

## 2. EDITIONS AND TEXTUAL STUDIES

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After a brief drought, 2024 saw the release of seven new single-play editions: *As You like It*; *Henry IV, Part I*; *Macbeth*; *Measure for Measure*; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; *Romeo and Juliet*; and *The Tempest* – all published as part of the Oxford World's Classics New Oxford Shakespeare series. The texts, which are taken from *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, overseen by Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus and Gabriel Egan in 2016, have now been furnished with compelling new introductions by Todd Andrew Borlik, Indira Ghose, Emma Smith, Emma Whipday, Callan Davies, Hannah August and Lauren Working, respectively, with more of the editions (twenty-eight in total) set to be released at the start of 2025.

New monographs included Ted Tregear's exploration of Shakespeare's position within the commonplace market in *Anthologizing Shakespeare, 1593–1603*, but the majority of work released in late 2023 and 2024 continued to mark the anniversary of the 1623 Folio: *The Library* issued James West's updates on the 'History of the Shakespeare First Folio' and the First Folio *Census*, and *Shakespeare Quarterly* offered a second anniversary issue, this one made up of essays guest edited by Holger Schott Syme. Further Folio-inspired publications that did not arrive in time for inclusion in this year's review include Matthias Bauer and Angelika Zirker's collection, *Shakespeare's First Folio 1623–2023: Text and Afterlives*, and *The Four Shakespeare Folios, 1623–2023: Copy, Print, Paper, Type*, edited by Samuel V. Lemley.

Crucial but often overlooked female contributions to the field of textual studies were celebrated in an essay by Claire M. L. Bourne that was published as part of Adam Smyth's *The Oxford Handbook of the History of the Book in Early Modern England*. Emma Smith and Lukas Erne contributed essays to *Liber amicorum H. R. Woudhuysen: A Bibliographical Tribute*, edited by Daniel Starza Smith and Hazel Wilkinson. Smith's essay focuses on the lost play 'Love's Labour's Won', while Erne examines the practice of scholarly editing. Journal articles included comparison of the cursive 'h' found in a newly discovered manuscript leaf with 'Hand D' of *Sir Thomas More* and – as an antidote to what Adam G. Hooks has termed (first) 'folio fatigue' – computational

analysis of damaged and distinctive type to identify the printers behind all three sections of the fourth Shakespeare Folio of 1685.

### EDITIONS

The fabulous introductory essays in the Oxford World's Classics New Oxford Shakespeare editions (OWC) are entirely new, but the textual work, attributions and notes are the work of the New Oxford Shakespeare (NOS) editors. It is a strange marriage, and the merging of the two series has advantages and drawbacks. A major event in the history of Shakespeare editing, the NOS (reviewed by Peter Kirwan in a previous issue of *Shakespeare Survey*) consisted of four related publications issued in 2016–2017: a *Modern Critical Edition (MCE)* that featured modernized spelling; a two-volume *Critical Reference Edition (CRE)*, with original spelling; an *Authorship Companion*; and an accompanying website that combined aspects of the print volumes.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the textual work for *As You like It* was completed by Connor; *Henry IV, Part I*, by Anna Pruit; *Macbeth*, by Jowett; *Measure for Measure*, by Bourus; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, by Sarah Neville; *Romeo and Juliet*, by Connor; and *The Tempest*, by Rory Loughane. Glosses – which are also provided by NOS editors – render the playtexts highly accessible.<sup>3</sup>

Paperback editions of individual plays cannot hope to contain all of the information provided in so many colossal volumes. Nonetheless, one problem with basing editions for a wide readership on the NOS's texts is that more explanation is needed than can be contained in the page and a half 'Note on the Text' its general editors provided for each of the OWC editions. As was much discussed at the time of its release, the NOS editors made controversial claims about the size and make-up of the Shakespeare canon and co-

<sup>1</sup> Sincere thanks to Simone Camponovo and Honor Jackson for their help in the preparation of this review section.

<sup>2</sup> An additional volume with 'Alternate versions' of the texts has long been promised but had yet to appear in print at the time of writing.

<sup>3</sup> *As You Like It* is the only edition released thus far said to also include 'a few notes and emendations' especially made 'for this edition' (52).

authorship, much of it supported by author attribution techniques, using computational stylistic approaches such as Word Adjacency Networks (WANs). A very positive upside of linking their canon to the OWC series is that *Arden of Faversham*, one assumes, is set to become available at a very low price in most high street bookshops. On the other hand, the same marketing that will be beneficial to lesser-known plays will also serve to cement conclusions embedded in the NOS in the minds of the general public.

It is debatable whether the short notes on textual choices do enough to prepare new readers for the potential shock of being told, in some instances, that what they hold in their hands is not a Shakespeare play but instead largely the work of Thomas Middleton. Concerning *Macbeth*, a folio-only play, Jowett's textual note restates the hypothesis that the folio text represents Middleton's adaptation of the play, with (unknowable) cuts made, and additions including 'the genre-bending passages presenting Hecate in 3.5 and part of 4.5' (37). The folio text has also been augmented by the addition of the full text of two songs (whereas the folio contains first lines only), and here it is explained that these come from Middleton's *The Witch*. Liable to create confusion is the apparent contradiction between statements that the text that readers have in front of them is 'Middleton's adaptation' and any attempt to reconstruct a pre-adaptation *Macbeth* would be 'speculative and incomplete', but that 'no continuous scene heading is provided for 3.5, because this scene is understood not to have appeared in Shakespeare's original version of the play' (38). The reader may be forgiven for asking what is 'understood' or known and what is 'speculation'. What is at stake here is not so much whether or not one agrees with the hypothesis but rather the fact that readers of the OWC editions are not privy to detailed accounts of the analysis, rationale or methodologies on which these conclusions are based.

