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Translating History and Expunging Treason: Textual and Political Intervention in the Conspiracy of the Duke of Biron

ADRIÁN IZQUIERDO

BY THE END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY and the beginning of the seventeenth, translation and historiography, both anchored in a common past and a venerable practice, were inseparable from the idea of nascent statehood in early modern Europe.¹ As humanist scholars and politicians used the *artes historicae* as a method of dissecting the past to unravel the present, the translation of history became, in the hands of many European princes and states, a powerful political instrument for the deployment or emendation of contentious purposes.²

Since historical narratives were built upon Cicero's definition of *historia magistra vitae* as well as on the Polybian premise of *similitudo temporum*, humanists read, quoted, and translated the Greek historians and their Latin imitators, and widely drew on their accounts and style to chronicle the history of their times.³ Interest in ancient and modern historians was renewed, and the translations of historical narratives into vernaculars, and from one vernacular into another, were in constant demand, many setting the basis for the birth of great historical vernacular prose, like Jacques Amyot's *Vies paralleles* and Thomas North's *Lives*.⁴

What follows is an analysis of Spanish intellectual Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo's textual appropriation of a contemporary historical account by Pierre Matthieu—a phenomenon by no means uncommon to the practices of early modern *imitatio*—in order to write his *Historia trágica de la vida del duque de Biron*. In the early modern period, as Peter Burke has noted, “[d]espite . . . claims [to faithful translation], the interlingual translation of historians was at the same time a form of cultural translation, in other words, an adaptation to the needs, interests, prejudices and ways of reading the target culture, or at least of some groups within it.”⁵ The present essay argues that Mártir Rizo's recodification of the account originally written by of-

ficial historiographer Pierre Matthieu (1563–1621) served, on the one hand, to make relevant to his particular context a contemporary *exemplum* of the contentious relationship between a king and his minister, and on the other, to exonerate Spain from any involvement in the Duke of Biron's conspiracy in the midst of the European power struggles for hegemonic supremacy.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, the work of Matthieu was immensely popular within the European communities of readers, and his books became a fixture in the most important libraries of the time.⁶ A former Catholic leaguer opposed to the ascension of a Protestant king to the French throne, Matthieu was appointed royal historiographer after King Henry IV of France had initiated a program to restore the monarchy's authority after decades of civil wars that had devastated the nation and posed a challenge to the very nature of kingship. Known as "politique," which was the moderate position in French religion and politics at the time, Matthieu's official history became thus subservient to Henry's exercise of power and aimed at increasing the authority and reputation of the king and state.⁷ Like Justus Lipsius's influential treatises on political prudence, Matthieu's history writing drew on classical rhetoric, Neo-Stoicism, Skepticism, and, most of all, on widespread Tacitism, and followed the usual humanist practices of extracting moral and political *sententiae* from past and present sources.⁸ In his elegant and erudite historical accounts, hyperboles, parallelisms, digressions, *sententiae*, and apothegms meet us at every turn; his laconic style, highly esteemed by many of his contemporaries, accommodates a keen reflection on men and events in order to explain causation and extract a political philosophy of governance in times of uncertainty.⁹

Besides his monumental *Histoires*,¹⁰ Matthieu also wrote several biographies of historical characters that brought him wide recognition among both Catholics and Protestants in Italy, England, and Spain, and that, unlike the dry political treatises that abounded at the time, penetrate the hidden desires and inclinations that moved past and contemporary historical characters. Anchored in the ancient and humanistic historiographical tradition—Plutarch, Tacitus, Seneca, Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, and Justus Lipsius—his biographical portraits allowed him to examine the exercise of kingship and power at a time when the absolute monarchies of Spain, England, and France were fighting for survival or world hegemony.

In the aftermath of Henry IV's assassination in 1610, and during the regency of Marie de Medici, former royal ministers and advisors like Matthieu were excluded from the court.¹¹ In 1617, when the young king Louis XIII asserted his royal authority by ordering the assassination of Concino Concini, Matthieu came back as royal historiographer. He then published *The Life of*

Sejanus, the biography of Tiberius's infamous favorite mapped onto the life and death of Concini. As for how he put together his narrative, he states in the title that it is a "Roman history compiled from different authors," mostly from books III and IV of Tacitus's *Annals*.¹² The same year, he also published *The Life of Philippa the Catanian*, in which, taking as a model one of Boccaccio's cases from *De casibus virorum illustrium*, he recreates the biography of Concini's wife, Léonora Dori Galigai.¹³ Matthieu's first two biographies on Sejanus and Philippa are contemporary transpositions of ancient and early Renaissance narratives intending to depict the political landscape of seventeenth-century France. Together with the panegyric *History of the Death of Henry IV* (1610) and the political sketch of *The Life and Services of Monsieur Villeroy* (1618),¹⁴ they became Matthieu's most translated books.

His ancient and contemporary historical portraits rely on the recognition of the models offered by the classical tradition, and his princes, ministers, and royal favorites became prevailing symbols in the European collective imaginary. The names of Sejanus, Concini, and Philippa grew into cultural paradigms of the treacherous counselors, while that of Villeroy and King Henry IV of France illustrated the perfect minister and the superlative king. An eloquent and persuasive historian, Matthieu's narratives are buttressed by the *exemplum* both as a rhetorical device and as an instrument of moral imitation, allowing him to exploit the classical rules of oratory to move the passions and guide the reader towards virtue.¹⁵ Also the writer of several tragedies, Matthieu's history writing incorporated elements of the popular "histoires tragiques" genre practiced by other contemporary French humanists and historians such as Jean-Pierre Camus, Pierre Boitel, Pierre Boais-tuau, François de Belleforest, Agrippa d'Aubigné, and Victor Palma Cayet.¹⁶

