

A Bibliographical Review of the Italian-Language Academic Production on Shakespeare's History Plays (2000-2022): A Data-Based Approach

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1. Introduction

It is well-known how problematic and crucial it is to trace an extensive and definite profile of all the scientific publications related to authors, subjects and disciplines (Boote and Beile 2005). In the past years, most of the existing bibliographical reviews were written thanks to meticulous research activities in libraries or via the scrutiny of references reported in monographs, research papers, etc. However, literature and bibliographic reviews have increasingly required the support of digital and online resources in order to maximize efficiency (O'Brien and Mc Guckin 2016), especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Close and attentive reading still remains a crucial approach in producing a comprehensive bibliographic profile of the academic production in a specific discipline. The critical evaluation of references is an additional practice for scholars, precisely when the aim of the analysis is to advance new perspectives in the examined area (Boote and Beile 2005) or to fill an existing gap in the literature. This is particularly true for authors like Shakespeare, who elicit continuous interest and thus require constant updating and revision of the relevant academic production.

Against this backdrop, it may be almost impossible to outline an exhaustive review – which is here intended as a “systematic literature review” (Booth, Sutton and Papaioannou 2016) of the necessary evidence – of all the academic publications related to Shakespeare (both Italian and international). Furthermore, most of the results obtained from a meticulous online search could turn out to be only marginally related to a specific field, in this case Italian academic publications regarding Shakespeare’s history plays. Additionally, the entire production of Shakespeare is largely referred to in many academic papers in the broader fields of linguistics, literature and cultural studies. However, and more interestingly, scholars have also focused on history plays utilizing new, non-literary approaches, as for example in business studies, with Olivier’s work on the leadership of Henry V (translated into Italian in 2005); or in political studies, Krippendorff’s work on the political Shakespeare in the history plays (translated into Italian in 2005)¹. This broad focus on Shakespeare may create considerable problems in distinguishing between academic productions specifically devoted to his works and those which merely use Shakespeare as a reference to focus on different topics.

The main attempt of this paper is thus to provide the reader with an extensive, though far from definite, overview of Italian academic publications on Shakespeare’s history plays and of their new translations (or new editions of translations) that have appeared in Italy in the last twenty years: the reference period here considered goes from 2000 to 2022. Firstly, this review does not aim to critically evaluate or offer a broad perspective on one or all of the history plays, nor does it attempt to critically evaluate the academic publications themselves. The article focuses instead on a critical presentation of the results collected from the examination of the relevant bibliographical resources available online. Secondly, this is an attempt to offer a possible, systematic digital approach to a bibliographical review both from quantitative and qualitative perspectives. This focus on a preliminary search via web-based tools does not aim to replace traditional academic approaches, but

¹ See section 3.2 for the entire references.

has been developed as a way to review the new trends of web-based research, statistical analysis and pattern recognition.

2. *Methods and Materials*

All the collected results will regard the following histories (Shakespeare 2017, ix-x): *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* (2 Henry VI), 1590-1591; *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York and the Good King Henry VI* (3 Henry VI), 1591; *The First Part of Henry VI*, 1592; *The Tragedy of King Richard III*, 1592-1593; *The Reign of King Edward III*, 1592-1593; *The Tragedy of King Richard II*, 1595; *The Life and Death of King John*, 1596; *The History of Henry IV (The First Part)*, 1596-1597; *The Second Part of Henry IV*, 1597-1598; *The Life of Henry V*, 1598-1599; *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, 1603-1604; *All Is True (Henry VIII)*, 1613.

This bibliographical profile was compiled thanks to a combination of databases available online and reference sources in the field. In the last few years, in fact, research articles and monographs have benefitted from a wider visibility in the scientific community worldwide thanks to the Internet, especially when compared to the examinations conducted via direct reading of specialized journals (Hyland and Zhou 2022; Hsin, Cheng and Tsai 2016); consequently, scholars have experienced a higher and more efficient searchability of the data they require. Titles have proved to be crucial in terms of the key information provided when scanning a dataset and collecting pertinent results (Hsin, Cheng and Tsai 2016; Hyland and Zhou 2022). A list of works has been collected thanks to this preliminary search, which aims to be as unbiased and representative as possible of the Italian scientific debate in the period under scrutiny.

