VISIONS OF ANTIQUITY
REMEMBERING THE CLASSICAL PAST IN THE CASTILIAN ROMAN ANTIQUE

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ABSTRACT

The appearance of the Libro de Alexandre and the Libro de Apolonia in the thirteenth-century Castilian literary scene represents the first time in which the key classical narratives about Alexander the Great, the Trojan War, and Apollonius of Tyre are rendered in an Iberian vernacular language. Both works are traditionally studied against the background of the mester de clerecía, a body of Castilian clerical didactic poems often composed in the same metrical form as the Libros and encompassing different genres such as hagiography, epic, or romance. In this study, I read the Libros from a European rather than exclusively Castilian perspective as part of the generic tradition of the roman antique or roman d’antiquité, vernacular romances recounting some of the central narratives inherited from classical antiquity. The romances of antiquity initially took shape in twelfth-century francophone courts but were copied, read, and reworked in almost every Western European language throughout the Middle Ages. My reading stems from a reconceptualization of the roman antique as a genre primarily concerned with the construction of a collective memory of antiquity, a result of its investment in the larger process of cultural homogenization known as the Europeanization of Europe. I argue that memory is central to the Libros not only in the form of the memorable events recounted in the poems but also as a set of mnemonic strategies necessary to remember them, which the Libros offer to their audience as well. The study explores two fundamental rhetorical techniques of the roman antique,
ekphrasis and anachronism, as they negotiate the interaction between word and image both within the text and on the manuscript page. In this way, I show how the *Libros* interrogate the visual and verbal means through which a vernacular cultural memory of antiquity, providing a shared past for the courtly elites throughout the continent, could be successfully created, stored, and transmitted.
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This dissertation has been in the making from 1999, when as an undergraduate student I took a course on the *Libro de Apolonio* taught by Olivier Biaggini. Equally important have been other teachers that, before and after that first encounter with the *Apolonio*, sparked and maintained my enjoyment of intellectual exchange: Jesús Rodríguez Velasco, Michel Garcia, Jeremy Lawrance, and Lalitha Gopalan have also had an impact on this work. In addition, Simone Pinet and Alejandro Yarza have been extremely patient and generous readers. Most of all, Emily Francomano has not only been a wonderful teacher, advisor, and friend, but also cheerleader and therapist whenever needed.

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INTRODUCTION

Around 1350, in the court of king Alfonso XI of Castile, a magnificently illuminated manuscript was being finished. It contained a prose Castilian translation of the still popular *Roman de Troie*, composed during the mid-twelfth century by Benoît of Sainte-Maure in a different royal court, that of Henry II Plantagenet and his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine. The codex’s beautiful illustrations, a total of seventy, invariably depict the wonderful city of Troy in Mozarabic and Gothic architecture, a look that must have been quite similar to the fourteenth-century towns of the rapidly expanding Castilian kingdom. King Alfonso intended to present his son and heir Pedro with the manuscript, probably in the hope that the valuable lessons of the Trojan story would not be lost on the prince. Alfonso XI did not live to see the manuscript finished—he died in 1350 during the siege of Gibraltar. Nor could he have envisioned that the codex would end up having something of a prophetic quality, since, like Troy, the Castilian kingdom would soon be at war. Pedro would fight and lose a war against his half-brother Enrique de Trastámara, son of Alfonso’s lover Leonor de Guzmán.

The manuscript, preserved today with the signature h-I-6 in the Biblioteca de El Escorial, is in many respects an exceptional occurrence in Castilian medieval book culture.¹ Its spectacular and comprehensive visual rendition of a secular romance is only comparable to a later codex, the fifteenth-century copy of the *Libro del caballero Zifar* illustrated for king Enrique IV.² At the same time, this manuscript, known as the *Crónica*

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¹ For more information about manuscript h-I-6 and the main critical essays dealing with it, see chapter three of this study.
² This codex is located at the Bibliothèque National at Paris under the signature manuscript espagnol 36. Literary scholars have been paying increasing attention to its
troyana de Alfonso XI, stands as a perfect example of the cultural place that classical antiquity came to occupy in the secular courtly culture of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castile. The Crónica troyana de Alfonso XI possesses a number of characteristics that are far from unique in Castilian vernacular renditions of classical narratives: it is linked to a courtly, in this case royal, milieu; it skillfully combines word and image as resources to preserve and recount a story, the Trojan War, that remained central to European political, literary, and visual culture; it enacts the transmission of power and memory (the twin movements that medieval thought conceptualized as translatio imperii and translatio studii), both within the fictional account it contains and as an object created by a king for his heir; it posits classical antiquity as an ethical model, as its intended role as a speculum principis makes evident; finally, it appropriates the classical past through the determined use of textual and visual anachronisms.

Manuscript h-I-6 represents, in all these respects, the most spectacular link in a chain made up of works intent on creating and transmitting a vernacular memory of antiquity, which in medieval Iberia starts as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century. In this dissertation, I examine how that tradition first took shape in Castile with the creation of the Libro de Alexandre and the Libro de Apolonio. The two poems in fact contain three key narratives in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century vernacular renditions of the classical past: the stories of Alexander the Great, Apollonius of Tyre, and the Trojan War. My aim in reconsidering two poems that have been amply studied is twofold. First, from the point of view of Ibero-medieval studies, I intend to provide a new literary historical context for both works by reading them within the generic paradigm formed by visual program (see for example E. Michael Gerli, “Zifar Redivivus” and José Manuel Lucía Megías).
the European romances of antiquity, rather than against the background of the Castilian clerical poems known as *mester de clerecía*. Moreover, my understanding of the romances of antiquity emphasizes a feature of these works that, in my view, has not received sufficient critical attention, which is their preoccupation with matters related to memory and representation. In this sense, from the wider point of view of medieval studies, my analysis of the Castilian poems is meant to work as a case study that may eventually prove useful for other instances of romances of antiquity. My reading of the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Libro de Apolonio* intends to offer grounds for a reconsideration of some of the aims and techniques of a central genre in European literature, arguing at the same time for the insertion of Iberian literature into the European tradition of *roman antique*.

The *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Libro de Apolonio* as Mester de Clerecía Poems

The *Libro de Alexandre* (*Alexandre*) and the *Libro de Apolonio* (*Apolonio*) were composed in the thirteenth century—the *Alexandre* most likely during the first third of the century, the *Apolonio* probably around the mid-century—by anonymous clerical authors. The two poems are primarily based on authoritative Latin sources, Walter of

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3 For an overview of the critical discussion about the composition date of the *Alexandre*, see Juan Casas Rigall’s edition, 26-30. As for the *Apolonio*, see Dolores Corbella’s edition, 12-14. Despite some differences on the concrete dates, currently there exists a critical agreement that the *Alexandre* preceded the *Apolonio* and was, in fact, the inaugural work of the *mester de clerecía*. From very early on, some scholars—most notably Dana Nelson—have defended that Gonzalo de Berceo was the author of the *Alexandre*, but this attribution has not gained widespread critical acceptance. For Nelson’s arguments, see his *Gonzalo de Berceo y el Alixandre*. A review of the critical discussion on this matter can be found in Uría Maqua, *Panorama crítico* 177-96. Casas
Châtillon’s *Alexandreis* in the case of the *Alexandre* and the late antique *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyrii* in the case of the *Apolonio*. In both instances, the clerical narrators place great emphasis on the lessons about Christian morality that are to be gained from their tales. Finally, but maybe most importantly, the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* were composed in the stanza, monorhymed alexandrine quatrains, traditionally known in Hispanic studies as *cuaderna vía*. As a consequence of this conjunction of features, the two poems are almost invariably read in the context of a group of clerical poems that have come to be known under the label *mester de clerecía*.

The term *mester de clerecía* is derived from the famous verses in the second stanza of the *Alexandre*: “Mester trayo fermoso: non es de joglaría; / mester es sin pecado, ca es de clerezía” (2ab). From the time it was coined by Manuel Milà i Fontanals in the second half of the nineteenth century (Uría Maqua, *Panorama crítico* 19), its use has been surrounded by critical controversies. In the most important study about the *mester de clerecía* to come out in recent years, *The ‘Mester de clerecía’: Intellectuals and Ideologies in Thirteenth-Century Castile*, Julian Weiss employs this expression to refer to a body of Castilian narrative poetry created by clerkly authors during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Employed in this sense, the *mester de clerecía* encompasses not only the works composed in the same metrical form as the

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4 Rigall also reviews Berceo’s as well as other proposed authorships for the poem (*Libro de Alexandre* 18-24).

4 Unless otherwise noted, I quote from Juan Casas Rigall’s excellent edition of the *Alexandre*.

5 Some of the key positions on this matter have been taken by Willis, “Mester de clerecía;” Deyermond, “Mester es sen peccado;” López Estrada; Salvador Miguel; Rico; Gómez Moreno 71-86; and Uría Maqua, *Panorama crítico* 17-171.
Alexandre and the Apolonio, the cuaderna via, but also other clerical poems traditionally considered as a separate corpus because of their different metrical form, rhyming couplets. Weiss has argued that

a social reading of the cuaderna via poems [...] acquires greater depth and meaning by setting them in the wider context of clerical narrative, and that the broad social and didactic impulses that drive the poems in pareados, such as the Vida de Santa María Egipciaca and the debate poem Elena y María, are the same as those that motivate the more formally sophisticated poems [i.e., those written in cuaderna via] (2).

In this respect, Weiss coincides with Ángel Gómez Moreno in arguing for the usefulness of considering the mester de clerecía as a “literary mode” (Weiss 1), rather than as a school narrowly defined in spatial, temporal, and formal terms. Nevertheless, both scholars recognize the closer links that bind the thirteenth-century poems written in monorhymed alexandrine quatrains, which in the words of Isabel Uría Maqua show a “unidad estilística y formal, poética y retórica” (Panorama crítico 56). The attention to those connections has led scholars such as Uría Maqua to reserve the use of the expression mester de clerecía to refer to a hypothetical literary school, maybe even a

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6 As is well known, cuaderna via was also coined from the second stanza of the Alexandre: “fablar curso rimado por la quaderna via, / a sílvas contadas, que es grant maestría” (2cd). This reference to a “fourfold way” was in all likelihood not intended as a label for the stanza that the poet was using, but may have meant that the verses were grouped in fours (see Casas Rigall, Libro de Alexandre 47 and 48-54 for an overview of the cuaderna via’s Latin and French origins and of the critical discussions about this metrical form).

7 Gómez Moreno uses the term “modalidad literaria” to refer to the group of cuaderna via poems written during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (83). However, his overview of the “poesía de clerecía” groups together the “poesía narrativa de corte moralizante” (73) regardless of its metrical form and, more importantly, consistently considers the poems he studies in the context of other romance literatures.
‘taller’ centered around the newly founded University of Palencia. Since both positions are clearly not exclusive, the controversy about the meaning of mester de clerecía remains to a great extent “una polémica fundamental[mente] nominalista,” as Gómez Moreno has observed (83).

The stance taken by Gómez Moreno and Weiss possesses in my view the distinct advantage of situating the Castilian mester de clerecía poems within the wider context of European literature, and more specifically of the vernacular narrative poems created by clerkly authors. Even though we can observe with Uría Maqua that the Iberian mester de clerecía shows “rasgos singulares, genuinos, que lo distinguen de los poemas provenzales, italianos y franceses” (Panorama crítico 51), this does not invalidate a line of inquiry that takes into account the insights offered by considering the Castilian poems alongside their European counterparts. Indeed, as Amaia Arizaleta has reminded us, “l’écriture de clergie” (the term with which she refers to the thirteenth-century cuaderna vía poems) “constitue […] l’accomplissement de l’entreprise initiée par les clercs français” when they decided to compose literary works in the vernacular language (La translation 33).

The scholars who prefer using mester de clerecía to name a literary school developed in a very specific temporal and geographical setting and those who employ it to refer to “a broader and looser literary movement” (Weiss 2) coincide in rejecting the

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8 Uría Maqua first presented her hypothesis about the connection of the thirteenth-century cuaderna vía poems to the University of Palencia in “El Libro de Alexandre y la Universidad de Palencia.” See also, more recently, her Panorama crítico 57-69.

9 The seminal work for a consideration of the mester de clerecía in a pan-romance perspective was Francisco Rico’s “La clerecía del mester,” where he argued that the poems in cuaderna vía needed to be considered as “concreciones parciales de un espíritu más amplio” (148), that of the university-educated scolares clerici.
possibility that these poems conform a literary genre in any strict sense. This view has been explicitly held by Nicasio Salvador Miguel, who groups the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century poems written in monorhymed alexandrine quatrains under this generic denomination. Salvador Miguel sees the *mester de clerecia* as an essentially formal genre, with the verse mould of the *cuaderna via* as its defining feature.

Furthermore, in his view,

> no cabe la menor duda [...] de que el autor [del *Alexandre*] utiliza el rótulo *mester de clerecia* [...] para señalar como una característica concreta y específica de su obra el uso de un determinado tipo de métrica culta, regular [...] a la que confiere un valor sobresaliente (15).

Later writers such as Juan Ruiz, the author of the *Libro de misería de omne*, and possibly the *Apolonio* poet are equally invested, in Salvador Miguel’s reading, in the *cuaderna via* metric form as the essential characteristic of their poems. It should be noted, nevertheless, that Salvador Miguel’s claim also depends, even if he does not mention it, on the thematic features that the poems that he considers as part of the genre have in common.10

To the suggestion that the *mester de clerecia* poems function as a literary genre, Gómez Moreno has objected that

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10 Of course, the discussion about *mester de clerecia* as a generic denomination depends on the concept of genre, a particularly slippery category, held by each scholar. For medieval literature, the contributions of Paul Zumthor and Hans Robert Jauss have been particularly influential, and the objections advanced below by Gómez Moreno implicitly take them into account. See also Ardis Butterfield for a more recent reassessment. For a brief and useful overview of the evolution of the critical thinking on medieval genres, see Gaunt 3-10.
resulta ilógico aseverar que los Milagros de Nuestra Señora de Berceo pertenecen al género de los miracula o milagros—común a toda Europa—y, al mismo tiempo, a un género que podemos denominar mester de clerecía o cuaderna vía (83).

Gómez Moreno recognizes however that the cuaderna vía poems may have functioned as models for writers as well as created specific horizons of expectations for their reading or listening public, thus working as literary genres from the point of view of both creation and reception. Ultimately, the reason why he prefers to refer to the mester de clerecía as a literary mode and use miracula, hagiography, or romance as generic categories is that the latter terms “son las mismas categorías empleadas por otras filologías románicas al estudiar sus obras compuestas en tetrásticos” (86). Once again, Gómez Moreno’s position is determined by the awareness that “el fenómeno de la cuaderna vía” (not to speak of clerical narrative poetry in general) “no es exclusivo de España” (86).

The Libro de Alexandre and the Libro de Apolonio as Romances of Antiquity

What is then the genre through which the Alexandre and the Apolonio may most productively be approached from a European point of view? The two works respond to the standard characterization of medieval romance as

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11 In contrast, Arizaleta observes that the didactic purpose, reliance on Latin auctores, and knowledge of rhetoric that are often listed as common features of the mester de clerecía “sont communes à toutes les œuvres de nature lettrée composées en Occident au long des XIIe et XIIIe siècles,” because those works “s’inscrivent dans la vaste école des moderni du tournant du siècle” (La translation 31).

12 Uría Maqua advances similar objections in her Panorama crítico 158-62. She focuses particularly on the thematic diversity of the thirteenth-century poems and the formal differences between them and the fourteenth-century cuaderna vía works.
poems typically concerned with aristocratic characters such as kings and queens, knights and ladies, and their chivalric pursuits. They are often organized around a quest, whether for love or adventure, and involve a variety of marvelous elements (Fuchs 4).\textsuperscript{13}

The protagonists of both poems are wandering kings who either search for adventures, in the case of Alexander, or find themselves involuntarily subjected to them, in the case of Apollonius and his family. Other features are also present: the \textit{Alexandre} displays the fascination with \textit{mirabilia} that is common in many narratives about Alexander the Great, while the \textit{Apolonio} focuses on the concept of courtliness that pervades the so-called “courtly romances.”\textsuperscript{14} Consequently, it is not surprising to find that Gómez Moreno classifies both poems under the French term \textit{roman} (83). In a similar way, many scholars who now study the \textit{Alexandre} and the \textit{Apolonio} recognize romance, at least cursorily, either as the generic category most appropriate to describe both poems or, at the very least, as one that needs to be taken into account in order to understand them fully.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} In contrast with this traditional definition of medieval romance, Barbara Fuchs advances an understanding of romance as a set of strategies rather than as a series of fixed traits. My own understanding of the genre is close to Fuchs’s and, in the field of medieval literature, to the one articulated by Geraldine Heng in her book \textit{Empire of Magic}; see chapter three below for a discussion of this concept of romance in relation to a key characteristic of the \textit{Alexandre} and the \textit{Apolonio}, their anachronistic representation of classical antiquity.

\textsuperscript{14} It should also be noted that Fuchs considers earlier narratives about Alexander the Great and Apollonius of Tyre in her overview of classical romance (31-33; 36), arguing that both sets of stories make use of “romance strategies.”

\textsuperscript{15} María Rosa Lida de Malkiel already noted that “los adaptadores de las historias de Apolonio y de Alejandro […] reinterpretan como aventuras caballerescas las peripeyas geográficas de la novela griega y las expediciones de Alejandro” (168-69). Weiss also refers to the two works as romances throughout his \textit{The ‘Mester de clerecía’}, and in fact makes of the “the seamless incorporation of market scenes into the world of the romance” (201) a central part of his reading of the \textit{Apolonio}. Marina Brownlee’s reads the \textit{Apolonio} as a poem partaking of romance and hagiographic features, although by
Within the protean field of medieval romance, the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* are related to a very specific strand—the foundational works of the genre, known as *romans antiques*, *romans d’antiquité*, or romances of antiquity. Unlike the term *mester de clerecía*, this is a modern critical label traditionally used to describe the first romances documented in the French language. The expression *roman antique* is useful because, in Barbara Nolan’s words, it “emphasizes a formally significant conjunction […] between a medieval vernacular language and the language and matter of classical history, between modern authorial composition and ancient Latin models for writing” (7). This group of verse narratives written around the mid-twelfth century drew from Latin sources in order to tell stories that would become synonymous with the classical past in the courtly imaginary: the wars between Oedipus’s sons in the *Roman de Thèbes* (c. 1152), the Trojan War in the *Roman de Troie* (c. 1160), Eneas’s adventures after the Trojan defeat in the *Roman d’Énéas* (c. 1155), Alexander the Great’s conquests in the different versions

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**16** The concept of *roman antique* is partly based on the famous classification found in a poem composed by French author Jean Bodel at the turn of the thirteenth century, which divides the possible *matières*, according to geographical criteria, in *matière de Rome*, *matière de Bretaigne*, and *matière de France*. For a recent assessment of Bodel’s classification as geographically based, see César Domínguez 19-26. In addition, manuscript composition may also betray a certain generic consciousness, since the *Roman de Thèbes*, the *Roman de Troie*, and the *Roman d’Énéas* are usually found together (often followed by the *Roman de Brut* and then Arthurian romances in order to form a chronological sequence; see Sylvia Huot 63-64).
of the *Roman d’Alexandre* (c. 1160-1177), and Apollonius of Tyre’s misadventures in the *Roman d’Apollonius de Tyr* (c. 1150-1160).

The *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* are thus the Castilian counterparts of two Francophone *romans antiques*—and, in the case of the *Apolonio*, the *Roman d’Alexandre* is also one of the principal sources of the poem. However, both the *Roman d’Alexandre* and the *Roman d’Apollonius de Tyr* sit uneasily on the canon of twelfth-century *romans antiques*. Many critical overviews of the genre focus on the so-called “classical trilogy,” formed by the *Roman de Thèbes*, the *Roman d’Énéas*, and the *Roman de Troie*. The reasons for the two poems’ relative marginality are very different. On the one hand, the *Roman d’Alexandre* is often perceived as a poem midway between epic and romance: from a formal point of view, it employs the epic *laisse* and twelve-syllable verses rather than rhyming couplets of eight-syllable lines; as for its content, the subject of love, which would take center stage in the classical trilogy and later in Arthurian romance, appears but is not central to plot development.

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17 Although these are the more widely accepted dates for each romance, critical opinions differ as to the timing and order of composition of the *romans antiques*. For a discussion of this matter, see Renata Blumenfeld-Kosinski; Aimé Petit, *Naissances du roman* 11-14; and Catherine Croizy-Naquet, *Thèbes, Troie et Carthage* 14-15.

18 Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Barbara Nolan, for example, consider only these three works. In contrast, Petit (*Naissances du roman*) and Christopher Baswell (“Marvels of Translation”) also include the *Roman d’Alexandre*. Only Jean Frappier & Guy Raynaud de Lage, the most exhaustive overview, takes into account the *Roman d’Apollonius de Tyr*.

19 Ironically, in this respect the *Roman d’Alexandre* epitomizes the *roman antique*’s status in traditional criticism as a transitional genre between epic and “true” romance (the Arthurian romance that starts with Chrétien de Troyes’ poems). For an example of this line of reasoning, see Frappier’s observations in Frappier & Raynaud de Lage 145-48.

20 An additional problem is that it is not even possible to talk of “the” *Roman d’Alexandre*—there exist several versions and reworkings by different authors. See Frappier & Raynaud de Lage 149-67 and, for a recent reassessment of the French Alexander tradition, the volume edited by Donald Maddox & Sara Sturm-Maddox.
The Roman poet d'Apollonius de Tyr is that only a very short fragment of the twelfth-century poem has survived.21

Despite the secondary status of their French equivalents, the Alexandre and the Apolonio appear distinctly as romances of antiquity if we consider the genre, as current scholarship does, in relation to the twin historiographical metaphors of translatio studii and translatio imperii.22 These topoi conceptualize the relationship of medieval culture to the classical past by positing a historical transfer of political and cultural legitimacy in a westward and northward direction—in its shorter version, from Greece to Rome, and from Rome to France or whatever European power was trying to claim legitimacy.23 Francophone romances of antiquity enact the relocation of studium and imperium both inside and outside the diegetic world, and, as I will argue, so do their Castilian counterparts.

In regard to translatio studii, the romances of antiquity symbolically complete the transfer of learning from the Roman Empire to its would-be heirs through the modern sense of the word translatio—translation, in this case implying a transfer from Latin to vernacular. The romans antiques are nothing less than revolutionary as they make stories

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21 There are abundant allusions to Apollonius’s story in twelfth-century poems, even though only a short fragment of the poem has survived. For a brief account of this French version, contemporary allusions, and some of the European versions, see Frappier & Raynaud de Lage 167-70. For a detailed assessment of the transmission of the Apollonius narrative from the late antiquity to early modern Europe, see Elizabeth Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre.

22 I follow Blumenfeld-Kosinski in considering that “one of the important achievements of the roman antique lies in its incorporation of the two-faceted topos [of translatio studii and translatio imperii] into literary works by poetically conjoining both its aspects” (148). Baswell’s account of the main traits of roman antique in “Marvels of Translation” is also organized around both forms of translatio.

23 On the origin and some of the uses of the tropes of translatio studii and imperii, see Ernst Robert Curtius 28-30; A.G. Jongkees; and more recently, Karlheinz Stierle.
that had previously existed only in Latin versions available in the vernacular for the first time, thus initiating a movement that David Baswell describes as “cultural appropriation” (“Marvels of Translation” 32). If we compare the romans antiques, or “matter of Rome” in Jean Bodel’s famous terminology, to the two other matières mentioned by Bodel—the “matter of France” represented by the epic genre and the “matter of Britain” treated in Arthurian romances—\(^\text{24}\) one of the main differences is that, while epic and Arthurian romances derive from oral sources, the romances of antiquity are based on written Latin texts that were part of formal education. As a consequence, the language shift entailed yet another form of *translatio*, this time in a spatial sense, from an exclusively clerical milieu to a secular court where the audience was made up of both *clercs* and *chevaliers*, as the author of the *Roman de Thèbes* famously stated.\(^\text{25}\) The transfer of learning from Latin to vernacular is also central to the thirteenth-century *Alexandre* and *Apolonio*, which appear around the time when the vernacular language started to be routinely used in the Castilian royal chancery (Uría, *Panorama crítico* 70).\(^\text{26}\)

The romans antiques also reflect the momentousness of the *translatio studii* from Latin to vernacular within their textual world. These romances are acutely aware of their own “bookishness,” of their quality of written works that parallel “the canonical books of

\(^{24}\) For Bodel’s classification, see note 16 above.

\(^{25}\) “Tout se taisent cil del mestier / si ne sont clerç ou chivaler: / ensemet poet escouter / come li asnes a harper” (*Roman de Thèbes*, verses 13-16).

\(^{26}\) As Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja has explained, the first known official vernacular document produced by the Castilian royal chancery dates from 1206, but it is during the reign of Fernando III (1217-1252) that the use of the vernacular for official recording became widespread and, more significantly, that important documents started to be written in Castilian, as proven by their “estupenda letra” (Sánchez-Prieto Borja 177; see also Derek Lomax). From a different angle, Arizaleta’s latest work focuses on Latin and vernacular thirteenth-century writings that may have been products of the royal chancery (see “Écritures de clergie” and “El Libro de Alexandre”).

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the arts curriculum” (Nolan 9). Not only the book itself, but also the figure of the mediator in this process—Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *clers merveillos* (*Roman de Troie*, verses 45, 88, 99)—is enthusiastically celebrated in both French and Castilian romances of antiquity. The learned narrator’s role is eagerly foregrounded through continual references to his Latin written sources, both real and imagined, the display of an encyclopedic knowledge on a variety of topics, or the insertion of marvelous objects through which the authors “encode their roles” (Baswell, “Marvels of Translation” 34) in the poems. Furthermore, some characters in these narratives have a specular relationship to their authors—a feature particularly prominent in the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*, whose protagonists are extremely well versed in the liberal arts that conformed the scholarly curriculum. The French *romans antiques*’ clerkly authors, who “had a growing if always marginal power in the secular world of the court” (Baswell, “Marvels of Translation” 33) thus found themselves, as Weiss puts it for the Iberian *mester de clerecía* poets, “in between” (179). Both the Francophone and the Castilian authors of the romances of antiquity create powerful ideological tools for the secular aristocracy, but at the same time they inscribe forcefully on them their own presence and authority.

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27 For an exploration of “bookishness” as a defining characteristic of *roman antique*, see also Blumenfeld-Kosiniski 144.
28 Chapters one and two of this dissertation study the presence and some of the functions of these objects (tomb, tents, and other monuments) in the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*.
29 As a result, critics have talked about the “intellectual hero” of the *mester de clerecía* (Ronald E. Surtz, “El héroe intelectual”) or defined them as “learned clerks” (Alvar, “Apolonio, clérigo entendido”).
30 Weiss’s account of the ideological dynamics of the *mester de clerecía* deals at length with the clerk’s position as a mediator between two very different worlds and sets of interests. See also Michel Garcia’s important article for an assessment of the Castilian clerkly writers’ role as mediators.
The other side of *translatio*, the transfer of power described with the expression *translatio imperii*, is likewise connected to the romances of antiquity in two different but interrelated facets: territorial expansion and genealogical succession. The *romans antiques* incorporate the concept of *translatio imperii* in their diegetic world, but not without interrogating and problematizing it. With respect to territorial expansion, the narratives retold by the *romans antiques* consciously depict a transfer of political rule more often than not marked by violence. Power changes hands from Thebans to Greeks in the *Roman de Thèbes*, from Trojans to Greeks in the *Roman de Troie*, from Persians to Greeks in the *Roman d’Alexandre* and the *Libro de Alexandre*, and migrates from Troy to Rome in the *Roman d’Énéas*. In the case of Apollonius, he starts as the king of Tyre but after his travels and tribulations he and his family end up ruling a handful of Mediterranean cities in addition to his original kingdom: Antioch, Pentapolis, and Mitylene. The territorial expansion depicted in these works appears to be linked to a constant anxiety about genealogical legitimacy. As Baswell has observed, “[t]he romances of Antiquity may attempt to enact a tidy succession of power from east to west, from father to son, yet they are rife with elements that complicate the smooth notion of a patriarchal line” (“Marvels of Translation” 35). The Castilian poems in particular are very concerned with this issue. The *Alexandre* explores the question of genealogical legitimacy in relation to the doubts about the identity of Alexander’s father, while the opposition between incest and exogamy plays a central role in the *Apolonio*.31

31 See Weiss 112-23 for a perceptive examination of genealogical anxiety in the *Alexandre*. On the topic of incest in medieval literature, including several versions of the Apollonius narrative, see Archibald, *Incest in the Medieval Imagination*. Chapter two of this study also explores the issue of genealogical transmission in both the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*.
Translatio imperii is not just one of the main thematic threads within the fictional world of the romans antiques. The centrality of genealogical succession and territorial expansion in both French and Castilian romances is related to the problems posed by those issues during the time when these poems were written. The romances of antiquity respond to the considerable changes in family structure and the conception of lineage that were taking place in Western Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Baswell, “Marvels of Translation” 34-38). Moreover, the creation of the first romans antiques in the court of Henry II, the Norman king of England, is partly explained by their ability to “help provide a mythic prehistory and genealogical source for imperial formation in northwest Europe” (Baswell, “Marvels of Translation” 35). Although such a close link cannot be established in the case of the Alexandre or the Apolonio, thirteenth-century Castile was in the middle of the process of colonial expansion known as the “Reconquista.” It would not be too audacious to suggest that, in the Castilian case as in the Norman, the romans antiques may have contributed to establish the “desperately needed link with Antiquity” (Buchthal 58) that imposes a logical and legitimizing narrative on the translatio imperii implied in territorial expansion.

The centrality of the concepts of translatio studii and translatio imperii both within the diegesis of the romans antiques and in the social and political world

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32 R. Howard Bloch, Gabrielle Spiegel, and Simon Gaunt, among other scholars, have investigated the relationship between these changes and medieval French historiography and fiction. Isabel Beceiro Pita & Ricardo Córdoba de la Llave offer a historical overview of similar changes in the Castilian case.

33 Blumenfeld-Kosinski offers some opinions as to how individual romances may be read in this context (157-59); for a detailed consideration of the presence of contemporary events in the Roman de Thèbes, see Petit, L’anachronisme 49-84.

34 For a related hypothesis in relation to the Alexandre, see Arizaleta, La translation 255-61 and “L’écriture de clergie au XIIe siècle” 17-18.
surrounding them is also reflected in their use of an important rhetorical tool—anachronism. The romances of antiquity’s clerkly creators systematically medievalized the classical past where their narratives were set, introducing contemporary objects, behaviors, and institutions. Although I will have much more to say about this device in chapter three, I would like to call attention now to the fact that anachronism, besides being a form of translatio in and of itself—the equivalent of translating the past into the present—, also serves to highlight the most urgent issues for the creators of these romances. The importance of both kinds of translatio is highlighted in the Alexandre and the Apolonio through the accumulation of anachronisms related to both knowledge and power, the most prominent of which is the fact that the heroes of the two poems, Alexander the Great and Apollonius of Tyre, are presented as both learned clerks and ideal medieval monarchs.35

The generic connection of the Alexandre and the Apolonio to the romans antiques is therefore well established. The French and the Castilian poems share not only a common interest in the classical past, but also a similar pioneering role in the transfer of learning from Latin to vernacular, an enthusiastic conception of clerkly authority that pervades the texts, a deep preoccupation with contemporary problems related to genealogical succession and territorial expansion, and an astute use of anachronism. For this reason, it is not surprising to find that the ties of the Iberian poems to the romans antiques have been repeatedly acknowledged by critics.

35 See note 29 above for the image of Apollonius and Alexander as clerks. Ian Michael has signaled the accumulation of anachronisms around the subject of kingship in the Alexandre (28-87), and a similar observation could well be made about the Apolonio. Moreover, the parallels that many scholars have traced between the fictional kings and Castilian monarchs, particularly Alfonso X, also seem to have been exploited by medieval writers (Calderón Calderón).
For instance, in her important study about the _Alexandre_, Arizaleta speaks of the poem as “l’heureuse fusion des traditions épique, romanesque, didactique, exemplaire et encyclopédique” (_La translation_ 225), and connects the Castilian work to French romans antiques in their investigation of a monarchic ideal (_La translation_ 224), an observation that could also be extended to the _Apolonio_.

Gómez Moreno goes further in this respect as, besides referring to both poems as romans, he also follows Bodel’s terminology by including them under the epigraph “materia de Roma” (106). Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht observes as well that the _Alexandre_ and the _Apolonio_, together with the later work known as _Historia troyana polimétrica_, “may be classified as romances of antiquity” (207). In the same vein, Marina Brownlee has stated in her overview of medieval Spanish romance and its relation to the Cervantine novel that “[i]n Spain, as elsewhere in Europe, the first instance of romance to appear in the vernacular was the so-called “romance of Antiquity” of the thirteenth century” (“Medieval Spanish Paradigms” 254), by which she refers to the _Alexandre_ and the _Apolonio_.

