



## Review of John Wilders, ed., *Shakespeare in Production: Macbeth* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

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light task aboard the *San Giovanni* (110). Accounts of capturing prizes and dealing with storms predominate all of the campaign narratives, except that of the voyage to Lepanto – which culminated in an enormous battle that was widely celebrated as a landmark victory of Christianity over the ‘infidel’ Ottoman fleet.

Even if Aurelio Scetti’s service with the Tuscan galleys could have been more confined to port than the author would have us believe, the text remains valuable. After all, Aurelio Scetti’s text is not a personal narrative as much as it is an account of the naval campaigns of the Tuscan galleys. The author himself claims in his dedicatory letter that: ‘it is not a hardship for me to write to You about Your enterprises, particularly in this memoir about the victories of Your galleys on the salty sea from the year I fell into this misery until today’ (163). The exploits of the Tuscan galleys were already well reported in contemporary Medici correspondence – now preserved in the *Mediceo del Principato* collection in the *Archivio di Stato di Firenze* – and much publicized in printed pamphlets that were distributed throughout Europe. As a catalogue of victories, then, the journal could draw on these accounts, as well as a long literary tradition of military chronicles, with which both the author and the intended reader were apparently very familiar.

The Grand Duke of Tuscany’s reception of the journal obviously conditioned the narrative strategies employed by the author. Aurelio Scetti’s text performs homage both to the memory of Cosimo I de’ Medici and to his successor, Francesco I de’ Medici. A poem of praise coupled with an illustration open each chapter. Scetti recounts his frequent petitions for release in dramatic language and describes himself as ‘poor Aurelio’ who is ‘left alone and helpless’ (106). Aurelio’s need to demonstrate his service to the Grand Duke may have led him to make the improbable claim that he took two ‘Moors’ prisoner during the battle of Lepanto (121–122). This dramatic approach is fundamentally linked to the exaggerated formal language of sixteenth-century service and supplication. Understanding Scetti’s text as a pardon tale allows us to reconsider the textual strategies he uses in attempting to gain pardon from his ‘doleful condition’ (56).

Luigi Monga’s English translation of this fascinating source should interest a broad range of scholars researching early modern Mediterranean history, some of whom may want to consider using this text with upper-division or graduate students. The *Journal of Aurelio Scetti* offers readers an intriguing window into Tuscan justice, Mediterranean warfare, Christian-Muslim religious conflict, and slavery in the early modern period.

Medici Archive Project

BRIAN SANDBERG

William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare in Production: Macbeth*. (ed.) John Wilders. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xiv + 229pp. 12 b & w illus. £16.99. ISBN 0-521-53482-8.

The Cambridge ‘Shakespeare in Production’ series serves the discipline of performance studies. A dozen volumes have appeared so far. Each volume enables readers to trace historical developments in the staging of Shakespeare’s plays – textual history, critical responses and the plays’ engagements with topical controversies are largely

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passed over. The John Wilders-edited *Macbeth* volume is typical of the series. A seventy-six page 'Introduction', tracing the theatrical history of the play, is provided, followed by the text itself. The text (taken from the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition, edited by A. R. Braunmuller) lacks conventional explicatory notes, and is instead augmented with details about how passages were portrayed (or cut) in performance. For instance, for the scene in which Malcolm's camouflaged army approaches Macbeth's seat, we learn from an 1837 reviewer that William Charles Macready's presentation of the scene was so impressive that 'The approach of the English army . . . really was a moving grove, as if Birnham [*sic*] Wood had come to Duncinane [*sic*']'. Like Macready, Henry Irving also sought to outdo previous producers of *Macbeth* through sheer theatrical spectacle: over 400 costumes were made for his presentation of the play.

The text and its necessarily anecdotal accounts of historical performances are followed by a useful bibliography and a very useful index, which allows one, for example, to find every reference to Ellen Terry's Lady Macbeth in the book's materials. The Cambridge general editors attempt to appeal to both the advanced researcher and inexperienced performance students. Unfortunately, this attempt to satisfy two disparate sets of readers is not wholly successful: the researcher will find material that is either too vague or extraneous, while the student may be overwhelmed with arcane detail and the lack of explanatory notes. Students need explicatory notes for *Macbeth*, as they do for any Shakespearean text, whether they are pursuing study in an English or Theatre Studies department. Inexperienced readers need notes to clarify the text's references to 'dudgeon gouts', 'the brindled cat' and 'wretched kerns'. Therefore, this edition of *Macbeth* will not suffice as a stand-alone text for undergraduates – as the paperback issue costs seventeen pounds, it would be unfair to ask cash-strapped students to buy this edition of *Macbeth* in addition to a more conventional text-based one.

