ashley translated the French version of the original Italian. Ashley’s copy has his marginalia, underlining, and a quote from Seneca on the title page that is replicated in the English version: “Cum hac persuasione vivendum est: non sum uni angulo natus, patria mea totus hic mundus est” (one should live by this motto: I was not born to one little corner- this whole world is my country).

<sup>6</sup> Ashley’s copy of *Davide perseguitato* (1634) contains marginalia in his hand.

Robert Ashley died in 1641 and bequeathed his library of approximately 5,000 titles,<sup>7</sup> bedding, furniture, and £300 to the Inn to employ a Keeper of the Library; he was buried in Temple Church. His library, which remains relatively intact at Middle Temple, contains a broad range of subjects. Most of the books are continental Latin imprints, with strong holdings of French, Italian, and Spanish titles, fewer in English, and a minor number of Dutch and German titles. He did not leave instructions for his personal papers, and none are in the current library collection or the Inn's archive. As such, we have no documentary evidence reflecting his interest in the topic of honor (it is not discussed in his *Vita*), nor how he came to be interested in Sebastián Fox Morcillo's works, but his collection had the following works by him: *De demonstratione, eiusque necessitate ac vi, liber I. [...]* *De honore, Lib. I* (1556b); *De historiae institutione, dialogus* (1557); *In Platonis Dialogum qui Phaedo seu de animorum immortalitate inscribitur Sebastiani F. Morzilli Hispalensis Commentarii* (1556); *De regni regisque institutione libri III* (1556); and *In Platonis Timaeum Commentarii* (1554b). Ashley's interest in Iberian works is evidenced not only by his translation, *Almanson*, but also by the approximately 125 sixteenth-century books printed in Spain and Portugal, and/or in Spanish/Portuguese in his collection, of which thirty-one survive in fewer than five known copies. Five titles appear to be unique: Iñigo López de Mendoza, *Los proverbios* (1532); *Flor de virtudes, nuevamente corregido* (1539); Jean de Mont, *Suplicacion y informacion que fue presentada a la reyna de Francia por los fieles Christianos de aquel reyno* (1567); Licenciado Lara, *Libro intitulado reprehension de estados* (1584); Victoriano Zaragozano y Sabater, *Lunario y repertorio de los tiempos* (1590) (Wilkinson 2010, x).<sup>8</sup> Full analysis of Ashley's marginalia is on-going, but has so far revealed annotations in fourteen of his Spanish books, with the most heavily annotated work (Spanish or otherwise) being Mateo Luján de Sayavedra's *Segunda parte de la vida del picaro Guzman de Alfarache* (1603).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This estimate is based on preliminary analysis of the sixteen manuscript catalogues compiled after his death (Middle Temple, MT.9/LCA/1-16): <https://www.middletemple.org.uk/archive-history/archive-information-access/sources-resources/digitised-records/library-manuscript>. For current transcription updates see: <https://hcommons.org/docs/transcription-of-middle-temple-library-ms-catalogues/>. The modern library catalogue is at: [www.middletemplelibrary.org.uk](http://www.middletemplelibrary.org.uk).

<sup>8</sup> This list was updated by using the *Universal Short Title Catalogue*: <https://www.ustc.ac.uk>.

<sup>9</sup> It is not clear why Ashley annotated this picaresque novel so extensively.

Although Ashley did not overtly express any interest in the topic of honor in his *Vita*, he did discuss avenging himself against “a certain assassin” and entered a duel with him when he first entered the Middle Temple (Kelser, Nelson, and Satterley 2021, 22). Honor was an important concept in early modern England, albeit one with shifting definitions, and the modern characterization differing from that of sixteenth-century England (Schwerhoff 2013, 31). Ashley himself stated in his dedication to Egerton: “that a moderate desire of Honor ys not only very conuenient, but also aboue all other good things (vertue only excepted which yt vsually accompanieth) to be preferred” (Los Angeles, CA, Huntington Library, MS Ellesmere 1117, fol. 3r).<sup>10</sup> Other works on honor published prior to 1600 in his collection include the French translation of Giovanni Battista Possevino’s *Dialogo dell’honore*, *Les dialogues d’honneur* (1557) and Guillaume de Chevalier’s *Discours des querelles et de l’honneur* (1598).

### ***Of Honour: The three copies***

The treatise manuscript *Of Honour* has long been considered an original work. But it has only recently been determined (Espigares Pinilla 2016, 57–62) that it is a translation of the Spanish humanist Sebastián Fox Morcillo’s *De honore* above mentioned, as we will thoroughly study below. Based on analysis of his marginalia we have determined that Ashley used his own copy for the translation.<sup>11</sup>

There are three known manuscript copies of *Of Honour*: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 1148;<sup>12</sup> Cambridge, Trinity College Cambridge, MS R.14.20; and Huntington Library, MS Ellesmere

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<sup>10</sup> As discussed below, this was translated from Sebastián Fox Morcillo’s Latin dedication to Ruy Gómez de Silva in *De honore* (1556). Susanna de Schepper’s analysis of the paratexts in some English translations (2013, 189–191) has shown that many included English versions of the original dedications.

<sup>11</sup> London, Middle Temple Library: shelfmark BAY L530. There is an inscription on the last blank leaf of the final part: “Anthony Crompton Animus caelestia cogitat.” The volume has marginalia in a second, unidentified hand that could be Crompton’s.

<sup>12</sup> No ascription to Ashley is given in the catalogue of Ashmole’s manuscripts: “this neat MS. is subscribed with these initials [R.A.] at the word Finis,” (Black and Macray 1845, columns 1006–1007) but a hand-written attribution has been added in the Weston Library’s reference copy at the Bodleian Library. Erin Courtney Thomas attributed the manuscript to Ashley, but without explanation for the ascription (2017, 7).

1117 (hereafter referred to as Ashmole, Trinity, and Ellesmere).<sup>13</sup> Until recently only Ellesmere had an explicitly correct authorship attribution.<sup>14</sup> All three manuscripts are undated and written by different scribes. Trinity was dedicated to Sir John Puckering (1543 or 1544–1596), dating it prior to 1596,<sup>15</sup> and Ellesmere was dedicated to Sir Thomas Egerton, who succeeded Puckering as Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in 1596. Both Trinity and Ellesmere are bound in limp vellum with traces of ties, and gilt tooling on the Trinity covers. Ashmole has no dedication or preliminary material and was acquired at an unknown date by Elias Ashmole (1617–1692), also a member of Middle Temple. It is not in Ashley’s hand, and although the copy is fine, it is not as polished as Trinity or Ellesmere.

Ashmole<sup>16</sup> contains many corrections, scored-through segments of text, and some added text. There are too many corrections and additions to list here, but to give only one, at p. 141 between “to be desired” and “since that [...],” a mark (X) indicates that the copyist mistakenly omitted a phrase (“which since it cannot be [...] not to be desired”) which was then added in the right-hand margin.

Our analysis of the textual differences, corrections, additions, and slight variations to the chapter headings in the three manuscripts, suggests that Ashmole was a draft used by Ashley to produce Trinity. Ellesmere has its own characteristics that differ from the previous two:

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<sup>13</sup> A full line-by-line comparison between Trinity and Ellesmere would be beyond the scope of this article, but sample comparisons between the two did not reveal any significant differences between them, apart from the dedications.

<sup>14</sup> The catalogue of manuscripts at Trinity College Cambridge listed the author as “Robert Asheley” (James 1900, 303), dating the manuscript to the seventeenth-century, as it had been donated to the library by Sir Henry Puckering (1618–1701). Ashley used variant spellings of his surname, and ‘Asheley’ was the form he used in the dedication. The manuscript is digitized: <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/R.14.20>.

<sup>15</sup> In the dedication Ashley mentions his “late absence from [his] attendance” on Puckering which, if he left his employ by 1595, suggests that the manuscript could have been written around this time.

<sup>16</sup> It is bound as item V in Ashmole MS 1148 and paginated, not foliated, as 131–170. Due to the pandemic the authors were not able to verify any watermarks, which may date the manuscript. Heltzel described the watermark in Ellesmere as similar to one used in London in 1584: “two columns, intertwined, surmounted by a crown, with ‘I.RICHAR’ below, similar to Briquet 4444 and 4445, the former used in London in 1584” (Ashley 1947, 17).



