



**Serón-Ordóñez, Inmaculada. (2023). *Twelfth night llega a España. La versión de Jaime Clark: Traducción y mediación cultural en torno a Shakespeare*. Tirant Humanidades. Pages: 228. ISBN: 978-84-1183-212-0**

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Inmaculada Serón-Ordóñez's *Twelfth night llega a España* (2023) is a detailed and groundbreaking scholarly examination of Jaime Clark's 19<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish translation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth night, or What you will*. This monograph highlights Clark's significance in the history of Spanish Shakespearean translations by specifically emphasizing his approach of translating directly from English during an era when translations were mostly derived from French versions. The volume also explores Clark's efforts to maintain Shakespeare's use of prose and verse, while highlighting the translator's role as a cultural mediator. In these respects, it makes an outstanding contribution to the new field of Translator Studies. In addition, what is the first monograph dedicated to Jaime Clark includes a richly annotated edition of his translation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth night*. This is a highly valuable contribution, considering both how unusual it is to find annotated translations and how illuminating an annotated translation of a work by Shakespeare can prove for researchers, students, and instructors interested in the playwright and/or in translation. The annotated edition compares the translation to the original text and to other significant translations, analyzing Clark's work in detail.

*Twelfth night llega a España* opens with an introduction in which Clark's significant contributions to the history of Spanish Shakespearean translations are prominently highlighted. Jaime Clark, born in Naples to British parents who named him James Clark, is presented as the author who provided the first translation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth night* into Spanish. In this introductory section, Serón-Ordóñez underscores how Clark rendered verse

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into verse rather than prose at a time when translating into prose was common practice. The challenges and difficulties that Clark went through when translating Shakespeare's writing styles are explored, focusing specifically on the alternation between blank verse, rhymed verse, and prose. In like manner, Serón-Ordóñez succeeds in drawing attention to Clark's efforts to find a balance between his loyalty to the original text and his cultural and literary adaptations for Spanish-speaking audiences.

After the introduction, the main corpus of the monograph is constituted by three chapters. The first chapter explores the history of Shakespearean translation into Spanish, covering four major periods that span early prose translations based on French versions to modern English-based verse translations. The author clearly succeeds in tracing these four main stages: early indirect prose versions through French (1772–1872); the first faithful English-based translations by Jaime Clark and Guillermo Macpherson (1872–1896); further prose renderings by Cipriano Montoliu, Luis Astrana Marín, and Mariano Valverde (1896–1974); and the predominance of verse translations from 1975 onwards, foremost among them those by Fátima Auad, Pablo Mañé Garzón, and Ángel-Luis Pujante. Although Serón-Ordóñez provides a well-documented historical review of the different translations into Spanish carried out during these four stages, it is in the second period (1872–1896) that she locates Clark as the first translator to whom the first systematic attempt to translate all of Shakespeare's works from English is attributed. The author emphasizes that Clark's principal objective was to provide genuine Shakespearean translations for Spanish-speaking audiences and reinforces how he respected Shakespeare's variety of styles. At the same time, Serón-Ordóñez is particularly insightful in highlighting that Clark's project was interrupted by his death and that Guillermo Macpherson continued his legacy by following Clark's method of translating directly from English and preserving the combination of prose and verse. This makes the discussion of this period especially valuable, as it emphasizes Clark's often overlooked but pioneering contribution and effectively restores him to his rightful place in the history of Shakespearean translation. Therefore, although Serón-Ordóñez's overview of these four main periods is largely descriptive, it offers valuable historical insight, and the final concluding paragraph successfully synthesizes the main ideas in the chapter, underlining the significance of Clark's and Macpherson's work as the foundation for modern free-verse translations of Shakespeare in Spanish.

The second chapter is the shortest section in the monograph and delves into Clark's life and works. Serón-Ordóñez excels in pointing out that although Clark wrote in different types of genres, his crowning achievement comes from his ten Shakespearean plays in Spanish compiled in *Obras de Shakspeare [sic] [en] versión castellana de Jaime Clark* (1873–1874). The collection, which was originally intended to include all of Shakespeare's works, is accompanied by a thoughtful introduction in which Clark presents himself as a mediator between Shakespeare and the Spanish public. By detailing his method—using *The globe edition*, consulting other translations, acknowledging his limitations as a non-native speaker, and prioritizing both fidelity and naturalness—the author provides valuable insight into Clark's self-awareness and rigor as a translator. This information is especially significant, as it reveals the intellectual depth behind Clark's work and underlines his pioneering role in shaping modern approaches to literary translation in Spain. Therefore, this chapter, although the briefest of the three in the book, is very enlightening since Serón-Ordóñez provides a succinct but fundamental description of the most outstanding characteristics of Clark's Shakespearean translations that she will expand on in the following chapter.

