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Ros King

The Works of Richard Edwards: Politics, Poetry, and Performance in Sixteenth-Century England

Manchester: Manchester University Press (The Revels plays companion library), 2001. 269p.

£45.00 hardback

ISBN: 0-07190-5299-8

All that remains of the writing of Richard Edwards (?1524-1566) is one play (*Damon and Pythias*), some poems, and music, and now all of it is available in one volume with full critical annotation, thanks to Ros King. *Damon and Pythias* was written for performance at court and King gives a brief account of its recent revival in a 1996 production at the Globe Theatre in London (for which King was dramaturg) featuring an all female cast, updated to the 1950s and with Damon and Pythias "as a couple of Scotsmen--in kilts" (p. 92). As King points out, Richard Edwards was highly-regarded during and immediately after his lifetime (p. 1) and it is clear that she considers his writing worth re-discovery. The Revels Plays Companion Library series aims to provide students not only with "carefully edited texts of the major Elizabethan and Jacobean plays" but "to include some important plays from the earlier Tudor and from the Restoration periods" and "to further this expansion to allow for new developments" (p. ix). Edwards must fall into the last category since he is, despite King's convincing argument for his works' merits, undeniably a marginal figure and it is thus difficult to see this book appealing to undergraduates, especially given the thinness of the 'select bibliography'; this is not surprising given that so little has been written on Edwards. Nonetheless, this edition will prove useful to any scholar wanting to discover Edwards's extant, though slim, corpus or learn more about the context of his writing.

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