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The Reception of Galician Performances and (Re)translations of Shakespeare¹

Abstract: This presentation will deal with the reception of performances, translations and retranslations of Shakespeare's plays into the Galician language. As is well-known, Galician is a Romance language which historically shared a common origin with Portuguese in the Iberian Peninsula, and which had a different evolution due to political reasons, i.e. the independence of Portugal and the recentralization of Spain after a long partition with the so called Catholic monarchs. As a consequence, Galician ceased to be the language of power and culture as it was during the Middle Ages, and was spoken by peasants and the lower classes in private contexts for centuries. With the disappearance of Francoism in the 1970s, the revival of Galician and its use as a language of culture was felt as a key issue by the Galician intelligentsia and by the new autonomous government formed in 1981. In order to increase the number of speakers of the language and to give it cultural respectability, translations and performances of prominent playwrights, and particularly those by Shakespeare were considered instrumental. This article will analyse the use of Shakespeare's plays as an instrument of gentrification of the Galician language, so that the association with Shakespeare would confer a marginalized language social respectability and prestige.

Keywords: Shakespeare; Galician language; reception; performances; translations.

Introduction

This article deals with twentieth- and twenty-first century performances, translations and (re)translations of William Shakespeare's plays in the Galician language. It seeks to provide a historical overview of the reception of the

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playwright in Galicia, and analyses the use of his works as a means of dignifying the Galician language. Due to the minority cultural status of this language, the existence of versions of Shakespeare's work in Galician would serve to lend it social respectability and prestige. The theoretical approach used draws on Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere's assertion that translation takes place between cultures as well as languages, what they call "the cultural turn" (3-4). This is related to Itamar Even-Zohar's theory that translated literature is included in the various systems of the target culture as expressed in "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem". My theoretical standpoint is also influenced by Lawrence Venuti's view that translation "wields enormous power in the construction of national identities" (13), and by Maria Tymozko's claim that translation is not only a "locus of imperialism" but also "a site of resistance and nation building" (21).

History of the Galician Language

Galician is a Romance language from the Iberian Peninsula which shares its origins with Portuguese, yet had a different evolution for political reasons. Whereas Portugal became independent, following a lengthy partition under the so-called Catholic Monarchs (1479-1516), Galicia remained part of a recentralized Spain. As a consequence, Galician ceased to be the language of power and culture, a status it had enjoyed during the Middle Ages in the Peninsula, and for centuries would be spoken mainly by peasants and the lower classes in private contexts: it became, then, a minoritized language for the first time in its history. Hence in terms of Galician letters the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are known as the "séculos escuros" (dark centuries), followed by the Galician "Rexurdimento" (Renaissance) in the nineteenth century. Although no sociolinguistic studies exist from the early twentieth century, it is widely agreed that over ninety per cent of the Galician population were proficient speakers of the language, whereas its written form was restricted largely to prose fiction, poetry, and political essays (Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira, *Addenda 1*). During the 1960s and 1970s Spain experienced a significant exodus from rural villages to cities, which brought about a process of linguistic substitution, hybridization of the language and a decline in the contexts for oral transmission. However, even in such circumstances, in the mid- to late twentieth century the percentage of the Galician population that understood the language was above 97% (Fernández Rodríguez and Rodríguez Neira, *Addenda 1*), and although it is slowly losing speakers, Galician continues to be used by the majority of the population in the twenty-first century (Fernández Rodríguez, "Evolución [...]", 265). With the demise of Francoism in the 1970s, the revival of Galician and its use as a language of culture was seen as a key issue by the

Galician intelligentsia, and also by the new autonomous government formed in 1981. In order to increase the number of speakers of the language and to give it cultural respectability, translations and performances of prominent playwrights, particularly those works by Shakespeare, were considered to be important.

