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Santa Teresa o la llama permanente: estudios históricos, artísticos y literarios.

Coordinado por Esther Borrego Gutiérrez y Jaime Olmedo Ramos. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica. 2017. 421 pp.; 56 ilustraciones en color.

This collection of scholarly essays represents a tribute to Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) in honour of the quincentenary of her birth. As mystical writer, founder of the discalced Carmelites and canonized saint, Teresa has bequeathed a multifaceted legacy that the articles in this volume seek to commemorate from the perspectives of various disciplines that include art history, theology, history, literary studies and gender studies. The collection is divided into two primary parts: ‘Santa Teresa y su época’ encompasses multidisciplinary studies on diverse aspects of Spanish culture as related to Teresa, and ‘Escritos teresianos’ offers philological analyses of her texts. A shorter third section, ‘La vision de la mujer’, includes two essays that examine Teresa and her works from a gendered perspective. A bibliographic Addendum provides an indexed list of 717 literary studies on the famous mystic.

The variety of approaches and the copious full-colour illustrations attest to the quality of this collection which, taken as a whole, represents a worthy compendium of Teresian scholarship. The individual essays vary in voice and quality. Some studies synthesize existing research on Teresa or provide overviews of the historical and religious context in which she lived. In taking on broader topics, these essays lack depth but are useful as an introduction to Teresa and Golden-Age Spain. The strongest essays, such as Ascensión Mazuela-Anguita’s ‘Música y paisaje sonoro en las fiestas de beatificación de Santa Teresa en 1614’, Ángel Peña Martín’s ‘“Con las telas del corazón”: versos y oraciones para vestir simbólicamente a las imágenes en el Carmelo teresiano’ and Pedro Rodríguez-Ponga y Salamanca’s ‘Una pintura inédita de Giacinto Brandi: *Santa Teresa cruzando el Guadalquivir*’ offer in-depth analyses of precise topics. These studies include reprinted texts of *villancicos* sung at Teresa’s beatification, and twentieth-century spiritual exercises used by Carmelite nuns who continue the tradition of mystically dressing the baby Jesus with prayer and virtue. The essays on art and music will delight readers accustomed to approaching Teresa through her written works. In ‘Decoro, devoción y representación: arte y arquitectura en torno a Teresa de Jesús’, Beatriz Blasco Esquivias examines early portrayals of the Carmelite founder; initial paintings follow Fray Juan de la Miseria’s portrait of Teresa in prayer, but later renditions depict her as a writer.

The literary studies on Teresa’s works adopt a philological approach that contrasts somewhat with the tendency in recent scholarship to analyse what the saint omits or indirectly suggests through rhetorical strategies employed to avoid suspicion by superiors or the Inquisition. The authors whose essays appear in the second part of *Santa Teresa o la llama permanente* occasionally allude to such strategies, but they focus instead on what Teresa does say, and on how her conscientious writing decisions correspond to her intense desire to communicate spiritual knowledge to others. Experts on Teresa will find some articles primarily descriptive and most appropriate as an introduction to the Carmelite’s works. Of particular interest are Giuseppe Mazzocchi’s excellent overview of *Fundaciones*, Víctor de Lama’s analysis of Empress María de Austria as a key promoter of Teresa and Ignacio Arellano’s comparison of Teresa-themed theatrical works, which ranged from ephemeral allegorical pieces with crowd-pleasing visual effects to full-length *comedias*. These literary studies, alongside the historico-cultural essays of the first part of this volume, demonstrate the profound impact of Teresa in the years and decades immediately following her death.

The two final essays of this collection, which analyse the relationship between Teresa and feminism, offer a critical eye toward Teresa’s writing even as they recognize the importance of religion for the Carmelite. In ‘“Basta ser mujer para caérseme las alas”: Teresa de Jesús y el feminismo’, Asunción Bernárdez-Rodal argues that, even if the term ‘feminism’ is anachronistic, Teresa represents a proto-feminism in that she believed herself capable of

writing and of carrying out the foundations she envisioned, despite the general misogyny of which she was aware. In 'Teresa de Jesús y los espacios de libertad femenina', María del Mar Cortés Timoner places Teresa within a detailed genealogy of female writers and concludes that Teresa 'apoyó la dignidad de la mujer y su derecho a un espacio—exterior e interior—personal, libre e íntimo, en el que dialogar consigo misma y con lo trascendente' (368). For literary and linguistic studies of Teresa's works, students and scholars alike will benefit from consulting the Addendum 'Calas bibliográficas en Santa Teresa: estudios filológicos', a near-comprehensive list of books and articles on the saint's writings. Although the Bibliography omits a few important studies, its index will quickly orient the reader toward the extensive scholarship on Teresa from the 1800s to the present day.

TERESA HANCOCK-PARMER

Roanoke College, Virginia.