Quickly, Archy, and the Citizens’ Wives; Or, How to Talk to an Elephant

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Quickly, Archy, and the Citizens’ Wives; 
Or, How to Talk to an Elephant

BARBARA SEBEK

That an elephant, 1630, came hither ambassador from the great Mogul (who could both write and read) and was every day allowed twelve cast of bread, twenty quarts of canary sack, besides nuts and almonds the citizens’ wives sent him. That he had a Spanish boy to his interpreter, and his chief negotiation was to confer or practise with Archy, the principal fool of state, about stealing hence Windsor Castle and carrying it away on his back if he can. —Ben Jonson, Discoveries

Marry, this is the short and the long of it. You have brought her into such a canaries, as ’tis wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift, smelling so sweetly, all musk; and so rustling, I warrant you, in silk and gold, and in such aligant terms, and in such wine and sugar of the best and the fairest, that would have won any woman’s heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eyewink of her. I had myself twenty angels given me this morning—but I defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, but in the way of honesty. And I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all. And yet there has been earls, nay which is more, pensioners. But, I warrant you, all is one with her. —William Shakespeare, The Merry Wives of Windiør

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In the following pages, I juxtapose the two passages above—a fragment from Ben Jonson’s *Timber, or Discoveries* (229-234) and a speech of Mistress Quickly in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (2.2.57-72). I purposely extract these passages from their respective works in order to trace an intricate set of topical references and to model a close reading strategy that insists simultaneously on “local,” contingent meanings and meanings that are transposable, global, or that otherwise radiate elsewhere, outward, forward. In a recent essay contextualizing *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in culinary culture and the Anglo-Spanish wine trade, I show how this trade and its practitioners were enmeshed in multilateral, transglobal networks that disrupt binary configurations such as English/Spanish, native/foreign, and domestic/far-flung. I argue that Shakespeare’s play, oft regarded as the “most English” of the comedies, disrupts these binaries. In addition to research on the wine trade, a close reading of the deliberate Spanish wine and trade references in Quickly’s speech advances this argument. The selected snippet from Jonson likewise alludes to that trade and to a web of English engagements beyond its own shores. My primary purpose in this paper is to unpack the passage from Jonson in order to lay out some preliminary claims about how it and the passage from *Merry Wives* speak to each other, enabling us to discern women’s participation in public culture and attuning us to a cluster of cultural concerns about England’s participation in cross-cultural travel and trade.

I read Jonson’s fragment—hereafter referred to as “Hearsay news,” following the printed marginalia at line 229 in the Cambridge edition—as a note for a comic plot or a snippet of dialogue from a planned play in which the speaker satirically, perhaps blunderingly, rewrites and recombines elements of a charged moment in Anglo-Spanish relations: the so-called “Spanish match crisis.” A variety of transpositions and condensations imbedded in “Hearsay news” work with a web of topical references to the Jacobean and early Caroline courts and to Jonson’s career. Even as I unpack such specific contexts, I hope to enact a strategy of historicized close-reading that allows us to recover—or, perhaps, initiate—gestures to a wider and more global perspective, one that looks both back and forward in time. Juxtaposing “Hearsay news” with Mistress Quickly’s speech to Falstaff allows us to see how the comic play that she invents to lure Falstaff into the wives’ revenge scheme resonates with tensions and entanglements between citizens and courtiers, and between local community and international affairs. Juxtaposing the passages allows us to regard Mistress Quickly as a poet-playwright or dramatic plotter in her own right and to recognize women’s roles as active transactors, creators, and participants in public life—roles that are discernible in “Hearsay news” but are brought into higher relief when paired with the Quickly passage. In addition to modeling a method of historicized close reading that navigates between specific or “micro-topical” references and broader or more global histories and futures, then, I plan to create a feminist dialogue between Shakespeare’s Windsor wives, their hired servant Quickly, Jonson’s Archy (Archibald Armstrong, the “principal fool of state”), his citizens’ wives, the “great Mogul,” the Spanish boy interpreter, and a wine-drinking, talking, Windsor castle-carrying elephant.