Following these preliminary assumptions, two major categories of resources were adopted: searchable databases and specialized publications in the field. Four popular resources for scholars were finally chosen: as for searchable databases, Google Scholar and the OPAC SBN; as for specialized publications, *Memoria di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies* and *Marenco's Drammi storici* (Shakespeare 2017). All the resources were available online, which

helped enormously in the attempt to answer the two research questions formulated above.

Expected results were hypothesized, and inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to improve the examination of the massive set of results received from the online-based search of the datasets. As regards the type of texts, research articles and papers, volume contributions and chapters, and PhD dissertations were included in the results, in that they are research-oriented primary sources; on the other hand, conference abstracts², reviews, manuals and BA or MA theses were excluded, since they are not sufficiently data-oriented to be here considered as primary sources. With regard to the content of the publications, specialized works on Shakespeare's histories were obviously included; whereas contributions offering mere references to Shakespeare's histories were excluded from the results analysed in this review, since non-specific works were considered irrelevant to a comprehensive profile of the Italian academic debate in this field. In particular, several results on other Shakespeare plays appeared among the outcomes produced by the web-based examination conducted via Google Scholar, though focused on the history plays: those results were excluded as non-relevant. With particular reference to academic databases available online, titles, abstracts, and meta-descriptions had to be consistent with the keywords selected for the purpose of the specific search. If not, they were excluded (e.g. meta-descriptions highlighting only "Shakespeare" as a keyword, and hence not displaying the specific reference to the play searched, are not presumed to be a specialized contribution).

In the first phase, research was conducted via the Google Scholar³ search engine which is commonly adopted to survey the existing literature in a scientific field by means of selected and searchable keywords. Investigating online databases containing titles and citations of scientific publications to retrieve prospective relevant results is a well-established academic practice (Hyland

² It is here necessary to mention the papers presented during the Shakespeare Permanent Seminar at Sapienza University of Rome in 2021 on the language and performance of Shakespeare's history plays. See further details of the seminar at <https://web.uniroma1.it/spss/en/home>.

³ Last access 15 November 2022.

and Zhou 2022). In compliance with the research questions here formulated, a number of filters were applied to narrow the dataset returned by Google Scholar: the period, which was established from 2000 to 2022; the language of the pages to be returned was set as “Italian”, so that only academic publications published in Italy were returned, regardless of the language of publication; and citations were included in the dataset⁴. This increased the opportunity to examine papers which were not immediately available online but were cited in online-based works. Following this, the search engine bar was interrogated based on a selection of keywords⁵ which had to be distinguished into two specific categories: general/comprehensive and specific/play-oriented, displayed in Table 1:

Table 1: Keywords selection (Google Scholar-based preliminary examination).

Categories	Selected keywords
GENERAL/ COMPREHENSIVE	"Shakespeare" AND "histories" "Shakespeare" AND "history plays" "Shakespeare" AND "history drama" "Shakespeare" AND "drammi storici"
SPECIFIC/ PLAY-ORIENTED	"Shakespeare" AND "Henry VI" "Shakespeare" AND "Richard III" "Shakespeare" AND "Edward III" "Shakespeare" AND "Richard II" "Shakespeare" AND "King John" "Shakespeare" AND "Henry IV" "Shakespeare" AND "Henry V" "Shakespeare" AND "Sir Thomas More" "Shakespeare" AND "Henry VIII"

The preliminary search was conducted selecting some general keywords in order to obtain a comprehensive dataset of results related to history plays, and then to outline an initial picture of the relevant works available online; secondly, specific plays were searched to confirm or add further results to the list. In both cases,

⁴ Patents were excluded from the dataset, for they are not of interest for the purposes of this review.

