Theatre Survey 53:2 (September 2012)

doi:10.1017/S0040557412000099

RE: SOURCES

BETH KATTELMAN

Eric J. Johnson

A THEATRICAL AND TEXTUAL LABORATORY: THE CLAUDE E. ANIBAL COLLECTION OF SPANISH DRAMA

For generations, scholars of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spanish drama have been attempting to define the parameters that characterize the *comedia suelta*, but to date no firm consensus about the form's textual or generic qualities has been reached. Broadly defined, the term *comedia suelta* embraces theatrical works written in a variety of styles, including *farsas* (short, humorous, carnivalesque texts); *sainetes* (short productions or distinct portions of larger works that are normally danced and sung); *eglogas* (brief pastoral works, often with sad or somber overtones); *entremeses* (concise comedic pieces emphasizing the burlesque and the grotesque); and *autos* (succinct allegorical religious productions frequently tied to the celebration of the Eucharist).[1] Other theatrical forms and subgenres current in Spanish drama of the period might also easily be classified as *sueltas,* depending on one's particular point of view.

Given the potential all-inclusiveness of the label *comedias sueltas,* some who have studied the form have attempted to demarcate its boundaries more stringently by focusing not on generic terms or thematic concerns but on more precise qualities of bibliographical stability and material fixity. In other words, they believe that *comedias sueltas* can best be defined not by the types or styles of theatrical work they represent but by the physical forms in which they are presented.

Eric J. Johnson is Curator of Early Books and Manuscripts at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. He is also OSU Libraries' liaison to the University's Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and teaches regularly in its various course offerings. Eric's research interests include medieval manuscript studies, vernacular theology in the Middle Ages, book history (in all its forms), pedagogical uses of primary source materials, and military propaganda produced for children.

Generally speaking, *sueltas* are cheap, single-volume pamphlets that contain separately issued plays intended to be sold as individual units (as opposed to single play texts printed as part of a larger collection of works bound and issued together within common covers). Although *sueltas* were actively printed from the early 1600s until about 1850, their main period of wide popularity spanned roughly 150 years, from the last quarter of the seventeenth century to the first quarter of the nineteenth. For most of this period, they almost always appeared in quarto format (comprising sheets of paper folded twice to create four leaves, yielding eight pages of text on each sheet), although *sueltas* in the smaller octavo format (sheets folded three times to produce eight leaves, or sixteen pages on each sheet) began to be produced more frequently by the mid-1800s. These short publications typically included twenty-four to sixty-four pages of two-column printed text; twenty-four to forty pages was most common.[2]

Though this basic bibliographical definition of the *suelta* works well enough in allowing us to identify such works quickly and without too much confusion, it is important to remember that this broad, bibliographically defined field encompasses hundreds of separate authors and includes dramatic works extending from the secular to the sacred, from the comic to the tragic, and from the historical to the fantastical. Additionally, the extreme popularity of the form meant that *sueltas* were published on a staggering scale. For every title that may have been printed only once there is at least one—and likely many more—that was reprinted ten, twenty, or even thirty times over the years by a bewildering array of printers located across Spain. The combined textual, generic, and bibliographical diversity and complexity of *sueltas* has made it extremely challenging for those interested in the Spanish theatre to understand fully the complicated histories of these texts and their authors, publishers, and audiences. For scholars who hope to develop their appreciation for *sueltas* and the textual, commercial, intellectual, and performance cultures that depended on them, a simple fact becomes clear: without access to physical copies of primary documents—in this case the original *sueltas*—scholars will not be able to unravel the many problems that presently obscure a clear view of the field.

