ON FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH VERNACULAR HUMANISM

IN the third book of the Catalan romance *Curial e Güelfa* there occurs an odd and illuminating scene: Curial, the chivalric hero, who is sailing about the Mediterranean in a galley, lands in Athens. From there he journeys to Thebes — attracted by the literary associations of Statius's *Thebaid* — and then to the temple of Apollo at Delphi, on the slopes of Mount Parnassus, where he falls asleep and experiences a dream-vision. Apollo and the nine Muses appear, and ask him to judge a case which, according to Apollo, "és entre'ls vivents molt gran qüestió". It turns out to be no more urgent than a debate between two accounts of the Trojan War.[1]

All this seems out of place; Curial is supposed to be a knight errant, not a bookworm. And the length and detail of the anonymous author's treatment of Curial's Parnassian encounter make it difficult to explain the episode simply as a piece of erudite tinsel: The problem disappears if we forget *Curial e Güelfa*'s affinities with the *libros de caballerías* and think more of its affinities with the fictional or fictionalized exemplary "chivalric biographies" which were then so popular with noble readers in Burgundy, France and Castile. The best known are Gutierre Díez de Games' *Victorial* on Don Pero Niño, Count of Buelna; Boucicault and Jacques de Lalaing's *Livres des faicts*; Antoine de la Sale's *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré,* and Jean de Bueil's *Jouvencel.* These books were intended as mirrors of attitudes and behaviour for their own day. Curial's name, which means "courtly", is a signpost of a similar aim in *Curial e Güelfa:* Curial is not merely a romantic hero, but the model of a "verray, parfit gentil knight".[2] This being so, a clue to the significance of the episode of the Parnassian dream is the emphasis the author lays on the

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[1] *Curial e Guelfa, text del XV^en^ segle reproduhit novament del codex de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid,* ed. R. Miquel y Planas and Anfòs Par (Barcelona, 1932), pp. 342-54.

[2] Miquel and Par connect the name with Alain Chartier's *Le Curial,* a translation of the Italian humanist Ambrosius de Milliis's letter to Gontier Col, *De vita curiali* (*Curial e Güelfa,* p. 482, note to l. 38); a glance at Heuckenkamp's edition shows that there is no connection. But Chartier's title shows how the name alone must have invited an allegorical reading.

fact that his hero was an "home scientífich e qui nulls temps lexava l'estudi" (p. 342). The phrase picks up a concern with *sciència* that runs through many passages of Curial's story. As a boy he learnt grammar, logic, rhetoric and philosophy, and became a "poeta molt gran" (p. 7); and as a man he became an all-rounder:

> Es cavaller en parlar e en obrar, e en plaça e en cambra, e en liça e en tot loch. Daltra part, és molt abte e virtuós, savi e de gran e notable consell; pero no me'n maravell, car entre los grans philosofs, poetes e oradors, veig que es tengut en gran stima ... E, partit d'aquí, no lexà l'estudi, ans tractà tan reverencialment los libres, que tots quants lo conèxen ho han a gran maravella (p. 269).[3]

In other words, the episode is an allusion to the age-old topic about "arms and letters" *(sapientia et fortitudo),* or the ideal conjunction of intellectual and physical prowess in the perfect warrior-knight, which Curtius has traced from Homer and Virgil right down to Castiglione and the Renaissance and beyond.[4]

But whereas in earlier times the warrior's *sapientia* broadly meant his prudence and cunning, Curial's *sapientia* is quite specifically portrayed in the Parnassian episode as a familiarity with classical literature. That makes this particular passage, in the fifteenth-century context, something more intriguing than a bookish *topos.* It is a reflection of social reality. We have only to think of Diego de Valera (c. 1412 - c. 1480), who fought on the Moorish frontier and travelled the courts of Europe as a knight errant, but also wrote poetry and copious learned treatises, among them one on the *Origen de Troya y Roma,* to find a real-life counterpart to Curial.[5] And there were many other contemporary examples of learned knights in the Peninsula: the historian and translator Pérez de Guzmán, the enthusiastic Livian Benavente, the "Latin Count" of Haro, the *érudits*

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[3] The emphasis on "all-round" excellence prefigures Castiglione's ideal of the *cortegiano,* a point I return to below (see note 32); cf. the Italian's evocation of the model courtiers of Urbino: "nelle giostre, nei torniamenti, nel cavalcare, nel maneggiar tutte le sorti d'arme, medesimamente nelle feste, nei giochi, nelle musiche, in somma in tutti gli esercizi convenienti a nobili cavalieri, ognuno si sforzava di mostrarsi ... degno", Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano,* edited by E. Bonora (Milan, 1972), p. 35.

[4] Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* translated by Willard R. Trask (London, 1953), pp. 174-79.

[5] See *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV,* I, ed. M. Penna, BAE, CXVI (Madrid, 1959), pp. xcix-cxxxvi, for an excellent resumé of Valera's career and writings. The *Origen de Troya y Roma,* addressed to the noble lord Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, is there edited on pp. 155-59.

Duke Pedro of Coimbra and Prince Charles of Viana, the bibliophile Constables of Portugal and Castile, the soldier-poets of the Manrique, Guzmán and Stúñiga families, and above all that *uomo universale,* Santillana (1398-1458). Abundant evidence from fifteenth-century libraries, and from the pattern of thought reflected in fifteenth-century literature, shows that a growing class of noble lay readers in Iberia really were interested in precisely the kind of classical questions which appealed to Curial.

