

CATALAN LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION  
IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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Translated by Sarah Yandell

The latest edition of *Nabí* by Josep Carner enables one to take a detailed look at the creative process of the three versions of the text written by the poet over a two-year period. The first version was for an edition by the Institution of Catalan Letters (Institució de les Lletres Catalanes or ILC), whose activities were ceased when Franco's troops entered Barcelona in January 1939. The second was the translation of the poem into Spanish undertaken by Carner for publication in Mexico in 1940, and the third, definitive version came after a final revision and was published in Buenos Aires in 1941. The poet's dedication to translation and to poetic creation during the first years of his exile is touching, but still more poignant is the fact that, thanks to his work, we are able to read, in detail, about how languages mutually nourish one another. Indeed, in the definitive version of a work that represents one of the high points of Catalan poetry, clear traces of the Spanish version can be found: some of the most perennial Catalan verses were 'given' to the poet during his work on the Spanish translation.

This extreme example has been used to begin this report on translation in Catalonia, with the affirmation that translation is the touchstone in any living literature. Translation is not a process that comes after literary creation, limited to communicating what was created in a closed literary context in another language. Instead, creation is kept alive through the translator's work, and the translation process gives life to different literary traditions in a reciprocal manner.

However, nowadays the work of the translator takes place within publishing processes which can only be understood as part of a European and international framework. That is why the Ramon Llull Institute (Institut Ramon Llull or IRL), whose objective is to support translation of Catalan literature, has commissioned an in-depth study of translation policies on an international level.

The Ramon Llull Institute has joined forces with the group of cultural institutions within the *Literature across Frontiers* network. The group states that one of the main challenges faced by European authors is the hardship of being translated into English. The Slovenian writer Andrej Blatnik stated ironically during a recent Cafè Europa session in Barcelona that, "Authors that write in English are born translated, whilst the rest of us have to aspire to it."

That is the reason why the writing of the international report was entrusted to Esther Allen, director of the Center for Literary Translation at Columbia University, closely linked to PEN America, an institution that is creating a public debate in the United States based on the paradoxical fact that English, which perceives itself as the language of globalization, is conversely one of the least-translated languages in the world.

The international report, in addition to supplying a great deal of data on translations into English, includes an analysis of the situation in six countries, as a counterpoint and as a form of research into models of good translation practice. One of the cases analyzed is the situation of Catalan language translations, laid out in a text by Carme Arenas and Simona Skrabec that is both extensive and to the point, and which will also make up part of the international report (in a necessarily shorter version).

This is the text that the Institution of Catalan Letters and the Ramon Llull Institute now wish to present in this joint edition. The Institution of Catalan Letters promotes the translation of foreign literature into Catalan, through diverse initiatives including financial aid for translation projects, translation seminars for foreign poets and playwrights invited as special guests, and participation in international initiatives in order to increase the visibility of the strong tradition of translation in Catalan literature. The Ramon Llull Institute supports translation of Catalan works into other languages through subsidies aimed at foreign publishers for the translation of Catalan literary works (classic and contemporary fiction, narrative and poetry, plays and essays), subsidies for the promotion of translated books and for dossiers on Catalan literature in foreign literary journals, help for writer's travel costs, and specific publications to encourage the international projection of journals of essays and essayistic writings. It is developing ways of supporting translators, with residences in Catalonia and a translators' training program in languages which do

not have translators who use Catalan as a source language. Both institutions work together to develop policies to support translation on many fronts.

It is within this context that we believe the publication of *Catalan Literature and Translation in a Globalized World* is very positive. Despite the fact that the report was created in an international context, we believe that it is, in itself, a useful tool in the analysis of the current reality of translation in our country, and in the promotion of the very necessary debate on these issues that manage to be both global and local, and that must always accompany government decisions.

JAUME SUBIRANA  
*Director*  
*Institució de les Lletres Catalanes*

CARLES TORNER  
*Head of Humanities and Science*  
*Institut Ramon Llull*

There is no loftier service that can be offered to literature than the transferral of masterpieces of the human spirit from one language to another.

MADAME DE STAEL

It is a mistake to leave translations to private initiatives alone. In every culturally organised State guiding authorities should, as Talleyrand wanted in an initiative that did not flourish, dispose of a reasonably complete and technically sound system of translating essential works from foreign tongues. It would be doubly important to apply this to nations with incomplete cultural structures.

JOSEP CARNER

The purpose of this report is to contribute to the debate on the state of literary translation both into and from Catalan in a globalized world. The importance of translation is generally acknowledged in all cultures, as a means to promote knowledge and as an element of construction of a culture and literature. Josep Carner reminds us that, “All formal literature began with translation”. This becomes even more necessary in the case of literature written in languages with few speakers, which needs translation not only to grow, but also to make a place for itself in universal literature. In the case of Catalan literature we often complain that works by our authors are not often translated into other languages, that Catalan literature needs to be translated into a bridging language that opens doors to other literature and to the world, and we argue about which is the true bridging language, Spanish? English?

To what degree are Catalan authors translated into other languages? Into which languages are they most often translated? What mechanisms make a Catalan author more likely to be translated into another language? Does having a work translated into Spanish or English guarantee further translations? Does Catalan literature function with the same mechanisms as any other literature in a majority language? Do our cultural institutions take this situation into account? What percentage of books published in Catalan are translations from other languages? What support and correction mechanisms does the government provide to fill possible gaps and maximise literary circulation? How is translation experienced by those who make it possible: the translators themselves? What are the working conditions like for those that translate into and from Catalan? How is translation regarded? Are translations more or less prestigious than works written in Catalan? Is there a translation policy to cover possible historical gaps? Is it the industry and the market which dictate what gets translated, and how and when? Answers to some of these questions can be found in this report, or if not, at least an attempt has been made to clarify

some situations that would undoubtedly go some way towards addressing certain needs, and to shape attitudes and policies aimed at introducing improvements in the situation and to help find and develop creative answers in this respect.

CARME ARENAS and SIMONA SKRABEC

## 1 THE PROJECTION OF CATALAN LITERATURE WITHIN SPAIN

There are two official languages in Catalonia; Catalan and Spanish, the latter being the official language of Spain. The inhabitants of Catalonia know both languages; this is especially true of the last 25 years during which period Catalan has been the official language of schools, a fact that has given almost all younger Catalans linguistic competence in both spoken and written Catalan. Hence the two languages influence each other constantly.

However, the fact that the official language of Spain is solely Spanish means that this language has a very strong influence in all areas. We believe that the vast majority of influential media expression in Catalonia is in Spanish, and that Spain does not have any policies to foster the spread of Catalan language or culture in all social and cultural areas either inside or outside Catalonia. This job is seen as the responsibility of the government of the Generalitat de Catalunya alone.

It is not surprising, then, that many Catalan publications end up with a corresponding Spanish translation. According to the *Index Translationum*,<sup>1</sup> 91% of all translations from Catalan are into Spanish. Another important factor in understanding the situation of Catalan literature is the fact that the publishing industry, both Catalan and Spanish, has traditionally been concentrated in

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1. The *Index Translationum* is an accumulative database that includes books translated and published in one hundred UNESCO member states since 1979. It includes publications in all areas: literature, natural and social sciences, art, history and others, but explicitly excludes articles from newspapers and magazines. It is updated every four months. It is fed by sources from each country, in the case of Spain the Biblioteca Nacional supplies the information, which explains the existence, since 1997, of the categories Catalan, Valencian Catalan, Balearic Catalan and even Old Catalan, introduced by the Partido Popular party, and considered as separate in this database. In this case the political interests and administrative division of Spain are more important than the criteria of a recognised common language.

Catalonia, and especially in Barcelona. Barcelona is an important publishing capital not only for Catalan works but also for Spanish language works.

The dependence on the Spanish language makes itself visible in literature too. According to the TRAC<sup>2</sup> archive, between 1998 and 2004 just over 200 literary works of all genres (prose, poetry, plays and essays) were translated from Catalan into Spanish. Translations into Spanish represent more literary works than in all other languages put together (some 170 works in 24 different languages). What stands out is the fact that the vast majority of prose translated into Spanish is published in Catalonia (or in Valencia in the case of Valencian authors). On the other hand, when it comes to poetry and especially plays, the translations are, for the main part, published outside Catalonia.

Only part of the Catalan literary legacy is represented in Spanish translations. Translations of classic works are rather thin on the ground, while contemporary classics represent 23% of translations into Spanish. This means that the majority of translations into Spanish are of works of living authors (77%).

It is worth highlighting the fact that, in many cases, translations are of works by authors of children's literature (Gemma Lienas), from genre fiction writers (Albert Salvadó, Albert Sánchez Piñol), or media-friendly or socially influential authors (M. de la Pau Janer, Baltasar Porcel, Carles Duarte, David Castillo). On the other hand, there are authors that participate simultaneously in the literature of both languages, and normally publish all their latest works in Catalan and Spanish. In addition, around the 1990s, some publishing houses which normally publish in Catalan (Edicions 62 – Empúries, Quaderns Crema) tried to expand into the Spanish market. This is why they sometimes publish their own authors simultaneously in Catalan and Spanish (Maria Barbal, Carme Riera, Quim Monzó, Sergi Belbel, Josep M. Benet i Jornet, Josep M. Espinàs).

