

## Alfonso X's Translation of a Latin Alexander Romance in his *General estoria*

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Scholars have identified many of the sources Alfonso X el Sabio used to compile his *General estoria* (GE). By comparing original works, such as Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, with corresponding passages in the GE, we have begun to learn about the practices of medieval textual transmission. This essay studies Alfonso's treatment of the *Historia de preliis* texts used to construct the Alexander romance included in the GE. Alfonso's alterations of his sources can be grouped into three categories: stylistic changes, additions of fictitious material, and factual corrections, all of which when taken together help us to better describe thirteenth-century techniques of translation and modernization.

The fact that a text is more than twice as long as its direct source would seem to preclude any notion of literal translation. González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, editors of the full-length *Historia novelada de Alejandro Magno* (HNAM) taken from the "Cuarta parte" of the GE, say that the Latin model Alfonso's translators used was "fácilmente accesible" so that nothing "impedía que se realizase la técnica de traducción palabra por palabra" (30). They stand with scholars such as Millás Vallicrosa<sup>1</sup> and Badia Margarit<sup>2</sup> in affirming the "fidelidad con que los redactores han seguido a sus originales" (HNAM 29). Lida de Malkiel in her extensive study of the passages in the GE from Ovid explains the *amplificatio* that she observed in many passages in the Castilian translation as a desire on the king's part to transmit "todo lo que dicen en sus respectivas lenguas las fuentes" (1958: 122-123), and for this reason Alfonso's text is not short on words. In his "El literalismo de los traductores de la corte de Alfonso el Sabio," Millás Villacrosa sees "un espíritu de gran fidelidad a los originales traducidos, fidelidad que no sólo afecta al vaciado y moldeamiento de las palabras, sino al curso de la frase" (158). He goes further to say that the translators

of Alfonso's court professed a "casi infantil" (159) respect for their sources. Similarly, Kiddle, in his study of the French prose story of Thebes as rendered in the GE, says that Alfonso's *Estoria de Tebas* "could almost be considered as another manuscript of the French prose Thebes itself" (121), even though he does go on to point out examples of non-literal translation.

And yet the variations between the Latin original and the Spanish translation are undoubtedly there, and they would seem to go beyond what is required for the translation from Latin to Romance. Lázaro Carreter, in his study of the *modus interpretandi* of Alfonso's translators, says that "las traducciones de la corte alfonsí pertenecen a la clase de las versiones 'traidoras'" (141) because they betray their original. And, according to Solalinde, Alfonso's method of translation included substantial revision of the text with factual correction of details such as names and numbers, additions from other sources, amplification of details due to the invention of the scribe (GE xvii-xviii). The treatment of source material concerning Biblical history described by Eisenberg suggests that Alfonso's work might best be described as compilation rather than translation (210-212). G. Menéndez Pidal identifies moments in the GE where the scribe is called "trasladador" and other places where he/she becomes the "ayuntador" (370). One might say that the former is a translator and the latter a compiler.

González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, in their excellent edition of this part of the still unpublished *Cuarta Parte* of the GE, have pointed out some variations from literal translation, particularly, the sentence expansion ("Ensanchamiento de la frase") due to a) notes of clarification for explaining obscure terms such as *astrologia*, which becomes in Alfonso X's translation "en la astrología que es el saber de las estrellas" (30); b) the repetition of synonyms: *ingeniosus* becomes "sotil e engeñoso" and *hostium* becomes "de huestes e de enemigos" (HNAM 31); and c) Alfonso's predilection for etymologies: *Bucefalus* becomes "bucifal e dieron le este nombre desta palabra bus que dize el griego por buey" (HNAM 32). Additionally, the editors point to occasional switching between direct and indirect style,<sup>3</sup> the insertion of Christian elements, and errors of translation (i.e., *vivente* Dario for "viniendo Dario" HNAM 32).<sup>4</sup> One appreciates the categorization of González Roldán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, especially inasmuch as it allows them to say with some confidence that they have reconstructed Latin texts that in all likelihood do reflect the ones the scribes of

