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### Dekker, Thomas. Old Fortunatus. Ed. David McInnis

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**Dekker, Thomas.**

***Old Fortunatus*. Ed. David McInnis.**

The Revels Plays. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020. Pp. xvii, 253. ISBN 978-0-7190-8943-5 (hardcover) £80.

The place of *Old Fortunatus* in the history of early modern drama is hard to fathom. Despite the vibrancy of its dramatic poetry, this memorable—if not altogether successful—play has received less critical attention than it deserves. Its life on stage has been long, if patchy. It was first performed in a public theatre in the late Elizabethan period; a dramatic reading of the play was held at the Globe Theatre in 2006, and a production was put on by a university theatre group in North America. Textual scholarship has, however, taken a significant interest in this play at different times in critical history, as David McInnis's comprehensively researched and substantial Introduction demonstrates. In this first modern scholarly edition of the play, McInnis brilliantly and cogently balances numerous opposing views about its authorship and dating. He has established a modern-spelling text and an extensive and erudite apparatus of explanatory notes that reveals many layers of intellectual and aesthetic connections with the play's own cultural background. This edition recovers for the modern reader, critic, and theatre practitioner a comedy that—if not as sparkingly clever as one by Jonson or Heywood—is as splendidly fantastical as any good romance and as bountiful and aurally captivating as the best rhetorical drama performed at the time. If rhetorical performance and playfulness—and not sources, textual provenance, imitation, print, and performance—were the sole criteria for entering the history of early modern English drama (to echo C. S. Lewis at some distance), *Old Fortunatus* would be restored to a prominent place by this excellent scholarly edition and by a critical interpretation that teases out, directly and indirectly, the play's modernity in relation to the economy of money and gold, and the East, which are relentlessly pursued within a dynamic plot.

Based on a popular German legend of the eponymous magician-trickster, *Old Fortunatus* has an immediate link to European folklore. McInnis reconstructs in convincing detail a history of the translation of the legend of Fortunatus as reimagined in this English play. That tradition, as well as the play's intertextual relationship with Marlowe's *Faustus* and the *Tamburlaine* plays, locates *Old Fortunatus* within the broader history of Elizabethan stage drama. The two dates associated with the play shed light both on the play's complicated

place in the history of early modern drama and on its authorship. Whether 1596 and 1600 refer to two plays, of which only the later date refers to Dekker's work and the only text of the play in English, or to a "continuing play" (2); or to a 1596 revision of an even older play from the early 1590s—this is a question McInnis treats with judicious care, lucidly untangling the history of the play on stage and in print. His claims are aided by an astonishingly large body of critical and archival sources; by critical engagement with all scholarship, old and new, on the subject of dating; and by new evidence from the archives and through techniques used in the scholarship of recent textual research. McInnis has reconstructed the play's staging history from a large body of diverse evidence, balancing gaps in knowledge with a careful and exciting analysis of facts that have survived or that can be reconstructed. Since the first productions in the sixteenth century, each subsequent century has given this play room on the stage, at times even setting it to music. A careful explanation of act and scene divisions and of press-variants adds to the depth of analysis evident throughout the Introduction.

McInnis's detailed elaboration of the play's print history, his extensive discussion of the knotty question of authorship, his wide-ranging analysis of an impressively large body of source material, and his extensive analysis of the play's interaction with (rather than, perhaps, imitation or emulation of) Christopher Marlowe make up most of the Introduction. McInnis is a cautious reader of the nature and level of Dekker's interaction with Marlowe; his conclusion—that we should not go too far in claiming a direct contact and revealing indebtedness—is a necessary guard against the absence of evidence. He reconstructs the immediate dramatic context of dates and staging to support his caution in this regard. In presenting the circumstances that gave this play a rich life in theatre, McInnis has produced a critical foundation for the play that will be hard to dispute. Whatever the actual relationship between *Old Fortunatus* and Marlowe's plays may have been, Dekker's play echoes throughout with the kind of language and eloquence resonant of the amplified verbal style that was pleasing to the ears of late Elizabethans and early Jacobean. Philological engagement with the play's rhetorical and stylistic variety—for instance, its many aural effects—which in some places matches the rhetorical effect of both Marlowe and early Shakespeare, might have opened up the text of this play to another level of analysis, where aesthetic display within the text overcomes and complements the lacunae of its material origins. McInnis has produced

an admirable, rigorous, and reliable scholarly edition. He has given criticism a chance to match this editorial achievement with insights of comparable height and nuance.

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**Eisenbichler, Konrad, ed.**

***A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities.***

Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 83. Leiden: Brill, 2019. Pp. xvi, 476 + 14 figures. ISBN 978-90-04-34366-5 (hardcover) US\$234.

This comprehensive 476-page volume of twenty essays by an international cadre of authors represents essential reading on confraternities in the late medieval and early modern periods. The volume is edited by Konrad Eisenbichler, who also translates many entries smoothly into English and contributes a thoughtful introduction. The contributing authors each consider the centrality of confraternities to culture, law, politics, economics, and religion in Europe and the New World. This collection should be of interest to both established scholars and students new to the study of confraternities and urban Christianity.

These essays are divided into five parts, each addressing a current trend in confraternity scholarship. The first part, "Birth and Development," considers the fundamental questions relevant to confraternities, including their medieval origins, shared institutions, and their difference from other urban collectives, such as guilds. The chapter by Paul Trio provides a helpful overview of confraternal life in the Low Countries, giving the reader an immediate sense of these groups' regional diversity. Davide Adamoli and Beata Wojciechowska follow with discussions of Swiss and central European confraternities, respectively. The volume's second part, "Devotion and Prayer," outlines confraternal piety. Gervase Rosser rightly reminds readers that confraternities encouraged the ethical growth of individual members and altruism towards non-kin. Such counsel, founded upon Aristotelian ethics, permeates confraternity sources, such as statutes and sermons. Danilo Zardin explores how Eucharistic piety and doctrine shaped confraternities, while Christopher Black discusses the often complicated relationship between Christian brotherhoods and the Inquisition.