In the 1620s, Spanish political life-writing saw an unprecedented development and, as I argue elsewhere, Matthieu's translations, adaptations, and illustrations were a key factor in the popularity of this dramatic reason-of-state genre.¹⁷ A case in point is the subject of the present essay, the biography written by Spanish humanist Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo (1593–1642): *La historia trágica de la vida del duque de Biron*, which tells the story of Charles de Gontaut, Duke of Biron (1562–1602), executed for treason by Henry IV of France in 1602. The Duke of Biron was a French commander whose military achievements and friendship with King Henry IV elevated him to marshal of France. After the Peace of Vervins of 1598, the Duke of Savoy, refusing to cede the geographically vital Marquisate of Saluces to France, conspired with the Duke of Biron to dismember the French kingdoms aided by the gold ducats and by the men secretly provided by the Spanish Crown. The conspiracy involved other outstanding French nobles unhappy

with Henry's government and whose alleged reason was to restore religious unity under a Catholic (not a converted Protestant) king in France. Alerted about the conspiracy, Henry IV had Biron condemned for high treason and beheaded in the Bastille.

Mártir Rizo, whose biography of the infamous French duke was published in 1629 and republished in 1635, was a well-known figure in the intellectual circles of the third decade of the seventeenth century.¹⁸ He was also Matthieu's most prolific translator into Spanish; by 1625, he had published, all translated from Matthieu, the lives of Sejanus and of Philippa the Catanian, and the history of the death of Henry IV.¹⁹ More than a mere propaedeutic to bolster his own creative faculties, these translations from the French served him as a model to shape his own biographical accounts around those same years. Fully aware of Matthieu's appeal and that the genre of political biography was widely consumed by his contemporary public, he readily capitalized on both with his *Life of Seneca* (1625) and *Life of Maecenas* (1626).²⁰

All of Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo's translations from Matthieu's biographies revolve around the controversial notion of reason of state, the question of tyrannicide, and a paramount philosophical and political concern all over Europe at the time: the limits and prerogatives of the royal favorite. As suggested by José Antonio Maravall some decades ago, in the lives translated from Matthieu as well as in the ones he wrote, Mártir Rizo explored and illustrated all possible king-favorite combinations: Sejanus represents the bad minister serving a bad king (Tiberius) and Philippa the Catanian the bad minister who subjugates a queen's will (Joanna I of Naples), complicated in this case by the fact that they are both women. Mártir Rizo's biography of Maecenas represents, on the other hand, the good minister serving a good king (Augustus), while his life of Seneca portrays the good minister who serves a bad king (Nero).²¹ But in order to expand the whole spectrum of the king and minister associations, he needed the case of a bad minister coupled with a good king, which he readily found in Matthieu's account of the conspiracy of the Duke of Biron.

Mártir Rizo creates an independent biography, the *Historia trágica de la vida de Biron*, drawing on various narratives found in Matthieu's grand history. Illustrating the *historia sui temporis* under Henry IV's patronage, the official historiographer had chronicled the Duke's conspiracy in his vast *Histoire de France et des choses mémorables*, divided into seven books. In the first book (third narration) Matthieu described how Biron obtained his illustrious titles of Duke and Marshal of France while the details of his betrayal appear in the third book (fourth narration). It is in book five (first, third, and fourth narrations), however, where the reader discovers

HISTORIA
TRAGICA DE
 LA VIDA DEL DVQVE
 DE BIRON.

SV AVTOR IVAN PABLO
 Martyr Rizo.

*DIRIGIDA AL EXCELEN-
 tissimo señor Don Francisco Diego Lopez
 de Zuñiga, y Sotomayor, Duque de Bexar.
 Conde de Belalcaçar, y Bañares, Mar-
 ques de Gibráleon, Vizconde de la
 Puebla, y señor de las cinco
 Villas, &c*



Impresso en Barcelona por Sebastian de Cór-
 me llas, Año de 1629.

Figure 1. Title page of the *Historia trágica de la vida del duque de Biron*, Barcelona, 1629.

Biron's dealings with his coconspirators until his execution. Thus scattered throughout several books and narrations in the *Histoire de France*, Matthieu registers the official version of the case, pointing out Biron's connivance with the Duke of Savoy and with the Count of Fuentes, who was at the time the Governor and Captain General of the Spanish territory of Milan. The details of the plot are lushly interspersed with political and philosophical comments on reason of state, observations on the fortunes and misfortunes of past and present kings and ministers, apothegms, myriad *exempla* on past and present historical cases, and quotations from countless sources including Tacitus, Plutarch, Seneca, and even Machiavelli.

A thorough comparison of Mártir Rizo's *Historia trágica de la vida del duque de Biron* and Matthieu's *Histoire de France* exposes most of Mártir Rizo's text as a translation from the French historian. While the opening lines of the biography were directly translated from Matthieu (third book, first narration), Mártir Rizo adds about fourteen folios that, as far I have been able to determine, seem to have been written by him. From then on, except for a few very precise additions and subtractions, the *Historia trágica* is a "translation" that weaves together all these passages extracted from the various books of Matthieu's *Histoire de France*.

In the early modern period, "translation practices," as Peter Burke has noted, "varied considerably more than general theories suggest. As often happens, different norms coexisted and competed, so that we may speak of cultures or subcultures of translation."²² Mártir Rizo himself, for example, approached different texts by Matthieu in very different ways. If in his *Sejanus* he closely followed the French historian, the same cannot be said of *Philippa the Catanian*, where his active intervention in the text is visible from the paratexts. For this particular translation, he also enlisted the pen of his influential friend Francisco de Quevedo, who wrote a "Judgement" of the works of Matthieu included in the prefatory material. Quevedo, also captivated by the political wisdom and the rhetorical *energeia* of the French historian, highlights how and why Mártir Rizo's historical emendation on the ancestry of Aragonese kings was imperative. While Quevedo recognizes Matthieu as a famous and worthy historian, he criticizes him for slandering the Spanish monarchs, thus deviating from his duty as a historian and manipulating the truth. According to Quevedo, Mártir Rizo's two marginal corrections in the *Life of Philippa the Catanian* aimed at rectifying the distorted message in the original, namely, the reprehensible lies written by the French historian. These two emendations announced in the paratexts are visible in italics in the margins, and they replace the copious marginal notes in the original French.²³

