

Deconstructing the authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*: a play by Lope de Vega?

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Early modern Spanish theater is a rich and vast cultural patrimony that still presents numerous problems surrounding the authorship of plays due to the massive amount of texts written and performed—approximately 10,000—, as well as to the fluid nature of authorial status during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this article I will focus on *Siempre ayuda la verdad*, a play that presents interesting problems in relation to its authorship since it was first published in 1635 as part of the volume *Segunda parte de las comedias del maestro Tirso de Molina*. The plot of this palatine drama is set in fourteenth-century Portugal and it is part of the constellation of early modern Iberian plays related to the figure of Inês de Castro. The story takes place not too long after her death and one of the protagonists is her lover, king Peter I of Portugal. Over the centuries *Siempre ayuda la verdad* has been associated with several major playwrights such as Tirso de Molina, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Luis de Belmonte, Lope de Vega, and Andrés de Claramonte. This play is currently considered by most scholars as penned by Ruiz de Alarcón, probably in collaboration with Belmonte and maybe even with Tirso (Urzáiz Tortajada 2002: 163, 584, 630).

Thanks to the ongoing development of the database *CATCOM* (Ferrer Valls et al. in progress), which gathers and critically examines known performances of a play and offers an overview of issues surrounding its authorship, we have a tool that can help us detect problematic attributions. This is the case of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*, whose current attribution needs to be deconstructed: we must explore how its authorial status has been created by scholars over time by examining the faulty steps of its configuration, and then approach the problem of the play's authorship with a fresh perspective. In the first part of this paper I will examine how the traditional attribution relies on a bibliographic ghost, subjective impressions of style, and the creation of a scholarly discourse based on the repetition of statements—including some explicitly made up—without any critical examination of facts. The possible attribution of this play to none other than Lope de Vega—a name that has been associated with *Siempre ayuda la verdad* since 1906—has not received specific examination until now. I will proceed to do so in the second part of

this paper by using a variety of resources that offer objective criteria: early modern documentation, strophic versification, stylometry, and orthoepy.

The formation of a critical discourse

Siempre ayuda la verdad was included in the problematic *Segunda parte de las comedias del maestro Tirso de Molina*, published in Madrid in late Spring of 1635. *Siempre ayuda la verdad* is the fourth play in the volume, it is attributed to “el maestro Tirso de Molina” and it includes a reference to its performance: “Representola Juan Jerónimo Valenciano, con que entró en Sevilla” (Tirso de Molina 1635: 68r). This is the only known edition of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* from the early modern period.¹ Despite this volume being prepared by Tirso himself—probably hidden under the identity of a supposed nephew, Francisco Lucas de Ávila—, only four of the twelve plays were truly by Tirso, as he stated in the dedication of the volume: “la dedico destas doce comedias cuatro (que son mías en mi nombre) y en el de los dueños de las otras ocho (que no sé por qué infortunio suyo, siendo hijas de tan ilustres padres, las echaron a mi puerta) las que restan” (Tirso de Molina 1635: ¶4v). We will come back to this statement shortly.

The eighteenth century saw the emergence of the first bibliographic attempts to recollect early modern Spanish plays and their authorship in the form of indexes and catalogues. *Siempre ayuda la verdad* appears in the earliest index, prepared by Juan Isidro Fajardo in (1717: 48v), simply as a play written by Tirso and published in his *Segunda parte*. The next catalogue, prepared by Francisco Medel del Castillo in (1735: 107), includes two separate entries for the title *Siempre ayuda la verdad*: one attributed to Tirso de Molina and the other to Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. There is no indication regarding the origin of this attribution to Alarcón. Medel del Castillo was a bookseller whose index was published by his heirs and its front page states that “este índice y todas las comedias y autos que se comprehenden en él, se hallarán en casa de los herederos de Francisco Medel del Castillo” (1735: n.p.). This could lead us to believe that all the plays included in this index, including a version of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* attributed to Alarcón, existed in print and were available at the bookstore owned by Medel del Castillo’s heirs. However, we know that this is not the case since Medel del Castillo used a variety of sources to

¹ Everett Hesse (1949: 810) stated that an undated *suelta* of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* with attribution to Tirso exists in the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid. However, it is really a *desglosada* from the *Segunda parte* as the online catalogue of this library indicates.

prepare his index, including attributions that circulated only in manuscript copies, and they are not always correct. The fact that Fajardo, who did have direct access to *suestras* that are now lost, did not mention any such edition of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*, leads me to believe that an edition of this play attributed to Alarcón is a bibliographic ghost.

Medel del Castillo's dual attribution is the source of the problematic authorship surrounding *Siempre ayuda la verdad*. A shared authorship was assumed and reproduced by later bibliographers, such as Vicente García de la Huerta (1785: 174), Joaquín Arteaga (1839: 354r) and Cayetano A. de La Barrera, who stated in his often-used catalogue that *Siempre ayuda la verdad* "se ha impreso suelta y se cita en los catálogos de Medel del Castillo y de Huerta atribuida a Alarcón" (1860: 351).² Emilio Cotarelo y Mori eventually denounced that Medel del Castillo's catalogue was mistaken,³ but by then it was too late: the authorial duality of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* had been incorporated into the nascent scholarship on early modern Spanish theater.

