

**THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE
AND THE CANARY ISLANDS:
THOMAS NICHOLS AND EDMUND SCORY**

Francisco Javier Castillo
University of La Laguna

“Thus much have I written of these ilands by experience, because I
was a dweller there ...”

T. Nichols

“This Iland hath beene called Nivaria, by reason of the Snow ...”

E. Scory

The English presence in the Canary Islands in the 16th and 17th centuries can be seen at three different levels. As a result of the hostile relations held by Britain and Spain at this time, some English forces, adventurers and pirates arrive by surprise and with violent manners, trying to obtain in the roads and harbours of the Canaries the riches and the valuable cargo that the galleons and ships of the Spanish Empire carry from the American colonies to the mother country, as well as the attractive and sure plunder of the towns and villages of the Islands, little protected and insufficiently defended.¹ Others, less ambitious than the above mentioned and of a more peaceful and civilized disposition, know the privileged situation that the Canaries have for the traffic in the Atlantic and are quite

¹ Francis Drake, John Hawkins, Walter Raleigh, the Count of Cumberland, and Robert Blake are some of the Englishmen that attacked the Canaries at this time. Cf. Antonio Rumeu de Armas, *Piraterías y ataques navales contra las Islas Canarias*, 3 vols., Madrid, 1948-1950.

The English Renaissance and the Canary Islands

aware of the commercial possibilities of the Islands, and so they establish in them - especially in Tenerife, La Palma and Grand Canary - several trade agencies, houses and stores, whose activities are usually dedicated to import manufactured goods from England, generally London cloth, and to export to Europe and the West Indies the main products of the Archipelago: sugar and wines.¹ Other English travellers, not interested in business and not particularly eager in making money, come to the Islands attracted by its unknown origin and by the nature of the prehispanic culture, a civilization about which nothing or very little was known for certain at this moment. Filled with scientific curiosity and zeal, these travellers and explorers want to have a direct contact with the Canaries, to check empirically all the information, most of it of a legendary sort, which had been collected for centuries about them, and to obtain on the spot good and satisfactory answer to their questions about the geology, the fauna and the flora of the Islands, as well as on the characteristics and origin of the primitive people that inhabited them at the time of the coming of the European conquerors and first settlers in the 15th century.² Two men, Thomas Nichols and Edmund Scory, are indicative examples of this kind of peaceful English presence in the Canaries in this period.

Thomas Nichols' early and last years are quite unknown to us. According to his own words, it seems that he was born in the city of Gloucester by the year 1532.³ In 1556, when he was about twenty four years old, he was sent to Tenerife, where he lived for three months, learning Spanish and getting familiar with the commercial activities of the place, with the idea of becoming a trade agent there in the near future. He came back to Tenerife in 1557, this time as a representative of the commercial interests of Anthony Hikman, Edward Castelin and Thomas

¹ Cf. Antonio Béthencourt Massieu, "Canarias e Inglaterra: el comercio de vinos: 1650-1800", *Anuario de Estudios Atlánticos*, II, 1956, pp. 31-114; Víctor Morales Lezcano, *Relaciones mercantiles entre Inglaterra y los archipiélagos del Atlántico ibérico: 1503-1783*, Instituto de Estudios Canarios, La Laguna, 1970.

² Cf. Víctor Morales Lezcano, *Los ingleses en Canarias*, Edirca, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1986, pp. 18-20.

³ Cf. Nichols' biography in Alejandro Cioranescu, *Thomas Nichols, mercader de azúcar, hispanista y hereje*, Instituto de Estudios Canarios, La Laguna, 1963, pp. 9-59.