In his translation of the *History of the Death of Henry IV*, Mártir Rizo's authorial mediation is somewhat different. In this particular case, for example, he decided to append to his translation an account of the harrowing judgment and torture meted out to François Ravaillac, Henry IV's tyrannicide.²⁴ He reminds us in the paratexts that if Pierre Matthieu had not mentioned Ravaillac's name even once so as not to bring the murderer any glory, his decision—to append the excerpt on a punishment he considered exemplary and worth telling—might have also been prompted by political reasons. After Henry IV's assassination, the prominent Spanish Jesuit thinker Juan de Mariana's book *De rege et regis institutione*, denounced as a Jesuit agitation to kill the king and deliver France into the hands of the Pope, was publicly burned by order of the French Parliament. When the tyrannicide went public, people gathered in front of the house of the Spanish ambassador in Paris to stop any attempt at escape, and François Ravaillac, when questioned under torture, denied any acquaintance with Mariana's book.²⁵ Besides a warning to tyrannicides, the translator's addition, I believe, aims at clearing Spain, and the Spanish religious order, from any doubt of agency in the French magnicide.

Mártir Rizo's approach to Matthieu's lengthy account of the fall and decapitation of the Duke of Biron, however, conspicuously differs from these two previous examples. Nowhere in his text does he broach the fact that all the material for his book was taken from Pierre Matthieu's monumental *Histoire de France*. But what is still more significant, contemporary writers and censors considered the *Historia trágica* as his, and not as a translation. Quevedo, for example, defending Mártir Rizo from the attacks of writer Juan Pérez de Montalbán, cites the lives of Maecenas, Seneca, and Biron as Mártir Rizo's own.²⁶ Similarly, the censor of the edition published in Barcelona in 1635 clearly credits him with the authorship of the Biron biography.²⁷

In the study of the circulation of early modern transnational texts and ideas within the Republic of Letters, the case of Mártir Rizo's *Historia trágica del duque de Biron* is significant because the binary model of original and translation stalls, and the line between what is and is not a translation becomes blurred. In order to understand Mártir Rizo's approach historically, and not to fall into futile and anachronistic judgments on plagiarism and intellectual dishonesty, I believe it is more productive to highlight the kind of transformations such texts underwent when moved across borders and assess Mártir Rizo's endeavor in relation to what Burke calls "the cultures of or subcultures of translation" prevailing at the time.²⁸

Duque de Biron. 19

por opinion de la intelligencia de
 los dos, ni el Duque menor seguri-
 dad de su aficion, por auer rehusa-
 do, porque por respeto fuyo princi-
 palmente el Duque auia hecho es-
 te viaje para separarle totalmente
 del seruicio del Rey, concibiendo
 aquella gran maquina que al fin se
 descubrio, para confusion de los q̄
 la tratan. Esta era aquella gran-
 de ocasion que el tenia oculta en
 lo interno del animo, y que no que-
 ria descubrir, quando sus conseje-
 ros le disuadian de la yda a Francia.

*Pedro
 Ma-
 theo bi
 storia
 de Fr. 3.
 cia 1.
 parte
 lib. 3.
 prime
 ranar
 rasió.*

Figure 2. Marginal note and only instance where Mártir Rizo mentions Matthieu in the *Historia trágica*.

TEXTUAL MEDIATION

Mártir Rizo's biography follows a *compositio* and typographical language similar to the one employed by known philologists and historians such as Justus Lipsius, Montaigne, and Pierre Matthieu. The biography is divided into "parts" containing a summary of the chapters in italics, and, curiously enough, only a handful of marginal notes, one of them a reference to Pierre Matthieu's history describing the death sentence that fell upon the Duke, as if Mártir Rizo were using Matthieu as another source *en passant*, and not as the historian from whom he is "carrying across" his whole biography (see fig. 2).²⁹ Such a method of assembling fragments, citations, and *sententiae* from different classical and modern sources into different chapters where

new meaning emerged from fragmentation, was not unfamiliar to humanists nor to the community of readers at the time. Commonplace books, “the principal supporting system of humanist pedagogy,” as Anne Moss and others have studied, were popular in the period, and readers saw themselves as potential writers and mediators between old and new texts.³⁰ Lipsius’s *Politicorum*, Montaigne’s *Essais*, or Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, are, using Lipsius’s own metaphor, single tapestries of a variety of colored threads, where meaning of *loci communes*, made uniform and coherent in the new texts, differed from the original meaning and resounded with political connotations.³¹

After carefully reading Matthieu’s *Histoire de France*, one can assume, Mártir Rizo selected all the building blocks pertaining to Biron’s life and death needed for his biography. Once he had identified the rhetorical elements of *inventio* scattered in the different books of the *Histoire*, he organized them following a chronological order, varying Matthieu’s lengthy account in order to create his own rhetorical *dispositio*. Through translation, he imitated Matthieu’s style to produce the “elegance” of the *elocutio* praised by the censor in one of the paratexts.³² At the same time, he introduced cuts, opening sentences, comments, and additions, working with the disposition in order to glue together the different pieces, or, as Lipsius had said of his *Politica*, “to prevent them from flowing around and being mortar without limestone, . . . connect[ing] them fittingly . . . with the cement of [his] own words.”³³