⁵ Keywords were provided in inverted commas to obtain results with the specific words being matched both in titles and in meta-descriptions; and the Boolean operator “AND” was used to obtain as many results having both the keywords as possible.

the results were examined based on the correspondence between the title of the paper and the consistency with the research questions here to be answered. With particular reference to the specific/play-oriented category, it was not necessary to replicate the process with the Italian equivalent of names, for the search engine automatically returns related or equivalent samples in Italian. When the meta-description of the reference provided by Google Scholar did not include at least one of the keywords chosen for the search, the result was not opened for further investigation; additionally, if the meta-description displayed the content of the publication related to a more general background than the specific critical focus required, the result was ignored. All the meta-descriptions following the titles which appeared as possibly relevant were evaluated to establish pertinence with the research questions.

The second phase consisted in the exploration of *Memoria di Shakespeare*⁶, an open access Italian journal devoted to Shakespearean studies⁷. Part of the results published in the journal were collected through the investigation carried out via Google Scholar (e.g. those published in the years 2009 and 2014, both available online). However, the majority of results (approximately 67% of the titles retrieved from the journal's publications) were obtained via the online search engine DiscoverySapienza⁸ providing both internal and external resources which can be retrieved through keywords on the library system of Sapienza University of Rome as well as journals, datasets, and PhD theses⁹. All the pertinent results were reached through a combination of the keyword-based approach and a close reading of the abstracts and/or introductions of the related works.

⁶ Last access 28 May 2022.

⁷ The journal was published in print until 2012, then as a digital journal available online at https://rosa.uniroma1.it/rosa03/memoria_di_shakespeare. The catalogue related to the printed versions published up to 2012 is still available via the electronic resources provided by Sapienza University of Rome.

⁸ Last access 28 May 2022.

⁹ The catalogue is available online at the following website: <https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/search/basic?vid=0&sid=4f87c794-2b94-46ca-bb9c-f4669d9b94f2%40redis>.

This third phase involved consulting academic monographs, in order to perfect the collection of data conducted via web-based sources. One useful reference text, the most recent and updated critical collection of Shakespeare's history plays translated into Italian, is Marenco's *Drammi storici* (Shakespeare 2017). This publication presents each history play in three major sections: a parallel corpus of history plays (both the Italian translation and the source text are provided), an introductory note on each play (with salient information on the text, original publication, transmission, reception, main sources, and a critical overview), and key references (which include the Italian translation and new translations of the same play). The volume thus offered valuable bibliographical suggestions in the introductions and several notes which accompany the Italian translation of each history play¹⁰. These additional references regarded critical literature on Shakespeare's history plays and new translations published in the period 2000-2017, and were thus included in the dataset.

The list of Italian translations of Shakespeare's histories was expanded thanks to an online search of the OPAC SBN¹¹. The "advanced search" settings available in the online version of the catalogue were adjusted in order to search the database according to specific criteria: in this particular case, both keywords and object, and also filters, e.g. years of publication (setting the exact time frame), as well as the language and the country where the work was published.

Lastly, all the pertinent titles extracted from the different sources were reported in an Excel¹² file sheet in order to properly manage the available data, aggregating quantitative data and preparing qualitative data.

¹⁰ See Shakespeare 2017, I-IV, 23-25, 305-7, 567-69, 804-5, 1138-39, 1359-61, 1595-97, 1810-11, 2059-61, 2329-31, 2589-91, 2839-41.

¹¹ The Online Public Access Catalogue of the National Library System (<https://opac.sbn.it>). Last access 15 November 2022.

¹² Version 2210, build 157226.20174.

3. Data

3.1. Quantitative Data

This first section attempts to provisionally answer the second research question, that is to prove how adequate digital and online resources may be to evaluate the reference scenario here studied.