Some Impediments to a Reading of the _Libro de Alexandre_ and the _Libro de Apolonio_ as Romans Antiques

Yet if the _Alexandre_ and the _Apolonio_ are almost universally recognized as romances of antiquity, Hispano-medievalists have not, to the best of my knowledge, followed up on the implications of this generic denomination. Despite the remarks

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36 Arizaleta also recognizes the continuity between the French and the Castilian clergies when she observes that “[l]a _translatio studii_ prit forme avec les auteurs de ‘romans antiques;’ le savoir ne fut plus latin, mais vernaculaire. Avec la clergie castillane, la _translatio studii_ se matérialisa définitivement” (_La translation_ 33).
quoted above, scholars like Arizaleta or Gómez Moreno situate their readings of the poems squarely within the critical paradigm of the *mester de clerecía*. Neither have the studies that compare the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* made use of their common connection to the *roman antique*.37 This lack of interest responds to several interconnected reasons that I would like to discuss in some detail. First, romance has traditionally occupied a marginal place in medieval Hispanic studies. Second, and due in great measure to this situation, there has not existed a critical awareness of the Iberian tradition of romances of antiquity and related works. Finally, the dominant *mester de clerecía* paradigm within which the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* have usually—and often fruitfully—been read encourages an overemphasis on the Christianizing aspects of both works and tends to assume, wrongly in my opinion, that all the thirteenth-century *cuaderna vía* poems were composed for similar audiences.

One of the main reasons for the critical reluctance to read the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* as romances of antiquity may be the lack of a strong scholarly tradition of romance studies in Ibero-medievalism. This situation was famously lamented by Alan Deyermond in his classic article, “The Lost Genre of Medieval Spanish Literature.” When Deyermond published the article in 1975, some romances—among them the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*—had already been the objects of sustained critical interest, but many others were only available in nineteenth-century editions or had not been edited at all. None of them, in any case, were considered as part of the specific generic tradition of romance. Taking into account that romance “is […] one of the dominant [genres] of

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37 Studies such as Uría Maqua, “El Libro de Apolonio;” Ancos García, “El autor” and “Vocalidad y textualidad;” Arizaleta, “La transmisión del saber médico” and “Les vers sur la pierre,” compare the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* within the framework of the *mester de clerecía*. 
medieval Europe,” Deyermond argued that the lack of attention to its Iberian manifestations “has concealed an important area in which Spain is part of the European tradition, and has contributed to the mistaken belief that Spanish literature can be viewed in isolation from its European roots” (“The Lost Genre” 247). The neglect of romance as a genre was due, according to Deyermond, to two main causes: first, the fact that there does not exist in the Spanish language a word equivalent to the English *romance*, or even to the French *roman*, which also refers to the genre that we would call “novel” in English (“The Lost Genre” 243-45). Second and maybe more importantly, Deyermond detected a “psychological” reason for the marginalization of romance—the insistence of Spanish literary history in considering properly “Spanish” only works deemed to be sufficiently “realistic” and “popular” (“The Lost Genre” 245-46).

This situation has, of course, greatly improved in the thirty-five years elapsed since the publication of Deyermond’s article. The unedited or poorly edited romances to which he refers are for the most part widely available and have consequently received more critical attention, while the connections of Iberian literature with its European counterparts are routinely taken into account by most Hispano-medievalists. Still, even after the rehabilitation of romance as a legitimate generic category, most critical energy has been spent on what are perceived as “indigenous” brands of romance—the sentimental and chivalric subgenres. Deyermond already observed that “the chivalresque and sentimental subgenres are studied, but their wider connections are usually overlooked” (“The Lost Genre” 240). Even Sylvia Roubaud-Bénichou, who to my knowledge is the only critic who has

38 Deyermond relates this impulse with the creation of Spanish medieval studies in the intellectual milieu of the so-called “generación del 98.” See also Gerlí, “Inventing the Spanish Middle Ages” for a recent study on this topic paying special attention to the figure of the founder of Spanish medieval studies, Ramón Menéndez Pidal.

39 Deyermond already observed that “the chivalresque and sentimental subgenres are studied, but their wider connections are usually overlooked” (“The Lost Genre” 240).
implicitly treats romance as a genre that made a late appearance in Castilian literature with the fourteenth-century *Libro del caballero Zifar*.

The second reason why reading the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* as romans *antiques* may not appear productive is the seeming lack of a sustained Castilian tradition of vernacular works, and particularly romances, concerned with classical antiquity before the advent of fifteenth-century vernacular humanism. In this respect, the two poems’ focus on ancient history would appear to be an isolated occurrence that did not have any continuity. However, this appreciation stems from the way in which the canon of medieval Castilian literature and its generic configuration have been constructed. The *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* have always enjoyed a central place in the traditional narrative of Spanish literary history, while other works dealing with classical matter have never received comparable critical attention.

As it happens, the narrative of the Trojan War, recounted for the first time in a written Iberian vernacular in the *Alexandre*, seems to have become metonymic with the classical past during the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. The proliferation of works adapting Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie*, such as the *Historia troyana polimétrica* or the Castilian and Galician versions related to the *Crónica troyana de Alfonso XI*, together with the mysterious Leomarte’s *Sumas de historia troyana*—based on the Latin version of Benoît’s work, Guido delle Colonne’s *Historia destructionis*

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40 The fifteenth century is a period of extraordinary cultural effervescence, during which the interest in Greek and Latin civilizations grew exponentially among noblemen. Some key studies dealing with the roots, development, and significance of “chivalric humanism” or “vernacular humanism,” as it has been labeled, are those by Ottavio Di Camillo, Jeremy Lawrance, and Jesús Rodríguez Velasco (*El debate sobre la caballería*).
Besides the importance of the Trojan narrative in medieval Iberian literature, the only studies about it for a very long time were Antonio García Solalinde and Agapito Rey & García Solalinde, published in 1916 and 1942 respectively. Fortunately, more recent studies, such as Casas Rigall’s La materia de Troya, have started to address these works not only individually but also as a group. Reliable editions are still lacking for most of these works (an exception is Ramón Lorenzo’s edition of the Galician Crónica troiana), but preliminary studies for editions of the Roman de Troie versions contained in manuscripts Escorial h-I-6 and Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo M-558 by Claudia D’Ambruoso and Ricardo Pichel Gotérrez respectively are available or in press.

In fact, the story of the Trojan War was considered important enough to merit a unified retelling in second part of the General estoria instead of recounting the separate events in the respective years in which they took place (see Roubaud-Bénichou 115-128).

The connection between the Historia troyana polimétrica and the Crónica troyana de Alfonso XI is particularly close, since both derive not directly from Benoît’s poem but from a lost source in a Western Iberian vernacular (Casas Rigall, La materia de Troya 223-38).
precluding their incorporation to the canon of Castilian literature at the same level as the *Alexandre* or the *Apolonio*. However, their existence and obvious importance to thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Castilian literary culture should alert us to the role that the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* may have played in starting such a vivid interest in classical antiquity.

The secondary situation within Hispanic medieval studies of both romance as a genre and the Castilian works focusing on classical antiquity—excepting the two *cuaderna via* poems—explains to a great extent why the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* have been almost exclusively read within the context of other clerical creations. In this sense, the *mester de clerecía* has, if not nominally at least practically, functioned as a true generic paradigm for the two works. The fact that the majority of the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía* poems belong to the hagiographic genre thus explains to a great extent the critical overemphasis on the Christian aspects of the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*. Brownlee’s and Gumbrecht’s assessments of both poems are two good examples of how this situation has precluded their consideration as *romans antiques*.

As I have mentioned above, the two critics approach the poems from the point of view of romance. However, Brownlee states that,

> While the conventions of romance and the positivistic values that underlie the genre are very visible in both of these texts, the presentation of each hero is a hybrid one, offering a juxtaposition of the romance focus on
earthly, secular personal achievement with the sacred, extra-textual considerations of eternity ("Medieval Spanish Paradigms" 254). Brownlee perceives a key difference between the French and the Castilian romances in the contrast between the presentation of an explicitly Christian point of view in the Iberian works and the absence of such a perspective in the twelfth-century romans antiques. In contrast with the Castilian poets, the authors of the French poems resorted to “ancient history and ancient values” in order to “release themselves—for the sake of intellectual play and ethical inquiry—not only from the traditional, customary ethos of the chansons de geste but also from the teleological interests of Christian morality” (Nolan 9).

For his part, Gumbrecht has argued that the Alexander and Apollonius stories performed different functions in the French and the Castilian case, so that the Roman d’Alexandre and the Roman d’Apollonius de Tyre “may be classified [as] romances” in the French literary genre-system, but in the Castilian case their “didactic function in the broadest sense” situates the Alexandre and the Apolonio within the ‘genre’ of mester de clerecia (217). Gumbrecht identifies three “new functions” performed by the narratives

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46 Brownlee’s observations about the “extra-textual considerations of eternity” in the poems depart from her conception of romance as self-referential, in contrast for example with hagiography’s “extra-textual concerns” (“Writing and Scripture” 161), which I find highly problematic. The brief overview of the main features of roman antique offered above should be enough to dispel any illusion that these texts do not display extra-textual preoccupations.

47 Gumbrecht’s article departs from some assumptions now outdated about the composition of the Alexandre and the Apolonio, which he believes contemporary with the reign of Alfonso X, as well as from a problematic conception of the roman antique as a transitional genre. In any case, he is interested in how the same narratives performed different functions in France and Castile (207) and, while it is not my intention to downplay the social and cultural differences between the two kingdoms, I believe that the
about Alexander and Apollonius in the Castilian context: providing “astonishing and entertaining information” (209); asserting “virtues […] that relate directly to social living” (210); and finally, insisting on the “ultimate immutability of fate” (212).

However, these features figure prominently in the Francophone romances of antiquity, with their fascination for mirabilia, preoccupation with ethical and courtly rules of conduct, and reliance of ancient stories that showed the ravages of Fortune in once-powerful cities such as Thebes or Troy. Rather than these characteristics, I believe that it is once again the Christian inflection of the Iberian poems—and in particular their explicit Christian moralization, absent from the French romances—that ultimately leads Gumbrecht to reject their characterization as romances of antiquity. This is why he also insists that in medieval Castile “the Church assumed responsibility for not only religious but also socio-ethical education” (222).

Scholars dealing with both poems have in fact often highlighted the process of Christianization undergone by both works—significantly however, they have done so as part of the wider process of “medievalization” that consists in the systematic introduction of anachronisms in the narrative world, a technique that we have seen as one of the main traits in French roman antique. This characteristic of the Castilian poems may to a certain extent be due to their particular sources—Walter of Châtillon’s *Alexandreis*

48 Michael treats the *Alexandre*’s Christianization as part of his wider study on the medievalization undergone by the poem (88-142). As for the *Apolonio*, “notable [compared to other versions of the narrative] for its heavy Christian moralizing” (Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre* 190), Ancos Garcia has also treated its Christianization in the context of the medievalization process (“Vocalidad y textualidad” 45-50). See also Brownlee, “Writing and Scripture” and Surtz, “The Spanish *Libro de Apolonio*” for the *Apolonio*’s relationship to hagiography.
emphasizes the distance between Alexander the Great, limited by his pagan worldview, and the Christian perspective of both narrator and audience, while the Latin *Historia Apolonii Regis Tyrii* already displayed abundant Christian traits. More significantly perhaps, the undeniable and explicit interest shown by the *Alexandre* and *Apolonio* poets in the interplay of their own Christian morality with the antique setting of the poems can also be found, if not in the early Francophone works, in fourteenth-century poems situated within the *roman antique* tradition such as Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight’s Tale* (Minnis; Nolan 198-281).

Reading the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* alongside other *mester de clerecía* works has also led some scholars to assume a common audience for all of them, and particularly for the thirteenth-century *mester de clerecía* poems. In this respect, Uría Maqua has conjectured not only that these works were created in an academic milieu, but also that schools and universities conformed their primary space of reception. She concludes that, estos poemas irían destinados a las personas cultas o semicultas, como textos que completaban su educación intelectual y moral; serían leídos en voz alta, y la lectura se acompañaría de glosas y comentarios de los pasajes más difíciles, pues así era como se realizaba la *lectio* en las escuelas y universidades medievales (*Panorama crítico* 152).

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49 For a reading of the *Alexandreis* based primarily on the distance between pagan and Christian perspectives, see Maura Lafferty, “Mapping Human Limitations” and Walter of Châtillon’s *Alexandreis*.

50 In contrast with scholars who consider the Latin work’s Christian features superficial (e.g. Kelley, “Mixed Messages”), Patricia Grieve has argued that they already were an integral part of the *Historia Apolonii Regis Tyrii*.

51 For an overview of the different positions on this matter from the nineteenth century onwards, see Uría Maqua, *Panorama crítico* 134-53. Her own argument is also detailed
In a similar vein, John K. Walsh has also argued for a common context of creation and reception of the early *mester de clerecía* poems, in this case monastic—either Benedictine or Cistercian—rather than academic (40-44). More recently, Pablo Ancos García has argued that not only “the authors of the vernacular poems and their scribes, as well as the authors of the sources, were male *clerici*, either in the cultural and/or the professional sense” but that “the same is true of the vocal emitter and the primary audience of most of the Romance texts” (“The Primary Audience” 120).52

On the contrary, critics considering the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* individually tend to posit the court as the most probable space of reception for the poems. In the case of the *Alexandre*, Arizaleta has noted that the poem, “héritier de la matière du *Roman d’Alexandre*, l’est aussi de son caractère courtois, dans ce sens qu’il est [...] destine à la cour” (*La translation* 261), while Pedro Cátedra has observed that the Castilian poet’s treatment of some passages of his work, such as the Amazons episode, implies a courtly “implicit reader” (330).53 As for the *Apolonio*, Fernando Gómez Redondo has argued that the courtly audiences appearing throughout the poem mirror those for which it was composed (286-87), while Ancos García thinks that this work may have been “una obra

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52 Ancos García’s argument is primarily based on his close reading of certain passages of the texts (in reference to the *Alexandre*, see “The Primary Audience” 130-31, and especially n20). However, the interpretation of those passages is skewed, I would argue, by their having been considered exclusively alongside other *cuaderna via* poems. Significantly, when Ancos García considers the *Apolonio* on its own in his “Vocalidad y textualidad,” he finishes by positing a courtly rather than a wholly clerical audience as its primary context of reception (see below).

53 See also Martin Aurell, who believes that Alexander as a character represents the ideal receptor of the poem, a *miles litteratus*. Arizaleta has proposed that the royal court was the centre of creation and primary diffusion of the *Alexandre* (“L’écriture de clergie au XIIIe siècle,” 17-19; *La translation* 255-61).
destinada a ser recibida primariamente como relato ejemplar por un público más señorial y cortesano que burgués; incluso, me atrevería a decir, que fuera concebido como una especie de ‘espejo de príncipes’” (“Vocalidad y textualidad” 64), thus paralleling one of the obvious functions of the Alexandre.\textsuperscript{54}

The plausibility of a courtly space of reception for the Alexandre and the Apolonio increases if we take into account that the stories of both Alexander the Great and Apollonius of Tyre—as well as the Trojan narrative—seem to have been a fixture of courtly entertainment in the French and Provençal-speaking domains.\textsuperscript{55} They appear in enumerations of appropriate jongleuresque repertoire such as the ones found in the twelfth-century poem Cabra, joglar, composed by the Catalan nobleman Guerau de Cabrera,\textsuperscript{56} the late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century Chanson de Doon de Nanteuil,\textsuperscript{57} or the thirteenth-century Occitan romance Flamenca.\textsuperscript{58} Ultimately, I believe that the Alexandre’s focus on problems related to the concept of kingship, as well as the Apolonio’s investment in the notion of cortesía,\textsuperscript{59} could only acquire their full relevance

\textsuperscript{54} See Willis, “Mester de clerecía” 222-24 and Arizaleta, La translation 240-45.
\textsuperscript{55} Provençal poetry and culture was, of course, highly influential throughout Europe, and the thirteen-century Iberian courts were not an exception, as Vicenç Beltrán has shown.
\textsuperscript{56} The poet lists all the narratives that the jongleur Cabra should know but ignores, saying, “ni del bon rei, / no·n sabes que·s fei / d’Alixandri fil Filipon. / D’Apoloine / no·n sabes re, / qu’estors de mar de perizon” (Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 220-21).
\textsuperscript{57} The stories of Apollonius and Alexander are retold at the court of king Charles: “Et chantent d’Apoloine et del bien Tenebré / Del viel Antiocus, de Porus et d’Otré, / Et del roi Alexandre et del preu Tholomé” (Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 225-26).
\textsuperscript{58} Among the minstrels performing every imaginable story at a courtly wedding, “l’autres contava d’Apoloine / consi retenc Tyr e Sidoine; l’us comtet de rei Alexandri” (Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 227-28).
\textsuperscript{59} Both aspects are central to Weiss’s readings of the Alexandre (109-42) and the Apolonio (198-209).
in a courtly setting composed of clercs and chevaliers, akin to the one for which the French and other European romans antiques were composed.\textsuperscript{60}

The European Roman Antique and Cultural Memory

By now, I hope to have shown that the connections of the Alexandre and the Apolonio to the French romans antiques merit a reconsideration of both poems in the light of the some of the techniques, preoccupations, and functions of the genre. Nevertheless, approaching the Iberian works from this angle makes it necessary to contemplate the romances of antiquity not from the narrow perspective of French literary history but taking into account the European dimensions of the genre. This point of view is particularly relevant in the case of a generic tradition that, as I will argue, is intimately tied to the cultural process known as the “Europeanization of Europe.” For this reason, my reading of the Alexandre and the Apolonio as romans antiques will focus on how these works interrogate the means through which a vernacular cultural memory of antiquity, providing a shared past for the courtly elites throughout the continent, could be successfully shaped, stored, and passed on.

Traditional accounts of French literary history saw the twelfth-century romances of antiquity as a transitional genre between epic and fully-fledged (Arthurian) romance, a group of works “où s’esquisse un genre encore à la recherche de son identité” (Frappier & Raynaud de Lage 145). In this narrative, the younger sibling Arthurian romance soon

\textsuperscript{60} In her work on the European roman antique, Nolan observes that not only the twelfth-century Francophone romans antiques, but also the works by Boccaccio and Chaucer that she studies as part of the same tradition, were created for a courtly audience, the court of the Angevin king Robert of Naples in the first case, and that of Richard II of England in the second (2).
obscures the *romans antiques*, whose main value resides in having “préluđé utilement à la manière plus réfléchie et plus raffinée d’un Chrétien de Troyes” (Frappier & Raynaud de Lage 147). The romances of antiquity, however, did not disappear with the emergence of the *matière de Bretagne*. On the contrary, they continued to be copied, illustrated, reworked, and integrated into encyclopedic accounts of world history, and spawned innumerable translations, adaptations, and imitations throughout Europe (Baswell, “Marvels of Translation” 42). For this reason, the most recent criticism on the romances of antiquity recognizes the existence of a European tradition that goes well beyond the twelfth-century Francophone poems.

This view has been most notably taken by Barbara Nolan, who has studied what she calls the tradition of *roman antique*. She approaches not just the three canonical twelfth-century romances of antiquity, the *Roman de Thèbes*, the *Roman d’Énéas*, and the *Roman de Troie*, but also Boccaccio’s *Filostrato* and *Teseida*, and Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight’s Tale* as part of that tradition, reading them “within the context of the medieval Latin arts curriculum from which they spring” (284). The main thread in Nolan’s reading of the three groups of works is how the medieval liberal-arts curriculum shaped the formal design employed in and the ethical questions raised by the *romans*.

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61 More recently, D.H. Green has offered a similar assessment of the transitional nature of both French and German *roman antique* (134-201). He argues that being still “tied to history” (195) they offer “at the most incipient or episodic fictionality,” unlike the *matière de Bretagne* which “provided opportunities for creative innovation on a far greater scale” (168).

62 It is particularly significant of the success obtained by the *Roman de Troie* that it was adapted into Latin (by way of a prose version) by Guido delle Colonne in his *Historia destructionis Troiae*, which resulted in a new wave of European adaptations, including the Castilian *Sumas de historia troyana* mentioned above. For a study of the German *Alexander, Eneit*, and the *Liet von Troye*, see Marie Sophie Masse. Baswells studies some of the abundant English versions in his *Virgil in Medieval England*.
antiques.\textsuperscript{63} It is interesting to note that while, in Nolan’s view, the twelfth-century romances of antiquity used the classical setting as a sort of excuse to evade a religious point of view in order to “interrogate hypothetical or possible rules for secular ethical conduct” (9), she comments on the ways in which Chaucer’s versions deal more directly with the problem posed by the pagan condition of the characters and their world, paralleling more closely the Castilian poems in that respect.\textsuperscript{64}

My own approach to the romans antiques follows Nolan’s in considering the genre from a European perspective. However, I would like to take her views on the existence of a European tradition of roman antique further by suggesting that the romances of antiquity should be considered in the context of the late medieval cultural developments that the historian Robert Bartlett has described as the “Europeanization of Europe.” Through this expression, Bartlett tries to convey the idea that if “‘Europe’ is a construct, an image of a set of societies that can be seen as sharing something,” then “there was a dramatic change in what was shared and how widely over the course of the High Middle Ages” (269). During this time, the Frankish and Norman elites expanded throughout Europe, not only through a process of conquest and colonization that resulted

\textsuperscript{63} A similar approach to the Alexandre and the Apolonio would undoubtedly be productive, and may draw especially on Uriá Maqua’s work on the links between the mester de clercia works and academic circles. My own point of view, which connects the poems with different facets of memory work, is also related to the questions raised by Nolan, since the training of memory was considered central to the development of morality and the practice of ethical reading (see Mary Carruthers, The Book of Memory 156-88).

\textsuperscript{64} Alastair Minnis has also taken up this issue in regard to Chaucer in his Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity. Each group of works must, of course, be also considered individually, and in the case of the Iberian poems, the importance of the Christian component may be related to their depiction of ideal monarchs in a moment when the Castilian kings were fashioning themselves through the figure of the rex christianissimus (Arizaleta, “L’écriture de clergie” 17-18 and La translation 257-59; see also chapter one below).
in the extension of Latin Christendom, but also by other means such as dynastic alliances. Concomitant with this military expansion, a process of “cultural homogenization,” which ultimately served to spread the culture rooted in the old Frankish empire, took place. This “process of cultural change,” Bartlett argues, “interwove with the more simply military tale and was not merely a function of it” (269). In his account of the late medieval Europeanizing process, Bartlett includes institutions and practices such as the worshiping of certain saints, the minting of silver coins, chanceries, universities, the Roman Latin liturgy, or religious orders (243-91).

The spread of *roman antique*, I would contend, is directly linked to the developments that would eventually result in a more culturally homogeneous Europe. The clerical class that created the romances of antiquity in the different parts of the continent, and particularly the French and Iberian clerks who wrote during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was in fact the product of several developments tied to the Europeanizing process. As Bartlett explains, “[b]y 1300 Europe existed as an identifiable cultural entity,” a feat made possible in part by the fact that “Europe’s rulers everywhere […] depended upon chanceries [and] Europe’s bureaucrats shared a common experience of higher education” (291). The clerical authors of the French and Castilian *romans antiques* were in all probability, as we have seen, members of the bureaucratic class created in order to staff the new chanceries, many of them at the service of secular

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65 See particularly Bartlett’s chapter on the phenomenon that he calls “the aristocratic diaspora” (24-59).
lords. In this context, the fact that they seek to transmit key narratives from the classical past in a secular courtly setting becomes highly significant in several respects.

First, some classical narratives, and most often that of Troy, were repeatedly used not only as means to claim prestigious origins for different cities and kingdoms, but also as legitimating tools in the processes of colonial expansion mentioned above. The cases of the Norman expansion in England or the Venetian claims over Byzantium are some of the better known, but almost every European monarchy tried at some point to give itself a Trojan origin. For this reason, it is not surprising to see classical narratives appear at the foundational stage of vernacular literatures. But even more importantly, I would argue that the continual adaptation, rearticulation, and appropriation of the narratives told by the *romans antiques* contributed to the creation of a specifically vernacular and secular memory of antiquity. In this sense, the romances of antiquity aided the “Europeanization of Europe” in quite a literal way, contributing to the construction of a common classical past shared by the secular ruling elites across linguistic or political

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66 As I have mentioned above, Arizaleta has recently studied the cultural developments in the Castilian chancery at the turn of the thirteenth century and argued that the appearance of the *Alexandre* cannot be understood without reference to this intellectual milieu (see “Écritures de clergie” and “El Libro de Alexandre”), while Uría Maqua has argued that the thirteenth-century *mester de clercicia* poems have close ties to the newly founded University of Palencia (see “El Libro de Alexandre” and Panorama crítico 57-69).

67 Lee Patterson lists European claims of Trojan origins (90-91); see also Richard Waswo; Colette Beaune for the French case; and Hugo Buchthal, who connects the miniatures of Venetian manuscripts of the *Roman de Troie* to the city’s Mediterranean expansion (53-67). Helena de Carlos Villamarín has studied pre-Alfonsine Iberian claims of classical origins; for an exploration of the important figure of Hispan (Ishbān in Arabic historiography), associated to Hercules and reappearing in Alfonso’s X *General estoria*, see Tixier-Caceres. Roubaud-Bénichou considers Alfonso’s treatment of the Trojan episodes in relation to the French *roman antique* and believes that they may constitute an indirect claim of Trojan origins for the Castilian monarchy (115-28).
divisions. The roman antique thus became a key tool in the construction of what we may call a “collective memory” or “cultural memory” of the antique past.

The term “collective memory” first came into use during the early twentieth century, particularly in the work of the French scholar Maurice Halbwachs. However, it was not until the 1980s that the concept became the subject of widespread attention across several disciplines, coinciding as well with the translation into English of Halbwachs’s La mémoire collective. The central insight offered by Halbwachs is the idea that individual remembering always takes place within a social framework and thus memory needs to be treated as “a social phenomenon” (Whitehead 123). The concept of collective memory in Halbwachs’s work possesses two different but complementary dimensions, which he termed “autobiographical memory” and “historical memory.” The autobiographical component of collective memory refers to the fact that individual memory is structured by a person’s membership in social groups such as a family, class, or religion. On the other hand, those groups construct “publicly articulated images of shared pasts” (Olick 156), which conform the group’s “historical memory.” As Astrid Erll has noted, in the first case the expression “collective memory” refers to biological memory (so that ‘memory’ is used in a literal sense), but at the same time takes on a

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68 In his Historia troiana, Hugo Buchthal notes approvingly, if with some exasperation, “To mediaeval man, [the “Trojan” connection of European royal houses] represented in its odd way an assertion of the unity of Western Europe, which shared not only a common religion but also a common origin” (65).
69 Translated as The Collective Memory. Equally if not more influential has been On Collective Memory, which includes a translation of Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire and part of La topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre Sainte. See Whitehead 123-52 for a discussion of how the concept has evolved from a historical perspective and the main works produced since the 1980s.
70 See Halbwachs, On Collective Memory for his ideas on the concept’s relation to family (54-83), religion (84-119), and social class (120-66).
metonymic sense by displacing the idea of social influence to memory. In its “historical” sense, speaking of a “collective memory” is a metaphor that indicates a “resemblance to the processes of individual memory, such as the selectivity and perspectivity inherent in the creation of versions of the past according to present knowledge and needs” (Erll 5). This metaphor works particularly well to express how both individual and collective memory are linked to the construction of identity (Erll 6)—in the case of the *roman antique*, the identity of the European secular elites.

The expression “cultural memory,” coined by Jan Assmann, emerged much later in response to perceived shortcomings in Halbwachs’s work. Assmann has argued that Halbwachs’s model does not account satisfactorily for the existence of collective memories lasting beyond a human or generational lifespan (“Communicative and Cultural Memory” 111). To refer to this kind of memory, which becomes imbued with an institutional character, Assmann proposes to employ the term “cultural memory,” while he renames Halbwachs’s *mémoire collective* as “communicative memory.” Assmann describes communicative memory as,

- non-institutional; it is not supported by any institutions of learning, transmission, and interpretation; it is not cultivated by specialists and is not summoned or celebrated on special occasions; it is not formalized and stabilized by any forms of material symbolism; it lives in everyday interaction and communication (“Communicative and Cultural Memory” 111).

It should be noted, however, that collective memory and cultural memory are often employed as synonyms referring both to what Halbwachs would call the
“historical” side of collective memory and to cultural memory as defined by Jan Assmann. In the case of the *romans antiques*, the kind of memory they work to create falls squarely within the realm of cultural memory in Assmann’s terms, since it is situated in the distant, almost mythical past. However, through the introduction of systematic anachronism—one of the main characteristics of the genre, as we have seen above—the historical events take place simultaneously in the immediate, living past that Assmann associates to communicative memory, or Halbwachs’s collective memory. For these reasons, in this study I will employ the expressions “collective memory” and “cultural memory” interchangeably.

One last aspect of Halbwachs’s work that has been the origin of many controversies is his distinction between history and memory, which has led some scholars to posit an opposition between “the former as abstract, totalizing and ‘dead,’ and […] the latter as particular, meaningful and ‘lived’” (Erll 6). In order to bypass what she perceives as an unproductive approach, Erll has proposed that we look at the past not as a given but as something continually reconstructed and renegotiated in any culture. In this framework, same events can thus be approached through different “modes of remembering,” and history would be “yet another mode of cultural memory, and historiography its specific medium” (Erll 7). This point of view applies particularly well to the situation of European *roman antique*, which is a specific mode of remembering the classical past but shares this function with other genres such as vernacular historiography.

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71 See chapter three for a detailed consideration of anachronism in relation to medieval memory practices.
72 Such an opposition has been taken up and popularized by Pierre Nora’s work on the *lieux de mémoire* (see particularly his “Between Memory and History”), and is analyzed by Ricoeur (401-11) and Whitehead (139-47).
In her overview of the theoretical discourses on memory from ancient Greece to the twenty-first century, Anne Whitehead has observed about collective memory that,

The notion of a memory that is not concerned with individual experience, but with practices of remembrance that are defined and shaped by the surrounding culture, resonates with classical and early-modern conceptions of memory (124).

Such a notion is also akin in many respects to the way in which medieval culture conceived memory as, among other things, a set of practices shared in a sparticular social environment. In her groundbreaking work, Mary Carruthers has argued that during the Middle Ages, *memoria* functioned “as a social institution” (*The Book of Memory* 259), and that,

Training the memory was much more than a matter of providing oneself with the means to compose and converse intelligently when books were not readily to hand, for it was in trained memory that one built character, judgment, citizenship, and piety (*The Book of Memory* 9).

Indeed, it was mnemonic practice that provided certain social groups such as monks or clerks with “common places” that became a vital part, if not the basis, of an identity based on a “shared *paideia*” (Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 45). The trained memory thus was truly a collective or cultural memory in many of the senses in which those expressions are employed in current scholarship.

73 Carruthers treats at length of the function of memory in the monastic context in *The Craft of Thought*. On the communal dimension of monastic memory work, see especially the chapter on “Collective memory and *memoria rerum*” (*The Craft of Thought* 7-59).
The composition of the *romans antiques*, which depended on the appropriate knowledge of works from the medieval liberal-arts curriculum, relied—perhaps more than any other vernacular genre—on the mnemonic education received in an academic setting. Blumenfeld-Konsinki has noted that “writers of romance […] conceive of themselves as translators who hold at their disposal an immense storehouse of themes, techniques, and *matière*” (144). The storehouse or *thesaurus* was, of course, one of the preferred metaphors for the trained memory (Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* 33-45) and complex poems drawing from a variety of sources such as the *Alexandre* are making obvious and careful use of many of the elements accumulated there.

The *roman antique* poets are also, as I have explained above in relation to the concept of *translatio studii*, relinquishing pieces from their memorial storehouse for the construction of a courtly collective memory. It is in this sense, I believe, that we can interpret the promise in stanza 3 of the *Alexandre* that whoever listens to the poem, “aprendrá buenas gestas que sepa retraer” (3c). Not only do the “gestas” recounted in the *romans antiques* win empires, as in the case of Alexander the Great’s successful narration of the Trojan story to his troops, but they are also used by secular rulers for their own self-fashioning, as in the famous verses attributed to Alfonso X by several chroniclers in which the king compares himself to Apollonius:

\[\text{ya yo oy otras vezes de otro Rey asi contar}\]

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74 As Carruthers puts it, “adaptation, the essential conduct of *memoria ad res*, lies at the very basis of medieval literary activity” (*The Book of Memory* 259).
75 See also Gómez Redondo (266-67) and Ancos García (“The Primary Audience” 130-31 n20) for a commentary on this verse, which has sometimes been taken to refer to an exclusively clerical audience, but could also apply to a mixed courtly audience made up of *clercs* and *chevaliers*.
76 On the direct relationship between Alexander’s recounting of the Trojan narrative and his conquest of Asia, see chapters one and two.
que con desanparo que ovo se metio en alta mar

a morir en las ondas o las aventuras buscar

apollonio fue aqueste e yo fare otro tal

My approach to the Alexandre and the Apolonio as Castilian romances of antiquity stems from this reconceptualization of roman antique as a genre primarily concerned with the construction of a collective memory of antiquity, a result of its investment in the larger cultural process of the Europeanization of Europe. As I will show, the two poems are concerned with the technical means through which collective memory may be successfully construed, stored, and transmitted. I believe that such a preoccupation is related, first, to the fact that the majority of the courtly audience that I have posited for the poems could not be expected to possess a trained memory—so that the clerical task of translatio studii extends as well to this realm—, and second, to the poets’ sense of both the importance and the urgency of their own task. In my reading of both poems, I depart from a reconsideration of two key rhetorical techniques of the roman antique: in chapters one and two, the descriptions of precious objects in which a narrative is often inscribed, and in chapter three, the use of systematic anachronism, which almost completely medievalizes the classical world in which the action is set. Moreover, a common thread in the three chapters is the attention to the visual dimension of memory in roman antique, reflected both within the poems and on the manuscript page.

