

**THE LIMITS OF MEDIEVAL TRANSLATION:  
JUAN DE MENA'S USE OF THE *IMAGO MUNDI* IN THE *LABERINTO DE FORTUNA*<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT:** This article examines a case of medieval adaptation which is not usually considered as a translation but forms part of a translation continuum in that it loosely adapts its base text into a different context through the insertion of translated extracts into a new narrative. Such 'translation' results in an interplay between rewriting and respect for authority which produces new works which are paradoxically both original and derivative at the same time. A particularly illustrative case in that regard is the insertion of translated extracts from the geographical section of the twelfth-century Latin encyclopaedia *Imago mundi* into vernacular works of different genres. This article takes as its case study the incorporation of *Imago mundi* material into Juan de Mena's *Laberinto de Fortuna*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Imago Mundi*; Juan de Mena; *Laberinto de Fortuna*; Medieval Geography; Translation Continuum; Relative Distance

### **1. Introduction**

This article addresses the issue of the range of the term 'translation' with respect to medieval rewritings by looking at the use of very loosely translated extracts from a Latin encyclopaedia in a late medieval narrative text. In doing so, it seeks to further Ivana Djodjević's argument that an emphasis upon formal equivalence in translation 'as opposed to its dynamic aspect' does a disservice to our understanding of the complexities of medieval translingual intertextuality (Djodjević, 2000, p. 9). In proposing to apply the term 'translation' to Mena's use of geographical information derived from the *Imago mundi* in his own vernacular poem, I essentially put into analytical practice the conceptual framework provided by Djodjević, who postulates that "while the kinds of medieval translation that have most baffled translation historians may ignore formal equivalence, their authors do share with later translators a notion of dynamic equivalence which compels them to strive for acceptability (to the recipients) rather than adequacy (to the original)" (Djodjević, 2000, p. 9).

I propose to refine Djodjević's picture by combining it with the concept of 'relative distance' effectively used by Erich Poppe in his analysis of medieval Welsh versions of Francophone romances (2004, pp. 73-74). The idea of 'relative distance' allows translated texts to be mapped onto a spectrum that ranges from works that are verbally and structurally close to the original, through loose adaptations, to others that are ultimately 'original'-inspired new compositions. This article explores how our understanding of Juan de Mena's *Laberinto de Fortuna* can be enhanced by looking at the intertextual relationship of its geographical passages with their Latin source through the prism of 'relative distance'.

Juan de Mena's (1411–1456) *Laberinto de Fortuna* is one of several medieval vernacular texts which contain a geographical description of the world that is heavily reliant

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on the twelfth-century Latin encyclopaedia *Imago mundi* of Honorius Augustodunensis.<sup>2</sup> By doing this, Mena brings this text into the family of *Imago mundi*-based texts, which form a continuum ranging from verbatim translations (such as the thirteenth-century Spanish *Semeiança del mundo*) through loose adaptations (like the thirteenth-century French *Image du monde*) to translated extracts inserted into new types of text (such as the fourteenth-century *Catalan Atlas*) (Bull and Williams, 1959; Gossouin de Metz, 1999; Connochie-Bourgne, 1999; Kogman-Appel, 2020). Mena employs geographical knowledge to provide a spatial location for the action he describes. We will see that Mena's *mappa mundi* ('world map') has a specifically Spanish focus, rewriting Honorius's material for the Spanish audience of a literary epic (Clarke, 1973, p. 51). As Joaquín Gimeno Casalduero (1964, p. 125) writes, "Mena escribe para Castilla, para sus gobernantes y para ciudadanos" ('writes for Castille, for its governors and for citizens', my translation). The text is also updated, as references to contemporary geopolitical units such as Hungary are added, which had been absent in the Latin source.<sup>3</sup>

Mena appears to have drawn directly upon Honorius's text. Although the Castilian translation of the *Imago mundi*, the *Semeiança del mundo*, predates the *Laberinto* and may have been available to him, variants in the readings suggest it was not his main source. An example which Autesserre gives to show the proximity between Mena's text and the *Imago mundi* is the reference to Chaldea and the invention of astronomy (2009, n.115): the *Laberinto*, as quoted by Autesserre, reads "[Caldea], do el astronomía / primero fallaron", while the *Imago mundi* reads: "Chaldea in qua primum inventa est astronomia" (Honorius Augustodunensis 1982, p. 56). This can be compared to the more extensive reading in the *Semeiança*: *Caldea, e alli fue fallada primera mienentre la siencia de astronomia* and *Caldea, e al fue fallada prymer mente la çiençia de astronomia* (Bull and Williams, 1959, pp. 64, 65).

