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Smith, Emma. The Making of Shakespeare's First Folio

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Smith, Emma.
The Making of Shakespeare's First Folio.
Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2015. Pp. ix, 180 + 8 figs., 32 plates. ISBN 978-1-85124-442-3 (hardcover) US$35.

The opening pages of Emma Smith's indispensable book on William Shakespeare's First Folio (1623) contrast the relative modesty of the First Folio's publication circumstances with its importance and influence over the last four centuries. Smith's study sustains a thoroughly historicized reading of the Folio's publication with emphasis on the remarkable material factors that influenced its initial printing and subsequent dissemination. With the exception of the multi-authored King James Version of the Bible (begun in 1604 and printed in 1611), which is so closely tied to its distinctive idiomatic contributions to modern English, and the publication of Ben Jonson's *Workes* in mid-November 1616, which redefined notions of authorial self-construction and representation via collected works, and the equally important King James VI and I *Workes* published in early 1617 (but with 1616 as its publication date on the frontispiece), there are perhaps no other early modern books that can claim to have had as significant an influence on English language and culture.

Nor were these works isolated from each other. Scholars like Richard Dutton have gone so far as to argue, in *Ben Jonson: Authority: Criticism,* that Shakespeare's First Folio would have been "an unthinkable publication" without Jonson's *Workes*. One might add that the close interconnection between James's monarchic self-construction, what I have elsewhere referred to as the "sovereignty of words," and Jonson's monumental realization of authorial identity effectively set the stage for Shakespeare's First Folio. These interlinked publications are, in other words, an important early modern site of cultural production that was to have a significant ongoing impact on English literary undertakings.

As an instance of that importance, Smith reminds us that without the First Folio, "eighteen of Shakespeare's plays would have joined the many hundreds of early modern plays (the vast majority of all those performed) that have not survived" (1). Ergo no *Macbeth*, or *Twelfth Night*, or *Julius Caesar*, or *The Tempest*—the latter of which appears as the opening play in the 950 folio pages that contain eighteen plays otherwise unrecorded—not to mention the infamous Droeshout engraving over which so much fuss is regularly made in relation to ongoing debates about Shakespeare's true image.

Smith cannily reads the "negotiation of artistic and economic value" that the First Folio represents in its own historical moment. This negotiation was a portent of things to come as the market value of First Folio copies has risen to astronomical heights, with copies selling recently for between 5 and 7.5 million dollars (CDN)—this, for a book that exists in some 230 known copies, including a three-volume copy just found at Mount Stuart House on the Isle of Bute (Firth of Clyde) in Scotland. Richly illustrated with some thirty-two colour plates, Smith wisely chooses to open her book with focus on the plays and how they are represented, following up with concise chapters exploring Shakespeare's reputation, the collaborative work that played such a critical role in the book, the printing and publishing details, many of which are utterly fascinating and a must read for people interested in the materiality of early modern publications, and, finally, early readership and reception histories. Smith nimbly handles the tense dynamics between illusory notions of solitary genius and the realities of collective co-creation embedded in the First Folio's production history. Her third chapter ably unpacks the diverse names associated with backing and producing the book—the so-called "team Shakespeare." Tellingly, Smith acknowledges John Heminge and Henry Condell as "vitally important to the First Folio project since they were the connection between the publication and the theatre: without them, there was no access to the unpublished material" (96). Meanwhile, Smith addresses questions about the degree to which the two close associates to Shakespeare actually edited the volume, in the context of more modern notions of editorial practice and judgment informed by a scholarly apparatus. Most admirably, Smith attends to the "men of the printing shop" who played determinative roles in the history of the First Folio, especially publisher Isaac Jaggard and stationer Edward Blount, the latter "apprenticed to the foremost literary publisher of the Elizabethan age William Ponsonby, from 1578 to 1588" (115).

There are, no doubt, further stories to be told about the First Folio and its genesis, including the extraordinary blend of friendship, business acumen, and memorialization that it represents. We know that Shakespeare's close, if not closest, associate and business partner, John Heminge, who played such a critical role in the First Folio's genesis, was born in Droitwich, a small village in the Midlands about twenty-two miles from Stratford-upon-Avon. Heminge also lived in London in 1603 in close proximity to Condell and Shakespeare—both Condell and Heminge were located in the parish of St. Mary Aldermanbury

just a stone's throw from where Shakespeare lived for a time in Cripplegate at the corner of Silver Street and Monkwell (St. Olave's parish), in a house then owned by Christopher and Maria Mountjoy, now approximately the corner of Noble Street and London Wall just down from the Museum of London. Moreover, Heminge's last will and testament (9 October 1630), as published by E.A.J. Honigman and Susan Brock in *Playhouse Wills, 1558–1642*, is notorious for how it indicates not only sustained interest in the legacy of the "Playhowses of the Globe and Blackfriers," and especially in their ongoing profitability ("my said p*ar*tes in the said Playhowses should be imployed in playing the better to raise proffitt thereby as formerly the same haue bine and haue yielded good yeerely proffitt"), but also, very unusually, the ownership of at least two "pictures" "sett vp in a frame in my howse" (164–69). Clearly Heminge cared about legacy as much for business ("proffitt" is mentioned at least eight times in the course of the three-page will) as for sentimental reasons. *The Making of Shakespeare's First Folio* points us to the richly nested set of circumstances attending on the people, the social connections, and the aesthetic *milieux* that gave rise to this exceptionally influential book.

In short, Smith's volume is a wholly worthwhile read. It is full of hints at the breadth of the detailed social geographies and creative affiliations that linked Shakespeare's King's Men and their families and friends in their lifetimes and, perhaps even more so, in the afterlives of the page that make the First Folio such a landmark in English literary history.

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Sophia of Hanover.
***Memoirs (1630–1680).* Ed. and trans. Sean Ward.**
The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 25. Toronto: Iter Inc. / Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2013. Pp. ix, 206. ISBN 978-0-7727-2148-8 (paperback) $21.50.

In the English-speaking world, Sophia (or Sophie) of Hanover is best known as the German princess who was almost queen of Great Britain. In June 1701, at the age of seventy, she became heiress presumptive following the passing of the Act of Settlement by parliament. For much of the remaining thirteen years of