Another case in point is Bourus's note on the text of *Measure for Measure*, where she does little to prepare the reader for the announcement that what they have in their hands is not an edition of Shakespeare's play but rather an adaptation. She refers to a performance of the play by the King's Men in 1604, states that the 1623 Folio is the only textual witness and that 'the play's text seems to have been significantly altered' in the interim. She dedicates a paragraph to the questionable nature of Shakespeare's authorship of the single-stanza song 'Take, oh take those lips away' (4.1), before confronting readers with the bald statement that 'the present edition

[of *Measure for Measure*] is based on Middleton's adaptation, probably written in late 1621' (48), without further explanation.

The General Editor's preface to the New Oxford Shakespeare is included in each OWC edition, but this sales pitch for the USP of the NOS, like other notes directing readers to its different volumes, risks stressing just how much is missing from the present editions. For example, Jowett's note on the text of *As You Like It* informs readers that the Folio is the first textual witness and provides helpful information about the play's songs, but readers of this and other editions are redirected to the *CRE* if they want to read 'a transcription and discussion of the original music manuscripts from this play', and the *MCE* if they wish to see 'a modern musical score' (52). To do so, they would need to shell out a lot more money than they did for their OWC edition: the NOS volumes retail for over £300.

*Romeo and Juliet* is exceptional among the editions released so far in that a genuine distinction is made between the texts found in the two series, but it does not result in the most resounding of endorsements for the OWC. Readers are told that the text of 'the New Oxford Shakespeare Complete Works and this Oxford World Classics edition' is based on the 1599 second quarto. However, whilst 'The New Oxford Shakespeare edition emphasizes the uninterrupted sequence of scenes, as presented in the play's first performances', the Oxford World's Classics volume instead features 'traditional act and scene numbers', which were 'conjecturally and anachronistically inserted by later editors' (46). Anachronism and conjecture will no doubt be real selling points for anyone browsing this edition in a bookshop but, sarcasm aside, Taylor's note on the text is worthy of praise as it stands out as being a particularly lucid, easy to follow stand-alone account of textual variants between the different quartos and the 1623 Folio edition of *Romeo and Juliet*.

A helpful 'Chronology of William Shakespeare' is included as a preliminary in each OWC edition and this is, happily, far more nuanced than the discussions of chronology and authorship found in the NOS *Authorship Companion*. Concerning the anonymously published *Arden of Faversham*, it is stated that 'many critics agree Shakespeare had a hand in scenes 4–8, and dispute scene 9' (55), a far less forceful assertion than the *Companion's* claim that scenes 4–9 have been 'unequivocally' classified as Shakespeare's and that it is 'impossible' to believe that Shakespeare had no hand in the play (181, 193). There is also no reference to 'Love's Labour's

Won', included as part of the NOS 'canon', beyond quoting it as part of the list of Shakespeare plays given in Frances Meres's *Palladis Tamia* (c.1597). Users may, however, question why the timeline does not include reference to what Bourus says about the text of *Measure for Measure* having been written by Middleton in 1621, or even, more generally, why some of the editions are not accompanied by a chronology of Middleton's life and career in place of Shakespeare's.

The new chronology helpfully situates the writing of Shakespeare's plays, and their publication in different formats, in the context of Shakespeare's life and political developments, such as 'Elizabeth's proclamation for deportation of "blackamores"', plague closures and the founding of different colonies. Each individual edition is also accompanied by a select bibliography of 'General reading' and recommended reading on the play in question, and these do a good job of balancing classical studies, such as Stephen Orgel's *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (1996) for *As You Like It*, with important recent scholarship, like Farah Karim-Cooper's *The Great White Bard: How to Love Shakespeare while Talking about Race* (2023).

Rather than full introductions to individual plays, the NOS MCE provided a 'sampling of the expanding universe of responses to Shakespeare', which was termed 'tapas Shakespeare' (iv). The OWC editions do a fabulous job of demonstrating how part of Shakespeare's 'timelessness is actually a serial topicality' and how his works 'continue to speak to issues of identity, politics, and culture in new ways' (Emma Smith, OWC General Editor's Preface). The texts may be (textually) based on a complete works edition from almost a decade ago, but the introductions are full of new ideas and readers will be pleasantly surprised by the extent to which these essays enable us to think afresh about some of the best-known plays in the Shakespeare canon.

Smith's introduction to *Macbeth* is a case in point, with its argument about the impact the play's opening stage direction – '*Thunder and Lightning*' – is likely to have had on the audience's bodies, their anxiety-levels, and their relationship to the villainous protagonist. Most likely produced by rolling a cannon ball, the sound of thunder is one that will have created both a loud noise and vibrations, eliciting 'a deep physical resonance, a sensation involving the spectator's whole body' (1). As Smith reminds us, the effect of this stage direction and 'one of the loudest noises ever experienced up close by early modern Londoners' is best understood in the

context of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, which will have left them 'preoccupied by this breach of what would come to be known as homeland security' (12).

In a fascinating section on newly coined or newly topical terms within the play, Smith explains how *Macbeth* is replete with references to the Plot and the trials that followed in 1606. These include words that 'came to epitomize the Plot', like 'blow' and 'equivocate', a term 'associated with the language of political and ethical evasion and its Jesuit manipulators', which appears six times in *Macbeth*. We are also informed of the surprising fact that the play contains the first use of the word 'assassination' (1.7.2), an extension of the (known) word 'assassin', which was 'originally a word for Muslim fighters in the Crusades' (17). It will likely have both seemed and sounded 'strange'; it is 'an alienating term both in the sense that it implicitly likens Macbeth's plan to something done by exotic and distant people', and because it will have escaped the comprehension of the majority of the play's first audiences.

This example of opacity and obscuring fits Smith's (17) reading of Macbeth's first soliloquy (1.7), which she describes as a highly unusual example of such speeches in the Shakespeare canon in that the protagonist does not speak directly or clearly to the audience. In a passage full of beautiful close textual analysis, Smith details the evasive, solipsistic nature of Macbeth's speech, in which he never really says what it is that he is talking about. It is 'as if he cannot bring himself to tell us what he is really thinking' (15). It both does and does not prepare the audience for the crime Macbeth is about to commit and, with this confusion added to the play's startling, loud opening noise, Smith suggests that early audiences will likely have been as jumpy as Macbeth, who is 'morbidly susceptible to sound' (2), thereby aligning them with him as 'every noise' frightens and 'appals' (2.2.55). The overall result, as Smith terms it, is 'the absence of objective distance: we can only be, but never know Macbeth' (19).