In fact, as we have long known, vernacular translations from classical authors were one of the forms of secular literature most enjoyed by the fifteenth-century lay reading public. The list available in one or more of the vernaculars — Castilian, Aragonese, Catalan, Valencian and Portuguese — included works or extracts of works by Livy (also Florus's *Epitome*), Caesar, Quintus Curtius, Josephus, "Trogus Pompeius" (Justin's epitome is meant), Valerius Maximus, Orosius, both Plinies, Plutarch, Procopius, Sallust, Vegetius, Frontinus, Polybius, Eutropius, Thucydides, Homer (and the *Ilias Latina*), Lucan, Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, Lucian, Eusebius, Palladius, Boethius, Seneca, Plato and Aristotle.[6] Dedications, provenance of surviving MSS and library inventories show that the patrons and sponsors and readers of these books (even, occasionally, their translators) were princes and noblemen. If the passage from *Curial e Güelfa* suggests that an involvement in classical book-learning was a desirable ideal in the *chevalier* of romance, the translations show that such an involvement, for some powerful and wealthy knights, and particularly in Castile, went beyond the merely ideal.

It is tempting to speculate why this interest in classical translation gained such a grip on Spanish readers at this particular time. What did they want from their tomes of ancient history and moral philosophy? Doubtless the chief thing was what any sane man seeks from literature, a relief from boredom and despair; that "singular reposo a las vexaciones e trabajos que el mundo continuamente trahe, mayormente en estos nuestros reinos" of which Santillana so eloquently spoke in a letter to his son

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[6] Raw bibliographical evidence is amassed in M. Menéndez y Pelayo's *Bibliografía hispano-latina clásica,* ed. E. Sánchez Rayón, 10 vols. (Santander and Madrid, 1950-55); Th. S. Beardsley, "Hispano-Classical Translations printed between 1482 and 1699: A Study of the Prologues and a Critical Bibliography" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1961) makes a few additions. For a different type of evidence, see J. Lawrance, "Juan Alfonso de Baena's Versified Reading List: A Note on the aspirations and the reality of fifteenth-century Castilian culture", *JHPh,* 5 (1981), 101-22.

about a new translation of Homer's *Iliad* (c. 1446-1452). Fifteenth-century readers often added morally bracing *exempla* as a desideratum; and it sometimes seems as if they hoped to find this twofold "exemplo e consolación", as they called it, not so much in an aesthetic experience, as in the books' more pragmatic freight of "information". So Santillana remarks in the same letter, "si carescemos de las formas, seamos contentos de las materias".[7]

This heuristic approach links up with the omission from the list of translations of much of what we regard as most characteristic and precious in classical literature: lyric, satire and drama. So it is sometimes argued that the choice of classical texts preferred by Spanish readers implies not only a deficient aesthetic appreciation of classical literature, but also a lack of curiosity about the *quiddity*, the essential "otherness", of classical civilization and that this makes their interest in the classical world quite a different thing from the Italian Revival of Learning. But it seems that the Florentine humanists of the early Quattrocento were no less concerned with didactic and moral readings of classical texts and showed no greater predilection for lyric, satirical or dramatic poetry than Spaniards. The exemplary purpose behind the study of ancient history and ethics which motivated a key figure like Leonardo Bruni (1369-1444) was supremely acceptable to his avid contemporary readership in Spain and often quoted as authority and protreptic: so, in the dedication to Prince Enrique of his immensely popular *Proverbios*, Santillana justified the use of "buenos exemplos" from Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Virgil, Ovid, Terence and others by reference to

> Leonardo de Arecio, en una epístola suya al muy magnífico ya dicho señor rey [Juan II], en la qual le recuenta los muy altos e grandes fechos de los emperadores de Roma naturales de la vuestra España, diciéndole que los traía a la memoria porque ... por enxemplo de ellos a alteça de virtudes e a desseo de muy grandes cosas lo amonestassen.[8]

And this approach to the classics remained unquestioned among lay readers everywhere in Europe at least until the eighteenth century; so

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[7] Marqués de Santillana, *Obras*, ed. A. Cortina (Madrid: Austral, 1946), p. 44. On *exemplo e consolación*, see further J. Lawrance, "The spread of lay literacy in Late Medieval Castile", *BHS*, 62 (1985), 79-94, at 82 and 88-90.

[8] *Obras*, p. 46. The letter of Bruni to which Santillana refers, a eulogy of Spain and the Spanish emperors of Rome, the first of several sent to Juan II, probably dates from 1434; see *Epistolae*, ed. L. Mehus (Florence, 1741), VII, p. 6. It achieved wide diffusion in the Castilian translation (for example, Biblioteca Nacional MSS 5732 and 8611; Santillana's copy, BN MS 10212).

that R. R. Bolgar defined the whole Revival of Learning as "the noblest elements in Roman morality organized to serve the Renaissance spirit".[9] In this respect at least the Quattrocento Italian humanists and the patrons of the vernacular translations of Spain were united.

Besides moral "exemplo e consolación", however, the prologues which Peninsular translators earnestly tacked on to their works often touted a more utilitarian idea: that the classical moralists, historians and epic poets offer important practical lessons to noble readers on the conduct of their profession and of the "republic's" affairs. This seems to mean in part that, for the new lay readership of the fifteenth century, classical literature provided almost the only available texts for a study of statecraft, warfare and secular ethics based on empirical examples. This point was made, for example, by the Portuguese translator of Cicero's *De officiis*, when he noted that though there were other "mui boos livros que trautam da philosophia moral ... os outros per a mayor parte screvem da theorica, e a tençom deste he de mostrar a pratica".[10] But the idea is also related to the so-called "revival" of chivalry. Roman *militia* was still believed, in all the courts of fifteenth-century Europe (Italy not excluded), to be a "source" in direct historical descent, and hence "mirror", of contemporary chivalry and knighthood.[11] The supposition that Roman *militia* had this direct historical relevance for the definition of a knight's duties and behaviour is a note that was sounded over and again in the prologues.

