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INTRODUCTION

Popular Hermeneutics in Shakespeare's London

Thomas Fulton and Kristen Poole

"Popular hermeneutics" might strike many readers as a twofold oxymoron. Hermeneutics, which encompasses both the theory and methodology of interpreting sacred Scripture, has long been the purview of an intellectual elite, requiring the knowledge of biblical languages, linguistic structures, the vast body of inherited exegetical scholarship, and, of course, an intricate familiarity with the Bible itself. This exclusive set of skills and erudite knowledge is hardly what we associate with the general populace today, let alone with early modern commoners who had a lower rate of literacy and arguably more restricted access to education. And if biblical hermeneutics are not perceived as "popular" in the sense of being "common," they are also hardly considered "popular" in the sense of being widely liked. Hermeneutics can have the reputation of being arcane, moldy, ridiculously abstract, and convoluted.

Yet in Shakespeare's London, there was a widespread cultural fascination with the Bible and biblical interpretation. As many scholars have recently discussed, the Bible was an utterly central text in early modern England, not only informing spiritual practice and personal life, but structuring its politics and society as well. Sixteenth-century Protestantism, following Martin Luther's call for *sola scriptura*, placed a premium on biblical knowledge, and therefore the Bible was read in a myriad of textual forms – massive, ornate Bibles housed in churches; smaller, affordable divisions of the Bible (such as the Old or New Testament) that could be carried in pockets; psalters (i.e., the book of Psalms in poetic meter) that could be sung with a congregation or at home. Counter-Reformation Catholic readers also read the new English Bibles, and were furnished with translations specifically for Catholics – the New Testament in 1582, and the complete Bible in 1609–10.[1] In addition to public and private readings of the Bible, people flocked to hear sermons, which were essentially lengthy exegetical lectures on a small passage of Scripture. Biblical scenes were painted on expensive household goods and

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printed on cheap broadsides that could be hung for domestic decoration. In a helpful analogy, Hannibal Hamlin invites us to imagine a culture in which there was one television show that everyone was legally compelled to watch, that was playing on television all of the time, and that had been for generations – this is how familiar the biblical stories would have been to Shakespeare's audience.[2] The Bible was culturally ubiquitous; it was a text that people spoke through and about.

In recent years, the topic of "Shakespeare and religion" has flourished, encompassing a vigorous range of topics (political power, sacrament, the supernatural, gender, social identities, theatrical representation, etc.).[3] Yet, as Hamlin notes, "What has been described as the 'turn to religion' in the study of early modern English literature has perhaps generated some increased interest in the Bible and Shakespeare, yet less than one might expect."[4] Hamlin's own book *The Bible in Shakespeare* – along with other recent titles such as Travis Cook and Alan Galey's collection *Shakespeare, the Bible, and the Form of the Book: Contested Scripture* (2014), Beatrice Groves's *Texts and Traditions: Religion in Shakespeare 1592–1604* (2007), Adrian Streete's collection *Early Modern Drama and the Bible: Contexts and Readings 1570–1625* (2012), and Steven Marx's earlier *Shakespeare and the Bible* (2000)[5] – have made this statement less true than it once was. While these studies all offer important insights into Shakespeare's use of Scripture, a key concern continues to be neglected: how Shakespearean plays engage with the Reformation imperative to not just *read* the Bible, but to *interpret* it. The Protestant Reformation was, at its heart, a debate over the nature of language and the nature of reading. Given that scriptural and hermeneutic literacy derived from both the private experience of reading and the aural experience of sermons, audience members of Shakespeare's plays would have been knowledgeable about biblical interpretation to a degree that has largely been unacknowledged by scholars, even though this has tremendous ramifications for how audiences would have processed textual features ranging from biblical allusion to puns. Shakespeare himself, deeply attentive to words and language, lived in the midst of this popularization of hermeneutics, and his plays reflect biblical fluency and engagement with contemporary exegetical debates.

The question of how to interpret the Bible was charged with profound social, political, and personal implications. The Reformation therefore sponsored a cultural imperative for people to become not only biblically literate, but also aware of interpretive practices and principles. And indeed, hermeneutic instruction was popularized, leading to a consumer demand for interpretive education that fueled the dramatic rise of the publishing

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industry in the latter half of the sixteenth century. The Bible and exegetical texts were available in the vernacular as never before (or since). The material form of Bibles, with their extensive textual glosses and other paratextual aids, taught readers how to approach Scripture on their own. Sermons – both spoken and printed – brought Reformation hermeneutics to a listening and reading public.[6] Biblical commentaries, which appeared in a variety of forms (erudite or simplified, expensive or cheap), promoted interpretive study among a range of populations.

