



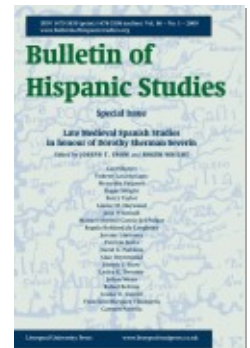
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Barry Taylor

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BARRY TAYLOR

The British Library



The *Proverbios* have the longest reception history of all the works in the Old Spanish wisdom corpus: 30 manuscripts in Dutton, 25 printed editions to 1594 in Dutton and Palau, as well as an English translation by Barnaby Googe in 1579.¹ To these witnesses may be added Cambridge University Library Add. MS. 9305 (olim Phillipps 8257),² citations in other works (Whetnall 1998: 206–07) and a copy of stanza I in Oxford, Bodleian, Department of Oriental Books, MS. Reggio 55, a 17th-century Sephardic miscellany.³ My purpose in this article is to account for the longevity of the *Proverbios*. I hope to show that one factor in their success was that two genres to which the *Proverbios* belong – the mirror of princes and the courtesy book – were able to spread from the court to the wider world. I shall also argue that the *Proverbios* represent a moderate, kind, generous model of royal behaviour which contrasted with the Old Spanish wisdom literature which preceded them and harmonized with the idealistic anti-Machiavellian models of kingship of the Counter-Reformation period.

Some initial comments on the textual history of the *Proverbios* are necessary, based on Dutton (1990–91) and facsimiles. Santillana wrote the *Proverbios* in 1437 at the behest of Juan II for the instruction of his 12-year-old son, Prince Enrique. There seems to be no witness in which the text is unglossed. Santillana added glosses ‘en las margenes’ devoted exclusively to unpacking his references to exemplary figures from scripture and ancient history (Santillana 1965: a6r). To these glosses Dr Pero Díaz de Toledo, translator of the *Proverbia Senecae* and *Phaedo*, added glosses of a broadly moralistic nature, also at the behest of Juan II. So far as can be discerned from the plate in Rogerio Sánchez’s edition, Escorial MS N–I–13 preserves a third gloss on the *Proverbios* (Santillana 1928: between pp.

1 Dutton et al. (1990–91: 0050); Palau (1948–87: 141473–93).

2 *Proverbios* and *Question del origen de la cavalleria*, 15th century:
see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/accessions/1995/95returns/95ac12.htm>.

3 Brown and Gómez Aranda (1998: 59). I owe this reference to Jane Whetnall.

42 and 43). In a good number of manuscripts (at least 14 according to Dutton),⁴ the text of the *Proverbios* is divided into sections by 16 rubrics: 'De amor e temor', 'De prudencia e sabiduria', 'De justicia', 'De paciencia e honesta correpcion', 'De sobriedat', 'De castidat', 'De fortaleza', 'De liberalidad e franqueça', 'De verdat', 'De continençia cerca de cobdicia', 'De invidia', 'De gratitut', 'De amicicia', 'De paternal reverencia', 'De senetut o vezex', and 'De la muerte'.

Sometimes the rubrics are presented as numbered 'capitulos' (SV2 (Severin and Maguire 2000) and the three incunable editions), and in at least one witness (CO1-1) they are headed 'titulo'.

The *Proverbios* first appear in print in 1494, with the glosses of 'El Marques', 'El Doctor', the rubrics (called *capitulos*) and Valera's *Tratado de Providencia contra Fortuna*. This combination of texts persists to 1510. Between 1512 and 1548 the *Proverbios* appear with their glosses alone. From 1558 to 1594 they are accompanied by Manrique's *Coplas* and the *Coplas de Mingo Revulgo*, with the glosses of Francisco de Guzmán and Fernando del Pulgar respectively.

