

Guimerà in Europe and America

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ABSTRACT

The Spanish translations of some of Guimerà's works and their determined dissemination by María Guerrero's company in Spain and South America served as the point of departure for translations and performances in other languages and for the opera and film adaptations made in Europe and America over the course of the past century. In the first decade of the 21st century, *Terra baixa* (Lowlands) still remains the top referent in the dissemination and the international presence of Àngel Guimerà's theatre.

KEYWORDS: Àngel Guimerà, Catalan literature, Catalan theatre, translation, *Terra baixa*

INTRODUCTION

Àngel Guimerà¹ started his career as a writer within the romantic tradition who cultivated both narrative poems with a civil and political bent and the exaltation of a distant past with patriotic leanings as the more lyrical and evocative facet of his oeuvre, focusing on childhood, youthful sentiments and the mother's death.² The expressively artistic and dramatic nature of his lyric production was one of the reasons for his immediate and almost exclusive relationship with the theatre until the end of his life. Within the context of the gradual development of certain pioneering propositions in contemporary theatre, Guimerà dedicated his early output to romantic drama written in verse, with titles like *Gala Plàcidia* (Galla Plàcidia, 1879), *Mar i cel* (Heaven and Sea, 1885) and *Rei i monjo* (King and Priest, 1888). From the very start, with due acknowledgement of Shakespeare, Victor Hugo and particularly Schiller, this playwright was capable of offering his own unquestionably unique theatre³ based on the internal struggles of characters who obsessively and even pathologically handle the discovery of their hidden identity with denial. In other words, they face up to an intimate reality which violently and dramatically clashes with a social reality laden with tensions, which sometimes leads the main characters in his plays to a process of self-destruction.

Guimerà's literary journey throughout the 1890s was primarily characterised by the need and desire to write

drama in prose with a realistic feel, mainly based on contemporary reality and with an identifiable social background. He used this personal effort to frame and mask an entire series of reflections on the complexity of relationships, feelings and human passions which were anything but idealised. In fact, this is the most personal stage in the creation and consolidation of Guimerà's texts, those that revolve fundamentally around amorous desire and possession, such as *En Pólvora* (1893), *Maria Rosa* (1894), *Terra baixa* (Lowlands, 1896), *La festa del blat* (The Wheat Festival, 1896) and *La filla del mar* (The Daughter of the Sea, 1900).

Working in the midst of Modernism, its development also dovetailed with the gradual dissemination of Guimerà's plays outside of Catalonia, beginning with Madrid, Buenos Aires and other cities in South America thanks to their propagation by the theatre company of María Guerrero and Fernando Díaz de Mendoza⁴ and continuing with the European reception of the corresponding theatre and opera versions of *Terra baixa*.

In the early years of the new century, driven by the desire not to fossilise in the literary sense and pressured by María Guerrero, who was encouraging him to expand his horizons, the playwright temporarily chose a realistic, bourgeois and cosmopolitan model of theatre whose referents might have been the oeuvre of Giuseppe Giacosa and Marco Praga, with titles like *Arran de terra* (At Ground Level, 1902), *La pecadora* (The Sinner, 1902) and *La Miralta* (1905). However, the experience did not work out entirely well, and Guimerà returned to his pathway from the 1890s with texts like *Sol, solet...* (Sun, Little Sun, 1905) and *L'aranya* (The Spider, 1906), which constitute the most personal strain of his theatre, "among peasant folk" as María Guerrero noted.⁵ It is a model of action

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Figure 1. Monument to Àngel Guimerà, a plaster sculpture from 1909 by Josep Cardona i Furró (1878-1923) which was replicated in bronze by Josep M. Codina in 1983. The figure of Guimerà is closely associated with the neighbourhood where he lived the last years of his life.

theatre that takes place in humble, often rural, settings. There, Guimerà felt free and succeeded in expanding his more genuine concerns when defending divorce and free love in *L'Eloi* (Eloi, 1906) or the responsible fatherhood embodied by the main character in *Sol, solet...* Without a solution for carrying on, Guimerà did not give up a romantic conception of the world experienced with tension and drama by exceptional characters that are devastated by passion and experience the characteristics of brutal love. These characters, who have emerged from an upheaval-ridden social reality, virtually never manage to channel an authentically radical attitude of rebellion and agitation as do other characters in European naturalistic theatre as portrayed by Hauptmann, Ibsen and Strindberg, just to name a few.

From 1907, when he was proposed as a Nobel Prize candidate for the first time by Barcelona's Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres, until shortly before his death in 1923,⁶ Guimerà had trouble reorienting and designing a new and unique voice of his own as a playwright. Among other initiatives, he contributed to Espectacles Audicions Graner with a piece, *La Santa Espina* (The Holy Thorn, 1907), which was set to music by Enric Morera.⁷ In this context, a group of writers from previous generations undertook a concerted defence of his personality and poetic theatre, not to mention the national tribute to him held on the 23rd of May 1909.⁸

In his final stages, Guimerà tried to provide samples of his creative versatility, which was closely tied to his desire

to be present on the Catalan scene. He aired his *Indíbil i Mandoni* (Indibil and Mandoni, 1917), the tragedy of the origins of a fossilised hair; *Joan Dalla* (1921), a historical play with political intentions; and a couple of contemporary plays, *Jesús que torna* (Jesus Returns, 1917) and *Alta banca* (High Bank, 1921). His *Per dret diví* (By Divine Right, 1926), which his friend the writer Lluís Via readied, premiered posthumously. His death prompted a vast, heartfelt homage from all sectors of Catalan society, precisely when some of his plays – unquestionably *Terra baixa* – had already spread beyond the borders of our culture and enjoyed an international presence.

GUIMERÀ AND THE SPANISH THEATRE

In the web of relations between Guimerà and the Spanish theatre, there are four early factors that help us to grasp the reasons and consequences of their later development. The first is the role of interlocutor that Josep Yxart took on as a critic, connoisseur and friend of a number of highly representative Spanish writers with whom Guimerà also established contact.⁹ The second is the positive and fruitful repercussions of Guimerà's first premiere in Madrid, of *Mar y cielo* (20-11-1891), put on by Ricardo Calvo and the company of the Teatro Español.¹⁰ The third is the attitude taken by María Guerrero, an ambitious young actress determined to revamp the Spanish theatre scene with the support of authors who were heavily influenced by the spirit of the revolution of September 1868. And the fourth is the inestimable role of José Echegaray as a mediator and Spanish translator of some of Guimerà's most important plays.¹¹

Indeed, the staging of *Mar y cielo* drew the attention not only of critics and audiences in Madrid but also of some Spanish writers, most notably the vociferous and unconditional support of Josep Yxart via the *La Vanguardia* newspaper. This Tarragona-born critic's assessments came at a very delicate time in the development of Spanish and Catalan theatre, one year before Emilio Mario's company premiered the theatre adaptation of Galdós' *Realidad* (Reality, 1892):

“Apparently, the success of Guimerà's tragedy *Mar y cel* in Madrid has not been solely a theatre event, albeit an extraordinary one without greater meaning than all ovations for inspired playwrights. No, it has been something more than that. As can be inferred from the fervent praise in the Madrid press, Guimerà's play surprised everyone as the unexpectedly vivid and complete revelation of a kind of drama that can in no way be called new, but whose memory had been lost perhaps since Tamayo retired from the theatre. Such vivid characters, so muscular and strong, such human passions and such a high poetic mettle at the same time, the fire of that inspiration intensely and invisibly burning the soul of the characters, the simplicity of the ac-

tion, the sober, concise, manly dialogue have reminded Madrid audiences that tragedy is still possible, that the theatre of *recherché* effects is possible, and that the highest and most moving poetry, without glittering lyricism, is still possible. This is what ensured the success of the Catalan tragedy (read between the lines) after the fluctuations and exhaustion produced by the false grandiosity of some and the anaemic vulgarity of others.¹²

It should also be noted that the translation of *Mar i cel* was by Enrique Gaspar,¹³ the author of *Las personas decentes* (Decent People, 1890), the play which heralded the introduction of bourgeois drama in prose into Spanish theatre in a context that was no longer the same as that of the literary generation of “Dumas or Sardou, nor even the next generation of Zola, Becque and the fixer Busnach, but a more advanced cohort whose gods were Ibsen, Björnson and Strindberg and who applaud Maeterlinck’s endeavours.”¹⁴

The fact that Gaspar was the crucial name in the updating of Spanish theatre in the early 1890s, among other factors, supports the expectation that was aroused when Mario’s company,¹⁵ with María Guerrero as the leading actress, premiered *Huelga de hijos* (The Rebellion of the Young, 28-7-1893) at Barcelona’s Teatre Novetats two weeks after the premier of Galdós’ *La loca de la casa* (The Madwoman of the House, 6-7-1893).¹⁶

The crux of the matter is that between 1890 and 1893, there began to be an irreversible revamping of Spanish theatre which more tentatively corresponded to the revamping of Catalan theatre in an atmosphere in which Guimerà encountered difficulties putting on his productions. Hence the personal acquaintance between Àngel Guimerà and María Guerrero in July of 1892,¹⁷ when they had both shown signs of modernising their respective fields – the former by performing texts written by “revamped” Echegaray, Galdós¹⁸ and Feliu i Codina, and the other by writing the first costumbrist pieces in prose: *La Baldirona* (1890) and *La sala d’espera* (The Waiting Room, 1892) — was providential for both, at least until the first decade of the new century. During this extensive period of time, Guimerà premiered a total of 21 texts. Seven of the nine plays performed by María Guerrero in Spanish premiered before the originals in Catalan *Terra baixa* / *Tierra baja*; *Mossèn Janot* / *El Padre Juanico* (Father Juanico); *La filla del mar* / *La hija del mar* (in Buenos Aires); *Andrònica*; *La Miralta*; *L’aranya* / *La araña*; *L’ànima morta* / *El alma muerta* (The Dead Soul, in Montevideo). Much to María Guerrero’s dismay, *Maria Rosa* premiered on the same day (24-11-1894) in Barcelona and Madrid, and *La pecadora* premiered on the 11th of March 1902 in Barcelona and on the 3rd of February 1903 in Mexico. There may be at least one explanation for fact that the seven plays premiered in their Spanish version before their Catalan: Guimerà wrote them expressly for a pair of actors who

spent a great deal of time offering him all sorts of recommendations and instructions.