But if we need to go back to Lipsius’s process of *receptio* to understand Matthieu, I believe we also need to take another look at both Lipsius and Matthieu in order to understand Mártir Rizo. Matthieu, well versed in the Lipsian tradition of organizing political theory books from commonplace collections, used translation, transposition, and adaptation of all traditional ancient and modern sources available to him to write history. These sources range from the Latin works by Renaissance scholars like Erasmus, Agricola, Ramus, and Lipsius—derived in turn from earlier works reaching back through Cicero, Quintilian, Plutarch, Plato, and Aristotle—to more modern and contemporary political writers such as Botero, Machiavelli, and Spanish political exile Antonio Pérez. His encyclopedic accumulation prompted historian Charles Sorel to quip in the mid-seventeenth century (once this method of composition had lost favor) that one could become an erudite just by reading Matthieu’s marginal annotations.³⁴

Similarly, Mártir Rizo, aware of Matthieu’s use of past historians, philosophers, and moral and political writers for *inventio*, smuggled across languages and borders the historian’s textual “building blocks” as sole source of composition and arranged them in order to create his own rhetorical *dispo-*

sitio. In doing so, he produced something new, that is, a stand-alone biography, thus crossing not only geographical and linguistic barriers, but also the generic divide between history and biography. Unlike Lipsius, Matthieu, Burton, or Montaigne, Mártir Rizo's only source in this particular case was Pierre Matthieu's eclectic and erudite history. But the end result was also his, prompting not only the censor of the book but also the printer of his editions to noticeably call him "the author" on the title page (see fig. 1).

The elimination of Matthieu's marginalia in the Spanish version, the unification of the typographical layout of an original text marked by the use of italics in lowercase identifying a direct speech, or capital letters emphasizing a *sententia* or a *dictum*: all this, in sum, transformed the original multi-layered "tapestry" into a homogeneous five-part discourse. In this sense, as Jacob Soll has studied in relation to Machiavelli's *The Prince*, "material rhetoric," besides taking into account the material form of texts, "implies that the act of changing the meaning of a text by its formal presentation was a conscious method of expression for humanists."³⁵

POLITICAL INTERVENTION

Despite historians' claims that they wrote *sine ira et studio* (without hate and partisanship)—a much-quoted phrase from the opening lines of Tacitus's *Annals*—historical truth depended on what side of the Pyrenees they stood. In the first decades of the seventeenth century, and beyond the political animosity that opposed both nations, French and Spanish intellectuals shared a keen interest in the literature, history, and ideas produced by their respective scholars. Official historiography, based on a common humanistic background and appreciation of the classical tradition, drew on the active circulation of contemporary practices, techniques and ideas.³⁶ The case of Biron's conspiracy, also registered by other French historians such as Jean de Serres and Victor Palma Cayet, traversed the English Channel and became known in England in Edward Grimeston's translation, *A General Inventory of the History of France*, published in 1607. This translation, in turn, gave playwright George Chapman material for his double play *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of the Duke of Biron*, performed in 1608 at the Blackfriars. Mártir Rizo's appropriation of Matthieu's text was also the source for Spanish playwright Juan Pérez de Montalbán's *El mariscal de Viron*, reprinted several times since 1632. These examples of the European circulation of the Biron episode are a particularly suggestive snapshot both of the dissemination of knowledge on a massive scale and of the instrumentality of translation and adaptation of political texts across national borders.³⁷

Following the project he had in mind, Mártir Rizo started his third part of *Historia trágica de la vida del duque de Biron* (corresponding to the second narration, fifth book of Matthieu's *Histoire*), blatantly eliminating any negative allusion to Spain's declining role in European politics.³⁸ According to Matthieu, the European political environment at the turn of the century was strained, and peace in the continent was compromised because of the "uprisings in Italy, the extremely belligerent nature of the Count of Fuentes, the intrigues of the Duke of Savoy (who could not live in peace), and the resentment of the Spaniards as a result of the disadvantageous conditions they had obtained in the Treaty of Vervins."³⁹ Mártir Rizo replaced this entire section with a lengthy philosophical digression on the maliciousness of men (supported by a moral reflection on the value of physiognomy in relation to Biron's appearance) and tied it up with Matthieu's translated text, systematically eliminating in the rest of the text any reference to the Spanish participation in the conspiracy as well as the part played by the Count of Fuentes, the head of the plot on the Spanish side.⁴⁰ The maneuvers and intrigues of the Count of Fuentes, governor of the Spanish territory of Milan, are unambiguously described by Matthieu, who cites Fuentes's stratagems dozens of times. Mártir Rizo, on the contrary—and this is one of the more conspicuous deviations in the translation—only mentioned the Count of Fuentes once, adding a very different twist to history writing that summarily absolves Fuentes of any involvement in the plot.⁴¹

According to the official history rewritten by Mártir Rizo, the Count of Fuentes, whom he calls an "invincible captain," showed superlative integrity by refusing any deceitful participation in the plot. In Mártir Rizo's recasting, the Spanish monarchs and their subjects would only meet their enemies face to face, with the sun as a witness, always abstaining from any unscrupulous participation in intrigues and double-crossings. But he does not stop there and goes on to say that Henry IV of France owes the brave Count of Fuentes the favorable outcome of the conspiracy. Most recent historiographical evidence, however, tells us otherwise, since Fuentes, one of the great defenders of the prestige of the Spanish Monarchy, did have an active involvement in the conspiracy, constantly communicating with the Duke of Biron as well as with Philip III and the Duke of Lerma.⁴²

But since history was primarily written in order to illustrate how the present mirrored the past, the historical reasons that prompted Mártir Rizo's transposition of the 1602 Biron episode twenty-seven years later were very different. The Mantuan Wars of 1628–31, brought about by the deaths of the Dukes of Mantua without legitimate heirs, was one of the final chapters of the century-old confrontation between Spain and France for the

control of the Italian territories. The Duchy of Mantua and the Marquisate of Monferrat were strategic positions for Spanish access to the Netherlands; both Spain and Savoy were anxious to prevent the succession of the rightful heir, the French Duke of Nevers, because it would jeopardize the Spanish position in northern Italy. Eventually, although “the costs of intervention in Mantua had been horrifying for both France and Spain,” for the latter “the results were an unrelieved disaster.”⁴³ According to John Elliott, Spain’s intervention in Mantua “had antagonized European public opinion, driven the papacy into the arms of the French, strained Madrid’s relations with Vienna almost to a breaking point, and wrecked Olivares’s grand design for securing peace with the Dutch on terms rather better than those of 1609.”⁴⁴ Another crucial factor to bear in mind is that Mártir Rizo’s *Historia trágica* was published twice in Barcelona, a region in robust disagreement with Olivares’s policies that aimed at curtailing their provincial rights and liberties. This growing conflict with the provinces would eventually, in less than a decade, lead to the revolt of the Catalans and the loss of Portugal.⁴⁵ As Elliott categorically puts it, the Mantuan affair was “probably the worst [...] blunder of [Olivares’] twenty-two years in power.”⁴⁶