Lok, three London merchants.¹ But, just a year after his settling in La Laguna, Nichols began to have troubles, troubles not only suffered by him but by many - if not by all - of the English commercial agents and merchants established in the Islands at this time. In the 16th and 17th centuries and particularly after the accession to the throne of Queen Elizabeth in 1558, both the government and the Inquisition authorities in the Canaries did have in the Anglo-Spanish political enmity and in the differences between Spain and England in the religious field a good excuse to commit all sorts of abuses on the English subjects that arrived to the Islands. In February 1559, Polo Morteo, the governor of Grand Canary, sent Nichols to prison and confiscated his properties on the grounds that the Queen of England was an enemy of Spain and the Catholic faith. He was released a month later but, in February 1560, he was imprisoned again in the city of Las Palmas, this time by the Holy Office, accused of heresy and apostasy, of being a follower of Luther's doctrine, of having declared that the British faith was better than the Roman one and that the English mass was better than the Catholic one, of having sung songs used by heretic people; of having made some negative comments about the confession and the bulls, and of not going usually to church. These charges, always rejected by Nichols, were based on the declarations of several witnesses of uncertain morality. Nichols' prosecution was quite irregular and so extremely slow that, three years after his imprisonment, he had not been judged yet. As the Inquisitor Luis de Padilla had died, Nichols' case was sent in August 1562 to the Holy Office in Seville, where he was taken nine months later. In Seville, Nichols was found guilty and sentenced to seclusion in the city in the way decided by his judges and to life exile from the Canary Islands. He was also condemned to go out in the *auto-da-fe*, the public exhibition of penitence and acceptance, in which he was compelled to wear the shirt, hold a lighted candle and forswear *de vehementi*. From 1564 onwards, Nichols' biography is hardly known. He may have stayed in Spain during a period, but then, before 1577, he went back to England and established himself in London, where he began to publish his works.

¹ Cf. A. Cioranescu, *op. cit.*, p. 16: "En el annio de N.S. 1556 mis maiores me embiarun encomendado a Gilermo Edge, residente entonce en Tenerif y fator delios, para que deprendiesse la lengua hispaniola; y sendo asi bossal, estuve trez meses alla y torne despues de los tres meses a mi terra ... En el annio de N.S. 1557 buelvi otra vez a estas yslas."

The English Renaissance and the Canary Islands

The Spanish that Nichols learnt in the Canary Islands would be a very helpful tool for him. In the first place, he uses it in his business and to defend himself in the different lawsuits in which he was engaged. Then, when he is back again in his country, he uses it in a very different field: to translate into English several of the most relevant Spanish works of the 16th century.

Nichols published five works.¹ The first one, printed in 1577, is *The strange and marueilous Newes lately come from the great Kingdome of Chyna, which adioyneth to the East Indya*, an English version of a Spanish work not found and probably written in the city of Mexico by a Spanish merchant that had travelled to China. The following year appeared *The pleasant Historie of the Conquest of the West India, now called new Spayne, atchieved by the worthy Prince Hernando Cortes, Marques of the Valley of Huaxacac*, a translation of the second part of the history written by Francisco López de Gómara, whose name the translator does not include. In 1580 Nichols' translation work increased with a new contribution, *A delectable Dialogue, wherein is containd a pleasaunt disputation between two Spanish Gentlemen, concerning Phisick and Phisitions*, with sentence of a learned Maister given upon their argument, which is a piece from the *Coloquios y diálogos* (1547) of the Spanish humanist Pedro de Mejía. This translation, whose author is hidden behind the capitals T. N., has been traditionally assigned to Thomas Newton (1542-1607), but Alejandro Cioranescu, a qualified expert in Nichols' biography and creative work, puts it among the English versions of Spanish books made by this author. A new work is published in 1581, *The strange and delectable History of the discoverie and Conquest of the provinces of Peru, in the South Sea. And of the notable things which there are found; and also of the bloudie civill warres which there happened for government*, in which Nichols translates almost all the *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú* (1555) by Agustín de Zárate.

