Introduction

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Abstract

The introduction offers an overview of English-language and Spanish-language scholarship about Spanish comics since 2000. This research is typically concerned with one of four main chronological periods, i.e. early comics history 1875-1939; the Francoist dictatorship 1939-1975; the Political Transition 1970-1985; and Democratic Spain from the early 1980s, and some of its recurrent themes are memory, gender, regional identities and history, and/or a focus on social or educational comics. The articles in the two special issues on Spanish comics (11.1 and 11.2) almost all relate to these periods and themes in different ways, and together they show that comics scholarship about Spanish comics is a fascinating field, and one that offers plenty of opportunities for further study.

Keywords: Spanish comics scholarship since 2000, Francoist comics, political caricature, memory, gender, regional identities

Spanish comics do not take up much space in English-language comics research, which is one reason for choosing this theme as the topic for two special issues of *European Comic Art*. However, the limited research in English that actually exists is very interesting, and the Spanish language research is quite impressive. In this introduction, we therefore offer a sketch of the field with a specific focus on the academic literature published since 2000.¹

Apart from conventional academic texts, the comics scholar may draw on alternative resources that are only to a very limited extent included in the following text. When it comes to comics, the line between academic and non-academic publications is somewhat blurred. Comics is a popular medium in Spain, and this engenders publica-

1 Due to the limited pages available, this introduction is in no way an exhaustive discussion of research into Spanish comics. With few exceptions, research in languages other than English and Spanish will not be included here.

tions for a general audience, which do not necessarily follow academic conventions (e.g. documentation, argumentation, reference to relevant research fields) but nevertheless offer valuable information for research. In addition, comics played an important role in the strengthening of cultural regional identities as part of the democratization process from the 1980s in Spain. One result has been many exhibitions about regional comics and related publications that in many ways follow academic standards and conventions. Even though much of this material is difficult to obtain, it is certainly a worthwhile part of research into Spanish comics.

A third kind of alternative resource includes the platforms Tebeosfera.com and PACE. Tebeosfera is a rich and invaluable source of information for many references and much information regarding Spanish comics, authors, works, artists, activities and publications.² PACE (Plataforma Académica sobre el Cómic en Español) is a relatively new and promising initiative, not so much for publications but rather for networking among comics scholars and for the exchange of publications.³ This resource concentrates on conventional academic outlets but also draws attention to other sources.⁴

English-language studies of Spanish comics are typically published in either comics research journals, edited books about comics or books with a common theme such as memory. In Spanish, there are several monographs, as well the open access academic journal *CuCo – Cuadernos de Cómic* (since 2013), which features a focus on academic studies as one of its three twice-yearly sections, and the journal *Tebeosfera* (since 2001) linked to the platform of the same name. Both include a relatively high number of articles about Spanish comics, although

2 Another valuable resource for comics until the mid-1990s is Jesús Cuadrado, *Diccionario de uso de la historieta española* [Dictionary of the uses of the Spanish comic] (Madrid: Compañía Literaria, 1997).

3 PACE, 'Plataforma', <https://pace.hypotheses.org> (accessed 20 July 2018).

4 Spanish scholars often write about comics theory and methods without a specific focus on Spanish comics, which is why such literature will not be included here. For an overview of the first generation of this scholarship, see Antonio Lázaro-Reboll, 'Historicising the Emergence of Comics Art Scholarship in Spain, 1965–1975', *European Comic Art* 11, no. 1 (2018): 8–29. More recent theoretical and methodological accounts include Rubén Varillas, *La arquitectura de las viñetas: Texto y discurso en el cómic* [The architecture of panels: Text and discourse in the comic] (Seville: Bizancio Ediciones, 2009); Santiago García, *La novela gráfica* [The graphic novel] (Bilbao: Astiberri, 2010); Iván Pintor-Iranzo, *Figuras del cómic: Forma, tiempo y narración secuencial* [Comics figures: Form, time and sequential narration] (Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona Servei de Publicacions, 2018). Several Spanish comics theorists also publish about Spanish comics history. These titles will be mentioned when relevant.

