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978-1-107-04003-8 - Shakespeare's Stage Traffic: Imitation, Borrowing and Competition in Renaissance Theatre

Janet Clare

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SHAKESPEARE'S STAGE TRAFFIC

Shakespeare's unique status has made critics reluctant to acknowledge the extent to which some of his plays are the outcome of adaptation. In *Shakespeare's Stage Traffic* Janet Clare re-situates Shakespeare's dramaturgy within the flourishing and competitive theatrical trade of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. She demonstrates how Shakespeare worked with materials that had already entered the dramatic tradition, and how, in the spirit of Renaissance theory, he moulded and converted them to his own use. The book challenges the critical stance that views the Shakespeare canon as essentially self-contained, moves beyond the limitations of generic studies and argues for a more conjoined critical study of early modern plays. Each chapter focuses on specific plays and examines the networks of influence, exchange and competition that characterized stage traffic between companies and playwrights, including Marlowe, Lyly, Jonson, Marston, Rowley and Fletcher. Overall, the book addresses multiple perspectives relating to authorship and text, performance and reception.

JANET CLARE is Professor of Renaissance Literature at the University of Hull and Director of the Andrew Marvell Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies. She is the author of *'Art made tonguetied by authority': Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship, Drama of the English Republic, 1649–1660* and *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance*. She has published many articles on Renaissance and early modern literature and drama, co-edited *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 2 on Shakespeare and Early Modern Popular Culture and reviewed Shakespeare productions in Ireland for *Shakespeare Survey*.

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*To the fellows, students, and friends of the
Shakespeare Institute, 1976–1981.*

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A note on texts

Throughout this book, unless otherwise stated, Shakespeare quotations are from *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford University Press, 1987); quotations from works by Jonson are taken from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge University Press, 2012). When using early editions of texts I have retained old spelling except where noted. Where quotations have been transcribed from the original spelling, that spelling has been retained, but the long 's' and 'u' have been normalized.