The Matter of Spain in Romantic Britain

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During the Romantic period, British representations of what could be called the "matter of Spain" responded to intensifying public interest in the fate of the Iberian Peninsula and its empires in relation to Britain's ongoing struggle for global dominance. In this struggle, modernization and accompanying discourses of modernity were perceived as crucial to victory. "Modernity" has diverse, often contradictory uses in research, so for clarity I adapt Anthony Giddens's exposition (*Consequences*; *Modernity*; *Transformation*). This adaptation sees modernity as a contested discourse formulated gradually by certain interests over the long eighteenth century. It centred on self-reflexive autonomous personal identity that enabled "pure" or disinterested relationships ranging from intimacy, conjugality, and domesticity through sociability, community, ethnicity, and "nation" to the "national" chronotope or time-space as persistence of a people in and shaped by a particular land over time. Such relationships in turn supposedly aided successful engagement with modernization's intensifying relations of risk and trust, new and changing chronotopes, new and expanding abstract or faceless systems and knowledges, and the necessity for disembedding from what was perceived as an outmoded or oppressive locus and

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re-embedding in one able to accommodate the "modern" and "national" subject. For many in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century this modern location would be the constitutional nation state, variously defined and designed. Together, these tropes constituted modernity not as a lived reality but as a discourse or way of talking and writing—a vision to live by rather than in. Such discourse arguably comprised much of what came to be called "Romanticism".

This chapter examines some uses of the "matter of Spain" in that discourse in Britain and the Atlantic world in the onset of modernity, focusing on certain salient examples.[1] "Matter" here has the now "obsolete" sense of "[t]he subject of a book, speech, etc.; a theme, a topic, a subject of exposition" (*OED,* citing last use as 1752), recently and helpfully expanded to mean literature very broadly that is "concerned to define a place and its people in relation to a heroic, even mythical, past… in (and often in response to) a context of contested definitions of political, territorial, or cultural boundaries" (Federico "Chaucer" 301). "Matter" in a similar sense was applied by the twelfth-century French writer Jean Bodel to Rome, (Arthurian) Britain, and France as represented in chivalric literature, though it could also apply to Greece and Troy, while "Spain" had such a "matter" purposely created for it in the fourteenth century by the kings of Castile and later by Charles V to promote themselves and their kingdoms/empires in the context of rival European monarchic and aristocratic cultures (Federico "Chaucer" 301–316; Federico "Writing"). Once circulating, such "matter" could be used by others, at that time or later, in Spain or elsewhere, for their own purposes, as happened in Britain's onset of modernity.

By mid-eighteenth century Spain was perceived in Britain as a still formidable but unmodernized and hence declining world power. The Scottish Enlightenment historian William Robertson's account of the reign of Charles V and sixteenth-century height of the Spanish empire, published soon after Spain's ill-fated intervention against Britain in the Seven Years War of 1756–1763, attributed Spain's decline to the inability to modernize caused by the establishment of the Inquisition. "In Spain and Portugal," Robertson wrote, "where the tyrannical jurisdiction of the Inquisition crushed the Protestant faith as soon as it appeared, the spirit of Popery continues invariable; science has made small progress, and the character of ecclesiastics has undergone little change". This contrasted with "those countries where the members of the two churches have mingled freely with each other, or have carried on any considerable

intercourse, either commercial or literary"—Britain was implicitly one of "those countries" (*History* 3: 450). Spain remained a serious military and imperial rival, however, especially when allied to Britain's most dangerous competitor, France. Attempts by Spanish *afrancesados* to emulate French Enlightenment and Revolutionary modernity were reinforced by Napoleon's intervention in the Peninsula to keep it in his anti-British coalition (Juretschke). In 1808 Napoleon replaced Ferdinand VII with his own brother Joseph, who initiated radical modernization, promulgated a modern constitution, and abolished the Inquisition and other aspects of unmodernity. Britain reinforced its ally Portugal militarily while differing forces of Spanish resistance sought restoration of the Old Regime on the one hand and creation of a modern constitutional state on the other. In 1812 the Spanish *junta* led by *liberales* or "independent men" besieged in Cadiz, promulgated their own modernizing constitution (Phillips and Phillips 206–215). This attracted considerable attention in Britain, where reformists saw it as a model for the constitutional nation-state they sought. William Cobbett even asserted that the Cadiz constitution was based "*with very few alterations*" (Cobbett's italics) on a draft sent to the *junta* by the English reformist Major John Cartwright (*Political Register* 12 October 1811). Expulsion of French forces from Spain enabled the restoration of Ferdinand in 1814, at the price of accepting the Cadiz constitution, which he soon repudiated, prompting widespread resistance and armed revolt in 1820. The ensuing Trienio Liberal restored the Cadiz constitution and inspired self-styled "liberals" across the Atlantic world. But internal Spanish conflicts enabled intervention by a royalist French army sanctioned by the Quintuple Alliance of Britain, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, restoring Ferdinand and his antimodernizing policies, while Spanish American provinces pursued armed independence, opening Spain's former empire to British interests.

