Chapter 5. Prompt Book Practices in Context: The "Hamburg Shakespeare" between Handwriting and Print, the Audience and Censorship Demands (1770s–1810s and beyond)

In the 1770s, the young Friedrich Ludwig Schröder and his company were renowned in the German-speaking world and beyond for their pioneering productions of William Shakespeare's plays on the German stage. The prompt books for the company's Shakespeare adaptations are of particular interest for this study. The multi-handed, multi-layered internal Hamburg Stadt-Theater prompt books hold versions of Shakespeare's plays that markedly differ from the ones attributed to a writer who was about to become the epitome of individual authorship and creation, notions that still widely persist in the popular imagination of the twenty-first century. German versions of Shakespeare's plays (as well as adaptations of them) circulated widely in the 1770s – as printed books – as did Shakespeare criticism (the emerging German strain as well as translations of English writers) in journals and other publications.[1] Shakespeare in print shaped both the popular imagination and intellectual discussions. With respect to the Hamburg Shakespeare of the 1770s, this chapter will examine the relationship between the handwriting of prompt book production and upkeep on the one hand and, on the other, the multitude of printed books that they were related to and that made them possible. The by definition unfinished character of prompt books was what allowed them to be used flexibly in the theatrical context. Handwriting could be added as long as a folio provided enough blank space for it and as long as the valid text remained legible. Handwriting made theatre companies more flexible to outside demands – whether commercial because aspects of a play were not to the audience's liking or political because the authorities objected or were feared likely to object to particular passages. While Shakespearean texts began flourishing in print, their occasionally bumpy introduction to and establishment on the German-speaking stage manifested themselves in print's interaction with handwrit-

1 Cf. Paulin 2003, 62–132.

ing. The following considerations focus on two prompt book examples: the hasty transformation of the failing 1776 production of *Othello*, *Theater-Bibliothek: 571*, and the longevity of the 1778 production of *König Lear* [*King Lear*], which was reworked for the French censor's approval in 1812 as *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029*. To set the scene, we will situate the most influential of the company's Hamburg Shakespeare productions, its 1776 version of *Hamlet*, at the intersection between the realm of print media and the practicalities of running a theatre business.

I. The German Shakespeare in Print and Its Relationship to Theatre

When Shakespeare was introduced to the wider, German-reading public in the 1760s through Christoph Martin Wieland's prose translations, the affiliation between Shakespeare's now printed texts and London's vibrant early modern theatre culture had been seen as a rather unlucky coincidence.[2] It had been thought that currying favour with the "Pöbel"[3] [rabble] of the low-income groundlings who crowded before Shakespeare's London stage had been to blame for Shakespeare's use of foul language and for quite a few "Fehler" [mistakes] in the plot that competed with the many "Schönheiten"[4] [beauties] of his plays. In the theatre district of contemporary eighteenth-century London, Shakespeare's name had been attributed to plays that had been somewhat freely adapted from his works or only loosely inspired by them. "In the present case the publick has decided,"[5] as master critic Samuel Johnson put it with respect to the success of the adaptations. Shakespeare's plays were there to be read, not performed. It was only slowly that David Garrick reintroduced passages taken from various Shakespeare print editions into his productions.[6] Overall, Shakespeare's plays were well known and relatively widely read because they circulated in print. These print editions were themselves notoriously derived from printed works, i.e., the famous Shakespeare folio and quarto editions which provided different semblances of what the actual text that had been handwritten by Shakespeare and then copied out in parts for the actors might have looked like. It has been well established that these print editions (full of variations, inconsistencies, typographical errors, and multiple more or less obviously corrupted passages) gave rise to the unending task of editing the suppos-

2 Wieland's translation "imported" this prejudice by including Alexander Pope's introduction to his own 1723–1725 Shakespeare edition in the first book of his translations. Cf. Pope/Wieland 1762, 3–28.

