

2017 SAA 2017 Seminar: Traces of Reading in Shakespeare's Britain Abstracts
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Harriet Archer, University of Colorado Boulder

**'Under thy shadowed wings':
Reading and Shakespeare in Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr* (1601)**

Robert Chester's composite epyllion *Loves Martyr* (1601) is a mysterious and largely neglected work, best known as the vehicle for Shakespeare's 'The Phoenix and the Turtle', a mystical reiteration of the main body of the text's subject matter. The critical consensus maintains that *Loves Martyr* was an occasional series of poems, which took advantage of a specific moment in Elizabeth I's complicated relationship with her court and parliament after the Essex Rebellion to reaffirm the loyalty of Chester's patron, John Salusbury, who had dubious family ties to Essex as well as the residual Catholicism embedded in Wales, his country of origin. Attention to the poem's peculiar contents, though, including an inset 'Legend of King Arthur', its high frequency of neologisms, and its misleading paratexts, point to a much more engaged participation in the currents of late sixteenth-century writing than has previously been attributed to its author. This paper will explore traces of reading in the poem – from its evocations of the materiality of textual evidence, to Chester's allusion to and citation of source texts, real or constructed – and reread Chester's work in the context of its late Elizabethan analogues in verse historiography and complaint. I will suggest that the eccentricity of some aspects of *Loves Martyr* locates its composition in a particular 1590s literary milieu, while the metatextual focus of contemporary narrative poetry, especially complaints by Samuel Daniel and Michael Drayton, as well as Shakespeare's 'Lover's Complaint', helps to bridge the apparent stylistic and conceptual gaps between the work's disparate parts.

Jim Berg, Middlebury College

"Our True Intent Is": Reading [in] *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

This essay explores problems of intention in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as traces of a readerly attitude towards life itself. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is marked by conspicuous absences of intention. Everywhere in the play (from the climate changes described by Titania to Hermia's falling in love with Lysander to the juice-induced fallings-in-love "by" Lysander and Demetrius with Helena, and "by" Titania with Bottom, to all of Puck's unfortunate or fortunate interventions), the plot advances by accident. Yet *all* the accidents feel strangely intentional: in denying intention, they also suggest its presence, something just missed a moment ago, something—like Puck—that always turns out to be something else. Where is intention in this play? My hypothesis: through its study of metaphor and language, the play demonstrates an understanding of intention not as something that persons can "have" in the sense of owning, but as something to which persons must subscribe, as readers subscribe to the intention (the tendency or "stretching toward") or tenor of a text. From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, we learn that one "has" intention in the way vehicle embodies tenor. Also (to put it in a way that seems different but is actually the same) one "has" intention in the way a reader "gets," or subscribes to, the

meaning of a text. Here I mean not the reader implied in Lukas Erne's theory that Shakespeare's plays were intended to be read as words in a book, but the reader implied in the players and audiences in the theater. From the player's point of view, to "have" intention is to be one, via reading, with a collection of things to be read by the audience, to surrender via reading to a larger intention, to be translated--as Bottom is translated--into a metaphor serving meaning, or intention, not controlling it. Such intention, which is larger than any player or character, is also larger than any author; the play makes that clear through its internal representations of authorship as readership. A convenient Elizabethan term for the location of intention—authorial or otherwise—is "Providence." A convenient modern term for this location might be "genre" or "structure." But the fact that intention has its full existence only in structure does not mean that single persons lack the readerly agency implicit in interpretive choices, which partake of intention. As readers make interpretive choices to determine the larger intentions of a text, so the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* make choices, which decipher and serve an intention external to the choosers.

Erin McCarthy, National University of Ireland, Galway

Quantifying Reading in Early Modern Manuscript Miscellanies

The European Research Council-funded project "RECIRC: The Reception and Circulation of Early Modern Women's Writing, 1550–1700" is a collaborative, interdisciplinary effort to develop a large-scale quantitative account of the ways early modern women's writing was read and transmitted. Over the last two years, a team of ten researchers has gathered material on manuscript miscellanies, networks of manuscript transmission, and book and manuscript ownership in the English-speaking world. Since October 2014, we have compiled a list of 1,844 early modern women authors who were either writing or being read in the English-speaking world. This is likely the most comprehensive list anywhere, and it continues to grow. We have also compiled a bibliography of 6,759 works written by these women, which we have found received 4,231 times by 368 identifiable receivers.

