useful bibliographical tool and highly informative. As a work of scholarly interest, this catalogue is highly recommended.

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While reading Adam G. Hooks’s new monograph, I could not help but recall my many classroom conversations about William Shakespeare. Despite my regular remonstrations about authorial intention, many of the most studious will still ask in all seriousness, “But what would he have wanted us to see in this scene?” Indeed, their uncertainties about the texts, magnified by the early modern language and the unfamiliar allusions, often cause students to fall back on hypothesizing about the author’s private emotional landscape, trying to connect points of biography to the work under discussion. Hooks opens his monograph with a variation on the same set of concerns, widening his reach to literary critics and historical biographers.

He resists the long tradition that ties source texts to biography and productively examines “Shakespeare” as early modern literary construction; in fact, via detailed bibliographical work, Hooks offers readers the opportunity to consider the multiple “Shakespeares” that were designed to help sell texts in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century world of books.

In a sensitive discussion of the challenges faced when considering biography in concert with other scholarly approaches to historical work, Hooks (2016) posits that “perhaps what we need is a new kind of biography: a life in print” (7). Hooks effectively summarizes influential biographies of Shakespeare, and he criticizes the move to speculate about historical unknowns, suggesting that while the last approach “has revitalized biography in many ways,” it has also worked to further “a more romantic, or at least a more firmly individuated, Shakespeare that is incompatible with the collaborative processes responsible for the creation of his authorial persona” (12). Hooks’s work is at once “bio-bibliography” and “biblio-biography” (4, 5): he emphasizes the early modern book trade as a site for creating Shakespeare’s literary reputation, and he suggests that this first commercial activity had
key ramifications for eighteenth-century understandings of the author, effectively setting the stage for Shakespeare’s reputation as a playwright, not a poet.

While many readers and scholars focus on the First Folio (1623) as the definitive text for understanding Shakespeare, Hooks draws attention to the variable, sometimes competing, Shakespearean authorial constructions that circulated in the marketplace prior to the publication of the author’s collected dramatic works. Indeed, Hooks starts, sensibly enough, at the beginning, with the 1592 publication of *Venus and Adonis*, the first text to bear Shakespeare’s name as author. Literary historians have frequently assumed that Shakespeare specifically selected Stratford native Richard Field to print and publish the poem, and that the author was perhaps only interested in developing the literary persona of a poet while keeping “separate … the popular business of the theater” (36). Hooks takes issue with these assumptions and outlines a rich history of collaboration between Field and his business partner, the publisher and bookseller John Harrison, particularly as this history involved works by or inspired by Ovid. Hooks also draws potential connections between Field and Henry Wriothesley, earl of Southampton, the man to whom *Venus and Adonis* was dedicated, thus framing a more complicated picture of Shakespeare’s early poetry in the marketplace.

While Shakespeare entered publishing as a poet, his role as playwright soon overshadowed other literary outputs. In his second chapter Hooks examines the business of publishing a series of hugely popular plays. He notes that Andrew Wise, the stationer who sold Shakespeare’s early histories, initially kept the author’s name off the title pages of *1 Henry IV*, *Richard III*, and *Richard II*. While other critics have suggested that Wise’s later decision to credit Shakespeare on title pages shows the likelihood that the playwright’s name began to be more marketable, Hooks maintains that the initial anonymity in publication had more to do with other texts being sold by Wise. Indeed, Hooks convincingly argues that Wise paired Shakespeare’s poetry with Thomas Playfere’s sermons, two “comparable literary properties” (69) that were both associated with a “sweetness of style” (67). To also sell the popular histories under Shakespeare’s name might dilute or confuse the branding created by Wise. While also offering engaging connections between drama and sermon, Hooks’s second chapter essentially tracks a critical moment as Shakespeare’s dominant reputation shifted from poet to playwright with mass market appeal.
If any text defines Shakespeare as playwright in the popular and critical imagination, it is the First Folio. In his third chapter Hooks re-examines the work, arguing that literary historians have placed too much emphasis on the text’s objectives and effects. Indeed, Hooks views the Folio through the lens of occasionally nightmarish publication negotiations by various stationers, describing the work to be “a contingent commercial enterprise that capitalized upon (and did not displace) existing marketing strategies” (31). Quarto editions of single pays continued to be sold successfully, for example, and Hooks persuasively places the First Folio within a history of other Shakespearean collected works, including the 1619 quarto collection often referred to as the “Pavier quartos.” This earlier publication actually involved the participation of the man who printed the 1623 Folio, William Jaggard, but Jaggard’s work on the Folio has overshadowed his long history with other printing projects, even when those projects were more technically complicated. Hooks’s third chapter brings the business of publishing and selling drama to the forefront, effectively setting up the focus for his concluding chapter, which examines the mid-seventeenth-century inventories compiled and released by booksellers, inventories that created a section for plays as separate from books.

As Hooks notes, these catalogues shed light not just on what booksellers had in stock but on how they presented their wares. Importantly, the lists cemented Shakespeare’s status as playwright (not poet), and as playwright of greater repute than others. For Hooks, Shakespeare’s reputation did not create the genre or the market demand in any sort of simplistically linear fashion; rather, “[t]he aesthetic and the commercial economies were … mutually constitutive” (139), and Hooks persuasively follows his initial points to their logical conclusions. In short, Shakespeare’s intentions were largely irrelevant to the printers, stationers, and readers who created, circulated, and strengthened a variety of literary reputations that were initially designed to move product. This monograph must have required painstaking labour, and the attention to detail is evident throughout Hooks’s writing. Because the material is presented clearly and accessibly, Selling Shakespeare could certainly be used by senior undergrads, but its niche research will likely be of most interest and use to those who do more advanced work in early modern print culture.


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