

Ana Sáez-Hidalgo and Berta Cano-Echevarría, eds. 2021.
Exile, Diplomacy and Texts: Exchanges between Iberia
and the British Isles, 1500–1767.
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In 1623, a fifty-page account by an alleged British soldier warning King James I against Spaniards indulges in a rambling lament of political distrust: “How prejudiciall their treaties of peace have ever been to such Princes or State with whom they have contended, is most evident, as well as to us, as other Nations, as appears by their *Armado* in 88” (4–5). Understanding how political animosity unfolds in early modern public discourse through interested representations of the “other” is the work of historians as well as literary scholars in their search to apprehend underground patterns of continuity and change, tensions and overtures coexisting in any departure from the conflictual relationship between the British Isles and Iberia beyond the Spanish black legend. The number of articles and monographs exploring the alternative dynamics of the political and religious rivalry between these two world powers has grown significantly, with studies on the textual cultures of recusant literature, diplomatic channels, the circulation of news and commercial partnerships with major contributions to the debate by Liesbeth Corens (2019), Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (2016), David Coast (2014), Helen Hackett (2016), and Freddy Cristóbal Domínguez (2020). While the broader picture of these exchanges and routes has been mapped out with its cultural and historical parameters, the assumptions regarding their antagonistic nature permeate many of them even when the evidence points at a more complex interplay. *Exile, Diplomacy and Texts* is a most welcome study in this direction. Stemming from the lead authors’ research projects, in particular, *Exilio, diplomacia y transmisión textual: redes de intercambios entre la Península Ibérica y las Islas Británicas en la edad moderna*,¹ Ana Sáez-Hidalgo and Berta Cano-Echevarría interrogate

¹ Sáez-Hidalgo, Ana; Cano-Echevarría, Berta. 2016–2020. *Exilio, diplomacia y transmisión textual: redes de intercambios entre la Península Ibérica y las Islas Británicas en la edad*

the Anglo-Spanish binary through neglected archival materials: manuscript letters, printed pamphlets, reading traces in printed books, reports from prisoners or soldiers, notarized inventories and travelers' accounts make up the raw material and backbone of the "heterogeneous transnational and transcultural conversations carried out among the diverse communities in early modern Iberia and the British Isles" (2). By examining the subtleties of these discourses, as well as the comments and viewpoints that emerge unexpectedly within the context of these exchanges, this volume dispels the belief in simplistic accounts of confrontational politics to articulate a more capacious and multi-dimensional cultural landscape.

The volume is divided into three main parts that tackle these various types of multilateral exchanges, presenting in each chapter interactions with the "other," conceptualized as "the encounter, the narration and the reading" (2). These correspond to three typologies of difference and dissonance in transnational relations coming from accounts of military collaboration or the intricacies of diplomatic missions, including the relationships of Irish nationals with other countries. The opening chapter by Glyn Redworth in his review of English participation in the 1557 Battle of Saint-Quentin in France invokes not only textual sources but visual materials from one of the witnesses to the battle, Antoon van den Wijngaerde. As Sáez-Hidalgo and Cano-Echevarría note, his sketches would decorate the *Sala de las Batallas* in the El Escorial monastery (5). Perhaps more importantly for the purposes of the volume, Redworth's close-up analysis of Wijngaerde's sketches of the strategic positioning of English troops help the reader reconsider the negative light with which previous witnesses' accounts of the battle viewed English participation, moving away from ready-made representations of triumph in battle as an unequivocal measure of political alliance. Redworth reads the episode as one of collaboration between the English and the Spanish forces against the French. Such an entente could also be at risk at times when geographical borders were called into question. Susana Oliveira's chapter on an English mission to the Portuguese court led by Thomas Wilson aiming to seek compensation for the Portuguese

moderna. "Exile, diplomacy and textual transmission: Networks of exchange between early modern Iberia and the British Isles." MINECO, Excellence R+D Project. FFI2015-66847-P. <http://www.estudiosingleses.com/networksexchange/>

sinking of an English ship and its cargo off the shores of Liberia shows the complexities of the Lusitanians' special rapport with the English. Although no monetary compensation was gained, the English diplomatic mission was at least successful in guaranteeing the release of English captives from the Castle of Mina, an outcome that broadens the lens of our definition of alliance in the early modern period by moving it closer to contemporary notions of *realpolitik*.

Under the rubric of "narrations" in the second part of the book, Berta Cano-Echevarría's chapter on the construction of a "white legend" of Catholic faith on British soil reads martyrs' accounts, popular romances, and newsletters as instruments for promoting the political and religious efforts to correct the enemy's mistaken stance. It does so by assimilating it into a supra-narrative in which Catholic Spain is a moral and benevolent superpower. Representations of national identity, though, are not only projected onto "the other," as Sáez-Hidalgo and Cano-Echevarría rightly note (7). National self-representation was also strategically deployed and, as Rui Carvalho Homem shows in his chapter on Tomé Pinheiro da Veiga's *Fastigínia*, even defined in almost oxymoronic terms. By studying imagology, Carvalho Homem signals the "tropes energizing the narrative" (107) of the invented persona of the warrior-bishop of Turpin in 1605 Valladolid to celebrate the birth of the new heir to the throne of Spain—Valladolid being at that time the capital of Spain. The contrasts between Portuguese and Spaniards, Catholics and Protestants, the early modern global North and South, allow us to finetune our concept of "foreignness" through the imaginary mind of a third person who "lends density and complexity to [the author's] polarized remarks" (106). But reading the other gains as much prominence as writing the other, and in this context Ana Sáez-Hidalgo's chapter delves into the practice of reading through material objects—books themselves—and the dramatic renderings in narratives of diplomatic encounters. Her nuanced definition of what constitutes orthodox and heterodox messages in the context of the textual production of English missions and seminars in exile informs Sáez-Hidalgo's analysis of a copy of *The Second Part of Christian Exercise* by Robert Person held at the Royal Library of El Escorial in Spain. Her examination of the annotations and markings in various hands not only casts light on the reception of English books in Spain and the channels through which they were disseminated,

but it provides evidence of how Catholics in exile *repurposed* those texts, including Protestant ones (157). Mark Hutchings' chapter closes the volume by revisiting the episode of the English embassy's visit to Valladolid in 1605—offering an interesting counterpart to Carvalho Homem's chapter on the same episode from a different angle. His analysis of Robert Treswell's *A Relation of Such Things* explores the performative function of reenactments of narratives of diplomatic missions. By reading the two dimensions of the text, as the *Haupttext* (the main dialogical text of the diplomatic event) with the *Nebentext* (the stage directions), Hutchings demonstrates the importance of the latter in diplomatic accounts in which the visual and almost ritualistic aspects of the *mise-en-scène* become the main message, inviting us to understand the craft of diplomacy narrative as a response to "the 'problem' of translating visual material into prose" (212).

The scope, analytical depth, and original choice of primary materials and perspectives makes this volume a major, if not a landmark, reference book for the understanding of the cultural ramifications of early modern Anglo-Iberian relations. The penetrating analyses of each and every chapter, together with an insightful and highly informative introduction provide the necessary context and theoretical underpinnings to open up new ground in the continuing and exciting explorations of the political uses and readerships of early modern textual culture.

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