Knutson, Roslyn L., and David McInnis. "Lost Documents, Absent Documents, Forged Documents." *Rethinking Theatrical Documents in Shakespeare's England*. Ed. Tiffany Stern. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2020. 241–259. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350051379.ch-012>>.

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Lost Documents, Absent Documents, Forged Documents

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To speak of a ‘lost play’ and an ‘extant play’ is ostensibly to posit a simple dichotomy in ontological status, but the reality is more complex and involves a continuum of ‘lostness’. This is in part because, as Tiffany Stern has noted, ‘a play was pieced together out of a collection of odds and ends; it was not a single whole entity’ but something ‘patchy’ – any one of these odds and ends could easily become separated from its group and subsequently lost altogether.¹ In addition to the documents that constitute a play, there are also the documents a play generates through the processes of composition, performance, and publication (as previous chapters in this volume have demonstrated). Scholars who attend to this vast assemblage of documentation find that their sense of how much is lost and how little survives changes radically. For example, *Titus Andronicus* – now widely believed to have been co-authored

by William Shakespeare and George Peele – appears to be an early modern play near the ‘extant’ end of a lost-to-extant spectrum due to its many surviving records. *Titus* was registered for publication by John Danter at Stationers’ Hall on 6 February 1594, and printed by him later that year (Q1, STC 22328). It was published twice more in quarto (1600) and octavo (1611), and twice with other plays in folio (1623, 1632) prior to 1642, appearing in the Stationers’ Register three more times (1602, 1626, 1630). This paper trail provides substantial information on its company affiliations. The title page of the 1594 Quarto advertises that three companies had performed the play: the Earl of Derby’s Men (formerly Lord Strange’s Men), the Earl of Pembroke’s Men, and the Earl of Sussex’s Men; the title page of the 1600 Quarto adds a fourth, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men (later the King’s Men, who are advertised on the 1611 title page).

The stage history of the play in London is also well documented in the book of accounts, or ‘diary’, kept by Philip Henslowe between 1592 and 1603. Henslowe recorded three performances at the Rose playhouse in January 1594 and two at the playhouse in Newington in June 1594 (the Newington entry adds the Admiral’s Men to the companies with repertorial links to *Titus*). To these events may be added the following: a performance at the Manor House of John Harrington in Rutland on 1 January 1596; performances during a continental tour sometime before 1620; an illustration by Henry Peacham of what might be the play in performance; and seventeenth-century editions of a 1594 ballad (see Stern’s chapter for more on the ballad). This apparently full record notwithstanding, *Titus* is missing significant evidence including a backstage plot, actors’ parts, a playbill, a title or scene board (for more on these, see Steggle’s chapter), an actual manuscript, and confirmation of co-authorship.

As co-editors of the *Lost Plays Database* we have often necessarily restricted the focus of our inquiries to the ontological status of play-texts. In this chapter we complement our work on plays by considering losses in records from both

the playhouse and the larger world in which theatrical activity in England took place. We believe that the documents generated by plays in composition, performance, and print are beneficially contextualized by this wider view. Until recently, the study of lost documents has been a neglected field. In 1962 Bernard Beckerman asserted with the confidence of a scholar who knew the thinking of his peers that theatre historians 'need be grieved little by the disappearance of 75 per cent of the plays' on stage with Shakespeare's at the Globe because those lost plays were 'filler'; he praised the repertory system for 'winnowing out the chaff'.² We think about documentary losses differently. We argue that an awareness of gaps in the historical record enables us to assess extant evidence more shrewdly, as well as to be open to resources that have not yet exhausted their information on the early modern theatrical marketplace. Below, we consider the repertory system, playwrights and players, evidence from court and provincial performances, and the information in office books from various governmental agencies. In the process, we consider also absent documents and forgeries.³

Repertory documents

A play called 'Titus & ondronicus', which scholars have agreed is the *Titus Andronicus* so well documented earlier, first appears in Henslowe's diary along with other plays being performed by Sussex's Men at the Rose between 27 December 1593 and 6 February 1594. Because Henslowe listed the plays by title (there are twelve altogether), the diary provides the repertory to which *Titus* belonged during that run. Similarly, by naming the seven plays given at Newington in June 1594, Henslowe identified the repertory offered there over a ten-day period by the Admiral's Men and Chamberlain's Men (in some sense jointly, though Henslowe neglects to document the details of this arrangement).⁴ But what of the other repertories in which *Titus* participated? Many theatre historians believe

the play was new as early as 1589,⁵ but no evidence survives to locate it in any company's repertory at that time; likewise, no evidence identifies its repertorial mates after it migrated to the Chamberlain's/King Men.

