

THE *VITA CAROLI MAGNI*
OF DONATO ACCIAIUOLI,
TRANSLATED BY ALFONSO DE PALENCIA
(1491)

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**1. Text in Latin: the *Vita Caroli* of Donato Acciaiuoli
(Florence 1429-Milan 1478)**

Donato Acciaiuoli was without doubt one of the most distinguished figures of Florentine civic humanism. He was a philosopher actively involved in city life and more concerned with ethics, economics and politics than with metaphysics and theology. In fact, in *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Eugenio Garin recalls the words of Angiolo Segni: “Donato Acciaiuoli, cittadino fiorentino, governando la Repubblica attese alla filosofia e filosofando governò la Repubblica”,¹ meaning that politics did not hinder his ability to philosophize, and that his philosophical interests did not undermine his political pragmatism. Some of his works reflect his unconditional service to his city. This is the case of the *Life of Charlemagne* written, as we will see, representing the Republic and his family as a gift offered at the coronation of the new French king, Louis XI (1423-1483), for which he was given the title of councillor and “maistre d’hostel”.²

¹ Eugenio Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, 5th edn (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2005), 199, takes the notice from *Vita di Donato Acciaiuoli descritta da Angiolo Segni, e per la prima volta data in luce dal cav. avv. Tommaso Tonelli* (Firenze: nella stamperia di L. Marchini, 1841), 35; and the manuscript is conserved in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS. Naz. II, II, 325, fols 91r-111v and also in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS. Palatino 493.

² “Acciaiuoli, Donato,” in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, dir. by Alberto M. Ghisalberti, 72 vols (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960-), I (1960), 81.

The *Life of Charlemagne*³ belongs within the general framework of humanistic interest in historiography and the recovery of biographical classics with Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* as its archetype. During the Middle Ages, Plutarch was best known for his moral writings, but after 1400, when the *Parallel Lives* started to circulate in Italy, his biographical works began to be translated and circulated. At the same time, Italian humanists wrote new original biographies in Plutarchan style. Acciaiuoli translated from Greek into Latin the lives of Alcibiades (1454-1459) and Demetrius (1454-1459), and also wrote the lives of Charlemagne (1460), Hannibal (1467-68) and Scipio (1467-68).⁴

Coinciding with the coronation of Louis XI of the Valois dynasty, which took place in Reims on 30 August 1461, Florence sent an embassy as a sign of loyalty to the new monarch.⁵ Donato Acciaiuoli formed part of it and for the occasion, he wrote a biography of Charlemagne "in segno di fede e dono". In the preface, preserved in several manuscript copies and in some subsequent editions, are words supposedly addressing the new French king. There were three reasons for choosing

³ The specific works about this Life are: D. Gatti, "La *Vita Caroli* di Donato Acciaiuoli," *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 84 (1972-1973): 223-74; id., *La Vita Caroli di Donato Acciaiuoli. La leggenda di Carlo Magno in funzione di una Historia di gesta* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1981); M. Davie, 'Biography and Romance: The *Vita Caroli Magni* of Donato Acciaiuoli and Luigi Pulci's *Morgante*', in *The Spirit of the Court: Selected Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society (Toronto, 1983)*, ed. G. S. Burgess and R. A. Taylor (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1985), 137-52; C. Pérez González, 'La figura de Carlomagno en la *Vita Caroli* de Donato Acciaiuoli', in *Humanismo y pervivencia del mundo clásico: homenaje al profesor Antonio Fontán*, ed. J. M. Maestre Maestre, L. Charlo Brea, J. Pascual Barea, 5 vols (Madrid: Ed. el Laberinto, 2002), 1485-1504.

⁴ Cf. M. Affortunati and B. Scardigli, "La *Vita Plutarchea* di Annibale: un'imitazione di Donato Acciaiuoli", *Atene e Roma* 37 (1992): 88-105; B. Scardigli, "C'è qualcosa di plutarcheo nella *Vita* di Scipione dell'Acciaiuoli?", in *L'eredità culturale di Plutarco dall'antichità al Rinascimento: Atti del VII Convegno Plutarcheo, Milano-Gargnano, 28-30 maggio 1997*, ed. I. Gallo (Napoli: M. D'Auria, 1998), 289-97.