Both the practical bent behind the revival of classical history and its historical reflection on contemporary chivalry are illustrated at the outset

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[9] *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge, 1954), p. 255. By way of a Renaissance example, one may quote the proem of Machiavelli (1469-1527) to his great commentary on Livy, the *Discorsi*: "ho giudicato necessario scrivere ... a ciò che coloro che leggeranno queste mia declarazioni possino più facilmente trarne quella utilità per la quale si debbe cercare la cognizione delle istorie", Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe e Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, ed. S. Bertelli (Milan, 1960), pp. 124-25.

[10] *O livro dos oficios de Marco Tullio Ciceram, o qual tornou em linguagem o infante D. Pedro, duque de Coimbra*, edited by J. M. Piel (Coimbra, 1948), "Prologo".

[11] A classic example is Bruni's treatise *De militia*, twice translated into Castilian, once for Santillana and once for Rodrigo Manrique; see M. Schiff, *La Bibliothèque du marquis de Santillane* (Paris, 1905), pp. 113-16 and 361-63. It was much discussed by Castilian readers, e.g. the correspondence (1444) of Santillana and Cartagena in *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV*, ed. Penna, pp. 235-45. Bruni defines the ideal knight by examining the pristine form of militia founded by Romulus, using Livy as chief source, and discusses how far knighthood in Bruni's own day lived up to the Roman ideal; see C. C. Bayley, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence: The "De militia" of Leonardo Bruni* (Toronto, 1961), pp. 316-36.

by one of the earliest and most influential of all the Spanish statements on the subject, the one set out by Pero López de Ayala in the prologue to his translation of three *Decades* of Livy, made from the French of Pierre de Bressuire at the behest of Juan I in 1386. Ayala recommended Livy's history to his fellow noblemen not as an example of antiquarianism, but as a lively document in the rules of chivalry and war. The King may, indeed, have intended the translation of Livy's extended hymn to patriotic self-sacrifice to act as a specific reprimand and *exemplum* to the Castilian knights whose selfish and uncooperative thirst for personal glory and lack of discipline had so recently led to disaster and ignominy at the battle of Aljubarrota.[12] Ayala writes:

> Plogo a la vuestra real magestat que este libro de Titus Livius, dó se ponen e cuentan las ordenanças que los príncipes e cavalleros [antiguos] guardaron en sus batallas, ... sea traído agora en público por que los príncipes e los cavalleros que lo oyeren tomen buen exenplo e buena esperencia e esfuerço en si, catando quánto provecho e quánta onra nace de la buena ordenança e de la buena obedencia en las batallas, e quánto estorvo e daño e peligro viene al contrario.[13]

In Ayala's conception, the chief lessons to be learnt from classical history were rules of war and strategy, though he also suggested, significantly, that the grandeur of Rome's legacy might inspire "esfuerço". The same narrowly military conception doubtless was in the mind of the many nobles who subsequently comissioned copies of San Cristóbal's version of Vegetius's *De re militari,* of its abbreviation *Libro de la guerra,* of a new version of Frontinus's *Strategemata,* or of the Castilian translations (based on Bruni's Latin and Pier Candido Decembrio's Italian versions) of Polybius's *De bello Punico,* Procopius's *De bello Gothico,* and Caesar's *De bello Gallico.*[14] Juan Alfonso de Baena, in the *Prologus Baenensis* to his

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[12] P. E. Russell, *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 398-99. Russell also makes the point that Ayala, with his study of Livy and Vegetius, seems to have been the only man of his time capable of seeing that the defeat at Aljubarrota probably had something to do with faulty tactics and morale, not divine intervention.

[13] Pero López de Ayala, *Las Décadas de Tito Livio: edición crítica de los libros I-III,* ed. C. J. Wittlin, 2 vols. (Barcelona, 1984), I, pp. 215-17, at p. 217. The popularity of this translation is attested by numerous MSS, incunables, later editions, and mentions in library inventories. It was usually read in the abbreviated version prepared in the 1430s by the Count of Benavente.

[14] On Fray Alfonso de San Cristóbal's version of *Vegecio de re militari* (late 14th c.), see Schiff, *Bibliothèque du marquis de Santillane,* p. 75. The BN MS 6526 *Libro de la guerra* dubiously attributed to Villena (ed. L. de Torre in *RH* 38 (1914), 497-531) is simply an epitome; another, the *Dichos de Séneca* [*sic*] *en el fecho de*

famous *Cancionero* compiled for Juan II, thought it not simply instructive, but obligatory for nobles to study the "batallas, guerras e conquistas que en fecho de armas e cavallerías los muy esclarecidos *sus antecessores* antigos, enperadores e senadores e cónsules e dictadores de la muy famosa e redubtable cibdat de Roma fizieron e ordenaron e conpusieron e escrivieron". In his Frenchified and long-winded style, Baena spelled out the strategic benefits of such study:

> para que puedan e sepan ser cabdillos e governadores, capitanes de grandes gentes, e que sepan con pura discreción e con buen seso governar ... en ordenada justicia e buena dispusición e sabia ordenança todas sus gentes e huestes e batallas e conquistas e guerras. [15]

And the emphasis on soldiering continued to be of prime importance, to judge by the undiminished popularity of translations of military history, well beyond the turn of the century and into the Golden Age. [16]