Shakespeare on the Galician Stage

As early as 1916, a cultural society –founded in Corunna by Galician intellectuals, including the brothers Ramón and Antón Vilar Ponte, Fernando Osorio, Florencio Vaamonde Lores and Francisco Tettamancy–, called ‘Irmandades da Fala’ (Brotherhoods of the Language), promoted the teaching and practice of the Galician language through drama performances. One of their aims was to organize theatrical performances of long plays of good quality, which would be of interest to cultivated minorities, and which would feature high and middle class characters. Consequently, in January 1919 this group created the Conservatorio Nazonal do Arte Gallego (National Conservatoire of Galician Art), a school for actors and actresses, conceived as a platform to renew and revitalize Galician theatre at the time (*A Nosa Terra*, 5 Feb. no. 79). Shakespeare’s texts, among many other international plays, were used for these purposes in soirées aimed at persuading comedy audiences to come to the venue, situated in one of the buildings of María Pita Square, the emblematic Town Hall square of the city. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was the first translation of a Shakespearean play into Galician, (probably through a previous Portuguese version, *As alegres comadres de Windsor*, 1913). The Galician play, entitled *Xan entre elas* (John among the Ladies), was translated the prominent writer Antón Vilar Ponte (1881-1936), one of the most active members of the Galician nationalist organization Irmandades da fala (Insua). As stated in the journal *A Nosa Terra*, May 1918, *Xan entre elas* was chosen in order to introduce the new school of theatre to the public of Corunna. These theatrical soirées included Portuguese drama in Galician versions, original Galician plays, and other European plays in translation by playwrights such as John Millington Synge, Molière, August Strindberg, Maurice Maeterlinck and W. B. Yeats, among others. As an example of such theatrical praxis, on April 22, 1919 the original Galician play *A man da Santiña* by the playwright Ramón Cabanillas was performed (*A Nosa Terra* 77), and on January 4, 1920, the Shakespearean version *Xan entre elas* was premiered, seemingly with success, as the same journal *A Nosa Terra* (10 Feb 1920, no. 112) attests:

O público que enchía o local non se fartaba de reirse co'as bromas terribres que sofre o inmenso Falstaff. De tres actos e cinco cadros consta a comedia, e a tramoya faise rápidamente como non é adoitado nas representaciós de

aficionados. O derradeiro coadro, unha broma no antroido, resulta pintoresco e vistosísimo. *Xan entre elas*, a petición de cantos asistiron ó estreno, vaise repetir o próximo domingo.

[The audience, which filled the premises, could not stop laughing at the terrible jokes suffered by the immense Falstaff. The comedy consists of three acts and five scenes, and the stage machinery is carried out quickly, as opposed to the usual amateur performances. The last scene, a carnivalesque joke, is picturesque and very flamboyant. *Xan entre elas*, at the request of those attending the premiere, will be repeated next Sunday].

To the best of our knowledge this is the first instance of the performance of a Shakespearean play in Galician. It was possible thanks to the effort of Fernando Osorio, responsible for the *mise en scène*, under the linguistic direction of Xoán Vicente Viqueira and assisted by Antón Vilar Ponte and Bernardino Varela Docampo (Vizcaíno). It is believed that some of these early translations were either lost during the Spanish Civil War (1936-9) or burned by the translators themselves before fleeing the country (Vizcaíno). However, as stated above, there are various references to their didactic and performative purposes in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Civil War period and the subsequent dictatorship put an end to the use of Galician as a language of culture, and there were few subsequent translations until the revival of the language in the 1970s. However, in the later years of Francoism some Galician intellectuals did begin to publish original and translated works in Galician. In 1958 the Galician writer Álvaro Cunqueiro, who was devoted to the translation into Galician of European and American poets (Lorenzo-Modia and Pérez Janeiro 227), published a play entitled *O incerto Señor Don Hamlet príncipe de Dinamarca* (The Uncertain Mr. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark), in which the Shakespearean character is transmuted into the Galician world with an emphasis on its origin in Norse sagas. It is not itself a version of *Hamlet*, but the fruit of Cunqueiro's enduring interest in the sources that inspired Shakespeare (Cunqueiro, "As mil" 420), something which can also be seen in his articles for the Galician newspaper *Faro de Vigo* (Jarazo and Domínguez "El discurso" n.p.). In 1974 Cunqueiro claimed, albeit anonymously in the newspaper which he edited, that with *Hamlet* there was something which was not quite right, which may be related to the Oedipus complex, as described in 1900 by Sigmund Freud (Anon, *FV*, Feb. 3 1974, 28; Freud 224; Smith 366). Cunqueiro's *O incerto Señor Don Hamlet* presents an absurd and complex atmosphere in which characters are not who they appear to be. It is a play in which Hamlet learns that his father is not the ruling king Olaf but his uncle Halmar, while the young heir seems to be the only person in the kingdom who does not know his true origin as an illegitimate son. The conflicts of Hamlet's inner identity are still with him after the deaths of the brothers. Furthermore,

