

This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 26 Sep 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



Edited by Javier Muñoz-Basols, Laura Lonsdale and Manuel Delgado

The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies

Javier Muñoz-Basols, Laura Lonsdale, Manuel Delgado

Building Nations Through Words

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315709895.ch26>

Santiago Pérez Isasi

Published online on: 28 Mar 2017

How to cite :- Santiago Pérez Isasi. 28 Mar 2017, *Building Nations Through Words from: The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies* Routledge

Accessed on: 26 Sep 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315709895.ch26>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Literature and visual culture



26

BUILDING NATIONS THROUGH
WORDSIberian identities in nineteenth-century
literary historiography¹*Santiago Pérez Isasi***National identities, literary histories**

The birth and expansion of nationalism between 1800 and 1918 is one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of contemporary European history. In just a little more than 100 years, a relatively marginal ideology managed to become the fundamental principle guiding international relations, with extremely significant, and sometimes tragic, consequences. Of course, nationalism did not materialize out of thin air: it had its roots in eighteenth-century ideas, such as “Herder’s belief in the individuality of nations, Rousseau’s belief in the sovereignty of the nation, [and] a general discourse of national peculiarities and ‘characters’” (Leersen 2006, 125–6). However, the core doctrine of nationalism, as A. Smith calls it, only developed and became prominent during the nineteenth century, and it consisted of a set of propositions which have been summarized as follows:

- 1 The world is divided into nations, each with its own individuality, history and destiny.
- 2 The nation is the source of all political and social power, and loyalty to the nation overrides all other allegiances.
- 3 Human beings must identify with a nation if they want to be free and realize themselves.
- 4 Nations must be free and secure if peace and justice are to prevail in the world. (1991, 74)

Fascinating as they may be, we will not have time or space to deal with the debates on the relevance, or even existence, of pre-national ethnic communities and traditions (which Anthony Smith defends and Ernest Gellner (1983), among others, denies or minimizes), nor with the conditions that triggered the appearance of national movements that sometimes coincided with preexisting dynastic states (such as Spain, Portugal, France or England), or promoted the creation of new entities by means of unification (Italy or Germany) or separation (Catalonia or Scotland).

When considering, as we intend to do, the construction of Iberian national identities during the nineteenth century, it is important to remember that even in those cases where there existed an established state with fixed boundaries (such as Portugal and Spain), there still was a need to “nationalize” the people, to (re)construct the past of the nation, a task which during the nineteenth century was carried out mostly by a liberal *intelligentsia* using all the resources

of political, cultural and social power: a growing centralized bureaucracy, a national army, a new education system, national symbols and commemorations, and so on.

Of course, literature, literary studies and literary history were also affected by this shift in the paradigm of collective identities, which coincided with other significant modifications brought about by Romanticism, in areas such as History, Aesthetics or Poetics. The first wave of Romantic Literary Criticism (cfr. Behler 1993; Bowie 1997), systematized by August Wilhelm and Friedrich Schlegel, respectively, in *Über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (1809–11) [*Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, 1815] and *Geschichte Der Alten Und Neuen Literatur* (1812) [*Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*, 1842], applied the Herderian concept of *Volksgeist* (meaning “spirit of the people” or “national character”) to the study of European and World literatures, firmly establishing the idea that each nation creates art – including literature – according to its national character; and that therefore not all national literatures can be judged by the same criteria (i.e., the classical pseudo-Aristotelian rules), but should be studied individually and historically.

Iberian literatures were no exception in the expansion of this new paradigm of literary history and literary criticism; in fact, Portuguese and, even more significantly, Spanish literature played an important role in the creation of a Romantic scheme of European literatures, by offering an outstanding example of a Southern, Latin, Catholic, Romantic literature which could be opposed to other Northern, Germanic and Classical literatures, and which demanded, in their view, a specific set of critical tools different from the ones provided by classical literary theory. These ideas contributed, or quite simply provoked, the recovery and reconsideration of Spanish and Portuguese medieval poetry, and particularly of seventeenth-century Spanish drama, with Calderón de la Barca as the champion of Catholic and Romantic literature.

