

Fair Copies: Reproducing the English Lyric from Tottel to Shakespeare.

Matthew Zarnowiecki.

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Matthew Zarnowiecki's *Fair Copies* argues that Elizabethan writers of lyric verse should be understood as "coming to terms with the idea that their works will be rewritten, recopied, modified, and changed" (8). They did so by harnessing the conceptual parameters of the media in which their works were disseminated, articulating in their lyric practice an understanding of copying and reproduction structured by metaphors of textuality, sexuality, parenthood, and materiality. These claims will not strike scholars of Elizabethan literature and print culture as radically new: indeed, Zarnowiecki's work complements, but does not supersede, such foundational studies as Arthur Marotti's *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (1995) and Wendy Wall's *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (1993). Zarnowiecki adopts a narrower focus than these earlier works, largely bypassing the

question of manuscript circulation and confining himself to a sensible but limited printed canon in chapters on Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes* (1557), George Gascoigne's *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* (1573), Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579) and *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (1595), Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (as printed in 1590 and 1593), and *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609). Questions about the proper scope and focus of literary history and criticism are deliberately foregrounded throughout the volume, as Zarnowiecki claims, not entirely convincingly, to be offering a new methodology for the study of the early modern printed lyric, which he awkwardly names "medium-close reading." This is understood as a fusion of the best lessons of New Criticism and associated kinds of formal analysis with contextual, materialist, and codicological methodologies, paying special attention to the mutations undergone by poems as they are copied, rewritten, or appropriated by authors, readers, and printers.

In his chapter on *Songes and Sonettes*, Zarnowiecki draws an analogy between Richard Tottel's interests as a printer of legal texts and his seminal publication of Tudor lyrics. Both lyric and law reproduce past events as present events, which do not efface their historicity but derive from it their authority to speak bindingly in the present. The analogy is instructive, but not unproblematic. Zarnowiecki's reading of legal texts using the methods and terminology of literary criticism leads him to exaggerate the historically overdetermined and overburdened status of statutes, forgetting the more prosaic professional pragmatism that legal printing was designed to serve. His readings of poems from Tottel's miscellany are sometimes overly ingenious: a typographical detail about the replacement of Thomas Wyatt's name by a "W" (36–38), for example, is assigned a greatly exaggerated significance. A similar interpretive excess is found in Zarnowiecki's comments on a single ownership mark in a copy of Sidney's *Arcadia* (126–28), blunting the force of an otherwise excellent chapter.

Such problems of focus aside, there is much here to interest scholars of Elizabethan poetry. Zarnowiecki's account of Gascoigne's interest in delight, ephemerality, and permanence is convincing. The chapter on the *Arcadia* argues that "Sidney previews the afterlife of his poems by narrating their first moments of being copied" and by advancing a model of "lyric surrogacy" (109), and is a solid contribution to the study of the dynamics of Sidneian reception. The chapter on Spenser is less successful, and does not always seem reconciled to the argument made by the book as a whole, but there are some fine local observations on the stance and tone of the figure of Colin Clout in *The Shepheardes Calender* — including, for instance, "the wish for annihilation" (93) sometimes audible even in the act of poetic utterance. The final (and best) chapter offers an engaging and detailed (if not always radically innovative) study of the problems of textual and sexual reproduction in *Shake-speares Sonnets*. For Zarnowiecki, the sonnets' provocation to reflect on the merits and problems of their arrangement in the 1609 quarto demands "medium-close reading." As in other chapters Zarnowiecki pushes his critical metaphors as far as they will go: the sonnets exist less in a state of "sequence" than of "coition," demanding acts of "readerly copulation" (159). The grammatical copula of predication, as deployed and scrutinized in the poems themselves, is set against the kinds

of juxtaposition the sonnets solicit. Zarnowiecki's florid critical vocabulary will not please everyone, but his arguments, and his compelling close reading, deserve attention.

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