Translations of Matthieu’s works, I argue, were a dynamic source for Spanish intellectuals and political figures involved in the direction of the Hispanic Monarchy to appropriate ideas and values that otherwise would have been censored by Spanish Catholic authorities. Some of Machiavelli and Bodin’s ideas, openly or in disguise, faithfully translated or intentionally amended, were extensively used by Mártir Rizo, as noted by Maravall some decades ago.⁴⁷ In this particular case, Mártir Rizo found in Matthieu’s history volumes the hermeneutical artillery that allowed him to decipher an exemplary case of a grandee that had everything but the throne, and who, moved by ambition and ingratitude, acted against his king and kingdom. Such cases, for instance, had been outlined both by Machiavelli (*Discourses*, III, 6) and Lipsius (*Politicorum*, IV, 10) when discussing collective conspiracies and tyrannicide.⁴⁸

People, books, and ideas spread via different exchange networks, and one must also emphasize Mártir Rizo’s relationship with prominent intellectuals and Tacitist writers from Olivares’s circle (Francisco de Quevedo, Lorenzo Ramírez de Prado, Tamayo de Vargas and Gil González Dávila, and the Count of la Roca) who participated in the common culture of historical and political counsel of the period.⁴⁹ In the first years of the 1620s, he seems to have been, like many in that decade, captivated by Olivares’s winds of change, as can be inferred from his flattering dedication of his 1626 *Life of Maecenas* to the minister. His translations and dedications to Olivares and

other outstanding statesmen and politicians might have been prompted by his desire to obtain an office at court. But after almost a decade in power, by 1629, when Mártir Rizo's biography appeared, Olivares's politics was becoming widely discredited, and French and Spanish relations had begun a downward spiral that would bring about, only six years later, a declaration of war between the two nations.

Behind the surface of Mártir Rizo's account of Biron as an *exemplum* were many other familiar shadows: the beheadings of Concini and Léonora Dori Galigai in Paris, the fall of all-powerful minister Lerma, the decapitation of Lerma's secretary, Rodrigo Calderón, in Madrid when Phillip IV ascended the throne in 1621, as well as the 1601 execution of the Earl of Essex and the 1628 assassination of the Duke of Buckingham in England. In the politically charged horizon of expectations of Mártir Rizo's Spanish readers, different in time and space from the ones of the *Histoire de France*, the exemplary fall of the all-powerful French Duke, who, due to his pride and *cupiditas*, had betrayed his prince, could be read both as a warning and a covert critique of Olivares, the Spanish minister who had usurped the king's authority in government affairs and whose military and financial reforms were ruining the hispanic monarchy.⁵⁰

In the end, what Mártir Rizo saw in Matthieu's account of Biron's downfall was an invaluable opportunity to draw attention to the limits and prerogatives of the royal minister in the exercise of power, as well as to the reading of history as a method for extracting political prudence. Ultimately, the European circulation of Matthieu's texts is evidence of both the prevalent culture of manipulation and "translation" as well as of the interdependence of official historiography across national borders during the early modern period. Official history writing, as Chantal Grell has noted, far from being an isolated or theoretical phenomenon, was part of a game of competition and emulation connected to the creation of modern states in Europe.⁵¹ In the cases of France and Spain, as studied by Fabien Montcher, royal historiography was an essential component of the "information system of both monarchies."⁵²

While Mártir Rizo's *Historia trágica de la vida de Biron* exemplifies how protean were the lines between translation, imitation, and adaptation, and how diverse were the approaches that translators could take within the same period and vis-à-vis the same source author, what is remarkable in this case is a translation operating simultaneously to transform content, genre, and style. Using translation as a cloak, a serious incident in European politics was reshaped, and the extensive interventions of Spaniards in the conspiracy and all other political transgressions were completely expunged

with one stroke almost twenty years after the events, thus distancing the Spanish Catholic king from the common accusation of Machiavellian abuses of power. An altered linguistic dress, a partisan historical perspective, and a new subgenre—that of biography—all highlight, in the case of Mártir Rizo’s rewriting of the Biron episode, the translator’s legitimate agency in the authorship of the text. If his *Historia trágica* intensified what he had found in Matthieu’s history volume—a new *translatio* of an old theme—it is the author, not the translator, who becomes invisible in the process.⁵³ Both *traduttore* and *traditore*, Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo produces a new text in which original authorial sources and the intervention of the Spanish Crown in the conflict are “betrayed” in one and the same process.