Alfonso's court used. Alfonso's sources for his version of the Alexander romance are taken from the *Historia de preliis* J1 and J2 versions, and Walter of Chatillon's *Alexandreis*, principally, and on occasion, Alfonso makes reference to his use of the "Estoria de Egipto," which Solalinde says refers to an Arabic source named Ibrahim Benuasif Xah al-Misri (I, xiii, n. 3). However, upon comparing the Spanish and Latin, one finds a concerted effort on the part of the *trasladadores* to improve their text, even if this means to betray the original by leaning away from the literal translation. In contrast to Alfonso's scientific work for which Millás Villacrosa has shown that literalism insured preservation of scientific truths (155), the HNAM has undergone a process of what may be called thirteenth-century modernization. When translated literally the versions of these Latin scribes must have seemed dry and excessively concise in the romance of Alfonso's day, despite the likelihood that they may derive from a J2 text that Hilka says is a notable example of erudition and elegant Latin (cited in HNAM 19). Alfonso remedies this by introducing stylistic changes, additions that reflect pure invention on the part of the scribe, and corrections of fact. Since the work of Alfonso and his court at this moment amounts to nothing less than the emergence of Castilian prose, it is necessary that we continue to study the mechanism that made this prose because, as Lázaro Carreter says, without knowing how the translators worked, "nos faltarían elementos de juicio para medir el alcance de aquella empresa" (139).

Regarding stylistic changes, we have already mentioned the scribe's use of doublets, "rogaron-le e pidiéron-le merced" (47:8) where the Latin has "rogaverunt" (44:42), as well as the popular etymologies which augment the text, such as the translator's explanation for the Tigres River, "por essol dixieron Tigre, por que semeja en ello a la bestia tigre que corre otrossí muy irada e mucho, tanto que alcança al cavallo muy corredor e pással" (103:52-54). The doublets—or "estructura binaria" as Lázaro Carreter refers to them (146)—suggest a newfound appreciation for the richness of Castilian, and at the same time they endow the prose with a stable and calm rhythm familiar to medieval rhetoric (Lázaro Carreter 146). The etymologies assure the reader that he or she is getting the story from a true *sabio* who embellishes the text with his/her expansive knowledge. Eisenberg has observed Alfonso's sometimes exaggerated display of erudition in many passages of the GE (208). In keeping with the format of the GE, Alfonso introduces

chapter headings into the text where in the Latin one finds chapter titles only in the case of an epistle (i.e., “*Epistola Darii ad Alexandrum*” 96:16). For example, Chapter 30 has a typical heading: “De la presa que el rey Alexandre ganó en esta segunda batalla, et cómo priso y a la madre e a la mugier e al fijo de Dario, e de cómo oviera un princep de Dario de matar a Alexandre” (119:1-4). Besides the usual summary of what is to come, this title also anticipates the king’s evaluation of his sources. The list of members from Darius’ family prepares the reader to reject a conflicting account Alfonso will soon mention in which Alexander takes two of Darius’ daughters (“e la “*Estoria de Egipto*” cuenta que [ganó y] a dos fijas de Darío” (119:7-8).

Together with the formal chapter partitions, the narrator makes frequent reference at the beginning of chapters to the preceding material. For example, Chapter 2 begins: “El rey Neptanabo, pues que maltroxo e castigó a aquel so princep, como oyestes” (45:4-5).<sup>5</sup> The narrator obliges the reader to recall what had happened in the previous chapter and, at the same time, passes judgment using the word “maltroxo” in reference to Neptanabo’s abuse of the Egyptian guard who left his post to warn him of the invading armies. None of this is present in the Latin.<sup>6</sup>

