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TRANSLATING HORACE: JOAQUIM GARCIA I GIRONA

JOAQUIM GARCIA I GIRONA, TRADUCTOR D'HORACI

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Abstract

Different aspects of the translations of Joaquim Garcia i Girona are presented, focusing on the poetry of Horace. Some odes and epodes were translated and published in the *Butlletí de la Societat Castellonenca de Cultura*, between 1920 and 1958, in a section entitled "Del jardí d'Horaci" by the translator. The meticulousness and rigour of the translation, together with the complementary notes on the choice of the appropriate Catalan lexicon, represent his intuition and deep linguistic knowledge of both Latin and Catalan.

Keywords: Garcia i Girona. Horace. Latin. Catalan. Translation.

Resum

Es presenten diferents caires de les traduccions de Joaquim Garcia i Girona, centrades en la poètica d'Horaci. Algunes odes i epodes apareixen traduïts i publicats al *Butlletí de la Societat Castellonenca de Cultura*, entre el 1920 i el 1958, a la secció intitulada pel



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traductor “Del jardí d’Horaci”. La minuciositat i rigor de la traducció, juntament amb les notes complementàries per a la tria del lèxic català adient, ens mostren la intuïció i coneixement lingüístic profund tant del llatí com del català per part del benassalenc.

Paraules clau: Garcia i Girona. Horaci. Llatí. Català. Traducció.

De vós aprenc i desaprenc altern,
dels vostres fulls, de les vostres paraules,
del vostre vers d’adelerada ametla
que crema més que no el vent de ponent.

Vicent Andrés Estellés, *Mural del País*
Valencià XXIV, “Morella” v. 1-4.

1. Introduction

Horace was a unique poet among the Romans. He is the ultimate follower of the neoteric movement and its reception of the Greek archaic and Hellenistic lyric. However, in his lyrical works (*Odes* and *Epodes*) he was not a mere epigone but rather he built a literary world that no one could emulate in the Latin corpus. His works are such perfectly rounded artefacts in terms of both form and content that the handwritten transmission shows few alterations if we consider what is usual in a poet at the turn of the era. In sum, this striking poet consciously became one of the poetic referents of Western literature, including — obviously — the Catalan tradition.

However, critics often indicate that, before the 20th century, Horace was an author rarely found in Catalan literature. For example, aside from the mention of medieval manuscripts, Carles Riba (1936), whilst reviewing the reception of Horace in the literatures of the Iberian Peninsula, only quotes Costa i Llobera and Josep Carner for the Catalan account; in an excessively short note, Manuel Balasch (1969) mentions the edition of the *Odes* by Josep Juvenci in Cervera (1751) as the only reference previous to Tomàs Forteza’s translations in *Gay Saber* (1868). In Jaume Medina’s (1976: 96-97) profound and fundamental paper on this issue, after some news about medieval and modern manuscripts and editions, he moves on to *Preludios de mi lira* by Manuel de Cabanyes (1833) and then to the list of translators or versions of

Horace in Catalan collected by the bibliographic monument that is Menéndez y Pelayo's *Horacio en España* (1885). However, as happens too often, the literary historiography of the four Catalan provinces overlooks the group of Minorcan enlightened authors of the second half of the 18th century and the early 19th century: leaving aside the quotations in the works of Joan Ramis i Ramis, Antoni Febrer i Cardona is, for now, the first adapter (rather than translator) of a preserved poem by Horace (*Ode* I 4, cf. Paredes Baulida 1990: 59-60 and 1996: 153-159) into Catalan. That said, after the imitation of Tomàs Forteza in 1868, the translations and adaptations of Horace into Catalan became more and more frequent. These are very formalistic and sparse adaptations, a trend broken only by Joan Sardà, who translated a number of odes (collected posthumously by the poet Joan Maragall in 1914), although in 1922 Isidre Vilaró Codina was the first to offer a complete translation of the odes and epodes in Catalan (with the addition of *Carmen Saeculare* and the fundamental work of *Epistula ad Pisones*).

