

Writing the Antithesis of María of Aragón: Alvaro de Luna's Rendering of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*

Escrivint l'antítesi de Maria d'Aragó: Álvaro de Luna interpretant el *De mulieribus claris* de Giovanni Boccaccio

ABBY MCGOVERN
amcgovern@alb.edu

Albright College

Abstract: In forming the canon of works that exemplify the debate on women in the fifteenth century, particularly in the Iberian Peninsula, there is often one text omitted. This work was composed by perhaps the most notorious figure in Spanish history: Alvaro de Luna. Although more commonly known as the king's lifelong companion and privado, Luna was also the author of *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres*. Among the autoridades that Luna credits, he does mention one medieval writer as a source of inspiration: Giovanni Boccaccio. His work, *De claris mulieribus* was written a mere 73 years prior to Luna's Castilian version and it can be argued that Luna's 15th century work is an adaptation or imitation of its Italian predecessor. The texts present themselves similar in purpose, content and structure. While some critics have dismissed the intrinsic similarities between the two texts, this article will discuss how Alvaro de Luna chose to craft a 15th century adaptation of Boccaccio's obra maestro and give examples of the debt that Luna owes to the Italian version. It will be discussed in this article how Luna utilized his work to not only instruct María on how she should behave, but to also exemplify women who were good and virtuous and thusly, offering the antithesis of what Luna believed María was.

Keywords: Alvaro de Luna; John II: María of Aragón; Giovanni Boccaccio; Debate on Women in the Middle Ages; pro-feminine texts; medieval biography

Resum: Quan es parla del cànon dels textos que formen el debat de les dones a l'edat mitjana, específicament a la Península Ibèrica, moltes vegades ens cal un sol text: el *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres* per don Álvaro de Luna. Al *Libro*, Luna cita a les figures patristiques, la Bíblia i els escriptors clàssics i els filòsofs com a fonts de referència. Però, entre les autoritats que cita Luna, s'esmenta una autoritat medieval: Giovanni Boccaccio. Boccaccio va escriure la seua obra mestra, *De claris mulieribus*, 73 anys abans i es pot proposar que l'obra de Luna, del segle XV, és una veritable adaptació o imitació a la seua versió italiana. En aquest article es vol proposar que hi ha una explicació al fet de per què Luna va triar l'obra boccacciana com a model per a la seua. Tots dos textos són semblants en el seu propòsit, en el contingut i en l'estructura. Investiguem com Álvaro de Luna trià l'obra boccacciana per produir una adaptació castellana. També donem alguns exemples concrets del deute respecte del text italià. S'investiga com Luna utilitzava aquesta forma d'escriptura per a produir un text per instruir la reina, quant al seu comportament. A més, Luna volia donar exemple amb nombroses dones virtuoses per demostrar com de dolenta era ella, al seu parer. També per aquest text, Luna podia oferir l'antítesi del que pensava que Maria exemplificava.

Paraules clau: Álvaro de Luna; Joan II de Castella; la cort de Castella; Maria d'Aragó; Giovanni Boccaccio; el debat de les dones a l'edat mitjana, els textos pro-femenins, la biografia medieval

DATA PRESENTACIÓ: 24/11/2013 · ACCEPTACIÓ: 29/11/2013 · PUBLICACIÓ: 19/12/2013

Of the many works that form the canon of the debate on women in the fifteenth century, particularly in the Iberian Peninsula, there is a text that is often omitted. This lesser known text was written by one of the most notorious figures in Spanish history: don Alvaro de Luna. Though Luna carries an immense legacy with the mere mention of his name, he is not usually associated with a literary work. Much less is his name mentioned when discussing works written either in defense or against women. Luna is generally associated with the notion of a ruthless politician. He was commonly known as King John II's lifelong companion and *privado*. While Luna was the author of *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres*, it was his political endeavor that created the personae that many remember.

However, when discussing the debate on women in the fifteenth century, there is a writer who set the precedent for other texts to follow: Giovanni Boccaccio and his *obra maestra*, *De claris mulieribus*. Boccaccio was famous for writing both pro-feminine texts and anti-feminine texts¹. Boccaccio was the author of many texts during the 14th century in Italy, and provided the model for many works that followed throughout Europe. While Luna was known for his political endeavors, Boccaccio was known as a writer and his texts appear as either the source or inspiration for many works that would follow. This article will discuss the dependence of Luna's text on the Italian predecessor. Additionally, it will explore how Boccaccio's work provided a model that would lend itself to its Iberian counterpart: a work that Luna would compose in order to define what was a good and virtuous woman and thusly, provide a stark comparison with a woman that was his enemy, María of Aragón.