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2. The TRAC archive's development began as a result of financial aid that the Institute of Catalan Letters (*Institució de les Lletres Catalanes*) started to give help for the translation of Catalan works into other languages. Since 2002, with the creation of the Ramon Llull Institute (*Institut Ramon Llull*), both the financial aid and the archive have been managed by this organism dedicated to the overseas projection of Catalan literature. The archive has been converted into a computer database and can be freely consulted on-line: <http://www.llull.cat/llull/biblioteca/trac.jsp>

Amongst the contemporary Catalan authors whose works are most often translated into Spanish, there are just a few which have an international presence. The two literary systems work independently, and getting into the Spanish scene does not necessarily guarantee an international projection. The same is true of the reverse situation: a work may be translated into foreign languages, but have little or no resonance in the other languages of Spain. For instance, of Jaume Cabré's latest works only *Senyoria* has been translated into Spanish (1993). Although *L'ombra de l'eunuc* has already been translated into French, Hungarian, Romanian and Slovenian, there are not even plans yet to publish it in Spanish. In addition, the third important novel he has written in the last few years was first published in Hungarian. There is a relative lack of interchange between literature written in the different official languages of Spain. In contrast to what would seem logical, Spanish, a majority language, does not work as a bridging language to access other literatures via translation. Being translated into Spanish does not even mean that a Catalan work will be received into the literary system of the Spanish language, and still less would it serve to launch a literary work onto the international scene.

When it comes to other languages within Spain, a considerable number of Catalan works are translated into Galician and a constant exchange is maintained; whereas translations into Basque are rare.

■ TABLE 1

CATALAN LITERATURE EXPORTS INTO OTHER SPANISH LANGUAGES

YEAR	SPANISH			GALICIAN	BASQUE	TOTAL
	Published in Catalonia	Published in Spain	Outside Spain			
1998	29	7	2	1	1	<b>40</b>
1999	22	5	1	4	1	<b>33</b>
2000	19	10	1	—	—	<b>30</b>
2001	32	14	1	8	1	<b>56</b>
2002	33	15	2	4	—	<b>54</b>
2003	19	2	1	—	—	<b>22</b>
Total by publishing location	154	53	8	17	3	<b>235</b>
Total	216			17	3	<b>235</b>

SOURCE: *Traduccions de la Literatura Catalana 1998-2003*, published by the Ramon Llull Institute. A manual system of has been used in the creation of this table, as the booklet groups translations by language and by alphabetic order of authors making it impossible to know into how many languages a specific work has been translated.

Between 1998 and 2003, 139 prose works, 59 poetry works and 18 plays were translated from Catalan into Spanish. An anthology of contemporary short stories and three contemporary poetry anthologies were also published. What stands out here is that most of the prose translated into Spanish is published in Catalonia (or in Valencia when it comes to Valencian authors). Of the 139 prose works, only 16 were published in the rest of Spain and 3 in Latin America. On the other hand, as far as poetry and especially plays are concerned, publishing tends to occur outside Catalonia. Classic literature is represented with 4 translations of Ramon Llull, one of Roís de Corella and one of Joanot Martorell.

The contemporary classic authors most frequently translated into Spanish are: Josep Pla (10 titles), Joan Brossa (7), Mercè Rodoreda (5), Montserrat Roig (4), Joan Perucho (4), Josep Maria de Sagarra (3), Vicent Andrés Estellés (3), Manuel de Pedrolo (2), Josep Carner (2) and Miquel Martí i Pol (2). The following authors have had one work translated: Joan Fuster, Blai Bonet, Pere Calders, Santiago Rusiñol, Llorenç Villalonga, Gabriel Ferrater, J.V.Foix and Miquel Costa i Llobera. In other words, of the 216 works translated into Spanish, 50 (23 %) are from the Catalan literary legacy.

Contemporary authors represent the highest percentage of translations into Spanish (77%). Contemporary authors whose works have most often been translated into Spanish are: Albert Salvadó with 9 titles, Carles Duarte with 7 titles, Carme Riera, Maria de la Pau Janer, Joan Margarit and Baltasar Porcel each with 6 titles, Sergi Belbel with 5 titles, Isabel Clara Simó, Quim Monzó, Pere Gimferrer, Josep Maria Benet i Jornet and Miquel de Palol with 4 titles each; Joan Barril, Flavia Company, David Castillo, Jordi Coca, Gemma Lienas and Rodolf Sirera with 3 titles each.

Other authors whose works were translated into Spanish between 1998 and 2003 include: Maria Àngels Anglada, Roser Atmetlla, Maria Barbal, Alfred Bosch, Ada Castells, Josep Maria Espinàs, Eduard Márquez, Imma Monsó, Xavier Moret, Sergi Pàmies, Josep Piera, Maria Mercè Roca, Ramon Solsona, Àlex Susanna and Pep Subirós with two books. The following authors have had one book translated: Vicenç Llorca, Antoni Marí, Biel Mesquida, Albert Sánchez Piñol, Lluís Maria Todó and Rafel Argullol, amongst others.

## 2 THE PROJECTION OF CATALAN LITERATURE ABROAD

If we now look at the international scene, the most translated Catalan authors, according to the *Index Translationum*, are those who write literature for children or young people (Josep Vallverdú, or the team behind '*Les tres bessones*': Roser Capdevila, Mercè Company and Enric Larreula) who have adapted their books into very popular TV cartoons, both in Catalonia and the rest of the world. With audience success achieved, television series have sparked off a wave of children's publications featuring the same characters. This is the reason behind the high volume of translation in this area. Amongst the most often translated works we also find the genre novel (Andreu Martín). Thus, of the ten most frequently translated authors, only two authors come from the Catalan literary legacy (Mercè Rodoreda and Josep Pla).

If we narrow our focus onto the literary works catalogued by the TRAC archive, the fact that English lies in just third place, behind French and German, really stands out here. In addition, if we look at the literary translations of the last few years, we find many works published in English, but brought out in Catalonia. A paradigmatic case could be that of Brossa whose works, in recent years, have been published in Barcelona directly in English, *Joan Brossa or the poetic revolt* (2001) or *Joan Brossa, beyond the Catalan lands* (2003).

It could be said that attempts have been made to use English as a bridging language, but there is no evidence that works translated into English have then systematically been translated into other languages. All things considered, Spanish – as mentioned earlier – is far and away the language into which the most Catalan works are translated, both in literature and in other areas.

Amongst less circulated languages Romanian stands out, because from 2001 it went from having almost no translated exports of Catalan literature to occupying fourth position, ahead of Italian or Portuguese, two traditionally allied

cultures. In Romania, the Meronia publishing house has a collection dedicated to Catalan literature, directed by Jana Matei, which encourages the translation of key works of Catalan literature, from both the literary heritage and contemporary literature. It is worth noting, however, that this interest in Catalan literature has not sparked a reciprocal interest in Romanian authors in Catalonia, as recently there has not been a single translation from Romanian into Catalan. This means that the exchange with Romania is one of the most unbalanced of all the present cultures, because usually the export of Catalan works to a particular country also inspires a reciprocal incorporation of the works of that country's authors into Catalonia.

Perhaps the best example of this mutual interest can be seen in the case of Hungary<sup>3</sup> Although the literary cultures of both Catalonia and Hungary are relatively small, it can be noted that links of mutual knowledge are being created, involving experts and readers from both countries. This fact is especially relevant when it comes to the presence of Hungarian literature in Catalonia. It must be remembered that, as Hungarian does not belong to any of the major European linguistic groups, it does not have any academic presence in Spain, nor, in fact, in many other countries. The Romance, Germanic and Slavonic languages have university departments dedicated to the major philologies. This framework facilitates the opening of assistantships for the study of languages with a small number of speakers too. The case of Hungarian and other European languages that still struggle today to be given a place on academic curricula (Hungarian, Finnish, Albanian or Basque) contrasts strongly with the important role that Catalan assistantships around Europe have played in finding an initial way into diverse cultures. Catalan has known how to profit from the interest in Romance languages to put itself on the map, at least with the specialist public.