a very young Queen Gerda is presented as unaware of the consequences of her sexual activities as an adolescent, and ends up by proposing incest with her own son, following the poetic rules of Old Nordic, which did not forbid marriages between brother and sister or between mother and son, the lady here being the more active partner in the proposal (Smith 365-366). The play mocks the audiences' own beliefs and myths by means of irony and sarcasm and presents doubly tragic characters, not only in the terrible search for vengeance—on the part of Hamlet—, but also wretchedly looking for their own identities in an existentialist and symbolist atmosphere. The piece was premiered in Corunna in 1959, and, given the circumstances of the Galician language and culture at that time, it was viewed as a symbol of Galician patriotism (Vieites 248). Cunqueiro's *Don Hamlet* was performed on various occasions later, notably by the company Escola dramática galega, in Corunna on June 7, 1979. It was subsequently presented in a dramatized reading in Arteixo by the same company, directed by Santiago Fernández on April 11, 2000, sponsored by the town council. More recently, in order to commemorate the centenary of the author's birth (1911-1981) and the thirtieth anniversary of his death, the tragedy was performed in Santiago de Compostela in 2011 by the professional-company Sarabela Teatro. In it a female director, Ánxeles Cuña Bóveda, presented on the stage of Teatro Principal a postmodern quest for identity in an absurd and collapsing world.

Cunqueiro's "Romeo e Xulieta, famosos namorados" might be described as a version of the original play by Shakespeare, which—using the technique of embedding—is inserted into his novel *As crónicas do sochantre* (1956). In the play some deceased people pass for actors and actresses and stage the famous Shakespearean drama, but they suddenly appear as corpses acting a part in the play (Rutherford 167-168). To the best of our knowledge no public enactment of the play has thus far been made, although some scenes were performed by the company Achádego in 1989 and it had already been acted in a private show by Teatro Circo in 1974 (Lourenzo "Cunqueiro" 36). From 1965 onwards a number of independent Galician theatre companies were set up by enthusiasts, and some of these were interested in performing Shakespeare (Lourenzo "El teatro" 88). In this period the first to opt for a Galician performance of *Macbeth* was the director Manuel Lourenzo, who presented the tragedy in Ribadavia, in the Galician province of Ourense, on May 18, 1975 and in Corunna in 1976. His company, Teatro Circo, incorporated the Uruguayan Pepe Estruch, who was in charge of the scenography. The key idea of this performance was its close relationship with traditional Galician folklore rhythms and costumes, including 'meigas' (Galician witches) and recognizable popular dances with wooden peasant clogs, as well as innovative modern traits. This Shakespearean performance testified to a *mise en scène* that would give added value to Galician

traditional culture by being in touch with high literature. It also seems that Shakespeare is a leitmotif for Manuel Lourenzo.