77 The transcription is Manuel Calderón Calderón’s from manuscript M-563 at the Biblioteca de Menéndez y Pelayo, Santander (52). His article offers a fascinating account of the connections of the figure of Alfonso X not only with Apollonius but also with Alexander.
The first chapter, “‘El cabdal sepulcro’: Word and Image in the Libro de Alexandre,” deals with the way in which the Alexandre poet approaches the interplay of the two different media through which the transmission and creation of memory is made possible: word and image. The consequences of the medieval concept of representation as an essentially mnemonic activity are explored through the comparison of the poem’s decorated tombs—which take on the rhetorical form of ekphrasis—to the verbally decorated sepulcher of Achilles at Troy and, finally, to the drawing of Achilles’s tomb in one of the manuscripts of the Alexandre. The proliferation of precious objects, such as the decorated tombs analyzed in this chapter, is a generic mark of roman antique that appears clearly in this poem but seems to be entirely absent in the Apolonio.

Chapter two, “From Precarious to Monumental: Using and Transmitting Cultural Memory in the Libro de Alexandre and the Libro de Apolonio,” tackles this apparent problem by comparing the Alexandre’s “ornamental overload”—an expression used by Emmanuèle Baumgartner to refer to the pervasiveness of ornamental objects in the French romans antiques—with a similar technique in the Apolonio, the proliferation of the characters’ retellings of their own stories. This comparison allows me to explore how the poems reflect about the advantages of visual versus oral means of transmission in transforming what is perceived as a dangerously precarious individual and oral memory into a stable collective memory visually inscribed on monuments. At the same time, I show how both techniques are related in the two poems to the topoi of translatio studii and imperii that are central to the romans antiques as a genre.

The third and final chapter, “Reconsidering Anachronism in the Iberian Roman Antique,” approaches what in my view is one of the fundamental debates in roman
_antique_ criticism, the question of anachronism, from the point of view of the ideas on memory and representation that inform the two previous chapters. First, I review the debate on anachronism and propose to consider this rhetorical device as a “romance strategy,” in Barbara Fuchs’s expression, with mnemonic purposes. Like memory, anachronism in the _Alexandre_ and the _Apolonio_ possesses not only a temporal but also a spatial dimension, and I explore the way in which certain urban spaces in both poems may have functioned as _loci memoriae_ where the poems’ audiences could store their newly acquired knowledge. The chapter concludes by linking the two poems’ techniques to construct _loci memoriae_ to the miniatures of the manuscript with which I began this introduction, the _Crónica Troyana de Alfonso XI_.

41
The first of two extant illustrations of the *Alexandre*, both found in the late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century codex known as manuscript O, is a very simple drawing showing a statuesque Alexander the Great surrounded by two groups of diminutive soldiers on both sides. The illustration occupies two thirds of fol. 45v under stanza 761, marking the end of the long passage in which Alexander recounts the story of the Trojan War to his troops. In the poem, the king’s retelling takes place after the Greek army encounters the ruins of Troy and the sepulchers of their own ancestors who died during the city’s siege. Among the tombs, the most prominent is Achilles’s, which displays an epitaph that Alexander praises enthusiastically (330-32) only a few stanzas before launching into his rendition of the Trojan legend. The two elevated stones between which the king stands as he talks in manuscript O’s drawing represent Greek

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78 The Alexandre has survived in two complete manuscripts. The first is Vit. 5-10, kept at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, where it arrived in 1886 as part of the collection of the Dukes of Osuna and Infantado, and is therefore known as manuscript O. The codex’s second illustration in fol. 53v depicts Alexander’s soldiers mourning their king as they take him out of the Cydnus River, where he has almost drowned. Both drawings are reproduced in Casas Rigall’s edition (*Libro de Alexandre* 858-59). None of the illustrations has iconographic parallels in the Alexander tradition (see David Ross, “Alexander Iconography in Spain” and, for general reference, *Alexander Historiatus*). The other manuscript, Espagnol 488, is kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and known as P; it dates from the 15th century. There also exist fragmentary testimonies for some parts of the poem. For a full description of the manuscripts, see Willis, *Libro de Alexandre* ix-xx; for a listing and description of the fragments, see Casas Rigall’s edition (74-75).

79 All quotes from the Alexandre make reference to the stanza numbers in Casas Rigall’s edition. Stanza 761 corresponds to 716 in manuscript O, according to Willis’s numeration in his parallel-text edition.

80 Or rather, in which the narrator paraphrases Alexander’s retelling, as Mary Jane Kelley has argued (“The Trojan War”).
sepulchers, and most probably, according to David Ross, Achilles’s tomb (“Alexander Iconography in Spain” 84).

The illustration provides a visual point of reference that allows the reader to easily locate the ending of Alexander’s long narration of the Trojan legend, as well as the beginning of the king’s expounding of his “sermon” (764-771). As Michael Agnew has rightly observed, the drawing acknowledges the centrality of Troy’s story in the overall design of the poem (169). At the same time, it provides an interpretation of the illustrated passage, tracing a clear connection between the king’s retelling of the Trojan narrative and Achilles’s sepulcher, found more than four hundred stanzas above. The visual cue of the tomb is thus presented as inextricably intertwined with the oral performance of a key classical narrative, linking image and word as means of transmission of a crucial piece of memory.

The Greek hero’s sepulcher is not the only tomb in the Alexandre to stand at the intersection of word and image. In fact, the two most spectacular monuments in the poem are the tombs that Alexander erects for the Persian queen (1239-49) and later for her defeated husband Darius (1791-1804), both of which are lavishly decorated with carved imagery. The creator of the sepulchers is an extremely skilled Jewish artist at the service of Alexander, Apelles, who depicts a selection of Biblical history in the queen’s tomb, while for the king’s he represents a world map. Both monuments take on the form of ekphrasis, a rhetorical device most clearly described as “the verbal representation of a visual representation” (James Heffernan, “Ekphrasis and Representation” 299; W.J.T.

81 The identification of the famous Greek painter Apelles with a Jewish artist of the same name is already found in Walter of Châtillon’s Alexandreis (Casas Rigall, Libro de Alexandre 162; Weiss 138).
Ekphrasis was a set piece in classical epic, and as such was incorporated by the *Alexandre*’s main source, Walter of Châtillon’s twelfth-century *Alexandreis*, from which the two Persian sepulchers derive in the Castilian poem. Extended descriptions of richly decorated objects—not only tombs but also shields, automatons, palaces, and more—also became a staple of the French *romans antiques* and one of the genre’s signs of identity, displaying the learning and artistic capacity of their clerkly creators.  

The presence in both the Persian and Achilles’s tombs of verbal and visual elements—albeit in very different combinations—is not, I believe, a matter of chance. On the contrary, this feature is connected with the sepulchers’ monumental function, if we take ‘monument’ in its etymological sense: one of the most important purposes of tombs is to preserve the fragile memory of things past. It seems therefore particularly befitting that the *Alexandre*’s tombs offer a space where the relationship between word and image, the media making possible the construction and transmission of memory, can be negotiated in textual and visual ways. This negotiation remains a particularly important task in a pioneering work such as the *Alexandre*, in which two central narratives of the classical past—the stories of Alexander the Great and of the Trojan War—are made accessible in an Iberian vernacular for the first time.  

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82 There has been a heightened interest in the rhetorical figure of ekphrasis for the past few years, coinciding with the so-called “visual turn” in the humanities. A concise review of current research on this topic, preceding a collection of articles on ekphrasis with extremely useful bibliography, can be found in Bartsch and Elsner.

83 Description in general, and ekphrasis in particular, have long been recognized as one of the defining characteristics of the *roman antique*, producing what Emmanuèle Baumgartner terms the genre’s “surcharge ornamentale” (*De l’histoire* 11), which I will explore in chapter two of this study. Baumgartner has also analyzed the tombs in the *Roman d’Énéas* and the *Roman de Troie* as the site of poetic competition between vernacular authors (*De l’histoire* 189-202).

84 ‘Monument’ ultimately derives from the Latin *monere*, ‘remind.’
Critical accounts of the tomb ekphraseis have focused on their structural (Arizaleta, *La translation* 137-45) or ideological (Weiss 138-41) functions in the poem; in contrast, Achilles’s grave has attracted considerably less attention.  

The connection of the poem’s tombs with the question of how word and image interact, however, comes forcefully to the fore if we consider all of them together. In this chapter, I will explore the interplay of verbal and visual registers in the *Alexandre’s* funerary monuments. I will start by offering a detailed reading of how the Persian tomb ekphraseis present the word-image relationship in comparison with their source, the *Alexandreis*. An examination of Achilles’s tomb, as it appears both in the early-thirteenth-century poem and in manuscript O around a century later, will offer more information about the interaction of both media, while also considering how this monument mirrors the structure of the whole work—an effect known as *mise en abyme* and often associated with ekphrasis.

The tombs’ handling of the relationship between word and image and their function as mirrors of the poem are related, as we shall see, to the *Alexandre’s* preoccupation with the creation and transmission of a cultural memory of the classical past.

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85 Amaia Arizaleta and Julian Weiss coincide in highlighting two different functions performed by the passages. First, Arizaleta notes that the sepulchers provide a comment on Alexander’s personal fate, reminding of previous and anticipating future events in the work; Weiss takes this insight further by suggesting that they also reflect on the possibilities and limitations of empire. Second, Arizaleta shows how the Persian sepulchers forcefully establish Apelles’s artistic mastery, describing it in terms that parallel the poet’s own *maestria*; Weiss relates the artist’s function as alter-ego of the poet to his Jewish condition, noting the ambivalent social and political status of clerical intellectuals.

86 See Marco Infurna for general considerations on medieval *mise en abyme*. 
The relationship between word and image in the Persian tomb ekphraseis is best understood through an examination of how the Castilian poet manipulated his source, the *Alexandreis*. Tomb ekphraseis in Walter’s poem, and particularly the description of the queen’s mausoleum in Book IV, attracted a great deal of readerly attention, to the point that the first tomb ekphrasis is the most annotated passage in the *Alexandreis*’s extant manuscripts.\(^\text{87}\) Paradoxically, as David Townsend has noted, Walter’s sepulcher descriptions have been derided by modern critics for their failure to comply with the expectations of classical ekphrasis (“*Michi barbaries*” 21-22). However, in my comparison I will be more interested in how the *Alexandre* poet treats an effect that was amply used in classical ekphrastic passages, and that Walter employed liberally in the queen’s tomb description: representational friction.

The first tomb description in the *Alexandre* is worth reproducing in its entirety, since the Castilian writer seems to have felt the need to make more profound changes in this passage. This ekphrasis depicts, as I have just mentioned, the mausoleum of the Persian queen, who dies while Alexander holds her captive. The Macedonian is greatly saddened by her death and honors the queen’s body by having it embalmed and commanding Apelles to build and decorate her tomb. The artist creates a marble sepulcher on which he portrays chosen episodes of Biblical history. On one level, he depicts scenes taken from the Pentateuch:

\[
\text{Allí pintó las estorias quantas nunca cuntieron,}
\]

\(^{87}\) David Townsend has recently edited a freestanding commentary of this passage in *An Epitome of Biblical History*. The ekphrasis of the queen’s tomb became so popular that mnemonic verses referring to the images’ layout were in circulation, as Townsend notes in the prologue to his translation of the *Alexandreis* (19).
los ángeles del Cielo de quál guisa cayeron;
los parientes primeros cómo se malmetieron,
porque sobre deviedo la mançana comieron.

Estava más adelant Noel el patríarca,
los montes de Armenia do arribó el arca;
Sem, Cam e Jafet,— cadauno en su comarca;
los Gigantes confusos e la Torre que es alta;

Abraham el católico, Isac cerca él;—
todos los Doze Tribos fíjós de Israel,
las plagas de Egipto e el ángel crúel,
el taü en las puertas de sagne del añel,
las carreras del mar e la muerte de Farón,
cómo pidién los pueblos rëy a Arón,—
cómo prendié la ley Moïsés el varón,
cómo se comsumién Datán e Abirón,

de quál çevo bivieron por todo el desierto;
quál fue el tabernáculo, de quál guisa cubierto. (1240-1244b)

A different level in the monument portrays Jewish history after Moses’ death, including Joshua, unidentified prophets, and David and his descendants:
En la otra estoria, don Moïsés finado,
tenié en su lugar Josué el ducado;
metiélolos en la tierra e fue bien adonado
—es de Santa Iglesia oy en día plorado—.

Allí eran los profetas, convento general,
todos tablas en manos, todos con su señal;
cadaúno qué dixo o en qué temporal,
quisque en su escripto de dó era natural.

David con su salterio sus salmos acordando;
Salamón hace el templo, justos judizios dando;
Roboam en el regno metié cisma e vando.
En es’ día fue su obra Apeles ençerrando. (1245-1247)

Pagan history is also present, but remains marginalized both in the description and in
Apelles’s work: “Las otras incidençias de las gentes paganas / como non son abténticas
yazién más orellanas” (1248ab).

The Alexandre poet freely reorganized and abbreviated Walter’s description, and
inserted in it some elements of his own; nevertheless, the basic content and narrative
function of this passage, which introduces sacred history in the midst of a retelling of the
pagan past, remains quite similar to its source. The anonymous writer, however,

88 For a detailed list of content changes with respect to Walter’s poem, see Casas Rigall’s
notes to this passage (Libro de Alexandre 430-35). Townsend (“Michi barbarie”) and
considerably distanced himself from Walter in his way of approaching the relationship between word and image. In this description, the Latin poet used several techniques that accentuate the tension between the visual and the verbal. Such a choice is in line with the function usually performed by classical ekphrasis as the site of a competition between word and image, in which the former displays its visual power. However, the Castilian author seems to have chosen a very different path, downplaying instead the friction between both media. Indeed, while in the *Alexandreis’s* tomb ekphrasis, as it could be expected, the verbal element comes to dominate, its preeminence is not achieved by highlighting the limitations of the visual, but by erasing any traces of the image’s alterity: the anonymous poet sought to create a fundamental equivalence between word and image.

The Castilian adapter’s choices stand out if we consider the use in the *Alexandreis*’ first tomb ekphrasis of what James Heffernan terms “representational friction.” In Heffernan’s definition, representational friction “occurs whenever the dynamic pressure of the narrative meets the fixed forms of visual representation and acknowledges them as such” (*Museum of Words* 19), and reveals an underlying preoccupation with “the complexities of representation itself” (*Museum of Words* 20). I will consider here three different ways in which Walter creates this effect when describing the queen’s tomb: highlighting the stasis of the image in implicit contrast with the narrative’s dynamism, calling attention to the gap between medium and referent in visual representation, and a third one not mentioned by Heffernan, the inclusion of references to the visual artist at work interspersed throughout the description.

Lafferty (“Mapping Human Limitations” and *Walter de Châtillon’s* Alexandreis 103-40) have analyzed in detail both tomb ekphrasis in the Latin poem.
The first type of representational friction that I have mentioned is already present in the most famous ekphrasis in literary history, Homer’s description of Achilles’s shield, where Heffernan detects “subtle allusions to sculptural stasis and to the inorganic condition of the figures on the shield” (Museum of Words 19). A similar effect can be identified at least twice in the description of the queen’s tomb. In the first occasion, the narrator describes the visual representations of the Fall and the subsequent decadence of the human race, and then goes on to remark: “Factorem, si triste notes in ymagine signum, / Penituisses putes hominem fecisse” (IV.198-199). A few verses later, after describing the depiction of Absalom’s death, the narrator comments in passing, “patriam lugere putares / Effigiem” (IV.233-234). Both observations function as narratorial asides that interrupt the flow of the description in order to comment on one of the characters’ feelings. At the same time, they purposefully remind the reader that these are not characters but visual representations by using the words “ymagine” in the first case and “effigiem” in the second. Furthermore, the narrator strongly implies that, unlike the characters in his story, these images cannot actually be grieving; if the reader were to stand before the work of art, he or she may think that they did—but the reader’s visual perception of the tomb is actually impossible, as the use of the subjunctive in “putes” and “putares” implies (Townsend, “Michi Barbaries” 31). In this way, the narrator subtly

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89 “You might consider that Man’s making grieved / the One who made him, if you were to note / the image’s sad token graven here” (IV.247-249). All quotes from the Alexandreis are taken from Marvin Colker’s edition; English translations are David Townsend’s.

90 “You might think that the father’s image grieved” (IV.290).

91 The subjunctive may also reflect that this is a case of “notional ekphrasis”, a term coined by John Hollander for descriptions of works of art that do not exist (209).
highlights the limitations of the static visual representations contained within his verbal narrative, signaling them as a shortcoming to be imaginarily overcome by the reader.

The second kind of representational friction mentioned above takes place, according to Heffernan, “when the poet’s language registers the difference between the medium of visual representation and its referent” (Museum of Words 19). Walter also creates this effect in several occasions; for instance, at the very beginning of his ekphrasis, the narrator describes the Creation scene inscribed in the tomb:

Hic operum series que sex operata diebus

Est deitas, inter que, auro spirante nitorem

Luciferum et rutilis lambentibus aera gemmis,

De tenebris primam uideas emergere lucem. (IV.185-188)\(^2\)

A few lines below the narrator observes that, in an image of the passing of the Red Sea, “puro liuescit pontus in auro” (IV.210).\(^3\) Of course, neither the morning star in the first quote nor the sea in the second are made out of gold, and stars are not red gems—the sepulcher’s surface uses these materials. Once again, the apparent incongruity of these descriptions encourages the reader to reflect not only on the difference between, for instance, the materiality of gold and the sea represented through it, but also, by analogy, on the gap between the image being described and the words describing it.

The third category referred above contributes more subtly to the effect of representational friction: the narrator’s references to the artist carrying out his work. The description of the queen’s tomb includes direct and indirect references to Apelles, such as

92 “Here was the chain of tasks / that Godhead worked in six days: among these, gold breathed the Daystar’s splendour, ruddy gems / blazed in the heavens –thus you might have seen the first day rise from darkness” (IV.232-236).
93 “The sea grows livid in pure gold” (IV.262).
“Iudicibus tandem populum supponit Apelles” (IV.218), or “Quodcumque alterutrum preclare gessit, eodem / Marmore docta manus et res et nomina pingit” (IV.240-241).

The artist is also the subject of a series of verbs appearing throughout the description (“notat” IV.181; “infamit” IV.242; “preterit” IV.244) and even some passive forms reflect his hand at work (“pingitur” IV.270) or his choices not to depict certain scenes (“tacetur” IV.245). These mentions can bring to mind, yet again, the image’s artificial nature and contribute to impede the total integration of the description into the narrative poem, since they constitute a reminder of the two different registers, visual and textual, at play.

The vernacular writer, however, carefully avoided the emergence of any kind of representational friction in his description of this mausoleum. In stark contrast to Walter’s poem, the relationship between the describing words and the described images appears to be completely harmonized in the Alexandre.

The Iberian author omitted any allusions to the immobility of the depicted figures, which foreground the tension between the textual and the visual in the first type of representational friction exemplified above. And, although references to “sculptural stasis” are not found in the Alexandreis’s description of Darius’s tomb, in its Castilian equivalent many parts of the world map are presented as unproblematically dynamic. The monument shows,

cuémo corre el Sol, la Luna e las estrellas;

cuémo passan las noches, los días en pues ellas

94 “Apelles next subjects them to the Judges” (IV.272).
95 “Whatever either realm / does well, the skillful hand sets on the stone” (IV.298-99).
96 The treatment I will describe is consistent with other occurrences of ekphrasis in the poem that I will not discuss here, such as the description of Alexander’s (96-98), Achilles’s (653-659) and Darius’s shields (989-1001), and Alexander’s tent (2539-2595).
cuémo fazen las dueñas en mayo las corellas;

[…] de quál lugar a quál responden los caminos
cuémo an d’andar por ellos los peregrinos.

Y eran los griegos, qué fazién los latinos,
e Saúl el viejo con todos sus vezinos;
cuémo yazién los mares e los ríos vezinos,
cuémo sorven los ríos los grandes a los chicos. (1792b-1794d)

In this passage, the sun, the moon, nights and days, women, paths, pilgrims, “los latinos,” and rivers are all depicted in action in much the same way as they would be if they were part of the main narrative. Unlike in the examples of the Alexandreis analyzed above, there are no elements to remind the reader that such a movement is not possible in a visual representation.

The Alexandre poet also edited out systematically the second type of representational friction described above, the Alexandreis’s frequent allusions to the material used by Apelles to create his estorias: none of the references to gold or gems remains in the vernacular rendition of this passage. In both tomb ekphraseis, even allusions to the stone out of which the monuments were carved have been relegated to the margins of the descriptions. The same treatment has been granted to the third kind of representational friction, the mentions of the artist at work, carefully contained in the opening and closing stanzas:

Apeles el ebreo, un maestro contado,
que de lavor de manos non ovo tan ortado,
entalló el sepulcro en un mármol preçiado,
—¡él se maravillava, quando lo ovo obrado!—. (1239)
Quando ovo Apeles lo que sopo labrado,
fue en quatro colupnas el sepulcro alçado.
Fue con grandes obsequios el cuerpo condesado.
¡El seso de Apeles será siempre contado! (1249)

These two stanzas mirror one another in several respects. First, the author’s name is mentioned here, but left outside the description proper; moreover, both stanzas offer in their closing verses parallel evaluations of Apelles’s feat that ponder the artist’s own marvel before his achievement and the eternal fame that he has attained for it. More importantly, the only reference to a material used in the monument, marble, appears in verse 1239c. All of the scarce references to Apelles carrying out his work are also concentrated here: “entalló” and “obró” in the first and “Quando ovo […] labrado” in the last stanza; in the verse immediately following the first stanza, which introduces the description proper, we can also find “pintó” (see above stanza 1240a). In this way, the narrative of the images decorating the Persian queen’s sepulcher becomes a self-contained and homogeneous section where no kind of representational friction could possibly emerge.

The description of Darius’s sepulcher also relegates the references to Apelles as he creates the monument to the beginning and opening stanzas.97 Right before the

97 Darius’s mausoleum, described in Book VII of the Alexandreis, presents considerably less instances of representational friction, and thus the Iberian poet did not need to make many changes in that respect. However, he did omit a reference to Apelles in the middle
description proper begins, in the first two stanzas, we find “obró” (1791a) and “debuxó” (1792a). The closing stanzas present, however, a slightly different picture. The narrator has finished the description of the world map with which the artist has decorated the king’s tomb; he then makes Apelles reappear and tells us, following Walter, that the artist inscribed in the sepulcher the date of his creation and an epitaph for Darius. The verbs chosen this time to describe Apelles in action do not specifically refer to the activity of a visual artist but point to the act of writing: “escribió” (1799a) and “fizo un petafio” (1800a). In this way, the poet subtly underlines the similarities between the accomplished Jewish artist and himself and once again strives to bridge the gaps between the visual arts and his own endeavor.

This construction of the artist as writer has been already noted by Amaia Arizaleta, who has observed that the building of the monuments seems to respond to the same aesthetic principles championed by the anonymous author throughout the work (La translation 138-40). The tombs, in Arizaleta’s opinion, present a “notion de l’art comme performance issue de la pratique du métier et des connaissances” (La translation 140) that reflects the ideals defended in the rest of the Alexandre. As a result, Apelles becomes a projection of the Castilian author, while the tombs he creates can be interpreted as reflections of “le monument littéraire que le poète est en train d’achever” (La translation 144). As it is often the case with ekphrasis, the sepulchers serve as mises en abyme of the work as a whole. However, in this particular case, their mirroring of the description: “tante fuit artis Apelles” (VII.393) [“such was Apelles’ craft” (Townsend VII.435)].

In this way, the Castilian poet adds to the display of clerical knowledge through marvelous objects upon which Baswell identified as typical of the French romans antiques (“Marvels of Translation” 34)—he introduces not only his learning but also himself as a creator within the text.
function is reinforced by the effacement of any sense of otherness that an ekphrasis playing with representational friction would have caused.

Yet another passage contributing to this perception of the artist as writer can be identified in the first tomb ekphrasis. In stanza 1244cd, the narrator pauses between the two estorias in the queen’s tomb in order to tell us that “todo era notado tan bien e tan en cierto / que lo verié todo omne com’en libro abierto.” These two verses would seem to parallel certain effects of representational friction in the Alexandreis, since they interrupt the flow of the description in order to comment on the possible effect of the monument on a viewer. Nevertheless, in this case the Castilian poet places a telling emphasis not on the material or visual qualities of the work being described, but on its verbal features, a move that deflects the potential tension between different media. Although “todo” clearly refers to the Biblical scenes engraved in the monument being described, the use of the word “notado,” coupled with the reference to the open book, seems to point here to the realm of the written word. But it still remains an ambiguous case, for a book can contain both words and images, and in that respect this is a particularly felicitous comparison for a monument including both media, at the very least, in its representation of the prophets (see stanza 1246). The indirect connection between books and tombs

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99 These verses have no equivalent in the Alexandreis and could be considered “filler” lines that complete the stanza in order to allow the description of the second estoria of the queen’s tomb to start in the first verse of a new stanza.
100 In this way, they also parallel the reactions to Apelles’s work that I have highlighted in the opening and closing stanzas of the ekphrasis, thus creating a symmetrical structure in the passage.
101 Occurrences of “notado” in works roughly contemporary of the Alexander seem to point to its association to writing: see Libro de Apolonio 588d (“yo te di el escripto, qual tú sabes, notado”), or Berceo’s Milagros 410a (“Fue luego esto miraculo escrito e notado”). Corominas observes about ‘notar:’ “de notare, ‘señalar,’ ‘designar,’ ‘escribir,’ ‘anotar,’ voz de escribas y clérigos, pronto popularizada.”
posited here derives, I believe, from both kind of artifacts’ mnemonic and memorializing function.\textsuperscript{102}

It could be argued that the choices of the Castilian author in his rendition of both tomb ekphraseis amount to a simplification of the \textit{Alexandreis}’s source passages, and might therefore have been driven by the limitations of the vernacular with respect to Latin rather than by any underlying ideas about the relationship between different means of representation. However, a comparison of the ways in which each poet recounts how Darius’s mausoleum was built shall make clear that, unlike Walter, the \textit{Alexandre} poet values homogeneity as an aesthetic goal. The Latin writer praises the artifice used to join different stones together in order to form Darius’ mausoleum by saying,

\begin{quote}
Coniunctos lapides infusum fusile rimis
Alterno interius connectit amore metallum:
Exterius, quacumque patet iunctura, figuris
Insculptum variis rutilans intermicat aurum. (VII.385-388)\textsuperscript{103}
\end{quote}

This description proudly highlights the artifice and artistry of joining different elements together by displaying the resulting sutures, as it were—not only are the joints not hidden, but the potential spectator’s attention is called to them through the use gold and decoration, since they are engraved with undetermined images (“figuris […] variis”). Quite the opposite, the \textit{Alexandre} poet insists, both at the beginning and at the end of his

\textsuperscript{102} Carruthers has shown how in medieval culture, which she conceives as “fundamentally memorial, […] a ‘book’ is only one way among several to remember a ‘text,’ to provision and cue one’s memory with ‘dicta et facta memorabilia.’ So a book is itself a mnemonic, among many other functions it can also have” (The Book of Memory 8).
\textsuperscript{103} “Molten metal / was poured into the cracks, to join the stones / in mutual love inside the monument. / Where each joint was exposed, gold gleamed; engraved / with varied images, its light flashed forth” (VII.429-30).
description of the Persian king’s sepulcher, on the monument’s seamlessness. In this
passage, the narrator explains that the bases of the columns are perfectly linked to the
shafts (“tant’ eran bien juntadas, non pareció juntura” 1791d), and later he proudly
describes the tomb’s final effect in the following way,

La obra fue complida, el sepulcro alçado,

fue sobre los fusiellos igualment assentado,

non pareció juntura, —¡tant era bien labrado!—

tal cosa meréció pora rey tan honrado. (1803)\textsuperscript{104}

The seamlessness celebrated in this description of Darius’s tomb is analogous to
the effect obtained by the Iberian poet through the erasure of representational friction in
the queen’s sepulcher. The goal in both cases is to develop a sense of sameness, to which
end Apelles conceals the seams in his monument, while the anonymous writer carefully
closes the gap between two different media that ekphrasis could have created.\textsuperscript{105} The
homogeneity within the ekphrasis is preserved even when the writer interrupts his
description of a tomb or foregrounds the artifact’s creation process, since in those
occasions the process of making an image becomes an act of writing. The \textit{Alexandre}
presents Apelles as an extremely accomplished painter and sculptor, of course—but he is,
above all, a “clérigo bien letrado” (1800c) who functions, as I mentioned above, as the

\textsuperscript{104} A similar observation reappears in the poem’s final ekphrasis, the description of
Alexander’s tent: “El tendal fue de boiri sotilmente obrado / de pedaços menudos en
torno compassado. / Como era bien preso e bien endereçado, / no’l devisarié omne dó era
ajuntado” (2542).

\textsuperscript{105} Arizaleta rightly considers these verses in the context of the parallels between Apelles
and the Castilian author, who has carved his own work out of a variety of materials (\textit{La
translation} 144). Weiss also relates these observations to the poet’s vision of his own
work as including “the ability to combine perspectives and to show how the here and now
is indissolubly conjoined to the eternal” (140).
author’s alter-ego. Apelles’s effortless shift from visual artist to clerkly writer reinforces the idea that the image is not a rival of the word, a threatening or intriguing other as classical ekphrasis would have it, but rather an equivalent means of transmitting a story.

Achilles’s Sepulcher: Words, Images, and *Mise en Abyme*

In comparison to its Persian counterparts, Achilles’s tomb seems to be much more modestly decorated—it does not sport any masterly carved images, only a short epitaph, and its description takes up just three stanzas of the *Alexandre* (330-32). However, the Greek hero’s sepulcher was, as I noted above, deemed significant enough to be illustrated and directly associated with the most important digression in the book, the story of the Trojan War, in manuscript O. The illustration can also be read as a reflection of the communicative context in which the poem was most likely transmitted, thus creating a *mise en abyme* effect similar to the one found in the Persian tombs. An examination of the scene narrating the discovery by Alexander’s army of the Greek tombs at Troy, as well as of manuscript O’s drawing, will reveal the same ideas about continuity, equivalence, and even interchangeability, of word and image implicit in the Persian ekphraseis. The illustration can also be read as a reflection of the communicative context in which the poem was most likely transmitted, thus creating a *mise en abyme* effect similar to the one found in the Persian tombs. Finally, both the textual and the visual renditions of Achilles’s final resting place trace a direct link between tombs and the construction and diffusion of memory, a connection that remains indispensable to understand their function in the *Alexandre*.

In the poem, Achilles’s tomb is discovered when, not long after disembarking on Asian shores, Alexander and his men arrive at the ruins of Troy. There, they encounter a

106 See Michael’s chapter on the poem’s structure (249-86) and Peter Bly & Alan Deyermond for a detailed explanation of the role of the so-called digressions in the *Alexandre*. 

59
field full of tombs, where the Greeks who died during the city’s siege, their own ancestors, are buried. Alexander is pleased to find Achilles’s sepulcher, and above all to read his epitaph:

Falló en un bel campo una grant sepultura,
do yazié soterrada la gente de su natura,
que tenié cadaúno de suso su escriptura,
que dizié cadaúno qui fuera su mestura.

Falló entre los otros un sepulcro honrado,
todo de buenos viessos en derredor orlado;
qui lo versificó fue omne bien letrado,
capuso grant razón en poco de dictado:

“Aquiles só, que yago so este mármol cerrado,
el que ovo a Éctor el troyano rancado;
matome por la planta Paris el perjurado,
a furto, sin sospecha, yaziendo desarmado.”

Quando ovo el rey el pitafio catado,
dizié que de dos viessos nunca fue tan pagado;
tovo que fue Aquiles omne aventurado,
que ovo de su gesta dictador tan honrado. (329-332)
After saying prayers and making offerings for their forebears’ souls, the king goes on to recount the story of Troy to his troops:

La procesión andada, fizo el rey sermón
por alegrar sus gentes, ferles buen corazón;
empeçó la estoria de Troya de fondón,
cuémo fue destroída e sobre quál razón. (334)

This introduces the longest of the poem’s digressions, which extends from stanzas 335 to 761, where Alexander narrates the Trojan legend from Thetis and Peleus’s wedding to Troy’s final destruction by fire. The Trojan passage, as numerous scholars have noted, mirrors the structure of the poem as a whole, including an introduction that briefly summarizes the story.107 These introductory stanzas, which are found right after the king’s arrival at Troy,108 employ a language that presents a striking similarity with the words representing the images inscribed on the Persian queen and king’s sepulchers:

Contoles a los sos cuémo [Troya] fue destroída,
cuémo oviera Paris a Elena rabida,
cuémo ovo Diomedes a Venus malferida,
cuémo murió don Éctor, una lança ardida.

