Translation, Adaptation, Propaganda: Alfonso X of Castile and *Historia Regum Britanniae*

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Abstract: Thanks to the Toledo School Europe rediscovered some long-lost classical texts which form the basis of Western culture. In its cultural enterprise, the School went beyond the mere act of translating: its scholars produced new texts based on those translations and medieval chronologies and King Alfonso's *General Estoria* (*GE*) is an example of this. One of the medieval texts that Alfonso used for the composition of his GE was Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, a pseudo-historical account of the creation and development of the British Isles. This article analyses three short paragraphs of the original work (the original text had some propagandistic features) and how they were translated and adapted into emerging Castilian and to what extent these Alfonsine adaptations also contain some propaganda features.

Keywords: History Arthurian literature; Alfonso X; Translation; Adaptation

King Alfonso X is better known for his cultural impact rather than for his regal achievements. Experts who have studied his life, deeds and works identify his output as "a turning point in Spanish historical writing." (Procter, 1951, p. 109) Other scholars, such as Sánchez Alonso (1941, pp. 206-208), have also highlighted his success in producing didactic texts which emphasize the use of vernacular Castilian over Latin.[2] It is absolutely clear, thus, that Alfonso's footprint in the Iberian Peninsula has been more cultural than political. This cultural influence is obvious in the translations and compositions of the different works he did throughout his life, to the extent of helping to fix the Castilian language, going beyond the simple translation by embellishing the texts, and including some propagandistic ideas in his texts, as it will be shown below.

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[2] See his *Historia de la historiografía española,* where on pages 206-208 of the first volume he develops this theory.

However, it is vital to emphasize that both the versions and adaptations carried out by the translators of the Toledo School were not the first of all the historiographic texts written in the Middle Ages in the Iberian Peninsula. The medieval historiographical tradition traces its origins back to the texts by John of Biclaro (c. 540-c. 625) and Saint Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), whose *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Suevorum* (c.624) would be later used by Archbishop Jiménez de Rada (c. 1170-1247) for the composition of his *Chronicles* (c. 1243) which, in turn, would be one of Alfonso´s main sources for his historical texts. Along with this story, the king also used chronicles that other kings usually commissioned, such as the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, the *Albelda Chronicle* (both dating from the ninth century) or the *Nájera Chronicle* (last quarter of the twelfth century). However, these Alfonsine versions have a great value as, with them, the Spanish language is fixed and established earlier if compared to other vernacular languages. As Pedraza and Rodríguez Cáceres highlight:

El rey Sabio se preocupó de establecer una lengua castellana que participara de los caracteres burgaleses, toledanos y leoneses, y que prescindiera del apócope extranjerizante y de los cultismos innecesarios, si bien introdujo muchos neologismos latinos o árabes que no tenían equivalencia en romance. (Pedraza Jiménez & Rodríguez Cáceres 2002, pp. 31)[1]

If compared with other European traditions and cultures, the amount of Hispanic historical texts is limited. The British tradition, by contrast, exhibits a series of chronicles, such as Bede's *Historia Eccelesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (c.731), the list of kings in the Welsh tradition or the pseudo-history that Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote by 1136, the famous *Historia regum Britanniae* (*HrB* henceforward), which is famous for becoming the first pseudo-biography of King Arthur rather than for its historical accuracy. Geoffrey's text was widely known throughout the continent. Some scholars, such as Kasten, have even suggested that the use of Geoffrey's material in Alfonso's texts is "quite exceptional" (Kasten 1970: 104) because, despite the evidence that the king used medieval material, he seems to rely heavily on the *HrB*. As Kasten himself affirms, the rest of the medieval texts used by Alfonso are predominantly classical.

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[1] All the translations provided here from Spanish into English are my own. "The Wise King made an effort to establish a Castilian language which would comprise the Burgos, Toledo and León linguistic characteristics and disregard the typical foreign apocopation and unnecessary learned words, even though he introduced many Latin or Arabic neologisms with no equivalence in Castilian."

Nonetheless, Alfonso had a privileged access to the *HrB*, since its third edition was dedicated to one of his ancestors. It is quite paradoxical that Alfonso never mentioned the author of this source, as he was accustomed to do. He almost considered *HrB* an anonymous work even when the third edition, as mentioned, had been dedicated to his own family, as it will be explained below. As Kasten points out, it is very probable that an omission in the codex resulted in the loss of the introduction and the author's name. (Kasten, 1970, p. 106) Should this be the case, Alfonso might have been handling a version of a text, probably, the so-called *Variant Version,* but not the text dedicated to his ancestors.[1]

Geoffrey's text is mainly a propaganda exercise. He wrote it to earn the affection of two social groups in particular: the Church and the new Norman lords. The text was very popular in Wales, since Geoffrey included elements proper to Welsh tradition, such as the famous battle of Camlann and the role of Merlin, a character who would become key in the Arthurian legend from then on. It is important to note, however, that Geoffrey criticised the Welsh heavily with the aim, once more the propagandistic bias is shown, of attaching more importance to the role of Normans in the history of the British Isles. This is even more obvious in the second edition, where the famous *Prophetiae Merlini* were added. This edition is dedicated to the Earl of Gloucester, the illegitimate son of King Stephen, and to the bishop of Lincoln, Alexander, of Breton origin. Both were the driving force, along with the king himself, for the implementation of the Norman ideology in the British Isles. The other recipient of his flattering remarks was the Norman Church, which had helped the political and warrior classes enormously in their conquest of the British Isles. The role that the clergy are given in Geoffrey's texts will set an example for later authors throughout the Middle Ages. Not only do the churchmen crown Arthur king and legitimise his position, but they also take up arms, almost adopting the role of a warrior caste, whilst haranguing the troops before the battle.

