

# Editorial

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This issue boasts a strong collection of essays on performance and presentation throughout the period, from the Coventry medieval pageants to the Caroline drama of Richard Brome. Sandwiched between these articles are two essays that examine the place of women in the early modern period: in one through examining the portraits of female donors to civic charities, and in the other, through understanding the role of women as touring performers. Finally we have a note on the ‘War of the Theatres’.

Sheila Christie’s article on the Coventry play revisions explores how the pageants evoke contemporary artisanal and civic contexts in addition to the texts’ central religious stories. Both pageants express nostalgia for and anxiety over the failure of gerontocratic hierarchies, and, as Christie argues, recognizing these contemporary references demonstrates how the pageants bring local political and social issues into a public forum.

Robert Tittler examines one scene in Thomas Heywood’s *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody Part 2* in which Alexander Nowell, Dean of St. Paul’s, shows off his picture gallery of ‘charitable citizens’, causing one of his guests, Lady Mary Ramsay, a substantial benefactor herself, to ask why she should not be similarly depicted. That scene opens several windows onto Heywood’s time and also onto several themes repeatedly raised in Heywood’s oeuvre. They include the role of women in charitable benefactions, women as ‘urban heroes’, the positive benefits of urban society (often disparaged in that era), and the uses of portraiture itself in contemporary civic discourse and self-presentation.

Sara Mueller investigates performance records to document that women touring professionals were an accepted part of the performance culture of early modern England. Her article argues that a positivist approach to reading performance records of female itinerants needs to be paired with an approach which acknowledges that the remaining records cannot be taken as a repre-

sentative sample of what occurred and that the records themselves are slippery, biased, and grounded in the time and place of a singular instance. Instead of being a failure of the surviving body of records, this aspect of the records can be an opportunity to recover the ideological valence of the performances of itinerant women.

Rachel Poulsen looks at Brome's late city comedy *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* (1639), a play that devotes specific attention to women as consumers, and foregrounds the financial and erotic rivalries that consumption spurs between them. The familiar city comedy equation of sex, cash, and commodities gains a fresh perspective when all three things circulate exclusively among scheming female characters. A great deal of their contact is antagonistic; much of it is homosocial, and, with a cross-dressed heroine wooed by two wives, it frequently crosses into the homoerotic. This erotic and financial competition between women articulates cultural anxieties specific to Caroline London, and pushes the thematic boundaries of city comedy to their outer limits.

Finally James Doelman has excavated new information on the 'War of the Theatres' by digging into the Latin epigrams in Charles Fitz-Geffry's *Affaniae* (1601). As with most epigrams, individuals are masked by fictional names, but identification is possible through the supplementary evidence of the manuscript Latin letters of Fitz-Geffry's friend, Degory Wheare, and by comparison with other epigrams, especially those attacking John Weever, Thomas Bastard, and John Marston. Overall, the epigrams and correspondence manifest the sensitive dynamics of personal attacks within the English literary sphere at this time, and the resultant care (and even self-censorship) as a poet moved toward print.

With this issue, we welcome Melinda Gough as our new Managing Editor; she will take on additional responsibilities as Associate Editor beginning with the next issue.

HELEN OSTOVICH