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ROBERT SOUTHEY'S *CHRONICLE OF THE CID*: SPAIN AS A TEXTUAL ARCHIVE AND AN INTERVENTION ZONE

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ABSTRACT: Far from being a mere medievalizing work meant to provide light entertainment, Robert Southey's *Chronicle of the Cid* (1808) was the first translation of a fundamental component of Europe's revered epic heritage and a complex work of scholarship. Through a careful exploration of this often overlooked masterpiece, this essay demonstrates how the author organized it as a multilayered textual machine aimed at an intricate operation of cultural construction. To this end, the essay offers a detailed examination of the origins and compositional development of the *Chronicle*, an analysis of its translational mechanisms and an assessment of its contribution to a wide-ranging process of «cultural translation» of Spain and its civilization into nineteenth-century British culture. In this perspective, the *Chronicle* becomes visible as an instrument of intervention into Spain and Iberian culture, into Romantic-period scholarly discourse and practice, as well as into the ideological debate on the Peninsular War. Through his composite text, Southey pieced together a multifaceted vision of Spain that translated into a cosmic vision of Europe and the West, as well as of world history and civilization. Finally, the impact of this work on later poets, historians and intellectuals testifies to the long-lasting relevance of its narrative of Spain for the imagination of nineteenth-century Britain and the rest of the English-speaking world.

KEYWORDS: Translation, geo-cultural construction, intercultural transfer, ideology, Islam, medievalism, Peninsular War.

LA *CHRONICLE OF THE CID* DE ROBERT SHOUTHEY: ESPAÑA COMO ARCHIVO TEXTUAL Y ZONA DE INTERVENCIÓN

RESUMEN: Lejos de ser una mera narración amena de tema medievalizante, *The Chronicle of the Cid* de Robert Southey (1808) fue la primera traducción al inglés de una obra fundamental de la venerada tradición épica europea y un complejo trabajo de erudición. A través de una exploración atenta de esta obra maestra frecuentemente ignorada, el artículo se propone analizar su variada estructura de máquina textual orientada a una operación de construcción cultural. En él, por lo tanto, se ofrece un estudio detallado de los orígenes y de la composición de la *Chronicle*, de sus mecanismos traductivos y de su

contribución al proceso de «traducción cultural» de España y de su civilización propio de la literatura británica del siglo XIX. En esta perspectiva, la *Chronicle of the Cid* emerge como un instrumento de intervención en la cultura española (e ibérica más en general), en el discurso y en la práctica de la investigación erudita en la edad romántica, así como en el debate en torno a la Guerra de la Independencia. Entretejiendo diferentes niveles textuales, Southey compone una visión polifacética de España que se traduce en una visión de Europa y Occidente y, es más, del desarrollo histórico de la civilización en general. El impacto de la *Chronicle* y de su construcción cultural sobre los poetas, historiadores e intelectuales de las generaciones sucesivas confirma la relevancia perdurable de su traducción de España para el imaginario de Gran Bretaña y de las demás culturas de habla inglesa a lo largo del siglo XIX.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Traducción, construcción geo-cultural, transferencia intercultural, ideología, Islam, medievalismo, Guerra de la Independencia.

It was Romantic-period writers, translators and artists that encoded and, thus, effectively produced Spain for the imagination of nineteenth-century Britain and the English-speaking world. As part of a European and more generally Western cultural development, the delineation of a Spanish myth in Britain relied on a substantial number of dedicated intercultural mediators and promoters (Saglia, 2000; Howarth, 2007). Among these, Robert Southey held an undeniably central role as one of the foremost Hispanists (and Lusitanists) in the early part of the century (Cabo Aseguinolaza, 2012: 176-86). Armed with one of the most impressive Iberian libraries in the country, he contributed to what we may call a process of «cultural translation» of Spain into the British cultural domain.¹ In particular, he gave a crucial impulse to the popularization of an image of Spain as the land of romance which underlies such resonant formulations as Lord Byron's apostrophe to «lovely Spain! renown'd, romantic land!» (Byron, 1980-93: 2, 23).

Byron left England for the Iberian Peninsula and his unusual Mediterranean *grand tour* in early July 1809. A few months earlier, Southey had published one of his most outstanding and influential contributions to nineteenth-century British Hispanism: *The Chronicle of the Cid, from the Spanish*. Between late August and early September 1808, the associated London publishers Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme brought out the book, on which Southey had been working for a number of years, as a handsome quarto volume.²

Henry Morley, Professor of English at University College, London, published an abridged version of the *Chronicle* as the fourth volume in «Morley's Universal Library» inaugurated in 1883. This stalwart of late Victorian literary erudition introduced Southey's narrative with a somewhat uninspired essay, where he concluded that the Cid and the *Chronicle* were valuable emblems of «an old and haughty nation, proud in arms» (Southey, 1883: 8). Twenty years later, Edward Dowden, the late poet and critic who dedicated several studies to Southey, noted that his «translations from romantic fiction, while faithful to their sources, aim less at literal exactitude than at giving the English reader the same pleasure which the Spaniard receives from the originals», and that his «chief

¹ Peter Burke has recently defined «cultural translation» as a set of practices referring to «the work that needs to be done by individuals and groups to domesticate the alien, and the strategies and the tactics that they employ» (Burke, 2009: 58).

