

TEXTOS Y DOCUMENTOS*

* Todos los textos se publican aquí respetando la ortografía original, pero modernizando la puntuación, la acentuación, el uso de mayúsculas y la separación de palabras y desatando las abreviaturas.

El *Primero Sueño*, traducido por Gilbert Cunningham

Gilbert F. Cunningham, nacido en Alva, Clackmannanshire (Escocia) en 1900, y muerto en Edimburgo en 1967, fue durante muchos años director de la imprenta Robert Cunningham and Sons, Ltd., fundada por su padre y especializada en libros “de calidad”. Hizo también una carrera universitaria, pero muy pausadamente: tenía ya 54 años cuando presentó en Edimburgo su tesis de doctorado (sobre las versiones de la *Divina Commedia* en lengua inglesa a través del tiempo). Lo más de su energía había estado —y seguiría estando— dedicado a sus dos amores: el arte de la imprenta y el arte de la traducción. Tradujo poesías del italiano, del latín, del alemán (Goethe y Mörike), del francés (Jean de Sponde), del ruso y, en sus últimos años, del español. Y no es que haya sido un prodigio de poliglotismo: *he could not really speak or write well, much less pronounce, any of the six languages which he translated. Yet he had an instinct for languages, seen in his extraordinary flair for grasping, seemingly intuitively, the meaning of any passage of verse in these six.*

Sus primeras traducciones del español fueron nada menos que las de las *Soledades* y el *Polifemo* de Góngora, hechas en el mismo número de versos, en el mismo metro y con la misma disposición de rimas que los poemas originales. La de las *Soledades*, impresa en 500 ejemplares, fue el regalo que Cunningham mandó a sus amigos en la navidad de 1964. El hispanista Alexander Parker, que acababa de trasladarse a la Universidad de Edimburgo, hizo llegar uno de esos ejemplares a Elias Rivers, profesor a la sazón en la Universidad de Johns Hopkins; y Rivers, entusiasmado, le sugirió a Cunningham que, de la misma manera que tradujo el gran poema de Góngora, tradujera también el gran poema de Sor

Juana. Cunningham aceptó la sugerencia, pero la amorosa labor quedó interrumpida por su muerte.

En 1968 salió a la luz la edición comercial de *The Solitudes*, y en la revista *Modern Language Notes* (de Johns Hopkins) se publicaron, como homenaje póstumo al traductor, los 150 primeros versos de *The Dream*.¹ Yo quedé fascinado por una y otra cosa. Poco tiempo después le escribí a Rivers pidiéndole noticias sobre Cunningham, y Rivers, viendo mi admiración, me obsequió —generosidad fuera de lo común— los originales de la traducción del *Sueño*. Son dieciséis hojas de papel fino, en parte borradores a lápiz, escritos con letra muy menuda y llenos de vacilaciones, y en parte copia en limpio, a máquina, pero aún con enmiendas manuscritas. Me he esmerado en la transcripción, y espero que no se hayan colado erratas.

ANTONIO ALATORRE
El Colegio de México

THE DREAM

An earth-born shadow, like a dismal cone,
Directing to the sky the loftiest
Point of its empty obelisks, appeared
Presumptuous to scale the starry heights;
But all their lovely lights,
Shining for ever and for ever free,
From boundless space looked down,
Deeming this dusky warfare but a jest,
While the grim, fleeting shadow darkly reared
10 Its cloudy armoury,
Whose gloomy frown attained

¹ *The Solitudes of Luis de Góngora*. The Spanish text with an English translation by Gilbert F. Cunningham. Preface by A. A. Parker. Introduction by Elias L. Rivers. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968. (Las palabras en cursiva que cito en el primer párrafo proceden del prefacio de Parker). Los primeros 150 versos de *The Dream* están en *MLN*, 83 (1968): 253-261.

Not even the upper convex of the sphere
 Where Artemis is seen
 In three-fold beauty's sheen,
 As she in turn three beauteous faces shows.
 And so the shadow gained
 The lordship only where
 Its murky breath besmirched the lower air,
 Pleased with the still repose
 20 Of silent sovereignty,
 Banning all sound save the submissive cries
 Of birds that stirred the night
 In dark, ungainly flight,
 Too faint to break the hush that filled the skies.