Original copies of *comedias sueltas* are not rare. In fact, as a result of the massive numbers of such plays printed during the 150 years of their main popularity, it is probably safe to say that original copies of various works can be found in most libraries that house even a smattering of early modern Spanish theatrical materials. Although the sheer number of *sueltas* that survive has engendered significant textual and bibliographical confusion, the very survival of so many of these texts has provided modern scholars with a unique opportunity to construct an accurate picture of theatrical publishing, reading, and performance in Spain during this period. Over the past several decades, many institutions across Europe and North America with sizable numbers of *sueltas* have helped lay the groundwork for more comprehensive scholarly work by preparing detailed descriptive catalogs of their holdings.[3] Some bibliographies list hundreds of volumes, whereas others document much larger collections, such as the more than fourteen thousand individual pieces currently being cataloged at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas.[4] Such in-depth bibliographical efforts have proven extremely valuable in helping researchers identify previously unknown and unstudied texts,

recognize variant editions of single plays, distinguish between the typographical work of anonymous and unspecified printers, and investigate complex questions about textual transmission and reception. These collections and the growing number of catalogs that expedite scholarly access to them offer tools of immeasurable value to anyone interested in learning more about the vibrant and diverse culture of the early modern Spanish stage. The Claude E. Anibal Collection of Spanish Drama of The Ohio State University Libraries (OSUL) perfectly embodies the value of such primary source collections.

Claude E. Anibal, professor of Spanish languages and literatures at The Ohio State University from 1924 to 1955, was an early advocate of the indispensability of primary sources for literary and textual analysis of *comedias sueltas*. Throughout his academic life, Prof. Anibal remained preoccupied with the Spanish stage, specifically in terms of problems of authorship, literary attribution, and textual editing, and over the years he amassed a significant private collection of original *sueltas* that he used for teaching and research until his sudden death in 1955.[5] In 1956, to honor her husband's memory and perpetuate his scholarly legacy, Prof. Anibal's widow generously donated his library and papers to OSUL.[6] Today the Claude E. Anibal Collection is administered and developed by two distinct units of OSUL's Special Collections. The Rare Books and Manuscripts Library (RBMS) oversees a sizable (and growing) group of well over five hundred individual *sueltas* as well as many other associated Spanish dramatic and literary works produced between 1600 and 1899. This core collection of original dramatic texts is supplemented further by the holdings of the Jerome Lawrence & Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute, which holds additional primary source materials, such as *entremeses* and other related works, as well as Prof. Anibal's unpublished manuscript studies of numerous plays written by Lope de Vega, Mira de Amescua, Monroy y Silva, and Juan Bautista de Villegas and his extensive notes on the vocabulary, historical context, style, versification, and sources of the many plays and authors he researched throughout his career.

Although the Anibal Collection is relatively small compared to other cataloged collections—though in many ways is typical of other holdings in its mixture of odd works by lesser-known playwrights, such as Guillén Pierres, and more substantial holdings of texts by famous dramatists, such as Calderón de la Barca, Luciano Francisco Comella, Lope de Vega, and Agustín Moreto y Cabaña—it stands out from its peers in one major respect: the large number of plays featuring manuscript markings.[7] These unique annotations imbue the Anibal collection with additional levels of historical, textual, and cultural authority, allowing us to see these plays not just as static works of dramatic literature but as valuable, living artifacts that testify to the dynamic and continuous histories of production, transmission, staging, reception, and interpretation of each text. For our purposes here, these annotated plays can be divided into three main groups, each of which suggests new ways for us to engage with the many complex questions underlying *suelta* research.

The first and most sizable cluster of annotated works comprises fifty-seven plays containing Prof. Anibal's explanatory notes and textual observations. Although they cannot tell us anything about early modern attitudes toward these

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557412000099 Published online by Cambridge University Press

plays, these notes nevertheless represent an extremely interesting and useful record of the scholarly questions and viewpoints that were prevalent during Anibal's day. Given the overall complexity of the bibliographical and textual histories of *sueltas* in general, the working comments of a trailblazing scholar such as Anibal also offer useful commentary, reminding us that literary texts do not exist in an interpretive vacuum but live and breathe in a continuum of constantly evolving reception and criticism. Anibal's annotations actively demonstrate this intellectual evolution in process, and alongside his surviving notes and manuscripts they provide helpful insights into specific scholarly approaches to analyzing and interpreting particular authors and plays.

