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### **Review of Eduardo Olid Guerrero and Esther Fernández, eds., Susan Doran (Forward), The Image of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Spain**

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**Olid Guerrero, Eduardo and Fernández, Esther, eds., Doran, Susan (Forward). *The Image of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Spain*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2019. 420 pp. + 29 ill.**

This volume of essays sets out to explore the “image” of Queen Elizabeth I from a Spanish perspective during the rule of Philip II and throughout the seventeenth century. As Eduardo Olid Guerrero emphasises in the introduction, the “two great early modern royal lineages, the Habsburgs and the Tudors... established distinct propagandistic tactics” (1), and it is the propagandistic value of portrayals of Elizabeth, in the main—but by no means exclusively—that are explored at length throughout this volume. As Susan Doran points out in her insightful forward to the collection: “English and Spanish propaganda were not developed in isolation but responded to each other” (xv). Throughout the volume the authors examine a variety of familiar and lesser-known materials, bringing this exchange and counterpoint of accusations deftly to life.

The book is split into three sections. Each explores a theme. Part One focuses on Anglo-Spanish Relations and the Politics of Elizabethan Queendom; Part Two centers on Visual and Literary Images of the *Jezebel del Norte*; Part Three takes up the topic The Queen is Dead! *Isabel Tudor* in the Spanish Ethos and for a Spanish Audience.

The introduction sets the scene for the distinctions made in art and literature between the queen’s bodily image and the body politic, as the discursive landscape of relations between England and Spain moved into hostile territory. Like the Duke of Feria (whom he cites), Olid Guerrero emphasises Elizabeth’s “intelligence and autonomy on matters of politics and faith” (10), and the inextricable link between religion and politics throughout the period under scrutiny. Setting the scene for the move from friendship to Armada, he also details how “the Spanish reaction to the English queen went from hopefulness, to disillusionment, and ultimately resulted in accusations intended to convince and enrage the peninsular population so they would contribute with soldiers and taxed to the enterprise against England” (12). The English queen and her councillors could control her image on an island but overseas was another matter, as Olid Guerrero’s subsequent historiographical assessment reveals.

Part One opens with Magdalena de Pazzis Pi Corrales’ assessment of that transition “From Friendship to Confrontation.” She details how the Black Legend came about, how disputes arose, and who the key friends and adversaries of the period were. It should be noted that, at times, the footnoting here is thin at best or non-existent, leaving some of the claims unsubstantiated (especially pages 59-62), which could prove problematic for readers. But having established this otherwise solid bedrock of context, in Chapter Two, Jesús M. Usunáriz neatly takes the

reader through the key stereotypes by which Elizabeth is portrayed in the court of Spanish public opinion and chooses a vibrant array of sources and representations—from spider to monster—that set the stage for the topics covered in subsequent chapters.

“Antichrists, Pope Lovers, and Atheists: The Politics of Elizabeth I’s *Christian Prayers and Meditations*” focuses, in the main, on the Spanish prayers in Elizabeth’s prayer book, and how their “violent” tone is so different to that of prayers in other languages in the volume. Given the title of the volume, I was a little surprised not to see more discussion of the image of Elizabeth at prayer, commissioned by John Day; instead, it lays greater emphasis upon the “rhetoric of rule” and Elizabeth’s choice of tone in relation to topic (117). Nonetheless, the essay is an excellent assessment of the volume’s content, even though it does tend to jump back and forth between the languages, rather than detailing how the set of prayers progresses.

Chapter Four finally presents us with a wealth of images of Elizabeth, although not quite as I expected. In “Elizabeth I and the Politics of Representation,” Mercedes Alcalá-Galán presents us with detailed analysis of thirteen images of Elizabeth. Sadly, however, the emphasis is on English productions, not Spanish. There are some of the usual suspects—such as the Sieve and Armada portraits—but also some detailed interpretations of other, lesser-known printed illustrations. It makes for a really useful study of “the fundamental presence of Spain in the political model embodied by Queen Elizabeth I” through the bibliographical lens (168), even if it closes the section with content somewhat at odds with the volume’s title, in that it provides images of Elizabeth and Spain from an English—not Spanish—perspective.

Part Two takes us “In Search of Elizabeth I,” examining “Visual Representations of the Virgin Queen in Early Modern Spanish Sources.” And here the problem raised for the reader at the end of Part One comes to the fore: “images of Gloriana produced in Spain and for Spanish audiences are not easy to locate” (179). This is indeed true. The images the title suggests ultimately “appear to be absent” (180). That said, Mesa Higuera takes us on a tour of “written portraits” (181) within the Spanish sources, followed by a delectable selection of images from the Spanish Netherlands, their provenance, meaning, and impact. This is a truly excellent piece of research and explication, ranging from numismatics to polychromatic woodcarvings, and makes a fine job of linking its findings to other essays in the volume. Any student of this period would do well to look at the bibliography for this essay too.