they also publish articles about non-Spanish comics.⁵ Moreover, since 2000, a few special issues and edited books specifically about Spanish comics have been published. In English, the *International Journal of Comic Art* (vol. 5, no. 2) published a special issue in 2003. In Spanish, two publications stand out, namely a special issue of the journal *Arbor* in 2011 and an edited book in 2002.⁶ All three combine articles about Spanish comics history with analyses of specific comics and artists. They include texts by some key Spanish comics scholars and are an excellent representation of the main topics that were current within the field at the time of their writing.

Spanish Comics Research, 2000 Onwards

Whereas the edited books and special issues mentioned here cut across different historical periods, most other texts – monographs, articles, chapters – relate specifically to one of four historical periods: early comics history (1875–1939); the Francoist dictatorship (1939–1975); the political transition (1970–1985); and democratic Spain from the early 1980s. The presentation below follows these main periods of Spanish – political and comics – history. Comics and cartoons of the first period are the least studied. Antonio Martín's account of early comics history from 1978 continues to be a standard reference for this period.⁷ Nevertheless, the field has attracted more attention in recent years, both with a national and regional focus, with the work of, for example, Manuel Barrero, Xulio Carballo Dopico, Jorge Catalá Carrasco, Rhiannon McGlade and Pedro Porcel.⁸

5 There is also the apparently short-lived *Historietas: Revista de estudios sobre la historieta* [Comics. Journal of Comics Studies] published by the University of Cádiz, which saw three issues from 2011 to 2013. These were thematic – history, women and the 1940s – and included both foreign and Spanish material. For examples of monographs and the like, see notes below.

6 Antonio Altarriba, ed., 'La historieta española, 1857–2010: Historia, sociología y estética de la narrativa gráfica en España' [The Spanish comic, 1857–2010: History, sociology and aesthetics of graphic narrative in Spain], special issue, *Arbor* 187, extra no. 2 (2011); Viviane Alary, ed., *Historietas, comics y tebeos españoles* (Mirail: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2002). Note that *tebeo*, *historieta* and *comic* may all be translated to English as 'comic', but they have different connotations in Spanish.

7 Antonio Martín, *Historia del comic español: 1875–1939* (Madrid: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1978). See also Antonio Martín, 'La historieta española de 1900 a 1951', in Altarriba, 'La historieta española', 63–128.

8 Manuel Barrero, 'The Evolution of Children's Comics in Spain', *International Journal of Comic Art* 5, no. 2 (2003): 28–49; Manuel Barrero, 'Orígenes de la historieta española, 1857–1906', in Altarriba, 'La historieta española', 15–42; Xulio Carballo Dopico, *Tornar os tempos: Os pioneiros da banda deseñada galega* [Changing the Times:

Compared to the topic of early comics, comics during the Francoist dictatorship have been a much more popular academic field since 2000, especially in Spanish. Children's adventure and humour comics have been the subject of many studies, and this is furthermore a topic that has generated many more popular publications for a broader, non-academic audience. Scholars such as Viviane Alary, Antonio Altarriba, Ana Merino and Pedro Porcel offer general introductions to the comics of the period.⁹ Others zoom in on a particular comic, artist or genre, typically using this as a prism for a more general image of the comics and their context. This is the case with several studies of the adventure comics of that era, with the series *El Capitán Trueno*, *El Guerrero del Antifaz* and *Roberto Alcázar y Pedrín* being among the most popular.¹⁰ Studies of the period's humour comics also often focus on a comics

