

Ghosts, Holes, Rips and Scrapes: Shakespeare in 1619, Bibliography in the Longue Durée. Zachary Lesser.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press in cooperation with Folger Shakespeare Library, 2021. x + 198 pp. \$49.95.

The Pavier Quartos, a collection of ten plays often considered the first printed collection of Shakespeare in print, have been a prominent source of evidence for situating Shakespeare's drama and his authorial status within the early modern book trade. As with many early modern publications, their narrative is far from straightforward: a number of the plays are not actually by Shakespeare; their appearance on the market in 1619 was in contradiction to an edict protecting the rights of Shakespeare's playing company, the King's Men, against unauthorized printing of their plays; and the appearance of false publishing dates on certain title pages misrepresents the quartos—all of which were printed at the same time—as including leftover copies of earlier editions. The first definitive bibliographical discussions of these texts came from the New Bibliographers of the early twentieth century. Their scrutiny of available copies of the Quartos produced a base of bibliographic evidence that produced Shakespeare-centric narratives of illicit publications and pirate stationers which, despite challenges from recent textual scholarship, still influence understandings of Shakespeare's relationship with the book trade.

In his latest book, Zachary Lesser asserts that continued fealty to the evidence and narratives of New Bibliography has stymied studies of the Quartos. For instance, while meticulous in their descriptions, the number of texts examined by these scholars was limited to editions encountered by chance or in the libraries of their own institutions. Lesser counters this with an extensive case study of 342 copies of plays from these collections. (That so many exist is a revelation.) From this expanded pool of evidence, Lesser reconsiders accepted theories of the Quartos' rationale and offers fresh insights into its textual transmission. The result is an important and compelling study that also invites questions about the state of bibliographical research.

Each chapter focuses on a particular bibliographic element of the copies which, Lesser notes, have been largely overlooked because they are not visible in digital facsimiles. Chapter 1 explores the phenomenon of *ghosts*: title pages that, due to the composition of ink, bled into a page that was bound next to it, leaving a faint, ghostly image. The presence of these specters among copies of the Quartos revealed that more bound volumes of the collection were sold in 1619 than originally thought; a significant revelation that enables Lesser to argue convincingly that the idea of the quarto collection originated with stationers rather than readers.

Chapter 2's study of stab-stitch holes (a lack of these indicates that copies were bound as a collection rather than individually) prompts the book's most striking challenge to scholarly convention. Arguing that it was actually the printers, William and Isaac Jaggard, who were the most consistent agents in the publication of the

Quartos, Lesser renames the collection the “Jaggard Quartos” for the rest of the book. Switching the focus to the Jaggards presents new opportunities for thinking about the production and dissemination of the collection. For instance, to center printers over publishers subverts conventional narratives that publishers, not printers, were the motivating agents of publication. It would have been interesting to get a more in-depth discussion of this change in perspective as it prompts new questions about motivation and textual authority among agents of the book trade.

In chapter 3, “Rips and Scrapes,” the misdated title pages are contextualized in the Jaggard printing house. The fascinating study of hand-inked changes to imprints shows that the altered dates of at least some of the title pages were made near to the time of printing. Overall, this rich study raises almost as many questions as it produces answers, a point Lesser readily acknowledges in his conclusion. For example, how common are some of these elements beyond the Shakespeare bubble? The book also raises issues of access and inclusivity in twenty-first-century bibliography. Lesser rightly argues for the need to examine all existing texts in person, but few scholars will have the resources to conduct such extensive, in-person research. Nevertheless, this riveting study provides compelling new takes on a foundational episode of Shakespeare book history and will reinvigorate scholarship on these texts.

Jennifer Young, *University of Greenwich*

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Hunger, Appetite and the Politics of the Renaissance Stage. Matt Williamson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. vi + 238 pp. \$99.99.

The title of Matt Williamson’s *Hunger, Appetite and the Politics of the Renaissance Stage* aptly summarizes the book’s focus, which reviews both broad and nuanced topics around the way these two concepts—hunger and appetite—operate in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays to reflect socioeconomic shifts and conflicts of the early modern era. Subjects range from the role of servants and women vis-à-vis restricted food access to the radical implications of hunger as a precursor to revolt. Williamson dissects plays by, among others, Lyly, Chapman, Dekker, Middleton, Jonson, and Shakespeare, for evidence of broader struggles distinct from such physiological drives. Extensive consideration is given to understanding the difference between the demands of hunger on the body as opposed to appetite cravings and what each represents when embodied in stage action. Marxist perspectives imbue Williamson’s critique through a focus on characters of different classes who are shown to represent broader class conflicts. Food allows Williamson to analyze the plays to source evidence of anxieties over access to food during the transition from feudal to capitalist economies.

I confess part of my reaction to the book is based on how the title misled me, although I could be responsible for looking for something more focused on stagecraft,