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Título

The Unparalleled Experience: A Contrastive Analysis of Ubaldino's
and Ribadeneyra's Accounts of the 1588 Armada Campaign

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ABSTRACT

The Armada Campaign of 1588 has been considered a key moment in Anglo-Spanish relations and a considerable amount of literature around the subject has appeared since then, particularly in England. It is from the fourth centenary of the battles onwards that interpretations started to agree on a defeat for both countries, as against the traditional stand of a Spanish defeat at the hands of the English. The purpose of this B.A. Thesis is to examine which of the two perceptions is implied in such texts as were written in the immediate aftermath of the campaign. For such purpose, Petruccio Ubaldino's Discourse concerning the Armada (1590) and Pedro de Ribadeneyra's Exhortation to the Invincible (1588) and Letter to Philip II (1589) will be analysed. The results obtained will confirm the idea that both countries were defeated but also prove that the myth of the English victory over the Armada could crystallise as early as then due to the absolute unexpectedness of the outcome of the conflict.

Keywords: Spanish Armada, Petruccio Ubaldino, Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Anglo-Spanish Relations, Myth

La campaña naval de la Armada Invencible ha sido considerada un punto clave en la historia de las relaciones anglo-hispanas y desde entonces se ha publicado un buen número de publicaciones sobre el tema, especialmente en Inglaterra. Es desde el cuarto centenario en adelante que los historiadores empezaron a coincidir en que se trató de una derrota para ambos países, interpretación contraria a la tradicionalmente sostenida de se dio la derrota de España a manos de los ingleses. El propósito de este Trabajo de Fin de Grado es examinar si esta idea de derrota de ambos países está implícita en textos escritos inmediatamente después de los acontecimientos. A tal fin, hemos seleccionado para analizarlos la narración de Petruccio Ubaldino sobre la Armada Invencible (1590) y la Exhortación a la Invencible (1588) y carta a Felipe II (1589) de Pedro de Ribadeneyra. Los resultados obtenidos después de tal análisis confirman que ambos países fueron derrotados pero prueban también el mito de la victoria inglesa a costa de la Armada pudo cristalizar tan temprano debido a lo absolutamente inesperado que fue el resultado del enfrentamiento.

Palabras clave: Armada Invencible, Petruccio Ubaldino, Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Relaciones Anglo-Hispanas, Mito.

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INTRODUCTION

Around 1588, England and Spain were immersed in very different circumstances. The former was undergoing a period in which Protestantism was being secured by Queen Elizabeth, Catholic persecutions were widespread, and finance was short. The latter was living a period in which the empire had reached its peak and Philip II was reputed in many regions worldwide for being the most powerful monarch of all times. The relation of the two monarchs became subject to deterioration, as did the relation between their countries, ever since England had begun assaulting the West Indies, supporting the war in Flanders against Spain, and even attacking Spain on occasions such as the Sack of Cadiz. The Spanish treasury did not see how accounts could keep a positive balance.

The King of Spain resolved to send his Armada and invade England. The enterprise had been under preparation long before, but with the execution of Mary Stuart in 1587, English Catholics were definitely in danger and the honour and respect of Spain called into question. From the campaign Philip II expected to obtain another lesson of confidence like that of Lepanto; Queen Elizabeth gave hers to her troops at Tilbury: “we shall shortly have a famous victory over those enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people” (May 77), aware as she surely was of their disadvantageous position. Resulting in one of the more spectacular events in the century, the outcome of the Armada conflict of 1588 would be equally unexpected for both.

1.1 State of the Art

The events of the Armada campaign and its aftermath have been widely studied. Comparatively, there are many more English than Spanish studies on the issue, even nowadays, and with different conclusions. This may be the reason why the English version of events has prevailed over the Spanish one. English authors before 1988, from William Camden, through the Whig historians, to D. W. Waters focused on describing the victory of their nation at the expense of the Spanish defeat; whereas Spanish authors, such as Antonio de Herrera, Carlos Coloma, and Baltasar Porreño among

others centered on Philip II and lamenting the dramatic defeat. Moreover, documents that were published a century and a half ago by, for example, Laughton and Fernández Duro had been recently completed by Jorge Calvar Gross in 2014, which shows how very relevant the question is still today.

This idea of an English victory as a result of the naval campaign remained intact well into the mid-twentieth century, when historians were concerned with not just compiling documents but also analyzing tactical and naval aspects. Garrett Mattingly (1959) was the first historian focusing on and comparing both Spanish and English documentary sources.

It is in 1988, a year of constant celebrations, that there is a turning point of this idea of English victory. Both Spanish and English historians participating in several conferences and symposia agreed on a military and economic defeat for both countries. In this fourth centenary, Fernández-Armesto's *The Spanish Armada* (1989) stands out. He demystifies the episode by describing first the event as a simple military conflict and by negating an English victory. Further histories continue to be written following Fernández-Armesto's steps: James McDermott (2005) and Robert Hutchinson (2010) narrate a similar experience of myth and moral defeat. Despite such agreement between English and Spanish historians, as far as I know, there is not any comparative study on the different historical narrations or interpretations on the episode.

1.2. Objectives

Thus, the main purpose of this B.A. Thesis is to examine whether the idea appearing in the fourth centenary on a common English and Spanish defeat is present in texts appearing just after the event; analyzing thus the origin of the myth over the English victory and Spanish defeat in the 1588 naval campaign. Moreover, such analysis will be carried out from both the Spanish and the English perspectives and drawing on two documents produced within a year before or after the conflict.

1.3. Methodology

For such purpose, I have selected *A Discourse Concerning the Spanishe Fleete Inuadinge Englande in the Yeare 1588* (1590), by Petruccio Ubaldino, and Pedro de Ribadeneyra's *Exhortación sobre 'La Invencible'* (1588) and *Sobre las causas de la*

pérdida de la Armada (1589). The reasons for having selected those texts are very different in intention and format, but each text is equally and individually valuable in their own context. Ubaldino's narration has been selected because of its importance over the ages as it was the only text circulating until the eighteenth century on the confrontation itself; moreover, it was the unique source for many historians until Laughton's *State Papers* (1894) were published. On the other hand, Ribadeneyra's work, focused on the moments prior and posterior to the confrontation itself, has been selected because of the acuity of the arguments Ribadeneyra establishes as the reasons and causes of the event as they are still remained; furthermore, there is not much more written in Spain apart from the earliest chronicles and *La Batalla del Mar Océano* by Gross (1985-2014).

1.4. Results and Interpretation

In the first chapter I will address the tendency that historians had before 1988 to say that there was an English victory and a Spanish defeat, but then I will claim that this changed in 1988 onwards when they agreed on material and moral defeat for both countries. Secondly, I will approach Ubaldino's analysis on the course of events in battle. I will take mainly Garret Mattingly's *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (1959) and Fernández-Armesto's *The Spanish Armada* (1989) as reference to counter his points whenever necessary. Thus, through a comparison of what Ubaldino narrated with what has been generally thought to happen, I will analyze how accurate Ubaldino's descriptions were and therefore what perception on the event he had. Thirdly, I will analyze Ribadeneyra's exhortation on the Armada and his arguments claiming that the invasion was necessary, together with two letters he wrote to Ana Felix de Guzmán and King Philip II respectively, in which the reasons for having prepared the oration and the reasons for its fall are established.

Finally, I will finish off my B.A. Thesis comparing both authors. I will focus firstly on the aspects that Ubaldino narrates and that still remain true and then in the modifications and narrative contributions he incorporated. Likewise, I will evaluate Ribadeneyra's arguments for the invasion, that are still prevailing nowadays, and I will estimate the manipulations and narrative contributions he added. I will then contrast both authors and both accounts in order to evaluate who is analyzing and describing the deeds more objectively, who is being more accurate to the reality, and most importantly,

which the final conclusions are. Thus, after such analysis, it will be possible to conclude whether the idea of both countries being defeated is already present in their texts or not.

