

THE SIR HENRY THOMAS PROJECT: TOWARDS A HISTORY OF PORTUGUESE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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Introduction

“We English are, with few exceptions, little acquainted with Portuguese literature.”¹ Thus spoke Edward Quillinan’s literary creation, Captain Vincent Stanisforth, in 1841, and, if truth be told, little has changed since that date.

In the second half of the 20th century, Jorge de Sena found English ignorance of the wealth and diversity of Portuguese literature quite monstrous — “qualquer coisa de monstruosa (1981: 143), while Onésimo T. Almeida has observed:

If we were to survey that minuscule segment of the Anglo-American readership with some knowledge of Portuguese letters, we could easily predict that, in the final analysis, poetry would rank the highest with two names: Camões and Pessoa. The second category would be the novel, with *Eça de Queiroz*, possibly followed by José Saramago. (Almeida 1997: 127)

¹ Edward Quillinan, *The Sisters of the Douro*, in *The Conspirators*, Vol. 1. London: Henry Colburn, 1841, p.106. The statement is made by Captain Vincent Stanisforth in chapter V, when Francisca Coelho takes him on a whistle-stop tour of Portuguese literature, based largely on Bouterwerk, as Miguel Alarcão has established in his article “Home is Where the Heart is: A Obra Lusófila de Edward Quillinan (1791-1851)”, *Revista de Estudos Anglo-Portugueses*, 4 (1995), pp. 87-132.

Eugénio Lisboa, less dispassionate than his fellow countrymen, berates the British reading public, if not the British in general, for their:

“arrogância cultural [...], o seu conhecido fastio cultural, o desprezo altaneiro pelos “foreigners”, sobretudo quando estes mostram tendência a pertencer ao sul indisciplinado e moreno. Este fastio, esta falta de curiosidade pelo outro (sobretudo se o outro é pequeno e política e economicamente sem importância)” (1997: 237-38)

The Sir Henry Thomas Project

The principal objective of the Sir Henry Thomas Project² is to counter these attitudes and this ignorance by mapping the presence and reception of Portuguese literature in the English-speaking world, simultaneously challenging long-standing perceptions of the low status of literary translation in “a tradition that belittles translation” (Bush 1997: 126) and raising the profile of Portuguese literature in general. Only a project of some magnitude can explore satisfactorily the history of Portuguese literature in English translation, following Lambert & Van Gorp’s arguments in favour of large-scale research programmes whose object of study is “translated literature, that is to say, translational norms, models, behaviour and systems” (1985: 51). The project should make it possible to gauge the nature and extent of Portugal’s literary ‘influence’ on English culture. Any changes that have taken place over time in translators’ approaches as well as their perceptions of the task of translation will emerge.

Anglo-Portuguese relations — dynastic, political, commercial — boast a long and complex history (Prestage 1935). The very fact that the two countries have enjoyed these relations since before the Treaty of Windsor (1386) suggests that there is much to learn about the cultural interaction between them. Portuguese and English literature have met at the “encruzilhadas da cultura” (Ferreira Duarte 2001) for more than six centuries, but they have

² Henry Thomas, for whom this project is named, graduated from Mason College (the Birmingham institution from which the present University was formed in 1900), and went on to become Principal Keeper of Printed Books in the British Museum and the foremost Hispanic bibliographer of his day.

never met on equal terms.³ This inequality is strikingly obvious when we compare the volume of translations of canonical English authors, Shakespeare, Scott, Austen, the Brontës, for instance, with the paucity or non-existence of translations of, say, Gil Vicente's tragicomedies, Júlio Dinis, Herculano's *Lendas e Narrativas*, the novels of Camilo Castelo Branco. Even if we do not fully subscribe to Itamar Even-Zohar's Polysystem Theory, or accept it with grave reservations, there is no question that Portuguese literature has remained on the margins:

