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### “NOT WRITING A REGULAR NARRATIVE”: WASHINGTON IRVING’S CONSTRUCTION OF GRANADA IN BRITISH AND TRANSATLANTIC ROMANTIC-PERIOD LITERATURE

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#### RESUMEN

En sus obras dedicadas a Granada y la Alhambra, Washington Irving no se limitó a crear distorsiones entretenidas de hechos históricos en el contexto de una geografía remota y ornamentada de un agradable color local. De hecho, *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829) y *The Alhambra* (1832) muestran una compleja operación de producción de la geografía cultural granadina mediante una combinación de diferentes modelos epistémicos y de representación. Estas obras producen Granada y la Alhambra ubicándolas dentro de narraciones “irregulares” y visiblemente híbridas, así como en medio de distintas preocupaciones estéticas y procedimientos epistemológicos.

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#### PALABRAS CLAVE

Alhambraismo; orientalismo; historicismo; polifonía; recepción

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#### ABSTRACT

In his works on Granada and the Alhambra, Washington Irving did not merely fashion entertaining distortions of historical facts set in a remote and pleasingly colourful geography. Instead, *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829) and *The Alhambra* (1832) set in train a complex operation of production of Granada’s cultural geography by combining different forms of knowledge and representation. These texts produce Granada and the Alhambra by locating them within conspicuously hybridized and “irregular” narratives at the nexus of multiple aesthetic concerns and forms of knowledge.

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#### KEYWORDS

Alhambraism; orientalism; historicism; polyphony; reception

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Writing to Henry Breevort on 23 May 1829, Washington Irving described the impressions and sensations he was experiencing in Granada, and particularly in the Alhambra, and expressed his delight at finding himself “nestled in one of the most remarkable, romantic, and delicious spots in the world”<sup>1</sup>. With a hint of proprietorial pride, he added: “I have the complete range and, I may say control of the whole palace”<sup>2</sup>. If, on the one hand, his words convey a disarming sense of disorientation – “It absolutely appears to me like a dream, or as if I am spell-bound in some fairy palace” – on the other, they make plain his intention to master the spatial, cultural and historical features of the Alhambra in order to form “a complete idea how those knowing Moors enjoyed themselves in their marble halls”<sup>3</sup>. A few days later, on 18 July, he mentioned again the intense pleasures offered by the Alhambra in a letter to his brother Peter, to whom he confessed that “the effect of the climate, the air, the serenity and sweetness of the place, is almost as seductive as that of the Castle of Indolence [James Thomson’s 1748 poem], and I feel at times an impossibility of working, or of doing any thing but yielding to a mere voluptuousness of sensation”<sup>4</sup>.

In these epistolary flashes, Irving conjures up the Alhambra and Granada as spaces of pleasure in ways that anticipate Henri Lefebvre’s definition, in *La Production de l’espace* (1974), of the Nasrid palace, its gardens and the whole city as a zone of *jouissance*. Although, as Lefebvre remarks, “[t]he architecture of pleasure or joy ... is still to be invented”, “Granada, the Alhambra and its gardens” delimit one of the few existing locales “of voluptuousness and enjoyment” (“L’architecture du plaisir ou de la joie ... est encore à inventer”, “Grenade, Alhambra et jardin”, “de la volupté, de la jouissance”)<sup>5</sup>. In actual fact, the idea that the Alhambra was designed and built primarily for the enjoyment of its (Muslim) inhabitants is deeply flawed, even though Irving’s report of his own first-hand experience ostensibly bears it out<sup>6</sup>. Evidently, this imagery of pleasure and luxury is yet another

1 P. M. Irving, *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, New York: G. P. Putnam, 1862, vol. II, p. 102.

2 Irving, *Life and Letters*, vol. II, p. 102.

3 Irving, *Life and Letters*, vol. II, p. 102.

4 Irving, *Life and Letters*, vol. II, p. 108.

5 H. Lefebvre, *La Production de l’espace*. Paris: Anthropos, 2000, p. 437 (my translation).

6 See, for instance, the numerous critical assessments focusing on the ‘decorative’ aspects of Irving’s writings on Granada and the Alhambra. In line with Edward Said’s interpretation, these

effect of an apparently unstoppable mythopoeic process that ascribes Granada and the Alhambra to a dimension of physical pleasure (*volupté, jouissance*) and relegates this space, its cultural import and transcriptions to the sphere of a generically exotic and ineffectual imagination. Yet, if we focus on the significance of the Alhambra in British Romanticism, to which Irving was heavily indebted, it did not merely lie in the invention and promotion of clichés about Muslim luxury and voluptuousness<sup>7</sup>. Rather, Granada's space and the Alhambra as its pivot amounted to an intricate geo-cultural dimension, produced by weaving together a variety of spatial and historical, geographical and human traits, a process which ultimately resulted in the identification of an archive of (factual and fictional) knowledge about this space<sup>8</sup>.

Irving's remark about his "control" over the Alhambra intimates that, during his residence in the monument, he gradually came to dominate it by producing it in and through writing. He made the place his own by transcribing it into his letters and fiction. And this form of imaginative (and, indeed, ideological) inscription, aimed at accumulating and organizing knowledge about an other place, is part of a wider process of discursive construction which, in a Foucauldian perspective, contaminates and subsumes geo-cultural narratives primarily aimed at stimulating and satisfying readerly pleasure.

With such premisses in mind, this essay throws light on some of the discursive strategies underlying Irving's *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829) and *The Alhambra* (1832) in order to verify the narrative logic regulating their constructions of knowledge about these places, that is, their production of a geo-cultural dimension. Though much has already been written on Anglo-American Hispanism and the sources of Irving's Spanish imagination, what has not yet been paid adequate attention to are the mechanisms directing his invention of Granada's cultural geography, especially in connection with other discursive and

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approaches view Romantic-period Orientalism as steeped in "Sensuality, promise, terror, sublimity, idyllic pleasure, intense energy", and thus constituting a "free-floating Orient" that was completely divorced from the pressures of historical reality. E. W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991, pp. 118-19. For a recent example of this type of interpretation, see B. Nugnes, "Paradise Regained: Washington Irving's Mythological Spain", in M. Bacigalupo and P. Castagneto (ed.): *America and the Mediterranean*. Turin: Otto, 2003, pp. 333-42.

<sup>7</sup> On the multiplicity of meanings attached to the cultural geography of Granada in British Romantic-period writings, see D. Saglia, "The Exotic Politics of the Domestic: The Alhambra as Symbolic Place in British Romantic Poetry", in *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 34 (1997), pp. 197-225, and *Poetic Castles in Spain: British Romanticism and Figurations of Iberia*. Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000, pp. 254-330.

