

“The Intellectual Scope of the *Mester de Clerecía*”

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### Short Abstract

This thesis investigates the first poetry written in Castilian by intellectuals, the *mester de clerecía*, ‘craft of clerics’. Exploring the unique circumstances of Iberia in the Middle Ages as a hub for the intellectual vanguard and a holy territory for encounters with saints, pilgrimage and Reconquest, I examine the canonical texts of an alleged thirteenth-century poetic school as the Castilian bedrock of a wider Iberian and European literary movement. Notably including analysis of the fourteenth-century *Libro de buen amor*, a canonical work in its own right thought to parody the earlier poems, I also reassess the significance of the verse form *cuaderna vía* for the *mester de clerecía*, in which the thirteenth-century poems are exclusively written. Over an introduction and four chapters, I combine close reading of the *Libro de Alexandre* (Chapter 1), Berceo’s *Vidas* of Millán, Domingo and Oria (Chapter 2), the *Libro de Apolonio* and *Poema de Fernán González* (Chapter 3), and the *Libro de buen amor* (Chapter 4), with research into intellectual, pedagogical, and religious contexts. Notably, I have found the poems analyzed to be especially concerned with the landscape of the reading mind. The result is an expanded view of the *mester de clerecía* as theological and philosophical poems that offer ways of understanding and approaching the life of the mind as well as that of the body that are thought-provoking and informative to this day. Concluding that the thirteenth-century, canonical poems are rather the witnesses of a “textual community” of authors probably separated by time and space than a poetic school, I advocate an inclusive definition of the *mester de clerecía*. The *mester de clerecía* are of extremely rich intellectual scope and are of potential interest to scholars of all European literatures, and literary, intellectual, and social history, as well as theology and philosophy.

## Long abstract

This thesis investigates the first poetry written in Castilian by intellectuals, the *mester de clerecía*, ‘craft of clerics’. Exploring the unique circumstances of Iberia in the Middle Ages as a hub for the intellectual vanguard and a holy territory for encounters with saints, pilgrimage and Reconquest, I examine the canonical texts of an alleged thirteenth-century poetic school as the Castilian bedrock of a wider Iberian and European literary movement. Notably including analysis of the fourteenth-century *Libro de buen amor* (*LBA*), a canonical work in its own right thought to parody the earlier poems, I also reassess the significance of the verse form *cuaderna vía* for the *mester de clerecía*, in which the thirteenth-century poems are exclusively written.

In the 1960s, Deyermond expressed serious misgivings with regard to the traditional concept of the *mester de clerecía* as theoretically opposing the so-called *mester de juglaría*, ‘craft of minstrels’ (1965). Drawing on the work of Willis (1956-1957), he called to account the categorization of a limited corpus as learned poetry identifiable by the careful use of *cuaderna vía*, as first asserted by Milá y Fontanals (1874) and Menéndez y Pelayo (1911-1913). Deyermond’s brief article sums up the problems of classification and, therefore, analysis associated with the *mester de clerecía*, such that, despite almost one hundred and fifty years of criticism, sustained considerations of the poems as a group are few. Broadly, critical opinion since Deyermond can be divided into two camps, as represented by the only two monographs written on the *mester de clerecía* to date, by Uría Maqua (2000), and Weiss (2006).

Uría Maqua’s critical survey covers the canonical poems of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía* in line with traditional definitions of an erudite, select corpus. Focusing on the *Libro de Alexandre* (*Alexandre*), oeuvre of Gonzalo de Berceo, *Libro de Apolonio* (*Apolonio*), and the *Poema de Fernán González* (*PFG*), she argues, in line with Dutton (1973), that the category “mester de clerecía” refers only to this Castilian output as the product of a poetic school centred around the University of Palencia, as founded c.1210. With strong emphasis on the precise use of *cuaderna vía* as the defining feature of products of the alleged school, she excludes many related clerical works from her analysis, including the fourteenth-century *LBA*. For Uría Maqua, *cuaderna vía* is a distinctly Castilian form of the monorhymed quatrain, as used in various vernaculars through the High and Late medieval period.

Uría Maqua’s grouping of the early, canonical *mester de clerecía* as a wholly indigenous output associated with a Castilian university is certainly a neat critical solution to the diverse terrain presented by Old Castilian clerical narrative poetry. Although there is no definitive evidence linking any of the *mester de clerecía* to Palencia, with the exception perhaps of Berceo’s *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (*MNS*), the notion of a poetic school or *taller* has proved critically compelling, and even to those who advocate a far more inclusive definition of the corpus such as Walsh (1979) and Weiss (2006). For Walsh, a discussion of the *mester de clerecía* must include the *LBA*, which he posits as a parody of pious, thirteenth-century *mester* poetics. Including a broad group of poems as *mester de clerecía*, he discusses the development of *cuaderna vía* to accommodate the octosyllabic hemistich by the fourteenth century, a

form traditionally associated with the alleged *mester de juglaría*. His research plots the parameters for Weiss' highly influential monograph, in which Weiss argues that theories of a thirteenth-century literary school and a far broader *mester de clerecía* are not necessarily mutually exclusive (2006: 2).

Though focused on the thirteenth century poems, Weiss identifies the *LBA* as a point of departure for what he terms the "movement" of the *mester de clerecía* across the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. While he analyses octosyllabic compositions such as the debate poem "Elena y María" alongside canonical *cuaderna vía* texts, he also acknowledges Uría Maqua's study of the Castilian specificity of *cuaderna vía* as "foundational" (2006: 1-8), in line with Rico (1985). In addition to the work of Walsh, Rico's important doublet of articles offers crucial context for Weiss' inclusive study. Rico strikes a balance between an expansive European context for the *mester de clerecía* and examination of their peculiarity in form and content.

Drawing on Rico's inference that *cuaderna vía* is both erudite and elevating as a metrical scheme and indebted to the intellectual developments of the twelfth-century, I wished to explore the interrelation of the canonical *mester de clerecía* to throw further light on their composition and purpose. In the presentation of my findings, I have endeavoured, in the words of Wallace, to apply my: "specialist and localized" philological knowledge for "greater understandings of European connectedness" (2014), while ultimately celebrating the specific Iberian characteristics of the *mester de clerecía*.

Distinguishing my methodological approach from those prior is my reading of the *mester de clerecía* as fundamentally rhetorical, constituting a process of reading and composition as well as a product. Such an approach is closely linked to my understanding of the didacticism of the corpus, which teaches approaches to the letter and the spirit as analogous with the interaction in the world of man with the divine. Placing as much emphasis on the intellectual and spiritual realm charted by the *mester de clerecía*, both in the stories of the protagonists and in meta-textual terms, as on that of the literal word, I have found the poems to be fundamentally concerned with the function and aim of the soul, i.e. the mystery of human consciousness.

I believe that the didacticism of the *mester de clerecía* is fundamentally theological and philosophical as well as social, pertaining to the experience of the individual intellectual in Christian communion as much as that of the community at large. My research thus extends Weiss' compassing of, in the words of Stock, a "secular ontology" for the *mester de clerecía* (1990: 93). Offering a social reading of a selection of *mester de clerecía* poems in his monograph, Weiss aims to explore, quoting Williams (1977): "the discrepancy between the received interpretation of the world and one's practical experience of it . . . [as] especially relevant to the study of art and literature 'where the true social content'" is often of a: "present and affective kind, which cannot without loss be reduced to belief systems, institutions, or explicit general relationships" (2006: 2,14). Weiss' recalibration of the concept of didacticism in the *mester de clerecía* with regard to social experience in relation to structures of power and cultural authority is one of his most important contributions to the debate, and led me to reconsider the relationship between the *mester* poems and their audience as principally Christian as well as instructive.

The *mester de clerecía* are poems formulated by intellectuals as immersed in Christian theology and philosophy as the seven liberal arts. In line with the pious rhetoric of the *mester de clerecía*, I have endeavoured to plot the poems' Christian

ontologies. Doctrines of being and knowing are as important if not more crucial than those that refer to action in the *mester de clerecía*. My findings, as presented over the course of the following four chapters, are of a *mester de clerecía* of diverse devout ontologies linked by enduring affiliation to the teaching and practices of the monasteries and the genre of hagiography, so important for medieval Iberian cultural life.

I argue: in Chapter 1, that the *Alexandre* is a product of the intellectual zeitgeist of the late twelfth century and the most scholastic of the canonical thirteenth-century poems; in Chapter 2, analyzing the *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* and *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* in conjunction with the *Vida de Santa Oria*, that the saint's Life was a genre of especial significance to Berceo who was ultimately a local poet; in Chapter 3, that the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* were written in accordance with the values of thirteenth-century Iberian *cortesía* for the court; and in Chapter 4, that the *LBA*, in large part a depiction of the life of the mind of the alleged author/protagonist, parodies hagiographic and monastic paradigms.

Each of the poems that I have examined promotes a relatively autonomous orthopraxis as a direct means for Christian salvation. In my judgment, the thirteenth-century, canonical poems are not the output of a poetic school, which implies a relatively close and binding association. To borrow Stock's looser notion, I argue rather that they are the witnesses of an Iberian "textual community" of European affiliation, by authors probably separated by time and space, with which plural modes of being and acting—plural *mesteres de clerecía*—are advocated. *Cuaderna vía* was employed by Castilian authors who identified with and drew upon the works written in the same metrical style that had gone before them. Accordingly, I advocate an inclusive definition of the *mester de clerecía* across Old Castilian clerical narrative poetry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, although I place emphasis on the poems written in *cuaderna vía* as of especial intellectual and devout purpose.

Throughout my research I have been keenly conscious of the huge amount of material I have not been able to take into account. The breadth of erudition displayed in the poems concerned, the number of Old Castilian clerical narrative poems I could have included in my analysis and not least those likely lost over the course of history, and the quantity of critical articles written on the *mester de clerecía*, have at times proved overwhelming. Primarily, I am aware that my treatment of the *LBA* in relation to the earlier poems could have taken the form of a series of chapters, and in the future I intend to pursue this area further. However, while regretting my limited remit and consequently the partial nature of my conclusions, I hope to have taken forward the debate on the *mester de clerecía*, and principally with regard to their status, as I perceive them, as philosophical poetry. The intellectual scope of the *mester de clerecía* is rich, provoking questions still contentious to this day with regard to humankind's purpose and limitations.

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## The Intellectual Scope of the *Mester de Clerecía*

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Abbess Herrad von Landsberg, "The Rose of Learning", *Hortus Deliciarum* (late twelfth century), from the Alsatian convent of Hohenburg. Philosophia is crowned and seated in the centre with Plato and Socrates attending. Around her are the seven petals of the rose, each petal standing for one of the Liberal Arts. Outside the closed circle of knowledge and below it sit poets and intellectuals, whispered to by Satan's emissaries. From Whicher (1979).

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## Introduction

The Renaissance invented the Middle Ages in order to define itself; the Enlightenment perpetuated them in order to admire itself; and the Romantics revived them in order to escape from themselves . . . “the Middle Ages” thus constitute one of the most prevalent cultural myths of the modern world.

Brian Stock (1990: 69)

Mas, como es grant salto pora'l çielo sobir,  
tan grant ribaço cae entre fer e dezir.  
*Libro de Alexandre* (st.2465cd)

### I. Mind Travel

In the Castilian *Libro de Alexandre* (*Alexandre*), Alexander the Great carries out two pioneering explorations of the natural world. The first, of the depths of the sea in an early prototype for the submarine (sts.2306-08), is followed by a flight through the heavens, as alluded to by the narrator when Alexander is planning this further conquest: “es grant salto pora'l çielo sobir” (st.2465c; Casas Rigall 2007). Alexander’s *grant salto*, during which he views the landmass of the earth as a figure of Christ, is a physical journey that constitutes the final stage of the intellectual progress of the hero across the *Alexandre*, from proto-Christian warrior-king to first condemned and then enlightened natural philosopher, epitomizing a central theme of the *mester de clerecía*: the intellectual journey. As Alexander learns his cognitive limitations, the audience experiences an intellectual journey of their own, as governed by the ‘fourfold’ way of *cuaderna vía*, the erudite poetic metre used for the first time in Castilian in the *Alexandre*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed discussion on the origins and form of *cuaderna vía*, see Chapter 1 of this thesis.

Highlighting the glory of Alexander's achievements, the narrator of the *Alexandre* ruminates that for most men: "tan grant ribaço cae entre fer e dezir" (st.2465d). The difficulty of synthesizing action and words is a preliminary analogue for trying to remedy the discord between body and soul, and it is left unclear whether Alexander is welcomed into heaven or hell at the end of the *Alexandre*. Man as a microcosm of God's creation, whose flesh and spirit are in conflict, reflects the broader disjunction between the visible world and the heavens and, in Christian hermeneutics, between *verba* and *sententia*.<sup>2</sup> The intellectual journey and the concept of text as comprising, in the Castilian formula, *corteza* and *meollo*, are two related commonplaces of medieval European literature.<sup>3</sup> As a means of synthesizing lower literal and higher spiritual truths, the trope of the intellectual journey guides the audience, such that the story of the pagan Alexander as reinterpreted by the clerical author of the *Alexandre* and physically embodied with the text of his poem, is a vehicle by which he and his audience may attempt to commune with the divine realm.

From the twelfth century, a period of rapid scientific and philosophic advancement in conjunction with the rise of European vernacular literature including the *mester de clerecía*, the heavens were broadly considered to be structured in

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<sup>2</sup> In medieval Christian tradition, creation was considered a second divine book. The doctrine of God as *logos*, a Greek term meaning "reason" and "word", conferred divine manifestation in the natural world as a system of signs (Kelley 2004: 66). Notably, in his *City of God*, Augustine describes the world as a 'beautiful poem': 'God would never have created a single angel—not even a single man—whose future wickedness He foresaw, unless, at the same time, He knew of the good which could come of this evil. It was as though He meant the harmony of history, like the beauty of a poem, to be enriched by antithetical elements. For, the figure of speech called "antithesis" is the most elegant among the ornaments of rhetoric', "neque enim deus ullum, non dico angelorum, sed uel hominum crearet, quem malum futurum esse praescisset, nisi pariter nosset quibus eos bonorum usibus commodaret atque ita ordinem saeculorum tamquam pulcherrimum carnem etiam ex quibusdam quasi antithetis honestaret. antitheta enim quae appellantur in ornamentis elocutionis sunt decentissima" (XI.18; Walsh and Monahan 2008: 213-14; *Library of Latin Texts, Series A*).

<sup>3</sup> In the High Middle Ages: "in response to the tensions between higher and lower truths poets began to thematize the relation between the two by making the spiritual journey a common narrative pattern in their poetry" (Lynch 1988: 16). Nichols describes the pilgrimage of Dante's *Commedia* (c.1308–1321) as: "a vast metaphor for the mind motion of the human striving to transform perception to thought and wisdom of a higher state" (1991: 18-19).

mathematical proportion.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, as Stephen G. Nichols asserts, medieval poets, architects, musicians, and painters used their work to emulate such proportion in the manner of scientific observing instruments.<sup>5</sup> Like the astrolabe, a navigational tool for taking bearings of the sun and stars, a poem of carefully calibrated structure and form enabled its audience to project what Nichols describes as “grids of cognition” onto the dangerously chaotic fallen world, thus emphasizing the continuum of man with creation (1991: 4-5, 22-23), and facilitating his salvation. The mathematically proportioned *cuaderna vía*, structured in accordance with the symbolic numbers four and seven, is the primary tool for the intellectual journey of the audience of the *mester de clerecía*.

As demonstrated by the important work of Brian Dutton (1973) and Elena González-Blanco García (2010), *cuaderna vía* is closely related to the French alexandrine and Latin metre, and monorhymed, alexandrine quatrains are prevalent in medieval French and Italian as well as Castilian. As a verse form *cuaderna vía* can be described as a pan-romanic phenomenon. However, I argue that *cuaderna vía* may have threefold, local significance in its Castilian guise, as closely related to the centrality of the intellectual journey to the *mester de clerecía*. Firstly, more than half a century ago, Raymond S. Willis suggested that the quatrains of *cuaderna vía* evoke the *quadrivium*, the group of four mathematical subjects of the medieval curriculum of the seven liberal arts (1956-1957: 217), which were studied as a means to glimpse the nature of cosmic reality. As is well known, intellectual institutions in Iberia and notably those of Toledo

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<sup>4</sup> Such a concept of the cosmos is indebted to readings of Plato’s *Timaeus*. See particularly Chapter 1, but also Chapter 3 of this thesis for further detail on the *Timaeus*.

<sup>5</sup> Nichols continues: “proportion enabled artistic forms to be generated, varied, and refined in ways that made them images of the ethical, ontological, and aesthetic structure of the world as perceived . . . With St. Thomas Aquinas these tendencies were homologized into a theological metaphysics for which Dante’s *Commedia* offers the greatest vernacular example”. The purpose of such forms was not to: “confirm the already known . . . They were a means for overlaying a complex and abstract order on a natural world known to resist such ordering” (1991: 5, 22).

acquired an especial reputation for study of the *quadrivium* in the High and later Middle Ages.

The schools of northern Iberia were unique hubs for the translation of hitherto lost classical texts via Arabic from the twelfth through the thirteenth centuries. Consequently, in the words of José Luis Pérez López, Christians often considered Toledo a demonic place where scholars fraternized with the heretic in pursuit of science at the expense of faith: “todo lo que culturalmente procedía de España era sospechoso” (2007: 138). Intellectuals from across Europe nevertheless flocked to Toledo, and notably the Englishman, Daniel of Morley, who in his *Philosophia* or *Liber de Naturis Inferiorum et Superiorum* (c.1175), describes how he fled: “the stultifying atmosphere of Paris, with its emphasis on law and theology, for Toledo, so that he might study the *quadrivium* under the *sapientiores mundi philosophos*” (Stock 1972: 61).<sup>6</sup> The humanism associated with the twelfth century prevailed in northern Iberia through the reign of the learned king Alfonso X of Castile and León (1252-1284), whose projects included research across the sciences, history, law, and poetry, marking the Peninsula, along with Paris, as a contemporary: “intellectual powerhouse of Europe” (Deyermond 1996: 154). The ‘fourfold way’ of *cuaderna vía* is emblematic of the medieval Iberian intellectual vanguard.

Secondly, in addition to a particular fame for intellectual enquiry, Iberia also held special status in Europe as a holy land. While the Reconquest reached its height from the second decade of the thirteenth century under Fernando III (*r.* Castile 1217-

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<sup>6</sup> See also Burnett, who additionally explains that the only philosopher Morley mentions in his *Philosophia* is: “Gerardo da Cremona, the leading translator of scientific texts from Arabic into Latin in Toledo. When Daniel returned to England, ‘with a pile of books’, he was disappointed to find that the English schools were now as devoted to the study of Roman law as the French ones had been. But the bishop of Norwich asked him to speak about the wonderful things and the *disciplinae* of Toledo, and the *Philosophia* was the result” (2004).

1252, León 1230-1252), the pilgrim route across the north of the Peninsula to Santiago de Compostela was also extremely popular, and both pursuits drew considerable traffic from across the European territories.<sup>7</sup> William J. Purkis's research has demonstrated the close link between crusade and pilgrimage in twelfth-century medieval Iberia as distinguished from the Jerusalem tradition. The saint connected with the road to Compostela, James, developed a militaristic identity as *matamoros*, with the notion of an *iter per Hispaniam* resonant for crusading and pilgrimage (2008: 182). The journey undertaken by pilgrims and soldiers was spiritual as well as physical for potential redemption, as inspired by monastic doctrine, and thus the trope of their route, *iter*, *camino*, is likely to have acquired especial resonance in thirteenth-century Iberia, to be associated with the rhetorical *vía*, "way", of *cuaderna vía*.<sup>8</sup>

Thirdly and finally, Iberia was well known in Europe for its saints and martyrs (Nepaulsingh 1983: 214). Hagiography, a particularly important genre for the *mester de clerecía*, was especially prolific in Castilian and Catalan throughout the Middle Ages (Gerli 2003a: 375-76; "Hagiography"). The prominence of holy figures including Eulalia, Millán, Domingo de Silos, and Domingo de Guzmán, in conjunction with the Peninsula's status as a holy land with its own pilgrimage route, would have contributed, I argue, to a strong sense of the immanence of God in medieval Iberia. In such liminal territory, prone to what Julian Weiss terms "marvelous reality", contact with the divine was likely considered a higher-than-average probability. Notably, Weiss associates the marvelous as depicted in the *mester de clerecía* with the novel form of *cuaderna vía* as

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<sup>7</sup> See Dutton (1973: 73, 87); also Ruiz (2004: 140), and Mâle (1949: 40-43) on pilgrimage to Spain from France.

<sup>8</sup> The preaching of the Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux in support of the Second Crusade (mid-twelfth century) was particularly influential, transforming conceptions of crusading as an act of charity or a war into a means of redemption through Christ, for further discussion of which see Chapter 2 of this thesis. The rhetorical *vía* of *cuaderna vía* is originally a monastic trope, as detailed by Gerli (2005) in response to the work of Carruthers on the cultural impact of monastic pedagogy through the Middle Ages (1998).

well as content: “listeners found themselves walking a tightrope, balancing precariously between the familiarity of the vernacular and a verse form, syntax, and frequently a vocabulary that would have appeared quite wondrous” (2006: 15-16). Narrating the miraculous feats of their protagonists with an elevated, vernacular verse form, the *mester de clerecía* offered Castilian speakers compelling opportunity to channel the spirit, bringing renewed meaning to their daily lives.

With the central theme of the intellectual journey, the *mester de clerecía* constitute a textual and therefore intellectual landscape for their authors and audience, in which the acute and particularly Iberian tension between pioneering scientific and philosophical research on the one hand, and piety in emulation of Christ on the other, is played out. Investigating the intellectual scope of the *mester de clerecía*, this thesis explores the multiple forms of physical and cognitive travel—erudite, devotional, theological, societal, military—as portrayed by the poems. While in the case of each individual poem the ultimate aim is the reuniting of man, exiled from Eden, with his God in heaven, the stories that guide the audience, along with the principles taught, are strikingly diverse.

## II. What is the *Mester de Clerecía*?

In the 1960s, Alan Deyermond expressed serious misgivings with regard to the traditional concept of *mester de clerecía* as theoretically opposing the so-called *mester de juglaría* (1965). Drawing on the work of Willis (1956-1957), he called to account the categorization of a limited corpus as learned poetry identifiable by the careful use of *cuaderna vía*, as first asserted by Manuel Milá I Fontanals (1874) and Marcelino

Menéndez y Pelayo (1911-1913).<sup>9</sup> Deyermond's brief article sums up the problems of classification and, therefore, analysis associated with the *mester de clerecía*, such that, despite almost one hundred and fifty years of criticism, sustained considerations of the poems as a group are few. Broadly, critical opinion since Deyermond can be divided into two camps, as represented by the only two monographs written on the *mester de clerecía* to date, by Isabel Uría Maqua (2000), and Weiss (2006).

Uría Maqua's critical survey covers the canonical poems of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía* in line with traditional definitions of an erudite, select corpus. Focusing on the *Alexandre*, oeuvre of Gonzalo de Berceo, *Libro de Apolonio* (*Apolonio*), and the *Poema de Fernán González* (*PFG*), she argues, in line with Dutton (1973), that the category "mester de clerecía" refers only to this Castilian output as the product of a poetic school centred around the University of Palencia, founded c. 1210.<sup>10</sup> With strong emphasis on the precise use of *cuaderna vía* as the defining feature of products of the alleged school, she excludes many related clerical works from her

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<sup>9</sup> As Deyermond describes: "most of the points in the traditional definition are present in *Alexandre* [st.] 2 . . . were it not for the words of one thirteenth-century poet, nobody would have thought of dividing early narrative poetry into two watertight compartments" (1965: 112). See Chapter 3 of this thesis for further discussion of Deyermond's argument in relation to the *Apolonio*. Lappin has recently reaffirmed the traditional view of the *mester de clerecía* as oppositional to *juglaría* (2002: 260). As Alvar and Gómez Moreno outline, historically, criticism has broadly advocated three general notions for the purpose of the *mester de clerecía*: private or collective reading, oral performance by minstrels or clerics, or personal use such as prayer or writing (1988: 87-88). I find it very hard to separate such notions: private reading may well have included prayer or writing, for example, and collective reading surely comprised an element of oral performance whether on the part of the clerical or lay community. To my mind, concepts of medieval "orality" and "literacy" need to be far more carefully construed for a fuller understanding of the *mester de clerecía*. In the words of Carruthers: "'literature' is not the same thing as 'literacy'. . . Learning by hearing material and reciting aloud should not be confused with ignorance of reading" (2008: 11-12). The rich interrelation of the oral and the written in the *mester de clerecía* is a topic I explore throughout this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> Uría Maqua argues: "sin duda existen poemas cultos en España, Francia, Provenza e Italia de carácter narrativo y escritos en tetrásticos monorrimos, poemas que son trabajos de clerecía, o sea, hechos por clérigos. Pero . . . el solo uso de la 'copla cuaderna' no es suficiente para incluirlos en el grupo de los poemas castellanos del siglo XIII, que llamamos 'mester de clerecía' . . . nuestro 'mester de clerecía' adquiere rasgos singulares, genuinos, que lo distinguen de los poemas provenzales, italianos y franceses" (2000: 51). On the University of Palencia, see also Alvar and Gómez Moreno (1988: 75).

analysis, including the fourteenth-century *Libro de buen amor* (*LBA*).<sup>11</sup> As Uría Maqua argues, *cuaderna vía* is a distinctly Castilian form of the monorhymed quatrain, which was used in varying vernacular forms through the High and Late medieval period (2000: 64, 17-18, 27, 51).

Uría Maqua's grouping of the early, canonical *mester de clerecía* as a wholly indigenous output associated with a Castilian university is certainly a neat critical solution to the diverse terrain presented by Old Castilian clerical narrative poetry. Although there is no definitive evidence linking any of the *mester de clerecía* to Palencia, with the exception perhaps of Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (*MNS*; see Chapter 2 of this thesis), the notion of a poetic school or *taller* has proved critically compelling, and even to those who advocate a far more inclusive definition of the corpus such as John K. Walsh (1979) and Weiss (2006). For Walsh, a discussion of the *mester de clerecía* must include the *LBA*, which he posits as a parody of pious, thirteenth-century *mester* poetics: "the likeliest start for Juan Ruiz's initial caprice". Including a broad group of poems as *mester de clerecía* and notably the *Proverbios*, *Castigos de Catón*, *Partidas rimadas*, and *Libro de miseria de omne* as forming: "a bridge between the great series of thirteenth-century *clerecía* poems and Juan Ruiz's masterpiece", he discusses the development of *cuaderna vía* to accommodate the octosyllabic hemistich by the fourteenth century (1979: 86, 73-80), a form traditionally associated with the alleged *mester de juglaría*. His research plots the parameters for Weiss' highly influential monograph, in which Weiss argues that theories of a

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<sup>11</sup> Lesser-known works in *cuaderna vía* include: *El Dio alto que los cielos sostiene*, a contemplation of the Fall (late thirteenth century); the hagiographic *Vida de San Ildefonso* and *Oración a Santa María Magdalena*, the former on the Archbishop of Toledo and by a "Beneficiado de Úbeda", and the *Libro de miseria de omne* (all early fourteenth century).

thirteenth-century literary school and a far broader *mester de clerecía* are not necessarily mutually exclusive (2006: 2).

Though focused on the thirteenth century poems, Weiss identifies the *LBA* as a point of departure for what he terms the “movement” of the *mester de clerecía* across the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. While he analyses octosyllabic compositions such as the debate poem “Elena y María” alongside canonical *cuaderna vía* texts, arguing that the: “broad social and didactic impulses that drive the poems in *pareados* . . . are the same as those that motivate the more formally sophisticated”, he also acknowledges Uría Maqua’s study of the Castilian specificity of *cuaderna vía* as “foundational” (2006: 1-8), in line with Francisco Rico (1985: 22). In addition to the work of Walsh, Rico’s important doublet of articles (1985) offer crucial context for Weiss’ inclusive study (2006: 230). Rico strikes a balance between an expansive European context for the *mester de clerecía*—“[un] esqueje cortado de jardines transpirenaicos”, “concreciones parciales de un espíritu más amplio” (1985: 5, 148)—and examination of their peculiarity in form and content. Rico’s scholarship is also very important for this study.

Notably, Rico attributes the novel, striking quality of *cuaderna vía* to its symbolic, mathematical proportion. As governed by the strict separation of syllables, each seven-syllable hemistich of *cuaderna vía*: “deslinda una por una las piezas de la sarta lingüística . . . es solidario . . . del que fragmenta el ‘curso rimado’ en estampas, viñetas o ‘paneles’ recuadrados por el marco del tetrámetro”. Drawing on Rico’s further inference that *cuaderna vía* is both erudite and elevating as a metrical scheme and indebted to the intellectual developments of the twelfth-century (1985: 21-22), this thesis began as a means to further interrogate the *mester de clerecía* as the product of a

thirteenth-century school or *taller*. The poems designated authentic by Uría Maqua, namely the *Alexandre*, work of Berceo, *Apolonio*, and *PFG*, are by far the most well-known of the wider corpus of Old Castilian clerical narrative poetry. The existence of a school that produced these works is the bedrock for any further definitions of the *mester de clerecía* as a literary movement, and I wished to explore the interrelation of the canonical poems as a group to throw further light on their composition and purpose. To bring perspective to my research and in response to Weiss' call for further study of the *mester de clerecía* across the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (2006: 230), I elected to include the *LBA* in my selection, the most famed of all Old Castilian poems with the exception perhaps of the *Poema de Mio Cid* (1201-1207?).

In the presentation of my findings, I have endeavoured, in the words of David Wallace, to apply my “specialist and localized” philological knowledge for “greater understandings of European connectedness” (2014), while ultimately celebrating the specific Iberian characteristics of the *mester de clerecía*. Distinguishing my methodological approach from those prior to mine is my reading of the *mester de clerecía* as fundamentally rhetorical, constituting a pious process of reading and composition in which both author and audience actively participate.<sup>12</sup> Such an approach is closely linked to my understanding of the didacticism of the corpus, which teaches approaches to the letter and the spirit as analogous with interaction in the world of man

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<sup>12</sup> Carruthers's analysis of monastic meditation as a rhetorical process and product that was foundational for medieval approaches to reading and composition (1998) has greatly informed my research on the *mester de clerecía*. As Brown asserts in relation to the *LBA*: “*doctrina* is actively *verbal* as well as nominal in the Middle Ages—a process as well a product . . . medieval texts teach as much about teaching as they do about their ostensible subject matter. In fact, we may even be led to conclude that, in many cases, the ‘doctrine’ taught is less the final cause than the pretext of textual teaching” (1998: 9). Stock likewise argues with regard to literature in more general terms that: “texts . . . are both physical and mental. . . [they] have propositional content, but they are procedural knowledge” (1990: 146).

with the divine.<sup>13</sup> Placing as much emphasis on the intellectual and spiritual realm charted by the *mester de clerecía*, both in the stories of the protagonists and in meta-textual terms, as on that of the literal word, I have found the poems to be fundamentally concerned with the function and aim of the soul as a spiritual landscape i.e. the mystery of human consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

I believe that the didacticism of the *mester de clerecía* is fundamentally theological and philosophical as well as social, pertaining to the experience of the individual intellectual in Christian communion as much as that of the community at large. The *mester de clerecía* are personal and social rhetorical tools. In addition to the outputs of a poetic school or literary movement, I suggest that the *mester de clerecía* may also be referred to as the witnesses of a “textual community”, to borrow a term of Brian Stock (1983, 1986, 1990). Considering the poems thus further shifts focus from their poetics to the close relationship between their form and their use by their authors and the members of their audience.

Stock principally coined the term “textual community” to describe small groups of medieval heretics and reformers. Such groups were founded and forged through the shared interpretation of texts, bringing people together who may otherwise not have associated. As he describes, members of the groups were broadly uneducated and relied

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<sup>13</sup> As Dagenais describes: “where we tend to see our texts as webs of language, medieval readers saw a world of human action for good or ill co-extensive with their own. . . . They engaged the reader, not so much in the unraveling of meaning as in a series of ethical meditations and of personal ethical choices. They required the reader to take a stand about what he or she read” (1994: xvii). As Cuddon summarizes, early didactic poetry was written in Greek and important works in Latin verse include those by Lucretius and Vergil, while: “the Middle Ages produced the bulk of the didactic literature in Europe and most of it was in verse. Proverbs, charms, gnomic verses, guides to the good life, and manuals of holy living were abundant. . . . It has been argued that all poetry is, by implication, didactic; that it should and does instruct as well as delight” (1999: 224-25; “Didactic”). On the didacticism of the *mester de clerecía*, see also Maravall (1983: 203-54) and Alvar and Gómez Moreno (1988: 71-88).

<sup>14</sup> Consciousness remains an enigma to this day. One of the foremost philosophers of mind currently working on the so-called “hard problem” is Chalmers, who explains: “consciousness poses the most baffling problems in the science of the mind. There is nothing that we know more intimately than conscious experience, but there is nothing that is harder to explain. All sorts of mental phenomena have yielded to scientific investigation in recent years, but consciousness has stubbornly resisted” (2000: 9).

on a highly literate leader to disseminate knowledge of the usually short and uncomplicated texts (Stock 1983: 90, 1990: 151). The concept “textual community” is thus, in its primary form, not obviously relatable to the academic subculture of the clerics who wrote the *mester de clerecía*.<sup>15</sup> However, Stock extends the concept to the ancient Christian community as once considered a sect within the Jewish faith and known for its highly erudite activities (1990: 151, 157), an application of great interest for study of the *mester de clerecía*.

The clerics who wrote the *mester de clerecía* formed an academic medieval subculture for which the texts of Christianity were a continuous point of shared reference. The term “textual community” refers to the centrality of written text to the group, yet, crucially, the Iberian clerics, like the ancient Christians, privileged: “the spirit of the text [as opposed to the letter] as the essential bonding of God and man” (Stock 1990: 149), and, I would add, of author and audience. To privilege the spirit is also to privilege the oral and aural dimensions of a text (as I suggest is particularly notable in hagiography; see Chapter 2 of this thesis), such that, in the words of Stock: “the ritual of reading recapitulates the primal experience of speaking and hearing the word of God” (1990: 149), i.e. prior to the recording of his word in text. Written with an erudition that is predicated on the potency of the voiced word, the innovative and challenging poems of the *mester de clerecía* are both clerical and minstrelesque, and, like the texts of the ancient Christians, can be conceived as “chapters” in an “ongoing

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<sup>15</sup> In her descriptions of the literate groups of medieval English society, Riddy identifies a clerical-academic “subculture”: “which is international, Latinate and male” (1991: 317).

narrative” (Stock 1990: 151) both parallel to and intertwined with the development of Christian Iberian society.<sup>16</sup>

I therefore share Weiss’ view that the relationship between the authors of the *mester de clerecía* and their audience is based on a conviction that the truth may be: “present, here and now, in the text being read or performed”. However, I would add that it is also based on another that the truth is equally likely to be found “out there” (2006: 7), and in society beyond the confines of the textual community, which members may have engaged with by publically reciting their poems, or through other pious activities such as preaching or pilgrimage.<sup>17</sup> My research thus extends Weiss’ compassing of, in the words of Brian Stock, a “secular ontology” for the *mester de clerecía* (1990: 93).

Offering a social reading of a selection of *mester de clerecía* poems in his monograph, Weiss aims to explore, quoting Raymond Williams (1977): “the discrepancy between the received interpretation of the world and one’s practical experience of it . . . [as] especially relevant to the study of art and literature ‘where the true social content’” is often of a: “‘present and affective kind, which cannot without loss be reduced to belief systems, institutions, or explicit general relationships’” (2006: 2, 14). Weiss’ recalibration of the concept of didacticism in the *mester de clerecía* with regard to social experience and in relation to structures of power and cultural authority is one of his most important contributions to the debate, and led me to reconsider the relationship between the *mester* poems and their authors/audience as principally Christian as well as instructive. Both Weiss and Stock include the reader or listener’s

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<sup>16</sup> As Stock specifies, textual communities: “issue in rule-bound patterns of behavior that break with what has come before”, as distinct from “reading or interpretive communities, whose purpose is to follow the old hermeneutic path of reintegrating ‘new horizons’ with the old” (1990: 156).

<sup>17</sup> Discussing Paul, Stock notes that he: “never tires of telling his followers of the advantages of the spirit over the letter, or of emphasizing the doctrine of charity by which the Word is transformed into behavior towards one’s neighbors, friends, associates, and even oneself” (1990: 157).

personal relationship with a text within the term “social”, and my approach thus adds a further possible dimension to readings of the *mester de clerecía*.

The *mester de clerecía* are poems formulated by intellectuals as immersed in Christian theology and philosophy as the seven liberal arts.<sup>18</sup> In line with their pious rhetoric, I have endeavoured to plot the Christian ontologies of the poems. Doctrines of being and knowing are as important if not more crucial than those that refer to action in the *mester de clerecía*. My findings, as presented over the course of the following four chapters, are of a *mester de clerecía* of diverse, devout ontologies linked by enduring affiliation to the teaching and practices of the monasteries and the genre of hagiography, so important for medieval Iberian cultural life. Accordingly, I advocate an inclusive definition of the *mester de clerecía* across Old Castilian clerical narrative poetry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, although I would qualify that the poems written in *cuaderna vía* are of especial devout and intellectual purpose, as studied through this thesis.<sup>19</sup>

I argue: in Chapter 1, that the *Alexandre* is a product of the intellectual zeitgeist of the late twelfth century and the most scholastic of the canonical thirteenth-century poems; in Chapter 2, analyzing the *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* and *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* in conjunction with the *Vida de Santa Oria*, that the saint’s Life was a genre of especial significance to Berceo who was ultimately a local poet; in Chapter 3, that the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* were written for the court in accordance with the values

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<sup>18</sup> In twelfth- and thirteenth-century Western Europe, philosophy is a subject that implies: “the sum of the liberal arts and the sciences that are not arts”, areas of study that are individually and collectively: “regarded as *ancilla theologiae*” (Wagner 1983: 253). Philosophy bridges the study of the liberal arts with that of highest Theology, enabling the learned on the right path to salvation.

<sup>19</sup> On this dual purpose of the poems written in *cuaderna vía*, two articles by Surtz are essential reading (1980, 1987).

of thirteenth-century Iberian *cortesía*; and in Chapter 4, that the *LBA*, in large part a depiction of the life of the mind, parodies hagiographic and monastic paradigms.

Throughout my research I have been keenly conscious of the huge amount of material I have not been able to take into account. The breadth of erudition displayed in the poems concerned, the number of Old Castilian clerical narrative poems I could have included in my analysis and not least those likely lost over the course of history, and the quantity of critical articles written on the *mester de clerecía*, have at times proved overwhelming.<sup>20</sup> Primarily, I am aware that my treatment of the *LBA* in relation to the earlier poems could have taken the form of a series of chapters, and in the future I intend to pursue this area further. However, while regretting my limited remit and consequently the partial nature of my conclusions, I hope to have taken forward the debate on the *mester de clerecía*, and principally with regard to their status, as I perceive them, as philosophical poetry. The intellectual scope of the *mester de clerecía* is rich, provoking questions still contentious to this day with regard to humankind's purpose and limitations.

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<sup>20</sup> I also do not take into account Arabic and Hebrew sources. As Walsh surmises: “the corpus of known *clerezía* poems is apt to constitute but a portion—a goodly portion, no doubt—of a more extensive original collection” (1979: 63).



## 1. The Problem of Knowledge in the *Libro de Alexandre*

Son of man,  
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
 A heap of broken images, where the sun beats.  
 T.S. Eliot, “The Wasteland” (1940: 23)

### I. Introduction

The frontiers of knowledge and experience are the primary concern of the *Libro de Alexandre (Alexandre)*.<sup>1</sup> At the inception of his intellectual explorations of the globe, Alexander implores his seasoned warriors to follow him into uncharted territory with words of marked existential anxiety: “Si ál non apresiéssemos, en balde nós viniemos” (st.2290b; Casas Rigall 2007).<sup>2</sup> *Apresiéssemos* here signifies *aprendiésemos* and *conquistásemos*, signaling the importance of such achievement for worldly fame in accordance with the Homeric ideal of *sapientia et fortitudo*.<sup>3</sup> Yet Alexander’s words, which promote a journey to the Antipodes, also indicate his desire for closer contact with the divine. Exhausting the possibilities of exploration of land through crusade of the holy East, Alexander proposes to penetrate the remaining realms of Earth and the cosmos, principally that of the deep seas, which are the domain of Nature and God and

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<sup>1</sup> I date the *Alexandre* to the latter half of the reign of Alfonso VIII (1158-1214). The striking balance of intellectual ambition and Christian devotion in the poem, quite distinct from the erudite yet penitential poetry of Berceo, the *Apolonio*, and the *PGF*, suggests composition before the Fourth Lateran Council (1215). The period in which critics generally consider the *Alexandre* to have been composed stretches from the late twelfth to the late thirteenth century. Notably, Uría Maqua links the *Alexandre* with the newly founded University of Palencia, suggesting the second decade of the thirteenth century, while Weiss makes association with the reign of either Alfonso VIII (1158-1214) or Fernando III (1217-1252) (2006: 24). Deyermond suggests the late 1220s as most likely (1996:146n7), and Arizaleta broadly advocates the first thirty years of the thirteenth century (2008: 75).

<sup>2</sup> There are two extant manuscripts of the *Alexandre* that contain the full text and they are known as *O* and *P*. *O* is housed at the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid and dates to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. *P* is held by the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris and dates from the fifteenth century. Three fragments of the poem also exist.

<sup>3</sup> “En el programa de Alejandro se conjugan ambas acciones” (Casas Rigall 2007: 639n2290b). The Homeric formula is found in the writings of Isidore of Seville (Curtius 1990: 175).

thus forbidden to man. His quest to journey to the limits of his capacity as a natural philosopher indicates the *Alexandre* to be a reflection on the major intellectual developments of the twelfth century that shook the foundations of education in Western Europe.

As is well known, the monasteries conserved cultural heritage through the darker centuries of the Middle Ages, but with the rise of schools and, later, universities, the centre of intellectual life irrevocably shifted. During the twelfth century, a sophisticated and scientific education became available to the clergy that produced an increasingly international student body (Lomax 1969: 299). The end of the twelfth century is a point of departure for higher education when the system of the seven liberal arts inherited from antiquity and anchored in the writings of the *auctores* is significantly modified to reflect study of the newly translated Aristotle, the Philosopher, notably in Paris, the twelfth-century “intellectual capital of Europe” (France 1995: 444), where Aristotle’s writing remained controversial and was prohibited in 1210, and in 1215.<sup>4</sup> The work of the Spaniard, Domingo Gundisalvo (an old form of “Gonzales”, fl. late-twelfth century), celebrated for his role with an important school of Toledan translators, is representative of the change in pedagogical approach (Curtius 1990: 482-83). Spain, like France, was an “intellectual powerhouse of Europe” in this period (Deyermond 1996: 154), drawing scholars from all over the continent and beyond to study new texts for Latin translation.

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<sup>4</sup> In the medieval scheme that dates to the organization of the subjects by Isocrates (Curtius 1990: 37), philosophy is considered: “the sum of the liberal arts and the sciences that are not arts”. Individually and collectively, the disciplines headed by philosophy are *ancilla theologiae*, the ultimate subject of study (Wagner 1983: 253). The majority of the works of Aristotle were translated into Latin by the end of the twelfth century (Spade 2013). 1215 was also the year of the Fourth Lateran Council, “que tan parentoriamente urgió una mejor educación del clero”, as attended by Diego García de Campos (Rico 1985: 8). On the Council in the Spanish context, see Lomax (1969) and Linehan (1971); more generally, see Duggan (2008: 318-66).

Gundisalvo possibly studied at the cathedral school of Chartres in Paris, a highly influential centre of twelfth-century humanism with which many important works of contemporary literature are linked, including Bernard Silvester's *Cosmographia* (1145-1156), Godfrey of Saint-Victor's *Fons philosophiae* (c.1176), and Gautier de Châtillon's *Alexandreis* (1178-1182; Townsend 2007: 94n3), the principal source of the *Alexandre*.<sup>5</sup> In his *De divisione philosophiae*, Gundisalvo extends the Chartrian notion of the synthesis of the academic disciplines through poetry, whereby extensive rational and scientific inquiry could be carried out without threat to faith (Wetherbee 1972: 4, 31), to conceive of philosophy and theology as distinct sciences (Lagerlund 2011: 274-75; "Dominicus Gundissalinus"). He also somewhat denigrates poetics and rhetoric, and advocates a new range of higher disciplines, including physics, mathematics, politics, economics, and ethics (Curtius 1990: 482), stating, for example, in the "Prologus": 'Grammar in truth is an instrument of philosophy as to teaching but not as to learning—for philosophy can be known without words but cannot be taught without them' (Grant 1974: 62).<sup>6</sup> The *Libro de Alexandre* was forged in the atmosphere of intellectual challenge indicated by the *De divisione philosophiae*, in which the need to reconceive the relationship of Catholic tradition to science was ever pressing.

The school at Chartres had significant impact on Spanish written culture, including the work of Diego García de Campos and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, in continuation with the further shift in thinking of the mid-thirteenth century as associated

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<sup>5</sup> See Townsend for a discussion of the dating of the *Alexandreis*. The text was dedicated by Châtillon to his patron, Guillaume des Blanches Mains (2007: 15, 12), and draws chiefly on the "quasi-romance" of Quintus Curtius Rufus (Ross 1963: 1).

<sup>6</sup> "Grammatica uero instrumentum est philosophie, quantum ad docendum, non quantum ad discendum—sine uerbis enim philosophia potest sciri sed non doceri" (Baur 1903: 18).

with Alfonso X (Rico 1985: 16-17; Faulhaber 1972: 140-41).<sup>7</sup> The *Alexandre*, well known for the proud celebration of poetics, erudition, and the Christian faith in its opening verses and throughout, shows affiliation with Chartrian thought (Casas Rigall 2007: 647n2329-30), yet takes as a primary theme discord between philosophy and theology. Key to the organization of the material of the *Alexandre* is the tension between two modes of experience: Christian vision and philosophic cogitation. The hero's exploration of the East and beyond, a landscape highly Christianized, is governed by these two types of intellectual journeying that are presented by the poet as oftentimes irreconcilable and potentially disastrous in the case of the latter. Christian vision is the preserve of Alexander the talented crusader, while he engages in philosophic cogitation in the latter stages of the *Alexandre*.

The *Alexandre* is a highly original adaptation of the *Alexandreis*, a contemporary school text studied in place of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, the *Thebaid* of Statius, and even the *Aeneid* (Destombes 1965: 11). Over a third of content is derived from other sources and the poet adds significant material of his own at key episodes and throughout, notably: Alexander's lament to Aristotle; the digression on Troy; the elaboration on Alexander's time in Jerusalem; aspects of his descent under the sea and the two sequences featuring personified Nature; and God's soliloquy on Alexander's pride, all of which I will discuss in this chapter. According to Willis, the interpolation of new materials was made: "with constant concern for their adjustment to the *Alexandreis* framework", yet the poet limited his fidelity to the aspects of Châtillon's work prominent in the tradition of writing on Alexander's life (1965: 40-77). He employed

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<sup>7</sup> Diego García de Campos' *Planeta* (1218) is often cited in conjunction with the *Alexandre*. In the words of Rico, the work: "selva inagotable de interpretaciones aritmológicas, etimológicas y de toda laya simbólica—concibe la tétrada como clave del universo y la aplica reiteradamente al análisis literario" (1985: 6). See also García Única (2011: 113).

the *Alexandreis* as a ready-made structure upon which to hang his thought and thus assert his particular pedagogical and existential agenda.

The Castilian Alexander is an unusually accomplished scholar of a modified curriculum of the *artes*, notably grammar, logic, rhetoric, medicine, music, astronomy, and natural philosophy (sts.38-50). His military excursions are inspired by his education and among his arms he boasts a belt worked by the hands of Lady Philosophy (st.91ab). Alexander's story provides much material for passages relating to natural philosophy: beasts and monsters, minerals, plants, and the configuration of the planets (Willis 1956-1957: 219-20), as well as the crucial voyage to the Antipodes, when he spends a lengthy period meditating on life under the sea in the manner of his teacher, Aristotle.

However, Alexander, who lives above physical constraints for the majority of his short life, defying his diminutive body (st.2191b), is a hero akin to those of hagiographic literature, as well as a philosopher king. Long associated with the Bible in Catholic tradition, he is thought to appear in Maccabees and, most significantly, in two allegories of the prophetic Old Testament Book of Daniel, as a leopard and a goat.<sup>8</sup> Jerome's reading of such passages proved highly influential in the Middle Ages and encouraged the belief that Alexander's conquests were achieved in accordance with the will of God (Cary 1967: 120). At approximately half of the way through the poem, Alexander enters the spiritual, geographic, and historic centre-point, Jerusalem, and recounts a divine vision that he has experienced that portends his rise to greatness.

Throughout the *Alexandre*, Alexander engages in cognitive activity: Christian, philosophic, and rhetorical, with the aim of extending his power. The *Alexandre* narrates Alexander's physical journey across the globe, yet it also traces his mental

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<sup>8</sup> See: 1 Maccabees 1.1-10, 6.2; Daniel 2.39, 7.6, 8.5-7 and 11.3-4.

explorations in allegory of the discord between theology and philosophy in contemporary academia. The intellectual journey is a primary theme of the *Alexandre* that extends to those of the poet and his audience along the ‘fourfold way’ of *cuaderna vía*.<sup>9</sup> The clerical trope *via*, ‘pathway’, as developed from late antique and monastic pedagogy, is inherently rhetorical, and each stanza circumscribes the magnitude of Alexander’s adventures for erudite, Christian analysis. Rhetoric, as employed by the poet of the *Alexandre* for the composition of his poem, is thus a process by which Alexander’s life may be considered in relation to extra-diegetic Christian truth, as well as major theme of the narrative itself.

As I will argue, the first half of the *Alexandre* details Alexander’s training in discussion with Aristotle as a proto-Christian leader—a role that requires sophisticated rhetorical skill—and the hero’s successful application of rhetorical techniques in the digression on Troy, sections which culminate in Alexander’s entry into Jerusalem. In the holy city the hero recounts a vision he experienced, effectively persuading his men of his divine favour, and confirming his foreshadowing of Christ. The use of rhetoric to advance Christian purpose, notably that of crusade, is closely linked with Alexander’s ability to commune with God in Christian vision.

In the second half of the poem when Alexander explores the seas as a natural philosopher, his rousing rhetoric is jettisoned for philosophic argumentation. This shift leads him to be promptly condemned and silenced, first and foremost, with the direct speech of the Christian God and, secondly, by the goddess Nature. The use of direct speech formally illustrates Alexander’s Christian progress through the *Alexandre*, in

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<sup>9</sup> As Willis asserts, the lines are the *roads* of the poem (1956-1957: 217).

association with Christian vision and philosophic cogitation.<sup>10</sup> Notably, in a final section that describes the hero's aerial adventure, the last of his exploits before his dishonourable death, the narrator offers a Christianized description of the globe on behalf of a speechless Alexander. While encouraging meditation on man's place and purpose in the cosmos, the *Alexandre* is a devout, cautionary tale of intellectual *soberbia* that clearly delineates limits for man's learned aspirations.<sup>11</sup>

## II. Formulating the Future

For his clerical, vernacular version of the Alexander legend, the author of the *Alexandre* chose to use *cuaderna vía*, a metre of both erudite and pious significance. As premiered in Castilian literature by the *Alexandre*, *cuaderna vía* is a 'fourfold way' comprised of seven-syllable hemistichs that evokes the *quadrivium*: "as the symbol of the clerkly spirit and content" of the poem (Willis 1956-1957: 217).<sup>12</sup> Due to the translation of doctrines like the Aristotelian physics and Ptolemaic astronomy, twelfth-century scholarship placed especial emphasis on the four higher disciplines of the seven arts (Stock 1972: 3). The number four was also important for Chartrian Platonism, as based upon readings of the *Timaeus*, a work of poetic philosophy that was extremely popular with contemporary French intellectuals (Townsend 2007: 227), in which the world is

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<sup>10</sup> Willis finds that: "more than three quarters of the passages of direct discourse in the *Alexandreis* appear in the *Alexandre*, and over nine-tenths of those retained were kept in the original form of direct address . . . from time to time, the poet added speeches, some of them based on other sources than the *Alexandreis*, and some originating with him". He notes the: "poet's strong bias in favor of direct discourse" (1965: 22, 64).

<sup>11</sup> The apparently ambivalent attitude of the poet/narrator towards Alexander's erudition and fame is a theme of criticism on the *Alexandre*. See Michael (1960). Brownlee argues that the poem is a romance of antiquity of pagan and Christian values (1983b: 264), while Weiss approaches the moral and political dimensions of the poem throughout the third chapter of his monograph, asserting that: "the political reading is predicated upon the poem's metaphysical force" (2006: 111).

<sup>12</sup> The concept of the *quadrivium* may originate with Boethius, who named the four mathematical *artes* the "quadrivium", 'four roads' (Curtius 1990: 37).

constructed in accordance with mathematical harmony. Moreover, the numbers three, four, and seven have great symbolic significance for Christians: three evokes the holy Trinity, seven the days of creation, and four is a perfect number associated with the seasons, the faces of the Cherubim, the Evangelists, and the arms of Christ's cross (see De Lubac 1998: 13, Curtius 1990: 503).

The *Alexandre* was composed in the context of developments in scholarship of the late twelfth century. Two of the poem's most important sources date from this period: the Latin *Alexandreis*, the first epic of the life of Alexander by the churchman and humanist Gautier de Châtillon, and the vernacular *Roman d'Alexandre*.<sup>13</sup> *Cuaderna vía*, monorhymed alexandrine quatrains, is closest in line form to the twelve-syllable French *vers alexandrin* as named after the *Roman d'Alexandre*, yet was also developed in imitation of Latin literature.<sup>14</sup> The *Alexandreis* employs grandiose dactylic hexameters, the quantitative metre of Greek and Latin epic such as Vergil's *Aeneid*. Châtillon additionally wrote Goliardic satires to great renown (Strecker 1929), and is credited as the inventor of Goliardic metre *cum auctoritate* (France 1995: 336).

As Derek W. Lomax describes, one of the most “distinctive” products of the clergy of the twelfth century is Goliardic poetry (1969: 299), the most active period for which was *c.* 1160. The Goliards were allegedly a broad group of wandering scholars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries who wrote on the joys of sex and drinking, as well

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<sup>13</sup> The version of the *Roman d'Alexandre* familiar to the author of the *Alexandre* is known as B, and is employed to bring greater colour to the often staid narrative of the *Alexandreis*. In the words of Such and Rabone, the version comprises: “a collection of fragments”, including the text by Lambert le Tort (*c.* 1170), “making up a coherent whole, but not corresponding directly to the version of Alexandre de Bernay” (2009: 31). The scene where Alexander observes the ways of the fish at the bottom of the sea and the description of his tent are likely borrowed from the *Roman d'Alexandre*, for example. Both are inserted to conform to the structure of the *Alexandreis*. The scene under the sea is furnished with detail of unknown source (Willis 1965: 50-57).

