

A new approach to retranslating: (Re)translations of the chronicles of the discovery and conquest of the Canary Islands

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Abstract

Expeditions throughout the Atlantic Ocean in the Middle Ages gave rise to numerous chronicles narrating the discovery and conquest of the Canary Islands, by direct or indirect witnesses of the events and in different languages. The brief accounts accredited to the Italians Niccoloso da Recco and Alvise Cadamosto and to the Normans Gadifer de La Salle and Jean de Béthencourt are likewise essential to the broader historiography of the European advances into Africa and America. These chronicles have been translated and retranslated into Spanish in multiple occasions practically from their appearance up to present times. The incessant translational activity linked to these chronicles gave rise to a tangle of versions, translations, retranslations and revisions stemming from a variety of diverging source texts. The aim of this study is thus to discuss the multiple (re)translations practices of these chronicles (translations from original or pseudo-original or from complete or partial source texts, existence of diverging source texts, translations in very short periods, etc.), which reveal multiple motives beyond those currently identified by retranslation theory (revisions, a lack of awareness of previous versions, the desire to distinguish a translation from previous ones, etc.). The study thus offers a new way to analyse the causality and circumstances for retranslating texts and challenges the traditional retranslation model.

Keywords

motives for retranslations, chronicles, Canary Islands, Late Middle Ages

1. Introduction

European explorers throughout the Late Middle Ages embarked on numerous expeditions into the Atlantic Ocean giving rise to a series of chronicles written by direct witnesses and participants. The numerous (re)translations of these works linked to the discovery and conquest of the Canary Islands in the 14th and 15th centuries have yielded a very complex framework of translational practices and relations between source and target texts. Both the retranslations of the chronicles by Niccoloso da Recco and Alvise Cadamosto and the retranslation known as *Le Canarien* ascribed to Jean de Béthencourt and Gadifer de La Salle offer new insights into the phenomenon, as the translation practices they demonstrate do not conform with the prevalent model of retranslation theory. Indeed, this model (Berman, 1990; Gambier 1994, 2011; Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010; Deane-Cox, 2014) does not take into account variables such as the loss of the original text, or the fact that source and target texts may be subjected to multiple revisions. Furthermore, the model is based, generally speaking, on the idea that second or subsequent translations, in the same language and of a unique source text, were undertaken after a certain period of time, and with the aim of improving or challenging earlier versions.

The main characteristics of the three cases presented in this study are firstly the great number of retranslations of these chronicles and secondly the multiple diverging motives for retranslating them into Spanish. These have been drawn from the few available testimonies of the translators themselves and from an analysis of the circumstances of publication of the different (re)translations.

The aim of this study therefore is to offer a broader outlook on the circumstances in which retranslations can be undertaken, and on the varying motives behind them. And the retranslation of historical texts sheds new light on this translation phenomenon. It is for this reason that this paper, based on the definitions advanced by Zaro (2007, p. 21) and Koskinen and Paloposki (2010, p. 294) and Zaro (2007, p. 21), views the concept of 'retranslation' as a second (subsequent or contemporary) translation into the same language of a complete or partial source text, or of a *pseudo-original* when the original text was either manipulated and/or lost. The resulting translation(s) thus preserved a great amount of the initial essence and content of the original text.

To offer a comprehensive vision of the complexity of the case at hand, we tracked down all the source texts – including *pseudo-originals* – and their (re)translations, including versions that possibly are only reproductions, revisions, or modifications of previous translations (see Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010, p. 294). We contextualised the circumstances in which they were drafted and how they surfaced throughout the centuries. The translations were compared with each other in an attempt to elucidate the exact source text of each translation and to determine who took the initiative to carry out the translations and why.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the relevance of such a broad scope, given that the original chronicles date back six centuries and have survived thanks to different copies, not always identical, and to their (re)translations. The variety of issues brought up in this study thus aims to offer a more complete overview of the enigma of the retranslation into Spanish of the chronicles describing the discovery and conquest of the Canarian Archipelago. In previous studies (Marcelo 2017, 2022) all the source texts, translations and circumstances of the Italian and French versions were tracked down and presented. The current analysis, however, places a particular emphasis on the practice of retranslation and the real motives behind the multiple retranslations.

2. Motives behind retranslations

Although there are multiple motives behind retranslations (Brownlie, 2006; Paloposki & Koskinen, 2010, p. 46; van Poucke, 2017), the main reason invoked seems to be the ageing of the renderings (Berman, 1990; Paloposki & Koskinen, 2001; Zaro, 2007; Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010; Venuti, 2012), resulting in a perceived lack of credibility, quality or acceptability. The ageing of translation thus is presented as the consequence of the passage of time, affecting the perceived validity of a translation in a certain target culture, due to changing linguistic, stylistic, ideological or social norms (Vanderschelden, 2000; Brownlie, 2006, pp. 150-151; Paloposki & Koskinen, 2010, pp. 29-30). It could likewise reflect changing translation norms and strategies (Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010, p. 295), especially in the case of texts that present a high degree of complexity (Pym, 1998, p. 82). These perceptions of earlier translations trigger the necessity of offering improved versions (Paloposki & Koskinen, 2004, p. 27; Brownlie, 2006; Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010, p. 296; Venuti, 2012; Van Poucke, 2017). Other motives for retranslating a text are the open-ended nature entailing ambiguity or obscurity of certain genres and texts that lend themselves to multiple interpretations (Brownlie, 2006, p. 152), or the fact that such interpretations of the source text are linked to specific time and space coordinates (Vanderschelden, 2000, pp. 4-6; Venuti, 2012). It has also been argued that “retranslations can contribute to the revival of interest in a forgotten literary text, and publishers often use new translations as a positive marketing device” (Vanderschelden, 2000, p. 7), or even that a different function can be assigned to a certain work in the target language (Vanderschelden, 2000, pp. 4-6; Brisset, 2004). Alternative motives for retranslating a text stem from power struggles (Susam-Sarajeva, 2006; Venuti, 2012, p. 26), economic aspects (Vanderschelden, 2000; Koskinen & Paloposki, 2003), the “... bid to achieve canonicity through inscription of a different interpretation” (Brownlie, 2006, p. 153), or a change of focus switching from a target-oriented to a source-oriented translation (Bensimon 1990, in Brownlie, 2006, p. 148).

