

## To Professor Arthur Terry (1927–2004), In Memoriam

Arthur Terry, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at the University of Essex, died suddenly on 24 January 2004. His death has been deeply felt by Hispanists all over the world, and most especially by those who knew and benefited from his dedication to Catalan literature and culture. Born in York in 1927, he gained a First Class Honours Degree in Spanish and French at Cambridge University. He taught at Queen's University Belfast, where he became Professor, and in 1973 was appointed Professor of Literature at the University of Essex. In 1982 the *Creu de Sant Jordi* was conferred on him by the autonomous Catalan Government and in 1985 he was presented with the prestigious *Premi Ramon Llull*. Arthur Terry published extensively on medieval Catalan poets, on Golden Age Spanish literature, on Catalan and Spanish twentieth-century poetry, and on English poetry. He was an accomplished literary translator and a tireless contributor to *The Times Literary Supplement*, where he introduced Catalan and Spanish authors to a wider readership. He was president of the Anglo-Catalan Society (1962–65) and president of the *Associació de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes* (1982–86). The wide scope of his scholarship and the generosity of his teaching and tutorial manner are not easily put into words, and the multitude of affectionate tributes that have been paid following his untimely death at the age of 76, when he was as active as ever, shows how well respected and loved Arthur Terry was. *Tesserae, Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, wishes, in its turn, to pay tribute to an inspirational person and an irreplaceable scholar by dedicating this issue to his memory.

THE EDITORS

### Remembering Professor Arthur Terry

Arthur Terry was a consummate Hispanist: his research interests in that most wide-ranging of cultures span the centuries, from medieval and renaissance studies to the modern and contemporary arena. However, it was surely in the tireless work on the assimilation of Catalan culture outside that country that his presence was most firmly perceived and, given the minority nature of the experience, it is precisely here that his recent loss will be most significantly appreciated.

During the formalities at the Anglo-Catalan Society's conference at Cardiff

University in November, 2002—and celebrated in honour of our distinguished colleague—it became clear to those assembled, and much to the consternation of Professor Terry himself, that the honoured guest had been responsible for the award of practically every single doctorate and research degree of the dozens that adorned the academic conference hall. This anecdote in itself would suffice to attest the breadth and depth of Terrian erudition but it also underlines the significance of the contribution made by one man to the promotion or, more exactly, defence of Catalan Studies as a university discipline in these islands. There is no question that had it not been for Terry's selfless dedication to this cause at a most difficult moment in the second half of the last century, this branch of Hispanic Studies would now be the domain of marginalised, lone-wolf academics and not a thriving component of Schools of Modern Languages at all our major centres of learning up and down the land.

However, Arthur Terry offered much more than a trenchant support for this subject whose resolve was crystallised by his single-handed preservation of the Anglo-Catalan Society for a period of six years in the 1960s when, without help from outside, he acted as President, Treasurer and Secretary of the association. The sureness of his critical touch is evinced by the quality of his academic purpose, which may be elucidated by a single example.

A few years ago, a review of the re-edition of his monograph on a Catalan modernist poet was entitled simply, "El Joan Maragall d'Arthur Terry". Evidently, the title for this pioneering work could not be more appropriate. More significant in this respect, however, is the fact that the approach established by this critic to Maragall was so influential that it now constitutes the manner in which we all relate to this writer. What is more impressive still is that the same could be said for a whole series of poets for whom Arthur Terry's introductory studies have been instrumental for their recognition, diffusion and assimilation: March, Riba, Espriu, Xirau, Ferrater, Foix and Gimferrer.

Colleagues in different areas of Hispanic Studies will forgive the catalanocentrism of this reflection. There will be others who will no doubt set the record straight in this respect. It has merely been my intention in adopting this perspective to underline the contribution of this most talented of commentators to the recovery of Catalan letters in the international arena. It is when this is added to the warmth, simplicity and generosity of our lamented colleague that the totality of this loss to Romance Philology will be completely appreciated.

DOMINIC KEOWN  
*Cambridge University*

Arthur Terry va ser sempre un acadèmic subtil i un home admirable. Com que vaig tenir el privilegi de trobar-me entre la munió d'aspirants a l'acadèmia que vam passar per la supervisió de l'Arthur, m'atreiria a dir que tots nosaltres hem perdut un mestre únic. Home de principis clars, l'Arthur no ens en deixava passar ni una i a les seves cartes ens donava instruccions minucioses i suggeriments valuosíssims,

això sí, sempre precisos i expressats amb el mínim possible de distraccions. Aquest és un do que l'Arthur també va mostrar tant a la seva obra crítica com a les seves traduccions de poesia: sempre agut, sempre humil, però sempre segur de la seva lectura. El que era especial de les seves cartes és que, després del comentari acadèmic, hi havia sempre el toc humà: inconfusibles *one-liners* en què ens deixava clar que ens considerava com a col·legues. Era evident que, tot i les nostres mancances, ell gaudia de les lectures poètiques i crítiques que sotmetiem al seu judici d'home savi.