The statement by Tirso in the dedication of his *Segunda parte de comedias* that he only wrote four of the plays included in the volume contributed to complicate the matter even more. Scholars started to debate which four plays were truly his—especially since one the texts included in this volume is *El condenado por desconfiado*—⁴ and Tirso's possible relationship with the other eight plays. Hartzenbusch (1848: xxxviii) proposed that the eight plays were *refundiciones* or recasts of plays originally written by Tirso and done by other playwrights, a hypothesis that has seen very little support.⁵ La Barrera (1860: 386) considered that Tirso might have had a hand in these eight plays, whereas Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo (1941: 70) thought that Tirso co-wrote the other eight plays with different playwrights. All these are opinions with no substantiated proof.

Regarding *Siempre ayuda la verdad*, scholars based their approach to its authorship using the existing catalogues as their starting point. In the prologue to his edition of a

² On the other hand, Ramón de Mesonero Romanos confusedly indicated in his catalogue that this play was written by "Tirso o malo (sic) de Molina" (1859: xlvi).

³ "Pudiera creerse que hay alguna edición suelta, pues el *Catálogo* de Medel la cita dos veces, atribuyéndola una a Ruiz de Alarcón y otra a Tirso, como si fuesen obras distintas, error que, como de costumbre, repite Huerta" (1907: xxxvii).

⁴ By internal references it was determined that *Esto sí que es negociar*, *Amor y celos hacen discretos* and *Por el sótano y el torno* were undoubtedly plays by Tirso, which is also the current scholarly view. This issue of the fourth play is still a matter of discussion: some scholars propose *El condenado por desconfiado* (Oteiza 2000: 106), although recent research points towards *La mujer por fuerza* (Rodríguez López-Vázquez 2010). In his study, Rodríguez López-Vázquez (2010: 134) initially considers the possibility that *Siempre ayuda la verdad* could be one of the suspect plays by Tirso, although his lexical analysis of the texts has him completely rule out this hypothesis.

⁵ See, for example, Cioranescu (1962: 180).

selection of plays by Alarcón, Hartzenbusch wondered in relation to *Siempre ayuda la verdad* if “quizás, aunque yo lo dudo, fue escrita por Téllez y Alarcón, pues en efecto no es indigna de tan grandes ingenios, y alguna vez escribieron juntos” (1852: vii).⁶ Despite this problematic co-authorship, Hartzenbusch included *Siempre ayuda la verdad* in his anthology of Alarcón.

Emilio Cotarelo y Mori offered a more detailed approach to the authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* in his 1893 monograph on Tirso. Cotarelo thought that the play was written by at least two playwrights and that proof of this could be found in the final verses of the text, where the two main characters address the audience using the plural form. In their final speeches, they refer to “nuestra comedia” and ask playgoers “ayúdenos los deseos”. According to Cotarelo, “sabido es que en estos finales de nuestras antiguas comedias hablaban siempre los autores y no los actores” (1893: 89). However, not every ending of an early modern Spanish play has the actors embodying the playwright(s) voice(s). In the case of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*, it fits the ending better to read those references within the fictitious world of the characters, who are referring to the tragicomic conclusion of their tribulations and ask the audience for a better future. In any case, Cotarelo considered that the first act of the play is mainly by Tirso, that the second act is nowhere near his style but has “el mismo estilo y gravedad” (1893: 90) as Alarcón, and that the third act would be mostly by Tirso, but also with interventions from “una mano que no es la de Alarcón ni la de Téllez” (1893: 91). Cotarelo mentioned the hypothesis that this third author could be Luis de Belmonte, but he considered “como muy probable que lo fuese el poeta representante Andrés de Claramonte” (1893: 92), based on the common idea at the time that Claramonte recast other plays by Tirso. Thus, in (1906) Cotarelo included an edition of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* in his anthology of Tirso plays published in the Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles series.

Therefore, towards the end of the nineteenth century the authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* had been further complicated as scholars started to see a third hand in the play. Cotarelo’s (1893: 92) mention of Luis de Belmonte leads us to an earlier work by Luis Fernández-Guerra. In his study on Juan Ruiz de Alarcón he devoted several pages to the supposed premiere of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* in front of Philip IV on February 16, 1623 (1871: 369-376). Fernández-Guerra imagined the whole context of this performance,

⁶ Ruth Lee Kennedy (1964) later debunked Hartzenbusch’s suggestion that Tirso and Alarcón collaborated in several plays.

making up details such as that the play was accompanied by a prologue and two interludes written by Luis Quiñones de Benavente. Fernández Guerra confessed in an endnote that it was all a fictionalized recreation: “he aderezado a mi gusto la representación, porque de los documentos existentes en el Archivo del Real Palacio, solamente se averigua la fecha en que se hizo la comedia, el autor que la representó y el precio de su trabajo” (1871: 505). Regarding the authorship of the play, he considered that the whole second act and most of the first act were by Alarcón, whereas Luis de Belmonte Bermúdez wrote the whole third act and helped Alarcón polish the first one. Fernández-Guerra based this claim on a purely impressionistic reading of the text, as he stated in another endnote: “basta leer con atención media docena de comedias alarconianas y otras tantas de Luis de Belmonte para deducir la paternidad de la comedia que examino” (1871: 504).

Despite the absolute lack of objectivity in Fernández-Guerra’s claims, other scholars started to echo this possible collaboration between Alarcón and Belmonte. In (1875: 258) Patricio de la Escosura published a brief article on Spanish theatrical news in which he included the supposed premiere of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* in February of 1623, stating that it was a play by Alarcón and Belmonte. Escosura did not state the source for this information, which was most probably Fernández-Guerra. The way the information was presented made it seem as if it were indisputable and came from an objective document. This minor source was later used by José Sánchez-Arjona in his fundamental book on theater in Seville (1898: 217-218). Hugo Albert Rennert (1909: 615) then took this information from Sánchez-Arjona and reproduced it in his list of Spanish actors and actresses, a seminal source on early modern performers used by scholars for over a century.⁷ This contributed to spread the idea that Alarcón and Belmonte were the authors of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*: Fernández-Guerra’s fabulous attribution had thus made its way into mainstream scholarship through acritical repetition.

