

tached"; *Woodstock* remains a notable outstanding case.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars were rather too eager to attribute anonymous plays to learned writers like the University Wits. Such attributions must await confirmation or rejection until such time as the rigorous modern computer tests can be applied as they have been to the texts of *Titus Andronicus* and *TR*. Peele's dramatic corpus may grow yet further; perhaps his collaboration with Shakespeare may yet be found to be more extensive. Peele is still proposed by some scholars as a possible contributor to *Henry VI*, Part One. The authors of the *Oxford Textual Companion* leave open the question of collaboration in Parts Two and Three of *Henry VI* (*First Part of the Contention*; *Richard Duke of York*), while dating them to the early 1590s, the time when Peele was engaged in writing his history plays.

Charles Forker's edition is everything one expects of this distinguished scholar. Of particular interest among the Introduction's rubrics are those devoted to "Authorship and date", "Sources" and "From *The Troublesome Reign* to *King John*". A thirteen-page bibliography precedes the Introduction (a cursory run down the lists caught one minor misprint on p. xvii: *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1959 [for 1559]: *The Elizabethan Prayer Book*). A measure of the thoroughness with which the editor undertook his work is the number of previous editions of the play collated (22), from three copies of the 1591 Q1 (Folger, Huntington, Trinity College Cambridge) to the anonymous Wikisource text (2008). A rather surprising number of separate editions were produced in the twentieth century, seven in all according to Forker's list.

Printed in two parts, *The Troublesome Reign's* action is nevertheless continuous: neither part "could stand satisfactorily on its own in performance" (88). The two "parts" are of unequal length (1767 and 1206 lines respectively); but have separate titles and prefatory poems, even separate signature sequences, unlike the 1590 octavo of *Tamburlaine* whose two parts collate continuously. In any case, *TR* is clearly one continuous work, totalling 2973 lines. In the textual introduction (87-95), Forker makes considerable use of J. W. Sider's Garland Press edition of 1979, in particular the latter editor's analysis of the printing of Q. Only three copies of the first black-letter edition survive; some press corrections were made, though not against copy. The text is for the most part unproblematic, and was set probably from the author's draft, or a fair copy of it. An abundance of descriptive and permissive stage directions hint strongly at non-theatrical, i.e., probably authorial copy. The same

phenomena are found in the 1595 quarto of Peele's best-known play, *The Old Wife's Tale*.

The text, exhaustively annotated, is followed by two appendices: a selection of extracts from sources, mainly Holinshed, and the aforementioned table of "unique matches of three consecutive words in *TR* with comparable word strings in other plays by Peele". This is an intriguing section of the book: George Peele his personal linguistic ticks, as it were. It should not be surprising that a large majority of these parallels are found in *Edward I* and *The Battle of Alcazar*, Peele's two other English historical or pseudo-historical plays. A twenty-three-page index concludes the volume.

Charles Forker's superb edition of *TR*, building upon the researches of Vickers and others, places the play indisputably within the corpus of the enigmatic George Peele. The Peele canon is on a rising curve. Several scenes of *Titus Andronicus* and the totality of *TR*, added to the modest surviving canon — *The Arraignment of Paris*, *Edward I*, *The Battle of Alcazar*, *David and Bethsabe*, *The Old Wife's Tale*—and Peele begins to emerge a little further from the late Elizabethan swamp of playwriting anonymity. Since the standard Yale edition of Peele's works, published in three volumes between 1952 and 1970, only isolated critical editions of individual plays have appeared, mainly *The Old Wife's Tale* and *The Battle of Alcazar*. Were a new edition of Peele's works to be envisaged, then on the principle adopted by the editors of the *Oxford Middleton Collected Works* (2007), it would surely include *Titus Andronicus* and *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*. And counting. For George Peele's newly enhanced stature and visibility on the Elizabethan scene, Charles Forker and the Revels Plays must be warmly applauded.

Charles WHITWORTH

Bruce Danner, *Edmund Spenser's War on Lord Burghley*, Early Modern Literature in History Series (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2011), 280pp., ISBN 978-0-230-29903-0, \$85.00.

Bruce Danner begins his book with a truth universally acknowledged, amongst Spenserians at least, which is that "Edmund Spenser hated William Cecil, Lord Burghley" (1). However the reasons for Spenser's notorious attacks upon Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer, have been less clear and it is this puzzle that Danner sets out to consider in this study. What is at stake is not simply the personal enmity between two men but a reappraisal of the traditional view of Spenser as, above all, an obsequious servant of the state, an "arse-licking poet", as Karl Marx put it. Danner's

reappraisal of the motives for Spenser's attacks upon Burghley, and what they tell us about his attitude to power, involves reconsidering the date of Spenser's *Complaints* volume and the re-reading of a troublesome episode in *The Faerie Queene*.