It can be no surprise, then, that the first literary histories of both Spanish and Portuguese literatures were written by foreigners, and published outside the Iberian Peninsula: for instance, the *Geschichte der Poesie und Beredsamkeit seit dem Ende des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts* [*History of Poetry and Eloquence from the End of the Thirteenth Century*], published by Friedrich Bouterwek between 1801 and 1819, which was partially translated as *Historia de la literatura española* in 1829; Jean Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi's *De la Littérature du Midi de l'Europe* [*On the Literature of the South of Europe*] (1813–4), again partially translated as *Historia de la literatura española* (1841–2); Ferdinand Denis's *Résumé de l'histoire littéraire de Portugal* [*Summary of Portuguese Literary History*], published in Paris in 1826; and the *History of Spanish Literature* written by George Ticknor in 1849 and translated into Spanish in 1851–6. The image of Iberian literatures – and nations – was therefore first developed abroad, by foreigners, and only later (mainly after 1850) adopted and adapted by the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula themselves, who in some cases modified or rejected, but in many others simply perpetuated, the views and configurations of their history supplied by these foreign scholars.

In the following pages, I offer some considerations on the way in which the Iberian Peninsula as a whole, and the Spanish and Portuguese nations individually, were conceptualized in the literary histories written during the nineteenth century. I hope to show how the Romantic vision of Spain and Portugal conditioned both the formation of the literary canon in each of these countries, and the narrative literary history constructed with it.

The idea of “Iberia”

As we have seen, the first wave of European Romanticism constructed a critical, philosophical and historiographical system that incorporated a very specific view of the ethnic,

cultural and geopolitical distribution of nations in Europe and worldwide. This new conception of the world established the existence of nations with recognizable characters and features, which were permanent through history and yet could be captured in the form of historical narrations. As we have also pointed out, this Romantic conceptualization divided nations into families or categories, such as Classical versus Romantic, Catholic versus Protestant, Germanic versus Latin, etc. These classifications do, in fact, overlap to some extent (e.g., they tend to appear integrated as Northern, Germanic, Protestant versus Southern, Latin, Catholic), but they are not mutually interchangeable, since they do not always respond well to these amalgamations and can vary from one literary critic to the other. For instance, Mme de Staël establishes a triple division of European peoples, between Latin, Germanic and Slavic, as opposed to the twofold divisions that appear in the Schlegel brothers' works:

On peut rapporter l'origine des principales nations de l'Europe à trois grandes races différentes: la race latine, la race germanique et la race esclavonne. Les Italiens, les Français, les Espagnols, ont reçu des Romains leur civilisation et leur langage; les Allemands, les Suisses, les Anglais, les Suédois, les Danois et les Hollandais sont des peuples teutoniques; enfin, parmi les Esclavons, les Polonais et les Russes occupent le premier rang. Les nations dont la culture intellectuelle est d'origine latine sont plus anciennement civilisées que les autres. [The origin of the main nations in Europe can be brought back to three different races: the Latin race, the Germanic race and the Slavic race. The Italians, Spanish and French people have received their civilization and their language from the Romans; the Germans, Swiss, English, Swedish, Danish and Dutch are Teutonic peoples; finally, among the Slavic peoples the Polish and the Russians occupy the first rank. The nations in which the intellectual culture has a Latin origin were civilized earlier than the others.]

(de Staël 1813: I, 45)

The Iberian Peninsula was consistently classified, as a whole, among the Southern, Latin, Catholic nations (the European *Midi* or *Meridione*), but with a strong Romantic component, as demonstrated by Simonde de Sismondi's history:

Nous avons trouvé dans toute l'Europe méridionale, ce mélange d'amour, de chevalerie et de religion, qui a formé les moeurs romantiques, et qui a donné à la poésie un caractère particulier. [We have found in all of Southern Europe a mixture of love, chivalry and religion, which formed the romantic customs and gave their poetry a particular character.]

(Sismondi 1813–4: IV, 557)

This concept of the South, of course, is not just a geographical indication, but a complex ideological operation (cfr. Vecchi 2013, Domínguez 2006) that idealizes Iberia and at the same time transforms it into a primitive, exotic and wild space, almost in association with the myth of the "noble savage." As Sismondi puts it, "ils vivent encore avec la nature" [they still live among nature] (Sismondi 1813–4: IV, 270).

