

# Translating Ariosto: a testimony

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SAYING THAT these reflections are limited to the testimony leads me to start them with a trip down memory lane. It was here, at the University of São Paulo, over 30 years ago that the project to translate Ariosto came to life. For the then young Italian literature professor it would be the best way to get acquainted with one of the greatest - though perhaps least publicized - Italian poets.

The decade was the 1980s. While teaching and preparing for my PhD, I completed my translation of Machiavelli's *Mandragora*. The first Commented Translation courses were beginning to be established among us and I was invited to teach some of them. The current *Prédio das Letras* was still under construction: the classes were held at the so-called "Colmeias", which currently house other areas of the University. They were afternoon classes, attended by few somewhat sleepy students, just out of lunch at the cafeteria: one could hardly expect that in a few years the studies of translation would experience such an extraordinary growth. Students of Italian (and not only them) foresaw in Translation the passport to other professional worlds. The risk was that the classes would neglect literary translation which, in my view, should be the main focus of courses linked to Language departments. To prevent literature from being sidelined, seminars for the discussion and translation of pages of contemporary prose writers were promoted. Many spoke of the works of Umberto Eco, who in those years had visited the University of São Paulo and had just released *Il nome della rosa*.

The classroom experience (in Translation and especially Literature courses) led me to confirm the impression that Ariosto was either little or not known at all. Not only among us, since a Sorbonne professor had noted a few years before that Ariosto's poem is "*l'une des oeuvres les plus célèbres (peut-être pas les plus lues) de la Renaissance*" (Renucci, 1998, p.52). It is indeed a pity, not only because of the recognized beauty of the work, but also for the surprising strength of his critical vision. Attempting to convey some of that vision served as encouragement to carry forward the project of translating the poem. At the University and in Brazil we were going through the end of a long period of political authoritarianism. All of us - and especially the younger generations - wanted to be set free from intolerant discourses, such as the one that had been official in the country for over twenty years. Helping to rediscover Ariosto could perhaps be a contribution, however small, to meet the expectations of the youth at that time of renewal.

There was talk of rediscovery. That was because the *Orlando Furioso*, if not forgotten, is often seen but as a masterful exercise of fantasy, a work of "pure

literature” in the least committed sense of the expression. What is almost never seen, in my view, is that the always acknowledged beauty of the work is rooted in a poetic structure of contrasts. The operative word and the marginalized word, “reason” and “insanity” pervade the entire poem (cf. Ghirardi, 2011).

The lack of attention to this central point can perhaps explain why a work that allows us to reap some of the most precious fruits of Humanism is so rarely read. The *Orlando Furioso* operates a deconstruction (as we say today) of alleged “absolute rationality” at the service of equally absolute powers. That is precisely why the poet begins with self-criticism. The adventures of Orlando Furioso are sung by someone who distrusts his own judgment, who confesses to being perhaps as troubled as Orlando (cf. I, 2, XXIV, 3).<sup>1</sup> Hence the Socratic smile with which the poet debunks an establishment that condemns dissents to the “politically correct” of that time (dissents labeled as “treason”, “crimes of lese-majesty”, “heresies” - in short, “madness”). The space given by the poem to the marginal discourse can be seen in the central characters, which do not come from the classical world that prevailed in Renaissance culture, but from the fantastic medieval world that subsisted in popular narratives. This, incidentally, was one of the signs of the “insanity” of the poem, according to the Aristotelian masters of rhetoric of that time. It was also one of the secrets of its immediate popularity. Another secret would have been the openness to the alternative “female” vision. From early on, numerous female readers recognized themselves in the women portrayed in the *Orlando Furioso*.<sup>2</sup>

What has just been said may perhaps be summed up in one of the most famous episodes in the poem, the trip to the moon. The episode shows us mountains on the lunar surface, where all things lost upon the earth end up. Everything is found there, except what among us never strays. At least one of the stanzas is worth reading (XXXIV, 81):

*Lungo sarà, se tutte in verso ordisco le cose che gli fur quivi dimostre;  
che dopo mille e mille io non finisco, e vi son tutte le occurrenze nostre;  
sol la pacia non v`è poca né assai;  
che sta qua giú, né se ne parte mai.*

Or in the Portuguese translation:

*Outras coisas que viu, mui numerosas, Pedem tempo que o verso meu não  
dura, Pois lá encontrou, guardadas e copiosas,  
Mil coisas de que andamos à procura.  
Só de loucura não viu muito ou pouco,  
Que ela não sai de nosso mundo louco.<sup>3</sup>*

And in the English translation:

The things he witnessed, to recount in rhyme

Too tedious were; were myriads on record,  
To sum the remnant ill should I have time.  
'Tis here that all infirmities are stored,  
Save only Madness, seen not here at all,  
Which dwells below, nor leaves this earthly ball.

