

# 'BEOWULFO', 'GEATAS' AND 'HEOROTO': AN APPRAISAL OF THE EARLIEST RENDERINGS OF *BEOWULF* IN SPAIN<sup>1</sup>

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In her article “Translations, versions, illustrations”, Marijane Osborn devotes one paragraph to the Spanish translations and adaptations of *Beowulf*:

The first account of *Beowulf* in Spanish was a retelling for children by Vallvé published in 1934. The first direct translation of passages was published by Manent in 1947. Orestes Vera Pérez produced the first full Spanish translation, in prose, in 1959, republishing it in 1962. The most recent Spanish translation was by Lerate and Lerate, in 1986. (1997: 350)

There are more renderings of *Beowulf* into Spanish than, for instance, into Russian, Frisian, Bulgarian, Scottish, Portuguese, Arabic, Polish, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Norwegian, Hungarian and Greek, but less than into Japanese, Italian and Swedish—not to mention German—. By the time Osborn published her article, the catalogue of Spanish translations/versions of the poem included 8 references; most of them are included in her “Annotated List of *Beowulf* Translations”, a useful document available at the ACMRS website (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies). Together with Vallvé’s, Manent’s and Vera’s renderings, Osborn lists almost all the editions by Lerate and Lerate (the 2004 version is not listed), and includes Antonio Bravo’s prose rendering of the poem (1981). Angel Cañete’s prose *Beowulf* (1991)—the latest translation of the poem into Spanish to date—is not included; the first Catalan rendering of the poem (by Xavier Campos Villanova) is not referred to either.

To my knowledge, Salvador de Madariaga was one of the first Spanish scholars to make reference to *Beowulf*. In his lecture “Paralelos Anglo-Españoles”, addressed to the Spanish Association of Scotland and published in 1922, he illustrates the similarities between Spanish and English literature. The first instance he provides of this is *Beowulf*'s closeness to *Myo Cid* (Madariaga 1922: 152), a closeness that he further qualifies in terms of lack of artistry and realism.<sup>2</sup> Madariaga clearly prefers *Myo Cid* to *Beowulf* (Madariaga 1922: 154): the Spanish poem is much more realistic, less supernatural than the second, a text in which, Madariaga says, the hero—whose identity is uncertain, lost in old *Danish tribal memory*—, spends his time beheading monsters (Madariaga 1922: 154-55). It is interesting to notice that Madariaga's words seem to echo the state of *Beowulfiana* up to Tolkien's “The Monsters and the Critics” (1936), a general agreement that *Beowulf* was, above all, an important historical document, but a failure as a poem: although “unmistakably heroic and weighty”, “there is nothing much in the story. The hero is occupied in killing monsters” (Ker 1958: 163-64); besides, it is “rude and rough” (Tolkien 1983: 8).

My initial intention was to review all the renderings of *Beowulf* published in Spain. However, I soon realized that even the simplest adaptations of the poem—those for children, for instance—were relevant in many senses. Therefore, in the present paper, I will only analyse the first four versions of the poem: Vallvé's (1934), Manent's (1947), Vera's (1959), and Herrera's (1965). I leave Lerate's, Lerate and Lerate's, Bravo's, Campos' and Cañete's for a future paper.

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## 0. Introduction: Translation and ideology

*Beowulf* was written sometime between the Age of Bede and the eleventh century. The poem was built upon a series of values that are no longer standing, a scenario that the scholar who aspires to a full understanding of the poem will have to recreate. But the task of the translator is different and, in a sense, much more complex. Ideally, the literary critic reads and analyzes the text in its (recreated) context; the translator, however, has to assimilate the text (and necessarily its context), render the former into a new language, and present its characters, their behaviour and their motivations in such a way that they make sense to the new audience. This is the reason why Jorge Luis Borges suggested that “no problem is more essential to literature and its small mysteries than translation” (1992: 1136).

The reader naturally takes for granted that the translation he holds in his hands is *what the original text says*, but this is of course a fallacy. The translation is, obviously, the result of a particular hermeneutical process of what the text says, and the text says many things:

The literary translator is necessarily engaged with far more than words, far more than techniques, far more than stories or characters or scenes. He is —and the literary translator of medieval works is even more so— engaged with world views and with the passionately held convictions of men and women long dead and vanished from the earth. (Raffel, 1989: 53)

We could further argue that the source text is itself another interpretation of reality. But leaving this aside for the moment, in the case of medieval documents it must be made clear that what I am calling the source or original text —whenever it was published— is itself a modified version of the way in which it appears in the original manuscript. To make the poem readable, it contains a number of changes in punctuation, spelling, and line arrangements. So, in fact, translators are working with a text that has already been 'translated'. Taking this into account (and given that he considers that *Beowulf* was originally composed in oral form),<sup>3</sup> John D. Niles describes a complex process of intersemiotic translation already at the initial stages of transmission of the poem (1993: 859-62):

Oral poem → Poem in manuscript → Edited poem

From this perspective, in the case of *Beowulf* the act of translation is not simply a culmination in the story of a literary work, but something that has played an essential role in the genesis of the concept that we have of the poem<sup>4</sup>.

Ideology could also be said to play its part in each of the three levels identified by Niles, inasmuch as they are all the result of interpreting a previous discourse. Translations seem to be particularly useful channels for ideological transmission; or, taking for granted a more passive attitude on the part of the author, in them ideology is easily traceable. As Marijane Osborn has rightly observed —“any translation [...] is historically and culturally situated, and the history of the recovery for a later generation's public of a work originally in a language no longer living is expressed in translations [...], but these too have their interest” (2003). The old saying *traduttore traditore* acquires a new set of connotations that is well defined in the words of translation theorist Lawrence Venuti:

Translating is always ideological because it releases a domestic reminder, an inscription of values, beliefs, and representations linked to historical moments and social positions in the domestic culture. In serving domestic interests, a translation provides an ideological resolution for the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text. (1999: 485)

Sometimes, as in the case of Seamus Heaney's 1999 translation of *Beowulf*, the issue is much more complex, as much as to serve 'domestic interests' —to follow Venuti's claim— he would be using the very language of those who had threatened these interests:

“Putting a bawn into *Beowulf* seems one way for an Irish poet to come to terms with that complex history of conquest and colony, absorption and resistance, integrity and antagonism, a history that has to be clearly acknowledged by all concerned [...]”. (“Introduction”, 1999: xxx)

Many scholars might not be willing to use the term ideology, for eventually it seems to gain control of the whole critical discourse. This seems to be the case of Niles himself, who describes this unifying code behind the translation with such words as *power* or *passion*:

In reading *Beowulf*, one should ask, “Who is translating, and what power is he or she trying to assert over the text? For power of some kind is always at issue. If there is no such thing as a disinterested record or reading of literature, there is surely no dispassionate translation either, whether the translator’s passion is directed more toward the language of contemporary poetry, the Germanic heroic ethos, Christian values, nationalism, pedagogy, antiquarianism, or something as specific as metrics. (1993: 875-76)

76 I have tried to answer Niles’ question taking into consideration the earliest Spanish renderings of *Beowulf*. Such a revision has not been made up to now, and I consider it is badly needed given the level of maturity reached by Old English studies in Spanish universities at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Strictly speaking, this is not a paper on the technical aspects of translation, though especially in the notes I will make detailed reference to what I consider relevant formal issues. However, all this serves quite another purpose, one which is indeed my concern in writing this article. I intend to contextualize these four translations in the ideological context in which they were produced. I will show how the Spanish versions of *Beowulf* were consciously used by their authors mainly in two ways: either as a response to the dominant ideology (as in the cases of Vallvé and Manent), or as channels of transmission and reinforcement of the political establishment (Vera Pérez and Herrera). A mere contrastive analysis between the original text and the translation must be necessarily complemented with other considerations, and also in the cases when the translations are presented as ‘literal’ or ‘complete’. Deviations from the original poem—for the sake of simplification in most of the cases— were almost necessary in those adaptations of *Beowulf* written for young readers, those who were (and are) more receptive and vulnerable to indoctrination. In the academic or ‘serious’ renderings of the poem—even if we leave aside mistakes due to the authors’ lack of knowledge—, many of the authors’ choices also reveal well defined ideological positions.

