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From Resistance to Reverence: My Translation Journey with *A Queda dum Anjo*

Da resistência à reverência: a minha jornada traduzindo A queda dum anjo

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Abstract: This article narrates the journey of translating Camilo Castelo Branco's *A Queda dum Anjo* into English, from the first reading to the completed work. It recounts the translator's initial resistance to Camilo's intricate allusions and stylistic complexities and how this evolved into an appreciation of the humour, satire, and historical richness embedded in his work. The article examines the linguistic and cultural challenges of bringing a nineteenth-century Portuguese novel to an English-speaking audience and reflects on key translation decisions shaped by the theoretical frameworks of Venuti and Newmark. By exploring the balance between fidelity to Camilo's style and accessibility for a contemporary English readership, it considers the translator's role in preserving cultural nuance. Ultimately, the translation seeks to introduce English-speaking readers to Camilo's distinctive voice and the enduring relevance of his social critique within the Portuguese literary canon.

Keywords: Camilo Castelo Branco; *A Queda dum Anjo*; literary translation.

Resumo: Este artigo narra a jornada de tradução de *A Queda dum Anjo* de Camilo Castelo Branco para o inglês, desde a primeira leitura até à conclusão do trabalho. Relata a resistência inicial do tradutor às alusões intrincadas e à complexidade estilística de Camilo, e como esta evoluiu

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para uma apreciação do humor, sátira e riqueza histórica presente na sua obra. O artigo examina os desafios linguísticos e culturais de trazer um romance português do século XIX para um público anglófono e reflete sobre as decisões-chave de tradução moldadas pelos quadros teóricos de Venuti e Newmark. Ao explorar o equilíbrio entre a fidelidade ao estilo de Camilo e a acessibilidade para um público contemporâneo de língua inglesa, considera o papel do tradutor na preservação das nuances culturais. Em última análise, a tradução procura apresentar aos leitores anglófonos a voz singular de Camilo e a relevância duradoura da sua crítica social no contexto do cânone literário português.

Palavras-Chave: Camilo Castelo Branco; *A Queda dum Anjo*; tradução literária.

1 Background

In January 2024 I was asked by Lisbon University's Cátedra Camilo Castelo Branco to translate Castelo Branco's *A Queda dum Anjo* into English. The second edition was chosen as being the last edition in which the provenance of the author's revisions is clearest. Initial eager acceptance of the work soon resolved into a significant degree of trepidation. Although I have always had a passion for nineteenth-century romanticism, the majority of my Portuguese-English translations between 2007 and 2024 were technical in nature, often involving translation of contemporary Brazilian Portuguese in the fields of science and technology or energy, for example my work on locational tariff structures (Etchebehere and Lima, 2021). Additionally, my works as a technical translator were rarely attributed and I had therefore retained a comfortable anonymity.[1] The prospect of turning from this to the translation from nineteenth-century European Portuguese of one of Portugal's most important authors was somewhat daunting (to be frank, more stomach-churningly terrifying than 'daunting'). In the cold light of day, I was not at all sure I could do it.

I am no academic. My translation of *A Queda dum Anjo* would therefore not be an 'academic' one, and neither was my envisioned reader an academic. My contribution here should instead come under the

[1] One exception is my work on Landscape and Urban Planning for Santos et al (2016).

heading of "any insights relevant to the occasion of Castelo Branco's 200th anniversary", and although I do worry about the value of my observations to such an august body as the readership of *A Revista do Centro de Estudos Portugueses*, I console myself with the thought that Camilo wrote to be read (and, for that matter, translated),[2] rather than studied, and this has been my guiding principle throughout. What I offer here is a short, personal narrative of my journey from a first reading of Camilo to total immersion in the translation, including my hopes of completing it and my fear of... not. Feigning modesty then, to paraphrase Camilo (1873, p. 5), I offer my own *bagatela* which I hope may be of some interest.

