

Jacint Verdaguer, national poet of Catalonia

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ABSTRACT

Jacint Verdaguer's vast and rich work makes him the most outstanding Catalan writer of the Romantic period, and even of the whole nineteenth century. Doubtless, he is also one of the classic Catalans of all times. His work was not only of an intrinsic and lasting quality, it was also of historical importance. Verdaguer brought with him the consolidation of the literary language of the *Renaixença*¹ which was the foundation for later literature. Furthermore, his prestige as a writer resulted in a measure of international recognition for the Catalan literature of the *Renaixença*. Interest in the figure of Verdaguer often related with the polemics around his biography, an interest that is still alive nowadays. This interest has created a field of its own, the *verdagerisme*, that in the last thirty years has turned him into a privileged subject for study in the world of Catalan philology, with doctoral dissertations, critical editions and essays, besides a specialised academic review (*Anuari Verdaguer*) and a scientific society devoted to him (*Societat Verdaguer*).

KEY WORDS: Jacint Verdaguer, Romanticism, *Renaixença*, 19th century, *verdagerisme*, Catalan Philology, Catalan Literature, Catalan Classics.

A ROMANTIC WRITER TURNED CLASSIC

Jacint Verdaguer (1865-1902) is unquestionably the most representative writer of modern Catalan literature. On the one hand, he is the most outstanding figure of Catalan Romanticism, with the greatest international recognition during his time. On the other, he is a classic, not in the sense of being the opposite of romantic, but in the sense of a literary model, imitated, admired and studied as very few other Catalan writers have been. For modern Catalan literature his literary output has a significance only comparable to that of Ramon Llull in the Middle Ages. This is why very soon after his death, several editions of his complete works, critical editions and doctoral dissertations, editions of his posthumous works (in different degrees of elaboration), besides numerous editions and re-editions of single works, and many anthologies began to appear. There is also a scientific corporation (the Verdaguer Society), a specialised review (the *Anuari Verdaguer*) and periodical seminars (*Col·loquis sobre Verdaguer*) that keep the current importance of this modern Catalan classic alive.

Just as Llull gave rise to the field of *lul·lisme*, Verdaguer has his own *verdagerisme*, made up of the uninterrupted study of his life and work and of the popularity of his exceptional figure. No other personality in Catalonia of his time has lived in the hearts of a great part of the population as Verdaguer did («*mossèn Cinto*»,² as he was popularly called); and no other Catalan writer has achieved such wide national and international acclaim. In 21st century Catalonia he keeps up unaltered the prerogatives of a national classic.

AN APPROXIMATION TO VERDAGUER'S BIOGRAPHY

Verdaguer's biography was divided in the middle by a profound personal crisis and by a great social scandal; it oozes the agonistic –in the etymologic sense of the term– history of Catalonia during the second half of the 19th century, plus some glimpses from Spain and Europe, while his work gives shape to the no less agonistic literary recovery of the Catalan language from Romanticism³ to Modernism.⁴ Therefore it is not surprising that Verdaguer's personality has attracted the attention of more biographers than any other Catalan writer, a fact that for a long time has impaired the scientific study of his literary production.

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His origins and education: 1845-1870

Jacint Verdaguer Santaló was born in 1845, in Folgueroles, a village close to Vic some eighty kilometres North of Barcelona, to a large, modest, pious and well-read family. The village of Folgueroles, with just over five hundred inhabitants, was basically agricultural, although the proximity of the textile industries on the river Ter generated the first industrial working-class conscience. But above all Folgueroles felt drawn to Vic, a town with little over ten thousand inhabitants, a bishopric since antiquity, capital of the old earldom of Osona, and centre of a rich county of the interior of Catalonia, placed between the Pyrenees and the Montseny. Today the village of Folgueroles, with Verdaguer as a tourist cultural trademark, has fifteen hundred inhabitants, and the town of Vic, enlivened by some thousand students of its university, has quadrupled its population. In the year 1845, when the poet was born, Isabella II reigned in a Spain that was still a colonial empire, while Catalonia, in spite of the Carlist⁵ civil wars and the clashes between conservatives and progressives, recovered its national identity and tried to find its place in modern Spain.

Verdaguer's parents directed him towards ecclesiasti-



Figure 1. Portrait of Jacint Verdaguer. Photography. Heribert Marriazcurrena, 1868. Historical Archive of the City of Barcelona.

cal studies in Vic's Seminary. He was adored by his mother who saw in him a unique destiny. He was a strong and lively adolescent attracted to adventure, love and cultural values. He stayed at the family home until he was seventeen, although from the age of ten he attended daily lessons in Vic's Seminary.

His mother's religious influence, the permanent contact with nature and his inclination towards popular culture awoke in him his writing vocation. At the age of fifteen he wrote his first lines. The study of rhetoric and poetry in the Seminary soon acquainted him with academic literature; at eighteen he started to write his first ambitious works, one of which, *Dos màrtirs de ma pàtria o sigui Lluçia i Marcià* (Two Martyrs of my Country, Lluçia and Marcià), a poem in two cantos, was published in Vic in the year 1865. Other works remained unfinished, such as *Colom*, an interesting poem in verse and prose on the discovery of America; one episode of this gave rise later to *L'Atlàntida* (Atlantis). In 1865, when he was twenty years old, he was awarded with would it be first great triumph of his life: the prizes at the Barcelona *Jocs Florals*.⁶ He won again the following year. These prizes introduced him to the literary circles of the capital of Catalonia, strengthened his literary vocation, and helped him to become friendly with the most outstanding figures of the Catalan movement of the *Renaixença*,⁷ as well as with the young priests who would later hold the highest posts in the Catalan Church.

In 1867 he founded with his school companions a literary group called *Esbart*. Like Provençal *felibres* (poets), they met in open nature, under the shade of a willow tree that grew near a fountain close to the poet's home. When Frederic Mistral visited Barcelona in 1868, the author of *Mirèio* recognized the young man's talent, and both kept up a long relationship. In 1885 Verdaguer translated Mistral's poem *Nerto*. In spite of his undistinguished studies, the young poet was at the centre of the Vic *Esbart* students. This group would soon merge with the Catholic and Catalanist groups from Barcelona, becoming one of the ideological leaders during the period of the monarchical Restoration of the Borbon dynasty. Verdaguer's intimate friend, Jaume Collell (1864-1932), orator and journalist with a great influence in the Church and in the initial political conservative Catalanism –opposed to the liberal Catalanism of Valentí Almirall (1841-1904)– encouraged and decisively oriented him.

In 1870 Verdaguer finished his ecclesiastical studies and was ordained as a priest. In general terms, and compared to other educative centres, Vic's Seminary was a prestigious school that provided a solid academic formation; Verdaguer, though, did not take full advantage of it because he preferred poetry and the arts to scholastic philosophy and theology. When he celebrated his first Mass in the hermitage of Sant Jordi de Puigsesolles, on a hill close to Folgueroles, in the centre of the Vic Plain, with a prehistoric dolmen, the priest and poet filled the occasion with symbolic meaning. He would always remember that

he celebrated his first mass «between a dolmen and an altar» and that his life was nothing but intent to render compatible «the chalice and the harp», religion and paganism, priesthood and poetry.

His fifteen years as a student in Vic provided Verdaguer with a rich human, literary and religious formation. His uncouth and impulsive character became softer; his rural, unmannerly appearance changed into the gentle manners of an educated and sensitive young priest. Among the erudite groups and in the libraries of Vic, particularly in the Episcopal library, rather than in the classrooms, he managed to acquire a remarkable humanistic knowledge. In the libraries he was able to study the classical Greco-Latin antiquities, the great authors of modern European letters, especially the Castilian authors of the Spanish Golden Age. At the same time he kept in contact with his Barcelona masters, in particular with the librarian and polymath Marià Aguiló (1825-1897) and the professor and critic Manuel Milà (1818-1894). They guided him in his readings of contemporary romantic authors, and asked him for field work on traditional folk songs. In short, Verdaguer's literary training is the result of the convergence of two different currents: that of ancient classical tradition and that of Romantic and Classic modernity, both coexisting in the 19th century.

