

REVIEWS

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MOLINA FIGUERAS, Joan, 2018. *La memòria de Carlemany: culte, litúrgia i imatges a la catedral de Girona*, Aguilar de Campo, Fundación Santa María la Real del Patrimonio Histórico

This short book by Joan Molina Figueras, lecturer in Art History at the University of Girona, is part of the field of research he has been developing in recent years, the study of the visual manifestations of cults and legends in the late Middle Ages and the relationship between art and power in the Crown of Aragon. Following this line of study, Molina Figueras presents us with the work *La memòria de Carlemany: culte, litúrgia i imatges a la catedral de Girona*. Through an open and multidisciplinary methodology, he studies the causes, the process of establishment and the mechanisms of survival and memory of Charlemagne's feast, not only in the cathedral of Girona, but also in the collective imaginary of the city in medieval times.

It is worth mentioning the exceptional nature of the work, which stands out for being one of the few monographs on the cult of Charlemagne in Girona, and the only one in the most recent historiography, leaving aside the diverse and numerous articles published by other art historians, especially in Catalonia and France. Likewise, taking into account the relevance it had in Girona's medieval religiosity and, even now, in the social imaginary of the city, it has been a subject that has been little studied with the depth it deserves.

In the introduction to the work, the author offers a brief but excellent state of the art. He goes through the medieval authors and their hagiographies of Charlemagne, presented as a paradigm of monarch and knight, and the legends, mainly from the year 1000 onwards. This was the dynamic of the historiography referring to the emperor in the lands of Girona until the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, when historiography began to introduce a more critical approach, which continues to the present day.

As Molina Figueras points out from the beginning of the work, the cult of Charlemagne in the city of Girona is a completely exceptional fact, not only in the territory of the Principality, but also in the whole Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean. On the other hand, we do find it in many parts of the Empire and in France.

As for the structure of the book, the author –in six chapters– gives a chronological account of the history of the cult and the feast, and also of the religious practices and the mechanisms of devotion and memory. This is how the reader can form a clear picture of the evolution of this cult in the area of Girona.

Thus, each of these chapters conveys a specific aspect of the cult of Charlemagne and his

devotion. The first chapter, “La festa de l’Emperador (1345)”, analyses the origin of the cult and its establishment in the decree of 14 April 1345 by Bishop Arnau de Montrodon, in accordance with hagiographic accounts and the liturgy of northern Europe, but above all in accordance with local legends, which attributed the foundation of the city and the new cathedral to the Carolingian emperor. The second chapter “*Officium in festo Sancti Caroli Magni imperatoris et confessoris*”, studies the formation of the celebration and the office of Saint Charlemagne, choosing January 29 as his day. This will become one of the main and most spectacular of the cathedral of Girona, with a clear fusion between the liturgy of Aachen and the local singularity. The third chapter, “Del text a la paraula: el sermó de l’emperador”, focuses on the writing of the sermon to the emperor inspired by the *Tractatus de captione Gerunde*, text that brings the figure of Charlemagne closer to the general public. The fourth chapter, “La construcció del nou imaginari de la catedral gòtica”, goes back to 1345, with the figure of Arnau de Montrodon, to ask why the feast and cult of Charlemagne was established at that time and by that bishop, and what interests lay behind. It is at this point that the author presents the importance of the Holy Cross, Mary and the autochthonous saints, framing these devotions in the construction of the new Gothic cathedral and the confrontation between the community of Santa Maria and that of Sant Feliu for the primacy of the cathedral. The fifth chapter, “Imatges i topografia del culte”, is mainly devoted to the study of the artistic representations of worship, the images scattered throughout the cathedral and their role in devotional practice: the alabaster statue of Charlemagne, located in the chapel of the four martyr saints until the 19th century; the episcopal chair, behind the high altar; and the keystone of the second transept, dated around 1420, with an iconography that refers to the Valois France. Finally, the sixth and last chapter, “De la supressió de la festa a la pervivència de la memòria”, is devoted to the survival, in the cathedral chapter and the social imaginary, of the cult of Saint Charlemagne from its suppression by Pope Sixtus IV in 1483 to the present day.