The translation work made by Nichols is relevant and deserves a specific study. But our present interest is limited to his last work, *A Pleasant Description of the Fortunate Ilandes, called the Ilands of Canaria*,

¹ Nichols' translation and creative work is also commented by A. Cioranescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-84.

with their straunge fruits and commodities,¹ an account of what he knows about these islands which, as he explains, “may call infortunate, for there was I apprehended for an heretike and an open enimie to the Romish Church; and there deteyned in that bloudie Inquisition the space of five years”.² In the dedication of the Description - offered to John Wolley, one of the secretaries at Queen Elizabeth’s service - we can see its genesis. The author follows the old use of the poor pilgrims, who, when the hard days of the journey are over and they are back in their country among their dearest friends, tell them all the relevant and wonderful things seen in remote lands.³ Nichols adds that with “this little pamphlet” he wants to clarify all

¹ Imprinted at London by Thomas East, 1583. This work will be published by Richard Hakluyt in his *The Principal Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, imprinted at London by Georg Bishop, Ralph Newberie and Robert Barker, 1599, vol. II, part II, pp. 3-7, under the title of *A description of the Fortunate Ilands, otherwise called the Ilands of Canaria, with their strange fruits and commodities. Composed by Thomas Nicols, English man, who remained there the space of seven yeeres together*. In the 18th century, Nichols’ Description is translated into French and German. It was included in the *Histoire generale des voyages ou Nouvelle collection des toutes les relation de voyages par mer et par terre ...*, vol. II, Paris, 1746, pp. 225-248, under the title of “Description des Iles Canaries & de l’Isle Madere, par Thomas Nicols”. Later, it was published in S. J. Schwabe’s *Allgemeine Historie der Reisen zu Wasser und Lande*, vol. II, Leipzig, 1747, under the title of “Beschreibung der Canarischen Eylande und Madera, nebst ihren merkwürdigen Früchte und Waaren”. The first Spanish translation of Nichols’ *Description* was published by Buenaventura Bonnet, “Descripción de las Canarias en el año 1526, hecha por Thomas Nicols, factor inglés”, *Revista de Historia*, Universidad de La Laguna, V, 1933, pp. 206-216. A. Cioranescu published a new Spanish translation and a new edition of Nichols’ original text in his work *Thomas Nichols mercader de azúcar, hispanista y hereje*, pp. 95-127.

² Cf. 101. Nichols’ quotations are from Cioranescu’s edition.

³ Cf. p. 109: “Pore pilgrimes use, Right worshipfull Sir, that after their wearie journies and returne into their native soile, to communicate the troth of anie thing worthie to be knowen and of them seene, among their especiall friends which are learned, and also lovers of such kinde of vocation. The Holy Scripture sheweth us, that when the wise men called Magi, being led by a straunge starre, to the place where Christ our Saviour was borne, at which place the starre did not only staie, but also gave a wonderful brightnes with shining beams, to assure them that there the Saviour was. Undoubtedly these men letted not to declare these marvailous things and visions at their returne, as appeareth at this present, that in Aetiophia and the East Countries are an infinite number of christians. Like-

The English Renaissance and the Canary Islands

the variety he finds in some writers about the Canaries and to repair several “untrothes” relating to these islands and included in the work *The New Found Worlde Antartike* written by André Thévet.¹ From the beginning, Nichols makes a clear distinction between Thévet - “a Frenchman who wrote of the Fortunate Ilandes by hearesay” - and himself, who writes of the Canaries “as time hath taught me in manie yeares”.² For him, this circumstance has a special relevance and he insists on it at the end of his paragraph on Fuerteventura, where he says: “Thus much have I written of these ilands by experience, because I was a dweller there, as I have sayd before, the space of seven yeares, in the affaires of Master Thomas Lock, Master Anthonie Hikman and Master Castlin, who in those dayes were worthie merchants and of great credit in the citie of London”.³

We find in Nichols’ work a brief but full account of the Canaries in the second half of the 16th century, a description that includes geography, history, government and administration, economy, production and primitive culture. Most of the work is dedicated to the agriculture, the economy, the fauna and the flora of the Archipelago, and this is not surprising because these references clearly show Nichols’ interests and experience. As a

wise the eunuch, messenger to the queene of Candace, letted not to manifest in his countrie the miraculous things that he had seene in Jerusalem when Christ our Redeemer suffered the most bitter death of the cross; nor yet the queene of Sabba kept in secret the wisdom of Salomon.”