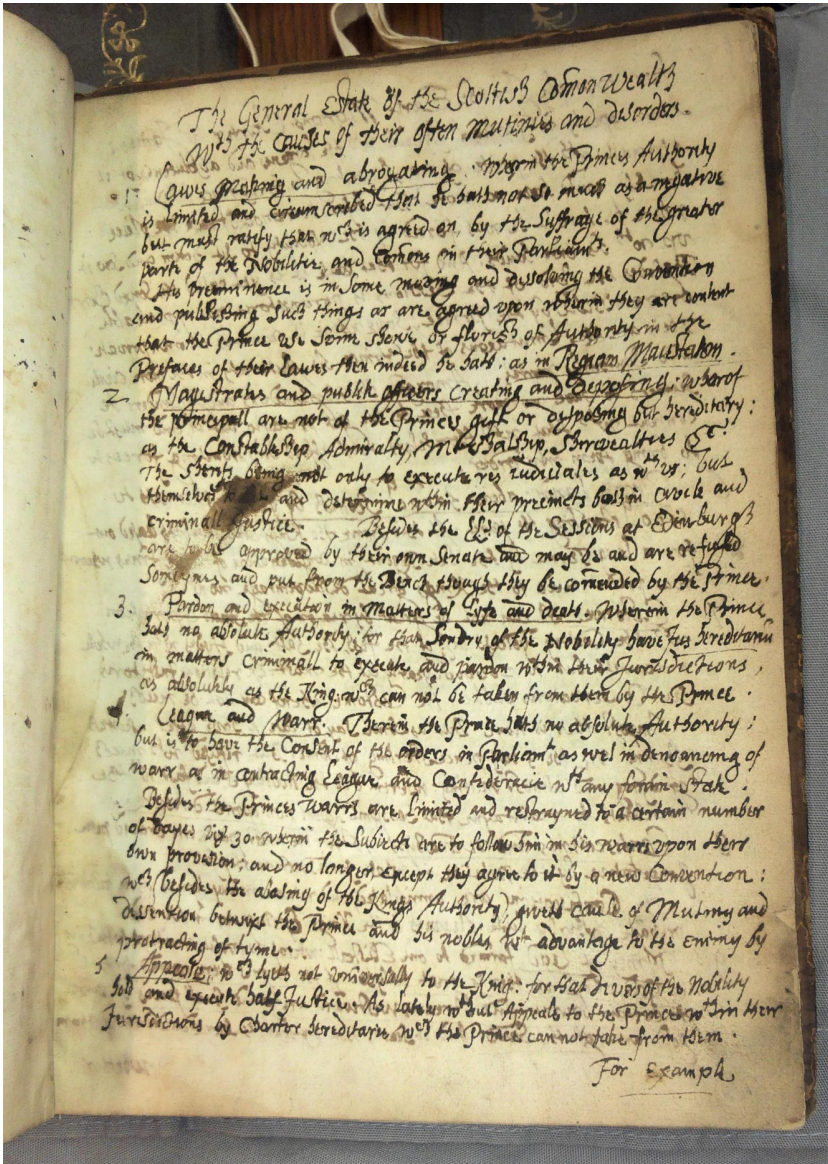


Figure 1: An example of Robert Ashley's handwriting as found in his copy of Hector Boece, *Descrittione del regno di Scotia, et delle isole sue adjacenti* (1588). London, Middle Temple Library: shelfmark BAY L (FOLIOS).

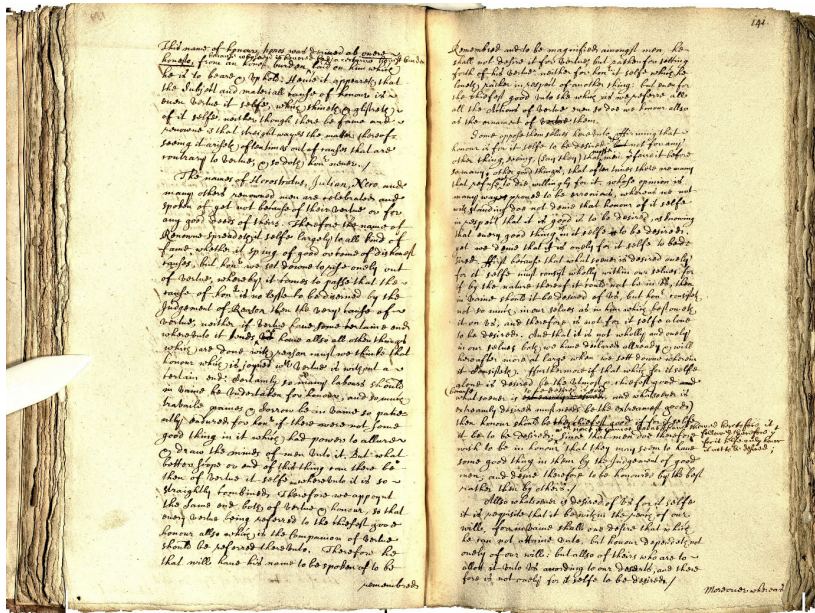


Figure 2: Text inserted at p. 141 of Ashmole MS 1148. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries.

1. Some fragments from *De honore* translated in Ashmole and Trinity, but deleted in Ellesmere:
  - a) *De honore* 23: *Atqui hac de re satis hoc loco.* Ashmole (p. 143) and Trinity (fol. 11r): “and of this thing [...]”
  - b) *De honore* 62: *Haec sunt clarissime Roderice, quae [...] arbitrare.* Ashmole (p. 170) and Trinity (fol. 31v) translate it, removing only the reference to Rodrigo: “This is it [...]”
2. Some mistakes that appear only in copy Ellesmere:
  - a) *De honore* 12: “*honoris conservatio.*” Ashmole (p. 135) and Trinity (fol. 6r): “the conservation of honour.” E (fol. 7r): “the consideration of honour.”
  - b) *De honore* 17: “*Honor contra simplici approbatione bonorum [...].*” Ashmole (p. 139) and Trinity (fol. 8v): “Honour on the contrary being content with the simple approbacion of the better sort [...].” Ellesmere (fol. 9r): “Honour on the contrary being content with the ample approbacion of the better sort [...].”



- c) *De honore* 39: “*Solonem.*” Ashmole (p. 153) and Trinity (fol. 19v): “Solon.” E (fol. 17v): “Solen” (corrected in Heltzel’s transcription: Solon [Ashley 1947, 54]).
  - d) *De honore* 60: “*ad societatem humani generis conservandam.*” A (p. 169) and T (fol. 30v): “to the conservacion of humane sotiety.” E (fol. 24v): “to the conversacion of humane societie.”
3. Some terms have different translations: *De honore* 48: “*Iudaeorum rege Herode.*” Ashmole (p. 160): “Herod the K: of the Iewes.” Trinity (fol. 24r): “Herode the king of the Iewes.” Ellesmere (fol. 20v): “Herode Tetrarck of the Iewes.”
  4. Correct corrections in Trinity, retained in Ellesmere:
    - a) *De honore* 39: “*Carolum Caesarem.*” Ashmole (p. 154): “Cai. Caesar.”<sup>17</sup> Trinity (fol. 19v): “Car. Caesar.” Ellesmere (fol. 17v): “Carolus Caesar.”
    - b) *De honore* 43: “*Anaxagoras, Pittacus, Demetrius Phalereus, Epimenides, Valerius Publicola.*” Ashmole (p. 158): “Anaxagoras, Pitiacus, Demetrius, Valerius, Epimenides, Valerius, Publicola.” Trinity (fol. 22r): “Anaxagoras: Pittacus: Dimetrius Phalereus: Epimenides: Valerius Publicola.” Ellesmere (fol. 19r): “Anaxagoras, Pittacus, Demetrius Phalereus,<sup>18</sup> Epimenides, Valerius Publicola.”<sup>19</sup>
  5. Incorrect corrections in Trinity, retained in Ellesmere: *De honore* (p. 39): *Antoninum.* Ashmole (p. 153): “Antoninus.” Trinity (fol. 19v): “Antonius.” Ellesmere (fol. 17v): “Antonius.”