A second, much smaller group of marked-up volumes includes plays that feature ownership inscriptions that provide valuable evidence of each text's early provenance. Over the past twenty years, provenance research has become a driving force in book history as scholars search for new ways to place historical literary texts within wider sociocultural contexts.[8] At first glance, these simple inscriptions might not seem to provide much in the way of concrete information, and they may only name individuals for whom it might be impossible to find further information. If we pay close attention to such markings of ownership in *suelta* collections around the world, however, the potential is there to discover a number of interesting things about the broader commercial, collecting, and reading milieus of early modern Spanish drama. Compiling lists of these inscribed names could allow us to reconstruct previously unknown collections of *suelta* materials and, perhaps, help us match these named collectors with recorded figures in a variety of contemporary demographic and documentary sources. By identifying individual collectors we might then be able to learn more about the distribution of *sueltas,* the types of audience they attracted, the economics of collecting, and the personal tastes of individual collectors and readers. These potential answers could then lead us to ask new questions about the social aspects of *suelta* reading and collecting and the wider influence of this literary form on Spanish popular culture in general.

The third, and perhaps most unique, group of marked-up *sueltas* in the Anibal Collection comprises the ten plays featuring annotations that testify to the professional practices of a Madrid-based printer of dramatic texts named Quiroga (likely Manuel Quiroga and possibly later his widow, who apparently took over the business after his death).[9] It would appear that Quiroga acquired copies of each of these plays with the intention of revising their layout for his own press; moreover, in preparing his own editions, he marked his source texts in various ways, all of which now provide insight into the editorial and compositional practices of one eighteenth-century Spanish theatrical printer. A few examples of Quiroga's editing activities should suffice to point out the importance of these manuscript annotations. The number "2000" has been written on the front page of several of these plays, a significant addition that Víctor Arizpe has argued denotes the number of copies Quiroga intended to print.[10] If Arizpe's interpretation is correct, these notations offer concrete evidence of the size of a print run for a *suelta* during this period. Some of these source texts also contain instructions to the compositor about how many lines of text each page should include. For instance, Quiroga stipulates that his edition of Antonio Bazo's *La piedad de un*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557412000099 Published online by Cambridge University Press

hijo vence la impiedad de un padre, y real jura de Artaxerxes [A Son's Mercy Conquers a Father's Cruelty, and the Royal Oath of Artaxerxes] should include fifty lines of text per column (Fig. 1). These editorially annotated texts also include markings indicating changes Quiroga wished to make to typographical elements, such as converting roman type to italic, alterations to the layout of act divisions and stage directions, and deletions of ornamental features such as columnar boundaries and decorative pieces of type for which his print shop likely had no direct analogues. Quiroga also altered his source texts' colophons by updating the date and place of publication and noting that his new edition would be reprinted according to well-known generic conventions (Fig. 2).

Quiroga's annotations can tell us much about the enduring popularity of particular authors and titles, his expectations of commercial success, and his own particular printer's aesthetic. These marked-up copies can also reveal details about the strategies printers used to produce texts as economically as possible. A close analysis of the markings in Tomás de Iriarte's *El señorito mimado, ó La mala educacion* [The Pampered Dandy; or, Bad Manners] illustrates the value of Quiroga's annotations—both to his bottom line as a printer and to modern scholars studying the economics of printed play production. At the top of the play's first page, Quiroga has noted that each appearance of the words "Don" and "Doña" demarcating the beginning of individual portions of dialogue throughout the text should be removed. Over the course of the forty pages of text, these deletions amount to a total excision of 2,621 total ems (individual pieces of type). The omission of these letters does not decrease considerably the amount of *space* necessary to print each line of text, but it does reduce the amount of *type* that the compositor would have had to set. Given that an average compositor of the time could set approximately 1,250–1,500 ems of type per hour, this simple editorial expedient would have trimmed approximately two hours' worth of composition labor, saving Quiroga additional wages for time spent assembling this text and allowing him to assign his compositor another piece of work.

Other annotations by Quiroga reveal a more substantial way that he saved money on his printing of this play. Throughout the text he marked 257 places where he planned to collapse or combine lines, resulting in a substantial reduction of the total amount of space necessary to set the complete text (Fig. 3). Altogether, these 257 dropped lines amount to just over five columns' worth of set text in his model copy. Multiplied over an entire print run of two thousand copies, the total Quiroga apparently planned for many of his editions, this would be the equivalent of a reduction of 10,080 total columns of type. In a typical *suelta* quarto edition, sixteen columns of text were printed on each sheet. By dividing the total number of columns Quiroga's editing activities saved by the total number of columns printed per sheet, we arrive at a total savings of 630 sheets over the print run. Considering the fact that the cost of paper was a printer's heaviest financial burden during the hand press period, these savings would have been very welcome.