<sup>14</sup> Although the Alexandrine takes its name from the late-twelfth-century *Roman d'Alexandre*, it was used earlier (France 1995: 19). For study of the likeness of the fourteen-syllable Spanish *alejandrino* to the French version, see Dutton (1973: 84-85).

as much satire against the Church. These men, the: “ecclesiastical equivalent of jongleurs and court jesters”, are not, however, to be pigeon-holed as purely rebellious or frivolous. Just as the distinguished Châtillon wrote works as prestigious as the *Alexandreis* alongside Goliardic satire, the Goliard: “might write at one time as a clerk and at another as an entertainer for the unlearned” (Whicher 1979: 4).

Broadly, the strict differentiation of syllables in each line and their precise count in place of metrical feet, firmly links *cuaderna vía* with the Latin poetic tradition. The Goliardic line of (7pp + 6p) syllables, which sometimes appears in single-rhymed stanzas and quatrains (Paraíso 2000: 53), was formed according to models of rhythmic poetry in imitation of quantitative verse, and is strikingly akin to the Alexandrine (Norberg 2004: 184).<sup>15</sup> The monorhymed alexandrine quatrain in French and Italian, and that of *cuaderna vía*, is considered to derive from the Goliardic, with the French closest to the Latin overall.<sup>16</sup>

The association of *cuaderna vía* with licentious Goliardic verse offers a clue as regards the vehement rejection of *juglaría* in the opening verses of the *Alexandre*

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<sup>15</sup> The abbreviations pp and p refer to “proparoxytone” and “paroxytone”, in Spanish terms of versification, *esdrújulo* and *llano*. The following is an example stanza of Goliardic verse by Châtillon: “Nullis avaritia rebus erubescit, / ex hac vis libidinis derivata crescit, / nam cum semel opibus dives intumescit, / inguinis et capitis que sunt discrimina nescit” (Strecker 1929: 67).

<sup>16</sup> In her study of monorhymed, alexandrine quatrains in the French, Italian, and Spanish traditions, González-Blanco García finds the most significant material to be the French, abundant in number both of poems and extant manuscripts. Moreover: “los testimonios franceses son cronológicamente anteriores y entroncan directamente con las estrofas latinas” (2010: 293-94). Her research corroborates that of Rico, who earlier argued: “la estrofa goliárdica está emparentada de cerca—e incluso llega a confundirse—con el tetrástico monorrímo de alejandrinos que la influencia francesa, a comienzos del Doscientos, extiende por toda la Romania como metro didáctico y narrativo, propio de un linaje de intelectuales que ahora sienten con creciente intensidad el deseo o la conveniencia de difundir en vulgar las riquezas de la cultura latina, copiosamente incrementadas y transmitidas en los últimos decenios” (1985: 4). The following is an example stanza from the late thirteenth-century Italian poet, Bonvesin da la Riva: “In nom de Iesú Criste e de sancta Maria / Quest’ovra al so honor acomenzadha sia: / Ki vol odir cuintar parol de baronia, / Sí olza e sí intenda per söa cortesia” (*Libro delle Tre Scritture*, “De scriptura nigra”; lines 1-4; Diehl and Stefanini 1987).

(st.2a).<sup>17</sup> Since the foundational work of Manuel Milá I Fontanals (1874) and Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1911-1913), such verses have been considered a theory for navigation of the highly diverse poetic terrain presented by Old Castilian, clerical, narrative poetry, implying a genre of learned poetry in contrast to the popular and formally irregular so-called *mester de juglaría*. Although Anthony Lappin has recently reaffirmed the traditional view of the *mester de clerecía* (2002: 260), the two categories—a critical anachronism—are now broadly recognized to be far from mutually exclusive, and *mester de juglaría* doubted to be a genre at all.<sup>18</sup>

When considering the significance of the opening verses of the *Alexandre*, it is worth bearing in mind the words of Julian Weiss:

Our aim should not be simply to reconstruct a poetic on the basis of remarks extracted from poems and prologues, and to imagine, in other words, what poets would have said if it had occurred to them to write a formal poetic . . . we need constantly to ask whether a writer would have formulated a theory in the same way in different circumstances . . . theories are [often] chosen for their rhetorical effect. (1990: 11)

Weiss is here writing with regard to early-fifteenth-century literary theory in Castile, although his thinking applies equally well to the *Alexandre*. I argue that the poet of the *Alexandre* was invested in elevating any features of his composition that were vulnerable to misinterpretation, and this likely also included the use of his major source for structure and content, the “studiously classical and pagan” *Alexandreis* (Ross 1963:

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<sup>17</sup> The opening verses of the *Alexandre* are adapted in the *Libro de miseria de omne* and the *Libro de Apolonio* (see Chapter 3).

<sup>18</sup> See Deyermond (1965) and Weiss (2006), for example, for a broader conception of “mester de clerecía”. As Musgrave points out, the *Alexandre* portrays a *juglar* in a positive light at stanza 232: “Un joglar de grant guisa—sabié bien su mester—, / omne bien razonado que sabié bien leer, / su viola taniendo vino al rey veer. / El rey, quando lo vío, escuchol’ volunter” (1976: 138, 132). A somewhat ambivalent portrayal of the *juglar* is also characteristic of Berceo’s poetry. Notably, in the *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* Berceo refers to himself as a *juglar* yet also maintains the distinction between the clerical and the minstrelesque. Oria, a devout young woman, is reported to prefer listening to: “las oras más que otros cantares, / lo que dicién los clérigos más que otros joglares” (st.318ab; see Chapter 2).

1). As Alan Deyermond argues, in line with Willis (1956-1957), rather than “proclaiming the foundation of a poetic movement” hostile to *juglares* with his opening verses, the poet of the *Alexandre* was: “defining his own kind of scholarship” (1965: 112), which while entertaining, is, we are persuaded, a most serious intellectual and spiritual endeavour.

Moreover, the emphasis on a *mester* of “grant maestría”, yet “sin pecado, ca es de clerezía” in stanza two of the *Alexandre* articulates a profound tension between erudition and religious devotion in the *Alexandre*. Such tension is a response to the rich and illuminating developments of twelfth-century Latin scholarship, and notably those as regards the *quadrivium* and natural philosophy. The strictures of *cuaderna vía* both celebrate the developments and demonstrate the need to circumscribe them, incorporating them into a rather more conservative understanding of man’s place in the cosmic order: “el Criador nos dexa bien apresos seer: / ¡si en algo pecáremos, Él nos deñe valer!” (st.4cd).

Key for the success of the incorporation of such developments in accordance with the pious agenda of the poet of the *Alexandre*, was a strong command of grammar and rhetoric. In the words of Willis: “the author meticulously obeyed the precepts of elegant writing . . . far beyond the mere matter of *syllabas contadas*” (1956-1957: 217), and Charles F. Fraker describes the *Alexandre* as a: “mammoth epideictic oration” (1988: 367).<sup>19</sup> Grammar and rhetoric, the first two subjects of the *trivium*, involved the learning and interpretation of ancient literature and rhetorical treatises, and were the

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<sup>19</sup> As Fraker’s findings suggest, the *Alexandre* is composed according to rhetorical patterns including peripety, the prior summing up of a narrative episode, and *ethopoeia*, which at the “microdispositional” level enable the poet to add relief and fresh perspective to his sources (1988: 356-57).

founding disciplines for education in the monasteries as later also in the schools.<sup>20</sup> The traditions of classical and monastic rhetoric, both of which are important for the *mester de clerecía*, have distinct foci: public persuasion in the case of the former and creative composition in the latter.

In his *Institutio oratoria*, a key text of Roman rhetoric, Quintilian outlines a programme of grammatical and rhetorical training for the ideal orator, whereby: “the art of writing is combined with the art of speaking, both depending upon a study of literature” (Murphy 2001: 23): ‘We must acquire first-class linguistic resources, in the way that I have recommended; our style must be formed by a great deal of conscientious writing, to ensure that even our sudden effusions reflect the tone of our written work’ (X.vii.7; Russell 2001: 377).<sup>21</sup> Medieval writers, notably those of the twelfth century, were heavily influenced by Ciceronian rhetoric as in the *De inventione*, Quintilian, and the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and developed by Donatus and Augustine (Murphy 2001: 22-25, 8, 363). Charles Faulhaber notes the importance of the *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* for the early authors of the *mester de clerecía*, and to a lesser extent: “because less complete”, treatises on the liberal arts of Chartrian influence (1972: 140).

Monastic rhetoric is rooted in the study of antique texts and, as Mary Carruthers’ findings suggest, was a disciplined and creative process of reading and composition. An art centred on memory function, monastic rhetoric was fundamentally synaesthetic,

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<sup>20</sup> The *trivium* is: “a well-beaten ground like the junction of three roads, or a cross-roads open to all. Contrasted with them we find the mathematical disciplines as *artes quadriviales*, or *quadrivium*, or a road with four branches. The seven liberal arts are thus the members of a system of studies which embraces language branches as the lower, the mathematical branches as the intermediate, and science properly so called as the uppermost and terminal grade” (Willmann 1907).

<sup>21</sup> “Ut copiam sermonis optimi, quem ad modum praeceptum est comparemus, <ut> multo ac fideli stilo sic formetur oratio ut scriptorum colorem etiam quae subito effusa sint reddant”.

mixing verbal and visual media for the making of “mental images or cognitive ‘pictures’” through meditation (1998: 3). Drawing on the late antique notion of rhetorical *ductus*, as known to Quintilian, the monastic practice enshrined a method of meditative reading that was taken up by the clerics and interpreted across the medieval period.<sup>22</sup> This mode of reading was: “basado e imaginado en términos de un movimiento, viaje o trayectoria intelectual”, and employed the structural trope of “pathway”, *via*, *carrera* (Gerli 2005: 68), a figure key to the poetics of the *mester de clerecía*.

The *Alexandre* is known for its high-minded didacticism, and effective didacticism is essentially rhetorical. According to Peter Such and Richard Rabone, rhetoric is defined in the *Alexandre* in terms of: “the spoken language and the art of persuasion”, as reflected in stanzas 40 and 42 (composition is the realm of grammar), yet the distinction between the subjects is often rather hazy (2009: 38), and skills in imaginative composition are entirely necessary for the would-be sophisticated orator. With the *Alexandre*, the narrator asserts that he will: “fablar curso rimado”, to bring pleasure and solace to his audience through his *livro*. Moreover, he will increase their knowledge and understanding: “deve, de lo que sabe, omne largo seer”, while imploring: “ternem’, si lo cumpliere, por non mal escrivano” (sts.1-5). Crucially, the poet sought to: “create a fundamental equivalence between word and image” in the *Alexandre* in stark differentiation to his major source, the classicizing *Alexandreis* (Pascual-Argente 2010: 77). To my mind, the approach to verbal and visual media in the *Alexandre* is in line

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<sup>22</sup> “The routes of the liturgy and the routes of the mind meditating its way through the sites (and ‘sights’) of Scripture became for the fourth-century Fathers their essential concept of Invention, the mind thinking. In rhetoric, this development is both new, and distinctively fourth century. Teachers of rhetoric in late antiquity developed a concept to describe it, *ductus*, which they related in turn to the old rhetorical concept of *colores* . . . *ductus* is the way that a composition guides a person to its various goals” (Carruthers 1998: 61, 78).

with techniques associated with monastic rhetoric. The intellectual journey is a major theme of the *Alexandre* at both the diegetic and meta-diegetic levels, with the life of Alexander serving for extra-textual Christian contemplation.

As Clara Pascual-Argente emphasizes in her investigation of the tomb *ekphraseis* in the *Alexandre*, the poem subverts the classical norms adhered to in the *Alexandreis*, whereby *ekphrasis* is the: “site of a competition between word and image, in which the former displays its visual power”, in order to foment cultural memory of the Alexander legend (2010: 77, 95). Although broadly examining the *Alexandre* from a secular perspective, Pascual-Argente’s article is suggestive of the significance of monastic rhetorical technique for the poem. It thus intersects with the work of Hazbun, who explores: “the unique role of medieval memory in restoring the cleavage between mankind and the divine” in the *Alexandre* and the *Libro de Apolonio* (2013: 93).

Extending the work of Pascual-Argente and Hazbun, I suggest that the highly rhetorical *Alexandre*, written for didactic oral presentation, is a poem for contemplation of the contemporary curriculum in line with the increasing division between philosophy and the arts and theology. Whereas Christian rhetoric, as developed in the monasteries, the “craft of making thoughts about God” (Carruthers 1998: 2), raises Alexander to the status of Emperor and prophet, pagan philosophy ultimately impoverishes his perspective and leads to his downfall. Notably, Alexander is portrayed as a highly skilled rhetorician at several important junctures that emphasize his incipient Christian faith, including the digression on the Trojan War and when speaking to his troops in Jerusalem.

Conflicting modes of intellectual journeying—Christian vision and philosophic cogitation—are juxtaposed from early in the poem when Alexander is still an adolescent student of Aristotle. In the tradition of the epic, Alexander is motivated by a “fiera maletía” (st.24b), his rage matching that of Achilles, Roland, and the Cid, the god Poseidon in the *Odyssey*, and Juno in the *Aeneid* (Curtius 1990: 170), yet it also echoes the “fiera pasión” of the saints of the *mester de clerecía*, such as San Millán (st.59c; Dutton et al. 1992).<sup>23</sup> Such fervour combined with a prodigious intellect predisposes Alexander to visionary experience.

Following suggestions of his illegitimacy, Alexander experiences a pervasive desire to prove himself his father’s son: “por fi de Netánamo non me ayan a tener” (st.27d), and is deeply affronted that the Greeks are made to submit to Persian rule. Likened to Hercules, Alexander has wanted to conquer alien territory from a young age (sts.15cd, 27), and he suffers the shame of his lack of military experience both physically and psychologically. At night, tossing and turning in his chamber, he experiences visions of pillage and conquest conceived in a manner remarkably similar to that described and detailed in studies of monastic meditation:

Revolviés’a menudo e retorciés’ los dedos;  
non podié, con la quexa, los labros tener quedos:  
¡ya andava partiendo las tierras de los medos,  
quemádoles las miesses, cortando los viñedos! (st.30)

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<sup>23</sup> Epic and hagiography are far from mutually exclusive genres, despite their distinct origins in the pagan and Christian traditions, respectively. As Curtius observes, the *acta* and *passiones* of persecuted Christians, and saints’ Lives, were genres that appropriated forms of pagan literature. A notable consequence of this crossing of canons is that medieval Biblical poems and *Vitae* often appear in the form of the Latin epic (1990: 260). The heroes of Gonzalo de Berceo’s *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* and *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* are saints described with terminology borrowed from the epic tradition (Dutton 1984: 192). For the hagiographic text, affinity with the epic is almost mandatory (Rico 1985: 139).

In both classical and monastic rhetoric, withdrawing to a chamber or other confined space, and feelings of profound anxiety and restlessness often accompanied by physical distress, signal a visionary state of mind. Carruthers identifies Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (c.524) as a key source for discussion of medieval vision, and describes the anxious repose of the author/protagonist in his bedchamber that leads to his perceiving of Lady Philosophy, a mental state that: "came to be understood as an important indicator of the 'way' of monastic meditation", and through which he hopes to find some relief (1998: 173-74). As Ulrike Wiethaus notes: "visions often occur as creative and constructive responses to severe crises" (2006: 136).

Following this episode, Alexander meets with his teacher and advisor, Aristotle, to discuss his future. While the young king has become increasingly exasperated with his cloistered life, to the extent that he is making himself unwell: "seyé descolorido, / triste e destemprado" (st.31ab); "¡podrié caer en tierra de poca empuxada!" (st.34d), the sage has been philosophizing in sleepless confinement in his home: "avié un silogismo de lógica formado" (st.32c). In a passage original to the *Alexandre*, the longest of direct discourse, which Willis describes as almost: "the refrain of a lyric poem" (1965: 61-62), Alexander bewails: "assaz sé clerezía quanto me es mester" (st.39a). He is increasingly ashamed of his studies of the liberal arts, despite his talent as an *escolar* only superseded by his *doctor*, Aristotle (st.49b; see sts.39b, 43c, 50b), as detailed in stanzas 40-45.<sup>24</sup> This sequence of stanzas culminates with Alexander's assertion that he fully understands the properties of the four elements and the *signos* of the Earth and the Sun (st.45bc), knowledge associated with natural philosophy and astronomy.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> According to the *Alexandre*, Alexander began daily study of the liberal arts at age seven (sts.16-17).

<sup>25</sup> Alexander asserts: "bien sé las qualidades de cada elemento; / de los signos del Sol, siquier' del fundamento" (st.45bc). According to Alonso Pedraz, *elemento* (thirteenth to fifteenth century), from the

Alexander's discontent: *rencura* (sts.40d, 50d), *pesar* (st.41d), *repentència* (st.46c), leads him to conclude that he must reject *clerecía*: “Non serié pora rēy vida tan aontada: / ternía por mejor en morir muert'honrada”; “dava grandes sospiros, ca tenié grant manziella” (sts.47ab, 50c).<sup>26</sup> His desire to follow a path of vindictory crusade is indicative of tension as regards the function of the cleric in contemporary society, in the words of Ronald Surtz: “la cuestión del justo papel de la erudición en la vida del hombre” (1987: 265).<sup>27</sup> The threat posed by Alexander to the Christian order should he continue with his philosophical study beyond the structure of the liberal arts and his cloistered palace is presaged at this early stage of the narrative. After lamenting to Aristotle, Alexander concludes: “sé de todas las artes todo su argumento . . . / no's me podrié çelar quanto val'un açento” (st.45ad). His prodigious capabilities can only raise his Christian status, however, when channelled in battle for the East.

Devoid of Christ's example to follow, Alexander listens to Aristotle: “cuemo del Criador” (st.49c). The subsequent exchange between teacher and pupil is an important juncture in the text when Aristotle hands down classical military mores adapted to medieval crusade, knowledge gleaned from ancient texts that is rendered appropriately Christian. Aristotle first warns his young charge to respect God's might: “ca los omnes el seso non lo han por heradat, / sinon en quien lo pone Dios por su pïedat” (st.57cd), and later highly exalts worldly fame: “ïsi omne non gana prez por dezir o por fer, /

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Latin *elementum*, is a term pertaining to the discipline of natural philosophy that refers to: “cada uno de los cuatro principios inmediatos fundamentales que se consideraban en la constitución de los cuerpos y se simbolizaban en la tierra, el agua, el aire y el fuego” (1986: 985; “Elemento”).

<sup>26</sup> Alexander's lament is based on Book I of the *Alexandreis*, in which Aristotle asks Alexander the cause of his ire and he describes his resentment of Darius' domination. See Willis (1965: 61-63).

<sup>27</sup> The cleric as an intellectual is a subject of much criticism on the *Alexandre* and is a central theme of Weiss' monograph on the *mester de clerecía* (2006). See Deyermond (1996), Rico (1985), and Willis (1956-1957).

valdrié más que fues' muerto o fues' por naçer!" (st.72cd), teaching Alexander that: "e seso e esfuerço te será menester" (st.65d), in a reprise of Homer's ideal of the hero.

The battlefield is the place: "do es a parecer / cadauno qué se preçia o qué deve valer" (st.78ab). Classical precepts and learning about fame on earth are unified with Christian principle in moral purpose in the lessons of Aristotle, his role as a philosopher side-lined for the ultimate instruction of Alexander in the ways of the world under the Christian God. His teaching is also appropriate for the contemporary Iberian crusader. In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, crusading expeditions sought to end Muslim occupation of the Holy Land, as referenced twice in the *Alexandre* (sts.279d, 2510c; Such and Rabone 2009: 12-13). As William J. Purkis concludes in his study of the Holy Land and Iberia, drawing on Jean Leclercq: "crusaders were inspired by much the same spirituality as that which motivated the hermits and monastic reformers" (2008: 180).<sup>28</sup> Rhetoric and warfare are worldly pursuits compatible with Christian goals.

Aristotle also teaches Alexander how to channel visual experience by rhetorically illustrating his charge's future success over the course of their discussion. He depicts Alexander's duties, which range from talking through the possibility of military action with his vassals, to freeing Greece from oppression (sts.53b, 85c). He particularly emphasizes the importance of rousing speech to one's men prior to battle (sts.67-69), and using words tactically to further motivate and direct them (sts.72-75). Capturing the imagination of the young leader, the philosopher's speech is memorable and instructive:

El infant' fue alegre: tovos' por conseyado;  
non olvidó un punto de quanto'l fue mandado;  
perdió el mal talento e tornó tan pagado

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<sup>28</sup> Purkis continues: "the idea that the crusade was an act of Christo-mimesis continued to prove popular in the twelfth century" (2008: 180-81).

cuemo si ya oviesse todo esto recabdado.

¡Ya tornava las treguas a Dario e a Poro!;  
¡ya partié a quateros la plata e el oro!

.....

¡Ya contava por súa la Torre de Babilón,  
India e Egipto, la tierra de Sión,  
África e Marruecos, quantos regnos y son. (sts.86-88)

It is as if the young prince has already triumphed. He now better understands the cognitive capacity that, earlier on in the narrative, made him so ill and unhappy. He goes on to use the techniques he has learned from Aristotle's example to uplift and focus his vassals shortly after in the text when he speaks to them about the Trojan War (sts.320-772), the heroes of which Aristotle praised in their discussion (st.70) and who were known in the Middle Ages through the dissemination and adaptation of classical epic, such as the *Aeneid*. Alexander's intellect and passion dispose him to rhetorical composition and the extent to which he employs his skills in this discipline is closely linked to his capacity for Christian faith in the *Alexandre*.

Suggested in the *Alexandreis* (Willis 1965: 77), the *excursus* on Troy is a substantial addition by the poet of the *Alexandre*. Accounting for sixteen per cent of the work overall (Michael 1970: 256), the scene showcases Alexander's rhetorical technique while signalling his significance as a proto-Christian leader.<sup>29</sup> Ian Michael makes two very interesting points about the episode. Firstly, it is referred to as a sermon or speech given by Alexander, *sermón* (sts.332a, 762a), with the Troy story as its *thema*. Secondly, the rendition immediately precedes Alexander's major campaigns in the East. Despite Michael's initial assertion that the *excursus* in no way furthers the Alexander

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<sup>29</sup> The source for the *excursus* is probably the *Ilias Latina* (Michael 1970: 256).

narrative, he later adds that it sets: “a standard by which Alexander’s achievements can be judged and which they can be seen to surpass” (1970: 256-60).

The fact that the story of Troy is recited directly before Alexander’s significant battles suggests two further points. First, the popular legend is used as a model for battle: the alien enemy of Asian shores is imagined as familiar through a set of shared images. Alexander makes the unknown visible and to be overcome with the inevitability with which the Greeks conquered the Trojans. Second, classical epic is adapted for sermon rather than speech, its prestige harnessed to inspire a Christianized retinue. When it does not simply mean *habla* or *discurso*, *sermón* refers to an: “oración evangélica que se predica . . . en elogio de los buenos para la imitación de sus virtudes” (Alonso Pedraz 1986: 1580; “Sermón”). That the term *sermón* is to be read here in the Christian sense is emphasized at the end of the digression, when Alexander is described as an edifying preacher to his followers:

como es costumbre de los predicadores  
en cabo del sermón adobar sus razones,  
fue él aduziendo unos estraños motes  
con que les maduró todos los coraçones. (st.763)

After hearing the sermon, Alexander’s vassals are delighted by their leader’s skill in oration: “fueron todos alegres, ca siguié bien razón, / porque tenié los nombres todos de coraçón” (st.762cd). They tell Alexander: “¡De quanto tú has dicho somos mucho pagados! / ¡De fer quanto mandares somos aparejados!” (st.772bc). Furthermore, the visual training of Alexander’s retinue brings great success, confirming the righteousness of their military quest: Darius and Asia are definitively vanquished. Alexander later congratulates his men with visual terms for having superseded the efforts of their legendary Greek forefathers. They have, he says, *blinded* further admiration of the legend of Troy: “la estoria troyana con esto la çegastes” (st.2286c).

In her elucidation of vision and fantasy in the medieval period, Carruthers reminds us of Quintilian's definition of "vision". In his *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian comments that "mental craftings", *visiones*, are: "most powerfully of use to call up the emotional energies of oneself and one's audience". Indeed, Quintilian: "defines *visiones* at greatest length when he is talking about the rhetorical ornament of *enargeia*" (1998: 172). As he argues: 'A speech does not adequately fulfil its purpose or attain the total domination it should have if it goes no further than the ears, and the judge feels that he is merely being told the story of the matters he has to decide, without their being brought out and displayed to his mind's eye' (VIII.iii.62).<sup>30</sup> *Enargeia* uses language to create a: "vivid, visual presence, bringing the event described, and all the emotions that attend its perception, 'before the reader's eyes'" (Walker 1993: 353), a technique employed by Alexander in the digression on Troy—a collective visual experience—to help guide his troops (and the audience) through the adventure, and reaffirm their engagement with his proto-Christian agenda.

Portrayed as delivering his speech on Troy in the manner of an edifying preacher, the presentation of Alexander is also indebted to the tradition of monastic rhetoric. In the monastic tradition, as developed by Augustine, *visiones* could lead to apprehension of God and took as models the prophetic narratives of the Bible, as found in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Paul, among others. As well as presaging events, the prophet was considered to act as a: "Christian teacher-orator . . . speaking God's word to people in present societies", and, in his commentary on Genesis, Augustine argues that a prophet is privileged with superior capacity of judgement (Carruthers 1998: 172). The highest type of vision is "intellectual", after the bodily and spiritual, and when utilized: 'it either

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<sup>30</sup> "Non enim satis efficit neque, ut debet, plene dominatur oratio si usque ad aures valet, atque ea sibi iudex de quibus cognoscit narrari credit, non exprimi et oculis mentis ostendi".

finds the answer and attains its object, or it does not find it and holds itself in suspense, in order not to lapse by some perniciously rash judgement into a fatal error' (XII.xiv.29; Hill 2002).<sup>31</sup> In anticipation of his entry into Jerusalem, Alexander shows his growing prowess as a Christian teacher-orator to his present audience in the Troy digression. The roles of rhetorician and prophet are conflated in monastic pedagogy, as they are to be briefly united in the figure of Alexander.

### III. Perilous Vision

The events leading up to the battle of Issus are one of a sequence of scenes that culminate with the hero's entry into Jerusalem. Fraker notes such events as particularly striking as regards rhetoric. Darius is deceived into believing that Alexander is in retreat and confronts his foe with a large army, to his eventual horror and that of his men when they discover the truth: a *peripety*, one of the techniques recommended in the *De inventione* and the *Ad Herennium*. This sudden and unexpected change of fortune is depicted elementally in the *Alexandreis* and remodelled for enhanced drama in the *Alexandre* (1988: 357-59).<sup>32</sup>

Shortly after the fall of Issus, Darius lodges himself and his nobles in a beautiful spot reminiscent of Paradise itself (st.938d).<sup>33</sup> There, he conducts an assembly in preparation for the battle to come (st.941cd), and gives a striking speech to rouse his men. Darius' talent as a rhetorician is highlighted by the poet of the *Alexandre*: he

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<sup>31</sup> "Et aut inueniens ad fructum suum peruenit aut non inueniens in disceptatione se tenet, ne aliqua perniciose temeritate prolabatur in exitiabilem errorem" (*Library of Latin Texts, Series A*).

<sup>32</sup> In the words of Fraker as regards the *peripety*: "Gautier cocks the rifle, so to speak, and the *Alexandre* poet fires it". As he points out, this *peripety* is also an incidence of *anagnorisis* (1988: 357): Darius' change of fortune is an important feature of the dénouement in the *Alexandre*.

<sup>33</sup> The description is of a *locus amoenus*, a device traditionally associated with Vergil's ideal landscapes. From Horace regarded as a "technical term of rhetorical ecphrasis" (Curtius 1990: 192), the *locus amoenus* was a common feature of medieval literature, and a lengthy example introduces Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*.

delights listeners (st.943d); “movió gent’ su palabra” (st.944a), and persuasively casts his enemy as *torpe* of mind and *loco* (sts.948cd, 954a). However, due to his lack of favour from the Christian God, Darius’ *visiones* only serve to expose his limited perspective and emphasize the potency of Alexander. Indeed, the chief subject of Darius’ oration is a dream, *sueño* (st.951a), that erroneously predicts victory over his foe. In scenes of landscape bathed in angry fire descending from the heavens: “unas iradas flamas”, “flamas cuemo rayos agudos” (sts.952c, 953a), Darius sees the dwellings of the Greeks burned and Alexander captured alive and chained at the neck (st.954c).

Darius assures his nobles of the significance of what he has presaged, concluding that it cannot but come true: “¡lo que será de vero, segundo que yo fio!” (st.954d). As if confirming his dream, he soon receives reports of Alexander’s retreat (st.955), but the narrator quickly informs his audience of Darius’ double deception: by the messenger, and his dream, a work of the Devil, “mal pecado”, that renders him “mal cofondido” (sts.957-60). Meanwhile, Alexander enjoys an unusual moment of tranquillity and praises God for the opportunity to defeat his great enemy: “Tendió a Dios las manos: cató a suso fito. / . . . ¡De toda cueita tengo que me has öy quito!”; “¡Todos nuestros contrarios viénennos a las manos!” (sts.962ad, 965a). He subsequently triumphs decisively, forcing Darius to flee the battlefield (st.1074).

Darius’ rhetoric, although pleasing and skilful, is style over substance, and his dream a mere image, like a mirage in the desert, of no higher significance. A true, prophetic vision or dream from God is a rare experience afforded to only the most devout or blessed. Conversely, the false vision is relatively common as signalled in the Bible (Le Goff 1988: 195-96, 228). In Ecclesiastes 5.7, for example, the Christian is warned: ‘for in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities:

but fear thou God' (*The Bible*).<sup>34</sup> Those who most famously receive visions in the Bible include Job, who is tested by very frightening images (Job 7), while the clear vision, *visio*, is reserved for Moses and the patriarchs. Darius is doomed to defeat, as prophesized in the Bible and later retold in the *Alexandre* in preparation for the battle of Gaugamela. Paraphrased from the Book of Daniel, the narrator alludes to Alexander as a force of God-given power: “verníe en la sierra un cabrón mal domado; / ¡quebrantarié los cuernos al carnero doblado!” (st.1339cd). The goat, ‘king of Grecia’ (Daniel 8.21),<sup>35</sup> forces the ram to relinquish his stronghold over the two kingdoms of the Medes and the Persians, and: ‘therefore the he goat waxed very great’ (Daniel 8.8).<sup>36</sup>

In the battle for Issus itself and the subsequent capture of Gaza, Alexander must preserve his life from two men possessed: Zoroas, a visionary astrologer turned “loco endiablado” (st.1068b), “sabié bien catar” (st.1053a), and an assassin “endiablado, / en guis’ de peregrino” (st.1124ab). At this stage in the narrative, Alexander is a morally upright warrior in contrast with these two men who have been corrupted by Lucifer. He next enters one of two symbolic centres of Asia in the poem, Jerusalem—the second is Babylon—*loci* that correspond to the Augustinian *civitas Dei* and *civitas terrena*, respectively (Deyermond 1989: 163). In Jerusalem, over the course of a speech to his men, Alexander’s status is raised to that of a prophet and the righteousness of his dominion confirmed by an authoritative religious leader, Jadus, the Jewish High Priest of the city.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “Ubi multa sunt somnia plurimæ vanitates et sermones innumeri tu vero Deum time” (5.6; *Biblia Sacra* vol. 2).

<sup>35</sup> “Rex Græcorum”.

<sup>36</sup> “Hircus autem caprarum magnus factus est nimis”.

<sup>37</sup> In the *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* and *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* the eponymous protagonists develop the gift of prophecy, but only after considerable monastic training. See stanzas 283 and 287, respectively.

The narrator describes how: “vínole en visión a Jadus do durmié / que, quando Alexandre sopiessen que vinié, / sallesse contra él qual la missa dizié” (st.1137abc). Jadus, privileged with a vision, understands that he must welcome Alexander even though he has sworn loyalty to render tribute to Darius alone (st.1134). When Alexander finally enters the holy city, an ingress reminiscent of that of Christ in Matthew 21 and Mark 11 (Arizaleta 2012: 145), and the High Priest greets him as he has been guided, the hero is moved to confirm his incipient faith in God. The High Priest, like Alexander, is of latent Christian faith: he attires himself with the tetragrammaton (sts.1139cd, 1155), yet is additionally described as a bishop wearing a mitre (sts.1139b, 1154b). Deferring to the leader, Alexander shows respect for the moral authority of a keeper of the old law. He prostrates himself in prayer at Jadus’ feet (st.1142d) and: “fizo sus estaçiones; / cuemo la Ley mandava, ofreçió oblaçiones. / Confirmoles su Lëy e todas sus acçiones” (st.1143bcd). Lastly, he reads the prophecy of the Book of Daniel that predicts his rise to power (st.1145), in a departure from the sources of the poem.<sup>38</sup> He has made everlasting peace with the city and freed its people from all tributes, just so long as they obey his laws in return (st.1144).

The unusual mercy of Alexander with the people of Jerusalem shocks his men and he must explain himself to them. On entering Jerusalem: “membrol’ por aventura de una visi3n” (st.1142b); Jadus, he says, reminds him of an angelic figure who came to him when he was but a newly crowned king following the death of his father (sts.1148, 1160). Note the description of Alexander’s experience as a vision, *visi3n*, rather than a lesser dream, *sueño*, as in the recent case of Darius. Alexander recalls the anxiety and

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<sup>38</sup> Daniel (8, 11) is not mentioned in the *Alexandreis* and in the *Historia de Preliis* the book is mediated by clerics (Arizaleta 2012: 146).

sleeplessness he experienced prior to the vision, once again conceived in a manner remarkably similar to that described and detailed in studies of monastic meditation:

Estava en mi cámara en un lecho yaziendo;  
de las cosas del regno yazía comiendo.  
Fue, con la grant anxia, el sueño posponiendo:  
¡yazía en grant cueita, grant lazerio sufriendo!  
.....  
corrién de mí sudores, ca era en ardura. (sts.1149-50)

Alexander was lying in bed thus when, unexpectedly, an angelic figure appeared to him in the gloom. The palace was “fierament’alumbrado” (st.1152c), and the apparition said:

Entiende, Alexandre, qué te quiero fablar:  
salte de Eüropa, passa a ultramar.  
¡Avrás todos los regnos del mundo a ganar!;  
¡nunca fallarás omne que’t pueda contrastar! (st.1157)

The words of the apparition are resonant of the prophecy of Daniel, just read by Alexander, and Psalm 72.8: ‘He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth’, as noted by Amaia Arizaleta.<sup>39</sup> Yet in order to appease his men, Alexander must defend the purity of his experience most vehemently: “¡Yo a ésti non adoro nin cato por señor, / mas, so la su figura, oro al Críador!” (st.1161ab). He is no pagan idolater and understands that the angel was just a *figura*, or image, to direct him to the worship of God. God, he claims: “me prometió de fer emperador” (st.1161c), and next asserts understanding of his place in the Christian hierarchy in relation to his Lord, who is: “¡Rey e Obispo e Abat e Príor!” (st.1161d).

Following this, Alexander must state his case even further in order to satisfy his men:

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<sup>39</sup> “Et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare et a flumine usque ad terminos terrae” (71.8; *Biblia Sacra* vol. 1). Arizaleta cites this psalm in relation to the *Alexandre*, the *Fuero de Cuenca*, and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada’s *Historia de rebus Hispaniae* (2008: 99-100). She also notes that the voice of the apparition: “rappelle le contenu des paroles de Daniel, prophète des prophètes, médiateur choisi par Dieu et conseiller des rois” (2012: 147).

¡Bien sepades, amigos, que aquel mandadero  
 mensaje fue de Dios por fer a mí çertero!  
 ¡A mí Esse me guía, non otro agorero!  
 ¡Vós lo veredes todos que será verdadero! (st.1162)

With a combination of eloquence and conviction, Alexander helps his followers to understand the exception he has made and implores them: “non me devedes tener por falleçido” (st.1160d). He affectively describes the darkness and anxiety of his night of insomnia, the wind and lightning which throws open his windows, and then the sudden appearance of the figure in a flood of light (sts.1148-63), such that his men, and the audience, can imagine the event as if they too had paid witness. They are convinced: “Entendieron ya todos que fizo aguisado: / fueron bien fëuzantes de ganar el regnado” (st.1163ab).

Alexander’s speech is composed in accordance with the five parts of rhetoric, notably invention, *inventio*, or “the discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments that render one’s thoughts plausible”, and memory, *memoria*, “the firm mental grasp of matter and words” (*De inventione*, I.VII; see summary in Murphy 2001: 10-11).<sup>40</sup> In the holy city the hero recasts his *visi3n* (st.1142b) as a rhetorical *visio* or “mental crafting”, such that the emotional energies of his vassals—and those of the audience—are called up to renew commitment to the adventure, as in the case of the sermon on Troy. His speech is the supreme example of the skills of the *trivium* applied for Christian purpose in the *Alexandre*, and confirm him as a: “Christian teacher-orator . . . speaking God’s word to people in present societies” (Carruthers 1998: 172). As Arizaleta remarks, in Jerusalem, Alexander the proto-Christian leader can be compared to Daniel the prophet himself, for there: “rien ne se dresse entre lui et Dieu” (2012: 146).

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<sup>40</sup> The other three parts are: arrangement, *dispositio*; expression, *elocutio*; and delivery, *pronuntiatio*.

Shortly after the Jerusalem interlude, the hero undertakes a pilgrimage in the manner of a *peregrinus* heading for Santiago de Compostela (st.1167d), a further indication of his deepening spirituality. The clarity of Alexander's recalled vision and the partial realization of its prophecy in Jerusalem confirm him as a quasi-prophet blessed by the Christian God. Yet Alexander is shortly to radically undermine his status, as his interest shifts from righteous rhetoric and crusade to philosophy and science. The hero's many military victories and corresponding edification bring him insufficient satisfaction, as brought to a head when he is recuperating from the attack on Sudrae in which he sustains a serious injury (sts.2245-49). Anxious that he is no longer at war (st.2266d), Alexander perceives a new challenge: a journey to the Antipodes: "quiérolos conquerir" (st.2293b). He thereby hopes to discover new methods of warfare and learn about the natural world (sts.2269-70; see Michael 1960: 206), in further development of the training he received from Aristotle.

Indeed, Alexander's voyage is prefigured in the digression on the Trojan War with the *ekphrasis* of Achilles' shield (sts.652-59).<sup>41</sup> As Pascual-Argente argues, the person responsible for manuscript *O* of the *Alexandre*: "seems to have been well attuned to the relationship between word and image reflected in the poem", as the codex contains an illustration of Alexander speaking of Troy to his men: "a highly verbal moment" (2010: 87-88).<sup>42</sup> In conjunction with the illustration, together an effective mnemonic node, the *ekphrasis* of Achilles' shield anticipates the scene of the dénouement of the poem, when Alexander, pursuing natural philosophy, speaks ill of creation.

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<sup>41</sup> On the interweaving of the Trojan narrative into the structure of the poem as a whole, see Such and Rabone (2009: 42).

<sup>42</sup> Manuscript *O* also contains an illustration of Alexander after his disastrous swim in the River Cydnus (sts.880-913).

Achilles, like his admirer, Alexander, is a restless avenger: “¡nunca durmió buen sueño fasta que fue vengado!” (st.652d). He has new arms produced to aid him in his task and by his order his shield is decorated with carvings that include the following:

Los pescados quantos son en la mar,  
 .....  
 Eran y los doz’ signos del Sol bien compassados,  
 los unos de los otros igualmente tajados;  
 e las siete planetas cuémo tienen sus grados,  
 quáles son más ravisosos o quáles más pagados.  
  
 Non es omne an neçio que viesse el escudo  
 que non fuesse buen clérigo sobra bien entendudo.  
 (sts.654b, 658, 659ab)

Notably, stanza 658, only present in manuscript *O* and “a todas luces original” (Casas Rigall 2007: 296n658), emphasizes knowledge of astronomy and philosophy. The seven planets feature in the key Chartrian text, the *Timaeus*, and are evoked for a second time by Alexander before his Antipodean voyage.<sup>43</sup> The design of Achilles’ shield is a composition of scientific and universal learning, the description of which indicates the poet and Alexander as *clérigos entendudos*, as well as associating them with the military prowess of the legendary hero Achilles.<sup>44</sup> The poet is hinting here of the perils of *clerecía* when not properly aligned with the principles of Christian faith. Indeed, like Achilles, Alexander has a fatal weakness that condemns him to an early death, although his is located in his mind rather than his body: the inability to perceive his own pride and covetousness, in short, his lack of Christian humility, the primary tool of the pious contemplator of Creation.

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<sup>43</sup> “In order that time might be created, the sun and the moon and five other heavenly bodies—the so-called planets—were created to determine and preserve the numbers of time. Once he had made bodies for each of them, he put them into orbits within the circuit of difference, seven bodies for seven orbits” (*Timaeus* 38cd; Waterfield 2008: 26).

<sup>44</sup> See Pascual-Argente on the *ekphrasis* of Achille’s tomb (2010: 84-91).

In the manner of a Chartrian Platonist, Alexander believes that his voyage is no threat to faith: “Envïonos por esto Dios en estas partidas: / por descubrir las cosas que yazen sofondidas” (st.2291ab). He must, however, convince his generals of the latter, who have serious reservations. One of them, Craterus, speaks boldly to his leader. Although they are all inspired to follow him (st.2275d), they cannot help but question the sense of the trip and advise restraint: “La tu fiera cobdiçia non te dexa folgar; / señor eres del mundo: non te puedes fartar. / . . . el omne sabidor dévese mesurar” (sts.2274ab, 2276d). Reminding him of the natural hierarchy in which he considers all men to have their place, Craterus evokes the famed battle between Hector and Achilles: “¡non li cayera preçio a Éctor el famado, / de irse abraçar con un puerco lodado!” (st.2279cd). Alexander must seriously consider whether this further exploration will enhance his fame: the chances are that the opposite will be the case.

Central to the general’s argument is the notion that what Alexander desires to experience and understand is unnatural: “prendié carrera que nunca fue usada”; “¡mal nos semeja buscar cosas atales, / las que nunca pudieron fallar omnes carnales!” (sts.2271b, 2272cd). Alexander’s desire to journey to the limits of his mind and body—to go beyond land to wrestle with the waves, *foguera*, and the sky (st.2277)—is arrogant indeed and marks him as one reaching for divine power. As Casas Rigall describes: “de las dos grandes regiones del universo—la Naturaleza y el Cielo, separadas por la órbita de la Luna—el hombre sólo puede dominar parte de la primera, el elemento de la tierra, pues el conocimiento del agua, el fuego y el aire le está vedado” (2007: 639n2289).

Alexander, however, is unperturbed and gives a speech that persuades everyone to his will: “era bien lenguado” (st.2282c). This is his final significant oration before that which records his fall from grace, an event that seriously undermines his rhetorical

capacity, not to mention his prestige as a leader. For now, however, the hero acknowledges the decade-long, exhausting service paid to him by his men (st.2285), a period that recalls the shared point of reference of the ten-year siege of Troy, in reprise of the persuasive digression on the epic battle. He subsequently evokes the Trojan War explicitly, flattering his men for their achievements (st.2286c), and, ultimately, admonishing them: “¡non escribió Omero en sus alegorías / los meses de Aquiles, mas las barraganías!” (st.2288cd).

Note the use of the term *alegoría* in association with Homer. From the fourth century, when Constantine applied Vergil’s Fourth Eclogue to Christ, important classical texts were broadly considered to offer truth to the Christian allegorically: “the infant literature of Christianity could not give up the literary forms of antique culture . . . from this discordant situation . . . Christian poetry arose” (Curtius 1990: 445). The notion of sacred truth veiled in pagan texts came into particular vogue in the twelfth century with the doctrine of the integument. A representative example proposing the said doctrine is the *Commentary on the First Six Books of the “Aeneid”* (*Commentary*), as usually attributed to Bernard Silvester (see Stock 1972: xii), in which the *integumentum* is described as: ‘a type of exposition which wraps the apprehension of truth in a fictional narrative . . . thus it is also called an *involucrum*, a cover’ (Schreiber and Maresca 1979: 5).<sup>45</sup> The *Commentary* describes the *Aeneid* as written with a dual narrative order: the first constructed by the poet, *artificialem poeta*, the artificial, and the second revealed by the philosopher, *naturalem philosophus*, the natural.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> “Genus demonstrationis sub fabulosa narratione veritatis involvens intellectum, unde etiam dicitur involucrum” (Jones and Jones 1977: 3; lines 14-15). The concept of *integumenta* has fascinating implications for study of the *Libro de buen amor*, which takes as a major theme the covered and revealed.

<sup>46</sup> “Geminem esse narrationis ordinem” (Jones and Jones 1977: 3, line 13; 1, line 15).

As Wetherbee describes, the relation of what Plato and other ancient philosophers and poets wrote to “underlying truths” was considered to be: “like that of the visible world to the divinely ordained cosmic order”, and could be discerned by rational i.e. philosophical means (1972: 37, 144). Such discernment is Alexander’s goal as a natural philosopher, and also that of the poet of the *Alexandre*, who seeks to reveal the truth-value inherent in the life of the pagan hero. The extent to which their understanding on how to achieve their respective goals diverges, maps the tension between theology and philosophy in the *Alexandre*. I suggest that the figures of Alexander and the narrator of the poem may be representative of rival students of a contemporary Iberian school: a keen philosopher in the case of the former, and someone of greater loyalty to the monasteries in the case of the latter.<sup>47</sup>

Like the narrator, who advocates erudition and the dissemination of knowledge from the outset of the *Alexandre* (sts.1-5), Alexander wishes to be remembered for his intellectual derring-do. Alexander’s ambition, however, knows no limits, as his speech illustrates:

Dizen las escripturas —yo leí el tratado—  
que siete son los mundos que Dïos ovo dado.  
De los siete, el uno apenas es domado:  
¡por esto yo non conto que nada he ganado!

Quanto avemos visto, antes non lo sabemos:

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<sup>47</sup> Towards the end of the poem, the narrator praises Spain and Europe’s principal centres of learning, including Bologna, Paris, Burgos, León, Seville, and Toledo, where the poet of the *Alexandre* may have trained (Arizaleta 2008: 82), yet he also cites the modest San Millán de la Cogolla (sts.2580-83), merely a hill at the time, as one of the five most important Spanish landmarks. The inclusion indicates that the poet may have had a strong connection with the area and perhaps the local monastery (Such and Rabone 2009: 8). As is well known, Berceo had close personal and professional ties to San Millán de la Cogolla and wrote a life of the saint who founded the monastery very early on in his career (see Chapter 2 of this thesis). Notably, stanza 2675 of manuscript *P* attributes the *Alexandre* to Berceo’s hand: “Si queredes saber quién fizo esti ditado, / Gonçalo de Berçeo es por nombre clamado, / natural de Madrid, en Sant Millán criado, / del abat Johán Sánchez notario por nombrado”. I believe this to be highly unlikely, given the style and tenor of the work and the stanza is broadly considered to be apocryphal.

si ál non apresiésemos, en balde nós viniemos.  
 ¡Por Dario e por Poro, que vençidos avemos,  
 yo por esto non cuido que grant cosa fiziemos!

.....  
 Cosas sabrán por nós que non serién sabidas:  
 ¡serán las nuestras nuevas en cántigo metidas! (sts.2289-91)

Alexander's denigration of his prior achievements is striking. The perspective granted to him by his vast learning leads him to conclude that man's position in the world is generally a lowly one and military fame an illusion of power. However, rather than affording him humility, this understanding only increases his desire for knowledge. Likely drawing on the *Etymologiae* or a commentary on the *Alexandreis*, Alexander articulates a grand vista of the seven planets, unmentioned by Châtillon (Casas Rigall 2007: 639n2289) and earlier evoked in the *ekphrasis* on Achilles's shield, an image of universal knowledge. His drive to make his life count for the annals of history is compelling: his men interrupt him, overwhelmed by what they have heard: "¡todos te seguiremos por tierra e por mar!" (st.2295d). The leader and his followers thus make rapid preparations and set sail almost immediately (sts.2296-97).

The crew soon have great difficulty navigating unknown waters and the weather changes for the worse, the beginning of Alexander's humbling. The divine force channelled by the King to subdue so many peoples is to be used against him. As the narrator remarks with more than a hint of irony, when the angry waves rise up to threaten the ships: "—¡non las podié el rëy por armas amansar! —" (st.2300d). There is no doubt in his mind that Alexander is a man of extraordinary capabilities: "¡Fizo Dïos grant cosa en tal omne criar, / que non lo podién ondas iradas espantar!" (st.2302cd), and the clouds and the winds envy this equal of Ulysses (sts.2303b, 2304), yet the rare

determination that previously brought Alexander such success is now deplored by the narrator as *mala porfidia* (st.2303a; see Michael 1960: 207).

Alexander next prepares and descends into the deep: a scene likely borrowed from the *Roman d'Alexandre* that contains detail of an unknown source, probably original to the *Alexandre* (Willis 1965: 50).<sup>48</sup> The poet/narrator does not want the event to be forgotten (st.2305d). First, Alexander has his vessel made: a barrel of glass and bitumen, suspended on chains from one of his boats, that is large enough for him and two of his best men (sts.2306cd, 2308). This triumph of contemporary science and technology will be his residence for fifteen days, he commands (although his men nervously remove him much sooner; sts.2309a, 2322d), an indulgence permitted by a higher will: “destajado era que en mar non morrié” (st.2310d).

The image of Alexander enclosed in the magnitude of the ocean depths is at once awe-inspiring and comical: “el buen rëy en su casa çerrada: / sedié grant coraçón en angosta posada” (st.2311ab). The man who commands the length and breadth of the globe is paradoxically most comfortable in a confined space such as this. Alexander’s barrel, a *casa çerrada*, *angosta posada*, evokes the ascetic dwelling places of saints in the *mester de clerecía*, such as Millán and Oria. In the *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla*, Millán constructs a *capiella* for contemplation: a “casa angosta e poquiella” (st.107ac), and in the *Vida de Santa Oria*, the protagonist shuts herself away “en un rencón angosto” (st.20b), withdrawal which in the monastic context signals a visionary state of mind (Carruthers 1998: 174).

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<sup>48</sup> The scene is also present in the *Historia de Proeliis* and the poet was likely working from memory of one or both texts as he (mistakenly?) writes: “una fazaña suelen las gentes retraer; / non yaze en escripto: es malo de creer” (st.2305ab). See Casas Rigall (2007: 642).

Alexander, however, is no monk who abhors the world. Rather than suffering in confinement with anxiety and sleeplessness in order to receive divine message, composing edifying speeches, or fighting to unite the world's people under his rule, he now sits in comfort imbibing knowledge from observation in the manner of his philosopher teacher, Aristotle. His purpose is to understand and record the mysterious nature of marine society: “saber e mesurar / e meter en escripto los secretos del mar” (sts.2306ab, 2309cd), and thus compile a body of knowledge of universal insight: “Non vive en el mundo ninguna criatura / que non cria el mar semejante figura” (st.2312ab). The sea is a microcosm of the world as a whole and, as is the case in human society, the narrator asserts, sea creatures: “traen enemistades entre sí por natura: / los fuertes a los flacos danles malaventura (st.2312cd), a point corroborated by Alexander's empirical observations: “los chicos a los grandes tenienlos por señores; / maltrayén los más fuertes a todos los menores” (st.2316cd). Alexander considers the deep another *imperio* won (st.2315d) as, extraordinarily, the fish gather around him: “como si los oviés' por armas subjudgados: / vinién fasta la cuba todos cabez' colgados” (st.2314bc). Though he cannot tame the waves, Alexander is a compelling leader of all creatures within them.

Alexander's observations lead him to an interpretation of the cosmic order, a move that invokes the disapproval of the narrator and the wrath of God. In four stanzas of direct speech (sts.2317-20), the hero argues that Creation is gravely afflicted by the sin of pride: “Diz'el rēy: ‘¡Sobervia es en todos lugares!’” (st.2317a). The philosophizing oration, which is framed with imagery of the creatures of the land, seas, and air (sts.2317bc, 2320a), yet contains a troubling blend of Christian teaching and judgment, resembles the scholastic *quaestio*.<sup>49</sup> God is invoked as authority at st.2317d

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<sup>49</sup> On the medieval *quaestio*, see Lawrance (1984: 233-34).

in condemnation of pride, and this is followed by proof from sacred scripture and Alexander's own experience of the damage the vice can cause, in development of the initial proposition: "Naçió entre los ángeles: fizo muchos caer; / derramó por la tierra, dióle Dios grant poder. / . . . qui más ha más quier', muere por ganar ál" (sts.2318ab, 2319b). The concluding stanza is quasi-syllogistic, demonstrating that inequality follows from the divisions that exist between creatures:

Las aves e las bestias, los omnes, los pescados,  
 todos son entre sí a bandos derramados.  
 ¡De viçio de sobervia son todos entecados!:  
 ¡los flacos de los fuertes andan desafiados! (st.2320)

Alexander defines prideful self-assertion and Christian recognition of others as one's equals as conflicting modes, and the former as highly destructive: "¡Mal pecado, ninguno non es a Dios leal!" (st.2319d). Failing to perceive the irony in his pronouncements, the hero has descended, not only into the depths of the sea, but as a spiritual leader and rhetorician: "bien devié un poquillo su lengua refrenar, / que tan fieras grandías non quisiesse bafar" (st.2321cd). He thus follows in the steps of Satan, Adam, and Eve: those closest to God are often the most vulnerable to a poverty of perspective.

#### IV. The Divinity of Nature

With the interlude under the sea, the poet of the *Alexandre* emphasizes a topic in vogue in the later twelfth century: "the breach between philosophical and religious knowledge, between the vision accessible to fallen man and that 'theophanic' vision with which he was originally endowed" (Wetherbee 1973: 56). Alexander, a man of extraordinary greatness, is also the epitomic sinner, ignorant of Christ, a role commensurate with that

of the daring natural scientist in the tradition of the twelfth century. With his attempts to turn his “knowledge of *natura* to practical advantage” (Willis 1956-1957: 221), Alexander assumes: “power to collaborate with Nature, even compete with her, and exploit her secrets in the interests of human life”, an attitude to the natural world exemplified in Bernard Silvester’s *Cosmographia* (1145-1156; Wetherbee 1973: 56).