We have not established whether Ashley presented the manuscript to his patrons as an original work or a translation, nor if he had intentions to publish it. As discussed in more detail below, Ashley’s version omitted any reference to Fox Morcillo and *De honore*, and even used parts of its dedication in the translated dedication to Sir Thomas Egerton. Conversely, in 1594 he had admitted to Puckering in

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<sup>17</sup> This was possibly a mistake made by the scribe in confusing emperor Charles I with Caius Julius Caesar.

<sup>18</sup> Corrected from Phalerius.

<sup>19</sup> Surprisingly, the mistake was replicated in Heltzel’s transcription (Ashley 1947, 57): Anaxagoras, Pittacus, Demetrius, Phalerius, Epimenides, Valerius, Publicola.

his dedication to *Of the Interchangeable Course* that he was incapable of producing original works:

But mine owne wit and inuention, being vnable to write or inuent any thing worth the reading, yet my wil being a welwisher to all good inuentions; I thought it more commendable, to commend and communicate to others, that which other men haue excellently inuented (being not able myselfe to attaine to so much excellency). (Ashley 1594, Sig.A2r-A2v)

Warren Boutcher (2006) has noted that “anybody with an education might translate in a multiplicity of personal and career circumstances, for it was considered a suitable sign of one’s intellectual preparedness for services of all kinds.” Ashley would not have earned his patron’s approval to publish *Of Honour*, as Puckering died in 1596.

We can only speculate regarding Ashley’s intentions to publish after presenting a new copy to Egerton. Heltzel (Ashley 1947, 19) had noted that Ashley’s punctuation was “light” and “inconsistent, as if he regarded such a mechanical matter as something the printer was expected to take care of.” Puckering’s successor presumably decided not to give Ashley patronage, thus impeding any further attempts to publish it. However, analysis of this version seems to suggest that Ashley did present the treatise as an original work, not a translation:

1. p. 23: “haue geuen me also encouragement to indeuour in this Argument of Honor [...] For what cold there be fitter for me to treat of then some such peice of Philosophie (wherein I haue bene trained) [...]”
2. p. 24: “Theis are the respects and reasons which haue directed and dedicated this discourse [...] my whole scope and dryfte ys, to proue [...] Which befor I go about to proue with Philosophicall reasons (for theis grounds are borrowed from the Peripatetick and Academick Philosophers) I do a little digresse after the manner of Orators into the large and pleasant feild of the praise of Honor, and so do passe therhence into the streightes of Disputacion.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> 1 and 2 were direct translations from *De honore*.

3. p. 24: "Yf your Lordship deigne but to accept theis travailes of my poor penn."

We have no evidence of Puckering or Egerton's reaction to the work—whether it was received as an original work, a pseudo-original or unmarked translation, or as a straightforward translation.<sup>21</sup> Had Ashley presented the treatise to Puckering and/or Egerton as an original work, we think it is unlikely that he intended to publish it as such, since his "plagiarism" would have been evident, in particular the semi-plagiarized dedication. He also omitted portions from the original text (admittedly a common practice at the time), which may have required reinstatement.<sup>22</sup> There were heated debates about plagiarism at the Inns of Court during this period and the subject matter of this work meant that presenting one's self honestly would have been crucial to its publication.<sup>23</sup> In the 1589 dedication to Sir William Hatton in his *A Comparison of the English and Spanish Nation* Ashley wrote that the "love of truth is to be preferd aboue al other respects" (Ashley 1589, sig. A2r).

Conversely, would Ashley have risked his chance at patronage by presenting the translation of a Spanish work on honor in such a febrile anti-Spanish climate, particularly after publishing his translation of the anti-Spanish work, *A Comparison*? According to Griffin (2009, 357) during the 1590s "English public culture had been inundated with Hispanophobic stereotypes mobilized again and again in propagandistic efforts to affirm the twin pillars of national sovereignty and the Protestant faith." The dedication to *A Comparison* exemplifies this English "Hispanophobia" through its encouragement to its readers to "learne to despise those magnificent Dom Diegos and Spanish Caualleros, whose doughtiest deedes are bragges and boastinges, and themselues (for the most part) shadowes without substaunce" (Ashley 1589, sigs. A2v–A3r). But there were many translations from the Spanish published in the 1590s, perhaps to encourage English readers to familiarize themselves with these "Dom Diegos." Translations included those by Adrian Poyntz (1590), Richard Carew (1594), Robert Codrington (1594), John Frampton

<sup>21</sup> For discussions on indirect translations, see Pym (2014) and Marin-Lacarta (2017).

<sup>22</sup> This is true despite that "plagiarism of foreign authors" (Lee 1910, 249) by English lyricists/poets was common during this period.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of plagiarism at the Inns of Court, see Cook (2011).

(1595), and Richard Eden (1596). Luis de Granada's *Guía de Peccadores* (Salamanca, 1568) was translated by Francis Meres as *The Sinners Guyde* (London: James Roberts, 1598) and dedicated to Egerton.<sup>24</sup>

Without further documentary evidence, we simply cannot draw any definitive conclusions regarding his intentions. Ashley omitted any mention of *Of Honour* in his *Vita*, and we can only surmise this was due to his failure in having it recognized and published, or because he did not want to bring attention to this pseudo-original work.

### **Comparative study of Sebastián Fox Morcillo's *De honore* and Ashley's *Of Honour***

Sebastián Fox Morcillo is one of the most important Spanish humanists of the sixteenth century. His life is a clear example of the most difficult moments of religious persecution at the end of the reign of Charles I and the beginning of Philip II. Fox Morcillo was born in Seville between 1526 and 1528. His paternal family, the Morcillos, were artisans and merchants and Jewish converts to Christianity. Ruth Pike (1968, 877) has noted that he tried to hide his Jewish origin by changing the order of his surnames, reversing "the order of his paternal and maternal names, placing the maternal before the paternal name, a standard *converso* practice in the sixteenth century." After finishing his first studies in Seville, and probably at the University of Alcalá, he traveled to the Low Countries in 1548 to continue his studies at the University of Louvain. He published all his works in the years that followed, between 1550 and 1558, and dedicated them to important Court figures such as Cardinal Francisco de Mendoza y Bobadilla, Gonzalo Pérez, Luis de la Cerda, and Ruy Gómez de Silva, first Prince of Éboli (1516–1573), to whom *De honore* was dedicated.<sup>25</sup> Due to his

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<sup>24</sup> Ashley owned a copy of the original Spanish version and there are contemporary manuscript inscriptions on the title page: "Edward James" and "Este libro pertence, am= Edward James: [?] en vilo." It is worth noting that Ashley's copy of Francisco López de Gómara's *La Historia General de las Indias* (1554) has the inscription "Ricardus Eden xprin. Xi6" on the title page.

<sup>25</sup> This Portuguese nobleman, who had arrived in Spain in the entourage of Isabel of Portugal in 1526, grew up alongside the young Prince Felipe, and became one of the most influential figures at Court during his reign. By dedicating his work to him, Fox Morcillo was undoubtedly seeking to win his favor or, through him, that of Felipe himself.

great prestige among these dedicatees, he was appointed master of the King's pages, but his life changed radically after 1557, like that of other Spanish students in Louvain suspected of Protestantism. Fox Morcillo was investigated for his heretical opinions on celibacy or against the Inquisition and returned to Seville. There he was accused alongside his brother Francisco, who was burned in the auto-da-fé of September 1559. As such, although we do not have any documents about his final days, it is very likely that after pawning part of his library, Fox Morcillo decided to flee Seville and during that flight died in a shipwreck. If we believe Hubert Languet's letter to Philipp Melanchthon in April 1560, "Foxius Morzillus Hispanus insigniter doctus fugiens incendium periit naufragio"<sup>26</sup> (Cantarero de Salazar, 2015a; Espigares Pinilla 2016, 25–30).