⁵ There are several sources which describe how the Florentines sent an embassy (which included Filippo de' Medici, the bishop of Pisa, Piero de' Pazzi and Buonaccorsi Pitti), to the coronation of the new king. One of the sources is Vespasiano da Bisticci who, in the life of Acciaiuoli, remembers how, at Piero's request, Donato formed part of the embassy and offered to write a biography of Charlemagne: see Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Vite di uomini illustri del sec. XV scritte da Vespasiano da Bisticci*, ed. A. Greco, 2 vols (Firenze: Istituto Nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 1970-1976), II, 187-88.

such a gift: firstly, the help that the French monarchs had given to the Florentine Republic, and in particular to the Acciaiuoli family; secondly, the chance to display to the world the image of a king who was “el lume e la gloria di tutto el mondo” and to portray him as an “esempio e specchio di virtù” for future leaders; and lastly, the need to replace the biographies written up until then, all of which were incomplete, partly inaccurate and, above all, written in poor Latin. The three key points may be summarized as follows: 1) the political aim of the work was to gain the favour of the new French king by comparing him to the great Charlemagne; 2) the moral aim was to demonstrate the human and military qualities of Charlemagne as a role model to follow; 3) the humanistic aim was to triumph over the old texts written about Charlemagne, and to produce a biography capable of reconstructing the truth from the facts known and to write it in Ciceronian Latin.

It is from this angle that I intend to summarize the method followed by the Florentine biographer. The structure of the *Life* is divided into two sections, military feats and customs, as follows:

—Genealogy: Pepin the Short and his children.

—Charlemagne’s military activity and conquests: the war of Aquitaine; the war against the Lombards and the dismissal of Desiderius; *excursus* on the history of the Lombards; the war against the Saxons; the expedition to Hispania; the ambush of the Basques in Roncesvalles and the death of Roland; the war against the Bretons and Beneventans; the Bavarian war and the betrayal of Taxilo; the war against the Velatabi; the war against the Huns, conflicts with Adalgis, son of Desiderius, against the Bohemians and the Linonians, the war against the Normans; assistance to the pope against conspiracy; named emperor.

—*Excursus* on imperial dignity.

—Charlemagne’s expedition through Tuscany, reconstruction of Florence and return to Gaul.

—Charlemagne’s journey to the East.

—Demarcation of the Frankish empire.

—Foreign affairs.

—Portrayal, private life and habits of Charlemagne: physical portrait (attire for festivities); habits (hunting and baths) and friends; family (his mother, Bertrada, his brother Carloman and his sister; conspiracy of his bastard son, Pepin the Hunchback); charitable work, benevolence and justice; religious feeling; public and cultural works.

—Eloquence, educated by Alcuin of York; foundation of the University of Paris; children educated in the *artes liberales*.

—The end of Charlemagne: coronation of Lewis the Pious and the death of Charlemagne; funeral and epitaph; premonitions surrounding his death; the royal will; distribution of his wealth.

The structure of the biography is based on conscious *imitatio* of Plutarch and this is evident on numerous occasions. Firstly, Charlemagne is depicted as a classic Plutarchan hero whose outstanding qualities, magnanimity and exceptional nature are accentuated. Furthermore, his characterization is defined through his actions. In other words, the ethical virtues of the hero are made up of the qualities he reveals through his constant moral choice. These qualities are manifested regularly through his actions, and this produces dramatic intensity. Therefore, for example, when Charlemagne is faced with a polemic situation, he is always motivated by an objectively just cause. Thirdly, as in the Plutarchan biographies, and as already seen in the preface, the character pursues an ethical purpose (the dialogue with classical authors encourages the assimilation of their values and conduct) and also a political aim (in Plutarch's case, his work is a bridge between Greeks and Latins and in Acciaiuoli's case, between Italians and Franks).

