

Alexandre de Riquer



ALEXANDRE DE RIQUER
(1856 – 1920)

The British Connection in
Catalan *Modernisme*

By
Eliseu Trenc Ballester
&
Alan Yates

1988
THE ANGLO-CATALAN SOCIETY

THE ANGLO-CATALAN SOCIETY OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS

- No. 1. Salvador Giner. *The Social Structure of Catalonia*
(1980, reprinted 1984)
- No. 2. Joan Salvat-Papasseit. *Selected Poems* (1982)
- No. 3. David Mackay. *Modern Architecture in Barcelona* (1985)
- No. 4. *Homage to Joan Gili* (1987)
- No. 5. E. Trenc Ballester & Alan Yates. *Alexandre de Riquer* (1988)

© E. Trenc Ballester & Alan Yates

Produced and typeset by Sheffield Academic Press Ltd
Printed by A. Wheaton & Co. Ltd, Exeter
Cover design by Joan Gili

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Ballester, Eliseu Trenc

Alexandre de Riquer (1856-1920): the
British connection in Catalan modernisme.

(The Anglo-Catalan Society occasional
publications, ISSN 0144-5863; 5).

1. Catalan decorative arts. Riquer,
Alexandre de, 1856-1920

I. Title II. Yates, Alan III. Series
745'.092'4

ISBN 0-905713-74-0



CONTENTS

Preface	7
I Catalan <i>Modernisme</i> (1888-1911)	11
II The Life of an Artist	21
III Riquer the Writer (Prose)	47
IV Riquer the Poet	71
V Documents	107
1. A. de Riquer's Visits to England	108
2. Publications by Riquer on British and American art.	111
3. The English section of the 1907 Barcelona exhibition	116
4. Correspondence with book-plate designers	122
5. The reception of Riquer's work in Britain and the USA	124
6. English and American books in the library of Riquer	129

PREFACE



The origins of the present publication were in an article by Eliseu Trenc Ballester, 'Alexandre de Riquer, ambassadeur de l'art anglais et nord-américain en Catalogne', which appeared in Volume XVIII (1982) of the

Melanges de la Casa Velazquez, pp. 311-359. It was a documentary study of the important influence that certain tendencies in British art and artistic ideas of the nineteenth century exercised in the crucial and productive phase of cultural development in Catalonia over the turn of the century, the phenomenon known as *Catalan Modernisme*. What the article highlighted was the role of Alexandre de Riquer in this process. The nature and interest of the subject commended themselves naturally to the editorial committee of the Anglo-Catalan Society's Occasional Publications, at a time when the collection was in its infancy and when its objectives and range were just being clearly defined.

E.T., for some time a participator in the Society's affairs, agreed to the proposal that his original piece be expanded and modified to the characteristics of the ACSOP series. This involved building around the original research article a set of chapters to place Alexandre de Riquer's life and work in their cultural context, to supply a relatively detailed biography and to give an account of his literary production. The latter was felt to require a sizeable proportion of space, because of the access which his writing supplies to certain key traits of the important creative movement in which he was involved.

The original project thus grew in scope and in size. There was, from the start, a collaborative aspect to the operation, insofar as E.T.'s original text and then drafts of other chapters were being

translated from the French by various members of the Anglo-Catalan Society. A.Y.'s role in this increased as the work took on definitive shape, and the point was reached where joint authorship was felt to reflect input to and responsibility for the product. Some signs of a division of labour are to be seen in the text published here, but this monograph is offered by its authors as the result of a common effort: the finished version was hammered out in a series of joint work-sessions held in Sheffield, Paris and Toulouse. Both the subject, then, and the circumstances in which this little book was produced are fully consonant with the stated objectives of the ACSOP collection and, more widely, with the collective spirit of the Anglo-Catalan Society.



The present tide appears at a time when international appreciation of the singular character and quality of modern Catalan culture is markedly, and gratifyingly, on the increase. The currently fashionable image of the city of Barcelona itself has contributed to awareness of how crucial and how productive in the consolidation of the modern Catalan cultural identity were the decades spanning the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The *fin-de-siècle* recovery of a splendid gothic inheritance is written in the streets and buildings of the capital. Our present historical awareness of the making of contemporary Catalonia focuses naturally upon the turn of the century and upon the phenomenon of *Modernisme* which brought to a head nineteenth-century processes of national revival. The life and work of Alexandre de Riquer are here studied as representative of central features of this complex and fertile phase of cultural evolution. The 'British connection' in our subject is one such feature which we here endeavour to show in true perspective and in relation to the underlying dynamics—with its achievements and its frustrations—of *Modernisme*. In a basically biographical approach, the broad lines emerge portraying a man of the nineteenth century whose vision of a new era was crossed with contradictions of an inherited past and was severely stressed by the incipient crises of the twentieth century. His words and his images remain, though, as monuments to the vision that is now being positively revalued as our own century draws to a close.



The work of Riquer, in the recent renewal of interest of Catalan *Modernisme*, has been the subject of scholarly critical and historical attention. The English connection was disclosed and investigated in M. McCarthy's unpublished doctoral dissertation (*Catalan 'Modernisme' and English Cultural Movements of the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge 1973). M.A. Cerdà i Surroca pays him generous attention in her *Els Pre-rafaelites a Catalunya. Una literatura i uns símbols* (Barcelona 1981). She and E.T. were principal contributors to the commemorative volume of studies (*Alexandre de Riquer. L'home, l'artista, el poeta*) published in Calaf (1978), while E.T. supplied text for the catalogue published on the occasion of a major exhibition of Riquer's work (Barcelona 1985). Specialised studies of both the art (notably Cirici, Ràfols, Fontbona) and the literature of *Modernisme* (Castellanos) accord due attention to Riquer. The foregoing, however, tend understandably to see his work as belonging to either the field of the visual arts or, to a lesser extent, to that of literature. The present publication is the first attempt to present a unified view of his life and work, in which both the literary and the visual aspects are viewed as complementary, within a biographical frame. For reasons already expressed, it is fitting that this should be published in English, and in the uniform of the ACSOP series. While the following pages direct a steady spotlight upon Catalan *Modernisme*, they include also a sidelight upon the pervasive influence of contemporary British art movements.



We wish to record here our gratitude to Dominic Keown, Susi Serrarols and John Devlin, for their cooperation in the early stages of preparing the text; to Pauline Climpson and her colleagues at Sheffield Academic Press, for the patience, good taste and professionalism which they have devoted to steering this publication through all the processes of production. Grateful acknowledgement is also made of continuing financial support for the ACSOP series from the Instituto de España in London, and of a generous grant for the present title from the Fundació Congrés de Cultura Catalana.

E.T.
A.Y.
Sheffield
17/vi/1988



CHAPTER I

CATALAN MODERNISME (1888-1911)



The term *Modernisme* has very particular and extensive connotations for the development of society and culture in modern Catalonia. It refers to a two-fold process occurring in the

Principality (and secondarily in Valencia and the Balearic Islands) during the two crucial decades spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within a continuing surge of social transformation there emerged together impulses for the explicit *modernisation* of a culture considered archaic, pedestrian and provincial—Catalan culture as it had taken shape during the nineteenth-century revival movement of the *Renaixença*—and for the creation of a specifically *national* art. Both motives were intertwined, and related to a complex social ferment. Associated with the growth of political Catalanism, awareness increased that only by becoming cosmopolitan and abreast of the latest advances abroad would Catalan culture shake off its provincial complexion, thus to attain a higher degree of differentiation and independence from perceived deficiencies in the official Spanish-Castilian culture centred in Madrid. Most of the key-notes are sounded, and the external colouring revealed, in this altogether typical passage from an article by Juan Gay on the composer D'Indy, published in the journal *Luz* for November 1898:

... Let us have the Strausses, the D'Indys, the Chaussons, the Debussys in music; let us have all modern literary works of whatever tendencies; let us have *affiches* and sentimental mood-paintings, and let all of us together put movement into art, so that it is seen to be alive, it being of no matter that they dub us *modernistes* or whatever, as long as our actions signify advancement for our Catalonia. If we are mistaken in our tendencies, we shall

have lost nothing: we shall have gone through an *artistic revolution* [our emphasis], which will eventually establish the true way, towards which we shall direct our steps. What is called for now is much artistic agitation, to allow us to begin to escape from the materialism which engulfs us, by giving as idealised a cast as possible to our existence.

As is clearly expressed here, the opening up of Catalonia to contemporary European culture was essential to a project of collective affirmation and renovation. What this is *fin-de-siècle* Europe offered was an apparently stable political model of bourgeois nationhood, and a beguiling array of artistic options related to profound changes in taste, sensibility and fashion. One thus understands why eclecticism was the watchword of Catalan *Modernisme*: the outwards scan validated the complementary inwards gaze, the urgent enquiry about selfhood, personal and collective. A notion of 'cultural revolution', strongly imprinted in Gay's message, expresses the close relationship between the artistic and the social dimensions of the whole cycle.

A first stage in this process was the partial assimilation of Naturalism in literature and the plastic arts, mainly by the critics J. Sardà and J. Yxart, the novelist Narcís Oller and the painters Santiago Rusinol and Ramon Casas, during the decade 1883-1893. This was the period in which the impressive journal *L'Avenç* operated as a rallying-point and catalyst of progressive intellectual currents applied to the particular circumstances of Catalan culture. In the early phase of *Modernisme*, the scientific and positivistic connotations of Naturalism, even without its more radical philosophical and social import, offered a provocative challenge to stale conventionalism and predominantly romantic conservatism. The strongest impetus of the movement, however, was generated under a different aesthetic sign, in a development dating from the crucial year of 1893. It was from this point that *Modernisme* moved on from having a fairly wide and general sense of cultural renovation, as formulated in *L'Avenç*, to acquire a more specific definition and programme. There emerged a concerted, assertive literary and artistic movement, led by the multi-talented Rusinol and the critic-author Raimon Casellas, which, although short-lived as a coherently concentrated force, redefined the terms of creativity and of its social relevance. Again as can be detected in the passage quoted above, this entailed a radical critique of contemporary Catalan society, charged with philistinism

and 'soul-lessness', and attributed to Art and to the artist-intellectual a messianic function.

The sign under which this enterprise was conceived was a direct derivation of Symbolism, whose full reverberations came to overlay Naturalism and eventually to occupy the foreground of the Catalan cultural scene between 1893 and 1898. The British Pre-Raphaelites, Franco-Belgian Symbolism, German and Nordic idealism, all left deep impressions in every creative sphere during this period. The most familiar reminiscences are those of Maeterlinck, Ibsen, Wagner, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ruskin, Puvis de Chavannes, Dante, Gabriel Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Böcklin, in fact the full pleiade of the *fin-de-siècle*, avidly and in many cases originally adopted to the Catalan circumstances and translated into its idiom. Enhancement of the value of the artistic product went hand in hand with a real education of sensibility, of the kind that Catalan culture needed to undergo if the ambition of standing on equal terms with its European counterparts was to be fulfilled.

The general evolution is reflected in numerous individual cases, where the common denominator is priority given to aesthetic emotion over 'analysis', to suggestion over statement. Intuition and artistic perception become the favoured modes of access to a transcendent 'reality', producing the characteristic symbiosis of diverse forms and genres as these all aspire, in Pater's words, to the condition of music. Casellas defended the new aesthetics in relation principally to the visual arts, while translating theory into practice in narrative prose which evolved from the early imitation of Pre-Raphaelite devices towards a highly stylised realism. Santiago Rusiñol, as painter, author and cultural activist, assumed visible leadership in the 1890s. The focus of *modernista* energies and publicity were the Modernist Festivals which he set up in Sitges as a concerted attempt to enliven the cultural scene and promote total Art in Catalonia. Particularly important were the second

: XIV DE FEBRER DE M DCCC.XCVII :



TEXT CATALÀ I TRADUCCIÓ LITERAL FRANCESA

TIP. «L'AVENÇ» Ronda Universitat, 4, BARCELONA

one in 1893 which included the epoch-making performance of Maeterlinck's *L'Intruse*, and the fourth in 1897 with the production of *La fada* by Massó i Torrents and the composer Enric Morera, an exercise in Wagnerian total drama conceived to establish a Catalan national opera. In his own painting Rusiñol moved swiftly from his early naturalistic idiom, to a subjective, introspective style in which interest lay fully in the capturing of mood and atmosphere. This trajectory was paralleled in the appearance of his most characteristically symbolist creation in literature, the prose-poems *Oracions* (1897).

The influence of several currents related to symbolist aesthetics (and philosophy) spread quickly. From as early as 1894 Alexandre de

• LVZ •

Riquer introduced and practised a version of Art Nouveau that was directly related to British sources, especially the spirit of William Morris and Burne-Jones and its impression on all the graphic and decorative arts. This is the particular chapter of the total history of *Modernisme* that constitutes the focus of the present monograph. It is important to be aware all the time, though, that our subject stands within a positive surge of talents, all showing diversified approximation to the new aesthetics: Adrià Gual and Apel·les Mestres, Miquel Utrillo, Lluís Bonnín, Joaquim Vancells, Josep M. Tamburini, Joan Brull, Josep M. Roviralta, Sebastià Junyent, etc...

The journal *Luz*, the most refined publication of Catalan *Modernisme* (despite the paradox of its predominant use of Castilian), was launched in 1898 and marked the apogee of Symbolism's diffusion as innovatory fashion, with contributions from most of the artists

• PERIÓDICO •
• SEMANAL •



• LA MÚSICA
• POPULAR •

just mentioned. However, at the end of that same year of 1898, Spain's defeat in the Cuban War brought to a head a crisis whose effect was to create in the artistic fraternity a reaction of disenchantment with the fashionable morbidity of Decadence and with symbolist escapism. A sort of counter-current is perceptible in aspects of the work of a group of slightly younger painters including Isidre Nonell, Mir, Canals, Pidelaserra and the young Picasso... Prominent here is a component of social protest given in an expressionist style whose emphasis was on the sordid, a discernible qualification of symbolist flights into aestheticism. It was with this brilliant group that the epoch of *Modernisme* in the visual arts came to a close with the first decade of the new century. Thereafter what survived were the mere externals of a style that had become conventional mannerism, or a medium without a message.

In literature the situation was more complex. The symbolist and naturalist currents ran side by side, frequently interacting, but circumscribed in many areas by the effects of an interrupted literary tradition, by the relative underdevelopment of the market and by the limitations of a still 'unreformed' literary language. Allowing for this natural 'drag', though, *Modernisme* generated its characteristic, and characteristically exuberant, equivalences in literature.

The Naturalism-Symbolism alternative is particularly visible in the theatre where, side by side, under the same sign of artistic innovation, there appeared the work of Adrià Gual, a disciple of Maeterlinck, and that of Ignasi Iglesias and J. Puig i Ferreter, two exponents of a socially orientated theatre strongly influenced by Ibsen and Hauptmann. Art for Art's sake or an Art designed to fathom the Unknowable thus contended with the regenerationist (and in this case populist) tendency.

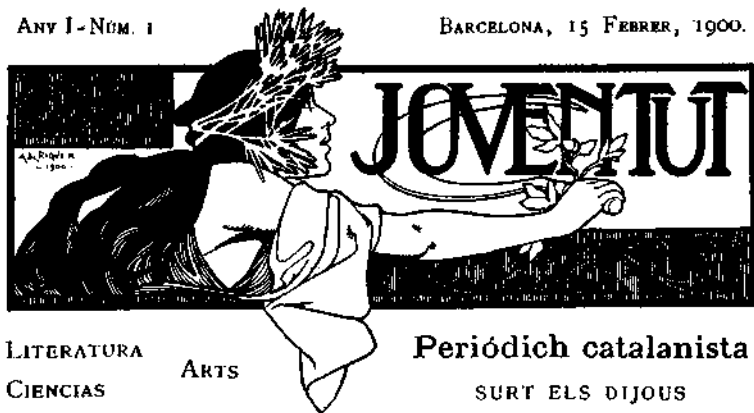
In other genres the play of forces was less sharply delineated. In poetry there are writers like Miquel de Palol or Alexandre de Riquer whose initial orientation was clearly symbolist, while Jeroni Zanné introduced specifically Parnassian designs to a panorama in which lyricism of the most subjective or even Decadent kind was the *passé-partout*. After 1898, however, and with the ensuing concentration of *catalanista* values, the major figure of Joan Maragall came to dominate the scene with a distinctive voice, an authentic fusion of personal and collective concerns, and a poetic theory exalting *la Paraula Viva*—the living word, utmost sincerity of feeling and expression—, that exerted a considerable moral influence upon his

contemporaries. If D'Annunzio provided a foreign model of vitalism that suited the new atmosphere, it was Maragall who, as embodiment of local essences, sounded the whole current of European romanticism going back through Heine to Goethe and Novalis, consummating diverse possibilities within the *modernista* repertoire.

The panorama of *modernista* prose is likewise variegated, not least because of the break-down of the traditional generic categories under the influence of Symbolism. Material and contextual factors, as well as aesthetic ones, affected this situation. The so-called crisis of the nineteenth-century novel was felt more acutely in Catalonia than in other European literatures, for reasons alluded to above. *Modernisme* nonetheless generated a spate of very diversified productivity in prose (and some notable novelistic specimens) in which the prevalent

ANY I - NÚM. 1

BARCELONA, 15 FEBRER, 1900.



Director literari: LLUÍS VÍA.

Director artístich: ALEXANDRE DE RIQUER.

subjective idealism was associated with the urge to create narrative forms—running over into poetic or pictorial styles—appropriate to the new epoch. There is, then, no contradiction in the coexistence of the most refined, ethereal mood-painting and an almost sadistic new brutalism, for example, or of prose-poetry and popular satire. On the other hand, a distinct surge of interest in rural themes and settings can be related to the contemporary growth of nationalism and its quest for the roots of the community. The situation is well represented in the prose contents of the major journal *Joventut* (1900-1906), in which one finds side by side the extremes of a primitivist ruralism (where Maragall's influence is distinct) and of a

current of refined urbanity shot through with culturalist references. The latter, in fact, prefigured the manner that the ensuing movement of *Noucentisme* would promote and cultivate in the service of a conservative nationalism which renounced its *modernista* precedents.

Within the turbulence of ideas and possibilities for narrative prose, and against the background of a considerable boom in production, two works stand out as the joint *summa of modernista* preoccupations and designs expressed in novel form: *Els sots feréstecs* (1901) by Raimon Casellas, and *Solitud* (1905) by Víctor Català (pseudonym of Caterina Albert). In each case a powerful narrative line and a highly stylised mountain setting are 'pretexts' for exploring the limits of human consciousness in relation to both the aesthetic and philosophical concepts of *Modernisme*. Together they represent, perhaps, the most complete expression of the *modernista* sensibility, particularly in that they turn it back imaginatively upon the constraints set upon its own enterprise.

In the sphere of architecture and the decorative arts, *Modernisme* has tended to be confused with Art Nouveau, further adding to the terminological vagueness from which the phenomenon has suffered. After 1900 the most authentic exponents in the decorative arts rejected the label of *modernistes*, although that is obviously what they are for us, and the term was relegated to refer only to the decorative Art Nouveau (on its way to being the facile mannerism mentioned above) adopted by a fashion-conscious bourgeoisie. Our present-day perspective allows us to discern that alongside this Art Nouveau wave—predominant, it is true—there flourished various other distinctive aesthetic tendencies, in particular a strong neo-Gothic strain and a synthetic realism, inspired by Toulouse-Lautrec and Steinlen, whose outstanding exponent was the painter Ramon Casas. It remains true, though, that in the areas of furniture, glass, ceramics, silverwork and, above all, architecture, *Modernisme* was a specifically Catalan reinterpretation of Art Nouveau or Modern Style. It is sufficient to consider the principal buildings of Gaudí, Puig i Cadafalch and Domènech i Montaner to appreciate the force and originality of this Catalan adaptation at the same time as the diversity of expression arising from a single, common inspiration. (David Mackay's contribution to the present series, *Modern Architecture in Barcelona*, provides illuminating discussion of this subject.) Ultimately it is etymology which explains the primary energy of *Modernisme* in relation to its counterparts abroad: a

question of creating, within the exhilaration of the Catalan context, a *new* art, a *modern* art seen as appropriate to the dawning of a new era, and to a reaffirmation of Catalan-ness.

Within the stylistic diversity of *Modernisme*, then, one can perceive a fundamental unity of another order. At bottom, the constant shifts and changes, the quest for novelty alongside the urge to rediscover authentic Catalan roots, were all the expression of the crisis of an age. It was a sense of crisis (taken in itself to be a token of modernity) which was felt to mark the break between the moribund values of the nineteenth century and the nascent civilisation of the twentieth, one which was mysterious and exciting because still poorly defined. This society, afflicted by social tensions (the class struggle and anarchism), political crisis and the traumas of dynamic change (the Catalonia-Spain friction, especially after 1898) and economic difficulties (the loss of colonial markets), produced a culture which was riven by a deep tension: between Decadentism (moribidity, listlessness, the oneiric cult of memory and tradition) and Vitalism (a hymn to life and youth, a projection towards an idealised new society). The real society of *fin-de-siècle* Catalonia harboured its own erotico-mystical phantoms: its perverse or saintly women, images of purity or corruption and apocalypse, its talismanic flora and its sinuous lines which suggested mystical communication with the Unknowable. Behind these swirling projections of the emancipated imagination there moved what the *modernistes* themselves understood as a 'feverish metaphysical quest'. In religion, the same quest could lead, at one extreme, into religious esoterism, or, at the other, back into the most strictly orthodox Catholicism; in politics it could lead either to anarchism or to the most idealised historicism. In many cases, too, the extremes could overlap.

There is another apparent contradiction that requires brief comment here. On the one hand, *modernista* art stood in frank opposition to the cultural impact of industrialisation, John Ruskin's influence being decisive in this respect, but it sought on the other hand to reconcile the Applied and the Fine Arts through exploitation of new means of production. The *modernistes* were not, then, trapped in an insoluble conflict between Art and Life. Certainly, for many of them, the reaction against indifference and 'soul-lessness' in a materialistic middle class opened on to aestheticism and the flight from reality. But these same artists, particularly those who expressed themselves in the decorative arts and in architecture, saw in their

activity a way of transforming and embellishing reality through their creations. The ideal, which the writers and musicians seconded, was an organic human environment fashioned to a new sophistication of taste and according to challengingly new concepts of beauty.

The renewed intensity of cultural activity in Catalonia was experienced not only in the capital Barcelona but in simultaneous waves which affected the main provincial centres: Girona, Reus, Terrassa, Sitges, etc. and, further afield, Lleida, Valencia, Majorca... The decorative flourish, the exuberance of *Modernisme* translated the immediate vitality and confidence of an economically dynamic society, open to innovation and disposed to affirmation of a distinctive communal identity. *Modernisme* was the cultural galvanisation of this potential, at least for as long as its own ideals remained valid.

The heyday of *Modernisme* contained already the forces which would bring about its crisis and demise. Its extreme idealism was ultimately to prove unsusceptible to political channelling, and the movement of *Noucentisme* swiftly invoked the virtues of order, restraint and responsibility in the service of a nationalism whose conservative cast became clearer as its political achievements gained consistency. A new and most productive phase of cultural Catalanism took shape with the opening of the new century, taking over and monopolising the basic aims of *Modernisme*, appropriating some of its means and forms of expression while violently repudiating others. The legacy of *Noucentisme*—particularly in its cultural institutions and in its stabilising influence upon the natural 'social institution' of the language—has been fundamental in characterising Catalan culture in the twentieth century. For our purposes, though, it is important to focus on the two movements at their point of interaction and to appreciate how *Noucentisme* arose from within the *modernista* project itself.

The new orthodoxy invoked discipline, 'classical' simplicity and rigorous propriety. Mediterranean limpidity dispelled Nordic mists. The price for the intellectual-artist's admission to the new order was acceptance of a 'party line' (that of Enric Prat de la Riba's *Lliga Regionalista*) and subordination of the previously exalted artistic freedom, seen now as dissolvent and conducive to Chaos. The consequence of this was the isolation and disorientation of many committed *modernistes* who would not or could not conform. The picture is, of course, far more complex than this drastic summary

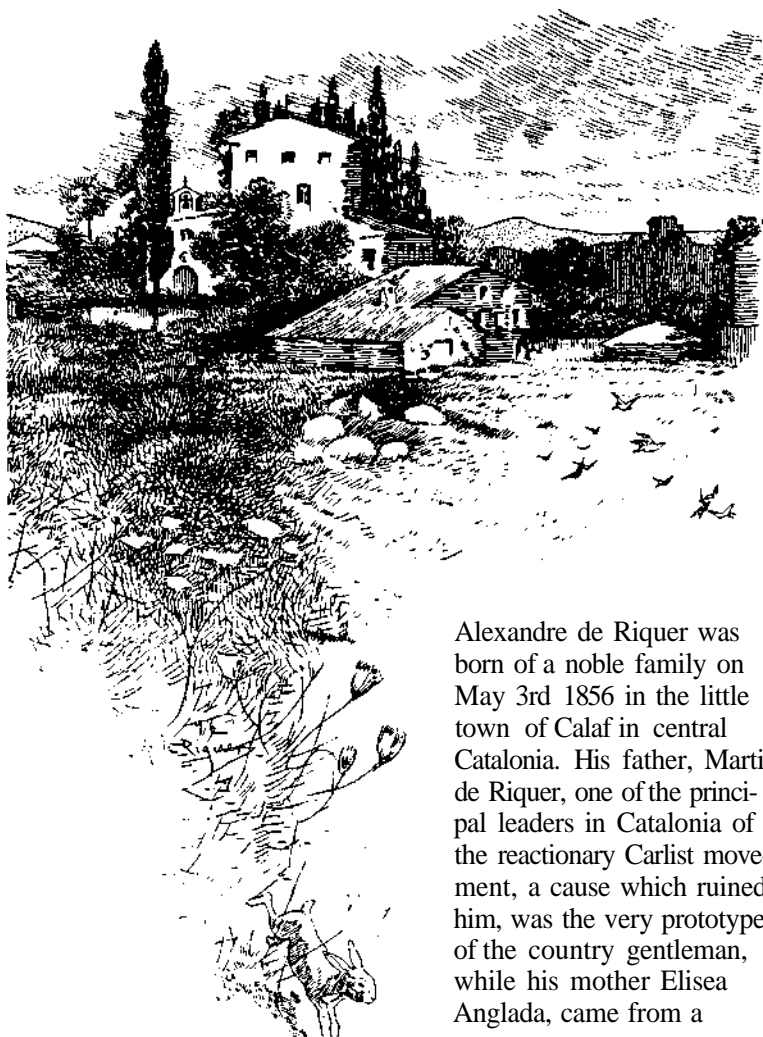
suggests, but the essential point is that the trajectory of the individual career that we study here is set in the play of these wider forces. The emphasis falls upon *Modernisme* because it was this movement which gave first a direction and then scope and relevance to the artistic vocation of Alexandre de Riquer.

Ours is a case-study of a single facet of *Modernisme's* 'artistic revolution' as depicted in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter. In relation to the fundamental eclecticism of the movement, we may easily understand why Great Britain should have served as one major example of 'modernity' for Catalonia, as a model of bourgeois nationhood and of cultural plenitude. William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement; the Pre-Raphaelite slant supplied to symbolist aesthetics; *The Yellow Book* and *The Studio*; Ruskin's pervasive ideas: these would become points of reference for those artists and intellectuals equating 'movement in art' with the 'advancement of Catalonia'. Alexandre de Riquer's was a decisive role in the introduction and assimilation in Catalonia of this specific strand of influence. The particulars are incorporated into a life story whose central thread is that of an absorbing dedication to Art.



CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF AN ARTIST



Alexandre de Riquer was born of a noble family on May 3rd 1856 in the little town of Calaf in central Catalonia. His father, Marti de Riquer, one of the principal leaders in Catalonia of the reactionary Carlist movement, a cause which ruined him, was the very prototype of the country gentleman, while his mother Elisea Anglada, came from a

Liberal family in Vilanova i la Geltrú, a family of artists and intellectuals. After an early childhood spent on the family estates not far from Calaf and in the Jesuit College in Manresa (1864-1867), Alexandre lived with his mother for a brief spell in 1868 until his father, in exile in France, enrolled him at the boarding school of L'Immaculée Conception in Béziers. There, from 1869 to 1871, as well as absorbing the French language, he showed a passionate interest in the art and design courses. It was in Béziers that Riquer painted the first canvasses of his apprenticeship, and it was there that clear signs of a powerful artistic vocation, doubtless inherited from his mother, came to be prominent in his life.

A brief involvement in the Carlist War of 1872, without his father's knowledge, had him quickly brought back to the family estates whence he departed once more for France. While following courses at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Toulouse (1873-1874), probably as a non-enrolled student, Riquer painted his first portraits and saw the prospect of earning a living as a painter. Meanwhile, despite continuing active collaboration with his father in the Carlist cause, his mother in Barcelona obtained for him in March 1874 a pardon for his subversive military adventure of 1872. In April he was thus able to return to Barcelona and to enrol at the art school of La Llotja where he was to study for several years under Tomàs Padró, Claudi Lorenzale and, in particular, Antoni Caba, the teacher who he most admired. In fact, though, the only painting we have from this stage in Riquer's development is a landscape (1876) with an equestrian figure in the foreground, a work which if anything displays the influence of Martí i Alsina, a dissident teacher in La Llotja who was championing a new realism in painting. It is from this period that Riquer's literary vocation also dates, in the form of his poems *Notas del alma* (Notes of my Soul), written virtually all in Castilian, a collection in which a very elementary Romanticism is evident. This, on the one hand, is indicative of the relative poverty and underdevelopment—in terms both of themes and of linguistic normality—of Catalan literature at the time. On the other hand, though, we see here the emergence of some sentimental subjects that will receive more sophisticated treatment in Riquer's later writing, and we see, even more significantly, the beginnings of that conjunction between different artistic modes that was to be so characteristic of the aesthetics of *Modernisme*.

With his family in dire economic straits, Riquer was obliged to set his mind to earning a living in the only way he knew how. Through

his friendship with the writer and illustrator Apel·les Mestres—a key figure in early *Modernisme*—he was introduced into the world of publishing. When the former left to travel in the summer of 1876 Riquer took over some of his work on ornamental lettering and cover illustration. Thus began a long collaboration in the artistic side of publishing which would remain a major facet of Riquer's creative activity. Through his friendship with Mestres, who was to become a sort of spiritual elder brother, the young artist made contact with the group of intellectuals that included the mercurial Pompeu Gener, Joaquim Bartrina, Simó Gómez, Enric Obiols and the brothers Josep Maria and Fernando Arteaga. (the latter, as we shall see, to be involved in Riquer's 'English connection'). His horizons were broadening. By the end of the 1870s, moreover, Riquer was beginning to enjoy some fame as an artist, with his first publicly exhibited canvas in 1878 and with the publication in 1879 of a drawing in the Madrid journal *La Acadèmia*.

Riquer shared the interest of his intellectual circle in Italian literature, specifically Manzoni and Pelico, and eventually in 1879 he obtained his father's permission to go to Rome to complete his painting apprenticeship. He cannot have stayed very long in the Italian capital, although he painted a few landscapes of the local countryside in the highly detailed luminist style of the celebrated Catalan painter Fortuny. Then came study travels to Pisa, Florence, Genoa, Milan and Venice. He was particularly sensitive to the art of the *quattrocento* painters, a clear sign of the eclecticism of his generation which was attracted both to contemporary realism and to a mythical medievalism associated with the Romantic cult of the Gothic.

Riquer's journey brought him back through France, via Paris and, according to some biographers, possibly via London in 1879, although we have no evidence at all of this. There is certainly no impression of London in Riquer's work of the 1880s. On his return to Barcelona he resumed his work on the illustration of magazines and books, which continued for some time to be his mainstay. In 1880 he designed the title-page for the annual of *La Il·lustració Catalana* and for the same magazine, over several years, he drew the stylised floral friezes framing portraits of dignitaries of the *Jocs Florals* poetry festivals. He also contributed in 1882 and 1883 to the journal *Artes i Letres* where he published a number of ink drawings in a basically realist style, a portrait of Wagner (enjoying something of a cult in

Catalonia, soon to become a hero of the *modernistes*) and several Italian sketches. He had returned to that country in 1881 and had frequented the colony of Spanish artists settled in Rome, particularly the Catalan Enric Serra with whom Riquer appears to have had quite close intellectual contact.

