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Review of *Del Siglo de Oro (métodos y elecciones)*, by José Lara Garrido

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A veces faltan referencias cruzadas entre diferentes documentaciones del mismo motivo (por ejemplo, entre los núms. 52, 61 y 127; los 79, 88, 248–49 y 372–73; y los 120, 150 y 185 arriba citados). Hay regular número de erratas, sobre todo de acentos mal colocados; errores más serios son: p. 79, línea 26: léase “Diana” en lugar de “Anarda”; 106, l. 14: “remos,” no “ramos”; 116, l. 2: “gallardo,” no “galardo”; 146, l. 9: “45,” no “43”; 222, l. 4: “112,” no “113.” En la Bibliografía faltan estudios muy básicos para el tema, y también bastantes textos a que se hace alusión en las Referencias. A pesar de estos defectos, el libro será útil al lopista, y también a los especialistas en la poesía del Siglo de Oro.

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Del Siglo de Oro (métodos y elecciones). By José Lara Garrido. Madrid: U Europea, CEES, 1997. 590 pages.

In the Introduction to this erudite if somewhat unwieldy book, José Lara Garrido asks the reader not to view the volume as a “colectánea asistemática cuando no arbitraria.” That is, he wants its various sections and chapters to be taken as parts of a whole and not as discrete, independent studies. Nevertheless, there is no avoiding the fact that this is basically an anthology of miscellaneous essays on Golden Age literature, written at various times and many of them published before. Were this a more thematically unified volume, we might be tempted to complain about the absence of a bibliography, an index, and a clearly-stated purpose or methodology. The author clearly anticipates objections to the book’s theoretical eclecticism when he tells us, paraphrasing C. S. Lewis: “me repugna intelectualmente . . . la obsesión academicista por la metodología cuando ‘la propia literatura llega a parecer casi irrelevante’ ” (15). I am happy to say that the patient reader who sets aside academic obsessions with methodological and thematic coherence will be rewarded with the author’s impressive erudition in dealing with Golden Age literature in its multifarious manifestations.

The book is divided into two parts: 1) Estudios Panorámicos and 2) Estudios Monográficos. The first section begins with an essay on the historical use and usefulness of the designation “Siglo de Oro.” Arguing that the Latin *saeculum* is not strictly a chronological term meaning “one hundred years” but rather a word that is etymologically equivalent to *aetas* (edad), Lara Garrido rejects recent attempts to substitute the traditional term with the purportedly more accurate “Edad de Oro.” The second essay, subtitled “Perspectiva sobre los menores,” is precisely that—a meditation on several minor literary figures and texts. He considers, for example, the Menippean

satires of Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola and the work of Miguel de Molinos. This chapter is representative of the most valuable aspect of Lara Garrido's book for it invites readers to examine topics that have been ignored by literary histories and criticism. The third long section (which might have constituted a book in itself) is a panoramic overview of the development of the lyric in Andalusia, with considerations of individual poets. When dealing with well-known figures such as Herrera or Góngora, the text is primarily a summary of what other critics have said; indeed, entire paragraphs seem little more than a threading together of quotes. Nevertheless, the sections on lesser known figures such as Francisco de Medrano, Luis Barahona de Soto, and Juan de Jáuregui (to mention only a few) represent valuable introductions to the works of these forgotten poets.

The second half of the book, "Estudios Monográficos," abandons panoramic breadth to consider a number of topics in depth. The first article, on the use of allegory in Aldana's *Octavas a Felipe II*, argues that a rhetorical and semantic perspective is preferable to the thematic, historicist approach that other critics have taken to this difficult work. The next chapter is an exhaustive consideration of the symbolism of the fountain in stanza 11 of San Juan de la Cruz' *Cántico espiritual*. The third essay combines separate studies related to Vicente Espinel's *Marcos de Obregón*, including one that deals with its relationship to *Gil Blas* and another that provides a useful overview of the literary reception of Espinel's picaresque novel. The long section on Lope de Vega's *El Peregrino en su patria* analyzes the structural and thematic similarities between the Spanish text and its model, the Greek romance as cultivated by Heliodorous. The last two chapters of the book deal with the *comedia*: one is on scenic space in Lope's first plays, and the last one is a suggestive consideration of the garden as a setting in plays from Lope to Agustín Moreto.

The above summary does not begin to do justice to the wealth of information to be found in Lara Garrido's *Del siglo de oro*. This volume leaves the reader in awe of the author's erudition (the footnotes are voluminous, constituting a competing text) but rather exhausted from this embarrassment of riches. Careful editing might have provided smoother transitions between sections and avoided the repetitive nature of some of the chapters (not to mention the typos in many of the English quotes). Nevertheless, in addition to being a testament to the author's versatility and intelligence as a critic, this collection of essays by Lara Garrido serves the larger purpose of reminding us to take another look at texts that have been excluded from our working canon of Golden Age literature.

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