

Poetic tradition and the voice of the translator: The first verse translations of Dante's *Commedia*

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Abstract

This paper analyses and compares the variety of text types in the first verse translations of Dante's *Commedia*: the Catalan translation by Andreu Febrer (1429), the Spanish translation by Pedro Fernández de Villegas (printed in 1515), and an anonymous French translation preserved in a manuscript dating from between 1491 and 1530. All these translations are the first verse translations of the work into their respective languages.

Keywords

Dante's *Commedia*, Poetry translation, Andreu Febrer, Fernández de Villegas, French 16th-century translations

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The first verse translations of Dante's *Commedia*¹

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the translation of Latin into Romance languages, viewed as the transfer of doctrinal content from one cultural context to another (Badia 33), was of key importance for the dissemination of knowledge, and, above all, for the appropriation of classical culture and academic, erudite discourse by speakers of Romance languages. The cultural prestige of Latin explains why classical poetic texts were translated into Romance languages in prose: for translators, the need to explain the august content of the text took precedence over any aesthetic interest in the form, and precluded any approach to translation which went beyond the transfer and explanation of meaning. By contrast, the first translations of poetry between Romance languages themselves – in the fifteenth century, though there were others previously – were not bound by this noble aim and were characterised by the use of verse. Writing in verse, even in a translation, involved the use of limited metrical forms and the adaptation of the original to specific stylistic norms determined by the poetic tradition of each translator.² The adaptation of the original to a form already widely cultivated and firmly established in the target language involved the necessary shift to a poetic language –

¹ This paper is part of the FFI2014-53050-C5-4-P project (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competition. With regard to Andreu Febrer's translation of the *Commedia*, I owe much to the work of Raquel Parera, and I would like to express my thanks for her comments and suggestions. Any errors I may have committed are entirely my own.

² Clear examples of this are the Catalan, Italian and English translations of *La Belle Dame sans merci* by Alain Chartier, and the Spanish translations of Petrarch's *Triumpho*, which adapt the metre and versification of the original to established forms in their traditions (see Marfany "Traducciones").

formulae, vocabulary and rhyme scheme – which was often obeyed unwittingly by the translator. The final text, despite being faithful to the original poem and following it verse by verse, was, to a greater or lesser extent, at some distance from the diction of the source languages because it was written in the metre and with the dominant stylistic traits of the target language.

The earliest translations of Dante Alighieri's *Commedia*, however, contain a wider variety of text types when it came to adapting the versification, as we shall see below. This is certainly due to the nature of the original text, which, though written in a Romance language, was treated as a classic in the Middle Ages, and considered to be on a par with the works of Homer and Virgil. To illustrate the variety of text types in the first verse translations of Dante's *Commedia*, I will provide a brief introduction to the oldest translations entirely in verse: the Catalan translation by Andreu Febrer (1429), the Castilian translation by Pedro Fernández de Villegas (printed in 1515), and an anonymous French translation preserved in a manuscript dating from between 1491 and 1530. All these translations are the first verse translations of the work into their respective languages.

The first complete verse translation of the *Commedia* is the translation into Catalan by Andreu Febrer (circa 1375-1440/1444). The translation was a present to Alfonso the Magnanimous, whom Febrer served as a bailiff (Parera *La versió d'Andreu Febrer de la Commedia de Dante: estudi del manuscrit i edició de l'Infern*). On the manuscript containing the translation, Febrer's work is dated 1429; just a year before, in 1428, Enrique de Villena had carried out a prose translation of Dante's *Inferno* into Castilian at the request of the poet Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marquis of Santillana. The reverence for Dante felt by fifteenth century authors apparently justifies the choice of prose for Villena's translation, and to a great extent, the adoption of Dante's *terzina* metre in Febrer's Catalan translation. The Marquis of Santillana, who had been in the service of Alfonso the Magnanimous at the same time as Febrer, commented years later on the Catalan poet's remarkable undertaking: «Mosén Febrer fizo obras nobles, e algunos afirman aya traído el Dante de lengua florentina en catalán, no menguando punto en la orden de metrificar e consonar» (Gómez 22). This respect and veneration for the original underlie Febrer's decision to maintain the *terza rima* chain rhyme structure, but there are doubtless other factors which influenced such a bold decision for the time: Firstly, Febrer was a great poet and an excellent versifier, who had already experimented with metres foreign to Catalan tradition, using established French forms (the *ballade* and the *lay*) in his own poetry. Secondly, Febrer's boldness cannot be considered in isolation from the figure of Alfonso the Magnanimous and the taste for Italian literature in vogue in his court at the time. The aesthetic intentions of Febrer's version contrast with Villena's Spanish translation, which had an altogether different aim: The manuscript on which the Spanish version appears contains the original by Dante accompanied by glosses in Latin and the text attributed to Villena in the margins as a tool for understanding the Italian poem (Pascual 15-66).