² On 16 August 1808, Southey wrote to Grosvenor Charles Bedford: «You will have the Cid in about a fortnight» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1494); later, on 4 September, he reassured Charles Danvers as follows: «The Cid will speedily reach you, & Rexs [John King's] copy in the same parcel» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1501).

gift in this kind to English readers is *The Cid*» (Dowden, 1902: 197-8). This authoritative pronouncement featured in Dowden's biography of Southey for the series «English Men of Letters» published by Macmillan under Henry Morley's supervision.

Heavily fraught with Victorian cultural assumptions, these late nineteenth-century assessments envisage Southey as a cultural mediator contributing to a wide-ranging process of intercultural transference. They also depict him as a writer who offered his readers an insight into an ancient, remote and quaint civilization. Nonetheless, both judgments visibly underplay —indeed, lose sight of— the scholarly complexity of Southey's act of translation and its contemporary (that is, early nineteenth-century) topicality. In other words, they overlook the textual intricacy and patent ideological implications of its «writing of Spain». Seeking to re-evaluate its multiple meanings and ideological import, this essay focuses on the *Chronicle* in order to assess its customarily marginal position within Southey's output, as well as verifying the extent and peculiarity of its translation of a series of texts on Spain and its national hero. What follows is an examination of the mechanisms of importation, appropriation and reinvention through which Southey's *Chronicle* fashioned a portion of Spain's literary heritage for nineteenth-century British culture.

At over 500 pages, the quarto edition of the *Chronicle of the Cid* was no light book. A ponderous and expensive volume, it was not a source of entertainment in line with contemporary demands for medieval or medievalizing narratives. Similarly, it was not merely designed to satisfy curiosity about the attractively exotic literary and historical heritage of Spain. In fact, Southey conceived the *Chronicle* as a multilayered textual machine for multiple, interacting operations of cultural construction of the Iberian country, its past and its pivotal role in the history of the West.

WRITING AND PUBLISHING THE *CHRONICLE*

What is possibly Southey's earliest mention of his intention to write about the Cid appeared in a letter of 30 March 1802 to his friend Grosvenor Charles Bedford. On his return from his second trip to Portugal in June of the previous year, he had begun to develop the project of a «History of Portugal» that was to become the major unfinished project of his life (Dias Pinto, 2007). In the same letter he wrote «the growth of my history satisfies me», and announced his purchase of Robert Beale's Renaissance collection of «Scriptores Rerum Hispanicarum, after a long search» (no. 1420 in the sale catalogue of Southey's library). He added that he had «made some progress in what promises to be a good chapter about the Moorish period», and remarked further that «[t]he life of the Cid will be a fit frame for a picture of the manners of his time — & a curious picture it will be. putting what all that is important in my text, & all that is quaint in my notes I shall make a good book» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 667).

Around 21 June 1802, Southey wrote to his friend and patron Charles Watkin Williams Wynn: «I have begun to transcribe the Cid for you, & that you may have it in a portable form, in the size of Thalaba. besides I thought, as it will be so long before it can be printed you would like to have the manuscript as a preservable volume & in this shape what with notes & margin it will reach a hundred pages» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 683). He wrote to Wynn again on 13 July 1802:

Your Cid is half done. I regret the want of some Spanish poems about him which I know not when I shall get. but one of these is among the oldest poems in the language & whenever I do get it must be of great authority as to manners

— my documents now use the Chronicle of the Cid, — the General Chronicle which differs very little from it. the Ballads — & Sandovals Chronicle the Kings Fernando, Sancho & Alonzo, an excellent book that scrutinizes every fact & brings deeds & inscriptions to refute or confirm. (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 695)

A few months later, on 28 November, he informed Bedford that, having extracted some materials on the Cid from the chronicles, he had woven them into his account so that «everywhere where possible the story is told in the very phrase of the original chronicles which are almost the oldest works in the Castilian language» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 737). Revealing that the origins of the *Chronicle* lay in the author's work on the «History of Portugal», these remarks concurrently highlight his essentially erudite and antiquarian interest in the Cid, as well as confirming his view of (medieval) Iberian culture as a homogeneous, albeit multi-lingual, archive.

A crucial turning point in the project was the long-awaited arrival of the *Poema del Cid*, obviously in Tomás Antonio Sánchez's *Colección de poesías castellanas anteriores al siglo XV* (4 vols, 1779-90). On 12 March 1804 Southey triumphantly wrote to Samuel Taylor Coleridge: «You would rejoice with me were you now at Keswick, at the tidings that a box of books is safely harboured in the Mersey...»; «It contains some duplicates of the lost cargo; among them the collection of the oldest Spanish poems, in which is a metrical romance upon the Cid»; «Talk of the happiness of getting a great prize in the lottery! What is that to the opening a box of books» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 911).³ Yet, even with this precious book now in his possession, he continued to carry out extensive archival research. On 13 October 1806, he informed John Rickman that he was planning a trip to London in the spring «to inspect certain books for the Cid at the [British] Museum & at Holland House» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1226). Similarly, on 13 June 1807, he wrote to Hartley Coleridge: «The Chronicle of the Cid is to go to press as soon as I receive some books from Lisbon, which must first be examined» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1332).

Printing also progressed apace. On 11 February 1808 he informed Walter Scott that «[m]y Chronicle of the Cid is printed & waits for the Introduction & supererogatory notes, both which will be of considerable length, & must be completed at Holland House, where I shall find exactly those books which were out of reach of my means» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1426).