British newspapers followed these events closely with news reports, verbatim dispatches, copies of documents, and "opinion" pieces, often cast in terms of conflicts between modernity and unmodernity and different versions of modernity in Spain, and focusing on Spanish constitutionalism and national resistance, in both of which Britain had interests. Such coverage was augmented by travelogues and surveys describing social, economic, political, topographical, historical, antiquarian, literary, religious and other aspects of the Peninsula in relation to modernity. Writers included Richard Twiss, William Dalrymple, John Dillon, Alexander Jardine, Henry Swinburne, Jean-François

Bourgoing, Richard Croker, Robert Southey, Alexandre Laborde, Philip Thicknesse, Christian Fischer, Joseph Blanco White, John Milford, and Maurice Keatinge, and military travelogue writers (see Fernández Herr). Historiographies reinforced these accounts, including Robert Watson's often republished *History of the Reign of Philip II* (1777), John Talbot Dillon's *History of the Reign of Peter the Cruel* (1788), Charles Hereford's *History of Spain* (1793), John Bigland's *History of Spain* (1810), and William Coxe's *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain* (1813), while new editions of William Robertson's works kept his analysis of Charles V and the Spanish golden age in circulation. There were numerous surveys and accounts of the Spanish empire. A stream of books covered related topics, including documents and commentaries on diplomatic and commercial relations, anecdotes of Peninsular "customs" and "manners", views of "the Arabian antiquities of Spain" (James Murphy, 1813), accounts of Moorish Spain (George Power, 1815), surveys of the Spanish empire, critiques of the Inquisition (Joseph Blanco White; Juan Antonio Llorente), narratives of the Peninsular War, descriptions of Spanish prison conditions, and accounts of the Spanish revolution of 1820. These books usually focused on policies and practices of and resistance to modernization in relation to Spain's historic unmodernity.

Writers of belles-lettres versified, fictionalized, and allegorized these topics. Poems included Felicia Browne's *England and Spain* (1808), William Lane's *Loyalty and Freedom* (1808), John Wilson Croker's *The Battles of Talavera* (1809), William Magness's *The Battle of Salamanca* (1812), Preston Fitzgerald's *Spain Delivered* (1813), Robert Southey's *Roderick, The Last of the Goths* (1814), John Merivale's *Orlando in Roncesvalles* (1814), and the first canto of Byron's *Don Juan* (1819). Novels included: M. G. Lewis's *The Monk* (1796); Elizabeth Meeke's *The Spanish Campaign; or, The Jew* (1815); Christian Isobel Johnstone's *Clan-Albin: A National Tale* (1815), linking contemporary Spain, Scotland, and Ireland; and Alexander Dallas's *Felix Alvarez; or, Manners in Spain* (1816). Dramas included: Sophia Lee's tragedy *Almeyda, Queen of Granada* (1796); Robert Mayow's "historical play" *The Abdication of Ferdinand; or, Napoleon at Bayonne* (1809); and Walter Savage Landor's *Count Julian* (1812). Books for youth included *Spain Yesterday and Today* (1816) by "A Lady" and Frances Jamieson's *Stories from Spanish History: for the Amusement of Children* (1820). Sensational down-market chapbook fiction included *Lermos and Rosa; or, The Fortunate Gipsey* and *The Perilous Cavern; or, Banditti of the Pyrenees.* There were street ballads

and graphic news engravings and satires referring to Spanish affairs. Even the Cosmorama, a popular London show, included Spanish scenes by then familiar through literature. Among the lower ranks, Spanish affairs were followed with intense interest as an ongoing sensational narrative and Spain was known through the stories of the many returning common soldiers, constituting a British folklore of Spain (see, for example, the autobiographies of John Binns, Thomas Carter, and William and Robert Chambers).