This paper examines the specific methodological challenges in reception studies that RECIRC seeks to address and offers some preliminary findings, including the most frequently received authors and works, the most common kinds of reception, and patterns in the circulation of women's writing. It also addresses the advantages and limitations of quantitative analysis of early modern manuscripts and describes likely avenues for further qualitative research.

Kirk Melnikoff, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

English Speaking-Book Poems: Imagining Readers in a Sixteenth-Century Printed Paratext

In 1550, the clergyman printer Robert Crowley published *One and Thirty Epigrams*, a short collection of his own poetry satirizing among others "double beneficed men," "Obstinate Papistes," and "Wayne wrytars." At the beginning of the volume, Crowley included the short prefatory poem "The Boke to the Reader." In it, he appeals to the educated, godly reader, one who does not "delite / In wickednes to dwell, / But when they heare their fault / are sorye they did so, / And louingly imbrace / suche men as do them tell" (A3^v-A4^r). Crowley, of course, was

not the first satirist openly to plead moral purpose to justify disparagements. He was, however, one of the first to do so in printed preliminary verse in the guise of a book addressing its own readers. It might have been that *One and Thirty Epigrams* ended up only in the hands of amenable “Lords people,” but “The Boke to the Reader” suggests nervousness about the print marketplace in which the collection would be sold and about the terms of its reception. Following Crowley, speaking-book poems like “The Boke to the Reader” could more and more be found in the preliminary pages of print titles published in London. Composed by authors, translators, compilers, and printers, they ranged from a few lines to many stanzas, and they routinely fretted about “vile abusers” and Momus’s mates. This short essay accounts for the first appearance of this subgenre of prefatory poem in 1533, charts its proliferation in the mid sixteenth century, and lays out its developing conventions. It is especially concerned with these poems’ various imaginings of readers and reading.

Jen Mylander, San Francisco State University

“Reading News: Responding to Port Royal’s 1692 Earthquake in the Margins”

The 1692 Huntington Library copy of *A Sad and Terrible Relation of the Dreadful Earthquakes that happened in England and at Jamaca* is a fairly standard news account of the catastrophic earthquake that rocked Port Royal, Jamaica, just before noon on June 7th of that year. Within minutes about 33 acres of British America’s largest and most sophisticated port city had sunk, taking with it famous forts, a cathedral and its bell tower, and about 2000 of the city’s estimated 6,500 citizens. As many as 2,000 more would die of injuries and infection in the aftermath of the disaster. Once famous in London as the site of Sir Henry Morgan’s privateer successes against European foes, Port Royal now became “England’s Sodom” in British print. While the Huntington’s copy of the *Sad Relation* has been digitized, its opening end papers have not. Covered with a carefully scripted prayer, the end papers offer a powerful counterpoint to a methodology that might distinguish a news tract (and its imagined readers) from cheap print devotional works (and their imagined consumers). While the title page woodcut of the tract offers a grotesque spectacle of dead bodies in front of a fort, suggesting the publisher’s interest in attracting buyers with a voyeurism of horror, the end paper marginalia reveals a reader far from objectifying the torture of those 3,000 miles away. This handwritten prayer shows one British reader’s identification with Caribbean colonists: “see thy poor unworthy servants do upon the bended knees of our souls in all humility.” While the prayer evidences the early modern Protestant strategy to apply another’s afflictions to one’s own spiritual development, it also notably speaks in the first person plural, either as the voice of a family that owned the text that one wrote in or, what is perhaps more likely, in the voice of Britons as nation, no matter where. My paper for the “Traces of Reading” seminar will examine these endpapers in light of the print response to Port Royal’s 1692 earthquake.

Emily Rendek, University of South Carolina

Mark My Place: Bookmarks and Early Modern Readers

This paper explores the use of bookmarks in early modern texts and how studying these markers can perhaps reshape our understanding of the act of reading during the early modern