Silvester was one of the most successful didactic poets of the medieval period (Stock 1972: xii), who gained the status of *auctor* (Wetherbee 1973: vii). The *Cosmographia*, a Latin *prosimetrum* and tale of creation written in the tradition of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, was read before Pope Eugene III in 1147 (Wetherbee 1973: 56,20). He was known in medieval Iberia: manuscripts from Toledo allude to his work and one to the *Cosmographia* in particular (Dronke 1978: 13; see also Wetherbee 1973: 20).<sup>50</sup> Beginning before time and ending with the making of man, who struggles with his passions, the work concludes with three quatrains, the final lines of which draw on Plato’s *Timaeus* (Dronke 1978: 48-49).<sup>51</sup>

The notion that Nature is to be competed with and possibly exploited for human gain also features in the *Fons philosophiae* (c.1176), a text written in the same decade as the *Alexandreis* by the French monk Godfrey of Saint-Victor (c.1125-1194). This didactic, autobiographical poem in Goliardic quatrains concerned with the *viae* of the liberal arts, is identified by Winthrop Wetherbee as belonging to a group of Chartrian allegories that took the liberal arts as theme (1972: 144), and brings to mind the findings

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<sup>50</sup> According to Millás Vallicrosa’s study of the manuscripts of the library of Toledo Cathedral, of two inventories extant from Don Gonzalo García Gudiel’s time as archbishop in the thirteenth century, the first: “redactado cuando siendo deán de Toledo, fue nombrado obispo de Cuenca (1273)”, lists approximately fifty volumes, including the work of Bernard Silvester, Alan of Lille, and Aristotle. On the twenty-third folio of a further manuscript: “se cita en nuestro texto a ‘Bernardus Silvester’, y luego se habla de los días de la semana, meses, signos zodiacales, división del año, año lunar . . .” (1942: 17, 222).

<sup>51</sup> Bernard Silvester’s ideal is notably a: “man of both action and vision, a king as well as a philosopher” (Wetherbee 1973: 58). The *Cosmographia* depicts the creation and ordering of the universe according to a quaternary harmony, in consonance with man, with two books, the *Megacosmos* and *Microcosmos*.

of Faulhaber, who cites: “treatises on all the liberal arts taking their inspiration from Chartres”, as important rhetorical sources in early thirteenth-century Castile (1972: 140). In a stanza on the ‘Quadrivium, or the Arts of Nature’, “De quadriuo seu phisica”, Godfrey, who: “counted no stage of his formation as useless or unworthy of a Christian believer” (Synan 1972: 25), writes of the penetrative potential of science:

What’s left to the globe of earth their attention urging,  
High or low, no matter what, in one study merging,  
Now go down beneath the ground, profoundly submerging,  
None of Nature can escape – See: now they’re emerging!  
(lines 329-32)<sup>52</sup>

The protagonist of the *Cosmographia* is Nature, who discovers the secrets of the universe as brought into being by divine providence over the course of the tale. The *Cosmographia*, along with the later *prosimetrum* of Alan of Lille, the *Plaint of Nature* (1160s/1170s), established Nature as a character rather than a personification (as such a medieval commonplace), in emulation of Lady Philosophy in the *Consolation of Philosophy*.<sup>53</sup> In both of the twelfth-century works Nature is goddess and secondary creative force in the cosmos: the vicar of God, *vicaria Dei* (Economou 1972: 53; Stock 1972: 63), as she later appears in Jean de Meun’s *Roman de la Rose* and Chaucer’s *Parlement of Foules* (Economou 1972: 2).<sup>54</sup> This is also her depiction in the *Alexandre*,

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<sup>52</sup> “Reliquum theorice fert per orbem cursum / Penetrando quicquid est deorsum uel sursum, / Nunc sub terras mergitur, nunc emergit rursum; / Phisicorum studiis nil est impercursum”. Circa 1180 and shortly after the composition of the *Fons philosophiae*, Godfrey was expelled from Saint-Victor by the Prior of his own house on account of his controversial views. Although, by 1194, Godfrey was permitted to return, the philosophy of this “humanist Canon” had made its mark (Synan 1972: 21, 25).

<sup>53</sup> As noted in the introduction of this chapter, *doña Filosofía* is referred to as the craftswoman who makes Alexander’s belt (st.91ab).

<sup>54</sup> Casas Rigall asserts that: “La Natura como entidad alegórica personificada deriva de Gautier, pero está respaldada por una sólida tradición en la que se inscriben Bernardo Silvestre y Alain de Lille” (2007: 646n2325). As Kay describes, in Jean de Meun’s *Roman de la rose*, Nature talks of: “the mysteries of the Trinity, the incarnation, and such like—mysteries which, as she says, philosophers themselves cannot understand by reason”. Her role is: “presented in terms of twelfth-century Christianized Platonism: she is the material reflection of God’s spiritual intentions”, closely following her model in Alan de Lille (1995: 95, 97).

in a departure from the *Alexandreis*.<sup>55</sup> God is the ultimate power in the *Alexandre*: “al Criador que crió la Natura” (st.2329a); “El Criador, que *fizo* todas las criaturas” (st.2335a), yet she is: “la Natura, que *cría* todas las criaturas” (st.2325a; my italics), who manages worldly life. Nature’s station in the clouds, “de do siempre morava” (st.2331c), further marks her status as an intermediary between heaven and earth.

Critics of the *Alexandre* have broadly considered Nature to be a personification: for example, Willis (1956-1957: 217); in their translation of the poem Such and Rabone refer to her with the pronoun “which” rather than “who”.<sup>56</sup> She has thus garnered scant attention in criticism of the *mester de clerecía*, also likely due to the fact that she features in two sequences that amount to only twenty verses of the long Alexander narrative. However, although brief, Nature’s role in the *Alexandre* is absolutely key to the dénouement. Moreover, she is employed, in adaptation likely original to the *Alexandre*, to articulate the primacy of Christian vision over philosophic cogitation.

In the first sequence that features Nature, her role as minister to all earthly life is emphasized: “La Natura, que cría todas las criaturas, / las que son paladinas e las que son escuras” (st.2325ab). With his *palabras duras* and ambition, Alexander threatens to expose the enigma of her power (st.2325cd), for which he and the goddess engage in a form of warfare:

Tovo la rica dueña que era sobjudgada,  
que'l querié él toller la lëy condonada:  
¡de su poder non fuera nunca desheredada,  
sinon que Alexandre la avié aontada!

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<sup>55</sup> “A diferencia de Gautier, el poeta ibérico subordina la intervención de Natura a la voluntad de Dios” (Casas Rigall 2007: 646n2324-33).

<sup>56</sup> “La Natura, que cría todas las criaturas”, ‘Nature, which is nurse to every living creature’ (st.2325a; Such and Rabone 2009: 601).

En las cosas secretas quiso él entender,  
 que nunca omne vivo las pudo saber.  
 Quísolas Alexandre por fuerça coñocer:  
 ¡nunca mayor sobervia comidió Luçifer! (sts.2326-27)

In the words of Michael, Alexander wishes: “to conquer (and not just to learn of) these unknown spheres. . . his attitude is that of a victorious general, flushed with success, rather than that of a humble scholar” (1960: 209-10). Moreover, *por fuerça* and *coñocer* carry a “hint of rape” (Deyermond 1996: 152), as also implied by *sobjudgada* and *aontada*. The sexualizing of the battle between Alexander and Nature, evoking traditional depictions of *eros* as associated with the goddess Venus and her lover, Mars, god of war, is striking in the context of philosophical exploration, and further hints that Alexander’s actions are not just pagan in aim but concupiscent. They are thus akin to original sin and, what is more, equal that of the fallen angel: an overweening desire for knowledge is the most basic and most serious moral corruption according to traditional Christian doctrine. The rhetoric that Alexander employed to rouse his generals to join him in the chase of secrets of the forbidden realms takes on disturbing relief in this scene.

Alexander’s voyage under the sea illustrates the limits of a secular education. His study of classical texts with his master, Aristotle, has enormously elevated his understanding, yet cannot bring him the crucial insight he needs into his own potential and shortcomings, as partially attained through Christian vision and the reading of scripture in the first half of the *Alexandre*. In contrast to those of saints enclosed in prayer, the image of the hero confined in a barrel foreshadows his dishonourable death and the burial of his *cuervo chico* (st.2191b) in a narrow tomb (st.2672). Stanza 2328 is a neat summary of his life as a divinely endorsed conqueror incapable of being beaten

by human force, who seeks: “lo que non podié ome nunca acabeçer” (st.2328d). It also encapsulates the author’s position on philosophical inquiry, as further confirmed with the subsequent interpolation of God himself into the narrative of the *Alexandre*.

In a speech original to the author of the Castilian poem (Willis 1965: 64), God’s extraordinary words override Alexander’s *feras grandias* (st.2321d) on marine society and mark the beginning of a period in the poem when the hero falls silent:

¡Este lunático que non cata medida  
Yo’l tornaré el gozo todo en amargura!

Él sopo la sobervia de los peçes judgar:  
la que en sí tenié non la sopo asmar.  
¡Omne que tantos sabe judizios delivrar,  
por qual jüizio dio, por tal deve passar! (sts.2329-30)

Alexander has spoken ill and reaps the consequences of condemnation by his God. The last two lines of stanza 2330, which conclude his judgement, are reminiscent of the Golden Rule as it occurs throughout Christian scripture in the doctrine of loving one’s neighbour, and specifically in Matthew 7.1: ‘Judge not, that ye be not judged’.<sup>57</sup> He has failed as a proto-Christian prophet, demonstrating his lack of “immediate power of moral discernment and judgement”, as put forward by Augustine (Carruthers 1998: 172). At the heart of such teaching is the notion that God’s creatures should treat each other with equality, as blindly asserted by Alexander in the concluding stanza of his argument under the sea.

The poet of the *Alexandre* places the greatest emphasis possible on the consequences of a lack of intellectual measure such as that demonstrated by Alexander. Overly ambitious philosophical cogitation impairs one’s intellectual capacity and

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<sup>57</sup> “Nolite iudicare ut non iudicemini” (*Biblia Sacra* vol. 2).

threatens one's place in heaven, a realm of perfection beyond human understanding, where worldly fame is worth little: “serán en gloria qual non sabrán pedir, / qual non podrié nul omne fablar nin comedir. / ¡Metrán toda su fuerça en a Dios bendezir!” (st.2337abc). Following the interpolation of God, Nature puts aside her duties, *lavores* (st.2333a), and with his sanction, gleefully sets a trap for Alexander: a *mala carrera* devised in Hell that will put an end to his explorations (sts.2332-33, 2443b).

In the second sequence featuring Nature, the poet further underlines her status as *vicaria Dei*. All Hell is terrified at her coming (st.2425b), and she engages Satan, her servant (st.2426b), with a speech to persuade him to assist her in vengeance. Reminding him of his debt: “Quando fust’ por tu culpa de los Çielos gitado, / . . . Yo te di este lugar” (st.2435ac), Nature outlines the grave threat posed to them both by Alexander, concluding that the hero wishes: “¡a mí e a vós todos en cadenas levar!” (st.2433d). Casas Rigall finds the source for this episode to be the *Alexandreis* (X.75-167): “seguida ahora con notable fidelidad” (2007: 669n2424-57). Yet in the case of Nature's description of Alexander's worldly might, I suggest that the poet of the *Alexandre* is departing further from his sources than previously considered.

As Nature elucidates to Satan: “temen la su espada todos de mar a mar: / ¡non es omne naçido que'l pueda contrastar!” (st.2431cd). Her words recapitulate those of the angelic figure who Alexander recalls to have visited him while in Jerusalem, now a prophecy realized (“salte de Eũropa, passa a ultramar. / . . . ¡nunca fallarás omne que't pueda contrastar!” st.1157bd). In the *Alexandreis*, the relevant parts of the speech of the angelic figure, as recalled by Alexander, closely resemble those of the *Alexandre*: “Set out, most valiant Macedonian, / from your own land,’ he said. ‘To you I grant /

dominion of each race” (I.619-21; Townsend 2007).<sup>58</sup> Yet Nature’s words to Satan are quite distinct and do not recall those of the apparition.<sup>59</sup> In the *Alexandre*, the content of a vision marks the rise and fall of Alexander as prophesized in Daniel, with a striking original touch from the Castilian author in the speech of Nature. With stanza 2431, the fidelity of Nature to the Christian God is further indicated and the pre-eminence of Christian vision emphasized.

Nevertheless, before Alexander meets his death he is surprisingly permitted a final adventure. In the wake of his condemnation, Alexander flies through the heavens in a scene that crystallizes his status as proto-Christian hero, both literally and figuratively caught between heaven and hell. Satan, who in fear confuses the hero with Christ, confirms this status.<sup>60</sup> As well as bringing the narrative to a dazzling crescendo, the flight offers a final opportunity for contemplation of the discordant perspectives offered by pagan philosophy and the Christian faith.

The episode of the flight, an innovative composite of several sources (Willis 1965: 51), is a portrayal of God as *logos* whereby: “to know God is to understand or to

<sup>58</sup> “Egredere, o Macedo fortissime, finibus’ inquit / ‘A patriis, omnemque tibi pessundabo gentem” (I.532-33; Colker 1978). The primary source for the vision is the *Alexandreis*, as adjusted in accordance with the *Historia de preliis* (Casas Rigall 2007: 408n1148-63).

<sup>59</sup> “You surely know with what great force / the elements are taxed by Alexander’s / might at arms: when with his fleet he’d tamed / Pamphylia’s sea, he conquered Darius thrice, / broke all of Asia, and compelled Porus, / unvanquished in all strife, to serve him. Nor / did that suffice, but now he traces out / the secrets of the East, and madly strikes / against Ocean itself. And if the Fates / should lend his sails kind winds, he plans to seek / the Nile’s source, and lay siege to Paradise. / Look to yourself, or else he’ll not permit / the hidden reaches of the Antipodes, / or deep Chaos itself, to go unscathed, / but strive to gaze upon the other sun’ (X.100-14); “scis etenim quantis elementa fatiget / Motibus armipotens Macedo. qui classe subacto / Equore Pamfilico Darium ter uicet et omnem / Confringens Asiam Porum seruire coegit / Indomitum bellis. nec eo contentus eoas / Vestigat latebras et nunc uesanus in ipsum / Fulminat Oceanum. cuiuis si fata secundis / Vela regant uentis, caput indagare remotum / A mundo Nyli et Paradysum cingere facta / Obsidione parat, et ni tibi caueris, istud / Non sinet intactum Chaos Antipodumque recessus / Alteriusque uolet nature cernere solem” (X.89-100).

<sup>60</sup> “Cantan las Escripturas un desabrido canto: / ¡que parrá una virgen un fiyo müy santo, / por que han los Infiernos a prender mal quebranto! / Si es ésti o non, non vos lo sé dezir, / mas valiente contrario nos ha a devenir: / tollernos ha las almas, —esto non puede fallir—; / robarnos ha el campo, no’l podremos nozir” (sts.2441-42). Note that Satan is sure of Alexander’s spiritual and physical power to claim both souls and territory, in anticipation of Christ, the Word made flesh.

decipher the message that is God's creation" (Kelley 2004: 66). As such, man, landscape, and God are understood as essentially related and, Alexander, described at the beginning of the section with divine implications as: "el bueno, potestat sin frontera" (st.2496a), embodies such a concept to a considerable extent. His plan is to breach the heavens with some form of ladder or embankment to observe the world (st.2496cd), a scheme recalling both glorious and admonitory writing from the Book of Genesis, notably Jacob's dream and the Tower of Babel.<sup>61</sup> While exalting his God-given power over the elements, the depiction of the aerial expedition further exposes Alexander's spiritual limitations.

As the narrator of the *Alexandre* describes, Alexander: "asmó una cosa yendo por la carrera: / cómo aguisarié poyo o escalera" (st.2496bc). Jacob dreamed: 'and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God' (Genesis 28: 12-13).<sup>62</sup> Alexander wishes to physically enact what Jacob envisions in a dream: to scale a ladder or embankment into the sky as might an angel; moreover, a device of his own construction, as likewise conceived by the early peoples responsible for the Tower of Babel: 'And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth' (Genesis 11.4).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> The Tower of Babel features in the description of Babylon in the *Alexandre* (sts.1505-22).

<sup>62</sup> "Viditque in somnis scalam stantem super terram et cacumen illius tangens cælum / angelos quoque Dei ascendentes et descendentes per eam / et Dominum innixum scalæ dicentem sibi" (*Biblia Sacra* vol. 1).

<sup>63</sup> "Et dixerunt venite faciamus nobis civitatem et turrem cuius culmen pertingat ad cælum / et celebremus nomen nostrum antequam dividamur in universas terras."

As well as inspiring reverence, Alexander's plan signals his propensity to overreach and presages his imminent dishonorable death. Unlike the faithful Jacob, he will not be blessed with direct contact with God, who, in contrast, recently interpolated in the poem to condemn him. Note that Alexander's conception of his plan aligns physical and cognitive journeying, evoking the key structural trope of pious rhetoric, the "pathway", *via*, *carrera*: "asmó una cosa yendo por la carrera: / cómo aguisarié poyo o escalera" (st.2496bc). The poet emphasizes that Alexander's flight is to be considered allegorically, as is the case with all of Alexander's exploits, in a final exploration of the relationship between philosophic cogitation and Christian vision. The audience can meditate on the details of Alexander's life while cognitively travelling each line or *carrera* of *cuaderna vía*.

Increasing the physical confinement he experienced in the barrel under the sea, Alexander has a pouch, *casa*, constructed to accommodate only him (st.2498ab): "fizose él demiente en el cuero coser, / la cara descubierta, que pudiesse veer" (st.2499cd). Starving gryphons pull him up to the heavens, "knowledge and violence in harness" (Weiss 2006: 131-32), with the hero's desire for knowledge echoing the beasts' for flesh. While airborne, scaling the heavens at the height of the clouds, the abode of the goddess Nature (st.2331c), Alexander observes the world he has so thoroughly conquered below:

Tanto pudo el rëy a las nuves pujar:  
 veyé montes e valles de yus' de sí estar;  
 veyé entrar los ríos todos en alta mar,  
 mas cómo yazié o non nunca lo pudo asmar. (st.2504)

Despite his superior physical position and perceptive capacity (st.2507), Alexander is not capable of imagining the extent of the landscape. As in the case of his observation under the sea, the hero's cognitive reach falls short of his ambition. When pursued for its own sake, natural philosophy is aligned with pagan ignorance in the *Alexandre*. The extraordinary vista leaves Alexander humbled and, notably, speechless, at which stage the poet/narrator takes over with his own compositional flourish. He will provide an interpretation of this “panorama nunca visto”, “una síntesis de todo conocimiento” (Rico 1986: 53), as adapted from authoritative scriptures, with the ultimate aim of correcting the excesses of twelfth-century philosophical inquiry.

As the poet/narrator describes: “Solémoslo leer, diz’lo la escriptura, / que es llamado mundo el omne por figura” (st.2508ab). The notion of the universe and man as *macro-* and *microcosmos* is particularly prevalent in writing from the twelfth century, including the *Cosmographia* and the *Fons philosophiae*. In the latter work, for example, man is depicted as: ‘a small world remaining, / Like a planet, his flesh is vagrant paths maintaining’ (lines 457-58).<sup>64</sup> The primary source for such a model of reality is Plato’s *Timaeus* “even in its fragmented medieval form”—a poetic vision and key text for Chartrian thought (Wetherbee 1972: 34-36). The description in the *Alexandre* recalls passages of the *Timaeus*, as noted by Catalina Beatriz Fedoruk (2006: 271).

In the *Timaeus*, the universe comprises a body, soul, and intelligence, and is crafted from the four elements (30b, 32c). Man is a microcosm of this universe: his flesh is as earth, irrigated by “onrushing streams” (77c); he is able to breathe due to the movement of air and fire within his inner tubes (78de); and “both replenishment and

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<sup>64</sup> “Homo microcosmus est id est minor mundus, / Ut planeta carnis est motus errabundus”.

wasting occur in conformity with the general principal of movement in the whole universe . . . the contents of our blood, which have been chopped up inside us and have become surrounded by the ‘universe’ that any living creature constitutes for them, necessarily imitate this universal movement” (81ab) (Waterfield 2008: 21, 19, 79-80, 83).

In the *Alexandre*, the globe is described in the form of man, yet through the optics of Christian theology:

Qui comedir quisier’ e asmar la fechura  
entendrá que es bien razón sin depesura:

Asiã es el cuerpo, segunt mio esçient’;  
Sol e Luna, los ojos, que naçen de Orient’;  
los braços son la cruz del Rêy Omnipotent’,  
que fue muerto en Asia por salut de la gent’.

La pierna que deçende del siniestro costado  
es el regno de África, por ella figurado.  
Toda la mandan moros, un pueblo renegado,  
que oran a Mafómat, un traedor provado.

Es por la pierna diestra Ëuropa notada.  
Ésta es más católica, de la fe más poblada;  
ésta es de la diestra del Obispo santiguada:  
tienen Petrus e Paulus en ella su posada.

La carne es la tierra, espessa e pesada;  
el mar es el pellejo que la tiene çercada;  
las venas son los ríos que la tienen temprada:  
fazen diestro e siniestro mucha tornaviscada.

Los huessos son las peñas que alçan los collados;  
cabellos de cabeça, las yervas de los prados:  
crían en esta tierra muchos malos venados,  
que son por majamiento de los nuestros pecados. (sts.2508-13)

The earth or flesh is cruciform and Catholic Europe is the right leg of the *figura*, aiding the world on its path back to God. Moreover, the last two lines indicate that the wild

creatures of the earth serve as a form of penitential trial for fallen man (st.2513cd). Such a depiction is reinforced in association with maps that feature at the beginning and end of Alexander's adventures: the "T-O" depicted before he arrives in Asia, and the painting on the third panel of his commemorative tent in Babylon, shortly before his demise. Probably the most frequent form of *mappa mundi* found from the eighth century onwards (Deyermond 1996: 147), the T-O shows land divided "por triple partiçión" (st.276c), in the shape of the cross: "verá que tien' la cruz essa figura misma" (st.280c).<sup>65</sup> The tent map, set forth with such skill that it brings the globe to the viewer's mind, "como si la oviesse con sus pïedes andada" (st.2576d), emphasizes the lowliness of the earth: "Tenié el mar en medio a la tierra çercada: / contra la mar, la tierra non semejava nada. / Era éssa en éssa más yerma que poblada" (st.2577abc). Depicting Europe and Africa as more stepchildren than daughters to Asia (st.2578d), the map further indicates the chaos, geopolitical and religious, that will reign after Alexander's death.

Rather than permitting him to further assert his power over Nature or bringing him into contact with God, Alexander's second adventure as a natural philosopher indicates the ultimate dependence of man on the divine, and anticipates the coming of Christ to redeem him.<sup>66</sup> It thus underlines the limits of man's understanding, particularly should he choose to pursue philosophical inquiry outside the prescription of theology.

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<sup>65</sup> Isidore's *Etymologiae* is a source for stanzas 276-94. See Such and Rabone (2009: 32, 687).

<sup>66</sup> Willis suggests that the hero expiated: "his sin of *soberbia* when, from aloft with the griffons, he saw the world below reduced to the symbolic microcosm, the form of man, and thus regained the true perspective" (1956-1957: 222). I am inclined to agree: although he strays from an acceptable path of military crusade to transgress the frontiers of knowledge, the hero is edified by his mistakes, in line with the parable of the prodigal son. Alexander's spiritual starvation is exposed under the sea, as the prodigal son finds himself with less to eat than swine after squandering his fortune (Luke 15.13-16). Permitting him the gryphon flight, God gives Alexander a second and splendid chance, just as the prodigal son is welcomed back into his father's home with merry-making and feasting (Luke 15.23). Michael points out, however, that as a pagan Alexander would have been unable to enter the Christian heaven after death (1960: 214).

The poet's position as regards erudition is markedly censorious of that associated with Chartres, which favoured the rational over traditional authority. The *Alexandre* links: "philosophy and theology, pagan *auctores* and Christian doctrine, *sapientia* and *eloquentia*", through poetry in the manner of a Chartrian work (Wetherbee 1972: 4), yet ultimately denigrates philosophy and asserts the mystery of the cosmos. The poet thus reasserts the primacy of Catholic rhetoric and philosophy in the Augustinian tradition, as chiefly concerned with the soul and God.<sup>67</sup>

## V. Conclusion

The *Alexandre* is a product of the intellectual zeitgeist of the late twelfth century. While steeped in the Chartrian tradition, the poem takes as its central theme the discord in contemporary pedagogy between study of the *trivium* and theology, and the scientific *quadrivium* and philosophy, as illustrated allegorically through the life of Alexander. A gifted scholar and warrior, Alexander applies his erudition, namely his command of grammar and rhetoric, for proto-Christian purpose in the first half of the *Alexandre*, leading to his confirmation as a quasi-prophet in Jerusalem. His recounting of a divine vision in the holy city is the apex of the narrative. Resonant of the prophecy of the Book of Daniel, the recollection of the vision marks the rise of Alexander as a divinely favoured leader, and his fall.

The content of the vision is recapitulated by the goddess Nature—a characterization drawn from Bernard Silvester and Alan of Lille—when she plots to take the life of Alexander. His greatness is marred by overweening ambition and pride

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<sup>67</sup> In the Augustinian tradition (see *Soliloquia* 386/387, I.ii.7; Cassiodorus' *Institutiones*) all scholarly study is: "a preparation for the reading of Scripture. The arts are seen as secular, even pagan attainments that the believer can redeem and put to a higher purpose" (Wagner 1983: 253-56).

as manifest in his exploration of the forbidden elemental realms of the earth as a natural philosopher. Alexander believes that his skills in philosophical inquiry will enable him to penetrate the mysteries of the cosmic order. While they aid his domination of all the world's creatures, they cannot bring him insight into his soul, a microcosm of the universe. Like man, the universe is constructed of a fleshly external form that holds divine truth within and, according to the pious poetics of the *Alexandre*, meaningful understanding of such internal life is only possible through Christian faith. Philosophy, when pursued for its own sake, is associated with idolatry and pagan ignorance in the *Alexandre*.

The *Alexandre* is a highly visual poem intended for private contemplation as well as oral delivery. Each line of *cuaderna vía* is a figurative as well as literal, textual “pathway” for devout consideration of the life of Alexander and plots the anonymous poet's particular *inventio*, in departure from the *Alexandreis*. While the *Alexandreis* draws closely on the classical tradition, the *Alexandre* is thoroughly Christianized in both form and content, and an acute tension between pagan and Christian approaches to life and text enlivens and propels the poem.<sup>68</sup> The narrator of the *Alexandre*, like his protagonist, takes the role of teacher-orator and offers a series of mental craftings or *visiones* to his audience in accordance with the principles outlined in his opening verses: “querríavos de grado servir de mio mester: / deve, de lo que sabe, omne largo seer; / si non, podrié en culpa e en riepto caer” (st. 1bcd).

The synthesis of word and image in the first half of the poem, along with the aligned moral positions of the narrator and his pre-Christian protagonist, is abruptly broken when Alexander swaps pious rhetoric for philosophic cogitation. From the point

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<sup>68</sup> See Michael (1970).

of his journey to the Antipodes, Alexander's direct discourse is demonstrated to be at odds with the principles of Creation and thus the narrator's agenda. The *visio* Alexander offers in his scholastic speech under the sea is a broken image—a symptom of his pagan poverty of perspective as a fallen man before the coming of Christ. Over the course of his adventures as a natural philosopher, Alexander is humbled into silence and the narrator teaches through the contrary example of his hero's misdirected words, most notably in his description of the world in the form of man, a classical *figura* revealed to have mysterious Christian significance which indicates human life to be a form of penitence.

Despite its status as a highly visual work of literary art, the final emphasis of the *Alexandre* is the proper employment of the word, the cleric's primary tool. The *Alexandre* inaugurates the use of *cuaderna vía* in Castilian literature and the opening verses demonstrate a markedly self-conscious application of the verse form, in differentiation from the work of Berceo, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG*. The calibration of *cuaderna vía* according to pious and erudite symbolic numbers, notably four, and the mathematical syllable count required, has particular resonance for the *Alexandre*, steeped in the intellectual developments of the twelfth century. The *mester de clerecía* of the *Alexandre* is the most scholastic of the canonical thirteenth-century poems. Concerned with how his choice of metre and principal sources would affect interpretation, the poet took pains to assert the Christian import of his brand of erudition at the beginning and throughout the *Alexandre*. *Cuaderna vía*, like the protagonist of the

*Alexandre*, is an imperfect vehicle to help guide God's people towards salvation: 'He who boasts should boast in the Lord' (Paul, II Corinthians 10.17).<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> "Qui gloriatur, in Domino gloriatur"; cited in the prologue of *The Rule of Saint Benedict* as a principle of proper conduct. See Venarde (2011).

## 2. The Three Sainly Role Models of Gonzalo de Berceo

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Proverbs 18.21<sup>1</sup>

### I. Introduction

Towards the end of the *Vida de Santa Oria* (*SO*; c.1255), the author is evoked:

“Gonçalo li dixieron al versifficador, / que en su portaleio fizo esta lavor” (st.184ab

[205ab]).<sup>2</sup> As well as a presentiment of his death, the emblem of Gonzalo de Berceo

composing in a doorway of the prominent monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla near

Burgos, where he received his education and with which he remained linked throughout

his life, demonstrates the status of this secular priest who produced exclusively

hagiography and devotional poetry.<sup>3</sup> The writing of hagiography, specifically the Lives

<sup>1</sup> “Mors et vita in manibus linguae”, as quoted in Chapter 6 of *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (Venarde 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Uría Maqua believes the *SO* to be the last work written by Berceo in the second half of the thirteenth century (Dutton et al. 1992: 494). Alvar dates the poem to c.1252 (Dutton et al. 1992: 41), and Lappin to the late 1250s (2000: 3). Dutton, Connolly, and Lappin are all agreed that Berceo was likely born in 1196 (Dutton et al. 1992: 120; Gerli 2003a: 656; “Poetry, didactic”; Lappin 2008: 16), and Dutton gives 1221-1246 for the years in which he was most active (1962). Berceo died c.1260, with Lappin suggesting the year 1259 (2008: 16), and Connolly 1264 (Gerli 2003a: 656; “Poetry, didactic”). The *SO* was most likely written in the last ten years of Berceo’s life and I suggest the date of c.1255. There is considerable controversy with regard to the manuscripts of the poem, as reflected in major editions by Uría Maqua (1976; Dutton et al. 1992) and Lappin (2000). For Uría Maqua, the *SO* was preserved poorly and requires considerable intervention on the part of the editor to restore the narrative order. Yet as she freely admits, her version consitutes: “una excepción dentro del conjunto de los otros poemas de Berceo, copiados en los mismos códices y transmitidos dentro del mismo ámbito del Monasterio de San Millán de la Cogolla” (1976: 9). Her method is deeply criticized by Gerli as tantamount to a “centuries-long Lachmannian hangover”, and he advocates greater respect for the integrity of the sole manuscript witness, *F*, as reflected in Lappin’s edition (2003b: 937). *F*, a manuscript from the last quarter of the fourteenth century, is housed at the Real Academia Española and is known as MS.4. Unlike in the cases of the *SM* and *SD*, there is no extant Latin source with which to compare the narrative structure of the *SO* in *F*, compounding the uncertainty of editors. I believe Lappin’s treatment of *F* to be the most judicious and use his edition when quoting the *SO* throughout. As Uría’s Maqua’s text is the traditional and more widely available version, I include references to her 1992 edition in square brackets after those to Lappin, as follows: (st.X [X]).

<sup>3</sup> Uría Maqua believes the *portaleio* described to be: “el pórtico-galeria de Suso, donde seguramente se hacían los codices” (Dutton et al. 1992: 550n205b), while Lappin argues that it is the door to Oria’s enclosure (2000: 209n184b). As Uría Maqua asserts, Berceo may have taught at the school of the upper monastery, San Millán de Suso. She additionally argues that the hagiographer benefited from education at the newly founded university at Palencia (2000: 268, 274), in line with Dutton, who suggests the years

of the saints Millán de la Cogolla, Domingo de Silos, and Oria, all closely associated with the monastery of San Millán, marks Berceo's life. He composed the Lives of the two male saints in the earlier stages of his career, and that of Oria at the close.<sup>4</sup>

The quotation (st.184ab [205ab]) also indicates the particular brand of self-consciousness of Berceo's work within the early *mester de clerecía*. The figure of the author routinely appears in the *Vidas*, in counterpart to the theorizing of the *Libro de Alexandre (Alexandre)* and related commentary of the *Libro de Apolonio (Apolonio)*, to indicate the style and purpose of his enterprise, and with a relative intimacy of approach: "prosigamos el curso, tengamos nuestra vía" (*Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* st.8d; Dutton et al. 1992). Although the citing of the author's name is characteristic of hagiography (Rico 1985: 139-40), and the author figure device common in medieval literature more generally (Alonso 1982), its use is striking in the poems of Berceo, who wrote in a highly personalized mode. While working closely with the narrative structure and tenor of his Latin models, Berceo offers: "la poesía que brota donde no la había" (Alvar in Dutton et al. 1992: 32), employing his sources in a manner that is "ethical and constructive" rather than imitative (Farcasiu 1986: 308). Writing himself into the stories of local, familiar saints, to quote Dámaso Alonso: "sentimos el borboteo humilde de su oración, el cándido y estremecido anhelo de su

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1222-1227 as a possible period for such study (1973: 81). Rico (1985: 147) and González-Blanco García (2010: 222) also highlight Berceo's significant erudition, with Rico underlining: "él debía de ser harto más ilustrado que la inmensa mayoría de los monjes" (1985: 147). As Lappin notes (2008: 14), the verses usually cited to link Berceo to Palencia are those that refer to the bishop Tello Téllez de Meneses who founded the university with King Alfonso VIII of Castile in about 1210, from the *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*: "ni·l nució más que nuzo yo al bispo don Tello" (st.325d). While Berceo was clearly familiar with his local region and likely knew Palencia well, he may have met Tello at Silos, a place frequented by the bishop, as indicated by Dutton (quoting Solalinde; 1973: 79). With the evidence available, I can only conclude that it is possible Berceo studied at Palencia's university, although it is just as likely that he attended a school.

<sup>4</sup> See Beresford (2004: 80-82). Lappin has recently reassessed the canon of Berceo's works, in total nine long poems and three hymns. He deems only the three *Vidas* and the *MNS* to be the genuine article, and rejects several works, including the *Duelo de la Virgen*, as *spuria* (2008: 237).

alma . . . resella, como firma auténtica, cuanto escribió, y le da un encanto inolvidable” (1982).

In Berceo’s three *Vidas*, tales of an eremite, cenobite, and anchorite, the heavens are brighter and closer, and the world darker, than in the *Alexandre*, *Apolonio*, or *Poema de Fernán González* (PFG). When the *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* (SM; c.1230) and *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* (SD; c.1236) are read in conjunction with the *SO*, the three works illuminate our understanding of Berceo’s life and poetic project.<sup>5</sup> The *SM*, in which Millán (474-574AD) battles to understand his purpose in life and defeat the Devil, and in which the author figure is not as prominent as in the *SD* and *SO*, is the product of a young local writer loyal to the monastery of San Millán, as founded by the eponymous saint. A reflection on eremitism anchored in patristic and ecclesiastical tradition, the *SM* is often twinned with the far longer, more typically Benedictine *SD*, on the eleventh-century prior of San Millán and, later, abbot of the cognate monastery of Silos (1041-1073AD).

In accordance with hagiographic custom, the *SM* and *SD* portray their saints as akin to the epic hero. They also demonstrate a strong preoccupation with economy and profit in the material and spiritual spheres, as associated with epic as well as the exigencies of monastic life and teaching. Much as been made of the two male *Vidas* and particularly the *SM* as profiteering propaganda, a view foremost argued by Brian Dutton (1984: 251), and notably rejected by Isabel Uría Maqua (2000: 287) and Anthony Lappin (2008: 114). In extension of their findings, I will argue that both extremes of the

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<sup>5</sup> Uría Maqua (2000: 285) and González-Blanco García (2010: 222-23) believe it most likely that the *SM* and *SD* are Berceo’s two earliest poems. As González-Blanco García argues, we can assume, “casi con total certeza”, that the *SM* was Berceo’s first work (2010: 223). Dutton dates the *SM* to c.1230 (Dutton et al. 1992: 122), and both Dutton (1978: 12) and Ruffinatto (Dutton et al. 1992: 253), believe the *SD* to date to 1236. Lappin contests this traditional dating, questioning whether the *SM* was written before the *SD* (2002: 262). For further discussion of the issue, see section III of this chapter. On the manuscripts of the *SM* and *SD*, see Dutton (Dutton et al. 1992: 123), and Lappin (2008: 17-37).

critical debate distort the carefully moderated materialism of the *SM* and *SD*. As Francisco Rico notes: “las pecuniarias ocurren a cada paso en la hagiografía medieval” (1985: 139). Corroborating his view, Fernando Baños Vallejo records the two main purposes of Castilian hagiography to be the depiction of saints as models to be followed and the generation of revenue for associated institutions (Gerli 2003a: 376; “Hagiography”).<sup>6</sup>

Domingo (c.1000-1073), the namesake of the founder of the mendicant Dominican Order (1215), Santo Domingo de Guzmán (c.1170-1221), is a hero keen to carry out monastic and public duty.<sup>7</sup> Ensuring the flourishing of his institutions, he acts as both enemy and ally of kings, and *redentor de cautivos* in the battle for the Peninsula against the Moors. The hero of the *SD* is the most outward-facing of the three *Vidas* and an icon for an ambitious Berceo at a later stage in his career. Corresponding to this status, the figure of the author in the *SD* is particularly salient as a self-identifying *juglar*: a reporter of holy deeds who requires the satisfaction of his bodily needs, while aspiring to Domingo’s glory as prophet—a teacher-orator of God’s Word.

Both the *SM* and *SD* emphasize ascetic penance during a period of warfare. Written at the height of the Great Reconquest (1217-1252) and in the wake of two centuries of Church reform, when read both individually and in parallel the two *Vidas* articulate contemporary tension with regard to ecclesiastical authority. The *SM*, enshrining the primitive, indigenous, Mozarabic origins of the monastery of San Millán, is a counterpart to the fundamentally Benedictine *SD*. Both Millán and Domingo are

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<sup>6</sup> In the *SD*, Berceo identifies the subject of his narration as a *gesta* on three occasions (sts.487c, 571d, 754c; Dutton 1984: 189). Beresford associates Domingo’s profitable exile from his homelands with that of the *Cid* (2004: 81).

<sup>7</sup> Domingo was the best known of the saints associated with San Millán de la Cogolla: “un santo confesor que se hizo muy famoso en España y a quien se dedicaron un sinnúmero de iglesias y conventos benedictinos”. Accordingly, the *SD* was the most famous of Berceo’s works until the publication of Tomás Antonio Sánchez’s seminal *obras completas* in 1780 (Dutton 1978: 11).

symbols of the nascent Castile as the cultural and political heart of a proto-nation and empire, while remaining officially recognized figures of the Roman Church.

The *SM* and *SD* chart the life, death, and miracles of saints approved by the Church. The *SO*, distinctly, records the visions of an eleventh-century young woman, Oria (*fl.*1080s) (and her mother), a likely contemporary of Domingo de Silos who, in line with general contemporary practice as regards the anchoress, was never canonized. She remained an object of local veneration, however—the minimum requirement for medieval sainthood (Mulder-Bakker 2005: 194-96)—and we can deduce from the *SO* that Berceo admired her greatly.<sup>8</sup> His treatment of her story recalls that of the Belgian anchorite, Juliana of Liège (1193-1258), whose life was unusually recorded as a *Vita* and she also presented as a virgin martyr in accordance with approved models for female piety.<sup>9</sup> Oria, who lived and is buried, alongside her mother, in the grounds of the monastery of San Millán, is a figure inscribed into official Christian history by Berceo.<sup>10</sup> She nevertheless offers an alternative approach to religious praxis, and Berceo's choice to portray her at the wane of his health and career raises questions about his ultimate loyalty to ecclesiastical institution.

The *SO*, like the *SM*, is a highly contemplative poem, and, of the three *Vidas*, the author figure is most salient in the *SO*. This is undoubtedly in large part because of Oria's gender: religious women were rarely privileged with an education to match that

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<sup>8</sup> After her death, Oria was the object of a local cult that remained active in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the early thirteenth century, figures of her and her mother were sculpted on a bas-relief used to adorn Millán's tomb at the upper monastery of Suso (Lappin 2008: 144, 149).

<sup>9</sup> Juliana of Liège is also known as Juliana of Cornillon. Her Life includes a long death-bed scene in which she predicts the day of her death. In distinction from Berceo: "Juliana's hagiographer tried hard to praise the thaumaturgic qualities of his subject", and, unlike Oria, she did not receive the local veneration of a cult (Mulder-Bakker 2005: 195). See also Mershman (1910).

<sup>10</sup> Oria's burial is recorded in the *SO*: "Si entender queredes toda çertanidat / dó yaze esta duenna de tan grant sanctidat: / en Sant Millán de Suso, ésta es la verdat. / . . . Çerca de la iglesia es la su sepultura, / a pocas de passadas en una angustura" (sts.180-81 [183-84]). Walsh notes that a later copyist of the *SO* records the Latin tomb inscription with a translation into mock *cuaderna via* (1988: 259).

of the male cleric in the Middle Ages, and Oria is no exception.<sup>11</sup> Rather than a translator or reporter of deeds and utterances in awe of such masters of the Word as Millán and Domingo, Berceo is closer to being an equal in the case of Oria. He can offer his linguistic skill to complement her bodily and spiritual asceticism, and thus plays a greater role in articulating her experience.<sup>12</sup> The distinction of the *SO* from the male *Vidas* is further indicated by the division of the poem into seven sections recording five visions, rather than into the more typical tripartite structure. Berceo acknowledges his privilege in the *SO* by referring to the author figure as a *versificador*, generally thought to be of higher worldly status than the *juglar* due to his closer association with original composition and the written word.<sup>13</sup> The *SO* is, correspondingly, often considered the most “literary” of Berceo’s output and is thus valued particularly highly, and most prominently so in the work of Lappin (2000, 2008).

The qualification of the *SO* as “literary” is not altogether unhelpful with regard to the lyrical elements of the poem, although there is an ever-present danger of this verging on the anachronistic. “Orality”, such as that associated with the *juglar*, far from precludes “literacy” in the medieval period, and the oral and the written were not then subject to mutually exclusive categorization as they often are today, and notably within

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<sup>11</sup> In both the *SM* and the *SD*, the protagonists are versed in the psalter in record time, as noted by Kelley (2004: 69), in accordance with the precepts of masculine hagiography (Gerli 2003a: 722; “Saints”). In the *SM*, the psalms are the foundation of Felices’ pedagogical programme, through which Millán: “entendió la forma de la perfección”: “Fue en poco de tiempo el pastor psalteriado, / de innos e de cánticos sobra bien decorado” (sts.21-22). The case of Domingo is narrated with a couplet almost verbatim with that of the *SM*: “Fue en poco de tiempo el infant salteriado, / de innos e de cánticos bien i gent decorado” (st.38ab).

<sup>12</sup> Medieval women: “as scholars agree, are embodied physicality in a way that men, more often identified with mind and spirit, are not” (Mooney 1999: 13). As Weiss remarks on the *SO*: “although Berceo incorporates references to Oria’s liturgical readings, her access to the divine is primarily through her body . . . physical to a degree rare in representations of male spirituality” (2006: 70). See Coakley (2010).

<sup>13</sup> According to the Martín Alonso dictionary, in the thirteenth century, *juglar* referred to someone who, in exchange for material goods, performed songs and dances recreationally for the public or royalty and dignitaries. For the public, he might offer *truhanerías* and games as well. A *versificador*, on the other hand: “hace o compone versos” (1986: 1277, 1622; “Juglar”, “Versificador”). Berceo uses the verb *versificar* on two occasions in the *SO* (sts.1, 203 [1, 6]; see Lappin 2008: 117).

notions of literature.<sup>14</sup> Although Berceo exalts the authority of the written word, he plays with conceptions of worldly status and truth, and the potent, sacred, and refined qualities of the voiced word are a central theme of the three *Vidas*. When the role of the author figure in the *Vidas* is considered in distinct relation to each protagonist, the status of the supposedly “literary” is called into question.

In hagiography utterance is valued even more highly than in epic and romance due to the especial role of the holy protagonists as channels of the Word. When Berceo draws attention to the sovereignty and aesthetics of written culture in his *Vidas* he is also, paradoxically, calling his very purpose as author into question, which will always fall short of delivering the plenitude of the Word as beyond the semiotic, sensual, and temporal. As Julian Weiss notes, drawing on Eric Jager, in the patristic tradition the written word: “produced feelings of ambivalence . . . [as] essentially a copy of speech, signifying ‘absence not presence, illusion not reality, *mimesis* not *logos*’” (2006: 74). In the case of the *SO*, the primacy of the spoken word is depicted all the more acutely than in the *SM* and *SD*, substantiating the poem’s distance from ecclesiastical authority. Due to her particular asceticism, distinguished by her gender, Oria’s body is converted into an especial channel for the holy spirit: for wisdom, *sapientia*, the higher epistemological “road” which, unlike that of knowledge, *scientia*, as associated with the cleric, reaches all the way to the heavens.<sup>15</sup>

There is an important case to be made that the story of the historical Oria has been appropriated and thus somewhat violated by the male pen in the *SO*, as indicated

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<sup>14</sup> In the words of Carruthers: “the ability to write is not always the same thing as the ability to compose and comprehend in a fully textual way, for indeed one who writes (a scribe) may simply be a skilled practitioner, employed in a capacity akin to that of a professional typist today . . . Learning by hearing material and reciting aloud should not be confused with ignorance of reading” (2008: 11-12).

<sup>15</sup> In her study of the medieval anchoress as a “common theologian” (rather than one trained at university), Mulder-Bakker describes how, in their spiritual explorations, erudite holy men and lesser-educated women: “met at the high road where only *sapientia* went on, and perhaps at the mountain top where they tasted the same mystical ecstasy” (2005: 176, 189).

by Weiss (2006: 68-82). However, Berceo's intimate idealization of this controversial female is intriguing as regards what may be deduced from it of his own historical voice, as may also be traced through the *SM* and *SD*. While drawing suppositions about a historical author based on a his or her texts is a precarious endeavour to say the least, the familiar tone of the *Vidas* and manner in which Berceo-as-author-figure interpolates, and the personal connection of the author with the local saints he depicts, lead me to conclude that cautious conjecture can usefully be made. Allegiance of the historical Berceo to Oria can be deduced from the author figure's gender-neutral affiliation of his bodily sufferings with hers throughout the poem, *lacerio* also portrayed in the *SD*, yet with far less emphasis.<sup>16</sup> Fluidity of status in the *SO* is further emphasized by the interchange of the first and third persons of the figure of the author and that of his postulated Latin source, Munno, in the latter stages of the poem. I will argue that when merging the gender and identity of his author figure with an anchoress and a monk, respectively, the author figure breaks ties with his role as authenticator, possibly indicating misgivings on the part of the historical Berceo with regard to the purpose of his secular profession.

All three of Berceo's saintly role models mortify their bodies to elevate their minds, using their flesh as a channel for the Word in imitation of Christ. Incapable of such an advanced synthesis of the flesh and the spirit, the worldly Berceo chooses not his body but the word as his primary vessel, notably the vernacular, *román paladino*, "en qual suele el pueblo hablar con so vecino" (*SD* st.2ab). This he fashions into a uniquely taut *cuaderna vía*, imposing the ecclesiastical discipline of *ençerrado latino* (*SD* st.609c), with a particular care for syllable count, a high percentage of Latin

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<sup>16</sup> In the introductory stanzas of the *SD*, the author figure proclaims: "En el nomne de Dios que nombramos primero, / suyo sea el precio, yo seré su obrero; / galardón del lacerio yo en Él lo espero" (st.4abc). See Bower (2005: 192).

vocabulary, and a Latinate style.<sup>17</sup> In this regard, Berceo is writing in the patristic tradition that considered the letter as equivalent to the human body, a vessel for the spirit, from which, in the words of Robin M. Bower: “logically followed a practice of reading that accepted the letter but treated it ascetically” (2005: 191n13). This is especially true in the case of Berceo within the *mester de clerecía*, whose *cuaderna vía* is so well pruned and beguiling that he historically acquired the reputation of a naïve and spontaneous village poet.<sup>18</sup> On this theme, Simina M. Farcasiu describes the: “economy of Berceo’s communicative method” in the *SO* as an “artistic self-cloistering”, that “mirrors the existential condition of his hagiographic subject” (1986: 305).<sup>19</sup> Such a description can be extended to the text of all three of Berceo’s *Vidas*, in which each stanza of *cuaderna vía* is crafted as a cell for contemplation by Berceo’s audience, and with which the word is used with humility in praise of God and never for personal or secular purpose alone. Central to Berceo’s discourse on penance, both in the form and content of the *Vidas*, is the way in which visions are portrayed. Each of the protagonists is blessed with divine visions in a distinct manner according to his or her penitential way of life, experience that is revealing as regards his or her relationship with ecclesiastical authority.

## II. Penance, Vision, and Authority

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<sup>17</sup> Berceo work demonstrates: “una cuidadísima regularidad en su cómputo silábico” (González-Blanco García 2010: 223; see also Paraíso 2000: 227-28). *Cuaderna vía* is derived from Latin Goliardic metre (see Chapter 1 of this thesis), some twenty per cent of Berceo’s vocabulary is taken directly from Latin, and his syntax is often highly Latinate with a pronounced use of hyperbaton (Rico 1985: 144).

<sup>18</sup> Since the 1960s, critical opinion has shifted away from the notion of Berceo’s writing as: “ingenuo, lleno de candor y falta de cultura” (Uría Maqua 2000: 273). See also Suszynski (1976: 21), and Bayo and Michael (2006: 39-40).

<sup>19</sup> Weiss also relates the author’s attempts to tame words to Oria’s asceticism (2006: 70).

The emphasis on penance in Berceo's *Vidas* is in part a response to the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>20</sup> Convoked in 1215 by Pope Innocent III and extremely influential across Europe, the Council nevertheless had limited early effect in Iberia, most likely due to the Reconquest. From 1230-1250, a period in which Berceo is believed to have been particularly active as a writer, Christian Iberia doubled in size, exhausting the resources of Church and State. The reform movement, thus: "was not as dynamic in Castile by 1252 as it was then in France, or as it would be in Castile by 1300" (Lomax 1969: 301-12). Berceo's penitent poetics can also be attributed to the effects of prior Church reform, notably that initiated in the eleventh century and associated most readily with the reign of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085).

Two of the subjects of Berceo's *Vidas*, Domingo and Oria, lived and worked in the second half of the eleventh century. Under the auspices of the Gregorian reformers, Roman authority was consolidated and expanded, laying the groundwork for the height of papal power in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and bringing about a crisis in monasticism. The reformers placed a new emphasis upon proper appointment of the clergy, and were inspired by the apostolic ideal that promoted austerity and poverty as prominently articulated by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), and, later, in the life and works of Saint Francis of Assisi (1181/82-1226).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in the late eleventh century, an important eremitical movement prominently involving women threatened the sovereignty of the contemporary Benedictine Order (Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, Bouyer 1982: 128-29). Divergence from traditional norms occurred within the Order itself, as well as in splinter groups. According to the Cistercians,

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<sup>20</sup> There were five Lateran Councils in total, in 1123, 1139, 1179, 1215, and 1512-1517. Uría Maqua (2000: 302), Weiss (2006: 36), and Coates (2008: 211), comment on the emphasis placed on penance by the Council of 1215.

<sup>21</sup> For further detail on the impact of Gregorian reform see Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, and Bouyer (1982: 128-29).

founded in 1098 in France as a Benedictine reform order, Benedict (*c.*480-*c.*547), a saint contemporary with Millán de la Cogolla, was no longer being followed in accordance with his primitive rule.

Whether with those on the battlefield, as in the case of the Knights Templar, or with those devoted to a religious profession, the Cistercians promoted greater commitment to the proscriptions of early monasticism: in the words of André Vauchez: “neither liturgical nor priestly, but penitential” (1993: 100-01). Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, the Cistercian monk and mystic, preached a life lead in *imitatio Christi* centred on contemplation, for spiritual insight into Christ’s divinity (Purkis 2008: 98-118). Humility and penance: “the spiritual masterwords of the apostolic movements, were reintegrated within Benedictine monasticism by the White Monks” (Vauchez 1993: 103). Cistercian monasticism had considerable impact on Iberian religious culture from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century, including the period in which Berceo wrote the three *Vidas*.

In addition to the influence of Rome and France, medieval Iberia was home to an indigenous church that especially valued the eremitic life. The so-called Mozarabic church was generally active from the fifth until the eleventh century, when its distinct practices—including church services that featured a secular and a monastic rite—were supplanted by those from Rome (Bosch 2000: 57-59). In 1064, Pope Alexander II attempted to abolish the Mozarabic Rite, and in 1077, Alfonso VI introduced the Roman Rite into Castile and León, which went on to become the standard.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the old rite survived into the thirteenth century in Muslim territories subsequently claimed during the Reconquest, such as Valencia, Murcia, and the

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<sup>22</sup> The first Roman Mass was sung in Iberia on 22 March 1071, at the Monastery of San Juan de la Peña, near Jaca (Jenner 1911).

majority of Andalucía (conquered in 1238 and from 1235-51). Before Gregorian reform and in the lifetimes of Domingo and Oria, San Millán de la Cogolla was a Mozarabic monastery, and, as Lappin notes, Oria was witness to the last days of the Mozarabic rite (2002: 70).

Lappin notes three Mozarabic ideals as particularly prominent in the *Vidas*. First and foremost, hermits or monks were generally considered to emulate the martyrs, who they supersede in divinity, in a tradition corroborated by the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great (2000: 14; see also Gerli 2003b: 937). The martyrdom of the hermit or monk is private and through asceticism, a training of the flesh that configures will and action. Second and third, the Iberian church placed importance on the imitation of earlier holy models and the recounting of visionary experience to substantiate claims to sanctity (Lappin 2002: 49, 72). The *SM* honours the life of an eremitical priest and, in the *SO*, the recluse is depicted as occupying a very high position in heaven followed only by the apostles, evangelists, and Christ (st.83 [83]).<sup>23</sup> Millán, Domingo, and Oria imitate penitent models. In his early vocation as a shepherd, Domingo is compared to: “Abel el protomártir”, “los santos patriarchas”, “David tan noble rey”, and “Samillán”, among others (*SD* sts.26-29), and Oria’s spiritual progression emulates that of the martyrs Eugenia, Eulalia, and Perpetua, and the anchorite Pelagia.<sup>24</sup> Lappin describes Domingo

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<sup>23</sup> There is dispute between Uría Maqua and Lappin as regards the hermits’ position in the heavenly hierarchy. Uría Maqua adjusts the order of holy figures as recorded in manuscript *F* to honour the martyrs over and above all other saints according to established Christian tradition. Lappin believes her emendation insensitive to the valuation of the hermit in the Mozarabic church and does not alter the reading of the manuscript. I believe Lappin’s approach to be the most thoughtful and judicious as regards *F*, as I state in footnote 2 of this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> For further detail on Eulalia and Eugenia, see sections II and IV of this chapter, respectively. Perpetua, like Oria, was a holy virgin transported to the heavens. At the beginning of the narration of Oria’s second vision, the *SO* mentions the feast of Saint Saturninus: “Terçera noche ante del mártir Saturnino” (st.116a [119a]), which, as Walsh remarks: “may not be incidental, since the reading for Saturninus incorporates the vision of Perpetua” (1988: 256). The Mozarabic church celebrated Saturninus on the 29 November (Dutton et al. 1992: 528n119a). During her third vision, Oria journeys to the land surrounding the Mount of Olives, a location associated with Pelagia, who lived there as a penitent (Lappin 2000: 34).

as a: “Mozarabic celebrity, assisted no doubt by his connections amongst the local nobility, but also by the abiding affection for the primitive ideals of monasticism which the Spanish church and its laity held” (2002: 35). Visionary experience as a key feature of the contemplative life is recorded in all three *Vidas*: throughout the *SM*; just after Domingo becomes Abbot of the monastery of Silos in the *SD*; and as the main tenor of the narrative in the *SO*.

