

**Dr Peter Sillitoe, PDRA on ShaLT**

**Third Monthly Enhancement Report on the V&A Collections: Detailed Report on Tour of the Museum, December 2011**

**NB: Where possible, the museum number of the item has been given in the text.**

This report documents aspects of the V and A collections that are on display to the public at present. Ranging through the museum and including diverse materials (printed works, visual art, jewels etc) the report seeks to identify items that could be linked to the Theatre and Performance Department, and, indeed, exploited for narrative purposes by the Museum. As such, the items could be utilised for display in a specific theatre-related exhibition (such as a potential Shakespeare / early modern theatre festival or exhibition, circa 1567 to 1642). Similarly, if the Department were unable to exhibit the items together as part of a new display the material could form the basis of a guided walk through the museum that could draw attention to related early modern items. Such an event might be entitled ‘Shakespeare and early modern culture’, or perhaps even ‘Shakespearean London Theatres’. Although the selected material may at times appear to have little to do with Shakespeare and the drama of the Tudor / Stuart period, it is important to stress that this report seeks to offer a contextual framework for the discovery of the period and its theatrical culture by the general public who visit the museum. Thus, it ranges from the obvious (the 1623 First Folio is actually omitted as it is well-known to the Director of Theatre) to the less-than-obvious (a miniature, a sculpture, and so on). Lastly, many of the materials will be of significant benefit to the ShaLT project, both for images for the website and for the filmed documentaries.

- ‘Monument to Sir Moyle Finch and his Wife, Elizabeth’, c. 1615-18. Museum number A186-1969. Thought to be by Nicholas Stone the Elder. Part of the gallery entitled ‘Sculpture in Britain 1600-1900’. Clearly a tenuous link to the

London theatres of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, but the monument allows visitors to engage with a large visual and material artefact from the Jacobean period and offers a glimpse of visual characterisation and artistic skill.

- ‘Neptune and Triton’ by Bernini, 1622-23. Museum number A18-1950. Again, this is part of the first-floor gallery for ‘Sculpture in Britain’. This could be used as an example of Renaissance culture using the visual arts to narrate classicism and myth, just as the dramatists used ancient Greece and Rome to classicise the London theatres. More specifically, this might be linked to the Hermione / statue scene in Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* for which Paulina is said to have engaged the Italian sculptor Giulio Romano. It should also be noted that a number of early modern plays make a theatrical connection to Renaissance statues and / or sculptors. Incidentally, the statues were expected to be brightly painted rather than monochrome.
- ‘Bust of Philip II of Spain’ c. 1554-56, by Leoni, part of the ‘Medieval and Renaissance Galleries’ on Floor 2. (A museum number is not supplied as this is on loan from Queen Elizabeth II). This is worth referencing for two reasons: Firstly, as an example of Renaissance art and aesthetics from continental Europe. Secondly, Philip II of Spain was a primary threat to Elizabethan Protestantism and even Elizabeth I herself, as he launched the famous Armada attack in 1588. Thus the bust permits a link to a key cultural and diplomatic moment of the Shakespearean period. Furthermore, the 1588 defeat of the Spanish Armada was a key influence on the drama of the late 1580s and early 1590s and most likely influenced the precursor to *Hamlet*, Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* from the late 80s.

- ‘Tapestry with the Arms of the Earl of Leicester’ (about 1585), in the ‘British Galleries, 1500-1760’. Museum number T.320-1977. This is worth a mention as Leicester was not only very influential at court and famously close to Elizabeth, but was also one of the period’s first theatrical patrons (Leicester’s Men were active in the 1570s and 80s and are thus highly important for an understanding of pre-Shakespearean theatre in London and elsewhere). Furthermore, the Queen’s Men (of which Shakespeare may have been a member – he certainly knew their plays well) were formed by Walsingham using the cream of Leicester’s Men.
- *The Book of Martyrs*, Foxe, 1596, on display in the British Galleries but actually referenced as Art Lib. 1510.1879. A key work for the English Reformation and thus a vital influence on Tudor religious culture and the Elizabethan stage. Furthermore, Foxe had tutored Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, whom Shakespeare certainly knew (he parodies him in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and is supposed to have left Stratford for poaching Lucy’s deer park). Lastly, the grandfather of the dramatist John Fletcher (Shakespeare’s successor for the King’s Men and also his co-author on *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Henry VIII* and the lost *Cardenio*) assisted Foxe on *Martyrs*.
- Members of the public should be directed to the British Gallery section of the museum for the entire display entitled ‘The Court of Elizabeth’. This includes the Great Bed of Ware (mentioned by Shakespeare in the 1601 play *Twelfth Night*). Museum number W47-1931. The Elizabethan display also includes the famous Elizabethan miniature ‘Young Man Among Roses’ from about 1587 by Hilliard (museum number P.163-1910). Indeed, it has been suggested

previously that the miniature is of the Earl of Essex, a leading aristocratic at Elizabeth's court who challenged her authority in a failed coup d'état in 1601 which resulted in his eventual execution. Indeed, the Essex faction actually had Shakespeare's company (then the Chamberlain's Men) perform his *Richard II* at the Globe, possibly to incite rebellion in the audience. Additionally, there is an engraving of Elizabeth I from 1592 (E.3000-1960). Clearly any contemporary image of the queen is vital as Elizabeth was both an early modern monarch and theatre patron. The Elizabethan section also contains a feature on Hilliard and the miniature, including two Elizabeths, one of Hatton, a Leicester, and two unidentified portraits. Hilliard had also produced a miniature of Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, who had been Shakespeare's patron in the early 1590s (the narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are both dedicated to the Earl).