There is, however, another important biographical model to take into account: Suetonius and his *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, discovered by Acciaiuoli through Einhard's *Vita Karoli*. The erudite method, structured *per species* is, in effect, that which is used in the Einhardian biography and, in fact, the selection and organization of the topics seem at first to coincide with the sequence of episodes that Acciaiuoli recounts.⁶ A closer

⁶ A simple comparison between Acciaiuoli's and Einhard's chapters illustrate the analogy (cf. Eginhardo, *Vida de Carlomagno*, ed. and trans. A. de Riquer (Madrid: Gredos, 1999) 27-28, from which I have taken the titles) can be found in: I. Preface; II. Fall of the Merovingians and rise of the Carolingians: the Rois fainéants; Charles Martel and his children; Pepin the Short and his children; III. Plan of the work; IV. Military activity and conquests of Charlemagne: the war of Aquitaine, the war against the Lombards; the war against the Saxons; expedition in Hispania and ambush in Roncesvalles; war against the Bretons and the Beneventans; the war in Bavaria; the war against the Welatabi, the war against the Avars; war against the Danes; V. Demarcation of the Frankish empire; VI. Foreign affairs; VII. Public works and naval defence; VIII. Character, private life and habits of Charlemagne: family and friends; conspiracies; relationships with foreigners; physical portrait; clothes; customs; cultural interests, religious views; charitable work and donations; IX. Coronation; X. Legislative and cultural reforms; XI. The end of Charlemagne; his funeral and epitaph; omens surrounding

analysis, however, shows that after this surface analogy, two very different human models emerge (for instance, Suetonian interest in human vices and descriptive details in particular disappear)⁷. In Acciaiuoli's case, for example, most of the biography is dedicated to the description of the subject's *res gestae*, focusing in particular on the history of the Lombards and their relationship with the Roman Church. By contrast, in Einhard's work, military feats are limited to a brief informative catalogue and the account focuses much more on details concerning Charlemagne's habits and his portrait as a human being. Furthermore, the portrayals by both writers are different: in Einhard's case that of a secular *Rex Francorum*, and in Acciaiuoli's case that of a king who established the Christian *renouatio imperii*. The method also varied, in that Einhard leans towards hyperbolic exaltation (as in the description of the borders of the empire), and Acciaiuoli remains true to historical truth thus highlighting the veracity of the information.⁸

Nevertheless, besides the *Vita Karoli*, different chronological sources can be detected in Acciaiuoli's text. On one hand, there are influences from classical authors such as Caesar⁹ and Livy and on the other, from medieval tradition. One of the medieval influences is the myth of Florence's reconstruction by Charlemagne,¹⁰ the founding of the University of Paris, the Basque defeat of the French in Spain, and lastly, Charlemagne's journey to the East.¹¹ Furthermore, Acciaiuoli made use

his death; distribution of his wealth.

⁷ D. Gatti (1981: 29-52).

⁸ Acciaiuoli's voice appears constantly in verbs such as *comperio*, *adducor*, *inuenio*, etc.

⁹ When describing the regions of France, Acciaiuoli writes: "Aquitania pars Galliae est, quae antiquorum descriptione, a Garunna flumine ad Piraeneos montes et ad eam partem Oceani, quae ad Hispaniam pertinet, spectat inter occasum solis et septentrionem". And Caesar in his *Gallic War*: "Aquitania a Garumna flumine ad Pyreneos montes et eam partem Oceani quae est ad Hispaniam pertinet; spectat inter occasum solis et septentriones" (I, 1).

¹⁰ According to D. Gatti (1981: 59), the unknown origins of Florence brought about the elaboration of a legend; ignorance of how it was created gave rise to all kinds of speculation and, eventually, ended up becoming a popular legend even though it had been produced in an aristocratic atmosphere. In this way, if the image was of a Christian French king as the creator of Florence, the legend was well received and the city acquired a founder of high lineage. This was a motive to connect Charlemagne's benevolence with that of the present French monarch and, in this way, gain his favour.