107 On the parallelism between the Trojan story and the Alexandre’s structure, see Michael 256-57, Jesús Cañas Murillo 202-03 n332-772, and Marcello Barbato. For an assessment of the passage’s relationship to literary tradition, see Casas Rigall, La materia de Troya 39-94.
108 In his edition of the Trojan passage, Emilio Alarcos Llorach placed these two stanzas after 334, thus situating the story’s summary right after the beginning of the digression and reinforcing the structural parallelism between the Trojan digression and the poem as a whole (98 n324). Cañas Murillo follows Alarcos Llorach’s proposal but, as Casas Rigall notes in his own edition (219 n325-326), the stanzas still make sense where they appear in manuscripts P and O.
Dixo cuémo fue Ulixes sossacador d’engaños,
cuémo vistió Aquiles en la orden los paños,
cuémo avién yazido en la cerca diez años,
cuémo ellos e ellos prisieron grandes daños. (325-326)

These two stanzas anticipate the tomb ekphraseis appearing later in the text in two respects: first, they briefly present a series of “scenes” that summarize a story (in this case a classical narrative, as opposed to the Biblical narrative in the queen’s tomb); perhaps more significantly, the narrator introduces each of them using the word “cuémo.” The same interrogative adverb appears regularly, though not systematically, in both tomb ekphraseis in order to introduce different scenes, to the point that, in the context of the poem, it would not be difficult to read this summary of the story that Alexander is about to tell as a description of a visual object—or the other way around.109

This short but crucial passage confirms the fundamental identity of word and image that the Iberian poet seems to perceive, since the visual images that adorn the Persian king and queen’s tombs are described in very much the same terms as the upcoming verbal digression. In fact, I would argue that the apparent simplicity of Achilles’s tomb is misleading, for in the Castilian poem the Greek sepulcher rivals the two Persian ones in terms of decoration. The narrator tells us that Achilles’ sepulcher is “todo de buenos viessos en derredor orlado” (329b), and perhaps the “good verses” do not end with the Greek hero’s epitaph. They extend beyond the physical tomb to include Alexander’s long rendition of the Trojan legend—which is, after all, an extremely

109 “Cuémo” or “cómmo” appears in verses 1240c, 1243bcd in the first tomb ekphrasis and in verses 1792bcd, 1793d, 1794cd, 1797a, 1798ab in the second; other interrogative adverbs fulfilling the same function, such as “quál” or “qué” also abound in both descriptions.
magnified *amplificatio* of the four-verse epitaph. The king’s mastery as a storyteller undoubtedly matches Apelles’s art when it comes to complete and ornate Achilles’s sepulcher.  

Working around one hundred years later than the anonymous author of the *Alexandre*, the scribe and occasional illustrator of manuscript O, or perhaps the person who commissioned the codex, seems to have been well attuned to the relationship between word and image reflected in the poem. The drawing representing Alexander as he narrates the story of Troy to his troops shows clear analogies with the key elements in the *Alexandre* poet’s treatment of the relationship between word and image as equivalent devices. First, and somewhat paradoxically, the drawing seems to affirm the importance and priority of the word by choosing to depict a highly verbal moment. But the execution and *mise en page* of the illustration are even more relevant in this respect. For one, the drawing has come to substitute literally for the following stanza of the poem, since the scribe of manuscript O erased it in order to make sufficient room for the drawing, and then copied the whole stanza on fol. 46r:

> Quando ovo el rëy  conplido su sermón,  
> más plogo a los griegos  que si les dies’ grant don:  

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110 This is indeed one of the techniques through which the poet traces a correspondence between Apelles, Alexander, and himself (see Arizaleta, *La translation* 144-45).

111 The continuity between word and image in an illustration that features an essentially verbal moment can also be seen in manuscript O’s second drawing, which shows Alexander’s men lamenting their king’s death while they take him out of the Cydnus River after his near-fatal bath (reproduced in Casas Rigall, *Libro de Alexandre* 859). The illustration, which occupies the lower half of fol. 53v, is situated next to the passage of the text on fol. 54r where the soldiers’ expressions of grief are reported in direct speech (890-93 in Casas Rigall’s edition; 844-47 in Willis’s numeration for manuscript O). Moreover, the scene seems modeled after the iconography of the Deposition or the Entombment of the Christ, introducing once again a tomb into the picture.
fueron todos alegres, ca siguié bien razón,
porque tenié los nombres todos de corazón. (762)

These verses express the Macedonian army’s satisfaction at the performance of their learned king, while in the drawing the gestures of some of the soldiers, who look at one another and point their fingers, may be trying to reflect the same sense of pride and wonderment.

The impression of continuity between word and image on the manuscript page is also aided by the illustration’s lack of any kind of framing device. Moreover, the colors used in the drawing are the same that were employed for the text: the soldiers have been drawn in the brown ink used for the main text; the blue ink of the paragraph marks signaling the beginning of some stanzas is the same color utilized to draw and retouch the king, the tomb, and one of the soldiers on the right; and the red ink that alternates with blue in paragraph marks has been used to color one of Alexander’s eyes. Finally, most of the soldiers look up to Alexander, either listening to him or showing their delight over his learning, but in so doing they are also looking up to the upper part of the page, where the last stanza of the Trojan story that the king has just finished recounting is written down. Indeed, one soldier situated at the king’s left side is pointing with his finger in the direction of both king and text, while the only blue soldier, who looks away from the

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112 Ross describes Alexander’s figure as having been drawn in brown and retouched in blue ink (“Alexander Iconography in Spain” 84). However, a personal inspection of the manuscript has revealed that the upper part of the king’s body (above the stone) was drawn in blue ink. On the other hand, the stone, the lower part of Alexander’s body, and the soldier who seems to mimic the king’s pose at his left side have indeed been drawn in brown and retouched in blue.

113 The legend of the Macedonian’s bicolor eyes is mentioned in the Alexandre 150a (“El un ojo ha verde e el otro vermejo”). For the possible origins of this particular trait, see Arizaleta, La translation 129.
king, points to the other side, to fol. 46r, where the text again gives us a speech by Alexander, this time expounding his previous “sermon,” that is, telling their soldiers how they must interpret the story he has just told. Both hands, in fact, remind of a paratextual device, the maniculae that served countless readers to mark passages of the text that they deemed important and to which they wanted to return—a function that this image, situated between the ending of the Trojan story as recounted by the king and his interpretation, also fulfills.114

The illustration also provides yet another parallel with the Persian sepulchers by reflecting and emphasizing the mise en abyme effect that the retelling of the Trojan legend produced in the poem.115 In the drawing, the contrast between Alexander and his soldiers is visualized through the conventional composition that underlines the king’s importance by giving him the central position and bigger size; through color, since he is the only figure that has been partly drawn in blue ink; and through clothing: Alexander sports courtly attire and wears a crown, while the soldiers are dressed in chainmail. This difference conveys not only a distinction between king and subject, but also and more importantly, between an author/performer and his public. Thus, the illustration replicates the communicative context of the reception of both the Trojan story in the poem, and the Alexandre itself, which was most probably read aloud for a group of people.116

114 I am grateful to Isidro Rivera for pointing out the parallel between the soldiers’ hands and the maniculae. For a brief but suggestive account about the history and functions of this paratextual device, with emphasis on the early modern period, see Sherman 25-52.
115 Barbato has offered a perceptive reading of the Trojan digression as a mise en abyme of the poem (121-24).
116 In this way, the drawing validates Barbato’s argument that the communicative situation constructed for the retelling of the Trojan episode replicates the relationship not only between narrator and narratee, but also between a performer of the poem and its listeners: “Alessandro e i soldati permettono rispettivamente all’autore e al pubblico di
poem as well as in the drawing, Alexander performs a function similar both to the poem’s creator, who refashions an old story for a new public, and to whoever performed the poem by reading it aloud. Correspondingly, the king’s audience could be argued to stand for the listeners or readers not only of the Trojan *gesta* but also of Alexander’s story itself, a correlation even more significant if we accept the hypothesis that the poem was created with a knightly—and courtly—audience in mind.117

Once again, as it was the case with the Persian tombs, a sepulcher marks a place where the narrative turns upon itself. This reflective movement is reinforced in the illustration by the shape and position of the tombstone in front of the king, which brings to mind a lectern, perhaps pointing both to an absent book that ultimately makes possible the transmission of the Trojan story, and to the actual codex where the illustration is inscribed, which passes on both Troy’s and Alexander’s stories. As I noted above, the repeated connection between books and tombs springs from their common monumental function, that is, their mnemonic and memorializing purpose. Through the construction of a *mise en abyme* and the linking of tombs with the Trojan narrative—something that the poem did only implicitly—, the drawing makes clearer that tombs (and books) perform a crucial task. Both Alexander and his anonymous alter-ego, the creator of the *Alexandre*, are refashioning and passing on a central piece of the past. The illustration makes visible the way in which Achilles’s tomb fits in an endless chain of memory

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117 The image inevitably brings to mind the famous passage in Alfonso X’s *Partida* II, Titulo XXI, Ley XX, in which the king affirms that “los antiguos” made sure that knights listened to “las hestorias de los grandes fechos de armas que los otros fecieran” (213). See the introduction to this study about the case for a courtly reception of the *Alexandre*. 

identificarsi in figure concrete e non in funzioni linguistiche” (123). Ancos García has argued that textual evidence in the *Apolonio* points to its reception as a story read aloud (“Vocalidad y textualidad”), a contention applicable to the *Alexandre*.
through which ancient secular stories are transmitted—from Aristotle to Alexander, from the king to his troops, from the narrator to his audience, which now “aprendrá buenas gestas que sepa retraer” (3c).118

Word, Image, and the Memory of Antiquity

As we have just seen, the Alexandre’s funerary monuments serve as spaces where word and image interact in a variety of ways: through the rhetorical figure of ekphrasis; by linking a visual element to an oral retelling; or through the graphic rendition of a verbal act. What these diverse modalities have in common is that they all ultimately posit a continuity, interchangeability, and even sameness between both media. This point of view would seem paradoxical in the case of the Persian tombs: if classical ekphrasis’s raison d’être is to stage a competition between word and image, why did the Alexandre poet choose not to expose but to downplay this tension, emphasizing the ‘wordy’ instead of the visual qualities of the described artifact? Yet another intriguing feature is the recurrence of the mise en abyme effect in the sepulchers. The parallelism between tombs and books as monumental objects is certainly an element contributing to the repeated use of this technique. But how is it related to the issues raised by the representation of the past through word and image, and what does this mirroring device tell us about the Alexandre as a whole?

118 In this context, Aurell’s reading of the poem becomes particularly suggestive. Aurell argues, as I mentioned in the introduction, that Alexander functions not only as an alter-ego of the author but also as a representation of the poem’s ideal reader, which he describes as the European figure, related to the twelfth-century Renaissance, of the miles litteratus.
Medieval doctrines on representation and memory can shed some light on these questions. As Mary Carruthers has convincingly argued, representation in medieval culture “was understood not in an objective or reproductive sense as often as in a temporal one; signs make something present to the mind by acting on memory” (*The Book of Memory* 221-22). From this point of view, both letters and pictures become primarily visual signs that serve to bring to mind something that is not present: as the *Libro de buen amor* recalls in the *accesus* to the Salamanca manuscript, “fueron la pintura e la esc[ri]ptura e las imágenes primeramente falladas por razón que la memoria del hombre desleznadera es” (Ruiz 8). Neither letters nor pictures refer to *realia* in this model, but rather to a *historia*, that is, a story that they are designed to help memorize or recollect (Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* 222).

Richart de Fournival’s well-known preface to his *Bestiaires d’amours*, also discussed by Carruthers, tackles the relationship between means of representation from a different perspective. The thirteenth-century writer discusses the similarities between seeing a story depicted and hearing it read aloud:

> Car quant on voit painte une estoire, ou de Troies ou d’autre, on voit les fais des preudommes ki cha en ariere furent, ausi com s’il fussent present. 

> Et tout ensi est il de parole. Car quant on ot .i. romans lire, on entent les aventures, ausi com on les veïst en present. (Fournival 5)\(^{119}\)

Whether a story is received through sight—as in the case of illustrations or of silent reading—or through hearing—when a book is read aloud or a narrative is told from

\(^{119}\) “When one sees painted a story, whether of Troy or something else, one sees those noble deeds which were done in the past exactly as though they were still present. And it is the same thing with hearing a text, for when one hears a story read aloud, listening to the events one sees them in the present” (Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* 223).

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memory—, Fournival tells us, the audience is actually able to see the historia as if it were developing before their eyes, since “it is translated into predominantly visual images by the mind” (Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* 223). Fournival insists that, either through visual or through aural means, the (past) story is made present for the audience, thus emphasizing the idea of representation as a work of memory and for memory.

From this point of view, the equivalence of word (both in oral and in written form) and image repeatedly suggested in the *Alexandre* seems only natural, since both media are primarily envisioned as means of representation that share a mnemonic rather than a mimetic purpose, and whose common referent is a historia rather than a thing. 120 The consequences of this conception for the medieval practice of ekphrasis are too numerous to consider here, but one of them is clearly present in the *Alexandre*—its author’s lack of interest in exploiting the difference between word and image through classical devices such as representational friction. 121 Instead, what is offered in the tomb’s ekphraseis, as well as in the summary of the Trojan story, is a list of memorable events or places, mnemonic cues that could be used to organize and recall a whole narrative. 122 The brief allusions to different visual and verbal scenes preceded by an

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120 In addition, as Michael Camille has argued, in the prevalent medieval model of visuality “seeing and reading were part of the same bodily operation, involving perception and cognition in the search for knowledge” (“Before the Gaze” 216).

121 Interestingly, while considering ekphrasis from a different perspective, W.J.T. Mitchell arrives to a comparable conclusion about the similarities between word and image: “from the semantic point of view, from the standpoint of referring, expressing intentions and producing effects in a viewer/listener, there is no essential difference between texts and images and thus no gap between the media to be overcome by any special ekphrastic strategies. Language can stand in for depiction and depiction can stand in for language because communicative, expressive acts, narration, argument, description, exposition and other so-called ‘speech acts’ are not medium-specific” (160).

122 Although Darius’s sepulcher, decorated with a world map, focuses on geographical rather than historical information, medieval maps reunited both types of knowledge and
introductory “how” are also intriguingly close to the language of certain paratextual elements that began to appear in vernacular manuscripts not long after the creation of the Alexandre. From the mid-thirteenth century onwards, examples abound in both French and Castilian of rubrics or tituli introduced by “comment” or “commo.”123 These rubrics summed up or identified either a section of the text or an image, once again attesting to the perceived interchangeability of both from a mnemonic viewpoint.

The idea of re-presentation as making the past present is also related to the specular dimension that I have noted in Achilles’s and the Persian tombs. In his study of the Trojan digression, Marcello Barbato observes that the mise en abyme effect taking place in the passage (and, as we have seen, in the image illustrating it as well) does not produce, as it is usually the case, a closing of the text upon itself, but on the contrary, creates “una continuità tra l’opera stesa e l’esperienza” (124). What Barbato calls “the work itself” and “experience” also correspond to different layers of time: the past of Troy and Alexander within the book, and the present of the book’s audience in the experiential world—but there is also the intradiegetic present of Alexander confronting the past of Troy. In the act of narration springing from Achilles’s tomb in both words and image, the frontiers between these different strata of time seem to collapse in the identical

123 See Hasenohr on the evolution of vernacular rubrics from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. It is intriguing to note that the Alexandre would seem to be replicating one of Walter’s non-classical strategies in both tomb ekphraseis: the Latin poet’s use of phrases that remind of “the briefly stated identifications often accompanying narrative pictorial cycles,” making the passage read as “the captions for a series of murals” (Townsend, “Michi Barbaries” 33-34). However, without evidence of vernacular tituli in manuscripts predating the composition of the Castilian poem, the parallelism cannot be attributed to the vernacular author’s desire to imitate Walter’s technique.
actions of Alexander as he retells the story of Troy, the poet as he shapes Alexander’s story, and the performer who reads the poem aloud for an audience.

A similar phenomenon takes place in the tomb ekphraseis, where the emphasis has shifted from the competition between media to the coexistence and, indeed, embedding of different times that both word and image can achieve. The Persian sepulchers contain scenes from the past, but they also anticipate the future: the full extension of Alexander’s kingdom is reflected in the map in Darius’s tomb (Arizaleta, La translation 142), while several Biblical episodes from the queen’s prefigure the Alexandrine empire’s ultimate fall and division (Weiss 139). The inscribed images thus perform a complex temporal role, representing the past and foreshadowing events to come at the same time. The parallelism established between Apelles and the poet also reinforces the sense that different layers of time can coexist and be relevant to each other in the Alexandre.  

In this way, both the sepulchers and the poem “mak[e] present the voices of what is past, not to entomb either the past or the present, but to give them life together in a place common to both in memory” (Carruthers, The Book of Memory 260). What kind of memory? As I have explained in the introduction, the stories of Alexander the Great or the Trojan War provided the European secular nobility with a set of shared narratives that contributed to create a common identity across linguistic, geographical, and political divisions.  

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124 The investment in the coexistence of different times is undoubtedly related to the use of systematic anachronism in the romances of antiquity, which I will treat at length in chapter three.
125 In his General Estoria, Alfonso X establishes genealogical links between Jupiter, the Trojans, Alexander, and finally “todos los altos reyes del mundo”, presumably including
and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize
and convey that society’s self-image” that Jan Assmann has called “cultural memory”
(“Collective Memory” 132), and that in the case of the vernacular antiquity offered here
for a courtly public, is eminently class-based.126

Moreover, the collective memory to which the *roman antique* as a genre gives
shape is, as I have argued, part and parcel of the process of cultural homogenization
labeled by Robert Bartlett as the Europeanization of Europe.127 Such a process was
intertwined with social, political, and military developments, paramount among which
was the colonial expansion of Latin Christendom within Europe (Bartlett 5-23),
represented in the Iberian Peninsula by the so-called “Reconquista.” Arizaleta in
particular has insisted on the parallel between Alexander’s conquests and Castilian
territorial expansion (*La translation* 232); she has also related the presentation of the
Macedonian as a largely Christianized character with the self-fashioning of Castilian
monarchs such as Alfonso VIII, Fernando III, or Alfonso X in the guise of a *rex
christianissimus* (“L’écriture de clergie” 17-18; *La translation* 257-59),128 a decision at
least partially motivated by a desire to legitimize their claim to Muslim territory. In this
context, the *Alexandre*’s preoccupation with the media through which it is possible to
create and disseminate a cultural memory linking Castilian to Northern (and Latin
Christian) European elites takes on an added urgency.

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126 As I noted in the introduction, social class is one of the groups that Halbwachs
considered as key to the formation of collective memory in both its “autobiographical”
and “historical” dimensions.
127 See the introduction for more details on this concept.
128 For this image of the monarch, see Peter Linehan 292-94 and José Manuel Nieto Soria
717-18.
In an apparent paradox, Alexander’s tomb is glossed over in the *Libro de Alexandre*.\(^{129}\) We are only told that the king had a temporary burial in Babylon, while his definitive sepulcher, “el cabdal sepulcro” (2665d), had to wait until Ptolomeus took the remains to Alexandria—but the narrator does not describe in the least this final monument. Nor does he needs to, since paralleling Alexander’s retelling of the Trojan legend not far from Achilles’ tomb (or, according to the illustrator of manuscript O, *at* Achilles’ tomb), the poem itself serves as the ornament of its hero’s sepulcher. In much the same way as the tombs analyzed above, the *Alexandre* combines words and images (verbal in the ekphraseis, but also visual in manuscript O) in order to reshape and transmit key antique narratives aspiring to constitute crucial parts of cultural memory for the late medieval secular public.

\(^{129}\) Casas Rigall observes in his edition that, given the presence in the *Roman d’Alexandre* of an ekphrasis of the king’s tomb, it is “llamativo que el poeta hispano, que en cambio a recreado los mausoleos de Endrona-Estatira […] y Darío […] escatime otra descripción a la muerte del protagonista” (722 n2665d). He attributes such an absence to the poet’s desire to finish a very long work.
CHAPTER TWO: FROM PRECARIOUS TO MONUMENTAL: USING AND TRANSMITTING CULTURAL MEMORY IN THE *LIBRO DE ALEXANDRE* AND THE *LIBRO DE APOLONIO*

“El nombre que havía, perdílo en la mar” (*Apolonio* 172c). The mournful words of the *Apolonio*’s protagonist after his first shipwreck stand out against Alexander’s constant self-assuredness throughout the *Alexandre*. This contrast could be extended to the generic identity of the two poems, at least in respect to one of the key characteristics of the *roman antique*—the proliferation of precious objects, often decorated and described at length through the rhetorical figure of ekphrasis. The monumental Persian tombs of the *Alexandre* are echoed throughout the poem by numerous descriptive and ekphrastic passages, culminating in the description of the hero’s tent towards the end of the poem. In contrast, the shorter and much more frugal *Apolonio* lacks any comparable objects but displays a parallel proliferation of metanarrative retellings of the main characters’ stories, always in response to threats to their social and genealogical identity such as the one suffered by Apollonius after his shipwreck.

In this chapter, I will examine first the *Alexandre*’s final ekphrasis—the hero’s monumental tent—and then the *Apolonio*’s retellings as parallel reflections on the technical means that allow for the construction and transmission of cultural memory.

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130 A good example of Alexander’s attitude can be found in stanza 131, where he answers to king Nicolao’s inquires about his name and lineage: “Dixo: Yo só llamado por nombre Alexandre; / Filipo, rey de Greçia, aquél es el mi padre; / Olimpias la reína sepas que es mi madre; / ¡quien a mí con mal viene de mí con mal se parte!” Of course, the aggressiveness of Alexander’s statement may be related to the character’s genealogical anxiety, as his royal legitimacy is questioned at the beginning of the poem by the rumor that he is the son of Nectanebo instead of king Philip, to which he responds by killing the former (19-20).
Both poems explore the media used to shape and pass on a relevant memory of the past for collective use while providing clear examples of the personal and political functions that this kind of memory is able to perform when it is adequately managed. The *Apolonio* reflects as much, if not more than the *Alexandre*, on what I have argued is a central problem for the *romans antiques*: what are the media better suited for a successful transmission of collective memory and identity? The answer will serve not only to recover Apollonius’s lost name but also to preserve it for all eternity.

“Ornamental Overload” and Monumental Memory in the *Libro de Alexandre*

Romances of antiquity present the reader with an almost endless proliferation of marvelous objects: tents, shields, tombs, automatons, statues, or palaces are all described in rich detail, seemingly competing with one another to elicit their public’s astonishment. In her study about twelfth-century Francophone *romans antiques*, Emmanuèle Baumgartner has described this striking feature as the romances’ “surcharge ornamentale” (*De l’histoire de Troie* 11). Christopher Baswell has observed that wondrous objects, such as king Adrastus’s tent in the *Roman de Thèbes*, are often designed to showcase clerical knowledge, so that in marveling at them one is also in awe before the learning of the *clers merveillos* that crafted them in writing (“Marvels of Translation” 34). In turn, this strategy creates a mirroring effect, inviting us to see these decorated objects as smaller versions of the work in which they are embedded. The wonders of the past thus become models for the poet’s momentous work of *translatio*
studii, or transfer of learning, from the past to the present, from Latin to vernacular, and from a clerical community to a courtly public.\textsuperscript{131}

From a different but complementary point of view, Baumgartner has argued that the pervasive descriptions of precious objects create narrative pauses, lulls in the unstoppable force of the story as it inevitably goes forward. She links the ornamental proliferation to a desire to stop time and create a space for eternity within the tale. The multiple mirabilia of roman antique thus participate in the “strategy of delay” (Parker 5) that is central to romance as “a form that simultaneously quests for and postpones a particular end, objective, or object” (Parker 4).\textsuperscript{132} Indeed, Baumgartner notes, “toutes ces machines à défier le fil destructeur du temps, sont peut-être la manifestation la plus agressive d’une méditation sur le temps et le récit” \cite{De l’histoire de Troie 11}, a meditation only facilitated, one would expect, by their mirroring function.

The Alexandre is in this respect a typical roman antique, where the descriptions of wonderful objects and places that punctuate the poem create the sense of ornamental overload noted by Baumgartner. Raymond S. Willis has observed that the Alexandre poet took great pains to adapt descriptive passages not only from his main source, Walter of Châtillon’s Alexandreis, but also from a variety of additional texts \cite{The Relationship 18-19}. This fact is particularly significant considering that description in general is arguably one of the most important writing techniques introduced by the roman antique

\textsuperscript{131} The centrality that the trope of translatio studii takes on in the romans antiques is one of the salient features of the genre (see introduction).

\textsuperscript{132} Taking Patricia Parker’s insight as a point of departure but from a slightly different point of view, Barbara Fuchs sees “narrative delay” as one of what she terms “romance strategies” in her understanding of romance as “a concatenation of both narratological elements and literary topoi, including idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity, that, as Parker suggests, both pose a quest and complicate it” \cite{9}.
authors to the vernacular (Baumgartner, *Le récit médiéval* 23). Descriptions in the *Alexandre* are, in Willis’s view, “given such prominence that they assume equal rank with the major narrative characters” (*The Relationship* 19), and indeed many of the book’s so-called digressions, which play a crucial role in its structure, describe in great detail either objects or places. A good number of the descriptions in the poem portray the kind of marvelous objects that are often found in romances of antiquity. The depictions of decorated shields, tombs, and tents; of king Poro’s palace’s or the city of Babylon and its innumerable wonders; and even of the exotic encounters of Alexandre and his army while they wander in Indian lands, create as many opportunities for the narrator to pause the main action for a moment and display the full extent of his learning.

As the brief list above should make evident, many of the *mirabilia* in the *Alexandre* aim to impress its public with the exoticism of Eastern lands. In this way, they follow the literary tradition of the “marvels of India” tied to imperial expansions such as Alexander’s and linking *translatio studii* to *translatio imperii*. However, not all the *mirabilia* in the book seek to depict—and to a certain extent domesticate—geographical otherness. Many other, especially when it comes to decorated objects, confront us not only with spatial but also with chronological alterity through their representation of

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133 For a brief overview of description in medieval literature, see Edmond Faral, *Les arts poétiques* 75-84; on the relationship between description and the marvelous, see Faral, *Recherches* 307-83. Although focused on Chrétien de Troyes’s works, Douglas Kelly’s “The Art of Description” also contains useful observations on the *romans antiques*.

134 Ian Michael identified four major digressions in the poem, of which the last three are descriptive: the narration of the Trojan War, and the descriptions of Babylon, Hell, and Alexander’s tent (256-69).

135 The central part of the “marvels of India” in terms of geographical alterity was arguably the catalog of monstrous races, often illustrated in medieval manuscripts. See Laurence Harf-Lancener, “From Alexander to Marco Polo” and, for a general discussion of monstrous races in medieval culture, John Block Friedman.
historical events. The abundant ekphrasis in the poem all contain to some extent scenes taken from the Biblical or the pagan past, and three of them do so in an exclusive manner: the descriptions of king Darius’s shield (990-98), his wife’s tomb (1239-49), and Alexander’s tent (2539-95). Through the inclusion of sacred and pagan history, the objects that I have just mentioned unequivocally participate in the desire to stop time and create eternity that Baumgartner described as the underlying cause of the ornamental overload in roman antique. They do so, however, in a way that goes beyond the strategy of deferral that she describes, since they vigorously establish a space for the refashioning and transmission of collective memory, and thus undergo a transformation from ornamental to monumental objects.

Of the three ekphrasis in the Alexandre that we may call “historical,” the longest and most spectacular is doubtless the description of Alexander’s tent. It is perhaps not a coincidence that, while the description of Darius’s shield and the Persian queen’s tomb derive directly from the Alexandre’s main source, the Alexandreis, the depiction of Alexander’s pavilion is based on a similar passage in the Roman d’Alexandre. For

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136 The sense of alterity produced by the past is beautifully reflected in the famous opening line from L.P. Hartley’s The Go-Between, “The past is a foreign country.” John Ganim recalls this sentence in the introduction of his Medievalism and Orientalism, in which he studies some of the ways in which the medieval past has been construed as both “a native past and an exotic otherness” (6). The same attitude can often be detected in the medieval stance toward the classical past.

137 Of course, ornamental objects may perform a mnemonic function per se. The lavishness that they display, the fact that they are objects out of the realm of the ordinary, ensures that they remain memorable for the poems’ audiences.

138 As Willis notes, the passage is located in branch I, laisses 91-98 of Alexander de Paris’s version of the Roman d’Alexandre, while it appears in branch III, lines 3383-3483 in the so-called manuscript B or Venice manuscript (dating from the mid-fourteenth century and located in Venice, Museo Civico VI, 665), which is in most cases closer to the Alexandre (Willis, The Debt 42). The description of royal tents became a staple in the Francophone romans antiques: Alexander’s pavilion in the Roman d’Alexandre is
even though the Latin epic clearly represents the main model for the Castilian poet, and the one he hopes to make available in the vernacular and maybe even to surpass (Arizaleta, La translation 113-14), the proliferation of marvelous objects of which the tent is the culmination remains, as we have seen, a crucial feature of roman antique.

Positioned towards the end of the poem, the sumptuous pavilion represents in many ways a summary and condensation of the anonymous author’s project in composing the Alexandre. As we shall see, the tent sums up the tension between secular and religious interpretations of the Macedonian king’s figure that pervades the Iberian work. Moreover, the inclusion of Alexander’s own deeds as one of the tent’s panels represents the peak of the intricate web of self-reflectivity that dominates the poem, alerting us of its importance as the final in a long series of mirror-like objects that lay out some of the book’s most cherished ambitions (Arizaleta, La translation 127-45). More importantly for my purposes in this chapter, the tent ekphrasis showcases some of the most important implications of cultural memory in the poem: it establishes a direct link between translatio studii and translatio imperii; it connects ancient genealogy to collective remembering; and finally, the pavilion represents a celebration of the power of visual media to preserve and stabilize—in other words, “monumentalize”—cultural memory.

In order to fully understand the way in which cultural memory is construed in the poem, it is important to review the innovations introduced by the Alexandre poet in paralleled by the ekphraseis of king Adraste’s in the Roman de Thèbes and king Bilas’s in the early thirteenth-century Athis et Prophilies. Baumgartner has compared the three tents in De l’histoire 179-87; Petit has studied Alexander’s tent as it appears in manuscript B in “Le pavillon d’Alexandre.”
relation to its source in the *Roman d’Alexandre*. In the French poem, the first four *laisse* depict the precious materials out of which the luxurious pavilion is made (an introduction echoed in stanzas 2541-47 of the Castilian version), while the remaining four—the ekphrasis proper—are dedicated to describing the images represented in the tent’s four panels, of which the first depicts the months of the year and the firmament; the second shows a T-map; the third contains the story of Hercules; and the fourth and final one portrays scenes from the Trojan War. Situated at the beginning of the work, the decorated panels thus prefigure Alexander’s future dominion over circular time in the first section, space in the second, and linear time in the last two.

In his article “La tienda en el *Libro de Alexandre,*” the most detailed critical treatment to date of this passage, Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua has listed the main ways in which the *Alexandre*’s tent description departs from its French model:

1. Adición de unas historias bíblicas en la cúpula; 2. Desarrollo del calendario con las ocupaciones correspondientes a los meses del año; 3. Incorporación de una ruta de la clerecía en el mapa mundi; 4. Unión de las historias de Hércules y Troya en un mismo paño; 5. En el cuarto hastial se añade un resumen parcial de los hechos de Alejandro; 6. Se varía el contexto narrativo del que depende el episodio. (113)

In addition to these changes, one more innovation is the attribution of the tent to Apelles, the Jewish artist who accompanies Alexander and had earlier in the book decorated the sepulchers of Darius and his wife (Willis, *The Debt* 42). In this way, the poet associates the tent with the stone tombs and thus heightens its monumentality. Since Apelles has

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139 See Willis, *The Debt* 41-46 for a detailed comparison of the Castilian to the French passage.
appeared throughout the work as an alter-ego of the author (Arizaleta, *La translation* 143-44; Weiss 141-42), his creation of the tent reminds us that the tent stands as a representation of the whole poem or, as Cacho Blecua calls it, a “microcosmos” (131) not only of the extra-textual but also of the textual world.

The changes noted by Cacho Blecua belong in two different categories: the first five pertain to the content and organization of the royal pavilion’s painted decoration, while the last one affects the role of the tent in the narrative structure. While in the *Roman d’Alexandre* the tent’s ekphrasis appears earlier in the poem, the Castilian poet introduced this passage towards the end of his work, at the moment in which Alexander has attained an almost total dominion over the known world, and soon before his untimely death. As a consequence, Cacho Blecua notes, the pavilion becomes “la culminación de buena parte de las descripciones anteriores” (113), and most specifically of the ekphraseis that punctuate the poem, echoing and summarizing many of the subjects brought up by the previous descriptions of decorated shields and tombs. Moreover, the temporal relationship of the facts depicted in the tent’s panel to the story in which they are embedded is greatly changed: for example, the map becomes a representation of Alexander’s conquests instead of their prefiguration.

The reorganization and amplification of the paintings decorating the tent must be understood, as Cacho Blecua’s analysis indirectly makes clear, in relation to the

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140 As I have noted, the tent appears at the beginning of the poem in Alexandre de Paris’s version, while it is situated towards the middle in the case of manuscript B (Willis, *The Debt* 42).

141 Willis argues persuasively that the Iberian poem initially intended to place the tent passage right after the marriage of Alexander and Roxana and discusses possible reasons why it was later transferred to the end of the poem (*The Debt* 44-46).

