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Selected Publications in Shakespeare Studies

Continisio, Tommaso and Del Villano, Bianca, eds, ***Queens on Stage: Female Sovereignty, Power and Sexuality in Early Modern English Theatre*****, Canterano, Aracne, 2018, 201 pp.**

One of the many strengths of this volume can be found in its very title. Rather than using the category of "queenship", or an Elizabeth I-centred "Staging the Queen", the editors opt for the plural "Queens", thus signalling the collection's praiseworthy emphasis on the multiple intricacies and complex variety of its subject matter. The contributors' essays themselves live up to both the title and subtitle, exploring from diverse perspectives the shifting, often ambiguous, and sometimes contradictory dynamics of power and sexuality involving early modern English theatrical queens both real and fictional. While they reach a general consensus that the gender politics of a male-privileging patriarchal society placed extraordinary pressures and limitations on female sovereigns, the authors convincingly demonstrate that the staging of charismatic, eloquent, and self-assertive queens could follow a wide range of paths, disallowing any single, dominant cultural or aesthetic interpretation, and opening up instead multiple possibilities for future research and analysis. In keeping with this same laudable favouring of plurality, the collection does not – as is too often the case – give precedence to Shakespeare, but places studies of his plays amidst ones focusing on Marlowe, Middleton, Jonson, and others.

The title also aptly evokes the well-known statement of Queen Elizabeth I that "we princes, I tell you, are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world duly observed" (p. 151), but mainly as an initial reference point, especially to New Historicist and Cultural Materialist criticism of the past thirty years. As Bianca Del Villano notes in her pithy introduction, the oft-employed "containment vs. subversion" dialectic can be insufficient and even misleading, and thus she advocates, à la Foucault, an approach that assesses "a different distribution of Power, which became as pluralised as the

counter-discourses that undermined its centrality" (p. 11). Stressing the diversity of "discursive typologies of macro-micro interaction affecting specific social groups", she characterises Elizabeth Tudor's "crucial position in this process" as neither hegemonic nor anomalous, but rather as one that saw this real-life Queen "staging and interpreting a scenario in which looming confusion, convergence or inversion between these opposites [of privileged male and subordinate female, of social 'tops' and 'bottoms'] certainly meant political threat but inevitably semantic richness" (Introduction, p. 13). Also invoking the "formations of compromise" that distinguished early modern social and gender relations, Del Villano lucidly explains that the queens of the volume's essays are not mere refractions of Elizabeth I, but more complex theatrical "palimpsests", vital to dramatic representations where "*power* and *sexuality* emerge as markers of particular importance for delineating the interpersonal dynamics of the characters" (Introduction, p. 13). This critical stress on fluidity and heterogeneity thus gives *Queens on Stage* the admirable merit of providing highly welcome updating and revision – marked by rigour, nuance, and subtlety – of historicist studies focusing on monarchical questions and phenomena in early modern English theatre.

In this regard, it is pertinent to give special commendation to one of the volume's final chapters, Roger Holdsworth's "Uncertain Creatures: Playing the Quean in Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama". Applying thorough and scrupulous analysis of playwrights' frequent and often ingenious uses of the "quean" (specifically meaning "whore", generally "a sexually aberrant woman") / "queen" homophone, and deftly relating them to contemporary constructs of gender and female sexuality, Holdsworth demonstrates how audiences would have heard not only punning but also ambiguously provocative, satirical, and challenging conflations of "high status female sovereign" with "low status unchaste (Biblically 'strange') woman". Given the simultaneous availability of five choices for understanding what the "KWIN" sound could represent, auditors would have enjoyed "a liberty of interpretation greater than the reader's" (p. 167). He concludes his engagingly written essay with a helpful list – including new and persuasive readings of Antony's "Fie, wrangling queen[quean]" quip with Cleopatra, and Leontes' jealously insidious "Tongue-tied our queen[quean]?" question to Hermione – of significant Shakespearean instances, following upon

his illuminating appraisals of passages and scenes such as Heywood's brilliantly devised, innuendo-laden card game among Frankford, his wife Anne, and her lover Wendoll in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (with double entendres on the "queen" card), Follywit's backfiring impersonation of the prostitute Frank Gullman in Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters,* Gonzalo's tempting courtship of the Princess Erota in Massinger's and Ford's *The Laws of Candy,* and in the latter playwright's *Perkin Warbeck*, Huntly's confused and indeed confusing reflection on his daughter's possibly bigamous marriage to the would-be future king: "I never was ambitious/ Of using Congeys [deferential bows] to my *Daughter Queene:* / A *Queene,* perhaps a *Queene?*" (II.iii.45-77). In this case, as Holdsworth explains, multiple entendres would depend on the actor's tone of voice, once again showing that the "queen/quean" homophone is more than an easy verbal joke; it was also a way to keep audiences guessing, and in the process to interrogate cynical and abusive patriarchal attitudes towards women and their sexuality.

Such attentive and fruitful analysis prompts me to recall Launcelot Gobbo's design to "try confusions" with his listener: the "queen/quean" wordplay confounds any single, stable, decisive meaning, and enables hermeneutic riddles to function as markers of but also challenges to conventional views of female power, with their sexually inflected bias. I thus would venture to link much of early modern English staging of female sovereignty with the trope of the enigma: my response does not in any way presume to confine the essays of *Queens on Stage* within this interpretation, but rather attests to how they spark critical enquiry and insight into their subject matter, with its own historically and theatrically shaped tendencies towards ambiguity and provocation. For example, Tommaso Continisio starts his compelling piece on the "Questioning of Female Royalty" in *The Lady's Tragedy* with the assertion that "Women are ultimately powerless in Middleton", only to demonstrate that the opposite may also pertain to several of his plays and female figures, such as Gloriana with her poisoned skull in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and the Lady herself, who in her eponymous tragedy outshines her hesitant fiancé Govianus as well as the other male characters with her courage, eloquence, and rejection of tyranny. Again the "queen/quean" pun plays its crucial part, as Continisio elucidates how Middleton employs it to develop contrasts as well as parallels between the main plot of female refusal of sexually tyrannous

exploitation, and the subplot of the Wife's yielding to adulterous temptation. The essay accentuates the complexity of the playwright's female characters, and in particular of the moral ambiguities of The Lady's heroic, saint-like, yet potentially damnable suicide, an act that exposes how her identity remains vulnerable to pressure and re-shaping by the men who attempt to possess her.

Middleton's stark and ambivalent dramatisation of men's resolute efforts to prey upon, abuse, and scapegoat women – whether the latter be innocent or guilty, resistant or complicit – emerges even more graphically in his mixed-genre *Hengist, King of Kent, or The Mayor of Queenborough* (note the significant pun of this place-name), with the first title designating a tragedy, and the second a comedy (which, through revision, came to dominate the play's reputation and popularity). Daniela Guardamagna incisively clarifies these generic as well as gender-related tensions, focusing on the evil queen Roxena, who colludes with her lover Horsus (spelled Hersus in the manuscripts of the play, and in the version edited by Grace Ioppolo for the Oxford *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*) to manipulate the lust of King Vortiger, arranging for him to cruelly rape his own chaste wife Castiza, publicly shame and repudiate her, and then marry the scheming and ambitious Roxena. Along the way, while the good queen suffers infamy, the evil one poisons a male political rival, and like her counterpart Beatrice-Joanna in Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*, feigns virginity to achieve her ends; here Guardamagna usefully cites the real-life contemporary scandal of Frances Howard, with the scandalous poisoning of Lord Overbury and Howard's divorce from Count Essex in order to marry Lord Somerset. And yet, as Guardamagna appropriately emphasizes, Roxena's horrible demise, painfully dying in the flames that engulf Vortiger's castle, is worsened by the males – her lover and her husband – who remain deaf to her cries for help and prefer to kill each other, confirming the critique of masculine jealousy and violence made by the queen herself earlier in the play: "I pity all the fortunes of poor gentlewomen / Now in mine own unhappiness; when we have given / All that we have to men, what's their requital? / An ill-faced jealousy" (III.i.44-47). In his dying speech, Vortiger may vilify Roxena as a "mystical harlot", and pronounce the rhyming *damnatio memoriae* epitaph for her "whom lust crowned Queen before, / Flames crown her now for a triumphant whore" (V.ii.155-

56), but his own lustful and criminal deeds contradict him, and thus give more validity to the woman's spoken words.

It is in fact the staging of the power and influence of the regal female voice that serves as a revealing *leitmotif* in the collection's essays devoted to Shakespearean plays. These are Savina Stevanato's "Margaret's Queenship: A Mirror for Kings", Paolo Pepe's "The Lily and the Rose: Queen Isabel and the Prophetic Vision of a New Lineage of Kings", and Simonetta De Filippis's "Queens on Trial: the Staging of Passions in Shakespeare's Theatre". While the last-named contribution brings needed and instructive attention to the shared dignity and remarkable eloquence of the accused self-defendants Katherine of Aragon in *Henry VIII* and the Emperor of Russia's daughter Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, the preceding two, focusing on the early plays *Richard III* and *Richard II*, illuminate the ways in which the theatrically impressive utterances of dispossessed queens carry a force that transcends their own historical limits, resonating into England's (Tudor) future. Stevanato discerningly characterises the ever-evolving, dynamic Margaret of the first tetralogy as a "maieutic queen," who teaches other repudiated, disgraced, and grieving royal women "the power of words and how to appropriate it" (p. 74). Tracing how the efficacy of Margaret's truthful language increases through the final acts of *Richard III* – in contrast to the decreasingly efficacious speech-acts of the title character – Stevanato reaches the conclusion that "through Margaret's queenship, Shakespeare provides a model for kingship that tells of the Tudors' ability to combine tradition and modernity" (p. 85). Likewise, though in a less rhetorically transparent way, Queen Isabel – transformed by Shakespeare from the ten-year old consort of historical fact into a mature, devoted, and much-admired queen – speaks lines that will be revealed to have prophetic power, though in unorthodox ways. As Paolo Pepe persuasively argues, citing the key insight of Silvia Bigliazzi in her monograph *Nel prisma del nulla,* Isabel's "heavy *nothing*" will generate a legacy of *something* genuine and substantial (italics mine): this paradox is made possible by the inner truth of her emotional sensibility, combined with the script's use of the Biblical paradigm of the withered but ultimately redeemed Garden. Thus Isabel's curse of the plants grafted by York's gardener – hailed by the queen as "old Adam's likeness" – is undone by her own tears, which symbolically fertilise the repentant land, fostering the growth of rue/ruth (the herb of grace) and thus the restoration of the English

body politic, "in the remembrance of a weeping queen" (III.iv.107). In this sense, Isabel speaks most proleptically with the miraculous organ of her tear-shedding eyes, rather than with her ultimately silenced female tongue. In these Shakespearean cases, the conventions of female complaint, cursing, and lamentation are thus re-imagined, and through theatrical performance put to other, more strategic and constructive uses.