For verses like those, Don Quixote would say "*me precio de cantar algunas estancias del Ariosto*".<sup>4</sup> "Sing", as the criticism of the absolute and allegedly "rational" discourse is best expressed through the voice of poetry, the language of intuition. Poetry made of virtually musical sound and images that rival those of the Greeks and Latinos.

The project of translating Ariosto became therefore inseparable from the invitation to establish a dialogue between the *Orlando Furioso* and the moment that was then being experienced. It was necessary to point out what I called "sequestration of madness" of the poem (Ghirardi, 2001 p.13ss), the oath of silence of many critics who, extolling the "formal" beauty of the work, see in it at best a moralizing allegory. Precisely in that allegorical depiction there were those who denounced one of the many attempts to render a dangerous poem harmless, "*the most frequent technique to domesticate the Furioso*" (Javitch, 1991, p.6, emphasis mine). These are the words of a recent critic who unfortunately not always recalls them in the rest of his argument.

It is clear that if the singer of the *Orlando Furioso* casts no doubt on the clarity of his judgment, much less will those who try to reinterpret it and translate it. The poet wisely warns (I, 7) that human judgment often wanders wide: "*Ecco il giudizio uman come spesso erra!*" (I, 7). It would therefore be incoherent to intend to transform this testimony into an apology of what, whether rightly or wrongly, has been done. It is worth recalling here the answer of a famous "neighbor" of Ariosto, the great Fellini. When asked how he assessed the work he had created, he confessed that he would rather not even watch again the scenes he had brought to the screen. If when flipping channels on TV he came across scenes of his films, he was astonished and sometimes wondered who would have done all that: "*Ma chi ha fatto questo?*".

Talking with some clarity about what one has translated, if not impossible seems perhaps even more difficult than translating. What one can do, at most, is to outline the inspiring purposes of the project and discuss attempts to solve concrete problems raised by the text that one has sought to make accessible. The purposes have already been mentioned. As for attempted solutions, I believe that it will suffice to refer to two major challenges.

I have said that this project dates back to the 1980s, when Translation courses were beginning to take root at this University. At that time, what seemed to arouse the interest of researchers was what we might call the "rupture" potential in any work to be analyzed or translated. The most fashionable texts were those that enabled break-

ing established patterns of linguistic expression. The acclaimed authors (preferably the “non-canonical” ones) were those who stood out for their lexical and syntactic experimentalism. In this context the project to translate Ariosto could not have aroused immediate interest. It was about showing how a “canonical” author, faithful to the linguistic tradition of Petrarchism, still criticized the parameters prevailing in his time.

In this amazing character of the *Orlando Furioso*, translation met the first big challenge. Trying to get the transposition process to achieve some degree of “equivalence” with the original linguistic pattern required translation solutions to prioritize lessons of the classics of our language. Following this path - besides other objections that could emerge - would probably mean running the risk of creating barriers between the translated work and the readers. Would it be preferable to make broader concessions to colloquial use or even yield to omissions and adaptations?

What can be recalled at this point is that the classical language of the original was no hindrance to its popularity. We know that from the first publication of the *Orlando Furioso* (1516) to the definitive edition (1532), the revision work, carefully undertaken by the author, led it astray from the colloquial speech of that time. The revisions of the poem, particularly the last one, promoted the distancing from the more or less dialectal Italian of the court of Ferrara, and even more from the vernacular common in the region. What is perceived is the language of Petrarchism (incidentally, since 1525 recommended by then extremely respected Bembo’s treatise, *Prose della Volgare Lingua*).