Since peripheral literatures in the Western hemisphere tend more often than not to be identical with the literatures of smaller nations, as unpleasant as this idea may seem to us, we have no choice but to admit that within a group of relatable national literatures, such as the literatures of Europe, *hierarchical relations* have been established since the very beginnings of these literatures. (Even-Zohar 1987: 110)

Yet Félix Walter maintained in respect of Portuguese literature, that "son influence sur d'autres littératures, surtout celle des pays qui ont eu le plus de rapports avec lui, est loin d'être négligeable" (Walter 1927: 10). This affirmation may be truer now than when it was first uttered, particularly since the attribution of a Nobel Prize to José Saramago in 1998. Certainly, questions of impact and influence should be broached within the framework of a history of translation that charts the flow of translations from Portugal to England and to the United States.

Translation History

Translation history, as Anthony Pym (1998: 2) has pointed out, does not appear explicitly in James Holmes' map of Translation Studies (Holmes' seminal lecture "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies" was delivered in 1972 and has been published in Toury 1987). Two decades later, José Lambert lamented the fact that "si la carte mondiale des littératures nous est mal connue, celle des traductions n'existe même pas à l'état de

³ One possible indicator of this interaction is the number, frequency and quality of translations from the Portuguese, though such data, some of which is available in UNESCO's *Index Translationum*, would need to be interpreted with caution.

concept" (1993: 10). Even in 1996, for commentators like Alexander Gross, translation history was still in its infancy, not least because only "nine useful books about translation history, specialised works aside, have been published over the last thirty years".⁴ Needless to say, none of these useful books tackles the question of Portuguese literature in translation. Delisle and Woodsworth's *Translators through History* (1995) may provide useful models of approaches to be taken, but it offers no Portuguese examples. On the other hand, Lambert reminds us that pieces of translation history are frequently to be found hiding within other areas of research, including Comparative Literature and studies on reception (1993: 8). One notable example of this is Professor Machado de Sousa's study of Gothic literature in 18th — and 19th century Portugal (1978), which contains valuable discussion and analysis of Herculano's translations of Lewis's *The Monk*.

In reality, scholars of Portuguese have actually been ahead of their time in this type of endeavour. Several general surveys on Portuguese literature in English translation were produced before academics had thought to coin the terms Translation History or Historiography of Translation. While their work is not especially critical, and may fall short of the standards expected of today's scholars, they did carry out substantial activity in the field of "translation archaeology", "which can include anything from the compiling of catalogues to the carrying out of biographical research on translators" (Pym 1998: 5).

Thus, Henry Thomas published his brief study of translations from Portuguese before 1640 (1926, 1930), covering literature, history, travel writing and other genres. In the same period Félix Walter published in France a study of Portuguese literature in England during the Romantic period (1927). Fran Paxeco's short work, *The Intellectual Relations between Portugal and Great Britain*, published in 1937, reviews and augments the work done by Thomas and Walter. Although Paxeco's commentary lacks scholarly rigour, the wealth of anecdotal evidence offers many useful points of departure for an exploration of how Portuguese literature has been received in Britain. Luiz Cardim has a concise work on Camões in English literature (1940). This is followed by Carlos Estorninho's "Portuguese Literature in

⁴ Alexander Gross, reviewing Delisle and Woodsworth's (1995) *Translators through History* in 1996, at <http://language.home.sprynet.com/trandex/histrhis.htm>

English Translation”, in the homage volume for Prestage and Bell, *Portugal and Brazil* (in Livermore 1953: 129-138). A list of translated works is provided in the Portuguese literature section of *Literatures of the World in English Translation*, Vol.3 (Berrien *et al* 1967). Antony Allison (1974) has produced a catalogue of translations from Spanish and Portuguese to the year 1700. More recently, *The Babel Guide to the Fiction of Portugal, Brazil & Africa in English Translation* (Keenoy *et al* 1995), offers short introductions to a limited selection of translated works but the brevity of the book and its supposed target audience preclude any critical analysis of the translations themselves or historical overview of Portuguese literature in translation.