¹¹ This is another Carolingian topos which circulated in many places from the Middle Ages onwards, but the truth of the matter is that Charlemagne did not make

of more modern sources such as the *Liber pontificalis* (in particular the part which makes references to the biography of Pope Hadrian), Ricordano Malispini, and Giovanni Villani's *Chronicle*.¹² Two chapters in particular of Leonardo Bruni's *Historia Florentini populi* (translated by Acciaiuoli into Italian in the 1470s), must also be acknowledged: one chapter, at the time of writing the catalogue about the Barbarian nations, in particular the Lombards' settlement and fortune in the Italian peninsula. The other, the *excursus* on imperial dignity, documents a history of institutions in Ancient Rome from the period of the monarchy until the dissolution of the empire.¹³

I believe that the sources used by Acciaiuoli are a reflection of the portrait of Charlemagne that he creates: on one hand, the Plutarchan model, that of a classical hero, a *speculum uirtutis*, and a magnanimous and fair king, a true humanistic prince (who even knows Greek and Latin). On the other hand, a medieval character, a king rescued from the Dark Ages, author of the *renouatio imperii*, a *rex sacerdos*, a vassal of the Roman Church and one who possesses *uirtus christiana*. A model, therefore, of a ruler in a world governed by the ideals of the Catholic church and so not at all in conformity with the new model of humanistic ruler. However, despite the contrast between these two images, Acciaiuoli manages to merge them to create a new classically heroic Christian character who fights for "la commune libertà di tutti e' Christiani", relentless against barbarity and the growth of Christianity.

The *Life* was a success, as the preserved manuscript copies show.

any trips to the East, either to Constantinople or a pilgrimage to Jerusalem: see F. Monteleone, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa. Un'esperienza di pellegrinaggio nella tradizione europea occidentale* (Fasano: Schena, 2003), 311-20. In fact, the passage is very interesting as we can see the historical method Acciaiuoli uses: in the face of information of which he is unsure, he chooses only to provide it without categorically identifying if it is true or false.

¹² These are sources proposed by D. Gatti (1981: 32), but a complete analysis of the sources used by Acciaiuoli in this biography is yet to be carried out.

¹³ In Bruni's case, the narration adopts a distinct philorepublican tone. On the other hand Acciaiuoli expresses a philoimperial tone (as could only be in a biography dedicated to an emperor) and an eminently positive vision of the *renouatio imperii*. Despite these copies, Acciaiuoli sometimes distances himself from Bruni's theories even though the latter gives historically sufficient reasons which are much more convincing than those of popular tradition; this is seen for example in the discussion of the reconstruction of the city of Florence and Bruni's opinion, different for that of Acciaiuoli: *Istoria fiorentina di Leonardo Bruni, tradotta in volgare da Donato Acciaiuoli*; premessovi un Discorso su Leonardo Bruni aretino per C. Monzani (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1861), 44-45.

But, above all, it was made known thanks to being included in the first edition of the Latin translations of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* first printed in Rome in 1470.

An interesting aspect of this biography of Charlemagne is the existence of a rough first draft in Italian by Donato Acciaiuoli used as a starting point for the Latin version.¹⁴ This first draft is incomplete: we have only the first half which ends just after the war against the Velatabi who were helping the Abodriti. Comparison with the Spanish translation by Alfonso de Palencia of 1491 seems appropriate for seeing how two vernacular languages approach the same text, as well as for better understanding of the connotations attached by Acciaiuoli himself to the Latin terms used. However, as we are dealing with something that is not exactly a translation, categorical affirmations and possible conclusions are risky.

2. Alfonso de Palencia's Translation

A second edition of Plutarch's *Lives*, in which its first editor Giovanantonio Campano had included Acciaiuoli's translation, was published in Venice in 1478 and Palencia used it to do a complete translation of the two volumes.¹⁵ In order to carry out an initial analysis

¹⁴ The only manuscript preserved was edited together with the Latin text by Gatti (1981).