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Fancifully invoking negotiations for a royal marriage that could transform England’s religious, economic, and political place in the wider world, “Hearsay News” is a tiny snippet, six lines out of about 2000 of Jonson’s Tim-ber, or Discoveries. First printed posthumously in the 1640-41 Folio of the Works and the longest of his prose works, Discoveries (the title chosen in the recent Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson) has prompted a range of editorial questions about the coherence and order of the entries that comprise this commonplace book, a work that for some readers conveys a strongly miscellaneous, even haphazard, effect.4 “Hearsay news” stands out as especially idiosyncratic. It is the only entry in the entire collection that includes a specific date. It is part of a brief section that Jonson editor Ralph Walker describes as “notes of a kind which might be made by a writer of comedies with future plays in mind.”5 Editors Percy and Evelyn Simpson describe this group of entries as “notes for use in plays” and suggest that this particular entry was “probably jotted down for dramatic use by some such newsmonger as Sir Politic Would-be” (XI.211).

Sir Politic’s rumors of international intrigue and intelligence on projects involving culinary delicacies and exotic animals (Vulpone 2.1) are akin to what we find in “Hearsay news,” a marginal heading which alone suggests the sort of idle, outlandish gossip that such a character seeks and circulates:

That an elephant, 1630, came hither ambassador from the great Mogul (who could both write and read) and was every day allowed twelve cast of bread, twenty quarts of canary sack, besides nuts and almonds the citizens’ wives sent him. That he had a Spanish boy to his interpreter, and his chief negotiation was to confer or practise with Archy, the principal fool of state, about stealing hence Windsor Castle and carrying it away on his back if he can.

In addition to the abundant servings of canary sack (a wine produced in Spanish dominions), the presence of the Spanish boy and the elephant itself invoke the negotiations for the marriage between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta and the scandalous secret embassy to Madrid undertaken by Charles and the Duke of Buckingham in 1623.6 In July of that year, James received a gift of an elephant and camels from Philip IV while the match negotiations were still ongoing. Several details of the scenario depicted in “Hearsay news” align with what we know about that gift. Caroline Grigson cites records of public disruption upon the animal’s arrival, as well as instructions about feeding and keeping, including the instruction to serve wine instead of water, the allowance of both Spanish and English keepers (after some “tetchy” queries from James), and James’s particular insistence that the elephant be kept from “the vulgar gaze.” The king’s secretaries complained about the costs of maintaining the animal so lavishly, a gift that proved a heavy drain on resources.7 Contemporary sources indicate that the elephant, camels, and their entourage caused a late-night public stir, one that James apparently wished to prevent from recurring: “Going through London at night, they could not pass unseen and the clamour and the outcry raised by some street loiterers at their
ponderous gait and ungainly step brought sleepers from their beds in every district through which they passed. Jonson's seemingly fanciful idea of a wine-drinking elephant turns out to be based on documented instructions from the elephant's Spanish keepers. The Domestic State Papers of 1623 include a note on the annual costs for maintaining "the Elephant and his keepers" and the item that "his keepers affirm that from the month of September until April he must drink (noe water) but all wine, and from April until September he must have a Gallon of wyne the daye." The kind of wine is not specified in this record, and I don't know if Jonson would have been aware of the elephant's actual diet (or what its keepers cleverly claimed to be its diet), but at the very least Jonson specifies a particular kind of wine, canary sack, that solidifies the link to Anglo-Spanish affairs, in all their global dimensions. Reaching its apex in the first three decades of the seventeenth century, the voluminous, lucrative trade in sack from the Canary Islands and other Spanish dominions was enmeshed in multilateral, transglobal networks that disrupt binary configurations such as English/Spanish, native/foreign, and domestic/far-flung.