<sup>8</sup> About cultural geographies in British Romanticism, see D. Saglia (ed.): "Romanticism and Cultural Geography" (Special Issue), in *European Journal of English Studies*, vol. 6 (2002), pp. 123-220.

narrative modes proper to contemporary British culture<sup>9</sup>. This essay therefore approaches Irving’s works on Spanish-Moorish themes in order to re-evaluate their contributions to the progressive emergence of an imaginative discourse about Granada. More specifically, it aims to explore the formal, and especially the enunciative, procedures that determine this discursive operation, as these may explain its authoritativeness – as a product of Transatlantic Romantic culture – over later, nineteenth-century representations of Granada in the English-language tradition.

Of Irving’s works about Granada, and *The Alhambra* in particular, Robert Irwin has recently noted that they draw upon “atmospheric cliché” in order to evoke “a fantastic topography” marked by a “decidedly melancholy flavour”, so that Irving may be justly accused of disseminating an unfortunately alluring “slack and self-indulgent way of writing about Spain’s Islamic past”<sup>10</sup>. Irwin dispatches Irving’s text as irreparably steeped in “mere voluptuousness of sensation” and as responsible for initiating a distorted and misleading transposition of Spanish-Moorish cultural geography. In the face of similar assessments, it is clear that there is still substantial work to be done in order to recover and evaluate the narrative and discursive mechanisms underlying Irving’s imaginative investments in Granada and the Alhambra.

#### INTERTEXTS

In a note to chapter XII of *Chronicle*, the narrator offers additional information on the battles of the 1487 expedition to the Axarquía which led to the Christian conquest of this portion of Andalusia. He specifies that “Pulgar, in his chronicle, reverses the case, and makes the Marquis of Cadiz recommend the expedition to the Axarquía; but Fray Antonio Agapida is supported in his statement by that most veracious and contemporary chronicler, Andres Bernaldo, curate of Los Palacios”<sup>11</sup>. Through a recurrent strategy in his narrative of the decline and fall of the kingdom of Granada, in the cramped space of an erudite note Irving multiplies his sources and emphasizes the interplay of alternative historical versions. Weaving his voice and perspective with those of well-known chroniclers such as Fernando del Pulgar and Andrés Bernáldez (“el cura de los Palacios”), as well as that of his fictitious chronicler Agapida, Irving inserts the historical event into a cluster of different narrative focalizations and ideological positions,

9 For nineteenth-century Anglo-American Hispanism, see M. Gonzalez-Gerth, “The Image of Spain in American Literature, 1815-1865”, in *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, vol. 4 (1962), pp. 257-72, and, more specifically on Irving’s Spanish-themed works, S.T. Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, vol. II, pp. 3-45, and M. Weatherspoon Bowden, *Washington Irving*. Boston: Twayne, 1981, pp. 111-44.

10 R. Irwin, *The Alhambra*. London: Profile Books, 2004, pp. 141, 135.

11 W. Irving, *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada; from the Mss. of Fray Antonio Agapida*. London: John Murray, 1829, vol. I, p. 108.

most visibly Agapida's strict Catholicism and glorification of the figure of King Ferdinand II of Aragon. In the margin between the main text and its footnotes, the narrative line of *Chronicle* suddenly disperses into a kaleidoscopic array of different viewpoints.

A comparable effect of multiplication comes into view in the early pages of *Alhambra*, which significantly opens with a dedication to the Scottish painter David Wilkie. It was Wilkie who, thanks to his passion for all things Spanish and Moorish, inspired Irving to travel to Granada and familiarize with its medieval and oriental heritage. Addressing his friend in this introductory epistle, the author recalls the "scenes and incidents in the streets, which reminded us of passages in the 'Arabian Nights'", as well as the fact that Wilkie urged him "to write something that should illustrate those peculiarities" – something, Irving adds, "'in the Harun Alraschid style'"<sup>12</sup>. In addition, he explicitly tells Wilkie: "you are, in some degree, responsible for the present work"<sup>13</sup>. On the one hand, this statement is a more or less conventional manifestation of friendship and respect. On the other, it intimates that Irving's writing of Granada stems from an almost joint authorial operation. Encoding his narrative as a series of "Arabesque" sketches" modelled on the structure of the *Arabian Nights*, as requested by Wilkie, Irving shares with the latter the paternity of the work and casts *Alhambra* as a polyphonic performance. In other words, the opening paratext enmeshes the text's origins in a plurality of subjectivities that, at this stage, comprise Irving, his *persona* Geoffrey Crayon and Wilkie<sup>14</sup>.

These two passages belong to paratextual forms – the dedication and the footnote – that make patent how Irving put Granada's space into discourse by way of multiple and intersecting mechanisms of focalization. In both cases, the act of transcription relies on a pluralization of the (real or fictional) subjectivities conveying the other place. Featuring a multiplication of the authorial function, especially with regard to what Irving would term his "control" over the narrative materials, the passages reveal how the selection, organization and redistribution of discursive enunciations responds to an all-encompassing logic of dispersal<sup>15</sup>. And in *Chronicle* and *Alhambra* the narrative materials are notoriously multifarious. As Pere Gifra-Adroher has noted, "Irving's representation of Spain can be conceived as a progressive attempt to articulate his romantic, ethnographic, touristic, and historical view of that country through such diverse genres as travel

12 W. Irving, *The Alhambra; or the New Sketch Book*. Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1832, p. v.

13 Irving, *The Alhambra*, p. v.

14 The first (London) edition, published by Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, bears the following title: *The Alhambra. By Geoffrey Crayon, Author of 'The Sketch Book,' 'Bracebridge Hall,' 'Tales of a Traveller,' &c.*

15 On control, selection, organization and redistribution as crucial protocols in the formation of discourses, see M. Foucault, *L'Ordre du discours*. Paris: Gallimard, 1971, p. 10.

book, biography, mock epic, and sketchbook”; and especially in *Alhambra* the narrative is located “between history and romance in a text liable to be read as an ethnographic account”<sup>16</sup>. The hybrid make-up of Irving’s works about Granada stems from an intersection of intertextual and intratextual levels dictating how formal patterns and thematic threads are narrativized. Essential to this process is the interplay of genres and subgenres resulting from Romantic-period revisions of traditionally fixed generic codes into flexible heuristic tools facilitating the delineation of new literary objects<sup>17</sup>.