Although the headings are a reasonably good guide to the structure of the *Proverbios* – and therefore Round's account of the *Proverbios* (1979), which depends on them, is sound – they are not comprehensive. For example, the rubric 'De amor e temor' supposedly covers stanzas I–XII. In fact, it applies only to stanzas I–V; stanzas VIII–XII are on a standard topic of the mirror of princes, good and bad counsel (Piccus 1962, Rey 1979, Truman 1999: 15, 19, 23, 48, 79, 95ff, 266, 305, 350). Similarly, 'De prudencia e sabiduria' ostensibly refers to stanzas XIII–XXIII, but more properly describes only XIII–XX. 'De paciencia e honesta correpcion' (XXVIII–XXXIV) is really on clemency. 'De fortaleza' (IV–LXII) includes a passage on humility (LX–LXII). Like most medieval rubrics they are not authorial. The evidence for this is that the rubric often picks up the phrasing from the beginning of the section rather than summarizing the whole of it (compare for example Funes 1984).

The ideology of the *Proverbios* contrasts with that of the wisdom literature which preceded them. In most cultures, wisdom literature expresses a hard-headed attitude to life, unforgiving of folly, emphasizing testing before trust and teaching suspicion in the presence of deceit. The earliest Spanish representatives of the genre, *Bocados de oro* and *Buenos proverbios*, translated in the mid-13th century from known Arabic originals which were indebted to Greek sources, are true to the cynicism of the wisdom tradition. They are followed by works such as *Flores de filosofia* and *Libro de los doce sabios*, apparently modelled on them. An indication of the un-Christian nature of *Flores* is that it was bowdlerized as *Dichos de los santos padres* (Lomax 1972). In the 15th century, wisdom literature takes a more idealistic turn, with works such as Valera's *Doctrinal de príncipes* for Fernando el Católico and the anonymous *Directorio de príncipes* dedicated to the Catholic Monarchs, in which suspicion is replaced by the imitation of Christ (Valera 1959; Tate 1977).⁵

4 Dutton sigla CO1-1, EM9b-13, GB1-19, HH1-27, ML4-2, MN6b-38, MN34-2, PN4-45, PN5-21, PN12-64, SA1-2, SA3-1, SM1-1, SV2-5.

5 The *Directorio de príncipes* is indebted to Valera.

Outside Spain, 15th-century princely wisdom was largely based on the pursuit of virtue. Machiavelli's cynicism in the *Principe* (composed 1513–14; printed 1532) is usually and quite rightly seen as a reaction to this idealism, yet in a Spanish context at least the *Prince* can be viewed as a return to the older, harder ways. When he argues that ends justify means, recommends dissimulation (Ch. XVIII) and places limits on the value of virtue (Ch. XV), he chimes with the older wisdom literature.⁶

The anti-Machiavellian reaction, in Spain as elsewhere, soon made itself felt. As Maravall puts it, 'En el segundo cuarto, aproximadamente, del siglo XVI, hay en España, como en el resto de Europa, una agudización de la preocupación moral en la política, tal vez debida a la necesidad de no presentar un flanco de fácil ataque en las querellas religiosas que la Reforma ha desencadenado' (1972: 70). Although some Spanish authors accepted Machiavelli's analyses (but not his conclusions), the Spanish reaction to Machiavelli was generally one of condemnation, and mirrors of princes once again stressed that the prince was first and foremost a good Christian (Maravall 1972). Machiavelli was placed on the Roman Index in 1559 (1972: 91).

It should also be remembered, as Maravall points out (1972: 70), that older Christian mirrors of princes such as Thomas Aquinas's *De rege* continued to be printed in the early modern period, including the Spanish translation of Ordóñez de Seijas of 1525.⁷ Aquinas, incidentally, was printed more than Aegidius Romanus.

Santillana's *Proverbios* have elements of both the mirror of princes and the courtesy book.⁸ This latter genre, in its medieval forms, was addressed originally to monks and later to young courtiers. The emphasis is on bodily control and on relations with one's neighbours and betters: deference is to the fore (Knox 1991).