In the democratic period, when regional governments were established in Spain and started to encourage their respective languages through diverse linguistic policies, a new scenario for drama was made possible. After the creation in Madrid of the Centro Dramático Nacional (Spanish Drama Centre) in 1977, the autonomous administrations established their own public dramatic institutions. In Galicia the language was made official, and the Centro Dramático Galego (Galician Drama Centre) was created in 1984, a relevant event for the institutionalization and legitimization of Galician dramatic undertakings (Feldman and Abuín González 423). Together with other major European plays by authors such as Christopher Marlowe, Luigi Pirandello, J. M. Synge, Carlo Goldoni and Anton Chekhov, this public company presented *As alegres casadas* (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*) (1989) and *Un soño de verán* (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) (1992), both directed by Eduardo Alonso; *Richard III* (2005), directed by Manuel Guede; and *Noite de reis ou o que queirades* (*Twelfth Night or What You Will*) (2007), directed by Quico Cadaval. These performances sometimes used a script written or adapted by the directors, Eduardo Alonso, as in the case of *As alegres casadas*, translated by Alonso and Manuel Guede and later published by Edicións Xerais. On other occasions, new (re)translations were commissioned from philologists in order to provide a contemporary text which would be adapted to the new production. The importance of Shakespeare for Galician public institutions was so great that in the 1980s there was a public project which commissioned Manuel Balboa to turn Cunqueiro's *Don Hamlet* into an opera, although to the best of our knowledge the project did not come to fruition.

In this period the director Manuel Lourenzo continued to present Shakespearean plays to Galician audiences, including *Os amantes de Verona* (1988) (*Romeo and Juliet*), in this case in performances by the amateur company Titiriteiros do Norte (Lourenzo 1988). Other theatrical shows directed by Lourenzo and played by the company Teatro do Alvardán were also inspired by the English playwright, such as *Morte accidental de Hamlet* (1992), in which the Shakespearean play is connected with Dario Fo's *Morte accidentale di un anarchico* (*Accidental Death of an Anarchist*) (1970). In other performances also overseen by Lourenzo, such as *Unha noite en Elsinor* (*A Night in Elsinor*) (1997) and *Hamlet e familia* (*Hamlet and Family*) (2001), Shakespeare continues to be one of the inspirational authors, on this occasion combined with Cunqueiro and the German playwright Heiner Müller. Lourenzo also consistently used topics from Shakespeare for his various entrepreneurial and publishing projects. These are mainly from *Hamlet*, such as in Clube teatral Elsinor, a company founded in 1990, or the journal *Casahamlet* launched in 1998, in which playlets of Shakespearean origin are published: "Falta Hamlet" (*Hamlet Missing*) (perf.

and publ. 1998) or “Leria habitual de Hamlet” (Habitual Hamlet Talk) (2002). The first of these was performed in isolated form in 1998, sponsored by the Drama Division of the University of Santiago de Compostela, and in 2010 within the performance entitled *Eclipses* (Lourenzo 2014). Other short pieces of Shakespearean inspiration, such as “O cuarto de Ofelia” (Ophelia’s Room) by Xesús Pisón, were also published in *Casahamlet* (1999) and directed by Manuel Lourenzo in Rianxo, in the province of Pontevedra, on June 19, 2009. It seems that Ophelia’s suffering has also been an inspiration for Galician female poets in seeking to deal with the issue of the victims of patriarchal domination. This is the case with Marta Dacosta who in 2003 published a book entitled *As amantes de Hamlet* (Hamlet’s Lovers), in which she presents in Galician a feminist poetry manifesto on Ophelia’s suicide and male power.

Other prestigious Galician theatre directors, such as Eduardo Alonso, apart from working for publicly funded companies as the first director of the Galician Centro Dramático, noted above, also worked for private ones, such as Teatro do Noroeste, for which he adapted *Rei Lear* (*King Lear*) in 1990 (in collaboration with Candido Pazó and published in 1998 by Xerais), *Macbeth* in 1994, *Noite de Reis* (*Twelfth Night*) in 1996 and *Romeo e Xulieta* in 2007. Explaining his work and more specifically the type of texts he presented, Alonso (“Some” 342) says that the texts “were modified to meet particular wishes, with the exception of the production *Macbeth*, the text of which play, translated from the original into Galician, remained almost untouched”. He observes that these are performances based on Shakespeare’s plays rather than productions of the English playwright’s texts themselves. For instance, in the case of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, it was an adaptation based not only on this play, but also on *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Henry IV* (Part I and II), and the libretto of Verdi’s *Falstaff*, with the aim of introducing into the original comedy a broader treatment of love relationships (Alonso, “Some” 342-343).