Regrettably, the *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English* (Classe 2000) has only three entries for Portuguese literature, Camões, Pessoa and Saramago, thus wasting an invaluable opportunity to foreground other, major Portuguese authors who have been translated into English. The balance of the article on Portuguese Literature (McGuirk & Vieira 2000: 1105-1107) is tipped towards Brazilian and Lusophone African works in translation. It offers no hint that there is a tradition of academic research into Anglo-Portuguese cultural relations, referring instead to the *Babel Guide*, and relies too heavily on the essays published in Coulthard & Odber de Baubeta (1996), to the extent of reproducing an obvious typographical error.

Whilst some of the works listed above indubitably provide an invaluable starting point for this study, they are limited in scope, the view they provide is fragmented, outdated and, occasionally, inaccurate. Valuable studies of authors and translations do exist — George West’s groundbreaking research on Camões is a notable example (West 1934, 1938, 1971-72).⁵ Now, perhaps, it is time for exhaustive research into the dissemination and reception outside Portugal of works by Portuguese authors.

A number of Portuguese and British academics, principally *anglistas* and *lusitanistas* who occupy the middle ground of comparativism — “l’étude des traductions constitue toujours un ‘no man’s land’ des études littéraires” (Lambert 1993: 8) — have identified the crucial role played by translation within intercultural studies, and continue to advance scholarship in this area.

⁵ I am much indebted to Professor João Ferreira Duarte for drawing my attention to West’s work and the Catalogue of the Fundo British Council, Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1984, as well as his comments on the Portuguese canon.

Foremost among these are Professor Maria Leonor Machado de Sousa and her team of researchers in the Departamento de Estudos Anglo-Portugueses in the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. The results of their research, individual and collective, have been published in monographs and collections of essays, including, *A Literatura "Negra" ou "De Terror" em Portugal (século XVIII e XIX)* (Sousa 1978); *Walter Scott e o Romantismo Português* (Pires 1979); *Portugal visto pelos Ingleses* (Pires 1981); *D. Inês e D. Sebastião na Literatura Inglesa* (Sousa 1980); *D. Sebastião na Literatura Inglesa* (Sousa 1985); *Inês de Castro: Um Tema Português na Europa* (Sousa 1987), and *Camões em Inglaterra* (Sousa 1992); in the eight numbers of the *Revista de Estudos Anglo-Portugueses* that have appeared to date; and in articles and monographs deriving from masters and doctoral theses. Outstanding among these are João Paulo Ascenso Pereira da Silva's *Memórias de Portugal. A Obra Lusófila de John Adamson* (1986, 1990a) and Pedro Serra's study of Stevens' translation of D. Francisco Manuel de Melo's *Carta de Guia de Casados* (1994, 1995).

In a parallel trajectory, Professor João Almeida Flor and Professor João Ferreira Duarte, in the Universidade de Lisboa, following the tradition established by Professor Fernando de Mello Moser (see for example Moser 1994), have turned their respective attention to Anglo-Portuguese cultural relations, publishing their findings in seminal articles that consider, for instance, Shakespeare in Portugal (Flor 1985, 1994; Duarte 2000) and Camões in English translation (Duarte 1996; Flor 1998).

In the United Kingdom, initiatives in this area have traditionally sprung from academics engaged in teaching, researching and promoting Portuguese literature, librarians, poets and professional literary translators. Foremost among these was Edgar Prestage, who posed the following question in a letter to *The Academy*:

Why is the study of Portuguese literature neglected in England at a time when so much real interest is taken in all that concerns the literary evolution of foreign cultures? [...] The English neglect of which I complain is strange, seeing that both France and Germany have translated many of the Portuguese classics. (1893: 506)

Indeed, as Richard Pound has rightly pointed out, "Edgar Prestage's contributions to the study of Portuguese history and literature in the English-speaking world are so numerous and so

well known that is perhaps surprising that in the thirty-six years since his death no attempt has been made at a comprehensive study of the man and his work" (Pound 1987: 84).