What happened to the other Guimerà texts from those years which were not put on by Fernando Díaz de Mendoza and María Guerrero? What were the reasons or circumstances why *La festa del blat* was not staged in Madrid, for example? Apparently Guimerà liked *La festa del blat*¹⁹ better than *Terra baixa*. Both were written virtually in parallel, but he was concerned that the plot twists of the former would not be accepted by Madrid’s audiences. Even though Echegaray, the play’s translator,²⁰ had liked it, the fact is that Mendoza-Guerrero felt more trapped by the conflict in *Terra baixa*²¹ than by the problem of the anarchist in *La festa del blat*. However, Guimerà’s fears were stronger²² and he decided to premiere *La festa del blat* (24-4-1896) only in Barcelona (two months before the attack on the Corpus Christi procession on Canvis Nous Street on the 7th of June). He did it after deeming that “*Tierra baja* does not run as much danger and is more likely to be accepted in Madrid” and that “*it would be a pity* (both you and I say this) if I *condemned myself to oblivion* in Madrid and Barcelona for one year with two plays on the playlist.”²³

A year after the *La festa del blat* affair, Guimerà once again showed signs of his insecurity and concern about displeasing or looking bad in front of his Madrid friends. The dissemination of *Missatge a S. M. Jordi I, rei dels hel·lens* (Message to His Majesty King George I, King of the Hellenes, 7-3-1897)²⁴ led to the closure of Catalanist publications and centres, which in turn led to street demonstrations in which the participants wore the *barretina*, the traditional Catalan cap. One sector in Madrid’s press reported on the issue of “regionalism” and directly attacked Guimerà, who was labelled a “neo-Greek” and accused of heading both *Missatge* and the *barretina* demonstration.²⁵ Most likely consternated by the journalistic and societal repercussions, Guimerà wrote a letter to Echegaray (which I have been unable to locate); in his response, the Spanish playwright tried to calm Guimerà and advised him to issue a public rectification, if he deemed that wise, on a series of specific points:

“1 That you have not owned the newspaper *La Renaixensa* for some time.

2 That you are not the editor-in-chief of this newspaper.

3 That you have not written anything for it in so many years but occasional article on theatres.

4 That when the newspaper was suspended you were not at its helm nor do you even know who is.

5 That you did not sign the message to the King of Greece.

6 That for a long time you have not signed any document referring to the issue of political regionalism.

7 That your daughters did not sport the *barretina* on the Rambla, among other reasons because you have no

daughters (I am not too sure about this; you should know).

8 That nor did you attend the demonstration wearing either a *barretina* or sashes or emblems.

9 That you honourably profess this or that idea, which are not those of Pi i Margall, and that professing them in no way harms your scientific or literary works.

I have made this list with no other purpose than to organise what you tell me in your letter and to add the part about how your daughters [Aldavert sisters] wore the *barretina*, because this is the latest telegram.”²⁶

Echegaray’s letter is nothing but a faithful example of a historical context characterised by the gradual dilution of the Modernist intellectual movement among the participants in Catalanist politics which affected the overall functioning of Catalan literature and greatly touched intellectuals and writers with a recognised public career, including Guimerà. On another order of affairs, the realistic, socially-conscious orientation of theatre which had characterised part of the programming of María Guerrero’s company until then began to be revised to open it up to other needs and artistic objectives within a framework in which, parallel to the incorporation of the theatre of ideas and symbolist theatre, manifestations were appearing which, like Edmond Rostand’s *Cyrano de Bergerac*, earned a response from a broader audience than the aforementioned models. Sensitive to the reorientation and diversity of theatre propositions in *fin de siècle* Europe, Guerrero premiered Rostand’s play in 1899. Guimerà, who had already finished *La filla del mar* and *Mossèn Janot* and continued to have difficulties putting on plays at the Teatre Romea, which was directed by Ramon Franqueza after the death of Frederic Soler (1895), was trying other dramatic registers that must not have interested Guerrero and her husband, such as *La farsa* (The Farce, 1899), a piece about police corruption in caciquism which may not have fit with their ideological interests, and *Aigua que corre* (Water that Runs, 1902), which was



Figure 2. The actor Enric Borràs playing Manelic.

not performed in Spanish,²⁷ in which Guimerà explicitly portrayed an instance of adultery with all its cruelty and drama.

It became clear that there were texts by the Catalan playwright whose subject matter or boldness might not work with a Spanish audience:

“It does not surprise me, and actually I celebrate the success of *Agua que corre*. I already told you that I found the play very lovely, but I was afraid of the effect it might have on our audiences both in Madrid and in the provinces and the Americas. The daringness, the boldness that is tolerated in other theatres, in other companies, is not permitted here. That was my fear, even though I understood and felt all the beauty of the play, especially the entire third act. I therefore triumphantly celebrate it and congratulate you for it.”²⁸

The crux of the matter is that in the early years of the new century while Guimerà personally felt so disheartened and pessimistic about the pathway adopted by Catalanism²⁹ that he decided to withdraw from political life, as a playwright he also realised the need to expand his dramatic horizons in accordance with the artistic and economic interests of the theatre companies and businesses with which he interacted. This took place precisely when he began to earn fame internationally thanks to *Terra baixa* and several translations and performances of other texts into French and Italian, such as the world premiere of *Scivolando sulla terra*, a translation of *Arran de terra*, which the Italian company Vitaliani put on at the Teatre Novetats in 1901.³⁰

Another extremely important landmark was the presentation of the Catalan theatre season by Enric Borràs’ company in Madrid (26-5/14-6-2004).³¹ Among the twenty plays that Borràs’ company put on in Madrid, four titles were by Guimerà: *Terra baixa* (which had four showings), *Mar i cel*, *Maria Rosa* and *La festa del blat*, which was run again that same season at the Teatro Romea, much to Madrid audiences’ displeasure. The experience was a critical success as well as an overall hit with audiences, and it had noticeable repercussions on several Spanish writers as well as on Guimerà himself. Borràs was so well-liked in Madrid that this became the immediate origin of two unique initiatives which involved Emilia Pardo Bazán, Eugenio Sellés and Àngel Guimerà.

Indeed, right in the midst of the Catalan theatre season at Teatro de la Princesa, the writer Pardo Bazán sent Guimerà a copy of *La suerte* (Luck), a dramatic dialogue, with the following motive:

“When reading in the Madrid newspapers these days so much praise for the actor Borràs, whom I was unable to see since I had to go to the countryside with my family – and the countryside is delightful – it dawned on me that it would be very pleasant for Borràs to put on *La suerte* in Catalan. Could you tell him this and en-

courage him to stage, in such a colourful and fresh language as Catalan, a dialogue that is not written in Galician simply because it was not possible for the audience to accept it thus, but which, as you shall see, is devised, and felt, regionally? Please tell me whether this is a feasible idea or not, and in the meantime please believe that I remain your faithful friend, Emilia Pardo Bazán.”³²

I do not know whether Guimerà answered her; in any event, Borràs never did perform Bazán’s dialogue. In the case of Eugenio Sellés, Guimerà got much more heavily involved: he translated two texts which were never staged or published in Catalan, but which remain among his papers in the Library of Catalonia collection with a letter from Sellés which paradoxically bears the same date – 5th of June 1904 – as the one sent by Emilia Pardo Bazán. The goal is quite similar, although the tone is different:

“Mr Ángel Guimerà

Dearest friend and colleague,

I wanted to express my wholehearted appreciation for your translations of *Las Serpientes* (The Snakes) and *Los Domadores* (The Tamers).

It is as admirable an endeavour as [illegible], and furthermore because the nature of those plays and their style correspond well to the vigorous temperament of your literature.

I would also like to express my gratitude for your praise of them in your affectionate letter.

Yet without a doubt Mr Borràs does not think the same because he seems to have decided not to put them on. He says that there is no time to rehearse them. He has had the translations for many days, the translation of *Los domadores* since he began to act here, and he has not shown the slightest interest in them, nor has he even shared them. There was more than enough time in so many days to study even one of them if he really wanted to, since after all it is a short, simple act with action and characters.

I am disappointed with this result mainly because you worked so painstakingly in the effort to translate them in so few days. A useless effort and wasted endeavour. I am very sorry to have been the cause of it, and I am also sorry for myself, since I consider Borràs a peerless actor today [illegible] and we would have both reaped success: he and I.