The common denominator throughout the work that explains the spread of the cult of Charlemagne is the desire to legitimise the supremacy of Santa Maria over the rest of the diocese of Girona, given that, according to legend and medieval texts, it was Charlemagne himself who ordered the construction of the cathedral, dedicated to Santa Maria, after the conquest of Girona.

This is a brief but excellent monograph that provides an insight into the cult of the emperor Charlemagne in the city of Girona and the processes of legitimisation of the supremacy of the cathedral associated with it. The brevity of the work is contrasted and balanced by the inclusion of an extensive bibliography. This bibliographical section allows the reader to delve deeper into the topics of their interest. In a clear and synthetic way, this book is remarkable for the singularity of its topic, as well as for the interest of the images that support the text.

SERGI REXACH CAMPS

BAERT, Barbara, 2019. *Interruptions and Transitions: Essays on the Senses in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture*, Leiden, Brill

This work is the 14th volume of the series “Art and Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe” which, under the direction of Sarah Blick and Laura D. Gelfand, pays special attention to visual and material culture in the period between approximately 1200 and 1600, proposing a study of the artistic phenomenon from an interdisciplinary perspective. This collection is also characterised by the large number of illustrations that accompany its publications in order to enrich their content.

Under the title *Interruptions and Transitions*, the volume compiles and reviews six articles published by the author between 2011 and 2016, which have a common link between them: the theme of transition or threshold from certain biblical narratives and their form of representation in Christian iconography.

Throughout the different chapters Baert aims to place the reader before what she calls a transitional space, that is, a space in which human beings and their artistic expressions existentially meet, by means of an interdisciplinary two-fold research method. The first method is synchronic, dealing with the relationship between visual analysis and textual analysis, and the second is diachronic, inherent to the historical development of art, alluding to the artistic context of the work (in the sense of the creation and reception of other texts and works of art in the same period). The way in which the biblical text is integrated into the different artistic examples analysed throughout the book necessarily leads the artists to seek ways of expressing sensory experiences that go beyond the realm of the image, such as speech, hearing, taste or touch. The artist places us on a threshold where the principles of ambivalence, reconciliation, invitation, transformation, mediation and synaesthesia take on a leading role. And it is precisely the artist's will to portray an instance of transit –the opening of a threshold– the main reason for the interconnection between the six iconographies studied in the six chapters of the book (Pentecost, *Noli me tangere*, the healing of the bleeding woman, the beheading of Saint John the Baptist, the Dance of Salome and the pneuma in the mystery of the Incarnation). The first essay, on the representation of Pentecost, mainly discusses the miniatures commissioned by the Ottonian dynasty in Reichenau and their way of alluding to the sense of smell associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit by depicting essentially invisible senses. In the case of the *Noli me tangere*, the subject of the second essay, the author argues that this prohibition against touch that Christ delivers to Mary Magdalene triggers a transition to a deeper vision, transcending the sense of sight and including perception also through smell and taste, and describes how artists, with examples from the 10th to the 16th century, attempted to show what is hidden in the pictorial surface. The third chapter, which examines the iconography of the healing of bleeding woman, again highlights the sense of touch and the way in which it represents the timeless moment of healing. Delving into the story of this anonymous

woman underlines the proto-Christian and Semitic origins of the menstrual and touching taboos. According to Baert, the connection between touch and the textile (the woman's contact with Christ's robe) eventually linked this theme to that of Veronica's veil as a creation without human intervention. Veronica is also mentioned in the fourth essay, devoted to the beheading of Saint John the Baptist, in his role as a proto-martyr prefiguring the Passion of Christ. Through the analysis of the so-called *Johannesschüssel* or head of Saint John the Baptist on a platter, we see how this artefact concentrates the power of transition; it reflects how after the decapitation we pass from the sense of hearing (the poet's voice ceases) to the sense of sight (plate and head merge into a single icon). The fifth chapter explores another aspect of the same story, the dance of Salome, and shows how this dance also has an ambiguous or transitional character between sensuality, the healing character associated with certain movements and the bridge to sacrifice. In the last essay, the concept of *pneuma*, also present in the first chapter, is taken up again. Here it is related to the moment of the Annunciation in which the Incarnation takes place. The challenge is, once again, to succeed in representing the wind of the spirit by visual means.