## 1. *Beowulf* for children

Manuel Vallvé López worked as a translator for the Editorial Molino, the most important publisher in Spain of popular literature before the Spanish Civil War.<sup>5</sup> For Molino, Vallvé used pseudonyms, such as Adolfo Martí Caja or M. de Avilés Balaguer. He was the author of *Hércules* (a plagiarism of the American comic *Doc Savage*) and *Ciclón* (too closely inspired by *Bill Barnes*). In 1934 Vallvé published *Beowulf* in Araluce, a Barcelona based publisher, which had published a collection of abridged classics for young readers, the most complete in Spain at the time. Vallvé presented *Beowulf* for children (Vallvé 1934: i) and young people (Vallvé 1934: iii). And so, the book included 8 illustrations by the Austrian artist Félicien de Myrbach (1853-1940).<sup>6</sup> I do not know the source of Vallvé's retelling of the story; under the title is the statement: 'according to (*según*) the manuscript kept in the British Museum' (Vallvé 1934: 3). It is more than probable, however, that he used an English translation of the poem, for Vallvé knew English (Chumillas i Coromina 2007: 64).<sup>7</sup>

In the four-page preface, Manuel Vallvé describes the story as a reliable source of information about life in the Scandinavian Peninsula at the beginning of the eighth century (Vallvé 1934: vii) — a statement that Tolkien would deny two years later. Vallvé seemed to be overly concerned about one particular critical current, the "mythical allegory".<sup>8</sup> This indicates that, to some extent, he was aware of one of the strongest — if not the strongest — schools of literary criticism at the end of the nineteenth century, especially in Germany. The identification of Grendel with winter fogs,<sup>9</sup> his dam with the sea,<sup>10</sup> the dragon with winter, or Beowulf with spring, was to him very learned,<sup>11</sup> but disappointing; all these theories diminished the impact and the charm of the poem (Vallvé 1934: viii-ix). Vallvé was not a literary critic to argue against Müllenhoff or Lainster — the pillars supporting mythical allegory —, and so he would have been comforted to know that he was not the first one to dislike this approach. Henry Morley had written in 1887: "Enough of wind and mist. One more of these ingenious turns of the mythological screw might convert Beowulf into the myth of a mining engineer, if not of a drainpipe" (in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 41-42). In fact, by the time Vallvé's *Beowulf* was published, this theoretical frame was already considered antiquated. In his famous address to the British Academy, Tolkien alluded to the "(now discredited) mythical allegory of nature: the sun, the seasons, the sea and such things" (1983: 15); all this "myth-mongering", as Stanley calls it (1994: 22).<sup>12</sup> Vallvé praises the beauty of the poem's plot (1934: vii), but in his rendering of the story he tries to mend that "lack of steady advance" — I am using Klaeber's words (1941: lvii) — that the poem had for many. The story begins with Beowulf and his Geatish warriors sailing from the island of Gothland [sic] to the land of the Danes.

Since the journey takes no less than five days, the hero has time to indulge in a swimming match with Breca who, by the way, is one of the fourteen warriors in the ship. Before the outcome of the contest is revealed, the author takes us to Denmark and presents Hrothgar, Wealtheow, as well as Grendel. The monster is moderate in his attacks, never killing more than one at a time. Interestingly enough, he is deprived of his Biblical ancestor, Cain, since no reference is made of him. The rest of the story proceeds in a lineal progression, just as I have myself often told the story to students. Beowulf defeats Grendel and his dam; then he returns to Gothland (!!!). Time passes by and Hygelac dies. After his initial refusal to accept the crown—in so far as there was a legitimate heir to the throne—, Beowulf is finally proclaimed king of the Geats by Queen Hygd. The fire-drake appears and Beowulf dies saving his people from the powerful serpent.

This is the way in which one would summarise the story to a non-specialized audience, similar to as many literary manuals did at the time. Vallvé states that he has adapted the story for children, for otherwise it would be confusing and obscure (Vallvé 1934: x). In fact, this first Spanish adaptation rationalizes all those issues in the poem that puzzle us when we apply modern logic to it. And so, Beowulf commands his warriors to go to sleep while he waits for Grendel during his first night at Heorot; Hondscioh's death is never mentioned; Hrothgar did not know the monster had a mother; Beowulf cuts Grendel's head off for the monster was still alive in his underwater cave; the hero takes Grendel's head to Hrothgar, but the dam's too; King Beowulf is a married man, whose wife and friends try to prevent him from fighting against the dragon; etc.

Vallvé presents all the characters in *Beowulf* as Christians, a detail in which he sees no contradiction with the two pagan funerals that are described in the poem (Beowulf's and Scyld Scefing's). Osborn states that the story has been modified to emphasize the moral content (see the entry for Vallvé in Osborn's "Annotated List of *Beowulf* Translations"), but I do not think this is the case. This *Beowulf* is by no means doctrinal or moralizing; the author is clearly adopting a traditional view in which the 'goodies' defeat the 'baddies', and the former are presented as Christians; that is all. The story is indeed modified in a way to make it simpler and more easily understood and enjoyed by children. In fact, Vallvé suggests that *Beowulf* is especially suitable for young readers since, like all the works written during the Middle Ages, it is full of charming ingenuity. Humanity, he goes on, was in its childhood, not in the preposterous youth of our days, so cool and materialistic (Vallvé 1934: x). One might infer from his words that Vallvé's views were conservative or traditionalist. Certainly, he would not be very comfortable with the thrilling political atmosphere of pre-war Barcelona: the so called 'Revolution of 1934' culminated in Catalonia with the proclamation of a Federal Catalan State and the immediate intervention of the Spanish army.

Two years after *Beowulf* was published, the Civil War broke out in Spain. Some of the children and adolescents who read Vallvé's translation were probably killed in the first massive air bombings of civilians in the twentieth century. Those who survived understood well that there was no epic glamour in battle and that war is rarely a struggle of 'good' soldiers against 'bad' ones.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. The poet translating the poem

Marià Manent (1898-1988) is the author of an anthology of English poetry published in 1947 entitled *La poesia anglesa: de los primitivos a los neoclásicos*. This book contains the first attempt to translate *Beowulf* into Spanish verse. Manent was a Barcelona-born poet, translator and literary critic, who has been defined as 'catholic, conservative and catalanist'.

Manent had been brought up in the basic principles of *Noucentisme*, a term coined by Eugeni d'Ors to refer to an aesthetic movement which attempted to put Catalan culture at a European level. *Noucentisme* was concerned with beauty and formal perfection, showing a particular taste for archaisms and classical references. For practitioners of this tendency, translation was central in the process of renovation of culture; as Eugeni d'Ors had stated: "Ara traduim volent incorporar el món de la Cultura a la nostra petita cultura. I sabem que aquest és el millor camí per incorporar aviat la nostra petita cultura a la Cultura del món" (Ortín in Pujol et al. 2004: 676).

Because Manent had received a solid formation in French and English, he was able to publish several translations into Catalan of both English and North American poets from before and after the Civil War. In 1934 he went to the Edinburgh Meeting of the International Pen Club in representation of the *Centre Català* of this association; throughout the following years he would visit different European countries, especially Switzerland. All this was abruptly interrupted by the *coup d'état* in 1936. When the military conflict came to an end, Franco's policy did not favour the publication of texts in Catalan.<sup>14</sup> A well-known liberal, a writer in Catalan, and active participant in the development of culture in pre-war Barcelona, Manent was consigned to oblivion. To earn a living he worked for Editorial Juventud (founded in Barcelona in 1923). Under strict censorship—and in considerable financial straits—he did his best to render into Spanish different works from English writers. It was thus during the 1940s that a simplistic image of Manent as a translator—rather than as a poet—was constructed, especially outside Catalonia. Paradoxically, it is due to this misrepresentation that we have his *La poesia anglesa*, an anthology of versions from *Beowulf* and Chaucer to Dylan Thomas and other contemporary poets.<sup>15</sup> Many Spanish readers would know about English poetry through Manent's translation.<sup>16</sup>

Josep Janés (1913-1959) seems to have been the promoter of the book:<sup>17</sup> his own publishing company (Josep Janés) was responsible for its publication. However, Editorial Lauro was chosen to avoid censorship (Pascual Garrido 1999: 173). How Janés and Manent came to work together in a work on English poetry might be indirectly suggested by Jacqueline Hurlley when she talks about the setting up of the British Institute in Madrid (1940), under the direction of Walter Starkie, a member of the British Council. He did his best to spread British culture in the peninsula (Hurlley 1992: 90-91), a difficult task at a time when the sympathies of the Spanish government were with the Axis forces and the tide of war did not precisely favour the Allies.<sup>18</sup> Starkie's contacts with Catalan intellectuals were many, and he was surprised to find "an immense amount of pro-British Catalans" (Hurlley 1992: 91). It would not be surprising if the topics discussed in Starkie's meetings with these elite did not solely deal with English poetry. Janés, as Pascual Garrido suggests, met Starkie at the time (1999: 173); Manent could also have attended some of these meetings.