The Madrid season was brilliant. Major triumphs and applause, and crowds at the theatres, especially for your plays. *Tierra baja* was the biggest hit in terms of both the play and the playwright. I wholeheartedly congratulate you for that.

It came out a beauty.

A warm embrace from your good friend and colleague who holds you in great esteem,

Eugenio Sellés³³

Indeed, the Guimerà Collection conserves the bundles from *Las serps*, “Scenes in one act and original prose by Eugeni Sellés translated into Catalan by Ángel Guimerà. One act”, and *Los domadors*, “Scenes in one act and prose, original by Eugeni Sellés translated into Catalan by Ángel Guimerà”. If I am not mistaken, after Enrique Gaspar and before Galdós, Sellés was the Spanish playwright who contributed the most to incorporating prose and the contemporary reality into the Spanish stage in the late 19th century from a naturalistic perspective.³⁴

What personal interest might Guimerà have had in translating the two plays by Sellés given that he translated no other plays into Catalan? Both short pieces were part of a trilogy – *Los domadores* (1896), *Los caballos* (The Horses, 1899) and *Las serpientes* (1903)³⁵ – whose common denominator was their treatment of anarchism from a perspective reminiscent of the one expressed by Guimerà specifically in *En Pólvora* (1893) and *La festa del blat* (1896). In this vein, the prologue that Sellés published in the edition of *Las serpientes* (1903) is quite enlightening:

“*Las serpientes* is the first part of a trilogy that continues with *Los domadores* and closes with *Los caballos*. They must be put on in this order in the theatre whenever all three plays are staged together. [...] They are independent and dissimilar in their plots, action and characters, yet they are connected by an ‘inner nerve’ of ideas and underlying purposes.”

It explicitly declares that the total work “runs counter to active anarchisms. And note clearly that ‘anarchisms’ is plural in order to include all anarchy, regardless of where it is from, rising up from the streets or trickling down from the powers-that-be, dressed in either a tunic or in a uniform.” (Sellés, 1903, “Prologue”, p. 5).

Seeking a subtitle that would encompass the main idea of each play, he noted: “*Las serpientes* could be given the subtitle ‘How an anarchist is made’. *Los domadores* could be subtitled ‘How an anarchist is unmade’.” [...] The author does not give *Los caballos* a subtitle; rather he explains that the two anarchies appear in it in place and operating: the “bottom-up one, which is the excess of individual freedom, and the top-down one, which is the excess of social authority, despotism denying the rule of law” (Sellés, 1903, “Prologue”, p. 9). We could, then, subtitle it “two anarchisms, face to face”.³⁶

If we focus on the plots of both plays, we can better grasp the decision to translate them, most likely based on the ideological affinity between both writers in terms of how the subject of anarchism is dealt with.³⁷ Sellés’ literary approach to this social issue was as close to Guimerà’s as it was to Ignasi Iglésias’ or Joaquín Dicenta’s, all four of whom were far from the claims of most radical strains of late 19th century anarchist culture. Neither Sellés nor Guimerà attempted to condemn social inequalities or the living conditions of the working classes in order to com-

bat them; rather their aim was precisely to expose them with the goal of *understanding them* from a moralising perspective which included the redemptive value of love and good feelings.

In those early years of the new century, Guimerà kept his sights set on María Guerrero's company as well as on Enric Borràs well once he resumed his career as a performer almost exclusively in Spanish. After putting on *El camí del sol* (The Sun's Path, 1904), in Barcelona Guimerà consecutively premiered *Sol, solet...* (17-4-1905, Teatre Romea)³⁸ with Pere Codina and Maria Morera, and two other plays put on by María Guerrero's company: *La Miralta* (23-7-1905, Teatre Novetats) and *Andrònica* (18-12-1905, Teatro Español de Madrid).³⁹

Guimerà was keenly aware of the delicate juncture that the Catalan stage was experiencing, which affected him personally. All we have to do is glance at the letters he sent to Díaz de Mendoza and Guerrero (2-3-1905) and to Enric Borràs (20-6-1905), respectively, prior to the Barcelona premier of *La Miralta*:

"The new play, the play which I promised you to premier this summer in Barcelona, is already underway. It will be called *La Miralta*; it is a play of passions. It is strong and tragic and written in prose.

The main characters are wealthy people. It takes place today. *La Miralta* is an agricultural estate in the Catalan mountains which becomes a factory and falls into ruin. Carlos (Fernando) is an engineer and Débora (María) (I don't know if it's written with *b* or *v*), his wife, murders a rival in the last scene. How does she kill her? In a new way for María.

Not with poison, a rope, a knife, a working implement, a blow, gas, tickling, a fish hook, a bomb, a car, a club... Ruminant (what a word!) on it. Let's see who can guess! She kills her in the simplest of ways.

But I am not only writing this play; rather I also find myself required to premiere another at the Romea, because when I got here I became convinced that it would be ill-advised to premiere two plays in a row in Spanish, as the audience here would assume that I was forever giving up on the Catalan theatre.

These days I have been racking my brain and silent, all this time under the fear of being unable to make both plays. What a calamity! But the fear has dissipated and now I am fully *uncalamitised*. Both plays will be ready in due time. The one for the Romea, which will be about country folk, will be called *Sol, solet...* There is a popular Catalan exclamation which goes "¡Sol solet, vine'm a veure que tinc fred!" (Sun, little sun, come see me; I'm cold!). The main character has not a soul in this world and is seeking the warmth of family. At the end of this play he also commits murder, of course. But here the murder takes place with a farm tool."⁴⁰

Guimerà also sent a letter somehow offering his services to Enric Borràs, who had made *Mar i cel* and *Terra*

baixa part of his repertory throughout Spain. He reminded Borràs that he had sent:

"those three tragedies and the two new plays which we could say might have crossed paths in our correspondence, which has gone uninterrupted for any reason for so long; because just as I have never doubted your esteem for me for a single moment, I am confident that you have also never doubted that I have always had and continue to have equal esteem for you mixed with admiration that grows stronger every day for all the battles you have won."⁴¹

He was happy that Borràs wanted to put on the plays from his early years as a playwright, but he was afraid of failures because "many years have passed since I wrote them, and just as then I would never have doubted their success in Madrid, now it might be a very good thing that they have aged because the fashions now run in an entirely different direction." And he added:

"Speaking of the other one, you see how it is going at the Romea. I don't know how they'll deal with it. First your loss, and you are forever irreplaceable, and now the loss of Morera and Codina, who were very useful. I assure you that the runs next season will be very doleful."

He then sent his regards to Díaz de Mendoza and Guerrero, who "feel so badly that they cannot work together next season" and dreamt about a partnership that never materialised:

"Can you imagine the plays that could be made with you and Fernando and María? Imagine what a *Jesus of Nazareth* would come of it! Isn't it true? The things we would do! I still haven't given up hope that one day we will do what is worthy of a great company. Imagine *Padre Juanico* with you, who were so inimitable in it (and I don't have to say this; it's already common knowledge) and Fernando and Toni, who was also great in it. I know that for now this is all a dream, but some dreams do come true.

And now, before closing, my dear friend, I would like to thank you profusely for touring my plays *Terra baixa* and *Mar i cel* through Spain, so ennobled by you. Sometimes newspapers reach me which speak enthusiastically about your performance of these plays, and then I feel so sorrowful at not having you before me to give you a hearty embrace, like the one I am sending you now, your eternal friend, and more than anything the foremost of your enthusiastic admirers."⁴²

Between 1905, the premier of *El alma es mía* (The Soul is Mine, 1919) and the withdrawal of the Madrid-based couple Díaz de Mendoza and Guerrero from this play in Seville one year later based on the patriotic discourse in the Jocs Florals of Barcelona, which was presided over by Josep Joffre,⁴³ the relationship between the two sides lost

the fluidity and complicity of the early years. This distancing might have begun when the acting duo left the Teatro Español (1908) and moved to the Teatro de la Comedia, which had different artistic objectives and a repertory focusing on the poetic theatre of Marquina, Villalpesa and Fernández Ardavín, along with certain plays by Benavente, Linares Rivas and the Álvarez Quintero and Muñoz Seca brothers, among others.

Guimerà was unquestionably experiencing a time full of professional transformations which were affecting him personally. As noted above, he was suffering from the crisis in the survival of the Catalan stage, first noted and shaped in the early years of the new century.⁴⁴ Because of this crisis, like other Catalan playwrights he found himself forced to diversify his output to the utmost and pull out all the stops. He revived his old project, *Per dret diví*, for which he readied a first act in verse,⁴⁵ and he pondered *Al món blau* (In the Blue World), a project ultimately never completed.⁴⁶ He worked at the Espectacles Audicions Graner (1907) with the success of *La Santa Espina*⁴⁷ and with the Sindicat d'Autors Dramàtics Catalans (Union of Dramatic Catalan Authors),⁴⁸ among other groups. Of everything he wrote, three quite divergent texts – *L'aranya*, *La reina vella* (The Old Queen) and *L'ànima és meva* – were performed by María Guerrero, but the Madrid actress rejected others like *L'Eloi*, a piece in a similar vein to *L'aranya* which premiered at the Teatre Romea (27-3-1906); *Sainet trist* (Sad Farce) which premiered at the Teatre Romea (14-4-1910) and was translated into Spanish by Gregorio Martínez Sierra; and *La reina jove*, which Margarida Xirgu premiered at the Teatre Principal (15-4-1911) in Catalan. Another play, *Jesús que torna*, was performed by Enric Borràs in Catalan (1-3-1917) and in Spanish (8-5-1917).⁴⁹

GUIMERÀ IN THE REST OF EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS

Setting aside now the essential projection of Guimerà's oeuvre on the Spanish stage until his death (18-7-1924), I shall attempt to trace what he achieved in the rest of Europe and the Americas while alive. The fact that María Guerrero and Fernando Díaz de Mendoza's company had included some of his texts into their repertory was decisive in the dissemination of his plays on both Spanish-language stages and in the theatre and film community of North America.