Following Autesserre's suggestion that in neither case should the geographical description be perceived as merely a *simple parcours géographique* ('simple geographical record'), the discussion below aims to show that the differences are both in the rhetorical emphasis and geographical focus (Autesserre, 2009, para. 29). I show, for example, that Mena re-focuses his text onto Spain, positioning it first geographically, then temporally (Clarke, 1973, p. 51).

Another important point to note is that though Mena followed Honorius closely, he used the *Imago mundi* in combination with other sources, such as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, which was also one of Honorius's own sources for his text (Lida de Malkiel, 1950, p. 41; Kerkhof, 2015, p. 234; Autesserre, 2009). Our first point of interest, therefore, is precisely this combination of sources. We will look at how the text flatters its patron/reader with the assumption of great erudition. We will then see what Mena does to the geography specifically, and how he adapts it to re-target the text to Spain (and flatter his patron/reader by highlighting his region's prominence). Finally, we will look at the implications of this process for our understanding of the *Laberinto*'s geographical passage as a borderline translation of Honorius's text.

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<sup>2</sup> There are multiple editions of this text, such as *Juan de Mena* (1979), edited by Cummins. In this article, I use *Juan de Mena* (1997), edited by Kerkhof. Lida de Malkiel (1950) remains a key discussion of Mena and his opus. For more recent discussions, see Moya García (2015). My designation of Mena's text as 'medieval' follows Frank Domínguez (2014, p. 137), who observes that Mena, though often associated with the introduction of Italian Renaissance into Castille, is not entirely a Renaissance writer himself. For a much earlier expression of a similar view, see Post 1912 p. 251.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the reference to the *reino de Ungría* ('kingdom of Hungary') in the final line of stanza 44 (Mena, 1997, p. 110), absent from Honorius Augustodunensis's *Imago mundi* (1982, p. 60).

## 2. The texts

One of the most important texts of medieval Castilian literature, the *Laberinto* is tightly linked both to political events and to literary traditions (Deyermond, 1980, pp. 295-6; Weiss, 1990, p. 17).<sup>4</sup> It was written for Juan II of Castille (1405–1454) and appears to have been intended as support for Álvaro de Luna (c. 1390–1453). The text is also known as *Las Trescientas* for the number of stanzas. As an allegorical vision poem addressed to Juan II and his court, the *Laberinto* presents a critique of the current state of Spain, entreating the king to take a firmer stance against the excesses of the aristocracy.<sup>5</sup>

The text's geographical description of the world in stanzas 32–54, which Jessica Knauss describes as a *mappa mundi*, corresponds to the geographical section of the popular twelfth-century Latin encyclopaedia *Imago mundi*.<sup>6</sup> Despite its immense influence in medieval Europe, the *Imago mundi* is not very well-known today and therefore requires an introduction.<sup>7</sup> Composed in very accessible Latin, and following a simple structure, it survives, either whole or in part, in over a hundred medieval manuscripts. It was also the source of a large number of vernacular rewritings, ranging from faithful translations and verbatim quotations to loose adaptations and entirely new works inspired by it (Honorius Augustodunensis, 1982, p. 18; Petrovskaia and Calis, 2019). In Spain, Italy, France, the Low Countries, Germany and Wales, the *Imago mundi* was used and re-used many times by multiple authors independently of each other, creating a complicated network of interrelated texts.<sup>8</sup> A further network of branches is also added to this rich tree by later commentators, such as when a glossator of the Palma de Mallorca manuscript of the *Laberinto* (c. 1470–1480)<sup>9</sup> used the *Imago mundi* alongside Isidore's *Etymologies* and *Sententiarum sive de summo bono libri III* as his main sources of information, occasionally quoting *in extenso* (Kerkhof, 2015, p. 241).<sup>10</sup>