As most scholarship on retranslation has focused on literary texts (Koskinen & Paloposki, 2010, p. 295), the study of retranslations of other types of texts can offer a broader grasp of the aspects influencing this phenomenon. Analysing retranslations of historical texts offers a vastly different panorama as their value resides in actual historical facts and not literary values. Besides, the value of old written sources may change considerably with the discovery of new unknown writings, evidence, or facts giving rise, for instance, to a desire by the scientific community to share these findings and to offer new research perspectives – and potentially new retranslations.

Although retranslations can be viewed as narratives constrained by specific social forces, changing ideologies and linguistic, literary, and translational norms or situational conditions (Brownlie, 2006, p. 167), these factors are not as relevant in the case of these chronicles, as their retranslations respond to other criteria, as we will show in our analysis.

3. The chronicles of the discovery and conquest of the Canary Islands and their (re)translations

Italian, French, Portuguese, Majorcan, and Catalan navigators in the 13th and ensuing centuries undertook a series of explorations of the African coastline (Aznar *et al.* 2006, v. I, p. 11) leading to the discovery and conquest of new territories and archipelagos. Their motives were mainly commercial to identify new sources of wealth (Berthelot, 1849, p. 276), as well as the need of tracing new trade routes to India after the occupation by the Ottomans of the link between the Italian Republics and the Near East (Lobo *et al.*, 1994, p. 67; Pellegrini, 1995, p. 789). The technical advances in navigation and cartography developed by Italians facilitated these missions (Serra, 1961, p. 230; Martínez, 2002) and led to an expansion of knowledge on the African continent. These types of endeavours were promoted by Prince Henry of Portugal,

known as ‘Henry the Navigator’ (Millares, 1893, v. I, p. 30; Azevedo, 1913, in Padoan, 1993, p. 131; Vázquez, 2003, p. 84). The different expeditions generated brief, handwritten accounts and chronicles in French, Portuguese, Latin and Italian from the 14th century onwards (for the distinction between ‘narratives’, ‘chronicles’, ‘stories’, etc. see Baucells Mesa, 2004, pp. 71-76). These not only describe the missions, including the first real specifics as to the discovery and conquest of the Canary Islands, but cast light on aspects of anthropological, ethnographic, cultural and linguistic nature, and allow to reconstruct a part of the history of the Islands, as well as of the European expansion towards Africa and America (Lobo *et al.*, 1994, p. 67).

The relevance of these chronicles and their (re)translations is justified by the following reasons: a) they offer key historiographic evidence shedding light on the discovery and conquest of the Canary Islands in the 14th and 15th centuries; b) they were originally written or copied as manuscripts, undergoing a variety of circumstances such as the disappearance of the originals, subsequent manipulations and diverging copies, the emergence of unknown copies, contradictory testimonies, etc.; c) the contents of certain copies of the same manuscript can vary; and d) the source text of each translation is not always indicated by the translator. This scenario reflects the great complexity of analysing (re)translations of records from expeditions in the Middle Ages bearing evidence of the palpable instability of the source texts. As such, its analysis may serve to shed new light on the phenomenon of retranslation.

The chronicles selected for the present study are among the oldest reporting the European expansion towards Africa. They were either written by, or accredited to respectively Niccoloso da Recco (circa 1346), Alvise Cadamosto (circa 1463, see Marcelo 2022), Gadifer de La Salle and Jean de Béthencourt (circa the first half of the 15th century, see Marcelo, 2017). Furthermore, all engendered multiple Spanish translations and retranslations.

3.1. Niccoloso da Recco: *De Canaria et insulis ultra Hispaniam noviter repertis*

Niccoloso da Recco’s chronicle is the first to describe the arrival of Europeans in the Canarian Archipelago. This brief account dating appr. 1346 includes ethnographic, linguistic, and other cultural data relative to the indigenous Canarians (Millares, 1860, pp. 63-67).

The chronicle states that three Portuguese vessels commanded by Alfonso IV of Portugal and manned by Florentines, Genovese and Spaniards, sailed from Lisbon towards Africa at the outset of July, 1341. One was led by the Genovese Niccoloso da Recco (Padoan, 1993, p. 133) and after five days they reached the coasts of the Canary Islands before returning four months later. The chronicle narrating the events of this mission was probably drawn up in vulgar Latin (Padoan, 1993, p. 132), presumably deriving from information about the journey transmitted by Recco to confidants. Florentine merchants gained knowledge of the account and transmitted it by letter to the Bardi banking company. The humanist Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) then gained access to the letter before translating it into classical Latin, and incorporating it into his volume *De Canaria et insulis ultra Hispaniam noviter repertis* (Pellegrini, 1995, p. 121), an undertaking marked by clear “literary intentions” (Peloso, 1988, in Martínez, 2001, p. 103).

The chronicle was then discovered four centuries later by the Italian philologist Sebastiano Ciampi (1769-1847) in the Magliabechi Library. This narrative, known as the *Ciampi Chronicle* (Berthelot, 1849, p. 18), was published in Latin on four occasions. The first came out in Florence in 1826 in the compilation entitled *Monumenti d’un manuscritto autógrafo di Messer Gio. Boccacci da Certaldo trovati ed illustrati* (Chil, 1876, v. I, p. 258; Millares, 1893, v. I, p. 24; Bonnet, 1943, p. 112; Padoan, 1993, p. 132; Vázquez, 2003, p. 81; García, 2016, p. 16), titled *De Canaria et Insules reliquis ultra Ispaniem in Oceano Moviter repertis*. It also appeared in two revised editions (1827 and 1828), as *Monumenti d’un manuscritto autógrafo di Messer Giovanni. Boccaccio da Certaldo trovati e illustrat da S. Ciampi, Firenze 1827*. The fourth was

published in 1830 in a bilingual edition with a Latin version and an Italian back-translation. In 1928, the Italian editor Rinaldo Caddeo (1881-1956) printed an improved version of the Recco chronicle and in 1959 Manlio Pastore Stocchi provided a revised edition of Ciampi's text (Pellegrini, 1995, p. 121). The original text of this chronicle ultimately disappeared, as a result of which its translations came to serve as source texts and pseudo-originals (Marcelo, 2022).