In the spring of the same year, John Hookham Frere promised Southey his translations from the *Poem*. This turn of events was all the more satisfactory, since the poet had first met Frere in Portugal in the autumn of 1800 on what was a somewhat embarrassing occasion because of the diplomat's recent contributions to the *Anti-Jacobin* and its fierce satires on Southey's 1790s radical poetry (Pfandl, 1913: 75-8 and Speck, 2006: 85-6). Time and their shared enthusiasm for the Peninsular War evidently helped to heal the rift between them, and Southey wrote to Walter Scott on 22 April 1808:

I saw Frere in London, & he has promised to let me print his translations from the Poema del Cid. They are admirably done, indeed I never saw any thing so difficult to do, & done so excellently ... I do not believe that many men have a greater command of language & versification than myself, & yet this task of giving

³ The original consignment had been lost in 1803. See Southey's letter to Thomas Southey of 29 October 1803: «... this damned war [with Portugal] has affected me in every possible shape. in the King George packet I lost a whole cargo of books for which I had been a year & half waiting & my Uncle searching» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 847).

a specimen of that wonderful Poem I shrank from, fearing the difficulty. At present I am putting together the materials of my introduction, which with the supplementary notes will take about three months in preparing & printing, — at least, it will be as long before the book can be published. (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1445)

On 9 August 1808 Southey informed his uncle Herbert Hill that «Freres translations are in the Printers hands. They form an appendix which will soon be printed, and in the course of three weeks I hope you will receive the volume» (Curry, 1965: 1, 480). All the parts composing the book were gradually falling into place and the date of its final publication drew nearer. Eventually, between late August and early September 1808, the *Chronicle* appeared in a print run of 500 copies. It was an expensive volume. Since the *Curse of Kehama*, Southey's Indian epic also published as a quarto by Longman and their associates in 1810, was priced at 31s 5d (before binding), we may infer that the *Chronicle* would have fetched a comparable sum. As already suggested, this was not a book for everyone.

Eager for favourable publicity, on 6 November 1808 Southey wrote to Scott: «A reviewal of my *Cid* by you will be the best aid that it can possibly receive» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1528); and Scott's appreciative piece duly featured in the first number of the newly-founded *Quarterly Review* (February 1809). Published by John Murray in London, this periodical was a conservative counter to the Whig *Edinburgh Review* and its scandalously pro-Napoleonic attitudes as expressed in the so-called «Don Cevallos article» on the state of the Peninsular War and the affairs of Spain (October 1808). Significantly, the *Chronicle* was one of the earliest publications to obtain the imprimatur of a new and redoubtable cultural player in the literary and ideological arena of early nineteenth-century Britain.

NARRATING THE CID: CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE

Scott began his review by noting that «[t]he name of the *Cid* is best known to us by the celebrated tragedy of Corneille» (Scott, 1809: 134). Undoubtedly, British readers had knowledge of the *Cid* before Southey's *Chronicle* appeared in print. Although in his 1797 *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Spain and Portugal* Southey himself said nothing about this figure and the copious Spanish literature about him, other travel writers included references to Spain's national hero. Touring the Peninsula in 1775-6, Henry Swinburne saw a play on the *Cid* in Barcelona, and reminded his readers that «the famous *Cid Ruy dias de Vivar*» was responsible for the reconquest of Valencia (1787: 1, 35, 156). Similarly, the hero was mentioned in a «Modern Description of Valencia» published in the *Town and Country Magazine* for October 1792. Occasional references also featured in historical books on Spain, such as the anonymous *History of Spain, from the Establishment of the Colony of Gades by the Phoenicians, to the Death of Ferdinand, surnamed the Sage* (1793). In 1802, the year when Southey began to think about a work on the *Cid*, two different poems with the same title appeared in as many periodicals: «Ximena and the *Cid* (from the French of Florian)» in *The Poetical Register* (January 1802, pp. 109-11) and «Ximena and the *Cid* (A Ballad translated from the Spanish)», *Monthly Magazine* 13 (July 1802, p. 558). In the same year, «A Gentleman, formerly a Captain in the Army» published *The Cid; A Tragedy, in Five Acts, Taken from the French of Corneille*, an extremely free translation of Pierre Corneille's play that was never acted but was mentioned in the *British Critic* and *Monthly Review*.

In comparison with these texts, Southey's volume offered a completely different treatment of the figure of the Cid, his narrative and myth. Through his multiple and comprehensive approach, he put the hero of Vivar on the map as a complex historical and fictional character, while also drawing attention to Spain and its medieval history and civilization. In the preface, Southey lists the three main sources for his translation — the «*Chronica del famoso cavallero Cid Ruy-Diez Campeador Burgos 1593*», «*Poema del Cid*» and «*Romances del Cid*» (Southey, 1808: III-IX)⁴ — and provides an introduction to each work. Not just a token of scholarly accuracy and critical awareness (for instance, he polemically asserts that «the heroic ballads of the Spaniards have been over-rated», Southey, 1808: x), this list also crucially introduces readers to the intertextual web that constitutes the volume. In point of fact, the most outstanding structural feature of the *Chronicle* is its intricate combination of different textual levels — the relatively short preface, the much more extensive introduction, the *Chronicle* proper, a sizeable apparatus of endnotes, and the appendix containing Frere's verse translations.

