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Preamble to Part II

Bearing in mind the range and variety of countries, periods, topics, genres, authors and works dealt with by the critical articles intended for Part II of this *Festschrift*, I have opted to adhere to the *Bulletin's* normal procedure for determining the order in which they appear. Accordingly, I have grouped the articles depending on whether they are concerned with Spain, Portugal or Latin America. I have also been guided by considerations of chronology: that is to say, I have taken into account the period or century to which the works, authors or topics studied wholly or mainly belong.

As a consequence, two articles on Portugal and its literature lead the way. In the first, Patricia Anne Odber de Baubeta revisits the sonnets of Camões in anthologies and translations; while in the second, David G. Frier takes us forward into mid-to-late nineteenth-century Portugal, to discuss its politics, its social norms, and especially its 'alienated women', as perceived through Camilo Castelo Branco's *A Brasileira de Prazins*.

Some eighty years ago, William Atkinson declared that 'the distinction of Portuguese literature remains, and must remain, its lyricism'; he also made the following comment about Camões in particular:

[T]he *Lusíadas* bears witness that even Camoens is primarily, and more by nature than by art, a lyric poet. *As Cem Melhores Poesias*, says its compiler, would contain no other name [but his] were it true to its title.¹

What Odber de Baubeta has to say, while 'Revisiting Camões' Sonnets: Anthologies, Translations and Canonicity', would seem to suggest that her views and those of Atkinson are comparable and even to an interesting degree compatible. For she shares Atkinson's belief in the importance of lyricism and the lyric in Portuguese literature. She judges the sonnet in particular to be 'the quintessential Portuguese mode of expression because it speaks to the national psyche, giving voice to the most profoundly melancholic sentiments'. Odber focuses on the sonnets of Camoens, and finds in the frequency of their publication, both in multi-author Portuguese poetry anthologies and in English translations, reliable indicators as to

1 See William C. Atkinson, 'An Introduction to Portuguese', in *A Handbook to the Study and Teaching of Spanish*, ed. & intro. by E. Allison Peers, with the assistance of W. J. Entwistle & W. C. Atkinson (London: Methuen & Co., 1938), Part IV, Chapter XVI, 268–81; see (iii) 'Literature', 276–81 (pp. 281 & 279). The compiler to whom Atkinson refers has to be Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcellos. See *As Cem Melhores Poesias (Líricas) da Língua Portuguesa*, escolhidas por Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcellos (Lisboa: Ferreira Limitada/Glasgow: Gowan & Gray, 1910; reprinted 1914).

which Camonean sonnets have become 'canonical', not only in Portugal and other Lusophone countries but throughout the world. Odber's ample findings, which prove how well Camões' 'sonnets have withstood the passage of time', serve to confirm the validity of Atkinson's assertion that 'without this [*The Lusiads*], his country's grandest masterpiece, Camoens would still be its greatest poet'.²

David Frier has chosen to write about Castelo Branco (1825–1890), a novelist whom William Atkinson admired for being 'stylistically the outstanding artist of his age',³ and because,

though open to every influence, [he] remained more Portuguese at heart than Eça de Queiroz (1843–1900), whose stature is lessened by excessive devotion to French naturalism.⁴

Frier analyses *A Brasileira de Prazins* in light of its title, through which Castelo Branco succinctly conveys the nature and cause of his heroine's predicament: she has the misfortune to live in a society and period in which she counts as the property of her husband. Frier explores how the novelist, while portraying Marta's arranged marriage and its consequences, allows himself to recollect the unsatisfactory political solution which was imposed on Portugal as a result of the popular Maria da Fonte rebellion in 1846. His article sheds new light on Castelo Branco's views concerning the futility of political idealism as an agent of meaningful change.

'*Para usted soy siempre: A Picaresque Double Act in Ángeles Vicente's Zezé (1909)*' is one of the studies to have resulted thus far from Anne Holloway's 'Thinking Forward through the Past: The Afterlives of the Spanish Golden Age', a research project from which other impressive outputs will surely follow. For many years, Ángeles Vicente received less critical attention than she deserved. Thanks mainly to her novella *Zezé*, interest in this writer has significantly increased of late, and books and articles are being written to determine her place within the literary context and conventions of modernism in early twentieth-century Spain. Holloway argues, however, that *Zezé* may better or best be comprehended if it is studied as a *fin-de-siècle* recasting of the Spanish Golden-Age picaresque novel. She establishes the validity of her interpretation through an analysis of *Zezé* as a first-person narration by an eponymous heroine, who relates her itinerant life-story to a single confidant in order to account self-reflectively for her present circumstances and her profession as *cupletista*.

2 William C Atkinson, *A History of Spain and Portugal. The Peninsula and Its Peoples: The Pattern of Their Society and Civilization* (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960); see the section 'Literature and the Arts—II', Chapter 11, 204–14 (p. 211).