Filtered through the aesthetic codes of the picturesque and the sublime, Romantic images of Granada and the Alhambra tend to consign these places to the spheres of the unsayable and the unattainable, turning them into expressions of a surplus of signification that can only be communicated through images of excess, the fantastic, the supernatural, the indescribable and the evanescent (as in the frequent recourse to the *ubi sunt* topos). By the same token, and in contrast to the impossibility of expressing Granada’s cultural geography, Romantic authors experiment with countless ways of narrating it – most visibly, as in Irving’s texts, through the interlacing of a variety of patterns and materials. In this perspective, *Chronicle* draws upon Pérez de Hita’s *Guerras civiles*, late-medieval and Renaissance chronicles, Edmund Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the contemporary historical novel as made popular by the Scottish sisters Anna Maria and Jane Porter, as well as Walter Scott’s reformulation of historical fiction, that was indebted both to the Porter sisters and to Scottish Enlightenment conjectural historiography. *Alhambra*, in turn, draws on techniques of framing and embedded narratives typical of the *Arabian Nights* and *Don Quijote*, Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and the eighteenth-century Oriental tale, the American tradition of the *sketch* (which had originally made Irving famous) and Byron’s reinvention of the travel narrative, in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812-18), pivoting around a fragmented subjectivity destined to immerse itself in the geo-cultural intricacies of an other place.

This array of models for transcribing the inexpressible space of Granada amounts to a proliferation of intertextual (generic, formal, thematic) codes that parallels the intratextual multiplication of positions of enunciation in Irving’s works. Such models correspond to what may be termed Irving’s distinctly polyphonic way of putting space into discourse<sup>18</sup>. This emerges from the dedication of

16 P. Gifra-Adroher, *Between History and Romance: Travel Writing on Spain in the Early Nineteenth-Century United States*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000, pp. 23, 24.

17 See T. Rajan, “Theories of Genre”, in H.G. Nisbet and C. Rawson (ed.): *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*. Vol. 5: M. Brown (ed.): *Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 226-49.

18 On the practice of “polyphonic narration”, a concept that stems from Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism, M.-P. Malcuzyński notes that it “implies that the unity of several consciousnesses

*Alhambra* to Wilkie, where the image of the arabesque encapsulates a promissory affiliation to a multifaceted narrative practice which keeps the text in a state of constant mutation through the avoidance of single and exclusive points of view and focalizations. The epistle to Wilkie makes plain Irving's intention to multiply and disperse the authorial function and its attributes of discursive authority and control. The same preoccupation sustains the dialectic of sources and *auctoritates* in *Chronicle*, where, as seen above, footnotes function as spaces of polyphonic interaction in which facts are turned into discourse through a chorus of converging (or diverging) voices.

#### THE MULTIPLE VOICES OF HISTORY

Irving translates Granada into discourse by conjuring up narratives which are not exclusively under his own control and in which, by contrast, the narrator's authority is transferred to a variable number of enunciative subjects. In view of the deeply intertextual nature of *Chronicle* and *Alhambra*, this narrative method also draws upon the revised models of historiography promoted in the Romantic period. Indeed, as Ann Rigney has shown, in this transitional phase historians began to come to terms with the issue of the "representability" of the past as reality; in other words, they started to problematize the question of an "aesthetic effect that is directly linked to the representational function of historical writing"<sup>19</sup>. One crucial concern, therefore, was to determine the nature and scope of acts of representation aimed "to establish a meaningful relationship between something that is presented (in this case, the information presented in a text) and something that is permanently absent", the events of the past<sup>20</sup>. Accordingly, a distinctive priority of Romantic historicism regards the intersection between emergent forms of documentary realism in historiography and the use of personalized points of view over past events, or an epistemic validation of subjective historical narration. If, as Stephen Bann remarks, it was in the Romantic period that "'subjects' (poets, artists, historians) began to intervene discursively in the story of the past", by extension, and in view of the adjacent generic status of fiction and historiography at the time, we can also ascribe such discursive interventions to the presence of

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is constituted by their interdependent interaction in relation to the whole, of which the consequent diversification is the unifying totality". M.-P. Malcuzyński, "Polyphonic Theory and Contemporary Literary Practices", in *Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature*, vol. 9 (1984), p. 78. More specifically, on the polyphonic tendencies of Romantic-period fiction, see M. Spiridon, "Torn Halves: Romantic Narrative Fiction between Homophony and Polyphony", in G. Gillespie, M. Engel, B. Dieterle (ed.): *Romantic Prose Fiction*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008, pp. 435-51.

<sup>19</sup> See A. Rigney, *Imperfect Histories: The Elusive Past and the Legacy of Romantic Historicism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Rigney, *Imperfect Histories*, p. 25.



potentially multiple intratextual subjectivities<sup>21</sup>. The inevitable reference, in this case, is to Walter Scott and his epoch-making reformulation of the link between historiography and fictional writing. Moreover, in Irving’s case, the partly alternative model elaborated by William Godwin may be equally significant.

The well documented personal connection between Irving and Scott dated back to their meeting at Abbotsford in 1817, an event which allegedly caused the American’s conversion to Romanticism in its medievalist and exotic manifestations<sup>22</sup>. Scott had already gained universal plaudit as a novelist, even though his identity was still officially concealed under the pseudonym of ‘The Author of *Waverley*’, the novel of 1814 that marked his gradual transition from poetry to prose and inaugurated what he termed ‘the *Waverley* series’. In the introductory chapter of this work, Scott emphasized the relevance of subjectivity and subjective perceptions to his combination of history and fiction – “my tale is more a description of men than manners” – and defined his aim as that of “throwing the force of my narrative upon the characters and passions of the actors; – those passions common to men in all stages of society, and which have all alike agitated the human heart”, even in different historical periods presenting different customs<sup>23</sup>. The past is a stage and the men (and women) living in it are its actors. Writing history therefore amounts to investing in its performative potential and the multiplicity of subjects that take part in the action.

If Irving knew Scott’s novel and was familiar with his fictional-historiographic model, he may also have known Godwin’s earlier reflections in “Of History and Romance” (1797). It is indeed plausible that Irving was acquainted with Godwin’s essay because, as with Scott, he had direct links with the radical philosopher and novelist. Godwin had read and appreciated the second issue of the *Sketch Book* and Irving was aware of his praise; while later – in the ‘Spanish’ year of 1829 – Irving acted as Godwin’s literary agent in trying to secure a contract with an American publisher for his latest novel, *Cloudesley*, that was eventually published in 1830<sup>24</sup>. In “Of History and Romance”, Godwin’s discussion of the interconnections between historical and fictional writing and the importance of a subject-based focus anticipates Scott’s in spite of some conspicuous divergences stemming from Godwin’s rejection of the probabilistic approach promoted by Scottish Enlightenment historiography<sup>25</sup>. As part of the wider pedagogic project

21 S. Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History*. New York: Twayne, 1995, p. 81.

22 See K. Sutherland, “Walter Scott and Washington Irving: ‘Editors of the Land of Utopia’”, in *American Studies*, vol. 10 (1976), pp. 85-90.