The Pioneers of Galician Comics] (Vigo: Edición Xerais, forthcoming); Jorge Catalá Carrasco, *Vanguardia y humorismo gráfico en crisis: La guerra civil española (1936–1939) y la revolución cubana (1959–1961)* [Avant-Garde and graphic humour in crisis: The Spanish Civil War and the Cuban Revolution] (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015); Rhiannon McGlade, *Catalan Cartoons: A Cultural and Political History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016); Pedro Porcel and Vicente Sorní, *Viñetas a la luna de Valencia: La historia del tebeo valenciano, 1965–2006* [Panels to the moon of Valencia: The history of Valencian comics] (Alicante: Edicions de Ponent, 2007); Joel C. Webb, 'Drawing a Glorious Past, Picturing an Uncertain Future', *European History Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (2017): 257–283. A couple titles study the satirical press during a longer period of time: Luís Conde Martín, *El humor gráfico en España: La distorsión intencional* [Graphic humour in Spain: Intentional distortion] (Madrid: Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid, 2005); Enrique Bordería Ortiz, Francesc-Andreu Martínez Gallego and Josep Lluís Gómez Mompert, eds, *El humor frente al poder: Prensa humorística, cultura política y poderes fácticos en España (1927–1987)* [Humor up against power. The humor press, political culture and the powers that be in Spain (1927–1987)] (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015).

- 9 Viviane Alary, 'The Spanish Tebeo', *European Comic Art* 2, no. 2 (2009): 253–276; Antonio Altarriba, *La España del tebeo: La historieta española de 1940 a 2000* (Madrid: Espasa, 2001); Ana Merino, *El cómic hispánico* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2003), 97–145; Pedro Porcel, 'La historieta española de 1951–1970', in Altarriba, 'La historieta española', 129–158.
- 10 E.g. José Antonio Ortega Anguiano, *El Capitán Trueno: El Gran Héroe del tebeo* [El Capitán Trueno: The great comics hero] (Palma: Dolmen Editorial, 2012); Pedro Porcel, *Tragados por el abismo: La historieta de aventuras en España* [Swallowed by the abyss: adventure comics in Spain] (Alicante: Edicions de Ponent, 2010); Lucas E. Lorduy, 'Roberto Alcázar y Pedrín como paradigma sociológico del período de la autarquía en España (1939–1959)' [*Roberto Alcázar y Pedrín* as a sociological paradigm of the autarky period in Spain], *CuCo – Cuadernos de Cómic* 7 (2016): 66–86; Antonio Lara, 'El Guerrero del Antifaz, repaso del cuaderno nº 26: "El crimen de Harúm" (1946)' [El Guerrero del Antifaz: A reading of magazine no. 26: "The crime of Harúm"], in Alary, *Historietas*, 164–173.

artist, character or series.¹¹ Within the field of caricature and cartoons during the dictatorship, the semi-satirical magazine *La Codorniz* in particular has caught scholarly attention.¹² Closely related to comics and cartoons during the dictatorship is the question of censorship. It is almost by definition part of any study within this period, but some titles have it as their main theme.¹³

Continuing from cartoons, dictatorship and censorship, the political cartoons during the political transition have become a major topic of study. Some of these studies focus on specific publications or series, as is the case with María Iranzo's study of *El Papus*, Gerardo Vilches's of *El Jueves* and Alfonso Cortés González's of *Martínez el facha*.¹⁴ Others, like