¹⁵ The identification of the edition used by Palencia has already been sufficiently clarified. See J. S. Lasso de la Vega, "Traducciones españolas de las *Vidas* de Plutarco," *Estudios Clásicos* 6 (1961-1962): 451-514 (471-83); A. Pérez Jiménez, 'Plutarco y el humanismo español del renacimiento', in *Estudios sobre Plutarco, obra y tradición: Actas del I symposion español sobre Plutarco, Fuengirola 1988*, ed. A. Pérez Jiménez and G. del Cerro Calderón (Málaga: Vicerrectorado de Extensión Universitaria y Area de Filología Griega de la Universidad: Delegación Provincial de Cultura de la Junta de Andalucía, 1990) 229-47 (233); J. A. López Férez, "La traducción castellana de las *Vidas* realizada por Alfonso de Palencia," in *Estudios sobre Plutarco: ideas religiosas. Actas del III Simposio Internacional sobre Plutarco. Oviedo 30 de abril a 2 de mayo 1992* (Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 1994), 359-69; J. Bergua Caveró, *Estudios sobre la tradición de Plutarco en España (ss. XIII-XVII)* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1995), 15-16; S. Allés Torrent, "Alfonso de Palencia y la traducción de las *Vidas* de Plutarco (nuevos datos en torno al texto de partida)," *Cuadernos de Filología Clásica. Estudios Latinos* 28:2 (2008): 99-124. In the case of the *Vita Caroli*, the affiliation of Palencia's text to the Venetian edition of 1478 is shown by the following variation: 'Frisie' (Rome: Ulrich Han, 1470); 'Erisiae' (Venice: Nicolaus Jenson, 1478); Palencia translates 'Erisia' (Seville: Quatro compañeros alemanes, 1491) persisting

of the translation method used by the Spanish humanist, I took into account cultural and philological factors implicit in some of his lexical, morphological and syntactic choices.¹⁶

As in all the other lives, the translation of the *Vita Caroli* is preceded by a brief introduction acknowledging the author and translator. In Charlemagne's case, however, we read the following:

Donato Acciolo, çibdadano florentino, escrivió en latín la vida del ylustre varón Carlo Magno, recolegida de las historias, y el cronista Alfonso de Palencia la traduxo en romançe castellano. Aquesta vida es más moderna y de príncipe católico y bien mereciente de la religión cristiana.

This brief introduction demonstrates that Palencia viewed Acciaiuoli's *Vita* as an interweaving of different sources ("recolegida de las historias"), even if the generic aspect of the reference prevents us from knowing exactly what his assertion is based on. In any case it helped him to highlight the historically reliable nature of the biography in which the author accurately identifies Acciaiuoli as a Florentine citizen, and chooses an interesting subject: the modern life of a "príncipe católico y bien mereciente de la religión cristiana" in contrast to the lives of so many pagans.

I would now like to shed light on the final words of the introduction: the presence of a Christian element in the compilation of the *Lives* made the volume more attractive and compensated for the predominance of pagan figures. The final biography of the volume is that of Charlemagne, an epilogue which is a culmination of a process and the best representative of modern times. Charlemagne was a promoter of the *renouatio imperii*, the bridge between Romans and Christians and the thread of western Catholic Christianity from its establishment until the present.

This Life was Palencia's last translation which he finished as an elderly man and would have undoubtedly interested him profoundly. The copy I have used as a point of reference (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional,

in the error of the Venetian edition.

¹⁶ A first attempt at philological analysis focusing on matters of nominal and verbal syntax such as unnecessary additions was made by J. A. López Férez, "Notas filológicas a la traducción en español de las Vidas Paralelas de Plutarco realizada por Alfonso de Palencia (1491)", in *Synodia: Studia humanitatis Antonio Garzya septuagenario ab amicis atque discipulis dicata*, ed. U. Criscuolo and R. Maisano (Napoli: M. D'Auria, 1997), 601-15. But a complete and systematic analysis of Palencia's translation method still needs to be carried out, a task which I hope to develop in my doctoral thesis.