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NOTES

- 1 For fuller comments on translation and nationhood see David Damrosch’s “Translation and National Literature,” in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter (John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 349–60; A. E. B. Coldiron, *Printers without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance* (Cambridge U. Press, 2015); and Myriam Yardeni, *Enquêtes sur l’identité de la «nation France»: de la Renaissance aux lumières* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2005).
- 2 On the European “political turn” on historiography around 1580, see Richard Kagan, “Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas and the ‘Political Turn’ in the ‘Official History’ of Seventeenth-Century Spain,” in *Les historographes en Europe de la fin du Moyen Age à la Révolution* (Presses Univ. Paris–Sorbonne, 2006): 227–97.
- 3 While the literature on historiography is particularly abundant, see, for a valuable review, D. R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law, and History in the French Renaissance* (Columbia U. Press, 1970); Eric Crochane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (U. of Chicago Press, 1985); Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge U. Press, 2007); on the Ciceronian and Polybian *topoi*, see Reinhart Koselleck, “*Historia magistra vitae*: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process,” in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Columbia U. Press, 1985). On Spanish historiography, see Richard Kagan, *Clio and the Crown: The Politics of History in Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Johns Hopkins U. Press, 2009).
- 4 The reception of these ancient historians in our early modernity, as studied by Peter Burke and others, shifted according to the needs and tastes in history. For an account, see Peter Burke, “A Survey of the Popularity of Ancient Historians, 1450–1700,” *History and Theory* 5.2 (1966): 135–52.
- 5 Peter Burke, “Translating Histories,” in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, Peter Burke & R. Po-Chia Hsia, eds. (Cambridge U. Press, 2007), 133.

- 6 For details on the circulation of Matthieu's books in Spain, see Asensio Gutiérrez, *La France et les français dans la littérature espagnole (1598–1665)* (Publications de l'Université de Saint Étienne, 1977): 182–213.
- 7 For the Machiavellian connotations of the word *politicus* and the importance of jurists as humanists (Matthieu was also a jurist), see D. R. Kelley, "'Home politicus': The Jurist as Renaissance Man," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 51 (1988): 84–102; E. M. Beame, "The Politiques and the Historians," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54 (1993): 355–79. For Matthieu's role as a royal historian, see Michel de Waele, *Réconcilier les français. Henry IV et la fin des troubles de religion (1589–1598)* (Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2010).
- 8 On the connection of these philosophical and political movements, see Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government: 1572–1651* (Cambridge U. Press, 1993); and Peter Burke, "Tacitism, Scepticism, and Reason of State," in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450–1700* (Cambridge U. Press, 2008), 477–98.
- 9 For Matthieu's style, see Jean Lafond, "L'esthétique du 'dir moderno' dans l'historiographie de P. Matthieu et de ses imitateurs," in *Mélanges à la mémoire de Franco Simone* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1981), 2:135–48.
- 10 For example: the *Histoire des derniers troubles de France, sous les règnes des Roys Très Chrestiens Henry III, Roy de France de et de Pologne, et Henry IIII, Roy de France et de Navarre, divisée en plusieurs livres contenant tout ce qui s'est passé durant les derniers troubles, jusques à la paix faite entre les Roys de France et d'Espagne* (1594–1606) (republished with new chapters several times); the *Histoire de France & des choses mémorables aduenues aux Prouinces estrangères durant sept années de paix dv règne de Henry IIII, Roy de France & de Nauarre; divisée en sept livres* (Paris: Jamet Metayer & Mathieu Guillemot, 1605); and the *Histoire De Louys XI, Roy de France et des choses mémorables aduenues en l'Europe durant vingt & deux années de son règne: enrichie de plusieurs observations qui tiennent lieu de commentaires; divisée en 11 Livres* (Paris: Mettayer, 1610).
- 11 For the characters of Concini and his wife, see Hélène Duccini, *Concini. Grandeur et misère du favori de Marie de Médicis* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991); and Georges Mongrédien: *Léonora Galigai. Un procès de sorcellerie sous Louis XIII* (Paris: Éditions Hachette, 1968).
- 12 Aelius Sejanus, *Histoire romaine recueillie de divers auteurs* (Paris: Veuve Jean Regnoul, 1617).
- 13 Pierre Matthieu, *Histoire des prosperitez malhevrevses d'une femme cathenoise, grande seneschalle de Naples* (Paris: Veuve Jean Regnoul, 1617).
- 14 *Histoire de la mort déplorable de Henry IIII, Roy de France et de Navarre: ensemble un poème, un panégryrique et un discours funèbre: dressé à sa mémoire immortelle* (Paris: Veuve de M. Guillemot, 1611); and *Remarques d'estat et d'Histoire sur la vie et les services de Monsieur de Villeroy* (Rouen: Chez Thomas Mallard, 1618).
- 15 For the *exemplum*, see John D. Lyons. *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton U. Press, 1990), and Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Cornell U. Press, 1990); for literature in Spain, see José Aragüés, *Deus concionator: Mundo predicado y retórica del exemplum en los Siglos de Oro* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999).