Verdaguer's religious background, as that of most Catalans of his time, received a double influence too, a wise one and a popular one, represented respectively by two eminent clergymen from Vic: the philosopher Jaume Balmes (1810-1848) and the preacher Saint Antoni Maria Claret (1807-1870). Both were prolific and influential Controversialists. The former defending the Church from the attacks coming from modern thought and science; the latter –confessor to Isabella II and Archbishop of Cuba– defending it from the laicist and anti-religious ideas that were gaining ground in 19th century society.

Decisive parenthesis: 1871-1876

Against his own prospects and aspirations, and in contrast to his priest friends, Verdaguer was appointed by the Bishop of Vic as vicar to the parish of Vinyoles d'Orís, a small hamlet, not even a village, near Vic. He spent three years there, from 1871 to 1874, at the height of the Carlist war,⁸ sincerely dedicated to his priestly tasks, especially when he was left by himself, because the rector had abandoned the parish to enlist in the Carlist army. Full of mystical fervour, Verdaguer imposed on himself a rigorous way of life inspired by Saint John of the Cross and Saint Ignatius of Loyola. In his work plan he allotted a specific time for poetry: to popular poetry, in order to renew the pious songs of the people; to mystic poetry, to express his religious experience; and to epic poetry in order re-make his poem on Atlantis on which he had been working for years, and that had been rejected in the *Jocs Florals* of 1868. His austerity, his aesthetic privations and the tensions and commotions of those years of conflict between Carlists, liberals and the first Republic (1873) were at the

origin of his illness, probably tuberculosis, which he caught in Vinyoles d'Orís and that made him suffer severe migraines, treated by doctors in the most disparate ways.

In 1874 Verdaguer moved to Barcelona, where he spent one year ill and in poverty in the homes of friends and benefactors related to Vic and its surrounding area; he was determined not to return to the parish. A friendly priest managed to secure him a job as chaplain in a steamship of the *Companyia Transatlàntica* covering a regular route from Spain to the Antilles. He embarked at the end of 1874, and in two years crossed the Atlantic nine times. Sailing brought with it a complete turning point in his career. The sea breeze made him recover his health; ocean landscapes, the sailor's life, free time, and the acquisition of new knowledge on continents and oceans helped him to complete the great poem of his youth, *L'Atlàntida*; and eventually his post as steamship's chaplain soon opened his path to become a protected employee of the owner of the *Companyia Transatlàntica*, the magnate Antonio López López, first Marquis of Comillas (1817-1883), and of his heir Claudio López Bru (1835-1925). This allowed him to establish himself in Barcelona and acquire a very favourable situation as a professional ecclesiastic and writer.

In Barcelona, under the protection of the Marquis of Comillas: 1877-1893

At the end of 1876, after «conquering» the *Atlàntida*, Verdaguer left the sea behind and entered to serve the first Marquis of Comillas, Antonio López López, his household and his enterprises, as domestic chaplain. This is how he achieved golden stability under the patronage of that powerful ship-owner with the biggest fortune in Spain at the time. A fortune that began in America and that grew with his financial and industrial activity in the Iberian peninsula, particularly in Catalonia. It was there that Antonio López linked his family to the family of Count Eusebi Güell i Bacigalupi (1846-1918), patron and principal of the architect Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926). The two geniuses of finance and of industry of modern Catalonia and of post-revolutionary Borbon Restoration⁹ formed, with the two geniuses of Catalan poetry of the *Renaixença* and of *Modernist* architecture a mighty «League of the Holy Family».¹⁰ Verdaguer was not only the famous poet loved by Catalans from all the regions of the language, the singer of the Hispanic theme par excellence, the New World's discovery, but also the priest from humble origin who incarnated the kind of social harmony preached by the Church, the fitting person to receive the patronage and to transform it into an instrument of Catholic propaganda. He became the courtly priest, the household servant, the family confidant, the administrator of the charity of the Marquis. He also held the post of religious inspector of the *Companyia Transatlàntica*. As Ricard Torrents, one of the outstanding critics of the writer's life and work, has remarked: «This is how Verdaguer was able to become the first professional Catalan writer;



Figure 2. Portrait of Jacint Verdaguer. Photography: 1886. Museum of History of the City of Barcelona-Verdaguer Museum. Vil·la Joana. Antoni Boada Collection.

professional in the sense of somebody usually working as a writer, not having to write in his free time while in some other job, or having to write also in Castilian» (Torrents, 2002, p.65).

Verdaguer was an employee of the marquis of Comillas from 1877 to 1893. During those years he rose to the highest social level he could aspire to. He had his own office at the Moja palace, in Barcelona's Rambla, where he daily celebrated a mass for the soul of the marquis' son. He accompanied the López and Güell families on their journeys and holidays away from Barcelona. He attended the frequent visits of high ecclesiastics and prominent figures of politics, enterprise and the arts. The López family –raised to the rank of *grandees*, as the Güells would also be– were patrons and friends of King Alphonse XII and of the royal family, who visited them at the palace of Sobrellano, in Comillas (Cantabria). As a representative of the marquis and marchioness, María Gayón, he distributed among the poor of that Barcelona of «the gold rush» substantial sums of money. He had a hand in the designation of people to be hired in the marquis' enterprises. He travelled all over the Peninsula, France, and Italy, with stays in fashionable health resorts and in residences the marquis had in Santander, Extremadura and Madrid. He went on a cruise to Northern Africa, and accompanied Eusebi Güell on a journey to Central and Northern Europe, as far as Saint Petersburg. He went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Pal-

estine, Syria and Egypt. He spent some time in the mansions the López and the Güell families had near Barcelona, in Caldes d'Estrac, Les Corts de Sarrià, and La Mogoda. During five summers he undertook difficult trips and long stays in the Pyrenees, walking from peak Aneto to Cape of Creus. His economic position allowed him to help his relatives in Folgueroles and to find jobs for his ecclesiastical friends, writers and artists.

This period of prosperity was his most productive period as a writer. He published several books in verse and prose, he took part in numerous competitions, was awarded prizes and distinctions and acted as representative of Catalan writers in commissions and in all kind of social and patriotic events, without ever going into politics. As a culmination of his literary and social success, Verdaguer was solemnly crowned in Ripoll as Catalonia's Poet. The symbolic significance of the place, where the beginning of the restoration of the monastery (a Romanesque monument, pantheon of the Catalan Earls) was being celebrated, was reinforced by the recent publication of the poem *Canigó*, as well as by the presence of the great Bishop of Vic, Josep Morgades (1826-1901), crowning Verdaguer.

Once the poet had completed his break away from that world, he was to summarize that glorious period saying that he had spent his prime locked in a «golden cage». As a matter of fact, maybe it was not a golden cage looked for, but it was certainly willingly accepted for many years without regret. Since he had intended to harmonize the chalice with the harp, and was proud of having celebrated his first mass between a heathen dolmen and a Christian chapel, and since he craved as much for literary glory as for religious perfection, he took most advantage of these years of wellbeing to write a vast work in prose and verse, and to take part in numerous religious, patriotic and literary undertakings. The Church was in need of prestigious people: Verdaguer was ready to put his name at the service of Catholic propaganda, as well as to gather others from the letters and the arts. The Church and the new industrial bourgeoisie were allied against the de-Christianization of the rural masses and of the urban industrial workers. The poet contributed to propagandist campaigns writing texts that, if hardly poetical, they moved popular religious feelings. The Catholic and conservative Catalanism born from the *Renaixença* aimed at being hegemonic in the Catalan political aspirations; Verdaguer was the best poet in Catalan and was able to construct a patriotic poetics and mythology that have been a guiding reference to several generations of Catalans.