Chapter Six zooms in on the literary representations of Elizabeth I in the “Fictional Worlds” of Lope de Vega. Alejandro García-Reidy examines at length two epic poems in context: *La Dragontea* (The Dragontea, first published 1598)

and *Corona trágica: vida y muerte de la serenísima reina de Escocia María Estuarda* (Tragic crown: the life and death of the most serene queen of Scotland Mary Stuart, published in 1627). Both poems represent Lope's assiduous pursuit of patronage, and are examined at length both for their portrayals of Elizabeth I and their contextual references, revealing just how tellingly these "images" of Elizabeth are "filtered by religious animosity" at a time of political and economic confrontation between England and Spain (242).

Chapter Seven turns our attention towards the "Spanish Poetic Satyr," with a consideration of the "Political Context, Propaganda, and the Social Dimension of the Armada." Again, the emphasis here is upon images painted with words, but they are vibrant and important nonetheless. Jesús-David Jerez-Gómez makes the significant observation that "poetry operated as an instrument of the state intended to create and maintain favorable public opinion that would back the Crown and support its campaign against England" (253). He explores the pressing need for Spaniards at this juncture to align themselves—perhaps more than ever—with Catholicism, against the monstrous Elizabeth. His essay also raises a Spanish twist on the problems faced by monarchs incumbent on bad advice from those closest to them. "The oral, audiovisual, collective society" presented by Jerez-Gómez depicts beautifully the sensory assault that was utilised to garner and maintain hostility against Elizabeth, the Protestant queen of England, and represents a virtuoso end to Part Two (261).

Part Three declares almost rampantly "The Queen is Dead!" and leads us into the portrayal of *Isabel Tudor* for Spanish audiences. Alexander Samson opens this section with an important assessment of the Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneira's *Historia Ecclesiastica del cisma del Reyno de Inglaterra* (Ecclesiastical history of the schism of the kingdom of England), a text still under-appreciated by many scholars of Anglo-Spanish relations. Samson brilliantly explains the "surprisingly anodyne" treatment of Elizabeth in this work, despite it being based largely on the work of the English Catholic exile, Nicolas Sander (his *De origine ac progressu schismatis Anglicani*) (287). The "high political drama" includes many memorable descriptions, not least a rip-roaring account of Anne Boleyn's alleged incest that begot Elizabeth but also a serious analysis of the impact of key figures such as William Cecil on Elizabeth's rule and image (290). Again, Samson makes the point that although "Elizabeth loomed large in the Spanish imagination", her image—including on the stage—is "virtually invisib[le]" to all those seeking her in a Spanish context (293).

Next, Adrián Izquierdo examines "Elizabeth Tudor, the Elephant, and the Mirroring Cases of the Earl of Essex and the Duke of Biron." In an interesting departure from the running narrative, this chapter addresses what happens when "providential historians and politicians" chose to "rise above religious divides and

acknowledge [Elizabeth's] achievements" (314). Justus Lipsius' *Politicorum* (1589) provided an "escape clause" for women rulers, by declaring both male and female rule possible (315). Izquierdo then situates Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo's portrayal of Elizabeth in his *Historia trágica de la vida del duque de Biron* (The tragic history of the life of the Duke of Biron) within this realm of possibility. This biography of Biron details the Duke's visit to Elizabeth's court and presents her favourably, proving that not all Spanish political writers and historians denigrated Elizabeth's character, rule, and image—something English-language-only scholars would do well to remember.

Finally, we return to the spectacle of Elizabeth upon the Spanish stage, with Esther Fernández's examination of the queen's "image" as a "performative entity" (345). Since the character of Elizabeth never appeared on the Spanish stage during her lifetime, Fernández sets Spanish portrayals within the framework of her "afterlives"—a concept familiar in an English-language context, and so highly welcome here to provide much-needed balance. *El Conde de Sex* (The Earl of Essex) by Antonio Coello (staged in 1633) and *La reina María Estuarda* (Queen Mary Stuart) by Juan Bautista Diamante (staged in 1660) are the central focus of this closing essay, returning us to the concept of the queen's two bodies. What we encounter here—even after Elizabeth's death—is an "overshadowing" of the queen "by the playwrights' imaginations and ideological intentions" (359). After all, egos and pecuniary need are not the sole province of the present age.

As a whole, this edited collection attempts to grapple with the nebulous image of Elizabeth in early modern Spain. Time and again, the authors note this central problem, and the contents of the volume sit uneasily beneath the weight of its title. It is less the "image" of Elizabeth we encounter here, and more representations or perceptions of the queen. If you expect a volume awash with *images* in the strictest sense, you may find yourself disappointed. It does not fully deliver on the promise of its title. But what it *does* deliver is a series of well-researched, thought-provoking essays about Spanish encounters with and accounts of Elizabeth, as well as the manifestations of Spanish and Netherlandish imaginations well worth your time and hard-earned cash.

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