Another Queen Isabel(la), that of Marlowe's *Edward II*, actively enters the scene in Paola Di Gennaro's trenchant essay on the play's treatment of "Power and Desire", though with less emphasis on her volubility, and more on the character's volatility, especially in her relationships with her husband the king and with her eventual lover, the Machiavellian power-broker Mortimer. At stake once more is the question of how Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights modulate gender roles and conventions, for as Di Gennaro recognises, "Marlowe plays with femininity and masculinity as they relate to sovereignty" (p. 43). In this light, Isabella emerges as a virago queen, more fit to be a warrior than is her effeminate husband/king, with his homosexual, politically irresponsible passion for his favourite Gaveston: consequently, "the fusion of masculinity and femininity subverts the expected common order" (p. 59). Likewise, Carmen Gallo focuses on Marlowe's revisionist approach to historical material and literary traditions, in her essay "Translating Gender, Power and Fate in *The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage*" (the first of the collection's case studies, which follow a chronological order from this Elizabethan play through Jonson's Jacobean masques). Informatively citing recent London stage productions of Marlowe's tragedy, Gallo confirms its theatrical viability, connecting it to how the script boldly departs from its Virgilian model, with such moves as Dido's putting Aeneas in feminine positions and even metaphorically inscribing him in her own body. As elsewhere in this dramatist's oeuvre, we see a distortion and even a parody of moralizing Christian versions of classical figures. Thanks also to the nearly farcical suicide of Dido's sister Anna, the play's characters convey a loss of faith in any providential framework, as they fight to maintain some kind of independence from literary clichés – in some ways, Marlowe's Dido consciously rejects her standard portrayal as a victim of lust and desire – as well as from the logic of imperialism mixed with the (possible) operation of supernatural agents.

Supernatural factors, however, do not mark the agenda of two other contributions to the volume, which make apposite reference to the theatrical consciousness and activities of the historical queens Elizabeth I and Anne of Denmark, the consort of King James I. In Marina Lops' well-articulated study of "Queen Anne and the Staging of Female Sovereignty in *The Masque of Blackness*", primary attention is given to the crucial roles played by Anne both on- and off-stage, as the royal patron who insisted that the masque's author Ben Jonson write scenes for her and her ladies-in-waiting costumed as "blackmores", which they then performed – the pregnant queen herself in the lead as the nymph Euphoris, exposing her bare, black-greasepainted arms – at the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, to scandalised as well as favourable reaction (in 1605). By elucidating how Queen Anne astutely deployed a cultural-aesthetic politics that aimed to give positive valence to her actual (as Danish/Scottish outsider) and represented (as the Daughter of the River Niger) otherness, as well as to legitimise herself through a metaphoric continuity with the recently deceased Queen Elizabeth, Lops worthily extends the valuable insights into Jonsonian masques made by scholars such as Stephen Orgel, Bernadette Andrea, Leeds Barroll, and Clare McManus. She suggestively explains how the masque's tropes of alchemical recombination and transmutation achieve an empowerment of otherness, and finally an idealised *conjunctio oppositorum*, with the Queen's symbolic Moon uniting with the King's symbolic Sun, in concert with the Union of the Realms of England and Scotland. The culminating contribution to *Queens on Stage*, an "Afterword" by Carlo Bajetta, provides an English translation of the unpublished letter recently discovered by the author himself, written (or dictated) in Spanish in 1567 by Elizabeth I to Empress Maria of Austria, regarding the marriage negotiations still proceeding, though soon to be broken off, between the English queen and Archduke Charles of Austria, brother of Emperor Maximilian II. Like Lops and Del Villano, Bajetta cites Elizabeth's "set on stages" comment, applying it to his perceptive reading of the "dramatic effect" of Elizabeth's letter, accomplished in collaboration with her secretaries. This effect involves the precisely calculated deferential language used in the letter, intimating a kind of sisterhood between the queen and the empress, in contrast to the colder, more detached tone of Elizabeth's missives to Maximilian. With his concise affirmation that Elizabeth's constant princely performance was not a monologue-

based one, Bajetta clinches a key argument pervading the volume's essays: namely, that the staging of female sovereignty crucially and dialogically engaged listeners and spectators, in multi-faceted and challenging ways.

For a variety of reasons, then, *Queens on Stage* itself deserves a fully appreciative audience response – in other words, thorough and assiduous reading by all admirers, students, and teachers of early modern English theatre.

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Del Sapio Garbero, Maria, ed., *Rome in Shakespeare's World*, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2018, XXII 294 pp.

Edited collections are sometimes met with mixed critical reception, insofar as – even when all the contributions originate from a single conference, symposium or workshop and should accordingly be (at least) thematically coherent – they all too often exhibit lack of balance, unevenness and excessive diversity across chapters. This is definitely *not* the case with *Rome in Shakespeare's World*, a particularly well-crafted book that gathers extended and reworked versions of some of the papers delivered during the series of coordinated events held in Rome in April 2016 under the collective title *Shakespeare 2016: Memoria di Roma* on the occasion of the quatercentenary of Shakespeare's death. Chapter after chapter, the volume strikes the reader for its consistency and clarity of scope. Credit is especially due to its editor, Maria Del Sapio Garbero, now Professor Emerita of English Literature at the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Roma Tre University, who has been the coordinator of the departmental "Shakespeare's Rome Project" since 2004 and founded the Shakespeare's Rome International Summer School in 2017, besides publishing extensively on the manifold shapes of Shakespeare's encounter with the Roman past.

Del Sapio Garbero's careful editorial work is visible at every turn of the collection. Though tackling different areas of Shakespeare's Roman canon from several critical perspectives, the various chapters that make up *Rome in Shakespeare's World* display remarkable unity. This, as the editor makes clear early on in the introduction, is predicated above all on the book's daring investigation of "the different ways in which Shakespeare took advantage of the contrast between the mythologised values of a Rome long past and the sense

of their decline: a crisis [...] which he appropriates [...] as a discoursive pattern, to make it interact anachronistically with the unsettling context of his own early modern times" (p. XX). Structurally, the book is divided into two parts: "Part I. Shakespeare's Uses of Rome" and "Part II. Using Shakespeare's Rome".

In introducing the volume, Del Sapio Garbero resorts to reflections concerning the matter of ancient Rome by Walter Pater, as well as to the notions of inheritance and fragmentation as put forward by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Derrida, with a view to creating what proves to be a fruitful conceptual framework against which to scrutinize Shakespeare's dramatic uses of ancient Rome. The virtual conversation set up between these four writers leads Del Sapio Garbero convincingly to argue that "Shakespeare forcefully edits and marks his Rome [...] by saturating his Roman plays with an excess of time, or else by inscribing into them, as a deliberate anachronism, the untimely urge of the playwright's historical present – his own time *à venir*, or better his characters' time *à venir*" (p. XV). Hence, Del Sapio Garbero continues, the plays and the poem that Shakespeare set in ancient Rome end up not merely enacting "the fictional replica of real events"; on the contrary, "they posit themselves and the 'now' of the theatre [...] in a ghostly chain of representations" (p. XVI), which makes them particularly worthy of scholarly interest, while at the same time enabling them to outshine Shakespeare's contemporaries' attempts at recreating their own ancient Rome(s).

Stephen Greenblatt opens the first part of the collection by focusing on "Shakespeare's uncanny ability to represent the conflicted inner life of characters onstage" (p. 3). Among the many factors that contributed to its development, Greenblatt singles out Shakespeare's engagement with Seneca's *Oedipus*, which provided Shakespeare with a blueprint for reversing the Aristotelian dictum according to which characterization is included on stage for the sake of the characters' action rather than the other way around. This reversal, Greenblatt suggests, dates from the late 1590s and might be considered Shakespeare's "crucial breakthrough" (p. 6). Whereas in plays such as *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* the protagonists are still "delineated as characters in order to make possible the actions they are depicted as taking" (p. 7), this gradually changes as Shakespeare's career progresses. And while "Shakespeare never entirely gave up on the primacy of action" (p. 7); yet, he

progressively started focusing more closely on "inner conflict, mixed motives, and unconscious fears" (p. 10), a mixture of ingredients he would readily find in the Roman – rather than the Greek – *Oedipus*. Here, Seneca shies away from the action and instead sets out to explore "what it means [...] to live *in ambiguo*" in order to dramatize "extreme psychological states" (p. 11). Shakespeare seems to have become especially fascinated "by the ways in which Seneca defers action and delays resolution, in order to explore inner conflict" (p. 12). This occurs for the first time in *Julius Caesar*, a play that offers no solution to the psychological and political dilemmas it scrutinizes, offering instead "an unprecedented representation of uncertainty, confusion and blindness" (p. 17), with the inward conflict that Brutus likens to an insurrection proving to be more central than Caesar's historic murder itself. *Julius Caesar*, Greenblatt concludes, would open the way to further analogous explorations in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*.