Despite his short life, Fox Morcillo published an extensive body of work (Cantarero de Salazar, 2015b) covering various areas of philosophy (comments on three dialogues by Plato—*Timaeus*, *Republic* and *Phaedo*—and on Cicero's *Topica*, logic, dialectics, ethics, and natural philosophy), literary theory, and political philosophy. His works are praised in all manuals on the history of philosophy of the Spanish Renaissance for his synthesis of Platonic and Aristotelian ideas. *De honore*, a monograph on one of the most debated subjects from Antiquity to the Renaissance, was issued with other three works in 1556.<sup>27</sup> In this treatise Fox Morcillo (1556a) presented honor from a double perspective, moral and socio-political, and analyzed different questions: honor as reward for virtue, the morality of the desire for honor, the difference between honor and glory, the ways of acquiring honor and its various degrees, honor as justification for nobility and aristocracy, etc. He perfectly combined the ideas of Aristotle and Plato and elaborated a definition of honor in which the external value of social distinction and the internal value of moral sentiment that prompts us to act righteously converge. In Espigares Pinilla's 2016 edition and translation of *De honore*, it was shown that Robert Ashley's *Of Honour* is almost entirely an English translation

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<sup>26</sup> "The Spanish Fox Morcillo, famous scholar, died in a shipwreck fleeing from the flames." Translation by Antonio Espigares Pinilla.

<sup>27</sup> *De demonstratione eiusque necessitate ac vi, liber I. De usu et exercitatione dialecticae, liber I. De iuuentute, lib. I. De honore, lib. I.*



of Fox Morcillo's *De honore*. The following is an exhaustive study and analysis of Ashley's version.

### The dedications in *Of Honour*

The Trinity and Ellesmere manuscripts both start with lavish dedications (Sir John Puckering and Sir Thomas Egerton, respectively), but that in Ellesmere is much longer.<sup>28</sup> In the latter Ashley also replicated some of the elements from Sebastián Fox Morcillo's dedication to Ruy Gómez de Silva in *De honore*. Ashley's dedication borrowed some of the virtues attributed to *De honore's* dedicatee, taken from the beginning of the *Praefatio, ad Clarissimum uirum Rodericum Gomeziuum Syluam*:<sup>29</sup>

p. 23, line 56: "But specially your singuler humanitie, and well affected inclination towards the better sort of men."

*De honore* 3, lines 1-3: "*Singularis tua virtus, & humanitas, tum in bonos omnes stadium.*"

Ashley removed some of the expressions from the final paragraph of *De honore*, and transplanted them into his dedication to present himself as learned in philosophy and respectful of civil and religious rules:

p. 23, line 20: "For what cold here be fitter for me to treat of then some such peice of Philosophie (wherein I haue bene trained) as might be most agreeable with the Rules of Religion, and most applyable to vse, and practise in our ciuile lyfe and conuersacion?"

*De honore* 62, lines 10-18: "*Haec sunt, clarissime Roderice, quae hoc loco de Honore dicenda mihi, philosophorum acumen, & usum ciuilis uitae, atque nostrae religionis decreta spectanti, uisa sunt.*"

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<sup>28</sup> The dedication in Trinity is one page, compared to four pages of dedication in Ellesmere. As mentioned earlier there is no dedication in Ashmole.

<sup>29</sup> These comparisons are based on Heltzel's transcription and publication of Ellesmere (Ashley, 1947). The numbers refer to the page and line numbers in the respective publications.

Ashley used the same words as Fox Morcillo to explain why he wrote *Of Honour*, that is, to defend the moral right of the desire for honor:

p. 24, lines 7-15: "Theis are the respects and reasons which haue directed and dedicated this discourse as due vnto your Lordship, wherein (that I may deliuer in a word that which ys after more largely discoursed) my whole scope and dryfte ys, to proue against the dull and heavy spirited, and against the abiect and base minded, that a moderate desire of Honor ys not only very conuenient, but also aboue all other good things (vertue only excepted which yt vsually accompanieth) to be preferred."

*De honore* 5, lines 10-17: "*In ipso autem hoc libro, quem non iam ultro oblatum, sed honori tuo debitum offerimus, ut disputationem uniuersam paucis complectar, docere contra socordes, abiectosque homines est institutum, moderatam honoris cupiditatem non modo honestam esse: sed etiam omnibus bonis seu corporis, seu fortunae, uirtute una excepta, cuius est comes, praeferendam.*"

Before praising honor in the first chapter of the work, Ashley revealed his philosophical sources by replicating Fox literally:

p. 24, lines 15-20: "Which befor i go about to proue with Philosophicall reasons (for theis grounds are borrowed from the Peripatetick and Academick Philosophers) I do a little digresse after the manner of Orators into the large and pleasant feild of the praise of Honor, and so do passe therhence into the streightes of Disputacion."

*De honore* 5, lines 18-25: "*Quod ipsum priusquam rationibus philosophicis, atque Socratica subtilitate dissero (sunt enim haec omnia ex philosophorum, Peripateticorum praesertim, & Academicorum schola deprompta) aliquantum oratorum exemplo a proposito euagatus, per eiusdem honoris laudum amoenum ac latum campum ad ipsas disputationis angustias te ducam.*"

## The body of the treatise

*Of Honour* is for the most part an exact translation of *De honore*, including the chapter headings. The syntax is also almost the same as that of the original Latin, and Ashley often kept the same order of elements in the sentences. We could cite many examples, but his definition of honor is especially interesting. In Ashley's copy of *De honore*, he underlined a sentence where the phrase "*ut hinc nostra ducatur oratio*" appears, putting it into parentheses; indicating in this way that it should be excluded from the translation, surely to avoid a possible reference to the original work (using Ellesmere as an example):

p. 34, line 13: "Honor therefore ys a certeine testimonie of vertue shining of yt self, geven of some man by the iudgement of good men: For when any one ys of such and so apparent vertue that he turneth others into admiracion and love of him, yf as the shadow followeth the body so prayse and reverence followeth him, then he ys called honorable, and the same which is geven unto him as an approbacion of his vertue ys termed Honor."

*De honore* 15, line 12: "*Est igitur honor, ut hinc nostra ducatur oratio, testimonium quoddam uirtutis per seipsam splendentis, iudicio, studioque bonorum de aliquo latum. Nam cum quis est tanta uirtute, ac tam illustri, ut in sui admirationem & studium alios conuertat, si hunc ueluti umbra corpus, sic laus & reuerentia habita ab alijs sequatur, honoratus idem dicitur: atque id ipsum, quod ei quasi approbatio uirtutis defertur, honos appellatur.*"

The most important and significant difference between *Of Honour* and *De honore* is that Ashley took great care to avoid combining its philosophical and theological matters and removed all of Fox's biblical references.<sup>30</sup> There are six occurrences of this. The first one of them occurs at the end of chapter 1:

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<sup>30</sup> For the most part these are not literal quotations, but references to different texts from *Proverbs*, *Isaiah*, *Acts of the Apostles*, *Matthew*, 1 and 2 *Peter*, 1 *Timothy*, etc.

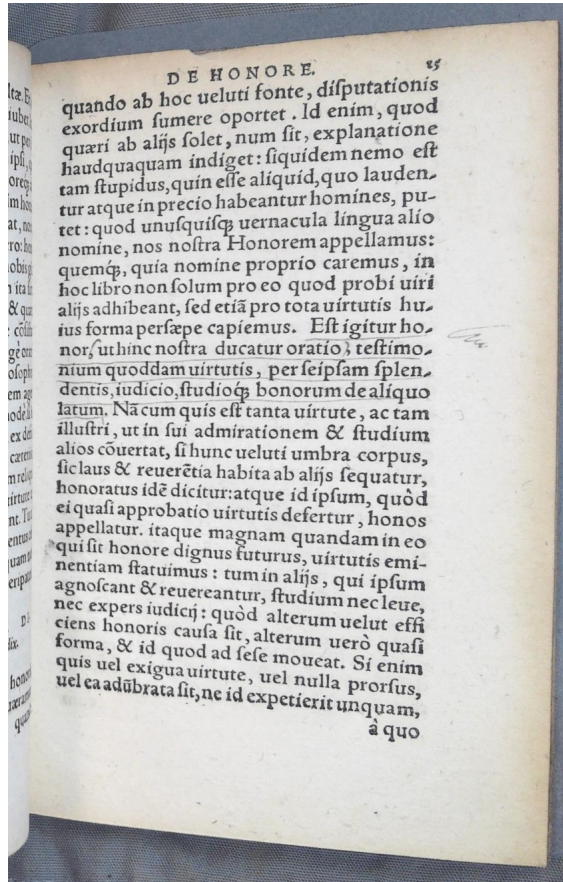


Figure 3: Sebastián Fox Morcillo, *De honore*, showing Ashley's underlining and enclosing "*ut hinc nostra ducatur oratio*" in parentheses. London, Middle Temple Library: shelfmark BAY L530.

p. 33, lines 8–16: "Whereby ys that proved which we said before, that honour hath great force amongst men even of nature yt self, and that yt was not invented by any pride of mind, nor yet by opinion, which since yt ys so, yt remained so sett downe what honour is and how farr forthto be desired, or wherein yt consisteth, least while my speech runneth too much in the praise thereof I may seeme rather to play the Orator then to follow the Philosophers, which ys my purpose here."