The value the Mozarabic church placed upon eremitism is akin to that of the reform movement, on account of which the Iberian tradition was expunged as, quite literally and paradoxically, parochial. The relationship of the Mozarabic hermit to the martyr is akin to that of the Templar knight to the ordinary crusader in the writing of Bernard of Clairvaux. In both cases, the former, modeled on the latter, imitates Christ far beyond his human sufferings. God: ‘wanted to recapture the affections of carnal men who were unable to love in any other way, by first drawing them to the salutary love of his own humanity, and then gradually raising them to a spiritual love’ (*Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 20.6).<sup>25</sup> In keeping with Cistercian spirituality and the broader thirteenth-century inclination towards the apostolic ideal, as extended to the battlefield, the values of the Mozarabic church are appealing to Berceo and his audiences in times of reform and warfare. A bearer of indigenous Iberian tradition, the Mozarabic liturgy had a distinct calendar of saints, many of which were local, and mentioned events from Iberian history (Bosch 2000: 57-59). Notably, whereas the reading of hagiography in church is rarely recorded after the eight century, in the Mozarabic liturgy this took place until the eleventh (Gerli 2003a: 375; “Hagiography”).

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<sup>25</sup> “Quod voluit in carne videri et cum hominibus homo conversari, ut carnalium videlicet, qui nisi carnaliter amare non poterant, cunctas primo ad suae carnis salutarem amorem affectiones retraheret, atque ita gradatim ad amorem perduceret spiritualem” (*Library of Latin Texts, Series A*). The English translation is quoted in Purkis (2008: 99).

Writing the *Vidas* in the mid-thirteenth century, Berceo looks back, principally to the eleventh century, the last period of great activity for the Mozarabic church and the heyday of Benedictine monasticism, yet also to the sixth century, and the very origins of the place of his education and affiliation, as connected to both monastic traditions.<sup>26</sup> The trials and tribulations of the monasteries of the eleventh century, as resonant in the *SD* and *SO*, were still relevant in the thirteenth, when the monasteries declined and the mendicant orders greatly rose in popularity (“Monasticism”; Gerli 2003a: 581). Living at the height of medieval papal power in the thirteenth century, with his three *Vidas* Berceo considers the place of his indigenous church within Benedictine monasticism and Roman Catholicism as universalizing institutions, and traces eremitic penance as a unifying path to salvation across centuries of flux.<sup>27</sup>

Written in the local vernacular, yet with Latinate style and in emulation of the *Vitae*, the *Vidas* demonstrate strong tension between the local and the European. The fundamental question for the *Vidas* is when penance can bring man closest to God: when he is alone and self-ministering, or when he receives the official sacrament and serves the Christian community.<sup>28</sup> A central field for enquiry with regard to this

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<sup>26</sup> Monasticism was present in Iberia from the late Roman era. The Council of Elvira, Granada, held in the early fourth century, regulated the lives of holy women, and documents from before the First Council of Toledo (400AD) mention anchorites, *monachi* (Gerli 2003a: 580; “Monasticism”).

<sup>27</sup> Although eremitism was and remains a part of monastic life, with some members of an order permitted to live in isolation for certain periods, as in the case of Domingo in the *SD*, the eremite is on the whole a far more autonomous, individualized figure than the cenobite, and one more thoroughly dedicated to solitary contemplation, as in the *SM* and most notably the *SO*. See Mulder-Bakker (2005: 179-80) and Lerclerq, Vandenbroucke, and Bouyer (1982: 128).

<sup>28</sup> Berceo also raises this question in miracle twenty-one of the *MNS*, “La abadesa preñada”. As Weiss perceives, the Abbess’ sin, which leads to her falling pregnant: “confounds judicial investigation; it is not formally confessed (at least not to a human; Berceo eliminates the confessional relationship between Bishop and abbess); and it requires no penance. It becomes, in short, a matter of conscience” (2006: 106). The Abbess redeems herself outside of the workings of ecclesiastical institution with the help of the Virgin Mary, although, as Berceo explains to his audience at the beginning of the miracle, her sin was carried out: “ennos tiempos derechos que corrié la verdat . . . Si pecavan los omnes, fazién bien penitencia, / perdonávalis luego Dios toda malquerencia” (sts.502a, 504ab). The implication is somewhat nostalgic: in past eras of greater moral purity, the role of the Church was reduced; and suggests dissatisfaction on Berceo’s part with the machinations of masculine power.

question is the vision. A cornerstone of both eremitic and monastic life, visionary experience is only possible within the individual mind and thus requires careful authentication by the Christian community, most notably through the recording of it in written document. Berceo, a well-educated man of the secular Church who has personal insight into the monastic life of San Millán de la Cogolla, is an ideal candidate for the role of authenticator in the case of the *Vidas*.<sup>29</sup>

Visionary experience is part of Millán's daily life from a young age, and is woven consistently and subtly through the *SM*. Living in a wilderness teeming with serpents for over forty years, the hermit is continuously primed for divine contact, yet as such he is also especially vulnerable to the predations of the devil. Millán's first vision takes place when he falls asleep while working for his family as a humble shepherd: "mientras yazié dormiendo fue de Dios aspirado; / quando abrió los ojos despertó maestrado" (st.11bc; Dutton et al. 1992). A later stanza confirms the significance of this experience, connecting Millán's otherworldly ascetic stamina with what he conceived as a boy: "sin sermon ninguno de Dios fue aspirado, / sufrió tan fuert' lazerio tiempo tan porlongado, / parece bien por ojo qe de Dios fue guiado" (st.65bcd). Notably outside of the realm of worldly language, the divine teaching that he receives is so perfect that it leads the young man to abhor the world: "entendió que el mundo era pleno d'engaño, / qeríe partirse d'elli e ferse ermitaño" (st.12ab). Yet in order to live fully as a penitent, Millán first requires guidance: "por prender tal vida doctrina li menguava" (st.13b).

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<sup>29</sup> The last stanza of the Paris manuscript of the *Libro de Alexandre* states that Berceo was notary to the abbot of San Millán de la Cogolla, Juan Sánchez (1209-1253). As Rico argues, such a position would have increased Berceo's status as an authenticator (1985: 136-40).

Millán seeks Christian authority, although his teacher and model to be is not a monk or a cleric, but a fellow local hermit, Sant Felices of Billivio in La Rioja.<sup>30</sup> The budding *ermitán* finds him: “orando en somo del otero, / plus umildosamientre que un monge claustrero” (st.15cd). Note the equivalence made between eremitic and cenobitic prayer here, lending authority to Felices and the hermit in general in concordance with primitive monasticism. With Felices’ teaching, Millán goes on to strike out alone in the wilderness and specifically to tame “la Cogolla un anciano val” (st.27b), in affirmation of the eremitic heritage of the monastery of San Millán. Although his eremitism brings him public recognition and the position of *racionero* at the church of the Iberian saint Eulalia, Berceo’s parish church, such *fama* (st.41a) and success is shortlived: Millán’s primary purpose is solitary contemplation.<sup>31</sup> He is fundamentally uneasy in dealings with the Christian community and feels “poco sabor” (st.75d) when called to account by his ecclesiastical superiors.

Book I of the *SM* ends with the image of the hermit erecting a small structure in the wilderness, *capiella*, *ciella* (st.107ab), in order to dedicate himself more fully to ascesis and thus visionary experience: “maguer era la casa angosta e poquiella, / de precioso tesoro estava bien pleniella” (st.107cd). Rather than describing a very unlikely stash of booty on the part of Millán, the text here refers to the treasure accumulated in the saint’s mind through meditation.<sup>32</sup> Millán’s continuous activity in this regard renders the landscape in which he operates, in which the spiritual and visible worlds frequently merge, particularly liminal in relation to those of the *SD* and the *SO*. During

<sup>30</sup> Relics pertaining to Felices were taken to the monastery of San Millán in 1090 (Dutton et al. 1992: 128n13c).

<sup>31</sup> Braulio’s Latin *Vita* does not mention the dedication of the church. See Dutton et al. for further detail (1992: 150n95a).

<sup>32</sup> In Augustine’s *Confessions*, memory is described as a ‘treasurehouse’, “thesauro memoriae”: ‘a storehouse for countless images of all kinds’, “ubi sunt thesauri innumerabilium imaginum” (X.8; Pine-Coffin 1961; Watts 1996).

his lifetime, Millán comes face-to-face with the devil in a solitary battle for worldly *posada* (st.117b), and after his death, as an angelic figure, returns to aid the Christians with Saint James, in conflict with the devil incarnate, the “*moros descreídos*” (st.443a).

Notably, after his brief period at the church of Saint Eulalia and return to eremitism, a group of devils with whom Millán is familiar set upon him and try to burn him while he sleeps, a death from which the eremite is miraculously delivered when the flames procured by his enemies are turned against them. The saint awakens to observe the scene of the devils fighting each other: “*levantó la cabeça, cató en derredor; / vío esta revuelta, entendió el fervor, / por poco se non riso tant’ ovo grand sabor*” (st.222bcd).

As Kelley suggests, Berceo depicts the plotting of the devils before they carry out their plan as a parody of a church council, most likely a reform council called in the wake of Lateran IV (2004: 80):

Fueron con estas cosas los dñablos fellones,  
fizieron so concilio las malas criaciones,  
por levantar capítulos e consituçiones,  
por destruir est’ santo con algunas razones.

Trataron de sue regla quando fueron juntados,  
de reformar los vicios que avién olvidados,  
por decebir las almas de los buenos christianos,  
de legos e de clérigos, por casar e casados.

Maguer que ementavan muchos otros tractados,  
por esta cosa sólo estaban fetalados;  
dizién qe est’ serrano los avié afrontados,  
ond’ se tenién por muertos e por descabeçados. (sts.203-05)

For Kelley, the synod is a playful joke, the parody of which also refers to Berceo’s own writing as didactic and to some extent reformist, representing: “the lighter side of Berceo’s self-referential thematization of writing” (2004: 80). I believe, however, that the scene is a serious as well as humorously pejorative portrayal of the: “voluminous

verbiage produced by the reform councils” (Kelley 2004: 80), and the machinations of ecclesiastical power. Millán, an outsider and relatively uneducated *serrano* humiliates those who believe he should operate under their collective jurisdiction, and his triumph over them validates his unique relationship with God as a local eremite.

Millán is a thaumaturge, as recorded in a formal *Vida* in the tradition of the *Vitae* of the Church Fathers, and the figurehead of a monastery that went on to embrace the Benedictine Order. Yet, historically, the cult of Millán suffered greatly with Roman reform and his words and deeds are in keeping with, in the words of Lappin: “the Mozarabic Church’s anarchic toleration of individual eremitism” (2002: 71, 33), and the practices of the desert fathers. Berceo’s resurrection of Millán’s Life, as originally penned by the saint Braulio (590-651AD), roots Millán and his own writing in indigenous Iberian tradition. The author closely associates himself with Millán: “Gonzalvo fue so nomne qui fizo est’ tractado, / en Sant Millán de Suso fue de niñez criado; / natural de Verceo ond’ sant Millán fue nado” (st.489bc). The continual interweaving of visionary experience with the unimposing authorial voice of the *SM* are testament to the young Berceo in the process of finding his own voice as hagiographer, cleric, and penitent Christian.

Quite distinctly, in the *SD*, visionary experience has a thoroughly public and institutional purpose, and the most prominent of the poem’s visions is set as a central jewel within the narrative frame. Domingo’s first step towards his saintly profession is, as in the case of Millán, as an uneducated shepherd working for his parents. The former, however, is not inspired to become a hermit, rather opting at first for the communal life of the priesthood: “asmó de seer clérigo, saber buenas façañas, / pora bevir onesto, con más limpias compañas” (st.34cd). He thus receives training at a church school, which he

attends in absolute obedience: “guardávase de yerros e de todas fallencias; / non falsarié por nada las puestas conveniencias” (st.41cd).

Domingo is the model vassal, keen to experience *façañas*, who rises to become a reforming abbot. As Rico reminds us, affinity with the epic is almost mandatory in hagiography (1985: 139), as linked closely to the commonplace of the monk as a soldier of Christ armed with honed language.<sup>33</sup> In keeping with his role as saintly epic hero to a burgeoning Christian community, Domingo’s ascension through the ranks of the Church, from *quatrogradero*, *pistolero*, to *evangelistero*, is depicted with symbols of worldly beauty and prosperity: silver, gold, and pearls. These Domingo transcends on becoming a priest, to live in harmony with heavenly light: “semejó al lucero” (st.44).

As regards the eremitic and cenobitic inclinations, Domingo is definitively of the latter, although the ongoing tension between the two is portrayed in a particularly striking manner in the *SD*. After joining the priesthood, Domingo elects to live as a hermit, yet after only eighteen months dedicates himself to monasticism at the increasingly Benedictine monastery of San Millán. Before he becomes a hermit, Domingo gives a striking speech in which he praises: his forefather Millán’s facility as a visionary, “andando por los yermos, y abrió el camino, / por ond subió al cielo” (st.58cd); the authority of Millán’s master, Felices, “fo ermitaño vero, en bondat acabado” (st.59c); and the tradition of eremitism more broadly, “En los primeros tiempos nuestros antecessores, / . . . de Sancta Egleſia fueron cimentadores/ . . . Yo, pecador mesquino, en poblado ¿qué fago?” (st.54ab, 64a), indicating that the traditional,

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<sup>33</sup> As Carruthers reminds her readers, the commonplace of the monk as soldier of Christ is in part an adaptation of the classical concept of the orator as such (1998: 106). In the preface to his *Rule*, Benedict writes of a *scola* to be formed in God’s service. The word *scola*: “had a military as well as an academic sense . . . [and indicated] a kind of combat unit, in which the recruit was trained and equipped for his spiritual warfare under an experienced commander—the abbot” (Lawrence 1984: 28). In the words of Bower: “reading, understanding, and memory are the military exercises, oratory and pious writing the arms that defend . . . within the claustral halls” (2005: 201).

solitary approach to penitence is fundamental for the young leader. Yet on later deciding to become a monk, his period in the wilderness is portrayed as a necessary though merely preliminary stage in a progressive educational model:

Por amor que viviesse aún en mayor premia,  
que non ficiesse nada, a menos de licencia,  
asmó de ferse monge, e fer obediencia,  
que fuesse bien travado fora de su potencia.

No lo tenga ninguno esto a liviandad,  
nin que menoscabó de la su sanctidat,  
ca en sí ovo siempre complida caridad,  
qui en poder ageno metió su voluntad. (sts.81-82)

In a later potted history of Domingo's life, the narrator explains that: "biviendo por los yermos, del pueblo apartado", Domingo "sufrió más martirio que algún martirado" (st.255bd), in line with the Mozarabic hierarchy of penitents. Yet as a monk, the narrator reiterates: "desend entró en Orden, fiço obediencia, / . . . como si lo oviesse preso en penitencia. / Aun de la mongía subió en mayor grado" (sts.256ad, 257a). The implications are that Domingo, priest and monk, rather than Millán, eremitic priest, is the saint for a new era, in line with the development of the institution at San Millán from hermitage to monastery from the sixth to the eleventh centuries, and its ongoing Benedictine status during the lifetime of Berceo.<sup>34</sup> Such a depiction is resonant with regard to Berceo's continued involvement with San Millán de la Cogolla in the wake of the renewal of the *Carta de Hermandad* between the monastery and its cognate at Silos in 1236, and his appointment as priest of Berceo, a village close to San Millán, in 1237, as indicative of the *SD*'s date of composition, an issue I will tackle shortly.

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<sup>34</sup> The narration of Domingo's eventual passing into the next world emphasizes his status as fulfiller of Mozarabic legacy. The deliverance of his soul is celebrated with a chorus of singers that includes Saint Benedict, his followers, and Millán: "dulcement organando", "leyendo e cantando", "cantavan a Dios Laudes, sones multiplicados" (sts.522-26).

Berceo's writing of the *SD* is a realization of progression in sacred literature akin to that of Domingo in sainthood. In the words of Farcasiu: "the saint is manifest through the historicity of supernatural events . . . hagiography as *imitatio* fulfills the New Testament allegorically as the New Testament fulfills the Old" (1986: 308).<sup>35</sup> With his vernacular *Vida*, subsuming the *Vitas Patrum* and the Latin *Vitae*, Berceo asserts his parallel contemporary importance with that of Domingo for the monasteries of his local region, as well as his patrons and wider audience. Domingo's ascension through the ranks of the monastery of San Millán to become prior, before he is forced into exile and takes refuge at the nearby monastery of Silos, is also an equivalent tale of the ups and downs of an ecclesiastical career such as that of Berceo, and points to the latter's professional ambition. Just after his appointment as abbot, Domingo experiences a vision, *visión* (st.226c), which, in addition to substantiating his claims to sanctity, affirms the righteousness of Benedictine institution as historically associated with Iberian statehood.<sup>36</sup>

Domingo recalls his past vision to companions in affirmation of his divine right to rule, inviting comparison with Alexander in Jerusalem in the *Alexandre*, and Fernán González prior to battle in the *PFG*.<sup>37</sup> The prior, solitary speech of an unsatisfied Domingo, given before entering the wilderness as a hermit (sts.51-64), is superseded by this communal rite in his role as abbot, in which the authority of witnesses is crucial. As Berceo insists, his version of the tale is composed: "assí como leemos, los que lo escrivieron, / de la su boca misma, dél mismo lo oyeron, / sabemos que en ello toda

<sup>35</sup> As Walsh remarks: "the claim to 'historicity' or antecedent, of course, is an insistent motif in the written chronicles of saints" (1988: 254).

<sup>36</sup> Fernando I of Castile, for example, promoted Cluniac monasticism in the interests of: "imperial rule of Iberia" (Gerli 2003a: 581; "Monasticism").

<sup>37</sup> In the *Alexandre*, in order to explain his unusual mercy with Jerusalem, Alexander: "membrol' por aventura de una visión" (st.1142b). Having spent a period in absence from his men, Fernán must reassure them of his legitimacy in the *PFG*: "Entrante de la puerta y fyz' mi oración, / tal qual me dio Dios seso e me dio corazón; / vyno a mí el monje commo en vysyón" (st.421abc).

verdad dixieron” (st.227abc). Domingo reports that while dreaming he was transported: “durmiésse en su lecho, ca era muy cansado; / una visión vido por ond fue confortado” (st.226bc). He subsequently found himself in a “fiero logar” (st.229a), looking out at a river that separated into two: “dos aguas bien cabdales”, one whiter than crystal and the other redder than wine (st.230).

Two angelic figures holding luminous crowns and standing on a bridge over the river presented Domingo with a challenge: he was to climb the steps of the bridge, an extremely narrow and *pavorosa carrera* made of glass (st.231), which, despite his reservations, he miraculously managed to achieve: “tan sin embargo como por grand carrera” (st.236b), in what I believe to be an allegory of his ascent to the position of abbot of Silos. Domingo is subsequently lauded by the figures and then presented with three crowns:

La una porque fuste casto e buen claustrero,  
a la obediencia non fuste refertero.

La otra te ganó mieña Sancta María,  
porque la su eglesia consagró la tu guía,  
en el su monasterio fecist grand mejoría,  
es mucho pagado, ende te la embía.

Esta otra tercera de tan rica hacienda,  
por esti monesterio que es en tu comienda,  
que andava en yerro como bestia sin rienda,  
has tú sacado ende pobreça e contienda. (sts.240-42)

Domingo is the ideal monk who brings prosperity to every institution under his care.

While a symbol that references the martyrs, the crowns celebrate the monastic service of the hero. The author figure, more thoroughly conscious of ecclesiastical hierarchy in the *SD* than in the *SM*, cannot thoroughly identify with such a grand protagonist and worships him with self-deprecation, an issue I will tackle in greater detail in the following section: “ovi grand talento de seer tu joglar, / esti poco servicio tú lo deña

tomar, / e deña por Gonçalo al Criador rogar” (st.775bcd). Domingo’s vision is a reward, not for eremitic penance, but the *lazerio* he endures as a Christian leader.

As confirmed towards the end of Book I, Domingo: “prophetó sin dubda, esto por conocía”; “fue vero propheta, dioli Dios grand poder, / e grand espiramiento en dezir e en fer” (sts.260d, 287cd). In line with the doctrine of Paul, Domingo’s command of the Word is communal: ‘He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church’ (I Corinthians 14.4; *The Bible*).<sup>38</sup> Although Millán also had the gift of prophecy (st.283), Domingo is more thoroughly the Christian teacher-orator of biblical tradition. Conversely, and more akin to Millán, Oria is an intensely private figure who struggles to articulate her visions in the *SO*, especially towards the end of her life: “assaz tengo en mí lazerio e quebranto; / más me pesa la lengua que un pesado canto” (st.173cd [176cd]).

As an anchoress Oria is not called to any official position in the Church. She can thus dedicate her every moment to eremitic penance to an even greater extent than Millán, although her visionary experience is at a far greater danger of heresy. As a woman, therefore of meagre education and greater inclination towards the sins of the flesh, Oria’s divine insight requires the authority and eloquence of her hagiographer to a far greater extent than in the cases of Millán and Domingo. For Lappin, the *SO* is the most accomplished *Vida* of a writer of European world-view disassociated from the intellectual backwater of San Millán de la Cogolla (2008: 117, 237), a view broadly in line with that of Rico on Berceo’s oeuvre (1985: 136-38).<sup>39</sup> Though a large and

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<sup>38</sup> “Qui loquitur lingua / semet ipsum ædificat / qui autem prophetat / ecclesiam ædificat” (*Biblia Sacra* vol. 2).

<sup>39</sup> Rico argues that the *mester* of Berceo can be closely aligned with that of the author of the *Alexandre* as European and clerical. However, he also notes that Berceo was not keen on: “ciertos alardes de ‘ciencia’: en parte, por carácter; en parte, porque se los desaconsejaban los fines de aleccionamiento y cuestión que pretendía” (1985: 140-43).

prosperous monastery, San Millán was certainly no medieval centre of scholarly excellence and its library is recorded as unusually impoverished even by monastic standards.<sup>40</sup> In Lappin's final analysis, the *SO* is likely to be: "a deliberate corrective" to the "questionable cult" surrounding Oria at San Millán de la Cogolla (2008: 149).

Lappin argues that in the *SO*: "literary concerns come most to the fore", in relation to the *SD*: a lesser, "pseudo-juglaresque performance", nevertheless intended for an audience "trained to appreciate literature"; and deems the *SM*: "written for the local Riojan peasantry, yeomen and townsfolk" (2008: 117; 2002: 263). However, his aesthetic hierarchy, whereby the local, and oral are synonymous with a relative poverty of education and literature, is hard to reconcile with the *SO*, as profoundly Mozarabic and as concerned with the voiced word as it is Roman and authoritative, as evident in examination of the visions that pertain to the anchorite.

In accordance with his role of educated priest, Berceo lends authority to the visions with three distinct narrative techniques. Firstly, visions one and two unfold seamlessly within the narration in likeness with Marian hagiography, to great immediate effect (Lappin 2008: 135). This dramatic extension of a similar technique employed in the *SM*, such that Oria's story consists almost entirely of visions, is counterbalanced, secondly, by a doubling of authorial figure in vision three, with the addition of the first-person voice of Muño along with that of Berceo. Thirdly, in his treatment of Oria's visions, Berceo places especial emphasis on his command of the written word, grounding her more wayward experience: "Qui en esto dubdare que nós versificamos, / .

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<sup>40</sup> As Rico observes: "San Millán no supo ponerse al día . . . La Cogolla se mantiene en una línea básicamente conservadora, mientras a su alrededor florecen más y más los nuevos autores y las nuevas preocupaciones" (1985: 137-38). His position is corroborated by Díaz y Díaz, whose study of Riojan libraries records a marked lack of manuscripts at the monastery other than those pertaining to study of grammar or spiritual topics: "la biblioteca emilianense no pasa . . . de ser la esperable en un núcleo monástico importante . . . la orientación monacal es muy marcada" (1979: 262-67).

. . peccará dura mente en dios que adoramos, / ca nós quanto dezimos escripto lo fallamos” (st.203acd [6acd]).

Within the visions, however, Oria strongly identifies with the Mozarabic ideal of asceticism as superseding the physical suffering of the martyrs, and her voice, converted from struggling worldly tones to that of the divine *Vox Mea* over the course of her journeys to the heavens, is a major theme of the poem (I dispute that *Vox Mea* is the voice of the Church in section IV). Oria’s roots within the Mozarabic church are acknowledged by Gerli (2003b: 936), and sketched by Lappin in his recent edition of the *SO* (2000), who goes as far as to describe Oria’s visions as markedly individualistic (specifically, “Protestant”; 2000: 43-44).<sup>41</sup> Notably, the narration of Oria’s first vision, the longest of the three, is testament to her guidance into heaven by three martyrs: Agatha and Cecilia, as celebrated by the Mozarabic liturgy, and the Iberian saint Eulalia, martyred in Mérida in 307, whose local church features in the *SM*.<sup>42</sup> The martyrs liken themselves to their charge: ““Oria, por ti tomamos esta tan grant carrera. / Sepas bien que te tengas por nuestra compañera””(st.32cd [35cd]), and explain their aid as a reward for her *servicio* and the particularly acute physical suffering she endures as a female anchorite, as indicated by her rough clothing, “la saya de lana” (st.33d [36d]).

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<sup>41</sup> The individualistic nature of the visions of the Mozarabic anchoress may account for the loss of the Latin source of the *SO*. As Lappin surmises: “Munno perhaps celebrated Amunna and Oria in his hagiography as exemplary representatives of the Mozarabic tradition . . . Berceo’s Latin source, we may presume, was written as a means of defending Mozarabic practices . . . at a time when they were subject to sustained criticism” (2000: 43-44).

<sup>42</sup> Agatha and Cecilia were Sicilian and Roman virgin martyrs, respectively. The Mozarabic church celebrates Agatha on the 5 February and Cecilia on 22 November (Dutton et al. 1992: 506). Agatha, whose breasts were severed by her tormentors, also appears in the *Libro de buen amor*: the Archpriest calls a mountain woman Gadea (Agatha) at stanza 987, as noted by Giles (2009: 9). As a possible source for Berceo’s choice of the three virgin martyrs that guide Oria, Walsh cites the *De Variis Apparitionibus et Miraculis* (1063-1072) by the Doctor of the Church, Saint Peter Damian of Ravenna. The text reports the vision of a priest who saw Agnes, Agatha, and Cecilia: “it is likely that Berceo had this configuration in mind, and substituted the Spanish virgin martyr Eulalia of Mérida for Agnes in his transposition of the setting” (1988: 256).

Eulalia plays an especially significant role in Oria's vision. She gives a dove to the anchorite to follow as she ascends to heaven, a symbol of Christian martyrdom in general but also specifically of her own. As Eulalia died, a dove flew from her lips (Farcasiu 1986: 315), indicating the ascent of her spirit to God in heaven and the absolute supplanting of the word by the Word within her, just as it does for Oria: "guarda esta palonba, todo lo ál olvida. / Tú ve do ella fuere, non seas decebida" (st.37bc [40bc]). As Oria flies into heaven via a ladder, a miraculous tree, and as a feather perched on the *bordón* of an angelic figure, her utter humility is given Nature's blessing.<sup>43</sup> Such a blessing invites contrast with the example of the notoriously learned Alexander the Great of the *Alexandre*, in evidence that Berceo's attitude to erudition and ecclesiastical authority is somewhat ambivalent as portrayed in the *SO*.

As his final major exploit in the *Alexandre*, Alexander plans to breach the heavens with some form of ladder or embankment (st.2496cd). His scheme exposes his spiritual limitations and is comparable with his prior escapade under the sea, when, rather than eliciting a blessing, he offends Nature and generates envy among the clouds and the wind (st.2303b). In direct contrast, Oria—female, of limited education, physically weak, and only locally celebrated—is granted free and rapid passage: "puyava a los çielos sin ayuda ninguna, / non li fazié embargo nin el sol nin la luna" (st.50ab [53ab]). In marked distinction to the *Alexandre* and to his own *SD*, Berceo privileges local, uneducated experience in the *SO*.

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<sup>43</sup> Farcasiu suggests that the column is a figure of action and the tree one of contemplation (1986: 317), as consonant with Alexander's plans to breach the heavens with some form of ladder in the *Alexandre* (st.2496cd; see above), and Berceo's beautiful garden in the meditative introduction to the *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*. The tree is an important symbol in Christian tradition that pertains to the Virgin Mary, who bore the Redeemer, as the: "verdant tree of life—that which typologically fulfils the tree from the Garden of Eden" (Burke 1980: 258). As regards the virgins as feathers ascending on the *bordones* of angelic figures, Weiss suggests that the women are as quills and, as such, the simile: "celebrates female sanctity while making it dependent upon man's own spiritual pilgrimage" (2006: 82).

The heavenly court welcomes Oria, though she is rustic creature: “por essa serraniella menos non se preçiava” (st.51d [54d]; see also sts.59a, 62a [62a, 65a]). Although the heavenly hierarchy she observes is likened to the Roman Church, with the imposition into Oria’s vision of a “speculative system of thought” on the part of the clerical author (Mulder-Bakker 2005: 176), the hermit occupies a position above the martyrs therein in accordance with Mozarabic tradition, as only superseded by the apostles, evangelists, and Christ.<sup>44</sup> The most salient events of Oria’s stay are her spoken communications with Urraca, her former teacher and model: “conosçió la voz Oria, entendió las senneras” (st.75c [78c]), and with God himself: “fablólis dios del çielo, la voz bien la oyeron” (st.101c [103c]).

As Weiss observes, Oria’s visions become incrementally shorter as the *SO* progresses and she comes closer to death. In the case of the third and most brief vision, the focus is shifted from Oria’s cognition to the reception of her experience by her mother, Munno, and female companions, illustrating: “that the cleric’s ability to capture and represent in writing the saint’s visions diminishes as her physical voice fails, and as she reaches her reserved *silla*” (2006: 70-71). To her witnesses, Oria’s speech becomes increasingly hard to understand:

Non gelo entendié nadi’ de la posada  
ca non era la voz de tal guisa formada.

Otras buenas mugeres que çerca li sedién  
vedién que murmurava, mas no la entendién.  
Por una maravilla esta cosa avién:  
estavan en grant dubda si era mal o bien. (sts.147-48 [150-51])

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<sup>44</sup> The heavenly hierarchy is related to the Church as follows: “Ihesu Christo fue papa, éstos los cardenales, / que sacaron del mundo las serpientes mortales” (st.87cd [90cd]). Lappin argues that the association is particularly thirteenth-century, drawing on the activity of Innocent III. Innocent III was the first pope to be titled *vicarius Christi* in lieu of the more traditional *vicarius Petri* (2008: 148).

Oria is speaking in tongues and requires an interpreter, in accordance with Paul:

‘Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret . . . it is a shame for women to speak in the church’ (I Corinthians 14.13, 35).<sup>45</sup> Her mother, Amuña, duly calls for Muño, who enters Oria’s chamber to record her utterance, along with Berceo.

Traversing the boundaries of text and time, Berceo asserts that he writes the *SO* in the *portaleio* of the anchorite (st.184ab [205ab]), authorizing her controversial penance for a new contemporary audience. As Oria’s walled enclosure is supplanted by her golden *silla*, however, the pure voiced Word of heaven renders the authorial guidance of his *cuaderna vía*, in emulation of her chamber, redundant. The eventual lack of Oria’s particularly physical, female presence informing the kernel of the *SO* prompts some of the most lyrical and moving lines of Berceo’s oeuvre:

Estas palabras dichas e muchas otras tales,  
Oria la benedicta, de fechos spiritales,  
fuyóli a la madre de los oios corales:  
despertó luego ella, mojó los lagremales. (st.201 [203])

As Berceo shows off his poetic skill, he paradoxically elevates and undermines his craft. An act of relatively empty textual vanity compared to the pure kernel Oria signifies in penance, I suggest that there is some humorous and poignant irreverence in the emphasis on his role as *versificador* in the *SO*. Written so close to the end of his life, the extent to which Berceo exalts this uncanonized, individualistic, and thoroughly local anchoress indicates a distancing from ecclesiastical authority. Beyond the hierarchy of the worldly Church, Berceo celebrates the holy spirit in the *SO* as particularly present in his Mozarabic anchoress.

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<sup>45</sup> “Et ideo qui loquitur lingua / oret ut interpretetur. . . Turpe est enim mulieri loqui in ecclesia.”

### III. Sing for your Supper: The *Vidas* of Millán and Domingo

The *SM* and *SD* initiated and helped further establish Berceo's career. Along with the author's ties to the monastery of San Millán, their composition can be linked to external factors, most notably, the on-going Reconquest and the ebbing fortunes of the monasteries. The 1230s, the decade in which the *SM* and *SD* were composed, marks the earlier stages of the Great Reconquest under the reign of Fernando III.

Adding to the economic strictures of wartime, the prosperity of San Millán began to wane in the thirteenth century (Dutton 1984: xii), and the monasteries in general would continue to decline until the revival of the fifteenth century (Gerli 2003a: 581-82; "Monasticism").

1236, the year of the fall of Córdoba to the Christians, is also the year in which the monasteries of San Millán de la Cogolla and Silos renewed their affiliation with a *Carta de Hermandad*. Originally ratified in 1190, the *Carta* was the product of improved relations between the institutions after the problematic leadership of San Millán by Abbot Gómez from 1037 (d.1067), teacher to the Navarran royal family and notably García de Nájera (1035-1054). In 1040, García demanded material goods from the monastery, as opposed by Domingo, then prior, whose subsequent exile resulted in his abbotship from 1041 of the dwindling monastery at Silos. With the blessing of Fernando I of Castile, brother of García, Domingo went on to run a highly prosperous cognate monastery, as recorded in the *SD*. Dutton dates the *SD* to the year in which the *Carta* was newly ratified (1978: 11-12), and, certainly, the story of Domingo, who brought new wealth and prestige to the monastery of Silos with the support of a

Castilian monarch, would have been particularly compelling in the second quarter of the thirteenth century.<sup>46</sup>

As argued by Lappin, the composition of the *SD* is also linked to unprecedented interest on the part of Fernando III in the monastery of Silos from October of 1233. Likening the thirteenth-century monarch to Fernando I as featured in the *SD*, Lappin also notes that Fernando III commanded that his chancery wrote in the vernacular, as established after 1230, and dates the poem to the summer or early autumn of 1233. He thus suggests that, composed for a royal and more general audience, the *SD* sparked Fernando III's involvement with Silos such that he took the monastery under his protection in that same year (2002: 257-62).

There are, however, problems with Lappin's view which he acknowledges, significantly that the *SD* does not include a miracle dating from *c.* 1232 that involves Fernando III.<sup>47</sup> He explains this referring to Berceo's "slavish fidelity" to Grimaludus' *Vita*, a suggestion that does not support his broader argument for the poetic interest of the *SD* and is undermined by his listing of the several important changes Berceo did in fact make to his source (2002: 258). Dutton argues that such changes are due to Berceo's use of a defective copy of the *Vita* when writing his vernacular interpretation (1978: 17). I believe, however, that they are more likely due to Berceo's authorial purpose. The author notably includes the miracle of the leeks from the oral tradition of Domingo's shrine and greatly emphasizes the escape miracles associated with his Life, further exalting the thaumaturge as *redentor de cautivos* in the *SD* (Lappin 2002: 255).

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<sup>46</sup> As Dutton describes: "había relaciones íntimas entre los dos cenobios, y queda claro que Berceo había estado en Silos y que conocía bien el monasterio y sus alrededores" (1978: 12). His view is corroborated by the research of Díaz y Díaz, who describes the shared culture of the two monasteries. Díaz y Díaz cites the sources for Berceo's poetry, and notably the Latin *Vitae* for the *SM* and *SD*, as evidence of regular sharing of written resources between San Millán and Silos (1979: 267, 267n45).

<sup>47</sup> Shortly after 1232, the miracle of Domingo's apparition to Mahómat, captain of Córdoba, as recounted to Fernando III, is recorded to have taken place. Domingo's purpose was to free a number of captives of the Muslim leader (Lappin 2002: 256-57).

Both of these changes point to Domingo's importance as an indigenous saint and, indeed, as Lappin notes, Fernando III dedicated a chapel to him in Seville after he reclaimed the city from the Muslims in 1248 (2002: 258).

I would argue that, rather than provoking Fernando III's interest in Silos, the *SD* is more likely to have been composed, at least in part, as a result of such interest. The combined factors of the King's involvement at an important stage of the Reconquest and the renewal of the *Carta de Hermandad* a few years later, point to composition in the second half of the 1230s. Further adding to the likelihood that the *SD* was composed after 1234 is the fact that the namesake of Domingo, Domingo de Guzmán, founder of the Dominican Order, was canonized in that same year. While I find Dutton's dating to 1236 likely, I would extend it to 1237, the year of Berceo's appointment as priest of the village from which he takes his name, a parish close to San Millán: an important year for the hagiographer when he may have wished to reaffirm his ties with the two monasteries. During the Great Reconquest, Berceo's local territory took on new significance as part of the heartland of *España*. Writing in the wake of the fall of Córdoba when he, like the monasteries of San Millán and Silos, sought new prosperity, Berceo links local Christian legend with proto-national aspiration.

The protagonists of both the *SM* and the *SD* are readily identifiable as Iberian saints. Along with the more typical gifts of prophecy, visions, and miraculous powers to cure sickness, Millán appears after death with Saint James in battle in the *SM*, and Domingo is especially skilled in the freeing of captives from enemy armies in the *SD* (Gerli 2003a: 722; "Saints"). Millán and Domingos' redeemed bodies are metonymic of the Iberian Christian territory steadily re-conquered from 1217-1252, and are associated with the period of Visigothic rule before the catastrophe of 711, contemporary with

which Millán (474-574AD) lived and founded the hermitage and later monastery at La Cogolla.<sup>48</sup> The notion of Millán and Domingo as redeemed bodies of the Reconquest can be linked with the preoccupation with the redemption of sexual sin in the *Apolonio* and *PGF* (see Chapter 3), and makes interesting comparison with the universalizing concept of *homo microcosmos* in the *Alexandre* (see Chapter 1), whereby Millán and Domingo are microcosms of their local and proto-national territory.

The eremitism of Millán itself is worthy of fame:

El confessor precioso fincó en so montaña;  
mientras el siglo sea e durare España  
siempre sera contada esta buena fazaña.

El bon campeador por toda la victoria  
non dio en sí entrada a nulla vanagloria. (sts.122-23)

The eremite is such a hero that his community proclaims: “nunqua nasco tal omne en España” (st.252d). They believe that: “sin costa los podrié gobernar” (st.253d), and in the *Votos* section of the *SM*, Fernán González gives a speech to his men in which he implores them to pay a tribute, *furción* (st.429c), to the saint so that he might continue to guide them after his death: “frontero es del regno, cuerpo envergonçado, / padrón de españoles el apóstol sacado” (st.431ab). In the tradition of the reluctant and exceptional ruler—which includes Christ, and Pelayo, the first Asturian King of the Goths (718-737), who initiated the Reconquest with the battle of Covadonga (719?)—Millán is a primitive Christian role model for Iberia.<sup>49</sup> His office is later typologically and literally fulfilled by Domingo, “lumne de las Españas”, “padrón de la Castiella” (*SD* sts.248a,

<sup>48</sup> Visigothic rule began with Theudis (531–548AD), the first of the monarchs to reside permanently in Iberia. In 587, shortly after the death of Millán in 574, King Reccared converted from Arianism to Roman Christianity (thus accepting that Christ was identical to God).

<sup>49</sup> Christ shows reluctance to accept his fate as the son of God. On the cross, he cries out: ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’, “Deus meus Deus meus ut quid dereliquisti me” (Matthew 27.46). Pelayo spends several years living in the mountains building up: “grand corage pensando como podrie librar la cristiandad” (*Estoria de Espanna* 565). King Wamba (672-680AD) is a further reticent Visigothic monarch fortified by God for his worldly task.

624b), and both of their legacies are brought to bear by Berceo in the thirteenth century.<sup>50</sup>

The first half of the thirteenth century was clearly a period in which financial matters were of great concern for the monasteries of San Millán de la Cogolla and Silos. Largely based on the research of Dutton on the *Votos* section of the *SM* as related to a *Privilegio de Fernán González*, the topic of the ethics of the acquisition of wealth features strongly in criticism on the *Vidas*. The *Privilegio* fraudulently authorized the collection of *votos* on the part of San Millán, and Dutton goes as far as to implicate Berceo in the forgery and to declare him a propagandist for the monastery: “en todo esto hay un elemento de engaño y de fraude” (1984: 251).<sup>51</sup> His position is vehemently contested by Lappin, who argues for Berceo’s innocence, and rather implicates a monk of San Millán, Fernán Garçiez, in the forgery of the *Privilegio* and further documents (2008: 114, 50).

Lappin argues persuasively that the *Votos* section, while encouraging the payment of the laity, was not intended to imply a legal obligation. There is certainly no conclusive evidence that Berceo was involved in the forgery of any *privilegio* and Lappin cites the surprisingly short list of locales as recorded in the *SM* which would have been expected to yield cash should the section have been employed with coercive intent (sts.468-74; 2008: 113). Moreover, the controversial *Votos*, a major addition by Berceo to his Latin source, is joined by two new miracles, as characteristic of the

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<sup>50</sup> Ruffinatto records the importance of Domingo to the Spanish people, quoting Antonio de Yepes, a Benedictine historian. The monastery of Silos was dedicated to Saint Sebastian until the coming of Domingo: “tuvo la casa un abad, santo ilustrísimo, que con sus heroicas virtudes y claros milagros ganó tanta fama y crédito en España, que venció a los nombres de San Sebastián, San Pedro y San Pablo y San Millán, y se quedó el monasterio con sólo el nombre de Santo Domingo de Silos” (Dutton et al. 1992: 306n195a).

<sup>51</sup> As Suszynski reports, Dutton’s study of the *SM*: “reads like a detective story, as it keeps the reader in suspense while the critic examines a series of old documents closely related to the monastery of Saint Emilian”. Dutton proved the *Privilegio* to be a forgery: “without any basis in royal grant or privilege” (1976: 21-22). See also Uría Maqua (2000: 287).

author's balanced approach to worldly and spiritual wealth in the *SM*. However, while I concur with Lappin that to portray Berceo as a cynic and a propagandist is disproportionately condemnatory and dismissive, I do not agree that Berceo's likely innocence is a result of a distanced relationship with San Millán de la Cogolla due to loyalty to the clerical profession.

As in the case of the dating of the *SD*, Dutton and Lappin are divided as regards Berceo's primary allegiance: to his local monasteries and community in the case of the former, and to Europe and the Church in the case of the latter. I do not believe their respective positions to be mutually exclusive and, drawing on both critics, I argue that while Berceo's heart and pen were rooted in his local community, he obviously benefited from and had some allegiance to broader horizons. The close connection with San Millán de la Cogolla that Berceo evidently had does not condemn him to immorality and intellectual primitivism, but rather sheds light on his relative intellectual and moral conservatism in relation to the *Alexandre*, *Apolonio*, and *PFG*. Berceo's intention with the *Votos* section was undoubtedly to bring in some money for the monasteries of San Millán and Silos: "Señores e amigos, quantos aquí seedes, / si escuchar quisiéredes, entenderlo podedes, / quál acorro lis traxo el voto qe sabedes" (st.435abc). Rather than undermining his piety, such an intention is perfectly compatible with the tradition of the hagiographic text and, notably, with monastic rule.

Rather than propaganda, the *SM* is a poem that readily uses religion to guide approaches to work and economy.<sup>52</sup> In the *Votos* section, the apparitions of James and Millán, as affiliated with Remiro and the Leonese, and Fernán González and the

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<sup>52</sup> To borrow a distinction made by Weiss in relation to the twenty-third miracle of Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, I believe that the two *Vidas* provide an opportunity for figurative debate about Christian wealth, usually referred to as "the economy of salvation", as well as for religion to be used: "to think about economic life" (2006: 210).

Castilians (sts.420, 429), respectively, respond to the donations of *votos* on the part of their people to help them vanquish the Moors: “avién caras angelicas e celestial figura, / descendién por el aer’ a una grand pressura, / catando a los moros con turba catadura” (st.439abc). As such, they are no mercenaries: taking into account the intention behind each payment, the *voto* is elevated as a resource that serves the Christian community both locally and universally, materially and spiritually, and, fittingly, the miraculous appearance of the two patron saints in the sky, “fermosas e luzientes” and whiter than fresh snow (st.437cd), aligns the visible world with the mystery of the heavens.

The saints’ response to the donations is governed by a striking work ethic: “non quisieron en baldi la soldada levar, / primero la quisieron merecer e sudar” (st.448ab). As if they were manual labourers, James and Millán are to sweat for the money proportioned by the *votos*, lines that imply a morality of trade applicable to those from the lowest to the very highest echelons of Christian society. Just as their saintly appearance links the earth with the heavens, James and Millán’s labour after death is a bridge between their ascetic practice as religious professionals and the manual work of ordinary men, in demonstration of their immediate relevance to the Christian community. Whether or not composed for the local peasantry (Lappin 2002: 263), the *SM* emphasizes the dignity and importance of so-called humble professions such as labouring, farming, and fishing, in accordance with Christian tradition and notably that of the New Testament.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Christ is referred to with imagery of farming and harvest, and calls on fishermen to follow him, as in Matthew 3.12 and 4.18-22, respectively. A widespread symbol of Christ and Christianity is the fish and Jesus’ father, Joseph, is thought to have been a carpenter. See also the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13.23). Peter, James, and John, fishermen and disciples, are witness to Jesus’ transfiguration: ‘Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light’, “adsumpsit Iesus Petrum et Iacobum et Iohannem fratrem eius / et ducit illos in montem excelsum seorsum / et transfiguratus est ante eos / et resplenduit facies eius sicut sol / vestimenta autem eius facta sunt alba sicut nix” (Matthew 17.1-2).

The preoccupation with economic matters and work ethic is not confined to the *Votos* section, but is found throughout the *SM*. From the first stanza, the author figure implores his audience: “meta mientes en esto que yo quiero leer: / verá adó embían los pueblos so aver . . . / de dar las tres meajas no li será pesado” (st.1cd, 2d). Early on in the narrative, Millán’s eremitic toil is described with striking simile: “martiriava sus carnes como leal obrero, / qeríe a todas guisas merecer el dinero” (st.32cd), and in Book II, Millán helps to build a granary for his community with a group of carpenters who are notably described as *maestros* of their craft (sts.226b, 229a, 234a). Through their labour, the men: “prendién buena soldada, qeriénla bien vengar” (st.227d), and they are duly paid on the completion of the building (st.238). In the *SM*, the economy of salvation has evident applicability to even the most basic transactions. As such, the material exchanges of working people, should they live as Christians loyal to their indigenous saints, are blessed and consecrated, and their material comforts endorsed to some extent.

The work ethic of the *SM* further enhances the notion that the Mozarabic tradition foreshadows that of Benedictine monasticism, in line with the history of the monastery of San Millán. Manual labour is an important component of Benedict’s Rule, accompanying silence and psalmody in enhancement of the cenobite’s ascetic practice, while at the same time facilitating the monastic economy (Dutton et al. 1992: 284; Lawrence 1984: 30). In the *SD*, the young Domingo partakes in manual labour as part of his education at the monastery of San Millán: “si *ad opera manum* los mandavan exir, / bien sabié el bon omne en ello abenir” (st.89ab). Such ethics extend to Berceo: in the opening stanzas of the poem, the author figure announces: “En el nomne de Dios que

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nombramos primero, / suyo sea el precio, yo seré su obrero; / galardón del lacerio yo en Él lo espero” (st.4abc). Proper economic practice is closely associated with appropriate use of language in the *SD*, in keeping with the significance accorded to psalmody in the Rule of Benedict, in which detailed instructions prescribe that the entire Psalter be recited on a weekly basis (Lawrence 1984: 29).<sup>54</sup>

Silence and psalmody help fallen man to approximate a pre-Edenic state, while contrasting practices encourage him to indulge the flesh. The employment of speech vainly and with pride in distraction of others (Gehl 1984: 220-28), is summarized metonymically by the term *roído* in the *SD*, which also applies to worldly speech and actions in general.<sup>55</sup> In an auspicious encounter with King García de Nájera in the *SD*, described by Bower as: “the crucial *agon* of the narrative” (2005: 202), Domingo’s blessed ability to discern the word spoken well from *roído* is closely aligned with his talent to maintain and encourage the material prosperity of San Millán de la Cogolla. As a measure of his skill in the salvific economy, the scene exalts the then prior as a model Benedictine and ally of the nascent Castile, whereby both institution and region prescribe material wealth and religious purity in order to prosper: “tovo el priorado, dizlo el cartelario, / como pastor derecho, non como mercenario” (st.123ab).

Two types of treasure pertain to the monastery of San Millán, yet only one is of interest to García, the Navarran king. Firstly, Domingo, an exceptional monk, is a vessel for the resplendent Word: “yacié grand tesoro so el su buen pellejo” (st.92b), in the manner of his forefather, Millán, whose presence fills his refuge in the wilderness with

<sup>54</sup> See chapters 9 and 17-19 of *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (Venarde 2011). The basic prescriptions outlined in the *Rule* as regards the psalms were later adopted as part of daily worship in the Western Church (Lawrence 1984: 29).

<sup>55</sup> See also *SD* (st.714bc), *SM* (sts.44a, 46a, 236a). The word *roído* features in Berceo’s *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*; for example, the Virgin appears to a sinner and exclaims: “Don fol malastrugado, torpe e enloquido, / ¿en qué roídos andas? ¿en qué eres caído?” (st.340ab). It also makes striking appearance in the *Libro de buen amor*, such as when Endrina implores the wily go-between Trotaconventos: “Déxame de roídos, yo tengo otros coidados” (st.742a).

*precioso tesoro* (*SM* st.107cd). Domingo's respective Christian *tesoro* is of the Benedictine rule, the wisdom of which he embodies: "En logar de la regla todos a él catavan, / en claustra o en coro por él se cabdellavan" (st.121ab). Secondly, the monastery is reasonably wealthy in material terms, possessing various *thesoros* (sts.133d, 138b), as gifted by previous patrons. When García rides to San Millán and demands the monastery's material goods as his right, Domingo argues against his wishes, risking his life.

García, although a "firme cavallero, noble campeador" (st.127c), is corrupted by "una tacha" that leaves him vulnerable to covetousness (st.128d). To his demands, *roídos* (st.157b), Domingo gives a severe response, warning the king that he is endangering his place in heaven:

Lo que una vegada a Dios es ofrecido,  
nunqua en otros usos deve seer metido;  
qui ende lo cambiasse serié loco tollido,  
el día del Juicio seriéli retraído. (st.139)

Like the *votos* paid to James and Millán, the treasures of the monastery have an elevated significance due to their role in furthering the power of the Church. They are no longer mere material goods but are infused with divine significance, as related to Christ, the Word made flesh, and redeemer of man and woman following their covetousness in Eden. In differentiation from the *SM*, however, the *SD* implies a hierarchy of material wealth, whereby certain echelons i.e. the treasures of the Church, are beyond the aspirations of secular men, in keeping with the poem's concern with ecclesiastical institution. Accordingly, Domingo reminds García of his rightful income from tributes and the like (st.141b), and quotes Psalm 91.12 with an ultimate admonition against his potential sacrilege, should he try to remove some of the treasures: "por aver que non

dura la tu alma non vendas, / guárdate ne ad lápidem pedem tuum ofendas” (st.141cd).<sup>56</sup>

In the King’s hands the treasures would be mere objects of worldly trade and he would condemn himself to a terrible fate.

García’s reaction to Domingo’s defiance is one of shock and rage, and he deems the prior’s speech unacceptable for a monk: “Parece de silencio que non sodes usado . . . / Sodes de mal sentido, como loco fablades, . . . / fablades sin licencia, mucho desordenades” (sts.142-43). Overcome with anger at Domingo, who asserts himself as “diciendo derecho” (st.145b), García moves on to threaten to cut out Domingo’s eyes (st.143b). Notably, the King associates the Prior with the schools and universities, implying an inappropriate level of intellectual ambition and, I suspect, a correlative like of material wealth for its own sake: “sodes muy raçonado, / legista semejades ca non monje travado” (st.146ab). After threatening Domingo with a further deformity, the loss of his tongue (st.146d), García finally declares that he will have Domingo hung in the manner of a traitor (st.150d).<sup>57</sup> Despite the King’s vehemence, Domingo is unwavering, and identifies García’s rhetorical *ductus* as diabolical: “la ira e los dichos adúcente grand daño, / el diablo lo urde que trae grand engaño” (st.152ab). He subsequently prays to Millán for insight into his future (st.158), and later consigns himself to exile.

Whereas for García, Domingo’s righteousness is infuriating: “fablades com qui siede en castiello alçado” (st.150b), he is welcomed by Fernando, a model king.

Speaking to his entourage of princes and wise men, the penitent Fernando, “sea en

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<sup>56</sup> Psalm 91.11-12 reads as follows: ‘For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone’, “Quia angelis suis mandabit de te ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis / in manibus portabunt te ne forte offendant ad lapidem pes tuus” (90.11-12; *Biblia Sacra* vol. 1). The words of this psalm are repeated in the New Testament when Christ is tempted by the Devil (Matthew 4.6; see Dutton et al. 1992: 292n141d).

<sup>57</sup> Given his desire for material treasure, King García’s threats are fittingly confined to Domingo’s body. They are also symbolic with regard to the prior’s skill in oration and, as perceived by Bower, with regard to monastic reading. García wishes to deprive the prior of eyes and tongue: “the eyes, which were cast down against worldly sights but are open to solemn lines of sacred writing, and the tongue, which . . . accompanies the eye in sounding out the silent page” (2005: 202).

paradiso” (st.219a), who acknowledges God as “Rei de los reyes” (st.225a), recognizes that the monastery at Silos is in a state of poverty “por los nuestros pecados” (st.203a), and perceives Domingo’s value, both material and spiritual: “es de recabdo bono, demás bien ordenado, / es en quanto veemos del Criador amado, / vernié el monasterio por el a su estado” (st.207bcd). Crucially, Fernando thoroughly understands a king’s duty to his territory’s monasteries and their keepers, in the manner of Fernán in the *PFG*:

Es por un monasterio un regno captenido,  
ca es días e noches de Dios en élli servido;  
assí puede seer un regno maltraído  
pora un logar bono, si es esperdecido. (st.204)

A monastery can help increase a region’s prosperity in material and territorial terms through joining it in more profound union with the Christian God. Through his work as a saintly intermediary, Domingo shields the monastery of San Millán from the ravages of the erring García, and brings prosperity and grace to further institutions i.e. the monastery of Santa María de Cañas, and most notably the monastery at Silos. Affirming the link between kingship loyal to the monasteries and broader prosperity, the *SD* offers a package of values of mutual benefit to Silos and the nascent Castile. As in the *PFG*, the monasteries are the spiritual refuge of a kingdom in conflict in the *SD*, serving as a reminder that each worldly battle must be won on spiritual as well as material terms, should long-term peace and wealth be desired.