In 1885 the artist married Dolors Palau Gonzalez de Quijano, the daughter of a distinguished and cultivated family. The nuptial mass was celebrated by the poet-priest Jacint Verdaguer and the witnesses were the dramatist Àngel Guimerà and the poet-publisher Francesc Matheu, clear indication of how Riquer was now moving in the leading circles of that 'literary Catalanism' which bridged the *Renaixença* and the age of *Modernisme*. Already, since 1882, the artist was working from a garret studio in the Carrer Petritxol which was a favourite haunt of the local intellectual set and their patrons. Between 1886 and 1898 he fathered nine children (three of whom died in infancy) and it was this responsibility with its attendant economic pressures which doubtless gave added, even urgent stimulus to Riquer's professional dedication, especially after the death of his wife in 1899. His prolific activity as a book illustrator during the 1880s was centred on the *Arte y Letras* collection, under the direction of Lluís Domènech i Montaner, and it is here that the *pre-modernista* 'aestheticism' directly inspired by Apel·les Mestres is

very evident: in the concern for detail, in the precision of the realistic touch, in the predominance of floral or animal themes, and in the Japanese flavour of composition. Their common source of inspiration was the Spanish illustrator Daniel Urrabieta Vierge, currently enjoying great celebrity in Paris. In addition it is clear that Riquer drew heavily on the work of the French artist Hector Giacomelli, specifically his superb plates for Andre Theuriet's *Nos Oiseaux*, a copy of which was owned by Riquer.



Of equal note is the influence of the neo-Gothic current, especially as typified by Viollet-le-Duc. The latter's stamp is visible in the six compositions done by Riquer to illustrate the 1886 edition of the traditional Catalan folksong *Los Estudiants de Tolosa*, based on some earlier tapestry designs. The fact is that Riquer's increased productivity around this time, encouraged by his domestic circumstances, was facilitated by processes of change among the Catalan middle classes who were gradually being 'educated' to the social and cultural value of Art and being cultivated as consumers-patrons. The development would not gather full momentum until *Modernisme* coalesced as a movement in the following decade, nor would it foment or be receptive to real stylistic innovation or adventurousness until that same period. Nonetheless it can be seen that the origins of a vocational 'professionalism' on the part of Catalan artists, *per se* and in relation to a specific socio-cultural ethos, was a phenomenon of the 1880s. And Riquer's individual trajectory was fully representative of it. The diversification of his activity through the decade is to be understood in this light. He did design work for the Masriera firm of jewellers: interior and furniture decoration; programmes, dance-cards and room decorations for high-class social occasions; *japoniste* painting on vases for wrought iron-work by the architect C. Oliveras. He participated in several painting exhibitions, with water-colours and oils—on natural as well as allegorical subjects, moving into religious painting with his *Sant Julià Hospitalari* (1886)—and in 1890 came his first one-man show at the Sala Parés, the premier commercial gallery in Barcelona. Here he exhibited twenty-five canvasses (of which fifteen were sold), realist landscapes serving to frame close-ups of birds and featuring flowers and forests, all of which were becoming fixed as favourite motifs of Riquer's pictorial and literary creations. Symptomatically, the most ambitious of these paintings, a Saint Francis with the birds, was criticised for being insufficiently mystical in its treatment of the saint.

The Universal Exhibition of 1888 had a major part in putting Barcelona on the map of Europe and in strengthening the Catalan bourgeoisie's aspirations to cosmopolitanism and cultural modernity. Beneficial repercussions were naturally felt by Catalan artists. Riquer collaborated as a decorator with the architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner who in so many ways personified the *élan* engendered by the occasion. Domènech's spectacular International Hotel, demolished immediately after the Exhibition, contained interior decorative work

by Riquer, who also did the external ceramic designs for the architect's restaurant *El castell dels tres dragons*. From this time also dates his fireplace for Gaudí's *Palau Güell* where he gave a Neo-gothic rendering of the then fashionable theme of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary.

The Universal Exhibition of Paris in the following year understandably acted as a magnet to many Catalan artists, Riquer among them. He took advantage of this trip to visit the museum of Cluny, fostering his already strong predilection for medieval art in line with the teaching of Viollet-le-Duc of whom he considered himself to be an indirect disciple. The latter's *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français* (1872-75) and *Compositions et dessins de Viollet-le-Duc* (1884) were in Riquer's library, and this influence (and example) was no doubt instrumental in turning the Catalan's creative attention to decorative art and furniture. In 1892 he opened with his cousin Manel a studio in Barcelona which specialised in ebony work and in architectural-cum-interior decoration for which Alexandre drew the plans. Very little is known of the output of this short-lived enterprise (which closed in 1893 when Manel embarked on a vandàlic adventure to find treasure in the monastery of Poblet), although the surviving drawings in the family archive show a predominant Neo-gothic style subjected to the sort of simplification applied by contemporary British designers. That the workshop produced artefacts of a high technical quality is evidenced, though, by the fact that the only gold medal in the Spanish section of the 1893 Chicago Exhibition was awarded to A. Riquer and Company of Barcelona for a 'well-designed' chest, 'a superior piece of cabinet work'.



The Paris Exhibition of 1889 opened Riquer's eyes in another quarter also. The contemplation and study of the contemporary painting on display there, in particular the Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the English section, affected him profoundly. Henceforth his own work would enter a more idealistic phase, characterised by the virtual disappearance of his bird motifs, becoming more religious in flavour and marked by a distinct thematic shift, from an iconography of saints and hermits to one based on the Virgin Mary. Perhaps what is seen here are the first resonances of the Pre-Raphaelite and Symbolist movements, with their idealised cult of feminine purity. Continuity is evident, nevertheless, in the blending of spiritualised themes with a still realistic treatment of landscape. His *Entre liris* (1889-90), the *Santa Pastora* shown at Chicago in 1893 and a startling *Annunciation* exhibited at the Barcelona Athenaeum in 1893 are the best instances of a distinct renovation in Riquer's painting in this line, neatly characterised as 'bucolic-mystical' by the percipient Raimon Casellas.

With the emergence in the early 1890s of political Catalanism, and its steady consolidation through the decade, an important new ingredient came to bear on Riquer's ideological make-up. The commitment to Catalanism would from now on interact with his deeply held religious convictions that had earlier been channelled into the extreme ultramontane values of Carlism. The mentor in this development was Domènech i Montaner, with whom Riquer was working at the time, and it was he who sponsored in 1888 his membership of the pioneer Catalanist party, the *Lliga de Catalunya*. The combination of a now more forward-looking patriotism with confessionalism in the artist would be evident again, some years later, in his immediate response to the sculptor Joan Llimona's proposal for the creation of a Catholic artistic association, to be called the *Círculo artístico de San Lucas*. Riquer no doubt saw in this a potential resurgence of the medieval confraternities, a brotherhood united in the ideal of Art. The catalanisation of the name, to *Cercle Artistic de Sant Lluc*, was certainly indicative of the enterprise's growing nationalist identification, but this was underpinned by a zealous Catholicism which discharged itself in a basically conservative and traditionalist version of Catalanist politics. In this respect the authority of Josep Torras i Bages, author of *La tradició catalana* (1892) and future Bishop of Vic, was decisive. Riquer was certainly in his element here. He was a member of the *Cercle's* first steering

committee and participated in all its biennial exhibitions beginning with the one at the Sala Parés in 1893, where he showed two religious canvasses.

An event of capital importance in Riquer's development, one which would turn him away from the sort of conservative religious zeal that he might have been fixed into, was his journey to London in May-June 1894. In letters from his wife there are complaints about her husband's long absence, and one can suspect that important personal or commissioned business was the motive of the journey, connected with his activities as an art collector. The fact, anyway, is that in England Riquer encountered an artistic *milieu* which accorded with his own beliefs and aspirations. The Pre-Raphaelites, Burne-Jones in particular, provided him with examples of a totally renewed medievalism. William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement offered him a doctrine which could validate his hitherto disparaged efforts in Catalonia as a decorative artist. Finally, the British Art Nouveau movement, propagated after 1893 in the beautiful journal *The Studio*, furnished him with a stylistic model, moving him towards a higher degree of stylisation in his own decorative idiom which would now be freed from attachment to excessive realism and to a too literal or unmediated Gothicism.

When Riquer returned to London in 1906 it was as Commissioner for the English section of the 1907 Barcelona Exhibition of Beaux Arts and Industrial Arts. He was evidently chosen for the post on account of his authority in this area and on account of his contacts in this important sector of the international art world. In a sense the two visits to Britain frame the heyday of Riquer's artistic career.

There has perhaps been a tendency in recent studies, however, to overstate the impact on Riquer of his discoveries in British art. The fact is that before 1894 the Catalan was a Pre-Raphaelite without realising it. The adoption of this manner and his departures explicitly under this sign thus respond neither to fashion nor to crude imitation. As we have seen, he had been a committed decorator and had tended constantly, albeit under a predominantly French influence, towards aesthetic idealism. What he discovered in London, then, as Riquer himself acknowledged to F. Arteaga, in an article published in *The Studio* itself in 1900, was a catalysing inspiration, a conjoint creative model and the urge 'to proclaim these hitherto unknown glories in Catalonia'. The artist became a missionary at just the time when the cultural atmosphere in

Catalonia, with *Modernisme's* banner fully unfurled, was propitious to reception of his message.

Riquer's principal medium, of course, would be his own art, and this underwent a distinct stylistic change from 1894. He adopted a blend of the Gothic and *japonisme* so characteristic of Art Nouveau, that expressive quality of line enclosing flat surfaces imbued with subtle harmonies of colour, which gives the composition an antirealist feel in line with the idealised, symbolist subject matter: international Art Nouveau. From 1895 onwards Riquer was the outstanding figure in *modernista* decorative art, in an increasingly responsive situation, encouraged and sustained in particular by the achievements of the brilliant architects of *Modernisme* headed by the genius of Gaudí.

The years 1895-1907—the apogee of *Modernisme* in all art forms—were a period of intense activity and projection for Riquer as protagonist of the 'new art'. His assimilation of aestheticism and the Arts and Crafts ideal gave him justification for continued diversification. His literary output increased and developed in parallel to his plastic creations, a relationship we shall explore in our next chapters. Likewise it was the Arts and Crafts which, as well as placing emphasis upon individual craftsmanship, raised the status of industrial art, reconciling refinement and aesthetic excellence with large-scale production. Accordingly, the modern industrial means of artistic reproduction—posters, book-plates, printing, etching and engraving—would become his favourite fields of activity.

The cultivation of poster-work was taken up by several major *modernista* artists as a mode of expression and communication felt to be particularly attuned to the spirit of the age. It is, indeed, one of *Modernisme's* most innovative



and representative phenomena, and it was Riquer who was responsible for the first modern Catalan poster, done for the third Exhibition of Arts and Art Industries, Barcelona 1896. This first effort, oblong in shape and somewhat cluttered in design, still displays an incomplete fusion of Neo-gothic motifs and Pre-Raphaelite allegory, but its pioneering status is undenied. Moreover, the style of Riquer's posters was soon evolving rapidly in a more imaginative direction and with a more relaxed feel, very close in aspect to the poster-work of the Belgian Symbolists Privat-Livemont and Edmond Meunier. This was clearly a direct line of influence, since Riquer possessed a copy of A. Demeure de Beaumont's *L'Affiche illustrée* (Vol. I, *L'Affiche beige*, 1897), a book to which he referred in an article of 1899, *Cartells y cartellistas* published in *La Renaixensa*. The Belgians (Privat-Livemont, Mignot, Henri Meunier) here occupied pride of place, confirmed by Riquer's ownership of the former's *L'Absinthe Robette* together with signed copies of Meunier's *Les Concerts Isaye* and *Casino de Blackenbergue*. The latter's influence on the Catalan artist is visible in the simplicity of composition, in the harmony of pastel shades and in the Symbolist orientation of themes. Nonetheless, the

beginnings of this new departure were set in Riquer's first trip to London in 1894. It is clear that he discovered there the modern poster and that the idea of propagating the form was embraced as a missionary undertaking. Arteaga recorded the artist's view of his role here:

Posters! Why, ever since I saw the first of the new posters the thing tempted me so strongly that I offered to do tradesmen's posters here [Barcelona] for nothing; not one would listen to me.

The resistance was soon overcome, as is evidenced by the twenty-odd posters produced by Riquer between 1896 and 1902, of which the most noteworthy are the advertisements for his own *book Anyoranses* and *Encerados J. Ricart*, the *Salon Pedal* and *IV Exposició del Circol de St. Lluch 1899*, and *Napoleon* for the photographers A. and E. Fernandez.



Another area in which Riquer was a true innovator, in the full spirit of *Modernisme*, was that of the book-plate, like the poster a typical and fashionable product of the new art. A few samples date from the 1880s, but these, it seems, were designs not originally intended to serve as book-plates. The real stimulus to the artist in this respect appears to have been the special Christmas number of *The Studio* for 1898 which was devoted to these items. As in the case of posters, the initial impulse to adopt and introduce this artistic speciality into Catalonia stemmed from Riquer's discovery of the English models. What is remarkable, though, is how underivative and confidently original are his own creations in the form. They display a control and a unique poetic quality which made Riquer an indisputable master of the European book-plate at the turn of the century.

It was the great contemporary collector, the German Count Leiningen-Westerburg, who financed publication of the book *Ex-libris d'Alexandre de Riquer*, printed in 1903 by J. Furnó in Barcelona and by Giesecke & Devrient of Leipzig. It is one of the rarest but undoubtedly one of the finest artistic achievements of *Modernisme*, conceived, designed and decorated by the artist who gathered together within it his first 63 book-plates. His total output over the period 1900-1914, as catalogued by Joan-Lluís Yebra, was 142 individual commissions, either etchings or photo-gravured drawings. Their quantity and quality have a socio-cultural interest, in what they reveal of *Modernisme's* effects in cultivating the sensibility and cultural consumerism of influential sectors of the Catalan bourgeoisie. Beyond this they add up to an important body of creative work in harmony with an industrialised culture, a phenomenon which is complemented by Riquer's production across the whole field of commercial graphic art, from watermarks, trademarks, letter-heads and publishers' insignia to advertisements, magazine and sheet-music covers, as well as almost the entire range of minor forms of the printer's trade: visiting cards, menus, invitations, Christmas cards, programmes and dance-cards, First Communion and In Memoriam cards, catalogues, invoices, not forgetting that important turn-of-the-century phenomenon, the artistic illustrated post-card. For most of these delightful compositions Riquer limited himself merely to providing the design, but a number were also skilfully engraved by him, generally by the etching process, a technique in which he was one of the most accomplished practitioners in Catalonia.



Indeed, Riquer's contribution to the general reemergence of quality engraving in Catalonia is not to be underestimated. Copper engraving had virtually died out in Barcelona, succumbing to photochemical processes. The engraving studio at the art school of La Llotja had had to close in 1879, for want of students. The rebirth of engraving, in particular etching, in the last years of the nineteenth century was largely due to the upsurge of interest from bibliophiles and the associated growth in demand for book-plates. Riquer's experience, and his familiarity with the beautiful work produced in Catalonia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, placed him in the forefront of reviving the art. He had a press brought over from London in 1894 or slightly later, and began to engrave in his studio in the Carrer de la Freneria. There two young followers, J. Triadó and J. Renart, were introduced to the techniques of etching, soon to be imitated by a wave of book-plate designers, in particular by Casals i Vernís who worked in Reus. Riquer was in a true sense the master of this development. His first prize for engraving at the 1906 National Art Exhibition in Madrid and first-class medal at the 1907 International Art Exhibition in Barcelona were his appropriate recognition.

The extraordinary quality of Riquer's achievements in the related field of book illustration and decoration also merits special comment. One is struck by the radical shift in style between the work done before his 1894 visit to London and that which followed. The covers and illustrations which he produced from 1895 to 1898 for the New Year editions of *La Ilustración Artística*, published by Muntaner y Simón, show him fully in control of an expressive new idiom. Beardsley's *japonisme* is again smoothly blended with a William Morris Gothic in flat, decorative compositions, harmoniously tinted in pastel, particularly graceful in the friezes to texts of Cervantes (1897) and Quevedo (1898). One notes here too the reiterated presence of allegorical feminine themes inside the decorative frames, clearly deriving from European Symbolism. Another dimension of this specific artistic importation in which Riquer was actively involved was the foundation in 1897 of the journal *Luz*, the most explicitly Symbolist of early *Modernisme's* vehicles. The format itself was typically elongated, and Riquer designed several intricately elegant compositions for the cover, like the one reproduced in our Chapter I. Their movement is distinctly vertical, with lightly-clad sprites seeming poised ready to fly upwards into the sky of the picture, towards the source of a mystical light (the meaning of *Luz*.)

whose rays penetrate their ecstatic eyes. The same illustrations were also used in Riquer's collection of prose-poems, *Crisantemes* (1899), one of the most subtle fusions of the artist's dual vocation. This volume and *Anyorances* (1902) constitute together perhaps the finest attainment of *modernista* book production, anticipated to a degree in the illustrations for Riquer's autobiographical *Quan jo era noy* (1897). In the earlier work, though, the style is still transitional, as the literary content is more conventional, and the *modernista* stylisation is seen emerging from a realism that harks back to the 1880s. A clear example of this is the vignette which heads the present chapter. *Crisantemes* and *Anyorances*, on the other hand, are totally coherent in their effect. The stylised decorativism of the illustrations, the integration of text and image, the asymmetrical positioning of the print on the page, the small oblong format itself, all combine to make these exquisite models of Art Nouveau aesthetics in book production, wherein refinement of design reflects the preciousness of the writing.

Riquer's fourth book *Aplech de sonets. Les Cullites. Un poema d'amor* (1906), shows a distinct evolution in both aspects, related to contemporary cultural developments in Catalonia. The decorative elements are now tempered by a balance and a deliberate formal symmetry which announce, as does the exclusive use of the sonnet form, the return to a type of classicism, a current which was to swell into *Noucentisme's* rejection of *modernista* taste and ideology. Perhaps symptomatic of Riquer's own uncertainty in the face of the eventual dissolution of artistic *Modernisme* is the fact that he chose not to illustrate himself his long sylvan poem, *Poema del Bosch* (1910), preferring instead to use xylographic vignettes taken from seventeenth-century originals. The subject matter of the poetry would have seemed anachronistic already in 1910, in relation to the *noucentista* cult of the urbane, while the concept of the illustration (and the total visual effect of the book) reflects perhaps Riquer's misapprehension of what the new movement's classicism entailed. The disjunction is indicative of a major tide-change in Catalan culture or cultural Catalanism.

The foregoing survey has aimed to give an idea of the fundamental role played by Alexandre de Riquer, as decorative artist, in the incorporation and development of Art Nouveau in the graphic arts in Catalonia. His pioneering effort and his confidence in applying a new, culturally appropriate idiom across a whole range of printed

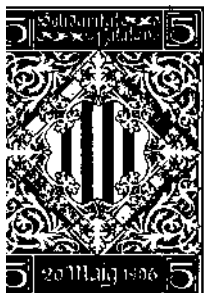
products were his positive contributions to Catalan art. He attracted a group of disciples to whom he generously opened the doors of his studio and library: J. Triadó, J. Renart, J. Diéguez, Jaume Llongueras, F. Galí, E. Moya. Part of the mainstream of *modernista* artistic expression, then, derived directly from him. Even Eugeni d'Ors, the high-priest of *Noucentisme*, recognised Riquer's mentorship and recalled his studio as 'the only seminary of true art... in Barcelona'. In similar vein it was the idealist painter Joan Brull, also art critic of the leading journal *Juventut*, who summed up the historical importance of Riquer's role as pioneer of an Arts and Crafts spirit in Catalonia:

Some great English artists had begun to cultivate and promote decorative work, so successfully that it became a unique art form in its own right. The Germans, the Danes and the Northern countries all together followed suit. We are fortunate to have an artist who is inspired in that same tradition: Riquer.

Decorative painting, in effect, which Riquer had begun to practise in the 1880s, forms as decisive a contribution to the *modernista* canon as does his work in the graphic arts. Again there is a discernible surge in creativity after 1894. Of particular note are the two large vertical panels for the choir of the abbey church of Montserrat, done in collaboration (1896) with colleagues from the *Cercle de Sant Lluc*, and the paintings in the house of Sra. Alomar in the Passeig de Gràcia (1897), four panels representing the seasons with two others in the form of allegories of Poetry and Music.

This was an activity which Riquer fluently extended into architectural decoration, now under a distinctly *modernista* sign of 'total art'. In 1900 he designed the entire project for decoration of his relative Grau Ynglada's chemist-shop on the corner of the Carrer Nou de la Rambla, calling in Gaspar Homar to execute the marquetry and Granell to do the stained-glass work. The Arts and Crafts spirit was fully exemplified here, as it was in so many of *Modernisme's* finest and most lasting achievements. Among these must surely be counted Riquer's work on decoration of the lobby of the *Cercle del Liceu*, also begun in 1900. His designs for the furnishings and gas-lamps, combining wood, metal and enamelling (a technique he pioneered), show the artist at his most assured and delicate. A further important commission, also dating from around 1900, was to decorate the Great Hall of the Industrial Institute in Terrassa near Barcelona, an occasion which can be seen as part of the

coming of age of *modernista* interior decoration, now given institutional sanction. The accord between Art and the industrial establishment was, however, symptomatically short-lived. There was a serious disagreement with the Board of Governors of the Institute, who were shocked by the allegorical nudes representing the textile industry and commerce on the huge symbolic ceiling, an up-dated version of a grand Puvis de Chavannes wall-painting. The artist refused to clothe his nudes and left for Barcelona, his project unfinished. It was completed several years later by Vancells, and Riquer's original work can now be viewed in the Casa-Museu Alegre de Sagrera in Terrassa. Another important legacy of Riquer to the town was the interior decoration of the Cafè Català which was done by the brothers Pere and Tomàs Viver under his supervision.



Resettled in Barcelona, Riquer found his services as a designer in great (and, one must presume, remunerative) demand. The diversity of his commissions and the importance of the sources from which they came indicate the solvency of his professional position. He painted in 1903 part of the decor of *La Maison Dorée*, the cafe-restaurant of his friends the brothers Pompidor, and in 1905 he was in charge of interior decoration for *La Vaqueria Catalana*. During this period he was also busy

designing patterns for the celebrated mosaics of Escofet y Tejera. Jewellery also engaged his attention, and in one particularly well-crafted piece—a brooch representing Saint George and the Dragon, whose oval centre-piece reproduced the motif of the banner of the *Unió Catalanista*—Riquer combined this specialism with that of designing political and associational banners, for which he was in much demand. It was, in a sense, the artist's point of direct contact with the political and cultural ferment of the times. But it was Art itself which was the absorbing concern, a situation made possible by the fashionable generalisation of the *modernista* idiom. Furnishings and candelabra, stained glass for the firm of A. Rigalt & Co., playing cards for the successful firms of Comas and Fournier: the surge of creativity was fomented by a socio-cultural context towards which the artist himself had contributed, a relatively normalised relationship between the creator of aesthetic values and his capitalist clientele.

Consonant with this exclusive and consuming dedication to Art

were Riquer's private activities as a connoisseur and collector of art works and antiques. It was a passion which he shared with some other guiding spirits of *Modernisme*, and Joseph Pla writes of a trip to the Pyrenees, as early as 1887, by Riquer, Santiago Rusinol and M. Utrillo, in search of antiques. Their frequenting of art-dealers and connoisseur-ship can be seen, of course, as a significant dimension of cultivating the market for their own products. Riquer certainly assembled an imposing collection of items related to his own specialisms: different types of graphic art, antique book-bindings, old manuscripts, and prints, and, above all, book-plates of which he owned over two-thousand examples. His substantial collection of antique glass was bought from him in 1902 for 8,000 pesetas by Rusinol. In addition he put together an appreciable collection of drawings by celebrated masters, Eugenio Lucas in particular, which are now held in the Museum of Modern Art in Barcelona. Before his departure for Majorca in 1917 he sold the bulk of his collections of papers and watermarks to the widow Wenceslao Guarro, the owner of the former stationery firm of that name. His library and the undispersed part of his collections were acquired after his death by the Barcelona Museums and the National Library of Catalonia.

There is no doubt that the heyday of Riquer's career was the period from 1895 to 1907 and that this coincided virtually exactly with the heyday of *Modernisme* itself. With one foot in the camp of literature and the other in that of the visual arts, he embodied the *modernista* virtues of the artist as cultural stimulator and privileged public spokesman. In 1898 he served as *mantenidor* of the literary *Jocs Florals*, while in 1900 he was first artistic director and art critic of the great *modernista* journal *Juventut* (whose decorative heading he had designed: see the reproduction in Chapter I). Beyond this, however, on account of his experiences and affinities, Riquer played an important 'diplomatic' role in bridging and reconciling a fundamental divergence of aesthetic currents, with ideological implications, within *Modernisme*. The basic rift was between ideas of Art in the service of Religion and those of a 'post-Christian' Art for Art's sake, in both of which tendencies Riquer had participated just as he was a proponent of the Symbolist aesthetic that offered the possibility of synthesis. His involvement in the journal *Luz*, already mentioned, is indication of the spiritual kinship and artistic unity that linked Riquer, under the sign of Symbolism, with 'decadents' like Rusinol and Utrillo, complementing their shared enthusiasm for

art collecting. Further, another triad of archetypal *modernistes*—Riquer, Rusinol and Adrià Gual—converged on this same point through their common interest in exploring the potential of the Symbolist prose-poem in Catalan. It was the trip to London which broadened his horizons and loosened Riquer's ties with militant Catholic conservatism. Without abandoning allegiance to his mentor Torras i Bages or to Catholic colleagues like Vancells and the Llimona brothers from the *Cercle de Sant Lluc*, Riquer was naturally drawn closer to more restless spirits and radical innovators like Rusinol, Casas, Utrillo and Raimon Casellas.

There was a brief period of relative unity in Catalan *Modernisme*, coalescing around the time of the fourth *Festa Modernista* in Sitges held in 1897, where most of the above-mentioned figures participated. Utrillo himself wrote a preface for the 1903 publication of Riquer's collected *Ex-libris*, and he published a number of these plates in the impressively elegant journal *Pèl & Ploma* of which he was the editor. Relations between Riquer and the influential critic-novelist Casellas were more strained, but, although they had profound differences, the two men respected each other. Between 1895 and 1911 the critic published virtually nothing unfavourable in reviews of the artist's work, and the two collaborated in several important cultural undertakings, notably preparations for the International Art Exhibitions of 1907 and 1911. It cannot be denied, though, that, put to the test, Riquer's deepest affiliations were ideologically conservative. During a polemic concerning the respective merits of drawings by Casas and Josep Llimona, it was Torras i Bages who had the last word and prevailed on him to resign in July 1900 after a very short spell of involvement in *Juventut*, the last major organ of *Modernisme*, of which Riquer had been a co-founder but which the Bishop judged to be 'divorced from Catholic norms'. The crisis did not put an end to his critical writing even so: Riquer continued to write copiously on contemporary art and to be its proponent right up to his death in Majorca in 1920.

What is clear from his correspondence and the contents of his library is that from 1911, the date of his marriage to the French writer Marguerite Laborde, Riquer's lines of communication with the world of British art were virtually severed. The date was a significant watershed, where personal factors coincided with the deepening crisis of the artistic values with which Riquer was associated, including that important 'new art' component which he

had implanted partly from British sources. After 1911, *Noucentisme's* repudiation of the supposedly chaotic, dissolvent and self-indulgent aspects of the *fin de siècle* was in clear ascendancy... But following this line takes us too rapidly towards the end of the story, and we should return to the earlier stage when *Modernisme's* aesthetic ideal remained valid.

Utterly devoted to Art and to his vocation, Riquer had created around himself, in his studio in the Carrer de la Freneria, close to Barcelona Cathedral, a unique atmosphere, an island of resistance to philistine materialism and base commercialism, an aesthetic paradise which offered a welcome to like-minded young artists. We have already observed Eugeni d'Ors' admiration of this shrine or 'only seminary of true art'. It was the venue for musical evenings, Mozart and Beethoven being the revered favourites, and the sanctuary of Riquer's precious collection of *objets d'art*. Many other contemporaries have testified to the spiritual atmosphere of the studio, the most succinctly representative being the account given by the critic Manuel de Montoliu. Highlighting Riquer's championship of the English Pre-Raphaelites, headed by the painter-poet Dante Rossetti, Montoliu goes on to recall the following episode which we can take to be typical:

His studio contained for us, in addition to the lure of discussion, the attraction of the great art journals that were received mainly from England and Germany. At that time I was immersed in reading the *Divine Comedy*. My enthusiasm for the great Florentine knew no bounds. What joy to discover that Riquer was as passionate an admirer of the great Italian poet as I! He and two of my friends... agreed to meet twice a week in his studio for sessions on Dante in which we would read together and discuss the *Divine Comedy*. We did so with exemplary constancy for several months... One night, at the conclusion of the session, Riquer, without uttering another word, rose and, after extinguishing the lights, suddenly drew back the curtain of the large windows. We were struck dumb with amazement. He had revealed to us a magical world. High above the moon rode in a clear sky, spilling its silvery light over the pinnacles, gargoyles, windows and capitals, an enchanted forest of stony vegetation which crowned the rich Gothic architecture of the apse of our cathedral!

This temple of *Modernisme* within Barcelona—more intimate, more restrained than Rusiñol's celebrated and spectacular *Cau Ferrat* in Sitges, the home of the *Festes Modernistes*—was tacitly

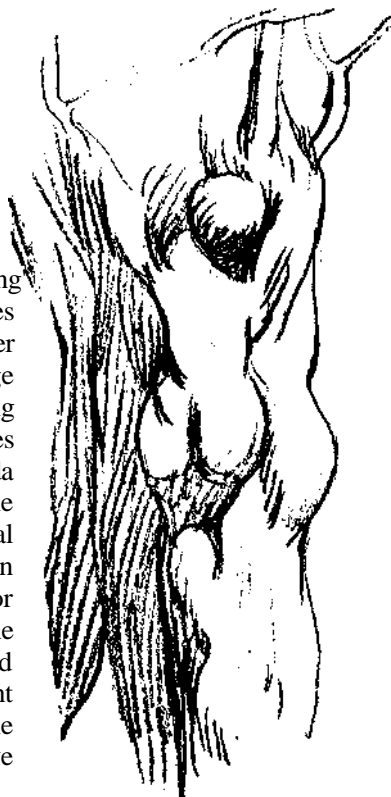
dedicated to the cult and memory of Lolita, the artist's wife and soulmate, who had died in 1899. It was closer to another pocket of poetic resistance that was even more secret and hermetically sealed from the sounds of the outside world, namely the home of Apel·les Mestres in the Passeig Permanyer, to which only a few friends and, interestingly, their children were invited. For this 'chosen few' there must have been the sense of the aesthetes' dream being fulfilled, of work and living being harmonically assimilated to Art and Beauty. The dream could not last...

In another dimension, Riquer, like many contemporary Catalan intellectuals, maintained good relations with the Spanish artists and writers of Madrid. Their respective cultural regenerationism, and to a degree common philosophical and aesthetic influences, momentarily disguised the incipient divergences that would mark the twentieth-century page of the history of Catalonia within the Spanish state. Riquer contributed to Madrid journals which were sympathetic towards Catalan *Modernisme* and which even gave the phenomenon a certain prominence, such as *La Lectura* edited by Francisco Acebal and *La Vida Literària* edited by Jacinto Benavente. The date of Riquer's first trip to Madrid is uncertain, but it is known that he went frequently to Castile and the capital in search of antiques and to attend the biennial National Art Exhibitions, where he was a gold-medal winner in 1906. Before that, in 1902, he attended the coronation celebrations of Alfonso XIII and had then discovered the world of the Madrid literary cafes presided over by the legendary Valle-Inclán. Another leading figure of Spanish *Modernismo*, Miguel de Unamuno, was a friend of the tutor to Riquer's children, Luis de Zulueta, and visited the family in Barcelona. A friendship with Angel Ganivet, author of the influential *Idearium español*, was struck up during a visit by Riquer to Andalusia. The Spanish dimension of the Catalan artist's horizons, then, was present as it was in the case of another great *modernista*, the poet Joan Maragall.