It is not the Villena Spanish prose translation which concerns us here, however, but rather the first Spanish verse translation. This is the Spanish translation of the *Inferno* by Pedro Fernández de Villegas (1453-1536), archdeacon of Burgos cathedral and doctor of theology, which had been commissioned by Joanna of Aragon, natural daughter of Ferdinand II of Aragon, countess of Frias and Duchess of Haro. The translation was

printed in 1515 – written, therefore, several years before –, and accompanied by Villegas' glosses which explain and interpret Dante's text in detail.³ As mentioned above, Dante's *Commedia*, by its very nature, was considered to be a classic and the equal of works by Homer and Virgil. This respect was so great that the scholars of the time applied the same procedures to Dante's work as they applied to Greek and Latin texts: numerous treatises and commentaries were produced, and the Italian text was often copied onto the manuscript and interleaved with glosses explaining the meaning and providing analysis on a range of aspects. This was precisely the approach of Villegas, who provided a commentary on his translation of Dante's verse. The commentary is of extraordinary value, as, in addition to interpreting the meaning of Dante's verse, he also makes comments on his own translation (choice of vocabulary, versification, etc.). As for the translation, Villegas did not reproduce the metre, but rather used the *coblas de arte mayor* verse form. This was the approach to Dante adopted by poets in the Spanish tradition, for example, the Marquis of Santillana and Juan de Mena, the two most renowned poets of the so-called fifteenth century Castilian *alegórico-dantesca* school. For Villegas, then, the *cobla de arte mayor* form was the most natural way of rewriting the *Commedia*, learnt from Castilian poets influenced by Dante.

With regard to the French cultural context, it has often been said that neither the *Commedia* nor Dante left much of a trace in the work of medieval French poets and that the work of the Tuscan poet took some time to be disseminated in France, but it is possible that this view corresponds less to the truth than to the scant interest that Dante has raised amongst scholars of French literature, at least until now.⁴ Whatever the case, it is true that no translations were made until the sixteenth century. Having said that, there are four French verse translations of the *Commedia* made in the 16th century, a not unappreciable number which should be given more importance than has hitherto been the case. The text that we shall consider below is believed to be the first French translation of the *Commedia* and can be found in a manuscript in the Turin library. It dates from between the end of the fifteenth century and the middle of the sixteenth century; it is in *terza rima* alexandrines; and it contains only the cantos from the *Inferno*. Nothing is known about the translator, as the first pages were burnt in a fire, so any possible information about the translator and the recipient of the translation has been lost (Vignali 223). It has recently been suggested that the manuscript was composed in the milieu of Jean Lemaire de Belges, librarian of the House of Burgundy, later historian of Louis XII, and the first to use alexandrines to translate Italian verse (*terzine*, sonnets, etc.) (Vignali 224). Space does not permit me to comment at length on the other French translations, but the variety of verse forms employed in the translations should be mentioned: a second translation of the complete *Commedia* in decasyllables and rhyming couplets was composed in the second half of the sixteenth century and is preserved on a Vienna manuscript; there are fragments from a third translation from the beginning of the sixteenth century, by François Bergaigne, which is highly literal (it follows the Tuscan text word for word, and therefore contains many errors);⁵ and lastly, there is the

³ See Hamlin and Marfany "La traducción del *Inferno* de Fernández de Villegas".