One also recognizes the presence of an emerging narrator-reader relationship, as the former acknowledges the latter in saying “como oyestes.” Second person plural verbs referring to the reader/listener are frequently present in the text as in “Quando aquello vio Alexandre, tomó un arco e sus saetas, e dixo a sus cavalleros *de la guisa que agora vieredes vos*” (italics mine; 77:18-20). Thereupon the narrator reproduces Alexander’s words “A mí ferit vos de saeta.” The narrator’s set up—“agora vieredes vos”—of Alexander’s words adds suspense to the moment. The chapter divisions also allow the narrator to build anticipation of the coming material: “agora contar-vos-emos de cómo fizo el rey Philipo sobr’esto,” (55:66-67) as we find at the end of Chapter 6.<sup>7</sup> The narrative techniques employed in these examples effectively manipulate the reader’s attention forward and backward and add a mark of sophistication not present in the Latin original.

The tags the narrator uses to engage the reader are part of a larger effort to develop the narrator’s role. Among the more extensive additions one finds in Alfonso’s text is a more powerful omniscience that establishes character motives and portrays character more subtly. Alfonso’s modernization also enriches the text by allowing the narrator

to dramatize scenes with more detail, sometimes in the form of battle gore, and other times in the form of courtly customs and commonplaces a thirteenth-century reader would expect from a text dealing with kingship. First, it is convenient to have a look at the new omniscience.

One begins to see some inner reasoning within characters that is lacking in the Latin text. When queen Olympias speaks to Neptanabo, the narrator implies that she is succumbing to his seduction because she trusted his wisdom, “teniendo que se avié fallado con varón sabio como lo era él” (51:31). Similarly, the narrator allows us to see Olympias’ fear of her husband Philip after Philip tells Alexander that he is sad because they do not look alike: “e si de ante se temié del rey Philipo, mayor miedo ovo después” (61:31). Further omniscience introduced in passages not present in the Latin can be appreciated in seeing Darius’ fearful thoughts of capture at the height of battle, “e que serié él y preso o muerto” (111:28), which causes him to flee. As Alexander determines to punish the traitors who have betrayed Darius, the narrator allows us to see Alexander’s thoughts “e tóvo-lo por bien e por guisado e derecho” (137:34).

Closely related to omniscient power is the degree of characterization achieved in this thirteenth-century Spanish recreation. One sees Alexander’s prudence as he memorizes the escape route from Darius’ castle upon approach: “e Alexandre, quando vinié a casa de Darío, sospechando de tal evenimiento, paró mientes en tener bien el siesto de la carrera” (109:32-34). In another scene, the narrator underscores Alexander’s promptness in his response to situations with the medieval formula “non se estido de vagar” (111:10). With regard to Alexander’s conduct during Darius’ death scene, the narrator adds that “e cubrió él mismo con él” (137:41), from which one gets a sense of the Macedonian king’s compassion. The characterization may also fall on Darius as when he loses hope for a peaceful end to the conflict with Alexander: “perdió esperanza de poder aver paz con él” (129:6). These short additions on the part of Alfonso and his translation team add complexity to the psychology of the characters.

Another aspect of characterization that one finds lacking in the Latin original is motive for action. Rather than assuming that the reader will understand implicit motives, Alfonso uses what Lida de Malkiel calls “realismo racionalista” (122) in the GE, which is to invest the story with complete and explicit explanations. Where the Latin original tells the reader that Nectanabo left Egypt because the enemy was

