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There were other criteria at work, and it seems that the actors and their professional needs were treated with indifference, if tempered on occasion with a tolerant warmth. A much-needed chapter on artists and artisans turns out to be a choppy compendium in which nothing is given the treatment it deserves, though everything is of startling interest. A more robust section on the audiences, with due attention given to the women, includes details on tickets, turnstiles, ushers, and security. Finally, Astington brings together the archival evidence with texts of plays presented at court in three select decades—the 1580s, 1603–13, and the 1630s. The result is generally rewarding, but exact conclusions cannot always be drawn because of lacunae in the records. The result is a rather more speculative discussion than seems decorous at the climax of a book so steeped in documentary evidence.

Errors in such a densely-packed book are probably inevitable. But the columns inside Jones's Whitehall Banqueting House are engaged, not "free-standing" (83); the previous structure on the site, famously made of brick, was not a "wooden building" (112); and some cyber-devil in the typesetting has converted nearly every £, or pound sterling, into a very odd currency, the ú.

Macbeth: Man and Myth. By NICK AITCHISON. Stroud: Sutton Publishing 1999. Illus. $34.95 cloth.

Reviewed by KATHLEEN MCLUSKIE

In the summer of 1999, soon after the Scots had opened their first Parliament since 1777, London's *Independent* newspaper reported that Shakespeare's *Macbeth* had been disallowed as part of the school curriculum in the section relating to "literature by Scots or about Scotland." This gesture echoed a common view that the play was yet another part of the conspiracy to denigrate the Scots by misrepresentation, presenting a travesty of Scotland's heroic past and suggesting that only English-supported invasion could bring right rule to wild and primitive people. This almost comic confusion between history and literature, past ideologies and present politics, is in part a tribute to the enduring power of the play, insisting on the ideological power of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* while denying its historical truth.

Nick Aitchison's *Macbeth: Man and Myth* starts by acknowledging the social force of that position—"The Macbeth of popular perception is invariably Shakespeare's Macbeth" (v)—but he quickly takes his reader from that commonplace observation into a fascinating account of the prehistory of Shakespeare's Scottish king and the ways in which it was both informed and trammelled by the cultural perceptions of succeeding ages.

The Macbeth who emerges from this account goes some way to restore the heroic figure demanded by Scottish nationalist feelings. He is celebrated in a Middle Irish praise poem as "the red, tall, golden-haired one" bringing plenty to his people (*Prophecy of Berchán*, quoted in Aitchison, 102). He went on a pilgrimage to Rome, which "may reflect Macbeth's own interests in ecclesiastical reform" (82). And he "kindly received" the Normans expelled from England by Godwine, earl of Wessex, in 1052 (83–84).

Aitchison, however, is too good a historian simply to provide an alternative, coherent "character" to set against Romantic interpretations of the play. At every stage he scrupulously analyzes the nature of the evidence, turning attention from "*what* we know about the historical Macbeth" to "*how* we know about a king who belonged to such a remote period of Scottish history" (1). In the process, he returns King Macbeth to the troubled world of Hiberno-Scottish culture, recorded in chronicles and Viking sagas and regnal lists six centuries before Shakespeare. He then examines how Shakespeare's play confused and complicated the later archaeological and historical record.

Drawing on diverse sources, Aitchison establishes that Macbeth was a great steward, or *mórmaer*, of Moray, a region that acted as a buffer between the Viking territories and the rest of Scotland, and which provided Macbeth with a regional power base from which to challenge the Scottish kingship. Macbeth's murder of Duncan, however, is presented less as an act of individual ambition than as another example of the continual warring over territory and power among the related kin of the Scottish royal house. Eligibility for kingship was restricted to the sons of kings, but a system of alternating kingship meant that a son did not immediately succeed his father. The successor to the kingship was often designated during the reign of his predecessor (as Malcolm is by Duncan), but despite this system of tanistry, "eleven Scottish kings who ruled before 1100 were killed by, or in favour of, their immediate successor" (13). The Scottish kingship of the mid-eleventh century was unstable, as successive kings seem to have sought to retain the kingship for their own descendants.

Macbeth's position as king was also strengthened by his marriage to Gruoch, a member of the royal kinship group and a direct descendant of Kenneth II or III. Macbeth had murdered Gillacomgain, her husband, and his cousin; Aitchison observes that "by taking Gruoch as his bride, Macbeth may have been emphasising the completeness of his victory" (49) as well as linking himself to a woman whose dynastic connections made her politically influential. More is known about Gruoch than about almost any other medieval Scotswoman, apart from St. Margaret, queen of Malcolm III. Evidence places her in the midst of feuds that resulted in the murders of her father, her husband, and her nephew, though it also records her gift of land to an ecclesiastical house on Loch Leven. Aitchison very tentatively weighs the possibility that she might have accompanied Macbeth on his pilgrimage to Rome.

The supernatural element, which looms so large in Shakespeare, first enters the historical record in Wyntoun's early-fifteenth-century chronicle, which identifies Macbeth himself as a devil's child. Aitchison traces the development of the witches from Norse mythology through the witch persecutions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, concluding that "the continuation of the witch-hunts into the early modern period ensured that Wyntoun's emphasis on the supernatural had an enduring influence on many subsequent versions of the myth" (114).

