



Romantic Strife: The First Carlist War (1833–1840) in British Fiction

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ABSTRACT

British volunteers fought on both sides of the First Carlist War (1833–1840), the dynastic struggle between the liberal factions that championed Isabella II and the reactionary forces that supported Don Carlos's claim to the Spanish throne. Despite British intervention, the conflict did not arouse as much interest in Britain as the Peninsular War (1808–1814), but it served as the setting for several English literary works that reconstructed it from different perspectives. These fictional texts include George Ryder's *Los Arcos* (1845), Frederick Hardman's *The Student of Salamanca* (1845–1846), and Edward Augustus Milman's *The Wayside Cross; or, the Raid of Gomez* (1847). This paper analyses these texts focusing on their representations of Spain and the First Carlist War and shows that they mostly ignore British intervention in the conflict and perpetuate the romantic image of Spain that had emerged in Britain during the Peninsular War.

KEYWORDS

Carlism; First Carlist War; Anglo-Spanish relations; Representations of Spain; Imagology.

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of Anglo-Spanish relations has been traditionally marked by conflict. After centuries of enmity, the Peninsular War (1808–1814) meant a turning point in their relationship and contributed to the diffusion of a romantic image of Spain in the British Isles.

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Almost three decades later and under very different circumstances, British soldiers participated in another Peninsular armed conflict: the First Carlist War (1833–1840), the first in a series of civil wars over the succession to the Spanish throne, which was followed by the Second and Third Carlist Wars (1846–1849 and 1872–1876). Upon the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833, his three-year-old daughter Isabella was proclaimed queen and, given her age, her mother María Cristina was appointed regent with the support of the liberals. The late King's brother, the Infante Don Carlos María Isidro, claimed his right to the throne as he denied the validity of the *Pragmática sanción* of 1830, by which the Salic law had been abolished in Spain. His claim was supported by the clergy and the most reactionary sectors of Spanish society, especially in the Basque provinces. Although the war between the Carlists and the Cristinos (or Isabelinos) emerged as a dynastic struggle, the conflict also had political, social and religious implications and confronted two opposing visions of the Spanish nation (Canal, 2000; Lawrence, 2014).

Despite its civil nature, Great Britain became involved in the First Carlist War too: the government supported the regency –even if they refused to send regular troops– and British volunteers joined both sides, although in different proportions. Whereas just a few intrepid adventurers joined the Carlists, a volunteer military corps of around 10,000 men known as the British Auxiliary Legion travelled to Spain in 1835 to assist the Queen's forces (Brett, 2005). In contrast with the 1808 conflict, this time, the British did not play a decisive role and, therefore, Carlism neither captured the attention of the public nor inspired British writers to the same extent as the Peninsular War had done several decades before (Valdés Miyares, 2016). Nonetheless, this does not imply that British authors disregarded the Carlist Wars altogether. Graham Greene's *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931) and Joseph Conrad's *The Arrow of Gold* (1919) are set during the First and Third Carlist Wars, respectively, and Carlism is the background of other narratives published at the turn of the century, such as George Alfred Henty's *With the British Legion: A Story of the Carlist Wars* (1903) or Arthur W. Marchmont's *Sarita, the Carlist* (1902). These works, however, are beyond the scope of this article, which focuses on the fiction of the First Carlist War published in Britain before 1850.

The interest in nineteenth-century Anglo-Hispanic relations and the representations of Spain in British literature has considerably increased in recent years, although scholarly attention has mainly centred on the literary responses to Spain in British Romanticism, a trend started by Diego Saglia's *Poetic Castles in Spain: British Romanticism and Figurations of Iberia* (2000) and followed by Almeida (2010), Coletes Blanco and Laspra Rodríguez (2013, 2019), Valladares (2015), Saglia and Haywood (2018), Beatty and Laspra Rodríguez (2019), Saglia (2019) and Perojo Arronte and Flores Moreno (2022), among others. More research is needed on the cultural and literary relations between Britain and Spain from the late 1820s onwards –including the Carlist Wars– as Saglia and Haywood have also noted (2018: 15). In fact, although there are a few studies that explore the diplomatic and political

relations between the two countries in the First Carlist War (Gallardo, 1978; Rodríguez Alonso, 1991; Santacara, 2015), the representations of the Spanish conflict in British fiction have been largely ignored until recently.¹

