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REVIEWS Books

On est évidemment en présence de deux excellentes traductions et, à ce niveau, la préférence sera guidée par des priorités d’attente de nature subjective.

Les points communs à toutes les traductions proposées sont la densité, le refus d’archaïsmes inutiles et le respect du contenu sémantique de chaque vers, ce qui rend le vis-à-vis bilingue facile et donc agréable à pratiquer.

Ces deux volumes constituent la digne fin de cette entreprise de longue haleine, remarquablement menée à bien par Michel Grivelet et Gilles Monsarrat. Eux et leurs collaborateurs, la maison d’édition aussi, qui offre un rapport qualité-prix remarquable dans cette collection, ont bien servi le lectorat français.

Jean-Marie MAGUIN

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We all know what the problem is with the Festschrift: bringing together contributors in order to pay tribute to a friend, colleague, or teacher rather than in order to explore a well-defined area of investigation, the Festschrift notoriously lacks focus and intellectual coherence. We may want to call it a “mixed bag” or, trying to make a virtue of necessity, “eclectic”. Whatever the rhetoric used to mask its deficiencies, it does not, as a collection, make a mark in any field. Or does it? In Arden: Editing Shakespeare, a Festschrift for Richard Proudfoot edited by Ann Thompson and Gordon McMullan, contradicts all of the above prejudices.

The volume’s editors pay tribute to Richard Proudfoot’s indefatigable work behind the scenes as “the true editors’ editor”, asserting that “the name of Richard Proudfoot should be on the cover of every volume, not just as general editor but as, in effect, co-editor” (p. xii). The publications that do bear Proudfoot’s name are listed in an appendix along with a “biographical note”.

The editors have assembled a team of nearly twenty contributors, all of whom have edited or are currently editing for the Arden Shakespeare series. The collection is divided into five parts, with three or four essays each, “bibliography/theory of editing”, “editing and feminism”, “editing and stage practice”, “annotation and collation”, and “the playwright and others”. While this division allows for useful groupings, the editors’ succinct introduction also establishes further connections between the essays, suggesting that the collection is more than the sum of its parts.

A short review cannot hope to do justice to as many as eighteen essays. The more modest but perhaps useful aim it can set itself is to supply a rough sketch in the hope of providing guidance to future readers. In Part I,
“bibliography/theory of editing”, A. R. Braunmuller’s learned essay, “Shakespeare Various”, shows that “the form of present scholarly editions of Shakespeare” (p. 5) has a history, tracing back features such as commentary, collation, and line numbering to editions of ancient and English classics in centuries past. Giorgio Melchiori’s “The Continuing Importance of New Bibliography” is interested in the more recent, twentieth-century history of editing. Apart from offering a condensed summary of his view of the provenance of Shakespeare’s texts, he mounts a defence of Greg and his new bibliographical legacy, perhaps a welcome intervention at a time when it has become all too fashionable to denigrate the giant on whose shoulders modern bibliographers and editors stand. Anthony B. Dawson is also interested in restoring a balance to bibliography where recent challenges may have gone too far. Believing now that “the ‘new textualists’ […] have pluralized truth” (p. 32) and convincingly argued that significant non-authorial agency informs the extant textual witnesses, it is time, Dawson holds, to return to Shakespeare, to recognize that “Shakespeare’s authority may be relative but it is not insubstantial” (p. 43). Where Dawson is interested in Shakespearean authority, H. R. Woudhuysen re-evaluates the authority of Shakespearean and other early modern playbooks. His careful study of Greg’s monumental Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration reveals an intriguing problem that has hitherto escaped notice: even though the costs for the paper of a playbook were high (about as high, it seems, as those of the total printing costs), almost two thirds of the editions published between 1565 and 1640 contain one or several blank pages. This leads Woudhuysen to state that “The presence of such quantities of blank leaves might […] suggest that printed plays were not always considered to be entirely ephemeral items” (p. 59), a revisionary idea whose potential implications are far-reaching and exciting.