In today's academic practice such diverse genres are commonly treated separately and separately from Spanish and other representations of the matter of Spain, but for British observers at that time all could be used in formulating a matter of Spain in their own interests, and certain topics prominent in journalistic and travelogue-survey accounts recurred in literary representations. One such topic, already noted, was the Inquisition, its history, its supposed corrupting effects on individual subjectivity and social relations, its implication in the struggle for modernity, and its use as a synecdoche for certain kinds of unmodern and anti-modern regimes. A related topic was popular "patriotic" resistance to supposedly alien, incorrect, or excessive forms of modernity. This topic was exemplified in the figure of the *guerrilla* (a term that entered English) as a hero who was "popular" in several senses: as a man of the common people and of the "people" as an ethno-cultural entity over time, or what came in this period to be seen as the "folk"; as a supposed repository of the national character and culture and foundation in everyday life of the nation-state; and as a figure widely accepted and supported by the "people". An associated figure was the individual, past or present, historical or fictional, exemplifying the modern subject as foundational unit of a proleptic modern constitutional nation-state based on an electorate and government of such sovereign subjects. Frequently this figure was represented as possessing excessive subjectivity and selfhood, in two different forms: on one hand, the man or woman of passion, from erotic love to patriotism; and on the other hand, the national leader as rebel, guerrilla, or apostate, and consequently refugee and exile. The most important topic, however, was internal division of various kinds that weakened nations and empires, exposing them to external subversion or destruction. In this struggle the prominent figure was the exemplarily national individual, hero or traitor, patriot or renegade, believer or apostate, resolving or instigating internal divisions of people and institutions and using the national character and popular culture to do so. All of these topics could be found in the

matter of Spain and would be developed in British Romantic representations, translations, and appropriations of this matter in British struggles for modernity.

The Spanish matter of Spain that existed for such use was complex, comprising matter circulated in Spain itself and matter translated, circulated, adapted, or appropriated elsewhere in the Atlantic world. The earlier matter of Spain created in the Spanish Middle Ages and aftermath of the *reconquista*, or Christian reconquest of the Peninsula from the Moors, serving an ecclesiastical-dynastic nationalism and chivalric culture, mainly comprising popular *romances*, chronicles, and historified narratives, for example, as refashioned, in some respects, in Ginés Pérez de Hita's often republished and translated *Historia de las guerras civiles de Granada* (1595). This early matter was used in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century contests of court elites, emphasizing two convergent topics—internal divisions and decadence opening the way to intervention and domination by an alien power, and the character and role of the patriotic national leader who could embody, enunciate, and perform the will of the people, in contrast to the figure of the traitor or apostate on the one hand and on the other of the failed or premature leader as exile or refugee. The early matter of Spain offered certain moments for representing these topics. There was the end of Moorish rule in the late fifteenth century, when internal conflicts enabled the defeat and expulsion of the Moors by Ferdinand and Isabella, who then unified the Spanish kingdoms and instigated the voyages of Columbus that founded the Spanish empire. There was the supposed resistance to the Moors by the eleventh-century military commander known as the Cid, with the equally prominent figure of Pelayo, the eighth-century Visigothic leader credited with initiating the *reconquista* and so sometimes linked to the Cid, and the more recent figure of the historical general-for-hire Gonzalo de Córdoba (1453–1515), glamorized in popular literature as "*el gran capitán*". Recurring topics were the conflicts in Spanish dynastic and imperial history, especially those of Charles V and Philip II. This matter was used variously in and outside Spain.

In Spain these representations proliferated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, facilitated by the development of theatres and the spread of print, mainly dramas, historified fiction and historiography, and down-market collections of "ballads", or *romanceros* (Flitter, Chap. 1). Outside Spain, literary treatments romanticized the defeat of the Moors and the figure of the Cid, and addressed political-social conflicts in

various places. In both cases the historico-legendary figures were recast as figures of chivalry or courtliness, and their situation implicitly related to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dynastic-courtly intrigues and religious conflicts. In France, Pierre Corneille's tragicomedy *Le Cid* (1636) drew on an earlier Spanish drama and circulated in English translation but was supplanted by Colley Cibber's 1719 adaptation, *Ximena; or, The Heroic Daughter*. John Dryden's two-part verse Heroic Drama *The Conquest of Granada* (performed from 1670 to 1671; published 1672), drew on such sources as Georges de Scudéry's French heroic prose romance *Almahide* and the Spanish sources Pérez de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada* and Juan de Mariana's *Historia general de España* (1601–1609). A later English drama apparently from the same sources was William Taverner's blank verse play *The Faithful Bride of Granada* (1704). In such works, love as a subjective imperative is blocked by the hopelessly conflicted needs of state.