Considering the basic principles of Imagology, the critical analysis of national characters and stereotypes in literature (Beller & Leersen, 2007), this paper analyses how Spain and the First Carlist War are depicted in George Ryder's *Los Arcos: A Spanish Carlist Romaunt* with notes by George Merry (1845), Frederick Hardman's *The Student of Salamanca* (1845–1846), and Edward Augustus Milman's *The Wayside Cross; or, The Raid of Gomez, a Tale of the Carlist War* (1847). It explores these authors' portrayals of Spain and the Spanish people to determine whether their narratives of the conflict refute or perpetuate the romantic and picturesque image of Spain that had emerged in British print culture in the early nineteenth century. Moreover, the analysis is based on the tenets of New Historicism since the literary texts under analysis are read as material products of specific historical conditions. Therefore, in the analysis of their representation of the First Carlist War, due attention is thus paid to the authors' relationship and contacts with Spain, their views and involvement in the conflict and, more generally, British participation in the war.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first one serves as an introduction to the texts and their authors, analysing their stance towards the war. The second examines their portrayals of the conflict and the Carlist movement, connecting them with the figurations of Spain that had spread in Britain since the Peninsular War. Finally, the third section explores how Ryder, Hardman and Milman depict –or rather ignore– British intervention in the First Carlist War.

2. TAKING SIDES: DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE FIRST CARLIST WAR

The earliest reference to the First Carlist War in British fiction is included in the anonymous short story “The Maid of Toledo”, published in *The Ladies' Cabinet of Fashion* in 1837. It tells the story of Teresa and Rodrigo, two Spanish patriots who had fought against the French during the Peninsular War but several decades later were captured by Don Carlos and executed for their support to liberalism. The author sides with the Cristinos, but little is said about the Carlist conflict, which is described as an “unnatural war” (Anonymous, 1837: 420), probably in allusion to its civil nature. The war, however, plays a greater part in other works published in the 1840s: Ryder's *Los Arcos* (1845), Hardman's *The Student of Salamanca* (1845–1846), and Milman's *The Wayside Cross* (1847). There is a lapse of around a decade between the war and the publication of these texts, but such an interval should not be regarded as unusual or striking. In fact, many English novels of the Peninsular War were also published several years or even decades after the end of the conflict (Dendle, 1991). Nonetheless, their publication took place precisely at a time when Carlism was again in the

spotlight. In 1845, the pretender Don Carlos abdicated in favour of his son Carlos Luis to facilitate a marriage between him and Isabella II. The Queen eventually married his cousin Francisco de Asís de Borbón in 1846, and this motivated a new outbreak of the conflict, which is known as the Second Carlist War or War of the Matiners (1846–1849). *Los Arcos*, *The Student of Salamanca*, and *The Wayside Cross* were thus published in the context of this second Carlist rebellion, but none of them does specifically refer to it. Only Merry, the author of the notes to Ryder's *Los Arcos*, regrets that the dispute was not over yet, and Milman wonders whether the situation in Spain was better then than in the years of the First Carlist War (Milman, 1847: 132; Ryder, 1845: 78). Therefore, there is no explicit connection between these works and the Second Carlist War, but the re-emergence of the conflict probably encouraged the writers to publish them.²

The three texts under analysis recreate the situation in Spain in the 1830s from different perspectives. Ryder's metrical tale *Los Arcos* is the result of its author's juvenile enthusiasm for the ill-fated Carlist general Santos Ladrón, as he explained a few years later in the preface to *Gillian; and Other Poems* to refute allegations that he had supported Don Carlos (1858: vii–viii). Although he claimed that his poem had no political intention, *Los Arcos* exhibits a clear bias in favour of the Carlists, which is evident in its dedication to Viscount Ranelagh, introduced as “the leader of King Charles's party in England” (Ryder, 1845: vii). Ranelagh travelled to Spain in late 1835 to fight for the Carlist cause (Anonymous, 1838: 220–230), and there he may have met Merry, the author of the epilogue and notes contained in *Los Arcos*, who was also a volunteer in the Carlist army (Ryder, 1858: vii). Both Merry's notes and Ryder's poem present Carlism as a noble and legitimate cause led by true patriots like Ladrón, the hero of the story. The action is set in Navarre at the onset of the war, when Ladrón proclaimed Carlos V King of Spain and gathered a band of men, who were defeated in Los Arcos by the Queen's army. Ladrón was eventually captured and executed, but most of his followers were sent to a prison in Cadiz. At the end of the poem, one of these war prisoners, Manuel, recalls Ladrón's story when, after a six-year captivity, he is reunited with his beloved Andresa. Ryder suitably called his poem a *romaunt* as his story underlines the chivalric and heroic aspects of the Carlist rebellion.

