

2019 Seminar Abstracts: Manuscripts and Early Modern Drama
Ivan Lupić, Stanford University
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Students Playing Parts:
Material Traces of University Drama

Daniel Blank, Harvard University

In a 1592 letter to the Oxford academic and theologian John Rainolds, the academic playwright William Gager defended student theatrical performance by emphasizing its frugality and lack of skill. In comparison to professional actors, he claims: “we differ from them altogether in the manner bothe of settinge owte Playes, and of actinge them. thay did it with excessyve charge; we thriftely warely, and allmost beggerly; thay acted their Playes in an other sorte then we doe, or can, or well knowe howe.” In laboring to keep his theatrical endeavors distinct from those of the commercial stage, Gager paints a picture—one that has been widely accepted by scholars—of a slapdash performance tradition, in which little care is devoted to the rehearsal process or the final production. The manuscript record, however, suggests otherwise, and this paper calls Gager’s characterization of university drama, as well as his distinction between academic and commercial theatrical performance, into question through an analysis of the four university parts that survive in the Harvard library. These documents have been used to highlight differences between academic and commercial practices, since they provide slightly more detail to the actors than professional parts are known to have given. I argue instead that certain features of these manuscripts, as well as their very existence, point to an unrecognized affinity between academic and commercial ventures. The manuscript remains of the university stage are notoriously sparse, but these surviving parts provide insight by attesting to its professionalism, rather than its lack thereof.

Early Modern Spanish Theater Manuscripts:
What 3,000 of Them Tell Us

Margaret R. Greer, Duke University

The growth of early modern Spanish theater paralleled that of Elizabethan theater despite their independent development. The *corrales* (public theaters) in Madrid and other cities opened in the 1570s and 1580s, as did London’s extramural playhouses. The network of *corrales* was more extensive and continuous, however, operating in some 30 cities and towns at least into the 18th century. Close to 10,000 plays were apparently written for them, by Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, Calderón de la Barca and scores of lesser talents. That volume helps explain the survival of some 3,000 manuscripts, listed in our database, <https://manos.net/>: over 100 autograph manuscripts by the principal dramatists, plus those made by theater company owners, actors, semi-professional copyists, *memoriones*, copies for sale, gifts or personal collections. Playwrights sold their plays to a theater company owner, who closely guarded that manuscript and his copies of it for some years, against rival companies and publishers alike. Their eventual publication was often based on abbreviated or defective texts. Surviving manuscripts can help editors correct defective published texts, understand relationships between dramatists, theater companies and publishers. I will focus on evidence of playhouse use of two manuscripts each of Calderón and Lope, and several manuscripts of *memoriones* (playhouse reporters). Lope altered

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the ending of his best tragedy, *Punishment without Revenge*; the ending an editor prints shapes the play's meaning. And an added scene in a copyist's manuscript in Prague of Calderón's *Eco y Narciso*, signed by Calderón, enriches our reading of the play.

Persons of the Play:
Understanding Characters through Character Lists in Manuscript

Jonathan Holmes, Central State University

The character list, or *dramatis personae*, is a paratext that should tell us something about early modern perceptions of dramatic characters. Recent work on character lists has focused on just that: using them to read dramatic character, or on character lists in manuscript plays. However, manuscript character lists in printed playbooks have received relatively little attention. We can organize these lists into three different categories: character lists that have been added to printed playbooks to replace missing pages (essentially recreating printed lists), character lists created by readers to supplement playbooks that lacked them, and printed character lists that include marginalia. Marginalia in the last category includes character traits such as social roles and familial relationships, which sometimes appear in printed character lists too. Yet the descriptions that some readers added to simpler lists do more than just repeat the conventions of printed character lists; they demonstrate the ways those early modern readers imaginatively engaged with dramatic character.

'How Elizabethan Dramatists Worked':
The Plot of *Aristocles*

John Jowett, Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham

Sir Edward Dering's sketch of the play I call *Aristocles*, otherwise known as *Philander King of Thrace*, is a unique example in manuscript of the author's plot, a document that establishes a ground-plan for the writing of an early modern play. It was advertised for sale in the Maggs catalogue of 1923 under the headline 'HOW ELIZABETHAN DRAMATISTS WORKED'. How far is this bold claim for the manuscript's interest justified? Similar documents are often thought to have been used in the standard practices of writing a play for the professional theatre. *Aristocles* is crucial evidence as to what such a document might look like. Yet in terms of its content it is fundamentally idiosyncratic. My paper will correlate *Aristocles* with the less immediate evidence of Ben Jonson's 'Arguments', a synopsis of part of *Mortimer*, and 'The Argument of the First Act' of *The Sad Shepherd*, both printed in the 1640-41 Jonson Folio before the play fragment in question. These plays, like *Aristocles*, were evidently planned for amateur provincial performance. Though this paper will uphold the assumption that early modern plays for the professional theatre were written from authors' plots, it will highlight the problem of evidence for such documents.

