

Jordi Sánchez-Martí. 2020.
Los libros de caballerías en Inglaterra, 1578–1700.
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Thanks to a growing number of studies and editions published in recent years, the international impact of sixteenth-century Iberian chivalric romances is gradually emerging from a confusing grey area to be properly valued and acknowledged. Its role in the forging of national and transnational cultural and literary canons is on the right path to be justly recognized, but the process that in the coming years will allow us to have a sufficiently clear overview to advance critical overall evaluations is still long and insidious. Scholars and research teams dealing with this enormous bibliographic corpus must not only bring to bear their comparative, philological, historical, and linguistic expertise, but often—and this is where the main difficulties arise—also their skills in mediating between scientific communities that frequently try hard to talk to each other. When this happens, when disciplinary boundaries are crossed by the desire to learn and to create shared knowledge, mutual enrichment increases exponentially. Jordi Sánchez-Martí deserves high praise for having been a promoter of this kind of dialogue in recent years, at least starting with the international meeting he organized in Alicante, entitled “The printed distribution of the Iberian books of chivalry in early modern Europe” (2019), if not before. On this occasion, specialists from different disciplinary fields and different countries discussed the literary object that unites their lines of research, presenting their findings, their ongoing projects and ultimately laying the foundations for joint collaborations with a wide international scope.

Research results have been particularly vast and interesting in the field of English studies. From a situation of substantial stalemate crystallized around the contributions of the praiseworthy monographs by Thomas (1920)—the only one translated into Spanish (1952)—, Patchell (1947), and O’Connor (1970), over the last 15–20 years there has been a shift to a more clearly defined framework of knowledge

in terms of bibliography, critical editions, and the study of authors, sources, transmission, and influences of the Iberian *libros de caballerías* in England. Thanks to these studies, the overall view of the Amadis and Palmerines phenomenon in Europe has undergone a profound change. The volume edited by Jordi Sánchez-Martí, which I'm reviewing here, is meant to provide a state of the art in the reception and dissemination of Iberian chivalric novels in England. It has been conceived as a starting point from which the Spanish-speaking reader (a specialist or not) can obtain up-to-date and rigorous coordinates on each of the Spanish chivalric novels translated into English from 1578 to 1700. The book consists of nine chapters, each presenting a study of the English titles taken into consideration, entrusted to specialists who, in most cases, have edited or are preparing a critical edition of the work they are dealing with. One thing I find particularly interesting is that each chapter refers (albeit briefly) to the textual transmission, not only in English, but also in the various language transitions from the source texts to the target English texts. In this way, the book (its footnotes in particular) also becomes a valuable mine of bibliographical updates on studies regarding the spread of the Spanish chivalric novel in the major European languages.

The sequence of chapters is organized chronologically according to the date of publication of the books in England. Therefore, the first chapter (11–32) written by Joyce Boro concerns the cycle of the *Espejo de príncipes y caballeros*, whose first four parts in Spanish were translated directly into English in the nine volumes of the *Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* cycle (printed in various editions between 1578 and 1601) and was very successful, which is also reflected in adaptations for the theater. Donna B. Hamilton is the author of the second chapter (33–52) dedicated to the three books of the English cycle of *Palmerin of England* (1581–1685), the first to be translated by Anthony Munday, the main author and promoter of English versions of the Iberian chivalric genre. The following chapter (53–62), authored by Jordi Sánchez-Martí, concerns the translation of *Palmerin d'Oliva* (1588–1637). As in most English translations of chivalry books of Iberian origin—with the exception of the *Mirror of Princely Deeds*—the source text of the translation is not the Spanish original, but its intermediate French version (in this case probably also compared with an Italian version). *Palladine of England* (1588) is the focus of Chapter 4 by Agustín López Avilés (73–86), a largely free translation by Anthony Munday of the

first forty-six chapters of *Florando de Inglaterra* (1545) drawing from the French version of Claude Colet (*L'Histoire Palladienne*, 1555).

