

**THE STRANGE FATE OF THE ENGLISH  
ARNALTE Y LUCENDA  
BY DIEGO DE SAN PEDRO**

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Quite by chance, when looking up a reference in the British Library Catalogue (the one in the Main Reading Room) last summer on behalf of a colleague of mine in the Spanish Department, I came across the name of Diego de SAN PEDRO. Out of a matter of curiosity, I reread the many entries devoted to his works (I had had the opportunity of doing so before, when writing my Ph.D thesis.) Till that moment, I had only paid attention to his main production, *Cárcel de amor*, which I knew had been translated relatively early in the 16th century and had had a fairly large audience in England (John BOURCHIER, Lord BERNERS, translated it in 1549.<sup>1</sup> But what quickly caught my attention was the fact that another one of his novels, the less ambitious *Arnalte y Lucenda*, had been translated into English at least on three different occasions in less than a century and that one of those translations had been printed four different times in thirty years. Of course, we are not talking of what we would call today a “best-seller”, but if you let me make the point, we have here the proof of an interest on the side of the reading public which lasted for a century and meant that, at least for the English, *Arnalte y Lucenda* made better reading than *Cárcel de amor*.

Nothing much is known about Diego de SAN PEDRO. There are no precise dates of birth and death (He probably died in the first years of the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Castell of Loue*, Iohan Turke (London: 1549?).

*The strange fate of the English Arnalte y Lucenda*

16th century). We do not even know for sure the number of his literary works. His authorship is beyond doubt as far as the following titles are concerned: *Arnalte y Lucenda* (1491), *Cárcel de amor* (1492), *Sermón* (being a discourse on “leyes enamoradas”), *Pasión trovada*, *Desprecio de la Fortuna* (a long poem of a didactic nature) and some minor poetry. He has been also attributed the authorship of many others.<sup>1</sup> The *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda* included in its first edition two long poems: one in honour of Queen Isabella, the other of Our Lady, under the title *Las Siete Angustias de Nuestra Señora*. They were not printed again together with the book in later editions and there is no trace of them in its translations. So we suppose HERBERAY, the French translator (and all other translators who based their work upon his) used as his source text the second edition, that of Burgos: 1522.

The first English translation of the work we are concerned with is by John CLERK and was published in 1543.<sup>2</sup> We know that CLERK was a Catholic writer who had studied in Oxford for a time, and had travelled on the Continent where he had learnt French and Italian. He was secretary to the Duke of NORFOLK and, apparently, he committed suicide in the Tower of London (10-5-1552), where he had been imprisoned with his lord, the Duke. The entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* tells us of his being the author of two books on religious matters and the translator of another two. Nothing is said of this evidently more frivolous undertaking of his, the translation of *Arnalte y Lucenda*. In the title-page we can read: “A Certayn tre/atye moste wyttely deused/ orygynally wrytten in / the spaynysshe, lately/ traducted in to / frenche entytled / Lamant mal traicté de samye/”. It is dedicated to a very special person, “Lorde Henry / Erle of Surrey”. In his Epistle Dedicatory CLERK underlines the merit of SURREY’s own translations and “the great paynes and trauayles susteyned by your selfe in traductions as well out of the Laten, Italian as the Spanyshe, and Frenche, wherby your Lordship surmouteth many others, not onely in knowledge, but also in laude and comendacyon”. CLERK goes on with this typically eulogizing game but not for very long, as he quickly

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete account of his works *vide* Diego de SAN PEDRO, *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda (Obras completas, vol. 1)*, edited ed by Keith Whinnom, Castalia (Madrid: 1979), pp. 34-5.

<sup>2</sup> It was printed by Robert Wyer “dwellynge in seynt Martyns parysshe at Charyng Crosse”. Unluckily this beautiful volume (the only extant copy in the British Library) is incomplete.

turns his attention to the actual procedures of translating. He carefully states how he has made every effort to keep the grace of the original by not being a mere slave to it: *not verbum pro verbo, sed sensum pro senso*.

Nicholas de HERBERAY, Seigneur des Essarts, in the service of FRANCIS I, had made a high sounding French version in the late thirties (1539).<sup>1</sup> HERBERAY was a well known translator at the time and he had already tried his hand at several Spanish books: his is, for instance, the translation of *Amadís de Gaula* that Anthony MUNDAY used as his source for his own English rendering.<sup>2</sup> HERBERAY's version of *Arnalte y Lucenda* was the immediate source of CLERK's translation.