I/573) was perhaps used by Palencia himself,¹⁷ as some hand-written notes (*rubricae*) can be found to indicate the general topic, but on three occasions the marginalia are much more extensive. Two in particular, found precisely in the chapter about the defeat of Roncesvalles, deserve mention. In the first, when Charlemagne's expedition to Hispania is described ("De expeditione Caroli Magni / in Hispaniam de qua plurima aliter...") he warns us that the facts do not resemble the truth. The second refers to the Basque ambush at Roncesvalles which resulted in the death of Roland and also refutes the version of facts put forward by Acciaiuoli: "Non est uerum res ...". If Palencia is the author of these notes, it would reveal the critical approach of an erudite Hispanophile. In addition and with the purpose of making the text more intelligible, Palencia adds detailed explanations in the body of his translation:

hunc potissimum deligendum putarent, cui communi sententia regnum decernerent. > pensaron que devían muy principalmente *e con mayor razón a este Pipino*, al qual por común sententia encomendassen el reyno [he specifies the demonstrative pronoun *hunc* with the intention of clarifying who is being referred to]; Carolo Magno, *ca el otro su hermano se nombró Carlo Mano* [added so that the reader does not confuse the characters]; quinto Kalendas Februarias. > quinto kalendas de febrero, que son a .XXVIII. días de enero [provides the exact date].

In order to clarify this point, I will refer to other important information extracted from the translation.

An effective indicator of Palencia's translation methodology is his vocabulary. The cases examined demonstrate some constant features of his techniques. Firstly, he highlights the use of binary constructions (copulative or disjunctive), which shows an awareness of semantics. Therefore, for example, when faced with the difficulty of translating certain Latinisms which require clarification, Palencia reproduces the original term accompanying it with an equivalent Spanish word:

magno > Grande o Magno [he consequently translates *magnitudine* > *grandeza*]; *militiae* > milicia o exerciçio de guerra; *eunuco* > eunuco o castrado; *fortitudine* > en fortaleza y en robustidad de cuerpo; *satellite* > satélite o ombre de la guarda; *figuram* > la figura o effigie; *basilicam* > la basílica o esglesia cathedral.

Other times, the doublet corresponds to a semantic distinction:

¹⁷ The script clearly seems humanistic and given the small circulation of the text in Spain, it is likely that we will find autograph notes by Palencia here.

opes > riquezas o favores; exinanitas [urbes] > affligidas y despobladas; colentes > honrrando y adorando; nullum [...] praesidium > ningund amparo nin ayuda; diuina ope > favor y ayuda divinal; in fines hostium > a las fronteras y términos de los enemigos; tueri > amparar y defender; insignem cladem > una grande y señalada pérdida; fortia facta > fazañas fuertes y notables; per intestina arma > a causa de la guerra y armas intestinas o entreñables; opes > poderío y riquezas; multis gemmis > con muchas perlas y piedras preciosas; uenationibus > las monterías y caças; sobolem > hijos y fijas.

Although the procedure is often that of the synonymous pairs of medieval style:

clarissimum > notable y mentado; in locupletissimo regno > en un reyno tan rico y tan bastado.

It is possible that a Latin concept can lack an exact opposite number in contemporary reality, and so an equivalent must be offered to the reader:

magistratum > magistrado o dignidad de mayordomía; ante armorum castrorumque > ante capitanía de gente de armas y de gobernaçión de aposentamientos en el campo; controuersiis hominum > en las diferencias y pleytos entre los ombres litigantes.

There are also many instances of toponyms which are accompanied by their corresponding modern name:

agrum Ticinum > campo de Ticino o de Pavía; Bisantium > Bysancio o Constantinopoli; Pannonias > Panonias o tierras de Ungría

or are substituted directly:

Hetruria > Toscana; Galliae Citeriori > la Galia de aquende de los Alpes.

There are other translations which transpose the concept into modern Castilian reality. This means that concepts used by Acciaiuoli, which come from classical vocabulary, are translated along by Palencia with others from his own time, always offering where possible a native word:

praefectos > mayordomos [ad praefectos regiae domus, sic enim eos uocitabant > a los mayordomos de la casa del rey, a los quales ellos llamavan prefectos]; oppidani > los de dentro; peditum equitumque copiis > compañías de peones y cavalleros; dominationis > señorío; honore >

honrra; dominatione > señorío; egregie > señaladamente; Lupus > el duque Lupo; controuersiis > diferencias que eran entre los del reyno; praefectis > comissarios; duces > cabdillos; Ecclesiae romanae patrocinio > abogaçia de la Iglesia romana; suppellectilem > jaezes.