In short, by the beginning of the twentieth century *Siempre ayuda la verdad* had been published under both Alarcón and Tirso’s names, it was almost unanimously considered a collaborative play, and Belmonte’s name had been firmly added to those of the Mexican and Madrilenian writers. A review of the scholarship from the past one hundred years shows that most researchers who have touched on *Siempre ayuda la verdad* have relied on sources such as Hartzenbusch, Cotarelo, Rennert or La Barrera regarding the

⁷ Just two years before, Rennert (1907: 53) had attributed *Siempre ayuda la verdad* to Tirso and Alarcón in another article. This is an example of the fluid nature of the authorial status of this text even for the same scholar.

authorship of the play. Because of this, its authorial status has been consolidated as plural yet unstable.

For example, Alfonso Reyes stated in his prologue to an anthology of plays by Alarcón that *Siempre ayuda la verdad* was written by the Mexican playwright and that he “colaboró con Tirso, según unos, y con Luis Belmonte, según otros” (1937: xxix). In his study of Alarcón, Julio Jiménez Rueda stated in one page that *Siempre ayuda la verdad* was a collaboration of Alarcón and Tirso, just to say a few pages later that it was written by Alarcón and Belmonte, with a probable collaboration by Tirso (1939: 269, 273). Antonio Castro Leal offered a more careful approach to this matter in his significant essay on Alarcón. He considered *Siempre ayuda la verdad* as a play by the Mexican playwright written around 1621-1622 in collaboration with an unknown author, who could be Tirso or Belmonte. Castro Leal did not choose one or the other, but he did defend a multiple authorship for the play based on an impressionist reading of its style: “Hay escenas tan ajustadas al estilo alarconiano que es difícil creer que no las haya escrito él, [pero] hay otras escenas que en nada recuerdan a Alarcón” (1943: 177-178). As others before him, Castro Leal saw the hand of the unknown collaborator mostly in the first and third acts: “Son muchas las escenas que lo mismo pueden ser de Alarcón que de su ignorado colaborador, el cual intervino sobre todo en los Actos I y III” (1943: 179). Carmen Olga Brenes (1960: 114, 141-142) also considered *Siempre ayuda la verdad* as a play written by Alarcón with the help of a collaborator, and so she included this text among the corpora of plays she used to study Alarcón’s view of the court and servants. Williard F. King’s book on Alarcón (1989: 178) makes a passing reference to this play. A final example among Alarcón scholarship is Margarita Peña’s (2005: 13) brief overview of his production, where she considers *Siempre ayuda la verdad* as a play written by Alarcón with the possible collaboration of Belmonte.

In the field of scholarship on Luis de Belmonte Bermúdez, William Kincaid’s classical study (1928) did not include *Siempre ayuda la verdad* among the certain or doubtful plays by this playwright. Neither did Alejandro Rubio San Román in his (1988) update of Belmonte’s bibliography, although Antonio Cortijo Ocaña presents *Siempre ayuda la verdad* as a play by Belmonte “en colaboración con Ruiz de Alarcón (y quizá Tirso de Molina)” (2004: 134) in his more recent overview of Belmonte’s works. The assumed idea that Belmonte participated in *Siempre ayuda la verdad* was used by Antonio Sánchez Jiménez as an argument that “este caso confirma, junto con el de *El diablo*

predicador, que, extrañamente, el nombre de Belmonte se evitó y escondió en muchas ocasiones a partir de este año de 1623” (2001: 11). Fewer researchers who have studied Tirso’s work have continued considering *Siempre ayuda la verdad* as part of his production, although there are some older examples, such as Alonso Zamora Vicente’s (1948) essay on the presence of Portugal in Tirso’s plays or Sabine Horl’s (1969) study of passions and emotions in Tirso. A relatively recent overview of Tirso’s biography and literary production prepared by Berta Pallares and Luis Vázquez (2015: 12) still includes *Siempre ayuda la verdad* among his works.

Regarding editions, *Siempre ayuda la verdad* has kept appearing under both Tirso’s and Alarcón’s names during the past sixty years. Blanca de los Ríos included this play in the third volume of her classic *Obras dramáticas completas* (1958) by Tirso, since she believed that all plays included in Tirso’s *Segunda parte* were his. Ten years later, Agustín Millares Carlo included *Siempre ayuda la verdad* in his third volume of *Obras completas de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón* (1968). More recently, this play appeared as part of the edition of Tirso’s *Segunda parte* prepared by Pilar Palomo and Isabel Prieto (2005) for Fundación José Antonio de Castro.

To summarize, anyone currently interested in *Siempre ayuda la verdad* will believe that it is a collaborative play written mainly by Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, probably with the help of Belmonte and maybe even Tirso. This is the panorama that is presented in the most updated catalogues, such as Héctor Urzáiz’s (2002: 163, 584, 630)⁸ or the *Diccionario filológico de literatura española* (Jauralde Pou 2010: 515). This problematic scholarly consensus has been constructed through an echo process, by which authorial hypotheses with weak or non-existing foundations originally presented by nineteenth-century scholars have been picked up and reproduced over the decades. The only serious attempts to tackle the authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* with objective criteria were done by T. Earle Hamilton in (1949) with his study of Alarcón’s epistolary practices and by Jorge de Sena in a hardly-cited essay from (1968) on the play’s strophic versification. I will refer to these essays in the following section, where I move on to look at the authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* with fresh eyes.