The chronicle then was translated into Italian, French, Portuguese, German, English (Martínez 2001, p. 96) and Spanish (Marcelo, 2022). The following is a list of the Spanish (re)translations we will use for the purposes of this study:

1. Sabin Berthelot (1794-1880), a French naturalist and ethnologist residing in the Canary Islands, included a commented French translation of *De Canaria et insulis* in the version of 1827 in his *L'Ethnographie et les Annales de la Conquête*. This formed part of the first volume of the *Histoire Naturelle des Iles Canaries* (1842), drafted in collaboration with Philip Barker Webb. Its Spanish translation was undertaken by Juan Arturo Malibrán y Autet (1818-1882), a specialist of ethnography and archaeology and member of the Real Academia Canaria de Bellas Artes. Malibrán thus translated Recco's chronicle into Spanish most likely on the basis of Berthelot's French version in a volume that was published in 1849.

2. A second, abridged translation was undertaken by the Canarian historian Agustín Millares Torres (1826-1896) based on Ciampi's version and incorporated into his study *Historia de la Gran Canaria* (1860, pp. 63-66). In a footnote, although declaring knowledge of Berthelot's French rendering, he made no allusion to the earlier Spanish version, neither clarified the reasons behind the new translation. He was potentially unaware of Malibrán's work and thus deemed it necessary to render it in Spanish.

3. The medical doctor, anthropologist and historian Gregorio Chil y Naranjo (1831-1901) published a third translation incorporated into his volume *Estudios históricos, climatológicos y patológicos de las Islas Canarias* (1876, v. I, pp. 259-267). He explicitly declared to be the translator of this version, also based on Ciampi's version of 1927: "*La importancia de este relato me obliga á trasladarlo del texto latino en que fué escrito*" [The importance of this account obliges me to translate it from the Latin text in which it was written] (1876, p. 259). Chil y Naranjo was most likely aware of Malibrán's version and his intention for retranslating it appears to be a desire to align it with his own style, and possibly as a personal challenge or eagerness to display his mastery of Latin (Marcelo, 2022).

4. In 1893, the historian Millares Torres again incorporated another translation (in this case complete) of the Recco chronicle in his *Historia General de las Islas Canarias* (1893, v. II, pp. 46-54). He once again declared to be its translator: "*creemos conveniente trasladar íntegra á nuestras columnas*" [we deem it necessary to translate it in its entirety] (1893, pp. 46). This may reveal an attempt to improve Malibrán's rendering as it is unlikely that he was unaware of Malibrán's version published 44 years earlier (Marcelo, 2022). A comparison of the rendering by Malibrán suggests, in fact, that both Millares and Chil y Naranjo consulted the Malibrán version.

5. In 1974, the Venezuelan Marisa Vannini de Gerulewicz (1928-2016) translated the Recco chronicle in Caracas from Ciampi's 1926 version and incorporated it into her book *El mar de los descubrimientos*, accompanied by other texts related to the discovery of America. This rendering is accompanied by explanatory information making explicit her aspiration to search for the 'sources of sources', thus questioning the validity of previous translations: "*estamos conscientes de que la transcripción de transcripciones y la traducción de traducciones perjudican la verdad histórica*" [we are conscious that transcribing transcriptions and translating translations is detrimental to historical truth] (1974, p. 8).

6. In 1993, Miguel Martín (1945), lecturer at the University of La Laguna (Tenerife, Spain), translated the article *Ad insulas ultra Hispaniam noviter repertas: el redescubrimiento de las islas atlánticas (1336-1341)* by the Italian philologist Giorgio Padoan (1993), a work including Ciampi's Latin version.

7. In 1998, the Canarian translator José Antonio Delgado Luis published a compilation of narratives of voyages through the Atlantic from the 14th to 17th centuries including a translation of Recco's chronicle. The translator declared to have knowledge of the earlier Ciampi versions of 1826 and 1827 and offered another stemming from the text published by Rinaldo Caddeo (1928) due to the differences between Ciampi's and Caddeo's versions that Delgado Luis had found.

8. In 2003, the Arts graduate María José Vázquez de Parga y Chueca printed a volume on the rediscovery and conquest of the Canary Islands entitled *Redescubrimiento y Conquista de Las Afortunadas*. In spite of containing all the texts known since the Middle Ages related to the Islands accompanied by comments, contextualisations and translations (mostly personal undertakings), she did not cite the earlier translations.

9. In 2012, the Italian magistrate Alfonso Licatta published *Lanzarotto Malocello, dall'Italia alle Canarie* to celebrate the 7th centenary of the discovery of Lanzarote. The volume included his Italian translation of the Recco chronicle stemming from the Stocchi text. This was then translated into Spanish in 2016 by Elena Martínez Cornet from Licatta's Italian version.

These retranslations of the Recco chronicle clearly reveal different paths taken by the source text, notably from vulgar Latin to pure Latin, prior to several revisions, before finally passing through French and Italian translations into Spanish. The retranslators in certain cases cite their motive to be the relevance of incorporating the fundamental chronicles into their history treatises, as these texts are key to shedding light on the historical facts, and contextualising the historical framework. New translations such as Delgado Luis's were likewise justified by the need to offer a translation of a non-translated version, thus highlighting the problematic existence of different pseudo-originals. In other cases, the reasons behind these ventures could have derived from fulfilling a commission, such as those of Malibrán and Martínez from previous contemporary translations and not from the known pseudo-originals. This leads to speculate as to different scenarios. The first is that the brevity of Recco's chronicle appears to have favoured new translations. Moreover, it is also highly relevant due to the fact that most of the translations were carried out by historians rather than by professional translators. Comparisons reveal that certain translators discarded the idea of resorting to previous undertakings and created their own, maybe as a yearning to display their erudition and mastery of dead languages, or to undertake the linguistic challenge themselves. The following diagram offers a breakdown of the different translations of the Recco chronicle.

