

A primavera toda para ti

Homenagem a Helder Macedo A Tribute to Helder Macedo

Organização de Margarida Calafate Ribeiro
Teresa Cristina Cerdeira
Juliet Perkins
Phillip Rothwell

prestígio e não poucos privilégios, incluindo o uso de um longo avental espanhol aprendeu a adaptação de "Làbas, là bas, dans la montagne" ao dueto que inva-
rai ser que vais servir-me?"... "Galinha assada com batata"... E assim por dian-
eve, combinavam bem. O cozinheiro sabia todos os papéis mas, como bass-
um truque que o administrador refinara à custa de vários serviços de louça: ao i-
cozinha, puxava de um **leão da Zambézia** e **teia da mesa** posta deixando ficar tudo i-
e bufando grosso como **esperadas em cima da cabeça**, para ser cape-
de perfeição de **busca continuava, para os papéis secundários** —
que, antes e d **as art**... **seque** varrerem o quint-
sol a sol, depois de mel- **juia de palmatoada** em cada **mão** os ter paternalm-
que eu bem vejo na **carra**. Bem se **culpa não é tua se não tens voz**
orça." "Sim patrão, desculpa patrão." **ia não** **desculpava**: "Meia dúz-
is que já tivessem algum **treino básico** **as**. Ora acontece que o admin-
nha de ser estava a ser feito a um **promisso**, mas finalmente **Michaela**
causa, sentiu um suave calor **que significava** que os seus nós interiores se tinf-
enhor administrador ia lá dentro e voltava; o administrador lucrou, porque se ser-
o sipai para despachar sozinho o assunto e cantou ao Carmen que servisse o
omo parte legítima das suas funções quando havia culpa manifesta, não gos-
spancava o estofa da cadeira do **senhor administrador** e mandou-o **radpidam**
e justiça, por um "leão da Zambézia", tipo de **penico** muito em uso para **as** nece-
aixa de som capaz de transformar em ameaçadores rugidos os sopros **mais ti**
é ao pescoço e os galões nos ombros, mas as calças invisivelmente **caídas** a
cio fosse por vezes necessário continuar até as mãos **justiçadas** **estatarem em**
ara o alívio de todos. E Angélica teria achado que foi de facto a **origem** de tal mu-
atolicismo repudiante, de Lutero em posição semelhante, certa **manhã de chuv**
s pretos eram a **carne** feia de Babel contra a qual era necessário **prevalecer** co-
ham nascido já com a cor das nódoas negras. Mas ainda **hesitou**, **meditou**, e
n que **contumava** ser **constante**, havia um arco-íris, vinha do **chão fumegante** e
ssa negra de **esponsais**, um manguço tinha **penetrado** **durante** a r-
profano **pelas** preces de amor divino e pendurou em **duas** p-
agonuia acompanhou **durante** três dias e três noites, **prostrado no chão**, a
ante cada dia de trabalho, **qualquer** que fosse o crime de cada um **deles**, par-
n cada mão... três vezes nove, **vinte e sete** em cada mão... **três vezes** vinte e
Deus que lhes perdoasse para a **salvação** da sua **própria** **alma**. **Cispa** das pu-
fugiu; os régulos reuniram-se em **segredo**, analisando **precedentes** que lhes trou-

EDITORIAL  PRESENÇA

The *Cantigas Mínimas* of a Pan-Iberian Poet

Stephen Reckert

Camoens Professor, Emeritus, University of London

poema mínimo
cristal
irreducible
— Ramon Dachs

Eurasia, by the Barcelona minimalist poet and university librarian Ramon Dachs, comprises six short books or *poemarios* and various minor works in Catalan, Castilian, French, and Galician, published between 1985 and 2002.¹ The subtitle, *Palimpsesto lírico mayor*, signifies that the Catalan texts and all but three of those in Galician have been «transfigurados», as the author says, in an «ejercicio radical [...] de reescritura» in Castilian.² The eighteen micro-poems (mainly distichs or quatrains) that make up *Libro de amiga* are, however, wholly Gallego-Portuguese in spirit, with an epigraph from Eugénio de Andrade (now moved to the section entitled *Fronda adentro*); and each of the six groups of three poems is preceded by a quotation from a medieval *Cantiga de amigo*. Of the remaining books, fourteen of the forty-one *Poemas mínimos* (almost all tercets) are from the Galician *Cima branca*, itself derived from the original *Poemas mínimos*; but the only specifically Portuguese reference in the whole volume, apart from the epigraph, is in one of the few longer poems in *Libro de amiga* (p. 27):