Lamentable as the loss of repertory lists is for plays with extant texts and known company affiliations, it is even more regrettable for plays with neither. Consider the play *c.* 1588–89 for which Thomas Nashe implied an existence when he satirized poets who could spout 'whole Hamlets, I should say handfulls of Tragicall speeches' on command.⁶ Thomas Lodge also implied the existence of such a play in *Wit's Misery* (1596) when his narrator calls one of Beelzebub's devil-sons a 'fiend . . . [who] looks as pale as the Visard of y^e ghost which cried so miserally at y^e Theator like an oister wife, *Hamlet, reuenge*'.⁷ If Nashe and Lodge were referring to some play named 'Hamlet', the loss of its repertorial context in 1589 and/or 1596 deprives theatre historians of possible clues to its kinship with the *Hamlet* ascribed to Shakespeare that we know from editions in 1603, 1604–5, 1611, and 1623. But, sadly, that later *Hamlet's* repertorial context is also lost. We do not have playlists from the Chamberlain's Men in 1599–1604 from which we might learn the titles of 'revenge tragedies' that may have shared the stage with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; and we cannot say whether there were other contemporary offerings that complemented through comedic motifs or historical narratives conventional features in that *Hamlet*, such as a garrulous old courtier or a hastily remarried widow. Further, without repertory lists, we miss evidence that would show whether the King's Men returned *Hamlet* to the stage *c.* 1609–10, the success of which revival perhaps prompting its reprinting in 1611. Only one document locates a play featuring the character of Hamlet in repertory, and that is Henslowe's all-too-brief list of the Newington performances in June 1594. At present, we lack sufficient documentary evidence to determine the textual and commercial relationships of these 'Hamlet'/'*Hamlet* plays.⁸

When Henslowe cast up his accounts 'frome the begininge of the world vntell this daye beinge the 14 daye of marche 1604',⁹

he sounded the death knell for a decade-long period of repertorial information in which he had recorded theatrical activities at the Rose and Fortune playhouses. The loss that theatre historians suffer by Henslowe's abrupt stop is illustrated most acutely with regard to the Admiral's Men (by 1604, Prince Henry's Men). Although occasionally Henslowe recorded the business of other companies (i.e., Pembroke's Men in October 1600; Worcester's Men in 1602–03), the primary focus of his accounting was the Admiral's Men, whose repertory he documented from 1594 to 1597 and whose expenditures for playbooks, apparel, and other company matters he listed from 1597 to 1603. Presumably, the company continued to play at the Fortune as vigorously as they had previously. However, it is not until 1624, when Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, entered in his Office-Book a list of fifteen plays newly licensed for the Admiral's/Prince Henry's Men (known as Prince Charles's Men by 1613) that a repertory list for the company resembling the fullness of one constructible from Henslovian data can be found. In that twenty-year gap, theatre historians have little more than printed editions to identify extant plays owned by this company and only one record, a note signed by the clerk of the Office of the Chamber on 15 June 1613, that provides the titles of lost plays. It names a pair of plays—parts one and two of 'The Knaves'—which were performed at court by 'the Princes servauntes' the previous March.¹⁰ If Prince Charles's company repertory lists for performances at the Fortune playhouse in 1612–13 were not also lost, we would know more about the commercial environment of the two-part 'Knaves' than its plain-Jane title suggests. That wished-for repertory list, a decade into the Jacobean period, would also provide evidence on a topic hotly debated by theatre historians: the divide across companies between so-called 'citizen' drama at outdoor playhouses and classier 'elite' drama for indoor venues. Assuming 'The Knaves' was a 'citizen' drama, was its offering at court (an indoor venue for the elitist of the elite) therefore an aberration? If we had complementary information for the company repertory, we could provide an answer to this question that has some basis in historical data.