On the other hand, Hardman offers a more prosaic account of the war in his novel *The Student of Salamanca*, first published in instalments in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* between 1845 and 1846 and then printed in one volume in 1847. The title evokes Washington Irving's short story “The Student of Salamanca”, included in *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), and José de Espronceda's *El estudiante de Salamanca* (1837), but Hardman's novel is not connected with any of them. Hardman may have drawn inspiration from his own experiences in Spain since, having enlisted the British Auxiliary Legion, he fought against the Carlists and was severely injured in the final stages of the war (Alger, 1890: 347).

In the 1840s, he became a regular contributor to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and published some articles and tales about Spain and its recent history that he collected in *Peninsular Scenes and Sketches* (1846). He also returned to Spain in 1854 as the Madrid correspondent of *The Times* and continued writing about Spanish affairs in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in the 1850s (García Castañeda, 2017: 443). He was thus familiar with Spain and the First Carlist War when he wrote *The Student of Salamanca*. The story is set in Navarre and the Basque provinces and recounts the war from beginning to end, although focusing on the years 1833–1835. The main character is Luis Herrera, a young officer of the Spanish army who, after a series of incidents and combats, regains the favour of the Count of Villabuena, a Carlist supporter and the father of his former fiancée. Although these characters are fictional, Hardman explains the development of the war in considerable detail, describes the guerrilla warfare tactics of the two factions and introduces historical figures like Tomás de Zumalacárregui, Francisco Espoz y Mina or Luis Fernández de Córdoba. Even if the author tries to employ a neutral tone throughout most of the narrative, his sympathies are with the liberal army of the Queen, to which the main character belongs.

Whereas Ryder's and Hardman's narratives are set in the northern front, the plot of Milman's novella *The Wayside Cross; or, The Raid of Gomez* takes place in Andalusia in the context of the six-month expedition led by Miguel Gómez in 1836 in an unsuccessful attempt to mobilise Carlist supporters in southern Spain. Milman was familiar with this expedition because he was stationed in the garrison of Gibraltar at the time (Milman, 1847: 132). His work abounds in stereotypes about Spain, including bullfights, bandits, romantic scenery and allusions to the Inquisition and the traditional siesta. It tells the story of Juan, a young and bold man who was eager to fight for the Carlist cause but, after falling in love with Frascita and experiencing the violence of war, he eventually realised that the conflict had caused only suffering to his compatriots. This evolution in Juan's ideas is related to the aim of Milman's novel, which in his own words is to “depict the utter lawlessness and consequent misery of a naturally beautiful and gay country . . . under the bloodstained horrors of an unnatural civil war” (132). In order to depict these horrors, he includes a series of gory scenes that portray a remarkably violent and vengeful society, even if the principal characters in the story are not soldiers and warriors, but bandits and smugglers.

The three authors adopt different attitudes towards the First Carlist War. Their responses to this conflict thus range from Ryder's manifest sympathies for the Carlists and Hardman's less explicit support for the Cristino faction to Milman's apparent neutrality, which actually serves to denounce the atrocities committed by both parties. As the following section examines, these approaches to the conflict have an effect on their representations of Spain and the Carlist movement.