Sovint, el que parlava era el silenci. Et tornava un capítol amb quatre comes o errors ortogràfics i una nota dient: "espero amb interès el proper capítol", i sabies que al teu món solitari d'investigador tot anava bé. Però era als congressos, especialment als sopars, quan l'Arthur més entranyable es deixava veure. Trencant el silenci, algú de nosaltres encetava una conversa que inesperadament feia sortir l'Arthur del seu món distant amb un d'aquells Aaaahs! seus, i llavors ens explicava alguna anècdota de les seves estades a Catalunya, quan alguns de nosaltres encara no havíem ni nascut, o del seu descobriment d'un determinat poeta, o del sopar que va fer a casa de Gimferrer, o de l'últim llibre de poesia acabat de publicar.... I era divertit jugar a portar-li la contrària després de la segona cervesa, quan ja havia tret la pipa i el maletí descansava al peu de la barra. Potser encara més entranyable era la carta que arribava al cap de dos o tres dies amb un article seu introbable o un esborrany gairebé enllestit sobre el tema que havíem tractat, sempre amb una breu nota que deia: "potser t'agradarà llegir això". I t'adonaves que abans de la conversa ell ja ho havia ponderat tot, i que, no obstant i això, el seu interès en la discussió havia estat absolutament sincer.

Quan nosaltres lluitàvem per fer-nos un petit lloc entre els hispanistes i catalanòfils, havíem comentat la nostra perplexitat pel fet que l'Arthur no semblés haver caigut mai en els parany del politiqueig acadèmic que tant ens amoïnava a nosaltres. D'alguna manera havia aconseguit l'inassolible, ja que, per a ell, mai no va estar renyit ser hispanista i alhora catalanòfil, crític i traductor, especialista en literatura europea comparada i escriptor d'estudis profundíssims sobre autors d'èpoques ben diferents. Aquesta fou part de l'admirable complexitat de l'Arthur: sempre alerta, sempre amant de la seva feina, sempre just, objectiu dins la seva subjectivitat, generós dins la seva autoestima. Una persona molt gran i un acadèmic excepcional. Ens deixa una vasta contribució a la crítica europea i a la traducció literària, però sobretot ens deixa el bé que ens va fer a tants de nosaltres.

MONTSERRAT ROSER I PUIG  
*President of the Anglo-Catalan Society*  
*University of Kent*

A first meeting with Arthur could prove a disconcerting experience. He seemed somehow rigid in his courtesy, diffident in his self-effacement. Yet, through this, his eyes sparkled and the head was inclined slightly forward in acknowledgement; after the initial exchanges the interest deepened and attention was complete. At the point where others might be withdrawing from the encounter, Arthur would become more involved. If it could be said of Arthur, as it was of Campanella, that he was a man

who had read everything and remembered everything, then that capacity for comprehension extended to the people lucky enough to know him. He listened. He was as assiduous and tireless in replying to letters as he was in accepting countless requests for references and for examining doctoral theses. And nothing seemed too much trouble; no request was refused. This generosity also permeated his writing: measured, judicious, never carping, never mean-spirited. Even in this, however, appearances could be deceptive. Though he may have not relished the designation, his observations on poetry were frequently brilliant and often ahead of their time. I think of his article on Quevedo and the metaphysical conceit, which stood out in an era when his poetry provoked little sympathy and much platitude. I recall a paper on Neruda at a Hispanists' Conference in the 1970s that was listened to with the rarest attention; a later essay on the same poet's "*Fantasma del buque de carga*" demonstrated Arthur's depth of understanding for this poet. Arthur, of course, had been the friend and confidant of several major poets of the second half of the twentieth century, from Belfast to Barcelona, from Essex to Galicia. This lent his writing on poetry a wonderfully practical edge: Arthur was concerned about how poems "worked". He was also admirably cool-headed about interpretation and hermeneutics—the following sentence from his essay on Neruda should be on the wall of everyone who presumes to write on poetry: "if a poem ... is 'powerful' this is not only because of what it says to us, but because of what it *does* to us, and this is because of the energies it contains and which it is capable of transmitting to its readers."

In his life, as well as in his writing, Arthur was averse to pomposity, and he derived an unmalicious delight from witnessing the spectacle of the self-important. I recall his hilariously downbeat asides when we heard an over-the-top declamation of an Ausiàs March poem by a black-robed lady—truly "*ab ulls plorant e cara de terror*". Likewise, his account of how he saw one of the leading Catalan scholars of recent decades entering a sex-shop (which was opposite Arthur's hotel) in Valencia (or was it Barcelona?)—a story with a characteristic Terryian *envoi*: "I can't imagine what he'd have been wanting in there". Had he done nothing else, Arthur would have earned a lasting place in British Hispanism because of half a century's dedication to Catalan, and he was its champion in the darkest days. He remembered how on one occasion in the 1950s he had been able to deliver a lecture on Maragall in Catalan, only because the plain-clothes policeman at the back of the hall had been bribed with a box of cigars. He leaves us with an imposing legacy and an inspiring example. He could, with all justice, have said of himself what one of his favourite poets, Salvador Espriu, wrote: "*He donat la meua vida a les paraules*".

