

With an unusual but very welcome addition to the printed book, Fumerton follows Ross Duffin (*Shakespeare's Songbook*) in providing an easily accessible audio guide ([https://repository.upenn.edu/fumerton\\_broadside-ballad/index.html](https://repository.upenn.edu/fumerton_broadside-ballad/index.html)). This resource uses vocal and instrumental lines to illustrate different versions and interpretations of each ballad discussed, reminding us that written notes were more of a guide than something to be strictly followed. Thus, the audio guide considers some of the different ways in which a melody might be adapted by the performer, whether to better fit their vocal range, to fit the meter of the song, or to convey the mood or meaning of a song. This is invaluable in understanding the ballads and how they might have been experienced by their early modern public, giving us an insight not only into what our ancestors sang, played, and heard, but also how they did so. Personally, I have to admit to finding the sound of the electronic “audio fiddle” a little jarring, and preferred the interpretations played by Sara Bashore. I would also have liked the vocal recordings to be more spirited and varied in their execution, but these are tiny quibbles.

Fumerton's study concludes with a section entitled “Ballading *The Winter's Tale*.” In this, she consolidates the work done earlier in the book, examining later scenes of the play that are rich in ballad information on a number of ways, covering ballad sellers, the wide range of the ballads they offer, and the different levels on which the ballads are understood or enjoyed by their public, along with a discussion of end-of-play jigs. The mention in the play of Rogero (a popular ground, or set of chords, originally from Italy, but known throughout Europe, and used for songs, dances, and divisions from the mid-sixteenth century onward) leads to a demonstration of how the same tune can be interpreted in myriad ways to be almost whatever you want it to be—just like the protean broadside ballad.

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*The Court of Richard II and Bohemian Culture: Literature and Art in the Age of Chaucer and the “Gawain” Poet.* Alfred Thomas.

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Continuing his two-decades-long exploration of medieval and early modern Anglo-Bohemian relations, Thomas, in his latest study, convincingly demonstrates the significant cultural and political ramifications of King Richard II's marriage to Anne of Bohemia in 1382. The daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV and closely related to the French Valois dynasty, Anne embodied what Thomas calls a cosmopolitan, multilingual “international court culture” (7) that was foreign to the more insular and provincial Plantagenet monarchs. Thomas convincingly demonstrates how Richard's marriage deepened his irenic approach to the Continent and enhanced

his ambitions to succeed Charles as Holy Roman Emperor. Anne's Franco-Bohemian cultural inheritance, Thomas shows, profoundly shaped the poets and visual artists of 1380s and 1390s England, particularly Geoffrey Chaucer and the anonymous composer of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl*.

Henry Bolingbroke's ascent to the throne in 1399 and the subsequent Lancastrian effort to erase the memory of Richard's reign makes immeasurably more difficult Thomas's reconstruction of the "brilliant shards" of the Ricardian "shattered international mirror" (38). Lacking evidence that Richard or Anne ever financed Chaucer's poetry, Thomas's first two chapters detail the complex patronage networks of Anne's family to argue that "Chaucer may have *imagined* Anne receiving his work and being receptive to it," precisely "*because* there was no tradition of rewarding vernacular English poets" (10). Chaucer's poetry may imitate the courtly love visions of Continental poets to forge connections with the sort of international court poets patronized by the queen's extended family: Anne's uncle Wenceslas, Duke of Luxembourg and Brabant, was Jean Froissart's patron, while Guillaume de Machaut served King John of Bohemia and his daughter, Bonne of Luxembourg, Anne's aunt. Thomas suggests that the multilingualism of Charles IV's court in Prague offers a precedent for the rise of English in the Ricardian court, and he raises provocative questions about whether Chaucer's apparent feminism might be motivated more by his "desire to be part of a sophisticated international club of writers" (191) than his own beliefs, especially when his feminist sensibilities falter in poems like the *Legend of Good Women*.

Throughout his study, Thomas interprets a range of poems—including *Confessio Amantis* and the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*—as political allegory, finding references to Anne in such characters as Chaucer's Griselda and Constance, the former seemingly "norissed in an emperoures halle," the latter the literal daughter of a Roman "Emperour." This interpretive strategy continues when Thomas turns to the poet who wrote *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl* in the book's third and fourth chapters. He again creatively reworks a lack of evidence to argue that the poet's anonymity can be "explained by the Lancastrian desire to suppress the memory of the international court culture" (191), as *Gawain* and *Pearl* both appear more deeply integrated into the Ricardian court and international court culture than any of Chaucer's poems. *Gawain*, Thomas shows, navigates between "admiration for the Ricardian court culture and moral scruples about its hubristic drawbacks" (90), while *Pearl* eulogizes the queen after her death in 1394, fusing love poetry with religious allegory in ways that recall Bohemian virgin-martyr stories and Richard's preoccupation with his own visual representations.

Most exciting to scholars of medieval and early modern England will be Thomas's vast knowledge about the politics, literature, and visual arts of Anne's Franco-Bohemian cultural milieu. He skillfully situates *Pearl* within international court culture—for instance, with convincing readings of hagiography in verbal and visual art, including the Czech *Legend of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (ca. 1360–75), the illuminated

*Passional of Abbess Kunigunde* (ca. 1312–21), and the Wilton Diptych altarpiece. Thomas's book, printed on glossy stock with over three dozen colorful and sharp reproductions of manuscripts and other artwork, reveals continuities between literary and visual artifacts and foregrounds connections across modern nation-states. Some may wish Thomas had extended his close analysis of poetry and paintings to flesh out the implications of his political, feminist, and at times psychological readings. Even so, Thomas's learned study will leave its readers with a newfound appreciation for the Bohemian influences that gave the Ricardian court a level of aesthetic sophistication not to be approached in England until the reign of Henry VIII more than a century later.

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*The Early Modern English Sonnet: Ever in Motion*. Rémi Vuillemin, Laetitia Sansonetti, and Enrica Zanin, eds. Manchester Spenser. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020. x + 230 pp. £80.

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*The Early Modern English Sonnet: Ever in Motion* provides a provocative reassessment of the sonnet's place in English literary history. The introduction and the chapters that follow fulfill the promise of the title (a borrowing from Michael Drayton) and illustrate the sonnet's evolution in early modern England. The editors and the authors of the individual chapters break new ground by juxtaposing the sonnet, or, rather, our historical and literary understanding of the sonnet, alongside fresh and new interpretations that both students and advanced scholars of poetry and poetics will find indispensable.

The scholarly methodology is largely linguistic and contextual. The authors employ close reading, philology, textual editing, translation studies, and New Formalism. As part of their invitation for us to reread the sonnet, the authors also marshal the scholarly expansions offered by New Historicism. The temporal scope is appropriate for the ambitions of the anthology, and it takes us from Wyatt and Surrey to the end of the seventeenth century. The chapter's thematic divisions overlap to allow for interdisciplinarity. By way of example, chapters 1, 3, and 8, meditate on the social practices of the sonnet, with chapter 8 also investigating social miscellanies and patterns of publication. There are nine chapters that range from revisiting canonical poets, like Shakespeare and Spenser, to explicating the works of lesser-known entities, such as Harvey and Barnes. Additionally, the contributors illustrate how the sonnet shifted from personal exegesis to cultural works of art. What's more, the anthology seeks to illuminate the sonnet's cultural symbiosis with other poetic forms. Finally, the anthology is careful to foreground its reevaluation of the sonnet to include necessities of geography and literary jealousy. For instance, how does England's spatial relationship to Italy and France influence the English sonnet?