

**Book of Alexander (*Libro de Alexandre*).** Translated, with an introduction and notes, by Peter Such and Richard Rabone. Aris & Phillips Hispanic Classics. Oxford: Oxbow Books. 2009. xvii + 733 pp.

The latest addition to the Aris and Phillips series of translated works from the Iberian Middle Ages is Peter Such's and Richard Rabone's *Book of Alexander*. The heart of the book is, of course, the translation of the text, which is based fundamentally on the edition by Raymond Willis and supplemented by reference to the extensive recent works on the *Libro* by Juan Casas Rigall. As the object of the exercise is that of providing a clear text in both English and Castilian, there is little by way of information about manuscript variants and the text is presented as authoritative without much by way of justification. This is not a flaw in the work however, and the authors point out that such in-depth philological information as the reader may require can be found courtesy of Casas Rigall at his webpage dedicated to the subject (<[http://webspersoais.usc.es/persoais/juan.casas/Libro\\_de\\_alexandre.html](http://webspersoais.usc.es/persoais/juan.casas/Libro_de_alexandre.html)>) and in his Castalia edition of 2007. In truth, the readership for the translation is likely to be different to that which might employ Juan Casas Rigall's material and the authors have catered well for that readership. There is a substantial introduction to the *Libro*, divided into ten sections (albeit with more weight given to some sections—the question of themes, for example—than others). The introduction covers such topics as the Alexander story in the Western tradition, the place and date of composition (northern Castile around 1220 being given as the most likely), and an analysis of the themes of the poem.

The authors place particular emphasis on the scholarly nature of the *Libro* and the context of crusading, urban and chivalric growth and clerical education which serve as the background to its composition. Such and Rabone provide a picture of a (relatively) historically accurate account of Alexander's life and death which is presented in a sober learned fashion, occasionally marked by elements of oral composition. The figure of Alexander is presented to us as a complex multidimensional combination of achievement and pride, but all framed in a context in which Christian virtue is all.

Little of this, of course, is dramatically new, however, it will all come as valuable information to those seeking an introduction to the Castilian Alexander. The presentation of the material is excellent; there are maps and timelines given for both Alexander's time and the time of composition of the *Libro* and a helpful synopsis of the text (63–69). There is also a themed bibliography for those searching for further reading.

The translation is presented in four line stanzas, although there is no attempt made to mimic the rhyme of the *Libro's cuaderna vía*. The text is accompanied by a series of endnotes which explain particular historical and contextual issues. For the reasons mentioned above, no philological information is given in the text.

In short, this is a fine addition to the translated work series. It will not serve the expert, but this is not the aim of the work. It will, however, provide an excellent starting point for the student of medieval Iberian literature and anyone interested in the Alexander story who may have no knowledge of Spanish.

AENGUS WARD

*University of Birmingham.*

***La Biblia en la literatura del Siglo de Oro.*** Edición de Ignacio Arellano y Ruth Fine. Biblioteca Áurea Hispánica 56. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert. 2010. 477 pp.

This volume of essays on the influence of the Bible in Golden-Age literature stems from a collaborative research project carried out under the auspices of the Hebrew University of

Jerusalem and the Universidad de Navarra; versions of twenty-five of the twenty-seven papers published here were read at the conference 'La Biblia en la literatura del Siglo de Oro', held in Jerusalem in late 2007.

Arellano and Fine make clear in their preface that the cultural period encompassed by the volume is 'el Siglo de Oro español, hispanoamericano y sefardí' (9), which accounts for the otherwise incongruous inclusion of two essays on the *Me'am Lo'ez*, an Old Testament commentary in Ladino published in Turkey in 1730. In fact, the majority of the papers treat Peninsular authors, from the well known, such as Calderón and Cervantes, to more obscure figures, such as Antonio Enríquez Gómez and Juan Bernal Díaz de Luco, though, in the American ambit, Sor Juana does garner two essays. The editors stress the importance in the Golden Age of 'los intertextos bíblicos, las metáforas, los símiles, los personajes y los episodios pertenecientes a aquel imaginario [bíblico] compartido' (9), and the very diversity of the texts examined in this volume demonstrates the pervasiveness of biblical themes in the period, be these expressed explicitly through the appropriation of biblical plots or indirectly, through topoi or echoes derived from the Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, the broad range of approaches employed by the authors of the individual essays, from minute textual forensics to expansive critical panoramas, proves analogous to the multiple ways in which Golden-Age authors could mould and employ biblical source material.

The papers presented here are never less than competent, and the very best amongst them represent significant contributions to scholarship, enriching our knowledge of specific authors and of the literary atmosphere of the Counter-Reformation in Spain and her dominions. Whilst it may prove invidious to single out individual contributors, one must highlight, for instance, Luis Girón Negrón's essay (207–39) on San Juan de la Cruz's dual translation of a verse from Psalm 63. In this study, the author explores San Juan's suggestion, in his *Noche oscura* commentary (2.11.5), that a line from this psalm can be rendered in two quite different ways, as 'cuán de muchas maneras se ha mi carne a ti' or 'mi alma se pierde o perece por ti'. The resolution of this seeming oddity leads Girón Negrón into the realms of Hebraic philology, the mystical tradition and San Juan's university study under Gaspar Grajal in Salamanca. The essay is rigorous and copiously exemplified, and never loses from sight the minuscule portion of San Juan's commentary from which it takes its lead. Occupying similar territory and of comparable quality, is Javier San José Lera's treatment (421–43) of Luis de León's two poetic paraphrases of Psalm 103 in *De los nombres de Cristo*. Other excellent studies in this volume adopt a wider initial purview, such as the essay by David Boruchoff on historiographical works with biblical resonances penned by Franciscan missionaries to Mexico (63–76), and that by Michèle Estela-Guillemont on biblical references in the *œuvre* of Mateo Alemán (117–34); in this latter paper, the author examines Alemán's *San Antonio de Padua* and *Ortografía castellana* alongside the *Guzmán*, separating her study into Old and New Testament influences. By adopting this systematic approach, she is able to delineate some of the attitudes which remained constant throughout Alemán's work. Estela-Guillemont's essay, in so far as it places greater emphasis on the Old Testament, also reflects a tendency which characterizes much of the rest of this volume; what this might indicate about Golden-Age literary practice and what it might reveal about our own critical tools are questions which would bear further investigation.

