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Stewart, Alan, ed. The Broadview Anthology of Tudor Drama

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Stewart, Alan, ed.

The Broadview Anthology of Tudor Drama.

Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2021. Pp. 664. ISBN 978-1-5548-1411-4 (hardcover) \$59.95.

As an undergraduate, I was fortunate enough to have an anthology of Tudor drama. When I was teaching, many such anthologies had gone out of print. Now it is good to see Broadview bring out this and related volumes, to give students and teachers well-edited and well-selected anthologies. This one, under the general editorship of Alan Stewart, an outstanding Renaissance scholar, is a benefit to all students and scholars of English and European medieval and Renaissance drama.

Stewart's Preface reminds us of the importance of Tudor drama, which I enjoyed studying, teaching, and seeing staged. The Tudors reigned from 1485 to 1603, but Stewart points out a quirk of English studies that shortens the period: "In terms of drama, however, it tends to signal something of a lull, a relatively little-read and under-studied period that falls between two more familiar fields of English 'medieval drama' and 'Renaissance drama'" (ix). He also explains the wide range of venues: "beyond the streets of the towns in which biblical plays were performed," such as the grammar schools (the comedies of Terence and Plautus and perhaps the "Terentian" *Ralph Roister Doister*); the universities of Oxford and Cambridge (multiple dramas in Latin and English, including *Gammer Gurton's Needle* at Christ's College, Cambridge); the Inns of Court in London (at the Inner Temple, where *Gorboduc* was first staged); by royal command at various palaces (including Whitehall, where Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish ambassador witnessed the second performance of *Gorboduc*) (ix). In English towns and cities, touring companies staged plays in civic halls, private households, and inns, such as the inns in London during the 1560s: the Bull on Bishopsgate Street, the Bell and the Cross Keys on Gracechurch Street, and the Bel Savage on Ludgate Hill (ix). With print, families and friends may have performed the plays, and businessmen began to build playhouses: John Brayne, a grocer, built the Red Lion in 1567; James Burbage, a joiner, built The Theatre in Shoreditch in 1576; the Curtain opened nearby in 1577 (ix). One can see why Goethe admired Shakespeare and the early and long commitment the English made to drama.

Stewart also notes the rise of professional theatre groups: “A few licensed companies of players (Leicester’s Men, the Queen’s Men—these actors were all male) emerged and consolidated their hold on London’s audiences, commissioning plays, and creating stars out of their leading actors and clowns” (ix). For instance, Stewart says that Leicester’s Men probably performed *The Three Ladies of London* at The Theatre, its author, Robert Wilson, appearing in a leading role, while the Queen’s Men put on *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (ix). These adult companies and a boys’ company were part of the London theatre scene. In London in 1576, the great hall of Blackfriars, the former Dominican priory, became a theatre where the Children of the Chapel Royal performed (ix–x).

The volume’s selection of plays is deliberate and apt. Here, Tudor drama includes morality plays (*Mankind, Everyman*), interludes (*The Play of Wit and Science*), comedies inspired by Terence and Plautus (*Ralph Roister Doister, Gammer Gurton’s Needle*), and tragedies influenced by Seneca (*Gorboduc, Cambises*) (x). Tudor plays mix morality plots with slapstick (*The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art, The Three Ladies of London*), represent classical gods in England (*Gallathea*), depict politics (the anti-Catholic *King Johan* and the question of succession in *Gorboduc*), and present obliquely contemporary events (e.g., expeditions to the New World in *Four Elements*, and immigrants in England’s ports and trade in the Mediterranean in *The Three Ladies of London*) (ix). As Stewart states, other plays push theatrical boundaries by staging violence in *Cambises* and by questioning gender roles in *Gallathea*. Stewart rightly calls attention to the Records of Early English Drama (REED) project from 1978 and its exploration of playmaking in English towns and cities from the late Middle Ages to the shutting of the theatres in 1642 as well as to the work of Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson in their projected ten-volume *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* from 2012 (x). Stewart’s anthology builds on all this, on archaeological discoveries—in 2008, the north-eastern corner of The Theatre in Shoreditch and in 2020 the foundations of the Red Lion Theatre in Whitechapel—and on “the teams of scholars, dramaturges, and actors—like the Shakespeare and the Queen’s Men Project in Toronto; and the Before Shakespeare project in London” (x). This anthology is, then, part of a greater effort to deepen our understanding of these plays and their production, performance, and theatre spaces.

For Stewart, it is important for the reader to know that the anthology seeks to be “faithful to the copy-texts on which they are based, while providing enough information about the plays, in the headnotes and annotations, to enable students at all levels, to read, interpret, and even perform the plays on their own” (x). He also notes that the spelling has been modernized for accessibility, that the annotation is for explanation and context, that the dating and authorship of the plays are challenging, and that there are individual introductions to each play (x–xi).

These introductions are helpful, and the editing of the plays, which includes notes on the text and credits, involved a team of textual editors who deserve thanks. From *Mankind* and *Everyman*—both marvellous plays resembling the Middle Dutch play *Elckerlijc*, “one of the many Rederijkers’ (Rhetoricians’) plays of the low countries” (25)—the anthology takes the reader on a wonderful theatrical and dramatic journey through *Magnificence* to a play Shakespeare’s Falstaff echoes, Thomas Preston’s *Cambises*, and to *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* by Robert Greene, who criticized Shakespeare. Stewart and the textual editors remind us of the treasures of drama beyond Shakespeare.

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Swan, Claudia.

Rarities of These Lands: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Dutch Republic.

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. Pp. 336 + 140 ill. ISBN 9780691213521.

In the past decade, art history’s “global turn” has pushed scholars of early modern Europe to expand the field’s traditional boundaries to encompass new geographies, leading to significant interest in cross-cultural exchange. Claudia Swan’s fascinating new book takes part in this conversation, examining the political implications of trade between Europe and Asia. Her focus is the United Provinces of the Netherlands in the first half of the seventeenth century, leading up to Spain’s recognition of the Dutch Republic in 1648. Swan argues that circulation and exchange of foreign products were fundamental to the