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***John of Bordeaux* and Theatrical Revision**

James Purkis, University of Western Ontario

MS 507¹ of the Duke of Northumberland's Library at Alnwick Castle, titled *John of Bordeaux* by twentieth-century scholars, is a scribal copy of a sequel to Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. It has been marked for playhouse use. This paper's consideration of the manuscript pulls in two opposed directions. First, an empirical analysis of the text's lacunae and playhouse annotation shows how bookkeepers were concerned with making a text sufficient for playhouse use that falls short of New Bibliographical suppositions of the characteristics of prompt books. Such revisional practices underscore the difference between text and performance. A speculative account of how the scribe's text came into being entertains the possibility that manuscripts may preserve more material derived from performance than is sometimes recognized. Because of its length, perceived 'uneven' verbal texture, lacunae, and apparent anticipations, critics almost universally identify the document as some sort of theatrical adaptation. Attempts to understand *Bordeaux's* revision have been written under the imposing shadow of Greg's *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: The Battle of Alcazar & Orlando Furioso*, his 1923 investigation of 'bad' texts of two plays 'abridged and adapted for performance'. A reappraisal of the evidence of *Bordeaux's* revision challenges the differentiation between memorial and non-memorially abridged texts that has driven much consideration of short / abridged / corrupt texts.

**“Had time coher'd with place, or place with wishing”:
 Scene Locators in *Measure for Measure***

Sid Ray, Pace University

The question at the heart of this paper arose from a separate project on the staging of sexual coercion and assault in 2.4 of *Measure for Measure*. If Angelo assaults Isabella here (as many productions from the last 50+ years would have it), where are they? In the palace? In a courtroom? In an ante-room? In Angelo's house? Each of these has been indicated in editions since 1699 when the editorial practice of scene setting began. Indeed, the location for many of the play's scenes (with the exception of the convent scene and the prison scenes) remains doubtful, even the city itself: Is it Vienna, Ferrara, *Turin*, London? For a play about misplacements, displacements, and replacements, determining “place” surely matters. A review of early editions and promptbooks reveals subtle locators whose significance contributes to our understanding of both place and stage practice as well as Crane's and perhaps Middleton's manuscript editing choices. With the promptbook quarto of *The Two Merry Milkmaids* as the primary point of comparison, this paper examines locators in dialogue, stage directions, and paratext from key *Measure* editions—including the Folio, Davenant's *The Law for Lovers* (1663), Rowe, Capell, the Arden 2, the Oxford Shakespeare, and the Oxford Middleton—as well as locators suggested by property calls or lack thereof and other manuscript notations from the earliest known *Measure* promptbooks—the Padua promptbook and a promptbook from Gildon's *Measure for Measure, or Beauty the Best Advocate*. This paper will review the bookkeepers' and editors' efforts to place or displace the play's action.

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Documents of Play-acting from the East India Company's Sixth Voyage

James Seth, Auburn University

The early voyages of the East India Company have invited critical attention on account of their peculiar relationship to Shakespeare and dramatic performance. There is the mystery of whether *Hamlet* and *Richard II* were performed in Sierra Leone during the EIC's third voyage in 1607, which has baffled scholars since the nineteenth-century. However, the documents that allege these performances are notoriously problematic. But there is at least one other documented instance of play-acting within the East India Company's records that presents evidence of the Company's shipboard performance culture. Two journals recording Sir Henry Middleton's second voyage (and the sixth EIC voyage) mention a play on 18 June 1610, when the Company was outbound off West Africa. The first journal is from Nicholas Downton, who commanded the *Peppercorn*, with Middleton commanding the flagship, the *Trade's Increase*. The second is from Thomas Love, a "master mate" who was transferred from the *Peppercorn* to the *Trade's Increase* on the very day that the play was performed. The details of the play itself are few, but it is possible that Benjamin Greene, a factor with the EIC who accompanied Middleton on the journey from 1610-13 to Surat, was the playwright, or connected to the playwright. Greene's diary, preserved in the India Office Marine Department Records, contains a dramatic fragment consisting of the dramatis personae, a stage direction, and several lines of dialogue. Though Greene was stationed on the *Darling*, the third ship on the voyage, the dramatic fragment in his diary presents potential connections to the performance recorded by Love and Downton.

Manuscript Playbooks and the Performance of Uncued Actions

Leslie Thomson, University of Toronto

As part of a larger project that asks "How did they do it?" this paper will use a particular aspect of some early modern plays to consider the relationship between play manuscripts with "theatrical provenance" and performance. Sometimes a playwright requires a dramatic character to perform an action or make a gesture that is cued neither by that figure's dialogue nor by a stage direction, but has to happen because it is referred to by another character either simultaneously or subsequently. (For example, Romeo's 2.2 reference to how Juliet "leans her cheek upon her hand," which she has to already be doing; and Iago's detailed description of Cassio and Desdemona's actions in 2.1, which are performed as or before he refers to them.) These actions seem to occur spontaneously until one realizes that the player has to know what to do and when to do it. But an early modern player seems to have memorized his part alone, rehearsals were minimal, and a different play was performed every day; under these conditions how did he know about these uncued actions? In this paper I shall look at several of the theatrical manuscripts for evidence of how such actions were treated by the bookkeeper-prompters who annotated them and what it might tell us about the relationship between these texts and performance.

