

Pedro LOSA SERRANO y otros, *La Guerra de Sucesión española y la opinión pública hispano-británica*, Madrid, Sílex ediciones, 2014. 195 pp. ISBN 978-84-7737-902-7

On the occasion of the tricentennial of the War of Succession the number of publications have led to a new historiographic outbreak. The diplomatic issues, the main fighting scenarios, the economic consequences, the social impact and the special historical moment of the different territories, and in particular Catalonia, have gone through. However, there is still a lack of studies that have focused on public opinion and the media impact of the conflict, so this publication is more than timely. As the book analyzes, the struggle had two fronts: one the military, of which there are numerous works and on which historiography has focused more; and the media war. In England, more than in Spain, the rival parties ardently went to the press in campaigns no less fierce than the military, influencing in the public opinion, in the political decisions, and in the campaigning phases and the outcome of the Peace talks. Therefore, the War of Succession of 1702-1714 is an important example to understand the press power and the public opinion in the development of the events of its time.

Everything seems to indicate from the results that the propaganda produced by the opposition to the Government of Great Britain in relation to the War of Spanish Succession had to influence both the decisions of domestic and international politics adopted by the cabinet of Anne Stuart. In fact, she was forced to lead a propaganda campaign in the mass media to support her government policy. The alliance of states against France and Spain was made up of Austria, Holland, Portugal, Savoy and England. England led the decision-making and development of events. Great Britain had to win two battles, the one that was disputed in the battlefield and the one that was discussed in the Parliament with supporters and opponents to the warlike dispute.

The seven chapters in which the book is divided focus on questions of propagandistic rivalry, the transformations of England at the end of the seventeenth century, the propaganda of "battles" and the impact of war on different levels. Professor Christopher Storrs analyzes the transformations that took place in England between 1689 and 1720. In his view, things were very different after 1688, especially after England became involved in the war of the League of Augsburg or the Nine Years War (1688-1697). As a result, the expansionism of Louis XIV in Europe was avoided or at least restrained. England's success was probably based on its ability to withstand the cost of a large-scale war for several years, including the building and maintenance of a modern fleet. The parliamentary struggles of these years between the conservative *tories* and liberal *whigs* would be a good example of the political thermometer being experienced in the country.

Within the framework of this political rivalry between the two important English political parties, the professor and coordinator of the book, Pedro Losa Serrano, incorporates two

chapters. In the first, it echoes the ups and downs in which English foreign policy was involved. On the one hand, the *whigs* were committed to the European alliance and to a continental or terrestrial campaign to blockade the expansionist policy of Louis XIV. On the other hand, the *tories*, with a more isolationist and insular sense, preferred a campaign based on maritime and colonial operations, leading the attacks against the French and Spanish colonies. In the second chapter, it focuses on the political discourse of conservatives and liberals using the written press to gain the support of British public opinion, and especially after the naval battle of Malaga in 1704 and the terrestrial ones of Almansa and Brihuega, in 1707 and 1710 respectively, contemplated by the *Review*, *The Observator* and *The London Gazette*. Precisely one of his keen political analysts was Daniel Defoe. His personality and figure has been the object of several studies by Rosa Maria Lopez Campillo and she is doing it again in this one. From his journalistic watchtower, first in the *Review* and then in *The Mercator* he maintained in most of his pamphlets the defense of British commercial interests, the balance of power in Europe and the protection of the Protestant religion. From Defoe's essays and letters on warlike actions one can observe the growing political polarization of the British people during the reign of Anne Stuart. Although Defoe was mainly a supporter of peace, he defended the war as long as British economic and commercial interests were threatened.

The War of Succession had its local impact, general and in the future Anglo-Spanish relations. Precisely to this last aspect refers the new contribution of Porfirio Sanz Camanes on its impact in the Spanish America during the XVIII century. The Franco-English relations and the succession of a series of treaties, in the eighteenth century, with the so-called *Pactos de Familia* between the Bourbons of Paris and Madrid, which would lead to the Paris Peace of 1763, are analyzed in a clear way. The American War of Independence is explained in this chapter as one of the consequences of the Seven Years' War and the Anglo-French colonial conflict in America. The Anglo-Spanish border in North America became a focus of permanent tensions while the Spanish sovereignty of New Mexico and Texas was achieved thanks to the establishment of a series of defensive means and military garrisons. As Sanz Camanes points out, there would remain unresolved obstacles in the Anglo-Spanish relations of the eighteenth century, such as the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar, among others, in a European context that was marking the new bases of military balance in the European building.

The War of Succession also had an important echo in the Portuguese press. Ramon Cozar Gutierrez analyze a chapter to a subject little studied at the present: the *relaciones de sucesos* (or relationships of events), as valuable sources of information to know the events as a consequence from the Portuguese participation in the War of Spanish Succession. As a result of the study of a series of printed copies in the National Library of Portugal, which are including as an annex, goes beyond the analysis of the source, to provide information of Portuguese diplomatic and military participation. No doubt that given the particular Hispano-Portuguese relationship, with a single border, any decision taken with regard to Spain would soon or later affect their territories or interests. The war brought sacrifices for the Portuguese and little grants at the end. The last of the chapters, focuses in the impact of the War of Succession in the privileged estates of Toledo. Its author, Professor Ramon Sanchez Gonzalez, explore the consequences of the conflict on the two great powers established in the city of Toledo: the Town Hall and the Cathedral Cabildo. Both institutions discussed the various measures of collaboration that were taken from both the Bourbon side, first, and the Austracist side afterwards. The study, well documented in the municipal and capitular archives of Toledo, allows us to go deep into the background of local institutions, church and city, in their support of aid requests, especially during the rule of Archduke Charles of Austria, between 1706 y 1710.

To sum up, the flood of publishings appearing for the purpose of the tricentennial has not been able to cover all the gaps. This book, focused on public debates in the English press as a result of the War of Spanish Succession, can help to cover one of them and for that reason its publication is timely and its reading recommended.

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