Once the six chapters and the six expressions of the threshold discussed throughout the book have been examined, the intimate relationship that runs through them is evident. The blood taboo and the concept of offering are found in most of the essays, associated both with ancient cycles of fertility and renewal and with Christianity's own form of sacrificial thinking.

In short, the work is very coherent, from the selection of essays to the way they are arranged. Baert acknowledges that she is indebted to the pioneering work in the field of visual studies by Hans Belting and W. J. T. Mitchell, and also values (and integrates into her discourse) the contributions of authors such as Aby Warburg and Georges Didi-Huberman to the interdisciplinary turn in the study of the work of art. The author is committed to a multi-layered analysis that integrates knowledge usually covered separately in Theology, Artistic Sciences, Anthropology or Psychoanalysis, with the ultimate aim of developing a hermeneutic that places the genesis of the image at the centre of her research. Although these aspirations are complementary, the way in which the texts are argued aids their comprehension, conveying erudition and inviting the reader to delve deeper into the abundant secondary themes that emerge from the main discourse.

VANESSA AGUDO

CARRILLO-RANGEL, David; NIETO-ISABEL, Delfi I.; ACOSTA-GARCÍA, Pablo (eds.), 2019. *Touching, Devotional Practices, and Visionary Experience in the Late Middle Ages*. Cham,

Palgrave Macmillan <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-26029-3>

This work involves the participation of authors from different European universities who provide an interdisciplinary and multicultural vision of devotional practices in medieval Europe, mainly female. It is a compilation of different readings and proposals for approaching the low-medieval mystical experience through the sense of touch and the great importance of the materiality of objects in devotional practices. The project was conceived within the framework of the Second International ARDIT Congress of Medievalists in 2015, with the title *Senses and Sensuality in the Middle Ages*.

The book follows a complex structure: it opens with a foreword focused on the meaning of affect and its significance in affectivity, in which D. Carrillo-Rangel starts from contemporary definitions and works to delve into the conception of medieval affect. Then, in a first chapter entitled “A Clash of Theories: Discussing Late Medieval Devotional Perception”, P. Acosta-García introduces the book as a whole, divided into three large sections comprising a total of twenty chapters.

The first part of the work, entitled “Unbinding the Body” (chapters 2 and 3) has as its central theme the importance of liturgical material elements and the relationship with the body in the practical experience. Chapter 2 (B. ZIMBALIST) focuses on the devotional practices of a woman in the context of the *devotio moderna* and analyses the tactile contact between her body and the manuscript of *Jhesus Collacien* in the 15th-century Low Countries; the author highlights the correlation between the content of the text and its material support and the duality of affective piety. Chapter 3 (O. ROBINSON, E. DUTTON) focuses on the different late medieval theatrical representations in women’s convents, which are considered to be devotional practices in which the act of playing the role of the sacred character brings about a spiritual and corporal union. Furthermore, she emphasises the use of relics and liturgical elements, objects that often could only be touched by men; to do so, the authors start from two images: the prohibition *Noli me tangere* to Mary Magdalene, and the figure of Saint Wilgefortis, known for her beard.