Terra baixa as a paradigm

Everything began with *Terra baixa*, the Guimerà play most often translated into other languages,⁵⁰ which was the inspiration for two operas, the German *Tiefland* (1903) with a libretto by Rudolph Lothar⁵¹ and music by Eugen d'Albert, and the French *La Catalane* (1907), set to music by Fernand Le Borne with a libretto by Paul Ferrier and Louis Tiercelin. Both operas were adapted to the

characteristics of the dominant musical codes of their respective cultures: Verism in Germany and "lyric drama" in France. The German version fared better – even today it is found in the repertoires of some German-language opera theatres – than the French, perhaps because the realistic facet of Guimerà's text fit Verism better than the lyric canon.⁵²

The German opera version was based on an Italian version by Giuseppe Soldatini which was apparently never published. The story is nonetheless curious: a Hungarian countess saw a performance of it in Italy, wanted to put it on herself and commissioned theatre agent Wilhelm Minkus to translate it into German based on the Italian version. At Minkus' request, Rudolph Lothar undertook the translation, and when it was ready it turned out that the countess had gotten married and was no longer interested in it. Despite this, Minkus sent it to different German theatres, one of whose directors, Ernst von Schuch, the head of the Royal Opera of Dresden, became enthused with the prospect and got in touch with Lothar and the composer Eugen d'Albert. Finally, the opera premiered at the Neues Deutsches Theater of Prague (15-11-1903) where it was warmly welcomed by critics and audiences, in contrast to its failure one year later when it was performed in Leipzig (17-2-1904). Upon this poor reception, the publisher of the score, Hugo Bock, asked Lothar and Albert to keep the prologue to the opera, which was based on a retrospective narration by Manelic, but to reduce two of the three acts in the first version. The new, defini-

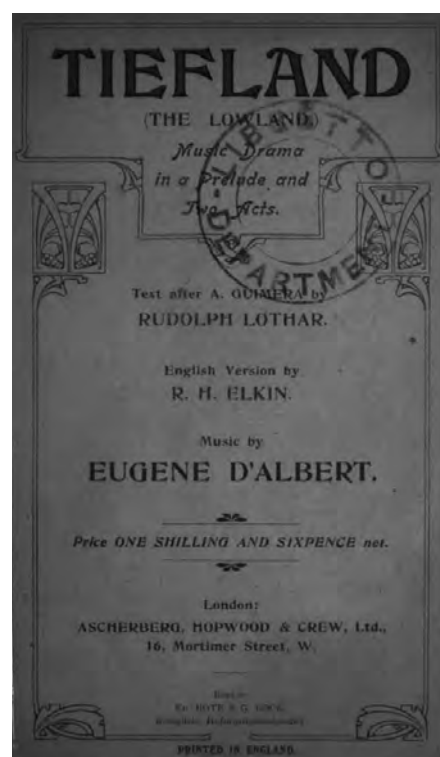


Figure 3. Libretto of the opera version of *Terra Baixa*, published in English in 1908 based on the German version.

tive opera, which was premiered once again, this time to success, in Magdeburg (16-1-1905), earned even more recognition when it was performed at the Komische Oper of Berlin, where it premiered on 9-10-1907. In Catalonia, the Italian version premiered at the Gran Teatre del Liceu on the 18th of January 1910; six performances were held under the direction of Franz Beitler. Joaquim Pena wrote the Catalan libretto which premiered at the Teatre Novetats on 23-12-1924.

Doctor Benet Roura Barrios⁵³ wrote a prologue to the German translation dated the 7th of February 1907,⁵⁴ which reveals details about the quick spread of *Terra baixa* around the world until then:

“The most popular play by Master Guimerà is *Terra baixa*, and it is put on in theatres abroad in Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, Sicilian, English in the United States and the Hebrew dialect of North America, Yiddish (Kalich Theater of New York), Serbian, German and soon it will be performed in Czech. However, in the German language it is not a lyric drama but a musical drama set to music by the famous Viennese piano virtuoso Eugen d’Albert. [...]”

Some of the foreign versions have kept the Catalan title in translation, while others have been christened with the name of the main characters, such as *Manelich* in the Portuguese version, *Martha of the Lowlands* in English, and the Sicilian attempt *Feudalismo* to signal that the wolf who kills Manelic, Sebastià, is the feudal lord representing this class. The German version is also titled *Terra baixa* or *Tiefeland*, following German syn-



Figure 4. Àngel Guimerà next to the sculpture of Manelic on Montjuïc. Work by Josep Montserrat (1909).

tax. However, the Viennese librettist has changed some of the names of the characters, and that is understandable since *Xeixa*, for example, is too Catalan to be translated. However, what is difficult to understand is that Manelic has been renamed Pedro, an essentially Spanish name that is always difficult for foreigners to pronounce. Might this be because they did not directly translate from the original and perhaps they used the Spanish version, a language in which *Pedros* are quite common?⁵⁵

Apart from these opera versions, *Terra baixa* was also translated into French by Albert Gelée Beral (1897),⁵⁶ into Czech by Antonin Pikhart (1907),⁵⁷ into Russian by Isaac Pawlosvsky and A. E. Nikiforakih (1910),⁵⁸ into Swedish by Edvard Lidfoss and Karl A. Hagberg (1917)⁵⁹ and into Portuguese by João Soler (1939).

In turn, with the title of *Feudalismo*, Augusto Campagna made a Sicilian version which Giovanni Grasso premiered in Barcelona in 1907.⁶⁰ The Italian actor included it in his repertory and performed it all over the world: in Madrid, Lisbon, Buenos Aires, Paris, London, Berlin, Hungary and Russia, among other cities and countries.⁶¹

The dissemination of *Terra baixa* in other languages and cultures took place via José Echegaray’s translation as opposed to the original text, to such an extent that Echegaray’s version became the common, obligatory reference for its reception in both Europe and America and the point of departure of the different film adaptations that were made on both continents in the first half of last century.

The first translation into English was undertaken by Guido Magburg and William Gillpatrick in 1902⁶² based on Echegaray’s translation. On the 13th of October 1903 it premiered at New York’s Manhattan Theater:

“Once *Terra baixa* had been translated into Spanish, the play reached not only Madrid but also Latin America. After Guerrero toured the play in Latin America, actress Virginia Fabregas performed the play in Mexico in 1900. In the audience for that performance were Broadway actor Guido Marburg and journalist Wallace Gillpatrick, who went on to translate the play for the American stage. Marburg applied for the translation and production rights. By 1902 a copy of their translation of Echegaray’s translation *Tierra baja* was deposited at the Library of Congress for copyright protection under the title *The Wolf*. On March 17, 1903 the *New York Times* reported that Harrison Grey Fiske had obtained the rights to a Spanish play [...] which in its English form has not been named, [but] will most likely be called *Martha of the Lowlands* (“News of Plays and Players”).

Martha of the Lowlands premiered in Troy, New York on October 1 of 1903, then opening in New York on October 12 (“*Martha of the Lowlands* in Troy”). The play was also presented in Washington, Pitts-



Figure 5. Scene from the play *Mar i Cel* in the musical version from 2008 by the troupe Dagoll Dagom. The tragedy revolves around the impossible love between a Muslim pirate and a captive Christian woman.

burgh, and Chicago, and then reports suggest that the show went on to tour other cities (“Mme. Kalich Going on Tour”).”⁶³

José Echegaray’s version of *Terra baixa* was also used in the adaptation by Camilo Vidal (1909) to the social and cultural milieu of Argentina’s Chaco province.⁶⁴ Pablo Podestá premiered the “adaptation” and “reworking” of Vidal’s *Tierra Baja* at the Teatro Odeón in Buenos Aires⁶⁵ (4-3-1909), when not only this but also other Guimerà plays were already known by the audiences in that city.⁶⁶ Another Argentine writer, José León Pagano, contributed to disseminating the intellectual and literary figure of Guimerà in his book *Atraveso la Spagna letteraria* (1902).⁶⁷ Finally, Argentina was also where playwright José Marañón made a parody of *Terra baixa* called *Tierra baja... da*, which was published in 1918.⁶⁸

The film versions

The film industry also took an interest in *Terra baixa*. One film version of it, called *Martha of the Lowlands* (1914), was made in the United States featuring Hobart Bosworth as Manelic and Bertha Kalich as Martha. One

year later, Cecil B. DeMille directed the film adaptation of *Maria Rosa* starring Geraldine Farrar, a famous opera singer. The most prominent and controversial film version of which we are aware⁶⁹ is the one that Leni Riefensthal⁷⁰ filmed, envisioning the character of Manelic as a kind of Parsifal living in Goya’s Spain. This was a project by the German director in which she herself starred with Bernard Minetti in the role of Sebastià. *Tiefeland* took almost 20 years to materialise; it finally premiered in Stuttgart in February 1954 and was submitted to the Cannes Film Festival competition that same year to rousing success thanks to the intercession of Jean Cocteau, who was the President of the Jury.⁷¹

ON GUIMERÀ’S RELEVANCE

Since 1939, if we exclude Leni Riefensthal’s film version, the most significant changes in the domestic and international dissemination of Guimerà’s plays have taken place in the past 35 years.⁷² Let us begin with the productions of *Terra baixa* according to dramaturgy by Guillem-Jordi Graells (1975) at the Teatre de l’Escorpí; the ones by



Figure 6. Manelic. Monument from 1909 to the character in *Terra Baixa*. The shepherd, representing the purity of the solitude of the mountains, is married to Marta, his lord Sebastià's lover, who hopes to marry her off as a way to overcome his indebtedness, yet without giving up his domineering relations with Marta. Manelic rebels, kills Sebastià and runs far away with Marta.