The introduction, in particular, is a pivotal part of this textual organization. Never completely satisfied with it, Southey wrote to Bedford on 16 August 1808, when publication was imminent: «The Introduction to be what it ought to have been, what I could have made it, would have required a volume to itself, — for my reading is far more extensive on these subjects than almost any person can suppose» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1494). What he had produced he described as «a rapid sketch» aimed at giving readers «a summary view of the previous history & existing state of Spain» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1494). In reality, the introduction is a wide-ranging and detailed account of medieval Spain from the Islamic conquest to the period before the emergence of Rodrigo Díaz. It introduces readers to the multilayered complexity of the work through side notes and thus makes manifest its graphic layout and twofold level of reading. These notes also highlight the historical framework of the *Chronicle*, which Southey then translates into a more discursive, and more colloquial, format in the expansive endnotes. Emphasizing history, the side notes indicate how the author expected readers to apprehend the entire narrative — as a historical delineation viewed from the skeptically informed viewpoint of present-day scholarship.

By separating preface from introduction, Southey assigned specific tasks to both sections and to the *Chronicle* as a whole. They were primarily intended to provide a list of sources and materials and to analyze them in a historical and contextual perspective. Southey's notion of history specifically illuminated this structural organization. He generally avoided the methods of conjectural historiography in favour of an approach that drew on the authority of the ancients to produce linear narratives aiming to be faithful records of the past without any authorial digressions, which he regularly relegated to the notes (Craig, 2007: 136-7). This approach presented historical evolution as a homogeneous process that, unlike philosophical histories based on differential developments, resists differentiated analyses of political, religious, military or literary and artistic events.

The prose narrative follows the introduction and is divided into 11 books subdivided into roughly 30 sections each. As anticipated, the *Chronicle* proper is complemented by a substantial 64-page section of endnotes, containing a variety of accessory information which enriches, yet also often disproves and corrects, the epic tale.⁵

4 On Southey's interlaced translations from prose and poetical sources, see Pfandl, 1913: 243. The poet owned copies of all these works, as appears from the Sale Catalogue of his library: Tomás Antonio Sánchez (3198), *Crónica ... Burgos* (3344), *Romancero de Escobar* (3349), *Romancero de Sepúlveda* (3348), *Romancero General de 1602* (3719).

5 On the practices and uses of annotation in Southey see Saglia, 1999.

The endnotes make plain the complex nature of Southey's Spanish and Iberian knowledge, and reveal the encyclopaedic tendencies of the volume. Compressing a wealth of heterogeneous details, this paratext is a genuine manifestation of Southey's multifarious Spanish archive. For instance, they contain translations of the Moorish *romances* «Paseábase el rey moro» and «Moro alcaide»; offer abundant details on the economic structure and revenues of the Umayyad empire; and provide plentiful information on the legend of Santiago, the city of Compostela, and the related tradition of Zaragoza's Virgen del Pilar. They also contain one of the most circumstantial narratives then available in English of the tale of Mudarra and the Infantes de Lara, for which Southey translated the relevant sections of the *Crónica general*. In the notes he also gave his readers a thorough overview of the figure and legends of Bernardo del Carpio, something which allowed him to present himself as a book collector and antiquarian, as he declared to be in possession of two epics about the hero: Agustín Alonso's *Historia de las hazañas y hechos del invencible caballero Bernardo del Carpio* (1585) and Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa's *España defendida* (1612) (Southey, 1808: 431). The notes also gloss the terms *hidalgo*, *adelides*, *almocadenes* and *adelantado*. They introduce readers to the events surrounding the fourteenth-century siege of Zamora, when Enrique de Trastámara killed King Pedro el Cruel's three sons before the city walls in order to force the town's military commander to surrender. They relate the history of the convent of San Pedro de Cardeña, explain who the Almogávares of Catalonia and Aragon were, and describe the *juego de cañas* or «cane play» typical of Islamic pageants and celebrations.

In addition, the notes mention a sizeable number of literary texts, from which Southey sometimes quotes either in Spanish or in English translation. These include Gonzalo de Berceo's *Vida de San Millán*; excerpts from the ballads on the Cid; Juan de Mena's *Trescientas*; and all the major Renaissance chivalric novels, from *Amadís de Gaula* and *Amadís de Grecia*, to *Palmerín de Oliva* and *Las sergas de Esplandián*. Southey also quotes from such historical authorities as Ambrosio de Morales, Bernardo de Brito, *Las siete partidas*, the *Crónica general*, Francisco de Berganza, Esteban de Garibay, Prudencio de Sandoval, Pere Tomich and Enrique Flórez. This impressive list of sources reads like preparatory work for his documentary and contextual research for *Roderick, the Last of the Goths* (1814), which he was composing in the same years and the endnotes of which draw upon and debate the same series of texts (Saglia, 2012: xxx-iv). Finally, the *Chronicle* closes with the appendix containing Frere's translations from the *Poema del Cid*, which Southey presents as having been «obligingly communicated to me by a Gentleman well acquainted with the Spanish language. I have never seen any other translation which so perfectly represents the manner, character, and spirit of its original» (Southey, 1808: 436).⁶

Through its multilayered structure the volume interweaves formal and epistemological modes ranging from poetry to prose, and from fiction to history, and —within history— from the fictional chronicles to the more reliable and scholarly works of eighteenth-century scholarship. Taken together, these modes define the *Chronicle* as an intricate orchestration of different textual levels, and, by the same token, make plain Southey's wide-ranging knowledge of Spain as a composite cultural archive.

