

*Los cigarrales de la privanza y mecenazgo en Tirso de Molina.* Juan Pablo Gil-Osle. Biblioteca Áurea Hispánica 110. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2016. 198 pp. €29.80.

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Despite the canonical regard enjoyed today by many of Tirso de Molina's *comedias*, new book-length considerations of the Mercedarian friar's work and career remain infrequent. Still more rare are in-depth analyses of *Los cigarrales de Toledo* or *Deleitar aprovechando*, his two miscellanies of prose, verse, and plays; André Nougué's imposing *L'oeuvre en prose de Tirso de Molina*, published in 1962, has seen too few successors or challengers over the course of half a century. This scholarly inattention makes Juan Pablo Gil-Osle's original, insightful, and exhaustively researched study of *Los cigarrales de Toledo* all the more welcome. Gil-Osle positions Tirso's 1624 miscellany, approved for publication in 1621 and a product of the years during which the Duke of Lerma's *privanza* gave way to that of the Count-Duke of Olivares, as a textual nexus within which contemporary discourses of political and literary patronage intersected, and as a material product of that same intersection.

As the dedications of so many texts from the era remind us, authors in early modern Spain continually sought aristocratic sponsorship, both for financial support and for the status and influence that reflected upon and protected the artists favored by powerful patrons. For Gil-Osle, therefore, one key to decoding *Los cigarrales de Toledo* is the tantalizing figure of Don Luis Suero de Quinoñes y Acuña, the minor nobleman of somewhat questionable reputation to whom Tirso fulsomely dedicated the work, his first published book. Gil-Osle's opening chapter examines *Los cigarrales*'s dedicatory material and the frontispiece to the first edition, an illustration that depicts Luis Suero as Favor and Tirso himself as Ingenio. Gil-Osle foregrounds how both text and image flatter the nobleman as an ideal courtier and a munificent benefactor and protector; he offers an especially interesting reading of the frontispiece within the period's emblem tradition. The second chapter turns to Tirso's extended description of a river regatta staged as an afternoon's entertainment for his characters, a pageant symbolically interweaving poetry, literary ambition, and patronage into which Tirso inserts both himself and Luis Suero as pilots of two of the boats. Gil-Osle uses this episode to build his case for an essential thematic continuity between the paratexts he explored in his first chapter and the work's narrative frame.

The third chapter is the rewarding fruit of extensive archival work by Gil-Osle. Here he turns temporarily from Tirso's text to construct portraits of the Quiñones family and of the nobleman himself; the book's appendix assembles some of the documents Gil-Osle consulted. The clan emerges as an ambitious yet self-destructively litigious lot, forever pursuing internecine legal actions disputing family income and assets unable to support so many. In turn, Gil-Osle depicts Luis Suero as a plausible choice of patron for a writer anxious to find one. Well connected and a possible member of Lerma's circle at Felipe III's court, his nevertheless insufficient means led him to trade in paintings for

profit, perhaps not always scrupulously. It seems no surprise that a nobleman in his precarious position might attempt to fashion himself as a Maecenas rather than a merchant. Unfortunately, neither his finances nor his political fortunes improved under Felipe IV, and *Los cigarrales* would be the only work dedicated to him by Tirso or any other author.

The book's final chapter focuses on the plays Tirso interpolated into *Los cigarrales de Toledo: El vergonzoso en palacio, Cómo han de ser los amigos, and El celoso prudente*. Gil-Osle effectively demonstrates how these three *comedias* chosen by Tirso dramatize questions of political power and favor, friendship, and reciprocal loyalty, reflecting not only the debates concerning *privanza* that circulated during Lerma's tenure as Felipe III's *valido*, but also the corresponding socioeconomic systems of artistic patronage within which Tirso hoped to form a durable, mutually beneficial connection with Luis Suero. This completes Gil-Osle's argument: from the volume's frontispiece to its narrative frame to the plays interpolated within that frame, Tirso's thematic focus does not waver.

Thanks to Gil-Osle's skillful interweaving of archival research and literary analysis, *Los cigarrales de la privanza y mecenazgo en Tirso de Molina* offers a satisfying, erudite exploration of the complex relationships in early modern Spain between political and literary patrons and the beneficiaries of their support.

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*Valeur des lettres à la Renaissance: Débats et réflexions sur la vertu de la littérature.* Pascale Chiron and Lidia Radi, eds.

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The present volume is the record of three conferences held in France and the United States between 2010 and 2012. The twelve essays it consists of, all written in French, tackle the debate around literature's value in early modern France through the complex notion of virtue. While literature's morality, i.e., its *vertu*, has been defended against religious accusations of idleness by writers stressing its edifying purpose, the powerful way in which a text is able to impact the reader illustrates literature's efficiency, in other terms its *vertus*. This capacity for action (very similar to the idea of strength conveyed by the Latin *virtus*) is what makes writers and readers value literature as a powerful experience. Can the pleasure one feels when reading or writing enhance the lessons literature teaches us, or does it lead to a redefinition of literary virtues?

This exciting take on an important debate is carried out through three main sections whose progression conveys a coherent reflection. The first four contributions question the ways in which literature can shape the reader's mind. Claude de France's literary education provides a moral foundation for her political views (Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier); the narrator of François de Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques* uses a combina-