Part II explores the timely topic of the relationship between editing and feminism, now that an increasing number of female scholars have been commissioned to edit Shakespeare for one of the major series. Torn between post-modern indeterminacy — “Each decision is local; an unified theory is not possible” (p. 67) – and a belief that “all our commitments, including our sexual politics, may have textual consequences” (pp. 76-77), Suzanne Gossett shows how a feminist approach to editing Pericles can help “clarify the text” (p. 68), but remains acutely aware that the solutions arrived at can be no more than provisional. Lois Potter’s examination of the character of Desdemona in the 1622 Quarto and the 1623 Folio texts of Othello is similarly balanced. Whereas most editors over the past centuries have felt free to conflate the two texts, she illustrates “how a textual decision becomes a comment on character, a cultural comment that is in turn embedded in cultural history” (p. 82). In spite of the various textual differences between the two early substantive editions, Potter argues against an identifiable pattern that would make Desdemona more sensual or more innocent in one of the two texts, suggesting instead that “someone – probably the author, but possibly not only him – was uncertain about how to achieve a balance between Desdemona’s sexuality and her
innocence” (p. 92). At work on an edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*, another play that has prompted considerable feminist criticism, Barbara Hodgdon examines extra-dialogic stage directions in which many Shakespeare plays are deficient, prompting editors to provide additional stage directions to make the text more accessible to readers. Such editorial intervention, as Hodgdon shows, has both textual and ideological consequences, as the stage action suggested by modern editorial interventions has more to do with past editions and acting versions (and with their patriarchal assumptions) than with Shakespeare (or “Shakespeare”).

Hodgdon’s article provides a transition to Part III on “editing and stage practice”, a blooming field of inquiry a quarter of a century after what J. L. Styan called “the Shakespeare revolution” started making performance an increasingly central element of our engagement with Shakespeare. Examining, like Hodgdon, the editorial treatment of stage directions, George Walton Williams believes that “every new editor should be a director, whose page is his stage” (p. 112). He therefore encourages editors to supply their own stage directions when they seem wanting in the early editions and to choose from among the options when several stagings seem possible, explaining in the commentary notes what other options there would be. R. A. Foakes goes even further than Williams. Comparing the plot of *The Battle of Alcazar* and Edward Alleyn’s part in *Orlando Furioso* (both unique manuscript documents of their kind) to the printed quartos, Foakes unveils a wealth of evidence about the different treatments stage directions appear to have received in the three kinds of documents – authorial manuscript or transcript, stage plot, actor’s part – of any play production. This evidence, for Foakes, has important implications for modern editing. As the actors appear to have felt free to adjust authorial directions, so modern editors, Foakes argues, “should perhaps feel free to speculate on ways in which the directions found in printed texts might have been interpreted on stage” (p. 136). In a collaborative essay, Lynette Hunter and Peter Lichtenfels, a bibliographer and a theatre director who are co-editing the Arden 3 *Romeo and Juliet*, discuss how theatrical practice can have an editorial impact not only on stage directions but also on other textual decisions. A theatrical production of the second quarto text, stripped of centuries of editorial accretions, served them as a guide to certain editorial decision, notably concerning punctuation and the preservation of passages which modern editors usually believe to be repetitions that survived accidentally. While Hodgdon, Williams, Foakes, and Hunter and Lichtenfels explore how performance past and present can influence the text of an edition, John Russell Brown deals with performance and annotation. He argues that recent Arden editions, seeking to “present the plays as texts for performance” (p. 167), do not yet do enough in their annotations for the readers to become aware of the plays’ potential in performance.

Just as Hodgdon’s article bridges Parts II and III, so Brown’s article bridges Parts III and IV, “editing and stage practice”, and “annotation and collation”. Historicizing Brown’s plea for greater emphasis on performance,
G. K. Hunter analyses the social function annotation of Shakespeare plays has had over the centuries, from the promotion of the national poet in the eighteenth century, to “nineteenth- and twentieth-century concerns with the autonomy of the individual” (p. 190), to our modern “theatrical indeterminacy [...] that calls for pluralism as an appropriate response” (p. 191). Whereas Hunter’s interest in footnotes is diachronic, Helen Wilcox’s is synchronic. Her “exploration of the character of the footnote” (p. 206) usefully distinguishes between six (at times overlapping) sub-types, “textual, etymological, intertextual, contextual, dramatic and critical” (p. 199). By way of illustration, she shows how the opening scene of All’s Well That Ends Well requires a combination of all six to make annotation as complete and useful as possible.