In the early years of the twentieth century Riquer underwent considerable ideological development. It is true that he maintained contact with Bishop Torras i Bages. The latter, while he was a governor of the *Cercle de Sant Lluc*, often dined at the Riquer home and engaged in spirited arguments with Zulueta, a rebellious free-thinker, whose position in the household was therefore rather anomalous unless it was an indication of a certain private heterodoxy on the artist's part. The fact is that Riquer had become interested in

Theosophy—enjoying something of a boom among the aesthetic intelligentsia throughout Europe—even though he never became a member of the Theosophical Society. He frequented the *Llibreria Orientalista* of Raymon Maynadé, and after the turn of the century there is discernible in his creative work a drift away from Judaeo-Christian conceptions and conventions.

Although Riquer may appear to have deferred to Torras i Bages by ceasing contributions to *Juventut*, there runs through his pictorial and poetic work of this period a line of feeling that stands in clear opposition to the Bishop's conservative moralising. His mature creations show an imagination engaged with some of the erotic and pantheistic implications of his artistic philosophy's broadest reaches. Once again, his writing and his pictorial work converge in the one direction. Nor was Riquer alone in this: there is a pantheistic strain in the poetry of Maragall, with very profound Romantic roots, which likewise drew sanction from the Bishop, and several other *modernista* artists and writers reviewed the human condition in terms of dark, pagan atavisms. In a series of paintings and drawing dated between 1906 and 1910 Riquer returned to the world of pagan antiquity with its nymphs and satyrs symbolising the cyclical (ritual) and organic forces of that favourite domain of his earlier work, the forest, where now strange trees are transformed into coupling human bodies. Alongside themes drawn from classical antiquity (Leda the swan being a particularly notable instance) we encounter also medieval reminiscences, focused on the Arthurian legends, the common denominator being that of place, the forest, the undergrowth of Riquer's childhood in La Segarra. An identical movement is found in his last poetic work, the ambitious and curiously regressive



Poema del Bosch of 1910. One of the great paradoxes of this complex artistic personality, of a man who was among the most outstanding cultivated temperaments of his day, was this final application of his vast cultural breadth to the worship of Nature, a trend that was to grow in strength during the last decade of his life. One line of explanation would certainly centre on the *anti-modernista* fixation of *Noucentisme*, —at its most emphatic around 1910—, on its very particularised, exclusive interpretation of urbanity in art, and on the consequent restraints applied to artistic freedom.

Another factor in this reorientation was doubtless the new development in his emotional life dating from 1910-11. Now aged 54, he met in Barcelona Marguerite Laborde, a Béarnaise writer from Oloron Sainte Marie who used the pen-names of *Andrée de Beam* and *Hein!*. Marguerite was introduced to Riquer's circle by Octave Uzanne, the great French bibliophile and friend of his sister Augusta. The couple fell in love and were married in Oloron Sainte Marie in September, 1911. They lived for a while in the Pyrenees, and it was here that the artist rediscovered landscape. He put much feeling into his paintings of the Pyrenean forests and cool undergrowth. He exhibited these works in Pau in 1912, and in 1912-13 he had three exhibitions of an ever-widening range of landscapes from the places (Andalusia, Majorca and Ibiza) that he visited in these years. These exhibitions were held at the still-prestigious Sala Parés and at the Fayans Català: their contents displayed a concentration of subject matter and a vitality of treatment such that they amount to a kind of affirmation of principle. The cultural tide had turned in Catalonia: the *modernista* had become an embattled figure. Riquer's life-work and stock-in-trade of decorative art, his style so intimately associated with *Modernisme*, were suddenly declared out-moded by the new opinion-makers. Except in the field of book-plate design, the artist was no longer in demand. It was reliably reported in 1913 that he was even considering emigration to Argentina.

Riquer's authority waned, then, as *Noucentisme* reached its apogee. In 1913-14 he added his voice to the movement of disquiet over Torres García's ceiling painting in the Saló de Sant Jordi of the Generalitat palace, the seat of the recently achieved semi-autonomous government of Catalonia. Riquer's platform was, significantly, set outside the capital (he wrote in the journal *La Sembra* of Terrassa) and he was contradicting a man of the new establishment, Alexandre Galí. The latter had praised Torres García's paintings for their

simplicity and synthetic quality: Riquer criticised them for what he saw as poverty of style. It is too facile an interpretation, though, to see in this confrontation an irreconcilable conflict of antithetical artistic values and cultural orthodoxies. Such a version, which has been current until recently, harks back ultimately to the simplifications of *Noucentisme's* own propaganda. We can nowadays appreciate better that, behind the disagreement, there lay the inability of the displaced but still committed *modernista* to understand fully the terms of a new aesthetic which emerged from a specific branch of *Modernisme* itself. However, if our present-day perspective gives us a clear view of the real complexities and continuities in the relationship between *Modernisme* and *Noucentisme*, it is none the less true that the tide-change left many *modernistes* as stranded victims.



Charcoal drawing of Alexandre de Riquer by R. Casas

Despite relative success in terms of public response and sales from his exhibitions, Riquer now felt that he was fighting a rearguard action in Barcelona and he underwent a movement of relying increasingly on his own inner resources and artistic vision. To the weighty cultural factors in this must be added family misfortune which turned 1914 into a bleak year for him. He was forced to

separate from his wife Marguerite who was incompatible with his daughter Emilia; his eldest son Emili died in a typhus epidemic, and another son, Alexandre, died in the following year. The artist's isolation was thus increased in the most poignant way. The outbreak of the First World War also affected him. In line with most Catalan intellectuals, who felt the German aggression to be a threat to small nations, he supported the Allies, but, above all, he was moved by the collective tragedy and by the desire for peace.

Riquer sought refuge in painting and in the associated travelling. In April 1915 he mounted a large exhibition at the Fayans Català, divided into four sections: *Spain*, a return to the world of Goya and the Romantics, inspired perhaps by the works of Eugenio Lucas in his own collection; *Ibiza and Majorca*, landscapes treated on a scale larger than before; *The Lower Pyrenees*, French landscapes characterised by a strikingly fresh realism; and *Miscellany*, where Riquer remained faithful to his fay-world full of literary and musical allusions, tightly controlled within a small format. This exhibition brought him public and critical acclaim for what was felt to be a brave new departure. A banquet was given in his honour on May 1st, 1915, by the Barcelona artists of his generation, all of them *modernistes*. Not a single *noucentista* was on the guest-list.

This success did not prevent Riquer, wearied by the tensions and the feuding in Barcelona, from leaving the Catalan capital in search of peace and rest in Majorca, where he had painted around 1913-14, and where he was to spend the remaining years until his death in 1920. He invited his closest friends and associates to a farewell supper in their favourite restaurant, the *Lion d'Or*, on March 27th, 1917, before sailing with his children to Majorca. He took a house in the Terreno district of Palma, and devoted himself to landscape painting. However, unlike his earlier travels, it was not now a case of being in the right place at the right time.

In a sense Riquer went too late to Majorca, where Anglada Camarasa was already installed and had made fashionable a broad, decorative approach to landscape, all light and vivid colours, very different from the former's detailed realism, now beginning to look quite old-fashioned. In fact, Riquer continued to paint as though Impressionism had not transformed the art of landscape, almost as though it had never existed. His exhibitions at the *Círculo Mallorquín* in April 1918 and May 1919, then in the salons of the *La Veda* society in January 1920 were appreciated more by the insular and conservative

Majorcan upper classes than by the many young landscape artists living there. Their criticism was that the elderly Catalan artist never mastered the problem of light on the Golden Isle, on account of his excessively conventional technique.

These were the declining years. In an excellent obituary, a highly cultivated journalist who was one of Riquer's Majorcan friends, Miguel Sarmiento, gives us a vision of Riquer in the tranquility of this semi-retirement at Son Alegre:

He worked in the mornings. That is to say, he sometimes worked, and sometimes, on the pretext of looking for something, he would delve into his sketch-books as if he were trying to console himself with his memories of other times. At noon he would go down to Palma, visit a few friends, buy newspapers, browse through the bookshop, call at the antique-dealer's; and then, the tram home. He never went out in the evenings.

Riquer painted rather more than Sarmiento suggests, and he also continued, sporadically, to write poetry. Although relatively isolated from the outside world, he retained some contact with the Catalan cultural world of the mainland through his son Josep Maria, a restless bohemian who hovered around the Barcelona literary circles. It was Josep Maria who took to the *Lion d'Or* group a poem of greetings which contrasted the peace of Majorca with the violence raging in Europe, and which vehemently declared Riquer's support for the Allies.

Two articles which Riquer contributed to the journal *Mallorca* in November 1917 set up a striking contradiction, one which, however, on inspection, can be seen to represent a dynamic pull in his own artistic trajectory, even a sort of summary of the two main forces in play within his total *oeuvre*. In the first, reviewing a collective exhibition organised by *La Veda*, he invoked the Camille Mauclair of *Trois crises de l'art actuel* in order to condemn the *avant-garde* and defend the 'need for tradition, study and order'. The second, devoted to an exhibition by the young Majorcan painter Canals and to a group of young artists—Pons, Vidal, Salvà and Ferrà—quoted Oscar Wilde to defend the superiority of Art over Nature: 'Art, according to Wilde himself, is the burning protestation, the courageous endeavour of Man to instruct Nature as to how She should be.' There was here, perhaps, a sort of theoretical swan-song, as there was also a creative one in Riquer's last two exhibitions. In 1920 he showed his Majorcan landscapes in Catalonia, at the salon of the *Casino Sabadellenc*, and

then again in the Sala Parés where he presented twenty-nine canvasses. At the Paris *Salon d'Automne* in the same year he participated, with *Pine trees in Deyà* and *The Cove at Deyà*, in the exhibition of Catalan artists organised by the Municipal Committee for Art Exhibitions in Barcelona. The organisers had invited the Catalans to Paris in gratitude for the hospitality shown by Barcelona on the occasion of the major exhibition of French art in 1917.

Characteristically, the swan-song had a range wider than painting and took in Riquer's other principal enthusiasms. In 1919 the *Círculo Ecuestre de Barcelona* commissioned him to make and decorate a de luxe album to be presented to its president Albert Rusiñol. Riquer was working on the decoration of this valuable album, with its sumptuous presentation and its metal cover studded with precious gems, truly the last word in *Modernisme's* cult of the book as emblematic work of Art, when death suddenly overtook him on November 13th, 1920. The designer Saurí Sires undertook completion of the album, and it may be admired today at the *Círculo Ecuestre*.

Some time before his death Riquer had effected a reconciliation with his wife Marguerite, and she had come to join him in Majorca. It was in the very year of his death that the artist published in poetic form, in the catalogues of the 1920 exhibitions, a summary of his aesthetics which was also his literary testament. The most telling fragments of the poem, *Credo*, read as follows:

I live with my face to the light of the sunflowers and I believe in myself, as I believe in an expansive Art that calms my aching soul, for me alone...

I believe in the truth of plastic harmony, in breathable space, distances and light in the sublime, peaceful magic of a beautiful day, and in LIFE which is BEAUTY, in the ART which is its perfume.



CHAPTER III

RIQUER THE WRITER (PROSE)



Recent studies by M. McCarthy (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cambridge University) and M.A. Cerdà (*Els Pre-rafaelites a Catalunya*, 1981) have understandably given prominence to the 'English connection'—specifically the resonances of contemporary English poetry—in their interpretations of the literary work of Alexandre de Riquer. Such approaches, however, while obviously consonant with our general focus here, appear to us to be too limited to provide a proper characterisation of Riquer as a writer. The dangers of over-emphasising Pre-Raphaelite influences and of

seeing in our subject's anglophilia a virtually exclusive motivation have tended to remove the author from his immediate and true context, which is that of the Catalan literature of *Modernisme*.

It is, moreover, a literary-historical context to which some special considerations must apply. Riquer, like his contemporaries, took up writing in Catalan in a crucial period when the language itself was in a particularly fluid and delicate phase of evolution as a vehicle of culture, breaking loose from the anachronism and the staidness of literary expression as it had been shaped during the mid-century *Renaixença*. What is more, the *modernistes* were, to a large degree consciously, responsible for placing increased demands on the range and ductility of Catalan as a literary medium, insofar as they were enacting a far-reaching revision of the concept of Culture itself, initiating in literature a surge onwards beyond the perceived banalities of conventional romanticism and beyond the limitations or literalness of naive realism. In this process, attuned at various points to contemporary movements in those national literatures with which Catalan aspired to be aligned, while the Word and the act of creation

itself acquired transcendental status, some formal deficiencies of written Catalan and the desiderata of its recent literary credentials would inevitably be exposed. Seen in this light the literature of *Modernisme* represents the overcoming of a double handicap, impelled by the zeal of the movement and all its urges to 'stylise' its new perceptions.

It is against this whole background that the literary activity of Alexandre de Riquer needs to be considered. The basic identification of the author with his native language, his roots in the Catalan countryside, the ideological and artistic connotations of the 'literary Catalanism' that *modernista* nationalism made such an inseparable coupling, the characteristics—limitations and potential—of the literary repertoire that *Modernisme* inherited and would renovate: these are the parameters for situating Riquer's literary works in relation to the biography and the artistic trajectory that we have already outlined. A constant feature emerges which is the interrelation between literary and visual modes of expression as cultivated by Riquer. In detecting this as a hall-mark of his individual imagination and creative temperament, a major element of his originality, we perceive too something of its relevance within the aesthetics and the literary programme of *Modernisme* as a total phenomenon.

Over twenty years separate the composition of Riquer's unpublished *Notas del alma* (1875) from the publication in 1897 of *Quan jo era noy* (When I was a Boy). It was with this work, (a collection of sixteen prose pieces based on childhood reminiscences), that Riquer, now 41 years old, began a cycle of literary activity geared to other expressions of his artistic temper. Rather than to seek for connections between *Notas del alma* (written mainly in Castilian and deeply informed by the naive poetics of Castilian romanticism) and *Quan jo era noy*, it makes more sense to relate the latter work, as a fresh literary debut, to the contemporary cultural scene in Catalonia wherein the artist himself had become a considerable protagonist. For one thing, unconditional use of Catalan as literary medium was by now an automatic option for the cultural vanguard. A dominant subjectivism and refinement of aesthetic sensation were, in general terms, tendencies promoted, in precept and increasingly in literary performance, by the *Modernisme* of the late 1890s. Contemporary reviews of *Quan jo era noy* hopefully discerned in the work the opening of new possibilities along such lines. It is interesting for us to consider to what extent Riquer was in fact breaking new ground,

abreast of a potent change of sensibility, and to what extent he was resorting to familiar, well-tried and even outmoded formulae from within the local tradition.

The sixteen stories of *Quan jo era noi* were written mostly between 1894 and 1896, but the book probably incorporates some earlier material and certainly, as remarked above, some illustrations dating from the 1880s. This itself indicates a basically transitional (and opportunist) character, showing through an overall patterning that was conceived, or at least presented, as a unified whole. Thus the preface insists how the collection springs from an *ideal*, defined as the 'giving of everything that lives deep in the heart, with the urge to translate the sensations of the spirit', an ideal that corresponds to 'the vibrancy of [my] being, pining for things that are longed for and have no form'. Unity is accordingly a function of the authenticity of emotion deriving from 'the ideal that smiles upon me and constantly plays upon the keys of my nerves [producing] a single note... born as much in crude realism as, when recalled in hazy fantasies, it ends in the shedding of a sentimental tear'.

The unstable nexus of 'nervousness-realism-fantasy-sentiment', a first distillation of primary *modernista* aesthetics and the inherent weakness of so many of its lesser products, articulates the internal structuring of *Quan jo era noi*. It determines here a significant diffraction of the simple coherence of the autobiographical design. The narrator is not usually the main actor in the sixteen stories or episodes, often appearing instead as witness to events experienced at close range. The first-person narrative mode prevails, but we observe that the narrator is frequently heard as part of a collective 'we' and that in two of the most sensitive episodes—*Antonieta*, an evocation of mental disturbance associated with adolescent loss of innocence, and *Com se'n van* (Departing), the effects on a formerly callous father of the death of his sickly daughter—an omniscient third-person form is used. The single location of these episodes is the *masia* farmhouse in La Segarra of Riquer's childhood (with the exception of *Historieta trista* (Sad tale), whose ostensibly extraneous character was noted by contemporary reviewers), and this unity is underscored by continuity in the reappearance of several characters, involving a certain amount of cross-reference between stories. It is as though a movement towards a broad, overall patterning—in terms of a conventional autobiography or of a novel in potential—has been checked or fragmented. What matters are not the episodes themselves nor the

concatenation of incidents as illustration of the development of the narrator's experience, but rather the suggestive quality of his recapturing of moment and mood, the effort itself of artistically recreating a reality that is perceived as shifting and elusive.

Autobiography and the act of narration thus become 'pretexts' for a more transcendental effort of imagination, as Riquer's preface explains, again in terms of the *ideal* 'which makes me feel the urge to fix, in order to rediscover and to relive them, these childhood memories reworked in fantasy by the grown man'. The aesthetic idealism of this is apparent, even when the writing itself is too flat to conform to the motivation, and it is focused again in the final episode, *Després* (Afterwards), whose main function is to describe the underlying unity of the whole collection. Here, in what is perhaps the most delicately composed of all the episodes, the adult narrator returns to the abandoned *masia* in search of spiritual refreshment, only to find the place depressingly empty and half-ruined. The theme of Paradise Lost, the tension between reality and the inner world of the creative imagination are thus directly evoked, and the book closes in on itself as *Després*, thematically and chronologically, merges with Riquer's preface.

The difficulty of giving a precise generic classification to *Quan jo era noi* is not at all unusual when the book is viewed in its context. Its hybrid character—autobiography, narration, lyricism and aesthetic speculation—is in fact quite symptomatic of a phase of crisis, experimentation and diverse reorientations in contemporary prose-writing in Catalan, intimately related, as Jordi Castellanos has emphasised, to the central palpitations of *Modernisme's* aesthetic and cultural concerns.

At the root of this phenomenon, as it affected narrative, was dissatisfaction with the perceived superficiality of inherited concepts of realism. The conventional novel, with its claims to comprehensive objectivity in recreating the 'slice of life', went into recession. Selection, concentration, emotiveness and sincerity, vibrations (a key word) of poetic (or 'musical') evocation of glimpses of a reality now discerned as fragmentary and subjectively relative: these were the keynotes of a modified 'realism'—clearly related to derivations from impressionism and symbolism in the visual arts—whose basic recipe for performance was summed up in Raimon Casellas' formula of 'intensity of sentiment and of technique'. The short story, evocative vignette or poetic prose understandably became the favoured units of

expression. The most chemically pure *ofmodernista* novels, Casellas' own *Els sotsferéstecs* (1901), was created out of a conscious effort to expand 'intensity' into an ample and sustained image of life. Casellas went several stages beyond the elaboration of a central point of consciousness and gave a more complex gearing to the accumulation and loose connection of 'intense' episodes, the two dominant compositional features of *Quan jo era noi*. The similarity and the progression are historically significant. Riquer's work is seen to belong with a cluster of others from the late 1890s (Massó i Torrents' *Croquis pirinencs*, M. Vayreda's *Records de la darrera carlinada*, various works by Pons i Massaveu, Rusiñol between *Oracions* and *El poble gris*, even occasional *Records de noi* by the old novelist Oller) with several shared genetic traits, half an evolutionary stage from the impressive boom in *modernista* fiction between 1901 and 1911.

The transitional character of *Quan jo era noi* now comes more clearly into focus. What is also evident, though, in Riquer's and the works associated with it, is a distinct primitiveness or reductionism of material and of literary form. The new influences felt and the new possibilities adumbrated there, while on the one hand they promoted some dynamic experiments in stylisation, also contradictorily gave a new lease on life to certain 'naive' prose models. The quest for aesthetic purity, when Art-for-Art's-sake, Symbolist or Decadent values were only part-assimilated, could legitimate a sort of recycling of romantic *costumisme*, simple depiction of picturesque customs, scenes and types from local life, rural or urban; unmediated descriptivism could be passed off as suggestive mood-painting; the cultivation of 'sentiment', the primacy of aesthetic feeling, could run back into sentimentalism. Such was the attraction of romantic antecedents, revitalised by the acknowledged 'neo-Romanticism' in *Modernisme*, that they continued to permeate Catalan prose-writing through into the twentieth century. Two interconnected aspects of this literary current (reflecting also impediments in the objective conditions of the contemporary literary language) are prominent in *Quan jo era noi*. Both relate directly to Riquer's personal experience and to his motivation in the turn to literary expression, in ways that make this collection a quite markedly representative work.

First, the return to childhood offered perhaps the simplest formula for providing thematic substance and pattern for embodiment of the *ideal*. Innocence, purity and childlike simplicity become emblems of the realm of the artistic spirit that, as Riquer's preface explains,

'strives for beauty and more beauty, filled with sighs, with unfounded sadness, with the despair of the child who in the dark night would reach with tiny hands for the star shining in the sky'. Nostalgia, thus inevitably sentimentalised, is artificially imbued with serious artistic purpose. Associated with this was the surge of a sort of collective atavism that was even more pervasive and culturally significant.

The emergence within *Modernisme* of a whole corpus of rural or ruralist literature, regional in its themes and idyllic in tone, parochial in outlook and ideologically conservative, is a distinctive feature of the movement's repertoire, and one which is only at first sight contradictory. The aesthetic justification for this kind of simplistic nostalgia, already referred to, merged with several other interrelated stimuli. Among these a strain of reaction against the squalor, Philistinism and depersonalisation of industrial society was certainly a component of *modernista* feeling, in which out-and-out reactionary values combined with a more sophisticated theory deriving from Ruskin and Morris. In political terms, the discovery and affirmation of Catalanism through community history, tradition and myth; Catholicism as a bastion against the modern 'godless' state; notions of 'roots' and of a communal spirit identified with land and landscape: all encouraged promotion of rural images of an ideal Catalonia within the ferment of nationalist energies that would only find their definitive political channelling with the advent of *Noucentisme* (a movement which absorbed the conservative import of ruralism while berating all its rustic and romantic forms of expression).

Modernista ruralism also encompassed attitudes towards language and expression, romantic associations of land(scape) and language inherited from the *Renaixença* along with the idea of the Catalan countryside as the repository of ethnic and linguistic purity. Maragall's Eulogy of the Word and his theory of *la paraula viva* (the living word), the ultimate *modernista* advocacy of sincerity and inspired spontaneity, was deeply impressed by this legacy. So too was the writing of even those radically innovative prose-writers — Casellas, Víctor Català, Prudenci Bertrana and, to a lesser extent, Joaquim Ruyra—who supplied an inverted and neurotic version of the rural idyll in exploring the limits of individual consciousness. These writers and many other contemporaries figured, moreover, in a literary census that was characterised, sociologically, by 'rural exodus', a movement of aspiring artists into the metropolis, the dynamic centre of the new nationalism. The turn of the century was

a time when all the conditions were propitious for the individual writer to be faithful to his roots and, so to speak, to his idiolect.

This summary of a highly complex cultural circumstance supplies a sort of identikit literary pattern to which Riquer's *Quan jo era noi* conforms, in the broad outlines of assimilated convention and contemporary relevance, and also in terms of the limitations of the work's creative scope.

The society depicted in all these stories is Catholic-conservative, rigidly hierarchical, patriarchal. The figure of the father, noble land-owner and semi-feudal master, embodies stability and authority, while the mother, the guardian angel of the children, represents the warm protectiveness of a 'holy woman' whose very image 'dispels all suffering'. It is an idealised, Utopian version of the Catalan countryside, without conflicts between masters and servants, where misery is accepted with resignation by the poorest and where the masters' charity is the only remedy for those who suffer. Occasional disturbances of this Order—the risks, incidents and minor crises (natural and social) which form the subjects of the stories—tend consistently to be resolved in variations on the 'happy ending' wherein conventional religious moralism blends into social harmony. Every modulation of lost time 'poetically' recovered—the work's aesthetic pretext, as it is formulated between the preface and the elegiac tone of the final piece—veers ultimately into line with an ideological equivalent, the reactionary ruralism referred to above. *Quan jo era noi*, in its confessional spirit, betrays this fundamental contradiction between a would-be transcendental or emancipating aestheticism and articulation of a set of values at odds with the social dynamic of late-nineteenth-century Catalonia. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the suggestively entitled *Baf de ciutat* (Stench of the City) which, far from being a stylised Baudelairean plunge into the abyss of the modern mind, represented in physical and moral degradation, turns out to be a programmatic defence of pre-industrial values. The young peasant who experiences the Hell of depravity of modern Barcelona returns, corrupted and lawless, to the realm of innocence of the *masia*, whence he is peremptorily expelled by one of its virtuous guardians, the trusty farm overseer.

This fusion of subjective and social nostalgia is characteristic of romantic *costumisme* (with its historical function of wistfully recording the swathes cut by Progress), the genre to which *Quan jo era noi* constantly harks back. It is what principally conditions the

texture of Riquer's writing in this work, for all its pretensions (occasionally realised) to a more sophisticated order of perception and expression. The characterisation draws heavily on *costumista* typology: *El Manco* (The Cripple) and *L'Isidro*, for example, in the pieces bearing their names, remain firmly set in the mould of representative, picturesque 'types', without 'roundness' or complexity. The realism of the work is a quality that is determined principally by its localism. The narrator's idealised vision is fixed upon and materialised in a specific geographical location, the landscape of La Segarra which is conscientiously depicted and made familiar in its detail, the language of whose inhabitants is carefully reproduced in dialogue and is incorporated into descriptions. In this procedure one can detect both *costumista* strains and the ambition of the *modernistes* to enrich the literary language with vocabulary sanctioned by its (rural) authenticity and by its 'living' virtues. Certainly, one can feel the effort made by the author to deploy a varied and precisely detailed lexis in the depiction of scenes and moods (often contrasting with slackness in other narrative effects), and it is in this visual, concrete aspect that Riquer's prose shows its most individual and creative stamp. It is, of course, the area where the competence of the writer converges with that of the illustrator and painter. On the one hand, the usual picturesque and pictorial idiom of *costumisme*—the narrative unit conceived as *quadre* (picture) or *estampa* (print) made up of verbal 'brush-strokes'—is fully called into play. *El Manco*, *La vetlla de Nadal* (Christmas Night), *L'Isidro* and *Lo llop* (The Wolf), for example, are readily interpreted as verbal equivalents of genre painting. In closer focus, one is aware of a tight correlation between careful observation, with the arrangement of detail in the precision of visual effect, and many of the accompanying drawings, as in this description of a swallow (*L'Oreneta*):

Son cosset prim, bufó, ben estiradet, ab la cua d'estisora y el ventre blanc, furgant dintre per netejar-lo de les runes que l vent de la tardor y els freds de l'hivern hi havien arremolinat, fent caure engrunes y fulles seques sobre les lloses del portal.

(Its trim little body, pretty and pert, with its scissor-tail and white breast, poking away inside [the nest] to clear it of the odds and ends swirled in by the autumn wind and winter cold, dropping bits and dry leaves down on to the flagstones in the gateway.)

Later, when the bird is injured, the emotional tone is heightened by the combination of visual and tactile sensation:



Son tremolor es va calmar a poc a poc, girava y regirava ls ulls, obrint-los y tancant-los impregnats de sang, badant el bec, d'on s'escapava una goteta vermella, aquietant-se, immovilisant-se, fins a quedar tant fluixa que semblava que no tingués ossos.

(It gradually ceased trembling, its blood-filled eyes turned round and round, opening and closing, its beak gaped open and from it there escaped a tiny red drop; then it became calmer and still, until it felt so soft that it seemed to have no bones.)

The writer is indeed capable of communicating some very delicate, subtle effects of perception and sensation, as in this passage from *La Gavia* (The Cage) where, in the blurred vision of drowsy observation, the subjective (mental, suggestive) and the objective (connotative) function of the words flow finely into each other:

La polcina de plata del raig de sol que hi entrava fins al cap de la cambra m'endormisquejava suaument ab una ausencia de pensaments y idees que no m deixava donar compte sinó de lo que ma retina comunicava a mon cervell. M'ensopia ab un benestar indefinible, y closes les parpelles, d'un vermell transparent, veyia canbiants de colors rojos y verds, que passaven al negre quan donava caparades.

Les mosques voleyaven dins del raig d'or descrivint angok aguts. Los ulls, ab un esforç de celles, se m'obrien per tomar-sem a cloure a poc a poc, fixant-me en l'ombra que reproduïa per terra l reixat engrandit y en los esbatiments que projectaven los aucells dibuixant siluetes fantàstiques.

Una abella pegava cops de cap per les parets y rondinava. El cervell, enterbolit per la calor, sentia la meua respiració afanyosa, y sabia lo que passava al voltant meu tant bé com ab los ulls oberts.

(The silvery haze of the sunbeam, shining in to the back of the room, lulled me gently with an absence of thoughts and ideas which made me unaware of anything except what my retina transmitted to my brain. I was drowsing in an indefinable sense of

well-being and, with my eyelids drooping, through a transparent redness, I saw a shifting pattern of reds and greens, turning to black as my head nodded.

In the golden beam the movement of flies described sharp angles. My eyes, with an effort to raise my brow, opened only to close slowly again as I gazed at the shadow formed on the ground by the enlarged bars of the cage and at the fluttering projected in fantastic silhouettes by the birds.

A bee was bumping against the wall and humming. My brain, dulled by the heat, could hear my urgent breathing, and I could tell what was going on around me as well as if my eyes were open.)

The spell here is broken by thought of the narrator's ailing mother, whereupon the atmosphere and verbal texture of the piece descend immediately to an altogether triter level.

The instance is one which brings into sharp focus both the virtues and the limitations of *Quan jo era noi*. There is Riquer's profound appreciation of the natural world—the wooded landscape, the birds and animals associated with his own primitive self—communicated with a sense of mysterious beauty, in moments when 'beauty' itself is convincingly felt to be a function of the artist's intimate sensibility, and of his creative effort to capture that ineffable relationship. The motto enshrined in a symbolic drawing on the title page—'Cullir lo es matarlo' (To pluck the flower is to kill it)—announces the aesthetic dilemma. It indicates, too, how certain tendencies of Riquer's imagination, that symbolist and Pre-Raphaelite influences would reinforce, were inherent in his temperament and personal vision. There is much in *Quan jo era noi* that recalls the nature poetry of Riquer's companion Apel·les Mestres whose 'naturalism' was praised by a contemporary reviewer because it stopped well short of the brink of 'ugliness'. This is to be interpreted as the abyss of Decadent experience, a domain which is timorously glimpsed then curtailed off in *Antonieta* and *Com se'n van* from *Quan jo era noi*. The

consequence is that pervading fayness which dominates throughout. If on occasions, as in the examples briefly discussed, Riquer's writing transcends banality it is in details of perception that are products of the artist's eye



expressed with a suggestiveness of language beyond the capacity of the artist's hand.

Seen in perspective, *Quanjo era noi* stands as a literary debut that looks both backwards and forwards, crossed with tensions that are closely related to the author's temperament and to the cultural circumstances of the work's production. Almost as if a necessary stage of literary initiation had been undergone and a direction established, Riquer in his next work would cut loose from many of the bonds tying him to naive literary models (which themselves emphasised a conventional cast of mind), and would intensify the dimension of his writing which opened decisively upon a more refined aestheticism in the form of symbolist prose-poetry. The development occurred at a moment (1897-1899) when the artist's creative élan and confidence were at their height, coinciding with the great turn-of-the-century peak in *modernista* exuberance.



Crisantemes (Chrysanthemums), published in 1899, takes the form of 34 prose-poems introduced by a quotation from Barrés ('*L'esprit souffle où il veut, nul ne sait d'où il vient, où il va*'), and by an unnumbered poem-prologue where we encounter again the spirit and even the vocabulary of Riquer's earlier presentation of *Quanjo era noi*. The 'dreams or fantasies... childhood memories reworked in fancy by the grown man' become now 'dreams or fantasies, fables or descriptions, strains of sentiment or of nostalgia'.