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la cavallería, and some *Dichos de Quinto Curcio,* are attributed equally apocryphally to Alonso de Cartagena (BN MSS 8830 and 17803). Of Frontinus there were an Aragonese, a Catalan, and two Castilian versions current during the century: see Schiff, pp. 34 and 141-42, and A. Rubió i Lluch, *Documents per l'història de la cultura catalana mig-eval,* 2 vols. (Barcelona, 1908, 1921), I, pp. 219 and 226; the second Castilian version, made by Diego Guillén de Ávila for the Count of Haro in 1487, was subsequently printed and reprinted several times (Beardsley, "Hispano-Classical Translations", pp. 25 and 127-28). Bruni's *De primo bello Punico* (1421), an unacknowledged crib of Polybius, was translated into Italian by Pier Candido Decembrio (Schiff, pp. 37-38) and then into Catalan by Francesc Alegre (Hispanic Society of America MS H.C. 387/4327); his Procopius, *De bello Gothico* (c. 1441), into Castilian for Santillana's cousin Fernán Álvarez de Toledo, Count of Alba (Schiff, pp. 357-59). Decembrio's Italian Caesar was translated into Castilian c. 1450 (A. Morel-Fatio, "La Traduction des *Commentaires* de César par Pedro Candido Decembrio", *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes,* 4 (1894), 345-48; Schiff, p. 65); on a second fifteenth-century translation, see note 16 below.

[15] *Cancionero de Juan Alfonso de Baena,* ed. J. M. Azáceta, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1966), I, pp. 7-15, at pp. 10-11.

[16] An example is *Los comentarios de Gayo Julio César* by Diego López de Toledo, son of Santillana's cousin, the Count of Alba, who became *comendador* of the Military Order of Alcántara. Done in the 1480s while Diego was still a page-boy at the court of Prince John, the version was subsequently published by Pedro Hagenbach in Toledo in 1498; Diego later revised the translation with the aid of better, printed texts, and rededicated it to His "Caesarean" Majesty Charles V. The book was reprinted time and again in the sixteenth century, the last edition being that of 1621 (Menéndez Pelayo, *Bibliografía hispano-latina clásica,* II, pp. 142-54; Beardsley, "Hispano-Classical Translations printed between 1482 and 1699", p. 23). A similar case is that of Appian's *Romaica,* a military history of the Empire: it was translated, via the Italian and Decembrio's Latin, by Captain Diego de Salazar for the Marquis of Berlanga as *Historia de todas las guerras civiles* (Rome, 1502 and many subsequent editions), and, as *Los triumphos de Apiano* (Valencia: Juan Jofre, 1522, etc.), by Juan de Molina for Rodrigo de

But this military and chivalric focus was not all there was to the classical movement in fifteenth-century Spain. A significant extension of Ayala's and Baena's view of the practical strategic lessons of classical history appeared when writers began to express the opinion that a knowledge of literature was an essential training not only for military prowess, but for more general lessons, and especially for fitting noblemen for their role in the governance of the polity. Such an opinion is clearly expounded, for example, in the interesting prologue which Alonso de Cartagena (1395-1456), Bishop of Burgos, prefixed to his compilation of the laws of chivalry, the *Doctrinal de cavalleros,* which he dedicated to the poet and Count of Castro, Diego Gómez de Sandoval, in 1446:

> Los famosos cavalleros, muy noble señor, que en los tiempos antiguos por diversas regiones del mundo florescieron, entre los grandes cuidados e ocupaciones arduas que tenían para governar la república e la defender e anparar de los sus adversarios, acostumbravan interponer algund trabajo de sciencia, *por que onestamente supiesen regir así aquellos cuyo regimiento les pertenescía, así en fechos de paz como de guerras,* entendiendo que las fuerças del cuerpo non pueden exercer auto loable de fortaleza si non son guiadas por coraçón sabidor. [17]

A classic formulation of the same theme occurs in the prologue to Santillana's *Proverbios.* Santillana kicks off with the customary exordial topic of "arms versus letters", fustigating the (perhaps imaginary) dolts who say that a prince need know only "how to administer his realms or conquer new ones"; he then leads in with Cartagena's argument:

> ¿Cómo puede regir a otro aquel que a sí mismo no rige? ¿Nin cómo se rigirá nin se governará aquel que non sabe nin ha visto las governaciones e regimientos de los bien regidos e governados?

He winds up by citing the Catos and Scipios, Hannibal, Caesar, and more recent heroes in support of his peroration: that "la sciencia non embota el fierro de la lança, nin faze floxa el espada en la mano del cavallero". [18]

Mendoza, Santillana's (bastard) grandson, Marquis of Cenete (A. Bravo García, "Apiano en España: notas críticas", *Cuadernos bibliográficos,* 32 (1975), 29-39).

[17] I quote from Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bod 597, fols. 115-116 (my italics). There are another 12 MSS and 3 early editions of this very popular work; see *Dissertation Abstracts,* LXIV, 12965, on G. L. Boarino's "Alonso de Cartagena's *Doctrinal de cavalleros*: Text, tradition and sources" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1964).

[18] *Obras,* pp. 46-48. For further examples of the rhetorical topic of "arms versus letters", see N. G. Round, "Renaissance culture and its opponents in 15th-Century Castile", *MLR,* 57 (1962), 204-15. Both Round and P. E. Russell, "Las armas

The heroes in Santillana's list, and particularly Caesar, were to become standard models of the spirit of the age.[19]

