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# Re-Writing Parts of Europe in Some Vernacular Adaptations of the *Imago Mundi*

## Introduction

The present chapter engages with the concept of translation broadly defined by investigating some of the patterns found in the alterations to the geographical description of Europe in vernacular adaptations of the geographical section of the twelfth-century encyclopaedic text *Imago mundi*.<sup>1</sup> As my case study for this investigation I take three translations (broadly defined) of the *Imago mundi* produced in three consecutive centuries in two languages, Castilian and Catalan. The original Latin text was composed by Honorius Augustodunensis in the beginning of the twelfth century in three books, of which the first contained an extensive description of the inhabited world (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982). This book far outstripped books II and III in popularity and not only circulated on its own in Latin but was translated into many European languages, and also formed the basis of a number of looser adaptations incorporated into other texts, themselves often quite popular (Petrovskaia and Calis 2019). The basic structure of the textual map in the *Imago mundi*, inherited by its various vernacular adaptations, is a tripartite picture of the world, constituted by Asia, Europe, and Africa, discussed in that order (Petrovskaia 2022). Each of these is first introduced in a short general outline, and then discussed in more detail, region-by-region, with attention to rivers, main cities, and some etymological discussion, the extent of which depends on each given translation/adaptation.

In this chapter I propose to engage with the concept of translation as transformation and transfer by regarding three vernacular “rewritings” of the *Imago mundi* in the medieval European geographical tradition (Petrovskaia 2020, 361–362; Pate and Rose 2013, 613). I use “rewriting” in the definition introduced by Liedeke Plate and Els Rose, as a way of describing a “technology of cultural memory” which constitutes a “writing again” and does not quite fall either under translation or under exegesis and is “an act of transfer enabling cultural remembrance, rewriting inscribes time and difference” (Pate and Rose 2013, 613 and 614). To “time” and “difference” in this discussion I would like to add “space” as the subject of re-inscription onto the original text

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on the findings of the research project “Defining ‘Europe’ in Medieval European Geographical Discourse: the Image of the World and its Legacy, 1110–1500” (2017–2020), hosted by Utrecht University and funded by the Dutch Research Council <https://definingeurope.sites.uu.nl/> (accessed 17 June 2024).

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within this process of rewriting. It will be seen in the discussion below that the treatment of the description of Europe in the three rewritings under examination is formed by considerations based on their historical, cultural, linguistic, political and geographical contexts.

As Michelle R. Warren points out, while “in traditional paradigms, source texts are originals that have priority over their derivative translations, modern theory conceptualizes translations that have their own independent value” (Warren 2019, 165). Taking as my premise the notion that this is also the case for medieval translations (*translationes*, moving the text to a new context), I propose to demonstrate this by examining the way in which the geographical area where the translation itself was produced is emphasized in the world-description of the geographical treatise being translated. I have chosen to focus on the Iberian branch of the tradition – *Semeiança del Mundo*, *Mapa mundi* in the Catalan Atlas and the geographical chapters in Juan de Mena’s *Laberinto de Fortuna* – because it provides an interesting and illuminating snapshot of the common treatment of the original material across three different periods (*Semeiança del Mundo* of the 1170s–1220s, Catalan Atlas 1370s–1380s, and *Laberinto de Fortuna* in the 1440s), and across what to the modern audience are three distinct genres: an encyclopaedia, a map, and a poem variously defined as epic and / or allegoric and didactic work (Juan de Mena, ed. Cummins 1968, 21 and 25; Clarke 1973, 61–62).<sup>2</sup> Due to limits of time and space, the focus here will be mainly on the role of Spain itself in these three different rewritings of the *Imago mundi*.

It is important to emphasize at the outset of this discussion the Janus-like nature of the *Imago mundi* tradition: the works belonging to this broad family have a disconcerting tendency to be at the same time politically relevant to their own time of composition, and intentionally archaic in their representation of geographical space (the *Imago mundi* itself, notoriously, frequently prefers Roman provincial designations to twelfth-century placenames). This seemingly confusing duality might also usefully be regarded through the prism of Homi Bhabha’s interpretation of the nation narrative: “For the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of its irredeemably plural modern space, bounded by different, even hostile nations, into a signifying space that is archaic and mythical, paradoxically representing the nation’s modern territoriality, in the patriotic, atavistic temporality of Traditionalism” (Bhabha 1990, 300). Bhabha’s articulation of the tension between the archaic and anachronistic on the one hand and the intensely current on the other, can be traced in each of the three texts here examined.

Since the extent of each text is too expansive to be encompassed within one chapter, the discussion below engages primarily with alterations undergone by the description of Europe, and Spain in particular, in these three texts. This is used as a case

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<sup>2</sup> I emphasise here the modern conception of genre distinctions. The medieval typology of genre is notoriously distinct from today’s, but it is beyond the limitations of this chapter to engage with the issue in the depth which its treatment would require.

study to bring into sharper relief the various tidal forces operating on the adaptations, produced as they were for different purposes, in differing political contexts, and in different genres. The discussion is divided thematically into three parts. These fall broadly within the thematic fields of structure, content, and format. The first addresses the changes made to the description of Spain, and its placement within the broader description of Europe, in the three texts. The second engages with the issues of archaism, focusing on the reasons behind retention of seemingly outdated information in some instances, while in others placenames and epithets are altered to accord with new demands. The third and final section of the discussion engages with the various modes in which the text responds to the demands of the new formats within which its contents are moulded in the adaptations: as a product of aural culture in the case of the thirteenth-century *Semeiança*, of the intensely visual cartographic monument in the case of the fourteenth-century Catalan Atlas, and as part of a verse epic in the *Laberinto*.

Since no overarching discussion of rewritings of the *Imago mundi* as adaptations is currently available, an introduction to each of the texts concerned from that perspective is in order, prior to discussion.<sup>3</sup> The three texts, *Semeiança del Mundo*, the Catalan Atlas, and the *Laberinto de Fortuna*, are briefly introduced in the following section, with special focus on their relationship with the *Imago mundi*.