This view of the Iberian Peninsula must then be analyzed in relation with the general classification of nations, according to ethno-linguistic, religious or aesthetic criteria, but also in relation to the opposition between centers and peripheries within Europe. And the center of the system, of course, is situated in the northern European countries (Germany, France and

England). In the southern part of Europe, only Italy is qualified as “central,” for instance, by Friedrich Schlegel in his *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*:

It is quite evident that four countries alone in the centre of Europe, Italy, Germany, France, and England, as they have occupied the first place in the political history of modern Europe, so in the history of literature also have they distinguished themselves to such a degree, that from the time of the first awakening of the European intellect under Charlemagne, down to the present day, it is scarcely possible to point out a single great incident in the annals of philosophy, a single remarkable discovery, extension, retrogression, or error,—or, in short, to fix upon a single great name in the history of philosophy, which does not belong to one of them.

(F. Schlegel 1841, 232)

Not only are Iberian literatures peripheral in the European context but also for some historians they are not even *strictly speaking* European, given their geographical position, their cultural isolation and their close relation with the East. This idea of Iberia’s isolation from Europe appears in F. Schlegel (“Spain remained at all times cut off in some measure from the other districts of Europe, not more by geographical position, politics, constitution, and manners, than by her peculiarity both of language and of intellectual cultivation,” 1841, 227–8) and Simonde de Sismondi (“D’ailleurs, [la littérature Portugaise] c’est une littérature qui est hors de la portée du reste de l’Europe” [Furthermore, Portuguese literature is beyond the reach of the rest of Europe], 1813–4: IV, 262), and has a strong rhetorical and ideological tradition that prevails even to this day.

This peripherality of the Iberian nations is reflected in the ignorance – or fragmentary or imperfect knowledge – of their respective literatures, notable in the critics and historians themselves: A. W. Schlegel, Bouterwek or Sismondi are just a few examples of significant authors who, although they included Iberian literatures in their works, admitted that they knew little about them. This gap in the knowledge of Iberian literatures is particularly blatant in the case of Portuguese literature. For instance, F. Denis begins his *Résumé* with a chapter entitled, “Pourquoi la littérature portugaise est peu connue” [Why Portuguese literature is little known].² Sismondi’s case is also extreme: in his work he accepts that he knows close to nothing about Portuguese literature, and that he follows almost to the letter what Bouterwek had previously written on this subject – which, naturally, brought him fierce criticism from Portuguese scholars later in the century (Sismondi 1813–4: IV, 262). Of course, this lack of knowledge gives these early literary histories what we could call a “civilizing” purpose: by filling gaps in the knowledge of the European past, they are offering (or recovering) cultural and artistic models for those same countries that were “left behind” by the history of European nations. This combination of both retrospective and prospective intentions (narrating the past to modify the present and the future) is implicit in all literary histories, and even explicit in some of them, such as Schack’s *Geschichte der dramatischen Literatur und Kunst in Spanien* [*History of Spanish Dramatic Literature and Art*] (1845–6), translated into Spanish as *Historia de la Literatura y del Arte Dramático en España* (1885):

A los españoles podrá servir este ensayo de una historia de su literatura dramática . . . para recordarles vivamente el periodo de su grandeza y originalidad literaria, y a exhortarlos quizás, en medio del tumulto de sus luchas actuales de partido, a no olvidarse de aquellos grandes hombres que llenaron de orgullo a sus abuelos, y cuya memoria debe ser entre ellos sempiterna, si no quieren despreciarse a sí mismos.

(1885: I, 47)