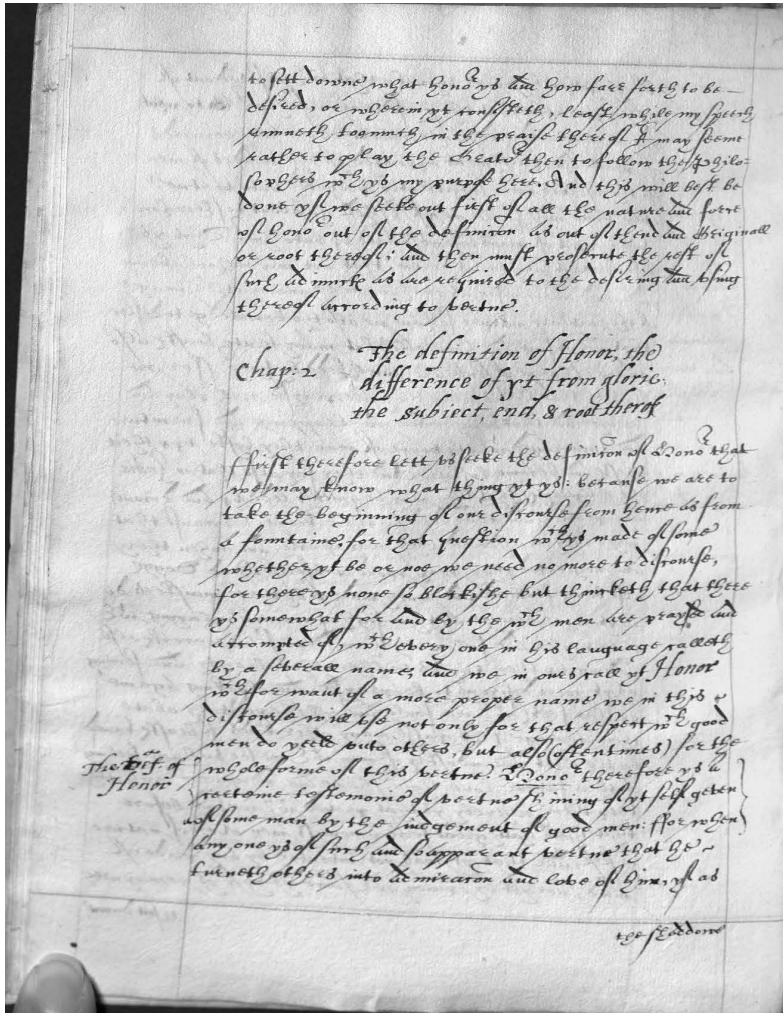


Figure 4: MS Ellesmere 1117, fol. 7r. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Between “opinion” and “which” Ashley removed almost thirty lines of the *De honore* text, from “Ac ne omnia [...]” to “[...] merito possumus” (pp. 13–14). In the margins of his copy of *De honore*, Ashley used a strong dash in the margins at the beginning and end of these lines. The other five are as follows:<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> These are the deleted lines of *De honore* and their location (\*) in *Of Honour*.



- p. 19, line 24 – p. 20, line 16: “Dicam hoc apertius [...] est finis extremus.” (p. 38, line 10: “ornament of them. \* Some oppose”).
- p. 30, line 29 – p. 31, line 11: “Esse uero [...] ludibrio, praecepit.” (p. 46, line 22: “person and dignitie. \* They report”).
- p. 42, lines 22–26: “Sic uidemus [...] accusari.” (p. 57, line 4: “yt. \*Whiles”).
- p. 45, line 18 – p. 46, line 7: “Ideo prudenter [...] inquirentibus.” (p. 59, line 10: “others. \*That Honour”).
- p. 46, line 16 – p. 47, line 3: “sic idem quoque [...] abiectiois” (p. 59, line 18: “of others. \*Therefore”).

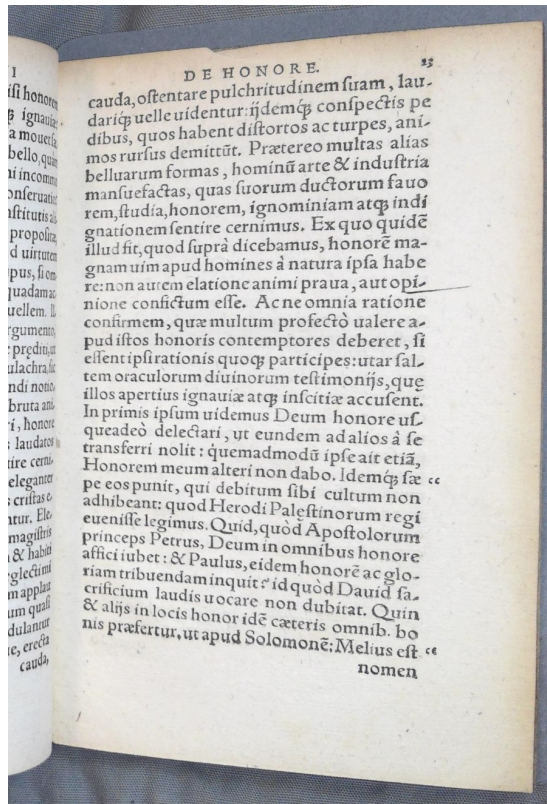


Figure 5: Sebastián Fox Morcillo, *De honore*, showing the beginning dash used by Ashley to indicate the lines omitted in the English translation.

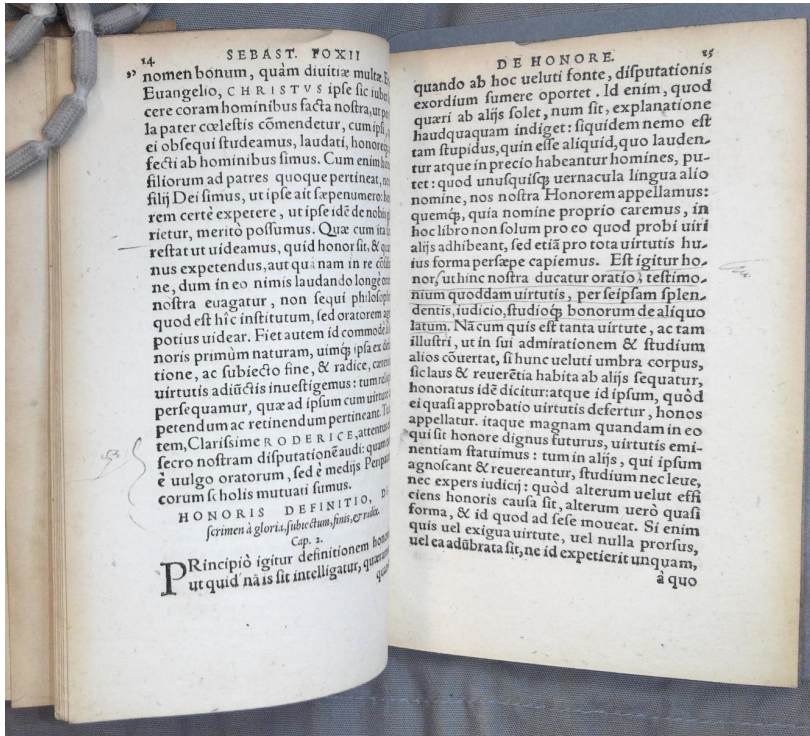


Figure 6: Sebastián Fox Morcillo, *De honore*, showing the end dash and marginal symbol used by Ashley to indicate lines omitted in the English translation.