In the field of Portuguese Studies, there is no binary opposition between translation theorists and practitioners since the individuals involved are often one and the same, as demonstrated by such events as the *International Conference on Translation Theory and Practice*, celebrated in Birmingham in 1993,⁶ the Forum for Iberian Studies held annually at the University of Oxford (1999 was dedicated to *Translation and National Literatures* and included a paper by Ana de Brito on Camões in translation), and at the one-day conference *From the Portuguese: Translations and Transformations* (Institute of Romance Studies, London, 1999).

The late Giovanni Pontiero not only translated works by Agustina Bessa Luís and José Saramago, among others, but also shook off any traces of invisibility in order to express his heartfelt views on translation.⁷ Margaret Jull Costa is equally articulate, in conferences, workshops and articles (Costa 1999). Other scholar-translators have researched and published on various aspects of translation from the Portuguese (Perkins 1993, 1996; Livermore 1996; Lappin 1997; Aiken 1998; MacLaren 1999; Kelsh 2000a, 2000b; Odber de Baubeta in press),⁸ but due to the nature of academic publication (and demarcation lines), their writing may not always be seen by those involved in Translation Studies. Conversely, those who research Portuguese literature might not think to consult translation journals and reviews.

From the other side of the Atlantic, a series of publications contribute significantly to the field. These range from single articles, such as Rebecca Catz's study of previous translations of the *Peregrinação de Fernão Mendes Pinto*, in which she calls to account "all the translators who butchered the *Peregrinação*" (1988: 72), to book-length studies. For instance, George Monteiro has meticulously researched the impact of Camões (1996, 1999) and reception of Pessoa in England, America and Southern Africa (1994, 1997).

⁶ The papers concerned specifically with Luso-Brazilian topics were published by Coulthard & Odber de Baubeta in 1996 under the title of *Theoretical Issues and Practical Cases in Portuguese-English Translation*.

⁷ See Pontiero's lectures and essays, which have been reprinted in Orero & Sager (eds) *The Translator's Dialogue. Giovanni Pontiero* (1997).

⁸ Dr Helen Kelsh is co-designer of the Sir Henry Thomas Project and is preparing Volume II of the *History*.

It becomes clear that while considerable amounts of research are taking place, the lack of connection between them has given rise to a piecemeal approach to a much broader cultural phenomenon. Scholars continue to comment on translations of particular works without examining the broader context within which these were made, or indeed, the relationship between different translations of the same work made at different points in time. Studies of Portuguese literature in translation do not always take account of the latest theoretical advances in Translation Studies, and Translation Studies do not necessarily look to Anglo-Portuguese literary and historical studies for its working models and examples.

“Translation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures” (Venuti 1998: 67). This *History* will look to such different subject areas as Descriptive Translation Studies, Comparative Literary Studies, Reception Theory, History of Publishing, Postcolonial Studies and Gender Studies, in order to understand the Anglo-Portuguese relationship in the past, and provide the basis for future research into the ways that Britain constructs, represents and reads her Portuguese ‘other’.

The History of Portuguese Literature in English Translation

The first task will be to compile a catalogue of all known translations of European Portuguese literary works into the English language to the year 2002, recovering wherever possible those translations which have been ‘lost’, overlooked or have quite simply fallen out of fashion. Susan Bassnett’s observation that “The translations that are heralded as definitive at one moment in time can vanish without trace a few years later” (1998: 135) might easily have been made with Camões’ *Lusíadas* in mind. While much of the information for the early years has already been disinterred and published by Thomas, Walter, Allison *et al*, their works are not widely available, and virtually inaccessible to non-specialist English readers. The catalogue will provide the factual basis for the *History*. While José Lambert may advise against “une historiographie factuelle, cumulative” (1993: 20), it is difficult to see precisely how a history can be written if we do not know which works were translated, when, where, and by whom — precisely those questions suggested by Lieven d’Hulst in his article “Why and How to Write Translation Histories” (d’Hulst 2001: 21-32).

