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978-0-521-60864-0 - The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Poetry

Edited by Patrick Cheney

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
SHAKESPEARE'S POETRY

This *Companion* provides a full introduction to the poetry of William Shakespeare through discussion of his freestanding narrative poems, the Sonnets, and his plays. Fourteen leading international scholars provide accessible and authoritative chapters on all relevant topics: from Shakespeare's seminal role in the development of English poetry, the wide-ranging practice of his poetic form, and his enigmatic place in print and manuscript culture, to his immersion in English Renaissance politics, religion, classicism, and gender dynamics. With individual chapters on *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 'The Phoenix and Turtle', the Sonnets, and *A Lover's Complaint*, the *Companion* also includes chapters on the presence of poetry in the dramatic works, on the relation between poetry and performance, and on the reception and influence of the poems. The volume includes a chronology of Shakespeare's life, a note on reference works, and a reading list for each chapter.

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EDITED BY

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo
Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521608640

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First published 2007

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-84627-1 hardback
ISBN-13 978-0-521-60864-0 paperback

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For Richard Helgerson

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PREFACE

The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Poetry is the first volume in print to study the achievement of Shakespeare's poetry both in his poems and in his plays. As such, the companion aims to complement other volumes in the Shakespeare companion series. These volumes, all published by Cambridge University Press, concentrate on the plays and Shakespeare's role as a man of the theatre: *Shakespeare on Film*, edited by Russell Jackson (2000); *Shakespeare on Stage*, edited by Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton (2002); *Shakespearean Comedy*, edited by Alexander Leggatt (2002); *Shakespeare's History Plays*, edited by Michael Hattaway (2002); *Shakespearean Tragedy*, edited by Claire McEachern (2002); and *Shakespeare*, edited by Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (2001). This last volume includes only a single chapter on the poems (by John Kerrigan), and nothing on the topic of poetry in the plays, although it does include a few chapters relevant to the present volume: those on Shakespeare's texts by Barbara A. Mowat, on his reading by Leonard Barkan, and, most importantly, on his language by de Grazia. Only incidentally, however, do these chapters mention the poems, so that the texts, the reading, and the language discussed are overwhelmingly for and of the plays. Accordingly, this new companion assembles a distinguished group of scholars from the United Kingdom, the United States, the Republic of Ireland, Switzerland, and South Africa to present a series of chapters on the individual poems, on the topic of poetry in the plays, on the special contexts important for viewing 'Shakespeare's poetry', and on the afterlife of this topic.

The companion consists of fourteen chapters, each dealing with a literary, historical, or cultural feature of Shakespeare's poetry, and each concluding with a select 'Reading list' of recommended works. The volume also includes a chronology geared to the individual chapters and a concluding note on the reference works available on Shakespeare's poetry. The 'Introduction' draws a frame for viewing Shakespeare's poetry in the twenty-first century, while the structure of the subsequent chapters conforms to the tripartite format of the companion series.

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PREFACE

The first part divides into three chapters, and establishes the critical foundation for viewing the volume topic, examining Shakespeare's role in 'the development of English poetry', his use of 'rhetoric, style, and poetic form', and the media of 'print and manuscript' that allowed his poetry to take its distinctive shape. These chapters suggest a range of cultural venues and contexts for witnessing how Shakespeare's poetry derives from, and responds to, the primary energies of the Renaissance, in Europe as in England.

The second part of the companion consists of five chapters on individual poems and ancillary volumes of published poetry, with one chapter each on *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, the Sonnets, and *A Lover's Complaint*, and a combined chapter on the two works taught less often: *The Passionate Pilgrim* and 'The Phoenix and Turtle'. These chapters aim to orient readers to the poems and to the critical conversation about them, and (where relevant) to apply the material from the first part of the companion.

Finally, the third part consists of six chapters that seek to widen the topic of 'Shakespeare's poetry'. The first three chapters introduce important topics, contexts, and methodologies, attending to 'politics and religion', to 'love, beauty, and sexuality', and to the recurrent 'classicism' in Shakespeare's poems (especially Virgil and Ovid). The next two chapters each produce a different critical model for relating the poems to the plays, the poetical to the theatrical: the first on Shakespeare's use of 'poetry in the plays'; the second on the connection between 'poetry and performance'. A concluding chapter treats the afterlife of Shakespeare's poems – their 'reception and influence'.

