

Notes on the Text of Diogo do Couto's *O Soldado Prático* *Notas sobre o texto d'O Soldado Prático de Diogo do Couto*

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Resumo: Apesar da sua fama entre críticos e historiadores de literatura portuguesa, a segunda versão d'*O Soldado Prático* de Diogo do Couto continua a apresentar grandes desafios no estabelecimento de uma lição fidedigna da obra. A última edição, editada por García Martín (2009), melhorou consideravelmente as edições anteriores de Brasil (1988), Lapa (1937) e Amaral (1790). Há, porém, certas frases e palavras que ainda precisam de correção ou de emenda, especialmente nos apotegmas clássicos, que podem ser melhorados por meio de uma análise dos livros espanhóis de que Couto se serviu como fonte sobre o mundo antigo. Este artigo propõe seis emendas ao texto de García Martín, comparando as leituras do manuscrito mais fiel, BNP nº 463, com quatro livros quinhentistas que serviram como fontes de apotegmas clássicos para o famoso diálogo de Couto.

Palavras-chave: Diogo do Couto. Crítica textual. Tradução. Recepção dos clássicos.

Abstract: Despite its fame among critics and historians of Portuguese literature, the revised second version of Diogo do Couto's *O Soldado Prático* has presented significant challenges to scholars seeking to establish a definitive edition of the dialogue. While the most recent edition, that of García Martín (2009), is a welcome improvement over earlier editions by Brasil (1988), Lapa (1937), and Amaral (1790), there remain a handful of passages in which the text can be further improved by a closer study of the Spanish books that Couto used as sources for the dialogue's many classical anecdotes. This article proposes a number of corrections and emendations to García Martín's edition by comparing the readings of the most reliable manuscript, BNP 463, with four 16th-century books that Couto consulted as sources of ancient sayings for his own dialogue.

Keywords: Diogo do Couto. Textual criticism. Translation. Classical reception.

FLP 23(1)

1 INTRODUCTION

The second (and better known) version of Diogo do Couto's *O Soldado Prático*, one of the classic works of early-modern Portuguese literature, has an interesting and complicated textual history¹. Composed in India during the final decades of the 16th century after the loss of an earlier version of the dialogue from the 1560s that circulated in Portugal without the author's name, Couto's famous critique of bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency in Portuguese India remained unpublished for nearly two

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¹ One of the dialogue's early editors, Manuel Rodrigues Lapa, observed that the text "é dos livros mais honrados da literatura portuguesa" (1937, p. xxviii). All citations and quotations of the Portuguese text of *O Soldado Prático* refer to the edition of Ana María García Martín (2009), unless otherwise noted.

centuries². The first printed edition of the text, which contained both versions of the dialogue, was later published by António Caetano do Amaral in 1790 under the title *Observações sobre as principaes causas da decadencia dos Portuguezes na Asia*. This *editio princeps* was based on a single manuscript copy of each version of the dialogue held in the library of the Academia das Ciências de Lisboa (cod. A. 1572), which required extensive emendation by Amaral (1790, p. xiii)³. The subsequent discovery of a more reliable manuscript of the second version of *O Soldado Prático*, MS. 463 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (BNP), led to greatly improved editions by Manuel Rodrigues Lapa (1937), Reis Brasil (1988), and Ana María García Martín (2009), as well as a recent English translation by Timothy Coates (2016). However, the uneven quality of the two surviving manuscripts, as well as a number of errors and inconsistencies that appear to be the fault of Couto himself, rather than of his copyists, have continued to present vexing challenges to editors and commentators seeking to establish a definitive version of the text.

One such challenge has consisted in determining exactly which errors in the text are merely transcription mistakes attributable to the copyists who produced the surviving manuscripts (and which, as such, ought to be emended), and which errors — such as historical inaccuracies or misattributions of ancient quotes — reflect the intent of the author himself and should therefore be retained in the text. This issue is particularly pronounced with respect to the roughly 70 anecdotes and quotations from Greco-Roman antiquity that appear in the dialogue, where previous editors have detected many confusing irregularities or outright mistakes in the extant manuscripts. Amaral, for example, in a note on Couto's credulous discussion of the (apparently fictional) Athenian 'Anaxilo', warns the reader of Couto's inaccuracy, but avers that genuine authorial material, however erroneous, ought to be retained in the text: "Não he este o unico lugar, em que se achará pouca exacção em ponto de Historia Antiga: mas assentou-se não se dever emendar mais que os erros da escrita, que se podia entender serem dos copistas, e não os do Author" (1790, p. 5)⁴. However, while numerous scholars and editors have pointed out similar inconsistencies in Couto's dialogue, such remarks are typically made only in passing, with little in the way of detailed explanation. Indeed, there have been few serious attempts to discover the specific literary sources for Couto's copious — and sometimes inaccurate — citations of classical sayings. Moreover, many commentators have found Couto's display of classical erudition tedious and overwrought, which has tended to discourage further investigation into where and how the author obtained his information about the classical world⁵. All the same, these classical anecdotes comprise a significant portion of the dialogue. Therefore, a more detailed examination of Couto's use of literary

FLP 23(1)

² For detailed discussion of the chronology of the two versions of the dialogue, see Martins (2001, p. 237-58). Various chronological details in the text of the second dialogue indicated that it was composed and revised intermittently during the last two decades of the 16th century.