The second part, “Wounding the Spiritual Self”, comprises the chapters 4, 5 and 6, which deal with different multi-sensorial approaches to sacred objects and how they involve a materiality that facilitates the mystical experience. Chapter 4 (M. VEDEL HEILSKOV) focuses on the rosary as a material connection to the suffering of Christ in order to show, on the basis of evidence originating in Denmark and the relationship between the rosary, the *Expositio* by the master Miquel and the book of Anna Brade, its character as a multisensory act and how, through prayer, the perception of the world is sacralised. Chapter 5 (L. K. SKINNEBACH), is once again set in a Danish context, and studies the different images in the sacred books and their function. Chapter 6 (H. H. LOHFERT JØRGENSEN) claims the piety of the skin as a space of religious experience and

communion, a means and place of the passion; the author focuses on the depictions of the body of Christ that represent his death or the passion, built with a hyperrealism that supports the experience of martyrdom

The third part “Seizing Nothingness” (chapters 7 to 9) focuses on the study of the works of some mystics and how these recount the love union through bodily senses. Chapter 7 (D. CARRILLO-RANGEL) is a study on sexuality understood as an ideological construction, highlighting that *queer* visionary discourses emerge from an experience of displacement; the author compares and juxtaposes *The Revelations* of Bridget of Sweden in the artistic work of the Turkish Erinç Seymen. Chapter 8 (L. SAETVEIT MILES) analyses the *Book of Margery Kempe* and the dialogue between Margery Kempe and Juliana of Norwich, which she links to the gospel episode of the encounter between Mary and her cousin Elizabeth and the vision of Bridget of Sweden, whose topic is the same biblical episode. Chapter 9 (V. CIRLOT, B. GARI) recounts the amorous experience of different mystics with the divinity and highlights the feminine horizontal aesthetics of secondary senses, where the mystical woman transgresses gender. Furthermore, the authors reflect on the function and power of touch in different devotional practices where the importance of the tactile contact with the sacred material in the mystical experience is made clear. Throughout the study, the authors illustrate the relationship between the body and sacred matter and explain the different perceptions among the different mysticisms..

Overall, the volume –published in physical and digital format– brings together approaches that open up new lines of analysis of the haptic experience in mysticism through testimonies such as sacred and liturgical objects. The importance of the link between the subject and the object is therefore emphasised throughout the work. In addition, each article deals with various objects (from rosaries to theatrical performances and their costumes), addresses very different cultural settings and contexts (Danish, Dutch, English, etc.), and uses current artistic theories and representations to offer a broader and more complete view of the different devotional practices and mystical experience that were practised throughout the late Middle Ages. All in all, it is an innovative, suggestive and provocative book within the trends of current medievalism.

JÚLIA PÉREZ I RIPOLL

CIRLOT, Victoria, 2019. *Visión en rojo*, Madrid, Siruela

Victoria Cirlot, Professor of Romance Philology at the Pompeu Fabra University, has published her latest book, entitled *Visión en rojo*. The book deals with one of the author’s main fields of study, medieval mysticism, to the analysis of which she has devoted several publications. This trajectory began in 1997 with the edition and translation of the work of Hildegard of Bingen,

followed by the publication, with Blanca Garí, of *La Mirada Interior* in 1999, republished by Siruela in 2008.

However, among her extensive bibliography, two books seem to contribute especially to the substratum of *Visión en Rojo*. On the one hand, the edition of *Mística y creación en el s. xx* (Herder Editorial, 2006) which contains seven articles that are the result of a meeting held in May 2004 and, on the other hand, the publication of *La visión abierta: Del mito del Grial al surrealismo* (Siruela, 2010). These two publications by Cirlot announce three fundamental axes that we find in his new book: the treatment of the medieval visionary experience, the interrelation of the philological branch with the study of mysticism, and the perspective of analysis that allows us to search for the trace of medieval mysticism as a founding element of European spiritual identity in contemporary artistic movements. As a result of the effort to fit the three aspects into a case study, the author offers us in *Visión en rojo* a philological work on the aesthetics of the work of Julien of Norwich confronted with contemporary artistic expression. Taking as a starting point the extraordinary hegemony of the colour red in Julien, in *Visión en rojo* Cirlot dives into the relationship between the visions of this medieval mystic, Julien of Norwich, and the creative process of the contemporary currents of abstraction and informalism, and compares his work with that of artists such as Joan Miró and Max Ernst. The book translates the aesthetic language of a medieval mystic into the artistic representations of the century of scepticism, establishing the links that cross the boundaries of time, from the 14th to the 20th century.