D. GARETH WALTERS  
*University of Exeter*

News of Arthur Terry's death reached me (on the phone, from an audibly ashen-faced Nick Round) within 24 hours. I immediately phoned Jordi Castellanos in Barcelona and less than 24 hours later, on 26 January, *Avui* carried a full-page

obituary notice, with a touching personal memoir urgently composed by Castellanos himself. The detail speaks volumes about Arthur's standing in the sphere of Catalan literary culture.

I had just done a draft translation of a text by the poet Marta Pessarrodona, which begins with thoughts on the loss (in 1998 and then in 2003) of two great native sons of that same culture: "Tant Joan Gili com Joan Perucho ja viuen en els qui els hem estimat i que, com ells, segur, constatem una vegada més que la vida és un dol i dansa carnerià." My problem with handling *dol i dansa carnerià* had been only slightly more taxing than how to render *hem estimat*. The dictionary gives "(*moralment*) to esteem, respect" and "(*amar*) to love, be fond of". To the latter we might add "to feel affection for". In the very fitting context of a translation exercise, absorbing Marta Pessarrodona's words has given me both solace and a focus for reflection on a professional and personal relationship spanning (incredibly) five decades.

It is impossible for me to say at what point my esteem and respect for Arthur Terry, the scholar and the person, became complemented by a dimension of affection. He was always someone to whom I looked up. Nor do I know at what point he might have begun to see me as anything other than a junior colleague. Perhaps it was after our joint enthusing over the work of Paul Klee, whose miniature masterpieces had so thrilled us on a visit to the Kunstmuseum, during the 1975 AILLC conference held in Basel. (We reminisced about that experience on publication of the *Word in Time* 1998 homage volume, presented to him by colleagues at Essex University, for whose front cover Arthur himself chose the painter's "Golden Fish".) By the time of the launching of TV3, on 11 September 1983, an auspicious occasion that we shared in the hospitable home of Jordi Castellanos and Maria Campillo, I would say that we were friends as well as colleagues.

In the ensuing 20 years, telephone calls at "unsocial" hours were normal, with the professional pretext invariably giving way to relaxed conversation about this and that. We would seek each other's company at conferences and other meetings in this country and in Catalonia. I have especially fond memories of several lunchtime beer and sandwich sessions, at the "Princess Louise" in Holborn and in Barcelona's Plaça Reial. On his last visit to Sheffield, only eight months or so ago, Arthur stayed at my house. He brought his slippers and, with late-night pipes and nightcaps, we talked a lot about Catalan literature, with excursions into his reminiscences about school cross-country and military service.

The formal obituaries, of which a stream has already begun, will illuminate his eminence as a scholar and critic (witness, already, Peter Hulme in the *Independent*, 4 February 2004, and Nicholas Round in the *Guardian*, 19 February 2004). Across the extraordinary breadth of his interests he has left an inimitable legacy, both in his writings and in the example he set to juniors and peers alike. Within the Catalan context, it is impossible to overestimate the value of his experience or the inspirational strength of his influence. In any citation index he would be close to top of the list. But this is only part of the picture. On the wider front, as Peter France has observed, "he helped keep alive in the English-speaking world an awareness of the

importance of cultures which lack the power of a nation-state and an army but nevertheless possess distinctive voices heard in the chorus (or cacophony) of world literature". In this, as in his expertise as a translator, in his readings of Spanish poetry and in his productive work in the field of comparative literature, Arthur was consistently true to his "universalist" approach to the appreciation of all creative writing. As Peter Hulme observed, he was never happier than when talking about books. While sympathetic to the politics of Catalanism, his contribution to this cause derived from the exclusively literary criteria that put the major Catalan poets into the same frame as Mallarmé, Valéry, T.S. Eliot, Machado, Neruda, Heaney, Larkin....

And then there is the personal dimension. Arthur's apparent frugality and diffidence belied his magnanimity and charm. He embodied the liberal intellect and cleaved unfailingly to the noble values that, still, define our idea of "the humanities".

Arthur Terry received numerous institutional tributes and honours, among them the dedication of the Anglo-Catalan Society's 48th annual conference (Cardiff, 2002) as a special homage to him, an event exceptionally well attended by colleagues, most of whose apprentice research he had either supervised or examined. Hindsight now lends a special poignancy to memories of that occasion. I shall miss Arthur deeply, as a scholar, as a model and as a friend.

ALAN YATES  
*University of Sheffield*