Additional examples of how Quiroga's editorial annotations would have impacted the production, packaging, and marketing of his texts abound throughout these ten marked-up texts. By paying close attention to such bibliographical and typographical evidence we can speculate more intelligently about the economic

1000. -a 50. Lineas

~~N.87.~~ ~~Pag. 1~~

COMEDIA ~~FAMOSA~~.

LA PIEDAD DE UN HIJO
VENCE LA IMPIEDAD
DE UN PADRE,
Y REAL JURA
DE ARTAXERXES.

DE DON ANTONIO BAZO.

~~HABLAN EN ELLA LAS~~ PERSONAS ~~SIGUIENTES~~.

Artaxerxes, Principe de Perſia.
Arbaces, hijo de Artabano, Galàn.
Cambiſes, General, Galàn.
Artabano, Capitan, Barba.

Mandane, Infanta, Dama.
Semira, hija de Artabano.
Lucinda, Criada.
Alarve, Graciòſo.

Quatro Generales.
Damas. ~~Muſicos~~.
Soldados.
Acompañamiento.

JORNADA PRIMERA.

Jornada primera

~~Mutacion de Jardin, y ſalen Mandane y Infanta, Damas, y Arbaces, Galàn.~~

Arb. SUpueſto que ya la Aurora
las negras ſombras deſtierra,
es preciſo, dueño mio,
(aunque me mate la pena
de dexarte) el auſentarme
de tu adorada preſencia.
Quedate con Dios. *Mand.* Arbaces,
como con tanta preſteza
eſta noche te deſpides?
què poco fino te mueſtras
adelantandote aſsi
à lo que yo no pudiera.
Arb. Muy al contrario inferiſte,
hermoſa Mandane bella,
de mi amor, no conociendo,
que me obliga ſu grandeza,
por evitar rieſgos tuyos,
à lo miſmo que condenas;
y porque lo ſepas, oye:
Bien ſabes, amada prenda,
que Xerxes el Rey tu padre,
grande Emperador de Perſia,
teniendo de nueſtro amor
algunas leves ſoſpechas,
me deſterrò de la Corte,
y que ſi acaſo ſupiera,
que de la noche valido
vengo à adorar tu belleza,
quebrantando la Real orden,
que eſtos umbrales me niega,
quizàs vengaria en tì
eſta imaginada ofenſa.
Mand. No es injuſto tu recelo;
pero pues èl te deſtierra