HrB's impact and influence in the Iberian Peninsula was more important than previously thought, and Entwistle (1925) was the first one to point this out. There are two main reasons for this impact: the text was written in Latin, so it was relatively easy for the educated classes to understand it; secondly, Geoffrey was considered a serious author.[2] The fact that Alfonso dealt with the original third

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[1] This explains why some parts of the translation vary from the original. The hyperbatons in the translation are obvious.

[2] Geoffrey, however, also had a series of detractors in the Middle Ages. William of Malmesbury condemned him for lying and making up stories. Centuries later, Luis de Vives would also describe him in similar terms.

edition or one of its versions is paramount, since it means that the Hispanic author dealt with the original texts and not with a French translation. Entwistle argued that Eleanor of England, the daughter of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine and great-grandmother of the Wise King, might have brought the third edition of Geoffrey's text, dedicated to her father, as part of the dowry for her wedding with Alfonso VIII of Castile. This manuscript would prove an inexhaustible source of information, not only for Alfonso X himself, but for other authors also, as the *Anales Primeros Toledanos* (*Annals of Toledo,* 1212) show when mentioning the Battle of Camlann. On the other hand, another of Geoffrey's texts, the *Prophetiae Merlini*, was a source of inspiration for the composition of *El baladro del sabio Merlín* (*The Shriek of Merlin the Sage,* 1498, but especially the 1535 edition) and of the *Poema de Alfonso Onceno* (*Poem of Alfonso XI,* 1348), where a series of prophecies applied to the history of Spain follows closely those written by Geoffrey, specifically in the use of animals to explain them. For instance, stanzas 1819-1820 read:

Salirse ha el puerco espín,	[The Porcupine, Lord of the great sword,
Sennor de la grand espada,	
De tierras de Benamarín,	Must come from
Ayuntará grand albergada.	The lands of Benamarin.
Con bestias brauas e perros marinos,	He will gather a great army.
Las aguas fondas pasarán,	With wild beasts and seadogs,
Cobrirán montes e caminos,	The deep waters they will sail
En la Espanna aportarán.[1]	And will walk on mountains and roads,
	And they will find port in Spain.]

On the other hand, Geoffrey had also made use of animals (underlined words below) to illustrate his P*rophetiae Merlini*:

Aper etenim Cornubiae succursum pretabit et colla forum sub pedibus conculcabit. Insula occeani potestati ipsius subdentur et Gallicanos status possidebit. (...) Uindicabit leonem uulpes Caerdubali et totum dentibus suis consumet... Signifer lupus conducet turmas et Cornubiam cauda sua circumcinget (...) Amplexabitur

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[1] The text can be accessed online on the Cervantes online library webpage (Biblioteca Virtual Cervantes): http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/FichaObra.html?portal=0&Ref=27112 (accessed June 14, 2015).

homo leonem in uino et fulgor auri oculos intuentium excecabit. (Wright, 1985, p. 74)[1]

If we have a look at the number of works attributed to the king, it is evident that Alfonso could not have composed all the works by himself, and that it is highly likely that he directed a team of translators from different cultures who carried out the task, as Brancaforte suggests when talking of "los compiladores alfonsíes", or "the Alfonsine compilers" (Brancaforte, 1999, p. 25). His work is divided into two periods: the first extends from 1256 to 1260 and

se centra en los textos científicos. Tras una larga interrupción provocada por las ocupaciones políticas y militares, inicia una nueva etapa en 1269. Se muestra más exigente e incluso rehace algunas de las versiones anteriores. Emprende producciones tan ambiciosas como la *Estoria de España* y la *GE.* (Pedraza Jiménez & Rodríguez Cáceres, 2002, pp. 31-32)[2]

The date for the composition of the *GE* has been problematic for different Alfonsí scholars. Ballesteros-Beretta thinks that Alfonso wrote part of this text around 1283, the year before his death (1963: 502), although it is very probable that he had started it by 1270 (as Díez de Revenga suggests) or 1272 (as defended by Santoyo, in Lafarga & Pegenarte, and by Solalinde). One of the reasons that support 1270 or 1272 as the beginning of the composition is that by 1274 his wish to accede to the Germanic Imperial throne, which Alfonso always called *Fecho del Imperio*, or "Fact of the Empire", came to an end when Pope Gregory X anointed Rudolph of Habsburg as the new emperor. *GE* is universalist and, as such, is also imperialist, as Díaz de Revenga shows and, thus, it is a subtle propaganda exercise. 1274, or even a bit later, is more likely to be the date for the end of the composition, or at least, the date for Alfonso's loss of interest in the work because of the frustration of being ruled out as Germanic emperor; for these reasons, it is very unlikely that this date would be the beginning of its composition, let alone the late 1283 that Ballesteros-Beretta suggests.