³ Cf. Martins (2001, p. 205).

⁴ For the 'Anaxilo' anecdote, see Couto (2009, p. 65).

⁵ For assessments of Couto's classical anecdotes as "tedious" or "tiresome," see Amaral (1790, p. xii), Lapa (1937, p. xxvii), and Martins (1998, p. 301), as well as M. N. Pearson's foreword to Coates's English translation (2016, p. xi). Loureiro (1998) has catalogued a variety of classical literary sources cited in Couto's *Décadas da Ásia*, but typically without identifying the specific editions or translations consulted by the author. A similar study for *O Soldado Prático* would be immensely useful for assessing the sources of Couto's knowledge about classical antiquity.

sources is sorely needed for a better understanding of the text, in particular for the task of clarifying textual errors or faulty emendations.

While a comprehensive study of Couto's classical anecdotes lies beyond the scope of the present paper, it is my intention to show that, in the case of classical anecdotes where obvious errors have crept into the text, Couto was often translating closely from a Spanish version of a classical text. Moreover, by comparing the relevant passages of Couto's dialogue side-by-side with these sources, it is possible to correct certain errors introduced by the copyist that thus far have escaped detection, and also to adjudicate between conflicting emendations proposed by later editors. In the sections that follow, I discuss six passages containing textual issues or disputed readings, in the order in which they appear in the dialogue. For each passage, I begin by discussing any discrepancies that exist between the editions of García Martín (2009) and those of Lapa (1937) and Amaral (1790), as well as my own readings of BNP 463. I then compare the Portuguese passage with the Spanish sources used by Couto, in order to propose either an improved reading of the manuscript or, if necessary, a more faithful emendation of the text.

2 PROMETEU OR PTOLOMEU? (P. 211–12)

One of the key themes of Couto's critique of Portuguese colonial administration in India is the complexity and inefficiency of existing judicial processes, which are discussed at length in the third scene of Part 2. While Couto cites both medieval and contemporary legal theorists in this discussion, a significant portion of the scene is dedicated to citations of various models of legislative and judicial clarity from classical antiquity⁶. In one such passage, Couto contrasts the complicated, jargon-laden judicial procedures employed in Portuguese India with the systems established by ancient lawgivers and legal philosophers:

Naquelas repúblicas antigas, os graves legisladores que as governavam nunca lhe insinaram esta ordem do juízo que hoje se usa... o que nunca Sócrates insinou aos atenienses, nem Sólon aos gregos, nem Numa Pompílio aos romãos, nem Ptolomeu aos egípcios, nem Licurgo aos lacedemónios, nem todos os mais que fizeram e ordenaram leis para o bom governo de seus povos, só por os afastarem de contendas, trapaças, preitos e demandas. (Couto, 2009, p. 211-12, emphasis added).

In the line identifying the lawgiver for the Egyptians, both surviving manuscripts read *Prometheo*, which Amaral (1790, p. 101) retains without comment, and which Lapa (1937, p. 157) retains as well, but a modernized spelling: *Prometeo*. However, García Martín, perceiving an error in Couto's attribution of Egyptian laws to the Greek god Prometheus, emends the text to *Ptolomeu*, a name used by various Greek rulers of Hellenistic Egypt. However, García Martín's emendation is not entirely satisfying, since the Ptolemaic kings ruled Egypt at a relatively late period of history, and they are typically not mentioned as foundational 'lawgivers' for the Egyptians in the way that Solon is for the Athenians, or Numa for the Romans.

⁶ Elsewhere in this scene Couto mentions the 14th-century Italian jurists Bartolus de Saxoferrato and Baldus de Ubaldis (Couto, 2009, p. 209), as well as the 16th-century Spanish humanist, Juan Luis Vives (2009, p. 217).

Interestingly, Couto's source for this passage appears not to have been a translation of any ancient text, but rather a 16th century Spanish book of moralizing advice for courtiers, Antonio de Guevara's *Aviso de privados, y doctrina de cortesanos* (1539). Best known for his pseudo-historical — yet quite popular — biographies of Marcus Aurelius, the *Libro áureo de Marco Aurelio* (1528) and the *Libro del eloquentissimo Emperador Marco Aurelio con el relox de príncipes* (1529), Guevara had a reputation among contemporaries for carelessness in his reporting of classical anecdotes and apothegms, many of which were either mangled or completely fabricated⁷. Yet despite his tendency to misreport or even to invent details from Antiquity, Guevara's works were widely read and frequently reprinted in 16th century Europe, and it is quite plausible that Couto had access to a printed copy of the *Aviso de privados, y doctrina de cortesanos*, either in Goa or in Lisbon. In the passage that appears to have served as Couto's source, Guevara reports a similar list of ancient lawgivers who avoided the kind of litigious pleading that plagued the Spanish and Portuguese courts⁸:

Es el pleytear una sciencia tan profunda, que ni Socrates a los Athenienses, ni Solon a los Griegos, ni Numma Pompilio a los Romanos, ni Promotheo a los Egipcios, ni Ligurguio [sic] a los Lacedemones, ni Platon a sus discipulos, ni Apolonio a los Menphicos vates, ni Hiarchas a los Indios, nunca la supieron enseñar, ni aun la hallaron para en los libros de sus Republicas la escribir. (Guevara, 1539, fol. 16v, emphasis added).