We have spoken, so far, without distinction, of Spanish and Portuguese literatures as “Iberian literatures.” Do Romantic literary histories offer a unified image of both Iberian nations? The answer to this question must be dual, and somewhat paradoxical: Romantic literary histories insist on the similarity and the continuity between the two countries, but also on their mutual independence and individuality. This is the case with Bouterwek’s *Geschichte* (the volumes devoted to Spanish and Portuguese literature were in fact translated together into English in 1847); Sismondi’s *De la littérature* (1813–14) and, a bit later, the *Studien zur Geschichte der Spanischen und Portugiesischen Nationalliteratur* [*Studies on the History of Spanish and Portuguese National Literatures*] (1859) by Ferdinand Wolf (1840), translated into Spanish by Miguel de Unamuno, and annotated by Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, with the title *Historia de las literaturas castellana y portuguesa*. However, all of these works are structured on the principle of nationality and national literatures; this is to say that even if Iberian literatures are shown to be close neighbors and even members of a common family, they are also studied in different chapters, books or volumes, separated even in relation to those times when the two nations were part of a diverse cultural, linguistic and political continuum (such as before 1492, when the Iberian frontiers were stabilized almost definitively), or when they were united under a common dynasty (between 1580 and 1640). Continuity and unity are hinted at or pointed out in the text, but diversity and separation are much more strongly suggested by the configuration of the historiographical work itself. We cannot really speak of a history of Iberian literatures, but of the histories of Spanish and Portuguese literatures brought together by geographical proximity and certain historical and cultural connections.

This tension between unity and diversity, proximity and separation, continuity and difference, is present in several of the first nineteenth-century literary histories, such as F. Schlegel’s, Bouterwek’s or Sismondi’s:

Le royaume de Portugal fait proprement partie de l’Espagne; les Portugais eux-mêmes se considèrent comme Espagnols, et en prennent le nom, tandis qu’ils appellent toujours castillan le peuple leur voisin et leur rival, qui partage avec eux la souveraineté de l’Espagne. Cependant, le Portugal a une littérature à lui; sa langue, au lieu de demeurer un dialecte de l’espagnol, a été regardée, par un peuple indépendant, comme une marque de sa souveraineté, et a été cultivée avec amour. [Strictly speaking, the kingdom of Portugal is a part of Spain; the Portuguese themselves consider themselves to be Spaniards, and they adopt that name, although they still call “Castilian” the people of their neighbor and rival, which shares with them the sovereignty of Spain. Nevertheless, Portugal has a literature of its own; instead of remaining just a dialect of Spanish, the Portuguese language has been seen by this independent people as a sign of its own sovereignty, and they have cultivated it with love.]³

(Sismondi 1813–4: IV, 261)

To sum up, both Iberian nations form a historical and literary unity, when considered from the distant point of view of the European (literary, cultural and political) center; they are together and similar in their geographical, linguistic and historical isolation; they are both, then, peripheral and Southern – with all the consequences that this entails. However, when they are compared with one another, differences and discontinuities become apparent – at least from the point of view of the Romantic definition of national literatures: one nation, one *Volksgeist*, one literature. And when Spanish and Portuguese literary histories start to be written by Iberian historians themselves, any idea of Iberian proximity and continuity vanish quite quickly: these literary histories, written mainly from 1850 onwards, may mention occasionally the other

Iberian nation and literature (more frequently in the case of Portuguese literary histories than the other way round), but they always establish very clear boundaries and limits that coincide, as we might expect, with the political territories of the nineteenth-century states of Spain and Portugal.

The next part of this chapter is devoted, precisely, to understanding how the Spanish and the Portuguese *Volksgeist* differed from that of other European nations, and from each other, and the consequences these differences had in the formation of their literary canons and the construction of their literary histories.

The chivalrous Spaniards, the sweet Portuguese

As we have seen, historians such as F. Schlegel, Sismondi or Bouterwek considered the Iberian Peninsula as a historical and cultural unity that was severed from the rest of Europe and preserved its common peculiarities through time; however, this unity and continuity disappears, as we have also seen, when we consider Spain and Portugal separately. And this is what happens in nineteenth-century literary histories when they are devoted to each of the national literatures, from their birth to the present moment, as we see herein.

It is common in Spanish and Portuguese literary historiographies to identify the Middle Ages with the moment when both national characters are created.⁴ The Middle Ages are the starting point for most literary histories too: the birth of the nation is equated with the birth of the romance languages, and therefore literatures. This medieval period also provides what became a key element in the conceptualization of Iberian literatures: the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and the long years of struggle (or peaceful coexistence, depending on the historian) between Eastern and Western peoples.⁵ This same idea is repeated in almost every history of the nineteenth century (see Pérez Isasi 2011). According to the Romantic vision, the Christian inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula simultaneously rejected and were influenced by the long centuries of war and cohabitation with the Moors: they fought against them, but also lived with them; they adopted some of their key customs, and reaffirmed some of their own in opposition. This is why the Iberian Peninsula is often referred to as an “Eastern space,” or as a bridge between Europe and Asia: an imaginary *locus* filled with often fantastic connotations (César Domínguez 2006). Iberian “orientalism” is easier to find, in fact, in the histories written by foreigners, and progressively disappears as the century progresses, and as Iberian scholars contribute more to literary historiography.⁶