3. LAND OF CONFLICT: CIVIL WAR, CHIVALRIC RESISTANCE AND DOOMED HEROES

Setting their stories in the First Carlist War, Ryder, Hardman and Milman perpetuate the Romantic conception of Spain as an area of conflict. As Saglia explains, “either directly or indirectly, the ways in which Spain was narrated by the British Romantics owed much to the general perception of this nation as a conflictive area” since the Peninsular War had contributed to fix the image of Spain as a place of patriotic struggle, revolution, and military conflict (Saglia, 2000: 19). Influenced by the events of the Peninsular War, Romantic authors show a tendency to present Spain as a nation constantly forced to fight against foreign enemies to preserve their liberty and integrity. They interpret the fights between the Numantians and the Romans, the Christians and the Moors, and the Spanish guerrillas and the Napoleonic troops as conflicts between “Spanish” patriots and external foes. Heroism, patriotism, and freedom-fighting figure prominently in the narratives of the Peninsular War and also appear in these works on the First Carlist War, although applied to another type of struggle: a civil armed conflict.

The civil nature of this war is a central issue in both *Los Arcos* and *The Wayside Cross*, but not in *The Student of Salamanca*. Hardman portrays two separate factions, but he does not seem especially concerned about the particularly tragic circumstances of a civil conflict that divided families and friends. This is in marked contrast with the two other texts. As indicated above, Milman’s aim in *The Wayside Cross* was to depict the horrors of the First Carlist War, which he considered “unnatural in its origin, ferocious in its progress, miserable and pusillanimous in its execution, demoralizing in its consequence, and its end anarchy and confusion” (Milman, 1847: 25). He refers to the “unnatural” nature of the conflict in other passages using this term to denounce the inhuman and monstrous behaviour of the contenders as well as to claim that the war was not justifiable (105, 114, 132). Although he does not discuss whether Don Carlos’s claim to the throne was legitimate or not, he argues that the war was absurd inasmuch as a dynastic struggle could not account for such bloodshed and destruction. “Oh, Mother of Heaven, why are there any Carlists?” wonders Frascita at the end of the story (115)—a question that seems to encapsulate the author’s views on the conflict.

Los Arcos also portrays the extremely painful consequences of the war for the Spanish people, especially in the notes, where Merry includes two anecdotes showing how the conflict had torn families apart (Ryder, 1845: 78–80). The first is the story of a woman who had lost her mind after the death of her two sons. One of them (a Carlist) killed his brother (a Cristino) and, when the former realized that the man he had shot was his own brother, he fell ill and eventually died. The other story is that of a young Cristino soldier worried about his father, who was fighting on the Carlist side. When a Carlist prisoner told him that his father was alive, he felt so grateful that he provided his father’s comrade with a

bed and tobacco. In the poem, Ryder also presents two friends fighting against each other: Santos Ladrón and the general Manuel Lorenzo. After being captured by the Cristinos, Ladrón requests to speak to his former friend and says goodbye to him before being executed (49–51). Ryder and Merry incorporate these sentimental scenes to illustrate the suffering of the population but, in contrast with Milman, they believe that the cause of the conflict was justifiable and legitimate. In the introduction, they claim that Ferdinand VII's decision to revoke the Salic law was “indecently illegal”, and they recognise Don Carlos as the rightful king of Spain (xiii). These ideas are also expressed in the poem. In the speech pronounced by Ladrón just before the battle of Los Arcos, the Carlist leader celebrates the heroic behaviour that the Navarrese had shown in the Peninsular War, but he warns his men that this time their cause was “sterner” but “right”:

But ours is now a sterner cause,
 The stoutest heart would make to pause,
 And yet it is a cause of right,
 Though Spain against her sons must fight.
 Alas! that civil war should drain
 The best blood of the best of Spain,
 That ever should our Spanish throne
 Be filled by rulers not its own.
 (...) Away –we have cast off the yoke,
 As sons of Spain we yet will live,
 Her proudest sons –as thus we give
 A cheer, –whose echoes loud shall ring,
 Carlos the Fifth –our own –our King. (Ryder, 1845: 24)

Ryder presents the Carlist uprising as “a cause of right”, that is, a cause of dynastic legitimacy. However, the phrase is ambiguous and he might have wanted to provide the war with an ethical or moral dimension too, regarding it as a struggle between right (the Carlists) and wrong (the Cristinos). This interpretation is in tune with his support to the Carlist faction, which he identifies as *authentic* Spain. When in the preceding passage Ladrón tells his men that “Spain against her sons must fight”, “Spain” refers to Carlist Spain, the one that must enthrone their “own” king and depose those “rulers not its own”. As opposed to Don Carlos, these rulers are considered alien to Spain not only because the Queen Regent was of Italian origin, but mostly because she and the liberals who supported her did not represent the *true* Spanish identity. Ladrón thus establishes a contrast between them –“the best of Spain”– and the rest, anticipating the debates on the two antagonist Spains that still resonate nowadays.