The work is also a significant example of interlinguistic translation, which features in all its sections — from the prose narrative, to the endnotes and the appendix. Juan Miguel Zarandona has recently examined the *Chronicle's* combination of foreignizing and

⁶ Frere's excerpts correspond to the following sections of the poem: ll. 662-764 (laisse 33 to laisse 38, on the taking of Alcocer); ll. 3242-389 (laisse 137 to laisse 149, where the Cid demands justice of the King over the *afrenta de Corpes* by the Infantes de Carrión); ll. 3504-691 (laisse 149 to laisse 152, the Champions of the Cid defeat the Infantes in combat) (*Poema*, 1972: 437-43, 444-54, 456-68).

domesticating strategies (Zarandona, 2006), while Anthony Pym and John Style have commented on the form and rationale of Southey's and Frere's translations. The latter, in particular, are notable for their attempt at imitating the irregular metrical structure of the original. Southey's prose, instead, displays a remarkably archaic tone, «reminiscent of the Authorized Version in rhythm, syntax, and diction» (Pym and Style, 2006: 262). From the outset Southey patently fashions his narrative through the diction, syntax and rhythm of the King James Bible: «At this time it came to pass that there was strife between Count Don Gomes the Lord of Gormaz, and Diego Laynez the father of Rodrigo» (Southey, 1808: 3). Pym and Style point out the ideological motivations for Southey's choice of a Biblical-sounding language in light of his desire to promote «the conversion of a distant past into a call to action» in the present-day crusade pitting Britain and Spain against Napoleonic France (Pym and Style, 2006: 263). His aim is to effect a cultural convergence between the two allied nations: «Nothing better, then, than to have the archetypal crusader sounding like an English Bible» (Pym and Style, 2006: 263). Even if this interpretation is not entirely flawless, since Southey actually began working on the *Chronicle* well before the outbreak of the Peninsular War, yet, the idea of an operation of cultural convergence is both suggestive and relevant.

In a letter of 22 November 1808 Southey answered his brother Thomas, a naval officer, who had reported some criticism on his style and diction on the part of his own commander: «There is ... a language of pure intelligible English, which was spoken in Chaucers time & is spoken in ours — equally understood then & now, & of which the Bible is the written & permanent standard, as it has undoubtedly been the great means of preserving it» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1540). With this remark the poet intimates much more than the translator's identification of an appropriate register in the target language. It reveals that the *Chronicle* is an instance of interlinguistic as well as cultural translation, one which, as Anthony Pym has recently suggested, is «a process in which there is no source text and usually no fixed target text», and where «[t]he focus is cultural processes rather than products» (Pym, 2010: 144). In his observations on the language of the *Chronicle*, Southey refers to Biblical language as «peculiarly adapted» to the narrative style of the early chronicles, and as traditionally «appropriated to such narration by our books of chivalry» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1540). Adaptation, appropriateness and appropriation confirm that Southey saw his «Englishing» of the *Cid* as more than a mere textual transposition. Ideally, his work amounted to a wholesale transference of one cultural system into another. After all, he considered himself as the foremost contemporary «cultural translator» between Iberian cultures and Britain, and did not hesitate to announce that he had «intellectually naturalized [himself] in those countries» (Southey, 1823: 1, 2).

IBERIAN ARCHIVE AND GLOBAL VISIONS

What specifically reveals the cultural ambitions of Southey's *Chronicle* is the fact that he envisaged a peculiar afterlife for it, one that would project it well beyond bookshops and bookshelves. In a letter to Bedford of late November 1808, he noted that his book was «not a text for entering directly upon the present Spanish affairs, — tho a fair one for *touching* upon them» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1542). The volume could indeed be useful for commentaries on current Spanish politics and the Peninsular War. And yet this was only one in a complex constellation of references and meanings that the *Chronicle* drew on and activated.

First and foremost, Southey's volume made a previously unknown work available to English readers. It was meant to appeal to the learned, and the author explicitly defined it «a very curious monument of old Spanish manners & history» in a letter to Joseph Cottle of 11 August 1806 (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1210). Given Cottle's own aspirations to epic glory (with poems such as *Alfred* and *The Fall of Cambria*, 1808), in the same letter Southey proceeded to discuss a list of subjects for a possible heroic poem. Indirectly, therefore, the *Chronicle* was related to the poet's tireless rethinking of epic, the elusive grand *desideratum* for most Romantic-era poets (Pratt, 1996, and Saglia, 2011). By the same token, it was keyed to the author's overarching interest in the «archive» of Spanish and, more generally, Iberian cultures, their past and its written monuments. In this sense, the volume was yet another manifestation of what may be termed Southey's propensity for collecting and recording, as is visible from his voluminous *Commonplace Book* and the notes to his Iberian poems—from *Roderick* to the *Pilgrim to Compostella*—as well as those to the *Chronicle* itself.

