

matters may suggest at least one route of endeavor for productive literary inquiry. Although, of course, profitable as such inquiry may prove to be, absent hard evidence, we remain mindful that interpretive constructs alone shall decisively establish but little that will secure a currency of decisive value in efforts to procure recognition of Edward de Vere's authorship of this and other works in the canon.

Love's Labor's Won

Love's Labor's Lost: Critical Essays
Ed. Felicia Hardison Londré
(Garland Publishing, 1997)

Reviewed by Gary Goldstein.

This handsomely produced hardcover of 476 pages assembles a brilliant selection of critical essays, theater reviews, poems and letters spanning four centuries and three continents. By so "merging" the contributions of the scholar, the critic and the theater professional, Professor Londré has provided generalists and specialists alike with that most rare of pleasures: a fully rounded perspective on one of Shakespeare's most misunderstood plays.

Contributors include two contemporaries of Shakespeare, Robert Tofte and Sir Walter Scope, classic essays by Samuel Johnson, von Schlegel, and Coleridge, Hazlitt and Pater, plus modern contributions from scholars, reviewers, directors and actors from Japan, France, England and the U.S.

In her introduction, Londré discusses the Shakespeare authorship question, presents the Oxfordian case, her position (that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford wrote the plays and poems under the pseudonym "Shakespeare"), and expresses the hope that, in the future, scholarly research will be conducted on both sides of the issue and within the Academy.

Shakespeare's Scribe

The Texts of Othello and Shakespearean Revision
by E.A.J. Honigman
(Routledge, 1996)

Professor Honigman offers us several explanations for several long-standing problems regarding *Othello* and the First Folio. He starts off by declaring that "Shakespeare (like other dramatists of the period)

wrote a first draft or 'foul papers' and also a fair copy, and that these two authorial versions were both copied by professional scribes, the scribal transcripts serving as printer's copy for Q[uarto] and F[olio]."

He then poses the question: was F *Othello* printed from a corrected copy of the Quarto or from a manuscript? His answer is the latter. As to who penned the manuscript of *Othello* for the First Folio, his answer, or discovery, is the scribe Ralph Crane. Without pausing for breath, the professor proceeds to ask, "Who edited the First Folio?" and then provides the following scenario.

Howard-Hill thinks that detailed supervision of the texts included in the [First] Folio would have been impossible for busy men like Heminges, Condell and the book-keeper of the King's men.

On the other hand, there does exist indisputable evidence of an editorial presence in the Folio over some stretch of time, exerted by one who had a documented close connection with the King's Men—

in short, Ralph Crane. By adding *Othello* to the five comedies assigned to Crane we stretch the 'stretch of time' to embrace just about the whole of the First Folio, and the implied question becomes even more interesting: what kind of editorial presence?

Honigman wonders whether Crane may have "corrected what less trusted scribes had written and who copied out single pages or scenes that were deemed too untidy or illegible for the printer?" He answers his own question:

We can say, then, that Crane's role in the preparation of the First Folio appears to have been a significant one, more so than hitherto suspected. At the very least he transcribed five comedies—this is generally agreed—and it may be that he transcribed eight plays in all and even replaced pages in other texts that were illegible or otherwise unsuitable for the printer.

Honigman here proposes that Crane transcribed *Othello* and *2 Henry IV* for the First Folio, and urges more detailed study of Crane's scribal habits, in particular his transcripts of the play, *A Game at Chess*. Doing so "may yet identify other plays, or parts of plays, in which he had a hand."

Honigman also declares that "The arguments of this book drive me to a conclusion that I did not anticipate, namely that the reliability of F*Othello* has been overrated and that Q's has been underrated—", leading him to offer this advice to himself and, obviously, future editors of the plays: "...I may want to re-edit *Othello* with Q as parent text."

Those interested in weighing the detailed evidence assembled by Professor Honigman are advised to comb through his short, 181 page text. Honigman summarizes his methodology as follows:

...the evidence identifying Crane as the scribe responsible for five Folio comedies consists mainly of accidentals—'marks of elision, parentheses, hyphens and the like.' My list of 'Crane' spellings supports this identification of Crane as a Folio scribe and also depends on accidentals... Howard-Hill concentrated on Crane's usual or favored spellings, whereas most of my 'Crane' spellings, etc., are best described as occasional, rather than usual, in his work.

Oxford Redux

Alias Shakespeare
by Joseph Sobran
(The Free Press, 1997)

Reviewed by John Mucci. Mr. Mucci is associate editor of The Elizabethan Review.

In the commonality among the mass of material available on Shakespeare's authorship, there is a necessity to cover the same ground to introduce readers to the contention. After reading dozens of such books, one comes to regard them as a kind of familiar tapestry, some with one design brought forward, and others with items subdued or omitted. As the threads are drawn out one by one, the reader may with some pleasure appreciate the skill which the author has selected his patterns and arranged his loom. In his long promised book, *Alias Shakespeare*, Joseph Sobran has succeeded in creating a most attractive arras, through which we are invited to run our rapier and skewer the persistent man from Stratford whom traditionalist conflate with William Shakespeare.

On the author's own terms the book is persuasive: those who read this as their first introduction to the authorship question are likely to find it absorbing and thorough. As a mainstream book brought out by a major publisher, it begs to be taken seriously, and will doubtless be mightily pounced upon by academia for that presumption.

Although Sobran himself regards traditional Shakespearean biographies to be "comically formulaic," his case for Oxford follows many others in the attempt to first compromise the position of the Stratford Man (or, "Mr. Shakspeare," as Sobran so disingenuously insists on putting it), then build up Oxford through parallels in his life with the Shakespeare works.

The new twist is that so many of the obstacles with which Oxfordians have grappled—one might almost say been bloodied over—Sobran ignores, or casts aside, leaving himself a very clear path of polished touchstones which he uses to smoothly present his case. His introduction is coy: "I have not tried to