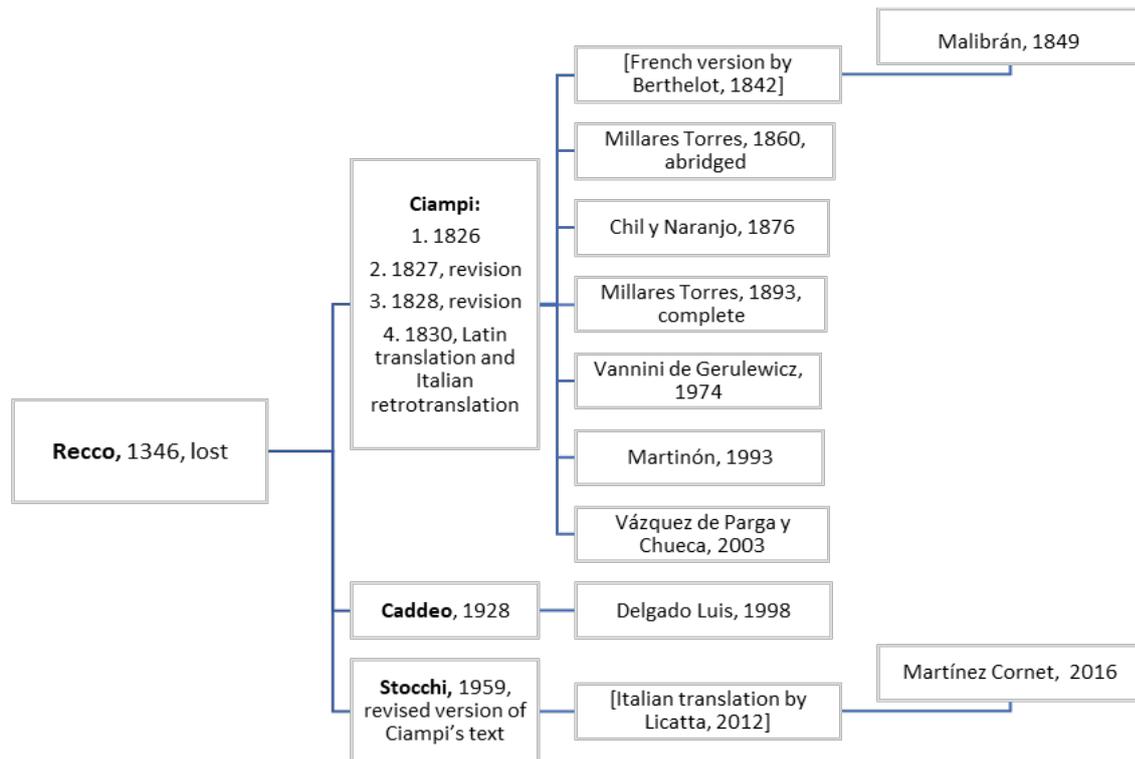


Figure 1. Different versions of the Recco chronicle

3.2. Alvise Cadamosto: *Navigatio ad terras ignotas*

Prince Henry of Portugal (1394-1460) put Venetian nobleman Alvise Cadamosto (also known as Aloisio Ca' da Mosto) (1432-1482) in charge of a mission along the African coast to acquire knowledge about this continent (Berthelot, 1849, p. 56). In 1463, Cadamosto drafted a chronicle in Italian describing the discoveries of the expedition. The second part of the four-part narrative, limited to a few pages, includes compelling details about the indigenous Canarian language, gastronomy, geography, religion, political organisation, etc.

Four versions exist of the Cadamosto chronicle (Aznar *et al.*, 2017, pp. 16-18). The first was published in Venice in 1507 by Francanzio da Montalboddo in his compilation of travels entitled *Paesi novamente ritrovati et novo mondo da Alberico Vesputio Florentino intitulato*. The second (1550) was included by Giovanni Battista Ramusio in the compilation about his voyage entitled *Primo volume delle navigationi et viaggi nnei qual si contiene la descrizione dell'Africa...*, a narrative that benefited from consecutive editions (Aznar *et al.*, 2017, p. 18). A third, dated to the second half of the 15th century and known as manuscript 'A', was released in 1928 by the Milanese poet and writer Rinaldo Caddeo (Aznar *et al.*, 2017, p. 16). The fourth, labelled 'B', was written about 1520 and is preserved in the Marciana Library of Venice. Cadamosto's account was ultimately translated on several occasions into Spanish:

1. The Canarian historian Joseph Viera y Clavijo advanced a short translation of the Cadamosto narrative in his *Noticias de la Historia General de las Islas de Canaria* (1772, pp. 446-448) based on the Montalboddo version of 1507.
2. Sabin Berthelot included a complete French version (apart from minor deletions) of the chronicle based on Ramusio's Italian text of 1550 in his *L'Ethnographie et les Annales de la Conquête* (1842, pp. 61-63). This French version was then translated in 1849 into Spanish by Juan Arturo Malibrán.
3. Agustín Millares Torres included a translation of the section regarding the Canary Islands

in his *Historia General de las Islas Canarias* (1893, v. III, pp. 175-180). Millares occasionally cited Ramusio and did not identify himself as the translator of the retranslation. He probably consulted Berthelot's Spanish translation, as certain phrases are shared by both texts (Marcelo, 2022). It is most likely that Millares translated the text himself as he did not cite the Malibrán version.

4. In 1998, José Antonio Delgado Luis translated Caddeo's version of the section on the Canary Islands into Spanish and incorporated it into his compilation *Relación de los viajes a la costa occidental de África (1455-1457). De las siete islas de Canaria y de las costumbres de sus habitantes*. He also included Caddeo's notes and certain others of his own alluding to the Portuguese edition (1998, pp. 68-69).

5. María José Vázquez de Parga y Chueca (2003, pp. 92-93) translated a short, commented section of Cadamosto's text in her volume *Redescubrimiento y conquista de Las Afortunadas*, theoretically stemming from the Ramusio version. There is evidence that suggests she resorted to Berthelot's French and/or Spanish versions as she reproduced certain differences present in these versions. Furthermore, the translator offers no explanation as to why she retranslated the chronicle.

6. In 2015, Alberto Quartapelle, lecturer at the University of Bologna, published a new retranslation into Spanish based on Montalboddo's version in his volume *Cuatrocientos años de Crónicas de las Islas Canarias* (pp. 105-108), a compilation of different texts and chronicles about the archipelago spanning the 13th-17th centuries.

7. In 2017, Eduardo Aznar, Dolores Corbella and Antonio Tejera of the University of La Laguna produced a Spanish retranslation of Cadamosto's complete journeys based on the Ramusio version. In their volume they included an extensive introductory study relative to Cadamosto's historical and geographical framework, translator notes, as well as the itinerary and vicissitudes described in the chronicle.

This is a rare case of a translation deriving from retranslations produced very shortly before. Its relevance as well as its brevity favoured it forming part of historiographical research. It is evident that the existence of different pseudo-originals of Cadamosto's brief chronicle can explain in part the great number of Spanish translations. There are several reasons for retranslating this chronicle into Spanish. In certain cases, the retranslators only produced their new versions (possibly only revisions) to underpin their historical research, without citing the author of the translation, invoking the argument they were obliged to retranslate it because of its historical relevance. It is not possible to prove if they really were unaware of the previous retranslations despite the brief lapse of time between them. In other cases, translators such as Delgado clearly explained that their intention was to translate directly from a specific pseudo-original, in order to challenge previous renderings and to offer greater accuracy. The same argument applies to the cases of Vázquez de Parga, Quartapelle and Aznar *et al.*: what explains their retranslations is the desire to offer a complete translation and contextualisation of Cadamosto's chronicle. Of course, a translation can also have simply resulted, as in the case of Malibrán, from a commission.