1.5. Thesis Statement

Complementing each other by their contrary nature, public and private, factual and moral, Ubaldino wrote his work attempting to give an objective reinforcement of the idea of the English victory; Ribadeneyra's analysis and vision of the Spanish defeat, for their part, may be said to be surprisingly accurate, and completely adjusted to facts, however moralizing his rhetoric and tone may be. The only thing these two unparalleled experiences had in common, I conclude, is how unexpected the outcome of the conflict was for each of the two countries individually. Such unexpectedness is what lies at the root of the myth of the English victory and the Spanish defeat in the Armada campaign of 1588.

The Armada Campaign of 1588: Sources and Interpretations

The conflict with the Spanish Armada of August 1588, representing the height of the struggle between Protestant England and Catholic Spain in the second half of the sixteenth century, is generally considered to have marked Anglo-Spanish relations for centuries and the history of the two countries individually ever since. In line with the earliest claims of Elizabethan propaganda, it is commonly understood that the fall of the Armada was a defeat at the hands of the English; in line with the contentions of Whig historiography, the general belief nowadays is that it was in the aftermath of the Armada campaign that Elizabeth I's England consolidated her imperial power and naval force, at the same pace that Philip II's Spain witnessed its deterioration. As shall be seen, those two conceptions were only challenged in the last quarter of the twentieth century. This may be why the amount of literature published on the occasion in England and in Spain differs so much, since the Spanish literature on the subject is much less abundant.

2.1 Documentary evidence before 1988

This applies first to the publication of primary sources. In England, the event was documented by the end of the nineteenth century, principally in the form of naval records and diplomatic correspondence. The Domestic series of *The Calendar of State Papers* in the Elizabethan period, gathered chronological lists of documents or manuscripts from the Public Record Office and large sections of material on the Armada, especially in volumes 212 to 215. In 1894, John Knox Laughton extracted from them his *State Papers Relating to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, in two volumes, with registers dating from December 21st, 1587 onwards, written, as Laughton stated, to complement Cesáreo Fernández Duro's *La Armada Invencible*, published in 1884-85 (I, xxiv). Indeed, Duro's compilation was rather incomplete; it merely reproduced the correspondence maintained between Philip II and his two Admirals from copies of the originals. It was in the late 1920s that Enrique Herrera Oria decided to enlarge Duro's selection, including for the first time originals from Simancas in a new *La Armada Invencible* (1929). He was forced to admit, though, how until then the majority of documentary or historical work on the Armada came from outside Spain:

“[a] poco que se consulte la bibliografía sobre la empresa se verá que la mayoría de los autores son extranjeros” (x). Herrera Oria (xi) referred in particular to the memories of Hawkins and Drake, Corbett’s sixteenth century compilation of *Papers Relating to the Navy During the Spanish War* (1585-87) and, of course, to Laughton’s collection, along with the work by the English Hispanist Martin Hume in *Spanish Calendars* (1896), who had first reproduced papers originally belonging to the Archives of Simancas, but only in English translation: his selection and translation were Anglocentric and imperfect. In Spain, before 1884, no more than the notorious *Relación verdadera del [sic] Armada [...] en Lisboa* (1588) and Medina Sidonia’s Campaign Diary had been printed (Duro [v]).

2.2 Perceptions before 1988

It is logic then that the most widespread interpretations of facts followed those of the English historians. Most of the early political and military accounts of the 1558 naval engagement published in England reproduced the triumphant spirit of the pamphlets, broadsides, and newsletters printed in the years surrounding the event. A little later, William Camden’s *Annales* (1615) reconstructed, in patriotic celebration, the Armada’s preparations, the distribution of English forces, and the first and later encounters between the Spanish and the English fleets as a series of successful steps on the part of the English admirals and soldiers toward their final victory over the Spaniards. “Most of [the Spanish] shippes [...] very much torne and shot through” and “most grievously distressed” were set in contrast with Elizabeth “going as it were in triumph, [...] through the streetes of London” (*s.a.* 1588, 28, 35). Camden’s history was transmitted into the eighteenth century by Thomas Hearne’s new edition of the work of 1717, so that with regard to the episode it appears that the same victorious sentiment still survived in the interpretations of Whig historiography, at the height of the Victorian period and of its sea power.

James Aitken Wyley, a prolific writer of the period, wrote an extended version of Camden’s account in his three-volume *History of Protestantism* (1878). The pages dedicated to the Armada campaign (23.27-29) included the two commonplaces that, as said before, survived until fairly recently attached to its memory, apart from it having resulted in a victory by the English. First, the conflict was the turning point in the war between Rome and the Reformation: “The tragedy of the Armada was a great sermon

preached to the Popish and Protestant nations. The text of the sermon was that England had been saved by a Divine hand” (510); and second, it marked the future history of the two European nations: “Spain was never after what it had been before the Armada. [...] England and the Netherlands rose and Spain fell” (510).

The three ideas were popularized in the celebrations that spread all throughout England at the tercentenary of the “defeat” of the Spanish Armada. Henry Hamilton and August Harris put them on stage in September 1888 at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, in their play *The Spanish Armada: A Romance of 1588*, though with dubious success. The opening lines of Lord Macaulay’s “The Spanish Armada: Ballad of Old England” published in 1832 (5-8) are still probably remembered by the audience:

It was about the lovely close of a warm summer day,
There came a gallant merchant-ship full sail to Plymouth Bay;
Her crew had seen Castile’s black fleet beyond Aurigny’s isle,
At earliest twilight, on the waves lie heaving many a mile.

Henry Austin Dobson’s jest at the defeat would resound at English prep schools as late as the 1950s (Fernández-Armesto [v]):

King Philip had vaunted his claims;
He had sworn for a year he would sack us;
With an army of heathenish names
He was coming to fagot and stack us;
Like the thieves of the sea he would track us,
And shatter our ships on the main;
But we had bold Neptune to back us,
And where are the galleons of Spain? [...] (“A Ballad of the Armada” 1840)

John Knox Laughton’s had linked both documentary evidence and Whig interpretation in his *State Papers*. As it can be read in his introduction, his aim was to present the evidence available on the superior sailing power of English ships and the higher skill of the men who worked them and their armaments and of the result of the phenomenon as well as the consequences: “The defeat of the Spanish Armada of 1588 [...] marks alike the approaching downfall of Spain and the rise of England as a great maritime power” (I, [ix]). Just as his collection of documents crowned the author as the leading authority on the Armada campaign for decades, the interpretation given in his introduction also marked the lead.

The next generation of historians decided to use the most recent information available on the episode. For instance, James A. Williamson in *The Age of Drake* (1938), using much new material from English, French, and Spanish repositories, managed to demystify the figure of Drake that Julian Corbett had glorified in *Drake and the Tudor Navy* (1899) by proving how Hawkins was as important in the preparation and command of the Queen's fleet. Most importantly, themes were expanded and focused largely on the differing tactical and strategic aspects, shipping and armaments, and how these might have had influence on the final events. A good illustration is "The Elizabethan Navy and the Armada Campaign" by D. W. Waters (1949), which focused on the effects of the tides on the final outcome of the conflict. And yet, the base of their interpretations remained essentially the same as Laughton's: the English Fleet had a stronger gun power and was superior in tactics. Michael Lewis' earlier attempt to correct such accepted theory in his comparative study called "Armada Guns" (1942) had failed for lack of evidence (Martin and Parker 206).

As pointed out before, Spanish chroniclers and historians had remained rather silent on the event, perhaps as a consequence of their assumed defeat. In his *Historia General del Mundo* (1612), Philip II's chronicler, Antonio de Herrera, only registered the most painful episodes of the fight, such as the damage to Juan Martín de Recalde's galleon or the captivity of Juan de Valdés, and explained the defeat of the Spanish 'Católica Armada' suggesting that they had missed the occasion of landing at Plymouth and facing the weak English forces there on deciding to fare on to meet Parma's second Armada (102-3). Carlos Coloma, who seems to have reached Flanders on board of one of the Armada ships, contributed details in *Las Guerras de los Estados Baxos* (1625) which were also humiliating, like the Spanish lack of provisions and overcrowding of soldiers on board of the galleons, along with Hugo de Moncada's fall in battle (18-20). Baltasar Porreño's *Dichos y Hechos del Señor Rey Don Felipe II* (1639) struggled to explain Philip II's reasons for invading England—English piracy and support of the rebellion in Flanders, plus Mary Stuart's execution—, and proved England's military inferiority and the tempest as cause of the dispersion of the Armada, concluding then with the famous sentence of the Spanish king: "I did not send my ships to fight against the tempest but against the English" ("Yo no envié mis buques a combatir contra las tempestades, sino contra los ingleses," in Rey 878). This low morale must have survived until very late because not much was published before Fernández Duro's work.