Such lacunae in the documentary record are a siren call to forgers, who recognize (1) the pragmatic opportunity to insert new repertorial information into a convenient gap and, more interestingly, (2) a scholarly yearning for supplementary data. Accordingly, at the lower margin of fol.11v of Henslowe's diary, the Victorian scholar John Payne Collier took the liberty of adding an entry for a play he called 'galfrido & Bernardo', which he subsequently transcribed into the edition of Henslowe that he published.¹¹ Collier's response to loss is fraudulent, even unethical, but it nevertheless points to the important question about how to respond to such documentary loss or absence. Scholars active today may not introduce forgeries to supplement an archival lack, but they do either ignore the lack altogether (yielding a distorted conclusion) or confidently supply conjecture as if it were fact. Such methodology puts at risk the wider community of scholars, who reproduce these dubious versions of the historical record because they trust the venerable reputation of their fellows.

Documents of playwrights

If Henslowe had acquired *Titus* as a new play in 1598, he probably would have written down the names of the playwright/s who wrote it. Switching in 1597 from the practice of recording daily performances at the Rose, he began instead to enter payments to specific authors for scripts (as well as other commercial activity); consequently, his diary from 1597 to 1603 is a rich source for names of playwrights in early modern England. Of special interest here are the men (including players) who are not identified elsewhere as writers of dramatic material, such as William Haughton, William Rankins, William Bird (Bourne), 'Mr Pett' (Haughton's collaborator on 'Strange News Out of Poland', 1600) and 'Mr Robinson' (Henry Chettle's collaborator on 'Felmelanco', 1602). These men, demonstrably known to the theatrical world of early modern London, are conspicuously absent from the current documentary record.

However, Henslowe's accounts are by no means complete; he did not always enter the details of his transactions with playwrights, despite having the opportunity to do so.¹² Consequently theatre historians rely on other documents to supplement the information the diary provides. One such is *Palladis Tamia* (1598), the moral, critical and literary reflections of Francis Meres. Meres claims that Thomas Heywood and Richard Hathway were accomplished writers of comedy, though no comedic titles can be associated confidently with Hathway until July 1598 ('Valentine and Orson') or with Heywood until December 1598 ('War without Blows and Love without Suit').¹³ Meres also describes Thomas Dekker as being 'amongst our best for Tragedie',¹⁴ though no tragic works by him dated 1598 or earlier survive under his name. Perhaps this is why Collier took pains to enlarge the credentials of Dekker as a tragedian by inserting a payment to him into Henslowe's accounts on 20 December 1597 for additions to *Faustus* and a prologue to *Tamburlaine*.¹⁵

In general, playwrights not recorded in Henslowe's diary fare badly in terms of archival preservation. An example is Thomas Watson (1555–1592), who is known to have contributed plays to the Queen's Men after their formation in 1583. Watson influenced fellow dramatists including Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd, and was recalled fondly by Meres, Dekker, and others for his great learning. However, there is no surviving play, title, or even document that identifies a play as his in the archives.¹⁶ Theatre historians even struggle to identify the dramatists who – with Shakespeare – wrote for the Chamberlain's Men. Andrew Gurr estimates that the company had '140 or so' plays now perhaps lost, plus 23 extant ones to 'match' the 161 staged by the Admiral's Men, 1594–1600.¹⁷ The authors of some of these plays are identifiable through title-page ascriptions (e.g. *Every Man in His Humour* names Ben Jonson, *Satiromastix* names Thomas Dekker), but other plays were printed without authorial attribution (*A Warning for Fair Women*) or recorded by title in contemporaneous letters or diaries but subsequently lost ('Gowrie'). A pair of plays, 'Cloth Breeches and Velvet Hose' and *A Larum for London*, appear on a flyleaf in the Stationers'

