

Riva, Fernando. “*Nunca mayor soberbia comidió Lucifer*”: *Límites del conocimiento y cultura claustral en el Libro de Alexandre*. Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2019, 234 pp. ISBN 978-84-9192-057-1.

Critical convention has long identified the thirteenth-century *Libro de Alexandre* as the first work of the first flowering of learned vernacular romance literature in Iberia that has come to be known as *mester de clerecía*. The designation itself is taken from the second stanza of the lengthy poem, which identifies poetic composition as a task or duty, specifically one that falls upon a particular category of religious, the clergy. While the mostly anonymous authors of the *mester de clerecía* might have been attached to monasteries as secular adjuncts, scholars have sup-

posed that they were not monks and their execution of their 'task' was not to husband stored knowledge behind monastic walls. Rather, this verse represented the expansion of cultured learning beyond the cloister.

Fernando Riva adds an extraordinary erudite contribution to a recent swell of critical engagement with the *Alexandre* by scholars including Amaia Arizaleta, Julian Weiss, and Simone Pinet. Riva suggests an alternative to a binary conception of cloistered versus clerical vocations, arguing instead for a recognition of a culturally and spiritually complex intersections among secular and monastic religious ideologies and spaces. Riva develops his argument in five chapters, framed by an extensive introduction and a brief conclusion. These build a meticulously researched investigation of the tension between expansive intellectual yearning and the regulatory limitations imposed by monastic tradition. In Riva's reading, the figure of Alexander embodies a prideful, Luciferian hunger for knowledge, while the poetic narrative that contains him voices a monastic backlash mounted as a corrective against the hero's intellectual outrage. A concomitant aim is to unsettle the contemporary habit of installing a hard boundary between the spiritual and intellectual practices of monastic and secular religious by demonstrating that these spaces were permeable, both at the level of individual vocation and, more broadly, at the level of institutional culture.

The introduction supplies the bold lines of his argument, an overview of the theological and ecclesiastical controversies contemporary with the composition of the poem sometime in the 1220's, and a brief presentation of the principal biblical, patristic, and medieval sources that will bolster Riva's reading of the *Alexandre*. Chapter 1, "El saber de Alejandro y sus límites," traces the tensions between two systems of thought, that associated with monastic culture, and that emerged with the ascendancy of the schools. Riva explores this tension within contemporary theological and philosophical discourses, and also as the *Libro de Alexandre* elaborates it. He introduces here the figure of Aristotle, famously, Alexander's teacher, and Aristotelian natural philosophy, which presents itself to Iberian claustral Christianity as both foreign and tainted with heterodoxy. This natural knowledge comes to stand as the suspect *scientia* that threatens the orthodox and divinely sanctioned *sapientia* of the cloister.

The second chapter, "*Scientia, sapientia, y la profecía de Daniel*" further develops the tension between dangerous, illicit, dysregulated knowledge proceeding from intellectual pride that links Aristotle, Lucifer, and Alexander, and the humble pursuit of knowledge which proceeds entirely from God. Here Riva examines how the poem complicates both of these opposed models of knowledge and offers the Book of Daniel as an instrument for illuminating the theme of interpretation and its moral consequences. Alexander's intellectual arrogance and lustful pursuit of knowledge here intersect with his hermeneutical failures to position him as an *exemplum ex contrario* promoting the value of the sapiential knowledge associated with claustral or monastic culture. This reasoning, which also supports Riva's theory that the *Alexandre* author may have been a regular canon affiliated with both monastic culture and secular offices, is carried further in Chapter 3, "El clero y el claustro: el *contemptus mundi* y el fin de los tiempos," which traces the trope of *contemptus mundi* in Diego García de Campos' *Planeta* and the *Didascalicon* of Hugh of St. Victor to shed light on the presence of *contemptus mundi* tropes, and the apocalyptic tradition that they invoke, in the poem.

Chapter 4, “La reacción frente al aristotelismo hispánico” and the final chapter, “Los viajes del rey y el linaje de Babilonia” use the copious material developed through the preceding chapters to firmly embed Alexander and the poem that embodies him in the monastic, intellectual, and political realities of early thirteenth century Iberia. Riva’s goal in executing this meticulously contextualized reading is to open new possibilities for analyses of the poem which encompass multiple, intersecting spaces that have traditionally been held apart. Riva’s own intricate, intersectional readings of thematically adjacent authors across biblical, philosophical, and ecclesiastical ambits go far toward preparing the ground for further scholarship in the same vein.

Due perhaps to the sheer extent of the book’s erudition, some sentences are overlong and complicated, which requires of the reader a more disciplined attention and a slower progress than may be customary. Also, it is jarring to see Hebrew Scripture referred to exclusively as the “Old Testament,” which perpetuates an ideology of supersession. That said, Riva’s book is a valuable addition to any library, personal or institutional, both as a sourcebook compiling scriptural, patristic, and medieval theologies of knowledge, and as an examination of the problem of knowledge in the context of transforming religious and political cultures and their intersection with intellectual currents defined as both foreign and dangerously heterodox in the *Libro de Alexandre*.

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Saona, Margarita. *Despadre. Masculinidades, travestismos, ficciones de la ley en la literatura peruana*. Gafas Moradas, 2021. 230 pp. ISBN: 978-612-48579-9-7.

Los estudios sobre masculinidades se desarrollaron especialmente en la academia anglosajona y francófona durante la década de 1980 y 1990. El interés y adaptación de la teoría en la academia latinoamericana, especialmente en la antropología y la sociología, se hizo con prontitud en la segunda mitad de 1990. Sin embargo, recién en las últimas dos décadas los estudios literarios prestaron mayor atención a las categorías de masculinidades para entender las dinámicas y sistemas de género representadas en los textos literarios y artefactos culturales. En esta dirección, *Despadre. Masculinidades, travestismos, ficciones de la ley en la literatura peruana* es el primer libro que presenta un orgánico de las identidades masculinas en la literatura peruana contemporánea.

Partiendo del psicoanálisis lacaniano, de la antropología y los estudios sobre colonialidad, Margarita Saona propone que algunos textos centrales de la literatura peruana “descubren fracturas esenciales en la construcción de la masculinidad en el Perú y estas fracturas se manifiestan tanto en el arraigado cinismo frente a las instituciones como en la violencia de género” (16). De Kaja Silverman, Saona toma la categoría de “ficción dominante” —término que describe a un patriarcado basado en una imagen ficticia de hombre completo y sin mellas—, para afirmar que, en el caso del patriar-