FLP 23(1)

While Guevara lists more lawgivers than Couto does, it is clear from the ordering of the first five names, Socrates, Solon, Numa, Prometheus, and Lycurgus, as well as the overall context and phrasing, that Couto was essentially translating the first half of this catalogue from Spanish into Portuguese. Of particular relevance for the text of Couto's dialogue is the fact that Guevara's Spanish text erroneously attributes the laws of the ancient Egyptians to *Promotheo*, which is the reading that is also found in both manuscripts of *O Soldado Prático*.

It appears, then, that the bizarre attribution of Egyptian laws to Prometheus that appears in the surviving manuscripts of *O Soldado Prático* is in fact a faithful transcription of the author's original intent—a product of Couto's reliance upon Guevara as a source of information about classical antiquity. Given that Couto's mistaken use of *Prometheo* is, therefore, a product of his less-than-scrupulous use of *Aviso de privados, y doctrina de cortesanos* as a historical source, rather than a transcriptional error by a copyist, we ought to retain the reading found in the manuscripts, *Prometheo*, or its modernized equivalent, *Prometeu*, as Lapa does.

⁷ On Guevara's reputation for inaccuracy, see Blanco (2016, p. 33). Commenting upon a list of mistranslated and erroneous names in Guevara's *Una década de Césares*, Joseph Jones argues that many of Guevara's mistakes were due to his faulty grasp of Latin (1966, p. 21-22).

⁸ The *Aviso de privados, y doctrina de cortesanos* went through numerous printings in the 16th century, most of which differ only with respect to pagination and slight changes in orthography. This treatise was first published by Juan de Villalquira as part of an anthology titled *Las obras del illustre señor don Antonio de Guevara* (Valladolid, 1539). Standalone editions of the *Aviso de privados, y doctrina de cortesanos* were later published in Valladolid (1545) and Antwerp (1546). For all Spanish quotations, I have retained the orthography of the original text, while modernizing capitalization and punctuation for ease of reading.

3 *TRIUMPHE* OR *TRIUMPHET*? (P. 231–2)

In the following scene, Couto engages in an extended discussion of the different virtues that civil and military officials ought to display, with frequent reference to ancient Greek and Roman examples. Near the end of a section on clemency and mercy, which cites examples relating to Antoninus Pius, Julius Caesar, Miltiades, Philip of Macedon, and Scipio Africanus, Couto describes the following interaction between Pompey the Great and the aging Roman dictator Sulla, in which the young general was granted the extraordinary honor of celebrating a triumph, despite not having yet achieved senatorial rank:

Pompeu, dignamente merecedor de sobrenome de Magno, por sua clemência chegou a triunfar quando veio de África, sem haver sido senador; e porque Sila, que primeiro que todos lhe chamou Magno, foi o que o quis estorvar, virando-se Pompeu a ele, lhe disse: “Não sabes, Sila, que muitos mais adoram o sol ao nacer que ao pôr?”, querendo dizer que em tanto se há-de ter o homem que começa a crescer em virtudes como o que vai acabando; e visto por Sila sua brandura e clemência, começou a gritar: “*Triumphet! Triumphet!*” Mas Sérvio, senador, o não quis consentir, sem primeiro lhe não dar algumas peitas, ao que lhe respondeu Pompeu que tal não faria, porque honras compradas ficavam sendo vitupério. (Couto, 2009, p. 231–2, emphasis added).

FLP 23(1)

Although both the BNP manuscript and Amaral’s edition (1790, p. 114) read *triumphe*, *triumphe* at the moment where Sulla grants Pompey permission to hold his triumph, García Martín follows Lapa (1937, p. 178) in emending the imperative *triumphe* to the Latin jussive subjunctive form *triumphet* in the third person singular⁹. In contrast with the manuscript reading, in which Sulla addresses Pompey directly (‘triumph! triumph!’) Lapa’s emendation subtly shifts the grammar, so that Sulla instead refers to the young general indirectly in the third person (‘let him triumph! let him triumph!’).