The omission of any direct or indirect reference to *De honore* and its author, Sebastián Fox Morcillo, is also notable. Ashley removed the entreaty to Ruy Gómez de Silva (*De honore* 14: “*Tu autem, Clarissime RODERICE, attentus obsecro nostram disputationem audi, quam non e vulgo oratorum, sed e mediis Peripateticorum scholis mutuati sumus.*”) As shown here, Ashley used a parenthesis and unidentifiable mark (possibly a trefoil) to indicate this passage, which appears in the final sentence in the first chapter. The final paragraph of *De honore* (“*Haec sunt, clarissime RODERICE, [...] religionis decreta spectanti, uisa sunt*”) was entirely omitted from Ellesmere. However, these were retained in the other two copies, Trinity and Ashmole, omitting only “*clarissime RODERICE.*”

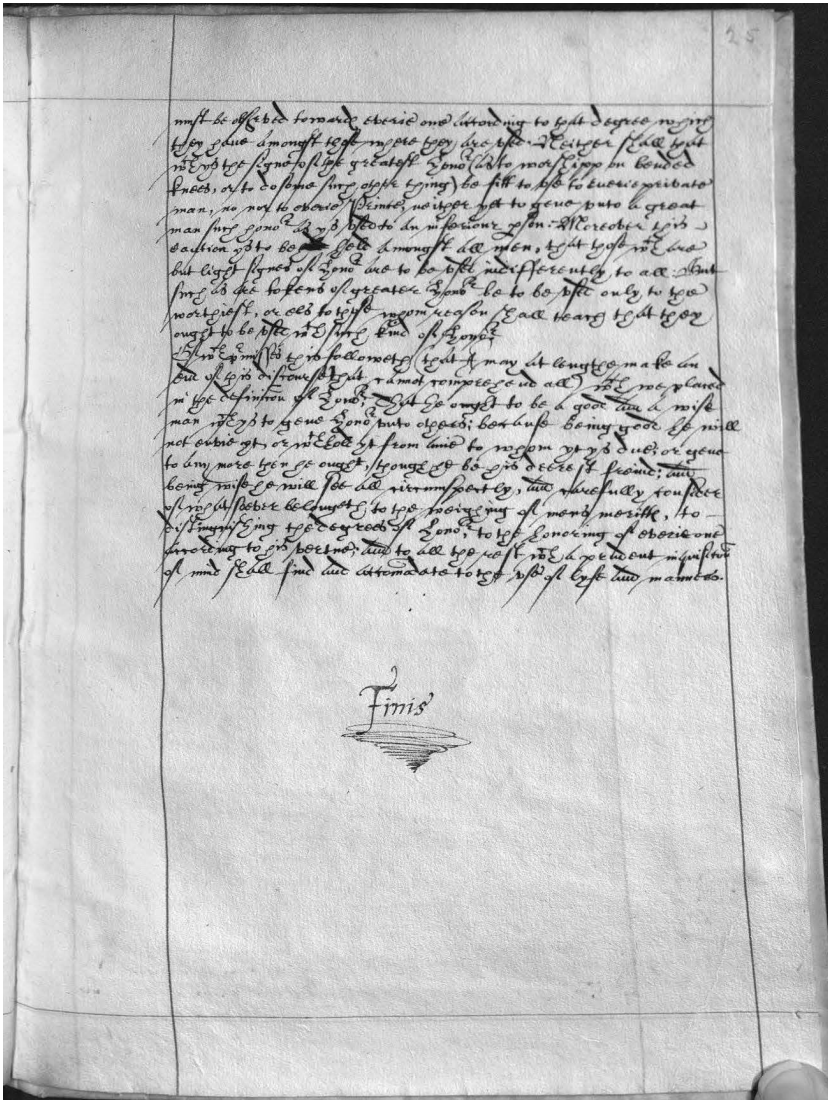


Figure 7: MS Ellesmere 1117, fol. 25r. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.



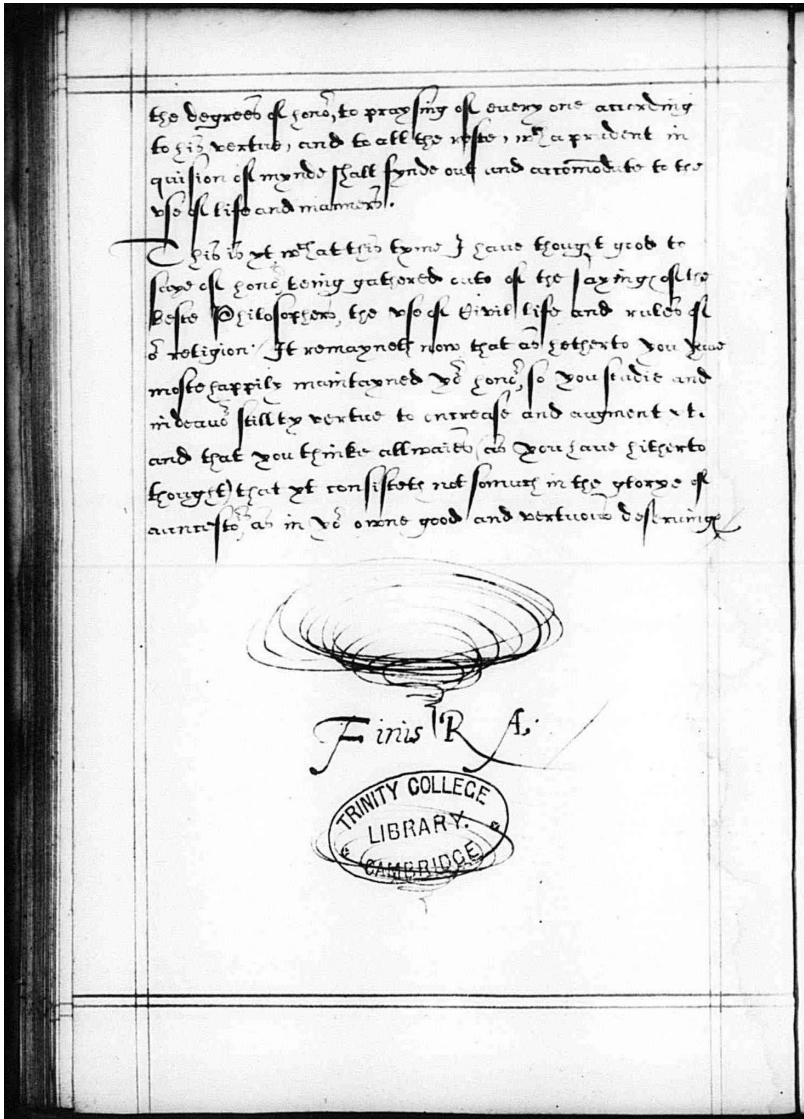
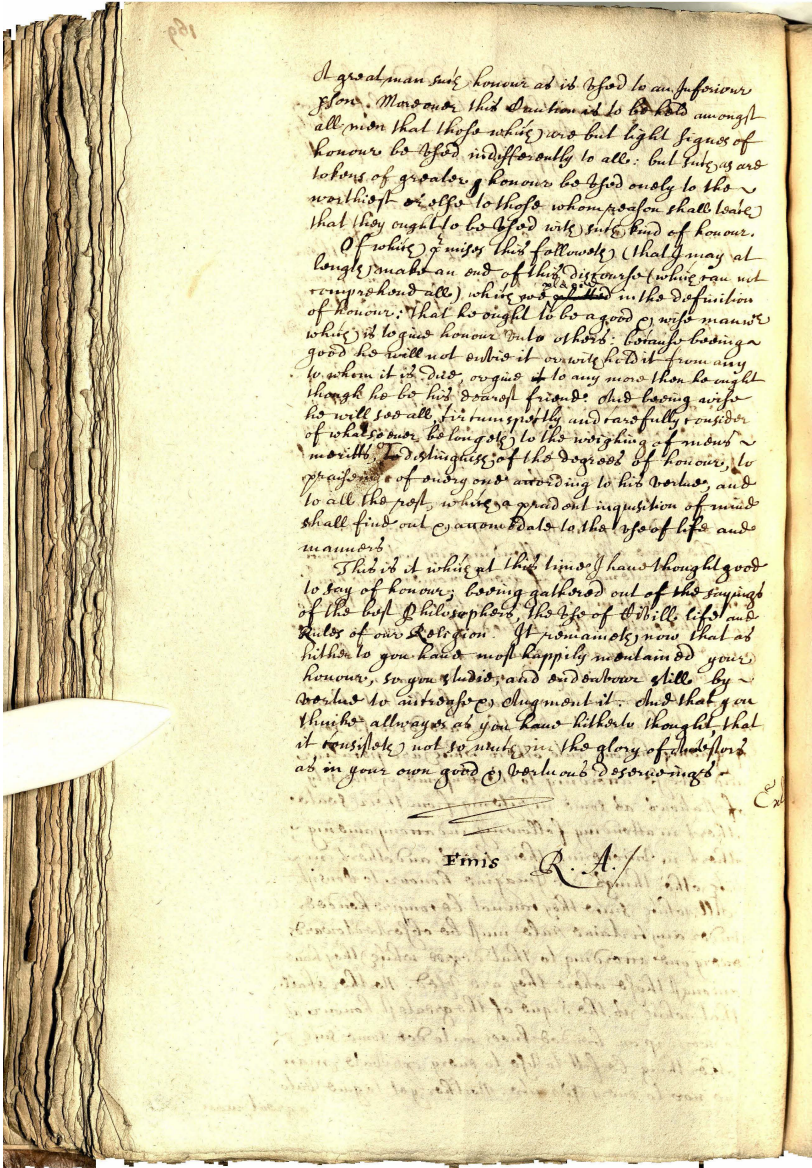