- Furthermore, a separate section on the Jacobean period (strangely / incorrectly labelled as 1600-1625, rather than 1603) features a display of various aristocratic clothes from the period, as well as swords, rapiers, doublet and breeches. These items are of course interesting on their own, but in terms of theatre there is also the crucial context of theatre companies receiving aristocratic clothing for use on the stage. The Jacobean section has a 1604 engraving by Harrison of a Triumphal Arch for the entry of James I into London in 1604 (delayed from 1603). Although not part of the theatre culture of the playhouses, public entries were certainly a type of ceremonial theatre in the seventeenth century, and of course James I took on Shakespeare's company as 'the King's Men' after 1603. Furthermore, the poet and public dramatist Ben Jonson wrote part of the speeches for the entry of James into

London. Lastly, Shakespeare took part in the procession and was given red velvet for a suitable suit for the occasion. The engraving's museum number is 14006.

- Part of the Jacobean section should be of particular and strategic use to the Theatre Department at the Museum and also for ShaLT images, as this contains a display of various Jacobean miniatures, including many of the royal family. There are portraits of King James, his queen, Anna of Denmark, Prince Henry and Prince Charles, Princess Elizabeth, and her eventual husband Frederick V, Elector Palatine. Each member of James's family was a patron of an early modern theatre company at some point ('the Queen's Men', 'Palatine's Men' and so on). Thus the miniatures offer both the project and the department / museum a unique opportunity to demonstrate the complex negotiations between royal power, patronage, and theatre in our period. Likewise, the Jacobean section has a 1616 engraving of Queen Anna on horseback (ink on paper) by Simon van de Passe (museum number E3113-1960).
- The British Galleries have an additional section on the court from 1603-49, including three drawings by Inigo Jones (architect to the royal court and designer of costumes and settings for court theatre / masques). There are three drawings of the West Front of Old St Paul's, all lent from the Devonshire Collection at the Chatsworth Estate in Derbyshire. Of particular interest for theatre is a display copy of the 1606 edition of the play *No-body and Somebody* (first published in 1592 and with the Dyce reference of 6967). There is a 1631 marble 'Bust of Charles I' by Herbert Le Sueur (museum number A.35-1910) which offers ShaLT and the museum the opportunity to use visual

materials to narrate Charles's love for the theatre, and of course his continued patronage of the Shakespeare company, the King's Men up to 1642 and the outbreak of civil war. Furthermore, there is an obvious link to Shakespeare and the period's classicism with a bronze of 'Venus and Adonis' by Fanelli from about 1640 (museum number A.96-1956). Of perhaps less relevance in this section is a closing display on the civil wars, including armour from the period and other visual items / portraiture, although this material might be linked to a narrative about the closing of the theatres by Parliament in 1642 owing to the outbreak of war.

- There is an entire gallery at the museum devoted to miniatures, and many of these are relevant for theatre for the same reasons given above on the members of the royal family and patronage. The collection includes a further assortment of those by Hilliard, as well as a 1623 James I by James Palmer (museum number P.12-1958). Case 4 of the miniatures includes a selection of the monarchy from 1580 to 1625, with items such as an image of Elizabeth I by Hilliard from 1586-87 (no. P.23-1975); an Elizabeth by Isaac Oliver from about 1590-92 (no. P.8-1940); a picture of the queen by Hilliard from about 1600 (no. P.3-1974); James I by Hilliard from 1604-09 (no. P.3-1937); Queen Anna by Hilliard from about 1612 (FA689); Princess Elizabeth (the Winter Queen of Bohemia) by Hilliard from 1606-09 (no. P.4-1937); Prince Charles when Duke of York by Hilliard c. 1605-08 (no. P.10-1947).
- Level 2 (a continuation of the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries in Room 64B) contains Pindar's House c. 1600 from Elizabethan London (no. 846-1890).
- Level 3 (Sculpture display 111) includes a medal of James I (no. A.21-1980).

- Items of less interest that still deserve a mention in the report:

A Bust of Shakespeare from the 1730s (A.6-1924).

A display of 'The Tudor Table' in the Silver Galleries. This might be of use to illustrate a banqueting scene in Renaissance drama, including of course *Hamlet*.

The Jewellery galleries contain a section on 'Dress and Fashion 1500-1620' including a Renaissance pendant and early modern jewels of a devotional nature. Furthermore, the Jewellery Gallery has a Renaissance pendant collection covering the period 1540-1650, as well as 'The Barbor Jewel', a cameo of Queen Elizabeth, c. 1590 (no. 889-1894), as well as the so-called Armada Jewel (see <http://www.vam.ac.uk/images/image/47299-popup.html>).