142 Cacho Blecua offers a detailed comparison between the scenes represented in the tent’s ceiling and panels and those depicted in the poem’s shields and tombs.
pavilion’s displacement to the end of the poem. In Cacho Blecua’s reading, the tent stands as a symbol of Alexander’s limitations: in the king’s moment of greater glory, the Biblical scenes in the ceiling should remind us of the dangers of pride and the futility of human triumph, while the changes undergone by the historical sections in the second and fourth panels highlight man’s penchant for deceit and treason, to which Alexander will ultimately succumb (132). The placement of this somber reminder at the moment when the Macedonian is about to fall from the highest pinnacle of worldly power should make it all the more effective.

Cacho Blecua’s assessment thus echoes Ian Michael’s reading of the tent description, in which even the glorious deeds represented in the pavilion, seen in some interpretations “as a hall of fame” (269), should ultimately “be taken to imply the futility and fleetingness of human achievement and the vanity of human ambition sub specie aeternitatis” (268). The tension between a secular and a religious reading of the tent to which both Michael and (more obliquely) Cacho Blecua point reflects a wider friction between alternative views of Alexander as model monarch or epitome of pride, and more widely between secular and religious approaches to the classical past, that persists throughout the poem. This tension, and the related problem of whether the poet

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143 Lafferty also reads the two tomb ekphraseis in the Alexandreis as a reflection of the king’s limitations (“Mapping Human Limitations” and Walter de Châtillon’s Alexandreis 103-40). The coincidence may respond to an influence of the Latin work on the Alexandre poet even when he was reworking material from different sources, to his desire to offer a coherent whole, or more generally to Alexander’s exemplary role in medieval culture as the epitome of fallen pride.
ultimately admires or condemns the Macedonian, has generated a continuous debate in which scholars have passionately argued for one or the other side.\textsuperscript{144}

However, the most productive approach to this issue is probably to recognize, as Julian Weiss has done, the coexistence of competing and even opposed ideological interests in the \textit{Alexandre}.\textsuperscript{145} Consequently, Weiss sees Alexander’s tent as “both a celebration of his achievements and a \textit{memento mori}” (141). In his view, the ekphrasis depicts “empire in its temporal and spatial dimensions” (141), a representation that at the same time rejoices in the possibilities and highlights the limitations of secular \textit{imperium}. Therefore, the friction between two different worldviews becomes what Arizaleta termed “une tension organisatrice” (\textit{La translation} 117), which Weiss relates to the “new clerical caste[s]” uneasy footing between church and court (141).\textsuperscript{146}

If Alexander’s tent offers a representation of secular empire, as Weiss suggests, I believe that it also proposes a reflection on how Alexander’s empire has come to existence in the first place, through the judicious use of cultural memory. The emphasis on the most striking of the Castilian poet’s additions—the Biblical scenes in the tent ceiling—has resulted in a limited understanding of his second major amplification: the inclusion of Alexander’s own deeds in the final panel of the tent’s decoration. Cacho Blecua, for example, rightly insists on the thematic of treason that links the episodes

\textsuperscript{144} Some key contributions to this discussion are María Rosa Lida 167-97; Willis, “Mester de clerecía” 222-23; Michael 278-86; Cañas Murillo 76-80; Bly & Deyermond; Brownlee, “Pagan and Christian;” Uría Maqua, “La soberbia de Alejandro,” and \textit{Panorama crítico} 203-06; and Arizaleta, \textit{La translation} 232-55.

\textsuperscript{145} Weiss assesses the critical controversy in terms of “moral” versus “political” readings of the \textit{Alexandre}, and argues that in his own interpretation, “the political reading is predicated upon the poem’s metaphysical force” (111; see especially n3).

\textsuperscript{146} In the same vein, Weiss relates the fact that Apelles is a Jew to his role as alter-ego of the clerical poet (141-42).
narrated in the depiction of Alexander’s story and treats the inclusion of the Macedonian’s adventures in his tent as a confirmation that the king already enjoys “la vida de la fama” (131)—thus directly connecting this part of the tent description to the desire for eternity that Baumgartner detected in the *roman antique*’s marvelous objects. However, in order to fully understand the function of this panel, it is necessary to relate it to the other historical depiction in the tent, containing the stories of Hercules and Troy’s. I would contend that the relationship between the pavilion’s historical panels, together with their echoes throughout the rest of the book, make clear that the tent also functions as a commentary about the salutary effects of antique history on the knightly public to which that history is genealogically connected. *Translatio studii* is thus much more than just the companion of *translatio imperii*—the adequate transmission of knowledge becomes the condition of possibility for the transfer of power depicted in the poem.

Part of the reflection that the *Alexandre*’s tent ekphrasis offers on the inextricable connection between *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* can be traced back to its source in the *Roman d’Alexandre*. The French poem establishes an explicit link between the clerkly learning depicted inside the tent and the future conquests of the poem’s hero through Alexander’s reaction to the images in the second, third, and fourth panels. The final verses of each panel’s respective *laisse* shows the Macedonian as a single-minded spectator who invariably reads each panel as an invitation for conquest and expansion:

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147 Weiss also comments on how “[j]ust as this digression slows down but can never hold off Alexander’s inevitable demise, so the ecphrasis itself […] arrests passing Time in a moment of stillness” (141), in relation with his reading of the *Alexandre* as a poem concerned with the idea of empire as “dominion in time” (110). Since the situation of the French *roman antique* authors as writers at the service of secular patrons is similar to the one Weiss proposes for the *Alexandre*, this perspective may also prove fruitful for a reading of the Francophone works.
when he looks at the map, he complains that “molt fist Dieus poi terre por un home honorer” (2032); on seeing Hercules’s feats, Alexander swears that, like the ancient hero, he also “[s]es bonnes metera par devers Orïent” (2051); and the contemplation of the Trojan War makes him promise that he will make Darius of Persia suffer the same destiny that Alexander’s Greek ancestors inflicted upon the Trojans (2066-69).

In this way, the tent ekphrasis in the Roman d’Alexandre depicts the correct use of clerical learning in a knightly environment. Through its insistence on Alexander’s desire for eastward expansion—fully realized later in the poem—in verses 2051 and 2066-69, the poem makes clear that, as Laurence Harf-Lancner has observed, translatio imperii, or the transfer of power in a westward direction, springs from the clerkly task of translatio studii, the transfer of knowledge (“Introduction” 37). In his own description of the tent, the Alexandre poet made full use of the connection between translatio studii and translatio imperii established in his source. But, as I will argue, by including Alexander’s deeds in the tent ekphrasis the Castilian author called attention not only to the political advantages offered by clerkly knowledge, but also to the means through which a cultural memory of the antique past could be created and transmitted.

In his rendition of the tent ekphrasis, the Iberian poet paralleled the Roman d’Alexandre’s structure by commenting on the emperor’s reaction after describing the second and the third panels. Very much as he did in the French poem, the Macedonian

148 “God made too little land to honor a man.” He goes on to add: “Se longes puis durer, / Seur tant com il en est vaurai je segnor” [“If I live long enough, I will rule over all existing lands”] (2034-35). Quotes are taken from E.C. Armstrong’s edition of the poem; translations are mine.
149 “He will fix his boundaries in the Orient.”
responds to the stories of Hercules and Troy by expressing a renovated desire for conquest:

Quando el rey Alexandre estas gestas veyé
creçíel’el coraçon, gran esfuerço cogié.
Dizí que por so pleito un clavo non darié:
¡si non se mejorasse, morir se dejarié! (2575)\textsuperscript{150}

In contrast, Alexander’s reaction to the map is not directly expressed; instead, the poet tells us that the king could see the progress of his conquests in the world map and offers a general comment on his inexorable imperial expansion in the last two verses of stanza 2587:

Alexandre en ella lo podié perçebir
quánto avié conquisto, quánto por conquerir:
non se le podié tierra alçar nin encobrir
que él non la sopiesse buscar e combatir. (2587)

While the French Alexandre ties a wide array of clerical learning to his hero’s *translatio imperii*’s efforts, the Castilian version appears to give a greater importance to the retelling of stories from classical antiquity, which are the only ones meriting an explicit reaction from Alexander. This may simply reflect the different placement of the tent in the two poems: while in the *Roman d’Alexandre* it appears before the hero has

\textsuperscript{150} Manuscript O capitalizes “Quando,” a fact that could be significant in a passage where the capitals seem to respond to a particular reading of the tent’s organization. We find capitals in stanzas 2540 (beginning of the external description of the tent), 2549 (transition between external and internal description), 2575 (quoted above), and then in 2595, which restarts the action after the description ends in the previous quatrain. Therefore, within the description of the tent’s panels, the stanza reflecting Alexander’s reaction to the stories of Hercules and Troy is the only one that has been capitalized in this manuscript.
finished most of his geographical expansion, in the Iberian poem the pavilion is located, as I have already mentioned, towards the end of the text, and therefore the map does not offer much in the way of new conquests. Even stanza 2575 seems somewhat incongruous in the new context—how is Alexander to emulate his ancient models if the whole world has already surrendered to him and he has even had the opportunity to take his air and submarine trips? This is why Casas Rigall argues that Alexander’s “empecinamiento guerrero es signo de desmesura y soberbia: la emulación de las gestas de Hércules y los héroes troyanos, lícita para granjearse fama, puede conducir también al pecado” (Libro de Alexandre 702 n2575; La materia 39-43).

Casas Rigall’s view ties in, once again, with the vexed question of the clerical author’s ambivalent attitude towards his poem’s hero. But the reproduction, in direct style, of the king’s reaction to the depictions of Hercules’s feats and the Trojan War also serves as a transition of sorts between the second panel, where they are represented, and the fourth and last panel including Alexander’s own deeds—or rather as evidence of a causal relationship between those two sides of the tent. The main effect of the ancient stories on the Macedonian is, after all, his conquest of the whole known world (represented on the third of the tent’s sides), which ultimately makes him worthy of being represented in the pavilion. The connection between translatio studii and translatio

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151 In his edition, Casas Rigall also points to the similar incongruity of stanza 2587’s mention of lands “por conquerir” in the new context of the tent’s description (Libro de Alexandre 706 n2587). Cacho Blecua argues that this comment refers to the fact that Alexander has yet to set foot in the Western lands that have just surrendered to him and that therefore “[e]l mapa mundi refleja su máxima ambición, su máxima soberbia y su máxima gloria” (130).

152 Moreover, given the order in which the panels are described, we can probably assume that the stories of Troy/Hercules and Alexander face each other, as if they were mirror images, in yet another way to stress the similarities between them.
*translatio studii* is presented here as the condition of possibility for *translatio imperii*: recording military facts such as the story of the Trojan War has as an ultimate goal “meter en calentura” future generations of soldiers. The successful expansion of Alexander’s empire throughout Asia can therefore be argued to be a direct result of his retelling of the Trojan story—once again of his “heart,” but this time in a very different

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153 See chapter one for a reading of the Trojan digression in relation to the *Alexandre*’s tomb ekphrasis.

154 This function is institutionalized in Alfonso X’s *Partida* II, Título XXI, Ley XX (see chapter one); the effect of the ancient stories on knights is expressed in very similar terms to Alexander’s reaction to the narratives of Hercules and Troy: “oyéndolas les crecían los corazones” (213).
sense, as the site of memory. This is why the first reaction of Alexander’s soldiers after hearing his rendition of the Trojan story is sheer delight at the fact that the king “siguió bien razón, / porque tenié los nombres todos de corazón” (762cd).

The Greek soldiers’ enthusiasm also has to do with the fact that the Trojan escriptura, as transmitted by both Alexander in his oral retelling and Apelles in the painted panels of the king’s pavilion, is not just a historical exemplum randomly chosen in order to inflame Alexander’s army. The emperor takes pains to point out the genealogical connection between the ancient Greeks and his soldiers when he expounds the Trojan story, referring to them as “[l]os nuestros bisavuelos” (768a; see also Cacho Blecua 126). Alexander can claim kinship not only with the most illustrious participant in the Trojan War, Achilles, but also with the hero of the other story depicted in his pavilion’s second panel, Hercules. The genealogical relationship is quickly acknowledged in the poem through the intervention of the Theban jongleur Cleor, who in an unsuccessful attempt to save his city reminds Alexander that “Alcides, tu avuelo, daquí fue natural” (238a).

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155 For the conception of the heart as the site of memory, already abandoned in favor of the brain but still present in Latin and vernacular languages, see Carruthers, The Book of Memory 48-49.
156 The reference to the “names” that Alexander knows “by heart” reflects the importance of inventories in medieval mnemonic technique (Carruthers, The Craft of Thought 24-29). On the other hand, the “razón” refers in this context to “el desarrollo narrativo con las líneas argumentales que van a ser expuestas” (Gómez Redondo 288). In this way, the two verses make clear that Alexander is trained in both memoria ad verba (memory for words) and memoria ad res (memory for things).
157 As Bly & Deyermond put it, “the poet clearly associates Alexander’s Asian venture with the legendary exploits of his ancestors, and the whole expedition is held firmly in a Trojan framework, by direct narrative at the beginning and a cluster of references at the end. The deeds of Alexander’s ancestors form a background for his own deeds: they are his point of departure” (155).
The tent’s second panel depicts, then, not just antique history but “historias de antepasados” (Cacho Blecua 126). The insistence on the crucial genealogical connection serves to bring the old stories into the realm of Greek cultural memory. This operation could in fact be construed as a conscious attempt to bridge the distance between what Maurice Halbwachs termed “autobiographical memory” and “historical memory” (*The Collective Memory* 50-55). Halbwachs posited that the two types of memory “are often intermingled” (*The Collective Memory* 50); indeed, as Ricoeur has noted in his reading of Halbwachs’s work, both kinds of memory are put into play in “the discovery of the historical past by means of the memory of ancestors” (Ricoeur 394). It would seem that both Alexander and Apelles try to perform a very similar operation through their respective oral and pictorial retellings of classical narratives, anchoring them in “transgenerational memory” (Ricoeur 394).

Genealogical connections in the *Alexandre*, however, are far from straightforward. Weiss has convincingly argued that throughout the text, “the poet does everything he can to problematize lineage and disrupt the smooth dynastic transmission of power” (113), for example by tackling the question of Alexander’s disputed paternity with deliberated ambiguity. The emperor’s kinship to Hercules

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158 Halbwachs’s idea of collective memory does not span beyond a generation; however, his insights often can be adapted to work for what Assmann has termed “cultural memory,” reaching far longer in time. For a discussion of these terms and the relationship between Halbwachs’s and Assmann’s conceptions of collective memory, see the introduction.

159 As I explained in the introduction, the *romans antiques* almost invariably tackle questions related to genealogical anxiety, a feature probably related to the changes in family structure and lineage organization that took place during the twelfth and thirteenth century.
actually surfaces for the first time in this context, when a young Alexander assailed by
genealogical anxiety reflects,

Alçides, de la cuna, como solemos leer,

afogó las serpientes que lo querién comer,

e y o ya bien devía en algo parecer,

que por fi de Netánamo non me ayan a tener. (27)\(^{160}\)

Weiss reads the problem of Alexander’s paternity, the choice between Philip and
Nectanebo, as a question about “the source of royal power: arms or letters” (114), the
traditional topical virtues of *fortitudo* and *sapientia*. The poet’s answer, Weiss argues, is
that the king’s power, authorized through lineage, “comes from the prince’s military
identity, his strength, and his warrior’s ability to kill” (114), and this explains
Alexander’s eager preference of Hercules over Nectanebo. The ambiguity of the
genealogical principle, Weiss explains, makes violence necessary in order to maintain
and expand Alexander’s power, as well as prove his lineage.

This suggestive interpretation, however, does not take into account that Alexander
also claims his royal descent through *sapientia* in the form of storytelling, since he
carefully displays his genealogical ties both in his own account of the Trojan War and in
Apelles’s tent decoration. If violence or *fortitudo* serves the king both to prove his
lineage and to expand his empire, the same argument may be made for his skillful
management of cultural memory, and more specifically of what Jan Assmann has termed
“figures of memory,” which serve to create and maintain cultural memory in a given

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\(^{160}\) Cacho Blecua explains this allusion by the fact that in the stories of both Hercules and
Alexander, “[l]as pruebas posteriores del protagonista no suponen solamente su
reconocimiento como héroe ejemplar sino como sucesor legítimo a los derechos de su
padre” (127).
The ruins of Troy, *lieu de mémoire* if there ever was one, are the stage for the accumulation of several of such figures of memory, which remember “fateful events of the past […] through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)” (Assmann, “Collective memory” 129). In addition to the monumental function of the tombs found by Alexander’s army and the king’s own storytelling, the collective importance of the Trojan War, as well as its genealogical ties to the Greek soldiers, are reinforced through the performance of funeral rites. Immediately after finding the ruins of Troy and before the king starts his rendition of the legend, the Macedonian and his soldiers carry out ritual offerings at their ancestors’ sepulchers:

Echaron grant ofrenda, dieron grant oblaçión,

ençensaron las fussas, fizieron procession:

orava cadaúno con grant devoçïón

por aquellos que fueron de su generaçión. (333)

The foundations of Alexander’s Asian empire are thus laid at Troy through the accumulation of several figures of memory: monuments, funerary rites, and storytelling.

The historical panels in Alexander’s tent and the king’s oral retelling of the Trojan legend offer, in this way, a clear picture of what an adequate management of collective memory, which appears as intimately tied to genealogy, can accomplish—no less that the most famed imperial expansion in world history. Even more importantly, both passages make a point about the means through which cultural memory is created

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161 Of course, cultural memory cannot exist without proper memory training, which is what Alexander’s soldiers admire in his rendition of the Trojan story. The king’s trained memory is obviously a product of his education with Aristotle, a clerical and paternal figure (Weiss 129), at the beginning of the poem.
and transmitted. If Alexander’s pavilion marks in the *Alexandre* the highest point in the Macedonian’s imperial career, I would contend that it also represents the apogee of a stable and monumental cultural memory that is transmitted through visual media.

The king’s story as visually recounted by Apelles is particularly self-conscious of the work carried out through visual means in this respect, since—despite recounting the Macedonian’s story up to his marriage with Darius’s daughter Roxana in only seven quatrains—it takes the time to highlight the importance of monumental and visual devices. It is significant in this respect that the two tomb ekphraseis that appear earlier in the poem, representing Darius’s and his wife’s sepulchers,\(^\text{162}\) have both found their way into the tent’s fourth panel. The Persian king’s sepulcher is only obliquely mentioned in stanza 2594ab (“La traiçión de Dario: cómo murió traído, / cómo fue soterrado e Bessus escarnido”), but his wife’s monument clearly makes part of the pavilion’s illustrations, which show “la grant emperadriz cómo fue soterrada, / e la su sepoltura cómo fue debuxada” (2593ab).

Unlike manuscript O of the *Alexandre*, however, the fourth panel of the king’s tent does not seem to show Alexander recounting the story of Troy to his troops—it only mentions that the pavilion’s decoration shows “Cómo [Alexander] passó a Asia a Darïo buscar; / cómo a Troya ovo en Frigia a fallar” (2590ab). It could be argued that this is the case because the king’s retelling of the Trojan legend is an oral event, and consequently does not belong in a tent that remains a celebration of the power of monuments to preserve and stabilize cultural memory. However, the poet has been careful to present the “Trojan digression” as entirely dependent on visually-based, as opposed to strictly

\(^{162}\) See chapter one for a detailed analysis of both tomb ekphraseis and their relation to the transmission of cultural memory.
oral, media. First, as we have just seen, Alexander’s own “expounding” of his “sermon” mentions the “escripturas” that have made possible for him to tell the story (765c). And second, as I have argued in chapter one, the Trojan story in the book springs from the encounter with an eminently visual work, Achilles’s tomb, which is in addition inscribed with verses.

Therefore, the memorializing and monumentalizing process as presented in the *Alexandre* does not dwell, as I established in chapter one, on the distinction between word and image, which are seen as basically equivalent in their mnemonic function. Nevertheless, I would contend that there is a focus on the efficacy of visual and permanent media for the transmission of cultural memory. Even in the case of Alexander’s oral retelling of the Trojan story, the foundation for the successful diffusion of a key story is found in writing, which is, like the images depicting the king’s story in his tent, a visual medium, spatially rather than temporally based. The importance of such a distinction will be made clearer, I hope, through an examination of similar patterns in the *Apolonio*.

Precarious Memory in the *Libro de Apolonio*

Description in general, and description of ornamental objects in particular, is scarce in the *Apolonio*. Narration and direct discourse dominate the story, and the encyclopedic and overwrought quality of the *Alexandre* is entirely absent. Moreover, the *Apolonio* also appears to lack the intricate web of self-reflectivity created by the ornamental objects pervading the *Alexandre*, and more specifically by the decorated monuments created by the author’s alter-ego, Apelles. As a result, the *Apolonio* does not
seem at first as preoccupied as the *Alexandre* with the problems derived from the shaping and diffusion of cultural memory, or with the technical means to achieve them. If we accept that, as I have argued, these matters are a central concern of *roman antique*, then the *Apolonio* may only be considered as such rather superficially, as it has been until now, by virtue of its subject matter.

However, as I will argue in this section, the *Apolonio* does show a pressing concern about the way in which cultural memory comes into being and the means through which it can and must be preserved. While the *Alexandre* seems to display a great confidence in the stability of a cultural memory established and maintained through visual media (in the form of either written words or images), the *Apolonio* betrays a latent anxiety about the precariousness of both individual and cultural memory, particularly when they depend exclusively on oral means of transmission. This will be evident if we explore not only the scarce monuments present in the poem, but also a different element that parallels the ornamental objects described by Baumgartner in their superfluity for narrative purposes and the sense of excessiveness with which they endow the poem: the countless times in which the characters, especially the protagonist Apollonius and his daughter Tarsiana, recount their own story, resulting in what we may term, paralleling Baumgartner’s expression, a “metanarrative overload.”

*A Monumental Frame*

The monumental objects that appear in the *Apolonio* could not be more different from their counterparts in the *Alexandre*. They are few and far between, and display none of the ekphrastic exuberance that characterized them in the *Alexandre*, culminating in the tent description. Only three monuments punctuate Apollonius’s adventures, the
three of which derive from the poem’s Latin source, the *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri (HART)*. In contrast with the *Alexandre*’s lavish descriptions, in the *Apolonio* their physical characteristics are only cursorily noted, and the focus moves instead to the epigraphs engraved in them. It is however within these inscriptions that we can detect a first hint of self-reflectivity in the poem; as Arizaleta notes in her study of the epigraphs in the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*, they function as so many “miroirs de l’oeuvre” (“Les vers sur la pierre” 166). Moreover, their importance in the poem’s overall design should not be underestimated, since, as Weiss has noted, two of these three monuments, the statues of Apollonius in Tarsus and Mitylene, “frame the main action” of the poem (202). As we shall see, the third, Tarsiana’s false tomb, is situated in the middle of the main narrative arc and also contributes to shape the poem’s structure.

The first of the *Apolonio*’s monuments is the statue in Apollonius’s likeness that the citizens of Tarsus erect after he saves them from famine by providing them with grain at cost price:

\[
\text{Tanto querían las gentes de onrra le buscar,} \\
\text{fiçieron en su nombre hun ídolo labrar,}
\]

163 The *HART*, in the form that reached the *Apolonio* poet, dates from the late fifth or early sixth century. Scholars distinguish two different versions in the surviving manuscripts, usually called RA—longer and containing more vulgarisms—and RB—probably an effort to correct RA: although shorter, it employs a more classical Latin and adds details improving narrative coherence—(Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre* 6-9). The Iberian poem follows RA in its general outline but contains elements from RB (Alvar, *Libro de Apolónio* I, 35-38). I quote from the *HART* text included in Elizabeth Archibald’s *Apollonius of Tyre*, which for the most part follows G.A.A. Kortekaas’s edition of RA but also includes many RB variants or additions in notes, as well as an English facing-page translation. Unless otherwise indicated, English translations are also Archibald’s.

164 Pablo Ancos García also comments on this feature of the poem’s inscriptions, explaining that they function as “un ejemplo claro de iteración metaliteraria” (“Vocalidad y textualidad” 66).
fizieron en hun márbor el escrito notar
del bueno de Apolonio qué fizo en ese logar.

Pusiéronlo drecho en medio del mercado,
sobre alta columna, por seyer bien alçado,
fasta la fin del mundo e el sieglo pasado,
el don de Apolonio non fuese olvidado. (96-97)\textsuperscript{165}

In his perfunctory account of the monument, the *Apolonio* poet highlights the inscription on marble retelling Apollonius’s deeds and the location of the statue in the town’s market, but does not offer even a summary description of how the actual statue looks like. The description’s brevity notwithstanding, the last two verses (97cd) make plain that the statue is meant to stop time and create a space for eternity (“fasta la fin del mundo e el sieglo pasado”) through memory—very much like the *roman antique’s* ornamental objects described at the beginning of this chapter.

The second monument in the book is an aberration that alerts us to the possibility and the dangers of creating false memory. It is a tomb, but it could not be more different from the sepulchers in the *Alexandre*, not only because of the descriptive simplicity of the passage where it appears, but especially because it memorializes an event that has never taken place. The tomb commemorates the death of the hero’s daughter, Tarsiana, whose jealous foster mother Dionysias tries to have her killed because her own daughter compares unfavorably to Apollonius’s. Fortunately for Tarsiana, a ship appears and a

\textsuperscript{165} Quotes from the *Apolonio* are taken from Dolores Corbella’s edition, although I do not reproduce her use of italics to represent the manuscript’s abbreviations, regularize u/v, i/j/y, and substitute the Tironian “et” for “e.”
group of pirates kidnaps her when she is about to be murdered by her stepmother’s minion. Meanwhile, Dionysias commissions a tomb so that Apollonius will be more easily deceived about her own role in his daughter’s disappearance. Tarsiana’s sepulcher is presented in much the same way as Apollonius’s statue in Tarsus: the narrator quickly describes it as “rico a muy gran guisa / de mármol tan blanco como una camisa” (445cd), and then devotes the next stanza to the epitaph that the evil Dionysias inscribes in it:

Fizo sobre la piedra las letras escrevir:

“Aquí fizo Estrángilo ha Tarsiana sobollir,
fija de Apolonio, el buen rey de Tir,
que a los xii anyos abés pudo sobir.” (446bcd)

As Arizaleta rightly notes, this epigraph contrasts with the one in the statue to Apollonius at Tarsus in that it is intended for Apollonius’s eyes only, instead of for collective reception in the town market (“Les vers sur la pierre” 163). By having the sepulcher so inscribed, Dionysias subverts the true function of monumental epigraphs: memorializing an event for collective remembering. Instead, she wants to memorialize a false event in order to deceive an individual, and this is probably one of the reasons why she is so severely punished at the end of the poem. Moreover, she proves incapable of achieving the desired effect through her deceitful monument, since Apollonius cannot cry when he sees it, and therefore suspects that his daughter is not buried there. The momentary crisis of monumental truthfulness provoked by Tarsiana’s tomb is resolved,

166 Arizaleta also notes that, unlike in the HART where the citizens of Tarsus decide to build the tomb and are reflected in its inscription (see Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 120-21), in the Apolonio the initiative is only Dionysias’s (“Les vers sur la pierre” 163). As a consequence, any possible association of the monument with collective memory is avoided and the false tomb remains a message from an individual to another.
however, in the third and final monument in the *Apolonio*, which represents the climatic reunion of the two characters that should have been separated through the fake sepulcher.

This final monument is a golden statue representing Apollonius and Tarsiana, which purposefully echoes the first sculpture in Tarsus. It is also located in a market, this time in the city of Mitylene, where Apollonius and his long-lost daughter have finally been reunited. The narrator focuses once again on the materials and location (literally reproducing verse 97a in verse 571c) and gives only the briefest possible description of the actual statue,

\[
\text{Mandaron fer un ídolo al su mismo estado;}
\]
\[
\text{de oro fino era, de orençe labrado;}
\]
\[
\text{pusiéronlo derecho en medio del mercado,}
\]
\[
\text{la fija a los pieses del su padre ondrado. (571)}
\]

In contrast with this cursory treatment of the “idol,” the inscription that the citizens of Mitylene have had engraved at the base of the new monument merits three full stanzas. The *Apolonio*’s epigraph amplifies and endows with greater narrative content the *HART*’s inscription, which in a style typical of Latin epigraphy, reads, “Tyrio Apollonio restitutori aedium nostrorum et Tarsiae pudicissimae virginitatem servanti et casum vilissimum incurrenti universus populus ob nimium amorem aeternum decus memoriae dedit” (Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre* 170, 172).167 The Castilian version makes a greater emphasis in the events that have brought Apollonius to Mitylene, explaining that,

\[
\text{El rey Apolonio, de grant mesura,}
\]

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167 “In great affection as a sign of eternal honour and remembrance, the entire population of Mitylene gave this statue to Apollonius of Tyre, for restoring our buildings, and to the most chaste Tarsia, for keeping her virginity in the face of the most demeaning misfortune” (Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre* 171, 173).
echólo en esta villa huna tenpesta dura,
falló aquí su fija Tarsiana por grant ventura.

Con gozo de la fija perdió la enfermedat,
diola a Antinágora, senyor desta çibdat;
diole en casamiento, muy gran solepnidat,
el regno de Antiocha, muy grant eredat.

Enriquesció la villa mucho por su venida,
a qui tomarlo quiso dio aver sin medida;
quanto el sieglo dure fasta la fin venida,
será en Mitalena la su fama tenida. (572-74)

While Tarsiana’s false sepulcher could not be farther away from the Persian tombs created by Apelles, the statue of Apollonius and Tarsiana parallels the Alexandre’s monuments in several respects, and particularly the tent description—even though the Alexandre delights in describing at length an object richly decorated with images, while the Apolonio focuses on a written inscription. First, both the Apolonio’s statue and the Alexandre’s tent emerge near what is arguably the climax of the story—Alexander’s achievement of dominion over the whole known world and Apollonius’s reunion with Tarsiana—and offer a self-reflective recapitulation of previous episodes in the work.\(^{168}\) Second, the statue’s epigraph departs from the Latin version in order to highlight the

\(^{168}\) In his edition of the Alexandre, Jesús Cañas Murillo notes that the presence in the tent of the panel recounting Alexander’s deeds follows “uno de los principios de la retórica que aconsejaba resumir al final de la obra los asuntos tratados en ella” (557 n2539-2600).
successful exogamic trafficking of Tarsiana (573b), an important feat in a romance pervaded by incest. In this way, the monument becomes linked to the genealogical transmission of sovereignty (573cd), which as we have seen is closely connected to cultural memory in the Alexandre. Finally, drawing from its Latin source and echoing the initial statue at Tarsus, the last two verses insist on the creation of a space for eternal memory (574c) and refer to the fame that Apollonius has obtained by the end of the poem, not only through his generosity towards the citizens of first Tarsus and then Mitylene, but also through his adventures (574d). The last verse thus echoes Cacho Blecua’s assessment about the panel containing Alexander’s story in the tent description: “el héroe ha pasado a la vida de la fama y se encuentra ante su propio pasado” (131).169

This and other inscriptions in the Apolonio remain, in Arizaleta’s assessment, “autant de pauses dans le récit” (“Les vers sur la pierre” 165). Arizaleta’s words echo Baumgartner’s assessment of the ornamental objects that pervade the French romans antiques as means to stop the passage of time and connect with the first and final monuments’ mentions of eternity. In fact, the literal reproduction of the statue’s dedication is as superfluous to the Apolonio’s narrative flow as the ubiquitous ornamental objects are to the Alexandre’s. The events recounted in stanzas 572 to 574 do not really need to be recalled for the reader or audience, since they have just been recounted at length right before Mitylene’s town council decides to raise the statue, from stanzas 457 to 569. This seemingly gratuitous repetition of recent incidents is far from unique in the poem, and it is to this technique that I would like to turn now in order to locate the Apolonio’s equivalent to the Alexandre’s “ornamental overload,” which I would term, for

169 On the theme of fame in the Apolonio and its relation with the concept of adventure, see Lida de Malkiel 159-66.
lack of a better expression, its “metanarrative overload.” In both types of surplus, the progression of the main narrative is halted and the flow of time stopped for a while in order to create a space for the production and preservation of memory.

Metanarrative Overload

The proliferation of ornamental objects in the Alexandre is analogous to a similar narrative surplus in the Apolonio, represented this time in the constant retellings that the characters do of their own story, which has already been recounted in detail by the poem’s narrator. The Apolonio’s monuments cannot compare in quantitative terms to the oral recaps offered by the poem’s characters, which create a sense of what I would call excessive storytelling, or metanarrative overload. This accumulation of metanarrative repetitions not only stops the narrative flow and introduces a space for remembrance; it also establishes a web of self-reflectivity not unlike the one created by ornamental and monumental objects in the Alexandre. Moreover, the affinity between monuments and oral retellings in the Apolonio is underlined, as I will go on to show, by the existence of a framing structure that parallels the distribution of monuments I have just reviewed.

Let us start by briefly pointing out the occasions in which the book’s characters decide to recount events that have just happened, effectively halting narrative progression.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Ancos García offers a longer list of “resúmenes de la acción” (“Vocalidad y textualidad” 58-60) including additional passages in which the characters summarize past events not necessarily in direct relation to them. He relates this technique of the poem with his argument that the poem was read aloud as its primary form of diffusion, so that “los resúmenes podrían servir, entre otras cosas, para refrescar la memoria del público oyente, a la vez que para mantener un ritmo pausado en la narración” (“Vocalidad y textualidad” 60).
1. Apollonius, after being shipwrecked, washes up on the shores of Pentapolis and retells his story so far in form of a lamentation (114-120).