*La poesía inglesa: de los primitivos a los neoclásicos* included lines 1345-1382 and 2236-2265 from *Beowulf*,<sup>19</sup> both in Old English and in Spanish. In the prologue, the translator announces that his anthology starts with echoes from the heroic Age in the Anglo-Saxon poems (VII-XI); from Germanic warriors, with iron coats of mail and helmets adorned with boar shapes (Manent 1947: 17). The excerpts from *Beowulf*, Manent says (1947: 18), are taken from F. Holthausen's edition (Heidelberg, 1929).<sup>20</sup> As Osborn puts it, this is the "first direct translation" of the poem into Spanish (1997: 350). In fact, it is not *direct* at all. Manent never claims to have translated from the Old English text: he explicitly admits to have used two translations into Modern English (Manent 1947: 18): R. K. Gordon's and Gavin Bone's (Oxford, 1945).<sup>21</sup> Obviously Manent did not know any Old English and therefore he based his translation mostly on Bone's verse rendering. Most probably, Manent had access to these editions thanks to Janés' relationship with Walter Starkie (Pascual Garrido 1999: 174).

This partial translation deserves the honour of being the first into verse and this is more than enough for the time being. Manent's rendering is literal (as literal as Bone allows him to be), but he makes no attempt to reproduce the alliteration. Moreover, his translation presents some inaccuracies,<sup>22</sup> and displays the tension of turning into Spanish a foreign syntax with so much variation; and yet some of the lines have a nice, pleasant effect, especially when the *variatio* is absent, as in the translation of lines 2260-2266:<sup>23</sup>

Ya la cota de malla no irá con el guerrero  
ni será compañera del valeroso. El arpa  
no suena ni el adufe delicioso; no cruza



el buen halcón la estancia; ningún corcel ligero  
hace sonar sus cascos en el patio; la muerte  
Violenta ha arrebatado de su morada a muchos... (Manent 1947: 23, 25)

In the Old English lines —the numbers of which are not indicated—, Manent reproduces Holthausen's editorial decisions in brackets and square brackets, but he provides no critical apparatus and does not explain the editorial procedures. Manent never uses *þ* or *ð*. Finally, there are mistakes in the spelling of some Old English words: l. 1376: "loderas" for "roderas"; l. 2237: "ærram" for "aerran"; l. 2247: "moston" for "mostan". We might say that this editor/translator was, to a certain extent, careless when reproducing the original text. In fact, these defects probably went unnoticed at the time: it was not until the 1950s that Spanish scholars and university students slowly began to have access to Anglo-Saxon texts (Bravo 1991: 4).

All this carelessness —if I may refer to it as such— is not simply due to the fact that Manent was not an Anglosaxonist. Other reasons may be adduced. He was trying to survive, working in a rush for several publishing companies at the same time, in order to make a living. Besides, *Beowulf* was certainly not one of his favourite poems. Perhaps he felt more comfortable about including translations from Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, Blake or Dickinson. But the Old English epic poem was the necessary place to start, if *La Poesia Inglesa* was meant to be exhaustive and include —as Pascual Garrido rightly claims— poems from all the periods in English literary history (1999: 172). And yet, he went to the trouble of working with academic editions, prepared a bilingual version and, above all, he came up with a verse rendering of *Beowulf*. In the light of all this, this *Beowulf* is a praiseworthy effort to offer readers a decent translation. While it is true that Janés provided financial backing for the work, it was Marià Manent who decided the poems and excerpts that would finally be included (Pascual Garrido 1999: 171). All this was done in the middle of political and cultural repression; as his son Albert wrote in his father's biography: "Manent vivia amb entusiasme actiu i fins amb apassionament el combat contra el franquisme. La vaga dels usuaris del tramvia (1951), la campanya contra Galinsoga, director de La Vanguardia (1959) o la detenció de Jordi Pujol (1960) eran fites d'aquest combat".<sup>24</sup> The publication of *La Poesia Inglesa* was primarily conceived by Janés as part of a very ambitious project to keep Catalan culture alive (officially non-existent), by translating as many foreign texts as possible (Hurtley 1992: 29); this takes us back to the words of Janés' friend Eugeni d'Ors, already quoted. If Catalan could not be used for the translations, at least Manent's work would be published by a Barcelona based publisher: Editorial Lauro. To some extent, it was the Catalan public that the editor had in mind, but many other readers would benefit from this new publication.

Finally, there is an additional interest in this text: Manent's name must be added to the list of poets that have decided to translate *Beowulf*, from Tennyson in the early 1830s to Seamus Heaney on the eve of the twenty-first century.

### 3. The first 'complete' translation of the poem

By the end of 1944, three years before Manent published his *Poesía Inglesa*, the Spanish Minister of Education, José Ibáñez Martín, held a dinner at the British Institute in Madrid. After the German disaster at Stalingrad, Spain changed its policy of *non-belligerence* for one of *neutrality*. The defeat of Hitler's Germany was at hand and the Spanish Minister announced to the British diplomats his wish to promote the study of the English language both in Secondary Education and at the University (Hurtley 1992: chapter 2). However it was not until 1952 that the degree on 'Modern Languages' was officially approved. The first University to offer it was Salamanca and the next year the University of Barcelona set up a branch of 'English Philology' (Guardia Massó and Santoyo Mediavilla 1982: 5-16), a degree that seems to be about to disappear in the near future after the final 'raid' of the Spanish Government on the Humanities. The first *Catedrático* (Professor) of English Philology was Emilio Lorenzo Criado (1918-2002), *Catedrático de Lingüística Germánica* at the *Universidad Complutense* of Madrid. His name is particularly relevant at this point, for he wrote the foreword to the first 'complete' translation of *Beowulf* into Spanish (1959). Editorial Aguilar presented Spanish readers with a translation of *Beowulf* that might be considered scholarly.<sup>25</sup> Aguilar was a Madrid based publishing house which had been quite active before the Civil War (especially in translations) and managed to survive the conflict (Gallego Roca 2004: 515; Vega 2004: 544).

The appearance and credits of the book are in accordance with its alleged academic quality. There is a photo of the original *Beowulf* manuscript (dated by the translator to the tenth century) and three big names are written under the title: Orestes Vera Pérez, Professor of English Literature at the University of Chile, who held an M. A. from Princeton; Carlos Sander (the Consul General of Chile in Spain), and Emilio Lorenzo, *Catedrático* in Madrid. All very impressive.

The Chilean, Carlos Sander Álvarez, opens the book with his "Pórtico", a kind of foreword.<sup>26</sup> He pays a poor homage to the translation with his bombastic words. His admiration of Vera Pérez, once his teacher, was not sufficient to tempt him to read the translation. Sander states that Vera Pérez, a man of talent and wisdom, had studied the Cotton Vitellius manuscript at the British Library (in Vera Pérez 1959: 13), as well as many other manuscripts; but then, summarizing the Anglo-Saxon poem, he concludes that Beowulf went to Denmark to kill the Dragon Grendel and his Dragon mother! (in Vera Pérez 1959: 19).

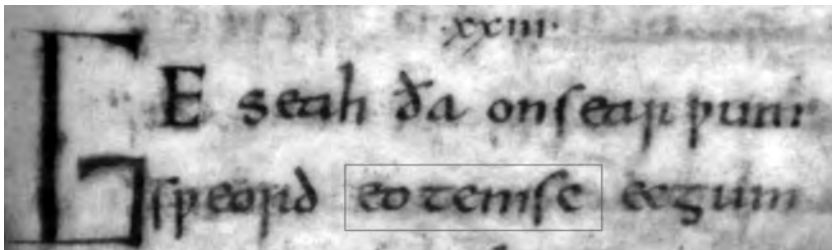
Emilio Lorenzo's "Preliminary Note" followed Sander's "Pórtico" and also celebrated the publication of this first complete translation of the English poem, as in brotherhood with the entire Latin American world (in Vera Pérez 1959: 23-24). This translation was by a Chilean scholar. At the end of his "Note" Lorenzo emphasises again the links between Spain and South America. But this celebration of Hispanic fraternity apart, Lorenzo's words are different in tone and content from Sander's. The former's scholarship becomes evident when he shows his familiarity with Klaeber's edition of the poem. The massive bibliography provided by the German scholar enabled Lorenzo to conclude that Orestes Vera's translation was the first in the Spanish speaking world. This statement needs further clarification. First, Lorenzo is completely unaware of Manent's partial rendering of the poem; and secondly, strictly speaking, this is not a complete translation, for the Finnsburg episode (ll. 1071-1158) is omitted,<sup>27</sup> a detail that often passes unnoticed in references to Orestes Vera's text.<sup>28</sup>