Despite this association between Carlism and the Spanish national identity, Carlism did not emerge as a nationalist force but as a traditionalist movement which argued for the restoration of the Old Regime. Although the ideology of the early Carlism of the First Carlist War was not completely cohesive yet, it can be defined as a royalist, ultra-Catholic and anti-liberal front (Lawrence, 2014: 20). For Ryder, the Carlists were convinced freedom-fighters and the liberal reforms introduced during the Queen's regency were a deviation from the Spanish tradition and a "yoke" from which the Spanish people should free themselves (Ryder, 1845: 24, 29). This emphasis on freedom, however, is not connected with the individual liberties promoted by nineteenth-century liberalism because they are precisely what the Carlists and the authors of *Los Arcos* opposed. In the introduction to the poem, Ryder describes liberal reforms as "hideous and repulsive" manifestations of "anarchical liberty" that "sensible men" despised (xii). Then, in the notes, Merry explains that the Carlists stood for "their King and Religion" against "Revolutionary Oppression" (77), thus appropriating the concept of freedom. Furthermore, this fight for freedom was related to the vindication of the traditional *fueros*, that is, the laws that have guaranteed a wider degree of self-government in Navarre and the Basque provinces and have been traditionally associated with the Carlists' agenda. Merry also alludes to these *fueros* in the notes when he argues that "the Navarrese enjoy special laws and privileges, which render them the freest, and perhaps the happiest people in Spain" (77). The Carlist desire to preserve their traditional laws, values and customs together with a nostalgia for the past pervades both Ryder's poem and Merry's notes, but the authors fail to discuss the nature of the liberal reforms they opposed and their political and socio-economic effects in any depth.

The fascination for Carlism showed by the authors of *Los Arcos* is also connected with the romantic figurations of Spain in Europe and, most particularly, with the romantic charm of the Carlist movement as a relic of the past. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, certain European Romantic authors –including Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel, for example– felt attracted by Spanish non-modernity and celebrated Spain as an exotic land where medieval chivalry had not disappeared yet. As Iarocci (2006: 24) argues, Romantic historicists believed that Spain possessed "a national spirit that had heroically resisted a modern world that was now beginning to come into question". This chivalric resistance to modernity was also part of the Carlist cause and attracted other contemporary Europeans, such as the authors of *Los Arcos*. In fact, in one of the notes Merry praises the "chivalric bravery" that the Navarrese had inherited from their ancestors and displayed in their struggle against the liberals, which connects the Carlists with the heroic deeds of a past world that was falling apart (Ryder, 1845: 77).

Moreover, this romantic image of the Carlists is also related to their idealism. When exploring foreign interpretations of the Carlist Wars, Capistegui Gorasurreta (2008: 139) identifies a "romantic interest" in the Carlist insurrection between 1830 and 1860 inasmuch as

it was the “manifestation of a struggle to attain one’s own ideals”. This idealism is well attested in *Los Arcos*, where the peculiar devotedness and enthusiasm of the Carlists are specifically contrasted with the more worldly motivations and mechanic way of fighting of the Cristinos (Ryder, 1845: 59–60). A similar distinction can be found in *The Student of Salamanca*. Hardman portrays the Cristino forces as a professional army whereas he depicts the Carlist troops as a group of non-experienced volunteers and *guerrilleros* who stood out for their “tenacious courage and hardihood” (Hardman, 1845–1846: 49). Even if his sympathies are with the Queen Regent, he is somehow captivated by the boldness and loyalty of the Carlists, whom he compares with wolves:

During the whole winter, the Carlists lived like wolves in the mountains, surrounded by ice and snow, cheerfully supporting incredible hardships and privations. Nay, even under such disadvantages, their numbers increased, and their discipline improved; and when the spring came they presented the appearance, not of a band of robbers, as their opponents had hitherto designated them, but of a body of regular troops, hardy and well organised, devoted to their general, and enthusiastic for the cause they defended. (Hardman, 1845–1846: 49–50)

By underlining their zeal and commitment, to a certain extent, Hardman also romanticises their struggles and shows respect and even admiration for the Carlists, although his depiction is less idealized than the one in *Los Arcos*.