Difficulties will inevitably arise in identifying and locating translations of poems and short stories which have appeared in little known journals and anthologies, or in editions with low print runs. However, new developments in information technology, including the computerisation of library catalogues and the uploading of magazine indexes to the Internet, have already facilitated the task of tracking down relevant material across academic disciplines, the “complex detective work” referred to by Anthony Pym (1998: 5).

Next comes a lengthy Introduction to explain the structure of the *History*, set out the objectives, parameters, theoretical framework and methodology of the research, and present the principal issues to be explored.

Successive chapters in the two Volumes will deal with translators, authors and works, translation issues, and the relationships between all of these, ordered more or less according to the chronology of the source literary system, by centuries as opposed to literary movements, although there may be a degree of overlap between these categories (for some readers, the 16th century would naturally correspond to the Renaissance, the 19th to Realism). Notwithstanding José Lambert’s misgivings about “periodisation littéraire” (1993: 2), given the specific purpose of this history, as well as the nature, size and temporal distribution of the corpus, this mode of organisation is deemed to be the most appropriate. Other possible structuring modes were considered. For instance, chapters might have been arranged by the period in which translation activity took place. However, this would have led to a serious imbalance, with gaping *lacunae* for some centuries and a heavy overload for others. Likewise, an ordering of material solely according to theoretical issues would not work in the context of translation from Portuguese, where the broader canvas has yet to be painted in. For any explanation to be well founded and convincing, the archaeological phase must have been duly completed. Though undoubtedly reminiscent of traditional literary historiography, the *History* is intended to function, among other things, as a parallel history of Portuguese literature.

Emphasis will fall on particular literary texts and their translations, but never losing sight of “problems of social causation”. For Pym, “Only through translators and their social entourage (clients, patrons, readers) can we understand why translations were produced in a particular social time and place” (Pym 1998: ix). Wherever possible, the formal and informal processes through

which literary works are selected for translation and publication will be scrutinised.

Even-Zohar suggests that translated works may serve to fill a vacuum in a weaker, peripheral literary system, particularly at turning points or moments of crisis (1987: 109), but this model does not adequately explain why a work or works from the periphery may 'invade' the stronger literature. Some translations are easily accounted for in terms of their specific content or the importance attributed to the genre of the source language text, for example, certain kinds of travel literature, the epic, or a controversial work like *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* with an explicit feminist agenda. Thirty Portuguese folk tales were published in English translation for the benefit of English scholars, in advance of a more complete Portuguese edition, namely Consiglieri Pedroso's *Contos*, translated by Henriqueta Monteiro as *Portuguese Folk-Tales*, London 1882.

Susan Bassnett, echoing Even-Zohar, has stated that "translation is especially significant at moments of great cultural change" (Bassnett 1993: 10). To test the truth of this assertion, account will be taken of the possible impact and influence of particular historical circumstances. Walter, for instance, believed that events such as the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 and the French invasions of 1807-1810 awoke interest in Portuguese literature (1927: 119). Once the full picture of translational activity has been drawn, it should be possible to verify whether Bassnett's affirmation holds true for the specific case of Portuguese. Indeed, discernible patterns of cultural exchange and appropriation may be attributed to the impact of British Romantics travelling in Portugal, the exile of Portuguese intellectuals in the 19th century, and dynastic alliances such as the marriage of Catherine of Bragança to Charles II in 1662.