Vera's translation in itself is, in general terms, a fine achievement, the first serious attempt to provide a reliable translation of the poem, including genealogical tables,<sup>29</sup> footnotes, an index of names and places<sup>30</sup> and an introduction. Nevertheless, the work shows that Vera was not a specialist in Old English literature, no matter how serious his effort was. The introduction ("Introducción"), as stated in a footnote (Vera Pérez 1959: 37, n. 1), is a translation of C. L. Wrenn's introductory essay to J. R. Clark Hall's prose rendering of the poem into modern English.<sup>31</sup> In his own prologue, Vera Pérez states that his translation is based on Wyatt and Chambers' 1920 edition of the poem,<sup>32</sup> with the extra support and help of several translations into Modern English, both in prose and verse (Vera Pérez 1959: 31). It is up to the audience to interpret the term 'based on' in Vera's prologue, but my impression is that he was translating not from Old English but mainly from Clark Hall's prose translation reedited by C. L. Wrenn;<sup>33</sup> only once in the entire text does Vera Pérez acknowledge that he is following this text (1959: 350, n. 1). Moreover, the translation is divided into two parts: "Parte I", up to XXIX; "Parte II", from XXX to XLII. This is exactly what Clark Hall does in his translation.

For the footnotes, however, Vera reproduces some of the notes in Wyatt and Chambers's —often making reference to his source (Vera Pérez 1959: 154, n. 1; 175, n. 1; 183, cont. n. 2; 205, cont. n. 1; 246-47, n. 1; 257, n. 1; 261, n. 1; 263, n. 1; 275, n. 1; 276, n. 1; 312, n. 1; 313, n. 1; 338, n. 1; 344, n. 1; 350, n. 1.)—, while others are his own (note on the geats: Vera Pérez 1959: 109, n. 1).

Vera's translation in itself reads well, but at times it does not follow the original, or is faulty. It is not just that the text begins with a rhetorical question —"¿Quién no ha oído cantar las alabanzas a las proezas de los reyes de los daneses[...]?" (Vera Pérez 1959: 93)—, where the original poses no questions at all; this might be

considered as valid as Seamus Heaney’s “So”, for the original “Hwaet!” (l.1). Every now and then Vera’s translation presents more serious problems, which are certainly derived from the fact that he knows little or no Old English at all. Let me provide a couple of examples of this. Vera’s translation of lines 175-78<sup>34</sup> is as follows: “A veces hacían ofrendas en sus templos paganos y en voz alta impetraban de los dioses guerreros, ayuda para el dolor de su pueblo” (Vera Pérez 1959: 107); “At times they made offerings at their pagan temples and prayed aloud to their war gods, for help for the pain of their people” (my translation). The key words in the Old English text are *gastbona* (l. 177), “slayer of souls, devil” (Mitchell and Robinson 1998: 262) and *wigweorþunga* (l. 176), “homage to idols” (Mitchell and Robinson 1998: 303). And yet, Vera fails to convey the original meaning of the lines: the tragic ignorance of the Danes who, when praying to their idols were in fact invoking Satan.<sup>35</sup> Later on, when he is translating the description of the sword with which Beowulf kills Grendel’s mother (ll. 1557-1558), we read: “Vió, entre otras armas, una hoja de triunfo, antigua espada forjada por los gigantes” (Vera Pérez 1959: 215); “He saw among other weapons a victorious blade, an ancient sword forged by the giants” (my translation). In a footnote for “gigantes” (giants) he specifies that the original word is \**Lotenise*, a word that does not exist in Old English and Vera translates as “gigantes del mar” (Vera Pérez 1959: 216, n. 2). Obviously, the O.E. word behind “gigantes” is “eotenisc” (l. 1558); but how did Vera get from “eotenisc” to \**Lotenise*? A look at the original MS, which I think Vera really saw at the British Library, will clarify this. Vera takes the initial “l” for an “l”, and the final “c” is taken for an “e”.



A few more details about the translation. The original form of the names is preserved, with the exception of “Scyldo el Scafo” (for Scyld Scefing) and just one reference to “Beowulfo”, with “Beowulf” in the rest of the translation. The tribal names “geatas”, “scyldos”, “Wilfingos”, “Ingurnos” and “Brisingos” are, as can be seen, made Spanish. Sometimes in the footnotes Vera Pérez makes reference to

the original Old English words so as to further clarify his translation, but some of them have incorrect spellings: “meado-seatla ofteak” (93, n. 1) for “meodosetla ofteah” (l. 5); “bed after-burum” (104, n. 1) for “bed aefter burum” (l. 140); “grun wong” (208, n. 2) for “grundwong” (l. 1496).

One last issue still remains to be considered, one which will have full relevance in the text analysed in the following section. As Madariaga had already stated, *Poema de Myo Cid* was the obvious Hispanic counterpart of the Anglo-Saxon epic, and, in his opinion, a better poem (Madariaga 1922: 152ff). The Spanish epic poem was no doubt the most obvious point of reference in the mind of the readers of the translation, as the most outstanding epic text from the Spanish Middle Ages. But besides this, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, *Myo Cid*, was probably one of the most emblematic characters in Franco's Spain, an ideological icon of all the values of his regime (Payo Hernanz 2006: 111-46). The Spanish audience would certainly be flattered to read that, in the opinion of the Chilean Consul, *Beowulf* was the English *Mio Cid* (Vera Pérez 1959: 17), not the other way round, thereby implicitly reaffirming the superiority of the Spanish epic. Vera Pérez himself establishes a connection between the two poems, but rather than making any value judgements, he draws attention to a common practice lived in both cultural contexts: warriors offer their lords war trophies (Vera Pérez 1959: 265). Just as Beowulf offers Hygelak the gifts he has brought from the land of the Danes (ll. 2150ff), so did *Mio Cid*, —says Vera Pérez (1959: 265, n. 1)—. Despite the fact that he had been exiled by his king he sends him war presents after his victories over the Moors. Though the parallel is problematic (the exiled Don Rodrigo is just willing to win back the favour of his king),<sup>36</sup> Vera Pérez's intention seems to be to shorten the distance between the two epics. In this sense there is another relevant detail.

Vera's *Beowulf* is divided into *Cantos*, corresponding to the original divisions in the poem marked with roman numerals. Although the *canto* is the major division in an epic or other long narrative poem, it seems to be quite foreign to the spirit of the Anglo-Saxon epic. Early oral epics —such as Homer's— were divided into discrete sections, i.e. books.<sup>37</sup> The *canto* was first used by Italian poets such as Dante, Matteo Boiardo, and Ludovico Ariosto. The first long English poem to be divided into cantos was Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-1609). Spenser was deep in the tradition of Italian love epics and, no doubt, he was trying to provide his poem with the glamour of Italian Renaissance poetry. I very much think that Vera Pérez's use of the term *canto* is an attempt to assimilate *Beowulf* to the Mediterranean epic tradition and, by doing so, he is indirectly emphasising the prominence of that literary corpus which was heir to Homer, Virgil and many others, a culture far superior to that of the *Barbaric* North; as Tolkien would put it, “a real question of taste” (1983: 15), thus showing his dislike for this preference.

Similarly, the assimilation to Classical epic poems seems to be at work when Vera Pérez mentions the *Parcae*, knitting the destiny of mortals, as a footnote to a rather forced translation of “Ac him dryhten forgeaf / wigspeda gewiofu, Wedera leodum” (ll. 696-97),<sup>38</sup> “Pero el Señor tejó para el pueblo de los geatas la tela del éxito en la guerra” (Vera Pérez 1959: 149); “But the Lord weaved the cloth of success in war for the people of the Geats”. The translator gives the names of the three *Parcae* (Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos). I do not mean that these characters were alien to Northern mythology (the *Norns* is an obvious counterpart),<sup>39</sup> but the translator’s emphasis in itself is relevant.

So, after all, *Beowulf* might not be so culturally alien to Spanish readers. From a historical perspective, if Jutes, Saxons and Angles had conquered post-Roman Britain, *Hispania* had harboured the flourishing of the Visigoth dynasties; to this topic I will return. Concerning literature, both England and Spain had developed great epic poems in their Middle Ages and, if a comparison was to be made, there was no doubt as to which text deserved more praise. This idea of superiority was further confirmed by the fact that the Iberian Peninsula belonged to a cultural tradition, not only Classical but Mediterranean, which was welcoming a text from the North and to some extent lending to it some of its grandeur.