1. Alvaro de Luna's Motivation

Alvaro de Luna was born the bastard son of a nobleman, Pedro de Luna. Through the means of his uncles, he would eventually find a place in the court of John II as his playmate. Luna remained in the court for many years, and consequently, due to their constant companionship, would become John II's close confidant and advisor. John II named Luna the *Condestable de Castilla* and while the title does not grant him ultimate authority over the king, Luna's captivating and charming personality caused John II to become almost spellbound². Many within the court began to question the power that Luna had over John II and factions were formed with the sole aim to break the hold that Luna had over the king. The Manrique family (the Infantes of Aragón) and later, John II's son Prince Enrique, eventually joined forces to destroy the relationship between Luna and the king. As Nicholas Round describes their dire situation, they had to end the relationship between the king and his *privado*, and create a coalition with two aims: to end the absolute control of Luna over the king and as a consequence, end Luna's domination over the kingdom (Round 1986: 8).

1 When discussing a pro-feminine text, this is referring to a text that is instructing a woman on how to behave or discussing women in a good or virtuous way. Likewise, an anti-feminine text refers to a text that presents women in a negative light by highlighting their negative actions or faults.

2 For more information regarding Luna's life and rise to power, see *The Greatest Man Uncrowned* by Nicholas Round.

However, the Infantes and Prince Enrique were not Luna's only problem. While he was envied by many within the court, he also had a rivalry with one of the most important people in the kingdom, Queen María, King John II's first wife. While Luna had arranged this marriage himself, at some point he and María became enemies and it is surmised that Luna eventually had her poisoned in order to arrange yet another marriage of convenience for Luna (Isabel, John II's second wife) (Round 1986: 46-7).

María's death occurred slightly before the composition date of the *Libro* (1446). Therefore, it is possible that Luna not only had been writing it to instruct the soon to be deceased queen as to how a queen should behave, but also to instruct the future queen (Isabel) on her behavior as well. Additionally, it could have served the purpose to show María exactly what she wasn't in the Condestable's eyes: good and virtuous. There is nothing that can be found to show that María ever acted any way other than right and virtuous, however, Luna and John II had such an intensely close relationship, that Luna simply could not share him with María. Therefore, the composition of the *Libro* as a guide to the current and future queens seems logical. After all, manuals of instruction were quite common in the Middle Ages³ and by using the model of Boccaccio's *De claris mulieris*, Luna had a successful work that he could utilize in order to create a work that was not only for his benefit, but for others.

2. *El Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres*

The *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres* is essentially a catalog or a collection of biographies of women that exemplify good and wholesome women from history. The text begins with five preambles, a *prohemio* written by Luna and a *prohemio* written by a Luna propagandist, Juan de Mena. Within the *prohemio* of Luna, he discusses his reasoning for writing the work, in essence trying to correct some errors from history and provide examples of women in all their glory and righteousness⁴. Luna explains:

(...) daremos obra, commo todo lo que se fallare derramado en diuersos libros e tractados a esta material tocante, con algunas emiendas e correcciones e otras cosas por nos añadidas, autenticas e verdaderas, en el siguiente libro sea todo juntado e acopilado; e para que la gloria de las virtuosas mugeres respandesca e la su honrra vaya mas cresciendo(...). (Luna 2012: 2v)

Throughout the introduction of the work, Luna discusses women the virtues of women in general. In the preambles Luna does something that is quite contrary to other writers, especially the male

3 Some examples of manuals of instruction for how a woman should behave are: Martín de Córdoba's *Jardin de nobles donzellas* and Fransesc Eiximenis *Libre de les dones*.