coming to destroy him, Alfonso's translation adds that "e entendió que perdié el regno e aun el cuerpo si atendiés. E pues que vio que assí seríe e que non falleceríe ende, escogió el menor mal e quiso perder el regno ante que non el cuerpo e mudó luego los vestidos que trayé e vistiósse de otros como de omne pobre" (45:13-47-16). Alfonso allows us to witness the process by which Nectanabo arrives at his rationale for fleeing. Furthermore, Alfonso adds that once abroad in Ethiopia, Nectanabo "cató su astronomía e sus saberes otros, e falló que le era buena la muebda e yr-se d'aquella tierra a otra e entre las tierras a Grecia e entre las siete provincias de Grecia a Macedonia" (47:23). By virtue of his astronomical knowledge, the Egyptian king saw that he would be better off in Greece and specifically in Macedonia. The alignment of the stars provides a motive for Nectanabo's move and allows the Spanish translator to expand on the Latin, which states only that Nectanabo "venit Macedoniam" (44:39). Another explanation of motive not present in the Latin involves the Bishop of Tyre, Jado, who in the Spanish text tells Alexander's messengers that he cannot pay tribute to Alexander nor befriend the Macedonians "ca seríe perjuro e ésto era cosa que él non farié" (83:54). No motive is given in the Latin. When Darius writes Porus, king of India, the context suggests that the letter's intention is to inform the Indian king that Alexander has attacked and to ask for help. But the Spanish author prefers to state explicitly that his letter is "pora fazel-le saber lo quel avié contecido con Alexandre" (113:5-6). As the Macedonian troops go into battle against the Persians, the reader is aware from an earlier episode that their motive in fighting is to free themselves from subjugation. But Alfonso feels compelled to add this observation to his reworking of the Latin to explain the intensity with which the Macedonians fight: "teniendo que non devién seer sus pecheros, e por salir d'aquella premia e d'aquella servidumbre, lidiavan todos a maravilla e firién-se muy derrezio, de guisa que los unos non davan logar a los otros en la batalla" (119:11-15).<sup>8</sup> In short, words such as *pues que*, *ca*, *pora* are abundant in Alfonso's translation in the GE and they often serve to make explicit motives that are either omitted or understood in the Latin original. According to Lida de Malkiel, the preference for the motivations behind human conduct may have come to Alfonso from Ovid (124), whom he used extensively in the preparation of the GE.

Beyond omniscience and characterization through exploration of character psychology, Alfonso's *amplificatio* of the text is often reduced

to pure invention of details to dramatize the material. When messengers of Darius give Alexander some gifts and a letter, Alexander immediately reads the letter to his men: "Alexander autem precepit ipsam epistolam legere coram omnibus militibus suis" (76:3-4). In the translation Alexander receives the gifts and hands them out to his men before reading the letter: "E Alexandre tomó-lo todo e dió-lo a tener allí ante sí a cavalleros de su cámara, e fizo y luego leer ante todos aquella carta" (91:27-28). While the Latin text does not underscore Alexander's generosity in this ritual, Alfonso must have known from other versions about Darius' gifts. For the king and his *trasladadores*, the distribution of gifts is not too insignificant a detail to include. On another occasion, Alexander has daringly disguised himself as his own messenger and visited Darius. As soon as he is discovered he makes his escape. The Latin text tells us rather mechanically that some Persian men with arms, one does not know exactly which men, mounted their horses and with great velocity followed Alexander: "Perses vero videntes hoc omnes armati ascenderunt equos suos et cum magna velocitate secuti sunt eum" (88:13-15). Alfonso adds that the "Perses" were "ricos omnes" and "cavalleros," thinking logically that they would be the ones present at such a gathering. He further adds that these men got excited ("aviváron-se-les los coraçones") and raced as fast as the horses would go almost in competition after Alexander: "Los ricos omnes e los cavalleros de Persia que allí seyén, quando esto vieron, aviváron-se-les los coraçones e corrieron quanto más pudieron a los cavallos, e cavalgaron e fueron que más e qui más tras Alexandre" (107:27-109:31). Alfonso continues to embellish this scene by describing how the Persians' own horses fell on top of them as they lay chase: "algunos d'ellos los cavallos que les cayén de suso" (109:43). As an author, Alfonso prefers to specify who the actors are and to intensify the thrill of a climatic scene. His additions show deductive logic and inference. The Persians must have been excited, they must have run to their horses before mounting them, and then they must have raced one another to get at Alexander, even though the source does not say these things.

