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The final version can be found at http://www.brill.nl/book-triumphant

The Printed Book on the Iberian Peninsula, 1500-1540

Alexander S. Wilkinson

In the epilogue to his *Coronica de España,* first published in Seville in 1482, Diego de Valera (b.1412-1488) commented on the scarcity and inaccessibility of manuscript texts.[1] He went on to speak of a new and 'marvellous art of writing which takes us back to the golden age, restoring to us in multiplied codices all that the wit of man can learn of the past, present, and future'.[2] Printing had arrived in Spain relatively quickly, with the first known press established in Segovia around 1472.[3] Valera's comments, written a decade later, undoubtedly capture the almost naive sense of wonder and expectation that accompanied these early years. As the industry matured, however, it would become clear that the new technology would service many markets. It would not function solely as an agent of intellectual regeneration. Forty years after Valera's statement, in 1525, the printer Miguel de Eguía, based in Alcalá de Henares, lamented in a preface addressed to the Archbishop of Toledo Alonso III Fonseca (b.1475-1534), 'how accursed we are in Spain, where our printing offices ceaselessly pour out common and sometimes even obscene doggerel, tasteless ditties, and works which are yet more worthless than these'.[4] Eguía was evidently frustrated at the seemingly unfulfilled potential of the Spanish presses.

Our own ability to understand the different cultures of print on the Iberian Peninsula - even in very broad terms - has been seriously hindered by the

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[1] On Valera's life, see Lucas de Torre, 'Mosén Diego de Valera. Su vida y sus obras', *Boletín de la Academia de Historia*, vol, 75, 1914, pp. 50-83 & 133-168.

[2] Diego de Valera, *Crónica de España* (Seville, Alfonso del Puerto, 1482), 2°, cited in Frederick J. Norton, *Printing in Spain 1501-1520*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1966, p. 117.

[3] *Sinodal de Aguilafuente* (Segovia, Johannes Parix, [1472]), 4°. Only a very few items were printed by Parix in Segovia before he moved to Toulouse.

[4] Eguía's declaration, addressed to the archbishop of Toledo, is contained in an edition of Desiderius Erasmus, *Precatio dominica in septem portiones distributa* (Alcalá. Miguel de Eguía, 1525), cited by Luis Gil Fernández, *Panorama social del humanismo español (1500-1800),* Alhambra, Madrid, 1981, p. 573. The translation is that of Clive Griffin, *The Crombergers of Seville : the history of a printing and merchant dynasty*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1988, p. 10. Griffin points to an agreement between Eguía and Jacobo Cromberger noting that 'Eguía is here seen arranging to sell books from a press which was well known for printing just the sort of editions he had so rounding condemned in the very year he signed this contract'. Document dated 20 October 1525, Archivo de Protocolos, Seville, Oficio 4, Libro 3 of 1525, fols. 142v-143v.

lack of any comprehensive short title catalogue. To date, remarkably, there is no Spanish or Portuguese equivalent to Pollard and Redgrave's *English Short Title Catalogue*, first published in the 1926 and since a fundamental research tool for all scholars of early-modern Britain and Ireland.[5] Despite the lack of a national catalogue, the book in Spain and Portugal has benefited from well over a century of first-rate bibliographical scholarship. In 1978, the Cambridge bibliographer Frederick John Norton (1904-1986) produced his monumental *Descriptive Catalogue of Printing in Spain and Portugal* which covered the period from 1501 to 1520.[6] Norton was able to build on a number of important bibliographies of printing centres, compiled from the late nineteenth century onwards. In the past two decades, many of these earlier bibliographies have been updated, and new catalogues of printing centres and offices published.[7] Scholars have also been able to turn to new database projects - the Catálogo Colectivo del Patrimonio Bibliográfico Español and Porbase - online union catalogues of the major Spanish and Portuguese libraries.[8] All these initiatives have made and will continue to make hugely significant contributions to our understanding of printing. Nevertheless, as independent projects, they can offer only fragmented snapshots of publishing on the Peninsula as a whole.

It was in an attempt to redress this bibliographic fragmentation that the Centre for the History of the Media at University College Dublin launched a project in September 2006 to produce a catalogue of all books published in Spain, Portugal, Mexico and Peru or published in Spanish or Portuguese before 1601.[9] This project is still ongoing – it will be published by Brill in 2010. To date, however, it has been able to gather together information on around 19,000 editions surviving in over 90,000 copies in over 1100 libraries worldwide. It has drawn its information from the union catalogues, online

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[5] William Pollard and Gilbert Redgrave, *A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland : and of English books published abroad, 1475-1640*, The Bibliographical Society, London, 1926. The second edition was begun by W.A. Jackson & F.S. Ferguson and completed by Katharine F. Pantzer. Anti-intuitively, the second volume was published in 1976 while the first volume appeared a decade later in 1986.

[6] Frederick J. Norton, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Printing in Spain and Portugal 1501-1520*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978.

[7] This is not the place for an exhaustive list of Spanish and Portuguese bibliographies. Of particular note, however, is the series of bibliographies of major printing centres produced by Arcos Libros in Madrid.

[8] The Spanish Catálogo Colectivo can be accessed at http://www.mcu.es/bibliotecas/MC/CCPB/index.html while the Portuguese Porbase catalogue can be accessed at http://www.porbase.org/ These are magnificent initiatives. However, it is important to recognise that collective catalogues are not a replacement for national short title catalogues. The experience of the recent bibliographical project to catalogue French books before 1601, for instance, suggests that over 30% of surviving items can only be found in a library outside of France, see Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby & Alexander Wilkinson (eds.), *French Vernacular Books. Livres vernaculaires français*, Leiden, Brill, 2007.

[9] Further information on the UCD Iberian Book Project can be found at http://www.ucd.ie/ibp

and published library catalogues as well as the major bibliographies of printing centres and printing offices.