The pious rhetoric of epic and economy in the *SM* and *SD* is extended with a device of particular interest in the *SD*. As a complement to Domingo’s status as Christian hero, the author figure characterizes himself as a *juglar*, whose effort reporting the protagonists’ holy deeds: “bien valdrá, como creo, un vaso de bon vino” (st.2d). The *juglar*, a narrator of epic tales who often at worked at court and was ill famed for his morals and poetics in thirteenth-century Iberia (Musgrave 1976: 131-33;

Weiss 2005: 497-98), is appropriated by Berceo with humour and humility to enhance the penitent dimension of his writing practice. The role is notably resonant in the context of the growing reputation of Francis of Assisi and his *joculatores Domini* in the thirteenth century, as argued by many critics of Bercean poetry (see Dutton 1984: 188), and as such, Berceo extends his characterization of the hagiographer in terms of *juglaría* to his companions and audience at the beginning of Book II:

Querémosvos un otro libriello començar,  
e de los sus Milagros algunos renunçar,  
los que Dios en su vida quiso por él mostrar,  
cuyos joglares somos, él nos deñe guiar. (st.289)

Rather than self-aggrandizing poetic creation, Berceo advocates that his concern is for fidelity to his source in the interests of historicity, in the manner of a *juglar*, and the Christian faith. Using the device of author figure as *juglar* to paradoxically extend his authority with the written word, Berceo also extends his possibilities of income for himself and the monasteries of San Millán and Silos presenting his *Vida* as entertainment. His purpose is as vassal to Domingo, *el novel cavallero* (st.84a), within the hierarchy of the Church: “ovi grand talento de seer tu joglar, / esti poco servicio tú lo deña tomar, / e deña por Gonçalo al Criador rogar” (st.775bcd), and he is thus to be distinguished from your common-or-garden *cedrero* (*SD* st.701b) or *enojoso joglar* (*SD* st.759d), as associated with the distracting *jonglería* dismissed by Domingo early on in the *SD* (st.89c).

The self-identification of the author figure as *juglar* in the *SD* is in contrast to his as *versificador* in the *SO*.<sup>58</sup> In addition to the especial requirement for authoritative eloquence and the written word in the case of Oria, Berceo elected the respective roles

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<sup>58</sup> Berceo alludes to the tradition of employing epic themes and topics in hagiography in the *SO*, without taking this any further: “si nós cántar sopiéramos, grant materia tenemos; / mester nos será todo el seso que avemos” (st.19cd [23cd]).

according to a further criterion with regard to gender. Although, like Tarsiana in the *Apolonio*, Berceo is no ordinary *juglar* in the *SD*, to have self-identified as such in the *SO* would have been highly problematic. In the case of Domingo, an educated man validated by monastic and ecclesiastical authority, it is appropriate for Berceo to self-deprecatingly serve him as a minstrel of moral turpitude in relation to his hero. In that of Oria, an uncanonized female of potentially dubious experience according to the Church, such an association may have tainted her *fama* as a virgin martyr, not least due to the contemporary understanding of the *juglaresa* as a prostitute, as referred to in the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*.<sup>59</sup> Of the three *Vidas*, Berceo could only have appropriately characterized the author figure as *juglar* in the *SD*, whereby, rather than reflect inappropriately, his trade is one of humble accord with the words and deeds of the relatively worldly saint.

#### IV. Gender, Authorship, and Silence: The *Vida de Santa Oria*

While the product of the author figure as a self-proclaimed *versificador*, silence is paradoxically integral to the *SO*. Rather than that of the monastic community in prayer, as in the *SD*, the silence of the *SO* is of a young anchorite who spends eighteen years alone in a walled enclosure in the grounds of San Millán de la Cogolla. Oria's silence is to be associated with her gender. Although she was a popular local saint whose legend was almost certainly transmitted orally, her worldly life as a relatively uneducated woman would have likely remained virtually unknown to history were it not for the written record of Berceo. As *versificador*, the author figure provides the poetry—the

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<sup>59</sup> The Amazonian queen Talestris desires a child with Alexander, making clear to him: “non vin’ ganar averes, ca non soy joglaressa” (*Alexandre* st.1884b). In the *Apolonio*, Tarsiana is careful to explain her status, which has included her enslavement to a pimp, while lost to her parents and their kingdom: “non só juglaresa de las de buen mercado, / nin lo é por natura, mas fágolo sin grado” (st.490cd).

literal level of the *SO*, as structured by authorized, clerical *cuaderna vía*—that enshrines the elusive and unpredictable kernel of Oria’s lived experience.

Writing the *SO* in accordance with his putative contemporary Latin source, Berceo breaks the silence correlative to Oria’s experience and continues the tradition of the particular linguistic control accorded to medieval male interpreters of female holy experience.<sup>60</sup> The silent walls to be permeated are hermeneutic and historical, across two centuries to the eleventh and the last days of the Mozarabic rite. With each line of his particularly well-pruned, Latinate *cuaderna vía*, Berceo imposes a discipline on the vernacular as he might his flesh were he a monk or an anchorite. In the case of the *SO*, each division of *cuaderna vía* acts as a particularly sacred “grid” for the cognition of Berceo and his audience (Nichols 1991: 22-23). The tetradic “cell” of each stanza, constructed with building blocks of the literal, material syllable, can be likened principally to Oria’s *emparedación*, but also to the enclosure of her body, a vehicle for the spirit or *meollo* within as presented through the narration of her three visions. In the *SO*, *cuaderna vía* as a cell for contemplation offers access to Oria’s flesh and spirit as if she were present in the thirteenth century.

The *SO* was written for a mid-thirteenth-century Iberian society newly engaged with the apostolic ideal due to the rise of the mendicant orders, and around the end of the Great Reconquest. In the tradition of the desert fathers and mothers of the Church, medieval anchorites such as Oria offered a distinct holiness to that of the saints: as a living example rather than a deceased thaumaturge, and as a promulgator of popular faith rather than Church rule (Mulder-Bakker 2005: 182, 198). Walsh suggests that Berceo was “provoking a cult” with the *SO* (1988: 260) and, enshrining the experience

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<sup>60</sup> With regard to the Latin source of the *SO*, see footnotes 2 and 41 of this chapter.

of penance in isolation, the poem is in large part a fulfilment of the Mozarabic ideal of eremitism as articulated in the *SM*, and even in the *SD* during the short period in which the young Domingo lives as a hermit. Both the *SM* and the *SD* suggest that, ultimately, reading is no substitute for personal penitential experience. In the *SM*, as the protagonist's wanderings bring him to the auspicious territory of La Cogolla, the author figure interpolates in the narrative: "De la sue santa vida ¿quí vos podrié dezir?, / . . . non es qui la podiesse quál era perceber, / fuera qui la podiesse en sí mismo sufrir" (st.55acd). In the *SD*, the author figure offers an analogous message with regard to Domingo's brief eremitism: "Todos los sus lacerios, todas las tentaciones, / non lo sabrién decir los que leyen sermones, / sinon los que sufrieron tales tribulaciones" (st.74abc).

Oria's penance is markedly private and individualistic and thus appeals to the author figure as *versificador*. With striking intimacy, he announces his purpose in the prologue of the *SO*:<sup>61</sup>

En el nonbre del Padre que nos quiso criar  
 .....  
 de una sancta virgen quiero versificar.

Quiero en mi vegez, maguer só ya cansado,  
 de esta sancta virgen romançar su dictado;  
 que dios por el su ruego sea de mí pagado  
 e non quiera vengança tomar del mi peccado. (sts.1-2 [1-2])

As remarked by Alonso, while an allusion to the commonplace of authorial tiredness, Berceo refers quite personally to his circumstances in the *SO*: "es viejo, y ha trabajado mucho. Es de sí mismo de quien habla . . . el uso de los tópicos tradicionales convive perfectamente con la expresión individual del escritor". Asking, "¿por qué es un poeta encantador, por qué nos emociona, su voz, ahora, setecientos años más tarde?" (1982),

<sup>61</sup> The *SO* is the only of Berceo's works to have an explicit prologue. See Lappin (2008: 117).

Alonso's research points to the personal connection Berceo had with each of his saintly role models, and particularly Oria. The author figure's supposed suffering, as increased with the toil of writing, corresponds to that of his protagonist, who throughout the *SO* is in an oneiric state approaching closer and closer to death, and may be assumed to directly relate to the historical Berceo, himself in the last years of his life when he wrote the *SO*. As at the beginning of her second vision: "avié mucho velado Oria, era cansada. / Acostóse un poco flaca e muy lazada" (st.117bc [120bc]).

In marked differentiation from the broadly upbeat opening stanzas of the *SM* and *SD*, those of the *SO* express fear of divine judgement. In the *SO*, Berceo seeks solace and inspiration in the stationary life of gentle Oria, rather than in the pioneering wanderings of Millán, or the institutional triumphs of Domingo. Identifying with Oria, Berceo also aligns himself with Mary, the paradigm for redeemed womanhood, whose worship had a long history in the Mozarabic Church (Lappin 2002: 50): "ruegue a la Gloriosa, Madre Sancta María, / que sea nuestra guarda de noche e de día" (st.3cd). Indeed, Lappin argues that in the *SO*: "the 'guiding' hand" of Oria: "is not to be seen in her inspiration", but rather in "her praying to the Virgin Mary to protect the poet and his audience"; "her role is solely that of an intercessor" (2008: 144-45). While Oria is a far less active worldly instrument of God than Millán or Domingo, I would argue that she is also a role model in her absolute submission of the flesh in honour of the Virgin, whose prophetic gaze she emulates with her extraordinary visions. Oria's appeal to her hagiographer is thus twofold: her relatively domestic eremitism is a fitting model for one who is ageing and, as a broadly passive female, she is readily appropriated according to his increasingly urgent need for communion with the divine: "los días son

non grandes, anochezrá privado: / escribir en tiniebra es un mester pesado” (st.10cd [10cd]).<sup>62</sup>

Oria is a highly accessible as well as aspirational model for Berceo. In a brief summary of the anchoress’s life that follows the aforementioned introductory stanzas, Berceo attributes the qualities of a *vaso de oración*, receptacle of the divine, to Oria (st.8b [5b]): “fue esta sancta virgen vaso de oración / ca puso dios en ella conplida bendición / e vido en los çielos mucha grant visión” (st.8bcd [5bcd]). The phrase, drawn from a reading of the Roman Breviary and normally associated with Paul, *vas electionis*, a towering apostle and visionary of the New Testament (Dutton et al. 1992: 498n5), overlooks Oria’s gender in expression of her significance, local and universal, within the Catholic tradition. It also anticipates Oria’s comprehensive abhorrence of her female flesh over the course of her short life in emulation of the martyrs and the desert fathers, a practice that increases the extent to which the author figure can readily identify with her. Oria’s determination to self-mortify is her major virtue and the mark of her total devotion to Christ, as symbolized by her dressing in monks’ clothing: “desemparó el mundo Oria, toca negrada” (st.20a). She can be especially identified with the virgin martyr Eugenia, whose story was contained in the Mozarabic *Passionarum*. Eugenia also dressed as a monk, her feast day is that upon which Oria experiences her first vision, and Eugenia, like Oria in the epilogue to the *SO*, visits her mother after her death, with whom she is also buried (Lappin 2000: 32-35; Walsh 1988: 259).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> As Alonso argues: “esto, contra lo que imaginaba Curtius, no tiene absolutamente nada que ver con la tradición del bucolismo greco-latino . . . Pero tampoco tiene que ver propiamente con el tópico medieval *Terminat hora diem, terminat auctor opus*. Pues claro está que en el paisaje de Berceo no acaba el día; se trata de aprovechar, acelerando el trabajo, la luz, porque los días son cortos” (1982).

<sup>63</sup> The anchoress Pelagia also dressed as a monk (Lappin 2000: 34). Oria’s first vision is introduced as follows: “Terçera noche era después de Navidat, / de Sancta Eugenia era festividat. / Vido de visiones una infinidat” (st.25abc [28abc]). With regard to the epilogue of the *SO*, Walsh suggests it is an “apt and natural” additional section given the anchoress’s relationship with Amunna, as akin to that of Eugenia (and also Agnes) with her mother (1988: 259). Lappin, however, argues that the *SO* was written in two

Although a cleric of sophisticated education compared with the average monk, Berceo, like Oria, *serrana* (sts.51d, 59a, 62a [54d, 62a, 65a]), and Millán, *serrano* (*SM* st.205c), is a penitent of rustic roots and somewhat proud of Iberian territory. The mountains in the north were extremely important for Iberian peoples during the Moorish occupation of the Peninsula as a place of refuge, notably for King Pelayo: as *serranos* Millán and Oria are identified with this symbolic location. During Oria's first vision, after the young virgin is informed that the abbot of San Millán de la Cogolla who treacherously forced Domingo into exile, Gómez, did not reach heaven (st.62 [65]), a choir of virgins explain to her that devotion rather than skill or worldly success is what ultimately led to their exaltation by God: "Esto por nuestro mérito nós non lo ganariemos, / esto en que nós somos nós non lo mereçiemos, / . . . fizonos esta graçia porque bien lo quisiemos" (st.68abd [71abd]). Such sentiment, which cheers the extremely modest and humble Oria, is a marked contrast to that expressed in the *SM* and *SD*, and is further emphasized in the final vision of the *SO* when Oria visits her mother, Amunna: "'Madre', dixo la fija, 'estó en buen logar, / qual nunca por mi mérito non podría ganar. / . . . Yo non lo merezría de seer tan honrrada'" (st.199cd, 200c [201cd, 202c]).

Whereas in the *SO*, *mérito* is dismissed as unnecessary for God's approval, this is not the case in the *SM*. When the Bishop of Tarazona calls Millán to take up public service towards the end of Book I, Millán is given a warning:

Non es el to mérito por seer abscondido.  
 .....

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recensions and that the extension to the first that would include the epilogue may have been "forced" upon Berceo as a means to correct the poem's Mozarabic inclinations (2000: 43-44). I am not convinced by Lappin's argument, given that, as he himself reports, the Iberian church placed importance on the imitation of earlier holy models and the recounting of visionary experience to substantiate claims to sanctity (2002: 72).

el cabdal sin ganancia no lo debes render;  
 debes por tus christianos la tu alma poner,  
 si non, Dios grand rencura puede de ti aver. (sts.81d, 88bcd)

Citing the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25.14-30), the Bishop makes Millán understand that his public role, however limited, is essential to raise the profile of “Sancta Dei Ecclesia” (st.87b). Like the faithful of the parable, Millán must bring worldly profit to his Lord in accordance with his ability, and avoid the fearfulness of the ‘wicked and slothful servant’ who hides his single talent in the earth and is consequently cursed: ‘cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness’ (Matthew 25.26, 30).<sup>64</sup> Although the primary purpose of Millán’s life is contemplation, his *mérito* has a clear worldly role, as likely resonant for the young and ambitious Berceo. In the *SO*, the overwhelming implication is of a dark world in which the exercise of talent is ultimately futile, and of which an enclosed Oria laments: “los cielos son much’ altos, yo peccadriz mezquina” (st.104a [107a]).

As well as *vaso de oración*, Berceo refers to Oria as “vaso de caridat” (st.22a [25a]). The implication that Christian charity rather than knowledge is the true way to heaven supports the notion, as argued by Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, that the anchoress follows the path of: “*sapientia*, acquiring en route a knowledge of the Bible and theology that equals or surpasses that of professionals” (2005: 199). Such apparent dismissal of learning and worldly success in the *SO* is possibly linked to Berceo’s own professional difficulties later in life. As Lappin notes, the author’s career did not progress through the Church and he remained primarily a local priest (2008: 15). The devaluing of *mérito* in the *SO* is reinforced even by the voice of God, who responds to Oria’s lament in her first vision. Although Oria cannot see him, he comforts her: ““Oria,

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<sup>64</sup> “Serve male et piger”, “Et inutilem servum eicite in tenebras exteriores” (*Biblia Sacra* vol. 2).

del poco mérito non ayas baticor. / Con lo que as lazrado ganest' el mi amor'" (st.105bc [108bc]). Correspondingly, Oria's motivation to continue mortifying her flesh is renewed by what she envisions: "por amor de la alma, non perder tal victoria / non fazié a sus carnes nulla misericordia" (st.111cd [114cd]).

Oria takes refuge in her visions, as Berceo and his audience might. This prospect is enhanced by Berceo's style of narration in the *SO*, as of the three visions pertaining to Oria, the first two are narrated seamlessly as if they had occurred there and then. As well as enabling the breaching of the walls of Oria's enclosure via his analogous *cuaderna vía*, Berceo facilitates permeation of the anchoress' flesh for access to her mind and thus the divine realms. Each stanza, along with Oria in her enclosure, is a microcosm of the structure of the universe, containing all the significance of God beyond what is visible with the physical eye, and ultimately exalting local, individual experience.

Berceo's narration infers a virtually continuous state of contemplation on the part of the Oria, enabling especial and prolonged intimacy between her, the author figure, and her audience. This is particularly so in the case of Oria's second vision, in which Oria is raised to converse with Mary on a marriage bed. In line with Uría Maqua, I believe that this vision is: "centro y clave de la estructura del poema" (Dutton et al. 1992: 495), grounding Oria's journeys through heaven and, later, to Mont Oliveti with a relatively domestic encounter that further highlights Oria as a vessel of Christian charity.

At the beginning of the second vision, Oria's experience is described as superseding the communion available to the sinner through the Eucharist: "vínoli una graçia mejor nunca le vino, / más dulz' e más sabrosa era que pan nin vino" (st.116cd

[119cd]). Almost as soon as Oria lies down on her hard bed to take some rest, she receives a visitation: “Vido venir tres vírgines todas de una guisa; / todas venién vestidas de una blanca frisa” (st.118ab [121ab]). The virgins take Oria to Mary, who offers her proof of the verity of the vision in the form of prophecy of her imminent death. While she beseeches Mary, Oria notably associates her vision with the Marian prophecy of Isaiah 7,11, and 14 (st.133b [136b]; see Dutton et al. 1992: 532n136b), although it is clear from the beginning of the sequence that she deeply doubts her fitness for such visions.

When the virgins try to encourage Oria onto a richly adorned bed to take her to Mary, she protests: “non meresçen mis carnes de yazer tan viçiosas: / . . . Para muy grandes omnes son cosas tan preçiosas” (st.123bd [126bd]). Oria is mistaken, however: the bed is for her imminent nuptials with Christ, raised up as she is from the “tierra que es fría e dura” (st.121a [124a]), to be considered of like status to *grandes omnes* despite her avowed lack of merit. Consequently, for Oria, death will be a joyful emancipation and the vision concludes with a promise from Mary: “irás do tú codiçias, a la silla honrrada, / la que tiene Vox Mea para ti bien guardada” (st.136cd [139cd]). Oria’s silent enclosure will be transformed into a glorious *silla* and her toil and prayer subsumed by *caritas* and the Word.

The nuptial mysticism of the *SO*, to be associated with the Song of Songs, is noted by Catherine M. Mooney to be a feature particularly of male-authored hagiography about women (1999: 12), and may betray anxiety in the treatment of an ecstatic female subject. It may also, however, indicate desire on the part of the hagiographer for like subsuming under Christ and the elevation of his fallen authorial voice, fettered with the worldly word, to that of his own *Vox Mea*, a figure symbolic of

linguistic salvation. Interpretations of Vox Mea vary considerably in criticism on the *SO*: for Farcasiu, she is Wisdom, as associated with the sole mention of the phrase *vox mea* in the Vulgate at Proverbs 8.4 (1986: 327); for Uría Maqua, she could be the voice of God (Dutton et al. 1992: 518n82b); and, for Lappin, developing Farcasiu's findings, she is both the Church and Christ.<sup>65</sup> As Lappin argues, Christ is identified as the Old Testament figure of Wisdom in the New Testament, and patristic authors associate her with both Christ and the Church: "Vox Mea, then, represents the Church which is the Body of Christ, the voice which transmits the Word of God". As such she is also the bride of Christ and her palace correspondingly is depicted as a bridal chamber in the *SO* (2000: 36-39), in which Oria asserts: "a mí es prometida esta tamanna gloria, / luego en esti tálamo querría seer novia. / Non querría del oro tornar a la escoria" (st.97bcd [99bcd]).

The figure of Vox Mea and her role in preparing Oria for her spiritual marriage undoubtedly alludes to the union of the Church and Christ. However, I find it implausible that this is her primary signification, and believe that she has a rather more personal connection to Oria. Aligning my view most closely with that of Farcasiu, I argue that Vox Mea is first and foremost a representation of all that is beyond Oria's reach while she remains tied to the flesh and, consequently, has little to do with the work of the Church on earth. Rather than the Church as Christ's body, Vox Mea is a figuration of all Oria wishes to become via the course of *sapientia* (rather than *scientia*). Accordingly, it is Vox Mea who warns Oria in the strongest terms of the linguistic

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<sup>65</sup> Proverbs 8.1-4 reads as follows: 'Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man', "Numquid non sapientia clamitat et prudentia dat vocem suam / in summis excelsisque verticibus super viam in mediis semitis stans / iuxta portas civitatis in ipsis foribus loquitur dicens / o viri ad vos clamito et vox mea ad filios hominum".

corruption of original sin, should she cease to live as she has done so—silently, enclosed, and with deep humility: “Todo esti adobo a ti es comendado, / . . . si non te lo quitare conseio del Peccado, / el que fizo a Eva comer el mal bocado” (st.96acd [98acd]).

Guarding Oria’s chair, *heredat* (st.100d [102d]), in the heavens, Vox Mea is described as: “una duenna fermosa de edat mançebiella” (st.79a [82a]), and as *mançeba* (st.91a [93a]). She is of likeness to Oria and, moreover, the space afforded by her rich garments on which the names of important Christians are recorded, is largely devoted to those of Oria’s religious profession: “de los reclusos fue la mayor partida / que domaron sus carnes a la mayor medida” (st.92cd [94cd]). I believe that Vox Mea is a prefiguration of Oria after death and symbolizes the anchoress’s spirit guarding her place in heaven. Despite Oria’s status as a Mozarabic anchoress, Vox Mea is a sign that Oria will be accepted and exalted by God, even if she was not by his earthly representatives, and thus is also a promise to all lowly sinners that they too may be saved. In the case of Berceo, an ascetic as regards the fleshly word, Vox Mea is an indication that he may one day be transformed into such a being of pure signification, whose speech, beyond the confines of sensorial noise, communicates only Christian truth.

Weiss has noted that as Oria comes closer to death, her recorded visions become shorter: Berceo’s connection with her voice and story wanes (2006: 70-71). I would add that as she draws near to her union with Christ, the temporal union of her symbolic being as the kernel —*sententia* or *meollo*—of the letter of Berceo’s *cuaderna vía* is annulled, breaking the hermeneutic ties that have enabled the recuperation of the

meaning of her life from across the centuries.<sup>66</sup> Such ties are particularly precarious in the case of Oria as evident from her first vision, in which the anchoress, sent for by Christ, asks for acceptance into the spiritual realm of the virgins that guide her. Her request invalidates the word: “si me reçibiéssedes vós en vuestra memoria, / allá serié conplida toda la mi estoria” (st.35cd [38cd]). The breaking of such ties is further evidence of the breach between the luminous heavens and the dark, fallen world, in accordance with which Berceo recognizes his role as *versifficador* to be humble and merely preliminary in the quest for salvation. As his control of the kernel of his text wanes, Berceo summons reinforcement through the doubling of the author figure in the third vision of the *SO*.

In the sections that record the third vision and subsequent events, the first-person Bercean authorial figure merges with Oria’s supposed contemporary hagiographer, Munno. For Farcasiu, the appearance of Munno as a narrator as well as a major character in the *SO* is due to the necessity for authentication associated with hagiography (1986: 312), and I would add that this feature—unique within Berceo’s corpus—is a response to the particular necessity in the case of the *SO*.<sup>67</sup> As Lappin indicates, Munno appears in demonstration of the manner in which Oria’s vision is recorded, an unknown in the cases of the first and second. Notably, the third-person style is employed when Munno is in conversation with Oria, bringing a degree of objectivity to the portrayal of their discourse (2000: 43):

Dixieronli a ella quando yo fui entrado,  
 “Oria, abri los oios, oyrás buen mandado:  
 rescibe a don Munno, el tu amo honrrado”  
 .....

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<sup>66</sup> The patristic commonplace of *verba* and *sententia*—or *corteza* and *meollo* in the Castilian—refers to signifier and signified: the literal “covering” of the word in relation to its implied meaning, which in medieval exegesis can consist of several levels.

<sup>67</sup> As Farcasiu notes, Braulio and Grimaldus are absent from the *SM* and *SD* (1986: 312).

Luego que lo oyó este mandado Oria,  
 abrió ambos los oios entró en su memoria,  
 e dixo: “¡Ay mezquina! Estava en grant gloria”  
 .....  
 Ovo destas palabras Munno mucho plazer.  
 “Amiga”, dixo, “esto, fáznoslo entender.” (sts.150-53 [153-56])

Munno is the primary written link in a verbal chain that leads from Oria (via her mother Amunna), and, ultimately, to Berceo. Despite her close relationship with her daughter, such that Oria even visits her after her death to relieve her grief, Amunna, a visionary herself, requires Munno as erudite interpreter and translator in order to bring the strange insight with which Oria is blessed into the Christian community. Communing with the original authenticator of Oria’s experience and thus more deeply with Oria herself, Berceo-as-author-figure retains his grasp of the anchoress’s hermeneutic kernel just long enough to record her third vision.

Weiss argues that, at the point in the narrative in which Munno begins to interact with Oria: “written recollection (the domain of the cleric) takes precedence over oral/memory (at this point in the narrative, the domain of women)” (2006: 80-81). While the opposition he constructs between written/male and oral/female has considerable currency, it does not offer the full picture here. As Farcasiu suggests, the shifting first-to-third-person device as emphasized in its application to Munno and the Bercean author figure in the *SO*, is used in emulation of paradigms of inspired utterance in the Bible, as in Ezekiel 1.1-4 (1986: 311). I contend that it ultimately exalts the spoken over the written word. Note the shifting from the first to the third person in the biblical text: ‘as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were

opened, and I saw visions of God. . . The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi' (Ezekiel 1.1, 3).<sup>68</sup>

Farcasiu indicates that the Holy Spirit, as present in sacred scripture and hagiography, displaces the prophetic “I” who channels the Spirit’s presence to bring about a shift in persons. As such, I argue that the use of the third-person Munno in conversation with Oria would indicate the presence of God, as well as provide a measure of objectivity. Farcasiu suggests that the authority of the Latin *auctor* who displaces the Bercean “I”, Munno, “Yo, Munno” (st.163a [166a]), can be aligned with the Spirit, yet this is not quite correct: the Bercean “I” is replaced in order that two poetic “I”s give witness in the *SO* across the textual history of her life, such that the spirit can align with Oria. As well as increasing the authenticity of the poem, Munno’s interpolation emphasizes the conversation he shared with Oria in the moments before her death. He and Berceo write her story, yet such writing would not have been possible had shared speech not retained the anchoress long enough for her to impart some of her newfound insight.

Oria’s telling of her vision before she dies is urgent and further communicates the futility of worldly endeavour:

Dixo·l Munno a Oria, “¿Cobdiçias allá ir?”  
 Dixo·l a Munno Oria, “Yo sí, más que vivir.  
 E tú non perdriés nada de comigo venir.”  
 Dixo·le Munno, “¿Quisiésselo esso dios consintir!” (st.158 [161])

Ultimately, the spoken word is given precedence in the *SO*, a written work that seeks to give witness of Oria, a living vessel of divine grace, for the salvific needs of those immediately present. Berceo’s poetry is thus as Oria’s enclosure and her flesh: a mere carrier of the immanence of Christian truth. As Oria reaches death and her attachment to

<sup>68</sup> “Cum essem in medio captivorum iuxta fluvium Chobar / aperti sunt cæli et vidi visiones Dei. . . factum est verbum Domini ad Hiezeihel filium Buzi sacerdotem”.

her worldly “I” is broken such that she may be re-acquainted with Vox Mea, so the author figure of the *SO* seeks all the more keenly to dissolve his own fleshly chains and commune with the divine realm beyond time. Like Oria, however, he must wait his turn for death, and meanwhile continue with his penitent travail: “tengo otras priesas de fer mis cabazones. / Quiero alçarme desto fasta otras sazones”. As Berceo indicates, there are many more visions relating to Oria that he could record (st.202 [204]), but for now, at least, the rest is silence.

## V. Conclusion

Over the course of this chapter I have sought to demonstrate the value of reading Berceo’s three *Vidas* in relation to each other. The two *Vidas* pertaining to the male saints Millán and Domingo and the *Vida* of the anchoress Oria, dating from the early and latter stages of his career, respectively, indicate the saint’s Life to have been a genre significant to Berceo personally and professionally that gives witness to his lifelong connection with the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla. Though a secular cleric of relatively sophisticated education compared to the average monk, Berceo was ultimately a local poet and preacher. He sought to bring prosperity and stability, both spiritual and material, to the institutions of the area in which he grew up, was educated, and worked as an adult during Church reform and at the height of the Reconquest. His is an era that heralded the emergence of Castile and Castilian at the centre of Iberian cultural, political, and economic life, and, as such, his three vernacular *Vidas*, to greater and lesser extents representing the indigenous Iberian practices of the Mozarabic church, take on broader proto-national significance.

When the two earlier *Vidas* are read in conjunction with the *SO*, long-standing conceptions of their textual purpose and value are challenged. Millán, Domingo, and Oria offer their audience distinct models of sanctity and approaches to penance, as can be linked to three stages in Berceo's life as young hagiographer, ambitious priest, and ageing penitent. As such, the three *Vidas* also plot the spiritual development of the author, most notably through his portrayal of the visions of each of his saintly role models. With the *SM*, Berceo indicates his loyalty and commitment to the founding saint of his local monastery along with its Mozarabic legacy; with the *SD* he plots the Benedictine heritage of the monasteries of San Millán and Silos, as epitomized by the hero Domingo; and with the *SO* he re-embraces his local, indigenous church within the Roman tradition. The *SO* does not just describe visionary experience within a broader narrative: the text is almost entirely constituted by visions, indicating a far more contemplative stage in Berceo's life and career.

Far from mere instruments of propaganda or socio-historic documents, the *SM* and *SD* are of poetic and cultural interest in their own right. They also greatly illuminate the differences of narrative structure, style, tenor, and lexicon employed in the *SO*, not least with regard to the author figure present in all three of the *Vidas*. While very unobtrusive in the *SM*, he takes the form of a loquacious *juglar* in the *SD*, a penitent model who asserts his authoritative place within the hierarchy of intermediaries between mankind and Christian divinity. In the case of the *SO*, Berceo's author figure as sophisticated *versificador* simultaneously celebrates and denigrates the power of the written word and, as such, readily demonstrates the significance of Oria's being, a hermeneutic kernel that illuminates and transcends the constraints of the word and the flesh. Written towards the end of his life, the *SO* suggests a distancing from

ecclesiastical authority on the part of its author, exalting alternative religious worship rather than that associated with the canonized thaumaturge.

The *SO* is Berceo's ultimate statement of commitment to his local monastery and its primitive heritage. Honouring the Mozarabic ideals of eremitism, the imitation of earlier holy models, and the recounting of visionary experience to substantiate claims to sanctity, the poem also celebrates Oria's female body as a potent, Pauline vessel of divine charity and grace. Oria's story is interpreted and documented by the monk Munno and Berceo in turn, each with his own agenda, and thus the voice of the historical anchoress is somewhat muffled in the *SO*. Yet Berceo's choice to appropriate Oria's legend ultimately champions her spoken word as a witness of God's grace and, with the strikingly fluid narration of her visions, further demonstrates the word as a mere preliminary tool in the superior task of Christian contemplation of the divine.

Berceo's interpretation of Oria's life is also evidence of the importance of holy females both due to and in spite of Church reform, which began in the eleventh century in the last days of the Mozarabic rite and continued with the Lateran Council of 1215, the most notable of the thirteenth century including Juliana of Liège (1193-1258) and Clare of Assisi (1194-1253), abbess and founder of the Poor Clares. The portrayal of Oria, an emblem of individualistic piety appealing to the author figure as *versificador*, articulates contemporary tensions between Church institution and local and personal Christian worship. Oria may also be read as a less orthodox symbol of the nascent Castile, advocating the civil and territorial autonomy of *España* against the Moors and within Europe, along with Millán and Domingo.

Berceo's *Vidas* offer three varied approaches to Christian Iberian piety, which reject the philosophic and scientific developments of the schools and universities in

favour of humility and penance. While relatively intellectually conservative, they offer a unique perspective on the cultural life of thirteenth-century Castile, and insight into the life and mind of the region's first-named poet.

### 3. *Cortesía* and the Redemption of Sexual Sin in the *Libro de Apolonio* and the *Poema de Fernán González*

O happy race of mortals, if at all times  
 we might consider the eternal Good,  
 might fear the end which, though unseen, approaches  
 for nobleman and commoner alike.  
 We search out wealth in peril of our souls;  
 around our mortal eyes of deceitful glory  
 of action flies on wings of vanity.  
 In grasping at those honours now for sale,  
 we scour the sea's billows and, in hatred  
 of our own lives, unto the tumid surge  
 commit our persons and our goods.  
 Gautier de Châtillon, *Alexandreis* (X.519-29)<sup>1</sup>

#### I. Introduction

The *Libro de Apolonio* (*Apolonio*) and *Poema de Fernán González* (*PFG*) are, at first glance, an unlikely pairing. The first is the story of a pagan king turned pilgrim set in the eastern Mediterranean and based on a Latin romance, whereas the latter is a reworking of a lost vernacular epic that charts the battles of a decidedly local count.<sup>2</sup>

Both texts are more likely to be compared to the *Libro de Alexandre* (*Alexandre*): the *Apolonio* as a celebration of a prominent, erudite figure of the ancient world, the Greek King Apollonius of Tyre (second–third century AD), and the *PFG* as that of a warrior of unusual drive and charisma.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, both works are strongly influenced by

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<sup>1</sup> From Townsend (2007). “O felix mortale genus si semper haberet / Eternum pre mente bonum finemque timeret / Qui tam nobilibus media quam plebe creates / Inprouisus adest. animae discrimine magno / Dum queruntur opes, dum fallax gloria rerum / Mortales oculos uanis circumuolat alis, / Dum petimus profugos qui nunc uenduntur honores, / Verrimus equoreos fluctus uitamque perosi / Et caput et merces tumidis committimus undis” (X.433-41; Colker 1978).

<sup>2</sup> The Latin romance on which the *Apolonio* is largely based is the *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* (*HART*), extant in more than sixty manuscripts, the oldest of which date to the ninth and tenth centuries (Corbella 2007: 18-19). The *PFG* is broadly thought to derive from a lost *cantar* of a poetic cycle on the Counts of Castile.

<sup>3</sup> For an interesting, if limited, list of commonplaces and borrowings within the canonical thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía* in relation to the *Apolonio*, see Carroll Marden (1937: LIV-VII). With regard

hagiography and are dated to *c.*1250, closely following the period when Gonzalo de Berceo was most active as a writer (*c.*1221-*c.*1246 CE).<sup>4</sup> Andrew M. Beresford notes that: “in the work of the Riojan . . . [Spanish] monastic interest in literary production reached its zenith”, and highlights the importance of hagiography for Berceo, the composition of which marks the beginning and latter days of his career (2004: 80-82).

The controversial *Votos* section of Berceo’s *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* (*SM*) portrays Fernán González in battle assisted by the saints Emilian and James, as also narrated in the *PFG* (sts.410-12, 545). The *PFG* is well known to begin with a stanza barely adapted from the beginning of the *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* (*SD*), and is closely associated with San Pedro de Arlanza, a monastery in northern Iberia in relatively close proximity with those of San Millán and Santo Domingo de Silos.<sup>5</sup> Gene Dubois has argued that the worldview of the poet of the *PFG* is rooted at the monastery of Arlanza (2000), as also indicated by Itziar López Guil (2001: 17), and Isabel Uría Maqua notes the salient praise of the saints, martyrs, and virgins in the introductory section of the poem (2000: 331; see sts.9-13, 154-55). The martial *PFG* is a narrative consonant with what William J. Purkis terms: “the ‘new monasticism’: the imitation of Christ and the apostolic life” (2008: 2), a movement most commonly associated with Saint Francis, canonised in 1228, whose *joculatores Domini* have been linked by

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to the relationship of the *Alexandre* to the *PFG*, as López Guil describes: “parecen proceder del *Alexandre* gran parte de los versos que expresan los consejos y profecías de Pelayo a Fernán de los de Aristóteles a Alejandro (véase cuadernas 239, 241), el malestar de los caballeros expresado a su caudillo por medio de un representante (estr.329-52 del *LFG* y 2268-2295 del *Alexandre*) y la voz de pavón (estr.587 del *LFG* y el verso 1717a del *Alexandre*)” (2001: 38-39). See also Michael (1970: 286), Uría Maqua (2000: 319-22), and Weiss (2006: 169-70).

<sup>4</sup> As regards dating, the general critical consensus on the *Apolonio* is for *c.*1250 (Corbella 2007: 12-14). The case of the *PFG* is more controversial, although the argument is broadly limited to the latter half of the thirteenth century. I am inclined to the views of López Guil (2001: 27) and Coates (2009: 38n1), who both argue for *c.*1250.

<sup>5</sup> *PFG*: “En el nombre del Padre, que fizo toda cosa, / del que quiso nasçer de la Virgen preçiosa, / e del Spíritu Santo, que ygual d’ellos posa, / del conde de Castiella quiero fer una prosa” (st.1); *SD*: “En el nomne del Padre, que fiço toda cosa / e de don Ihesu Christo, fiço de la Gloriosa, / e del Spíritu Sancto, que equal dellos posa, / de un confessor sancto quiero fer una prosa” (st.1).

critics to Berceo's *SD* in which he repeatedly refers to himself as a *juglar* (see Musgrave 1976: 132, Dutton 1984: 188).

Ronald Surtz (1980), Marina Scordilis Brownlee (1983a), Patricia E. Grieve (1998), and Matthew V. Desing (2013), have all argued for the pervasive hagiographic character of the *Apolonio*, the sole extant copy of which is found in a unique manuscript that also contains the *Vida de Santa María Egipciaca* and the *Libre dels tres reys d'Orient*, a miracle poem.<sup>6</sup> Surtz and Grieve indicate that Apolonio's story resembles that of a saint's life (1980: 341; 1998: 150-51), and Scordilis Brownlee emphasizes that the work's: "multiple adventures—calculated only to provide suspenseful entertainment in the antique text—have acquired a transcendent meaning in the Spanish romance" (1983a: 173). As Alan Deyermond describes, although the poet of the *Apolonio*: "no dice que sus personajes son cristianos . . . les retrata . . . dentro del sistema cristiano de valores, y les juzga . . . según dichos valores" (1989: 161).<sup>7</sup> In the *Apolonio*, Tarsiana notably self-identifies as a martyr (st.382cd), and her escape from murder and prostitution to bring about the redemption of others while playing the role of an impoverished *juglaresa* identifies her as an apostolic figure who Desing notably associates with Oria of Berceo's *SO* (2013). The homage to hagiography in the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* is further indication of the significance of the genre for the *mester de clerecía*.

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<sup>6</sup> The sole extant manuscripts of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are held at the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain. The *Apolonio* is one of three texts that feature in K.III.4 (mid-fourteenth century), all of which are set in the Eastern Mediterranean, incorporate a lengthy stay in Egypt, and depict escaping protagonists who encounter many dangers on journeys which dramatize the struggle between virtue and vice (Deyermond 1989: 153). In b-IV-21 (c.1460-1480), the *PFG* is the last of five works. López Guil believes the highly irregular, messy, incomplete, and unadorned text, in which of 737 extant stanzas only 11 are regular, was: "copiado en una notaría, quizá en los ejercicios prácticos de algún aprendiz de notario o, incluso, en un examen de escritura e aquellos que todo estudiante del oficio notarial estaba obligado a realizar" (2001: 11-15).

<sup>7</sup> Desing has also emphasized the clerical rather than hagiographic aspects of the *Apolonio* as an allegory rigged by references to the seven sacraments that centres on Tarsiana's ministry (2012: 115-16).

Nevertheless, the narrative pivot of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* is two-fold. As well as utilizing the paradigms of pious didacticism, the works are the most novelesque of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía*, and the most readily entertaining in secular terms. Whereas the *Alexandre* and Berceo's *Vidas* are models of the institutional erudition of the schools and the cloisters, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are a departure into the poetics of the courts and the wider world. At the centre of the *Apolonio* is the story of a *juglaresa* and the *PFG* is broadly thought to have minstrelesque roots in a lost *Cantar de Fernán González*. Accordingly, while drawing on the discourse of what Weiss terms the “marvellous reality” of the *mester de clerecía* (2006: 14)—the martial, exotic, and intellectual marvels of the *Alexandre* and the miracles of Berceo's early *vidas*—the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* centre upon the ethical drama of the relatively quotidian: the relationships between men and women, romantic, familial, and dynastic, and commercial exchange.

Eschewing the lengthy digressions and narrative complexity of the *Alexandre* and the highly polished, enigmatic semantics of the *Vidas*, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* narrate the daring, faith, and failures of their protagonists in a more direct, readily accessible style. Deyermond and Scordilis Brownlee account for the second facet of the *Apolonio* by arguing for the influence of folkloric tradition and Greek romance, respectively.<sup>8</sup> Although this chapter builds on their work, I am not convinced by their findings and am closer in my thinking to Grieve and Julian Weiss. For Grieve, the *Apolonio*: “exhibits the tensions between the Christian ideals of asceticism and the call to public life” (1998: 150), and Weiss detects: “an underlying tension in the poem between travel for the spirit and travel for the pocket” (2006: 202). The tenor of both of

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<sup>8</sup> Corbella corroborates Scordilis Brownlee's view as regards the generic dominants of the *Apolonio*: “el texto participa tanto de la novela de aventuras, del romance, como del poema hagiográfico y didáctico” (2007: 38).

the latter statements applies equally to the *PFG*. The *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are generically indebted to pagan tradition and contain striking folk motifs, yet these worldly aspects are ultimately subsumed within Christian doctrine.<sup>9</sup> Both poems propose what I will argue is a courtly orthopraxis for living profitably in the world while securing Christian favour for the next, with which prostitutes, soldiers, hermits, fishermen, kings, queens, tricksters, pimps, pilgrims, and musicians alike, all find the proper use for their unique *mester*.

It is tempting to link the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* to the court of Alfonso X (r.1252-1284), the *Apolonio* as a complement to the King's culture and scholarship and the *PFG* supporting his ambitions for Castile, *rex est imperator in regno suo* (Post 1954: 202), with the devotional character of both poems flattering claims for the divine right of his rule. In the case of the *Apolonio*, a link to Alfonso may be suggested with regard to central themes of travel for moral and territorial gain, and musical performance. In the *Apolonio*, as the protagonist voyages in search of redemption, he acquires popularity and kingdoms, bringing peace and prosperity to all he governs. The poem begins with the line: "En el nombre de Dios y de Santa María" (st.1a; Corbella 2007), and at an important juncture at the court of Pentápolin, King Apolonio is depicted as an unusually skilled musician who wins over his audience with elevated song, thus sowing the seeds for the eventual redemption of himself, his family, and his

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<sup>9</sup> Deyermond observes that the story of incest so central to the *Apolonio* can be traced to the ancient customs of matriarchal society (1989), as I discuss in more detail in section II of this chapter. Folk motifs are equally important to the structure of the *PFG* as a clerical rewriting of epic. Using Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (1932-1936), Deyermond and Chaplin make the following associations: Fernán's humble upbringing by a *carbonero* with L113, "hero of unpromising occupation", who reverses his fortune; Fernán's stumbling across the hermitage at Arlanza while lost on a hunt with N771, "King lost on hunt has adventures" (note also that the Archpriest who tries to thwart Fernán and Sancha towards the end of the poem is out hunting at the time); and Fernán's deal with Sancho for the hawk and the horse with K134, the "deceptive bargain", as linked with K521, the hero's escape from prison by deception later on in the poem. As they underline in their concluding remarks: "the use of folk-motifs is as consistent with a learned as with a popular origin of any poem" (1972: 40-52).

people through marriage to Luciana. As Joseph F. O’Callaghan notes, Alfonso and his court, of no fixed abode, embraced regular travel in order to promote and stabilize his reign: to “show himself to his people” (1993: 37). Moreover, in his most acclaimed poetic output, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, broadly acknowledged to represent the culture of his court throughout, Alfonso commemorates his skill in musical and poetic composition with his portrayal of himself as a troubadour of divine mission. Alfonso-as-troubadour is an example to all who should, in hope of salvation, praise Mary through word and music (Snow 1990: 133-38). Apolonio’s faith and behaviour, like that of Alfonso, provides a model for kingship and governance that in extension applies to the citizens of the realm.<sup>10</sup>

As Alfonso describes in his *Siete Partidas* (c.1256), at court: “se allegan todos aquellos que han á honrar et guardar al rey et al regno . . . [el] logar do es la cura de todos los fechos de la tierra” (II.ix.27; 1807). A poet himself with a marked interest in historical writing, Alfonso is known for his knowledge of the liberal arts and promotion of Castilian over Latin throughout his written corpora.<sup>11</sup> As Weiss details, Alfonso’s court was a major Iberian centre for debate on the nature of poetry and its composition (2005: 497), in the words of O’Callaghan, “a mecca for poets everywhere” (1993: 144), and the King was very much concerned with the education of his subjects (Salvador Martínez 2010: 546). Notably, his *Estoria de España* (1252-1284) contains a version of the story of Fernán González and traces Spanish origins from Noah to the contemporary period. Sharing the universalizing, Castile-centric vision of the *Estoria de España*, the

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<sup>10</sup> Additionally, in the *Setenario*, an ethical manual for heirs to the crown in which Alfonso praises his father, Fernando III, for his talent in composition and singing, Alfonso’s name is considered linked to the divine continuum of Alpha and Omega by the first and last of the seven letters, “a” and “o” (See Gerli 2003a: 71; “Alfonso X, el Sabio, King of Castile and León, Poetry”, and O’Callaghan 1993: 135). The name “A-poloni-o” as that of a king likewise believed to be guided by the hand of God may refer to Alfonso.

<sup>11</sup> As well as the *Cantigas*, Alfonso wrote some profane poetry in Galician (O’Callaghan 1993: 145).

first section of the *PFG* narrates Castilian history from Visigothic rule to the time of Fernán.<sup>12</sup>

While they may have been written during the reign of Fernando III (Castile 1217-1252, León 1230-1252) or that of his son Alfonso, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are poems by writers who have not just: “el pie en el suelo y el ojo en el cielo” (Rico 1985: 7), as most applicable to the *Alexandre* and *Vidas* of Berceo, but, I argue, *la mano* juggling the fancies and appetites of a more worldly, less attentive audience as associated with the court.<sup>13</sup> The distinct reception of the two works may be indicated by their less rigorous application of the principles of *cuaderna vía* than is the case in the *Alexandre* and Berceo’s poetry, as noted by Isabel Paraíso (2000: 227-28). Most notably distinct in the case of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are the racy plotlines devoted to clever, resourceful, physically tough, worldly women, namely Tarsiana and Sancha, with Luciana, the former’s mother, also playing a significant role.

The import of family, namely the appropriate Christian bonds between men and women, is signalled in the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* for a healthy lineage and a prosperous kingdom. Although the poems take as a central focus the life and times of their eponymous heroes, Apolonio and Fernán, the narratives equally hinge on the character, decisions, and actions of the protagonists’ female counterparts. Tarsiana, who instigates the process of her father’s return to worldly glory after a long period of trials and decline, and Sancha, who saves her husband from imprisonment and death and reunites him with his people, are both instrumental in safeguarding dynastic ties. However, the

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<sup>12</sup> As Coates notes, the *Estoria de España*, *Crónica de 1344*, *Crónica de veinte reyes*, and *Crónica geral de Espanha de 1344*, all describe the life of Fernán (2008: 203n1). See also Uría Maqua (2000: 344). Early to mid-thirteenth-century Iberian historiography tends towards an universal depiction of history, as also in Lucas de Túy’s *Chronicon Mundi*, and Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada’s *De rebus Hispaniae*.

<sup>13</sup> Rico is glossing the *Planeta* (1218), written by the chancellor to Alfonso VIII, Diego García de Campos (1985: 6-7).

decisive actions of such women also give rise to titillating and challenging scenes of a relatively explicit sexual nature. The regulation and appropriate channelling of desire is a major theme of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* in relation to that of the hagiographic.

Indeed, the redemption of the sexual misdemeanour of a monarch past circumscribes the action of both narratives, redemption only possible, I will argue, due to adherence to the tenets of a shared *cortesía*.

## II. *Confonda Dios tal rey*: Sexual Sin as the Impetus of Both Poems

The *Apolonio* begins with the tale of King Antioco and his unusually beautiful daughter (st.4bcd), who he rapes following the death of his wife (sts.7cd, 12a). The tale is strongly resonant of the founding myth of the rape of Count Yllán's (Julian's) daughter by Rodrigo, last king of the Goths, which brought about the fall of Christian Spain to the Moors in 711, as featured in the *PFG* and to which I will return later. The narrative of Antioco's sin introduces the young, bookish Apolonio as an ill-fated suitor who solves the riddle designed by Antioco to conceal the incest and prevent his (unnamed) daughter from marrying. As Deyermond suggests, the topic of incest is a far more important aspect of the *Apolonio* than its sources. In the *Apolonio*, the relationship between Antioco and his daughter: "llega a ser subtexto de los episodios que siguen" (1989: 155), namely those involving Apolonio and his daughter Tarsiana, and Tarsiana and her adopter and husband Antinágora, who also has a daughter of his own (st.414), as described by Grieve (1998: 158).

For Deyermond, the central, folkloric theme of incest is matched by that of religious devotion as a reflection of the genetic and codicological contexts of the *Apolonio*, the former emphasizing sex between father and daughter within a matrilineal

society and the latter as regards the content of manuscript Esc. K.III.4 (1989: 153-54). Within primitive matriarchal societies, on the death of the leader, the husband would only be able to maintain power if he married the next in line, namely his own daughter. In my view, Deyermond overly emphasizes incest as a folkloric theme of the *Apolonio*, although he also gestures at the poem's wider, Christian significance: "lo que es constante en el *Libro de Apolonio* es el sistema cristiano de valores". He notes that the reunited, prosperous family at the end of the narrative: "parece ser un anticipo del reino de Dios", and that inappropriate sex is also a strong theme of the *Vida de Santa María Egipciaca* (1989: 153-62), as it is of many hagiographic writings including the lives of the prostitute saints Pelagia of Antioch and Mary Magdalene, and the tale "La abadesa preñada" of Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*. Adapting the parameter of hagiographic literature whereby the consummate sinner is redeemed through penance and contact with the divine, the *Apolonio* presents sexual misdemeanour in the courts of the kings and the wider world. In the words of Surtz, the *Apolonio* communicates, "an ideal of peculiarly lay piety . . . [emphasizing] that salvation is attainable even by those who choose not to renounce the *siglo*" (1980: 337).

Apolonio's relationship with Tarsiana echoes that of Antioco and his daughter, with both kings left to care for their gifted offspring after the death of their wives (or so it would seem for Apolonio until he learns otherwise). Geraldine Hazbun pointedly describes the interaction of Tarsiana with Apolonio as: "suggestive of inherited, uncontrollable fault" (2013: 111)—resonant of the concupiscence of original sin, as formulated by Augustine (Le Goff 1988: 97).<sup>14</sup> However, Tarsiana and Apolonio do not succumb to an incestuous relationship, even when the former visits her father as an

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<sup>14</sup> Geraldine Hazbun (née Coates). I refer to her work with the surname under which it was originally published.

unknown, morally dubious *juglaresa* after many years of separation and hardship towards the end of the tale. Inherited fault is not uncontrollable in the *Apolonio* for those of Christian faith, and I will argue that it is precisely the degree to which concupiscence can be regulated and channelled appropriately within society that motivates and defines the *Apolonio*, as is also the case for the *PFG*.

The *Apolonio* is fundamentally concerned with how one should best cope with worldly loss, principally that of one's nearest and dearest. In stanza two of the *Apolonio*, the story of Apolonio's life is neatly summarized and the audience informed that, despite all the trials he suffered, he remained very loyal to his wife and daughter. Apolonio's closest relationships are set up in contrasting, edifying example to that of Antioch and his daughter, and the detailed narration of the latter begins in the following stanza. Antioco is first presented as a figure worthy of empathy: he has lost his wife and, consequently: "si estonçe fuesse muerto nol' deuiera pesar" (st.3d). His psychological state leaves him highly vulnerable to the predations of evil, and the poet assures his audience: "bien ssé que tanto fue ell enemigo en el rey encarnado, / que non auia el poder de veyer el pecado" (st.13ab). Antioco is blindly drawn to his daughter in a manner reminiscent of Lot, who lay with his daughters after they plied him with wine (Genesis 19: 30-38) and, indeed, the poet of the *Apolonio* cites the widespread medieval legend of the hermit who commits adultery after drinking wine as a parallel story (st.55; Corbella 2007: 91n55). However, the grave nature of the sin for the community and Antioco's soul: "que es para en conçejo vergüença de deçir", "se quería por su amor perder" (sts.5d, 6d), and the persistence of the King in incest, marks his behaviour as an example of drastic corruption of salacious appeal and didactic impact.

Like her father Antioco, the young princess is initially portrayed sympathetically for the public, *conçejo*, of the poem as: “enuergonçada / que por tal que muriese non quería comer nada” (st.8b), yet she is all too quickly convinced by her servant to absolve herself of guilt, *culpa* (sts.8d, 9b), and maintain her sorry circumstances. She has lost her faith in God as a consequence of the violation: “bien ueo que fuy de Dios desamparada” (st.12c), and rather than asking for his help she turns to her servant, who twice iterates: “vos más non pudiestes” (st.9bd). The daughter should view herself as a victim of fortune, *uentura* (st.9c), and avoid bringing scandal on the family, the servant argues (sts.9-10). Antioco, meanwhile, composes his riddle, an *argumente çerrado* (st.15b), “por fincar sin vergüença, que non fuese reptado” (st.15a), a piece of intellectual trickery as circular in purpose as fortune itself.