Victoria Cirlot takes as a basis for her text the work *Showings* by Julien of Norwich. The premise that leads her to find an explanation through time and space is that, despite the fact that mysticism belongs to a Gothic world, reflected in the themes it deals with (the Passion of Christ), it resolves the aesthetic embodiment of its visions on the basis of the language of abstract and informal currents. Based on this observation and in order to explain the link between the plasticity of the visions of mysticism and the artistic representations of the 20th century, he divides the book into two blocks: “La sangre de Cristo y la Mancha roja” and “La carne de Cristo y el elogio a la materia”. Following a Warbugian logic and drawing on Georges Didi-Huberman’s contributions on the knot of time and Eduardo Cirlot’s consideration of the unfolding of a style, the author aims to and succeeds in bringing the artistic experience and representations of the 20th century into the images evoked by Julien of Norwich.

In the first block, “La sangre de Cristo y la Mancha roja”, the analysis focuses on the appearance of the abstract image –certainly chromatic– in the first and fourth visions, which are related to blood that refer to life. It does so by comparing Julien’s descriptions with contemporary works. Blood plays a fundamental role in the image, in different textures and shades of red, finding its counterpart in Vasili Kandinski to explain abstraction in mysticism. Although he made an initial

move towards Kandinsky's work, it was Yves Klein who, according to Cirlot, best explained the monochrome within the abstraction inherent in Julien of Norwich's images. The relationship between Julien's visions and Kandinski is shaped by the origin of the *pathos* of colour, although the contemporary artist does not share Julien's monochrome. The latter trait is shared with Yves Klein, who comes to see colours in matter that stand out for the monochrome, beyond the monochrome. With this relationship, Cirlot situates Julien of Norwich in a specific expression of abstraction through his use of monochrome in his descriptions of the visions of the blood of Christ.

This first part of the abstraction is complemented by the second block "La carne de Cristo y el elogio a la materia", in which the informal image, opposed to the vitality of abstraction, is exposed. It is about the exchange of blood for the hegemony of flesh, fragmented as it is centred in images that are presented as true photograms. Discolouration prevails over the previous monochrome. Red is replaced by black, brown and pale colours. The second, eighth and ninth views are related to the works of Jean Fautrier and Modesto Cuixart y Tàpies. As in the first block, Cirlot finds a correlation between the description of the visions of Christ's body and flesh on limited planes. The expansion in colour that characterised the visions of the first part, in this one becomes a concretion of the flesh, beyond matter, becoming a clear expression of what is known as Informalism.

Thus, the visions of English mysticism are analysed in a correlation of images between abstraction and informalism. The novelty, already announced in previous works, is shown in the desire to include textual visionary descriptions in the artistic process and the works of twentieth-century currents. However, Victoria Cirlot draws a bridge between expressions of the visionary experience, which we find characterised in Christian revelation and in profane art. Through the two main blocks of the book, the reader is able to delve into the complementarity of two aesthetic movements that characterise Julien of Norwich's vision, so that they return to the reading of visions and the contemplation of abstract and informal art with a renewed and yet timeless perspective.

CLÀUDIA TRUYOLS GROSSI

MITRE, Emilio, 2019. *Morir en la Edad Media. Los hechos y los sentimientos*, Madrid, Editorial Cátedra (Historia / Serie Minor)

If a specialist in the history of death publishes a book on this subject in 2019, it is a sign that this trend is still alive and well in today's historiographical landscape. Emilio Mitre has focused his

