

John Knox. (1588) 2016. *El primer toque de la trompeta contra el monstruoso gobierno de las mujeres. Tratado contra María Tudor y otras reinas de la edad moderna*. Estudio preliminar, traducción y notas de José Luis Martínez-Dueñas y Rocío G. Sumillera. Valencia: Tirant Humanidades. 184 pp. ISBN: 978-84-16349-73-9.

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Queens regnant have typically been ill-defined figures, anomalous entities in a patriarchal society (Dugan 1997, xx). For centuries, both their role as rulers and their nature as women have widely been considered irreconcilable. However, it is precisely their ambiguity and paradoxical position, both as public and private agents, which have made them such attractive subjects for writers (Mitchell 2000, 142). John Knox's anonymously published pamphlet *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstruous Regiment of Women* (1558) must be seen in this context, as the initial lines of the text clearly illustrate: "Promover a una mujer a que ejerza gobierno, superioridad, dominio o mando sobre cualquier reino, nación o ciudad es repugnante a la naturaleza, contumelia a Dios, una cosa bien contraria a su voluntad revelada y a su mandato aprobado, y finalmente es la subversión del buen orden, de toda equidad y justicia" (126). Knox, a Scottish author, writes against women's rule in general, but his indictment is specifically addressed to two Catholic queens in the British Isles at that time: Mary of Guise (1515-1560), Regent of Scotland after the death of her husband, James V, and Mary Tudor or Mary I of England (1516-1558). Moreover, associating the figure of the woman ruler with Catholic idolatry, this text is also a relevant exponent of anti-Catholicism in Tudor Britain (Álvarez-Recio 2010, 54).

The publication of this Spanish translation of Knox's text forms part of a growing body of scholarship on queens and queenship in recent years, and particularly of the royal women of early modern Europe—Campbell Orr (2004), Benassar ([2006] 2007), Craveri ([2005] 2007), Jansen (2008), Cruz and Suzuki (2009), Wellman (2013), among others. During this period, owing to what has been termed dynastic accidents, different queens had to exert ruling power in various European countries (Cruz and Suzuki 2009, 1): Spain, England, Scotland, France, Navarre and the Netherlands were all governed by queens in the mid-sixteenth century. From a scholarly point of view, this high number of women in regnant roles constitutes a rich field of investigation

that permits a variety of approaches to the study of queens and queenship. Yet at that time these atypical circumstances caused social anxiety about women's competence as rulers, with divergent opinions emerging in a public debate known as *querelle des femmes*. On one level, Humanism and the Renaissance sanctioned and valued women's education to a certain extent, with various cultivated and learned women to be found in European courts and noble households, and several important texts on the issue were published, such as Luis Vives's *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* (1524) and Thomas Salter's *The Mirror of Modesty* (1578). Yet on another level, significant misogynistic assertions against women's capacities continued, associated with their alleged weakness, both physical and moral, which would serve to prevent them from participating in any kind of public role. A prominent example of the latter trend is Knox's text.

The text prepared by José Luis Martínez-Dueñas and Rocío G. Sumillera includes the translation of Knox's text into Spanish, along with an extensive preliminary study, divided into eleven sections, which, following Knox's biography, explores issues as diverse as the Scottish writer's political and religious assumptions, and the circumstances of Protestant exiles in Europe and their connections to other religious communities, such as that founded by Calvin in Geneva. The actual examination of *The First Blast of the Trumpet* is relatively brief. The introduction opens with some pages devoted to an explanation of the general idea behind the creation of this text by Knox, that is, the fact of two queens on the throne in two different kingdoms in Britain, when, according to the Holy Scriptures, as Knox pointed out, this was intolerable: "las hijas de Eva, presas de una maldición y un castigo bíblico, están condenadas a quedar apartadas del poder y sometidas al hombre" (17). Alongside this basic premise, Knox's vehement anti-Catholicism is also significant, since, faced with a ruler's idolatry, he was in favour not only of appealing to religious duties, but also of taking political actions to combat such illegitimate government. The resounding title of the pamphlet is also expounded in a footnote on the initial page, with a reference to another work by Knox, *A Godly Letter of Warning, or Admonition to the Faithful in London, Newcastle and Berwick* (1554), in which he compares his voice to a trumpet played by God to warn and prepare every man in England for the battle ahead (11).

In this introductory study the reader can follow Knox's life from his birth in a village near Edinburgh in 1514. He began his religious career as a Catholic priest, but soon converted to Protestantism and became an influential preacher among various Scottish and English congregations, and even in the royal court (23). However, when Mary Tudor acceded to the English throne and restored Catholicism, Knox decided to flee from England to the Continent. In his first stay in the French city of Dieppe, he published three letters addressed to his former congregations in Britain, alerting them to the terrible consequences of the reestablishment of Catholicism by Queen Mary I in England. Finally, Knox travelled to Frankfurt, one of the European destinations for English Protestants in exile at the time.