The study will attempt to identify the new qualities and characteristics that Portuguese authors and their works have exported to the English literary system. Examples which immediately come to mind are, of course, Fernando Pessoa and his heteronyms, and Saramago with his innovative narrative technique and Iberian 'magical realism'. However, this focus on the intercultural exchange does not imply that the linguistic and stylistic features of the translations will be disregarded. A growing body of scholars now claim equal status for original texts and translations as far as literary criticism is concerned (Rose 1997). Translation commentaries require precisely the same critical and interpretative skills as any other act of reading. For a deeper

understanding of the translation process, selected works will be subjected to close reading, treated either as literary works in their own right, or set alongside the source text on which they are based, principally in order to determine the extent to which the original has been adapted, manipulated, censored or perhaps (according to very subjective criteria) improved. Where more than one translation of the same work has been published, there will be greater opportunity for discussion of alternatives available, and solutions found. (This approach will work particularly well with poetry, for example the Galician Portuguese lyrics and the sonnets of Camões or Antero de Quental). Where one person has produced translations of different works, it should be possible to talk in terms of consistent stylistic preferences and choices. At the same time, the *History* will give the highest possible visibility to the translators' own views, as expressed in prefaces, afterwords, articles and papers. Pontiero and Costa have already been mentioned in this context, Richard Zenith also comes to mind (Zenith 1991, 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1998). When publishers grant them the space in which to express their views, translators often call attention to the specific challenge posed by a genre or even the language variety itself, or, torn between political correctness and a perceived need to remain faithful to the spirit of the original work, justify the choices made.⁹

Canonicity

The *History* will, throughout, consider the relationship between translation and the canon. Critics and academics continue to debate the canon, seen by some as a mode of cultural representation, condemned by others as a tool for marginalisation. Certainly, it may be perceived as an exercise in exclusion, or even as an example of the centre-periphery power relationship. Harold Bloom's decision to include only one Portuguese writer in his Western canon says far more about Anglo-American academic attitudes and values than the inherent worth of Portuguese literary genius. The judgement expressed in the *Encyclopedia of*

⁹ See for example Andrew Hurley's explanation of the rationale behind his use of such disturbingly racist terms as "sheeny", "wop" and "nigger" in "A Note on the Translation", *Collected Fictions. Jorge Luis Borges*. London: Penguin Books, 1998, p.521. A similar dilemma arises in respect of Gil Vicente's plays, where the translator must decide whether to retain or erase what would nowadays be condemned as unequivocally racist, anti-semitic verses (MacLaren 1999).

Literary Translation into English is also made from the standpoint of the 'dominant' culture: "It is as surprising as it is gratifying, therefore, to see him [Pessoa] figure in Harold Bloom's 1994 *The Western Canon* of essential writers" (Freeman 2000: 1066-1067). The decision to include Pessoa should come as absolutely no surprise whatsoever to anyone who has actually read his poetry, in Portuguese or in English. Infinitely more surprising is the absence of other Portuguese authors. Stephen Reckert talks of "foreign readers coerced into taking notice by a hard sell of Fernando Pessoa, implying that [...] Portugal has only ever had one poet: a marketing strategy at once demeaning to the literature as a whole and unjust to such predecessors and contemporaries of Pessoa's as Cesário Verde and Camilo Pessanha" (Reckert 1993: 9-10).

Canon, for the purposes of this study, is taken to mean a selection of valued works from the past, held in common as part of society's cultural memory and identity.¹⁰ No one would deny the existence of a Portuguese domestic canon of literary works, selected for the same reasons as the English, French or any other national canon. However, while these works might be classified as canonical on the grounds of their polyvalency, timelessness, their aesthetic and universal qualities, this argument is questioned by Tompkins, who maintains that "works that have attained the status of classic, and are therefore believed to embody universal values, are in fact embodying only the interests of whatever parties or factions are responsible for maintaining them in their pre-eminent position" (Tompkins 1985: 4), a view shared at least in part by Reckert, who considers that "no effort has been spared to domesticate, appropriate, capitalise on, and mummify *The Lusíads*. It has been quarried for lapidary lines to be carved on monuments and stirring sentiments to be slotted into Tenth of June orations" (Reckert 1993: 8).

