

NERUDA, Pablo (1904-1973). *Spain in My Heart*. (*España en el corazón : himno a las glorias del pueblo en la guerra*). [S.l.]: Army of the East. Literary Editions of the Commissariat, 1938

73 p.

The colophon states that 500 numbered copies were printed under the direction of Manuel Altolaguirre on 7 November 1938, the second anniversary of the defense of Madrid: “*De este libro se han impreso 500 ejemplares numerados del 1 al 500, bajo la dirección de Manuel Altolaguirre, terminándose su impresión el día 7 de noviembre de 1938, segundo aniversario de la defensa de Madrid.*”

Printed with Elzevir, or Old-style, typeface with larger initials. The cover is printed in two inks (black and red).

Pablo Neruda was Chilean consul to Madrid at the start of the Spanish Civil War. The experiences of the war marked him deeply, as he notes in his memoirs: “Almost everything I have done in my poetry and in my life takes its gravity from my time in Spain.” The first of the poems that would later make up this book was written in the weeks after the death of Federico García Lorca, and it was published anonymously in the magazine *El Mono Azul*, edited by the Alliance of Intellectuals for the Defence of Culture and directed by Rafael Alberti. Other poems in the collection also appeared separately in various magazines and publications, but not anonymously: *Canto a las madres de los milicianos muertos*, *Canto sobre unas ruinas*, *Es así...* All of them spread quickly among the Republican troops.

In November 1937, Neruda was in Chile, where he first published the entire collection (Ed. Ercilla). In July 1938, it was also published in France with a prologue by Louis Aragon. The edition made in Spain by Manuel Altolaguirre was not the first, but it was the most ill-fated, combining the most heroic and dramatic elements in the story of its publication. As Neruda himself said in his memoirs: “I think that few books in the strange history of so many books have had such a curious origin and fate”.

During the war, the monastery of Montserrat was confiscated by the Catalan government, the Generalitat. Administration of the monastery fell to the deputy Carles Gerhard. The old abbey printing press, dating from 1499, was taken over by the Republic's Army of the East and the editor became the printer and Malaga poet Manuel Altolaguirre. In the workshop, three books of poetry were printed as part of the Literary Editions collection for the Commissariat: two editions of Neruda's *Spain in My Heart*; the Peruvian poet César Vallejo's *Spain, Take This Cup from Me*; and Emilio Prados' *Cancionero menor para los combatientes*.

Altolaguirre tells how and where the book was made in a letter sent to the Cuban writer José Antonio Fernández de Castro: “[...] I printed Pablo's book in the Monastery of Montserrat, where the monks had one of the finest printing presses in Catalonia [...]. We discovered that there was an abandoned paper factory near the front, in Orpí, and decided to get it working [...]. The day we made the paper for Pablo's book, soldiers worked in the mill. We used not only raw materials (cotton and rags) allocated by the Commissariat, but also clothes, bandages, trophies of war, an enemy flag and a prisoner's shirt all thrown in by the soldiers [...]”.

The book is dedicated to Neruda, who when he first saw it on display in the US Library of Congress as one of the rarest books of the twentieth century, said: “[...] Despite the unusual materials and the total inexperience of those who made it, the paper looks very beautiful. The few copies of the book that survive are amazing for their typography and sheets of mysterious manufacture [...]”.

As Franco's troops advanced, the Republican soldiers had to flee. Altolaguirre was among them. Arriving in France, he was sent to a refugee camp with others. In danger of losing his sanity, friends helped get him to Paris. In the end, he went into exile in Mexico, where he died in 1959. In his memoirs *El caballo griego*, or *The Greek Horse*, he renounced any word edited or written by him that had made fall a single drop of blood.

At the abbey's printing press, many copies of the second edition of Neruda's book remained unbound and later mysteriously vanished. Of this edition, the only known copies are the one in the National Library of Chile, which was a donation made by the heirs of a Spanish exile who arrived in Chile on the famous ship Winnipeg. It can be consulted through the Cervantes Virtual Library.

The five-hundred copies of the first edition were probably given to political and military officials. The University of Barcelona's two copies are numbered 56 and 57. They come from the Civil War Recuperation Collection, which brought together books from public and private libraries left by people fleeing before or after the war. Unlike other books with the same provenance, they bear no stamp, catalogue number or bookplate that might identify their previous owners.

Other surviving examples include our two copies, the copy in the US Library of Congress (number 55), a copy in the Library of Catalonia (number 5) and another in a private collection (number 78).

(EDE)