*Decidme, rúas de Lisboa,
dónde estará mi buena amiga.*

*Contadme, torres de São Jorge,
qué soñará mi bien amada.*

*Dónde estará, por Barcelona;
qué soñará, dichosa y sola.*

The poet is adamant that *Eurasia* is not a translation but «la reescritura al español de todo mi ciclo *Euràsia: tot u*» and «un nuevo original plenamente autónomo» (Martínez Muñoz, p. 34). Collation both of *Cima branca* with *Poemes mínims* and of *Libro de amiga* with its predecessor *Llibre d'amiga*, substantiates this claim, as can be seen from the original version of the poem quoted (p. 26):

*Digueu-me, rues de Lisboa,
què deu fer la meva amiga.*

*Feu-me, torres de São Jorge,
noves de la meva amada.*

*Què deu fer la meva amiga
pels carrers de Barcelona.*

*Noves de la meva amada,
que es quedà joiosa i sola.*

Here the Catalan original uses the traditional Galician device of *leixa-pren* in lines 2/5 and 4/7, the latter two of which patently allude to the «news of the beloved» motif in Dom Dinis's «Ai flores, ai flores do verde piño». The Castilian omits this allusion and the *leixa-pren*, condensing the poem into three distichs, and substitutes questions about the *amiga*'s whereabouts and the nature of her dreams for the possibly indiscreet enquiry into her activity, while retaining the implicit uneasiness about her being happy although alone. Taken together, the tauter structure and the discarding of an overfamiliar allusion make for a net improvement on the model.

Among other examples of radical rewriting, compare the two versions of the following distich:

*Llibre d'amiga (p. 24): Quan beses, fas frescor de fulles, brill d'estrelles.
Olor de pomes i cireres fas quan beses.*

*Libro de amiga (p. 25): Hueles a fresas y manzanas cuando besas.
Sabes a rosa rociada, tan hermosa*

These two poems are indeed «plenamente autónomos». With the same number of syllables, the Catalan, despite the poetically effective incantatory repetition of the first two words at the end, contrives to include both more and more varied sensory information. The addition in the Castilian of the sense of taste, so closely related to that of smell, contributes little to the total effect, while the Catalan version includes the visual impression of starlight and the tactile sensation of coolness evoked by the starry night itself and enhanced by the implied presence of a breeze among the leaves. Submorphemic microsignifiers are limited in the Castilian poem to the alliteration *ro-/ro-* and the internal rhymes *fresas/besas* and *rosa/hermosa*, (*fresas* perhaps being suggested by *frescor* in the original); the Catalan text,

in contrast, is generous in the use of such «significantes parciales» (to use Dámaso Alonso's term): compare the alliterations *fas-fres-full* and *ull-ill-ell*, all in the first line. Finally, the *re-escritura* contains, as well as the uncharacteristically lame invocation «tan hermosa», the tricky word *rosa*: «palavra impossível de poema» (as another poet wryly observed when himself compelled, like many others, to use it). A micropoem has no room for the slightest relaxation of poetic tension if it is to deserve Dachs's own definition (*Eurasia*, p. 160): «Poema mínimo/cristal/irreductible»; and a word as shopworn as *rosa* has to work its passage if it is to be justified. Here the justification is not immediately obvious.

In this pair of distichs, on the other hand, the Castilian version is once again an improvement:

Llibre d'amiga (p. 18): *De pluja i sol et vull, amiga, ardent i humida.*
Amb pluja i sol et vull, amada, nit i dia.

Libro de amiga (p. 19): *De nieve y sol te quiero, amiga, noche y día.*
Con nieve y sol te espero, amada, ardiente helada.

The ratio of conceptually empty but poetically significant repetition to hard information is customarily both high and highly effective in the typical *Cantiga de amigo*, but a distich can seldom afford the luxury of such a device. The replacement of the overemphatic repetition *vull / vull* by the alternatives *quiero* and *espero* is advantageous, and the contrast of temperatures in *nieve y sol* and *ardiente helada* is more appropriate to the alternation of night and day than is the less obviously symmetrical opposition of heat to dampness.

