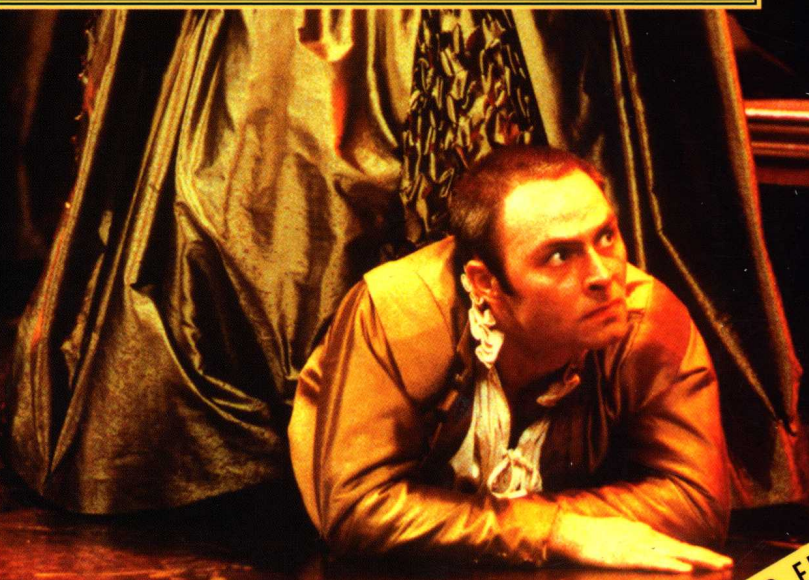


THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



ENGLISH
RENAISSANCE
DRAMA

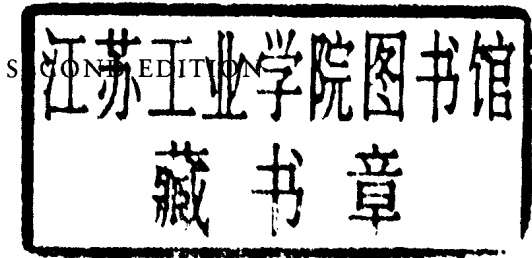
*Edited by A.R. Braunmuller
and Michael Hattaway*



SECOND EDITION

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
ENGLISH
RENAISSANCE DRAMA

EDITED BY
A. R. BRAUNMULLER
AND
MICHAEL HATTAWAY



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521821155

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First published 1990
Second edition 2003
Third printing 2007

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-82115-5 hardback
ISBN-13 978-0-521-52799-6 paperback

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

We know that there is no such thing as a ‘neutral’ organization for a book such as this, indeed, none for any book. Any shaping of material implies (pre)conceptions about that material; every system stipulates an order, any order accepts some values and ignores others. Still, a book must be ordered, and its order should have a phrasable rationale. Throughout, we have aimed for clarity combined with thought-provoking juxtapositions that convey the exciting multifariousness of the drama our contributors examine.

We considered two obvious ways of organizing this *Companion* – by author and by chronology. Our reasons for rejecting these arrangements will make clear the benefits and advantages of the pattern we did choose. Of all the nominally ‘literary’ arts, theatre involves the widest collaboration. Renaissance English drama is, like classical Greek drama, heavily language-biased (and hence written texts provide, or preserve, more pleasure than texts of later drama); nevertheless, the source of these words, the author, is at best *primus inter pares*. For centuries, the act of preparing a play for production has changed the author’s original text, and the Renaissance theatre was no different. Talking about plays in terms of their authors, like the common metonymy by which we use ‘Milton’ to refer to ‘L’Allegro’, *Arcades*, *Paradise Lost*, *Samson Agonistes*, etc., is a convenience, emphasizing some elements in our relation with a play or other literary work, but ignoring or minimizing others. Discourse about drama almost inevitably speaks of authors and authorship, but to make authors the exclusive basis of our approach to fifty or more years of intense activity ignores the theatre as a collaborative mass art (whether the ‘mass’ of responding spectators be several hundred at the ‘private’ Blackfriars or 2,500 at the ‘public’ Globe), disregards the creative and coercive power of convention, that necessary mediator of similarity and difference, and ignores the less visible but even more powerful forces of society and culture.