That was no reason, as it was said, to prevent the *Orlando Furioso* from being read by everyone. Its popularity made it admired even by semi-literate readers. Well known is the case of the bandits who stopped robbing Ariosto when they recognize him as the author of a work they used to recite with enthusiasm. Less remembered is the case, told by Montaigne (1946, p.346), of the Italian peasant women who sang stanzas of the poem while working in the harvest. Thus, the search for classic linguistic patterns should not, by itself, create any barriers between the work and today’s readers. It should be added that Orlando, Rodomont and Sacripante for centuries have not been recognized as popular heroes (although they have survived in terms like “*rodomontada*” (panache) e “*sacripanta*” (rogue, villain), as well as in cordel literature<sup>T</sup>). It should also be recognized that seeking classic lessons does not ensure that the translation will always apply them in the most accessible way to current reading. But that has always been attempted.<sup>5</sup>

Here lay, therefore, the first challenge. Many others would follow. To these, just another one closely linked to the issue of the linguistic pattern should be added. One talks about the search for equivalence of rhymes, an aspect in which the art of the *Orlando Furioso* is recognized as unique. Ariosto’s rhymes, which charm all readers (Voltaire’s enthusiasm is well known), prove to be laborious to the translation that seeks at least a glimpse of the original. Let us see a few examples.

There is an episode in canto VII in which the young Rogero risks his promising future as a warrior. Seduced by the magic of the treacherous Alcina, Rogero exchanges the weapons for the courtier’s adornments he had received

from her: necklace and bracelets. But Atlante, who had raised the young man as a son, sarcastically admonishes him saying that he would soon rival Julius Caesar, Alexander or Scipio. The Italian verses (VII, 59) read as follows:

*Questo è ben veramente alto principio  
Onde si può sperar che tu sei presto  
a farti un Alessandro, un Iulio, un Scipio! chi potea, ohimè, di te mai creder  
questo che ti facessi d'alcina mancipio?  
e perché ognun lo vegga manifesto  
al collo ed alle braccia hai la catena con che ella a voglia sua preso ti mena.*

The strength of Scipio's name (in Portuguese, Cipião), which concludes the third verse of the stanza dominates the group of rhymes of the first three odd verses (*principio/mancipio/Scipio*). At first glance the translator would have here nearly obvious solutions, just by keeping the same name (Cipião, in Portuguese) at the end of the corresponding verse. This would pave the way for abundant rhymes (ending in "ão") and pertinent rhymes (it would be OK to talk about "servidão" (servitude) and "iniciação" (initiation) to translate *mancipio* and *principio*). However, a closer look at the original will show an alternation of unexpected rhymes, as unusual as the deeds they evoke. Trivial solutions therefore would not apply. It should be added that to maintain the sequence in which the three heroes are mentioned, the translation would hardly avoid the destruction of the decasyllable (or hendecasyllable in the Italian metric), because the sequence of names in Portuguese is not compatible with the desired distribution of metric accents.

Thus, what seemed less inadvisable was to assign a relevant position in the corresponding verse not to Cipião's (Scipio) name, but to Júlio's (Iulio). The choice favors the rhythmic construction and forces the translator to seek the best effect among the few possible rhymes. Then the solutions would perhaps be less distant from what occurs in the original stanza.<sup>TN</sup> The Portuguese translation of Atlante's words to Rogero is reproduced below, followed by the English translation. Here is, then, the translation of Atlante's words to Rogero:

*É dos mais altos teu começo! Emule-o  
Quem quiser, como tu, chegar depressa  
A ser Cipião, ou Alexandre, ou Júlio!  
Quem pode crer, oh dor!, que isto aconteça,  
Que de Alcina sucumbas ao acúleo?  
E por que a servidão mais apareça  
Tens no pescoço e braços a cadeia  
Com que ela a seu alvitre te meneia.*

*This does, in truth, a fair beginning show;  
 A seed which, we may hope, will soon conceive  
 A Julius, Alexander, Scipio.  
 Who thee Alcina's bondsman could believe;  
 And (for the world the shameful fact might know)  
 That all should, manifest to sight, perceive  
 Upon thy neck and arms the servile chains,  
 Wherewith she at her will her captive trains.*

Still with respect to rhymes, the following canto provides an example which again involves given names closing a verse (which is not uncommon in Ariosto). Here we have the Christian army besieged and the walls of Paris threatened with fire by the invaders. Threatened, Charlemagne uses the power of prayer. He is heard: a torrential rain saves the city and leads the emperor to recognize that he can do nothing without the help of Heaven. The original stanza (VIII, 70) reads:

*Il Sommo creator gli occhi rivolse  
 al giusto lamentar del vecchio carlo,  
 e con subita pioggia il fuoco tolse,  
 né forse uman saper potea smorzarlo. Savio chiunque a dio sempre si volse  
 ch'altri non poté mai meglio aiutarlo. Ben dal devoto re fu conosciuto  
 che si salvò per lo divino aiuto.*

