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978-1-107-04279-7 - Archaic Style in English Literature, 1590–1674

Lucy Munro

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1590–1674

Ranging from the works of Shakespeare, Spenser, Jonson and Milton to those of Robert Southwell and Anna Trapnel, this groundbreaking study explores the conscious use of archaic style by poets and dramatists between 1590 and 1674. It focuses on the wide-ranging, complex and self-aware uses of archaic linguistic and poetic style, analysing the uses to which writers put literary style in order to re-embody and reshape the past. Munro brings together scholarly conversations on temporality, memory and historiography, on the relationships between medieval and early modern literary cultures, on the workings of dramatic and poetic style, and on national history and identity. Neither pure anachronism nor pure nostalgia, the attempts of writers to reconstruct outmoded styles within their own works reveal a largely untold story about the workings of literary influence and tradition, the interactions between past and present, and the uncertain contours of English nationhood.

LUCY MUNRO is a lecturer in Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama Studies at King's College London. She is the author of *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge, 2005), hailed by Roslyn Lander Knutson in *The Times Literary Supplement* as a book that 'redefines the template for company histories'. Her essays on early modern literature have appeared in a number of collections, including *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (2009), and in journals including *Shakespeare*, *Modern Philology* and *Huntington Library Quarterly*. She has edited Sharpham's *The Fleer*, Shakespeare and Wilkins' *Pericles*, Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed* and, for an acclaimed online edition, Brome's *The Demoiselle* and *The Queen and Concubine*.

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Preface

In preparing this book, I spent a good deal of time considering what procedure to follow in choosing editions for primary texts. There are no modern-spelling editions of many of the texts discussed here, notably those of Spenser, who is conventionally published in original spelling. Moreover, modernising early modern texts can obscure aspects of the ways in which they would have functioned for early modern readers. Yet to cite all texts in old spelling would not only risk jettisoning all of the valuable editorial work carried out on the works of authors such as Shakespeare, Jonson and Middleton, it would also obscure for modern readers the distinctions between words and styles which are archaic to us in the twenty-first century and those that would have registered as archaic to their original readers and spectators. In short: it seems self-defeating to modernise all quotations, yet fetishistic to cite Shakespeare and Jonson in old spelling. As a compromise, I have therefore cited a mixture of different kinds of texts and editions – sixteenth- and seventeenth-century quarto and folio texts; manuscripts; old-spelling editions; and modern-spelling editions – hoping in the process to foreground language change, and the various ways in which texts may and may not be archaic. Titles of primary texts are standardised and, in most cases, modernised in the main text, but given in their original form when early editions are cited in the notes.

Unless noted otherwise, all references to Shakespeare's works are to Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds.), *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, 2nd edn (2005); references to Chaucer's works are to Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn (1988); references to Milton's poems are to Gordon Campbell (ed.), *Complete English Poems, Of Education, Areopagitica* (1990); and references to Spenser's works are to *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (1977) and *The Shorter Poems*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (1999). Latin text and modern translations of the works of Virgil are from *Virgil I (Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I–VI)* and *II (Aeneid 7–12, Appendix Vergiliana)*, ed. and trans. H. Rushton Fairclough;

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rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (1999). All references to the Bible, unless noted otherwise, are from the 'King James' version (1611).

The work for this book was supported by the Leverhulme Trust, who awarded me a Research Fellowship in 2009–10, and the Research Institute for Humanities, Keele University, who provided me with research leave in autumn 2010. I am especially grateful to those friends and colleagues who read and commented on sections and chapters: Hannah Crawforth, Julie Sanders, Clare McManus, David Matthews, Jonathan Hope (whom I would also like to thank for shared unpublished research with me), Scott McCracken, Ann Hughes, Christina Wald, Tripti Pillai, Anita Sherman, Nina Levine and Alison Findlay. My greatest debt is to Tanya Pollard, who has read multiple drafts with unfailing good humour, supporting and cajoling me in equal measure; any virtues that this book may have in terms of its clarity of argument should be credited to her, and any vices should be put down to my failure to follow her advice.

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I tried out draft material at a number of seminars and conferences, and would like to thank the following: the English research seminar at Nottingham University; the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Birmingham University; the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, University of Kent; the ‘Spiritual and Material Renaissance’ colloquium, Sheffield Hallam University; the Renaissance and Early Modern seminar, Leeds University (special thanks to Alex Bamji); the Centre for Research in Renaissance Studies, Roehampton University; the Department of English, University College, Cork; the English work-in-progress seminar, Keele University; the London Shakespeare Seminar; the English and Drama departments of Dalhousie University; the Shakespeare and Performance Research Team, McGill University; seminar organisers and participants at the Shakespeare Association of America annual conference (especially Julie Sanders and Kate Chedgzoy for ‘Sites of Memory/Sites of Performance’ in Washington, DC); the Renaissance Society of America (with thanks to Robert Dulgarian); the International Shakespeare Congress; the International Medieval Congress; the Marlowe Society of America; and the International Shakespeare Conference, Stratford-on-Avon.

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Part of Chapter 4 appeared in my essay ‘Archaism, the “Middle Age” and the Morality Play in Shakespearean Drama’, published in *Shakespeare* 8.4 (2012), 356–67. I am very grateful to the editors and Taylor and Francis for permission to reproduce that material here.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my family: George Munro, Duncan Munro, Liz Munro, Ewan and Isla, Len and Enid Haynes, Jenni Burton and, above all, Matt Haynes, whose response to my delighted discovery of a copy of George Daniel’s poems, pages uncut, in Keele University Library was ‘And you’re writing a *book* about this book?’. This book is for him, if he wants it.

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- BL British Library, London
- CBJ *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, gen. eds. David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- CEP John Milton, *Complete English Poems, Of Education, Areopagitica*, ed. Gordon Campbell (London: J. M. Dent, 1990)
- EEBO *Early English Books Online* (Proquest, 2003–13): eebo.chadwyck.com
- FQ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 1977)
- LION *Literature Online* (Proquest, 1996–2013): lion.chadwyck.co.uk
- NA National Archives, Kew, London
- ODNB *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, gen. eds. H. C. G. Matthew, Brian Harrison and Lawrence Goldman (Oxford University Press, 2004–12): www.oxforddnb.com
- OED *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford University Press): www.oed.com
- SP Edmund Spenser, *The Shorter Poems*, ed. Richard A. McCabe (London: Penguin, 1999)