***Siempre ayuda la verdad*, a play by Lope de Vega?**

⁸ Urzáiz also includes *Siempre ayuda la verdad* under Lope de Vega’s name indicating that there is a document “donde se menciona una representación valenciana de esta comedia de Ruiz de Alarcón a nombre de Lope” (2002: 680-681). We will examine this right away.

When dealing with the authorship of any early modern play we must take into consideration a variety of elements that can help us shed light on the author of the text as objectively as possible. We must always begin by examining the available documentation from the period. I will do so with the help of two essential digital tools, the databases *DICAT* (Ferrer Valls et al. 2008) and *CATCOM* (Ferrer Valls et al. in progress),⁹ which critically examine and organize the vast and intricate sources we have regarding the performance of early modern Spanish plays. The earliest known performance of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* took place sometime in early 1623. On March 3 of that year, Juan Bautista Valenciano received a payment of 600 *reales* for having staged *Siempre ayuda la verdad* with his company as a private performance for King Philip IV. As we mentioned before, some nineteenth-century authors specified that this performance took place on February 16, but the existing document does not state such information.

Juan Bautista Valenciano continued as head of his company during 1623, but on February 17, 1624 he was murdered in Madrid. His twin brother Juan Jerónimo Valenciano took over his role of theatrical director and inherited his repertoire. Two documents published by Piedad Bolaños Donoso (2006: 85; 2011: 317-318) offer us detailed information of this repertoire in 1624-1625. In the first document, dated March 5, 1624 Juan Jerónimo and his brother's widow, Manuela Enríquez, authorized Francisco de Encinar so that he could act in their name ensuring that other companies did not perform plays that belonged to them, which they had bought together with the deceased Juan Bautista. This document included a list of these twenty-one plays, with the names of the playwrights that had written them. Among the seven plays attributed to Lope—which included plays such as *La corona de Hungría* or *La nueva victoria de don Gonzalo de Córdoba*—we find *Siempre ayuda la verdad*. One year later, on June 24, 1625 Juan Jerónimo Valenciano offered another detailed list of his repertoire, this time while he was in Seville. Among the forty-four titles mentioned as newer plays we find *Siempre ayuda la verdad*.¹⁰ As we saw at the beginning of this article, when *Siempre ayuda la verdad* was published in Tirso's *Segunda parte* a reference to a performance was included on the front page: “Representola Juan Jerónimo Valenciano, con que entró en Sevilla” (Tirso de

⁹ All references to performances of this play are taken from these databases.

¹⁰ When Bolaños Donoso (2006: 85) published the document from 1624, she considered that its author was Tirso based on Pilar Palomo and Isabel Prieto's edition (2005), despite the document's explicit attribution. When she published the document from 1625 (2011: 318), she attributed it to Lope with no further explanation, but probably based on the 1624 document.

Molina 1635: 68r). Although Sánchez-Arjona (1898: 218) proposed that this performance took place in 1627, it probably did so in 1625, when Juan Jerónimo's troupe performed in Seville for the first time, where they stayed between January 25 and early Summer.¹¹

The last relevant document is dated August 9, 1628. On that day the authorities of the General Hospital of Valencia, who managed the playhouse of the Corral de la Olivera, made a list of the more than sixty plays that Juan Jerónimo Valenciano and Manuela Enríquez had presented as guarantee of the money that the Valencian managers had lent them. Among the plays attributed to Lope de Vega we find, once more, *Siempre ayuda la verdad*. Juan Jerónimo's company performed in Valencia between June 11 and September 1, so they might have performed the play during this period. This is the last known reference of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*'s presence in the Baroque theatrical circuit. It must have stayed in Juan Jerónimo Valenciano's repertoire until at least 1634, when a copy was sold for publication in Tirso's *Segunda parte*.

Existing seventeenth-century documents therefore state that the author of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* was Lope de Vega—not Ruiz de Alarcón, Tirso or Belmonte—in two different instances, 1624 and 1628, both in relation to Juan Jerónimo Valenciano's repertoire. We must approach this attribution with caution notwithstanding since theatrical documentation is not always trustworthy. This is especially true of the 1628 repertoire, which presents clearly erroneous attributions, as Henry Mérimée pointed out (1913: 175-178).¹² In fact, Mérimée offered what he considered were the correct attributions for several plays of the list, including *Siempre ayuda la verdad*, which he—erroneously in this case—assigned to Tirso de Molina (1913: 175). However, I believe that there are reasons to think that, in this case, the attribution from the 1624 and 1628 documents is not suspect. Of the seven plays attributed to Lope in the 1624 document, only the texts of two besides *Siempre ayuda la verdad* have been preserved: *La corona de Hungría* and *La nueva victoria de don Gonzalo de Córdoba*, and they are undoubtedly Lope's. The other titles mentioned in that list—*El platicante de amor*, *El caballero de Cristo*, *San Sebastián*, *Venga lo que viniere*, and *Nunca viene solo un mal*—do not seem to belong to any other playwrights and should be considered lost plays by Lope. On the other hand, all the titles from the 1624 list, except *Venga lo que viniere* and *Nunca viene*

¹¹ The company returned to Seville in Spring of 1626, so there is no reason to keep believing that *Siempre ayuda la verdad* was first performed there in 1627.