To his dense account of medieval Scotland, Aitchison brings an anthropologist's understanding of the relations between kinship groups, a historian's awareness of the political *parti-pris* of different chroniclers, and a literary critic's sensitivity to the nuance of language and affect in the praise poetry that celebrates a king. He provides an image of a sophisticated Christian culture simultaneously riven by violence and stabilized by the complex rituals that authorized and endorsed political authority. That kind of

account fits the requirements of modern historiography, and one of the strengths of Aitchison's book is the way he acknowledges the other functions of historical narrative. He records, for example, how John Fordun's first complete narrative history of Scotland (c. 1370) "emphasised the continuity of Scottish kingship to counter English claims of historical overlordship" (107) and began the isolation of Macbeth as an exceptional, murderous tyrant. He provides a particularly full account of the historiography that informed Shakespeare's play, but he avoids the facile determinism that subsumes theatrical production into the political tensions surrounding the Union of the Crowns and the accession of another Scottish king. In acknowledging the importance of imagination and the traditions of theatrical production, Aitchison's account reveals the important distinction between a dramatic narrative structured by character and motivation, and the powerful mix of territorial, dynastic, and cultural pressures which informs historical processes. Shakespeare's image of a procession of continuous male kingship in which lineage and territory came together can be dismissed as a travesty of Scottish history, but its immediate theatrical purpose is to appall Macbeth and to renew the suspense animating his drama.

In a sense Shakespeare's *Macbeth* marked a turning point in the myth: no subsequent version was free of its influence. The theatrical afterlife of Shakespeare's play is all too well known, and it is to Aitchison's credit that he deals with it in a lively but summary fashion. Instead he gives a fascinating final chapter to the archaeological record of sites, monuments, and artifacts associated with the Scottish king. That record, too, is inflected by history and politics. The attribution of monuments to events associated with the Macbeth myth did not begin until the mid-sixteenth century, and the process was given new impetus by the defeat of the 1745 rebellion and the opening up of Scotland by the English army. Aitchison deals briskly with the "heritage" dimensions of the myth, such as the oak tree "that did not go to Dunsinane" (166), but he gives a wonderfully detailed account of the intermingled myth and archaeology that identify the play's key locations: Perth and Inverness, Macduff's castle, Birnam Wood, and Dunsinane.

The most powerful of these accounts is the minutely detailed record of the excavations of Dunsinane Hill. Aitchison analyzes excavations from 1772 onward which reveal as much about the expectations of successive generations as they do about the site's characteristics and history. His conclusions are characteristically careful:

> Dunsinane is a complex monument with probably multiple phases of fortification and occupation, perhaps extending over 1,500 years or more. It probably originated as an Iron Age hillfort with timber-laced ramparts. The hilltop was refortified, possibly by the Picts, using vitrified material from those ramparts. Dunsinane may have been a fortified royal centre of the province of Gowrie, perhaps complementing the ritual centre at Scone. After the eclipse of Pictish power in the mid-ninth century, Dunsinane, like other royal centres, may have retained its role under the early Scottish kings. Dunsinane's link with the historical Macbeth, and even its fortification and occupation during the early medieval period, are unconfirmed.
>
> (179)

Behind those cautious speculations lie other possible stories, of the fire that vitrified the rock, of a group of people storing corn and animals underground to sustain them

when under attack. Like the myth of the red king or the tale of Gruoch and her murdered menfolk, they fire the imagination partly because they do not offer certain knowledge. Shakespeare's play is the supreme example of the imaginative response that all but overshadows other artistic possibilities. By offering a new range and variety of knowledges, Aitchison's book reopens a terrain beyond the shadows in which the imagination can play.

Shakespeare's Storytellers: Dramatic Narration. By BARBARA HARDY. London and Chester Springs: Peter Owen, 1997. Pp. 224. $34.95 cloth.

Reviewed by ANN JENNALIE COOK

In *Shakespeare's Storytellers*, Barbara Hardy considers the art of dramatic narration, a subject on which she has written and lectured for almost half a century. Though revised for this book, her ideas will be familiar to many from previous publications. Nonetheless, the present work is a pleasure to read, free of jargon, intelligently crafted, eminently sound, sane, and subtle. Hardy eschews fashionable theoretical technicalities in favor of a sure grasp of literary aesthetics, techniques, and structure.

The first section of *Shakespeare's Storytellers* examines narrative constructions, with chapters on self-conscious narrative, narrative beginnings, closing narrative injunctions, and narratives in the sources. Among the intentional narrators discussed in the first chapter, Egeon and Egeus spring from classical roots, while the figure of Gower offers "Shakespeare's most sustained and elaborate act of literary mimicry" (37–38). In the treatment of choruses, of messengers and ambassadors relating their stories before public audiences, as well as comic or satiric discourses, readers may feel too much is covered too briefly, though for *Othello*, "a play about the ethics of narrative" (58), the observations deepen to a certain extent. The second chapter offers a good assessment of the Poet-Painter dialogue in *Timon*. When Hardy takes up the phenomenon of the narrative injunction in the third chapter, she observes that, save for a couple of instances in Lyly, Shakespeare seems to have invented "the form of a demand or request or invitation, at the end, for someone to recall and relate the story of the play" (72). Racing through examples from fourteen plays in a scant nine pages, the assessment lingers for a surprising two-and-a-half pages on *Cymbeline* before polishing off the rest of the canon.

Possibly the strongest critiques lie in chapter 4, "Shakespeare Reading Narrative." Through revisions to the sources, one perceives "within the play a distinguishing awareness of narrative meant for a reader and narrative meant for an audience" (92). Thus, in *Antony and Cleopatra*,

> Shakespeare's poetry, complexly in character, is expressive both of the subject (the narrator) and object (the person discussed). Enobarbus's rapturous hyperbole characterizes a sensualist with imagination and humour, shaping for other men a sensual woman also with imagination and humour, staging a scene. Caesar's bitter savouring of austerity and endurance speaks the politician's—and the general's—ambivalent wry