Ricard Salvat (1976) and Josep Montanyès (1981); and the staging of *Maria Rosa* (1983) directed by John Strasberg, the last three cases according to the corresponding versions made by Josep M. Benet i Jornet.

The *Terra baixa* (1990) directed by Fabià Puigserver, director of the Teatre Lliure, featuring Lluís Homar and Emma Vilarasau as the main characters, complemented with a performance of *La filla del mar* directed by Sergi Belbel as part of the Catalan Classical Theatre Series organised by the Centre Dramàtic of the Generalitat in 1992, became the instigation of the renewal and regularisation of productions of Guimerà's plays. Since then, other productions of his plays have been put on: one version of *Terra baixa* directed by Ferran Madico at the Teatre Nacional (2001), and a couple of versions of *Maria Rosa*, one directed by Rosa Novell (1997) and the other by Àngel Alonso (2004), as well as a new version of *La filla del mar* (2002) by Josep M. Mestres, and *En Pólvora* (2006), directed by Sergi Belbel.

Another major milestone with *Mar i cel* took place when the troupe Dagoll-Dagom created a successful mu-

sical based on Guimerà's play. Xavier Bru de Sala wrote the libretto,⁷³ which was set to music by Albert Guinovart and premiered to rousing success in 1988. In 2004, it was re-released to outstanding acclaim in Catalonia and toured around Spain in its Spanish-language version. In 2007, it premiered in German in the Opernhaus in Halle, leaving the original title and adding the subtitle *Der Himmel und das Meer*.⁷⁴

Guimerà is still a universal cultural referent; indeed, we should spotlight two updated productions of *Terra baixa* in both theatre and opera. First, in the 2008-2009 season,⁷⁵ the Opernhaus of Zurich's staging of *Tiefland* was put on at the Gran Teatre del Liceu following the production by Matthias Hartmann, which was totally up-to-date:

“Naturally, Matthias Hartmann, recently appointed director of the Burgtheater, wanted to flee from the concept of (blood and land) [...]. To begin with, Hartmann and the stage designer Volker Hintermeier relativised the vestiges and distanced themselves from the past antithesis between alpine purity and industrial deprivation. There is also an act of purification. The sadomasochistic drama around ingenuous wild nature, the diabolical, male chauvinist dictator and the beauty who yearns for pure love who is at his mercy has been staged realistically. Hartmann yields a solid, lifelike thriller full of sensationalism in the feelings inspired, which is counterbalanced symbolically by a rainfall of rose petals during the forced wedding. The opera is quite heavy in words, and a handful of exaltations inadvertently sound comical; however, the libretto is better than they say, at least in its representation of the erotics of violence. Ultimately, it is a theatre of vibrant emotions, not necessarily as trivial in the contrasts as has been assumed” (Gerhard K. KOCH: “El Parsifal de la pastura alpine”. *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 4-9-2006).⁷⁶

However, the most theatrically revolutionary staging that has ever been made of *Terra baixa* was the one by the director of the Staatstheater of Stuttgart, Hasko Weber, with an original script by Kekke Schmidt. It premiered at the Teatre Romea on the 23rd of April 2009 in a process of revamping three aspects that essentially affect the space, the profile of the main character and the condensation and concentration of the play around the triangle made up of Manelic, Marta and Sebastià. In Weber's production, the action shifts from the flour mill to a bar in Catalonia today, where a unique Manelic appears in the guise of a Black African, an illegal immigrant. Manelic's unusual illegal situation is harnessed by Sebastià, who offers him a marriage of convenience with Marta, his abused lover, as a way for Manelic to gain legal status. Finally, this version includes a major change in the denouement of the play:

Yet Manelic and Marta's final flight in Guimerà's *Terra baixa* in order to be able to live in lofty, Arcadi-

an purity opens up several questions that disturb the viewer: What price have they paid by fleeing from other people to a happiness that they have not yet attained? Can we speak about freedom without the presence of others? Can they truly be free in their solitude, even though they are with each other? As the prisoners of this solitude, won't they end up turning the supposed purity that surrounds them into a morally infected place? In Kekke Schmidt's version, the viewer has no time to ask these questions because the playwright believes that the power, and even the death of the one who embodies it with total forcefulness, has effective resources for perpetuating itself since now it is a temporary yet implacable substitute because it must vindicate itself. Schmidt does not leave a crack for hope or even doubt. And after this denouement, we perfectly grasp Marta's tears that open the play: rebellion implies radical solitude or death, nothing more."⁷⁷

One hundred years after the international dissemination of Guimerà's *Terra baixa*, we can claim that its relevance is manifested today in the necessary regularity of its presence on Catalan stages, both public and private, and in *Tiefland*'s continued existence in the repertory of some German-language opera theatres.⁷⁸ The most substantial change is that today Catalan-language theatre does not rely exclusively on Spanish translations to be translated into other languages and known universally. While Guimerà had the support of María Guerrero and Fernando Díaz de Mendoza and José Echegaray to gain fame in the world, today the propagation of the works of his direct heirs – from Josep M. Benet i Jornet to Lluïsa Cunillé, not to mention Jordi Galceran and especially Sergi Belbel – draws from other conduits, both official and institutional ones and others generated by the direct relationship between the authors or their literary agents and companies, groups and troupes around the world. And herein lies one of Guimerà's main merits: having ushered in the international dissemination of Catalonia's dramatic literature through *Terra baixa*.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- [1] For an overview of the literature on Guimerà, see Xavier VALL. "Àngel Guimerà". In: Enric CASSANY (dir.). *Panorama crític de la literatura catalana*. Vol. IV. *Segle XIX*. Vicens Vives, Barcelona 2009, pp. 337-358.
- [2] Regarding Guimerà's poetry, see especially: Pere GIMFERRER. "La poesia d'Àngel Guimerà". In: Àngel GUIMERÀ. *Antologia poètica*. Selecta, Barcelona 1974, pp. 5-28; Xavier VALL. "La poesia històrica d'Àngel Guimerà". In: Josep M. DOMINGO and Miquel M. GIBERT (ed.). *Actes del col·loqui sobre Àngel Guimerà i el Teatre Català al segle XIX*. Tarragona Provincial Council, Tarragona 2000, pp. 307-332.
- [3] Regarding Guimerà's theatre, see especially the monographs by Xavier FÀBREGAS. *Àngel Guimerà: les dimensions d'un mite*. Edicions 62, Barcelona 1971, "Llibres a l'abast" Collection, no. 91; Ramon BACARDIT. *Tragèdia i drama en l'obra d'Àngel Guimerà*. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 2009, "Textos i Estudis de Cultura Catalana" Collection, no. 144.
- [4] See Joan MARTORI. *La projecció d'Àngel Guimerà a Madrid (1891-1924)*. Curial and Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 1995; María Florencia HEREDIA. "María Guerrero, embajadora cultural de España en Argentina". In: Osvaldo PELLETTIERI (dir.). *Intercambio teatral entre España y la Argentina*. Galerna, Buenos Aires 2006, pp. 59-74.
- [5] Letter dated the 2nd of March 1905. In: Àngel GUIMERÀ. *Obres Completes*. Vol. 2. Selecta, Barcelona 1978, "Biblioteca Perenne" Collection, no. 6 bis, p. 1505.
- [6] See Enric GALLÉN. "Guimerà i el premi Nobel. Crònica provisional d'una candidatura". In: *Professor Joaquim Molas: Memòria, escriptura, història*. Publicacions de la Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona 2003, pp. 487-508; Dan NOSELL. "L'acollida de la literatura catalana a Suècia al tombant dels segles XIX i XX i la candidatura de Guimerà al premi Nobel". In: *Actes del Catorzè Col·loqui Internacional de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes*. Vol. I. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 2009, pp. 357-372.
- [7] Regarding the experiment of the Espectacles Audicions Graner, see Xosè AVIÑOÀ. *La música i el Modernisme*. Curial, Barcelona 1985, "Biblioteca de Cultura Catalana" Collection, no. 58, pp. 311-328.
- [8] The Guimerà of the historical tragedies and nationalistic myths of the 1880s was publicly praised by writers and political forces linked to Catalanism. See Enric GALLÉN. "Enquesta sobre'l teatre en vers", a *Teatralia* (1908-1909): estudi i edició". *Estudis Romànics*, no. 31 (2009), pp. 183-218; Assumpta CAMPS. "Teatre poètic, teatre nacional". In: *La recepció de Gabriele D'Annunzio a Catalunya*. Curial and Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 1996, "Textos i Estudis de Cultura Catalana" Collection, no. 50, pp. 185-236.
- [9] Rosa CABRÉ. "Yxart i els llibres. Una aposta intel·lectual". In: *Estudis sobre el positivisme a Catalunya*. Coordinated by Rosa Cabré and Josep M. Domingo. Eumo and Universitat de Barcelona, Vic and Barcelona 2007, pp. 9-97.
- [10] Joan MARTORI. *La projecció d'Àngel Guimerà...*, pp. 13-36.
- [11] José Echegaray translated and published *Maria Rosa* (1894), *Terra baixa* (1896) and *La filla del mar* (1899). He also translated *La festa del blat*, although his translation was never published.
- [12] "La literatura catalana en Madrid". *La Vanguardia*, 27-11-1891. In: Rosa CABRÉ (ed.). *José Yxart. Crítica dispersa (1883-1893)*. Lumen, Barcelona 1996, p. 319. See also the article, "María Guerrero. *Entre lobos anda el juego. El vergonzoso en palacio. Lo positive*". *La Vanguardia*, 7-7-1891. In: Rosa CABRÉ (ed.). *José Yxart...*, p. 307.
- [13] Regarding the relationship between Guimerà and Gaspar, the Guimerà Collection (Library of Catalonia)