Another relevant performance is that of Quico Cadaval’s production of *Twelfth Night*, *Noite de reis ou o que queirades*, in 2007. In it the director avoided the solemn elements of the classic text by transforming the original Italian settings into twentieth-century Italy, achieved by means of popular songs from the 1950s. The piece was very well received by the public, and the tour by the official company included performances for students at different stages of their A Level studies. A specific pedagogical text was produced to be used in secondary schools before performances took place, and this material was, and indeed remains, available on the internet (Vázquez Freire).

Other professional companies, such as Librescena and Voadora, have presented performances of *Otelo* (2000), and *Obras completas* (2002), and *A Tempestade* (*The Tempest*) (2013). These productions also represent visions of reputed directors who wanted to contribute to the construction of a Galician

theatrical tradition by incorporating Shakespeare into their repertory. The first two texts were translated by Francisco Pillado and are classic in their conception, in that they are conceived with fewer instances of adaptation to the stage, sticking to the English-language source. It is to be noted that Xosé Manuel Rabón directed the former play (*Otelo*) with a cast of just four actors, which was an indirect comment on the dire financial straits of Galician companies. The same could be said about the devices of parody and farce used in the performance of *As obras completas de William Shakespeare (abreviadas)* (*The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)*), following the trend established by the American playwrights Adam Long, Daniel Singer and Jess Winfield in 1987, which was a resounding success with audiences on both sides of the Atlantic (Long, Singer and Winfield). Likewise, the performance of *A tempestade* is a production made possible by international cooperation between Galician and Portuguese companies and crowdfunding, perhaps the only way for Galician transnational performances to be staged in the current age of austerity. This version is presented as a postdramatic play in which spectators are to enjoy a very physical performance, one which includes many dancers from Portugal, as a way of marking a new turn in Galician Shakespearean drama. In the performance the most important elements are dancing and vitalism, as well as light and sound effects used in order to shock spectators aesthetically, yet also existentially. This year a new version of *Hamlet* was presented in the city of Corunna directed by Lino Braxe, starring Luis Tosar, an internationally successful Galician actor whose acting was reviewed positively in an article entitled “The Great Luis Tosar [...]” in *The Chicago Reader* (19 March 2014) (Sachs), and who received the María Casares award for his interpretation of Hamlet. This presentation is set in Denmark in the 1940s during the Nazi invasion, and has a decadent, cabaret, and brownshirt atmosphere that paves the way for a personal and collective crisis. It was a very successful play, shown in different cities, and was sponsored by the industrial owners of the world-wide Zara Company based in the city of Corunna.

On the same postdramatic lines used for the performance of *A tempestade*, the director Quico Cadaval has coined a new term for some Galician performances, “teatro perralleiro” (penny drama), which might be translated as Galician traditional, low-brow theatre (Becerra de Becerreá). It is a sort of modern fiesta-theatre, in which Dionysian elements are preeminent. His version of *Twelfth Night* already exhibited some features related to this peculiar way of understanding drama, such as the mixture of ingenuity and malice, impudence and tenderness. In 2010 Cadaval and the duo Mofa and Befá, consisting of the Galician actors Evaristo Calvo and Víctor Mosqueira, staged *Shakespeare para ignorantes* (Shakespeare for Ignoramuses), in which—with the same tone of lucid comicality and playfulness—several unnoticed topics, characters, or scenes from the plays of Shakespeare are performed as a fiesta on

stage (Capeáns). This play also satirizes the academic world when at the beginning both Mofa and Befá burst in and interrupt a very scholarly lecture on Shakespeare to provide their own atypical vision of the English playwright. This hilarious play was presented both in Galician playhouses and in other drama festivals in Madrid in 2012 (Corral).