The word 'poetry' in the volume title is deliberately open-ended, evoking Shakespeare's poems and simultaneously calling attention to the poetical as a major tool and concept in the Shakespearean craft, in plays as in poems, for the stage as for the page. Thus individual chapters focus on the poems but layer in commentary on the plays when relevant or possible.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for a *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Poetry* emerged through discussions with Sarah Stanton at the Press. I am grateful to her for support and advice throughout the project.

Also at the Press, I wish to thank Jackie Warren for guiding the volume through production with courtesy and efficiency, and Penny Wheeler for expertly copy-editing the manuscript.

The Press produced four readers' reports on the volume proposal, and each of them helped shape the final outcome. So did Lukas Erne and Colin Burrow, who read the Introduction and the note on reference works, and who offered scrupulous commentary. As always, at Penn State I wish to thank Robert R. Edwards, Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., and Laura Lunger Knoppers for their continued conversation and collegial friendship. My department heads, Robert Caserio in English and Caroline D. Eckhardt in Comparative Literature, make my work possible through their generous support.

Three research assistants also made contributions. Alexis Hait, an undergraduate intern, helped assemble some of the upfront material; Eric Brune, also an undergraduate intern, compiled the Index; and Giuseppina Iacono, a Ph.D. student, prepared both the Chronology and the note on 'Reference works on Shakespeare's poetry'. My thanks to all three for doing excellent work.

Finally, let me thank the contributors themselves. Through their care, discipline, and scholarship, they have ensured that this volume appears in a timely fashion. The field is lucky to depend on so much expertise, assembled in a single volume, and devoted to Shakespeare's poetry.

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All quotations from the poems and plays of Shakespeare come from Cambridge University Press editions, unless otherwise noted.

In particular, for *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, 'The Phoenix and Turtle', and *A Lover's Complaint*, quotations come from *The Poems*, ed. John Roe (Cambridge University Press, 1992); and for the Sonnets, from *The Sonnets*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1533 Birth of Queen Elizabeth I.
- c.1552? Spenser born in London.
- 1553 Death of Edward VI and accession of Mary I. Virgil's *Aeneid* translated by Gavin Douglas.
- 1555 *Mirror for Magistrates* first published.
- 1557 Richard Tottel edits *Songes and Sonnettes* (i.e. *Tottel's Miscellany*); Surrey (tr.), *Certain Books of Virgil's Aeneis*.
- 1558 Death of Mary I and accession of Elizabeth I.
- 1563 John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* ('Book of Martyrs') published.
- 1564 26 Feb. Christopher Marlowe baptized at St George the Martyr, Canterbury.
26 Apr. Shakespeare baptized at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon.
- 1565 Golding (tr.), *The First Four Books of P. Ovidius Naso's Work Entitled Metamorphosis*. Henry Parker (tr.), *The Triumphs of F. Petrarch*.
- 1566 Birth of James I. George Gascoigne, *Supposes* (tr. of Ariosto's *I Suppositi*). Adlington (tr. of Apuleius), *The XI Books of the Golden Ass, with the Marriage of Cupido and Psyche*. Painter (tr. of Boccaccio, Bandello, Belleforest), *The Palace of Pleasure*.
- 1567 The Red Lion playhouse opens. The complete edition of Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* appears.
- 1572 Ben Jonson born in Westminster, London.
- 1573 Gascoigne's *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* published (revised as *The Poesies* in 1575).
- 1576 Richard Edward's *The Paradise of Dainty Devyces* published. The Theatre playhouse opens.
- 1577 Curtain playhouse opens; Blackfriars Theatre opens.
- 1579 Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* published (entered into the Stationers' Register 5 Dec.).