¹ Nichols uses an English translation made by Hackit and published in London in 1568. The original title of Thévet’s work is *Les Singularitez de la France antarctique* (1558). On Thévet and the Canaries, cf. Eduardo Aznar Vallejo, “El capítulo de Canarias en el Islario de André Thévet”, *VI Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americana*, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1988.

² Cf. pp. 103 and 105: “Because mine intent is particularly to speak of the Canaria ilands, which are seven in number, wherein I dwelt the space of VII yeares and more; because I finde such varietie in sundry writers, and especially great untrothes in a booke called *The New Found World Antartike*, set out by a French man called Andrew Thevet, the which his booke he dedicated to the Cardinall of Sens, keeper of the great seale of Fraunce. It appeareth by the said booke that he read the works of sundrie philosophers, astronomers and cosmographers, whose opinions he gathered together. But touching his owne travaile which hee affirmeth, I referre to the judgement of the experient in our daies; and therefore for mine owne part I write of these Canaria Ilandes, as time as taught me in manie yeares.”

³ Cf. p. 123.

Francisco Javier Castillo

merchant or commercial agent he was able to know all about the Canary wines¹ and sugar, and we have an example of this in the complete description of how sugar canes were grown and how sugar was obtained:

The manner of the growth of sugar is in this sort. A good ground giveth fourth fruit nine times in 18 yeare. That is to saie, the first is called *planta*, which is laid along in a woerowe, so that the water of a fluce may come over everie roote being covered with earth; this roote bringeth forth sundrie canes, and so consequently all the rest. It groweth two yeares before the yeelding of profit, and not sixe monethes, as Andrew Thevet the French man writeth.

Then are they cut even with the ground, and the tops and leaves called *coholia* cut off, and the canes bound into bundels like faggets; and so are carried to the sugar house called *ingenio*, where they are ground in a mill, and the juyce thereof conveyed by conduct to a great vessell made for the purpose, where it is boyled till it ware thicke; and then is it put into a fornaice of earthen pots of the moulede of a sugar loafe, and then is it carryed to another house called a purging house, where it is placed to purge the blackness with a certain clay that is laid thereon. Of the remainder in the cauldron is made a second sort, called *escumas*, and of the purging liquor that droppeth from the white sugar is made a third sort, and the remainder is called *panela* or *netas*. The refuse of all the purging is called *remiel* or *mallasses*, and thereof is made another sort, called *refinado*.

When this first fruit is in this sorte gathered, called *planta*, then the cane field where it grew is burned over with sugar straw to the strumps of the first canes, and being husbanded, watered and trimmed, at the end of other two yeres it yeeldeth the second fruite, called *zoca*. The third

¹ Cf. p. 110: “This Iland [Grand Canary] hath singular good wine, especially in the towne of Telde ... ”; p. 115: “Out of this iland [Teneriffe] is laden greate quantitie of wines for the West India and other countries. The Best groweth on a hill side called the *Ramble*.”; p. 119: “Their best wines grow in a soile called the *Brenia* [La Palma], where yeerely is gathered 12 thousand butts of wine like unto maulmsies.”; p. 121: “There is no wine in all that iland [El Hierro], but onely one vineard that an English man of Taunton in the West countrie planted among rockes, his name was John Hill. ”

The English Renaissance and the Canary Islands

fruite is called *tercia zoca*, the fourth *quarta zoca*, and so orderly the rest, till age causeth the olde canes to be planted againe.¹