Here I stress two more points regarding the “birth” of the Iberian nations and literatures: firstly, that the Moors (and, for that matter, any inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula before the Visigoths) are not considered, as such, Spaniards or Portuguese, and therefore no effort is made by historians to include them or their literary productions in the narration of the history of Iberian literatures; secondly, that this mixture of gruesome war and friendly cultural exchange between peoples is crucial to the way in which Romanticism conceptualized both the Spanish and Portuguese *Volksgeist*: as fighters for freedom and religion (in the case of Spain), or as peaceful, bucolic poets (in the case of Portugal).

There are, in fact, three main characteristics of Spanishness which stand out in these first foreign attempts to write the history of Spanish literature (cfr. Pérez Isasi 2013): orientalism; chivalry (connected with an exacerbated sense of honour and with a sense of gallantry); and piety or religiosity. All of them appear with surprising regularity in the histories of Spanish literature written in the first half of the nineteenth century, for instance in Sismondi, Ticknor or Schack:

La nación española otro tiempo tan valerosa, tan caballeresca, y cuyo orgullo y dignidad son proverbiales en Europa, se ha retratado al vivo en su literatura.

(Sismondi 1841, I: 2)

Hay en la literatura española dos signos tan peculiares y exclusivos de ella, que es forzoso fijarlos desde el principio como puntos de partida, a saber la fe religiosa y la lealtad caballeresca.

(Ticknor 1851–1856, I: 109)

A semejante resultado contribuyeron los dos grandes factores de la civilización moderna, cuyas consecuencias han sido en todos uniformes, a saber: el espíritu caballeresco y la influencia del cristianismo.

(Schack 1885–1888, I: 87)

Spanish literary historians, reluctant as they were to accept the idea of Iberian orientalism, happily accepted, however, the other two characteristics: in Amador's *Historia crítica*, for example, we can read that "*Dios y la patria*: he aquí el doble dogma del arte castellano" (Amador de los Ríos 1861–1865, III: 4), and Gil de Zárate, too, explicitly defines Spanishness as "religion, honour and gallantry":

La religión, el honor y la galantería: estos son como hemos visto los tres ejes sobre los cuales ha girado la civilización de los tiempos medios, y las tres fuentes de todas las bellezas propias de su literatura. Estas tres causas han influido poderosamente en nuestra patria, y tal vez con más eficacia que en ninguna parte.

(Gil de Zárate 1844, I: 11)

Of course, this characterization of the Spanish national character has, as we have already pointed out, deep implications for the formation of the national canon. For instance, the supremacy given to "chivalry" and "piety" in the definition of the national character implied giving more importance to certain genres, such as epic or mystic poetry, and underestimating, on the contrary, others such as lyric poetry or the novel (with the obvious exception of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*). In the case of Spanish literature, this essentially meant gathering popular "romances" (short popular, epic-lyrical medieval poems which had already attracted the attention of Herder and F. Schlegel) as they were considered to constitute the "true national poetry:"

Ya hemos visto en el poema del Cid y aún volveremos a ver en los romances la poesía de los guerreros, la poesía verdaderamente nacional, la que guarda perfecta armonía con las costumbres, las esperanzas y los recuerdos de todo un pueblo, la que está inspirada por el entusiasmo y la que servía para conservarle en el corazón y en la mente de los españoles.

(Sismondi 1841–2: I, 55)

Medieval epic poetry (which included both long epic poems such as the *Mío Cid*, and the much shorter "romances") was not the only genre exalted as "national:" from the very origins of German Romanticism, Spanish Golden Age drama was singled out as the perfect representative of Spanishness (because of its identification with Catholicism, honour and gallantry),

especially the work of Calderón de la Barca; in the first half of the nineteenth century Lope de Vega was considered his inferior or immediate predecessor (although the balance shifted towards Lope in the second half of the century).

