

Shakespeare Facsimiles Online:

The following is excerpted from my essay "Shakespeare on the Internet," forthcoming in the second edition of *Shakespeare in the Media: From the Globe Theatre to the World Wide Web*, edited by Brusberg-Kiermeier, Stefani and Helbig, Jörg (first edition in series Britannia: Texts in English 9, published by Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2004. 256 pp.).

Over the last ten years, a company called "Octavo" embarked on digitally photographing some of the world's great books from some of the greatest libraries. These books were photographed at very high resolution (in some cases at over 200 megabytes per page).

This site contains all the books (about 400) that have been digitized to date. These range over a wide variety of topics and rarity. The books are presented so that the viewer can examine all the pages in medium to medium-high resolution.

The site includes books by Galileo, Newton, Copernicus, Kepler, Einstein, Darwin, and others. But for our purposes, *The Rare Book Room* collection's Shakespeare section is stunning: it contains most of the Shakespeare quartos from the *British Library*, the *Bodleian Library*, the *University of Edinburgh Library*, and the *National Library of Scotland*. It also contains a First Folio from the *Folger Shakespeare Library* as well as the *Folger Library's* unique copy of Q1 *Titus Andronicus*, its copy of Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), and the Lambarde manuscript of *The Womans Prize* (Subtitled *the Tamer Tamed*, John Fletcher's Jacobean answer to *The Taming of the Shrew* in which Petruchio, the tamer, is tamed). The content of the *Folger Library Octavo First Folio*, considered one of the finest F1 in *The Folger Library*, can be viewed at the Library's web site, by entering *HAMNET*, clicking on "Other" at the top of the page, clicking on "catalog entry" in the Online facsimiles section, then clicking on "Digital edition by Octavo, in PDF format" in the Linked Resources box.

The *British Library's* web site provides access to many of its "treasures" in high quality digital images. Currently, visitors can preview sample pages from the *BL's* manuscript of Mallory's *Le Morte Darthur* and will soon be able to examine the entire Winchester manuscript online. The first and the

second edition of Caxton's *Canterbury Tales*, two copies of the Gutenberg Bible, a copy of the *Magna Carta*, and 253 digitized Renaissance festival books from the *British Library*'s collection are also now available. Of greatest interest to Shakespeareans, however, are the 93 copies of 21 quartos of Shakespeare's plays that can be examined side-by-side in high quality digital images.

Facsimiles:

Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image
<<http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/index.cfm>>

The Furness Shakespeare Library (Center for Electronic and Text Image)
<<http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti/furness/>>

Shakespeare First Folio toc (Brandeis University Special Collections)
<<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.03.0018>>

The Meisei University Shakespeare Collection Database Project
<<http://shakes.meisei-u.ac.jp/e-index.html>>

Rare Book Room
<<http://www.rarebookroom.org/>>

Folger Library Octavo First Folio
<<http://shakespeare.folger.edu/other/folio/ShaF1B.pdf>>

Shakespeare in Quarto (BL)
<<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/homepage.html>>

ISE: Facsimiles
<<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/facsimile/index.html>>

The Internet Shakespeare Editions (ISE)
<<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/index.html>>