The case of Garret Mattingly's *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (1959) is very illustrative. It should have been very welcome: it was the first complete narration of the events, starting with Mary Stuart's execution and reaching until the months following the return of the remaining ships, based not only on the English documents but also the Spanish ones and written in a most entertaining, objective style. Indeed, it was a bestseller and winner of a Pulitzer price and it was immediately translated into Spanish, but even though the editors gave it title *La Armada Invecible*, censors prohibited its distribution. Gabriel Maura's *El Designio de Felipe II y el Episodio de la Armada Invencible* (1957) was there in place of it. Mattingly's final message was then missed as said in the preface to Mattingly by Gómez-Centurión (1985): "the signification that with the passage of time the Invincible developed in the weak collective of whom participated or were witnessed to the event" (14-5. Translation mine). The 'Invincible' had become mythical on both sides, either defeated or pretendedly 'invincible.'

2.3 1988: The Four Hundredth Anniversary

As the quadricentennial of the conflict approached, over a hundred books and learned articles were being prepared to commemorate it (Martin and Parker xiii), together with bilateral conferences, symposia, and exhibitions. A case in point of the latter was the fourth Anglo-Spanish conference held in London and Madrid in 1988, sponsored by the International Commission of Historical Sciences and including members of the Gran Armada Commission, among other participants (Rodríguez-Salgado and Adams v). M^a José Rodríguez-Salgado prepared the largest and most important exhibition on the Armada ever, *Armada 1588-1988*. The two events were officially recorded in their respective proceedings and catalogue.

The year 1988 was the occasion for historical surveys and revisions. The discovery and recovery of wrecks in the 1970s had provided new evidence for naval historians and their knowledge on artillery and shipbuilding, so that as many as fifty new books appeared in England in the twenty five years following the publication of Mattingly (Gómez-Centurión 11). Their most popular focus was how the Armada was shrouded in myth and legend and this perhaps blurred behind the strength of traditions, whether Whig or conservative.

Felipe Fernández-Armesto's *The Spanish-Armada: The Experience of War in 1588* (1989) is the best example of that type of revision: "the Armada has played a

bigger part than any other single influence in shaping English perceptions of Spain. It has also, I think, had a disproportionate part in defining English self-awareness” (vi). By drawing extensively on personal accounts and analyzing from them and the evidence published the purpose and strategy of the Armada and the technical and tactical differences between both sides, Fernández-Armesto came to a two-fold conclusion. He concluded that the Armada was not an extraordinary war experience and nothing but a typical episode of sixteenth-century warfare and that, contrarily, a parallel experience was shared by both sides of failed logistics, chaotic strategic preparations, ineffective tactics, struggle against the elements, and material and moral defeat. He held there was not such an English victory—the war lasted “until the English desisted and the Armada was left to struggle on alone” (vii)—and that more success could be attributed to Spain than what was commonly acknowledged, if the war against the weather would not have been so invincible. Yet, he may have been too bitterly ironic when contrasting “the victorious English dying in the gutter; the defeated Spaniards going home to hospital beds and embroidered counterpanes” (223), considering how he attempted to argue for a balanced outcome of the campaign and show that the material and moral defeat was equal for both countries.

2.4 The Armada Today

In any case, Fernández-Armesto’s challenge of the notion of a Spanish defeat at the hands of the English remains largely unchallenged. Very recently, archaeologist and historian Robert Hutchinson’s *The Spanish Armada* (2014), while conceding that fire ultimately swung the balance in England’s favor, reiterates that the true destructive forces of the Spanish Armada were luck, accident, and the unusually strong summer and autumn storms. In line with Fernández-Armesto, Hutchinson also stresses and documents the moral and material losses on both parts and the final attempts and capacity by Philip II to build future Armadas since 1596.

Only Hutchinson’s book has been translated into Spanish, and yet Fernández-Armesto’s perspective is now generally accepted. From José Alcalá-Zamora Queipo de Llano’s *La Empresa de Inglaterra* (2010) to the unconventional José Cordero and Ricardo J. Hernández’s *Operación Gran Armada: La Logística Invencible* (2011), the contention is equally that there was not such a defeat at English hands and that, indeed, the decline of Spain was not while its administrative and logistic power remained strong

well into the seventeenth century. We must be grateful, then, that the fourth volume of Jorge Calvar Gross's *La Batalla del Mar Océano* (1985-2014), the most fundamental historical corpus compilation to date on the naval episode, has finally come out in 2014. If research on the topic continues to be alive, many new facts and perceptions will be at hand.

However, the question to be considered is whether these two versions on the event started to appear from the beginning, just when the Armada event took place, or whether they had appeared since the fourth centenary. In order to answer that question, two accounts recorded just after the war had to be analyzed—Petruccio Ubaldino's and Pedro de Ribadeneyra's. Ubaldino wrote his narration of the event first by order of Lord Howard in 1590; whereas Ribadeneyra wrote his work, *La Historia del Scisma*, in order to contribute to the fight against Protestantism.

**Petrucchio Ubaldino's *Discourse Concerninge the Spanish Fleete*
*Inuadinge Englande in the Yeare 1588 (1590)***

Only a few basic details have come down to us on the identity of Petruccio Ubaldino (d.c.1600). A Florentine artist and scholar, he lived exiled many years in Great Britain as courtier and mentor of Edward VI, and perhaps of Mary I, but there is no agreement as to the precise dates of his residence among the English. What can be immediately acknowledged from the readiest available evidence is his scholarly work: his tracts in defense of the House of Medici and lives of the illustrious men in history have been preserved. Nowadays, and to the interest of this dissertation, he is renowned today for having written an account of the campaign of the Armada of 1588 in two different versions within a year of the battle. He published them in English in 1590 with the title of *Discourse Concerninge the Spanishe Fleete Inuadinge Englande in the Yeare 1588*. The sure success of his work, written from the English point of view, survived its time and was then reedited in 1740 with a more emphatic title: *A Genuine and Most Impartial Narration of the Glorious Victory Obtained by Her Majesty's Navy over the Falsely-stiled Invincible Armada of Spain*. This last to be reprinted again in 1919 by Henry Y. Thompson, with engravings by John Pine.

3.1 Textual Transmission

Petrucchio Ubaldino wrote two different narrations of the Armada campaign of 1588, but he preferred to call them 'commentari' (Crinò 5). The first one, commissioned by Lord Admiral Howard and started from his report, was written in October 1588, whereas the second one was written for Vice-Admiral Drake early in the following year, apparently because of Drake's discontent with Howard's relation of event. Their original manuscript texts can now be found in the British Library as part of the Royal Manuscripts collection (14 A X and A XI), but their existence remained obscure for centuries until Anna M. Crinò unearthed them in 1988. This does not mean that Ubaldino's account had remained unknown until that date as an English translation of the first narrative by Augustine Ryther was circulating already in 1590 and, as stated earlier, well into the 20th century.

The first ‘commentari’ was written in October 1588. It is believed to be a summary of some anonymous manuscript version of events dating from the sixteenth century (BL Cotton Julius FX) and published, for the first time, by Laughton’s *State Papers Relating to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (I, 1-18). It resembles very closely a register of the same period by Lord Admiral Charles Howard. That Ubaldino’s Italian ornate version was written under Howard’s direction is a fact acknowledged in the dedication of the British Library manuscript copy (Laughton, II, 388).

