

synthesis of existing scholarship, locating Shakespeare firmly within the practices of the company for which he acted and wrote.

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- 1 Van Es makes the argument at greater length in 'Johannes fac Totum?: Shakespeare's First Contact with the Acting Companies', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61 (2010), 551–77.

**Margaret Shewring (ed.).** *Waterborne Pageants and Festivities in the Renaissance: Essays in Honour of J.R. Mulryne.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013. Pp xxv, 439.

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This dense and detailed collection of case studies provides an authoritative overview of waterborne festivities in Renaissance Europe. The volume is presented as a festschrift for J.R. Mulryne, who directed the research program 'Festivals of the European Renaissance' at Warwick's Centre for the Study of the European Renaissance and whose biography introduces this volume in a two-page head note (ix–x). The twenty-one essays range across different European geographies, with concentrations in France, Italy, and England in the later sixteenth century. Some chapters cover more than one location, but a rough count indicates seven chapters primarily exploring festivals in Italy, six on festivals in England, four on French festivals, and smaller numbers concerning festivals in Spain, Denmark, or other locations.

Margaret Shewring's introduction frames the project as exploring 'the cultural significance of th[e] liquid environment' (1) for Renaissance Europe. She celebrates the diversity of the festivals as a 'testament to the wealth of commentary invited by waterborne events' (1) and suggests that this volume aims to produce a 'coherent overview' designed to stimulate 'further study of this important topic' (7). With equal attention to the engineering feats and cultural meanings of waterborne spectacles, the succeeding chapters provide

valuable context for scholars of early modern theatricality, civic pageantry, politics, and potentially even environmental history.

A short review provides no space to summarize or engage twenty-one distinct chapters, but several structural elements present themselves. The geographic plurality already mentioned reveals regional variations while also presenting evidence of pan-European habits of mind and practices in festival culture. The main loci around which the collection circles are Venice, Lyon, and London. The first four chapters, all concerned primarily with French festivals, focus on the riverine nature of Lyon's festivals, based on the city's two-way access via the Rhône both to the Mediterranean and to 'German and Dutch commercial centers in the North' (38). Venice, with its proximity to the Ottoman threat to the East and its central lagoon, appears in many ways the salt-water ideal of Renaissance water festivals, with *naumachiae* staged on many occasions, especially in celebration of the great naval victory at Lepanto in 1571. The symbolic 'marriage' of the Doge and the sea epitomizes the city's understanding of itself and Christendom as a whole in the later sixteenth century (86–91). Finally London, which appears as the central location of many chapters in the second half of this collection, treats the Thames as co-extensive with itself, as in John Taylor's couplet about the river's intimate function in urban ecology: 'What does it doe, but serves our full contents, / Brings food, and for it, takes our excrements' (266). As Sydney Anglo archly notes in his chapter, 'The Thames *en Fete*', Taylor's couplet about the relationship between Londoners and their river makes 'A beautiful sentiment!' (266).

Each of these detailed case studies provides evidence about the immense technical challenges of setting festivals on bodies of water or using water as part of a civic pageant. An unusual freeze on the Arno River in December 1604 provided the occasion for an ice festival in Florence, 'where people engaged in animal hunts, a pageant procession, and a variety of competitions' (244) — all the while acting quickly to get the entertainment in before a thaw. Several chapters emphasize classical models, especially *naumachiae* staged in the Roman Colosseum, which served to inspire Renaissance festivals (e.g. 154–5). An inventive chapter by Roger Savage explores 'Sea Spectacles on Dry Land' and the place of theatrical illusion in evoking maritime symbolism.

A shared argument in nearly all the chapters views the waterborne festival as an emblem of state power and the ability of the monarch or city to control the uncontrollable element. Even monarchs whose reigns are often deemed

failures, such as Mary Stuart's rule over Scotland in the mid-sixteenth century, used water festivals as 'an important vehicle for communicating royal power' (199). Evocations of the Thames in the masques of Ben Jonson and the poetry of John Taylor similarly emphasize the political entanglement of city and water. The collective argument of these very distinct case studies implies that Renaissance political power relied upon its imaginary conquest of watery space.

Readers seeking information about waterborne pageantry in any of these regions will find a wealth of information and rich occasions for further study here. For scholars less focused on precisely this area of study, however, the book's relatively thin structure and apparatus may prove frustrating. Shewring's introduction is helpful but very short at only seven pages; readers who want to use this material for, say, studies of early modern theatre, relations between East and West in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, environmental history, or other literary or cultural matters will need to wade through the material with little guidance beyond the thorough index. Overall, this detailed collection will primarily serve scholars already invested in the scholarship surrounding Renaissance festivals, but its contents also hint at suggestive possibilities for connecting this work to broader scholarly conversations.

**Susan Bennett and Mary Polito (eds). *Performing Environments: Site-Specificity in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp xii, 271.**

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*Performing Environments: Site-Specificity in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama* is a richly diverse and innovative volume of essays that makes rewarding connections between theatre and site, memory and history, through chapters that are characterized by the wide-ranging and original methodologies employed by their authors. The volume is divided into four parts. The chapters of the first section, 'Building Frameworks', suggest that 'materiality and space — objects, rooms, buildings — provide defining