

*Diálogo sobre la vida feliz; Epístola exhortatoria a las letras.* Juan de Lucena.

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The series entitled Anejos de la Biblioteca Clásica de la Real Academia Española has recently come to include an edition of two key works by Juan de Lucena. The texts in question are *Diálogo sobre la vida feliz* and *Epístola exhortatoria a las letras*. This excellent critical edition has been edited by Jerónimo Miguel, and includes a footnoted introduction of almost 230 pages, containing 395 references, reflecting the enthusiasm of this author in his efforts to shed light on the life and works of the aforementioned humanist. Furthermore, each of the works is, in turn, accompanied by its own critical apparatus.

Miguel has gathered together an exhaustive amount of information about Lucena through research carried out in archives, such as that of Simancas, as well as the compilation of a modern and abundant literature. Lucena was a converso, but was protected by the queen. However, as we well know, social pressure was merciless: indeed, the canon of Toledo, Alfonso Ortiz, wrote a tract (published in 1493) entitled *Tratado contra la carta del protonotario Lucena*. Lucena was accused of heresy as a result. Although we have no information about his trial, what we do know is that there was another trial, around the same time, in which his mother (not him) was convicted in his absence. Although we do not know the exact date of his death, it must have taken place around 1503 (another document tells us that he was already dead by the spring of 1504).

The editor concludes his biography of the humanist protonotary by reminding us of his progeny, paying special attention to the murder of his daughter Catalina, at the hands of her lunatic husband, immediately after giving birth. He highlights the fact that the Lucena family did not settle in Soria, but rather the family name became scattered throughout Castile — something that was intrinsically natural to the collective behavior of converts and their descendants. There is a new section, particularly interesting and important, which talks of shared or confusing identities. Anyone who has taken a close look at the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries will have come across distracting homonyms. Lucena's prolific social activities were accompanied by written documents, which are summarized by Miguel as diplomatic, didactic, chivalric, mortuary, and anti-inquisitorial texts; these pages culminate with his specific and in-depth study of *Diálogo sobre la vida feliz* and *Epístola exhortatoria a las letras*.

Of the two works, the editor is of the opinion (certainly a very wise view) that it is the first that goes far beyond a mere search for happiness and concerns itself with “the Romance language and the defence of knowledge and science; a concern for the Reconquest . . . the defence of converts and their nobility”; and, in addition to criticizing well-established and not entirely virtuous social customs, such as the harming of fellow men, it also highlights “the ignorance of courtiers and religious men; sorrow for the neglect of education and knowledge in general,” and further matters, still theological, which form a group of subjects of paramount importance. Meanwhile, *Epístola exhortatoria* must have been written toward 1482, in the midst of the turmoil of the aulic cultural revolution, which is clearly described by Miguel. This was a time of national exaltation, preparing the way for what would be a legendary year, that of 1492. However, it was also a time of shadows and heartfelt reforms that were to be imposed. It was for this reason that Lucena came to tell all and sundry that “he who does not know Latin, must be called a two-legged ass.”

Finally, an exhaustive study of the textual transmission of both works — though the lack of sources perhaps prevents a more in-depth analysis of the social history of erudition — as well as a rich critical apparatus and explanatory notes are brought together in the work of Jerónimo Miguel, whose name is not to be found on the cover of this edition, as if it were not worthy of accompanying that of Juan de Lucena.

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