The transmission of the *Proverbios* parallels that of the mirror and the courtesy book. The mirror was originally regarded as privileged information for the monarch, as witness the title *Secret of Secrets*, but later – certainly by the print period – was consumed by readers outside the court. Similarly, in England, as Whigham (1984) shows, the courtesy book broke free of the palace and attained a broader readership. Santillana's advice to Prince Enrique, in its multiple witnesses, likewise circulated far and wide. The introduction to the edition of 1494 recognizes this spread:

E como quier que los dichos prouerbios & castigos ouiessem fecho: por mandado del dicho señor principe su fijo: Segund la dotrina que semejantes prouerbios: que el sabio Caton fizo & dexo a su fijo se entiende: & dirigen ser dados por qual quier

6 Maureen Ramsey (1995: 175): 'Although Machiavelli never articulates his descriptions or prescriptions in this formulation, the means–ends relationship and the relationship between politics and morality are the central issues which have inspired most interest in his political philosophy'.

7 The British Library has nine Latin editions from 1473? to 1655. For the *De rege* in Spain see Truman (1999: 17–18, 19, 41, 282, 324). For Ordóñez de Seijas, see Maravall (1972: 70).

8 On this genre, see Taylor (1997).

padre a su fijo: o maestre a su discipulo: & en general a todos los que en ellos leyeren [...] para se saber bien regir & gouernar (Santillana 1965: a2r).⁹

As a genre, the mirror of princes can include the theme of courtesy: Knox (1991: 115) cites sections on courtesy in Vincent of Beauvais. Furthermore, the courtesy element in Santillana is explicable because he is addressing a 12-year-old child. The explicitly kingly element is much reduced in Santillana; he has very little to say on relations between ruler and subject as described in the mirrors. This feature doubtless helped the *Proverbios* to appeal to a broader audience.

I shall now survey the *Proverbios* (Santillana 1988), comparing them with preceding and succeeding texts. Santillana begins with the injunction 'ama e serás amado' (5), as he who is feared will be cast down (29–32).¹⁰ The locus classicus is Seneca, *Epistulae*, IX, 4: 'si vis amari, ama'; and it is taken up as the opening injunction of another Peninsular work of fatherly advice, the *Versos proverbials* of Cerverí de Girona.¹¹ In these two works the context is inter-personal relations rather than politics. Political writers often debated whether it was better for a ruler to be loved or feared: for the *Castigos de Sancho IV*, the king was to be loved and feared (Bizzarri 2001: 131); Diego de Valera opted for love;¹² Machiavelli (Ch. XVII) plumped for fear. The 16th-century Spanish writers on statecraft returned to a balance between the two extremes (Truman 1999: 15, 27, 351).

Santillana's language in this verse is so general that it is not entirely clear whether the love to be sought is that of one's neighbour or of one's subjects. Even his evocation of Julius Caesar, whose 'altiveza ... intolerable' brought about his downfall (gloss to stanza III) is as much moral as political.

Stanza VI moves from haughtiness to its verbal expression in speech:

E sea la tu respuesta
muy graciosa,
non terca nin soberviosa,
mas honesta
(VI, 41–44).

We might contrast this considerate use of language, typical of courtesy literature, with the wisecracks in the use of which wisdom literature trained its adepts.¹³

Stanza XI praises 'consejo'. For Santillana, old people are the repositories of good counsel. He has no concept of testing counsel: contrast the *Castigos*, 'Mío fijo, non te pagues nin quieras en la tu casa omne que se atreuiere a yr al tu

9 The passage is corrupt but the meaning is clear. I have not attempted to amend the original punctuation.

10 I cite the *Proverbios* from Santillana (1988), by line, with the stanza number in roman.

11 Guillem de Cervera (1991: 17). Cerverí/Guillem is not one of the Catalan troubadours mentioned by Santillana in the *Proemio* or the prologue to the *Proverbios*. There are further parallels in Cicero, *De officiis*: see Lapesa (1967: 105–06).

