able interés. Si tuviera que expresar un desacuerdo de cierta profundidad, sería acerca de una posición teórica que podría ser calificada de optimismo metodológico, por otra parte muy extendido en los recientes estudios sobre la historiografía hispanomedieval producidos en España. Su afirmación de que ‘la historia es el dispositivo hermenéutico-textual que nos permite reconstruir su discurso’ (9) me parece una vuelta de tuerca forzada. A mi entender, las reconstrucciones no son verificables, o sólo resultan excepcionalmente verificables; todo lo que se puede demostrar es que son falsas o más bien poco adecuadas. Con todo, no se trata de una crítica a lo alcanzado en el presente libro, sino a la consideración epistemológica sobre el estatus de lo que se puede alcanzar.

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A comprehensive gathering of contemporaneous ephemera by and about Lope de Vega has been long overdue. Krzysztof Sliwa’s undertaking is a welcome contribution to this end. His two-volume compilation assembles 1,031 texts in chronological order, ranging from Lope’s baptismal entry (6 December 1562) to the burial records of his last surviving daughter more than a century later. Geographical and onomastic indices provide a useful reference to the letters and documents according to date.

The collection’s ample scope, relative to its concise physical dimensions, is its most commendable feature. The full documentation of Lope’s trial for libel, for example, comprises 37 pages as opposed to 77 in Tomillo and Pérez Pastor’s standard edition of the Proceso. Improving upon the less wieldy epistolarios lopescos of the past, Sliwa offers a more inclusive and more manageable presentation of Lope’s correspondence as well. Faulty editing, however, greatly impairs the collection’s usefulness. Most errors are typographical – inadvertent transpositions of letters, careless repetitions or omissions – and are easily recognizable as such. Others are the result of flawed transcriptions, as comparisons with source texts confirm. The sheer frequency of inaccuracies (I gave up keeping a record of them when my list exceeded 100) impedes reading. Here I will note only those which are most likely to cause misreadings.

They are as follows: the phrase ‘de qué e se entretiene’ should read ‘de qué vive e se entretiene’ (31); ‘si puerta’ should read ‘sin puerta’ (43); ‘pícanos’ should read ‘picaños’ (83); ‘çelos como esquiba’ should read ‘çelosa como esquiba’ (94); ‘estbo’ should read ‘estubo’ (96); ‘Lope de debe’ should read ‘Lope le debe’ (124); ‘i ni i guerra ni quieren que la aya’ should read ‘i ni ai guerra ni quieren que la aya’ (309); ‘nos sabe de qué’ should read ‘no sabe de qué’ (328); ‘el menor venano’ should read ‘el menor veneno’ (329); ‘vuelto el mi’ should read ‘vuelto en mi’ (397); ‘vida hay sido’ should read ‘vida haya sido’ (420); ‘pudiera parece’ should read ‘pudiera parecer’ (453); ‘ánimo me baste’ should read ‘ánimo me baste’ (455); ‘siempre’ should read ‘siempre’ (502); ‘el Marqués de Guadalcazar’ should read ‘el Marqués de Guadalcazar’ (197); ‘una dama desatinada’ should read ‘una dama desatinada’ (238).