Circulation and use of such works and their sources changed in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century struggle for formation of a modern nation state. Earlier works were read in new ways related to modernity, or modernized in form, or recast in modern genres; and new works historified in various ways were created in terms of central themes of modernity. For example, by this time Corneille's *Le Cid* was receiving little attention and though its English adaptation *Ximena* was republished into the 1790s, this was supplanted by a new translation in 1802. Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* was now a historical relic but was given modern form in 1804 by Benjamin Malkin in his unperformed *Almahide and Hamet: A Tragedy*. Earlier and chivalric constructions of figures such as the Cid and Pelayo were now transformed into modern self-reflexive subjects engaging less with courtly-dynastic intrigues than with national and imperial conflicts and inspired less by chivalric and feudal loyalty than by modern nationalist and religion-based patriotism. Taverner's play left no trace, but its central situation, as in Corneille's and Dryden's plays, set love as a subjective absolute against political intrigues and martial conflicts, collision of civilizations and world religions, and proved irresistible to later writers in the onset of modernity. Other prominent periods of the historical matter of Spain were similarly adapted, such as the reigns of Charles V and Philip II. While historians such as Robertson represented Charles V as presiding over the acme of the Spanish empire, the beginning of its decline was attributed to his alienated son in Schiller's drama *Don Carlos* (produced in Hamburg 1787),

successful across the Atlantic world. The play modernized a favorite device of seventeenth-century Heroic Drama and prose romance by showing how proleptically modern "pure" relationships were obstructed and destroyed in unmodern court culture, imbricating a plot of passionate but doomed love in a situation of dynastic usurpation and conflict in the reign of Philip II, in turn related to a crisis of nation and empire in Spanish resistance to the king's absolutist policies and the revolt of the Spanish Netherlands against Spanish rule. At the same time, the historical antiquarian and popularized matter of Spain was refashioned in terms of a modern sensibility of subjective and social formation by the national chronotope. Historical-legendary figures such as the Cid, who had in fact been warriors-for-hire and were later portrayed in popular literature as swashbucklers and in elite literature as chivalric action-men with beautiful souls, were now endowed with modern self-reflexive personal identities focused on devotion to modern patriotism and nationalism, actualized as heroic and self-sacrificing, practical or vicarious, of the kind promoted by state or oppositional forces engaged in the Peninsular struggle and similar conflicts.

By this time modernizers in Spain were refashioning historic popular and classical Spanish literature and using literature from elsewhere to fashion a distinctive national modern literature (McClelland). The inherited matter of Spain, often popular in character, address, and market, as in the *romanceros*, was edited and elegantly printed to suit the tastes and interests of elites driving modernization and fashioning rival modernities. New literary treatments of the Cid and Moorish Spain across Europe were expressed in and drew from new editions of Pérez de Hita in Spain. But in price and material form these were now less for the popular print market there than for a new up-market interest in the historifications of national premodernity in which historical-legendary national figures were transformed into proleptic modern subjects. There was also a similarly useful new French translation of Pérez de Hita and Spanish editions published in Germany. In literature across the Atlantic world, "Granada" became a commonplace synecdochic setting for the persistence of unmodernity and modernity as a field of contest, as in the enduringly popular "Spanish" works of the American Washington Irving. The European Romantic convergence of history, fiction, and popular verse in and for a certain modern national identity could invent a predecessor in Pérez de Hita and associated texts of the matter of Spain.

Inspired by British initiatives such as Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* and the poems of "Ossian"—Napoleon's favourite poet—popular antiquarians, later called folklorists, were collecting and refashioning their own and other nations' earlier popular literature and contemporary folklore to form a national "matter" embodying a supposed national identity and culture as the basis of a modern nation-state and empire (Percy himself studied Spanish literature and collected Spanish *romanceros*). In Britain as elsewhere this movement prompted interest in the contemporary formation of such a national "matter" in Spain by Spanish modernizers who were refashioning domestic popular literature and culture for their own purposes, associating them with national popular and patriotic resistance to Napoleonic France. Thomas Rodd, resident in Spain three years, translated ballads culled from Spanish texts such as Pérez de Hita in *Ancient Ballads from the Civil Wars of Granada* (1801), reprinted in 1803 with new editions in 1812 and 1820 prompted by the Peninsular War and its aftermath. Numerous others essayed translations of the Spanish *romances* (Bryant). Robert Southey, who also spent time in the Peninsula, fabricated from Spanish sources *The Chronicle of the Cid* (1808), augmenting transformation across the Atlantic world of the semi-legendary eleventh-century mercenary into a major figure representing the modern national emancipator. Such work was re-contextualized by the popularly supported liberal Spanish revolution of 1820, the ensuing Trienio Liberal, and its suppression by military invasion. These literary initiatives were assisted by collections and narratives locating such popular literature in national literary history. British writers translated collections of earlier Spanish popular poetry, such as J. G. Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads* (1823) and John Bowring's *Ancient Poetry and Romances of Spain* (1824). Literary histories included the Spanish chapters of the Swiss liberal historian and economist J. C. L. Sismondi's *De la littérature du midi de l'Europe* (1813; in English 1823), Angel Anaya's *An Essay on Spanish Literature… from… the twelfth Century to the Present* (1818), and the English translation *History of Spanish and Portuguese Literature* (2 vols, 1823) from the German of Friedrich Bouterwek.