2. Still on Pentapolis’s beach, Apollonius encounters a fisherman to whom he recounts what has happened to him (123-132).

3. Apollonius eats with king Archistrates of Pentapolis and his daughter Luciana; he retells his misadventures at the request of Luciana (172-174).

4. Apollonius arrives at Tarsus after his wife Luciana’s apparent death at sea and narrates what has just happened to the city’s council (334-336).

5. Lycoris, the old nurse who has taken care of Tarsiana after her father leaves her in Tarsus while he goes to Egypt, reveals her true identity to the girl, who believes herself to be her foster parents’ daughter (358-363).

6. Apollonius’s daughter retells her sad story to prince Athenagoras of Mitylene in order to avoid losing her virginity to him (410).

7. Tarsiana sings it in the streets of Mitylene as a juglaresa to earn a living and avoid prostitution (428).

8. Again in Mitylene, Apollonius’s men give an account of their king’s latest misadventures to Athenagoras (467).

9. Tarsiana is called by Athenagoras to entertain Apollonius and tells her story to his father in very general terms, without knowing his name or suspecting his true identity (489-94).

10. After being hit by Apollonius when she tried to put her arms around him, Tarsiana laments her fate and once again recapitulates her misadventures, provoking this time the climatic anagnorisis (530-38).
11. Apollonius presents his case against Tarsiana’s foster parents before Tarsus’s council (601-604).

The retellings listed above take varied shapes. While some of them are only one or two stanzas long and give only very compressed or general information, generally in indirect style, others are longer, provide more details, and tend to reproduce literally the character’s words. Similarly, some of the passages remain close to the HART, while others are greatly modified, usually through the use of the rhetorical technique of amplificatio. Nevertheless, it is possible to detect within this variety a distributional pattern that resembles the framing function performed by the poem’s monuments. A strikingly similar configuration emerges if we only take into account the longer, more elaborate retellings in direct style: the compressed narratives that Apollonius and Tarsiana tell about themselves.

Indeed, the first two instances in which Apollonius recounts his misadventures at the shore of Pentapolis (114-120 and 123-132) are mirrored towards the end of the poem by Tarsiana’s equally double retelling of her story (489-94 and 530-38).\textsuperscript{171} The geminated recaps parallel the two statues at Tarsus and Mitylene in the way in which they “frame the main action.” The only other comparable example is placed around the center of the narrative: Lycoris’s narration of the story of Apollonius and Luciana for Tarsiana’s benefit while she is on her deathbed (358-363).\textsuperscript{172} The old nurse’s narrative thus bridges the double recapitulations that frame the story—if it were not for her tale, the reunion of

\textsuperscript{171} This compositional strategy replicates other geminated structures present in the poem, such as the ones described for three of the Apolonio’s main themes in Phipps’s article “El incesto, las adivinanzas y la música.”

\textsuperscript{172} The main difference between this and the other retellings that I have taken into account is that Lycoris does not tell her own tale, but rather that of her masters—a fact that is of course a function of her social class.
Apollonius and Tarsiana, the two narrators of the geminated retellings, would not be possible. Lycoris’s narration may be read as an inverted echo of the monument located in the middle of the poem, Tarsiana’s tomb. While the false sepulcher threatens trust in monuments and therefore in the correct transmission of memory, the nurse’s tale enables such a transmission and the building of the final monument, the statue to Apollonius and Tarsiana in Mitylene.

A common thread can be followed in these accounts of personal history: they are related to moments in the poem where Apollonius’s or Tarsiana’s identity is threatened in some way, and used to reaffirm what the characters perceive as their true political, social, and genealogical self. In one such situation, Apollonius famously tells king Archistrates of Pentapolis and his court, “el nombre que havía, perdílo en la mar” (172c), but there is nothing farther from the truth. On the contrary, through their constant storytelling, both Apollonius and Tarsiana finally succeed in reestablishing their threatened identities. Though apparently gratuitous, the Apolonio’s metanarrative overload represents, as I will show, a reflection on the problems posed by both individual and collective memory and identity, and particularly on the threats they confront and the means to preserve them.

The four retellings that frame the poem’s main story arc are a perfect example of the precariousness of personal and social identity in Apollonius’s world. Moreover, the protagonist’s two initial recaps of his own story perfectly exemplify the superfluity, and what we may call the “ornamental” quality, of these compressed tales in the narrative flow. Apollonius first summarizes his misadventures after the initial example of the romance’s signature shipwrecks. The king, who had set sail from Tarsus, faces a tempest and shipwreck of which he is the only survivor. After washing up on the shore of
Pentapolis, he “cobró su sentido” (114a) and “membról de su facienda cómo l’habié contido” (114c). Apollonius’s regaining of both consciousness and memory immediately triggers a soliloquy in which he recapitulates and laments everything that has happened in the book so far: his failed bid for Antiochus’s daughter’s hand (115), his flight from Tyrus in fear of Antiochus’s retaliation (116), his successful integration in Tarsus (117), his depart from the latter city (118), and the ensuing shipwreck (119); he concludes by bemoaning the sea’s notorious untrustworthiness (120). Stanzas 115-120 are a clear instance of the rhetorical technique of *amplificatio*, since the poem’s source only contains here a short lamentation to Neptune, and nothing in the way of a summary of the poem.  

What is more, in yet another instance of *amplificatio*, the narrator treats us to an additional summary of Apollonius’s misfortunes only two stanzas after the first one. With the same self-blaming tone that he employed in the previous lamentation, Apollonius details his initial and fleeting privileged position as the king of Tyrus and his string of misadventures in stanzas 123 to 132, where the Latin source only offered the characteristically terse “Audi nunc tragoediam calamitatis meam” (Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre* 122). In this case, there is more of a narrative justification, since the shipwrecked king has just encountered a fisherman and wants him to know his story.

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173 “O Neptune, rector pelagi, hominum deceptor innocentium, proper hoc me reservasti egenum et pauperum quo facilius rex crudelissimus Antiochus persequatur? Quo itaque ibo? Quam partem petam? Vel quis ignoto vitae dabit auxilium?” [“O Neptune, ruler of the ocean, deceiver of innocent men, have you preserved me, destitute and impoverished, just so that the most cruel King Antiochus can persecute me with greater ease? So where shall I go? Which direction shall I take? Who will provide the necessities of life for a stranger?”] (Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre* 122-23). The closest counterpart to this apostrophe can be found in the last quatrain of Apollonius’s soliloquy: “Nunqua devía omne en las mares fiar, / traen lealtat poca, saben mal solazar, / saben al recebir buena cara mostrar, / dan con omne aína dentro en mal logar” (120).

174 “Hear now the tragedy of my misfortunes” (my translation).
before asking for help. However, the use of direct discourse once again appears to be completely superfluous. The accumulation of two summaries of the poem, accounting for six and nine quatrains respectively, and separated only by two transitional stanzas—and that too at the beginning of the work—shows well the redundant effect caused by what I have called the metanarrative overload that goes on throughout the *Apolonio*.

These passages have prompted some interpretations that focus on Apollonius’s self-blaming attitude and relate them to sin, either to deny that the main character has done anything sinful so far (Brownlee, “Writing and Scripture” 165), to argue that simply by virtue of being human his nature is already sinful (Grieve 161-62), or to see the king’s acceptance of his sins as a sign of his moral worth (Uría Maqua, “El Libro de Apolonio” 198-99). In this context, the presence of both retellings may be explained by the fact that they provide a moralizing and Christian reading of the story so far. However, Apollonius’s direct reference to the devil’s intervention (“Movióme el pecado” 118a) and his insistence on blaming himself (saying to the fisherman that he finds himself in this desperate situation “por mis malos pecados” 130d) for the misadventures that he has suffered so far do not need to be interpreted in a moral sense. They may simply be understood as ways of expressing the main character’s anxiety before the desperate situation in which he now finds himself, thus paralleling the spirit, if not the letter, of the

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175 Brownlee speaks about Apollonius’s “sinful self-perception” that, she believes, “is clearly not a feature of (pagan) Greek romance narration” (“Writing and Scripture” 166) and therefore must be ascribed to the hagiographic strand of the poem. Grieve’s insistence on Apollonius’s sinfulness is framed within her reading of the *Apolonio*, and indeed the *HART*, as Christian works that intend to show the shortcomings of pagan knowledge with respect to religious revelation. Interestingly, Grieve’s thesis relates to Uría Maqua’s interpretation of the *Alexandre* in “La soberbia de Alejandro” but not to the latter scholar’s assessment of Apollonius, which she sees as a completely positive character (“El Libro de Apolonio”).
apostrophe to Neptune, source of the first passage. In this case, the question remains of why we should be presented with a recapitulation of the main events so early in the story.

As I have pointed out, in both instances the tales are born of a direct threat against the king’s identity. Apollonius finds himself dispossessed not only of his kingdom (something that, it could be argued, already happened when he took flight to escape Antiochus’s wrath) but also of his wealth, which had allowed him to remake himself as the benefactor of the city of Tarsus—to such a point that this new identity had been solidified in the form of the first of the poem’s monuments, the statue build by the citizens upon which I have just commented. It seems that there is nothing to which he can cling at this point—although, as we will learn later in the poem, a more important and immaterial possession, his cortesía, will allow him to refashion his identity once again. Therefore, he tells his story, first to himself and then to the fisherman.

As for Tarsiana in the latter part of the poem, the menace against her identity is even greater, since she has been sold into a brothel and remains in constant danger of losing her virginity. Yet another threat to her status is her work as a juglaresa, through which she has managed so far to placate her pimp. As the final and greater peril, the shadow of incest plans over the encounter between Tarsiana and her father, who do not know each other. Olivier Biaggini has indeed signaled that in this scene, “[s]ans le savoir, la fille va requérir l’hospitalité de son père, ce qui pourrait conduire à l’inceste, c’est-à-dire à la perte définitive de l’identité” (178). Antiochus’s daughter seems to agree with Biaggini’s assessment about incest when she bitterly rejects calling Antiochus her

176 For an extremely compelling reading of the way in which the poem negotiates the opposition between cortesía and the exigencies of commercial exchange, see Weiss 198-209.
father or being called her daughter after he rapes her, since “es el nombre derechero en amos enfogado” (11d). For Tarsiana and Apollonius, it is the daughter’s final version of her own story that will ward off the threat of incest by triggering the climatic anagnorisis in which Apollonius will realize that Tarsiana is his daughter.\(^\text{177}\)

The way in which Tarsiana retells her misadventures makes clear which are the tenets of personal identity and, especially, social status that the Apollonio’s characters hold dear. Although Tarsiana’s shame for being forced to perform a work that is not in keeping with her aristocratic birth is already present in the HART, the Castilian poet’s work of amplificatio insists on the importance of her social and family origins.\(^\text{178}\) When she first recounts her life to Apollonius, in a passage that takes the form of a song in the Latin source (Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 160-61), Tarsiana tells him,

Por mí solaz no tengas, que eres ahontado;

si bien me conocieses, tener t’hies por pagado,

ca non só juglaresa de las de buen mercado,

nin lo he por natura, mas fágolo sin grado.

Dueña só de linatge, de parientes honrados,

mas dezir non lo oso por miós graves pecados;

nací entre las ondas, on nacen los pescados,

amos hobe mintrosos, traïdores probados.

\(^{177}\) There is a wide critical consensus that the incestuous overtones of this episode explain Apollonius’s mistreatment of his daughter at this point. See for example Deyermond, “Motivos folklóricos” 134; Phipps 814-17; Kelley, “Mixed Messages” 7-9.

\(^{178}\) Daniel Devoto has provided ample proof that musical performance was considered inappropriate for a person of royal lineage in the Middle Ages and beyond (317-30).
Ladrones en galeas que sobre mar vinieron,
por amor de furarme, de muert’ me estorcieron,
por mi ventura grave, a homne me vendieron
por que muchas de virgines en mal fado cayeron.

Pero fasta agora quísome Dios guardar,
non pudo el pecado nada de mí levar,
maguer en cuita vivo por mejor escapar,
busco mester que pueda al sieglo engañar. (490-493)

The first two stanzas in particular highlight Tarsiana’s genealogy as a mark of her true social self, even though in stanza 491 she also introduces an indirect acknowledgment of the endemic instability of her own identity by mentioning her birth at sea (Biaggini 178-79 n20). The young girl thus echoes Apollonius’s claims to royal lineage before Archistrates’s court shortly after the two passages analyzed above. In the presence of the king of Pentapolis and his daughter, who entreated him to reveal his name, Apollonius had declared that “el mio linage en Tiro te lo sabrién contar” (172d) and finally acquiesced to tell Luciana about “su nombre e su tierra e quál era su regnado” (174c).

Tarsiana’s second version of her life story parallels her father’s speech at Pentapolis’s shores, since it also takes the form of a lamentation, in this case after having received a blow from Apollonius. While this passage derives directly from the HART (see Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 166-69), the anonymous Castilian poet added a final
stanza, of which there is no Latin equivalent, explicitly expressing the genealogical and social anxiety that plague Apollonius’s daughter,

De padre nin de madre, por miós graves pecados,

non sabré’l ciminterio do fueron soterrados;

tráyenme com’ a bestia siempre por los mercados,

de peyores de mí faziendo sus mandados. (538)

Tombs are held here as crucial sites of memory and identity. What is more, Tarsiana’s allusion to her parents’ cemetery in verse 538b recalls her false tomb in Tarsus, although in this case she is making an allusion not to fake, but to inexistent monuments, and the mention takes on positive connotations, since neither Apollonius nor Luciana are actually dead, as she is about to discover.

The obsession with genealogical knowledge seems only natural in a tale where incest is one of the main subjects and, as we have seen, a key threat against identity. The question of incest also took on additional importance for twelfth- and thirteenth-century European nobility, which the Church was trying to force to abandon its traditional endogamous practices, and for which the story of Apollonius may have been used as a cautionary tale on the horrors of endogamy and the eventual benefits of God-ordained exogamy. 179 There exists an explicit link in the Apolonio between the desired exogamy and travel, and in this sense Biaggini has described hospitality as the opposite of incest in

179 For a general view of the topic, see Archibald, Incest and the Medieval Imagination. Grieve connects the perils of endogamy to her reading of the Apolonio as a full-fledged Christian narrative, insisting not only on the problem of incest and exogamy, but also on the issue of consent, since in the Church’s view the marriage needed the agreement of both partners in order to be valid (157-58). See Howard Bloch and Simon Gaunt for an exploration of the effect that the shift in European marriage practices during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had in French literature, and especially in romances (Bloch 159-97; Gaunt 71-121).
the poem. Moreover, the “circulation, physique et symbolique, des corps et des biens” (Biaggini 180) guaranteeing exogamic practices runs parallel in the Apolonio to the circulation of personal memory carried out through the characters’ continuous narrative efforts.

While the transmission of bodies, goods, and memory is necessary and desirable, for the progression of narrative as much as for anything else, this movement brings about a precariousness that will only come to an end with “leur figement dans un état prospère définitif ne donnant lieu à aucun développement narratif” (Biaggini 180). The Apolonio’s final monument—the statue representing Apollonius and Tarsiana at Mitylene—thus celebrates both the achievement of a definitive genealogical and social identity through the reunion of the two main characters and the projection of their lineage through the princess’s marriage to Athenagoras. In a way that reminds of the Alexandre, lineage is here connected to memory, since, as we shall see, the statue also represents the definitive solidification of the fluid, precarious oral and individual memory into a stable, monumental and visual cultural memory.

To recapitulate, the parallel retellings of their life stories by Apollonius and Tarsiana, which are totally superfluous for narrative purposes and stop the narrative flow, reveal a latent anxiety about the precariousness of genealogical and social identity from the part of the main characters in the book. This attitude could not seem further away from the Alexandre, where as we have seen the ornamental objects that pervade the story transmit a strong confidence about the permanency of collective rather than individual identity, and tend to do so through the use of monumental images rather than fleeting words. The anxiety of the Apolonio’s characters stems, in Weiss’s reading of the poem,
from the threat of an incipient market economy—which he relates to the constant presence of the untrustworthy sea—against aristocratic identity. In this context, he observes that the poem’s statues “fix within a stable set of identities and values the fluctuating and interrupted relationships of the intervening travel” (202-03). From my point of view, not incompatible with Weiss’s, in both the *Apolonio* and the *Alexandre* the proliferation of seemingly superfluous elements, whether in the form of ornamental objects or all-pervading life stories, reflects an underlying preoccupation with cultural memory and more particularly with the means through which it is preserved and passed on.

The misadventures of Apollonius and Tarsiana appear at first to be relevant only to their own trajectory as individuals, or at the most as members of a family; as Biaggini has put it, “l’errance des personnages se présente essentiellement comme la quête de l’identité perdue, dont les relations familiales constituent l’axe principal” (167). Yet because they belong to a royal lineage, their travels and tribulations have an effect on whole communities, as we are continually reminded in the poem: Tyre of course, whose citizens mourn the loss of their king and rejoice in his return; but also Antioch, which Apollonius will end up ruling and where he stirs the courtiers’ collective sympathy from the moment he appears to ask for Antiochus’s daughter in marriage; Tarsus, where famine is avoided thanks to Apollonius’s intervention; Pentapolis, which gains an heir to the king when Apollonius marries Luciana; and finally Mitylene, which will also rejoin the possessions of Apollonius’s family through the marriage of Tarsiana and Athenagoras.
Therefore, in the *Apolonio* personal and family identity remain inextricably linked to the collective identity of the Mediterranean cities through which its characters travel—most of which will end up making part of Apollonius’s family’s extended kingdom, in a geographical testimony to the advantages of both exogamic exchange and the correct transmission of genealogical memory. The seemingly individual adventures of Apollonius and Tarsiana need to be preserved not only in order to rebuild their threatened identities, but also so that they can eventually become part of collective memory. They do so, of course, through a process of what may be called ‘monumentalization’ that is most evident in the last statue of the poem, representing Tarsiana and Apollonius at Mitylene. As I showed above, the Castilian poet substituted the rather lackluster inscription in the *HART* for yet another retelling of recent events in the poem (572-74, reproduced above) that parallels the characters’ anguished accounts of their life stories throughout the *Apolonio*. By inscribing Apollonius’s story on the epigraph, the citizens of Mitylene recognize the collective relevance of what was so far just individual or family memory. But even more significantly, the precarious and endangered memory that the innumerable oral retellings represented assumes a stable and monumental form not unlike the one taken on by crucial events of ancient history in the *Alexandre*, particularly in the decorated panels of the hero’s tent.

*From Memory to Written Record?*

In the same way as the *Alexandre*, the *Apolonio* shows an unmistakable interest in the technical means through which memory is preserved and transmitted. The happy

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180 As in the *Alexandre*, although on a very different scale, this is a case where the adequate transmission of (genealogical) knowledge (*translatio studii*) ensures the transfer of power (*translatio imperii*) along the rightful genealogical lines.
ending afforded by the final statue, and particularly by its inscription, stands out against the anxious oral accounts of their story that Apollonius and Tarsiana had constantly needed to provide before their reunion. The contrast between them helps to establish an opposition between two different types of media, precarious and oral on the one hand, monumental and visual on the other.\textsuperscript{181} This point of view eschews the familiar dichotomy between word and image in favor of a valorization of different media with respect to their relative stability. Collective memory, in the \textit{Alexandre} and the \textit{Apolonio}, needs to occupy a physical space in order to be considered sufficiently reliable, something that oral transmission unsupported by a visual record (either in pictorial or written form), being exclusively temporal, cannot provide. If the ornamental objects described by Baumgartner sought to stop time and create a space for eternity, in the Castilian poems we can see how this task is literalized, transforming temporally-based into spatially-based media.

This stance is all the more significant for being advanced in two works like the \textit{Alexandre} and the \textit{Apolonio} that find themselves at the forefront of a pioneering process: the use of a vernacular language, still strongly associated with orality, to write down—and as a consequence to monumentalize, to convert into a visual form—and thus pass on stories that are deemed crucial to collective memory. There is, however, a double paradox inherent to this process: first, these stories were already written, although in

\textsuperscript{181} As I noted in chapter one, there existed a heightened consciousness in medieval culture of the visual dimension of the written word. For example, Richart de Fournival distinguished between \textit{painture} and \textit{parole}, but considered the letters on his book as \textit{painture} (Carruthers, \textit{The Book of Memory} 223-24). In medieval models of vision, moreover, seeing images and reading words were thought to be enabled by the exact same physiological process in the brain (Camille, “Before the Gaze”).
Latin; second, even though they are fixed in a visual form, the stories still have to take some kind of oral shape in order to come alive, either by being read aloud or by being committed to memory and then retold, as Alexander does at Troy. In this respect, Michael Camille has explained that in twelfth-century conceptions of visual media, “both text and image are secondary representations, external to, but always referring back to, the spontaneous springs of speech” (“Seeing and reading” 32). But the Trojan episode is a good reminder that a visual record (the “escriptura” mentioned by Alexander) remains necessary in order to make possible the diffusion of cultural memory, even if it is not physically present at the time of its oral performance. The relationship between speech on the one hand, and text and image on the other, posited by Camille has become reciprocal in the thirteenth-century Iberian poems: written text and pictorial image need to be completed by an oral performance, but at the same time the endless renovation of that oral performance is only possible through visual media.

In both the Alexandre and the Apolonio, therefore, there is an argument for the superiority of visual (both as words or as images) over standalone oral means of transmission. This stance favors the capacity of visual media to function, not quite as a substitute, but as a cue for memory—a feature deemed particularly important for the preservation of collective memory. Such a perspective was far from self-evident during the late Middle Ages. The traditional distrust of the visual, and especially of writing, that permeates Western thought since Plato, still had many proponents in a culture where, as Michael Clanchy has reminded us, “[t]o make a record often meant to bear oral witness,

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182 In this respect, Grieve offers an interesting parallel between Apollonius’s interpreting of the king’s riddle that makes its meaning accessible for everybody (“abrió la demanda que era tan escura” 51d) and “the move to vernacular literature,” which “opened up for many more people than before the act of interpretation” (163).
not to produce a document” (262). However, Clanchy has charted for the English case a progressive change from mistrust to reliance on the written word as documentary evidence in the period that goes from the eleventh to the early fourteenth century. Could the reliance on visual media in the Castilian poems be reflective of this kind of process?

This may well be the case; nonetheless, the insistence on the necessity and efficacy of visual media in both poems may also be interpreted as a justification and celebration of the poets’ task. Indeed, the final transformation of the oral retellings of the Apolonio’s characters into inscribed monuments bears a striking resemblance with the concurring endeavor of the anonymous authors, who were carrying what had been an eminently oral language into a visual form. The roman antique, moreover, was a self-consciously “bookish” genre (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 143-44). Unlike epic poetry or Arthurian romances, which depended to a great extent on oral sources, the romances of antiquity were based on narratives that had been passed on through books, which were, like the monuments in the Alexandre and the Apolonio, both mnemonic and visual objects (Carruthers, The Book of Memory 221-29). The importance not only of the poets’ mester but also of their materia is thus advertised through the poems’ monuments.

The task of perpetuating oral manifestations of cultural memory into a visual form seems to have been never-ending. In fact, the two illustrations of the Alexandre’s manuscript O repeat the same operation one century later: they both fix oral performances (Alexander’s rendition of the Trojan story in the first drawing, his soldiers’

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183 See Martin Jay for a study of the intellectual trajectory of the “denigration of vision” from Antiquity to the twentieth century. Jay cautions against an excessive emphasis on the generalizing idea of “the antivisual Middle Ages” (35); however, he bases his argument on a distinction between textuality and visuality that is not relevant for my line of reasoning. Camille also talks about the “medieval mistrust of the visual sign” (“Seeing and reading” 32).
lament when they believe him dead in the second) in a visual form. The fact that these oral performances were actually already fixed in a written visual shape did not stop the manuscript’s illustrator from trying, almost compulsively, to ensure that such important memories did not stay tied to fleeting words but took on an appropriate monumental form, stopping the passage of time and creating a space for the shaping and endless reproduction of cultural memory.
In the two previous chapters, I have analyzed the different ways in which the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* reflect, through a clever use of mirroring devices, upon the technological problems posed by their poets’ endeavor: the creation and transmission of a cultural memory of antiquity in the vernacular, most probably for a courtly public. Such a preoccupation stands out much more clearly, as I have argued, when we approach the two romances from the point of view not of traditional *mester de clerecía* studies but of their generic connection to the *roman antique*. Considering the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* as romances of antiquity also brings to the forefront an issue that is of the utmost importance for both works’ construction of collective memory—what *roman antique* criticism has repeatedly termed “the problem of anachronism.”

At first glance, posing the question of anachronism in these romances can conjure images of the scholarly equivalent of looking for the proverbial watch that an extra forgot to take off in a historical film. Indeed, some of the initial takes on this problem consisted mainly of identifying supposed mistakes made by medieval authors in their portray of classical rituals, attitudes, events, or objects. While some of the updates carried out by *roman antique* authors are doubtless the product of misunderstanding forgotten aspects of classical culture, this approach cannot explain the persistent

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184 In fact, such a search has sometimes become a scholarly pursuit in the study of what has come to be known as “medieval movies” (see for example John Aberth for an assessment of such films in terms of historical accuracy, or François de la Bretèque for a classification of the kinds of anachronisms that can be found in them). While more recent studies (see Nickolas Haydock; Laurie Finke & Martin B. Shichtman) try to avoid the pitfalls inherent in such an approach, I believe that a reconsideration of the workings of anachronism in *roman antique* may prove useful for a reassessment of medieval-themed films.
medievalizations that pervade romances of antiquity. Indeed, throughout this chapter I will often speak of “systematic anachronism,” in order to highlight the fact that this is an all-pervading practice in the romans antiques, not limited to obscure or difficult passages. Anachronisms cannot easily be attributed—as we will see they often were—to either sheer ignorance of or disregard for historical distance, since roughly contemporary works display very different attitudes towards the same subject. To give an example from texts that we have already considered, even at the risk of simplifying, in his Alexandreis Walter of Châtillon often insists on the strangeness of the classical past and maintains a careful distance between the Christian world in and for which he writes and the pagan past where his story is set, while the vernacular Alexandre prefers to bridge the gap between the antique and the medieval through the practice of systematic anachronism and develops a much more ambiguous relationship with its main subject, Alexander, who is presented as a Christian prince in many respects. In the face of this difference, it does not seem logical to assume that one of these two clerical authors, who in all likelihood received a similar education, was capable of maintaining historical perspective, while the second could not do so.

More recent criticism, however, has offered a much more nuanced and productive take on this issue and rethought the ways in which anachronism is tied up with the sociopolitical context in which romans antiques were fashioned. As we will see, these perspectives offer crucial insights into the ancient worlds newly brought into being in the

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185 Aimé Petit’s (L’anachronisme) and Ian Michael’s extensive treatment of anachronism, in the twelfth-century French romances of antiquity and in the Alexandre respectively, give a very good idea of the scope of this device.

186 See Lafferty, Walter of Châtillon’s Alexandreis, for a more nuanced view of Walter’s relationship with his main character; as Weiss has noted, “the medieval conception of Alexander was inherently contradictory” (228).
vernacular, as well as into the purposes of their clerkly authors. In my view, their most important insight is to regard anachronism as a central technique in the process of *translatio* carried out in romances of antiquity. However, I believe that they still do not consider sufficiently the important link between anachronism and the medieval views on memory and representation that I have explored so far. This is why in this chapter I will propose, first, that anachronism is connected to the memorial and mnemonic functions that we have seen to be crucial in the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*, and second, that in order to fully understand the technique’s implications, we need to take into account not only its textual but also its visual dimensions.

A note on terminology: Hispanomedeievalist critics have generally preferred to use the term “medievalization” to refer to what I have been calling anachronism. In his influential study, *The Treatment of Classical Material in the Libro de Alexandre*, Ian Michael explains that he prefers not to use the latter word, given that,

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This term […] has the serious disadvantage of denoting errors in computing time, or things out of harmony with the present or out of date. Even if we were to refer to them as ‘purposeful anachronisms’ the term would tend to draw our attention back towards the classical or pseudo-classical material. The term ‘medievalization’ has therefore been preferred, for at least it leads us towards what has occurred in the Spanish poem (28).
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Despite these judicious objections, I have preferred to keep using the word “anachronism” for two reasons. First, it is the term of choice in *roman antique* criticism. Second and more importantly, it suggests much more strongly than “medievalization”
one of the ideas that explain the use of this device in the romances of antiquity—the possibility of different layers of time coexisting that is inherent to medieval ideas on representation.

Critical Approaches to Anachronism in the Roman Antique

The question of anachronism has long fascinated scholars studying roman antique, since its persistence in these romances remains key to understand the relationship of medieval vernacular culture with classical antiquity.\(^{187}\) The first approaches to this problem came, unsurprisingly, from French critics studying the twelfth-century canon consisting of the Roman de Thèbes, the Roman de Troie, and the Roman d’Énéas. Ironically, anachronism was at first considered to be an anachronistic problem, perceived by modern scholars but hidden to medieval eyes, to which “past was fused with present” (Cormier 147). It was assumed that medieval attitudes toward history were grounded on a messianic view of time that precluded an interest in what we may call the ‘pastness’ of the past, or an archeological approach of the kind that, the narrative goes on, would only emerge with the Renaissance.\(^{188}\) Therefore, anachronisms were

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\(^{187}\) In this first section, I rely primarily on Petit’s thorough account of the approaches taken by early French scholars in his article, “L’anachronisme dans les romans antiques, et plus particulièrement dans le Roman d’Énéas,” and his very complete book L’anachronisme dans les romans antiques du XIIe siècle (7-29). Although published in 2002, the book reproduces Petit’s 1985 doctoral dissertation, which does not appear to have been revised. Raymond Cormier’s “The Problem of Anachronism” also offers a useful assessment of the older theories about anachronism in the genre (see especially 146-48).

\(^{188}\) José Antonio Maravall, who offers a similar take in Antiguos y modernos, talks about the medieval “principio de contemporaneidad” (202-09). As Cormier reminds us, anachronism was related both to the so-called interpretatio Christiana and to figural interpretation (147).
deemed to be the result of an anti-historical, or at best a-historical stance (Petit, *L’anachronisme* 12).

The founding father of French medieval studies, Gaston Paris, exemplifies perfectly this view when he attributes medieval anachronism to a supposedly widespread belief in “l’immutabilité des choses” (30). In his opinion,

L’antiquité, surtout dans les derniers siècles, est dominée par la croyance à une decadence continue; les temps modernes, dès leur aurore, sont animés par la foi en un progrès indefini; le moyen âge n’a connu ni ce découragement ni cette espérance. Pour les hommes de ce temps, le monde avait toujours été tel qu’ils le voyaient (c’est pour cela que leurs peintures de l’antiquité nous paraissent grotesques), et le jugement dernier le trouverait tel encore (30; qtd in Petit, “L’anachronisme” 108).

A similar stance was also taken by the eminent historian Marc Bloch, who—while taking Paris to task for his generalization—observed that “les poèmes en langue vulgaire dépeignaient uniformément les paladins carolingiens, les Huns d’Attila et les héro antiques sous les traits des chevaliers des XIIe et XIIIe siècles” (141; qtd in Petit, “L’anachronisme” 107). Bloch attributed this pervasive use of anachronism not only to ignorance in some instances, but also, in most cases, to the perception of time as a fusion of past and present mentioned above. He connected such a belief with the lack of technological means to measure time during most of the Middle Ages (115-19; Cormier 148). In the field of Hispano-medievalism, Michael Solomon and Juan Carlos Temprano adopt a similar view when they attribute the presence of systematic anachronism in the *Alexandre* to a medieval “modo de percepción histórica que es incapaz de diferenciar el
pasado del presente, que percibe todo el conocimiento histórico como parte del presente contemporáneo” (8).

In their early assessment of anachronism’s role in *roman antique*, nonetheless, Paris, Bloch, and other scholars were already pointing to features that would come to the forefront in more nuanced approaches to this problem. First, I would like to note Gaston Paris’s parenthetical connection of textual to visual anachronism when he mentions medieval “peintures de l’antiquité.” The fact that Paris just mentions it in passing, as an afterthought, reflects that this was already a common association when he was writing, towards the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the naïve and anti-historical attitude that early scholars attributed to medieval culture can also be construed as a lack of temporal perspective that would parallel a contemporary lack of pictorial perspective in the visual arts. This point of view was shared by the canonical narrative about the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance in art history, most famously conceptualized in Panofsky’s much-criticized “principle of disjunction.” From this standpoint, medieval anachronism was considered a side effect of the separation between

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189 However, Solomon & Temprano also argue that “los anacronismos relacionados con la idea medieval del monarca se presentan a lo largo de todo el poema con el propósito firme de percibir a Alejandro como imagen de un monarca contemporáneo” (15), an argument that implies some degree of purposefulness on the part of the poet, and not just an involuntary reflection of a particular mode of historical perception. Their article includes some very suggestive observations on the connection of anachronism with *amplificatio* and ornament.