Building on the scholarship of Richmond Noble and others, Naseeb Shaheen produced a reference volume in 1999 that attempted to catalog all of the biblical references in Shakespeare's plays. Of course, many of Shakespeare's biblical references remain unrecorded, and some of the writers in this volume (such as Richard Strier, Chapter 9) have pointed to hitherto unrecognized allusions. And often, as Hannibal Hamlin shows in his chapter on Acts (Chapter 8) and Adrian Streete in his chapter on Lamentations (Chapter 7), the connection to the Bible can be far more structural and generic than the precise linguistic quality of allusion. Shaheen's study shows evidence that Shakespeare drew from at least two dominant Elizabethan Bibles – the Geneva Bible, first created by Protestant exiles during the reign of Mary I and embellished in the Elizabethan context, and the Bishops' Bible, created by Archbishop Parker and others to be the official pulpit Bible – though, as Aaron Pratt shows in Chapter 2, our knowledge of this bibliographic history remains incomplete, and Shakespeare may have drawn from other popular Bibles. For psalm allusions and other parts of the Bible that had become part of the English liturgy, Shakespeare's references also derive from the language of the Prayer Book Psalter and the Book of Common Prayer.[7] This evidence suggests the probability that some of the references that derive from the Bishops' Bible and other church sources were in fact *heard* in church, that they derive not from Shakespeare's reading per se, but from the experience of hearing these texts read and interpreted in sermons and liturgical settings.

An explosion in printed Bibles and a rise in literacy rates contributed to the cultural ubiquity of biblical texts. By the late sixteenth century, Scripture had become a fixed part of the English educational curriculum; indeed, the Bible and biblical primers were often among the first things read by boys and girls. More advanced students, as Bruce Gordon reminds us in Chapter 1, would have studied from the heavily glossed Protestant Latin Bibles produced on the continent by Beza, Junius, and Tremellius. For the general reader and sermon-goer, sermons on biblical texts were full

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of entertainment, as in this action-packed description of Jonah's voyage to Ninevah (Jonah 1:5), which reads a bit like the opening to Shakespeare's *Tempest*: "The windes rage, the sea roareth, the ship tottereth and groaneth, the marriners feare, and pray, and cry, every soule in the ship, so many persons upon so many Gods, . . . they runne to and fro, they ransacke all the corners of the ship, unbowell her inmost celles, throwe out commodities, rende and rape downe tackles, sailes, all implementes."[8]

Shakespeare's audience would have had a relationship to the biblical text that depended heavily on the aural experience of having the Bible read and interpreted in sermons. Though largely focused on "reading" as an interpretive mode, scholars in this volume are also attentive to the ways that scriptural representations on the stage derive from both the written page and the pulpit; indeed, the pulpit and the stage are both places where the biblical text is, in a sense, performed as well as interpreted. Printed sermons, like printed plays, are a kind of record of what happened, often at a particular place and time: "as it was preached" and "as it was acted" frequently inform the paratextual presentation of these performed events. Some authoritative sermons, such as those preached before the monarch, or those printed in Homilies sanctioned by the church, provide a vital comparative archive for dramatic representations of particular biblical passages. And as Thomas Fulton discusses in Chapter 12, Shakespeare's own plays (which were similarly performed before the monarch) themselves staged bishops and other sermonizers interpreting the biblical text.

The Bible, then, was not just the most read, but also the most methodically scrutinized text in early modern England. First printed illegally in English by William Tyndale in 1525, but soon given royal sanction, Scripture was disseminated with prescribed methods of reading – in the apparatus of the Bible itself or in manuals and church teachings. In spite of the frequently reiterated Protestant notion of "sola scriptura," scriptural texts were seldom left to speak for themselves. The Geneva Bible grew through its many printings and revisions to have an extensive system of notes. As Protestantism became entrenched under Elizabeth, the Church of England sought to establish particular reading methods and practices. These could be challenged, however, by the various modes of biblical interpretation put into play through the heated polemics enabled by the printing press and a robust market for religious reading material, by the unlicensed and often itinerant preachers, or simply by the creative lay reader with Bible in hand.