One finds a similar pattern of imagining the intermediary steps in preparations for battle against the Persians. The Latin reads "Post aliquantos autem dies preparatur exercitu" (64:1), which becomes in the Spanish "Alexandre desde ovo fablado con su corte e puesto con ellos cómo fiziessen, envió-los a sus lugares que se guisassen e que fuessen luego con él, e a pocos días llegada la hueste e guisada salió

Alexandre con ella" (75:37). The Latin author lets the reader's imagination fill in the details. He does not feel compelled to share routine activities. It would seem unnecessary to say that the king spoke to his court before leaving and ordered his nobles to prepare and join him. These details create an atmosphere of realism, at the expense of weighing down the narrative without advancing the action. Thus Alfonso's prose is sometimes heavy and prosaic.

Battle scenes offered another opportunity to liven the text. In the heat of battle with the Persian army, the translator adds freely that "de guisa andavan embueltos todos que se non coñoscién bien de cuál parte eran cada unos e a las vezes firién a los suyos cuedando que firién a los agenos" (131:36-38). He leads the chaos of the battle scene to a turning point. Following his source, he writes that "E en el cabo començaron a cansar los de Darío más que non los de la parte de Alexandre" (131:43) but then he adds "mas esforçaron-se todavía más los de Alexandre, e de como tenién a los otros cansados ya, firieron en ellos tan derrezio como si essa ora lo començassen" (131:44-46). Whereas the Latin text leaves one to assume that Alexander's troops begin to dominate when the Persians tire, the translation introduces the redoubled efforts of the Macedonian troops. At the conclusion of this epic battle, the translator adds that "mataron allí tantos d'ellos que enllenaron todo el río de la una ribera a la otra" (131:66), which is to intensify the blood and gore of the battle.<sup>9</sup>

Another famous scene recounts Alexander's bath in a cold river called Cigno. The Latin tells us that he bathed and his nerves froze up ("contractu nervorum"), bringing him close to death (92:7-8). The Spanish glosses this to create an entire scene with many details not in the Latin:

E Alexandre llegando allí, dixo a su escudero quel tomava las espuelas: "Lazería es cavalgar además." Respuso el escudero: "Rey señor, mayor es andar de pie." Diz Alexandre: "Esso muerte se es." E Alexandre como vinié sudando de la muy grand jornada que avié fecha e vió aquel río tan claro tomól sabor de bañar-se en él, e despojós de los otros vistidos e dio consigo en el rrío en sus paños de lino, e entról la friura por los poros del cuerpo e tomó luego friura a Alexandre, e atereció por los nervios quel despoderó la friura del agua . . . (115:21-31)

This newly cast scene in the translation shows Alfonso's predilection for dialogue, his insistence on detail (Alexander wore linen), and his

expertise in medicine as he almost personifies the cold and explains how it entered the king's pores and gripped his nerves.

One finds a similar addition in the episode concerning Alexander's entry into Egypt, the Latin says that Alexander embraced the statue of his father, and inclined to read the inscription: "se cepit legere scripturam que erat scripta ad pedes eius" (68:9). The Castilian translator picks up where this scene in his source truncates and writes another whole scene:

E allí entendieron los egypcianos la respuesta qu'el so dios Serapis les diera quando demandaron del so rey Neptanabo qué se fiziera o si vernié en aquella tierra. E les respondió él que vernié, más mancebo, e que conquerrié la tierra e a ellos, e que lo dixiera por este so fijo que vernié mancebo e que ganarié la tierra como la ganó. E toviéron-se por de buen acuerdo e bien aconsejados, por quel recibieran tam en paz el dieran la tierra, ca recibieron su señor natural. E fué-les bien con él, ca Alexandre otrossí nin les fizo ningún crebanto nin ningún mal nin premia del mundo ninguna, si non que les aforó bien e les puso recabdo de cómo visquiessen em paz e en justicia bien assí como ellos quisieron e lo demandaron. 81:17-29