Jonson's pointed inclusion of "Archy," or Archibald Armstrong, James's "principal fool of state" as conspirer with the Mogul's elephant nonetheless strengthens the associations with the specific moment of the Madrid embassy. Prince Charles had created a list of individuals to be sent to join him and Buckingham after their secret voyage there became known. Armstrong was not on Charles's list, but James personally added him to the retinue. Archy proceeded to make quite a splash. Traveler and epistolarian James Howell reports in one of several letters from Madrid that, thanks to his insolent and pointed jests—including, or especially, those aimed at the Spaniards themselves—Armstrong had more intimate access to the Spanish monarch than any in Charles's retinue, including the English Prince himself. Philip IV granted Armstrong a lavish black coat fashioned after that of Gondomar, his ambassador to England, as well as a pension which Archy reputedly continued to receive even after the marriage negotiations dissolved. Jonson's fictive Archy possesses something that the historical Armstrong eagerly sought but did not—an interpreter. In a letter to James dictated to Buckingham, Armstrong speaks of his special access to the Spanish court and his potential usefulness to James's plans, making a special plea for an interpreter. According to Andrea Shannon, Armstrong was a fervent supporter of the proposed match, whereas Malcolm Smuts notes that the folly of the match was a frequent topic of his jests that circulated widely and contributed to Armstrong's popularity. Regardless of his "actual" stance, Armstrong's public rebuke of Buckingham in Madrid for bungling the negotiations was recorded by the Spanish observer Francisco de Jesus. Incarnating the idea of the all-licensed fool, Armstrong's star continued to rise. Indeed, his career at the English court was arguably eclipsing Jonson's by some point in the late 1620s. A few years earlier, Armstrong even beat Jonson to the honor of a ceremonial welcome and investiture as a burgess in a Scottish town: accompanying James's court on its journey to Scotland in 1617, he went ahead of the royal retinue to Aberdeen where these honors were bestowed. Jonson too met with such honors in Edinburgh, but over a year later. Jonson's jabs at Armstrong in "Hearsay news"—like those in...
Quickly, Archy, and the Citizens’ Wives

The Staple of News (1626) and Neptune’s Triumph for the Return of Albion (1624), the never-performed masque celebrating the return of the Madrid embassy—not only express disdain for the penchant for political news and gossip that Archy so successfully served and helped fuel, but also careerist sour grapes. (Compare Jonson’s haughty farewell to the commercial stage upon the failure of The New Inn in “Ode to Himself.”) It would not be until 1637 that Armstrong finally lost his place at the Caroline court when his ongoing public taunts at Archbishop Laud—which secured his celebrity status amongst ordinary Londoners—finally forced him out of royal service.

Once one discerns the Spanish Match crisis and the globally enmeshed Anglo-Spanish wine trade as salient contexts for “Hearsay news,” questions about other curious details in the passage remain: Why is the elephant itself an ambassador and agent, not a gift? What do we make of Jonson locating the elephant in its “native” Indian origins, coming “hither” (Windsor, presumably) as an ambassador serving the “Great Mogul”—especially since the elephant from Philip IV “no doubt came originally from Africa”? One possibility derives from Samuel Purchas’s direct observation of the London elephant included in the 1626 volume of Purchas His Pilgrimage. On page 518, the chapter heading “Of the Great Mogor, or Mogoll” vies for attention with Purchas’s note in the left margin on how the elephant gifted from Spain, “now in London,” uses his “two great teeth” to stand up: “Elephants trunke as a staffe to them. I have obserued of this yong Elephant now in London, sent out of Spaine to his Maiestie.” Here, the elephants at the Mughal court described in the body of the chapter and the Spanish elephant “now in London” in the marginal comment share proximate visual space on the page. Another possibility derives from the fact that King James’s official ambassador to the court of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, Thomas Roe, returned to England in 1619 bearing animals and other gifts for James. If known to Jonson, Roe’s delivery of the gifts provides an occasion for Jonson to further mash up ambassadors and gifts sent between James, Philip IV, and Jahangir.

Mark Aune discusses how elephants feature frequently in travelers’ accounts in this period, a persistent element of early modern travelers’ depictions of India’s wealth and exoticism. In large measure, Europeans brought positive, almost mythical conceptions of elephants with them to India, which enabled further constructions of the civilized and barbaric Mogul other.

As Silvio Bedini argues in his study of the elephant gifted to Pope Leo X in the first months of his reign in 1513, elephants transported from Asia served as “a trophy of Asiatic adventurism” and contributed to a triumphalist claim of (or hope for) Christian dominion. Thus, Jonson’s transformation of a (probably African) elephant gift from Spain into an elephant ambassador from the East Indies allows this passage to speak to a rich web of wider anxieties and desires about transglobal expansion and England’s access to global treasure and trading ventures.