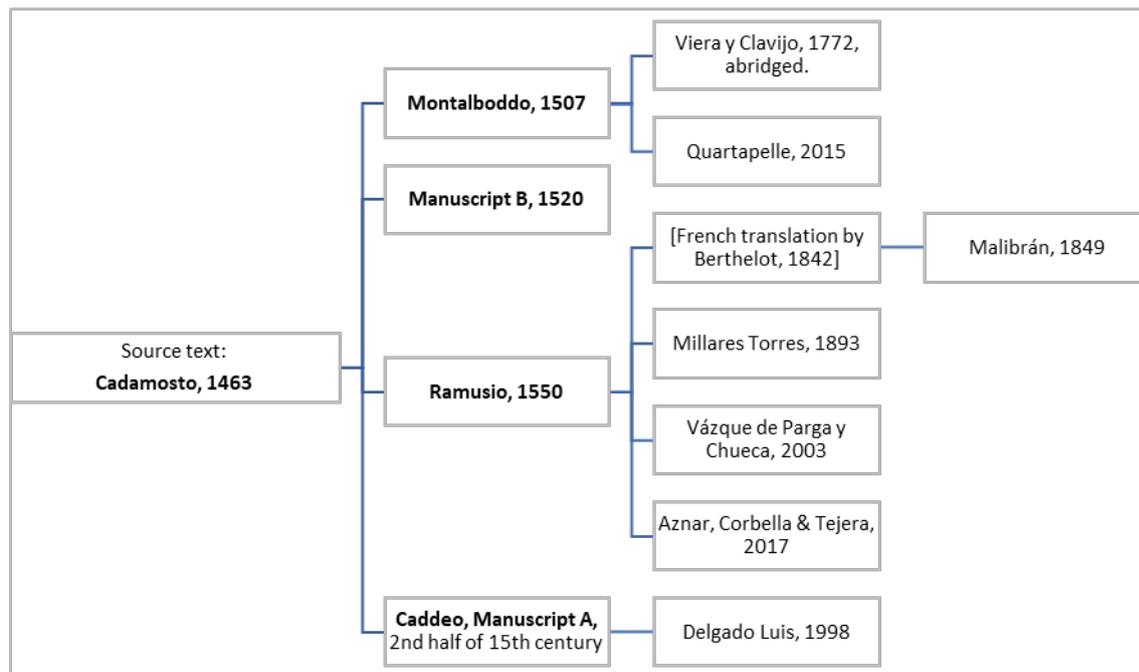


Figure 2. Different versions of the Cadamosto chronicle

3.3. Jean de Béthencourt and Gadifer de La Salle: *Le Canarien*

At the outset of May 1402, the explorer Jean de Béthencourt and the nobleman Gadifer de La Salle initiated a French-Norman mission under the auspices of the Crown of Castile to conquer the Canary Islands, which had previously been discovered by Italian explorers. They first set foot on the small island of La Graciosa before disembarking on Lanzarote and Fuerteventura. Soon thereafter, due to a lack of provisions, Béthencourt sailed back to Castile to gather what the conquerors and their men required to pursue the conquest. His return to Lanzarote only came about a year and a half later, in April 1404. During the interval, La Salle, who stayed behind and became the real conqueror (Wölfel, 1940, p. 29), continued the harsh seizure of Fuerteventura. Furthermore, Béthencourt, during his stay in Castile, gained rights to the dominion of the Islands and other privileges from the King which he did not share with La Salle. Both conquerors ultimately set out to Castile in an attempt to solve the dispute. La Salle, lacking the support of the King, returned to Normandy where he completed a manuscript of his own version of the conquest. Béthencourt pursued his desire of conquest of the other Islands, an action limited to El Hierro from where he eventually also returned to France (Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I, pp. 12-16).

The events of the conquest were recorded in different copies of manuscripts by two chaplains, Pierre Boutier and Jean Le Verrier, who each took part in the Béthencourt and La Salle explorations. One of the manuscripts preserved in the Canaries by Béthencourt's nephew Maciot de Béthencourt disappeared after a Turkish pirate assault. The other copies were returned to France by the conquerors themselves (Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I, p. 17). The narration of the enterprise comprises different versions which, at times, reveal the opposing interests of the two conquerors and, when occasionally coinciding, also reveal sharp discrepancies. The version supporting the viewpoint of Béthencourt is labelled 'B', while the version that shows Gadifer de La Salle's account of the conquest is known as 'G'. The joint publication of the two viewpoints entitled *Le Canarien* is the first record in a Romance language of the events of the French transatlantic expansion and the Franco-Castilian seizure of the Canary Islands in the early 15th century.

'B', also known as 'Mont-Ruffet' (Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I; the manuscript is housed in the Rouen Municipal Library [Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I, p. 19]), was drafted by Jean V de Béthencourt, a nephew of the conqueror, in either 1490 (Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I) or 1500 (Wölfel, 1952, p. 501). The motive behind the work is the desire of recognition of nobility by the Béthencourt family at a moment when aristocracy was on the rise in Tenerife (Corbella, 2006, p. 373). This version considerably distorted the facts of the conquest, in particular those from 1404 to 1406, that is, subsequent to the discovery and seizure of the islands and the departure of La Salle. The manuscript also comprises Béthencourt's genealogical data and unrelated events following the conquest. Scholars agree that it is a forgery falsifying the actual episode described in the original and that Béthencourt's descendants manipulated the events in an attempt to provide evidence of their ancestry (Wölfel, 1940, 1996; Cioranescu, 1982; Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I).

The manuscript was preserved in the hands of the family in France until another descendant, Galien de Béthencourt, embarked on a project to print it by preparing a preliminary manuscript known as the *Galien* Manuscript. Nevertheless, the editor Pierre Bergeron, who published it in 1630 under the title *Le Canarien*, did not take into account all the ideas advanced by Galien and printed a more sober version known as the *Bergeron* manuscript. Later editions were carried out by Édouard Charton in 1855, the curator of the British Museum Richard Henry Major in 1872 and the scholar Gabriel Gravier in 1874. This last version is considered the most scientific.