12 Diego de Valera, *Doctrinal de príncipes* (1959: 186, 199–200, cited by Maravall 1972: 69–70). In a letter to Juan II Valera preaches a balance of love and fear (*Epístolas*, I, *ibid.*, p.5).

13 Johnston (1986–87). The ability to coin pithy sayings in various categories – 'como gracioso', 'como justo y esforçado', 'como grave', etc. – is praised in Alfonso el Magnánimo; see Beccadelli (1997).

consejo e a la tu poridat, a menos de le llamar a ella' (Bizzarri 2001: 277) or most of the situations in *El conde Lucanor*. Santillana's deference for seniors is a feature of courtesy literature. Pero Díaz (Santillana 1965: c7v–c8r; cited by Lapesa 1967: 106) glosses 'ancianos' as 'senators' on etymological grounds, placing Santillana's advice in a political context.

Any possible Machiavellianism suggested by 'Al tiempo e a la sazón / sey conforme' (XXI, 161–62) is revealed in stanza XXI–XXII to be not advocacy of temporizing, but a Christian–stoic warning against Fortune.

In XXIX Santillana advises: 'No recuses rescebir / al contrito', without any concern to examine the sincerity of the contrite. Contrast for example *Castigos*: 'para mientes que pro o que danno te viene de aquel perdon que te demanda que fagas' (Bizzarri 2001: 152). The poet goes on to praise magnanimity ('magnificencia', XXX), and a long passage up to XXXIV is devoted to clemency.¹⁴

Santillana's moralistic treatment of gluttony: 'Quanto es bueno el comer / por medida, / que sostiene nuestra vida / de caer, / tanto es de aborresçer el glotón / que cuyda ser perfección / tal plazer' (XXXV) contrasts with that of the *Poridat*, in which the approach is medical: 'Et quando uos ueniere uoluntad de comer a la ora que lo auedes usado, fazet trabaiair uuestros mienbros con caualgar et con luchar ... que son cosas ... que tuellen la uentosidad...' (Kasten 1957: 68). Gluttony, as a vice, of course has its place in the mirror of princes, but its inclusion in the *Proverbios* is another link with the courtesy books, which have much to say on the subject of table manners.

What the Stoics would call self-conquest does not occupy a section of its own, but it underlies two concepts in the *Proverbios*: the avoidance of idleness and glorious death:

Fuye de la oçiosidad
con exerçios
honestos, porque los viçios
potestad
non ayan, nin facultad
de te prender;
que non es poco vençer
humanidad.
(XLII)

and:

Ca fijo, si mucho amares
tu persona,
non esperes la corona
que de Mares
obternías, ni forçares
el temor,
nin caresçerás de honor,
si lo buscares.
(LVII)

14 On clemency versus cruelty, see Truman (1999: 27, 79, 80–81, 147, 240, 265, 303, 335). On *magnificencia*, see Truman (1999: 51–52, 166, 304).

Such self-conquest was dear to the 16th-century writers on kingship (Truman 1999: 308, 373).

In stanza LX Santillana commends humility in the face of praise: 'Non te plega ser loado / en presençia'; contrast *Conde Lucanor*, *exemplum* LI, 'que seades omildoso mas non omillado' (Juan Manuel 1982–83: II, 502). And when Juan Manuel writes 'omildat con razon es alabada' (*Conde Lucanor*, Pt. V; II, 447), should the pause be after 'omildat' or 'razon'?

Santillana, usually unhesitating in his promotion of virtue, shows a heightened degree of caution in his treatment of liberality:

Usa liberalidad
e da presto,
que del dar, lo más honesto
es brevedad;
mesura la calidad
d'él al que darás;
e, vista, non errarás
en cantidad.
(LXIII)