By bringing together the new information generated by the Iberian Book Project with the rich scholarly work already undertaken in this field, it is now possible to explore - in more detail than has hitherto been possible - the publishing industry and how it developed on the Iberian Peninsula between 1500 and 1540.

Overview of Spain and Portugal at the beginning of the sixteenth century
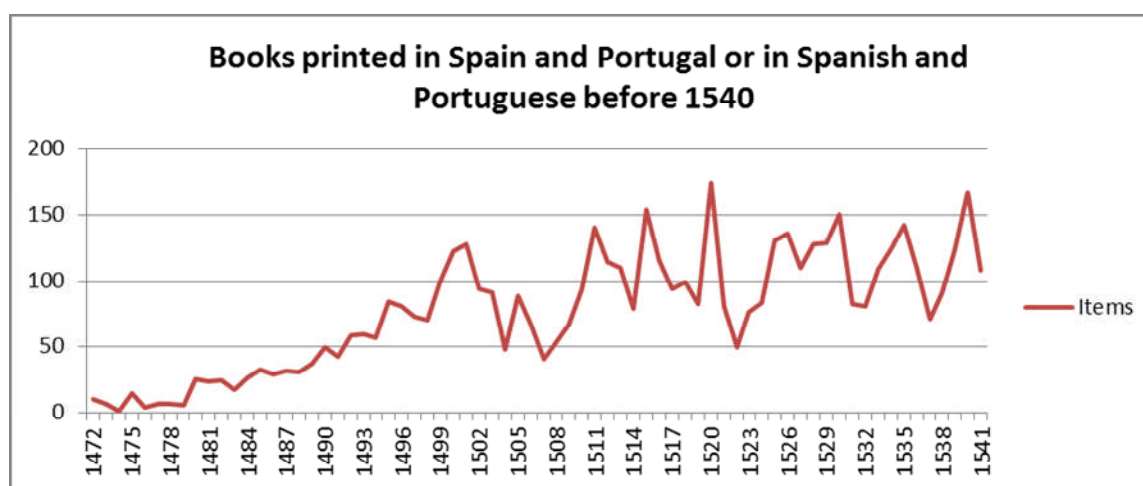
Before we begin our survey print production, it might be useful to offer at least some background information on Spain and Portugal at the beginning of the sixteenth century. With Castile and Aragon united in 1479 under the persons of Ferdinand II and Isabella, the boundaries of Spain and Portugal are more or less as they exist today. Spanish Navarre would, though, remain an independent kingdom until absorbed in 1513, while the boundaries of Catalonia extended to Perpignan, now in France.

In all respects, this Peninsula exhibited the characteristics necessary for the development of a flourishing print industry. Ignoring newly acquired territories in the New World – an expanding market - the population of Spain in 1530 was around 4.8 million rising to 6.8 million by 1591,[10] while Portugal

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[10] Carlos Álvarez-Naga and Leandro Prados de la Escosura, 'The Decline of Spain (1500-1850): conjectural estimates' in the *European Review of Economic History*, 11, 2007, pp. 319-366.

had around 1 million in 1500, a figure which doubled by 1600.[11] Spain was one of the most populous countries in Europe, after Germany, France and Italy. Levels of urbanisation were also comparable to other European nations. While statistical practices can vary from region to region, if we take urban community to mean a population of over 5,000 and include those who earned their living off the land, 12.5% of the population of Spain in 1530 lived in urban communities. This figure rose to 20.6% by 1591.[12] Significant urban communities included Seville,[13] Salamanca, Burgos, and Barcelona. Figures for Portugal are much harder to come by, but it is worth pointing out that in addition to the major cities of Coimbra, Évora and Oporto, the capital Lisbon was one of the most heavily populated cities of Europe, with a population of 50,000 in 1500 rising to 100,000 by 1600.[14] To offer a point of contrast, England had a population of 2.4-2.7 million in 1530, where 5% of the population lived in urban communities.[15]

Universities were established in Spain and Portugal from the thirteenth century right through into to our period, including Palencia (1212),[16] Salamanca (1218), Lisbon (1290),[17] Valladolid (c. 1293), Lérida (1300), Huesca (1359), Barcelona (1450), Saragossa (1474), Sigüenza (1489), Alcalá de Henares (1499) and Valencia (1500).[18] Salamanca, Alcalá, and Valladolid in particular would increasingly become the training grounds of choice for Spain's expanding civil service, magistrates and priests. As the economy and political structures developed, so Spain was to become increasingly well educated. The expansion of the university population was accompanied by a growth in secondary education in the form of a number of municipally-funded schools. In the 1960s, Lawrence Stone spoke of an educational revolution in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; a similar if less well studied phenomenon can also been identified for Spain.[19]

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[11] Paul Bairoch, *Cities and Economic Development : From the Dawn of History to the Present*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, p. 180. See also Nuno Valério, 'Portuguese Economic Performance 1250-2000', paper presented at section 36 of the 13th International Congress of Economic History, Buenos Aires, 2002.

[12] Álvarez-Naga and Prados de la Escosura, op.cit.

[13] Seville was one of the largest cities in Europe. Its population almost tripled between 1534 (33,000) and 1561 (95,000). See Henry Kamen, *Spain 1469-1714. A Society of Conflict,* Longman, London, 1983, p. 98.

[14] Nuno Valério, op.cit., table A.3.

[15] See E.A.Wrigley and R. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

[16] The University of Palencia could not compete with the University of Salamanca and was disestablished around 1264.

[17] The University of Lisbon was to move to Coimbra at various times, permanently settling there in 1537.

[18] On higher education in this period, see Richard L. Kagan, 'Universities in Castile, 1500-1700' in *Past and Present*, 49, 1970, pp. 44-71.

[19] R.L. Kagan, *Students and Society in Early Modern Spain*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1974, pp. 41-80.