An arrangement in chronological terms is still more artificial, since it lacks even the basis in psychological identity provided by individual

authors. Chronology's drawbacks are most simply illustrated in its grossest form, division by regnal periods. 'Elizabethan', 'Tudor', 'Jacobean', 'Stuart' ordinarily can point to the crudest of contrasts, even if we recognize how absurd it is to suppose, for example, that Jonson, Shakespeare, or Chapman, or their theatre companies, or the audiences, or their experiences and sensibilities changed detectably on that day in March 1603 when Queen Elizabeth died. (This absurdity is proved by the fact of revivals: placing prominence on only the first performance of any one play obscures the kinds of popularity and importance it may have enjoyed with different kinds of companies and at different periods – witness the early theatrical fortunes of Marston's *Malcontent*, originally a children's play, but soon performed by an adult, public theatre company in revenge for the children's producing an adult company's play at the Blackfriars.) Any chronological organization suffers from some form of the problem caused by regnal divisions – important theatrical events rarely march to the calendar's arbitrary metronome, and even when one could argue for an overall consistency or expository clarity offered by the plays, players, audiences, and social conditions of, e.g., the 1590s, what of the 1580s, or the half-decade 1615–20? Imprecise or unknown dates of composition, first performance, and revival also serve to make the dates of the volume's chronological range, 1580–1642, define an area of concentration and not set limits to a period.

The predominant organizing principle of this *Companion* is generic, but 'genre' conceived without neo-classical rigidity. Instead, our contributors have been asked to conceive of genre so as to catch some of the idea's Renaissance capaciousness: the mingle-mangle of clowns and kings, the variety of Bartholomew Fair, the social and musical expectations of a masque-audience. Occasionally, identifiable theatrical change does more or less coincide with a period neatly typified by some non-theatrical event, and we feel that Caroline drama is an example. Even here, however, we would claim no hard and fast temporal boundary, no throwing of switch or gears at the accession of Charles I. Rather, social and political changes rooted as far back as the economic and educational crises of the 1590s and parliamentary events of the later years of James's reign now appear forcefully in the plays produced during his son's reign.

Finally, we have made no attempt to be encyclopaedic. Our contributors were each assigned a list of representative plays appropriate to their topics, and were encouraged to offer accounts or analyses of particular passages or sequences. The general editors thus attempted to avoid duplicating material and to make certain that some account appeared of works by each major author, but they could not guarantee that a place would be found for *every* play commonly taken to rank among the period's masterpieces.

Shakespeare was included but given no privileged treatment. Some contributors have ranged more widely from the agreed texts than others, and this was always the intention. The essays seek not to be definitive but perhaps to be paradigmatic: to offer the reader ways of experiencing texts and performances, to provoke further reading, and, above all, to add to the enjoyment of Renaissance dramatic texts in the study and the play-house. The volume's apparatus does, however, attempt a conspectus of the best that has been written about the period and about authors. The Bibliography offers a selection of further reading on many of the topics covered in this volume – and many that could not be included in a book of this size. Major and some minor authors are there accorded a brief biography, a citation of the standard edition of their complete works (if there is one), and a brief list of relevant studies. Within the book, each essay is followed by a bibliographical note in which our expert contributors offer guidance on important past and recent work in their areas. The volume ends with a fairly comprehensive chronological table of plays and theatrical and political events. With these guides, and the volume's indices, we hope to match the curiosity and interest of both general and specialist readers.

