
Tarnya Cooper. *Searching for Shakespeare*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006. 239p.

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The perennial search for Shakespeare here becomes an investigation of material culture: paintings, drawings, manuscripts (usually in secretary hand), maps, printed books, and objects. The book itself is beautiful and a pleasure to handle: a lavish adornment of the coffee table, 9¾ by 11¼ inches, with red endpapers, printed on thick and not too glossy paper, felicitously laid out, and elegantly illustrated. It is based on an exhibit of portraits of Shakespeare and related items at the National Portrait Gallery in London and the Center for the Study of British Art at Yale in 2006. Essays by Stanley Wells on Shakespeare's life, James Shapiro on Shakespeare's theater, and Tarnya Cooper on contemporary conventions of portraiture precede the catalogue of the exhibition. An essay by Marcia Pointon on the contribution of Shakespeare's image to national identity follows it. The catalogue provides images of nearly all the objects in the exhibition, accompanied by the comments of one of a group of seventeen scholars. The scholarship is current and solid.

The catalogue begins with the centerpiece of the exhibition: images of Shakespeare that, although posthumous, are presumably faithful enough likenesses to have satisfied people who had known the playwright. These are the Droeshout engraving (catalogue 1) and the monument in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford (catalogue 2). The catalogue continues with portraits that people have considered authentic representations of Shakespeare as he appeared during his life: "these images represent a visual history of interest in Shakespeare.... they reflect our desire to encounter the expressive features and ponder the emotional character of the playwright" (52). Of these the Chandos (catalogue 3) portrait is by far the most familiar. This has always been my favorite because of the subject's mischievous expression and roguish earring. I cannot begin to share the opinion of J. Hain Friswell, who wrote in 1864 that "One cannot readily imagine our essentially English Shakespeare to have been a dark, heavy man, with a foreign expression, of decidedly Jewish physiognomy, thin curly hair, a somewhat lubricious mouth, red-edged eyes, wanton lips, with a coarse expression and his ears tricked out with earrings" (56).

The subsequent sections of the book are organized chronologically from Shakespeare's origins in Stratford through chapters on the theater, the court, and the literary scene to Shakespeare's will. The fascinating variety of items illustrated and discussed includes the list of recusants in which Shakespeare's father's name appears (catalogue 12), a hornbook (catalogue 15), a gimmel ring (catalogue 18),

a bear's skull (catalogue 30), a theatrical inventory of costumes (catalogue 35), and examples of costume (catalogue 36-42). Along with the predictable cloak (catalogue 36), gown (catalogue 37), doublets (catalogue 38-40), hats (catalogue 13 and 42), glove (catalogue 14), and shoes (catalogue 42), the book includes a supportasse or pickadil (catalogue 41), as in Piccadilly: a frame to hold up a collar like the one in the Droeshout engraving. A signet ring with the initials WS (catalogue 57), found in 1810 in a field in Stratford, is likely to have been Shakespeare's and lost because in his will (catalogue 92c) in the formula: "In Witness whereof I have hereunto put my Seale" the word "Seale" is crossed out, and "hand" has been substituted.

Marcia Pointon's essay on Shakespeare's image and national identity documents the ways in which "If a Shakespeare is needed, one will certainly be found" (222). Pointon interestingly observes the strain between Shakespeare and English patriotism on the one hand and the German dominance in Shakespeare scholarship in the 19th century on the other (224, 225n17). She concludes by saying of the Chandos portrait: "As an emblem of national identity and cultural pride it is without rival" (224). A brief section on the years for which no documentation on Shakespeare is available lists the places that the traveling companies visited between 1585 and 1592.

A few flaws mar the book. An emblematic painting of Youth, Old Age, and Time is reproduced twice (32, and catalogue 31), as are the Droeshout engraving (catalogue 1, and 216), the Chandos portrait (frontispiece, and catalogue 3), the grant of a coat of arms to Shakespeare's father (12, and catalogue 54), a drawing of the Swan Theater (22, and catalogue 27), and the title page of the second quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* (4, and catalogue 105). On the other hand the reproduction of Christopher Saxton's map of Warwickshire and Leicestershire (catalogue 9) is too small and vague to be legible. The accompanying commentary frustrates the reader when it calls attention to details, such as the designation of villages by a church and hamlets by a house, which the reader cannot see. It would have made sense to substitute a larger version of the map for one of the duplicated images. Surely Hamlet's remark in V.ii.78-79 refers to Laertes, not to Claudius (43n1). Lavinia doesn't bring a copy of the *Metamorphoses* on stage in *Titus Andronicus* (201). Her quest for the volume and passage that incriminate her tormentors drives her to enter in IV.i pursuing her schoolboy nephew, frightening him so he drops his schoolbooks, which include the Ovidian object of her search. The illustration of the third quarto of *Hamlet* (catalogue 111) isn't open at the title page. In the transcription of the redundant emblem (catalogue 31) "enoye [annoy]" should read "enioye [enjoy]," and "ys" should be read as "is," not "us." Many cross-references are incorrect. For example the reference to a portrait probably of Nathan Field as catalogue 99 (41) should be to catalogue 52. And why the cross-reference to a portrait of Marlowe (145) when

the commentary that accompanies the portrait (catalogue 22) proposes that the subject is probably someone else? Punctuation can be eccentric, and typographical errors occur. The book is such a pleasure to read, to look at, and to handle, that its occasional imperfections are particularly disappointing. ✱