On hearing the riddle, Apolonio, a man of great secular learning (st.22), quickly understands the nature of the King’s relationship with his daughter, “como si lo ouiese por su ojo prouado” (st.22d), a phrase reminiscent of that describing the *mappa mundi* in the *Alexandre*, in which the land is depicted by its maker: “como si la oviesse con sus pienes andada” (st.2576d). As Harriet Goldberg records in the context of Hispanic folklore and literature: “riddling, associated with the mysteries of the universe and with cosmological questions, involves a transfer of power (real or symbolic) from poser to responder” (1991: 59; as quoted in Desing 2012: 113). Apolonio’s knowledge gives him a penetrating understanding of the world that matches the worldliness of Antioco’s sin, by which he is nevertheless confounded, *confondido* (st.33d). He shuts himself away to verify his analysis with his books, “encérrase” (st.31a), and ultimately becomes frustrated that his desires have been thwarted: “cerró sus argumentos, dexóse de leyer, / en laçerio sin fruto non quiso contender” (st.32cd). Although his life is under threat

from Antioco, shame is a primary motivation for Apolonio's subsequent self-exile from Tyre: "non podia la vergüença durar, / mas quería yr perdersse o la uentura mudar" (st.34ab).

At this stage in the narrative, Apolonio's reactions to what befalls him troublingly emulate those of Antioco and his daughter. All three characters are overwhelmed by shame, *vergüença*, and seek to avoid the penance necessary in this Christian tale to overcome such a state, caring little whether they live or die. Like Antioco's daughter, Apolonio views himself as a victim of fortune. Nevertheless, rather than concealing the incest like the father and daughter and leaving himself vulnerable to further wrongdoing—"contesçe de todos los pecados: / los hunos con los otros son todos enlaçados" (st.54ab)—he speaks of it to the court at Antioch (sts.24, 25). Apolonio's incisive solution to the riddle evokes the fall of Adam and Eve: "Tú eres la rayz, tu fija el çimal; / tú pereces por ella, por pecado mortal, / ca la fija ereda la depda carnal" (st.25abc). Although Apolonio is not without fault, the poet clearly signals to the audience that, compared to Antioco, he is a man of virtue and understanding: "Confonda Dios tal rey, de tan mala mesura . . . / que querié matar al omne que dixera derechura" (st.51ac).

Over the course of the narrative, Apolonio faces many further challenges that strengthen his faith in God. The *Apolonio* is a development of the *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* (HART), which, as a tale of familial love rather than eros, is: "quite atypical of Greek romance" (Scordilis Brownlee 1983a: 161).<sup>15</sup> As Surtz notes, the *Apolonio* also closely resembles: "those narratives known to the Latin and vernacular Middle

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<sup>15</sup> As Carroll Marden indicates, the only reference to sources in the *Apolonio* is when introducing Teófilo, Tarsiana's would-be murderer: "su nombre fue Teófilo, so lo saber queredes, / catatlo en la estoria si a mí non creyedes" (st.372ab). The *estoria* alluded to is likely the HART, in which Teófilo is known as Theophilus (1937: LIII).

Ages which preserved most clearly the Greek romance pattern . . . the lives of such saints as Eustace and Clement”. Features of these hagiographic narratives include shipwrecks, kidnappings, and the separation of protagonists who are a family rather than a pair of unmarried lovers, the vicissitudes of which are ultimately attributed to Providence. The life of Eustace appeared as a hagiography and in secular version, both of which were known in medieval Iberia (Surtz 1980: 334-35; see also Walsh 1977).

In order to manage his despair at many losses over the course of the poem, which include his wife and daughter, all his belongings, his ships, crew, health, and confidence, Apolonio becomes a penitent pilgrim, *pelegrino* (st.151c) and, at one stage, lives as an ascetic in Egypt for thirteen years (sts.347-48).<sup>16</sup> The stay in Egypt is also a feature of the *HART* and Deyermond believes it to be a structural defect of both works only explicable: “tipológicamente, ya que Apolonio se refiere a menudo a sus pecados, y el exilio de los judíos en Egipto se suele interpretar como *figura* del pecado” (1989: 160). To my mind, the unusually devout behaviour of Apolonio not only reflects the concern of the poem with penitence, but specifically with penitence for sexual corruption between king and daughter, the central theme of the poem. Apolonio’s good treatment of Tarsiana is absolutely fundamental for his legitimacy as a ruler. He must demonstrate that he is in control of his desire, the *depda carnal* (st.25c) to which the human race is subject, and not a danger to his people, like Antioco, who is reported as having perished along with his daughter by “hun rayo del diablo” (st.248c) shortly after Apolonio’s marriage to Luciana.

At sea, believing Luciana to have passed away during childbirth, Apolonio returns to Tarsus, a city associated with Saint Paul, to entrust his daughter to her nurse,

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<sup>16</sup> Apolonio is referred to as a pilgrim—*peregrino, romero, palmero*—on ten occasions in the poem. See Scordilis Brownlee (1983a: 169n17).

Licorides, and two guardians, Dionisa and Estrangilo, before travelling to Egypt. There he lives, not cutting his hair or nails, until he can provide a suitable marriage for Tarsiana (st.346), as told to Tarsiana by her nurse on her deathbed:

Díxol' cómo su padre fizo tal sacramento,  
 fasta qu'él a la fija diese buen casamiento,  
 que todo su linage ouiese pagamiento,  
 que non se çerçenase por null falagamiento. (st.362)

Rather than stay with his daughter and risk her growing up in circumstances similar to those that he discovered in Antioch, Apolonio entrusts her to a married couple and her nurse with careful instructions for her education.

As well as being unusually beautiful (st.353c), like Antioco's daughter (st.4bcd), Tarsiana is raised to be as well-educated as her father: "sabia todas las artes, era maestra complida" (st.352b). She is thus far better equipped than Antioco's daughter to face the trials of worldly existence and Tarsiana, like her father, will take responsibility for *depda carnal* (st.25c) leading up to the major denouement of the poem. While Tarsiana blossoms in relative security, Apolonio must face his sins and try to overcome them through penance, stating shortly before he leaves for Egypt: "a Dios non podemos reptar, / lo que él a puesto, todo deue pasar, / lo que él dar quisiere, todo es de durar" (st.345bcd). In his grief, he has forgotten how to conduct himself and must begin anew from within: "los sus dichos corteses auíyalos ya olvidados" (st.330c). The unusually devout thinking and behaviour of this supposedly pagan king, along with the recuperation of his wife as a reward towards the end of the tale, distinguishes him sharply from his precedent, Antioco, and consolidates his right to an expanded reign.

The story of Antioco's sin would surely have resonated at the courts of Ferdinand III or Alfonso X as resembling the legend of Rodrigo and the violation of the daughter of his tribute collector, Yllán. Rodrigo's error is described in detail in the

*Estoria de España* and is a key event within the teleology of the *PFG*.<sup>17</sup> The rape is described in abstract terms of *culpa* in the *PFG* (st.35d), alluding to the concupiscent *felix culpa* of the fall of mankind as an analogous transgression (*culpa* [sts.8d, 9b] and *depda carnal* [st.25c] in the *Apolonio*). Following the opening prayer of the poem (sts.1-2), stanzas three to five briefly summarize the state of Spanish society from the Moorish invasion to the rule of Fernán González, in anticipation of the detailed history to follow. Stanza six begins with Rodrigo (b), juxtaposing his reign with that of Fernán (st.5d) as the beginning and end of a temporal sequence of great Christian and Castilian significance. This sequence is recognized explicitly by the young Fernán, just before he leaves home to begin fulfilling his life's purpose: "Perdieron castellanos sonbra e grand abrygo / la ora que murió mi ermano Rodrygo, / . . . sy de aquí non salgo, nunca valdré un fygo" (st.182abd; López Guil 2001). The long historical introduction, which spans nearly a third of the poem, would likely have been extremely entertaining for the court of thirteenth-century, emergent *España*.

The downfall of Spanish Christendom, which "fue de los profetas . . . profetizado" (st.77d; see also st.80), is a punishment shared by king and people alike. Conscious of a generalized state of sin amongst the population, the Spanish Christians rail: "diéranos Dios España, guardar non la sopimos; / sy en grand coyta somos, nós vyen lo meresçimos" (sts.98bc). The dynasty of the pious Visigoths has been broken, those who: "fueron de Sancty Spyritus . . . espyrados" (st.20a), and thus: "tod'el vyen de los godos por end' es confondido" (st.100d).

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<sup>17</sup> In the *Estoria de España*, the girl, "muy fremosa", was taken by the King: "por fuerça, et yogol con ella; e ante desto fuera ya fablado que auie el de casar con ella, mas non casara aun. Algunos dizen que fue la muger et que ge la forço; mas pero destas dos qualquier que fuesse, desto se leuanto destroymiento de Espanna et de la Gallia Gothica" (554). Prefacing the rape in the text is a violation of symbolic architecture: a sacred palace in Toledo kept locked by many generations of kings that Rodrigo perceives to contain "algun grand auer". After breaching the palace walls he reads of the promise of invasion written in "letras ladinias" (Latin or vernacular script) and illustrated with images of: "omnes de caras et de parescer . . . como agora andan los alaraues" (553).

The death of Christ to redeem original sin is broadly forgotten under Muslim rule due to the preaching of Mafomat (st.8), the aim of Yllán who, when plotting the invasion with Vusarván: “dixo cómmo podrya cristianos confonder” (st.43c). Instead of turning to God in distress at his daughter’s mistreatment, Yllán channels his rage into treachery and enables the devil, *pecado* (st.101a), to regain footing in holy Spanish *tierra*. His will to deliberately obfuscate Christian truth can be likened to Antioco’s desire to confound the court with his riddle and silence Apolonio, “que dixera derechura” (st.51c), and Antioco and Yllán’s persuasion of others in bad faith alludes to the cunning words of the serpent in Eden. Due to their poor judgement, *mal sentydo*, the Spanish Christians fall into a state of *grand yerro* (st.98d), in which they are luridly reported to be cooked and fed in significant numbers to the marauding invader (sts.91, 93).

Despite the exceptional loyalty of the Castilians to Christ (st.103b), who, within the language of trade and economy of the poem beg, “¡Val’nos, Señor, . . . ond’ seamos cobrantes!” (st.103d), they are required to pay a tribute of one hundred virgins to *Almozor* (st.104), as echoed in the *SM*.<sup>18</sup> The importance of the holy virgins to Christianity is detailed early on in the poem (st.11), along with that of the martyrs, a *santa mesnada* (sts.10c, 11d). Rodrigo’s transgression has exposed a morally languishing population, most pointedly to the mandatory rape of young women, a crime that returns to threaten the destiny of Castile and Spain towards the end of the *PFG* when a corrupt Archpriest tries to have his way with the future Queen Sancha (sts.634-46). The sexual transgression of Rodrigo, like that of Antioco in the *Apolonio*, circumscribes the narrative of the *PFG* and conditions the redemption of Spain under

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<sup>18</sup> In the *SM*, Abd-ur-rahman III (891-961): “mandó a los christianos el qe mal siglo prenda, / qe li diessen cadaño tres vent’ dueñas en renda” (st.370ab; see sts.369-74).

Fernán González. In a rousing speech to his men before battle towards the end of the narrative, Fernán depicts *España* as subject to continuous violation by the infidel:

“heredan nuestra tierra e tyénenla forçada” (st.435b).

Fernán is a Christ-like figure, as detailed by Geraldine Coates (2009: 52-53, 62-63), for whom the introductory section is a tripartite “sweep of redemptive history” and the poem more broadly centres upon justification for “the regeneration of the sinner”.<sup>19</sup> She associates the introduction with three stages of the hero’s life through ignorance and endurance to sonship of God, *ante legem*, *sub lege*, and *sub gratia*, according to Christian teaching, namely that of Paul in his letters to the Romans, and suggests that this ideological coherence extended to the lost conclusion with the death of Fernán, Castilian hegemony, and the celebration of the recuperated worldly and spiritual territory of the Visigoths (2008: 206-15).<sup>20</sup>

Coates’s findings intersect closely with those of Taran Johnston, whose focus is the way in which hagiographic imagery links the historical, martial, and novelesque material of the *PFG*, the latter two categories constituting what she terms the: “action of the work” (2008: 410). Both Coates and Johnston point to the profoundly Christian, teleological schema of the *PFG*, a narrated pilgrimage, *romería* (st.231d), closely associated with the *peregrinatio vitae*. The biblical concept of *peregrinatio vitae* casts post-lapsarian man as a wandering exile until he returns to God, as in Luke 9.58, and also resonates strongly in the *Apolonio*, as noted by Scordilis Brownlee (1983a: 169-

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<sup>19</sup> Notably, Fernán echoes Christ on the cross when he begins to doubt he will triumph over Almoçor: “yo non te falesciendo, ¿por qué me falesçiste?” (st.540d; Coates 2009: 62-63; see Matthew 27.46, Mark 15.34).

<sup>20</sup> Uría Maqua notes as regards the Reconquest: “en la realidad histórica, fue iniciada por los reyes caudillos de Asturias y continuada por los reyes de León, en el *PFG* se atribuye a los castellanos, y a ellos se otorga la gloria de ser los que llevan la iniciativa en las batallas contra el pueblo infiel” (2000: 335).

73).<sup>21</sup> Johnston duly notes the repeated use of the lexicon *via*, ‘pathway’, of San Millán to Fernán in a vision at the hermitage (sts.408-12) on the eve of battle (2008: 401, 397), as demonstrating the commonplace associations between warfare, pilgrimage, and monasticism of the period (Purkis 2008: 2). She also points out that the hunting episode which leads Fernán to the hermitage of San Pedro de Arlanza resembles one in the life of Saint Eustace, which Surtz likens to the *Apolonio* (1980: 334-35), and that as a religious exile, as well as a warrior, the protagonist: “fulfils the claims of the introductory material” (2008: 394-95, 410). I would add that the hunt as a courtly pursuit seamlessly leads the hero into contact with the divine, a representative example of the role of worldly activity, both celebrated and elevated, in the *PFG*.

Both Fernán and Apolonio undertake penitent journeys, physically and psychologically, to transform the past for themselves and their people. Over the course of these journeys, the heroes face all manner of challenges, and both poems are striking within the corpus of the *mester de clerecía* for the emphasis they place on worldly competence and even cunning as the foundation for worldly and spiritual wealth. Central to the ethics of both poems is the proper use of money to promote Church, State, and individual piety for the life to come, a topic that closely intersects with the central theme of sexual sin.

In what Weiss terms the “mercantile morality” of the *Apolonio*, during his early travels to Tarsus, Apolonio tries to purchase friendship and safety from the citizens he meets. Through their rejection of such moral prostitution, as in the case of Elánico, who advises: “quien bondat da por preçio malamiente se denuesta” (st.76d), Apolonio learns

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<sup>21</sup> ‘And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head’, “et ait illi Iesus / vulpes foveas habent et volucres cæli nidos / Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet” (Luke 9.58; *The Bible; Biblia Sacra* vol. 2). On pilgrimage in the *Apolonio*, see also Deyermond (1989: 153-64).

to transform expedient commerce into an exchange for the benefit of all, materially and morally (2006: 205). He sells another resident, Estrángilo, wheat, “a compra, pero de buen mercado” (st.87a), and with the profits builds the town a wall, becoming a patron much loved by the people (sts.86-87, 95). Later on in the tale, Apolonio’s daughter, Tarsiana, enslaved as a prostitute in her early adult life, must use her education and cunning, “como Dios lo quiso, ella fue bien artera” (st.406c), to win her freedom, not only for the benefit of her soul, but also for the future of her father and his kingdom. The ethics of trade are closely connected to those of desire in the *Apolonio*, and when faced with a man who has a commercial right to rape her, Tarsiana resorts to unusual tactics such as working as a minstrel to protect what really counts i.e. her virginity, as I will return to later.

In the *PFG*, while Fernán piously donates any booty secured in battle to the Arlantine hermitage, he demonstrates himself to be paradoxically adept at usury yet in control of his passions when recovering Castile from the King of León. With a gesture that bodes well for his scheme, Fernán manages to kiss Sancho’s hand at court in accordance with custom: “muy fiera cosa” (st.560b). On first impression, the affair of the horse and the hawk seems a rather incidental way to resolve the dispute over Castilian rule, yet it is a key episode that, along with the prevented rape of Sancha, culminates with the redemption of Spain at the end of the extant text. The motif of the animals, “un mudado açor” and “un cavallo que fuera d’Almançor” (st.564ac), can be traced in both romance and Arabic sources, and is closely associated with unbridled desire, notably that of Rodrigo, last King of the Goths, as reported by L.P. Harvey and David Hook.

Harvey and Hook find the earliest attested version of the horse and hawk motif in the *Ta'rikh iftitah al-Andalus* by the historian Ibn al-Qutiyya al-Qurtubi (d. Córdoba 977), which was written at around the time when the historical Fernán González lived (d. 970), and narrates the fall of Spain to the Moors. Ibn al-Qutiyya describes Rodrigo as coveting the finest horses and falcons, as were brought to him by a merchant from Africa, Yulyan (Yllán in the *PFG*). While abroad, Yulyan leaves his daughter in the King's care, and when he finds out that he has violated her, he uses the excuse of returning to Africa to find some exquisite animals in order to rally Muslim forces in revenge.<sup>22</sup> Covetousness and immoderate sexual desire are closely associated sins committed by Rodrigo. A later example of the motif occurs in the medieval Castilian didactic romance, *Libro del cauallero Zifar* (c.1300; *Zifar*), in which Roboán's desire for a hunting dog, a hawk, and a horse proves his undoing (1982: 841-45).

In the *PFG*, King Sancho's intense desire to possess Fernán's hunting animals is a weakness exploited by the hero that results in his loss of Castile, the heartland of Spain, just as Rodrigo's lack of measure lost *España*. Sancho's "mui gran sabor" for the horse and hawk is twice iterated (st.564d, 565a), and, in striking rejection of Fernán's offer of them as a gift (st.565), he insists upon buying them (sts.565-66). He thus engages with Fernán in an exorbitant *mercado* (sts.567-69), "assaz avié el rey buen cavallo conprado / . . . con el aver de França nunca serié pagado" (st.569ac), that brings to mind the trade to which Yulyan is dedicated in Ibn al-Qutiyya al-Qurtubi. Central to the success of the deal is Fernán's capacity to participate in the dubious exchange without becoming corrupt: his actions have a societal and higher Christian purpose in contrast to those of Sancho, a man confounded by base desire. The concupiscent land in

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<sup>22</sup> Harvey and Hook note that good horses and hawks are reported to have been of enormous value in medieval Spain (1982: 840). In Europe more generally, huge amounts were paid for the Arabian horse, considered noblest of all because of its speed (Bumke 1991: 178).

which Fernán comes to prominence, where virgins are offered as tribute and the remaining autochthonous monarchs are his enemies, requires a flexible approach to Christian morality

Harvey and Hook posit that the hawk and the horse are of superficial significance in the *PFG* as: “prestige objects and status symbols” (1982: 846). I more than agree with Weiss that this is an overly-cautious conclusion (2006: 173): as symbols of immoderate desire that lead to the loss of a kingdom metonymic of the old territory of the Visigoths, they refer back to Rodrigo’s *culpa* as described in the historical introduction. As such, the hawk and horse episode is a reversal of the events of 711 that brings about the redemption of Spain, although this is not without its complications for Fernán. In order to ensure the purgation of past error, Fernán must appropriately navigate the roles of both intemperate ruler (Rodrigo) and treacherous outsider (Yllán).

Flexibility in Christian morality extends to the battlefield. Prior to the recuperation of Castile, the Spanish Christians describe themselves as lambs preyed on by the wolfish Muslim (st.99d), the wolf traditionally a symbol of the devil in contrast to Christ the lamb, as associated with sexual sin in the *Apolonio* (st.406b), and later in the *LBA* (see Giles 2009: 62). Yet when fighting the enemy, Fernán encourages his troops to identify with the wolf’s ferocity to aid them against the odds: “matarién treinta lobos a tryenta mill ovejas” (st.223b). Furthermore, the Count’s nephews are known as “los lovos carniçeros” (st.447d) and the poet describes Fernán as: “faziendo lo que faze el lovo en las grueys” (st.495b). Fernán is also known as “vueytre carniçero” (st.174d), and, notably, “más bravo que serpyente” (st.512a), in a further allusion to original sin.

Fernán is wolfish and penitent, usurious and God’s vassal (st.389-91): a challenging, fallible hero. His legitimacy is questioned by Dubois, who perceives the

“demythification of the count” in the *PFG* (2000: 126). Coates, however, links the imagery of Fernán as a vulture and a wolf with his courtly hunting of the boar when he stumbles across San Pedro de Arlanza, noting that: “hunting is a common emblem of the trickster’s talents” and “cunning, knavery, and trickery are possible facets of heroism” (2009: 61-62). Fernán’s morally troubling behaviour is essential for his full participation in worldly, societal affairs, and I concur with Coates that he contributes to: “deception and uncertainty in the hope of establishing a more worthy order” (2009: 63), an order ultimately founded in *caritas* rather than *cupiditas*. Like Apolonio, Fernán is on a transformative journey subject to the vicissitudes of fortune, over the course of which, in accordance with his destiny as King, he intends to prosper both materially and spiritually for the sake of secular society as well as his future in the next life.

### III. *Cortesía*

The ethics of courtliness, *cortesía*, is a topic of keen interest in the *Apolonio* and one resonant in the *PFG*. According to the Martín Alonso dictionary, the thirteenth-century term circumscribed: notable happenings, such as miracles, as in the *SD*, “Fiço otra vegada una grand cortesía” (st.376a); a mode of behaviour, as in the *Apolonio*, “del buen rey Apolonio y de su cortesía” (st.1d); and a gift or service to others, as in the *MNS*, “Todo omne del mundo fará grand cortesía” (st.115a). *Cortesía* as a social act: “con que se manifiesta la atención, respeto o afecto que tiene una persona a otra”, is a concept held from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, from works as diverse as Berceo’s *Sacrificio de la misa* to Iñigo de Mendoza’s *Vita Christi* (1986: 798; “Cortesía”). Alonso refers to behaviour only with regard to the *Apolonio*, suggesting perhaps the machinations of a royal court. However, it is clear from the semantic field

he identifies that *cortesía* has strong associations with devotional writing in thirteenth-century Iberia. Although the term *cortesía* is not used in the *PFG*, the clerical poet was clearly very familiar with hagiography such as the *SD* and steeped in the mores of his time.

As José Antonio Maravall describes, *cortesía* embodies a tension between ethical and social concerns, and is rooted in clerical culture: “de cortés y cortesía no hablan sólo los poetas, ni son éstos los que han creado tales conceptos, sino los moralistas, lo que denuncia ya el fondo doctrinal que en aquéllos se da”. Maravall traces the semantic links between *clerecía* and *cortesía*, associated throughout the Middle Ages (1983: 257-67; see also Weiss 2006: 198), as evident in the third miracle of the *MNS*, “El clérigo y la flor”. Here, *cortesía* is a synonym of *mester* (*de clerecía*):

Todo omne del mundo fará grand cortesía  
qui fiziere servicio a la Virgo María;  
mientras que fuere vivo, verá plazentería,  
e salvará el alma al postremero día. (st.115)

Joachim Bumke, broadly concerned with twelfth- and thirteenth-century French and German courtly culture, corroborates Maravall’s findings, noting that the Latin *curalitas*, “courtliness”, was used to describe the social interaction of bishops and court clerics from the end of the eleventh century (1991: 322). Both Maravall and Hazbun define *cortesía* in relation to the *Zifar* (1983: 261-62; 2013: 104), which provides a markedly doctrinal definition. In the section, “De commo el rey de Menton demonstra a sus fijos que sienpre vsasen del bien e que sienpre fuesen muy corteses”, the *Zifar* provides a distillation of what is assumed to be familiar in the *Apolonio*, and resonates in the *PFG*.

The three verbs in the title to the relevant section, *demonstraua*, *vsasen*, *fuesen*, summarize *cortesía* as a concept that teaches both how to *act* outwardly and how to *be*

within oneself. *Cortesía* is an orthopraxis, a process and a product, for a life of both worldly and spiritual wealth: “el auer es vida de la cortesía e de la linpieça, vsando bien del, e la castidat es vida del alma”. The principles of *cortesía* in the *Zifar* apply in such striking detail to the example of King Apolonio (in contrast to that of Antioco), that it is tempting to think that they were modelled upon him:

Suma de cortesía es que el ome aya verguença a Dios e a los omes e a sy mesmo; ca el cortes teme a Dios, e el cortes non quiere fazer en su poridat lo que non faría en consejo. Cortesía es que non faga ome todas las cosas de que ha sabor. Cortesía es que se trabaje ome en buscar bien a los omes, quanto podiere. . .el vagar es vida de la paçiençia. Cortesía es sofrir ome su despecho e non mouerse a fazer yerro por ello; e por eso dizen que non ha bien syn lazerio. (González 1983: 288)

*Cortesía* emphasizes humility, the opposite of the *soberbia* that characterizes Alexander in the *Alexandre*, the restraint of desire, forbearance, and working for the good of others. *Cortesía* also enshrines bringing one’s public and private selves into harmony for the understanding of one’s purpose in secular society in relation to the life to come.<sup>23</sup> Apolonio and Fernán must demonstrate all of these qualities in order to redeem their respective kingdoms. As Alfonso X states in his *Siete Partidas*: “las bondades et los otros buenos enseñamientos, á que llaman cortesía, siempre los fallaron et los precieron en las cortes” (II.ix.27).

The concept is one with which Apolonio struggles at first. A breakthrough in his thinking occurs when he is shipwrecked on Pentápolin and loses his crew and all his belongings, as willed by God (sts.111-14). Arriving in the town, his desperate state is emphasized with reference to his clothing. The King, formerly draped in rich garments, is now: “mesquino de vestir y calçar” (st.112c), “menguado de vestido” (st.114b), “mal

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<sup>23</sup> Maravall links the definition of *cortesía* in the *Zifar* with one very similar in the thirteenth-century *Libro de cien capítulos*, in which: “*cortesía* reclama una disposición desde dentro, que emana de la misma ‘puridad’ del hombre, de la zona interior de su secreta conciencia, y se proyecta en su conducta social, poniendo ambos planos de conformidad” (1983: 261-62).

adobado” (st.145a), “mal vestido” (st.152c); “non tenié vestido ni adobo de prestar” (st.154b). This highlighting of Apolonio’s altered appearance is no coincidence. He is laid bare physically and psychologically by the storm: “non fue bien por dos días en su recuerdo tornado” (st.113c), a treacherous form of maritime baptism that enables his renewal, both private and public, as a hero.<sup>24</sup>

Apolonio’s reaction to what has befallen him is perhaps surprising. Rather than ruining his fortune, as he was wont on leaving Tyre, he begs help from a passing fisherman and excoriates himself telling his story (sts.123-30).<sup>25</sup> He then concludes: “todo lo he perdido por mis malos pecados” (st.130d), a penitent reflection, as indicated by Scordilis Brownlee. Scordilis Brownlee believes Apolonio’s penitence to be “totally incongruous” with the events of the narrative, and only attributable: “to the recognition on the part of Apolonio of man’s post-lapsarian state of sinfulness”, a comment that implies a clash of what she formulates as the generic dominants of the *Apolonio*, hagiography and romance. She argues that Apolonio’s departure from Tyre: “was motivated by one (or more) of three entirely unreproachable impulses”. While fear of being slaughtered by Antioco’s men, revulsion at the incest he exposed, and frustration with his narrow, bookish experience of life, are indeed good reasons for him to have fled (1983a: 165), I suggest that they are also indications of weakness in a Christian hero. The martyrs, hermits, and *milites Christi* (those wielding their arms in service to

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<sup>24</sup> In the *Apolonio*, the sea is emblematic of the ravages of fortune, including those of commerce (Weiss 2006: 208), and of the shifting nature of sin: “tanto pudo el malo boluer y reboluer” (st.6b). As Apolonio himself laments when he is shipwrecked on Pentápolin: “nunqua deuia omne en las mares fiar, / traen lealtat poca, seben mal solazar, / saben al reçebir buena cara mostrar, / dan con omne ayna dentro en mal logar” (st.120). Desing details the importance of the sacrament of baptism in the *Apolonio* and for him the sea symbolizes the Church (2012: 116). In both the *Apolonio* and the *PFG*, the sea and wind are cited as instruments of the Christian God (sts.656a, 230c, respectively).

<sup>25</sup> As Desing notes, citing García Blanco, this scene in the *Apolonio* is more than twice as long as the equivalent passage in the *HART* (2012: 99).

the Church), embraced death, and the saints were not frightened of sin or frustrated with an often closely limited worldly existence. Apolonio is a worldly character with whom his audience can relate, yet he also carries the moral responsibility of a saint.

The trials Apolonio endures and the humble attitude he is brought to assume pertain to him very personally. As detailed in the previous section, the primary motivation of the poem is that Apolonio demonstrate control over inherited concupiscence. He is certainly a post-lapsarian penitent working for the salvation of mankind, yet his personal assumption of this responsibility, through which he must distinguish himself from Antioco, enables a process of what in today's language is termed "self-realization", as necessary for his just and prosperous future leadership of a number of territories in the Eastern Mediterranean. Stripped of material comforts, Apolonio, *pelegrino* (st.151c), learns the truth of worldly existence according to Christian doctrine. As the fisherman, a purveyor of primary Christian principles, consoles: "e toller y en dar es todo su sentido, / vestir al despoiado y despoiar al vestido" (st.134cd). The fisherman also indicates that, as a man of education, Apolonio will acquire a nuanced level of understanding from his trials such that he will eventually be able to instruct others on the complexities of life:

Nunqua sabrién los omnes qué eran auenturas,  
si no perdiessen pérdidas ho muchas majaduras;  
quando an passado por muelles y por duras,  
después sse tornan maestros y cren las escripturas.<sup>26</sup> (st.136)

The fisherman then symbolically shares his meagre clothing, which he rips in half from his own back, little food (sts.138-39), and shelter with Apolonio, and on the following morning directs him on his way, *via* (st.141c), to the court of Pentápolin: from his

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<sup>26</sup> In the *PF*G, when in great distress, the Castillian troops: "dezién del Cryador mucha fuert' *majadura*" (st.596b; my italics).

private self laid bare, back to society: “metiólo en la carrera, / demostróle la vía, ca bien açerqua hera” (st.143ab).

The fisherman’s generosity emulates that of those on the road to Emmaus as read in Luke 24.13-35: Cleophas and another (perhaps Luke) are joined by a pilgrim who helps them to relate Christ’s miracles to scriptural prophecy; after offering to share their food and shelter, they recognize him as Christ risen. In the *Apolonio*, Apolonio seeks help to relate his experience to God’s will, yet he also receives the hospitality of a pilgrim and, in *imitatio Christi*, will one day use *escriptura* to guide others (st.136d).

Both the fisherman and Apolonio are manifestations of Christ in the *Apolonio* and Apolonio repays the fisherman for his hospitality lavishly at the end of the tale, earning the highest praise: “Dios que biue y regna, tres y huno llamado, / depare atal huéspet a tot ome cuytado” (st.635ab). As Johnston describes in relation to the *PFG*, the story of Emmaus is detailed in sculpture in churches and cathedrals along the Camino de Santiago, as at Santo Domingo de Silos, and was important for the theology of Gregory the Great (2008: 403-05).<sup>27</sup> In his homily on the Emmaus story, Gregory underlines: ‘the disciples set the table, they offer food, and the God whom in the exposition of scripture they did not know, now in the breaking of bread they recognize’.<sup>28</sup> The humility, forbearance, and faith of the pilgrim, a purveyor of hospitality, are characteristics shared by the thirteenth-century Iberian *hombre cortés*.

In the *PFG*, Fernán’s two visits to San Pedro de Arlanza evidence a series of scenes of striking resemblance to Apolonio’s engagement of the fisherman. Stumbling upon the hermitage for the first time, Fernán states: “aquí non entraría, / synon por dar

<sup>27</sup> See Moore and Spaccarelli for a line drawing of the Emmaus story as depicted in the cloister of Santo Domingo de Silos, dated to the late eleventh or early twelfth century (2008: 8).

<sup>28</sup> “Mensam ponunt, cibos afferunt, et Deum quem in scripturae sacrae expositione non cognouerant, in panis fractione cognoscunt” (*Homiliae in euangelia* II.23; *Library of Latin Texts, Series A*; Gardiner 1971: 25).

ofrenda or por fer romería” (st.231d), and is subsequently offered a meagre meal and shelter by the monk Pelayo, who helps him to resolve his troubles (st.235). While at the humble residence, Fernán implores his *Señor* in penance for his sins: “anpara a Castyella de la gent’ descreúda: / si Tú non la anparas, téngola por perduda” (st.232cd), a prayer that is developed further during his second visit:

Sea por Ty Castyella defenduda;  
 .....  
 anparar non la puedo, Señor, syn tu ayuda.

Por fuerça nin por seso que yo podies’ aver,  
 non la podryé por guisa ninguna defender. (sts.397-98)

Fernán is subsequently blessed with a vision in which the deceased Pelayo appears, prophesizes his victory over the Muslim invader with the help of the saints, indicates that he is held in unusual favour by God: “tú eres su vasallo e Él es tu Señor; / con los pueblos paganos lidias por su amor” (st.403bc), and admonishes him: “ve tu vya” (sts.401c), as then reiterated by the disembodied voice of Millán: “ve tu vya” (sts.408c, 409a, 412a). Fernán takes comfort and insight from his interaction with God’s humblest servants, in this case a monk and a saint, before he resumes his passage, *vía*, through the world.

The characterization of both Apolonio and Fernán as penitent pilgrims indicates the continual assessment of their worldly deeds in relation to the standards of heaven, in short, a striking integration of secular and devout traditions in both poems.<sup>29</sup> In keeping with the worldly, societal dimension of *cortesía*, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* also conceive of human existence as a game of fame and fortune, *trebeio*. The protagonists must come to understand the respective roles of linear Christian and circular pagan time

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<sup>29</sup> Fernán’s penitential attitude extends to discourse with his vassals. When defending his absence to them on return from the second visit to the hermitage, he articulates a lack of confidence in his virtue: “aguardarvos querrya, a todo mi poder, / de por mengua de mí en yerro non caer” (st.427cd).

in the life of man, both of which are attributable to God: “El rey de los çiellos . . . trebeia con los omnes a todo su placer” (*Apolonio* sts.93a, 94d); “De Dios e de los omnes mester nos ha consejo, / sy non los afyncamos, fernos han mal trebejo” (*PFG* st.428ab).<sup>30</sup>

Grieve’s research points to the relation between theology, poetics, and play in the *Apolonio*, and she reads the words of the fisherman within the context of such play (1998: 153-55). As the fisherman observes: “e toller y en dar es todo su sentido, / vestir al despoiado y despoiar al vestido” (st.134cd), thinking echoed in martial terms by Fernán shortly after his second visit to San Pedro de Arlanza: “de dar e de quitar Él es el fazedor; / por entender qu’Él es sobre todos mejor, / el que suel’ ser vençido, será el vencedor” (st.437bcd). Grieve’s findings link closely with the development of *cortesía* in medieval Iberia.

Bumke notes that the first court manual, the *Disciplina clericalis*, was written by a Spaniard as an “educational curriculum” based on clerical training.<sup>31</sup> The *Disciplina clericalis* refers to a letter of Aristotle to Alexander the Great, in which training in the liberal arts, etiquette, and other skills such as chess, sports, and poetic composition is recommended (1991: 322-23). Surtz argues that, in view of his excellent education, generosity to others, and athletic skills, Apolonio is a: “model prince” (1980: 331). However, it is Apolonio’s will to channel his competences in service to the Christian community and God, notably as a musician, which marks him as an exceptionally adept practitioner of *cortesía*. The same is true for Fernán, who is God’s vassal as well as a warrior and political leader.

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<sup>30</sup> In the *SD*, Domingo is patient and resilient when he is cast out of the monastery of San Millán, viewing such vicissitudes as a game of sorts: “él toda esta coita vediéla por trebejo” (st.170c).

<sup>31</sup> Petrus Alfonsi (*fl.* early 12th century), author of the *Disciplina clericalis*, was a converted Jew born in the former Kingdom of Aragon.

The thorough education of Apolonio in the liberal arts, notably grammar, rhetoric, and music, links him with Alexander as portrayed in the *Alexandre*.<sup>32</sup> However, the *Alexandre* is a poem concerned with martial and philosophic exploration in which few stanzas are lost on leisure activities such as games and musical performance, events central to the action in the *Apolonio*. Such activities, though ostensibly entertaining and light-hearted, reveal the truth veiled by appearances in the *Apolonio*, and connect the characters, as well as the audience of the poem, with extra-textual Christian truth. To give a preliminary example: after being shipwrecked on Pentápolin, Apolonio manages to ingratiate himself with the courtly folk of the town with his ball skills, whereby to the King: “semeiól’ omne bueno, de buen entendimiento” (st.149c).

The King subsequently invites Apolonio to his court where he is provided with rich clothing: “los mejores que fueron en su casa trobados” (st.157b). In relief at this act of generosity, such that his appearance newly reflects his innate value, “non podié Apolonio las lágrimas tener” (st.160c), yet he steadies himself to engage with Architartres and his daughter, Luciana, another father and daughter pairing in the poem. Apolonio’s courting of Luciana is an important juncture in the poem in which the protagonist demonstrates his musicianship for the solace of all along with his elevated understanding of the divine, in short, his exquisite *cortesía*.

In the words of Grieve: “music is one art practiced by human beings that approximates the creation of the cosmos” (1998: 159). The concept of the harmony of the celestial spheres, whereby through an understanding of music one gains insight into

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<sup>32</sup> As Alexander states to his teacher, Aristotle: “me enseñaste las artes todas a entender. / Entiendo bien gramática; sé bien toda natura; / . . . Retórico só fino: sé feroso fablar, / . . . Sé por arte de música, por natura cantar” (sts.39-44). In a scene with a musical tree, the poet of the *Alexandre* displays his musical knowledge (sts.2132-42).

the structure of the universe, is credited to Plato's *Timaeus* (fourth century BC). The *Timaeus*, a favourite text of twelfth-century French intellectuals, was influential across the Middle Ages and likely known by the poet of the *Alexandre*, as I detail in Chapter 1 of this thesis. As Plato remarks on the blending of sounds high and low in pitch: "This, a source of mere pleasure to the mindless, delights the intelligent as a representation of divine harmony in mortal movements" (*Timaeus* 80a-b; Waterfield 2008: 82).<sup>33</sup>

As Uría Maqua writes: "a principios del siglo XIII, los conocimientos musicológicos adquieren un nivel relativamente muy alto, con el descubrimiento y desarrollo de nuevas técnicas que permiten enriquecer las melodías. Es el caso del cromatismo, los temblantes semitones que ejecuta Apolonio en el concierto del palacio de Architrastes" (2000: 247). In her book on music in the thirteenth-century European university, Nancy van Deusen underlines the function of music as the subject that exemplified all the quadrivial arts. The *quadrivium* brought "measurable objectivity" to the primary principles taught by the *trivium*, and the end of all seven liberal arts was the understanding of God. Van Deusen takes as her case study the writings of the English bishop Robert Grosseteste (c.1175-1253), notably his *De cessatione legalium* (1230s), in which the theologian relates discord and concord in scripture to music (1995: xii, x). The concept of musical performance as a demonstration of cosmic order when executed according to esoteric laws is important for the *Apolonio*. Of note is the analogy Grosseteste makes between written and aural discord: 'But now consider the case of two conflicting scriptural texts, as if they were two pipes blown by the Holy Spirit . . . two

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<sup>33</sup> On sound and hearing: "attunement, whose movements are naturally akin to the circular motions of our souls, is useful to the man who makes intelligent use of the Muses not for mindless pleasure (which is nowadays taken to be the point of melody), but for the disharmony of the soul's revolutions that has arisen in us: attunement is an ally, provided by the Muses for the soul in its fight to restore itself to order and harmony. Rhythm also was given for the same purpose by the same benefactors, to support us because for the most part our internal state is inconsistent and graceless" (*Timaeus* 47d-e; Waterfield 2008: 38). Musical harmony is an important aspect of Berceo's *MNS*, notably the introduction, on which see Devoto (1980) and Marchand and Baldwin (1994).

pipes can be made to bring forth discord concordantly, and concord in discord'.<sup>34</sup> Such a concept of music is of considerable importance when considering the relation of poetic skill, musical virtuosity, and *juglaría* in the *Apolonio*, as primarily explored at the court in Pentápolin.

At court, it becomes a matter of urgency for the King to find out Apolonio's true identity: "contra éll que sepamos cómo nos captener" (st.166d). When pressed to disclose his story by Luciana, Apolonio weeps again, and she tries to cheer him by playing the *viuella* (st.178b). Luciana is a skilled musician, knowing how to tune her instrument "en hun son natural" and to modulate her voice (sts.178-79). Moreover: "fazia a la viuella dezir puntos ortados, / semeiaua que eran palabras afirmadas" (st.179cd). As Dolores Corbella notes, quoting D. Devoto, *ortados*, "executed with wisdom", is a scientific rather than musical adjective and features in the *Alexandre* applied to different *maestros* (2007: 133n179c).<sup>35</sup> Luciana's music seems to tell important truths: a feat, *fazannya* (st.180c), which is also described as entertainment, *depuertos* (st.180d).

Despite Luciana's competence in musical harmony, Apolonio's reaction is, notably, in discord with the keen response of the court, which grates the King: "demandóle y díxol' que se marauellaua, / que con todos los otros tan mal se acordaua" (st.181cd). Apolonio is unimpressed by Luciana's skills, citing himself as a far superior musician who plays "más con razón" (st.182d). This tense moment in the narrative, which leads Luciana to request Apolonio to prove his worth, "si no, asme dicho

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<sup>34</sup> "Sed numquid inter hos duos scriptores sacros, inter has duas Spiritus Sancti fistulas . . . faciunt per artem duas fistulas concorditer discordare et discordanter concordare" (*De cessatione legalium*, 164f; Van Deusen 1995: ix).

<sup>35</sup> In Cañas' vocabulary of the *Alexandre*, *ortado* is listed as "fino, culto", as at st.838c, and st.1209a: "un maestro ortado" (2000: 646).

soberuía y enemiga” (st.184d), is in fact the discord necessary for a more profound concord to be revealed in Pentápolin society through Apolonio’s musicianship.

The occasion of Apolonio’s performance is fraught with imagery of violent desire, recalling the sin of Antioco’s court. Luciana is passionately engaged while watching Apolonio: “abés cabié la duenya de gozo en su pelleio”, “fue la duenya toquada de malos aguigones” (sts.188d, 189d); the King has “gran sabor” (st.186a) for Apolonio’s request to borrow a crown before he plays, and the verb *violar* (st.185c) and noun *violador* (st.186d), as associated with Apolonio, suggest violation as well as playing the *viuela*: not only the rape of Antioco’s daughter but the potential of the protagonist’s performance to penetrate the truths of God and Nature. If he misuses his *maestría*, Apolonio could be guilty of *soberuía* as is Alexander in the *Alexandre*.<sup>36</sup> In development of the themes of the *Alexandre*, Apolonio must be dressed appropriately, with Antioco’s best crown (st.186c), in order to carry out his *mester*: his skill requires a careful balance of societal and personal, secular and devout affiliation, as appropriate to his place in the earthly and divine hierarchies. Furthermore, his playing initiates a love story, the conduct of which is a demonstration of *cortesía* of radical importance for the redemption of the societies of the poem. As I have indicated, according to the tenets in the *Zifar*, to be courtly one must restrain one’s *sabor*.

Apolonio’s crowned, virtuoso playing brings him immense relief: “fue cobrando el seso” (st.187c), and gladdens the hearts of all his listeners (st.189c). He plays better than Apollo and Orpheus (st.190b), is named by the King, who: “non sería más pagado / sy ganasse hun regno ho hun rico condado” (st.191ab), as a “cuerpo tan acabado” (st.

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<sup>36</sup> On his voyage to the Antipodes, Alexander descends into the depths of the sea in a glass barrel. His philosophical investigations within acquire a “hint of rape” (Deyermond 1996: 152): personified Nature is *aontada* (st.2326d); “en las cosas secretas quiso él entender, / . . . quisolas Alexandre por fuerça coñocer” (st.2327ac).

191d), and asked to teach Luciana music. This is the truth revealed by Apolonio's performance, which reunites him with both his wits and regal status, and thoroughly ingratiates him with the court. As such he can continue with God's work in society as a trusted *maestro* (sts.193b, 221a), as indicated that he should by the fisherman earlier in the tale: "quando an passado por muelles y por duras, después sse tornan maestros" (st.136cd).

Apolonio's learned goals are societal cohesion and piety, not the exposure of forbidden knowledge, as in the cases of Adam and Eve, Alexander in the *Alexandre*, and Antioco. He is paid handsomely with gold and silver for his services as teacher, as well as waited on by servants, and fed copious food and wine (st.195), the material reward for his newly affirmed value. The ultimate reward is, however, a suitable bride: Luciana; and the pair develop a close relationship as teacher and pupil that is happily sanctioned by Architartres. Their marriage is notably founded in passion as well as the intellect, as necessary for a prosperous union: "Entró entre los nouyos muyt gran dilección, / el Criador entre ellos metió su bendición" (st.241ab), and Luciana quickly becomes pregnant with Tarsiana (st.242d), ensuring the continuation of the dynasty of Tyre. Despite his status as a *maestro*, however, Apolonio still has much to learn, and most notably from his daughter.<sup>37</sup>

In the *PPG*, Fernán's status as the rightful, Christian leader of the Castilians and, thus, his innate worth, is publicly confirmed when the prophecies revealed to him at San Pedro de Arlanza become a reality. As I have detailed, the time Fernán spends privately

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<sup>37</sup> Desing asserts Luciana's importance in the *Apolonio*, alleging that: "her reading, writing, and interpretive abilities outshine those of her husband" (2011:4). His argument centres around Luciana's note to her father in which she covertly refers to the man she wishes to marry i.e. Apolonio (st.223). I believe that Desing greatly overemphasizes Luciana's skill without taking into account the plural nature of *maestría* in the *Apolonio* as most notably demonstrated through musicianship, and also medicine (see sts.284-324). Music and medicine are higher subjects in the medieval curriculum than grammar or rhetoric, through which one learned to read and write effectively. I believe that it is Tarsiana rather than her mother who is an unusually skilled composer and performer of text and music, as I will argue.

at the hermitage enriches his understanding of the world and prepares him for his greatest public challenges, which include a lengthy, horrifying battle with Almoçor. In the series of gripping scenes that narrate the apocalyptic fight, Fernán and his men come extremely close to death. Their struggles are elevated by the divine presence implicit in Fernán and explicit with the eventual coming of the saints to vanquish the enemy. In the heat of the fray, all gaze at Fernán, “*commo ángel de Dios*”: “*quando oyén ‘Castyella’ todos se esforçaban, / todos en su palabra grand esfuerço tomavan*” (st.520bcd).

The heroism and tragedy of the battle is narrated in affecting and gruesome detail, while emphasizing the immense skill of salient warriors. At a critical point, the loyal *Gustio Gonçález* (st.521a), who facilitates the passage of the Castilians in the field (st.521b), is swiftly cut down by a valiant African king: “*Capyello e almófar e cofya de armar / óvolos la espada ligero de cortar; / ovo fasta los ojos la espada passar*” (st.522abc). The count’s nephew falls in the same spot as *Gonçález*, along with his opponent: “*non avié y de moros más estraño bracero*” (st.523d), and news reaches Fernán that: “*eran los mejores de los suyos fynados*” (st.525b).

At this precarious stage of the fighting, the language notably shifts to describe the Castilian economy of fortune, simultaneously undercutting and emphasizing the poignancy of the scene of worldly devastation: “*eran desbaratados*” (st.525d), “*el conde, por end’ fue muy quejado, / . . . falló de mala guisa revuelto el mercado*” (st.526c). As the tension mounts, the African king who took down *don Gustio* engages Fernán, plotting: “*sy lo guisar podiera, mejor lo varatara*” (st.531c), but is summarily executed by the hero (st.533). This action brings a wave of reprisal to the Castilians, whereby Fernán begins to anticipate his death and call out to God mid-battle:

“Pues non só venturoso d’esta lid arrancar,  
 .....

Señor, ¿por qué nos tyenes a todos fuerte saña?  
 Por los nuestros pecados non estruyas España:  
 .....  
 Señor, pues es el conde de Ty desanparado,  
 que por alguna culpa eres dél despagado,  
 .....  
 Pero yo non morré assí desanparado,  
 antes avrán de mí los moros mal mercado:  
 tal cosa fará antes este cuerpo laçrado,  
 que quant' el mundo dure sienpre será contado.” (sts.537-42)

Note Fernán's recognition that fortune may not be on his side and his penitence in acknowledgement of *alguna culpa*, then the swift shift to an attitude of determined faith and defiance of his fate: he will do his duty as vassal, even if God has forsaken him. The hero's forbearance and daring is quickly rewarded, for above him appears the Apostle James, calling him in return and accompanied by a huge heavenly army (st.546).

The incredulity of Almançor at the spectacle emphasizes Fernán's elevated understanding: the African king cannot grasp the nature of “*atan fuerte poder*” (st.549b), which renews the energy of the flagging Christian army (sts.550d, 551a). The battle sequence concludes by highlighting the Muslims' unenlightened fear of death as they flee the field (st.552ab) and the agreement between Fernán and his men to bury their dead at San Pedro de Arlanza (sts.555-58), before Fernán is summoned to court by King Sancho. At court, the hero is welcomed by the people for his trusted counsel with private and public gatherings. There he shows off the horse he has acquired from Almançor as well as the coveted hawk (sts.563-64), evidence of his increasing status i.e. *cortesía*.

As indicated in the *Zifar*, *cortesía* entails bringing one's private and public selves into harmony for the realization of one's purpose in secular society in relation to the life to come, a very difficult endeavour at which Fernán excels in the *PFG*.

Committing himself to God as a lowly sinner, he embraces the path to redemption for himself and his people and channels all his worldly skill into the creation of a Castilian society of marked cohesion and piety. The *PFG* is usefully described as a courtly epic—an epic enshrining the tenets of *cortesía* as intended for a learned audience at court—and Fernán is the ideal knight, the image of which: “fused traditional concepts of lordship, the religious idea of knighthood of the reform movement, Christian ethical notions, and the modern code of good manners”, as indebted to the contemporary cleric. As Bumke indicates, medieval epics were often circulated at court before they were completed (1991: 321-22, 519-20), a compelling explanation for the abrupt ending of the *PFG*, and a further indication that the poem was intended to entertain as much as instruct.

#### IV. *Otro mester sabía*: Women, Sex, and Redemption

As I have been arguing, the central theme of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* is the regulation and appropriate channelling of desire. In both poems the redemption of the sexual misdemeanour of a monarch past is central to the legitimacy of the hero, who must safeguard his dynasty. Particularly distinctive to this pair of poems are the plotlines devoted to worldly women, namely Tarsiana and Sancha, who outdo both of the heroes with their insight and skill, proving themselves instrumental in such redemption. Both women are threatened with rape at key stages of the narrative progression and, rather than eschewing sexual sin, as is possible for Apolonio and Fernán, both face the problem physically and morally in a series of highly engaging and challenging scenes.

In the case of Tarsiana in the *Apolonio*, left by her father for thirteen years in Tarsus while he travels to Egypt, grows up an exceptionally well-educated and socially

adept young woman, “de muy gran paresçer” (sts.392a, 395b). She is, however, betrayed by those entrusted with her guardianship, Dionisa and Estrángilo, following the death of her beloved nurse, Licorides. When carrying out her morning ritual for Licorides at the cemetery, “rezando los salmos del salterio”, “leyé su matinada” (sts.375d, 377a), Tarsiana must save herself from murder at the hands of a thug sent by Dionisa, Teófilo, through prayer to God: “yo, mal non meresciendo, he a ser martiriada; / Senyor, quando lo tú sufres só por ello pagada” (st.382cd). Teófilo notably suffers from a debilitating *laçerio*, which he erroneously hopes to alleviate with the reward for carrying out the crime, later dying in servitude (st.390).

Due to God’s mercy (st.384c), pirates spot the attempted murder from their ship and chase down Teófilo, yet when he flees they turn their interest to Tarsiana, who is subsequently captured and put up for sale at market in Mitalena. There a bidding war ensues for her virginity between a pimp and Antinágora, the town leader, who: “ouo tal amor della que s’en querié perder” (st.395c). As noted by critics including Corbella, who cites C.C. Phipps, Antinágora’s destructive passion for Tarsiana echoes that of Antioco for his daughter (2007: 206n395a), for whom: “se queria por su amor perder” (st.6d). It is important to note, however, that Antinágora’s desire is not incestuous. Although he does have a daughter of his own, in echo of the paradigm of vulnerable father-daughter relations in the *Apolonio* and is later described as loving Tarsiana like a daughter (st.431ab), Tarsiana also inspires such love in the population of Tarsus as a whole (st.365cd). Antinágora’s passion more closely resembles that of Rodrigo for Yllán’s daughter, a girl left vulnerable by her father in a foreign city, as portrayed in the *PFG* and the *Estoria de España*.

Despite his unseemly lust, Antinàgora's relative goodness to present company is indicated during the bidding war for Tarsiana's virginity (note that, in the *PFG*, Rodrigo is described as "el vuen rey" st.49a, in relation to Yllán, "el mesquino" st.47c). His moral position receives no comment, yet the pimp is referred to as an "homne malo" (st.396a), "garçón malo" (st.397b), "malo fidiondo" (st.397d), "mal auenturado" (st.398a), and a "traydor" (st.399b). In a salacious few verses, Antinàgora gives up his bidding so as to rent Tarsiana later at a cheaper price (st.399d), while the pimp: "el que no deuié huna muger valer; / aguisóse la çienda para 'l mal menester, / escriuyó en la puerta el preçio del auer" (st.400bcd). As the poet indicates, the marketing of Tarsiana's body against her will, a "barata mala" with which she is *forçada* (sts.402b, 405d), is partly attributable to the fortune of an imperfect world (st.402a), as was the fall of Rodrigo: "un rey de grand natura, / el que perdió la tierra por su desventura" (*PFG* st.84cd).

While Tarsiana prays for God's mercy, Antinàgora demonstrates himself to be confused about the nature of love and to whom he should pray: "rogó al traydor de firme voluntat, / que le diese el preçio de la virginidat, / que gelo otorgase por Dios, en caridat" (st.404bcd). Mistaking commercial exchange for the satiation of his desire for *caritas*, Antinàgora is undoubtedly a sinner, yet he is surprisingly also described as an *apóstol* (st.405c) in relation to Tarsiana, a word usually reserved for the twelve disciples of Christ and the saints Paul and Barnabus. Critics dispute the word as found in the manuscript (see Corbella 2007: 210n405c), although I am inclined to consider it an intentional reference to Paul. In the *LBA*, I. Thessalonians 5.21-22 is twice referred to in justification of lust (at st.76cd, and st.950a, "Provar todas las cosas el Apóstol lo manda"), and the association may well have been current earlier than the fourteenth

century. Certainly, the discourse on sex and love in these scenes of the *Apolonio* calls to mind the contention of the *LBA*, a link that may also extend to the versification of the poems. As Paraíso observes: “tanto el *Poema de Fernán González* como el *Libro de Apolonio*, el Arcipreste de Hita o Pero López de Ayala, usan una versificación fluctuante en el tetrástrofo” (2000: 227-28).