Levels of literacy, therefore, compare favourably to other major European countries. Quantitative estimates are notoriously imprecise, and undoubtedly give scholars more comfort than is entirely justified. Nevertheless, recent estimates for Valencia in the period 1474-1560 indicate that around 34% of the male urban population was literate compared with 16% of the urban female population. Other studies, based on trial records of the Holy Office, confirm both this pattern and the gradual growth of urban and rural literacy over the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[20] Spain and Portugal, then, appear to have been very fertile grounds for the plantation of presses – urbanised, educated and prosperous.

Structure of the Industry

The first known book to be printed in Spain was the *Sinodal de Aguilafuente*, published on behalf of the local Bishop in the city of Segovia in June 1472.[21] However, with an extremely modest 52 editions printed during the 1470s, it was the 1480s and 1490s that witnessed the real growth of printing on the Peninsula. As elsewhere in Europe, it was in this formative period that the long-term structure of the industry took shape. Printing initially operated in a variety of locations where there was no adequate market to support the new technology, ultimately becoming concentrated in the major urban centres - primarily Seville, Salamanca, Barcelona, Saragossa, Burgos, Alcalá de Henares, Valencia, Valladolid and Lisbon. Over our period 1500-1540, we can also detect fleeting glimpses of printing in other cities – a reminder of the harsh challenges and risks facing those who sought to enter the business of print.[22] As in Germany, Spain's printing industry was dispersed across the country with no overwhelming centre of publication. While Seville's presses produced more than double the number of items of its nearest rival, Alcalá de Henares, it did not completely dominate book production, nor did its top position go unchallenged (see table 1).

TABLE 1: **Share of Items by Place of Publication, 1500-1540**

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[20] By the first half of the seventeenth century in the diocese of Cuenca, male urban literacy had risen to 41%. For rural males, the figure was 34%. See Sara T. Nalle, 'Literacy and Culture in Early Modern Castile' in *Past and Present*, no. 125, November 1989, p. 69. See also Jeremy Lawrence, 'Lay literacy in late medieval Castile' in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 62, 1985, pp. 79-94.

[21] *Sinodal de Aguilafuente* (Segovia, Johannes Parix, [1472]), 4°. The only surviving copy of this item can be found in the Catedral de Segovia.

[22] In places such as Córdoba, Cuenca, Évora, Madrid and Oporto.

Printing Centre	Number of Items / 4326	Share
Seville	841	19.4%
Valencia	402	9.3%
Burgos	401	9.2%
Alcalá de Henares	382	8.8%
Salamanca	346	7.9%
Toledo	330	7.6%
Zaragoza	327	7.5%
Barcelona	295	6.8%
Valladolid	179	4.1%
Lisbon	167	3.8%
Others	656	15.1%

A relatively small number of printing offices were at work in each of the numerous printing centres around the country.[23] Few active publishers geographically scattered appears to have led to a relatively disciplined industry, where there was neither intense rivalry nor a complete lack of a competitive environment. While, as we will see, publishers churned out many works destined for a local market, sometimes exploiting jealously guarded local monopolies, they also produced works intended for bookstores across the country and beyond. Careful archival research by scholars has uncovered the often sophisticated networks of distribution. In addition to local street pedlars and booksellers, major publishing houses often also employed factors to get their books into shops across the country; moreover, the twice-yearly fair at Medina del Campo held in May and October also offered an essential venue at which to showcase their wares.[24] Surviving contracts and inventories reveal the wealth of agreements made between publishers and booksellers eager to sell or perhaps even exchange stock.[25]

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[23] The importance of foreign workers is discussed by Clive Griffin, *Journeymen-Printers, Heresy, and the Inquisition in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005. See also Griffin's 'Inquisitional Trials and Printing-Workers in Sixteenth-Century Spain' in *The Library*, vol. 1, 2000, pp. 22-45.

[24] Griffin, *Crombergers*, p. 39

[25] It is clear from the inventory of property left by Jacobo Cromberger, dated 7 June 1529, that a large sum of money was owed to him by booksellers in other parts of Spain and Portugal. It is also clear that a large part of his own stock was not from his own printing office. The inventory was drawn up by Lázaro Norambergo, a German merchant in Seville and Jacobo's son-in-law. See José Gestoso y Pérez, *Noticias*

Chronological Distribution

With printing established in a large number of Spain's prosperous, well populated, and well-educated cities, we might have expected to see relatively constant growth in production, perhaps with undulations caused by major events such as plague or war or economic cycles. However, after the strong increases witnessed in the 1490s, the output of the presses begins to plateau. From graph 1, we can see that production becomes more unstable but does not witness any major upward movement in the first decade. Production does grow by 40% in the period 1510-1519 but the market seems unable to sustain this output and production declines in the following two decades – the 1520s and 1530s - recovering again only in 1539 and 1540. The sharp downturn in 1521-1522 may well have been the result of a collision of different factors. Firstly, there was the Comuneros Revolt of 1520-1522 which interrupted general patterns of trade and paper distribution. The full short-term and longer term impact of this revolt on the book trade has yet to be fully investigated; nevertheless, it was undeniably an event keenly felt in the industry. In August 1520, for example, one of the king's military leaders Antonio de Fonesca set a small fire to disperse the rebellious citizens of the city of Medina del Campo – a fire which grew wildly out of control. [26] While the city was not itself a major centre of printing, it was a commercial hub and the location for the twice-yearly fair, so important to the book industry as a whole. Warehouses of books were razed to the ground, while one of the city's principal booksellers lost his life. A second explanation for the downturn may well lie in the increase in the pace of migration out of Spain to the New World when the city of Tenochtitlán fell in 1521 to Hernán Cortés, effectively ending resistance to the Spanish conquest.[27] Thirdly, there was conflict with France, which disrupted book and paper imports.

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inéditas de impresores sevillanos, Gómez Hermanos, Seville, 1924, pp. 73-99, cited in Griffin, *Crombergers*, pp. 20-70.