John Gillies's discussion of Shakespeare's take on the core Republican myth of the *priscae virtutes* as imagined in Livy's *Ab Urbe condita* occupies the ensuing chapter. Shakespeare, Gillies suggests, appears to be sceptical of this myth, insofar as he appears to have read Livy through Plutarch, which seems to have made him deeply ambivalent towards both the *priscae virtutes* and the Republic as depicted by Livy. Three instances of Shakespeare's encounter with Livy's pristine virtues are offered as a demonstration, namely "the reference to 'rash Virginius' in *Titus Andronicus* [...], the character of Brutus in *Julius Caesar* [...], and the character of Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*" (p. 25). Gillies is especially interested in "fragmenting the category of *Romanitas*; the all-but monolithic nature of which has tended to limit our understanding of character in the Roman plays" (p. 25). In Gillies's view, "Shakespeare's negative characterization of Virginius testifies to his sheer distaste: if this is pristine virtue then Shakespeare doesn't like it", inasmuch as it "is uncompromising, even [...] when transgressing a defining human threshold: the sacrifice on one's own family" (p. 30). As for Brutus, after arguing that his "*ethos* [...] derives from Livy" (p. 33), Gillies remarks that while Brutus' "whole project is dominated by the myth of pristine virtue" (p. 34), Brutus none the less "reasons backwards from the violence to the virtue rather than forwards from the virtue to the violence", so that there emerges "a gap between his character and ethos", in that Brutus is "too complex, gentle and thoughtful" to

be "pristine" (p. 35). Hence, his ultimate adherence to the myth of *priscae virtutes* turns out to be "destructive", as "Brutus becomes single-minded, putting on the ancestor's stiffness like an ill-fitting armor" (p. 38). Finally, as regards *The Merchant of Venice*, Gillies contends that, in spite of its not being set in ancient Rome, the play "stages the fundamental confrontation of Livy's second and third books: that of virtue with the scandal of debt-slavery" (p. 40), which opens up the bitter realization that there is an odd homology between virtue and terror.

That *Coriolanus* sceptically treats as an opinion rather than a fact the notion that "valour is the chiefest virtue" (p. 50) and that this inevitably has negative consequences for the title hero is a consideration at the core of Gilberto Sacerdoti's chapter: "How can we be sure that Coriolanus deserves to be dignified more than all other men, if we cannot be sure that valour is the chiefest virtue?" (p. 51). That this is treated as a mere hypothesis is at the heart of the social conflicts portrayed in the play, which seems to constitute, when viewed in a Machiavellian light, "not a liability, but the very source of Rome's freedom, stability, and power, because they led to the dynamic equilibrium of a mixed and balanced state" (p. 55). Accordingly, it seems appropriate to look at the play as "belong[ing] to [an] English *ur*-Machiavellian moment" (p. 63) significantly predating the eighteenth-century one famously identified by John Pocock in the 1970s.

Pondering that Shakespeare must have been familiar with the iconographic convention of depicting Roman emperors as disembodied heads and that he must have been aware that women, by contrast, were often shown full- or half-length, Lisa Hopkins compellingly argues that the representational strategies Shakespeare adopts in the depiction of male and female characters in his Roman plays follow a similar logic. While the emphasis for male characters is invariably on the head, and references to other body parts tend to belittle them and their social status, the attention in the case of women frequently moves to the womb and the thighs. This, however, does not appear to demean them, inasmuch as "women bleed, leak and give milk, but they can also be associated with goddesses, with the symbolic, and with abstract concepts such as fertility. Men, by contrast, insist on headedness, which they seek to connect with the immobility and constancy of busts, but which they cannot always maintain" (p. 84).

Acknowledging dismemberment as a crucial element in *Titus Andronicus* – a play depicting *romanitas* as a figure of decadence in the name of the crisis of *pietas* that marks the decline of political and state powers, which are substituted by a sense of belongingness based on family bonds and feud logic that rekindles age-old outbursts of unrestrained violence – Silvia Bigliazzi contends that in the play "mutilation and self-mutilation combine into an overall system of signs dramatizing the crisis of civil ceremonies, political and funerary, in Rome as well as their regress to a tribal rituality of *sparagmos*, or sacrifice of a victim by tearing it apart and feeding upon it for communal bonding" (p. 91). Ultimately, the actual sacrificial victim turns out to be neither Titus nor his sons, but "an idea of Romanity embodied in the virtue of *pietas* that through the *translatio imperii* narrative tradition gestures to contemporary Britain" (p. 92).

A very sharp focus "on the linguistic expression of power in some momentous instances in Shakespeare's Roman plays" characterizes Iolanda Plescia's chapter, which scrutinizes two lexical items that appear in *Cymbeline*, 3.1, "specifically the verb *pronounce* [...] and the noun *utterance*, [...] which put the spotlight in different ways on the act of speaking, and of speaking performatively" (p. 108). Plescia is right in maintaining that a close examination of the uses of these two terms is "particularly revelatory of Shakespeare's linguistic treatment of the Roman theme, which seems to rely on a masterful blend of ancient and newer meanings of words that effectively depict the act of speaking in order to *do*: thus dramatizing the pragmatic and performative dimension of language" (p. 111). Plescia's riveting exploration of the web of meanings generated by these two words in other key Shakespearean Roman scenes reveals that both the emerging and the residual meanings of these words are at work together, thereby testifying to Shakespeare's "uncanny awareness [...] of the several layers of meaning, both old and newly developing, in words that had been around for quite some time before him" (p. 113).

The last chapter of the first part of the book by Andrew Hadfield refreshingly broadens the critical perspective of the volume beyond Shakespeare's *oeuvre*. Renaissance Rome, Hadfield points out, "loomed large in the English literary and cultural imagination, but not many people actually saw it first-hand. Rather, it existed as an imagined urban space, a cityscape that everyone and no-one knew that provided a powerful image of what an ancient and modern city

might look like" (p. 128). Hadfield surveys depictions of Rome offered by writers such as Thomas Nashe, Edmund Spenser and John Donne, then comparing and contrasting them with the eye-witness accounts of such travellers as William Thomas, Anthony Munday and Fynes Moryson. While these writers all provide different depictions of Rome, more or less directly relating it to London, what clearly emerges is that "For travellers and readers alike Rome was a city of startling contrasts, extraordinary beauty juxtaposed with fierce cruelty" (p. 140). Admittedly, Rome "was a large city, but was under-populated, notorious as a place of squalor and violence. It was not yet famous as a city of wonderful art" (p. 135). In this sense, Netherlandish writer Jan Van Der Noot's work seems to Hadfield especially telling as an encapsulation of "Europe's general perception of Rome in the sixteenth century, a city that was simultaneously ruined and powerful, [...] a disaster area that was eager to spread destruction throughout the civilised world" (p. 137).

The second part of the volume, which explores reworkings of Shakespeare's plays, starts with Manfred Pfister's discussion of two German-language adaptations of *Titus Andronicus*, a play that Pfister considers "an extremely well made play, transparent in its sequence of *peripeteias*, yet at the same time disturbingly subversive in the subtle interplay of stark contrasts and startling correspondences linking Goth barbarism and Roman civilization" (p. 149). Pfister examines in particular Swiss dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Umarbeitung* of *Titus Andronicus* (1970) and East German dramatist Heiner Müller's *Anatomie Titus Fall of Rome Ein Shakespearekommentar* (1985) as prime examples of adaptations of Shakespeare's *Titus* that "identify, reveal, and exhibit the modernist potential of Shakespeare's earliest tragedy as well as its potential timeliness for the present" (p. 152). While Dürrenmatt's *Umarbeitung* is particularly interesting for its "fatalistic and disempowering visions of history", Müller's *Anatomie* is a more complex work that is "much more alert to the divisions of racial and cultural otherness in Shakespeare's play" by dint of its having been written "three years before the Wall and the Iron Curtain came down" (p. 154). Müller's work explores the "uneasy and dialectical relationship between tragedy and comedy" (p. 156) and markedly displays a visceral interest in "the nexus between sexuality and violence" (p. 157). As a coda, Pfister also briefly discusses a Polish-German production by Jan Klata, first launched in Dresden and Wrocław in 2012, which shines through as

particularly remarkable for its treatment of xenophobic stereotypes and violence, thus demonstrating once again *Titus*'s enduring timeliness.

Claudia Corti's chapter examines "how the theatrical progression of the play *Coriolanus* developed and changed in modern and post-modern times" (p. 167). In Corti's view, the title character "shows psychologically intimate wounds and cracks which cast doubts on his apparently impenetrable, rigid identity" (p. 168). More specifically, Corti continues, "Coriolanus is mostly the case of a hidden, repressed, prohibited sexual sensibility [...] that concerns primarily his homoerotic attraction to his co-agonist and antagonist Tullus Aufidius" (p. 169). It is precisely this sexual dimension of Shakespeare's character that has been frequently explored in modern and contemporary productions of the play, while criticism and performances of *Coriolanus* from the Restoration until the end of the eighteenth century tend to display "a subordination of the political level of this drama to a moral/aesthetic one" (p. 172). This is effectively exemplified by the young German exponent of *Sturm und Drang* Jakob Lenz's adaptation *Coriolan* (1776), a closet drama focusing quite narrowly on "the hero's existential struggle" (p. 174) rather than on civic and political issues. In England, John Philip Kemble's landmark performance as a statuesque Coriolanus at the turn of the nineteenth century remained influential for a long time, at least until Lawrence Olivier's portrayal of the play's protagonist as a man of "solid class pride, crystal patrician anger, and granite imperial sensibility, all of them on an epic scale" (p. 177). The first half of the nineteenth century, however, also witnessed a very different Coriolanus, staged by Edmund Kean in 1820 as a "violent, passionate, volcanic [...] hero" (p. 178). After briefly surveying a number of twentieth-century productions of the play, which are especially interesting by virtue of their Modernist overtones, Corti closes her chapter by examining the focus of contemporary productions on the play's homoeroticism, which started being foregrounded in Tyrone Guthrie's 1960s production with John Neville as Coriolanus and Ian McKellen as Aufidius. Other ensuing notable productions in a similar vein were Peter Hall's in the 1980s (with McKellen as Coriolanus), Steven Berkoff's in 1988, Gregory Doran's in 2007-8, the 2011 cinematic rendition with Ralph Fiennes (Coriolanus) and Gerald Butler (Aufidius), as well as the 2014

Donmar Warehouse production with Tom Hiddleston in the title role.

