

CHAPTER 10

BIOGRAPHIES FOR A CAUDILLO AFTER A WAR: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL COMMENTARY ON BIOGRAPHIES OF FRANCO

Enrique Moradiellos

Translated from Spanish by Alison Pinnington and Helen Graham

In January 1936, the British Ambassador to Madrid, Sir Henry Chilton, in his routine annual report to the Foreign Office on 'leading personalities' within the Spanish arena, wrote a brief biographical note on 'el general de División Francisco Franco'. In it, he stressed the professional merits already achieved by the rising figure of the young general, and also Franco's clear preference for traditionalist social and political order, making him a decided opponent of revolutionary change; but Chilton also indicated what was then Franco's canny, careerist aloofness from any formal political commitment to either monarchist or Republican politics:

Born at Ferrol on the 14th [sic] December 1892. An infantry officer who served with great distinction in Morocco, where he commanded the Foreign Legion from 1923 to 1926. He played a conspicuous part in the occupation of the Ajdir sector, for which he was promoted to Brigadier-General. On creating the General Military Academy at Saragossa in 1928, General Primo de Rivera appointed him its first Commandant. When this academy was closed under the first Republican Government, General Franco was appointed to the 15th Infantry Brigade. In 1933 he became Military Commander of the Balearic Islands. In February 1935 he was appointed Commander-in-chief, Morocco, but was called home in May after Sr Gil Robles had become War Minister, to be chief of the Central General Staff. He was promoted to his present rank in March 1934. A fearless officer, clever tactician, popular commander, General Franco is one of the most prominent officers in the Spanish Army, and has now the almost unique record among senior officers of being as much appreciated by Republican War Ministers as he was formerly by Ministers under the Monarchy. He is regarded as a 'national power'. He acted as principal adviser to the War Minister in many aspects of the military campaign in October 1934 in Asturias. General Franco belongs to a family of distinguished soldiers. His brother, Don Ramón, is the well-known airman.¹

If in the middle of 1936 Franco was simply a distinguished general, just three years later he had become the Caudillo of Spain, the most important and decisive political and institutional figure within the political regime built by the military insurgents and their

civilian allies. In his hands were concentrated a wide range of executive, legislative and judicial powers unparalleled in modern Spanish history. It was a process that began on 1 October 1936 when the Junta de Defensa Nacional transferred to Franco the 'absolute powers of the State' as Generalísimo and leader of the Government.² Ultimately, Franco's authority as Caudillo would rest not on traditional legitimacy (by succession), nor rational or democratic (by election), but on 'charisma' – as the Francoist politician and jurist Torcuato Fernández-Miranda would explain years later, in 1960, with a reasoning clearly indebted to the political categories both of Max Weber and Carl Schmitt:

The authority (Jefatura) of the Spanish State, born of the national uprising (of July 18 1936), resides in the person of Generalísimo Franco, by virtue of the institution of the *caudillaje*. The Generalísimo is Head of State as leader of the Crusade. . . . *El caudillaje* is an exceptional title of authority, individual, and therefore unrepeatable, that rests on a right enshrined by proclamation and through outstanding support. . . . The process of permanent civil war, latent or explicit, in Spanish life since the time of Fernando VII, reached its worst moment in the anarchy of the Second Republic, making civil war inevitable. From that war there arose out of the National Movement, inspired by the support of *la España nacional*, the leader, or Caudillo, of the Crusade, in the person of Francisco Franco. In him is located the authority of the New State.³

Given that Franco constituted the cornerstone of the political system created during the war and formalized after the victory of 1939, it is not surprising that a plentiful biographical literature appeared inside Spain. While they varied to some extent in format and scope, these were obviously apologetic works, and for the most part they were produced with official support. Indeed, the almost forty years of Franco's personal dictatorship were enough to generate a very extensive body of biographical literature, though these are far better characterized as hagiographies than biographies. Only after Franco's death and with the dismantling of the institutions of the dictatorship, including its censorship apparatus, was it possible to publish serious or scholarly biographies of the dictator, because only then did the requisite array of primary sources begin to be available inside Spain – even if not necessarily always easily. Up until then, however, there was censorship: the regime was concerned from the outset with monitoring and controlling everything written about its origins in the civil war and about Franco's own history. To facilitate the task of the censors, described in the legal preamble as engaged upon a work of 'moral rectitude and political accuracy' dating back to the 1936 military rising, two censorship measures were implemented in 1941: one, an order from the Ministry of the Interior on 8 March 1941 required that publishers and presses present half-yearly work schedules to ensure that only 'interesting and useful works' were authorized to appear; the other a decree of the Presidency of the Government of 23 September 1941, established the need for the prior approval of the Ministry of the Army for works relating to the war of liberation or its origins.⁴

Praising a Caudillo: Francoist biographies

Amongst the raft of apologetic biographies of Franco, it is the very first one that stands out and whose influence has been most enduring. Entitled simply *Franco*, it was written by the journalist Joaquín Arrarás Iribarren in 1937 in Burgos, then Franco's general headquarters.⁵ Arrarás had known Franco for many years, and was involved in press and propaganda work for the insurgents from the beginning: it seems likely that Arrarás was the author of the biographical notes on Franco which were published in various media when he was appointed as Generalísimo and Head of State on 1 October 1936.⁶ Arrarás's biography, just over three hundred pages long, focused on Franco's life before the start of the war, and immediately and for the period of the civil war became recognized as the official version of the new Head of State's life. A great commercial success, by October 1939 the book was already in its eighth edition and had been translated into English, French, German and Italian, as well as other editions in Spanish in several Latin American countries.⁷ *Franco* served as a source of inspiration and information for newspaper reports and other subsequent biographies, largely thanks to its grandiloquent and obsequious style, as evidenced by its final fawning paragraphs:

Ambition, of any kind, does not motivate General Franco, when he embarks on an undertaking (to save Spain). Neither does he care about command, which he does not crave, nor human vanities, which he disregards, or material advantages, which do not interest him. In his prime he has reached those peaks which rarely crown prestigious men and cap a glorious military career. . . . Franco, Caudillo of the Faith and of Honour in this solemn period of history, who accepts the most glorious and overwhelming of responsibilities. . . . Franco, Crusader of the West, elected Prince of Armies in this tremendous hour, to allow Spain to accomplish the destiny of the Latin race. And may Spain crush the Antichrist of Moscow and the Cross prevail over the hammer and sickle.⁸

Similarly hagiographical was General José Millán Astray's biography *Franco, Caudillo*, published in 1939 after the defeat of the Republic.⁹ The disabled war veteran, founder of the Foreign Legion and Franco's former military commander in Morocco, Millán Astray had turned to propaganda work in Franco's HQ during the war, and this book was largely an extension of a brief sketch of Franco he had made in 1936 in a speech to cadets of the *Academia de Estado Mayor* (General Staff training school) in Valladolid during the war.¹⁰ Like Arrarás's biography, Millán Astray's depicted the heroism of Franco's military and personal journey up to the beginning of the civil war, but in this case the book followed Franco right up to his military victory in 1939. It exhibited the same providential and hagiographic spirit and an identical phobia against what it described as the Marxist-liberal-democratic and Masonic enemy.

The year 1939 also saw a biography appear aimed at younger readers. This was part of a series called the 'Children's Library' and the volume on Franco was written by the journalist Víctor Ruiz Albeniz, who had been a war correspondent under the nom de

plume of El Tebib Arruñi. This book, *La Historia de El Caudillo: Salvador de España (The Story of the Caudillo: Saviour of Spain)*¹¹ had begun life two years earlier, in 1937, as a propaganda brochure.¹² *La Historia de El Caudillo* was headed by an official portrait of Franco with the three obligatory acclamations, 'Franco, Franco, Franco! Arriba España!' ('Spain arise!'), and the caption: 'To courage and intuition, Franco added the dedication that soon gave him the status of first authority in military circles.'

With the defeat of the Italian-German Axis in 1945, these biographies, which indicated Franco's close relations with Hitler and Mussolini, became something of a liability, and this situation was not improved by new attempts such as that by Fernando de Valdesoto (the nom de plume of the journalists Joaquín Valdés Sancho and Oriol Fernando Soto), entitled *Francisco Franco*, or that of the prolific primary school inspector Ángel Pérez Rodrigo, *Franco: Una vida al servicio de la Patria (Franco: A Life of Patriotic Service)*.¹³ These works were politically at odds with the new postwar situation internationally, which posed something of a political problem for the dictatorship. It was not until journalist Luis de Galinsoga (former editor of the daily *ABC* and at that time editor of the Barcelona-based *La Vanguardia Española*) and Lieutenant Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo (Franco's cousin and head of his military household) published *Centinelas de Occidente: Semblanza biográfica de Francisco Franco (Sentinel of the West: A Portrait of Francisco Franco)* in 1956, that a biography took care to play up Franco's Second World War contacts with the Allies, although still ignoring both their equivocal nature and Franco's strong preference for the Axis.¹⁴ This biography also substantially airbrushed out Franco's anti-democratic diatribes and antisemitism in favour of a more internationally palatable and serviceable general anticommunism. The book's underlining of an anti-Communist profile, along with the projection of an equally vehement profession of Catholic faith which aligned itself with Vatican peace initiatives, served to soften and to some extent occlude the anti-democratic animus exhibited by the Franco regime during the brief period of international ostracism it suffered between 1945 and 1948.

As its title and date of appearance indicate, this new biographical portrait of Franco reflected the circumstances of the Cold War and Spain's military dependence on the United States following the dictator's sanctioning of the installation of American military bases inside Spain from September 1953. The degree of courtly flattery contained within the work can be seen even in a brief perusal of the chapter headings: 'Impassive before the siren song' (to explain the non-entry of Spain to the war, on Hitler and Mussolini's side, in 1940); 'Head unbowed before indignity' (to describe Franco's response to the international condemnation of his regime in 1945 and the veto against Spain joining the UN); 'El Pardo, Axis of the West and mediator with the East' (the chapter, whose title refers to the royal palace of El Pardo near Madrid, Franco's residence as Head of State, charted the gradual rehabilitation of the dictatorship by the Western powers from the beginning of the Cold War in 1947); and so on up to the high point of December 1955, when Spain formally joined the UN, which the authors Galinsoga and Salgado-Araujo celebrated with these words, concluding both the chapter and the book:

And the United States, the most powerful nation on earth, has realized, to its benefit and that of the whole world, that this tip of Europe, which could have been the bridgehead for communism, has become one for the diametrically opposed political camp, thanks to the presence in the Palace of El Pardo of the vigilant and far-sighted Generalísimo Franco. I am the sentry who watches while others are sleeping! Thus, while the statesmen of the United Nations were sleeping, the Sentinel of the West kept watch...¹⁵

This was a text which perfectly encapsulated the vast public distance travelled by the Franco dictatorship, towards its *modus vivendi* with the new world power, a USA which Franco and his political old guard would nevertheless continue to view as in thrall to a freemasonry as vitiating and inimical to Spanish values as communism.¹⁶

Nearly a decade later, in 1964, a new biography of Franco appeared in the form of a documentary film. It was part of the official propaganda campaign orchestrated by the Minister for Information and Tourism, Manuel Fraga Iribane, to commemorate what was termed the 'twenty-five years of peace of Franco'. The writer José María Sánchez Silva and the filmmaker José Luis Sáenz de Heredia had produced a very simple text as the script for the film that was made and distributed widely that year, and for many years afterwards, as *Franco, ese hombre (Franco, that Man)*.¹⁷ Later the text, without any major changes, was published in book form under the same title, and with a substantial set of photographs included.¹⁸ Its tone was in keeping with the official mood of those times, the years of economic growth (known as the 'years of development', *años de desarrollo*), which generated in those sectors of Spanish society who benefited therefrom (particularly the new urban middling classes) a sense of material well-being and acceptance of the regime. The portrait of Franco emphasized above all a 'man who gave [Spain] peace, work and prosperity'. The 'Victorious Caudillo' became the 'Caudillo of Peace', less heroic and more humanized, in civilian dress, with hobbies and a family life enjoyed amidst numerous grandchildren, and the recipient of support from a Spanish people united as never before with the man who won the war against communism, who miraculously preserved our neutrality and who was building a better and fairer Spain.¹⁹ In this sense, both the book and the film formed part of a new propaganda strategy by the Franco regime which now sought to appeal not so much to its original source of legitimacy, the military victory of 1939, but to a new, modernizing legitimacy derived from the socio-economic development of the 1960s.

