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**How Theaters Paid for Healthcare in Early Modern Spain**  
*LSU Press to Publish Rachael Ball's Treating the Public in April 2017*

**Baton Rouge**—In *Treating the Public*, to be published in April 2017, Rachael Ball presents a comparative history of commercial theater, public opinion, and charitable organizations in eight cities across the Spanish and Anglo-Atlantic worlds during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This innovative study uncovers the rapid expansion of public drama into urban daily life in the Spanish Atlantic, revealing the means by which men and women provided and sought theatrical entertainment while practicing Catholic piety and working to aid the poor. Ball focuses her analysis on the theaters of Madrid, Seville, Mexico City, and Puebla de los Angeles, which she compares to English-speaking theaters throughout the Atlantic world in cities and towns including London, Bristol, Dublin, and Williamsburg, Virginia.

Ball shows how the *corrales de comedias*, or inn-yard theaters, became staples of city life throughout Spain and the Spanish Atlantic. This development stemmed, she argues, from a tremendous output of dramatic works and from the theaters' charitable activities that included donating a percentage of admission fees to hospitals and orphanages. As a result, groups like theatrical companies, religious lay brotherhoods, city leaders, and hospitals forged collaborative relationships which at once allowed the *corrales* to flourish and protected theaters as charitable institutions. Ball highlights the uniqueness of this system by contrasting it with public drama in England, where financial dependence on courtly and noble patronage slowed the spread of regular theatrical performances to provincial cities and colonial centers.

Using an array of archival and print sources, Ball links the largely disconnected national histories of Spanish, English, and colonial American theaters. *Treating the Public* uncovers the depth of the comedia tradition that flourished in early modern Spain as well as the geographic scope of the Spanish theater as a political, social, and cultural institution.

**Rachael Ball** is assistant professor of history at the University of Alaska Anchorage and coauthor of *Cómo ser rey. Instrucciones del emperador Carlos V a su hijo Felipe. Mayo de 1543*.

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