Many translators of Catalan literary works (Bob de Nijs, Jan Schejbal, Anna Sawicka, Kálmán Faluba, Tilbert Dídac Stegmann, David Rosenthal, Arthur Therry, and Denise Boyer) have acted as ambassadors for Catalan literature in their own countries. With their interest and the work of translators or univer-

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3. CASTELLÓ, Eloi; FALUBA, Kálmán. «Literatura hongaresa i literatura catalana: coneixement mutu» In: *Quaderns*, 2004, number 11

sity professors, they have made a decisive contribution to the incorporation of Catalan literature into other cultures. The importance of these mediators is also demonstrated in the example of the English translation of *Tirant lo Blanc*. David Rosenthal's 1984 translation generated the indirect translation of this novel of classic chivalry into Finnish. However, no other Catalan works were subsequently translated into Finnish.<sup>4</sup> All other translations of *Tirant* have been undertaken by people that know Catalan very well, not via a version published in a bridging language. This pattern can also be discerned with other authors from the Catalan literary legacy. It can be observed that that these authors' versions are always translated directly from Catalan and find a way into new cultures only as and when an expert comes into contact with the Catalan literary legacy; hence an international reception is achieved after long periods of time. For example, the latest version of *The Towpath*<sup>5</sup> (*Cami de Sirga*) by Jesús Moncada, a Hungarian translation published in 2005, appears more than fifteen years after the first translations into Portuguese, French and Dutch in 1992, and almost two decades after the publication of the novel itself in 1988.<sup>6,7</sup>

Overseas commercial promotion strategies can be observed in the field of popular literature, also with successful results. This is what happened recently in the case of the two novels by Albert Sánchez Piñol – *Cold Skin*<sup>7</sup> (*La Pell Freda*) and *Pandora al Congo*. These books are being translated into lots of languages, not via translators or cultural mediators but instead because foreign publishers first purchase the translation rights on a best-selling novel at the international book fairs, or through a literary agent, and then immediately look for a translator. It is worth noting that some of these translations have been from Spanish. For example, Willi Zurbrüggen translated two novels by Jesus

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4. ARANDA, Joaquim. «El club de los ocho traductores» In: *El Observador*, 20 November, 1990.

5. *The Towpath*, London: Harvill/HarperCollins, 1994. Translation: WILLIS, Judith.

6. BIOSCA, Mercè; MORET, Hector. «La projecció i la recepció exteriors de l'obra de Jesús Moncada» In: *Col·loqui europeu d'estudis catalans*, Montpellier, 2004.

7. Farrar Straus Giroux, London, 2005. Translation: MORGAN, Cheryl Leah

Moncada from Spanish to German.<sup>8</sup> The same translator was not aware that Sánchez Piñol writes in Catalan.

In addition to these two export models, over the last few years we find a third model of overseas promotion based on the export of an anthology selection that is published almost simultaneously in several languages. The Italian and English editions of the anthology of the Balearic poetry of Pere Rosselló Bover are published in Palma, and the French edition in a university journal linked to the Catalan department in Montpellier. The Romanian edition is also published in a collection dedicated exclusively to Catalan literature. Only the Dutch version appears in a seemingly commercial edition. The same anthology, though with slightly different titles and variations in text selection, has also been published in Galician and Spanish. These anthologies – like others promoted by the Institution of Catalan Letters<sup>9</sup> – are promotion initiatives, without an explicit interest from foreign agents, aimed, if anything, at encouraging this interest.

In any case, the distribution channels available to these editions are too limited to arouse the interest of the mass public. Anthologies can be a further barrier to the full reception of an author, especially in the case of poetry. It is true that although the poems of many Catalan poets have been published overseas, very few complete works have seen the light. Anthology presentations often serve to give a block reception that proves the existence of a culture rather than helping to discover a literary heritage, cancelling out any discovery of an individual poet. In many cases anthologies are nothing more than a testimonial act, proof that the Catalan literary tradition does exist. An anthology cannot provide access to the rich literary heritage due to its fragmentary nature. The publication of an anthology should be backed up with the publication of more complete works of individual authors.

The change in promotional strategies that does not yet seem to have affected lyrical poetry is, however, highly visible with narrative. Both private publishing

houses and public initiatives launch specific literary works, novels or, sometimes, short story collections onto the international scene which are solid enough to function without the need to know about the cultural context in which they were created. In this case literary works act as true ambassadors. The novels of Mercè Rodoreda were the first to offer a new and different image of Spain to many readers around the world, but many other emblematic works have followed the same path; the civil war portrayed in Jesús Moncada's *The Towpath*, translated into around fifteen languages, or even Quim Monzó's short stories that show the dehumanized life of big cities. It is precisely due to the influence that a literary work can wield on its own that the complexity of the Catalan reality has become internationally recognised.

This function, however, cannot be automatically attributed to all literary works that end up being translated into lots of languages. The global literary market has shown a certain predilection for literary works that shun roots in a specific culture, especially in the last few decades. A literary work that is a little clichéd, that does not require the knowledge of any historical context, which has simple language, narrative agility and respects conventions of drama and suspense can easily obtain success on the international market as in the case of *Cold Skin* by Sánchez Piñol. Literary works written in a language like Catalan not only have to overcome the frontiers of a language with limited reach, but also have to find a place in a world that is increasingly devaluing demanding reading. If the aim is to project Catalan literature overseas as part of an autonomous cultural world, and to achieve an overseas reception that takes on the social, cultural and historical complexity of Catalonia, then market forces cannot end up having more weight than any other factor.

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8. QUINTANA, Artur i SCHMIDT VON DER TWER, Sigrid, Interview with Willi Zurbrüggen In: "La recepció germànica de l'obra de Jesús Moncada" In: *URC*, Lleida, 2006.

9. Institució de les Lletres Catalanes (ILC)

■ TABLE 2

AUTHORS WHOSE WORKS WERE MOST FREQUENTLY TRANSLATED OUTSIDE SPAIN BETWEEN 1998-2003

AUTHOR	LANGUAGES	NUMBER OF LANGUAGES	WORKS PUBLISHED	TOTAL EDITIONS	NUMBER OF WORKS (NOT INCLUDING ANTHOLOGIES)
1. Monzó, Quim	1998 German 1999 German 2001 German, Norwegian 2002 German 2003 Slovenian, French, Serbian	6	1 La magnitud de la tragèdia 1 L'illa de Maïans 3 Guadalupe (dues en alemany) 2 El millor dels mons 1 El perquè de tot plegat 1 Olivetti, Moulinex, Chaffoteaux et Maury 1 Benzina	10	7
2. Bonet, Blai	2001 Romanian, Hungarian 2002 French, Russian 2003 French, Polish, Serbian	6	6 La mar 1 poetry anthology	7	1
3. Rodoreda, Mercè	2000 Romanian, 2001 Slovenian, Italian, Romanian 2003 Portuguese	4	2 Mirall trencat 1 La signora Fiorentina e il suo amore Homer 2 La plaça del Diamant 1 short story compilation	6	3

4. Oliver, Maria Antònia	1998 English, French 2002 Romanian 2003 German	4	3 Estudi en illa 1 Antípodes 1 Tallats de Iluna	5	3
5. Porcel, Baltasar	1998 French 2000 Italian 2002 French 2003 Italian	2	1 Mediterrània 1 Ulisses a alta mar 1 L'emperador o l'ull del vent 1 Cavalls cap a la fosca	4	4
6. Lluïl, Ramon	2001 Polish 2003 Italian, Polish	2	1 Llibre de meravelles 1 Doctrina pueril 2 Llibre d'Amic e Amat (Both published in Poland in the same year)	4	3
7. Calders, Pere	2002 Slovenian, French 2003 Romanian	3	3 Cròniques de la veritat oculta	3	1
8. Duarte, Carles	2002 French 2003 Hebrew 2002 Italian	3	1 El silenci 1 triptych 1 anthology	3	1
9. Pàmies, Sergi	1999 German 2002 French 2003 French	2	2 La gran novel·la sobre Barcelona 1 infecció	3	2
10. Martorell, Joanot	2001 Hebrew 2003 French	2	2 Tirant lo Blanc	2	1

SOURCE: Traduccions de la Literatura Catalana 1998-2003, published by the Ramon Llull Institute. A manual system of has been used in the creation of this table, as the booklet groups translations by language and by alphabetic order of authors making it impossible to know into how many languages a specific work has been translated.

■ TABLE 3  
LITERARY WORKS MOST TRANSLATED OUTSIDE SPAIN BETWEEN 1998 AND 2003

TITLE	LANGUAGES	FOREIGN EDITIONS	SPANISH EDITIONS OVER SAME PERIOD
La mar by Blai Bonet	2001 Romanian, Hungarian 2002 French, Russian 2003 Polish, Serbian	6	1999 Spanish
Cròniques de la veritat oculta by Pere Calders	2002 Slovenian, French 2003 Romanian	3	—
Guadalajar by Quim Monzó	1999 German 2001 German, Norwegian	3	—
Estudi en Ilija by Maria Antònia Oliver	1998 French 2002 Romanian 2003 German	3	—
Tirant lo Blanc by Joanot Martorell	2001 Dutch 2003 French	2	2001 Spanish
La plaça del Diamant by Mercè Rodoreda	2001 Romanian 2003 Portuguese	2	2002 Spanish complete works
Mirall trencat by Mercè Rodoreda	2000 Romanian 2001 Slovenian	2	2002 Spanish
El mestre de Kheops by Albert Salvadó	2000 Portuguese 2002 Greek	2	1999 Spanish
El jardí dels set crepuscles by Miquel de Palol	1999 German, Italian	2	—
La gran novel·la sobre Barcelona by Sergi Pàmies	1999 Italian 2002 French	2	—

Between 1993 and 2003 Catalan literary works were translated into 24 different languages, according to the booklet published by the Ramon Llull Institute<sup>10</sup> (*Traduccions de Literatura Catalana 1998-2003*). An opening up to Central and Eastern European cultures is particularly notable, probably due to political changes in Europe from the 1980s onwards, and the end of the Cold War.

