

David M. Bergeron, Professor Emeritus of English, University of Kansas

Theater Families and *Pericles* (1619)

Three families associated with the theater converge in varying ways on the occasion of a performance of *Pericles* at the Jacobean court in Whitehall on 20 May 1619. The “presence” of these families will surprise no one: Burbage, Herbert, and Stuart. The historical context for this performance includes the recent deaths of Queen Anne and Richard Burbage, the serious illness of King James, and the publication of *Pericles* in the Pavier quartos. The 1619 performance of *Pericles* honored the French ambassador, who enjoyed a feast and the play.

Richard Burbage was present through the recollection of William Herbert, Lord Chamberlain, who attended the feast but not the play because of the painful memory of Burbage’s death. But the Lord Chamberlain did write about the event. Another Herbert, Gerrard Herbert, also attended. His letter to Dudley Carleton gives us the only information that we have about the actual performance of *Pericles*. The identity of Gerrard Herbert remains a mystery, but we do know that he attended several performances, especially of masques, and wrote about them. He was, as evidenced in his letters, well acquainted with William Herbert and the court culture. Gerrard writes much about King James, but whether the king attended the play remains unclear. Another Stuart, Ludovic Stuart, Duke of Lennox, was present for the play and had in fact arranged the feast. He, too, had a substantial history of supporting the theater, including being patron of an acting company.

The probably unprecedented presence of the three well-known theater families adds special richness to the importance of this court performance of *Pericles* in 1619.

Paul Brown
paul.brown@dmu.ac.uk

The Rowley brothers and the early modern theatre

The Rowley brothers, Samuel, Thomas, and William, were all part of the early modern theatre industry. They all acted, and at least two of them wrote plays. We know little of their lives away from the theatres: this paper presents new biographical information to partially address this deficiency. It considers the biography of each of the brothers, and asks just what their lives tell us about the industry and city to which they belonged. Such work pays close attention to the geography of the brothers – where they lived, worked, worshipped – and with whom they interacted.

A look at the brothers Rowley can inform current debates in theatre history too. A study of what we know about their lives, for instance, adds weight to claims that the theatre industry operated in a fraternal manner (Knutson, 2001). And, each brother had income beyond the theatre: what might this say about the nature of the entertainment industry to which they belonged? Examining the lives of the Rowley brothers shows not only the sort of relationships we would expect between family members – fraternal in the truest sense – but also congenial relationships within a world often imagined to be rife with enmity.

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Eva Griffith, London
DrEvaGriffith@gmail.com

‘Close’ Connections: the ‘Curtain’ in Shoreditch and the theatrically familiar

In the last chapter-proper of his 1992 Cornell University Press book, *The Business of Playing*, William Ingram discusses new research and a number of possibilities when studying the Curtain playhouse. Quoting a relevant 1581 Close Roll, he records six names as owning the “singuler other mesuages tenementes edifices and buildinges” on Curtain Close land. In 1876, as Ingram records, F.G. Fleay guessed these six to be members of a Curtain Theatre acting company, a jump of interpretation proving how far research has come. Taking these names as a sample group, however, the paper speculates and investigates these six, as far as they can be investigated, in the context of the topic ‘Theatrical Families’. It looks to other original records and other names which form part of a project to understand ‘The Curtain When Seen As A Field’. For as the location of the playhouse, this land had a development history and an activities’ interest all of its own which are fed by the context of the familial. The records to which I refer can indicate similar and more insistent Shoreditch drama connectivity of the familial, kinship kind.

Professor Tracey Hill, Bath Spa University
t.hill@bathspa.ac.uk

James and George Peele: pageant poets for the City, c. 1566-95

George Peele is best known as the writer of *The Battle of Alcazar* and a handful of other plays from the 1580s and 90s. Early modern theatre scholars are usually less aware that Peele succeeded his father James as de facto pageant poet and impresario for the London mayoral Show around 1585. Both were members of the Salters’ Company, one of the Great Twelve livery companies of London, and James Peele was Clerk of Christ’s Hospital, one of the City’s major charitable bodies.