4 The original thesis that Luna wishes to instruct not only María, but also Isabel on how to behave and live, it is the clear absence of María's name in the work that is most interesting. At the time of composition, María was still alive, and being the Luna was the confidant of the King, he only mentions John II and not María. It is possible to surmise that Luna omits her purposefully to demonstrate that in a book of good and virtuous women, María is not relevant.

authors of his time. Luna tries to prove that men are just as likely to be sinners as women are. He compares women and men and finds them to both be equal in the ability to be good, honest and reasonable. Luna explains that «De lo qual se concluye que commo quier que el varon aya mayor exçelencia que la mugger, e el sea cabeça de la mugger, segund lo dize el dicho apostol; pero quanto a la virtud e al fin por que son criados, asi el varon commo la mugger, amos a dos son yguales.» (Luna 2012: 6v) He discusses, for example, in the third preamble that due to original sin, women are just as likely to err as men⁵. He sets up his criteria for the women he chose to include in the text. Luna discusses the treatment of women throughout history and at times, their mistreatment as a subject as a whole. He provides many examples from history of authorities speaking out against women as a whole instead of singling out the one or two women who had erred. Thusly, criticizing those from history who chastised the female gender as whole instead of realizing it was the individual who had sinned⁶. Additionally, Luna provides a snapshot of the debate on women at that time, and thusly, providing context to his work. In general, the *prohemio* and the five preambles written by Luna are the only inkling the reader has as to his views on women. Luna states that with his work he can right many literary wrongs that have been committed against women throughout history.

These biographies are divided up into three sections or *libros*. The first section focuses on women from the Bible (which Luna entitles the *Ley de Escriptura*) and contains 21 biographies of exemplary women from the Old Testament, such as Eve⁷, Sara, Judith, and Esther. There are 19 women (or groups of women) mentioned in the first book. The second book focuses on women from the ancient world (the *Ley de Natura*); 33 biographies of Roman women and 45 biographies of gentiles. Some notable figures mentioned in this section are Dido, Coclia, Zenobia and Lucrecia. This section uses 45 examples of women, who Luna terms as «prophetisas e reynas, e otras notables e virtuosas mugeres, que fueron en el tiempo del vieio testamento, asi del pueblo de Israel commo de los gentiles, ...» (Luna 2012: 77).

Finally, the third book presents biographies of virtuous Christian women -- entitled the *Ley de Gracia*, in which there are 21 female saints included (for example Saint Anastasia, Elizabeth, the

5 This is a theme that appears to be unique to the *Libro*. Luna consistently discusses men and women as equals, if not elevating women to higher level of virtue. Consequently, in many examples given through the biographies throughout the book, one can find instances where Luna demonstrates the virtue that the specific woman exudes and claims that had it been a man, he would not have been able to withstand the sacrifice and uphold that level of righteousness.

6 Luna gives the example in his third preamble of King Solomon, who wrote that women were generally bad. Luna, in his own way, reprimands King Solomon for doing this. Luna does not wish to expressly say that King Solomon was wrong, he gently reminds the reader that the king wrote about what was actually the wrongdoing of a few women and as a consequence, wrote against all women. (Luna: 8v)

7 There are some structural differences between Boccaccio's and Luna's text. For example, while Boccaccio begins with his biography of Eve, Luna begins with the Virgin Mary. Thusly, each author demonstrating their point of importance.

mother of John the Baptist, and Mary Magdalene). Luna justifies his choices in this section by explaining that he is «(...)hordenado de recontar en este terçero libro las loores que merecieron algunas santas mugeres, cuya memoria e proçesion se çelebra, en las fiestas de cada año, por los fieles christianos, e de algunas otras, que en nuestro tienpo, fueron esclareçidas, por singular virtud e valiente sabidoria ...» (Luna 2012: 198).

3. Context for Luna's Work and its Natural Evolution from its Italian Predecessor

In 1446, the year in which Alvaro de Luna composed *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres*, the debate on women in the Iberian peninsula had reached its apex. Texts in the defense and attacking women were not a novelty. Predecessors of Luna, who composed pro-feminine texts, include Cerverí de Girona, Enrique de Villena, Francesc Eiximenis, and Alonso de Cartagena. While these texts were not openly defending women, their works, and Luna's, all of the aforementioned texts portrayed women in a positive light, demonstrating good and redeeming qualities in women. While not always overtly presenting a clear message, they were trying to moralize the female gender as a whole. In the 15th century, particularly, there are several Iberian writers that begin to sharpen their focus on exemplifying the good and virtuous characteristics previously thought to be lacking or absent in women. Diego de Valera's work, *Tratado en defensa de virtuosas mugeres*, Fray Martin de Cordoba *Jardin de nobles doncellas* and Juan Rodriguez del Padron, *Triunfo de las donas* all demonstrate the desire by men to support and nurture this dialogue of pro-feminine texts and defense of women against the *maldezirs* or slanderings of such writers as Pere Toroellas.⁸