When considering the reception of Horace in Catalan, the name that immediately comes to mind is Miquel Costa i Llobera and his *Horacianes* (1906). Apart from two translations of Horace (*Odes* I 30 and I 38), the Mallorcan poet, following the statements by Carducci, adapted the metres used by Horace into Catalan¹. This literary milestone also meant a series of adaptations of Horace with his Aeolic metre by poets such as Joaquim Garcia i Girona, Jeroni Zanné, Llorenç Riber, and Josep Maria Llovera (1978 and 1980, with a complete translation). We dedicate this paper to one of these followers of Costa i Llobera (see, e.g. 1927: 176), Garcia i Girona (Benassal, 1867-Baeza, 1928), as a preamble to an imminent edition of his translations hosted by Fundació Carles Salvador (Camatxo Buj & Obrador Cursach, in press).

2. Joaquim Garcia i Girona and Horace

Although Garcia i Girona has been already studied in relative depth, it is worth remembering that his literary and teaching career was closely linked to Latinity. As a presbyter, he acquired outstanding familiarity with Latin studies during his education in the seminary of his diocese in Tortosa. In

1. For a detailed commentary on the *Horacianes* with an extensive study of the classical reception in Costa i Llobera, see Bernat Cifre Forteza (2005: 313-505).

his first year (1879-1880) his Latin results were simply marked as “good” (*Benemeritus* 7) according to his academic file²; however, when finishing the subject, in the fourth year (1882-1883), he obtained a *Meritissimus* 9, while in Theology and Philosophy he consistently achieved excellent grades. As a diocesan operative, he had significant responsibilities in some seminaries (as rector in Zaragoza 1903-1919, Córdoba 1919-1926 and Orihuela 1926-1927 and, finally, as a spiritual director in Baeza, 1927-1928), although he had held other positions before where he had been able to promote literary affection among young students (Pérez Silvestre 2019: 15-16). His ardent militancy in favour of Latin and Greek education is explained posthumously in the article entitled “The study of Latin. Latin as a factor in classical education” (Garcia i Girona 1929), the first of a series of articles that he could not develop due to his death. In that paper, Horace is mentioned on two occasions. The first occasion (*Ode* III 2, v. 17-19 in Garcia i Girona 1929: 47), which follows one by Virgil (*Georgics* II 490), serves to demonstrate the exemplary adjectivation of the classical poets that would serve as inspiration for future men of letters (here it is inevitable to think about how this is precisely one of the virtues always attributed to Josep Pla). The second quotation of Horace, however, is a maxim that strongly concludes the article and rounds it off: *vos exemplaria graeca | nocturna versate manu, versate diurna* ‘turn over the Greek models by night, turn them by day’ (*Ars Poetica*, v. 268-269).

Not by chance, the last article sent to print by Joaquim Garcia i Girona mentions Horace at the end. We could also say that his career began with this Latin poet. As was customary in the education of that time, he was a student exposed to the Latin classics, among which the poets Virgil and Horace had a prominent status, while the *Ars Poetica* was a work of reference (in fact, this was the norm until only a few decades ago)³. Although it is true

2. Arxiu Capítular de Tortosa. Secció Seminari Conciliar de Tortosa. Llibre de matrícula, exàmens i notes acadèmiques dels cursos 1876 a 1893 (sense foliar). We would like to thank Mn. Josep Alanyà, canon archivist, for the consultation he carried out on our behalf.

3. The relevance of the *Ars Poetica* in education, from the Modern era (in historiographical terms), lasted until the middle of the 20th century. We must put under these terms the translation and school edition of this work by the modern (in the common sense) author Helena Valentí i Petit at a date as advanced as 1961.

that until the publication of *Horacianes* (1906) and some translations by Lluís Revest (1920-1921, see below), he did not focus on translation, we can find explicit references and echoes of Horace in the most important milestones of his poetic production. Thus, precisely in the prologue to *Seidia*, the award-winning poem that would give him fame, we can read: “As for the form and diversity of metres I use, I follow that of Horace, *pictoribus atque poetis*” (Garcia i Girona 1920: 8). There is no need to provide further explanation or make the source explicit because any author moderately trained in letters would know that it is from the beginning of *Ars Poetica* (v. 9) and in the next verse he continued with *quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas*: “poets and painters have always had equal authority to attempt anything.”