3 Pope/Wieland 1762, 4.

4 Pope/Wieland 1762, 2.

5 Wimsatt 1960, 98.

6 Cf. Tatspaugh 2003, 538; cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 40f.

edly "real" but ever-absent text of Shakespeare's plays – an undertaking already in full swing in eighteenth-century Britain.[7]

After a few scattered appearances on the stage and in print, the German-reading world encountered Shakespeare on a larger scale as an eighteenth-century print phenomenon. At first, this mainly took place in excerpts in journals, and then through the German translations of twenty-two of Shakespeare's plays published by Christoph Martin Wieland between 1762 and 1766 in volumes of two plays each.[8] His prose versions often cut potentially offensive parts, sometimes with and sometimes without comment. This was a successful strategy, if not entirely without controversy. While the linguistic errors and overall misconceptions of the translation were widely noted,[9] hardly anyone took issue with the way that Wieland ignored Shakespeare's free blank verse in its many variations.[10] The (mostly implicit) contemporary conception of translation still considered linguistic form to be a vessel used to transport the spirit of the letter, which could also be placed in a different vessel without friction or loss. Moreover, Wieland's prose fit in perfectly with the rise of the aesthetics of sentimentality and the aim of presenting "natural" characters in literature. During the 1770s, scholar Johann Joachim Eschenburg not only corrected and completed Wieland's efforts but also produced a compendium of everything that was known about Shakespeare and his plays in the English-speaking world and beyond. Shakespeare in German was indeed a figure of letters – and thus of printed books.[11]

Schröder had collaborators but was ultimately in charge of the adaptations produced at Stadt-Theater during his tenure.[12] We can assume that Schröder, who took over the Stadt-Theater in 1771 (at first together with his mother), was reasonably well informed about the goings-on of the London stage due to his interactions with Hamburg merchants, some of whom had extensive trade relations with London. The local Hamburg news reported on what was taking place in London theatres[13]; some merchants were members of the Gesellschaft der Theaterfreunde [Society of Theatre Friends] and relayed what they had seen.[14] But Schröder

7 Cf. Colins 1991.

8 Cf. Wieland 2003.

9 Cf. Kob 2000; cf. Stadler 1910.

10 At the same time, there could still be little appreciation of how Wieland's prose captured surprising nuances of "the Bard's" language and how it seems to have introduced a whole array of linguistic creations (such as "Steckenpferde" for Hamlet's "hobby-horses") into common usage. Cf. Itkonen 1971; cf. Kob 2000, 21.

11 Cf. Eschenburg 1787.

12 Cf. Hoffmann 1939, 18–21; cf. Malchow 2022, 99.

13 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 41.

14 Cf. Häublein 2005, 59.

also had ready access to Wieland's and then Eschenburg's translations as printed books. He could also read the many, sometimes very liberal Shakespeare adaptations that began cropping up in print before or immediately after they had been performed in theatres. Christian Felix Weiße's *Richard III.* (1765) and *Romeo und Julia* (1767) – which used Shakespeare's plots but were based on more contemporary adaptations – Franz Heufeld's *Hamlet* (1771), and Christian Heinrich Schmid's and Johann Heinrich Steffen's respective transformations of *Othello* (1769, 1770)[15] all customised Shakespeare's bewildering forms and plots to Enlightenment circumstances and prevalent tastes – dampening the impact of or omitting Shakespeare's obscenities and wordplay to comply with contemporary standards of *decorum* by decomplicating the language and generally furnishing the plays with happy or at least happier endings. All of them took for granted what was a well-established fact in London: that Shakespeare's puzzling plays needed to be adapted if they were to come across as presentable for the German stage.[16] Notions of translation and adaptation overlapped in the practices of the time; the two words were sometimes used interchangeably. Even among scholars, a "successful" translation would leave out or amend what was deemed wrong or inappropriate in the original.[17]

Schröder was known to be an avid reader of the journals and criticism circulating in print. In the early 1770s, Shakespeare started to be seen less as the somewhat tawdry and highly irregular (albeit fascinating) curiosity that European Enlightenment critics had made him out to be earlier in the eighteenth century. Instead, Shakespeare's plays began to be viewed as an alternative model to the normative poetics that had long governed what was considered "good taste" among critics – though not necessarily by the public or the theatre companies. The reception of Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759)[18] allowed writers such as Johann Gottfried Herder to fawn over Shakespeare as a "Genie"[19] [genius] and "Weltschöpfer"[20] [creator of worlds]. At the beginning of Herder's fervent 1773 essay on the Bard, a "Sterblicher mit Götterkraft begabt"[21] [mortal gifted with the power of the gods] sits somewhere high up in the mountains, alone on a throne of rocks, untouched by the "Sturm, Ungewitter und d[em] Brausen des Meeres"[22] [storm, tempest, and the roar of the sea] that rage at his feet but that seem to have