Luna's *Libro* is a natural inclusion into this genre of pro-feminine literature; however it is often overlooked by critics and scholars alike. For many years, when discussing the pro-feminine literature of the Middle Ages, Luna's text has often been omitted from mention. It is curious that this is the case due to the fact that it is very similar to a text that has enjoyed a plethora of fame, debate and discussion: Giovanni Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*. Luna's text while vastly understudied is an excellent literary contribution. As Julio Vélez-Sainz points out regarding the *Libro*: «(...)su obra posee gran valor literario e histórico. El *Libro* es puntal de una serie de defensas de las mujeres llevadas a cabo en la Castilla de Juan II y claro ejemplo de la temprana diffusion de la obra de Giovanni Boccaccio en nuestra peninsula» (Vélez-Sainz 2002: 107). Luna's work contains over 100 biographies that serve as examples of good and virtuous women. In Luna's *Libro*, he cites many types of sources: patristic figures, the Bible, and classical writers and philosophers. The sources that Luna mentions throughout his work are generally from ancient and classical time periods. However, among the *auctoridades* that Luna credits, he does mention one contemporary writer. He

8 Pere Toroellas is one of the most famous anti-feminine writers of the 15th century. He wrote many works slandering women, such as in his infamous *Maldezir de las mugeres*. Several other writers openly wrote of the vileness in women, such as in the works of Hernán Mexía (*Dictado en vituperio de las malas mugeres y alabanza de las buenas*) and Fray Iñigo López de Mendoza (*Versos*).

was a very significant contributor to the literary genre of women in the Middle Ages: Giovanni Boccaccio⁹. *De mulieribus claris* was written slightly less than a century prior to Luna's Castilian version. Some critics have dismissed the intrinsic similarities between the two texts, citing that Luna was familiar with the Italian text, but that the debt to Boccaccio's work is of much less importance. However, there are indications that Luna chose to craft his 15th century rendering in the image of Boccaccio's *obra maestra*. While it is clear Luna used many different sources in the composition of his text, it is plausible that he only used one model, and that was Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*.

Boccaccio's work, composed between 1355 and 1359, has been included in many discussions regarding the defense of women, and thusly in a natural inclusion in the sources for Luna's *Libro*. In the prologue of his text, Luna lists some of his sources of inspiration, including: Jerome, Alfonso, the Archbishop of Toledo, Petrarch and Isidore. While these are all good examples of texts that promote good deeds, they do not particularly speak to Luna's point, which was to glorify women and their righteousness. The authors that Luna specifically mentions only composed texts promoting the good deeds of men, not women. Luna himself admits this: «No poco marauillando nos de tantos prudentes e santos auctores, que de los fechos e virtudes de los claros varones ayan fecho estendida e complida mencion» (Luna 2012: 2). So while there are many texts that are similar in the theme --the compilation of biographies and names of those good and virtuous men, there are very few that deal with specifically with virtuous women. The only writer that Luna chooses to name, who matches both structurally and thematically is Boccaccio. The Italian writer focuses on the good and virtuous deeds of only women, and furthermore, is the first writer to create a compilation of biographies of women. Luna cites his dependence upon Boccaccio's work: «Por qual razon la memoria de las virtuosas mugeres e sus claros fechos hayan así, callando, traspasado aquestos, en los sus libros e tractados, saluo juan bacacio que de aquellas algunas cosas tracta. Pues estas causas nos fizieron que este trabajo ouivese lugar entre nuestros trabajos y este cuidado fuese unos de nuestros cuidados...» (Luna 2012: 2v). Luna admits that had it not been for Boccaccio, the good deeds of these women would have never come to light.

Many critics wish to dismiss the strong dependence of Luna's text on its Italian predecessor. For example, Arturo Farinelli, Caroline Bourland, and Marcelo Meléndez Pelayo all negate the Iberian text's reliance on *De claris mulieribus*. Meléndez y Pelayo argues against the relationship and cites that many sources were consulted in the composition of the *Libro*. The critic propagates that there is not a sole reliance on the Italian version: «(...)dista mucho de ser una traduccion ni una imitacion directa de él (*De mulieribus claris*). Don Alvaro vio muchos más libros, y todo lo que fallo derramado

9 While *De claris mulieribus* promotes the goodness in women for their deeds and virtues, *Il Corbaccio* and *De casibus virorum illustrium* serve as inspirational sources for those who wished to promote men as the strong and dominating figure and to dismiss and minimize the goodness in women. These pro-masculine texts composed by Boccaccio are easily sources for anti-feminine Iberian works such as *El Corbacho*, *El maldezir de las mugeres* and others that are less overt to be openly anti-feminist, such as *La Celestina* (Fernando de Rojas) and *Dictado en vituperio de las malas mujeres y alabanza de las buenas* (Hernan Mexia).

