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El espejo y el piélagos: La "Eneida" castellana de Enrique de Villena by Sol Miguel Prendes

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1074), and others at Augsburg, Laubach, and Fleury, which reveal widespread interest in the astrolabe (that was the instrument for which they used the Latin terms *horoscopus* and *horologium nocturnum*; the words in this context could not mean “sun-dial”!). To this evidence McCluskey adds the recently authenticated brass astrolabe with only Latin words; this is not explained clearly, but it was made within the wide area of langue d’oc on both sides of the Pyrenees (not necessarily near Barcelona) and redated securely within the years 960–1069. (Perhaps it should be mentioned that at least one thousand new essays were published for the centennials of Hugh Capet, Abbo of Fleury, and Gerbert of Reims but that none refers to any of the activities noted above, though each person was famous in his own time for such scientific accomplishments.)

The picture of astronomy in this period broadens and comes into focus with Walcher at Great Malvern (near the border of England and Wales), who observed lunar eclipses on 30 October 1091 and 18 October 1092, and with observations in 1116 by Pedro Alfonso (ca. 1075–1130), an Aragonese Jew who converted to Christianity while in Lotharingia and later served as a physician to the English king Henry I. Their lunar tables and reports of eclipses reveal changes in the study of astronomy that were indeed influenced by the work of the Persian mathematician and astronomer al-Khwārizmī (fl. 810–50 in Baghdad) and perhaps of other scholars whose works were brought to Arab courts in Spain. Unfortunately, this account of Walcher is derived from an article by Emmanuel Poulle (1980), which had been based upon an incomplete text; the full text still in manuscript would give a better picture of Walcher’s work and of the instrument that he actually used. Along with Olaf Pedersen (1975), McCluskey adds to the evidence that, at the origin of universities, mathematics and astronomy were required of bachelors in the core curriculum. Standards for *artes liberales* seem to have fallen since then.

Despite the success of this book, the author has neglected some evidence that would have supported his approach even more substantially. McCluskey has overlooked the geometric models and additional astronomy in *computus* texts, which go far beyond the needs of predicting future Easter Sundays. He does not know that some information about Bede in recent publications may be outmoded or that Bede’s ideas *de natura rerum* changed from his first lectures about 701 to his masterly works during 716–25 and 731, as was made clear in my Jarrow Lecture for 1985: “Bede’s Scientific Achievement.” McCluskey explains the use of terrestrial latitudes by Gregory of Tours but seems unaware that they continued to be used throughout his period and beyond or that they were indeed a practical application of astronomy. Likewise, the numerous contributions of Bruce S. Eastwood to the history of planetary astronomy in many Carolingian schools are cited but their content skimmed over too lightly here.

It is difficult to find information about any of the innovative scholars named here. McCluskey, however, writes fully and richly about many of the persons and materials important for the early Middle Ages. He makes his subject easily accessible, and the reader is provided with a detailed and reliable index. For those of us who are trying to understand a culture that was fully human by digging graves, scraping together the disparate evidence of politics and diplomatics, or trying to interpret the special assumptions of logic in philosophy and theology, the expected and unexpected images of art, and the rhetorical devices of literatures, the evidence and interpretations offered here should be seated deeply in the mind.

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SOL MIGUEL PRENDES, *El espejo y el piélagos: La “Eneida” castellana de Enrique de Villena*. (Teatro del Siglo de Oro, Estudios de Literatura, 47.) Kassel: Reichenberger, 1998. Pp. v, 306.

It is no easy task getting to grips with the work of Enrique de Villena. His highly wrought asiatic style and his complex frame of cultural references have a tendency to encroach upon

the style of whoever takes the trouble to study him. Such are the complexity of his syntax, the inventiveness of his lexicon, the intricacy of his morphology, and, of course, the annoying and sometimes incomprehensible series of prosodic and phonological explanations that Villena becomes an intellectual invader: there is almost no way to rediscover his intellectual universe without employing his own terms of reference, which on most occasions means including the term defined within the definition itself. Professor Miguel Prendes is fully aware (as the footnotes to the book under review indicate) how many studies on Villena are, in fact, unreadable for that very reason and how difficult it is to separate the wheat from the chaff when much of the bibliography on this Aragonese intellectual is tainted by the author's own interest in magic and mysticism and is written in a style reminiscent of a handbook of spells or magical charms.

Perhaps the most important virtue of this book is that it confronts that problem unambiguously: instead of joining the enemy in order to beat it (which seldom bears fruit in literary theory and history), it tries to reconstruct the cultural scaffolding on which Villena raised the fabric of his translation and, above all, of his commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid*. How crucial this approach turns out to be becomes apparent when we take into account how Villena works as both translator and commentator. This dual activity entails complex lexical analyses, which set up a dialogue between the formal decisions on which his translation depends and the larger cultural questions involved in the commentary. In my opinion, one of Miguel Prendes's keenest insights is to relate the rhetorical process of *inventio-dispositio-eloquutio* entailed in the translation with the equivalent process found in the commentary and to connect both of these with the original Latin and its *auctor*. In the hands of Miguel Prendes, this approach produces a better understanding from both hermeneutic and historicist perspectives of the way in which Villena construes the concept of *auctor*.