## The texts

The first of the three vernacular texts here examined can be described as a translation of *Imago mundi* Book I without any violence to the narrow technical definition of the term as intersemiotic rendering of meaning from one language system into another, with strong adherence to not only original content but also form, and where possible, syntax.<sup>4</sup> This text, entitled *Mapa mundi* in the manuscripts, but now known as the *Semeiança del Mundo* (1173×1223), is on the whole a faithful rendering – with some minor additions, omissions, and shifts – of the Latin text into Spanish (*Semeiança*, ed. Bull and Williams 1959, 10–11). Its alterations to the contents of the encyclopaedia are minimal, but include structural elements, such as transitional passages introduced as the text moves between the three parts of the world, from Asia to Eu-

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<sup>3</sup> A broader discussion of the *Imago mundi* tradition, including a wider range of vernacular translations and adaptations, will be provided in my forthcoming book, *Transforming Europe in the Medieval European Images of the World. Fuzzy Geographies*.

<sup>4</sup> This is a rough working definition which is not meant to be definitive, but rather to illustrate the common concept of “faithful interlingual translation”; for a discussion of the notorious difficulty of defining “translation”, see, for instance, Hermans (2013).

rope, and Europe to Africa. These are investigated in the third section of the main discussion below.

In a move of misattribution typical of the *Imago mundi* tradition as a whole, this text attributes authorship to Isidore of Seville (*Semeiança*, ed. Bull and Williams 1959, 12 and 16; Kinkade 1971, 263; Deyermond 1996, 143–144). One of the three early manuscripts of the *Semeiança* has it alongside a translation of Honorius's *Elucidarium*, suggesting at least the distant possibility that the texts might have been translated together from a collection of Honorius's works (Kinkade 1971, 268 n. 9).<sup>5</sup> It is possible to see the attribution to Isidore merely as an example of misattribution of this text to a known authority, a phenomenon observed in both Latin manuscripts of the text and in other vernacular translations. On the other hand, it is also possible that we are dealing here not with misattribution but with purposeful re-attribution and, indeed, appropriation of the text dictated not merely by Isidore's fame as encyclopaedist but by the fact that he was Spanish, a point emphasized also in twentieth-century histories of geography (Melon 1977, 70; Lacombe 2008, 343). Isidore's name appears to have attracted attribution of geographical and cosmographical materials. A much earlier example of this is the Pseudo-Isidore *De fabrica mundi* in the Códice de Roda (Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia cod. 78, s. x<sup>ex</sup> / xi<sup>inc.</sup>), fol. 195r-v (Díaz Díaz 1970). It also needs to be emphasized that the mis-attribution in the case of the *Imago mundi* text is not entirely unreasonable, since Honorius relied so heavily on Isidore, that the *Ety-mologies* and *De natura rerum* are often either the only or the primary source of information in the treatise, and even the editors of the *Semeiança* stated that the text derived directly from Isidore rather than Honorius (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982; *Semeiança*, ed. Bull and Williams 1959, 16).<sup>6</sup> In terms of the implications of the towering stature of Isidore for the prevalent view of the *Semeiança*, Alan Deyermond (1996, 144), for instance, points out that "Since Isidore's encyclopedia incorporates a great deal of information from classical sources, the description of the world offered by the *Semeiança* is not, as one might suppose from its date, a product of the XIIc Renaissance, but a late representation of largely classical geographical beliefs". In fact, since the *Semeiança* largely copies the *Imago mundi*, its antiquarian nature is also inherited from the Latin treatise's remarkably anachronistic view of Europe (reflected in its frequent use of Roman provincial names for various regions) (Kinkade 1971, 263). We will return to this issue of anachronism in the second section of the discussion below.

5 The manuscripts are Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 46 (s. xiii) and Madrid, Biblioteca del Escorial X.iii.4 (1467) and Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional MS 3369 (s. xiv-xv). The latter is one of six manuscripts containing the *Lucidario* (Kinkade 1971; Sacchi 2008).

6 This has had a ripple effect in scholarship with the reference to Honorius as source of the text tending, with time, towards partial then complete elision in favour of a reference to Isidore (Deyermond 1996, 144; Biglieri 2012, 21). One might see this as a result of the view of medieval geography as a whole as ultimately indebted to Isidore, which led Melon to describe the medieval stage of the history of geography as the Spanish stage (Melon 1977, esp. 69–71, 81–83).

The second witness in the present enquiry is also a text produced for the purposes of conveying geographic information, but in this case not a purely independent textual one like the *Semeiança*, but as an accompaniment to a cartographic representation of the world. This is a Catalan translation of a compilation of extracts from the *Imago mundi* and corresponding to (parts of): chapters 1–3, 5, 7, 26, 30, 33–34 (or 44–5 as they contain similar information), 50–51, 21–23, found on page 2 of the spectacular cartographic monument commonly referred to as the Catalan Atlas.<sup>7</sup> The text preserved thus does not correspond in extent to the whole world depicted on the maps in the Atlas. It only discusses the form of the world, creation of the world, the four elements, the tripartite structure of the inhabited world, islands of the Mediterranean and a part of Europe. It omits Asia for the most part and Africa almost completely, retaining only the first sentence of *Imago mundi* chapter 30 on Africa, giving its etymology and extent (Edson 2007, 78). Evelyn Edson (1997, 166) describes the Catalan Atlas as “an impressive attempt to integrate new cartographical knowledge with the old format”. The atlas, which presents a combination of two traditions, encyclopaedic and portolan, is composed of six sheets, of which the last four contain maps, while the first two contain illustrated cosmographical and astrological material (Yoeli 1970, 17; Edson 2007, 75 and 78; Woodward 2013, 567; Sarazin, 2013, 14 n. 5).

The Atlas was gifted to King Charles VI of France by the heir to the Aragonese throne, Don Juan / Prince John (1350–1396; r. as King John I, 1387–1396) and inherited by the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris from the Royal Library as MS Esp. 30 (Majorca, ca. 1375) (Kogman-Appel 2020, 21). Although frequently ascribed to Abraham Cresques in previous scholarship, that attribution is erroneous according to Kogman-Appel, who argues that the work was produced by Elisha ben Abraham Bevenisti Cresques (1325–1387) and that it should be referred to as the Ecumene Chart (Kogman-Appel 2020, 19 and 22; Yoeli 1970, 17 and 25; Estow 2014, 2–3).