Spenser's famous attacks upon Lord Burghley first appear in the *Complaints* volume where critics have long identified Cecil as the Fox in *Mother Hubberds Tale*, with Spenser's depiction of him representing "a moralistic portrait of hypocrisy and ambition" (161). For Danner, though, another work from the *Complaints*, *The Ruines of Time*, "has at least an equal claim of offense, and probably even a greater one" (92) since Spenser here "criticizes Cecil without the mediating fiction of an allegorical beast fable" (92); the work characterizes the Lord Treasurer as one who "welds all things at his will", and thus "frames Burghley as a usurper, seizing for himself all-encompassing authorities that rival the queen's own" (93). In *Virgils Gnat* Spenser presents an encomium aimed at his patron Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and here too criticism of Burghley is evident since he is apparently represented in the poem by Oedipus, a name meaning "swollen foot", and thus alluding to Burghley's gout.

Dates are crucial to Danner's argument. Following the lead of Edwin Greenlaw, general editor of *The Spenser Variorum*, critics have long assumed that Spenser's attacks on Burghley in *Mother Hubberds Tale* and *The Ruines of Time* can be dated 1579, even though the volume was not published until 1591; moreover, according to Greenlaw, *Virgils Gnat* can be dated during the poet's early years in Ireland, sometime before 1585. Danner puts his case persuasively that arguments for the earlier dating of these works (amongst them that Spenser's post in Ireland was a punishment and a consequence of attacking Burghley) are based only on conjecture; true, Spenser himself claimed that *Mother Hubberds Tale* and *Virgils Gnat* were composed in earlier periods ("long since") but this does not mean they were published before 1591. Crucially, there is no evidence that Spenser had any dealings with Burghley early in his career and it remains unclear why, if there was bad feeling between the two men in 1579, Spenser would have addressed Burghley courteously in a dedicatory sonnet published in the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene*. Danner argues that the criticism of Burghley and praise of Leicester in *Virgils Gnat* looks back: the poem should be read as a retrospective address to Leicester who by now is dead and Spenser presents himself as the shepherd-poet, as a figure of integrity (unlike some at court),

who remains loyal to the preservation of his patron's memory.

Crucial to Danner's argument that Spenser's enmity with Burghley stems from the early 1590s is his analysis of an important episode from the first edition of *The Faerie Queene*, which included Books I to III of the poem and was first published in 1590. Danner contends that what provoked Burghley's wrath was Spenser's allusion in the poem to Burghley's personal affairs. As Danner notes, one of the dedicatory sonnets prefacing the 1590 edition of the poem was addressed to Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, and Spenser here clearly states that Oxford is represented allegorically in the poem: "th'antique glory of thine auncestry / Vnder a shady vele is therein writ, / And eke thine owne long liuing memory". Oxford was married to Burghley's daughter Anne from 1571 to 1588 and, as Danner puts it, "From the very first moments of the marriage to Anne's tragic early death, Oxford made the Cecils miserable" (34). The worst action on Oxford's part was to question his wife's chastity by denying that he had fathered Anne's first child, Elizabeth, and leaving both his wife and daughter from 1576 to 1582 when he was finally reconciled with Anne. Before this reunion Oxford had an illegitimate child with one of the Queen's maids of honour, Anne Vavasor, who gave birth to a son in 1581 (her first pregnancy by Oxford apparently ended in a miscarriage). Oxford was clearly a rogue but it seems likely that his treatment of Anne was at least partly due to his irritation at being in debt to Burghley and thus under his authority; when he was only seventeenth Oxford had killed an undercook of the Cecil household and Burghley later admitted engineering the subsequent trial in Oxford's favour. Danner argues that Spenser presented the reunion between Oxford and Anne in the reunion of Scudamour and Amoret that comes at the end of Book III of *The Faerie Queene*, first published in 1590. It is likely that it was this intimate portrayal of his family and the public rehearsal of their woes that angered Burghley. In his revised version of the episode, published in the 1596 edition of the poem, Spenser presents not a celebratory and pleasurable encounter, as he had in the earlier edition, but one that has the couple avoid any acknowledgement of each other so that "the effect of the moment is entirely inverted from its earlier counterpart, open-ended and emotionally inert" (74-75). Whilst Scudamour has been connected with Oxford by anti-Stratfordian scholars, as Danner acknowledges, no connection has hitherto been made between Scudamour/Oxford and Burghley and although Danner is quick to note the lack of external evidence for Burghley's hostile re-

action to Spenser's poetry, his analysis of the internal and contextual evidence is convincing.