On sluggish wing, with fainter cry than ear
 Can catch, or even alerter spirit hear,
 Nyctimene, disgraced for nameless deeds,
 Peers at the sacred doors in search of chinks,
 Or pries for crannies at the transom's height,
 30 Whose crevices she thinks
 May widen to the gap her purpose needs;
 Then, sacrilegious, having reached the bright
 And holy lanterns of perennial flame,
 Not only quenches them
 But desecrates, sipping the unctuous foam
 Of that clear juice, from fruit that once adorned
 Minerva's trees, by ponderous engines crushed,
 Till from the press in anguished sweat it gushed.

And those who saw their home
 40 Crumble to dust, their webs to herbage turned,
 Who, doubting Bacchus' godhead, now no more
 Vie in the wonders that they told before,
 Being translated now to monstrous things,
 Made up a second screen,
 Even in darkness fearing to be seen,
 Birds with unfeathered wings;
 Three sisters, as I say, so insolent
 And so officious, whom
 Their dreadful punishment
 50 Winged with dark membranes, stripped of every plume,

- Ungainly and absurd,
 The laughing-stock of even the ugliest bird.
 These with that chatterer, late
 Servant to Pluto, now a portent dire
 For superstitious questioners of fate,
 Composed the tuneless choir,
 Whose horrid droning yielded little pleasure,
 With maxims, blacks and longs now alternating
 With silent intervals, as if awaiting
 60 The sluggish beating of the torpid measure
 Marked by the wind in its still ampler sweep,
 Which in phlegmatic motion seemed to blow
 With tardy and protracted rhythm, as though
 Sometimes between the gusts it fell asleep.
- Such was the dismal, intermittent sound
 Made by that frightening and frightened crew,
 Less stirring interest in those who heard
 Than bringing slumber's balm,
 Till, as it spread around
 70 Its dull and lingering harmony, it drew
 The troubled mind to calm,
 And rest upon the weary limbs conferred.
 Meanwhile, imposing silence on mankind,
 A seal upon its gloomy lips the Night
 With warning finger laid,
 Silent as a Harpocrates might be,
 To whose imperial right,
 Claimed not ungraciously,
 All living things obediently inclined.
- 80 The wind was hushed, the dog was sleeping fast,
 This still, while that delayed
 Its particles in flight,
 Afraid to rustle, lest, however slight,
 The sound might seem a sacrilegious blast
 To violate the silence of repose.
 No billows fell or rose
 To rock with wavering sway
 The sea-green cradle of the slumbering Day.
 The ever silent fish, who in their home
 90 Beneath the muddy waves,

Slept in the bosom of the sunless caves,
 Were now twice over dumb.
 Alcyone has there her dwelling, who,
 False sorceress, once changed
 Her over trustful lovers, now avenged
 On her, for she has been transmuted too.

- Where in the mountain's deeply hidden nooks
 To rough-hewn caves the rugged rocks divide
 (Even less defended by their savage looks
 100 Than guarded by the gloom that lurks inside,
 For though the noon is bright
 Their sombre corridors are wrapped in night,
 Even by the practised tread
 Of woodsmen, skilled in hunt, unvisited),
 Beasts of all kinds were laid.
 In dreams the weak forgot their fears, the fierce
 In slumber's bonds were tame,
 For even the brute must pay
 The tribute which from all the universe
 110 The powers of Nature claim,
 And though, with open eyes, he feigned to keep
 Vigil, their King himself was fast asleep.

- That monarch, famed in former times, and done
 To death by his own dogs, whose form has been
 Changed to a timid fawn,
 Amid this peaceful scene,
 Alert and prompt to hear
 Their faintest motions should the breezes start
 Or atoms stir the ground,
 120 Will, for the slightest sound,
 Cock an attentive ear
 For what disturbs his rest.
 Within their quiet nest,
 Frail hammock which, from mud and brambles made,
 Hangs in the densest shade
 The boughs afford, the feathery tribe apart
 Sleep, while the wind seeks refuge in repose
 From that which cuts the wings on which it blows.

Their queen, the noble bird of Jupiter,

- 130 For fear she might be wholly given to sleep,
 A vice, she thinks, in those who cannot keep
 Due measure in repose, avoids with care
 A negligencè that might be judged too great,
 And to a single foot entrusts her weight;
 Her clock, a tiny stone, the other grips,
 Which breaks her shallow slumber if it slips.
 The sleep permitted her cannot remain
 Unbroken long, for soon the hastening hour
 Bids her assume again
- 140 Her pastoral office and her regal power.
 Ah, heavy load that weighs a monarch down,
 And, for his slightest fault, excuse denies!
 For which mysterious cause, perhaps, the crown
 Is circular in shape, to symbolise
 The troubles of a king,
 No less continuous than its golden ring.