¹² Mérimée had first published this list in an article from (1906) in which he focused on Guillen de Castro's play *El ayo de su hijo*. Mérimée's publications went unnoticed by contemporary scholars when addressing the authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*.

solo un mal, also appear in the 1628 repertoire under Lope's name (Bolaños Donoso 2006: 92), including *Siempre ayuda la verdad*. This means that the authorship of these plays was clear for Juan Jerónimo Valenciano and Manuela Enríquez, with no fluctuations over the years like the ones we can find in relation to other titles (Ferrer Valls et al. in progress).

I will now move onto internal evidences of the authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*. The first textual element we must consider is the play's strophic versification and how it fits within the practices of the possible playwrights. Table 1 offers a summary of the play's strophic versification:

Stanza	Occurrences	Number of lines	Percentages
<i>Redondillas</i>	10	1,000	35.75%
<i>Romance</i> ¹³	10	936	33.46%
<i>Décimas</i>	6	350	12.51%
<i>Octavas</i>	4	152	5.43%
<i>Asonantados de seis sílabas</i>	1	108	3.86%
<i>Tercetos</i>	1	94	3.36%
<i>Liras</i> (types 1 & 3)	2	84	3%
<i>Quintillas</i> (types 1, 5, 1, 1, 5)	1	30	1.07%
<i>Sueltos</i>	1	29	1.03%
<i>Soneto</i> (type B)	1	14	0.5%
<i>Carta en prosa</i>	3		
TOTAL		2.797	99.97%

Table 1: Summary of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*'s strophic versification

The beginning and ending of the acts are: *quintillas-romance*; *octavas-romance*; *redondillas-romance*.

I will approach the analysis by elimination. Morley already ruled out Tirso's authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* due to the presence of *endechas* or "asonantados de seis sílabas" (1914: 184, 193-195), which are alien to Tirso's authentic plays.¹⁴ Regarding Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Morley showed that he is "a *redondillista empedernido*" (1918: 139), to a point that "seldom does the *redondilla* drop below one-half of the lines of the play, and the *romance* rarely rises above 30% of the total", so "plays having less than 40% *redondilla* ... fall at once under suspicion" (1918: 140-141). Another significant strophe is the *lira*, of which we find two variations in this play: aBaBcC and

¹³ The rhymes are e-e, e-e, e-a, a-o, e-a, e-a, e-o, e-a, e-a, and e-o.

¹⁴ See also Rodríguez López-Vázquez (2010: 134).

AbbACC. Neither is used in Alarcón's authentic plays (Morley 1918: 133-139, 165-166). For Morley (1918: 147), these two facts ruled out Alarcón as author of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*. Years later, Jorge de Sena (1968: 141-158) argued that Morley's approach to Alarcón's use of strophes needed to be revisited by considering only the twenty plays that the playwright himself published, and not other doubtful plays, which changed the average use of certain strophes. Based on this approach—Sena argued—*Siempre ayuda la verdad* would better fit Alarcón's strophic practices. However, Sena's analysis is inadequate since the use of several strophes in *Siempre ayuda la verdad* still does not fit Alarcón's authentic texts. Even by reducing the number of plays considered, the 40% threshold in Alarcón's use of *redondillas* does not change, as Sena himself admitted (1968: 142), and the use of *liras* is also at odds with Alarcón's true plays. Additionally, Sena himself pointed out other strophic discrepancies, such as an extremely high number of *décimas* or the presence of *octavas* in more than one act that characterize *Siempre ayuda la verdad* (1968: 145, 148). Sena underestimated these inconsistencies by considering that they were the textual fingerprints of Alarcón's collaborator, which is an unproved premise. I will add that other strophes found in *Siempre ayuda la verdad* such as *asonantados de seis sílabas* or *suelos* are also quite rare in Alarcón, although some examples can be found. In short, the strophic structure of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* deviates far too much from Alarcón's system and therefore does not support the hypothesis that he wrote this play.¹⁵

The play's strophic versification is also at odds with the hypothesis that Andrés de Claramonte or Luis de Belmonte participated in *Siempre ayuda la verdad*. Several strophes, such as *décimas* or *quintillas*, present values that fit Claramonte's practices, but others are problematic, such as the *redondillas*—slightly higher than Claramonte's maximum use—, or the relative values of *romances* versus *quintillas* plus *redondillas*. Other strophes frequently used by Claramonte, such as *romancillo* or *silvas*, do not appear in this play (Hernández Valcárcel 1983: 100-109; Rodríguez López-Vázquez 1987: 187-191). The disparity is even more evident in the case of Luis de Belmonte. The presence of *décimas*, *tercetos*—both in the third act, assigned to Belmonte by scholars who postulate his intervention—, *liras* and *octavas* go against Belmonte's metrical practices,

¹⁵ T. Earle Hamilton's analysis of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* in relation to Alarcón's epistolary practices (1949: 128-129), which Jorge de Sena also cited, is equally problematic: of the three letters read aloud in the play, two fit Alarcón's practices but the third one does not. Despite this, both critics believed that it is an argument in favor of Alarcón's authorship. The way the letters are read in this play fit Lope's usage perfectly.

as well as the lack of *silvas* or the relative percentages of *romances* and *redondillas* (Kincaid 1928: 230-236).