Comparable concerns—coupled with efforts at self-promotion—are at work in an engraving of Thomas Coryate astride an elephant that graced a 1616
Close Reading

In the oration, Coryate informs Jahangir that his first two motives for undertaking the long journey are, first, “to see the blessed face of your Majesty . . . and your glorious court” and “secondly, to see your Maisties elephants.” The linguistic mastery that Coryate claims and displays is transposed by Jonson who endows the elephant with the ability to speak. Rather than the object of the Englishman’s gaze, the elephant in “Hearsay news” is a speaker and agent. Aune argues that anthropomorphizing elephants and emphasizing their advanced mental capacities serves to “other” the Mogul and Indians generally for their barbaric treatment of them. In Jonson’s elaborate mash-up of Armstrong and the embassy to Madrid with Coryate’s audience with the Mogul, the elephant functions less, I argue, as a signifier of debased exotic otherness than as a challenge to the monolingual, semi-literate court fool who, in his fictional rendering in “Hearsay news,” relies on his “Spanish boy interpreter” in conspiring with both the beast and the king to undermine an English royal seat. The historical Archy was forced to rely on Buckingham as the transcriber of his missive to King James requesting an interpreter. The mash-up also invites us to reflect on the status of other agents of exchange who emerge in the story as participants in courtly gift exchange: the citizens’ wives who send almonds. (But for that line of inquiry, we shall wait for Mistress Quickly’s account of other courtly exchanges and offers.)

The item that most surprised and delighted me when I first came upon “Hearsay news”—the talking elephant—turns out possibly to be the least noteworthy for Jonson’s contemporaries. As Brian Cummings notes, speaking elephants are a commonplace from Greek and Roman writers such as Plutarch and Pliny, a figure “repeated from source to source without expression of surprise,” including Edward Topsell’s Historie of Four-footed Beasts (1607). They are often depicted with the capacity to understand language, even multiple languages and dialects. The image of the elephant carrying a castle became a familiar and “domesticated” one, depicted on candlesticks, coins, salt-cellars, inn signs, and, in 1622, the device featured in the visual design of the arms officially granted to the Cutler’s Company (fig 1):
The castle atop the elephant is considered by some to be an adaptation or even misreading of the howdah, a seat with railings and a canopy, originally placed atop ancient and medieval Asian war elephants. The elephant and castle device that “Hearsay news” turns into a conspiracy plot is thus both highly topical (“very 1623”) and part of a much longer arc of history. A familiar visual image is constituted by an appropriation or misrecognition that domesticates the exotic and that contemporizes the historically remote, a discursive reordering that Spanish sack underwent as its popularity grew in England in the seventeenth century. We can read “Hearsay news” as participating cheekily in such appropriations, a more complex process, I think, than the too simple notion that Jonson disdained foreign fashion and foreign travel. Jonson draws on temporally and culturally remote materials even as he inserts the image into the topical crises and events of the late Jacobean and early Caroline moment.

As noted above, “Hearsay news” is the only entry in the entirety of Discoveries that specifies a year. Why the specific year, 1630? One speculation that I find appealing is that 1630 presents another Jonsonian mash-up: not only between the elephant and the Great Mogul (the Mughal emperor Jahangir), whom Sir Thomas Roe reported to be excessively fond of wine, and between Philip IV and Jahangir, but also between the elephant and Jonson himself. As noted earlier, the elephant sent by Philip IV proved costly to maintain, particularly the wine that its keepers said it required. Like the fictive elephant ambassador in “Hearsay news,” and the actual elephant sent to England from Spain in July 1623, Jonson is a royal dependent who is granted Canary Spanish wine from the king’s own cellars. In 1630, letters patent of King Charles increased the annuity James had granted Jonson, from 100 marks to “100 pounds of lawful money of England.” In addition to the cash annuity, Charles specified that “We of our more especial grace . . . do give and graunt unto the said Benjamin Johnson and his assigns one terse of Canary Spanish wine yearly . . . out of our store of wines . . . at or in our cellars within or belonging to our palace at Whitehall.” Not so unlike his debased double Archy—who was still receiving an annuity from the Spanish crown, not to mention proceeds from the patent on tobacco pipes that James granted him in
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1618 and possible income from a grant of 1000 acres of land in Ireland from Charles—Jonson continued to be on the royal payroll: a “pensioner” in the potentially more pejorative sense of that word than we see Quickly use it. Lest this suggestion of a mash-up of elephant/Jonson as wine drinkers and rivals to Armstrong seem reductive or too tethered to biographical reading, recall how thoroughly commodities such as wine and tobacco were enmeshed in an emergent “world system” and wider global trade networks. These marks of honor and status conferred on Jacobean and Caroline court entertainers point outward and elsewhere, temporally, spatially, and culturally.