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Spanish Manuscript Drama and English Printed Playbooks

Jesús Tronch, Universitat de València

This essay is an exercise in comparative textual criticism, in which the abundant evidence of manuscript plays in early modern Spanish drama (up to 3000 manuscripts from the late sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century [Greer, “Authorial”, 102]) supplements the relative dearth of manuscripts in the contemporary English tradition up to 1642 (between one hundred [Werstine, *Early*, 4]) and one hundred and twenty-five [Ioppolo, *Dramatic*, 5-7]). As Margaret Greer pointed out, “[g]iven the significant parallels in the development and cultural centrality of Elizabethan and Spanish theater, awareness of Spanish theater manuscripts’ role might help resolve some controversies over practices in the Elizabethan theater world” (“Authorial”, 101). If not “resolve” controversial issues, at least some light may be brought to an understanding of the varied textual transmission or early English printed plays. In this essay, I focus on two kinds of manuscripts and problems: authorial transcripts annotated for performance in the debate over the categories of “foul papers” and “promptbooks” as defined by Greg; and collaborative plays in manuscript and what they can tell about *Timon of Athens*.

**Did Shakespeare Use a Manuscript of Samuel Daniel’s
Civil Wars to Write *Richard II*?**

David S. Weiss, Atlanta, GA

It is widely accepted that William Shakespeare referred to Samuel Daniel’s *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars* while writing *Richard II*. Critical editions of *Richard II* cite the 1595 publication of the first installment of Daniel’s epic poem, *The Civil Wars*, as determining the earliest possible date for Shakespeare’s composition of the play, implying that Shakespeare used the printed edition as his source. But available evidence is missing from this analysis, evidence that has never been considered in dating Shakespeare’s play and assessing its relationship to Daniel’s poem. There are two extant manuscripts of sections of *The Civil Wars*, raising the possibility that Shakespeare read such a manuscript, rather than the printed edition, of Daniel’s work. A stanza in one of those manuscripts that never appeared in print employs theater imagery similar to Shakespeare’s to describe the same invented episode, Richard’s entry into London in disgrace behind the victorious Bolingbroke. Is the shared imagery coincidence or did Shakespeare get inspiration from a pre-print-publication, scribal version of Daniel’s poem? To investigate that question, this essay assesses the dates of the manuscripts, evaluates the literary overlap, considers how Shakespeare’s possible use of a manuscript impacts the dating of *Richard II*, and identifies connections between Shakespeare and Daniel that explain how the playwright could have obtained access to a manuscript of the poet’s work.

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Scene Division and Act-End Notation in Playhouse Manuscripts

Paul Werstine, Western University

The manuscripts of greatest concern to Shakespeare editors are lost ones—those that lie behind the printed Shakespeare plays, those that likely were discarded after their use as copy in the printing houses. In attempting to infer the nature of these lost manuscripts, editors are concerned chiefly to discriminate between those printings that show signs of their copy having been used in the playhouses and those that don't. At the moment one of the discriminants in use by editors is the presence of scene division. It has recently been argued that the only playhouse manuscript in which scene division is to be found is Ralph Crane's copy of *Sir John van Olden Barnavelte*; Crane of course either preserved in or introduced scene division into all his extant manuscripts and, it seems, into the lost manuscripts thought to have served as copy for a half-dozen Shakespeare First Folio plays. Thus the presence of scene division in *Barnavelte* may reasonably be understood as a feature distinctive of Crane's work, not one distinctive of the playhouse. However, a broader examination of extant playhouse manuscripts reveals that scene division is a not uncommon feature of them. For example, the manuscript of *The Soddered Citizen* (located at Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office) contains scene division; this manuscript also contains the handwriting of Edward Knight, bookkeeper of the King's Men—a sure indication of playhouse provenance. One of Knight's concerns in annotating this manuscript is the numbering of its scenes.

Edward Knight's Dramatic Punctuation

Daniel Yabut, Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier 3

When the editors of the newly published Arden Shakespeare Performance Editions – targeted at theatre practitioners – stated that punctuation was a ‘matter of debate’ and ultimately decided to use modernised punctuation aimed at readers rather than arbitrarily choose a particular early modern text for its pointing, they laid bare an unresolved issue mostly between textual scholars and theatrical practitioners: was the punctuation in early modern playtexts ‘light’, ‘random’, or ‘haphazard’, and can therefore be dismissed as ‘accidental’? Or is this a long-standing assumption?

Previous studies on dramatic punctuation that reach the former conclusion tend to go no further than to examine the early printed playtexts, the ‘Hand D’ section of *The Book of Sir Thomas Moore*, and perhaps the works of Ralph Crane in limited scope. Yet a closer examination of the extant manuscript playbooks suggests that this may not be the case. This paper demonstrates that Edward Knight, a King's Men's scribe who served as bookkeeper/prompter, was indeed sensitive as to how he punctuated his texts. Knight's scribal habits in four surviving playhouse documents reveal that he may well have preferred to make bespoke texts dependent on intended use, with his own atypical system of points that marked out breath, sense, pitch, emphasis, and embodied action.