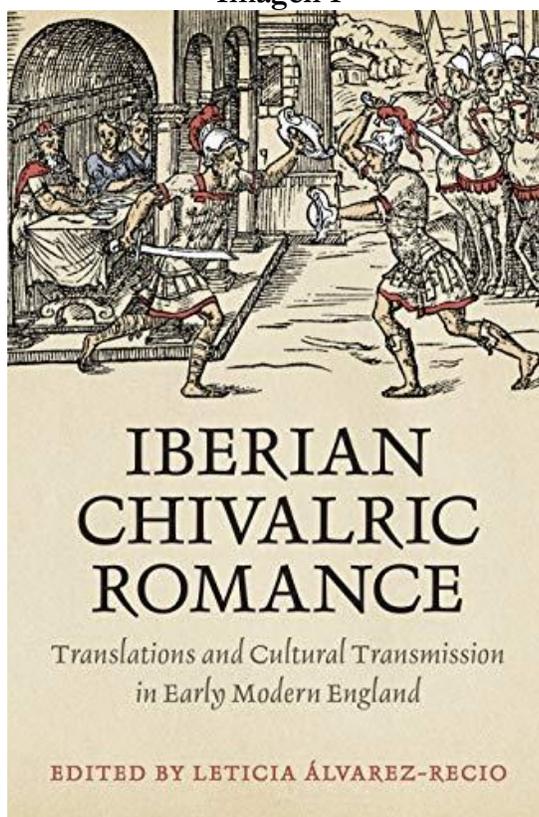




ÁLVAREZ RECIO, Leticia (ed.). *Iberian Chivalric Romance. Translations and Cultural Transmission in Early Modern England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021.

Antonio CORTIJO OCAÑA¹

Imagen 1



For Spanish students of English literature, the enormous influence of Spanish sentimental (*ficción sentimental*) and chivalric (*libros de caballerías*) books, as well as of Spanish short

¹ [University of California, Santa Barbara \(UCSB\)](#), [Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona \(RABLB\)](#). E-mail: amcortijo@aim.com.



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narratives (*novela corta*) in English Renaissance literature has always been puzzling, be it via translations of *Celestina*, *Arnalte y Lucenda* or of *Amadís*, as well as of Céspedes's *Gerardo*, *Diana*, *picaresque* novels, or *Don Quixote*. In addition, this influence has not been taken into consideration until very recently.

To this we should add the numerous imitations of Spanish lyric poetry and ballads as well as other discursive forms that appear very frequently in the pamphlets and small texts that compose the array of publications that helped create the anti-Spanish black legend (Cortijo 2008, 2010). Furthermore, we should also consider the plentiful anti-Jesuit literature from the 16th and 17th centuries that sometimes offers us literary surprises such as the texts of the *fictitious* author James Salgado.²

This excellent and welcomed contribution by Álvarez Recio and a group of renowned experts reflects on the relevance of the Iberian chivalric romance genre for early modern English literature. It provides us with a masterful analysis of English translations of Spanish chivalric romances and their cultural transmission. The editor sets this type of literature in the context of the numerous contemporary criticisms this genre received on account of its “extravagant fictions”, either from Spanish scholars such as Vives and Valdés or their English counterparts like Thomas Nashe.

She also offers us an overview of the history of scholarship on the topic of English translations of Spanish chivalric romances, paying particular attention to the figure of Anthony Munday (around whom this volume revolves) and the major contributions to the study of his relevance by Tracey Hill and Donna Hamilton, among other.

As Álvarez Recio indicates, “the present collection [composed of four sections] builds upon the work of these scholars and makes a significant contribution to the field, based

² CORTIJO OCAÑA, Antonio. *Herejía, inquisición y leyenda negra en el siglo XVII. James Salgado, 'el Hereje': Vida y obra de un exsacerdote español*. Barcelona: Calambur, 2016; CORTIJO OCAÑA, Antonio; GÓMEZ MORENO, Á. *Comentarios de lo sucedido en las guerras de los Países Bajos. Propaganda, contrapropaganda y leyenda negra*. Madrid, Ministerio de Defensa, 2018; CORTIJO OCAÑA, Antonio. *Don Carlos Coloma de Saa. Las guerras de los Estados Bajos*. Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2010.



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on new scholarly evidence and methodologies that include comparative readings across different cultures and languages of early modern Europe” including cultural studies, book history and reception, material history, translation, post-colonial criticism, and gender studies.

The first section is composed of the introductory essay by Sánchez-Martí, who offers a comprehensive overview of the publication history of Spanish chivalric romances in 16th-c. England, starting with the relevant role played by printers William Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde and William Copland (see Cortijo 2015 for Caxton’s translation of Lull’s *Llibre de l’orde de cavalleria*) and the first translation of an Iberian chivalric romance in 1578.

The second section deals with Munday’s most important translations (*Palmendos*, *Primaleon*, *Palmerin of England*, *Amadis*). Álvarez-Recio studies *Palmendos*’s dedication to Sir Francis Drake and sets the romance in the context of a search for utopian models of society as Spain, France, and England engaged in territorial expansion. She also interprets the work a proposal to influence Drake’s manner of confrontation with Spain.