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[1] "That the boar of Cornwall shall bring aid and assistance, and shall tread upon the necks of our enemies under his feet, the islands of the ocean shall be subject to his power, and the Gaulish forests he shall possess. (…) The fox of Caerdubalum will take the revenge on the lion and will tear it with its teeth … A wolf will lead the troops and surround Cornwall with its tail (…) A man will fight with a drunken lion and the eyes of the witnesses will be bright like gold." These prophecies taken from Wright's edition are 112, 2 and 57, 70 and 71).

[2] "focuses on scientific texts. After a long break because of political and military affairs, he starts a new period in 1269. He shows himself to be more demanding and he even rewrites previous versions. He starts ambitious projects such as *Estoria de España* and *GE.*"

GE is one of the finest examples of the cultural trend of the thirteenth century, where many authors aimed at creating a cycle of everything which had happened. Different texts attest to this, ranging from scientific works, like St Thomas of Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (1265-1274)*,* to literary texts, such as the Arthurian *Vulgate* (c. 1215- c. 1235) and *Post-Vulgate* (c. 1230-c. 1240) Alfonso's three main sources for the constitution of his *GE* are the Bible, Josephus's *Antiquitates Iudicae* (93-94), and Petrus Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* (c. 1173). It is interesting to point out that in her study of the *GE*, Lida de Malkiel, one of the most important Hispanic scholars in Arthurian literature, does not list Geoffrey of Monmouth as one of the medieval sources that Alfonso used.[1] However, Alfonso's universal history goes further, becoming thus the medieval paradigm of a *grammatica*, which, as Irvine and Thomson explain, "was traditionally defined as having two main methodological divisions and subject-areas; "the science of interpreting the poets and other writers and the systematic principles [*ratio*] for speaking and writing correctly." (Irvine & Thomson 2005, p. 15) Nevertheless, *GE* has also a moralising side aiming at "recoger hechos que sean ciertos y que sirvan de ejemplo para el comportamiento del hombre" (Díez de Revenga, 2006, p. 33)[2]

The use of *HrB* (or *Estoria de las Bretannas*, as Alfonso called it) as a source begins with the chapter dealing with the battle of Troy, where he narrates the adventures of Brutus, descendant of the Trojan hero Æneas, who arrives in Britain after a series of adventures. The motif is taken from book I (chapters 3 to 16). However, Alfonso makes use of more material, such as the twelve verses in the texts (the prophecies of Diana), taken from book II. All in all, Alfonso made frequent use of books II and IV of the *HrB,* dealing specifically with the conquest of *Britannia*, which he develops in the fifth part of the *GE*.[3]

The translators who worked on this chapter did not merely translate Geoffrey's original version, but also enriched it by expanding it (*amplificatio*) in some cases, following the king's aim of making everything understandable and clear, and fulfilling his didactic interest. He and his group of translators worked on this source using the same techniques applied to other texts: as with another of his sources, the

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[1] See her two articles cited in the bibliography, collected in the online version of *Romance Philology*: http://pao.chadwyck.co.uk/journals/displayItem.do?QueryType=journals&ResultsID=1294F9DE24F1 6F9C88&filterSequence=0&ItemNumber=1&journalID=3227#listItem146 (accessed June 2, 2015).
[2] "collecting true facts, setting examples for man's behaviour."
[3] It is very likely that the structure of the Alfonsine work followed the six ages of the world, as Brancaforte suggests in the introduction to his edition of the Alfonsine histoaric texts. However, since the work is unfinished, the theory is not conclusive.

French *Roman de Thébes*, Alfonso, as Paloma Gracia argues, follows simple and recurrent techniques, such as "*intercalar síntesis de lo ocurrido, tanto a partir de referencias (…) como de adiciones; dichos resúmenes constituyen una parte considerable de la amplificación, puesto que elevan enormemente el número de palabras castellanas empleadas.*" (Gracia, 2004, p. 305)[1] However, the way Alfonso deals with Geoffrey's text is different in some ways: while it is common for the Alfonsine text to open or close with a summary of the narration, as Gracia points out, in the case of the invasion of *Britannia*, such a summary is absent.