The Peele family’s work in mayoral pageantry coincides with, and can be used to throw light on, the early days of the professional London stage. The *Before Shakespeare* project is currently building a fuller picture of the hitherto rather neglected pre-1595 stage. This period is also the most mysterious in terms of the mayoral Shows: no printed pageant book has survived before 1585, and scholars have as yet only a fragmentary knowledge of the scene at this juncture. Nevertheless, the Peeles, father and son, are crucial figures in the development of these important civic entertainments.

My paper revisits the archival record in order to present a fuller picture of the connections and reprecipities inherent in the dramatic work of the Peele family. James and George Peele’s employments for the City demonstrate that in early modern London theatricality took place across a multiplicity of stages, and drew upon manifold connections, familial and civic. The paper also seeks to draw out family resemblances between civic pageantry and the dramaturgy of George Peele’s stage plays.

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Christopher Matusiak, Ithaca College

**“A kynde of powerfull Comaunde”:
Christopher Beeston, Kinship, and Managerial Authority**

Christopher Beeston is often considered the exemplar of an “impresario system” of theatrical management, in which professional authority is understood to flow from private ownership of the material resources required for performance—playbooks, costumes, properties, even the stage itself. On this view, Beeston’s ethos of economic individualism and will to power is most evident in his decision in 1637 to evict from the Drury Lane Cockpit his longtime colleagues, Queen Henrietta Maria’s Men, and to install in their place a company of young apprentices whose financial dependency would better ensure their obedience. But new evidence of Beeston’s domestic relationships—centered primarily on an innyard known by the sign of the King’s Head, near the Curtain playhouse—in fact suggests that sociability and cooperative-mindedness rather than autocratic self-regard may have been the true source of Beeston’s occupational authority. To demonstrate this, my paper will first map out Beeston’s bilateral relations c. 1602-18, with attention to their embeddedness in London’s larger theatrical community; it will then examine the unique advantages and obligations that arose from these relationships, and their role in the elevation of Beeston’s stature. By isolating and examining this aspect of his social network, I argue that we stand to gain a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between kinship, social capital, and leadership in the early professional theatre.

Lucy Munro, King’s College, London

The Coursing of the Hare: William Heminges and his Father’s Legacy

In the section of her *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* piece on John Heminges that records the subject’s wealth at death, Mary Edmonds describes him as ‘a man of property’; in contrast, Heminges’s son, William, has been better known for his debts, sometimes thought to be the product of a prodigal lifestyle. This essay will question both of these assessments, taking as its starting point John Heminges’s will, which spends a good deal of time discussing both his debts and the use of his shares in the Globe and Blackfriars to pay those debts. Drawing on new and neglected evidence, it will explore the nature of John Heminges’s debts and his son’s actions as executor of his father’s will. In doing so, it will establish a clearer picture of financial and affective networks within the Heminges family in the late 1620s and early 1630s. It will also set out fresh contexts for William’s imprisonment in Ludgate – the subject of one of his surviving poems – and his composition of a lost play, *The Coursing of the Hare, or The Madcap*, apparently performed at the Fortune in March 1633.

Alan Nelson, University of California, Berkeley

John Atkins: Scrivener to the King’s Men 1613-1640

John Atkins, son-in-law of John Heminges, is known to theater historians, but not in the full detail that a fresh search of surviving documents may afford. A thorough search of documents in The National Archives and elsewhere reveals that he was the product of a family in

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Gloucestershire; apprentice to the London scrivener John Mayle, his uncle; husband of Alice Heminges; father of Richard Atkins; co-resident in London with John Heminges; husband of Marie Gascoigne (his second wife); and witness to the wills of John Heminges and John Shank (both players). As established by Herbert Berry, theater historian and former member of this seminar, Atkins negotiated with carpenters for the reconstruction of the Globe Playhouse in 1614, and he served as a scrivener to John Heminges and thus to the King's Men. Unlike other known scribes, he did not apparently make copies of play texts for the company; rather, his activities were confined to the kind of low-level legal services that were a stock-in-trade for his profession. One particular clause in his will, concerning his second wife, provides John Atkins with characteristics of personality seldom found in the dry-as-dust documents which typically survive from the period.