Danner's re-reading of the Scudamour and Amoret episode from the 1590 edition *The Faerie Queene* in the light of Burghley's personal problems is important and so too is his re-reading of Spenser's repudiation. Stephen Greenblatt in his influential book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* characterized Spenser as subservient: "Spenser sees human identity as conferred by loving service to legitimate authority, to the yoked power of God and the state [...] Spenser's art constantly questions its own status in order to protect power from such questioning" (quoted from Danner, 209). As Danner clearly shows, it appears that Spenser was not a fawning puppet of those in power; his attacks upon Burghley for the Lord Treasurer's wilful misreading and apparent censorship of the 1590 Scudamour and Amoret episode reveals courage, if bloody-mindedness. This book should be of interest not only to Spenserians but those interested in exploring the machinations at court during the reign of Elizabeth I and the fascinating personal lives of its public figures.

Joan FITZPATRICK

*

Kevin A. Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), xvi+263pp., ISBN 9781409401599, £55.00.

The "disguised duke plays", popular in early Jacobean England, have often been read, reductively and anachronistically, as representations of King James. This new study, by Kevin Quarmby, contests that viewpoint, and is attentive to the ways in which rival companies harnessed the enduring power of the disguised ruler motif from the sixteenth century to the Caroline era.

The first chapter considers a range of sixteenth-century plays which dramatize disguised rulers. Shakespeare's *Henry V* is perhaps the most famous example, but Quarmby assembles an impressive range of evidence. He begins by arguing that "comical history" disguised rulers are presented as comforting figures, so Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* "stresses the value of disguise and secretly acquired knowledge" (28), and *George a Greene* "promotes its message of political security from, and solidarity for, rulers who wear disguises to travel in secret among their people" (36). According to Quarmby, in the 1590s more plays began to combine the romance plots of the "comical histories" with the factuality of the Chronicle, emphasising, rather than underplaying, "the darker potential [...] of disguised deceit"

(39). Thus, Thomas Heywood's *1 Edward IV* demonstrates "anxiety" caused by the "voyeuristic" disguised king (45), and *Henry V* is said to be "reassuring in its chivalric militarism" but "unnerving in its representation of disguised surveillance" (60); a point Quarmby makes by attentively reading textual variants between the Quarto and Folio texts.

This alertness to textual detail is amply displayed in the second chapter, which discusses the multiple versions of John Marston's *The Malcontent*. Previous scholarship has considered Marston's play to be a paradigm of the disguised ruler play, but, by addressing the textual variants, Quarmby unsettles this critical commonplace. Thus two distinct "*Malcontents*" (61) emerge: the QA/B texts probably reflecting performance by the boy company at Blackfriars; and the QC text, altered by Marston, with additions by John Webster, and apparently performed by the King's Men at the Globe. In Quarmby's hands the "*Malcontents*" are shown to be varied in their generic, cultural, and political interests. Quarmby argues that QA/B owes a greater debt to Giovanni Guarini's *Il pastor fido*, which Marston apparently consulted in Italian, and reflects a curiosity in generic experimentation which had already emerged in *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge*. By contrast QC is said to contain almost no Guarinian echoes, and leans towards city comedy, rather than tragicomedy, by incorporating far more topical localization, especially in the Websterian additions. These satirical references are not directed towards the king, however, "but against corrupt and acquisitive courtiers and citizens, targeting anyone who might threaten the fragile social cohesion of a nation adjusting to regime change" (98).

This observation on Webster's topical references chimes importantly with the interests of the next chapter, which actively resists attempts made by critics to read moments in *Measure for Measure* as comments on King James. The main way in which Quarmby achieves this is by concentrating on how critics have taken Whig propaganda at face value, propagating a negative image of the king which more recent, revisionist historical research, has sought to contest. Quarmby's discussion of Whig criticism is skilfully handled, but one wonders if the spectre of King James can, in fact, be fully exorcised (and whether it should be). It is demonstrably problematic to read the play as an allegory of the Jacobean court, but it is perverse to deny that James's accession had an influence over the play's composition and reception. Nonetheless, the chapter usefully debunks some myths about James and paves the way for a more nuanced understanding of how the Jacobean succession might act as a prism for early audiences of the play. Equally, the

attention paid to *Measure for Measure's* sixteenth-century heritage (the play is compared with the anonymous "comical history" *Fair Em*) and to its place in the early Jacobean repertory (Quarmby notes that it was probably performed at the Globe alongside *The Malcontent*) successfully illuminates the theatrical context of Shakespeare's play.