Register in May 1600 where they are identified as Chamberlain's plays; both now are anonymous but in their own time the company would have known who the authors were (as might playgoers). The dearth of information about these plays is compounded by potential absences in the Stationers' Register entry itself: the heading, 'my lord chamberlens mens Plaies Entred', implies an intention of the clerk to add more titles, but the list stops. A similar phenomenon can be observed in a record of performances at court by the King's Men in the winter of 1604–05: they prepared twelve plays but performed eleven; the identity of the twelfth remains a mystery. The clerk of the Office of Revels simply recorded 'A playe provided And Discharged' on Sunday, 3 February 1605, but did not enter a title or author.¹⁸ As with the apparently unfinished list in the Stationers' Register, the Revels record is one of documentary absence rather than loss: the document survives and the opportunity existed for the Revels clerk to record the twelfth play's details alongside its scheduled date of performance, but he did not do so.

Bleak as the prospect is of adding authorial attributions to lists of performances for the Chamberlain's/King's Men, it is bleaker still for companies without a Shakespeare, Jonson, or Heywood consistently in their employ. In the Jacobean period, companies under the patronage of the Duke of Lennox and the Duke of York included players from earlier decades; they must likewise have had experienced as well as (perhaps) new playwrights, but there is no record as to who they were. Even the records of the children's companies, which are comparatively well-documented in print in 1599–1608, do not identify more than a few plays in any given year by author. For theatre historians, this paucity of knowledge limits our ability to assess playwriting as a profession in the Jacobean–Caroline years; in particular, we are short of the information necessary to evaluate the versatility of individual authors in response to always-popular motifs as well as to the sudden emergence of new fashions in the theatrical marketplace.

A kind of bardolatry (or 'Shakespeare-effect') is observable in the realm of forgeries, where the desperate search for new

information about Shakespeare takes precedence over exciting non-Shakespearean discoveries, as Estill's chapter in this volume explores. Such is the case with the 'Play of Oswald'.¹⁹ A casual inspection of the British Library's detailed catalogue entry provides the impression that the manuscript warrants little attention: 'f. 37 William Shakespeare: Forged allusion to him: 19th cent.'²⁰ The reference here is to a suspected Collier insertion consisting of a cryptic reference to Shakespeare ('will shake') at the end of the document: 'yett the curre is of a good breede, *and to one hee knowes / will shake his tayl*' (the authenticity of the words italicized here has been disputed).²¹ Whether a forged or simply implausible allusion, this manuscript is a red herring in terms of Shakespeariana; it is more interesting as a dramatic fragment in its own right. Its date and authorship are uncertain but it appears to originate from the late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth century public theatres. It contains material from the end of the play, in which Oswald's true identity is revealed through distinctive birthmarks; this bears an uncanny resemblance to the denouement of *Cymbeline*, though it is impossible at present to establish the direction of influence, if any.²² The fragment preserves a not-insubstantial passage of dialogue, of obvious interest to students of Shakespeare's theatre, but the playscript as a whole is lost and the purported allusion to Shakespeare dominates what little critical discussion there is of the manuscript.

Provincial and court documents

Since 1979 when the first in a continuing series commissioned by the Toronto-based 'Records of Early English Drama' (REED) was published, theatre historians have had access to more data about theatrical activity in the provinces of England from the Middle Ages to 1642 than any previous generation of scholars. And yet, not a single REED item supplies the title of a London-based commercial play that was also performed in the country (though a letter by Edward Alleyn does; see later). However,

one lawsuit known to scholars since 1942 hints at a touring repertory; it gives the titles of four plays belonging to a company arrested for sedition in Yorkshire in 1609.²³ REED records also do not add names to the list of dramatists who wrote for companies in the London and provincial marketplaces. What information, then, might we have if provincial records were better preserved and more detailed? We might, for example, know the titles of plays (and their playwrights) taken into the country by the Queen's Men, whose repertory carried the monarch's agenda in politics and religion to her subjects from Cornwall to Northumberland starting in 1583.²⁴ We might also track the entry of new plays into performance through the 1580s. At present, we know that *The Famous Victories of Henry V* was on stage in 1587, but we do not know if it was then new. It was printed with an advertisement of the Queen's Men in 1598, but that date was probably a decade after its maiden run.