Biblical hermeneutics, in sum, were popularized in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England, and modes of interpretation had direct

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personal and cultural ramifications. Whether the biblical text was to be read literally or figuratively (or through a complex relation of the two) was a pressing cultural concern which could be realized in social experiments like the community at Little Gidding where devotees cut up and organized the Bible chronologically, reading it as a historical document. Typology, too, became a lived concern, and readers were trained to view their lives through biblical precedents – Protestant exiles returning after Mary saw Elizabeth as "our Zerubbabell,"[9] the descendant of David who would build the second temple after the Babylonian captivity; earlier, many had hailed her half-brother Edward VI as a new Josiah.[10] And those who would soon emigrate to the "New World" understood their journey in explicitly biblical terms: John Winthrop preached his sermon on the "city upon a hill," from Matthew 5:14, as he sailed for Massachusetts Bay Colony.[11] The Reformation popularized ideas about how to read the Bible, and this knowledge was translated into lived experience.

Shakespeare, like his contemporaries, was familiar with Reformation hermeneutic issues and with various trends in interpretation, and presumed an audience that would be also. And just as Elizabethans could see their own lives through exegetical principles, so too Shakespeare's characters make sense of their worlds through modes of biblical interpretation. Hamlet asserts to Horatio that there is a "divinity that shapes our ends" (5.2.10) and later supports this, as Jesse Lander discusses (Chapter 11), with a potentially Calvinist reading of Matthew 10:29, "there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow" (5.2.220). In *Richard II*, Richard tries to come to terms with his contradictory situation through the hermeneutic idea of collocation and repugnancy, "set[ting] the word itself / Against the word," as Tom Bishop argues in Chapter 6. In *Measure for Measure*, the "precise" Angelo reads literally, as Jay Zysk argues in Chapter 3 of this volume, as does the more comic Puritan figure of Malvolio, the cheerless moral policeman and the literalist who wrenches the text to his own ends.[12] In ways that are both oblique and direct, questions of how to read a text pervade Shakespeare's plays.

Buzzing Piddlers and the Teaching of Exegesis: Sermons from the Pulpit and in Print

Shakespeare's plays are often self-reflexive about their own demands for interpretation, but they repeatedly presume a set of interpretive precepts that emerge from Reformation hermeneutics and ways of reading the Bible in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England. Perhaps the best

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way to give an overview of the most basic hermeneutic concepts that would have been familiar to many in Shakespeare's original audience – while also showing how readers would have received this information – is to enter the colorful, dynamic, and lively culture of early modern hermeneutics through some exemplary sermons. The enthusiasm for early modern sermons can still be surprising – sermons at St. Paul's, for instance, could draw a crowd of up to 6,000 people. To put this in context, the Globe Theatre held approximately 3,000.[13] The stage competed with the pulpit for crowds and entertainment, and sermons were also an extremely popular commodity in the burgeoning marketplace of print, often becoming bestsellers.

In a vivid contemporary account of sermon-gadding, Laurence Barker describes the arrival of a new, young preacher: "Oh for Gods sake where teacheth hee [they say], to him they will runne for haste without their dinners, sit waiting by his church till the doore be open, if the place bee full, clime vp at the windows, pull down the glass to heare him, and fill the Church-yard full."[14] But Barker is far from delighted by these crowds that fill the churchyard, writing with cranky disdain of the type of preachers he deems "buzzing piddlers."[15] He laments that "there is not so much respect to bee had of old weather-beaten souldiours, as of new-trayned men," and "the same do many amongst us holde concerning Preachers."[16] Barker has a keen, and even poignant, sense of the old generation of clergy being pushed aside by the popularity of the young:

> For their owne poore shepheard it makes no matter for him, though he haue from God the charge of all their soules: God helpe him poore man, he is an over-worne divine: his learning is now out-dated: but if they should goe to Church, they would wish to heare a yong eloquent scholler, newe come from the Universitie, one that wil give them the flower and creame of his flowing witte, and that can deliver his mind in such fine polished tearmes, as in admiration will make them hold up their hands and blesse them.[17]

And it is not just the new university men who get under Barker's skin. Even worse might be the unordained, "hotter sort" of preachers, who attract auditors away from more learned elders. His complaint is worth quoting at length, since it reveals the degree to which different exegetical approaches were a matter of popular concern:

> Tell them where they may heare an Honourable Bishop preach, a reverend Prelate, or an auncient grave divine, tush, they know what these are, temporizing formalists, a sort of silken Doctours, such as when a man heares their text hee may gesse himselfe what will be al