The Spanish version portrays Alexander's arrival to Egypt as the fulfillment of an obscure prophecy. He comes to them as a triumphant reincarnation of his father, Neptanabo, their former king. It is not surprising that these events are cut short in the Latin Chapter 25 because the earlier scene from Chapter 1 foretelling Neptanabo's return was also abbreviated. It would not make sense to develop the fulfillment of a prophecy if the prophecy itself were previously omitted. Alfonso's translation is consistent in its extensive *amplificatio* of the puzzled Egyptian populous before and after Alexander, even though the material added is of a pagan nature. Perhaps Alfonso saw an opportunity to lend a providential air to Alexander's dramatic rise to power in the same way that other versions portray the hero as a prophetic figure incarnating divine will.<sup>10</sup>

When Kiddle compared the French prose Thebes with the version in the GE he found that "the largest group of independent amplifications made by those collaborators concerned references to royalty and nobility" (129). He goes on to say that "whenever their source mentioned a king, a queen, a noble gathering, or some feature of courtly life, it inspired the collaborators to expand the bare details of the original into a vivid picture" (129). One finds a similar fascination in the HNAME for

courtly life. Occasionally, the translator adds detail to the description of a palace such as Darius' palace, which the scribe says was "cubierto con paños de peso" (105:95). How would Alfonso's scribe know that the walls were covered with tapestry, unless he was assuming Darius' palace to be like the one in which he was working? Similarly, he adds detail to Alexander's royal character at one point stating that the Macedon king was carrying a royal summer cloak, "que trayé en la mano un manto de verano- e el manto era real" (101:8). One imagines a "manto" similar to those kings carried in the thirteenth century, and one must use his or her imagination because there is no mention in the source text.

Regarding courtly customs, the Latin text leaves perhaps too much room for the imagination to wander with respect to queen Olympias' rendezvous with Neptanabo. The Spanish translator adds that they were able to talk because they had stepped aside: "ca assí seyén apartados de las compañías la reyna e él que podién aver estas razones que les no oyrién si no ellos" (49-30). He adds that after these talks the queen ordered her chambermaid to make a bed for the guest: "mandó a su covigera que fiziesse otra cama del otro cabo del palacio, e la covigera fizo-lo" (53:25). And to be sure to avoid the suggestion of adultery, the Spanish translator clarifies the sleeping arrangement: "cada uno en su cama" (53:28). The thirteenth-century compiler has in mind a vivid picture of life in the palace of Alfonso's court and he imposes it on his text.

One of the longer intercalations involving courtly life involves celebrations surrounding Alexander's wedding to Roxane. In the Latin original one learns that Alexander has conquered Persia and married Darius' daughter Roxane. In the part of the translation concerning Alexander's letter to Aristotle and Olympias, the scribe adds the following passage:

que les rogava que fiziessen grand fiesta e grandes ondras por todo el regno a sus bodas e al día de so imperio, e otrosí de las justicias e de los donadíos e de las franquezas que él avie fecho por las tierras, e de los recibimientos e las ondras que a éll fizieron. E él estido en Perssia en la cibdad de Persépolis muchos días en sus bodas teniendo grand casa a los sos de Macedonia e a los de Perssia que eran suyos ya, otrossí comiendo con ellos e dando-les muchos donadíos e odrándolos con muchas franquezas. (145:13)

The letter home describing the celebrations recalls the one mentioned in the *Libro de Alexandre* just after Alexander got married (st. 1964-1967). The "ondras," "recibimientos," "donadíos," and "franquezas" are pure invention inspired by contemporary custom, and contradict any suggestion that the Spanish text is on the whole a literal translation of the Latin.