The whole of the second page of the Atlas / Chart is occupied by a text in Catalan that corresponds to a collection of extracts from the *Imago mundi*, followed by a short discussion of tidal dynamics, which appears to derive from a variety of different sources (possibly including the *Imago mundi*) at col. 2 ll. 63–88 (Rosselló i Verger 2015, 100–101, 104; Edson 2007, 78; Nogueira 2013, 207, 230–31; Petrovskaja 2024). The switch between the two texts is marked with a reference to leaving one text for the other, *pus que aven perlat del mapamundi* ‘after having spoken of the *mapamundi*’ (p. 2, col. 2 l. 61).<sup>8</sup> It is worth pointing out that the text here, as in the *Semeiança*, is labeled

7 For an image of the page under discussion see the digital facsimile on Gallica at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55002481n/f3> (accessed 16 September 2022). Note that due to the abbreviated nature of the material there is some disagreement in previous scholarship on the exact sources. According to Hoogvliet, the *Imago mundi* chapters used are as I.1–3, 5, 7–35 and 39; according to Edson – I.1–3, 5, 7, 26, 30, 33, 34, 50, 51, 48, 21–23, 40, and 41 (Hoogvliet 1997, 69; Edson 2007, 251 n. 49). For a more in-depth discussion, see Petrovskaja (2024).

8 My transcription and translation.

*Mapa mundi*. It begins with the words *Mapa mundi uol dir . . .* ('*Mapa mundi* means . . .') and translates the first chapters of *Imago mundi* Book 1. After the initial introductory sentences, the text picks up at the second sentence of *Imago mundi* 1.1: *Huius figura est in modum pile rotunda* 'Whereof the figure is round like a ball' which it translates as *la dita ymage ho figura es redona a manera de pilota* 'the said image or figure is round in the manner of a ball'.<sup>9</sup> The translation continues word-for-word, rendering the egg metaphor of the world structure (Yoeli 1970, 17; Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 50–51).<sup>10</sup> It continues through *Imago mundi* 1.2 (*De creatione mundi* 'of the creation of the world'), 1.3 (*De elementis* 'Of the elements'), 1.5, and 1.7. Subsequent sentences constitute extracts concerning parts of Asia, Europe, and – very briefly – Africa. These are heavily abridged and re-ordered in respect to the source material. Most importantly, the text discusses Europe twice. After a very brief mention of Asia, it proceeds to give a lengthy passage on Italy. The text for Italy is a very close translation of the first part of *Imago mundi* 1.26, including all etymologies and concluding with the reference to the links between Rome and the lion, Brundisium and the stag, Carthage and the bull and Troy and the horse. This is followed by a translation of the first sentence 1.30 on Africa, continuing with a translation of the first part of 1.33 on the Islands, mentioning only Cyprus and Centapolis (Petrovskaja 2024, 359). This is followed by a translation of 1.34 (Sicily) up to the reference to Etna. Because the *Imago mundi* repeats information about Sicily and Etna in 1.44 and 1.45 it is possible that these are the source of the Catalan Atlas text. This is followed in the Atlas by a rendering of 1.50 (on the Red Sea), and the whole of 1.51, commencing with *Mare dicitur quod sit amarum* 'The sea is so called because it is salty' (the medieval etymologies are often reminiscent of attempts at puns) translated as *La mar es dita mar perço com et amara* but omitting the final quotation from Ecclesiastes (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 71; Petrovskaja 2024, 359). The following text in the Atlas returns to Europe, doubling back to translate 1.21 (including the dual etymology for Europe), continuing to 1.22 (Scythia), 1.23 (Germania Superior) up to the reference to the etymology of *Alemania* (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 59; Petrovskaja 2024). The text switches abruptly at this point to discuss the tides and the relation between the sea and the moon, partly also based on information derived from the *Imago mundi* (Rosselló i Verger 2015, 100–101 and 104; Edson 2007, 78).

The third witness under examination here is the geographical section of the *Laberinto de Fortuna*, also known as *Las Trescientas*, completed in 1444 by Juan de Mena

<sup>9</sup> The present discussion and transcriptions are based on the online facsimile of the manuscript on the Bibliothèque nationale de France website Gallica at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52509636n/f2> (accessed 20 September 2019). A more extensive treatment of the sections derived from the *Imago mundi*, found in the Catalan Atlas, as well as a discussion of the reasons for the selection of those particular passages in the Catalan text, can be found in Petrovskaja (2024).

<sup>10</sup> Yoeli discusses the sources of the atlas with reference to Crone, but the *Imago mundi* is not mentioned (Yoeli 1970, 26–27, Crone 1953). For a discussion of related portolan maps, see Winter (1954); Falchetta (1994).



(1411–1456), one of the classics of Spanish literature, writing at the court of Juan II (1404–1454) (Street 1952; Juan de Mena, ed. Kerkhof 1997; Beresford 2005, 91–93). The work's purpose was to extol the rule of Juan II and was presented to the king himself (Cañas Gálvez 2015, 13 and 14). The text contains an extensive description of the geography of the world, in stanzas 32–54 (Knauss 2006; Autesserre 2009). This description probably derives directly from *Imago mundi* Book I, although it is not entirely impossible that the author might have had access to the *Semeiança* (Kinkade 1971, 269; Juan de Mena, ed. Kerkhof 1997, 31; López Férez 2010, 249–64; Petrovskaja 2023, 20, 24). The poet both condensed and elaborated on the information derived from the encyclopaedia and worked it into his allegorical and instructional (specifically for a ruler) text (Knauss 2006). Indeed, as Knauss observes, this approach to adaptation – to limit the amount of information and to illustrate it with more elaborate descriptions – was not only in the interests of intelligibility but also in accordance with the didactic goals of the poem dedicated to a royal patron (Knauss 2006). This corresponds to rewriting in its definition of transmission of cultural memory, referred to at the beginning of this chapter. It will be seen below, that these result in a number of subtle alterations to the text, which yield a somewhat different emphasis as compared to the Latin original. The dominance of knowledge in the value system Juan de Mena championed, as the ultimate source of prestige, can be read as the background for his use of the otherwise seemingly dry encyclopaedic material derived from the *Imago mundi* tradition in the richly allegorical framework of the *Laberinto* (Hartnett 2011, 354; Knauss 2006).