- 11 Óscar Gual Boronat, 'Qué suerte más perra: Los oscuros años de Jaimito' [What bad luck: Jaimito's dark years], *Historietas: Revista de estudios sobre la Historieta* 3 (2013): 57–69; Jesús Jiménez Varea, 'You Can Never Win: An Analysis of Comic Strips by the Spanish Cartoonist Peñarroya', *International Journal of Comic Art* 5, no. 2 (2003): 50–65; Fernando Javier de la Cruz, *Los Cómic de Francisco Ibáñez* (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2008); Viviane Alary, 'Hito de la historieta española: El caso de K-Hito en la serie "De cómo pasan el rato Currinche y Don Turulato"' [Hito of the Spanish comic: The case of K-Hito in the series 'How Currinche and Don Turulato spend the day'], in Alary, *Historietas*, 142–163.
- 12 José Antoio Llera, *El humor verbal y visual de La Codorniz* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2003); Cristina Peñarroya, 'El humor gráfico del Franquismo y la formación de un territorio translocal de identidad democrática' [Graphic humor during Francoism and the formation of a translocal territory of democratic identity], *CIC (Cuadernos de Información y Comunicación)* 7 (2002): 351–380; Manuel Barrero, 'Martínez de León: Humor gráfico en la guerra civil y bajo el Franquismo' [Martínez de León: Graphic humor in the Civil War and during the Francoist regime], *Tebeosfera* 2 (2008); José Antonio Llera, 'De la palabra a la imagen: El chiste gráfico de Chumy Chúmez' [From word to image: Chumy Chúmez' graphic jokes], *Tebeosfera* 2 (2008).
- 13 Vicent Sanchis, *Franco contra Flash Gordon: La censura franquista aplicada a les publicacions infantils i juvenils (1936–1977)* [Franco against Flash Gordon: Franco's censorship applied to children's and youth's publications] (Valencia: Tres i Quatre, 2009); Vicent Sanchis, *Tebeos mutilados: La censura franquista contra Editorial Bruguera* [Mutilated comics: Francoist censorship against Editorial Bruguera] (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 2010); Ignacio Fernández Sarasola, 'Viñetas truncadas: El control sobre las historietas durante el franquismo' [Truncated panels: Control over the comic strips during Francoism], *International Journal of Iberian Studies* 30, no. 1 (2017): 41–57.
- 14 María Iranzo, 'Un golpe de risa: La gracia de un golpe – Análisis del golpe de estado del 23 de febrero de 1981 por la revista *El Papus*' [A joke of a military coup: The grace of a coup – Analysis of the coup of 23 February 1981 by the magazine *El Papus*], in *La risa periodística: Teoría, metodología e investigación en comunicación satírica* [Journalistic laughter: Theory, methodology and research in satirical communication], ed. Enrique Bordería Ortiz, Francesc A. Martínez Gallego and Josep L. Gómez Mompert (Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch, 2010), 183–213; Gerardo Vilches, 'La primera etapa de *El Jueves*: Un análisis de los primeros 26 números del semanario' [The first stage of *El Jueves*: An analysis of the first 26 issues of the weekly], *CuCo – Cuadernos de cómic* 2 (2014): 137–158; Alfonso Cortés González, 'Historieta social y de actualidad: *Martínez*

Carla Garrido Zanón and Jessica Lluch Jiménez, discuss the representation of women in the magazines.¹⁵ The period of the political transition also saw the emergence of what would become the most popular comics genres of the 1980s: underground and *línea clara* comics. These genres have also become key topics for scholarly work, and the monographs by Francisca Lladó Pol, Pedro Pérez del Solar and Pablo Dopico stand out.¹⁶ There is also a wealth of articles with analyses of specific works from the period.¹⁷

The first overviews of comics development from the 1990s onwards are emerging,¹⁸ although it is still recent history, and there are also a few

el Facha' [Social and current comics: *Martínez el Facha*], in *Las dimensiones social y política del comic* [The social and political dimensions of comics], ed. Ana Jorge Alonso, Rocío de la Maya Retamar and Alfonso Cortés González (Málaga: Centro de Ediciones de la Diputación de Málaga, 2006), 53–70. For a general introduction, see Francisco Segado Boj, *Un país de chiste: El humor gráfico durante la Transición* [A joke country: Graphic humor during the Transition] (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 2012).

