

Glynn Wickham, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram (eds) *English professional theatre, 1530-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) ISBN 0 521 23012 8 £90 pp. xlv+714

Key documents about professional theatre in Shakespeare's time have long been hard to obtain; some were never printed and others appeared in obscure places. For the period between the 'revolutions' of Henry 8's act of supremacy and the restoration of Charles 2, Wickham, Berry, and Ingram have placed in the researcher's hands virtually all the textual evidence available on the topic. The documents are organized under 517 heads, each being a descriptive label (such as "The so-called 'Sharers' Papers', 1635") or an historical assertion supported by documentary evidence (such as "A French company with women plays at the Red Bull, 22 November 1629"). This intuitive organization allows many standard queries to be answered by simply scanning the table of contents.

Significant new interpretations are presented. The playhouse in Abram Booth's 'Utrecht' picture, long thought to be the Theatre, is assigned back to the Curtain, as Leslie Hotson originally claimed in 1954. The playhouse depicted in the frontispiece to Francis Kirkman's *The Wits* (1673) "should be the Red Bull in the 1650s", so the caption to a reproduction of it omits the well-known doubt altogether. Item 347 shows the impact upon the Rose receipts once the Globe "was fully open" in autumn 1599; what, we might ask, is a partially open one? Perhaps half an audience, half the actors or half the play. Berry discovered that the Boar's Head on Whitechapel High Street was operating in 1599, yet oddly he insists that only the Curtain was operating "near Bishopsgate" that summer and so it must have been Thomas Platter's playgoing destination "not far from our inn in the suburb". These are, of course, professional quibbles about tiny detail. This monumental work will for a long time be the theatre historian's standard reference for the documentary evidence about this period.

298 words