As the stakes for Spain and for Britain in the Spanish struggle over modernization increased, press, writers, and publishers in Britain grew more interested in Spanish literature and the matter of Spain in Spain and for British use (Rudder). Spanish books could be obtained, at least

in London, where William Earle claimed in the late 1790s that his "Original French, English, Spanish and Italian Circulating Library" had been "Established upwards of 60 years" (title page). Wyndham Beawes, London merchant and long-time British consul at Seville, included a substantial chapter, with reading lists, "Of the State of Literature, and Men of Learning, in Spain", in his 1793 two-volume *Civil, Commercial, Political, and Literary History of Spain and Portugal*. In March 1798 the *Monthly Magazine* noted, "Notwithstanding the wretched state into which Spain has been thrown by the present war, literature, in that country, seems to be making some progress", citing four double-column pages of examples (5: 213). This was followed a year and a half later in the same periodical with a "Retrospect of the Progress of Spanish Literature during the Year 1799" in seven double-column pages, where "literature" included the full range of modern scientific and professional knowledges as well as the belles-lettres (8: 1097–1103). The role of *afrancesados* in Spanish modernity alarmed some commentators, however: in 1804 the gallophobic *Anti-Jacobin Magazine and Review* decried past French influence on Portuguese and Spanish literature before praising new Portuguese publications for showing independent character and literary superiority to French (19 [1804]: 474–491). In 1806 the London *Morning Post* welcomed recent British interest in Spanish literature, such as a translation by John Belfour of Tomás de Iriarte's didactic poem *Music* and the recent study of Lope de Vega by Henry, Lord Holland, resident in Spain for three years, noting, "Although of late years literature has been on the decline in Spain, there are still existing in that nation men of great erudition and genuine poetical talent", naming a few ("Spanish Literature" 28 August 1806). A few months later the London *Morning Chronicle* advertised an anthology of extracts for students of the Spanish language entitled *La Floresta Espanola* (advertisement 23 October 1806). Two years later the London firm Oddy advertised their new *Novelist's Magazine* across Britain, noting that "the prevailing taste for Spanish literature" induced them to begin with *Don Quixote* ("New Work", *Aberdeen Journal* 12 October 1808). Spanish literature had also been an interest of some well-to-do Britons connected with Spain, as indicated by advertisements for auctions of household effects and books, such as those of General Raimsford, which included "military and Spanish literature" (advertisement, *Morning Chronicle* 17 July 1809).

Some British commentators asserted, however, that there was scant British knowledge of classic Spanish literature. In 1806 the *Morning Post* declared, "It is with pleasure we perceive, after a lapse of nearly two centuries, that the study of the Spanish Language begins to revive among us", but conceded, "Of the literature of that enlightened nation, with the exception of the Works of MARIANA, CERVANTES, LOPE DE VEGA, DE SOLIS, QUEVEDO, and a few other writers, we are almost wholly unacquainted" ("Spanish Literature", 28 August 1806). Few English translations of any Spanish author existed apart from Cervantes, the early picaresque novelists, and stage adaptations of Lope's contemporary dramatist Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Even the dedicatee of Holland's book on Lope, the Spanish poet and liberal politician Manuel José Quintana, remained almost "untranslated" through the period. According to the February 1816 *British Review*'s long account of the Spanish section of Sismondi's *De la Littérature du midi de l'Europe*, "excepting Cervantes, no Spanish writer has, in this country, attained any extensive popularity; and though our intercourse with the Peninsula has lately forced many Englishmen to learn the language of Spain, it has not been much employed as a key to unlock the treasures of literature", in contrast to interest in Spanish literature in Germany (7: 157). Such comparative uninterest could be attributed to the widespread view that Spanish literature could not modernize under an unmodern regime and so could not interest modernizers elsewhere. Jean-François de Bourgoing, savant, former *de facto* French ambassador to Spain, and frequently cited source of information on contemporary Spain, declared that the "productions" of Spanish literature "are considerable in quantity, and display perhaps more imagination than that of other European nations, but little reasoning, taste, or profundity: these necessarily depend upon a certain degree of liberty and will return with it" (3: 379). In 1796 a writer to the reformist-leaning *Monthly Magazine* asserted a similar view: "Spain has never recovered herself since the ruinous reign of Philip the Second" because he imposed the Inquisition across his empire:

> He, who entertains liberal sentiments, if he be obliged to submit his productions to the scrutiny of the Inquisition, will write with timidity; and it may safely be asserted, that he who writes timidly, cannot write well.… Thus the tyranny of superstition co-operated with the decline of the country, to check the progress of literature in Spain and Portugal. (Y. T. 452)

This view of the inextricable connection between political and literary modernization continued to inform commentary, though mid-1790s moves to political modernization at the Spanish court prompted expressions of optimism in British observers.

A salient example of how the matter of Spain could be modernized for immediate political use was *Gonzalve de Cordoue; ou, Grenade reconquise* (2 vols, 1791) by Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian (1755–1794). By this time Florian was a member of the Académie Française and a leading figure in the European literature and the culture of Sensibility. Of part-Spanish parentage, he consciously interested himself in the matter of Spain. Of noble family, he was arrested by the French Revolutionary government and died in prison. Like other works of Sensibility, *Gonzalve* explored ways to represent modernity, destabilize elites' hierarchies of style and genre, appropriate emergent forms of popular literature, and reach a wider readership by converging historiography, romance, prose narrative, verse, antiquarianism, and popular narrative. An energetic "*Précis historique sur les Maures d'Espagne*" in the style of consciously modern historiography preceded ten books narrating the protagonist's intertwined martial and amatory adventures across the Moorish Mediterranean world and the finale of the *reconquista*. Gonzalve was based on the historical Gonzalo de Córdoba, a nobleman, military commander, and administrator serving Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain and Italy and at times a *condottiere* or general-for-hire in Italy. He was glamourized in Spanish and Italian popular history-romance as "*el gran capitán*", resembling the Cid and Pelayo in the matter of Spain, and even today is celebrated popularly as a model servant of monarchy ("Soldier of Monarchy"). Florian placed his fictionalized Gonzalo in the world represented by Pérez de Hita and similar sources in the matter of Spain relating the struggle between Moorish warrior-clans of Abencerages and Zegris that facilitated the *reconquista* by Ferdinand and Isabella. Formally and stylistically, *Gonzalve* resembled Pérez de Hita's history-romance by intermingling prose narrative and descriptions of chivalric ceremonies with topically appropriate poems in the style of the popular *romanceros*. But Florian added features appropriated by the literature of Sensibility from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century romance in order to "antique" the text's promotion of a certain modernity while aiming for popular appeal. These devices were also being appropriated by the new theatrical form of melodrama and included hyperbolic style, sudden plot reversals, idealized characters and situations, and inset narratives between characters.[2]

Published in the pre-republican phase of the French Revolution and portraying martial honor, virtuous love, and selfless patriotism struggling to assert themselves amidst military betrayal, moral corruption, social decadence, and individual self-aggrandizement, *Gonzalve* was a tale for its time, promoting a monarchic modernity, administered by men of merit reinforced by their female counterparts, in the national interest against internal factions and external threats. As the Revolutionary aftermath reformulated the contest over modernity into the early decades of the nineteenth century, Florian's historico-fictionalization of the myth of constitutional monarchy attracted continuing interest, new editions, re-use, and adaptation across the Atlantic world. French editions appeared almost every year into the 1840s and occasionally to the end of the century. Florian's romance appeared in English in 1793, Spanish in 1795, Polish in 1804, Dutch in 1811, German at least by 1817. Florian's prefatory "*Précis historique sur les Maures d'Espagne*" was often republished as a free-standing historiography. Editions in Spanish proliferated in the liberal-revolutionary 1820s. Given their format and price, these probably reached readers in the middle and upper ranks, a circulation broadened by theatrical adaptations that, given admission prices, could have included lower ranks. These adaptations often dropped the character of Gonzalve, focused on other characters, and/or returned to Pérez de Hita and similar texts in the matter of Spain, in a process of re-assemblage characteristic of Romantic literature. There was a three-act French opera *Zoraïme et Zulnar* (published 1806). Another French opera entitled *Les Abencérages* was composed by Luigi Cherubini, at this time almost the court composer of Napoleon, who attended the opera's 1813 premiere. There was Alexandre de Ferrière's *Hassem; ou, la vengeance: mélodrame en trois actes* (performed Théatre de la Gaieté, 1817). There was the Italian opera *Zoraide di Granata* by Gaetano Donizetti (published 1822). The wide circulation of Florian's work beyond the crisis for which it was written suggests that it found a form of historified lyrical prose answerable to its central theme and accessible and useful to readers in many places through the changing political circumstances of the Revolutionary, Napoleonic, and post-Napoleonic crises of state-formation.

