

Shapiro has raised useful and provocative questions about Shakespeare's culture and personality.

*1599* is like the finest Elizabethan lace made from linen thread. It presents more about Shakespeare and his times than we have known heretofore, especially with regard to Queen Elizabeth and 'equivocating' James I. Its fragility, however, derives from its concentration on one year. We hope that the author will soon return to his spinning with no limit to the pattern of his web.

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Frances A. Shirley (ed). *Troilus and Cressida*. Shakespeare in Production. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp xxi, 258.

The recent shift of emphasis in Shakespeare studies to performance issues has made inevitable the emergence of projects like Cambridge's 'Shakespeare in Production' series, which, according to the cover of this volume, offers 'the fullest possible stage histories of individual Shakespearean texts'. Each volume offers these 'stage histories' in two ways: first, through a chronological survey of what is known about a play's stage history, from its first performance to its most recent; and second, through a text annotated with descriptions of how particular moments were staged in different productions. Frances Shirley's volume on *Troilus and Cressida*, which I take to be representative, also offers a list of all known productions, including filmed versions; a bibliography; and a small number of photographs. A review of any particular volume will have to be concerned with the concept behind the series as much as with the individual contribution. Frances Shirley, it should be said, has done a thorough scholarly job of turning up what information seems to be available about past productions of *Troilus and Cressida* (though in many cases this is, inevitably, very little). The problems I find in her book are mainly with the publisher's concept.

Shirley's introductory survey is very useful, but limits are imposed by the small availability of information about most earlier productions of *Troilus and Cressida*. Even in the case of more contemporary stagings, the editor herself has not seen most of them, and has had to rely on anecdotal information or information taken from program notes and newspaper reviews. This is no

fault of Shirley's, but it leads to an unavoidable unevenness of coverage, and in some cases, I would suggest, unfair treatment of particular productions. I take as a case in point her handling of two productions of *Troilus and Cressida* at Stratford, Ontario (1987 and 2003). She did not, it seems, see either of them, and so for information on the former she relied almost entirely on newspaper reviews, while for the latter she had the advantage of extensive eye-witness notes provided by M.J. Kidnie. The 1987 production is given about half a page, most of it denigration based on a mocking statement made by Muriel Byrne about idiosyncratic productions of the play (but not with reference to this particular one). The 2003 production receives five times as much coverage, and thus appears much more important. Having been fortunate enough to have seen both, I would have to say that I found the 1987 version the more interesting and adventurous and, in its treatment of the realities of war, the more moving. While I would acknowledge that my own evaluations are subject to the peculiarities of taste and the distortions of memory, they are at least personal, and illustrate the difficulties of offering, even if only by implication, evaluative judgments of productions based on the kind of evidence used here.

Problems of a different sort arise from the annotation of the text, which is that edited by Anthony Dawson for the New Cambridge Shakespeare. The annotations provide a rich array of information about different ways in which local moments in the text have been treated in different stagings, but they can also create a depressingly clotted reading experience. For example, the 31-line Prologue to the play attracts more than two pages of annotation. Often this takes the form of a simple listing: 'Yale's 1916 Prologue rushed on breathlessly. Pentlow entered with stuffy dignity to give the BR a lecture in 1963. The Prologue appeared in the "penthouse" (balcony) of Payne's Elizabethan set (SMT 1936)', and much more along these lines (91). While such material is useful, one questions whether many students are likely to persevere with it, and this surely raises questions about what the market for such a volume might be. Indeed, one might argue that a volume on Shakespeare in production (whose essential focus is on what audiences have seen) should make a greater attempt to counteract its rendering of the visual into words by providing more illustrations; under the circumstances, the twelve photographs included here seem somewhat scant.

I have one further quibble with this book, though here again I assume I am quibbling with the publisher's policy. In the Bibliography there is a subsection of editions and adaptations. The only two recent editions of *Troilus*

and *Cressida* to be listed are Dawson's Cambridge edition and (oddly, since it has nothing to say about the play's stage history) *The Norton Shakespeare*. Omitted are scholarly editions by Kenneth Palmer (1982), Kenneth Muir (1982), R. A. Foakes (1987) and David Bevington (1998). The omission of Bevington's edition is particularly unfortunate, since its introduction includes an excellent thirty-page section on productions of the play. If the reason for these omissions is that Cambridge does not want to advertise rival editions, it is a rather ungracious policy, and certainly raises questions about the scholarly authority of the volume.

PETER HYLAND

Marta Straznicky. *Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama, 1550–1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp xii, 182.

Marta Straznicky's book—her first, surprisingly—is by one measure the culmination of her years of research into the cultural and literary conditions that produced women's sixteenth- and seventeenth-century closet drama. In *Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama*, Straznicky examines the plays of five female dramatists within the women's educational and theatrical milieu, but only after she redefines two key concepts within that milieu.

The first concept Straznicky redefines is 'privacy'. Privacy in the early modern era, Straznicky reminds us, had less to do with solitude than with the exclusions of class. Hence, an early seventeenth-century private theatre like the Blackfriars was so-called not because it admitted few patrons, but because those it did admit were not subject to the 'Rables, Applewives and Chimney-boyes, / Whose shrill confused Ecchoes loud doe cry, / Enlarge your Commons, We hate Privacie' (9). The educated, well-behaved crowd at the Blackfriars comprised the same individuals one might find reading printed versions of the plays or participating in coterie readings in a domestic setting. A playwright might bolster his reputation (and 'his' is the appropriate pronoun, despite the focus of Straznicky's work) by having his work performed before a large crowd at a private theatre, secure in the knowledge that this audience shared his erudition, his moral sensitivity, and his disdain of commerce.