Our contributors have graciously helped us and each other in shaping this volume. We thank Mary Jane Ross for her assistance in compiling many of the biographies and bibliographical materials and Sarah Stanton and Victoria Cooper for their patience and counsel in seeing the book through the press.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

Since *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama* first appeared in 1990, a great deal of important writing has appeared concerning the ideology, history, playing spaces, plays, playwrights, audiences, technology and much else of the early modern professional theatre in England. More than a decade on, major works of critical and documentary scholarship enrich our new edition's still heavily selective bibliography and bibliographies. We draw attention to this continued vitality by expanding those parts of the volume and, more important, by inviting our contributors to revise and, where possible, to improve their chapters. To say much more about what is, we trust, improved in this second edition would be invidious and an odorous comparison. As humble and obedient servants of the students, teachers, and practitioners who read this book, we may note exceptional advances in studies of theatrical companies, the lives of individual theatre professionals, the cultural circumstances of play-writing, performance, and reception.

The editors thank, once more, the contributors, and especially wish to thank Anne M. Myers and Beth A. Wightman for assistance in preparing the new edition and Sarah Stanton and the other professionals at the Press who made this revision possible.

A NOTE ON DATES, REFERENCES, AND QUOTATIONS

The dates assigned to plays are those of composition and/or performance and derive from Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, rev. edn, S. Schoenbaum and Sylvia Wagonheim (London, 1989); these dates are often speculative or unreliable, and contributors have felt free to modify them.

References in the notes are given in full at first mention and by author and short title thereafter. Author and short title only are given for a work that appears in full either in the select bibliography (pp. 372-80) or in the relevant bio-bibliography (pp. 380-419) when the work deals with a particular playwright.

Contributors have generally cited the following editions; divergences from and additions to this list are mentioned in the bibliographies to individual chapters. Spelling and punctuation have been silently modernized.

The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon, gen. ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge, 1966-96)

The Plays of George Chapman: The Comedies (Urbana, Illinois, 1970) and *The Tragedies* (Cambridge, 1987), gen. ed. Allan Holaday

The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, ed. Fredson Bowers, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1935-61)

The Complete Plays of Ben Jonson, ed. G. A. Wilkes, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1981-2)

The Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe, ed. Fredson Bowers, 2nd edn, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1981)

The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger, ed. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1976)

The Life and Works of George Peele, gen. ed. C. T. Prouty, 3 vols. (New Haven, Conn. 1952-71)

The New Cambridge Shakespeare, gen. eds. Philip Brockbank, Brian Gibbons, and A. R. Braunmuller (Cambridge, 1984-)

The Works of John Webster, ed. David Gunby, David Carnegie, Antony Hammond, and MacDonald P. Jackson (Cambridge, 1995-)

ABBREVIATIONS

CL	<i>Comparative Literature</i>
CompD	<i>Comparative Drama</i>
CritQ	<i>Critical Quarterly</i>
DUJ	<i>Durham University Journal</i>
E&S	<i>Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association</i>
EIC	<i>Essays in Criticism</i>
ELH	<i>ELH: A Journal of English Literary History</i>
ELR	<i>English Literary Renaissance</i>
EM	<i>English Miscellany</i>
ES	<i>English Studies</i>
HLQ	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
JWCI	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
MARDIE	<i>Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England</i>
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
MLQ	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
MLR	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
MP	<i>Modern Philology</i>
NLH	<i>New Literary History</i>
NQ	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
RenD	<i>Renaissance Drama</i>
RenQ	<i>Renaissance Quarterly (formerly Renaissance News)</i>
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
RMS	<i>Renaissance and Modern Studies</i>
RORD	<i>Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama</i>
s.d.	stage direction

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SEL	<i>Studies in English Literature</i>
ShakS	<i>Shakespeare Studies</i>
ShJ	<i>Shakespeare Jahrbuch</i>
ShS	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
SP	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
SQ	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
TDR	<i>Tulane Drama Review</i>
TSSL	<i>Texas Studies in Language and Literature</i>
UTQ	<i>University of Toronto Quarterly</i>
YJC	<i>Yale Journal of Criticism</i>
YR	<i>Yale Review</i>