The Horatian reception of Garcia i Girona is common of his time, in which post-romanticism and the Catalan Renaixença had left a deep mark — not without reason, Garcia i Girona was both an academician of his time and an admirer of Msgr. Jacint Verdaguer and Frederic Mistral. So, stripped of the humour and irony with which Horace plays in almost all his work, we find a Latin author who develops — or is assumed to develop — in *Ars Poetica* a prescriptive program of composition and a source of inspiration regarding the treatment of the landscape, an idealisation of the countryside, which at this time does not depart from Virgil’s bucolicism. This vision must have taken root in Garcia i Girona, who does not cease to praise his peasant homeland, which due to its relief and customs could be regarded as a cultural heir of the classical world (“dins sa terra el cavador atònit | ossos i marbres i joiells hi troba”, as Costa i Llobera says of an idealised Mallorca). All this perception also serves him in the analysis of the territory that becomes poetic material, in the historical and mythical framework or the contemporary depictions. Indeed, verses like the following dawn at *Seidia* are of pure classical tradition: “Llavons ja ses ovelles blanquíssimes l’Aurora | Pels camps del cel blavissos traïa a pasturar” (Garcia i Girona 1920: 55).

This concrete aesthetic of the Latin poets such as the bucolic Virgil and the rural Horace, that of an idealised countryside, had already inspired the Castilian Renaissance mandatory readings in education at that time, which guides the selection of poems that Garcia i Girona translates. In his own words:

The great authors, well, of the selected Latinity are in the field of exploration of our young humanists. Better than the countryside, it would have to be called the pleasant orchard, peaceful Arcadia, valley of Tempe, where all beauty, all temperance, and serenity have their seat: this is to be said also of the prose writers, but especially of the great masters of poetry (Garcia i Girona 1929: 46, our translation).

Thus, this pleasant orchard (“vergel amenísimo”) will be used, through Lluís Revest, *Del Jardí d’Horaci* (“From the Garden of Horace”), as the title of the section where his translations of Horace appear and which make up a particular vision of the Latin poet. This is coherent with his time: note that precisely Isidre Vilaró Codina had published *De mon ermot i del verger de Horaci* in 1919. Note that these translators use similar words, *verger* ‘orchard’ and *Jardí* ‘garden’, for the title of the poems of Horace.

If we focus on the theme of the selection that Garcia i Girona made of Horace’s *Odes and Epodes*, we can find the exaltation of some virtues that can be shared by an ecclesiastic (such as simplicity in I 38 and I 20, the finitude of life in I 14, virtue in III 12 or peace in Epode VII), famous topics (*carpe diem* Ode I 11, *pallida mors aequo pulsat* I 4, *aurea mediocritas* II 10) and apologies for poetic art (I 6, II 13, IV 3), the idyllic life of the traditional countryside (Epode 2, Ode I 7, I 16, I 17, III 13, III 22) contrasted with the trade and the dangers of the sea (Ode I 7, I 3, II 10), not without humour in keeping the end of Epode II and choosing IV (as well as the invective of VI). It would be excessive to say that when Garcia i Girona translates the famous ode to the fountain of Bandúsia (III 13, from which the Horatian V of Costa i Llobera drinks) he is thinking of the famous Font d’en Segures of his beloved Benassal because the selection is very common. However, the whole imagery that the selection evokes fits with the ideal description of his homeland, even if it just follows Horace’s reception in the Modern Age.

3. Del Jardí d’Horaci, lengthy composition and publication

In 1920 *Del Jardí d’Horaci* was issued as a section of the *Bulletin of the Castellonenca Society of Culture* (BSCC). It was promoted by Lluís Revest Corzo (València, 1892-Castelló de la Plana, 1963), a key figure in the humanities in Castelló and one of the founders of the journal. From 1921 Joaquim Garcia i Girona took over the publications and, following his death in 1928,

his translations into Catalan continued to appear until 1958. After a few years of silence, new translations of Horace by Garcia i Girona have been made known thanks to Professor Lluís Gimeno Betí. This scholar released four odes, a new version of one ode published in the BSCC, and another epode that remained unpublished in *Mossèn Alcover i les comarques centrals del domini lingüístic: correspondència epistolar amb mossèn Joaquim Garcia Girona* (2004).