[26] On the burning of Medina del Campo, see Pedro Mexía, Historia del Emperador Carlos V, edited by Juan de mata Carriazo, Espasa-Calipe S.A, Madrid, 1975, pp. 160-170. A new history of the Fair is wanting. For the moment, see Cristóbal Espejo and J. Paz, *Las antiguas ferias de Medina del Campo* Valladolid, 1912.

[27] This point is made by Griffin, *Crombergers*, p. 56

Spanish Print Production

Perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of printing on the Peninsula is the overwhelming predominance of publications in the vernacular over those in Latin. In their introduction to volume three of *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp pronounced, 'no other country with a lively book culture [...] confined its production so much to its own vernacular and was almost wholly reliant for its Latin books on what was published elsewhere. In this respect, the British Isles are unique'.[28] This is not the case. From the earliest period in Spain, Latin printing represented only around 35% of total output. Like England, there seems to have been a fairly early concentration by publishers on vernacular and Latin works predominantly intended for the local and national markets.[29] Far less effort appears to have been made to produce high-quality Latin works destined for European retail.[30]

There are a number of explanations for why this may have been so. There was already the precedent of the medieval manuscript trade which imported a high percentage of books rather than producing them domestically.[31] Paper was and continued to be a heavy commodity which had, for the most part, to be imported from France and Italy.[32] Given that paper represented up to 70% of the total cost of publication, delivery and distribution expenses meant that the Iberian presses may simply have been priced out of the market. However, perhaps the most important - if largely unacknowledged – explanation lies in the relatively long period of time it took printing to mature on the Peninsula. By the time presses were active and flourishing in Spain, the major centres for the international book were already well established in Venice, Leipzig, Cologne, Strasbourg and Basel. Indeed, these centres were already beginning to develop their own specialisations,

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[28] Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 3 (1400-1557)*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 9.

[29] In England, there were approximately 971 items printed in Latin between 1500-1540 (35%), with 1783 items in English (65%). To the percent, the situation in Spain and Portugal was identical – with Latin representing 1284 items out of a total of 3635 items (35%) and vernaculars 2335/3635 (65%).

[30] More work might be undertaken with the Frankfurt book fair catalogues to establish what and perhaps how many Latin books published on the Peninsula were sold abroad.

[31] Griffin, *Crombergers*, pp. 4-5.

[32] Quite why indigenous paper manufacturing failed to develop in response to the growth of printing on the Peninsula and the increasing requirements of bureaucracy is an issue which has not yet been satisfactorily explained. The situation in England might offer some interesting parallels. England is an example of a country which exported its own linen rags - principally to France – but whose printing industry imported the vast majority of its paper from Italy. On the history of paper manufacture and use in Spain, see Oriol Valls I Subirà, *The History of Paper in Spain*, tr. Sarah Nicholson, 3 vols., Empresa Nacional de Celulosa, Madrid, 1978-1982.

attracting a highly-skilled workforce able to publish elegant, typographically sophisticated works with the concentrated investment necessary to support the international trade. While Paris and Antwerp stand as examples of centres which came late to the book world of Latin print, no centre of Spain developed in this way during the first forty years.[33]

If scholars have generally recognised the comparatively low number of Latin publications produced in Spain and Portugal, few commentators have observed the very real vibrancy of vernacular publishing.[34] Comparisons of per capita output are problematic given the vagaries of population data, virtually no information on print runs, and variations in the survival and loss rates of works. However, if we do a very rough comparison between the vernacular output of France, England, Spain and Portugal, it is evident that the Peninsula has extremely healthy levels of consumption. In the period 1500-1540, there were 7422 editions published in French for a population of 16 million (464 per million). In the same period, 1783 items were printed in English for a population of roughly 2.5 million (713 per million).[35] Even if we factor in the fact that the English print domain extended beyond national borders to encompass the small secondary markets of English speakers in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, the figure remains high. Spanish vernaculars account for 2258 items for a population of circa 4.8 million (470 per million); Portugal has incredibly low levels of production in both Latin and vernacular languages, (158 per million total; 116 per million vernacular). At this point, the reasons for the low overall output of the Portuguese presses remain obscure. Educational provision might offer one explanation, although to my knowledge, this has not been the subject of systematic investigation. Perhaps a telling indicator is that the country only had one major university at Lisbon which moved a number of times, eventually settling in Coimbra in 1537. By way of contrast, Scotland, which had roughly the same population as Portugal, had three universities by the sixteenth century – at St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen. Other explanations might be found in the mutual intelligibility of languages between Castilian and Portuguese.

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[33] Indeed, one of the most celebrated attempts to tap into this market, Cardinal Cisneros' Alcalá Bible was a spectacular flop. On the Alcalá Bible, see Julián Martín Abad, 'The printing press in Alcalá de Henares: the Complutensian Polyglot Bible', in Kimberly van Kampen and Paul Saenger (eds.), The *Bible as Book*: *The First Printed Editions* (The British Library, London, 1999), pp. 101-115. On humanism on the Iberian Peninsula, see Jeremy N.H. Lawrence's essay in A. Goodman and A. MacKay (eds), *The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe*, Longman, London, 1990, pp. 220-258.

[34] The predominantly vernacular language was Castilian followed by Portuguese. There was also some publishing in Catalan and Valencian.

[35] Statistics derived from the electronic version of the English Short Title Catalogue, available on the British Library's website at http://estc.bl.uk

The figures for our comparative assessment of vernacular output assume that books have survived or been lost in roughly the same proportions across the different domains of print. But one rather elusive aspect of Spanish print culture is that of cheap print – a seam of literature which has now all but disappeared. In Spain, there appears to have been a very early flourishing culture of such ephemeral material. In the second of our opening quotations, we noted the lamentations of the humanist printer Miguel de Éguia, deploring the publication of so much trivial nonsense and works even more worthless than tasteless ditties. But of what was he speaking? Was he referring simply to sentimental romances and tales of medieval chivalry? It is far more likely that he was referring to what appears to have been a vigorous trade in broadsheets and other ephemera.[36] Such works, quick to produce and quick to sell to a local market, were important to publishers to ensure an adequate flow of capital, off-setting the costs of larger and more ambitious projects. But Eguía's remarks may also, intriguingly, indicate that such works were being produced in some offices not to facilitate but in preference to more substantial endeavours.

