

"Review of Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (eds.) *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England* Redefining British Theatre History series, gen. ed. Peter Holland (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) ISBN 1403933443X (paperback) xiii+251 pp." by Gabriel Egan

Second in a series of five, this book is concerned with the early-modern processes of writing drama and getting it performed, and its eleven essays are divided into "Questions of Evidence", "Interrogating Data", "What is a Play?", and "Women's Work". The self-reflexive objective announced in Peter Holland's series introduction--to "theorize" theatre history and examine its "methodological [and] . . . theoretical bases"--is evident in these headings' formulation of the question 'how do we know what we think we know?'

R. A. Foakes thinks that the replica Globe theatre now standing in south London is too indebted to the famous but unreliable 1590s drawing of the Swan theatre. Foakes adds to our knowledge of this evidence's unreliability and argues that we should be paying more attention to the surviving category of playhouse documents called 'plots'. Foakes's readings of the 'plots' are illuminating, although he wrongly associates them all with Henslowe's Rose; David Kathman has shown that 2 *Seven Deadly Sins* belongs to Shakespeare's company in the late 1590s. Moreover, their importance is moot until we discover how they were used: for reference during performance (as W. W. Greg claimed) or when plays were being cast (as David Bradley holds)?

Looking earlier, Richard Beadle surveys our vast ignorance about how such dramas as the York mystery cycle were performed: on wagons, but facing which way(s) and with or without masks? Claire Sponsler too is concerned with the older forms, and reminds readers that the *Records of Early English Drama* (REED) project that publishes evidence of regional drama has shown that the biblical and morality plays flourished well into the period we think of as the beginning of professional drama, the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Maybe, she wonders, we have overlooked some scripts because we do not recognize the documentary forms they take, as when they are copied into other texts. Carolyn Sale too is concerned with the way that drama shades off into our cultural forms such as ritual humiliations. Collectively, these essays admirably survey the mixture of transitions and continuities that marks the rise of Elizabethan drama, and they achieve Holland's aim of helping theatre historians leaven their innate empiricism with some cultural history.