en ellos lo junto en el suyo» (Meléndez y Pelayo 1891: Mviii). Julio Velez-Sainz makes a comparison between the Italian and Iberian texts and points out that while Luna borrows 32 women from Boccaccio's work that he chooses other women to include his compilation. However, while Velez-Sainz finds this insufficient evidence to prove an imitation or translation of *De claris mulieribus*, the critic does not deny the connection between the Italian and Iberian works. However, he does not believe that Boccaccio is Luna's only source. The critic finds Luna's use of *De claris mulieribus* as more of a borrowing of the Italian text or a starting point, but with the intention of gaining political power and for political means rather than defending women. Vélez-Sainz states that «(...)si se observa bajo este prisma, el *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres* se convierte, más que en una mera «alabanza galante» o una traducción» de la obra de Boccaccio en una parte más de un complicado aparato de propaganda política que buscaba ensalzar la figura del valido» (Vélez-Sainz 2002: 119).

Luna does attest to the fact that there are many sources for the biographies of the women included in his work. In his preambles, as well as in the individual chapters, Luna thoroughly cites many writers, both biblical and pagan, as references to his biographies presented throughout the text. In his work, Luna cites a vast amount of sources, yet does not give credit to Boccaccio in any of the biographies. It is true that Boccaccio did not serve as reference for any specific story told however, it was Luna's holistic approach to Boccaccio's text where one can directly find the Italian influence on Luna's work. Luna borrows from Boccaccio the essential parts of his work such as the theme, some content and its basic structure.¹⁰

There are several critics who concur with thesis that there is an intrinsic relationship between Boccaccio's and Luna's works. The critic Bernardo Sanvisenti, affirms the Boccaccian text as «una vera fonte del de Luna» (Sanvisenti 1902: 302). Boccaccio works as a model and Luna's work, in essence, becomes the *imitatio* of the Italian creation. The idea of *imitatio*, following the understanding of the Romans and was then used as a model for many medieval works, was more than copying word for word from a text. It relied more on a series of steps in which one would read a text, contemplate and then paraphrase the thoughts. This is similar to Luna's rendering of his text. It is fair to believe that Luna had access and read Boccaccio's work. Additionally, it is possible that he chose to follow these same steps and utilize Boccaccio's theme and structure. In surveying works throughout the Middle Ages, there are no other texts more similar to Luna's than Boccaccio's.

There are some differences between *De claris Mulieribus* and the *Libro*. Luna's text relies much more heavily on providing Christian women to serve as didactic tools for its readers. *Libro* provides examples from the Old and New Testament of the Bible, saints and Christian women. In fact, Luna directs most of his work towards the treatment of Christians or the Bible towards women. For example, in the third preamble, Luna deals with those in the Bible that speak out against women as being generally vile and evil. He points to the few clear examples when a biblical authority actually

10 There are several biographies in which the similarities between the two works are almost identical, such as in the chapters on Camilla or Artemisia.

does argue in favor of the goodness in women. Luna provides the example of King Solomon, as a pro-feminine propagandist. Luna argues: «E quanto en esto el non faze diferençia del onbre a la muger nin de la muger al onbre, ca de la muger virtuosa e buena, escriue el dicho sabio e rey salamon muchas loanças en el quinto capitulo del dicho libro e en otros capitulos siguientes» (Luna 2012: 8v). Likewise, Luna utilizes the fifth preamble to perhaps explain the difference between his work and Boccaccio's. As aforementioned, the Italian work begins with Eve, which would be logical when proceeding in chronological order. However, although Luna does not attempt to explain specifically why his first chapter differs from Boccaccio's first chapter, he does in general, provide his preference for the Virgin Mary. Consequently, if indeed, Luna wished to instruct the present and future queens, he could not find any other example more holy, perfect or virtuous for a Catholic queen than the Mary. Additionally, politically at this time, in order for Luna's work to appear to be more appropriate, it would naturally need include many more catholic women and saintly than in Boccaccio's work. It is to this end, that Luna while attempting to imitate the Boccaccian text, found it necessary to make changes necessary in order to serve his purposes.