The extent of the trade in ephemeral literature can be glimpsed in a few surviving inventories. Take, for instance, the German-Polish printer Guillermo Remón, who operated in Cuenca between 1528 and 1544. Noted among his stock are 14,750 broadsheets, along with 6500 prayers and religious songs, 1875 secular poems and ballads, a further 4375 sheets of jokes and 2000 primers.[37] In 1528, Jacobo Cromberger's shop in Seville had 50,500 sheets of rhymes, 21,000 sheets of prayers, over 10,000 copies of devotional woodcuts normally of one sheet each, and 3,000 'Rosaries of Our Lady' (2 sheets)'.[38]

This world of ephemeral publishing print will undoubtedly repay much more careful – future - investigation.[39] It is complicated not only because many of

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[36] To these one might add indulgences. Jacobo Cromberger printed 20,000 for diocese of Jaén in 1514, and another 16,000 for it two years later. Joaquín Hazañas Y La Rúa, *La imprenta en Sevilla: ensayo de una historia de la tipografiá sevillana y noticias de algunos de sus impresores desde la introducción del arte tipográfico en esta ciudad hasta el año de 1800*, Seville, 1892, i, 99-100, 105, cited in Griffin, *Crombergers*, p. 51.

[37] Archivo Hist6rico Provincial de Cuenca, leg. 226, fols. 366r-374v, cited by Sara Nalle, 'Literacy and Culture', p. 82. Other inventories also point to the pronounced trade in devotional literature, including that of Rodríguez, Toledo, 1581, Archivo de Protocolos de Toledo, Protocolo 1758, Gabriel de San Pedro, notary and Juan de Ayala in Toledo, 1556. A. Blanco Sánchez, 'Inventario de Juan de Ayala, gran impressor toledano, 1556' in Boletín de la Real Academia Española de Historia, lxii, 1987, pp. 207-50.

[38] Two documents dated 7 June 1529, can be found in the Archivo Protocolos (Seville), Oficio 4, Libro [2] of 1529, unfoliated), cited in Griffin, *Crombergers*, p. 36.

[39] Some excellent work has already been undertaken – see in particular Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino, *Diccionario bibliográfico de pliegos sueltos poéticos* (Siglo XVI), Editorial Castalia, Madrid, 1970.

these items have simply been lost, but also because much of the material which has survived is undated, obscuring it from scholarly attention. Moreover, from the experience of the French Book Project, it is clear that broadsheets and other ephemera are almost as likely to found in archival repositories as in libraries; it will be interesting to discover whether a similar pattern holds true for the Iberian Peninsula.

Consumption of Print

If the world of cheap print may have to wait for future systematic research, what of that portion of the historical record which has survived? What do inventories and the new Iberian Book Project tell us about the character of the print market in Spain and Portugal? While the classification of items from author and title information alone is rather crude, it does offer a useful if very general sense of the character of the print market. In chart 1, we can see two snapshots of the output of the Iberian presses – the first covering the period 1501-1506 and the second covering 1535-1540.[40] While there are notable regional variations in what was printed, there is a clear overall emphasis on religious literature - not simply on official publications of the church, but also popular devotional literature. If the two snapshots of the output of the presses are representative of broader trends, it suggests the declining significance of religious works to total output over the four decades under discussion. The figures also point to the expansion of the market for works of literature, especially medieval chivalric literature – authentic and newly conceived.[41]

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[40] For comparison, of the books published between 1465 and 1540 listed in Pettegree, Walsby and Wilkinson (eds.), *French Vernacular Books.* 25% can be classified as religious, 12% as prose literature, 10% as poetry, 10% as jurisprudence 10%, 9% as history while 4% fall under the classification of classical literature.