Indeed, Villena's work seems to be centripetal, with Villena himself at the center, not just as a person but also as a cultural link in the history of poetry, from the perspective of the process of its composition and subsequent interpretation (or concretization) by future readers. The comprehensive and detailed studies by Pedro Cátedra (which are an obligatory reference point for all codicological, editorial, and theoretical aspects of Villena studies), together with the research of Julian Weiss, Jeremy Lawrance, Francisco Rico, and Alastair Minnis, provide the main support for Miguel Prendes's historicist edifice, while her theoretical core of hermeneutics, reception aesthetics, and reader-response theory is clearly inspired by the thinking of Umberto Eco and Wolfgang Iser, among others.

Miguel Prendes's study is divided into three chapters. The first, "La exégesis" ("Exegesis," pp. 19–105), explains the theoretical parameters on which Enrique de Villena based not only his commentary on Virgil's text but also the necessity and implications of his commentary. This triptych is highly important because it provides the framework that structures Miguel Prendes's entire thesis. What is at stake is nothing less than the description, in accordance with the terminology and methods of medieval Scholasticism, of the way in which Enrique de Villena constructs a commentary that completely transcends the limits of its own Scholastic classification. The author introduces and discusses some of the concepts that Villena adds to his Scholastic models, in particular the influence of Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* and his ideas on the commentary of non-Mosaic prophecy. In the final analysis, the common ground of the triptych is the fact that Villena strives to set himself up as an *auctor* in his own right. He does this through the creation of a commentary that not only realizes his own intellectual and pedagogic goals but also extends the life of the poem as well as its practical application and usefulness in future intellectual circles.

The second chapter, "El espejo" ("The Mirror," pp. 107–88), explores the conditions in which the concept of *auctor* was developed by Villena (a kind of intellectual reincar-

nation of the *auctor universalis*, which Virgil also embodied) and, from an archaeological and historicist point of view, analyzes the rhetorical procedures that produced the text. However, Miguel Prendes goes beyond rhetorical aspects and broaches the subject from the Scholastic perspective of Aristotelian causes. In this way, both she and Villena underscore the fundamental point that the concept of the *auctor* is located, not in a technical, but in a philosophical context, which affects issues ranging from the intellectual's everyday conduct to his definition of the poem as a pedagogic and scientific text. One of Villena's great achievements, which the author brings out with great clarity, is precisely to valorize and vindicate the concept of literature and fiction.

The book closes with a third chapter, "El espejo y el piélagos" ("The Mirror and the Sea," pp. 189–258), dedicated in its entirety to reconstructing Villena's ideas on literature, fiction, and exegesis in the context of how he imagined his work would be received. This chapter is, therefore, the direct correlation of the previous one and contrasts the *espejo*, which for the most part is an authentic *speculum historiale*, with the *piélagos*. To adopt another analogy, the text becomes a complex labyrinth (or *labor intus*), which forces readers to internalize all the commentary's levels of analysis. This clearly establishes how Villena's strategies revolve around the allegorical and tropological levels, from which anagogical meanings are distilled "like honey from the honeycomb," as Hugh of St. Victor would say. What I find particularly important is the way in which Miguel Prendes analyzes this tropological-anagogic distillate in the final section of chapter 3, "La sagrada milicia" (pp. 252–58). However, I would argue that most of Villena's exegetical method derives, not from St. Bernard, but from the methods of the Victorine school, whose preoccupation with the literal level and history he shares (it is the substance of the *espejo*, after all); but this is something that for reasons of space I cannot discuss here.

An epilogue and bibliography conclude a fascinating book, which is, regrettably, sometimes tarnished by very weak editing: it has numerous typographical errors and appears to have been utterly neglected by the publishing house that took on the responsibility of producing it. I must also emphasize that the themes outlined here are only some of those discussed by the author: I have simply attempted to explain the relation between the main parts of a thesis whose clarity, however, sometimes leaves something to be desired. Perhaps the weight of the studies by Cátedra, Weiss, Lawrance, and others has made it hard to come up with new research topics in Villena's work. Consequently, the author has had to resort to an analysis that focuses on sources and possible models, for which, no doubt, the computerized versions of the *Patrologia Latina* and similar repertoires (although they are cited only in their printed versions) have been of obvious use. Even so, this is—and I must emphasize the point—a complex and valuable book, packed with ideas and required reading for all those who might wish to approach Villena afresh, perhaps now with a view to discover new topics for research.¹

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¹ This review was translated by Julian Weiss.

JAN-DIRK MÜLLER, *Spielregeln für den Untergang: Die Welt des Nibelungenliedes*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1998. Pp. vi, 494.

This book is a major achievement. It is both theoretically sophisticated and accountable to the vast *Nibelungenlied* critical tradition. Its analysis of the *Nibelungenlied* text is absorbing. Since Müller's methodology of close attention to the text, or better, to its internal dissonances, means stripping away assumptions about what and how the story can mean,