The most popular target language for Catalan translations is French (40 titles), followed by German (29 titles). The number of English translations (15 titles) was less than Romanian (18 titles) during this period. Then follow Italian (12 titles), Portuguese (11 titles), Russian (7 titles), Hungarian and Polish (5 titles each). More than one Catalan work per year was translated into Slovenian, Serbian, Swedish, Czech and Dutch, amongst others.

In comparison with the situation during this five-year period, the international presence of Àlbert Sánchez Piñol's two novels is exceptional. From its publication in autumn 2002 to Spring 2006, translation rights to his first novel *Cold Skin* were sold to 30 countries (Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Holland, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, the USA), and the same thing is happening with his second novel *Pandora al Congo*.

SOURCE: *Traduccions de la Literatura Catalana 1998-2003*, published by the Ramon Llull Institute. A manual system of has been used in the creation of this table, as the booklet groups translations by language and by alphabetic order of authors making it impossible to know into how many languages a specific work has been translated.

10. Institut Ramon Llull (IRL)

### 3 THE PRESENCE OF UNIVERSAL LITERATURE ON THE CATALAN SCENE

Since 1975, the year the dictator Franco died, the number of titles published in Catalan has been increasing progressively. The same is true of the number of publishing houses that publish in this language. It should be remembered that in the 1960s, few publishing houses published in Catalan (Edicions 62, Aymà, Barcino, Vergara, Laia, Proa, Nova Terra, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat), everything else was only published in Spanish. Thanks to the democratic transition, a more normal situation has been re-established (not without difficulties), meaning that it can now be said that the position of the Catalan language within the Spanish book market has been consolidated.

Currently, for publishing houses with headquarters in Catalonia, Catalan books represent 30% of published titles, 18% of copies produced and 17% of turnover, according to the *l'Informe de comerç interior 2003 (Domestic trade report 2003)* by the Gremi d'Editors de Catalunya (Catalan Publisher's Association). One important contributing factor to the increase in the number of books published in Catalan was the introduction of Catalan onto the school curriculum, both as a subject in its own right and as the language of instruction in other subjects. The weight of primary and secondary education is also reflected in the structure of Catalan publications. A quarter of all books published in Catalan are text books, whilst children's literature and literature for young people make up another quarter. In other words, 50% of Catalan books are destined for a young public. However, Catalan disappears when it comes to the university system, where there is a major lack in Catalan publications in the areas of academic books, technical and scientific publications and in general circulation. Literature represents around 20% of all publications in Catalan, a similar situation to that of most other languages with a consolidated publishing system.

As a source language Spanish has brought in more translations than English since the year 2000, and translations from Spanish into Catalan have more than doubled in the last ten years. The fact that Catalan versions of texts originally published in Spanish have risen leads one to believe that Catalan has become more prestigious. Nowadays it is not taken for granted that a Catalan reader will read a Spanish or South American author in the original version, and it is becoming more and more common to find bookshops with editions in both languages. This phenomenon is not only limited to literature in a strict sense; in the area of general printed matter Catalan is slowly becoming more visible. The tendency is well illustrated with the publication of the Catalan version of *El Periódico* newspaper, and the publication of a whole series of colour magazines in Catalan, well received by the general public, covering such diverse subjects as contemporary history (*Sàpiens*), travel (*Descobrir Catalunya*) and cooking (*Descobrir Cuina*).

In the 1980s the publishing houses Edhasa, Grijalbo and Gedisa had already made some timid efforts to translate Spanish language authors like García Márquez, Vargas Llosa or Borges into Catalan. Today, these cases have become more frequent. For example, the latest novels of the Basque author Bernardo Atxaga were translated simultaneously into Spanish and Catalan; *Captain Alariste*<sup>11</sup> (*El capitán Alariste*) by Arturo Pérez Reverte, was translated into 22 languages, including Catalan and Basque, on the express wishes of the author. It is also worth considering the case of *Soldiers of Salamis*<sup>12</sup> (*Soldados de Salamina*), translated into Catalan two years after its publication in Spanish, 2001. Other examples include *The City of Marvels*<sup>13</sup> (*La ciudad de lo prodigios*) by Eduardo Mendoza and *The Shadow of the Wind*<sup>14</sup> (*La sombra del viento*) by Carlos Ruiz Zafón.

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11. Pheonix, 2006. Translation: PEDEN, Margaret Sayers.

12. Bloomsbury, 2004. Translation: MCLEAN, Anne.

13. Pocket Books; Reprint edition (April 1990). Translation: MOLLOY, Bernard.

14. Penguin. Translation: GRAVES, Lucia.

The other thornier question, one which is not usually spoken aloud, is self-translation: authors who write in Spanish, but who translate their own works, or who have the novel translated and give it the status of an original Catalan work. A good example of this blurring of the boundaries between the original version and the translation can be seen with the simultaneous publication of three versions – Czech, Spanish and Catalan – of the latest novel by Monika Zgustova, *Una dona silenciosa* (2005). The well-known Czech translator considers each translation an original in its own right.

There has also been a significant change in translations of classic Latin and Greek authors, now overtaken by translations from literature in less circulated modern languages. On the other hand it is very difficult to find out exactly which languages have been translated into Catalan because, within the only general statistics generated by Spain in this area, lesser-spoken languages are all grouped together in the ‘other languages’ category. The *Overview of Spanish Publishing*<sup>15</sup> does not tell us whether the number of languages which are translated into Catalan has increased. The lack of clear statistics, which effects more than just this one issue, leads to a worrying conclusion: in the Spanish publishing world, although Catalan publishing houses carry a lot of weight, books published in Catalan are not very important, and nobody has yet been interested enough to do an in-depth study of the characteristics of Catalan publishing.

In addition, the lack of statistics to quantify the presence of world literature in Catalan point to a certain lack of interest in other cultures. The Institution of Catalan Letters and, later, the Ramon Llull Institute put together the TRAC catalogue of Catalan works translated into other languages, but no such project exists to trace the origin of translations into Catalan, to look at how literary works from other cultures are entering the Catalan language, from which source languages translations are coming from, what kind of literature is imported, who are the international authors with most resonance in Catalan and other related questions.

15. «Panorámica de la Edición Española de Libros» is published by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. The main indicators of the sector can be consulted on the website, but for a more detailed study and for data relating to Catalan publications, it is worth looking at the paper version that is published annually. [http://www.mcu.es/jsp/plantilla\\_wai.jsp?id=44&area=estadisticas](http://www.mcu.es/jsp/plantilla_wai.jsp?id=44&area=estadisticas)

■ TABLE 4  
IMPORTS OF UNIVERSAL LITERATURE INTO CATALAN

YEAR	SPANISH	ENGLISH	FRENCH	GERMAN	ITALIAN	LATIN	GREEK	PORTUGUESE	GALICIAN	BASQUE	RUSSIAN	OTHERS	TOTAL
1996	329	374	139	55	48	17	15	5	11	1	—	25	<b>1.019</b>
2000	413	388	230	75	70	16	9	22	17	7	—	60	<b>1.307</b>
2001	500	535	218	74	102	9	8	16	33	12	—	55	<b>1.562</b>
2002	628	493	201	99	35	13	12	19	13	—	11	55	<b>1.579</b>
2003	756	492	197	95	47	18	7	20	20	—	—	67	<b>1.719</b>
2004	854	456	164	95	50	17	12	32	26	—	—	52	<b>1.758</b>

SOURCE: According to data from the “Overview of Spanish Publishing” published by the Ministry of Culture, 1996-2004.

This data would be of particular importance because of the heavy dependence of the Catalan culture on Spanish language books. With a completely bilingual population, the need to translate a foreign author into Catalan is in-existent because any book can be read by the Catalan public via a Spanish translation with absolutely no hindrance. Catalan readers benefit from this cohabitation with the large Spanish culture in that they have very broad horizons, as they have access to a supply of works by most of the major writers, as well as recent commercial successes, in a language they know, even if it is not their own.

After the year 2000, the ranking of languages which are translated into Catalan changes (taking into account statistics from the *Index Translatorum* on the ten languages which are most frequently translated into Catalan between 1970 and 2003). More works were translated into Catalan from Spanish than from English, and works by classic Latin and Greek authors were overtaken by translations of literature from less circulated modern languages.

Translations from Spanish to Catalan have more than doubled over the last ten years.

The 'other languages' category in the *Overview of Spanish Publishing* does not give information as to whether the number of languages which are translated into Catalan has increased. Also unclear is the nature of the evolution of Russian and Basque translations which appear in their own category in some years and then disappear again. This fluctuation also makes it impossible to obtain an exact picture of the exchange between the other official languages of Spain and Catalan, or of imports of world literature into Catalan. A very high number of titles are included in the category 'other languages'. It is a shame that this has not been broken down because it is impossible to know exactly which languages have had literature translated into Catalan.