⁴ Fortunately, now it has changed: See the volume 176 (LIX/II) of *Studi Francesi*, with very interesting articles on the first French translations of Dante's works (*Intorno alle prime traduzioni di Dante in Francia. Questioni linguistiche e letterarie*).

⁵ These three translations were published in a volume in 1897 (Morel).

complete translation by Balthazar Grangier, printed in 1596. These four French translations are not well-known and have been little studied or neglected altogether.

The episode of Paolo and Francesca

To provide an example of the variety of metre and verse forms and the characteristic poetic language of these early versions of the *Commedia*, and, beyond Dante's voice, the different poetic voices which they transmit, I propose to compare some verses from the fifth canto of the *Inferno*, perhaps the best-loved canto of the *Commedia* throughout the ages. This is from the well-known episode of Paolo and Francesca, to which the fifth canto largely owes its fame. In the circle of the lustful, together with characters from literature and history whose passion led them to sin – Semiramis, Dido, Paris and Helen, and Tristan –, we encounter Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini, contemporaries of Dante. Francesca, daughter of the Lord of Ravenna, falls in love with Paolo Malatesta, her husband's brother, who kills them both. The crime occurred between 1283 and 1286 and was therefore still fresh in people's memories when Dante composed the *Commedia*. In Dante's text, Francesca reveals the exact moment when she and Paolo fall in love, in a much-praised passage of great literary quality. A comparison of the verses in the three translations makes it possible to observe some of the most important translation procedures. These are both related to the metre and versification and the degree to which each translator has intervened in the text. The comparison of the translated fragments illustrates three different ways of approaching Dante's *Commedia*:⁶

<i>Commedia</i> , Dante Alighieri	Catalan Translation Andreu Febrer
«Noi leggiavamo un giorno per diletto di Lancialotto come amor lo strinse; soli eravamo e senza alcun sospetto.	«Nos dos ligent un jorn, per gran plaer, de Lançalot, com amor l'entreprès, éram tots sols, sens sospita aver.
Per più fiate li occhi ci sospinse quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso; ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.	Per moltes veus lo nostr'ull se sospès, e cell legir descolorí lo vis; mas un sol punt fo cell qui'ns sobreprès.
Quando leggemmo il disíato riso esser baciato da cotanto amante, questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,	Quan nos legim aquell amorós ris esser bessat de son leal amant, aquet, qui may de mi no fos divís,
la bocca mi basciò tutto tremante. Galeotto fu 'l libro e chi lo scrisse: quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante».	la boca me bessà tot tremolant. Galeot fo lo libre e qui l'escrís. E aquell jorn no'n legim plus avant».
Mentre che l'uno spirto questo disse, l'altro piangèa; sì che di pietade io venni men così com' io morisse.	Mentre que l'un sperit açò dis, l'altre plorà tant, que de pietat jo'm smortí, axí com si morís.

⁶ Alvar has analysed four modern Spanish translations of verses 121-142 of the 5th canto of the *Inferno*. See also English translations of the Paolo and Francesca episodes from the Romantic era in Saglia.

