

ESTUDOS

CAMÕES IN TRANSLATION: FURTHER DISCOVERIES

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For George Monteiro

While much of the translation archaeology for Camões' poetry, *Os Lusíadas* and his *Líricas*, has already been carried out, there is still scope for one or two unexpected discoveries. This brief note¹ constitutes an addendum to a recent article by Professor George Monteiro (2002: 37-55), in which he stated:

It's simply that there are still Camonean references of all sorts to be gleaned by the inquisitive and industrious scholar who does not mind turning over the sometimes fragile and dusty pages of old newspapers or who will risk eyestrain by staring for hour upon hour at faded microfilms or microfiche (2002: 55)

There is, in fact, another source that researchers may fruitfully explore, namely the anthology of poems in translation, whether we mean the monumental 'Libraries' that were so popular in the United States and United Kingdom at the end of the nineteenth century, such as those edited by William Cullen Bryant, Charles Dudley Warner, Harry Thurston Peck *et al*, or the slim, 'fine book', printed by a small press and frequently embellished with specially commissioned woodcuts or a distinctive dustjacket.

¹ It is anticipated that these, and other translations of Camões, will be discussed in greater depth in the projected second of volume of *The History of Portuguese Literature in English Translation*, part of the Sir Henry Thomas Project.

Nowadays, it has become common to talk about the 'politics of the anthology', and to bemoan the power wielded by anthology editors:

Those who are in positions to edit anthologies and prepare reading lists are obviously those who occupy positions of cultural power; and their acts of evaluation represented in what they exclude as well as in what they include — constitute not merely recommendations of value but [...] also determinants of value. (Smith 1983: 29-30)

It is less usual to encounter discussion of the politics of the anthology in relation to so-called peripheral languages and cultures. However, as Barbara Korte points out, "The poetry of minorities is also dependent on anthologies for reaching a wider audience, and again anthologies have played an important role in making that poetry known" (Korte 2000: 11). For this scholar, "only poets and poems that have been anthologized have a good chance of becoming items of cultural memory or even inter-cultural memory" (Korte 2000: 12). By this logic, Camões, along with Gil Vicente and other Portuguese authors, may owe his place in the Anglophone world as much to the efforts of anthologists and translators as to his own intrinsic artistic merits.

It goes without saying that anthologies, whether of poetry or prose, can be organised in various ways. For example, they may be compiled according to the country of origin of the works they include (*Passport to Portugal*), the language in which these texts were originally written (*Contemporary Portuguese Poetry*), the period in which they were composed (*Século de Ouro. Antologia Crítica da Poesia Portuguesa do Século XX*), genre (*The Baroque Poem*),² theme (*The World's Love Poetry*), or even gender (*A Book of Women Poets from Antiquity to Now*). Some anthologies approach their task by combining several criteria and are marketed under the broadest of titles (*World Poetry. An Anthology of Verse from Antiquity to Our Time*) or the most circumscribed (*Alentejo Não Tem Sombra. Antologia da Poesia Moderna sobre o Alentejo*).

There is a further category, the work that brings together poems or short stories by a single author, usually those works

² This study/anthology contains translations of "Mudam-se os tempos", "O Tempo acaba o ano", "Que Levas, Cruel Morte", "Transforma-se o Amador na Causa Amada", "Amor é fogo que arde sem se ver", "De quantas graças tinha a Natureza" and "Que Esperais, Esperança? — Desespero".

deemed — by the anthologist — to represent the best of his or her literary production. (The author may not always agree with this judgement). What all anthologies do have in common is the fact that they are the result of conscious, deliberate choices, inclusions and exclusions. As Korte reminds us:

An anthology, in its basic understanding, is a collection of *picked flowers*, of *selected* texts. This select(ed)ness is advertised in the very titles of anthologies (as in Francis Palgrave's famous *Golden Treasury*), and the particular selection of texts and poets is a point of emphasis in most prefaces and introductions to anthologies (Korte 2000: 2)

An examination of anthologists' prefaces and introductions will often establish which selection criteria they have applied, and draw attention to any constraints under which they have operated, quite apart from the usual limitation of space. Where we are faced with a translator's anthology,³ there may be some discussion of the specific challenges posed, for instance, by a Galician Portuguese *cantiga*, a Vicentine lyric or a sonnet by Camões. Others, frustratingly, offer whether very little background information, or no explanation whatsoever.

This is the case of three translators' anthologies, all of which contain renderings of poems by Camões. The earliest of these dates from 1891, and is entitled *Translations in Verse from the French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Swedish, German and Dutch*. The translations were made by Collard J. Stock, and the volume was published by Elliot Stock (presumably a relative). There is no preface, and the appendix does not offer a great deal of information:

With the exception of Cervantes and Calderon, probably very few of the Spanish poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are well known in this country; and Camoens is almost the only Portuguese poet whose name is familiar to English ears. It may, therefore, not be out of place to add one or two brief notes on some of those writers from whom translations are given. (page 61)

Because it assumed that the reader will know Camões, he is not mentioned in the notes. There is no indication of the

³ For the distinction between an editor's anthology, and a translator's anthology, see Essmann & Frank, 1991.