It is important to note that this data includes all books, not only literature. Therefore it cannot be established which subject is responsible for the increase in translations from Spanish or English. On the other hand, translations from Latin, or Russian and from all the less circulated other languages must correspond above all to literature.

Throughout the twentieth century Spain, as a country, has been marked by a public sphere in which the most conservative and rigid structures of society had huge power and influence. To simplify matters, it can be said that the Church and the military had constant control over all areas of life including, of course, literature. It is true that only during the harshest years of Franco's dictatorship was effective censorship carried out to check the morality of published books, and in addition to ban all books that were not written in Spanish (Gallofré: 1991, Torres: 1995). It is precisely due to the presence of such a conservative mentality that Spain has become one of the countries with the most highly developed conscious and effective resistance against such pressure. Imported literature, books by foreign writers and thinkers, has served to counterbalance the narrow horizons permitted at home. That is why translated authors traditionally enjoy a high level of acceptance from readers, and are seen as prestigious by scholars. In addition to these circumstances we must also consider the modern-day media and advertising pressure that accompanies most commercially successful authors in a globalized world. Names such as Dan Brown and Philip Roth have more resonance than strong Catalan authors, even though the obviously do not appeal to the same class of reader.

An awareness of the importance of the literary heritage of other cultures in the enrichment of one's own culture, so conspicuously absent in official reports, is, conversely, very present amongst professional translators and scholars, as well as in the daily press where articles relating to recent translations into Catalan can often be read. Most of the specialized journal articles about translation in the last few years talk about diverse and interesting aspects of the incorporation of the universal literary heritage into Catalan.

Many of the articles are about the way in which great classics of literature have entered the Catalan language. The study of Catalan versions of Shakespeare,

for example, has served to sketch out the rules of Catalan dramatic language (Oliva: 1996). The entrance of James Joyce, or Paul Celan into the Catalan scene, on the other hand, has proved the importance of marginal journals and small publishing houses in making public a legacy of authors who were recognised by the general public decades after the first Catalan versions (Ibarren: 2004; Farrés: 2000). We can also find in-depth reflections on how works fundamental to other cultures or religions have been adapted into Catalan. Thus in 2001 Mikel de Epalza explained the difficulties that were faced in the making of a version of such an 'inimitable' text as the *Koran*; and from the Arab culture we can also read about the difficulties of translating *The Arabian Nights* (Castells: 2002). There is also a great deal of interest in finding out how a place is made for literature that was previously little known in Catalonia. Since 2000 an increase in the presence of modern Greek (Gesti: 2004) and Central European literature (*Quaderns* dossier, 2004) has been noted. They have had a strong start and show that the international climate has improved when it comes to direct exchange between small literatures, at least in Europe.

Of special interest, however, is research which tells readers of the lack of incorporation of certain authors' works into Catalan. During almost three decades Joan Sales, from the publishing house *Club dels Novel·listes* upheld and applied the theory set out by George Steiner (*After Babel*) which stated that the more isolated a linguistic or cultural source, the easier it is to transplant. Sales translated Dostoyevsky, comparing the French, Spanish, Italian and English translations and was sure that in this way an exact replica of meaning was obtained. The same process was carried out on a some ten further literary works, coming from languages that were completely unknown to him such as Dutch, Greek, Norwegian and Occitane (Bacardí: 1998). In contrast, a thorough reading of translations of Russian classics by Andreu Nin, revolutionary and politician, but not an expert in literary matters, demonstrates major absences in the text that do not arise from an ignorance of the language, but due to the lack of theoretical preparation of this self-taught and makeshift translator (Kharitónova: 2004). But today, even prized translations do not escape criticism. It is possible to find a well-founded analysis which makes clear that all the works of Elias Canetti in Catalan contain serious mistakes, although few readers are capable of detecting them due to the widespread lack of knowledge of German (Farrés: 1995). Or the accusation of errors in Assumpta Camps' translation of *Zibaldone dels pensaments* by Giacomo Leopardi (Muñiz:

1999), a translation that was singled out for the 'Serra d'Or' prize. This is a serious matter when we consider that in the Catalan culture there is not usually a second chance for the incorporation of great works of universal literature, and especially as there are still significant absences of classic authors from all periods.

Although horizons have been widened to include many languages, with translators who do not need to use any kind of bridging language, in Catalan there are still languages and cultures that are not present. On the other hand, whilst foreign narrative and even poetry are well enough represented, the same cannot be said for essays and essayistic writings that Catalan readers continue to read in Spanish because there is no Catalan version. The most demanding literary works and essayistic writings still find little acceptance in Catalan. There are very skilled vocational translators who complain they cannot find a place within their own language because neither publishers nor the cultural agents who grant subsidies have the sensitivity or sufficient interest to also promote translations aimed exclusively at a learned public. It goes without saying that gaining access to learned literature in all genres in Catalan is also a way of reevaluating and giving force to the language.

Literary translation is highly valued in the arts world because in this circle everyone is aware that foreign authors represent the basic material for the evolution of Catalan. Translation is seen as a driving force for seeding new artistic sensitivity and opening new spaces within literary creation in one's own language. Unfortunately the translator does not enjoy the same recognition.

## 5 THE LITERARY TRANSLATOR

“The Spanish book market”, writes Peter Bush (2004), “has a tradition of being very open to translations. This fact, however, hides the conditions which have made it possible for great deal of translators to work for publishers used to publishing a lot of translations. This tradition is based on tight deadlines, low pay, no pay-rises, and dreadful contracts (or sometimes even no contract), and all this within an economy where the cost of living has risen sharply due to Spain’s increased integration into the world economy.”

From the publishers’ point of view, translation is often seen as an “external contribution” and thus almost on a par with proofreading. Today in Catalonia the reality of the profession consists of translation being valued as nothing more than a simple step within the publishing process, anonymous translators that nobody knows or recognises even though they have put their name to the translation, rushed translations, low pay and very poor quality work. Most publishers blindly accept the version that is given to them, and some do not even carry out stylistic checks, often to keep costs down. Many translations suffer from this pressure. It is also possible to find cases in which literary translations are entrusted to a translation agency. It is not without irony that we can say that the translator has become the *invisible* being preached in certain theories.<sup>16</sup>

Even if we consider translation as a creative and prestigious task, the practice of the vast majority of publishing houses refutes this. Both the working conditions such as the existence of very tight deadlines, inadequate proofreading

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16. This section is also based on an e-mail survey of around fifty translators and publishing professionals. Although we do not mention any names, we have tried to gather together the most common opinions.

processes carried out without the translator’s participation and low pay seem to be more suited to a mechanical and routine job. Publishers have traditionally been unwilling to grant the translator any kind of intellectual property rights, and it is only through legislation that a forced change in criteria has been bought about. The percentage the translator receives in rights rarely overcomes the 1%. However, the percentage the translator receives in rights is just 0.1% of the sale price, meaning the translator will never receive adequate recompense for his or her efforts, whilst on paper the publisher will have complied with the law in awarding a share of profits.

The translator usually appears in the book credits and, in the case of well-known authors, can also appear on the cover. Translations tend to appear in media reviews in the case of a work that is part of the universal literary legacy, or if the author is well-known. These reviews often mention the name of the translator in the accompanying information file, but rarely do they mention the quality of the translation. Translators see this situation as an example of the lack of recognition their work receives. A further example of this lack of recognition can be seen in the booklet published by the Ramon Llull Institute, used in this report to draw up the tables on Catalan literature exports. In a document that is dedicated to the promotion of Catalan literature abroad, not one single translator’s name is cited. Specific books with the publisher, year and place of publication are mentioned, but the key piece of information which enabled these works to find readers in other cultures is missing.

This does not mean that the translation in general is no longer regarded as prestigious, but rather that two ways of working as a translator coexist. Some translations are seen as mechanical, and some are put on a level with creative work and considered as such by the general public. There are still translators who have made a name for themselves in Catalonia but, as usually happens in the arts world, each individual has had to earn his or her own reputation through individual work and accumulated merit. Traditionally Catalonia has had very good literary translators, mainly writers or university professors. The difficulties faced by the Catalan language in establishing itself as a modern and agile language during the 20th century must not be forgotten. Within this context, literary translation was seen not only as a vehicle for getting closer to other cultures, but also as an efficient way of creating and enriching its own literary language. The mechanism of

incorporating foreign works into Catalan was often the personal and literary interest of the translator him or herself, who began the translation and subsequently offered it to the publisher.

Around the 1980s and '90s, with the introduction of university courses in translation, well-qualified translators with theoretical training in translation joined the team of literary translators. Translation has become more and more professional, bringing about a standardization in the field, although there is still no professional association of translators and the few existing associations (TRIAAC or ATIC) do not have a very consolidated presence. With the new intellectual property law of 1987, the translators rights were laid down, and publishers tend to draw up and, to a greater or lesser degree, respect contracts with translators. In any case, critical voices like that of the above-mentioned Peter Bush, warn that the rapid expansion of university courses has not solved the old problems, but has in fact made the situation worse, due to a higher number of people wanting to make a living in translation which has had the knock-on effect of bringing prices of all translation services down even further.