Second, we might learn what shows Lord Strange's Men took on tour with 'Harry of Cornwall' in the summer of 1593. We know about that play because Edward Alleyn wrote to Henslowe in August 1593 and said that his company was 'redy to begin the playe of hary of cornwall'.²⁵ Henslowe had recorded this play as one of 24 performed at the Rose from February to June, 1592 (it was not then new). But provincial records are blank not only on the performance of 'Harry of Cornwall' but also on the names of other plays in Strange's summer touring repertory. Third, provincial records are largely silent on the titles of plays (and authors) given at the manors and castles of wealthy and titled families. According to Barbara D. Palmer, 'the Clifford and Cavendish accounts make up perhaps the largest continuous body of information available on visits of professional players to provincial great houses'; sadly, though, that massive archive does not name a single play seen by that privileged audience.²⁶

Sometimes records from the court supplement other caches of documents. In 1583–84, the clerk at the Chamber Office entered payments for three plays given by the newly formed

Queen's Men at Christmastide, and two each by the Children of the Chapel and the Earl of Oxford's Boys; the clerk at the Revels Office complemented that record by specifying that six histories had been performed and one comedy.²⁷ But neither clerk named a title. In 1584–85, the Chamber clerk paid the Queen's Men for five performances, 26 December–23 February; and *this* year, the Revels clerk named the four plays ('Phyllida and Corin', 'Felix and Philomena', 'Three Plays in One', and 'Five Plays in One' [plus an 'Antick' and a comedy]). It is indicative of the fate of plays and the eccentricity of record-keeping that in such an instance – where so much information is provided – the plays themselves are lost. In an ideal world, clerks of the Chamber and Revels Offices would have done routinely what their counterparts did in 1604–05 and 1611–12, which was to enter the customary details (date, company, play title, payments to companies, royal audience). And, in that ideal world, the playscripts themselves would have survived.

Governmental documents

Theatre historians depend on records kept by governmental agencies and agents including those of the aforementioned Office of the Chamber and Office of the Revels; the Privy Council; the Admiralty; the Courts of Chancery, Requests, and the Exchequer; city and crown officials such as the Mayor of London and Bishop of London; and wardens of the guilds. A sample from just a few of these resources will illustrate how valuable surviving documents are and how frustrating their archival loss. An example is the infamous 'Isle of Dogs' affair. On 28 July 1597, the Privy Council issued a letter to the Justices of Middlesex ordering that 'no plaies shalbe used within London' and that the playhouses were to be 'plucked downe'.²⁸ On the same day, the Lord Mayor petitioned the Privy Council to do precisely that: shut down playing. Two weeks later (15 August) the Privy Council sent a letter to Richard Topcliffe

to arrest Thomas Nashe and question him about a lewd play recently staged on the Bankside. And in between, on 10 August, Philip Henslowe made a note in the diary that William Bird had joined the Admiral's Men because there was a restraint against playing prompted 'by the meanes of playing the Ieylle of dooges'.²⁹ There are more official records and personal commentary on this disruption in playhouse business (e.g., players were imprisoned and released; Nashe, having fled to Yarmouth, complained about the charges against him), but absolutely nothing among surviving documents confirms the implication that the Privy Council ordered all playhouses to be 'plucked downe' *because* of 'The Isle of Dogs'.³⁰ In this case as in others, forgery supplements the conspicuous lack of evidence, thereby inadvertently identifying critical desires: a Collier intervention on fol.33v of Henslowe's diary purportedly documents a payment to 'the Mr of the Revelles man . . . for newes of the restraynte beinge recalled by the lords of the Queenes counsel'; it follows earlier wish-fulfilment forgeries on fols. 29v and 33r which present a memorandum of payment to Nashe 'for the Iylle of dogges w^{ch} he is wrytinge for the company' and another to Nashe 'at this tyme in the flete for Wrytinge of the eylle of dogges'.³¹