- 15 Carla Garrido Zanón, 'La construcción de la imagen de la mujer en el humor gráfico del semanario *Hermano Lobo* (1972–1976)', [The construction of the image of women in the graphic humor of the weekly *Hermano Lobo*], *Revista de Comunicación de la SEECI* 36 (2015): 20–30; Jessica Lluch Jiménez, 'La representación de la mujer en la prensa satírica: *Por Favor* (1974–1978)' [The representation of women in the satirical press: *Por Favor*], *Revista internacional de Historia de la Comunicación* 3 (2014): 71–94.
- 16 Francisca Lladó Pol, *Los cómics de la Transición: El boom del cómic adulto 1975–1984* (Barcelona: Ediciones Glénat, 2001); Pedro Pérez del Solar, *Imágenes del desencanto: Nueva historieta española 1980–1986* [Images of disenchantment: The new Spanish comic] (Madrid: La Casa de la Riqueza, 2013); Pablo Dopico, *El cómic underground español, 1970–1980* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2005).
- 17 Elena Masarah, 'Cuando dibujar es político: Historiografía y memoria de las autoras de cómic en la Transición' [When drawing is political: Historiography and memory of the comic authors during the Transition], *CuCo – Cuadernos de Cómic* 5 (2015): 54–75; Pablo Dopico, 'Lo femenino y el sexo en el underground español', *Historietas* 2 (2012): 87–96; Anne Magnussen, 'Mara and Paracuellos: Interpretations of Spanish Politics from the Perspective of the Comics', *Scandinavian Journal of Comic Art* 1, no. 1 (2012): 26–44; Álvaro Pons, 'Micharmut: Más allá de la vanguardia' [Micharmut: Beyond the avant-garde], *CuCo – Cuadernos de Cómic* 3 (2014): 51–65; Maricarmen Vila, 'Historieta feminista y erotismo: Las relecturas del cuerpo' [Feminist comics and eroticism: Rereadings of the body], *Historietas* 2 (2012): 97–104; Danielle Corrado, 'Carlos Giménez y el pacto autobiográfico', in Alary, *Historietas*, 174–194; Pablo Dopico, 'Espustos de papel: La historieta "underground" española' [Spittle of Paper: The Spanish 'underground' comic], in Altarriba, 'La historieta española', 169–181.
- 18 Juan Manuel Díaz de Guereñu, 'El Cómic español desde 1995', in Altarriba, 'La historieta española', 209–220; Santiago García, 'En el umbral: El cómic español contemporáneo' [On the threshold: Contemporary Spanish comics], in Altarriba, 'La historieta española', 255–263; Anne Magnussen, 'Spanish Comics and Politics', in *Comics und Politik / Comics and Politics*, ed. Stephan Packard (Berlin: Christian A. Bachmann Verlag, 2014), 157–178.

studies of the publishing background of the period.¹⁹ However, many studies of post-1980 comics are concerned with comics as literary works in their own right, including a variety of themes, from intertextuality and monstrosity to the representations of place.²⁰ Other studies focus on the comics medium and aesthetics, using Spanish comics as their main examples.²¹ Among the text-oriented analyses, two themes stand out in post-2000 research: studies of memory and comics, and of what could be called social comics. The topic of memory has been present in comics research for at least ten years, and it represents a broad variety of perspectives. In Spain, historical memory relating especially to the Civil War and the dictatorship has been the subject of many studies, but focus has recently moved towards memories relating primarily to the intimate sphere.²² ‘Social comics’ is an equally broad term that