Manuscript 'G' was discovered in 1888. It had been written with care in Gothic characters at the end of 1420s, probably by Gadifer de La Salle himself in his later years. This version narrates the events of 1402, when the conquerors set foot in Lanzarote, until 1404 when La Salle abandoned the enterprise and withdrew from the Islands (Aznar, *et al.*, 2006, v. I, p. 17). This copy was part of the personal items of Baroness Angéline de Hensch whose heir, Madame E. Mans from Brussels-Ixelles, eventually sold it to the British Museum. The museum curator, G. F. Warner, recognised the similarities with the other versions of *Le Canarien* and published its discovery. Finally, Pierre Margry prepared an edition of manuscript 'G' known as *Canarien-Hensch* which was published posthumously in 1896 (Aznar, *et al.*, 2006, v. I, p. 18).

Chronicle 'B' was translated into Spanish on multiple occasions, listed below in chronological order and then presented in the form of a diagram to better illustrate the sequence of (re) translations:

1. Soon after publication of the *Bergeron* manuscript, Berthelot's descendants commissioned a first translation into Spanish (Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I, p. 24). There are three handwritten copies of that translation. The oldest, dated 1639 and conserved in the Library of the University of Oviedo (Spain), is bound with a chronicle known as *Crónica Ovetense*. The second, included in the '*Fondo antiguo*' of the University of La Laguna, is the so-called *Crónica Lacunense* (17th century), which includes a translation of the section linked to the Canary Islands, that is, Bergeron's *Traicté de la navigation et des voyages de découverte*. A third, housed in the Library of Santa Cruz (Tenerife), belonged to the historian Francisco María de León y Xuárez de la Guardia. It reveals for the first time the name of the translator, namely 'Captain Serban Graue' (Servan Grave), a resident of the Island of La Palma. The first printing by Pedro Mariano Ramírez Atenza dates 1847.
2. An abridged translation of only 20 pages of the *Bergeron* manuscript, ascribed to the historian Marín y Cubas (Códice Marín, fs. 23-42v), was discovered by Agustín Millares Carlo. It is dated between 1682-1687 and conserved at the Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia de Madrid (sign. RAH A/102) (Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I, p. 28-29; Corbella, 2006, p. 379).
3. Viera y Clavijo included a partial translation of the catechism of chronicle 'B' (chapters XLVII-LII) in his *Noticias de la historia general de las Islas Canarias* (1772-1783) (Corbella, 2006, p. 387).

4. The editor Pedro M. Ramírez undertook an edition of the chronicle in 1847 upon reception of a copy of Servan Grave's translation in the version by León y Xuárez de la Guardia. Although his original intention was to simply correct the spelling errors and other defects, he ultimately revised and updated the text, also adding missing sections such as the summary and the indexes, as well as Viera's chapters corresponding to the catechism (Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I, pp. 27-28).

5. In 1860, Mariano Urrabieta published in Paris a Spanish translation of Édouard Charton's version of 1855. It was incorporated into a volume containing other descriptions of expeditions under the title *Los viajeros modernos ó Relaciones de los viajes más interesantes e instructivos que se hicieron en los siglos XV y XVI* (Marcelo, 2017).

6. Manuel María Flamant and Francisco Madina-Veitia carried out another translation of the *Bergeron* version sponsored by *Correo de Ultramar* based on the Charton's volume. It was published in Madrid in 1861 by the publishing house J. Sierra Ponzano (Aznar *et al.*, 2006, v. I, p. 29).

A striking turn of events subsequent to the discovery of manuscript 'G' in 1888 is reflected in the later translations of *Le Canarien*, as they now compare and include each of the two versions of the conquest of the Canary Islands.

7. In 1959, Elías Serra Ràfols and Alejandro Cioranescu published a complete Spanish translation (*Volume I*) of manuscripts 'B' and 'G', in addition to all the illustrations of 'B,' different reports of Béthencourt's family, biographies of both conquerors and a wide range of other records.

8. In 1960, Serra Ràfols and Cioranescu printed a critical and bilingual edition (French and Spanish) of 'B' (*Volume II*) including excerpts of 'G', explanatory notes with amendments and interpretations.

9. In 1965, Serra Ràfols and Cioranescu published an amended translation of 'G', including a study by Ràfols and complementary information relative to the Canarian conquest (*Volume III*). The translation was reedited and expanded in 1984 and 1986 by adding the *Epítome de 1501*, a letter initially written in Latin, summing up the events in which Béthencourt took part.

10. In 1980, Cioranescu, according to his own words, published a clearer, more accessible translation 'for the general public' of the 1960 version, dispensing with the critical notes of the French text that related inconsistencies introduced in the previous version by Ràfols.

11. In 2003, Berta Pico, Eduardo Aznar and Dolores Corbella of the University of La Laguna published a new translation of both manuscripts, together with a facsimile reproduction and the first palaeographic transcription and codex analysis.

12. A posthumous translation by Alejandro Cioranescu appeared in 2004. Its aim was to offer once again a more comprehensible and loyal rendering of the two texts by means of comments and correcting minor errors and misspellings.

13. In 2006, Berta Pico, Eduardo Aznar, Dolores Corbella and Antonio Tejera published a new edition in two volumes. This edition includes a detailed introduction describing the conditions of the conquest from a historical, linguistic, iconographic, etc. perspective, as well as each of the manuscripts and their previous translation with updated spelling and punctuation (2006, v. I).

Le Canarien evidently has unique historical value because it is the first chronicle to count the archipelago's conquest. It is likewise unique to Translation Studies because the irruption of manuscript 'G' represents a stunning turning point as it invalidated the narrative established up to then, and altered the view of the conquest. In fact, the appearance of a second source text justified the need for new translations and retranslations of each of the two pseudo-originals.

These cases of retranslations also challenge the traditional retranslation model. The characteristics and circumstances surrounding the original manuscript (handwritten, lost, diverging, and manipulated copies), the pseudo-originals (revealing different viewpoints and serving opposing interests) and the (re)translations are unique as they initially stem from the only source text known at that moment and then from two largely diverging source texts. They were then ultimately subjected to multiple revisions and partial and/or complete (re) translations.

