

deficiencies in hair.—under this wig I wore a skull piece very shiny [sic]—with just a few whisps of white hair.”) Although Lark Taylor never achieved leading-man status in New York, he was a proficient character actor. In Barrymore’s *Hamlet*, for example, Taylor played two small but pivotal roles: Barnardo, the palace guard who opens the play with a haunting “Who’s there?” and the First Player, the actor’s actor whose empathetic performances propel Hamlet from indecision to action.

Taylor seems to have been aware of the potential interest of promptbook collectors in the celebrity connections of his theatrical work. His promptbook includes the cast list of Daly’s original production of *Shrew*, which premiered in 1887 when Taylor was a child in Nashville. It initially ran over 100 performances and was still being revived when Taylor joined the company in 1899. The production starred Ada Rehan—the company’s leading lady and one of the most famous actresses of her generation—as Katharina. Playing opposite her as Petruchio was John Drew Jr., a member of a prominent acting family and uncle of John Barrymore. (You’ve probably heard of the dynasty’s most famous descendant: John Drew’s great-great-niece and John Barrymore’s granddaughter, Drew Barrymore). A note added to the 1899 cast list, Taylor’s first show, identifies another scion of a famous theatrical family. The actor who played Grumio, Wilfred Clarke—no relation to William Andrews Clark Jr. of Montana and later Los Angeles—was the “Nephew of Edwin Booth,” the most celebrated American actor of the previous century. Wilfred was the son of Booth’s sister, Asia, and her husband, John Sleeper Clarke. Left unstated: Wilfred was also the nephew of actor and presidential assassin John Wilkes Booth.

Lark Taylor’s promptbooks have three functions: first, an overview of the production’s design and staging; second, a detailed account of Taylor’s own participation; and finally, what we might today call “fan service,” or gestures meant to appeal to the public’s interest in the celebrities themselves, separate from their Shakespearean roles. That third category accounts not only for the allusions to the Drew-Barrymore and Booth families but also for the very existence of souvenir promptbooks. Taylor created multiple copies of his promptbooks to satisfy a public interest that was probably fueled by his association first with Augustin Daly and later with Edward H. Sothorn and Julia Marlowe. Sothorn and Marlowe had established their individual careers before co-starring in *Romeo and Juliet* in 1904, beginning a collaboration that would last decades. The pair married in 1911, adding some off-stage intrigue to their reputation as “America’s greatest Shakespearean team” (McArthur 33). But Marlowe and Sothorn were also innovators in their industry, touring the country and playing at multiple theatrical venues in and around New York in order to reach wider audiences. Reviewing a performance in May of 1916, a New York magazine proclaimed Marlowe and Sothorn “more than merely actors and producers of plays; they have been a large cultural influence in our National life. They have withstood without flinching the tendencies toward the degradation of the stage, and they have spread wide a taste for the best that the theater has to offer” (*The Outlook*, 14 June 1916).

Lark Taylor’s promptbooks illuminate a formative period in American theater, a moment when the art form was becoming both increasingly sophisticated and more widely accessible to the general public. They bring to life not only the practices of the Shakespearean stage but also the web of professional and personal relationships through which they were developed and sustained. The promptbooks will continue to be a valuable resource for Shakespeare scholars and theater historians.

Persian Habits at the Clark

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In William Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, Edgar, disguised as Poor Tom, assists the distraught, elderly Lear on the heath by turning away three imagined barking dogs and thereby accommodating his dejected state in Act 3, Scene 6:

- KING LEAR The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.
- EDGAR Tom will throw his head at them. Avaunt, you curs! Be thy mouth or black or white, Tooth that poisons if it bite; Mastiff, grey-hound, mongrel grim, Hound or spaniel, brach or lym, Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail, Tom will make them weep and wail: For, with throwing thus my head, Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled. Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.
- KING LEAR Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?
- [To EDGAR]
- You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your garments: you will say they are Persian attire: but let them be changed.

Acknowledging Edgar’s service, Lear—in this instance of solidarity between two abject souls—proclaims: “You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred, only I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say they are Persian; but let them be changed.” Considering Edgar’s rags are far from any sartorial symbols of Eastern elegance, riches, and pomp, the image Lear claims to see is ironic and puzzling. At the same time, Lear’s lament on Edgar’s clothing reveals the presence of another persona for Edgar: an invisible Persian figure or Englishman dressed as a Persian, possibly a soldier or an ambassador, graciously aiding Lear in his confrontation with the rancorous dogs populating his suffering mind. Thus, Lear does not perceive Edgar as *Poor Tom*, who is attempting to salvage the king’s dignity and control over his lost fortunes, but rather an unknown figure with Persian adornments who succors him in his time of need.