Literary translation is still mainly undertaken by writers, philologists or university professors who see translation more as an 'extra' than as a profession. This perception is without a doubt brought about by the precarious working conditions within the translation sector in Catalonia, where translators work in varying economic conditions depending on the publisher. In order to regulate the situation, AELC<sup>17</sup> has worked hard to oversee promotion of contract models and offers a legal consultancy service to its members.

Another initiative to give more importance to translation is the website created by the Translation/Linguistic Rights Committee of the Catalan PEN ([www.pencatala.cat/ctdl](http://www.pencatala.cat/ctdl)), started in 2004 with the support of the Ramon Llull Institute and the Institution of Catalan Letters. Its objective is to make the most of the possibilities offered by the web to present Catalan literary translation to a wider public, both in Catalonia and abroad. Thus presentations of translated

authors have been divided into two sections. The first is designed for the promotion of Catalan literature abroad, and presents Catalan authors with a short essay translated into different languages, with a bibliography of all translations illustrated with short extracts from the original work and the translations. In contrast, the second section aims at drawing a map of the translations that are entering Catalonia from diverse cultures. However, in addition to the presentations of translated authors and books there is a third section exclusively dedicated to translators. Under the heading "The Translator's Site", biographies and extracts of translations by all translators that have used Catalan in their work, whether as a source or a target language, are slowly being put together. This initiative is the first, and only one, of its kind for the moment, as previously no association or institution had proposed the creation of a catalogue representing the world of Catalan literary translation.

It is also important to mention "The guest writer" initiative undertaken by the Institution of Catalan Letters. This consists of a guest writer being invited to reside in Catalonia for a month or two. The writer can continue to dedicate time to the task of literary creation, whilst enabling the maintenance of contacts with Catalan writers, professors and critics, with the aim of promoting knowledge of Catalonia and its literature amongst foreign authors.

A similar initiative from the Institution of Catalan Letters has resulted in twice-yearly Translation Seminars held in Farrera de Pallars since 1998. Each spring and autumn, the Institute invites two poets who write in the same language to meet up with ten Catalan poets and translators. Divided into two groups, the participants have the chance to talk about all aspects of the versions of the pre-selected poems. This work is extraordinarily valuable in that it encourages personal contacts and mutual knowledge of the work and working methods of the participants. Beyond acting as a tool for giving Catalan readers a direct taste of what is being written around the world, more importantly the seminars serve to strengthen personal ties, and it is these ties which are the basis of the most long-lasting and fruitful relationships between writers. Although until now the seminars have always been based on poetic translation, there are plans to increase the scope to include plays and short stories.

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17. AELC- Associació d'Escriptors en Llengua Catalana (Association of Catalan language writers), created in 1977, as a result of the Catalan Culture Congress.

## 6 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR TRANSLATION

The Government of Catalonia's policy includes moves for strengthening the presence of the Catalan language and for encouraging publishing, distribution and circulation of books in Catalan (Linguistic standardization law, 1986). In accordance with this regulation, since 1983 the Department of Culture has bought between 150 and 300 copies of each book published in Catalan at a 50% discount. This applies only to books with a print-run of between 1,100 and 1,500 copies and with a price no higher than 30 euros. Between 1983 and 2004 it gave generic support to 22,909 titles, of which only 43% were distributed in libraries. The rest of the stock was warehoused. In 2004 around 1,500 titles benefitted from this aid, in other words just under 20% of all titles published in Catalan. Thus it is clear that many of the published translations did not receive the subsidy. In some countries where equivalent generic support aid is offered all published titles are eligible, this serves to feed libraries with a constant supply of books.

In Catalonia this funding, named *Suport Genèric (Generic Support)*, was abolished on 30 December 2004, and in 2005 was substituted by the *Programa de Suport a l'Edició en Català (Support for Publishing in Catalan Program)* which consists of two funding lines in accordance with the *Associació d'Editors en Llengua Catalana* (the Association of Catalan Language Publishers), managed by the *Institut Català de les Indústries Culturals* (the Catalan Institute of Cultural Industries), with financial aid for publishing production in Catalan and Aranese,<sup>18</sup> which in practice means book orders of between 10 and 800 copies with a 15% discount; and for the *Sistema d'Adquisició bibliotecària (Library Purchasing System, or SAB with its Catalan*

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18. Aranese is a variant of the Occitane language spoken in the Vall d'Aran, a region of the Catalan Pyrenees.

initials), managed by the *Direcció General de Cooperació Cultural* (General Direction of Cultural Cooperation), which joins up the funding program based on the specific needs of the public library sector. A framework of cooperation between publishers and libraries is established, the latter choosing which newly launched books they would like to receive. In addition to helping to give support to reading, this measure helps to get more newly released books into Catalan public libraries. The program is open to publishers from the other Spanish autonomous regions.

In addition to this support, the Department of Culture gives financial aid to special cultural interest publications in Catalan, and grants subsidies to entities for book-related activities such as the organization of book fairs or the participation in international book fairs. The publishing of complete works of important authors and university text books also benefits from special financial aid to encourage the authors to write directly in Catalan.

In 1987 the Institution of Catalan Letters was created as an autonomous entity of the Department of Culture and successor to the historic Institution that had been active until 1937, despite the difficulties caused by the Spanish Civil War. The objective of the Institution is to oversee the promotion of Catalan literary works and their authors. To this end it plans promotion campaigns, organises exhibitions and participates in book fairs. It also grants subsidies to literary creators, scriptwriters and scholars. In addition, since 1993 it has published two calls for submissions of translations into Catalan per year, one for translators and the other for publishing houses.

All things considered we believe the Institution of Catalan Letters should act still more decisively to promote and offer help towards the translation of all the key works of universal literature that have not yet been translated into Catalan. To be able to fill in the gaps that still exist, it would probably be useful to draw up a list of literary works that should take priority in being translated into Catalan. The list would have to be put together by experts and revised periodically, but making it public would probably help to give an incentive to many highly desirable translation projects.

At the same time these translation projects should be granted special financial aid to ensure that the Catalan translation of no important literary work is left

out by publishers unwilling to undertake a project they see as commercially unviable or too demanding. In other words, there is a need for a more explicit willingness to build the cultural infrastructure of the country, where there can be no doubt that the world literary legacy has a great deal of influence. Thus it is also worth considering that universal literature represents more than just the works from the Catalan literary legacy throughout time, it is also important to increase the number of literary translations that have left their mark in Catalonia. The translation of less circulated languages into Catalan should be encouraged, especially in cases when the economic situation of the source country does not permit financial aid for translation. This would work as an important corrective mechanism to avoid a situation where only those translations which enjoy external financial support get published, as we will see later on.

Until 2002 the Institution of Catalan Letters was responsible for promoting Catalan literature abroad. In addition to giving financial aid for translation, it edited the journal *Catalan Writing* (17 issues from 1993-2002, the last issues in collaboration with the Catalan PEN). In 2002 the Ramon Llull Institute was created, and took over this task. Each year it grants subsidies to publishing companies for the translation of Catalan works and for initiatives related to the promotion and overseas circulation of Catalan literature, including the organization of festivals, congresses or literary demonstrations, translation seminars or the publication of monographic dossiers and literary extracts in foreign journals. It is not possible for the individual translator to receive financial aid, all the subsidies are related to the publication of the translation by a foreign publisher and it is the publishing house that makes the application and receives the subsidy. The granting of specific financial aid for writers' travel costs is foreseen.

In addition, the Spanish Ministry of Culture, via the Dirección general del Libro, Archivos y Bibliotecas (General Direction of Books, Archives and Libraries), offers an annual "Subsidy for the encouragement of translation and publishing, in any foreign language, of literary and scientific works by any Spanish author", aimed at publishing houses. It also awards the annual "National prize for best translation", recently won by translators using Catalan as their target language, like Joan F. Mira in 2001 with his translation of the *Divine Comedy*, and Mikel d'Epalza with the Catalan translation of the *Koran* in 2002.

In addition to financial aid for translation that can be obtained in Spain, other forms of financing are very widespread in the publishing world. The first group includes all the financial aid that almost all European countries and the rest of the developed world provide for the circulation of their literature abroad. In a similar way to the Ramon Llull Institute, other cultures have also developed strategies to increase their presence outside the borders of their language. The 'largest' cultures tend to trust the concession of financial aid directly to the Ministry of Culture of the respective country, but they often have a powerful network of cultural institutions basically dedicated to teaching the language, which helps to channel all applications. This is what happens in the cases of countries like France, Germany, Italy and English-speaking countries. In fact, in these cases the financial support goes beyond the strict translation of the work, because in addition a publisher can count on the fact that this network of cultural entities will serve to promote all the latest books that get translated.