The last two instances appear in editorial synopses which preface most of the primary texts. They are instances of errors which occur in spite of the fact that Sliwa has simply copied these summaries (unacknowledged) from Ángel Rosenblat’s edition of the Cartas completas (Emecé, 1948). In nearly every case, Sliwa reproduces Rosenblat’s summaries word for word, except for redundantly and unnecessarily expanding the name ‘Lope’ to ‘Lope Félix de Vega Carpio’. Unfortunately, this wholesale appropriation also has the effect of duplicating Rosenblat’s inaccuracies. The scriptural allusion Lope makes in a 1616 letter to the Duke of Sessa, for example, is not to a ‘pasaje del Evangelio de San Juan’ as Sliwa, following Rosenblat, would have it (336), but to the third chapter of St John’s Apocalypse. When Sliwa attempts to augment Rosenblat’s summaries, he creates additional opportunities for error. To clarify the subject of Lope’s letter of 3 September 1605, Sliwa lifts Rosenblat’s notes verbatim but for one addition: whereas his predecessor simply identifies the motive of the Toledan festivities as the ‘nacimiento del principe Don Felipe’ (I.39), Sliwa specifies that it is...
the ‘nacimiento del Príncipe Don Felipe III’ (126). Consideration of the date and the full title of Lope’s Relación of the event would have obviated this mistake. When a given text in the collection does not appear in Rosenblat’s edition and thus lacks a ready-made synopsis, Sliwa’s own prefatory notes prove to be far less informative. Merely labelling a document ‘Notificación’ adds no useful information, particularly when ‘Notificación’ already appears as the first word in the document itself (70); and heading an excerpt from an ecclesiastical registry with nothing but Lope’s full name is pointless (296).

Sliwa characterizes his compilation as ‘una lista cronológica’ (13). Due to unsatisfactory editing, the work’s chief utility is that of a list – an indexed catalogue to Lope’s legal, ecclesiastical, and epistolary records, their dates, and their sources. Let us hope that an equally comprehensive collection, rigorously and reliably edited, will succeed these volumes. An Internet-based edition or one made available as a CD-ROM could be especially advantageous. Publishing the Cartas, documentos y escrituras in the form of a searchable database, with the addition of a thematic index and the inclusion of any fresh archival discoveries, would furnish scholars with a truly valuable corpus.

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Del monte sale quien el monte quema is one of Lope’s late plays, with an autograph manuscript dated in Madrid on 20 October 1627. As such, it provided one of the benchmarks for Morley and Bruerton’s Chronology. Since the manuscript is readily available in the Biblioteca Nacional, it has, of course, been edited before: by Cotarelo (1916) and Juliá Martínez (1934), while there is a palaeographical edition by Le Fort Peña (Buenos Aires, 1939). A new edition is not going to change the Morley and Bruerton percentages of different metres, but in the last 70 years scholars have become increasingly aware that evidence from orthoepy, and the varying use of diaeresis and synaeresis or of hiatus and synalepha, can be as useful as metrical evidence in determining authorship: and the most reliable evidence for the practice of authors is provided by original manuscripts. Another factor which makes a new edition worthwhile is the neglect of the play: it apparently remained unprinted until 1916 and has been largely ignored by critics. In addition, as the list of variants shows (pp. 305–10), the previous editors were not always accurate: they tended to ‘correct’, consciously or otherwise, precisely those oddities which are now of interest.

There are apparently only 44 surviving manuscripts which are wholly or partly in Lope’s hand. Original manuscripts often provide other information besides the text of the play. This one has licences and a list of actors’ names (the list is not autograph): one of the few actors to have both Christian name and surname is the notorious María de Heredia, who also figures in the reparto (this time, in the author’s hand) of another autograph text, Calderón’s La desdicha de la voz (1639). The editor argues cogently from what we know of the career of Ms Heredia and the other actors who can be plausibly identified that their names should be associated with the licence granted in October 1636 in Granada: these are not the actors who premiered the play.

Since Del monte sale has been so little studied, critics are not even agreed on how to categorize it. Simply describing a play as a ‘comedia palatina’ would not be helpful, but the editor examines what this means: the social category of the characters, and the temporal and spatial distancing. The setting is, in fact, France, and both the setting and the closing lines (‘Aquí acaba / Del monte sale, que dio / tan ilustre reina a Francia’) were no doubt seen as a compliment to Isabel, Philip IV’s French queen. The editor also examines themes (love, honour, jealousy, ‘menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea’), the individual characters, the dramatic action and the style; there are extensive textual notes, as well as a list of the variant readings found in the other surviving manuscript (BNE, MS 16786, of the nineteenth century) and the printed editions.

The editor suggests, no doubt rightly, that the play was not a huge success in its day: it never appeared in a parte, and if it was ever printed as a suelta, no such editions...