This is in accordance with the earlier mirrors: 'Non cae al rey ser escasso por la qual escaseza ouiese a menguar en sus fechos, nil cae otrosi ser franco o non deue e commo non deue' (*Castigos*, 149). In his gloss, Santillana quotes an anecdote of Alexander the Great from Seneca. Lapesa (1967: 109–10) points out a contrast between Santillana and his sources. A *minestril* asked Alexander for a coin; the King gave him a whole city, on the grounds that the gift should match the liberality of the giver. For Seneca, *De beneficiis*, II, 16, this was the act of a 'tumidisimum animal'; for Santillana simply 'Alexandre con franqueza / conquistó / la tierra, e sojudgó / su redondeza' (LXIV). Santillana gives similar treatment to Antigonus (LXV; Lapesa 1967: 110). Machiavelli (Ch. XVI) argues against liberality that the prince should not fear being thought a miser. For Pedro de Ribadeneyra in 1595, 'Liberality will most properly be displayed in relieving the needs of the poor and affording help in times of calamity. In this way the prince shows himself to be the father of all his people' (Truman 1999: 304).

Santillana's treatment of friendship is typical of his relationship with earlier and later wisdom literature:

Pero non pienses que digo
que te celes
ni te reguardes e veles
de tu amigo;
ca sería tal castigo
desonesto
e tornar lo pronto e presto
enemigo.
(LXXXIX)

The earlier mirrors praise friendship, but insist on testing it: 'Todos los que omne cuenta por amigos que non son todos eguales' (*Castigos*, p. 256). Juan Manuel claimed to have had only one true friend (*Libro enfenido*, Ch. XXVI (I, 185)).

In the final stanza Santillana shows his stoic credentials by summarizing his poem by means of praise of the middle path: 'Concluyendo, en fin, te digo / qu'el remedio / de todos viçios es medio / ser contigo' (793–96). Yet the benefits of *medio* which he identifies are more suited to a boy or a commoner than to a king: 'vida inmensa / viviras, e sin ofensa / nin castigo' (C, 778–800).

The *Proverbios* invite comparison with two commonly read works of paternal advice, the *Distichs of Cato* and the Biblical books of Solomon. Although Santillana mentions Solomon in his prologue as a generic model (217), he has few quotations from him: Lapesa (1967: 102–03) identified six such. He seems to have taken little from Solomon beyond, perhaps, the loose structure. He certainly does not share Solomon's hard-hearted ethos, which Christian exegetes were at pains to explain away (Letture 1992).

Cato the man appears in the *Proverbios* as an exemplary figure a number of times (Prologue, 218, 219; stanza LVI, lines 441–44). Santillana never names him as an author, but he does quote him on occasion: 'Inquiere con grand cuidado / la sciencia, / con estudio e diligencia reposado' (XIII, 97–100) parallels Cato's 'libros lege' (Monostich 16; Boas 1962); more closely, Santillana's 'yo me so visto subjecto / por fablar, / e nunca por el fablar / fui correbto' (LXXXVIII) is Cato's 'Rumores fuge, ne incipias novus auctor haberi, / nam nulli tacuisse nocet, nocet esse locutum' (I, 12). More generally, Cato's moderate stoicism, which proved easily assimilable to Christian culture, is close to Santillana's.

In conclusion, every idea expressed by Santillana is a commonplace. Yet even commonplaces have their history and their fashions. Santillana owes his success to his resemblance to the kindly Cato, another best-seller whose message was also attractive to the anti-Machiavellian culture of the sixteenth century.¹⁵ The hard-hearted Old Spanish wisdom literature fared poorly in the print age: *Bocados* was printed four times, *Doce sabios* once, *Buenos proverbios*, *Flores* and *Castigos* never; the *Proverbios* outshone them all. In 1569, that doyen of anti-Machiavellian statecraft, the Jesuit Antonio Possevino, summarized the three duties of the prince as: just government, the control of the passions, and hope in eternal life.¹⁶ Such values, for man or master, the 16th-century Spanish reader could find in Santillana's *Proverbios*.

15 On the diffusion of Cato in Spain in the print period, see Taylor (1999).

16 *Il soldato christiano*, in *Discorso contra l'impietà e perniciosissimi consigli del Machiavello* (Venice: 1604: 181–87), cited by Bireley (1990: 26).

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