This development beyond a purely military focus reflected the fact that a greater range of classical works were available for the noble education. Enrique de Villena, in the monumental unfinished commentary on his translation of the *Aeneid* (c. 1427), chose to interpret that work as an "espejo doctrinal" of the type envisaged by Cartagena and Santillana; according to Villena's *Prohemio,* noble readers would find in Virgil's epic, among many other bizarre and esoteric scientific and moral lessons of his own peculiar devising, and the inevitable "esfuerço siquiere de osar cometer grandes fechos", lessons in politics: "las prácticas como libran ... en las cortes de los reyes, e saber regirse en las mobilidades dellas" (BN MS 17975, fol. 10v). The lesson was plainly embodied in another of Villena's popular classical allegories, *Los doze trabajos de Hércules* (1417): in the prologue, where he once again performed the ritual of attacking the "boors" who affirm that learning is incompatible with arms by citing the standard counter-example of Julius Caesar, and by pointing out that the Romans, according to Valerius Maximus, "leían los buenos fechos de los pasados e virtuosos cavalleros por animar a tales e mayores cosas a los entonces vivientes ... afirmando que tal exercicio era pungitivo de virtud"; and then in the body of the work, where Hercules, "espejo actual a los gloriosos cavalleros en armada cavallería", was made not only a knight of unequalled prowess but also, rather like Curial, a considerable natural philosopher and scholar as well.[20] A more systematic exposition of the broadly political arguments for reading classical ethics and oratory as well as history was Cartagena's *Epistula ad co-*

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contra las letras: para una definición del humanismo español del siglo xv", in his *Temas de "La Celestina" y otros estudios: Del "Cid" al "Quijote"* (Barcelona, 1978), pp. 207-39, argue on the basis of these *topoi* and other evidence, that there really was an overwhelming prejudice against letters; when the *topos* occurs, as it usually does, in contexts like the one quoted above, it is surely more reasonable to take it as meaning that such prejudice was being seriously challenged. In particular, I find it hard to believe, in view of the evidence I am discussing in this article (and see note 33 below), that there was any important current of opinion at the court of that eminently bookish King Juan II to warn Prince Henry of the fatty degeneration of the moral fibre inherent in the literary pursuits devised for him by his father.

[19] The *locus classicus* for Caesar as soldier-scholar is Decembrio's prologue to his translation of the *De bello Gallico* (fifteenth-century Castilian version in Menéndez y Pelayo, *Bibliografía hispano-latina clásica,* II, pp. 141-42).

[20] Enrique de Villena, *Los doze trabajos de Hércules,* ed. M. Morreale (Madrid, 1958), pp. 7-10. The popularity of the work is attested by seven MSS, two incunable editions, and a number of citations in library inventories.

mitem de Haro, a Latin letter on the proper criteria for building a nobleman's library addressed to a leading collector of the time; the edifying programme set out by the bishop here was backed up by his own cycle of translations from Cicero and Seneca, the latter apparently the most popular secular work written in Castilian in the fifteenth century.[21]

Eloquent statements of the civic duty of men engaged in the *vita activa* to busy themselves with letters began to appear with some frequency as time went on. This note is sounded, for example, in the stirring tribute to his kinsman, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, included by Vasco Ramírez de Guzmán in the prologue to his translation of Sallust, where he states that as a "zelador de saber los grandes e antiguos fechos" Fernán Pérez may count himself amongst those who "con derecha voluntad estudian de acrescentar el bien público".[22] A fine later example is Gómez Manrique's dedication (1476) of a *Cancionero* to his friend and patron the Count of Benavente, where he takes yet another conventional swipe at any "sluggards" who may still adhere to the "arms versus letters" topic:

> Comoquiera que algunos haraganes digan ser cosa sobrada el leer y saber a los cavalleros, como si la cavallería fuera a perpetua rudeza condepnada, yo soy de muy contraria opinión; porque a estos digo yo ser *conplidero* el leer e saber las leyes e fueros e regimientos e governaciones de los pasados ..., las quales doctrinas ¿en quién mejor nin tan bien pueden ni deven ser empleados que en aquellos que han de governar?[23]

An anonymous mid-fifteenth-century translator of Aristotle's *Politics* and *Economics* made a related point when he wrote in his prologue that he had been moved to translate the two works (then seen as part of a trilogy with the *Ethics*) because

> por la mayor parte vemos que todos los hombres que rigen ciudades y repúblicas y cosas familiares no alcançan ser latinos, de donde muchas vezes les falta la manera de governar; a los quales pensé hazer beneficio, si con mi industria diesse camino para que sin necessidad de la lengua latina tuviessen preceptos con los quales supiessen bien regir y governar.[24]

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[21] J. N. H. Lawrance, *Un tratado de Alonso de Cartagena sobre la educación y los estudios literarios* (Barcelona: Universidad Autónoma, 1979); K. A. Blüher, *Séneca en España: Investigaciones sobre la recepción de Séneca en España desde el siglo XII hasta el siglo XVII,* trans. J. Conde (Madrid, 1983), pp. 133-48.

[22] Schiff, *Bibliothèque du marquis de Santillane,* pp. 78-79.

[23] *Cancionero de Gómez Manrique,* ed. A. Paz y Melia, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1885), I, p. 2 (my italics).

[24] Printed, together with the Prince of Viana's translation of the *Ethics,* in Saragossa by Jorge Coci, 1509 (Beardsley, "Hispano-Classical Translations", pp. 24 and 118-19).

A similar topos, that translations of the classics themselves help to "benefit the republic" by educating its statesmen, also became entrenched: the Navarrese courtier and poet Hugo de Urríes, for example, in the prologue to his *Valerio Máximo,* written in 1467 and printed with a dedication to Ferdinand of Aragon in 1495, boasted that by bringing home this work from his travels as ambassador in England and Burgundy he was conferring a "singular beneficio" on his homeland. So too the soldier Diego López de Toledo, who translated Caesar before serving at the siege of Granada in 1492, claimed in his dedication to the ill-fated Prince John of Castile that his aims had been to "aprovechar mi tierra ... ca poco aprovechan las armas si no andan acompañados con consejo". Diego Guillén de Ávila, who dedicated his translation of Frontinus's *Strategemata* to the Count of Haro in 1487, repeated the claim to "aprovechar a nuestra castellana república", citing "aquella sentencia de Aristóteles donde dize que se deve más amar el bien público que no el propio".[25]