- 19 Álvaro Pons, ‘La industria del comic en España: Radiografía de un mito o una realidad?’ [The comic industry in Spain: X-ray of a myth or a reality?], in Altarriba, ‘La historieta española’, 265–273.
- 20 Ana Merino, ‘Intertextuality: Superrealist Intertextualities in Max’s *Bardín*’, in *Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods*, ed. Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan (New York: Routledge, 2012), 252–264; Sarah D. Harris, ‘The Monster Within and Without: Spanish Comics, Monstrosity, Religion, and Alterity’, in *Representing Multiculturalism in Comics and Graphic Novels*, ed. Carolene Ayaka and Ian Hague (Oxford: Taylor & Francis, 2014), 113–129; Miguel A. Pérez-Gómez, ‘Analizando Neurope: La construcción de mundo en la obra de Miguel Ángel Martín’ [Analyzing Neurope: The construction of the world in the work of Miguel Ángel Martín], *CuCo – Cuadernos de Cómic* 6 (2016): 34–61.
- 21 Guy Abel, ‘Trazo de tiza de Miguelanxo Prado: El improbable relato entre novela y cuadro’ [Streak of chalk by Miguelanxo Prado: The improbable story between novel and painting], in Alary, *Historietas*, 196–209; Jean Alsina, ‘La narración en *El artefacto perverso*: Algunas Calas en un objeto inagotable’ [Narration in *The Perverse Artefact*: A few slices of an infinite object], in Alary, ed., *Historietas*, 210–228; Viviane Alary, ‘Briefness in Spanish Comics: A Few Landmarks’, *International Journal of Comic Art* 5, no. 2 (2003): 5–27; Anne Magnussen, ‘The Semiotics of C. S. Peirce as a Theoretical Framework for the Understanding of Comics’, in *Comics and Culture: Analytical and Theoretical Approaches to Comics*, ed. Anne Magnussen and Hans-Christian Christiansen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2000), 193–207; Jesús Jiménez Varea, ‘Formas y contenidos: Evolución del lenguaje y de los argumentos en la historieta española’ [Form and content: Evolution of language and arguments in Spanish comics], in Altarriba, ‘La historieta española’, 43–61; Óscar Gual Boronat, *Viñetas de posguerra: Los cómics como fuente para el estudio de la historia* [Post-war panels: Comics as a source for historical studies] (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2013).
- 22 Ana Merino and Brittany tullis, ‘The Sequential Art of Memory: The Testimonial Struggle of Comics in Spain’, *Hispanic Issues On Line* 11 (2012): 211–225; Hartmut Nonnenmacher, ‘La Memoria del franquismo en el cómic español’, in *Lugares de memoria de la guerra civil y el franquismo* [Memory sites of the Civil War and the Francoist dictatorship], ed. Ulrich Winter (Frankfurt and Madrid: Vervuert and Iberoamericana, 2006), 177–208; David Fernández de Arriba, ‘La memoria del exilio a través del comic: *Un largo silencio, El arte de volar y Los surcos del azar*’ [The memory

combines themes of immediate relevance with a more or less explicit educational ambition. These comics aim to enable readers to understand complex political or social situations (e.g. the financial crisis) or severe illnesses (e.g. the field of graphic medicine).²³

Overall, children's comics during the Francoist dictatorship and political cartoons and new comics for adults during the political transition are the main recurrent topics in the scholarship from 2000 onwards. Memory and social comics also stand out as popular themes for analysis. To these should be added two topics that cut across historical periods and themes, namely an interest in regional comics and in women and comics.

As a relatively new phenomenon, recent research has seen a surge in the interest in regional comics, from historical overviews to analyses of specific works and themes. These studies include accounts of comics history in Catalonia, Galicia, Valencia, Mallorca and Asturias.²⁴ Many of the comics and caricatures treated in these studies are also

of exile represented in the comics: *A Long Silence, The Art of Flying and Twists of Fate*], *CuCo – Cuadernos de Cómic* 4 (2015): 7–34; Anne Magnussen, 'The New Spanish Memory Comics: The Example of *Cuerda De Presas*', *European Comic Art* 7, no. 1 (2014): 56–84; Michel Matly, 'El cómic español y la guerra civil: Transición y primera década de democracia 1976–1992' [Spanish comics and Civil War: the Transition and the first decade of democracy], *Tebeosfera* 12 (2014); Viviane Alary and Danielle Corrado, 'L'autobiographie dessinée en terres ibériques' [The autobiography drawn in Iberian lands], in *Autobio-graphismes: Bande dessinée et représentation de soi* [Autobiographics: Comics and self-representation], ed. Viviane Alary, Danielle Corrado and Benoît Mitaine (Chêne-Bourg: Éditeur Georg, 2015).