Luna viewed Boccaccio's work as a malleable substance, one that he could mold and shape to serve his purposes. Whether it was amending a biography in order to work in his favor or altering the theme by orienting it towards being more Christian, Luna expunged everything possibly from the Italian version and thusly, produced a text worked within his context in the court. Luna was able to propagate an image of an *hombre de armas e letras*. Similarly, as Guido Guarino points out, Boccaccio not only crafted his text in a like fashion, but also his image: «Boccaccio's fame today rests on his masterpiece, the *Decameron*. From the moment it was published this work forced everyone to be aware of its existence but was not always praised by Boccaccio's contemporaries...his latin works... *De casibus virorum Illustrium*, *De Montibus*, *De claris mulieribus* and other works, Boccaccio was the great propagator of classical history, literature and mythology...» (Guarino 1963: ix). And thusly, the same can be said for Alvaro de Luna.

Textually, there are many similarities that show Boccaccio to be the clear inspiration and influence on Luna. Like Boccaccio, Luna's work included information, sources or characters from classical history, literature and mythology. Both writers packaged their information in the shape of a collection of biographies of women. Both the Italian and Iberian versions include three distinct groups of women. While Boccaccio's includes, pagans, ancient women and contemporaries, Luna's text offers Biblical women, saintly women and gentiles. Both offer a dedication in the beginning of their work, Boccaccio's to Andrea Acciaivoli of Florence, Countess of Altavilla and Luna offers his thanks and gratitude to the King of Castile, John II. Both men choose stories that are well known like Penelope, Lucretia, Suplicia and Artemisa. Both works loosely cite sources such as Valerius Maximus, Livy, Cicero, and Justinus, among others. Additionally, Boccaccio and his Iberian counterpart, while wishing to convey the goodness in these women and upholding them as strong and virtuous, sometimes get lost in the «telling» of the story. Boccaccio and Luna are actually very similar in their treatment of historical accuracy. They both often show preference for a good story

rather than precise details, therefore choosing fiction over fact. Luna, for example, when wishing to hone in on a certain aspect or virtue, but does not have the source to reference in order to validate his claim, will simply dismiss the need for a source and offer a lapse in memory instead. For example when citing sources for Valeria: «(...)contor los loores de santa valeria, oy se me acordase auer leydo algo de lo que a ella pertense; e por que non me viene en mente al salvo que fue(...)» (Luna 2012: 183v-184) Boccaccio has somewhat of a similar treatment to sources, or lack thereof. Guarino explains, «When historical sources do not come to his aid, Boccaccio feels justified in using his imagination, for after all he must write the story, give the example and make it palatable.» (Guarino 1963: xxix). Both authors attempt to present a complete and thorough biography of each woman, yet they do not always have the historical accuracy to reinforce their point. In fact, not only do both writers occasionally omit references, they both tend to heavily rely on the *auctoridades* as their way of neglecting citations. For example, in Boccaccio's and Luna's chapter on Camilla, neither one of the authors give references, but rather cite the *auctoridades* and «muy publico es» (Luna 2012: 142) by Luna. Boccaccio tends to, at times, completely ignore references all together.

4. Conclusion

There are some differences between the two authors that are undeniable. In the *Libro*, Luna tends to cite, or rather over cite, in order to demonstrate his knowledge of antiquity and prove himself well read. On the other hand, Boccaccio completely ignores the need to cite his work for reasons unknown. It is possible that he is treating his work to be more a literary work, than a compilation of historical biographies. One could argue that because of the well received *Decameron*, that perhaps he found it unnecessary and wrote more for the enjoyment. In this sense, Boccaccio's work becomes more historical fiction rather than historical biography. Further differences do present themselves in the *Libro* that set Luna's text apart from its predecessor. In his Iberian version, Luna has the editorial hand which allows him to «fix» or mold the Italian version into his own. Additionally, as aforementioned, Luna's work does not begin with Eve, such as Boccaccio's does. Boccaccio's work is chronological, while Luna groups the women as to how they fit into biblical history or Christianity in general. Critics, such as Vélez-Sainz finds this aspect to be monumental in breaking the relationship between Boccaccio's and Luna's works. This critic finds that Boccaccio uses one purpose as explained in three books; Luna utilizes three separate categories of women in his books to reach the same end. While this is true, structurally they are similar. It is the argument of this article that Boccaccio's work served as the main source for the production of the Iberian text.