The poem rewrites the *Imago mundi* as a view of the world from above, shown to the poet by “divine Providence” from the vantage point of Fortune’s dwelling place.<sup>11</sup> Thus, although this text, in contrast to our other two witnesses, is not entitled *Mapa mundi*, the association with the visual exercise of cartographic description is nevertheless present. The description of the world proper begins at stanza 34, which refers to the five zones.<sup>12</sup> Autesserre identifies the source of Mena’s geographical information as chapters 6–36 of the *Imago mundi*.<sup>13</sup> A full list of passages added by Mena to his rewriting of the Latin original has been published by López Férez, so I will omit the detail here in the interests of brevity.<sup>14</sup> It must be emphasised that Mena does not translate the Latin text, but rather uses it as a source of information. My focus in the discussion below, thus, will be on Mena’s treatment of Europe within this geographic descriptive passage.

<sup>11</sup> Providence first appears in stanza 20 and is identified in stanza 23 (Autesserre 2009). Post (1912, 225 and 241) mis-identifies the source as Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum naturale* (ibid., 241–242), a suggestion refuted in Lida de Malkiel 1950, 33–35 (Petrovskaja 2023, 22 n. 12).

<sup>12</sup> Cummins (Juan de Mena, ed. Cummins 1968, 71); Domínguez (2011, 156).

<sup>13</sup> Flint (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 51–66); Autesserre (2009 n. 13); Autesserre provides references to Flint’s edition.

<sup>14</sup> López Férez (2010, 249–259, 263–264).

## The place of Spain in Europe

The structure of the geographic descriptions in all three adaptations is largely informed by the constraints of the original, which in turn, as shall be seen below, carries some features of its own exemplars, such as Isidore's *Etymologies*. It is worth therefore quoting the short chapter of *Imago mundi* 'On Europe' (chapter 21) *in extenso*:

Europa ab Europe rege, vel ab Europa filia Agenoris est nominata. In qua inprimis versus septentrionem sunt Rifei montes et Tanais fluuius, a Tanai rege dictus, et Meotides paludes, magno mari iuxta Theodosiam urbem seiungentes. (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 59)

Europe is named after King Europs or after Europa, daughter of Agenor. In which first towards the north are Ripheian mountains and the River Don, named after King Tanaus, and the Maeotian Swamps, severing the Great Sea close to the City of Theodosia. (my translation)

The passage is characteristic of the *Imago mundi* and its way of packaging information. An etymological introduction (Isidorean influence is visible here) is followed by the step-by-step hodoeporical description of the area. It is worth pointing out the lack of emphasis on borders. The *Rifei* mountains and the Don are mentioned as *inprimis* 'first', rather than as boundaries.<sup>15</sup> The Western edge of "Europe", by contrast, is not described in this chapter. This is left until the end of the entire section on Europe, which includes several chapters region by region, and concludes with a chapter on the British Isles and Ireland (I.29). Chapter 21 thus remains open-ended – the entry point of the description of Europe.

The first and in appearance most faithful of the Spanish adaptations, the *Semeiança*, by contrast, shifts the emphasis in its opening chapter on Europe by converting it into a brief overview through the addition of the reference to the Western edge of the region:

Europa es dicha e llamada del nombre de un rey que dixieron don Europe; otrosi puede seer dicha del nombre duna reyna que fue quel dixieron por nombre duena Europa, e fue fiia dun rey don Agenor. Esta partida de Europa comiença dun rrio que ha nombre Tanays, e descende fata occidente mas ayuso. Se departe de septentrion e tiene toda Espanna, e acaba se en la tierra mas de Espanna. (*Semeiança*. Ed. Bull and Williams 1959, 78)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> For a more extensive discussion of the inclusive, rather than divisive, geography of the *Imago mundi* and the implication of the lack of emphasis on borders for the vernacular geographical tradition based on that text, see my forthcoming monograph, *Transforming Europe*.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. The text of Version B: *Heuropa es dicha e llamada del nombre de vn rrey que fue que dixeron don Ehuropa, e otrosi puede ser dicha del nombre de vna rreyna que fue que dixeron por nombre donna Ehuropa, e fue fija del rrey Agenor. E esta partida de Ehuropa comiença de vn rrio que dicen Tanays, e deçiende fasta ocidente el mar ayuso, e parte de setentrion e viene por toda la Espanna, e acabase en la nuestra mar de España*. (*Semeiança*, ed. Bull and Williams 1959, 79) This constitutes a more complete rendering of the *Imago mundi* chapter, but also adds Spain.



Europa is called and named from the name of a king who they called *Europe*; otherwise it might be called from the name of a queen who was, whom they called by the name *Europa*, and who was daughter of a king Agenor. This part of Europe begins with a river which has the name *Tanais*, and descends down towards the west. It starts from the north and contains all Spain, and concludes in the land beyond Spain. (my translation)

Without postponing the conclusion to its version of *inprimis* until the end of the chapter range devoted to Europe, this text introduces a symmetrical construction at the outset, marked by the terms *departe* ‘starts’ and *acaba* ‘ends’. It also specifies here explicitly that Europe ends in Spain. This contrasts with the conclusion of Europe at the British Isles and Ireland in the *Imago mundi*.

The significance of the alteration made to the text – and the fact that such an alteration is made at all – is only apparent when the source of the *Semeiança* is recognised as the *Imago mundi*, rather than Isidore’s *Etymologies*. The latter text does refer to Spain, in the final position of XIV.iv.2:

Europa autem in tertiam partem orbis divisa incipit a flumine Tanai, descendens ad occasum per septentrionalem Oceanum usque in fines Hispaniae; cuius pars orientalis et meridiana a Ponto consurgens, tota mari Magno coniungitur, et in insulas Gades finitur. (ed. Lindsay 1911, vol. 1, XIV.iv.2)

The third of the globe that is called Europe (*Europa*) begins with the river Tanais (i.e. the Don), passing to the west along the northern Ocean as far as the border of Spain, and its eastern and southern parts rise to form the Pontus (i.e. the Black Sea) and are bordered the whole way by the Mediterranean and end in the islands of Gades (i.e. Cadiz). (*Etymologies*, ed. Barney et al. 2006, 289)

Spain is in Isidore’s text given twice over (in references to *Hispania* and to *Gades*) as the westernmost edge of Europe. That Isidore is not the source for the passage in the *Semeiança*, however, is clear from the fact that in the preceding passage in the *Etymologies* the etymology given for *Europa* is only the mythological reference to the daughter of Agenor, not, as in both the *Imago mundi* and *Semeiança*, a king of the name. The latter is a significant variation on the etymology for Europe predominantly found in texts of the *Imago mundi* family (Oschema 2013, 165 and 204–206).