The *Imago mundi* is in three Books, dedicated to matters that can be grouped under the labels of 'space', 'time', and 'history' respectively (Honorius Augustodunensis, 1982, p.13; Flint, 1981, pp. 212–13; Twomey, 2000, p. 260; Edson, 1997, pp. 112-13). Book I, dedicated to the description of the physical world, appears to have exerted a particular fascination for medieval audiences. It is organized into four parts, in accordance with the four elements, conceived as concentric spheres encompassing all creation. In terms of contents, the Earth section deals with geography (with a generous helping of historical reference); Water to oceans, rivers, and weather phenomena; Air to aerial phenomena such as tempests, rain, and winds, while the section dedicated to Fire is concerned with astronomy.

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<sup>4</sup> The text is described by Weiss as both a 'political poem' and 'a piece of cultural propaganda' (Weiss, 1990, p. 17). As Cristina Moya García (2015a) shows, the text's surge in popularity and entrenchment in the literary canon are linked to the rehabilitation of the figure of Álvaro de Luna, with whom the text is tightly connected.

<sup>5</sup> For the poem and its geographical passages, see Autesserre (2009, pp. 127–70).

<sup>6</sup> The use of *Imago mundi* in this section of the *Laberinto* is discussed in Knauss (2006), López Férez (2010) and Autesserre (2009). For a discussion of the connections between the *Laberinto* and medieval geography, with reference to the *Imago mundi*, see Domínguez (2011).

<sup>7</sup> For a brief summary of the text's contents, see Gilson 1980; originally published in French (1952).

<sup>8</sup> See my forthcoming book *Transforming Europes in the Images of the World Tradition*.

<sup>9</sup> Biblioteca de Fundación Bartolomé March, MS B80-B-17

<sup>10</sup> This type of use is difficult to classify and even more difficult to catalogue, since there may well be similar, yet unidentified further glosses made by commentators and users of other texts in widely different contexts. We will not discuss this case in detail further, but I note it here in the hope that it may spark further investigation).

The simplicity of the structure is maintained as we zoom in on the geographical section—the part of *Imago mundi* Book I that is relevant to our discussion. The world it describes has the standard medieval tripartite structure of Asia, Europe and Africa, inherited from classical geography via Isidore of Seville’s famous *Etymologiae* (Lewis and Wigen, 1997, p. 22; Woodward, 1987, pp. 301-02; Isidore of Seville, 2006, 1911; Petrovskaia 2022). Visually familiar from the so-called T-O-type *mappae mundi* (‘world maps’), this tripartite way of presenting the inhabited world was dominant in the Middle Ages and is shared by all works in the *Imago mundi* tradition.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. ‘Translating’ into a new text

The geographical description of the world in stanzas 32–54 of the *Laberinto* closely matches Book 1 of the *Imago mundi*. Within the structure of the poem, the *Imago mundi* section comes at the moment when ‘divine Providence’, personified by a damsel covered in flowers, shows the poet a vision of the world from above, from the abode of ‘Fortune’.<sup>12</sup> This borrowing, already recognised by the text’s earliest editor, Hernán Núñez in the fifteenth century, has led to this part of the work being perceived as of lower literary value (Núñez, 1499; Autesserre, 2009, p. 127), reflecting the traditional negative attitude towards medieval translations noted by Djordjević (2000, pp. 8–9).

The description of the world begins at stanza 34, with reference to the five zones (Mena, 1997, p. 97; Domínguez, 2011, p. 156), and according to Autesserre (2009, n. 13), it is based on the *Imago mundi* 1.6–36 (Honorius Augustodunensis, 1982, pp. 51–66).<sup>13</sup> Frank A. Domínguez, on the other hand, analyses the section as a description of a *mappa mundi* and describes Mena’s technique as ‘similar’ to that used by Honorius (Domínguez, 2011, pp. 165–66), with one crucial difference: Mena describes the world his narrator sees far below him (using specific terms for seeing and observing) (Domínguez, 2011, p. 166).