2 Conflict

My introduction to the Camilian world came in 2019 when, encouraged by friends, I browsed through *Amor de Perdição*, from which I recoiled simply because wrist-slashing genres are not generally my cup of tea, and I could not avoid encountering so many comparisons with Romeo and Juliet. Not even Camilo's preface (2020, p. 15), suggesting I might find the narrative laughable (if not humorous) was enough to persuade me to immerse myself. In 2023, I found *O Que Fazem as Mulheres* more to my taste, although at the time not enough to encourage any extended dalliance. In short, when I was confronted with *The Fall of an Angel*, I was not immediately disposed to favour either it or its author. Indeed, it was with some horror that I encountered constantly repeated character names, a cascade of classical references that were far beyond the level of my ignorance, and an intrusive authorial voice – all within the first few pages. However, I was at the same time drawn by the author's tongueincheek tone and self-deprecating humour – not at all what I expected – and, by the time I got to "*anatomia nacional*" (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 21) in chapter II, I was conflicted enough to be hooked.

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[2] He wrote, in *O Vinho do Porto*, *"Prevendo que estes folhetins vão ser traduzidos, convém que o tradutor alemão e os outros saibam que Maia e Silva é um chapeleiro dos mais imaginosos da Rua de Santo António, no Porto. Não queremos a imortalidade só para nós"* (1990a, p. 309). "Anticipating that these booklets will be translated, it is appropriate for the German translator and others to know that Maia e Silva is one of the most imaginative hat makers on Rua de Santo António, in Porto. We do not want immortality just for ourselves" (My translation).

3 Rising Action

I plunged on, battling uphill against the plethora of (to me) arcane and obscure references and allusions, clinging to a narrative I felt was sometimes teetering on the brink of an abyss of predictability.

Both the classical and Portuguese references challenged me considerably, although I feel I deserve at least a little compassion in the case of the latter. Not only was I no scholar of Portuguese history or culture, but the situation was not helped by the idiom and syntax of nineteenth-century European Portuguese.

Initially, however, the unknown references and allusions did not greatly worry me: I did not feel I needed to know so much about King Afonso Henriques, for example, and I felt able to gloss over whatever the Lamego Courts, already 700 years old in Camilo's day, might be. I could even turn a blind eye to closely-packed references like those to João das Regras, Martim de Ocem, the Monastery of Batalha, the Manueline Ordinances, and the Jerónimos Monastery, all flung at me in one sobering sentence (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 13). I registered them vaguely, and moved along. However, it did slow down my initial reading considerably, usually in direct proportion to how engaged I was with the narrative. And this, too, took time.

To begin with, I was not immediately drawn to the fuddy-duddy character of the protagonist, whose election to parliament transports him from the fields to the fleshpots of Portugal. Neither did I feel that the author was at any great pains to help me: Calisto and his actions were, after all, reportedly "*inoffensiva*" (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 13). To be honest, I initially saw Calisto as something of a caricature, and suspected that the narrative was going the way of a rather humdrum version of the monomyth. Things were not going well.

Fortunately, by Chapter VI I felt that things were looking up. Calisto was starting to show some mettle, and my instinct told me that his display of parliamentary prowess was coming much too early in the story for this to be his sole or ultimate trial. There must be more to it. I continued with more interest, in the expectation of something just around the next corner, and led by the humour in Camilo's style. The prospect of the confrontation with Dr. Libório was engaging, as were the descriptions of the two main characters up to this point. Then came the promise of a bit of passion at the end of Chapter X, and by the time the

first '*vaporações cálidas*' (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 119) filled Calisto's chest, I was rooting for him.

I found myself was increasingly drawn in by the rich vocabulary and complex satire in Camilo's narrative, providing a humorous critique of nineteenth-century Portuguese society while revealing something of his own feelings and attitudes. I also appreciated Camilo's ability to both engage me in the fictional world of his characters and spin me back to the time of my own youthful idiocies. I even began to appreciate Camilo's authorial intrusions and the fact that, although it was invariably light in touch, it seemed to leak a little of his own blood, sweat and tears onto the page. This is not the place to consider the novel's plot and characters in detail, but I do think the quality of both can affect a translator's spirits and motivation. In this case, certainly, I was beginning to feel a buzz of excitement – as much at what might be in store for the protagonist, as at the prospect of being able to bring the novel to light in English.

