

## 6 *Review*

# DUNNE, Jonathan ed.

## *Anthology of Galician Literature (1196–1981)*

# DE TORO SANTOS, Antonio Raúl ed.

## *Breogán's Lighthouse: An Anthology of Galician Literature*

Santiago de Compostela  
and Vigo: Xunta de Galicia,  
Xerais, Galaxia. 2010. 341 pp.  
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Two bilingual (Galician-English) anthologies of Galician literature were published in 2010 with the aim of making the Galician cultural heritage and literary wealth available to an anglophone readership. Another twenty partial collections had been previously published in English according to a list produced by Jonathan Dunne, which is available from the Small Stations Press publishing house website. They mostly focused on contemporary authors and on poetry and short stories, showing to what extent Galician literature remained under-represented in the anglophone world. Thus, the relevance of these two titanic projects lies in their contribution to changing this situation by making Galician literature from different periods available in the English language.

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Jonathan Dunne's *Anthology of Galician Literature (1196–1981)*, published by the two largest publishing houses in Galicia (Xerais and Galaxia), provides a view of Galician literature from 1196 to 1981: the dates of the first recorded text in Galician-Portuguese (a *cantiga de amigo* by Mendinho) and the Galician Statute of Autonomy, when '[Galicia] enter[s] the modern era with commercial publishers, literary prizes and many more women writers' (13). Antonio Raúl De Toro Santos points out in the foreword to his own anthology (*Breogán's Lighthouse*) that Dunne's collection 'leaves out the rich flowering of the last thirty years' (23) since it does not go beyond 1981. Nevertheless, a second volume covering the most recent literary production (from 1981 to 2010) seems to be already in progress. Thus, this limitation will soon be overcome. From Mendinho to contemporary writer Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín the collection includes fifty-five texts that cover 800 years of literature representing the main genres of poetry, fiction, essay and theatre as well as folk tradition (including tales, proverbs, ballads and riddles, amongst others). Preceded by the editor's brief introduction about the history of Galician literature, nine texts from the Middle Ages, eight of folk literature (12<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries), seven from the Galician Revival (19<sup>th</sup> century) and thirty-one from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, introduce the reader to some of the main canonical works of each period. The volume is the outcome of the work carried out by fifty-five anthologists, the editor (who compiled the selected texts over a period of thirteen years), and twenty-one translators. The anthology aims at providing 'a record of those working in the field of Galician-English translation at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century' (17).

Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos's anthology, *Breogán's Lighthouse*, brought out by the English publishing house Francis and Taylor Publishers as the third volume of its collection Lesser Used Languages of Europe, is more comprehensive. Taking also as a starting point Mendinho's *cantiga de amigo*, it incorporates texts up until the present time. The last work included is a poem by María do Cebreiro taken from *Os Hemisferios* (2006). Unlike the *Anthology of Galician Literature (1196–1981)*, the selection of the texts for this collection was carried out entirely by the editor, and six translators were involved in the project. A total of nearly 300 texts, including thirty-eight from the Middle Ages, five from the Dark Centuries, forty-five from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 195 from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, lead the reader on a journey through the history of Galician literature. The focus of the anthology is mainly on poetry and fiction, and the literary works are preceded by two introductory essays: one on the history of Galician literature from the Middle Ages to the present day, and the other on the development of the socio-political status of the Galician language. These two introductions play a relevant role within the anthology as they serve the purpose of contextualizing the literary collection to an audience that may not be familiar with the subject. Considering that both anthologies are addressed to the general reader, the inclusion of these essays is a significant aspect of *Breogán's Lighthouse*. However, the style of the second essay, which is unidiomatic at times, could potentially have a negative effect on the reader by lowering his/her expectations of the translations.

Owing to the extensiveness of its scope, De Toro Santos's anthology provides a broader view of the Galician literary production through nine centuries; however, it goes without saying that any anthology has limitations, such as the previously mentioned focus on only some genres. It should also be noted, in this respect, that the proportion of women's writing in this collection, as well as in Dunne's anthology, is noticeably low.

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Nevertheless, limitations aside, both projects are an excellent contribution towards the goal of making Galician literature available in English.