Nearly a century after CLERK's work was published, the third (and last) translation of *Arnalte y Lucenda* came into being in 1639. The title-page offers a very meaningful approach to its story: the headline keeps the reference to its main characters ("A Small Treatise betwixt Arnalte and Lucenda") and the legend following gives the would-be readers the clue to its plot: "The Evill- intreated Lover,/ or/ the Melancholy Knight". Immediately afterwards we have the ancestry of the edition exposed: "Originally written in the Greeke Tongue,/ by an unknowne Author./ Afterwards translated into *Spanish*, after that, for/ the Excellency thereof, into the *French Tongue* by/ *N.H.*, next by *B.M.* into the *Thuscan*, and/ now turn'd into *English Verse* by *L.L.*/ a well wisher to the Muses".<sup>3</sup>

As you can quickly realize, the path has been long and winding: we can count four intermediate stages up to the actual rendering into English. The initial source is, of course, fictitious (in the tradition of a well known literary device, the authorship and origin of the novel are disguised under the garments of a pretended Greek source -shall we remember *Don*

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<sup>1</sup> "Petit Traité DE/ Arnalte et Lvcen-/ da, Autrefois tra-/ duit de langue Espaignole/ en la Françoise, & intitulé/ l'Amât mal traité de s'amy:/ Par le Seigneur des Essars Ni-/ colas de Herberay, cômmissair-/ re ordinaire de l'artillerie du/ Roy", Denis Janot (Paris: 1539).

<sup>2</sup> Vide RANDALL, Dale B.J., *The Golden Tapestry. A Critical Survey of Non-Chivalric Spanish Fiction in English Translation (1543-1657)*, Duke U.P. (Durham, N.C.: 1963), pp. 34-35. He puts this precise book as an example of those Elizabethan translations from the Spanish which had French intermediaries.

<sup>3</sup> "Printed by *J. Okes* for *H. Mosley*, and are to be sold at his shop, at the Signe of the Princes Armes in *Pauls Church-yard*" (London: 1639).

*The strange fate of the English Arnalte y Lucenda*

*Quixotte's* supposed Arabic birth?-). The initials *N.H.* clearly refer to our French translator, Nicolas de HERBERAY, the ones *B.M.* stand for Bartolomeo MARRAFFI, the Florentine writer whose work *L.L.* (Leonard LAWRENCE) used as the starting point for his “Melancholy Knight”.

Of course, the approach to the task of translating by using intermediate languages was common coin at the time: French and, to a lesser degree, Italian were the usual sources of works originally written in more “exotic” languages.

Leonard LAWRENCE, of whom we know no other literary endeavours but his translation, dedicates his work to an uncle of his, Adam LAWRENCE. In a longish Epistle Dedicatory he carefully points out how he does not pay any attention to his critics (upon his words we would say there were many of them!)<sup>1</sup> and according to tradition he begs pardon for the possible mistakes that undoubtedly had slipped in, “My *Genius* having prompt me to present these unpolisht lines to Your judicious Censure; I shall intreate You’ld pardon the faults my English Stile affords; and attribute them to my unskilfulnesse”. Apparently, we have before us the gift of a grateful nephew to a munificent uncle. But the very nature of the gift is a bit striking, as we are concerned with a sentimental novel, the story of a badly paid love, not the kind of reading we would expect to interest a gentleman of a certain age (as Adam LAWRENCE must have been at the time). A three-page long poem, that closely follows the epistle-dedicatory, gives the answer to this predicament. The heading reads thus:

To all fair Ladies,  
Famous for their Vertues,  
L.L. wisheth the enjoyment of their  
Desires; whether Celestiall, or  
Terrestriall, but most especially to  
that Paragon of Perfection, the ver-  
ry Non-Such of her Sexe, famous  
by the Name of Mistris

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<sup>1</sup> “But’s not matter, such Censurers may use their freedome, I will not say of ignorance or envy, if of either I care not: It’s Your Honour’d selfe, whom I observe: so you be pleased, it imports not who’s offended” (The Epistle Dedicatory, A3 r).

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Now the aim of the translator's task lies patent to our eyes: LAWRENCE, in an evident attempt of *captare benevolentiam*, is offering the sad example of ARNALTE's travails upon LUCENDA's hardened will.