The seventeen years that Verdaguer spent in Barcelona as an employee of the marquis of Comillas are divided into two sub-periods. The first were the ten years between the poet's two grand literary triumphs, the epics *L'Atlàntida* (1877) and *Canigó* (Mount Canigó, 1886); it is a period characterized by a great literary, patriotic, and social activity in a context of Catalonia's «restoration». It is the most productive period of his career: *Idil·lis i cants místics* (Idylls and Mystic songs, 1879), *Llegenda de Montserrat* (Legend

of Montserrat, 1880), *Cançons de Montserrat* (Songs of Montserrat, 1880), *Caritat* (Charity, 1885), *Canigó* (1886), *Lo somni de Sant Joan. Llegendes del Sagrat Cor de Jesús* (Saint John's Dream. Legend of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1887), *Excursions i viatges* (Excursions and Journeys, 1887), *Pàtria* (Fatherland, 1888), *Dietari d'un pelegrí a Terra Santa* (A Pilgrim's Diary to the Holy Land, 1889), etc. The second sub-period begins in 1886, after the coronation in Ripoll, and ends with the expulsion from the marquis' service in 1893; it is characterized by a strong crisis of disagreement with himself, a progressive dedication to spiritual perfection, to devotions, and charitable practice, with the result of a dwindling of his literary production leading to an all out conflict with his protectors/employers.

The conflict: 1893-1897

It is difficult to summarize a question so complex, argued on and swamped with bibliography, as the conflict that began by confronting Verdaguer with the marquis of Comillas, continued with his opposition to his religious superiors, and ended with his being antagonized to most of his relatives, friends and collaborators. Capuchin Miquel d'Esplugues (1870-1934), in his penetrating study *La tragèdia de mossèn Verdaguer*, published in 1930, sees it as a tragedy. The Andalusian historian Jesús Pabón (1902-1975), in his well-documented research *El drama de mosén Jacinto*, published in 1954, presents it as a «drama». Others prefer to speak of «the case Verdaguer». We have opted to qualify the poet's new situation as «conflictive»: it was induced during his journey to the Holy Land in 1886, was followed by his expulsion from the marquis' palace and from Barcelona in 1893, as well as by his two year seclusion at La Gleba; then he disobeyed and escaped, was suspended *a divinis* (i.e., deprived of his priestly faculties), was a defiant rebel for two years, and was finally rehabilitated in 1898.

The conflict was in fact dramatic, even tragic, not only for Verdaguer, the protagonist, but also for his antagonists: in the first place, for the marquis of Comillas, one of the most outstanding men of Spain at the time, and for the Bishop of Vic, Josep Morgades, an eminent figure in the 19th century Catalan church. It was equally dramatic for a great number of close or distant groups of people, diversely implicated in the affair, as it was also dramatic for the better or worse informed general public, both in and out of Catalonia, who, baffled and perplexed, read the poet's articles *En defensa pròpia* (In Self-defense) that were published by Barcelona's anti-clerical and anti-Catalanist press. It was a dramatic conflict too for the Catalan nation, who experienced in Verdaguer one of the most representative moments of the contradictions of its contemporary history.

In spite of the difficulties in dealing with such an intricate and tedious question, a question that is not yet closed but still open to new research and interpretations, we present a summary of the facts and their reach, trying to follow the opinions of the most balanced scholars.

The journey to the Holy Land in 1886 sparked off the poet's interior crisis. On his return from the holy places of Christianity, he wrote to his friend Collell, who was writing the prologue to the French edition of *L'Atlàntida*: «I have seen my forty years one by one, and I feel ashamed of them all. You could summarize my wasted life distorting the words from the Gospel: *Male omnia fecit* [he did everything wrong].» In accordance with this attitude of blaming his past for having pursued literary glory and having lived, if not in riches, at least under their shadow, the poet turned his life around and almost abandoned his literary activity devoting himself to the search of a holy path, intensifying his prayers, fasting, confession and almsgiving. He aimed at holiness, taking as his models the traditional figures of Christian saints who had already seduced him in his youth, in particular saint Francis of Assisi. He neglected his social obligations as domestic chaplain, and in his task of distributing the marquis' alms, when he saw they were not sufficient to fulfil the many needs, he made them up from his own pocket, being on more than one occasion victim of some unscrupulous people.

He entered into a more and more intense relationship with a group of illuminist and visionary faithful meeting privately in a «House of Prayer» in a Barcelona apartment. They claimed to receive supernatural revelations, guided by priests who practiced exorcisms without the bishop's obligatory authorization. The shock of those esoteric experiences in contrast with his daily immersion in a dual Barcelona, divided between the riches of the Comillas palace and the misery of the excluded, gave rise in Verdaguer to an «enlightening» that transformed him into a new man. On his new path the poet found the support of a pious widow who exerted a powerful influence on him. Verdaguer had attended her husband on his deathbed and had formally promised him not to abandon his three orphan children. A boy and two girls, one of whom, Empar Duran, had supernatural visions.

The exorcising prayers were recommended by the Pope himself, and every priest received the order –that is the power– to exorcise, but their application to people supposedly possessed by the devil, as was done by Jesus, according to the Gospels, the hierarchy reserved for especially experienced and duly authorised priests. It has not been proved that Verdaguer transgressed the prohibition to exorcise; maybe he only prayed for it. The poet bought a property in the Barcelona quarter of Penitents that was considered by the group of illuminists as the founding sacred place for their religious practices. But Verdaguer did not have the necessary financial resources and counted on the help of the marquis. This unwise acquisition was at the origin of the economic troubles that reduced him to misery.

The marquis and his entourage could not tolerate that their domestic chaplain, after all only an employee, should turn towards such forms of devotion and frequent groups of faithful who were objects of gossip and denunciation in the ecclesiastical courts. Verdaguer brought them to the

oratory of the palace, where he celebrated daily mass. These visits originated more and more uncomfortable situations, to the point that the old marchioness left her Barcelona residence and moved to Madrid. Guided by his Jesuit Counsellors, the marquis decided to put an end to that situation by dismissing the priest employee of his duties; he did it through Verdaguer's ecclesiastic superiors, the Bishops of Vic and Barcelona. On the one hand, Verdaguer belonged to the bishopric of Vic, where Bishop Morgades could take away his licence to hold office in another diocese and bring him back to his original one. On the other hand, the Bishop of Barcelona, to whose jurisdiction Verdaguer was assigned due to his post as the marquis' chaplain, could hold back this assignment and force him to go back to Vic. This is what the three leading men decided to do.

Leaving aside whether the measure was fair or unfair, prudent or imprudent, inspired or not by the Jesuits and other supposed enemies of Verdaguer, it seems clear that they committed the serious mistake of ignoring the poet's character. They deceived him by hiding the true reasons for moving him away from Barcelona, telling him that it was a temporary measure and that it would be good for his health to return to Vic. Obediently Verdaguer chose as residence the sanctuary of La Gleva, eight kilometres away from Vic and three from Manlleu, where he could catch the train. There he took up again his literary activity with new intensity, but proceeded with his relationship with the Barcelona illuminists. As the months went by he discovered little by little his real situation. The marquis did not only not pay his debts as he had promised to do, but did not readmit him to his service. The Bishop of Vic not only did not grant him licence to move to another bishopric, but forced him to stay at La Gleva, kept watch on him so he could not escape and offered him retirement in the Asylum for old priests in Vic.

He realized that his stay in the sanctuary was a form of confinement, and he fled from it on May 1895, openly disobeying his superior's orders. Once in Barcelona he stayed at the house of his admirer, Deseada Martínez, who changed from being protected to protector of the fugitive priest. This was the origin of accusations of indecency, or even concubinage, that began to go around in clerical circles. The bishop threatened to send him back to Vic by appealing to obligatory canonical obedience, and using the norms derived from the Concordat with the Holy See, he had no qualms in ordering the police to arrest him. He failed in that, and eventually put him under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastic court of Vic who condemned the rebel priest to the maximum punishment of the canonical penal code, his suspension *a divinis*, that is, taking away his priestly licence, which implied depriving him of priests' subsistence wages.