Nichols' account is not only concerned with the present but also with the past of the Islands, which he tries to know and to explain. And this is so because he is a man of his time and because rationalism rules both the material and spiritual life of the Renaissance man, to whom the irrational has no use, the contradictions must be cleared and reduced, and truth must be sought. That is why we find Nichols going to see the caves where the primitive inhabitants of Teneriffe were kept after death, and asking the people of Grand Canary if they had ever heard that the geographic name *Canaria* came from the number of dogs which were found in this island. An additional example will illustrate this point. Nichols accepts the ancient reference of Atlantis, given by Plato in his *Timeo*, as a positive and appropriate explanation of the origin of the Canaries. Nichols observes nature, and finds that the coast of Guinea has sands and shallows lying out a great way into the ocean, which lets him consider Plato's report as true.² In relation to the primitive inhabitants, Nichols' references are unfortunately short and limited to two islands, but not lacking interest. Of the aborigines of Grand Canary he writes:

They were clothed in goate skinnes made like unto a loose cassocke. They dwelt in caves in the rockes, in great amitie and brotherly love. They spake all one language. Their chief feeding was gelt dogs, goates and goates milke; their bread was made of barlie meale and goats milke, called *gofia*, which they use at this daie; and thereof I have eaten diverse times, for it is accounted exceeding wholesome.

¹ Cf. pp. 109 and 111.

² Cf. p. 103: "Plato, in his *Thimeo*, writeth that about 750 yeres past, ther was a great Ilande lieng in the Ocean Sea, in front of Hercules Pillers, which stood at that time in the iland of Cadez. This ilande was called Atlantica, which lande by Gods permission senke, saving certaine ilands which yet remaine, calld the Ilands of Cabo Verde, the Ilands of Canaria and the Ilands of Azores and others. The opinion of Plato seemeth to be true, because the coast of Guinea hath sands and shallowes lying out a great way into the maine Ocean, which agreeth as parcell appertayning to the other ilandes before rehearsed. Some of the Canaria ilands, as the ile of Fortaventura by name, lyeth 50 leagues distaunt from the continent land of Africa, and the ilands of Azores neere 300 leagues. The opinion of Plato shall serve for this purpose, to the which I remit me."

Francisco Javier Castillo

Touching the originall of these people, some holde opinion that the Romanes which dwelt in Africa exiled them thether, as well men as women, their tongues beeing cutte out of their heades, for blasphemie against the Romane Gods. But howsoever it were, their language was speciall and not mixed with Romane speech or Arabian.¹

To these references we have to add the ones given in relation to the primitive inhabitants of Teneriffe:

In this iland, before the conquest, dwelt seaven kinges, who with all their people dwelt in caves and were cloathed in goat skinned, as the Canaria people were, and with such like order of dyet as they had. Their order or buriall was, that when anie died, he was carried naked to a greate cave, where he was propped up against the wall, standing ou his feete. But if he were of anie authoritie among them, then had hee a staffe in his hand, and a vessel of milke standing by him. I have seene caves of 300 of these corps together; the flesh beeing dried up, the body remained as light as parchment.

These people were called *Guanches* by naturall name. They spake another language cleane contrarie to the Canarians, and so consequently every iland spake a severall language.²

Nichols is not a historian and his *Description* is not an academic work, accurately done and well documented. He plans and writes it in England, where he does not have the necessary materials and sources and after a long absence from the Canaries -twenty years, if he wrote it just before its publication. Had he planned it when he was living in the Islands he would have offered a very different work, as, in this way, he could have made use of the manuscripts on the history of the Archipelago that were circulating at the period, and also he could have gathered complementary material and could have made further research. Unfortunately his only source seems to be his memory, and his memory sometimes fails as, when speaking about Fuerteventura, he says that "on the North side, it hath a little ilande about one league distant from the maine iland, betweene both of the which it is navegable for anie ships, and is called *Graciosa*."³ This is

¹ Cf. p. 107.

