

body of documentary evidence that shines a new and revealing light onto women's lives in early modern Scotland.

Jane Whittle, University of Exeter

W. R. STREITBERGER. *The Masters of the Revels and Elizabeth I's Court Theatre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 319. \$99.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.144

W. R. Streitberger begins his account of the Elizabethan masters of the revels by arguing that scholars of early modern drama should question their dependence on the work of E. K. Chambers. Streitberger is right, of course. Since the publication of *The Elizabethan Stage* in 1923, plays have been found, documents discovered, theater sites excavated, and theories propounded to supplement the history Chambers constructed and to place it into new contexts. Chambers, as Streitberger repeatedly reminds us, was a creature of his time, finding in Elizabethan bureaucracies the same hierarchical organizing principles he saw in his work as a twentieth-century civil servant and basing his conclusions about the Revels Office on a misunderstanding of the structures of Tudor government and the royal household. Given the array of digital tools now available to scholars, an updated version of *The Elizabethan Stage* is long overdue. But in *The Masters of the Revels and Elizabeth I's Court Theatre*, Streitberger's efforts to incorporate decades of new material into the history of the Elizabethan Revels Office illustrate the benefits, as well as the perils, of attempting an account of the professional lives of Thomas Cawarden, Thomas Benger, and Edmund Tilney in the age of digital abundance.

In his preface, Streitberger explains that he had been working on this volume for four decades. He is responsible for the recovery and analysis of many crucial records of early modern English drama. The book is stuffed with facts and figures arranged to explore the evolution of the responsibilities of the masters of the revels and the financing of their activities, as well as to argue that these men influenced, and were influenced by, changes in the structure and repertory of London's public theaters. Streitberger describes numerous productions—of plays, masks, tilts, and other courtly devices—and he includes richly detailed information on texts, props, sets, venues, costumes, and costs. He provides a thorough account of the family and political networks of each of the masters of the revels, showing how the office is linked to various court factions and lords chamberlain while revealing the complexity of producing entertainment that were expected to respond appropriately to political developments. He acknowledges (and sometimes corrects) nearly every recent study of the period. Streitberger's careful apparatus—a thorough index, a thoughtfully curated bibliography, and two valuable appendices (“A Calendar of Court Revels and Spectacles” and “Officers of the Revels”) make this a reference work well worth acquiring. But the impulse to include everything, understandable as it is, makes the book difficult to navigate, particularly as a narrative account of the work of the court officials who oversaw the plays of The Lord Chamberlain's Men and The Admiral's Men.

Streitberger begins with an overview of the functions of the Revels Office, describing the array of productions it was expected to fund and produce, and offering evidence that the operation of this office was chaotic and reactive rather than smoothly bureaucratic, particularly as money became increasingly scarce. What follows are long chapters devoted to each of the masters: Sir Thomas Cawarden (1558–159), affiliated with the Tudor court since Henry VIII's reign, whose political savvy enabled him to devise entertainments that helped cement Elizabeth's reputation and right to rule; Thomas Benger (1559–1572), who reorganized the

Revels Office and brought glamour, spectacle, and new technology to the works he produced; the various officers who, between 1578 and 1603, dealt with the difficulties of entertaining French suitors and shifted the queen's entertainments from devices generated by the master of the revels to plays originating outside of the court; and Edmund Tilney, who from 1578 to 1603 saved the queen an enormous amount of money by "outsourcing" royal revels to professional companies and less formal groups affiliated with courtiers. Streitberger ends with an afterword, "Regulating the Commercial Theatre," whose links to the previous chapters are not always clear. In the biographical chapters, Streitberger examines the financial, political, social, and artistic evidence for the significance of the work of the masters, and he combines that evidence with intelligent speculation to conclude that the Revels Office served as a vital means for Elizabeth to communicate and negotiate with her court, her suitors, her political allies and enemies, and her subjects; and to explain how the role of the office changed and was changed by the London liveryed and commercial theater companies.

The biographies of the masters and the descriptions of their offices and productions are given in exhaustive detail. Researchers will find rich new sources there. But students, who are accustomed to finding additional information via hyperlinks in a streamlined text, are likely to be lost in the thick descriptions and convoluted digressions. The work of the Revels Office is complex, and so are Streitberger's descriptions. An additional distraction is the overuse of the not-quite-correct terms "outsourcing" to describe the gradual process by which in-house devices were replaced by performances by the professional and children's acting companies, and "celebrities" to describe notable actors.

Streitberger gives any reader a new appreciation of the many demands placed on the master of the revels and his assistants, and his accounts of the elaborate lighting effects and painted canvas "houses" created for court performances should convince theater historians to rethink assumptions about the bare stage. The book's wealth of details will surely launch additional research projects for which Streitberger has provided excellent grounding. The anonymous author of the sixteenth century "A Platte of Orders," a prescription for a well-run Revels Office, describes the master as "A man learned of good engine inventife witte and experience aswell for varietie of straunge devises delectable as to waye what most aptlye and fitleye furnisseth the tyme place presence and state" (46). This is an apt description of Streitberger's hard work and scholarly skills, as well as his efforts to make a delectable display for our own time and place of the work of the Revels Office.

Catherine Loomis, University of New Orleans

FRANCES TIMBERS. *The Magical Adventures of Mary Parish: The Occult World of Seventeenth-Century London*. Early Modern Studies 16. Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2016. Pp. 211. \$40.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2016.145

The story in Frances Timbers's *The Magical Adventures of Mary Parish* goes something like this. Goodwin Wharton, the youngest son of the fourth Baron Wharton, was a penurious Whig politician and mystic. In 1683 he met a thrice-married widow named Mary Parish, a lowborn, ambitious, "cunning woman," or what today we might call a medium. She supplied him with a charm to improve his luck at gambling, but once they had gotten to know each other better, she introduced him to the world of the fairies, who offered guidance for finding hidden treasure and offered to make Wharton their king. Other messages came directly from God or from angels, some concerning women (including his own relatives) whom he should seduce. Wharton and Parish, who was also broke, needed each other, and so formed