A

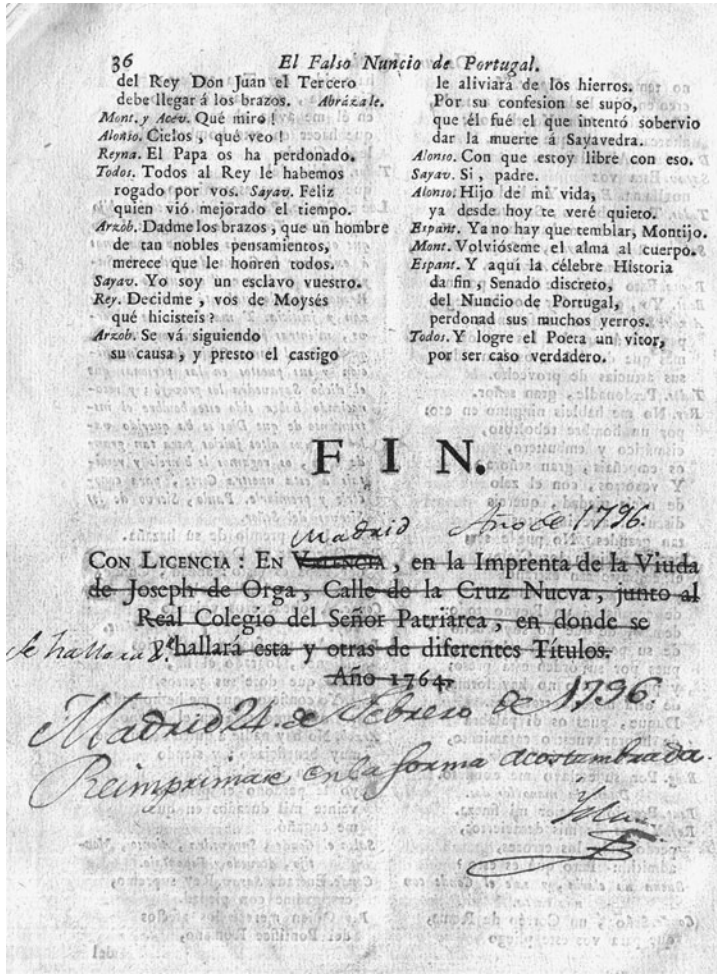
de

Figure 1.

Antonio Bazo, *La piedad de un hijo vence la impiedad de un padre, y real jura de Artaxerxes* (Valencia: la Viuda de Joseph de Orga, 1765). At the top are Quiroga's notes designating the number of copies to print and the total number of lines to be set per page.

and commercial environment surrounding the production, distribution, and collecting of *comedias sueltas* and, in turn, think about how the practices of printing houses directly and indirectly influenced the public's buying choices and reading interests. These practices might also provide clues about the popularity of particular plays and about theatre practices of the time.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557412000099 Published online by Cambridge University Press



36 *El Falso Nuncio de Portugal.*

del Rey Don Juan el Tercero
debe llegar á los brazos. *Abrázale.*
Mont. y Acev. Qué miro!
Alonso. Cielos, qué veo!
Reyna. El Papa os ha perdonado.
Todos. Todos al Rey le habemos
rogado por vos. *Sayav.* Feliz
quien vió mejorado el tiempo.
Arzób. Dadme los brazos, que un hombre
de tan nobles pensamientos,
merece que le honren todos.
Sayav. Yo soy un esclavo vuestro.
Rey. Decidme, vos de Moysés
qué hicisteis?
Arzób. Se vá siguiendo
su causa, y presto el castigo
le aliviará de los hierros.
Por su confesion se supo,
que él fué el que intentó sobervio
dar la muerte á Sayavedra.
Alonso. Con que estoy libre con eso.
Sayav. Si, padre.
Alonso. Hijo de mi vida,
ya desde hoy te veré quieto.
Espant. Ya no hay que temblar, Montijo.
Mont. Volvióseme el alma al cuerpo.
Espant. Y aquí la célebre Historia
da fin, Senado discreto,
del Nuncio de Portugal,
perdonad sus muchos yerros.
Todos. Y logre el Poeta un vitor,
por ser caso verdadero.

FIN.

Madrid Año de 1796.

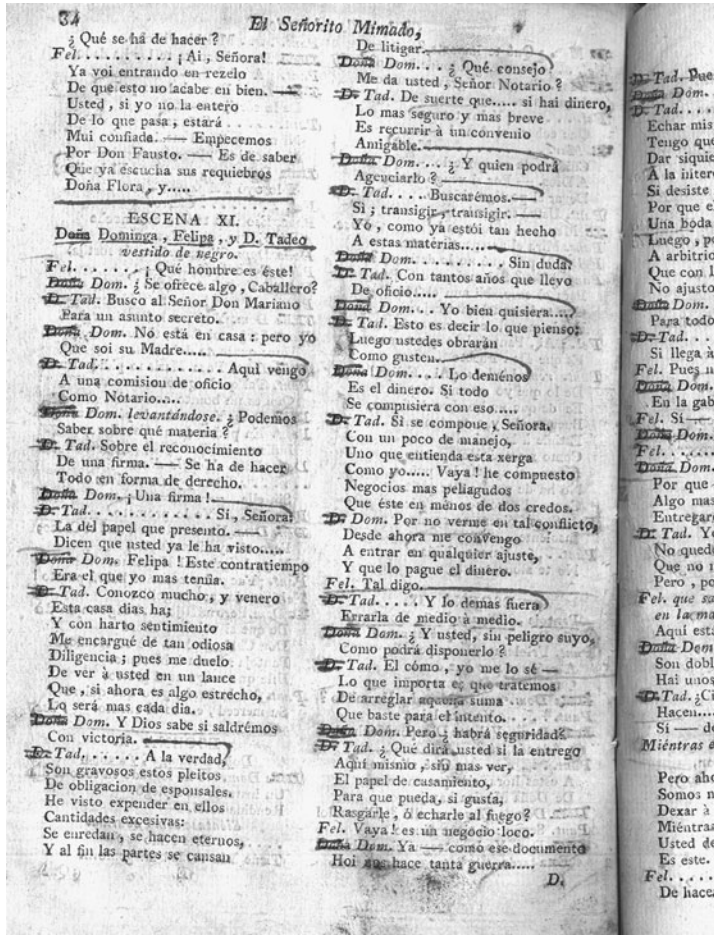
CON LICENCIA: EN ~~Valencia~~, en la Imprenta de la Viuda de Joseph de Orga, Calle de la Cruz Nueva, junto al Real Colegio del Señor Patriarca, en donde se ~~le hallará~~ hallará esta y otras de diferentes Títulos.
~~Año 1764.~~

