

Cristalián de España, by Beatriz Bernal. Edited by Jodi Growitz. Ediciones críticas 78. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2015. Pp. 896; 6 b/w ill. ISBN: 9781588712608 (paperback).

Beatriz Bernal's *Cristalián de España* stands alone among the very popular late medieval and early modern Iberian books of chivalry (libros de caballería). Written in 1537 and first published eight years later in Valladolid, *Cristalián* is the product of the only known feminine pen in the genre. As Jodi Growitz explains in the introduction to her edition, the 1545 text "attributes its authorship to a woman writer" though she remained unidentified until the second edition, in 1587 (10). Though not unique in terms of female-authored texts, Bernal's voice belongs to an often-silenced choir.

Bernal's narrative seems to have gathered relatively scarce attention in the sixteenth century, judging from the five extant copies of the first edition, an anonymous translation into Italian (in 1558), and a reprint of this translation about fifty years later with nine surviving copies. But let us not judge this information vis-à-vis other very popular books of chivalry of the time, such as *Amadís de Gaula*, of which there are numerous exemplars and diverse editions. According to Donatella Gagliardi, who studied the reception of the text, *Cristalián's* popularity is evident due to its inclusion in private libraries and booksellers' inventories, as well as intertextual references in later works.¹

Scholarly attention to Bernal's work is limited to a handful of theses and dissertations, several articles (one of them published in this journal),² as well as an excerpt translated into English in an anthology of Iberian female writers. This relative neglect of a fascinating text perhaps is not due to its being the product of a woman's imagination, but to the lack of an edition actually reflecting the original product. The digitized version from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek provides scanned images of the entire book but has no critical corpus. Until 2015, the available editions were theses or dissertations. This includes Sidney Park's 1981 dissertation (a modernized rendition of the second edition) and Gagliardi's 2003 thesis (a partial edition of the first part of the narrative from

1. Donatella Gagliardi, "Quid puellae cum armis?": Una aproximación a Doña Beatriz Bernal y a su *Cristalián de España*" (PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Departament de Filologia Espanyola, 2003).

2. See Piera, Montserrat and Jodi Shearn [Growitz]. "Gendering Action in Iberian Chivalric Romance." *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality* 45, no. 2 (2009): 85-109.

the *princeps* edition). Growitz's edition, too, derives from her 2012 dissertation and might bring this intriguing narrative back onto the radar of Iberianists and comparatists concerned with early women's voices.

This volume, more than a traditional edition, is a paleographical transcription that maintains most of the original text's orthography and grammar. It begins with an introduction that offers some insight on Beatriz Bernal, the two editions of her book, and an overview of the genre during early modernity. Though this section presents a wealth of valuable information, a clearer organization of the data would be beneficial should there be a reprint. Moreover, the textual apparatus is a summary of several available studies but requires extensive revision to enhance the contribution of this otherwise commendable publication.

After the introduction, Growitz provides her readers with an explanation of the transcription practices as "a reproduction of Cristalián de España's [sic] debut publication" (35). And though this part references a specific transcription manual, David Mackenzie's *A Manual of Manuscript Transcription for the Dictionary of the Old Spanish Language*, non-specialists will find the transcription hard to follow at first. Growitz's paleographical transcription is for those interested in Iberian books of chivalry in general or early modern editorial practices. Readers may find the meticulous reproduction of every detail about folios, columns, insertions, and abbreviations an obstacle to following the narrative.

The last part of the front matter includes an extensive bibliography, most likely derived from Growitz's dissertation, an index of characters, and a transcription of the index of the chapters. It is noticeable that some works present in the bibliography are not mentioned elsewhere in the text. An example of this is Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*. Cases such as this might better be included in a further reading bibliography, with specific subsections like "Early Modern Women" and "Gender Politics." Moreover, a careful revision of the bibliography would correct several careless errors: titles not italicized or misconstrued names of authors (Hernán Pupareli is not an author, but part of the name of Elami Ortiz Hernán Pupareli).

What may be almost accidental, as "changing the its name" or "complete; the." or "star in much of of" (Gorowitz 11, 11n7, and 30), may compromise the integrity of a lengthy paleographical transcription that covers 827 pages. How are we to know if a misspelled word in Bernal's work is due to "historical veriations [sic]" or a faulty transcription (Gorowitz 36)? However, regardless of these details, Beatriz Bernal's *Cristalián de España* will be a welcome addition to the

shelves of scholars interested in lesser-known exemplars of a very popular genre and the intervention of a woman's pen in a literary arena often out of their reach. Let us hope for a revised version of this transcription which will, no doubt, be useful to many scholars to come.

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