Mena begins the Europe section in the *Laberinto* (stanza 42), with a reference to the origins of the name; *E vi más aquélla que Europa dixerón, / de que robada en la taurina fusta / lanço los hermanos por causa tan justa / en la domanda que fin no pusieron...* (Mena, 1997, p.107). In this he follows Honorius, whose text read “*Europa ab Europe rege, vel ab Europa filia Agenoris est nominata*”, “Europe is named after King Europs or after Europa, daughter of Agenor” (Honorius Augustodunensis, 1982, p. 59; Mena 1997, p. 107, n. 329–334). Mena makes, however, a significant change that distances the *Laberinto* from other texts in the *Imago mundi* family. While expanding the reference to the Europa myth, as seen from the quotation above, he omits any reference to the alternative etymology provided by Honorius, that of King Europs.<sup>14</sup> Autesserre reads this in the broader context of the two

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<sup>11</sup> T-O-type *mappae mundi* represent the inhabited part of the Earth as a hemisphere, composed of three parts (Asia, Europe and Africa), with the Mediterranean, the Don and the Nile forming a T shape in the centre; Woodward, 1987.

<sup>12</sup> Providence appears in stanza 20 as *cubierta de flores / una donzella* ‘a girl covered in flowers’ (Mena, 1997, p. 89), identified in stanza 23 (*me puedes llamar Providencia*; Mena, 1997, p. 90) (see Autesserre, 2009). Post describes this geographical section as ‘a digression of inordinate length’, and a ‘tedious passage’ (1912, pp. 225, 241), mis-identifying the source as Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum naturale* (pp. 241–42); the identification is refuted by Lida de Malkiel, 1950, pp. 33–35.

<sup>13</sup> Though Mena does not cite the source by name, López Férez traces the information in the *Laberinto* which derives from the *Imago mundi* point by point, quoting the additions (2010, pp. 249–59, 263–64, 324).

<sup>14</sup> This alternative etymology for the name of Europe, identifying the origin as the name of a king, is widespread among texts of the *Imago mundi* family. King Europe is mentioned in Justin’s *Epitome* (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century?) of the world history of Pompeius Trogus, and this ultimately may have been Honorius’s source;

works, pointing out that while the term ‘king’ is present in multiple etymologies in the Latin text, it appears to have been entirely avoided by Mena (Autesserre, 2009, para.55). Autesserre suggests that this is connected to Mena’s more general point about the nature of kingship, querying and undermining the standard notion of secure linear descent, the illusory nature of which is highlighted in his introduction of the concept of Fortune (Autesserre, 2009, paras 55–56). If Autesserre’s reading of Mena’s changes to Honorius’s etymologies is correct, and the removal of Europs is part of a broader trend in the *Laberinto* to avoid the designation ‘king’, then information adapted from the geographical treatise is being moulded to a new text, context, and message.

Mena continues his discussion of the region of Europe by describing, in the same stanza (42), the boundaries of Europe as *los montes Rifeos e lagos Metroes*, corresponding to the *Rifei montes* and *Meotides paludes* of the *Imago mundi* (Mena, 1997, p. 107). No mention is made in this stanza of the River Don, which in the Latin text had formed part of the sequence with the Ripheian mountains and the Maeotian Swamps.<sup>15</sup> In stanza 42, Mena asks the reader to praise the Rifean mountains and Meotidan swamps because they were neighbours of Gothia (*porque vezinos de Gótiga fueron*; Mena, 1997, p. 107).