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> their Sermon: but if you can tell them of a trimme yong man, that will not quote the Fathers (and good reason, for his horse never eate a bottle of hay in eyther of the Universities): that neuer yet tooke orders, but had his calling approoved by the plaine lay-elders (for he was too irregular to be ordred by a Bishop): that will not confounde the congregation with latine sentences (for he is not guiltie of the Romane language): that will not sticke to revile them that are in authoritie, that his sectaries may crie he is persecuted, when hee is justly silenced.[18]

It is not just the person of the "yong eloquent scholler" or the uneducated "trimme yong man" that irks Barker: it is the content of his sermons, full of polished rhetoric on the one hand and ignorant of patristic learning on the other.

But of course, as much as Barker complains about sermon readers and auditors (which he conflates in calling his printed sermon an "Auditorie"[19]), his own book only exists because of the period's widespread vogue for sermons.[20] There are a number of reasons why sermons were popular. In a time of heightened religiosity, many people were avidly concerned about spiritual matters. At a moment when the printing press was a relatively recent technology, the availability of biblical text was a source of fascination. At a juncture when Calvinism and its emphasis on preaching the Word were ascendant, it was, as one contemporary put it, "requisite for all true Christians to be instructed in [the Bible]."[21] And the confluence of new purpose-built professional playhouses and public sermons, in a time of rapid population growth, led to homologous experiences of crowds gathering for dramatic or oratory performances.[22] These phenomena – and how they impacted Shakespeare's theater – have been studied extensively. But there is another element at play here that has received much less attention: that "men [and women] took bookes in hand to increase their learning."[23]

Sermons, in part, were teaching people not just the content of the Bible, but how to read and analyze the text. Motivated by anti-Catholic politics and biblical imperatives, numerous authors sought to bring the Bible to the masses:

> If this booke [the Bible] be so darke and so mysticall, that it cannot be understood: if the interpretation of it be uncertaine: or if the common people cannot be taught to understand it, & therefore are not to meddle with it, how should the holy Ghost say, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that heare the words of this prophecy, and keepe the things which are written therein?* [Revelation 1:3] Let any man judge that hath common sense, shall a man ever become blessed by reading or hearing those things which he cannot understand, or which he is not to meddle withal?[24]

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Sermons, from both the pulpit and the page, were thus educational affairs – the rabble in Barker's account ask, significantly, "where teacheth hee?" when they learn of a great preacher, and they are eager for a sermon "that they never heard before, and everye day a new one."[25] Unlike the pietist sermons of later centuries, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sermons frequently sought to educate their audience on specific hermeneutic principles and techniques of exegesis.

Not just biblical content, then, but biblical reading protocols were taught in sermons. Readers were instructed on the necessity of comparing different passages of the Bible, or collocation, associated with the practice of "harmonizing" (discussed in Chapter 6). Thus we find statements such as "And because the safest and most sound interpretation of the Scriptures, is by other like places of the Scriptures, wee reade this like kinde of saying in the first of *John*, concerning Christ,"[26] and "His exposition is plaine not onely by testimonies of interpreters, but by conference & witnesse of scriptures themselves,"[27] and "Plaine againe is the scripture for the firmenesse and stabilitie of this decree of God, as by many places might be showed."[28]

In addition, audiences were taught how to read for typology, the idea that one biblical figure or event foreshadows another. This concept appears in short comments, such as the assertion that Jonah is "a figure & type of the co*n*version of other Gentiles,"[29] and in longer explanations such as this one:

> May it please you therefore to understand, that in the new Testament, the texts & prophesies of the old Testament, are alleaged somtimes properly & according the litteral sense, [and] . . . Sometime not properly & litterally, but to expresse some truth which was signified or shadowed by them: as in the 1. to the Heb. that of the *2. Sam. 7. I wil be his father & he shal be my Son;* which being properly spoken of *Salomon*, is applied by the Apostle to our Saviour Christ, whose life & figure *Salomon* was: as also in the 19. of S. *Johns* Gospell that of the 12. of Exodus, *Os non comminuetis ex eo*, Not a bone of him shal be broken: which being spoken litterally of the lambe, the Evangelist applies to our Saviour, who was figured by the paschal lambe.[30]