The *Libro* owes an immense debt to the Boccaccian text, a compilation of biographies on women and the first of its kind written less than a century before Luna's. Still it begs the question, does Luna wish to translate the Italian version? One could possibly argue in favor and against that hypothesis. There are several chapters, such as Camilla, in which Luna preserves every detail of the passage. However, he does split from the Boccaccian version by only including 32 of Boccaccio's

104 biographies. The rest are chapters on women that Luna felt were more appropriate for his specific audience, the court of a Catholic king and queen. The purposes may have also differed, however by using this Italian model, Luna is able to craft a work that suits his needs. He is not only using this work for political maneuvering, he is using it as a tool for him to direct a queen who would soon meet her demise. Additionally, it is possible that towards the end of María's life, when her rivalry with Luna had reached its height, Luna wanted to compile a biography of women who would provide examples of virtues that he felt María did not possess. In this way, he was able to render a product that would show the queen everything that she was not, and everything that Luna felt she should be. However, when reading this work, there is one fact that is undeniable - had it not been for Boccaccio's 14th century work, Luna's text may have never come to fruition.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Boccaccio, Giovanni (1963) *Concerning Famous Women*. Guarino, Guido (ed.) New Jersey, University of Rutgers Press.
- . *De claris mulieribus* (1976) Branca, Vittore (ed.). *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*. Milan, Mondadori.
- Cartagena, Alonso de (1491) *Cinco libros de Séneca*. Seville, Maynardo Ungut Alimano and Stanislao Polono.
- Córdoba, Martín de (1974) *Jardín de nobles doncellas*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.
- Eiximenis, Francesc (1981) *Lo libre de les dones*. Naccarato, F., Witlin, C. and Comas, A. (eds.) Barcelona, Departament de Filologia Catalana.
- Luna, Alvaro de (1940) *Crónica de don Álvaro de Luna*. de Mata Carriozo, Juan (ed.). Madrid, Real Academica.
- . *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mujeres* (2012) McGovern, Abby (ed.). Philadelphia, Dissertation, Temple University.
- Martínez de Toledo, Alfonso (1992) *Arcipreste de Talavera o Corbacho* Gerli, E. Michael (ed.). Madrid, Cátedra.
- Pizan, Christine de (1998). *The Book of the City of the Ladies*. Zemon Davis, Natalie. New York, Persea Books.
- Rodríguez del Padrón, Juan (2007) *Triunfo de las donas*. <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com>.
- Torrellas, Pedro (1994) *Coplas fechas por Mosen Torrellas, de las calidades de las donas*. In *Poesia cancioneril castellana*. Gerli, E. Michael (ed.) Madrid, Akal, pp. 332-35.
- Valera, Diego de (1959) *Tratado en defensa de virtuosas mugeres*. Penna, Mario (ed.). Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 116, Madrid, Atlas.

Critical References

- Alvar, Carlos and José Manuel Lucía Megías (eds.) (2002) *Diccionario filológico de la literatura medieval*. London, Tamesis.
- Arce, Joaquín. (1975) «Seis cuestiones sobre el tema 'Boccaccio en España.'», *Filología Moderna* 15, pp. 473-88.
- Archer, Robert. (2001) «'Tus falsas opiniones e mis verdaderas razones': Pere Torroella and the Women Haters», *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* LXVIII, pp. 551-56.

