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*Cheshire (including Chester). Records of Early English  
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Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* is the subject of the first essay. Karen Sawyer Marsalek (pp. 271–91) writes a poised and close reading of the resurrection scene in this play against a context of plays of Christ's Resurrection from before and after the Reformation, which is just right for this volume. Deceptively narrow in compass, the essay vitally demonstrates how new readings of so-called "medieval" drama can enrich Shakespeare scholarship. The author also resists engagement with the wider debate about Shakespeare's own confessional status that has attracted much recent discussion, seeing the scene's resurrection metadrama purely in terms of theatrical device.

The book's concluding slot is aptly reserved for David Bevington (pp. 293–310), whose *From Mankind to Marlowe* remains one of the classics of medieval to early modern cross-over scholarship. Bevington rethinks the relative merits of the A and B texts of Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, concluding that, while A is the more metaphysically consistent, B is a knowingly crowd-pleasing revision directed at audiences on whom the subtleties of Calvinist theology were lost. In constructing this argument, Bevington refers to "the great medieval biblical plays," specifically the Harrowing of Hell and Doomsday, as analogues to and precursors of the B-text ending. To have taken his chosen exemplars from the Towneley manuscript, whose status, date, and provenance are all now hotly contested, might seem perverse. Bevington, however, chooses to swim against the running tide of opinion by stating in a footnote, "I nonetheless remain convinced that a single and distinctive genius is to be found in the works among the Towneley Plays customarily associated with the name of the Wakefield Master." This whole book has offered comment on the shifted landscape of medieval drama away from Corpus Christi cycles and morality plays to the more varied and disparate one uncovered by the records archaeologists. But after so much demolition of old certainties, rightly undertaken as the incontrovertible evidence of REED mounts up, perhaps it is also timely to revisit with David Bevington some of our surviving scripts with renewed confidence in critical intuition. The book concludes with a bibliography of Alexandra Johnston's publications (pp. 311–18), and, usefully for a collection like this, has a full index.

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CHESHIRE (INCLUDING CHESTER). RECORDS OF EARLY ENGLISH DRAMA, 19. 2 vols. Edited by Elizabeth Baldwin, Lawrence M. Clopper, and David Mills. Pp. ccxxv + 1231. Toronto and London: Toronto University Press and The British Library, 2007. \$400.

This is the latest set of volumes from the Records of Early English Drama project, which seeks to edit and present "all records before 1642 of dramatic, musical, and ceremonial activity" in England (p. cxci), and, in its sister project RED (Records of Early Drama), in Wales and Scotland. The Cheshire edition "incorporates an updated and revised edition" of Clopper's 1979 REED: *Chester*. In these latest volumes, activity regarded as dramatic "ranges from visiting professional players to the Chester Whitsun play to plays performed by the scholars and the townsmen in Congleton to isolated incidents involving mimicry." Music and musicians "cover the entire social range" outside of ecclesiastical music. The selection criteria for "ceremonial activity has been limited to secular events." Visits by royalty or nobility are included only if they "were accompanied by mimetic ceremony,

music, or drama," although a list of all such visits is included in an appendix. Also included are animal sports such as "bearbaiting, bullbaiting, cockfighting, and horseracing" (p. cxciij).

The two-volume set opens with a nearly 100-page introduction which includes sections providing "Historical Background" (pp. xiii-xxxiii), a summary of "Drama, Music, and Popular Customs" in the region (pp. xxxiii-lxxxiii), a formal description for the documentary sources of the records ("Documents," pp. lxxxiii-cxciii), and the series' "Editorial Procedures" (pp. cxciii-ccii).

The records themselves take up the rest of Volume 1 and about half of Volume 2. They are organized by locality first, beginning with the Province of York and Diocese of Chester, and then by individual villages and towns, from Acton to Wymbunbury, in alphabetical order. Within those sections, they are ordered chronologically where possible. Undated records are in the first of seven Appendixes in Volume 2; the remaining six Appendixes are: "Royal and Noble Visits to Chester," "Collier's Letter and the Play of Robert of Sicily," "The Breviaries of Archdeacon Robert and David Rogers," "The Development of the Plays," "Selective List of Musicians and Musical Performers," and "Saints' Days and Festivals." Translations of records not in English are provided after the Appendixes.

In keeping with the usual practice of the REED series, documents are only lightly edited for the purposes of modern print. Manuscript punctuation and spelling are retained, and expanded abbreviations are marked in italics. The layout attempts to follow the manuscripts as closely as possible with regards to headings, marginalia, and columns, and where changed, it is noted. Other editorial interventions are noted (see pp. cc-cci).