What about Lope de Vega? Morley and Bruerton (1968) did not include *Siempre ayuda la verdad* in their study of Lope's strophic versification despite the document published by Mérimée (1906; 1913). The play's metrical structure is a perfect fit with Lope's praxis and helps us date it, as we can see in table 2. I have included the intervals of dates when Lope used similar percentages of each strophe based on Morley and Bruerton's work:

Stanza	Percentages	Dates
<i>Redondillas</i>	35.75%	1588-1603, 1610-1630 (prob. 1620-1625)
<i>Romance</i>	33.46%	1613-1625
<i>Décimas</i>	12.51%	1620-1635
<i>Octavas</i>	5.43%	1588-1635 (prob. 1609-1625)
<i>Asonantados de seis sílabas</i>	3.86%	1604-1635 (prob. 1610-1623)
<i>Tercetos</i>	3.36%	1588-1635
<i>Liras</i> (types 1 & 3)	3%	1588-1603, 1609-1635
<i>Quintillas</i> (types 1, 5, 1, 1, 5)	1.07%	1588-1635 (prob. 1620-1635)
<i>Sueltos</i>	1.03%	1588-1623
<i>Soneto</i> (type B)	0.5%	pre 1604, 1608-1635
Number of stanza changes (37)		1610-1616, 1620-1634
Stanzas used to open and end acts		post 1615, pre 1626

Table 2: *Siempre ayuda la verdad*'s strophic versification and dates of Lope de Vega's use of each strophe

The *décimas* establish a date *post quem* of 1620, which is reinforced by the *redondillas*, *quintillas*, and number of stanza changes, whereas the use of *sueltos* establishes a date *ante quem* of 1623, which is reinforced by the *asonantados de seis sílabas*. According to its versification, *Siempre ayuda la verdad* is an authentic play by Lope written in 1620-1623. This interval fits with the earliest known performance of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*,¹⁶ which took place sometime before March 3, 1623, as we saw before. Juan Bautista Valenciano was therefore the theatrical director who originally bought the play from Lope, maybe in 1622, when we know that the Fénix sold other plays

¹⁶ The post-1620 date of composition explains why *Siempre ayuda la verdad* does not appear in the updated list of authentic plays that Lope included in his 1618 edition of *El peregrino en su patria*.

to him (García Reidy 2013: 124) and this theatrical director was in Madrid.¹⁷ The premiere might have taken place in one of the *corrales* of this city during the Fall-Winter of 1622-1623, shortly before performing it in front of the king.

Another textual element related to the authorship of *Siempre ayuda la verdad* lies in the fact that the play corresponds to Lope's orthoepic preferences, as analyzed by Morley (1927) and especially by Poesse (1973). A sample of significant features is as follows: *traen* and *sea* are used as disyllabic at the end of verse; *cruel* and *juez* are disyllable; *crueldad* and *leal* are disyllable within the verse; *diablo* is always disyllable; *real(es)* is used equally as a monosyllable and a disyllable; *tenía* and *juicio* appear as trisyllables; *confiada* has four syllables at the end of the verse; there is dieresis in *criado*, *cruel(es)*, and *vidriera*, as well as in verbs with the infinitive ending *-uir*; *diamante*, *juez* and forms of *triunfar* and *triunfo*, as well as the adjectival ending *-ioso* and words ending in *-ión*, are always used with a diphthong; *hasta* is joined in synalepha; there is predominantly hiatus before *honra*, *hijos*, and *hecho* (with the only exception); and *he* and *oh* are always in synalepha with the preceding word.

The final objective criteria that I will consider are those related to the play's style. The most current developments in authorship attribution through stylometric measures focus on the relative use and deviation of most frequent words as a method to identify the author of a text within a closed set of possibilities and with a significant probability of reliability (Burrows 2012). This method can be easily applied using the software 'Stylometry with R' or Stylo, "a flexible package for the high-level analysis of writing style in stylometry" (Eder, Rybicki & Kestemont 2016: 107), written in the R programming language. Stylo has recently begun to be used for the authorship of early modern Spanish plays with some very interesting results.¹⁸ Since *Siempre ayuda la verdad* has a closed set of potential authors, Stylo is a useful tool to compare different authorial styles with an objective approach and draw conclusions based on a computational analysis of large textual corpora.

¹⁷ Another play that the company of Juan Bautista Valencia performed at the palace around the same dates was Guillén de Castro's *El ayo de su hijo*, which Bruerton (1944: 135-136) dated in 1620?-1623. Juan Bautista might have also bought this play in the Fall of 1622, once he arrived in Madrid, where Guillén de Castro was living at the time—like Lope.

¹⁸ I thank Dr. Patricia Marín Cepeda for sharing with me her yet unpublished study "¿Arbitraria y conjetural?: la estilometría en los estudios de autoría del teatro del Siglo de Oro", presented at the Université de Neuchâtel in June 2017, on the application of Stylo to authorship problems in early modern Spanish plays. See also the webpage <http://estilometriatso.com/>, by Álvaro Cuéllar González and Germán Vega García-Luengos.

I prepared a plain-text version of 72 authentic plays by Tirso de Molina—twenty plays—, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón—twenty plays—, Lope de Vega—twenty plays—, Luis de Belmonte Bermúdez—five plays—, and Andrés de Claramonte—seven plays—.¹⁹ These texts were processed using the Stylo package (version 0.6.9) with the following parameters: Stylo analyzed the 5,000 most frequent words or MFW (ngram size = 1), with 0% culling, performing a cluster analysis using Cosine Delta or Wurzburg as the distance measure—since it currently yields the most reliable results (Evert, Proisl et al. 2017). The outcome can be visualized as a dendrogram, where we see that Stylo has correctly paired each play with another one by the same author:

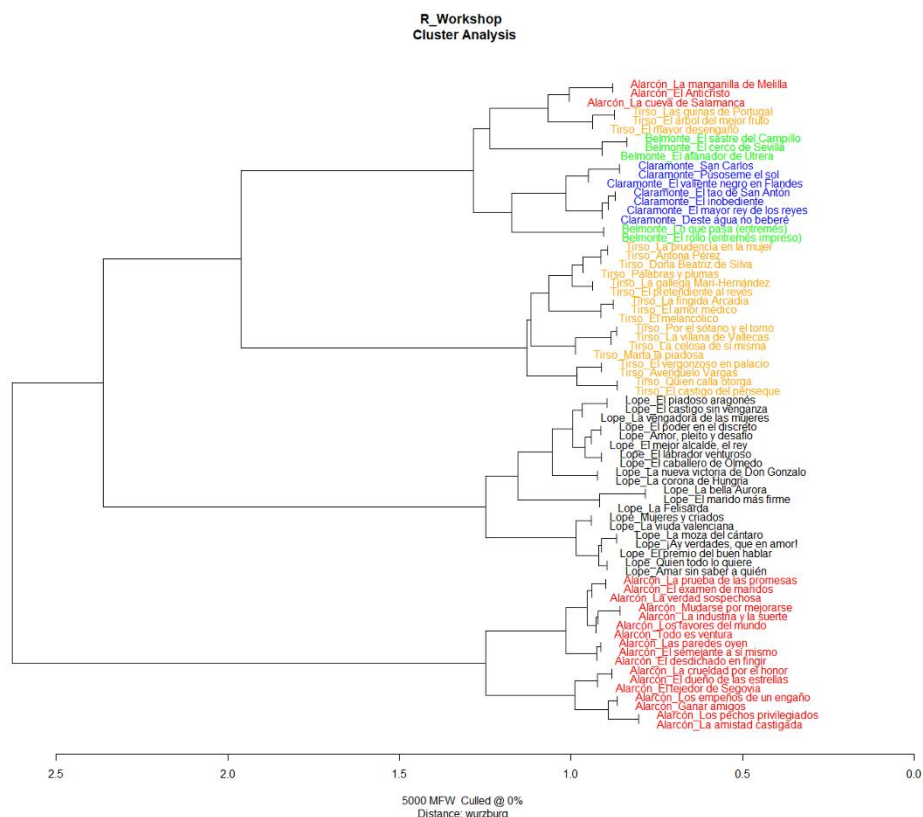


Fig.1 Analysis of 72 plays visualized as a dendrogram outputted by cluster analysis with Cosine Delta Metric for 5,000 MFW (default settings)

¹⁹ These plain texts present only the characters' speeches and seventeenth-century stage directions—based on my own testing, their presence or absence does not have noticeable effects on the results. The selection of plays has been determined in part by the availability of digital editions that could be prepared for analysis within a reasonable amount of time. To allow for reproducibility, the complete set of files used is available for download at the following Open Science Framework repository: https://osf.io/axgjc/?view_only=08d7916575e643d2a30c37f60dec422e.

After asserting the effectiveness of this analysis with plays of undisputed authorship, I proceeded to include *Siempre ayuda la verdad* as an additional text to be analyzed with the same parameters. The result is the following dendrogram:

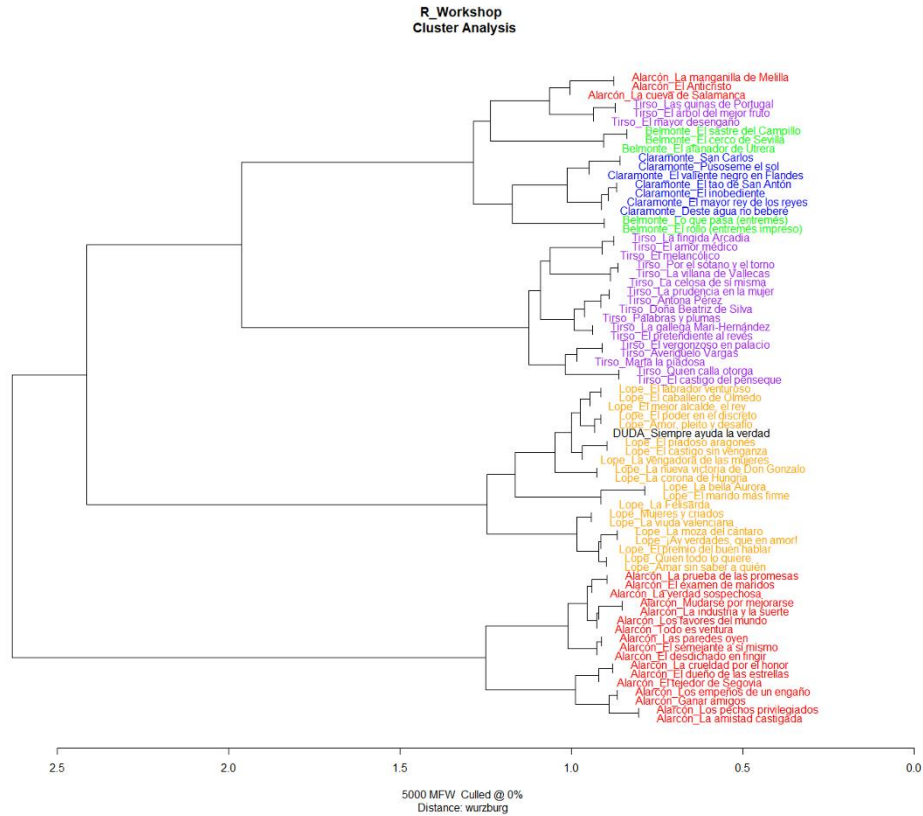


Fig.2 Analysis of 73 plays, including *Siempre ayuda la verdad*, visualized as a dendrogram outputted by cluster analysis with Cosine Delta Metric for 5,000 MFWS (default settings)

The stylometric analysis reveals that *Siempre ayuda la verdad* clearly falls within Lope’s use of most frequent words in contrast to the other playwrights whose names have been associated with this text.