In a review of Alexander Chalmers's *The Works of the English Poets* (1810), Southey enthusiastically dubbed the *Poema del Cid* «the most Homeric» of all the epic poems written since the *Iliad* (Southey, 1814: 64). In the same passage, he also added that «[t]he Spaniards have not yet discovered the high value of their metrical history of the Cid, as a poem: they will never produce any thing great in the higher branches of the art till they have cast off the false taste which hinders them from perceiving it» (Southey, 1814: 64).⁷ In adopting this position of superiority over Spanish ignorance, Southey explicitly set up foreign scholarship as more thorough and effective than Spanish erudition. Interestingly, however, he was also echoing a recurrent commonplace in eighteenth-century Spanish literature, which frequently voiced the need to jettison French cultural models in order to embark on a scholarly and antiquarian rediscovery of the national heritage (Torrecilla, 2008). In this light, the *Chronicle* does not merely relate to aesthetic issues such as genre, but also addresses broader cultural-historical concerns by giving readers access to an intricate socio-political and cultural panorama that awards an entirely new meaning to Southey's act of interlinguistic transposition. This multifaceted panorama begs the question of what Southey's «translation» is really about.

Primarily, the *Chronicle* is an embattled text waging an ideological campaign. Even though the author admitted his dissatisfaction with it, its introduction is a polemically pointed treatise on the origins and development of Islam, its confrontations with the Christian West, and the past and present impact of Catholicism on Spain. Through its focus on the Iberian country, the introduction examines the contours of Europe and its identity.

Laying the ground for Rodrigo Díaz's momentous irruption onto the stage of history, Southey explores and discusses the relevance of religion to medieval Spain and, concurrently, denounces the ills of Islam.⁸ This approach is in line with his customary attribution of densely allegorical meanings to the confrontation between Islam and Christianity. He read the war of 1808–14 in terms of a crusade, and defined himself an ardent supporter of the holy wars of the Middle Ages. After the publication of the *Chronicle*, in late

⁷ See also Southey's letter to William Taylor of 6 November 1808: «the Spaniards themselves have not found out that it is one of the most curious & finest books in existence» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1529).

⁸ The theme of the relevance of religion to the emergence of national communities and their transformation into nation-states bears traces of Southey's earlier fascination with late Enlightenment reflections on the ideology of religious systems (most notably in Constantin François de Volney's *Les Ruines*, 1791), as well as of his youthful intention to write poems about all the major world religions. Simultaneously, it anticipates his later engagements with the debate on Catholic emancipation and the promotion of the Anglican Establishment. See Carnall, 1960.

November 1808 he wrote to Bedford of his intention to «hold up the war as a crusade on the part of us & the Spaniards», and added: «I love & vindicate the Crusades» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1542). In addition, he made clear his perception of a state of national and international emergency for Spain and Europe by remarking that the Peninsular War was «a business of national life and death, a war of virtue against vice, Light against Darkness, the Good Principle against the Evil One» (letter to Humphrey Senhouse, 19 October [1808], Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1523). Later he reprised this idea in the introductory pages to his *History of the Peninsular War* by casting the entire conflict as «no common war», but rather a «contest between the principles of good and evil» fought not just «for the Peninsula alone» but «for England and for Europe» (Southey, 1823: 1, 1-2).

As part of the author's vision of the Iberian conflict «as a crusade on the part of us and the Spaniards», the *Chronicle* might obviously serve as commentary on current Spanish affairs. Narrating a constant and protracted state of warfare involving the Cid, its tale could double as a coded narrative of the Napoleonic Wars, and the Peninsular conflict in particular, a form of historical prescription that Southey developed further and much more explicitly in his Spanish-themed poems of 1814 — *Roderick* and «Carmen Triumphale». ⁹ In addition, the *Chronicle* and the Cid also function as tokens of the current Continental and, more generally, global geo-political situation. Southey's epic narrative of the past emblematically encapsulates the epic of the present, and the figure of Rodrigo Díaz is transmuted into some sort of patron saint of tirelessly single-minded battling.

In his 1808 essay on *The Convention of Cintra* William Wordsworth noted that, during the outburst of patriotic fervour against the French invaders, Pelayo and the Cid were key watchwords in the Junta's «address to the people of Leon» (Wordsworth, 1974: 1, 244). During the war, however, the Cid functioned as a watchword in a more specifically effective way in an episode involving Frere (who was ambassador to Spain for about two years from September 1802), the Spanish commander Pedro Caro y Sureda, Marqués de la Romana, and Southey, who reported the anecdote in the first volume of his *History of the Peninsular War*:

During Mr. Frere's residence as ambassador in Spain, Romana, who was an accomplished scholar, had recommended to his perusal the Gestes of the Cid, as the most animated and highly poetical, as well as the most ancient and curious poem in the language. One day he happened to call when Mr. Frere was reading it, and had just made a conjectural emendation in one of the lines... (Southey, 1823: 1, 657)

Romana, whom Southey presents as a cultivated man acquainted with the *Poema del Cid*, «instantly perceived the propriety of the proposed reading» (Southey, 1823: 1, 657). ¹⁰ Years later, after the outbreak of the Peninsular War, this line from the medieval poem was pressed into service when the British government needed to communicate with Romana in Denmark. The Spanish commander was stationed there with a 15,000-strong contingent of troops, the «Division of the North», in support of Marshall Jean Baptiste Bernadotte according to existing Franco-Spanish agreements. A British Catholic priest accepted to act as messenger and was given «[o]ne Spanish verse» as codeword, the line

⁹ See, for instance, Southey's reference to the heroic sieges of Zaragoza («Zaragoza may be the Saguntum of modern history») in his letter to Walter Savage Landor of 26 November 1808 (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1543). These sieges also parallel the many similar episodes (such as those of Zamora and Valencia) in the *Chronicle*, and anticipate the siege of Auria in book 3 of *Roderick*.