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I would like to add something else. By the beginning of the 1960s, the vast majority of texts that were being translated into Spanish were in English, both from Britain and USA. This massive (and at times unjustified) *anglophilia* had grabbed—together with *Beowulf*, Sinclair Lewis, John dos Passos, Pearl S. Buck, John Steinbeck, ...—dozens of authors whose names were soon forgotten. The reason for this seems to be ideological, and Miguel Angel Vega writes about a certain cultural homologation at the service of the ‘empire’ (Vega 2004: 551).<sup>40</sup> However this might be, and in the precise case of this first *complete* translation of *Beowulf*, the notion of the lost Empire seems to be brought back by the words of the Chilean Consul in his “Pórtico” to the translation: Spain, as Sander states, is the junction where the best *roads* of Latin America always merge (in Vera Pérez 1959: 16).<sup>41</sup>

Despite the strictures, the overall evaluation of this work must be positive. Vera’s translation marks a milestone in the history of *Beowulf* in Spain, and it was a point of reference for future translations of the poem in this country. It is easy to point to the deficiencies of Vera’s text, but his task was titanic. On the other hand, those other aspects of this work that I have commented on (cultural and ideological) serve as a link with the next and final section. For fifty years after its publication, there had been no serious attempt to evaluate this work; Bravo dedicates to it less than a page in his article “La Historia de los estudios sobre *Beowulf* en España” (1996-97: 87-8), surely because his scope was wider. Despite its long periphrastic

constructions (Bravo 1996-97: 87-8) and the many ideological links with the historical moment in which it was written, it was the only 'complete' *Beowulf* available in Spanish for over fifteen years.

#### 4. *Beowulfo*: the appropriation of the hero

In 1965 Aguilar decided to publish another version of the story for young readers, in the collection *El Globo de Colores*. The name of the hero was adapted into Spanish, and so the book was entitled *Beowulfo*. Strictly speaking, though, this was not a novelty. Orestes Vera had used the name once in his translation. So did Madariaga in the essay referred to earlier. Further back in time, Juan Valera, the famous nineteenth century novelist, wrote in 1872: "los Anglosajones, (...), tuvieron poemas, de los cuales es el más famoso el de Beowulfo". (Speech read on February 12th (1872) for the *Academia Española*.)

*El Globo de Colores* was intended for children and young readers. Antonio Jiménez-Landi (1909-1997) was its director and, in an ultimate sense, responsible for the selection of texts to be included in the collection. Jiménez-Landi had been absent from the intellectual landscape of post-war Spain, since his academic past was associated with the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, anathematized by Franco's regime. Manuel Aguilar did not seem to care much about that and put Jiménez-Landi at the head of a long cherished project (Serrano Gómez 2001: 11).<sup>42</sup>

The author of the new adaptation was José Luis Herrera and his work included several illustrations by Julio Castro de la Gandara (1927-1983).<sup>43</sup> Herrera's text is clearly based on Vera's prose translation. In his short prologue he does not mention his source, but I do not think it takes a great effort of imagination to realize that it must be Vera's translation, republished also by Aguilar three years before Herrera's work. The "geatas", "scyldos" and "thanes" coined by Vera reappear in the new adaptation. Besides, Herrera follows him in some other renderings: whereas Vera uses both "bardo" and (the anachronistic) "trovador", Herrera always uses the latter. When Vera coins "Heoroto" and translates it as "del ciervo" (of the deer), Herrera consistently translates "Heorot" as "El palacio del Ciervo" (the palace of the deer). One detail in particular clearly proves Herrera's link with Vera's translation: the narration of the Finnsburg episode in *Beowulfo* is based on the latter's summary of the story in a footnote to his translation (Vera Pérez 1959: 178, n. 3).

The story of *Beowulfo* in itself presents some deviations from the original narration. As in the case of Vallvé's version, Herrera often attempts to rationalise some *non sequitur* issues in *Beowulfo*. I will mention only two: the hero sacrifices one of his warriors to see how Grendel fights; and *Beowulfo* defeats the dragon, still as a young

warrior, for his acceptance of the crown comes immediately after his return to the land of the Geats. Herrera, on the other hand, stresses moral issues in the poem, much more than Vallvé does: Beowulfo is one hundred per cent Christian (he is even presented as a descendant of Abel), so there is no funeral pyre after his death.

But probably the most interesting aspect of Herrera's adaptation is that the hero is gradually perceived as a familiar icon by his new audience. The translation of the name, Beowulfo, is in itself a meaningful detail: it is not just that the final '-o' appears in so many Spanish names, but that Beowulfo sounds very much like the name of the first Visigoth king in the Iberian Peninsula, Ataulfo.<sup>44</sup> In the long list of names that children had to learn by heart, that one was the easiest one to remember, for it was at the beginning. Beowulfo was not after all a 'perfect stranger' in Spain. This simple mechanism of making the hero familiar for the audience was in fact described as early as 1813 by the German philosopher Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher in his treatise *On the Different Methods of Translation* (1813):

El traductor hace todo lo posible por asegurar un hábitat natural a la presencia extranjera que él ha introducido en su propia lengua y en su paisaje cultural. Se tiñe su estilo de arcaísmo, crea una impresión de algo ya visto (*déjà vu*). El texto extranjero se siente, menos como un objeto importado (sospechoso, por definición), que como un elemento surgido del pasado nativo de cada cual. Ha estado allí 'desde siempre', y está en espera de reproducirse. Es, en realidad, un eslabón de la propia tradición, temporalmente extraviado. (Steiner 1981: 398)

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This attempt to recreate a Beowulf of our own, either conscious or unconsciously, might explain the peculiar way in which the final fight is narrated. Beowulf, still in the splendour of his youth, kills the dragon by himself and survives to tell the story to his amazed warriors. The agony of the dragon, mortally wounded by Beowulfo's spear, as much as by the hero's behaviour, are both described with words that might help Spanish readers to visualize the scene in a very precise way:

y tal como su herida iba creciendo, tal aumentaba el caudal de la sangre derramada. Los ojos del animal —tremendos fanales en la penumbra del crepúsculo— dejaron de lanzar odio para tomar una patética luz de dolor, pálida como los muertos. Dilataba sus narices, no para lanzar malignos vapores, sino en busca del aire que faltaba a su vida. Las garras se hincaban quebrando las rocas en su afán de permanecer firmes. Pero Beowulfo sintió que la muerte del dragón acechaba desde todos los árboles, y empezó a galopar en torno al cuerpo fabuloso, haciendo graciosas cabriolas con su caballo bien domado. La bestia lanzó un nuevo rugido, y se desplomó, dejando abierta la fuente ancha por donde acabó de salir la sangre. Aún tuvo algún movimiento; algunos de esos tristes e inútiles movimientos convulsos de los animales que acaban de morir. (Herrera 1965:79-80)



Although I will not translate the whole paragraph, it is interesting to highlight some relevant (and gory) details in this description. The dragon is bleeding profusely, with his nostrils wide open to take more air. Staggering, the beast sticks its claws in the ground so as not to fall down. Meanwhile, Beowulfo “galloped around the enormous body, his well-tamed horse prancing”. The beast finally falls down and dies with a “useless and sad” spasm. There is a picture in the text portraying Beowulfo by the dead dragon, but another image would come to the mind of Spanish readers: the hero on horseback is a medieval *rejoneador*<sup>45</sup>—his bull, the dragon— admiring and enjoying his own deed or, as we say, ‘recreándose en la faena’. I am convinced that Herrera does his best to *Hispanicise* the hero, a task that is further supported by Julio Castro’s illustrations, as I will show in the last part of my paper.

Osborn makes an interesting comment on some of the pictures that is worth quoting:

One might well call the quixotic hero “Don Beowulfo,” as in fifteenth-century armour he spars with a mildly cubist brachiosaurus that serves as the dragon (...). In other pictures, Grendel is a hulking Moorish wrestler, and cacti stud the landscape of Grendelsmere, that desert lake. (Osborn 1997: 355) [see Plates A & B]

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She could not be more right when she defines this as nationalistic appropriation (Osborn 1997: 355). Her conclusion is further reinforced by more details in Julio Castro’s illustrations. Sometimes the artist presents overall views of the land of the Danes, presenting them as typical Mediterranean landscapes [See Plate C]. Just one more example. The details of the picture showing Beowulfo and his thanes setting foot on the Danish shore [See Plate D] might pass unnoticed by a modern audience, but certainly not by young Spanish readers of the second half of the 1960s [See Plate E]. The hero stands in the foreground, a bit to the right of the picture, with all his retinue behind. He is leaning on his right leg, raising his left hand while holding a sword in the other, his head slightly turned to his left. A ship lies at anchor in the background, surrounded by sea and sky. All this was certainly familiar to Spanish youngsters, who were used to finding precisely this combination of figures in most of their textbook plates of Columbus’ arrival in the New World [See Plate E].