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- 1580 Mention of *The Faerie Queene* for the first time. Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* (published 1591) and *Apology for Poetry* in MS circulation (*Defense of Poesie*; published 1595).
- 1581 Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*, second edition. Arthur Hall (tr.), *Ten Books of Homer's Illiads*.
- 1582 Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway; the license is issued on 27 November and the first child (Susanna) is born six months later. Sir Walter Raleigh's poetry circulates at court. Thomas Watson's *Hekatompathia* published.
- 1585 Shakespeare's twin son and daughter, Hamnet and Judith, born. Marlowe probably composes *Ovid's Elegies*. *Dido, Queen of Carthage* probably first written by Marlowe while at Cambridge.
- c.1586 Shakespeare leaves Stratford; nothing is known for certain of his life between this date and 1592, by which time he is in London.
- 1586 17 Oct. Death of Sir Philip Sidney in Zutphen, Netherlands. Babington Plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth exposed. William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetry*. Third edition of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*.
- 1587–8 Marlowe possibly composes 'The Passionate Shepherd to His Love'.
- 1587 8 Feb. Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots. Rose playhouse opens.
- 1588 28 July. Spanish Armada defeated.
- 1589 Thomas Lodge's *Glaucus and Scilla* published.
- 1590 Publication of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Books 1–3, and of Sidney's *Arcadia*.
- 1591 Publication of Spenser's *Complaints*, *Daphnaïda*, and fourth edition of *The Shepheardes Calender*. Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* published. Sir John Harington publishes his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.
- 1592–3 Plague breaks out in London, closing the theatres.
- 1592 Samuel Daniel's *Delia* and *The Complaint of Rosamond* published. Henry Chettle publishes *Greene's Groats-worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, attacking Shakespeare.
- 1593 Lodge's *Phillis* and Watson's *The Teares of fancie* published.
18 Apr. *Venus and Adonis* entered in the Stationers' Register.
30 May. Christopher Marlowe killed by Ingram Frizer in Deptford.
28 Sept. Marlowe's *Lucan's First Book* and *Hero and Leander* entered together in the Stationers' Register.

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- 1594 9 May. 'A booke intituled *the Ravysheiment of Lucrece*' entered in the Stationers' Register.
The Rape of Lucrece published; Shakespeare becomes a sharer in the Chamberlain's Men. Marlowe's *Ovid's Elegies* and Sir John Davies' *Epigrams* published together. Richard Barnfield's *Cynthia* also published. Swan Theatre built.
- 1595 Publication of Spenser's *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*, as well as *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* and *Astrophel*. Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*, and Michel de Montaigne's *Essais*, also published.
- 1596 Publication of second instalment of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Books 1–6. Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes* and *Prothalamion* also published.
- 1597 Fear of second Spanish Armada.
- 1598 Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* published, first as 818-line poem and later as a Homeric and Virgilian epic, completed by George Chapman. Homer's *Iliad* translated by Chapman (Books 1–7).
Globe Theatre opens. *The Passionate Pilgrim* published with Shakespeare's name on the title page, and including versions of Marlowe's 'The Passionate Shepherd' and Raleigh's 'The Nymph's Reply'.
13 Jan. Spenser dies in Westminster, London.
- 1600 *Lucrece* reaches its fourth edition, *Venus and Adonis*, its sixth. Marlowe's *Lucan's First Book* published with Marlowe's name on the title page. *England's Helicon* published, including versions of Marlowe's 'The Passionate Shepherd' and Raleigh's 'The Nymph's Reply'. Fortune Theatre built.
- 1601 'The Phoenix and Turtle' appears in Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr, or Rosalin's Complaint*. Jonson's *Poetaster*.
- 1603 Queen Elizabeth dies and is succeeded by James I.
- 1609 *Shake-speares Sonnets* published by Thomas Thorpe. First folio edition of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Books 1–6, with 'Two Cantos of Mutabilitie'.
- 1611 First folio of Spenser's collected works published.
- 1616 Shakespeare dies in Stratford.
Jonson's *Works* published in a folio edition, containing poems, masques, and plays.
- 1623 Publication of the First Folio, the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays.
- 1625 James I dies. Accession of Charles I.
- 1637 6 Aug. Jonson dies in Westminster, London.

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- 1638 Posthumously published book of poetic tributes to Jonson entitled *Jonsonus Virbius*.
- 1640 A second folio edition of Jonson's *Works* published, including the collection of poems *The Underwood*, assembled by his literary executor Sir Kenelm Digby. John Benson's edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* published.