- 16 His tragedies, all published in the 1580s, are *Clytemnestre*, *Esther*, *Vashti*, *Aman*, and *La Guisade*. For the “histoire tragique” genre and its relation with ancient literary tradition as well as with *exempla* in history writing, see Steve Uomini, *Cultures historiques dans la France du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998). For a valuable treatment in Spanish letters, see R. Kagan’s “Las plumas teñidas de Felipe IV: ¿periodismo o propaganda?” in *La aparición del periodismo en Europa: comunicación y propaganda en el Barroco*, Roger Chartier and Carmen Espejo, eds. (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2012): 87–102.
- 17 For Pierre Matthieu’s translations in the development of the genre of political biography as well as for the reception of political ideas in Spain, see Adrián Izquierdo, *Pierre Matthieu en España. La biografía política en las traducciones de Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo y Lorenzo Van der Hammen* (doctoral diss., The City University of New York, Graduate Center, 2015).
- 18 The *Historia trágica de la vida del duque de Biron* was published twice in Barcelona, first in 1629 by Sebastián de Cormellas, and then in 1635 by Gabriel Nogues. The work is dedicated to the grandee of Spain Francisco Diego López de Zúñiga Guzmán Sotomayor y Mendoza, VII Duke of Béjar (1596–1636), an outstanding military commander under Kings Phillip III and IV. For Mártir Rizo’s biography, see José A. Maravall, “Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo. Estudio preliminar a una edición de sus obras,” in *Estudios de Historia del pensamiento español. Serie tercera: El siglo del Barroco* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1984): 385–436.
- 19 The Spanish titles of these translations are: *Vida del dichoso desdichado* (Madrid: Pedro Tazo, 1625); *Historia de la prosperidad infeliz de Felipa de Catanea* (Madrid: Diego Flamenco, 1625); and *Historia de la muerte de Enrico el Grande, cuarto Rey de Francia de este nombre* (Madrid: Diego Flamenco, 1625). The titles of his biographies are: *Historia de la vida de Lucio Anneo Seneca español* (Madrid: Juan Delgado, 1625); and *Historia de la vida de Mecenas* (Madrid: Diego Flamenco, 1626).
- 20 Although the term *biography* postdates the works here analyzed, for the sake of clarity here I use it alongside the term *life*. In most European languages, the term began to be used toward the end of the seventeenth century. French and Spanish historians used *vie* or *vida*, as well as the expression *vida particular* to refer to what we call today the biography of an individual from birth to death. For a valuable panorama, see *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV*, ed. Thomas F. Mayer and Daniel Woolf (U. of Michigan Press, 1995); and James Weiss, *Humanist Biography in Renaissance Italy and Reformation Germany: Friendship and Rhetoric* (Farnum: Ashgate/Variorum, 2010).
- 21 José A. Maravall, “Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo...,” 415.
- 22 For the notion of “cultural translation” in the early modern period, see Peter Burke, “Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe,” in Burke and Hsia, *Cultural Translation*, 7–38, quotation on 27. See also Burke’s “The Renaissance Translator as Go-Between,” in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Andreas Höfele & W. von Koppenfels (Walter de Gruyter, 2005): 17–31.
- 23 Quevedo’s “Juicio a las obras de Pedro Matheo” (that is, Pierre Matthieu in Spanish), as we have mentioned, is a paratext of Mártir Rizo’s *Historia de la prosperidad infeliz de Felipa de Catanea*.
- 24 “Advierto que Pedro Mateo, con industria no quiso poner en este escrito el nombre del Parricida, mas yo aviendo hallado en otra parte la sentencia que pronunció contra el

Parlamento, la he introduzido con distinción de letra en el lugar que se hallara, para adorno de la Historia, admiración del que leyere y horror de los atrevidos.”

- 25 See Henri Méchoulan, “L’Espagne dans le miroir des textes français,” in *L’Etat baroque. Regards sur la pensée politique de la France au premier XVII^e siècle*, ed. H. Méchoulan, Emmanuel Le Roy, André Robinet, (Paris: Vrin, 1985): 423–46; Harald Braun, *Juan de Mariana and Early Modern Spanish Political Thought* (Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2007): 7; Eric Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy, Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590–1615)* (Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2005): 147–207.
- 26 Quoted by Maravall, “Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo. Estudio preliminar,” 388.
- 27 Censor Luis de Céspedes writes: “Esta trágica Historia de la Vida del Duque de Biron (elegancia cuidadosa de Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo, su Autor, ya otra vez impressa en esta ciudad) he visto por mandato...”
- 28 Burke, “Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe,” 27.
- 29 These notes, a total of five, offer some details on certain dates (the siege of Amiens in 1597, on page 6), a referral to check Catalina in Sallust when talking about the coconspirators (on page 69r); one note signaling Biron’s death sentence (on page 165v), and a last one on the year the Duke was executed, erroneously given as 1622 instead of 1602. The second note is the only instance where Mártir Rizo mentions the historian, pointing out Matthieu’s first narration in the third book in connection with the Duke’s plot.
- 30 Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- 31 For a complete study and discussion of Lipsius’s work see the introduction to his *Politica: Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction*, ed. Jan Waszink (Royal Van Gorcum, 2004). For the metaphor, see 232.
- 32 For the censor’s words, see note 27 above.
- 33 “But I have not in fact given bare of scattered maxims, to prevent them from flowing around and being ‘mortar without limestone’: but I have either connected them fittingly, or I have here and there joined them together with the cement, so to speak, of my own words” (Lipsius, *Politica*, 233). For more details on Lipsius’s method of composition, see, from the same book, Waszink’s “The Rationale and Form of this Work,” 231–35.
- 34 Quoted by Jean Lafond, *Moralistes du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1992), 6.
- 35 Jacob Soll, *Publishing The Prince: History, Reading, and the Birth of Political Criticism* (U. of Michigan Press, 2005): 14.
- 36 On the connections between French and Spanish official historiography, see Fabien Montcher, *La historiografía real. El contexto de la interacción hispano-francesa (c. 1598–1635)* (doctoral diss., Facultad de Geografía e Historia de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2013). For a general background on French and Spanish literary and historical relations, see Alexandre Cioranescu, *Le masque et le visage. Du baroque espagnol au classicisme français* (Geneva: Droz, 1983); and Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *La France espagnole. Les racines hispaniques de l’absolutisme français* (Paris: Seuil, 2003).