Having overcome my initial inertia with respect to the first few chapters, I was surprised to find myself enjoying the book and the easy playfulness of the prose and commentary, as for example in Teodora's letters and Calisto's cringeworthy reactions to them, or in the tale of "*o mordomo das três virtudes cardeais*" in chapter XXI. I also overcame my impatience with the constantly recycled and repeated epithets for Calisto (Calisto Elói de Silos e Benevides de Barbuda, Calisto, Calisto Elói, o morgado da Agra de Freimas, Calisto de Barbuda, Benevides de Barbuda, Barbuda, o morgado de Agra, deputado Calisto, o fidalgo, o fidalgo da Agra de Freimas, Fidalgo da Agra…), which are in fact another example of Camilo's characteristic irony and a playful poke at pomposity.

Beyond this, I grew more accustomed to Camilo's direct presence in the text and also found myself increasingly caught up in the joy of his descriptions, such as that of Dr. Libório in Chapter IX. I delighted, too, in little gems such as Calisto's reaction, in Chapter VI, when the abbot informs him of the state subsidy for St. Carlos Theatre*: "Calisto Eloy correu a mão pela fronte humedecida de suor civico, e sentou-se nas escadas da egreja de S. Roque, porque ao espanto, colera e dôr d'alma seguiram-se caimbras nas pernas"* (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 47), or in Chapter XIII, when we see Catarina's amateur dramatics played out for the benefit of her husband Duarte:

> *Era dor que lhe encolhia os folipos das lágrimas. Não arranjou a chorar. Caiu de golpe na poltrona de mais capacidade e flacidez*

> *para quedas daquela natureza! E, tapando a face com as mãos alvissimas, balbuciou, desentallando-se dos suspiros:*
> – Oh! que infeliz ! que infeliz ! (Castelo Branco, 1873, p.114)

The beginning of Chapter XXIII is also a little rollercoaster that takes us from the sublime paragraph beginning *"O desastre de Campolide quebrantaria um homem qualquer..."* (Castelo Branco, 1873, p.195) to the ridiculous frivolity of Calisto's thoughts on French furniture. *"...eu creio que se não offende a França no caso de chamarmos a este móvel uma cadeira longa..."* (Castelo Branco, 1873, p.197)

But it was not all plain sailing by any means. I found I could not easily skip over some of the avalanche of references that often required hours to penetrate. I was sucked into taking time out to calculate the value of a *vintém* in today's money; then I got lost in history, doing battle with the details of Aljubarrota and the *Ala dos Namorados*; while trying to see through the two trees of João de Castro proved quite impossible. Of course, I felt pleased with the references I *was* able to resolve, even if it did require a significant amount of reading (the stories of the Lamego Courts, of Count Julião and his daughter, or of Leonor Teles – all needed a degree of detective work in order to fully appreciate the historical context and the relevance to the narrative), and in many cases accurate or detailed explanations were only available in Portuguese, which slowed the process for me.

4 Climax

Ultimately, my frustration at having to put certain references aside in order to make progress on the narrative became as great as when I opted to stop and puzzle them out. In the end, my exasperation peaked with the growing stack of unresolved references.

While I cleared up several of them with help from the experts, some, like the Palmerin encounter, demanded an intense search through various sources, leaving me alternating between triumph and despair. Each resolved reference added to the translation's depth, yet the process often made me wonder if Camilo's intent was to 'stretch' his readers, or simply to stamp his authority on the satire. There were also a large number of anomalies that I had had to overlook in favour of reaching the end of the book: the Vasconcelos and Mouras defied me in Chapter XVII; the 'two trees' of Chapter VIII still cast impenetrable shadows; in Chapter XXI

it was the precise details of 'The Palmerin of England' that eluded me; and apart from all this, just who *was* the woman 'Pôncia' in Chapter IX?

Indeed I could not leave Pôncia alone, as it were. It was just one name, after all: how difficult could it be to find? I reasoned that with the *chapéu* over the 'o', it must surely be a Portuguese name, but an internet search yielded no result at all. It is so unusual for several search engines to fail to find a single reference to something, that my interest was guaranteed. Perhaps the circumflex was obsolete spelling. I tried 'Póncia' instead of Pôncia. Nothing. 'Poncia'? Nothing older than 1898. 'Ponciá', perhaps? Well, I found that this name occurs in the title of the contemporary Brazilian novel *Ponciá Vicêncio* (Evaristo, 2003), and that the novel itself does, coincidentally, have some tantalising links to Camilo's time. I got side-tracked again. I read a little of the novel. I even read about its link to Parnassianism. Three hours and a plea for help to my experts later, and… nothing. I had to let it go and leave the query to ripple through time and space, while I ground my teeth and continued along the plot line. The question was finally resolved several *weeks* later by an astute expert on the subject who posed the simple question 'could it not be a typographical error?' Change the 'n' for an 'r' and we get 'Porcia' – a perfect fit in context, and even in the temporal order of the full reference. Time to slap a hand to the forehead and call for painkillers.