The theatrical reception of Shakespeare in nineteenth-century Italy is the subject of Lisanna Calvi's chapter. Italian translations and adaptations of Shakespeare in this period need to be examined in the context of the so-called *teatro del personaggio*, "in which the relationship between the actor and his/her character is the core element of the whole performance" (p. 191), as illustrated by the work of Tommaso Salvini, Ernesto Rossi and Adelaide Ristori. As Calvi remarks, these actors tailored their Shakespearean roles "to their taste and skills mainly by way of cuts and variations fashioning the playtexts to a pre-set agenda which they arranged by identifying the protagonists of the single dramas with a dominant passion" (p. 191); accordingly, they "very often got rid of secondary characters or passages of the plot that could distract the audience's attention [...] from the centrality of the 'protagonist-star'" (p. 192). With a view to displaying this approach at work, Calvi focuses on two different versions of *Giulio Cesare* by Rossi. A careful comparison of these two scripts reveals that Rossi moved from a conception of the play in which Caesar was the dominant force to another in which it was Brutus who governed the action. In order to achieve this result, Rossi had to proceed by means of severe cuts and sizable creative additions. This way, not only did the logic of the *grande attore* ended up flattening the play's multi-protagonist arrangement; it also "ironed out and domesticated [the complexity of Brutus] into a rudimentary emblem of heroism and rigour" (p. 203).

Laura Tosi discusses adaptations of Shakespeare's plays for young audiences, the story of which "has been very much a tale of drama turned into narrative" (p. 205), starting with Charles and Mary Lamb's collection of short stories *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807). As Tosi observes, "the Roman plays do not feature in the Lambs' selection of Shakespeare plays [...], and the Lambs' choice was followed by several later adaptors" (p. 206), at least until the second half of the nineteenth century, when renewed interest in Shakespeare's Roman plays was sparked both by a nationalistic agenda connected with the British imperialistic efforts and by the broader Victorian fascination with the classical past. Prose adaptations of Shakespeare's plays for young readers generally feature an intrusive omniscient narrator, a stable view of characters and actions, and "a clear-cut division between good and bad

characters"; as a result, they "tend to generate simplified meanings" (p. 208). The effects of such an approach are especially evident in the case of a play like *Julius Caesar*, which "tends to withdraw motivation to an even higher degree than is usual in Shakespeare" (p. 208). Tosi examines eight Victorian/Edwardian adaptations of the play and three more dating from the second half of the twentieth century. Her focus is especially directed to the tales' beginnings, "because this is where Caesar, Cassius and Brutus are introduced and contrasted, so it is often immediately apparent how power and responsibility are distributed among the main characters" (p. 210). A careful investigation of these adaptations leads Tosi to conclude that "every narrative adaptation of Shakespeare for children [...] takes a major interpretative effort to produce meaning – this is achieved through clarification, explanation and [...] judgment. Narrators tend to be telling rather than showing, appropriating comments and conclusions that are expressed by the characters in the play or describing not only what the characters do but also their thoughts and motivations" (p. 217).

A discussion of two very recent contemporizing rewrites by David Lane, initially commissioned for Shakespeare Unplugged, are at the heart of Márta Minier's chapter, which seeks to contribute "to a much neglected area of Shakespeare reception when looking at projects that involve some degree of community engagement and borrow from less orthodox vocabularies such as youth theatre, site-specific performance and immersive performance" (p. 223). *I Am England* is "a wholesale reworking" of *Coriolanus* set in a dystopic England; *Resurrection*, "the fragmentary, character-based reworking of *Titus Andronicus*" (p. 222), is "a promenade performance text consisting of five monologues to be voiced by five resurrected Shakespearean characters [i.e. Lavinia, Ophelia, Richard of Shrewsbury, Cordelia and Arthur], all of whom die young in Shakespeare but are revived here and forced to tell us something meaningful, wise or moving in and for our contemporary world" (p. 224). Here, Lavinia is given a poetic soliloquy offering alternative historiography. As Minier contends, both adaptations should be considered analogies, in which "the adaptation uses a 'skeleton' derived from the source (p. 237). Though in different ways, both plays seem to meditate "on heroism, nationhood and community", as well as "the paradox of the contemporary past" (p. 238), thus

productively impinging not only on the *extra*mural afterlife of Shakespeare, but also on *intra*mural public discourse.

Maddalena Pennacchia closes the collection with a thought-provoking survey of the silent films based on Shakespeare's Roman plays. Pennacchia conceptualizes Shakespeare's dramatic writing as "a form ontologically in motion between different semiotic systems and with an intense kinema-tic quality" (pp. 245–46) and decides to focus on three different cinematic takes on the assassination scene in *Julius Caesar*, since this is perhaps the most compelling instance of a Shakespearean scene that is "'deferred' to be realised in a different medium" (p. 246) by virtue of its highly elliptical quality. Specifically, Pennacchia examines *Julius Caesar* by William V. Ranous (1908), *Giulio Cesare* by Giovanni Pastrone (1909) and *Cajus Julius Caesar* by Enrico Guazzoni (1914), ultimately demonstrating that filmmakers of this era deliberately let "intermedial references to art forms [...] such as painting or sculpting affect the adaptations" (p. 253). The Caesar of Ranous's movie "dies in less than ten seconds", the action clearly "arranged in order to faithfully follow Shakespeare's play-text" (p. 254); interestingly, "the actor impersonating Caesar wears heavy makeup that has him resemble the 'Chiaramonti Caesar', a famous marble head which represents the statesman as a dignified if not idealised great man" (p. 255), thus producing a deviation from the insistence on Caesar's weakness in Shakespeare's text. As for Guazzoni's film, it did not originate as a Shakespearean adaptation, and it was only during the US distribution that it became associated with him. The sequence of Caesar's murder here "is much longer and violent" because it follows Plutarch (p. 255). Finally, Pastrone's film appears broadly to follow the Shakespearean storyline. Yet, its murder scene "seems to have been inspired more by the visual arts than [by] written sources", insofar as it "seems to revive Vincenzo Camuccini's monumental canvas entitled *Death of Julius Caesar* (1806), now at the Museum of Capodimonte in Naples" (p. 256).

As a timely addition to the recent wave of scholarly publications dealing with the reception of classical antiquity in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, Maria Del Sapio's Garbero's *Rome in Shakespeare's World* marks a significant contribution to our understanding of Shakespeare's engagement with the classical past as well as of modern and contemporary adaptations of his plays. By exhibiting a breath-taking array of stimulating critical insights and in being devoid of any discernible flaws, this collection provides yet

another effective illustration that, as Del Sapio claims in her introduction, "no-one better than Shakespeare with his own Rome was able to grasp, with the emulative and revisionist perspective of the latecomer, all of the promise and potential of modernity stored in Rome's history of pride and catastrophe, making it resound – again and dramatically – from the arena of his 'Wooden O'" (p. XVIII).

Domenico Lovascio, University of Genoa

Dente, Carla and Drakakis, John, eds, *Shakespeare and Money*, Pisa, Pisa University Press, 2018, 213 pp.

In a way, it all began in 1988 when Graham Holderness registered, in his preface to *The Shakespeare Myth*, the cultural relevance of Shakespeare's presence on the reverse of English £20 notes. Here, "the device of the banknote" served to transact a give-and-take of values: "the currency of Shakespeare as a cultural token enhances the material worth of the promissory notes; while the high value of the note itself confers a corresponding richness on the symbol of high art and national culture" (Holderness, 1988, p. xi). It was, in its essence, a cultural landmark both for the evolution of cultural studies, or cultural materialism, and for "bardolatry", for the seminal connection of Shakespeare with areas apparently removed from his poetry. The Bard's imbrications with economy were followed up to Stratford, where trade regarding his birthplace was thriving. Indeed, it is now impossible to tackle Shakespeare's instable, ever-growing canon without considering the financial fallout after a "new" play with the Bard's name is brought to the fore, as well as the financial capital(s) that Shakespeare's plays have accrued over the years.

In *Shakespeare and Money*, the relation between the Bard and the coin is evaluated in Shakespeare's time (essays by Régis Augustus Bars Closel, Sukanya Dasgupta, Niranjan Goswami, Paolo Bugliatti) as well as in our so-called globalized culture, which indefatigably continues to nurture Shakespeare's offspring (Roberta Ferrari, Susan L. Fischer, Sara Soncini). The point made, as John Drakakis explains in his introductory essay, is that it is necessary to go beyond the metaphor and to consider economy and literature as mutually related and influenced. This is not a mere matter of language, nor is the relation one that involves a similitude, however sophisticated: it is

rather a functional dependence, a "structural similarity" (p. 14), a system that is "both reflective *and* constitutive" (p. 23, emphasis in the text). The Revenge tragedy, a hit of Elizabethan drama, can hardly be imagined without the operative aid of a novelty of Shakespeare's time, "Venetian book-keeping" (p. 17) which sounded, to many Elizabethan theatre-goers, as Italianate as revenge itself. Both were based on mathematical reckonings and both were founded on a "binary system" (p. 17) that could come to an end only when the triumph of profits over losses was achieved. Not to mention "the proximity of the venereal and the venal" (p. 19) that the discourse of Love increasingly enacts in much poetry, and drama, of the sixteenth century and onwards. Today, not only does economy affect areas of experience in unprecedented ways, but it is also embedded in various discourses that tend to blur disciplinary boundaries and make the "compartmentalisation of particular disciplines" (p. 14) appear old and obsolete. (This is, indeed, a *vexata quaestio* that seems to resist only in academic labels, with all the power of endurance that this "compartmentalisation" entails).

In Shakespeare's times, the dematerialization of money also had its first inception. Money could be there even if it was not *physically* there, and an abstract quality of thought was quintessential in understanding a system of credit which implied a principle of transience even for the ludicrous and the venal. It was then, as Carla Dente notes, that "the use of a non-tangible [...] true standardized unit of currency [...] made a system of unitary prices possible" (p. 9), and it was then that the immateriality of wealth began to be the hallmark of a generation of *nouveaux riches* which prospered on speculation and commerce instead of customary money-grounded business.

All this, as Dente notes again, speaks of "issues that resonates with our own concerns" (p. 26), thus introducing the idea of a conjunctive interest in the study of the past, of an advantage in studying the ancients for what they can still teach us. Insofar as the past is seen in proleptic terms, as a source of knowledge that anticipates the present, this is undeniable. One question, however, is left open, namely whether economy and its old and new strategies promote the dissolution of (geographical) borders or rather their strengthening. Apparently, economic transactions operate against

walls and barriers, connecting people worldwide and, given the cross-cultural aspect of the transactions themselves, incidentally also against the "compartmentalisation of disciplines" mentioned above. However, such an increasingly globalized approach is also responsible for the burgeoning of neoliberal social *milieus* reshaped by a new, unbalanced market rationale, with all the partitions and filtering that this may entail and that we know only too well. Once again Shakespeare, and Shakespeare studies, may serve as a parameter to verify the permanence of distinctions between inclusion and exclusion.