The case of Portugal is different to the Spanish one in some key aspects. Firstly, Portuguese literature was deemed of secondary importance by European Romanticism, with the single exception of Luis de Camões, who was considered a true literary genius. Its reception was, in a way and up to a point, mediated by that of Spanish literature, with which it was supposed to share a geographical and, above all, ideological or symbolic space. As noted previously, in foreign literary histories both literatures tend to appear closely linked, as is the case, for instance, of Bouterwek's *Geschichte*, which not only often makes frequent references to Spanish literature in the chapters devoted to Portuguese literature, but also concludes with a very significant section entitled "Comparison of Portuguese and Spanish literatures." This does not mean that Portuguese literature lacks individuality or that it is in no way different from Spain; in fact, Romantic historians stress that, because of its long tradition of political independence, the Portuguese nation and its language and literature acquired very specific and unique features; quite different, in fact, from those of the Spaniards. Instead of the fierce brutality of the Spanish nation, the Portuguese are characterized as a sweet, soft, friendly nation, devoted to poetry and the arts, favoured by the climate and washed by the Atlantic Ocean. Nouns such as "sweetness," "tenderness" or "softness" often appear as *leitmotifs* when referring to the Portuguese language, literature or national character.

References to the climate are not fortuitous: in fact, Sismondi justifies the Portuguese *Volkgeist* with reference to its geographical and climatic conditions, opposing the roughness of mountains to the soft influence of the sea: "D'ailleurs la langue est adoucie, come le sont le plus souvent les dialectes des côtes, par opposition aux langues rudes et sonores des montagnes" [Furthermore, the language is sweetened, as often happens with coastal dialects, as opposed to the rude and sonorous languages of the mountains] (Sismondi 1813–4: IV, 262). Portuguese historians themselves, such as Borges de Figueiredo, for example, also mention these same elements, climate and language ("um clima encantador, uma lingua sonora e majestosa," 1844, 151), thus accepting the self-image proposed by center-European historians.

If chivalry and piety were the main features of Spanish national identity according to early Romantic historians, the Portuguese are characterized not only by "tenderness" but also by a certain "technical ability," which manifests itself in different ways: in their capacity to navigate the seas, but also in their literary dexterity and scientific interests:

O amor ás Letras, e a aptidão intellectual para as cultivar com dignidade e aproveitamento é um dos caracteres da gente Portuguesa.

(Carvalho 1845, 17)

Na verdade a propensão para as Letras e sua cultura data entre nós de tão longe, que era opiniao corrente, dominando o Imperador Octaviano Augusto, que os Turdulos ou Turdetânos, isto é, os habitadores naquelle tempo de grande parte da Andaluzia e Algarve, ou, para melhor dizer, os seus antepassados, que moravam entre o Tejo e o Douro, eram os mais doutos dos Hespanhoes; pois usavam de *Grammatica* [. . .] e conservavam muitas poesias e leis, postas em verso, com varios monumentos de grande antiguidade, em que não só mostravam as gloriosas memorias dos seus progenitores, mas a elevada sciencia dos seus antepassados.

(Carvalho 1845, 20)

Again, this definition of a national character is not a rhetorical preliminary merely packaged together with the rest of the literary history: it is, on the contrary, as we have already said, a theoretical and ideological framework that conditions the selection of literary works, genres and periods. In the case of Portuguese literature, the predominance of “tenderness” and technical ability (over, for instance, religiosity and chivalry), makes lyrical and bucolic poetry the preferred genre, at least until the appearance of Camões, the cornerstone of the Portuguese literary canon:

A amenidade do clima de Portugal e ao gosto pelos prazeres campestres que sempre tiveram os seus habitantes cumpre attribuir a aparição da poesia bucolica n'alvorada de sua civilização, e o grão d'aperfeiçoamento que reveláram os seus primeiros ensaios.