The sixties in Spain were a decade of economic growth. It was necessary to remind the younger generations of Spaniards that, despite the European dislike of Franco’s totalitarian regime, they were living in a great country, heirs of a glorious past. In conclusion, Herrera and Castro’s *Beowulfo* held the official line by promoting nationalistic exultation on the basis of the historical and cultural legacy of Spain in four major respects:

1. The supremacy of the Germanic presence in the peninsula (from the fifth to the eighth century), symbolised in the Visigoth Beowulfo, is emphasised as against the eight hundred years of Muslim domination, represented by the *Moorish Grendel*.
2. Spain's most widely known mark of identity, the bullfights of the *Fiesta Nacional*, is brought to mind by Beowulfo riding around the dying dragon, a metaphor for the bull.
3. Spanish literary glories are conveniently summarised by the figure of a Quixotic Beowulfo.
4. And finally, the birth of Imperial Spain is re-enacted by the Columbus-like stance of Beowulfo himself.

## 5. Conclusion

The editorial history of the first renderings of *Beowulf* into Spanish is by no means simply a technical matter. The very election of a remote Anglo-Saxon epic poem indicates a preference for English culture that goes back, at least, to the end of the nineteenth century. I have tried to show how behind the selection of this text, the authors' motives and their personal circumstances were as varied as the different historical scenarios they were passing through.

In the agitated Barcelona of the years previous to war, Vallvé tells the story of an anachronistic Christian hero who restores the order of the community by killing monsters and immolating himself. The message is simple, with no contradictions: good conquers evil, no matter the sacrifice it demands. Whether or not he meant his young readers to take the morals of his story seriously I do not know. But surely the bloodshed in the years to follow would challenge the certainty of his premises.

For Marià Manent, *Beowulf* was a matter of survival, cultural de-centralization and of *beginnings*. Above all, he was a poet in Catalan, who enjoyed translating poems into that language. In the 1940s, he was forced by his economic circumstances to translate into Spanish an anthology of English poetry, a corpus that necessarily began with *Beowulf*. That was it, no less no more. And so, behind the first partial verse rendering of this poem, there is a silent story of dire hardship and repression, both political and cultural, which has never been told before.

At the other extreme, Orestes Vera's prose *Beowulf* and Herrera's *Beowulfo* are the result of self-contemplation and pretended self-sufficiency: though Europe had turned its back on us, we might still take shelter in the values of our *Hispanitas*, and besides we could always look to South America, where our Empire had flourished. We were heirs of the Mediterranean Classical grandeur. If the English

had an epic poem, so had we and it was far superior. As a matter of fact, Spain also had a strong Germanic element in its past, in so far as the Visigoths had been the first to achieve the unity of the country. Beowulf(o), after all, with all his virility and heroism, was also one of us, and so, a good model for our young readers to imitate.

With the perspective that only time can give, one can look back on these four texts and acknowledge that they played their part in the genesis of Medieval English studies in Spain, in so far as they offered an invitation to go on reading or triggered many young readers' curiosity; John D. Niles' words might seem too benevolent, but could also explain the academic vocation of many scholars:<sup>46</sup>

Even when the poem is rendered into a new language with only the most perfect literalist decorum, then someone, somewhere, is wanting to raise *Beowulf* from the dead and set it into motion again before a new generation of readers. The poem, in short, is becoming news again. Some witness to this resurrection may even be inspired to learn Old English well enough to throw their translations away. (1993: 876)

Herrera's *Beowulfo* was published in 1965. That was the year of the beginning of an increasing opposition to the government in Spanish Universities (especially in Madrid, Barcelona and Seville). The new translations of *Beowulf* would all be written by scholars, born in the last years of Franco's regime. These translations were, in many senses, different and will be analysed in a future paper.

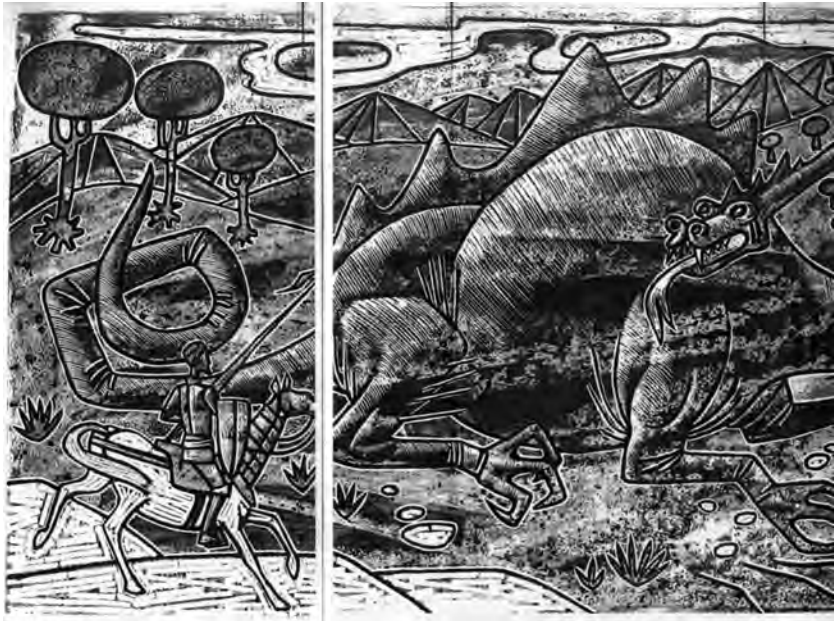


PLATE A



tanto, retirado el rey y despedido el pueblo, los thanes se quedaron todavía en el Palacio del Ciervo; refrescaron su lengua con algunas vasos de cerveza, y se quedaron dormidos apaciblemente.

En esa noche, mientras soñaba Rothgar y los thanes dormían en los escaños del Palacio del Ciervo, salió Grendel por primera vez de su guarida.

Si nadie había visto a Grendel, nadie podría decir sus señas, si tenía figura de hombre o de animal, o si la cambiaba a su placer y según sus conveniencias. Los scyldos, que aquella noche anduvieron desvelados a causa del cansancio o del empacho, vieron cómo atravesaba los campos, corriendo como un viento poderoso, que derribaba los árboles en su carrera. Era una figura enorme, que se fundía con las sombras de la noche. Se alumbraba el ca-

PLATE B



PLATE C



'Beowulfo', 'Geatas' and 'Heoroto': An Appraisal of the Earliest...

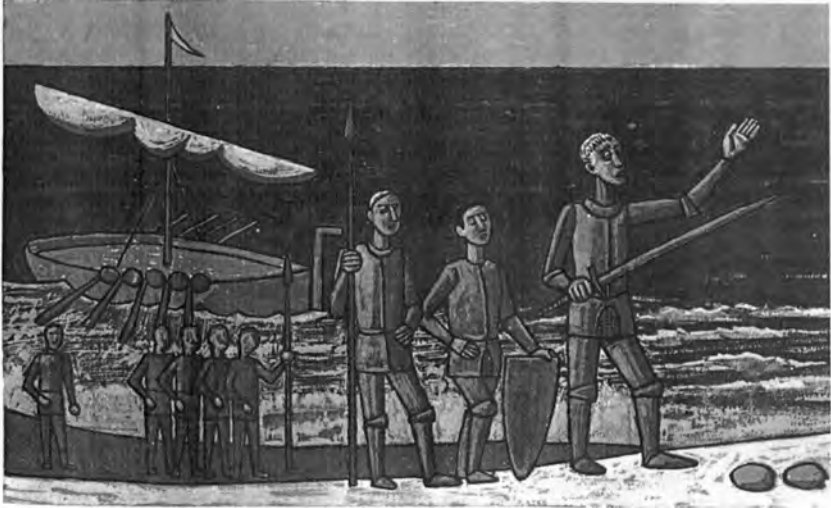


PLATE D



PLATE E

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup>. In May 225, Professor Roberta Frank came to the University of Jaén (Spain) to teach a course on *Beowulf*. In her opening session she made a quick review of the different translations of this poem published in Spain and suggested that it would be interesting to review them. I was highly intrigued by her invitation.

I want to thank Professor Marijane Osborn (University of California, Davis) for her suggestions in the writing of this article. Heartfelt thanks also go to Dr. Jesús López-Peláez Casellas (University of Jaén) for his valuable comments.

As always, I wish to express my gratitude to Richard T. Meyer (Northridge Prep. School, Chicago) for his patience and friendship.