In re-editing and presenting the Chester records in context of the entire county of Cheshire, REED: *Cheshire* places the dramatic activities of Chester into a much vaster matrix of performative culture than Chester's civic interests alone. The original Chester volume, one of the first two published in the REED series (the two-volume York set being the other), gave a large proportion of its space to documents regarding the Whitsun plays. At the time, medieval drama scholarship saw such "cycle plays" as the measure of all other dramatic activity. More recently, however, as Lawrence Clopper himself has shown in his *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (2001), such large scale civic performances were the exception, rather than the rule, of early English drama. The new Cheshire volumes make this clear in many ways. Though Chester records regarding the Whitsun plays and other ceremonial activities still take up a large portion of the documents, and the Introduction's section on "Drama, Music, and Popular Customs" begins with a discussion of the Whitsun plays, they are now embedded within a larger regional context which involves a great variety of dramatic, ceremonial, musical, and other entertainment activity. Various records show Chester residents entertained or entertaining in other towns—for example, Congleton hired "Calis the musitian" from Chester in February 1620/1 and in April 1621 (p. 647)—and thus give witness to the network of performative culture that thrived in the region. The inclusion of re-edited Chester documents in these volumes, then, creates new interpretative contexts for Chester and its performative culture, as well as for the entire region.

This combined reissue and expansion of records from Chester and Cheshire comes at a timely moment in the scholarship of Cheshire literary and performative cultures. Recent and forthcoming works on Cheshire literary cultures are providing a picture of a medieval and early modern Britain with many cultural centers,

Cheshire being one of the richest and most vibrant, a hybrid space that partakes of English and Welsh culture, and which has its own ties to other places and cultures, independent of London. With the addition of these Cheshire volumes, scholars of the region and its culture—and not only those who work on drama as conventionally conceived—might find new sources of study and inspiration.

Aside from expanded breadth, there are other differences between the original 1979 Chester volume and this new Cheshire set. The original introduction began with a description of the documents and concluded with a nine-page overview of dramatic and ceremonial activity, a briefness that Anne Hudson, in her 1982 review, found disappointingly “bare” (*Review of English Studies*, n.s. 33, 314). That section now consists of forty-seven pages of text and three pages of illustrations, and is complemented by four maps, including a modern rendering of the streets of Chester, the absence of which in the original volume Hudson lamented (p. 314). The greater quantity of introductory materials is not only the effect of expanding to all of Cheshire, but also of revising and expanding the discussion of Chester and its dramatic activities.

The expansion and revision of the introduction also affects how that material is introduced. The REED editors seem to be responding in some form to Theresa Coletti’s charge in her article “Reading REED” (in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain 1380–1530* [1990]) that in presenting the historical evidence without interpretation, REED’s “method undermines its effort to illuminate dramatic activities and play texts” (p. 272). Although some of the faults that Coletti found with the REED project still remain—in particular, the tendency to present brief references to drama without their original contexts—the introductory material now does attempt to provide interpretation, and it also recognizes where the difficulties lie as well as how extra-documentary knowledge is a necessary part of the interpretative process. For example, in the original REED: *Chester* volume, one short paragraph is given to a seemingly uncontroversial description of the structure of the Whitsun play carriages as “open on the top” (REED: *Chester*, p. lvi). In the current Cheshire volumes, two longer paragraphs are given to discussing the “controversy” and “difficulty” in interpreting Chester antiquarian David Rogers’s description of the carriages as being “open on the tope,” and do so with references to play texts, modern performances, critical history, and two other records included in these volumes (pp. xlii, xlv). Two more pages analyze other difficulties in Rogers’s descriptions. Thus the latest volumes do not simply leave the historical documents to speak for themselves, but provide at least one model of interpretation on matters much debated and puzzled over.

The REED volumes have generally had a fairly inclusive conception of “drama,” including musical performances and animal sport as well as mimetic performances. These latest volumes also include the texts of outlaw ballads, perhaps on the assumption that they were sung. And since much of our knowledge of musicians and performers comes from the laws regulating them and the instances in which individual members broke those laws, a significant number of the Records of Early English Drama are legal records that indirectly shed light on the performance culture of a given city, town, or county. Thus the REED volumes—this set and others—could be a useful reference for scholars in fields other than drama studies.

In light of Lawrence Clopper’s *Drama, Play, and Game*, it is easier to understand why it is that animal sport is included. The terms “drama,” “play,” and “game” overlap significantly in medieval and early modern records, and sporting events of various kinds fall into that continuum. But if the reader of REED: *Cheshire* has

not encountered Clopper's book, he or she might still be puzzled by the inclusion of bearbaiting and cockfighting in a reference work on drama and performance. Although the introduction mentions that Puritan preachers associated bearbaiting with the wakes, which they considered recusant (p. lxxv), thus giving bearbaiting some association with other performance practices, it would be helpful if the introduction more directly addressed the inclusion of animal sports.