E caddi come corpo morto cade. Petrocchi: vol. 2, canto V, vv. 127-142	E cayguí mort, com si fos trespassat. Pareira 2006: canto V, vv. 127-142
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Although in verse, Andreu Febrer's translation is characterised by its fidelity to the Italian text. He translates Dante's hendecasyllables into Catalan decasyllables and maintains the chain rhyme of the tercets, parting company with the Italian only in the stress: the Catalan decasyllables do not have the syllabic rhythm of the original – an aspect which is difficult to reproduce – but rather the characteristic structure of the Catalan line, with a masculine caesura (on an oxytone word) after the fourth syllable (4+6).⁷ This is the case throughout the translation, although Febrer does not always manage to achieve the Catalan stress and sometimes reproduces the syllabic structure of the Italian. This happens in verse 136 where the Italian «la bocca mi basció tutto tremante» is translated with the stress on the sixth syllable: «la boca me bessa tot tremolant». The characteristic caesura in the decasyllable is the reason for some small modifications in the translation. In the first verse of the fragment, the Italian verb form «leggiavamo» is changed to a gerund «legint» in order to allow the stress to fall on the oxytone in the fourth syllable. The Catalan translation does, however, tend to maintain the syntax of the Italian text, and, in the few cases where it does not, the solutions can be attributed to the constraints of the rhyme scheme. Thus, in the last verse of the first tercet, the translation «sens sospita aver» (which translates «sanza alcun sospetto») is a response to the need to complete the line with a word which rhymes with «plaer» and with «voler» in line 125 («del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto» / «de nostra amor tu as ten gran voler»). In addition, the translation of «como corpo morto cade» as «si fos trespassat» can be explained by the need to find a rhyme with «pietat» in the preceding tercet. In fact, in this verse Febrer was unable to reproduce the phonetic effect of the original, but shifts the translation of the word «morto» to the end of the first hemistich («e cayguí mort»), and therefore maintain the relationship Italian has with the previous rhyme word («morisse» / «moris»). It is also important to note the repetition of sounds in «jo·m smort», and «moris» and «mort», as if Febrer wished to compensate with poliptotons the alliteration in Italian («caddi», «come», «corpo», «cade») which he is unable to produce in the last line. On the other hand, the Catalan translation does conserve a good number of the Italian words at the end of the lines. This is particularly noteworthy, as it is in the rhyming words that the expressive power of the line is concentrated. Thus, apart from the first tercet and lines 132 and 142, Febrer maintains the Italian rhyme words («sospinse» / «sospes», «viso» / «vis», «riso» / «ris», «amante» / «amant», «diviso» / «divis», «tremante» / «tremolant», «scrise» / «escri», «avante» / «avant», «disse» / «dis», «pietade» / «pietat», «morisse» / «moris»). In the other cases, the rhyme word is translated by an equivalent or a close synonym, and therefore it maintains the original meaning: «per diletto» / «per gran plaer», «lo strinse» ('squeezed' / «l'entrepres» ('seized'), «ci vinse» ('defeated us') / «ens sobrepres» ('surprised us', in a military sense, meaning attack, defeat). These expressions, which translate the original

⁷ The Catalan translator of *La Belle Dame sans merci* also translated the French octosyllable line with a decasyllable and a masculine caesura on the fourth syllable (Marfany "Traducciones"). In *La glòria d'amor* by Bernat Hug de Rocabertí, a work written in the second half of the fifteenth century, which reprises passages from Dante's *Commedia* (see Heaton), the Italian-style *terzine* are also constructed with 4+6 decasyllables.

Italian very effectively, can be found in troubadouresque poetry in similar contexts and in rhyme position. For example, the expression «amor empres» was used by Bernat de Ventadorn in his line «aissi sui d'amor empres» (*Non es meravella s'en chan*, v. 30; Riquer *Los trovadores* I, 409). Febrer's translation is not entirely literal in a further two cases. He translates the expression «disiato riso» in line 133 as «amorós ris», and «cotanto amante» in line 134 as «leal amant». Both solutions belong to the repertory of troubadouresque poetry, and the choice of «amorós ris» is motivated by the other rhyme words in the passage («vis», «entreprès», «divis», «morís»). This is demonstrated by these examples from troubadouresque poetry and from his own poetry below (my italics):⁸

C'ab un *amorós ris*

Arnaut de Maruelh, *Tant m'abellis e m'platz*, v. 60 (*Corpus des Troubadours*)

Que, qand esgar los huolls ab lo clar *vis*

e'l bel semblan don m'a si *empres*

Gaucelm Faidit, *Mout m'enojet ogan lo coindetz mes*, vv. 29-30 (Riquer *Los trovadores* II, 755)