Figure 8: Trinity College Cambridge MS R.14.20, fol. 31v. Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.



A great man seeks honour as it is tied to an inferior  
 glory. Moreover this distinction is to be had amongst  
 all men that those who are not but legal signs of  
 honour be tied indifferently to all: but true are  
 tokens of greater honour be tied only to the  
 worthiest of those whom reason shall teach  
 that they ought to be tied with such kind of honour.

Of which I may this followeth (that I may at  
 length make an end of this discourse) which you not  
 comprehend all) which was gathered in the definition  
 of honour, that he ought to be a good & wise man  
 while it to give honour into which: being being a  
 good he will not envie it nor will he desire it from any  
 whom it is due: or give it to any more than he ought  
 though he be his dearest friend: And being wise  
 he will see all, fitly and rarely consider  
 of whatsoever be longed to the weighing of merit  
 in the judgement of the degree of honour, to  
 proportion of giving out according to his virtue, and  
 to all the rest, where a good out acquisition of merit  
 shall find out a reward due to the use of life and  
 manners.

This is it which at this time I have thought good  
 to say of honour; being gathered out of the sayings  
 of the best Philosophers, the use of Aristotle, Cicero  
 and of our Religion. It is now amok now that ad  
 vithin to you have most happily maintaind your  
 honour, in your studies, and out of your skills by  
 such as so introduce Argument it: And that you  
 think always as you have likewise thought that  
 it is possible, not so much in the glory of the world  
 as in your own good & virtuous Deserving.

Finis R. A.

Figure 9: Ashmole MS 1148, p. 170. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries.



This explains why Ashley removed the sentence “*quemadmodum alio loco fusius docuimus*” (p. 22, line 21; “kind of thing:\* wherefore” p. 39, line 40), in which Fox Morcillo clearly referred to one of his previous works.<sup>32</sup> Ashley also modified the original sentence (p. 30, line 19: “*abiectionis quam minus Latino, sed usitato tamen uocabulo, pusillanimitatem uocare possumus*”), changing the first person plural (p. 46, line 15: “of abieccion or basenes of mind which the Latinistes with an vsual yet scarce good latine word call *Pusillanimitie*”), in order to avoid presenting himself as an expert Latinist, and to remove all traces of the original Latin work.

Regarding the translation from Latin words to English, Ashley often used two words to translate one: p. 7, line 6: “*Quid etiam diuinius*” (p. 28, line 13: “more divine or heavenly thing”); p. 8, line 8: “*languescat*” (p. 29, line 8: “languishe and be weakened”); p. 9, line 18: “*uirtutes excitantur*” (p. 30, line 10: “are vertues kindled and incouraged”); p. 60, line 2: “*principes uiros*” (p. 70, line 9: “Princes, Noble men”), etc. As for the more specific philosophical concepts, Ashley almost always retained the original Latin term. Take, for example, the case of *abiectus*:

p. 5, line 13: “*contra socordes abiectosque homines*” (p. 24, line 11: “against the abiect and base minded”).

p. 23, line 16: “*abiectos uero atque molles*” (p. 40, line 21: “the abiect and baser sort”).

p. 24, line 15: “*Abiectus contra*” (p. 41, line 15: “Contrariwise the abiect or base minded”).

p. 25, line 17: “*Contra idem abiectus, & inambitiosus, ut sic dicam, censei possit*” (p. 42, line 20: “Contrariwise the same might be thought very abiect”).

p. 26, line 14: “*aut abiectus contra modestus uideatur*” (p. 43, line 9: “or an abiect man to be modest”).

p. 43, line 11: “*cur adeo abiectus esset*” (p. 57, line 18: “why he was so abiect”).

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<sup>32</sup> *Ethices Philosophiae Compendium, ex Platone, Aristotele aliisque optimis quibusque auctoribus collectum* (1554a).

p. 59, line 12: "*licet abiectum*" (p. 69, line 25: "be he never so base").

Or *mediocritas*:

p. 24, line 22: "*mediocritas aliqua*" (p. 41, line 22: "some mediocritie").

p. 25, line 1: "*cerni possit mediocritas*" (p. 42, line 6: "mediocritie may be vsed").

p. 25, line 26: "*mediocritatem ipsam honoris cupiendi*" (p. 42, line 29: "the mediocritie yt self in desiring of honour").

p. 26, line 3: "*mediocritatem esse quandam*" (p. 43, line 1: "a mediocritie be").

p. 26, line 8: "*in hac rationis mediocritate*" (p. 43, line 4: "in this mediocritie of reason").

p. 26, line 15: "*uera mediocritatis ratione*" (p. 43, line 10: "the true rule of mediocritie").

p. 29, line 7: "*mediocritatis terminos*" (p. 45, line 11: "the limittes of mediocritie").

p. 42, line 6: "*mediocritas est quaedam*" (p. 56, line 24: "a certeine mediocritie").

p. 42, line 14: "*ueram honoris mediocritatem*" (p. 56, line 31: "the true mediocritie of Honour").

p. 44, line 16: "*ad ueram honoris mediocritatem tenendam*" (p. 58, line 16: "towards the true mediocritie of Honour").

There are some instances, such as the expression *animus elatus* or *elatione animi*, where he chose different terms, however:

p. 32, line 24: "*elatoque animo*" (p. 48, line 18: "high minded").

p. 33, line 15: "*elato essent animo*" (p. 49, line 12: "were of great spirite and Courage").

p. 41, line 4: "*homines animo elato*" (p. 55, line 32: "men of great mindes").

p. 43, line 2: "*animus natura sua nimium elatus*" (p. 57, line 9: "the mind of man being by nature puffed vp").

p. 13, line 10: "*elatione animi praua*" (p. 33, line 11: "any pride of minde").

p. 23, line 6: "*animi elatio & magnitudo*" (p. 40, line 10: "the swelling of yt <mind> and the heat of Courage").

p. 23, line 9: "*honesta quaedam animi elatio*" (p. 40, line 14: "certayne comely elacion of mind").

p. 30, line 6: "*animi elatione*" (p. 46, line 2: "swelling of mind").

Ashley also avoided using the Neoplatonic concept *mens divina*, sometimes translating it as "heavenly nature":

p. 32, line 22: "we (who being indewed with reason, as we haue in vs many other images of the heavenly nature, so haue we also the knowledge to desire that which ys fair and honorable)."

*De honore* 12, line 14: "*nos (qui ratione praediti, ut alia non pauca diuinae mentis simulacra, sic pulchritudinis & honoris cupiendi notionem habemus).*"

And others by "the Celestiall beinges":

p. 43, line 17: "we say here that honour ys to be desired also because yt ys a good thing, andwhatsoever ys good ys in his owne nature to be desired as all evill thinges are to be eschewed, for yt perfecteth the subiect wherein yt ys found in that yt taketh away all spottes and blemishes of ignominie, and embelisheth the mind with a certeine beawty, like to the beawty (as Plato saieth) of the Celestiall beinges."