It is briefer than the second ‘commentari’ (Crinò 5). This one was written because Drake was neither happy nor satisfied with the first narration as it did not make reference to his nobility but to his preferences for piracy. Drake provided Ubaldino with some notes on his participation, but they were neither as accurate nor as precise as Howard’s, so the first account of events is more complete and the one transmitted.

This is basically why our analysis will be based on the first ‘commentari’, not least because it was immediately translated into English and it was consistently transmitted into our contemporary age. The English translation was commissioned by the Yorkshire engraver Augustine Ryther in 1590, and at his expense, but the translator himself is just known by the initial ‘T. H.’ It was reedited by Richard Montagu in 1740, and dedicated to Francis Howard, descendant of Charles Howard. It is this edition that I will refer to here, as it is more readily available than any other and reproduces more faithfully the 1590 text, if only in modernized spelling.

3.2. Preparations and Provisions: November 1587-June 1588

Ubaldino opens his narration with a reference to Philip II’s “mighty fleet,” with the “strongest ships [...], all sorts of provision and munition necessary” ([3]). By then, English people were certain that, as it had been manifested in numerous pamphlets, the purpose of such Spanish preparations was the invasion and conquest of England, with troops and ships being furnished in the Netherlands to secure the success of the enterprise. A contrast is then set by Ubaldino between Philip II and the English Queen, who mistrusting Parma’s beguiling offer to peace, was prudent enough to still hurry for the preparation of a great fleet “to defend her by sea of the enemy” (6) in less than two months. Ubaldino was fully aware that this was a really short time, if it was to be compared to the “so many years” (7) employed by the Spaniards in the same undertakings. They were four years as Mattingly states (75), during which the arrival of

English troops in the Netherlands in support of the Dutch rebels and the continuous piracies in the Indies under Drake's command gradually heightened the tension.

The false rumor that the Spanish Armada would arrive before Christmas may be behind Ubaldino's record that Elizabeth resolved to provide and furnish her fleet before the 20th of December (6-7). However, even after Mary Stuart's execution, preparations still lagged until Philip decided how to reconcile the differing positions of his admirals: Santa Cruz's call for "a direct invasion of England from Spain in a massive, overwhelming force" and Parma's preference for an "invasion [that] would be launched from the Netherlands" (Fernández-Armesto 80-1). His decision was that Parma would gather an army in the Flemish coasts and Santa Cruz would gather another army to join Parma's and escort it in the course of England (Mattingly 77). That is the reason for reading in Ubaldino that it was not until mid-June that Howard, along with his Vice-Admiral Sir Francis Drake, Henry Seymour, and ninety ships were gathering for battle at Plymouth (8-9), probably having received positive news that the Armada had by then left Corunna for the English Channel.

Such grandeur of the Spanish Armada—"the number of the ships, mariners and soldiers, the diverse sorts of quantities of victuals, the great number and various kinds of artillery" (4)—and the necessarily urgent preparations that the English thus presented by Ubaldino surely enhanced the figure of the man that had been put in care and in charge of the English navy. Charles Howard incidentally had commissioned the author's work, "the right and honorable Charles Lord Howard" (7), and his company of men, all praised by him for their honorability, worshipfulness, bravery and talents (7-8), more than could have been "so subtil and malicious enemy" (6).

3.3 First Sightings: June-July 1588

According to Ubaldino, Howard kept watch of the English coast, sometimes drawing near France sometimes near the coast of England for roughly a week, after that returning to Plymouth "to refresh his company" (9). The Armada was yet not to be seen near England. Around the 16th June, news arrived about "certain ships of the Spanish fleet, not above the number of 14" (10) being separated from the rest by a great tempest in the area between Ushant and Scilly. Only the perseverance of the storms and the unfavorable winds prevented Howard's passing onto the coasts of Spain to destroy the Armada (Mattingly 260-61).

On the 29th of July, in Ubaldino's account, there is the first discovery of the Armada near Lyzard (11-2). The near threat and the unfavorable wind served Ubaldino speak at length of the skills that the English showed in marine discipline, portraying all masters and officers conducting themselves in the fifty-four ships, "diligent and industrious" (13). This was the only way to assure "hope or certain victory" (13) against the impressive defense array of the Spanish Armada, displayed in the manner of a moon crescent, "her horns extended in wideness about the distance of 8 miles" (14). Ubaldino took pride in soberly describing Lord Admiral in his *Ark Royal*, commanding a pinace to give defiance to the Duke of Medina Sidonia (14). The fight was imminent.

3.4 The First Battle: 31st July

How effective the Spanish defensive formation could be would be soon tested in the morning of July 31st in two different fronts: one at the forefront, between Howard and pretendedly Medina Sidonia, and the other in the rearguard, between Drake and Martín de Recalde.

Ubaldino's claim that the first fight "continued so long and so hot, that diverse other ships [...] of the Spanish fleet came to her succor" (14-15) may have helped to open his narration in epic terms, but seems to be contradicted by evidence. First, the engagement was neither between the two Lord Admirals, but between Howard and Alonso de Leyva, nor between the two flagships, but between the *Ark Royal* and the *Rata Coronada*, where Howard mistakenly thought Medina Sidonia to be, "considering [...] the say'd ship was so well accompanied by others" (14). It also appears that the fighting was not as long or as fierce as Ubaldino took pride in reporting. It is now known that no sooner had Howard realized that the *Rata Coronada* was not commanded by the Duke, he fired no more than a few broadsides and left; there were no casualties or rescues (Mattingly 279). Furthermore, the implied message in Ubaldino's short sentence that it was the English defiance that had made the Spanish fleet come in help may be understood otherwise: the Spaniards seemed well prepared to immediately frustrate the enemy's tactics.

The case with the fight at the rearguard is very similar. While Ubaldino sustained similarly that "this fight was so well maintained [...] that the enemy was so enforced to leave his place" (15), evidence suggests contrarily that Sir Francis Drake,

John Hawkins, and Martin Frobisher, in the *Revenge*, *Victory*, and *Triumph*, stood off at the prudent distance of three hundred yards (Mattingly 281), that their fire was timid and at long range (Fernández-Armesto 141), and that it was the English that were put to flight by Medina Sidonia's offensive (Mattingly 281).

In fact, “a cut forestay and two great shot lodged in the foremast [of Recalde's ship] after an hour's battering” (Fernández-Armesto 158), registered today as the only damage done to the Spanish Armada, and by three of the most heavily-gunned ships in the Queen's fleet, were mishaps not even registered by Ubaldino. Instead, Ubaldino replaced them by the bigger loss of the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, which collided while succoring the *San Salvador*, and by the explosion and ruin of the latter, claimed by Ubaldino to be the work of a Flemish gunner's resentment against his Spanish captain, as the latter had abused the former's wife “according to the custom of that nation” (15-16). He included the damage of those two ships there, even if in case were they caused by the action of the English, but by accident or petty treason.

On balance, then, the ‘jornada’ of the 31st was not so favorable to the English as Ubaldino liked to suggest, but a failed experience for both sides. The English dissatisfaction may be implied in Ubaldino's recording of Howard's considering at the end of the day that “he wanted as yet 40 ships” (17) and his appointment of the night watch; the Spaniards', by the fact that Medina Sidonia was planning to abandon his defensive tactic and rearrange his ships in three columns (Mattingly 281).

3.5 The treasures found: 1st August

The next day was one of plundering for the English. Drake had left his watch to prey upon the *Rosario*. He received Pedro de Valdés as his prisoner and sent the ship to Dartmouth. Howard and Hawkins for their part went aboard the *San Salvador*, towed it to Weymouth but found that it was to be with little profit: “they understood that the Spaniards had taken out of her the best things they could” (20); Ubaldino, however, recreated the “lamentable sight” of the men “miserably burned” on board (20).

Indeed, the capture of the *Rosario* was a heavy blow and much held in reproach against Medina Sidonia upon his return to Spain (Fernández-Armesto 171). Thus, it has been interpreted as the start of the weakening of morale among Spaniards, only comparable to the animosities that had emerged in the English command: while the

Spaniards always resented Pedro de Valdés surrendering to Drake's fame as his prisoner, Drake's indiscipline and transgression by leaving his watch was only appeased by envy and hopes of gaining part of the bounty of the *Rosario* (Mattingly 294).

