

A Companion to Early Modern Hispanic Theater. Hilaire Kallendorf, ed.
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xv + 388 pp. \$188.

A Companion to Early Modern Hispanic Theater largely achieves the goal set out by editor Hilaire Kallendorf in her introduction: namely, to provide an overview of the current state of affairs in Golden Age *comedia* studies. Divided into four broadly defined sections — “Origins,” “Themes,” “Places,” and “Intersections” — this anthology includes essays by an impressive list of scholars whose collective contributions highlight the underlying diversity of this dynamic area of research. This is a collection that has something for just about everyone, from graduate-level students encountering the *comedia* and its related forms for the first time, to seasoned scholars who will discover among these essays some real gems.

Looking beyond the book's formal divisions, I find that there are perhaps three tendencies in the scholarship here that help to define the significant contributions of this anthology. First, several essays in this collection make novel interventions in long-established debates within the field of *comedia* studies that open up new ways of thinking about old problems. A. Robert Lauer's study of honor stands out in this regard for its careful examination of the etymological roots of the terms *honor* and *honra* and their complex usage within the *comedia*. Other scholars whose contributions fit within this category include Robert Bayliss ("Courtly Love and the *Comedia*"), Frederick de Armas ("The *Comedia* and the Classics"), and Matthew D. Stroud ("The Wife-Murder Plays"). The essays that form a second group shed light on texts that have received less attention in the critical literature and, in the process, illuminate new paths for future research. Manuel Delgado Morales's chapter on the works of Gil Vicente exemplifies this other tendency, as does Ted L. L. Bergman's highly insightful piece "*Entremeses* and Other Forms of *Teatro Breve*" and Christina H. Lee's article on Lope de Vega's *The Martyrs of Japan*. Enrique García Santo-Tomás's study of urban space in Calderón's lesser-known plays, with its explicit interest in the problem of canon formation, also fits comfortably within this second category. Finally, a third category of essays submits the *comedia* to innovative interpretative strategies that encourage us to think of the genre as a whole in new ways. Edward H. Friedman's meditation on the points of contact between the *comedia* and picaresque fiction, for example, draws powerful connections between two genres that are infrequently studied in tandem. I would also place Henry W. Sullivan's study of *El médico de su honra*, with its smart synthesis of Lacanian psychoanalysis and Aristotelian theories of tragedy, in this third category. Finally, Adrienne Martín's essay on animals in the theater of Golden Age Spain presents a critical perspective on the genre that is, to my knowledge, without precedent.

In practice, I suspect that this collection of essays will find its greatest use as a reference for research into the myriad areas of scholarship represented within its pages. I can further imagine a place for many of these essays on reading lists for advanced undergraduate and graduate seminars. I was also heartened to discover a summary bibliography at the end of the text — this should prove to be an invaluable resource for both scholars and students who might wish to follow up on the topics covered in the collection.

Taken as a whole, however, what stands out most in this anthology is the eclecticism of the included scholarship. In this sense, this book may be said less to provide a definitive answer to the question of the state of *comedia* studies than to underscore the sheer diversity of interpretative approaches and themes that fall under this deceptively simple rubric. It is here, I would argue, that we discover the deeper significance of Kallendorf's attempt to offer us something of an overview of the field: the eclecticism on display in the pages of *A Companion to Early Modern Hispanic Theater* reflects the complex heterogeneity of the *comedia* itself as a dramatic form that defies easy categorization. In the end, this collection of essays serves as a powerful reminder of precisely that complexity.

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