Following the *Imago mundi* and echoing the *Semeiança*, Mena, too, begins the Europe section of the world description in the *Laberinto* (stanza 42), with a reference to the origins of the name (Juan de Mena, ed. Cummins 1968, 75; Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 59). Mena’s section on Europe commences with stanza 39: *Vi, de la parte que el Noto se ençiende, / el Cáucaso monte cómo se levanta* (Juan de Mena, ed. Kerkhof 1997, 103). The re-targeting observed in the *Semeiança* discussed above can be seen even more sharply in his text, as the information derived from the *Imago mundi* is incorporated and re-purposed in a different genre. Mena’s discussion of Europe makes a number of adjustments in respect to the Latin text, which are all closely tied to the poem’s function as a treatise on kingship, dedicated to a royal patron. For example, he avoids the term ‘king’ inherent in Honorius’s second etymology for the place-name ‘Europe’ (from ‘king Europs’) and adds several references to Gothia (*Gótiga*), in concert with

Spain's discourse of Gothic origins. In particular, in stanza 42, Mena asks the reader to praise the Rifean mountans and Meotidan swamps, *porque vezinos de Gótica fueron* (stanza 43; Juan de Mena, ed. Cummins 1968, 75), adding, in the following stanza that the line of Spanish kings descended from Gothia (Petrovskaia 2023, 23): *la gótica gente que el mundo vastase, / por que la nuestra España gozase / d'estirpe de reyes atán gloriosa* (Juan de Mena, ed. Kerkhof 1997, 109). As Kerkhof observes, this is much more than is said of Gothia in Honorius's text, and here "Mena aprovecha la ocasión para intercalar un elogio de la tierra de donde la 'estirpe atán gloriosa' de los reyes de España tiene origen" (Juan de Mena, ed. Kerkhof 1997, 109, n. 338). This, of course, is in line with the overarching theme of the text, intended as praise for Juan II and apparently appreciated by the king as such (Cañas Gálvez 2015, 14 n. 13). Mena concludes his description of Europe with a discussion of Spain in stanza 48, which is followed by the beginning of the discussion of Africa (with reference to Ethiopia in the opening line), in stanza 49 (Juan de Mena, ed. Kerkhof 1997, 112–113).

Thus, both the *Laberinto* and the *Semeiança* alter their source text to emphasize the position of Spain at the westernmost edge of Europe, conscious of the fact that their own audiences are based in that region. Whilst in the case of the former text this might be a deliberate echo of the *Etymologies*, inspired arguably by the reference to Spain in the opening chapter of the Europe section in Isidore, I would suggest that this should be primarily read in the context of twelfth- and thirteenth-century views of the progress of history. Analysed in the framework of a time-space *chronotope*, the text shows a privileging of Spain as the cumulation of historical progress (Bakhtin 1981, p. 84). In the medieval view of the development of history, *translatio studii et imperii*, power and knowledge moved with time from east to west (Jongkees 1967; Weiss 2012, 69). Adding Spain at the end of the geographical description, in the west, the *Semeiança* and the *Laberinto* position its geographical location, themselves, and their audience, as the culmination of human progress.

In both texts this initial change to the opening of the description of Europe is complemented by an act of reordering the text's constituents, resulting in a similar repositioning of Spain at the end of the European section of the text. In the Latin text, Spain occupies the penultimate chapter of the section dealing with Europe, preceding the chapter dedicated to Britain and Ireland, upon which the text moves, with an explicit break, to Africa, marking it as a new section corresponding to a new "part of the world". The *Semeiança* gives Spain the prominent final place in the course through Europe, by moving the discussion of Britain and Ireland (*Imago mundi* I.29) to a separate section of the text, which deals with islands in general. (In the *Imago mundi* there is also a separate section dealing with islands, but these are exclusively Mediterranean islands). Mena's *Laberinto* achieves an equivalent shift in emphasis by re-ordering the description to finish the entire section on Europe with a description of Spain. The treatment of Britain away from its original position at the end of the discussion of Europe (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 62) in both texts is the result of different adjustments to the order in which the regions are discussed. In contrast to the Se-

*meiança*, which achieves the final position of Spain in the description by moving Britain to the section on the Islands, in the *Laberinto* Britain is moved in the other direction – to the final line of the stanza concerning France (stanza 47; Juan de Mena, ed. Cummins 1968, 77). The final stanza of the section dealing with Europe is thus dedicated to Spain (stanza 48), whence the poem moves directly to Africa, beginning with stanza 49 (Juan de Mena, ed. Cummins 1968, 77–78). As in the *Semeiança*, Spain is the concluding section of Europe, thus arguably the most important, in the historico-geographical framework of *translatio studii et imperii*.<sup>17</sup> Compared to the *Semeiança*, Mena's text makes more of this change by supplementing its effect through the addition of information in the chapter on Spain.

The Catalan Atlas/Ecumene Chart, by contrast, gives Spain no special prominence in its translation of the *Imago mundi* text (and the same applies to France). Instead, it omits the two entirely (Petrovskaja 2024, 364–7). Given the patronage and intended recipient of the work, this is particularly striking, especially if one considers the contrast with the special treatment given to the work's place of creation, Mallorca, depicted in gold in the cartographic section of the work. It is possible that the omission of Spain and France in the textual *Mapa mundi* should not be assigned too much importance, as it could be that the author expected neither the Aragonese prince nor the French king to read the Catalan text. It could also be a question of sources – conceivably the Catalan translation represents all that was available to the translator (Petrovskaja 2024, 360). Nevertheless, putting aside arguments based on coincidence and focusing on the possibility of intention for the time being, one is faced with a tantalizing possibility. The map section of the Atlas / Chart accords greater detail to European regions, and this is mirrored in the *Mapa mundi* text: while the first column concludes with the introduction of the three parts of the world (*IM* 1.7), the second column begins with the description of Italy, with Asia omitted almost entirely, in contrast to the extended sections on the region in, for instance, the *Image du monde* (Cf. Edson 2007, 78). This suggests that Cresques privileged Europe over Asia in detail and factual precision.