Fortunately, this particular anecdote was the subject of various translations and retellings in both Latin and Spanish in the early modern period, and due to differences in phrasing between these versions, it is possible to identify the exact source used by Couto: Diego Gracián de Alderete’s *Morales de Plutarco*, published first in 1548 and then again with minimal corrections in 1571¹⁰. While Couto does not translate word for word from Gracián’s description, the correspondences are numerous enough to confirm his reliance upon this Spanish version of the text, rather than a Latin or Italian translation¹¹:

⁹ For the identification of *triumphet* as a Latin subjunctive, see Lapa (1937, p. 178 n. 20); cf. Brasil (1988, p. 116, n. 36).

¹⁰ For the relationship of Gracián’s 1548 edition of the *Morales* to his earlier 1533 translation of the *Apotegmas*, see Morales (2000, p. 243).

¹¹ This episode is also described in Alfonso Fernández de Palencia’s *Las vidas*, the earliest printed translation of Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* in Spanish (1491, part 2, fol. 73r). However, both the phrasing and content of Palencia’s translation differ significantly from that of Couto’s Portuguese version. Támara’s Spanish translation of Erasmus’s *Apothegmata*, which is similar to Gracián’s version, also reads *triumphe*, *triumphe* (Támara, 1549, fol. 42v), while Erasmus’s Latin text simply reads *triumphet* one time, without any repetition (1561, p. 316).

Tornando de Africa Sila le rescibio con mucha honrra, y el primero de todos le llamo Magno, que quiere dezir grande, pero queriendo Pompeyo triumphar no se lo permitio, porque aun no era Senador. Por lo qual como Pompeyo dixesse a los que alli estavan. *Sila no deve saber que muchos mas adoran al sol quando sale, que quando se pone.* Queriendo dezir que en tanto se ha de tener el hombre que comiença creciendo en virtud como el que va acabando. Entonces a vezes dixo Sila *triumphe, triumphe*. Empero como Servilio varon Senador no consintiesse, y muchos de los hombres de guerra resistsen al triumpho pidiendo algunos dones, les dixo Pompeyo. *Que antes dexaria el triumpho que lisongearles:* entonces dixo Servilio. *Agora tengo a Pompeyo por grande, y digno de triumpho.* (Gracián, 1548, fol. 21v, emphasis added).

As we can see in the translation above, Gracián uses the imperative form *triumphe*, rather than the Latinized emendation in the 3rd person proposed by Lapa. With respect to the correct reading of Couto's text, it is clear from the passage just cited that the *triumphe* found in the manuscripts of *O Soldado Prático* is not an erroneous rendering of the Latin word *triumphet*, as Lapa supposed, but rather an accurate transcription of the Spanish verb *triumphar* (with its Latinate, anachronistic spelling) in the imperative mood, as it is printed in Gracián's text.¹² Consequently, we should reject Lapa's emendation, which appears to have been a hypercorrection arising from the faulty assumption that Couto intended to quote the phrase in Latin. Instead, I propose restoring the original reading of the BNP manuscript: *triumphe, triumphe*, understood here as the imperative form of the Portuguese verb *triumfar*, written with an archaic, Latinate orthography.

FLP 23(1)

4 MEILICHIOI OR MELICHION? (P. 234)

Only a few pages later within the same scene, Couto ends his discussion of mercy with a short digression on Greek etymology. Drawing once again upon a detail originally preserved in Plutarch, Couto explains that the Greeks gave their gods and kings the epithet *meilichioi* ('mild' or 'gracious') to highlight their gentle, forgiving nature:

A esta virtude da clemência, de que vou tratando, chamavam os gregos *philanthropia*, que quer dizer afabilidade humana; e assi os mesmos, quando queriam engrandecer os seus deuses e seus reis, lhe chamavam *meilichioi*, que é tanto como chamar-lhes mansos e amorosos, o que nos reis há de resplandecer muito, porque os homens querem ser levados por amor em todas as cousas. (Couto, 2009, p. 234, emphasis added).

For the Greek epithet underlined in the passage above, García Martín follows both Amaral (1790, p. 115) and Lapa (1937, p. 180) in printing *meilichioi*, the plural nominative form of the ancient Greek adjective *μειλιχιοι*. However, García Martín also observes in a note on the text that the reading of the BNP manuscript appears to be *melichié* (2009, p. 243, n. 742). While the change from *-e* to *-ei* in the first syllable of

¹² Interestingly, the error of *Servio* for *Servilio* in Couto's text may also be a function of his use of Gracián as a source. In the first edition of *Morales de Plutarco*, the name *Servilio* falls at the end of a line, where it is hyphenated and split in two before continuing on the line below: *Servi- | lio* (1548, fol. 21v). Couto (or a copyist) easily could have missed the three letters after the line break and transcribed the name without its correct ending.

the word is unremarkable and can be explained as a minor orthographical adjustment, it is worth asking whether the accented *-é* at the end of the word in the manuscript should be understood as a transcription error, as an artifact of 16th-century orthography, or as something else entirely.