In respect of the USA, Tompkins indicates that "Even in the last sixty years, the literary canon has undergone more than one major shift as the circumstances within which critics evolved their standards of judgment changed" (Tompkins 1985: 187). What holds true for the US may well apply to Portugal. Certain authors, excluded from the canon by the censorship of Salazar's Estado Novo — Torga, the Neo-Realists, the Three Marias, José

¹⁰ I am grateful to Stuart Davis for making available to me his MPhil thesis, *The Hispanic Canon*, University of Birmingham, 1999.

Luandino Vieira — are now accepted members of the literary establishment.¹¹

Stephen Reckert concedes that “Like most national canons, that of Portugal is now in a state of flux”, but then takes the controversial view that “the Portuguese [canon], as far as the outside world is concerned, might have been put in deep freeze a hundred years ago [...] Lack of outside feedback has hindered both the formation and the revision of the Portuguese canon, turning it in on itself as a closed system” (Reckert 1993: 9). The question is whether translators (English, American, South African) share collective responsibility for transforming Portuguese literature into an erstwhile Sleeping Beauty, or whether their magical powers of transformation will eventually break the spell and bring it to life.

Through its reconstruction of translation history, the Sir Henry Thomas Project will explore the ways in which these translators, along with academics, critics, authors and even ‘cultivated travellers’, have created a Portuguese foreign canon which is exported to (or appropriated by) the English-speaking world. In 19th century England, among those responsible were Southey (Leal 1986; Castanheira 1996), Adamson (Silva 1986, 1990a) and William Morgan Kinsey, who drew largely on Garrett (Oliveira Martins 1987, 1990). In the first half of the 20th century, Prestage (1893), Bell (1913, 1914a, 1914b) and Roy Campbell (1957) disseminated Portuguese literary culture, while on the other side of the Atlantic, the canon-forming influence of the New England elite (Ticknor, Longfellow *et al*) cannot be underestimated (Tompkins 1985: 27-28). In more recent times, a number of individuals have exercised their personal judgement in choosing which works should be translated and published. Research will establish whether they are applying different criteria or are operating under different constraints from their predecessors.

Canon Formation and the Role of the Anthology

On the subject of canon formation, Wendell Harris notes:

What a generation is taught depends on the tastes and interests of the previous generation and on the antholo-

¹¹ Research might usefully be carried out to ascertain how far the 25 of April led to the inclusion of ‘subversive’, post-colonial or feminist writers in the canon.

gies and texts created in response to the demands that issue from those tastes and interests. To the selection that it has inherited, each generation adds those works given visibility by either fortunate sponsorship or malleability to current interests (1991: 110).

This observation is particularly relevant for Portuguese. Translations of Portuguese literary works, mainly poetry though there are some short stories, have been included in a series of English or American anthologies, one of the earliest being Longfellow's *The Poets and Poetry of Europe* (1845). While volumes such as these may have been forgotten by all but a few specialist scholars, they presumably had a significant impact on the reading public at the time of publication. More importantly, the translated works may have achieved a kind of after-life or "aura", in Benjamin's words, because they are selected for inclusion in subsequent anthologies and thus continue to be read.

Lefevere (1996) demonstrates the relationship between translation and canon formation in the context of drama in the United States. Following his approach, the *History* will consider the role of anthologies in disseminating Portuguese literature in translation. "Comparison of anthologies — a popular academic pastime at present — is informative in several ways" (Harris 1991: 114). Those anthologies in which translations from Portuguese have been published will therefore be compared in order to establish whether once the works have crossed over into the target literary system, they remain there, recur in subsequent anthologies, are retranslated by writers who think they can (or ought to) produce their own, more up-to-date version ("Alma minha gentil", for example, exists in at least eighteen different translations) or have simply been discarded and dropped from the canon.