Garcia i Girona contributed a total of twelve odes and three epodes translated into Catalan together with three theoretical papers on his translations to the journal. In the BSCC, *Odes* 3, 4, 7, 17, and 20 of the first book are published; 10, 13, 14, and 16 of the second; 12 and 22 of the third; and 3 of the fourth; as well as the *Epodes* 2, 6 and 7. Therefore, Garcia i Girona published fifteen translations in the BSCC. The majority, twelve, are independent publications, while three of them are versions inside the explanatory papers. In them, Garcia i Girona provided valuable explanations about his adaptation of the Latin texts in Catalan. It is also worth noting that, at the end of most of the poems published in the BSCC, explanatory notes were included on the original Latin form, the adaptation of terms from classical culture or the definition of the Maestrat's own words. The thoroughness of Garcia i Girona in the preparation of the papers and his interest in their publication is representative of his temperament, demanding and devoted to the task of translation and the transmission of the best version of each text to the readers with critical commentaries.

Following the commemoration of the centenary of *Seidia* (1920-2020), the manuscripts of Garcia i Girona preserved in the archive of Societat Castellonenca de Cultura were made accessible, from which it was possible to recover an unpublished version of *Ode* I 3. This translation will be published in the compilation of Horace translations by Garcia i Girona (Camatxo Buj & Obrador Cursach, in press). By combining the publications at the BSCC (1921-1958), the editions by Gimeno Betí (2004) and the unpublished manuscript preserved in the archive of Societat Castellonenca de Cultura, twenty-one versions of Horace by Garcia i Girona are known.

4. The language of the translations

The language of the translations by Garcia i Girona reveals the desire to recover Catalan as a literary and cultural language, following the Catalan Renaissance statements. Born in Benassal, Joaquim Garcia i Girona studied at the Diocesan Seminary of Tortosa, where he stood out as one of the best students with degrees in Philosophy and Letters. The production of Garcia i Girona (1920) is governed by the triad of Renaissance values emblematic of the Floral Games: homeland, faith, and love, from the Latin *patria, fides, amor*. In his own words: “the religious vocation, the love for the Valencian land and the passion for the revival of the language of our fathers”.

The author’s first publications were in Spanish, as was common in the linguistic context of the time in the Diocese of Tortosa, which included the counties of Alcatén, Alt Maestrat, Baix Ebre, Baix Maestrat, Montsià, Plana Alta, Plana Baixa, Ribera d’Ebre, Ports, Terra Alta, and part of the districts of Alt Millars, Baix Camp, Matarranya, Priorat and Segrià. A key moment for the recovery of Catalan was the appearance of the Tortosa weekly in Catalan: *La Veu de Tortosa* (1899), founded by one of the leading followers of the Reinaxença in that territory, Francesc Mestre i Noè (Tortosa, 1866-1940). In this weekly paper, Garcia i Girona published his first composition in Catalan, the poem “Als fills del Maestrat” (n. 107, 1901), whose thematic core is a hymn to the revaluation of the Catalan language, valid for lyrical expression, within the beloved landscape and the brilliant historical and literary antecedents of King James I, Montcada, Ausiàs March, Ramon Llull, and Sant Vicent Ferrer. These references are relevant, as they show the author’s models, common to the authors of his time.

Regarding the linguistic awareness of Garcia i Girona, his imperviousness to prejudices is very remarkable, allowing him to understand language as a continuum and, therefore, to make a unitary conception of it. In this sense, we cannot avoid mentioning his work as a collaborator on the *Diccionari Català-Valencià-Balear*, from which he established a rich epistolary exchange with Antoni Maria Alcover. His lexical work, *Vocabulari del Maestrat*, was the first Valencian dictionary with Catalan used as a metalanguage, abandoning the method of predecessors who had produced Valencian-Castilian glossaries. The *Vocabulari del Maestrat* appeared in fascicles in the *Butlletí*

de la Societat Castellonenca de Cultura, from 1922 until 1928, when the work was interrupted by the death of Garcia i Girona.

He had started collecting words before he knew about Alcover's project, just as his admired Verdaguer and Mistral had done before, with literary purposes. As we pointed out, Garcia i Girona wrote with ambition and was interested in the reception of the work, including notes on the linguistic choices in the translations, to guide the public in the reading and correct understanding of his texts.