The direct second person address – "May it please you therefore to understand" – reinforces the pedagogical nature of these sermons, which enthusiastically inculcated as they explicated. Here the preacher recognizes that his audience will understand the imperative of literal reading, but suggests that in some cases a passage needs to be read "not properly" (or not literally), but in a "figured" or "shadowed" sense. The more modern, technical terms "type" and "typology" describing this interpretive

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procedure were much rarer; the notes to the Geneva Bible, for example, always use the word "figure," as in its description of David in the Argument to 1 Samuel as "the true figure of the Messiah, placed in his steade, whose pacience, modestie, constancie, persecution by open enemies, fained friends, and dissembling flatterers are left to the Church and to every member of the same, as a patterne and example to beholde their state and vocacion."[31] As is the case here, figuration is shown throughout the Geneva Bible to be far more capacious than strict typology: the story of David supplies a "figure" of Christ, but also "a paterne and example" for the early modern "state," a form of applied historical typology that Beatrice Groves takes up in Chapter 5 on readings of London as the new Jerusalem.

Reading for typological "figures" spills into a third hermeneutic: reading for the literal and figurative senses of Scripture (discussed in this volume by Jay Zysk in Chapter 3 and Kristen Poole in Chapter 4). While reformers had varied and deep concerns about the interpretive protocols of the medieval *quadriga*, whereby biblical passages were presumed to have a fourfold significance (the literal/historical, allegorical/moral, tropological, and anagogical), the idea that Scripture carried multiple senses persisted in Protestant reading. In a small octavo sermon printed on cheap paper – that is, in a text that was clearly marketed for the popular reader – we find a lengthy explication of the multiple senses of Scripture, where "in the reading of the Old Testament wee must not be ignorant that it receyueth two interpretations, the one hystoricall, the other mysticall."[32] The sermon's author, John Dove, interprets at length Jesus's comment to Judas that "he that eateth bread with me hath lifted vp his heele against me."[33] Dove takes the reader through the context of the Psalm that Jesus is here quoting, considering how "Christ in the new Testament dooth mystically expounde it of himselfe," and "Likewise *Peter* interpreteth this saying of *David*," which takes us back into the ancient Jews and the Roman Empire. Dove concludes, "these blessings & cursings, loue & hatred, which in the old testament are historicall, are in *th*e new testame*n*t mystical."[34] Here the biblical text is shown to have a literal, historical meaning as well as a figurative, allegorical one, and, strikingly, we see both Jesus and Peter practicing this kind of interpretation as model readers.

These three exegetical practices – collocation or harmonization, typological interpretation, and reading for different senses – are the specific major aspects of hermeneutics that recur in the period's sermon literature. We should note, though, the even wider education in complex theories of signs and semiotics that early modern readers received. Readers are taught to "discerne betwixt signes which signifie onely, and signes which

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also doe represent, confirme and seale up (or as a man may say) give with their signification"; or, otherwise put, there are "signes significative, [that] shew no gift. But in the other signes, which some call exhibitive, is there not onely a signification of the thing, but also a declaration of a gift."[35] This passage appears in a small octavo sermon, suitable for carrying in one's pocket. It is indicative of a historical moment when theorizing about the distinction between signs significative and signs exhibitive was on offer for the common reader, and when a massive consumer market for such sermons keep them coming off the printing press in droves.

It is in this context that we consider the particular terms of Barker's description of the hoi polloi chasing after flashy new preachers – the people reject the parish priest because "his learning is now out-dated," and divines are "temporizing formalists . . . such as when a man heares their text hee may gesse himselfe what will be al their Sermon." This is an educated mob indeed. In another text, we catch a glimpse of the type of critical conversations that might have taken place after hearing a sermon. In *Times Lamentation: or an exposition on the Prophet Joel, in sundry Sermons or Meditations* (1599) (one copy in the British Library with the delightfully ironic seventeenth-century inscription, "My Aunt Muddle lent me this booke"), Edward Topsell observes,

> Sometimes the preachers . . . want learning to feede the curious minds of vaine religion bablers; . . . I like not this sermon, saith one bicause he wanted words: it was a silly piece of worke saith another, bicause it was not bombasted with the sayings of Fathers, and he seldome or never confuted the papists: and other saith that the preacher was but a poore beggarly fellowe, and therefore it is no matter what hee says, none of the great men would haue said so much.[36]

