

LIBELS AND THEATER IN SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

In the first comprehensive history of libels in Elizabethan England, Joseph Mansky traces the crime across law, literature, and culture, outlining a viral and often virulent media ecosystem. During the 1590s, a series of crises – simmering xenophobia, years of dearth and hunger, surges of religious persecution – sparked an extraordinary explosion of libeling. The same years also saw the first appearances of libels on London stages. Defamatory, seditious texts were launched into the sky, cast in windows, recited in court, read from pulpits, and seized by informers. Avatars of sedition, libels nonetheless empowered ordinary people to pass judgment on the most controversial issues and persons of the day. They were marked by mobility, swirling across the early modern media and across class, confessional, and geographical lines. Ranging from Shakespearean drama to provincial pageantry, this book charts a public sphere poised between debate and defamation, between free speech and fake news.

JOSEPH MANSKY is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Oklahoma.

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IN SHAKESPEARE'S
ENGLAND

Publics, Politics, Performance

JOSEPH MANSKY

University of Oklahoma



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Abbreviations

<i>APC</i>	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed. John Roche Dasent et al., 46 vols. (London, 1890–1964)
BL	British Library; Lansdowne MSS accessed at <i>State Papers Online, 1590–1714</i> (Gale Cengage Learning)
Co. Rep.	<i>The Reports of Sir Edward Coke, Knt. In Thirteen Parts</i> , ed. John Henry Thomas and John Farquhar Fraser, 6 vols. (London, 1826)
CP	Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, Cecil Papers, accessed at <i>The Cecil Papers</i> (ProQuest)
<i>CWBJ</i>	<i>The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson</i> , gen. ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
REED	Records of Early English Drama
SP	state papers, accessed at <i>State Papers Online</i>
STAC	Court of Star Chamber records
TNA	The National Archives of the UK
<i>TRP</i>	<i>Tudor Royal Proclamations</i> , ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964–69)