Scholarly knowledge of licensing documentation has been enhanced by a series of serendipitous events. Extracts of the dramatic records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels between 1623 and 1673, were published by Edmond Malone in the late eighteenth century, but by 1818 the papers had all but disappeared, as had the transcript Malone claimed to have made of Herbert's office-book.³² Nevertheless, from Malone's notes we have some Herbert traces, meaning we know about such lost plays as 'Doctor Lambe and the Witches' and 'Buc is a Thief'. Craven Ord (1756–1832) also copied licensing transcriptions from Herbert's original manuscripts before they were lost; he did not publish his work but allowed other scholars to consult it.³³ A subsequent owner of Ord's transcription, Jacob Henry Burn (1793–1869), copied Ord's notes of play-licences into his own notebook (the anonymous

'The Lovesick Courtier' and Richard Brome's 'Florentine Friend' are known only through the Burn transcript).³⁴ When James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps acquired the Ord transcript after Burn's death, he cut it into individual licence records, some of which are now lost; some are affixed in his various scrapbooks (including Folger MSS W.b.137–256). A further palimpsest layer is present in that these transcriptions (and copies of transcriptions) of Herbert's records sometimes also contain Herbert's records of *earlier* Master of the Revels' accounts; for instance, the record apparently made in 1661–62 of a note dated 20 November 1622 registers 'Seuerall Plays allowed by Mr Tilney In 1598. which is .62. years since' (including the lost 'Sir William Longsword', 'Fair Maid of London', and 'Richard Coeur de Lion').³⁵ The survival of multiple independent transcriptions of sections of Herbert's licensing records, and multiple copies of those transcriptions, is fortuitous in the extreme, but even so, caution must be exercised: these are transcriptions not primary documents.³⁶

Another collection of official documents impoverished by archival loss provides information about the people associated with the playhouse world. Perhaps the most precious of these is the parish register. In 1536 Thomas Cromwell, on behalf of King Henry VIII, ordered that parishes keep registers of births, burials, and marriages.³⁷ For theatre historians the registers from parishes with playhouses are special because theatre professionals tended to live near their place of work: St Leonard Shoreditch (the Theatre), St Giles Cripplegate (Fortune), and St Saviour Southwark (Rose, Swan, and Globe). However, not all parish clerks noted more than name and date. At St Leonard, for example, the burial entry for Richard Tarlton on 3 September 1588 gives his address as Halliwell Street but does not add that he was a player, or playwright, or the most famous clown of his generation. James Burbage, a man of considerable commercial status in the parish (also a joiner and a player), was listed as buried on 2 February 1596/7 with no further detail; his son Richard, who was the star power of the Chamberlain's-King's Men for more than two decades

(as Syme discusses in his chapter) was acknowledged merely as ‘player’ when buried on 16 March 1618/9. In contrast, the clerk at St Giles Cripplegate provides a thumbnail narrative in the entry of christening for ‘Comedia base borne Daughter of Alice Bowker and as she saithe the fathers name is William Johnson one of the Queens plaiers’ (February 1586/7). In the register of St Saviour, there is an entry of burial dated 31 December 1607 for Shakespeare’s brother, ‘Edmond Shakespeare, a player’; ancillary parish books, in this case the monthly accounts, record that he was ‘buried in the church, with a forenoone knell of the great bell, 20s’.³⁸ The giant among parish supplementary books is the set of daybooks kept by Thomas Harridance at St Botolph, Aldgate, c. 1583–98; he recorded, over time, a family history for James Tunstall, a player with the Alleyns and their companies for most of his professional career.