Another aspect of the fifteenth-century vogue for vernacular classics was the debate on "True Nobility". Fifteenth-century Spanish, Burgundian and French writers on this theme, as well as Italian ones, sought to establish, amongst other things, the classical topic that a nobleman's true virtue lies not in hereditary *prez,* but in his intrinsic public value to the body politic ("república" or "cosa pública"), a *virtù* which could consist as much in the knight's wise advice and knowledge as in his physical prowess.[26] An interesting contribution to this *De vera nobilitate* tradition was made by Diego de Valera, whose *Espejo de verdadera nobleza* — one of the three native Castilian works in the Count of Benavente's library in 1440, another being Villena's *Doze trabajos de Hércules* — was translated into French by a Burgundian courtier, Hugues de Salve. Valera was a tireless champion of a lettered and classically educated aristocracy; in one of his famous "open letters" to an unnamed friend, dated 1447, he

[25] The three quotations from Beardsley, "Hispano-Classical Translations", pp. 122-23, 126-27, and 127-28 (fuller version in Gallardo, *Ensayo,* III, pp. 151-52); see notes 16 and 14 above for details of the early editions.

[26] See C. C. Willard, "The Concept of True Nobility at the Burgundian Court", *Studies in the Renaissance,* 14 (1967), 33-48; M. Vale, "The Literature of Honour and Virtue", in his *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (London, 1981), pp. 14-32; and S. Anglo, "The Courtier: the Renaissance and Changing Ideals", in *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty 1400-1800,* ed. A. G. Dickens (London, 1977), pp. 33-50, who describes the theme as "tilled by Dante, and trudged into mud by a host of writers throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries" (p. 38).

affirmed: "sé esforçarme servir mi príncipe no solamente con las fuerzas corporales, mas aun con los mentales e intelectuales".[27] In another treatise, the *Tratado de las armas,* Valera supported his views with an appeal to Plato's concept of "philosopher-kings":

> Es verdadera aquella sentencia de Sócrates que dize "Entonces la tierra es bien aventurada, quando los príncipes della son sabios".[28]

Characteristically, the source for this quotation was not Plato's *Republic* (though the first six books of this were available in Spain in the Latin version sent to Juan II and dedicated in part to Alonso de Cartagena by Pier Candido Decembrio), but Vegetius's *De re militari.* The same authority, from the same source, was quoted by, for example, Pero Díaz de Toledo in the prologue to his gloss of Santillana's *Proverbios* and by Enrique de Villena in the "Vida de Vergilio" which precedes his *Eneida* (BN MS 17975, fol. 6). By the end of the century Plato's philosopher-kings had become a ubiquitous commonplace.

The eminently practical purpose of fitting themselves for their role in the governance of the commonweal, which Hexter and others have documented also in the reading tastes of the newly literate nobility of the fifteenth century north of the Pyrenees,[29] was thus the driving idea behind the rash of classical translations commissioned by Spanish noble readers in this period. But to see their aspirations in this light, as spurred and guided by new "civic" attitudes and aspirations, is already to bring them closely into contact with some — not all — of the attitudes and aspirations of Quattrocento Italian humanism. We may apply to the Spanish case Huizinga's memorable dictum: "between the ponderous spirit of the Burgundian and the classical instinct of the Italian ... there is only a difference of nuance".[30] Therefore the claim that Boscán's famous translation (1534) of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* represented a "first wave" of Italian Renaissance ideas about the gentleman-courtier in the Spanish peninsula is slightly misleading, however important that publication may have been in other respects.[31] *Il cortegiano*'s portrait of

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[27] *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV,* ed. Penna, p. 7.
[28] *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV,* ed. Penna, p. 173.
[29] J. H. Hexter, "The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance", in his *Reappraisals in History* (London, 1961), pp. 45-70.
[30] J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages,* trans. F. Hopman (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 68-69.
[31] Compare Russell's verdict in "Las armas contra las letras", pp. 209-10.

the perfect courtier, evoked from memories of the courts of the *condottiere* dukes of Urbino and Milan at the turn of the century no less than from such impeccably Renaissance sources as Cicero's ideal of the orator-statesman, had been forestalled in many details by medieval writers on chivalry and Burgundian writers on True Nobility, so that the ideal is hardly "Italian".[32] And I have been arguing that Castiglione's concept of the well-born and cultivated professional soldier, with his easy but deep acquaintance with classical literature ("full-time dilettante" as Anglo wittily puts it), had been taken for granted in Spain for a considerable time before. After all, as Curtius observes apropos of the "arms and letters" topic, the combination was "nowhere ... so brilliantly realized as in Spain's period of florescence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries"; would this not point to a remarkable *volte-face*, if it were really the case that Castilian noblemen in the fifteenth century had been extraordinarily hostile to letters?[33] On the basis of the evidence presented here, Garcilaso, far from pioneering the idea of the well-read soldier, simply put into practice the established ideals of two generations of kinsmen such as Santillana and Manrique.

To return, finally, to Curial's Parnassian dream: in the interview with Apollo and the Muses, Curial was called upon to judge a curious dispute over the relative merits as *cavallers* of Achilles and Hector. If it is right to see this in the context of the new-found desire of the nobility to find out about and model itself on the exemplars of ancient virtue, then it becomes easier to comprehend the interest of original readers of *Curial e Güelfa* in the question of whether Homer or Dares was to be given the greater credit, or of whether Achilles or Hector was the better *cavaller*.

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[32] Anglo, "The Courtier: the Renaissance and Changing Ideals", *passim*. On p. 40 he notes that accounts of court festivities in *El Victorial*, for example, "antedate Castiglione's Urbino by a century, and represent a tradition of courtliness extending back at least to the thirteenth century". See also note 3 above.