Concluding Quickly

After Shakespeare’s Windsor wives receive Falstaff’s insulting epistolary advances, they employ Mistress Quickly as their ambassador in a revenge plot against him. Sent to Falstaff to arrange a secret visit when Mistress Ford is alone at home, Mistress Quickly creates an elaborate scenario that shows her keen skills in fabrication and improvisational storytelling:

Marry, this is the short and the long of it. You have brought her into such a canaries, as ’tis wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift, smelling so sweetly, all musk; and so rustling, I warrant you, in silk and gold, and in such aligant terms, and in such wine and sugar of the best and the fairest, that would have won any woman’s heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eyewink of her. I had myself twenty angels given me this morning—but I defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, but in the way of honesty. And I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all. And yet there has been earls, nay which is more, pensioners. But, I warrant you, all is one with her. (2.2.57-72)

Quickly lures Falstaff into the wives’ revenge scheme by flattering him. In her improvised “playlet,” Falstaff is able to arouse Mistress Ford as no other before, impervious as she was to the assays of the loftiest courtiers with “coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift.” The “wine and sugar of the best and the fairest” that Quickly imagines the courtier suitors to offer are not just figures for flattery (as the Norton Shakespeare glosses the phrase) but are literal comestibles which are often linked as here. Like the almonds that the wives send to the elephant in “Hearsay News,” wine and sugar are commodities enmeshed in
transatlantic trade routes and, at the time that *Merry Wives* was first written and performed, were procured and brought into England via clandestine trading with the enemy. Quickly’s “canary” and “canaries” (usually glossed as errors for “quandary” and “quandaries”) and “aligant” (almost always glossed as a blunder for “elegant”) are Spanish wines and/or the regions whence those Spanish wines are procured. A historicized close-reading that unpacks these transglobal trade contexts demands that we pose the same question about the “nuts and almonds” that the citizens’ wives send to the Elephant in “Hearsay news.” Where were these cultivated? How were they procured? By whom, and in exchange for what? T.S. Willancatalogues shipping inventories from various sixteenth-century trading voyages that include imported almonds from Venice, Morocco, and Malaga in mainland Spain. In Thomas Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*, almonds are listed amongst the items in the Dutch skipper's inventory that Simon Eyre manages to procure and sell for profit. Like wine and sugar, almonds make their way from distant locales into the kitchens and gift baskets of English citizens’ wives and even the bellies of resident alien elephants.

Juxtaposing “Hearsay news” and Quickly’s playlet allows us to attend to layered and complex historical questions of rivalry between male citizens and aristocrats and courtiers, as well as such macronarratives as the “rise of the middling sort” and the “transition to capitalism.” How do women figure in these master narratives? How might a careful close-reading challenge the view of them as mere trophies for citizen-versus-courtier male combatants? How might a newly or re-theorized and historically attuned practice of close reading trouble the master narratives themselves? Put in dialogue with “Hearsay news,” Quickly becomes an Archy-esque working class purveyor of gossip and the penchant for court news in the specific locale of Windsor. Like Armstrong, she thrives economically, and is in the pay of many. Setting these two chunks of text side by side requires us to see the status of Jonson’s wives as gift-givers, not recipients of gifts being used as a means of seduction, nor as themselves objects of exchange. Women are part of public/political culture with a transnational dimension. In Coryate’s account of the wealth and magnificence of the Mogul court, elephants, wives, and concubines are structurally parallel, items in an impressive inventory of imperial wealth. Something very different is happening in “Hearsay news” and *Merry Wives*, and likely in the culture of Windsor where both plots are set. Taken together, Jonson’s wives and Quickly’s clever, on-the-spot improvised plot can tell us something about what that something is.
Appendix of Figures

Figure 2: Bronze Candlestick, 1200-1400 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Figure 3: Cutlers Company Crest, 1569. Image Courtesy of the Worshipful Company of Cutlers.

Quickly, Archy, and the Citizens’ Wives
Figure 4: Coventry Halfpenny Trade Token, 1793. Image Courtesy of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.
Quickly, Archy, and the Citizens’ Wives