In order to offer a general picture of the quantitative data collected through the bibliographic examination of the area of interest, four major categories were taken into consideration: the reference period and the related dissemination of the academic publications on Shakespeare's histories here investigated; the main sources from which the results were obtained (as described in 2. *Methods and Materials*) to critically evaluate major contributions beyond the mere figures reported; the typology of texts produced in the last twenty years, aiming to disseminate critical perspectives in the Italian academic scenario as well as to translate or retranslate Shakespeare's history plays; and the distribution of the single history plays over all of the publications retrieved in this examination. This approach in particular allowed an analysis of which history play received most attention in the Italian academic context.

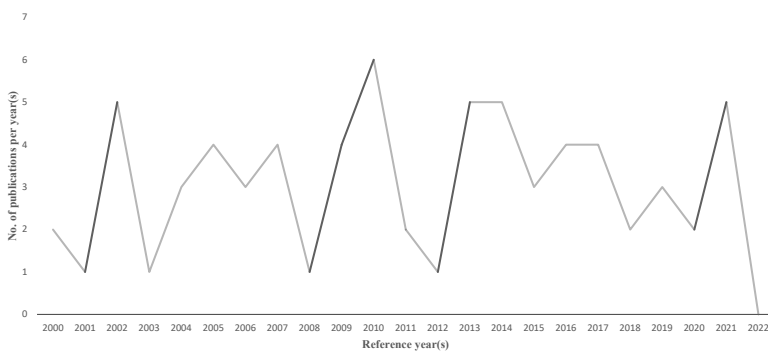


Fig. 1: The Italian academic production on Shakespeare's histories between 2000-2022.

The line graph (Fig. 1) illustrates the number of the Italian academic publications regarding Shakespeare's histories which are dispersed in the defined period between the years 2000 and 2022. A first glance at the diagram reveals four major peaks equally reached in both decades; however, four troughs were immediately experienced, accordingly. This is to say that a generally balanced trend is observable, since continuous fluctuations are constantly visible throughout the period. According to the findings, the most productive years were those between 2008 and early 2014, when approximately 35% of the academic works were published: the number of publications soared dramatically in the first couple of years (11 academic works were produced), but then plummeted drastically in the following years up to 2012, when they started growing steadily before stabilizing between 2013 and 2014 (10 works published). Unexpectedly, the peak year which can here be observed is not 2016: the four hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death witnessed an enormous contribution of international academic publications (Holland 2017). However, as the graph shows, from 2021 onwards the trend has presumably suffered from a new decrease in the number of publications (or they may have simply not yet appeared online). To sum up, research activity on Shakespeare's histories in Italy has been regularly conducted in the last two decades; and although the first decade appears as generally negative, this may depend on the fact that academic works published in the first years of the millennium have yet to be digitalized: it is important to consider the lower level of searchability of resources in that period.

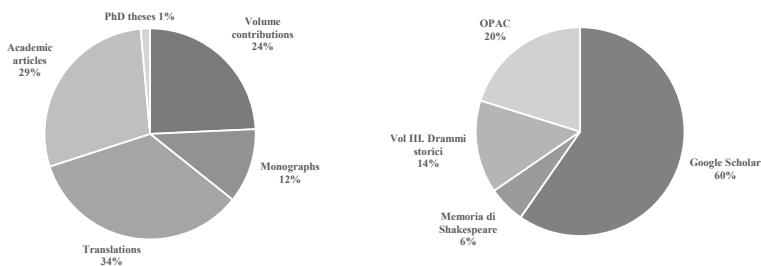


Fig. 2: Text-types and sources of the Italian academic production on Shakespeare's histories between 2000-2022.

