

readers to a Shakespeare liberated from the heady distractions of bordellos, pregnancy, bed tricks, and the like. Of the essays on particular works, I especially admire Wells's analysis of "Juliet's Nurse: The Uses of Consequentiality," with its close inspection of the Nurse's colloquialisms, her vulgar diction ("dug," "tetchy," "trudge," "waddled"), her colorful asseverations, her lack of logical sequence, her pious commonplaces, and her flawed anecdotal memory, all of which inspires Wells to ask why Shakespeare lavishes such artistry on matters that are so irrelevant to the plot. Then we have Wells's study of "Translations in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," by which is meant those moments when Bottom and the young lovers are transformed by the "little western flower" known as "love-in-idleness" into nightmarish experiences culminating in dreamlike remembrance of things that "seem small and undistinguishable, / Like far-off mountains turned into clouds." "Problems of Stagecraft in *The Tempest*" focuses on a shipwreck caused by a storm at sea and on a masque that is both medium and message. "'My Name is Will': Shakespeare's Sonnets and Autobiography" is wonderfully honest and judicious in dealing with issues of whether publication was authorized or not, what we are to make of Thorpe's initials, the ordering of the sonnets, proposed biographical links, and still more. "Shakespeare and Romance" is a long and serious essay asking how the literary genre of romance can be defined or described by means other than formal characteristics. Wells's broad expertise in theatrical interpretation is well illustrated in his discourse on "Staging Shakespeare's Apparitions and Dream Visions."

For many of us, Wells is best known as the editor, with Gary Taylor and others, of *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, as well as his Oxford and New Penguin series. His breadth and judiciousness are generously on view in an essay "On Being a General Editor," with advice that I have long taken to heart as to whether notes should appear at the foot of the page, how to keep the text as free as possible from algebraic signs, how to persuade individual editors in a series to absorb and act upon the advice they are given, and much more. These are only a few instances of enlightenment afforded by this immensely valuable collection of essays.

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*Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book.* Emma Smith.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. xiv + 380 pp. \$29.95.

This book is a very good read, a largely anecdotal but always entertaining account of copies of the Shakespeare First Folio (henceforth FF) from their production in 1623 to the present. As approximately one copy in three of an estimated 750 survives, the FF may be the least rare but most valuable book printed in early modern England. Smith's introduction concentrates on Sir Edward Dering, first known purchaser of a FF (in fact, he purchased two). Numbered chapters are "Ownership," on the history

of private ownership, purchasing, and collecting, touching on Henry Clay Folger and his famous library, but concentrating on other collectors and institutions; “Reading,” as evidenced by marking and extracting; “Decoding,” covering interpretation, message hunting, and machine-assisted analysis; “Performing,” covering both the neglect and the use of the FF for theatrical performances; and “Perfecting,” on the creation of “perfect” copies, whether by facsimile or by “sophistication.” The concluding chapter is typically anecdotal in narrating, among other things, the theft of a FF from Durham University and its recovery by the Folger Shakespeare Library. One could dine out for a month on stories told between the covers of this engaging and informative book. Only the “Decoding” chapter runs off the tracks, drawing an unconvincing analogy between the useless machine created by the fanatic Ignatius L. Donnelly (*The Great Cryptogram* [1888]) and Charlton Hinman’s ingenious collator. Smith is too tolerant of Donnelly and too dismissive of Hinman.

Sophisticated language may place a heavy burden on the general reader. A reference to “the supercessionism of the Venice court room” (278), for example, sent this reader to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which cites “supersessionism” (with *s* not *c*) in four theological treatises from 1972 to 2010. Similarly, “grangerized” is used twice (118, 219) before it is defined (300). Professional academics may find information that is new, but little that is surprising. Most books from the period were treated exactly the same as the FF; differences occur only when the FF achieves astronomical and therefore unique cultural and financial value. Bibliographers will grouch that unbound books were sold in sheets, not in “gathered pages” (70). Signature marks are not alternate forms of pagination (172). Printer’s waste was not “torn unceremoniously into strips” by a binder (288), but cut with an edged tool (paper does not tear in straight lines). Particularly confusing is the statement that “these last two copies also show the distinctive deckled edges of the paper, marking their original trimming with a binding knife” (288). Deckled edges occur on all paper from the handpress era, and survive when a book has escaped the ministrations of the binder’s knife (properly called a “plough”). Catchwords are nowhere mentioned, nor, except indirectly, is the concept of the conjugate leaf, necessary for understanding how copies are “perfected.”

Though Sir Edward Dering also purchased jewels, it seems mean-spirited to characterize his purchase of the FF as “conspicuous consumption” (13). Smith treats Continental purchases of the FF (93), but overlooks advertisements for the Frankfurt Fair in 1622 and 1624. Humphrey Dyson’s early bibliographic notice of Shakespeare’s “workes” in an inscription on the title page of a *Troilus and Cressida* (1609), now in the Huntington Library, is also overlooked. The destruction of unsold sheets of the Third Folio (1663–64) by the Great Fire of London (1666), which made Third Folios exceptionally rare, goes unmentioned. Another missed opportunity: folios listed in auction catalogues, 1676–1700.

This product of a top academic press suffers from a lack of copyediting, with misplaced commas (e.g., 68, penultimate line); redundancies like “difficult crux” (162); a

single use of “s/he,” elsewhere “he or she” (162); a duplication of “2014” (339); “Gizman” for “Guzman” (182, 345). The vaguely identified “one Thomas Looney” (219) later becomes “Thomas J. Looney,” though his first name was John, whence he is correctly called J. Thomas Looney (232). A table of all copies analyzed in Smith’s survey, with page numbers, would have been of great service. Such irritants to the nit-picker do not seriously compromise the pleasure and instruction this book will bring to the casual bibliophile or the Shakespeare enthusiast.

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*Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England: Ten Case Studies.* Matthew Steggle.

Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. xi + 200 pp. \$109.95.

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More than 500 texts of early modern English plays survive. The titles of another 700 pieces are known, and another 1,000 examples have been entirely lost. Because so many of the period’s plays can no longer be accessed, our understanding of early modern English theater may be somewhat skewed. Matthew Steggle and others have created a digital database to collect references to these lost plays and reconstruct anything that can be known about them. In *Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England*, Steggle offers the fruits of some of those reconstructions. This engaging book examines ten plays for which only titles have survived and offers a tentative description of potential authorship, genre, subject, and circumstance, giving us some understanding of what these lost plays might have staged. Steggle’s book offers many satisfying possibilities, even if these remain speculative.

This book is not a digital-humanities manifesto. Making only a modest contribution to that field, Steggle instead highlights the digital tools most early modern scholars frequently use, such as Early English Books Online (a database that members of the RSA can currently use by virtue of their membership fees). Steggle acknowledges the limits of EEBO, Wikipedia, LION, Google Books, and EEBO-TCP, while making explicit their use, often effaced in early modern scholarship or used uncritically. In essence, Steggle shows exactly how he used these fundamental tools to undertake “prosthetic reading” (22) in combination with traditional scholarly resources and hunches to construct an outline of the plays that might have gone under these titles.

Steggle reaches remarkable conclusions about the plays in this study. The most exciting identification is Steggle’s discussion of a play Philip Henslowe referred to in his diary in 1602 by the name of “Albere Galles,” written by Thomas Heywood and Wentworth Smith and performed by Worcester’s Men. F. G. Fleay once influentially asserted that this title must refer to the extant anonymous play *Nobody and Somebody*. Steggle, however, uses EEBO-TCP to uncover the possibility that “Albere Galles” may