Kara Northway, Kansas State University

**“A brother of the tyring house”:
Early Modern Actors, Playwrights, and Claims of Surrogate Kinship**

Theater historians have long investigated theatrical family-like relationships that were either real, based on blood and marriage ties, or symbolic, for example, the “brotherhood” model of the livery companies or Susan Cerasano’s characterization of Edward Alleyn as a *paterfamilias*. My paper offers significant additional evidence revealing a rich rhetoric of surrogate families. Early modern actors and playwrights strategically applied the elastic language of kinship to non-kin in different contexts. In published playscripts and paratexts, fraternal terms predominate. In letters and wills within the theater community, however, writers appealed more often to friendship than kinship, with recurring exceptions. Actors identified a range of surrogate family relationships during actual or anticipated prolonged absences, such as touring, incarceration, or even death, but conspicuously absent is the term *brother*. Nathan Field’s letter requesting bail from Philip Henslowe addressed him as “Father Hinchlowe.” On their deathbeds, Nicholas Tooley remembered Cuthbert Burbage’s wife for her “motherlie care over me,” and Richard Tarleton petitioned Sir Francis Walsingham to acknowledge joint familial responsibility for Tarleton’s son. This rhetoric of surrogate theatrical families is important to understand because it extended onstage—*The Winter’s Tale* uses *brother* this way seventeen times—and it was satirized offstage in antitheatrical commentary.

June Schlueter

The Norths of Kirtling Hall

Anyone who has read Enobarbus’s speech about Cleopatra sailing the Cydnus on her “burnish’d throne” has admired the beauty of the language that, Shakespeareans have long known, was

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borrowed from Thomas North. There is no question that North's translation of *Plutarch's Lives* served as a source for *Antony and Cleopatra* and Shakespeare's other Roman plays. What many Shakespeareans do not realize is that the links between Shakespeare and North extend to all four of Sir Thomas's translations, namely, *The Dial of Princes* (1557), *The Moral Philosophy of Doni* (1570), *Plutarch's Lives* (1579), and *Epaminondas* (1602). EEBO searches reveal myriad Shakespearean passages that parallel similar passages in North's translations, reproducing the same elaborate idea while borrowing unique phrases and word-strings. Shakespeare's borrowings from North are so extensive that one is tempted to conclude that the Stratford playwright had North's four translations in front of him whenever he wrote a play. But newly uncovered evidence among North family manuscripts suggests a more surprising scenario: that Shakespeare relied not on North's translations but on a now-lost body of plays written decades before Shakespeare arrived on the London stage. This paper explores the links between Sir Thomas and the early modern theatre in an attempt to establish the likelihood that the great translator was also a playwright.

James Wallace, London
Actor and director.

John Donne's Mr I. L. and his 'loved wife':
John Lyly, Beatrice Browne, and their family.

The identity of 'Mr I. L.', the recipient of two short poems written by John Donne in the early 1590s, has remained a mystery. No-one has yet suggested playwright John Lyly. However, not only is he the most plausible candidate yet proposed, literary allusions in the poems suggest that he is indeed the addressee. Further, the search for links between the two men has led to the discovery of shared family connections between Donne and the family of Lyly's Yorkshire wife Beatrice Browne in the descendants of Sir Thomas More, connections that also help to explain the Court careers of both men.

New archival research also corrects the date of Lyly's marriage, suggests a revision of the known number of his children, reveals the marriage of his eldest daughter, and uncovers nine previously unknown grandchildren - including one who ventured to America and another who married minor poet Henry Colman. New evidence also shows Lyly's career at Court extending into the Jacobean era, provides new details of his burial, and challenges the idea that he died in poverty.