The strongest part of the monograph comes with the third chapter, which is devoted to *Twelfth night* in Clark's version. It starts with an overview of the original text and its most important features. Serón-Ordóñez is brilliant at focusing on the comedy's complex language

and pointing out different characteristics that clearly highlight Shakespeare's diversity of styles. For this purpose, she relies on a range of well-established scholars to illustrate the linguistic and stylistic richness of *Twelfth night*, highlighting its position at the height of Shakespeare's comic career, his mastery of blank verse, and the abundance of figurative language (particularly similes and metaphors, along with metonymy, synecdoche, irony, and hyperbole), cultural imagery, and wordplay that complicate translation. At the same time, although Serón-Ordóñez points out that *Twelfth night* has a single text because the play only appears in the First Folio of Shakespeare, published in 1623, which offers a "remarkably clean and free of error" copy (Osborne, 1990, p. 37), a brief section concerning the textual variants of *Twelfth night* would have been appreciated in this part of the monograph. This issue has sparked a considerable scholarly debate among researchers discussing the play's various editions and the multiplicity of the apparent single text of Shakespeare's great comedy (Adams, 1978; Osborne, 1990).

Serón-Ordóñez makes a brilliant choice when selecting the translations used to compare Clark's version and provide additional translations for her audience. While she clearly states that the four Spanish versions –Luis Astrana Marín (1924), José María Valverde (1968/2000), Instituto Shakespeare (1988/2000), and Ángel-Luis Pujante (1996/2001)– all show great respect for Shakespeare's original text (Serón-Ordóñez, 2012), she also expands her analytical perspective by comparing Clark's translation with those by August Wilhelm Schlegel and Pierre Le Tourneur, the German and French versions that Clark himself cited as references. The author highlights how Clark followed August Wilhelm Schlegel's translation model and how Schlegel treated the formal aspects of literature, such as meter, rhyme, and rhythm, not as embellishments, but as essential to meaning. Additionally, Clark's decision to translate in verse, maintaining distinctions between prose, blank verse, and rhymed verse, is presented as a landmark effort to preserve Shakespeare's stylistic and poetic richness.

From a methodological perspective, the use of corpus tools such as LF Aligner to align the source text with its translation adds notable depth and methodological rigor to the study. It also highlights the author's meticulous and systematic approach to research while allowing for precise and corpus-based comparisons that enhance the reliability and analytical scope of her findings.

However, the strongest part of this chapter comes with the author's excellent and enriching annotated edition. Serón-Ordóñez continuously emphasizes Clark's effort to maintain the formal structure of Shakespeare's play while introducing different modifications necessary for the adaptation to Spanish verse, thus emphasizing Clark's role as a cultural mediator between Shakespeare's work and Spanish-speaking audiences. Numerous examples of amplifications, omissions, additions, substitutions, and translations that diverge from the original text are provided and explained, reflecting a translation philosophy focused on domesticating the text. Particularly interesting are the examples of religious additions and substitutions of culturally unfamiliar references, which reveal Clark's attempt to make Shakespeare accessible and resonant for Spanish readers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this sense, Serón-Ordóñez's footnotes and commentaries throughout her annotated edition are particularly helpful to explain these translation choices, while providing a critical perspective on how Clark contributed to shaping the reception of Shakespeare in Spain. At the same time, the presence of these translation choices also seems to indicate that literary translation functions not merely as a linguistic exchange but as a cultural negotiation.

Additionally, it is gratifying to find that Molina and Hurtado Albir's (2002) work is one of the major sources followed by the author, as this offers readers the chance to expand on their knowledge about translation techniques and methods used by translators. This theoretical framework brings rigor and clarity to the examination of Clark's translation

choices, while helping readers to understand not only the nature of the modifications but also the justifications behind them. By drawing on this well-established model, the author places Clark's work within the broader field of translation studies, thus enhancing the chapter's analytical scope and scholarly reliability.

To conclude, *Twelfth night llega a España* amply achieves its intended purpose of enhancing readers' knowledge of Clark's life and works and highlighting his contribution to and influence on Spanish Shakespearean translations. The volume also illustrates how Clark's approach to the translation of Shakespeare's works laid the foundation for future translators while demonstrating his ability to adapt the complexity of Shakespeare's writing style to a Spanish-speaking audience and reinforcing his role as a cultural mediator. The monograph captivates with its enlightening history of Shakespearean translations in Spanish, its meticulous account of Clark's life and works, and its enriching and exhaustive annotated edition of *Twelfth night* in its Spanish version by Clark. Serón-Ordóñez's compelling monograph is definitely a must-read for translators, researchers, professors, and students interested in the history of Shakespearean translation into Spanish as well as in translation and philological studies.

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