<sup>2</sup>. Madariaga supports his view in M. Dixon's words about *Beowulf*—"harsh and untutored", "firmly rooted in experience", "how clearly it sees life for what it is" (quoted in Madariaga 1922: 153)—, and Menéndez y Pelayo's statements about *Myo Cid*: "Esta poesía no deslumbra la imaginación", "los mismos páramos y las mismas sierras que nosotros pisamos y habitamos", "total carencia de arte", "nos da la visión plena de la realidad" (quoted in Madariaga 1922:153)

<sup>3</sup>. See *Beowulf: The Poem and its Tradition*. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard U.P., 1983.

<sup>4</sup>. Another clear instance of intersemiotic translation has recently taken place in the story of the poem. I am referring to the publication of the *Electronic Beowulf, 2.0* (ed. Kevin Kiernan. London: British Library Publications, 2003) a digitalized edition of the *Beowulf* manuscript in a set of 2 CD-ROMs.

<sup>5</sup>. The collection "Hombres Audaces" was particularly successful.

<sup>6</sup>. The illustrations are in pages 24, 35, 51, 69, 89, 99, 115 and 124. Félicien de Myrbach-Rheinfield was an Austrian baron who was an army officer until 1881. During the last years of his military career he studied at the Vienna Art Academy as a pupil of Professors Eisenmenger, Huber and Lichtenfels and in Paris under Carolus-Duran. In 1881 he went to Paris, where he was active mainly as an illustrator for Parisian magazines and publications (Daudet, About, Loti, Bourget and Flammarion). After returning to Vienna in 1897, he became Professor of Illustration at the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts, of which he was director (1899-1905). It was thanks to him that J. Hoffmann, A. Roller, K. Moser, R. von Larisch, C.O. Czeschka and F. Cizek became teachers at the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts. In 1903, he was elected President of the Vienna Secession, but left in 1905 along with Klimt and his circle. Myrbach also lived in Spain for a long time.

It seems he had a taste for Germanic heroes, since he also illustrated a compilation of Wagnerian stories prepared by Manuel Vallvé for Araluze. His works are displayed in various museums in Austria.

<sup>7</sup>. It was reasonable to feel optimistic about the quantity and quality reached by Spanish translations in the first half of the 1930s. In 1934 (the year of Vallvé's translation) 270 literary works were translated into Spanish, a number similar or superior to other European countries (Vega 2004:532).

<sup>8</sup>. The advocates of this current, Müllenhoff, Möller, Panzer, Berendsohn and many others from the 1840s, were all following Jacob Grimm's optimism: as J. M. Kemble put it himself, all Germanic epic poetry "will be elucidated unexpectedly little by little as soon as our scholarship succeeds in comprehending and unravelling the mythical element" (Stanley 1994: 16). For mythical-allegory, see also Stanley (1994:15-20); Chambers (1959: 45-57); Lawrence (1967:147ff).



<sup>9</sup>. L. Lainster quotes from Uhland: "these man-eating giant-creatures (...) are no other than the plagues of a marshy, sickness-ridden sea-coast" (in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 393).

<sup>10</sup>. "Grendel is at bottom identical with his mother, who is likewise only a personification of the sea" (Karl Müllenhoff (1849) in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 285).

<sup>11</sup>. For Müllenhoff (1849), the fights in the poem symbolized the changing seasons of the year. The hero's presence was, therefore, aestival, his death and burial hiemal (Stanley 1994: 18). L. Lainster: "He would then need to be taken as the spring-wind" (in Shippey and Haarder 1998: 395).

<sup>12</sup>. Three years before the publication of Stanley's words, Prof. Northrop Frye (1912-1991) had died. One of the most influential figures in twentieth century literary criticism and author of the widely read *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Frye came to define a critical method known as 'Archetypal Criticism': every single ideology has its own mythology.

<sup>13</sup>. Vallvé's book was republished in Mexico in 1994: *Beowulf*. Biblioteca Juvenil Porrúa, 72. (Mexico D.F.: Porrúa).

<sup>14</sup>. Franco had declared: "La unidad nacional la queremos absoluta, con una sola lengua, el castellano, y una sola personalidad, la española" (Pujol et al. 2004: 697).

<sup>15</sup>. Thanks to Manent's diaries, we know that he used to read San Juan de la Cruz, Lope de Vega and Juan Ramón Jiménez before translating into Spanish.

<sup>16</sup>. As stated by María Luisa Pascual Garrido, Manent's anthology of English poetry was not the first to be published in Spain. However, for all those readers who showed some curiosity about English poetry during the 1940s and 1950s, Manent's translation was probably much more influential than any previous work. The testimony of poets and translators, such as José María Valverde or

Ángel Crespo, proves this (Pascual Garrido 1999: 171-172). For a detailed analysis of Manent's *La Poesía Inglesa*, see also María Luisa Pascual Garrido's Ph. Dissertation *Un hito en la poesía inglesa traducida en Antologías: estudio descriptivo de la Poesía Inglesa 1945-1948* de Marià Manent (Universidad de Córdoba, 2000).

<sup>17</sup>. During the Civil War, Janés had been working at the *Generalitat* on publications for Republican soldiers at the front. In January 1939, when Franco's troops entered Barcelona he left the Peninsula for just a few weeks. Upon his return to Spain, he was arrested and even condemned to death for being a 'separatist'. His Falangist friends, Eugeni d'Ors among others, interceded for him and he was set free. Back in Barcelona, he founded his publishing company, despite the many difficulties he had to face as a consequence of his political past.

<sup>18</sup>. Walter Starkie was an Irish born Roman Catholic and, as Jacqueline Hurtley states, he was considered *persona grata* in Franco's Spain (2005: 50). Hispano-British diplomatic relationships were extremely tense. Spain's official non-belligerence did not hide the hostility that certain media harboured towards the *pérfida Albión*. At a time when Hitler's Germany faced no opposition in continental Europe, the Gibraltar issue was again insistently raised by Spaniards. Belligerence was a real threat hanging over bilateral relationships: British diplomats in Madrid had to make a great effort to moderate the Spanish position. Walter Starkie and Bernard Malley, another Catholic Hispanist who worked in the Press and Propaganda section at the British Embassy in Madrid, played a prominent role in his task (Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla 2005: 352-53).

<sup>19</sup>. The line numbers are not given in Manent's translation. All references to *Beowulf* are from Mitchell and Robinson (1998).

<sup>20</sup>. The title of Holthausen's work is not given by Manent. It is *Beowulf nebst den kleineren Denkmälern der Heldensage*. I. 6 Aufl. II. 5 Aufl. (text and notes revised; supplement

bringing bibliography to 1928). Previous editions of this work are: 1905-6, 1908-9; 1912-13; 1914-19 (Chambers 1959: 585).

21. Manent provides no other information about Gordon's text. It is a prose translation published in 1923: *The Song of Beowulf* rendered into English prose (The King's Treasuries of Literature, London and New York, n.d.) Klaeber noted that this was "(not entirely accurate)" (Klaeber 1941: cxxx). The title of Bone's work, which is not given either, is: *Beowulf in Modern Verse*.

22. "seleraedende" [hall-counsellors] (l. 1346) is translated as "consejeros del príncipe" (prince counsellors); "foldbuende" [country-dwellers] (l. 1355): "habitantes de aquellos montes" (mountain-dwellers); "the haethstapa humdum geswenced" [the heath-rover chased by hounds] (l. 1368): "seguido por los canes/ y sangrante" (chased by hounds and bloody); "fela/sinnigne secg" [the deeply sinful creature] (l. 1379): "al gran Mal" (the great Evil).

The beginning of the next excerpt (ll. 2236-65) is more deficient:

... Ealle hie death fornam  
ærram [sic] mælum, ond se an tha gen  
leoda duguthe, se thær longest hwearf,  
weard winegeomor, wende thæs ylcan,  
thæt he lytel fæc longgestreona  
brucan moste.  
(ll. 2236-41)

...Tiempo ha que la Muerte se los llevó, y el único  
que allí dejara ["duguthe" (from the proven warriors) is not translated], triste por su  
dueño ["weard winegeomor" (a guardian mourning for friends) is translated as "sad for his lord" ] esperaba.  
Igual sino, sabiendo que había de ser breve  
Su goce de la antigua riqueza.  
Finally, "hringa hyrde" [the guardian of rings] (ll. 2244-5) is translated as "El Viejo", (the old man). (1947:23).