What makes of this 1639 edition a very special case indeed is the fact that it is written in verse. LAWRENCE introduces, just before the actual text of his translation, a poem of his own in which he pays tribute to "all ingenious Poets, who, he hopes will cherish these his Infant Verses, as being the first that hee ever writ". The result of his decision is very irregular: the whole of it is written in couplets and the strife for the rhyme has from time to time a comic effect completely nonexistent in the original (at least in the eyes of his contemporaries).<sup>1</sup>

Before we go on studying the English versions of our novel let's stop for a while and make a short reference to the Italian translation by Bartolomeo MARRAFFI, LAWRENCE's source text. It was first printed in LYON in 1555 and it is a bilingual edition (French & Italian). Its title-page indirectly seems to tell us of the existence of a previous Italian translation, as it reads: "Picciol trattato d'ARNALTE & di / LUCENDA tiontolato l'AMANTE / mal trattato della sua amorosa, nuo- / uamente per Bartolomeo Marraffi / Fiorentino, in lingua Thoscana tra- / dotto". There is no allusion whatsoever to its Spanish origin. The time gap existing between this Italian translation and LAWRENCE's one into English is great (nearly seventy years) and there were several editions of the work by MARRAFFI other than this one from Lyon the English translator could have consulted (Paris: 1556, Lyon: 1570, Lyon: 1578, Lyon: 1583).

Finally, after having had a brief look at both the first and last representatives in English of SAN PEDRO's novel, let us concentrate on the translation made by Claudius HOLLYBANDE in 1575<sup>2</sup>. Again, as it was the case of the Italian version by MARRAFFI, we face here a bilingual edition (English and Italian), in which the texts can be easily compared. The translator works with the Italian as his source text. Once more, we are

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<sup>1</sup> Whinnom discards any such interpretations, *vide* Diego de SAN PEDRO, o.c., pp. 57-8.

<sup>2</sup> "Imprinted at London/ by Thomas Pursoote".

*The strange fate of the English Arnalte y Lucenda*

dealing with a translation that was indirectly rendered from the original tongue. Why a bilingual edition? A look at the title-page suffices to answer this question. I quote: “The Pretie / and wittie Historie of / Arnalt & Lucenda: / with certen Rules and / Dialogues set foorth for / the learner of th’Ita = / lian tong:”. As a matter of fact, this precise circumstance makes it different from the other books we have reviewed, and, I dare say, makes it different from a translation proper. What we have here is a “Teach yourself Italian” handbook with a long reading, set as an example of Italian writing (which, I might add, is nothing but a translation from the Spanish). In the introductory declaration to the reader, HOLLYBANDE himself states that this, and no other, has been his aim for preparing his book. He starts by saying: “Who wisheth to attayne my skill in th’Italian Tong”. And as such the edition not only includes both the Italian and the English versions of *Arnalte y Lucenda*, there is as well an appendix on the phonetics of Italian (“Certaine rules for the pronunciation of th’Italian tongue”) and also a choice selection of situations of real life (with its equivalent in English) under the title “Familiar talkes”. Here is but a short sample of them (I just want to whet your appetite!):

“Modo di favellar, et primo come il viandante domanderà la strada”

(“The manner to talke, and first how a voiaeger may aske for the way”)

“Dell’ostaria” (“Of the Inne or lodging”)

“Ragionar con donne” (“To talke with wemen”)

To this HOLLYBANDE adds a seven-page long appendix on grammar dealing basically with nominal declension and verbal conjugation. In this, especially as far as nominal declension is concerned, he shows his debt to Latin Grammars on the model of which he builds his own. He advises the reader to spend some time studying this material before actually attempting to read the story “in the reading whereof using a good discretion, he maye attayne great profite, as well for th’understanding of any other Italian books, as for his entraunce to the learning of the same tongue”. Several interesting questions arise here. Probably the most obvious (and important) is: Is the translator aware of the fact that he is not dealing with an Italian original? The immediate answer is: Yes, he is. He includes (and translates) the very epistle-dedicatory that MARRAFFI wrote for his Italian translation. And not only this: the translation by