The title *Del jardí d'Horaci* for the translation section already anticipates the thematic axis of the selected poems, which places the Horatian *locus amoenus* in his country, el Maestrat. The language and style of his translations are a reflection of the language of Benassal. The versions by Garcia i Girona fully adapt the style of the originals, which range from learned compositions to satirical poems. As a taste of the linguistic aspects, we can mark some features of different categories. For example, we find hesitation in articles, combining both the form *el* and *lo*. The choice of demonstratives is also varied: *aqueste*, *aquesta*, *este/esta*, and *eixe/eixa*. Regarding the possessives, he combines the tonic possessives *meu*, *meua*, *meus*, *meues* with the unstressed *mon* and *ma*. Another case of alternation occurs in the consecutive conjunctions *pos* and *puix*, which is the most repeated. Following in line with the classics, he includes several cultisms in the reception language, such as the maintenance of the preposition *ab*, which appears most frequently, with few incursions of the evolved form *amb*. Turning to the lexicon, he tries to use Benassal's idiosyncratic words. We can mention some of them that were introduced by him in the DCVB: *escucar*, *rabera*, *regatxol* and *retanir*.

Following the same interest in linguistics, in his remarks he also signals the presence of some hispanicisms in the common language of his territory, as is the case of *cuèrnos* (Garcia i Girona 1928: 174). In the notes on the poem in which it appears, he states the following: "This word, vicious because it is altered Castilian, is, however, used in our Maestrat, Plana and València. Horace, against a vile dog, is dressed up here in the beautiful figure of a brave bull."

The semantic precision in the choice of words is one of the great virtues of Garcia i Girona, which is perceptible both in his poetic production and translations. The series *Del jardí d'Horaci* follows the statement Garcia i

Girona himself specifies in the first article on translations published in the *BSCC* (Garcia i Girona 1925: 269-270):

Making a Valencian Horace, [...] a bouquet of his chosen odes that reveal an aspect of his excellent and multiple literary personalities. A Horace as he is, not taking away or adding or changing anything from the main aspects, nor even from anything secondary out of pure necessity; it does not make me sorry if I am considered to stick too closely to the letter: I prefer this to the originality of certain translators, who put a lot of their own [...] because they do not have the patience to unravel and disentangle the meaning of the original [...]. Of course, Horace dressed in the Valencian style, let him be heard and understood in the words, turns and mannerisms that I know how to find more typically and legitimately in our language. Indeed, I have so much faith in the virtue, nerve, and grace of our beautiful vernacular, that I am sure that it is not about it.

With these last words, Garcia i Girona confirms his desire to make a version “spread in Valencian” with necessary attention to the original text to obtain an accurate result for the Horatian text. He comes to a Horace located in his immediate context, with natural expression resulting from using his language, beautiful and valid for literary expression. He has a personal style, with the Maestrat’s lexicon and linguistic traits through which he accesses his personal sphere, both of environment and thought. Garcia i Girona, in short, makes a Valencian Horace that we can well read looking back at the surroundings of Benassal: “Ací baix l’ombra la innocent dolcesa | gustaràs del vi Lèsbic, sense cures | de que ambdós, Baco i Mart, promoguen fresa” (‘Here, under the shadow of innocent sweetness, | you will taste Lesbian wine, without care | that both, Bacchus and Mars, promote noise’) (Garcia i Girona 1924: 322).

5. The metrics of the translations

One of the most outstanding features of Garcia i Girona’s translations is the constant experimentation and development of the metrics. Since this aspect has been examined thoroughly by Jesús Bermúdez Ramiro (2009), whom we follow and refer to in this chapter, we do not need to go into details. Nevertheless, metrics are a fundamental aspect in the reception of

later Horace in the *Horacianes* de Costa i Llobera (1906) and, therefore, an unavoidable aspect of his follower Garcia i Girona.

As for the form of the translations, always in verse, it is necessary to distinguish two stages characterised by Garcia i Girona due to the assumed style. The first, following the nomenclature of J. S. Holmes adopted by Bermúdez Ramiro, is the use of semantic forms: the translator, Garcia i Girona, uses specific verses of the poetic tradition of the target language, Catalan. After all, at this stage, it follows what had been done, exclusively, until the publication of Costa i Llobera's influential work. Here, this way of translating corresponds to poems published between 1921 and 1924. Most likely, other undated poems that follow this modality can also be listed chronologically. Octosyllables, decasyllables, hexasyllables and Alexandrians, as his predecessor Lluís Revest had already begun to use, serve to pour out the calculated quantitative rhythms of Horace's Latin original. Take for example the archaic stanza used by Horace in Odes I 17 and II 14: Joaquim Garcia i Girona used quartets of decasyllables with different rhymes. According to Bermúdez Ramiro (2009: 56), he grouped the verses in this way "visually imitating the Latin model". In the case of I 14, only the even lines rhyme, and the same scholar emphasises that Garcia i Girona provides these lines "a calm rhythm that invites reflection", a "paused rhythmic march" (2009: 57, from which we also take the dot to identify the tonics):

