

# Editorial

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The articles and note presented in this issue, representing a range of approaches to understanding and interpreting early modern English drama, share qualities that we believe exemplify the commitments of this journal. All balance close reading with sensitivity to larger cultural contexts usually informed by careful analysis of primary source materials. Even the essays that do not specifically refer to Records of Early English Drama volumes have clearly been influenced by the types of arguments that such a massive research project makes possible.

The first four articles all focus on questions of performance. The transcript of Simon Jewell's 1592 will that appears as an appendix to Chiaki Hanabusa's article is the sort of document that should inspire further scholarly consideration of the material and economic conditions that shaped performance conditions. Hanabusa persuasively infers from this suggestive document the cost of becoming a shareholder in a playing company, the importance of costume stocks, the relationship between fencing masters and players, and the usual practices for dispersing a patron's largesse among troupe members. Alexandra S. Ferretti reads Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* as an exploration of the complex relationship between theatrical performance and performative language, and her interpretation of how Hieronimo makes language fail at the end of the play raises questions about staging chaos, violence, and justice with profound implications as to how we might understand bloody climaxes in other revenge tragedies. Kristina E. Caton's thoughtful discussion of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* relies on archival records of folk and commercial puppet shows to suggest how their presence in this public theatre play calls attention to a rich performance situation that can potentially make all characters, actors, and audience members into objects of ridicule. The discussion of the book-as-woman trope in Eleanor Lowe's insightful reading of Richard Brome's *The Love-Sick Court* points out complex connections among women's bodies, clothing, books, and book bindings that resonate in the love language used by Shakespeare, Middleton, Fletcher, and Dekker.

The volume's remaining pieces concentrate on issues that come to the attention of editors as they wrestle with texts. Mathew R. Martin not only

explicates how changes to punctuation and spelling in the 1612 quarto of Marlowe's *Edward II* subtly reshape the play's presentation of Gaveston — and thus make this 1590s text more explicitly engaged with Jacobean controversies about royal favouritism towards handsome male courtiers — but also indicates the importance of carefully considering all early editions, even so-called bad quartos and those supposedly just reset from earlier versions. Such awareness should surely be brought to *The Stonyhurst Pageants*, a series of seventeenth-century plays that are currently available only in the transcription prepared by Carleton Brown and published in 1920. J. Case Tompkins argues that this too-long neglected group of plays can be better understood as an example of seventeenth-century attempts by Catholic communities to seek toleration than as a nostalgic or polemical revival of traditional Catholic performance traditions. His discussion of how the anonymous author of these plays adapted both the translated text and the scholarly apparatus of the Douay-Rheims translation of the bible into English suggests questions we might raise about biblical drama from the middle ages to the closing of the theatres. Brett D. Hirsch's note on a stage direction in *The Late Lancashire Witches* is similarly far-reaching, implying a set of early modern connotations for the word 'reel' that ask us to ponder what it means in this play to 'reel in the dance' and whether the term connotes drunkenness, witch-like dancing, or northern hornpipe music when it appears in the dialogue or stage directions of other dramatic texts.

These arguments will be of interest to any scholars of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century drama as will the reviews of monographs, essay collections, and anthologies. Our next issue will focus specifically on texts and performances from the first half of the sixteenth century. The 16.2 (December 2013) Issues in Review section, 'New Approaches to Early Tudor Drama', organized by our associate editor Erin E. Kelly, builds on Kent Cartwright's discussion of *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama* in this issue and calls attention to a fascinating set of texts that have received too little scholarly attention. We hope that these Issues in Review essays will inspire rethinking of how we periodize, delimit, and understand early theatre. Also in 16.2, we will encourage readers to return to some of the most discerning research that has recently appeared in the pages of *Early Theatre* by announcing prizes for best theatre history paper, best critical article, and best note published in the past two years (volumes 14 and 15).

For fifteen years, *Early Theatre* has been able to address such broad questions because of the excellent work of our editorial board. It is an ideal time

to thank the distinguished medievalist Lawrence Clopper, professor emeritus of English at Indiana University, for fifteen years of invaluable contributions and wise guidance as he is now retiring from our editorial board. To help guide the journal from this point forward we are happy to welcome two new medievalists, Theresa Coletti (University of Maryland) and Jill Stevenson (Marymount Manhattan); both have been helpful in the past as peer-review readers and advice-givers, and are now prepared to do more. We also thank Erin Julian for standing in as acting assistant editor for this issue. Finally, we appreciate the willingness of Peter Kirwan (University of Nottingham) to share with Roberta Barker during this transitional year the position of book review editor before he takes full responsibility for the job himself in 2014.

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