I would suggest that this issue needs to be addressed not as one of omission, but rather as one of focus. In the brief summary of the *Mapa mundi* text in the introduction above, I have given some details of the information included. It will be seen from this that both Asia and Africa are essentially condensed to a single sentence, while the discussion of islands and the seas, framed by two sections on Europe, is central to this text. The fact that it is followed by a treatise on tides, supports the notion that the sea is the main region discussed here. It is therefore possible that unlike the other two adaptations discussed here, the Atlas / Chart re-writes the text not to privilege its audience's location (because in essence there are two audiences at least, with very differ-

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17 The fact that in the *Laberinto* the same effect for Spain is achieved by a different movement of the section of Britain than in the *Semeiança*, is yet another piece of evidence pointing to Mena's independence from the earlier Castilian text.

ent locations) but to privilege the intended audiences' point of attention – the sea, echoing the portolan emphasis of its cartographic section.

## Archaic and updated contents

It has been noted before that in reproducing the *Imago mundi* text, the Catalan Atlas / Ecumene Chart appears to ignore contemporary political interests (Estow 2014). It thus appears to be producing material which seems anachronistic and irrelevant. Indeed, in the discussion of Germany, for example, it takes over the thoroughly outdated Roman regional nomenclature employed by the *Imago mundi* (and already archaic in the twelfth century): *Alània*, *Dàcia*, *Gòthia* (*El Atlas Catalan de Cresques Abraham*, ed. Llompart i Moragues et al. 1975, 69; Petrovskaja 2024, 364–5). This use of the original terms for the regions, without updating to contemporary placenames, is shared to various extents by our other two witnesses and deserves some attention. Since, unlike the Catalan Atlas text, both the *Semeiança* and the *Laberinto* do discuss Spain in detail, it is worth using that as a case-study.

Following the general trend of the *Semeiança*, the chapter dedicated to Spain largely corresponds to the *Imago mundi*, ending on the enumeration of the six provinces of Tarragona (Catalonia), Cartagena (Murcia), *Lusitania* (Roman province encompassing Portugal and neighbouring parts of modern Spain), Galicia, *Betica* (Roman province, corresponding roughly to modern Andalucía), and *Tinguitania*. The identification of the last is uncertain but it may refer to the Roman province of Mauretania Tingitana, corresponding roughly to modern Morocco.<sup>18</sup> If so, both the *Imago mundi* and the *Semeiança* incorporate part of what we now consider the African “continent” into their concept of Europe, emphasising that the boundaries between the three parts of the world did not have to correspond to bodies of water. A similar phenomenon, which displaces the perceived boundary between parts of the world in relation to the Mediterranean, is observed in the French adaptation of the text, the thirteenth-century *Image du monde* (Connochie-Bourgne, 1995; Jostkleigrew 2006; Petrovskaja 2022, 57–59). This fluidity of boundaries located at sea in the thirteenth-century material might be seen as a precursor to the centrality of the sea in the later texts, as in the Catalan Atlas / Ecumene Chart *Mapa mundi*, discussed above.<sup>19</sup>

As shown in the identifications for the regions of Spain provided in brackets in the discussion above, the nomenclature used is largely that of the Roman provinces. The text, therefore, demonstrates the archaising feature observed in much of the

<sup>18</sup> Mauretania Tingitania also occurs in Isidore's *Etymologies*, although it should be noted that the list of Spanish provinces in the *Semeiança* and *Imago mundi* does not quite correspond to Isidore's (Wojciechowski 2019, 44 and 45).

<sup>19</sup> For the Mediterranean as a region in its own right, see e.g. Abulafia (2011).

*Imago mundi* tradition. Leszek Wojciechowski sees a similar archaising tendency in his analysis of Isidore's description of Spain in the *Etymologies* (Wojciechowski 2019, 39). As Wojciechowski (2019, 48) points out, Isidore's description formed the basis for Honorius's, but the latter changed the emphases slightly for a new audience, providing only "enough for a reader (receiver) to be able to place the country in the overall picture of the inhabited globe drawn (from the Isidorian perspective) by Honorius". In this respect, the *Semeiança* follows in that tradition. As Alan Deyermond (1996, 144) observes, "... the description of the world offered by the *Semeiança* is not, as one might suppose from its date, a product of the XIIIc Renaissance, but a late presentation of largely classical geographical beliefs". That the *Semeiança*, in the passage on Spain, does not update the text, is interesting in the light of other changes made in the translation, including the omission of the description of Britain, which is moved to the section on islands, and in particular the distinct adaptation of the material to the host culture in the addition of set formulas and transitional passages discussed below.

Even more striking is the contrast between the archaism of nomenclature and the intended political relevance in Mena's much later *Laberinto*. For the purpose of contrast and illustration, the passage is reproduced in its entirety below.

Vi las provincias de España e poniente:  
la de Tarragona e la de Celtiberia,  
la menor Cartago que fue la de Esperia,  
con los rincones de todo ocidente;  
mostróse Vandalia la bien paresçiente,  
e toda la tierra de la Lusitania,  
la brava Galícia con la {Tinguitania},  
donde se cría ferosçe la gente.

(Juan de Mena, ed. Kerkhof 1997,  
112–113)<sup>20</sup>

If we compare this to the Spanish chapter of the *Imago mundi*, the changes – with the notable exception of the place-names – are quite marked. The *Imago mundi* itself describes Spain in chapter 28 as follows:

Inde est Hispania, ab Hispano rege dicta, prius Hiberia ab Hiberno flumine, et Hesperia ab Hespero rege nominata. Hęc versus occasum oceano terminatur. Sunt in ea .vi. provincie, Terracona, Kartago, Lusitania, Galicia, Betica, Tinguitania, a propriis civitatibus dicte. (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 62)

Comparing this with Mena's adaptation, we can see that the latter text drops the etymologising of the beginning. It also, unlike the thirteenth-century translation, makes some minor adjustments to the placenames, changing Hiberia (which in Latin is given as part of the etymological section) to Celtiberia, adding Vandalia, and removing Betica. The order of the regions is hodoeporical, roughly circular, and also roughly (look-

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<sup>20</sup> The brackets are Kerkhof's.

ing at the map) clockwise: Tarragona → Celtiberia → Cartago (= Roman *Hispania Carthaginensis*, into which Celtiberia would roughly fall) → Vandalia (= Andalucía) → Lusitania → Galicia. The progress is then broken with a jump to Tinguitania, if that is indeed to be identified with *Mauritania Tingitana* (Petrovskaja 2022, 51).<sup>21</sup> If, as suggested above, this is *Mauritania Tingitana* and therefore a region belonging to the body of land commonly referred to by the label Africa, this presents an anticipation of the move to the next section of the textual map, and the discussion of Africa.

