

world on divine will opened the way to the universal quantification of phenomena. Science pertains to quantities, and the quantitative spatial homogeneity has also got a Christian origin, as we can read in *Wisdom* 11.20: "But you have disposed all things by measure and number and weight." In conclusion, as regards to contemporary science, no geometrical assumptions can eliminate the rationality of an all-encompassing metaphysics and/or theology establishing the sameness of the world as a coherent whole of related phenomena.

Ângela de Azevedo. *El muerto disimulado. Presumed Dead*. Edited by Valerie Hegstrom. Translation by Catherine Larson. Critical Introduction and Notes by Valerie Hegstrom and Catherine Larson. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018. viii + 327 pp. \$120. Review by NIEVES ROMERO-DÍAZ, MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE.

This fine edition, which is also the first translation of Ângela de Azevedo's play *El muerto disimulado*, couldn't arrive at a better time. Not only are seventeenth-century Iberian women writers now a common subject of study in Spanish programs across the country, increasing interest is being paid to Spanish *comedia* written by women, as we witness more of their plays being staged in the last fifteen years than at any time in recent history. This is not the first time, however, that Hegstrom and Larson have come together to work on a project such as this: Their superb and now classic bilingual edition of María de Zayas and Sotomayor's *La traición en la amistad. Friendship betrayed* from 1999 was the beginning of a collaboration that has produced a second bilingual publication, equal in quality, if not superior, to the previous one. Finally, Azevedo is receiving the much-deserved attention that for centuries has been denied to her, in a superb edition that leaves no detail behind.

The bilingual edition opens with a co-authored introduction that provides the reader the perfect background: from an overview of theater and women playwrights in Early Modern Spain and its empire, to the most comprehensive notes on the edition and translation. With the popularity of *comedia* in the so-called Golden Age, we now know that women, too, wrote plays, though many didn't get to see them in

print, while even fewer saw their works actually performed on stage. It is for that reason that the editors of this edition have as one of their main goals making Azevedo's play available for performance, in Spanish *and* in English.

From the beginning, Hegstrom and Larson insist on reminding the reader that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spain and Portugal shared strong ties and, therefore, it is very common to encounter a "substantial number" of dramatists that "were Portuguese writers who composed their plays in Spanish" (4) of whom Azevedo is a remarkable example. However, even for experts in Spanish *comedia*, Azevedo is still not well-known. It is for that reason that most of the introduction is dedicated to present Azevedo's life and works to the reader as well as to unpack *El muerto disimulado*, for which the editors highlight the few critical approaches to the play while adding new and suggestive ideas to the analysis. That we don't know much about Azevedo's life is not so unusual, indeed. The few records we have of her show that she was well-known by contemporary playwrights of her time, on both sides of the Atlantic. Contrary to that fact, however, catalogues on Iberian writers, even from the early periods, barely mention her and her work, and when they do, as Hegstrom and Larson explain, they simply repeat, eliminate, or even invent contradictory and, in many cases, inaccurate information about her life (e.g., from Frois Perim's *Theatro Heroico*, 1740, to Machado's *Bibliotheca Lusitana*, 1741 and other later works). Some critics have tried to extract possible information from the play itself (particularly around the Savoy Armada) but as the editors say, it is obvious that "the play is loosely based on history" (18), which has added even more ambiguities to the already unclear facts we know for sure. It is clear that *El muerto disimulado* draws from many sources from the Iberian peninsula but Azevedo is able to make them hers, creating in the process one of the richest meta-plays of the period. From here on out, Hegstrom and Larson move into the analysis of the play and highlight how Azevedo manipulates, inverts, and treats with wit and humor the three main topics of the *comedia* at the time: honor, virginity, and constancy. By dialoguing with critics who have studied the play, the editors discuss the female and male characters and demonstrate how Azevedo challenges the customs and conventions of the period. Conscious of the-

ater as spectacle, Hegstrom and Larson thoroughly touch on one of the richest elements of the play, its self-reflection. That is, the way in which characters develop through multiple examples of cross-dressing as well as the substantive code switching according to the role they play; hence, language and identity become clearly intertwined. As they conclude: “[t]he persistence of self-conscious allusions to the theater, language disguise, character and role found in *El muerto disimulado* illustrate the multiple ways in which Azevedo explores the tension between illusion and reality, as well as the (in)stability of identity, in her comedy” (38).

The part dedicated to the staging of the play, as well as the notes by the translator and the editor, are probably the most interesting parts of the introduction. From the beginning, Hegstrom and Larson highlight the importance of the audience for writers when they work on a play. Plays are meant to be performed, and though most early modern women playwrights were not fortunate enough to see their plays on stage, that doesn’t mean they didn’t write with performance in mind. In this sense, the editors “explore the decision-making that, based on her written text, Azevedo reveals” (40), analyzing settings, implicit and explicit stage directions, and props that are key for the performability of the play and the development of plots and their characters. After that, they introduce readers to the two modern adaptations, one in Spanish by the Brigham Young University Spanish Golden Age Theater Project in 2004, and another in English by the WSC Avant Bard in 2016, based on their translations. This part of the introduction definitely invites practitioners to bring this play to the stage.

After a detailed description of the metric of the original play, Hegstrom explains her decision to modernize the Spanish version of the play for a contemporary audience, a modernization that, however, resists “domestication,” in the sense that, following Azevedo’s original intention, it brings to light the foreignization of the text, its Portuguese nature—after all, Azevedo was Portuguese, the play is set in Portugal, and linguistic and cultural code-switching are key to the characters’ identity development. As for the translation, Larson thinks of her contemporary audience as well, and with her translation meant to be a version of the play that can be acted out, she decides to translate it in

prose but still maintains the play's foreign elements, thereby engaging with linguistic and codeswitching wordplay, emphasizing the humor of the play, and deciding, therefore, to give priority to making sense whenever jokes don't work in translation. The result is a smooth, funny, and clever translation. Minimal clarificatory footnotes during the bilingual edition makes the reading smooth. The rich introduction frames the bilingual edition well for the reader and offers ideas for the potential staging of the play. Hegstrom and Larson have done a superb job bringing Azevedo's play to life, and scholars, students, directors, actors and lovers of Golden Age *comedia* can now enjoy a play and playwright, neither of which will ever again fall into oblivion.

Steven Nadler. *Menasseh ben Israel: Rabbi of Amsterdam*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018. ix + 298 pages. 1 b/w illustration. \$26.00. Review by WILLIAM E. ENGEL, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH: SEWANEE.

Steven Nadler has written an accessible account of the rabbi and literary entrepreneur, Menasseh ben Israel, who led the rapprochement between Christians and Jews during the seventeenth century (71). Navigating between Catholic inquisitions (seeking refuge beyond the reach of Lisbon's *autos-da-fé* with his father, who had been tortured three times) and Protestant sectarian concerns (which made the status of Jews in Holland always potentially precarious), Menasseh emerged as a preeminent writer, printer, bookseller, and publisher whose commentaries, translations, and Hebrew devotional manuals set the standard of the age (123).

Early on Menasseh recognized a need for books to advance Jewish literacy, especially among those who recently had fled to the Dutch Republic from lands where the Inquisition had forced their conversion to Christianity and otherwise denied them the right to observe and practice their ancestral religion. One of his goals, therefore, was to help these mostly Portuguese Jews now living in Holland (many of whom had been dubbed New Christians) rediscover—or learn for the first time—their sacred heritage. In the early 1630s he published “no fewer than five Spanish and Hebrew prayer books; two of the