

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



### Kiefer, Frederick. English Drama from Everyman to 1660: Performance and Print

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[See table of contents](#)

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persona" (11). Nevertheless, the image of her abdication is the one most widely disseminated after her death.

In the interests of full disclosure, I will add that I wrote my MA thesis on Caterina Corner and her villa complex at Altivole. Although it was a good thesis, it did not adequately speak to the complex cultural imbrications between Venice and the Ottoman Turks that Caterina assimilated into, and projected onto, her identity. Hurlburt's key project here is to identify Caterina's own agency and voice in the uneasy contemporary, and even current, polemics of east and west. Hurlburt admits, in her introduction, that this is not easy; it requires conjecture and suggestion based on the piecemeal nature of the remaining documentary evidence. If there are times when Hurlburt reads rather too much into too little—with ample use of "may," "might," "perhaps," and, at least once, "We can only imagine" (200)—the rich context she provides and the excellence of her writing make such conjecture plausible.

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**Kiefer, Frederick.**

***English Drama from Everyman to 1660: Performance and Print.***

Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 447. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2015. Pp. xxii, 929. ISBN 978-0-86698-494-2 (hardcover) US\$110.

The English civil wars provided a harsh reminder that theatrical practices and artifacts once lost might never be resuscitated. That lesson in cultural frailty seems not to have been wasted on a handful of booksellers, bibliophiles, and theatrical aficionados who began collecting, archiving, and cataloguing all known English plays—both extant and lost. The wellspring for preservationist activity was Francis Kirkman (1632–80), whose obsession with collecting plays led him to start cataloguing his own library. By 1671, Kirkman had printed his second and expanded catalogue of 806 "English Stage-Playes." His seminal work feeds modern scholarship like Alfred Harbage's *Annals of English Drama: 975–1700* (1964, rev., 1989) and Yoshiko Kawachi's *Calendar of English Renaissance Drama* (1986).

Frederick Kiefer's scholarship engages, but does not subsume, the works by Kirkman, Harbage, and Kawachi. You'll want to keep his book close at hand, alongside the others.

Harbage's extensive catalogue is organized chronologically. It includes earliest and latest dates of printing, author names, titles, and other data, including plays in English, French, and Latin, as well as adaptations and translations. The performing acting company is also listed where possible and some attempt is made to include a generic category ("Type"). Readers familiar with this catalogue will already have a deep appreciation for the meticulous attention to detail, as well as a keen sense of how valuable this resource is. One of Harbage's many strengths is the useful number of indexes, including listings of plays (foreign and English), playwrights (foreign and English), and translations, adaptations, and dramatic companies. Unfortunately, Kiefer's book does not offer these kinds of indexes, thereby making search and locating functionalities less versatile and more restrictive.

Kawachi's work catalogues plays from 1558–1642 and follows Harbage in many ways. It offers titles, authors, performance companies and dates if applicable, Stationer's Register dates, genres, sources, and printing date ranges. Although Kawachi, like Harbage, includes an index of titles at the end, there are fewer indexes here.

Kiefer's catalogue adds more books, but disappointingly parts company with Harbage and Kawachi by not allowing searches by author. This is not a big defect, but it will add an extra step or two if you are looking for plays by author. On the other hand, if you know the title of the play or the approximate time it was printed or staged, locating information is straightforward.

Listed alphabetically by play, Kiefer's *English Drama from Everyman to 1660* provides printing, dramatic, theatrical, and staging information about approximately eight hundred English plays, but it excludes the "mystery plays, quasi-theatrical shows, mummings, disguisings, civic pageants, masques, triumphs, entertainments for weddings, and plays written in Latin, as well as performances abroad" (xx) contained in Kirkman and elsewhere. Plays that were intended as translation exercises or otherwise thought to have been written for purposes other than performance have also been excluded. The scope of Kiefer's book starts predictably, with *Everyman*, but extends beyond the customary 1642 end date, right through to 1660. By extending the range of

his catalogue, Kiefer is able to include some drolls and playlets that have fallen through the cracks in other catalogues. This is another welcome enhancement.

*English Drama from Everyman to 1660* is a very powerful and rich resource. Each entry is a convergence point for all kinds of information culled from historical and modern scholarship and further enhanced by Kiefer's own current research. For example, Kiefer records and brings together differences between the actual title page and the Stationer's Register entry. His entries also note the presence of any prologues, epilogues, or both, when and where the plays were first performed, and even the names of actors who might have appeared in these plays. He also records how the play was received, any staging peculiarities (e.g., dumb show), whether there is a chorus, how the play is divided (its units), the print format (folio, quarto, etc.), the presence of any illustrations or any MSS (where appropriate), and even where those MSS are located.

It is difficult to overestimate the usefulness of Kiefer's work. For example, Robert Armin started his career as an apprentice goldsmith (DNB), but ended up acting and clowning, eventually for the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Armin wrote a play called *The Two Maids of Moreclack*. Kiefer's entry for this item includes notes about an original version (acted 1597–99) and a revised version after 1606. The notes also reference the use of a trap door in a particular scene and there is a note that Armin himself may have played the role of Tutch. This kind of enriched information is useful for theatre professionals and scholars alike.

Kiefer's book is really a database; it should be marked up in XML for improved search flexibility so that a variety of inquiries could be conducted using different parameters. For example, it might be useful to know whether there were any comedies printed between 1617 and, say, 1635 that used trap doors for stagecraft and had a written part for a chorus and were performed by certain actors.

However, even in its printed form, *English Drama from Everyman to 1660* is a "must have" for specialists, and certainly for all libraries. The meticulous care that has gone into the scholarship of this book is truly a most remarkable accomplishment.

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