With regard to translation strategies there is a tendency towards fluency, producing a transparent discourse in the target language in both collections. This inclination conforms to the preferences in Anglo-American culture whereby translation is considered acceptable when it reads as an original in English (Venuti 1995). A clear example of this technique is the translation of the medieval *Cantigas* into modern English, which happens in both anthologies. Other examples of this procedure include the explanation of some cultural terms such as *Santa Compañía* (Dunne, 131) with a footnote or its translation by another cultural term in the target language: 'pipa da caña'/'barrel of brandy' (Dunne, 154–55), 'pote'/'kettle' (De Toro Santos, 182, 189), 'día de defuntos'/'Halloween' (De Toro Santos, 257, 261). Although fluency is in line with the expectations of the audience to whom the translations are addressed, occasionally this aim of transparency leads to extreme domestications of the source text, such as 'queixo fresco'/'cottage cheese' (De Toro Santos, 116–17), where a target culture-specific item is unnecessarily introduced into the target text. However, these occasional over-adaptations do not compromise the quality of the translations in both anthologies.

Literary translation has a strategic political value in terms of spreading a specific culture and keeping it in contact with other languages and cultures. This function is particularly relevant in the case of linguistic minorities. In this respect, De Toro Santos states in the foreword that his collection intends to make 'the Galician literary heritage available to a wider reading public, other than the Galicians or the Spanish' (23). In the same vein, Dunne asserts that his work aims to 'dramatize great works of Galician literature, to rescue them from obscurity, to present them and bring them to life not only for the reader, but for all taking part in this endeavour' (7). For 'the reader' we should understand the English-speaking reader who can only access these works through translation. Special attention should, therefore, be paid to whether the appropriate measures have been put in place for these two anthologies to be able to reach a wider audience.

The *Anthology of Galician Literature (1196–1981)* was published in Galicia by the publishing houses mentioned earlier with the financial support of the Xunta de Galicia. It had an initial print run of 3,600 copies, a small number of which were distributed amongst Galician libraries and the participants in the volume; the rest is intended to be distributed internationally by Galaxia. During the launch in Santiago de Compostela, Roberto Varela, Galician Minister for Tourism and Cultural Affairs, stated that this anthology was 'un paso esencial cara á internacionalización da nosa escrita' and 'unha clara acción de difusión dos produtos editoriais galegos no exterior'. Nevertheless, the plan for distributing the book abroad consists mainly of sending copies to different academic and professional institutions and bodies, such as universities and libraries, centres for Galician Studies, literary critics, translators' associations, publishing houses and specialized media, amongst others (Xunta de Galicia, 2010). One could ask whether this distribution policy is enough to guarantee the internationalization of our literary production, and why a project that intends to introduce the Galician cultural heritage abroad is published in Galicia without the involvement of an international publishing or distribution company.

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A completely different scenario is found with *Breogán's Lighthouse* as, in this case, an English publishing house, Francis Boutle Publishers, was the initiator of the project which was commissioned to the editor, Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos. It was produced with the support of the Xunta de Galicia, the Centro Ramón Piñeiro and the Amergin University Institute for Irish Studies of the University of A Coruña. The anthology was published in the series 'Lesser Used Languages of Europe', which aims to introduce the reader to the diversity of European writing by presenting the neglected heritage of Europe's minority cultures. The book, which had an initial print run of 1,000 copies, was launched in Oxford and London, and a quick search on the internet shows that the distribution, and therefore the reception in the anglophone market, has already been more successful.

Translation is an essential tool to guarantee and maintain the relevance of minority languages. Both Jonathan Dunne and Antonio Raúl de Toro Santos have superbly produced these two anthologies translated into English in order to present Galicia's cultural heritage to the world, and they have taken a significant step forward in this direction. However, it is noteworthy that in both cases the initiative to produce these works came from abroad: the English translator Jonathan Dunne, on the one hand, and the English publishing house Francis Boutle Publishers, on the other. This shows that more measures and effort should be put in place by Galician institutions to promote this type of project in order for Galicia's cultural heritage to be able to cross national boundaries.

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