However, if the motivation of writing and the underlying artistic function remain the same, the form of *Crisantemes* is markedly different from and considerably more *modern* than that of *Quanjo era noi*. What we have is a conscious and concerted exercise in prose-poetry as the mode was configured by the aesthetics of literary Symbolism, a form which in Catalonia had been previously essayed only by Santiago Rusiñol in *Oracions* (1897) and *Els caminants de la terra* (1898). The poem in prose, which acquired major significance in *fin-de-siècle* French literature, sprang from a revolt against the perceived 'tyrannies' of conventional poetic form that might prevent the poet from creating his own personal voice. It corresponds to that very pronounced current of individualism which Catalan *Modernisme* took from French Symbolism, at least as one of its principal sources. The virtually simultaneous appearance, then, of three concentrated

collections in this mode of writing (Rusiñol's works as mentioned, *Crisantemes* itself, and Adrià Gual's *Llibre d'hores*, also published in 1899), just upon the turn of the century, clearly indicates the impact of the fashion and its relevance to this specific phase of literary evolution in Catalonia.

Indeed, the prose-poem in symbolist guise corresponded particularly closely to the objective defined by Raimon Casellas as 'intensity of sentiment and of technique'. Interestingly, the latter formula was coined in connection with narrative, but it applied equally across the range of production within the *modernista* programme of cultural renewal. The new, cross-generic form of prose-poetry represented a means of condensing the pure essentials of artistic emotion, understood as the highest and most transcendental of values. For it is precisely this quality of condensation and sublimation—literature's 'purest concentrate' as Huysmans saw it—that characterises the form within its diverse possibilities of development. In fact a distinction must be made here, in the observation that the type of prose-poem adopted by the Catalan authors is not the seemingly random 'illumination' inspired by Rimbaud or Mallarmé, but rather the formal prose-poem which, with an overtly musical cast, obeys and articulates a conscious effort of artistic organisation. The analogy (recalling Pater's dictum about Art aspiring to the condition of Music) helps to understand a basic difference of function between two aesthetic attitudes, corresponding to two opposing metaphysical outlooks. While the poetic prose of the 'illumination' springs from a rejection of the settled order of things, from the effort to discover an alternative 'order' (or to create it through the alchemy of words), the 'artistic' prose-poem, on the other hand, reposes on a feeling of universal harmony and on a desire to participate in it. It is this latter philosophy that unites *Oracions*, *Llibre d'hores* and *Crisantemes*, within a broader cultural enterprise: the cognate urge to heighten personal expressiveness merges with a movement to test the limits of the common literary language.

In every sense, then, *Crisantemes* represents a significant aesthetic advance with respect to Riquer's earlier prose. The narrative pretence or 'pretexts' of *Quan jo era noi* are now reduced to barely residual emblems: shreds of fable or exotic legended, parable, strain of folk-song or fairy tale. The evocation of mood, elevated to the category of religious transport, operates now through memory and imagination virtually freed of the constraints of anecdote. In this

process there occurs, naturally, the final pruning out of those antiquated literary models—the *costumisme* of childhood and idealised setting, realist descriptivism—which are a kind of ballast in *Quan jo era noy*.

Chronology, temporal development and precise historical reference are eliminated from *Crisantemes*; geography all but disappears. Each poem exists as a momentary revelation, as a self-contained and self-sufficient world closed in upon itself. The individual poem constitutes a discrete unit of aesthetic concentration, a synthesised atomic whole, where time is either absent or eternal. This tension, however, between existence *in time* and the timelessness of art, the idea of the eternal present, inspired particularly by musical analogies, led the symbolist poets, and with them Riquer, to use procedures deriving from versification in order to control the *tempo* of the prose, to impose form and structure through rhythm.

The symbiosis prose-poetry-music is clearly a function of the breakdown of generic categories, in the pursuit of stylistic renewal, so characteristic of *fin-de-siècle* creativity. The essential strategy, in imbuing prose-composition with the rhythm and sonority of music, is through repetition of diverse sorts. Thus in *Crisantemes* the echoing of single words or phrases is one of the most consistent stylistic devices. A good example can be seen in poem VII, where repetition of the 'poppies and white daisies' motif is designed to have a haunting effect, worked into a verbal equivalent of a favourite image from Riquer's graphic work of the period, that of flowing female hair merging into widening ripples on water. As here, swirling and intertwined patterns are deliberately evoked, notably in IV, XIII, XVI, xvii, xxiii, etc.

Similar results are achieved elsewhere and overlaid with explicitly musical elements (repetition of the familiar), in the form of strains from popular folk-songs: XXIV glosses *Plou, fa sol/les bruxes se pentinan/plou i fa sol/les bruxes portandol*, while XXX makes a reprise with *La lluna, la bruna, vestida de dol, son pare la crida, sa mare la vol*. Beyond simple repetition we find delicate parallelisms of construction: in IX it is sensuous mystery evoked through the interplay of questioning and oneiric fantasy centred on floral patterns:

iNo sabs ahont condueix la via d'aromers y llorers roses?... Apartat de la via sembrada d'aromers y llorers... què'ls ulls de Pan brillan entre'lfullatge.

(Do you not know whither leads the acacia and pink laurel bordered path?... Leave the path sown with acacias and laurels... for Pan's eyes gleam amid the foliage),

While in XXI it is the obsessively echoing repetition of the interrogative:

Dígam, pàlida nit ¿perquè en l'espai se prepara ta vinguda ab reflexos d'incendi...?,

building to the climax,

¿Perquè dels cims més alts pujan girells de boyres, com si en la fosca, terra y cel s'haguessin juntat en suprema abraçada.

(Tell me, pale night, why in the expanse your coming is prepared with blazing reflections?... Why do whisps of mist rise *from* the highest peaks, as though, in the dusk, earth and sky had joined in a supreme embrace?)

Frequently the pattern is developed in three unfolding stages, in a manner established in the opening piece: *Somnis ò fantasíes... Somniadores i fantasyaíres, evolucions d'un cervell... Aplech de flors gayre be tristes...*

Cyclical structure, so appropriate a correlative of timelessness, of eternal return, and thus so favoured by the Symbolists, is likewise recurrent in Riquer who uses it to make the poetic idea coil in upon itself, shaping the literary form to the sense of the inwards imaginative spiral. Pieces IX, X and xviii exploit this technique to the full, xviii, which is particularly opulent in language-texture, deploys also the mirror-image effect:

'Oh, llocs divins d'Arcadia, prats hont floreix l'eterna primavera, ... Oh, prats florits! Oh, llocs divins d'Arcadia!'

(Oh, divine places in Arcadia, meadows where Spring flowers eternal... Oh, flowering meadows! Oh, divine places in Arcadia!)

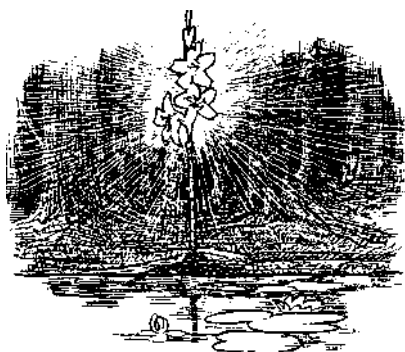
This cyclical mirrored form within the individual piece recurs in the broader pattern of the collection as a whole. Just as in the example quoted above, where direct repetition is avoided, so on the broader level Riquer introduces minor modification to the first element so as not to fall into cold automation or facile symmetry. The first two poems in the collection, I (on the theme of rainfall, fertility and life), and II (crepuscular melancholy, evanescent visions evoked through mood and memory), are picked up cross-wise by XXXII and xxxiii (with the themes of night-scape contemplation and

fading strains of love-notes in poetry) and by the final piece xxxiv which, through floral imagery, refers back to II but which also, for further entwinement of the coda-effect, re-glosses the quotation from Barrés. The whole collection is thus turned in upon itself—in a sort of verbal equivalent of Art Nouveau's favourite swirling effect—through contemplation of (and implied definition of) its own status as poetic creation.

Within this frozen time-frame of the collection, we find themes and motifs recurring between the separate compositions, further strengthening the cyclical organisation. A significant pattern of meaning emerges from various resonances of the solitary traveller's panic fear and the fantastic chimerae aroused by dark woodland scenes, 'the expansive cathedral where mystery flitters' (xxviii), where 'Pan's eyes gleam amid the foliage' (ix), among 'strange visions... memories or presentment of other lives' in 'nights whose blackness invades all one's being, drowning the spirit in the darkness of unconsciousness' (xxiv). It becomes clear that these insights and imaginative visions represent the essential movement of aesthetic emotions as an elevated mode of perception—from the mystery of individual consciousness outwards, as the poem-prologue stresses—and that poetic expression, as a mode of access to the great mysteries, is the subject itself of the writing. This suggestion is reinforced by frequent recurrence of themes of song, in the form of folk-song or the natural song of the nightingale, the wind or the streams, hallowed images of poetic communion with creation in the religion of Art. This romantic legacy, mystically recharged by symbolist values, is what so fully imbues the spirit of *Crisantemes*.

It is a spirit which can only be appreciated (however necessary it might be to do this from a perspective of historical detachment) in terms of confrontation with Absolutes as the aesthetic movement conceived them. Where *Quan jo era noy* pointed towards a totally subjective version of Nature and the Universe, the shift is consummated in *Crisantemes*. Nature and the Universe are now the subjects of a poetic vision which knows no boundary between the inner subjective self and external reality. The circuit of idealism is closed. The aesthetic world of *Crisantemes* wells out of the opening declaration that the book's contents are 'all that lives within the self avid to take external form'. Thus, as wilfully and consistently as any French symbolist poet writing in the late 1890s, Riquer converts 'landscape' into 'inscape'. The 'pathetic fallacy', now elevated to absolute

mystical status, alludes to the ineffable through a symbolic code of universal images. The poet intuitively equates mood and vision experienced in darkness or, more especially, in the half-light of dawn and nightfall, when 'nothing is real'. The evanescent state of mind is 'equated' with these privileged moments when the material world is softened to become as though *itself* sentient. The haunting suggestions of *of capvespre* (twilight), day fading into night, correspond to a spiritualisation of matter and of outline; synaesthesia floods into the sensation of a mysterious, ineffable spirit-world, 'fading visions like notes of an unknown song... everything hums a soft and muffled tune... a legend of gallant knights with golden locks' all perceived through an 'infinite tenderness... the bitter-sweet recall of a distant kiss, undefinable and lost in the impenetrable depths of blurred memories' (II). The illustration (like which other comparable examples abound) is to us now perhaps less indicative of sensitivity earnestly cultivated than of the tendency to slip into the facile sentimentality and lushness that quickly took over, and disqualified, this whole line of experiment and expression. Riquer, though, with his contemporaries, deserves at least to have his intentions understood in their context. The stock iconography can be re-viewed and can have some of its original force restored if we look sympathetically at the imaginative source out of which eventual cliché arose.



A good illustration can be poem X, devoted to one of the most typical of symbolist-decadent images, the white lily as symbol of purity and redemption. Again, as the visual image shades into spiritual associations, the writing becomes suffused with a whole mood of immanence or sublimation of the material world. The text

itself, here as throughout the collection, displays an equivalent of the delicate craftsmanship and retains some of the freshness more easily appreciated still in the accompanying illustration and decoration. The two effects are, of course, designed to be synaesthetically unified. Even so, we can say that what rescues the words from banality are the well-pitched cyclical movement, the forceful antithesis—between the purity of the lily and the vileness of its woodland-swamp surroundings—and the ingenuity of the comparison with 'altarpiece virgins'.

This last detail identifies the rather conventional use of personification as a frequent device in *Crisantemes* for evoking the spiritual halo of Nature: the storm 'intones the *De profundis* in the deserted church' (xxv), the woods weep (xxviii) while in xxx twilight speaks to a moon dressed in mourning and who, according to the folksong, is courted by the dawn.

Just as the terms of the outer and the inner worlds are merged in the vision of *Crisantemes*, in the spiritualisation of the physical, so inversely is the indissoluble union expressed in material equivalences given to the spiritual dimension, as in xxxiii, for example, where 'daydreams... like the vapour-clouds of a mystical censer poured out from within my being'. Synaesthesia was the medium developed in Symbolism for this function of the poetic sensibility, and Riquer delights in exploring the multiple inflections offered. In viii a solitary wild-flower on a rock at the ocean's edge 'sees only spreading before it the endless Ocean of the inconsolable soul', with this figurative reprise of the word that enforces the spiritual aura of the vision and the symbolism of the flower as the poet's soul in solitary transport before the 'incomparable poem of life'. A high point in this totally subjective communion of the poetic emotion and the world of Nature comes in xxvii where Riquer reworks the same drowsy floating on the edge of conscious perception that we commented on earlier in 'The Cage' from *Quan jo era noi*:

Lulled by the scent of violets, the fresh draught from the cress-laden brook could not stir me; my eye-lids slowly closed; a contemplative and conscious drowsiness, a blissful calm, a complete distancing from the external being marked by my body on the patch of grass, prevented me from commanding the will to rise, and I felt that I was alone on the earth, and that what strength I had was wandering afar, searching out perfumes like the bees, entranced by some indefinable dream.

The basic movement, which we have already identified with a refined version of the pathetic fallacy, is one which discovers in the spectacle of Nature and in external phenomena equivalences of fleeting feelings and states of mind. A certain code of correspondence, though, was as it were programmed into the poetics appropriated by Riquer. There is a sort of symbolist conditioned reflex in his insistence, for example, on night-time as evocation of sadness, death and loss of the beloved in XIX ('It is always night in the heart where hope is dead') and xx where an 'intense and impenetrable darkness... beats down upon the soul'; and likewise, also in XX, in the association of dead leaves with despair, 'the flurry of dead leaves swirled along by the wind, now rotting in the water'.

This last observation highlights the essential *artificiality* of such writing, where artistic emotion and the artifice which precariously suggests it are elevated to pseudo-religious category. The poet's intentions are thus defined, and the term 'artificial' must be applied cautiously as a critical valuation. Even so, while Riquer in *Crisantemes* supersedes some of the literary anachronism of *Quan jo era noy*, it is also true that the new book lacks the spontaneity, innocence and freshness of the first. The price to be paid was probably inevitable. Riquer, the self-conscious and cultivated artist, who adopts the posture, so fashionable in the cultural climate of his day, of subordinating life to art, here runs into the contradiction of excessive reliance on the currency value of those cultural references that feed his imagination. This is particularly apparent in the later collections of poetry, but already in *Crisantemes* the mannerisms are becoming fixed. As well as the tendency to facile decorativism in the deployment of so many motifs and clichés from the 'ready-made' department of Symbolism, there is also the tendency towards cultural pastiche (likewise shared by many of his contemporaries). The book's diffuse eroticism is shot through with reminiscences of classical Greek culture; Pan, Daphnis and Chloë, and Venus being the favourite mythical allusions. Similarly, the Middle Ages, evoked through a Pre-Raphaelite literary and pictorial lens, are another facet of the mythology of this culture-based fantasy world. Out of the Parnasse and fin-de-siècle spiritualism Riquer also extracts a fashionable strain of Orientalism, invoking the ancient Indian religions with symbolic references to Indra, the land of eternal repose (xxix), to the sacred lotus of the Apsaras (xxi) or to the literary topos of the Virgins of Carthage, worshippers of the pale Goddess Thanit, the moon (XXX).

Such 'literariness', which endows the writing with the equivalent preciousness of the exquisite art-object but which inclines towards mere affectation, is redeemed, nevertheless, through being matched and balanced by other notes which are more convincingly internalised and *personal* to Riquer. In particular, recurrent allusions to song, and more specifically to Catalan folk-song, have a deep and true resonance. On the one hand they are attuned, historically, to patriotic myths and themes of *Volkgeist* in the quest for collective identity, central concerns in *Modernisme's* ideological and political ferment. This is virtually explicit in xiii, where the talismanic flute discovered by a shepherd evokes 'l'esperit de pàtria', the homeland spirit and the last of the fairies. On the other hand also, strains of these same folksongs are expressive of the purest poetic instinct and of deeply intimate longings. In n and in xii the 'unknown song' and the 'forgotten song' spontaneously suggest themes of fusion, a longed-for spiritual union, a desire for communion with the mysteries of the spirit-world, culminating in the reprise of xxxiv, where themes of poetry and divine inspiration merge in the impotent nostalgia of the poet's struggle to express the ineffable.



Some critics have loosely categorised *Cristantemes* as a work of Decadence while others have insisted strongly on this affiliation. Both visions require some clarification, especially the latter which appears to focus too exclusively on the title of the collection at the same time as it over-emphasises the theme of Death in the writing itself. It is to be remarked in the first place that chrysanthemums are as much a decorative element of Art Nouveau and the *japoniste* style as they are a decadentist emblem. Moreover the theme of Death in *Crisantemes* is more ambiguous than the Decadent label would imply: morbidity and the *delectatio morosa* are in tension with other forces and moods throughout the book, and the tone which ultimately prevails is one of transcendence. This needs to be understood in relation to the basic conflict between Decadentism and Vitalism that was a principal dynamo of cultural theorisation and productivity in Catalonia over the turn of the century. Indeed, the issues involved here, and the ultimate resolution of the tension in favour of vitalist tendencies, where what shaped and directed the art and ideology of *Modernisme* in its final phase, as the work of Marfany

and Castellanos has convincingly demonstrated. In the preceding period just upon the turn of the century, the moment to which *Crisantemes* belongs, the two forces remained in more equal contention, their interplay was itself a focus of creative energy, and, furthermore, as Castellanos observes, the vitalist and the decadentist mode are often difficult to separate as each tended to use the same imagery and vocabulary.

It is precisely in this context and in these terms that *Crisantemes* must be interpreted. Death and morbidity certainly figure in Riquer's thematic palette (being central in certain pieces: IX, XX, xxvi), and we recognise the characteristic decadent impulse to peer into the abyss, to speculate at this the most extreme limit of consciousness. But neither is Death triumphant nor is decadent languour the prevalent mood. On the contrary, what is more emphasised is the struggle itself, the tensions —ambiguous, contradictory, paradoxical—, between Life and Death. Poem XXVI is absolutely paradigmatic in this sense, for it plays precisely upon the essential interdependence of the two: when the end of Death is decreed the populace become bored with 'life without end', frustrated that there can be no prospect of 'new life', and end up praying for Death to be restored; just as there can be no Death without previous Life so a kind of obverse is demonstrated in this telling little parable.

A similar ambiguity or balance of forces is encountered too in the key poem XII where the familiar decadentist motif of nostalgia for lost youth and for pure ideals that have crumbled is turned into the powerful affirmation that 'lo recordar és viure', to remember is to live. It is in this same spirit that the poet resolutely rejects the charms of the 'lascivious bacchante, obscene courtesane, barren decadent woman of the *fin de siècle*' (XXII). The use of the term 'decadent' (its only occurrence in the volume) and the posture towards the 'living image of refined vice' are both clearly deliberate, set also firmly within the wider cultural debate mentioned above. The rejection of the bacchante derives on the one hand from the strong Catholicism that Riquer never abandoned, but it can also be felt that there is at work an equally strong impulse coming less from moral scruples than from a vital, or vitalist, imperative: 'the breast, which in other women is a fount of life, in her is a source of death'. And beyond this is that pseudo-religious or mystical urge to transcend death, to contact the 'beyond' in states of mind or

inspiration through which the poet can melt into the Creation.

It is in this sense that Riquer's Catholicism, in the opulent version cultivated by a branch *offin-de-siècle* aestheticism, merges with the more secular, culture-based mysticism in a mix which characterises the writer's individual response to contemporary stimuli, and his individual literary voice. His Vitalism is inseparable *from* the mystical cult of Nature and of Beauty, in terms which are neither purely humanist nor which exclude the Christian deity. The interplay of these feelings is at the centre of the key imagery in *Crisantemes*. In literary terms one can talk of a sensibility which is as close to the sort of Pantheism expressed in the nature poetry of Joan Maragall as it is to Baudelaire's searching 'correspondences'. This is summed up in the telling section of xxviii, where Riquer's favourite woodland motif strikes the chord in which all these notes are discernible: 'The forest, that expansive cathedral in which mystery flutters, raises its voice in a plaintive chord as though of a distant organ'.

Crisantemes stands, then, as one of the most remarkable cases of fully-fledged Symbolist prose-poetry within Catalan *Modernisme*. In the light of our discussion it is clearly insufficient to classify the text as an exercise in Pre-Raphaelite writing, on the basis of the occasional 'Rossettian' vignette, the stylised medievalism or the preference for certain images like swans, fountains, the lily and the water-lily, etc. The point is that this is an iconography and idiom common to the whole of European Symbolism, and it is in this much wider category that *Crisantemes* must be viewed. If a single direct influence is to be ascribed then it is surely that of French Symbolism, as the epigraph from Barrés announces, and as is expressed in the work's general consonance with the spirit of Baudelaire's '*La modernité, c'est le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent, la moitié de l'art, dont l'autre moitié est l'éternel et l'immuable*'.

The particular significance of *Crisantemes*, though, is centred on the extent to which Riquer makes his own and incorporates into the repertoire of Catalan the expressive possibilities and the sensibility embodied in the Symbolist enterprise. Evidence of this is to be found, on the broadest level, in the way in which so many motifs and images from *Cristantemes* make their way subsequently into that prolific flowering of *modernista* writing that surged up in the first decade of the new century. On the one hand, 'Pan's eyes gleaming amid the foliage' (ix) signals the mood of Víctor Català's *Solitud* and the wave

of anti-idyllic ruralism climaxing in that novel, while on another plane the theme of XV, where the poet's distraction in fantasy is confronted with human tragedy, brings to the surface a contradiction inherent in underlying bearings of *Modernisme* and makes explicit the conclusion to which so much *modernista* writing tends: 'from limitless space, the poet was brought back down to earth, to the brutal earth of a reality which shatters illusion'. These and numerous other 'intertextual' reverberations indicate the relevance of *Crisantemes* to its cultural moment and to the whole process of literary continuity. On the level of personal expression, moreover, *Crisantemes* is representative also insofar as it bodies forth the aestheticism and art-fetichism which pervaded *modernista* creativity. At the heart of the collection lies that urge to fix the fleeting relationship between the sensitive imagination and the mystery of Nature, to transcribe the privileged moment in which true insight and true self-fulfilment are enshrined, when inspired poetic utterance becomes spiritual plenitude, in the process which the final piece describes:

L'esprit souffle où il veut, nul ne sait d'où il vient, ou il va: beauty imposes itself, and the poet lost in the cool shade of the woodland branches, in his solitude, free from imprisoning gazes, deep in the forest and far from anyone to hear him, possessed by the feverish urge to outpour his feelings, with an ample gesture and loving voice breaks forth in the stanza which tremulously springs out to his lips...

Behind the exaggerated posture and rhetoric there lies a powerful and engaging idealism whose historical impact was, and remains, conspicuous. In purely literary terms we perceive in this poem XXXIV a kind of personal poetics containing profound affinities with Maragall's influential theory of the Living Word. The question of influence is less important here than the affinities themselves and their implications. We see Riquer as participating fully in the total, organic process of a literary movement in the fullest sense of word.

It is clear from the foregoing that it is as poetry rather than as narrative that *Crisantemes* must be described, and moreover that it is to the central tradition of *modernista* poetry that the affiliation relates. Just as for Maragall and for the phase of writing that his influence inspired, spontaneity, the truthfulness of the poet to his own sensibility, is the paramount value, so for Riquer the same quest is exalted. In the opening preface he presents a metaphor of a

'murmuring spout of the purest water' as quintessence of poetry, the source whose perfume, clarity, immediacy and primal authenticity the poet would imitate in his own outpourings. Emblems of poetry, then, open and close *Crisantemes*, and the language of the collection is marked throughout with a texture whose rhythms and deliberate musicality disclose a sort of latent prosody. Complementing the repetitions and parallelisms already mentioned, we detect some emergent metrical patterns which bear, as one contemporary critic immediately observed, a distinct preference for the hendecasyllable. Versification is, as it were, embedded in the very fabric of *Crisantemes* and the work itself, as a stage in a personal literary evolution, might be seen to point towards a transition into verse proper.

Indeed, with a certain natural logic, Riquer returned to verse writing, the Symbolist experience now assimilated, with the publication in 1902 of *Anyorances* (Nostalgic Reminiscences). In one sense this can be seen as a progressive development, the necessary step on beyond the limits of poetic prose reached in *Crisantemes*. In another sense, however, and seen in full perspective, the movement was more regressive than 'modernising'. The return to poetry, as we shall see, entailed a return to tradition, to formal stereotype and the adaptation of certain Classicism, all of which revealed the limitations of Riquer's literary capacity. From the perspective of *Anyorances* and the ensuing collection of sonnets (*Aplech de Sonets*) indeed, it can be seen that with *Crisantemes* Riquer had reached the peak of his own creative potential in literature and the point of his greatest relevance to the wider cultural scene. By the time a comparable peak of expressiveness and personal authenticity was regained, now in verse, with the ambitious *Poema del Bosch* published in 1910, the relevance was being severely placed in question.



ALEXANDRE DE RIOUER

CRISANTEMES



A. VERDAGUER
RAMBLA DEL MIG
BARCELONA



POEMA D'AMOR

HISTORIA D'UNA

VIDA



1903

CHAPTER IV

RIQUER THE POET

Riquer lost his wife, Dolors Palau (Lolita), in the same year that *Crisantemes* was published. The tragedy transformed his life and his inspiration as a writer. Personal factors merged with latent directions in his literary production up to this point to make him now a poet devoted essentially to evoking the presence of the lost beloved, in formal poetry where melancholia and distress are mingled with the hope of being reunited with her in the after-life, in a transcendental 'otherworldly' love.

In discussing the prose works of Riquer we have found it necessary to qualify the extent of his direct affinities with Pre-Raphaelite models. At this point, however, the affiliation can be seen to be real, both thematically and in terms of specific formal influence. The inspiration for the new cycle of literary production was the work of the English poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti, especially *The Blessed Damsel*, at only one remove from a common source in the poetry of the venerated Dante Alighieri. In our Chapter II we observed how, at the time of composing *Anyorances*, Riquer and Manuel de Montoliu (the translator of *La Vita Nuova* into Catalan) were holding readings and commentaries on *The Divine Comedy* in the former's studio. These circumstances reverberate in the dedication of *Anyorances* to 'the late lamented wife...' and in the opening epigraph taken from stanza xxxiii of the *Vita Nuova*.

Riquer's collection comprises an introductory sonnet and 62 poems distinguished by an extraordinary variety of verse-form and rhythmical pattern. This formal complexity, the details of which need not concern us here, is a primary indication of the meticulous seriousness with which Riquer approached the poetic craft, with something of the draftsman's attention to detail: properties which could and did, however, impede flow and the spontaneous sincerity



which several poems claim as their moving force. Thematically, as Riquer's modern commentators have stressed, these poems show obvious parallels with the poetry of Rossetti, that 'modern, luminous Dante' as Riquer himself later called him. For McCarthy *'Anyorances'* explores the possibility of a Rossettian transcendental love, an earthly love wearing a spiritual halo'. Castellanos, on the other hand, misses the predominant sensuality and morbidity of the English poet, considering that Riquer takes the emotional clichés of Pre-Raphaelism and returns them to their origins in the medieval spirituality of Dante Alighieri. The point is surely, though, that the Catalan poet was drinking from dual, intercommunicating sources. The Pre-Raphaelite example, even if only part-assimilated, was clearly a direct stimulus to Riquer, as several literal echoes of Rossetti in *Anyorances* confirm. His description of his beloved, for example:

*per l'ampla roba de dalt baix oberta
 ofrena d'armonia
 com la que fa la flor y a Deu envia
 ingènuament oferta. (Poem XXXVIII)*

(... her ample dress, opened from top to bottom, offering of harmony like that made by the flower and sent to God, ingenuously offered.)

clearly recalls the stanza from *The Blessed Damozel*:

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem
 No wrought flowers did adorn,
 But a white rose of Mary's gift,
 For service meetly worn.

In a short story, 'The King of the Poplars', written at the same time as *Anyorances*, Riquer evoked a similar vision with an explicit mingling of his two literary sources, the 'Blessed Damozel' and the *Beata Beatrix* of Dante. Rossetti it was, though, who supplied most fuel to Riquer's visual imagination. The common desire to relive earthly love in the after-life is expressed in the image, from *The Blessed Damozel*, of the poet and his beloved rising one day

... hand in hand,
 To him round whom all souls
 Kneel...

echoing in Riquer's vision of being led by his beatified love

*Fins al trono del Altíssim
me farà de guia sant
y allí, una llàgrima seva
redimirà mos pecats.* (Poem VI)

(To the throne of the Almighty, leading me as a holy guide, where a tear will redeem my sins.)

Nonetheless, *Anyorances* is to be read as something more than a superficial imitation of certain aspects of Rossetti's poetry. The collection was born out of tragedy, and out of the urge to find solace and salvation through writing. The movement which transforms distress into lyric expression creates a note of intense feeling, through all the artifice and decoration, as was recognised by none less than Maragall, the main flag-bearer of emotional and expressive spontaneity in poetry. Maragall's review of *Anyorances*, alluding to the presence of Dante, insisted on the simplicity and authenticity of certain poems which he saw as embodying his own particular concept of 'pure poetry':

Occasionally the literary apparel is torn by the vivacious memory of conjugal happiness, by the sudden sharpening of pain, by a vision, almost a momentary hallucination, and then the palpitation swells forth in the purest nakedness of poetry... The tenderness of the wonderfully living vision interrupts the tears: that is real poetry.



POESIES PER
At. Riquer

Maragall quotes various instances of the 'pure' poetic moments he found in *Anyorances*, all of which highlight the ultimate, confessional tone of the collection, like this one evoking memory and solitude in the empty home:

El meu tremolor no'l sents?

Dintre l'ample menjador

Fins esbatego de dents,

La nit fa por,

No hi ha ningú

Ypenso en tu. (Poem xxv)

(Do you not hear me tremble? In the spacious dining room I cannot stop my teeth from chattering. The night is fearsome. There is no one here and I am thinking of you.)

Certainly, the qualities admired by Maragall are those which echo not only the Pre-Raphaelite imagination but also, more generally, symbolist characteristics, especially the confluence of mysticism and sensuality. The atmosphere, heavily laden with perfumes of incense and myrrh and bathed in celestial music, is impregnated with a feeling closely related to the symbolist sensibility and which is expressed preferentially through effects of synaesthesia, as, for example, when Riquer envisages the perfect union of the lovers:

fugint ab Ella sense dexarnos may

com una nota armònica que oneja

sospesa en l'ample espay. (Poem XIX)

(fleeing with her never to be parted, like a harmonious note that ripples hanging in the breadths of space.)

The point is that it is wrong to squeeze the poet Riquer into an exclusively Pre-Raphaelite dress that does not quite fit; his Pre-Raphaelism, like that of other contemporary Catalan writers, simply could not be identical to the original British version. On the one hand, the influence of French Symbolism, as we have remarked here and in connection with the prose, supplied consistent variations on complementary themes. It is true, moreover, that Catalan *modernista* poetry—given the limitations of context and tradition—rarely attains the linguistic refinement or the philosophical depth of the best Pre-Raphaelite poetry in English. Nor should it be a question here of viewing Riquer's poetry purely in comparative terms and in terms of the diverse influences received by Catalan *Modernisme*. The poet's individual circumstances, temperament and voice are considerable

factors, as is also the strength of local influences.

Riquer's Catholicism is strongly felt in *Anyoranses*, conditioning an image of Dolors in which maternity strongly overrides sexuality, placing her in a position quite removed from the sensuous personality of Rossetti's chosen one:

*Es un goig lo mirarte, bella fotografia
ahont de mare'l gesto noblement irradia* (Poem LIV)
(It is a delight to look at you, beautiful photograph in which the
mother's gesture shines forth nobly)

(suggesting, incidentally, an insight into Maragall's admiration for precisely this 'domestic' aspect of the book.) Likewise, the recurrent floral motifs throughout *Anyoranses* are more closely related to the mystical, Marian lyrics of the priest-poet Jacint Verdaguer than to any other literary influence. Castellanos highlights this telling example, in which echoes of Verdaguer's *Flors de Maria* and other poems are unmistakable:

*Perfum de rosa, flor de viola,
poncella vera del roserar,
llàgrima d'alba, sospir que vola;
l'amor que et porto m'ha de matar!* (Poem v)
(Rose perfume, violet flower, true bud of the rose tree, dawn tear,
fleeting sigh; my love for you will surely kill me!)