HOLLYBANDE is the sole version that counts in an *Argument* of the work, and it openly tells the reader the whole genealogy of the story (how it was originally written in Greek, and then translated successively into Spanish, French, and Italian). For a contemporary mind the basic issue still remains unanswered: Why a translation as a model for learning a foreign tongue? The question is all the more interesting because this precise rendering was printed again twice before the end of the century. The 1591 edition is nothing but a reprint of that of 1575.<sup>1</sup> The version of 1597 is a very different matter, indeed. What we have here is a new edition which has undergone many changes when compared with that of 1575. Even the title has been modified: the didactic aspect has been stressed by renaming it *The Italian Schoolemaster*.<sup>2</sup> A second line sentence tells us of an added offer “And a fine Tuscan historie cal- / led Arnalt & Lucenda”. The importance of the translation has been debased to a less prominent place. The order in the parts of the book has been changed too: first comes a very much enlarged grammar of Italian, of which the translated text is but an illustration. Secondly, the story proper in which no alterations have been introduced. There is no other reference to its origin but a statement saying that it is a translation from HERBERAY’s French version. Undoubtedly public demand must have weighed heavily in HOLLYBANDE’s decision. Proof that he was right is a reedition of *The Italian Schoolemaster* ten years later, in 1608, in this occasion “revised and corrected by F.P., an Italian”. Robert S. RUDDER, in his well known work *The Literature of Spain in English Translation*, lists the three versions we have been talking about, but there is no reference whatsoever to this reprinting of HOLLYBANDE’s as revised by F.P. in 1608.

There existed a demand for the learning of foreign languages at the time. As a matter of fact, the final years of the century witnessed an enormous growth in interest for them. Let me include a quotation from Louis WRIGHT’s *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England*: “Even though the study of modern languages increased remarkably from the late sixteenth century on, and though Latin remained the backbone of grammar-school education, the majority paid only lip service to Latin and knew no

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<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Diego de SAN PEDRO, o.c., p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Pursoot (London: 1597).

*The strange fate of the English Arnalte y Lucenda*

modern languages other than their own”.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, Englishmen had to wait till the 17th century for the foreign vernaculars to become a part of the official grammar-school curriculum. Even at Oxford and Cambridge, the study of modern languages was furnished by private tutors, most of whom were refugees from the Continent. This said, we have to underline the fact that simply for communication’s sake, since English was a minority language at the time, learning a foreign language (at least the essentials) was a must for certain trades: merchants, for instance. Conversation books in two or three tongues were used by Englishmen since the first years of the 16th century. Authors of this kind of books would very often keep schools in which people were instructed, especially in French. This is the gap HOLLYBANDE’s translation attempted to fill. Taking into account what we have just said, we have to be very careful when trying to assess the popularity of a translation as a means of judging on the role it had in the literary system of the language of reception. Four of the six editions *Arnalte y Lucenda* underwent in England (all those of HOLLYBANDE’s translation) were meant to be something else than the actual proof of a literary success. *Cárcel de amor* does not fare so badly when we consider this phenomenon.

When I was asked to give the title of the paper I was going to read today, I thought “strange” was the proper word to denominate the curious story of *Arnalte y Lucenda*’s translations into English. “Strange” also evokes the character of “foreign”, which it has as definition n° 1 in the OED: (*of persons, language, customs, etc.: of or belonging to another country; foreign, alien*). If you allow me to sum up briefly the data I have been offering up to this very point, I think you will agree with me on the choice of the word.

1° - Our little treatise was edited in six occasions in less than a century in three different translations. That is practically a record of its own as far as translations of Spanish books are concerned at the time.

2° - None of the English versions was translated from the Spanish original. CLERKE made his through the French of HERBERAY, HOLLYBANDE & LAWRENCE through the Italian of MARRAFFI, who, in his turn, also used the French as his source.

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<sup>1</sup> Louis WRIGHT, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England*, The University of North Carolina Press (Chapel Hill: 1935), p. 339.



*José Luis Chamosa*

3° - That by HOLLYBANDE had the widest circulation. It was the only one that considered the text as an instrument for other means than those of enjoyment and/or literary appreciation, namely the didactic purpose of teaching a foreign language. Paradoxically, he made use of a translation and not of an original: this clearly shows there was no bias between originals and translations at the time.

Judging on the circulation a translation had as the measure for assessing its influence on the culture of reception is by no means always valid. As Keith WHINNOM states in his excellent edition of SAN PEDRO's *Obras completas*: "Sería arriesgado, pues, llegar a cualquier conclusión acerca de una supuesta diferencia entre el gusto español y el europeo".<sup>1</sup>

#### TEXTUAL APPENDIX

"The strange fate of the English *Arnalte y Lucenda*  
by Diego de San Pedro"

"Este verano pasado, más por ajena necesidad que por [premia de] voluntad mía, huve, señoras, de hazer un camino, en el cual de aquesta nuestra Castilla [me convino] alongar; y cuando el largo caminar entre ella y mí mucha tierra entrepuso, halléme en un grand desierto, el cual de estraña soledad y temeroso espanto era poblado; [y como yo de aquellas tierras tan poco supiese, cuando pensé qu'el cierto camino llevaba, falléme perdido] y en parte que cuando [quise] cobrarme, no [pude] por el grand desatino mío y por la falta de gentes, que [no] hallava a quien preguntar." (SAN PEDRO, 1491-1522, ed. by Keith WHINNOM, Castalia (Madrid: 1979)).