Ai, quę afuąts se'n van, oh Pòstum, Pòstum,
los anys! ni la pietat lo pas atura
a les arrugues i a la instant vellęsa,
ni menys a l'ąspra mort, a tot fre dura.

(*Ode* II 14, v. 1-9, Garcia i Girona 1922: 322)

As for couplets, Garcia i Girona only respects the metrical alternation in two translations of the semantic modality. This is the case of *Ode* I 4, in which the archilochian and catalectic iambic senarii become a decasyllabic and a hexasyllable, and of *Ode* I 3, where he rendered the glyconic and the asclepiadeous with a hexasyllable and a decasyllable:

Ja amolla'l crúo hivern a l'alenada
de nova primavera,
i els àrguens trauen lentament, eixutes,
les naus a la ribera.

(*Ode* I 4, Garcia i Girona 1922: 386)

Vullga Venus la Cípria
I de Helena els germans, llums del cel fúlgides,
I dels vents lo rei lòbregue,
tots tancant-los al cau, fora els dols làpiga,

(*Ode* I 3, Garcia i Girona 1925, in Gimeno Betí 2004: 179)

In two translations by Garcia i Girona, the original couplets have become extensions of a single type of verse. This is the case of *Ode* I 7, in which the alternation of dactylic hexameter and dactylic tetrameter is neutralised in a string of alexandrines, and of *Epode* 3, made up of couplets of iambic senarius and iambic tetrameter, which he translated into hexasyllabic verses. These references serve as a brief sample of the first stage.

After the publication of a translation of the *Ode to Melpomene* (*Ode* IV 3) in 1925, the author consciously began a second stage characterised by the use of mimetic forms: here the translator prefers to adapt the original Latin metres, intimately linked to Horace's lyrical poetics, into a combination of Catalan tonic and atonic syllables that aim to imitate the rhythms of the Latin original, quantitative in nature. The aim, following the spirit of Carducci and, mainly, of Costa i Llobera, was, in the words of the translator, "to make a Valencian Horace" both in content and form. The first translation published with this modality was followed by a long and grateful theoretical explanation. In this second text, he not only explains his conception of Horace and the translation but also becomes aware of being in a different phase (Garcia i Girona 1925: 270) to the previous one.

Regarding the adoption of rhythms, already in the first stage, Garcia i Girona had become a disciple who followed the steps of the master, Costa i Llobera, very closely. This is evidenced by Bermúdez Ramiro (2009: 61) by comparing the translations of the same ode first by the Mallorcan and then by the poet from Castelló:

Calma suplica // el navegant qui es troba
 per la mar ampla // si ya negre nuvol
 tapa la lluna // cap estel propici
 guia li dona.

(Costa i Llobera, Horacianes IV)

Calma al deus prega // el navegant quis troba
 en la mar ampla // Grega si un fosc nuvol
 tapa la lluna // i'ls estels dubtosa
 guia li donen.

(Garcia i Girona 1923)

However, the disciple was to develop his own strategies in the mimetic stage, aiming to be as close to Horace as possible. To do so, he explicitly relies on the interpretation of Ettore Stampini (1908) and the traditional ecclesiastical prosody of the Latin *Breviarium* (Garcia i Girona 1925: 275). Thus, he develops a very particular system in which he takes as a reference the *ictus* of the different feet to put, in the Catalan version, a tonic syllable. At this point, it may be worth reproducing his own words (Garcia i Girona 1925: 271):

Let's do a test, benevolent readers, in a random ode, for example, in the one entitled "To Vergil's ship".