- 23 Ryan Prout, 'Mapping Neuro-diverse Alterity in "Social and Sensitive" Comics from Spain', *International Journal of Comic Art* 15, no. 1 (2013): 84–99; Brittany Tullis, 'Paco Roca's *Arrugas*, Miguel Ángel Gallardo's *María y yo*, and the Impact of Social Comics in Contemporary Spain', *International Journal of Comic Art* 14, no. 2 (2012): 77–89; Jorge L. Catalá-Carrasco, 'Neoliberal Expulsions, Crisis, and Graphic Reportage in Spanish Comics', *Romance Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (2017): 172–184; Jorge Catalá Carrasco, 'Cómic, 15M y crisis en España', *Tebeosfera* 3, no. 5 (2017); Ryan Prout, 'From Boom to Bubble and Bust: Comical Economics in Aleix Saló's *Troika Trilogy*', *International Journal of Comic Art* 16, no. 1 (2014): 458–476.

- 24 Catalonia: McGlade, *Catalan Cartoons*; Jordi Riera Pujal, 'El cómic en catalán: De la postguerra a la Transición' [The comic in Catalan: From the post-war period to the Transition], *Tebeosfera* 3 (2008); Galicia: Carballo Dopico, *Tornar os tempos*; Universidad de A Coruña, ed., *BDG70: A revolta do cómic galego* [BDG70: The revolt of Galician comics], (Corunna: Demo Editorial, 2017); Valencia: Porcel and Sorní, *Viñetas a la luna de Valencia*; Francisco Tadeo Juan, 'The Valencia School: Pioneer of Spanish Comic Strips', *International Journal of Comic Art* 7, no. 1 (2005): 485–503; Mallorca: Francisca Lladó Pol, *Trenta anys de còmic a Mallorca (1975–2005)* [Thirty years of comics in Mallorca] (Palma: Edicions Documenta Balear, 2009); Asturias: Mercedes Fernández Menéndez, ed., *Asturias: Imágenes de historieta y realidades regionales* [Asturias: Comics images and regional realities] (Oviedo: Servicio de Publicaciones Universidad de Oviedo, 1999).

included in general accounts of comics history. This is especially true for Catalan and Valencian comics, as they have had a major impact on the national comics scene and are therefore part of national comics histories and accounts. However, what is (relatively) new is that in the regional comics histories focus is on an explicit regional viewpoint.

We have already mentioned a series of titles concerning women and comics, which include analyses of publications especially for girls during the dictatorship, the representation of women in comics and female comics artists among other foci.²⁵ The articles published in *European Comic Art's* two special issues on Spanish comics relate in different ways to trends sketched out here.

The Articles

In the introduction to *European Comic Art* volume 11, issue 1 (*ECA* 11.1), I argued that the political transition is a key period in Spanish comics history, pointing both backwards to the political, cultural and social repression of the Francoist dictatorship, and forwards to the development of new comics, genres, publications and audiences. The focus in recent research on cartoons and adult comics from this period confirm this statement, and Antonio Lázaro-Reboll's article in *ECA* 11.1 about Spanish theoretical scholarship is an example of this.²⁶ So are the first two articles in the current issue. In his article 'Tintin in the *Movida Madrileña*: Gender and Sexuality in the Punk Comic Book Zine Scene', Louie Dean Valencia-García studies underground fanzines of the period and how they offered Spanish young people new possibilities of cultural production and new ideas. In his article 'Satirical Panels against Censorship: A Battle That Raged during the Spanish Transition', Gerardo Vilches discusses the more explicitly politicized political cartoons of the time and the ways in which the Francoist regime tried

25 Some have already been mentioned. See also Adela Cortijo, 'Autoras contemporáneas en la historieta Española: Revisión de la etiqueta "cómic femenino"' [Contemporary female authors in Spanish comics: A rethinking of the label 'feminine comics'], in Altarriba, 'La historieta española', 221–238. To this should be added some interest in comics for girls during the dictatorship: María del Pilar Loranca de Castro, "'Mis chicas' y su influencia en las niñas de posguerra" ['My girls' and their influence on post-war girls], *Historietas* 3 (2013): 71–81; Rosario Jiménez Morales, 'Pequeños defectos que debemos corregir: Aprendiendo a ser mujer en la historieta sentimental de los años cincuenta y sesenta' [Small defects that we should correct: Learning to become a woman in the sentimental comics of the fifties and sixties], in Altarriba, 'La historieta española', 159–168.