Borlik's introduction to *As You Like It* is full of energy and enthusiasm and begins like a sales pitch detailing all that is great about the play, from the fact that it has the largest female role in all of Shakespeare and represents the most musical play in the canon, to its inclusion of a wrestling match 'for those who prefer hard-hitting sports', and even hints of an interest in animal rights (1). A long section is dedicated to Shakespeare's use of sources, particularly to Thomas Lodge's darker romance, *Rosalynde* (1590), and to the pastoral more generally, a genre which, Borlik reminds us, will already have

seemed old fashioned to Shakespeare's audiences but will have held a sort of nostalgic, 'damnably quaint' rustic charm (4). A particularly strong subsection covers foresters and laws governing forests that appear to have influenced the play. Throughout, he provides a rich, celebratory handling of the play's treatment of gender, stopping just short of labelling it an Elizabethan version of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*.

Ghose provides a learned section on 'Histories' to open her discussion of *Henry IV, Part I*, and uses it to highlight both the context in which Shakespeare was writing and what sets him apart as a writer of histories. She covers the genre's appeal, be it in the public theatres, where there was 'a hunger for stories about the national past', or in the studies of Renaissance writers interested in historiography and – as with the given example of Polydore Vergil – fuelled by a desire to question received accounts of the past and demolish myths. Shakespeare, she argues, draws important distinctions between history and literature (2–3); in his history plays, Shakespeare 'avails himself of anachronism to heighten resonances with the present, and has no qualms reshuffling chronology for dramatic purposes' (8). The Tudor Myth is also explored, along with scholarship on and responses to the genre, ranging from E. M. W. Tillyard through Laurence Olivier's production of a film version of *Henry V* to support British efforts during World War II.

A compelling section entitled 'Shakespeare's Machiavellian Moment' explores the connection between Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *The Prince's* philosophy. Ghose's argument challenges conventional interpretations that align Machiavellian thought primarily with Shakespeare's villains. Instead, she positions Prince Hal as Shakespeare's most sophisticated embodiment of Machiavellian strategy. Ghose highlights Hal's soliloquy in 1.2 as a striking illustration of Machiavellian influence. Here, Hal demonstrates his mastery of 'suspense and wonder', skilfully revealing that his tavern escapades were an orchestrated façade (15). This revelation catches the audience off guard and signals the calculated 'surprise' he intends to spring on his peers, aligning with Machiavelli's account of Cesare Borgia's strategic use of shock-and-awe tactics to manipulate perception and consolidate power. Her analysis underscores Hal's deliberate and pragmatic approach, suggesting a ruler who will carefully manage his image and actions, embodying Machiavellian principles of political strategy and foresight. By portraying Hal as a tactician who shapes his destiny through calculated manoeuvres, Ghose offers an insightful reinterpretation of Shakespeare's character as one deeply informed by

Renaissance political thought, challenging the notion that his rise is driven solely by fortune or circumstance.

Another highlight is Ghose's analysis of characters as she asks whose history is told in the play, identifies Hotspur as one of the play's most memorable characters, and analyses the names 'Falstaff' and 'Oldcastle'. Drawing on the 'religious turn' in Shakespeare criticism to revisit censorship theories that have been proposed to explain these and other name changes in different versions of the play, Ghose shifts focus to a broader question: rather than fixating on whom Falstaff might represent, she asks why Shakespeare included him in the play and examines the function he serves. Her answer is that Falstaff is not merely a source of humour and wit but also a vessel through which Shakespeare celebrates the complexity of human nature. Falstaff embodies the contradictions of human life – its pleasures and its pains – allowing Shakespeare to present a nuanced vision of humanity in ways unparalleled in historical drama. Ghose concludes that Falstaff enriches the play by portraying human experience with a depth and vitality that transcends its historical framework, showcasing Shakespeare's innovative approach to character and narrative.

Whipday's introduction to *Measure for Measure* provides a fresh analysis of Isabella's interactions with Angelo, focusing on the 'dangerous game of imagination' she initiates. By asking Angelo to engage in 'a series of imaginative substitutions' to foster empathy and spare her brother's life, Isabella's actions, Whipday argues, closely mirror 'the act of performing a play' (3). This interpretation draws attention to the often-overlooked metatheatrical elements of *Measure for Measure*, highlighting how its structure encourages audiences and readers to confront moral dilemmas – asking themselves what they would do if they held Angelo's power or if 'their own kin were under his sentence' (4).

The play's concern with 'the act of shared imagination' (4), she argues, extends to its reliance on the audience's willingness to suspend disbelief, as seen when a mere cloak conceals the Duke's identity from all that know him and convinces others he is a friar. Whipday connects these self-aware depictions of performance and substitution to the political climate during the play's creation, reflecting on the transition of power as James I ascended the throne following Elizabeth I's reign. This alignment between theatrical representation and political change underscores the play's exploration of authority, identity and the shared illusions that sustain societal and dramatic structures. Other topics covered in

this rich piece include the ‘Monstruous Ransom’, how the Duke can be seen as ‘the most difficult to pin down’ of the play’s characters (14), treatment of *Measure for Measure*’s near obsession with women’s maidenhead, and ‘Marriage and Death’.

Davies presents a thorough and insightful introduction to *Merry Wives of Windsor*, exploring the play’s status as a ‘spin-off’ and its relationship to the *Henriad*, as well as ways in which critics have responded to the Falstaff depicted in this play versus the character in the history plays. He also explores questions of genre and style, highlighting *Merry Wives* as a blend of domestic and city comedy, characterized by its heavy use of prose. He situates the play within its social and spatial context, discussing Windsor’s representation and its implications for social status. His analysis extends to the themes of physical households and their dynamics, material culture (notably fabric and the iconic laundry basket) and the treatment of marriage and gender roles. One of Davies’s most illuminating observations relates to the play’s self-awareness in its exploration of role-playing and its engagement with ‘social themes and contexts’ (32). He offers a nuanced discussion of the play’s reliance on physical comedy, unscripted moments, and its capacity to animate ‘pre-modern ideas of fun’ (37), showcasing *Merry Wives* as a vibrant, comedic work that is deeply connected to its cultural and theatrical milieu.