Let us take the chapter entitled "*De commo Jullio Çesar paso a Bretaña por conquerir la, e lidio com Casibellano, rey dende, e fue vençido el Çesar*"[2] as an example. The introductory paragraph in the Galfridian original is short:

His itaque uisis, Gaius Iulius Caesar nauigium parat prosperosque uentos expectat ut quod Cassibellano litteris mandauerat effectibus prosequeretur. Optato igitur uento instante erexit uela sua et in hostium [sic] Tamensis fluminis cum exercitu suo applicuit. Iamque rates tellurem appulerant, ecce Cassibellaunus cum tota fortitudine sua occurrit et ad Dorobellum oppidum ueniens ibi consilium cum proceribus regni iniuit qualiter hostes longius arceret. (Wright, 1985, p. 36)[3]

When this paragraph is compared with the Castilian version, it can be clearly observed how the latter has been expanded. Once more, Gracia's thesis on the use of the *Roman de Thébes* can be applied here: "Las frases escuetas [del original] se han extendido dando cabida a un número de palabras que multiplica por muchas veces las de la fuente"[4] (Gracia, 2004, p. 307):

Pues que Gayo Jullio Çesar vio estas letras de Casibelano, mando guisar su flota muy bien e espero que oujese buen viento, para que auje a coraçon de conpljr por

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[1] "inserting summaries of what has happened, both by means of references (…) and additions; these summaries become a paramount part of the process of expansion, since the number of words in Castilian increases enormously."

[2] "How Caesar went to Britain to conquer it, and fought against its king Cassivelaunus, and Caesar lost the battle." For the study of the passages in Castilian, the excellent edition that Brancaforte prepared for Cátedra will be used. It should also be noted the different spelling of the British leader in the title of the chapter (Casibellano) and in the text (Casibelano)

[3] "After he saw these, Gaius Julius Caesar prepared his fleet and waited for a following wind before he could achieve his aims. Thus, when he had the good wind, he ordered that the sails be hoisted and arrived with his army at the estuary of the Thames. Then, the ships steered to port and Cassivelaunus arrived with all his men and went to a stronghold called Dorobellum, where he took advice from the noblemen of his kingdom on how he could expel the enemies."

[4] "The short sentences (in the original) have been expanded thus multiplying the number of words from the source text."

el fecho lo que a Casibelano enbiara dezjr por su carta e cometer lo luego. Et pues que el ouo viento endreçado qual el auja menester, mando luego alçar las velas e entro en la mar, e fue arribar con su caualleria toda al puerto de vn rrio que es dicho Tamense. Et avn non huujaran fincar las estacas de las tiendas en tierra quando Casibelano llego con toda su caualleria, et desy fuese vn castillo que dizen Dorobello, e ouo y consejo con sus rricos omnes en qual manera podrie y alongar de sy aquellos sus enemjgos. (Brancaforte,1999, p. 263)*[1]*

Thus, the 60 word text in the original is expanded into 128 in the Alfonsine version, approximately double the length. This paragraph illustrates the *amplificatio*, a typical device of the School of Translators, which has been achieved through three main techniques: the inclusion of words aiming at clarifying the context; the elaboration of the original text; and what could be considered here "cultural translation", that is, the process of the modernizing words in order to make them fit into a medieval context.

Regarding the first technique, the inclusion of new words, there are several subtypes. The first one deals with the substitution of a pronoun or a deictic for its corresponding noun (*denominatio*). The first example can be seen in the first line: "His itaque uisis" [After he saw these] becomes "Pues que vio estas letras de Casibelano" [After he saw these letters by Cassivelaunus]. As Gracia points out in her article, this technique has a double objective: on the one hand, it helps to clarify the context; on the other, it helps to link what has been narrated and what is going to be narrated.[2] Secondly, on some occasions, the Toledo School simply developed the original idea with more words (*circuitio*); thus, "effectibus prosequeretur" [so that he could achieve the aims] becomes "e cometerlo luego" [and fulfil it], even when in the previous sentence in Castilian, a clause had been introduced bearing the same meaning: ("auie coraçon de conpljr por el fecho") ["had the will (i.e., wanted) to do the deed"]. Once again, the aim to clarify and educate in each Alfonsine text is obvious here. As regards the third technique, in Geoffrey's original text, he uses place names that, no doubt, his audience might have known well but that would have been totally unknown to an Iberian reader. Thus, "in

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[1] "After Caesar read these letters from Cassivelaunus, he ordered the fleet to get ready and waited for a following wind in order to fulfil what he had written to Cassivelaunus in his letter. When the awaited wind came, he ordered that the sails be hoisted and started sailing. He arrived with all his knights at the estuary of the river called Thames. Hardly had they set up camp when Cassivelaunus arrived with all his knights and from there he went to a castle called Dorobellum. There he heard the advice of his noble men on how he could expel the enemies from there."

[2] As Gracia says: *"(sirve) de trabazón entre lo ya narrado y lo que se va a narrar."* (Gracia, 2004, p. 305).

hostium [sic] Tamensis fluminis" [to the estuary of the Thames] becomes "al puerto de un rrio que es llamado Tamense" [towards the harbour of a river which is called Thames]. This is repeated in the following sentence, when talking about Dorobellum; the Castilian text reads "vn castillo que dizen Dorobello" [a castle they call Dorobellum]. These three examples illustrate how the technique of expansion is deployed for various reasons, ranging from cultural explanations to purely grammatical motivations. Whatever the reason may be, it always reflects an educational purpose. As Rico indicated, these expansions of the original text expose "the compulsory expression of didacticism and nationalist rhetoric realism present from the conception of the work." (Rico, 1972, p. 178)[1]