Verdaguer's reaction was that of a priest who has been offended and humiliated, as well as that of a writer brought to bay and who defends himself by his writing. He responded by publishing in the daily press –which he had to

do in left wing and anti-catalanist ones– two series of articles, *Un sacerdot calumniat* (A Slandered Priest, 1895) and *Un sacerdot perseguit* (A Persecuted Priest, 1897), published later together with the title *En defensa pròpia*, where he offers his own version of the events, denounces the persecution to which he has been submitted and gives the names of those he considers guilty of it all. The scandal he provoked was impressive and found national and international echo comparable in some points to that of the *affaire Dreyfus* in the France of the time. Public opinion was divided between the poet's supporters and his detractors. He was publicly presented as mad –a medical report in this sense was published– and his moral integrity, because of his living with the Duran-Martínez family, was put into question. Most of his priestly friends and a big section of literary Catalanists abandoned him. Verdaguer found himself fallen into economic misery and was marginalised from literary, social and ecclesiastic life. His conflict with the bishop was not easily solved in spite of the steps taken by many, including the Vatican. Verdaguer, with his strong faith, and convinced that he was not guilty at all and was being unjustly persecuted, did not want to submit himself to the bishop. Eventually the conflict was solved in Madrid thanks in particular to the mediation of the Augustine friars of El Escorial who at the end of 1897 achieved a reconciliation of compromise with no winners nor losers: Verdaguer signed a document –later published– where he recognised the prelate's authority and apologised for any wrong he might have done to the Church; the Bishop, in his turn, restored to him the right to celebrate mass and allowed the poet to belong to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Barcelona. (For information on the whole conflict, cf. Torrents, 2002, p. 87-121).

The last stage: 1897-1902

After his rehabilitation in January 1897, Verdaguer once more took up his priestly activities and his participation in literary enterprises, contests and homages. His clash with the powerful men of the Church and plutocracy increased his renown among ordinary people. Modernist writers who, at the end of the romantic century, took over the old representatives of the *Renaixença*, saw in old Verdaguer the misunderstood artist, ill-treated by bourgeois society. The painter and writer Santiago Rusiñol (1861-1931) took Verdaguer's figure as inspiration for his drama *El místic* (The mystic, 1904), and it is possible that Benito Pérez Galdós (1843-1920) had him in mind when he drew the protagonist of his novel *Nazarín*.

But after he crossed the line of fifty years, Verdaguer had suddenly grown old because his personal drama and the economic ruin that the first brought. He had to get by from his job in the parish as priest serving in burials. He embarked in new publications, founded and directed magazines, attempted to become a professional writer.

He died as the century began, on 10th June 1902, but destiny had one last contradiction for him. The partisan fights to get hold of his name, of his image and of his mate-



Figure 3. Funeral of Verdaguer on 13 June 1902

rial and spiritual legacy, restarted again around his death bed and embittered his last days. All the same, the poet's death succeeded in making everybody lay down arms, at least temporarily, and come together in an unanimous homage to the man. A crowd of people from all classes and conditions, never equalled in Barcelona's annals, overflowed the official cortège and accompanied the hearse of the immortal poet to Barcelona's Montjuïc cemetery.

AN APPROACH TO VERDAGUER'S WORK

Written over forty years within the romantic literary principles, Verdaguer's literary production was focussed above all on poetry, with more than thirty titles, published during his lifetime or posthumously. He was also the author of some prose works of a high literary quality, as well as of some translations and versions in prose and verse from other languages. After his death, some of his unpublished works have been published, and among the thousands of manuscripts he left behind there are still poems and different prose works more or less unfinished that have not yet been published. A vast and interesting epistolary of more than fifteen hundred letters, most of them already published, should also be added; including those unpublished, they add up to some two thousand letters (Casacuberta and Torrent, 1959-1993).

Until the Civil War of 1936-1939, different Barcelona publishers undertook the publication of the Complete

Works of Verdaguer. The first edition, in seven volumes, was published between 1905 and 1908 by Toledano, López and Company; from the third volume onwards the publisher was Josep Agustí, and the general title *Obres completes*. After this came the edition by Francesc Matheu in thirty small volumes that was published between 1913 and 1925, although it bears no printing date. And the edition in ten volumes by *Llibreria Catalunya* (Catalonia Bookshop) printed between 1928 and 1936, remained unfinished because of the war. It was the first that was published with standardized spelling, and presented as the «definitive edition».

In the year 1943 the edition in a single volume by Editorial Selecta, in the collection «Biblioteca Perenne», appeared in Barcelona. This edition, reprinted and augmented up to 1974, was for fifty years the only one available to the public. It had a «Prologue» by Marià Mament, an «Epilogue» by Joan Bonet i Baltà, a «General Bibliography» by Lluís Guarner, and an «Alphabetic Index of first lines». Promoted by the publishing house of the University of Vic (Eumo) and the Verdaguer Society, the first volume of the planned forty-two of the Complete Works of Verdaguer, known as OCSV (*Obra Completa Eumo Societat Verdaguer: Complete Works Eumo Verdaguer's Society*). The following titles have appeared up to now (2006): *Dos màrtirs de ma pàtria o siga Lluçia i Marcià, Montserrat: Llegendes de Montserrat, Sant Francesc* (Saint Francis), *Pàtria* (Fatherland), *Montserrat: Odes i cançons*, *L'Atlàntida*, and *Barcelona. Textos per a un llibre* (Barce-

lona. Texts for a Book).¹¹ It is an initiative as ambitious as it is slow due to the necessary research required by each volume, usually based on a doctoral dissertation. The last initiative of Complete Works is promoted by *Enciclopèdia Catalana/ Edicions Proa*, 2002-2006, made up of four volumes under the general epigraph «All the works» and the individual titles: *I Prose*, *II Long poems*, *Drama*, *III Poetry* and *IV Poetry 2*. It was edited by Joaquim Molas, Professor at the University of Barcelona, and the literary critic and Verdaguer scholar Isidor Cònsul, in addition to the collaboration of several specialists who are also in charge of the OCEV volumes. Besides the introductions and prologues to each title, the contents of the whole are remarkably superior to previous editions of the complete works because it gathers together that part of the work that was only available in specialized editions, such as juvenilia, the epistolary and unfinished books, or work that had been published in dispersed publications and therefore of difficult access, and that had never been gathered together before. The edition ends with a complete Index of titles of all poems and another of first lines.

Although not explicit, another attempt to publish a large «selected edition» of the great works of the Verdaguerian production is by professor Narcís Garolera, from the University Pompeu Fabra, of Barcelona, who since 1995 has published ten titles in diverse publishing houses.¹² They are based on the last editions published during Verdaguer's life, which have been collated with the manuscripts, once in a while presented as "critical editions" and are published with brief prologues and a sparse number of notes or textual variants; spelling and punctuation have been adapted to present usage.

In spite of the difficulty of classifying such a complex and vast work as Verdaguer's, we offer the proposal by professor Ricard Torrents because of its clarity and completeness:

a) Work in verse:

— Great poems: *Colom* (Columbus; unfinished, 1864?, published posthumously in 1907). *L'Atlàntida enfonsada i l'Espanya naixent de ses ruïnes* (Sunken Atlantis and Spain born from its Ruins, 1868, published in 1946). *L'Atlàntida. Poema* (1878). *Canigó. Llegendenda pirinaica del temps de la Reconquesta* (Canigó. Pyrenean Legend from the Time of the Reconquest, 1886).

— Odes: *Qui com Déu!* (Who like God!, 1869). *A Barcelona* (To Barcelona, 1883).

— Bucolic Poem: *Amors d'en Jordi i na Guideta* (The Loves of Jordi and Guideta, 1864, published in 1924 as a «little poem of youth»).

— Love and jocular poetry: *Jovenívoles* (Juvenilia, 1865, published in 1925 as *Primeres poesies d'un Fadri de Muntanya* (First poems of a Mountain Lad)).

— Hagiographic poems: *Dos màrtirs de ma pàtria o siga Llucià i Marcià. Poema en dos cants* (1865). *Llegendenda de Montserrat* (1880), *Lo somni de Sant Joan* (1882 i 1887). *Sant Francesc. Poema* (1895). *Romanceret de Santa Clara*

(Little Romance of Saint Clare, 1895). La trilogia *Jesús Infant* (The Trilogy of Infant Jesus, 1896), made up of three previous books: *Natzaret* (Nazareth, 1889), *Betlem* (Bethlehem, 1890) i *La fugida a Egipte* (The Flight to Egypt, 1893). *Santa Eulària. Poemet* (Saint Eulària, 1899).

