



The translations of Verdaguer (an approach)

by Isidor Cònsul

Outside Catalan literary circles, there was no interest in Jacint Verdaguer's work until 1877, thanks to the impact of *L'Atlàntida*. In a report that Serafí Pitarra wrote on the same afternoon of the Jocs Florals of 1877, to be sent to “La Lluanera de Nova York”, the magazine that the versatile Artur Cuyàs published in the USA, he spoke of the tremendous impression made on him personally, of a festival which had been *exceedingly splendid* and, as far as *L'Atlàntida* was concerned he left no doubt but that it was a work of genius, that inspiration bubbled out of *all its verses*, and the young author who had been awarded confirmed *the hopes that the world of Catalan letters had placed in him*.

THE IMPACT OF L'ATLÀNTIDA

It has been said that the Jocs Florals of 1877 were a sufficient justification in themselves of the Renaixença movement and 19th century Catalan literature. On the one hand, Àngel Guimerà, as a poet, won the title of “mestre en Gai Saber” in one round; on the other, the exceptional prize granted to *L'Atlàntida* by Jacint Verdaguer gave rise to a legitimate pride in knowing that Catalan literature had, at last, produced a great poem which justified its existence. The fuss that was later made of it meant that other literatures turned their attention to Verdaguer and this marked the beginning of the first translation projects into Castilian, Russian, French, English, German, Czech, Italian, Latin, Esperanto, Portuguese... Not all these projects had a happy ending and not all the translations that emerged from them were of the work as a whole. However, the following translations can be mentioned, referring only to the Atlantic poem: there were translations into Spanish [*La Atlántida* : verse translation by Josep M. Despujol (1878); prose translation by Melcior de Palau (1878); a verse translation by Francisco Díaz Carmona (1883); a verse translation by Joan Ots i Lleó (1930); a prose translation by José Miguel Velloso (1961). Apart from other partial translations which I don't mention here]; into French [*L'Atlantide* : prose translation by Albert Savine (1882); a verse translation by Justí Pepratx (1884)]; into Italian [*La Atlantida* : prose translation by Luigi Sunyer (1885); verse translation by Emmanuele Portal (1916)]; into German [*Atlantis* . Translation by Clara Commer (1897)]; into English [*Atlantide* . Translation by William Bonaparte Wise (unfinished)]; into Portuguese [*A Atlantida* . Verse translation by José M. Gómez Ribeiro (1909)]; into Czech [*Atlantida* . Verse translation by Jaroslav Vrchlicky (1891)]; into Latin [*L'Atlantida* , verse translation by the Piarist P. Tomàs Viñas], into Provençal [*L'Atlantida* , prose translation by Jean Monné (1888)], as well as extracts translated into Swedish by Göran Bjorkman, into Esperanto by Josep Grau Cases and into Provençal by Frederic Mistral. By way of a postscript, it is worth mentioning the multilingual edition of *L'Atlantida* which was published in 1927, to commemorate the first fifty years of the poem.

CANIGÓ

The eruption and dissemination of *L'Atlàntida* favoured the translation of other works, such as the first Castilian version of *Idil·lis i cants místics*, [Idylls and Mystic Songs], in a verse translation by Josep Maria Carulla, in 1879, which was followed by a second edition, also in verse by Francesc Badenes i Dalmau, in 1908. The same Josep Maria Carulla translated the *Llegenda de Montserrat* [Legend of Montserrat] (1881) and the *Oda a Barcelona* [Ode to Barcelona] (1883), a piece which

was also translated into Castilian by Francesc Mas i Otzet (1883), P. Hermenegildo Torres (1899), Joan Baradat, Marc Tintoré, Lluís Viada i Lluch and Pere Voltes Bou.

In general, however, it was necessary to wait for the publication of the great poem by Verdaguer, *Canigó*, in 1885, before there was a new wave of proposals for translations, though not in the quantity there had been for *L'Atlantida*. There were translations of *Canigó*, into Spanish [*Canigó* : prose translation by J. Nogués i Taulet (1886), a translation into verse and prose by the Count of Cedillo (1898), partial translations by Constantí Llombart, Ramon D. Perés and Sebastià Turllo]; into French [*Canigou* : prose translation by J. Toldrà de Bordas (1889), by P. Blazy, also in prose (1908), and extracts in verse by Justí Pepratx]; and partial translations into Italian, in verse and prose, by Maria Lices and Luigi Bossi (1888).

Translated by Matthew Tree