Hernández-Pérez studies *Primaleon of Greece* and the connection between hagiography and romance present in this work. By studying pleasure, space, and the *topos* of *femme sole*, she analyzes how women make use of their own private space. Wilson studies Munday’s *Palmerin of England* and the reader’s attitude to the narrative as well as the reader’s sense of familiarity with the objects present in the text.

The second section deals with the way these translations of Iberian romances influenced English romance, letter writing and history. For instance, Sumillera studies the way chivalric romance incorporated letter-writing and explores the genre of *ars dictaminis* in 16th-c. Europe. Crowley studies the influence of the Amadis cycle on Sidney’s *Arcadia* and pays particular attention to the French translation of *Florisel de Niquea* by Gohory.

He focuses on three related motifs that explore the ethics of clandestine marriage: the sequestered princess, love by image, and the Amazonian disguise that leads to marriage. He also argues that Sidney’s protagonist lovers achieved a new degree of philosophical



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(Neoplatonic) and political self-awareness through Iberian chivalric romances. Evenden-Kenyon studies the role played by Arthurian romances in the confessional debates of the 16th-17th centuries and the way the genre helped an English Catholic reflection on cosmopolitanism vs. loyalty to one's own country.

In a similar fashion, Hamilton studies how history and romance were crucial for “transnational European history, ideology, and myth”, and studies Munday's translation in connection to the Oath of Allegiance, the Spanish Match, and the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church.

The final section explores the influence of these translations on English fiction from the late 16th c. to the 17th centuries. Stanivukovic argues that Iberian romances offered a new way of writing fiction with an emphasis on character's emotions and sensual experiences, later followed by the influence that *Don Quixote's* and *Diana's* insistence on self-analysis and psychological complexity had on English romances. Cooper views Iberian fiction as crucial for the change of literary taste in England that can be observed from Rastell's version of *Celestina* in 1525 to Mabbe's version of Rojas's work in 1631. She concludes that eroticism, highlighted in Mabbe's version, took root in English literature through Iberian chivalric romances.

An afterword by Alex Davis offers a summary of all these ideas and approaches and concludes that Iberian romance offered a mixture of deeds and words and paid attention to the performative function of language. In addition, these narratives represented the shift from an aristocratic medieval ideal to modernity.

Ars dictaminis, ‘sentimentality’, and psychological depth³ are three crucial elements present in the Iberian romance genre that helped shape the writing of fiction in 16th- and 17th-

³ CORTIJO OCAÑA, Antonio. *Boncompagno da Signa. La rueda del amor, Los males de la vejez y senectud, La amistad*. Madrid: Gredos, 2004; CORTIJO OCAÑA, Antonio. *Evolución genérica de la ficción sentimental*. London: Tamesis, 2001.



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century English literature. The way Iberian writers portrayed their main protagonists was influenced by the Spanish sentimental fiction. This pioneering genre represented a development of the world of chivalry at large and offered a novel perspective of the *caballero* and his female counterpart.

The action slowed down and the lover's exchanged letters that closely followed the precepts of the dictaminal works that were famous at the time in university and courtly circles (Boncompagno's and Faba's for instance). Let us also remember that the very beginning of *Celestina* (which is also a sentimental fiction) is influenced (if not taken directly from) by the *Rota Veneris* by Boncompagno da Signa⁴, one of the most influential writers of *ars dictaminis*.

Sentimental fiction also played a crucial role in the later development of the chivalric genre in Spain and Portugal, either through the sagas of *Palmerin-Palmeirim* or *Menina e moça* and the works by Rodríguez del Padrón, Flores or San Pedro. These developments in Iberian fiction via the sentimental genre were also crucial in the creation of genres such as the Byzantine novel, the pastoral romance, and the picaresque genre, all of which derive ultimately from the sentimental genre and left their imprint in English prose fiction via the translations of many of these works into English during the 16th and 17th centuries.⁵

The works of James Salgado (a diatribe against Jesuits and the Catholic world at large), a fictional name or *nom de plume* from the 17th century, pay tribute to the continuous presence of Iberia in the early modern English fictional world, now through the imitation of the short novel, with a mixture of French, Italian, and particularly Spanish influence. From Caxton's adaptation of Lull's foundational treatise on knighthood (*Llibre de l'orde de cavalleria*) to Salgado's works in the context of the Popish Plot, Spanish literature, and the Spanish world at large, played in crucial role in shaping English literature and identity in the early modern period.

⁴ CORTIJO OCAÑA, Antonio. *Boncompagno da Signa. La rueda del amor, Los males de la vejez y senectud, La amistad*. Madrid: Gredos, 2004.

⁵ CORTIJO OCAÑA, Antonio. *Mesianismo, epifanía y resurrección en el Quijote: La tolerancia de la contradicción*. Madrid: Polifemo, 2016.