The single most evident defect in this volume is found in its organization; the essays included here are arranged alphabetically according to surname of the contributor. This choice ensures that the book opens with a paper by Luis Alburquerque García on Benito Arias Montano (11–28), which, although it presents a good overview of the humanistic tradition in which Arias Montano was working, dedicates relatively little space to biblical questions and thus provides something of a 'false start'. Such a structuring principle also separates the two essays on the Ladino *Me'am Lo'ez*, which could be read more profitably as an adjacent pair. The editors might have considered at least grouping together the six essays dedicated to the theatre, or the four papers on Cervantes, whilst placing together the respective essays on

Montemayor, Quevedo and Alemán would have allowed a more organic comparison of the techniques employed by three major authors of the age.

JONATHAN DAVID BRADBURY

*St John's College, Cambridge.*

***Spanish Humanism on the Verge of the Picaresque: Juan Maldonado's 'Ludus Chartarum', 'Pastor Bonus', and 'Bacchanalia'***. Edited, with introduction, translation, and notes, by Warren Smith and Clark Colahan. Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia XXIV. Leuven: Leuven University Press. 2009. 291 pp.

Este volumen recoge la edición y traducción al inglés de 'Ludus Chartarum', 'Pastor Bonus' y 'Bacchanalia' del humanista español Juan Maldonado. Sus editores, Smith y Colahan, ofrecen el texto original en latín, su traducción anotada al inglés, una introducción general, así como otras dos a 'Ludus Chartarum' y 'Pastor Bonus'. En la introducción general se aportan datos biográficos sobre Maldonado, información de su obra escrita exclusivamente en latín, sus principales ediciones y traducciones al castellano y, en contadas ocasiones, al inglés. Los editores destacan la condición del autor como seguidor de Erasmo de Rotterdam, con quien mantuvo una extensa correspondencia. Smith y Colahan acertadamente proponen que las dosis de indignación, aguda observación, crítica social e ironía que exhibe la obra de Maldonado se deben en parte a las circunstancias de una etapa histórica marcada por el abandono y la persecución de los ideales reformistas debido al triunfo de la Contrarreforma.

El primer diálogo, 'Ludus Chartarum Triumphus' está dedicado al juego de cartas, e incluye una tercera parte sobre los 'triumfos', es decir, los varios juegos que no dependen tanto de la suerte como de la habilidad. Respondiendo a un esfuerzo de situar el diálogo en el contexto de la época, los editores aportan referencias a la representación de los juegos de cartas en obras de Cervantes, Lope de Vega y Gracián, así como a otros tratados de la época escritos sobre esta actividad. En el estudio se alude al texto de Francisco Luque Fajardo que, aun constituyendo una diatriba contra el vicio del juego, revela conocimientos del autor sobre el juego. Los editores cotejan el diálogo de Maldonado con la obra de Juan Luis Vives, *Ludus Cartharum seu Foliorum*, publicado tres años antes, en 1538, subrayando similares propósitos pedagógicos. Ambos coloquios establecen puntos paralelos relacionados con la visión del juego como una alternativa al deporte en caso de mal tiempo, la necesidad de que las partidas duren poco para no interferir con el estudio y la devoción, la importancia de que no se apueste dinero, así como el hecho de que la autodisciplina y las decisiones inteligentes, y no solo la suerte, otorgan la victoria. Los editores destacan que Maldonado se desvía del modelo de Vives al hacer que los personajes del coloquio sean maestros de latín, haciendo del uso de la lengua una de las reglas del juego. El diálogo de Maldonado es más literario que el de Vives, al desarrollar, por ejemplo, la analogía del juego de cartas con la guerra apuntada por Diego del Castillo, así como al contener más rasgos de humor, introducidos, en parte, por el personaje del mayordomo asturiano, que es el encargado de arbitrar la partida y suministrar del vino y la fruta, cuyo abono se juegan los participantes. Al respecto, Maldonado aporta ciertos datos eruditos relacionados con el origen del vino de Toro y la etimología de la variedad de las manzanas servidas que conecta con las numantinas mencionadas por Virgilio, propiciando una exaltación del pasado clásico español.

En la introducción a 'Pastor Bonus' (1529), se establece la conexión entre el texto de Maldonado, una epístola enviada al obispo de Burgos, Don Íñigo López de Mendoza, en la que se ofrecen consejos encaminados a detener la corrupción de la Iglesia y de la sociedad, y la novela picaresca el *Lazarillo de Tormes* de la que podría constituir un antecedente. De manera similar a textos de Francisco de Vitoria, Tomás de Villanueva, Erasmo, Díaz de Luco, Alfonso de Valdés y Carvajal, autor de las *Cortes de la muerte* y sucesor de Maldonado, 'Pastor Bonus'