The second technique concerns the embellishment of the original text. Lida de Malkiel had already stated that the translations showed an artistic technique going beyond the simple translation.[2] Several examples illustrate this point. In Geoffrey's original text, the Latin expression "nauigium parat" [prepares the fleet] is translated as "mandó guisar su flota muy bien" [he ordered that his fleet be very well prepared.] In this context another important point arises: the use of "flota" (a Gallicism) instead of the Castilian words which were already in use (barco, naves), which Alfonso uses some lines below: this shows his intention to enrich the language, a novelty for Castilian culture.[3] As the king himself explained in the prologue of *Libro de la ochava esfera* (*The Book on the Fixed Stars of the Eighth Sphere,* 1256, revised in 1276), his intention was to write in *castellano drecho* [correct Castilian] (Díez de Revenga, 2006, p. 211). The example quoted above is not the only case of artistic *amplificatio* to be found in the short paragraph selected. The underlined segments are examples of this: the Latin "erexit uela sua et in hostium [sic] Tamensis fluminis cum exercitu suo applicuit" [he hoisted his sail and with his army, he went to the estuary of the Thames] is translated as "mando luego alçar las velas e entro en el mar e fue a arribar con su caballeria toda" (he ordered that the sails be hoisted and started sailing and arrived with all his knights); the original "Iamque rates tellurem appullerant" [the ships steered to port] is freely rendered into "Et avn non huujaran fincar las estacas de las tiendas en tierra." [Hardly had they set up the camp] It is also interesting how this practice of embellishing the language is not only applied to phrases or sentences, but also to

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[1] As Rico himself expounded: "(la) expresión forzosa del didactismo y realismo retórico nacionalista que presiden la concepción de toda la obra."

[2] "(una) actividad artística nada desdeñable, que rebasa con mucho la mera traducción." (Lida de Malkiel, 1958/1959, p. 113).

[3] All the translations provided here from Spanish into English are my own.

isolated words. In the above case of "Iamque" [then, eventually], translated by Alfonso as "et aun non" [hardly], instead of "apenas", Alfonso highlights here a negative idea. *Apenas* is a word first registered in a text dating from 1220[1], so it had already been in use for some 50 years at the time of the composition of this chronicle. This negation, does not only help to enlarge the number of words in the target text, but also enlivens the translation and makes it more attractive. What Paloma Gracia has termed as *humanización de los personajes* (making characters more human), meaning the process by which Alfonso makes use of the *amplificatio* to describe each character, can be thus also applied to actions. In this context, it is obvious how this task of embellishing the original, of enriching the language, is not limited to the inclusion of a larger number of words in the translation, but it is also reflected in the free translation of some parts through which the Castilian text becomes a new creation rather than a simple translation, as Lida de Malkiel had already suggested.

Finally, some original words in Latin have been updated in the translation within a medieval context, with the aim, once again, of enlightening and teaching. In the paragraph, Alfonso uses the word *caualleria* (knighthood), characteristic of the feudal and warlike society of medieval Castile, to translate the Latin *exercitu(s)* [army]; likewise, the word *castillo* [castle] in the target text derives from the Latin *castrum* [fort] through its diminutive *castellum* and is used here instead of the original *oppidum* [stronghold]. Another example is when the Latin *cum proceribus* [with his noblemen], translated as *rricos omnes* [rich men, with the sense of noblemen], with which Alfonso emphasizes the noble rather than the military aspect of the word, which he himself describes, as will be seen below, in his *Código de las siete partidas* (The Seven-part Code, pp. 1256-1265). The typical Alfonsine inflexibility when translating social terms is evident here, as Almeida and Trujillo argue in their article. The choice of *rricos omnes* is also an example of propaganda, which would reflect the political situation in which Alfonso found himself, and if so, this would help pin down the date of composition to shortly before 1274. In 1272, Richard of Cornwall, son of King John of England, died. He had been the German king since 1257. With Richard's death, Alfonso thought he was closer to succeeding to the imperial throne, since he was the grandson of the German king Philip of Suabia (pp. 1177-1208). Richard's relatives even supported him, as was the case of Richard's nephew, Alfonso's brother-in-law. Furthermore,

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[1] See Santiago Segura Munguía in his *Nuevo diccionario etimológico Latín-Español y de las voces derivadas*, p. 575.

Alfonso could easily recruit more support, especially from the Italian princes. However, Alfonso's main problem lay in his own country. As Ballesteros-Beretta explains, "la actitud de los magnates castellanos llegó a ser tan crítica y terrible, amenazando con desmembrar los dominios de Castilla."[1] (Ballesteros- Beretta, 1964, p. 674) This domestic problem was aggravated by the refusal of the new Pope, Gregory X, to crown Alfonso emperor, since the papacy showed a clear preference for the German candidate, Rudolph I, who was more malleable and eager to accept the papal supremacy than the Castilian king. This enraged Alfonso, who, according to Ballesteros-Beretta "pacta con los grandes de su reino, ruega, emplea, alternativamente, la seducción y la amenaza, recuerda a los vasallos sus deberes con la realeza, les hace presente su obligación de socorrerle, pues en ella se halla empeñado el honor nacional."[2] (Ballesteros-Beretta, 1964, p. 676) Alfonso clearly explained what the duties of these noblemen (the "rricos hombres" mentioned above) were. As the *Código de las siete partidas* (chapter 4, title 25 [Dealing with the vassals], law 10) states:

aquellos que en las otras tierras dicen condes o barones, y a estos tales pueden echar los reyes de la tierra por una de estas tres razones: la primera es cuando quiere tomar venganza por malquerencia que tenga contra ellos; la segunda, por malfetrías que hayan hecho en la tierra; la tercera, por razón de yerro en que haya traición o alevosía.[3]