In the end, the story carried me easily to the conclusion, for a fairly satisfying first reading – but all those references had piled up and sat now in an electronic corner glaring at me. Time to draw breath. I knew what I had to do.

5 Falling Action

Having finished the book, I laid it down to 'breathe' while I read a little about Camilo's life (Pimentel, 1890; Ribeiro, 1961; Cabral, 1995; Santos, 1992; Frier, 1996; Freitas, 2005) and reflected on the idea that we are all products of our experience. Orphaned at the age of 10, Camilo lived a life full of scandal, financial troubles, crises of faith or conscience, and ill health. I saw parallels with his contemporary Dickens, who was raised in difficult financial circumstances after his father was incarcerated in the

famous Marshalsea debtors' prison in London.[3] He subsequently worked as child labour and was later deeply hurt to find that his mother lost little love on him. Dickens was certainly more financially successful in later years, but his childhood experiences were the spur for much of his mordant humour.

Dickens was also heavily influenced by Romanticism (Starkowski, 2019]), and I recalled many scenes (and intrusive commentary) from stories such as *David Copperfield*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Great Expectations*. To me, the writing of the two authors bears some comparison, and the themes they favour are similar: social injustice, the arbitrary nature of fame and fortune, success and failure, and the pain of unfulfilled expectations. I find the frustration and pain that their styles evince are often as moving as the characters and stories they both so lovingly create to make their satire bite. The description of Sir Leicester Dedlock in *Bleak House*, or of Squeers in *Nicholas Nickleby* are cases in point: they could have been written by either author.

> Sir Leicester Dedlock is only a baronet, but there is no mightier baronet than he. His family is as old as the hills, and infinitely more respectable. He has a general opinion that the world might get on without hills but would be done up without Dedlocks… (Dickens, 1993, p. 7)
>
> He had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favor of two. The eye he had was unquestionably useful, but decidedly not ornamental: being of a greenish grey, and in shape resembling the fan-light of a street door. (Dickens, 2003, p. 59)

The same might be said of the description of Dr. Libório, or perhaps of Calisto's commentary on "*falaciosos ornatos*", both in Chapter IX of *A Queda dum Anjo*:

> *Impelido pelo couce de Pégaso, Libório já não podia retroceder. Foi para Coimbra: fez-se examinar em latim, e foi reprovado. [Libório] começou a dizer que era sabio em latim; e, por vingança dos examinadores, traduziu um poema latino com tanta claresa e fidelidade, que o poema original ficou sendo muito mais intelligível aos ignorantes de latim, do que a versão com que a memoria de Lucrecio fôra ultrajada.* (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 76)

[3] Marshalsea prison (1373-1842) was notorious in Dicken's day for housing, in the worst possible conditions, the poorest of England's debtors.

and

> *O sr. doutor, a meu juizo, é sujeito de grande imaginativa. Bonita coisa é idear fabulações em academia de poetas; porém, n'esta casa, onde a nação nos manda depurar a verdade dos fallaciosos ornatos com que a mentira se arreia, mister é que sejamos sinceros... É permittido aos versistas poetarem em prosa; mas as liberdades poeticas* não ajustam bem nos debates *circumspectos da res publica.* (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 85)

At the very least, I felt, Camilo might have read Dickens (and vice-versa) with some wry smiles and nods of approval.[4]

Eventually, I had to bring my mental meanderings to heel and do battle with the small mountain of unresolved references, so my second reading was almost entirely focused on these. The result was a large number of endnotes, and although it is impossible to detail here the work that went into them all, some were certainly more noteworthy in this respect than others. The passages that produced the greatest number of notes were clustered in fourteen pages between Chapters XV and XVIII (Table 1 refers). This is no more than might be expected, as Camilo gives rein to the two more or less erudite adversaries Calisto and Dr. Libório, but during my first reading, it did make me question whether I was up to the task or not.