Portuguese titles or the source texts for the two poems included in the anthology (“Amor é fogo que arde sem se ver”, “Sete anos de pastor Jacob servia”), nor any suggestion as to why these particular poems were selected for inclusion. It is, of course, quite possible that Stock took his lead from Burton, who has translated Camões’ lyrics just a few years previously.

SONNET:

FROM THE PORTUGUESE OF CAMOENS

LOVE is a fire whose flame doth burn unseen
a wound whose aching smart we do not fee [sic]
Contentment discontent with its own weal;
A teasing pain, though neither deep nor keen:
 It is *not* liking more than liking e’en;
Wandering alone ’midst crowds that seem unreal;
Not to content one’s self with Heaven’s own seal;
A care that only gain by loss doth mean:
 ’Tis to be captured with one’s own consent;
The victor to the vanquished here must serve;
Keep faith with one who on our death is bent:
 How can its fickle favour e’er preserve
In human hearts consistence of intent,
Since to itself contrarious Love doth swerve?

The translator has been at pains to retain the rhyme, and the antitheses of the original sonnet.

SONNET:

FROM THE PORTUGUESE OF CAMOENS

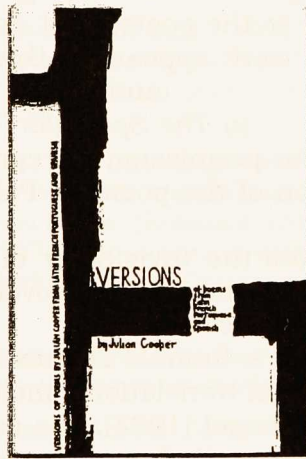
As shepherd Jacob served seven weary years
Laban for Rachel, fairest mountaineer,
But not the father did her server, ’twas her;
For her alone as his reward he cares,
 His days in hope of one sole day he bears,
Himself with sight of her contenting there;
But using guile her father, trickster rare,
Instead of Rachel’s hand now gave him Leah’s.
 The shepherd sad, seeing that with deceit
His shepherdess was thus to him denied,
As were he undeserving of his wife,

Began to serve seven other years complete,
Saying, More would I gladly serve beside
Were not, for love so long, so short our life.

His second translation is, perhaps, marred by his choice of “mountaineer” for “serrana”, but the last two lines do ample justice to the antithesis of the original text.

The second translator is Julian Cooper, who published his anthology, *Versions*, in 1959. Interestingly, more information is given on the dust jacket (clearly signalled on the inside flap as being the work of Ramsay Short):

Versions of poems from Latin French Portuguese and Spanish.



Among the other translations, we find Cooper’s version of Camões’ poem, “Descalça vai para a fonte”.

LEONOR

Barefoot she goes to the fountain.
Leonor through the greenery
Goes beautiful, but not safely.

Carries on her head a pitcher.
The cover in her hands is silver.
Her sash is fine scarlet,
Her wool mantel’s so soft.
She wears her every-day
Dress-whiter than clean snow,
And goes beautiful, but not safely.

Her cap leaves her throat bare;
Her snood uncovers gold hair.
A red ribbon, so bright
And pretty it gives the world a fright.
Such grace rains from her
She graces even beauty
As she goes, beautiful, but not safely.

Cooper does not discuss his selection or provide any notes. All he offers the reader is:

A grateful acknowledgement
is made to the poets, past and present
whose work appears in this volume
and
to *The Spectator*
for permission to reprint
the version of the poem by Pablo Neruda.

We cannot talk about the 'invisibility' of the translator, since his name does appear twice on the front cover, but the translations are left to speak for themselves.⁴

The third translator is Samuel Dennis Proctor Clough, who self-published a number of translations, including Camilo Castelo Branco's *The fall of an angel* (1991). His collection of poems in translation, *An Iberian Anthology., Versions of Spanish and Portuguese Literature*, also dates from 1991, and contains, along with other translations from the Portuguese, extracts from *The Lusiads of Camoens* (pages 8-17), and from *Babylon and Sion* (pages 18-19). With respect to the latter translation, Clough informs his readers that "My version of this poem in seven-syllabled lines is in the 'Hiawatha' trochaic metre" and, because the poem is closely related to Psalm 137, "I have added quotations from the Vulgate where appropriate" (p.137). Clough reproduces these translations in another self-published compilation, *Further Poems and Translations* (1992).

It is more than likely that a thorough scrutiny of poetry anthologies will uncover, other translations of Camões. Some

⁴ Cooper also published translations of Lorca poems (*Federico García Lorca: some of his shorter poems translated by J. Cooper*. Illustrations by W. Hallé, London: A.F.X. Demaine, 1955), wrote poetry of his own, and illustrated books.

may already be known, and have been selected for inclusion because of the canonical status of the poem or the prestige of the translator. Others translations may have been made and included because of the editor's personal preferences or because of recommendations by friends and colleagues. We cannot always discover the reasons behind the making of translations and their inclusion in anthologies. Still, we should not stop searching.

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