research on the history of late medieval Castilian social and political life and on the history of Christianity, the Church, heresies and religious dissidence. But we can say that he also stands out for being one of the Spanish historians who has dealt with the History of Death from the moment this line of research entered Spanish historiographical production in the 1980s. This is neither the first book nor the first work that Emilio Mitre has published on death in the Middle Ages. He published *La muerte vencida. Imágenes e historia en el Occidente medieval (1200-1348)* in 1988, and with it came the full influence of the French Nouvelle Histoire. And this book was followed by others focusing on the figure of the king (*Una muerte para un rey. Enrique III de Castilla (Navidad de 1406)*, Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, 2001) or on the relationship between death, society and illness (*Fantasmas de la Sociedad medieval. Enfermedad. Peste. Muerte*, Valladolid, Universidad de Valladolid, 2004; *Desprecio del mundo y alegría de vivir en la Edad Media*, Madrid, Trotta, 2017). In addition to these works, several articles highlight the great contribution of Professor Mitre to the History of Death in Spanish historiography. Others have followed in his footsteps, such as Jaume Aurell and Julia Pavón, among others.

His new book represents the culmination of a trajectory within the speciality just described. The author himself says so in the introduction, which states that the book follows criteria that seek to update, expand and systematise the History of Death. With a total of fourteen chapters in four parts, the book studies medieval death from different points of view, largely based on the methodology of analysis proposed by Philippe Ariès, so that we see concepts such as discourses on death, physical death or death itself, among others. And we also see the influence of Michel Vovelle when the author refers to the treatment of the sources from the methodological point of view and all the information that the documents offer about the experience of death, the funeral rites and the afterlife.

The seven chapters of the first part, entitled “La elaboración de un discurso para la muerte: un mundo para la metáfora y la polisèmia” outline the methodological aspects of the analysis of the sources. These include a broad spectrum that allows the medievalist to approach the subject of medieval death from the dances of death, Christian theology or lexicography.

The second part, “Encarando la muerte primera”, consists of only two chapters, which include a detailed analysis of wills, one of the main sources for the study of funeral rites and gestures. It also analyses the role of cemeteries in the construction of the memory of lineages. To this end, comparative studies are established between different geographical realities (Spanish, French and English cemeteries) and different social realities (the pantheons of royalty and nobility).

The third part is divided into three chapters dealing with one’s own death (“Alejándose de la muerte pròpia en el medioevo”) and the evolution from this towards the death of others, following the concepts of Philippe Ariès. In the midst of these ideas, the author outlines elements of medieval

mentality and culture, reflecting on themes in which he is also a specialist: violence, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, justice... and the death of the king. This represents, above all other deaths, the death of others par excellence, from which we can understand the attitudes and gestures of medieval society.

Finally, the last part of the book, “Más allá de la muerte”, delves into the theological analysis of the times and spaces that make up the afterlife: Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. The literature of the *novísimos* and Dante help the author to make this almost Dantesque journey, full of signs and meanings, which ends with a final section that includes the concept of eternal life in its title.

Throughout the book the author deals with all kind of sources: images, theological texts, medieval thought, New Testament literature, poems, testaments and fragments of royal chronicles. Mitre's map of death is complete and detailed precisely thanks to this broad spectrum of sources, some of which are summarised in the three quotations included at the beginning of the book, with fragments from Saint Paul, from the testament of King Henry III of Castile and Thomas à Kempis, which are the paradigm of the book's content.

The book includes an introduction, conclusions, an appendix with texts and documents, and a detailed bibliography. These sections complete the work and make it a reference for all those who wish to study the history of death, which can continue to be the subject of research for a long time to come thanks to the large number of wills that remain unpublished in the notarial archives. Far from producing a merely descriptive work full of curiosities, as we often find in books that claim to be part of the history of mentalities, Emilio Mitre culminates his research career by compiling good analyses thanks to a good method. For this reason, we can say that this book shows that it is possible to continue studying the History of Death.

DANIEL PIÑOL

Picón, Daniela (coord.), 2019. “Mística y Literatura”, dossier monogràfic de la *Revista Chilena de Literatura*, 99

Under the title “Mysticism and Literature”, issue 99 of the *Revista Chilena de Literatura* presents a monograph consisting of six articles dealing with Western mysticism from medieval times to the 20th century and the complex relationship between spiritual experience and writing.