E. A. J. Honigmann’s short note is not about annotation but deals with the stuff that annotation is made of, supplying a new insight — the extent of Shakespeare’s likely indebtedness to Cicero in the “To be or not to be” soliloquy — that future editors of Hamlet will no doubt want to draw upon in their footnotes. Eric Rasmussen turns from annotation to collation, the record of divergent readings in earlier editions, arguing that despite its incomprehensibility for the average reader, we could profit from more collation since intriguing, albeit now discarded, textual decisions of the past — “fascinating material for cultural analysis” (p. 216) — could be gleaned from it.

Whereas the annotation and collation dealt with in Part IV form an integral part of any scholarly Shakespeare edition, Part V, “the playwright and others”, provides samples of editors’ intense preliminary engagement with Shakespeare plays and their contexts that can end up informing editions in a variety of ways. John J. M. Tobin, for instance, argues that an awareness of the extent of Shakespeare’s indebtedness to the writings of Thomas Nashe could help editors deal with certain textual cruces. As Juliet Dusinberre shows, another notorious difficulty is posed by Elizabethan topicality which, frustratingly for modern editors, tends to be not only difficult to understand but also no longer funny. Attempting to recover an instance of such topicality, Dusinberre believes that Sir Oliver Mar-text, in Act III Scene 3 of As You Like It, who was usually cut in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editions, owed much of his original comic effect to having been acted not by Robert Armin, as has usually been supposed, but by Will Kemp, who had a reputation as an anti-Martinist since his involvement in the attacks on the Marprelate Puritans in the 1580s. John Pitcher’s concluding essay proposes to recover another topical meaning, boldly suggesting “that we can see Shakespeare in Autolycus” and “Autolycus in Shakespeare” (p. 252). In a dizzying intertextual tour de force that ranges from the accusations of plagiarism against Shakespeare in Greene’s Groatsworth of Wit, to Greene’s Pandosto — the main source of Shakespeare’s play — to a 1607 treatise on humoral theory by a Cambridge don with a section on “Autolican wit”, Pitcher presents the evidence for the intriguing possibility that with Autolycus Shakespeare was “putting on stage his persona from Groatsworth as an upstart thief” (p. 265).
In Arden: Editing Shakespeare derives much of its intellectual strength and coherence from the common project its contributors were or are involved in, practical editorial work for Arden and, in some cases, other Shakespeare series. While much recent stimulating work has approached textual studies and editing from theoretical angles, this collection restores the balance by giving a voice to hands-on practitioners able to write authoritatively on the key practical issues of editing Shakespeare today. The result is an incisive collection which no one interested in the editorial reproduction of Shakespeare’s drama can afford to ignore.

Lukas Erne


The immediately noticeable character of this new edition is its fullness. Fullness of primary material: it includes all the prefatory poems in the eleventh edition, the poem “A Wife”, and the “Characters” — those attributed to Sir Thomas Overbury and those by diverse hands — together with the great variety of textual additions from many sources that Laurence Lisle, the London bookseller trading at the Tiger’s Head in St Paul’s Churchyard, had made to the original work published in 1614. Fullness of editorial matter too — a ninety-one-page introduction, followed by eight appendices (on the continental origin of salon games, Jonson and the court set, Lady Mary Wroth’s Love’s Victorie, the contributors to the Overbury Anthology, charactery and game theory, additional memorial poetry and the Elstrack engraving, a note on charactery in the Arabic world [for good measure!] and charactery in memory books and collections of national stereotypes), a presentation of “The Text and Editorial Principles”, and a bibliography of some 220 works cited or consulted. Both generous and well-judged, glossarial elucidations appear as footnotes. Textual variants and textual commentary are printed at the end of the volume, and the last item is a “Complete Table of Texts and Occurrences”. Donald Beecher has not discarded any of the primary texts or left a stone unturned in his editorial approach. This contrasts sharply with previous enterprises. In 1968, James Savage, the last to edit the Overbury collection, chose to reproduce in facsimile the ninth edition, and appended material deleted or subsequently added to his chosen version without offering textual annotations. In 1936, W. J. Paylor had presented the “Characters” alone, and appended “A Wife”. His copy text was the first edition, presumably on the assumption that earlier editions are the least