Let us leave aside for now any other comments, including the analogy between two prayers equally heard: that of Charles who, as a Christian, here prays to God, and Medoro's who, as a pagan, invokes the moon, his goddess (XVIII, 184). Let us focus, however, on the issue of rhymes, which in this octave once again prove to be unusual. The greatest difficulty for the translator lies in a name of Charles (Carlo) which appears at the end of the verse. This helps to emphasize the importance of the emperor, the highest rank in Christian hierarchy. It is known, in turn, that there are no rhymes for his name in Portuguese. The solution, then, would be to remove it from the end of the verse, replacing it with, say, the title "*imperador*" (emperor). This option would entail abundant, easy and relevant rhymes (e.g., *Creatore* or *Dio* could be translated, in a rhymed position, as "*Senhor*" (Lord) or "*Criador*" (Creator).

This was not, however, the solution adopted. In view of the metric importance given to Carlo and the quality of the rhymes associated with the name, trying to preserve something from the original meant seeking less usual results. The solution adopted was ultimately inspired by The Lusiads (IV,32). When speaking of the battle of Aljubarrota, Camões' stanza concludes with the following verses:

*Contra irmãos e parentes (caso estranho!) Quais nas guerras civis de Júlio e Magno.  
 'Gainst parents and 'gainst brothers - case of shame!  
 'Twas in great Julius' Civil War the same.*

The Camonian rhyme here opens up convenient paths. Because *Carlo* is, after all, Carlos “Magno” (Charlemagne). The inclusion of this attribute would enable maintaining the metric position of the given name and avoid weakened solutions. The proposed translation was:

*O Sumo Criador os olhos volve  
Ao justo lamentar de Carlos Magno;  
Extingue ao fogo a chuva e à terra envolve  
(Não é dado ao mortal poder tamanho).  
Sábio é quem seu cuidado a Deus devolve:  
Terá melhor amparo que o de estranho.  
Ao pio imperador o caso ensina  
Que deve a salvação à mão divina.*

To the just plaint of aged Charlemagne  
The great Creator turned his eyes, and stayed  
The conflagration with a sudden rain.  
Which haply human art had not allayed.  
Wise whosoever seeketh, not in vain,  
His help, than whose there is no better aid!  
Well the religious king, to whom ‘twas given,  
Knew that the saving succour was from Heaven.

Another example can still come from the same canto, in which we find an occurrence that is repeated a few times in the *Orlando Furioso*. It is the simply visual rhyme (*rima all’occhio*). The curious case arises during the episode of Orlando’s sleep (one of the first signs of his progressive insanity). The paladin dreams and at one point has a nightmare, since the sight of his beloved Angelica is interrupted by the gale that sweeps the damsel away. Says the original (VIII, 82):

*Intanto l’infelice (e non sa come)  
perde la donna sua per l’aer fosco  
onde di qua e di là del suo bel nome  
fa risonare la campagna e il bosco.  
e mentre dice indarno – Misero me!  
chi ha cangiata mia dolcezza in toscò? –  
ode la donna sua che gli domanda,  
piangendo, aiuto e se gli raccomanda.*

In this octave, the fifth verse offers a good example of visual rhyme. The final words of the verse, in bold (*miser/me*), although each has its own tone, are organized as if forming a unit, with the accent on the penultimate syllable (*Miserome*). So it creates the illusion of perfect rhyme with the closing of the corresponding verses. It would be advisable, if possible, to maintain the original occurrence in the translation. The attempt has led to the following result (also highlighted):

*E vê o misero a dama que se some*  
*(Como, não sabe) na borrasca escura;*  
*Então, lá e cá, sai a gritar-lhe o nome*  
*Por veredas do campo e da espessura.*  
*– Infeliz! – vai dizendo – Eu aflijo-me,*  
*Pois quem mudou em fel minha doçura?*  
*Logo escuta, chorosa, sua dama*  
*Que pede auxílio e que por ele clama.*

Meanwhile the unhappy lover lost the dame  
 In that dim air, nor how he lost her, weets;  
 And, roving far and near, her beauteous name  
 Through every sounding wood and plain repeats.  
 And while, “oh wretched me!” is his exclaim,  
 “Who has to poison changed my promised sweets?”  
 He of his sovereign lady who with tears  
 Demands his aid, the lamentation hears.