The text leaves the different causes for treason open to interpretation, which could be liberally interpreted by the king, but not by those "rricos hombres". Furthermore, it was not the first time that Alfonso used a text with political intention. As Paloma Gracia comments, in his adaptation of the *Roman de Thébes* there is a clear political exercise on the character of Adrastus who highlights the need for cohesion between kingship and people.[4] In fact, some authors like Franker

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[1] "Castilian noblemen acted so critically and terribly that this could have meant the division of the Kingdom of Castile."

[2] "makes a pact with the noblemen of his kingdom, begs and alternates seduction and threat, reminds his vassals of their duties to help the king, since national honour is a stake."

[3] "Those who are called earls or barons in other lands can be expelled from their lands by the king, in accordance with one of these three reasons: the first is when he wants to avenge any hatred on their part; the second, because they have done harm to the land; the third, for treason or treachery." There is an online version of the 1807 edition on this Alfonsine work. It can be accessed on http://fama2.us.es/fde/lasSietePartidasEd1807T3.pdf (accessed May 13, 2015).

[4] In the original, "particularmente remarcables son las [desviaciones de intencionalidad política] que atañen a la figura de Adraste y afectan a su condición real subrayando, por ejemplo, la cohesión entre el rey y su pueblo o al introducir justificaciones para la guerra" (Gracia 2004: 313). See also (Almeida/Trujillo, pp. 168-170)

(collected by Brancaforte) observed in *Estoria de España* an excessive interest in the history of Rome, maybe reflecting Alfonso's wish to become the next King of the Romans.[1] This interest is more obvious, and reasonable, in the international projection of the *GE*. Alfonso's aspiration is also reflected in the establishment of Castilian as the language of culture and communication. As Weiss has explained:

Not only did he consolidate Castilian as the official language of the chancery, but he also commissioned in the vernacular a wide range of historical, scientific, legal and literary works (...) This enterprise was undertaken in large measure to make Castile central to the translatio studii from Antiquity to the modern age (...) And since his patronage also bolstered his claim to become Holy Roman Emperor, his cultural nationalism implicitly anticipated Antonio de Nebrija's view that language should be the 'companion to the Empire'. (Weiss, 2005, p. 500)[2]

Alfonso's propagandistic aim can also be clearly seen, as implied above, in his treatment of Geoffrey of Monmouth's text for his *GE*. The description of Cassivelaunus' cohort (see below) is an example of this: not only is the Celtic leader surrounded by his family, supporting him (unlike Alfonso's own relatives who opposed him on many occasions) but there are also several other minor kings: "Cridione, rrey de Albania, e Buzicath, rrey de Venedoçia, et Birtam el rrey de Demeçia" [Cridious, king of Albania, and Gueithaet, king of Venedotia, and Brithael, the king of Demetia][3] who were "tres reyes que le obedesçian",[4] which is his translation of the original Latin "tres quoque reges subditi sibi." As we can see in the complete paragraph reproduced below, Alfonso continues expanding the text with multiple descriptions and periphrases, amongst other elements, which increase the number of 111 words in the original text to 217 in the Castilian version:

Aderat secum Belinus, princeps militie sue, cuius ingenio et consilio totum regnum tractabatur. Aderant etiam duo nepotes sui, Androgeus uidelicet dux Trinouantum et Tanuantius dux Cornubie; tres quouque reges subditi sibi, Cridous Albanie et Gueithaet Uenedocie atque Brithael Demetie. Qui ut ceteros in affectus pugnandi duxissent, consilium dederunt ut recenter castra Caesaris adirent et antequam

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[1] As Brancaforte states "el desproporcionado interés por la historia romana [refleja una] motivación personal, relacionada con sus aspiraciones a la corona del sacro romano imperio" (Brancaforte,1999, p. 22).
[2] Weiss mentions Alfonso acting as patron to Juan Gil de Zamora and Englishman Geoffrey of Eversley.
[3] I am following here the names in the translation by Lewis Thorpe of the Galfridian text. See bibliography.
[4] "three kings who obeyed him."

ciuitatem aliquam siue oppidum cepisset ipsum expellere insisterent. Nam si sese infra munitiones patrie misisset, dicebant eum difficilius expellendum cum sciret ubi se et commilitones suos reciperet. Assensum igitur prebentes cuncti petierunt litora ubi Iulius Caesar castra et tentoria sua erexerat. Ibi dispositis in utraque parte cateruis dextras cum hostibus commiscuerunt, pilis pila, ictus ictibus obiecientes. (Wright, 1984, p. 36)[1]

