

main issues, a great deal of useful bibliography, a variety of analytical approaches, and much that is transferable for enlarging the field of inquiry to other cultural and linguistic areas and to other types of corpora.

Susan M. Baddeley, *Université Paris-Saclay*
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Le Grand Écrivain et sa première Vie: "L'illusion biographique" (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle). Maria Zerari, ed.

Encounters 500. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2021. 372 pp. €86.

This collection, edited by Maria Zerari, brings together ten excellent essays about the first biographical accounts of ten canonical early modern European authors, in particular the heavyweights of the Spanish Golden Age. Written in French and Spanish, the essays are organized into two sections: "Exemplary Figures," which focuses on the lives of Luis de Camões, Torquato Tasso, William Shakespeare, and Pierre Corneille; and "Bibliotheca Hispana Nova: Other Authority Figures," which analyzes the lives of Spanish Golden Age giants Miguel de Cervantes, Luis de Góngora, Lope de Vega, Francisco de Quevedo, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Zerari's introduction provides a wealth of bibliographic information, spanning different traditions and periods. Zerari describes examples of the genre in early modernity in relation to a common Greco-Roman cultural tradition, and highlights how the subgenre of the *vitae poetarum*, or the biographies of writers, blossomed at a time when writers from Dante and Boccaccio to Calderón and Sor Juana were considered equal or superior to their predecessors, and thus worthy of biographical attention.

The lives analyzed in the first section, spanning four geographic areas within the Republic of Letters, emphasize how the tradition was absorbed, modified, and co-opted according to the different literary controversies in their respective national environments. The first lives of Camões—six interconnected texts, different in length, language, and purpose—are analyzed by Aude Plagnard, who draws attention to the strategies generated by a particular culture to establish the preeminence of a forgotten poet. Matteo Residori's essay on the life of Tasso argues that the biographer's aim was to curtail the rumors about Tasso's madness and to propose instead an idealized image of Tasso to guide the reading of his celebrated poems. Line Cottagnies's fascinating account of the many myths surrounding the life of Shakespeare until today traces their origin back to Nicholas Rowe's biographical sketch of the Bard, the source of most of the biographies written thereafter. Élodie Bénard's essay, which focuses on the first two lives of Corneille—fashioned as a Cornelian hero himself in the context of the battle of the ancients against the moderns—closes this section. All together, these foundational texts, beyond their desire to champion these writers and their

work to portray them as singular and exemplary figures, expose how early modern life-writing moves from facts to legend and speculation in different degrees, and how rhetoric, chronology, and often the biographee's own oeuvre could be recast to serve the construction of an ethos.

The second section opens with Zerari's in-depth study of Cervantes's first life, its Romantic underpinnings, and its connection to the English literary field, where Cervantes's *Quixote* made a lasting impact. Ponce Cárdenas's analysis of the structure of Gongora's first life highlights how his biographer seeks to promote both Gongora and himself in relation to Gongora's groundbreaking oeuvre. Candelas Colodrón's survey of Quevedo's first biography shares a similar concern and underlines its centrality in the construction of Quevedo's literary image. Sánchez Jiménez dwells on several topoi replicated in the first biographical accounts of playwright Lope de Vega, making a case for their interconnectedness. Yannick Barne's study of the life of Calderón centers on the biographer's efforts to separate the playwright's life from his work to elevate his *comedias* as moral and political instruments. Lastly, Mercedes Blanco's thought-provoking essay debunks many widespread myths around Sor Juana's life and demonstrates how her biographer subtly employs the hagiographic tradition to extol her human and literary achievements.

This book is indeed a most valuable contribution to the study of early modern biography. Its particular emphasis on Spanish-language canonical writers, including one woman writer, is a welcome and stimulating addition to the field. There is an inherent coherence throughout the volume as the essays, and their supporting scholarly apparatus, reflect common threads and concerns. One important insight of this book is that although these lives are highly encomiastic, derivative, and morally edifying, they are generally the starting point of our interpretation—or misinterpretation—of these writers, and a site where historiography, rhetoric, and fiction intertwine and collide. In sum, this superb book, reminiscent of the collective biographies of the Renaissance, is poised to become a fundamental reference text on the genre of life-writing in early modern Europe.

Adrian Izquierdo, *Baruch College, CUNY*
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Play Time: Gender, Anti-Semitism and Temporality in Medieval Biblical Drama.
Daisy Black.

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xii +234 pp. £80.

Daisy Black's *Play Time* explores the representation of time in late medieval drama from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including supersession, queer futurity, and Michel