

Comedias varias I: "Morir y disimular," "Gravedad en Villaverde," "La más constante mujer." Juan Pérez de Montalbán.

Ed. Claudia Demattè, David Arbesú, and Philip Allen. Teatro del Siglo del Oro: Ediciones críticas 209; Obras de Juan Pérez de Montalbán 3.1. Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 2016. x + 356 pp. €82.

The enormous production of Golden Age theater (mainly thanks to the vast number of projects linked to Lope, Calderón, and Tirso) is now augmented by the arrival of a series of critical editions aimed at collecting the complete legacy of the celebrated Spanish playwright Juan Pérez de Montalbán. Edition Reichenberger has decided to bring to light the complete works of Montalbán, starting with the two "official" volumes published in the author's lifetime (1635, 1638): the first (*Primer volumen de comedias*) appeared in two volumes in 2013 and 2014, and the second (*Segundo volumen*) is still under preparation. To these works will be added the voluminous miscellany *Para todos*, also under preparation and whose overflowing success at the time of its publication gave rise to one of the most sour literary polemics of the moment with Francisco de Quevedo, who did not hesitate to brand the author a coarse imitator of Lope (even if Montalbán never hid his devotion to the work of his teacher and friend, the quality of his works went far beyond the rough imitation of a second-class playwright). Finally, the catalogue will be closed with the volumes of *Comedias varias* that will pick up those pieces that were published apart from the *Primer* and *Segundo volumen de comedias*.

It is important to mention that the three comedies published in this *Comedias varias*, vol. 3.1, are followed by interesting reflections on their textual transmission, reception, and some key aspects of their date of composition and authorship. The first comedy is the earliest one written by the playwright (*Morir y disimular*), now edited by C. Demattè, composed in late adolescence and strongly critical against the courtly fashions of the time. The second comedy is *Gravedad en Villaverde*, edited by D. Arbesú, an adaptation of the author's successful exemplary novel *La villana de Pinto*. Finally, the third is *La más constante mujer*, edited by P. Allen, one of the author's most successful works by number of editions, translations, international projection, and number of representations, and in which a more than interesting resolution of the plot is due to the initiative of the feminine characters. Perhaps for that reason it is not surprising that this comedy had to escape the ten year censorship from 1625 to 1635, during which it was prohibited to print comedies in Castile with the illusive purpose of ending an alleged prevailing sexual immorality that the theater was directly accused of spreading.

The work of Montalbán has been extensively analyzed to date, although his narrative is better known than his theater, as testified by the studies of Victor Dixon, María Grazia Profeti, or Luigi Giuliani. His plays have been scarcely treated, at least in comparison, and in that area stand out the studies of German Vega and Claudia Demattè, who signs the first of three comedies collected in this volume and is also the visible

figure of the editions of the two official volumes recently reissued and in preparation. In conclusion, *Comedias varias* vol. 3.1 comes to complete a very pertinent editorial objective to bring to light the complete works of Montalbán, and to which will soon be added the volumes of *Estudios de literatura*, *Bibliografías*, and *Catálogos*. This is, in sum, a long-term project: Montalbán's success and *ingenio* well deserve it.

Oriol Miró Martí, *Universidad Internacional de La Rioja*

The Book of the Mutability of Fortune. Christine de Pizan.

Ed. and trans. Geri L. Smith. *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 52; Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 514*. Toronto: Iter Press; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2017. xvi + 294 pp. \$44.95.

With her translation of Christine de Pizan's long poem *The Book of the Mutability of Fortune* (1400–03), Geri L. Smith gives us a perfect introduction to a medieval writer who has become a superstar of sorts. The phenomenon reflects a rupture in a male-dominated history of Western literature exemplified by Gustave Lanson's double-edge description in the first volume of his *Histoire de la littérature française* from 1894 of "the excellent Christine de Pisan" as a good daughter, wife, and mother on the one hand, and a writer of "universal mediocrity" on the other. This valorization, which gave female writers a special status in the history of literature until the end of the twentieth century, is typical for a canon formation informed by patriarchal norms and values, as well as by strategies to maintain this form of masculine domination. However, before feminism entered academia, Christine de Pizan's work was read and translated among the medieval and early modern European cultural elite. Thus one of the more interesting aspects of Smith's translation is that it highlights the importance of letting "other" voices speak and be heard in order to give modern readers a possibility to encounter a history that corresponds to the polyvalence of every discourse and, as is noted in Smith's informative introduction, "come away with new perspectives of their own" (27). Other voices, as Christine's, are in other words seminal for the evolution of critical thinking. Further, Smith's description of Christine's otherness escapes the pitfall of a binary force relation between same and other (so well analyzed by Simone de Beauvoir). What the reader gets instead is a clarification of the intriguing and always possible force of transcending and thereby changing the hegemonic order and putting history in motion.

Christine was the first professional woman author in France. Italian by birth, she was one of the first to bring humanistic thought to the French intellectual milieu, as when she argues that Dante is a greater poet than Jean de Meun, the misogynistic second author of the *Roman de la Rose*, the most read book in France at her time. Smith also notes that Christine's official refutation of this canonical book in the so-called *querelle de*