3 See Atkinson, *A History of Spain and Portugal*, Chapter 15, 'Literature and the Arts—III', 343–52 (p. 345).

4 See Atkinson, 'An Introduction to Portuguese', (iii) 'Literature', 276–81 (p. 281).

Holloway goes further, to demonstrate that as a female-authored depiction of same-sex desire, which is at the same time a feminist critique of prejudiced and prejudicial societal conventions, Ángeles Vicente's novella could be (should be?) credited with expanding creatively the traditional limits of the picaresque in Spanish literature.

In analysing the distinctiveness of 'Antonio Machado's Late Style', Gareth Walters focuses principally on the poems which appear in the *Cancionero apócrifo*. Written in the period of the Second Republic, they are characterized by restlessness and are difficult to interpret, yet constitute 'a remarkable flowering' of the poet's art. To close his article, Walters turns to 'El crimen fue en Granada', where he discovers in Machado's reaction to the 'silencing' of Lorca an underlying sense, almost a premonition that the poet's own death would soon overtake him—as indeed it did soon after the Civil War ended, when he took his last journey into exile.

Margaret Tejerizo's article, on 'Chekhov As Performed in the Theatres of Present-Day Madrid', is the outcome of in-depth interviews she conducted with three theatre-directors of successful productions in Spanish of Chekhov's major dramas, recently put on before audiences in Spain's capital. Juan Pastor's large-scale production of *Las tres hermanas* early in 2016 achieved full houses when it was staged in Madrid's Teatros del Canal. As Tejerizo reveals, Pastor and the other directors she interviewed (Ángel Gutiérrez and Irina Kouberskaya) have succeeded in bringing to Madrid more innovative and more authentic performances of Chekhov's masterpieces than Spanish audiences have previously had the opportunity to experience. These directors are changing profoundly for the better how Chekhov is understood by the theatre-going public in Spain.

In the first of three contributions on Latin-American subjects, Francis Lough discusses 'Avant-Garde Aesthetics in Felisberto Hernández's *Menos Julia*', offering a new interpretation of the deeper significances which the Uruguayan writer works into his novella. Originally published in 1946, *Menos Julia* is a first-person narrative in which the anonymous narrator recalls a chance encounter with an unnamed friend which has strange, even surrealist outcomes; for the friend introduces him to the secret life he lives within a tunnel he has constructed. On a deeper level, as Lough lucidly explains, Hernández uses both the story he composes and the mysterious tunnel it describes, imaginatively to explore the complex processes by which a writer may transform memories of lived experience into a work of literature. As such, '*Menos Julia* can be read as a metafictional commentary on its own construction and purpose as an *avant-garde* text'.

Next follows the late Giovanni Pontiero's edition, translations and study of *The Poems and Aphorisms of Mário Quintana* (1906–1994). Although he did not belong to their movements, Quintana believed in the poetic freedom and versatility which the Symbolists and the Surrealists advocated and practised; and he shared their views that every poet must establish his own

methods of self-expression. His poetry exemplifies a lyricism attuned to contemporary taste, and which is concerned with the simple realities of everyday life. In his introductory study, Pontiero explores many aspects of Quintana's poetic style and thought-content, elucidating the poet's seemingly unshaken faith in the value of human existence, and his belief that no matter the adversities that might occur, the best way to find happiness is to get on with life for as long as there is still time left to experience it. In Quintana, Pontiero recognizes a solitary figure in whose poetry Death features as a constant, but the poet treats its inevitability with composure. Quintana's poems and aphorisms, as Pontiero reveals, embody 'the authentic voice and soul of Brazil'.

Nuala Finnegan completes the studies on Latin America with an article interpreting contemporary Mexican culture and society. She discusses 'Staging Reconciliation: The Possibilities of Mourning in Rafael Bonilla's *La carta* (2010)', a documentary film which reconstructs the life of survivor and political activist Paula Flores, the mother of murder victim, Sagrario Flores González. Paula Flores is portrayed as the heroic embodiment of politicized womanhood and motherhood, while her daughter Sagrario is shown to represent quintessentially all the victims of *feminicidios* committed in Mexico since the early 1990s. Sagrario's murder in Ciudad Juárez is one among numerous violent attacks and killings carried out against women in Mexico's northern periphery, whose perpetrators have been linked to organized crime and drug-trafficking. These horrifying occurrences, together with the public indignation and mass protests they have provoked, may be regarded as part of the country's troubled history. But, similar murders are still being committed in the present, so that the crimes in Ciudad Juárez are 'unfinished business', remain of ongoing public concern, and cannot, therefore, be relegated wholly to Mexico's past.