Of the six studies included in this dossier, three of them are framed within the last medieval centuries, addressing the new mystical currents: Blanca Garí, in “Caleidoscopios de amor en la mística femenina medieval: Beatrijs van Nazareth y Hadewijch” reinterprets the idea of the spiritual itinerary found in the figures of Beatrijs van Nazareth and Hadewijch based on the circularity and complexity of the kaleidoscope. Victoria Cirlot in “Las visiones de Juliana

de Norwich entre el estilo gótico y la abstracción” studies the relationship between mystical experience and visuality and explores the stylistic novelty derived from the images. Finally, Maria Eugenia Góngora, analyses in “El Cantar de los Cantares y la escritura medieval: Richard Rolle de Hampole (CA. 1300-1349)” the relationship between erotic love and mystical love in the work of Richard Rolle, a connection used to understand and describe man’s encounter with divinity, which will lead to a true literary tradition.

further on in the chronology of Western mysticism, Lucre López-Baralt’s article “La extraña ornitología mística de San Juan de la Cruz” raises the old problem of Islamic and Sufi influences in the work of the 16th century Castilian mystic.

The last two articles deal with mysticism in the contemporary world and confirm the existence of a certain universality in the language of mysticism. In the case of Laia Colell’s work “Los cuadernos de Simone Weil: lenguaje de la cámara nupcial” the writing process is analysed as an exercise that takes place in absolute solitude, so that it is a private writing that means that the experience is framed in the sphere of thought, of interiority. In the case of the second article, which closes the dossier, Pablo Acosta-García studies, under the title “Palabra matriz y escritura poética: José Ángel Valente y la Fable mística”, the work of the 20th century poet José Ángel Valente and shows us how Valente himself established constant connections between the various mystical traditions and his own work.

Two of the aforementioned works devoted to the new mystical currents of the last centuries of the Middle Ages and framed within the so-called new mysticism are particularly interesting. Blanca Gari’s article, which reconstructs a whole mystical topography based on the specific analysis of two works: the small treatise devoted to the seven ways of Love, *Van seuen manieren van heilger minnen*, by Beatrijs van Nazareth and Letter XX, devoted to the twelve innumerable hours of Love, by the Beguine Hadewijch. Throughout this article we will analyse the two itineraries of perfection presented by these two authors in order to understand how the new mysticism goes beyond the idea of the scale of perfection found in patristics, in the monastic tradition and in mysticism. From the texts of feminine mysticism we find a high degree of complexity in the interpretations of the ladder, and in order to verbalise this new image of the itinerary of perfection a series of new symbolic formulations are created. Throughout the pages of the article, Gari details both itineraries in order to create a clear and diaphanous image of how they do not respond to the ascending topography, but rather to the image of a circle that cannot be conceived in a linear way, “un caleidoscopio espiritual que, sin negar la escalera, la desborda” [a spiritual kaleidoscope that, without denying the staircase, overflows it] (p. 32). On the other hand, Victoria Cirlot’s article shows the relationship between the images of the visionary experience and the art of that moment, in order to understand how these images fit in with the iconographic tradition of the time and the function they have. Cirlot explores this aspect in depth by analysing the

visionary experience of Juliana of Norwich in 1373. We are shown how the images conveyed by the mystic's visions, although framed within the themes of the Gothic style –marked above all by the Passion of Christ and the images derived from it– are at the same time clearly close to the monochrome abstraction of contemporary art. In particular, the visions in which Juliana focuses on the blood of Christ convey a strong impression of modernity, as they give us the feeling of abstract paintings. On this basis, the article focuses on the artist Vasili Kandinsky as a precursor of the abstract style. In the following pages, the artistic significance of Kandinski's work is explored, focusing above all on the choice of colour and the visibility of the red colour; these sensations are transferred to Juliana's visions, in which the blood of Christ is very much present.

Both analyses are particularly interesting because they show the complexity of the spiritual experience of the writers of the new mysticism and of the message that their works seek to convey. In any case, the monograph as a whole has an unquestionable value and provides a new point of view from which to observe Western mysticism in a renewed way.

ARIADNA SILVA JIMÉNEZ