Atressi soy clamans del seu *amorós vis*,

qui m'auci gen gardan, e mantenen m'aucis

que la vi, d'on m'agr' ops que nuyll temps no la vis:

c' ades muyr, ades viu, o! si del tot *morís*:

Cerverí de Girona, *Francs Reys, humils e cars e d'amorós semblan*, vv. 17-20 (Riquer *Los trovadores* III, 1574)

Lexant me va joya d'uymay,

solaç e xant, deport e *ris*,

que m tenia joyós e gay

remirant son *amorós vis*.

Er m'és avís,

a mon avís,

e suy *devís*

que tost morray

com se gran beutat no veuray.

Ay, Amor, ay!

¿per què no t play

almeys que denant ley *morís*?

Andreu Febrer, *Las, a qui diré ma langor?*, vv. 97-108 (Riquer, *Poesies* 124)

This demonstrates that, despite the lexical and syntactic fidelity of the translation, Febrer's memory resorts to formulae and rhymes belonging to his own tradition when appropriate. It is the voice of the translator which emerges despite himself.

The translation of Pedro Fernández de Villegas is very different and uses a metre much more usual in translations of the time. The chain rhyme tercets become *coblas de arte*

⁸ For «leal amant», see, for example, Cerverí de Girona, «via siguetz de leyal amador» (*Reys castelas, tota res mor e fina*, v. 6), or Febrer himself, «¿Serà nul ten leyal amant» (*Las, a qui diré ma langor*, v. 4; Riquer, *Poesies* 121).

mayor: eight decasyllables with an ABBA-ACCA rhyme scheme, with two hemistichs of six syllables each. The final result is very different to the first prose translation in Spanish, attributed to Enrique de Villena, which is reproduced below to provide a comparison with the translation by Villegas:

Spanish translation in prose Enrique de Villena	Spanish translation P. Fernández de Villegas
<p>«Nós leíamos un día por tomar plazer de Lançarote cómo amor lo estriñió, solos éramos e sin sospecha alguna. Por muchas vegadas los ojos se miraron en aquella letura, descoloróse el viso, mas sólo un punto fue aquel que le vençió. Cuando leyemos el deseado riso seer besado de tanto amante, aqeste que jamás nunca de mí fue departido, la boca me besó todo tremiendo: Galeoto fue el libro e quien lo escribió. Non leímos de aquel día adelante». En tanto qu'el un espíritu aquesto dize, el otro llorava así de piedat, yo vine menos así como si muriese e caí como cuerpo muerto cae».</p> <p>Enrique de Villena: canto V</p>	<p>«Entrambos estando en logar apartado de aquel Lanzarote leyendo su historia, el fuego de amor aun en nuestra memoria por actos extrínsecos no demostrado, materia nos dio el lascivo tratado. De aquellos amantes habiendo leído, suspensos los ojos, cegado el sentido, besó la mi boca tremiendo y turbado.</p> <p>Así Galeoto les fue medianero segund que a nosotros el libro tan vano, en cuya lectura es trabajo liviano sin buena doctrina al vevir verdadero». Mientra ella decía el su compañero contino lloraba con tanto gemido que su compasión amató mi sentido, y a tierra me lanza el dolor lastimero.</p> <p>Fernández de Villegas: canto V, vv. 161-176</p>

Enrique de Villena's translation of this fragment is highly literal: many words and expressions are translated word for word («strinse» / «estriñó», «disiatio riso» / «deseado riso», «io venni men» / «yo vine menos»). On other occasions, the meaning is transferred with a similar term or equivalent in Spanish: («per diletto» / «por tomar plazer», «diviso» / «departido») and, in one case, «li occhi ci sospinse / quella lettura» ('the reading suspended our eyes'), the passage is interpreted directly with the translation «los ojos se miraron en aquella lectura» ('while we were reading, our eyes looked at each other'). Moreover, in the translation of the last line, «E caddi como corpo morto cade» / «E caí como cuerpo muerto cae», Villena preserves the phonetic and expressive resources of the original: the play between «caddi» and «cade» at the beginning and the end of the verse, the alliteration of «corpo» and «morto», and the five successive disyllables.⁹ The success of this line, however, is not the fruit of Villena's poetic invention, but simply arises from the similarity of the two languages and his desire to