In keeping with the concept of worldly life as a game ultimately controlled by God, Tarsiana is able to use cunning to persuade Antinágora not to violate her: “como Dios lo quiso, ella fue bien artera, / con sus palabras planas metiólo en la carrera” (st.406cd). Note that *artera* is a term also used to describe the pimp’s plotting (st.421a). Despite her desperate situation, Tarsiana uses her skill in oratory (sts.412d, 415b) to instruct Antinágora onto the right moral and physical path, *carrera*, in the manner of the fisherman and the saints in the *PFG*. Her triumph at doing so, in which she appeals to Antinágora’s *nobleça* and *precio* (sts.408d, 409c), and he, with his daughter in mind (st.414), pledges Tarsiana the money he paid for her virginity to help her escape, stating “el Criador uos quiera ayudar y valer” (st.417c), is a decisive moment which initiates Tarsiana’s protagonism as a Christ-like redeemer of (incestuous) concupiscence in the *Apolonio*. As written in *The Rule of Saint Benedict*: ‘whether slave or free we are all one in Christ, and should bear alike the weapons of service under one Lord’ (Ch. 2).<sup>38</sup>

Despite his flaws, Antinágora is highlighted as a potential Christian leader. Tarsiana, martyr for all she suffers who regularly prays to God and *maestra complida* who commands the favour of all of Tarsus, possesses all the qualities pertaining to *cortesía* necessary to enable his transformation. She evades rape due to her own faith, determination, and competence, in striking distinction to Yllán and Antioco’s daughters.

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<sup>38</sup> “Quia sive servus sive liber omnes in Christo unum sumus et sub uno Domino aequalem servitutis militiam baiulamus” (Venarde 2011).

In the *Estoria de España* and the *Apolonio* the daughters must take their share of the blame for their ordeal: in the former her role is described ambivalently (554) and, in the latter, her lack of faith and general acquiescence is critiqued, as I detail in section I of this chapter. The portrayal of Tarsiana, who dissuades and even benefits materially from her potential violator is potentially, on the one hand, a misogynist confirmation that women sufficiently pure and resourceful don't get raped, and, on the other, a triumph of one woman's unusual will and skill in a world that often grants her little respect. As well as recalling the female saints and martyrs so popular in thirteenth-century Iberia, Tarsiana's distinction points to the important roles women may have played at court in the period. I am inclined to view Tarsiana as feminist: she is a role model in charge of the execution of her own story quite unlike, for example, Berceo's Oria in the *SO*, and she pointedly helps and honours other women less able, morally upright, and privileged than she to escape sexual slavery. Towards the end of the narrative, releasing her fellow "duenyas que él tenié conpradas": "dioles buenos maridos, ayudas muy granadas, / sallieron de pecado, visquieron muy onrradas" (st.569abc), an event which is also a fitting counterpoint to the tribute of virgins reportedly paid to Almoçor in the *PFG* (and *SM*).<sup>39</sup>

Sexual purity is almost as highly valued in the men as the women of the *Apolonio*. Along with Antinágora, many men are converted by Tarsiana and leave their money with her: "tanto fue la duenya sauia y adonada, / que ganó los dineros y non fue violada" (st.418cd), more than enough to buy her freedom (st.420). When her pimp declares that she has found a "buena carrera", believing her to be enjoying her

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<sup>39</sup> Desing highlights the Christian import of Tarsiana's assistance to her fellow prostitutes who, in the *Apolonio* are enabled to: "leave behind their sin and to find honor through marriage, whereas the emphasis in the Latin *Historia* is solely on Tarsiana's purchasing their freedom from slavery" (2013: 251). See Archibald (1991: 170–71).

prostitution (st.421), Tarsiana turns her rhetorical training to “un sermon tan tenprado” (st.422a), “tan bien adonado” (st.425a), entreating him:

“Otro mester sabía qu’ es más sin pecado,  
que es más ganancioso y es más ondrado.

Si tú me lo condonas, por la tu cortesía,  
que meta yo estudio en essa maestría,  
quanto tú demandases, yo tanto te daría;  
tú auriés gran ganancia y yo non pecaría.” (sts.422-23)

The *mester sin pecado*, *maestría*, which Tarsiana advocates to the pimp, ambitiously appealing to his *cortesía*, concerns the work of a *juglaresa*, as closely associated with prostitution. With the consent of her jailer, she rises early the next day to go to market and, there, with “huna viola buena y bien tenprada” (st.426c), she plays songs as a virtuoso, “que trayén grant dulçor y eran naturales” (st.427b). Her music is harmonious in relation to nature i.e. the music of the spheres, as in the lesser case of her mother, Luciana, who tuned her instrument “en hun son natural” (st.178b), and that of her talented father. Her audience soon exceeds the capacity of the town squares and people begin climbing ledges to glimpse her (st.427cd). First, Tarsiana must give adequate solace to the crowd with her song, but when she has accomplished this she then tells them her story with: “hun romance bien rimado, / de la su razón misma” (st.428).

Tarsiana’s performance using her musical and rhetorical skills is a further example of erudition employed for social cohesion in the *Apolonio*. All who hear Tarsiana love her and try to help her gain her freedom (st.430). Even though she is working as a *juglaresa*, Tarsiana’s virtue, education, and social skills, in short, her *cortesía*, enable her to simultaneously profit from and transcend her circumstantial difficulty for the spiritual betterment of all.

The relevance of Tarsiana's latter speech to her pimp and pursuit to the opening verses of the *Alexandre* is well known, and is examined closely by Deyermond. He argues that, in light of Tarsiana's portrayal, "it is difficult to believe in the accepted picture of a school-founding manifesto issued by the *Alexandre* poet", who notoriously asserts: "mester trayo fermoso: non es de joglaría; / mester es sin pecado, ca es de clerezía" (st.2ab).<sup>40</sup> As Deyermond details, both the poet of the *Alexandre* and Tarsiana practice an erudite, "sinless" *mester* for the pleasure of a public involving a skilled use of rhyme. The poet of the *Apolonio* is likely making: "ironic use of the emphatic statements that open *Alexandre*" (1965: 115-16). To extend Deyermond's commentary: although the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* may not be products of a poetic school, their composers were members of the same textual community, between whom an intellectual rivalry is palpable in the portrayal of Tarsiana. In re-writing the terms and conditions of the opening verses of the *Alexandre* to correspond rather to the tenets of *cortesía* and a distinguished *juglaresa*, it may be the case that the *Apolonio* poet is performing an intellectual and social coup, albeit a little distant in time and space, of a courtly sophisticate over a rather more bookish cleric.

At issue is whether Tarsiana's *juglaría* compromises her or whether the office is dignified by her portrayal.<sup>41</sup> J.C. Musgrave complicates Deyermond's stance and argues

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<sup>40</sup> As Deyermond notes, the only other poem to echo the opening verses of the *Alexandre* is the fourteenth-century *Libro de miseria de omne* (1965: 112): "Onde todo omne que quisiere este libro bien pasar / mester es que las palabras sepa bien silabificar, / ca por sílavas contadas, que es arte de rimar, / e por la quaderna vía su curso quier finir" (st.4; Cuesta Serrano 2012: 84).

<sup>41</sup> Grieve argues that aspects of Tarsiana's character and her stint in the brothel may be based on one of Seneca's *Controversiae*, "The Prostitute Priestess", in which a virgin, captured by pirates and sold to a pimp, is reported to have requested alms from the men who visited her to conserve her chastity. When one soldier visitor tried to rape her, she killed him, and although accused, was acquitted, thenceforth seeking a life as a priestess (1998: 159-60). Tarsiana's priestly characteristics are also explored by Desing, although in the medieval Christian context. Citing the work of the historical theologian Gary Macy, he notes that in 1210 Pope Innocent III railed against the activities of abbesses in Burgos and Palencia such as public preaching and hearing the confessions of their nuns. Female holy figures in early thirteenth-century, northern Iberia may have had a more important role in the ministry of the Church than has since

that the poet of the *Apolonio* is: “contrasting the standard *juglaresa* with his noble heroine, and so distinguishing between the office and the product”. This is a distinction made by Tarsiana herself: “non só juglaresa de las de buen mercado, / nin lo é por natura, más fágolo sin grado” (st.490cd; 1976: 129-30), perhaps unsurprisingly given her place in the naturalized hierarchy of the dynasty of Tyre. Overall, Musgrave advocates the maintenance of the tag “mester de clerecía” “in the sense of a high vocation” for the thirteenth-century *cuaderna vía* poems, advocating that *juglaría* be considered a trade rather than a literary genre (1976: 138).

Throughout his article, Musgrave refers to numerous thirteenth-century sources that express an ambivalent attitude towards the minstrel, including Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* (1259-1264), Alfonso X’s *Siete Partidas*, Berceo’s writing such as the *SD*, and even the *Alexandre* itself.<sup>42</sup> The *Siete Partidas*: “denounced those *juglares* who earned their living as public entertainers” (VII.vi.4), yet considered those “who performed for their own pleasure, or that of their friends, or to solace kings or lords . . . above reproach, as were those, by implication, who sang the *gestas*” (II.xxi.20). As is well known, Berceo repeatedly refers to himself as a *juglar* in the *SD*, and beyond those well-known opening lines, the *Alexandre* includes the portrayal of a “joglar de grant guisa” who plays for the king (st.232), as well as a dismissal of the office by the Amazonian Queen Talestris to Alexander: “non vin’ ganar averes, ca non soy joglaressa” (st.1884b; 1976: 130-32; see also sts.699-700). Moreover, I have noted that the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* incorporate images of pious *juglares*, such as at *cantigas*

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been officially recognized and thus Tarsiana’s role and status in the *Apolonio* are perhaps less surprising (2012: 105-06).

<sup>42</sup> Musgrave also cites the Occitan poet Guiraut Riquier’s *Declaratio*, a work presented to Alfonso X, in which the *juglar* is associated with narrative performance rather than original lyric composition, the pursuit of the higher-esteemed *trovador* (1976: 137-38). Based on the hierarchy of poets of Riquier’s *Supplicatio* and *Declaratio* (Weiss 2005: 497-98), Tarsiana’s skill as a musician and poet seems closer to the *trovador*, although her social status as a *juglaresa de buen mercado*, unattached to a court, defines her otherwise.

eight and five, “Milagro de la virgen en favour de un juglar” and “Juglares y danza en una vigilia religiosa” (Esc.T-i-1).<sup>43</sup> *Juglaría*, both despite and because of its status as a trade, is closely associated with *cortesía*.

The attitude to *juglaría* in mid- to late-thirteenth century Iberia is thus somewhat dependent upon context, along with the talent and faith of the individual minstrel, as reflected in the *Apolonio*. The minstrel is clearly elevated in association with Tarsiana, yet her entire portrayal is of someone exceptional. In my view, the significance of the portrayal of Tarsiana as *juglaresa* should more readily be considered within the grand scheme of the narrative, in which she also takes on the roles of Christian martyr (st.382cd) and redeemer of men. Tarsiana, due to her unusual virtue and intelligence, is a suitable candidate to navigate the depths of man’s concupiscence in striking scenes of salacious and devout content that surely delighted audiences. She and her father, Apolonio, must be tested before they can be reunited and her morally questionable role as *juglaresa* is the catalyst for the emancipation of their dynasty from inherited *culpa* at the principal denouement of the poem.

Still enslaved, Tarsiana is sent by Antinágora to cheer her ailing father: he suspects their relation to each other, although they are none-the-wiser. Addressing Apolonio as “romero o merchante” (st.489b), Tarsiana embarks on a lengthy performance, trying to solace him with her music, and then, when this has little effect, with an ingenious set of nine pious riddles. The riddles, however, also fail to draw Apolonio from his dejection, and the overriding riddle of the relationship of this estranged father and daughter remains unsolved. Frustrated and feeling a strong connection with Apolonio, Tarsiana subsequently flings her arms around his neck

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<sup>43</sup> With thanks to Dr Geraldine Hazbun for drawing my attention to these images.

(st.527) in a reprise of the configuration of incest/riddle that opens the poem. Unlike in the case of Antioco and his daughter, however, both Apolonio and Tarsiana are vigilant not to fall into sin: he strikes her away and she, shocked and hurt, delivers a long lament in which she tells her story and affirms her virtue. Tarsiana's *juglaría* leads her to her father's bedside, while her persistence, faith, and passion brings about their definitive mutual recognition. The combination of these attributes amounts to *cortesía*. When she finally confirms her identity to Apolonio, he leaps out of bed and declares his daughter to be walking proof of God's grace: "¡eres vertut vera!" (st.543d).

In the *Apolonio*, the trade of *juglaría* is honoured as a vehicle with which Tarsiana can restore her family to their rightful position in society. The vicissitudes of fortune of the fallen world are a game through which man achieves the goals of *cortesía*, both worldly and divine. The *mester* of *cortesía* is far more diverse than the *mester de clerecía* extrapolated from the opening verses of the *Alexandre*, in the case of Tarsiana alone comprising martyr, princess, daughter, prostitute, trickster, musician, poet, and, eventually, wife, yet maintains a fundamental emphasis on piety, and on education for the most able. Tarsiana as *juglaresa* personifies *cortesía* in its ideal form as an orthopraxis: worldly to the point of cunning in process, while prosperous both spiritually and materially in product, as she laconically summarizes when performing for Apolonio: "busco menester que pueda al sieglo enganyar" (st.493d).

As I have argued, the theme of sexual wrongdoing is as central to the PFG as it is the *Apolonio*. The character of Sancha, whose relationship with Fernán develops in the latter stages of the narrative, is instrumental for the long-term redemption of Castile. I thus develop Hazbun's stance on Sancha, believing her to stand with Fernán at the centre of: "the political and providential destinies of Castile", as well as by his

“extension” (2011: 35). The audience of the *PFG* is likely to have identified strongly with Sancha: as Bumke reports: “given the level of education within lay society, potential readers of courtly epics would have been, apart from the court clerics, almost exclusively noble women” (1991: 525).

The sequence of scenes that leads to Sancha and Fernán’s first meeting and on to their union in marriage begins with a visit to the Count’s castle cell in Castro Vyejo. There he languishes as a prisoner of the Navarrans, having been tricked by the vengeful Queen Teresa of León, sister to Sancho, with a promise of marriage to her niece, Sancha (sts.571-72). A Lombard count undertaking a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela hears of the Count’s fame (st.601) and wishes to aid him: “que tal omne non era por en cárçel tener” (st.605c). As Coates writes, the: “motif of pilgrimage provides ideological support for the linear dynamic of the poem” (2009: 68). The Lombard is wealthy and can buy his way in to see Fernán with a minimal guard (st.606); he talks with him extensively and they part in tears (sts.607c, 608a). Emotionally invested in the Count’s fate, the Lombard subsequently pursues Sancha on his behalf. She, like Tarsiana in the *Apolonio*, is a woman of unusual beauty (st.610ab), virtue, skill, and resourcefulness, and is thus a fitting heroine to carry the destiny of Castile through the murky waters of sexual sin.

Holding counsel with Sancha, the Lombard explains Fernán’s circumstances and admonishes her for the *manziella* (st.610) she has unwittingly caused, a “mal syn mesura” for the Castilians (st.611d):

Dueña syn pyedat e syn buen conosçer,  
de fazer byen o mal tú tienes el poder:  
sy al conde non quieres de muerte estorçer,  
avers’ ha por tu culpa Castyella a perder. (st.612)

Sancha's innocent yet catastrophic *culpa* marks her as a thirteenth-century Eve and a central figure in the redemptive drama of the *PPG*. The Lombard vilifies her for abetting the enemy (st.613) and, in further effort to persuade her to marry Fernán, describes the consequences of her pending decision with reference to God and society: “eres de tu buen preçio mucho menoscabada” (st.614a). If she refuses her duty: “serás por este fecho de muchos denostada; / . . . está culpa será toda a ty echada” (st.614bd); yet if she embraces it: “tenerte yen las dueñas por byen aventurada; / de todos los d’España series mucho onrada” (st.615bc).

Sancha and Fernán are portrayed as courtly lovers by the Lombard, she the aristocratic lady in distress and he the heroic knight: “más debes amar éste que non enperador; / non ha cabero d’armas en el mundo mejor” (st.616cd). The object of their union is a Christian marriage, yet the pair’s courting in such desperate circumstances, with the assistance of one of Sancha’s most loved *dueñas*, lends itself very well to high romance. Sancha soon receives a message from Fernán on behalf of her servant that casts her as a kind of *belle dame sans merci* in the shadow of her associations with Eve: “contra vós al Señor se es a querellar / que vós sola l’ queredes d’este mundo sacar, / e sy vós lo quisyésedes él podryé escapar” (st.619bcd). Sancha’s *dueña* who, like the Lombard, is turned to the Count’s favour through encounter with him, urges her mistress to make amends for what may well otherwise amount to a “gran pecado” (st.620d).

Sancha’s approach to the relationship is penitential, wise, and passionate. Describing herself in terms related to pilgrimage as “mal andante” and “pesante” (st.621bc), she understands that fortune may allow her to put things right: “mas venir á sazón que l’ veré byen andante” (st.621d), and formulates a bold and dangerous plan:

“al su fuerte amor dexarme yo vençer; / quiero m’ aventurar e yrmelo a ver, / todo mi coraçón fazerle entender” (st.622bcd). Her discourse with Fernán portrays romantic love channelled for societal and Christian purpose and thus elevated as an act of *cortesía*. Notable is the free reign Sancha is permitted with her passion as a force that, in reverse of Rodrigo’s lust for the daughter of Yllán, forges a dynasty anew: “buen conde—dixo ella—esto faz’ buen amor, / que tuelle a las dueñas vergüença e pavor, / olvidan los paryentes por el entendedor” (st.624abc). Sancha and Fernán are *guarida* and *guarido* of their lovesickness in each other’s presence (sts.623c, 628a).

In development of the argument of the persuasive Lombard, Sancha admonishes Fernán of his options and their consequences. If he wishes she help him escape, he must declare his love to her and to God: “pleyto e omenaje en mi mano faredes / . . . conmigo vendiçiones e misa prenderedes” (st.626bd). If he decides against this he will die alone in prison, *mesquino*, and bear the responsibility of the *culpa* weighed against her (st.627). Fernán responds equally passionately and with overriding reference to their union as willed by God:

Quien d’esto vos falliere sea de Dios fallido,  
faléscale la vyda com’ falso descreydo;  
.....  
nunca mientras vysquíeredes abré otra esposa:  
sy d’esto vos falliere, falesca m’ la Gloriosa. (sts.629-30)

Their mutual declarations made, Sancha helps Fernán to escape from prison and, due to the chains binding his legs, must carry him to relative freedom, “a cuestras” (st.632d). A strong and capable woman, Sancha’s actions recall those of the lusty *serranas* pilloried in the *LBA*, an association reinforced by the previous dialogue on *buen amor*. Sancha is a trickster as well as a princess, as indicated by Coates (2009: 68), and the couple make their way from the Camino Francés, through an oak grove, and into the mountains to

hide. It is there, amongst the brambles, that Sancha and Fernán face their greatest trial, as she must defend herself from a corrupt Archpriest who is hunting with his hounds in the area (st.534), a scene comic, salacious, violent, and an affirmation of Christian values, in turn.

The hounds detect the lovers and reveal them to the Archpriest, who gleefully considers the circumstances to offer a *varata* (st.635c) more valuable than the Castilian city Fernán would donate in exchange for secrecy: “plogol’ más que ganar a Acre e Damiata” (st.635d). *Varata* is a term that Coates associates with Yllán’s treacherous deal to bring down *España* (2009: 69), and is employed by an enemy African king who engages Fernán in battle: “sy lo guisar podiera, mejor lo varatara” (st.531c). The Archpriest intends to have his way with Sancha should the couple wish to remain hidden, and he equates sexual opportunity with commerce in the manner of Tarsiana’s pimp and clients in the *Apolonio*. He treats the couple like dogs (st.638b), and his impiety and poor tradesmanship, that is, his lack of *cortesía*, is declared by an enraged Fernán: “Par Dios—díxole—pydes cosa desaguisada, / por poco de trabajo demandas grand soldada” (st.639cd).

In a surprising turn of events, Sancha reveals herself to be far more cunning than previously indicated: *hartera* (st.640a), like Tarsiana (and the pimp) in the *Apolonio* (sts.406c, 421a), a quality that, crucially, aligns her with the old Visigothic dynasty of Iberia as described in the introductory portion of the *PFG*: “omnes fueron arteros, Dios los quiso guñar” (st.19d). As those chosen to rule Spain under the Christian God, the Visigoths knew how best to survive in a fallen world of fame and fortune, as must Sancha and Fernán, the rightful inheritors of their legacy. Persuading the Archpriest that she sees the logic of his plan: “más val’ que ayunemos todos tres el pecado” (st.640d),

Sancha commands him to undress and follow her (st.641). The Archpriest's reaction is one of satisfaction that echoes that of the lovers: "tovo s' por guarydo" (st.642), underlining both the genuine lust that underpins the couple's relationship and the distinction of their sentiments, channelled for Christian purpose, from the lower-order, destructive desire of the Archpriest. Far from compliant, however, Sancha has conceived a plan to rid herself of her violator-to-be, a man symbolic of the scourge of a corrupted Castile.

The rape of women, whether by the infidel, their fathers, guardians, or as commercially organized, is a metonym for societal and spiritual corruption in the *Apolonio* and the *PFG*. When the Archpriest attempts to forcibly embrace Sancha, he is met by a force of nature attuned who pulls his beard and swears revenge: "dueña tan mesurada, / nunca byo omne nado dueña tan esforçada" (st.644ab). While Fernán lies partially immobilized by his prison chains, Sancha must wrestle with the Archpriest, assumedly dragging him to the spot where she left her lover, "ya quanto apartar" (st.643a), so that, between them, they can stab him to death (st.645). Such a violent crime is sanctioned by God in this significant context: "nunca merçed le quiera aver el Cryador" (st.646b).

Eradicating the sexual corruption that threatens to maintain the state of sin brought about by the lust of Rodrigo, last king of the Goths, Fernán and Sancha also gain in material terms from their actions. The Archpriest leaves behind a mule, cloth, and nothing less than a *mudado açor* (st.646c): "quiso Dios que ovyessen más onrado señor" (st.646d). In the context, I suggest that the *açor*, a symbol of immoderate desire, further contributes to the understanding of this scene as a recuperation of Castile in spiritual terms by two guardians who can appropriately manage their desire. The

*mudado açor* references the deal made earlier in the narrative by which Castile is regained as a territory, as indicated at the end of the sequence with the Archpriest: “Dexemos aquí ellos entrados en carrera, / por llegar a Castyella, que ya muy çerca era” (st.648ab). The task of Fernán, Sancha, and the Castilian troops is almost complete.

Most striking in this sequence of scenes is the depiction of Sancha not only as physically strong enough to be a match for a member of the male sex, but as a woman of intellectual measure. She is the counterpoint, an anti-Eve, to the Archpriest with his errant lust and, in a feat of quick wit, turns his deception back upon him: “confonder cuydó otro mas él fue confondydo” (st.642d). The use of *confonder* recalls the exclamation of the *Apolonio* poet about the behaviour of Antioco: “Confonda Dios tal rey” (st.51a), and three earlier employments of the term in the *PFG*, as regards the treachery of Yllán, the generalized state of sin that led to the fall of the Goths, and betrayal by the Navarrans, who are reported to have ravaged Castilian territory after Fernán and his men arrive in Burgos (sts.43c, 100d, 282b). The Archpriest is closely associated with treachery and concupiscence: both Sancha and the narrator describe him as a *traydor* (sts.644d, 645d, 646a), distinguishing her use of trickery and violence as elevated by societal and Christian purpose. Sancha triumphs over sexual corruption in the *PFG*.

Sancha’s role in the *PFG* is unusually prominent for a woman in the *mester de clerecía* and echoes that of Tarsiana in the *Apolonio*. Like Tarsiana, Sancha (princess, pilgrim, trickster, lover, wife, and Christian), personifies *cortesía* as an orthopraxis: worldly to the point of cunning in process, and prosperous materially and spiritually in product. The *cortesía* advocated by the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* distinguishes itself markedly from the *mester de clerecía* articulated in the *Alexandre* and the early works

of Berceo. It requires that members of both sexes seek autonomous roles in society in preparation for the life to come, yet equally to foster ethical familial and commercial relations for a life both pleasant and prosperous while here on earth.

## V. Conclusion

I have argued that the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* are profitably read in conjunction as founded on the values associated with thirteenth-century Iberian *cortesía*. Although they are in some respects very different works of *mester de clerecía*—the *Apolonio* considerably more erudite than the martial *PFG*—inherited sexual sin is the thematic backbone of both narratives, the redemption of which is essential for the ultimate prevailing of both male protagonists. The *Apolonio* and the *PFG* also share a prominent female character without whom such redemption would not be possible and who is a force to be reckoned with in her own right. The depictions of Tarsiana and Sancha mark an important development in the characterization of the corpus that looks forward to the roles women play in the fourteenth-century *LBA*.

The *Apolonio* and the *PFG* promote the values of aristocratic lineage and power and a patriarchal social structure, yet the characters Tarsiana and Sancha are indications of the shifting ideological sands within such social edifices. The portrayal of the two women as chaste guardians and progressive, intelligent defenders of the societal and spiritual wellbeing of their people, places them on an equal footing with the heroes of the poems. The issues their stories bring to light as regards sexual exploitation, particularly in the case of Tarsiana, are still relevant to women today.

I believe that Tarsiana's stint as a *juglaresa* is of particular relevance to readings of the *LBA*, which, as explored by Elizabeth Drayson, depicts: "musical performance as

an apt trope for readers' interpretative performances", in line with prevalent strands of twelfth-century thought (2010: 28; see st.70 of the *LBA*). Learning to play and perform with an instrument is also usefully considered analogous to *cortesía* as an orthopraxis: a learned, pious, and social process of worldly and spiritual product. High attainment in such a competence is fundamentally rooted in study of the seven liberal arts and, virtuosity in music, one of the subjects of the superior *quadrivium* which bring "measurable objectivity" to the primary principles taught by the *trivium* (Van Deusen 1995: xii), is a sign of sophistication. Musical practice may be considered a particularly effective didactic trope within the *Apolonio*, simultaneously illustrative of a hermeneutic theory and an ethical and social code.

Throughout the majority of this chapter the *Apolonio* is the primary point of reference, a poem I consider to be of notable coherence, poetic grace and dense semantic patterning in relation to the rather more rough-and-ready, fragmentary *PFG*. This is not to denigrate the *PFG*: it is a highly engaging, affecting, significant poem and historic document in its own right, and both works are important witnesses in what I believe to be a new stage in the flowering of the *mester de clerecía* at the mid-point of the thirteenth-century, the beginning of what Charles Faulhaber describes as: "the period of liveliest scientific and didactic activity in medieval Spain", under Alfonso X (1972: 140).

Building on the work of prominent critics, I have endeavoured to navigate the complex generic textures of the *Apolonio* and the *PFG*. I have sought to illustrate that the pious examples of the protagonists of both poems are informed and extended by their roles in society, *mesteres* that sometimes require recourse to trickery, as in the episodes of Tarsiana's enslavement in the *Apolonio* and the encounter with the

Archpriest in the *PFG*. Accomplished generic hybrids, the *Apolonio* and the *PFG* impressively adapt profane and sacred tradition alike and portray worldly, often ostensibly sinful pursuits as potential forms of secular sacrament. As such, they articulate the most outward-facing configuration of “mester de clerecía” of the thirteenth-century, canonical poems.

#### 4. Hagiography and Monastic Rhetoric: The Case of the *Libro de buen amor*

Por quanto nos amamos, la fin non oluidemos.

*Libro de Apolonio* (st.651b)

By God! if wommen hadde writen stories,  
As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,  
They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse  
Than al the mark of Adam may redresse.  
Chaucer, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* (lines 693-96)

##### I. Introduction

The tradition of monasticism in Iberia dates back to late Roman Hispania. In the fourteenth century, the monasteries were in decline, yet the intellectual practices of the cloister remained highly influential on contemporary poetics. Moreover, the production of hagiography, as historically associated with the monasteries, continued to be prolific: by the fifteenth century, three quarters of European vernacular hagiography was written in Castilian or Catalan. Saints Lives written in poetry, such as the *Vidas* of Gonzalo de Berceo, had brought the legends of the saints enduring popularity. Contemporary with the *Libro de buen amor* (*LBA*), such legends were largely written in prose as more readily associated with private reading than their versed versions, although they were also recited by preachers and minstrels (Gerli 2003a: 580-81, 375-76; “Monasticism”, “Hagiography”).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The *LBA* is extant in three manuscripts, *G*, *T*, and *S*, dating to 1330 in the case of the former two and 1343 in that of the latter. *T* and *S* are named after the erudite environments in which they historically have been kept, Toledo Cathedral and the University of Salamanca, respectively, and *S* is by far the most extensive of the three. Critics debate whether the *LBA* was written in two redactions, or if the differing versions are evidence of scribal variation of a single redaction, as reflected in two of the most acclaimed editions of the poem by Gybbon-Monypenny (1988) and Blecua (1992). Blecua, viewing manuscript *S* as the most complete version of a postulated archetype, uses all three manuscripts to formulate his neo-Lachmannian edition. For Gybbon-Monypenny the *LBA* is a text that evolved with use, probably in response to interaction with an audience, and he bases his edition on the latest manuscript of the text (*S*). I favour the broader respect of Gybbon-Monypenny for the integrity of the manuscript witness and thus use

The canonical, thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía* demonstrates a strong affiliation with hagiography and the monasteries of northern Iberia, where many young men learned the arts of reading and writing throughout the medieval period. The monasteries of San Millán de la Cogolla and Santo Domingo de Silos are central locales for Berceo and his *Vidas*; the author of the *Poema de Fernán González (PFG)* sought to promote the nearby institution of San Pedro de Arlanza in association with the saintly first count of Castile; and both the *Libro de Alexandre (Alexandre)* and *Libro de Apolonio (Apolonio)* show marked allegiance to monastic thought along with the themes and narrative paradigms of hagiographic texts. The *LBA* is also a work steeped in hagiographic tradition and monastic models of rhetorical learning, yet it differs from the earlier works in this regard in two fundamental respects.

Firstly, whereas the *Alexandre*, Berceo's *Vidas*, the *Apolonio*, and the *PFG*, are all products of earnest didactic intent, the *LBA* is essentially parodic, burlesquing the conventions of the Western scholarly tradition and notably those of the *mester de clerecía*, as previously argued by John K. Walsh (1979) and corroborated by Julian Weiss (2005: 504; 2006: 11). As Jorge García López indicates, as such, the parody of the *LBA* does not merely poke fun at an out-dated clerical style and mode of thought but, going beyond the purpose of humour, renovates the erudite poetics of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía* (2004).<sup>2</sup> Secondly, rather than interpreting the words and deeds of a historical hero or set of heroes as they journey through their life or lives, the *LBA* broadly portrays the life of the mind, namely that of its supposed author,

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his edition of the *LBA* throughout. Manuscript *S* contains all the sections and episodes of the *LBA* that I analyse in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See also Scordilis Brownlee on Ruiz's: "expansion of the poetic possibilities established by the *mester de clerecía* poets of the thirteenth century" (1985: 130).

to newly interrogate the possibilities of salvation for fourteenth-century Iberia.<sup>3</sup> Of the earlier *mester de clerecía*, the *LBA* is thus most akin to Berceo's *Vida de Santa Oria* (*SO*), a work of vision literature: Ruiz narrates his cognitive experience as if it were occurring there and then, which I will argue constitutes the majority of the text.<sup>4</sup> The parody of the *LBA* thus explicitly pertains to the author figure—both the historical authenticator, Juan Ruiz, and the protagonist of his cognitive activity, the Archpriest of Hita—whose dual function as narrator and protagonist is a parodic extension of the role pertaining to the pious cleric as asserted in the *Alexandre* and the hagiographer as notably depicted in the oeuvre of Berceo. Ruiz characterizes himself as a morally conflicted poet and his Archpriest as a shameless lover and glutton, and there is considerable slippage between the two: “la burla que oyeres, non la tengas en vil; / . . . tú non fallarás uno de trovadores mill” (st.65ad).<sup>5</sup>

The thirteenth-century *mester* plot a Christian path through the disorder of the world for their heroic protagonists, whose geographic displacement foments intellectual journeying. As the principal characters connect this world to the next with their

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<sup>3</sup> For discussion on Juan Ruiz as a historical figure or authorial alias see Deyermond in Gerli (2003a: 488-90; “Libro de buen amor”) and Vasvári (2008). My argument in this chapter complements the view of the *LBA* as a pseudo-autobiography. Gybbon-Monypenny suggests that the *LBA* is a parody of the erotic pseudo-autobiography (1957), designed to: “demolish the pretensions of Courtly Love” (Deyermond 1970: 53), and this view is elaborated by De Looze (1997). The extent to which the *LBA* might be categorized as “courtly” as related to the theory of the poem as a *cancionero*, is a topic I would like to explore in the future in relation to the *Apolonio* and the *PFG*. I believe, in line with Lawrance (1984), that the *LBA* was written for a highly erudite audience, and this may have included members of a court or courts. As Maravall generally observes in commentary of pointed relevance to the *LBA*: “cortesía es una concepción moral de las relaciones con los demás, una doctrina o disciplina de vida . . . en la que se funden Ovidio y Aristóteles con el sentimiento cristiano—interiorizado y espiritualizado por obra de los cistercienses y de otros movimientos de espiritualidad—. El P. Gorce llamó a ese contenido doctrinal ‘escolástica cortés’, expresión que fue recogida y aplicada sistemáticamente por el P. Paré al estudio del *Roman de la Rose*” (1983: 262). Notably, Heusch argues that manuscript *S* is a courtly elaboration of the basic structure of the *LBA* as found in manuscripts *G* and *T* (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript *T* of the *LBA* contains the “Visión de Filoberto”, a prose translation of Latin verse concerned with the relation of the body and soul. Editors broadly view this piece of vision literature as apocryphal, though its inclusion further indicates that the *LBA* is closely associated with European traditions of meditative reading. See Dagenais (1994: 106).

<sup>5</sup> As Weiss observes, Ruiz develops: “a potential contradiction inherent in the narratorial presence of the earlier didactic texts”. In the *MNS*, for example, Berceo portrays the author figure as: “both Everyman and historical character” (2006: 6-8).

developed understanding, secular material is transformed to serve extra-textual Christian truth. In the *LBA*, the synthesis of belief of the High Middle Ages that honoured the universal, such that a writer's craft could bear a calculable relation to the divine in which the reader could share, gives way to fourteenth-century existential crisis and a preoccupation with the ambivalence of language (Lynch 1988: 14-15; Reiss 1989: 114). A consequence of such crisis, whereby the hero finds himself at increasing disjunction from God, is a turning inward of the gaze and renewed focus on secular topics for their own sake. Juan Ruiz articulates his own cognitive adventures as grounded in deviant language in the *LBA*, with which the strictures of *cuaderna vía* are subject to considerable centrifugal pressure.

A major focus of this chapter is the structural and thematic unity of the *LBA*. One of the earliest critics of the poem, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, referred to the poem as a species of *cancionero*—an anthology of songs and poetry—a theory recently re-explored by Juan-Carlos Conde (2010), although, notably, Alan Deyermond (2004) and E. Michael Gerli (1985, 2005) have argued for structural and rhetorical coherence, respectively. While Gerli (1985: 220), John Dagenais (1994: 95-96), and Catherine Brown (1998: 120-21) all assert that the *LBA* is a *contrafactum*, edifying the reader/listener by teaching through contraries, Colbert I. Nepaulsingh's specific analysis of the poem as an anti-hagiography is important for this study (1977).<sup>6</sup> As Nepaulsingh asserts, the *LBA* is dedicated to the youth of the narrator/protagonist in place of the life, death, and miracles of a saint (1977: 65-67), and, as I will demonstrate, his argument is

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<sup>6</sup> See also Brown 1997. Michalski also investigates the *LBA* as an anti-hagiography in relation to Augustine's *Confessions* (1973). Scordilis Brownlee assesses both his and Nepaulsingh's work as: "predicated upon the assumption that the protagonist [of the *LBA*] undergoes a kind of linear progression in which he rejects Catholicism, becoming converted instead to the religion of Don Amor", an approach which she questions, concluding that both: "afford only partial views of the *Libro*" (1985: 59, 114). I develop Scordilis Brownlee's views on the *LBA* further on in this chapter.

usefully related to Deyermond's neglected theory that the *LBA* largely comprises a dream vision followed by a closely linked allegory (2004). I believe that prevailing theories of the poem as anthological or unified need not be considered mutually exclusive. Portraying the mind of an anti-hero, the ostensible narrative disorder of the *LBA* may be considered the plural articulation of a mind in conflict.

Ryan D. Giles observes that the *LBA*, like the later *Celestina* (1499) and *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* (1605, 1615), acts out: "transgressions through the rhetorical parameters of sainthood". Moreover, as hagiographic texts typically open with pious didactic material and follow with narration of: "a fallen world of gross and pornographic excess" (2009: 9-14), as is the case in Berceo's *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (*MNS*), for example, the broadly obscene major sections of the *LBA* are framed with religious prefatory, central, and concluding material, along with secular comment.<sup>7</sup> In conjunction with the pious material, such secular comment functions dialectically, provoking doubt and debate with regard to clerical authority, and notably that of the author of the poem himself. As I will argue over the course of this chapter, such play with didactic paradigm is also characteristic of the microstructures of the *LBA*, which in its entirety may be principally divided, beyond the plural framing material, into two major central sections: the Amor/Endrina and the mock-epic.<sup>8</sup> Central to my discussion is the secular prefatory material on the nature of man that takes

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<sup>7</sup> In an allegorical prologue that does not feature in the Latin prose model for the *MNS* (Beresford 2004: 81), the author contemplates the Virgin with mind and body in harmony as it may have been before the Fall: "semeja esti prado equal de Paraíso . . . omne que y morasse nuncua perdrié el viso" (st.14ad). As Weiss notes: "in the very act of representing the process of redemption, Berceo is drawn ineluctably back to the very sins he aspires to forget", across the main body of his text (2006: 27).

<sup>8</sup> Lecoy understood the *LBA* to be fundamentally bipartite (1974: 352), a notion developed by Deyermond (2004) and discussed by Heusch, who asserts that Lecoy: "no vio que podía haber una relación de construcción no solo entre los que él indentificó como bloques centrales, sino también entre estos y los llamados episodios secundarios". He advocates the significance of manuscripts *G* and *T* for understanding the fundamental composition of the *LBA*: "por muy salpicado que todo ello esté de *exempla* y de digresiones, nos las habemos con un núcleo estructural perfectamente trabado y sobre todo autosuficiente" (2011: 198, 196).

recourse to the authority of Aristotle, and epitomizes Ruiz's particular brand of epistemological parody.<sup>9</sup>

The epistemological parody of the *LBA* is that of the fallen mind with reduced access to divine knowledge, the symptoms of which include deviant language and an excessive interest in secular poetics. As I will argue, the Amor/Endrina and mock-epic sections are testament to man's entrenchment in sin, and offer an intimate parody of Juan Ruiz's clerical skills in reading and composition as rooted in the pedagogy of the monasteries, the unrivalled centres for medieval European education until the rise of the schools and universities from the twelfth century. Monastic reading, which entailed profound contemplation of sacred texts, was a fundamentally rhetorical (in modern parlance, "creative") activity as associated with the memory, for the composition of further textual resources for the monk and his community, an activity associated with the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía* by Robin M. Bower (2005) and Geraldine Hazbun (2013).

Requiring that the mind be fully stimulated, monastic memory work often included frivolous, obscene, violent, and sexual imagery, as carefully engaged in accordance with pious purpose. Notably, a commonplace of monastic rhetoric was of reading as food, such as bread, or even meat, whereby the text was digested by thought and further ruminated upon or "cooked" in cogitation. "Good" reading was believed to transform the mind over time, nourishing it as appropriate food does the body, such that even when dreaming, it could only contemplate God (Carruthers 1998: 30-31, 91, 164;

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<sup>9</sup> Prior to the discourse on the nature of man is secular material that depicts a debate between the Greeks and the Romans in sign language (sts.44-70). The debate, in which both parties: "read into the other's sign the message they are predisposed to find" (Weiss 2005: 506), is central to global readings of the *LBA* for many critics. See, for example, Gerli (1982), Reiss (1989: 114), and as detailed by Brown (1998: 181n27). In my view, the episode highlights the central theme of the ambiguity of worldly signs as part of the wider exploration of the lot of fallen man in the *LBA*.

see also Haywood 2008: 8-9).<sup>10</sup> The comparison of narrative to food and drink is a motif of the *mester de clerecía* (Walsh 1979: 80; Weiss 2006: 219), and as Dagenais notes: “metaphors of rumination (‘eat this book’)” are frequent in medieval reading in general (1994: 60). As such, in pious rhetorical compositions, food may ambivalently represent both the spiritual “food” required for redemption, as notably symbolized by the elements of the Eucharist and sacred scripture, and the ultimate temptation of the flesh.

According to Augustine, whose view was generally accepted in Christian society by the twelfth century, the fall came about due to an appetite for knowledge closely linked with sexual desire (Le Goff 1988: 97). In a parallel tradition, Tertullian considered gluttony to be the sin that drove Adam and Eve to eat the apple of knowledge, such that mankind would evermore be condemned to the sensual, deceptive word, rather than the plenitude of the *logos*: “reason, wisdom, and Word” (Kelley 2004: 66).<sup>11</sup> In the monastic tradition, meditative reading is the means by which man ascertains his redemption from the fall. In the words of Bower: “monastic *lectio divina* was deemed uniquely able to unmake a sinful self and to inscribe both body and soul with the matter of sacred texts”, such that the reader may become a “physical

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<sup>10</sup> *The Rule of Saint Benedict* stipulates that the abbot, who acts in place of Christ in the monastery: ‘should sprinkle the yeast of divine justice in the minds of his disciples’, “sed iussio eius vel doctrina fermentum divinae iustitiae in discipulorum mentibus conspargatur” (Ch. 2). Moreover, the regulation of diet is a primary concern of the monk or saint: ‘above all [alimentary] excess is to be avoided so that indigestion never steals up on a monk’, “Remota prae omnibus crapula et ut numquam subripiat monacho indigeries” (Ch.39; Venarde 2011). The archetypal saint lives ascetically in *imitatio Christi* with the aim of helping redeem his or her community from the fall, and in Berceo’s *SM* and *SD*, Millán and Domingo deny their appetites to focus their minds (see, for example, sts.145cd and 66d, respectively). The sinners to whom they administrate are instructed to avoid the pleasures of the flesh, as in the case of Onorio in the *SM*, “un noble senador” (st.181a). Every time Onorio sits down to enjoy some roast meats, *assadura* (st.183a), he is assailed by a demon, the solution to which is severe fasting and the donning of rough, uncomfortable clothing (sts.189d, 190b).

<sup>11</sup> My thanks are due to Gregory S. Hutcheson, who shared his knowledge of Tertullian with me at the Medieval Congress, Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA 2013. On Augustine and Tertullian see Le Goff (1988: 97) and Walker Bynum (1995: 40-41), respectively, as further elaborated in section III of this chapter. For in-depth study of Augustinian theology and the *LBA*, see Seidenspinner-Núñez (1981), Gerli (1982), and Brown (1998).

embodiment of Scripture”, in emulation of Christ (2005: 189). It is my contention that representations of illicit sexual relationships and excessive food in the *LBA* refer directly to Ruiz’s deviant reading and composition. Allegorized through the Amor/Endrina and mock-epic sections by the promiscuity and gluttony of the Archpriest, erotic gastronomy is also a major theme of the two most important love affairs aside from that with Endrina, the Cruz and Garoça episodes, in which the Archpriest, rather than emulating Christ, is a parodic embodiment of Juan Ruiz’s errant reading.

In her discussion of John Cassian, whose *Conferences* were foundational for monastic rhetoric, Mary Carruthers recalls Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria nova* (c.1200), a medieval treatise on rhetorical poetics of enormous influence right through to the fifteenth century, three manuscripts of which are recorded by Charles Faulhaber in Spanish libraries.<sup>12</sup> Modelled on Horace’s *Ars poetica* and written in hexameter verses, the *Poetria nova* describes the remembering mind as a *cellula deliciarum*, a chamber of pleasures, which: “needs disciplined exercise . . . [and] a suitable regimen, both of mental ‘matters’ and of physical diet and rest” (1998: 88). The undisciplined mind, fed with unsuitable texts, whose condition is exacerbated by a physical body indulged with too much food, wine, and sex, is liable to undisciplined thought. In the case of the *LBA*, rather than following the ‘fourfold way’ of *cuaderna vía* as a hermeneutic route to salvation, Ruiz persistently errs from the clerical path, writing in a variety of metres and styles in order to portray the world of his erotic and alimentary meditations turned dreams and nightmares.

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<sup>12</sup> Faulhaber records the slim manuscript evidence for usage of the *artes poetriae* in medieval Spain: three manuscripts of the *Poetria nova* from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Nevertheless, two of the three, both at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (3699, 9589), are of Aragonese origin. Martín de Córdoba’s *Breve Compendium Artis Rethorice* (first half fourteenth century), though probably written in France, is heavily indebted to the *Poetria nova* (1972: 46-47, 140).

## II. From Meditation to Dream

The two major central sections of the *LBA*, portraying the Amor/Endrina affair and the mock-epic battle, are framed by sets of didactic material both religious and secular. The religious elements include *gozos* and *passiones*, in which the ultimate heroes of hagiography, Christ and the Virgin, are invoked for the purposes of meditation. Such lyrics, which also occur in the middle of the *LBA*: “serve as the basis for meditation on the great events of Christian religious history and upon the state of the reader’s soul” (Dagenais 1994: 103-06), namely the life of Christ as redeemer of mankind. The suggestion for sources of the lyrics include hymns supposedly by Berceo—the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, *Ave Sancta Maria*, and *Tu Christe que luz eres* (Lomax 1969: 305-06)—and English contemporary analogues, as argued by James Burke (1980-1981: 123-25) and Dagenais (1994: 81, 104, 106).

Of the framing material of the *LBA*, Burke examines the religious invocation, prose sermon, and lyrics as all pertaining to the English meditative sermon tradition. Citing Rosemary Woolf, he notes that these versions of the lyrics had the passion of Christ as one of their principal foci and were associated with the meditations of the Cistercians (1980-1981: 123-25), a mystical Benedictine reform order of considerable influence on Iberian monastic culture and notably the work of Berceo (see Chapter 2 of this thesis). Drawing on Luis Beltrán, Burke traces the trope of the passion for meditation in the *LBA* from the first ten verses of the invocation headed by the INRI in which Ruiz thrice pleads to be saved: “desta mala presión”, “desta presión”, “desta presión do ya[go]” (sts.1d, 2d, 3d), to the Archpriest’s affair with Cruz the baker girl (1980-1981: 122-23). Taking his analysis further, he notes that the Augustinian tripartite

division of the soul—*memoria*, *voluntad*, and *entendimiento*—as cited by Ruiz in the prose sermon, is a typical medieval meditative scheme, and he records that Ruiz also cites Psalm 119.47, “E meditabor in mandatis tuis que dilexi” (line 17; ‘And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved’; *The Bible*), and asserts that the purpose of his work is the “memoria de bien” (line 59), to conclude that the entire *LBA* may have been intended for meditation (1980-1981: 123). The invocation, prose sermon, and lyrics introduce the *LBA* as a work for pious contemplation as associated with the hagiographic tradition and fourteenth-century preaching.

Notably, Luis Jenaro-Maclennan also suggests that the prose sermon has the character of a meditative prayer (1980: 181, 184) and, in corroboration of Burke and Jenaro-Maclennan’s findings, Dagenais (1994: 40, 60, 89), Gerli (2005), and Louise M. Haywood (2008: 8-9), all relate monastic meditative reading to the *LBA* in response to Carruthers’ work on medieval memory. Through the invocation, prose sermon, and lyrics, Ruiz guides his audience to think on the *buen amor* of God, thus helping to impress such love upon: “la çela de la memoria por que se acuerde dello, e trae al cuerpo a fazer buenas obras, por la quales se salva el omne” (prose sermon, lines 22-23). In the prose sermon, Ruiz articulates the prevalent medieval concept that the faculty of memory, when employed well in reading, produces wisdom and builds character for the perfection of the soul (Carruthers 1998: 30-31).

In his study of the prominence of the structural trope of “pathway”, *via*, *carrera*, *senda*, *camino*, in the *LBA*, Gerli also concludes that the *LBA* as a whole is of meditative function. He describes how the trope, to be associated with the ‘way’, *vía*, of *cuaderna vía*, is a principal metaphor of medieval rhetoric as developed in the cloisters of the early Middle Ages: “basado e imaginado en términos de un movimiento, viaje o

trayectoria intelectual . . . éste tuvo una amplísima difusión en todos los medios eclesiásticos europeos” (2005: 68). The *thema* of the prose sermon enshrines the *via* trope and encourages pious meditation, reading as follows: “Intellectum tibi dabo, et instruum te in via hac qua gradieris: firmabo super te oculos meos” (Psalm 31.8).<sup>13</sup> Recording the prophecy of Saint David: “por Spiritu Santo hablando, a cada uno de nós” (line 2), the *thema* is a citation from one of the distinguished seven penitential psalms that were sung frequently in the monastic cycle that: “became expressions of Christ’s suffering for all mankind, a figure of the monastic vocation to do penance for the sins of all” (Gehl 1984: 222-23).<sup>14</sup> As resonant of the words of Christ in John 14.6: ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me’, the *thema* is also to be associated with Mary, who is praised shortly after the prose sermon with the first *gozo* of the poem: “O María, / luz del día, / Tú me guía / toda vía” (st.20).<sup>15</sup>

In the *LBA*, the homiletic and rhetorical pathway, *vía*, is one from which the mind of the author all too easily errs and, as Gerli argues: “está ligada a las múltiples lecciones que el texto puede suscitar sobre el amor divino y humano así como sobre la manera de encontrarlos” (2005: 68). As such, in the prose sermon Ruiz also advises his audience on appropriate objects for meditation should *buen amor* prove too difficult, with a striking warning: “los libros de la ley e del derecho e de castigos e costumbres e de otras çiençias. Otrosí fueron la pintura e la escriptura e las imágenes primera mente falladas por rrazón que la memoria del omne desleznadera es” (lines 45-48). The

<sup>13</sup> The *thema* translates as follows: ‘I will give thee understanding, and instruct thee in the path that thou shouldst follow: my eyes shall be fixed upon thee’ (Drayson MacDonald 1999).

<sup>14</sup> David is considered a prefiguration of Christ: “Bethlehem is the birthplace of both; the shepherd life of David points out Christ, the Good Shepherd; the five stones chosen to slay Goliath are typical of the five wounds. The betrayal by his trusted counsellor, Achitophel, and the passage over the Cedron remind us of Christ’s Sacred Passion. Many of the Davidic Psalms, as we learn from the New Testament, are clearly typical of the future Messiah” (Corbett 1908). Medieval depictions of David are prolific and illustrate his: “many, and apparently contradictory roles—*auctor* and adulterer, saint and sinner” (Minnis 1984: 6). He is fitting inspiration for Ruiz’s hagiographic parody.

<sup>15</sup> “Ego sum via et veritas et vita / nemo venit ad Patrem nisi per me” (*Biblia Sacra* vol. 2).

memory of man, his principal instrument in the contemplation of sacred texts, is drastically impoverished due to the fall: “por rrazón que la natura umana que más aparejada e inclinada es al mal que al bien” (lines 43-44), such that the inverse of the passion of Christ is evoked through the *LBA*. Rather than the ultimate act of self-abnegation for the good of the Christian community, the main body of the text articulates the self-indulgent thoughts of a persistent sinner.

The matter of the *LBA* is likely to be morally dissolute: “ca tener todas las cosas en la memoria e non olvidar algo más es de la divinidad que de la humanidad” (prose sermon, lines 48-50). Accordingly, the reader is acquainted with the Archpriest of Hita in the main body of the text, a highly flawed protagonist somewhat obsessed with procuring lovers, the most important of which is Endrina, as depicted in the central Amor/Endrina section. After narrating three minor, failed attempts at seduction, the central section begins with a series of arguments between the Archpriest and two figures—personified Amor and the Roman goddess Venus—who visit him during the night and offer him advice on relationships with the opposite sex: “una pelea que una noche me vino: / pensando en mi ventura, sañudo, e non con vino” (st.181ab). Christ and Mary are exchanged for Amor and Venus as the foci of Ruiz’s reading and composition in this section that, leading to the seduction of Endrina, is unabashedly focused upon worldly love. Having long puzzled critics for its narrative incoherence, Deyermond argues that the section may profitably be read as an “extended dream-narrative”, as previously suggested by José Amador de los Ríos (1969) and Félix Lecoy (1974). However, as I will argue, dreams and visions experienced through pious meditation are closely related phenomena, and Deyermond’s theory complements a

reading of the Amor/Endrina section as an errant meditation borne of the religious prefatory material of the *LBA*.<sup>16</sup>

At the beginning and end of the *LBA*, the Virgin is beseeched to help Ruiz write his book: “por que de todo bien es comienzo e rraíz”, “es comienzo e fin del bien” (sts.19a, 1626b). When the Archpriest goes to see Venus for help in procuring him a lover, she is described as Mary minus the qualifier *bien*: “ella es comienzo e fin deste viaje”, “sin vós yo non la puedo començar nin acabar” (sts.583d, 587c). In the Amor/Endrina section, Venus is the wife and mother of Amor (st.608a), who at one stage is described as Cupid (st.183bc), just as Mary is wife of God and mother of Christ (Nepaulsingh 1977: 65). Moreover, the Archpriest sacrilegiously praises Venus and Amor as the creators of man (sts.585d, 586b), and states that in Venus: “todo por su consejo se fará adó apuerte” (st.584d). The latter nautical imagery of the goddess as a port for pilgrims may be associated with the Ave María verse and *loores* of the concluding material of the *LBA*, where Mary is described as: “estrella / resplandeçiente”, “estrella del mar, / puerto de folgura” (sts.1663ab, 1681ab), a guiding star, just as she is: “estrella de los mares, guiona deseada”, “dicha puerto a qui todos

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<sup>16</sup> As portrayed in the Bible and in the earlier *mester de clerecía*, devout visionary experience and dreams are often hard to distinguish. Jacob, for example, dreamed: ‘and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God’, “Viditque in somnis scalam stantem super terram et cacumen illius tangens cælum / angelos quoque Dei ascendentes et descendentes per eam / et Dominum innixum scalæ dicentem sibi” (Genesis 28.12-13; *Biblia Sacra* vol. 1). In the *Alexandre*, Alexander wishes to physically enact what Jacob envisions i.e. to scale a ladder or embankment into the sky (see Chapter 1 of this thesis), and, earlier on in the poem while in Jerusalem, recalls a vision that he experienced at night while trying to rest in his chamber (sts.1148-63). Visions generally come to the heroes of the *mester de clerecía* through slumber. In the *SD*, Domingo: “durmiésse en su lecho, ca era muy cansado; / una visión vido por ond fue confortado” (st.226bc); in the *SO*, when Oriá lies down to take some rest she receives a divine visitation (st.118ab [121ab]); and in the *PFG*, Fernán falls asleep and envisions the deceased monk Pelayo and Millán: “un sueño muy sabroso al conde fue tomando; / con sus armas guarnido, assy s’ fue acostando” (st.399bc).

corremos” (sts.32b, 35c), in Berceo’s *MNS* (Dutton et al. 1992).<sup>17</sup> In stark contrast to pious, humble Mary, Venus encourages the Archpriest to use cunning to get what he wants from worldly life: “la verdat a las de vezes muchos en daño echa; / muchos caminos ataja desviada estrecha; / ante salen a la peña que por carrera derecha” (st.637bcd). Whereas the Virgin is a focus for directed meditative reading on God’s love, Venus encourages deviation from the Christian path.