Although none of the three editors who print *meilichioi* explicitly state their reasons for emending *-é* to *-oi*, it is possible to interpret the *-é* ending as the Latinized rendering of the Greek diphthong *-oi*, which was often transliterated in medieval and early modern texts as a single long *-e* vowel. However, since this particular anecdote is derived from Plutarch's *De cobibenda ira*, we can examine the various translations that might have been available to Couto to determine which specific source he used.

Of the various Latin and Spanish translations of *De cobibenda ira* from the 15th and 16th centuries, the version that most closely matches Couto's version of the *meilichioi* passage is the Spanish translation by Diego de Astudillo, who printed it alongside his translation of Juan Luis Vives's *Introductio ad sapientiam* (1551). Working from an earlier Latin translation of Plutarch, Astudillo writes: "Y ansi los Griegos el mayor loor que davan al rey (el qual ellos hazian a sus dioses) era, llamarle Milichion que quiere dezir manso, y amoroso" (1551, fol. 75v, emphasis added)¹³. When compared with other translators of Plutarch from this period, such as Erasmus, who glosses the Greek adjective with the Latin word *placidum*, or 'gentle' (1544, fol. 208v), or Gracián, who prints "suave y aplazible" (1548, fol. 152v), Astudillo's rendering of the Greek adjective *meilichios* as "manso y amoroso" offers the likeliest model for the "mansos e amorosos" phrasing employed by Couto in *O Soldado Prático*. It would appear, therefore, that Couto's source for this particular anecdote printed *Milichion* in the singular form, rather than the plural *Meilichioi*.

In terms of typography, two additional details in Astudillo's text provide clues that can help to clarify our reading of Couto. First, in keeping with the common practice of early modern printers, the *-n* at the end of the adjective in Astudillo's text was printed as a horizontal bar over the preceding vowel: *Milichiō*. Second, in the copy of Astudillo's translation that has been digitized by the Biblioteca Nacional de España, the distribution of ink in the bottom-right corner of the final vowel is uneven, such that the letter *-ō* could be mistaken for an *-ē*. It is possible to imagine, therefore, that Couto mistook Astudillo's *Milichiō* for *Milichiē* — a mistake that may have been reinforced by the fact that the next Greek word mentioned a few lines later, *Memacte*, ends in the same letter. Moreover, the diacritical mark that García Martín identifies as an accent in the manuscript of Couto's dialogue (*melichiê*) is in fact the common typographical abbreviation for either an *-m* or an *-n*: *melichien*. See, for example, the similarity between curved the mark on the ending of *melichie* and the mark indicating an *-m* at the end of the word *tambem*, found on the same page of the manuscript (60v)¹⁴:

¹³ For the Latin sources of Astudillo's translation, see Morales (2000, 104, 106–109).

¹⁴ Manuscript digitalized by the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal. Available at: <https://purl.pt/29499>.

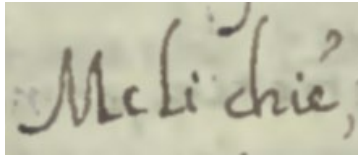


Figure 1 – “Melichien” (fol. 60v of BNP nº 463).

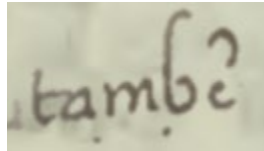


Figure 2 – “tambem” (fol. 60v of BNP nº 463).

Returning now to the question of textual accuracy and authorial intent in this passage, I offer two final thoughts. First, the text of BNP 463 shows that Couto copied somewhat uncritically from Astudillo in this passage, changing certain words from the Spanish translation into the plural (*reis* instead of *rey*, and *mansos e amorosos* in place of *manso y amoroso*), while retaining the Greek adjective in its singular form: either *melichien* or *melichion*, depending on whether we choose to attribute the incorrect vowel at the end of the word to Couto’s misunderstanding of Astudillo, or to a copyist’s mistake. Thus, while Amaral’s emendation to the plural form *melichioi* fits the syntax of Couto’s version better, allowing the Greek adjective to agree in number with its plural subject *reis*, it does so by disguising Couto’s reliance upon Astudillo’s translation and by correcting not just the text, but also the author himself. Given that Couto was working from Astudillo’s text, and in light of the fact that the mark over the final vowel is clearly the abbreviation for an *-n*, rather than an accent, I believe it would be more appropriate to instead print *melichion*, and to explain the source of this grammatical discrepancy in a footnote.

FLP 23(1)

5 CRESO OR CRASSO? (P. 236)

In the following scene, Couto turns his discussion to the subject of generosity and greed, citing a number of ancient examples where rulers and generals were undone by their own avarice. Among these figures, which include King Achaeus of Lydia and Marcus Lepidus the Triumvir, is a certain “Cresso,” who died at the hands of the Parthians: “Cresso isso mesmo foi causa de sua morte, porque sua avareza o levou a morrer a mãos de partos” (Couto, 2009, p. 236, emphasis added).¹⁵ While neither Amaral nor Lapa provide any commentary on the name *Cresso*, both García Martín and Coates identify this figure as King Croesus, who ruled Lydia in the 6th century until its conquest by the Persians under Darius¹⁶. However, the framing of this death as a consequence of avarice does not align with traditional portrayals of Croesus, whose name was frequently associated with extreme wealth, but rarely with greed per se. Moreover, while the term *partos* in 16th-century Portuguese and Spanish is occasionally applied to the ancient Persians, it more precisely denotes the Parthians, who ruled the

¹⁵ MS: *Creso* (fol. 61r).

