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### **Dramaturgia festiva y cultura nobiliaria en el Siglo de Oro**

*Henry Ettinghausen. Bulletin of Hispanic Studies.* Liverpool: 2008. Vol. 85, Iss. 4; pg. 583, 2 pgs

## **Full Text**

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*Dramaturgia festiva y cultura nobiliaria en el Siglo de Oro.* Coordinado por Bernardo J. García García y María Luisa Lobato. Madrid and Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana and Vervuert. 2007. 416 pp. ISBN 978-84-8489-294-6 (Iberoamericana), 978-3-86527-325-3 (Vervuert).

In the account he sent to the Duke of Osuna of the double royal Franco-Spanish nuptials celebrated in Burgos in October 1615, Quevedo tells how the Duke of Sessa 'trujo consigo a Lope de Vega', how the Count of Olivares sought to outdo him by bringing along 'un par de poetas', and how the Duke of Maqueda brought none, 'cosa que se notó'. For the selfrespecting top-notch nobility, a pet writer or two had become an absolute must.

This book of essays - following on the same editors' *La fiesta cortesana en la época de los Austrias* (Valladolid, 2003) - contains the fruits of an international conference held in 2005 in Lerma, the town built by the Duke of the same name and the scene of some of the most notable collaborations between poets, especially playwrights, and the aristocracy at the beginning of the seventeenth century. A genuinely interdisciplinary volume, it covers four main topics: [1] the culture of the nobility, in particular their education and leisure, [2] the Duke of Lerma and the political exploitation of court festivities, [3] dramatists and theatre at the service of ministers and favourseekers, and [4] chivalresque novels on stage. There is space here only to give the briefest of thumbnail sketches of its content.

Adolfo Carrasco Martínez goes into the cultural construction of the nobility and the conflicts that were often involved between individuals and family tradition. Santiago Martínez Hernández examines the functions of festivities in the courtly apprenticeship of the aristocracy and their perpetuation in relaciones, celebratory poems and visual images. María Luisa Lobato studies the formative effects of the nobility's participation in theatricals, whilst Margaret Rich Greer takes stock of the role of hunting in the education and entertainment of the nobility and the royals, seeing in it the demonstration of power and of the right to use violence.

Maria Grazia Profeti surveys dramatic depictions and discussions of the royal favourite. Teresa Ferrer Valls observes ways in which festivities could be used by aspirants to favour, whether dramatists or noblemen, including Lerma himself in his bid to become Philip III's valido. Patrick Williams goes so far as to argue that Lerma's domination of the court was based on his control and manipulation of festivities, to which he applied what Gil González Dávila described as 'un estilo nuevo de grandeza'. For his part, Bernardo J. García García has recourse to a variety of relaciones in order to analyse the organisation of the junketings that Lerma laid on in 1617 to celebrate his latest building works in his town.

Elisabeth R. Wright outlines how Lope's Duke of Sessa inherited a family tradition of using patronage of arts and letters to maintain its position at court and argues that his eagerness to collect Lope's manuscripts implies a cult of literary genius that was way ahead of its time. Felipe Pedraza Jiménez examines Lerma's patronage of Lope, and the playwright's vain hopes for the

post of court chronicler, in return. Juan Antonio Martínez Berbel offers a reading of *El villano en su rincón* that implies the vision of a new courtly culture, stripped of the corruption of Philip III's court; and Germán Vega García-Luengos studies Luis Vélez de Guevara's career at court in relation to the large proportion of his plays that were written to order for Lerma, before being adapted for the corrales.

María Teresa Chaves Montoya describes the introduction of Italian-style spectacle in Lerma and Aranjuez between 1612 and 1622. Esther Borrego Gutiérrez reviews the treatment of chivalresque motifs in Villamediana's *La gloria de Niquea* and Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza's *Querer por solo querer*, both of them first staged in Aranjuez; and Judith Farré Vidal surveys the presence in America of *Don Quixote* in vice-regal celebrations between 1607 and 1656, as well as in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century vejámenes.

One of the nicest instances of the ability to exploit artistic performance in the pursuit of preferment is supplied by Teresa Ferrer, who recounts how, on his arrival at the Spanish court in 1587, the Flemish valet Jean Lhermite took advantage of a cold winter to skate before the royal family on a frozen lake in the Casa de Campo and come face to face with Philip II. When, six years later, he put on a similar display, he saved a Dutch lady from drowning, thus clearly demonstrating that aspirants to royal favour could sometimes skate on thin ice.

**[Author Affiliation]**

HENRY ETTINGHAUSEN  
University of Southampton

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