The two pie charts (Fig. 2) display the number of sources which mostly contributed to the retrieval of the academic titles published in Italy in the reference period, and the typology of texts researchers mainly opted for. Two types of data are here presented: quantitative data in the form of percentages and qualitative data in the form of selected categories. From a general perspective, it is evident that Google Scholar provided most of the data collected in this analysis: almost two third of the titles were retrieved via this online-based scrutiny (i.e. 60%); and most of the Italian academic activity appears to be devoted to the translation of Shakespeare's history plays (i.e. just over 30%). Nevertheless, it is arguable that the discrete data related to translations may not be representative of a general trend reflecting overall academic research activity. All the other data have to be aggregated in order to display a more realistic picture of the size of the research activity conducted in Italy on Shakespeare's histories: in reality, nearly 70% of the titles collected are from text-types devoted to academic writing rather than translation (although a small portion of scholars appeared to work both on translations and on related academic works¹³). To summarize, online sources were of paramount importance in the collection of a preliminary dataset, but further investigation, i.e. a close-reading approach, is generally required to establish the significance of the data collected.

Table 2: Number of publications specifically devoted to a play or combination of plays.

History play(s)	Academic work(s)	Translation(s)	TOT.
King John	4	2	6
Edward III	0	1	1
Richard II	12	4	16
Henry IV	9	4	13
Henry V	8	7	15
Henry VI	3	0	3
Richard III	4	4	8
Henry VIII	4	0	4
Thomas More	2	1	3
Selected historical plays	5	0	5
All the historical plays	1	0	1

¹³ For example, Borgogni worked on the critical note and on the translation of *Henry VI* (Shakespeare 2017, 5-25) and published a paper on the trilogy of *Henry VI* in 2021 (see section 3.2 for the entire reference).

This last paragraph will be focused on a few specific figures of the history plays which received major attention in the Italian academic scenario devoted to Shakespeare (Table 2). Analyzing the dissemination of the individual plays here is problematic, for some of them do not appear singularly in the academic paper or monograph under review: *Henry IV* and *Henry V* were occasionally studied together¹⁴ as well as *Henry V* and *Richard II*¹⁵. On the whole, *Richard II*, *Henry IV* and *Henry V* received most of the attention of scholars in the last two decades (i.e. 22%, 19% and 17% of the research activities published in proper academic text-types, respectively); however, the situation is similar in the translations of the same plays, though not totally equivalent (i.e. 17%, 17% and 30% of the selected translations, respectively). This may lead us to formulate the hypothesis that, despite the intersections between academic writing and translation, scholars may differ in the focus devoted to the history plays.

In conclusion, from this preliminary attempt to attribute conceptual significance to the amount of figures calculated from the occurrences collected, it is clear that the period between 2000 and 2010 requires a more detailed scrutiny by hand. The overall picture may not be representative when relying only on the many citations and bibliographical references available via online databases.

3.2. Qualitative Data

This section will present the titles collected during the online examination; they are here presented in the form of qualitative data. The results are here presented in different sub-sections according to text typology: intersections among different plays in the same academic works made it expedient to adopt the following division.

¹⁴ For example, Melchiori 2000; Arnett Melchiori 2016; Manca 2018 (see section 3.2 for the entire references).

¹⁵ For example, Simonetta 2009 and 2014; Elam 2019 (see section 3.2 for the entire references).

i(a). Translations of the history plays:

G. Baldini, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV (Parte I-II)*, Rizzoli 2002; G. Baldini, ed. and trans., *Riccardo II*, Rizzoli 2002; A. Lombardo, ed. and trans., *Re Giovanni*, Newton Compton 2004; A. Cozza, ed. and trans., *Riccardo II*, Garzanti 2005; M. D'Amico, ed. and trans., *Re Enrico IV e Amleto*, Dalai Editore 2005; A. Cozza, ed. and trans., *Enrico V*, Garzanti 2006; A. Cozza, ed. and trans., *Enrico VIII*, Garzanti 2010; M. Bacigalupo, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV. Prima parte*, Garzanti 2010; M. Bacigalupo, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV. Parte seconda*, Garzanti 2010; P. Bertinetti, ed. and trans., *Riccardo III*, Einaudi 2011; M. D'Amico, ed. and trans., *Re Enrico IV e Amleto*, Dalai Editore 2013, reprint; E. Rialti, ed. and trans., *Tommaso Moro*, Lindau 2014; S. Payne, ed., and A. Serpieri, trans., *Riccardo II*, Marsilio 2014; V. Gabrieli, ed. and trans., *Riccardo III*, Garzanti 2015; M. Luzi, ed. and trans., *Riccardo II*, SE 2019; S. Quasimodo, ed. and trans., *Riccardo III*, Mondadori 2019; S. Sabbadini, ed. and trans., *Re Giovanni*, Garzanti 2020; D. Angeli, ed. and trans., *La tragedia di Re Riccardo II*, Saga Egmont 2021; C. Pagetti, ed. and trans., *Enrico VI. Parte prima*, Garzanti 2021; C. Pagetti, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV. Parte seconda*, Garzanti 2021; C. Pagetti, ed. and trans., *Enrico IV. Parte terza*, Garzanti 2021.