— Mystic Poetry: *Idil·lis i cants místics* (1879). *Roser de tot l'any* (The Rose Almanac, 1894). *Flors del Calvari* (Flowers of Calvary, 1896). *Flors de Maria* (Flowers of Mary, 1902). *Al cel* (1903). *Eucarístiques* (Eucharist Poems, 1904). *Perles del «Llibre d'Amic e d'Amat» d'en Ramon Llull* (Pearls of the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* by Ramon Llull, 1907). *Brins d'espígol* (Sprigs of Lavender, 1981). *Jesús Amor* (Jesus-Love, 2006). *Espines i flors* (Thorns and Flowers, 2006).

— Devotional poetry: *Passió de Nostre Senyor Jesucrist* (Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 1873). *Cançons de Montserrat* (1880). *Caritat* (1885). *Col·lecció de càntics religiosos per al poble* (Collection of Religious Songs for the People, 1889). *Veus del Bon Pastor* (Voices of the Good Shepherd, 1894). *Los pobres* (The Poor, 1908). *Sants* (Saints, 1908). *Cor de Jesús* (Jesus' Heart, 2006).

— Patriotic and civil poetry: *Pàtria* (1888). *Aires del Montseny* (1901). *Barcelona. Textos per a un llibre* (2006).

— Autobiographical poem: *La Pomerola* (1896, first published in 1995).

— Poem for the stage: *L'Adoració dels pastors* (Adoration of the Shepherds. Music by Enric Morera (1901).

b) Work in prose:

— Travels: *Excursions i viatges* (Excursions and Travels, 1887). *Dietari d'un pelegrí a Terra Santa* (Diary of a Pilgrim to the Holy Land, 1889).

— Controversial writing: *En defensa pròpia* (I): *Un sacerdot perseguit* (A Persecuted Priest, 1895). *En defensa pròpia* (II): *Un sacerdot calumniat* (A Slandered Priest, 1897).

— Narrative: *Proses autobiogràfiques juvenils* (Autobiographical Prose of Youth, 186?, year of publication 1958). *Rondalles* (Folk Tales, 1905).

— Folklore: *Folklore* (1907).

— Various: *Discursos* (Speeches, 1905). *Discursos, articles i pròlegs* (Speeches, Articles and Prologues, 1920).

c) Translations and versions:

— In verse: *Càntic dels Càntics. Precedit d'Els jardins de Salomó* (Song of Songs. Preceded by The Gardens of Solomon, 1907).

— In prose: *Nerto. Poema escrit es versos provençals per Frederic Mistral* (Nerto. Poem in Provençal verse by Frederic Mistral, 1885). *Les quatre Passions dels quatre Evangelis* (The Four Passions from the Four Gospels; year of publication, 1945).

GENERAL FEATURES OF VERDAGUER'S WORKS

Epic poetry

The 19th century confirmed the novel as the main literary genre, seen as the evolutionary result from the epic and,

indeed, as the modern epic. In this context, Verdaguer's effort to write epic poetry in Catalan may seem puzzling. Verdaguer's literary upbringing on the one hand and the situation of Catalan literature during his time on the other, explain his great dedication to the epic. During Verdaguer's years of training at the seminary in Vic and the early years of Catalan literary *Renaixença* epic poetry was highly esteemed. We know that Verdaguer's favourite readings were, among others, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Klopstock's *Der Messias*. But Verdaguer was also familiar with more contemporary authors such as Goethe, Mistral, W. Scott, Lamartine, V. Hugo or Chateaubriand, all of whom had taken steps towards revitalizing the epic. As for the Catalan context, there prevailed the idea that any literature that aspired to a place among other national literatures needed an epic to stand as an artistic and linguistic landmark. Some Catalan Romantics had already attempted the task without success. One of the most influential critics of his day, Manuel Milà i Montanals, Professor at the University of Barcelona, had advanced the idea that the epic could no longer follow the classic models and had to be adapted into a less ambitious genre such as the heroic or idyllic narrative poem.

In his first literary writings, Verdaguer, emulating Mistral and following Milà's theory, composed the long narrative poem (over a thousand lines long) *Amors d'en Jordi i na Guideta*, which remained unpublished. At the same time –following the neoclassical models– he wrote an epic story set in Vic during Roman times, *Dos màrtirs de ma pàtria*, published in 1865. From that year until 1868 he attempted to write but left unfinished a Renaissance-style epic, *Colom*, on the discovery of America. This would later be the origin of *L'Atlàntida* (1877), written over ten years and following the classic model, which is considered the most enduring, though with the introduction of some new romantic forms, such as the incorporation of poems independent from the general outline, and the chorus in Canto VII. It is an epic that sings, as was de rigueur, about mythical origins, though of the entire Iberian Peninsula rather than a particular nation. The success of *L'Atlàntida* both at home and abroad was extraordinary and assured for the people of the *Renaixença* the restoration of Catalan literature with a solid and prestigious work.

Soon afterward Verdaguer wrote *La llegenda de Montserrat* (1880), continuing in a way the disintegration of the epic form that he had began in his previous work; he now modelled on the «Romantic legends» popular in his day and taking as theme the supposed origins of the Montserrat monastery, a symbol of Catalan identity. During the first half of the 1880s Verdaguer conceived and wrote what for many critics is his finest epic: *Canigó* (1886). Singing of the birth of national and Christian Catalonia thanks to the defeat of the Moslems and the unseating of the fairies that inhabited this Pyrenean mount, the epic is unique in that it is composed as an extraordinary ensemble of short poems of a great metric variety, separate



Figure 4. Cover of the bilingual edition, in Catalan and Spanish of *L'Atlàntida* (Barcelona: Print of Jaume Jepús, 1878), with translation from Melcior de Palau. Publishing binding with drawing of the caravel Santa Maria in the former plan and border, work of Lluís Domènech i Montaner, with geographical motives. *Biblioteca de Catalunya*.

from each other yet blending into a single, perfectly woven long poem. With this book Verdaguer reached the summit of epic Catalan poetry and was established as the outstanding Catalan poet of the 19th century.

Civil Poetry

Despite the fact that in Verdaguer's poetry fatherland and faith are always intimately intertwined, one part of his lyric output appears unmotivated by religion. These poems have been categorized as «civil poetry» (Molas, 1986, p. 265-270) and, with the exception of some love and jocular compositions of his youth, have a patriotic theme; they were collected especially in two books: *Pàtria* (1888) and *Aires del Montseny* (1901). The Verdaguerian notion of *pàtria* can be understood in the most immediate, traditional and etymological sense of the word: the country of one's fathers. A country that, as distinguished poet and critic Carles Riba pointed out in his Prologue to his own *Antologia* of Verdaguer, published in 1922, it «was a work and gift of God». Within this Verdaguerian notion are contained all those aspects that, in his view, had come together to form this particular land of our fathers: landscape, history, inhabitants, myths, customs, religion...

It is important to define the territorial limits of the Verdaguarian fatherland. On one level, it comprises all the historically linked Catalan-speaking areas. This Catalan identity is present in all of Verdaguer's output, and in certain poems from *Pàtria* it is stated with an unequivocal ring not often heard among Verdaguer's contemporaries. This is not to say that Verdaguer ever suggested anything beyond an affirmation of linguistic, historical, and cultural unity, together with a desire for a unitary resurgence. The focal point of Verdaguer's civil poetry is Vic and its surrounding area, and Catalonia proper (including French Catalonia), extending to wider areas only in the historical and cultural sense (the Catalan speaking countries, or the whole of the Crown of Aragon), or else within the politico-historical apparatus of the Spanish State, where a shared destiny –especially religious– enters into play.