23 Sir W. Scott, *Waverley; or, ’Tis Sixty Years Since*, Claire Lamont (ed.). Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 4, 5.

24 Irving, *Life and Letters*, vol. I, p. 422; vol. II, pp. 116-17.

25 See T. Rajan, “Introduction”, in M. Shelley, *Valperga; or, The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca*, T. Rajan (ed.). Peterborough: Broadview, 1998, p. 19.

centred on *The Enquirer* (1797), Godwin's statements in his essay have a characteristic ring of intransigence about them. Thus he asserts that "He who would study the history of nations abstracted from individuals whose passions and peculiarities are interesting to our minds, will find it a dry and frigid science. It will supply him with no clear ideas"<sup>26</sup>. As with the fictional author's, the historian's task is "[to] mark the operation of human passions" in order to reconstruct those "characters in history" that may provide an edifying *exemplum* for readers<sup>27</sup>. The outcome would be a hybrid mode of historical narrative, "a composition in which, with a scanty substratum of facts and dates, the writer interweaves a number of happy, ingenious and instructive inventions, blending them into one continuous and indiscernible mass"<sup>28</sup>. This translation of facts into discourse produces what Godwin defines as "historical romance", for, in his view, "The writer of romance is ... the writer of real history"<sup>29</sup>.

Godwin's and Scott's reflections testify to a generalized concern with the status of fictional and historical writing, their comparability and interconnections, a preoccupation that bears crucially on the polyphonic texture of Irving's narratives on Granada<sup>30</sup>. In consequence, these works repeatedly and emphatically grant different levels of epistemological validity to historiography and fiction, respectively. In *Chronicle*, Irving denounces poets and their distortions of reality (see the *incipit* of chapter XLII), and by this token chooses to leave out the episode of the massacre of the Abencerrages, which he also handles with great care in *Alhambra*, for it does not belong to the realm of "sober history"<sup>31</sup>. Yet, the line he draws between fiction and history, or legends and facts, does not prevent him from intervening in his narratives in the style of the Romantic subjective narrators of history posited by Bann; nor does it hinder his recourse to pluralized enunciative positions as a way of constructing a multifaceted discourse, as seen in the paratextual instances examined above.

In this light, Irving's creation of the *persona* of Agapida in *Chronicle* signifies more than the mere invention (based on a fairly worn-out stratagem) of the

26 W. Godwin, "Of History and Romance", in M. Shelley, *Valperga*, p. 469.

27 Godwin, "Of History and Romance", pp. 470-1.

28 Godwin, "Of History and Romance", pp. 472-3.

29 Godwin, "Of History and Romance", p. 473.

30 About Irving and history-writing, see R. Adorno, "Washington Irving's Romantic Hispanism and its Columbian Legacies", in R. L. Kagan (ed.): *Spain in America: The Origins of Hispanism in the United States*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 56-9, and on his admixtures of history and romance, see J. Frey, "Irving, Chateaubriand, and the Historical Romance of Granada", in S. Brodwin (ed.): *The Old and New World Romanticism of Washington Irving*, New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1986, pp. 91-104.

31 Irving, *The Alhambra*, p. 324. On the intersection of fact and fiction in *Alhambra*, see J. Rubin-Dorsky, "The Alhambra: Washington Irving's House of Fiction", in *Studies in American Fiction*, vol. 11 (1983), pp. 171-88.

fictitious author of a supposedly found manuscript. On the subject of Agapida, he wrote to Alexander H. Everett on 14 February 1829: “I have adopted a *nom de guerre*, as allowing me a freer scope in touching up and colouring the subject from my imagination”; to which he added: “I received recently a diploma as corresponding member of the Royal Academy of History in Madrid”<sup>32</sup>. He once again interweaves fictional and historical writings by combining the imaginative purchase ensured by the *persona* of Agapida and his pride in the public and institutional recognition for his historiographic efforts. The friar is pivotal to Irving’s admixture of fiction and “sober history” and its attendant multiplication of voices; and, in actual fact, he devotes much of the introduction in *Chronicle* to substantiate and celebrate this ‘obscure’ author. It is no surprise, then, that Irving was seriously unhappy when, on publishing his work, John Murray added the author’s name to the frontispiece. Irving complained to his brother Peter in the following terms:

I observe he has altered the title-page. I had put “A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, by Fray Antonio Agapida.” He has inserted my name, - I presume to make the work more immediately salable, but it is an unwarrantable liberty, and makes me gravely, in my own name, tell many round untruths. I here openly make myself responsible as an author for the existence of the manuscript of Agapida, etc., etc. Literary mystifications are excusable when given anonymously or under feigned names, but are impudent deceptions when sanctioned by an author’s real name.<sup>33</sup>

These words lay bare several fundamental issues. One of them is undoubtedly the fact that Murray’s addition invalidated Irving’s reprise of the stratagem of the feigned manuscript. This evidently raised the spectre of charges of mystification. Yet, between the lines there lies also Irving’s resentment at the fact that Murray’s unilateral decision effectively simplified the polyphony of voices characterizing his operation of discursive transposition in *Chronicle* by eliding the pseudonym that emblemizes and guarantees this plurality.

#### Narrating Granada: Polyphonies, Multiplications and Dispersals

The opening sentences of *Chronicle* multiply the foci of discursive enunciation in ways that affect the roles of author, transcriber and translator with potentially disconcerting effects:

<sup>32</sup> Irving, *Life and Letters*, vol. II, p. 95.

<sup>33</sup> Irving, *Life and Letters*, vol. II, p. 97.