i(b). Translations of works on the history plays:

E. Krippendorff, *Shakespeare politico. Drammi storici, drammi romani, tragedie*, trans. R. Benatti and F. Materzanini, Fazi Editore 2005; R. Olivier, *Enrico V: Lezioni di leadership. Gli insegnamenti del più grande leader shakespeariano*, trans. F. Saulini, Fazi Editore 2005; W. H. Auden, *Lezioni su Shakespeare*, trans. G. Luciani, Adelphi 2006.

ii. Monographs:

A. Serpieri, *Polifonia shakespeariana*, Bulzoni 2002; M. D'Amico, *Scena e parola in Shakespeare*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura 2007; P. Virgili, *Riccardo III. Un ritratto*, ed. R. Ruggeri, QuattroVenti 2007; S. Simonetta, *Un regno per palcoscenico. La messa in scena della regalità medievale nel teatro di Shakespeare*, CUEM 2009; L. Innocenti, *La scena trasformata. Adattamenti neoclassici di Shakespeare*, Pacini 2010; S. Simonetta, *Lo scettro in scena. Rappresentazione e morte dell'idea di monarchia per diritto divino nei "drammi sulla regalità" di Shakespeare*,

Unicopli 2014; M. Tempera, ed., *Riccardo II dal testo alla scena*, Emil di Odoia 2015.

iii. Volume contributions:

P. Bertinetti, "Introduzione", in *Riccardo III*, Einaudi 2002; M. Mosca, "Note al testo", in *Riccardo III*, Einaudi 2002; J. Roe, "Shakespeare's *Henry V*: The Prince and Cruelty", in *Una civile conversazione. Lo scambio letterario e culturale anglo-italiano nel Rinascimento*, ed. K. Elam and F. Cioni, CLUEB 2003; A. Vescovi, "A Journeyman to Grief. L'idea di viaggio in *Enrico IV* ed *Enrico V*", in *To Go or Not to Go? Catching the Moving Shakespeare*, ed. Luisa Camaiora, ISU Università Cattolica 2004; D. Montini, "Tradurre Shakespeare per gli inglesi. *Henry V* di Aaron Hill", in *Aula VI. A lezione da Agostino Lombardo*, ed. Biancamaria Pisapia, Bulzoni 2006; A. Lombardo, "Riscoperta di Re Giovanni", in *Cronache e critiche teatrali, 1971-1977*, ed. G. Melchiori and F. Luppi, Bulzoni 2007; C. Dente, "Da Shakespeare a lezione di lingua", in *Threads in the Complex Fabric of Language*, ed. M. Bertuccelli, A. Bertacca and S. Brutti, Felici 2008; A. Leonardi, "Fiere in corpi umani. Shakespeare nella giungla dei Plantageneti", in *Raccontare la storia. Realtà e finzione nella letteratura europea dal Rinascimento all'età contemporanea*, ed. S. Bronzini, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura 2009; A. Anzi, "Simboli, allegorie e *imaginatio* medioevale in *Re Giovanni* di William Shakespeare", in *Studi sul teatro in Europa in onore di Mariangela Mazzocchi Doglio*, ed. P. Bosisio, Bulzoni 2010; M. Spicci, "Retorica del corpo in *Re Giovanni* di William Shakespeare", in *Studi sul teatro in Europa in onore di Mariangela Mazzocchi Doglio*, ed. P. Bosisio, Bulzoni 2010; A. Tauro, "Quando il personale si incrocia col politico. La figura del favorito regio in *Edward II* e *Richard II*", in *Commedia e dintorni*, ed. A. Accardi and S. Pezzini, Felici 2013; P. Caponi, "Shakespeare al buio. *Riccardo II* ai microfoni della radio italiana", in *Riccardo II dal testo alla scena*, ed. M. Tempera, Emil di Odoia 2015; B. Arnett Melchiori, "Mistress Quickly", in *Shakespeariana*, ed. C. De Petris and F. Luppi, Bulzoni 2016; G. Restivo, "Paradigmi costituzionali, nazione e legge nell'*Enriade* di Shakespeare. Nuove prospettive storiche", in *Diritto e letterature a confronto. Paradigmi, processi, transizioni*, ed. M. C. Foi, Edizioni Università di Trieste 2016; R. Ciocca, "Nota introduttiva,

