

*From Princes to Pages: The Literary Lives of Cardinal Wolsey, Tudor England's "Other King."* Gavin Schwartz-Leeper.

Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 202. Leiden: Brill, 2016. xi + 262 pp. \$155.

In its original sense, a *masterpiece* proved that a journeyman had mastered his craft and was ready to be admitted to the relevant guild. In today's academic community, undergraduates are the apprentices and doctoral students the journeymen, suggesting that every PhD thesis approved by its examiners can be considered a masterpiece. An analysis of the contemporary and posthumous literary lives of Thomas Wolsey (d. 1530) is a gem of a subject for such a thesis, requiring the student to master poetry and prose, history and biography, drama and polemic. This volume is the book of such a thesis. It does not aim to account for the entire range of Wolsey-inspired literature, focusing instead on five literary "stepping stones" dating from the 1510s to 1613. Each stone has its own chapter, the first being devoted to the anti-Wolsey satires written or inspired by the poet John Skelton, the second to the *Metrical Visions* and *Life* of Wolsey by the cardinal's former gentleman-usher George Cavendish, the third to those portions of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* in which Wolsey features as the personification of all that was rotten in the Church of Rome, the fourth to his appearances in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and the fifth to the Shakespeare and Fletcher dramatic collaboration *King Henry VIII*. All of these works have received appropriate scholarly attention: there are no new discoveries, meaning that Schwartz-Leeper's task is to identify the connections between them, which he does with relish.

If anything, the author's confidence and, consequently, the reader's enjoyment increase as the work proceeds and the connections multiply. Literary scholars will be equal to the technical language in its earlier sections and also gain most from the close textual analysis in the Skelton chapter, wherein is found the combination of animal imagery and social snobbery indicated by the well-known phrase "butcher's cur." In comparison to Skelton, Cavendish's *Life* is an easy read, which may help to account for its familiarity to historians and biographers. As its editor R. S. Sylvester pointed out in 1960, that familiarity has not been shared by literary scholars, and, despite acknowledging Sylvester's article, Schwartz-Leeper effectively confirms its point by conveying a sense of delighted surprise that the *Life* even exists. It is with the Foxe chapter that confidence and enjoyment increase markedly. There is a good deal of contextual information, which makes sense when it is mapped onto developments in the treatment of Wolsey through the four English editions of *Acts and Monuments* published between 1563 and 1583. It is no accident that the research was undertaken at the University of Sheffield, home of the John Foxe Project. The 1577 and 1587 editions of Holinshed's *Chronicles* offer an opportunity for similar analysis, not least because neither was exclusively the work of one author, so reflected the input of contributors more or less hostile to the late cardinal. That creative tension was inherited by Shake-

speare and Fletcher, whose treatment of Wolsey is a model of subtlety precisely because it derives from diverse sources.

Command of the texts is, of course, entirely admirable, but there comes a point where the example of those originals should not be followed slavishly. Thus, although Holinshed has the fallen Wolsey departing “vnto Asher, which was an house situate nigh unto Hampton court” (173), the commentator and, consequently, the indexer should identify that property as Esher in Surrey. Similarly, Shakespeare and Fletcher’s reference to a “Chartreux friar” (200–01) needs to be kept firmly in inverted commas, for the correct term is a Carthusian monk. It is perhaps little wonder that the author relaxes in the Foxe chapter, for it is with Catholic offices and culture that other misunderstandings creep in: a prebend should not be confused with its holder (54); Wolsey’s additional processional cross was legatine, not cardinalial (63); and the distinction between regular and secular clergy was and remains a clear one, in contrast to the awkward explanation given on page 107. Otherwise, there are minor inconsistencies of the Gray’s Inn / Grey’s Inn variety (182, 241); the Royal Shakespeare Company is misplaced at its rival, the Globe (12); and Cavendish briefly retires to Surrey (77), before being correctly located in Suffolk. The world beyond the text is a challenging place.

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*The Elizabethan Country House Entertainment: Print, Performance, and Gender.*  
Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich.

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Kolkovich’s detailed and well-researched study of Elizabethan country-house entertainments places them within a variety of relevant contexts, showing how these events, though sometimes rather gnomic, can illuminate the interweaving of gender, nation, family, and hierarchy in Elizabethan politics and culture.

Part 1 of the book gathers together readings of country-house entertainments as performance, considering the broad categories of place, gender, and hospitality. This section of the book is founded on detailed scholarship of the families who hosted the queen and their connections with her, providing well-informed sketches of the hosts and their situations as each entertainment is introduced. Part 2 concentrates on print, covering publishers’ targeting of a readership for entertainment texts, the texts’ role in emergent news culture, and the management of the Sidney family’s literary legacy. The focus on print is a welcome angle, extending the work of Gabriel Heaton and others on the afterlives of these events, acknowledging the distinctiveness of the print audience and therefore acknowledging the potential impact this might have on the