(Pinheiro 1862, 26)

Conclusions

As we pointed out at the beginning of this article, it would not be possible to argue that nineteenth-century nationalist movements appeared without precedent: they were built upon a previous rhetorical, political and anthropological tradition, which was then used for national movements and parties to create a self-image, often in opposition to the *other*, the outsider, the “barbarian.” However, as we have also pointed out, it was only in the nineteenth century that these ideas were systematized and applied to the (re)construction and diffusion (most frequently in a top-down manner) of specific national identities, which in some cases coincided with previously established dynastic states (as was the case of Spain and Portugal). Literary history, closely linked with the new state-based education system, was one of the tools used in this nationalization process, and it was dependent on the principles of early Romantic criticism: the idea that the world is divided into nations; that each nation has a *Volksgeist* or “national character,” and that this character was clearly visible in the literary productions of each nation. Not only that but Romantic literary criticism also established that there was a difference between groups of nations and literatures: some were Classical, and could be judged according to the Classical principles of Poetics and Rhetoric, while others were Romantic and had developed a new literary or poetic model which was still waiting to be described and systematized.

This philosophical, critical and historiographical paradigm was put into practice in relation to European and World literatures, and also, of course, in relation to Iberian literatures: Center-European historians created a vision of the Iberian Peninsula as a peripheral, exotic, Southern unity, severed from the rest of Europe and conditioned by its long centuries of interaction with the Moors; an image that combined an idea of Iberian unity with the national duality that corresponded with the two dynastic states of Spain and Portugal. This means that nineteenth-century literary historians also created (or described, as they would put it) a series of features related with each of the national characters: chivalry, gallantry and piety in the case of Spanish literature; tenderness and technical ability in the case of the Portuguese. While Iberian historians in some cases rejected the vision that came from abroad (for example, in relation to the oriental character of Iberian peoples and literatures), they in any case conditioned greatly the way in which they wrote their own literary histories during the nineteenth century.

In the short pages of this article, we have not been able to analyze with any detail the historiographical consequences of these ideological constructions of the Iberian nations. It

is obvious, however, that different works, authors, genres and periods are privileged accordingly and transformed into the center of each of the literary canons, for instance, medieval epic poetry and Golden Age theater, which are considered to best represent the Catholic and chivalrous Spain, and lyrical and bucolic poetry in the case of Portuguese literature. Of course, a much more detailed analysis of both the Spanish and the Portuguese literary canon would be needed to do justice to all the nuances and variations to these very general considerations: the subtle (or not so subtle) differences between historians and histories; the complexity of the Romantic aesthetic and historiographical project; or the evolution and modification of these very general concepts through the nineteenth and until at least the first half of the twentieth century.

Notes

- 1 This article is a result of my ongoing research project, “Nationalism and Literary Regenerations in the Iberian Peninsula (1868–1936),” funded by the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia of Portugal (Ref. IF/00838/2014).
- 2 He even risks a geographical and geopolitical explanation: “Cela tient sans doute à la position géographique du Portugal, et plus encore aux relations politiques des deux pays. Les Portugais, puissants en Asie, n’étaient rien en Europe; l’Espagne imposa ses lois et ses arts à une partie des peuples voisins” [This has to do, no doubt, with the geographical position of Portugal, and even more with the political relations of both countries. Portugal, powerful in Asia, was nothing in Europe; Spain imposed its laws and arts to some of its neighbors] (Deniz 1826, 2).
- 3 This same idea of diversity-in-unity lies at the heart of many of the texts that supported cultural Iberianism in the second half of the nineteenth century, such as Oliveira Martins’ *História da Civilização Ibérica* (1879). In the worlds of Teófilo Braga, for example, “No problema da raça não ha hespanhões nem portugueses. A separação começa na formação da nacionalidade” (Braga 1872, 12).
- 4 The *Historia Crítica de la Literatura Española* by Amador de los Ríos, published between 1861 and 1865 in seven volumes, is an exception to this rule: de los Ríos starts his history from the very first texts written in the Iberian Peninsula, in Latin, Hebrew and Arabic. However, he did not get to complete this very ambitious work: the seventh volume ends at the beginning of the sixteenth century.
- 5 According to Amador de los Ríos, for instance: “Fórmase en esta lucha [la Reconquista] el pueblo español propiamente dicho . . . ella es el campo siempre abierto, donde se fortalecen sus creencias, donde nace y florece su patriotismo, donde se crea, finalmente, su carácter” (Amador de los Ríos 1861–5, I, XCIX); and in the case of Portugal: “No celebrado campo d’Ourique, onde cinco estandartes mouriscos cáem nas maos dos Portuguezes; proclamado rei, Affonso Henriques funda a monarchia, e dá as primeiras leis a um povo amante da independencia e da victoria” (Borges de Figueiredo 1844, 153).
- 6 It still appears, for instance, in Schack’s work, written in 1849: “Este rasgo característico de su fisonomía, que proviene de la influencia de un pueblo no europeo, y es efecto de la unión de los dos elementos oriental y occidental, la distingue de manera singular” (Schack 1885–1888, I: 87). However, it is interesting to note that the Spanish translators of Simonde de Sismondi’s *De la littérature* already rejected, in 1841, this idea of Spain as an Eastern, or at least mixed nation: “Tampoco es exacto lo que asienta el autor pocas líneas más arriba cuando dice que la literatura española difiere esencialmente de las demás de Europa, y que puede decirse que éstas son europeas mientras que aquella es oriental. Nuestra literatura ha tenido diversas épocas y no deben confundirse en un juicio común” (Simonde de Sismondi 1841, I: 29, note A).