traduzione e note", in *I drammi storici*, vol. 3 of *Tutte le opere*, ed. F. Marengo, Bompiani 2017¹⁶; D. Borgogni, "Metadiscorsi shakespeareiani. La storia nella trilogia di Enrico VI", in *23 aprile 1616. Cervantes e Shakespeare diventano immortali*, ed. F Marengo and A. Ruffinatto, Il Mulino 2017; D. Borgogni, "'The Greatest Miracle That E'er Ye Wrought'. Creatività e 'artigianalità' nella trilogia di Enrico VI e in *Cimbelino*", in *William Shakespeare artigiano e artista. In margine a un'edizione di tutte le opere*, ed. F. Marengo, Il Mulino 2021.

iv. Academic articles:

G. Melchiori, "Hal's Unrestrained Loose Companions", *Memoria di Shakespeare* 1 (2000); K. Elam, "'Fat Falstaff Hath a Great Scene'. Concerto grosso per voce, corpo e coro", *Memoria di Shakespeare* 1 (2000); D. Montini, "Henry VIII e la scena della memoria", *Memoria di Shakespeare* 2 (2001); S. Simonetta, "I due corpi di Sir John Falstaff. La metafora stato/corpo umano nei drammi politici di Shakespeare", in *Dianoia. Annali di storia della filosofia* 12 (2007); G. Giardina, "Il problema testuale in Shakespeare *King Henry V* 2, 3, 18", in *Vichiana. Rassegna di studi filologici e storici del mondo classico* 11 (2009); G. Pascucci, "Authorship e strumenti informatici. Il caso di *All Is True*", *Memoria di Shakespeare* 7 (2009); D. Provenzano, "'Sometimes Am I a King'. *Riccardo II: Un viaggio da re ad uomo*", *Lingue e Linguaggi* 5 (2011); P. Pepe, "Dalla terra desolata al paradiso riconquistato. Riflessione e rivelazione in *Richard II*", *Testi e linguaggi* 6 (2012); N. Caputo, "Figli e... padri 'prodighi' in William Shakespeare", *Studium* 109 (2013); C. Catà, "Raccontando 'tristi storie della morte dei re'. Testo, contesto e rappresentazioni del *Riccardo II* di Shakespeare", *Testi e linguaggi* 7 (2013); M. Del Canuto, "Shakespeare or not Shakespeare. Il caso del manoscritto di *Sir Thomas More* all'alba del Novecento", *Rivista di letterature moderne e comparate* 66 (2013); A. Fassò, "I favoriti della Luna: Enrico V cavaliere", *Quaderni di filologia romanza* 22 (2014); E. Ferrario, "Tempo e sovranità. Note a *Richard II*", *Memoria di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies* 1 (2014); R. Camerlingo, "Machiavelli a Oxford. Guerra e teatro da Gentili a Shakespeare",