¹⁶ García Martín (2009, p. 236, n. 753); Coates (2016, p. 129, n. 73).

successor state to the Persian Empire from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD, and who thus do not overlap with Croesus's reign in the 6th century BC.

In fact, it would be more appropriate to understand this story of “greed” and “Parthians” as referring not to Croesus (*Cresso*), but rather to the Roman general Crassus (*Crasso*). Both Croesus and Crassus were proverbially wealthy in antiquity, but unlike Croesus, Crassus's reputation was one of unbridled and destructive avarice¹⁷. In addition, Crassus's desire for wealth and glory led him to initiate a poorly planned invasion of the Parthian Empire in 53 BC that ended in a disastrous defeat, followed shortly after by his own death.

In terms of the spelling of the name, it is easy to imagine that either Couto or his copyists wrote *Creso* (the manuscript reading) as a mistake for *Craso* or *Crasso*, since the two names occasionally appear as variant spellings in renaissance Portuguese and Spanish. For example, in the *Vida e Feitos de Júlio César*, an anonymous 15th-century Portuguese translation of the 13th-century *Li Fet des Romains* (which offers a history of the late Roman Republic based largely on the works of Suetonius, Caesar, and Lucan), the names Crassus and Cressus are used interchangeably. In a description of Croesus's death, which occurred along the river Halys in Lydia, the author spells the Lydian king's name as *Crassus* instead of *Cressus* or *Cresso*: “os da terra onde Crassus foi morto aalem da agua, d'Alisa” (1970, vol. 2, p. 392, emphasis added). Elsewhere in the *Vida e Feitos de Júlio César*, Crassus's name appears in a variety of spellings: Crasus, Crasius, Crassus, Clusus, Clausus, and Crassios, further confirming that the spelling of this name was not particularly stable in early modern Portuguese¹⁸.

FLP 23(1)

In light of these two factors — the fluidity of 16th century orthography and the fact that Crassus better fits the narrative of a death due to greed at the hands of the Parthians — I believe it would be appropriate to emend *Cresso* to *Crasso*, and to understand this as a reference not to Croesus, the King of Lydia, but to the Roman triumvir.

6 *SINTINAYAS DE MILHÕES?* (P. 238–9)

One of the most vexing passages in the text of *O Soldado Prático*, which has elicited significant emendation on the part of its editors, occurs in a catalogue listing the achievements of Pompey the Great on his eastern campaigns. Citing Plutarch as his source, Couto approvingly notes the great amount of spoils that Pompey contributed to the public treasury:

O grande Pompeu com esta virtude sojugou todo Ponto, Arménia, Síria, Cilícia, a grã Mesopotâmia, Fenícia, Palestina, Judea, as Arábias, e muitas outras nações; trinta e nove cidades que deixou com presídios romãos, afora novecentas outras que deixou sem eles, mil castelos e novecentas naus que tomou a diferentes piratas; e isto segundo conta Plutarco. E diz que da terceira vez que triunfou da Ásia sojeitou isto; e que os trebutos

¹⁷ For the association of both names with extreme wealth in renaissance literature, cf. Canto 38.2 of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*: “che Creso o Crasso insieme non ridusse...”

¹⁸ s.v. *Marcus Crassus* in glossary (1970, vol. 2, p. 784). The misspelling of *Cresso* for *Crasso* in Portuguese texts is found as late as the 19th century; cf. Juromenha (1866, vol. 5, p. 181). Cf. Muñoz Maldonado (1863, p. 81).

que deixou postos a estas províncias montaram cinco centos de dous centos de milhões, e que trouxera para o tisouro público vasos d'ouro e prata que pesavam vinte mil talentos, afora o que repartiu com os soldados; e que o que menos houve foram mil e quinhentas dracmas. (Couto, 2009, p. 238–9, emphasis added).

In the portion of the text where Couto mentions the increase of taxes brought about by the addition of Pompey's new provinces, the BNP 463 manuscript contains an obvious error, which editors have struggled to resolve: *sincoenta des sintinayas de milbois*. While the original Greek text of Plutarch reports that this amount was “50 million” (*Pomp.* 45), Lapa's correction of the nonsensical *sincoenta des sintinayas* to *cinco centos de dous centos* — which García Martín also prints — is difficult to reconcile with what appears in the manuscript. Similarly, Amaral's reading of the Academia das Ciências manuscript, *cincoenta mil homens*, fails to resolve the issue, since the number itself is orders of magnitude too small, and the mention of ‘men’ is out of place in a discussion of cash taxes (1790, p. 118)¹⁹.