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<sup>1</sup> Diego de SAN PEDRO, o.c., p. 63.

*The strange fate of the English Arnalte y Lucenda*

“Ayant en cest esté passé entreprins vn voyage (plus pour la necessité d’austruy que de mon bon gré) pour lequel faire me conuenoit de ce païs grandement esloigner, & apres auoir par longtems cheminé, me trouuay, de fortune, en vn tres grand desert, non moins solitaire de gents qu’ennuieux à trauerser. Et comme ceste contrée me fust incogneüë, pensant aller mon droit chemin, me vy esgaré, de sorte que ie ne peu recouurer mon adresse, tant pour la grand’facherie que i’auois, que pour la faulte d’aucun à qui la pouuoir demander.” (HERBERAY, 1539)

“After that I had this sommer passed emprysed a voyage (more for the necessity of another, than for my pleasure) for the accompysshement, wherof it was conuenient for me to absent my selfe, farre from this countree, conformable therunto by a long tyme trauayled in the same. I came by chaunce into a great deserte no lesse solitarie of peoploe, than displeasunt to passe thorughe. And as this countree was unknowen to me. So thynking to go the right way, I strayed i such sort, as coulde not eftsones directe myself, as wel for the great displeasur that I had, as for the lacke of some one, of whom I might demaud the same” (CLERKE, 1543).

“Sendomi io questa state passata, messo a far’un viaggio (più per la necessità d’altrui, che di mia propria volontà) per il quale mi bisognaua grandemete da q’sto paese allontanare: poi ch’ebbi molto camminato, per caso in un gran deserto mi trouuai, non manco di genti solitario, che ad à trauersarlo difficile. Et per questo luogo m’era incognito, pesando io d’andare pe’l mio dritto camino, ismarrito mi ritrouai, in modo, ch’io non potetti ritirarmi s’ul mio sentiero, tanto per il gran dispiacere che io haueua, quato per mancamento d’alcuno, à cui lo potessi domandare.” (MARRAFFI, 1555)

“Hauing this sommer past take in had to make a viage (more by other mes necessity, the through mine owne good will) thereby I was copelled to go farre fro this countrey: and after I had far trauailed, I came by chauce into a great wildernes, no les destitute of people, the hard & tedious to go through it. And bycause this place was unknowen unto me, thinking to go my right, I foud my selfe astrayed: so that I could not come backe to my path waye, as well for the great displeasure

*José Luis Chamosa*

it had therof, as for the lacke of anye, of whome I might aske it”  
(HOLLYBANDE, 1575).

“There’s but a Summer past; the golden Sunne,  
He had but once his Annuall course o’re run,  
And lodg’d his fire-breathing Steeds within  
The lofty Stables of cold Pisces Inn:  
And fragrant Flora, dewie-breasted Queene  
Of hills and Vallies, which we all have seene  
Be-spread with Grasse-greene Carpets, intermixt  
With pleasing Flowers, which no art had fixt.  
For By their spreadings and their disperst show,  
One might perceive that Nature caus’d them grow:  
Attended on with Troopes of lovely Roses,  
Carnations, Lillies, which the Spring discloses;  
And divers sorts of various colour’d Flowers,  
As Pinks and Pawnses, nurs’t by Aprils showers.  
She hath but once with her Traine giv’n place  
To wintring Hyems, with his Snow-white face,  
Since I a Journey, to my selfe no gaine,  
Did undertake; for, for my friend the paine,  
I freely did embrace, for certainly,  
The place at distance farre remote did lye,  
Whereto I was adress: but with my Steed,  
Like Pegasus I did intend to speed.  
But having some dayes spent in this my race,  
My fortunes brought me to a desart place,  
Set thick with Trees, whose lofty tops aspire  
To kisse the Clouds; nay yet to reach more higher,  
Spreading their branches with that large extent,  
That from my eyes they hid the Firmament;” (LAWRENCE, 1639)

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