The history of those desperate and bloody wars, observes Fray Antonio Agapida, which have filled the world with rumour and astonishment, and have determined the fate of mighty empires, has ever been considered as a theme worthy of the pen of the philosopher and the study of the sage ... Listen, then, while from the solitude of my cell I narrate the events of the conquest of Granada...<sup>34</sup>

These remarks introduce a narrative which, in the absence of quotation marks, readers are induced to ascribe to the initial enunciative subject – the Catholic chronicler Agapida. In reality, since what follows is the translator/compiler's account, we are reading a mediated transposition of Agapida's words into what Irving presents as a "superstructure reared upon the fragments which remain of his work"<sup>35</sup>. But the separation between Agapida's voice, which *de facto* initiates the narrative, and that of the translator/compiler is far from clear-cut. The friar's voice can be unequivocally heard again only near the end of the chapter, where, in a passage on the old king Muley Aben Hassan, we read: "He was a fierce and warlike infidel' says the catholic Fray Antonio Agapida"<sup>36</sup>. In the intervening paragraphs, the absence of a clear distinction between the opening first-person sentences and the rest of the narrative compounds two levels of subjectivity – a potentially neutral cultural mediator and an ideologically qualified *persona* – thereby producing discourse on the basis of an intersection of divergent viewpoints.

This initial move sets in train a multiplication of subjects and voices that determines how the narrative is handled, as well as the transposition of Granada's cultural geography into discourse. The most conspicuous of such strategies of multiplication is the use of *auctoritates* and their interaction in the text and footnotes, which frequently gives rise to complex dialogues involving the "opinions of certain of the most learned and devout historiographers of former times"<sup>37</sup>. Following the often erratic referencing conventions of the time, Irving introduces the names of chroniclers and historians, summarizing their divergent accounts or differing opinions, and sometimes providing literal quotations from their works, mostly in English, though sometimes also in Spanish<sup>38</sup>. These names comprise some of the best-known sources on medieval and early-modern Spanish history such as, among others, Esteban de Garibay, Fernando del Pulgar, Andrés Bernaldez, Luis de Mármol Carvajal, Antonio Conde and Juan de Mariana<sup>39</sup>. Even

34 Irving, *Chronicle*, vol. II, pp. 1-2.

35 Irving, *Chronicle*, vol. II, p. v.

36 Irving, *Chronicle*, vol. I, p. 7.

37 Irving, *Chronicle*, vol. I, p. vii.

38 See Irving, *Chronicle*, vol. II, p. 216.

39 For Irving's use of Spanish sources, although not exclusively historical ones, see L. M. Hoff-

more significantly, Irving occasionally creates his own *ad hoc* historical authorities, as in his reference to an unknown Arabian source in chapter XLV\* [*sic*]: “‘In the hands of God,’ exclaims an old Arabian chronicler, ‘is the destiny of princes: he alone giveth empire’”.<sup>40</sup> Irving intensifies the impression of authenticity of his account by invoking an ancient Moorish voice that, besides standing for the other culture, adds a touch of local colour through the reference to Muslim fatalism. By the same token, this act of historical forgery doubles as a form of cultural ventriloquism that goes to increase the number of voices involved in the act of narrating.

This strategy is also closely linked to the use of direct speech in *Chronicle* through proclamations, addresses and prophecies, which emphasize the subjective status of the actors in Irving’s *mise en scène* of Granada’s past. The author even develops entire sections of dialogue among these actors, as, for instance, the following between El Zagal and the sultana Ayxa la Horra: “‘Where is the traitor Boabdil?’ exclaimed El Zagal. ‘I know no traitor more perfidious than thyself,’ exclaimed the intrepid sultana: ‘and I trust my son is in safety, to take vengeance on thy treason’”<sup>41</sup>. The author as translator/compiler transposes the past into discourse by creating enunciations that are not merely about it, but also stem from it. He ventriloquizes the past through the characters’ emphatically subjective voices. Moreover, direct speech is not merely an attribute of individuals, but also of the people, who are accordingly identified as a collective subject. Thus, for instance, during the dramatic siege of Baza, its citizens gather their valuables and take them to their leader Mohammed ben Hassan: “‘Take these’ said they, ‘and coin them, or sell them, or pledge them for money wherewith to pay the troops’”, while “‘The women of Bara [*sic*], also, were seized with generous emulation. ‘Shall we deck ourselves with gorgeous apparel,’ said they, ‘when our country is desolate, and our defenders in want of bread’”<sup>42</sup>. With regard to the Moorish cultural dimension, Irving’s pluralized narrative offers yet another instance of voice as the vehicle for collective subjectivity – the voice of song, whether that of poets and minstrels or the people’s spontaneous (and therefore Herderian) lyrical ejaculations. A particularly eloquent example is the tuneful lament intoned by the poets of the Queen of Granada that begins: “‘Beautiful Granada,’ they exclaimed, ‘how is thy glory faded’”<sup>43</sup>. Here Irving is evidently modelling his account on Pérez de Hita’s *Guerras civiles* and its combination of prose narrative and embedded *romances*. In addition, within the text’s proliferation of voices, this introduction

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man, “Irving’s Use of Spanish Sources in *The Conquest of Granada*”, in *Hispania*, 28 (1945), pp. 483-98.

<sup>40</sup> Irving, *Chronicle*, I, p. 402.

<sup>41</sup> Irving, *Chronicle*, vol. I, p. 257.

<sup>42</sup> Irving, *Chronicle*, vol. II, p. 233.

<sup>43</sup> Irving, *Chronicle*, vol. I, p. 168.

of a simulacrum of medieval poetry also serves to provide a further instance of a collective voice, since the poets act as interpreters of a wider community of historical subjects within the polyphonic web of *Chronicle*.

Irving reprises these patterns in *Alhambra*, where, in the first chapter, he warns his readers: “I am not writing a regular narrative”<sup>44</sup>. Because of the complex mechanisms underlying his discursive transpositions of Granada, this statement does not merely allude to the work’s arabesque-like irregularity, grounded in the variety of sketches and tales composing it. It also calls attention to its subscription to a pluralized mode of voicing Granada’s cultural geography that obtains also in this seemingly less historical and more fictional narrative. This strategy is again in full view in the early sections of the book, starting from the first chapter – “The Journey” – in which the author/narrator strikes up a conversation about *Don Quijote* with his muleteer, the aptly named Sancho (Ibid.: 13). Yet, *Alhambra* shows a different arrangement of the polyphonic multiplication of enunciating subjects from the one in *Chronicle*, and thus a slightly different process of pluralization of the narrative viewpoints on Granada and the Alhambra. For this composite work features a gradual shift from the initial supremacy of the author/narrator’s voice to a later proliferation of voices that effectively transforms the multi-level narrative into a polyphonic arabesque.

