

SHAKESPEARE'S RISE TO CULTURAL PROMINENCE

Shakespeare's rise to prominence was by no means inevitable. While he was popular in his lifetime, the number of new editions and revivals of his plays declined over the following decades. Emma Depledge uses the methodologies of book and theatre history to provide a reassessment of the reputation and dissemination of Shakespeare during the Interregnum and Restoration. She demonstrates the crucial role of the Exclusion Crisis (1678–82), a political crisis over the royal succession, as a foundational moment in Shakespeare's canonization. The period saw a sudden surge of theatrical alterations and a significantly increased rate of new editions and stage revivals. In the wake of the Exclusion Crisis, Shakespeare's plays were made available on a scale not witnessed since the early seventeenth century, thus reversing what might otherwise have been a permanent disappearance of his drama from canonical familiarity and firmly establishing Shakespeare's work in the national cultural imagination.

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SHAKESPEARE'S
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PROMINENCE

Politics, Print and Alteration, 1642–1700

EMMA DEPLEDGE

University of Fribourg, Switzerland



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Note on Terminology and List of Abbreviations

Rather than 'adaptation' I use the term 'alteration' in order to reflect seventeenth-century usage. Late-seventeenth-century title pages use 'altered' where we would today use 'adapted', and as distinct from 'revived', which is predominantly used to denote an earlier play that has appeared on stage without the introduction of major changes. The first recorded use of the term 'adaptation' to denote 'the alteration of a dramatic composition to suit a different audience' dates from 1790 (*OED*). For more on historicizing play terminology, see Laura J. Rosenthal, '(Re)Writing Lear: Literary Property and Dramatic Authorship', in John Brewer and Susan Staves, eds., *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 323–38 (323).

DEEP	Database of Early English Playbooks
EBBA	English Broadside Ballad Archive
ELH	<i>English Literary History</i>
ESTC	<i>English Short Title Catalogue</i>
HLB	<i>Harvard Library Bulletin</i>
HLQ	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
LS	<i>The London Stage, 1660–1800</i> , eds. William Van Lennep, Emmett L. Avery, Arthur H. Scouten, George Winchester Stone, Jr and Charles Beecher Hogan, 5 parts in 11 vols. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960–8), Part 1: 1660–1700.
MLR	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PBSA	<i>Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America</i>
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
QU	Undated quartos
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
SPELL	<i>Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature</i>
SQ	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
SR	Stationers' Register. For the pre-1640 period, entries refer to Edward Arber, <i>A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers 1554–1640</i>

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AD, 5 vols. (London: privately printed, 1875–94). For the later period, entries refer to G. E. B. Eyre and C. R. Rivington, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers of London: From 1640–1708 AD*, 3 vols. (London: privately printed, 1913–14).

Wing Donald Wing *et al.*, *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries: 1641–1700*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982–98).

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