August uses the prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* to consider the play’s structure and its interest in binaries. Noting how unusual it is for a prologue to give so many spoilers, she offers astute analysis of the impact it has on audiences. For example, it both anchors the Italian setting, with its associations with Petrarchan love and Catholicism, and ensures that ‘subsequent action and dialogue is studded with painful moments of dramatic irony’ (1). Attention is also paid to the play’s genre and the way in which we are presented with paired scenes, whereby the first is comic and the second tragic, such as when Romeo and Mercutio’s battle of wits (2.4) is revisited as a literal sword fight in 3.1, or in the case of *Romeo and Juliet*’s two exchanges at her window, one of which ends in hope (2.1), the other with despair (3.5). Addressing the fallacy that this play constitutes the greatest love story of all time, she suggests that *Romeo and Juliet* instead ‘explores the failure of both Petrarchan and platonic scripts of love to accommodate real world exigencies’ (16).

Finally, in her account of *The Tempest*, Working presents the play as pastoral romance and travel story,

and as a critique of colonialism. She identifies traces of early modern literature proposing plantations in colonies in the play and contrasts this with critiques of imperialism, exemplified by lines spoken by Gonzalo (Shakespeare’s ‘most measured counsellor’) which, for Working, echo Michel de Montaigne’s defence of indigenous societies and reflect tensions the play stages between colonial ambition and utopian ideals. There is also a lovely account of the play’s ‘Language and Music’, and a section on ‘Books, Clothes, and Fragments’ which illuminates the symbolic and thematic significance of material culture in the play. Further, she delves into the themes of ‘Wonders, Illusion, and Intoxication’, and explores the various forms of magic represented in the narrative in a segment titled ‘Rejecting and Reclaiming the Witch’.

The different introductions show varying levels of interest in questions raised by the NOS. Some engage with textual decisions and authorship in detail (see, for example, Borlik, 34–9, and Smith, 23), and Davies reminds readers that ‘Shakespeare and his audiences would have understood “the play” *Merry Wives* to be far more than the text presented in quarto or Folio, or in any modern edition, and to encompass elements that went beyond scripted dialogue’ (2). Ghose’s discussion of character names reflects a similar attitude to Davies, whilst others analyse their play without reference to early printed texts or the NOS.

Indeed, one of the greatest strengths of the OWC series is that the scholars introducing the plays have clearly been given the freedom to reflect their own interests and present the plays on their own terms. Concerning performance history, the result is that Smith’s entire discussion of *Macbeth* is supported by helpful illustrative examples from past productions, films, and TV adaptations, most of which are still available to watch in one form or another (a thoughtful touch), whereas August pays focused attention to forms of performance, with separate sections on ‘Early Modern Performances’, ‘Later Performance History’, and on ‘Altering and Augmenting the Text’, from Restoration adaptations through recent productions that have ‘explicitly embraced queer identities for the supporting characters’ (43). Working has a closing section in which she charts adaptations and productions of *The Tempest*, from *The Sea Voyage* (1622) and John Dryden and William Davenant’s *Enchanted Island* (1667), through postcolonial works, such as Aimé Césaire’s *Une Tempête* (1969), to recent stage productions like Mohegan director and performer Madeline Sayet’s solo performance of *Where*

*We Belong* at the Globe Theatre in 2019. Each approach to performance afterlives works equally well and it is refreshing not to have the same subheadings repeated for each play. Indeed, the varied structures contribute to the series' achievement in celebrating each play individually, on its own merits. It should also be noted that, in contrast to some of the notes on texts discussed above, the introductions each do a great job of balancing academic rigour and discussion of recent scholarship and debates with accessibility and an awareness of what it is that makes these plays 'classics'.

## TEXTUAL STUDIES

Tregear's *Anthologizing Shakespeare* presents an exciting new perspective on Shakespeare's role as a literary author, portraying him as actively engaged in shaping the reception of his plays and poems. Tregear identifies what he terms Shakespeare's 'Anthologizing Period', a distinct phase in his early print career, from *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 to *Hamlet* in 1603. During this time, Shakespeare not only dominated anthologies but also embedded within his works 'conspicuously extractable passages' crafted to capture the attention of readers looking to select and extract material (25). Tregear argues that these passages were designed to do more than stand out to would-be commonplacers; they also invite reflection on the act of excerption itself – how it influences the meaning of a text, the voices it 'invests with authority', and the interpretations it enables or distorts (25). His study deepens our understanding of Shakespeare's print strategies in important ways, revealing his nuanced awareness of commonplace culture and ways in which his works could be curated, repurposed and consumed by contemporary readers.

Recent studies have explored commonplacing and anthologizing, but they tend to treat individual titles like the five anthologies considered by Tregear – *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), *England's Parnassus* (1600), *Bel-vedère* (1600), *Englands Helicon* (1600) and *Loves Martyr* (1601) – in isolation. This is understandable as there are notable differences between the form and contents of these collections and, as Tregear recognizes, they can be, and have been, classified under different generic labels. His rationale for grouping the five volumes together includes sensitive analysis of the floral metaphors running through them (including in their subtitles, e.g. *Bel-vedère* is a 'Garden of the Muses' and *Parnassus* a collection of 'choyest Flowers') and a reminder that 'although the word "anthology" had not yet passed into

English, the Greek anthologia, a compound of anthē legein, means a collection of flowers: anthology is choyest Flowers' (11). *The Passionate Pilgrim*, Tregear argues, ought thus to be seen as 'an anthology in disguise', and the contents may have been the work of a number of different writers but, with its title-page attribution, it 'singled Shakespeare out as representative of a whole style of 1590s poetry' (7).