Tompkins sounds a warning note, pointing out that "Even when the "same" text keeps turning up in collection after collection, it is not really the same text at all" (1985: 196). Literature in translation is subject to an identical process: Landeg White's 1997 *Lusiads* is quite distinct from Fanshawe's *Lusiad* of 1655, just as *Os Lusíadas* in the 21st century is different from *Os Lusíadas* as read by Camões' own contemporaries.¹² André Lefevere offers the chastening reminder that readers "will, in fact,

¹² See Thomas R. Hart, *The Reader's Role in the 'Lusiads'*, The Kate Elder Lecture, 6. London: Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, November, 1995.

read the translation, the rewriting, as if it was the original text, and they will experience this state of affairs as normal, leaving professional readers of literature, such as critics and theoreticians, to agonize over it" (Lefevere 1996: 139).

In any event, anthologists' prefaces will supply interesting insights. In 1947, Braybrooke and King made their editorial stance unequivocally clear:

the Editors [...] have looked not only for fidelity in their translations, but also for poetic ability and an understanding of the spirit of the poet, so that they may be assessed by the same standards as the original poems. It is for this reason that some languages are more fully represented than others, for in these cases the standard of translations received has been higher poetically. No attempt has been made to be representative". (Braybrooke & King 1947: v) ¹³

At this point, we should recall André Lefevere's observation that "the anthologist has to assume the burden of selection. Interestingly, enough the corollary to this is almost never discussed, namely: on what authority does the anthologist shoulder this burden?" (Lefevere 1996: 141).

Equally important for the *History* is the question of why certain canonical works of Portuguese literature have never been translated at all. Canonical status in the source culture offers no guarantee of transfer across to the target culture. João Ferreira Duarte accounts for this phenomenon in terms of "cultural distance":

I am employing this phrase to describe the fact that a highly canonical text or series of texts fail over a more or less lengthy period of time to be admitted into some target system for no other reason than cultural remoteness, which may stem from hostility or indifference and may lead to a dearth of experts able to tackle the translation. (Duarte 2000: 62)

Portuguese literature does not engender any hostility in the English-speaking world. It is more probable that the parochial,

¹³ The anthology contains 6 Portuguese poems, as compared with 13 Classical, 6 Italian, 14 Spanish, 4 Spanish American, 3 Brazilian, 26 French, 1 Dutch, 23 German, 6 Czech, 3 Croatian, 3 Estonian, 13 Russian, 9 Hebrew.

insular British were for the most unaware of its existence until Saramago received his Nobel prize. Indifference and a lack of translation expertise may go some way towards explaining why key (or full-length) works by leading authors — past and present — have not yet been translated: Sá de Miranda, Bocage, Herculano, Júlio Dinis (*Uma Família Inglesa* in particular),¹⁴ Carlos de Oliveira, José Cardoso Pires, Vergílio Ferreira, Maria Judite de Carvalho (one short story to date), Fernanda Botelho, Maria Ondina Braga, Agustina Bessa Luís (with the exception of a few short stories), the entire output of Alice Vieira. The gaps cannot be explained on the basis of gender — even the most cursory list reveals that male authors fare no better than women, all are left together on the margins. Unequal power relations between Portugal and the United Kingdom and the United States may be a deciding factor, or even the cultural arrogance that Eugénio Lisboa so vigorously lambasts.

Nowadays, no single reason can be adduced for the very small numbers of Portuguese works that are translated into English. Rather it is a combination of many: the indifference (or ignorance) noted above; the scarcity of competent translators; the low rates of pay that make it impossible for all but a few translators to dedicate themselves exclusively to the profession; the reluctance of publishers to invest in books that may not even cover their own production costs, even with translation grants from funding bodies. Portuguese literature, it seems, is not just devalued cultural capital (Guillory 1993). It was never legal tender in the first place.

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¹⁴ In his letter to *The Academy* (1893), Edgar Prestage urged Mr. Heinemann to consider an English translation of Júlio Dinis's *As Pupilas do Senhor Reitor*. His plea fell on deaf ears and remains unanswered to this day.

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