period. By bookmarks I include fore-edge bookmarks (where parchment or leather is affixed to the page), pins, register bookmarks, and loose bookmarks. These are distinguished from other types of readers' marks, such as annotations, manicules, and fingernail marks (as used, for example, by Anne Boleyn). The different types of bookmarks used suggest a variety of readers' motivations: from the static bookmark (which can take the form of tabs made from other materials or of the page cut into and folded upon itself to make a tab) highlighting a fixed section of a text, to the moveable and more dynamic bookmarks (which can take the form of found objects—whether that be manuscript fragments, leaves or flowers, strips of paper, etc.—to rotating bookmarks, or what Erik Kwakkel calls the “multi-dynamic” bookmark, which marks not only the page but also the line and column of text the reader has stopped at) highlighting a text whose focus is potentially ever-changing, providing a visible manifestation of the text's malleable form. I posit that bookmarks function as an additional facet in the embodied nature of reading. The physical refiguring (or disfiguring) of the page affects the act of reading. A new page is created (one authored by the reader) through the prioritization of sections non-linearly, which both disrupts and informs future readings.

Tim Sirles, Middle Tennessee State University

King Lear and the 1574 edition of A Mirror for Magistrates

Religious propaganda served as a catalyst for change during the years of the early English Reformation. Texts like John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, commonly referred to as the *Book of Martyrs*, and the various editions of *A Mirror for Magistrates* stand out for being not only popular with contemporary audiences, but also as being watershed works that urged along social and religious transformation. The atmosphere of the Tudor period was so saturated in this Reformation literature that the influence was felt in works that were ostensibly non-religious or non-political. My essay examines the backgrounds of and the relationship between John Higgins's 1574 edition of *A Mirror for Magistrates* and the role of Cordelia in *King Lear*. Additionally, I mean to place Shakespeare's Cordelia within a larger tradition of hagiography and *de casibus* writing that would have been recognizable by a contemporary audience, thereby offering a subtext on religious dissent in the face of political power.

Matthew Symonds, University College London

Archaeologies of reading: early modern reading strategies and the digital humanities

The Archaeology of Reading in Early Modern Europe (www.bookwheel.org) is a large-scale, international digital humanities collaboration between between the Centre for Editing Lives and Letter (CELL) at University College London, the Sheridan Libraries and Digital Research and Curation Center at Johns Hopkins University, and Princeton University Library, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The primary *scholarly* aim of the project is to explore, beyond an analogue context, the history of reading practices, strategies, and habits as preserved within early printed, composite annotated texts. The project focused in its first two-year phase (2014-2016) on early modern books heavily annotated in manuscript by the “professional reader” Gabriel Harvey. The second phase (2016-18) will concentrate on books annotated by the polymath John Dee.

Equally important is the project's *technical* aim: to establish the digital infrastructure necessary for exploring this material. The *Archaeology of Reading* exists as part of a wider constellation of initiatives allied to the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF), a web standard developed in order to create a uniform way to serve, view, and work with images made available online by cultural heritage institutions.

AOR has also developed a comprehensive data model and XML schema to describe, transcribe, and where appropriate translate all manuscript interventions readers have made in their books, whether they be marginal notes, underlining, marking up, correcting and amending, symbolic notation, or visual marginalia, such as drawings.

These two strands of the project have created a “digital bookwheel” (<http://www.bookwheel.org/viewer>) allowing for the comparison, browsing and searching of marginalia. This paper seeks not only to describe the methodologies used and the tools developed, but also to demonstrate that, by drilling down into data -- data that has been created almost as an accidental by-product of research -- we can make new discoveries about early modern strategies of reading.

Cordelia Zukerman, United States Military Academy, West Point

Reading in Service in Lady Anne Clifford's Household

This paper explores the collaborative reading and writing practices shared by Lady Anne Clifford and the servants who read with her, wrote with her, and delivered her letters. Through an analysis of Clifford's letters and diary, I explore her complex relationships with her household dependents. During much of the span of her extant letters and diary, Clifford and her husband fought—at home, in the law courts, and at the Royal Court—over the question of her inheritance, and Clifford was often left alone and deprived of friends who shared her social status. She sought companionship from the dependents in her household, with whom she often spent entire days reading literature and religious texts and discussing ideas.

This paper asks how we might be able to use Clifford's letters and diary to learn more about the people who read to, and with, her. In doing so, we might be able to better understand the complex workings of gender and class that shaped early modern aristocratic households. The people who read with Clifford formed an important part of her family circle, taking part in complicated family conversations and pursuing activities that had consequences outside the household. Analyzing their role in Clifford's household can help us better understand the degree to which these people held participatory agency in the lives and (public) affairs of the family they served. Moreover, it can also help us develop new ways of exploring the reading practices of people who are often ignored by the historical record.