

Early Theatre

2025 Prize for Best Article in Theatre History, Volumes 26–27

Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich

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‘Chaste, Fair, and Bountiful: Marston, Fletcher,
and the Countess of Huntingdon’s Patronage’

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Focusing on the business of theatre and performance as well as dramatic texts, Kolkovich’s essay unites literary criticism, gender theory, and social history with theatre history in ways that brilliantly recentre women as patrons, creators, and salon organizers. This article takes up John Marston’s *Ashby* entertainment (1607) and John Fletcher’s *The Faithful Shepherdess* (c. 1608) to explore the influence of Elizabeth Stanley Hastings, countess of Huntingdon and her female compatriots on early seventeenth-century theatre. Foregrounding private entertainments in ways that recentre patronage and regional performance and expanding our understanding of the intersections between gender and dramatic patronage in the period, Kolkovich makes possible a more rich and complete picture of Elizabethan and Jacobean entertainment.