The Castilian text reads as follows:

Et era y con el Belino, prinçipe de su caualleria, por cuyo consejo e esfuerço se guiaua el rreyno. Et eran y con el otrossy dos sus njetos, e estos fueron Androgeo, duque de Trinouanto, e Tenunçio, duque de Cornubia, et otrosy eran ay de la su parte tres reyes que le obedesçian, et estos eran Cridione, rrey de Albania, e Buzicath, rrey de Venedoçia, et Birta, el rrey de Demeçia. Estos rreyes todos tres, como qujer de los otros oujesen sabor de lidiar, dieron por consejo al rey Casibelano que fuesen luego sin tardança njnguna a las possadas del Çesar et ante que prisiese villa njn castillo que punasen de echar le dela tierra, ca sy dentro huujase entrar por las fortalezas de la tierra, dezien que serie peor de echar e que lo non podrien fazer sin grant trabajo, pues que touiese donde se acoger con sus caualleros e sus gentes. Et los bretones, pues que esto oujeron fablado entre sy, dieron luego consejo al puerto del rrio ally do Jullio Çesar arribara e fincara sus tiendas. Entonçe los bretones tan bien como Jullio Çesar pararon sus azes de amas partes e abenjeron se desta gujsa entresy, e dieronse las diestras vnos a otros que njnguno non se tirase atras njn fuxiese de la fazienda. (Brancaforte, 1999, pp. 263-264).[2]

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[1] "With him was Belinus, head of his army, after whose advice and counsel the kingdom was governed. There were indeed also two of his grandchildren, Androgeus, the Duke of Trionovantum, and Tenvantius, the Duke of Cornwall; there were also three of his kinglets: Criodus of Albany, Gueithaet of Venedotia and Britahel of Demetia. They wanted to start the fight and suggested that the Caesar's camp be attacked and he be expelled, before he could take over any city or fortress. If he ever occupied any land, it would be very difficult to drive him out, according to them, as he would know where to take refuge with his troops. Indeed, there was common agreement to march towards the coast where Julius Caesar had set up his camp. This way disposed, they fought their enemies, javelin against javelin, wound against wound."

[2] "And Belinus, the commander of his knights, was there with him and he advised the king on the country's affairs. With him, besides, there were two of his grandchildren, namely Androgeus, earl of Trinovantum, and Tenvantius, the Cornish earl, and besides, there were three kings who obeyed him, namely Cridous, King of Albania, and Gueithaet, King of Venedotia, and Brithael, the Demetian king. These three kings, since they knew everyone wanted to fight, advised Cassivelaunus to go to Caesar's camp before he took over any city or castle, so that they could drive him out of the country because, if he took over one of the forts, it would be more difficult to fight him and drive him out should he find a place where he could stay with his people. And the British, who had talked amongst them, went to

This paragraph shows the typical Alfonsine double textual function. The version retains the same structure of the original, but the Alfonsine translators strengthen it by including other elements, as underlined in the following examples: "… sus njetos, e estos fueron Androgeo, … et otrosy eran ay de la su parte tres reyes que le obedesçian, et estos eran Cridione, rrey de Albania, e Buzicath, rrey de Venedoçia, et Birta, el rrey de Demeçia."[1] The expansions in this second paragraph are more frequent than those in the first text examined. In fact, one of the next expansions is a sort of summary which starts the new sentence ("Estos rreyes todos tres"),[2] and helps the translator to link what has just been said with the new information, so that the reader is always informed of what the writer is talking about.

In this paragraph, another element can be observed: the syntax of the translation. Although it also appears in the first paragraph considered, the phenomenon of polysyndeton occurs more in this second paragraph. While the original sentences in Latin tend to be simple and short, in the Castilian version sentences are always linked by the conjunction *et* (polysyndeton), while, at the same time there is a development of the subordinate clauses. For example, the Latin original "et antequam ciuitatem aliquam siue oppidum cepisset ipsum expellere insisterent" [he should be expelled before he could take over any city or fortress] becomes "et ante que prisiese villa njn castillo que punasen de echar le dela tierra, ca sy dentro huujase entrar por las fortalezas de la tierra"[3], where the Spanish clause (another example of expansion) needs a subordinate conjunction (ca sy), while, at the same time, a relative conjunction (que) is also introduced.[4] Attention must also be drawn to the expansion of other sentences by including nouns, such as in "al rey Casibelano" [to king Cassivelaunus] or "Et los bretones" [And the British], which cannot be found in the original text and help to justify the construction of what has been narrated and what is to come, as stated above.

The embellishment of the translation is another point to take into account. In the description of the battle in the original, following the paragraph we have just seen,

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where Julius Caesar had arrived and set up his camp. Then both the British and Julius Caesar took up their weapons and started the fight, and they hurt each other in such a way that they were all falling but no one left the battle."

[1] "two of his grandchildren, namely Androgeus, …, and besides, there were three kings who obeyed him, namely Cridous, King of Albania, and Gueithaet, King of Venedotia, and Brithael, the Demetian king."