"Vaine religion bablers" they might be – and, as Topsell would have it, long-haired guys who also spend their time at whorehouses[37] – but this is an audience with "curious minds." Topsell might "complaine of the neglect of preaching and prophesying as *Jeremie* did of Jerusalem *Lament*," and cry "Oh miserable and lamentable daies wherein men come to the congregation like buyers to a faire, and they all crie it is naught it is naught," but his very complaints indicate the degree to which the congregation was listening – avidly and critically – to sermons.[38] Certainly there were those who, in Henry Smith's words, merely "frequent[ed] sermons for fashion to serve the time,"[39] but a fair number of people seemed to be paying a fair amount of attention to biblical hermeneutics. This may even be an understatement – as Peter Stallybrass and others have

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shown, sermon-goers brought their Bibles to sermons to mark and comment on passages, and the biblical paratext encouraged this.[40] These were active listeners, learners, and critics.

Many of these listeners and readers were also in the audience for Shakespeare's plays. This volume sets out to explore how this sixteenth- and seventeenth-century hermeneutic culture intersects with the Shakespearean theater. While scholars have addressed the similarities of early modern preaching and performance,[41] to date there has been little consideration of how the popular vogue for biblical hermeneutics – that is, a popular interest not only in the Bible as a set of stories, but as a text with particular structures and interpretive protocols – inflected both the production and the reception of Shakespearean drama.

About This Volume

The Bible on the Shakespearean Stage seeks to integrate the study of Shakespeare's plays with the vital history of practices of biblical interpretation that arose from the English Reformation. Such hermeneutics were, at one level, disseminated to the reading and listening public, and therefore available to Shakespeare and his audience. A working assumption in what follows is that questions of biblical interpretation – often contested and polemically driven, not just between Catholics and Protestants but avidly debated even amongst coreligionists – were lively and familiar. The chapters in this volume naturally engage with biblical allusion and quotation; these are, de facto, the bedrock of any study of Shakespeare and the Bible. But the chapters move beyond noting allusions, or even beyond considering the textual power of literary allusions, to consider the implications of actual biblical hermeneutics, the strategies and protocols of scriptural interpretation. Recognizing the effect of such interpretive theories and practices opens a rich array of social, theological, and textual implications.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part, "Europe, England: Contextualizing Shakespeare's Bible," historically situates the discussion of biblical interpretation in different ways. Bruce Gordon (Chapter 1) brings us out of the myopic vision that can tend to isolate discussions of the Bible in England from the vast linguistic scholarship and textual developments happening on the continent – international developments that shaped the primary English Bibles of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Geneva and Bishops' Bibles. Aaron Pratt (Chapter 2) then takes us to England, demonstrating how much publishers and printers – the business

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of marketing books – dictated the sale of the sacred word to the public. Of course, biblical translation and production is deeply influenced by the creators of Bibles – whether they are appointed bishops, outlaws such as Tyndale, or Calvinists like the Marian exiles in Geneva – but a great deal of biblical production, especially the paratextual packaging of Scripture, was the province of the printer and publisher. As Pratt shows, the most popular New Testament in Shakespeare's England seems to have been an odd conglomerate of many religious views, and one that reminds us that religious affiliation often had very little to do with the consumption of particular Bibles.

The next part, "Stagings: Reformation Reading Practices in the Theater," considers how Shakespeare's drama participated in – and was shaped by – foundational Reformation practices of scriptural reading. Taken together, these chapters explore the fundamentals of Christian biblical exegesis discussed earlier – collocation, typology, and the relationship of the literal and the figurative/allegorical. Jay Zysk's reading of the significance of John 6 in *Measure for Measure* (Chapter 3) demonstrates how Shakespeare deploys the contentious debate about the relationship between the literal and the figurative in sacramental and biblical hermeneutics to dramatize interpretive crises centered on the application of secular laws. Kristen Poole's chapter on *Hamlet* (Chapter 4) illustrates how the play's interest in punning, and amphibology more generally, responds to the complex Protestant semiotics of the notion of a plain, literal sense that nonetheless paradoxically absorbs a multiplicity of figurative meanings; Hamlet's "pregnant" paronomastic replies not only play with a crammed literalism, but, in a moment when individuals are encouraged to imagine themselves as text, contribute to a fraught notion of the person as a sign. Beatrice Groves (Chapter 5) explores the implications of Henry IV dying in the "Jerusalem Chamber" in *2 Henry IV*, demonstrating how the typological connection between the faithful and Israel promoted within Protestant biblical exegesis led Londoners to understand their city as a new Jerusalem; this identification positions Henry's death not as the failure of a missed pilgrimage, but as the aspirational fulfillment of a lived typology. Tom Bishop (Chapter 6) contemplates the portrayal of inhabiting a scripturally inflected world in *Richard II*, tracing the complications and possibilities that arise when collocation – the specific textual practice of scriptural commentary and exegesis via the juxtaposition of gospel texts – leads not to harmony, but to a verbal repugnancy that results in what Bishop calls "the uniquely folded registers of scriptural reading and understanding" that model theatrical performance itself.