¹⁶ This contribution on *King John* is here reported for appearing among the results obtained from the investigation conducted via Google Scholar.

in *Rinascimento* 56 (2016); C. Gallo, "La storia al tempo della politica. Le produzioni teatrali di *Tutto è vero* (Enrico VIII) nel Novecento", *Iperstoria* 8 (2016); V. Del Gaudio, "Sulle tracce di Riccardo. L'immaginario teatrale del male tra teatro del sangue e teatro della malattia", *Im@go: A Journal of the Social Imaginary* 9 (2017); C. Calvo, "Shakespeare and the Edwardian Turn of Mind: Textual Poaching and Mis-citation", *Textus* 3 (2018); E. Manca, "Eteroglossia e prospettiva nella ricostruzione degli eventi storici. Le strategie degli *Historical Plays* di Shakespeare e della stampa odierna", *Lingue e Linguaggi* 27 (2018); K. Elam, "Falstaff as *Vanitas*", *Memoria di Shakespeare. A Journal of Shakespearean Studies* 6 (2019); M. Sabbatino, "Enrico IV o l'apologo della follia", *Rivista di letteratura teatrale* 13 (2020).

v. PhD dissertations:

P. V. Colombo, "Giulio Cesare, 'specchio' della crisi? Sulla fortuna del *Julius Caesar* di Shakespeare nel teatro italiano dal 1949 a oggi", Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore 2015, <https://tesionline.unicatt.it/handle/10280/6168> 2015.

As previously claimed, the massive academic production on Shakespeare required criteria to be properly selected in the specific area of this review. Although excluded from the dataset, a few titles demanded a brief mention in this review. This was particularly true for the several occurrences appeared in the online-based examination of the titles made via Google Scholar.

vi. Manuals:

P. Bertinetti, ed., *Dalle origini al Settecento*, vol. 1 of *Storia della letteratura inglese*, Einaudi 2000; K. Elam and M. Crisafulli, eds., *Manuale di letteratura e cultura inglese*, Bononia University Press 2009; F. Marcucci, *Shakespeare*, vol. 2 of *Storia della letteratura inglese*, LED 2021.

vii. Graduation theses:

C. Latella, "Comunicare Shakespeare. Gli adattamenti cinematografici del *Richard III*", University of Naples L'Orientale 2002/2003; D. Matitieri, "*Henry V* dal testo di Shakespeare alla

trascrizione filmica. Laurence Olivier e Kenneth Branagh”, University of Rome Tor Vergata 2003/2004; M. Erinni, “The Analysis of the Filmic Adaptations of Shakespeare History Dramas”, University of Ca’ Foscari, Venice, 2011/2012; G. Coviello, “L’impronta di Shakespeare in *Edward III*. Il potere della malinconia nell’episodio della contessa”, University of Naples Federico II 2012/2013; G. Nobili, “Un caso di adattamento delle *histories* shakespeariane. *The History of Richard the Second* by Nahum Tate”, Sapienza University of Rome 2012/2013; E. Mazzoni, “Le dinamiche del complotto in alcuni drammi storici di Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, *Richard II* e *Henry IV*”, University of Pisa 2014/2015.

4. Conclusion

The data collected reveals that in the past twenty years the period spanning 2008-2014 was the most productive in Italy in terms of academic publications on Shakespeare’s history plays, although the international contribution to the academic production on Shakespeare peaked in 2016. The Italian academic publications were mainly devoted to academic writing rather than translating (or retranslating) Shakespeare’s histories and reserved most attention to the following plays: *Richard II*, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*.

The level of searchability of the resources examined has shown that a more extensive investigation by hand may yield interesting additional results: this is particularly true for the first decade examined, since most of the publications may not have been digitalized yet (approximately four fifths of the results were in fact collected online). In this sense, a digital approach to scholarly literature may be useful in terms of efficiency, but more detailed scrutiny by hand is necessary to reach a systematic literature review in the field of Shakespearean studies.

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