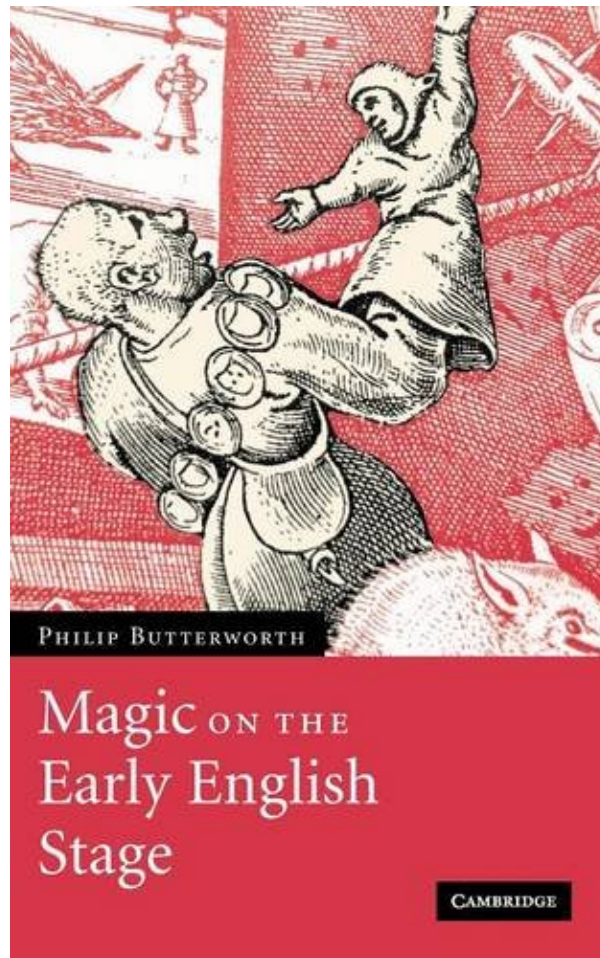
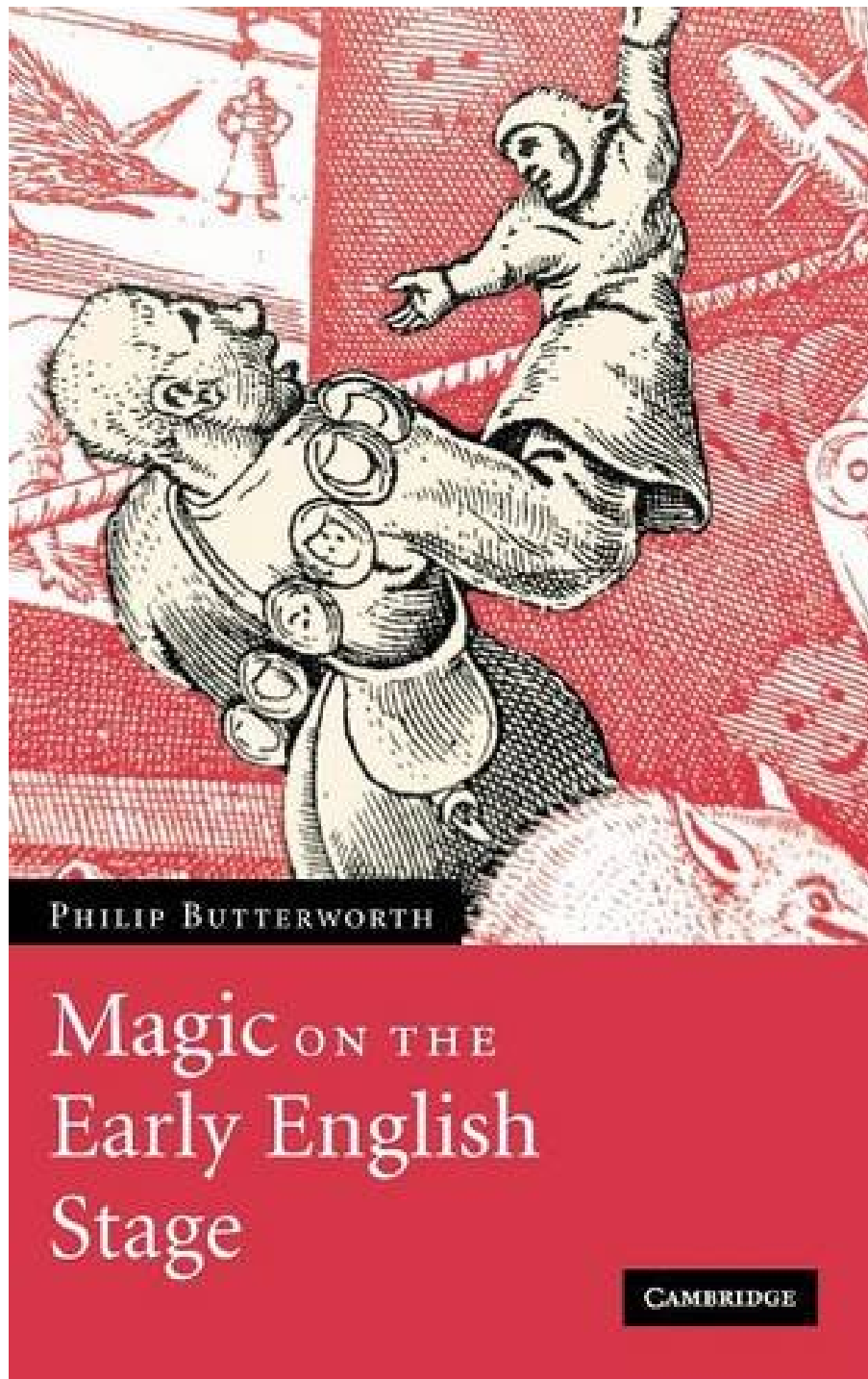