The most constant note in all Riquer's production, his love of and sensitive eye for Nature, is retained in *Anyoranses*, constituting another facet of his own personal stamp in the poetry. While Nature is here by no means the protagonist—the memory of Dolors is obsessively central—it remains ever present in Riquer's vision, as it was in *Crisantemes*. Here it is the privileged scenario of lost love and happiness, in nostalgic evocations of walks together in the woods, and it is the constant physical reminder of eternity, perpetually reborn through the cycle of the seasons—in stark contrast with the abruptness of bereavement—felt all the more poignantly through the sense of her absence. Thus we encounter again this most personal and distinctive trait of Riquer's production, both as writer and as draftsman, which underwrites his claim to authentic originality, however great the extent of his debt to outside influence. No doubt the writings of Ruskin confirmed the ideas of the Catalan artist in his maturity, and comforted him in his distress, but his feeling for Nature went further back and deeper in his experience than any

reading of the English aesthete; its origins were in the upbringing and in the formation of his personality in the *Paradise Lost* of Bassols, the recreation of which in *Quanjo era noi* contained already the genetic plan of Riquer's creations in words.



Si m'altunya de la terra
endinçant-me en la recort,
vinch a tu, pau de mon cor.
Propet teu, nia fantasia
com un vell que't fret condul,
via en somni y s'extasia
arracant-se al sol.
Vinch al sol de la miqueta,
al caliu de ton sorrís,
y ah l'ànima extasiada
tineb somnis de paradís,
y reviu la primavera
florida de il·lusions:
sento cants de cadenera
y pur orgig de pebons.
A llavors un bàlsam dolç
amassoix lo meu cor,
estrenyo els talls ab amor
xichs y grans al voltant meu.
corqués per un dol llunyà,
els beso y torno a besá'
com si los encàrrrech teu.

Personal circumstances determined the need and the cultural climate supplied the terms and justification for Riquer to develop as a poet. *Anyorances*, as we have seen, for all its shortcomings, represents much more than a passing phase of private self-indulgence. Rather is it a quite mature engagement with poetic convention and expression, showing the profile of a poetic personality capable of further consolidation. This is confirmed by the trajectory of Riquer's subsequent literary production.

Although not published until 1977 (edited by M.A. Cerdà in the commemorative volume *Alexandre de Riquer. L'home, l'artista, el poeta*), the collection *Petons* (Kisses) can with some accuracy be dated 1903. It stands as a sequel to *Anyorances*, in the form of a fully-worked and coherently structured cycle

of poems devoted to the theme of literary recreation of lost love, a theme now strengthened by reinforcement of the traditional and classical framework in which the process is enacted. Some of the engravings done to illustrate this book were shown by Riquer at the 1906 National Fine-Arts Exhibition in Madrid. This detail, as well as helping to date *Petons*, is further indication of the artistic seriousness with which the collection was composed and of the state of relative completeness in which publication was abandoned. (Indeed, corrected proofs of the whole set were discovered by E. Trenc in 1975.)

There are two reasons to explain plausibly why *Petons* was not

published in its day. The first, which supplies even more firmness about the date of composition, is that nine poems from *Petons* appear in the final part (*Un poema d'Amor*) of the longer collection that Riquer published in 1906 (on which work is known to have been virtually completed, though, by 1903). The former work, then, appears to have been a sort of rehearsal for the latter, abandoned when *Poema d'Amor* acquired definitive shape. The other reason for the ostensibly abrupt ditching of *Petons* is that of an apparent embarrassment on the poet's part at the intimate and erotic note in many of the poems. The gradual recovery from immediate grief and also possibly changes occurring in the moral climate of the times, with the beginning of *Noucentisme's* 'conservative backlash', would account for Riquer's sensitivity on this score and for the act of self-censorship that is openly prefigured in one of the poems of *Petons*:

després estriparem los versos ab que cantes

l'interna poesia del Talem nupcial,

Que n'ha defe'l terror de com granen les plantes? (Poem XXIV)

(Afterwards we shall tear up the lines with which you sing the inner poetry of the marriage bed. How is the ground to be blamed for seeds the plants give?)

In its published form *Petons* comprises two parts: a first section of 24 anacreontic lyrics, preceded by an introduction where the poet, in the setting of classical idylls, combines his favourite topics of Nature and the loved one; then a second part of seven poems followed by a concluding sonnet which offers a reprise of the opening poem in a kind of epitaph to the figure of the woman who inspired the whole cycle.

Petons appears thus as a more carefully and coherently structured ensemble than *Anyorances* or even *Crisantemes*. Life and Death are contrasted between the two parts, in the first of which Dolors is celebrated as a living presence, while in the second her death and absence are lamented. The first 24 poems are presided over by the spirit of classicism, each of them being introduced by a translated fragment from Theocritus, Vergil, Anacreon, Sappho or Propertius. These are the poet's authorities for the vitalistic pantheism and the mood of exalted idealism in which experiences are clothed. Similar motifs were visible in *Crisantemes*, but here they are more consistently applied and modulated. In the second part, on the other hand, the inspiration and authority become once again the idealised late Middle Ages incarnate in Dante and in the Petrarch of *In morte di*

Laura, merging with the Pre-Raphaelite version deriving from D.G. Rossetti. The movement from vitalist excitement and optimistic pantheism through to despair is thus given a universal frame of literary reference, representing the opposing but complementary models that fed Riquer's imagination. Metrical patterns are likewise more tightly controlled than in *Anyorances* and a preference for 'classical' forms begins to be seen in *Petons*, with seven sonnets and five *silvas* out of a total 33 poems. The firming of this tendency would occur in the *Aplech de sonets* (1906), Riquer's next published book of poetry, on which he was already working.

One of the remarkable things about *Petons* (and, as suggested, one cause of the author's second thoughts about publication) is the attention paid to the physical basis of idealised erotic experience. What in *Crisantemes* is implied in 'the eyes of Pan gleaming amid the undergrowth' and what in *Anyorances* is insinuated then idealistically sublimated, is here explicitly presented. The erotic nature of the two-some's night walks in the woods puts into the background the purely decorative motifs in these two examples:

*He vist dessota'l bosch il·luminarse
l'esplendor de ton pit;
sota teu han cruixit
coroles y poncells al vinclarse. (Poem V)*

(I have seen under the woodland canopy the splendid brilliance of your breast; flower-heads and buds rustled as they were bent beneath you.)

*S'enfonsa lo teu cos al tou de l'herba
y ta forma es superba
com armonia de bellesa ardida
tota esclatant de vida;
honora als deus y generosa invita:
Salut a l'Afrodita! (Poem VII)*

(Your body sinks into the softness of the grass and your form is as proud and fine as a harmony of blazing beauty all bursting with life; it does honour to the gods and offers a generous invitation: Hail to Aphrodite!)

Twilight—now translated out of and virtually freed of decadent connotations—is the moment when the amorous union is fulfilled, when, as night falls, the body of the beloved assumes a magical aura, a favourite image in several of Riquer's etchings:

*y en claror difusa, transparent, voluptuosa,
ondular veig la curva movedissa y hermosa
de ma Vida qu'espera y vetlla enamorada. (Poem I: xiii)*
(And in the diffuse light, transparent and voluptuous, I see in
sinuous dance the shimmering, beautiful curved form of my Life,
waiting and watching in love.)

The theme of kisses, which occurs in almost every poem of this first part, symbolises the vital plenitude of the amorous union, a physical union which becomes exalted into something divine and eternal:

*y el ferm petó rebut y retornat,
la fogarada ardent que devora
conjunció de l'amada y del amat
ansiosos de besarse,
dues vides qu'esclaten llavi enfora
y vibran al toparse. (Poem I: vii)*



(the firm kiss received and returned, the burning fire which
consumes the joining of lover and beloved in their urge to kiss, two
lives bursting out through the lips and vibrating as they touch.)

These images of fire and of the flame of love, associated with kisses, recall Dante's *fiamma* and Rossetti's reworking of the motif. Even so, that distance between Riquer and the English Pre-Raphaelite which above we noticed in connection with the question of maternity, is still maintained. What we find in *Petons*, though, is now a more sensual concept of motherhood as the bodily fulfilment of a bodily relationship, as in this picture of the child sleeping at the mother's breast:

*Li sonrius engelosida
y l'enclous ab dolsa amor
en ton si qu'esfont de vida,
y l'infant fa la dormida
al compàs que bat ton cor. (Poem I: xx)*

(You smile on him jealously and enwrap him in sweet love at your
breast which is the fount of life, and the child slumbers to the
beating of your heart.)

The second part of *Petons* stands in complete contrast, as we have remarked, to such affirmations of mystical and exuberant vitalism.

The poet now expresses his human suffering as acute misfortune succeeds happiness. The section opens with the stark vision of the motionless corpse:

*Fixa la tinch la darrera
visió de ton cos hermós,
del teu cos tot groch y palit,
fret ab la fret de la mort,
la teva cara marcida
per lo trapàs del dolor. (II: i)*

(Imprinted in my mind is the last vision of your lovely body, your body all yellow and pale, cold with the coldness of death, your face wizened with the last passage through pain.)

When, however, she is subsequently seen as 'sanctified, beautified and ennobled in death' we seem to sense grief and emotion tailing off into triteness and cloying religiosity. *Petons*, despite the allusions to Dante and Rossetti, does not contemplate the possibility of a transcendental love and reunion beyond the grave, and this appears as one of the imaginative weaknesses of the collection, in comparison both with *Anyorances* and the later collection. There is a resulting hollowness or futility, despite the undoubted strength of feeling, in the repeated statements of loss and grief, emphasised in this example in the definitive force of the verbs:

*Los seus petons qu'han mon sense esperança
de que tomin may més!
es lo meu cor glatintse d'anyorança
perquè Ella ja no hi es! (II: vii)*

(Her kisses that have died with no hope of their return! It is my heart aching with longing because she is no longer there!)

Petons, then, stands as a significant stage in Riquer's poetic production, a work which might have achieved viability if its positive features had not been subsumed in the subsequent collection and part of its weakness overcome there.

The three-part collection *Aplech de sonets, Les cullites, Un poema d'Amor* was published in 1906, the last title, dated 1903, being the earliest chronologically. *Un poema d'Amor*, as already suggested, was a sort of culmination of a whole first cycle of Riquer's poetry represented by *Anyorances* and *Petons*. Nine poems from the latter, unpublished collection, five of them sonnets, reappear, reworked, in *Un poema d'Amor*, which is itself divided into three sections: 'Ver

sacrum', 'Midday Sun' and 'Sunset', each introduced by a quotation from Sapho, Vergil and Petrarch respectively. The Life-Death, optimism-pessimism movement of *Petons* is reproduced, but with some refinement and a detectable increase in poetic self-consciousness.

The eight sonnets of '*Ver sacrum*' celebrate springtime, the passing of winter and the onset of new life and Love. In the atmosphere of vital fecundity the loved one appears in a decadent-symbolist guise so favoured in *modernista* iconography, that of the virginal adolescent on the brink of womanhood:

*ta ingènua positura humil, de col·legiala
vestida ab l'esclavina posada per distreure
el jove brotonar de florida primala. (Un poema d'Amor, I)*
(your ingenuous, humble schoolgirl posture, clad in the wrap-around cape to cover the youthful swell of your first flowering.)

As in Riquer's other writing and graphic work, floral imagery has here a central symbolic and decorative role. From the conventional association of flowers with springtime and love, the motif is extended to make the beloved herself 'the flower which captivates my quivering soul' (iv), the half-opening bud which exudes a heady perfume, the 'spring-like perfume' (vii) that is her whole being.

From this unoriginal nexus of ideas (Spring, Life, Love) centred on the fay sensuality of the burgeoning adolescent figure, as sterile in its emotional effect as the most facile of Art Nouveau female forms, we pass in 'Midday Sun' to summertime plenitude of physical and spiritual love, to the ecstasy of emotional union in oneness with Nature. The emotion here seems less stereotyped, an impression explained perhaps by the fact that eight of the nine poems salvaged from *Petons* are concentrated in this section (comprising 20 sonnets in all), retaining thus a link with Riquer's original inspiration and movement of feeling. The theme of kissing, now embellished and worked into the bucolic setting that the Vergilian epigraph announces, harks back now even further to intimate childhood memories of Bassols:

*Allí, en l'intimitat d'un bell boscatge,
vora la llar del foc d'antich usatge,
madona mia, m'hi voldràs seguir? (Un poema d'Amor, x)*
(Thither, in the intimacy of a lovely glade, by the ancestral fireside,
madonna of mine, will you follow me?)

This section likewise, despite obvious differences of literary posture,

contains echoes from back beyond *Petons*, as in this reminiscence of the 'last fairy' of *Crisantemes*, identified now with the beloved:

*Entre les flors reposa quieta, destrenada;
el bosch ha retrobat a sa perduda fada.* (xiii)
(Among the flowers she rests in tranquil repose, her hair unfastened;
the woodland has rediscovered its lost fairy.)

Love's plenitude is embodied in maternity, in that process paralleled with Nature's seasonal vegetation and fruition, a major theme, it must be recalled, in Riquer's own pictorial work and that of symbolist artists in general. If the literary version, at least in Riquer's hands, sounds now thin, mannered and unconvincing in comparison with its visual equivalents, to the personal and contextual factors that would explain this (the limitations of Riquer's verbal talents, deficiencies of the local tradition, linguistic instability) must be added the general observation encapsulated in Brion Gysin's dictum that 'writing is fifty years behind painting'.

After the exalted consummation in holy maternity (where the religious emphasis is stronger now than in *Petons*: 'if the bud burst open the Almighty blesses both fruit and seed...': XX), the section moves towards a close with two sonnets (xxvi and xxvn) announcing the subject of 'Sunset'. XXVI deals with the death of a young offspring and the parents' suffering, and we recall that the Riquer couple underwent this experience three times during their marriage. Exclamation and questioning now cast a shadow over earthly bliss:

*Un bressolet desert, sens vida, abandonat;
Un'ombra que a s'estén y atura un raig de llum:
un' alè dissipada com se dissipa'l fum.*
(An empty cradle, lifeless, abandoned; a shadow that spreads and
blocks out a ray of light; breathing puffed away like disappearing
smoke.)

In XXVII unhappiness caused by the death of the adored spouse is prefigured, for which 'intuition' Riquer resorts to the romantic cliché of the shadow of Death:

*Unfret intens la vida ha deturat,
com si passés enlayre pavorosa
la sombra de la mon tota negrosa!*
(Life is halted by an intense cold, as though above our heads had
passed the black form of Death's quivering shadow!)

'Sunset' corresponds to the second part of *Petons*, but is altogether more highly worked. Only the first poem survives in the later reprise, now converted into a sonnet and shorn of its more descriptive elements but retaining its introductory role insofar as it presents the moment of Dolors' death. The accumulation of stock romantic imagery, associating darkness and cold with solitude and loss, culminates here, with the poet in his plight likened to a dead leaf buffeted by the hostile wind:

*seure voldria al marge del camí,
mes, com la fulla, dins la boyra humida
lo fret mestral m'empeny per l'aspre vida. (XXXI)*
(I would sit by the side of the road, but, like the leaf in the damp mist, I am driven by the cold north-west wind along life's harsh way.)

Melancholy and despair still dominate. The mood surges powerfully in a motif which will come to the fore in Riquer's last poetic work, the *Poema del Bosch*, that of man's destruction of the woods which have witnessed the lovers' experience. Another characteristic Riquerian variation is that of the woods stripped of their charm having lost their fairy:

*Feyafret; tot arraulit, jo traspasava les portes
del palau de fulles verdes, de fulles mustiguejades,
despossehit del encant lluminós de tes mirades.*
(It was cold; I slunk through the doors of the green-leaf palace, its leaves now withered, being bereft of the luminous charm of your gaze.)

But now, unlike in *Petons*, Riquer can transcend despair through the hope of being reunited beyond the grave with his beloved. The theme of a love stronger than Death, rehearsed in *Anyorances* as we have considered, reappears here. The sincerity of feeling comes across with a particularly strong charge deriving from the expression of doubts about the possibility of such spiritual reunion:

*Les llàgrimes defoch que tinch vessades,
ens acosten un d'altre? Si m'atanso,
les penes benhexo qu'he passades...*
Qui sab si'ns allunyem com més me canso? (XXXII)

(The burning tears that I have shed, do they bring us closer together? If I do come nearer then I bless the pain I have suffered... But perhaps we are drifting further apart as I become wearier?)

These doubts inspire his fervent prayer to the Almighty to 'tighten the bond which joins [us] eternally' (xxxv), and the luminous certainty of being reunited finally prevails over doubt in the later sonnets XLI and XLII, with their paradisiacal visions reminiscent of Dante:

*Bat a bat s'obriran les pones d'or recloses,
y endintre vibraran, en lloch de cants d'aloses,
los himness celestials; y una veu sublimada,
què'l pressentiria sols d'exa lo cor suspens,
en un llenguatge nou dirà lo goig intens
de sentirse l'aymant en brassos de l'aymada.* (XLI)

(The tightly closed golden gates will be flung open, and within will ring out not lark-song but celestial hymns; and a sublime voice, which even before it sounds makes the heart miss a beat, will sing in a new language the intense joy of the lover feeling himself in the arms of his beloved.)

The second collection in the composite volume of 1906 is *Les cullites* (Harvests), subtitled 'short bucolic poem' and dedicated to Eduard Marquina who had published a poem of the same genre in Castilian. *Les cullites* is the part of this phase of Riquer's poetry which has least affinity with the Pre-Raphaelite mode (and where the spirit of the admired Apel·les Mestres is most strongly felt) and it is perhaps on this account that these poems have merited least attention from his recent commentators. Here Riquer consciously adopts a classical model, in a bucolic hymn to bread, to wine, to labour in the fields and to the gaiety of harvest time. As Mestres insisted in his introduction to these pieces, there is here a very strong note of personal experience and reminiscence —once again, strains of the poet's country boyhood recreated and to a degree mythified— sounding through the mannerism of a poetry which would otherwise appear tradition-bound and stereotyped. Riquer's close identification with his subject shows in the extraordinary precision, the loving attention to detail, of his descriptions of country activities and the behaviour of the peasant protagonists. Here the richness of the characteristic vocabulary is savoured for its own sake and applied again with the delicacy of the artist inspired by Ruskin's veneration of beauty in Nature. The skirts of the girls hoeing, for example, in *Les virbadores* are 'adorned with darnel, couch grass, fennel and savory'. It is an aspect where the temper and voice of the poet sound in closest harmony.



'The ploughman', 'The sower', 'Germinal', 'The hoeing girls', 'The reaper', 'The gleaner' and 'Threshing'. In three out of these eight poems Riquer describes a twilight scene, felt as a privileged moment, the culmination of the day's labours, touched with associations with

popular poetry and folksong, to which the calm and majestic rhythm of the alexandrine applies a dignity appropriate to the poetic moment par excellence. The decadent correlation of night-time with Death figures nowhere here: on the contrary, night is the time when, as in 'Germinal', the earth fecundates its plant-life:

*Mare terra germina, en nit serena,
axordada pels grills. Es lluna plena.*

(Mother earth germinates, in the night serene, deafened by the crickets. The moon is full.)

The spirit of this poetry is, then, fully vitalist in its dedication to Mother Earth made fertile by man's labours in work which is hard but which promotes a sense of peacefulness and even of joy. This joyfulness in which the first cycle, on the making of Bread, culminates is carried over into the second cycle about the making of Wine, six sonnets which follow the same chronological pattern as the previous set. After an opening poem in praise of wine, Riquer expresses the uncertainties and hopefulness of grape-picking time, the providential downpour which just saves the vines after summer's drought, then the harvest itself, the girls trampling the grapes, and the pleasures of deep imbibing. A similar healthy joyousness and vital élan pervades these poems, as it does the preceding cycle, culminating in the vision of the *masia* farmhouse in whiter and the patriarch's prayer of thanks, *Laus Deo*, for a successful harvest and of confidence in the continuity of life through the seasons.

This poem in particular, with its anecdotal and local-colour *costumista* character, more pronounced than in any other part of *Les cullites*, shows up the strength of the 'ruralist' strain in Riquer's

writing. The line extends back, of course, to *Quanjo era noy*, a mode which the author was still cultivating over the turn of the century, as seen in the story *Bartomeu*, published in the important *modernista* journal *Juventut* in 1900. Thus we encounter again, in Riquer the poet, the eddying of a fundamentally conservative outlook—the idealisation of the patriarchal countryside—that acquired renewed force and relevance in *Modernisme's* urgent formulations of an ideology of nationhood, and in the aesthetic currents tightly associated with the dynamics of renovation. Many of the contradictions of the situation as a whole are represented in the strengths and weaknesses of Riquer as poet: ingenuousness deriving from idealism and sincerity; reiterative sentimentalism condoned by the cult of subjectivism; thinness of verbal texture arising from excessive faith in the 'living word' when the native literary tradition itself remained insecure and unconsolidated. Indeed, the first and most significant part of the 1906 collection, the *Aplech de sonets*, often used as title for the volume as a whole, is circumstantially related to contemporary movements which were converging, at the levels of culture and of political ideology, to rectify such perceived weaknesses in the *modernista* programme.

The connections between *Anyoranses*, *Petons* and *Un poema d'Amor* are evident, which is our reason for leaving to last an examination of *Aplech de sonets*, a set of poems marking a distinct phase in Riquer's literary career.

The first feature to be remarked upon is the exclusive preference (common to the whole of the 1906 volume) for the sonnet form. Riquer, who in 1902 had declared the sonnet to be 'an unmusical form', had obviously undergone quite a radical conversion. The fact is that the sonnet had become, in the earliest years of this century, a decidedly privileged form in the more cultivated *modernista* circles, being the object of debate and the emblem of a concerted reaction against spontaneous formal anarchy and against homespun provincialism in Catalan poetry, a movement which would subsequently be taken over and firmly* channelled into *Noucentisme's* strict mobilisation of cultural forces, with 'purges' of those values not complying with its new conception of Classicism. In the initial stage, though, arising from distinctly *modernista* impulses, Dante, Ronsard, Baudelaire, Verlaine, the Parnassians, etc. supplied exemplary models of the sonnet cultivated as the epitome of poetic rigour and harmony. In the Catalan context the 'battle of the sonnet' was fought

within *Modernisme*, then, and its outcome was materialised in a distinct boom in this poetic form, in important contributions by Tell i Lafont, Pin i Soler, Ruyra, Zanné, Alomar and others, and then by the two outstanding *noucentista* exponents, Guerau de Liost and Josep Carner. Beneath all the variety of interpretation in this activity was a constant motivation: the idea that by cultivation of the sonnet and creation of its own repertoire in this mode Catalan literature would be joining in its own right the universal fraternity.

It is to this context that Riquer's definitive turn to the sonnet belongs. As well as the sources mentioned above, a most particular influence in his case was the Dante Gabriel Rossetti of *The House of Life*. This is unequivocally announced in Riquer's placing, as frontispiece to his own collection, his prose version of Rossetti's 'A sonnet is a moment's monument,/Memorial from the Soul's eternity/ To one dead deathless hour...', the exemplary prelude to *The House of Life* itself. Still in the introductory part of the collection, there follow two sonnets in which the poet continues to set out his stall, not without a certain ambivalence. While the first, invoking images of the troubadour and the nightingale, expresses an idealistic concept of inspired poetic utterance (with clear echoes of Maragall), the second dedicated 'To Deceit', incorporates distinctly Parnassian notions of culture and refined fancy as antidotes to 'painful, grumbling Truth'. The tension is itself, in fact, consistent with various pulls within Riquer's own 'split personality' as an artist. One such disjunction is apparent in the contrast between the 'realism' of *Les cullites* and the *Aplech de sonets* itself, a celebration of the civilised spirit. The work belongs to the moment of *Modernisme's* apogee (1906) and of Riquer's personal artistic trajectory. As such it contains many keys to his literary temper, 'original' in that sense and also in the sense of the confidence with which the poet essays a diversity of line-length (12-, 13-, 14- and even 16-foot lines) beyond the preferred hendecasyllable of his admired Rossetti.

While the poem 'To Deceit' enshrines a declaration of anti-realist principles, the collection as a whole is far removed from the deliquescent symbolism of *Crisantemes*. The movement now is away from dream-like mystery and vague synaesthesia,

....., gran, hermosa Mentida
moradora deb horts de misteriosa flayre

(grand, beautiful Deceit, dweller in the gardens of mysterious
aroma)

and from the desire to feel her 'whimsical kiss', towards a vision of great chromatic richness, with clearly Panassian limpidity and sharpness of outline:

Boguèm per la blavor quieta d'un gran port

*sentint batre l'onada en un porxo tranquil
qu'avansa les columnes de porfit escarlata
sobre un estol de cisnes de plomatge de plata.*

(We row through the still blueness of a great harbour, feeling the lap of the wave on a serene arcade jutting its columns of scarlet porphyry above a flock of silver-feathered swans.)

The consistent focus of the idealism of *Aplech de sonets* is Art itself, and this shift marks a significant development in Riquer's evolution as a poet, turning from the sentimental and towards a more reflective outlook. The tendency is away from present realities, into sublime aspirations and the evocation of magnificent, distant shadows of remote epochs. This latter mood is particularly strong in the first two of the book's five parts *Edat Antiga* (Antiquity) and *Edat mitjana i Renaixement* (Middle Ages and Renaissance), the two great sources of Riquer's literary and artistic inspiration. There follow *Temps modern* (Modern Times), devoted to the modern artists admired by the poet, *Bucòlica*, and finally a miscellaneous section entitled *Varia*.

Edat Antiga opens with a sonnet on the theme of Icarus, symbolising the artist's urge to be freed of material constraints only to be thwarted by death. The motif was a constant one in Riquer's production, and widely recurrent in *Modernisme's* artistic code. In *L'esfínx* the mystery of human destiny is posed; *El vell de Teos* and *Safo* are anacreontic in manner, while similar exercises in opulent nostalgia are carried out through evocations of Phryné, Perseus and Nero. Riquer's reworking of the myths of Antiquity, recalling the manner of the painter Böcklin, again unites his poetry and his painting. Likewise, his vision of the Middle Ages enables him to indulge in the world of the Gothic, so dear to his imagination. *Lady Godiva*, *Retaule*, *La Bella dama sens merci*, *Eljutglar*, *Dins del pati* and *L'ermità*, all of which suggest very sharp visual correspondences, are finely chiselled miniatures which depict with detached meticulousness the set-pieces of an idealised milieu of courtly love.

The second part of this medieval tableau moves through the passage into the Renaissance, with sonnets devoted to the great

artists of the *Quattrocento*: Guido d'Arezzo, 'L'Aretino', Dante and Giotto reunited in the evocation of the Crovegni chapel at Padua; Dante and Leonardo da Vinci celebrated in *A Florència*; Botticelli's famous *Spring* recalled in Riquer's poetry through the figure of the model *Simonetta Vespucci*. We rediscover here Riquer's admiration for the Italian primitives, that we remarked upon in Chapter II, expressed in a marked preference for the idealistic and the decorative in art. Also seen here, and allied to the latter trait, is the love of the Renaissance, assimilated by Riquer as a sort of synthesis of Antiquity and the Christian Middle Ages.

The sonnets in 'Modern Times' are particularly interesting insofar as they give further insight into the workings and the evolution of Riquer's artistic imagination. Not surprisingly, Pre-Raphaelism figures prominently here, but not before an incursion into the France of the eighteenth century. His feeling for the spirit of this period is well attested by the contents of Riquer's library, which included some very fine collectors' pieces, unking directly with the nice homage to the great book-binder Derôme in the sonnet *Mme de Pompadour*. Respective sonnets are dedicated to those embodiments of the eighteenth-century ethos, Watteau and Boucher. What stirs the poet is the elegance and the precious atmosphere of the world of these two painters. As an illustration we can consider how Boucher's Louis XV decor is admirably captured in the delicately colourful touches of this quatrain, where the painterly eye controls the words:

*Tes creacions perfuman del zocol fins als frisos
l'ambient dels boudoirs roses y la sala enjoyada
pel bronze, l'alabastre y cornisa daurada
qu'avansa coronant els verds pàlids y'ls grisos.*

(Your creations perfume, from plinth to friezes, the atmosphere of the pink *boudoirs* and the room bejewelled in bronze and alabaster with the gilded jutting cornice that crowns the pale greens and the greys.)

This interest in the taste for eighteenth-century France reveal quite a lot about Riquer's ideological development. That Catholic Riquer, strictly moralistic, who was a founder member of the conservative *Cercle Artistic de Sant Lluc*, the opponent of the nude figure in art, is far removed from the Riquer of the dawning twentieth century, the admirer of the *galant*, superficial and precious atmosphere of pre-revolutionary France. The new 'open-mindedness',

as we have seen, though, did not diminish Riquer's love of medieval Christian mysticism. Indeed, what characterises the artist in his maturity is a wide-arching eclecticism and liberality of spirit.

Something of this is felt in the sonnet 'On a page from Goethe's *Eridon and Amina*', featuring the third great artist of the French eighteenth century, Fragonard. It was he, according to Riquer, who might have put voluptuousness into the exquisiteness of Goethe's modern interpretation of ancient Greece. It is clear that a subtle shift was taking place in the sensibility and taste of the artist around the time of *Aplech de sonets*. The illustrations which he did for this volume, as well as the book-plates designed between 1905 and 1914, display a movement from an asymmetrical and swirling *modernista* style to a more balanced and symmetrical line, taking up patterns from the rococo and strains of baroque allegorical treatment of the female form. It is yet another instance, this time an extremely telling one, of the close and constant parallelism between literary and plastic modes in Riquer, between *lexis* and *opsis* in his creative imagination.

Chopin, Schubert and Schumann are the musical representatives in this part of *Aplech de sonets*, written at the time, we should recall, when the *lieds* of the latter two composers were centre-pieces of the musical evenings held at Riquer's studio workshop. Not surprisingly, with such late-romantic points of reference, the poet here associates music with the expression of nostalgia, sublimated despair or melancholy. The poetry-music analogy itself, together with the Mallarmean precedent of celebrating Wagner in verse, serves to make this the most symbolistic section of the *Aplech de sonets*, where Riquer attempts to evoke the ineffable mystery and beauty of melody through synaesthesia and chromatic association:

En les nits blaves, lluminoses

Schubert, com s'alsen los teus cants.

(In luminous blue nights, Schubert, how your songs soar.)

In the case of Schumann the characteristic note is identified in the expressive antithesis of music's sources in despair and its sublimating powers:

De tes amargues llàgrimes y de tos desconsols,

esclaten poms de roses y cants de rossinyols.

(From your bitter tears and from your desolation burst forth bunches of roses and nightingale songs.)

The honesty of response and genuine feeling of spiritual communion—despite the naive tone and stylistic texture—are similarly felt in the three poems dedicated to the Pre-Raphaelites and the one to the German idealist painter Arnold Böcklin. The work of the latter was known and admired in Catalonia from the 1890s, and had, with its Wagnerian associations, considerable influence in *modernista* aspirations to transcendental artistic expression and symbol, as in his famous painting *L'île de la Mort* reproduced in the journal *Juventut* in 1900, and discussed in an article there. Accordingly, what interests Riquer about Böcklin is the artist who recreates the major themes of Greek mythology, the Böcklin of centaurs and nereids, the pantheist like himself in the first part of *Aplech de sonets* and in his paintings of the early years of the twentieth century. His praise of Böcklin's 'burning fantasy' helps to elucidate Riquer's idea of the 'whimsical kiss' in the sonnet 'To Deceit', implying a sort of programme for an anti-realist art, idealist in spirit but sharp in outline and limpid in vision, removed from symbolist mistiness which is replaced by a 'Mediterranean' transparency shot through with vitalist energies and myths. The embryo of *Noucentisme*'s programme and idiom is seen to be taking shape within a vortex of terms and ideals of *modernista* origin. The definition quite accurately characterises Riquer's position in 1906, as it does that of many *modernistes* affected by the same momentum of transition.