[41] K. Whinnom, 'The Problem of the 'Best-Seller' in Spanish Golden-Age Literature' in *Bull. Hispanic Studies*, lvii, 1980, pp. 189-198.
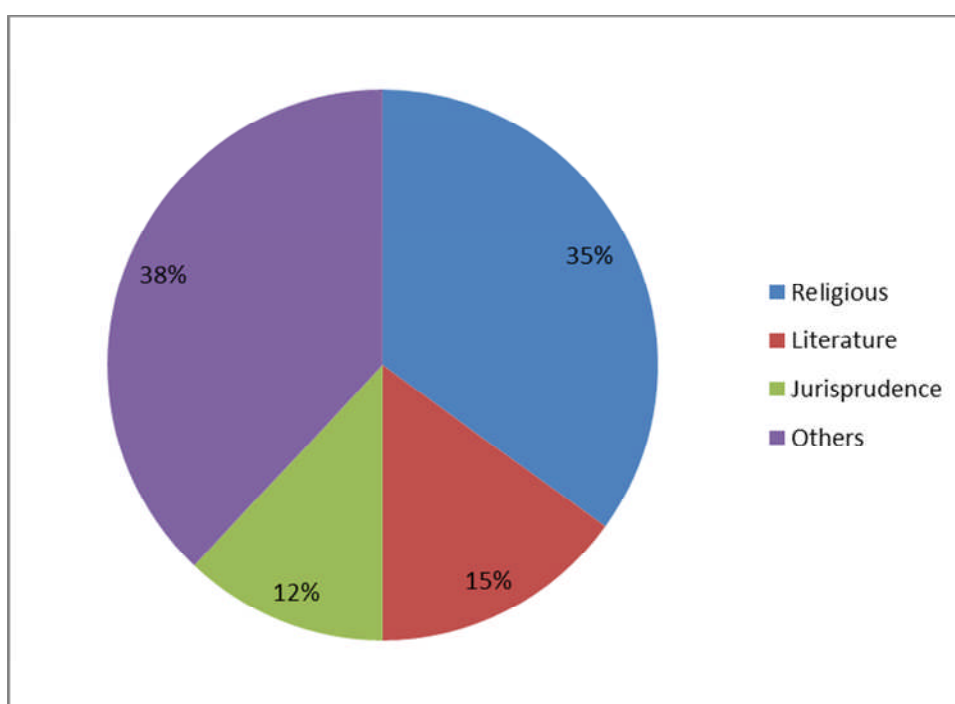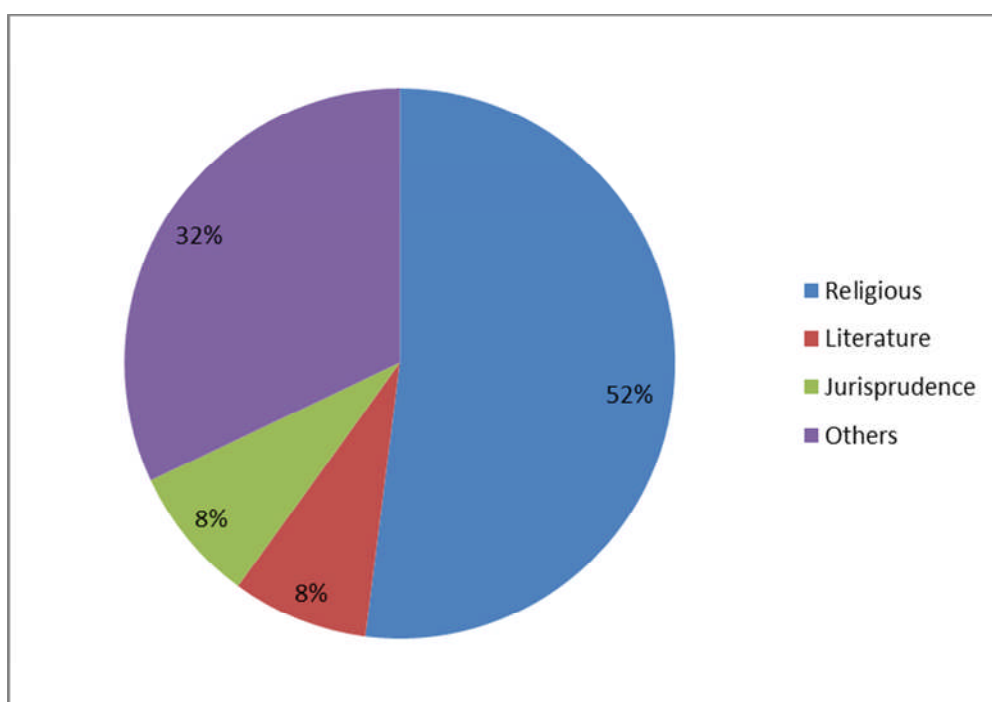
FIGURE: Two snapshots of the output of the presses covering the periods 1501-1506 and 1535-1540 respectively

Another sense of the appetites of the reading public on the Peninsula can be gained by looking at the bestselling authors of the period before 1541. By an overwhelming margin, the most widely published author was Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522), a distinguished philosopher, historian, grammarian, astronomer and poet. There are 218 bibliographically distinct items linked to Nebrija, including his *Aurea expositio hymnorum una cum textu*,[42] his Spanish to Latin and Latin to Spanish dictionaries,[43] and his *Gramática de la lengua castellana* – the first printed grammar of a vernacular language.[44] The second most popular author of the period was Pedro Ciruelo (1470-1548), a mathematician and theologian, whose works were published in a total of 39 distinct items and included the *Arte para bien confessar*[45] and *Cursus quatuor mathematicarum*.[46] The third most published author of this period with 36 items was Antonio de Guevara (1481-1545), a Franciscan who was to hold a number of influential posts – including court preacher and court historiographer. His most popular work before 1541 was the *Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio,* which sought to offer a guidebook for rulership. The *Libro aureo* enjoyed popularity not only in Spain but also across Europe.[47] In third position comes Diego de San Pedro (c.1437-c.1498) with 36 items, especially his sentimental romance the *Cárcel de amor* - The Prison of Love.[48] The other notable authors, Juan de Mena (1411-1456), 35 items, and Fernando de Rojas (c.1465-1541), 33 items, were also key literary figures. Mena was responsible for the *Laberinto de Fortuna* also known as *Las Trecientas*, a 297 stanza poem dealing with themes of national unity and the *Reconquista*.[49] Fernando de Rojas was the author of *La Celestina*, originally entitled *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*.[50]

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[42] Antonio de Nebrija, *Aurea expositio hymnorum una cum textu* (Zaragoza, Jorge Coci y Leonardo Hutz, 1502), 4º. There were at least 18 editions/states/issues of this work before 1541.

[43] Antonio de Nebrija, *Dictionarium hispano-latinum* (Salamanca, s.n., 1492), 2º and *Dictionarium latino-hispanicum* (Salamanca, s.n., 1492), 2º. Nebrija's dictionaries went through at least 20 editions/states/issues before 1541.

[44] Antonio de Nebrija, *La gramatica que nuevamente hizo sobre la lengua castellana* (Salamanca, 1492), 4º. On this grammar, see Manuel Mourelle de Lema (ed.), *Elio A. de Nebrija y la génesis de una gramática vulgar* (Grugalma, Madrid, 2006).

[45] Pedro Ciruelo, *Arte para bien confessar* ([Zaragoza, Jorge Coci, 1514]), 4º. There were 9 editions/states/issues of this work before 1541.