¹⁰ The line in question was «¡Aun vea el hora que vos merezca dos tanto!» (l. 2338) (Southey, 1823: 1, 657).

emended by Frere, which «would sufficiently authenticate his mission» (Southey, 1823: 1, 657). The operation succeeded and, allegedly, it was also thanks to this line of medieval poetry that contact was made between the British emissaries and Romana, so that about 9,000 of his 15,000 men were boarded on British ships and taken back to Santander to join the fight against the Napoleonic ally turned enemy.

Involving the two main agents in the compilation of the *Chronicle*, this episode emblematically confirms that, in Southey's output, the figure and narrative of the Cid are shot through with implicit meanings. For the *Chronicle* casts the hero and his tale as keys to unlock a whole panoramic conception of Spain and the Iberian Peninsula — that is, a complex geo-cultural construct emerging in increasingly clearer ways during and after Southey's second trip to Portugal in 1801-2.

As a structure composed of interlocking textual levels, the *Chronicle* encapsulates a vision of Spanish (and Iberian) reality amounting to a trans-historical and totalizing geo-cultural script which eventually overcomes Spain and opens up global perspectives. In the *Chronicle* Southey constructs Spain as the hub of a comprehensive vision of the world from the Middle Ages to the present. The very notions of Europe and the West depend on Spain, in that Southey's supra-national imagination reads and writes it as one of the crucial locations where the West materializes and is preserved as a discrete historical and cultural entity.

Accordingly, in the introduction to the *Chronicle* the author privileges a discourse of closure by emphasizing the long fight against the Moors and, more precisely, by giving pride of place to Charles Martel's victory over a Muslim army at Poitiers in 732. In the author's perspective, the Cid is a later embodiment of the urge to close the boundaries of Western Europe originating in that crucial battle. At this point, one may observe that «Cid» was an Arabic *sobriquet* and that Rodrigo Díaz was the protagonist of several acts of geo-cultural and geo-political transgression. In the narrative, Southey duly includes those moments in which the Christian and Islamic sides overlap within the fluid geography and politics of medieval Iberia. It is well known that, in the poem and the chronicle, alliances shift so that Spanish rulers may become the allies of Moorish kings. Similarly, after the conquest of Valencia, the Cid adopts the trappings of Moorish power; at the same time, however, he neatly segregates the Christians who take possession of the city, and the Muslims, whom he banishes to its suburbs. Thus, even as the narrative intimates forms of cultural admixture, it consistently reinforces the discourse of separation and closure that is a central concern for Southey in view of his literary and ideological passion for the crusades. In this fashion, the *Chronicle* imports and translates the significance of Poitiers, about which Southey wrote that «[t]he cause of civilized society has never been exposed to equal danger, since the Athenians preserved it at Salamis», as when «Charles Martel met [Abderrahman] by Tours, and destroyed him and his army» (Southey, 1808: xxv). Here, «civilization» evidently alludes to Western civilization, while the perfect tense («has never been») unexpectedly breaks up the flow of past events to highlight their relevance to present times and the fight against the Napoleonic threat.

These notations cast a different light on Southey's scholarly and imaginative investments in Spain. This country was part of an integrated whole made up of histories, languages, religions, political and military developments, literary traditions, folk customs and legends. In addition, Spain was crucially bound up with the origins, development and subsistence of Europe and the West. Viewing it not as an appendage, but as a pivotal location, Southey re-evaluated Spain at a time such as the decades between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the heritage of (mainly French) hostile Enlightenment pronouncements had relegated it to a marginal position in the map of civilized countries.

By inverting this authoritative topos, Southey made Spain, and Iberia in general, the vantage points from which the past and present history of Europe and the West could be clearly and firmly viewed. In Spain Southey found some of the earliest traces of those structuring ideological categories —the nation, chivalry, Christianity and the Church, poetry as the voice of the people, history-writing and chronicling, the connection of the old and new worlds, the integration of people, aristocracy and monarchy— that shaped Western civilization and set it apart from Islam and other systems.

In this perspective, the *Chronicle* is not merely a major instance of Romantic medievalism and chivalric fashion, or a prose detour into prime epic territory. Through its complex textual architecture, Southey reworked these aesthetic concerns into a representation of and a reflection on Spain, that doubled as a discourse of contemporaneity in which the literary and the ideological, the cultural and the political coalesced.

THE USES OF THE CID

Any definition of Southey's *Chronicle* as an interlinguistic translation represents a limited approach. As a transposition of multiple sources through a Biblically-inflected language, the *Chronicle* features a high degree of textual manipulation. It is also a multi-authored and composite text interweaving Southey's and Frere's contributions. Yet, on another level, it participated in a broader operation of cultural translation of Spain into nineteenth-century English-language culture. As such, it left many visible traces in its wake, which substantiate its fundamental role in this process of appropriation and assimilation of Spanish and other Iberian cultures.