Paolo Caponi, University of Milan

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Tyrant. Shakespeare on Politics*, New York, Norton, 2018, 212 pp.

Tyrant. Shakespeare on Politics is Stephen Greenblatt's thirteenth monograph, and continues its author's exploration of early modern England and of the development of its ideology and culture. This time, Greenblatt focuses on a range of Shakespearean plays and their main characters, drawing from their analysis his considerations on Shakespeare's attitude towards contemporary politics, and by implication inviting us to reflect on the politics of our own times. Lightly annotated (after the first chapter the endnotes dwindle almost to nothing) and with no bibliography at the end (although there is an accurate index), this volume is meant for a non-specialized audience, and invites its readers to revisit a number of Shakespearean plays in pursuit of a very individual topic: the portrait of the tyrant, his relations to friends and enemies, the modalities of his ascent to power and disastrous fall, the strategies of resistance organized by dissenters. Shakespearean tyrants appear to be exclusively male, but this is one of the very few things they have in common: they come from tragedies as well as comedies and history plays, are extraordinarily successful or quickly fall into disaster. Through their analysis, Greenblatt offers us a reading of plays ranging from the earliest histories to the late romances.

The title, however, poses the first of this book's problems: taken in conjunction with the dust-jacket and the opening chapter it misleads its reader. The dust-jacket introduces "an aging, tenacious

Elizabeth I" clinging to power, and the opening pages help matters by establishing a firm historical basis for Shakespeare's early plays: but as we continue our reading, such historical basis proves to be unnecessary, since Greenblatt explores various plays without references to contemporary England; nor does Elizabeth play any special role in his reading of the plays, or appear as a blue-print for any of the Shakespearean tyrants. The book puts its author's gift for elegant prose at the service of a literary-political search that in its initial phase has no clear direction. In the opening chapter, the scene is set, offering a gripping narrative that encompasses religious wars, Walsingham's espionage network, the Essex rebellion and the various factions in the Queen's council, all under the impending doom of Elizabeth's inevitable ageing. The famous 1601 staging of *Richard II* is discussed as making the case for the appropriateness of reading Shakespeare's plays against the background of sixteenth-century politics. But this first chapter sits uneasily with the rest of the book: not only is it the only one offering a historical reconstruction against which to understand Shakespeare's rise to theatrical fame; it is also proposed, thanks to the use of endnotes and the insertion of quotations from early modern chroniclers, as a scholarly endeavour, thus offering an odd contrast with the following chapters. Besides, although the first quotation of the book is from George Buchanan, the Scottish humanist who was also the highly influential teacher of the future King James, the latter is mentioned only once, in passing. Yet James I was the reigning monarch during Shakespeare's maturity, when the playwright wrote some of his most famous tragedies, his dark comedies, the late romances; by taking Shakespeare's company under his direct patronage, James was certainly more closely involved than the previous monarch in the theatrical life of his time. The conventional tendency of pairing England's greatest playwright with its most famous queen has been a staple of Renaissance studies and of popular imagination for centuries; the tenacity with which critical tradition assigned a special value to the relationship between Shakespeare and Elizabeth in the face of all existing evidence, has been successfully debunked in recent times by scholars such as Helen Hackett, who in her *Shakespeare and Elizabeth: The Meeting of Two Myths* (2009) explores the fascinating history of this supposed relationship, sharply defining the boundary between scholarship and fiction. Re-proposed in a book by an eminent Shakespearean scholar, the cliché is surprising and makes the book appear unsettled. The

other interesting omission is that of Henry VIII, a king who certainly has a greater claim to the title of tyrant than the ever-negotiating Elizabeth: although the actual monarch is mentioned, there is no discussion of the puzzling and somewhat upsetting play dedicated to him and attributed to Shakespeare. The omission appears deliberate, as on p. 5 we read that the playwright "carefully kept at least a full century between himself and the events he depicted" – a surprising statement, forcing facts to serve a theory.

However, these reservations concern only the early section of the book, which unfolds revealing a different agenda. As the author makes clear in the acknowledgements (a point to which I shall return below), the volume is meant to point at the present while discussing the past: this has been done before in the analysis of Renaissance drama, one of the most interesting examples probably being Jan Kott's *Shakespeare our Contemporary*. First published in 1961 and translated into English in 1964, the book proposed itself as a statement of anti-Stalinist engagement in Poland, the country where Kott lived and taught. The Soviet regime and the demands of censorship made any parallel with contemporary times at best muted, but the anguished plea for freedom of speech was unmistakeable, and the book offered some startling insights, and sometimes shockingly new ways of looking at ancient plays; it exerted great influence on the theatre and cinema of its day, informing the Shakespearean (and non-Shakespearean) productions of directors such as Peter Brook and Grigori Kozintsev. Even more importantly, it bridged the fissure between scholarly studies and performances of Shakespeare. A comparison between the two volumes would not be fair to either, since they were born of very different circumstances, but there is some similarity in the method. Both books aim at discussing the nature of tyranny and its role in the political game, implicitly inviting a comparison with the times in which they were written; Kott's study, however, adheres firmly to a close reading of the chosen Shakespearean plays, while Greenblatt's also considers early modern English politics – a terrain on which comparison with the contemporary political situation may prove misleading. While Kott lets each play speak for itself, freely exploring it against the background of twentieth-century culture (particularly interesting, in this context, is the chapter dedicated to *King Lear*), Greenblatt tries to link different plays with an overarching motif, using his analysis to offer a definition in more general terms of the

abstract concepts, such as *tyranny* and *populism*, on which his book rests.

Sometimes such definitions may prove simplistic: see, for instance, statements such as "Populism may look like an embrace of the have-nots, but in reality it is a form of cynical exploitation" (p. 35). This attempt to write at the same time a historicist study and a reflection on contemporary reality creates an imbalance in the book, and the scholar is aware of the problem. Thus in the brief account of religious dissension and of the network of espionage and counter-espionage that was formed in England and abroad in the second half of the sixteenth century, Greenblatt deliberately uses terms more easily applicable to today's international situation, such as *terrorist*, *radicalized*, *extremists*, *trolling*, *unstable youths*, *fanatics*, *brainwashed*. The attempt at presentism (not a novelty in Shakespearean scholarship) obscures the fact that these early modern English subjects were, after all, simply adhering to the "old faith", fighting a reactionary fight, rather than trying to impose a religiously-based fundamentalism from the outside. Catholicism was by no means a distant memory. Even more puzzlingly, none of the terms mentioned above is used for Anglicanism. Inevitably, the comparisons are somewhat forced: drawing an analogy between the executions of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587 and of Osama bin Laden in 2011 does not help understand either event, nor is the reader enlightened by slightly surreal statements such as "The play [*1 Henry VI*] could have depicted [the Dukes of York and Somerset] in a way that would remind us of the warlords of contemporary Afghanistan" (p. 26). I should add that, once again, this attempt to apply contemporary terminology to early modern politics is soon abandoned: it seems to belong to the historicist tendency that informs the first part of the book.

After the two introductory chapters, Greenblatt moves to a closer scrutiny of individual plays, focusing in turn upon the *Henry VI* trilogy, *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Coriolanus*. That the sequence may seem slightly random, both in the choice and in the order in which the plays are presented, is felt by Greenblatt himself when he writes that "*The Winter's Tale* is a rare release from the realistic thinking that occupied him for much of his career, thinking that returned to the ways in which the nightmare could be brought to an end" (pp. 137-38). I would posit that political thinking in Shakespeare's literary output is much more complex than

this, and not solely obsessed by "the nightmare" of tyranny. Thus some of the general assessments Greenblatt provides for tyrants do not fit all his examples: when he writes that "possessing no vision for the country they ruled, they were incapable of fashioning enduring support" (p. 142), I feel that such a statement does not adequately describe Lear (who, before his decay into senility, seems to have been, with reservations, accepted and calmly obeyed by all his subjects), or Julius Caesar, and to be frankly inapplicable to characters such as Macbeth or the various would-be tyrants in *Henry VI*, since they never had a chance to show their ability as rulers. Works that are essentially political such as *Julius Caesar* or *Coriolanus*, or works that are only in part political such as *Othello*, discuss the problem of tyranny against a much more articulated background; Shakespeare's political meditation goes beyond tyranny, or even absolute monarchy, and includes the role of oligarchical powers; the possibility of a republican form of government; the struggle of a king who has received no divine recognition through a clear dynastic line, and must make himself acceptable through his personal virtues and political ability. The problem of applying the concept of tyranny to a political system that did not envisage absolute rule such as republican Rome remains unsolved, and Greenblatt is conscious of the problem when he writes of Shakespeare's "interest in the world of classical antiquity, where Christian faith and monarchical rhetoric do not apply" (p. 5). It may be argued that the playwright's interest for classical antiquity, and his reading of Plutarch, created also the opportunity for him to explore different political systems, especially the republican form. On the other hand, early seventeenth century England, dominated by the debate on the divine right of kings and reason of state, provided a widely different scenario. Andrew Hadfield, among others, has examined this issue in *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics* (2014), offering a survey of the various plays that also shows the diversity of Shakespeare's responses to individual political situations. Greenblatt's choice to find the tyrant in a number of plays forces him to give a much too definite, occasionally even narrow, direction to his reading.

There are nice touches, marginal observations that are extremely rewarding, such as his reading of the role Shakespeare assigns to dreams to make the spectators aware of the unravelling of the mechanisms of tyranny, or the analysis of the scene in *King Lear* in which one of Cornwall's servants unavailingly tries to stop his

master's hand while the latter is torturing Gloucester. The analysis of the individual plays shows not only Greenblatt's expertise and power of detailed observation, but also his ability to communicate and to give life to the play on the page. Occasionally the analysis is less than rewarding, especially as deliberately vicious or tyrannical characters, such as Richard III, are described, but the journey along the character's development is lovingly made, and will entice readers. Interestingly, I found the reading reductive in the case of major characters, and richly rewarding for minor characters: it is as if the self-imposed task of exploring the concept of tyranny had forced the protagonists into one mould: but the cap of the tyrant is too large for characters such as Coriolanus, or York in the *Henry VI* plays, and too small for Lear.