Moving on to the next canto, it is worth mentioning one of the first stanzas (IX, 3). Here, as elsewhere in the poem, Ariosto reveals his taste for rhymes governed by numerals. In this scene the enemy troop of the Christians, which had claimed victory much too soon, walked, exhausted, in the rain. They finally spread out in groups of tens, twenties, fours, sevens, eights (“*a dieci, a venti, a quattro, a sette, ad otto*”). They try to sleep as they can. Orlando watches them, but does not unsheathe the sword, Durindane, as it would be dishonorable to kill by treachery those who were asleep. The original stanza reads:

*anzi, non attendata, perché sotto*  
*alberi e tetti l'há sparsa la pioggia*  
*a dieci, a venti, a quattro, a sette, ad otto;*  
*chi piú distante e chi piú presso alloggia.*  
*Ognuno dorme travagliato e rotto:*  
*chi steso in terra e chi alla man s'appoggia.*



*Dormono; e il conte uccider ne può assai:  
né però stringe durindana mai.*



Photo by France Presse

*Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533).*

The number that ends the third verse (*otto*) does not imply lack of rhyme in Italian, unlike what happens with its corresponding number in Portuguese. It is clear that the translator could seek solutions using other numbers with greater sound possibilities (“dez” (ten) or “sete” (seven), for example). But that could hardly be done without destroying the beauty of the verse, whose rhythm accompanies the increase and decrease of the numbers. To this stanza (which speaks, as stated, of a dispersing troop) the solution I managed to propose was:

*Mas não fica nas tendas; valhacoito  
Dão-lhe árvores e choças, que a tormenta  
Lá dez, cá vinte, ou quatro, ou sete, ou oito,*

*Atira e aos trambolhões desaposenta.  
Dorme no chão o triste povo afoito; Nas mãos se apóia a fronte sonolenta.  
Fizera Orlando ali fácil matança,  
Mas guarda a Durindana, que descansa.*

And the solution proposed by the English translator:

Rather uncamped: for, in less troops or more.  
Rains under shed and tree had driven the band.  
Here ten, there twenty, seven or eight, or four,  
Nearer or farther off, Orlando scanned.  
Each sleeps, oppressed with toil and wearied sore;  
This stretched on earth, that propped upon his hand:  
They sleep, and many might the count have slain,  
Yet never bared his puissant Durindane.

Of the many surprises that are offered in the organization of rhymes in the *Orlando Furioso*, let us also remember the one found in the next canto (X, 76). The English and Scottish forces, which are ready to help the army of Charlemagne, are being passed in review. A web of sound variations is created in the description. We have apparently a stanza of rhymes constructed with words with similar endings. Any affinity, however, disappears due to the different organization of the rhymes. In the first three even verses, the rhymes occur between paroxitone words (with the accent on the penultimate syllable), in which the stress falls on a vowel followed by double consonants (*ann*); in the first three odd verses the vowel is followed by a simple consonant (*an*), but the rhyme is dominated by a different vowel (*e*), on which the stress of the proparoxitone word (with the accent on the antepenultimate syllable) falls. Let us see how the original stanza is organized:

*E finita la mostra che faceano,  
alla marina si distenderanno,  
dove aspettati per solcar l'Oceano  
son dai navili che nel porto stanno.  
I Franceschi assediati si ricreano, sperando in questi che salvar li vanno.  
– Ma acciò tu te n'informi pienamente,  
io ti distinguerò tutta la gente.*

Perhaps it would now be appropriate to remember that which seems to be common knowledge: in Italian, double consonants are not a mere etymological reminiscence; they are clearly pronounced and retain full semantic relevance

(e.g., “*fato*”, which corresponds to “*fado*” or “fate” are not mistaken for “*fatto*”, “done”). We are therefore faced with a stanza that will impose on the translator, whatever his language, serious difficulties in terms of sound equivalence; in some languages, which do not have proparoxitone words (like French), the loss is likely to be complete; in others, like ours, the loss will be less, but it was not possible to reproduce in the translation the play between simple and double consonant sounds. Scholars have already said that every translation entails losses and gains. Thus, one should seek to reduce the losses by preserving the fabric of alternation of close sounds, with different tones. That is what we have sought to do:

*Depois de terem desfílado, impávidos,  
À praia irão e às naves, precavidos.  
Os lenhos sulcarão as águas, grávidos Destes que por exímios são havidos.  
Folgam os assediados francos, ávidos De verem seus domínios reavidos.  
– Mas por que disto saibas plenamente nomearei, uma a uma, cada gente.*

And added, ‘ Having ended this display  
Of arms, the troops would file towards the strand,  
Where vessels anchored in the harbour lay,  
Waiting to bear them to another land.  
The French besieged, rejoice in this array,  
And hope (he said) deliverance through the band.  
But that I may of all inform you well,  
I of each troop shall separately tell.