The name of Bonilla's filmed documentary underlines the function of the letter as an essential means of communication in remote places in rural Mexico, where phones, televisions and computers are still largely unavailable. Through exchanges of letters, the film assists its viewers not only to identify the motives and prejudices that have produced the *feminicidios*, but to understand better the deprived and marginalized people who are being most affected by these killings. The film is by no means wholly pessimistic in its treatment of its subject, for, as Finnegan demonstrates, its message points to the possibilities of catharsis, and of reconciliation between Mexico City and the country's remote border regions. Finnegan is, therefore, able to conclude her analysis on an optimistic note: 'amid growing concerns about Mexico's overall viability as a state, the potential [...] documented in films such as *La carta* to heal, transform and regenerate cannot be underestimated.'

In an email he sent to the editors in 2015, Bernard McGuirk referred to the article he had attached for this *Festschrift* as a piece dependent on ‘juxtapositions of languages, citations and images’. He went on to say:

Although I have really enjoyed putting together a text in a style which is indelibly mine but unlikely to be in consonance with the kind of literary criticism broadly familiar within the discipline, I would understand if you deemed it not to be appropriate in the context.⁵

Far from considering the article unsuitable, the editors found McGuirk’s ‘Re-Writing the *Estado Novo*: Antonio Tabucchi’s *Sostiene [Afirma] Pereira*’ to be particularly worthy of inclusion. The history of the Iberian Peninsula, after all, had been one of Atkinson’s chief research interests. The Italian novel which McGuirk discusses is set in Portugal in the late 1930s during Salazar’s dictatorship, when a policy of self-isolation was practised, even towards Spain, a country not only geographically but by then also ideologically Portugal’s ‘neighbour’. Moreover, McGuirk is as concerned as his former professor had been eighty years previously, when he wrote about ‘Translation from Spanish’, to examine the art and purpose of translation.⁶ Admittedly, McGuirk pursues noticeably more metaphysical lines of enquiry, in discussing the difficulties involved in translating a literary work into a different/foreign language.

Through the best part of his article (in more than one sense), and ‘in a style which is indelibly [his]’, McGuirk deconstructs and re-constructs, always thoughtfully, key observations selected from the works of such influential critical and literary theorists as Barthes and Derrida. Theirs were theories about which one may reasonably assume Atkinson knew little and cared less. After all, as Nick Round—quoted by McGuirk—has cogently put it, Atkinson and his still pioneering era in our discipline represented ‘the way things were’, while Hispanists active in more recent times, such as Round and McGuirk himself, stood for (still stand for?) ‘the way things are’. None the less, as his publications prove, Atkinson was thoroughly versed in the literary theories influential during Spain’s Golden Age and equally knowledgeable about the practical effects these theories exercised upon, *inter alia*, Cervantes and Lope de Vega. In any case, whether for comparison or contrast with his own ways of thinking, McGuirk positively encourages us through his study, to consider how Atkinson might have responded to his discussions of *Sostiene [Afirma] Pereira* and his allusions to Barthes and Derrida and others. He does so by inserting various reminders of Atkinson, and these insertions are not only derived from comments once made about him by other people, but are directly

5 Quoted from Bernard McGuirk’s email to Ann Mackenzie, dated 8 May 2015.

6 See Atkinson, ‘Translation from Spanish’, in *A Handbook to the Study and Teaching of Spanish*, ed. Peers, Part I, Chapter VI, 88–101.

inspired by his own memories of his former professor. For good measure, he even reproduces in facsimile the ‘carta de recomendación’ with which Atkinson had furnished him, so that he could gain access to major libraries during the term, while still an undergraduate, that the University of Glasgow required him to spend in Spain. All the disparate elements are carefully selected, and McGuirk ingeniously merges them into a tribute to Atkinson which is at the same time an original and persuasively argued contribution to Hispanic scholarship, and, more generally, to Translation Studies, Comparative Studies and Literary-Critical Studies.

In the brief ‘Appendix’ to his article, McGuirk quotes from words chosen by Nick Round as an ending to the obituary he wrote about his predecessor at Glasgow in the Stevenson Chair of Hispanic Studies. These words, inspired by a passage in Atkinson’s own memoirs,⁷ bear repeating here to conclude this Preamble to Part II of our *Festschrift* in his memory:

William Atkinson had it within him to respond with warmth to [...] comparable degrees of human difference. That capacity, for many of us, is fundamental to the Hispanic discipline. We strive to keep it alive in ourselves; we honour it now in him. With all his many services to that discipline, in Glasgow and beyond, he would not have been averse, one feels, to letting the last word lie there.⁸

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⁷ See *Fragments of University Reminiscence*, Chapter 1, ‘1922–: Discovering the Spaniard’.

⁸ This quotation, and earlier words about Atkinson and ‘the way things were’, are borrowed from Ann L. Mackenzie & Nicholas G. Round ‘William Christopher Atkinson (1902–1992)’, *BHS*, LXX:4 (1993), 435–40; see Round’s tribute, Part II, 438–40 (pp. 439–40).