

modern literature and culture that speaks directly to our longing to reach across the generations and to probe what we can of the tangible past. Among the delightful anecdotes Karim-Cooper uncovers is Tomkis's description of the hands as the "blindman's Candle," and John of Trevisa's of the index finger "namyed Likpot." The hands that often decorate the margins of early modern books suggest how tactile the reading experience can be—and this book, too, deserves to be well-thumbed for retrieving a forgotten aspect of our shared history.

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Culinary Shakespeare: Staging Food and Drink in Early Modern England.

David B. Goldstein and Amy L. Tigner, eds.

Medieval and Renaissance Literary Studies. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2016. 288 pp. \$70.

It is only relatively recently that food and drink in Shakespeare, and the historical and cultural contexts within which his plays were produced, have become a serious topic of study for literary critics. This collection of essays is broadly historical in its perspective, as its editors point out in their introduction (also written by Wendy Wall), with many of its essays considering Shakespeare's plays via early modern writings such as William Harrison's discussion of food and drink in his *Description of England* (1577) from Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Reginald Scott's *A Perfite platforme of a Hoppe Garden* (1574), and various cookery books. The volume's essays often focus on one food item or theme and often just one play—for example, small beer in *2 Henry IV*, the orange in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and herring in *Twelfth Night*—and for the most part this provides a clear focus for some insightful readings, for example, Peter Kanelos's remark that "Claudio, by tossing back the 'rotten orange,' enacts an alternative history, one in which Adam rejects the fruit of transgression offered to him by Eve" (69) and Tobias Döring's consideration of Sir Toby via the collective memory of past Catholic holidays and feasts.

The collection is less successful in its promise to explore the theatrical ramifications of food and drink in Shakespeare. Despite the volume's subtitle there is no discussion of the staging of food and drink in productions, but rather a focus on the plays themselves, which are interrogated as written texts. This allows for some thoughtful observations, as noted above, but there is little sense of the theatrical potential of the play. The volume's introduction proclaims that "food was inherently theatrical in Shakespeare's world, and food also permeated the spaces of theater" (14), referring also to the way in which "performances [were] played out around the stage of the dining table" (14) and how "food in the theater works experientially and sensually: the physical and metaphorical presence of food on the stage and the audience's sensual experience of comestibles are mutually enforcing" (15). Yet explorations of the various ways in which scenes

mentioning or featuring food and drink have been staged, either by early modern or modern practitioners in the theater or on film, do not emerge. Any reference to the theater or performance tends to involve generalized statements; for example, Tobias Döring rightly remarks how the early modern playhouse was “functionally associated with culinary practices and gastronomic acts” (176), but provides no detail as to what these were or how they might have impacted upon a script in its creation or production. Of course there is nothing wrong with focusing on the textual—no one has yet successfully challenged Lucas Erne’s persuasive view that the plays were written with a view to print publication (see his *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* [2003])—but this volume’s title and introduction mislead the reader into expecting something more.

While there is a lot of engagement here with current scholarship on food and drink in early modern culture, including Shakespeare, it is hard to find since the wealth of critical material included in what are sometimes lengthy discursive endnotes is not indexed, which means that important works and comments on them tend to get buried. Additionally, there is no list of works cited for the reader to see at a glance the scholarship to which this volume is indebted. The volume’s division into three parts (“Local and Global,” “Body and State,” “Theater and Community”) is not especially helpful either since certain essays that appear in one section might just as well have featured in another. As noted above, the use of historical documents to provide context is often productive but at times the selection of material could be better; for example, early modern attitudes to drunkenness considered by Rebecca Lemon in her essay on Falstaff are mainly seventeenth century. The lack of scholarly rigor in not providing a clear and easily traceable sense of the critical debate—also evident in such practices as referring to Harrison’s *Description of England* (cited in a number of essays) without mentioning that it is part of the larger Holinshed’s *Chronicles*—is disappointing; the volume’s contributors might have been better served by their editors.

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Shakespeare | Cut: Rethinking Cutwork in an Age of Distraction.

Bruce R. Smith.

Oxford Wells Shakespeare Lectures. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. xvi + 212 pp. \$39.95.

The title of *Shakespeare | Cut* suggests a book-length study of theatrical abridgment. As Bruce R. Smith quickly points out, however, this volume “is not intended primarily as a history of theatrical and cinematic excisions” (26). At times, Smith does engage with this subject matter. His survey of theatrical edits within the performance history of *Hamlet* (49–70), for instance, will be of great interest to scholars and practitioners researching this topic. But Smith’s “larger purpose,” as he notes, “is to install the cut as