26 Lázaro-Reboll, 'Historicizing the Emergence'.

to delimit their circulation and impact through censorship. With its focus on censorship, the article points backwards, representing the last efforts of the Francoist regime to control comics, and this article can be seen in relation to Rhiannon McGlade's article in *ECA* 11.1 about censorship during Francoist dictatorship. As mentioned, McGlade is also part of the new focus on regional comics, which she shares with David Miranda-Barreiro and his article about Galician comics in *ECA* 11.1.²⁷

Two recurrent topics of post-2000 Spanish comics research (memory and social comics) are also represented in the two special issues. In this issue, there are two articles on this topic. In 'The Representation of Traumatic Memory in Spanish Comics: Remembering the Civil War and Francoism in Panels', Juan Carlos Pérez García offers an overview of some key comics with reference to historical memory and more specifically to the Spanish Civil War. Sarah D. Harris also discusses memory in "They Tried To Bury Us; They Didn't Know We Were Seeds": Intergenerational Memory and *La Casa*', but from a quite different perspective that is intimate and family related rather than collectively political and/or with specific references to Spanish history. When these two articles are considered together with Benjamin Fraser's 'Paco Roca's Graphic Novel *La Casa* (2015) as Architectural Elegy' and Iain MacInnes's "For He Bestirred Himself to Protect the Land from the Moors": Depicting the Medieval Reconquista in Modern Spanish Graphic Novels' (both from *ECA* 11.1), the breadth of the topic of memory in comics is apparent.²⁸

The topic of social comics was present in *ECA* 11.1 with Javier Muñoz-Basols and Marina Massaguer Comes's article about social criticism in Aleix Saló's work.²⁹ And in this issue, Agatha Mohring, in her article 'Therapeutic Journeys in Contemporary Spanish Graphic Novels', analyses how Spanish comics as pathographies use the journey as a metaphor to represent illness. One of Mohring's examples is a work by Paco Roca, one of the most prolific and popular Spanish

27 Rhiannon McGlade, 'Dissenting Voices? Controlling Children's Comics under Franco', *European Comic Art* 11, no. 1 (2018): 30–47; David Miranda-Barreiro, 'From Pioneer of Comics to Cultural Myth: Castelao in Galician Graphic Biography', *European Comic Art* 11, no. 1 (2018): 66–86.

28 Benjamin Fraser, 'Paco Roca's Graphic Novel *La Casa* (2015) as Architectural Elegy', *European Comic Art* 11, no. 1 (2018): 87–106; Iain A. MacInnes, "For He Bestirred Himself to Protect the Land from the Moors": Depicting the Medieval Reconquista in Modern Spanish Graphic Novels', *European Comic Art* 11, no. 1 (2018): 48–65.

29 Javier Muñoz-Basols and Marina Massaguer Comes, 'Social Criticism through Humour in the Digital Age: Multimodal Extension in the Works of Aleix Saló', *European Comic Art* 11, no. 1 (2018): 107–128.

comics artists at this time. His work refers to both memory and social comics, and Esther Claudio's interview with Roca in this issue therefore ties together several strands relating to contemporary research into Spanish comics.

With the two special issues about Spanish comics, we hope to show that scholarship within the field is very much alive and kicking but also that there are plenty of opportunities for further study, not least in English, so that the comics scholar community at large can get to know more about the truly fascinating field of Spanish comics and their history.