- 37 George Chapman, *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron, Marshall of France* (1608), ed. John Margeson (Manchester U. Press, 1988). Besides Montalbán's play, Juan Maldonado based his 1658 *Comedia burlesca del Mariscal de Virón* on the character of the Duke.
- 38 Mártir Rizo, *Historia trágica del duque de Biron*, 62r.
- 39 "Les grandes levees qui se faisoient en Italie, l'humeur tant guerrier du Comte de Fuentes, les remouements du Duc de Savoye qui ne pouvoit vivre en Paix, les regrets que les Espagnols avoient des conditions des-avantageuses du Traicté de Vervins, & plusieurs autres considerations donnoient de l'apparence aux opinions communes de la guerre" (213).
- 40 For example, when Matthieu states that "Lafin partit aussi de l'armee pour aller clorre le marché avec le Duc de Savoye & le Comte de Fuentes" (223), Mártir Rizo translates: "Lafin partió del exercito para yr á confirmar el trato con del Duque de Saboya" (75). The rest of the passage on Lafin's dealings with the Duke of Savoy, Fuentes, and the Spanish Ambassador is eliminated.
- 41 "Lafin [the liason for the Dukes of Savoy and Biron] va a Milan a hablar con el Conde de Fuentes, porque ellos querian ocuparle en este trato [the conspiracy]: más aquel invencible Capitan no admitio platica tan indigna, diciendo que la grandeza de los Reyes Españoles, y el valor experimentado de sus subditos, no permitian vencer a los enemigos sino rostro a rostro, y siendo el Sol testigo de sus acciones. Desta respuesta, y de lo que luego dize que hizo el Conde, se conoce que el Rey de Francia deue al de Fuentes librarse desta conjuración" (Mártir Rizo, *Historia trágica*, 78v). The Spanish political and military commander Pedro Enriquez de Acevedo (1525–1610), the Count of Fuentes, also became the character of one of Lope de Vega's plays, *Pobreza no es vileza* (circa 1624) set against the backdrop of Fuentes's campaign in Flanders. Luis de Góngora and the Count of Villamediana wrote poems praising Fuentes's courage and service that mirror Mártir Rizo's opinion. According to José García de Salcedo Coronel, Góngora's sonnet "A este que admiramos de luciente" refers to the highly praised Count. See *Segundo tomo de las Obras de Don Luis de Góngora* (Madrid, Pedro Laso, 1644): 279–83. Góngora also mentioned Fuentes in his satirical sonnet "No más moralidades de corrientes," supposedly as a critique of Rodrigo Calderón and Lerma, who could not match Fuentes's greatness. Villamediana's poem ("Del saber de Dios las minas") also criticizes royal ministers but praises Fuentes. One can safely assume that Fuentes was a well-known figure in Spain, after such a long life devoted to the service of the Crown in its peripheral territories.
- 42 For the conspiracy, see José Luis Cano De Gardoqui, *La conspiración de Birón, 1602: tensiones hispanofrancesas en el siglo XVII* (Universidad de Valladolid, 1970).
- 43 For an excellent analysis of the conflict, see *The Count-Duke of Olivares, The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (Yale U. Press, 1986), 337–46. For the quote, John H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge U. Press, 1984), 112.
- 44 Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, 112.
- 45 For the Catalanian conflict, see Elliott's chap. 11, "A regimen under Pressure," in *The Count Duke of Olivares*.
- 46 Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, 112.

- 47 See Maravall, "Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo. Estudio preliminar"; and M. Pierre Mesnard, "Entre Bodin et Quevedo: l'humanisme politique de Juan Pablo Mártir Rizo," *Miscelánea de Estudios a Joaquim de Carvalho* 2 (1959):184–94. Mártir Rizo's four opening chapters of his *North of Princes* were translated from Bodin, and not even once in the text does he mention his source. As noted by Maravall, he also follows Machiavelli's *Prince*, devoting an entire chapter to the relationship between monarchs and ministers. In his *Life of Seneca*, for instance, he opens his book 'translating,' without any reference to the original, Machiavelli's first paragraph of chap. 22 from *The Prince*. See Izquierdo, *Pierre Matthieu en España*, 264. For a detailed discussion on Machiavelli's ideas in Spain, see Helena Puigdomènec, *Maquiavelo en España: Presencia de sus obras en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Fundación Universitaria Española, 1988). More recently, see, Keith D. Howard's chap. on Mártir Rizo's *Norte de Príncipes in The Reception of Machiavelli in Early Modern Spain* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis, 2014).
- 48 Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (London: Penguin Classics, 1984); *Politica*...ed. Waszink.
- 49 See Saül Martínez Bermejo, *Translating Tacitus: The Reception of Tacitus's Works in the Vernacular Languages of Europe, 16th–17th Centuries* (PLUS-Pisa U. Press, 2010), for fuller comments on the creation of a community of writers in Europe interested in this kind of literature. Matthieu's books (originals and Italian and Spanish translations) were present in the most important libraries of the time. For a detailed account, see Asensio Gutiérrez, *La France et les Français dans la littérature espagnole. Un aspect de la xénophobie en Espagne (1598–1665)* (Publications de l'Université de Saint Étienne, 1977). For comments on the circulation of books in Spain, see Fernando Bouza, *Hétérographies. Formes de l'écrit au siècle d'or espagnol* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010). The Count of la Roca, an influential politician and Tacitist writer, was a Spanish ambassador in Savoy in 1625–26, one of the nerve centers of the Biron conspiracy. For the biography of Juan Antonio de Vera y Zúñiga, Count of la Roca, see Carmen Fernández-Daza's *El primer conde de la Roca* (Badajoz [Spain]: Junta de Extremadura, 1995).
- 50 As studied by John Elliott, Antonio Feros and others, official historiography cannot be isolated from current political debate in connection with the phenomenon of the *valimiento* in Spain. See, for example, the collection of essays in *La España del conde-duque de Olivares*, ed. John Elliott and Angel García (U. de Valladolid, 1990).
- 51 For European historiography, see Orest Ranum's *Artisans of Glory: Writers and Historical Thought in Seventeenth-Century France* (U. of North Carolina Press, 1980); and Chantal Grell (dir.), *Les Historiographes en Europe de la fin du Moyen Age à la Révolution* (PU Paris-Sorbonne, 2006). For the quotation, 12. Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, in which historical cases are also treated as a source of experience, is another example of a narrative mode that combines historical and political instruction for princes and ministers. See Nicholas Popper, *Walter Raleigh's History of the World and the Historical Culture of the Late Renaissance* (U. of Chicago Press, 2012). See also J. F. Levy, "Hayward, Daniel and the Beginnings of Politic History in England," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 50 (1987): 1–34.
- 52 Montcher, *La historiografía real*, 21.
- 53 For the concepts and ideas on the invisibility of the translator, see Lawrence Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (New York: Routledge, 2008); and, more recently, Susan Bassnett's chap. "The Visibility of the Translator" in *Translation* (New York: Routledge, 2014).