On the other hand, Milman offers a far less heroic portrayal of the Carlists in tune with his pessimist representation of the war. However, he expresses a certain degree of esteem for Miguel Gómez, the leader of the Carlist expedition of 1836, who is one of the secondary characters in his novella. Milman introduces him as follows:

And there, stretched at full length on a gaudily striped though somewhat soiled manta, smoking a cigar, lay the most formidable, the most energetic, the most unfortunate, the most enterprising, and the most mysterious of all the leaders of the bands of Carlos Quinto. He who was here to-day –gone tomorrow! He by whom the nearly impracticable sierras were crossed with a rapidity which none could equal! He who was branded as a traitor by both parties! The pursuer and the pursued! The impenetrable and flying Gomez! (Milman, 1847: 12)

The author seems impressed by Gómez’s intrepidity and his ability to outwit the liberal troops that were persecuting him all around the country. Although his expedition was doomed to failure, he did not surrender and continued travelling southwards in a fruitless attempt to spread the rebellion to other regions. As the Carlist movement itself, his was a lost cause, but his determination to keep on fighting provided his expedition with a romantic

allure. Moreover, for Milman, Gómez remained an enigmatic and tragic figure: when he returned to the north of Spain, he was considered a traitor by his own party. In the epilogue, Milman comments that he had heard rumours that Gómez had been tried by a martial court and then condemned to death, but he believed that he was held in custody in France (Milman, 1847: 135). Actually, Gómez was in France but as an exile, not a prisoner. He returned to Spain in 1846 with the outbreak of the Second Carlist War, but after the defeat of the Carlists in 1849, he fled again to France.

Tragic Carlist heroes based on historical figures are also present in *Los Arcos* and *The Student of Salamanca*. In fact, *Los Arcos* recreates the fall of Santos Ladrón, the first to proclaim Carlos V in 1833. As explained above, Ryder was fascinated by the story of this unfortunate officer, and this is the reason why he decided to write the poem (Ryder, 1845: vii–viii). As for Hardman's *The Student of Salamanca*, it features the renowned Tomás de Zumalacárregui, the commander-in-chief of the Carlist troops in the first years of the war, who proved to be an inspiring leader and skilful tactician. His premature death in 1835 was a serious blow to the Carlist cause but granted him the status of legendary figure in Spain and overseas. His fame in Britain was notable: he was admired by King William IV³ and was compared with Spanish heroes like Viriato, Pelayo or El Cid (Howarth, 2011: 54). Hardman does not go as far as to match Zumalacárregui with these celebrated figures, but he offers a very positive portrayal of the Carlist general. He describes him as a thoughtful and grave man who was able to transform the ardent but non-experienced Carlist volunteers into a well-disciplined army. He was respected and obeyed by his troops, but he was not feared. In fact, Hardman underlines his benevolence and honourability and remarks that “although Zumalacárregui [sic] had been compelled, by the necessities of his position, to many acts of severity and apparent cruelty, his nature was in reality humane, and the shedding of human blood abhorrent to him” (Hardman, 1845–1846: 85). Moreover, in his view, Zumalacárregui had played such decisive role in the victories of the Carlist forces between 1834 and 1835 that “[t]he mere name of the Carlist chief had become a tower of strength to his followers, and a terror to his foes” (189). Consequently, his death meant a turning point in the development of the war: his men became “dejected and disheartened”, and his successors were not able to emulate his leadership and command (196). Zumalacárregui embodies the quixotic idealism of those who die for a lost cause, and, like Carlism, his figure aroused a romantic interest that somehow fascinated even those who, like Hardman, supported the other side.