Madrid 24. de Febrero de 1796.
Reimprimase en la forma acostumbrada.

Figure 2.
José de Cañizares, *El falso nuncio de Portugal* (Valencia: la Viuda de Joseph de Orga, 1764). Note Quiroga's addition of the new colophon in manuscript.

In sum, the Claude E. Anibal Collection of Spanish Drama at OSUL offers scholars a remarkable laboratory for the study of Spanish theatre from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. What can be done there to learn more about the criticism, provenance, staging history, printing and publishing, distribution, reception, and interpretation of *sueltas,* however, can be done in the many other specialized collections of such materials located around the world. I hope that in the years to come scholars will work together to compile annotated

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557412000099 Published online by Cambridge University Press



34 El Señorito Mimado,

¿Qué se ha de hacer?
Fel. . . . . . ¡Ai, Señora!
Ya voi entrando en rezelo
De que esto no acabe en bien. —
Usted, si yo no la entero
De lo que pasa, estará
Mui confiada. — Empecemos
Por Don Fausto. — Es de saber
Que ya escucha sus requiebros
Doña Flora, y.....

ESCENA XI.

Doña Dominga, Felipa, y D. Tadeo *vestido de negro.*

Fel. . . . . . ¡Qué hombre es éste!
Dom. ¿Se ofrece algo, Caballero?
Tad. Busco al Señor Don Marimo
Para un asunto secreto.
Dom. Nó está en casa: pero yo
Que soi su Madre.....
Tad. . . . . . Aquí vengo
A una comision de oficio
Como Notario.....
Dom. levantándose. ¿Podemos
Saber sobre qué materia?
Tad. Sobre el reconocimiento
De una firma. — Se ha de hacer
Todo en forma de derecho.
Dom. ¡Una firma!
Tad. . . . . . Sí, Señora:
La del papel que presento. —
Dicen que usted ya le ha visto.....
Dom. Felipa! Este contratiempo
Era el que yo mas tenía.
Tad. Conozco mucho, y venero
Esta casa dias ha;
Y con harto sentimiento
Me encargué de tan odiosa
Diligencia; pues me duelo
De ver à usted en un lance
Que, si ahora es algo estrecho,
Lo será mas cada dia.
Dom. Y Dios sabe si saldrémos
Con victoria.
Tad. . . . . . A la verdad,
Son gravosos estos pleitos
De obligacion de esponsales.
He visto expender en ellos
Cantidades excesivas:
Se enredan, se hacen eternos,
Y al fin las partes se cansan
De litigar.
Dom. . . . ¿Qué consejo
Me da usted, Señor Notario?
Tad. De suerte que..... si hai dinero,
Lo mas seguro y mas breve
Es recurrir à un convenio
Amigable.
Dom. . . . ¿Y quien podrá
Agenciarlo?
Tad. . . . . Buscarémos. —
Si; transigir, transigir. —
Yo, como ya estói tan hecho
A estas materias.....
Dom. . . . . . Sin duda:
Tad. Con tantos años que llevo
De oficio.....
Dom. . . Yo bien quisiera.....
Tad. Esto es decir lo que pienso:
Luego ustedes obrarán
Como gusten.
Dom. . . . Lo deménos
Es el dinero. Si todo
Se compusiera con eso....
Tad. Si se compone, Señora.
Con un poco de manejo,
Uno que entienda esta xerga
Como yo..... Vaya! he compuesto
Negocios mas peliagudos
Que éste en ménos de dos credos.
Dom. Por no verme en tal conflicto,
Desde ahora me convengo
A entrar en qualquier ajuste,
Y que lo pague el dinero.
Fel. Tal digo.
Tad. . . . . Y lo demas fuera
Errarla de medio à medio.
Dom. ¿Y usted, sin peligro suyo,
Como podrá disponerlo?
Tad. El cómo, yo me lo sé —
Lo que importa es que tratemos
De arreglar aquella suma
Que baste para el intento.
Dom. Pero ¿habrá seguridad?
Tad. ¿Qué dirá usted si la entrego
Aquí mismo, sin mas ver,
El papel de casamiento,
Para que pueda, si gusta,
Rasgarle, ó echarle al fuego?
Fel. Vaya! es un negocio loco.
Dom. Ya — como ese documento
Hoi nos hace tanta guerra.....

