Translation analysis with TEI: Mapping semantic units in Robert Southey’s *Amadis of Gaul*

The late fifteenth-century Iberian romance *Amadís de Gaula* offers an attractive opportunity for translators because it is particularly unmoored in time, space, and authorship. Medieval versions of the story have been lost, and sixteenth-century editions of the text often strip out the name and personality of Garci-Rodríguez de Montalvo, whose version of *Amadís* dates to 1508 and forms the basis for modern critical editions. Though twentieth-century scholarship points to a Castilian origin for the work, Robert Southey, translating the romance into English in 1803, believed that *Amadis* came from medieval Portugal and attempted in his translation to return the text to its “original” form, mostly via compression and omission. Earlier French translations of *Amadís*, meanwhile, had imagined *Amadís* to have a French origin for reasons of national pride. Early modern English translations, based on the French *Amadis*, replicated the myth of Gallic origin. Though Southey’s Portuguese thesis happened to be wrong, in effect his translation unwrites the politics of the French translations and restores, quite by accident, the Spanish identity of the romance for English readers.

Our digital project uses TEI to align Southey’s text with the Spanish text from which he translated, the 1547 Sevilla *Amadís*. We designed our markup to track and quantify Southey’s omissions, additions, and rewritings at the level of the clause and the sentence in the English text. We mapped these to “clause-like” segments of the Spanish text, so designated because the historic Spanish text carries its own distinct syntactical units that do not perfectly match the constructions of dependent and independent clauses in 19th-century English. Reviewing the corresponding units of text and their rearrangements leads us to form new hypotheses about how translation works at the level of the clause and the sentence. Our project deploys the TEI in some unusual ways to help us align parallel passages and consider what was reduced and superadded in the translation process. We will share our markup, data analysis, and visualizations of the alterations we are documenting in charts and SVG graphs. We look forward to discussing how our efforts might lead to formalizing a methodology for fine-grained analysis of translations.