Two themes prevail in Verdaguer's feelings about fatherland: history and the longing for homeland. The historical theme, that is present on all pages of Verdaguer's civil poetry, comes to the fore particularly in the early poems. As a good romantic, he devoted poems to Catalan medieval history, but also undertook contemporary historical topics laden with a strong ideological import, as in his two long poems focussed on Barcelona, which is used as a symbol of the whole of Catalonia: «A Barcelona» (To Barcelona) and the elegy «La palmera de Jonqueres» (The Palm of Jonqueres). These poems represent, as Verdaguer saw it, opposing visions of Catalonia under the Restoration. Thus «A Barcelona» sings optimistically of an industrious, flourishing Catalonia and its European-style bourgeoisie, while «La palmera de Jonqueres» depicts the reverse of that vision. Verdaguer was moved by any theme whatsoever, and based this poem on the news of the death of a palm tree, believed to be the oldest in Barcelona, when it was removed from the old Jonqueres convent; the poem alludes allegorically to the destruction of Barcelona's religious buildings during the nineteenth century revolutionary upheavals. The poet attributes this destruction to revolution and to progress, which are interested only in riches; he observes that those places where convents and monasteries once stood one sees now streets, squares, theatres, and brothels. Of all the poems in *Pàtria*, «La palmera de Jonqueres» is the most explicitly ideological and forceful, expressing in elegiac terms the passing of the old world in the march of nineteenth-century social and political change alongside the growing concern of Catholics to restore as much as possible the old order while vigorously adapting to the new times.

Side by side with the historical theme, the longing for homeland arises as a distinctly romantic element throughout Verdaguer's works. This feeling, closely related to memory and dream, projects over Catalonia's past –the splendor of the medieval period–, his own past –his childhood and youth–, his native landscape –both his own county of Osona and the whole of Catalonia– or, in a mystic mood, over «celestial paradise». All these projections

often mingle and mix up with each other. Sometimes the longing for homeland takes a mystic sense, others a more patriotic one.

Verdaguer's civil and patriotic poetry does not limit itself to these topics. The landscape, for instance, is a powerful Verdaguarian theme. He identifies landscape and feeling (particularly memory) in a very romantic manner. Other motifs touch on traditions, crafts in decline, emblematic figures of the Catalan Church, and Marian devotions well rooted in his country. Verdaguer's handling of patriotic themes stands above his contemporaries or above previous romantics, who appear often as unoriginal, grandiloquent and rhetorically stiff beside Verdaguer; he surpassed them with the perfection of his forms, providing well rounded models in different genres.¹³

Religious poetry

From the day Verdaguer resolved to become a priest, he devoted his poetic writing to religious themes, and his activities at the service of the Church. His religious output published in leaflets, engravings, religious magazines and loose sheets is enormous. Of an uneven value, they were widely spread among the Catholic masses. The devotional, apologetic and propagandistic needs of the Catholic Church of the time led him to write a great number of poems to respond to its needs; this is in general the part of his writing that has been most affected by the passage of time. But his religious poetry is not limited to this pious and propagandistic function (often triggered by reasons of immediacy: some debate, canonization, gathering at a local shrine, or new devotion or campaign led by the hierarchy...). There were also more elaborate and more literary and religiously ambitious books and poems that we will comment upon.

After the success of *L'Atlàntida*, he published *Idil·lis i cants místics* (1879) as if he wished to prove that besides being an epic poet he could also deal with the multiplicity of genres and moods of religious poetry. And although some critics have stated that Verdaguer's mysticism is more formal than really deep, the fact remains that while being influenced by the Biblical *Song of Songs*, by Ramon Llull, Kempis, saint John of the Cross or saint Teresa, his poems have their own mystical features and an undeniable mystic feeling, different of course from the models of previous centuries. The great Spanish critic of the time, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, saw it clearly and mentioned it in his admission speech to the Royal Spanish Academy. Even if not of a mystic kind, other religious books of his from this period were also remarkable: *Cançons de Montserrat* and *Llegenda de Montserrat*, that he wrote in 1880 as a contribution to the celebrations of the millenium of Montserrat, the symbol mountain of Catalonia, and *Caritat* (1885), a miscellaneous volume designed to help the victims of great earthquakes in Andalusia.

During the following years he published a number of quite remarkable religious books, even if apparently they

were only made up of individual poems linked by a thin argumental thread. They were always works of a certain ideological denseness, sometimes related to modern devotions promoted by the Church –such as the devotion to the Sacred Heart, in *Lo somni de Sant Joan* (1887), or to the Holy Family in the trilogy *Jesús infant* (1890-1893) (Torrents, 2006)– and sometimes focussed on the poet's most intimate anxieties –*Sant Francesc* (1895)–. From the anxieties and from the dramatic times he went through in the middle of the 1890s, a new kind of highly interesting religious poetry arose; in it static contemplation gave way to the dynamic expression of his intimate tensions, that will only find solace in the transcendence of divine love. Among these books we must highlight *Roser de tot l'any* (1894), *Flors del Calvari* (1896) –the most dramatic one, significantly under-titled *Llibre de consols* (Book of Consolations), showing his personal plight–, *Flors de Maria* (1902), and the posthumous *Al cel* (1903), *Eucarístiques* (1904), and *Perles del «Llibre d'Amic e Amat» de Ramon Llull* (1908).

Prose works and translations

Verdaguer's prose work, although not so vast as his poetry, was of a high literary quality and a great support in the consolidation of the literary Catalan language of the time. He began to write prose in his youth but did not fully and publicly develop it until the late 1880s. It is made up of four essential groups: a) reports and travel books, b) journalistic prose, c) folklore and fiction, d) intimate prose.

The texts of the first group, initially published in journals and magazines, were collected in *Excursions i viatges* (1887) (Garolera, 1995 and 1998);¹⁴ they deal mainly with his travels in North and Central Europe, on the Magreb coast, and particularly in the Pyrenees. Another collection of such texts *Dietari d'un pelegrí a Terra Santa* (1889) was written in the typical 19th century style on this theme; it recalls two great romantic works: Chateaubriand's *Itineraire de Paris à Jerusalem*, and Lamartine's *Voyage en Orient*.

The second group is mainly made up of the articles *En defensa pròpia* that, as mentioned above, he had published in two parts, in 1895 and 1897; he proves himself to be a skilful polemicist who knows how to effectively combine meekness with sarcasm. As Joaquim Molas has pointed out, these articles «produced an authentic revolution in the field of literary prose» (Molas, 1986, p.289). We also have to highlight those articles based on more or less real events, and which become true literary creations.

Verdaguer's folkloric prose gathers tales collected directly from popular tradition and somehow reelaborated, together with traditions and aphorisms.¹⁵ Finally, his most personal writings (such as his own self-introductions to many of his books, his correspondence –with truly literary masterworks– and some of his speeches and prologues to books by other authors, constitute a prose output of the

highest interest and remarkable importance for the development of modern Catalan literary prose.

Lastly, we have to mention Verdaguer's translations. This was the field in which he worked less, producing nonetheless some outstanding results, such as the translation of the Passion episodes of the four canonical Gospels; the prose version of *Nerto*, a book in verse by Frederic Mistral; and above all his recreation of the Biblical *Song of Songs*.

VERDAGUER'S INTERNATIONAL DIFFUSION

Among Verdaguer's unanimously acknowledged merits were his having consolidated the *Renaixença* movement and having rescued the Catalan literary language in a crucial moment of the country's history. There is another merit, though, linked to these two, that is usually underrated but that was of great importance in the last decades of the 19th century. The remarkable international spread of Verdaguer's work proved that Catalan literature, that for Europeans had ceased to exist centuries before, was still alive. In this sense, the success of *L'Atlàntida* in the Barcelona Jocs Florals of 1877 was much more than a per-