The remaining variants between the Latin and Spanish are due to supplements from other texts and factual corrections. Some of the supplements can be as short as offering a different time of day for when a battle ends: "E començosse esta batalla luego grand mañana e duró, segund cuentan unos, fasta medio día, otros dizen que fasta ora de nona" (119:15). The *Historia de preliis J2*<sup>11</sup> Chapter 32 offers only "usque ad medium diem" (94:8). One observes Alfonso's method plainly in his expansion of Chapter 29 of the HPJ2. His source says that "qui cum vidisset illam Darius, despexit eam pro parvitate forme eius. Et statim direxit ei pilam ludicram et virgam curvam a capite que grece zocani dicitur cum qua luderet et cantram auream" (74:6). This he translates fairly closely as "E Darío pues que vio aquella ymagen, despreció-la e non la tovo en nada, por que era Alexandre chico de cuerpo; e mandó luego fazer una pella de juego e una verga corva en somo-e departen que aquellas vergas tales que las llaman en el griego zocani-, e enviól ésto con que trebejasse e una bolsiella dorada" (89:79). But Alfonso is aware that there are many accounts of the famous gifts Darius sends to the young Alexander. In particular, one of his favorite sources is Walter of Chatillon, so it is not surprising that he compares Walter with the HPJ2 on the matter of the gifts: "Pero dize d'estas donas maestre Galter en el *Alexandre de las escuelas*<sup>12</sup> que envió Darío a Alexandre una pella e una trompa e una corriaga e una bolsiella; la pella e la trompa con la corriaga por trebajar, e la bolsiella en que condesasse dineruelos e aquivelas e otras cosiellas tales que por ventura ganarié él a estos juegos como moço." And then the translation returns to the HPJ2 Chapter 29 to include the letter that Darius sends along with the gifts, present in both texts: "Darius rex regum terrenorum, parens solis..." (74:16) and the Spanish "Darío rey de los reys de la tierra pariente del sol. . ." (91:4).

Finally, there are several instances of a clear discrepancy in numbers between the two texts, which could suggest sloppiness on Alfonso's part or an effort to choose numbers from what he considers a more reliable source. In one of the Persian battles, the HPJ2 Chapter 65

states that there were 4000 horses, "equitum quatuor milia" (90:2). Alfonso's version says there were "de caballeros quatro mil e quinientos" (111:11). In the aftermath of battle, the HPJ2 says that one hundred thirty Macedonian foot soldiers died, "ex Macedonibus vero ceciderunt pedites centum triginta" (94:12). The corresponding passage in the Spanish says that "e de los de Macedonia murieron de los de pie cient e cinquenta" (119:27). In the aftermath of battle, the HPJ2 says that Alexander spent thirty-four days dividing up the spoils: "Alexander itaque per continuos triginta quatuor dies castrorum predam divisit" (104:39), while the Castilian states that "duró y treynta días en coger el campo et partir-lo entre los suyos" (133). It would be interesting to cross-check the sources González Roldán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte consulted, but this is beyond the scope of this paper. It would seem beneath Alfonso to make mistakes with numbers like this when he is right on the mark with so many other details.

The stylistic changes, the additions of battle details and courtly customs, as well as the factual corrections introduced into the Latin-Castilian translation, as shown here, perhaps are most useful as an illustration of how the GE was pieced together. The translators' frequent variations from literalness coincide with what Lida de Malkiel found with regards to Alfonso's treatment of Ovid, and with what Kiddle showed for the *Estoria de Tebas*. One discerns homogeneity in Alfonso's manner of rendering Latin texts into Castilian even though the Latin texts differ greatly amongst themselves, and even though the king may use more than one source for a given chapter. It is noteworthy that an important manuscript of the GE in the Vatican dates from 1280, which means it was produced during the period of "más intensa participación del rey" (G. Menéndez Pidal 374). Considering the sheer volume of material in the GE and the numerous members of the team that worked on the translations, the more consistency one finds across distinct "estorias" would seem to point to greater intervention on the part of a single individual, perhaps Alfonso himself, in the editing of the text.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "El literalismo de los traductores de la corte de Alfonso el Sabio." *Al-Andalus* 1 (1933): 155-187.

<sup>2</sup> "La frase de la *Primera crónica general* en relación con sus fuentes latinas." *Revista de filología española* 42 (1958-1959): 179-210.