The English translations of the extensive Spanish *Primaleón* (1512), sequel to *Palmerín de Olivia*, are dealt with in two different chapters: Leticia Álvarez-Recio in the fifth chapter (87–104) takes stock of the *Palmendos* (1589), a partial translation of the *Primaleón* by Anthony Munday on the first thirty-two chapters of François de Vernassal's French version, corresponding to the first forty-five of the Spanish original, which deal with the vicissitudes of the knight Polendos (called Palmendos in the French and English versions). Álvarez-Recio also focuses on the relationship between *Palmendos* and a parallel and alternative translation of the same chapters of *Primaleón* published in 1596 by William Barley under the misleading title of *The delightful history of Celestina the faire*, a ploy to attract potential readers and also to avoid accusations of plagiarism and of infringement of *Palmendos'* printing privileges. The remaining parts of the *Primaleón*, all translated by Munday and published in three volumes between 1595 and 1619, are analyzed by María Beatriz Hernández Pérez in Chapter 7 (123–140), which delves into Munday's role, in particular in his relationship with the printed book industry, the guild of printers and booksellers and other translators of the Iberian chivalric genre.

The progenitor of the genre, *Amadís de Gaula* (1508) began to be translated in Europe in the 1540s. Nearly fifty years elapsed before an English translation appeared (1590), a significant amount of time, enough for existing translations to multiply and sediment and for a predominant model to establish itself and overshadow both the Spanish originals and other competing translations. The English and German translators decided, in fact, to choose the French version of Herberay des Essarts as the source text for the first Amadisian book. As to the motivations for this choice there is above all an exquisitely literary reason: the stylistic refinement and “courtly” style that des Essarts gave to his *Amadis*, creating a model of beautiful style, of elegant and refined prose that soon became fashionable, rose to literary canon, and expanded beyond French linguistic borders. Helen Moore discusses these aspects in Chapter 6 (105–122) of the volume, also arguing about the translation and reception of the successful *Trésor des Amadis* and the appearance, a few years later, of the first English translation of *Don Quixote* (1612). Alejandra Ortiz-Salamovich

deals with the remaining English versions of the Amadisian series. In the ninth chapter (163–178) she discusses the dubious attribution to Anthony Munday of the translation of the fifth book printed in 1598, as well as the wide interval between that publication and that of the next book in the series in 1652, the sixth English one version corresponding to the seventh Spanish one, translated by Francis Kirkman (*Lisuarte de Grecia* by Feliciano de Silva). Juan Díaz's original Book 8 appears as an independent supplement to the series under the title of *Don Flores of Greece* (translated from French in 1664), while the Spanish Book 9 is published nearly thirty years later, in 1693. As Ortiz-Salamovich points out, it is evident that the English Amadisian series is not characterized by the compactness and continuity that it possessed in Spanish and in the other languages into which it was translated and expanded. Furthermore, in later editions, the materiality of the book shows a deep change in both editorial standards and in the target audience.

These changes are even more evident in the creative and editorial trajectory of the books that compose the English cycle of the *Belianís de Grecia* (1598–1700), which Rocío G. Sumillera discusses in Chapter 8 (141–162). This cycle is worthy of interest not only because it contains the only original English continuations of a chivalry book of Spanish origin—parts two (1664) and three (1672) by Francis Kirkman—but also because the changes in form, content, language, and paratexts in the later editions manifest a generic evolution towards a sort of *feuilleton* literature for young readers or even children.

In addition to the brief profiles of the scholars involved in the project and the editor's *Introduction* at the beginning of the book (1–7), two useful appendices appear at the end of the volume: Appendix A (179–208) collects the bios of the translators, with the relevant critical bibliography, while Appendix B (211–212) consists of a concise and effective table of all English editions of books derived from Iberian *libros de caballerías* listed in chronological order up to 1700.

The book edited by Jordi Sánchez-Martí is a valuable and up-to-date guide to the reception of *libros de caballerías* in England, aimed especially at Spanish-speaking readers. Thanks to the type of research that led to this publication, the network of Amadis and Palmerin's passages between European languages and cultures (and beyond) at the time of the birth of the modern novel is becoming

more and more intriguing and multifaceted, and promises to be a harbinger of new discoveries and renewed critical perspectives in the near future.

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