contains three unpublished letters in Spanish from Gaspar to Guimerà written between 1888 and 1891 which respond to the three letters Guimerà wrote to Gaspar in Catalan in 1888 which are published in Daniel POYÁN DÍAZ. *Enrique Gaspar. Medio siglo de teatro español*. Vol. II. Gredos, Madrid, "Biblioteca Románica Hispánica" Collection, 1957, pp. 136-139. They all revolve around the translations of *Mar i cel*, *El fill del rei* and *Judit de Welp*; the latter premiered in Madrid (23-4-1892) to utter failure, as analysed by Laureano BONET: "*Judit de Welp*", síntoma del enfrentamiento entre Madrid y Barcelona". In: *Literatura, regionalismo y lucha de clases (Galdós, Narcís Oller y Ramón D. Perés)*. Universidad de Barcelona, Barcelona 1983, pp. 135-141. Regarding the relations between Gaspar and the Catalan cultural milieu, see Josep M. DOMINGO: "Pin i Soler, de la novel·la al teatre", and Rosa CABRÉ: "D'afinitats electives: vint-i-una cartes entre Enrique Gaspar i Josep Yxart". In: Josep M. DOMINGO and Rosa CABRÉ (ed.). "*C'est ça le théâtre!*". *Josep Yxart i el teatre del seu temps*, Punctum. Grup d'Estudis de la Literatura del Vuit-cents, Lleida, 2009, "El Vuit-cents" Collection, no. 3, pp. 137-172 and 295-368, respectively.

- [14] Josep YXART. *El arte escénico en España*. Vol. I. Imprenta La Vanguardia, Barcelona 1895, pp. 146-147.
- [15] See Roberto G. SÁNCHEZ. "Emilio Mario, Galdós y la reforma escénica del XIX". *Hispanic Review*, no. 52 (1984), pp. 263-279. To Mario, it was a "thesis" play, the kind that "always comes with a disadvantage: they frighten the audience and they refrain from applauding and they don't tend to yield money if they are salvaged and applauded, and since you have the reputation as a very well-established playwright it pains me that you work so hard and do not earn the money you should earn"; Daniel POYÁN. *Enrique Gaspar...*, pp. 143-144.
- [16] Letter from Emilio Mario to Benito Pérez Galdós (27-6-1893). In: Soledad ORTEGA. *Cartas a Galdós*. Revista de Occidente, Madrid 1964, p. 369.
- [17] Carmen MENÉNDEZ ONRUBIA. *El dramaturgo y los actores. Epistolario de Benito Pérez Galdós, María Guerrero y Fernando Díaz de Mendoza*. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Annexes to the journal *Segismundo*, no. 10, Madrid 1984, especially pp. 40-43 and 226-227. See also by the same author: *El neoromanticismo español y su época. Epistolario de José Echegaray a María Guerrero*. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Annexes to the journal *Segismundo*, no. 12, Madrid 1987.
- [18] See Gonzalo SOBEJANO. "Echegaray, Galdós y el melodrama". *Anales Galdosianos. Annexe*, 1976, pp. 91-117; Librada HERNÁNDEZ. "Clarín, Galdós y Pardo Bazán frente al teatro de José Echegaray". *Anales de la Literatura Española*, no. 8 (1992), pp. 95-108.
- [19] "I believe, with all due respect to Doña María, that *La fiesta del trigo* is more likely to be successful than the other: and now that they are both finished it can be seen more clearly in this than in an explanation of the plot.

This play which will go first has more intention, more common sense and I think that it has overcome a difficulty that had made me quite wary: making the anarchist likeable, and he is: let us now see what you and our Don José [Echegaray] think. The characters are also better sketched than in *Tierra*" (letter dated 5-1-1896). In: Guillermo GUASTAVINO: "Doce cartas de Guimerà". *Revista de Literatura*, no. 71-72 (July-September 1969), p. 68.

- [20] "We do not know any more about the play than what Don José [Echegaray] has told us according to what he has read, and he says he likes it a lot, so everything you have pondered is futile and there is no problem whatsoever. [...] I don't know on what this fear revealed in your letter is based because Don José says that the play is very lovely and the atmosphere should not inspire fear in you simply because the play we are doing now which is so successful is from the same genre. Forget about abandoning *La tierra baja* or not trusting *La fiesta del trigo*, which we are going to read this very night, and then we will write our impressions, even though they cannot carry more weight than the opinion of Don José", letter from Fernando Díaz de Mendoza to Àngel Guimerà, undated and with the letterhead of the Teatro Español. Guimerà Collection (Library of Catalonia). "It should be dated between the 23rd of February 1896 and the 2nd of March 1896", says Joan MARTORI. *La projecció d'Àngel Guimerà...*, p. 82.
- [21] "I told her [María Guerrero] what you told me and I think I have already written you: when I told her the play's plot she was thrilled, she liked it a lot and thinks it's better than *La fiesta del trigo*. I think that the thinking behind the play reveals beautiful virginity; it is like nothing else nor does it have the least bit of vulgarity and it has the hallmark: grandiosity", letter from Fernando Díaz de Mendoza to Àngel Guimerà, "Viernes 16-95". Guimerà Collection (Library of Catalonia). "We can date it from the month of August", says Joan MARTORI. *La projecció d'Àngel Guimerà...*, p. 78.
- [22] "But you don't take into account that the worst for me is not hearing even a single word! I appreciate when my good friends speak to me frankly, because if the play is destined to fail (and you have a better sense of this than I do), it's better to toss it in the fire than to put it on at the Teatro Romea of Barcelona in Catalan to see if the working classes like it, even though I have tried my best not to write a lulling play of distasteful passions. I ask and beg, then, most earnestly for just a little line from Mariña and another from Fernando to bring me out of my doubt and confusion, and in which I can see that they have not utterly forgotten one who, with or without drama, embraces them and loves them and will always care deeply for them", letter from Àngel Guimerà to María Guerrero (23-2-1896). In: Guillermo GUASTAVINO. "Doce cartas...", *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.
- [23] Letter from Àngel Guimerà to María Guerrero and Fernando Díaz de Mendoza. *IDEM*, pp. 71-72. The play did

not premiere in Madrid, and in Catalan, on the occasion of the Catalan theatre company of Enric Borràs. See Joan MARTORI. *La projecció d'Àngel Guimerà...*, pp. 157-158, especially; David GEORGE. "Borràs's season". In: *Theatre in Madrid and Barcelona 1892-1936*. University of Wales, Cardiff 2002, pp. 117-134.