The motives behind the different translations varied from a yearning of recognition of nobility of the Béthencourt family to the desire to offer brief translations or to amend, improve, complete and contextualise previous versions. This case likewise challenges the theory of retranslation as multiple translations were undertaken by the same translators who initially desired to publish the two versions of *Le Canarien* together and contextualise the conquest. Their printing was equally based on the historical relevance of *Le Canarien* and the desire to offer ‘more accessible’ revisions, such as those by Serra Ràfols and Cioranescu or, in turn, to disseminate scientific work. The following charts depict the different paths followed by *Le Canarien* before and after the irruption of ‘G’:

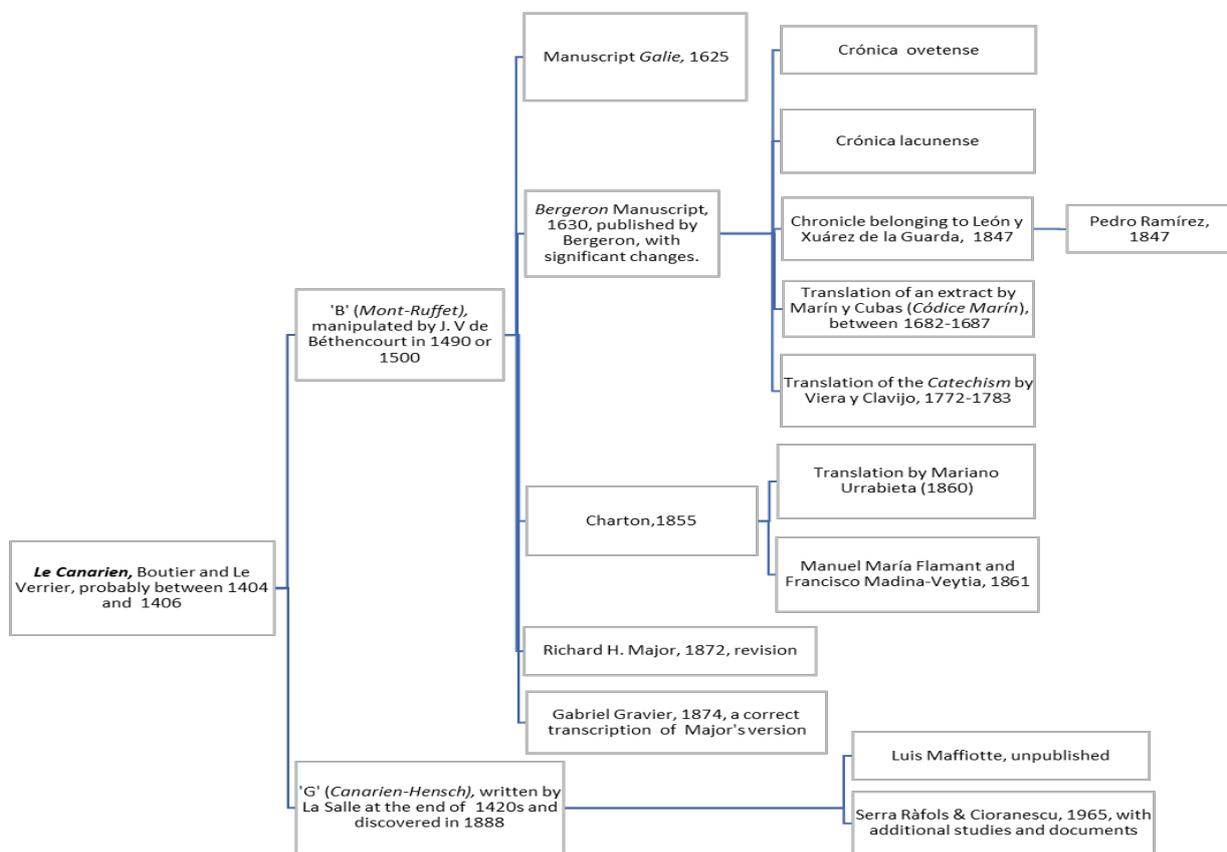


Figure 3. Different versions of *Le Canarien*, ‘B’