The last major laudatory biography written during the period of the dictatorship traced Franco's career up to the start of the 1970s, and was the work of the prolific regime historian Ricardo de la Cierva. First published in the form of fifty-two collectable instalments, *Francisco Franco: un siglo de España (Francisco Franco: A Century in Spain)* it then appeared in book form in two volumes.²⁰ Certainly, given its documentary and testimonial base (la Cierva repeatedly interviewed Franco for the work), its photographic accompaniments (in colour), its length and detail, and a certain literary flourish, the work was a great improvement on previous official biographies. Nevertheless, the critical objectivity and political distance la Cierva claimed to be deploying (the work was

advertised as a 'critical biography') was nowhere in evidence, and certainly la Cierva's work was, in the end, no less favourable to Franco than earlier official versions, portraying him as the venerable and humane leader.

With la Cierva's work, the regime's attempt at political aggrionamento had, in terms of Franco biographies, gone as far as it could. After the dictator's death in November 1975, subsequent Franco biographies written from a sympathetic perspective, were, in terms of Cierva's own second Franco biography published in 1982.²¹ This took the account right up to the dictator's demise and la Cierva even sought to offer what he considered to be a historical verdict on Franco:

He was the iron surgeon dreamed of by Costa.²² He was not a scholar but a man of great professionalism and highly cultured, though he never boasted of it... This historian sincerely thinks that if, God willing, democracy is consolidated in Spain, Franco will have been right about the most important objective of all.²³

Of the pro-Franco biographies that appeared in the post-Franco era, some are particularly worthy of note: one, for the personality of its author, the veteran journalist Manuel Aznar (*Franco*, 1975), and others for their media impact, including those of the writer and former army officer, Ángel Palomino Jiménez (*Caudillo*, 1992); and the one written by present-day Spain's most controversial Francoist political commentator, of chequered ideological past, Pío Moa (*Franco: un balance histórico*, 2005).²⁴ The linetaken in these three books is summed up in the subtitle of Palomino's biography: 'A unique man who recent history has been determined to conceal'. A further noteworthy and 'authorized' biography is the one by the medievalist Luis Suárez Fernández, *Franco y su tiempo* (1984), originally published by the Francisco Franco Foundation (FNFF) in eight volumes and then reissued two years later in twenty collectable parts with extensive photographs included.²⁵ Suárez Fernández had been a senior educational policy adviser to the dictatorship in the 1960s at the height of its developmental phase, and his insider status meant he had access to unpublished documents from Franco's private archive which is not open to the public,²⁶ and still less to independent historians – although in 2006 the FNFF did make available some documentation which was microfiched and deposited in the main archive of the Spanish civil war, the Centro Documental de la Memoria Histórica in Salamanca. In this sense of having used documents not generally available, Suárez Fernández's biography is a quite singular work, although it also manages to surpass even la Cierva as an apologia. Indeed there is no critical perspective at all: even la Cierva commented that 'the splendid historical and documentary study by Professor Suárez does not contain a single criticism of the errors of Franco and ignores the final degradation of the regime.'²⁷ Or, as the French Hispanist Bartolomé Bennassar (speaking for many contemporary and later historians) wrote: '[Suárez Fernández] is assiduous in the art of the pious omission.'²⁸

Finally, an essential subset of the laudatory biographical literature on Franco is that produced by non-Spanish authors, an output which was well-received and indeed

cultivated by the dictatorship. Some of these foreign works were published during the civil war as part of the propagandacampaign abroad, including Rudolf von Timmermann's *General Franco* (1937), Georges Rotyand's *Franco et la nouvelle Espagne* (1937), and Paolo Antoldi's *Chi è Franco* (1939).²⁹ However, many more appeared in the 1960s and were published directly in Spain at a time when economic boom was coinciding with a certain regime 'rebranding' of itself as technocratic rather than totalitarian, which was of course more acceptable to Western public opinion. These include the book by French author Claude Martin, *Franco, soldado y estadista* (1965) (*Franco, Soldier and Statesman*); and two biographies by British writers, George Hills' *Franco: el hombre y su nación* (1968) (*Franco, the Man and his Nation*) and Brian Crozier's *Franco: historia y biografía* (1969) (*Franco*).³⁰ Obviously, these books had a considerable propaganda value for the dictatorship at a time of economic and socio-cultural (although not yet political) integration into Europe. Their existence allowed the Franco regime to point out that there were foreign authors (and, as such, putatively impartial) whose work praised the Spanish leader both as a soldier and a statesman.