Table 1: Some endnote references in Chapters XV - XVII

Note	Reference(s)	Origin	Date
60	Blumenbach	Germany	c.17
	Porta	Italy	c.17
61	Ribeiro dos Santos	Portugal	c.18
62	Egas	Portugal	c.12
	Fuas Roupinho	Portugal	c.12
	The ancient count	Portugal	c.17

[4] It is quite probable that Castelo Branco read Dickens, from whom he had three volumes of novels in his personal library (*Catalogo*, 1921, p. 348; see also Carvalho, 1887, p. 322; Castelo Branco, 1987, p. 974; Castelo Branco, 1990, p. 1128; and Coelho, 2001, pp. 115, 128-129).

64	Berryer	France	c.19
	Montalembert	France	c.19
65	Supico	Portugal	c.18
66	História Genealógica	Portugal	c.18
	Vilas-Boas	Portugal	c.17
67	Voltarete	Spain	c.19
68	Count Julião	Portugal	c.7
70	Cormenin	France	c.19
71	Dr. Manuel Mendes Enxúndia	Portugal	c.19
72	João Pinto Ribeiro	Portugal	c.17
	Julião	Portugal	c.7
	Vasconcelos	Portugal	c.17
	Moura	Portugal	c.17
76	Bernardes	Portugal	c.16
	Barros	Portugal	c.16
79	Casal Ribeiro	Portugal	c.19
	Latino Coelho	Portugal	c.19
	Tomás António Ribeiro	Portugal	c.19
	Rebelo da Silva	Portugal	c.19
	Vieira de Castro	Portugal	c.19
	Fontes (António Maria de Fontes Pereira de Melo)	Portugal	c.19

Source: Author's own elaboration

I have removed from the table any Latin references, on the basis that I (arguably) should have known these. The remainder are mostly Portuguese, and approximately 40% are of Camilo's time. Undoubtedly the trickiest – or at least most time-consuming – proved to be 'the ancient count', Julião and Florinda, and Enxúndia.

The first of these took the most time to resolve and required a significant degree of electronic legwork and, finally, recourse to the experts and beyond. The eventual answer that rolled back was that the ancient count in question was Rodrigo de Almeida, and that this itself was a reference to the work *Corte na Aldeia* (1619) by Francisco Rodrigues Lobo. Left to my own devices, and even given an extra six months, I seriously doubt I would have discovered this for myself.

Count Julião proved easier to unearth, if you will, and to be honest the reason the resolution took so long was that I found the story interesting enough to lose myself in it for more than a day.

Another reference that perplexed me was to Doctor Manuel Mendes Enxúndia, Pico Island and a walkway to the Baltic. I was able to locate some information on the relevant work by António Xavier de Azevedo, and Pico Island itself presented no problem. But what of the walkway? No answer was forthcoming even after several weeks of investigating, on-and-off. Finally, I had to abandon it, satisfied at least that the meaning and context of Calisto's sarcasm was clear.

Next, and having already resolved the mystery of the woman Pôncia, I went back to the missing trees in Sintra: "*Nestes cuido eu ver D. João de Castro, que empenhou as barbas, e tem duas árvores em Sintra...*" (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 70). Research into João de Castro was fascinating in its own right, but I found no mention of any trees, shrubs or even large plants. The connection with Sintra was clear, but I found nothing remotely arboreal until I read on the website of the Câmara Muncipal de Sintra that he had once cut down all the fruit trees in his Quinta da Penha Verde estate. This led me to procure more information about the estate itself and eventually I found the website serradesintra.net that included the quote "*[D. João de Castro] apenas pediu a Dom João III que 'lhe fosse dado um rochedo com 6 árvores* "'. I reasoned that since Camilo's original reference may have been intended figuratively rather than literally, this was probably as near to closure as I was likely to get, although I do hope to some day obtain the original source of the quote.