The importance of Gothia (*Gótiga*) is explained in the following stanza (stanza 43), with its explicit reference to Spain: Mena specifies that the *estirpe de reyes atán gloriosa*, Spain’s glorious line of kings, came precisely from that area, providing another link to our recurring theme of princely power (Mena, 1997, p. 109; Autesserre, 2009, para 77). This addition builds on and harks back to an established tradition in medieval and Renaissance Spanish historiography of what Josué Villa Prieto calls the *ideología goticista* (Villa Prieto, 2010).<sup>16</sup> Tracing royal power back to the Gothic kings was part of an established ideological discourse and was also part of a continuing discourse among Mena’s contemporaries (González Fernández, 1986, esp. p. 295-96; Villa Prieto, 2010, p. 130). Thus, this is arguably one of those instances where Mena is counting on his audience’s contextual knowledge (González Fernández, 1986, pp. 291-2, 194-5; Villa Prieto, 2010, pp. 126-7, 139).

A further alteration made to the material taken from the *Imago mundi*, also of direct relevance to the treatment of Spain in the text, lies in the repositioning of the reference to Britain in *Imago mundi* l.29 and the subsequent re-ordering of the geographical description (Honorius Augustodunensis, 1982, p. 62).

Table 1. Order of Last Regions in Europe in the *Imago mundi* and in the *Laberinto*

<b><i>Imago mundi</i></b>	<i>Gallia</i> → <i>Hispania</i> → <i>Britannia</i> → Africa
<b><i>Laberinto</i></b>	France → Britain → Spain → Africa

In the *Laberinto*, the reference to Britain is moved to the final line of the stanza about France (stanza 47), becoming a mere casual aside in the description of the extent of France, *que tiende sus fines fasta la mar alta, / que con los britanos tiene que fazer* (Mena, 1997, p. 112). The result of this displacement is that the final stanza of the section dealing with Europe in the *Laberinto* is thus dedicated to Spain (stanza 48), after which the poem moves directly

for discussions, see Eckhardt (2006, 218–20) Oschema (2013, pp. 165, 204–06) and Petrovskaia (2018, p. 26).

<sup>15</sup> The Don, *Tanais*, is, however, mentioned in stanza 44 (Mena, 1997, p. 109).

<sup>16</sup> This is a broad topic the discussion of which is necessarily limited in the present article due to considerations of space; for more, see, for instance, also González Fernández 1986 and Cruz Díaz 2013.

to Africa in the first two lines of stanza 49: *Vimos allende lo más de Etiopia, / E las provincias de Africa todas* (Mena, 1997, p. 113) (See Table 1).

It is just possible that Mena might have been inspired in this by the Spanish translation of Honorius's *Imago mundi*, the *Semeiança del mundo* (1173×1223) (Bull and Williams, 1959, p. 1; Kinkade, 1971).<sup>17</sup> Both texts move Britain and Ireland from their original position in the final chapter in the section on Europe to the section on islands. Spain, which in the *Imago mundi* was in the penultimate chapter on Europe, i.28, thus ends up in concluding position in both Spanish texts (Honorius Augustodunensis, 1982, p. 62). Whether this is influenced by the *Semeiança* or an independent example of the same re-positioning of Spain in the text, it remains striking because although Britain is re-positioned in a different manner, the result for Spain is the same – it becomes the culmination of the European trajectory. It may also be that the move in the two texts is coincidental, and a result of the re-focusing of the geographical description on the host country in both cases.

While Mena generally follows the order of the *Imago mundi* in enumerating the parts of the world (Asia, Europe and Africa), he tends not to define their limits, and alters the order in which regions are named within these larger units, occasionally returning to a previously discussed area. He also does not provide transitional passages, as Honorius does, when moving between parts of the world.<sup>18</sup> Together, these alterations make his translation of Honorius structurally and spatially entangled, transforming the itinerary into a labyrinth.<sup>19</sup> The additions of references to the glorious kings of Spain and the 'neighbours of Gothia', mentioned above are all the more striking given the general trend in Mena's geographical passage to abridge and summarise information derived from Honorius (Autesserre, 2009, paras 68-70, 102-104).