Denouncing a Caudillo: anti-Francoist biographies during the years of the dictatorship

During the period of the dictatorship itself, anti-Franco biographies could not of course be published inside Spain. Among the defeated and fragmented anti-Franco opposition in exile it would obviously take some time before any substantive work on Franco appeared. Indeed this was an elusive goal, given that the condition of exile itself removed writers from the context they sought to analyse, generating anachronisms in perspective and sometimes negative- or counter-myth making. Nevertheless, from early on there were many articles, verbal sketches and caricatures, along with passing references to the life and character of Franco in the various journals and newspapers of the exiled anti-Franco forces (and also some, though rather fewer, among the materials circulated clandestinely and at great risk by the anti-Franco opposition inside Spain). In all possible formats – text, drawings, photographs and cartoons – this production demonized and schematized the life and character of Franco. He appeared as a cunning traitor; the mere puppet of Hitler and Mussolini or of capitalists and landowners; an ambitious, cruel and bloodthirsty dictator; an inquisitorial Catholic fanatic; and also, more curiously, as a castrated or effeminate male. The words of the exiled writer Arturo Barca in his novel *La forja de un rebelde* (*The Forging of a Rebel*) (1951) commenting on the cruelly Franco showed to both his own soldiers and enemies during his time in Morocco at the head of the Legion, serve as an example here: 'everyone hates him, just as the convicts hate the bravest killer in their gaol, he's obeyed and respected, he imposes himself on all the others, exactly like the most hardened killer imposes himself on the whole gaol'.³¹ Also well-known were the vehement and acute critiques of the prominent Spanish liberal writer and former diplomat, Salvador de Madariaga, against 'the cynical hypocrite who usurps power' in Spain as 'the leech of the West' (a witty riposte to Galinsoga and

Salgado-Araujo's *Sentinel of the West*) collected in Madariaga's widely circulated book *General, marchese usted* (1959) (*General, you must leave*):

Francisco is a devout and vulgar reactionary unable to conceive of or appreciate freedom. He is an ambitious and selfish man who failed to leave when, with Hitler's suicide, he became a terrible political burden for his homeland. . . . The most important thing for Franco is Franco. . . . Franco is a Sancho Panza, whose ambition is to eat and sleep well. But the temptation [to make the comparison] should be resisted because that would be unfair to Sancho.³²

However, it was not until the 1960s that a biography *stricto sensu* was produced by one of the members of the democratic opposition: Luis Ramírez's *Francisco Franco: historia de un mesianismo* (1964).³³ Behind this protective pseudonym was the Basque journalist and writer, Luciano Rincón Vega, who in 1971 would be tried and sentenced to six years in prison by the Tribunal de Orden Público for having dared in the biography to insult the Head of State politically and intellectually 'with his evident disrespect, imputing to Franco ideas and attitudes inconsistent with reality, exhibiting blatant contempt for his person'.³⁴ The Ramírez book was published by the exile publishing house par excellence, Ruedo Ibérico. Founded in 1961 in Paris by five Spanish Republicans and directed by the anarchist José Martínez, its huge cultural and historical significance has not yet been fully understood or recognized.

Ramírez/Rincón's book was a huge success in anti-Franco circles both in exile and also inside Spain, enjoying several reissues (three by 1973) and shaping the characterization of Franco among his opponents both inside and outside Spain. His version of Franco's character was made even clearer when the book's subtitle was modified after Franco's death, to *Francisco Franco: La obsesión de ser; la obsesión de poder* (*Francisco: The Obsession with Self and with Power*) (1976).³⁵ The Ramírez/Rincón's portrait of Franco was a mordant one:

Who is this man? A Messiah, a chosen one. . . . Franco is no longer a man; he is a slave to his own messianism, as he was before to his ambition and as a consequence of his sad spiteful impotence. But he is a Messiah before whom you have to close your eyes so as not to see his limits. . . . He is a Messiah without personality, boastful, shy, mediocre, to whom time has not given poise or confidence in his public actions, hesitant to speak, always with an interpreter because he is not a master in any language.³⁶

After the death of Franco in 1975, the process of democratic transition made the publication of more or less critical or hostile biographies and biographical sketches possible in Spain (this essay will not consider later cinematic representations of Franco, such as the documentary, *Caudillo*, made in 1977 by leading Spanish film director, Basilio Martín Patino).³⁷ Of all these later biographical sketches in textual form, it is worth mentioning the booklet written by the sociologist Amando de Miguel in collaboration

with Anna Úbeda and Jaime Martín, published in 1976 as *Francisco, Franco, Franco*, and which used as its title the Francoist triple acclamation with ironic intent.³⁸ One could also argue that it is within this genre of anti-Franco texts that we should also broadly locate the well-known literary fiction of the writers Francisco Umbral (*La leyenda del César visionario* (*Legend of the Visionary Caesar*), 1991), Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (*Autobiografía del general Franco*, 1992), José Luis de Villalonga (*El sable del Caudillo* (*The Caudillo's Sword*), 1997), Juan Luis Cebrián (*Francomortuandia*, 2003) and Albert Badella (*Francisco y yo: Buen viaje, Excelencial* (*Francisco and me: Bon Voyage, Your Excellency!*), 2003).

All of these, included in the stormy literary subgenre of 'dictator novels', give voice to an elderly protagonist (or to his sword) who reviews his own life (sometimes with occasional interventions by other narrators by way of counterpoint). These books met with a considerable reader response in Spain and all went through several reprints. Something about their style or perspective was evocative – and they were also translated into many other European languages. Their general tone is encapsulated by the opening lines of Francisco Umbral's book (Burgos and Salamanca being Franco's two civil wartime capitals and also the epitome of imperial, traditionalist, time-locked Spain):

In a Burgos Salamanca-like in its tedium, and laden with imperial architecture, in a cold-silver, Salamanca reminiscent of Burgos, Francisco Franco Bahamonde, small-time dictator, snacks on chocolate and passes death sentences. Yours is a youth not salvaged by African summers or Legionary nights, despite the legend, but a youth that is sinking, like a flower in a swamp, in the creamy softness of premature flabbiness and fat, as if the virile root of the military man, winner of a war, were sinking, obliterated by a bloody peace, beneath the flattery of the barracks and the chocolate of nuns. The voice, when he gives an order trembles with hypocritical remoteness and sounds high-pitched, minute and effeminate. The Generalísimo, less Caudillo than ever, who in his solitary lunch hour, in conversation with his dead, with the record and history of every man that he is about to kill or imprison, keeps the red beret of the *Reguete* [Carlist militia] on his head, like a night cap, devoid of the bravura of such a headress, and occasionally applies a napkin to his trimmed moustache, outmoded and black, while calmly reading reports of the repression, couched in the language of barracks bureaucracy and violent trickery.