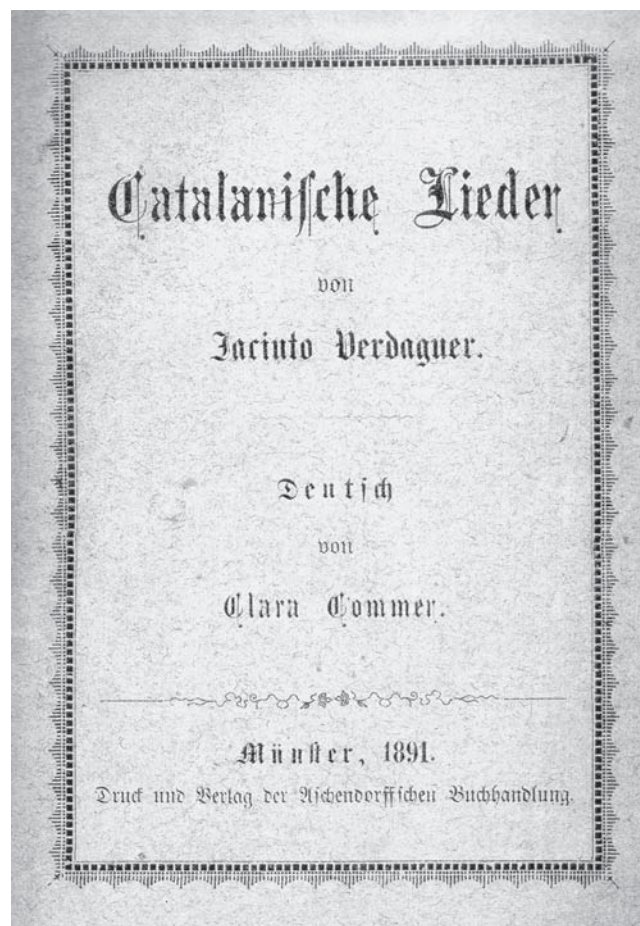


Figure 5. Cover of the poetic anthology *Catalanische Lieder* von Jacinto Verdaguer (Münster: Druck und Verlag der Aschenдорffschen Buchhandlung, 1891), in charge of Clara Commer. *Biblioteca de Catalunya*.



Figure 6. Cover of the Spanish edition of *Canigó* (Madrid: Printer of Fortanet, 1898), translated by Jerónimo López de Ayala, Count of Cedillo. *Biblioteca de Catalunya*.

sonal success; it was also the success of the whole *Renai-xença* movement achieving an emblematic target. *L'Atlàntida* became for the Catalans –even for those who had not read it– a cause for national pride, which was strengthened by its translation into several European languages and by the critical recognition of its value, both in Catalonia and abroad.

Thirteen works by Verdaguer have been translated into some ten European languages: Castilian, French, Occitan, German, Czech, Portuguese, Galician, Italian, Latin... There have been almost one hundred editions, about half of them in Castilian; and if partial versions or individual texts are taken into account, the number of languages could be around twenty (Llanas and Pinyol, 2004).¹⁶ Presented on the one hand, as a model Catholic writer, and, on the other, very romantically, by some other writers from other non-state nascent cultures, as the incarnation of the Poet (in capital letters), he achieved a broad diffusion which was checked in part in the middle of the 1890s as a consequence of his conflicts with the Church hierarchy.

Probably no other Catalan writer has ever had so many of his books translated into so many languages. They were the first translations since the middle ages with the exception of the great works by Ramon Llull and the novel *Tirant lo Blanc*. This is an aspect of Verdaguer's work that is

usually forgotten in spite of its importance at the time. The first global anthology in English of Verdaguer's work addressed to cultivated readers has been recently published with an introductory study and notes.¹⁷

STUDIES OF VERDAGUER'S WORK

From 19th century contemporary criticism to the end of the Francoist era

During his lifetime Verdaguer's output received great attention from literary critics. We must remember, though, that neither the Catalan nor the Spanish Universities of the time paid much attention to living authors, not even incidentally. But some outstanding university figures who also wrote criticism, such as Manuel Milà Fontanals, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, Leopoldo Alas, *Clarín*, became interested in Verdaguer's work –in a very intense way in the case of Milà and Menéndez–.

In general, the most relevant critics of the time –Joan Sardà, Josep Ixart, Teodor Llorente, Francesc Miquel Badia, Luís Alfonso– paid close attention to the poet's work.

During the years after his death in 1902, the critical interest on Verdaguer's work dwindled, greatly due in particular to changes in aesthetic taste. In the 1920s and 1930s the edition of the Complete Works helped to call some attention to the poet's output; he was especially valued as a prose writer. The romantic rhetoric of his poetry did not match the critical principles of that time. Some anthologies (both in prose and poetry) were published, but the main interest was centred on Verdaguer's accidented biography, in particular, of course, on its most dramatic and thorny aspects. Meanwhile his work had no presence in the school curricula, particularly in the university; nevertheless, in the few years when Catalonia enjoyed some political autonomy, his texts were present in the reading manuals of the pre-university years.

The Francoist dictatorship set up following the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) –a war that was, as everybody knows, very much against Catalonia– fought with a special strength against Catalan language and culture. But Verdaguer, because of his priestly condition as a singer of some glorious Spanish events, became one of the very few Catalan authors that were tolerated and that could be published in the first years of the dictatorship. Even so, his publishing had to be in 19th century spelling, in order to underline his archaic character, which rendered him admissible to the regime; in this way, the norms for a unified language that had been adopted before the war were placed under attack. The centenary of Verdaguer's birthday in 1945 with the publication of some books (of little or no scientific value) on the poet was used by the Francoist regime as a means to win the Catalans' sympathy.

In the following years, especially during the commemoration in 1952 of the 50th anniversary of Verdaguer's death, the new books on Verdaguer were still centred on his biography, although some of them (those by Jesús Pa-

bón, M. Monjas, J. Miracle, or S. Juan Arbó) had real interest. During the same years, some other writers, such as the above mentioned, Carles Riba, Josep M de Sagarra, J.V.Foix, or Marià Manent, contributed with their studies to the recovery of the writer rather than of the man.

The rigorous academic study of Verdaguer's output was initiated by scholar and publisher Josep Maria de Casacuberta, who published several studies in specialised reviews, and above all who in 1953 founded in Barcelona's publishing house Barcino a "Verdaguerian Library" that is still active; studies, critical editions, and eleven volumes of letters from and to Verdaguer (edited by Casacuberta himself, in collaboration with Joan Torrent Fàbregas) have been published. This collection has been the main basis for later studies on our writer.

From the seventies to the present

At the beginning of the 1970s the Franco Regime allowed the two Catalan universities with philological studies (the University of Barcelona and the Autonomous University of Barcelona) to impart official programmes including Catalan language and literature. At other school levels, though, the presence of the language was still barred. From that moment Verdaguer began to enjoy a normal presence in Catalan literature subjects, even if still seen by some university sectors as an author "of little interest"; the prejudice was founded on the fact of his being a priest, a romantic, a writer that had been used by the Franco Regime, and even on the popularity he still enjoyed among a good part of the population. It was not until the 1980s, though, that normality started to be restored. After dictator Franco's death democracy was re-established and Catalan language was taught again in primary and secondary schools. This led to an expansion of Catalan philological studies, basic for the recovery of the teaching of Catalan language and literature. It also led to the need for publication of new editions of outstanding Catalan authors addressed to students, and Verdaguer was of course one of them.

The old prejudices began to vanish, and at last Verdaguer began to be studied also in the doctoral programmes and to be the subject of Masters and Ph.D. dissertations. From the early 1980s, Joaquim Molas Batllori (Professor firstly at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and then at the University of Barcelona) played an outstanding role in this recovery: he taught doctoral courses, promoted and directed theses, programmed Verdaguerian editions, and published the monography *Jacint Verdaguer*, the first great synthetic study on the author. At the same time, in a new College, *Estudis Universitaris de Vic* (today *Universitat de Vic*), in the town, some seventy kilometres from Barcelona, where Verdaguer received his academic training, Ricard Torrents, the best contemporary biographer of our poet, with the collaboration of important researchers such as Segimon Serrallonga or Pere Farrés, and with the support of Joaquim Molas, organised in 1986 the first university conference dedicated

to Verdaguerian epic. This conference was the opportunity for new specialists on Verdaguer to make themselves known; they are the authors of many of the studies and editions published in the last thirty years: Isidor Cònsul, Pere Farrés, Narcís Garolera, Josep Paré, Ramon Pinyol, Joan Requesens, Pere Tió... In the following conferences (that in 2008 arrived to its 7th edition) other aspects of the Verdaguerian output have been focussed upon: journalist prose, patriotic poetry, Verdaguer and his romantic century, the work of his last ten years, his language, rhetoric and poetics; all this has significantly enlarged our knowledge of his work, both qualitatively and quantitatively. It has also allowed the appearance of new specialists (Maria Carme Bernal, Francesc Codina, Maria Lluïsa Plans, Llorenç Soldevila, Maria Àngels Verdaguer...) as well as the dedication by relevant scholars in Catalan philology to noteworthy studies on Verdaguer (Jaume Aulet, Rosa Cabré, Jordi Castellanos, Francesc Cortès, Josep M. Domingo, Carola Duran, Manuel Jorba, Jordi Malé, Josep Massot Muntaner, Josep Murgades, Albert Rossich, Antònia Tayadella, Xavier Vall, Pep Vila...). The minutes of these conferences have all been published in *Anuari Verdaguer*.