This possibility of circulating books once they have been translated does not work for 'smaller' and 'medium-sized' literatures, even though within Europe most of them plan a good support program for the translation of their own literature.<sup>19</sup>

The European Commission offers another possibility with its *Culture 2000* program. 30 European countries participate in the program; the 25 members of the EU, together with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Bulgaria and Romania. The aid program covers the total translation costs (which cannot exceed 60% of the total cost of publishing the book). In 2006 it is expected that 50 literary work translation projects will be selected, written by European authors from 1950 onwards. Priority in the granting of aid is given to works written in or translated into less circulated languages.

Once all these financial aid sources have been reviewed, it is possible to conclude that translation is not a poorly subsidised activity. But it is precisely because of that fact that it is potentially very weak. It is essential to consider

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19. The list of these organisms can be consulted for example on the "Literature across frontiers" website <http://www.lit-across-frontiers.org> or on the UNESCO site (Literature and Translations, Help and Subsidies): <http://portal.unesco.org/culture>

how much weight national aid carries in an international context. It is not hard to discover that countries with fewer resources publish fewer works outside their country. Is this a fair situation? Not only that, a relative abundance of subsidies has created a Europe-wide climate in which a publisher is practically never willing to publish a translation if it is not financed from the source country. Thus, correction mechanisms that help to conserve a balance should be developed.

Traditionally the importance of translation mainly came from the fact that through translation, one feeds one's own language with the contribution from other cultures. The *Bible* or *Don Quijote* translated in their entirety into a 'smaller' language demonstrate the capacity of a culture, however small, to be equal to the highest literary achievements. However, the centre of gravity is shifting and - if we force the situation a little - it can be said that today the task of translation is completely different. Translations have to demonstrate the importance of the culture itself through a capacity for incorporation into a foreign environment. In the case of literature, it is considered that success is achieved when a large amount of own-language literature is exported, in contrast the import of foreign works does not seem to have too much importance. In Catalonia this point of view is particularly grave. One of the great weaknesses of the Catalan literary system is precisely its proximity to Spanish, and the capacity of all Catalan speakers to read in this neighbouring language. From a pragmatic point of view, translations into Catalan are thus dispensable. In contrast, traditionally, translations into Catalan have enjoyed a high level of prestige because everyone was very aware of the importance of broadening horizons towards the presence of other cultures. The current increase in attention paid to the Catalan culture abroad should not be an excuse for letting go of our curiosity about other cultures. Although many opportunities for receiving financial aid abroad do exist, in Catalonia we are lacking a mechanism that would allow for the independent translation and promotion of Catalan literary works, thus obtaining the necessary literary support within Catalonia itself.

## 7 CATALONIA'S PROJECTION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Until 25 years ago, with the restoration of self-government through the reestablishment of the Generalitat of Catalonia in 1980, Catalan culture could not begin to make itself known abroad, because Spain has tended (both in the past and present) to display only Spanish culture and literature to the outside world. This occurs in spite of the recent close collaboration between the Instituto Cervantes (Cervantes Institute) and the Ramon Llull Institute for the promotion of Catalan culture via the infrastructures of the former. In the last few years, some major international trade fairs in the publishing sector have shown an interest in Catalan culture and publishing and have invited Catalonia to be represented there. This happened at the Torí trade fair (Italy, 2002), the Guadalajara fair (Mexico, 2004) and will happen in the near future at the Frankfurt book fair (Germany, 2007). These trade fairs are very important, as they represent both an opening up towards the outside world, and a platform for increasing awareness of Catalan literature.

Since their creation, both the Institution of Catalan Letters and the Ramon Llull Institute have always been present at all cultural and literary events abroad, and act both as a mechanism for the circulation of Catalan literature and as a receptive mechanism for foreign influences.

It is important to take into account the changes that Europe has undergone in the last few years. The creation of the European Union has not only meant the elimination of borders, but also free circulation of diverse cultural products. Both European and national promotion and financial aid for literature have contributed to channel of interlinguistic projects.

The situation of a culture like the Catalan one, which exists inside another state's framework, has improved over the last few years on an international level; this is also due to major political changes experienced by the European

continent from the 1980s onwards, sparked by the fall of the Berlin Wall. If in post-war Europe the forced division of Germany into two different states, and thus two different “national” literatures, was considered unquestionable, if the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia had to be seen as one single state and consequently one single nation, from 1989 onwards this construct has no longer been valid. A perspective which takes into account the importance of one’s own culture and respect for all languages has been progressively winning ground in Europe. Today, many EU policies champion this point of view and have established an effective system for the defence of the rights of linguistic minorities. The international recognition of Catalan could probably be greatly improved, but most problems are rooted in the difficulties of acceptance of the plurilingual reality within Spain itself.

A further important factor should be added in here: the ease of communications in a globalized world. Whilst during Franco’s dictatorship it would have been difficult for a Spanish citizen to obtain a passport to visit any of the Communist countries, today this bureaucratic barrier has completely disappeared. This has opened up a different perspective of Catalonia’s own reality from inside the country. Comparing the historic destiny of Catalonia with that of small Central European countries, or with nations that were integrated into the Soviet Union, the struggle for the preservation of cultural identity does not seem like such a completely isolated case as it did before, when the horizon stopped at the border with the nearest neighbour, France. Claiming one’s own culture no longer carries the stigma of provincialism that had been assigned to it. In general terms, the idea that a culture has to be large and has to coincide with the limits of an internationally recognised state to be important, has lost validity in Europe.

One of the consequences of this sufficiently generalized change in attitude has been the regeneration of the capillary system of European literature: cultures and languages that previously knew each other only through translations into one of the major languages are now able to establish direct connections, without the need to go through Paris publishers. Globalization has had many positive and revitalising effects.

However, it can be noted that Catalonia suffers from low self-esteem when it comes to Catalan-language literary production, as if by definition it were li-

imited and bad. This leads to a tendency for any foreign or Spanish author to enjoy higher prestige than an author considered to be too “local”. This phenomenon, also described by Zagajewski (2005), appears to be a feature of small countries in which, according to the author, there is a tendency for people to turn their backs on writers who use the native language. Thus many Catalan intellectuals assure they have read the works of many foreign classic authors, yet are profoundly ignorant of the classics from their own literary heritage. In bookshops, the overwhelming presence of Spanish books puts books written directly in Catalan or Catalan translations into second place. In addition, cultural administration bodies do not demonstrate enough imagination or planning skills to watch over and encourage knowledge of the Catalan literary corpus. Often a number of events are planned at which authors are present, but, in contrast, no effort is made to promote and guarantee the literary memory of all those who have gone before, through the encouragement of new editions of depleted works. There are many translations from Catalan into Spanish which have been impossible to find for some time now (*Solitud* by Víctor Català, or *L’auca del Senyor Esteve* by Santiago Rusiñol, and many others that cannot be found in Spanish today). A good example of this phenomenon is the disappearance of collections like ‘La Senda’ (pub. Polígrafa) or the ‘Marca Hispánica’ (Llibres del Mall), as well as the ambitious initiative of the ‘Biblioteca de Cultura Catalana’ (Editorial Enciclopèdia Catalana and Alianza) which managed to publish a fair number of Catalan works in Spanish (translation). This means that the ever-increasing lack of awareness of Catalan literature both inside and outside Catalonia has become a fact of life. The translator can rarely influence the situation given that the publishing sector’s obsession with sales and new launches makes the recovery and projection of important and demanding literary works very difficult or even impossible, especially if they are from the past.

## 8 ACHIEVING INTERNATIONAL RESONANCE VIA A DEPENDENCE ON OTHER LANGUAGES

It is said that, in order to become better-known internationally, Catalan literature has to depend on a majority bridging language. Based on what has been said throughout this report, Catalan's most natural theoretical ally is Spanish, due to its proximity and complicity, but it has already been observed that this is not actually the case, probably due to the lack of interest sparked in Spanish publishing agents for literature written in the other languages of Spain. Neither can this bridging function be ascribed to English as a general rule, whereas French and German translations have given significant drive to Catalan's projection towards other languages, especially if the work has been published by a major publishing house.

It has also been observed that the projection of Catalan literature abroad is mainly due to cultural or literary complicity and friendship between Catalan writers and writers, translators and professors coming from other language backgrounds. The existence of authors and titles which can be published in more than one language without ever having been published in either Spanish or English has also been proved.

## 9 THE CATALAN LITERARY LEGACY SEEN FROM ABROAD

One of the least developed fields within the Catalan literary system is literary criticism and theoretical study of the literary legacy in general. A solid academic system does exist, but the research of university professors rarely reaches the general public. Their studies are limited to the classrooms, congresses and the scarce literary journals, too specialised to be read by the lay reader. In an entirely different place we have the writers of daily media reviews, who have to carry out their work day in day out in a space that does not usually exceed two pages, using an entertaining and informative tone. As one would expect, critics focus all their attention on the latest launches, cancelling out a more panoramic vision. An 'advertising' type description of titles that one would find displayed on the central units of bookshops is thrust upon us.