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Having established some of the ways in which the plays engage with the specifics of hermeneutical principles, the volume then opens out to consider more broadly how modes of biblical interpretation become interwoven with the interpretive protocols of other early modern genres. Biblical hermeneutics have traditionally been discussed in isolation from other early modern textual modes – rhetoric, romance, classical texts – but, as our authors demonstrate, there was a frequent interpenetration of biblical text with other genres, and a concomitant intermingling of interpretive protocols. Part III, "Interplay: Biblical Forms and Other Genres," thus explores how these interpolations invited expanded and sometimes hybrid practices of interpretation. Adrian Streete (Chapter 7) examines the generative interplay between the Roman rhetoric of oratory and the biblical rhetoric of lament in *Titus Andronicus*, arguing that far from trying to reconcile these traditions, Shakespeare exploits the competing ethical and rhetorical provocations for the material of dramatic conflict. Hannibal Hamlin (Chapter 8) approaches *Pericles* as a dramatic work in which the generic features of romance – "stormy seas, shipwreck, and inexplicable turns of fortune" – appear alongside pervasive allusions to the biblical Jonah story. Recognizing these textual features, he offers the play as a romance of conversion. Finally, Richard Strier (Chapter 9) traces classical and biblical allusions in *The Winter's Tale*. He examines moments of intertextuality between Shakespeare's drama, the Pygmalion narrative in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and biblical texts, especially First and Second Kings and the book of Habakkuk. Doing so, he insists upon the dramatic integrity of *The Winter's Tale*'s final scene, offering its iconophilic/iconoclastic resonances as a dramatic testament to the power of living, breathing love – an essential feature of human relationships, including those with the divine.

In the final part, "Enactment: Hermeneutics and the Social," contributors consider the personal and political impact of particular types of exegetical reading. Shaina Trapedo (Chapter 10) takes on the question of the intensely repeated invocations of the persecuted interpreter Daniel in the trial scene of *The Merchant of Venice*. These references are still more complicated by the fact that Portia takes the name "Balthasar" – a name that had been given to Daniel upon arrival at the court of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon as a way of erasing his Jewish identity, or, as the Geneva note explains, suggestively transporting Daniel's story to a Christian context, "that they might altogether forget their religion" (Daniel 1.7 note). Tracing a remarkable interpretive history by Jewish and Reformation scholars, some of whom, like Calvin, characterize the biblical book in generic

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terms like "tragedy," Trapedo explores the drama of religious identity in Shakespeare's play. Like Trapedo, Jesse M. Lander (Chapter 11) also examines tensions between conflicting religious sensibilities – that is, Catholic ritual and Protestant biblical devotion – in Shakespeare. Focusing on "maimed rites" and whirling words" in *Hamlet*, Lander offers Matthew 10:29 as a key for understanding conflicts between rite and writing in the tragedy. He places *Hamlet* in a contested and ultimately mysterious context of Christian providentialism. Thomas Fulton (Chapter 12) closes the final part by transitioning from the gospels to the Pauline epistles. Focusing on the most predominant biblical passage of its length in all of Shakespeare – and arguably in the period itself – Romans 13: 1–7, on obedience to "the powers that be," Fulton investigates the ways that Shakespeare's history plays reflect the interpretation of this passage on the pulpit and in printed theologies.

Through examining Shakespeare's rich structures of allusion and wordplay, the chapters renew and invigorate scholarly conversations of once-familiar concepts, such as typology and figurative language. Attuned to the controversies of his time, Shakespeare explores the linguistic positions that emerged from heated debates about biblical hermeneutics and culturally legitimated modes of interpretation. Together, the chapters in this volume position Shakespeare's plays within these debates, and reveal how a scholarly sensitivity to the playwright's engagement with post-Reformation hermeneutic cultures not only helps us to better understand the drama, but also the complexities of England's engagement with the Bible.

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