One approach that Couto's editors have not pursued, but which can help us make sense of both the bewildering *sintinayas* in BNP 463 and the out-of-place *homens* that appears in Amaral's edition (based on the Acad. A 1572 manuscript), is to compare Couto's text with the first printed translation of Plutarch's *Life of Pompey* in Spanish, from Alfonso de Palencia's *La primera y segunda parte de Plutharcho* (1491). Although Couto's version differs in a few minor respects, the close correspondences in phrasing clearly point to Palencia as the primary source for Couto's discussion of Pompey:

Eran estas regiones. Ponto. & Armenia & Capadocia. & Paphlagonia. & Media. & Colchis. & Iberia. & Albania. & Syria. & Ciliçia. & Messopotamia. & los judios. & Arabes que moran çerca de Phenicea & Palestina. E aun quantos linajes de Cossarios por tierra y por mar fueran vencidos y entre estas cosas se notava: como avia tomado pocos menos de mill castillos: o villas fuertes: y noventa çibdades: y ochocientos navios de corsaje: y que dexava enfortaleçidas con guarniçiones de romanos treynta y nueve çibdades. Y a todo esto se añadia que montando tales los tributos que pagavan fasta entonçe a roma diez vezes çinquenta centenares de millares: llegavan ya estas sumas con lo que adquirio Pompeyo para el pueblo romano a ochenta y çinco mill vezes de çentenares de millares. (Palencia, 1491, part 2, fol. 83v, emphasis added).

In her edition of Couto's 8th volume of the *Décadas da Ásia*, Maria Augusta Lima Cruz (1994, 350, vol. 2) notes that Couto was often imprecise or inaccurate in his reporting of numbers in the *Décadas*, so it is perhaps not surprising that we find certain discrepancies in Couto's translation of Palencia, such as Couto claiming that Pompey captured 900 ships where Palencia says 800. Moreover, while Couto reports the conquered provinces in the same order as Palencia, he omits a handful of names from the middle of Palencia's list: “Capadocia & Paphlagonia & Media & Colchis & Iberia & Albania” (1491, part 2, fol. 83v).

More importantly, however, the portion of Palencia's text that deals with the increase in tax revenues offers an attractive origin for the corrupted reading *sintinayas* found in BNP 463. Although Couto omits the *diez vezes* that appears at the beginning

¹⁹ Lapa (1937, p. 184) and Amaral (1790, p. 118, emphasis added) also list the following alternative reading for the number of ‘ships and cities’ found in Acad. A 1572: “afora novecentas naus que tomou a diferentes piratas e novecentas çidades que deixou sem presidio romano e mil castelos”.

of the number in the Spanish translation, the rest of the phrase printed by Palencia, *cinquenta centenares de millares*, is very close in both sound and spelling to the nonsensical *sincoenta des sintinayas de milbois* preserved in the manuscript of *O Soldado Prático*. The word *sintinayas*, therefore, is likely a corruption of the word *centenares* or *centenas*, and the Portuguese text should be amended to *cincoenta de centenas de milhões*.

One additional issue remains concerning Couto's use of Palencia as a source in this passage: namely, the change from *millares* in Spanish to *milhões* in Portuguese. Is it possible that Couto originally wrote *cincoenta de centenas de milhares*, instead of *milhões*? Translations of classical works in the 16th century were often imprecise in their reporting of numbers, so it is at least worth considering the possibility. Fortunately, Amaral's reading of Acad. A. 1572 helps to clarify the original text, despite the fact that it is clearly erroneous itself. Where the Academia das Ciências manuscript reads *cincoenta mil homens*, I propose that *mil homens* was a copyist's error for *milhões*, which can be explained as a function of orthographic abbreviations. As discussed above in the case of the Greek word *Milichion*, 16th century texts often represented the letters *-m* and *-n* by placing a horizontal stroke above the preceding vowel. Thus, *mil homens* could be written with the abbreviation *mil hões* in a manuscript. I believe, therefore, that the copyist of the Academia das Ciências manuscript misinterpreted the circumflex in *milhões* as an abbreviation for the letters *-m* and *-n* in the word *homens*. In conclusion, based on this comparison between the readings of BNP 463, Acad. A. 1572, and Palencia's *Life of Pompey*, I believe that the manuscript reading *sincoenta des sintinayas de milbois* should be emended to *cincoenta de centenas de milhões*.