Although all the written and dramatic texts mentioned here thus far are in Galician, in order to indicate how kindred Shakespeare's plays are to the Galician imagination it is worth mentioning a play in Spanish that includes some Galician actors and which was staged in Galicia: *Los Mácbéz reinan en la Xunta* (The Macbeths rule the Galician government). On this occasion it is Galicia as a political community that is used as the setting and scenography, interspersed with some verses by Galician poets. Thus, Shakespeare's tragedy is not set in a distant time or country, since its powerful message relies on the here and now of political strife, ambition and tragedy. For the purpose of this research focusing on performances in the Galician language, this production staged in Narón, in the province of Corunna, in 2014 by a company called *Los Mácbéz* (The Macbeths) is circumstantial, yet it shows the consistent connection between Shakespeare and present-day Galician cultural and political life. This twenty-first century *Macbeth*, which is Galician rather than Scottish in setting, is directed by Andrés Lima and funded by the Spanish National Centre and the Narón Local Authorities. The fact of it being sponsored by Madrid itself serves to show how the Galician autonomous government is seen from the distance of the capital. On the one hand, Galicia is perceived as traditional and low-brow if compared to the sophisticated capital city and, on the other, this Northern country is seen as potentially subversive since new critical performances depicting the autonomous government are being acclaimed both by the intelligentsia and by members of the public.

All the performances staged in Galicia over the course of a hundred years show a consistent connection between Shakespeare and present-day Galician cultural and political life. On the one hand, the playwright is used as a means of elevating the status of Galician culture, and on the other hand there is a complex and intriguing appropriation of Shakespeare's work itself. The volume of adaptations outweighs that of translations, and this suggests a creative approach to the English playwright and a process of reinterpreting him and claiming him as one's own. The relationship between Shakespeare and Galicia goes in both directions, with each entity enriching the other. Even in the age of austerity performances of Shakespeare's plays seemed to be a safe bet in terms of both arts funding and ticket sales, only occasionally being sponsored by private corporations or theatre companies themselves. The Galician appropriation of Shakespeare is indeed multifaceted, and from the very beginning sought to cater for wide audiences, while at the same time it introduced original ideas such as the presence of native Galician witches in *Macbeth* or "teatro perralleiro" in low-brow performances at village festivals.

Galician Translations of Shakespeare

The second section of this article deals with the publication of translations of Shakespeare's texts into Galician. These versions can be divided into two types: those issued by commercial publishing houses and those edited with official Galician government patronage. Within the first group there are versions by Galician intellectuals living abroad, such as that of *Macbeth* by Fernando Pérez-Barreiro Nolla, published in 1972 by one of the most significant Galician publishers, Galaxia. However, as part of the process undertaken by this translator, Act II of this play had appeared in the Galician journal *Grial* two years previously, in 1970. Other translations have been made by theatre directors such as that of the same text by Manuel Lourenzo in 1975, which in fact was not published. The original text used for the performance is held along with other visual materials, such as drawings, pictures or programmes in the Universidade da Coruña "Fondo Francisco Pillado", a Galician drama archive at the Library of the Faculty of Philology (www.udc.gal/biblioteca).

Other translations have been commissioned by official institutions in order to make a Shakespearean collection of texts in Galician, such as the translation of *Hamlet* by Miguel Pérez Romero in 1993, published by the notable publishing house Galaxia, and by the Galician government, and years later, in 2003, the publication in one volume of *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest* by the same translator, again published by Galaxia and funded by a key Galician bank, at the time called Caixa Galicia. The involvement of the Galician government is patent in these projects, and even served as the only publisher of one of the editions of two plays by Shakespeare in one volume: *Soño dunha noite de San Xoan* (*Midsummer Night's Dream*) and *O mercader de Venecia* (*Merchant of Venice*) in 1989. Finally, the newspaper *La Voz de Galicia* was also among the publishers of Shakespeare's texts in Galicia, participating with Galaxia and the Caixa Galicia Foundation in the publication of *Romeo e Xulieta* in 2005.