*Síc te díva poténs Cypri
 Síc fratrés Helenáe, lúcida sídera [...]*

The syllables that carry an accent are the long ones, which must be pronounced loading and lengthening the voice more; the unaccented ones are the short ones, which should be read more quickly [...]. These two verses, reproduced in Valencian, read like this:

*Vullga Vènus la Xipria,
 I d'Helena els germáns, llúms del cel nitidesi [...]*

And I invite the readers to read the Latin verses first, and then the Valencian ones, paying attention to the accents as they are marked in the two versions, and to tell me loyally if they do not perceive the same galloping of the rhythm in both, the same harmony, the same grace of movement.

Identifying the mechanisms operating in Garcia i Girona when creating rhythms is not always easy. In fact, according to Jaume Medina (2003: 76), his theoretical articles, despite not being mentioned, were the instigators of

a controversy in the press of Vic about the possibility of imitating classical metres. Horace's translator Josep Maria Llovera was involved. That is why it is appreciated that, along with the exhaustive work of Bermúdez Ramiro, Garcia i Girona himself commented on his own translations in some papers and made his process of experimentation explicit. In Horatian terms, we could speak of *limae labor* (*Ars Poetica*, v. 290). Therefore, it is not surprising that we find different versions of the same ode (even if sometimes partially). This is the case of Ode I 3, two verses of which we have seen, but also of Ode I 20. We reproduce the preserved versions of the first stanza of this last poem (Garcia i Girona 1925: 275-276 and 1926: 219):

Jo tinc un vinet, de Sabina terra,
Que l'has de tastar, cavaller Mecenes,
Mon amic volgut, i en grec cànter guarde
Per a quan vingues.

Tinc un vi pobre de Sabina terra,
I has de tastar-lo, cavaller Mecenes
Mon amic íntim, i en grec cànter guarde
Per a quan vingues.

Te convida a un vi de Sabina terra,
Molt pobret i moll, cavaller Mecenes,
Car amic, i en grecs canterets jo guarde
Per a quan vingues.

Regarding the last version, he explained as follows:

But these are not sapphics — someone will say. — So many sharp hemistichs and twelve syllables instead of eleven. — I answer: I repeat that I do not adhere to the metric of our vulgar language. If I am allowed, I will say that I write Latin verses in Valencian words. I don't care if there are twelve syllables or eleven. What I want is for the tenses of the Latin quantity to be perceived as equally ordered in the Valencian, neither one more nor one less (Garcia i Girona 1926: 219).

An interesting point, which has gone unnoticed in previous criticism, is that Garcia i Girona was not only up to date with what was taking place in the sphere of Catalan, but he also took the opportunity to exchange impressions about translation with whomever he could. Thus, in one of Garcia i Girona's explanatory papers he describes a meeting with a "remarkable professional,

a Latinist of top-level” (Garcia i Girona 1925: 274), who showed him a whole series of metrical attempts “in Asturian Castilian made in the mould of the Latin classics” that coincided with the analysis and application made by our Valencian author. Although he goes so far as to quote two verses in Asturian that imitate the Latin hexameter⁴, he does not mention the name of his Asturian interlocutor at any point (“the name of whom I do not believe I am authorised to reveal”, Garcia I Girona 1925: 274-276). We only know that this person had the intention of “promptly publishing some works he has written on these subjects, and essays on new Castilian-Asturian poetry.” This approach to Asturian production shows once again Garcia i Girona’s sensitivity to creation in other languages, even minority ones. It is worth remembering that he had correspondence with Frederic Mistral as attested by “a postcard dated at Maiano, Provence, on June 15, 1909, and addressed to the Seminary of Zaragoza” (Barreda 1997).

Although at the beginning of the 20th century, Asturian literature experienced a hopeful moment thanks to the *rexonalismu*, which together with new political ideas sought to consolidate the resurgence movement developed in the previous century, the number of possible candidates that we can consider is reduced to two. Unfortunately, we have not obtained enough documentation to definitively confirm or deny either of them, despite having one more plausible candidate. First, one may consider the poet and doctor Francisco Balbín de Villaverde “Xiquín de Villaviciosa” (Madrid, 1892-Buenos Aires, 1985), a poet known for a collection of poems entitled *De la mió Asturias (Poesies)* (1926) and published in Argentina, where he resided between 1922 and 1929 and from 1942 until his death (Portal Hevia 1995: 8-12). A translation of Horace was published in this book (Ode I 26)⁵. One of the particularities of this Asturian author is that he did not reside in Asturias; he only summered there occasionally, and Simat de la Valldigna (la Safor, València) is among the places he visited to practise medicine. Note that it was in València that his Spanish translation of the *Chanson de Roland*

4. “Yo vou pul camin cantando l’amor que me lhieva, | Yo vi en cada flor pedim una càntiga nueva.”