[46] Pedro Ciruelo, *Cursus quatuor mathematicarum* (Zaragoza, s.n., [1516]). There were 10 editions/states/issues of this work before 1541.

[47] Antonio de Guevara, *Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio ēperador* ([Valencia], s.n., 1528). There were 24 e editions/states/issues of this work before 1541.

[48] Diego de San Pedro, *Cárcel de amor* (Sevilla, [Paulus de Colonia, Johann Pegnitzer, Magnus Herbst y Thomas Glockner], 1492 (=1493), 4º. 10 editions/states/issues before 1541.

[49] Juan de Mena, *Las trescientas (Las ccc) sive el Labirintho* (Zaragoza, Johann Hurus, 1489), 4º.

[50] Fernando de Rojas, *Celestina: comedia de Calisto y* Melibea ([Burgos, Fadrique de Basilea, 1499-1501]), 4º. 33 editions/states/issues of this work appeared before 1541.

In terms of Latin works printed on the Peninsula, these tended on the whole to be fairly practically-orientated – school books, grammars, dictionaries and works intended to be used by ecclesiastical communities. However, there were also theological and philosophical treatises and works on science which, one might imagine, found a market both within and outside the Peninsula. In terms of consumption, however, Spain and Portugal remained throughout the sixteenth century eager importers of Latin works; imported indeed since the late 1470s without tax.[51] Again, this is an area which would repay much closer investigation via a trawl of all surviving inventories. However, using one later inventory from 1556, from the printer and bookseller Juan de Junta based in the important ecclesiastical centre of Burgos, it is interesting to note that of unbound works in his stock, 8,953 copies were in Spanish and 6,261 in Latin. But there were 1,037 different Latin titles compared to 527 in Spanish.[52]

As customers browsed the shelves of Juan de Junta's bookstore, and perhaps many of the booksellers in business before the 1550s, they would have been struck by the broad range of titles available – with Latin books shelved separately from those in the vernacular. The vast majority of titles would have been unbound, arranged by title. In the Latin section of the shop, customers would have found books crafted in the printing offices of Europe. In the vernacular section, customers would have been able to pick up ephemeral items printed locally - prayers and jokes. They would also have found more significant works of religious devotion, literature, medical books, and histories sourced from major printing offices across the Peninsula.

Regulation and Censorship

Finally, it is important to turn our attention to the subject of regulation and censorship in this period, not only because regulation can have an impact on the type of works being produced, but also because in comparison to many other areas of Europe, the situation in Spain was rather surprising.

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[51] Isabella waived the tax on imported books. This was undertaken in response to a complaint made by Theodoric, a German printer, that he had been asked to pay duty at the ports of Sanlúcar and Cádiz on printed books which he had imported into Spain while he was 'ennobling many libraries and furnishing many scholars with rare texts'. See Norton, *Printing in Spain*, pp. 117-118.
[52] William A. Pettas, *A Sixteenth-Century Spanish Bookstore: The Inventory of Juan de Junta* (Diane Publishing Company, Darby, USA, 1995).

On 8 July 1502, Ferdinand and Isabella issued a decree establishing that in Castile and Leon, any new book was to be read and approved by 'un honesto letrado', requiring a license to be received before printing.[53] This is a strikingly early date for any attempt at systematic licensing. After printing, the text of the book was to be compared to the original before marketing of the work could proceed. In addition, booksellers had to obtain a license before importing any work from abroad. Any work published which had not received a license was to be seized and burnt publicly; furthermore, the printer or bookseller would be prevented from continuing in business.[54] Different civil and ecclesiastical individuals were responsible for licensing in different areas. In Valladolid and Granada, it was the presidents of the *audiencias;* in Toledo and Seville, it was the archbishops, and in Burgos and Salamanca, it was the bishops. Actual examination was to be carried out – significantly - by salaried individuals. In the 1540s in Toledo and later Madrid, for instance, the job of censor fell to one Alejo Venegas del Busto in (c.1498-1552) – a well-respected professor who appears to have carried out his duties diligently.[55] While the waters were partially muddied from 1527 when the Holy Office began issuing its own licenses, without any clear authority to do so, there is no evidence of individuals exploiting competing licensing authorities.[56]

In addition to pre-publication licensing, the growing threat presented by Lutheranism led to the development of post-publication regulation. This duty fell to the Holy Office. All works of Luther were banned from 7 April 1521.[57] In 1525 vernacular translations of a Psalter were seized. In 1530 and 1531, decrees mandated searches of bookshops.[58] In addition, extra care appears to have been taken to search books being imported, particularly from Protestant countries.[59]

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[53] Ley 1, Título XVI, Libro VIII, in *Vicente Salva (ed.)*, *Novísima recopilación de Leyes de España,* Librería de Garnier, Paris, 1854, vol. 3, cited in Norton, *Printing in Spain*, p. 119.

[54] Ley 23, Titulo VII, Libro I, in Salva, op.cit. See also Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition in Spain*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1906-1907, vol. 4, book 8, chapter 4.

[55] See Daniel Eisenberg, 'An Early Censor: Alejo Venegas' in *Medieval, Renaissance and Folklore Studies in Honor of John Esten Keller* Juan de la Cuesta, Newark, Delaware, 1980, pp. 229-241. We should ignore Eisenberg's contention that censorship began in 1521 with the prohibition of the works of Martin Luther, pp. 231-232.

[56] Pettas, op.cit, p. 18. From 1554, only the Consejo Real was allowed to issue licenses. See Jésus Martínez de Bujanda (ed.), *Index de l'Inquisition espagnole,* Sherbrooke, Quebec, 1984, p. 44. See also Henry Charles Lea, op.cit., vol.4, book 8 chapter 4.