A large number of these translations were published by one of the most prominent Galician publishing houses, Galaxia, founded in 1950 in Santiago de Compostela with the main purpose of supporting the Galician cultural and political resistance against Francoism. Renowned Galician intellectuals, including Ramón Otero Pedrayo, participated in this venture. Other translations, such as the director Eduardo Alonso's *As alegres casadas* (1997) and *Rei Lear* (1998) were published by Edicións Xerais, another well-known Galician publishing house, founded in 1979, with a more general scope, but also with the same commitment to Galician language and culture (Alonso). Finally, translations of Shakespeare have also been printed by other emblematic Galician publishers, such as Edicións do Castro, created by another significant intellectual, Isaac Díaz Pardo in 1963, as a branch of Sargadelos Group, famous for its distinctive Galician pottery. The chief aim of Edicións do Castro, as with

Galaxia and Xerais, is the dissemination of Galician language and culture. Edicións do Castro issued *Xulio César* (*Julius Caesar*) in 1998, a translation by Ricardo García Suárez known by the penname Xohán Ledo/ediciónsocaastro/. In 1998 the same translator published the translation *Ricardo III* (*Richard III*) with the renowned literary Galician foundation Fundación Otero Pedrayo. Interestingly, both this institution and the publisher issued *Romeo e Xulieta* (2003), *O rei Lear* (2003), *Otelo* (2006), and *Macbeth* (2006) as part of a wider project embracing Universal Classics, including Shakespeare.

This article has discussed Galician Shakespeare performances and published translations or versions in order to confer additional dignity on the Galician language, reviewing the presence of the English playwright in this language from the early twentieth century to the present day. In this period of about a hundred years Shakespeare's plays were translated, published, and performed in order to associate the Galician language with the high culture of English, one of the most prestigious languages of the twentieth century, and with William Shakespeare himself, perhaps the most prominent individual in the cultural industry of the United Kingdom. The period studied was a highly convoluted one in Spain, where the Civil War (1936-39) and the subsequent dictatorship (1939-75) directly affected not only the lives of the population but also the languages of culture spoken in different parts of the country, and specifically the staging of plays in Galician. Accordingly, the cultural translation policy which encouraged Galician performances of Shakespeare begun in the early twentieth century came to a halt in 1936, and, with the exception of some intellectuals who paid attention to the promotion of Shakespeare in Galician during the dictatorship, namely Cunqueiro and Pérez-Barreiro, it was not until the end of Francoism that a consistent private and public interest in the English playwright was promoted by means of performances and the publication of translations. While the complete body of Shakespeare's work has not yet been translated or enacted in Galicia, and there is no single consistent cultural project to do so, the task is gradually being accomplished by means of the contribution of academics, translators, directors, theatre companies and publishing houses with the support of both public and private funding. The creation of the Galician Drama Centre and the institutionalization and legitimization of theatre professionals by means of public sponsorship of many private companies allowed Galician drama to enjoy a certain revival between the 1980s and the beginning of the present century. The association of William Shakespeare with the Galician language has lasted approximately a century and the main function of this cultural venture is a significant contribution to a literary ennobling of this minoritized language. Such an institutional policy was successful in that it partially consolidated an incipient industry and audience, as well as allowed the professionalization of both actors and authors. By means of this celebratory language praxis, publications and playhouse productions became more fruitful in

terms of audiences, and this was achieved not only through high-brow intellectual creations, but—most importantly—by means of successful demystifications of works. In the twenty-first century this occurred with some experimental and even satiric versions of Shakespeare’s plays which followed international traits in contemporary drama praxis.

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