- [24] On the 10th of March 1897 the message, written by the Lliga de Catalunya (League of Catalonia) and the Centre Escolar Catalanista (Catalanist School Centre) was delivered to the Consul of Greece in Barcelona by representatives of 46 presidents and directors of Catalanist corporations and newspapers; the document expressed solidarity with Greece in its struggles against Turkey for the conquest of Crete. The pro-monarchy press labelled the message anti-patriotic and subversive because it aimed to compare the Greeks' struggle for their independence with the Catalans' struggle against centralism. The repression fell upon the publications *La Renaixensa* and *Lo Catalanista*, which were suspended, while Pere Aldavert and Enric Prat were brought to trial, and Catalanist songs like "Els Segadors" were banned. The response of the Catalanists and much of the press in Barcelona, even the *Diario de Barcelona*, empowered the Centre Escolar to launch a protest campaign against the repression dubbed the battle of the *barretina*. From the 15th to 22nd of March, thousands of Barcelona residents took to the streets wearing the traditional Catalan *barretina*. Right in the midst of the campaign, the Unió Catalanista published a manifesto: "Al poble català" (To the Catalan People), with a print run of 100,000 copies. At that time, Guimerà presided over the Ateneu Barcelonès (Athenaeum of Barcelona) and signed the message, condemned the torture of the prisoners in the famous Montjuïc trials and eliminated the campaign to aid soldiers called "El aguinaldo para el soldado" (The Bonus for the Soldier) with a subscription of aid for soldiers who came back from the colonial war disabled. See Jordi LLORENS I VILA. "El missatge a 'Jordi I, rei dels hel·lens' i a Finlàndia". In: *Catalanisme i moviments nacionalistes contemporanis (1885-1901)*. *Missatges a Irlanda, Creta i Finlàndia*. Rafael Dalmau, Barcelona 1988, "Episodis de la Història" Collection, no. 271, pp. 56-62.
- [25] Joan MARTORI. *La projecció d'Àngel Guimerà...*, p. 93-105.
- [26] Letter from José Echegaray to Àngel Guimerà (22-3-1897). Guimerà Collection (Library of Catalonia). *IBID*, pp. 104-105.
- [27] It was published, but in the "La Novela Teatral" Collection (Madrid: Oficinas y Talleres de Prensa Popular), no. 196, 12-9-1920.
- [28] Letter from Fernando Díaz de Mendoza to Àngel Guimerà (21-1-1903). Guimerà Collection (Library of Catalonia).
- [29] "I see that you have been hearing about the failures of Catalanism. I became convinced that we would never do anything, that Catalonia *shone* brilliantly with its commercial spirit, that it sacrificed everything to the... drunkenness of making money... This runs in the blood in this country, and every day we see manifestations that this is why we are in Catalonia. For this reason, they have always dominated it and I am afraid that this will remain so until the consummation of the centuries. Every day I distance myself more and more from the merchants of politics. By characters, I prefer to work on my plays, which I can make disappear with one pen stroke if it suits me", letter from Guimerà to Artur Vinardell (2-5-1904). In: Àngel GUIMERA: *Obres Completes*. Vol. 2, p. 1503.
- [30] Lídia BONZI and Loreto BUSQUETS. *Compagnie teatrale italiana in Spagna (1885-1913)*. Bulzoni, Rome 1995, especially pp. 257-263.
- [31] Joan MARTORI. *La projecció d'Àngel Guimerà...*, pp. 149-160; David GEORGE. "Borràs' season". In: *Theatre in Madrid...*, pp. 117-134. A few months earlier at the Teatre Romea, the company had premiered *El camí del sol* (9-2-1904), a "tragedy" with a Catalanian backdrop and a love story that critics associated with *Mar i cel*. See Ramon BACARDIT. *Tragèdia i drama...*, pp. 306-328.
- [32] Letter dated 5-6-1904 in La Coruña. Guimerà Collection (Library of Catalonia).
- [33] Letter from Eugenio Sellés to Àngel Guimerà (5-6-1904). Guimerà Collection (Library of Catalonia).
- [34] "In conclusion, with prose as the vehicle of dramatic expression, it also seemed clear that it was necessary to change the proportion between dialogue and dramatic actions. Along this pathway, which would be simplified for future theatre, much is unquestionably indebted to Enrique Gaspar (but also, we believe, to Eugenio Sellés). [...] This does not mean that both Gaspar and Sellés did not receive critical pans in the 1880s because of their condemnation of the corruption of contemporary customs, since Spanish theatre was entrenched in an idealistic lineage, clinging to romanticism, which had somehow degenerated into an art of recipe and conventionalisms": Concepción FERNÁNDEZ SOTO. *Claves socioculturales y literarias en la obra de Eugenio Sellés y Àngel (1842-1926)*. *Una aproximación al teatro español de finales del siglo XIX*. Universidad de Almería, Almería 2006, pp. 656-657.
- [35] Ermete Novelli premiered *Los domadores* in Italian at the Teatro de la Comedia in Madrid (27-5-1896), Rosario Pino put on *Los caballos* (24-1-1899) at the Teatro Lara in Madrid, and Ermete Zacconi premiered *Las serpientes* (29-5-1903), also in Italian.
- [36] See note 34 above, pp. 374-375.
- [37] In the former, Sellés showcased the case of Lleó, a man who is sick of poverty who abandons his wife and daughter. He returns with another companion, Pere, with the goal of inciting revolution. However, he finds that during the time he was away his wife has begun to work in a factory in order to maintain Gabriel, their son. Pere suggests that he bomb the factory, but two things stop him: one, he is carrying the bomb in the jacket which is serving as a cushion for his injured son because he has hurt

- his head and Lleó would have to rouse him to get the bomb; and two, his wife and Pere's wife are inside the factory. As a result, the new family situation thwarts the attack and manages to vanquish the *tamers*: the anarchist is ultimately redeemed by the love of his wife and son. In *Les serps*, Llorenç, a honoured railway worker of the town, lives surrounded by "snakes": his wife, who complains about the lack of money and the submission to the man; his daughter, Valentina, who shares her mother's desire for wealth and ostentation; and Pere, the foreman and revolutionary who aims to turn them into his group. Llorenç tries to combat the ambition and materialism of the "snakes", but he ends up yielding to his daughter's desires for emancipation and lets himself be convinced by the foreman who offers him money and a blank commission if he causes the derailment of a train filled with troops who are coming to put down a workers' uprising in the city. The act finishes with the younger daughter asking her father if with this act he will improve their situation. His answer could not be more pathetic: "ask this heap of passions", referring to the "snakes".
- [38] See the letter from Guimerà to Antoni Torrella (1-5-1905). In: Àngel GUIMERÀ. *Obres Completes*. Vol. 2, pp. 1505-1506.
- [39] Pere Codina and Maria Morera premiered *La Miralta* in Catalan at the Teatre Romea (20-3-1911) and Enric Giménez's company premiered *Andrònica* with Margarida Xirgu at the Teatre Principal (22-10-1910).
- [40] Letter from Guimerà to María Guerrero and Fernando Díaz de Mendoza (2-3-1905). In: Àngel GUIMERÀ. *Obres Completes*. Vol. 2, p. 1505.
- [41] Letter from Guimerà to Enric Borràs (20-6-1905). *IBID*, p. 1506; "Of the tragedies that I am sending you, two of which are *Rei i monjo* and *L'ànima morta*": Francesc FOGUET and Isabel GRAÑA: "L'admiració del gran Guimerà". In: *El gran Borràs. Retrat d'un actor*. Museu de Badalona, Badalona 2007, "Biografies badalonines" Collection, no. 2, p. 63.
- [42] *IBID*, p. 1507.
- [43] Regarding Guimerà's political ideology, see Pere ANGUERA. "El pensament polític d'Àngel Guimerà". In: *Literatura, pàtria i societat. Els intel·lectuals i la nació*. Eumo, Vic 1999, "Referències" Collection, no. 25, pp. 129-155.
- [44] See Enric GALLÉN. "Sobre la institucionalització, la tradició dramàtica i la base social del teatre català: una perspectiva històrica". In: J. AULET, F. FOGUET and N. SANTAMARIA (ed.). *Una tradició dolenta, maleïda o ignorada*. Puntum & GELL, Lleida 2006, pp. 77-107.
- [45] Martí MARTELL. "Guimerà i *Per dret diví*", *La Veu de Catalunya*, 3-10-1926. On this topic, see Ramon BACARDIT. "L'elaboració de *Per dret diví* (1894...) i la seva significació en l'obra d'Àngel Guimerà". *Anuari Verdaguier*, no. 13 (2005), pp. 421-438.
- [46] An incomplete manuscript of the play is conserved among the papers in the Guimerà Collection (Library of Catalonia).
- [47] "Here I have found resounding success at the Teatre Principal with *Reina vella. La Santa Espina*, which, as you know, premiered last year, is put on every day; it will soon reach 200 performances", letter from Guimerà to Enric Borràs, 1-2-1908. In: Àngel GUIMERÀ. *Obres Completes*. Vol. 2, p. 1515.
- [48] See Francesc CURET. *Història del teatre català*. Aedos, Barcelona 1967.
- [49] On the performance of Guimerà's late texts in Madrid, see Joan MARTORI. *La projecció d'Àngel Guimerà...*, pp. 181-269.
- [50] As a point of reference for Guimerà's translations into other languages, see: <www.visat.cat/traduccion-literatura-catalana/esp/llibres-traduits/>.
- [51] There are reports of a translation by Eberhard Vogel which was never published. In turn, Lothar's version was translated into English (1908, version by Rosie H. Elkin), Italian (1909, version by Ferdinando Fontana) and Russian (1911). Lothar also wrote the libretto for *La filla del mar*, which premiered in Vienna in 1912 under the title of *Liebesketten*. See Maridès SOLER. "La dinàmica dramàtica de *La filla del mar*, d'Àngel Guimerà i de *Liebesketten* de Rudolph Lothar i d'Eugen d'Albert: Una comparació". *Zeitschrift für Katalanistik*, no. 18 (2005), pp. 197-214.
- [52] See Maridès SOLER. "Caciquisme i color local a *Terra baixa* d'Àngel Guimerà i a *Tiefland* de Rudolph Lothar i Eugen d'Albert". *Zeitschrift für Katalanistik*, no. 1, 1988, pp. 132-149; "Les adaptacions operístiques de *Terra baixa* d'Àngel Guimerà al francès (*La catalane*) i a l'alemany (*Tiefland*)". In: Jordi JANÉ LLIGÉ and Johannes KANATEK (ed.). *20è Col·loqui Germanocatalà*. Shaker, Aachen 2007, "Biblioteca catalànica germànica" Collection, no. 6, pp. 25-44.
- [53] On his personality, see Carola DURAN I TORT. "Un viatger empedreït: Benet Roura i Barrios, ambaixador de la literatura catalana". In: *Miscel·lània Joan Veny*. Vol. 8. Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Barcelona 2006, pp. 31-68.
- [54] "Quatre paraules al llegidor". In: "*Tiefland*", *prólech de la traducció alemanya de "Terra baixa", òpera estrenada en el "LandesTheater" de Praga*. Impremta y encuadernacions de Marcet y Figueras, Terrassa 1907, pp. 4-9.
- [55] *IBID*, p. 6. Regarding Guimerà's reception in Germany, see Petra NEUMANN. *Untersuchungen zu Werk und Rezeption des katalanischen Dramatikers Àngel Guimerà*. Peter Lang, Frankfurt del Main 1999.
- [56] It premiered on the 28-12-1897 at Théâtre La Bodinière in Paris. Likewise, Maria Pi de Folch translated *La reina vella* and *Rei i monjo* into French during the first decade of the century, which is conserved among Guimerà's papers on deposit at the Library of Catalonia.
- [57] Pikhart's version premiered on the 16th of March 1907 at the National Theatre of Prague. He also translated *Mar i cel* (1909), which never earned the same acclaim as *Terra baixa*. See Jan SCHEJBAL. "Projecció internacional de Guimerà". In: *Àngel Guimerà en el centenari de la seva*