D.

Figure 3.
Tomás de IriaRte, *El señorito mimado, ó la mala educacion* (Barcelona: la Viuda Piferrer, ca. 1780), 34–5.

data sets that will facilitate critical comparison of the holdings of these collections, thereby revealing in more full and vibrant detail the complex and exciting world of early modern Spanish drama.

ENDNOTES

1. For more extended discussions of theatrical genres popular in seventeenth- through nineteenth-century Spain, see Javier Huerta Calvo and María Angulo Egea, *Historia del teatro breve en España* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040557412000099 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2. Other discussions of the defining physical characteristics of the form can be found in numerous catalogs and handlists of individual collections of *sueltas*. Two of the most comprehensive accounts can be found in Hannah E. Bergman and Szilvia E. Szmuk, *A Catalogue of* Comedias Sueltas *in the New York Public Library,* 2 vols. (London: Grant & Cutler Ltd., 1980), 1: 10–12; and Margarita Vázquez Estévez, *Comedias sueltas: Sin pie de imprenta en la biblioteca del "Institut del Teatre" (Barcelona)* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 1987), 5–9.

3. Don W. Cruickshank's article, "Some Problems Posed by *Suelta* Editions of Plays," in *Editing the Comedia II*, ed. Michael McGaha and Frank P. Casa, special issue of *Michigan Romance Studies* 11 (1991): 97–123, includes a substantial list of relevant author bibliographies and catalogs of particular collections. In addition, Cruickshank discusses many fine points of textual and bibliographical investigation that can help us learn more about *sueltas* and their authors, publishers, and audiences.

4. In January 2011 the Harry Ransom Center announced that it had received a $137,015 Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) for its project "Revealing Texas Collections of *Comedias Sueltas*." In addition to covering the Ransom Center's own substantial holdings, the grant is funding the cataloging of more than six hundred *sueltas* at Texas A&M University. The project is scheduled for completion in February 2014. For the full press release, see "Ransom Center Receives Grant to Catalog Spanish *Comedias Sueltas,*" 10 January 2011, *http://www.utexas.edu/news/2011/01/10/ransom_comedias_sueltas/*.

5. Arnold G. Reichenberger, "Necrology: Claude E. Anibal (1888–1955)," *Hispanic Review* 23.4 (1955): 298–302.

6. For a full description of this bequest, see Víctor Arizpe, *The Spanish Drama Collection at the Ohio State University Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 1990), 2–5.

7. Víctor Arizpe pays particular attention to these marked-up plays in his descriptive catalog of the Claude E. Anibal Collection and in his article "Evidenciary Marks in *Comedias Sueltas:* Recording and Interpreting Manuscript Markings on Plays," *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 41.2 (Winter 1989): 173–95.

8. For a full discussion of provenance research and its importance to the pursuit of bibliographical and literary history, see David Pearson, *Provenance Research in Book History: A Handbook* (London: British Library, 1998).

9. Arizpe, "Evidenciary Marks in *Comedias Sueltas,*" 177.

10. Arizpe, *Spanish Drama Collection,* 9.