Indeed, the *Chronicle* significantly re-echoed both within Southey's oeuvre and the works of other authors. Southey, for instance, referred to the figure of the Cid in book 3 of *Roderick*, while he mentioned the introduction in its endnotes. Apart from Scott's piece in the *Quarterly*, the *Chronicle* was reviewed in many other respected periodicals including the *Anti-Jacobin* (October, November 1808), the *Critical Review* (January 1809), the *British Critic* (May 1809) and the *Monthly Review* (February 1811). Even more importantly, it left traces in the works of several contemporary authors. Scott referred to it in a note to his 1814 «Essay on Chivalry» written as a supplement to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. His son-in-law and biographer John Gibson Lockhart frequently mentioned the *Chronicle* in his popular collection of *Ancient Spanish Ballads* (1823), though mostly to criticize Southey's scholarship and views on the romances.¹¹ The poet Felicia Hemans, who had been an admirer of the Cid since her youth, knew Southey's *Chronicle* and used it as an inspiration for her «Songs of the Cid» in the early 1820s. In his landmark *History of Spanish Literature* (1849) George Ticknor included several references to Southey's *Chronicle* in his discussions of the Cid, and recorded that William Godwin had recommended it as highly suitable reading for young men. Yet another trace may be found in the second volume of Samuel Astley Dunham's *History of Spain and Portugal* (1830), which features an appendix on the Cid where the *Chronicle* is repeatedly mentioned and highly praised. In general, as a regularly republished volume, Southey's epic narrative significantly shaped the Spanish imagination of generations of nineteenth-century British (and English-language) readers by converging into and reinforcing that cult of medievalism

¹¹ Ironically, in the 1870s, Frederick Warne published a joint edition of Lockhart's ballads and Southey's *Chronicle* entitled *The Spanish Ballads* translated by J.G. Lockhart, and *The Chronicle of the Cid*, by Robert Southey (London, 1873?).

and chivalric heroism which continued to provide influential models of collective and individual identity up to the First World War (Girouard, 1981).

The cultural relevance of Southey's volume was visibly rooted in its nature as a complex textual mechanism. It also relied on a notion of Spain as an «intervention zone», one in which discourse could translate into forms of potential or actual agency (Saglia, 2010). In point of fact, Southey imagined the *Cid* and the *Chronicle* as actively involved in contemporary Spanish affairs and the Spaniards' anti-French crusade. The convergence of military power, national heroism and historical destinies urged him to quote and rephrase the *Cid* in a letter to Bedford of 16 August 1808: «Huzza — Santiago & St George! Smite them, as my *Cid* said, for the love of charity!» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1494). If religion had its share in reviving the patriotic spirit of Spain, Southey also stressed the importance of the country's ancient chivalric traditions, emphasizing the Spaniards' «recollections of the deeds of their forefathers», a process in which «[t]he very ballads of the *Cid* must have had their effect» (to John Rickman, 13 September 1808, Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1507). As the author told William Taylor on 11 July 1808, the present heroism of the Spaniards amply demonstrated that they were the *Cid*'s «country men» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1479).

In this light, the *Cid* becomes a living force empowering the present effort and creating a trans-historical and geo-cultural bridge between the two allied nations. Not unsurprisingly, Southey envisaged his book as a possible instrument of intervention that might influence the course of events in Spain. On 13 October 1808, he wrote to Thomas Southey, who had recently seen service near the Spanish coast: «I wish you had had the *Cid* to have shown the Spaniards, — they would have been pleased to see that the *Campeador* was beginning to have his fame here in England 700 years after his death» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1520). In this case, he makes an indirect reference to the traditional legends, mentioned also in the closing pages of the *Chronicle*, that saw the *Cid* rising again in times of national emergency, a ghostly hero leading the Spanish armies to victory. On 31 October 1808, after reading the volume, William Taylor confidently wrote to Southey that «it will strengthen national sympathies at present of high value to the liberties of mankind» (Robberds, 1843: 2, 222). In the author's view, as well as in that of his earliest sympathetic readers, the *Cid* belonged in a process of geo-cultural and geo-political convergence of national spirits, a topos in the contemporary discourse of Spain that also permeated Felicia Hemans's youthful *England and Spain; or, Valour and Patriotism*, published in the same year as Southey's work.

In sum, the *Chronicle* must be viewed as a volume tasked with several functions. Southey's interest in epic and medieval culture qualified it as a scholarly contribution to the re-evaluation of the heroic poetry of post-Classical Europe. After all, this was the period when *Beowulf* first appeared in Copenhagen in 1815 and in Britain in 1833, while the Oxford manuscript of the *Chanson de Roland* was published in 1837. Nonetheless, as this essay has shown, the functions and values of the *Chronicle* were not exclusively literary. Seen as a possible aid in fostering relations between Britain and Spain and thus as an instrument to intervene in the current predicament, it was a text potentially endowed with extra-textual agency.

On 16 August 1808, Southey wrote to his brother Thomas: «Landor is gone to Spain!» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1496). The poet was struck with admiration for Walter Savage Landor when he learnt that his friend had gone to the Peninsula to join the fight. This decision must have impressed him even more, since, at exactly the same time as the *Chronicle* was being published, he was offered an «appointment in Spain» to write eyewitness accounts of military and political developments. Bedford, who was the bearer

of this offer, received the following answer on 8-9 September 1808: «Had I been a single man I should long ere thus have found my way into Spain» (Packer and Pratt, online: letter 1503). This remark provides a significant conclusion to this exploration of the cultural and ideological coordinates of the *Chronicle of the Cid*. It conjures up the picture of a lively exchange of texts and people that reinforces the idea of Spain as an archive and a zone of intervention, and of the volume itself as a central component in the multifaceted phenomenon that was the cultural translation of Spain into nineteenth-century British and English-language culture.

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