Judging a Caudillo: a historiographical review of Franco biographies

The end of the Franco regime also opened the way for an avalanche of works and accounts by witnesses and protagonists of the dictatorship. This flow of testimonies provided a new set of observations (albeit obviously highly constructed and mediated ones) on the character and private life of Franco. In this respect, the publication in 1976

of *Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco*, the work of his secretary and first cousin, Lieutenant General Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, offered a window on the dictator's domestic and family routine and his working life (Salgado-Araujo's own memoir was published a year later: *Mi vida junto a Franco*).³⁹ 1977 saw the publication of two other revealing accounts: Ramón Serrano Suñer's *Entre el silencio y la propaganda: La historia como fue (Between Silence and Propaganda: History as it was)*, is essential for its perspective on the years 1936–45 when the Generalissimo worked closely with Serrano Suñer, his brother-in-law (*cuñado*), and known popularly as the 'Cuñadísimo' (Supreme-Brother-in-Law), in what was a play on Franco's own title. Serrano Suñer, who was Franco's interior minister and then foreign minister for a time during the Second World War, was the key figure in developing the Spanish dictatorship's relationship with the Third Reich. Also published in 1977 was the first volume of memoirs by former cabinet minister, Laureano López Rodó, *La larga marcha hacia la monarquía (The Long March to the Monarchy)* – a crucial book for tracing the planned political evolution of the dictatorship.⁴⁰ Slightly later memoirs – all published (like the foregoing) by the Barcelona-based publishing house, Planeta, which became a privileged vehicle for this literature with its series 'Espejo de España' ('Mirror on Spain') – included the memoirs of Franco's sister, Pilar Franco Bahamonde, *Nosotros, los Franco (We, the Francos)* in 1980, the recollections of his ex-Ministers in *Franco visto por sus ministros (Franco as seen by his Ministers)* in 1981, and the testimony of his personal physician, Dr Vicente Gil (*Cuarenta años junto a Franco (Forty Years with Franco)*), in 1981.⁴¹ On the basis of these new eyewitness accounts and supplemented by archive materials, a historiographical review of Franco became more feasible.

Aside from scattered and minor contributions in newspaper articles or research journals, the first serious work of historiographical synthesis was published in 1985, ten years after Franco's death, by the historian Juan Pablo Fusi, in his now famous shortbiographical essay, *Franco: Autoritarismo y poder personal (Franco: Authoritarianism and Personal Dictatorship)*.⁴² For his careful treatment and his use of the new documentation (among others, the previously mentioned memoirs of Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo and Laureano López Rodó), Fusi's essay made a definite and decisive break with previous biographies. This was made clear by the author's preliminary 'warning', since he was well aware that the task he had posed himself was difficult and probably thankless:

Francoist hagiography has always evaded the Franco regime's most interesting problem: its lack of genuine moral legitimacy, in the eyes of the liberal and democratic world, due to its origins in military insurrection and civil war and its authoritarian, repressive character. Anti-Francoist demonology – often, despite appearances, a kind of academic escapism – evades equally disturbing problems of its own, such as the willing and sincere acceptance of Francoism by a very broad spectrum of Spanish society, the system's almost inviolable stability over several decades, the weakness of the opposition and the remarkable transformation of Spain ... between 1939 and 1975.⁴³

The year 1992 (the centenary of Franco's birth) saw two further biographical works, differing in scope and perspective. First, the American historian of modern Spain, Stanley G. Payne's *Franco, el perfil de la historia*,⁴⁴ the second, Javier Tusell's exhaustive study of Franco during the civil war years, *Franco en la Guerra civil*.⁴⁵ Payne's work amalgamates the social and political context of the dictatorship (the subject of an earlier study, *The Franco Regime* (1987)) with a summary of the public and private life of the dictator which concentrated on Franco as modernizer. Tusell's biography opens with the question, 'How does a person become a dictator? His portrait of Franco in the final stages of his political ascendancy as leader in the midst of a civil war was based on a large array of new and highly revealing archival material (from the personal archives of numerous of Franco's high-ranking political collaborators, through official Spanish foreign ministry papers to state archives in Italy, Portugal and the UK). For Tusell, this material demonstrated convincingly that 'only the civil war' and Franco's sheer brutality had generated the circumstances which allowed an otherwise merely methodical and competent military officer to reach the heights of absolute personal power. In Tusell's own words, his book

is a fragment of the biography of a man who was, perhaps, above average of the Spanish generals of the era, who had no political aspirations nor pretensions to hold an office of that nature, but through his own will in exceptional military circumstances became dictator until his death. ... His dictatorship was the product of three years of a civil war more bloody and cruel than any witnessed in Western Europe since the religious conflicts of the seventeenth century. That – bloodletting – was an important factor in understanding what then followed.⁴⁶

However, despite Tusell's significant contribution, still, a hundred years after Franco's birth, we did not possess a general biography which incorporated all of the available sources. True, by then there were some useful syntheses on Franco's persona, or studies of some of the other most crucial stages of his political or military career had appeared: the French Hispanist Philippe Nourry's interesting work on Franco's life up to 1937, that is, up to his emergence as Caudillo; the Galician journalist Carlos Fernández Santander's general biography; the psychiatrist Enrique González Duro's attempt at a psychological, and almost psychoanalytical, analysis; and the idiosyncratic and amusing biography by the journalist and social chronicler Jaime Peñafiel.⁴⁷ But there was nothing on Franco comparable to the comprehensive biographies of other modern European dictators, such as Allan Bullock's masterful *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, Renzo de Felice's opus, *Missolini*, or Marc Ferro's portrait of Marshall Pétain.⁴⁸

This gap was filled impressively in 1993 when Paul Preston published his much anticipated *Franco: A Biography*, after nearly a decade of research.⁴⁹ It was immediately hailed as a canonical reference work, and quickly translated into Spanish the following year,⁵⁰ where it also received resounding critical acclaim⁵¹ and equally remarkable sales figures (between April and June there were four successive editions of the book). The same intellectual impact followed its translation into four other languages, in addition to multiple subsequent reissues, including a revised and much expanded edition in 2002.