⁹ With regard to the purpose of modern Spanish translations of this verse, see Alvar 144 and 146-47.

produce a literal translation. In fact, Villena's aim was not to produce a poetic translation at all, but simply to transpose and explain the work, in order to make reading the Italian easier by clarifying and interpreting the more difficult passages. The translation by Villegas, on the other hand, has a completely different purpose and has a different approach altogether: the verses «invented» by the translator, that is to say, created by him or based on commentaries or glosses of the *Commedia* circulating at the time, are easy to detect in the fragment concerning the episode of Paolo and Francesca, in which Villegas deviates considerably from Dante's original words. I shall comment only on the most notable passages:¹⁰ The book about Lancelot which Paolo and Francesca are reading becomes, in the translation, «un lasciva tratado» (a lascivious treatise), which provokes «fuego de amor» (passion, lit: 'fire of love') and confounds the senses («cegado el sentido»). Furthermore, in the second *cobla*, the book is called «el libro tan vano» (such a frivolous book) and Villegas both amplifies line 137, «Galeotto fu'libro e chi lo scrisse» and provides his own interpretation: «Ansí Galeotto les fue medianero» (Galeot was the intermediary (between Lancelot and Guinevere), «segon que a nosotros el libro tan vano» (just as this frivolous book does with us). He then goes on to add two lines of his own of a clearly moral nature, inspired perhaps by some gloss or commentary, «cuya lectura es trabajo liviano / sin buena doctrina al vevir verdadero» (to read this book is a pointless enterprise and does not teach how to live authentically). The translation of the final verse («E caddi como corpo morto cadde») as «y a tierra me lanza el dolor lastimero» does not correspond to the original lexis or syntax in any way, and, importantly, Villegas omits altogether the line «quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante» (that day we didn't read any more), perhaps out of moral scruples. The influence of the Dante exegetic tradition and the Castilian lyrical tradition in this translation is huge. It is therefore important to point out some of the words and expressions used by Villegas which don't correspond to Dante's text but which are common in the Castilian poetic tradition. For example, the expression «dolor lastimero» used by Villegas in the last line of the passage, is a stylistic expression which can be found throughout medieval Castilian poetry, always in a rhyme position, for example, in this anonymous piece from the *Cancionero de Palacio*: «Todo plazer se me alexa, / tengo un dolor lastimero, / y no sé lo que me quiero» (Iriso 44).¹¹ As in other translations from the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century, one of Villegas' objectives was to compose a well-written translation in the target language which followed the metric and stylistic norms of his tradition. The *coblas de arte mayor*, associated with such lofty issues, established and consolidated by writers influenced by Dante, were the perfect medium for a translation of the *Commedia*.

Let us now look at the anonymous French translation:

¹⁰ For a more detailed analysis of this episode in the translation by Villegas, and for other issues in the approach to the versification and the influence of the Dante exegetic tradition in this passage, see Marfany "La traducción del *Inferno* de Fernández de Villegas".

¹¹ See the comments on this and other examples in Marfany "La traducción del *Inferno* de Fernández de Villegas".

Anonymous French Translation

«Ung jour pour passe temps et delectacion,
lisions de Lancelot, comme amour vint l'estraindre;
seulx estions sans avoir de riens suspicion.

Par maintes foys les yeulx de l'un a l'autre empaindre
celle lecture fit, et paslir nos deux viz;
maiz ung seul point causa notre amour alors joindre.

Quant nous vinmes a lire ung tant desiré riz
estre baisé d'un tel grant et noble amoureux,
cestuy qui ne sera jamaiz de moy diviz

la bouche me baisa tout tremblant e paoureux.
Galeot en fut cause et cil qui l'escripvit.
Ce jour ne leusmes plus au livre aventureux».