In this way the ancient world underwent an abrupt move towards Castilian modernity; a purist tendency which sometimes encourages him to use periphrasis even though the concept is not difficult to understand:

superiores > que antes dél fueron [subsequently translated thus: superiorum regum > de los buenos reyes antepassados]; superstites filii > dos hijos que le quedavan; primi > los que avían passado primero; posteriores > los que a la postre venían; a posterioribus regibus > los reyes que suçedieron.

The same procedure can be found in some Latin expressions which Palencia tries to express with the corresponding Spanish:

rerum gestarum > fazañas [although elsewhere: res egregie gestas > cosas notablemente por él fechas]; liberam dominandi potestas > libre poderío de señorear; contra ius fasque ultro > contra todo derecho y razón; contra ius fasque > sin derecho y sin causa razonable; maximis itineribus > a todo caminar; quam maximis potest itineribus > quanto más presto pudo caminar; iure iurando > con firme y estrecho juramento; necessitudine aut propinquitate > por parentesco o por afinidad çercana; auspicio praefectorum > por buena dicha de sus gobernadores; certamine factionum > contienda de las vanderías; ductu auspicioque > acabdillamiento e buena dicha; sedes regni eiusque regia > silla del reyno y su morada real; unius cuiusque ratione habita > guardada la condiçión de cada uno por razón.

The variety of Palencia's solutions of Latinisms is, in any case, noteworthy and always depends on the context. In some cases, he adopts the Latin term and in others he prefers the patrimonial word:

Latin term: referamus > refiramos, coniunctus > conjunto, monumento > monumento [in the meaning of tomb]; resumere uires > resumir fuerças; regem creauere > criar otro rey; a ceruicibus > de sobre las çervizes; perfidia > porfidia; sinus > seno, impetrato > impetraron, etc. Patrimonial word: indignabatur > pensava; multitudine > muchedumbre; suae perfidiae > quebrantamiento de la fe, etc.

Of lesser importance is Palencia's method of translating verbal morphology, although he always proves himself to be a skilled and varied translator in his choice of technique. When translating verbal constructions he always keeps the same person and almost always the

same tense (although, for example, the historic present is systematically translated into the past tense) but not the moods: there are translations which introduce a volitive modality (where *misit* > *quiso enviar*):

caepit > *quiso tomar*; *parat* > *quiso aparejar*; *parabat* > *quería mover*;
confirmat > *quiso confirmar*; *ignouisse* > *quiso perdonar*

or an element of possibility (*dimouit* > *pudo quitar*; *comparauit* > *pudo conseguir*), others which become a verbal periphrasis:

reprimuntur > *fizo que [...] se reprimiessen*; *persequitur* > *fue tras él persiguiéndolo*; *exercitum parat* > *dio obra a aparejar el ejército*; *factum est* > *se ovo de fazer*; *misit* > *ovo de embiar*.

Some verbal structures are not translated with total precision: for example, the ablative absolute is often translated by the personal form:

regno inter se parito > *partieron* entre sí el reyno; *defuncto Carolomanno* > *murió Carlomano*; *superato Vaifario duce* > *después que venció al duque Vaifario*; *Benigne hospitaliterque suscepti, auxilio impetrato* > *Fueron recibidos y hospedados benignamente y impetraron* lo que demandavan.

Furthermore, Latin nouns are expanded into sentences:

antiquorum descriptione > *según describen los antiguos*; *post Pipini obitum* > *luego que su padre falleció*; *post longum bellum* > *acabada la lengua guerra que entre sí fizieran*; *in expectationem belli* > *que atendían la guerra, filios quoque [...] in disciplinam dedit* > *dio también sus hijos para que los enseñassen y disciplinassen*

and vice versa relative sentences are reduced to nominal forms:

populos qui ei aduersabantur > *los pueblos contrarios a ella*.