Further characterisation of the poet's personal *curriculum* comes in the three sonnets devoted to modern English art. The first presents the members of the famous Brotherhood as champions of an exciting modern movement which triumphs over the insipid traditionalism of the Royal Academy. In the second quatrain Riquer names the leading figures: Rossetti, Hunt, Millais, Madox Brown, Burne-Jones, to which list are added their advocate Ruskin and Keats (the latter rather incongruously present unless the inclusion is seen as homage to the Arthurianism which was relayed to the Catalan artist via Pre-Raphaelism). Then the two tercets are occupied entirely by Rossetti, envisaged as reincarnation of 'a modern, luminous Dante... radiating the fire of Beauty and beaming from his heart the song of the pious lover'. Their basic affinity is referred again to *The House of Life* which, as we have insisted, was Riquer's inspiration for his death-transcending love poetry:

*Es la Casa de Vida que s'obra ab tot l'esclat
llumínich, d'un art nou que d'exa enlluernat.*

(It is the House of Life which opens up with the full light-burst of a new art which leaves one dazzled.)

Sonnet xxxii is also devoted to Rossetti, 'the worshipper and heir of Beauty', who revived in the 'misty lands of Albion' the ashes of the Florentine Renaissance with its 'exuberant richness of art, the exquisite wholeness of good taste and wisdom', infusing new blood and the vitality of southern Europe into the veins of British art. This is nicely symbolised in the poem by the image of the ray of Italian sunlight gilding a flat, grey landscape, and then by the extension of the metaphor to refer to the warmth of love which melts the chilled northern heart:

*y ab l'escalf d'un petó dels llavis de Siddal
haveu dotat les neus d'un' ànima vital.*

(And with the warmth of a kiss on Siddal's lips you have breathed vital spirit into the snows.)

The third sonnet (xxxiv) glosses the figure of Robert Aiming Bell, a minor member of the Pre-Raphaelite movement but a great decorative artist, something which perhaps explains Riquer's special admiration for him and the fact that it was with Bell himself that the Catalan had enjoyed direct acquaintance. (The two had probably met in London and in 1910 Riquer published a short book on Bell's work, a detail on which we shall comment in our final chapter.) Particular praise is expressed in this poem for Bell's recreation of Renaissance qualities of texture and colour,

*Tos policroms relleus y suntuoses vidrieres
l'encant de tes pintures y tes decoacions
prosseguexen l'esfors de Florentines eres.*

(Your polychrome reliefs and sumptuous stained glass, the charm of your paintings and decorations continue the effort of Florentine days.)

and for his his bibliophile's passion for the art of the book, a sphere in which the English artist was an acknowledged master:

*Absort, el bibliòfil veu tes ilustracions,
y devot de Bellesa qu'adora'l temps passat,
com qui sent un nou himne, eh guayta extasiat.*

(The bibliophile, all absorbed, views your illustrations; worshipper of Beauty adoring bygone days, as though hearing a new hymn, he looks upon them in ecstasy.)

Aplech de sonets, then, confirms Riquer's deep admiration for the Pre-Raphaelites and indicates the three facets of this attraction: painting, poetry and the decorative arts, in particular the art of the book. Also clearly marked here are the two lines which Riquer found strengthened from contact with the English movement: the delight in the Gothic and the sentiment from Dante, augmented and relayed by Rossetti, of transcendent love itself analogous with an ideal of art. These poems constitute thus intimate, literary expression of Riquer's 'English connection', the historical documentation of which will be the subject of our Chapter V.

Bucòlica, a sequence of ten sonnets, reiterates Riquer's life-long and profoundly ingrained fixation with the forest and with woodland imagery: the forest as enchanted place, centre of wonderment and site of happiness, recreated in fancy but always depicted with meticulous precision and eye for detail in the description of the inhabitant flora and fauna. Two contradictions require comment here. The first is that this section of *Aplech de sonets* was, surprisingly, dedicated to Eugeni d'Ors who, as *Xènius* the high-priest of *Noucentisme*, repeatedly declared himself to be an enemy of the woodland and of everything that smacked of 'ruralism', in pronouncements from his *Glosari* that began precisely in 1906. The cultural tide-turn that we referred to above, and Riquer's own rather insecure position in this, would explain this ostensibly paradoxical conjunction. The other contradiction is also familiar from aspects already reviewed of Riquer's art. The fact is, nevertheless, that in *Bucòlica* as in other examples of his 'bucolic' manner the poet seems best to resolve the fundamental tension in his art, between close observation of the real and flights of fancy. For it is in this vein that reality best and most harmonically serves him as a spring-board into the realms of the imaginary, the marvellous and the mythical, with anthropomorphism as the most consistent resource in this process.

In *Bucòlica* one swiftly recognises that water is associated with femininity: in *Pirinenca* 'the foaming waters/cascade, unfurling their white locks', and in *Boyra d'Hivern* (Winter Mist) 'the mist is all made up of the pale nudity of the Water-sprite/and of the hazy Nymphs'. In the springs hidden deep in the woods there live the Naiads, the fairies and the water-sprites, but these springs are also, and above all, the mythical hideaway for solitary contemplation and the quest for an ideal of beauty. A recurrent theme in all of Riquer's bucolic work is the pursuit and discovery of the lost spring in the

heart of the woodland —pure, unsullied, virginal— reserved for the poet alone, revealing only to him its secret mysteries. Perhaps Riquer's *El lloch hont granen les flors* (The place where the flowers seed: XLI) or *La font ignorada* (The unknown spring: xxxix), where we read,

*Oh font, intima font discreta y ignorada,
ja has apagat la set febrós de mon cos,
presentam la bellesa de ta gentil Naiada.*

(Oh spring, intimate spring, discreet and undiscovered, now you have quenched the fevered thirst of my body, show me the beauty of your graceful Naiad.)

were recalled by the great poetic heir of *Noucentisme*, Carles Riba, in the memorable lines of his *tannka*:

*(La Poesia?
Cal cercar-la on tu saps ja
que és, com la gràcia
o l'aigua pura i dura
d'una font emboscada.*

(Poetry? It must be sought where you already know it is, like Grace, or the pure hard water of a woodland spring.)

The difference in diction as well as in control of the poetic idea and material summarises not only the distance in quality between the two writers but also an entire and immensely condensed chapter in the history of Catalan as a modern literary language. But we digress... In Riquer's vision we detect strong strains of erotic implications —basically conventional in conception— in the sublimated quest, wherein the spring is occasionally replaced by a solitary flower of incomparable beauty, as in *Flors solitàries* (xxxvn) and *A una orquidea* (XLII).

The desire to melt into the forest's deepest recesses lead him to wish to be buried there (XLIV), to rediscover a sort of primeval harmony. There are in this and other pieces echoes of Buddhism and Eastern mysticism, characteristic of the orientalist current along which Riquer and other *modernistes* were carried, at a time when, as remarked in our Chapter II, the poet was frequenting Maynade's *Llibreria Orientalista*. Far from mankind, in sweet solitude, the poet surrenders to an ecstasy rendered eternal through death, finding access to that marvellous world in which the whole inheritance of

tradition, lore and legend —'the water-sprites and fairies which have died out the world over'— would be revived:

*d'un pastó' adolescent sentir la dolsa veu,
y al luny, com un recort de Grècia agonitzant
los planyivols accents de les flautes de Pan.*

(To hear the sweet voice of a youthful shepherd, and afar, like a memory of Greece in decline, the plaintive strains of Pan's flutes.)

The voice and the clichés belong unmistakably to Riquer, but it is interesting to see how the controlling spirit of this poetry coincides closely, both in its pantheism and in its apotheosis idealism, with that of the mature writing of the the most representative of *modernista* poets, Joan Maragall.

As its name suggests, *Varia*, is the most heterogeneous sequence of *Aplech de sonets*. Its eight sonnets relate to diverse themes, more or less marginal or complementary to Riquer's central artistic concerns. The first, on fox-hunting, belongs to the former category, while the second —evoking in dramatic and sinister terms the lonely death of a poor old woman—and the fifth, *Zoideal*—an almost mystical incantation, with its mantra-like title, to the echoing of the unobtainable ideal—refer to the limits of the *modernista* imagination. *La musa verda* (The green Muse: L) takes up again the theme from 'To Deceit' of banishing 'burdensome realities'. Here, though, the poet appeals not to the 'glorious vision, light of consolation and life', but to the 'mad woman', the Muse of absinthe, who begets 'great monsters with fevered stare'. The poem may well correspond to a moment of depression in the artist's life, when he imaginatively explored this route of evasion or artificial paradise so fashionable among the nineteenth-century artistic bohemia. This single sonnet, however, is hardly sufficient to qualify Riquer as a *poète maudit*, especially when it is set against the evidence of a temperate life-style, confirmed in the celebration of wine, in such poems as *Les cullites*, as an organic product associated with health and natural processes. We recall, in this respect, the way in which conventional morality prevails in Riquer when confronted by the full implications of Decadence, as in the way he recoils before the 'stench of the city' in *Quan jo era noy* and before the 'Modern Bacchante' in *Crisantemes*.

Truer to Riquer's artistic *metier* is the seventh sonnet in *Varia*, introducing an interest of his mature phase that he shared with the

painter-author Santiago Rusiñol. At least two paintings by Riquer from this period follow the example of Rusiñol in seeking to capture the subtleties of atmosphere in symmetrically laid-out parks, and it must be remembered that he also followed Rusiñol's lead, around 1912-1913, in painting the gardens of Aranjuez near Madrid. The sonnet expresses the corresponding mood of a highly filtered symbolism, where decadent tones are subjected to a civilising control:

*Grandiosa ruina deserta d'uns jardins
que visqueren el luxe de centúries passades.*

(Grandiose deserted ruins of gardens which lived through the luxury of past centuries.)

and it captures well the feeling, present in the cognate work of both painters, of resigned solitude and arrested time as an intimation of eternity:

*Un misteri rondina dins son desert ambient
hont les hores s'han mort y'ls arbres van crexent.*

(Mystery murmurs in its deserted air where the hours have died and the trees still grow.)

It is one of the moments when, in terms of intrinsic literary quality and also of a wider appropriateness, that the poetry is truest to the artistic personality.

Seen as a whole, *Aplech de sonets*, *Les cullites*, *Un poema d'Amor*, is a disparate collection whose only unity lies in the exclusivity of the sonnet form. Chronologically central within Riquer's production, it embraces all the terms of the author's literary capacity. While the *Aplech de sonets* and *Un poema d'Amor* hark back to, and in a sense represent culminations of *Anyorances* and *Petons*, there is in the *Bucòlica* sequence the continuation of another vein, close to the poet's heart, which for him remained unexhausted. It is, moreover, a vein which cuts across from the early prose works to the love poetry. The imaginative pantheism, rather primitively adumbrated in *Quan jo era noy* and which assumed, sporadically, a more refined guise in *Crisantemes*, achieves its fullest expression in the long poem of 1910, Riquer's last literary work, the *Poema del Bosch*. Here the author, becoming uncomfortable or alienated in the face of the newly dominant forces at work in Catalan culture, indulges in a sustained incursion into the favourite domains of his life and his fancy, his beloved forest and woodlands.

The *Poema del Bosch*, Riquer's most consuming and ambitious literary work, represents in a sense his poetic testament. Comprising 3,323 lines in all, it divides into eighteen still lengthy segments and a final ode to Bacchus. The preferred metre is a line of thirteen feet, built into stanzas of irregular length, quatrains and five-line verses often giving way to units whose greater length is determined in the main by syntax. As Castellanos remarks, Riquer seems at home in this broad-framed, narrative structure which does not place too great a strain on his control of language, a slackness of style and a tendency to fall into cliché being evident weaknesses of his other verse.

It is clear that the *Poema del Bosch* engaged the poet's attention and energies over a long period. Eleven of the sections are dated 1901 and 1902, while the other seven are assigned to a spate of activity in 1909. The published arrangement does not follow the order of composition, and Riquer's careful recording of chronology would indicate his intimate commitment to his poem. We certainly discern that the final order was designed to portray an internal evolution of mood and an implied passage of time. The first poems taken together, up to IX (*Fada Doralissa*), convey a more peaceful and idyllic vision than the set beginning with *Aquelarre* (Witches' Sabbath: x), the latter bringing to the enchanted world of the forest perversion superstition and, ultimately, the destruction of its mythical universe. Certainly, the vision darkens as evil erupts, and the tone is altogether more dramatic in the 1909 sections. We have suggested already that this process might be related to the major sea-change occurring for Catalan culture in these years and to Riquer's increasing alienation in these circumstances.

By 1909 *Noucentisme's* purge of the 'embarrassing' features of its own antecedents was at its most energetic. Many *modernistes* returned, or were driven, into the wilderness. Riquer was among these and, as we have mentioned, by this time he virtually ceased working in the field of decorative art, the victim of a change in taste and fashion which caused him considerable economic hardship. Already from 1907 his participation in art exhibitions had become sporadic and relatively unsuccessful. These years are the most obscure period of his life, in large measure because his literature-inspired paintings of the time found no favour at all with the critics and new arbiters of taste. In such circumstances, a feeling of rejection on Riquer's part, of living through the dissolution of a movement with which he had been identified, would be as understandable as the

turn for solace to literature, a type of literature which, more or less consciously, is a coming-to-terms with isolation at the same time as a self-justifying assertion of values now misunderstood. Riquer was certainly not alone in this reaction which is characteristic of *Modernisme* driven, as it were, underground. Crisis and disorientation would also seem to be manifest in the fact that Riquer chose not to illustrate the *Poema del Bosch* himself, and in his choice of some ponderous baroque woodcuts to accompanying his text. The incongruity, significant in itself, is probably explained both by creative insecurity and by concession to newly-prevailing criteria of taste.

Noucentisme's mythification of the City, its exaltation of control, discretion and urbane values meant, basically, a condemnation of an art inspired in Nature which entailed an aesthetics of spontaneity, emotion and sacrosanct creative freedom. The conflict is felt, translated and deplored in the *Poema del Bosch* in terms of the destruction of a paradise existing both in geography and in the realms of the imagination: the woodland. From the view-point of *Noucentisme*, and still now, viewed with historical perspective, the poem is grounded in an impenitent justification of a 'ruralist' tradition that *Modernisme* took up from the *Renaixença* and the *Jocs Florals*. The radicalisation of this line undertaken by vanguard *modernistes* like Casellas, Víctor Català and Bertrana is submerged beneath the weight of its profoundly conservative origins and legacy in the opening sonnet of the *Poema del Bosch*. The invocation here of the Felibrige's *Copa Santa* linked to 'Homeland, Love and Poetry' chimes in with the spirit of the prefatory letter supplied by none other than the patriarchal Felibre, Frederic Mistral. The underlying ideological import of Riquer's artistic nostalgia is disclosed even more definitively in the association 'song-homeland-forest', the proclamation of the rural and 'popular' roots of Catalan culture, from the same introductory poem:

*El cant que jo oferexo ben meu, que s'ageganta
fonentse ab lo tresor que te la pàtria mia,
barbolla'l rondineig qu'en la vesprada canta
el bosch tot ple d'aromes quan va morintse'l dia.*

(The song I offer, all my own, swelling to melt into my homeland's treasure-store, mutters the same vague message that the aroma-laden woods sing at the dying of the day.)

Intrinsic to the sentiment here is a body of ideas, precisely those lambasted by *Xènius* as a facile Romantic legacy confusing aesthetics

with hygiene, morality with patriotism, in a hackneyed vision of 'the true Catalonia' which it was *Noucentisme's* mission to eradicate.

The criticism and the conflict of values can themselves be seen now in historical perspective. The nineteenth-century rediscovery of the Catalan landscape, the resurgence of popular music, folklore and legend, were far too important and influential to be written off by strokes of urbane irony. The *Poema del Bosch* betrays its deepest roots by being given a post-script in the form of the score of the song *El Jutglar* (The Minstrel) by the composer J. Pahissa. The nostalgia, for all its superficial effects, represents a substantial cultural import. As already remarked in connection with *Aplech de sonets*, this conscientious cultivation of popular tradition, the recovery of the medieval inheritance, both bound to concepts of 'roots' in the affirmation of a national identity, are inextricably linked, as Riquer's work exemplifies, with the main currents of European idealism in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The reworking of the Arthurian cycle, initially in primitive Romantic terms and then refined through Pre-Raphaelism and the influence of Wagner, has to be understood in relation to the broad European movement as well as to its specifically Catalan manifestations.

This much indicates how the *Poema del Bosch* represents a reprise of poetic concerns and behaviour which *Aplech de sonets* seemed to have superseded, insofar as the latter collection tentatively acknowledged *post-modernista* tendencies. Control and formal rigour—hallmarks of the new Classicism—could hardly be expected of this 'sprawling' and 'tangled' composition, images used by contemporary commentators like Casellas and Masriera to liken the character of the book to that of its subject. Where Classicism does come in is in the mythical dimension, in the theme of the permanence of the ancient world, blending with the other legendary material. It is thus one component of the work's heterogeneity and diffraction, its lack of overall cohesion. Despite the evidence (in a letter from Maragall to Riquer) that the poet worked to a plan and that, in line with it, he consciously reshuffled the order of the poems, the impression is one of profusion and of a multiplicity of occasionally contradictory aspects, an outpouring of the creative imagination, true only to the artistic spirit of the individual mind which conceived it. In this sense the *Poema del Bosch* is a most unapologetically *modernista* work, Riquer's artistic testament, as we have remarked, which enshrines a theoretical and an active riposte to *Noucentisme* as he understood it.

Riquer's mystical communion with the woodland as the seat of Myth, the sacred sanctuary of Nature, Love and Beauty—together constituting the artist's *raison d'être*—here reaches its sustained climax, in repeated echoing of the song of the spring:

jo soch altar y font d'hont brolla Poesia.

(I am the altar and the fount from which Poetry issues.)

The key-stone of the great edifice is the opening song, originally intended to conclude the work (on the evidence of Maragall), a detail which confirms the mature Riquer's awareness of its strategic and programmatic nature:

*D'Occident a Orient arredosso la historia
desde'ls veils Prometeus fins al moment actual...*

*Del bosch de Kalidassa, la selva de Virgili,
qu'ab la romana llengua de nou transcriu l'idili,
al naxement d'aurora ab que nos extasia
Beethoven component la nona simfonia,
tot viu dins la fecon matriu naturalesa
ahont arrela'l germen creador de bellesa.*

(From West to East I shelter history, from the time of the ancient Prometheus up to the present moment... Since the woods of Kalidassa and the glades of Vergil who retranscribed the idyll into the Roman tongue, until the dawn-burst with which Beethoven transports us with his composition of the Ninth Symphony, everything lives in fertile Mother Nature wherein the creative seed of beauty strikes root.)

This is the Temple of Life, the ample accommodation of that urgent totality sought by the poet and manifested in his sweeping incorporation of so many diverse motifs from so multifarious cultural origins. Profusion and exuberance are themselves essences of this pantheistic vision of a Nature which is neither the Symbolists' dreaded enemy of Man and his culture nor the Decadents' dark mirror of the unfathomable mysteries of consciousness. The Woodland is harmony of infinite vastness, perpetual cycles of germination, growth and movement, whose energies are reproduced in the vital outflowing of poetry.

This dynamism is orchestrated in the scope of Riquer's themes, in the metrical diversity of the eighteen sections and in the strength of sensation conveyed through a constant resorting to anthropomorphic images: the grandiose forest 'heaves' in the night, the silent stars

'twinkle with delight and desire' in their golden spheres. Within this universal vibration of cosmic harmony the *poeta clarvident* ('the poet as seer') discovers also the 'love and the immense peace of the forest', the mystical silence of communion with the Absolute, expressed as a vision of the Redeemer:

*L'imatge del Silenci s'imposa commoguda,
estesos els dos brassos, fixada, quieta, muda,*
(The image of Silence imposes itself, deeply moved, with arms
outstretched, motionless, serene, unspeaking.)

This same forest is also the stage of the cultural history of Mankind. In section III, 'The Woodland defends itself', Nature resists its enemy, Man the predator, who brings cultivation, with ideas of productivity and profit, into the paradisiacal realms of Beauty. Fire is the agent of Man's ravages, yet in the beginning Nature is able to counter its effects with a stronger, vital energy, conserved in the deep sanctuary of its innermost recesses,

*... /a nau que guarda com arca misteriosa
l'intens secret de vida en atri sacrosant.*
(... the nave which guards like a mysterious ark the intense secret
of life at its holiest inner sanctum.)

All the contradictions of such anti-industrial utopianism, taken at its face value, are apparent: it remains true, nonetheless, that such sentiments, deriving from the central Nature/Civilisation discourse of the nineteenth century, exercised considerable attraction throughout a whole cycle of evolution of the Western imagination. It is to this generalised phenomenon that many of the socio-cultural tensions of Catalan *Modernisme* ultimately relate.

The distinctly religious drift of Riquer's vision, within the general tendency, articulates his individual sensibility. In section vii pagan ritual—'occult fantasy of sanctified crime' that profanes 'the purest site of life'—is contrasted with the religion of peace and harmony that springs from the contemplation of Nature as a reflection of its Creator. In this the poet discloses that conventional, Catholic cast of mind that prevented him from participating in the more radical reaches of *modernista* metaphysical speculation. The radicalism of the *Poem del Bosch* lies in its Ruskinian identification of Nature and Art, and, as we have insisted, in its repudiation of both the aesthetics and the ethics of *Noucentisme*, in its reaffirmation of the sublime,

Messianic role of the Artist and, by extension, of the sacred inviolability of his artistic freedom.

Riquer here relates Man's evil to his identification with the group and society, in total contrast to *Noucentisme's* insistence on the civilising values of citizenship. The old individualism thus powerfully reasserts itself: lovers, poets and hermits, those who as individuals live in harmony with the primal forces of Nature, the Romantic heroes in other words, are the only ones to escape condemnation. In 'The Devil's Cross' (XII) the repentant criminal who worships Christ on a rude cross in the depths of the wood is hounded and killed with the result that this social act creates a superstition which inverts the religious meaning of the crucifix. It is interesting to observe how Riquer's mind restores the conventional value to images which had been challenged or subverted in aspects of *modernista* creativity. The Black Mass, which in Casellas' *Els sotsferéstecs*, for example, bodies forth the terrifying experience of a Godless universe, is seen in *Aquelarre* as an aberration and a profanation of Nature. For Riquer salvation from the grip of darkness, sexuality and sorcery—the abyss beyond the limits of the mind—comes in the guise of Saint Hubert's deer, clad in the mystical clarity of dawn.



Throughout Riquer's writing it is literature itself, in a wide diversity of precedent and sources, which supplies the frame in which feeling and experience are (often too rigidly) set. Accordingly, in the *Poema del Bosch*, the cultural history of mankind is related essentially to two great traditions that configure the bulk of Riquer's production, both in visual images and in words: first, the world of classical literature and myth, as in *La driade* (iv) and in the imitation of Theocritus, *Bosch d'Arcadia* (Arcadian Wood: v); then sustained variations on folk and fairy-tale themes in IX, XII and XIII, and the legendary medieval world of

Escalibor (VIII). The latter is the best illustration of Riquer's attempt

to blur the boundaries between traditional subject-matter and the products of his imagination in a process that becomes analogous with poetic creativity itself. The essential motivation is at once intensely private and representatively public, in the sense that awareness of the 'nationalist' function of cultural activity is never far from the surface. (This is, indeed, as Arthur Terry has remarked in another context, the distinctive and differential feature of Catalan art of the whole modern period).

Thus the version of Arthurian legend that appears in *Escalibor* is the universal myth set distinctly in terms of an idealistic Catalan nationalism whose very historicism is its primary motor. The legendary knight of the Breton cycle adopts in prophetic terms the motto (*Pàtria, Fides, Amor,*) of the *Jocs Florals*, with all that this implied in terms of a political vision already superseded by the bourgeois nationalism of *Noucentisme* but still sentimentally potent for all that:

.. -*Oh vella profecia*
tu que dius l'arribada del hèroe, impacient,
qu'ha de cenyir l'espasa que sigles ha dormia,
te prenh en nom de Pàtria, en nom de Fey Amor.

(Oh ancient prophecy that announces the arrival of the impatient hero who will bind on the sword taken from the slumber of centuries, I take you in the name of the Motherland, in the name of Faith and Love.)

This section of the *Poema del Bosch* stands as a kind of compendium of all that the idealised Middle Ages represented to the *fin-de-siècle* poetic imagination, and also of the two channels by which this content was directed to apply to the self-image of Catalan culture as it was shaped upon Romantic foundations: on the one hand, Wagner, the inspirer of the idea of a 'total Art' and the powerful rekindler of the force of the old myths; on the other hand, and most particularly in Riquer's case, the affinity with that branch of contemporary British art centred in Pre-Raphaelite cultivation of Arthurian themes and epitomised in Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations for Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.

The convergence of the ancient and the medieval traditions in the attraction exercised upon Riquer by the Florentine Renaissance is introduced into the chronological order of the *Poema del Bosch* by the most esoteric poem in the collection: *El camí perdut* (The Lost Track: VI). Here the clouds which envelop the forest and the

intangible mist in which the poem is shrouded are—now in accordance with the purest symbolist vision—emblems of the mysterious veil concealing a reality of a higher order, forever lost. *El camí perdut* evokes enigmas of engulfed civilisations whose ruins continue to fascinate us and a luminous truth known to the woodland spirits but of which they will disclose nothing. These are the secrets of the forest (Nature, Creation, Being) that the poet senses and to which he strives to give equivalent form. His privileged status gives access to the eternal myths which are invisible to that 'pale passer-by', modern man who is a stranger to the woodland ways,

*acostumat al luxe de la vila daurada,
que no compren del bosc l'amor, l'immensa pau.*

(accustomed to the luxury of the gilded town, who knows not the love nor the immense peace of the forest.)

The closing sections of the *Poema del Bosch* focus on the modern world and provide the poet with the opportunity to re-set and update motifs already worked out in his writing. Saint Francis of Assisi (already the subject of an important painting of 1890) evinces the admirable harmony of man and Nature in 'Lari of the Birds' (xv), where the figure of the saint reappears in a modern, lay version embodied in the poor, misunderstood shepherd. The Daphnis and Chloë legend and the pastoral idyll already essayed in *Bosch d'Arcadia* reappears in contemporary dress and local *costumista* setting in *Fluvirolejant* (Pipe-playing: XVI). The book moves towards a concluding note of defeat and lament in 'Destruction' (xvii) where man's ravages of the forest and all that it stands for provoke a muted diatribe against the materialism of the urban-industrial world that has cut him off from the sacred harmonies of natural beauty:

*Ha mort, ha mort el bosch; sols queda una migrada
imatge del que fou la catedral sagrada
ahont resava un càntich l'ardent naturalesa,
grandiós com may l'han fet tants segles de bellesa.*

(The wood is dead, is dead; all that is left is the scant image of the sacred cathedral of yore, where ardent nature entoned a prayer as magnificent as ever it was made by the beauty of centuries.)

The logic of this concluding movement is disturbed, however, by the intercalation of the section *Les vinyes* (The Vineyards: xvii) which sings the glory of wine, the product of processes of cultivation

that have usurped the woodlands, in a vein similar to that of *Les cullites*. This is quite at odds with the condemnatory Ode to Bacchus wherein conviviality is identified with the forces that have destroyed the earthly paradise. If some of the momentum of the whole is thereby lost, the *Poema del Bosch* stands nevertheless as a remarkable literary monument to a faith that was overtaken by the tides of taste, and of history.



Our view from this perspective confirms what has frequently been said elsewhere: that the artistic and literary development of Alexandre de Riquer followed a circular trajectory, that in his final years he returned to his first loves. His landscape paintings from 1910-1920, as much as the *Poema del Bosch*, display the same reversion to the privileged subject which inspired both his early realist drawings and paintings of La Segarra and the semi-autobiographical narratives of his literary debut. What must be stressed, though, are the transformations that occurred in Riquer's vision of that same Nature, in relation to the circumstances in which his career evolved. The young artist of the 1880s, restless and ambitious but unsure of himself and of his directions, at a time when Catalan art was outgrowing Realism but still unclear about new departures, is very different from the extremely cultivated man in maturity, exposed to the main cultural influences of his day and steeped in the strongest traditions behind them. We have followed the changes of aesthetic outlook and the subsequent refinements of expression between *Quan jo era noy* and *Crisantemes*, refinements which would themselves be modified in the natural (but not altogether fulfilled) progression into poetry. The final stage occurred, of course, at a time of personal crisis and also at a time when the cultural milieu in which Riquer had matured and flourished was *itself* subjected to severe internal strain. So many of the contradictions, reiterations, clichés and reticences of his artistic production—more so in words than in images—are due as much to the interplay of Riquer's expressive strengths and limitations with these circumstances as they are to the limitations themselves. On the one hand, the slackness of his literary diction and the lack of concentration in verbal resources are related to the contemporary condition of Catalan as a literary medium, before Pompeu Fabra's linguistic reforms and the whole associated

process of stringent perfectionism and self-awareness that *Noucentisme* grafted into the repertoire. On the other hand, the writer's impulse is to move out from the real world (which he can describe with extraordinary freshness and colour, with touches appropriate to his painterly eye) into the realms of the imagination, fancy and myth. His role is to suggest to his readers some of the ineffable qualities of these subjective perceptions. In this, too, Riquer was a writer of his times, and he did not always successfully negotiate the pitfalls of this symbolist vein: the sentimentality, the cliché and the impression created that the world herein evoked is literature-deferred rather than life-referred. There are moments, nonetheless, when the voice of the author rings out sharp and true, and when we can still feel that we are in genuine communication with a complex and engaging creative personality.

There are reasons, beyond the historical or archaeological ones, that make Riquer a 'readable' author still today. One may prefer the fresh naivety of *Quan jo era noy* to the more sophisticated early poetry or to the intriguingly rich luxuriance of the *Poema del Bosch*. Or one may prefer to savour *Crisantemes* as a collection of rare miniatures of the most exquisite Art Nouveau, especially if one is lucky enough to be handling the original (and still, regrettably, only) edition. This will be a question of taste. What is important is an understanding of the course of a literary and artistic career which went through a whole historical period of crisis and of cultural reassessment, opening on to twentieth-century horizons, while retaining adherence to certain values and traditions of an older social order. Alexandre de Riquer exemplifies thus, in a very particular way and, paradoxically perhaps, more completely than many of his contemporaries, that resonant declaration in Baudelaire's *Le peintre et la vie moderne*, already quoted: 'La modernité, c'est le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent, la moitié de l'art, dont l'autre moitié est l'éternel et l'immuable'. The term *fin-de-siècle* assumes a particularly full meaning when applied to an artist whose life and *oeuvre* spanned that momentous turning-point. The tension between his Catholic-aristocratic education and the commitment to a concept of 'the modern' as he saw it is a deep characteristic that enhances Riquer's representativeness of *Modernisme* and of the Catalan *fin-de-siècle*.



CHAPTER V

DOCUMENTS



The near-simultaneous flowering throughout Europe of the phenomenon we now recognise as Art Nouveau is only explained by the extremely swift diffusion of artistic models and ideas, and by their active interplay across community boundaries. Nineteenth-century improvements in transport made the old continent shrink while bringing the Old World and the New closer together: 'international' exhibitions became virtually commonplace; art journals and literature circulated widely and rapidly; personal contacts between artists were facilitated as study visits and periods of residence abroad were increasingly taken for granted. Barcelona, reaffirmed by the end of the nineteenth century in its historical role as commercial and cultural cross-roads, was a major centre of *fin-de-siècle* artistic activity, even though the city's importance in this respect has only recently come to be fully appreciated in historical perspective. The foregoing chapters have investigated the part played by Alexandre de Riquer in the Catalan dimension of a truly international movement and in the local assimilation of those ideas and artistic currents that configured in large measure the outstanding phenomenon of Catalan *Modernisme*. The following pages now present and comment on the documentary evidence of Riquer's direct contacts with the world of con-

temporary British and, to a much lesser extent,, with North American art.