At the close of the day, the Spaniards are portrayed by Ubaldino in poor resolution. They "entreprised nothing, either for that they saw they could not safely do it or else because their minds were not thoroughly settled upon that which before they thought to do" (21). But the truth seems to be that the Spaniards did modify their formation, by ordering a continuous grouping to be formed of the vanguard under Alonso de Leyva and the rearguard under Medina Sidonia (Mattingly 296). It is the English, rather, Fernández-Armesto suggests (198), that insisted on their cutting out tactics, even though they were a failure, as proved to him by Recalde's episode one among several in which they could not destroy the most exposed ships.

Perhaps it all could be best summarized as one common failed experience, but two reactions: reproach and celebration.

3.6 The Second Battle: 2nd August

Ubaldino correctly registered that the following morning began with the Spaniards' advantage of windward position at north east, toward the land, which made the English fear they could reach the coast (14). This windward advantage soon changed, never to be regained again, except for brief intervals, as Fernandez-Armesto reminds us (151). However, this the opportunity Ubaldino seized to praise the Queen's fleet for "being very good at sail and stirrage" (22), two qualities still acknowledged these days, which in tactical terms clearly defined the characteristic abhorrence of boarding of the English:

[T]he English, who, with their ships, being (as was aforesay'd) excellent of sail and stirrage, yet less a great deal than the Spanish ships, and therefore more light and nimble, fought not at all, according to their manner otherwise, to board them, but keeping themselves aloof at a reasonable distance, continually beat upon the hull and tacklings of their enemies ships, which, being considerably higher, could not so conveniently beat the English ships with their ordnance. (26)

Such tactical skill would be set against "the huge greatness and height of the Spaniards ships" (22), and their sticking on their boarding tactics out of conceit (21), with the

result that Howard's fleet made the Spaniards edge away in the two minor assaults that occurred on that second of August.

Nevertheless, once more, evidence seems to speak otherwise. In the first assault Ubaldino registered that, for about an hour and a half, the *Triumph* and five ships which were severed from the rest of the Queen's navy were given assault by the Spanish galleases under the command of Hugo de Moncada. Instead of the Spaniards being "inforced to give them way", as in Ubaldino's narrative (23), it seems that Medina Sidonia intercepted them "with 16 of his best galleons" (22), with resources enough to also rescue the *San Martín* from enemy harassment (Mattingly 299-300). Otherwise, there is no other way to understand how Howard would have felt the need to call "other of the Queene's ships" and "not to discharge any one piece of ordnance before they should come within a musket shot of the enemy" (23). In fact, if the Spaniards were "inforced to give place and to retire unto their array of battle", in Ubaldino's faithful record (23), this was because the wind shift in favor of the English dictated it (Mattingly 298).

The ineffectiveness of the tactics of both parties is again nuanced by Fernández-Armesto: "Neither [of them] [...] was capable of defeating, or even seriously damaging, the enemy" (135). While the Spaniards had no hope of catching their elusive enemies, the English found their tactics useless against the Spanish discipline and great expenditure of shot (Mattingly 300-1). However, Ubaldino simply set record of a Spanish withdrawal that was not such.

3.7 A Day's Respite: 3rd August

The third of August is described by Ubaldino as a day in which there was no engagement, "by reason of a great calm which fell out" (27). Ubaldino's account admitted that the English were designing a way to acquire more offensive power by asking for a new supply of munition and dividing their fleet into four squadrons (26-27), but would not acknowledge any indication of weakness, and rather contrast it with a suggestion that the Spaniards were happy to use their time in repairing leaks (30-31), something for which there is no other record. Conversely, Ubaldino silenced that there was a duel on the rearguard between the *Gran Grifón* and Drake's *Revenge* and that, when Medina Sidonia called for battle, the English retired and eluded the fight

(Mattingly 304). As a result, the Spaniards had certainly not been able to land thanks to the agility of the English ships and Frobisher's tough defense, but they still sailed on (Mattingly 305).

3.8 The Fourth Battle and Further Recruitment: 4th and 5th August

A new target was set for the Queen's navy. The *San Luis de Portugal* and *Santa Ana*, a galleon and a merchant ship, were beset by Hawkins, to whom the Lord Admiral himself and Thomas Howard joined later on. As on previous occasions, Ubaldino depicted a scene where the Armada was put to flight by enemy action: "they did them much harm—one of them requiring the help of the rest, being succoured by them, returned unto the fleet" (28). Yet, it has been noted how damages on the Spanish galleases may have been used to exaggerate English naval efficiency, as with the ship which reportedly "was taken away her light" or the one which "lost her beck" (28). A light taken away is practically no harm at all, and so is a lost beck, especially considering how the galleases in question were repaired, contributing to the fight half an hour later (Mattingly 306).

In the following engagement, Ubaldino depicted a mirroring scene, if only it is an English ship, the *Triumph*, which was likely to be caught by the enemy and towed away by her friends. The action is the exact counterpart but it is interpreted differently: this time the English ship was not forced to leave the place by the enemy, but rather her friends "jointly saved" her (30). Indeed, Mattingly observes how close the Armada was of boarding her, had the wind not freshened on her favor (308), a fact also acknowledged by Ubaldino, though merely in passing (30). Fernández-Armesto is quick to point out how the advantage of the wind was used by the Queen's navy not to assault the Armada but to seek refuge at Dover (146).

On the following day, the fight ceased: while the Spaniards made provisions, the English reunited fresh forces. Howard appears to be celebrating the battle as a victory, by his granting the honour of knighthood to lords and gentlemen in the service of the Queen (31). It would seem neither tactic so far has yielded but frustrating effects.

3.9 Toward the final battle: 6th-8th August

On the 6th August, towards the evening, Ubaldino states that the Armada anchored in Calais and “sent tidings unto the Duke of Parma of their Arrival” (32), following on Philip II’s plan that Medina Sidonia would be united to the forces that had been gathering on the Flemish coast for one year. Parma made no reply, probably feeling the right time for fighting had been missed: of the 33,000 soldiers he had recruited by the beginning of the year, only half of them had survived from hunger and disease (Mattingly 193). The English must not have been aware of that, just as Medina Sidonia would still trust Parma’s army was ready to embark. Ubaldino recorded the news of Parma’s preparations with “a great number of tuns of water and 10,000 foot men” and Howard’s refreshing his fleet with more troops and munition (31-32), applying “his wits” to a plan that would prevent the forces of the enemy from being united: “he provided 8 small ships dressed with artificial fire, to the intent to drive the same upon the Spanish fleet” (33).

This time, the English stratagem, which was carried out on August 7th, was diligent and effective:

[T]he enemy was not only inforced to break his sleep, but the fire coming so suddenly upon him (not remembering himself at the very instant of time of another remedy, either more safe for himself, or more excusable) to cut his cables, to let slip his anchors, and to hoise up sails, as the only way to save his fleet from so imminent and unexpected a mischief. (34)

The sight of the English fireships in the distance made them think that they were Giambelli’s ‘hellburners’ and fear that they would scatter flaming and fire miles around with the explosives they surely contained (Mattingly 323-24). The tumult and confusion among the Spaniards was as immense as described above and had unexpected consequences: the chief galleases collided, one of them graveled, the rest were dispersed, 22,000 ducats of gold were seized, and prisoners were made.

Ready as Ubaldino always was to praise English naval skills, he was never too harsh on the Spaniards when real misfortune came about: when the *San Lorenzo* ran aground and Hugo de Moncada was felled in her defense, he described him as “a noble and valiant man” (35). And he would not rush to celebrate victory but portray the cautionary reaction on the part of the English: after all, the Armada was still able to

recover its moon shape formation (Mattingly 332). Howard had to make sure that the Armada had abandoned its plan of going to England. Lord Admiral gave order to Seymour and Wynter to continue to watch for Parma in the Channel (39) while “determined to follow the Spaniards” on their way North (40), an action whose end was unknown: other intents of the Armada upon England were perfectly possible, as Fernández-Armesto rightly reminds us (201). But this was the end: the wind remained remorselessly in the north-west, strong enough to drive the Spaniards on” (Fernández-Armesto 202). The Spaniards kept their course about the Orkneys and had could only but return that way into Spain along the north coast of Scotland facing evident danger.