After the dialogue with Sancho, the subsequent sections in the earliest part of *Alhambra* begin to introduce additional and alternative voices belonging to highly individualized subjects such as the figure of Mateo Ximenes or the less conspicuous, but highly significant, Moor of Tetuan. The narrator’s conversation with the latter in the magical surroundings of the Moorish palace, in the sketch entitled “The Court of Lions”, has a transformative effect on the structure of the book, since Irving starts the next section (“Boabdil el Chico”) as follows: “My conversation with the man in the Court of Lions, set me to musing on the singular fate of Boabdil”<sup>45</sup>. In other words, the secondary voice conditions the way in which the primary enunciating subject develops his tale. Even so, in the early part of *Alhambra*, the ‘I’ remains firmly in control of the organization of materials and the structuring and deployment of the narrative. The narrator explicitly manifests his intention “to form conjectural histories for myself”<sup>46</sup>, thus overtly combining the pivotal role of subjectivity in Irving’s story-telling and the “conjectural” mode of history-writing popularized by the Scottish Enlightenment. This statement also makes manifest the narrator’s reluctance to relinquish his hold over the narrative.

<sup>44</sup> Irving, *Alhambra*, p. 11. Pere Gifra-Adroher remarks on the connections between *Chronicle* and *Alhambra*, and particularly on the fact that the combination of history and romance in the former anticipates the latter work’s admixture of these modes (*Between History*, p. 146).

<sup>45</sup> Irving, *Alhambra*, p. 81.

<sup>46</sup> Irving, *Alhambra*, p. 92.

Yet, Irving’s approach begins to change as soon as other stories emerge and intersect with the main narrative through a process of textual embedding. In “The Adventure of the Mason”, Mateo’s voice takes over and soon introduces a chorus of other voices in what becomes an intensely dialogic tale. Thereafter, the narrator progressively abandons his enunciative primacy and his voice starts to disperse into a choir of other voices, as the model of the “Mason” is reprised and expanded in the “Legend of the Governor and the Notary” and the “Legend of the Governor and the Soldier”. Significantly, in “Visitors to the Alhambra”, Irving’s *persona* declares “My dream of absolute sovereignty is at an end”<sup>47</sup>, and then goes on to describe a joyful gathering that brings life and bustle to the usually silent and melancholy halls of the Nasrid palace. Here he draws attention to the fact that, besides dancing and other forms of entertainment, “On this festive occasion several curious and amusing legends and traditions were told”<sup>48</sup>. Irving views the Alhambra both as an architectural structure and as a repository of narratives, what he calls, in an eloquent phrase from the highly revised 1851 edition, “a stronghold for popular fictions”<sup>49</sup>. Spontaneously emerging from the voices assembled at the feast, these tales are then transcribed in the section that goes from “The Legend of Prince Ahmed al-Kamel” to “The Legend of the Two Discreet Statues”. This act of collecting and inscribing obviously begs to be read in terms of the intertextual links connecting Irving’s work, the *Arabian Nights* and *Don Quijote*. However, when seen in terms of enunciation and subjectivity, it also reveals that the tales in *Alhambra* are Irving’s and yet not entirely his own. He controls them because he collects, translates and transcribes them, but he does not master them completely. Rather, he attributes them to, or shares them with, a plurality of dispersed enunciative subjects, and thus with several other sources of authority.

Irving illustrates and vindicates this polyphonic geo-cultural operation in his own review of *Chronicle* in the *Quarterly* for May 1830. As Javier Villoria Prieto notes, in this article Irving aimed to “exponer las razones y el proceso que siguió en la gestación” of his work<sup>50</sup>. But the essay also constitutes a remarkable, because far from common, instance of self- and meta-criticism that usefully throws into relief the polyphonic mechanisms of *Chronicle* and, at a later stage and in modified form, of *Alhambra*. Commenting on the events of the last years of the kingdom of Granada, Irving observes: “It was one of those cases in which history rises superior to fiction. The author seems to have been satisfied of this fact, by the

47 Irving, *Alhambra*, p. 177.

48 Irving, *Alhambra*, p. 181.

49 W. Irving, *The Alhambra*, in: *The Works of Washington Irving*, Fulton Edition, New York: Century, 1901, p. 138.

50 J. Villoria Prieto, *Washington Irving en España: cien años de traducciones*, León: Universidad de León, Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1998, p. 177.



manner in which he has constructed the present work. The idea of it, we are told, was suggested to him, while in Spain, occupied upon his *History of the Life and Voyages of Columbus*<sup>51</sup>. In keeping with the stylistic and ideological conventions of Romantic-period literary review magazines, the author subordinates his own individual identity to the first-person plural sustaining the notion of a community grounded on shared discourse by which these publications authorized their critical interventions<sup>52</sup>. In this fashion, Irving detaches his voice from his own self on those occasions when he refers to “Mr. Irving” or, even more dramatically, when, as the spokesman for the *Quarterly*’s corporate identity, he declares the narration of *Chronicle* incomplete and sets about expanding it in the review: “Here ends the *Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*, for here the author lets fall the curtain. We shall, however, extend our view a little further”<sup>53</sup>. In a further instance of his meta-critical reflection on, and exemplification of, his polyphonic construction of Granada, he assesses the invention of Agapida as “another circumstance, by which Mr. Irving has more seriously impaired the *ex-facie* credibility of his narrative. He has professed to derive his materials from the manuscripts of an ancient Spanish monk”<sup>54</sup>. Thus, as his own reviewer, Irving takes himself to task for the problematic creation of Agapida, whose dissonant voice poses a threat to the narrative’s homogeneity and reliability. Owing to Murray’s printing of his name on the frontispiece, Irving is obliged to denounce Agapida as a fictitious character and a liability for the text’s successful depiction of Granada’s history. Yet, by the same token, these references to the *persona* of the friar make patent the pluralizing drives at work in *Conquest*. If, on the one hand, the 1830 review underscores the book’s construction of Granada and the Alhambra as a combination of fictitious and historic details, on the other, it throws into relief the peculiarly significant, multiform nature of its geo-cultural discourse.

#### IRVING’S GRANADA IN BRITISH AND TRANSATLANTIC ROMANTICISM

The residence in Madrid of my friend, the late Mr. Alexander Hill Everett, who ably represented his country for several years at the court of Spain; and the subsequent residence there, in the same high position, of my friend, Mr. Washington Irving, equally honored on

51 [W. Irving], “Review of *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*”, in *Quarterly Review*, vol. 43 (May 1830), p. 56.

52 On the linguistic conventions of Romantic-period literary reviews and their construction of an ideologically connoted community of discourse, see T. Mole, “Introduction”, in N. Mason (gen. ed.): *Blackwood’s Magazine, 1817-25: Selections from Maga’s Infancy*, 6 vols. Vol. 5: T. More (ed.), *Selected Criticism, 1817-19*, London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006, pp. ix-xxiii.