Tregear breaks new ground by examining Shakespeare's role within the anthology genre as a whole, offering a more integrated perspective and an overview of the 'common problems' anthologies address (6). This yields significant insights, including statistical analyses that shed new light on the position and prominence of Shakespeare plays and poems across the corpus. For example, we learn that Shakespeare (cited 240 times) comes second only to Edmund Spenser in *Bel-vedère*, but is the most prominent dramatist in *Parnassus*, with 30 quotes from the plays and 65 from the poems.

The most frequently anthologized play in *Parnassus* and *Bel-vedère* is *Richard II*, and it is John of Gaunt's deathbed scene that seems to have most attracted the compilers. He contends that this selection highlights an inherent affinity between the play's structure and the anthology's form, and argues that the anthologies' focus on John of Gaunt's words in *Richard II* enhances, rather than diminishes, their connection to the emotional power of the dying scene. According to Tregear, Shakespeare uses the play to explore how historical drama can incorporate words that transcend their original spatial and temporal context – words that, through their potential for inclusion in anthologies, strive to establish an independent historical identity (35).

*Lucrece* is extracted more than any other Shakespeare text in *Parnassus*, with 39 extracts (ahead of *Venus and Adonis* with 26), and in *Bel-vedère*, with 97 extracts. We are told that these include many of the lines marked as sententiae in the 1594 edition of *Lucrece*, published by Richard Field, but they are 'not restricted to those lines alone' (109). Describing the 1594 *Lucrece* as 'an edition as likely to be authorized as anything Shakespeare issued', Tregear suggests plausibly that the inverted commas marking 'selected lines' in the margins may well have been Shakespeare's own additions (111). However, what strengthens Tregear's argument and enables him to push beyond previous accounts of typographical markers of literary sententiae, such as those in the 1603 quarto edition of *Hamlet*, is his identification of meta references to practices of excerpting and remembering across various Shakespearian texts. Lines like Adonis' calling Venus

an ‘over-handled theme’, or his statement that ‘the text is old, the orator too green’, clearly comment on and invite commonplacings, as do many of Polonius’s maxims, discussed in the chapter on tragedies. Further, he identifies thematic resonances between *Lucrece* and the anthologies that later featured Shakespeare’s works, drawing attention to Lucrece’s ‘preoccupation with quoting: what it means to be quoted, misquoted, and to live on in quotations’ (109). These examples cannot be mere printshop additions, they indeed seem to show Shakespeare engaging actively with the practices of excerpting and memorialization, embedding within his texts an awareness of their potential afterlives.

In sum, Tregear’s monograph offers invaluable insights into Shakespeare’s early reception, showing that he was not only read ‘closely and enthusiastically’, but also regarded as ‘worthy of comparison with the best of his contemporaries’ (6). The study also sheds light on the history of reading and book use through its analysis of manuscript annotations, including examples of readers amending excerpts to align with their sources. By bridging textual analysis with the broader cultural practices of anthologizing and reading, *Anthologizing Shakespeare* promises to significantly impact Shakespeare studies and the field of book history, offering a deeper understanding of how Shakespeare’s works were consumed, adapted, and canonized in his own time and beyond.

One thing that Tregear was not able to shed light on is ‘Love’s Labour’s Won’, a play Emma Smith suspects might, if it was indeed ever printed or performed, be preserved within such anthologies, albeit without attribution. As mentioned above, Meres included the title in a list of Shakespeare plays given in *Palladis Tamia: wits Treasury*. A second reference to the title is found in a bookseller’s accounts of 1603 (discovered in 1957, within waste papers used to bind a 1637 book), and these, plus other factors, are analysed by Smith in an essay within *Liber amicorum H. R. Woudhuysen*, to suggest that ‘Won’ likely once existed but is now lost. She shares an original hypothesis about ‘Won’s’ relationship to *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, questioning assumptions that Won must be a sequel to *Lost* due to ‘the syntactic parallel of their titles’ (132).

Rather than view *Lost* as an incomplete play or one in need of a sequel – an interpretation grounded in the notion that its ending, where the lovers do not immediately marry, is an unsatisfying conclusion by conventional standards – Smith suggests a different possibility: what if ‘Won’ predated *Lost*? She challenges the assumption that ‘Won’ was merely a sequel by pointing out that

it is often assumed that it would be ‘comically restitutive’, even though *Love’s Labour’s Lost* does not fully dramatize loss. This assumption, she rightly argues, overlooks the ‘generic innovation’ of *Lost*’s unresolved romantic ending. She gives evidence from across Shakespeare’s works to show that phrases like ‘won’ and ‘lost’ appear in interchangeable order and, through comparison with other playwrights of the time, notes that it is rare to find pairs of plays with syntactical titles that genuinely form a cohesive narrative unit outside of history plays. This analysis offers a fresh perspective on Shakespeare’s treatment of narrative structure and the interplay between his works, even if all we have – until a copy of ‘Won’ rears its head – is conjecture. Smith’s essay is a fitting tribute to Woudhuysen, to whom the collection is dedicated, and who edited *Lost* for Arden 3 (1998).

In an effort to shed light on the often unnoticed or unacknowledged impact of editorial choices, Erne’s essay in the same volume identifies thirteen significant types of editorial interventions. These range from decisions about the specific object of editorial recovery – especially critical in cases where multiple early modern versions exist – to elements like introductions, commentary, character lists, act and scene divisions, and approaches to spelling. While the list is not exhaustive, as Erne acknowledges, omitting aspects such as collation, collaboration and the commercial constraints of publishers, it serves as a valuable blueprint for editors and students of textual editing.

The essay enables Erne to make crucial points about ‘perverse institutional practices’ whereby ‘the recognition bestowed on editions is rarely commensurate with the labour and expertise required from the editor’ (145). Indeed, academic hiring committees too often choose to overlook the outputs of talented textual editors in favour of those who write monographs, even if, ‘unlike academic monographs or journals, important Shakespeare editions are read by tens or even hundreds of thousands of people’ (147). This critique underscores the urgent need to re-evaluate how editorial work is valued within academia, advocating greater recognition of the expertise and influence wielded by editors in shaping the reception and understanding of Shakespeare’s works.

