

en los procesos de modernización y en la superación del nacionalismo como único horizonte de expectativas.

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*Vigilar, castigar e imprimir: La producción de libros en la penitenciaría de Lima (1907–1961)*. By CARLOS AGUIRRE and WILLIAM FISHER. Trujillo: Reino de Almagro, 2025. Photographs. Figures. Appendix. Notes. 258 pp. Paper, S/79.00.

Although it was established in 1907 and continued to function until 1961, during a relatively short period, between 1913 and 1926, the printshop of Lima's penitentiary produced several of the most important works of literature of the period, including books by José María Eguren, Abraham Valdelomar, and César Vallejo. In this captivating study Carlos Aguirre and William Fisher provide a fascinating, deep archaeology of knowledge on the Lima penitentiary printshop.

Both authors draw on years of experience and finely honed scholarly tools. To Fisher's expertise in Latin American literary and publishing history, Aguirre, one of Peru's most innovative and prolific historians, adds two key strands of his own extensive research interests: the history of crime, punishment, and imprisonment (on which he has published a single-authored monograph and a seminal volume coedited with Ricardo Salvatore), and the history of books, publishing, and reading—a recent example of which is 2024's *Cinco días en Moscú: Mario Vargas Llosa y el socialismo soviético (1968)*, coauthored with the Russian scholar Kristina Buynova.

Over seven chapters, the authors bring together a dizzying range of sources (including numerous photographs) to explain how and why inmates at Lima's penitentiary produced some of the most avant-garde literary works of early twentieth-century Peru, including Vallejo's revolutionary *Trilce* (1922), widely considered “one of the most important poetry books of the twentieth century in any language” (p. 125). There were printing presses in other Latin American prisons (the one in Buenos Aires was established as early as 1877), but none produced such high-quality literary works. To be sure, the penitentiary printed all sorts of works. An appendix lists 151 books, including one in Quechua, as well as several periodicals printed between 1907 and 1961. But Aguirre and Fisher are primarily concerned with the small number of books of outstanding literary merit published between 1913 and 1926, when “the prison printing press . . . closely accompanied the process of literary, intellectual, editorial, and, to a certain extent, graphic design renewal of that era” (p. 62).

The Lima penitentiary printworks were intended “to provide work for prisoners in order to, in theory, contribute to their moral rehabilitation and at the same time generate income for the institution and its own prisoner-workers” (p. 47). Though not designed to compete with Lima's numerous other printshops, some state-owned, that made possible the important growth in periodicals and books during the early decades of the twentieth century, it is likely, the authors surmise, that the penitentiary printworks were cheaper. In

a context in which aspiring poets and writers had to produce, distribute, and sell their own works, the lower production cost may explain why Vallejo chose to have the Talleres Tipográficos de la Penitenciaría print two of his poetry books. But Aguirre and Fisher show that other factors need to be considered.

They demonstrate the key role played by Abraham Valdelomar, one of the emerging Lima literary scene's major figures. In 1913, his father became the prison's director. He was in the post for little over a year, but the connection had been made. The following year, Valdelomar had his biography of Francisca Zubiaga y Bernales, President Agustín Gamarra's wife, printed in the prison. This connection between Valdelomar and the prison printshop may suffice to explain why others in Lima's small literary circles decided to have their works printed there. But Aguirre and Fisher point to equally important factors. Authors were drawn by the quality of the books produced in the printshop and by the degree of innovation and experimentation in production, covering typography and quality of paper as well as cover design. This may have proved particularly attractive to poets experimenting with form. Additionally, authors could "be directly involved in the design and editing of the book" (p. 131). For Vallejo, who had been imprisoned in Trujillo before moving to Lima and who may therefore have had another, more personal reason to choose the prison printshop, the penitentiary offered a singular opportunity to shape his poetry books during production.

In an epilogue the authors reflect on the relative absence in their account of the prison workers who manned the printing presses and linotypes. The available sources provide limited information on who they were, though Aguirre and Fisher provide fascinating insight nonetheless on these prisoners' agency by drawing on various sources; several photographs give a sense of the environment in which they worked. It is fitting that the quality of these prisoners' work, which Vallejo and others sought out, is echoed in the production of Aguirre and Fisher's volume. From the compelling cover with its wraparound image of the prison printshop to the quality of the paper on which the text is printed, the countless illustrations, and the overall design and editorial care, this is a beautifully and professionally produced book. Reino de Almagro is one of several small presses invigorating humanities and social science publishing in Peru. Together with the authors, the publishers have produced a book that, in form as well as substance, serves as an homage to the largely anonymous prison print workers who, a hundred years ago, helped produce some of Peru's literary masterpieces.

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*El terremoto del Cusco: Reconstrucción, utopías urbanas y Guerra Fría (1950–1953).*

By RAÚL ASENSIO. Estudios Americanos: Tierra Nueva. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2023. Photographs. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. 243 pp. Paper, €12.50.

Raúl Asensio's *El terremoto del Cusco* is a detailed history of the 1950 Cusco earthquake and its local and global consequences. This book joins a growing genre of Latin American