

PUBLISHING THE HISTORY PLAY IN THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE

During the early modern period, the publication process decisively shaped the history play and its reception. Bringing together the methodologies of genre criticism and book history, this study argues that stationers have – through acts of selection and presentation – constructed some remarkably influential expectations and ideas surrounding genre. Amy Lidster boldly challenges the uncritical use of Shakespeare’s Folio as a touchstone for the history play, exposing the harmful ways in which this has solidified its parameters as a genre exclusively interested in the lives of English kings. Reframing the Folio as a single example of participation in genre-making, this book illuminates the exciting and diverse range of historical pasts that were available to readers and audiences in the early modern period. Lidster invites us to reappraise the connection between plays on stage and in print, and to reposition playbooks within the historical culture and geopolitics of the book trade.

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PLAY IN THE TIME OF
SHAKESPEARE

Stationers Shaping a Genre

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For Nathan and Sandra

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Note on the Text

As this book concentrates on early modern publication practices and the production of texts, I quote exclusively from the early printed witnesses of the works under discussion. I silently expand contractions, regularize the long -s and -vv, but otherwise retain the original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization for all pre-1800 texts. After an initial footnote, further references to these texts appear parenthetically. Unless otherwise stated, all dates accompanying the titles of works refer to the date of first publication, rather than composition or first performance. Titles of lost plays are given in quotation marks. In my main discussion and Appendix, I give all early works a standardized, modern-spelling title, while references in the footnotes and bibliography retain original spelling. I adopt this principle to avoid the hierarchy that would be implied by using original spelling for lesser-studied works and modern titles for well-known ones (such as *Richard II* for *The Tragedie of King Richard the second*, as it was first published in 1597). Here, I apply the same principle to all titles.

Abbreviations

- Arber Edward Arber (ed.), *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640 A.D.*, 5 vols. (London, 1875–77; Birmingham, 1894)
- DEEP Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser (eds.), *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks* Created 2007. <http://deep.sas.upenn.edu>
- Greg W. W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 4 vols. (London: Oxford University Press for the Bibliographical Society, 1939–59)
- ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) online ed. <http://oxforddnb.com>
- SRO Giles Bergel and Ian Gadd (eds.), *Stationers' Register Online*, CREATE, University of Glasgow. <http://stationersregister.online>
- STC A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave (eds.), *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, 2nd ed., rev. W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and K. F. Pantzer, 3 vols. (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1976–91)
- Wiggins Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, 8 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011–)