The topics of ghost copies and editing were also at the heart of a roundtable published as part of *Shakespeare Quarterly*’s second F1 anniversary issue of 2023. Speakers examined the centrality of the 1623 Folio and key trends in editing and textual criticism over the past two decades, thereby providing helpful points of

reference for scholars and students alike. Additionally, the discussion (briefly) delved into the potential existence of ‘ghost copies’ of quartos predating F1. Eric Rasmussen referenced John Berkenhour’s *Bibliographia Literaria* (1777), which lists a 1594 *Tempest* and a 1604 *Macbeth*, among others. This was supported by David McInnes, citing *The Beauties of the English Drama* (also 1777), and by reminders of Peter Blayney’s estimate that a third of early books went unregistered (364).

Sonia Massai observed a shift in focus away from reconstructing authorial or theatrical intentions towards embracing the diversity of early textual sources. She emphasized the value of acknowledging the uneven quality of copies underlying both F1 and early quartos, suggesting that modern editors are increasingly free to adopt varied approaches (379). McInnes added to this the appealing suggestion that F1 should be viewed less as a first complete works, especially as it was no such thing, and more as a print ‘festival’ of Shakespeare’s plays, ‘compiled under tight deadlines and showcasing their variable states of readiness’ (379). This perspective, he argued, allows contemporary editors to create editions that reflect ‘multiple interpretative possibilities’ (379). The session concluded with a forward-looking vision, articulated by Massai, who urged editors to critically reassess the authority traditionally accorded to F1. This ‘unpicking’ of F1’s dominance, she argued, is essential for fostering a richer and more representative approach to editing Shakespeare’s works ‘that recognizes other types of authorities, including what more diverse editors can bring to Shakespeare’ (380).

The special issue, entitled ‘The Shakespeare First Folio as Source, Object, and Evidence’ is less concerned with celebrating the F1 quatercentenary than it is with highlighting both the volume’s status as ‘a myriad-faceted brand’ (304), and its many inconsistencies, so as to avoid them being ‘theorized out of existence’ or ignored altogether (304). A fabulous essay by Lucy Munro supports this aim by uncovering the roles played by members of Shakespeare’s company whom F1’s infamous ‘Names of the Principall Actors’ list sought to write out of history. Munro begins by detailing a list of books in folio-format owned by Henry Condell and his family that indicates both that actors were ‘aware of the advantages of large-format publication’ and, importantly, that the 1616 edition of Ben Jonson’s *Workes* was ‘not the only model available [to Condell] during the planning of the 1623 Shakespeare Folio’ (315). But the books owned – which include a copy of Chaucer’s works, *The Decameron* and the *Faerie Queen* – also

provide a reminder of just how wealthy and influential Condell was, a point that is made abundantly clear in the remainder of the essay.

Munro analyses the paratext to expose ‘unstated rules of inclusion and exclusion’, and makes key observations about the version of Shakespeare’s company it seeks to represent: it is not only an inaccurate reflection of those who performed Shakespeare’s plays, but also a carefully constructed document, one entirely composed of shareholders, that ‘represents and is a product of, the company’s elite’ (326, 316). Indeed, as she goes on to show through careful attention to stage directions and speech prefixes in the playtexts of F1, ‘references to hired players, apprentices, and musicians . . . implicitly acknowledge that there were actors’ other than the company implied by the Folio list. This work is coupled with a breathtaking amount of evidence amassed from parish registers, wills and other legal documents which enables Munro to glimpse ‘alternative lives and narratives’ (316), and to bring to light ‘the hierarchies and the invisible labor on which the work of the King’s Men depended’ (317).

The issue also contains a sub-section, put together by Bourne, which features short essays that address F1’s existence as ‘an object in the world’, be it in the Bodleian library (Tara Lyons), Carl H. Pforzheimer’s treatment of his copy, now held at the Harry Ransom Center, the University of Texas at Austin (Aaron T. Pratt), in the hands (or not) of two very different eighteenth-century collectors (Vanessa Braganza), or else by tracing the Auckland Free Library copy’s movement from colonial-era donation to source of cross-cultural events (Jane Wild). The issue closes with Jason Scott-Warren’s important reminder that petro-capitalism ‘funded the establishment of some of the most prominent collections of Shakespeariana in the world’ (305), a point which could have been further explored through detailed analysis of these collections and the extent to which they are and are not making efforts to recognize their varied legacies, but the essay instead ends up as an opinion piece rather than offering sustained consideration of the Folio as an object.

Lyons’s brilliant chapter, by contrast, returns to sources to correct a narrative alleging that Sir Thomas Bodley banned playbooks from the public library he founded in Oxford in 1598, only to ease the ban in order to house the first Shakespeare Folio in 1624. The story has been repeated so often that it is considered fact. Lyons draws on manuscript library records to reveal ‘a rich body of evidence of English playbooks in the pre-

1624 Bodleian collections' (387), and traces the story's rehashing and embellishments in modern scholarship from David-Scott Kastan's 2001 *Shakespeare and the Book* to Stephen Orgel's 2015 *The Reader in the Book*. Indeed, by analysing such 'counterfactual slippages', Lyons suggests that we are able to observe 'how the recirculation of conventional wisdom provided opportunities for scholars to bend the facts to aggrandize Shakespeare' (394). One cannot help but cringe for Douglas A. Brookes, whom Lyons also quotes as repeating the story, when re-reading his suggestion that Bodley 'had a change of heart' by 1623: as Lyons points out, Bodley died over a decade earlier. This essay also exposes scholarly tendencies to privilege the agency of wealthy, named owners and benefactors of repositories whilst overlooking the numerous agents who were responsible and continue to be responsible for the acquisitions, cataloguing, conservation and day-to-day smooth running of libraries and research institutes.