In the acknowledgments page, appearing at the end of the book, Greenblatt makes it clear that he is thinking of present-day America and of the 2016 presidential election; re-reading the book with this in mind, one may find a number of covert allusions. Much as one may sympathise with this, I cannot help wishing he had been a little bolder in his claim: the careful avoidance of any reference to contemporary politics does not help the double reading that is intended in the book.

Alessandra Petrina, University of Padua

Guardamagna, Daniela, ed., *Roman Shakespeare. Intersecting Times, Spaces, Languages*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2018, 233 pp.

The Elizabethans' attitude towards Rome, and the Roman myth, was rich and strange. It was varied, and characterized by inner, often jarring tensions. But it was also inescapable, and essential in defining the identity of the British nation. Rome was, *in primis*, the living and obvious symbol of the fall – the quintessence of the Elizabethan and Shakespearian conception of tragedy. Rome embodied decline, physical and spiritual decadence still showing signs of the previous splendor and intimations of its immortality. But Rome was, at the same time, the cradle of ancient, virile qualities, *virtus* and *pietas*, barely discernible, in the Elizabethans' view, after centuries of rotten popery. Rome as the den of all vices, as the place of venoms, literally and figuratively, from which the British people wanted to keep their

distance. But not always. There were times when the British prided themselves on being the sole heirs of the classical heritage, to the point that John Stuart Mill could still say, at such a very late date as 1846, that the battle of Marathon had been even more decisive for British history than the battle of Hastings.

A difficult relation, then, connects the wooden O and the Roman soul. This collection of essays, edited by Daniela Guardamagna, addresses this uneasiness acutely, both with a thorough knowledge of the contemporary critical debate and with an eye open on our predicament and on the various meanings and nuances that the Roman ideal still possesses to Western eyes. At first, the perimeter of the so-called "Roman canon" is traced, or re-traced, sanitizing it from the critical incrustations accrued over decades of wrestling with Shakespeare. If it is true that the proper "Roman", or "Plutarchan", plays are the ones joined by their mutual source, i.e. Plutarch's *Lives* as filtered by Thomas North, it is also true that a critical view focused only on *Julius Caesar*, *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* would fatally leave behind two other plays of Roman setting, the early *Titus Andronicus* and the late *Cymbeline*, which do not come under Plutarch's aegis but, precisely for this reason, may reveal something more of Shakespeare's conception of Rome. In *Cymbeline*, indeed, the issue of *translatio imperii* is felt more acutely than anywhere else, as Maria Del Sapio Garbero has noted: here, the Empire is in London, not in Rome, in accordance with James's project of a great and united Britain with Wales and Scotland, and with James himself as the new Augustus. The wide net of connections arising from Roman imagery is explored in this volume intensely and repeatedly, alternating the focus between past and present and with a culturalist approach which stretches the analyses to the figurative and the aural and the musical: from a survey of the present nationalist revival detectable behind contemporary performances of *Julius Caesar* (Michael Dobson), to the reconstruction of the geographical and cultural perspective that Shakespeare could have of Rome (Peter Holland); from a comparative study of Tim Crouch's *I, Cinna (the Poet)* and Rosy Colombo's *Viaggio di Giulio Cesare nei Fori Imperiali* (Marisa Sestito), to the individuation of an influence by D'Annunzio on *The Waste Land* that comes from a new interpretation of Eliot's cryptic reference to *Coriolanus* (Richard Wilson); from the analysis of the fleeting concepts of *barbarous* and *Roman* in *Titus Andronicus* (Tommaso Continisio), to the evaluation of the pastiche of literary

genres that is *Cymbeline* (Piero Boitani); from a thorough examination of the figurative tradition(s) embodied both by the Lucrece of the Shakespearean *Rape* and by the Lucrece of the much less known *Ghost of Lucrece* by Middleton (Daniela Guardamagna), to an evaluation of the dramatic, dynamic role played by music in the Roman plays (Giuliano Pascucci).

As Guardamagna writes in her sweeping introduction, the renewal of interest in the Roman plays, undoubtedly a trait of our modernity, has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, it performs an historical and literary function, one that openly deals with the past and that is engaged in the restoration of the national heritage through the reassuring mediation of the "classics"; on the other, the Roman plays as instruments, in the hands of contemporary artists and directors, used to shed light on the ubiquitous attacks on democracy carried out by political frond forces, in a dimension that is only slightly less than "dystopian" (Guardamagna, p. 2). It is precisely this lingering presence, this prolongation of the Roman myth in our present that raises the most disquieting questions. Was the Roman myth not at the root of the blackest European nationalisms? Mussolini *was* Caesar, to the point that the author and director Gian Francesco Malipiero was made to remove from view, and to play off-scene, Caesar's stabbing in his 1936 *Giulio Cesare*, so as to nip any emulative intent on the part of the audience in the bud. The Roman plays are thus a two-faced Janus, an instrument useful to expose contemporary fascisms and also to turn the screws of right-wing governance. As this book teaches us, we must keep our eyes open so as to prevent the Roman canon from falling once more into the wrong hands.

Paolo Caponi, University of Milan

Kerrigan, John, *Shakespeare's Binding Language*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, 622 pp.

With the hindsight afforded by the past three years, John Kerrigan's *Shakespeare's Binding Language* stands out as one of the most significant contributions in the plethora of studies issued to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. The book, extensively reviewed, has been deservedly hailed as a major accomplishment in Kerrigan's distinguished career as a Shakespearean scholar and

editor. The reasons for eulogy are sound, for Kerrigan knows how to deploy both thoroughness and erudition at their best. His virtuoso close reading, interspersed with calibrated Derridean touches, effortlessly dovetails with a painstaking probing of historical records to yield a double focus, in-depth exploration of binding language and of its multiple enactments in early modern England and in Shakespeare's works.

Despite its titular emphasis on Shakespeare, Kerrigan's ponderous study (a 622 page long *tour-de-force* that engages with over twenty plays by Shakespeare, touches upon relevant sonnets and samples many plays by other early modern dramatists) seems informed less by Shakespeare per se than by the baffling variety of language patterns to do with "binding" in early modern private and public life, "the whole array of utterances and acts by which people in early modern England committed themselves to the truth of things past, present and to come". "Oaths, vows, promises, asseverations, legal bonds, gages, contracts" (p. xi): the range of linguistic cases Kerrigan exemplifies at the outset anticipates the vast purviews and far-reaching undertones of his study. What is at stake is obviously not a repertoire of formulas but an array of speech acts caught in a perplexing casuistry of contexts and circumstances: who commits himself/herself to whom, in whose sacred or profane name, to what end and in which guise. The intention and the act of committing oneself through binding are seen to innervate all kinds of mundane and religious practices (binding, we are reminded, lies at the very root of *re-ligio*): they are to be found ubiquitously and are perhaps most active where least evident. Whether secular or sacred, formulaic or ridden with ambiguities, whether kept or broken, oaths, vows and promises weave the fabric of early modern communal life, a social life Kerrigan pores over meticulously via extensive forays into the overlapping fields of religion, politics, philosophy and economics. In his thorough introduction Kerrigan lucidly sets out the book's methodical assessment of all and every issue entangled in the language of binding: from the works and words involved, to the import of classical tradition, and the pesky variables of cultural status and gender. At the same time, Kerrigan designates early modern theatre – notably Shakespeare, but also, albeit more marginally, Dekker, Fletcher, Heywood, Marston and Middleton – as his ideal compass of study. For this is the place where the all-powerful histrionics wielded by the language of binding reaches its unfettered

fulfilment, where the tortuous motives and intentions of those who swear, promise or asseverate come into full view, and where the leeway allowed by varying allegiances is negotiated. On Shakespeare's stage, binding speech acts that are drawn from the discourses of everyday life instigate action and motivate characters. They are in fact "joint actions" where "speech act and doubt go together" (p. 37) and where "oaths and vows can reinforce the very doubt they are meant to allay" (p. 40). Whether perlocutory or illocutory, fatic or persuasive, they eventually lose all pretensions to neutrality to expose the textile shifts and wavering fragmentation of their fabric. On one hand then Kerrigan sheds light on how binding language upholds the cultural scaffolding of Early Modern England. On the other, his ingenious insights into the language of Shakespeare's theatre and Shakespeare's poetry lay bare the unsteady workings of it all: the underlying pushing, clutching and loosening of the bolts that hold such cultural construction precariously together.

The result is a volume which, in seventeen essay-like chapters, arranged in a loosely chronological sequence, followed by an "Epilogue", and complete with an impressively comprehensive bibliography, retraces unexpected Shakespearian variations of one *leitmotiv*. What matters are not the plays themselves, but their ability to reverberate the modulations of binding language. We come across them repeatedly as they are made to resonate with each other in plays unconventionally paired or as they resurface under different guises in several chapters that address the same play. We are shown how equivocation "ripples through *All's Well That Ends Well*" only to reach into darker places in *Macbeth* where it "is caught up in the unravelling of oaths" (p. 324); we are taught to discern the threat of bonds loaded with the double urge of time and money both in *The Merchant of Venice* and in *The Comedy of Errors*; more predictably but no less interestingly, we are made privy to the parallel oaths of fealty which bind counsellors to sovereigns and spouses to each other in *The Winter's Tale* and in *Cymbeline*.