Ardent debates about the Catalan literary legacy are still very much alive. A certain predilection for the elaboration of lists of essential authors can be detected and as one would expect no two lists are exactly the same, leading to passionate debate. The habit of evaluating the quality of a literary work on extrinsic signs, awards for example, is widespread. Each year in Catalonia more than one thousand literary prizes are awarded, and despite winning a prize, many of these works do not necessarily go on to be published. The author receives a money prize, but not always a publishing contract.

The opposite is true for translators. In Catalonia awards for translators are almost non-existent and very few include a money prize (Premi de la Crítica 'Serra d'Or', Premi Ciutat de Barcelona, Premi 'Jaume Vidal Alcover', Premi Cavall Verd). It is seen more as public recognition and submissions are always invited as part of other categories, never alone.

Not knowing how to create a favourable climate for in depth discussion about literature is also a visible problem when it comes to the projection of Catalan

literature abroad. Many people champion the idea that a closed list of authors from the Catalan literary legacy should be created. These authors would benefit from especially generous financial aid to encourage translations into other languages. But when the results in this field are examined, it is clear that there is no systematic translation policy. Several factors come into play in the export of Catalan literature; the existence of financial aid has an important role, but the interest of a specific translator in a specific author has been far more important.

The general trends of the international literary market must also be taken into account. Catalan literature, like that of other countries, has had most success in the export of narrative works, especially novels. In contrast, there is still a long way to go in creating overseas awareness of complete works of Catalan poets, and Catalan essays are practically unheard of outside the borders of Spain. The other weak point can be seen with reference books on translated Catalan works. Articles, essays or studies on the fundamental Catalan literary works are very scarce and more or less limited to the introductions of the specific books themselves, usually written by the translator. Plays cannot be considered in the same context, because international circulation occurs through staging rather than printed texts, and contemporary Catalan playwrights have secured a good presence in the theatres of the world.

It is possible to establish that exports have mainly concerned contemporary authors and some twentieth century classics. There have also been a considerable number of translations from the classic period of Catalan literature, especially the works of Ramon Llull, and of the novel *Tirant lo Blanc* which can also be considered as a key work in the European context of that period. Contracts between Barcino publishing house and European publishers for the translation of Catalan classics, which form part of their editorial collections, should be seen as very positive. In the future these tendencies, which have come about as a consequence of diverse factors, will very probably continue to be valid.

Furthermore it is extremely difficult to get reliable information about versions of Catalan literary works published in other languages, and the quality of the translations, especially of they are in far removed tongues. The following example well illustrates one such danger. In 1981 Janko Moder, one

of most prestigious and well-known Slovenian translators, published the first Catalan work translated into Slovenian, the novel *The Pigeon Girl* or *The Time of the Doves*<sup>20</sup> (*La plaça del Diamant*) by Mercè Rodoreda. His knowledge of Catalan was non-existent, and he based his work on a certain intuition. It goes without saying that most of the sayings and idioms are translated literally and there are many comprehension errors which make a dignified reception of this masterpiece impossible. In addition, the novel's main character, Colometa, who appears at the beginning of the book dressed in white with blond hair, is a red-head in the Slovenian version. The similarity between the Romance languages is very unreliable, hence the Italian adjective "rosso" led to the misunderstanding that dyed her hair red. In Slovenia almost nobody would be capable of judging the errors in this translation, not only because of a lack of knowledge of Catalan, but also due to an ignorance of the cultural context. Besides, because the translation was done by a very prestigious translator, there will never be a new Slovenian version of the Catalan author's novel. In the context of exchange between smaller literatures, second chances are almost non-existent. That is why it is so important for translators to have decent working conditions, as well as whatever means they might need to carry out their work. A poorly translated version of Shakespeare in any culture of the world will quickly be improved upon; a failed version of Rodoreda is unlikely to ever be corrected.

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20. There have been two translations of this novel: *The pigeon girl*. Translation by O'SHIEL, Eda. London, André Deutsch, 1967 and *The time of the doves*. Translation by ROSENTHAL David H. New York: Taplinger, 1981.

## TRANSLATIONS FROM CATALAN INTO OTHER LANGUAGES

1. 91% of all translations from Catalan are into Spanish.
2. Spanish, as a majority language, does not act as a bridging language to launch a literary work onto the international scene. There are no indications that titles translated into English have subsequently been translated into other languages systematically. There are Catalan authors who have major international recognition without ever having been translated into Spanish or English.
3. There are a lot of titles written in English, but published in Catalonia. In addition, the vast majority of translations into Spanish are published in Catalonia itself.
4. Outside Spain, the language into which most Catalan works are translated into is French, followed by German. English occupies third place only.
5. Between 1998 and 2003, Catalan literary works were translated into 24 different languages.
6. The projection of Catalan literature abroad is mainly due to cultural or literary complicity and friendship between Catalan writers and foreign writers, translators or professors.
7. Successful Catalan literature exports have mainly been of narrative works, especially novels. In contrast, there is a long way to go before the work of

poets is discovered abroad through the publication of complete works. Anthologies are, in many cases, no more than a testimonial feat, and can act as a further barrier to the complete reception of an author. Catalan essays are practically unheard of outside Spain.

8. Authors of children's and young person's literature had the most works translated from Catalan, especially those whose books have given rise to television cartoons.
9. Literary works written in a language like Catalan not only have to overcome the frontiers of a language with limited reach, but also have to find a place in a world that is increasingly devaluing demanding reading.
10. Cultural administration bodies do not always demonstrate enough imagination or planning to encourage and oversee knowledge of the Catalan literary corpus. This would be a good preliminary step towards good international circulation.
11. Rarely can a translator influence the retrieval and projection of important and demanding literary works, especially from the past.
12. It is extremely difficult to obtain information about versions of Catalan literary works published in other languages, and their quality, especially if the language concerned is far removed.

#### UNIVERSAL LITERATURE IN CATALAN

13. Due to the completely bilingual population, any book can reach the Catalan public unhindered via a Spanish translation.
14. Catalan versions of texts that were originally published in Spanish have increased. This phenomenon can be interpreted as a greater recognition of the Catalan language or as a simple market strategy.

15. The presence of narrative and even poetry from overseas in Catalan is strong, but the same cannot be said of essayistic writings and essays, which are still read in Spanish by Catalan readers due to the absence of Catalan versions.
16. Horizons have been broadened to include different languages (Central European literature, for instance) with translators who have do not need to use a bridging language. But in Catalan there are still absent languages and cultures.
17. Having Catalan translations of learned literature in all genres is also a way of increasing the value and giving force to the language.
18. Literary translation is highly valued in the arts world as here everyone is aware that foreign authors offer basic material for the Catalan culture.
19. There are no reliable statistics on the presence of world literature in Catalan. The Institution of Catalan Letters and, later, the Ramon Llull Institute have put together the TRAC catalogue of Catalan works translated into other languages, but currently there are no plans to take a detailed look at how literary works from other cultures are entering the Catalan culture.

#### THE SITUATION OF THE LITERARY TRANSLATOR IN CATALONIA

20. Translation seen as nothing more than a step within the publishing process, anonymous translators because nobody knows them or recognises them even though they put their names to the translation, hurried, badly paid and very poor quality translations are often a reality in Catalonia.
21. Traditionally publishers have shown unwillingness to admit that the translator should benefit from any kind of intellectual property rights. It is only through legislation that they have been forced to chance the criteria.

22. Catalonia has always had very good literary translators, mainly writers or university professors. The appearance of university degrees in translation has led to the incorporation of many graduates with theoretical training in translation, but few decide to dedicate themselves to literary translation.
23. There are still well-known translators in Catalonia but, as usually happens in the arts world, each one has had to build their own reputation through their own individual work and accumulated merits.
24. There is still no professional translators' association, and the few associations that do exist do not have a very strong presence.
25. The website of the Translation/Linguistic Rights Committee of Catalan PEN ([www.pencatala.cat/ctdl](http://www.pencatala.cat/ctdl)) is a pioneering initiative in the field of literary translation.
26. In Catalonia prizes for translators are virtually non-existent, and very few include a money element.

#### SUBSIDIES

27. Translation projects concerning key works of universal literature should enjoy special financial aid to ensure publication in Catalan and their consequent incorporation into the Catalan literary heritage. Thus, there should be a more explicit willingness to construct the cultural infrastructure of the country both from the government and from the publishing sector.
28. The Institution of Catalan Letters should promote the translation of all the key works of universal literature that have not been translated into Catalan in a more decisive manner, opening more possibilities.
29. Each year the Ramon Llull Institute grants subsidies to publishing houses for the translation of Catalan works and for initiatives related to the promotion and overseas circulation of Catalan literature.

30. A relative abundance of subsidies has created a Europe-wide climate in which a publisher is practically never willing to publish a translation if it is not financed from the country of origin. Correction mechanisms that help to conserve the balance between imports and exports should be developed.
31. There is no systematic policy regarding literary translations from and into Catalan.

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