In any case, fidelity to the Latin text is not subordinate to clarity.

As for syntax, Palencia's translation proves very true to the Latin without losing the structure of the Spanish. In difficult cases, before constructing an unnatural expression, he resorts to explanatory paraphrases. At times he puts in two verbs corresponding to one Latin verb; at others, a simplification of two verbs in order to facilitate the construction. He is not, however, always systematic in his choices. In the following example we can see how two absolute participles are resolved in a different way:

quod *posthabitis* ferocissimis hostibus *relictoque* domestico bello, rem suam *neglexerit*, > pues que, *pospuestos* los enemigos muy feroces, *quiso dexar* la guerra doméstica y *menospreciar* sus negocios.

In fact, if there is a conclusion to be drawn from this analysis, it is that his method is extremely varied: literal translations coexist with the free translations, explanatory paraphrases with translations which are a little uncertain and not wholly accurate:

Gothi primi barbarorum, diuersis deinde temporibus Hunni, Vandali, Heruli, postremi omnium Langobardi > primeros entre todos los otros bárbaros y, desde en diversos tiempos, los hugnos y los vándalos y los herulos [omitting the first in the list]; templum condidit ipsumque marmoreis columnis tum *argento auroque* caelato uehementer ornauit > edificó un templo y le adornó con columnas de marmol maravillosamente y le guarneció de *esculpturas doradas y plateadas*.

However, it is equally evident that this is not a medieval translation *ad verbum*, but rather one much more conscious of the difficulties, more flexible and close to the method proposed by the Italian humanists, the *conversio ad sententiam*, where the most important factors are the content and the translator's ability to express himself effectively. In a nutshell, Palencia's commitment to the Latin language is considerable but not to the point of producing a hybrid of the two linguistic codes, Latin and vernacular. It is a translation which is true to the Latin text but does not stretch to lexical or syntactical transposition of the content and semantic equivalences. This is evident from the abundance of native terms and meanings which in the end demonstrates Palencia's deep commitment to the Spanish language.

All things considered, Palencia is a consciously manipulative translator who communicates the necessary information in the introduction to engage and influence the reader. He is an interactive translator who analyses the text to be translated and disputes its content where necessary; a translator with the sensitivity to relay the original message, making a substantial effort in his search for equivalent and varied solutions. He generally tends to transform the Latin into a concept which is familiar to Spanish readers. He shows determination in communicating all the nuances of Latin words and finds ways of translating syntactical structures from the source text to the target language.

In conclusion, I must say that the fortune of the *Life of Charlemagne* has always been associated with the volume of Plutarch's *Lives*, and it is

undoubtedly owing to this that both the Latin and Spanish versions have been overlooked. Some authors refer to a 1508 edition which has however been lost.¹⁸ Another edition of some of the *Lives* was published in 1792¹⁹ but Charlemagne's was not included. Therefore, in the absence of a modern edition, I hope that this essay inspires the circulation and deserved recognition of the first humanist biography of Charlemagne.

¹⁸ Lasso de la Vega, 475; López Férez, 360; I. Muñoz Gallarte, "La presencia de Plutarco en España en el siglo XVI: La biblioteca del Seminario de Cuenca," in *Ecos de Plutarco en Europa. De Fortuna Plutarchi Studia Selecta*, ed. R. M. Aguilar and I. Alfageme (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Departamento de Filología Griega; Sociedad Española de Plutarquistas 2006), 193-206 (204).

¹⁹ Plutarco, *Vidas de los varones ilustres griegos y romanos escritas por Plutarco y traducidas por Alfonso de Palencia*, 2 vols (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1792). In this edition only the first six couples which are in the Latin edition and in Palencia's (vol. I: lives of Theseus—Romulus, Lycurgus—Numa, Solon—Poplicola; vol. II: lives of Alcibiades—Corollius, Themistocles—Camillus, Pericles—Fabius Maximus) appear, suggesting that the intention was to continue with the reissue of all the remaining lives. This work is preceded by a life of Plutarch and a very interesting preface.