A climactic point in the book's trajectory is the early Jacobean crisis in authority mirrored on and off stage by the unchecked proliferation of blasphemous oaths and perjuries, an escalation of dubious commitments that allude to the volatile religious controversies of a divisive post-reformation England. Imposed upon Catholic subjects in 1606 by James I, the Oath of Allegiance signals a

pivotal "defining" (p. 368) counter-measure which, in his two chapters devoted to the topic of Reformation, Kerrigan carefully places in context, in light of previous Oaths of Allegiance and through a penetrating analysis of religious contention in matters of natural and positive law, of obedience and of sacraments. What he also chases with unrelenting precision, however, is the problematic enactment of the tortuous relationship between oaths and obedience in plays which turn to the Henrician period, such as John Bale's *King Johan*, and Shakespeare's *King John*, or which hark back to the Henrician Reformation such as the collaborative dramas *Sir Thomas More* and *Henry VIII.*

In a book which so pointedly puts on record the many historical incarnations of binding language through the lens of the theatre the emphasis placed on the drawbacks of the 1606 Act to Restrain Abuses of Players against anyone who should "in any Stage/play, Interlude, Shew, Maygame, or Pageant, iestingly, and profanely [to] speak, or use the holy name of God, or of Christ Iesus, or of the holy Ghost, or of the Trinitie" (p. 8) comes as no surprise. Kerrigan convincingly shows that Jacobean coercions feed back into the theatre where expurgations and redirections became tangible. Yet, he also expands on how, even in his "oath-constrained plays" (p. 453) Shakespeare, like most other dramatists, found his own ways to dramatize restrictions, proving that " in the ongoing argument about profanity [...] the playhouse had things to say, not merely cuts to make" (p. 472).

These cursory remarks necessarily fail to do justice to the extent of Kerrigan's work, whose sophistication, complexity and meticulousness defy synopsis and challenge reviewers. All the more so because the author aims not to demonstrate, but to illustrate, "to highlight and bring into focus particular kinds of verbal and performative behaviour in Shakespeare" (p. 476), as he humbly puts it in his conclusion. What must be at the very least underscored is that, as Kerrigan highlights plays rarely addressed or details often unnoticed even in works amply plundered by critics, his innovative slant opens fresh vistas on Shakespeare's corpus. One would not expect, for instance, to consider *Hamlet* in the frame of its duels, let alone to find out how revealingly these still embed traces of judicial combats, "the bets upon the soul" (p. 325) which, preceded by sacred oaths , would have tested the truth of the word of honour in medieval times. And it is no less enlightening to be made witnesses of how

closely "the oaths, vows and curses that Shylock piles on top of his bond" (p. 190) in *The Merchant of Venice* tie in with early modern Jewish treatises on the sacred value of oaths and with the anti-Jewish protestant controversy on this issue. Here, as elsewhere, Kerrigan's insight into early modern culture readily engages us thanks to sharp close readings (a feature reviewers have aptly qualified as Empsonian) that are alert to the finest resonances of binding language and that occasionally place references to prominent twentieth century thinkers or critics: Marcel Mauss, Jacques Derrida or Judith Butler amongst others. No matter how opportune, such sparkles from our critical theorists, however, strike an odd note in a book which, despite this alluring smokescreen, remains unconditionally focussed on the pastness of the past, with no concession made to the difference of the present . Actually, emphasis on a synchronic version of history and of performance is, for better or worse, a distinctive feature of Kerrigan's massively erudite volume; and while we are given solid insights into how early modern audiences might have responded to the *mise-en-scène* of their own binding acts, we are also unfortunately left clueless as to the variables of such interaction across time. Still Kerrigan's painstaking delving into the folds "of anything that is conceptually difficult and socially complex" in search of "the variousness of utterance and circumstance in which Shakespeare's plays took shape" (p. 476) leaves us with invaluable tools and a powerful incentive to explore this issue further in a diachronic perspective, beyond Shakespeare's age.

Despite its refreshingly accessible style, this is a book meant primarily for a learned elite of Shakespearean scholars: alert minds that have been trained to follow the densely allusive patterns, the conceptual ramifications and the subtleties of Shakespeare's language across his whole corpus. It is to be hoped that average readers may also find their own ways. Even partial glimpses into this ground-breaking study, which boldly swims against the recent tide of compact books, handbooks and hard-headed writing dictated by the contingencies of academia, will surely spark curiosity and inspire research on the tying and untying of social bonds, a subject which, across the world, remains as topical as ever.

Alessandra Marzola, University of Bergamo

Lopez, Jeremy, *The Arden Introduction to Reading Shakespeare: Close Reading and Analysis*, The Arden Shakespeare, London, Bloomsbury, 2019, 164 pp.

A welcome addition to the many introductory texts which already aim to help the novice to read Shakespeare's work (Frederick Samuel Boas, *An Introduction to the Reading of Shakespeare*, Oxford University Press, 1927; Maurice Charney, *How to Read Shakespeare*, Peter Lang, 1992, a reprint of 1971; David Bevington, *How to Read a Shakespeare Play*, Wiley, 2006; Eugene Giddens, *How to Read a Shakespearean Play Text*, Cambridge University Press, 2011; Michael Alexander, *Reading Shakespeare*, Macmillan International Higher Education, 2012; Nicholas Royle, *How To Read Shakespeare*, Granta Books, 2014, to name only a few), Jeremy Lopez's book makes another "useful" (p. 162) tool to introduce ways of unravelling the complexities of dramatic language to "readers who are new to studying Shakespeare" (p. viii). That said, as a work that addresses dramatic structures, categories for analysis, technical matters, and close reading methods and techniques, Lopez's study offers far more to the reader than its title—*The Arden Introduction to Reading Shakespeare*—promises. The volume provides a starting point for further exploration ("this book", reminds the author, "should not be mistaken, or used as, a course in Shakespeare studies [...] it will probably be most useful in conjunction with a course or other reading you are already doing on Shakespeare", p. viii); even more importantly, it constantly encourages the reader to develop "habits of attention" (p. viii) which will enable them to test their own interpretive strategies. Indeed, one of the strengths of this *Introduction* lies in its continuous alertness to the "openness" of a Shakespeare text and to its possibilities for exploring and unfolding its "multiplicity of meanings" (p. 6).

The volume benefits from its structured methodology and thematic cohesiveness. The reader is led through four main sections: Part One on starting-points ("title", "stage directions", "scenes", and "the whole play"); Part Two on "first words", "the first act", "the third act", "the second and fourth acts", "the last act", and "last words"); Part Three on "patterned language" and "characters"; and Part Four on "metre" and "textual variation". The methodological rigour applied to the structure of the whole book is complemented in

the organisation of its chapters: each one contains a separate overview and a conclusion. These summaries are particularly commendable for the cogency of their exposition. The argument of each chapter is also proposed clearly and developed systematically in three different sections (A, B, and C), although – and despite Lopez's warning to his reader not to expect any evenly distribution of examples (p. 6) – the arbitrariness of the plays chosen for the close analyses somehow compromises what is otherwise an impeccably organised work.

Each individual section – even Lopez's excursion into Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and metrical language (pp. 141-49) – is sewn beautifully to the others by the book's "overarching concern [...] with the complex relation between individual parts of a play and the dramatic whole to which they belong" (p. vii). As one follows Lopez through his arguments, though, one may feel inclined to question the choice of the book's title: after all, it invites the reader to an "Introduction to Reading Shakespeare" and not, as it seems to be, to an introduction to reading Shakespeare's plays only. Indeed, when he reiterates that "the subject of this book [is] the complex experience of reading or watching a Shakespeare play" (p. viii), he further complicates our appreciation of his choice of the title.

Semantics aside, this lucidly written overview of Shakespeare's dramatic language will be of interest primarily to college and university students who will no doubt find this introduction valuable, particularly in those classrooms where Shakespeare's linguistic complexities are met for the first time. Academics and people with interest or special training in early modern drama will also find Lopez's demand that we see Shakespeare's plays as "contain[ing], or gestur[ing] towards, alternative versions of themselves" (p. 90 and p. 129) as both compelling and persuasive. Equally convincing are the author's analyses of the "inadequacy of last words" (p. 109), of characters who "must be partly defined by what we imagine others might think [them] to be" (p. 127), and of textual variations as a way of informing our close readings (p. 154).

At a time when Shakespeare's work is measured less in terms of its value as a (distant) cultural iconography and more as a space where every person who engages imaginatively with these texts can find relevant clues to inform their own individual knowledge of the world (even beyond academia), Lopez's book represents a strong example of how providing readers with the right critical tools will

enable them to appreciate Shakespeare's work and to position their own voice within today's critical discourse.

Lucia Nigri, University of Salford-Manchester (UK)

Sokol, B. J., *Shakespeare's Artists*, The Arden Shakespeare, London, Bloomsbury, 2018, 325 pp.

In the large catalogue of current intertextual studies on the fascinating crossover between modes of expression in the early-modern period, B. J. Sokol's book contributes to our sense of the overall map of cultural practices of the time. Shakespeare's poems and plays are at the core of a crucial engagement in portraying artist figures: painters and sculptors, and musicians of diverse kinds.

The volume is presented as an attempt at "a literary critical experiment", starting from an enquiry into Shakespeare's notion of an 'artist': "a practical matter or an intellectual category?" (pp. 4-8). The question also involves the complex issue of Shakespeare's consciousness of aesthetics as a field of knowledge, an issue that leads to a critical analysis of his fictional characters. Sokol's method integrates a historical approach with a subjective, imaginative interpretation: on the one hand it proves that "Shakespeare's artists are distinctive features, even bellwethers, of the social fabric"; on the other, it provides broadly thematic interpretations. The chapter on *Painters and Sculptors in Shakespeare's Poem*s focusses on the shift from Horace's authoritative dictum *ut pictura poesis* to the competitive *Paragoni* of the senses, bringing to the fore Leonardo da Vinci's and Ben Jonson's opposing attitudes to the relative priority of words and images – and related 'sister arts'. Particular attention is bestowed on *The Rape of Lucrece* with regard to Shakespeare's use of *ekphrasis*, but also on the active role played by the viewers imagination according to Ernst Gombrich's classical thesis in *Art and Illusion*: Sokol highlights Lucrece's perception *from a distance* of the Troy painting in the climactic scene leading to her suicide.

In the next chapter, on *Painters and Sculptors in Shakespeare's Plays*, an equal emphasis on the role played by *indefiniteness* is carried through, now with regard to the closet scene in *Hamlet*. Here portraits appear to share with the hallucinatory nature of the ghost, visible only to Hamlet, stirring "the psychological violence [of the scene], so intense that it pales the actual murder that takes place in it" (p. 48).