All things at last were held in slumber's keeping;
 All things by silence were at last possessed;
 Even the thief was sleeping,

- 150 Even the lover's eyes had closed in rest.

As dead of night dragged on its sluggish way
 And reached the midpoint of its gloomy sway,
 Limbs, wearied by the tasks which day requires
 —Not only those oppressed
 By hard and heavy hours
 Of manual toil (for pleasure also tires,
 Neither can any occupation fail,
 If long continued, even the pleasantest,
 To tire the human powers;

- 160 By such means Nature always alternates
 One or the other scale,
 By such allots diverse activities,
 Bidding one work, granting another sleep,
 And, constantly inconstant, regulates
 The poise of earth's superb machinery)—
 Such limbs, whose energy
 Was now relaxed in slumber soft and deep,
 Such powers, which, having ceased

- Their wonted functions, from the daily course
 170 —Their work, in short, though pleasing work it be,
 If any work can please—
 If not exempted wholly, then released,
 All yielded to that portrait in reverse
 Of Life which, clad in mail of lethargy,
 Coward assails and laggard conquers all,
 Though armed with sleep alone,
 From humble crook to lofty sceptre, yet
 With no distinction set
 Between the homespun cloak and crimson robe;
 180 Whose level, everywhere effectual
 Allows relief to none,
 From him whose sovereign right
 Boasts the tiara where three crowns unite,
 To him who on the sod
 Crouches beneath a wretched straw-roofed cot;
 From palace gilded by the Danube's swell
 To humble reeds in which the humble dwell;
 For with his changeless rod
 Morpheus, whose potent semblance differs not
 190 From Death's, impartially
 Measures both gold brocade and common twill.

- From outward influences
 Set free, the soul, no longer concentrated
 On gross activity
 In which each day is spent for good or ill,
 Now, as it were, dispenses,
 *
 To wearied bones and limbs relaxed in rest,
 As if by temporary death oppressed,
 200 The meed of quickening warmth on which they thrive;
 For, still in sleep, the body must perforce
 Become a soulless corse,
 Dead to all life, and yet in death alive,
 Faint signs of which that vital balance-wheel
 The human clock obeys,

* Se saltó Cunningham el v. 197. Podría ser "Remote, if not completely segregated".

Without a hand to point the hour, displays,
 While the arterial harmonies reveal
 The drowsy pulse whose feeble throbbing proves
 On what a smoothly ordered course it moves.

- 210 This kingly organ, living centre where
 The vital force is born,
 Linked with the bellows of the breath as well
 —The lung, a magnet to attract the air,
 Whose motions never vary, as in turn
 It now compresses, now dilates afresh
 The windpipe's duct of bright and supple flesh,
 Causing it to inhale
 Draughts of the fresh surrounding air, and then
 Expel it warm again,
- 220 Which, in revenge for its expulsion, thieves
 A little vital warmth each time it leaves,
 One day to be deplored
 And, ever unrestored,
 Bound, though the owner feels it not, to be,
 Repeated often, no small robbery—;
 These organs, faithful witnesses, bear out
 What I have said, and show beyond a doubt
 That life will yet survive,
 However much the silenced senses strive
- 230 With muted voices to impugn the claim
 —Though speechlessness alone can plead for them—
 While, dumb and sluggish now, the tongue affords
 A like denial with unspoken words.

A furnace, well designed and competent,
 Assists the lungs and heart,
 Serving the members' needs with prescient care,
 And, never greedy, always diligent,
 Does not, while pampering the nearest part,
 Forget the more remote,

- 240 But, with the help of Nature's accurate
 Prescription, takes good note
 In what proportion every limb should share
 The chile, distilled by unremitting heat
 From food which, pious mediator, sought

Of every creature found beneath the moon,
 For those of others too it showed, which are
 Each a resplendent intellectual star, ●
 Using such means as may
 Grasp the unseen, which it can thus portray
 290 Within itself, and then with subtle art
 Can to the Soul impart.