53 [W. Irving], “Review”, pp. 56, 78.

54 [W. Irving], “Review”, p. 57.



both sides of the Atlantic, but especially cherished by Spaniards for the enduring monument he has erected to the history of their early adventures, and for the charming fictions, whose scene he has laid in their romantic country; – these fortunate circumstances naturally opened to me whatever facilities for collecting books could be afforded by the kindness of persons in places so distinguished, or by their desire to spread among their countrymen at home a literature they knew so well and loved so much.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, in the preface to his *History of Spanish Literature* (1849), George Ticknor acknowledges his bibliographic debt of gratitude towards Washington Irving, while at the same time celebrating his friend’s Spanish-themed works. He subsequently expresses his obligations to Obadiah Rich (“the same bibliographer to whom Mr. Irving and Mr. Prescott have avowed similar obligations”)<sup>56</sup>, the American bibliophile resident in Madrid, who had collaborated with Irving and the historian William Hickerling Prescott, as well as with the Arabist Pascual de Gayangos. Ticknor’s remarks, therefore, grant Irving a secure place in one of the most authoritative and productive circles of English-speaking Hispanists of the early to mid-nineteenth century, all of whom gave vital contributions to the transposition into discourse of Spain, its culture and its past. Here Ticknor – who, in the first volume of his *History*, invites readers to consult Irving’s *Life of Columbus* – envisages his friend’s narrative constructions of Granada as part of a collective labour of discursive translation combining fictional and factual contributions, as well as literary and historical ones<sup>57</sup>. Threaded through with several competing generic and thematic codes, Irving’s polyphonic works belong to a varied space of cultural re-elaboration exerting a wide-ranging influence on subsequent inscriptions of Granada and the Alhambra.

Indeed, the impact of Irving’s pluralized production of Granada’s space, and especially that of *Chronicle*, is in full sight in an eminently hybrid work such as *The Tourist in Spain: Granada* (1835), one of “Jennings’ Landscape Annuals”, written by Thomas Roscoe and illustrated by David Roberts. From the outset, Roscoe places his narrative under the aegis of Irving’s work, for, already in the description of the frontispiece engraving of the hilltop town of Luque, Roscoe

55 G. Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, 3 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1849, I, p. viii.

56 Ticknor, *History*, vol. I, p. viii.

57 Pere Gifra-Adroher defines Irving’s “textual construction of Spain” as a “cumulative process where history and romance mingled with the descriptive and inscriptive discourse of the amateur anthropologist” (*Between History*, pp. 125-6). See also D. Saglia, “Iberian Translations: Writing Spain into British Culture, 1780-1830”, in J. M. Almeida (ed.): *Romanticism and the Anglo-Hispanic Imaginary*, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2010, pp. 25-51.

directs his reader to the “very interesting Chronicle of Granada by Mr. Irving”<sup>58</sup>. Further on, in his account of the siege and conquest of Loja, Roscoe acknowledges his debt towards “the admirable work of Washington Irving”, especially for its depiction of the indomitable spirit of the town’s population<sup>59</sup>. Similarly, in order to confirm the existence of a monastery dedicated to San Francisco in La Zubia, Roscoe again refers to the work of “that agreeable modern chronicler, – Washington Irving”<sup>60</sup>. Although on occasion, as in the case of the massacre of the Abencerrages and the liaison between the Abencerrage and Boabdil’s Queen, Roscoe and Irving part company, the former generally subscribes to, and relies on, the American’s delineation of Granada’s cultural geography in *Chronicle* for its verisimilitude as a “strictly historic” source<sup>61</sup>. Irving’s work thus functions as a repository of documentary information about Granada, its kingdom and the Alhambra, and one that is all the more valuable because it interweaves a compilation of ancient histories and chronicles with a first-person account of this territory.

Roscoe’s narrative is a historical romance mixed with travelogue and high-quality illustrations, a hybrid text that is fully in keeping with the multiplicity of codes and voices in Irving’s *Chronicle*. Yet, from a more rigorous disciplinary perspective, the historical validity of the latter work was also acknowledged by William Hickerling Prescott, one of the foremost representatives of nineteenth-century Spanish historiography in English. In October 1829, the future author of the monumental *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic* (1837) published a piece on Irving’s *Chronicle* in the *North American Review*, the first half of which is an erudite excursus on the key issues in history-writing from antiquity to the present day. As for the contemporary period, Prescott indicates two main modes of historiography, which he terms ‘philosophical’ and ‘narrative history’, respectively. Ascribing *Chronicle* to the second type, Prescott discusses Irving’s use of sources, which he presents as congruent with common scholarly practice, and the role of Agapida, whom he does not treat as a supernumerary contrivance, but rather as an additional voice that enriches Irving’s narrative. His conclusion on *Chronicle* is that “we may honestly recommend it as substantially

<sup>58</sup> Jennings’ *Landscape Annual for 1835, or The Tourist in Spain: Granada, illustrated from drawings by David Roberts*. London: Robert Jennings and co., 1835, p. x.

<sup>59</sup> Jennings’ *Landscape Annual*, pp. 163, 184.

<sup>60</sup> Jennings’ *Landscape Annual*, p. 249.

<sup>61</sup> Whereas Irving rejects these events as legendary, Roscoe develops them fully in his narrative. In the case of the massacre of the Abencerrages, in particular, he adds a footnote to his description of this episode and the blood-coloured stains in the fountain of the Hall of the Abencerrages. In this note, he explains that “It has more recently been strongly questioned if it [the massacre] ever occurred; but we are taking the popular and romantic, not a strictly historic view of the fall of the Moors” (*Alhambra*, p. 192).

an authentic record of one of the most interesting, and, as far as English scholars are concerned, one of the most untravelled portions of Spanish history”<sup>62</sup>. Later, in the preface to *Ferdinand and Isabella*, Prescott praised Irving’s narratives on Granada. There, possibly erring on the side of generosity, he asserts that they have inevitably deprived his own work of the “charm of novelty”<sup>63</sup>. And in chapter X, centred on the “War of Granada” and the episode of the “Rout in the Axarquia”, he resorts to Irving as a reliable source to illustrate the toponym “La cuesta de la matanza”<sup>64</sup>. Once again, as in Roscoe’s *Tourist in Spain*, the documentary solidity of Irving’s ‘multifocal’ geo-cultural construct is beyond question<sup>65</sup>.