I turned next to identifying the precise words spoken by the Palmerin of England, which Calisto recalls in Chapter XXI:

> *Ahi por volta de meia noite estava Calisto recordando o que dissera, em circunstâncias analogas, Palmeirim, aquelle grão cavalleiro de Francisco de Moraes, diante do castello de Almourol que fechava em seus arcanos a formosa Miraguarda.* (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 179)

Although I encountered several tantalising extracts, theses or essays, I could not find a complete text of the work online. A lot of time was spent searching for the eponymous knight's first meeting with Miraguarda, but it was only when I was sent a copy of Margarida Alpalhão's doctoral thesis that I identified, in Chapter LX of the book, the encounter at the castle of Amourol. I was disappointed to find that the actual words spoken – *"agora vejo o que nam cuidava"* (Morães, 1964, p. 407) – were somewhat underwhelming, and they left me with no sense of

what Camilo really meant by his reference. In fact it required considerable further reading and research, until eventually I was able to understand the words in context (it was of course not the mere words, but the *implication* of them uttered by someone supposedly already passionately in love with another). This was a recurring issue throughout the translation: it was not enough to recognise the source of a reference, nor even to understand the precise words; it was essential to know the whole (other) story or history and to appreciate the words or events, in context, *and* interpreted in the same way as Camilo's characters interpreted them.

I had agreed not to use footnotes (although I translated Camilo's own footnotes) and it was as well: a total of 112 endnotes were eventually generated. There could have been more, if I had been writing down to my own level; there could surely have been fewer, if I had written up to an academic audience. Completing the task was to a large degree more difficult than the translation *per se*, and at the end of the process I reflected again on the similarities – or the lack of them – between Camilo and Dickens. The latter seems generally to have chosen allusions or references to works with which his readers would have been very familiar (the bible, Shakespeare, fairy tales, popular works like Robinson Crusoe, for example), such as when he uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to describe the character Gradgrind in *Hard Times*. Camilo, on the other hand, seems to me to have enjoyed 'stretching' the reader more. Where Dickens' intent may be to appeal to a wider audience and make it easy for them to follow his narrative, perhaps Camilo wishes to challenge readers to recall this or that detail from their patchy education, from ancestral myth or from local lore and, by doing so, give his satire greater breadth, depth and sharpness.

6 Resolution

I read the book fully three times more, and in the process adjusted and refined my choice of language. I took my cue from Venuti (1995) and Newmark (1988) and during the process became increasingly comfortable with Camilo. I felt I understood him and his intent. I heard Camilo's voice in one ear when I was deciding on a difficult passage, and that of Dickens in my other ear, if we two could not quite get the thing 'out' between us. I tried to keep the 'Portugueseness' of the text and the story, while generally favouring function over form when adjusting longer

more complex sentences for a contemporary English audience. The more familiar I became with author and novel, the more quickly some initially impenetrable sentences revealed themselves to me; and the better I felt I was able to accommodate his style by the simple expedient of revising the punctuation, rather than taking drastic action that risked reducing the complex artistry of his syntax to more easily understood banality. Two early examples may suffice.

> *Farpeados pela viperina lingua d'elle, os fidalgos provincianos retaliavam quanto podiam a prosápia dos Benevides, propalando que n'aquella familia se gerara um clerigo grande femieiro, beberrão e lambaz, a quem o santo arcebispo D. Frei Bartolomeu dos Martyres, uma vez, perguntára que nome havia ; e, como quer que o padre respondesse Onofre de Benevides, o arcebispo acudira dizendo: Melhor vos acertára com o nome, segundo a vida que fazeis, quem vos chamára de Bene bibis e male vivis.* (Castelo Branco, 1873, p.12)

Here the prose runs fairly breathlessly (and, to me, quite correctly) through *"...que naquela família se gerara..."*, all the way to *"...havia"* and beyond. I wanted to make this more attractive for contemporary English readers, without losing anything of the style. The result was this:

> When stung by his viperous tongue, provincial noblemen would retaliate as best they could, often encouraging a rumour that in the Benevides family, a cleric had once been born: a whoremonger, a drunkard, and a glutton. It was further rumoured that the venerable Archbishop Bartolomeu dos Mártires had once asked the cleric his name, and, when the priest had replied 'Onofre de Benevides', the Archbishop had quipped, 'Well, given the life you lead, you had been better named Onofre de Bene bibis and male vivis'.

