

Editorial

The essays in this issue present stunning new material on early modern theatre, ranging from studies of a playwright, a company manager, community funding practices, and acting skills, to analyses of costume, including rusty armour and ‘a robe for to goo invisibell’. Our Issues in Review section offers a mini-collection of commedia dell’arte scholarship, much of which will have an impact on our thinking about early English drama.

David Mateer explores two lawsuits from 1587-8 — one certainly relating to Christopher Marlowe, the other probably relating to him — which have been discovered among the records of the court of King’s Bench at The National Archives in Kew, London and which fill a gap in Marlowe studies with previously unknown details of his life immediately after leaving Cambridge. In another foray into hitherto untapped records, Christopher Matusiak explores new evidence about Christopher Beeston, appointed Governor of the King and Queen’s Young Company in 1637. This article presents discoveries relating to Beeston’s non-theatrical activity in the 1630s in order to reconstruct the patronage conditions that apparently gave rise to his winning the appointment.

Ernst Gerhardt looks back at the acquisition of funds in Kent during the 1520s and 1530s, raised by collections taken both from individuals attending these events, and from towns and parishes as collectivities. This article explores the history of such affiliation among several parishes and towns in southwest Kent, tracing the decline in the number of rewards made to bann criers and other parish performers. Meg Pearson takes us forward to 1621, and another view of parish life, with the case of Elizabeth Sawyer as told in *The Witch of Edmonton*, especially looking at how Dog’s villainy displaces Sawyer’s witchcraft as the play’s centre. Dog’s destabilizing potency recalls the improvisational talents of clowning dogs in Tudor interludes and the early comedies in the public theaters, but his theatrical abilities push beyond laughs to unhinge the ethical underpinnings of Edmonton’s ‘justice’ system.

Barbara Palmer explores the costume worn by those who go invisible on stage: was there a particular robe worn to signal this purpose? This study draws

its treatment of invisibility from such appropriate English ‘cycle’ pageants as the annunciation and resurrection as well as several appearance, ascension, and assumption plays. Susan Harlan asks questions about the rusty armour in *Pericles*, act 2. She examines what this prop might have looked like on stage, how it might have been acquired by the theatre, and why it is ‘rusty’ or ruined. She also examines how found, claimed, or inherited material objects — such as stage properties — engage us with questions of inherited literary or dramatic form and the notion of military ‘spoiling’.

M.A. Katrizsky introduces the Issues in Review section on commedia dell’arte by looking at significant new publications in the field. Maria Ines Aliverti identifies a portrait by Veronese in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, as that of Isabella Andreini, on the basis of comparison to known portraits of the actress and the iconography these portraits share. Rosalind Kerr also has an interest in Andreini, among others. Her essay lays out a theoretical framework exploring the introduction of the actress in the 1560s as an early form of commodity fetish whose spectacularized body becomes a contested site of meaning. Erith Jaffe-Berg shifts the attention to gender in multilingual performance, giving special emphasis to the unique technique of *grammelot* or nonsense language, and the use of hybrid languages to create a discourse on cultural intermeshing. Stefano Mengarelli examines the illustrations accompanying the scenarios in the two-volume anonymous manuscript *Raccolta di scenari più scelti d’istrioni* in Rome’s Biblioteca Corsiniana, and offers answers to the central questions raised by these pictures. To what extent did they depict actual sets and actors of their time? Did their illustrators draw on their own knowledge of the theatre, or did they rely on iconographic borrowings? Finally, Robert Henke expands on published commedia scholarship to outline possible future work on cross-pollination between English and Italian practices: scholars now should ask whether English actors occasionally practised not only the *arte* method of improvisation, but also, more broadly, the modular ‘composition’ of speeches, dialogues, scenes, and plays.

With this issue I welcome Melinda Gough as Associate Editor, in addition to her duties as Managing Editor, and Suzanne Westfall as a new member of the editorial board. The board says farewell to Robert Tittler, who has been a dynamic presence in this journal’s growth since 1998.

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