Irving’s impact on more specifically literary discourse was equally widespread and pervasive. Together with Byron, Felicia Hemans, Robert Southey, Letitia Elizabeth Landon and John Gibson Lockhart, he made an essential contribution to the expansion and diffusion of the Spanish-Moorish theme in Romantic-period literature in Britain and America. Indeed, Irving’s works on Granada were employed as sources of historical information in fictional and, in particular, novelistic accounts that constitute one of the most conspicuous manifestations of the nineteenth-century obsession with this cultural geography<sup>66</sup>. Thus, the intersection of fiction and history in Irving’s *Chronicle* is directly relevant to *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck* (1830) by Mary Shelley, who, as Godwin’s daughter, was obviously conversant with her father’s writings on history and romance. In this novel, set mainly in the last decade of the fifteenth century, Edmund Plantagenet, the illegitimate son of Richard III, goes in search of his cousin, Richard, Duke of York (son of Edward IV and one of the two ‘Princes in the Tower’), and reaches a Kingdom of Granada in the last years of the war with Castile and Aragon. In the first note to chapter XI, Book I, the author observes:

I had originally entered more at large on a description of Andalusia, and the history of the conquest of Granada. The subsequent publication of Mr. Washington Irving’s very interesting work has superseded the necessity of this deviation from the straight path of

62 W.H. Prescott, “Review of *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*”, in *North American Review*, vol. 29 (October 1829), p. 314.

63 W.H. Prescott, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*, 3 vols. Boston: Phillips, Sampson & co., 1856, p. xi.

64 Prescott, *History*, p. 367.

65 On Irving’s influence on Prescott, see also D. Howarth, *The Invention of Spain: Cultural Relations between Britain and Spain 1770-1870*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007, p. 102.

66 For a preliminary overview on the theme of Moorish Granada in nineteenth-century British and American literature, see M.S. Carrasco Urgoiti, *El moro de Granada en la literatura (del siglo XV al XIX)*. Estudio preliminar por Juan Martínez Ruiz. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1989 [1956], pp. 252-7.

my story. Events which, in their romantic detail, were before only to be found in old Spanish folios, are now accessible to every English reader, adorned by the elegance of style, and arranged with the exquisite taste, which characterize the very delightful “Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada”.<sup>67</sup>

Highlighting Irving’s *Chronicle* as a major source on Granada, Shelley implicitly classifies it as a discursive archive, a repository of all that is known about this subject, and one that is both orderly organized (‘arranged’) and up to date (in contrast with the ancient folios). In other words, she acknowledges the success of Irving’s discursive transposition and its reliable and suggestive evocations. An instance of narrative history recalling Godwin’s imbrication of history and romance, *Chronicle* influences how Shelley’s historical romance conjures up Granada in accordance with her father’s approach based on historical possibility, rather than the probabilism favoured by Scottish historians.

Mid-nineteenth-century poetry also shows numerous traces of the influence of Irving’s accounts of Granada. Building on their Romantic predecessors’ popularization of Spanish-Moorish themes, mid-century poets imaginatively explored and colonized the Alhambra on both sides of the Atlantic, often taking their bearings from the discursive matrix provided by Irving’s works. Thus, Louisa Anne Meredith, in her “Spanish Song” beginning “Softly glimmers the evening star”, informs her readers that its composition was “Suggested by a description in ‘The Alhambra,’ by Washington Irving, Esq.”<sup>68</sup>. The later ballad “The Christian and the Moor: A Legend of Granada”, by Peter John Allan (of New Brunswick in Canada), published in his *Poetical Remains* (1853), narrates the episode of Garcilaso and the Moor Tarfe. As the poet admiringly adds in a note, “The following ballad is taken from Irving’s ‘Conquest of Granada.’ Would that my verse were half as spirited as his prose!”<sup>69</sup>. Precisely because they are the products of marginal figures, both poems are significant testimonies to the lyrical and narrative potentialities of Granada’s cultural geography that literally stem (“suggested”, “taken”) from the repertoires of *Chronicle* and *Alhambra*. Offering themselves as textual filiations of Irving’s Spanish-Moorish discourse, these poetic utterances testify further to the productive effects of his polyphonic constructions of Granada and the Alhambra.

67 *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck*, ed. D. Devin Fischer. Vol. 5 in: N. Crook with P. Clemit (gen. ed.), *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley*, 8 vols. London: Pickering & Chatto, 1996, p. 85.

68 L.A. Meredith, *Poems by Louisa Anne Twamley with Original Illustrations, Drawn and Etched by the Authoress*. London: Charles Tilt, 1835, p. 139.

69 P.J. Allan, *The Poetical Remains of Peter John Allan, Esq., Late of Fredericton, New Brunswick*. With a Short Biographical Notice. Edited by the Rev. Henry Christmas. London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1853, p. 86.

Additional examples of the hold of Irving’s cultural geography of Granada over the mid-century literary imagination appear in a host of other fictional works, among which are Elizabeth Gaskell’s well-known *North and South* (1854-55) and the American Lydia Maria Francis Child’s less familiar *A Romance of the Republic* (1867). But the few instances examined above may be sufficient to illustrate the major lines of impact and textual uses of Irving’s discursive production of Granada and its status as an *auctoritas* on this reality, both past and present. Irving’s accounts subsume this geo-cultural dimension in its entirety, and later works from different discursive areas call upon them as an organized and exhaustive archive of knowledge. Importantly, Irving’s texts are valued also in that they offer impactful inscriptions of direct experience of the *other* place and culture which, accordingly, become present and available for further reinscriptions in fictional and factual accounts.

The fact that Irving’s constructions of Granada were generally available to be re-elaborated in different forms of discourse is somehow rooted in their shared intertextual mechanisms – most visibly annotation, quotation and the exchanges between written and lived experience of Granada’s geo-cultural environment. These uses variously bear witness to the impact of Irving’s narrative practice based on the subject’s primacy and the multiplication of the narrator’s function into a polyphony of conflicting voices. The efficacy of his narrative and discursive operation is thus also demonstrated by the fact that it gives rise to new discursive transpositions which are explicitly connected with his pluralized narratives and hybridized constructions. In other words, the reasons for Irving’s centrality in the creation of a discourse on Granada and the Alhambra for British and American Romantic and post-Romantic culture lie also in the narrative texture of his works. *Chronicle* and *Alhambra* are the point of convergence of forms of knowledge that are reworked through polyphonic multiplications and then spill over into different discursive renditions combining the oneiric and the historical, fact and fiction. It is the carefully crafted irregularity of Irving’s discourse on Granada that ensured its success and proliferation, prompting that relentless process of creation and recreation of images, histories and stories that characterized the discourse on Granada and the Alhambra in nineteenth-century Transatlantic literature.