#### 4. Translating into new genre for a new purpose

According to Julian Weiss, Juan de Mena's *Laberinto de Fortuna* was not merely 'a political poem' but 'a piece of cultural propaganda', whose "learned style encourages the confident belief that the reader's gentility was based on more than just noble blood" (Weiss, 1990, p. 17). The poem was composed in the metrical form *copla de arte mayor* (used in the Castilian tradition of the time for poems dealing with lofty matter) in the tradition of the *Divina Commedia*; and the text was similarly heavily glossed and commented (Street, 1953, pp. 155 n.6, 156 n.3, 161; Marfany, 2013, pp. 271-72).<sup>20</sup> Mena was known to his contemporaries for his erudition, and the poem uses a wide range of classical and medieval sources, of which the *Imago mundi* is but one (Street, 1953, p. 154). Mena appears to have used a combination of sources in Latin and in the vernacular, including the grandiose historical compilation of Alfonso X, 'El Sabio', known as the *General Estoria* (Parker, 1978, p. 16; Linda de Malkiel, *Juan de Mena*, pp. 11-13, 41-42).<sup>21</sup> To quote Weiss once again, "It would be impossible, even without the glosses to ignore entirely the ambitiously learned nature of *El*

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<sup>17</sup> A close comparison of the text with the *Imago mundi*, *pace* the text's editors who state that it is based on Isidore's *Etymologies*, yields the conclusion that it is largely a verbatim translation of Honorius's text. For a recent discussion of the qualities of this text as translation, see Lacomba (2008, pp. 341-66, esp. pp. 342-343, 351, 356-59).

<sup>18</sup> See Autesserre (2009, paras 39-40, para.44). The lack of transitional passages also distinguishes Mena's text from the *Semeiança*.

<sup>19</sup> As Autesserre observes, this causes relative 'imprecision' and 'discontinuity' (2009, para.40).

<sup>20</sup> For Dante's influence, see Post, 1912 and more recently Hartnett, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> For the *General Estoria*, see Alfonso x El Sabio, 2009; for an earlier edition, see Alfonso el Sabio, 1930 and 1957-61.

*Laberinto*, with its wealth of classical allusion and linguistic innovation” (Weiss, 1990, p. 123). The poem thus combines overt praise to its dedicatee in the opening passages with subtle flattery by implication: the reader is expected to be learned enough to understand the text.<sup>22</sup> The work is very consciously targeted at a king who had a reputation for literary and artistic interests and patronage (Moya García, 2014, p. 491). This point is important for understanding the positioning of the text’s geographical description as a translation vis-à-vis the *Imago mundi*.

As well as being an epic poem, the work as a whole has also been considered an example of the medieval Spanish genre of *mester de clerecía*, (Clarke, 1973, pp. 61-62), defined by Dorothy Clarke as “‘learned’ poetry, didactic or at least informative, entertaining, and stylistically refined, often involving reworking of pieces (some fictional) from other languages’ and which “‘had always been chameleonic and constantly metamorphosed in form as well as content” (1973, p. 62). The drawing of *Imago mundi* into this new genre by Mena is comparable to the process we find in thirteenth century France, whereby the *Imago mundi* is drawn into the *livre de clergie* genre. *Clergie* in medieval France was essentially a term for ‘learnedness’ (Waters, 2016, p. 10); a *livre de clergie* being thus a book of learning. In this case, its Book I becomes, in translation, Book II of the *Image du monde* by Gossouin de Metz, which identifies itself explicitly as a *livre de clergie*<sup>23</sup> Defining its purpose as the improvement of the spiritual well-being of its lay audience,<sup>24</sup> this work focuses more strongly on religious matters than the original Latin text, and relates its material to biblical events much more than Honorius’s version does in the *Image du monde*. In essence, Mena does something similar, like Gossouin combining Honorius with other sources and repurposing it within a new literary context. In his case, the purpose, as we have seen, is largely political, and the way he formulates his message relies heavily on the audience’s knowledge of Spanish historiographical traditions and contexts.