The reader must be the judge, of course, but I can share at least the process and my thinking in the translation. I cut out the word *prosápia*, as it is obsolete in English, leaving the word 'family' to speak to the idea of genealogy.[5] I was then able to simply move Camilo's pause after *havia* and then transform it into a full stop. After this, some minor adjustments were made for English syntax, and otherwise the idea was to retain the

[5] *Oxford English Dictionary* (www.oed.com) 'prosapy', last recorded use around the mid 1600s.

sense and two-part balance of the 'anecdote' and perhaps increase the pace of the text slightly.

In chapter IV, Camilo records Calisto's thoughts on the women he sees in Lisbon.

> *Quanto aos bons carões das mulheres, Calisto, que, de um relancear honesto de olhos, observára os rostos pallidos e esgrouviados de algumas senhoras de Lisboa, não podendo arguir de fallacia o dizer de Luiz Mendes, atribuiu á degeneração dos costumes e raças o descarnado e amarellido das caras; no tocante á suavidade das vozes, ficou indeciso, não querendo desmentir o seiscentista, nem formar conceito por uns grunhidos de cantarola barbara com que os vendilhões pregoavam os comestiveis* (Castelo Branco, 1873, p. 31).

This is another example of one of Camilo's extended sentences, with punctuation that I feel maintains the flow while prompting the reader with the correct pauses (I find it helpful to imagine the novel being read aloud to an eager nineteenth-century audience). The language is wonderfully rich and the phraseology delightful, so the same approach was adopted: leave it as untouched as possible, while making it an easy read in contemporary English, with a slightly faster 'tempo'. This was done by changing the syntax in the first part of the sentence and accentuating slightly the break between the two related thoughts:

> As for the excellent complexions, Calisto had actually been struck by the pale and gaunt faces of some Lisbon ladies and, unwilling to doubt the veracity of his sixteenth-century author, attributed their emaciated and yellowish appearance to the general degeneration of society and race. In relation to the sweetness of the voices, he remained undecided, not wanting to contradict Vasconcelos, nor to form an opinion based only on the barbaric warbling of a few hawkers selling foodstuffs.

This overall approach guided me throughout my drafting and in all subsequent revisions (numbering seven in all), and I hope it resulted in a fair balance between accuracy and readability. Venuti (1995) lamented the loss of 'foreignness' in many translations, and I reflected on this for some time. I would agree that it was always at the back of my mind to provide an easily intelligible text for anglophone readers: I think it is conceptually difficult to prefer foreignness over intelligibility,

and I think I would instinctively distrust any translator who denied they were motivated to engage as effectively as possible with their audience. I believe the foreignness in *A Queda dum Anjo* owes at least as much to temporal, geographical and cultural features as it does to linguistic differences. I hope therefore that whether or not my choice of vocabulary or syntax contributes to the "invisibility of the translator", the uniqueness of Camilo and the 'Portugueseness' of the novel may still shine through.

In the end, although my specific choices and results are referred to in the Translator's Note in the translated book, the process has been very personal. Through it, I have fallen in love with Camilo. I have no doubt there may be variability in his works, above and beyond his 'restless heterodoxy', but this is surely inevitable over so many works from an author who, for the first time in Portugal, was under the considerable pressures that resulted from trying to make a living from his pen alone. He wrote, above all, to communicate ideas by engaging his readers, entertaining them and making them think. In this sense, and in context, I feel he deserves every bit of praise and respect he gets.

7 Conclusion

I do not believe that writers or translators are ever completely happy with their work. I have no doubt that some readers may feel that I could or should have translated more or less literally, that there are inaccuracies in the translation, that the punctuation might be improved, or that I have not quite captured all the nuances perfectly. I also believe that with the luxury of another six or twelve months I would surely change some of the text. On the other hand, writing to a brief or a deadline is a fact of life and a necessary evil, and injects some urgency and discipline into the process.

I have learned much during my journey this year – about Camilo, about Portugal, about Portuguese, and about the translation process. Ultimately, I hope the translation may bring Camilo into the light for a new English-speaking readership, preserving his humour, depth and cultural essence while offering insight into the rich Portuguese literary tradition.

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