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'Philip Butterworth is rapidly establishing himself as the pre-eminent authority on special effects of the medieval stage ... His approach is cautious, scholarly, and thorough ... Magic on the Early English Stage is a valuable addition to our knowledge of stage effects and other technical 'tricks' of the period.'

## Comparative Drama

"Magic on the Early English Stage provides an unprecedentedly precise and impeccably thorough survey of the historical records within its purview." - Bruce Bohrer, *Studies in English Literature*

"This valuable compendium should be acquired by university libraries and academies of dramatic art." -- DuBruck: *The Current State of Research*

## About the Author

Philip Butterworth is Reader in Medieval Theatre at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds. He is the author of *Theatre of Fire: Special Effects in Early English and Scottish Theatre*, and has published widely in journals on the subject of Medieval Theatre, including essays in *'Medieval English Theatre'*. He is currently working, with Joslin McKinney, on *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*, to be published in 2006.

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Magic on the Early English Stage investigates the performance of magical tricks, illusions, effects and their staged appearance in the medieval and early English theatre. Performers who created such magic were not known as conjurors, as we might refer to them today, but as jugglers. Records concerning jugglers on the medieval stage have been hitherto misunderstood or misapplied. These references to jugglers are re-examined in the light of discussions of 'feats of activity' that also include tumbling, vaulting and 'dancing on the rope'; appearances and disappearances of the 'Now you see it, now you don't' variety; and stage versions of these concepts; magic through sound in terms of ventriloquy and sound through pipes; mechanical images and puppets; and stage tricks. Information that has remained dormant since original publication is discussed in relation to jugglers such as Thomas Brandon, the King's Juggler, and William Vincent, alias 'Hocus Pocus'.

- Investigates the nature of the work of medieval jugglers for the first time
- Identifies and discusses individual jugglers and their work
- Draws upon analysis of stage directions, civic records, ecclesiastical accounts, eye-witness descriptions, and early books on magic to form a picture of the representation of magic on the medieval stage

- Sales Rank: #8414807 in Books
- Published on: 2005-11-21
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## Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

An important addition to conjuring and stage literature

By Gregory B. Edmonds

Coming, as it does, from an academic author and the Cambridge University Press, there's no surprise in the scholarly, and often pedantic, character of the prose found in this publication. It draws heavily from classical conjuring-related texts such as Scott's DISCOUERGIE OF WITCHCRAFT, and to a lesser degree, Ady's A CANDLE IN THE DARK. The extended quotations in the text are of a font size that put a strain my aging eyes as well, but they'll likely prove no problem for most readers.

Author Butterworth excels in bringing to light numerous passages from contemporary medieval and renaissance financial documents, listing various jugglers (conjurers), expressing their play dates, the contents of their programs and what they were paid. His listing of connections to the fraudulent use of trickery by the church, among other institutions and individuals, is also quite interesting, as are the conjuring-related "feats of activity." The theatrical "special effects" noted are very interesting as well. As noted, a fair amount of the content is found in other works, including the profiles of several personalities the author sketches. Butterworth credits Edwin Dawes (who wrote the Foreword), perhaps the world's leading current exponent of magic history, for his assistance. Dawes hand seems apparent in some of the profiles provided, which is a good thing. This text is, however, unique in its combination of information from the periods discussed. I believe it's safe to say there exists no other work to date capable of matching MAGIC ON THE EARLY ENGLISH STAGE's comprehensive content. All of the information is thoroughly credited and annotated. Indeed, the Appendix and Notes sections comprise nearly a third of the book. The book's price is more in line with what one would expect to pay for a college text than for a smallish hardbound tome for the general reader. As a student of magic history, though, I very much enjoyed it and believe those with similar interests will as well.

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