The latter now had turned to contemplate
 Its own ethereal life and essence fair,
 Rejoicing as it viewed
 The spark which Higher Being deigns to share
 With what is made in its similitude,
 Deeming itself now almost separate
 From the perpetual weight
 Of the encumbering body's heavy chain,
 300 Which sluggishly impedes and rudely thwarts
 The aspiring spirit, which already charts
 The vast extent of the celestial spheres
 And traces the careers
 Which, regular yet all unequal too,
 The heavenly orbs pursue
 (A grievous crime, which earns the cruel bane
 Of peace destroyed, in those who foolishly
 Study the stars to learn their destiny).
 The Soul, then, felt as though it stood upon
 310 A lofty peak, beside which Atlas' crest,
 Which overtops the rest,
 Seems but a dwarf who serves some giant lord,
 And even Olympus, though its tranquil crown
 Forbids all winds to blow,
 Despite the storms below,
 A buttress for its slopes would ill afford;
 Nor were the densest cloudy girdle thrown
 About the bulk that highest soars from sight,
 Or round the proudest crater that proclaims
 320 War on the sky with fierce, volcanic flames,
 More than a scanty zone
 For such a towering height,
 A roughly fashioned belt
 For that vast waist, which, fastened carelessly,

The wind would quickly loosen and shake free,
Or with its heat the neighbouring Sun would melt.

- To its first region, which would only be
The lowest, if in three we should divide
That formidable wall of mountainside,
330 Even the eagle cannot, though it tries
On rapid pinions to ascend the skies,
Out of the Sun athirst to drain the heat
And build its nest in the corona's flames,
Attain, however much
In its redoubled efforts it may beat
Its pair of feathered sails, and fiercely clutch
The air with eager talons, while it claims
To weave a stair of atoms, till its flight
Breaks the immunities of space and light.
- 340 The Pyramids, twin prodigies, the pride
Of Memphis, Architecture's crowning rite
Of elegance, if, being petrified,
They are not fluttering pennants too; whose height,
Surmounted by their barbarous trophies, gave
The Pharaohs both an ensign and a grave,
Which to the wind, which to the clouds proclaim,
If to the sky they do not send their praise,
Of their august, triumphal capital,
Which Cairo now we call,
350 Those (because such abundance mutes her lays,
As yet unsung by Fame)
Egyptian glories, Memphis' feats, thereby
Stamped on the wind and printed on the sky.

- They rose in perfect symmetry, these two,
And as their stature grew
Their girth diminished in the watcher's sight,
Shaped with such skill that to the lynx-like eye,
Following as they journeyed to the sky,
Among the clouds they disappeared from view;
360 Nor could it reach the summit's slender spear,
Which seemed to penetrate the lunar sphere,
But, dizzied by the terrifying height,

- Rather than fell, was hurled below, until
 Once more it rested on the ample base,
 Restored but late or ill
 From its paralysis,
 For those who dare to gaze
 Too high deserve no less a pain than this.
 Nor did the solid mass
- 370 Oppose, but rather welcoming the Sun,
 If not, indeed, more closely still allied
 By reason of the boundaries they shared,
 Was bathed on every side
 Till in the splendour of his beams it shone;
 But the perspiring pilgrim, as he fared
 Panting and footsore thither, found, alas,
 The sandy floor displayed
 No tiniest patch, no faintest hope of shade.
- These, which are Egypt's glories still, once might
- 380 Have housed a heathen rite,
 Hieroglyphs of a blind and barbarous age,
 Or so the Grecian sage,
 Blind too, but sweetest of all Poets told
 —Unless, since he recorded in his song
 Achilles' prodigies
 And sly Ulysses' warlike subtleties,
 He rather should belong
 To the historians' band, since, if enrolled
 Within their catalogue, his single name
- 390 Would surely many times increase their fame—,
 Of whose mellifluous numbers easier
 A task it surely were
 To wrench from Jove's right hand
 The flaming thunder-brand,
 Or from Alcides' clutch
 His steel-shod cudgel snatch,
 Than steal one line of those
 Which for his bard favouring Phoebus chose.
- The Pyramids, in the similitude
- 400 Of Homer, then, are but material
 Symbols, portraying by an outward sign

Inward dimensions, serving to define
The active disposition of the Soul;
For as some eager tongue of lambent flame
Pyramid-like soars upward to the skies,
The human mind likewise
Transcends its mortal frame,
Ever aspiring to the Primal Cause
—The central point to which their nature draws
410 Straight lines, the circle too, which can include
All essences in its infinitude.