LITERATURE 1490–1700 (DRAMA)

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(This survey covers the years 2006, 2007 and 2008)

1. General

Jonathan Thacker, A Companion to Golden Age Theatre, Woodbridge, Tamesis, 2007, xiii + 223 pp., provides an overview of and guide to all aspects of the drama of the Golden Age from the 16th-c. amateur playwrights to the age of Calderón. The volume has a heavier emphasis than most such studies on aspects of performance, and a short history of the reception of the comedia nueva is included. The way the comedia has been perceived over the ages is also considered by M. D. Stroud, ‘Defining the comedia: on generalizations once widely accepted that are no longer accepted so widely’, BC, 58.2, 2006:285–306. Approaches to Teaching Early Modern Spanish Drama, ed. Laura R. Bass and Margaret R. Greer, NY, MLA, 2006, xii + 281 pp., is a volume aimed at those who teach the drama in higher education institutions. It has a useful list of resources in its first part and, in the second, more than 20 individual short articles by established specialists dealing with different approaches to tackling the plays in the classroom, from exploring their historical frameworks to ‘cross-cultural’ approaches.

The first part of the *Historia del teatro breve en España, ed. Javier Huerta Calvo, M, Iberoamericana — Frankfurt, Vervuert, 1345 pp., deals with the shorter forms of theatre in the Golden Age, and acts as a companion to the earlier two-volume Historia del teatro español, vol. 1 of which has itself become an essential guide to Golden Age dramatists and theatre. *Dramaturgia festiva y cultura nobiliaria en el Siglo de Oro, ed. Bernardo J. García García and María Luisa Lobato, M, Ibberoamericana — Frankfurt, Vervuert, 2007, 416 pp., addresses drama beyond the corral de comedias, another area which is attracting increased attention.

Several other studies that have appeared in the survey period deal with a variety of different aspects of the comedia nueva. Christophe Couderc, Galanes y damas en la comedia nueva: una lectura funcionalista del teatro

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español del Siglo de Oro, M, Iberoamericana — Frankfurt, Vervuert, 2006, 416 pp., is one of the most important of them, although it concerns the less fashionable area of dramatic character. It is a corrective study of a corpus of some 20 plays, comedias de capa y espada that had found favour in France, which demonstrates the extent to which these works follow a set of pre-established and well-understood norms to do with the functions of their central characters. J. Gómez, ‘Discontinuidades y contradicciones en los personajes de la comedia’, BHS, 83, 2006:27–44, also considers the construction of characters, arguing a similar case to Couderc, but with examples from three Lope de Vega plays, specifically that generic conventions explain alleged psychological anomalies. El teatro clásico español a través de sus monarcas, ed. Luciano García Lorenzo, M, Fundamentos, 2006, 399 pp., and La criada en el teatro español del Siglo de Oro, ed. Luciano García Lorenzo, M, Fundamentos, 319 pp., focus respectively on monarchs and the under-studied character of the criada in the comedia. Hilaire Kallendorf, Conscience on Stage: The ‘Comedia’ as Casuistry in Early Modern Spain, Toronto U.P., 2007, x+299 pp., analyses the importance of casuistry, usually the fruit of their Jesuit schooling, in the plays of the major playwrights of the period. This is an attempt to understand the Spanish ‘conscience’ in the period and the study provides an introduction to the relevant terminology. La comedia de santos, ed. Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez and Almudena García González, Almagro, Univ. de Castilla-La Mancha, 276 pp., is an important collection of essays on saints plays. Some of these studies look at the general issues involved in bringing saints to the Golden Age stage, others analyse specific examples of the genre, including works by Lope de Vega, Cervantes, Mira de Amescua, Tirso de Molina and Rojas Zorrilla. Two other works that have come to our attention are: David García Hernán, *La cultura de la guerra y el teatro del Siglo de Oro*, M, Sílex, 2006, 298 pp., and *La comedia de caballerías*, ed. Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez, Rafael González Cañal and Elena Marcello, Almagro, Univ. de Castilla-La Mancha, 2006, 253 pp.

One general aspect of the drama which has attracted particular attention is the role of women, whether queens, saints or actresses. María Y. Caba, Isabel la Católica en la producción teatral española del siglo xvii, Woodbridge, Tamesis, 199 pp., examines the depiction of Queen Isabella in plays by Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina and Vélez de Guevara. The three dramatists are seen to have had slightly different but complex attitudes to Isabella, using her depiction for their own ends. Christopher D. Gascón, The Woman Saint in Spanish Golden Age Drama, Lewisburg, PA, Bucknell U.P., 2006, 203 pp., is the first