Wills are another source. Tunstall’s will survives, as do those of William Shakespeare, Edward Alleyn, and Christopher Beeston. Alleyn and Beeston are known to have owned plays, yet their wills do not mention a single book title. Even so, wills provide information not available elsewhere. The will of Simon Jewell (d. 21 August 1592) itemizes his debts and credits with his company; it also specifies bequests of his playing gear (‘my playenge thinges in a box and my veluet shewes’). The will of Augustine Phillips (d. 4 May 1605) itemizes not only his gifts to fellow players but also to his former apprentices, Samuel Gilburne (‘the some of ffortye shillinges and *my* mouse Colloured veluit hose and a white Taffety dublet A blacke Taffety sute my purple Cloke sword and dagger’) and James Sands (‘my base viall . . . the some of ffortye shillinges and a Citterne a Bandore and a Lute’). Both apprentices remained in the profession as adults.³⁹

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Expertise, confidence, and certainty are desirable traits of academic research, but the latter is easily confused with the

former two. Scholars often construct compelling narratives of early modern theatrical activity without being sufficiently shrewd in accounting for the loss, absence, and forgery of evidence. Previous chapters in this volume have demonstrated that a significant body of documentation survives, but simultaneously affirm that it remains a mere fraction of the theatrical activity of the period. That fraction is statistically atypical; it in no way guarantees that we know more about the masterpieces of dramatic literature. Indeed, the example of *Titus* illustrates that the greatest plays are not necessarily the best papered. In this chapter, we have stepped outside the playhouse to consider the loss of documentation beyond that on authorial composition, players' performances, and print culture to show how much more is additionally lost (and also how much remains to be discovered). Alongside a reinterpretation of surviving evidence, we recommend an openness to new sources of information (who knew that sewer records could yield data on playhouse architecture and players' daily lives?). As participants in the scholarly process of rethinking the contribution of documents from the court, manor house, Guild Hall, parish, and civic agencies, we are confident that further archival work will produce additional evidence to clarify and extend the narratives we currently tell about the literary and commercial world of theatre in the early modern period. Here, we highlight a few of the categories of documents historically perceived as ancillary to the study of theatre history in early modern England that could legitimately be said to be at its heart. Much of their data may indeed be lost, but perhaps the records are just waiting to be found.

Notes

- 1 Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, rpt. 2012), 1. In *Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England: Ten Case Studies* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015)

- Matthew Steggle – co-editor with Roslyn L. Knutson and David McInnis of the *Lost Plays Database (LPD)* (2009): <https://lostplays.folger.edu> – suggests that the very title of a play can itself be considered ‘a “miniature” document of performance’ (19).
- 2 Bernard Beckerman, *Shakespeare at the Globe 1599–1609* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 16.
 - 3 We define absent documents as lacunae in records where nothing has technically been lost because it was never entered; we consider forgeries to be barometers for evidence that is missing yet desirable enough to falsify.
 - 4 In another instance of absent documentary evidence, Thomas Heywood similarly neglected to elaborate on his address to the reader prefacing *The Iron Age, part 1* (1632), wherein he notes that ‘these were the Playes often (and not with the least applause) Publickely Acted by two Companies, vppon one Stage at once’ (Heywood, *The Iron Age* [London: Nicholas Okes, 1632, STC 13340], A4v).
 - 5 Gary Taylor and Rory Loughnane, ‘The Canon and Chronology of Shakespeare’s Works’, in Gary Taylor and Gabriel Egan, eds, *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Authorship Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 417–602, esp. 490.
 - 6 Ronald B. McKerrow, ed., *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols (London: A. H. Bullen, 1904), 3.315.
 - 7 Edmund Gosse, ed., *The Complete Works of Thomas Lodge*, 4 vols (Glasgow: The Hunterian Club, 1883), 4.56/62. Although Lodge omitted the title of the play, he provides details of costuming, dramaturgy, and script that point unmistakably to the Hamlet story.
 - 8 We follow a practice now common in the field of theatre history to mark lost plays by quotation marks and extant plays by italics. For clarity and consistency, we standardize the spelling of titles to conform to usage in the *Lost Plays Database*. All lost plays addressed here have entries on that website.
 - 9 R. A. Foakes, ed., *Henslowe’s Diary*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 209.
 - 10 David Cook and F. P. Wilson, eds, *Malone Society Collections VI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 54.

