

THE BIBLE ON THE SHAKESPEAREAN STAGE

The Bible was everywhere in Shakespeare's England. Through sermons, catechisms, treatises, artwork, literature, and, of course, biblical reading itself, the stories and language of the Bible pervaded popular and elite culture. In recent years, scholars have demonstrated how thoroughly biblical allusions saturate Shakespearean plays. But Shakespeare's audiences were not simply well versed in the Bible's content – they were also steeped in the practices and methods of biblical interpretation. Reformation and counter-Reformation debate focused not just on the biblical text, but – crucially – on *how* to read the text. *The Bible on the Shakespearean Stage* is the first volume to integrate the study of Shakespeare's plays with the vital history of Reformation practices of biblical interpretation. Bringing together the foremost international scholars in the field of Shakespeare and the Bible, these essays explore Shakespeare's engagement with scriptural interpretation in the tragedies, histories, comedies, and romances.

THOMAS FULTON is Associate Professor of English at Rutgers University. He is the author of *Historical Milton: Manuscript, Print, and Political Culture in Revolutionary England* (2010), and coeditor, with Ann Baynes Coiro, of *Rethinking Historicism from Shakespeare to Milton* (Cambridge, 2012).

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Cultures of Interpretation in Reformation England

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*For Betsy Walsh (1953–2017) and the entire staff of the Folger
Shakespeare Library, whose expertise and hospitality foster
enduring scholarly community.*

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A Note on the Text

Early modern printing frequently had customs that look strange to modern eyes, using *i* where we would use *j*, and *u* where we would use *v*, for instance. Scholars hold different opinions on the desirability of retaining original orthography or modernizing the spelling, and we consider these opinions to be matters of philosophical difference, not simply matters of style. Throughout these chapters, then, some authors have chosen to modernize early modern texts, and some have preferred to retain original spelling. In a few particular instances where the original orthography might be an impediment to comprehension, *i*'s have been silently emended to *j*'s, and *u*'s to *v*'s. The letters *m* and *n* were often omitted in early modern printing, signaled by a tittle over the words; these *m*'s and *n*'s have been supplied here with italics, as in *command*.