



Werlin's particularly Marxist approach may be more familiarly intelligible as materialist, insofar as the book is not generally concerned in making normative claims, and it focuses less on class relations than other forms of Marxist history might. The materialist bent does enable the book to establish a clear political and economic framework for literary history and effectively to situate changes in the practices of textual production in relation to broader economic developments.

Some aspects of these economic changes, however, predate the late sixteenth century. For example, the movement in the terms of agricultural tenancy from tenurial service to cash rent is a product of the plague years of the mid-fourteenth century, as is the increasingly textual character of economic relations. The rural armies of the Peasants' Revolt arrived partly hoping to destroy legal documents that established responsibilities for lordship and for tenancy. This is intended not as a criticism of the book's frame, rather simply as an observation that it would be helpful for the book to extend its discussion of economic context in order to show how developments in the late sixteenth century advanced significantly within extant currents of change. Scholars in the disciplines of social and economic history as well as that of literary studies would do well to consult this book; we are fortunate to have it.

Dan Breen, *Ithaca College*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.634

Vida y muerte de San Cristóbal. Juan de Benavides.

Ed. Anthony J. Grubbs. *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 542. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2020. 90 pp. \$60.

This is the first critical edition of *Vida y muerte de San Cristóbal*. Grubbs divides the volume into three major sections: a synopsis of the manifestation of the third-century Canaanite saint in medieval and early modern Spanish and European literature, a brief study of the *comedia* and its cultural milieu, and the edited text. While the first two sections are pared-down summaries of three of the editor's previous published articles (2006, 2014, and 2017), the last portion constitutes an original contribution to the studies of early modern European drama.

The first part opens with an outline of Saint Christopher's legend in medieval hagiography, devotional poetry, and drama before discussing how the religious climate of sixteenth-century Europe impinged on the representation of the saint in post-Tridentine literature. While medieval hagiographies like the *Pasionario hispánico* and Jacobus Voragine's *Golden Legend* (1258) revere the non-Hispanic saint because of his martyrdom and position him toward the center of Christian worship, post-Tridentine hagiographies suppress or remove the pre-conversion details of his life to redirect readers' attention toward the supremacy of the

Holy Trinity and other tenets of Christianity. This section ends with a plot summary of the play.

The second part begins with a discussion of the play's authorship and composition date. Basing the analysis on Sánchez Arjona and Pérez Pastor's studies, Grubbs affirms that Juan de Benavides, a playwright and actor from Alcañices, Zamora, wrote the play at the end of sixteenth century. Of special interest is the study of the effect that the Counter-Reformation had on seventeenth-century Spanish *comedias*. To postulate possible reasons for the play's censorship and performance ban shortly after its premiere in 1643 in Seville, Grubbs examines some notable cases of censorship of seventeenth-century Spanish theater and concludes that Benavides's play was most likely deemed heretical by censors because of its suggestion of the saint being an analogue to Christ or its out-of-proportion presentation of the character's pre-conversion life.

Here the editor also includes a metrification chart to show Benavides' versification habit. He suggests that the inordinate use of *redondillas* further provides us with a clue to the play's authorship because it is also common in two of Benavides's other *comedias*, *Lo que piensas te hago* and *El Marte español Guzmán*. But then Grubbs effaces himself immediately to acknowledge that the prevalence of the *redondilla* is not unique of Benavides's plays, but a general trend in the Spanish drama of the time. The section concludes with a brief discussion of the only extant manuscript (now in Spain's National Library), a list of works cited, and an explanation of its transcription criteria. The remainder of this volume consists of the text of the play, with a total of thirty-nine notes that are mainly concerned with elucidating the meaning of certain words and passages, but without further data on historical and cultural references, which would have been helpful.

Overall, the edition might have been better. First, there are a few notable editorial oversights: for example, footnotes 1 and 2 on page 39 are missing; figure 2, which intends to show the original cover page "written in the copyist's seventeenth-century hand" (31) is nowhere to be found; a similar omission (figure 3) occurs again in page 31. Although the preliminary study does a good job contextualizing *Vida y muerte* in its socioreligious and cultural milieu, it says little about its value. Likewise, I would have appreciated a comprehensive review of the polymetric versification system employed in all *comedias* known or believed to be Benavides's, and a fuller explanation of the expressive value of given strophic forms and their structural function in *Vida*. Further, I also wonder why Grubbs has not connected Benavides's *comedia* with the rise of Saint Christopher in visual arts, even though the latter was a popular motif in many seventeenth-century Spanish poetry and visual arts.

But these are small points: this is an auspicious beginning to a valuable contribution to *comedia* scholarship. The edition will be useful to almost any reader, from undergraduate students to teachers and scholars of Spanish Golden Age plays.

Carmen Hsu, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.631