1. Alexandre de Riquer's visits to England

a) Some commentators give 1874 as the date of Riquer's first stay in London, at the age of 18. This is quite unsubstantiated. The family history written by our subject's grandson (Martí de Riquer, *Quinze generacions d'una família catalana*, 1979) shows incontrovertibly that in early 1874 Alexandre was at the Beaux-Arts school in Toulouse; by March he was with his father in Pau, later to go, in that same month, to the Spanish Basque country. By April he was back in Barcelona.

b) In 1879 Riquer visited Italy. No correspondence from this journey survives, but it is corroborated by some drawings and a picture signed and dated Rome, 1879.

An otherwise reliable biographical sketch of Riquer published in the collection *Lectura Popular* (Vol. VI, 1916) gives 1879 as the date of his first visits to Paris and London, as an extension of the Italian journey. As well as there being no documentary evidence of such an itinerary, there is the equally conclusive fact, as we have remarked already in our Chapter II, that Riquer's artistic production and development bear no marks of a contact which would certainly have left a deep impression on a creative personality in a very receptive and formative stage.

c) That Riquer did visit London eventually in 1894 is documented by two letters, dated 30 May and 1 June 1894, from his wife Maria Dolors Palau, which have been conserved by the family of Josep Maria de Riquer. Lolita's complaints about her husband's long absence indicate that he was in London for some two months, over May and June. An envelope discloses his address—The Charing Cross Hotel—a residence which was obviously to his liking since he would return there in 1906.

A letter from Riquer, translated and reproduced by Fernando Arteaga in his article on the Catalan artist commissioned by *The Studio* (Vol. XIX, April 1900), contains a pondered and revealing statement by Riquer, who declared that it was:

a journey that fixed my present theory of art. It was then that English art revealed itself to me in all the strength of its deep rooted personality. After I had been admiring the Old Masters at the galleries the Modern Masters stood before me as strong as ever, and with all their profound knowledge of their art —Burne-Jones, Millais, Moore, and, above all to me, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, blazing like a sunflower of poetry, reflecting and reproducing

REVISTA MENSUAL
CON LA TRADUCCIÓN DEL TEXTO EN ESPAÑOL

THE · STUDIO

An Illustrated Magazine
of Fine & Applied Art

MARCH
15, 1906

VOL. 37
No. 156



44 Leicester Square
LONDON · W.C

Monthly
1s/-net

OPICINA DE PARIS:
LIBRERIA OLLENIXOFF
50 CHAUSSEE D'ANTIN
PRECIO 2 FRANCS NETO

absolute beauty. And then, outside the galleries, there were Aubrey Beardsley's Avenue Theatre poster on the walls of the streets and of the Underground railway stations, his Yellow Book cover in the booksellers' windows, Hardy's 'Gaiety Girl' at the theatre doors, the first number of *The Studio* on the bookstalls. I was dazzled by the brilliance of schemes of art that responded to my own ideas, as well as by the originality and richness of the creations of industrial art due to the genius of William Morris. I picked up what I could from all this, and carefully wrote down my impressions of it all, for I meant to proclaim these hitherto unknown glories in Catalonia. Especially I brought back with me the first number of *The Studio*, and I am proud of the fact that, when in other places that now eagerly follow in it every manifestation of Modern Art there was still an almost complete ignorance of this wonderful Review, there are artists in Barcelona among its earliest subscribers.

It is interesting to note here how the excitement of a personal discovery is linked to an awareness of the collective significance of this 'modernity'.

d) From the end of November and through December 1906 Alexandre de Riquer was travelling in England, an important journey as far as artistic relations between England and Spain are concerned. As mentioned in our Chapter II, the journey was made in the company of the friend and colleague J.M. Tamburini, in connection with the Barcelona International Exhibition of Fine Arts and Artistic Industries of 1907. Details of Riquer's activities as official commissioner for the English section at this exhibition are reviewed below in our Section 3.

e) The journeys to England of 1894 and 1906 are the only ones for which documentary evidence exists. While any visit there in 1879 can be virtually discounted, there does remain the tantalising—though as yet undocumented—possibility that Riquer might have been to England around 1901-1902. The indications of this are tenuous but not improbable. Riquer's official nomination as English commissioner for the 1907 Barcelona exhibition, in a decree which made explicit reference to his profound knowledge of the English art world and of his privileged contacts with many artists, is perhaps hard to explain on the basis of a single visit in 1894, when the Catalan artist was completely unknown in London. Moreover it is noteworthy that in 1903 Riquer sold to the Barcelona Museum of Art and Archaeology José Ribera's *Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew* for

15,000 pesetas. This might well be the canvas with this title that was bought by Sharpe at the sale of the Louis-Philippe collection in London in 1853, documented by Baticle and Marinas (*La Galerie espagnole de Louis-Philippe au Louvre*, [Paris 1981]). The likelihood is that the picture would still have been in London fifty years later. It is most improbable that Riquer would have acquired it in 1894 and held on to it for nine years, however enthusiastic a collector (or shrewd a dealer) he might have been. The hypothesis is, then, that Riquer visited London just prior to the attested sale of 1903. Our curiosity on this score is fired by the fact that the bulk of Riquer's correspondence has still to be unearthed. Until such time there will remain this and other intriguing gaps in his biography.

f) We can be virtually certain that Riquer did not return to England after 1906. There was one occasion which might have brought him back but evidently did not. He was officially the commissioner (with J.M. Witty, the British vice-consul, and George R. Smither) for the British section of the VI (1911) International Art Exhibition in Barcelona, but he did not participate in the selection and preparation of this event, according to the exhibition documents still held in the archives of the Museum of Modern Art in Barcelona.

2. Publications by Alexandre de Riquer on the subject of British and American Art

a) 'Cartells y cartellistas', *La Renaixensa*, No. 7802, 13/5/1899

The Catalan daily *La Renaixensa* printed the text of a lecture given by Riquer to the *Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluc* on Tuesday, May 9, 1899. The occasion of the lecture was itself, in fact, a pretext to organise a poster exhibition on the premises of the Circle at a time when poster art was expanding as a vogue. In his talk Riquer dealt with this new art form the world over, with detailed attention being paid to activity in Britain and the USA. After alluding to Fred Walker's *The White Lady* of 1877, the first modern English poster, Riquer acquainted his audience with the work of Dudley Hardy, Steer, Greiffenhagen and Aubrey Beardsley. Reference was also made to Robert Aiming Bell, Mabel Dearmer, Raven Hill, Leon V. Solon, H. Ellis Morrow, Foulkes, Mackintosh, J. Hassal, the panorama being rounded off with the Beggarstaff brothers (William Nicholson and James Pride) whose originality Riquer underlined. He also expressed his particular admiration of the North American

poster, wherein he felt that the figures and their background, the lettering and the decoration were all combined and unified with subtle artistry. After mentions of Edward Penfield and Wartos Edwards, Riquer stressed the originality of Louis J. Read and of William Bradley who, with Ethel Reed, were considered the leading exponents of poster design in the USA. The important point in Riquer's conclusion concerns the relevance of contemporary poster art to the democratisation and the exuberance of modern art, no longer confined to its sanctuaries—museums, churches and private houses—but now present in the street and in public places of all kinds.

b) 'Aubrey Beardsley', *Joventut*, I, No. 1, 15/2/1900

First, it is worth remarking on the significant coincidence that this article on Aubrey Beardsley appears in the inaugural number of *Joventut*, echoing the way that the first article on Beardsley in Britain, under the signature of Joseph Pennell, appeared in the initial number of *The Studio* in 1893. Riquer was well acquainted with Pennell's piece and we can conclude that the significant coincidence was deliberate. The former was artistic director of *Joventut*, the most important organ of late *Modernisme*, for which he had designed the banner title (see p. 16 above), and his ambition was to make it the Catalan equivalent of *The Studio*. Despite the relatively late date (Beardsley had died in 1898), this was the first article on the doyen of British decadent art to be published in Spain. Riquer's text is illustrated with five vignettes representative of his subject's bold linear style. The article itself opens with a brief biographical note and then passes on to discuss Beardsley's first masterpiece, the illustration of Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, a book which the Catalan had in his collection. Emphasising the perfume of the dream music and the penetrating sweet sadness that the images here evoke, Riquer moves on to the polemical illustration of Wilde's *Salome*, Beardsley's work in the thirteen volumes of *The Yellow Book* and his last major work in the contributions to *The Savoy*. He also pays attention to Beardsley's activity in poster art, underlining the personal and highly original character of his creations, and the failure of his many imitators. Like so many of his contemporaries, Riquer was struck by the strangeness of Beardsley's talent. He looks upon him as a refined spirit and perverse intellect, the most representative image-maker of the nineteenth century on account of his pathological delicacy, the

6

JOVENTUT



AUBREY BEARDSLEY

El dibuixant més característic del segle XIX, l'esperit refinat, el pervers intel·lectual, que fou Aubrey Beardsley, va començar sa vida del modo digne d'un home que tot ho fa avans d'hora. Sembla un d'aquells silenciosos de que parla Maeterlinck, sembla que guardi'l terrible secret de clarividència que fa pressentir la mort estalioñant, sent que s'afanyi a escapar pel món la seva producció malaltissa, incisiva, penetrant, extranya barreja que atrau i repugna tot a l'hora.

A cinch anys dirigia a l'nodres uns concerts que sorprenen l'auditori; als deu va entrar a estudi, y poch després, apretat per las necessitats de la vida, viatjava acompanyat de sa germana pels voltants de la capital, recitant y representant comedias en las que se endeviaava'l gust exquisit del nen desconegut.

Aquell nen sentia dintre d'ell las aspiracions

del artista; apassionat per la literatura, entusiasta de la música, fervent devot de la pintura y del dibuix en que resumia totas las esperansas de la seva ànima, y qu'estudiava sol per falta de mestres, encariyantes y contemplat admirat las manifestacions més humils del art japonès que veya en els aparadors de Picasilli, y ab las obras incomparables de Bourne Jones; aquell nen havia d'èsser un talent reconegut en vida, apassionadament discutit y apassionadament alabat.

Al entrar als quinze anys, segula'ls cursos de la Escola de Bellas Arts que prompte tingué de deixar per entrar al comerç, acceptant una colocació que l'ajudava a viure a ell, a la mare y a la germana.

En aquells tristes dies la seva ànima's revelava contra las impositions de la necessitat. Aubrey Beardsley no havia nascut per traficant de gèneros ni drogas; se sentia artista y no botiguer; las lecturas qu'havia fet, sol ó acompanyat de sa germana, l'havien convertit, en algunas especialitats, en un dels homes més instruhits de Anglaterra, y podieu comptarse ab els dits d'una mà las eminencias que coneguessin y haguessin estudiat tan fonament com ell als dramaturgs inglesos de la era de Isabel.

En 1892, quan no tenia més que divuyt anys, aparegué per primera vegada com a il·lustrador. Els senyors Dent & C.^a, publicavan una serie de *Bons mots*; Beardsley va dibuixarhi uns *groteschs* per decorarne un tomo, y els seus dibuixos, còcra que faltats de conexió ab el text, cridaren tan poderosament l'atenció, que l'editor va encarregarli la il·lustració de *La mort d'Arthur*, per la que buscava dibuixant ja feya temps.

La empresa era enorme, exigia un treball constant y regular; y no fou poca l'admiració dels que la coneixian, al veure qu'en l'espay de dos anys quedava terminada.

Avans de que acabés aquesta obra importantíssima, Beardsley era conegut en Anglaterra y América, degut al treball qu'executava per altres editors. Un article que publicà *The Studio* en son primer número firmat per Pennell, li obri las portas de la celebritat europea.

No n'hi havia per menos; aquesta celebritat era ben deguda el seu talent originaat, que rompia de cop moltillos y rutina.

incisive and unsettling edge which endows his work with such an ambivalent fascination.

c) 'L'Album—Catalech dels enrajolats hidraulichs de la casa Escofet, Tejera y Cia', *Joventut*, I, No. 13, 10/5/1900

This article, dealing with new processes of tile-production, is significant for containing a forceful defence of the equality of the Decorative Arts with Fine Arts. Behind this one detects the influence of trends from England, in particular the ideas of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement. Referring to the products of the company mentioned in his title, Riquer affirms that industrial art must be taken as seriously as painting or sculpture, that in a country as enviably modern as England talented artists like Morris or Walter Crane do not consider it beneath them to undertake projects in tilework, furniture, book or wallpaper design. On the contrary, their intervention ennobles what might otherwise be considered vulgar products. On the other hand, though, Riquer criticises Catalan industrialists who buy low-cost designs from abroad, arguing that every community has an individual character, a particular collective being that its own decorative art should reflect. Catalan-ness can only be expressed through a distinctive national genius in creation. The important point is that England is proposed as an example—of nationhood and its corresponding artistic autonomy—but not as a model to be followed slavishly. One of the essentials of the *modernista* ideology and programme is thus forcefully articulated, from a prominent platform, by Riquer.

d) 'Ex-libris', *La Lectura*, No. 24, 1902, pp. 476-496

This article seems to have been largely inspired by the special Christmas number of *The Studio* of 1898-99, entitled *Modern Bookplates and their Designers*, a copy of which Riquer possessed. In his world-wide panorama of book-plate design (covering England, Austria, Germany, USA, Belgium, France and Spain) the author highlights England as the main centre of the revival of this 'refined' art form. He writes of 'the wise doctrines which were inculcated in the British artists by powerful genius of Ruskin, through his rigorous critical writings, and by Dante Gabriel Rossetti through his works'. There follows a rapid inventory of seventeen leading designers in the field, including Walter Crane, Charles Robinson, J.V. Simpson and Beardsley, concluded with discussion of his favourite artist, Robert Aiming Bell. The text is accompanied by reproductions of items by

Byam Shaw, Bell and J.V. Simpson, undoubtedly selected from his own collection which was one of the most important in Spain.

On the subject of North-American book-plates, Riquer points out that production has only recently begun but that its development has been rapid. Seven artists are cited (J. Chambers, Isaac Morton, E.A. Alls, L.J. Read, Walter J. Enright, W.W. Denslow and H.E. Goodhue) with plates by Denslow and Enright reproduced. (Several of the names from this and the preceding paragraph will recur in the section below dealing with Riquer's correspondence with designers.) Riquer's conclusion is that the recent American production can stand comparison with best British work.

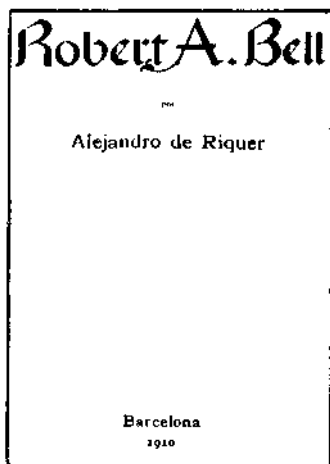
The importance of this article is two-fold: it is the first discussion published anywhere in Spain on modern book-plate design, and it marks the start of a flourishing phase of creativity in the genre, centred in Catalonia where it is an integral component of *modernista* artistic innovation in the opening decade of the twentieth century.

e) *Robert Anning Bell*, 1910

It was a more substantial item than an article—a 28-page quarto booklet, in Castilian—that Riquer published on the work of Bell, a measure of his special admiration for this artist and his work. The edition was produced for him by the best Catalan printer of the time, Oliva of Vilanova i La Geltrú, and Riquer managed to bring together for it 32 illustrations. In an undated letter to Riquer from Charles Holme, the director of *The Studio*, the latter explains his inability to locate a lithograph by Bell which the former was convinced had appeared in that journal. It is an indication of the effort invested by the author in this publication, even though the print in question was evidently not discovered.

We might wonder why Bell was Riquer's favourite British artist. Riquer himself here supplies the answer:

We can recall our surprise... on seeing accomplished something about which we had privately dreamed and which we could not



quite define; a great correctness of manner, reminiscent of the masters of the Italian Renaissance, revealed through Japanese-style shading, so starkly simple that it can be called classical.

In other words, it was the two-dimensional stylised compositions favoured by Bell that so appealed to Riquer's sensibility. The English artist was, moreover, one of the principal exponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement, specialising in book-illustration and in the design of book-plates, for which Riquer frequently expressed admiration.

Here, though, Riquer covers and analyses the diverse range of Bell's talents: his oil paintings, watercolours, lithography, stained glass and polychrome bas-reliefs in stucco. We have here too an authoritative account of the English artist's life and work, founded on information in a letter from Miss Hamel Lister, a disciple of the master from Liverpool University's Art School, the text of which Riquer reproduced in translation. The parallel he traces between Beardsley and Bell is interesting, and it supplies a good definition of his subject's art:

The type of neurosis which characterises Aubrey Beardsley does not overwhelm Bell; the latter sees things simply and in a clear light, being less attracted by the representation of modern life; the former surprises and disconcerts, the latter enchants and seduces.

3. The English Section of the V Exhibition of Beaux Arts and Industrial Arts, Barcelona 1907

a) The preparatory journey of A. de Riquer and J.M. Tamburini
Riquer's letters to the leading critic Raimon Casellas, a member of the Exhibition's executive committee, and to Carlos Pirozzini, the secretary-general to the organisers (as well as Tamburini's to Casellas of 20/12/1906) bear witness to the two Catalans' formal contacts with the English art world. As mentioned, Riquer, nominated official commissioner of the exhibition's English section, together with the idealist painter Tamburini, who was on the executive committee, stayed in Britain from the end of November 1906 until December 21 of that year, being together charged with selecting and inviting the participation of English artists. Thanks to R.A. Bell, Alice Woodward and the influential art-critic Konody, the Catalan pair were able to meet some well-known artists. Among the large number who promised to send their work were Bell himself, William

Lee Hankey, Byam Shaw, Arthur Rackham and his wife, Alfred East, James Nicholson, Joseph Pennell, Alexander Fisher, Leon V. Solon, Walter Crane, Charles Shannon, David Y. Cameron and George Clausen, and the sculptor George Frampton. Frank Brangwyn was offered a special room to house his decorated mural panels to be done for the occasion. Konody himself promised to take charge of a retrospective section containing works of Watts, Burne-Jones, Millais and Whistler. In the event, he promised more than he could deliver, and in the catalogue there appeared only



Burne-Jones's portrait in oils of Miss D. Menpes and a red-pencil study of a head by the same artist. According to documents in the exhibition archives (now in the Museum of Modern Art of Barcelona), Konody was also to have attended to give a lecture during the exhibition. It did not take place (Konody apparently having taken fright at the prospect of having to speak in public in either French or Spanish!), despite the fact that the latter had expressed to Riquer his desire to make contacts in the Spanish art world. Writing to his friend, the critic Miquel Utrillo, then the editor of the journal *Forma*, Riquer mentions this and Konody's interest in establishing an exchange with *The Connoisseur* which he edited. In another letter (to Pirozzini, 9/12/1906) we discover the interesting detail that Riquer and Tamburini were keen to mobilise the American artists resident in England and to organise an American section in the exhibition. That this did not materialise can be attributed to political reasons: memories and complications surviving from the recent (1898) Spanish-USA confrontation over Cuba.

As for the second aspect of the exhibition, industrial art, Riquer and Tamburini had contacted Alexander Fisher and Leon V. Solon, William Morris's Kelmscott Press and Ricketts's Vale Press, as well as several leading book-binders. While Tamburini went to Manchester

to obtain a work by Holman Hunt, Riquer went up to Leck on the Scottish borders to see the weaving studio directed by Leon V. Solon where fabrics were produced to designs by William Morris.

That the executive committee was most satisfied by their two agents' work in England is shown in the minutes of their meeting of March 4, 1907. At an earlier meeting, on January 26, the same committee had approved expenses, for the journey and for shipments, totalling 4,000 pesetas.

b) The English Section

The names of the artists mentioned in letters from Riquer and Tamburini do not quite match with those who actually figured in the exhibition. Crane, Shannon, Cameron and Clausen did not send any work. On the other hand one finds in the catalogue a great number of minor figures who were doubtless contacted later by Victoriano Codina Länglin, an Anglo-Catalan artist who lived in London and who was a delegate of the English section, along with the Spanish Consul in London, Joaquín M. Torroja, and the Vice-Consul, Eduard Toda, both Catalans. The latter took charge of all the administrative arrangements, giving Riquer and Tamburini every assistance during their stay in London. It was due no doubt to this high degree of coordination that so many of the artists contacted by Riquer and Tamburini and mentioned in the correspondence actually participated in the exhibition. The event clearly awoke interest in English artistic circles, as is evidenced, for example, by the fact that the outstanding sculptor Francis Derwent Wood on his own initiative accompanied George Frampton to Barcelona. In the end the Leck fabrics did not arrive and Ricketts's Vale Press display was replaced by samples from the presses of J. Gulhrie, W. Heinemann and the Eragny Press of Lucien Pissarro.

Brangwyn did not himself decorate the room assigned to him, but Riquer used the artist's specially commissioned plans to paint the decorative panels which, unfortunately, were not retained after the exhibition. The decoration of the main room housing the English section was also assigned to Riquer. Miquel Utrillo, writing in *Forma*, summarised the positive results of Riquer's commitment to the total enterprise:

The English artists have been lucky to find in Mr. Riquer the most careful collaborator for supervising the hanging of their work, and the selection that he himself made in London gives the Barcelona visitors an excellent idea of British Fine Arts.

The awards and commendations for the artists themselves were numerous, as was usual in this type of exhibition. It must be said that the quality of work exhibited in the foreign sections was remarkably high, when compared with the standard of previous exhibitions in Barcelona. The French Impressionists showed here for the first time in Spain, while Rodin and Puvis de Chavannes were also making important 'firsts'. This is the context in which to judge the exceptional diploma awarded to Brangwyn, and all the other commendations: first-class medals to Gerald Moira, George Sauter, Alfred East, Lee Hankey, John Lavedy, Byam Shaw, Joseph Pennell, James Guthrie and E.H. Sullivan; second-class medals to Thomas Austen Brown, Alfred Withers, A.K. Brown, Horace Mann Livens, R.A. Bell, Francis Derwent Wood, and Alexander Fisher; third-class to Sidney Lee and George Houston.

c) The sales of English works

As in the Paris *salons*, the majority of works on show at the Barcelona International Exhibitions were on sale. Riquer's personal copy of the 1907 exhibition catalogue, discovered some years ago by E. Trenc in the library of the Borràs de Riquer family in Palma de Mallorca, clearly indicates that he had been given responsibility by the English artists for the sale of their work. In this document, at the side of the titles of the works exhibited, there is a note of the names of the buyers and of the prices paid. These details correspond closely with the content of another document, recently unearthed in the exhibition archives, which is a formal record of the works sold, the purchasers and the prices. Both institutional and private buyers are included together in this list since the transactions were effected through a global payment administered in London by Eduard Toda. If we add to this list those works which were presented by the artists as gifts to the Barcelona Museum, we see the complete inventory of the English works which remained in Catalonia after the exhibition of 1907. Full details are reproduced below, for their documentary and anecdotal interest, with titles given in Spanish as they appeared on display.

i) Works acquired by the Provincial Council, the City Council and the Barcelona Museum of Art and Archaeology, currently housed in the Museum of Modern Art

<i>Artist</i>	<i>Catalogue No.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Technique</i>	<i>Price (pesetas)</i>
Bell, R.A.	1	Cúpido jugando a las cartas	oil	1,400
	3	El ruiseñor	water colour	1,000
	71			
	72	Ilustraciones para los poemas de Shelley	pen drawings	gift from the artisit
	73			
	74			
Brangwyn, F.	5	La taberna	oil	7,000
	11	Alamos blancos	oil	1,000
	18	Santa María de la Salute (Venecia)	engraving	2,400
	19	La cuerda de remolque	"	Donation of 1,000 ptas from Cabot
	20	Mujeres de Brujas	"	
	21	Lavando botellas	"	
	22	Los curtidores	"	
	23	Puerta (Brujas)	"	
	24	Regreso del trabajo	"	
	25	Barracas (Brujas)	"	
	26	Carnicería	"	
	27	Casas viejas (Gante)	"	
	28	Molinos de viento	"	
	29	El Rialto (Venecia)	"	
	30	Resto de Hanibal	"	
	31	Construyendo el Museo de South Kensington	"	
	32	Deshaciendo el 'Caledonia'	"	
Burne-Jones	76	Estudio de cabeza	red pencil	918
Byam Shaw, Mrs.	12	Retrato de Byam Shaw, B.	minature	1,250
		Retrato de Mrs. Turner Phillips	"	
Crawford, S.	102	Longpré	etching	130
	103	La avenida	"	130
East, Alfred	104	Un temporal en los Cotswolds	"	130
Fisher, A.	159	Cáliz	silver enamel	
	160	Cáliz	ivory and silver enamel	
	77	Proyecto de copa	drawing	
	78	Proyecto de lámpara eléctrica de plata	"	6,625

	79	Proyecto de una cajita de plata	"	
	80	Proyecto de tríptico en esmalte	"	
	81	Proyecto de copa	"	
Konody, I.	29	Melisande	miniature	280
Lee Hankey	34	El beso	water colour	1,000
Moir, G.	44	Hercules y Deyanira	oil	2,000
Pennell, J.	125	El Diablo de Notre-Dame de Paris	etching	
	126	El sitio más pintoresco del mundo	"	250
	132	Puerta Bisagra en Toledo	"	
Priestman, B.	52	Marea baja en el Solway	oil	750
Solon, L.V.	166	Ave Maria Stella	ceramic enamel	
	168	El baño de la ninfas	"	2,287
	169	La reina Isabel	"	
Sullivan E.	139	Caos	lithography	1,000
	140	Cefiro y Flora	water colour	
Woodward, A.	89	El mercador de Venecia	drawing	300

Several books, published by James Guthrie (£2), William Heinemann (£4) and Lucien Pissaro (£3), were acquired by the Junta de Museos for the Museum Library.

ii) Works acquired by private individuals

Artist	Cat. No.	Title	Technique	Purchaser	Price
Brown, A.	94	Pequeña aldea	wood engraving	F. Grash Griesel	£6
	95	El pasto	"	"	
Bell, R.A.	75	Ilustraciones para los poemas de Shelley	drawings	Felix Boix	200 ptas.
Fisher, S.M.	18	Adormideras	oil	Julio Barbey	1,100 ptas.
Rackham, E.	54	Busto de niña	"	Real Asociación de Cazadores de Barcelona	900 ptas.
Sims, C.	60	Ramas de haya	"	Julio Barbey	£20
Smith, M.	61	Paisaje	"	"	400 ptas.
Solon, L.V.	135	Ilustraciones para 'Les Trophées' de Heredia	engraving	Ramón Perés	£2
Woodward, A.	91	El hombre de la peluca encarnada	drawing	Real Asociación de Cazadores de Barcelona	200 ptas.

The relatively high ratio of sales to exhibits —over 25% of the works on show in this section— together with the similar proportion of commendations, is corroboration of the conclusion expressed in *The Studio* (vol. 43, 1908) that 'this event was a great success for the British contributors'. This success, as we have seen, was due in large measure to the efforts of Alexandre de Riquer. He himself, in the little book on R.A. Bell, relates how the single oil-painting exhibited by this artist was acquired for the Barcelona museum by a local group of artists and art-lovers. It seems quite evident that Riquer was the instigator of the move, symbolising a bond of artistic friendship. Likewise, the friendship between the Catalan artist and Leon V. Solon was consolidated in the same circumstance. Surviving correspondence (conserved in the archives, in Castilian translation no doubt because of insurance matters alluded to therein) expresses Solon's appreciation of Riquer's 'friendship and consideration' related to the satisfaction at having achieved his first 'triumph' in Barcelona. As well as offering one of his exhibits as a personal gift to his Catalan friend, there is reference in the first of two letters to an exchange of book-plates, the medium which was almost by definition a form of international artistic communication.

4. Correspondence with book-plate designers

From his correspondence we see that Riquer wrote in French to his British contacts. It is to be supposed that this language, which he spoke fluently, would have also been the medium of his conversation with contacts in England. He did have, nevertheless, a good reading knowledge of English, as is proved by the contents of his library and by his close familiarity with the work of a writer like Dante Gabriel Rossetti.



Tinch l'honor d'enviarvos mon Ex-libris esperant qu'en cambi m'afavorireu ab lo vostre.

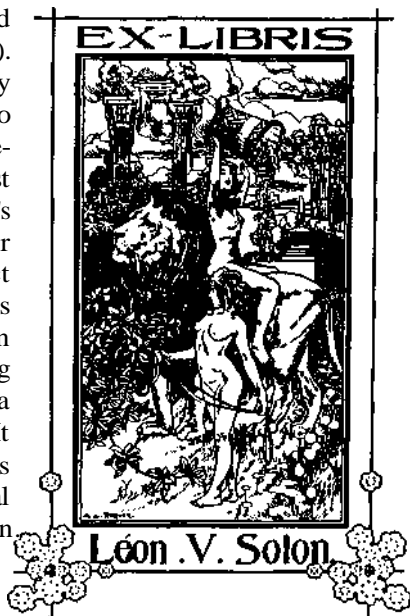
Enclosed you will find my Ex-Libris and I shall be very much pleased to receive yours in return.

Hiermit sende Ich Ihnen mein Ex-Libris und bitte Sie um das Ihrige für meine Sammlung.

J'ai l'honneur de vous envoyer ci-inclus mon Ex-Libris et j'aurais grand plaisir en recevant le vôtre en échange.

A. DE RIQUER - BARCELONA, FRANCE, 5

Many of Riquer's papers were disposed of years ago by the Borràs de Riquer family, and the surviving items concerned with his activities as book-plate designer and collector are assumed to be only a fraction of much more compendious correspondence. They comprise thirteen letters from England (signed by Edwin A. Abbey, John D. Batten, R.A. Bell, James Guthrie, A.E. Harrison, Hamel Lister, W.H. Margetson, Harold H. Nelson, J. Vinycomb, Walter West, John Williams and Alice B. Woodward) and five from the USA (from W.W. Denslow, William E. Fisher, E.D. French, Maxfield Parrish and Wilbur M. Stone). The letters themselves are basically formal and their content is of no great historical importance. Moreover, they serve to guard us against exaggerating or mythifying Riquer's privileged relations with major creative artists in Britain. The fact that R.A. Bell in 1902 responds 'with great pleasure', while in 1903 he sends back Riquer's offering and declares that he is not a collector, is quite revealing. It shows how important was Riquer's journey of 1906 in creating a real rapport and firm connections in England.



The only other prominent signature in the batch is that of Maxfield Parrish, and his remarks about his 'disastrous attempts' and 'proofs of things that have not much resemblance to book-plates' reveal a delightfully wry humour. Two general points do arise, however, from this small corpus of documents. The first is that Riquer, as book-plate designer, was very much appreciated and admired by his peers, Margetson 'envied the possession' of the King Alfonso plate which he had been shown by Bell. H.H. Nelson declares himself 'charmed' by Riquer's offering, and, interestingly, praises the 'sympathetic interpretation' given by 'an excellent printer who appears to be able to do justice to very delicate line-work'. The second point is that the initial contact made through these formal exchanges prepared the ground and facilitated the warm reception Riquer received in London, in 1906, particularly from R.A. Bell and Alice Woodward.

5. The reception of Riquer's work in Britain and the USA

We cannot claim that Riquer made a striking name for himself in the British art world. Only the painters Zuloaga and, slightly later, Josep Maria Sert constituted exceptions to the general disregard shown in Great Britain towards Spanish art in the early years of this century. (It would be a different story when Picasso and then Dalí, Miró and their successors made their appearance.) However, in spite of this, it remains true that through his posters and book-plates Alexandre de Riquer enjoyed a projection abroad greater than that of any of his Catalan or Spanish contemporaries

Coinciding with the dates of his contacts with book-plate designers referred to above, there are a handful of articles in specialist British journals devoted to Spanish activity in this sphere, where we find Riquer's name mentioned and given prominence. Two plates of his were reproduced in number 4 of *The Book of Book-Plates*, published in Edinburgh in August 1902. He is cited in an article by Marc Jesus Bertran, 'Ex-libris in Spain', printed in Vol. III number 28 of *The Picture Postcard and Collectors Chronicle* (London, 1902). Curiously, a piece with the same title was published in the same month (October) of that year in *The St. James's Gazette* (Vol. XLV, number 6926). The April 1903 number (Vol. III, number 3) of the Edinburgh review *The Book of Book-Plates* contained a brief notice on Riquer and Josep Triadó.