There is no reference to contemporary political entities in this passage, although Mena does update his map elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> Mena's focus, however, particularly in the Spanish passage, is not on providing a description of fifteenth-century geopolitical reality but rather the presentation of an encyclopaedic text – and a verbal map – in poetic form. Mena does not refrain, however, from adding some spirit to the material. In particular, the addition of adjectives in the passage above is remarkable, not because of the degree to which it alters the (rather dry) tone of the Latin, but because there is no such use of adjectives anywhere else in the section on Europe. Compare, for instance, the listing of the regions of Greece in stanza 45: *del Mediterraneo fasta la grand mar, / de parte del Austro, vimos toda Greçia, / Cahonia, Molosia, Eladia, Boeçia, / Epiro e su fuente muy singular* (Juan de Mena, ed. Kerkhof 1997, 110). This listing is followed by the detailed description of the supernatural powers of the spring, but the eulogizing nature of the adjectives for the Spanish placenames is not replicated. The fact that Spain is privileged in this text – the rewriting for the text's Spanish audience – is also demonstrated in the addition of the reference to Spain to the discussion of Gothia in chapter 53, discussed above (p. 90).

All three texts, therefore, are subject to the influence of the intense conservatism of the encyclopaedic tradition. In each case the adaptation of the material to the new purpose constitutes a process of negotiation with the static and archaic nature of the nomenclature. This is not a product of quaint archaism, but rather evidence for the remarkable strength of the notions of authority, coupled with a reluctance to challenge that authority through change motivated by anything less than equal. For a culture used to perceiving the world as *chronotope*, with a synchronous representation of time-space, so vividly illustrated by the *mappaemundi*, this did not represent a conflict. It did, however, provide ample material for negotiation and adjustment. To the familiar text, with familiar names, an explanation, or some illustrative adjectives might be added, or here and there, a reference to a contemporary land, to be picked up on by the audience. Alternatively, a short adaptation of traditional and old-

<sup>21</sup> The fact that just off the coast of Galicia on the Catalan Atlas we see a large island identified as the *Insula Tarignania* (referring to what now is the peninsula of Cabo Touriñán) raises the possibility, albeit very faint, of mis-association with this not dissimilarly named region.

<sup>22</sup> An example of this is the addition of the reference to the *reino de Ungria* 'kingdom of Hungary' in stanza 44 (Juan de Mena, ed. Cummins 1968, 76; cf. Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 60); see also discussion of the absence of the reference to it in the Catalan Atlas in Estow (2014).

fashioned text, with archaic placenames, might be added as a comforting touch to a revolutionary cartographic product, as the *Mapa mundi* was to the beginning of the Catalan Atlas. In the latter case we are also potentially dealing with the author's awareness of the form his work takes. It is with form and context that the next section of discussion is concerned.

## Form, aurality, and cultural context

While Cresques and Mena adapt the *Imago mundi* material into a recognizably different format – an introduction to an Atlas/Chart in one case, and as poetry in another – it is the *Semeiança*, which seemingly follows the exemplar closely, in maintaining the prose style and chapter divisions of the original encyclopaedia, that makes some of the most striking changes to its source in adapting it for a new audience. One of its most significant changes is the introduction of transitional passages between the sections dealing with different regions of the world. In these passages, information covered in the preceding section is recapitulated. The passage introducing the section concerning Europe is one such example:

Ia oystes de suso como se departe el mundo en tres partes: en Asia e en Europa e en Affrica. Ya oystes de Asia la maior, que es en tierra de India, e Asia la menor, que es en tierra de Bitinia, e terra de Frigia. Agora ueamos dest otra partida que dizen Europa. (*Semeiança*, ed. Bull and Williams 1959, 76 and 78)

You have already heard how the world is divided into three parts: into Asia and into Europe and into Africa. You heard already of Asia the Greater, which is in the land of India, and Asia the Lesser, which is in the land of Bitinia, and the land of Phrygia. Now we shall see the other part which they call Europe. (my translation)

The transitional passage not only links the two sections of the text but recapitulates the preceding section in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the “previously on . . .” we might hear at the beginning of an episode in a modern television series running a multi-episode story-arch. Similarly, a whole new transitional chapter is added by the translator(s) after the chapters on the beasts and monsters of India. By contrast, at this point the *Imago mundi* simply starts the next chapter, 13, with *Ab Indo flumine usque ad Tigrim* . . . (Honorius, ed. Flint 1982, 55).<sup>23</sup> The transitional passage is as follows:

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<sup>23</sup> It may be worth pointing out, that the French adaptor of the *Imago mundi*, Gossouin de Metz in his *Image du monde* also seemed to have had trouble with this rapid transition, as his text at this point appears to fail to switch to the next area, resulting in the re-assignment of the Middle East to India, which can alternatively be analysed as the re-labelling of the whole region of Asia as “India” (Petrov-skaia 2019, 203–206).



Ia oystes de suso de tierra de India como era rica por oro e por plata et por piedras preciosas e por cibades e por castiellas e por uillas, e oystes otro si del mar que corre por ella e dalgunas sos yslas e de los pescados e de las bestias e de las gentes que moran y fata que allegamos al rrio que ha hy, que dizen Indus. Agora lleamos deste rrio . . . que dizen Tigris, que terras e que cibdades ha . . . (*Semeiança*, ed. Bull and Williams 1959, 62)

You have already heard above of the land of India, how it was rich in gold and silver and precious stones and cities and castles and towns, and you heard apart from that of the sea which runs through it and of some of its islands and of the fish and the animals and the peoples who live there until we came as far as the river which is there, which they call Indus. Now we read of that river . . . which they call Tigris, which lands and which cities it has . . . (my translation)

These recapitulative passages are suggestive of a reading plan, where before the perusal of the new section, the audience is reminded of material that had been discussed in the previous reading. Indeed, the use of *oyestes* ‘you heard’, (< *oír* ‘to hear’), might suggest that the text was intended to be read out loud to an audience.<sup>24</sup> However, the use of the adverb *de suso* (or *desuso*) ‘above’, seems to indicate a written text, as does the reference to reading (*lleamos*) at the end of the second passage and seeing (*ueamos*) at the conclusion of the first. No such terminology is used in the Latin, which refers rather to traversing various areas, suggesting a conceptual perambulation through the universe being described.