- mort. Fundació Carulla-Font, Barcelona 1974; pp. 122-124; Jan SCHEJBAL. "Les traduccions en txec i eslovac d'obres literàries catalanes i viceversa". *Quaderns. Revista de Traducció*, no. 11 (2004), pp. 45-57.
- [58] See Manuel LLANAS and Ramon PINYOL. "Les traduccions no castellanes de Verdaguier, Oller i Guimerà fins a 1939". In: E. TRENÇ and M. ROSER (ed.). *Col·loqui Europeu d'Estudis Catalans*. Vol. 1. *La recepció de la literatura catalana a Europa*. Montpellier 2004, pp. 69-94.
- [59] *Langlandet* was published in *Modärna trubadurer*. Gleerups Förlag, Lund 1917.
- [60] Three performances were put on (9th and 13th of January; 10th of March). See Lidia BONZI and Loreto BUSQUETS. *Compagnie teatrali...*, pp. 595-604. The Guimerà Collection contains a letter and two postcards from Grasso to Guimerà dated between 1906 and 1907.
- [61] See Sarah ZAPPULLA MUSCARÀ and ENZO ZAPPULLA. *Giovanni Grasso: il più grande attore tragico del mondo*. La Cantinella, Acireale 1995. When Grasso died on 14-10-1930, Josep M. de Sagarra devoted one of his articles to him, recalling his way of performing: "Giovanni Grasso has died. This saintly man summoned sweet orpheonic, Petritxolesque and Guimeranesque hours from our infantile, anarchic twentieth century! Grasso had come to Barcelona to wallow in the stage like a lion, with a seven-spring knife on his teeth and a vibrant green tear that fell from his eyes and traced his cheeks full of scars and blisters like the mountains of Montserrat. The last time I saw him at the Teatre Barcelona he was totally swollen, wore a moustache that looked like patent-leather shoes and still had the strength to recite explosive verses, to seduce a candied characteristic and to open a gallant youth from top to bottom. I have seen few men as Dionysian, as terrific and as tender as Grasso. I imagine that this thespian would have fared quite well in the days of the ancient emperors, to perform a drama at the desert of a 20-hour meal, to act as Hercules or Neptune with a shining, oscillating stage and with a belly brimming with taunts": "L'aperitiu. Grasso". *Mirador*, no. 91, 23-10-1930, p. 2.
- [62] However, in his unpublished doctoral thesis, D. J. Kaiser adds: "After gaining much attention on stage and screen, *Martha of the Lowlands* was finally released in print in 1915 as part of the Drama League Series of Plays. This edition lists only Wallace Gillpatrick as the translator and notes that 'this play is dedicated to the reading public only, and no performance of it may be given' (iv). This same introductory note, however, is preceded by a copyright notice crediting both Marburg and Gillpatrick for *The Wolf* in 1902. In a translator's preface, Gillpatrick notes that 'the soliloquies and most of the asides [were] cut' when *Marta of the Lowlands* was produced. He defends the authenticity of this 1915 version, however, stating that the proper office of a translator [is] to render a foreign work as faithfully as may be, the play is here printed in its entirety (xxiii)". In: *Àngel Guimerà's Terra baixa: Three translations*. Vol. I. Performing Arts Department, Washington University 2007, p. 82. Regarding *Terra baixa* and other translations of Guimerà's plays into English, see David GEORGE. "Les traduccions de Guimerà a l'anglès". In: Josep M. DOMINGO and Miquel M. GIBERT (ed.). *Actes del col·loqui...*, pp. 189-198.
- [63] D. J. KAISER. *Àngel Guimerà's...*, p. 81; see also Luis PEGENAUTE. "El teatro español de fin de siglo: su recepción en los EEUU hasta 1936". In: Luis PEGENAUTE (ed.). *La traducción en la Edad de Plata*. Promociones y Publicaciones Universitarias, Barcelona 2001, especially pp. 222-225 and 254.
- [64] Regarding Camilo Vidal's adaptation, see Jorge A. DUBATTI. "Problemas de teatro comparado. La adaptación argentina (1909) de *Terra baixa* de Àngel Guimerà". In: *Comparatística. Estudios de literatura y teatro*. Biblos, Buenos Aires 1992, "Colección de Literatura Comparada" Collection, no. 1, pp. 45-62.
- [65] A. AISEMBERG. "Pablo Podestá". In: Osvaldo PELLETIERI. *Historia del teatro argentino en Buenos Aires. La emancipación cultural (1884-1930)*. Galerna, Buenos Aires 2002, pp. 257-258.
- [66] J. A. DUBATTI. "El repertorio teatral español en Buenos Aires (1880-1930)". In: *Actas del III Congreso Argentino de Hispanistas*. Asociación Argentina de Hispanistas and Universidad de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires 1992, pp. 473-483.
- [67] See Enric GALLÉN. "'Àngel Guimerà', de José León Pagano". *Anuari Verdaguier*, no. 12 (2004), pp. 207-226.
- [68] It was published in the "El Teatro Nacional" Collection, no. 26-27, 23-11-1918. According to the publication, the one-act parody "set on the national scene" premiered at the Teatro Argentino in Buenos Aires in 2-1-1911 in a production by Florencio Parravicini's company. Parravicini played the character of Melonich; the other characters were named La Martona, Sebastián, Tonina, Pepina, Nora, Tomás, Mason, Trompudo, Melena, Pepino and Nadon. The action takes place "on an estate in the inland region; inside a country kitchen. From left to right, doors that open; in the forum, middle ground a doorway through which the countryside can be glimpsed. To the right next to the doorway is a staircase leading to a door that can be opened covered with a curtain. In the foreground on the right side of the kitchen a table, chairs, field implements, a milky pudding made with mace, etc." Regarding other parodies of Guimerà, see Joan MARTORI. "Les paròdies del teatre de Guimerà". In: Josep M. DOMINGO and Miquel M. GIBERT (ed.). *Actes del col·loqui...*, pp. 241-251.
- [69] See "Filmografia de Guimerà". In: Enric GALLÉN (dir.). *Guimerà 1845-1995*. Department of Culture, Centre Dramàtic de la Generalitat, Barcelona 1995, p. 119.
- [70] See *Memorias*. Lumen, Barcelona 1991, "Palabra en el tiempo" Collection, no. 208, especially pp. 148-151, 245-257 and 343-362.
- [71] See Àngel QUINTANA. "De Àngel Guimerà a Leni Riefenstahl: el extraño caso de *Tiefland*". *Versants*, no. 42 (2002), pp. 161-181; Àngel QUINTANA and Margarida CASACUBERTA. "El nacionalismo como mito: *Tiefland*,

de Leni Riefenstahl, una interpretació de *Terra baixa* de Guimerà”. At: <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/80226953108682617400080/>

- [72] See Enric GALLÉN (dir.). *Guimerà 1845-1995*, pp. 13-19.
- [73] *Mar i cel*, based on the play by Àngel Guimerà. Edicions 62, Barcelona 2005, “El Galliner” Collection, no. 172.
- [74] Regarding the divergences between the Guimerà text and Bru de Sala’s version, see Maridès SOLER. “*Dagoll Dagom* y el musical *Mar y cielo*, según Àngel Guimerà”. *Gestos*, no. 22/44, pp. 107-117; Maridès SOLER. “‘Les veles s’inflaran...’ La musicalització de *Mar i cel* d’Àngel Guimerà, per Dagoll Dagom i Xavier Bru de Sala”. *Stichomythia*, no. 7 (2008), pp. 123-135.

- [75] See the programme for *Tiefland*. Gran Teatre del Liceu 2008-2009. Fundació Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona 2009.
- [76] “De L’espectacle”. *Full informatiu. Gran Teatre del Liceu*, no. 77, 2-10-2008, p. 2.
- [77] Miquel M. GIBERT. “*Terra baixa*, o el mite impossible”. In: *Dossier pedagògic* del Teatre Romea (2008-2009 season), coordinated by Enric Gallén (Pompeu Fabra University) and M. Carme Bernal (University of Vic). <www.grupfocus.cat/.../Dossier_pedagogic_AngelGuimera-Terrabaixa.pdf>. Retrieved on the 2nd of April 2011.
- [78] Jaume RADIGALES. “Guimerà a la alemana”. *La Vanguardia*, 24-9-2008, p. 24 (Suplement Cultura/s, no. 327).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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