Ubaldo merely had to confirm Howard’s return to England the 17th August, “by reason of a tempest”, while the Spanish Armada continued in the northern seas “tossed up and down until the end of September” (42). Most unexpectedly, upon his return in Spain, Medina Sidonia counted 32 ships lost, over 13,000 casualties, and more than 2000 prisoners (43). In the month of November, public thanks were given throughout the whole realm, that “the Common Safety of them all was accomplished by the special favor of God, the father of all good things” (44).

**Pedro de Ribadeneira's *Exhortación sobre 'La Invencible'* (1588)
and *Sobre las causas de la pérdida de la Armada* (1589)**

Unlike Ubaldino's, Ribadeneira's biography may be detailed from numerous sources. Apart from his own *Confesiones* (1611) and collected letters, included in *Monumenta Ribadeneirae* (1920-23), there were three other biographies, one contemporary by Cristóbal López, two from the nineteenth-century by Juan María Prat and Vicente de la Fuente, before Eusebio Rey edited his sketch in *Historias de la Contrarreforma* (1945 xxxv-lxxiii), available today in reprint. Born in 1526, Ribadeneira joined the Society of Jesus in 1540 and became priest in 1553. It is in one of his missions as a Jesuit that he met the Count of Feria, with whom he travelled to London as chaplain and spiritual adviser of his family. During this stay, Ribadeneira had the intention of establishing the Society of Jesus there; however, upon Mary Stuart's execution, and therefore Elizabeth's imposition of Protestantism, this could not be done without risking martyrdom. Such failed attempt and some health problems drove him out of England, settling in Italy until 1574, when he finally returned to Spain. It is after that that he took up historical writing, gaining an immediate success with the publication of the first and second parts of his *Historia Ecclesiastica del Scisma de Inglaterra* (1588, 1890), allowing him such fame that he was asked to preach at Philip's court, who granted him permission to establish the Society of Jesus in the Low Countries.

The two documents that shall be studied here belong precisely to the interim between the publication of the first and second parts of the *Historia del scisma*, and are dated immediately before and after the Armada campaign of 1588: Ribadeneira's oration *Exhortación sobre 'La Invencible'* (1588) and letter *Sobre las causas de la pérdida de la Armada* (1589).

4.1 Textual History

Let us start by describing briefly the textual history of those two pieces. The original manuscript of the first one, "Exhortación para los soldados y capitanes que van a esta jornada de Inglaterra, en nombre de su Capitán General," is kept at the Biblioteca

Nacional in Madrid (*cod. Matrit.* IV, ff. 189v-201v) and was first published in 1923 in *Monumenta Ribadeneira* (II 347-70). It will be analysed in conjunction with the letter sent from Ribadeneira to Ana Félix de Guzmán, dated May 1588 (*cod. Matrit.* IV, 33, ff. 188-189) and also made public in that same volume containing epistles, orations, and diverse other writings by the Spanish Jesuit (*Monumenta* II 92-93). The second one, “Carta de Ribadeneira para un privado de Su Majestad sobre las causas de la pérdida de la Armada,” may be found in the same collection and series (*cod. Matrit.* IV, 34, ff. 147v-150v) and is dated at the close of 1588. The three make up the final part of Eusebio Rey’s *Historias de la Contrarreforma*, whose 2009 edition has been handled in the writing of this dissertation.

A number of details about the intended addressees and purpose of the two documents remain obscure. The exhortation was intended to uplift the hearts of the soldiers in that crucial moment. It was originally written to be appended to his first part of the *Historia del scisma*, but he restrained himself from doing it, he confessed to Anna de Guzman, “out of due respects” (“por justos respetos”, Ribadeneira, “Carta a doña Anna”, in Rey 1331). So Ribadeneira let Anna de Guzmán know that he would like it to be read to the soldiers and captains of the Armada upon their departure in Lisbon, asking her to pass it on to Medina Sidonia, her son-in-law, for that end, on condition that she would not disclose his authorship. The letter addressed to the King of Spain was also sent through an unnamed private of His Majesty. Rey suggests he may be Juan de Idiáquez, chief secretary of state and war (1355n) and believed it to be the condensed anticipation of what became his *Tratado de la Tribulación* (1589).

It is not known exactly whether any of the two documents ever reached their intended recipients. Rey supposes that the exhortation did not, whereas the priest, that is once mentioned to have counseled the King on the oppressed in his kingdom, may be a possible allusion to the opening of the Jesuit’s letter, and thus an indication that Philip II did read his letter (879).

4.2 Exhortación sobre ‘La Invencible’ (1588)

The opening of Ribadeneira’s exhortation refers directly to the Spaniards’ trust in the happy ending and conclusion of the enterprise the Armada was about to undertake. However, he must have sensed a tinge of hesitation as to the legitimacy of the Spanish resolution to invade England for he starts by justifying its rightness and

holiness. To remove any doubt, he provided his intended audience with three main objects for sailing for England to wage war on that nation, three objects that clarified that this was a defensive and not an offensive war (“que es guerra defensiva y no ofensiva,” in Rey 1333). Those three objects were the defense of religion, the defense of the reputation of the King and his nation, and the defense of the welfare and properties of the Spanish people; the three had been subject to much grievance and offence coming from England and with that opens the first part of his exhort.

He started off by reminding the many times that England has been insulting God since Henry VIII’s days, not only by destroying and desecrating monasteries, arresting and martyring Catholics, but also by sitting a woman on the throne, much against all ecclesiastical canons, since “being a woman and naturally subject to man” (“siendo mujer y sujeta naturalmente al varón,” in Rey 1334) could never be acknowledged as the spiritual head of the Church. Of all the good many evils that Elizabeth could be charged of by Ribadeneyra, the worst one was to have allowed ‘diabolical’ unbelievers coming from different ‘infected’ provinces to establish themselves in England, turning the land into a “cave of snakes,” from where the “destructive and consuming fire of heresy would blaze up throughout the world” (in Rey 1334-35). Yet, that was not the only thing that mattered. She was destabilizing the nation after having killed Mary Stuart and supported rebellion in Flanders for decades, harassing the Spanish ports of Galicia, Cadiz, and the West Indies; and this before the eyes of the entire world (in Rey 1335-36). Surely, such shameful recklessness and temerity had exhausted Spanish patience (in Rey 1338).

Spain, then, had a three-fold mission to defend the Catholic faith, the King’s reputation and the interests of the nation. Enough had been said about the need to defend the Catholic faith, but now it was time to remind everyone of the need to accept the responsibility: he would ask rhetorically, to inquire which kingdom in Christendom had the strength and could take arms against England? (“¿Qué reino de toda la cristiandad tiene fuerzas y puede hoy ir a tomar las armas contra el de Inglaterra?,” in Rey 1337).

It was surely Spain, uncorrupted as it was by the heretics, reputed also among all nations for the extension of its Empire without limit (“los límites de su imperio son los límites del mundo,” in Rey 1339), and commanded by an able ruler of peace. The only

trouble was in Flanders and it lasted because Elizabeth sustained it; the harassment of far-away parts of the Empire also came from England and her piracies. Such impudence was to be punished and it should be too difficult: a beetle cannot fight an eagle; nor can a mouse fight an elephant (in Rey 1340).

Besides, the war in Flanders was costly for Spain, Ribadeneyra reminded (in Rey 1339). Fond of metaphors, his oration would illustrate the necessity of warring England, otherwise, as long as the disease exists, its effects will continue, and, as long as the spider exists, the house will be full of cobwebs regardless of how clean you mean to keep it (in Rey 1342). Putting an end to the war in Flanders, then, would result in fewer outlays there but also weaker threat to the ships coming from the Indies and on which the commerce of Spain depended so much (in Rey 1345).