<sup>3</sup> Kiddle also noted the frequent substitution of direct for indirect discourse within Alfonso's prose story of Thebes to "liven up the presentation" (126).

<sup>4</sup> These examples are from González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte's *Introducción. Historia novelada de Alejandro Magno* 9-40. The remaining examples are from my own comparison of the Latin and Spanish texts.

<sup>5</sup> For a study of similar chapter divisions as they appear in *Don Quijote*, see Raymond S. Willis, *The Phantom Chapters of the Quijote*, New York, Hispanic Institute, 1953.

<sup>6</sup> See further examples of recapitulation of preceding material at 81:30, 111:39-113:40, 133:4.

<sup>7</sup> See also the end of Chapter 3, at 49:30, "como vos contaremos agora aquí."

<sup>8</sup> See also a temporal motive for action: "pues que lo más fuerte del invierno fue pasado" (135:4).

<sup>9</sup> The translation of the episode concerning the Calcedonians receives a similar treatment. One finds dramatic details (the walls, the towers, bravery's end) that could logically be deduced but which are not present in the Latin. Compare Latin 66:10 with Spanish 77:64.

<sup>10</sup> See the Arabic version in Zuwiyya, *Islamic Legends Concerning Alexander the Great*, Binghamton, NY: Global Publications; the Morisco *Rrekontamiento del rrey Alisandre*, edition A.R. Nykl, *Revue Hispanique* 77 (1929): 409-611; the Syriac version of Jacob of Serug edited by E.A. Wallis Budge in *The History of Alexander the Great Being the Syriac Version* Cambridge, 1889 (Reprinted by Philo 1976), even the Spanish *Libro de Alexandre* stanzas 7-13.

<sup>11</sup> The *Historia de preliis J2* is the Latin original that González Rolán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte offer for Alfonso's Castilian text. Since the chapter numbering is different in the Latin text, it is convenient to refer here specifically to the Latin text with HPJ2.

<sup>12</sup> González Roldán and Saquero Suárez-Somonte, in their "La imagen polimórfica de la leyenda de Alejandro desde la Antigüedad latina al Medioevo hispánico: edición y estudio de las fuentes de un desatendido Libro de Alexandre en prosa," show that Walter of Chatillón's *Alexandréis* circulated widely in the universities and thus came to be known as the *Alexandre de las escuelas* (p. 125) in *Cuadernos de filología clásica: Estudios latinos* 23:1 (2003): 107-152.

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**The Text as Body / The Body as Text:  
An Approach to Reading Aleixandre's  
*Espadas como labios* and *La destrucción o el amor***

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Throughout his career Vicente Aleixandre has consistently discussed his early poetry in physiological terms. In various poetic pronouncements he refers to texts such as *Espadas como labios* and *La destrucción o el amor* as undifferentiated interior or carnal states, chaotic yet interconnected flows of sound, pulse, rhythm steadily gaining clarity and communicative power by engaging world and reader in a tumultuous yet productive dialogue. In the poet's words these texts showcase "poesía en estado naciente . . . manando con hervor caliente del fondo entrañable del poeta" (II: 523). Aleixandre also notes that in his early poetry,

... no hay más que el hombre y el bullente materia de la Creación ... sangre quería el poeta, una masa en ebullición se ofrecía ... un mundo de movimientos casi subterráneos, donde elementos físicos y subconsientes servían a la visión del caos original allí contemplado. (II: 541)

Despite the fact that the poet's own declarations clearly establish a vital tension between poetic language and the physical being from which it is born and with whom it interconnects, little has been written regarding correspondences between Aleixandre's expressed artistic aims and his exploration of the body as a model for the linguistic play and textual structures that characterize his early surrealist verse. Seminal critical studies by Bousoño, Ilie, Puccini, Morelli and Villaverde have directed some attention to this area by addressing Aleixandre's "visionary" imagery and its ties to a larger poetic vision of reality in which the body serves primarily as impediment rather than