One additional feature of the Stylo package that we can use with *Siempre ayuda la verdad* is the Rolling Classify function, which splits a text into equal-sized consecutive blocks and performs a supervised classification of these blocks against a training set to detect the presence of two or more authors in a text (Eder 2016). Since scholars have been repeating since the nineteenth century that *Siempre ayuda la verdad* was written by more than one playwright, this function can put this theory to test. By using the same textual corpora of plays by Lope, Tirso, Alarcón, Belmonte, and Claramonte, and applying the

Rolling Classify function to *Siempre ayuda la verdad*’s 1,250 most frequent words—a reliable frequency for the Burrow’s Delta distance measure used by this function—, split into 500-word segments, we reach the following result:

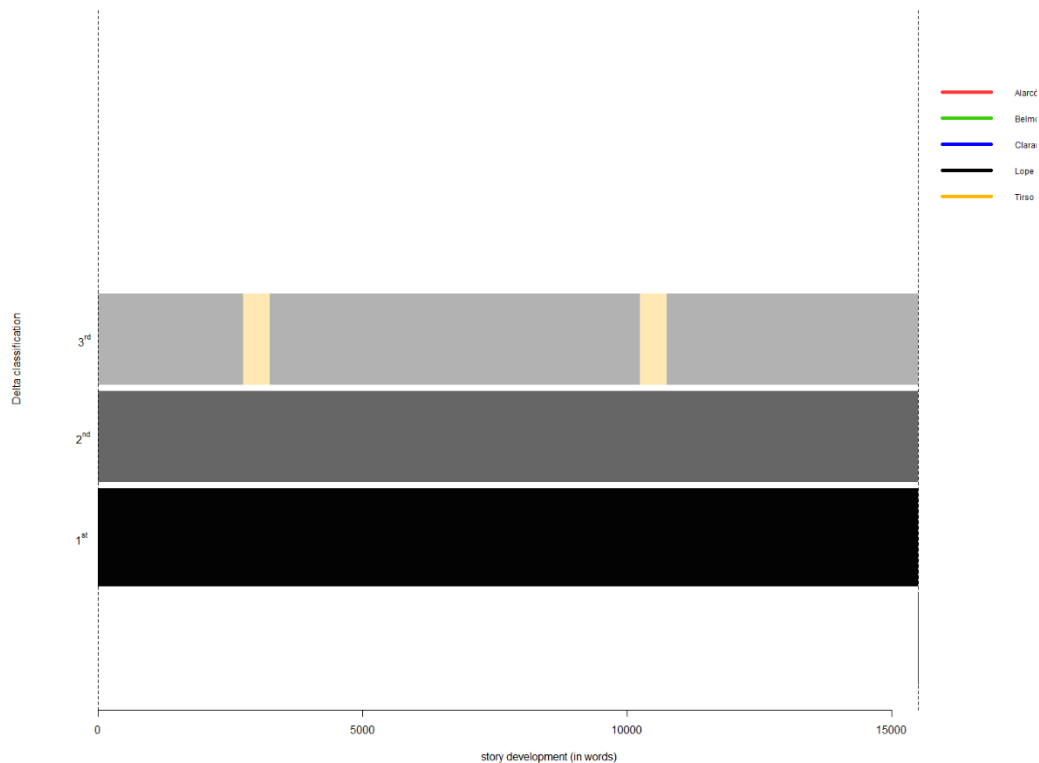


Fig.3 *Siempre ayuda la verdad* assessed using Rolling Classify and 1,250 MFWs

Each horizontal line ranks the first, second and third most likely authors for each 500-word block of the text. The strong homogeneous shading and identical color for all three attributions (excepting the two minor variations at the third rank, which have no significant value) indicates that there is no trace of multiple hands in *Siempre ayuda la verdad*. This stylometric analysis again points to Lope de Vega as the play’s sole author.

One last element of *Siempre ayuda la verdad*’s style that I will briefly mention is at the text’s microlevel. There are several words in the play that call a reader’s attention due to their apparent uncommonness in Lope, especially since some of them are *cultismos*: “cándidas espumas”, “argólico”, “grana”, “púrpura”, “ébano”, “cifrado”, “badea”, “montante”, “asesor”, “cascabel”, and “mona”. However, all these words appear in several other authentic works by Lope (Fernández Gómez 1971).

In short, *Siempre ayuda la verdad* can no longer be considered a play associated with Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Tirso de Molina, or Luis de Belmonte, as scholars have erroneously claimed for a century and a half. It is clearly a play by Lope de Vega, written in 1620-1623, as I have proved with my analysis of the existing documents, the play's strophic structure, and the use of stylometric features. Therefore, *Siempre ayuda la verdad* must be studied within Lope's theatrical practice, especially in relation to the palatine dramas he wrote around 1620 and his plays set in Portugal.²⁰ Other problematic authorship attributions are still at large and we must always approach them cautiously, aware of how the existing scholarly discourse can sometimes be based more on impressions and repeated assumptions than on updated and objective criteria.

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²⁰ Lope wrote a play on Inês de Castro a few years before *Siempre ayuda la verdad* since the title *Doña Inês de Castro* appears in the updated list of plays Lope included in the 1618 edition of *El peregrino en su patria*. Unfortunately, this play is currently lost.

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