Only after having thus justified the necessity of war could Ribadeneyra finish off his exhort with words which is of greatest interest to these pages: “ours is victory” (“nuestra es la victoria,” in Rey 1349). Regardless of the evidence he put forward to sound convincing, like trusting past experience whereby, when Spain had won her victories despite being less numerous or England had been dispossessed of all her French possessions (in Rey 1346-7), his conviction that the Spanish Armada would as so whole and entire and without a brink that on writing Ana de Guzmán, Ribadeneyra also set plans for Medina Sidonia once the Armada had set foot on conquered England:

May he once arrived in England distinguish Catholics from heretics [...] and may he pay heed [...] not to ruin the temples, which, serving now the devil as they are in their sacrilegious rites, may serve the Lord as they did in old times. (in Rey 1332)

[Q]ue llegados a Inglaterra sepa hacer diferencia de los católicos y de los herejes [...] y que se tenga en gran cuenta [...] no arruinar los templos, que, aunque ahora sirvan al demonio en sus ritos sacrílegos, podrán servir al Señor como sirvieron en otros tiempos (in Rey 1332)

How justified his taking victory for granted was before the start of the campaign is not the question here, but rather how unexpected the outcome would after such reasoning and sentiment be.

4.3 *Sobre las causas de la pérdida de la Armada (1589)*

Three months passed and no news were received from the Channel. In the meantime, Ribadeneyra enjoyed the success of his *Historia del Scisma*. The rumor gave way to the certain news that the invading plan had failed. If Ribadeneyra's earlier exhort was meant to justify and create a proper atmosphere for the Spanish naval campaign, once the disaster was confirmed, it was time for serious reflection.

Such was the purpose of Ribadeneyra's letter to King Philip II. As unaccountable as the outcome had been, knowing that everything happens under God's will, Ribadeneyra sought to share with the king what he had pondered on the causes of such "universal scourge and punishment" ("azote y castigo universal," in Rey 1352) which he could enumerate in writing.

Firstly, the King should make amends for the common people that had been dispossessed, imprisoned, or merely afflicted by the heavy charges laid on them, not for the King to finance the expedition, but for his ministers to obtain benefit unrightfully: there was no way the Armada could succeed, for "it was loaded with the sweating and cursing of so many miserable people" ("iba cargada con los sudores y maldiciones de tanta gente miserable," in Rey 1352). And secondly, the King should keep his accounts very neatly and examine the men at his service to figure out how his gross income could be going out as it was, perhaps through bad administration or even disloyalty. He should not forget, echoing Thomas More, the sentence: "[m]oney is the nerve of war" ("La hacienda es el nervio de la Guerra," in Rey 1353).

Thirdly, the King had to judge whether the attack on England was more for the sake of earthly interests than of God's glory. He may have forgotten to protect the Catholics under the persecution of Queen Elizabeth as he should, too careful not to offend her. Then, sins and scandals should be removed from the public eye, especially in the case of those who are expected to serve as examples of imitation to others and also, the King should restrain from participating too eagerly in the government of religious affairs; let no other future kings think that they can dispose on religions at will. Finally, the king should know that the greatest riches of a kingdom are not found in its gold and silver but in its brave and liberal people, the pillars of any republic.

This is certainly very much like preparing the king with an examination of conscience. There is an obvious change of tone, graver than the previous exhortation, and nearly consolatory. However, it is to be noted how Ribadeneyra never mentions the word ‘defeat.’ Not only because of the spiritual benefits to be gained from the experience, like to humble oneself before the power of God, but principally, because in him, as in many more in the nation, the attachment to the idea of military victory was still resilient, as when speaking of victory and God’s will, he wrote: “I think to myself that He didn’t mean to keep it from us, but to postpone it a little while” (“Yo para mí tengo que no ha sido querérnosla negar, sino dilatarla un poco de tiempo,” in *Rey* [1352]). And therefore, the urgency for victory resides in his words, as much as the impending need to seek for the enemy and wage on war: “dura todavía la necesidad precisa de llevar la guerra adelante y buscar al enemigo” (in *Rey* 1352).

Despite Ribadeneyra’s tone still surviving, it is now known that certainly Philip II had the power to send the Armada twice again in 1596 and 1597; the former “was driven back by storms”, but the latter:

[S]ailed with a rational plan, based on the securing a safe haven at Falmouth; [...] was overwhelming powerful—outnumbering the English in fighting ships of all classes, attaining an ‘invincibility’ which that of 1588 had possessed in nothing but name—[...] when the weather again intervened [...] and dispersed it. (Fernández-Armesto 270)

A Contrastive Analysis of Ubaldino and Ribadeneyra on the Armada Campaign

This chapter will set Ubaldino's and Ribadeneyra's contributions side by side with an aim to qualify their individual natures and then differentiate the way in which each relates to the differing experience of the 1588 Armada campaign that has prevailed in the two nations throughout history. I will analyze each of the two contributions in three different ways: facts or arguments in their accounts that are still held to be true, the modifications and omissions that play a part in the narrative, and any particular aspect or detail on the author's own contribution, that may better characterize their respective perspectives.

5.1 A Critique of Ubaldino's Narrative

The greatest part of the facts recorded by Ubaldino in his narration of the Armada episode has been corroborated by later evidence. Modifications and omissions were naturally present, we do not know whether intentionally or unintentionally, but they were repeated and quite significantly. Very often, the interpretation of facts reflects a naturally Anglocentric bias.

To begin with, much of the strategic detail included in the preliminary stages was confirmed to be true. For instance, the English fleet was already prepared on the 20th of December and the way of organizing the English fleet can be also testified: that Drake was sent to the west and Seymour went with Lord Admiral to watch out for Parma, but that when they heard news of the Armada approaching, Howard joined Drake at Plymouth. At this stage, nothing in his account refers to the Armada's preparation and supplies, however; the Spaniards only come on the scene when Ubaldino was describing the English already in the sea and their first sightings off Ushant and Scilly, and finally off Lyzard and Eddystone, when the fight is imminent. Thus, the narrative opened with a totally English perspective.

When confrontations began, Ubaldino seemed to take special trouble to register faithfully the earliest and almost only losses of the Armada. It is true that neither

the *San Salvador* nor the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* could continue fighting, though it were following accident or treason and no enemy action, but Ubaldino did not miss the opportunity to tell about the capture of the two by the English later on the first of August, building on the Spanish losses falsely as merits earned by the English tactics. The same could be said of the registered and attested fact that Hawkins set on the *San Luis de Portugal* and *Santa Ana*, left damage in a light and in a beck on two of the Spanish galleases. Registered as the facts should be, Ubaldino silenced that such small harm was not an impediment to continue to fight half an hour later and to great effect. Contrariwise, Ubaldino would omit any mishap on the English side that could speak in similar terms of misfortune or unskillfulness, like for instance, in the night of July 31st, when the English fleet found itself by accident between the horns of the Armada defensive formation, believing the light of the Spanish flagship was Drake's, who had disobeyed Howard and left his watch; this was better omitted for posterity to be able to argue for the exact opposite.

Sometimes those double standards were applied to exactly mirroring scenes and very consistently. Most of the times, in most battles, not only those fought by Howard, but also by Drake, were repeatedly described by Ubaldino as being well maintained on the part of the English and forcing the Spaniards to sail away, though the case was proved that the English would elude battling in their tactic to avoid grappling by all possible means. A good illustration may be what happened on the second of August, described by Ubaldino as a Spanish withdrawal, when in fact the Spanish fleet was not running away but going to help Recalde which was beset by several English ships. And yet, when the *San Martín* was left on her own and the English taking advantage of that, when the Spanish galleons arrived to support her, again the English fled from the place. Again, on the 4th of August, Ubaldino described that Hawkins attacked some Spanish galleons and caused one such harm that it had to be helped by the others to return to the Armada, but on that same day, Ubaldino wrote that when the *Triumph* was left alone and the Armada tried to board it, the English fleet honorably saved it, when the truth was that the *Triumph* helped itself thanks to a change in the weather.