Therefore, although to a different extent, the three writers somehow felt attracted to the Carlist cause and its doomed leaders. Their representations of the war differ, but their image of Spain is consistent with the romantic portrayals of the Spanish nation that had spread in Britain since the years of the Peninsular War. Nevertheless, the role attributed to Britain in

these texts is poles apart from that of the 1808 conflict, a question that is explored in the following section.

4. GAPS AND SILENCES: BRITISH INTERVENTION IN THE FIRST CARLIST WAR

Although the interest that the First Carlist War aroused in Britain can by no means be compared with that of the Peninsular War, British authorities and public opinion followed the development of the conflict with moderate attention. The British government wanted to put an end to the indiscriminate slaughtering of prisoners perpetrated by both sides, so in 1835 they sent a commission to convince the Cristino and Carlist officials to exchange prisoners instead of executing them without a trial, to which they agreed. However, these efforts to make the war less cruel should not be seen as a sign of neutrality. Concerned about the consolidation of liberalism in Spain –and the commercial benefits that Britain could derive from it– the Whig Cabinet and particularly Lord Palmerston, the head of the Foreign Office, seemed determined to support the regency of María Cristina. They thus provided the liberals with weapons and, although they refused to send regular troops, they promoted the creation of the British Auxiliary Legion, a volunteer military corps of around 10,000 men that operated in Spain between 1835 and 1837 (Rodríguez Alonso, 1991: 70–79; Santamaría López, 2011). The Auxiliary Legion, which was commanded by General Sir George de Lacy Evans, had a mixed performance. It was seriously decimated by typhus in the winter of 1835–1836 and, although these British volunteers contributed to the liberation of Bilbao in 1836, they suffered a humiliating defeat in the Battle of Oriamendi in 1837 (Lawrence, 2014: 98, 163–164, 254). As a result, they became the target of harsh criticism at home, especially from the Tories, who showed a preference for the Carlist cause and did not agree with the decisions of the Whig cabinet in relation to the Spanish conflict. The Tory press, including the pro-Carlist *Morning Post*, ridiculed the actions of the Legion using their apparent defeat as a means to discredit the Whigs (Santacara, 2015: 233, 252–253).⁴ Books and pamphlets were published to condemn Evans and his men or to vindicate the courage shown by these British volunteers on the battlefield. These include John Richardson's *Movements of the British Legion* (1837), the anonymous *A Concise Account of the British Auxiliary Legion Commanded by General Evans* (1837), Thomas Farr's *A Traveller's Rambling Reminiscences of the Spanish War*, (1838), Captain Martin's *The Dissolution of the British Legion of Spain* (1838), or Alexander Somerville's *History of the British Legion and War in Spain* (1839). Evans himself also expressed his views on the First Carlist War in *Memoranda of the Contest in Spain* (1840). Furthermore, the misfortunes of the British Auxiliary Legion inspired a burletta, Thomas Haynes Bayly's *The British Legion. A Burletta, in One Act* (1838).

With time, however, attention declined and the texts under analysis mostly disregard the role played by the British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War. Significantly, Hardman, who joined the British Auxiliary Legion, does not even refer to it in *The Student of Salamanca*. Milman alludes to it when Juan, the main character of *The Wayside Cross*, complains that “those terrible heretical islanders, the English, are assisting the usurper with men and money” (Milman, 1847: 15). The remark, which is not devoid of irony, obviously evokes past disputes between Protestant England and Catholic Spain and the firmly rooted suspicions that the Spanish held about the English, but it does not reveal Milman’s views about Britain’s participation in the conflict. Merry and Ryder do not pay much attention to the Auxiliary Legion either. In one of the notes to *Los Arcos*, Merry mentions “Sir de Lacy Evans’s once celebrated legion”, but he does not comment on it further (Ryder, 1845: 84). In the dedication, they express their gratitude to Lord Ranelagh for having shown a humanitarian attitude in the conflict saving some of his compatriots from “the merciless fury of an outraged and revengeful peasantry, whose civil and religious liberties were being trampled underfoot by a host of desperate and mercenary adventurers” (vi–vii). It is unclear who those compatriots were, but the authors might be alluding to members of the Auxiliary Legion. By contrast, in spite of Ryder’s active involvement in the war, they entirely disregard the presence of British volunteers on the Carlist camp –except for their dedication to Lord Ranelagh.