[2] "All these three kings."

[3] "before he took over any city or castle, that they could drive him out of the country in case he took over one of the forts."

[4] Some of the examples seen before (*e entro en la mar e fue… e cometerlo luego*) are also cases of polysyndeton. See text to which footnote 15 refers.

Geoffrey uses cruel and bloody images, which will set an example for future medieval texts.[1] The Alfosine translators tried to avoid these images but at the same time, they also attempted to keep their focus on cruelty. The original "Nec mora hinc et inde curruunt vulnerati, telis infra vitalia receptis" [Here and there the wounded fell, with the weapons stuck in their entrails] is softened in the Castilian translation by means of an expansion on the original, but avoiding the grotesque image represented by "infra vitalia" [inside their entrails]: "Et luego en pos esto començaron la batalla e cayen muchos de cada parte, dellos muertos, dellos feridos, de grandes colpes de dardos e de otras armas que se dauan por los cuerpos los vnos a los otros."[2] Closely linked with the intentions of expanding, clarifying and teaching, Gracia observed that "*el léxico y la sintaxis originales se vierten vocablo a vocablo y estructura a estructura; pero si bien es rara la supresión de elementos, la amplificación es sistemática y multiplica las palabras originales, al tiempo que convierte sus proposiciones simples en largas y complejas oraciones.*" (Gracia, 2004, pp. 313-314)[3]

A description of the battle will exemplify this, while showing how the Wise King adapts and improves the original rather than simply translating it. While the original Latin text is short, Alfonso expands it with a series of connected sentences: "*Denique plurima parte diei emensa irruentibus Britonibus strictis turmis et audaces impetus facientibus uictoria fauente Deo provenit et Cesar sese infra castra et naues laceratis Romanis recepit.*"[4] (Wright, 1984, p. 37)

The Castilian text reads as follows:

Pues que fue pasada muy grant parte del dia, los bretones andando muy abjuados por la fazienda, lidiando muy de rrezio con los rromanos, matando en ellos quanto podien, dioles Dios por su plazer que oujeron de auer la vitoria e lo mejor de la

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[1] This is especially obvious in Geoffrey's two epigones, Wace's *Roman de Bruce* and Layamon's *Brut*. The former is a version in French of Geoffrey's text, whilst the latter is a version of the French text in Middle English. For instance, in the Middle English text, we read how a man has played havoc at Arthur's court, and the king orders to "put a cord about his neck and drag him to a marsh, and thrust him into a bog where he shall lie; and seize all his close kin whom you can find and strike off their heads with your broad swords. The women of his immediate family whom you can find, cut off their noses and let their looks be ruined." In (Layamon's, 2001, p. 111)

[2] "And after that, the battle commenced and many men from both parties fall, some dead, some wounded by swords and by other weapons that they used against each other."

[3] "the original lexis and syntax are translated word by word and structure by structure; however, while the omission of elements is infrequent, the expansion is continuous and multiplies the original number of words, while, at the same time simple sentences become long and complex."

[4] "Most of the day had elapsed and the bold and brave British were favoured by God with a victory, so Caesar and the Romans withdrew to their camp and ships."

fazienda contra ellos en manera que se ouo el Çesar de acoger a sus naues, e acogie otrosy consigo a sus naujos a sus conpañas, todos muy mal trechos e quebrantados e mal llagados.[1] (Brancaforte, 1999, p. 265)

The paragraph above highlights a proper creative task, rather than a simple translation done by Alfonso and his group of translators. As Kasten suggested, "the general tendency [of the *GE*] is to paraphrase rather than translate, with explanation and clarity the primary considerations." (Kasten, 1970, p. 111)

This task of reading, interpreting and completing, going beyond the translation process, is reflected in the constant expansion of the sentences (that favourite medieval device of *amplificatio*), in the embellishment of some terms and ideas, in the propagandistic adaptation of parts of the original texts and in the process of facilitating the comprehension of some words (what has been termed here as cultural translation, the updating of some Latin terms into a medieval context). All these devices have been exemplified in three short paragraphs which show the way Alfonso and his group of translators worked. The great Alfonsine work is an outstanding example of the medieval ideal of the study of *grammatica* as a science interpreting other texts while creating, developing and beautifying the language. At the same time, these translations worked as a vehicle for the emperor to communicate his ideas, mainly to subdue and control the rebellious noblemen in his kingdom. Its intrinsic value is even more important when taking into account that the *GE* is the first universal history written in any vernacular language. These texts show how the Castilian lexis and syntax developed and grew thanks to the contribution of the Alfonsine School of translators. Even when the king could never become emperor, the King of the Three Religions ("rey de las tres religiones", as he liked being called) cemented the Castilian cultural hegemony in the Peninsula, while consolidating its language when making it the core of his *translatio studii*. His cultural endeavour and the universalist character of the *GE* confirm his propagandistic objective.

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[1] "After most of the day had passed, the British were well engaged in the battle, fighting the Romans vigorously and killing as many of them as they could; God gave them the upper hand in the battle in such a way that Caesar and his men had to return to their boats; all of them were very battered, tired and wounded."

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