190 Of course, the word “peintures” can also be taken in a figurative sense, but the connection between textual and visual anachronism is common enough in this line of thought (see for example Solomon & Temprano 6 or Raynaud de Lage 127).
classical matter and classical form in medieval art, which would only be reunited, at long
last, with the advent of the Renaissance.\textsuperscript{191}

Second, and also as an aside, Bloch’s assessment makes clear that the systematic
use of anachronism is restricted to “les poèmes en langue vulgaire.” I mentioned above
the contrast of the \textit{Alexandris} with the \textit{Alexandre} in this respect, which should be
sufficient to note the existence of a connection between vernacular language and the
employment of systematic anachronism.\textsuperscript{192} Moreover, this observation disqualifies
assessments such as Paris’s, for if medievalizations of antiquity are to be attributed to a
lack of interest in or inability to perceive historical difference and a belief in the
unchanging nature of things, then why would this philosophical stance not affect
medieval Latin literary creations as well? The association of systematic anachronism to
vernacular literature reveals that “[l]es anachronismes sont […] l’objet d’une pratique très
consciente” (Petit, “L’anachronisme” 141), a deliberate technique used by the clerical
authors of the \textit{romans antiques}.\textsuperscript{193}

The parallel medievalizing efforts in both the visual and the vernacular realms
suggest that anachronism is a technique that clerkly authors employed as an element in

\textsuperscript{191} See Panofsky & Saxl and Panofsky 82-108. A similar approach to both textual and
visual anachronism is still found in Peter Burke. For a recent reassessment of the related
problem of anachronism in Renaissance art, see Alexander Nagel & Christopher S.
Wood, “Interventions” and \textit{Anachronic Renaissance}.
\textsuperscript{192} Indeed, Cormier has related the appearance of anachronism in vernacular works to the
“infrastructural differences between the Latin language and the vernacular,” compounded
with the necessity of mediation for the new public to which the use of French opened up
the romances of antiquity (152-53).
\textsuperscript{193} Although the question is outside of the scope of this study, there also seems to exist an
association between the use systematic anachronism and the employ of verse—a choice
of obvious mnemonic connotations—both in the French and the Iberian traditions. In
contrast, vernacular prose works such as the \textit{Histoire ancienne jusqu’à César} or the
\textit{General Estoria} generally developed a more archeological approach to antiquity (see
Croizy-Naquet, \textit{Écrire l’histoire}, and Baumgartner, \textit{Le choix de la prose}).
their task of *translatio studii*. Visual arts and vernacular languages, often combined on the manuscript page,¹⁹⁴ are media through which ancient stories became able to achieve a significantly wider dissemination than the one they had gained in their written Latin form. In medieval composition, the idea of *translatio studii* may imply an effort of adaptation (Kelly, “*Translatio studii*” 294-97) that we can contemplate in both visual and textual form, a labor of mediation for which systematic anachronism must have become an invaluable instrument. Considering anachronism as a tool for *translatio* also offers the advantage of bringing to the foreground its relationship to romance, a genre that, unlike lyric or epic poetry, was born as an adaptation (Baumgartner, *Le récit médiéval* 7). As has often been noted, our modern term ‘romance’ derives from the French phrase “mettre en romanz,”¹⁹⁵ which meant “to translate [from Latin] into the vernacular French” (Krueger 1), and often brings self-consciously to the forefront its own origin as an act of *translatio*.¹⁹⁶

The reevaluation of anachronism in the *romans antiques* that has taken place in more recent criticism can in fact be construed as an effort to understand systematic medievalization as a rhetorical tool that facilitates the work of *translatio*. What is more, I would argue that from this point of view anachronism may be approached as what Barbara Fuchs, understanding romance not as a static genre but rather “as a set of mobile,

¹⁹⁴ For an excellent analysis of the possibilities of such a combination in a German manuscript containing Wolfram von Eschenbach’s *Willehalm*, see Kathryn Starkey.
¹⁹⁵ Thirteenth-century Castilian also employs “romance” to refer to the vernacular language (as in the famous second stanza of Berceo’s *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos*). The term’s use in the *Apolonio*, where it is related to literary forms, is discussed below.
¹⁹⁶ An excellent and very well known example of the centrality of the topos of *translatio studii* in the romance genre is the prologue of the *Roman de Troie*, which explains how Dares’s account of the Trojan War was transmitted from Greek to Latin and now, thanks to Benoît de Sainte-Maure, from Latin to French (vv. 45-144).
adaptable strategies for making text pleasurable” (58), has termed a “romance strategy.” In this sense, it is possible to combine the three main ways through which critics have tried to account for systematic anachronism: as a communicative need in the work of mediation between the classical and the medieval, as a conscious effort of cultural and political appropriation of antiquity, and as a rhetorical tool in the creation of the fictional and highly idealized world of romance.

The understanding of anachronism as a technique of mediation is well exemplified in Michael’s approach to this practice, analyzed in detail in his *The Treatment of Classical Material*. Michael contends that the poem’s systematic anachronisms are “part of the deliberate changes [the Alexandre poet] made in the material he found in his pseudo-classical sources” (17), and notes that the introduction of anachronisms “is central to the poet’s treatment of classical material […] in order that his medieval public should have an immediate grasp and understanding of the subjects as he interpreted them” (247). In this view, systematic anachronism would serve to make understandable and familiar a past era to which some of the expanded public reached by the vernacular languages may not have had much exposure. A related view is taken by Jean Frappier, who also suggests that the ubiquitous anachronisms derive from a humanist attitude paralleling a similar conception of classical *imitatio* in seventeenth-century French theater (Frappier; Petit 109-10).

On the other hand, some critics have focused on the relation of systematic anachronism to concrete historical and political circumstances. In the case of the first romances of antiquity, their connection to the court of Henry II has led scholars such as Erich Köhler to affirm that the “classical trilogy” of the *Roman de Thèbes*, the *Roman de
Troie, and the Roman d’Eneas responded to the expansionary interests of the Angevine monarchy. In this sense, Köhler contends, the romans antiques posit an ancient origin for the Angevine kings of England, and “identifient l’histoire universelle au destin de la féodalité” (29), a task greatly aided by the identification of classical with medieval characters, ideals, and events. In a similar vein, Emmanuèle Baumgartner has argued (Le récit médiéval 20-21; “Romans antiques”) that the use of anachronism in the early romans antiques is an example of the technique that Mikhail Bakhtin called “historical inversion,” which “locates such categories as purpose, ideal, justice, perfection, the harmonious condition of man and society and the like in the past” (Bakhtin 147).

Historical inversion in the romans antiques would therefore go beyond the topos of laudatio temporis acti, inserting into the past the blueprint for a utopian future. Christopher Baswell has expanded this idea, arguing that romances of antiquity’s anachronisms

> generate a comparatively safe imaginative space within ancient story to register aspects of their own time. This has a triple impact. First, it normalizes or domesticates Classical story; second, it validates contemporary modes of power by writing them into a mythic past and distant place; and yet, third, it provides a securely ancient mirror in which to investigate the anxieties of the present (“Marvels of Translation” 33).

From this point of view, systematic anachronism becomes a tool in an ongoing process of cultural and political appropriation of classical antiquity in which the romans antiques

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197 Petit makes a similar argument in “L’anachronisme” 146-47.
played a crucial part. The idea of *translatio* reappears once again in this concept of anachronism, where *translatio studii* and *translatio imperii* go hand in hand.\(^{198}\)

Finally, a third group of critics has advanced the view that anachronism was meant to create an alternate universe, neither ancient nor medieval, particular to romance. Aimé Petit calls attention to the temporal hybridity of the romances of antiquity and relates it with what he qualifies as a baroque sensibility, positing that “l’hybridité d’un univers ambigu, a la fois antique et médiéval, pourrait représenter avec l’extraordinaire et le luxe la forme romanesque du baroque roman” (“L’anachronisme” 144).\(^{199}\) Guy Raynaud de Lage had also proposed a similar approach, contending that the authors of the romances of antiquity used the classical past to create the highly idealized world of romance, which took the form of

un monde à leur façon, qui ne correspond effectivement ni à la ‘vraie’ Antiquité, ni au train quotidien de l’existence au XIIe siècle; c’est un monde qui n’est ni antique ni moderne, plus brillant d’habitude, plus riche, plus beau que le vrai, un monde où l’on trouve ce qu’on a voulu y mettre: une société, des héros, que l’on rêve sans doute à partir de ce que l’on connaît d’expérience, mais qui n’existent nulle part en fait, un monde de

\(^{198}\) Köhler himself, commenting on the transition from the classical to the Arthurian world in Chrétien de Troyes’ *Cligès*, has observed that “[l’]idée de la *translatio studii* se confond avec celle de la *translatio imperii*, comprise dans le sens d’un idéal de classe supra-national” (29). See the introduction for an assessment of the role of *translatio studii* and *imperii* in the romances of antiquity.

\(^{199}\) See also Petit’s *L’anachronisme* 251-75 for a detailed elaboration of this idea.
Anachronism would in this sense contribute to the generic *translatio* from the Latin historiographic or epic models to the fictional world of romance. However, even if the introduction of anachronisms in the romances of antiquity does create the world of ambiguous temporality that we have come to associate with romance, this does not necessarily mean that it was designed to produce the same effect on medieval audiences.

Nevertheless, I believe that the connection established by Petit and Raynaud de Lage between anachronism and romance merits further exploration. Indeed, we tend to forget that Arthurian romance is also set in a medievalized past, and therefore the use of systematic anachronism is not limited to romances of antiquity. More importantly, “mettre en romanz” is, as I have noted above, primarily a work of adaptation, and as such deals with “unfinished cultural business” (Hutcheon 116). The work of mediation and adaptation facilitated by anachronism contributes to the task of cultural and political appropriation carried out by romances of antiquity, and more generally of medieval romance, which as Geraldine Heng has argued, is deeply involved in “projects of empire” (6), offering “pleasures intimately folding into, and imbricated with, historical projects and agendas from which they are, at times, virtually inseparable” (5).

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200 Raynaud de Lage’s observations also point the way to later ideas about anachronism as a tool for cultural and political appropriation, such as the concept of “historical inversion” and the use of the classical past as a safe space where key issues of the present can be explored.

201 Indeed, Raynaud de Lage contends that, while the clerical creators of the *romans antiques* were entirely conscious of their use of anachronism, at least part of their courtly public “ne devait pas se poser beaucoup de questions dans l’ordre de la vraisemblance historique pourvu qu’on ne lui parlât pas de bapteme avant l’ère chrétienne” (157).
Heng conceives romance in a wider sense than usual in medieval literary studies, where the genre is typically opposed to other categories such as historiography, epic and lyric poetry, or hagiography. In contrast, Heng sees romance as a cannibalizing genre that can be found in many works traditionally ascribed to those categories (5-6). A similar amplification of the field of romance has been proposed by Fuchs, who suggests that we regard it not as genre but as a “literary and textual strategy,” or rather as a set of strategies, including but not limited to “idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity” (9). From this standpoint, I believe that we can approach anachronism as one such strategy, particularly important in medieval romances of antiquity, where it became an integral part of the work of *translatio* as mediation, adaptation, and cultural and political appropriation.²⁰²

The conception of anachronism as a romance strategy linked to *translatio* has been extremely useful in approaching romances of antiquity, and I will be drawing from it in the coming pages. The emphasis on anachronism’s role as a tool for adaptation and appropriation, however, needs in my view to be complemented with a different approach—a focus on this technique’s relationship to the medieval ideas on representation and memory discussed in the previous chapters. In fact, it would be possible to reconsider some of the earlier and disparaging views on anachronism from this point of view. The “fusion of past and present” detected and often derided by early critics—attributed by them to an anti-historical attitude and considered by later scholars only a byproduct of the work of mediation, idealization, and appropriation—may be

²⁰² Indeed, in her chapter on medieval romance, Fuchs signals as one of its characteristics “a fantastical setting that combines the contemporary with the antique” (56), an obvious consequence of anachronism.
explained by the romances of antiquity’s investment in the work of collective memory. As a tool for memory work, anachronism does not reveal a medieval inability or unwillingness to distinguish between different historical eras, but an intention to remember the past—keeping in mind that the action of remembering can only take place in the present. Anachronism is a romance strategy that serves not only to, in Fuchs’s expression, make texts pleasurable, but also, as I will argue in the following pages, to make them memorable.

Anachronism and the Creation of Memory Places

In the previous two chapters, I have contended that both the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* show an unmistakable preoccupation with the fashioning and transmission of cultural memory, and more specifically with the media that make this enterprise possible. In both works, monuments occupy a privileged place as the means to open up a physical and textual space for the past. The task of creating a place for the past in the present stems, as we have also seen, from a conception of representation as a mnemonic rather than a mimetic endeavor. As Richart de Fournival explained, the function of representation, either through aural or through visual means, is to make us see past people and events “com s’il fussent present,” as if they were present—to make present what is past.203 For, if memory is “of the past,” as Aristotle famously posited (Sorabji 48),

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203 See chapter one for a complete quote and commentary of Fournival’s words.
recollection, “the active and deliberate search for a memory” (Whitehead 25), as well as its result, the act of remembering, always need to take place in the present.\textsuperscript{204}

In this sense, anachronism performs a feat of mnemonic representation, since it breaks down the barriers between past and present, and by superimposing the present onto the past, it makes us see past events, as it were, before our eyes. This technique allows for a coexistence of different layers of time that remains at the heart of medieval ideas about representation. But rather than insist on the temporal dimension of memory and anachronism, in this section I will approach them from a less evident but equally important point of view, in their spatial dimension.

In her groundbreaking work on medieval memory, Mary Carruthers has explained that, along with Aristotle’s temporal definition of memory, there existed during the Middle Ages a locational model that took preeminence in the monastic practice that is the subject of her \textit{The Craft of Thought} (10-14). Such a model focuses not on the temporal content of memories, but rather on their structure, the “places” in which they need to be stored in order to be retrieved later. As Carruthers explains, if things “[exist] in space and time,” and all memories are “of the past,” then “in order to remember particular matters, one focuses on what distinguishes one memory from another, namely the qualities that constitute ‘place’” (\textit{The Craft of Thought} 13). In this model, of course, mnemonic “places” are not actual spaces but “cognitive schemata” which “may entail likenesses of existing things (a church, a palace, a garden) but they are not themselves real. They should be thought of as fictive devices that \textit{the mind itself makes} for remembering” (\textit{The Craft of Thought} 13).

\textsuperscript{204} For Aristotle’s distinction between memory, recollection, and remembering see Richard Sorabji (35-46) and Julia Annas.
It is also central for my argument to take into account the distinction between what Carruthers, following Julia Annas, calls “factual memory” and “personal memory,” or “remembering ‘the past’ and remembering ‘my past,’” (“Meditations” 150-51). Our “factual memory” includes events that we have learned happened at some point in the past, but we have not directly experienced, and therefore of which we do not possess a personal recollection. When we say that we “remember” an event in our factual memory, what we mean is that we remember having learnt that event. The learning of historical facts is the clearer example of this kind of memory work. In contrast, the second type of remembering, or “personal memory,” concerns events directly experienced by the person who is recollecting them, and in this case a statement beginning with “I remember” can be taken in a literal sense.

Carruthers goes on to argue that, while we tend to maintain a strict separation between both kinds of memory, antique and medieval cultures did not necessarily do so. In fact, classical and medieval *ars memoriae* often advised to personalize the facts one desired to remember, that is, to insert factual into personal memories, deemed easier to recall (Carruthers, “Meditations” 152). For example, in the early twelfth century Hugh of St. Victor recommends to the novices who are starting to learn the Psalms and Biblical history to pay special attention to

the color, shape, position, and placement of the letters, where we have seen this or that written, in what part, in what location (at the top, the middle, or the bottom) we saw it positioned, in what color we observed the trace of the letter or the ornamented surface of the parchment. Indeed I consider nothing so useful for stimulating the memory as this; that we also
pay attention carefully to those circumstances of things which can occur accidentally and externally, so that for example, together with the appearance and quality or location of the places in which we heard one thing or the other we recall also the face and habits of the people for whom we learned this and that, in so far as they are the kind by which they accompany their performance of a certain activity (Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* 264).

This technique is based on the fact that the physical appearance of the codex, the place in which one heard a fact for the first time, or the person one heard it from, are all personal recollections, in which the novices can embed the non-personal memories that they are trying to create.

It should be noted that most of the personal recollections that Hugh of St.Victor considers useful in order to anchor factual memories are of a visual kind—elements pertaining to the physical appearance or visual organization of the manuscript where a text that the novices want to remember was written, the look of the place where, or the person from whom, they learnt what they want to recollect, etc. This preference for visual stimuli may be related to the fact that medieval mnemonic models conceive of memories as mental images, existing in a primarily visual form (Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* 47-60). Thus, “crafting memories also involved crafting the [mental] images in which those memories were carried and conducted” (Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 10).

The ideas about memory that I have just reviewed will be key to my reconsideration of anachronism’s role in the Castilian *romans antiques*. My reading
departs from the observation that, in the *Apolonio*, anachronisms tend to cluster around scenes set in urban spaces and possessing a strong visual component, which Manuel Alvar classified as “cuadros de género.” This phenomenon is not limited to the *Apolonio*, but can also be connected with similar occurrences, in textual form in the *Alexandre*, and visually in the miniatures of the manuscript known as the *Crónica troyana de Alfonso XI*. As I will argue, the highly visual medievalization of Pentapolis, Mitylene, Babylon, or Troy may have served a mnemonic purpose. These urban spaces, despite their obvious distance from the traditional *loci memoriae* of which Carruthers speaks, had the potential to function not only as literary fictional places but also as the mnemonic “fictive devices” that are the “places of memory.” By providing the romances’ public with familiar places easily associated with personal memories, it became possible to store their newly acquired knowledge of classical stories, a part of “the past,” within “my past,” an operation ultimately full of political significance.

“*Cuadros de género*” in the *Libro de Apolonio*

In his enthusiastic account of the techniques that explain the originality of the *Apolonio* with respect to its Latin source, the *HART*, Alvar focuses on a series of scenes that he calls “cuadros de género” (*Libro de Apolonio* xxxvi). As the denomination implies, such scenes are rich in medievalizing details, and most of them take place in outdoor urban spaces, for example the ball game at Pentapolis (144-51), Tarsiana’s act as *juglaresa* in Mitylene’s market (426-29), or one in which Alvar is particularly

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205 Throughout this section, I quote from Alvar’s final version of his thoughts on this facet of the *Apolonio*, found in the prologue of his 1984 Planeta edition but initially formulated in his 1976 Castalia *editio maior*, 151-64. Alvar’s assessment recalls these words by Gerald Brenan about both the *Apolonio* and the *Alexandre*: “somewhat tedious as a whole, they contain vivid, coloured passages that illustrate contemporary life” (74).
interested—the two stanzas where king Archistrates of Pentapolis goes for a walk in the market with his friend Apollonius:

Ovo sabor hun día el rey de cavalgar,
andar por el mercado, ribera de la mar;
fizo ha Apolonio, su amigo, llamar,
rogóle que saliese con él ha deportar.

Prísolo por la mano, non lo quería mal,
vieron por la ribera mucho buen menestral:
burzeses e burzesas, mucha buena senyal;
salieron al mercado, fuera al arenal. (201-02)

This short passage is representative of the way in which the Apolonio poet often introduces anachronism in conjunction with the rhetorical technique of amplificatio. As it often happens, the two quatrains correspond to a single sentence of the HART, “Rex autem post pauco dies tenens Apollonium manu forum petit et cum eo deambulavit” (Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 130). While the most obvious anachronism in the passage comes from the transformation of the forum in a town market, the scene is most effectively medievalized through the addition of some carefully chosen

206 While the use of anachronism in the Alexandre has received attention as a separate topic in the works by Michael and Solomon & Temprano discussed above, this has not been the case for the Apolonio. Although many critics have made references to this matter or treated it briefly in relation to other aspects of the poem, to my knowledge it has never been studied on its own.
207 “A few days later, the king took Apollonius by the hand, went to the forum and walked there with him” (Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 131).
208 As Alvar puts it, “[a]quel hombre del siglo XIII ha pensado qué podría ser un forum y lo ha convertido en un mercado de Castilla” (Libro de Apolonio xxxvii). See also his Castalia edition 157 n128.
contemporary details, such as the presence of “menestrales,” “burzeses,” and “burzesas,” and possibly the location of the market “fuera al arenal.”

Alvar finds this technique particularly successful, arguing that thanks to the introduction of the medievalizing touches, “el cuadro es inolvidable: el caminar hacia el mercado, las gentes que pululan, la salida a la playa, con los ojos llenos de humanidad” (Libro de Apolonio xxxvii). Moreover, Alvar’s choice of the word “cuadro” to refer to these two stanzas—and to the “cuadros de género” in general—is not casual, since he describes the effect produced by the introduction of anachronisms in the scenes mentioned above in the following terms: “el ignorado poeta ha cogido unos cuadros de la vida de su tiempo, los ha bajado—como si estuvieran colgados de una pared—y los ha incrustado en las cuadernas del Libro” (Libro de Apolonio xxxvi). He goes on to compare the market scene at Pentapolis with a fifteenth-century Flemish painting (Libro de Apolonio xxxviii), the ball game to a sixteenth-century miniature (Libro de Apolonio xxxix), and the Apolonio poet’s art in general to Giotto’s, since in his paintings, Alvar argues, the Florentine master “desarqueologiza a sus figuras: las hace ser italianos de su tiempo” (Libro de Apolonio xli).

Although he never states it explicitly, it is obvious that for Alvar anachronism performs a mediating and domesticating function, rendering comprehensible the classical world for a lay public that in all probability was not familiarized with it. At the same time

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209 According to Jacques Heers, Castilian towns usually did not have a central market; instead, the town market was located, as it is in Pentapolis, outside the city walls (85). Julio Valdeón Baruque notes that in late medieval Castile, the construction of new walls was often explained by the desire of including the market within the space protected by them (83-84).

210 This is also the opinion of other editors of the poem: Carmen Monedero believes that the author intends to “acerca[r …] la historia al público y facilita[r] su participación en la
time, especially through the metaphor of the “dearcheologization,” Alvar also attributes humanistic purposes to the mediation efforts undertook by the Iberian poet, much as Jean Frappier did with respect to the French *romans antiques*. The cultural changes to which Alvar relates such humanistic motivations are directly related to the so-called twelfth-century Renaissance, still felt during the thirteenth century when the *Apolonio* was composed.\(^{211}\)

In his brilliant reading of the economic relationships in the *Apolonio*, Julian Weiss offers a critique of Alvar’s take on the poem’s market scenes. According to Weiss, “Alvar idealizes the seamless incorporation of market scenes into the world of the romance as instances of the poem’s basic humanism,” which would “[appeal] to the new class of lay reader […] produced by the developing urban society” (201). In contrast, Weiss interprets passages such as the one reproduced above as means through which the poet introduces the pressing ethical, economic, and political problems posed by commercial exchange into the courtly world of the *Apolonio*. Weiss’s reading of the poem rests, in fact, on the tension between “court and town” (198), between the dehistoricizing effect of *cortesia*, which in his view “functions as an ideological mechanism to remove individual identity from the realm of history and changing social relations,” and the surfacing within the narrative of “new forms of economic production” (200) represented, among other means, through the *Apolonio’s* market scenes. In this

\(^{211}\) The term was popularized after Charles H. Haskins’s classic study *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, published in 1927. For a recent overview, see R.W. Swanson, and for an appraisal of twelfth-century humanism, see Willemien Otten.
way, Weiss indirectly provides an alternative view of anachronism in the *Apolonio* as a tool that, as Baswell contended, provides a safe space to negotiate contemporary preoccupations—a for example by aiding to naturalize key ideological concepts such as *cortesía*.

In my own reading of the presence of anachronism in these and other urban scenes in Castilian *romans antiques*, I take into account the insights provided by both critics. Alvar’s reading of the “cuadros de género” in the *Apolonio* calls attention to the accumulation of anachronisms in the urban spaces of the poem, as well as to the feeling of familiarity achieved by the medievalizing process—features that, as I will show, may have been designed with mnemonic purposes in mind. Moreover, he repeatedly stresses the visual dimension of these “cuadros,” which is also a key component for a reconsideration of anachronism as a mnemonic tool. At the same time, Weiss’s analysis of the tension between court and town allows us better to perceive how the central space for the intended public of the romances of antiquity, the court, casts its shadow not only over the *Apolonio’s*, but also over the rest of the urban scenes that I will analyze.

Of the “cuadros de género” singled out by Alvar, the most significant one for my purposes shows Tarsiana’s performance as a *juglaresa* in Mitylene. There are three elements to which I would like to call attention in this passage: first, it introduces a urban

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212 Weiss’s reading departs directly from the problem posed by the coexistence of two different layers of time, when he asks, “what new social meanings accrue to a poem which has its roots in late antiquity, and the transition from a slave to a feudal mode of production, when it is revived and reworked during the long and uneven transition from feudalism to capitalism?” (199). Through this question, he suggests that the *Apolonio* as a whole may be read as a *translatio* in which some of the problems deriving from the first economic transition are reread, reworked, and medievalized as problems deriving from the second.

213 As a matter of fact, the concept of courtliness analyzed by Weiss is a perfect example of what Petit would term an “anachronisme de civilization” (see *L’anachronisme* 39-47).
space (once again, a market) that functions as a magnet for anachronisms; second, the scene can be interpreted as an inversion of a previous passage taking place in a courtly setting; finally, it contains a short but unmistakable *mise en abyme* of the poem. The stanzas in question appear after Tarsiana narrowly escapes being forced to prostitute herself and convinces her pimp that allowing her to work as a *juglaresa* in the streets of Mitylene will turn out to be even more profitable. The first day of Tarsiana’s new occupation is a complete success,

Luego el otro día, de buena madurguada,
levantóse la duenya ricamente adobada;
priso huna viola buena e bien tenprada,
e salió al mercado violar por soldada.

Començó hunos viesos e hunos sones tales,
que trayén grant dulçor e eran naturales;
finchiénse de omes apriesa los portales,
on non les cabié en las plaças, subiénse a los poyales.

Quando con su viola hovo bien solazado,
a sabor de los pueblos hovo asaz cantado,
tornóles a rezar hun romance bien rimado,
de la su razón misma, por hó havía pasado.

Fizo bien a los pueblos su razón entender,
más valié de çient marquos ese día el loguer;

fuesse el traidor pagando del menester,

ganava por ello sobeiano grant aver. (426-29)

The medievalization process in these stanzas is similar to the previous market scene in that it is conflated with the work of amplification, transforming the unidentified place in which Tarsiana performed in the HART into a medieval market.214 The “costumbrista” details that have people flocking to hear Tarsiana and filling the “plaças” in vv. 427cd may not be inherently anachronistic, but certainly seem designed to recreate contemporary spaces in the mind of the poem’s listeners through their strong visual overtones.215 To these details we have to add the passage’s musical anachronisms, which are consistent with the general treatment of music in the poem, from Tarsiana’s use of the medieval “vihuela de arco” to her way to tune it diatonically, producing “sones naturales.”216

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214 In the HART, Tarsiana asks the pimp’s servant to “Iube […] in frecuenti loco poni scamna” (“Have benches put up […] in some crowded place” Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 154-55). Then, the story goes on, “Quod cum fecisset villicus, omnis aetas populi ad videndam Tarsian virginem cucurrit. Puella ut vidit ingentem populum, introiit in facundiam oris studiorumque abundantiam; ingenio quaestiones sibi promebat et solvebat. Tanta populi adclamatio tantusque amor civitatis circa eam excrebruit, ut et viri et feminae cotidie ei multa conferrent” (“The servant did this; people of every age flocked to see Tarsia. When the girl saw the mass of people, she began to speak eloquently and with great learning. She asked questions and answered them cleverly. So great was the people’s applause, so great was the citizens’ love for her, that both men and women gave her a lot of money every day” Archibald, Apollonius of Tyre 154-55; I have introduced a variant from RB included in Archibald’s note 50, which in this passage is closer to the Iberian poem).

215 Alvar also reads this scene as “otro bello testimonio de la vida en una plaza castellana” in this Castalia edition (Libro de Apolonio 160-62).

216 The landmark study for the treatment of music in the Apolonio is Daniel Devoto’s “Dos notas sobre el Libro de Apolonio.” Devoto notes that “La descripción del juego instrumental […] puede […] confirmarnos preciosos detalles sobre la música del siglo decimotercero” (301).
The medieval notions of music that underpin the description of Tarsiana’s performance reflect an earlier scene of the poem, where the juglaresa’s parents met at the royal court in Pentapolis. In that passage (178-90), both Luciana and her future husband played the same instrument as Tarsiana, the “vihuela de arco,” Luciana at the behest of her father in order to comfort Apollonius, devastated after his shipwreck, while Apollonius played in order to assert his maestría by showing his superior musical learning. This exhibition causes king Archistrates to hire Apollonius as the music teacher for his daughter and Luciana to fall in love with the king of Tyre, thereby initiating Apollonius’s recuperation of his former social status. In stark contrast with the opportunities for social advancement provided by the courtly scene, Tarsiana is forced to work for the entertainment of the town at the market, an occupation inappropriate for someone of royal birth (Devoto 317-30); the situation that makes the princess put to practical use her training in one of the liberal arts is actually quite ironic, since she is anything but free at this point. The echoes of Luciana and Apollonius’s courtly performances in this scene do not stop with Tarsiana’s singing and playing, but extend to the presence of literal resonances of the previous scene in the first two quatrains.

The contrast between the early courtly and the later urban musical performances undoubtedly reflects the tension between town and court that Weiss has detected in the poem. The courtly echoes found in the market space reinforce the sense of Tarsiana’s social degradation, and allow for a reading of the scene as an inversion of the earlier scene.

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217 Many scholars, including Devoto (292), have noted this parallelism, which is yet another instance of the geminated designs that Phipps noted in the poem.

218 The resonances affect musical vocabulary: verse 178b, where Luciana “tenpró bien la vihuela en hun son natural” is echoed in both 426c and 427b; verse 185b, where Apollonius “priso huna viuela e sópola bien tenprar” is also related to 426c (see Corbella 132 n178b).
courtly performances. At the same time, the parallel between the court and the market posited in these stanzas speaks of deeper similarities between both spaces, which may prove to be similarly dangerous and unreliable. Finally, the shadow of the court in the urban setting of Tarsiana’s performance may be related to anachronism’s function as a device that makes possible the appropriation, not only of a foreign time such as the classical past, but also of an ideologically foreign space such as the market.

Even more significantly for my purposes, stanzas 428 and 429 insist on the mirroring function of this passage with respect to the whole book, using a technique that we have seen to pervade both the Alexandre and the Apolonio. The “romançe bien rimado” through which Tarsiana retells her sad story to the people of Mitylene is an obvious image of the poem, even if it takes on the form of an oral and dangerously fragile performance. The labeling of Tarsiana’s story as a “romançe” (428c) echoes the use of the same word in the Apolonio’s initial stanza, where the poet asserts his intention to “conponer hun romançe de nueva maestría” (1c). Furthermore, the mise en abyme effect is reinforced through the reference to Tarsiana’s art as a menester in verse 429c, which together with her earlier reference to her musical endeavors as a “mester […] más sin

219 Weiss has argued that in the Apolonio, the unreliable sea “evokes a […] specific form of the social unknown: trade” (208). The sea may equally be related to the court, which was often noted for its untrustworthiness: twelfth-century Walter Map describes the royal court as a fluid space in constant change that he compares to Hell (2-3). In addition, the sea is used as a metaphor for the court in Alfonso X’s Partida II, Título IX, Ley XXVII (83-84; noted by Rodríguez Velasco, “Mediación y agencia” 421-22). Complaints about the insecurity felt by courtiers with respect to their social standing are commonplace in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century anti-courtly literature studied by Jacques Lemaire.

220 Chapters one and two explore from different angles the use of mirroring techniques in the Alexandre and the Apolonio.

221 In his edition of the Apolonio, Alvar interprets the word as the equivalence of the English romance, or “historia de aventuras” (59 n428c), while Corbella prefers a different sense, “composición no cantada sino recitada (“rezada”), sin especial referencia a su forma métrica” (217 n428c).
pecado” (422c) seems to refer directly to the famous opening verses of the *Alexandre*. The choice of this term makes of Tarsiana’s task a reflection of the poet’s own *mester*, even if this reference may have, as Deyermond thought, a hint of irony (“Mester es sen peccado” 115-16).

Tarsiana’s successful act in Mitylene, as well as the other “cuadros de género” listed above, rich in highly visual and medievalizing details, are designed in order to allow their audience to call to mind the image of everyday experiences in a concrete space. This technique clearly takes advantage of the mediating and domesticating function of anachronism, but I believe that it may also have had a mnemonic use. The market at Mitylene could have functioned as a *locus memoriae*, not exactly in the traditional sense of a stylized mental image where lists are inserted, but rather as something akin to the visually-based personal memory where, as we have seen, mnemotechnic advice such as Hugh of St. Victor’s recommended that newly learned texts be stored. In this context, the insertion of a *mise en abyme* of the poem within a medievalized urban scene graphically parallels the insertion of factual memory (what Tarsiana’s story was for the *Apolonio*’s public) into personal memory (the medievalized market scene), contributing to the adequate retention of the important classical narrative that the poet is transmitting. Through the use of anachronism, I would contend, the poet tries to facilitate the implementation of one of his main purposes—the hope that the

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222 The word “me(ne)ster” is consistently applied to Tarsiana’s performance as *juglaresa*: see also 433c (“dexemos a ella su menester usando”) and 493d (“busco menester que pueda al sieglo enganyar”).