In meditative states a subject can compose narratives that defy the logic and limitations of physical reality, just as he or she might during dreams, whereby visual imagery facilitates: “mental *collatio*, or the gathering together in one place of various related strands” (Haywood 2008: 8). When read as a dream-narrative or an anti-meditation, the Amor/Endrina section’s numerous anomalies can be reasonably accounted for, including Venus’ repetition of Amor’s advice to the Archpriest, and the morphing of the Archpriest into a so-called Don Melón (Sir Apple) for the seduction of Endrina (Sloe), daughter of a Doña Rama (Mrs Branch).

As in the cases of the *Roman de la rose* (c.1280) and Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls* (1380s), the Amor/Endrina section is brought on by a waking preoccupation with love. Accordingly, the section may be related to Macrobius’ category of the *insomnium*, a troubling dream attributable to psychological causes (and thus of no prophetic value) (see Deyermond 2004: 110-12, and also Spearing 1976: 10). I suggest that the Amor/Endrina section may also be of parodic likeness to one of Macrobius’ categories of prophetic dream, the didactic *oraculum*, as distinguished by the presence of an authoritative figure giving advice to the dreamer.<sup>18</sup> The fact that the Archpriest (as

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<sup>17</sup> The *Ave Maris Stella* (‘Hail, thou Star of Ocean’) is the first verse of a hymn of seven strophes of four lines of obscure origin that was very popular in the medieval period, partly due to its use in the Divine Office (Henry 1907).

<sup>18</sup> For further details on Macrobius’ categories of dream, see Spearing (1976: 8-11).

Melón) and Endrina's relationship is the only one that is explicitly consummated in the *LBA* further corroborates the dream narrative/anti-meditation theory.

As A.C. Spearing notes, the fourteenth-century heralded the beginnings of interest in the individual psychology of dreams for the: "exploration of personal dilemmas" (1976: 9-10). The appearance of an imposing figure such as Amor to the narrator is a common feature of medieval dream narrative, as also occurs, for example, in the *Parliament of Fowls* and Juan de Mena's *Laberinto de Fortuna* (1444) (Deyermond 2004: 118), and draws on the tradition of the late-Roman poet and philosopher Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (c.524), a key source for the medieval vision (Carruthers 1998: 173-74). In the *Consolation of Philosophy*, Lady Philosophy appears to the author-figure, Boethius. As Philosophy helps Boethius to come to terms with his impending, unjust execution, Amor assists the Archpriest in understanding his failures as a lover.<sup>19</sup>

As Deyermond argues, with reference to ten other dream narratives from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries (Castilian, English, and French), there is no need for an explicit statement from the author that the text is a dream, or the depiction of the narrator reading a book before the dream takes place, neither of which occur in the Amor/Endrina section, in order for it to be qualified as such. The content of the narrative is implicitly understood to refer to a cognitive state, the specificity of which is, I argue, intentionally left ambiguous by Ruiz.

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<sup>19</sup> Ruiz, in further parallel with Boethius' work, laments his imprisonment in the invocation of the *LBA*: "saca a mí coitado desta mala presión" (st.1d). The *LBA* is on the whole written with a mixture of the prose-like *cuaderna vía* and lyric in the manner of a *prosimetrum* such as the *Consolation of Philosophy*. I discuss the significance of twelfth-century *prosimetra* for the *Alexandre* in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The extent to which the *LBA* draws on twelfth-century sources such as the *Pamphilus*, certain *prosimetra* etc. is a fascinating line of enquiry that I would like to pursue in the future. See Drayson on the Latin commentary tradition in relation to the *LBA* (2010).

Fitting for the narration of his ambiguous psychological state, Ruiz draws on the ultimate pagan authority on the art of love for the plot line of the Melón/Endrina courtship and consummation: Ovid, as read through the twelfth-century, Latin *Pamphilus* (Garbáty 1967: 457), a common point of reference for medieval scholars.<sup>20</sup> Heavily moralized versions of Ovid's work were often used by medieval preachers (Lomax 1969: 308); as José Antonio Maravall describes: "Ovidio era un manual de sabiduría para el hombre de la Edad Media . . . del que se estimaba que en el mundo de los paganos venía a ser la obra que se correspondía con los libros bíblicos" (1983: 260). Yet, rather than drawing a Christian reading from Ovid's text, which, as Dagenais remarks, required considerable exegetical "force" (1986-1987: 46), Ruiz, struggling cognitively with *loco amor*, follows a deviant path of meditative reading and composition to depict Melón and Endrina's relationship, of which the narration of Endrina's seduction is missing, presumably removed as it was too explicit for some medieval readers (Gybbon-Monypenny 1988: 289n877-78).

During the debate between the Archpriest and Amor, Amor, in parody of Christian teaching, explicitly cites Ovid and Pamphilus as prior disciples of his who the Archpriest can reference: "Si leyeres Ovidio, el que fue mi criado, / en él fallarás fablas que le ove yo mostrado: / muchas buenas maneras para enamorado" (st.429abc; see also st.446c). His recommendation is meta-textual, referring not only to the Archpriest's need for advice on how to procure a lover, but the role of the texts of these disciples in the problematic composition of the Amor/Endrina section, a discourse of self-

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<sup>20</sup> In the *Pamphilus*, Pamphilus, in love with Galatea, asks the counsel of Venus, who advises him to seek a go-between. The go-between, *Anus*, invites Galatea to her home to eat apples, where Pamphilus appears. The affair is consummated and later, to smooth things over, *Anus* advises the couple to marry. Garbáty notably associates the *Pamphilus* with the *Roman de la rose* and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (1380s), as well as the *LBA*, as all share a similar plot outline, and suggests that the *LBA* may be an important source for Chaucer's poem (1967: 457-66). For an overview on the possible links between Chaucer's oeuvre and the *LBA*, see Olivares Merino (2004).

referential, secular progression for which Ruiz in parody twice denies ultimate responsibility, while still claiming the section as his teaching. His didactic intent is highly suspect: “si villanía he dicho, aya de vós perdón, / que lo feo de la estoria diz Pánfilo e Nasón”; “dixe la por te dar ensienplo, non por que a mí vino” (sts.891cd, 909b).

The parody of pious contemplation of the Amor/Endrina section is also manifest in the episode as a microstructure of the *LBA* as a whole. Whereas the macrostructure of the *LBA* is largely constituted by the authoritative religious material of the invocation, prose sermon, and lyrics that call on Christ and Mary’s mercy and love and frame the licentious central sections, the Amor/Endrina section initiates with recourse to textual authority that is as invested in *loco amor* as the main content of Melón and Endrina’s affair. Whereas the *buen amor* evoked in the introductory material of hagiographic texts and as associated with the earnest, thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía*, implies the linear trajectory of a pathway that unites the fallen world with the heavens, *loco amor* is manifest in cycles such that the reader, engrossed in the Amor/Endrina section of the *LBA*, likely finishes just as far from salvation as when he or she began with the *pelea* between the Archpriest and Amor. Venus as *comienço e fin* does not show the way to salvation, but the beginning, end, and resurgence of carnal desire. The Amor/Endrina section is a secular dream vision as a result of deviant meditation on the figures of Christ and the Virgin in the framing material of the *LBA*. Fundamentally the product of errant reading, instead of nourishing the mind to dream about God (Carruthers 1998: 91), the section leads man to focus upon *loco amor*.

### III. The Cognitive Disorder of *Loco Amor*

The Amor/Endrina section is a microstructural response to the broader parody of hagiographic models of the *LBA* as a whole. Drawing on the authority of Amor and Venus and their disciples Ovid and Pamphilus, over Christ, Mary, and sacred scripture, Ruiz demonstrates *loco amor* to be an affliction of epistemological implications for fallen man. As I will argue, secular prefatory material, namely the discourse on the nature of man (sts.71-76), also plays an important role in determining the major content of the *LBA*. Stanzas 71-76, the second and last set of secular prefatory material after a debate between the Greeks and the Romans, take the form of an Aristotelian *quaestio* on carnal love. The argument of these stanzas for food and sex as the primary requirements of the flesh anticipates the erotic, allegorical battle between Carnal and Lent with their gastronomic armies of meats and fish, respectively, in the mock-epic section, in further manifestation of the cognitive state of fallen man, an argument briefly yet crucially explicated in explicit relation to Christian theology in the Amor/Endrina section.

During his debate with Amor in digression on *gula*, the Archpriest links gluttony with sexual excess and summarizes Adam's story:

Con la mucha vianda e vino, creçe la flema:  
duermes con tu amiga, afoga te postema;  
lieva te el diablo, en el infierno te quema;  
tú dizes al garçón que coma bien e non tema.

Adán, el nuestro padre, por gula e tragonía,  
porque comió del fruto que comer non devía,  
echó le del paraíso Dios en aquesse día;  
por ello en el infierno, desdeque morió, yazía. (sts.293-94).

This first of only two mentions of Adam in the *LBA*, who is otherwise listed in a group of sinners redeemed by Christ that also includes Eve (st.1561), is striking in its confluence with the doctrine of Augustine and Tertullian, the latter condemning Adam, who: 'yielded more readily to his belly than to God, heeded the meat rather than the

mandate, and sold salvation for his gullet!’ (*On Fasting* III; Roberts, Donaldson, Cleveland Coxe 1885).<sup>21</sup> Although Adam and Eve appear only briefly in the *LBA*, with the only notable mention of Eve, “Eva tristis”, the gullible victim of worldly love (st.378d), occurring further on in the *pelea* with Amor during the parody of the Canonical Hours (sts.372-87), their portrayals underpin the central thematic concern of the *LBA* with concupiscence and gluttony, as also indicated in the seduction of Endrina.<sup>22</sup> Endrina is tempted to Trotaconventos’ lodgings at midday, “quando yanta la gente” (st.871b), to meet the Archpriest with a promise of: “muchas peras e durazos, ¡qué çidras e qué mançanas!” (st.862b). The consummation of the relationship to follow her seduction is indicated by the alluring, symbolic apple, as first described in Genesis: ‘And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat’ (3.6).<sup>23</sup> In stanzas 71-76, the prefatory *quaestio* on carnal love, Ruiz attempts to justify his focus upon such desirables as food, sex, and their correlative, worldly knowledge, with parodic recourse to the greatest pagan, rather than Christian, authority on the natural world and the soul of the Middle Ages: Aristotle.

The discourse on the nature of man begins as follows: “el mundo por dos cosas trabaja: la primera, / por aver mantenencia; la otra cosa era / por aver juntamiento con fenbra plazentera” (st.71bcd). Aristotle is subsequently cited as an authority in *exsuperatio* on the nature of man, adding worldly knowledge to food and sex as the three strands of the *quaestio*: “dize lo grand filósofo, non só yo de rrebtar. / De lo que

<sup>21</sup> “Facilius uentri quam deo cessit, pabulo potius quam praecepto annuit, salutem gula uendidit” (*Library of Latin Texts, Series A*).

<sup>22</sup> Additionally, both the Archpriest (st.296a) and Amor (st.528c) include the example of Lot in their debate, as recorded in Genesis, who lay with his daughters after too much wine (19.30-38). The Archpriest remonstrates: “do mucho vino es, / luego es la loxuria e todo mal después” (st.296cd), while Amor admonishes, not without some irony: “guarda te sobre todo mucho vino beber” (st.528b).

<sup>23</sup> “Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum / et pulchrum oculis aspectuque delectabile / et tulit de fructu illius et comedit” (*Biblia Sacra* vol. 1).

dize el sabio non devemos dubdar, / que por obra se prueva el sabio e su fablar” (st.72bcd). In the spirit of Aristotelian empiricism and therefore in defiance of prohibition against scientific curiosity as associated with the teaching of Augustine (Camille 1998: 131-34; Biernoff 2002: 65), Ruiz calls upon his experience of the creatures of the earth to “prove” man’s bestial nature and thus justify his appetites. His argument would have been familiar to an erudite audience, and, as Jeremy N.H. Lawrance argues, their laughter would have been aroused: “not by the proposition that copulation is an operation *secundam naturam* . . . but by the sophistic logic of the application to the Archpriest’s own case” (1984: 234-35). Notably, the pursuit of Aristotle’s thought, as associated with the medieval schools, is condemned in the *Alexandre*, when Alexander, in empiricist exploration of the depths of the sea, gives an oration resembling a *quaestio* that leads to his downfall (sts.2317-20).

As I will argue in extension of Lawrance’s research, Ruiz’s use of Aristotle is by no means straightforward as a correlative symptom of gluttony and concupiscence in *loco amor*. Rather than promoting pagan philosophy and licentious approaches to desire as is ostensibly the case and as argued by José Luis Pérez López (2007: 155-56) and Jacques Joret (2011: 217), Ruiz irreverently combines his citation of Aristotle with Christian doctrine, including that of the Apostle Paul, thus burlesquing incompetent or deviant clerical appropriation of divergent scriptural traditions, as in the case of the use of Ovid in the Amor/Endrina section. He thus extends the parody of the impoverished state of his memory as related to his Christian skills in reading and composition as epitomic of the broader state of fallen man.

In Aristotelian teaching, man shares the nutritive faculty of the soul with animals as related to food and reproduction. His desire to copulate, Ruiz argues, is thus

completely natural: “omnes, aves, animalias, toda bestia de cueva, / quieren segund natura compañía sienpre nueva” (st.73bc). As Lawrance notes, at this stage Ruiz intentionally: “obscures the vital difference between Man and the other *animalias*”, namely his higher soul attuned to reason (1984: 236), a crucial distinction for Aristotle as read in the *De anima* (II.3).<sup>24</sup> Yet Ruiz’s initial evasion of Aristotle’s hierarchy of souls is only apparently to justify wanton copulation. In subsequent stanzas, he does in fact differentiate man from the beasts using further criteria of the *grand filósofo* in conjunction with Christian doctrine, to arrive at a notably parodic, Ruizian conclusion.

With regard to the desire to copulate, Ruiz indicates that man has an unusual propensity: “quanto más el omne, que a toda cosa se mueva. / Digo muy más del omne que de toda creatura” (sts.73d-74a). Whereas animals mate according to the laws of nature (st.74b), man, his mind ravaged by *loco amor*, carries out the act: “todo tiempo sin mesura, / cada que puede quiere fazer esta locura” (st.74cd). As Aristotle describes in the *De anima*, reproduction is only natural if it is: ‘not defective or spontaneously generated’ (II.4), such that Ruiz argues, when carried out by man, even the most fundamental act for the perpetuation of the species is as destructive as it is pleasurable and engaging. It is not reason that distinguishes man from beast, but *mal seso* (st.74c), the result of: “la pobredat de la memoria, que non está instructa del buen entendimiento, así que non puede amar el bien nin acordarse dello para lo obrar” (prose sermon, lines 41-43). Referring back to the discourse of the prose sermon, in which he underlines, “la flaqueza de la natura humana” (line 34), Ruiz implies not the authority of Aristotle, but the increasing distance of the soul of fourteenth-century man from the divine.

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<sup>24</sup> The distinction of man from plant life or animals is also advocated by Augustine (Fitzgerald 1999: 807; “Soul”), who privileges man’s rational capacity, *intellectus* (or *entendimiento*, as cited in the prose sermon): ‘the human soul is never anything save rational or intellectual’, “Numquam nisi rationalis et intellectualis est anima humana” (*On the Trinity* XIV.4; Schaff 1887; *Library of Latin Texts, Series A*).

Ruiz parodies man as a master of self-destruction with a portrayal that extends to himself as narrator and protagonist.<sup>25</sup> His sophistry with Aristotelian argument, a symptom of the cognitive disorder of *loco amor*, is complete when, to close the passage, he alludes to Paul, playing on the etymology of the verb *provar*, from the Latin *probo-are*, “to esteem”, “to approve”, as previously associated with the work of Aristotle: “que por obra se prueba el sabio e su fablar”, “que diz verdat el sabio clara mente se prueba” (sts.72d-73a). “Probar por obra” is a scholastic phrase that means to “to prove from experience”, as alluded to above, as one of three kinds of medieval proof, namely reason, authority, and experience (Lawrance drawing on Lewis 1984: 235). Ruiz paraphrases I. Thessalonians in a further attempt to justify *loco amor* as an affliction and the major subject of his book.

The Pauline text reads: ‘Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil’, “Omnia autem probate: quod bonum est tenete. Ab omni specie mala abstinete vos” (I. Thessalonians 5.21-22). In Ruiz’s interpretation, the Apostle’s words validate promiscuity: “provar omne las cosas non es por ende peor, / e saber bien e mal e usar lo mejor” (st.76cd), and, indeed, Paul’s text is employed for a second time much later on in the *LBA* in justification of the Archpriest’s sexual involvement with mountain women for the sake of a good meal, one of whom is named after Saint Agatha (st.987), shortly before the mock-epic section: “Provar todas las

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<sup>25</sup> On the theme of self-destruction, in the *quaestio* Ruiz also burlesques Aristotle’s analogy of the burning log to explain generation and decay, the governing principles of the sublunary world, as read in the *Physica* and *De generatione et corruptione*. In the case of Aristotle’s log, wood is destroyed but ashes are generated, whereas Ruiz indicates, attributing feelings and consciousness to the log (Lawrance 1984: 236), that indulgence of the flesh leads to death and destruction: “el fuego sienpre quiere estar en la çeniza; / como quier que más arde, quanto más se atiza; / el omne, quando peca, bien vee que desliza” (st.75abc).

cosas, el Apóstol lo manda” (st.950a).<sup>26</sup> Paul advises scrutiny, as equated by Ruiz via the verb *provar* with Aristotelian and scholastic proof. Note also that, according to Paul, man should retain what is good and reject evil, while Ruiz’s phrasing, “saber bien e mal e usar lo mejor” (st.76d), whereby the pronoun *lo* refers to both *bien* and *mal*, implies a far more ambiguous appraisal. Ruiz’s argument amounts to “proving” his grim conception of the soul with the experience of wanton copulation or, rather, wanton poetics—hardly what his authorities had in mind, and a process by which the “proof” itself constitutes the evidence. Evading the doctrine that reason, *entendimiento*, is a quality possessed by fallen man as held by Aristotle and Augustine, and employing Aristotle and Paul for personal ends, Ruiz proves his own thesis on the prevalence of *loco amor* in the mind of man and justifies his focus by default on food, sex, and worldly knowledge in the *LBA*. In the verse following the *quaestio* the Archpriest begins his first pursuit of a *dueña* in the *LBA*, in the words of Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez, a “succulent dish” to be consumed (1981: 91).

The mock-epic section continues the theme of food, sex, and worldly knowledge as the correlatives of *loco amor*. Carnal and Lent personify and gender the post-lapsarian dialectic of the flesh and the spirit for an Eastertime allegorical battle of foodstuffs burlesquing Christ’s passion to redeem mankind. As in the case of the Amor/Endrina section, this second section bears the characteristics of a dream or errant meditation. Notably, in his discussion of the Amor/Endrina section as a dream narrative, Deyermond extends his theory to the mock-epic section as largely based on the continued presence of the figure of Amor, and together the two sections amount to more than half of the *LBA* (2004: 122). Deyermond’s argument is developed by Kevin R.

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<sup>26</sup> Deyermond argues of the *serranas*: “while three . . . want sexual satisfaction, and the fourth wants marriage, the male protagonist is interested only in a good square meal. It is food, not women, that receives sensual emphasis” (1970: 64).

Poole (2009). The highly humorous mock-epic section comprises: the battle of Carnal and Lent, with the temporary victory of Lent and punishment of Carnal with a diet of mostly vegetable matter (sts.1067-1172); the resurgence of Carnal and reappearance of Amor (sts.1210-63); and Amor's tent and departure (sts.1264-1313), in explicit parody of the legend of Alexander the Great (see st.1081d); and is modelled on a widespread European tradition, to which Ruiz contributes, along with his interpretation, a parody of the Easter procession (Laurence 1970: 162; see also Drayson Macdonald 1999: 383-84).

Arguing for the “oneiric structure” of the *LBA*, Poole asserts that the mock-epic section is a product of the waking anxiety of the narrator/protagonist about the onset of Lent (st.1067d), coupled with the consumption of vast quantities of meat and wine, a custom of carnival week (2009: 123). As such, the mock-epic can be classified as a blend of Macrobius' *insomnium* and his second category of dream lacking in authority, the *visum*, of: “disreputable physical cause, such as an excess of food or wine”, which Deyermond describes but does not link with the *LBA* (2004: 112). The section is also akin to Macrobius' *somnium*, a prophetic dream closely associated with literary allegory. Notably, the *visum*: ““comes upon one in the moment between wakefulness and slumber, in the so-called ‘first cloud of sleep’. In this drowsy condition a person . . . imagines he sees spectres rushing at him or wandering vaguely about, differing from natural creatures in size and shape, and hosts of diverse things, either delightful or disturbing”” (Macrobius, as quoted in Spearing 1976: 8-11). Slumbering at the dinner table, the Archpriest begins to dream of a battle between anthropomorphized foodstuffs:

Desque vino la noche, mucho después de la çena,  
que tenía cada uno ya la talega llena,  
para entrar en la fazienda con la dueña serena,  
adormieron se todos después de la ora buena.

.....

Faza la media noche, en medio de las salas,  
vino doña Quaresma: “¡Dios Señor, Tú me valas!”  
dieron bozes los gallos, batieron de las alas;  
llegaron a don Carnal aquestas nuevas malas. (sts.1097, 1099)

The personification of Carnal and Lent, that is to say, the personification of some of the contents of the narrator/protagonist’s mind, helps to create: “a language in which the concealed forces that determine action could be discussed” (Vyvyan 2013: 182), namely the root of mankind’s sin in *loco amor*. In Marina Scordilis Brownlee’s analysis, the mock-epic is emblematic of the human psyche in the *LBA*, with regard to: “the perpetual psychomachia resulting from its duality” (1985: 69-73): conflict of the soul, or body and soul, as associated with allegory in the tradition of Prudentius.<sup>27</sup>

Notably, in further microstructural parallel of the *LBA* as a whole, the mock-epic section is preceded with verses dedicated to Mary and Christ akin with those that preface and conclude the poem, as related to the Amor/Endrina section. The *LBA* thus portrays the life of the conflicted clerical mind through structure as well as content; in the case of the mock-epic section, through both parody of the epic and the relation of such parody to preceding lyrics.

Evoking Santa María del Vado, Ruiz introduces two *passiones*:

Santiago apóstol diz que todo bien conplido  
e todo don muy bueno de Dios bien’ escogido.  
E yo, desque salí de todo aqueste rroído,  
torné rrogar a Dios que me non diese a olvido.  
.....  
Omillo me, Reína,  
Madre del Salvador,  
.....  
yo en tu memoria

<sup>27</sup> This suggestion is echoed in the prior work of Burke, who writes of the *LBA*: “man is constantly wavering between the poles as he proceeds through life. The *Libro de buen amor* is a literary representation of this psychological movement” (1980: 268). Prudentius was a medieval curriculum author and is described by Curtius as: “the most important, artistic, and universal early Christian poet, ca. 400” (1990: 49).

algo quiero fazer:  
 la triste estoria  
 que a Jesú yazer  
 fizo en presiones,  
 en penas e en dolor. (sts.1043-48)

Note the emphasis placed upon memory in these verses. Concerned that he will be forgotten by God and himself forget the divine in turn, Ruiz applies his memory to the Virgin and the passion of Christ. Imploring, “de su muerte devemos / doler nos e acordar” (st.1059cd), Ruiz sets his mind on a pathway of sacred reading and composition. Yet when this cleric thinks on the potentially “nourishing” matter of sacred texts, he experiences extensive ruminations of erotic and gastronomic character, as subsequently elaborated in the mock-epic section.

As duly remarked by Louise O. Vasvári (1991; see also De Lope 1979), the mock-epic battle is a riot of “gastro-genital excess” and functions on three primary semantic levels: violence, gastronomy, and sexuality. In the advance guard of Carnal’s meaty vassals, for example, *gallinas* and *perdizes* line up ready for a roasting (st.1082), who: “along with other birds, can connote women as desirable or undesirable”, and Carnal is attacked first by a leek (st.1102), a phallic symbol that was: “commonly cultivated as an aphrodisiac in medieval Europe” (1991: 1-9), and next by a salted sardine, as closely associated with poverty and the monastic diet (Poole 2009: 148-49; Brooke 2003: 81), who symbolically pierces Carnal’s helmet (st.1103). As indicated in *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, all monks were required to: ‘abstain entirely from the consumption of the meat of quadrupeds, except the gravely ill’ (Ch.39; Venarde 2011).<sup>28</sup> Carnal and Lent with their meaty and fishy armies symbolize unsuitable and suitable cognitive nourishment, respectively, for the errant narrator/protagonist.

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<sup>28</sup> “Carnium vero quadrupedum omnimodo ab omnibus abstineatur comestio praeter omnino deviles egrotos”.

Lent, Justice of the sea and: “alguacil de las almas que se han de salvar” (st.1075b), whose symbol is the conch shell, is linked with the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela (sts.1074b, 1205-07). She is thus also an Iberian personification of the hermeneutic path to salvation associated with Christ, as alluded to in the prose sermon. In the case of Carnal, Ruiz may in parody refer to the trope of cogitation as a process of cooking as his retinue is prepared for battle. The aforementioned hens and partridges, along with rabbits, capons, ducks, and geese, carry spits as weaponry and a trencher as shield (sts.1082-83), and pheasants and peacocks wear cooking pots as helmets, and kettles and pans as shields (sts.1086-87): “finchida la cocina, / todos aperçebidos para la lid malina” (st.1093bc). Moreover, in allegory of Ruiz’s self-destructive poetics, a feast takes place on the eve of battle—“la buena yantar”, “messa mucho farta” (sts.1083d, 1095b)—at which Carnal and his armies gorge themselves on each other such that the cockerels lose their wives to the dinner table: “tenia cada uno ya la talega llena” (sts.1097-1100). Weak and destined for defeat, Carnal and his armies arrive late to the fray (sts.1100-01), to be confronted with Lent’s army, and the psychological allegory of *buen* versus *loco amor* gets into full swing:

De parte de Valençia venían las anguillas,  
salpresas e trechadas, a grandes manadillas;  
davan a don Carnal por medio de las costillas;  
las truchas de Alverche davan le en las mexillas.

Aí andava el atún commo un bravo león:  
falló se con don Tozino, dixo le mucho baldón;  
sí non por doña Çeçina, quel desvió el pendón,  
diera le a don Lardo por medio del coraçón. (sts.1105-06)

Although Lent is feminine, her troops are virile in association with the divine power commanded temporarily at Easter. After vanquishing Carnal, they force him to repent for his sins (st.1128), before he returns to power with Amor for the summer season. In

the words of Scordilis Brownlee: “it is not Christ but rather Sir Love who (along with Lord Meatseason) emerges as ruler of the Earth . . . Next year, we realize, the scene and its outcome will be precisely the same” (1985: 69). Notably, Carlos Heusch has detailed the cyclical timescale of the major narratives of the *LBA* as a whole—the Amor/Endrina and mock-epic sections—as unfolding from March to July in two parallel seasons (2011: 203). Both sections are prefaced with religious tribute to Christ and Mary and the mock-epic, like the Amor/Endrina section, articulates the beginning, end, and resurgence of carnal desire. *Psychomachia* as allegorized thematically in the mock-epic is also expressed in the dialectical microstructures of the two major sections, in parodic development of the hagiographic paradigm.

#### IV. Two Framing Love Affairs

In further burlesque of fallen man’s gluttonous, concupiscent, cognitive wretchedness, as synonymous with his talent for secular poetics, two further love affairs of the Archpriest are particularly salient in the *LBA*. These ostensibly minor narratives, satellites of the major sections, highlight and extend the parody of pious reading and composition as the central thematic and structural issue of the poem. The Archpriest’s pursuit of Cruz the baker girl and his romance with the nun Garoça evoke alimentary imagery associated with Christ, Christian asceticism, and carnal indulgence.

As André S. Michalski highlights with regard to the affair with Cruz, *panadera*, the medieval baker girl sold bread from house to house during a time when modest ladies rarely ventured out of doors and required a go-between to engage with potential partners. She was likely considered promiscuous by nature of her trade and everyday expressions such as “comer pan” probably acquired strong sexual connotations, as well

as having sacred referents such as the consecrated bread of the Eucharist (1969: 435-36, 436n7), symbolic of Christ's flesh, as well as monastic reading material. Cruz's bread, both the comestible she sells and that bread which her flesh represents, is *mantenencia* and *juntamiento* for the lusty Archpriest in place of the spiritual nourishment he could find in Christ. As Burke indicates, the cross, as read in the Mozarabic *Liber Ordinum*, "cooks" or "prepares" in Christ the "bread of life for sinners", and the Virgin, to whom Cruz is an antitype, is also associated with bread as the bearer of Christ (1980: 256-58). For Juan Ruiz, rather than hermeneutic bread "cooked" in cogitation on the fourfold intellectual path to salvation as available through meditative reading and linked with *cuaderna vía*, Cruz represents the hollow nourishment of *loco amor*. However, in desperate yearning for physical union with her—in Giles' words, in "irreverent *imitatio Christi*" (2009: 18)—the Archpriest claims: "yo cruiziava por ella, otro la avié valdía" (st.112d).

The baker girl is a ripe subject for Ruiz's particular brand of erotic, alimentary, and epistemological parody. As Vasvári describes, the Cruz episode functions: "como parodia litúrgica de la Crucifixión y de la adoración solemne de la Cruz que tenía lugar anualmente el Viernes Santo", and, discussing imagery of food and sex, she associates the Aristotelian *quaestio* on carnal love as well as the mock-epic section with the episode (1983: 305-13). In summary, the affair records the Archpriest's pursuit and loss of the baker girl as co-wooed by his wily messenger, Ferrand Garçía, in parody of the life of Christ: "the mocked lover is compared to Christ; the intended becomes his cross; the story of his crucifixion is his *escarnio*; his friend-messenger is the betrayer" (Zahareas 1965: 76).

Written as a *troba cazurra*, a song often obscene and satirical (Michalski 1969: 434), with commentary in authoritative, clerical *cuaderna vía* to introduce and conclude, the Cruz episode is a humorous reflection on the trials of meditative reading and a further micro-structural parody of the hagiographic paradigm.<sup>29</sup> As in the case of the Amor/Endrina section, the didactic material (the *cuaderna vía* verses) and the salacious text of the main narrative (the *troba cazurra*) are equally focused on the Archpriest's experience of worldly love. The *cuaderna vía* introduction begins with the Archpriest's mind wandering and the initiation of the cycle of carnal desire:

Si Dios, quando formó el omne, entendiera  
 que era mala cosa la muger, non la diera  
 al omne por compañera, nin dél non la feziera;  
 si para bien non fuera, tan noble non saliera.

.....

E yo, como estava solo, sin compañía,  
 codiciava tener lo que otro para sí tenía:  
 puse el ojo en otra, non santa mas sandía;  
 yo cruiziava por ella, otro la avié valdía. (sts.109, 112)

The Archpriest is alone, pondering his misfortune at the hands of Ferrand. According to both classical and monastic rhetoric, anxiety and restlessness often accompanied by physical distress, and as experienced while in isolation (typically in one's chamber), signal a visionary state of mind. As in the Amor/Endrina section, in the Cruz episode Christ and Mary are replaced with figures that undermine their authority as the principal foci of pious contemplation, namely the Archpriest and Cruz.

The most crucial lines for understanding the episode occur within the introductory stanzas and in parody evoke the first phase of monastic prayer, *compunctio cordis*. As the Archpriest laments of his messenger, Ferrand: "sopo me el clavo echar: /

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<sup>29</sup> The form of the *troba cazurra* is the Hispano-Arabic *zéjel*, usually of an introductory strophe followed by four-line verses of rhyme scheme aaab, cccb, with the b rhyme a constant throughout.

él comió la vianda, e a mí fazié rrumiar” (st.113cd). According to Gregory I, the Church father of enormous influence on medieval monastic literature, *compunctio cordis*, a “compunction of love” by which God “‘presses’ us with insistence (*cum-pungere*), as if to pierce us” (Leclercq 1961: 37-38), is a process by which the monastic penitent remembers his or her sin to arouse anxiety and stimulate the memory (Carruthers 1998: 102-03). When the mind: ‘raises itself by the compunction of prayer to aim at things above, having been roused by the eye of its compunction, it returns to observe itself with greater vigilance after its tears’ (*Moralia on Job XXXII.i*; 1844-1850 vol.3.2: 506).<sup>30</sup> Associated with the crucifixion, *compunctio cordis* is symbiotic with reading and composition, when the manuscript page is also “wounded” i.e. punctuated by the stylus in order to record text and summon sacred meaning (Carruthers 1998: 101).

Ruiz composed the *troba* on Cruz due to the “gran pesar” (st.114a) he felt on “crucifixion” at the hands of Ferrand: “Dios confonda mensajero / tan presto e tan ligero” (st.120ab). His emotional wounds facilitate prayerful composition, yet the result, as engendered by a distracted rather than penitent mind, is obscene material—rather a parody of Gregory’s doctrine that: ‘to eat, to drink, and to be tired, are chains of corruption’ (*Moralia on Job IV.xxxiv*; 1844-1850 vol.1.1: 235).<sup>31</sup> Ruminantion—“a mí fazié rrumiar”, “a mi dio rrumiar salvado; / el comió el pan más duz” (sts.113d, 118cd)—the “cooking” of cogitation, is a preparation for the consumption of the signified of a difficult spiritual lesson. The Archpriest, however, meditates and composes on the food of Cruz as carnal truth, ironically described as “el pan más duz” (st.118d), whereby, as indicated by Burke, *duz* derives from the Latin *dulcis* and evokes the traditional notion of the cross as a sweet wood or fruit-bread. Such sacred bread, as

<sup>30</sup> “Cum tamen ad appetenda sublimia orationis compunctione se erigit, ipso suae oculo compunctionis excitata ad circumspiciendam se post fletum uigilantior redit” (*Library of Latin Texts, Series A*).

<sup>31</sup> “Esurire quippe sitire, lassescere, uincula corruptionis sunt” (*Library of Latin Texts, Series A*).

also associated with Lady Lent in the mock-epic section of the *LBA*: “ablanda rrobre duro con el su blando lino” (st.1179d), was believed to counteract the bitter apple of original sin (1980: 255), and humorously eludes the Archpriest on both counts, who is as much a failure in matters of the flesh as in those of the spirit.

In parody of the ambivalent signifiers of Christ’s cross, a symbol of life and death, Cruz is the potential sustenance of the Archpriest as well as the instrument of his humiliation and undoing. While pursuing Cruz, as in the *quaestio* on carnal love, man is both equated with the animals and latterly distinguished from them. In the words of Giles, the Archpriest and Ferrand are: “comparable to dogs, each wanting the morsel all to himself” (2008: 376), that is, a morsel of Cruz as *vianda* (st.113d), as Melón is described as canine in his courting of Endrina (st.874b). Yet the Archpriest is at least bestowed with a sense of humour: “ca devrién me dezir neçio e más que bestia burra, / si de tan gran escarnio yo non trobase burla” (st.114cd).<sup>32</sup> With this small mercy in mind, Ruiz entertains with the Cruz episode, distracting himself and his audience from the distress and excess of fallen existence, and notably that of the: “escolar goloso, compañero de cucaña” (st.122a).<sup>33</sup>

The appetites of members of the religious professions are the topic of the *Garoça* affair (sts.1332-1507), as depicted with striking imagery of erotic gastronomy. Shortly following the mock-epic and triumphal procession of monks, nuns, clerics, and ladies

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<sup>32</sup> Notably, the Cruz episode also puns on the *thema* of the prose sermon. An image of the Archpriest’s eyes, rather than God’s, opens the lyric, which have lost sight of Cruz: “Mis ojos non verán luz” (st.115a). As the Archpriest’s *entendedera* (st.116b), Cruz possesses understanding, *entendimiento*, while Ferrand is a treacherous guide, *duz* (st.117d), on the pathway, *carrera* (st.116c), of worldly love.

<sup>33</sup> Burke describes an English poem dating to *c.* 1300 about Cocaygne, *cucaña*, a mythical land of luxury and idle cares, which narrates the goings on of a monastery “constructed of rich and costly viands” and located near a convent: “periodically the ladies come over . . . so that the sexual needs of the monks may be assuaged”. Juan Ruiz must have been aware of material of this sort, perhaps from England, and as Burke points out, the parodic “Cántica de los clérigos de Talavera” of the *LBA* apes the *Consolatio Sacerdotium* that has been attributed to the twelfth-century English courtier Walter Map (1980: 264, 269-70n40).

joyously greeting the emperor Amor, the Archpriest's pursuit of the nun Garoça is the longest episode of the second half of the text after the mock-epic section, and continues the discourse on the trials of meditative reading. Rather than the difficulties of the Archpriest, left to ruminate, unsatisfied, by his messenger in the Cruz debacle (st.118c), the Garoça affair centres on the cogitations of Garoça herself with regard to the battle she experiences in her mind between the spirit and the flesh, *buen amor* and *loco amor*, a unique episode in the *LBA* dedicated almost entirely to the female voice. As a member of a Catholic order, Garoça would have learned to read sacred texts, likely lending her familiarity with the principles of monastic grammar and rhetoric. She is the only lover of the Archpriest portrayed as having sufficient wit to take on the wily Trotaconventos, his beloved go-between who in parody is later celebrated for her rhetorical capability as a saint at her death: “çierto, en Paraíso estás tú assentada: / con dos mártires debes estar aconpañada; / sienpre en este mundo fuste por dos martiriada” (st.1570abc).

The Garoça episode largely comprises a debate in ten successive *exempla* between Garoça and Trotaconventos, of which two—the third and fourth—employ striking alimentary imagery. The scholastic debate structure permits reflection on sexual mores beyond the strictures of pious didacticism and, as Joset notes when comparing the episode with Berceo's *MNS*, renders such narrative somewhat redundant: “la coherencia dialéctica . . . subsume los componentes narrativos de cada fábula ilustrativa” (2000: 192).<sup>34</sup> The debate between Garoça and Trotaconventos, in which Trotaconventos endeavours to persuade the nun to embark on an affair with the

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<sup>34</sup> More specifically, Joset analyses the tale of a thief as read in Berceo's *MNS* and in the Garoça episode of the *LBA*. The thief chooses to dedicate himself to the Virgin according to one branch of the tradition of the tale, and to the devil as recorded in the other. The *MNS* and Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa Maria* narrate both versions (miracles 6 and 25, *cantigas* 13 and 3, respectively), which can be traced to the last *exemplum* exchanged between Garoça and Trotaconventos, “Enxiemplo del ladrón que fizo carta al diablo de su ánima” (sts.1454-84; 2000: 192-98).

Archpriest: “*commo el diablo, / que dio a su amigo mal consejo e mal cabo*” (st.1453ab), may thus be considered a further microstructural dialectic within the *LBA* as a whole, in extension of the poetics of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía*. Adding to the humour of the episode and in echo of the comparisons made in the Aristotelian *quaestio*, the mock-epic, and the Cruz affair, the Aesopic *exempla* feature anthropomorphized animals as principal characters, closely relating the conduct of mankind with that of the beasts and subtly implying from the outset that Garoça will inevitably embark on a sexual relationship with the Archpriest.

In her rendition of the fable of the town mouse and the country mouse (*exemplum* three, sts.1370-86), characters that apply to Trotaconventos and herself, respectively, Garoça associates sex with gluttony. As she narrates, the mice visit each other for meals on the market days of their respective locales, Guadalajara and Mohernando, with the poor but generous-hearted country mouse the first to host. He shares what he has with the town mouse, a bean (st.1370cd), and they are none the worse for the lack of victuals: “*estava en mesa pobre buen gesto e buena cara; / con la poca vianda buena voluntad para; / a los pobres manjares el plazer los rrepara*” (st.1371abc).

When the times comes for the town mouse to host the country mouse at his residence in Guadalajara, the table is laden with cheese, unsalted bacon, fat, and bread, a veritable feast (st.1373). Though the country mouse is initially most happy to be able to eat as much as he desires (st.1374), the meal comes with a heavy price. The human mistress of the kitchen in which the meal is laid out opens the door to enter the room and terrifies the mice. While the “streetwise” town mouse is able to find shelter, the panicked country mouse risks death: “*fuía deserrado*” (st.1377b). The country mouse is

thus newly conscious of his lack of worldly experience and learns the benefits of his austere way of life, such that Garoça concludes: “Más quiero rroer fava seguro e en paz, / que comer mil manjares corrido e sin solaz” (st.1381ab). The meagre meal of a bean, symbolizing abstention from sexual relationships, is ultimately far more pleasurable and elevating than an indulgent feast: “Con paz e segurança es buena la pobreza; / al rico temeroso es pobre la rriqueza; / . . . la pobredat alegre es segura nobleza” (st.1384abd).<sup>35</sup>

Garoça considers Trotaconventos the equivalent of the town mouse, luring her into dangerous circumstances with the Archpriest:

Tú tienes grandes casas, mas ay mucha conpañia;  
comes muchas viandas, a questo te engaña;  
buena es mi pobreza en segura cabaña,  
que mal pisa el omne, el gato mal rrascaña.

.....

Más vale en convento las sardinas saladas,  
e fazer a Dios serviçio con las dueñas onrradas,  
que perder la mi alma con perdizes assadas,  
e fincar escarnida con otras deserradas. (sts.1383-85)

Garoça also associates concupiscence with keeping varied company, a kind of social promiscuity in her terms, and thus worldly knowledge, the contrary of her isolated life in the convent as symbolized by roast partridges and salted sardines, respectively. Her imagery recalls the deviant poetics of the mock-epic: Carnal’s retinue includes *perdizes* who line up ready for a roasting (st.1082), while the second to attack him in battle after the leek is a salted sardine, who pierces his helmet (st.1103), likely an emblem of the salt fish that: “played a heavy role in the monastic diet” (Brooke 2003: 81). Indulging the flesh at the risk of her soul could leave Garoça *deserrada* (st.1385d), “en compañía

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<sup>35</sup> As Garoça also puts it: “con miedo de la muerte la miel non es sabrosa” (st.1380c), as discussed by Walker (1970).

de otras descarriadas” (Blecua 1992: 351n1385d), like the country mouse, *deserrado* (st.1377b).

When using roast partridges and salted sardines as emblems of *loco* and *buen amor*, I believe that Garoça is evoking the objects of her cognitive activity, namely of her study of sacred texts, that are already misapplied in dialogue with Trotaconventos. The alimentary imagery is a tool with which she is considering the go-between’s proposal. Garoça associates fish with her own abstinence and vulnerability: like Endrina, she is one of the “peços de las aguas . . . veen el anzuelo” (st.884a), and like the piscine Lent, in the words of Seidenspinner-Núñez, she: “represents *caritas* and abstinence (both sexual and alimentary)” (1981: 63). In discussion with Trotaconventos, the *psychomachia* of roasted meats with salted fish, of *loco* versus *buen amor*, as attributed to the mind of the Archpriest in the mock-epic (Scordilis Brownlee 1985: 70), occurs in the mind of Garoça.

According to Garoça, Trotaconventos’ way of life, with “grandes casas”, “mucha conpañã”, “muchas viandas”, has direct impact on her mental state: “aquesto te engaña” (st.1383ab). In contrast to the go-between, she ensures the integrity of her soul by occupying a *segura cabaña* (st.1383c). Metonymic of the nunnery which is Garoça’s home and workplace, “cabaña” refers to a rustic cabin for the shelter of humble folk such as fishermen and shepherds (Alonso Pedraz 1986: 566; “Cabaña”), whose professions have been long associated in Christian tradition with Christ the Good Shepherd who recruited fishermen for his disciples (see, for example, Matthew 4.18-22). The image of the *segura cabaña* recalls Millán’s rustic *capiella*, *ciella*, in the wilderness in Berceo’s *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* (*SM*; st.107ab), which the hermit erects in order to fully dedicate himself to meditation, and the mountain *cabaña*

in which Fernán González is brought up by a humble *carbonero* in the *PFG* (st.181a). As Garoça maintains her body in the ascetic isolation of the nunnery, protected from temptations of the flesh such as rich food and sex, so she also guards her mind, including her *çela de la memoria*, as a *segura cabaña* (st.1383c).

Garoça is, however, involved in debate with Trotaconventos, a formidable rhetorician after whom Ruiz named the *LBA*, or so he suggests.<sup>36</sup> Trotaconventos' profession requires she play the wolf to Garoça's shepherd at the behest of her client, in the manner of Amor, *lobuno* (st.1308d), and *gula*, "lobo carnicero" (st.291d): "Sé que el que al lobo enbía, a la fe carne espera, / que la buena corredora ansí faze carrera" (st.1494cd; also st.1328c). The image of Trotaconventos as a wolf chasing the humble Garoça recalls the Amor/Endrina section, which concludes with a cautionary tale for the female sex. In the fable of the ass, the wolf's pursuit of the ass on behalf of the lion: "por comer saborado" (st.902a), is equated with the false speech of the procuress (Mirrer 1996: 134-35). As Giles describes: "across medieval Europe, wolves were inextricably linked with Lucifer because of their stalking of sheep and travellers at dawn" (2009: 62), and, notably, in the *Apolonio Antinágora* is described as *lobo* when he is alone in a brothel with the virtuous Tarsiana, *cordera* (st.406b). In homage to the teachings of Venus, Trotaconventos uses cunning to forge deviant hermeneutic "roads", *caminos*, *carreras*, in order to guide young women into the clutches of the Archpriest.

As well as the concupiscence, gluttony, and desire for knowledge of Adam and Eve, the causes of original sin include the sly words of the serpent (Genesis 3.1-7), the first go-between. Like Venus, Trotaconventos is an anti-Virgin Mary—a devilish intermediary—and in her reply to Garoça she manipulates the nun's argument to

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<sup>36</sup> Ruiz dedicates his book to his go-between, who implores: "llamat me Buen Amor e faré yo lealtat; / ca de buena palabra paga se la vezindat": "por amor de la vieja, e por dezir rrazón, / 'buen amor' dixé al libro, e a ella toda saçón; / . . . quien tal vieja toviere, guarde la commo al alma" (sts.932-36).

persuade her that the ethics of an affair with the Archpriest are somewhat relative. Giving the *exemplum* of the cockerel who found a sapphire in a dung heap (sts.1387-1400), Trotaconventos ridicules the cockerel's fear of the gem as that of a *villano* (st.1388c), a rustic creature like the country mouse: “falló çafir culpado, mejor omne non vido; / espantó se el gallo, dexol como sandío” (st.1387cd). With Christian humility, the cockerel asserts the simple value of the food he is familiar with over the gem—“más querría de uvas o de trigo un grano / que a ti nin a çiento tales en la mi mano” (st.1388ab)—just as the country mouse and Garoça recognize the benefits of beans and salted sardines, respectively, while safe at home, over riches on offer elsewhere.

Trotaconventos implies that Garoça, like the cockerel, is ignorant of the way to profit from opportunity. Notably, the go-between's assessment of the nun's ignorance in the art of love extends to her skills as a reader, further emphasizing the close association between licentious desire and deviant reading and composition in the *LBA*. Given her poor interpretation of the world, argues Trotaconventos, Garoça must be in need of a few lessons on how to approach written text as well: “muchos leen el libro toviendo lo en poder, / que non saben qué leen, nin lo pueden entender” (st.1390ab). If Garoça were a little more urbane i.e. a more expedient exegete of the Archpriest's intentions, she might enjoy herself a little:

Comedes en convento sardinas e camarones,  
verçuelas e lazeria, e los duros caçones;  
dexades del amigo perdizes e capones;  
perdedes vós, coitadas, mugeres sin varones.

Con la mala vianda, con saladas sardinas,  
con sayas de estameñas comedes vós, mesquinas;  
dexades del amigo las truchas, las gallinas,  
las camisas fronçidas, los paños de Mellinas. (sts.1393-94)

Employing the nun's imagery of sardines and partridges in her counter-*exemplum*, Trotaconventos argues that Garoça is oppressed by the sensual deprivation of her monastic life, counting on her ability to tempt the nun. Unlike Carnal in penitential fast following his defeat in the mock-epic section and Millán in Berceo's *SM*, who avoid fish to purify their souls (sts.1164b, 1169b and 145cd, respectively), Garoça's meagre diet of salted sardines and other *mala vianda*, in conjunction with her curiosity, are not sufficient to protect her from sexual sin. All she requires to persuade her is a rhetorical push in the wrong direction. As Trotaconventos asserts, a more artful approach to language will bring the nun erotic love as it will subsequently improve her appearance: the Archpriest will adorn her with gifts of rich clothing, an image resonant of the adornment of letters with potentially deceptive rhetorical device. It is quite normal for members of the religious orders to engage in romantic relationships, states the go-between, with further emphasis on the close ties between deviant language and unrestrained appetites: "quiere oír la monja nuevas del entendedor; / quiere el fraile goloso entrar en el tajador" (st.1399cd). The superficial benefits of gluttony, lust, and vanity, as acquired with specious rhetoric, are the domain of Trotaconventos, the Archpriest's primary representative in the pursuit of worldly love.

Garoça is aware that from "dulçe lijonja / . . . suele venir amarga lonja" (st.1443ab), yet she is nevertheless persuaded by Trotaconventos to take up contact with the Archpriest. Before they have a chance to speak, he woos Garoça with *fermosa rrima* (st.1498b), and a subsequent sexual relationship between them is implied (sts.1497-98). Garoça's yielding to the Archpriest recalls Carnal's return to reign as emperor of the sublunary sphere in the mock-epic section, despite Lent's temporary triumph: "rreal de tan grand preçio non tenían las sardinas" (st.1087d). Reiterating the cycle of desire as

equivalent to deviant hermeneutic process and product, Ruiz extends his parody of clerical authority at the close of the Garoça episode in the wake of the nun's untimely death:

Resçibió me la dueña por su buen servidor:  
 siénprel fui mandado e leal amador;  
 mucho de bien me fizo con Dios en linpio amor;  
 en quanto ella fue biva, Dios fue mi guiador.

.....

Con el mucho quebranto fiz aquesta endecha:  
 con pesar e tristeza non fue tan sutil fecha;  
 emiende la todo omne, e quien buen amor pecha,  
 que yerro e mal fecho emienda non desecha. (sts.1503, 1507)

In this affair between cleric and nun, religious language, including the phrase *buen amor*, is emptied of sacred meaning. As in the Aristotelian *quaestio*, when the narrator/protagonist reinterprets Paul in order to validate promiscuity (“provar omne las cosas non es por ende peor” st.76c; see also st.950a), he here encourages his readers to keep trying to remedy their loss of *buen amor*. Notably, such encouragement pertains to writing as well as the pursuit of love itself and, as such, the *LBA* is cast as an infinite cycle of *endechas* on erotic love, the desire for the latter engendering the former and vice-versa, in a further microcosm of the operational structure of the central sections beyond the religious framing material.<sup>37</sup> Along with the Cruz affair, the Garoça episode further parodies the application of clerical erudition to specious secular poetry. As Ruiz asserts in concluding material on how his audience should interpret his book: “Señores, he vos servido con poca sabidoría: / por vos dar solaz a todos, fablé vos en juglería” (st.1633ab). The *LBA* portrays the inner life of a cleric more akin to a minstrel than a

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<sup>37</sup> As Alonso describes, an *endecha* is a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century: “canción triste y lamentable” (1986: 1016; “Endecha”).

devout teacher of God's truth, in development of the canonical, thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía*.

## V. Conclusion

Over the course of this chapter I have sought to demonstrate that the structure and tenor of the *LBA* is a parody of hagiographic and monastic paradigms. Like the earlier, canonical works of the *mester de clerecía*, the *LBA* is particularly invested in the pedagogical and literary traditions of the monasteries, which it recasts with poetics of heterogenous form and limited sacred purpose. As in large part a depiction of the psychological life of Ruiz, the *LBA* explores the cognitive manifestation of original sin, *loco amor*, as characterized by a propensity to dwell on imagery of erotic and gastronomic excess rather than the redeeming spiritual nourishment of Christ's love. An interest in worldly knowledge for its own sake on Ruiz's part produces a poem of multiple, cyclical structures in macro- and microstructural dialectic, whereby sections and episodes purporting contrary themes enfold each other like the scales of an onion. Although ostensibly unrelated, such structures, as well as a rolling feast of virtuoso poetics, form the narrative continuation of a soul in conflict, provoking doubt with regard to clerical and scriptural authority. When read as such, the *LBA* is both a poetic anthology and a work of rhetorical unity.

With an author figure who is both historical authenticator and protagonist, the *LBA* parodies and extends the role of the clerical author of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía*, and notably that of Berceo. Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita is both minstrel-like author and anti-saint who, rather than edifying his audience with prophetic visions celebrating the glory of God, entertains with errant meditations akin to

secular dreams and nightmares. As I have argued, such anti-meditations, namely the Amor/Endrina and mock-epic sections, constitute the majority of the text, and are complemented by the burlesque of reading and composition in the Cruz and Garoça episodes.

Ruiz's ultimate intention, as he claims in the prose sermon, is to increase his readers' capacity for "buena rremenbrança" (line 21). Although the motives of a putative author figure who depicts his own mind as so thoroughly corrupt cannot be trusted, it cannot be doubted that Ruiz's humorous, scurrilous *LBA* is highly memorable. Individual episodes, such as the Cruz affair, could serve as an effective aide memoire with regard to the distractions faced in the process of pious, meditative reading rather than encouragement to indulge one's desires, depending on the state of one's soul. As Ruiz also asserts:

E así este mi libro a todo omne o muger, al cuerdo e al non cuerdo, al que entendiere el bien e escogiere salvación e obrare bien, amando a Dios; otrosí al que quisiere el amor loco; en la carrera que andudiere, puede cada uno bien dezir: *Intellectum tibi dabo, e çetera*. (lines 74-78)

With intellectual ambition to rival the *Alexandre*, the *LBA* extends the discussion of the close relationship between the ethics of textual interpretation and social ethics, as central to the doctrine of the *PFG* and particularly the *Apolonio*. Like the *PFG* and the *Apolonio*, the *LBA* has strong interest in intelligent and capable female characters and their voices within the hierarchy of the Church. As in the case of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía*, the role of the cleric is a primary concern, yet in the *LBA*, the degenerate Archpriest's presence—the constant across manifold diverse episodes—advocates an urgent need for Christian teaching reconsidered: for new debates, guidelines, and parameters of belief.

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