Works cited

- Amador de los Ríos, José. 1861–5. *Historia crítica de la literatura española*. 7 vols. Madrid: Imprenta de José Rodríguez.
- Behler, Ernst. 1993. *German Romantic Literary Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Borges de Figueiredo, Antonio Cardoso. 1844. *Bosquejo histórico da Litteratura Classica, Grega, Latina e Portugueza*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade.

- Bouterwek, Friedrich. 1847. *History of Spanish and Portuguese Literature*. London: David Vogue.
- . 1829 [2002]. *Historia de la literatura española*. Madrid: Verbum.
- Bowie, Andrew. 1997. *From Romanticism to Critical Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Braga, Teófilo. 1872. *Theoria da historia da litteratura portugueza*. Porto: Imprensa Portugueza.
- Carvalho, Francisco Freire de. 1845. *Primeiro Ensaio sobre Historia Litteraria de Portugal*. Lisboa: Typographia Rollandiana.
- Denis, Ferdinand. 1826. *Résumé de l'histoire littéraire de Portugal*. Paris: Leconte e Durey.
- de Staël, Anne Louise Germaine. 1813 [1968]. *De l'Allemagne*. Paris: GF-Flammarion.
- Domínguez, César. 2006. "The South European Orient: A Comparative Reflection on Space in Literary History." *Modern Language Quarterly* 67 (4): 419–449.
- Gellner, Ernst. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Gil de Zárate, Antonio. 1844. *Resumen histórico de la literatura española*. 3 vols. Madrid: Boix.
- Leersen, Joep. 2006. *National Thought in Europe. A Cultural History*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Pérez Isasi, Santiago. 2011. "The Origins of the Portuguese and Spanish Nations in Romantic Literary History." Proceedings of conference *Europe of Nationalities*, Universidade de Aveiro, 9–11 May 2011. CD-ROM.
- . 2013. "The Limits of Spanishness in 19th-Century Literary History." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 90 (2): 167–188.
- Pinheiro, Joaquim Caetano Fernandes. 1862. *Curso elementar de litteratura nacional*. Rio de Janeiro: Livraria de B. L. Garnier.
- Schack, Adolfo Federico de. 1885. *Historia de la Literatura y del Arte Dramático en España*. Madrid: Imprenta y Fundición de M. Tello.
- Schlegel, August Wilhelm. 1815. *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*. London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy.
- Schlegel, Friedrich. 1841. *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern*. New York: J. & H.G. Langley.
- Simonde de Sismondi, Jean-Charles-Leonard. 1813–1814: *De la litterature du Midi de l'Europe*, 4 vols. Paris: Treuttel & Wurtz.
- . 1841–1842. *Historia de la literatura española*. Sevilla: Imprenta de Álvarez y Compañía.
- Smith, Anthony. 1991. *National Identity*. Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press.
- Ticknor, George. 1851–1856. *Historia de la Literatura Española*. 4 vols. Madrid: Imprenta de la Publicidad.
- Vecchi, Roberto. 2013. "Thinking from Europe about an Iberian 'South': Portugal as a Case Study." In *Looking at Iberia*, edited by Santiago Pérez Isasi and Ángela Fernandes, 69–85. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Wolf, Ferdinand. 1840. *Historia de las literaturas castellana y portuguesa*. 2 vols. Madrid: La España Moderna.