

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642

Martin Butler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Theatre and Crisis
1632–1642

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642

Martin Butler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To JANE

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642

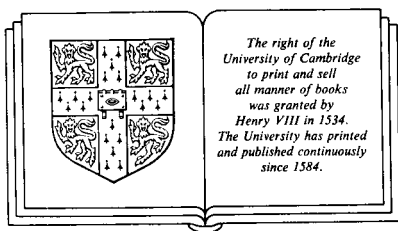
Martin Butler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Theatre and Crisis 1632–1642

MARTIN BUTLER



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge

London New York New Rochelle

Melbourne Sydney

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642
Martin Butler
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by
Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521310499

© Cambridge University Press 1984

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1984
First paperback edition 1987
Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2009

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 83-15250

ISBN 978-0-521-24632-3 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-31049-9 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of tables</i>	viii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Note on procedures</i>	xii
1 Some contentions	1
2 Drama and the Caroline crisis	7
3 Court drama: the queen's circle 1632-37	25
4 Lovers and tyrants: courtier plays 1637-42	55
5 Puritanism and theatre	84
6 The Caroline audience	100
7 City comedies: courtiers and gentlemen	141
8 The survival of the popular tradition	181
9 Concepts of the country in the drama	251
10 Some conclusions	280
Appendix I Dramatic or semi-dramatic pamphlets 1641-42	289
Appendix II Shakespeare's unprivileged playgoers 1576-1642	293
<i>Notes</i>	307
<i>Index</i>	335

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642

Martin Butler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

1	Wenceslaus Hollar, <i>The Royal Exchange</i> .	page 121
2	Wenceslaus Hollar, <i>Covent Garden church and piazza</i> .	148
3	Queen Elizabeth, from the title page of T. Heywood, <i>If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody</i> (6th edition, 1623).	199
4	Henry VIII, from the title page of S. Rowley, <i>When You See Me You Know Me</i> (2nd edition, 1613).	200
5	King John submitting to the Pope's legate; from J. Foxe, <i>Acts and Monuments</i> (6th edition, London, 1610), I, p. 722.	202
6	Tenterhook the projector and Dodger the patentee, from J. Taylor, <i>The Complaint of Mr Tenterhook</i> (1641).	230
7	Laud and his confessor caged, from R. Overton, <i>A New Play Called Canterbury his Change of Diet</i> (London, 1641), t.p.	239
8	Laud dining on the ears of his puritan critics, from R. Overton, <i>A New Play Called Canterbury his Change of Diet</i> , sig.A2 ^r .	241
9	Bishop Williams ready for war, by Wenceslaus Hollar.	243
10	Bishops carrying muskets and pikes, a detail from <i>Magna Britannia Divisa</i> (1642).	244

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642

Martin Butler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Illustrations

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 11 | Laud being purged by Henry Burton, contemporary satirical print. | 245 |
|----|--|-----|

Nos 1, 2, 9, 10 and 11 are reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum; nos 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 by permission of the British Library; and no. 5 by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

Tables

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | Family tree of Mildmay and Crofts (simplified). | 114 |
| 2 | Family tree of Dering and Hobart (simplified). | 126 |
| 3 | Dedications and commendatory verses in published popular literature 1637-41. | 187 |

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642

Martin Butler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

THIS BOOK is a study of the English theatre during the years immediately before the Civil War, focusing particularly on its treatment of political subjects and themes, its engagement with the issues of state, society and religion which were to generate the crisis of 1642. The character of this body of drama is revealed most fully and most significantly by an investigation of its political interests, and I believe that its modern critical devaluation has been due in considerable measure to persistent misconceptions about these concerns, and to a failure to recognize how frequently they were its leading preoccupations.