Figure 5: Cutlers’ Hall, Warwick Lane, London
Notes


27. See Harris’s excellent discussion of Coryate’s capacity to move between languages and cultures in “Thomas Coryate, the Fakir of Ajmer,” chapter 10 in *The First Firangis*, 187-211.
28. Brian Cummings, “Pliny’s Literate Elephant,” *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*, ed. Erica Fudge (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press 2004): 164-185, 166. As pointed out in the exhibition catalogue for “Animals from East and West,” shown at the Bodleian Library in 2001, Topsell draws extensively on Conrad Gesner’s *Historiae Animalium* (1551). Some of the illustrations in Gesner’s section on elephants are notable for being drawn from nature rather than from received, stylized depictions alone. The bronze candlestick (c. 1200-1400), figure 2 in the appendix, offers an example of one such stylized depiction.
29. See Bedini, *The Pope’s Elephant*, on the tale of the Portuguese mahout who didn’t want to leave home and thus secretly conspired with his elephant to refuse to board the ship setting out for the Vatican (33-34).
30. The image of the crest comes from the Company’s web site (“Coat of Arms,” *The Worshipful Company of Cutlers*, http://www.cutlerslondon.co.uk/company/history/#coat-of-arms). I am grateful to the Worshipful Company of Cutlers for permission to use this image. A 1569 Oak Panel with the company crest in Cutlers’ Hall appears as figure 3 in the appendix. Special thanks to Company Clerk R.W. Meacher for kindly providing the picture.
31. In *The Heraldic Elephant* (London: The Worshipful Company of Cutlers, 2015), Chris Osborn-Jones traces the elephant and castle design from its origins in the fighting elephants of classical times through its myriad appearances across the centuries since the original charter of the Cutlers Company in the reign of Henry V. His book includes many fine manuscript drawings from the College of Heralds and other illustrations. In *History of the Cutlers’ Company of London and of the Minor Cutlery Crafts. Volume I* (London: Printed privately for the Cutlers’ Co. 1916-23), Charles Welch notes that the elephant was in common use as a mark on the plate of the Company as early as 1470 (138-139). He also notes that the Cutlers who participated in the welcome given to Queen Margaret on her marriage to Henry VI “wore elephants as decorations on their riding either on their coats or shields” (139). In *The Mark of the Sword: A Narrative History of the Cutlers’ Company, 1189-1975* (London: Hutchinson Benham, 1975), Thomas Girtin discusses the company’s first charter during the reign of Henry V (57-65) and its reissue under James (157-209). In addition to interest in heraldry and heraldic terms that run through Jonson’s drama generally (see Arthur Huntington Nason, *Heralds and Heraldry in Ben Jonson’s Plays, Masques, and Entertainments* [1907; rpt.
New York: Gordian Press, 1968], the Jacobean “moment” of the Cutler’s Company and the Company’s longer history were likely subjects in which Jonson took an interest. Amongst the materials lost when his library burned in 1623 was the manuscript of his history of the reign of Henry V (Riggs, Ben Jonson, 288), the monarch who granted the company's original charter. One interest of Osborn-Jones in The Heraldic Elephant is to re-validate the discredited folk etymology of “elephant and castle” as deriving from an Englishing of “Infanta of Castile,” after Edward I’s Spanish wife Alienor/Eleanor of Castile. George Abbott discusses the elephant and castle image on ancient coins; see “The Elephant on Coins: Read before the Australian Numismatic Society,” 24 July and 28 August, 1919 (Sydney: Sydney and Melbourne, 1919). For a variety of illustrations of the elephant and castle device, from the Middle Ages to the present exterior of the Cutlers’ Company Hall, see my appendix of figures.

33. In the 1641 folio, the date appears as 630. Herford and Simpson explain that this is Jonson’s frequent way to indicate 1630, another instance of which appears in Sejanus. The new Cambridge Ben Jonson silently emends to 1630. We can trace Jonson’s interest in the elephant and castle device at least as far back as 1609. In his Entertainment at Britain’s Burse, written to celebrate the opening of the New Exchange in that year, the Master of a China House extols the ingenuity of a “rarity, a conceipted saltseller: An Elephant, with a castle on his Backe.” See James Knowles, “Jonson’s Entertainment at Britain’s Burse,” Re-presenting Ben Jonson, ed. Martin Butler (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999): 114-151, 135. Knowles notes that such vessels were in possession of Northampton and Robert Carr. The Cutlers Company possesses the 1658 Carington Salt, a jewel encrusted elephant and castle salt-cellar. See Welch, History of the Cutler’s Company, for an illustration of the Carington Salt.
37. On the grant of land, see Smuts, “Armstrong, Archibald (d. 1672),”
40. “Of elephants the king keepeth 30000 in his wile kingdome at an unmeasurable charge. . . . The king keepeth a thousand women for his own body whereof the chiefest (who is his Queene) is called Normal.” (Coryate, Thomas Coryate, Traveller for the English Wits, sig. E1v).

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