Before concluding this article, I would like to add a note on the later reception of Mena’s text. The *Laberinto* has a rich manuscript tradition of its own, also going through multiple print editions in the Early Modern period (Street, 1953, p. 149).<sup>25</sup> In the process, the text underwent further repurposing and further re-interpretation. Particularly notable in this respect is the work of commentators who annotated the text in the later manuscript tradition. As Julian Weiss points out, a commentator “has the power to influence the reader’s perceptions about a work, by highlighting those aspects which are of particular interest to him” (Weiss, 1990, p. 126). The glossator of the mid-fifteenth-century Paris manuscript, for example, who does not appear to have been aware of the *Imago mundi* (Kerkhof, 2015, pp. 230, 234), attributed the geographical information in the *Laberinto* to the Latin translation of Strabo’s *Geographica*, thus placing it as the continuation of the classical tradition.<sup>26</sup> He also explicitly presents the work as “an imitation of a classical epic” (Weiss, 1990, p. 126, see also p. 123). By contract, the glossator of the Palma de Mallorca manuscript (c. 1470–1480), for his part, quotes passages, and occasionally entire chapters

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<sup>22</sup> It has also been argued that the dense use of obscure nomenclature in such passages as the geographical description in the *Laberinto* also play an aesthetic function in this poetic tradition (Carreter, 1980, pp. 319–20).

<sup>23</sup> Ribémont (1991, p. 291); Centili (2006, pp. 184–85). For a discussion of the *Image du monde* as a *livre de clergie*, see Centili (2006, p. 163), Connochie-Bourgne (1998, 1999, 2013) and Petrovskaia (2019, p. 206).

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of this, see, for instance, Connochie-Bourgne (1999, pp. 146–47).

<sup>25</sup> For in-depth discussion of the editions of the *Laberinto*, see Kerkhof and Le Pair (1989) and Kerkhof (1984).

<sup>26</sup> Kerkhof, 2015, p. 220. The reference is to the glossator (Kerkhof’s ‘commentator A’) of Paris, BnF, MS Esp. 229 (s. xv<sup>2</sup>); <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8436399x> (Accessed: 6 April 2023)

from *Imago mundi* in his comments to the geographical passages,<sup>27</sup> thereby re-integrating the *Laberinto* with its source, and presenting “a compendium of learning, especially of geographical knowledge” (Weiss, 1990, p. 126). This diversity of interpretation, and indeed the fact itself that the *Laberinto* accrued glossaries and commentaries of its own shows that the text also acquired, in its turn, the status of *auctoritas* (Kerkhof, 2015, p. 252).<sup>28</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Given the freedom with which Mena adapted, abridged, adjusted, and re-ordered the material from his source, the geographical section of the *Laberinto* is best described as a rewriting of *Imago mundi*. Indeed, to return to Djodjević’s article, which provided the springboard for this analysis, there is, in terms of modern conceptions of intertextuality, a tension, in Mena’s unacknowledged use of the Latin source (in vernacular translation), between quotation, adaptation, and plagiarism (Djodjević, 2000, p. 10).<sup>29</sup> If we are to consider translation not in terms of a binary mode of relationship with the original, or even relationship with the audience, but in terms of relative distance from the original text being translated, it becomes possible to position even such intertextual relationships as Mena’s use of Honorius’s geography on the translation spectrum. This is necessary because, as the argument in this article hopefully has shown, seeing Mena’s geographical description as a translation of Honorius allows us to appreciate the nuances he introduced in order to appeal to his audience and to adapt the text to the style, needs, and political objectives of his own original composition.

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<sup>27</sup> The glossator also used Isidore’s *Etymologies* and *Sententiarum sive de summo bono libri III*. The *Imago mundi* quotations were identified by Kerkhof as coming from chapters 1, 2, 4, 6, 14, 8, 11, 14-16, 18-21, 24-25 and 32 (Kerkhof, 2015, p. 246). He does not cite an edition, but presumably uses Migne’s Patrologia Latina edition. If so, the corresponding chapters in the more recent edition by Valerie Flint are: 1, 2, 4, 6, 13, 8, 10, 13-15, 17-20, 23-24, and 30-31 (Honorius Augustodunensis, 1982).

<sup>28</sup> For more on the interplay between translation, transmission, and authority, see Petrovskaia, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> On the tension between medieval practice of tacit use of other texts as translation versus plagiarism, Djodjević quotes Bassnett-MacGuire, 1991, p. 53.



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