The fourteen Galician texts of *Cima branca*, «transfigurados» first from *Poemes mínims* and then into Castilian, show less modification of the original than do most of the Catalan poems rewritten in Castilian, and in some cases can legitimately be classified as translations. An exception is this tercet:

Poemes mínims (p. 19): *la terra encisa el cel*
trenant capricis d'aigua
amb els mugrons glaçats

Cima branca (p. 9): *a terra enmeiga o ceo*
trenzando as súas augas
dende os mamiños brancos

Poemas mínimos (p. 131): *la tierra atrae el cielo*
trenzándose las aguas
con los pezones blancos

The Galician text makes full use of the characteristic resources of the language, with its dreamily sentimental sensuality or *meiguice* and its notorious addiction to diminutives. The warmth and tenderness of *enmeigar* is in sharp contrast to the here quite literally

down-to-earth Castilian *atrae*, and the caressing diminutive *mamiños*, with its three smooth nasal sounds, similarly contrasts both with the grating *mugrons glaçats* and with *pezones* (which unlike breasts, or *mamiños*, are usually *rosados* rather than *blancos*; the title of *Cima branca*, however, makes explicit the implicit metaphor of snowy peaks flirting provocatively with the sky). A difference of just three words in what is otherwise a literal translation suffices to make both the wintry original and the Castilian version slightly less poetically effective than the Gallego, with its tacit evocation of Botticelli. The loss of *capricis*, on the other hand, necessitated by the extra syllables in *trenzando* and *trenzándose* as against the disyllabic *trenant*, is compensated for by the added warmth derived from the suppression of *glaçats*, radically transforming the whole atmosphere of the poem.

A number of the poems both in *Libro de amiga* and in *Fronda adentro* are of a fiercely tender erotic explicitness; the most remarkable of these, however, is the title poem of the latter (p. 77), which is unique in consisting of a single extended metaphor (easily decoded in the context of the poems preceding it) rather than literally explicit language:

Fronda adentro *Me adentro en el paisaje por la fronda
más umbría, por la hondura más
angosta; por los musgos embebidos
de frescor de manantial, me adentro.*

This is indeed a radical *reescritura* of the Catalan original in *Fosca endins* (p. 47):

*M'endinso en el paisatge per camins
boirosos, davallant cap als fondals
angostos, plens de molsa i humitat,
vers on em mena el més profund instint.*

The universal use of landscape as a metaphor for a woman's body, from ancient China and the Song of Songs to Camões (and even, *mutatis mutandis*, to St. John of the Cross), as well as to such contemporary poets as Jorge Guillén and João Cabral, is discussed in my *Beyond Chrysanthemums* (pp. 132-140).³ The substitution of *fronda* for the more banal *camins* (as the change in title of the Castilian version recognizes) adds expressiveness, reinforced by the addition of the superlative *más* to *umbría* and *angosta*, the substitution of a vivid sensual image for the abstract last line, and the chiasmic repetition of the first two words of the poem as the last two and perhaps most strikingly by the subliminal suggestion of *musgos/muslos* like that of *quan beses* in the distich from *Llibre d'amiga* transcribed above.

The *callida junctura* that links the East and West of the Peninsula by a bridge over Menéndez Pidal's «cuña castellana» is paralleled by another bridge on a larger scale, or perhaps more exactly a new *Ruta de la Seda* — as it has been called in the perceptive review article by the poet and critic José Antonio Martínez Muñoz (p. 33) — linking East Asia and Western Europe by way of thirty-nine Táng dynasty quatrains translated successively into Catalan and Castilian by the poet with the collaboration of his companion, the Sinologist Anne-Hélène Suárez («la dama de Catay» to whom *Eurasia* is dedicated). Dachs's conviction

of the relevance of the poetry of the East for the Western world is manifest not only in these translations and in the original title *Euràsia: tot u* (i. e., *todo uno*), but in his references to *haiku* and to the great *haiku* poet Bashô, as well as to Zen Buddhism.