Consistent with the theme of the chapter, critical focus on *Timon of Athens* is inevitable as is a comment on the pretended Giulio Romano painted statue in *The Winter's Tale.* Not only do Sokol (and Shakespeare) show the mediating function between art and life, but also the "psychic danger" that art's transforming agency encodes: for instance, the "short-circuiting the process of recognizing the symbolization in art" (p. 92) on the statue scene.

Chapters 5 and 6 extend to *Shakespeare's Musicians*; with the proviso that the focus is on "*musicians* represented by Shakespeare rather than, more generally [and predictably], on *Shakespeare and music*" (p. 139). Indeed, in this section the appropriate question is "the *kinds* of music indicated by Shakespearian texts" (p. 139), with a view to inferring from them the kinds of musicians Shakespeare represented in a time which was "a highpoint in musical history" (p. 140). Thematically, *The Tempest* is of course closest to this question, however Sokol seems to be more interested in *Twelfth Night*, seeing Feste as a direct projection of Shakespeare, a sort of 'co-performer', since his music was addressed to people of different stations in the social scale, high and low. An interesting side aspect of Feste is the character's anxiety about the decay of his profession, due to competition from the English playhouses (p.144); an anxiety which might have something valuable to tell us when we approach the experimental playwriting of Shakespeare's last phase.

In spite of the numerous references – historical *and* textual – Sokol's book is not a totalizing study nor was it meant to be. Some of its conclusions, like the claim that Shakespeare does not approve of music (and, by extension, art) used for deception rather than constituting an honest language of expression, do not seem to match the rich material and ideas circulating in the chapters. However, one of the suggestive features of *Shakespeare's Artists* is the perception of "Viola, Laertes, Marina, Imogen/Fidele, Perdita, and possibly even Hamlet" as "unheard musicians" (p. 162). This is real food for thought.

Rosy Colombo, Sapienza University of Rome

A Tribute to Roy Eriksen

Two men are sitting at a table in a candlelit room. Paper, pen, and ink on the table. The slightly better dressed of the two is reading from the sheet in front of him, stops, goes over it once more, before nodding approvingly, "Mmm [...] good, very good". He then swiftly seizes the quill, dips it, and underscores some words at the top of the written text, changes a word in mid-text, and others at the end, before pushing the sheet back over to his companion, with a smile: "What do you think? Better?" The other man peruses the sheet carefully: "Mmm [...] Quite. I see what you mean".

That theatrical scene comes at the opening of one of Roy Eriksen's most recent but finest essays – on Shakespeare's response to the plays of Christopher Marlowe – and it brings Roy's two greatest literary subjects together for a grand finale, which is also a beautifully lit, wryly humorous, typically generous group portrait of what we must now learn to call 'the Eriksen generation'. As with everything he wrote, Roy was hearing secret harmonies here, which he neither wanted nor needed to spell out. He would leave it to those who knew how sensitive his eye and ear were to coded, hidden messages, to get the deeper, secret meaning.

Of course, it is obvious that Roy is the better dressed of the men in the picture. His jackets were tailored in Rome. But anyone who had been invited, welcomed, introduced, chaired, moderated, wined, dined, put to bed, breakfasted, and then driven in a daze to the airport by him, at the end of one of the Maestro's famous conferences in Kristiansand or Italy, and had then been seductively cajoled, edited, corrected, revised, and, more often than not, abbreviated by him, before being published in one of those *de luxe* volumes he conjured, as if by magic, from some clandestine printer in Ferrara; or who had ever shared a seminar panel; or simply listened spell-bound, as he wove all the preceding presentations of the day into the Platonic harmony of his cosmic conclusion, would know how much that piece of chamber music said about his own belief in art and the academy as collaborative creative exchanges. And looking back at the scene of co-operation between the two Elizabethan dramatists, it seems to sum up Roy's irreplaceable role for us. Now I see what he meant. He made all our work better.

Professor Ken Pickering of Kent University, the President of the British Marlowe Society, has asked me to read this tribute from him to the way in which Roy was not only so scholarly in himself, but the cause of scholarship in others:

Roy was an outstanding scholar of early modern drama and he published extensively on Marlowe. He gave a number of fascinating talks to the British Marlowe Society at the dramatist's King's School in Canterbury, and he was a major participant in conferences wherever Marlowe and Shakespeare were considered. We all heard how his translation of Marlowe's Doctor Faustus *into his native Norwegian had its premiere in Oslo shortly before his key contribution to the Shakespeare and Scandinavia conference and the Marlowe and Shakespeare conference at the Rose Theatre, Kingston. He was a tremendous friend of the Marlowe Society, and a personal adviser and encouragement to me as Chairman. In recent years it was entirely appropriate that he was partly based at the University of Padua (like Galileo and another King's School boy, William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood) where his extraordinary gift for languages and his penetrating scholarship made him a true Renaissance Man.*

Roy's magnificent lecture at another 2016 conference in Kingston's Rose Theatre was entitled "Mission Impossible: Giordano Bruno in London", and that could have been a self-description. He was fascinated by Bruno as a border-crossing go-between, a courier between Catholics and Protestants, magic and science, who wrote the ultimate secret book, *The Ash Wednesday Supper*, about a midnight love feast, hosted to bring enemies together during the original Brexit, the English Reformation. Roy's own midnight feasts were celebrated extravaganzas, where seafood, champagne, and a knockout 15% red from Umbria, would have stunned the Borgias. But for his thank-you, Bruno was burned at the stake by the Pope in Rome's *Campo di Fiori*; and on the last-but-one evening we Shakespeare scholars would ever spend with him, at almost the end of his farewell conference, Roy led us by what seemed like a very Puckish roundabout route to the restaurant, all the time lecturing us on the Eternal City, towards the site of the fire, and the statue of the great free thinker. At the time, we were all too hungry to appreciate it. But now I see what he meant. 'To Bruno', reads the inscription

around the base of the statue, 'From the age he predicted'. This was Roy's homage to humanism. Francois Laroque has sent this message in tribute to the humanist spirit he brought to his activities in France, where he had many friends from his time in Montpellier in the 1980s:

Roy invited me to Tromso, Oslo and Kristiansand. Sophie Chiari and I also went to a conference he co-organised in Vincenza. Naturally, we were both very glad he also accepted to give papers at French conferences like "Transmission and Transgression" in Aix-en-Provence, "Censorship" in Clermont-Ferrand, as well as others in Lyons on "Love's Labour's Lost" and "As You Like It". Finally, he accepted to write a piece on Dr Faustus for a volume called "Performances at Court in the Age of Shakespeare", which will be published at the end of the year. Needless to say, the volume will be dedicated to his memory.

This only gives a faint idea of how hard Roy worked, while being yet able to travel and keep so many close links with friends and colleagues all over Europe, as France represents only a small part of his contributions to Renaissance and Italian scholarship. He really impressed us by his vast knowledge as well as by his kindness and availability whatever his other commitments may have been. I never heard him complain about his own health problems or pain. He took long walks, and told you about the magic powder he had been able to get through mysterious channels and which, so he said, did him much good.

Roy was an open-minded and most tolerant man, a true humanist and citizen of the world. He was our friend. We mourn him and we both very much miss him.

The Eriksen methodology is that nothing in the piazza or the picture or the play is accidental; and this belief in intention led Roy into an amused skepticism towards French theorists of 'the death of the author', as well as his lasting love affair with numerology: the concept of intelligent design in literature. He never could accept authorial death, being so confident Shakespeare was right when he swore that "Not marble nor the gilded monuments / Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme". Roy's commitment to "monuments of

unageing intellect" produced what will surely survive as his own best work, his 2001 book, *The Building in the Text: Alberti to Shakespeare and Milton*. This is dedicated, simply, 'To Berit', and when Roy writes there how the ladder Petrarch and his lady climb numerologically in the sonnets is made of what the poet calls "The love that lives and reigns in all my thoughts", we are made to think not only of all those days with Berit, counting the steps in the actual towers of Italy, but of the "marriage of true minds" that made this climbing possible.

Roy had been a high-altitude researcher, of course, in Bernard Berenson's illustrious *I Tatti*, Harvard University's Renaissance Research Centre in Florence, where interdisciplinarity is the sworn religion, and the *paragone* of poetry and painting is everyday conversation, and David Skilton, Professor of Illustration Studies at Cardiff University, has asked to pay this tribute to his role as a genial but astute intermediary between word and image:

As a polymath Roy Eriksen could bring his immense knowledge and judgment in history, languages, fine art and archaeology to bear on the visual content of Renaissance books and manuscripts. In this, as in so much else, he very willingly shared his wisdom with colleagues and students, offering to all who heard him or read his work, hugely exciting yet always reliable insights into the works he dealt with. He was generally patient with those who knew less than he did (that is to say, almost everyone), and, as a rule, was very charitable if asked to explain himself further. The exception to this rule was his impatience with people whose ignorance was a result of laziness or indifference. He had little patience for those who should have known better. To those of us working in literary illustration there was something comforting as well as a trifle shaming to find one's own specialism so well located, appreciated and expounded in such a broad context of renaissance culture. But Roy was, in every sense, simpatico.

Roy by name and royal by nature, the Maestro was known to British scholars as the Godfather, Il Magnifico, Maecenas, or sometimes, simply Rex. For a quarter of a century I have been an awed guest at his lavish multi-lingual table. I count his Kristiansand conferences on "Toleration and the City" as among the most creative events of my career, and the decade-long project as a model for relations between

the university and the community. The series was given unique impact by its location in the city planned by King Christian. For Roy truly believed in the ideal city. He was most eloquent writing about utopias, and the sharing of ideas, and most impatient when speaking of closed minds and policed walls. So, it was apt that he should host the last supper of his farewell conference, on crossing genres, in a Jewish *trattoria* beside the ruins of the gate to the Ghetto, the Portico Ottavia in Rome. As autumn moved into winter, Roy spoke quietly then as he does on the final page of *The Building in the Text*, about "The concepts of *fratellanza*, of brotherhood and the extended family", of the critic or teacher "creating new family ties between people who are not related in real life, and magnifying such ties as do in fact exist". Here was a man who understood the meaning of *The Symposium*. Let us give thanks to Roy, then, that, as the clown says at the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*, "the men of peace" have been at "a great feast of languages", and some of them have been lucky enough to have "stolen the scraps".

Richard Wilson