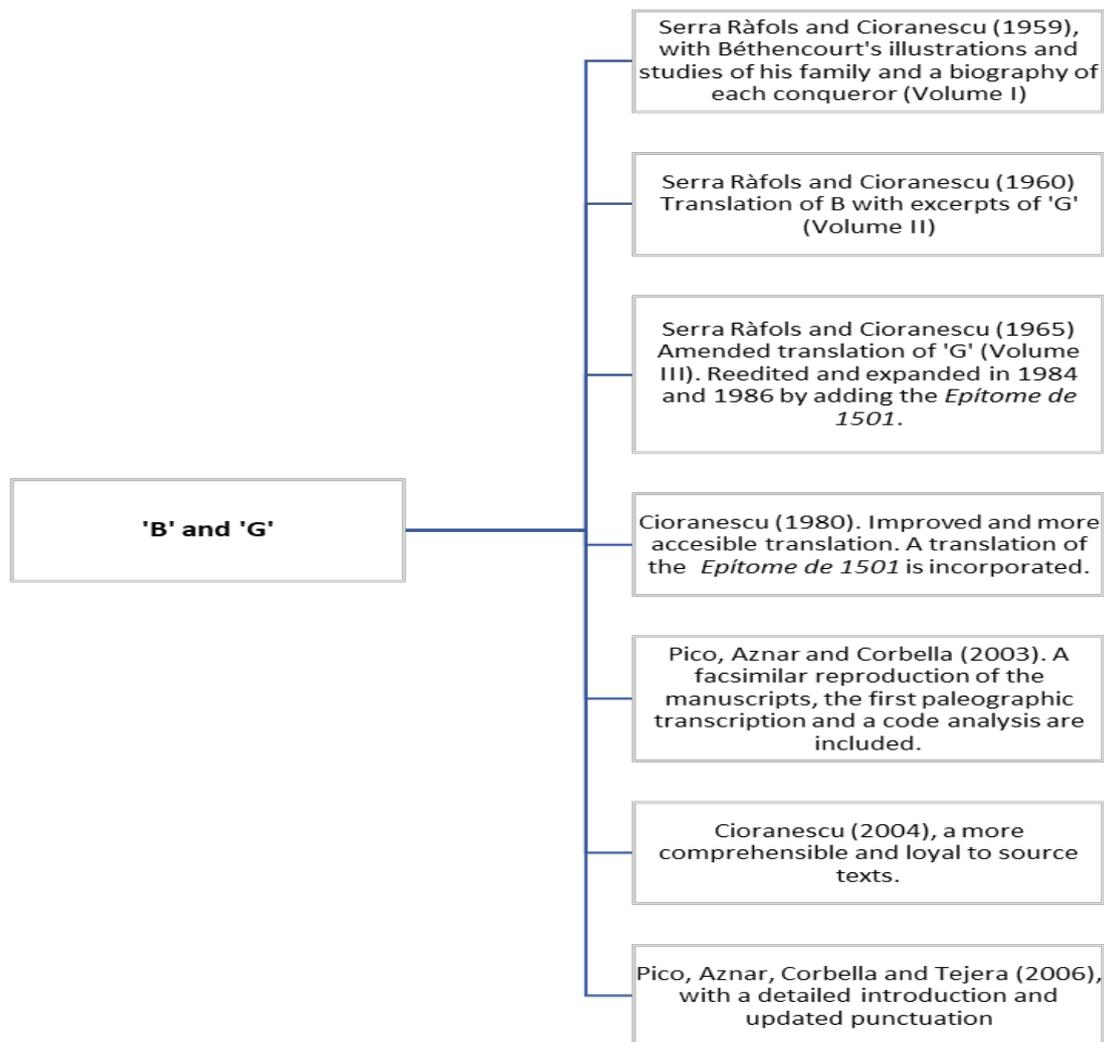


Figure 4. Different versions of *Le Canarien*, 'B' and 'G'

4. Concluding remarks

The current study on the (re)translations of the Recco, Cadamosto and *Le Canarien* chronicles challenges the model of retranslation currently accepted, as it shows a complexity of relationships between different source and target texts beyond what is commonly observed, as well as a variety of different motives behind the retranslations of the three chronicles.

The great number of translations and retranslations, either complete or partial, of these accounts or parts thereof, in different versions, is noteworthy. Moreover, the variety of versions most likely does not correspond to the motives usually mentioned for the retranslation of literary texts. The multiple retranslations of the three chronicles presented in this study can be explained both by their relevance to European and Spanish history and by the extended timeframe between when they were originally written and the appearance of subsequent translations.¹

To grasp the causality of the retranslations of these chronicles requires recalling the factors that make them deviate from the normal precepts of retranslation theory. A first peculiarity is the

¹ The chronological range between the chronicles and many of their (re)translations requires exploring the concepts of 'hot' and 'cold' translations defined respectively as either shortly after or following an extended period of time. The second offers the author the benefit of obtaining more data about the work and audience response hence yielding a more 'accurate' rendering (Demaneuelli, 1994, in Vanderschelden, 2000, p. 9).

unreliability of the original texts resulting from the disappearance of the primary manuscripts, which have survived only due to the existence of different versions which have, in turn, yielded a tangled web of revisions, pseudo-originals and (re)translations. This instability has triggered an eagerness, among other aspirations, to undertake translations from the *original* sources, or from untranslated versions so as to offer more accurate renderings.

Moreover, while the main focus of retranslation research has centred on text's literary or aesthetic value, the utility of these chronicles resides in their historiographic value. The retranslations examined in this study were the direct result of historiographic research as several of the translators incorporated their translations into historiographical treatises (Viera y Clavijo, Berthelot, Millares Torres, Chil y Naranjo) and expressed the desire to offer versions of greater scientific value, subjected to scrutiny, comments, and contextualisation (Serra Ràfols and Cioranescu, Vannini de Gerulewicz, Delgado Luis or Aznar *et al.*). The translations likewise benefit from other factors, notably the brevity of the Recco and Cadamosto texts, which probably favoured their incorporation into larger works or, as in the case of *Le Canarien*, the existence of diverging versions which gave rise to the necessity of reinterpreting the texts. Many shadows still hang over the translations of these chronicles. An example is the fact that some of the retranslators avoided citing earlier or contemporary translations while pointing out the need to translate them because of their historical relevance. This leads to question whether they undertook their versions aided or not by prior renderings, and if all the texts are really retranslations. It is possible that a lack of awareness of the previous versions (Venuti, 2012, p. 25) may have led to certain undertakings. Yet this can hardly be the case for all contemporary renderings. In this respect, Zaro (2007, p. 32) assumes the view that a retranslator is deceptive when not acknowledging the merits of previous translations. Moreover, he also notes that certain retranslators may have suffered from a sort of *arrogance* and avoided resorting to or resembling previous versions, or even recognising their existence or merit. Based on the existence of numerous contemporary retranslations of the chronicles, these are considered 'active retranslations', that is, translations competing for the same audience (Pym, 1998, p. 82). Another aspect stressed in the discipline of retranslation is the search for 'otherness' by translators of new versions who desire to distinguish their translations from previous versions (Venuti, 2012, p. 35). The current study has also led to the notion that translators felt the desire to assume a sort of personal challenge to produce a superior translation or even to reveal their erudition in dead languages.

The study of these cases evidences, in sum, that these chronicles experienced a variety of translational circumstances:

1. Translations of lost texts such as the case of the Recco chronicle.
2. Translations from different versions of an original account or pseudo-originals such as the cases of Cadamosto and *Le Canarien*.
3. Back-translation, as in the case of Recco, back to Italian.
4. Indirect translations from modern translations (stemming in turn from other translations), as the case of the translations of Recco by Malibrán and Martínez.
5. Translations from a forgery such as the case of the Spanish renderings of the 'B' manuscript of *Le Canarien*.
6. Contemporary retranslations of the same text.
7. Updated versions by correcting spelling and punctuation or, presumably, adapting a translated chronicle to the style of a broader history treatise, as is potentially the case of Chil y Naranjo's rendering of the Recco chronicle.

8. Abridged translations such as those undertaken by Viera y Clavijo and Vázquez de Parga y Chueca.
9. Retranslations and revisions of earlier translations by the same translators.

It is evident that the conditions undergone by the (re)translations of the chronicles linked to the discovery and conquest of the Canary Islands are not applicable to all types of retranslations. Nonetheless, the curious case of these chronicles challenges some of the theoretical presuppositions of retranslation. It is very likely that future historiographical research, especially when it is concerned with the translation and retranslation of materials dating from pre- or early-modern times, will offer new findings, as well as new texts that can, at the same time, bring new insights into the compelling episode of the discovery and conquest of the Canary Islands, and yield new readings and new interpretations of how the multi-faceted phenomenon of (re)translation has, over the centuries, contributed to that story being told.

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