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I

R. A. FOAKES

Playhouses and players

WHEN we look back at a distant historical period, it is easy to succumb to two temptations; the first is to see a sudden, sharp break with the past taking place at some date such as the coming to the throne of Elizabeth I (1558), or James I (1603), as though a transformation in all aspects of society happened in those instants. The second is to telescope the passage of decades of change into a single, homogenized period like 'the age of Elizabeth', as though forty-five years could be focused in a single, unchanging image. In our own lives we are continually alert to shifts and changes that make what happened or was in vogue ten years, five years, or even one year ago seem curiously old-fashioned and different now. Perhaps it has always been so, even when change was slower technologically. The period from 1558 to the end of the reign of Charles I saw the passage of eighty-four years, during which the theatre was transformed, and the drama startlingly expanded and diversified. It is perhaps unfortunate that the great standard works on the theatres and drama in this period should be entitled *The Elizabethan Stage* and *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*.¹ Yet any account of the period needs to begin with the recognition that there were many different stages as playhouses became more sophisticated, and that perhaps the only constant feature of the theatres up to 1642 was that all parts were normally played by men and boys; the professional companies in London had no actresses in them until after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. The following account of playhouses and players in this period is especially concerned to illustrate the changes and developments that took place in the theatres during the passage of nearly a century. It is divided into four sections: the first deals with the growth of the 'public' or arena theatres; the second is concerned with the earlier 'private' or indoor playhouses; the third describes the later private theatres after 1615, and their relation to the surviving arena stages; and the last focuses on the companies that played in the various theatres, and the business of acting.

¹ Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*; Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*.

The arena theatres

By the time Queen Elizabeth came to the throne a tradition of playing, both by adult groups of players and by companies of boys, was well established. A number of adult groups toured the major towns of England giving performances, without having any regular schedule or theatre buildings in which to play. A longstanding tradition of including the acting of plays in a humanist education for grammar-school boys led to boys' companies providing a major part of the entertainment at court during the Christmas season, and at Shrovetide. Plays had been staged at court for festive occasions since the reign of Henry VII, and Queen Elizabeth maintained the custom. During the early years of her reign up to 1576, performances at court by boys outnumbered those by adult groups. After 1576 professional companies of adult players became far more important, and began to establish their own permanent playhouses in London. I shall deal with these playhouses first.

In the early years of Elizabeth's reign groups of players performed where they could, occasionally indoors in halls to provide entertainment at court or in great houses, but more frequently in public in the square or rectangular yards of a number of inns in the city of London, the galleries round the yards being used by spectators. The companies were all licensed by the patronage of some great lord to travel and perform, for, if unlicensed, they were, according to a statute of 1598, technically deemed 'Rogues Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars'.² The civic authorities of the city of London generally showed hostility to players, whom they saw as a nuisance, promoting crowds and disorder, and distracting people, especially apprentices, from their proper occupations, as well as from divine service on Sundays. Following a prohibition of 1559, which does not seem to have had much effect, the Common Council of London in December 1574 banned performances in taverns in the city unless innkeepers were licensed and the plays first subjected to strict supervision and censorship.³

We do not know how effective such prohibitions were, for they did not altogether stop playing at the Bull in Bishopsgate, or at the Bell in Gracechurch Street, where performances continued for another decade or more; however, they may have stimulated entrepreneurs to borrow money and build the first professional playhouses outside the jurisdiction of the city authorities. The earliest was the Red Lion, erected east of London in Stepney in 1567 by John Brayne, brother-in-law of James Burbage, who, with Brayne, built the Theatre in 1576. Not much is known about the Red Lion, except that it had

² Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, iv. 324.

³ *Ibid.*, iv. 273-6; Wickham, *English Professional Theatre*, pp. 73-7.