- . (2005) *The Problem of Woman in Late-Medieval Hispanic Literature*. Woodbridge, England, Tamesis.
- . (2000) *Misoginia y defensa de las mujeres: una antología de textos medievales*. Madrid, Cátedra.
- Bach y Rita, Pedro, (ed.) (1930) *The Works of Pere Torroella: A Catalan Writer of the Fifteenth Century*. New York, Instituto de Las Españas en los Estados Unidos.
- Bennett, Judith M. (1993) «Medievalism and Feminism.» *Speculum* 68, no. 2, pp. 309-31.
- Bickley, Francis. (1910) *King's Favourites*. New York, John Lane Company.
- Blamires, Alcuin, (ed.) (1992) *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- . (1997) *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Bloch, Howard. (1991) *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Boyer, Agustín. (1989) «Estudio descriptivo del *Libro de las virtuosas e claras mugeres* de don Alvaro de Luna: Fuentes género y ubicación en el debate feminista del siglo XV.» Diss. University of California, Dissertation Abstracts International.
- Cocozzella, Peter. (1986) «Pere Torroella: Pan-Hispanic Poet of the Catalan Pre-Renaissance.» *Hispanofila* 29, no. 2, pp. 1-14.
- Contreras, José Vitelio. (2000) «Estudio y edición del 'Tratado en defensa de virtuosas mugeres' por Mosén Diego de Valera.» Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences 60, no. 7, pp. 2481-82.
- Coria-Sánchez, Carlos M. (1998) «Los tratados en defensa de las mujeres en la España medieval. ¿Tratados feministas?» *Fem: Publicación Feminista Mensual* 22, no. 184, pp. 21-26.
- Demerson, Paulette. (1984) «La 'Doncella a Dios' de Martín de Córdoba.» *Bulletin Hispanique* 86, nos. 1-2, pp. 142-53.
- Ferguson, Margaret W., M. Quilligan and N. Vickers, (eds). (1987) *Rewriting the Renaissance: Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Fradejas Rueda, José Manuel. (1997) «Los mss. y ediciones de las *Claras y virtuosas mugeres* de D. Alvaro de Luna.» In *The Medieval Mind: Hispanic Studies in Honour of Alan Deyermond*, Penny, R. and Macpherson, I (eds.) London, Tamesis, 139-52.
- Gil Sanz, Alvaro. (1883) «Don Alvaro de Luna y su obra (ms.): *Las claras e virtuosas mugeres*.» *Revista de España* 92, pp. 390-401.
- Jaén, Didier Tisdell. (1978) *John II of Castile and The Grand Master Alvaro de Luna*. Madrid, Editorial Castalia.
- Jordan, Constance. (1987) «Boccaccio's Infamous Women: Gender and Civic Virtue in the *De claris*

Abby Walls. Writing the Antithesis of María of Aragón: Alvaro de Luna's Rendering of Giovanni Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*

- mulieribus.*» In *Ambiguous Realities: Women in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Levin, C and Watson, J. Detroit, Wayne State University Press, pp. 25-47.
- . (1990) *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models*. Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press.
- Lida de Malkiel, María Rosa. (1954) «John Rodríguez del Padrón: Influencia.» *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 8, pp. 1-38.
- Matulka, Barbara. (1931) *An Anti-feminist Treatise of Fifteenth Century Spain: Lucena's Repetición de amores*. New York, Institute of French Studies.
- McCleod, Glenda. (1991) *Virtue and Venom: Catalogs of Women from Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Press.
- Meléndez y Pelayo, Marcelino. (1891). «Advertencia preliminar.» *Libro de las virtuosas é claras mujeres el qual fizo é compuso el condestable Don Alvaro de Luna, Maestre de la orden de Santiago*. By Alvaro de Luna. Madrid, Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, pp. 5-12.
- Miller, Robert P. (1974) «The Wounded Heart: Courtly Love and the Medieval Antifeminist Tradition.» *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 2, pp. 335-50.
- Montoya Ramírez, María Isabel. (1995) «Observaciones sobre la defensa de las mujeres en algunos textos medievales.» In *Medioevo y literatura, I-IV: Actas del V Congreso de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval*. Paredes, John. (ed.). Granada, Universidad de Granada, pp. 397-406.
- Moya García, Cristina. (2004) «Diego de Valera en el reinado de John II de Castilla: Los primeros actos en la corte.» In *Líneas actuales de investigación literaria: Estudios de literatura hispánica*. Arenas Lozano, V. et al (eds.). Spain, ALEPH, University of Valencia, pp. 81-92.
- Ornstein, Jacob. (1941) «Misogyny and Pro-Feminism in Early Castilian Literature.» *MLQ* 3, no. 2, pp. 221-34.
- Pons Rodríguez, Lola. (2008) *Edición, estudio preliminar y notas a «Virtuosas e Claras Mujeres» (1446) de Don Álvaro de Luna*. Burgos, Instituto Castellano y Leonés de la Lengua. Round, Nicholas.
- . (1986) *The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Alvaro de Luna*. London, Tamesis.
- Van Veen, Manon. (1995) «La mujer en algunas defensas del siglo XV: Diego de Valera y Juan Rodríguez del Padrón y los mecanismos de género.» In *Medioevo y literatura, I-IV: Actas del V Congreso de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval*. Paredes, John (ed.). Granada, Universidad de Granada, pp. 465-73.
- Vélez-Sainz, Julio. (2002) «Boccaccio, virtud y poder en el *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres* de Álvaro de Luna.» *La corónica* 31, no.1, pp. 107-22.
- Weiss, Julian. (1991) «Alvaro de Luna, John de Mena and the Power of Courtly Love.» *MLN* 106, no. 2, pp. 241-56.