The wealth of Ariosto’s creation with respect to rhymes (to stay within the aspect discussed here) shows up also in the frequent case of puns. Noteworthy in this regard is the final episode of the Magic Vessel (XLIII, 44). When visiting a castle the knight Rinaldo is invited by the castellan to drink the wine contained in an extraordinary vessel. Whoever can take it to his lips without “bathing his breast” can be sure to be loved with faithfulness; but spilling the wine indicates betrayal in love. Although in love and confident, Rinaldo refuses to submit to the experiment. The owner of the vessel praises him, saying that he had been the only wise guest among the many who had visited the castle. All those who accepted the vessel, starting with the owner, eventually regretted it. So the castellan concludes in the original:

*Il conforto ch’io prendo è che di quanti per dieci anni mai fur sotto il mio tetto  
(ch’a tutti questo vaso ho messo inanti), non ne trovo um che non s’immolli  
il petto. aver nel caso mio compagni tanti  
mi dà fra tanto mal qualche diletto. Tu fra infiniti sol sei stato saggio,  
che far negasti il periglioso saggio.*

Needless to say that *saggio*, a word repeated at the end of the last verses can be understood in Italian as an adjective (“wise, prudent”) or a noun (“experience, test”). Hence the pun, one of the many that appear in the *Orlando Furioso*. In this case the solution proposed (also highlighted) was:

*Conforto é que, aos maridos quando hospedo,  
(E esta casa há dez anos que os acolhe)  
Sempre a taça fatídica lhes cedo,  
E não encontro um só, que não se molhe. Por estar consolado, se não ledo,  
Basta que eu tantos companheiros olhe. Só tu, que não a queres, nem a provas,  
Entre mil, de ser sábio deste provas.<sup>6</sup>*

That comfort was; of all which harboured were  
Here for ten years (for still to every guest  
Beneath my roof I bade the vessel bear)  
Was none but with the wine had bathed his breast.  
To have so many comrades in my care,  
Some little soothes the griefs that so molest.  
Thou only of so many hast been wise,  
Who wouldst forbear the perilous emprise.

There are hardly a passage in the *Orlando Furioso* that will not have the translator facing such challenges. And in Ariosto’s incomparable stanza, rightly called the “golden octave” (*ottava d’oro*) the organization of rhymes is but one of the many aspects that require the translator’s permanent attention. But these considerations can go much too far. A simple testimony was promised and it is time to conclude it. On my part, I thank those who read it, by quoting the following verses by Ariosto (I, 3):

*Né che poco io vi dia da imputar sono, che quanto io posso dar, tutto vi dono.  
Nem por vos dar tão pouco ingrato sou, Pois do que posso dar, tudo vos dou.  
Then, with no jealous eye my offering scan,  
Nor scorn my gift who give thee all I can.*

#### Notes

- 1 This and other quotes from my translation, unless otherwise stated, refer to the 2011 edition (Ariosto, 2011).
- 2 It would suffice to mention the stories of Geneva, sentenced to death for false charges of adultery (cantos IV-VI); of Olympia, betrayed by the man to whom she had given her assets and her life (cantos IX-XI); and the memory of oppression that leads to female tyranny on the Women’s Island (cantos XIX-XX) (see Ghirardi, 2011, p.11-12).

- 3 “*Lungo sarà, se tutte in verso ordisco/ le cose che gli fur quivi dimostre;/ che dopo mille e mille non finisco, /e vi son tutte l’occorrenze nostre; / sol la pazzia non v’è poca né assai; / che sta qua giù, né se ne parte mai*”. The episode is translated in *Orlando Furioso (cantos and episodes)* (Ariosto, 2002).
- 4 Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, II, 42.
- 5 The notes to the 2002 and 2011 editions mentioned resemble some concrete solutions inspired by Camões, by the unsurpassed Father Manuel Bernardes and other classics.
- 6 The episode is translated in the 2002 edition mentioned.

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*ABSTRACT* – Translating the *Orlando Furioso* requires both rediscovering the “insanity” in the poem and respecting its classical expression. These ideas lead the author to comment on some aspects of his own translation.

*KEYWORDS:* Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, Italian poetry, Literature and madness, Translation.

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