From Ubaldino's account anyone would understand that the final battle and the dispersion of the Armada were the effective result of the English stratagem of the fire ships. Ubaldino did not say though that it was more the Spaniards belief that they were 'hellburners' what caused the chaos than the actual effectiveness of the fire ships that

carried no explosives on them and that it was rather the coalescence of storm and lack of munition that prevented both the English and the Spanish from continuing fighting.

It may be further argued that Ubaldino interpretative contributions were most frequently employed in praise of English tactics and skill and rarely used in recognizing any sign of weakness. Just as in the opening of the text, Howard was exalted at the expense of the description of the magnificent Armada, on the 29th of July, when the English fleet could not set off from Plymouth on account of the weather conditions, Ubaldino liked to describe that some ships managed to go out thanks to Howard's splendid skills. Contrarily, on the 31st of July, Ubaldino narrated the end of the battle as Howard deciding to wait for the rest of the English fleet, which was still at Plymouth, to do a better service; this may be nothing more but a beautiful way of saying that the ships that were already fighting against the Armada were not enough to win.

5.2 A Critique of Ribadeneyra's Exhortation and Letter to Philip II

As for Ribadeneyra's exhortation, many arguments he provided for the invasion of England would be considered true and sound by many research the topic today, if only perhaps expanding on the economic pragmatic reasons behind it. On the other hand, the one or other manipulation can be found in great measure by constantly blaming England of all sorts of mischief. His own contributions are to be found mainly here, in a most condemnatory mood toward England and her Queen.

His main focus is religious, as when establishing that the enterprise should be carried out because Elizabeth was disobeying the Pope, prohibiting mass, destroying images, and torturing Catholics. There is no denying that the Counterreformation was a strong force at the time. Nevertheless, his argument about the costs of the wars bleeding Spain would easily today be taken into serious account. Mattingly, among other historians, claims that this was the main reason for carrying out the enterprise. English help in the war of Flanders, as well as their attack over Cadiz or the West Indies, were draining the Spanish arks. Another argument Ribadeneyra provides for the invasion that may be considered well-based is that the reputation of the king and of the nation should be cared for as a guarantee of peace with the rest of the world. Ribadeneyra shows then the qualities of a first-class political analyst, an acute discerning sense, capable of identifying the key factors at play in the Anglo-Spanish relations of the time.

Most of Ribadeneyra's distortion of facts can be blamed some overwrought rhetoric and qualifying statements of a very negative character directly addressed at the adversary. We should remind how he described Elizabeth as a "terrible monster," the heresies as "foul-smelling ministers of Satan," and England as a "cave of snakes," also the way in which he supported the idea of invading England for her likeness to disease or the workings of a spider.

No doubt Ribadeneyra is very particular in his writings. He is also very original. His greatest narrative contributions may be found in the letter addressed to Philip II and the reasons he provided for the falling of the Armada. When describing them, he is now dives into the most problematic issues of the Spanish gigantic administrative body and its disrespect for the common people, ranging from inefficacy to corruption through public scandals. One does not know whether he believed himself to be acting as a political counselor of the king or as his confessor.

5.3 The Contrastive Analysis of Events and Accounts

If we look merely at events, it can be asserted that there was in all some English technical, as well as tactical, superiority shown throughout this campaign. Their ship steerage and armament were better and Howard was capable of devising new techniques with certain effect, even though in general terms the Queen's ships would be more defensive and elusive in their tactics than the Armada. The strategies of the Spaniards were also basically defensive and proved relatively ineffective in attack; their reliance and stubborn adherence on the boarding strategy is an indication of their inability to adapt to the northern seas. Yet, the Armada had a much greater capacity to stay at sea with no need to get supplies and their discipline was also undeniable. They could not do much about the heaviness of the ships but surely better coordination could have been sought and a way to establish a safe harbor looked after. In this way the first conclusion that may be reached is that there was no English victory in the fight, but an unfortunate fall of the Armada and a corresponding weakening of their morale.

But by comparing, not facts, but the accounts themselves, however, a better insight may be gained. The first obvious thing to be seen is that the two are very clearly different in nature: one more factual, the other much more argumentative; one prepared and written to be read as widely spread as possible, the other to be read almost in mediation. One would expect the former to be more objective and the latter more prone

to subjective view, but it may well be the opposite. Ubaldino's account, being more dependent on the expectations of the public, was surely more inclined to fulfill them by twisting his interpretation of facts; Ribadeneyra, moving on more private scene, could aim to reach some truth beyond facts, however biased it might be. By contrasting so very different accounts, and especially being stricken by Ribadeneyra's exhortations, what it teaches us is that, despite Ubaldino's occasional manipulation of events in favor of England and Ribadeneyra's sure moralizing tone against her, it is not facts that would decide on the whole experience of the 1588 Armada campaign, but their common prior conviction on the superiority of the Spanish Armada.

In conclusion, even though new facts were revealed today that may appear to be decidedly conclusive on favor of one side or other, probably nothing would change that first experience which has been handed down to us. It was the very unexpected nature of the outcome both for England and Spain, that led to the immediate construction of the myth of the English victory and the Spanish defeat, in which each side believed wholeheartedly for centuries.

Conclusion

The Armada Campaign has been discussed differently throughout history. At the very beginning, just when the event took place, people's conception was that there had been an English victory and therefore a Spanish defeat. In the aftermath, it has been believed that the English country saw their power increased and the Spanish one was deteriorated. There were also some publications on this idea, such as William Camden's, but they were just narrations of the events commissioned normally by English people, such as Queen Elizabeth; it was not until the end of the nineteenth century, coinciding with the third centenary, that writers started to focus not only on the narrations, but also in the English and Spanish tactics. It was also in that century when the commemoration of the English victory did not only take place in books but also in poetry, performances, and other type of publications and public acts.

In 1988, the fourth centenary of the Armada Campaign, ideas changed. Both English and Spanish people agreed for the first time on a single version, which was not the one prevailing until then. Historians such as Fernández-Armesto and Robert Hutchinson claimed that, in the 1588 naval engagement, both countries were defeated. They suggested that it had been a material and moral downfall. Moreover, the idea that England saw its power increased is rejected by García Cortázar in *Los mitos de la Historia en España*. He established that the Spanish power did not start to decrease until 1623 and that England did not see its power increased until the eighteenth century with Queen Victoria. Nevertheless, the question stated in the first chapter should be answered now: are these ideas appearing in the fourth centenary onwards present in the texts written immediately after the Armada Campaign took place?

Ubaldo's and Ribadeneyra's works, both written within a year of the events, provide an answer to this question. On the one hand, the way Ubaldo narrated the story leads to the idea that there was an English victory over the Armada, which according to him every time they fought each other run away. Thus, the idea of an English triumph had been transmitted already in the first English accounts on the event. On the other hand, the Spanish version is different, as it is the version of those who were defeated; this is the idea that Ribadeneyra proposes. In his letters, Ribadeneyra

focused on the arguments for carrying out the just and necessary invasion of England and on the causes for the fall of the Armada. In his work, Ribadeneyra is constantly inflicting guilt over not only the enemy, but also over his own country. He utterly blames Spanish people for the reasons of not getting the victory; but as such, they can be solved. Thus, it is important to notice that Ribadeneyra does not talk about defeat, but about fall. Moreover, the Armada's fall is something momentary; it is a postponed victory because God is testing Spanish faith. It can be inferred that Ribadeneyra thinks that God will provide the victory when Spain solves all its problems causing the fall.

After having considered all these previous ideas, I can assert that the idea conceived during the fourth centenary about the fact that both countries were defeated, is not present in these early texts. While Ubaldino claims that it was an English victory and a Spanish defeat, Ribadeneyra suggests that there has been an English victory, but not a Spanish defeat. The experience of a common defeat is only revealed when confronting them with further evidence. It may be concluded that such myths of the English victory over the Armada could crystallise as early as then due to the absolute unexpectedness of the outcome of the conflict.

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