5. On the translations of Horace into Asturian, see the comprehensive study by González Delgado 2004. Pages 79-80 are dedicated to the translation of “Xiquín de Villaviciosa”.

(1918) was published. However, we have no evidence to assume that this author had any special interest in the metrical adaptation of the classics and his only known translation does not go in this direction nor is it consistent with the observations that Garcia i Girona conveys from his anonymous interlocutor.

Despite it not being very clear where and when they could have met, the Asturian author who fits best as the illustrious interlocutor of Garcia i Girona is Galo Antonio Fernández (1884-1939), called Padre Galo, who signed under the name Fernán Coronas. The coincidences with the description of Garcia i Girona seem strong enough to be optimistic about this identification, although one must be cautious. First of all, Fernán Coronas agrees with the knowledge of the ecclesiastical interpretation of Latin (“[a] true revelation to me [...] on the way it is sung by the Church, [...] when the same *Breviary* [...]”) and an apology for the same (“[w]hat regards the conduct of the Church at this point, it must be vindicated”), something that is typical of a person who uses the breviary, a basic book of the liturgical life of consecrated people and, indeed, Padre Galo was a religious priest of the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate. Secondly, the mention of different ways of interpreting the Latin prosody specific to different countries — “[t]he distinguished visitor who has recently been in Germany and England [...] told me that in France and Italy they are still very refractory” — is consistent with his trips to convents of his order all over Europe: the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Italy. Secondly, in the fragment of the hexameters adapted to Asturian that the man from Benassal transmits, the verb *lhieva*⁶ for the more common *llieva* shows an innovative orthographic feature proposed and promoted by Ferrán Coronas. Bearing in mind all of the above, it seems quite likely that Padre Galo is the mysterious sage mentioned by Mn. Garcia i Girona, something

6. About the sound that represents this digraph, Padre Galo wrote a poem entitled “Pa prenuñar bien la lh”: “La nueva de Pin del Lhuelhu | Bundle of lhana a lhuvielhu; Foi lhavalhu nu perpielhu...” (Fernán Coronas 1993: 101, no. 56). It is worth saying, however, that it is not a conclusive argument in itself, given that other authors followed it. This is the case of Casimiro Cienfuegos (García 1993: 28).

that could be confirmed if it were identified to which poem the two verses in Asturian that he transmits belong⁷.

6. Conclusive remarks

Although *Seidia* is the most relevant work of Joaquim Garcia i Girona, the writer from Benassal devoted no less time and effort to the translation of some odes and epodes of Horace following the spirit of his time. Although he always followed his intuition, in the composition of the long poem on the conquest of València he followed the steps of the Catalan Jacint Verdaguer, while for the translation he followed the Mallorcan Miquel Costa i Llobera. This Catalonia-Mallorca-Valencia triangle is no minor fact, and reveals a high linguistic awareness, manifested in his translations (and compositions) using the idiosyncratic words of the territory of the old Diocese of Tortosa, already having found a collaborator in Antoni Maria Alcover.

The translations of Horace are a special part of Garcia i Girona and intimately linked to his poetic and academic activity. Not without reason, he dedicated himself to developing a translational and prosodic theory, something rare in his time. Indeed, his position as a priest at the head of the training of future ecclesiastics led him to prioritise a prosodic tradition not considered by the purest classical philology. However, their experimentation and theorising, despite the little impact they had north of the Ebro river, offer a testimony of the highest order to the development of the Catalan adaptation of classical metres, after the spark ignited by Costa i Llobera. Alongside translations and works that we find already completed, Garcia i Girona, progressively, slowly and over time, explains the problems and solutions he finds in the task of transporting complex and almost unusual rhythms into Catalan.

7. Although they are not found in Antón García's extensive collection (Fernán-Coronas 1993), the editor specifies that the work of this Asturian poet is very scattered and that he only could compile a part of it (García 1993: 38).

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