The medieval *Cantigas de amigo* quoted at the beginning of each of the six groups of poems in the *Libro de Amiga* include Dom Dinis's familiar «Ai flores», but not what is probably his second most celebrated one, which has been analysed by Helder Macedo in a magisterial essay, «Uma cantiga de Dom Dinis», in our collaborative book *Do Cancioneiro de Amigo*.⁴ In this transcription I abbreviate the *leixa-pren*:

*Levantou-s'a velida [or louçãa],
levantou-s'àlva,
e vai lavar camisas [or delgadas]
em o alto:
vai-las lavar àlva.*

*[E] vai lavar camisas [or delgadas]:
levantou-s'àlva;
o vento lhas desvia [or levava]
em o alto:
vai-las lavar àlva.*

*O vento lhas desvia [or levava]
(levantou-s'àlva):
meteu-s'àlva em ira [or sanha]
em o alto.
Vai-las lavar àlva.*

These lines from *Poemas mínimos* (p. 155) can be seen as a palimpsest of Dom Dinis's *alba*:

*la mañana
ha aclarado
la noche
y la tiende
a poniente*

Here a personified dawn replaces the fair young laundress of the king's poem; her washing of her clothes to make them whiter is mirrored in the dawn's having *aclarado* (both cleansed and illuminated) the night, which it then spreads out like the *alva*'s clothing, but to westward, where darkness will reappear to triumph again and renew the cycle of eternal return. The Castilian text (translated by Anne-Hélène Suárez in collaboration with the poet) does not differ significantly from the Catalan original except for the substitution of *noche* for *fosc*, creating a neater polarity.

Helder Macedo observes of Dom Dinis's *alva* that «a progressão semântica linear de uma cantiga de amigo é quase inexistente [...] O poema não progride linearmente mas [...] em círculos secantes [...]. As cantigas paralelísticas têm em comum com o poema concreto a quase abolição do tempo lógico-linear, submetido [...] ao espaço que o institui. [...] A palavra 'alva' [...] define uma [...] identidade entre a moça e [...] a própria água onde ela lava a roupa para [...] a tornar [...] *alva*» (pp. 64-65).

This approximation of the *cantiga* to the non-linear syntax of a concrete poem has analogies with Dachs's application to poetry of the non-linear dynamics or chaos theory of Benoît Mandelbrot and its manifestation in «fractals», representing the self-symmetry of phenomena observed repeatedly on an infinitely decreasing scale. The final section of the book, *Escritura fractal/Escritura geométrica*, is beyond the grasp of an innumerate like myself (quite apart from the illegibly microscopic print of the accompanying illustrations); but the symbiosis of palimpsests and fractals implied by the poet could well prompt the speculation that not only the poems in *Eurasia: Palimpsesto lírico mayor* but all poetry (and even the universe itself) might conceivably be regarded as an infinite succession of palimpsests of an underlying fractal structure.⁵

¹ Ramon Dachs, 2003, *Eurasia: palimpsesto lírico mayor, 1978-2001*, Ediciones sin Nombre, México, incorporates the Castilian texts of *Llibre d'amiga*, 1998, 7 i Mig, València, now *Libro de amiga*; *Fosca endins*, 1993, Germania, Alzira, now *Frona adentro*; *101 juejus da Xina Tang*, 1997, Alfons el Magnànim, València, now *Juejus de los Tang*, *Poemes mínims*, 2001, 2nd edn, Proa, Barcelona, now *Poemas mínimos*; *Blanc, o Nada*, 1998, Moll, Palma de Mallorca: texts in French and Castilian; *Esriptura geométrica, escriptura fractal*, 1999, IVAM, València, now *Escritura fractal*; and the minor works *Obagues / Umbrías, Vacant / Vacante, Quadern rimbaldià / Ecos de Rimbaud*, and *Tot i res / Zen*.

² José Antonio Martínez Muñoz, 2003, «*Eurasia: Libro de libros, mundo de mundos*», *Movimiento Actual*, 19: 33-45 (p. 34).

³ Stephen Reckert, 1993, *Beyond Chrysanthemums*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, successively revised and expanded as (1999), *Para Além das Neblinas de Novembro*, Lisbon, Fundação Gulbenkian, and (2001), *Más allá de las neblinas de noviembre*, Madrid, Gredos.

⁴ 1996, 3rd edn, Assírio & Alvim, Lisbon: pp. 59-70.

⁵ And not only poetry but prose fiction as well: analogous «fractal structures» have just recently been held to underlie *Don Quijote*, *La Regenta*, and Azorín's *Doña Inés*: see Elizabeth D. Sánchez, 2003, «Why Read *Don Quijote*?», *Literary Imagination: the Review of the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics*, 5.19: p. 117.

ADDENDUM

Page 53, last line, read:

foscó, creating a neater polarity:

Poemes mínims:

*el matí
esbandeix
la foscó
i l'estén
a ponent*