[57] Pope Leo X wrote to the Constable and Admiral of Castile, governors of Spain in Charles V's absence, urging them to take every measure to prevent Luther's works entering the kingdom. Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), Inquisición, Libro 317, f. 182r-v, cited in John E. Longhurst, 'Luther in Spain: 1520-1540' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society,* v. 103, no. 1, February 1959, p. 67.

[58] Henry Charles Lea, op. cit. Sometimes, reminders had to be sent.

[59] See, for example, the dispatch of Eustace Chapuys to the Emperor, dated 19 May 1534, contained in Pascual de Gayangos (ed.), *Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State Papers relating to the negotiations*

As with all discussions of censorship and control, however, the critical issue lies in the relationship between theory and practice. In the absence either of archival evidence or an adequate study thereof, it is difficult to establish reliably just how effective licensing and post-publication practices actually were. There was no need for Spanish books in this period to insert a copy of the license into the final published volumes. The distinguished Hispanist Clive Griffin describes a 'slackness of control in first half of the sixteenth century', adding his voice to the assessments of José Simón Díaz.[60] However, one wonders what yardstick is actually being used to judge the system as it functioned in Spain?

Fundamentally, one needs to take into account the limits of early-modern authority. To be sure, boundaries in the early-modern (as indeed the modern) world were very porous. Even if the Holy Office or other agency of the Crown made energetic efforts to search suspect cargos, it was relatively easy to smuggle undesirable books into the country. Various letters and statements among the archives of the Inquisition reveal this very frustration. There could be no *cordon sanitaire.* However, in terms of what could be overseen, it seems that the licensing system performed its function – ensuring that doctrinal errors were, on the whole, kept out of books published in Spain. In a letter to Erasmus in 1527, the Chancellor Mercurino Gattinara (1465-1530) emphasised that nothing could be published in Spain without careful previous examination; Gattinara also expressed his fervent wish that an equally effective regulatory system could be established in Germany.[61] This was perhaps stretching a point. Licensing alone does not offer an adequate explanation for the failure of Lutheranism - or for that matter any other unorthodox beliefs - to find a printed voice in the country. However, licensing did act as a discouragement. This is not to suggest, however, that the regulatory system was without its problems. Censors oversaw a relatively small number of local printing offices, which was both a strength – there was a limited number of items to examine - and a weakness - the major publishing firms in cities also tended to have a diverse ranges of other commercial interests; they were often powerful figures in the community. It is perhaps not without significance that in the mid-1550s, controls over licensing were centralised in the Consejo Real – recognition

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between England and Spain, Longmans, Green, Longman & Roberts, London, 1862-1954, 1534-1535, p. 164. See also Van Der Delft to the Emperor, London 9 January 1546, in *Calendar of Letters,* 1545-1546, p. 291, where he relates that an English merchant was thrown into prison by the Inquisition for having a Protestant Testament and other English books.

[60] Griffin, *Crombergers*, p. 121 and José Simón Díaz, *El Libro español antiguo: análisis de su estructura, Teatro del Siglo de Oro, bibliografías y catálogos*, I, Kassel, 1983, pp. 21-28.

[61] Henry Charles Lea, op. cit, cites Desiderius Erasmus, *Epistolarum* (London, M. Flesher and R. Young, 1642), 2o, Lib. XXVII, Ep. 33.

perhaps of problems with regulation carried out at a local level by censors working largely independently.

Licensing was, of course, a process distinct from privilege granting, which developed in Spain as elsewhere in Europe.[62] Privileges ensured monopolies for works, or types of work, effectively barring pirate editions or the importing of the same from abroad. Privileges were sought voluntarily by authors, translators or publishers to ensure commercial advantage. While licenses were - at least in theory - required for every book published or imported into the country, privileges were wholly voluntary. If printers did decide to infringe privileges, they risked confiscation of books and heavy fines and therefore the investment tied up in them. On the very rare occasions where privileges do appear to have been breached in Spain, it seems that publishers often came to informal settlements with the privilege holders. It is interesting to note that even a major publisher like Jacobo Cromberger who himself pirated an edition, was as keen as anybody else to secure the protection that came with privileges.[63] By and large, the Spanish printing industry appears to have been fairly disciplined and respected the privilege system.

Conclusion

In their seminal and hugely influential work, *The Coming of the Book*, first published in 1958, Febvre and Martin characterised Spanish printing thus:

> Only three places gave proof of any real life; Salamanca, Barcelona and Seville, where the Crombergers were turning out chivalric romances. There was some increase in activity in the second half of the 16th century at Madrid, where the printing industry developed in

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[62] On the development of privilege granting in Europe, see Elizabeth Armstrong, *Before Copyright: The French Book-Privilege System 1498-1526*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, chapter 1.

[63] Jack Gibbs, 'The Status of the Cromberger Editions of Antonio de Guevara's *Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio* and *Relox de Principes*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 54, 1977, pp. 199-201, cited in Griffin, *Crombergers*, p. 68.

the next century. However, even then Spain largely continued to be a market for foreign books, chiefly from Lyon and Antwerp.[64]

Our understanding of print culture on the Peninsula has come a long way since Febvre and Martin made these remarks. The dispersal of printing on the Peninsula has traditionally made it difficult for scholars to understand the full contours of its print culture. Recent scholarship together with the advent of the UCD Iberian Book Project is beginning to transform this landscape.

Although Spain and Portugal did publish their own works in Latin, they would very evidently remain net importers of Latin books. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there was any lack of vitality in Iberian print culture. There was an eager market for Latin books on the Peninsula, published at home and abroad. It is also a sobering thought that for Spain at least, more vernacular works were published per capita than France, works which although concentrated in genres such as religion, literature and jurisprudence, also included histories, medical works, games and cookery books, not to mention that vast underbelly of ephemeral literature which though real appears to have left little trace. Spain had a relatively well developed and well disciplined printing industry, albeit one that concentrated predominantly but not exclusively on the local and national markets.

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[64] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book* (London, 1997), pp. 190-191.