23. "...  
æfter wigfruman  
hæledum be heafte.  
gomen gleobeames,  
geond sæl swingeð,  
burhstede beateð.  
fela feorhcyinna  
Ne mæg byrnan hring  
wide fëran,  
Næs hearpan wyn,  
ne god hafoc  
ne se swiftha mearh  
Bealocwealm hafað  
forð onsended".

24. [http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/manentm/pagina.php?id\\_sec=2573](http://www.escriptors.cat/autors/manentm/pagina.php?id_sec=2573). See: Albert Manent. *Marià Manent: biografia íntima y literària* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1995).

25. Aguilar was founded in 1923 by Manuel Aguilar Muñoz.

26. Carlos Sander Álvarez (1918-1966) was a poet, journalist and diplomat. He was the director of "El Mercurio" in Antofagasta (Chile), before being appointed Education Attaché in Spain, where he would eventually stay as Consul General in Madrid. Sander became member of the *Real Academia de Aragón* and the *Real Academia de Bellas Artes y Ciencias Históricas de Toledo*. He was awarded the *Premio Iberoamericano de Periodismo*.

27. In a footnote (1959: 178, n. 3) Vera explains that he will not translate this episode, since the historical events behind it are obscure and the story itself (as narrated in *Beowulf*) does not follow a narrative sequence. And yet he reproduces a long summary of the episode taken from F. B. Gummere's *The Oldest English Epic*. New York: Macmillan, 1927. Later on, Vera Pérez makes reference to this text again (184, n.2: 205, cont. n. 1).

28. Lorenzo talks about a minority of students that show an interest in *Beowulf* (26-27). He mentions Gloria Moreno (Castilla) and her interest in the use of metaphor in the poem. In 1957 she defended her M.A. Dissertation at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, with the title *Figuras poéticas de Beowulf*. Lorenzo also makes reference to a student (no name is given) who was planning to translate the poem himself.

29. Taken from Klaeber (1941: xxxi & xxxviii). The pages are unspecified in Vera's text.

<sup>30</sup>. As indicated by the translator (Vera Pérez 1959: 55, n. 1), this section is taken from Wyatt and Chambers' 1920 edition of *Beowulf* (Cambridge U. P.); see note 31. In fact, Vera Pérez literally translates "The Index of names and Places" in the previous work, with one exception: the entry "Ingeld" contains half the information in Wyatt and Chambers'.

<sup>31</sup>. The author does not specify either the title of this work or its publication date; he just gives "(London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.)". The editorial history of J. R. Clark Hall's prose translation of *Beowulf* is a long one. *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg. A Translation into Modern English Prose* was first published in 1901 (London: S. Sonnenschein and Company). This was followed by a second edition "carefully revised" (Klaeber 1941: cxxx) in 1911, with the title of *Beowulf and the Finnsburg Fragment. A Translation into Modern English Prose* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.). By 1940 Prof. C. L. Wrenn had reedited Hall's translation, correcting its errors: *Beowulf and the Finnsburg Fragment, a Translation into Modern English Prose* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.). This translation included "Prefatory Remarks on Prose Translation of *Beowulf*" by J. R. R. Tolkien. Finally, a new edition of this work was published in 1950: *Beowulf and the Finnsburg Fragment, a Translation into Modern English Prose: New edition completely revised by Wrenn, with Notes and Introduction* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.) I assume Vera Pérez translated Wrenn's Introduction from this last-mentioned edition, which is in fact confirmed when Vera Pérez refers to the 1950 edition in one of the translation notes (Vera Pérez 1959: 128, n. 1).

John R. Clark Hall had also published a verse translation in 1914, though it was not as successful as the prose text: *Beowulf: a metrical translation* (Cambridge U.P.).

<sup>32</sup>. A. J. Wyatt's *Beowulf edited with textual Foot-Notes, Index of Proper Names and Alphabetical Glossary* was originally published in 1894 (Cambridge). A new edition thoroughly revised by R. W Chambers

appeared in 1914 (Cambridge U.P.). A first reprint of this text was published in 1920 and 1952 with additional textual notes.

<sup>33</sup>. See Note 30. Quite often Vera Pérez makes references to other translations of the poem, but he just identifies one of these: F. Gummere.

<sup>34</sup>.  

Hwilum hie geheton	æt hærgtrafum
wigweorþunga,	wordum bædon
þæt him gastbona	geoce gefremede
wið þeodþream	

<sup>35</sup>. In a footnote to the phrase "dioses guerreros", *warrior gods*, Vera tries to clarify the meaning of the original, but fails to do so when he explains that the literal meaning is "los demonios de la guerra" (Vera Pérez 1959: 107, n. 1), *war demons*.

<sup>36</sup>. In this sense, Mio Cid's behaviour reminds us of another episode in *Beowulf*, that of the disgraced man who stole the goblet from the Dragon's hoard and offered it later to his lord to regain his trust.

<sup>37</sup>. Virgil also divided his *Aeneid* into *libri*, in order to show his fidelity to the Greek epic models.

<sup>38</sup>. The verb *forgeaf* (inf. *forgifan*: "to give", "to grant"), will hardly bear the translation "to weave" or "to knit". Vera Pérez is probably going on the antecedent of *gewiofu* ("web"), a form of *gewife*. Liuzza's translation seems to be more accurate: "But the Lord gave them a web of victory" (2000: 74).

<sup>39</sup>. In his edition of *Beowulf*, Klaeber states that: "the conception of the 'weaving' of destiny [...] has become a mere figure of speech" (154, n. 697).

<sup>40</sup>. "En este contexto no deja de ser chocante, desde nuestra perspectiva, que Joyce o Eliot hayan tenido que esperar hasta hace muy poco a ingresar por la puerta grande de las letras españolas, mientras H. Belloc, autor respetable, pero menor, cosechaba

numerosas ediciones: *Carlos I, rey de Inglaterra* (Juventud, 1940, obra que fue reeditada numerosas veces); *Oliverio Cromwell* de Toda Valcárcel (Juventud, 1943); *Historia de Inglaterra* (La Nave, 1950); *Luis XIV* (Juventud, 1954); *Camino de Roma*, de Juan G. de Luaces; *María Antonieta*, de Dámaso Alonso (Espasa-Calpe, 1965) y muchas más" (Vega 2004:551).

<sup>41</sup>. In his book *En busca del Quijote* (1967), **Sander** appeals again to the union between Spain and Latin America. This time, however, the post-colonial connotations are absent, since the Mother Country does not see the former possessions as *daughters* anymore, but rather as *sisters* "por la madurez política, social, cultural y moral que ya tienen" (1967: 310).

<sup>42</sup>. Jiménez-Landi was the author of several adaptations of English classics included in the collection *El Globo de Colores*: Chaucer: *Cuentos de Canterbury* (1961); Walter Scott: *Ivanhoe* (1961); Shakespeare: *Teatro* (1961); Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe* (1962) (Serrano Gómez 2001: 11).

<sup>43</sup>. Julio Castro later on worked at the *Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* (Madrid), and during the 1970s he collaborated as a cartoonist for several Spanish magazines.

<sup>44</sup>. (d. 415, Barcelona (Spain), chieftain of the Visigoths from 410 to 415 and the successor to his brother-in-law Alaric). In 412 Ataulphus led the Visigoths, who had recently sacked Rome (410), from Italy to settle in southern Gaul. Two years later, he married

the Roman princess Galla Placidia (sister of the emperor Honorius), who had been captured at Rome. Driven from Gaul, he retreated into Spain early in 415 and was in that year assassinated at Barcelona. The 5<sup>th</sup>-century historian Paulus Orosius records Ataulphus' statement that his original aim had been to overthrow the Roman Empire, but that later, recognizing the inability of his people to govern an empire, he desired to bolster Roman power by means of Gothic arms. His vision of an empire revitalized through a barbarian alliance was not realized.

<sup>45</sup>. *Rejoneo* is a form of bullfighting in which the principal fighter, the *rejoneador*, is mounted on a highly trained horse and uses a *rejón*, a short, broad blade fixed to a pole, to kill the bull. *Rejoneo* is sometimes called the Portuguese style, since fighting on horseback is a central feature of Portuguese bullfighting. For the kill, *rejones de muerte* are used, with blades about twice the length of those used earlier. They are thrust between the bull's shoulder blades, just as the matador uses his sword. The kill from horseback is difficult, and the *rejoneador* or his assistant may be forced to finish off the bull on the ground with sword and cape.

<sup>46</sup>. An anecdote is relevant in this context. When I read a previous version of this paper at the S.E.L.I.M. Conference held in La Coruña (2005), a Professor of Old English Language in a Spanish University kindly told me that he remembered Herrera's *Beowulfo* as one of his childhood readings.

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