223 Representations of cities were, however, practically a staple in mnemonic treatises, maybe as an echo of the architectural structures often used as *loci memoriae* (for examples, see below the discussion of Babylon’s description in the *Alexandre*).
audience, as the *Alexandre* poet puts it in his prologue, “aprendrá buenas gestas que sepa retraer” (3c).

The incorporation of tools to facilitate the use of personal memory may explain, I believe, why critics such as Alvar have been struck by what he calls the “realism” of the *Apolonio*, which allowed the poet to “captar una realidad que no es libresco” (*Libro de Apolonio* xxxv).²²⁴ It is true that the details reviewed above are not “librescos,” in the sense that they are not based on the direct source of the poem, the *HART*. Instead, a “realidad” of sorts is introduced in the poem through the use of systematic anachronism and the resulting medievalization of the classical past. We can thus understand what Alvar terms “realidad” as something recognizable and thus closer to personal memory for the intended public of the *Apolonio*, while the “libresco” component would be akin to factual memory. The productive tension and complementarity between personal and factual memory, particularly in urban scenes, is not exclusive of the *Apolonio* but, as I will go on to show, a similar operation can also be traced in the most significant urban space of the *Alexandre*—the city of Babylon.

*Remembering through Babylon in the Libro de Alexandre*

“Babilonia, cabeça del regnado” (1456d), is indisputably the most celebrated city in the *Alexandre*, and the only one that merits a detailed description by the poet.²²⁵ The

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²²⁴ Of course, Alvar’s praise of the poem as realist must be understood in the context of one of the main narratives of Spanish literary history, which at least from the time of Ramón Menéndez Pidal has argued that realism is a key characteristic of Spanish literature, and attributed it to a supposed “national spirit.” By contending that the *Apolonio* is a realist poem, Alvar is also arguing for its inclusion in the canon of Spanish literature (see his Castalia edition 151).

²²⁵ Arizaleta has observed that “la description de Babylone semble constituer le coeur du texte” (“Le centre introuvable” 143).
poem’s structure carefully emphasizes its prominent role: the city appears not only as the site of the final triumph and death of Alexander (2515-2666), but also as the hero’s most spectacular conquest, occupying a long episode towards the center of the poem (1458-1560).\textsuperscript{226} The episode in question includes the famous “Babylonian digression,” the longest of such occurrences in the poem,\textsuperscript{227} as well as a narration of the king’s triumphal entry into the city and his subsequent promulgation of new “fueros” and “lēys” (1560b). As is the case in the rest of the poem, the central Babylonian episode is rich in anachronisms,\textsuperscript{228} which in many respects perform an analogous function to those found in the *Apolonio*’s “cuadros de género.” Two passages are particularly significant for my exploration of the mnemonic purposes served by the *roman antique*’s urban spaces: Alexander’s first entry in Babylon, which recalls similar scenes in the *Apolonio*, and the detailed architectural description of the city.

Alexander’s triumphal entry in Babylon, recounted in stanzas 1534-46, bears close resemblance to the *Apolonio*’s “cuadros de género.” The city’s inhabitants receive the Macedonian with unbridled enthusiasm, singing joyfully (1538, 1540) in their best attires (1539), perfuming the air with spices and decorating the streets (1541). There is a procession including political and ecclesiastical authorities, followed by the citizens and minstrels playing a variety of musical instruments (1542-45). The accumulation of anachronisms may have intended to give the scene the appearance of a medieval royal

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{226}] Moreover, as Arizaleta points out (“Le centre introuvable” 146 n6), Babylon is also present in the three shield ekphraseis that appear earlier in the poem: Alexander’s (97b), Achilles’s (655c), and Darius’s (990b).
\item[\textsuperscript{227}] See Michael 261-63 for an assessment of the relationship of the description of Babylon to the poem as a whole. Willis (*The Debt* 24-31) has discussed the passage’s sources, of which the main one is the *Roman d’Alexandre*.
\item[\textsuperscript{228}] Michael details some of them in his section on “medievalization in the descriptions” (201-04).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
entry. In any case, some of the strategies through which it has been medievalized recall similar passages in the Apolonio. For example, the anachronistic references to musical instruments (noted by Michael 204) and the accumulation of a mass of people desiring to witness an event recall Tarsiana’s performance at Mitylene:

El pleit’ de los joglares era fiera rïota:
avié y çinfonías, farpa, giga e rota,
albogues e salterio, çítola que más trota,
çítara e viola, que las coitas embota.

Por amor de veer el rey de grant ventura,
por muros e por techos subién a grant pressura;
sedién por las finiestras gentes sin grant mesura
—algunos, cuemo creo, sedién en angostura—. (1545-46)

The passage is further medievalized through the inclusion of elements that posit a feudal relationship between the conqueror and his new subjects, who not only see Alexander as their God-ordained king, but also perceive themselves as their vassals and seal such a pact through the use of “cartas por a b c”:

El pueblo de la villa fue todo acordado
—non era maravilla, ca era profetado—:
sallieron recebirlo al rey aventurado,

229 In this sense, it is interesting to note that Arizaleta signals a parallel between the Babylonian episode and the late twelfth-century Fuero de Cuenca’s reference to the royal entry of Alfonso VIII into the town (“Le centre introuvable” 150-53; “Del texto de Babel” 62). However, the Fuero does not include a description of Alfonso’s entry. 230 See Casas Rigall’s edition, 496-97, n1537b, for an explanation of how this authenticating technique worked.
ca veyén que de Dios le era otorgado.

Cuemo las rúas eran, ellos así vinieron;
todos por a b c con él cartas partieron:
cadauno sobre sí, omenaje’l fizieron,
de leal vassallaje las verdades le dieron. (1536-37)

With its representation of collective joy marked by professions of feudal loyalty taking place in an urban space, the scene parallels Apollonius’s similar entry in Pentapolis at the end of the *Apolonio*. The passage, in which Apollonius returns with Luciana to her city after leaving Athenagoras and Tarsiana at Antioch as regents (621-625), dwells in similar amplificatory details of the town’s celebration while at the same time inserting it into a feudal mode of relationship—Pentapolis’s citizens are happy because “de la natura del senyor non saldrién; / a guisa de leyales vassallos comidién” (623bc). This type of anachronism performs the same kind of ideological operation that the courtly echoes did for the market scene at Mitylene, appropriating the classical past as the authorized origin of contemporary modes of power.

At any rate, these parallelisms may indicate that urban spaces in the *Alexandre* offered the possibility of combining personal and factual memory in a way similar to the one that, as I have contended, was proposed by way of the *Apolonio’s* “cuadros de género.” However, such a reading does not take into account the specific way in which the *Alexandre* treats the urban space of Babylon. As Dolores Corbella has asserted, in the

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231 For example, “colgavan por las carreras ropa de grant valía” 621d; “entravan en los banyos por la color cobrar, / avian los alfagemes priessa de çerçenar” 624cd; and the entire stanza 625 use this technique.
Apolonio “se describen con gran efectividad los detalles concretos, pero no los grandes espacios” (39); in contrast, the Alexandre does provide a detailed description of the city of Babylon. The difference between the two poems is hardly surprising, given the contrast between the encyclopedic and monumental Alexandre and the more modest and sparing Apolonio. It is nonetheless necessary to consider the varied materials included in the so-called Babylonian digression, and particularly the city’s description, in order to understand fully the mnemonic possibilities of this episode.

The description of Babylon is situated right after the account of how the Babel tower was built (1505-22), and draws from a similar passage in the Roman d’Alexandre. The passage facilitates a visualization of the city through the accumulation of very specific details and a careful and clear organization that reflects the main elements of a fortified town. The description starts with the outer defenses of the city, and then goes on to depict Babylon’s wall, towers, and doors:

La çerca es estraña, en peña çimentada;
maguer yaze en peña, es bien car caveada:
lacárcava es fonda, de agua bien rasada;
naves traen por ella, ca es fonda e lada.

Un trecho de ballesta es en alto el muro,

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232 Willis has demonstrated that the Babylonian digression is primarily based on a similar passage in the Roman d’Alexandre’s manuscript B (Venice, Museo Civico VI, 665). See Willis, The Debt 24-31 for a complete assessment of the relationship of the Babylonian digression to the Roman d’Alexandre and other possible sources. Urban descriptions became a set piece in the French romans antiques; see Croizy-Naquet, Thèbes, Troie, et Carthage for a complete analysis of this feature. Aníbal Biglieri has also explored the descriptions of Seville and Jerusalem in Castilian literature (“Descripción de Sevilla” and “Jerusalén”).
de biva argamassa e de pedreñal duro;

en ancho, otro tanto, si mal non lo mesuro.

El que estovíés’ dentro devríé seer seguro.

Las torres son espessas, según que aprisiemos;
sobre guisa son muchas —cuenta non les sabemos—:
los días de un año diznen que serién diezmos
—de qui las non viesse creídos no seriemos—.

Las demás son de canto, menudas e granadas;
las otras son de mármol, redondas e quadradas;
mas éstas con aquéssas son assí aferradas,
que sean a aquéstas aquéssas sobjudgadas.

Ha y, sin los postigos, treinta puertas cabdales-
Guárdanlas sendos réys que pocos a de tales:
todos por natura son reýs naturales,
diznen que todos tienen regnos generales. (1523-27)

The last three stanzas of the description enter the city to describe the royal headquarters, the baths, and finally what seem to be interior towers with a panoptic device that allows the observer to detect any instances of theft:

El real es en medio hecho a maravellas:
y es el Sol pintado, la Luna e las estrellas;
y están las columnas, los espejos en ellas
en que se miran todas, casadas e donzellas.

Son dentro en la villa los naturales baños,
a que vienen las aguas por yus’ tierra en caños-
Están aparejados de ropas e d’escaños:
nunca y vino omne a que menguassen paños.

Tiene en quatro cantos quatro torres cabdales;
más claras son que vidrio nin que finos cristales:
si fazen por la villa furtos o cosas tales,
allí lo veen luego por çerteras señales (1583-30).

I would also like to call attention to the poet’s expression in verse 1524c, “si mal
no lo mesuro,” which brings to mind an image of the writer actually measuring or at least
estimating for himself the thickness of the city’s walls. This reference to personal
experience contrasts with other terminology in the passage that implies that the
information has been indirectly received, such as “según que aprisiemos” (1525a), and
“dicen” (1527d). While the use of “mesuro” may be explained away because of the “-uro” rhyme of stanza 1524, it also suggests that the poet himself has performed the
operation of personalizing factual memory up to a point that he “puede presentar a su
público los restos de la torre como si los tuviera ante sus ojos” (Arizaleta, “Del texto de Babel” 54).\(^{233}\)

The detailed description has led several critics to comment, directly or indirectly, on its visual quality. Arizaleta describes the passage as “una visión arquitectónica de la ciudad y de su mobiliario urbano” (“Del texto de Babel” 35 n2, my emphasis), while Casas Rigall notes that in the description, “se pinta una construcción medieval” (Libro de Alexandre 493 n1523-33, my emphasis). More explicitly, Simone Pinet has proposed that this passage may suggest “un contacto iconográfico” that she would relate to the poem’s ekphraseis (“Babel historiada” 386).\(^{234}\) This connection between the description of Babylon and the Alexandre’s ekphraseis is particularly noteworthy in light of the mnemonic function both of the ekphrastic passages that I have examined in the previous chapters and of the Babylonian description.\(^{235}\)

More importantly, the visual dimension of the city’s description should be considered in conjunction with the rest of the Babylonian digression, which works as an encyclopedic repository of facts. It includes not only the key story of the Babel Tower and the founding of the city by Semiramis (1505-11; 1518-22), but also a series of catalogues probably designed to be memorized, of which the most prominent two list world languages (1512-17) and precious stones (1468-92). Those were the sort of

\(^{233}\) Carruthers has commented on similar occurrences in, among other works, Chaucer’s \textit{Troilus and Criseyde}, explaining that this kind of observation “puts the poet in the position of a present-tense observer, now recalling a personal memory image of what he once experienced” (“Meditations” 151).

\(^{234}\) Pinet also deals with other visual connections of the Babel episode, such as the use of the term “estoria,” and acknowledges the pervasive medieval visual representations of the tower, particularly \textit{in mappaemundi} (“Babel historiada” 372).

\(^{235}\) See chapter one for the descriptions of Darius’s and his wife’s sepulchers, and chapter two for the ekphrasis of Alexander’s tent.
“inventories” that, as Carruthers explains, could be stored in the images working as
“places of memory.” It is perhaps not coincidental that those images sometimes took the
form of cities, complete with walls, doors, and interior buildings.\textsuperscript{236} The poet, however,
could not expect most of his courtly audience to be trained in this kind of mnemonic
system, even if the Babylonian digression probably responds to a great extent to the
associations and “places” created in his own trained memory. This is why I believe that
the embedding of factual into personal memory may again be at work here, proposing a
connection between the medievalized and therefore thoroughly familiar Babylon with the
catalogues or the story of the Babel Tower.

The familiarity of the Alexandre’s Babylon for a courtly public could also have
stemmed from the existence of direct visual referents for this passage. In this sense,
Arizaleta comments that “un público de corte hubiera visto en la Babilonia alejandrina
una imagen más de las que acostumbraban a decorar muros, tapices y tiendas, una
‘estoria’ desplegada ante sus ojos por el poeta” (“Del texto de Babel” 64). Albeit in a
very different sense, this suggestion brings back the idea of a courtly appropriation of the
urban space, already present in the Apolonio’s market scene at Mitylene. In this case, the
religious connotations of Babylon as the site of sin and debauchery, exploited by Walter
of Châtillon, have been purposefully left out in the Alexandre, where the presentation of
the city is, as Arizaleta points out, positive in every possible sense (“Del texto de Babel”).
The city has become instead a medievalized \textit{locus memoriae} referencing a courtly

\textsuperscript{236} This kind of mnemonic image appears in popular printed books such as the
Jacobus Publicius’s \textit{The Art of Memory} (Venice, 1482), which “depicts a fortified town
on a hill […], with many nooks and crannies that presumably would be suitable sites for
images” (Carruthers & Žiolkowski 229) or the walled abbey in Johannes Romberch’s
\textit{Congestorium Artificiosae Memoriae} (Venice, 1533; reproduced in Sorabji viii).
ornament rather than a religious metaphor, in a *translatio* that speaks once again of the productive tension between secular and religious views in the poem.

This reference to a courtly space for the image of Babylon takes me to the last stop of my reconsideration of anachronism as a place of memory: the manuscript known as the *Crónica troyana de Alfonso XI* (*Troyana*). The examination of some miniatures of this codex will allow me to explore briefly how the visual arts may have utilized this device for mnemonic purposes in a similar way to the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*. The uses of anachronism as an element of mediation, as an ideological tool, and as a way through which factual memory can be embedded in personal memory serving, at the same time, as a *locus memoriae*, all come together in the courtly visual representations of Troy devised for manuscript h-I-6 of the Biblioteca de El Escorial.

*A Visual Locus Memoriae: Troy in the Crónica Troyana de Alfonso XI*

Manuscript h-I-6 contains a Castilian rendition of Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s twelfth-century *Roman de Troie*, arguably the most successful of the first wave of *romans antiques*. According to the codex’s colophon, it was commissioned by Alfonso XI for his son and heir Pedro, and completed shortly after the initial commissioner’s death in 1350. The manuscript is lavishly illustrated with seventy miniatures and, through a format and *mise en page* reminiscent of the productions of Alfonso X’s *scriptorium*, it creates a visual connection with the learned monarch’s cultural endeavors. While

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237 The Castilian version of the *Roman de Troie* contained in manuscript h-I-6 derives from an initial translation of the French poem into a Western Iberian vernacular (Leonese, Galician-Leonese, or Galician-Portuguese; see Casas Rigall, *La materia de Troya* 223-38). See Claudia D’Ambruoso for a detailed assessment of the textual origins of the *Troyana*, as well as a partial edition (“Per una edizione critica” and “Sulle relazioni testuali”). A complete but notably unreliable transcription may be found in Kelvin M. Parker.
manuscript h-I-6 has been neglected for a very long time, due to the perception that it was not an “original” work neither in textual nor in visual terms, it has attracted a growing interest in the last few years.\textsuperscript{238} Fourteen miniatures illustrating the \textit{Troyana} represent the city of Troy in different moments of its ill-fated history.\textsuperscript{239} In these depictions of an ancient but medievalized urban space we can trace in visual form, I would argue, many of the techniques through which the \textit{Alexandre} and the \textit{Apolonio} poets make possible the use of Pentapolis, Mitylene, and especially Babylon, as personalized mnemonic places for their courtly public.

In contrast with the guesswork that necessarily surrounds the primary reception of the \textit{Alexandre} and the \textit{Apolonio}, we know for a fact that manuscript h-I-6 was created for the courtly public that Arizaleta imagines listening to the description of Babylon in the \textit{Alexandre} and relating it to familiar images in tapestries and other everyday visual decorations surrounding them. The correspondences between the description of Babylon’s spatial organization and the multiple representations of Troy in the \textit{Troyana} codex are indeed striking. Such coincidences may point to the existence of the iconographic parallel suspected by Pinet for the Babylonian description, while relating it to the courtly space envisaged by Arizaleta.

\textsuperscript{238} In addition to D’Ambruoso’s research about the manuscript’s textual side, see Rosa María Rodríguez Porto’s stimulating work about its visual dimension (“La tumba de Héctor,” “Troy-upon-Guadalquivir,” and most recently, “Courtness and its \textit{Trujumanes}”). In the following pages, I draw from many of the latter’s observations about the artistic styles employed in the manuscript and their possible significance in a fourteenth-century historical context. For a general description and assessment of manuscript h-I-6, see still Francisco María Tubino; Pilar García Morencos includes color reproductions of some of the codex’s miniatures.

\textsuperscript{239} The illuminations depicting Troy appear in ff. 13v, 23v, 39v, 40v, 84v, 91r, 97v, 127v, 135r, 140v, 146r, 159v, and 160r.
A miniature containing all the elements that define the city throughout the manuscript’s visual program appears in f. 13v and depicts Troy after being reconstructed by king Priamus. As Rodríguez Porto has noted, most architectural details in the illustration can be traced back to its textual source: the multicolored walls, the location of the towers, or the windows’ golden frames (“Troy-upon-Guadalquivir” 14). Still, equivalents to most of the elements present in the Alexandre’s description of Babylon can also be found in this image: a defensive moat, recalling the Babylonian “cárcava,” in the foreground and lower part of the miniature; stunning walls that take up the lower half of the composition, in this case made out of colored marble rather than “de biva argamassa e de pedrenal duro” (1524b); an assortment of towers; the wall’s doors, even without kings to guard them; and finally, the royal alcazar, Ilion, which is a counterpart to the Babylonian “real,” appears in a privileged location in the upper part of the illustration, slightly off-centered to the right.

The medievalizing process common to the miniature and the poem has thus rendered very similar urban depictions. In her study of the treatment of cities in French roman antique, Catherine Croizy-Naquet has observed that there was not an established rhetorical tradition of urban description neither in Latin nor in vernacular French before the appearance of these romances (Thèbes, Troie et Carthage 420-21). In creating this topos, the authors of the romances of antiquity, such as the Alexandre poet, may have borrowed from visual sources, a fact that could explain the similar organization of the textual Babylon and the visual Troy. More importantly, if we accept that the description of Babylon in the Alexandre could have played mnemonic role, a similar function can be

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240 A color reproduction of this miniature can be found in García Morencos 9.
posited for the image of Troy in the *Troyana* codex, which, through the use of anachronism, has also been transformed into an utterly familiar place—a reflection not only of fourteenth-century Castilian cities but also of the court where the manuscript was created.

Architecture plays a crucial role in this process of ‘Castilianization’ of the city of Troy. In her description of the codex’s Trojan miniatures, Rodríguez Porto notes “an unusual stylistic blend in the rendering of architecture that is not motivated by the text” (“Troy-upon-Guadalquivir” 14-15). She goes on to observe that the manuscript’s visual program repeatedly employs a mixture of Mudejar architecture, represented in this as well as other miniatures by features such as “horseshoe arches, triangular crenellations, etc.” (“Troy-upon-Guadalquivir” 16), and Gothic buildings like the alcazar at the top of the illustration in f. 13v. The contrast between Mudejar and Gothic elements is particularly prominent in the miniature depicting the sack of Troy in f. 160v, the last appearance of the city in the manuscript. Such a combination, Rodríguez Porto argues, was typical of many fourteenth-century Castilian cities, where Islamic walls were admired and preserved even after they fell into Christian hands (“Troy-upon-Guadalquivir” 20). In this way, the union of Mudejar and Gothic elements amounts to an effort to appropriate the ancient city through the careful employment of architectural anachronism.  

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241 Rodríguez Porto further argues that in the *Troyana*, “[t]he idea was not to adopt foreign elements—in this case, chivalric fiction—in a passive imitation of European traditions but rather to make them one’s own, to integrate them into the existing system of functions and meanings of Iberian courtly culture in order to assure their effectiveness in broadcasting a carefully crafted ideological program” (“Cortesía and its Trujamanes” 241-42). In any case, I am not interested here in the concrete ideological program that the miniatures were designed to further, but rather in the long-term ends that the
Anachronism is thus used in the royal codex, as it was in the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*, as both an element of mediation and an ideological tool: it domesticates the alterity of the classical past while at the same time reclaiming it as both origin and model for the medieval present. More importantly, the representation of Troy as a distinctively Castilian city allows for its incorporation to the realm of personal memory, onto which, as I have argued, factual memory could have been more easily mapped. The illustrator’s choice is even more significant if we take into account that there existed a parallel visual tradition representing Troy as a foreign city, often through the use of Byzantine or other Eastern architectural elements, and thereby collapsing temporal and spatial distance. On the contrary, the architectural anachronisms in the Castilian manuscript seek to emphasize the identity rather than the alterity of the classical past, creating a familiar space for its courtly public.

Yet another tool through which this familiarity is achieved is the presence of courtly scenes in the Trojan miniatures. Almost every miniature depicting the city also shows courtly characters, most often ladies, sitting cross-legged in the interior buildings, or watching the battle from the walls. The illuminations also include depictions of Iberian courtly entertainments, such as the representation of the *juego de bohordos* in f. 23v or the board games that the seated characters in the higher Gothic building are shown

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242 Hugo Buchthal has studied the inclusion of Byzantine elements in depictions of Troy appearing in Venetian manuscripts, and related them to the Eastern colonial expansion of the city (53-67). In addition to the use of Byzantine echoes in depictions of Troy, throughout his study Buchthal points to other means through which temporal and spatial distance were conflated (for example, the use of Islamic headgear for Trojan characters). Similar textual strategies appear in many *romans antiques*, for example the *Roman de Thèbes* (Catherine Sanok), or Thomas of Kent’s version Alexander’s story, the *Roman de toute chevalerie* (Suzanne Conklin Akbari).
playing in the miniature in f. 13v. In this way, court and city, the poles around which the “cuadros de género” in the Apolonio revolved, are also present in the Troyana’s miniatures. The anachronistic presence of the court in all the urban spaces examined represents an attempt to appropriate ideologically, spatially, or temporally foreign spaces such as the market, Babylon, or Troy—in the Apolonio it reflects the effort described by Weiss to subsume pre-capitalist economic exchanges under the concept of cortesia; in the Alexandre the feudal and courtly Babylon works as a counterpoint, maybe even a correction, to religious readings of the city; and in the Troyana, the emphasis on the courtly qualities of Troy, already present in the Roman de Troie, serves to reinforce the spatial appropriation proposed by the architectural anachronisms.

The court, moreover, was in all probability one of the central, if not the central space for most of the audience of the Alexandre, the Apolonio, and the Troyana. Therefore, the addition of courtly overtones to the urban spaces surveyed here could have worked as a means that, together with other types of anachronism, facilitated their perception as familiar places that made the key stories of Alexander the Great, Apollonius of Tyre, and the Trojan War easier to remember. The creators of the romans antiques, I would argue, were carrying out a translatio of sophisticated mnemonic techniques for a vernacular public that in all likelihood had not been trained in them, but could nonetheless have benefited from some of the lessons and mental habits that the clerical authors derived from their own training. The social and political connotations that the presence of the court obviously entails are also related to the mnemonic function of these loci memoriae.
“Common Places” and Collective Memory

Approaching anachronism as a tool to construct loci memoriae does not preclude a social or political view of this rhetorical technique. As Carruthers reminds us, most of the “building materials” of memory work were literally “common places” shared by a community, and therefore the combination and interplay to which they were put by an individual was at the same time a “fully social and political, a truly civic activity” (The Craft of Thought 21). As I have argued, throughout Latin Europe the romances of antiquity worked to make of their narratives about the classical past a locus communis for a new public, the courtly secular elites. They sought to create a sense of community by providing “a common store of res memorabiles” (Carruthers, The Craft of Thought 44) for an audience to which, in addition, the court that casts its shadow over the urban spaces that I have analyzed was a literal “common place.”

Moreover, the paradoxical task of transforming factual memory into personal memory may be related, as Carruthers also argues, to an equally paradoxical concept—the idea of collective or cultural memory that we have seen is central to understand some of the main preoccupations of the Castilian romans antiques and, I would argue, of medieval romances of antiquity in general. As I have previously discussed, this concept involves the creation of personalized forms of recollection, but these memories are at the same time shared by a given community and are “not only, or even primarily, concerned with preserving the past but rather with maintaining social cohesion and identity” (Whitehead 152). Therefore, within collective memory there is a direct contact between the past and the present, a presence of the past that ultimately amounts to a form of anachronism. The productive tension between personal and factual, or “memory” and
“culture,” explains to a great extent the rhetorical and political usefulness of anachronism.

As I have argued, the preoccupation with the creation and transmission of a collective memory of the classical past in the Alexandre, as well as in the Apolonio, is undoubtedly related to the ongoing cultural process of Europeanization of Europe, for which the roman antique remains a key tool. In her analysis of manuscript h-I-6, Rodríguez Porto also agrees that the codex’s “objective was to resettle ancient history on Iberian soil and thus to claim for the Castilian monarchy a prestigious past, in a fashion both homologous with and distinct from French and Norman constructions of Trojan genealogies” (“Courtliness and its Trujumanes” 244). The use of anachronism in order to bridge the distance between the personal and the factual makes possible the creation of a classical cultural memory for the Castilian elites, in a process that only appears in its full dimension when considered from a pan-European perspective.
CONCLUSION

The *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*, as I hope to have shown, become even richer by reading them as works invested in the shaping, preservation, and diffusion of a cultural memory of antiquity. This preoccupation explains to a great extent the pervasive use of mirroring techniques in both poems, and particularly that of the *mise en abyme*. The reproduction of Alexander’s story in his tent and of Apollonius and Tarsiana’s adventures in the monument in Mitylene are only the most obvious examples of the books’ almost compulsive memorializing. The presence of key Biblical and classical narratives—useful not only as means of enriching the fabric of the story but also *facta memorabilia* in themselves—in the *Alexandre*’s tent and tombs, as well as in the long Trojan digression, respond to the same impulse and similarly reflect the clerkly poet’s important task.

Memory is understood in both poems not just as a set of *dicta et facta memorabilia* that needs to be transmitted, but also, perhaps more importantly, as a technique. That is why the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* also contain a reflection on the media through which it becomes possible to store and disseminate cultural memory. In doing so, they offer valuable information concerning the ways in which word and image interacted in vernacular literature. Seeing pictures and reading written words were practically synonymous in medieval views of representation as a mnemonic rather than a mimetic endeavor; those views are reflected in the treatment of the rhetorical set piece of ekphrasis in the *Alexandre*, which attempts to diffuse the tension between both media embedded in the classical use of this figure. The *Alexandre* and especially the *Apolonio* posit, however, an important distinction between temporally-based, exclusively oral, and fleeting media and spatially-based, visual, and stable means of transmission. In this
respect, the contrast of Apollonius’s and Tarsiana’s anxious and repeated retellings of their own stories with the serenity they acquire once a statue has stabilized their personal and genealogical narratives could not be greater.

A final but crucial aspect of the mnemotechnic dimension of the poems is their attention to the spatial side of memory. While the use of systematic anachronism in the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* undoubtedly responds to a mnemonic idea of re-presentation as a way to make the past present—and thus re-collect past events—, some of its occurrences also transform passages of the poems into *loci memoriae*. By situating the classical past in familiar spaces, the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* are also refashioning it as a literal “common place” to which courtly secular elites can turn as the place of origins—a foundation both for a collective European identity across language, geographical, and political divisions and for individual self-fashioning.

What became of the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* during the centuries immediately following their creation? Were the poems successful in what I have argued was one of their central purposes, the creation of a vernacular and secular collective memory of the classical past? Michel Garcia believes that the two works constitute the best example of the *mester de clerecía*’s “échec dans le domaine de la médiation culturelle” (53), due to the excessive intellectual exigence of both their form and their content. What is more, Garcia has contended that, as a consequence of this failure, “l’orientation dans laquelle la littérature en langue vernaculaire se trouve désormais engagée exclut en grande partie la fiction” (54)—the lack of success of the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio* impeded in Garcia’s
opinion the development not only of *roman antique* but of the whole genre of romance in medieval Castilian literature.\textsuperscript{243}

The only extant witness of the *Apolonio* supports García’s argument that the Castilian public showed a preference for “les thèmes hagiographiques ou moraux au détriment d’une inspiration favorisant la fiction” (53): manuscript K.III.4 of the Biblioteca de El Escorial also contains the *Vida de Santa María Egipciaca* and the *Libre dels tres reys d’Orient* (also known as *Libro de la infancia y muerte de Jesús*). This selection clearly highlights the *Apolonio*’s hagiographic component rather than its relation to classical antiquity. Nevertheless, the figure of Apollonius, whether or not in the form of his *cuaderna vía* poem, remained present in the most important Castilian project of vernacular historiography, Alfonso X’s *General estoria*, where the narrative of the king of Tyre was projected to open the fifth part. The centrality of the Trojan story in the *General estoria* also suggests, if not necessarily the success of the first Castilian *romans antiques*’ project, at least its continuation through a parallel venture seeking to introduce classical narratives in a secular and vernacular space.\textsuperscript{244} In addition, the proliferation during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of works ultimately derived from Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie* attests to the continuous presence of the *roman antique* in Iberian soil.

\textsuperscript{243} García’s opinion about the *Alexandre* and the *Apolonio*’s lack of success is based on the paucity of extant witnesses of the poems, which is nonetheless comparable to other instances of contemporary vernacular literature (Weiss 9 n15). On the problem of the Castilian romance tradition, see the introduction.

\textsuperscript{244} The Alfonsine workshop, moreover, used the *Alexandre* for their account of the Trojan narrative, even though it was not considered as an *auctoritas* and therefore not mentioned as a source (García Solalinde; Casas Rigall, *La materia de Troya* 157-60).
What is more, Apollonius and Alexander became figures for self-fashioning among the courtly elites for which, as I have argued, the poems were composed. Manuel Calderón Calderón has traced the relationship of both characters to Alfonso X, including the *cuaderna vía* poem included in several manuscripts of the *Crónica de Alfonso X* and attributed to the king, in which he compares himself to Apollonius.\(^{245}\) In the case of the *Alexandre*, the famous insertion in *El Victorial* of eighteen stanzas of the poem reproducing Aristotle’s advice to Alexander suggests that it served as the basis for a comparable process as late as the fifteenth century.\(^{246}\) Gutierre Díaz de Games, the author of *El Victorial*, also makes clear that the poem was still deemed worthy of mnemonic investment when he explains that he has reproduced Aristotle’s *castigos* “rhytmicus, porque vienen más a la voluntad que no faze prosayçe” (235).\(^{247}\)

But maybe the best example of a continuing attention to memorial and mnemonic matters comes from the manuscript illustrations that I have considered throughout this work. Both the modest drawings in the late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century manuscript O of the *Alexandre* and the spectacular illuminations in the *Troyana* completed in 1350 reveal an attention to the means to store and transmit their key narratives, at the same time becoming models for the images that the Castilian *romans antiques* seek to etch in the memory of their courtly audiences.

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\(^{245}\) The poem is reproduced in its entirety in the introduction.

\(^{246}\) *El Victorial* is the chivalric biography of Pero Niño, Count of Buelna, composed in the 1430s by Gutierre Díaz de Games. Rafael Beltrán has argued that the *Alexandre* functioned as a biographic model for the composition of *El Victorial* (Díaz de Games 116-18). Casas Rigall has edited the *Alexandre* passages in *El Victorial* (“Excerpts from the *Libro de Alexandre*”). Santillana also mentions the poem, along with a lost Alexander narrative (the *Votos del Pavón*), in his *Proemio e carta*.

\(^{247}\) As Rafael Beltrán notes in his introduction to *El Victorial*, “rhytmicus” means “*rhytmicus*, ‘en verso’” (Díaz de Games 117).
APPENDIX: LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION FOR THE USE OF PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED MATERIAL

June 14, 2010

Dear Prof. Pascual-Argete:

We are pleased to grant your request to reissue your article “El cabdal sepulcro’: Word and Image in the Libro de Alexandre” which will appear in La corónica in vol. 38.2 (Spring, 2010): 71-98.

Copyright for material published in our pages is always shared with the author, so we only ask that you include a full citation of where and when the earlier versions of your essay appeared.

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Sincerely,

[Signature]

Sol Miguel-Prendes
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*Libro de Alexandre.* See Casas Rigall; Cañas Murillo.

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