

# Editorial

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Every two years, *Early Theatre* recognizes outstanding contributors with essay prizes for exceptional articles on a theatre history topic relying on Record of Early English Drama-style records; articles offering a critical reading of a topic in medieval or early modern drama; and notes discussing a range of theatre history and drama-related topics. With this issue, we are happy to announce winners in these categories whose work appears in volumes 18 (2015) and 19 (2016). Our prize recipients in this instance include graduate students and assistant professors as well as senior distinguished scholars, all of whom are shifting the methods and assumptions we bring to the study of early theatre. For a full list of prize recipients and runners up, with explanatory commendations authored by our advisory board prize committees, please see <https://earlytheatre.org/earlytheatre/pages/view/prizes>.

We are also happy to announce an important innovation that marks *Early Theatre*'s twentieth year in print. Starting with the publication of this issue, our contributors will retain all copyright to their work, having provided the journal a limited exclusive publication licence of one year. We are simultaneously reducing our subscriptions 'moving wall' from two years to one. As has been *Early Theatre*'s practice for the past several years, we continue to encourage contributors to disseminate their essays online immediately following publication, through professional and institutional websites or archives, as well as through social media platforms. With our new copyright policy, *Early Theatre* fully embraces what the Canadian Social Sciences Research Council calls 'knowledge mobilization' and what we think of as simply making exciting new work in our field available to the greatest number of interested readers.

This issue begins with two pieces on medieval drama. Stephen Wright offers an overview of little-explored early German plays associated with carnival and provides editions and translations of these short entertainments. Jillian Linster is on more familiar ground when analyzing the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, but her argument that readers ought to view the physician in that play as a serious authority figure persuasively challenges critical assessments of this character as well as of the play's representation of religious doubt.

The rest of the issue's contents focus on early modern drama. Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* and the anonymous *Alarum for London* serve as central case studies in Georgina Lucas's thoughtful consideration of how rape and massacre become conflated in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drama. John Kuhn and Ian Burrows discuss Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* in light of very different contexts. For Burrows, Jonson is a playwright whose *Sejanus* as it appeared in print directly engages with readers. Quite differently, Kuhn puts Jonson in the world of public theatres and thus reveals that the altar scene in *Sejanus* provided both a stage property and a theatrical grammar for staging paganism that recur (with interesting modifications) across decades of plays. Finally, Alan Dessen's note on the implications of scripted, multiple Os in many early modern plays also investigates how 'theatrical vocabulary' — in line with stage 'grammar' and print engagement — develops and morphs the performance of meaning.

The issue's final section is an Issues in Review forum entitled 'Beaumont400'. Although the four hundredth anniversary of Beaumont's death in 2016 was largely overshadowed by Shakespeare400, as contributing editor Lucy Munro points out, the essays featured here use the prompt provided by this anniversary to reconsider Beaumont's plays through a variety of fruitful critical frameworks, including records-based biographical research, reception studies, book history, and performance studies. We hope that this set of short essays in both its content and its methodology will help to spark additional new scholarship on Beaumont's life, literary reputation, and work, as well as on medieval and early modern drama more broadly.

As we begin our twenty-first year of publication in 2018, we thank Vanessa Harding for her many years of service as a member of the journal's advisory board, and we welcome in her place our new member, Jennifer Panek (University of Ottawa). We also look forward to receiving submissions from both new and regular contributors. Thanks to all of our authors and readers for continuing to be a part of an always developing conversation about medieval and early modern theatre history, drama, and performance.

THE EDITORS