*De honore* 26, line 23: "*Honorem autem ipsum hinc expetendum dicimus, quia & bonum sit, & bonum omne natura sua expetatur, ut mala e diuerso fugiuntur: siquidem id perficit, cui est insitum, eo quod turpitudinis notam ac labem debeat, mentique pulchritudinem quandam diuinae mentis, ut Plato inquit, pulchritudini similem addat.*"

We can also observe small additions or modifications: p. 7, line 16: "*Extra Collinam portam*" (p. 28, line 23: "in the Suburbes extra portam Collinam"); p. 8, line 29: "*propinquos, filios*" (p. 29, line 28: "kinsfolke, alliaunce, children, sonnes"); p. 10, line 2: "*magistratus uilesceť*" (p.

30, line 25: “offyces of honour despised, magistrates contemned”); p. 10, line 27: “*scripta omnia*” (p. 31, line 11: “all good writings and libraries”); p. 12, line 23: “*Elephantes quoque aiunt in India*” (p. 32, line 30: “And they say also that in India the Oliphantes (that they may be quietly ledd vp and downe”); p. 26, line 20: “*medium rationis*” (p. 43, line 15: “the golden meane of reason”); p. 29, line 26: “*Demetrius*” (p. 45, line 26: “Demetrius, a Philosopher”); p. 39, line 6: “*Gerebat in Italia magnus Gonsalus bellum*” (p. 54, line 16: “The great Gonsales<sup>33</sup> warred in Italy”); p. 47, line 26: “*Ad Theodecten de Rhetorica*” (p. 60, line 18: “Retorick”); p. 48, line 13: “*Iudaeorum rege Herode*” (p. 60, line 21: “Herode Tetrarck of Iewes”);<sup>34</sup> p. 52, line 9: “*In Italia, aut Hispania, aut locis aliis*” (p. 63, line 28: “in Italy, Spayne, Fraunce, Germanie, or other places”).

And there are, as to be expected, complete omissions of some terms and phrases. His translation of the famous anecdote of Caesar crying before the statue of Alexander (p. 29, line 19: “*C. Caesar, conspecta Gadibus statua Alexandri Macedonis, fertur plorasse*”) omitted the name of the Spanish city of Cádiz, quoted by its literary source (p. 45, line 20: “even as Caesar, seeing the image of Alexander the Macedonian, ys said to have wept”),<sup>35</sup> perhaps to avoid any allusion to Spanish history or geography. In the sentence “*honores diuini, quos iure quodam naturae, ac pietatis, tum Deo, tum diuis adhibemus*” (p. 6, line 15), he omitted the ambiguous term *diuis* and simply translated the sentence as: “divine honors which by a certeyne law of nature and religion we offer vnto God” (p. 27, line 18). Omitted phrases include:

p. 10, lines 11–14: “*Quid Pompeium, Scipiones, Marcellum, Paulum, Annibalem, Alexandrum? Quid nostros etiam ad coelum sustulit, quam honor?*” (p. 30, line 32: “by honour?\* You shall see”).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ashley mistook the name of the famous Spanish soldier Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba (1453–1515) by the surname “Gonsales.”

<sup>34</sup> As mentioned above, this modification only appears in MS Ellesmere 1117.

<sup>35</sup> “Hispania obuenuit; vbi cū mandato populi Romani iure dicundo conuentus circumiret, Gadeisq; venisset, animaduersa apud Herculis templum Magni Alexandri imagine, ingemuit [...]” (Suetonius, 9).

<sup>36</sup> This was probably to avoid mixing pagan and Christian examples, or to avoid the expression “*ad caelum sustulit*.”

p. 23, line 23: "*Atqui hac de re satis hoc loco*" (p. 40, line 27: "vnto vertue\*").<sup>37</sup>

p. 41, line 6: "*aut se magnifice & splendide gerere*" (p. 56, line 1: "other men,\*because").

p. 54, line 19: "*ut est demonstratum*" (p. 65, line 20: "man;\*yet").

p. 57, line 28 – p. 58, line 1: "*si bonum non ex eo cui inest, sed ex eo quod est, illum iudicet*" (p. 68, line 23: "yt self; \* and yf").

p. 58, line 7: "*facile enim id adhuc apparet*" (p. 68, line 30: "his desertes.\*You consider").

## Conclusions

Although Robert Ashley bequeathed a spectacular and important collection of books to the Middle Temple, his personal papers, including any commonplace books, or other miscellaneous writings were dispersed, with only a few items now known to us: his *Vita*; a miscellany; a letter; and *Of Honour*. Two versions of the latter were presented to their dedicatees, and if our research is correct, Elias Ashmole obtained the original draft, presumably after Ashley's death. As is made clear in the dedications, one of Ashley's intentions in presenting the work was to seek patronage: Puckering's "favour" (MS R.14.20, fol. 2r.) and the "protection of so honorable a Patrone" as Egerton (Ashley 1947, 23). It is likely that Ashley's dedication to Egerton was three times longer and more elaborate than that to Puckering because he was already known to the latter, whereas he did not have an established relationship with Egerton. Sir Thomas was known to be a demanding employer, one who "did not suffer fools," (Colclough 2003, 44) and it is likely that Ashley needed to write him a more fulsome dedication. As we have shown, it is also longer because it includes so many elements of *De honore*. We have been unable to answer, however, an interesting question with this analysis: whether Ashley intended to present the work as a translation or an original work, and whether he intended to publish it. The lack of personal papers, and the insufficient evidence in the translations themselves makes this an impossible query to answer satisfactorily.

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<sup>37</sup> This is only omitted from MS Ellesmere 1117.



Numerous and important studies on honor in Shakespearean drama and many other early modern works have been published since the 1950s.<sup>38</sup> Heltzel's edition of Robert Ashley's *Of Honour* had a great impact on them. He highlighted its novelty and originality in English literature, and its link to Shakespeare's historical plays of this period, in which honor was a fundamental subject:

Ashley is the first writer in England to bring together the best things that had been said on the subject and to integrate them by the discipline of reason [...] It acquires additional interest when one realizes that it was composed at a time when William Shakespeare was weaving the same theme, like a golden thread, through his great historical tetralogy. (Ashley 1947, 16-17)

Due to Heltzel's edition, *Of Honour* has been considered the most important source of early modern English writing on this topic.<sup>39</sup> It is surprising that it has been interpreted as being so influential in early modern English literary circles, however, given that researchers have believed that it survived in only one manuscript copy in a private collection, and with no printed edition available until the mid-twentieth century. While the continued reliance on manuscript culture in the late sixteenth/early seventeenth-century, and the wide circulation of manuscripts during this time meant that Ashley's work may have had a wider audience than his two dedicatees, we have uncovered no evidence of this.

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<sup>38</sup> Some examples are Wilson (1952), Alvis (1990), and Fernie (2002).

<sup>39</sup> "The idea that honour is a reward granted to men who perform virtuous and generally beneficial deeds was, however, the most widely approved, and it was an idea formed by a characteristically eclectic blending of definitions provided by Aristotle and Plato, illustrated by reference to historical example, and accommodated to orthodox Christianity. The most systematic presentation of this commonplace attitude towards honour is Robert Ashley's *Of Honour*." (Council 2014, 13-14). "After Heltzel's pioneering edition, scholars unanimously considered Ashley's *Of Honour*, which was a sophisticated combination of Aristotelian and Platonic ideas about honor, the major source of early modern writings on honor and related ideas." (López-Peláez Casellas 2019, 206). "Robert Ashley's *Of Honour*, which was produced sometime between 1596 and 1603, the period in which Shakespeare was writing many of his greatest plays, is the most compact work on the subject to appear during the English Renaissance. In this work is to be found one of the fullest definitions of honor" (Watson 2016, 94). See also Shalvi (1972), Pacheco (1990), Yoshitomi (1990), Welsh (2008), López-Peláez Casellas (2009; 2019).

The value of Robert Ashley's work has been universally recognized, but its originality must be denied, since it is a translation plagiarism of Fox Morcillo's *De honore*. Our analysis has shown that authors can no longer continue to read Ashley's *Of Honour* as an original work, and the assessment of its exemplification as an influential early modern work on the English concept of honor will now need to be reinterpreted. *Of Honour* needs to be re-framed to recognize and understand it as a translation plagiarism of a mid-sixteenth century work by a Spanish humanist. This reinterpretation will have implications on studies of honor in early modern English literature, particularly in Shakespearean studies.

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Espigares Pinilla / Satterley

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