The 'Introduction' does work as a guide to theatrical history of *Macbeth* and of English theatre history generally. The conditions of the diverse Jacobean theatres are described, as are the much-changed Restoration playhouses, Garrick's era and the naturalistic splendours of Victorian pomp. The William Poel and German-influenced, often expressionistic, anti-illusionary stagings of the twentieth century are accounted for, up to and including Gregory Doran's Royal Shakespeare Company production of 1999. Wilders' melancholy and pointed remark about the reason for the twentieth-century preference for bare staging – simple economics – will be appreciated by all theatre practitioners. One limitation of the book is obvious: the focus on London and Stratford-upon-Avon. More twentieth-century productions of *Macbeth* have been staged than can even be listed in a book of this size. Wilders has had an unenviable, thankless task of selection. Understandably, Wilders focuses on major, accessible and well-known performance spaces, but it is disappointing that there is no coverage of regional *Macbeths*. Every Shakespearean retains stirring memories of performances in regional areas of Britain and Ireland, but in the impressive list of productions that Wilders covers, only one post-1900 production is cited that was not produced in either London or Stratford-upon-Avon. Pedagogically, this approach could give the erroneous impression that Shakespeare does not flourish away from the major theatrical institutions of London and Stratford-upon-Avon; the academy's current

stress on non-metropolitan performance in Shakespeare's time and in ours is also undermined.

Students are poorly served by the 'Introduction's cursory coverage of filmed versions of *Macbeth* – I am not even sure that the medium of cinema is relevant to this theatre-centred book. Less than three pages are devoted to filmed *Macbeths* – only Orson Welles' 1948 and Roman Polanski's 1971 adaptations are considered thoroughly. Wilders notes that Kenneth S. Rothwell lists 14 cinema treatments of *Macbeth* in his 1990 compendium, *Shakespeare on Screen* (Wilders would have found two more filmed *Macbeths* if he had have consulted Rothwell's later monograph, *A History of Shakespeare on Screen*). Many of these silent and talking adaptations are important: Wilders perhaps exaggerates when he asserts that 'most of them [are] now forgotten'. The too-brief study of the three *Macbeth* films should have been either expanded or dropped, because the three judgemental pages (Wilders slates Welles for his 'uneven', 'scarcely audible' and 'slow, unvaried' *Macbeth*) offer little to the growing field of Shakespeare and film.

Experienced researchers and students alike may be distracted by some editorial slips and by some vague allusions and language, particularly in the 'Introduction'. The 1976 production starring Ian McKellen and Judi Dench is covered well, but is wrongly dated to 1996 on page 7. A simple typographical error on page 29 causes temporary bewilderment: '[Edmund] Kean was "the master of his own destiny" because only he had the power control it'. I'm not sure what Wilders means when he writes that the actress, Hannah Vaughan Pritchard, had 'coarse' features – the inclusion of a very small reproduction of Henry Fuseli's painting of Pritchard and Garrick scarcely assists. I had to do some extra library work to find out whether Sarah Siddons' Portia was the Portia from *Julius Caesar* or from *The Merchant of Venice*. Finally, Wilders helps nobody by quoting uncritically an unnamed *Daily Telegraph* reviewer's reductive and possibly sexist dismissal of Anastasia Hille's Lady Macbeth as a 'neurotic bimbo'. Generally speaking, despite its curious slips, the 'Introduction' – and the edition as a whole – will be quite useful as a supplementary (not set) text for students of performance history, but much of the information is too basic ('James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603') for Shakespearean researchers. Such scholars will, I think, keep a reference copy of this edition, but will concentrate on the promptbooks and primary and secondary texts cited by Wilders.

The Cambridge publishers could have established an 'In Production' series that excluded a general 'Introduction' and the arguably superfluous Shakespearean text to provide a truly compendious resource that would benefit researchers – something similar to the late Marvin Rosenberg's 'Masks of' series, say. Or, they could have established a student-friendly series that provides conventionally annotated texts as well as surveys of textual, critical and performance history. The realities of the book trade stipulate that Cambridge cannot fund two such different and extremely specialised series. But another reality is that the present 'Shakespeare in Production' series cannot satisfy both students and researchers, and the series may not survive long enough for it to include individual editions of all or even most of Shakespeare's plays.

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