² Cf. p. 117.

³ Cf. p. 123.

The English Renaissance and the Canary Islands

not true: the island called Graciosa is in the northwest of Lanzarote. However, on the whole, Nichols' memory is happy and his remembrance shows generosity and warmth.

Nichols' Description has a good complement in Scory's work which, under the title of *Extracts taken out of the Obseruations of the Right Worshipfull Sir Edmond Scory, Knight, of the Pike of Tenariffe, and other rarities, which hee observed there, has come down to us thanks to the fact that Samuel Purchas included it in his work Purchas His Pilgrimage or Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in All Ages and Places discovered, from the Creation unto this Present...*, published in London in 1626.¹

Scory's life is quite unknown to us. We do not know how long he stayed in the Canary Islands. Buenaventura Bonnet says that this knight was living in Tenerife in 1582, because he mentions an account of the wheat production gathered in Tenerife in that year, but it does not seem to be true. Scory's work mentions the Duke of Lerma, King Philip III's favourite, so that his stay in the Canaries must have taken place in the last years of the 16th century and, more probably, in the first decades of the following century.

The first lines of the work clearly show the limit of his report:

Tenariffe is the pleasantest of the Canary Ilands. This Iland hath beene called Nivaria, by reason of the Snow which like a Collar enuironeth the necke of the Pike of Teyda. The name of Tenariffe was imposed by the inhabitants of the Palme Iland, for Tener in the Palmesian language signifies Snow, and Iffe an Hill. It is situate in the Atlanticke Ocean fourescore leagues from the Coast of Affricke. It is in

¹ Cf. pp. 784-787. A copy of this edition, which we have consulted, is available in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (R/38399). Bergeron included Scory's work, translated into French, in his *Traicté de la navigation et des voyages de decouverte & conquete moderne ...*, Paris, 1629. It was published again in the *Histoire generale des voyages ...*, vol. II, Paris, 1746, pp. 249-253, under the title of "Description du Pic de Tenerife & recherches sur les Guanches". A Spanish translation was published by Buenaventura Bonnet, "Observaciones del caballero inglés sir Edmond Scory acerca de la Isla de Tenerife y del Pico del Teide", *El Museo Canario*, IV, 8, enero-abril 1936, pp. 44-59.

Francisco Javier Castillo

forme triangular, extending itself into three Capes, and stands within eight and twenty degrees of the equinoctial.¹

Then the singular and complete description of Mount Teide follows. Through his words, Scory makes us feel the admiration he has for the high mountain, “a Mountaine which begets I know whether a greater attention, when you come to it, or when you behold from a farre off: but in both very great”.² He takes notes about the suitable paths to the top, the effects that the considerable height causes to the travellers, the weather, and the very interesting geology of the place.

The second part of the work is dedicated to the island: its mountains and valleys, its water resources, its woods and its agriculture. Here, Scory gives - as Nichols had previously done - a special mention of the wine production, the Canary sack³ so much praised by Falstaff:

The Vineyards of account are in *Buena Vista*, in *Dante*, in *Oratana*, in *Tigueste*, and in the Ramble which place yeeldeth the most excellent Wine of all other. There are two sorts of Wines in this Iland *Vidonia* and *Muluesia*. *Vidonia* is drawne out of a long Grape, and yeeldeth a dull Wine. The *Maluesia* out of a great round Grape, and this is the only Wine which passeth all the Seas of the World ouer, and both the Poles without sowing or decaying; whereas all other wines turne to Vineger, or freeze into Ice as they approach the Southerne or Northerne Pole.”⁴

Just like Nichols had previously done, Scory’s interest is not only restricted to the economy and other practical aspects of the present. He also pays a lot of attention to the primitive inhabitants of Teneriffe and to their

¹ Cf. p. 784.