The absence of such references to aural reception in the Latin *Imago mundi* suggests a difference in attitude towards the texts in Latin and in Castilian (although it may also be a function of the date of composition, as the vernacular references to aural reception are later than the *Imago mundi*). The transition between various major sections in the Latin text is treated in a metaphor of perambulation, with words such as *transeamus* (pres. sj. 1. pl < *transire* ‘go over’) being used. A similar phenomenon is observed in the French thirteenth-century translation of *Imago mundi* Book I, as Book 2 of the *Image du monde* of Gossouin de Metz. Gossouin’s narrative, although it uses, as Gaunt observes, the first person verbal form (both present and future tenses) in the introduction, ‘this “nous” is strictly academic, and the futures (*diviserons, savrons*) relate only to what comes next in the text, not to any supposed trajectory or journey’.<sup>25</sup> Stylistically, it seems to stand closer to the Latin than to the Spanish. The problem of oral or written transmission or delivery in Spanish texts has been much discussed, and the only consensus at present seems to be caution in drawing any conclusions on the basis of such clearly formulaic expressions. We might tentatively conclude that in the shift from conceptual perambulation to auditory exhortations the Spanish translator / adaptor of the text is engaging in the process of cultural

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of such addresses to the audience and their implications for narrative texts, see, for instance, Walker (1974, 145–146). Walker relies heavily on Crosby (1936). As a cautionary note pointing to the possibility that such addresses were mere convention, Walker refers to Gybbon-Monypenny (1965, 230–244). See also comments on orality in Dworkin (2018, 15).

<sup>25</sup> Gaunt (2013, 70).

translation. The text is not only being translated into a new linguistic medium, with information relevant to the new audience being added (references to Spain), but the new text being thus generated is made to follow the narrative conventions of the host culture.

In the case of Cresques's and Mena's adaptations, the new purpose to which the content is being put is expressed in both format and the mode of selection. Unlike the author(s) / translator(s) of the *Semeiança*, they neither take the whole *Imago mundi* book I nor do they transfer it to an equivalent. Rather, they incorporate extracts from its verbal map into a new, and completely different work. In the case of Cresques, it is possible that the Catalan text should be – rather counterintuitively – considered almost a decoration. One might tentatively suggest that it might not even have been intended to be read (not more, at any rate, than text in a modern coffee-table picture book). It is there to be a reminder of textual authority and not as a source of information. The textual and archaic nature of its authority is necessary as a visual setting for the main part of the work it precedes – the map that is to follow.

It is, in the framework of rewriting, the adaptation of old material to new needs, that should also be our mode of reading of Mena's textual map also. Such adaptations, regarded as unoriginal, have traditionally, and also in this instance, led to the perception of the adapted and translated passages as inferior (Autesserre 2009, 127). This is, however, a later perception. In Mena's text, the geographical description also had its own function. What must be recognized is the skill with which he has repurposed the material in order to fit the needs of his new text.

## Conclusion

The present discussion has, albeit perforce briefly, brought into focus the processes of negotiation undergone by the material taken from the *Imago mundi* in three different adaptations. While much of the anachronistic and outdated content of the text of the *Imago mundi* was retained in the rewritings, the re-ordering of the material – as in the emphasis on the discussion of Spain in Section I – appears to invite, and be facilitated by, changes to the form of the adaptation. I have argued that these are also dictated by two important considerations: the mode by which the audience experiences the text, and the requirements of medium and format. The *Semeiança*, for instance, despite appearing to belong to the same broad type as the original *Imago mundi* text, makes some very striking alterations in this respect, both in the reference to “listening” and in re-ordering the component regions of the Europe section. Indeed, in all three cases examined here we are dealing with rewriting in the form of shifting the emphasis in the text regarding the area to which the new version of the text addresses itself.

I have described this phenomenon in terms of rewriting. Applied to medieval “translations”, rewriting, with its focus on creation as well as recreation, is a highly productive concept. The phenomena discussed here thus constitute translation and re-

writing. The fact that in this case, translation and rewriting bring the content to new formats, new cultural environments, and new audiences, means that the patterns analysed here can also be comfortably placed within Paul Ricoeur's broader hermeneutical framework, and specifically within his conception of "appropriation" (Ricoeur 2016, 144–156). In Ricoeur's definition (2016, 153), "appropriation" is a "letting go" rather than "any form of "taking possession" as in the common misunderstanding. Rather "appropriation" is understood as an expansion of the reader's horizons and the reader's self through exposure to the text. As Ricoeur (2016, 154–155) writes: "If the reference of a text is the projection of a world, then it is not in the first instance the reader who projects himself. The reader is rather broadened in his capacity to project himself by receiving a new mode of being from the text itself". This influence of text on the reader as part of a fluid and mutual connection, neither entirely divorced from the reader's cultural context and the text's objective (or intended) "meaning" nor entirely dependent on it, encapsulates the nature of rewriting in the three geographical descriptions examined here.

The *Semeiança*, the *Laberinto*, and the Catalan Atlas / Ecumene Chart each engage in the triple process of translation: they in turn re-position Spain in their geographical framework in respect to the Latin original, re-position their medieval audiences in respect to the framework of the geographical description of the world, and re-position us – in the twenty-first century – as new readers engaging in a process of appropriating these texts. We appropriate these texts, of course, in Ricoeur's sense of letting go. He tells us "absolute knowledge is impossible [and] the conflict of interpretations is insurmountable and inescapable" (Ricoeur 2016, 156). Both medieval audiences and those of today appropriate these texts, therefore, – in Ricoeur's sense of the word – by allowing ourselves to be re-moulded by what they tell us of the processes of translation.

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