[33] Curtius, p. 178. That there were nobles who did not care for letters is of course not in question; letters are always a minority concern, and it is the size of that minority and the climate of opinion which matter. Whatever the force of the other evidence adduced to prove the existence of an abnormal climate of hostility to letters among the Castilian nobility, the suggestion that the "arms versus letters" *topos* (see note 18) was to a degree peculiar to Castile seems questionable. Hexter's article (note 29) gives abundant examples of "arms versus letters" commonplaces from France and England (where there was no *converso* problem, no *Reconquista*) and in texts which reach well into the seventeenth century. As Russell points out ("Las armas contra las letras", p. 210), Castiglione's own important discussion of the "arms and letters" theme opens by attributing the contrary topic not to the Spaniards, but to the French (*Il libro del cortegiano*, p. 84).

Echoes of that interest sound elsewhere too. Gómez Manrique, for example, in a gloss on the eleventh *copla* of his long consolatory poem to his sister Juana, Countess of Castro, commenting the lines:

> aquella cibdad muy fuerte troyana
> de cuyos triunfos, onores e glorias
> están llenos libros e grandes estorias,

remarks that although his sister, as a woman, may not personally have read the histories of Troy, she will most certainly have heard of the *porfía* between Homer, Dictys and Dares: "no creo que en la sala de vuestro palacio algunas vezes no se aya debatido".[34] And comparisons between the heroes of antiquity were a popular pastime, started by the craze for Plutarch's *Parallel Lives.*[35]

Curial's quandary hinges on a traditional issue, the historical veracity of the rival accounts. Homer, the supporter of Achilles, is accused of having been too poetic: "fa creure moltes coses que no les hach Achilles, ne passaren axí com ell escriu". So Curial has, reluctantly, to find for Dictys and Dares, supposed eye-witnesses from opposite sides who wrote the unadorned "truth". The terms of this discussion, though lifted from countless medieval predecessors, are also connected to a common topic in fifteenth-century discussions about classical literature: namely, the authenticity of "history" and its superiority to the idle fables of romance.[36] The debate on the authenticity of Homer was one of the most

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[34] *Cancionero de Gómez Manrique,* I, pp. 209-41, at pp. 219-20. Santillana represents the Queen Mother of Aragon, Leonor of Albuquerque, in an *arboleda,* enjoying a reading by her ladies-in-waiting of "novellas e plazientes cuentos"; these were punctuated by "antigas gestas ... de Troya y de Tebas" (*Comedieta de Ponça, coplas* XLV-XLVIII). Such vignettes, which could be multiplied, suggest a milieu in which the *matière de Rome* was completely familiar to polite society, including ladies. For the popularity of the *Historia Trojana* (c. 1280) in Catalonia, see *Les Històries troyanes de Guiu de Columnes traduïdes al català en el XIVèn segle per en Jacme Conesa,* ed. R. Miquel y Planas (Barcelona, 1916), pp. xv-xviii; on the medieval Homer-Dares debate, see H. Buchthal, *Historia Troiana. Studies in the History of Mediaeval Secular Illustration,* Studies of the Warburg Institute, 32 (London-Leiden, 1971), pp. 1-8.

[35] Examples are Pier Candido Decembrio's *Comparazione di Gayo Julio Cesare ed Alessandro Magno,* trans. Martín de Ávila for Santillana (BN MSS 8549 and 10140, and an incunable version of 1496); the pseudo-Lucianic *Dialogue of Alexander, Hannibal and Scipio on the glory of arms,* anonymously translated (BN MS 9522, fols. 113ᵛ-122ᵛ); and, of course, the opening pages of Díez de Games' *El Victorial.*

[36] Brian Tate himself has noted that López de Ayala's attack on chivalric romances was linked to his translation of Livy by this "sustitución de los libros de caballerías por los historiadores clásicos" (*Ensayos sobre la historiografía peninsular del siglo XV,* Madrid, 1970, p. 46). Pérez de Guzmán argues that histories

interesting test-cases. Early in the 1440s a number of attempts were made by Juan II, through the offices of Cartagena, to gain access to Homer's account of the Trojan War, doubtless for comparison with the splendid Alfonsine translation of Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* (that is, an unwieldy 30,000-line verse romance version of "Dares and Dictys" made about 1165) in his royal library. An order was accordingly despatched to Pier Candido Decembrio at Milan to send a Latin translation. Decembrio, after much delay, sent only five books and a "Life" of Homer. Meanwhile, the King's chronicler and secretary of Latin letters, Juan de Mena, was commanded to produce, in Cordova, a version of the *Ilias Latina.*[37] Mena's *prohemio* to his version, the *Ilíada en romance* (as it is entitled in MSS and early editions), naturally alludes to the debate about Homer's veracity; here, the Cordoban author's enthusiasm for the "seráphica obra" of the "vaticinante poeta ... monarcha de la universal poesía", expressed with an eloquence which had scarcely ever before been achieved in Castilian prose, allows him to come to an evaluation of the relative worth of Homer and his rivals different from the time-honoured one still favoured, half-heartedly, by the author of *Curial e Güelfa*; this, despite the fact, which Mena himself bemoans in extravagant terms, that the *Ilias Latina* is no more than a miserable botch of the grand original. Mena derides with scorn the medieval versions of the Trojan saga, and especially the *Historia Troiana* of the parvenu Guido delle Colonne, whose insults to Homer were flatulent boasts, "atrevimiento sin freno", in view of the fact that Homer "fue en tal tiempo que bien pudo ser informado por vista de ... la troyana captividad" while he, Guido, lived in the time of good King Alfonso XI:

> ¿Y qué supiera Guido ni aun todos los otros de quien él rebuscó para escrevir si ovo seído Troya, si por la seráphica y quasi divinal obra de Homero como de original no lo ovi[e]sse avido?[38]

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and chronicles which are full of "cosas estrañas e maravillosas" — he cites the "trufa o mentira paladina" of Pedro del Corral's *Crónica sarrazina* as an example — should be censored "for the good of the republic" (*Generaciones y semblanzas,* ed. Tate, p. 1). The idea comes from his mentor Alonso de Cartagena's strictures on the lack of verisimilitude of "Tristani ac Lanceloti Amadisiive ingentia volumina, quae absque aliqua aedificationis spe animum legentium oblectant, illiusque "torneamenti" narratio, quod apud Toletum Roderici regis temporibus factum fuisse depromitur, quam audivi nudius tertius compositam esse" (*Un tratado de Alonso de Cartagena,* ed. Lawrance, p. 54).