² Cf. p. 784. On Teneriffe and the Pike in English works of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, cf. the very interesting paper by Bernd Dietz, “Tenerife en las letras inglesas: posibles antecedentes de un texto de Samuel Johnson”, *Serta Gratulatoria in Honorem Juan Régulo*, Universidad de La Laguna, I, 1985, pp. 223-230.

³ Many references about the canary or sack can be seen in Shakespeare’s plays: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry IV (First part)*, *Henry IV (Second part)*, and *Twelfth Night*. Cf. Andrés de Lorenzo-Cáceres, *Malvasía y Falstaff*, Instituto de Estudios Canarios, La Laguna, 1941.

⁴ Cf. p. 785.

The English Renaissance and the Canary Islands

ancient and simple culture, and in this case Scory does not limit himself to the brief references on this matter that we find in Nichols' *Description*, but he provides a complete account that includes food and dress, physical features, social organization, economic resources, religious and funeral rites, language and entertainment. Most of the information given here by Scory belongs to the work *Del origen y milagros de Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, que aparecio en la isla de Tenerife, con la descripción de esta Isla*, which is not mentioned. This book was written by the Dominican friar Alonso de Espinosa and was published in Seville in 1594, although Scory does not limit himself to copy literally the materials and information taken from Espinosa, but he treats them in a personal manner, and we can also see now and then Scory's original contribution, as when he says:

The first that were knowne to inhabit this Iland are called Guanches: but how they came thither it is hard to know, because they were and are people meerely barbarous & voyd of Letters. The language of the old Guanches (which remayneth to this day among them in this Iland in their Towne of Candelaria) alludeth much to that of the Moores in Barbary, to be no other then meere Gentiles ignorant of God.¹

In the last part of his work, Scory gives a full report of La Laguna, the city which seems to have been his residence in Teneriffe and which he praises. After speaking of the place in which La Laguna lies, its surroundings, the refreshing trade winds that come from the east, and the night atmosphere cooled by the dew, he goes on giving a detailed description of the city:

Their buildings are all of an open rough stone nothing faire, they are very plaine in their buildings, two or three stories high and no more, and commonly but one story high in the remoter parts of the City. It is not walled, they haue no chimneyes, no not so much as in their kitchins. They make only a flat hearth against a wall, and there they toast their meate rather then roast it. The decency of their streets is commendable, for when you are in the centre of the City, your eye reacheth almost to the extreamest parts thereof. They haue no want of water. The City hath its name from a great standing Lake at the West end of it, vpon which there are comonly diuers sorts of fresh water-fowles. The haggard

¹ Cf. p. 786.

Francisco Javier Castillo

Falcons doe euery euening flye vpon this Lake, and the Negros with slings beate them, which is the noblest sport of that kind in the world for the stoopings are many, and at one time, and the Hawkes the strongest and best mettalled of all other; of a greater kind then the Barbary Falcons.¹

In his work and in a natural way, Scory takes England as a close reference for comparison. So, when speaking of the pines he says that “There are of these Pine-trees two sorts, the strait Pine, and the other growing after the manner of our spreading Okes in England...”² Referring to the natives, he writes later that “They eat the flesh of Sheepe, of Goats, and Pork, but not commonly, for they haue certaine assemblies, like our festiuall Wake-dayes in England, at which times the King in person with his owne hands did giue to euery twentie of them three Goates, and a proportion of their Giffio”.³ And also, he says that there is very little difference between the body, colour and smoothness of “our English fallow Deere and their Goat”.⁴

As we have just seen, thanks to Thomas Nichols and Edmund Scory, the Canaries are introduced to England and to Europe. It is not a mere coincidence that Nichols’ *Description* is the first published work specifically dedicated to the Islands, and it is not a matter of chance that the primitive civilization of the Archipelago is widely known by the English Renaissance through Scory’s work. Both of them deserve our acknowledgment and our gratitude.

* * *

¹ Cf. p. 787.

² Cf. p. 785.

³ Cf. p. 786.

⁴ Cf. p. 787.