

*Ink, Stink Bait, Revenge, and Queen Elizabeth: A Yorkshire Yeoman's Household Book.* Steven W. May and Arthur F. Marotti.

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014. xiv + 272 pp. \$24.95.

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The captivating title of this book neatly summarizes the miscellaneousness characteristic of household collections. Taking the opportunity for detailed study offered by a recent acquisition made by the British Library, Steven W. May and Arthur F. Marotti use a representative example to consolidate and extend scholarly discussion of the features of household manuscripts. Their rich and fascinating account both analyzes and contextualizes the private archive of a Yorkshireman born in the reign of Henry VIII and alive until the very end of the sixteenth century.

The manuscript in question, British Library Add. MS 82370, was largely copied by John Hanson of Rastrick, near Huddersfield, a scrivener and legal agent related by marriage to members of the nearby Stanhope family, some of whom also left their traces in it. Hanson's biography and his local affiliations are outlined in careful detail: his legal interests, for example, are documented with reference to books mentioned in his will. The manuscript he brought into being is an all-purpose collection, with a special emphasis on legal concerns and Hanson's work as a scrivener; a paper notebook, still in its original vellum binding, its physical features are well described and illustrated here. Among its utilitarian texts are recipes for ink alongside instructions for making bait and for catching fish, rabbits, and birds. Its more substantial contents refer to local events and local families, but also stretch to matters of wider national moment, such as Queen Elizabeth's coronation. As well as enshrining much moral wisdom, they offer possibilities for social diversion.

Scholarly and critical analysis of manuscripts of this kind presents particular challenges. How best can the features of a randomly assorted household miscellany be contextualized and communicated to the cultural historians, literary and textual scholars, and codicologists to whose interests it will be relevant? May and Marotti have opted for an unusual format: along with their account of the manuscript's construction and copying, they offer semidiplomatic editions of most of its contents, grouping these in themed chapters that accommodate substantial discursive introductions as well as texts and the conventional apparatus of critical editions. This arrangement works well, making it possible for the reader to glean information about each text in its local setting — its association with other items in the manuscript and its presumed appeal to Hanson — while at the same time learning about its wider transmission and some of the other contexts in which it was produced and read (there is much valuable information here about other comparable manuscript collections). Three of the five main chapters deal with texts related in content: one compares the prose and verse accounts of a long-running local feud between the Eland and Beaumont families; others deal, respectively, with ballads relating to the Armada thanksgiving celebration and with utilitarian items. Two more chapters explore contents grouped according to

the likely route by which they came to Hanson's notice, from either printed or manuscript sources.

According to the authors' calculations, somewhere between one-quarter and one-third of the exemplars from which Hanson copied must have taken printed form, whether broadsheets or more substantial books like Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets*. For other items, however, he seems to have relied on access to manuscript copies. Oral transmission lurks in the background as an occasional possibility, and the authors give this plenty of space in their discussion of the ballads and other verse items in the collection; they note too the characteristic fluidity with which texts like these were handled even when transmitted in written form.

Hanson's household book exemplifies the striking complexity of personal compilations. It is a manuscript, yet it draws on printed works. It has an intensely local flavor, sometimes in its dialect as well as in its field of reference, yet it accommodates works emanating from London circles. It records responses to topical events, yet also reaches back into the past (the Eland-Beaumont feud began in the fourteenth century) and includes versions of works that had been current for many decades (its collection of recipes for inks is just one of several items with analogues in late medieval miscellanies). The authors explore all these complexities with skill and learning in an absorbing study that has much to offer manuscript scholars of all periods.

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