

Incroci teatrali Italo-Iberici. Michela Graziani and Salomé Vuelta García, eds. Biblioteca dell'“Archivum Romanicum,” Serie 1: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia 490. Florence: Olschki, 2018. viii + 152 pp. €25.

The volume comprises papers presented to the seminar *Relazioni linguistiche e letterarie fra Italia e mondo iberico in età moderna*, sponsored by the Università degli Studi di Firenze in 2017. They offer an important contribution to theatrical studies by revealing a complex and sometimes unexpected web of reciprocal influences of Italian plays and Portuguese and Spanish plays in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Valeria Tocco details the *Comèdia Eufrosina's* absorption of features of Italian texts that circulated in Spain, including Leon Battista Alberti's *Philodoxeus* and Battista Spagnoli's *Parthenice mariana*. Any influence of the comedies of Ariosto, Bibbiena, Machiavelli, and Boccaccio on it, she concludes, arrived via Portuguese and Spanish works and was generic. Michela Graziani laments the loss of much information about sixteenth-century Portuguese playwrights and their texts through suppression by a Catholic Church stung by their critiques. Inspired by the Italian comic epics, their works satirize Charlemagne and his knights as ridiculous and allow expressions of amorous sentiment to slide toward the clownish. On the other hand, they hold up Florence and Venice as centers of commerce and elegance. One small point: the title *marchese* for the lord of Ferrara in *Auto do Duque de Florença* could be an indication of the regional origin of the author or a text being imitated. Although the Este lord became a duke in 1450, many in nearby regions, including Venice, continued to refer to him as *marchese* well into the sixteenth century. Old habits die hard.

Teresa Megale, exploring the world of comedic companies, notes that Spanish companies required a woman to document her marriage as a condition of membership, while some Italian companies were more relaxed about actresses' marital status. Both, however, structured their works around the couple and appreciated the importance of women performers. Indeed, Megale sees the inclusion of actresses in companies as a basic characteristic of the professionalized theater of the *comici dell'arte* and an index of its adoption in other countries. Further observations of interest: a Spanish diplomat convinced Pope Gregory XIII to allow the *Gelosi* of Francesco and Isabella Andreini to perform in public as a means of avoiding violence at Carnival. Anna Pérez, a Spanish actress established in Naples, accumulated a significant fortune. The nobles of the *Accademia degli Oziosi*, noble dilettante theater practitioners, exchanged influences with the popular street-performance world of the companies.

Mariagrazia Russo and Carlo Pelliccia detail the interaction between diplomacy and performance for the Portuguese. Originating in the kings' exotic gifts to the pope from the areas of the world that their expeditions had recently discovered, including a white elephant who performed for Leo X, the practice characterized the relations between Portugal and China as well. China also saw a particularly vigorous development by Jesuit missionaries of their order's use of theater as a means of instruction. The appeal

of Western theater was confirmed by a group of youthful Japanese ambassadors to Pope Gregory XIII, who requested a visit to the new Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza on their return journey. Circulating Italian and Spanish influences in the work of Ottaviano Castelli, close to the family of Urban VIII, are the focus of Nicola Badolato. Castelli's *Favorito del principe*, Badolato notes, was influenced by the Spanish play *Carlos el perseguido*, in turn inspired by a novella of Matteo Bandello. It was performed at the French embassy in Rome, reflective of France's role as an important geographic and cultural bridge along which Italian commedia dell'arte troupes and theatrical influences traveled.

Less happy effects of the Catholic Church are detailed by Héctor Urzáiz—in particular, its censure of theater, applied with particular harshness to comedies. Comparing the manuscript version of Lope de Vega's *La bella malmaridada* with its later printed form, Urzáiz determines that, after having been targeted by the Inquisition, Lope removed the features that provided color but also could scandalize. Finally, the specific influence of Juan Pérez de Montalbán in seventeenth-century Florence is detailed by Salomé Vuelta García. His *Amor, lealtad y amistad* inspired multiple Italian versions that made some adaptations to local conditions and tastes. Among these was allowing the actor portraying a comic, lower-class character to improvise a crucial speech, bringing it closer to the norms of the commedia dell'arte.

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Drama in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Playmakers and Their Strategies.
Nadia Thérèse Van Pelt.

Themes in Medieval and Early Modern History. London: Routledge, 2019. xxii + 144 pp. \$44.95.

Drama in Medieval and Early Modern Europe is a broad-scope exploration of how theater and other forms of popular entertainment were both conceived and received in premodern Europe. In particular, Nadia Van Pelt's first monograph focuses on the reception of a collection of plays and pageants from across the European territories that demonstrate "playmakers' varying degrees of success in calibrating potentially dangerous or offence-giving elements to local performance contexts" (123). In addition to dispensing with national borders, Van Pelt also chooses to forgo the line that separates the medieval and early modern periods, a distinction that "traditionally suggests an evolutionary reading of drama and ritual, in which naïve forms are followed up by more sophisticated ones, rather than a more fluid reading in which continuity in dramatic and ritual performances can be emphasised" (4–5). This boundary-bending approach shares in a broader desire to do away with the artificial partitions, whether temporal or locative, that she rightly deems as distorting our understanding of how knowledge and culture is formed and formulated.