The following part of the preliminary study concentrates on Knox's stay in Geneva (1556-1557), where he spent the happiest days of his life (27). He had recently married, and his two sons were born there. Two dear female friends of his also joined them in the city. This raises a remarkable issue in regard to Knox's relationship with women, the contradiction between his great private bonds with them, and his severe attacks against women in public as the source of all the evils on Earth (28-29). In this section the independent city of Geneva is also described, Knox's stay there coinciding with it being ruled by Calvin. The inhabitants of the city considered themselves God's chosen people and followed the strictest Protestant discipline (30). The fourth section discusses four political writings published by Knox during a further stay in Dieppe (1557). Three of these address a crucial message in Knox's political agenda: the duty of Scotland, and particularly the Scottish nobility, towards God, and their responsibility to redress the errors committed by Mary of Guise's rule during her regency, before the accession to the Scottish throne of her daughter, Mary Queen of Scots. While these works dealt with a subversive assumption, it was the fourth, *The First Blast of the Trumpet*, turning its invective on Mary I of England, which caused the greatest impact (33).

Before addressing the text itself, the editors include a section about the literature written in favour and against the nature and capacities of women, that is, the *querelle des femmes*, a necessary step in contextualising Knox's pamphlet. Moving on to *The First Blast of the Trumpet*, Martínez-Dueñas and Sumillera describe the most important ideas contained in the text. Knox, considering himself a prophet of God on earth, vindicated Protestantism as the true expression of religion, against Catholicism and the Pope's idolatry, which had been reintroduced in England by Mary Tudor. However, his attack is not just against Catholicism, but against women's rule in general. His line of reasoning follows three steps: women's rule is contrary, first, to men's law and, secondly, to God's perfect command; consequently, women's government subverts order, equity and justice (44-45). Queen Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain (1554) made the situation in England worse still, as it was feared that the country might thus find itself under the yoke of a foreign power (48).

One of the most notable actions proposed by Knox to combat this dangerous possibility is the rebellion against illegitimate and idolatrous monarchs, as opposed to the traditional doctrine by which all the subjects of a kingdom had to obey their sovereign, since his or her power derived directly from God. These conflicting theories are discussed in great detail in section seven. In the following one, the propaganda at the time relating to Mary Tudor is analysed, which, as might be expected, included writings both in favour and against her, according to the religious beliefs of the author. The next part of the introduction is devoted to Knox's difficult relationships with Calvin and Queen Elizabeth I, owing to the publication of the *The First Blast of the Trumpet* itself. As noted above, this was published in 1558, just a few months before Mary I's death and the accession of her half-sister to the English throne as Elizabeth I. In spite of publishing the text anonymously, Knox admitted his authorship in other works, together with the ideas that he was going to discuss in his next two "blasts of

[the] trumpet” (75-76). Because Elizabeth at the outset of her rule needed to ensure the general acceptance of her right to the English throne, Knox’s text was “una puñalada en la espalda” for her (77). However, the Scottish writer, while admitting Elizabeth’s rule as godly design, continued to argue that her government was, as with the reign of any woman, contrary to the laws of God and men.

The reception and consequences of the publication of *The First Blast of the Trumpet* are examined in the final two sections. The reaction to the text was predominantly negative, among both Protestants and Catholics, which included Elizabeth I, and the new Queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart. Knox had four interviews with Mary Queen of Scots and in the first of these she accused him of publishing a tract against women’s rule, and particularly against her mother, Mary of Guise. However, given the universal nature of Knox’s allegations about women, Mary Stuart considered that he had also attacked her (98). Nevertheless, Knox remained faithful to his fundamental ideas regarding women until his death.

The introduction is accompanied by scholarly footnotes, as might be expected, though in some cases these are perhaps rather lengthy (98-99), since they include the original text in English of those quotations translated into Spanish in the main text. This seems quite unnecessary and incongruous when the actual text under study in the book, *The First Blast of the Trumpet*, can be read just in Spanish in the second part of the book. In addition to the presence of many bibliographical references in the footnotes, the volume also offers a broad section of works cited, which includes primary and secondary sources, as well as a recommended bibliography on women in early modern Britain. As for the translation of Knox’s text, Martínez-Dueñas and Sumillera have used the original text published in 1558 (105) and have exploited most footnotes for the marginalia present in it, instead of utilising them to complete the nine-page analysis devoted to *The First Blast of the Trumpet* in the preliminary section of the book. This treatise has been rendered into present-day Spanish, while preserving the exhortative nature of Knox’s discourse, particularly observable in long sentences with various subordinates and parenthetical remarks and the profusion of rhetorical questions and exclamations. A certain early-modern English flavour is also noticeable, thanks to the translators’ syntactic and lexical choices. The volume includes two further sections: a very short appendix (177-178) in which, quoting Poutrin and Schaub (2007), all the European queens regnant between 1500 and 1600 are set out on a grid and, finally, an index.

All in all, and despite some inconsistencies regarding the relative brevity of the analysis of Knox’s text in the introductory section and the unusual handling of footnotes throughout the text, this Spanish study and translation of *The First Blast of the Trumpet* is a well-documented work, which provides a new and suggestive perspective on queens and queenship studies, and particularly on Mary I of England, a relatively unknown royal figure in Spain (Pérez Martín 2012). It also enriches the Spanish view on crucial European historical episodes, such as religious persecutions and wars, particularly attractive for those scholars, students and readers interested in Renaissance and early-modern studies.

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