FLP 23(1)

7 MÉNON OR MEMNON? (P. 250)

The final passage that I will consider involves another moment of confusion regarding a Greek name in an anecdote recorded by Plutarch. In an extended discourse on the need for prudent speech among military commanders, Couto's *Soldado* reports the following anecdote, in which the Persian King Darius reproaches "Ménon," one of his Greek captains, for speaking ill of Alexander:

De Dario se escreve que, estando um dia comendo, movendo-se práticas entre os seus sobre Alexandre, um capitão chamado Ménon, que não era prudente na boca, meteu muito cabedal em dizer males de Alexandre, o que Dario não sofreu, e com ira lhe disse: —*Cala-te, Ménon, que não te trago comigo para que desonres Alexandre com a língua, senão para que o venças com a espada*. (Couto, 2009, p. 250, emphasis added)

As Lapa observes in a note to this passage, BNP 463 reads *Minō* (i.e. *Minon*), and García Martín follows Lapa in emending this name to reflect its updated spelling, *Ménon*. In contrast, Amaral prints *Memnon*, a different name altogether, which is in fact the version of the name found in the original Greek text of Plutarch (*Moralia* 174c), as well as in Gracián's Spanish translation²⁰. This discrepancy presents a particularly interesting challenge, because BNP 463 generally offers more accurate readings of the

²⁰ See Gracian (1548, fol. 3r, emphasis added): "Memnon que por el rey Dario peleava contra Alexandre, oyendo a un soldado dezir de Alexandre muchas cosas feas; y que no eran de hablar, le hirio con la lança, diciendo: Yo te mantengo para que peles contra Alexandre, no para que digas mal del."

text than Acad. A. 1572, yet in this particular instance the Academia das Ciências manuscript is more faithful to the Plutarchan source material.

The challenge is resolved, however, when we recognize that Couto's source for this anecdote was not Gracián's translation, but rather a slightly more inaccurate version of the story found in Antonio de Guevara's *Aviso de privados, y doctrina de cortesanos*. Like the *Prometeu* anecdote discussed above, Guevara's version of the story contains noteworthy errors, including the name of Darius's captain:

El rey Dario, estando un día comiendo, moviose platica a su mesa de hablar de Alexandro Magno, y como un su muy querido capitán, que avia nombre Miño, cargasse mucho la mano en dezir mal de Alexandro Magno, dijole el Dario: *Calla tu lengua, Miño, que yo no te traygo en esta guerra para que deshonres a Alexandro con la lengua, sino para que le venças con la espada.* (Guevara, 1539, fol. 39r, emphasis added).

Unlike Plutarch and Gracián, who report that it was Memnon who reproached one of his soldiers for speaking ill of Alexander, Guevara transposes the quotation to Darius, thus making the Greek captain the *recipient* of this rebuke — an error that Couto reproduces in his own version of the story. Moreover, it is clear that Couto's rendering of the Greek name as *Minō* (i.e. *Minon*) derives from Guevara's version, which prints *miño*.

Given that Couto's source for this anecdote was Guevara's *Aviso de privados, y doctrina de cortesanos*, and not Gracián's Spanish translation of Plutarch's *Morales*, the BNP 463 reading of *Minon* is, in fact, the more accurate reading, although it is less faithful to the original version of the story preserved in Plutarch. Furthermore, it seems that the reading of *Memnon* in Amaral's edition was a transcription error, or perhaps even a conscious attempt by a copyist to make Couto's version of the story more closely match the original anecdote found in Plutarch. Therefore, we ought to follow Lapa and García Martín in retaining *Ménon*.

FLP 23(1)

8 CONCLUSIONS

For more than 200 years, it has been the habit of scholars and commentators to either dismiss or disparage Couto's frequent use of classical anecdotes in the second version of *O Soldado Prático*. This tendency has had the unfortunate consequence of deterring more detailed scholarly investigation into the sources and translations that the author consulted for information about the ancient world. However, as I hope my survey of textual issues has shown, the Spanish sources for these classical anecdotes are often readily identifiable, and they can shed valuable light on some of the difficult readings found in the surviving manuscripts of the dialogue. Indeed, Couto's method appears to have been that of the compiler of aphorisms, dutifully translating — at times almost transcribing — memorable sayings and facts from his Spanish sources with minimal alterations to the phrasing or vocabulary of the original text. Therefore, careful comparison of the surviving texts of *O Soldado Prático* with the printed sources used by Couto can help to resolve challenging inconsistencies or errors in the surviving manuscripts of the dialogue. With access to Couto's sources, it becomes easier to distinguish between errors of the text that are deserving of emendation, and errors made by the author himself, which are better left unchanged (although perhaps with

some indication by the editor that Couto's error stems from his use of an inaccurate source).

As Amaral noted in his *editio princeps*, this distinction is particularly important in the case of Couto's *O Soldado Prático*, because the author himself is clearly the source of at least some of the factual and linguistic mistakes transmitted in the manuscripts (1790, p. 5). In particular, Couto's credulous use of Guevara as an authority on classical antiquity reveals a less-than-scrupulous approach to sources in translation, which is perhaps surprising in light of the care with which he documents his own historical sources in the *Décadas da Ásia*²¹. While it may not be possible to identify a specific literary source for every one of the numerous classical anecdotes in *O Soldado Prático*, a fuller investigation of Couto's classical anecdotes would be of great value, not only to aid in correcting other passages with dubious or confusing readings, but also for expanding our knowledge of where and how Couto obtained his knowledge about the ancient world.

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²¹ See Loureiro (1998, p. 24).

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FLP 23(1)