Curiously, the British reading public seemed indifferent to Florian's work. English translations of *Gonzalve* appeared quickly,[3] and a 1799 biographical-dictionary entry on Gonzalo noted, "Florian has made him the hero of an historical romance, which has been translated into english [sic], and well received: it is certainly an elegant as well as interesting performance" ("Gonzalva, of Cordova"). But these translations seem

to have gone unadvertised and unreviewed, were scarcely remarked in the print record, were overshadowed there by translations of Florian's other works, and appeared in only a few catalogues of commercial circulating libraries and booksellers. Despite this relative neglect, the formal and thematic variations of the matter of Spain by Florian and others were refashioned in several ways by the writer who would be the most widely read and admired woman poet in the nineteenth-century English-speaking world, Felicia (Browne) Hemans.

While growing up in Liverpool, Felicia Browne inherited a European cultural identity and languages from her parents and associated with leaders of the English provincial Enlightenment and reform, such as the family of William Roscoe, who had ties to progressive and reformist circles in London, including Joseph Johnson, publisher of the 1793 translation of Florian's *Gonzalve.* Browne had two brothers and her future husband serving with British forces in the Peninsula, and engaged in the matter of Spain from the precocious start of her literary career.[4] After Waterloo, Hemans engaged in post-Napoleonic contests over modernity and nation-state formation in the Atlantic world with *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy* (1816) and *Modern Greece* (1817). These heavily annotated poems addressed Britain's position as the post-Napoleonic global superpower through insistence on the positive role of art created under a free government in forming the modern subject, society, nation, and empire. Returning to the matter of Spain in face of post-Napoleonic restoration of ecclesiastical-monarchic absolutism, Hemans took up Peninsular literature with *Translations from Camoens, and other Poets; with Original Poems* (1818). This work assembled translations of Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, German, and French poems of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Implicitly linked to these were the "original poems" celebrating British military heroes of the Napoleonic wars, "the Spanish Patriot" and guerrilla leader Francisco Espoz y Mina, and patriots of several places and times. These last were portrayed as proleptic modern liberal national subjects in regions from Portugal to Poland where imposition of Napoleonic modernity had overthrown unmodern regimes but inspired anti-Napoleonic nationalist movements for cultural citizenship as the basis for political citizenship. The nature and scope of the volume not only demonstrated its author's command of modern languages and their past literatures across nations, but also linked those literatures and cultures—their "national matter"—to current struggles for formation of modern nation-states across the former Napoleonic empire, through figures of the patriot victor, martyr, exile, or bard.

Hemans expanded these themes and their scope in her next, breakthrough volume *Tales, and Historic Scenes, in Verse* (1819), ranging from the ancient Mediterranean world through medieval and early modern southern Europe, depicted as scenes of early struggles for modernity and modern state-formation by historians such as Sismondi and William Roscoe. With a focus in five of its nine poems on female opponents and victims of unmodern, male-dominated, martial and imperialist regimes, the volume also and notably took up the issue of women's role in history and modernity, as disclosed in moments of crisis. Hemans here developed the growing body of irenic yet patriotic writing by women and especially Germaine de Staël's best-selling novel *Corinne; ou, l'Italie* (1807), with its portrayal of a tragic female bard rather than a manly martial hero as exemplary modern subject and hence national voice of an Italy not yet formed into a modern liberal nation state. Hemans's volume also indicated her emulation of de Staël as a cosmopolitan liberal woman intellectual and artist and voice of anti-Napoleonic modernity and European liberalism. The longest poem in Hemans's volume, *The Abencerrage* in three cantos, returned to the matter of Spain and the form of Florian's modernization of historified romance such as de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada*. Hemans's poem is in verse rather than prose narrative, dropped the character of Gonzalve, and changed the happy ending to tragic, but retained devices used by Florian. These included interspersed lyric poems in the style of Spanish "*romances*", a third-person narrator manifestly identifying with the protagonists (a device learned from Byron), notes referencing both earlier texts and modern travelogues and surveys, and a plot of doomed love across ethnic lines set against internal conflicts in an unstable and misgoverned Moorish kingdom, leading to conquest by an external power.