Interest in Riquer's poster work is recorded from slightly earlier. A four-page article ('A mural decorative artist in Catalonia') appeared in the specialist journal *The Poster*, signed by the French expert Maurice Demeur who was well acquainted with his subject's work in the genre. Here Riquer is considered as the leading poster designer in Spain and praised for his pure, delicate line-work within the beautiful simplicity of his compositions. Another specialist periodical, *The Poster Collector's Circular*, of February 1899 published a piece on 'New Poster, Spanish Poster', which was reproduced in the following month in *The Poster*. The author, C. Street, undertakes here to introduce to his English public the work of a group of poster designers who would have been more appropriately called the 'Catalan school', comprising principally Miquel and Antoni Utrillo, Ramon Casas, J. Torres-Garcia, Adrià Gual etc.. Riquer figures prominently in this company, and it is revealed that the latter's work fetches the best prices on the London market (seven shillings per copy), second only to Ramon Casas's outstanding *Anís del Mono* at ten shillings.

The July 1903 number of *The Poster and Post Card Collector* carried an announcement of the opening of a poster exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. Riquer is listed among the participators, along with Casas, Utrillo and Rusiñol. The Victoria and Albert Museum possesses several posters by our artist: two items which were reproduced in the popular collection *Les Maîtres de l’Affiche* (plate 64, *Tercera Exposición de Bellas Artes e Industrias Artísticas de Barcelona de 1896*, and plate 95, the advertisement for the firm of *Napoleon Fotógrafos*) and two original posters, being that for the 1896 exhibition and the impressive one done to advertise the journal *Juventut* donated by Mrs. Bertram Evans. In view of this it is curious that the print department of the V & A does not hold any examples of Riquer's book-plates or prints. The British Museum's print department, on the other hand, reportedly holds 76 of his book-plates (with no other Catalan artist represented in this section). These are items which were given to the Museum between 1907 and 1924 by the collectors Rosenheim, Campbell Dogson and Haldane Macfall, with the largest donation (71 pieces in all) coming, rather strangely, from a commercial enterprise, Broomhead, Cutts and Co. The donation was made in October 1920, the year of the artist's death, and we can only speculate as to the origins of the collection and the spirit of the bequest.

There is less mystery concerning the background to the most consequential article to appear in English on Alexandre de Riquer, published in Volume XIX of *The Studio* (April 1900). The author, Fernando de Arteaga y Pereira belonged to a cultivated Barcelona family. His brother, José Maria, was a writer and composer. Fernando himself was man of letters. He had collaborated with Felip Pedrell and Francesc Viada in compiling the essays and sketches in *Celebridades musicales*, published by Seguí in Barcelona, 1886; with D.E. de Vaudrey he had translated Bret Harte's *Californian Sketches* (*Bocetos californianos*) into Castilian, published by Domènech in 1883, and he was the author of a collection of not very brilliant maxims, *Quinientos cantares* that came out in Barcelona in 1897. He emigrated to England and in 1894 was appointed Lecturer in Spanish (later, 1921-1928, titular Professor) at the Taylorian Institution in the University of Oxford, where he taught until 1928, the year in which he was succeeded by Salvador de Madariaga. Alexandre de Riquer had known the Arteaga family for a long time, certainly since about 1880, possibly through their common friendship with Apel·les Mestres.

This familiarity with and direct access to his subject show through in F. de Arteaga's thorough, well-illustrated account of the diverse talents and the artistic personality of Riquer. He understood, for example, how his subject had become a 'stalwart Pre-Raphaelite', by an independent route, resulting from the 1879 journey to Italy, even before he was aware of the existence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Arteaga was likewise sensitive to how Japanese art had decisively influenced the formation of Riquer's personal style. He wrote with understanding of the latter's local milieu and of the international perspective, and, while praising in conclusion 'the sincerity of his convictions and the faithfulness with which he has pursued his own ideals', could appreciate this as 'the secret alike of his strength and of his limitations'.

The only other authority to pay, in print, serious critical attention to Riquer's work was A.G. Temple, director of the Guildhall Gallery, in his fine *Modern Spanish Painters* (1908). He devotes two pages to the Catalan artist, whose spirit he identified as being close to the otherworldliness of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He also suggests a parallel between Riquer and the Belgian artist Fernand Knopff, that 'prince of mystics'. It is interesting to note, then, that Temple's scope

is wide and objective enough to include Riquer within the general current of European Symbolism.

Several commentators, following Ràfols (*Diccionario biográfico de artistas de Cataluña*, Barcelona 1953), persist in assigning to Riquer the distinction of a first-class medal in a London Book Art exhibition, held around 1900, for the binding of his work *Crisantemes*. Firm evidence is still required to corroborate this. An even more fanciful notion in need of dismantling is the affirmation by Riquer's son, Josep Maria de Riquer ('Quan el meu pare ja no era noi', in the 1977 commemorative volume) that his father, on his 'second' visit to London in 1894, met both Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde. It is, indeed, intriguing to speculate what might have passed between them if their paths had crossed, but this is the stuff of illuminated fantasy, and not of history.

As one might expect, Riquer's name produced even fewer ripples in the New World. He did participate, however, in the World's Columbian Exhibition held in Chicago in 1892, the fourth centenary of the 'discovery'. He exhibited there one of his major canvasses, *The Divine Shepherdess* (1891) which was one of the first explicitly idealistic works done by a Catalan painter. The painting was reproduced in the Beaux-arts section of the exhibition catalogue. He also exhibited some pieces of furniture, which won him the only gold medal to be taken by a participator from Spain. After this, in the early years of the twentieth century, Riquer's reputation surfaced again briefly, in the exchanges with designers and collectors of book-plates, to which reference is made above.

A specialist journal, *Book Plate Collector*, devoted a piece in (November 1902) in Spain and for particular work in the field must also have connoisseurs and USA. There are correspondence in the indicates that Alexandre consultant to the Boston Museum for certain acquisitions of



The Literary Review and published in Boston, its first number to the book-plate singled out Riquer mention. His of poster design been known to specialists in the references too to family archive which might have acted as

is not unlikely. Certainly Riquer's experience and status as a knowledgeable collector would have made him an obvious target for long-range contacts in the world of international art trading.

Returning our attention to Britain, we observe that Riquer had no individual exhibition there. He did figure once, however, in a collective show, the VIII Exhibition of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, held at the New Gallery in Regent Street, in January-February, 1908. This occasion was organised as a kind of grateful reciprocation on the part of the British artists, particularly the painters, who were so pleased at their success in the 1907 Barcelona exhibition. They operated through the agency of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, which was presided over by Rodin and whose only members from Spain were the eminent painters Zuloaga and Anglada Camarasa. Alfred Withers, a member of the Society, who had won a medal in Barcelona, was the moving spirit of the enterprise, as is documented in letters from him to Riquer dated June and July 1907. Withers himself selected a list of works for display, which was submitted to Lavery, Vice-President of the Society, and which was then approved, 'with a few exceptions', by the governing council. Riquer exhibited two drawings, decorative studies of heads entitled *Cheveux d'or* and *Vision*. The exhibition catalogue, which has recently come to light, reveals that the other participators from Spain were Aureliano de Beruete, Agapito Casas, Ramon Casas, Joaquim Mir, Darío de Regoyos, Tamburini and Pablo Uranga. Riquer's part in this reverberation of the Barcelona exhibition, and in the appearance of an albeit tenuous Barcelona-London axis, is certainly worthy of note.

It remains true, however, that in his day Alexandre de Riquer was known in Britain only by a small sector of the artistic community and by colleagues in the world of book-plate and poster collecting. In this sense we can say that his international projection was symbolic (and symptomatic of developments in Catalonia) rather than widely effective. It goes without saying that today his name is even less known, even among specialist historians of modern art. It is distressing to report that his book on Robert Aiming Bell does not appear in the catalogue of any important London library. Our hope is that the present monograph will serve to redress this neglect. The 'British connection' of Alexandre de Riquer is an aspect of a major chapter of Catalan culture. The two-way nature of this connection

means that objective study of it focuses a side-light on the British dimension that complements the spot-light upon Riquer's key role in Catalan *Modernisme*.

6. English and American books, etc. in the library of Alexandre de Riquer

The list which we reproduce below is probably not the complete inventory of the English and American section of Riquer's library. However, as the majority of the volumes listed here, now held in the Barcelona Museums Library, were bought in a single lot, at the artist's death, by the well-informed art historian Joaquim Folch i Torres, we can safely suppose that few works of importance would have escaped him. Even so, a handful of 'stray' items were located in the library of Riquer's daughter, Emilia, in Palma de Mallorca.

A glance at the list is sufficient to make one realise that this collection of art literature, still impressive in its volume and range, must have been quite unique in its day in Catalonia and, needless to say, in the whole of Spain. Its richness can be seen to represent compensation for the short and relatively infrequent visits of Riquer to England. His reading, or at least the material that he had at hand for reference, supplies an insight into the depth of knowledge and appreciation that Riquer acquired about a specific, and fertile, zone of the international scene. Journals and magazines would, of course, have played a major role in keeping him abreast of news and the latest developments. The separate list betokens a real avidity for information and for novelty, of which the complete run of *The Studio*, from 1893 to 1910, is fully representative.

Also listed separately is the sizeable section of works devoted to book-plates, the scope and quantity of which naturally reflect Riquer's specialism in this area, particularly insofar as it was his principal active link with the Anglo-Saxon art world. More surprising is the paucity of the other separate list, of works dealing with poster art. We must surmise that some specialised items from this section have been lost, for it is unthinkable that he would not have held copies of *The Poster*, for example, at least of the number which carried an article on his work. Other strange 'lacunae' are *The Poster Collector's Circular* and *The Poster and Post Card Collector*, both of which, as mentioned above, published pieces on the state of the art in Spain.

The thematic profile of the main corpus of the collection reflects Riquer's main areas of interest. His favoured Pre-Raphaelites—Dante G. Rossetti, John Millais, Burne-Jones and William Morris—have a large presence among the works on modern art, but Turner, Whistler, Aubrey Beardsley and Frederic Leighton also figure prominently (showing, incidentally, how much higher then than now was the standing of the latter). In line with the admiration that they all shared for the Italian primitives, it is not surprising to find the strong representation here of works on Luca Signorelli, Filippino Lippi, Fra Angelico, Carlo Crivelli, Donatello, Pietro della Francesca, published in London between 1898 and 1902. One can imagine the enthusiasm with which these acquisitions must have been made during the 1906 visit.

Riquer's friendship with the versatile Leon V. Solon and his collector's taste for *objets d'art* explain the various titles on pottery, furniture and jewellery. The Arts and Crafts phenomenon was, of course, deeply engaging to Riquer, whence the abundance of items on the decorative and the graphic arts among his books. One notes the presence of Walter Crane's fine illustrated editions. It is, moreover, book illustration which is the connecting thread running through the literary content of the collection. As a bibliophile Riquer was evidently as interested in the container as in the contents, with the possible exception of the Pre-Raphaelite verse which he accumulated. This would explain his possession of different editions of the same work: Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* (1897 and 1905), for example, or the Dent and Heinemann printings of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. What his copies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1895) and *The Tempest* (1901), Keat's *Poems* (1897), *English Lyrics from Spencer to Milton* (1898), Jameson's *Shakespeare's Heroines* (1901), *Lycidas and other Odes* by Milton (1903) and *Palgrave's Golden Treasury* (1907) all have in common is that they were illustrated by Robert Arming Bell.

Most of the major British illustrators from the turn of the century are present in Riquer's collection: William Nicholson, Maurice Greiffenhagen, Kate Greenaway, Arthur Rackham, *et al.* J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, with the plates which are Rackham's masterpiece, comes with a dedication to Alexandre de Riquer 'With kind remembrances from Mr and Mrs Arthur Rackham'. Aubrey Beardsley occupies pride of place, though, with virtually all his major book illustrations: Malory's *Le morte d'Arthur*,

Wilde's *Salome*, Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, in addition to the work in *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*. In this connection it is interesting to note that, side by side with the major journals mentioned and other titles like *The Studio* and *The Graphic*, we find much lesser-known publications such as *The Green Sheaf*, *The Dome*, *The Elf*, and *The Quest*, the latter emanating from the Birmingham art school where William Morris's archaic artisan style remained pervasive.

All the tendencies of contemporary English illustration are present in this part of Riquer's library, from the neo-gothic archaism of *The Quest* through to the stark simplicity and boldness of line of William Nicholson and E. Gordon Craig. The panoply embraces the *Japonisme* and the decadent exquisiteness of Beardsley, Rackham's charming whimsies and Kate Greenaway's eighteenth-century nostalgics. Nonetheless all these journals evince a distinctly *fin-de-siècle* character and a spirit which sets them apart from their predecessors: the transformation of the volume itself into an *objet d'art* with the conscientiously decorative quality of the illustration expressed in the incorporation of vignettes, *culs de lampes*, ornate capital letters, all fusing typography and image into a unified, unique whole. For Riquer it was this which constituted the great lesson of English book art, whose conceptions, as we have seen, he implanted almost single-handedly into Catalonia.

We remark that Riquer's library contains relatively few American works, with the items on book-plates being conspicuous: the collection of booklets devoted to individual designers published by Goodspeed of Boston, the classic historical accounts of the genre by Dexter *et al*, and by Gade. Beyond this field the only features of note are: *William Bradley. His Book*, the periodical in which William Bradley produced his own finely lyrical illustrations, reminiscent of Beardsley though less pathological and disturbing; the collection of handsome covers of the *Inland Printer* from Chicago, and the monthly *The Quartier Latin*, a self-consciously Art Nouveau publication which was the organ of the American Art Association of Paris. The imbalance of British and American works stands out, to the extent that one concludes that the latter figure in Riquer's library only insofar as they are relevant to or reflective of British book art.

For the rest, we consider that the lists which follow speak for themselves, constituting a fascinating 'period piece', a rich feast for the imagination and the profile of a sensitive, curious and cultivated talent.



i) BOOKS

Anonymous:

A Record of An in 1898. The Studio.

Beauty's Awakening, London, The Studio, 1899.

Catalogue of Planotype Reproductions of Pictures & C. Photographed and Sold by Mr, Hollyen, No.9. Pembroke, London (Burne Jones, G.F. Watts, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Hans Holbein, etc...).

Inland Printer Covers. Chicago. The Inland Printer Company.

Modern Book-Bindings & their Designers. London. The Studio, 1900.

Reproductions from Illuminated Manuscripts (British Museum). London, Longmans & Co. 1907.

Spring Catalogue. The Copley Prints, Boston, Curlis & Cameron, 1899.

The An Gallery of the World's Columbian Exposition, George Barrie, Philadelphia, 1893.

The Art of 1897, London, offices of The Studio.

The Complete Cynic's Calendar of Revised Wisdom, 1906, Paul Elder and Co., San Francisco, 1906.

The Water-Colours of J.M. W. Turner, London, The Studio, 1909.

Armour, Margaret: *Songs of Love and Death*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1896.

Baldry, A.L.: *Modern British Water-Colour Drawings*, London, The Studio, 1900.

Baldry, A.L.: *Sir John Everett Millais. His An and Influence*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1899.

Barrie, J.M.: *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, with drawings by Arthur Rackham, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1906.

Harrington, Mac-Gregor: *King Long Beard or Annals of the Golden Dreamland*, London, John Lane, 1898.

Bate, Percy: *The English Pre-Raphaelite Painters*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1901.

Bell, Malcolm: *Edward Burne Jones*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1893.

Benson, Father Robert Hugh: *Reginald Balfour and S.C. Ritchie- An Alphabet of Saints-*, London, Burns & Cates, 1907.

Boccaccio: *Tales*, London, George Allen, 1899.

Bonser, A.E., Sidney Woolf, B. and Buchheim, E.S.: *The Land of Enchantment*, London, Cassell and Co, 1907.

Braine, Shila, E.: *To Tell the King the Sky is Falling*, London, Blackie and Son, Ltd.

Browning, Robert: *Poems*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1897.

Carlyle, Thomas: *Sartor Resartus*, London, George Bell & Sons, 1900.

Cook, Edward, T: *A Popular Handbook to the Tate Gallery*, 'National Gallery of British Art', London, Macmillan and Co, 1898.

Cosslet Smith, Arthur: *The Turquoise and the Desert*, London, John Lane, 1903.

Crane, Walter *Line and Form*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1902.

Crane, Walter: *Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1896.

Crane, Walter. *Queen Summer or the Tourney of the Lily and the Rose*, London, Cassell & Co.

Crane, Walter *Red Riding Hood's Picture Book*, London, John Lane, 1898.

Crane, Walter *The Bases of Design*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1898.

Crutwell, Maud: *Luca Signorelli*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1899.

Crafer, Warwick, H.: *The Historical Paintings in the Great Hall in London of the Worshipful Company of Skinners Aforetime of the Craft and Mystery of the Guild of the Body of Christ*, London, The Caradoc Press, 1909.

- Dennis, John (introd.): *English Lyrics from Spencer to Milton*, London, George Bell & Sons, 1898.
- Dixon, E. (ed.): *Fairy Tales of the Arabian Nights*, London J.M. Dent & Co., 1893.
- Doddridge Blackmore, Richard: *Fringulia or Tales in Verse*, Cleveland, The Burrows Brothers Co., 1895.
- Drury, C. and Fortnum, E.: *South Kensington An Handbooks*, London.
- Dunsany, Lord: *The Gods of Pregana*, London, Elkin Matthews, 1905.
- Evans, Sebastian (introd. and transl.): *The High of the Holy Grail*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1903.
- Field, Eugene: *Poems of Childhood*, London, John Lane, 1904.
- Gallatin, A.E.: *Aubrey Beardsley's Drawings*, London, Elkin Mathews, 1903.
- Goldsmith, Oliver: *The Deserted Village*, London & New York, Harper & Brothers, 1902.
- Goldsmith, Oliver: *The Deserted Village*, London, Constable & Co., 1909.
- Graham, Kenneth (introd.): *A Hundred Fables of Aesop*, London, John Lane, 1899.
- Graham, Kenneth: *Dream Days*, London, John Lane.
- Graham, Kenneth: *The Golden Age*, London, John Lane.
- Greenaway, Kate: *Kate Greenaway's Birthday Book for Children*, London and New York, Frederic Wame and Co.
- Grimm, Brothers: *Fairy Tales*, London, Constable and Co., 1909.
- Grimm, Brothers: *Household Tales*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1901.
- Hamilton, Myra: *Kingdoms Curious*, London, William Heinemann, 1905.
- Hendry, Hamish: *Red Apple and Silver Bells*, London, Blackie and Son.
- Holme, Charles: *An in England During the Elizabethan & Stuart Periods*, London, The Studio, 1908.
- Holme, Charles: *Colour Photography and Other Recent Developments of the Art of the Camera*, London, The Studio, 1908.
- Holme, Charles: *Masters of Landscape Paintings: J.S. Cotman, David Cox, Peter de Wint*, London, The Studio, 1903.
- Holme, Charles: *Modern British Domestic Architecture and Decoration*, London, The Studio, 1901.
- Holme, Charles: *Modern Design in Jewellery and Fans*, London, The Studio 1902.
- Holme, Charles: *Modern Etchings and Engravings*, London, The Studio, 1902.
- Holme, Charles: *Modern Pen Drawings European and American*, London, The Studio, 1900-1901.
- Holme, Charles: *Old English Country Cottages*, London, The Studio, 1906.
- Holme, Charles: *Royal Scottish Academy*, London, The Studio, 1907.
- Holme, Charles: *Representative Art of Our Time*, London, The Studio, 1903.
- Holme, Charles: *Sketching Grounds*, London, The Studio, 1909.
- Holme, Charles: *The Art Revival in Austria*, London, The Studio, 1906.
- Holme, Charles: *The Gardens of England in the Midland & Eastern Counties*, London, The Studio, 1908.
- Holme, Charles: *The Old Water-Colour Society, 1804-1894*, London, The Studio, 1905.
- Holme, Charles: *The Royal Academy from Reynolds to Millais*, London, The Studio, 1904.
- Holme, Charles: *The Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours*, London, The Studio, 1906.
- Hutton, Edward (introd.): *Palgrave's Golden Treasury*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1907.

- Ingoldsby, Thomas: *The Ingoldsby Legends or Mirth and Marvels*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1907.
- Irving, Washington: *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, from the sketch book of Washington Irving, published for Will Bradley by R.H. Russell, New York, 1897.
- Irving, Washington: *Rip Van Winkle*, New York, Will Bradley, 1897.
- Irving, Washington: *Rip Van Winkle*, London, W. Heinemann, 1905.
- Jameson: *Shakespeare's Heroines*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1901.
- Jerrold, Walter: *Bon Mots of Samuel Foote and Theodore Hook*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1904.
- Jerrold, Walter: *Bon Mots of Charles Lamb and Douglas Jerrold*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1904.
- Jerrold, Walter: *Bon Mots of Sydney Smith and R. Brinsley Sheridan*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1904.
- Keats, John: *Poems*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1897.
- Khayyam, Omar *Rubaiyat*, Edinburgh, T.N. Foulis.
- Konody, P.G.: *Filippino Lippi*, London, George Newnes.
- Langton, Douglas: *Fra Angelico*, London, George Bell & Sons, 1902.
- Longus: *Daphnis and Chloe*, London, Elkin Mathews and John Lane, 1893.
- Lovey, Chisholm: *The Enchanted Land. Tales Told Again*, London, T.C. & E.G. Jack, 1906.
- MacDonald, George: *At The Back of the North Wind*, London, Blackie and Son.
- MacDonald, George: *Ronald Banner man's Boyhood*, London, Blackie and Son.
- MacDonald, George: *The Princess and the Goblin*, London, Blackie and Son.
- Mac Neil Rushforth, G.: *Carlo Crivelli*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1900.
- Madox Rossetti, Helen M.: *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, London, H. Virtue and Co., 1902.
- Malory, Sir Thomas: *Le morte d'Arthur*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1893.
- Mantegazza, Paolo: *The Legends of Flowers: or 'This Love That Makes the World Round'* (2nd series), Edinburgh, T.N. Foulis, 1909.
- Marillier, H.C.: *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1899.
- Martin, David: *The Glasgow School of Painting*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1897.
- Matthews, Brander: *Bookbindings Old and New*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1896.
- Mew, Egan: *Chelsea and Chelsea Pottery. Derby China*, London, T.C. & E.C. Jack.
- Mew, Egan: *Dresden China*, London, T.C. & E.C. Jack.
- Mew, Egan: *Japanese Porcelain*, London, T.C. & E.C. Jack.
- Mew, Egan: *Old Bow China*, London, T.C. & E.C. Jack.
- Millais, John Everett: *The Parables of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, London, Routledge and Sons.
- Milton, John: *Lycidas and Other Odes*, with illustrations by R. Arming Bell, London, George Bell and Sons, 1903.
- Morris, William: *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, London, John Lane, 1904.
- Morris, William: *Sir Galahad, a Christmas Mystery*, New York, Clarke Conwell, 1902.
- Murray, Hilda: *Echoes of Sport*, London, T.N. Foulis, 1910.
- Neale, Dr: *Good King Wenceslas*, Birmingham, Cornish Brs., 1895.
- Nicholson, William: *London Types*, London, William Heinemann, 1898.
- Nicholson, William: *Modern Illustration*, London, George Bell.

- Nicholson, William: *The Square Book of Animals*, London, William Heinemann, 1900.
- Paine, Bigelow, Albert: *The Autobiography of a Monkey*, New York, R.H. Russell, 1897.
- Parry, Edward, Abbot: *The First Book of Krab*, London, David Nutt, 1897.
- Parry, Edward, Abbot: *Katawanpus*, London, David Nutt, 1895.
- Pennell, Joseph: *San Francisco. The City Of The Golden Gate*, London, T.N. Foulis.
- Pennell, Joseph: *Venice. The City of the Sea*, London, T.N. Foulis.
- Poe, Edgar Allan: (see Williams, Noel and Wright, J.).
- Pollock, Montague Ban: *Light and Water*, London, George Bell and Sons. 1903.
- Pope, Alexander: *The Rape of the Lock*, London, Leonard Smithers, 1896.
- Pyle, Howard: *The Wonder Clock*. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1904.
- Raleigh, Walter: *The Last Fight of The Revenge*, London, Gibbings and Co. 1908.
- Rea, Hope: *Donatello 'Il maestro di chi sanno'*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1900.
- Reade, Charles: *The Cloister and the Hearth*. Chatto & Windus, 1909.
- Rhys, Ernest: *Frederic Lord Leighton. A Illustrated Record Of His Life and Work*. London, George Bell and Sons, 1900.
- Rinder, Frank: *Etchings of D.Y. Cameron*, Edinburgh, Otto Schulze and Co. 1908.
- Ross, Robert et Aymer Vallance: *Aubrey Beardsley*, London, John Lane, 1909.
- Rosetti, Dante Gabriel: *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1854-1870) to William Allingham*, London.
- Ruskin, John: *La couronne d'olivier sauvage*. (transl. George Elwall), Paris, Société d'éditions artistiques.
- Shakespeare, William: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, London, J.M. Dent & Co., 1895.
- Shakespeare, William: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, London, W. Heinemann, 1908.
- Shakespeare, William: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Raphael Tuck & Sons, London, Paris, New York.
- Shakespeare, William: *The Tempest*, London, Freemantle & Co., 1901.
- Shakespeare, William: *The Tempest*, London, Hodder & Stoughton.
- Shaw, Henry: *Dresses and Decoration of The Middle Ages*, London, William Dickerling, 1843.
- Solon, M.L.: *The Ancient Art Stoneware of the Low Countries and Germany of 'gres de Flandres' & 'steinzeug'*, London, Chiswick Press, 1892.
- Strachey, Henry: *Raphael*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1900.
- Strang, William: *A Book of Giants*, Drawn, engraved and written by William Strang, London, The Unicorn Press.
- Strange, Edward, F.: *Alphabets*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1896.
- Tennant, Pamela: *The Children and the Pictures*, London, William Heinemann.
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord: *Poems*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1905.
- Thorburn, Augusta: *My Friend Poppity*, London, David Nutt.
- Townsend, Harrison: *The Mansions of England in the Older Time*, London, The Studio, 1906.
- Tree, Herbert Beerbohm: *Souvenir of Stephen Phillips: 'Ulysses' produced at Her Majesty's Theatre*, on the 1st February, 1902, London, Carl Hentschel Ltd.
- Vallance, Aymer: *William Morris. His An, his Writings and his Public Life*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1898.

- Van de Put, A.: *Hispano-moresque Ware of the XV Century*, London, Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1904.
- Waters, W.G.: *Pietro della Francesca*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1901.
- Way, T.R. and Dennis G.R.: *The Art of James McNeill Whistler*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1903.
- Weale, James W.H.: *Ham Memling*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1901.
- Webb, H.D. & H.G.: *Quia amore langueo*, Bedford, Webb, 1902.
- Wedmore, Frederick: *English Water-Colour*, London, The Studio, 1902.
- White, Gleeson: *English Illustration 'The Sixties': 1855-70*, Westminster, Archibald Constable and Co., 1897.
- Wilde, Oscar: *Salome*, London, Elkin Mathews & John Lane, 1894.
- Williams, Noel H. (introd.). *The Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1901.
- Williamson, George, C.: *Pietro Vannucci Called Perugino*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1900.
- Wilson, H.: *Silverwork and Jewellery*, London, John Hogg, 1903.
- Wright, J.C. (introd.): *Some Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, Near Bognor (Sussex), J. Guthrie, 1901.

ii) JOURNALS

- The Artist*, 1898 and 1899, London, Archibald Constable & Co.
- Bradley. His book*, May-August and November, 1896, January 1897. Massachusetts (U.S.A.), The Way Side Press.
- A Broad Sheet*, Years I and II (1902-1903), London, Elkin Mathews.
- Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston.
- The Dome*, Nos. 1, 2, 3 (1897) and 5 (1898), Nos. 1, 3 (1898), London, The Unicorn press.
- The Elf*, 1st series, Nos. 1-4 (1899-1900), 2nd series, Nos. 1-4 (1902), New series, Nos 1 and 2 (1905), London, Old Bourne Press.
- The Graphic*, issues of 14, 21, 28 Jan and 4 Feb. 1905, London.
- The Green sheaf*, No. 6 (1903) and Nos. 9-13 (1904), London, Elkin Mathews.
- The Quartier Latin*, 1897, Paris and Londres, Iliffe & Son.
- The Quest*, Nos. 2 and 3 (1895), Birmingham, Cornish Brothers.
- Royal Academy Pictures*, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1900, London, Cassell & Co.
- The Savoy*, 1896, London, Leonard Smithers.
- The Studio*, 1893 to 1910 complete vols. and No. 231 (June 1912), London, The Studio.
- The Year's Art*, 1906-1908, London, Hutchinson and Co. ,
- The Yellow Book*, Nos. from April 1894 to April 1897, London, Elkin Mathews & John Lane.

iii) WORKS ON BOOK-PLATES

Books

Anonymous:

- Book-plates designed by Brown, Hapgood, Theodore*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1907.
- Book-plates designed by Chouteau, Brown, Franck*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1905.
- Eaton, Hugh and Margaret. Their Book-plates*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1907.
- Edwards Edwards and his Book-plates*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1903.

- Being a second collection of twelve signed and numbered proofs of some of the plates designed by William Edgar Fisher of Fargo*, 1902.
- Being a third collection of twelve signed and numbered proofs of some of the plates designed by William Edgar Fisher of Fargo*, 1903.
- Book-plates from the Designs of Fletcher, Seymour*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1903.
- Herbert Gregson and his Book-plates*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1903.
- Adrian J. Iono and his Book-plates*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1903.
- F. Arthur Jacobson and his Book-plates*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1903.
- Marguerite Scribner Frost and her Book-plates*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed, 1903.
- D.M.N. Stauffer. His Book-plates*, Boston, Charles E. Goodspeed.
- Castle, Egerton: *English Book-plates Ancient and Modern*, London; George Bell and Sons, 1894.
- Craig, Gordon: *Book-plates Designed & Cut on Wood*, London, Arthur Chilver, 1900.
- Dexter, Allen, Charles et Hewins, H., N.: *American Book-plates*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1895.
- Fincham, Henry, W.: *Artists and Engravers of British and American Book-plates*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1897.
- Gade, John, A.: *Book-plates Old and New*, New York, M.S. Mansfield and Co., 1898.
- Guthrie, James: *A Little Book of Book-plates*, (No. 9 'The Elf'), London, Old Bourne Press, 1906.
- Hamilton, Walter: *French Book-plates*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1896.
- Harrison, Erat, T.: *Twelve Ex-libris*, Harrison & Sons.
- Hoggarth, Graham and Oxon, A., B.: *David Becket: his Book of Book-plates*, Edinburgh, Otto Schulze & Co. 1906.
- Labouchere, Norma: *Ladies' Book-plates*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1895.
- Macey Stone, Wilbur: *Women Designers of Book-plates*, New York, Randolph R. Beam, 1902.
- Nelson, Harold: *His Book of Book-plates*, Edinburgh, Otto Schulze & Co., 1904.
- Simpson, Joseph, W.: *His Book*, Edinburgh, Otto Schulze & Co.
- Simpson, Joseph and Macey Stone, Wilbur. *The People Book of Book-plates*, New-York, M.F. Manfield & Co., 1901.
- Wamecke, Frederick: *Rare Book-plates of the XV and XVI Centuries by Albert Dürer, H. Burgmair, H.S. Beham, Virgil Solis, Jost Amman, etc...*, London, H. Grevel & Co., 1894.
- White, Gleeson and Uzanne, Octave: *Modern Book-plates. Their Designers*. French edition of Christmas supplement of *The Studio*, Paris, Lib. Ottendorf, 1898.

Journals

- The Bibliophile* (A magazine for the Collector, student and general reader), Years I and U (March 1908-August 1909), London, The Bibliophile.
- The Book-lover's Magazine, Books and Book-plates*, Years VI-VIII (1905-1908), Edinburgh, Otto Schulze and Co.
- The Book of Book-plates*, Years 1900-1905, London, Williams and Norgate.

iv) WORKS ON POSTER ART

Hiatt, Charles: *Picture Posters*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1895.

Penfield, Edwards: *Posters in Miniature*, New York, R.H. Russell, 1897.

Rogers, W.S.: *A Book of the Poster*, London, Greening & Co., 1901.