Besides this, Joaquim Molas and Ricard Torrents promoted the creation of the *Societat Verdaguer*, an institution similar to those existing for great European or American authors. It is an academic corporation with a limited number of members from some fifteen universities and academic corporations, with the purpose of publishing critical editions of Verdaguer's works (in collaboration with Eumo Editorial, from Vic), organizing conferences on Verdaguer, publishing studies on the author (and, in general, on the 19th century), as well as the publication of *Anuari Verdaguer*.

The *Anuari Verdaguer* appeared in 1986, and is already in its 15th issue. It was at first exclusively dedicated to Verdaguerian studies, but from 2004 it has widened its scope, as is expressed in its present subtitle: *Revista d'estudis literaris del segle XIX* (Review of 19th Century Literary Studies). As it is usual in this kind of scientific publications, it has a scientific committee and an editorial board made up of lecturers from diverse universities, a fixed inner structure and Abstracts in English. At present it is being published by Eumo Editorial, the *Societat Verdaguer* and the Verdaguer Chair of Literary Studies of the University of Vic. It is doubtless the most prestigious Catalan philological review dedicated to the 19th century, containing the most complete and updated corpus of Verdaguerian studies. Edited on paper as well as in electronic format, the whole collection (except for the last issue) is freely accessible through internet.

At present the Verdaguerian studies are going through bright times, a consequence of the work of the last three decades in Catalan Universities (where several dissertations are in the making, and where there is a line of research dedicated to the poet in the Universi-

ty of Vic), in the Societat Verdager (in particular the conferences), and in *Anuari Verdager*. To the scientific bibliography on Verdager we must add the constant publishing of school or popular editions of texts and anthologies, as well as an uninterrupted flow of new academic books or booklets on Verdager, showing the popularity he still enjoys. He has achieved a symbiosis between poet and people, as some of his compositions –such as ‘L’emigrant’, ‘El noi de la mare’ (The mother’s child), or ‘El Virolai’ (Song to the Virgin)– have become universally known, although many people sing them without knowing who the author is. Also the huge amount of musical scores, more than a thousand, written for his poems, witnesses to his popularity. On top of that, hundreds of Catalan streets bear his name and dozens of public monuments are dedicated to him.

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- [1] *Renaixença*: see note 7.
- [2] «Cinto» is the popular hypocoristic for Jacint. The Catalan «mossèn» is given to secular priests, equivalent to Spanish or Italian *padre*, French *abbé*, or English *father*.
- [3] Romanticism appeared late in Catalonia, as it did in Spain and in many other European countries. Paul VAN TIEGHEM. *Le romantisme dans la littérature européenne*. Albin Michel, Paris 1969, pp. 459-461. It was present from the 1820s to the 1880s.
- [4] Modernism, the Catalan equivalent in the artistic field to *Art Nouveau*, *Jugendstil*, *Modern Style*, *Style Liberty* or *Sezessionstil* was a wide cultural current that reigned in Catalonia between the last decade of the 19th century and the first of the 20th (see note 6).
- [5] The Carlist Wars had their origin in the dynastic split of the Borbon monarchists at the death of Ferdinand VII; there were three wars: the first one lasted from 1833 to 1840; the second, from 1846 to 1849; and the last, from 1872 to 1876. The three of them affected Catalonia seriously.
- [6] The annual literary contest *Jocs Florals* (Flowery Games) of Barcelona were created in 1859. They were one of the main platforms for the diffusion and consolidation of the *Renaixença* (see following note), and an obligatory step for any writer who wished to acquire prominence in the Catalan literature of the *Renaixença*.
- [7] The *Renaixença* was a politico-cultural movement developed in Catalonia during the second half of the 19th century with the aim to recover Catalan language and literature, that had been marginalized from public life since the establishment of the Bor-

bons in Spain at the beginning of the 18th century. New political and social aims were in time added to the cultural, while some sections of the population moved from a regionalist to a nationalist stance. Literary authors played a decisive role: the romantics at the beginning of the century, the realists and naturalists in its last third. At the end of the century the movement began to weaken, coinciding with the emergence of *Modernism*.

- [8] See note 5.
- [9] The Borbon Restoration began with the coronation of Alphonse XII, and it is usually considered to end at the coming of age of his son Alphonse XIII (1902), although some historians think it finished at the end of the latter's reign (1931). The Restoration followed the so-called Revolutionary sexennium (1868-1874), a troubled period that started with the deposition of the Borbon dynasty, followed by the instauration of a new dynasty (Amadeus I of Savoy), and ending with the First Republic (1873-1874).
- [10] The reference is not only to Gaudí's temple, but to a movement of Catholic devotion to the Holy Family that gave rise to a great number of publications, to which Verdaguer also contributed, especially with his trilogy *Jesús infant*.
- [11] *Dos màrtirs de ma pàtria o siga Lluçia i Marcià*, edited by Ricard Torrents, 1995 (OCESV, 1); *L'Atlàntida*, edited by Pere Farrés (OCESV, 2), 2002; *Montserrat I: Llegendari, cançons, odes*, edited by Maur M. Boix and Ramon Pinyol (OCESV, 4, tom 1), 2004; *Montserrat II: Llegendari de Montserrat*, edited by Maur M. Boix (OCESV, 4, Book 2), 1997 [2nd printing: 2004]; *Pàtria*, edited by Ramon Pinyol (OCESV, 9), 2002; *Sant Francesc*, edited by Isidor Cònsul (OCESV, 15), 2001, and *Barcelona. Textos per a un llibre*, edited by Francesc Codina (OCESV, 38), 2006.
- [12] If nothing is said to the contrary, all titles have been published in Barcelona: *Aires del Montseny*, Edicions de 1984, 2002; *Al cel*, Columna, 2003; *L'Atlàntida*, Quaderns Crema, 2002; *Canigó*, Quaderns Crema, 1995; *En defensa pròpia*, Tusquets, 2002; *Flors del Calvari*, Columna, 1995; *Idil·lis i cants místics*, Columna, 2005; *Jovenívols: poesies amatòries de joventut*, Cabrera de Mar, Galerada, 2006; *Montserrat. Llegendari, cançons, odes*, Edicions de 1984, 2003, i *Pàtria*, Edicions de 1984, 2002. We quote only from the first edition, although some of these titles have been reprinted.
- [13] For the ensemble of his patriotic poetry, see Ramon PINYOL. "La poesia patriòtica de Verdaguer. Una aproximació". In: Prenafeta, 2004, p. 59-78, and "Estudi introductori" in his edition of *Pàtria* (2002), quoted in note 11.
- [14] Narcís GAROLERA based his Doctoral Dissertation on the critical edition and the study of this collec-

tion; it was Published as *Excursions i viatges* in 3 volumes by Editorial Barcino, Barcelona, 1991-1992 (Biblioteca Verdageriana 18, 19, 21). It keeps the original spelling with slight adaptations to the present norms.

- [15] There is a critical edition of the storytelling Works: Jacint VERDAGUER. *Rondalles*, edited by Andreu Bosch i Rodoreda, Barcino, Biblioteca Verdageriana, 20, Barcelona 1992. Published, like the book in the previous Note, in the spelling of the time with only a few regularizations.
- [16] See also Ramon PINYOL. "La difusió internacional de Verdager". In: VERDAGUER, 2002 *a*, p.66-78. (There are Spanish and English editions, and Ramon PINYOL, Pere QUER. "Les traduccions al castellà de les obres de Verdager". In: *Anuari Verdager* 2002, pp. 369-381.
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