When *Tales, and Historic Scenes* was published in 1819 it could be read as relating the matter of Spain, represented by *The Abencerrage*, to similarly refashioned matters across Europe in the context of post-Napoleonic restoration of anti-liberal, ecclesiastical-monarchic absolutist regimes. But such refashionings were soon recontextualized by further events, notably in Spain itself, including the revolt of 1820, adoption of the Cadiz constitution, the Trienio Liberal, which resulted in internal divisions, and suppression by a French army authorized by the congress of absolutist European powers. Liberal intellectuals and writers across the Atlantic world returned to the matter of Spain, and Hemans's response was notable in its extent, variety, development of central themes of

liberal modernity, and corresponding generic and stylistic innovation. In *The Siege of Valencia: A Dramatic Poem* (1823), published with "other poems", and *The Vespers of Palermo: A Tragedy* (1823), she revisited the matter of Spain, in itself and in its erstwhile colonies the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, the former being the scene of exploits of the historical Gonzalo de Córdoba. In these plays Hemans appropriated Schiller's respected, popular, and ideologically liberal formulation of historical drama as representation of the destructive effects of unmodern political institutions on proleptically modern subjective identity, intimacy, conjugality, and sociability. The *Siege of Valencia* dealt with an episode in the *reconquista* in this way and its "other poems" included four "Songs of the Cid" refashioning popular Spanish *romances* about the legendary, now historified national liberator. The same volume included six "Greek Songs" in analogous vein, resuming themes developed in *Modern Greece* (1817), obliquely referencing the British-administered United States of the Ionian Islands with its modern liberal constitution, and the Greek war of independence against the Turkish empire, thus broadening the European implications of the volume's "Songs of the Cid" and Schillerian "Dramatic Poem". Again re-emphasizing the matter of Spain, in the second edition of *Tales, and Historic Scenes, in Verse* (1824) Hemans moved *The Abencerrage* from second to first place in the contents.

Her major adaptation of the matter of Spain in relation to liberal modernity, however, was in *The Forest Sanctuary* (1825), again with "Other Poems", published after suppression of liberal Spain. The "Other Poems" included 21 "Lays of Many Lands", composing a kind of *romancero* of expressive lyrics ostensibly from across the Atlantic world, and seven "Miscellaneous Poems". *The Forest Sanctuary* is an extended first-person narrative by an unnamed former Spanish *conquistador* of ancient chivalric family, returned from participating in ruthless empire-building in South America to find his homeland gripped by the Inquisition, which is about to execute his brother-in-arms as a heretic. Radically disillusioned as soldier, Spaniard, and Catholic, the narrator becomes subjectively unhinged, but is restored to inner wholeness by a vision of Christ as human (the Unitarianism Hemans herself admired at this time), is then himself confined as a heretic, and flees to the New World with his family. But his wife remains a Catholic believer and, in a moving passage, dies on the voyage from grief at what she considers his apostasy, destroying their intimacy and conjugality. The former hero of

martial chivalry, monarchic loyalty, ecclesiastical faith, and imperial quest, now an apostate, martyr, refugee, and exile, finds with his son a home in the as-yet-unpeopled "forest sanctuary" of the North American wilderness. The plot concerns subjective rather than martial action and illustrates the widespread liberal critique of the Inquisition as an institution and symbol of ecclesiastical-monarchic absolutist unmodernity and its effect in destabilizing subjective identity and undermining and destroying pure relationships of intimacy, conjugality, domesticity, sociability, and national (rather than unmodern dynastic) patriotism. *The Forest Sanctuary* celebrated and mourned the as-yet nationally homeless modern subjectivity and its pure relationships. These are represented fatalistically and elegiacally in briefer form in the volume's "Other Poems", but more extensively in Hemans's next and last major volume *Records of Woman: with Other Poems* (1828), though this included just one incident from the matter of Spain ("Juana"). *The Forest Sanctuary* remained perhaps the outstanding British Romantic imagining of modernity through refashioning the matter of Spain.

Notes

1. For a substantial and detailed analysis in a different line, see Saglia *Poetic*; and for a different take on Spanish modernity in European context, see Iarocci.
2. For a different account of *Gonzalve*, see Fabienne Moore.
3. Robert Heron, *Gonzalvo of Cordova; or, The Conquest of Grenada* (1792); anonymous, *Gonzalva of Cordova; or, Grenada Reconquered* (1793).
4. See poems addressed to her brothers in the army in *Poems* (1808); a poem *England and Spain* (1808); and "War-Song of the Spanish Patriots", "To My Younger Brother, on His Return from Spain, after the Fatal Retreat under Sir John Moore, and the Battle of Corunna", and "To My Eldest Brother, with the British Army in Portugal" in *The Domestic Affections, and other Poems* (1812).

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