The truth of the matter, Lyons tells us, is that Bodley 'did direct his librarian to reject idle books such as plays in 1612' (388), but he also died shortly after penning that letter. The librarian, Thomas James, 'shelved and catalogued a wide range of English playbooks' as well as almanacs and other popular and small-format books, and did so before 1624 (388). Drama may not have been prioritized by James and his successor, John Rouse, but the library did house 'playbooks by Ben Jonson, George Chapman, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Middleton, Elizabeth Cary, Francis Beaumont, Robert Taylor, Thomas Heywood, and others' (388), as well as the 1616 Jonson Folio, and this long before the infamous Shakespeare Folio was added. These facts are clearly documented in library records, albeit in manuscript records that require persistence on behalf of the researcher. It seems that nobody has bothered to check until now. Or, to take Lyons's more cynical view, nobody has been inclined to check because the truth might disrupt convenient myths about Shakespeare and his Folio (388).

Another stand-out essay in the collection is Pratt's engaging discussion of a collector who, by masking the true make-up of his copy of F1, 'rather ironically obscured the very thing that most distinguishes it' (404). In a bid to raise the First Folio he purchased in the early 1920s to the top category of copies – based on condition and completion, as dictated by the likes of Sidney Lee in his *Census* of 1902 – Pforzheimer sought to complete and 'perfect' his copy by adding what at first appeared to be missing leaves. Having

consulted with Henrietta C. Bartlett, Pforzheimer had good reason to believe that his copy was not in fact imperfect but instead issued without the bifolium preliminary leaves 'containing Digges's verses and the list of actors' (398). Indeed, Pratt suggests, other surviving copies of F1 indicate that a handful of copies were probably issued without them.

Pforzheimer looks to have bowed to pressure exerted by Lee's system of classification and, having 'completed' his copy through the purchase of facsimile leaves, later felt able to describe his Folio (in the 1940 catalogue of his library) as follows: 'Since this copy was acquired the two preliminary leaves which had been lacking, at least since last bound, have been supplied with genuine originals, inlaid to size. This copy is listed in Lee's *Census* Class II, Division A. In its present condition it would be eligible for Class I, Division B' (398). He then went on, Pratt explains, to obtain 'a pair of restored originals, but they remain unbound and housed separately from his Folio', and he may well have instructed his cataloguer to downplay the theory of some copies of F1 being issued without the bifolium (398).

In essence, Pforzheimer was probably hedging his bets; 'Had the originals of the Digges and Actors leaves he acquired actually been inserted, he would indeed have earned himself a Class I First Folio', but by noting, even at the bottom of the catalogue page, 'that his copy appears to have been originally sold without them, he could still boast a copy that prompts insight into an untold aspect of [F1's] early circulation' (402). As it is, this case study about the combination of Lee's classification system and Pforzheimer's desire to own a 'perfect', complete copy indicates how collection habits at given moments in time can 'confuse, or even render forever uncertain, part of an entire edition's history' (398).

Further discussion of specific copies of F1 is also found in West's update to his 2003 *Worldwide Census of First Folios*, and in his survey of 'selected events in the story of the First Folio' since the publication of his 2001 *Account of the First Folio Based on Its Sales and Prices, 1623–2000*. To supplement the *Census*, he lists, in chronological order, all sales of Folios and all copies discovered since July of the year 2000. The *Census* listed 228 volumes and this has been taken up to 235. For each 'new' Folio, a new number has been assigned and details of provenance and the buyer, the bookseller or auctioneer, and the price are provided, along with comments related to each of these three categories. These are supplemented by guides for anyone hoping to find a copy: 'Pursuing Leads to "New" Folios', and

'Some Targets for First Folio Hunters'. Chief among the latter is a copy stolen from the Owens College (Christie Library), Manchester in 1972 (W218/Lee 63). It is perhaps worth noting that West records 'ghost' copies in his census, as well as known copies, whereas the online Shakespeare Census, managed by Zachary Lesser and Adam G. Hooks, only records copies whose survival has been confirmed.

West's updated *Account* consists of notes under a series of headings which include, but are not limited to, the project to digitize the Bodleian Library copy of F1, the Folger Shakespeare Library First Folio Exhibitions, sales of institutional copies, the Folio's worth and new record prices, how the Folger's holdings of copies of F1 increased, the theft and recovery of the University of Durham copy (W7), and Claire M. L. Bourne and Jason Scott-Warren's discovery that the manuscript annotations in the copy in the Free Library of Philadelphia (W179) were made by John Milton. It is helpful to have this update in article form, even if the listing feels a little dry in comparison to recent, engaging accounts of the history of copies of this iconic book.

Adam Smyth's refreshing collection, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of the Book in Early Modern England*, is packed with original essays, offering explanations of subjects from 'Ways of approaching the history of the book' and 'Making books', to 'Moving books: selling, circulating, borrowing, imagining' and 'Using books: reading and marketing, collecting and preserving'. It does not repeat the same material or approaches found in previous handbooks and companions, and one of the main strengths of the volume is its dedication to inclusivity and its questioning of 'how it is that book history has been created as a discipline that has perpetuated' inequalities and exclusions (14). This is illustrated (in relation to Shakespeare studies) in the essay discussed below, and in the inclusion of outstanding essays by conservationists, curators, librarians and cataloguers – the experts on whose knowledge all bibliographical and book-historical work depends. Many of the topics covered lie beyond the scope of Shakespeare textual studies and I regret that it is not possible to do justice to the full contents of the collection in this review. The volume as a whole contains vital reading for anyone with an interest in book history, bibliography and the origins, futures and alternate histories of the field.

Claire M. L. Bourne's essay in Smyth's collection, 'The handmaids' tale: book history, Shakespeare, and women's textual labour', investigates how women's bibliographic contributions have often been subsumed into male-

dominated narratives of textual history, particularly concerning Shakespeare. She exemplifies this through Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespeare Illustrated* (1752), the first significant study of Shakespeare's sources; Evelyn May Albright, whose *Dramatic Publication in England, 1580–1640* (1927) critiqued foundational theories about Shakespeare's texts, including A. W. Pollard's 'good' and 'bad' quartos; and through the work of Alice Walker, who played a pivotal role in compositor studies in *Textual Problems of the First Folio* (1953), and whose unpublished old-spelling Oxford Shakespeare edition advanced understanding of the labour behind Shakespeare's texts. While Walker's work was recognized in her time, it has often been relegated to feminist critique, Bourne argues, rather than integrated into broader histories of the field. Her essay calls for a re-evaluation of bibliographic history that fully acknowledges the expertise and impact of these pioneering women, arguing that their work is essential for understanding the development of Shakespeare studies and textual editing.