Indeed, the publication of this biography was a publishing milestone, as well as a major cultural event in Spain where it attracted huge coverage in the press and broadcast media. The work was monumental both in its scale and as the fruit of exhaustive research – suffice it to say that the English edition had 787 pages of lucid and elegant text, plus 132 pages of rich and detailed explanatory notes, along with another thirty-three pages of bibliographical, documentary and newspaper sources. Comprising twenty-eight substantial chapters, Preston narrates with verve the successive phases of the life of Franco from his childhood in El Ferrol (Galicia) to his prolonged demise in a Madrid hospital. Preston assesses Franco as ‘a brave and outstandingly able soldier between 1912 and 1926, a calculating careerist between 1927 and 1936, a competent war leader between 1936 and 1939 and a brutal and effective dictator who survived a further thirty-six years in power.’⁵²

Ultimately, Preston’s *Franco* has set a gold standard for the field, exemplifying the study of the figure of Franco within a historiographical frame rather than, as in earlier periods (discussed here) as either hagiography/political legitimization or else as political denunciation of a Manichean and rather schematic type (although as earlier sections of this essay also attest, both of these types of work continue to be published). New historiographical work since the mid-1990s has harvested additional perspectives, as a result of new testimony and/or archival findings. In 1995 two very valuable but markedly contrasting works were published: first, the iconoclastic study by political scientist Alberto Reig Tapia, entitled *Franco ‘caudillo’: mito y realidad* (*Franco ‘caudillo’: Myth and Reality*), which tore apart, with evident irony, many of the alleged political and diplomatic virtues of Franco, and subjected to forensic examination the ideological doctrines adduced to claim Franco’s possession of a ‘charismatic’ mandate, as a substitute for the evident absence of any democratic one. Second, the more canonical biography by the French Hispanist, Bartolomé Bennassar.⁵³ The historical and biographical interest in Franco continues, as evidenced by the reprinting or revised editions of the works of Preston, Payne, Bennassar, Reig Tapia and Fernández Santander, and also by the work of a new generation of biographers, a number of whose texts have offered other perspectives and some of which have also been very successful commercially: the French Hispanist Andrée Bachoud’s *Franco ou réussite d’un homme ordinaire* (1997), immediately translated into Spanish as *Franco o el triunfo de un hombre corriente* (1998) (*Franco or the Triumph of an Ordinary Man*); the Spanish historian Fernando García de Cortázar’s very accessible *Fotobiografía de Franco: Una vida en imágenes* (*Photobiography of Franco: A Life in Images*) (2000); Gabrielle Ashford-Hodges’ thought-provoking psychological analysis, *Franco: a Concise Biography* (2002); José Luis Rodríguez Jimenez’s work *Franco: retrato de un conspirador* (*Franco: Portrait of a Conspirator*) (2005); and Enrique Moradillos’ *Francisco Franco: Crónica de un Caudillo casi olvidado* (*Francisco Franco: Chronicle of an almost-forgotten Caudillo*) (2002).⁵⁴ One might also include here the mainstream (and commercially very successful) publishing experiment, ‘Cara y cruz’ (‘two sides of the coin’) which included in its series a volume on Franco, with two essays by historians of diametrically opposed views, Ángel Palomino (with a text entitled ‘*Por España, frente al comunismo*’ (‘For Spain, against Communism’)) and Paul Preston

(whose text was entitled ‘Los mitos del gran manipulador’ (‘The Myths of the Great Manipulator’)).⁵⁵

If anything, we can say that the latest contributions to the study of Franco tend to focus on particular aspects of his character or specific stages of his career. For example, there have been abundant studies on his military role with an abiding controversy about their accuracy: according to the Cavalry Colonel Carlos Blanco Escola, Franco was a poor strategist and an even worse politician, but for Cavalry General Rafael Casas de la Vega, Franco was ‘a good soldier’ whose military and political work deserves respect and admiration, while Juan Blázquez Miguel comes down somewhere in the middle – although it is also the case that the criteria used by Blanco Escola and Casas de la Vega are at times underpinned by quite different assumptions.⁵⁶ Moving from the military to the political sphere, Francisco Sevillano Calero has studied the charismatic and providential ‘cult of personality’, while Laura Zenobi has examined the background and process of building that cult of personality.⁵⁷

Many of the myths spun by Francoist hagiography have now been completely debunked by professional historians using the common methodology of the discipline which allows for nuanced and sophisticated assessment based on a thorough examination of all the available primary and secondary sources. As this volume has amply attested, this debunking of myths to date includes the three which were most dear to Franco himself: his assumed role of providential Crusader who saved Spain from communism; his much vaunted ability as the statesman who cunningly deflected Hitler’s demands and kept Spain formally neutral in the Second World War; and Franco as architect of modernity whose own particular policies made possible the economic and social modernization of the 1960s. In contrast to these myths, the historiographical assessment of the dictator is clear: the empirical case overwhelming. But as the great Italian historian and philosopher, Benedetto Croce, famously reminds us, history is always about our own times too, and we see this in the emergence today of new and polemical biographies of Franco.⁵⁸ While the past remains the past, the history which encapsulates it is also a live dialogue with the present, and sometimes possessed of future goals too: as such, it is never ‘over’.