Their silence on British intervention in the conflict does certainly reveal a clear contrast with the English literature of the Peninsular War, which is also a consequence of the different roles and attitudes adopted by the British in the two conflicts. To a certain extent, the British, whose involvement was certainly instrumental in the defeat of Napoleon in 1814, appropriated the Peninsular War, regarding it as an Anglo-French war fought on Iberian soil. As Saglia (2000: 23–24) has indicated, as the war advanced, “Spain was edited out of the histories of a war that was increasingly turned into a British affair” so that in the end the Peninsular War became “part of a mythology of British heroism”. This is perfectly reflected in the English poetry of the Peninsular War and the Anglocentric histories of this conflict published in Britain (Coletes Blanco & Laspra Rodríguez, 2013; Lawrence, 2012). The situation is exactly the opposite in the texts about the First Carlist War since the British are almost entirely erased from their narratives of the conflict. The emphasis is placed on the civil nature of the war, and British intervention –remarkably less significant than in the Peninsular War– is completely disregarded. This time their mediocre performance could hardly appeal to their patriotism, and the British did not present a common front since British citizens had fought on both sides, so authors may have preferred to remain silent on the issue.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the whole, Ryder's *Los Arcos*, Hardman's *The Student of Salamanca* and Milman's *The Wayside Cross* perpetuate the romantic image of Spain that had emerged in Britain during the Peninsular War. Like their predecessors, they portray Spain as a land of conflict and underline the heroism of the Spanish people, but this time they recreate a civil conflict in which Britain played just a marginal role. Despite their different attitudes towards the First Carlist War, the three writers show a certain romantic interest in the Carlist cause and, more particularly, in the stories of its idealistic and ill-fated heroes. This romantic interest is more conspicuous in *Los Arcos*, where both Ryder and Merry show an unconcealed enthusiasm for the Carlist cause, but it is also present in Hardman's and Milman's texts, even when the former seems in favour of the Queen Regent and the latter denounces the atrocities of what he perceived as an unnatural and unjustifiable war. In addition, the three texts mostly ignore British involvement in the conflict, an omission maybe motivated by the controversial and mediocre performance of the British Auxiliary Legion and, in any case, in tune with the generally cold reception British volunteers received upon their return to Britain. Leaving aside the studies by Brett (2005), Santacara (2011) and Santamaría López (2015), academia has also neglected British intervention in the First Carlist War as well as the English literature of this conflict; therefore, more research is still needed on the historical accounts, pamphlets and memoirs published at the time of the war and on the later fictional representations of the Carlist Wars in British literature.

NOTES

¹ The research group led by Agustín Coletes Blanco is currently working on the European cultural and literary projections of the First Carlist War as part of the EURICAR'20 project. For more information on their activities, see their website: <https://www.unioviado.es/EURICAR20/>.

² Similarly, with the outbreak of the Third Carlist War (1872–1876), Carlism reappeared in British fiction, especially in periodical literature. The anonymous short stories “Diego, the Heretic: A Tale of the Carlist Rising” was published in *The Cornhill Magazine* in July 1872 and “The Curé Santa Cruz and the Carlist War” in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in July 1873. Moreover, Henry Vizetelly's “A Carlist Chief: In Three Parts” appeared in *All the Year Round: A Weekly Journal* in December 1877.

³ Stanhope (1888: 71) records a conversation between William IV and Miguel Ricardo de Álava, the Spanish ambassador in London, as retold by the Duke of Wellington, which shows that the King was sorry for the death of Zumalacárregui and hoped Don Carlos still had good generals with him.

⁴ The *Morning Post* showed a special interest in the conflict and sent Edward Bell Stephens and Charles Lewis Gruneisen to Spain to cover the war. Stephens and Gruneisen lived in the Carlist camp and can be regarded as some of the earliest war correspondents in history (Santacara, 2015: 233, 286). Stephens also published a two-volume account of his experiences in Spain entitled *The Basque Provinces: Their Political State, Scenery, and Inhabitants, With Adventures Among the Carlists and Christinos* (1837).

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