The seemingly minor Persian allusion embedded in this Shakespearean scene affords a host of novel ways to think about how drama philosophizes about growth and change on individual, societal, and global levels. Persia, in my use and in how I assess it in Shakespeare’s reference, is a catalyst for analogical thinking, an idea associated with certain attributes that I have been researching in seventeenth-century travel writings this past year as an Ahmanson-Getty Fellow at the Center for 17th- & 18th-Century Studies. I had an opportunity to present my ongoing research at the conferences for this year’s core program, “Entertaining the Idea: Shakespeare, Philosophy, Performance.” The conferences encouraged a philosophical consideration of Shakespearean drama through an interdisciplinary framework that increased my capacity to think about how a concept—such as Persia—enables paradigmatic analysis that is a manifestation of both being and doing on stage. In the case of Shakespeare’s Persian reference in *King Lear*, does



Thomas Herbert. *A Relation of Some Yeares Travaille, Begunne Anno 1626*. London: Printed by W. Stansby, and J. Bloome, 1634. Clark Rare DS7.H53*



Thomas Herbert. *Some Yeares Travels into Divers Parts of Africa, and Asia the Great*. London: Printed by R. Everingham, for R. Scot, T. Bassett, J. Wright, and R. Chiswell, 1677. Clark Rare fDS7.H53 1677*

the invocation entertain the idea of a *Persianized* Edgar? Why does this conceptual configuration occur in this moment of desperation? How can this temporary persona accommodate hospitable bonds between Lear and Edgar? And most important, why Persia?

The collections of early modern travelogues at the Clark Library reveal a story of familiarity and fascination with Persia for Europeans. Persia, modern-day Iran, was a familiar place for early modern England. The image of Persia's esteemed past is rooted in its rich classical and biblical heritage, a cultural repository well-known through not only the biblical books of Daniel, Ezra, and Esther but also Herodotus' *Histories*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, among other scholastic texts. This antiquated conception informed early diplomatic attempts with Persia as well as early biblical and classical dramas including *The Enterlude of Godly Queen Hester* (1561), *Kyng Daryus* (1565), and *The Wars of Cyrus* (1594). In 1561 a somewhat naïve and obsequious Elizabeth I attempted to forge diplomatic relations with Persia, leading to the failure of Anthony Jenkinson's initial envoy at the Safavid court of a flippant Shah Tahmasp I. During the mission Jenkinson was humiliated at the Persian court for being an "infidel" in the eyes of the shah, who had recently accepted the Treaty of Amasya (1555) with the Ottomans and was, therefore, less interested in pursuing an Anglo-Persian relationship. The next prominent phase in trying to forge a stronger and, in this instance, grandiose alliance included the largely unsuccessful attempts of the Sherley brothers, beginning in 1598 and leading to the acceptance of Anthony Sherley and later his younger brother Robert as ambassadors of Shah Abbas to European nations. Renderings of their adventures appear in Anthony Nixon's pamphlet *The Three English Brothers* (1607), a play *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607), and Anthony's own account, *Relation of His Travels into Persia* (1613), among other Sherlian texts.

These unorthodox attempts were not particularly welcomed by Elizabeth, who had not sanctioned the Sherleys' initial voyage into Persia and had turned to trade with the Ottoman Empire. In 1626,

following an infamous physical confrontation between Robert Sherley and the Persian ambassador Naqd 'Ali Beg, the recently crowned Charles I sought to clarify and improve the diplomatic situation and sent Sir Dodmore Cotton, the first official English ambassador, to Persia. The most influential fruit of this ill-fated voyage, which resulted in the deaths of Cotton, Beg, and Robert Sherley, was Thomas Herbert's travel account of the embassy, expanded and republished for years to come, *A Relation of Some Years Travel* (1634, 1638, 1664, 1665, 1677). Herbert's numerous editions testify to his continuing interest in Persia and to a growing audience fascinated with travel writings on the Near East. In 1634 his account highlights "A Description of the Persian Monarchy" and the deaths of the ambassadors; by 1677 his enlarged text somewhat detaches from the particular journey to present a more sensational and comprehensive study

of global adventure, one whose intricate frontispiece mythologizes the epic sojourn as part of a larger scheme of global traffic with a mythical Europa encountering various Eastern figures beyond her shores.

In contrast with the more steadily growing mercantile activity of the East India Company, inconsistency marks the fitful nature of Anglo-Persian exchanges of the period. The lapses in time and miscommunications, however, are partly responsible for the continuing accompaniment of stable classical and biblical conceptions of Persia and Persians in literature that inform the drama over the course of two centuries. Although less hospitable visions of Persia are found—for instance, in the tyrannical figure of Cambyses in Thomas Preston's *Cambyses, King of Persia* (1569) and the arrogant eponymous character of Colley Cibber's unsuccessful play, *Xerxes, A Tragedy* (1699)—these characters are exceptions rather than the rule in terms of Persian-themed drama of the period. In greater quantity are magnanimous representations of Persian royalty, as in the fictionalized rendition of Shah Abbas I as the Sophy in *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*. From his opening embrace of the traveling Englishmen to his final benediction of the marriage of his Persian niece to the Englishman Robert Sherley, the play emphasizes the king's hospitality toward his Christian guests through his frequent proclamations of liberality: "For thy sake do I love all Christians; / We give thee liberty of conscience." The Sophy's hospitality stems from his ability to invite the stranger, the uninvited Sherley, into his court without reservation and with respect to his faith. The play's emphasis on an intercultural and interreligious embrace presents Persianized hospitality toward English Christians as dynamic—as an active hospitality rather than a static and detached form of tolerance. Indeed, throughout the early modern period, it is noteworthy that hospitality, often in the form of a hospitable bond as narrated in Edgar and Lear's exchange on the heath, is at the forefront of such worthwhile attributes called upon to contemplate the issues of the day in a growing global early modern world.