Notes

1. Sir Henry Chilton, *Records on Leading Personalities in Spain*, 7 January 1936. Reproduced in Enrique Moradillos, ‘The Gentle General: The Official British Perception of General Franco during the Spanish Civil War’, in Paul Preston and Ann L. Mackenzie (eds.), *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain, 1936–1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 1–20; pp. 1–2.
2. *ABC* (Seville), 2 October 1936.
3. Torcuato Fernández-Miranda Hevia, *El hombre y la sociedad* (Madrid: Doncel-Delegación Nacional de Juventudes, 1960), pp. 188–90.
4. Published in *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 15 March 1941 and 25 September 1941.
5. Joaquín Arrarás Iribarren, *Franco* (San Sebastián: Librería Internacional, 1937).

6. See for example the article 'La figura del Caudillo,' in *El Eco de Santiago. Diario de la tarde* (Santiago de Compostela), 1 October 1936.
7. English: trans. J. Manuel Espinosa (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1938). Italian: trans. Cesare Giardini (Milan: Bompiani, 1937). French: trans. Jeanne Sabatier and Luis Blanco (Paris: Les Editions de France, 1937). German: trans. Christel Olof (Berlin-Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 1937). A second English version was published in Milwaukee, edited by Bruce Publishing Co. (1939). During the war there were also versions in Danish, Dutch and a little later it was translated into Portuguese and Hungarian. In Latin America there were editions in Argentina and Chile before the end of the war.
8. Joaquín Arrarás Iribarren, *Franco*, 8th edn. (Valladolid: Librería Santarén, 1939), pp. 304 and 314. The front page of the Toledo newspaper *El Alcázar*, 22 October 1937, used a large photo of Franco and under it, in capital letters, it copied one of Arrarás' titles: 'FRANCO LEADER OF FAITH AND HONOUR. CRUSADER OF THE WEST. PRINCE OF THE CONQUERING VICTORS. CONQUEROR OF A NEW SPAIN'.
9. José Millán Astray, *Franco, Caudillo* (Salamanca: Quero y Simón Editores, 1939). On Millán Astray himself, see Paul Preston, 'The Bridegroom of Death: José Millán Astray,' in his *Commanders: Portraits from the Spanish Civil War* (London: HarperCollins, 1999), pp. 11–42.
10. José Millán Astray, *El Caudillo Franco y nuestro glorioso Estado Mayor: Conferencia a los cadetes de la Academia de Estado Mayor en Valladolid* (Valladolid, 1936).
11. El Tebib Arrumi (pseud.), *La Historia de El Caudillo: Salvador de España* (Madrid: Ediciones España, 1939).
12. El Tebib Arrumi, *Héroes de España: Siluetas biográficas de las figuras más destacadas del Movimiento Salvador. El Caudillo*, S.E.D. Francisco Franco Bahamonde (Ávila: Imprenta Católica, 1937).
13. Ferrnando de Valdesoto (pseud.), *Francisco Franco* (Madrid: Gráficas Espejo, 1945); Ángel Pérez Rodrigo, *Franco: Una vida al servicio de la Patria* (Madrid: Hijos de Ezequiel Solano, 1947).
14. Luis de Galinsoga and Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Centinelas de Occidente. Semblanza biográfica de Francisco Franco* (Barcelona: Editorial AHR, 1956).
15. *Ibid.*, p. 463.
16. Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), pp. 563–4, 597–8. As Preston indicates (p. 564, no. 6), as late as 1969 Franco was regaling his ministers with stories of masonic conspiracies against Spain. Preston also summarizes here the gist of Franco's earlier writings on the subject, under the (not at all concealing) pseudonym of Jakim Boor.
17. Nancy Berthier, *Le franquisme et son image: Cinéma et propagande* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1988); Magí Crusells, 'Franco en el cine documental español,' *Historia Contemporánea* 22 (2001), pp. 215–31. See also the articles by Vicente Sánchez Biosca and Ángel Quintana in *Materiales para una iconografía de Francisco Franco*, special issue of *Archivos de la Filmoteca* (Valencia) 42–3, Vol. 1 (2002–2003), pp. 141–61 and pp. 177–89 respectively.
18. José Luis Sáenz de Heredia and José María Sánchez Silva, *Franco, ese hombre* (Madrid: Lidisa, 1975).
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 150–1.
20. Ricardo de la Cierva, *Francisco Franco: un siglo de España* (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1972 and 1973).
21. Ricardo de la Cierva, *Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1982, and reissued in 1986).

22. Joaquín Costa was an intellectual and reformer, and part of the Generation of 1898.
23. Ricardo de la Cierva, *Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1986), p. 507.
24. Manuel Aznar, *Franco* (Madrid: Prensa Española, 1975); Ángel Palomino Jiménez, *Caudillo* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1992); Pío Moa, *Franco: un balance histórico* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2005). On Moa, see Helen Graham, 'New Myths for Old,' *TLS*, 11 July 2003.
25. Luis Suárez Fernández, *Francisco Franco y su tiempo*, 8 vols. (Madrid: Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, 1984); Suárez Fernández, *Franco: La Historia y sus documentos* (Madrid: Urbián, 1986).
26. This private archive contains documentation from Franco's lengthy period as Head of State and amounts to more than 27,000 documents totalling some 300,000 pages: see María Concepción Ybarra Enriquez de la Orden, 'Al servicio de la Historia: El Archivo de la Fundación Francisco Franco,' in María Concepción Ybarra Enriquez de la Orden (ed.), *Testigos de la Historia II* (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2009), pp. 113–35.
27. De la Cierva, *Franco*, p. 17.
28. Bartolomé Bennassar, *Franco* (Madrid: EDAF, 2000), p. 23.
29. Rudolf von Timmermans, *General Franco* (Olten, Switzerland: O. Walter, 1937); Georges Rotvand, *Franco et la nouvelle Espagne* (Paris: Les Editions Denoël, 1937); Paolo Antoldi, *Chi è Franco* (Rome: Augustea, 1939).
30. Claude Martin, *Franco: soldat et Chef d'Etat* (Paris: Editions des Quatre Fils Aymon, 1959), republished as *Franco: soldado y estadista* (Madrid: Fernn Uriarte, 1965); George Hills, *Franco. The Man and his Nation* (London: Robert Hale, 1967), wittily republished as *Franco: el hombre y su nación* (Madrid: Editorial San Martín, 1968); Brian Crozier, *Franco* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), republished as *Franco: historia y biografía* (Madrid: Magisterio Español, 1969).
31. Arturo Barea, *La forja de un rebelde* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1966 [1951]), p. 409.
32. Salvador de Madariaga, *General, márchese usted* (New York: Ediciones Ibérica, 1959), pp. 10–11. Madariaga did not take his own advice, since he made the comparison with Sancho Panza in the same satirical, critical tone in a later work: his *novela-fantasia* entitled *Sancho Panco* (Mexico, D.F.: Editora Latino Americana, 1964), in which he coined the expression 'Teach of the West'.
33. Luis Ramírez, *Francisco Franco: historia de un mesianismo* (Paris: Ruedo Ibérico, 1964). It rapidly appeared in French translation, with the equally expressive title: *Vie de Francisco Franco: Régent du royaume d'Espagne par la grâce de Dieu* (Paris: Maspéro, 1965).
34. Jon Juaristi, 'Fallece el escritor Luciano Rincón,' *El País*, 5 September 1993. See the anonymous article entitled 'Luciano Rincón y Luis Ramírez,' published in *Cuadernos de Ruedo ibérico* 33/35 (1972).
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37. See on this theme the contributions of Alicia Salvador, Román Gubert, Nancy Berthier and Sonia García López in the monograph entitled *Materiales para una iconografía de Francisco Franco* in the journal *Archivos de la Filmoteca* (Valencia) 42–3, Vol. 2 (2002–3).
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39. Francisco Franco Salgado-Araujo, *Mis conversaciones privadas con Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1976); *Mi vida junto a Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1977).