Chapter four continues the theme, promising to exorcise the Jamesian spectre from two near-contemporaneous plays: Thomas Middleton's *The Phoenix* and Marston's *The Fawn*. This involves a degree of repetition, but the task of disassociating Middleton's Prince from King James is important, since the play seems especially susceptible to being read allegorically. However, Quarmby concludes, typically for critical commentators, that the play displays "hegemonic conservatism" and propounds an "uncontentious political message" (153). The chapter is at its strongest when it considers both plays in relation to medieval morality and advice-book tradition, and, again, in relation to sixteenth-century drama. *A Knack to Know a Knave*, *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* are all intriguingly discussed. Quarmby also widens the net to consider, in the final section of the chapter, John Day's *Law Tricks*, attesting to the commercial viability of the motif. Ultimately, Quarmby's claims here are modest: the plays in this chapter are said to be "formulaic" (177), but he gestures towards a new and more exciting vision of the disguised ruler in the next chapter.

The proposition in chapter five is that the "climate of insecurity and fear" (178) created by the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 coloured subsequent representations of disguised rulers. Quarmby perceptively notes that, whereas his previous chapters had sought to counter occasionalist readings by critiquing the notion of the Jamesian representation; this chapter encourages acceptance of "an occasionalist dimension to post-Plot plays" (183). So, Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Woman Hater* is said to be a parody of the disguised ruler theme which gains "a sinister immediacy" (185) when viewed as a specific response to the public execution of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators, who were hanged, drawn, and quartered near the Paul's playhouse venue. Quarmby's main argument, however, involves Edward Sharpham's *The Fleer*, which dramatizes a deposed duke who disguises himself as a Catholic interloper, thus "highlighting disquiet among London's urban population" (186). The thought of disguised usurpers infiltrating the kingdom meant that "fictive portrayals of voyeuristic disguisers [were] particularly unsettling" (195) and the disguised ruler was transferred from principal part to incidental motif in a short space of time. And yet the trope did not

disappear: Ben Jonson created the character of Justice Adam Overdo, whom Quarmby describes as "the last full expression of Jacobean disguised ruler subterfuge" (213). As is typical in this book, sixteenth-century "comical history" heritage is shown to inform the characterisation and, as is also typical, Quarmby steers the reader away from what he calls "traditional 'Overdo as anti-James' commentary" (206), preferring instead (persuasively) to read the Justice as a satirical allusion to the outgoing Lord Mayor of London Sir Thomas Myddleton.

Quarmby concludes the book with an intriguing afterword, designed to demonstrate that although "a small group of playwrights from the early seventeenth century might have recognized the potential [of the trope], only to discard it as social, political and artistic pressures dictated" (215), the disguised ruler did not suddenly disappear from London stages. The motif reoccurred, albeit tangentially in late-Jacobean and Caroline plays such as Lodowick Carrell's *The Deserving Favourite* and James Shirley's *The Duke's Mistress*, demonstrating its "incidental narrative appeal" (216). Quarmby also notes that earlier plays remained in the repertory, and cites evidence of a 1635 Blackfriars performance of *The Malcontent*, but his comment that "although no longer appearing in print, [disguised rulers] were still masquerading for their playgoing public" (216) is misleading since he does not mention that several of the plays discussed in preceding chapters received reprints around 1630-1635, including *The Phoenix*, *The Fleer*, *Measure for Measure* (in the Second Folio), and *The Fawn*; and (as he does mention in the fifth chapter) *Bartholomew Fair* first appeared in print in 1631. These intriguing publications warrant further attention, and attest to the textual afterlife of the disguised rulers. Quarmby continues the discussion by examining an anonymous, incomplete manuscript play, *The Wasp*, which he speculates may have been performed within a year of *The Malcontent* revival. But his point that "*The Wasp* [...] demonstrates the continued dramatic relevance of a motif which did not suddenly disappear in the first decade of the seventeenth century, but which continued to influence drama for decades to come" (221-22) could be supplemented by reference to another, largely forgotten play: it may seem perverse to criticise a study for failing to mention the drama of Shakerly Marmion, but *The Antiquary*, a rival play performed either in or near 1635, might usefully support and perhaps even expand the argument unfolded in this thoughtful coda.

Quarmby has produced a fine study notable for its skilful negotiation of a wide range of materials, including, but also reaching far beyond, the disguised duke plays which are so often the subject of