

**Ortín, Marcel and Pujol, Dídac (ed.) (2009) *Llengua literària i traducció (1890-1939)*. Lleida: Punctum & Trilcat, 191 pp., € 14. ISBN: 978-84-937371-3-9.**

**L**lengua literària i traducció (1890-1939) focuses on the four decades that expand from the first attempts by Pompeu Fabra to put some order in the grammar and vocabulary of the Catalan language to the year which saw the end of the Spanish Civil War and when the use of Catalan was forbidden in public contexts. After a decline—‘Decadència’—which lasted three centuries, Catalan was taken up again by some writers, like Verdaguer, and used again for literary purposes during the XIX century in the movement which was known as ‘la Renaixença.’ Nevertheless, Catalan had lost muscle during the long oblivion it had endured, and needed to establish clear grammar and vocabulary norms in order to attain the level of accuracy and productivity expected from a modern, cultivated language.

Pompeu Fabra was a crucial agent in the process of establishing the orthography (1913), vocabulary (1917 and 1932) and grammar (1918) of modern Catalan, that is to say, of creating a standard version of it, even though he tended to use the word “literary” instead of “standard.” In this sense, he could count on various generations of writers who strove to expand the possibilities of the Catalan language by means of translation, among other efforts. Both classical and contemporary works were translated into Catalan with the idea that this process would reveal its shortages and force it to create new solutions for expressive needs. This process used to involve taking up forgotten words Medieval authors had used during the golden age of Catalan literature and selecting words among the various Catalan dialects, generally with a marked preference for those used in the Barcelona area.

*Llengua literària i traducció (1890-1939)*, edited by Miquel Ortín and Dídac Pujol, is made up of several papers read at the II Symposium on Translation and Reception in Contemporary Catalan Literature, held in Barcelona in July 2008 and organised by the research group TRILCAT. Each of them focus on a specific subject: the presence of universals of translation in Catalan translations during the mid-war period (Josep Marco); the surprising number of biblical translations carried out in Catalonia at the beginning of the 20th century (Joan Ferrer); the translation of the Homeric Hymns by Joan Maragall, paying special attention to the formulaic epithets (Victòria Alsina and Jaume Pòrtulas); the old Catalan used by Anfòs Par when translating Shakespeare (Dídac Pujol); the first ideas on theatre translation held by Josep Carner (Marcel Ortín); the contrasting styles used by Sagarra and Maseras in their Catalan versions of *L'École des maris* by Molière (Miquel M. Gibert); the

translation solutions used by Miquel Llor when translating *I Malavoglia* by Giovanni Verga (Caterina Briguglia), and the use of ancient and dialectal words by J. V. Foix in his own poetry (Joan Veny Clar and Joan R. Veny-Mesquida).

The range of subjects and points of view within the research field is very wide — the last paper, in fact, has nothing to do with translation, even though it dwells on the other main subject of the book, literary style—, which makes for a very interesting read. All the papers are of very high quality, rich in data and extremely accurate in the way they deal with their subject matter. As Josep Marco notes in the first of the papers, Catalan-language researchers who work on literary translation tend to take a qualitative approach towards the materials they analyze, and they are usually very good at it. The papers included in this book are a very good example of this working style. On the other hand, as Josep Marco also notes, quantitative, corpus-based research, is much more common in other languages and countries, and it is quite difficult to combine these two approaches. In that sense, those who would rather get the ‘findings’ of the research expressed in numbers will probably be disappointed.

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