

Julian Bowsher and Pat Miller. *The Rose and the Globe — Playhouses of Shakespeare's Bankside, Southwark: Excavations 1988–91*.

MOLA Monograph 48. London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2009. xvi + 276 pp. index. append. illus. tpls. map. bibl. £26. ISBN: 978-1-901992-85-4.

Bones of bear, dog, and horse, coins, cucurbit seeds, dice, dress pins, a fork, fragments of clay tobacco pipe, glass beads, a gold ring, hazelnut rinds, shards of ceramic money boxes, snail and oyster shells, and a turtle's carapace: these items represent a fraction of the curious remains unearthed during twentieth-century excavations conducted at the sites of two storied early modern playhouses, the Rose and the Globe. Mundane and extraordinary, these objects capture the reader's imagination in Bowsher and Miller's account of the "artefacts and ecofacts"

pertaining to Philip Henslowe's Rose and Shakespeare's Globe (8), and in their archeological "report" Bowsher and Miller richly contextualize and handsomely illustrate, often with color images, this "wealth of data on life in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century" (xiv). Some explanations of the data — for instance, that early moderns deemed bear paw a delicacy, and that dogs kenneled nearby likely consumed the flesh of bears, horses, and other dogs (132, 151–52) — prove so intellectually tantalizing that, for some readers, they might strive for attention with the significant contributions that the volume makes to our knowledge about the construction, the renovation, and the demolition of these playhouses during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In a section that synthesizes the evidence they have adduced, Bowsher and Miller dub each of these contributions, which, among others, includes the determination that the Rose was a fourteen-sided polygonal structure, a "surprise" (130). For scholars of early modern environmental, material, and theater history, there is no shortage of surprises, big and small, from the playhouse's dimensions to the ursine remains, in *The Rose and the Globe*. And, as Bowsher and Miller suggest in their concluding remarks, wonders will persist when — and if — further archeological work can be carried out on these sites.

For the nonspecialist, by which I mean the non-archeologist, *The Rose and the Globe*, which is part of the Museum of London Archeology series, is an accessible book. It is dense reading, and comprehending its system of referencing took some practice. But its prose is also consistently user-friendly; there were only a handful of unglossed technical terms that I had to look up. (For the specialist, the volume contains a number of appendices that explain methodologies and findings; experts in various subfields — timber and invertebrate remains, for example — composed them.) Despite the clarity of its prose, I nonetheless found the experience of perusing the volume, particularly its two core chapters on the excavations, disorienting. These chapters relate history chronologically, from left to right, on a horizontal axis: first, we learn about the site before the playhouse was erected; second, we read about archeological evidence that dates from the playhouse's heyday; and, third, we hear about the afterlife of the theatrical site, where data are available, through the twentieth century. The structure of these narratives thus makes a vertical science horizontal, for the archeologist explores, from the top down, layers of sediment and other materials. It is as if Bowsher and Miller present the archeological findings in reverse order: the most recent archeological evidence, which was necessarily examined first, comes at the end of a historical narrative whose beginning the archeologists would have examined, in real time, last. This is no critique of the volume. Surely the reading experience I'm describing is an effect of conventions employed in writing archeological history. Perhaps just as surely, my sense of disorientation is productive insofar as it prompts scholars and students of early modern ecocriticism to imagine and reconfigure the environmental history of London in both horizontal and vertical terms. *The Rose and the Globe*, then, is a treasure trove of archeological and documentary information about the ecological and material history of these two Bankside theaters that will shape scholarship and pedagogy, including my own, for a generation. But for me what emerges in this

volume as a genuine surprise about these playhouses is the palimpsest-like quality of their eco-material histories.

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