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# ANGEL GANIVET

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## FOREWORD

Angel Ganivet —profound, complicated, strange, although virtually unknown to English readers— has fascinated, inspired and frustrated Spaniards since the publication of his *Idearium español* in 1897. One of the most representative literary spirits of his time, he was one of the first of the Generation of 1898 to express its patriotic concern over the character and future of a floundering nation. He also articulated the Generation's philosophic preoccupation with the existential anxieties of the individual, and in his last works he provided a meditation on artistic creativity.

The centennial of Ganivet's birth in 1965 gave rise to a series of studies which renewed interest in this key interpreter of Spain. *Papeles de Son Armadans*, *Revista de Occidente* and *Insula* all marked the occasion with essays on his life and works. Juan Agudiez, Antonio Gallego Morell, Javier Herrero, Miguel Olmedo Moreno, Herbert Ramsden and D. L. Shaw provided valuable new readings and insights into Ganivet studies and have salvaged many important letters and other documents that give us a clearer yet more complex picture of the personal and intellectual situation of the author.

The present study seeks to integrate further the works of these scholars and to provide several differing interpretations of Ganivet's life and works, to draw some connections that have not yet been drawn, and to point up a sense of humor in Ganivet that has been largely overlooked previously. Much attention has been granted to Ganivet's philosophical and religious conflicts, but insufficient account has been taken of his growing sense of himself as an artist and to his conception of art as a very broad activity, akin to charity in its moral quality and rather like the healing quality of a scar, which here emerges from a love that has not come to fruition.

What follows is conceived as a comprehensive account of this difficult and perplexing figure, who, while serving as a diplomat in foreign lands, composed, in addition to the *Idearium español*, two novels, one play, several collections of essays and over four volumes of correspondence. Chapter 1 discusses Ganivet's life in Granada, his birthplace, the years he spent in Madrid and his first academic and literary works. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are arranged in chronological order and organized around the works that Ganivet completed during the remainder of his life. Each chapter concentrates on the work produced in a particular place

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—Antwerp, Helsinki, Granada, Riga—and analyzes those works in the context in which they were written.

Unfortunately, any study of Ganivet must be hampered not only by the loss or destruction of many letters and documents but by the inaccessibility of other material, largely in the hands of Ganivet's family. Ganivet's *Obras completas* are far from complete, their organization arbitrary and confusing, and the bibliographic information given on the original publications is often inadequate. To offset such deficiencies this study provides a biographical Chronology and full Bibliography for all of Ganivet's published works as well as information on his projected works.

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