40. Ramón Serrano Suñer, *Entre el silencio y la propaganda. La historia como fue* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1977); Laureano López Rodó, *La larga marcha hacia la monarquía* (Barcelona: Noguer, 1977).
41. Pilar Franco Bahamonde, *Nosotros, los Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1980); Ángel Bayod (ed.), *Franco visto por sus ministros* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1981); Vicente Gil, *Cuarenta años junto a Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1981).
42. Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurúa, *Franco. Autoritarismo y poder personal* (Madrid: El País, 1985).
43. Fusi, *Franco*, pp. 15–16. A good indication of the book's reception was its immediate translation into English with a preface by the eminent British historian of modern Spain, Raymond Carr: *Franco: A Biography* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1987).
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45. Javier Tusell Gómez, *Franco en la Guerra civil* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1992).
46. Tusell, *Franco en la guerra civil*, pp. 12, 385–6. Previous quotations on pp. 9 and 11.
47. Philippe Nourry, *Francisco Franco: La conquista del poder* (Madrid: Júcar, 1976); Carlos Fernández Santander, *El general Franco* (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1983); Enrique González Duro, *Franco: Una biografía psicológica* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1992); Jaime Peñafiel, *El general y su tropa. Mis recuerdos de la familia Franco* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1992).
48. Allan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London: Odhams Press, 1952); Renzo de Felice, *Mussolini* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965–81, 5 Vols.); Marc Ferro, *Pétain* (Paris: Fayard, 1987).
49. Paul Preston, *Franco: A Biography* (London: HarperCollins, 1993).
50. Paul Preston, *Franco, Caudillo de España* (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1994).
51. See for example the review by one of Spain's leading modern historians, Santos Juliá, *El País-Babelia*, 22 January 1994.
52. Preston, *Franco: A Biography*, p. xviii.
53. Alberto Reig Tapia, *Franco 'caudillo': mito y realidad* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1995); Bartolomé Bennassar, *Franco* (Paris: Perrin, 1995); Spanish edition, *Franco* (Madrid: EDAF, 1996).
54. André Bachoud, *Franco ou réusite d'un homme ordinaire* (Paris: Fagard, 1997); Spanish edition *Franco o el triunfo de un hombre corriente* (Madrid: Juventud, 1998); Fernando García de Cortázar, *Fotobiografía de Franco: Una vida en imágenes* (Barcelona: Planeta, 2000); Gabriel Ashford Hodges, *Franco: A Concise Biography* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2002) and in Spanish translation, *Franco: Retrato psicológico de un dictador* (Madrid: Taurus, 2001); José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez, *Franco: Retrato de un conspirador* (Madrid: Oberon, 2005); Enrique Moradillos, *Franco: Crónica de un Caudillo casi olvidado* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2002).
55. Paul Preston and Ángel Palomino, *Francisco Franco* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2003); French edition (Paris: Grancher, 2005). A few years later, Paul Preston published an expanded version of his contribution as *El gran manipulador: La mentira cotidiana de Franco* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2008).
56. Carlos Blanco Escola, *La incompetencia militar de Franco* (Madrid: Alianza, 2000); Rafael Casas de la Vega, *Franco, militar* (Madrid: Fenix, 1995); Juan Blázquez Miguel, *Auténtico Franco: Trayectoria militar, 1907–1939* (Madrid: Almena, 2009).
57. Francisco Sevillano Calero, *Franco, Caudillo por la Gracia de Dios, 1936–1947* (Madrid: Alianza, 2010); Laura Zenobi, *La construcción del mito de Franco: De Jefe de la Legión a Caudillo de España* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2011).
58. Stanley G. Payne and Jesús Palacios, *Franco, A Personal and Political Biography* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014).

CHAPTER 11

CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORK OF PAUL PRESTON

This bibliography includes all material published in English but excludes US editions and translations into Spanish or other languages. (All of Paul Preston's books have been translated into Spanish, some in successive, revised editions.) It also excludes prologues, prefaces and introductions to books and dictionary and encyclopaedia entries. It does, however, include publications in Catalan and Spanish which are not available in English, and books which have been substantially expanded in their Spanish versions. It contains only first editions, except in cases where subsequent editions contain significant revisions and inclusion of new material.

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