[37] A. Morel-Fatio, "Les Deux *Omero* castillans", *Romania,* XXV (1896), 111-29; C. Fabiano, "Pier Candido Decembrio traduttore d'Omero", *Aevum,* 23 (1940), 36-51.

[38] Juan de Mena, "*La Yliada en romançe*" *según la impresión de Arnao Guillén de Brocar (Valladolid, 1519),* ed. M. de Riquer (Barcelona, 1949), p. 39. See also

In the wake of all this, not many years later, Santillana commissioned a Castilian translation of Decembrio's Latin version of the five books of the *Iliad* from his son, the future Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza.[39]

Of course, this desire to recapture from the ancient texts a more authentic portrait of antique heroes was never incompatible with a continuing taste for medieval texts; the *Crónica troyana,* in particular, in the translation attributed to Pero López de Ayala, which to judge by library inventories and extant MSS was tremendously popular in the fifteenth century, remained in print, in at least fifteen editions, until 1587.[40] Nevertheless, the *concurrent* popularity of the classical texts implies, in my view, just the sort of developing critical faculty which, on other grounds, is sometimes denied to the patrons and translators of Juan II's court. The purpose of my paper has been, in fact, to propose that these translations represent something we could call "vernacular humanism".[41] It has always seemed to me that the least relevant argument one could bring to bear against seeing some sort of renewal of the classical spirit in the fifteenth century in Spain would be that the Spanish humanism of this time was not carried out in the Latin of Valla and Poggio. Of course, the use of Latin made a great difference: though one eminent scholar has recently confirmed Wilamowitz's old dictum that, with the exception of Valla and Politian, the humanists were not philologists,[42] the Italian brand of humanism was more professional, more scholarly, perhaps more profound. But scholarship was not necessarily more important than translation for the eventual achievement of the Renaissance in literature: the splendid fusion of classical forms with the life and thew and muscle of the living languages. Besides, Latin humanism was not, contrary to common belief, the only form of humanism practised in Italy, or even in Florence; the works of Leonardo Bruni and Pier Candido Decembrio, for instance, the chief representatives of Italian humanism for the court

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the interesting dedication to Don Hernando Enríquez by the printer's hack, Alonso Tudela, *ibid.*, pp. 29-31, which refers to the "philosopher-kings" *topos.*

[39] Schiff, *Bibliothèque du marquis de Santillane,* pp. 1-7.

[40] Beardsley, "Hispano-Classical Translations", p. 20.

[41] I adapt the term from J. Monfrin, "La Connaissance de l'Antiquité et le problème de l'humanisme en langue vulgaire dans la France du XVe siècle", in *The Late Middle Ages and the Dawn of Humanism outside Italy,* ed. G. Verbeke and J. IJsewijn (Louvain-The Hague, 1972), pp. 131-70; see also his "Humanisme et traductions au Moyen Age", in *L'Humanisme médiéval dans les littératures romanes du XIIe au XIVe siècle,* ed. A. Fourrier (Paris, 1964), pp. 217-62.

[42] E. J. Kenney, *The Classical Text: Aspects of Editing in the Age of the Printed Book* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1974), p. 18.

of Juan II, circulated freely in Italian translations, frequently indeed in translations by their own hand.[43] There was in fact a growing lobby in Florence (Rinuccini, Alberti, Politian, Landino) in favour of the *volgare* for many types of writing; this reflects the fact that professional Italian humanists were servants, not masters — their patrons, the nobility and *condottieri*, often required a type of culture much more akin to the vernacular humanism of their Spanish and Northern European counterparts than to that of the Florentine *érudits* and *antiquaires*.[44] And lastly, when Latin humanism did arrive in Spain, under the aegis of Nebrija, it brought about changes certainly less wide-ranging, and arguably less significant to the Renaissance in its Spanish avatar, than the nowadays despised vernacular humanism of the previous generation. Pompous Italian visitors to Spain at the end of the century, as Russell and Round have shown, were fond of scoffing at Spaniards' lack of Latin; they fell into the trap of supposing that a Renaissance which was different from theirs was not a Renaissance. History suggests that the truth was more complex.

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[43] L. Bertalot, "Zur Bibliographie der Übersetzungen des Leonardus Brunus Aretinus", *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 37 (1936-1937), 178-95, and 38 (1937-1938), 268-85; V. Zaccaria, "Sulle opere di Pier Candido Decembrio", *Rinascimento*, 7 (1956), 13-74.

[44] R. Sabbadini, *Storia del ciceronianismo e di altri questioni litterarie nell'età della Rinascenza* (Turin, 1885), pp. 122-36; P. O. Kristeller, "The Origins and Development of the Language of Italian Prose", in his *Renaissance Thought and the Arts. Collected Essays* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 119-41; C. Grayson, *A Renaissance Controversy: Latin or Italian?*, Inaugural Lecture, Taylor Institution, 1959 (Oxford, 1960); and J. E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 226-54.