

of Western theater was confirmed by a group of youthful Japanese ambassadors to Pope Gregory XIII, who requested a visit to the new Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza on their return journey. Circulating Italian and Spanish influences in the work of Ottaviano Castelli, close to the family of Urban VIII, are the focus of Nicola Badolato. Castelli's *Favorito del principe*, Badolato notes, was influenced by the Spanish play *Carlos el perseguido*, in turn inspired by a novella of Matteo Bandello. It was performed at the French embassy in Rome, reflective of France's role as an important geographic and cultural bridge along which Italian commedia dell'arte troupes and theatrical influences traveled.

Less happy effects of the Catholic Church are detailed by Héctor Urzáiz—in particular, its censure of theater, applied with particular harshness to comedies. Comparing the manuscript version of Lope de Vega's *La bella malmaridada* with its later printed form, Urzáiz determines that, after having been targeted by the Inquisition, Lope removed the features that provided color but also could scandalize. Finally, the specific influence of Juan Pérez de Montalbán in seventeenth-century Florence is detailed by Salomé Vuelta García. His *Amor, lealtad y amistad* inspired multiple Italian versions that made some adaptations to local conditions and tastes. Among these was allowing the actor portraying a comic, lower-class character to improvise a crucial speech, bringing it closer to the norms of the commedia dell'arte.

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Drama in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Playmakers and Their Strategies.
Nadia Thérèse Van Pelt.

Themes in Medieval and Early Modern History. London: Routledge, 2019. xxii + 144 pp. \$44.95.

Drama in Medieval and Early Modern Europe is a broad-scope exploration of how theater and other forms of popular entertainment were both conceived and received in premodern Europe. In particular, Nadia Van Pelt's first monograph focuses on the reception of a collection of plays and pageants from across the European territories that demonstrate "playmakers' varying degrees of success in calibrating potentially dangerous or offence-giving elements to local performance contexts" (123). In addition to dispensing with national borders, Van Pelt also chooses to forgo the line that separates the medieval and early modern periods, a distinction that "traditionally suggests an evolutionary reading of drama and ritual, in which naïve forms are followed up by more sophisticated ones, rather than a more fluid reading in which continuity in dramatic and ritual performances can be emphasised" (4–5). This boundary-bending approach shares in a broader desire to do away with the artificial partitions, whether temporal or locative, that she rightly deems as distorting our understanding of how knowledge and culture is formed and formulated.

The book is divided into four main chapters, each of which explores different and very specific dramatic conventions and theatrical cultures. Through these case studies Van Pelt strives to illustrate how “certain plays and *topoi* were used throughout Europe, and that they found themselves reevaluated or reinvented, at times repressed or attacked, so that alternative forms arose that replaced, or existed alongside, their predecessors” (4). The first chapter discusses religious plays and pageants from late medieval Italy, France, and the Low Countries that depicted the desecration of a consecrated Host. The second centers on the figure of Mary Magdalene as represented not only in lesser-known works from the Czech Republic, Germany, and Cyprus but also in plays written by blockbuster dramatists, such as Baroque Spain’s Lope de Vega. The third focuses on two different archer-hero characters, England’s Robin Hood and Switzerland’s Wilhelm Tell, presented as exemplars of elite appropriation of popular and subversive figures across early Renaissance Europe. Finally, the fourth chapter explores a series of civic street performances that took place in 1607 in Wells, England, by examining them in their wider European social and cultural contexts.

Clearly the breadth of this book’s scope and subject matter is remarkable, especially when considering its length (144 pages). It is much to Van Pelt’s credit that she manages to bind these wide-ranging chapters closely together and make them read as a monographic study. Such cohesion rests on the selection of performances that share an underlying element of strategic thinking: as she explains, all the plays discussed in the book “stage a cross-over between the world of the play and the world outside the play” (126), and in doing so attempt to exercise some form of leverage in real life through the medium of performance. Also connecting these chapters is the author’s pervasive commitment to transnational reading, abetted by her dexterity and fluency in various languages and cultures. Accompanying its readers across an impressive range of geographic, temporal, or linguistic boundaries, *Drama in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* guides them toward a better understanding of the common ground on which the theatrical cultures of medieval and early modern Europe were built.

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Dizionario dei sogni nel Medioevo: Il “Somniale Danielis” in manoscritti letterari.
Valerio Cappozzo.

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Florence: Olschki, 2018. xii + 404 pp. €35.

The fascinating converging of different traditions—Latin, Arab, vernacular—makes this medieval dream book, the *Somniale Danielis*, incredibly interesting and multiculturally contemporary, and judging from the many reviews of this new edition in academic