Moreover its historical placing, at the end of a long theatrical tradition and on the eve of a moment of major political upheaval, makes it a unique test case for examining certain basic assumptions which commonly surface in criticism of the whole seventy years or so of English Renaissance theatre. As I explain in my introduction, the wider implications of this study arise from the opportunity which it provides for verifying or qualifying what are broadly agreed to be the underlying social and political tendencies of the English Renaissance stage in general, the nature, extent and limitations of its sympathies, its prejudices and its allegiances. The belief that the Elizabethan and early Stuart theatre was eventually to turn into a Cavalier theatre has profoundly affected our conception of its history, for that history has implicitly been written very largely from the point of view that the situation of the drama was always fundamentally contingent on the situation of the court, that in the crisis of 1642 the drama would inevitably tend to come down firmly on the side of

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642

Martin Butler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

the monarchy and against its critics. This point has been crucial to our valuation of the later drama and to many interpretations of the greater drama which preceded it but on investigation it proves to be problematic and to leave much out of account – especially, I wish to suggest, those things which in the decade 1632–42 are of greatest interest and significance. This is the larger question which principally I am going to be addressing and challenging.

So I have adopted the chronological limits 1632–42 in the first instance for pragmatic reasons, that they denote a period of drama significant simply for having been neglected and misunderstood for so long, but also for their very considerable symbolic force, that they stand for the final decade of the Renaissance stage in England, supposedly the ‘death’ of the Elizabethan theatre, in which we might expect to find its characteristic strengths and weaknesses most fully manifested. In 1632 appeared the first of the new ‘decadent’ line of amateur courtier plays, Walter Montagu’s *Shepherd’s Paradise*, while simultaneously that notorious warning of the theatre’s offensiveness to puritan sensibilities, William Prynne’s massive attack on the stage, *Histriomastix*, was in the press. Ten years later parliament closed the playhouses virtually at the same moment as it took up arms against the king. In politics, the decade begins with Charles’s experiment in personal rule at its most determined (William Noy was made Attorney-General in 1631, Wentworth was sent to Ireland in 1632, Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633); it closes with an unprecedented failure of confidence in the court, with political deadlock and civil war. Any drama is going to be judged in relation to the quality of its insight into the principal issues of its time, and this consideration impinges more closely on this decade than on most others. It has usually been felt that a drama which since the days of Elizabeth had been sponsored and protected by royalty went down in 1642 in the wake of the collapse of the court, but it may equally well be true that a theatre which had in the past been able to produce plays like *Tamburlaine* and *King Lear* was in 1642 involved in a political crisis which in important senses was partly of its own creation.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642

Martin Butler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

The preparation of this book has brought me many friendships and many debts. Heartfelt gratitude goes especially to Leo Salinger, who supervised this work when it was a PhD thesis with great kindness and care, and to Margot Heinemann who has been overwhelmingly generous with her ideas and her enthusiasm. Both will find much here that is more properly theirs. I am very grateful too to Marie Axton, Anne Barton, Professor Muriel Bradbrook, Derek Hirst and John Rathmell for reading and commenting on earlier drafts, and particularly to John Morrill for help and warm encouragement on the historical side, and to Peter Holland for friendly interest and criticism extending over a period of years. My unsolicited inquiries have been very kindly answered by Richard Luckett, Gill Spraggs, Lois Potter, Peter Salt, J. F. Fuggles, Susan Halpert, Geoffrey Trease, Ruth Spalding, Professor Jason P. Rosenblatt and Professor John Orrell. None of these however is responsible for any errors which I have introduced. The revision of this book was made possible by the generosity of the Master and Fellows of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in awarding me a research fellowship, and made pleasant by the courteous efficiency which prevails at the Cambridge University Library. My family have been very good in moments of need and, above all, my wife has been constantly involved and has worked harder than any. If I say that we have learned the significance of the word crisis together, she will know exactly what I mean.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-31049-9 - Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642
Martin Butler
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Note on procedures

I HAVE QUOTED Massinger from the edition of Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson (1976), Suckling from the edition of T. Clayton and L. A. Beaurline (1971), and Cartwright from the edition of G. B. Evans (1951). Elsewhere, in the absence of reliable modern comprehensive editions, I have quoted from the original texts, silently expanding speech-headings. The one exception is Brome, whose plays are difficult to obtain, and for convenience I have given page references to J. Pearson's three-volume reprint of 1873, but checking my texts against the originals. It should be noted that in volume 2 of Pearson's Brome *The Lovesick Court*, *Covent Garden Weeded* and *The Queen and Concubine* are paginated separately. Old-style dates have been altered to conform with the modern calendar, and to avoid confusion with the Cockpit-in-court I have referred throughout to the Drury Lane Cockpit by its alternative name, the Phoenix.