Regarding preachers and their sermons, such texts or excerpts of them are included when they explicitly mention other kinds of performance, as when excerpts from Edward Burghall's *Providence Improved* are selected for their description not only of a "debauched . . . Bear-ward" who was "cruelly rent in Pieces by a Bear," but also for their mention of another preacher, "Mr. [William] Hind," who preached against "those Disorders" (p. 33). But aren't such sermons also a kind of public performance and entertainment, especially in the later parts of the REED volumes' chronological span through 1642? If the texts of outlaw ballads are included in the volumes, why not the entire texts of sermons? It is not always easy to see where the REED editors draw their lines between the dramatic and the non-dramatic, or their reasoning for doing so. Granted, greater inclusiveness would make these already huge and expensive volumes even more so, but some more thorough discussion of the theory and methods of the project, included in each volume, would be appreciated. The section on "Editorial Procedures" as it now stands makes some justifications, but is largely descriptive. On animal sports, for instance, it says only that "Animal entertainments such as bearbaiting, bullbaiting, cockfighting, and horseracing were also popular in the county" (p. cxci).

Although the greatly expanded and more interpretive introductory materials answer some of the early criticism of the REED project and the REED: *Chester* volumes, one of the recurring points made by REED's critics—that excerpts of texts, taken out of their documentary and manuscript contexts, leave much to be desired—is always going to be a potential problem for the already monumentally sized REED volumes. Given the presumed material constraints on making the REED volumes longer and greater in number, the experienced scholar should see the volumes as a reference tool and a guide to what is in the archives, rather than an end in itself. That said, for graduate students and junior scholars who may not have the support or the release time or the training to use archives themselves, REED represents a certain amount of access that would otherwise be out of reach. For all the tantalizing one-line items that make us wish we had more of the original context—such as "Item one bandora and one lute with a Case" in the 1612 inventory of John Yardley, Gentleman of Crewe (p. 663), which makes one wonder what else the gentleman owned—there are more complete and detailed records that could be of interest not only to drama scholars but those working in other subfields. To give but one example, there is the 1614 Coppenhall Quarter Sessions Petition of John Beckett against Robert Tomlinson for having "inveihed againste the petitioner in Rymes and Lybels" (pp. 662–63), presented in its entirety.

That 1614 record calls to mind Hudson's assumption in her review of the original Chester volume that "the medievalist will be somewhat disappointed" by the paucity of records from before 1500. But so many of us work across the medieval-early modern boundary now, especially those of us in drama studies, that Hudson's concern seems less relevant today, even though the present volumes also provide much more material from after 1500 than from before. It seems that we have finally caught up to the REED policy of seeing the continuities in early drama across periods.

If we use REED: *Cheshire* and other REED volumes with caution, and teach our students to do so as well—to see fragmentary records as leads and previews, rather than complete documents in themselves and to use REED as a reference work and finding aid—it then becomes an excellent resource for scholars of the medieval and early modern periods in a variety of disciplines. Though its emphasis is on drama, it could be of use to scholars of literature and performances of various kinds, as well as historical linguists, social historians, musicologists, and others.

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WRITERS OF THE REIGN OF HENRY II: TWELVE ESSAYS. Edited by Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones. The New Middle Ages. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Pp. viii + 280. \$69.95.

The significance of the twelfth century in European, and particularly British, history has long been recognized. Charles Homer Haskins wrote his *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* in 1955; Christopher Brooke's *Twelfth Century Renaissance* and C. Warren Hollister's collection with the same title appeared almost simultaneously in 1969 and 1970; and by the end of the twentieth century there was a new overview, in R. N. Swanson's *Twelfth Century Renaissance*. The current essay collection is one of many that have followed in recent years, and so it might seem at first that the persistent references to neglect which characterize many of the essays in this volume are in some way misplaced. It is true that much has been written, in both large and small-scale studies, on this period, and it is one of the (minor) irritations of this volume that many of the writers fail to engage as fully as they might with some of that recent scholarship. However, it is also the case that persistent barriers remain when it comes to our ability to appreciate fully the scope and depth of the Angevin literary achievement. Each of the essays in this volume has something interesting to offer about some particular text or texts, but the true importance of the volume lies in its cumulative insistence on sweeping away some of those barriers.

The collection is bookended by statements which make clear what is at stake in a proper appreciation of the Angevin literary inheritance. Simon Meecham-Jones opens his Introduction by stating that the period fostered a range of literature "without precedent in English cultural history" (p. 2), while Rosalind Field concludes her essay by writing that "The literature of the reign of Henry II is seminal to the development of English fiction" (p. 260). Thus the literary productions in the period of Henry II (a somewhat elastic designation, as more than one of the contributors includes the decades before and/or after Henry's reign) are marked out as both remarkable and foundational. Other themes link the essays: most of the contributors take pains to insist on the multilingual context for the works discussed; many trace the significance of court culture and the role of courtier-clerics in Angevin political and literary life; and many essayists use close attention to particular material contexts to underpin their arguments. These leitmotifs help to bind the contributions together. As in any essay collection, some parts are more tightly knit to the whole than are others, but this stands as a particularly useful book, one of those rare collections in which the very good individual parts are enhanced by their proximity to the rest of the work.

Simon Meecham-Jones's Introduction hits the thematic notes that will be repeated throughout the collection. He points to the multilingual context of the