Pendent que ung des espritz ce narré poursouivit,
l'autre plouroit moult fort, dont pitié j'en prins telle
que je m'esvanouy tellement qu'on me vit

cheoir plat, comme ung corps mort qu'on met dans la berelle.

Morel 32-33

The manuscript containing the French translation has a slightly unusual *mise en page*: The Italian original appears on the left folio and the French on the right, so the translation appears opposite the original. This was not common amongst Romance languages at the time, but was not unusual with translations from Latin (Vignali 232). This may explain the desire of the translator to use chained rhyme tercets, albeit adapting the metre to alexandrines. The translation is very close to the Italian, but many of the rhyme words are innovations of the translator. Unlike the translation by Andreu Febrer, this text does not preserve the majority of Dante's rhyme words: In the second *terzina*, for example, the rhyme «sospinse» becomes «empaindre» in French, and «vinse» becomes «joindre». In the fourth *terzina*, «tremante» is translated by the pair of synonyms «tremblant e paoureux», so therefore the rhyming word is also different, as below «avante» becomes «aventureux» in French. This variation in the rhymes implies a greater degree of manipulation, motivated perhaps by the greater length of the alexandrine and certain characteristics of French, such as the abundance of monosyllabic words, and words which are shorter in French than in Italian. This all means that the translator has to add words or expressions which are not in the original. Sometimes he uses periphrases which translate the Italian well, such as the expression «come amore lo strinse» which he translates with a verbal periphrasis «comme amour vint l'estraindre»; at other times, however, the French text deviates from the original and offers a less successful translation, as in the last line of the passage, which neither reproduces nor adapts any of the stylistic resources of the original.¹² A deeper analysis of this translation is needed,

¹² For the last word in the passage, *berelle*, see Morel: 33, n.142.

taking into account both the manuscript – its dating, and features of the codex – and the characteristics of the French text, both linguistic and literary.

Conclusions

It is essential to understand the poetic tradition of the translator when analysing medieval and Renaissance translations. Further factors which determine the final result are the purpose of the translation and the recipient, information which is not always completely transparent to us now. In the case of Andreu Febrer, it is not surprising that a poet who had already incorporated French verse forms in Catalan poetry at the court of Joan I, the king who was known as «wholly French», should seek to do the same with Italian verse forms in a translation, when he went on to serve Alfonso the Magnanimous, the king who would be known as «wholly Italian». In modern times, Febrer's translation has been criticised for its use of Italianisms, a biased criticism which does not take into account the cultural setting of the translation. As Parera (19) explains, some words believed to be Italianisms also occurred in Provençal, and the veneration for the language of Dante, well-known in the court circles in which Febrer moved, could well have induced him to include certain words in his translation, as a sign of distinction, or simply because he believed his readers would understand them.¹³ Villegas also had his readers in mind, especially the recipient of the translation, Joanna of Aragon, who would have been accustomed to reading Castilian works in *coblas de arte mayor*. Villegas certainly bore her in mind in the rhetoric extension of some of the verses and possibly also in the passages in which he explains and interprets the original. As for the French translation, it is necessary to research in more depth the choice of alexandrines by the anonymous translator and the dating of the manuscript containing the translation, given the curious fact that the translator opted for a new verse form, unused till then in French lyric poetry. In fact, it would make more sense for the translation to be contemporaneous to or later than the circulation of the alexandrine, which later became the verse form *par excellence*, used in the adaptation and translation of Italian poetry. Whatever the case, the three approaches to translation can be understood perfectly in the light of their own poetic traditions. The analysis of the metre and versification employed in each case reveals that the literary conventions of the era and the poetic tradition of each translator had an influence on the final result, and, with greater or lesser intensity, allowed the voice of the translator to be heard.

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¹³ For more details, see Parera "La versió d'Andreu Febrer de la Commedia de Dante: Recursos del traductor."

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