Particularly illuminating is the essay's account of Henrietta C. Bartlett, known for her work on the *Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto* (1916, 1939), but here lauded for her pedagogical innovations in book history and material bibliography. Bourne draws attention to Bartlett's teaching materials, preserved at the Beinecke Library, which include reverse-engineered quarto sheets and samples of early printing. As Bourne rightly summarizes, these resources reflect Bartlett's expertise and her effort to democratize access to bibliographic knowledge, just as Walker's insights into the relationships between compositors, copy and typesetting were transformative, marking a shift in how Shakespearean texts were approached and understood.

Walker also 'challenged the argument that the spelling of certain words written by Hand D in the *Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* manuscript pointed to Hand D being Shakespeare', suggesting that the spellings were 'too common in manuscripts of the period to have any significance' (34). This debate was revisited recently by Molly G. Yarn and Eric Rasmussen. They analysed a distinct scribal habit – 'in which the lower loop of a cursive *h* makes a high arch before connecting with an *a*' – previously thought unique to Shakespeare and Hand D in the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript (452). Their study included a newly discovered English manuscript leaf, dated c. 1550, which displayed a similar *h-a* ligature. Comparative analysis led them to conclude that this hand differed from Hand D. Additionally, Heather Wolfe, Curator of Manuscripts at the Folger Shakespeare

Library, provided evidence of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, using a similar *h-a* form in a 1588 letter. Yarn and Rasmussen therefore understandably concluded that this ligature's presence across multiple examples 'challenges the uniqueness of the form' and may require a reassessment of its role as a link between Shakespeare and the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript (452). The article includes clear images and a diplomatic transcript, allowing readers to assess the evidence for themselves, without needing access to rare or distant archives.

It is always refreshing to see scholars return to old debates with fresh resources, as is also the case with a team of researchers investigating the printers of the fourth Shakespeare Folio of 1685. The 1685 collection was published by Henry Herringman, Richard Bentley, Edward Brewster and Robert Chiswell, whose names appear variously on different imprints, but no printer was named. We know, from George Watson Cole's 1909 work, that it was printed in three separate parts, with separate pagination, by three different printers and, until recently, only the printer of the first part had been identified. Fredson Bowers, writing in 1951, identified Robert Roberts as the printer of this section and, in doing so, corrected C. William Miller's 1948 suggestion that Thomas Newcombe Junior was behind it.

Equipped with the methodologies of computational analysis of damaged and distinctive type, the team – which consists of Christopher N. Warren, Samuel V. Lemley, D. J. Schuldt, Elizabeth Dieterich, Laura S. Deluca, Max G'Sell, Taylor Berg-Kirkpatrick, Kari Thomas, Kartik Goyal and Nikolai Vogler – have convincingly demonstrated that Robert Everingham printed the second section (spanning pages 1–328, sigs. BBB–EEE8v) and John Macock printed the third section (from page 1 through 304, sigs. AA4–BBBB8v), along with the infamous error '*HAMLET / RPINCE of DENMARK*' echoed in the article's title. Further, their work corroborates Bowers's identification of Roberts as the printer of the first part, spanning signatures A1–Z4.

The approach consists of bringing Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to bear on digital facsimiles of copies of the 1685 Folio and publications with known printers, 'to identify and categorize all majuscule Roman-type pieces', before using 'a combination of computer-aided damage detection, visual inspection, and computational matching' to identify examples of distinctive or broken pieces of type (140, n. 5). In particular, the new attributions are linked to distinctive 'pica body type' and 'titling type matches', the latter of which shows that Macock was responsible for one of the

title page's two settings and Roberts for the other (141). The article is accompanied by clear, convincing images to support these findings.

Comparing their methodology with that of Charlton Hinman, who consulted a minimum of three copies of F1 because he was analysing damaged type within a volume to attempt to determine the order in which sheets were printed, the authors note that their work 'requires consulting fewer copies because [they] rely on multiple, highly likely damage matches, for which any single one could conceivably be a phantom but which in toto represent a body of evidence in favor of a given printer' (141, n. 5). That makes good sense but what is lacking from their discussion is attention to the section of F4 that, according to Lara Hansen and Rasmussen, was reprinted in c.1700 by a printer working with Richard Wellington. Wellington inherited Bentley's copies and stock after his death in 1697 but discovered that he had been 'short sheeted' and therefore needed to commission the reprinting of seventeen sheets before he could sell complete copies of F4. The short sheeting can now be blamed on Everingham, as it came from the middle section of the edition, but it would be very interesting to know what further light the authors' study can shed on the printer who produced the reprinted sheets in c.1700.

The discovery is very exciting for Shakespeare studies and for analytical bibliography more generally, and the printers identified are very plausible contenders, given that they are known to have printed other projects for the publishers in question. To take one example, Everingham is known to have printed Bentley projects and even entered copies in the Stationers' Register on his behalf; and Macock, Everingham's former master printer, worked with Herringman on a number of publications. As the authors rightly note, Roberts seems the most unlikely of the three to be involved in the project but they add the fresh hypothesis that he may have stepped in to replace his 'longtime' partner, Anne Maxwell, who frequently worked with Brewster (the other publisher involved in F4), but who looks to have died at some point in 1685.

In sum, the year's work brought significant contributions, including fresh perspectives on seven plays, and critical reflections on the biases and assumptions underpinning Shakespeare editing and textual studies. A handful of scholars encouraged deeper interrogation of received knowledge and challenged the traditional narratives that shape accounts of book history, Shakespeare, the First Folio, and its compilers' enduring legacy. Material bibliographers advanced the field

with innovative methodologies that uncovered new insights into textual production, and groundbreaking research on commonplace culture highlighted Shakespeare's strategic engagement with his reputation and works.

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