- 11 Foakes, ed., 28n. For a digitization of the forged entry for 'Galfrido and Bernardo', see the *LPD* entry.
- 12 Neil Carson claims that that the diary 'formed only part of Henslowe's accounting records, which included also formal bonds and very likely one or more ledgers', which he bases on Henslowe's lack of repayment records, inexplicable calculations of total outstanding debt, and sudden absolution of debts (*A Companion to Henslowe's Diary* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 30).
- 13 Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (London: Cuthbert Burby, 1598, STC 17834), Oo3v. To make sense of Meres's claim, Martin Wiggins (in association with Catherine Richardson) records untitled comedies by Heywood (#1044) and Hathway (#1068) in *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, 10 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012—). For the Hathway and Heywood payments, see Foakes, ed., 89 and 102.
- 14 Meres, Oo3.
- 15 Foakes, ed., 44n.
- 16 Michael J. Hirrel, 'Thomas Watson, Playwright: Origins of Modern English Drama', in David McInnis and Matthew Steggle eds, *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 187–207.
- 17 Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company 1594–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.
- 18 W. R. Streitberger and John Pitcher, eds, *Malone Society Collections XIII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 9.
- 19 British Library MS Egerton 2623, ff. 37–38; see also the *LPD* entry and Wiggins #1260.
- 20 See http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-001983597.
- 21 E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 2.386; cf. Arthur Freeman and Janet Ing Freeman, *John Payne Collier: Scholarship & Forgery in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 2.1038.
- 22 See McInnis, 'Lost Plays and Source Study', in Dennis Austin Britton and Melissa Walter, eds, *Rethinking Shakespearean*

- Source Study* (London: Routledge, 2018), 304–307, for a discussion of the parallels.
- 23 Charles J. Sisson, ‘Shakespeare Quartos as Prompt-Copies’, *The Review of English Studies*, 18 (1942), 12–43. The plays named were ‘The Three Shirleys’ (i.e., *The Travels of Three English Brothers*), *Pericles*, a ‘King Lere’, and a St Christopher play.
 - 24 Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen’s Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18–36.
 - 25 Foakes, ed., 276.
 - 26 Barbara D. Palmer, ‘Early Modern Mobility: Players, Payments, and Patrons’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56.3 (2005), 259–305, esp. 271.
 - 27 E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), 4.159–160.
 - 28 Chambers, 4.322.
 - 29 Foakes, ed., 240.
 - 30 William Ingram, *A London Life in the Brazen Age; Francis Langley 1548–1602* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 167–196; see also, the *LPD* entry.
 - 31 Foakes, ed., 68n, 63n, and 67n.
 - 32 N. W. Bawcutt, ed., *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623–73* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996, rpt. 2003), 13–16; and Edmond Malone, ‘An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage’, in *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare*, 10 vols (London: H. Baldwin, 1790), vol.1, part 2, 1–287 (Malone quotes Herbert’s office-book throughout this account of the stage, rather than reproducing lengthy excerpts of it in one location).
 - 33 Bawcutt, ed., 17–19.
 - 34 MS Osborn d1 (Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University; the *Lost Plays Database* has sponsored the digitization of the Burn transcript, excerpts of which are available on the relevant entries.
 - 35 Bawcutt, ed., 249, item R29.

- 36 A cautionary example is the plot of '1 Tamar Cham', the original of which was lost after being transcribed by George Steevens in *The plays of William Shakspeare*, 21 vols (London: 1803), vol.3, foldout after 414. See that transcription in the *LPD* entry and W. W. Greg's scepticism of its accuracy in *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Stage Plots, Actors' Parts, Prompt Books: Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, rpt. 1969), 160.
- 37 E. A. J. Honigmann and Susan Brock list 162 parishes inside and outside the City Walls in *Playhouse Wills 1558–1642* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), xvii–xxii.
- 38 Edmund was christened on 3 May 1580 (see 'Parish register entry recording Edmund Shakespeare's baptism' in *Shakespeare Documented*, <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/>).
- 39 Honigmann and Brock, 59, 73. Phillips is one of many theatrical people named also in the token books of St Saviour Southwark, which (along with more kinds of information) provide street addresses and household size (William Ingram and Alan H. Nelson, eds, *The Token Books of St Saviour Southwark*: <http://tokenbooks.folger.edu/>).