15 Cf. Weiße 1836; cf. Weiße 1776; cf. Weilen 1914; cf. Schmid 1772; cf. Steffens 1770.

16 Cf. Dobson 1992; cf. Habicht 1994b, 50–55.

17 For example, cf. Huber 1968, 6–15.

18 Cf. Young 1966.

19 erder 1993, 499.

20 Herder 1993, 509.

21 Herder 1993, 508.

22 Herder 1993, 498.

been summoned at his will. In this vein, Herder saw Shakespeare's plays as quasi-organic formations, the heterogeneous parts of which had been assembled "zu einem Wunderganzen zusammen"[23] [into a miraculous whole]. Nothing was to be removed from or added to such "miraculous wholes". To Herder, every detail seemed "so zu diesem Ganzen [zu] gehören, daß ich nichts verändern, versetzen, aus andern Stücken hieher oder hieraus in andre Stücke bringen könnte"[24] [to belong to this whole in such a way that I would not change anything, move anything, add anything from other plays to this one or from this one to other plays]. Thus, Herder conceived of his reading of a Shakespearean play as a portal into an original, self-sufficient world: "Mir ist, wenn Ich ihn lese, Theater, Akteur, Kulisse verschwunden!"[25] [For me, when I read him, theatre, actor, scenery disappear!] This Shakespeare was for and of the mind, not the artifice of theatre. Herder did not even have to point out that his reading of Shakespeare seemed to make the material printed books containing the letters of the plays disappear together with the material infrastructure of theatre. In the New Testament tradition, Herder took for granted the written word's ability to transcend itself into the spirit. As an individual author, Shakespeare became a divine creator and even transcended the status of the supposedly flawless writer who, according to London contemporaries, "in his writing (whatsoever he penned) […] never blotted out a line".[26] While the material conditions of writing are skipped entirely in Herder's reading, the assumed essence of Shakespeare needed to be removed from its ties to the theatre and its practical conditions. But such an essence was not impaired by publications in print.

It was this printed Shakespeare as an individualised author who, from today's point of view, received less than respectful treatment when he was adapted for Schröder's stage. Here, the printed Shakespeare was brought into the world of handwritten prompt book creation and enrichment. In prompt book creation and use, lines were "blotted out" on a regular basis – albeit for technical rather than creative reasons. "Changing" and "moving" parts, the sacrilege that Herder foreswore, was more often than not precisely what adapting a play for the stage and creating a handwritten prompt book was all about. As seen in the previous chapter, this was hardly the effort of one creative "genius" but took place over various stages and with the involvement of multiple participants. While the creation and use of prompt books (and the booklets for the actors' parts) were a theatre company's internal affair, they heavily depended on and interacted with the circulation of plays (and reviews, criticism, etc.) in print.

23 Herder 1993, 508.

24 Herder 1993, 511.

25 Herder 1993, 509.

26 Jonson 1975, 394.

II. The 1776 *Hamlet* and Its Relationship to Print

The newly fashionable veneration of the "creative power" of an individual author had little influence on the practicalities of running a theatre business – although Schröder took note of and championed the new reading of Shakespeare that Herder (who was of the exact same age) and younger authors in Herder's circle were putting forward.[27] In 1774, Schröder successfully staged *Götz von Berlichingen*, the young Goethe's homage to the more open form of Shakespeare's plays (albeit in an abridged version that could actually be performed instead of spending the majority of the time carrying out scene changes).[28] Even more than Herder's point of view, Schröder held Lenz's appraisal of Shakespeare's tragedies as "character plays" in high regard.[29] But like the historical Shakespeare, Schröder was dependent on the commercial success of his theatre operation. However sympathetic he was to the Enlightenment programme of turning the theatre into a public place of education in matters of morality, taste, and the overall improvement of humanity (especially in Lessing's version, which had failed in Hamburg in the late 1760s), or to the new notion of literature being put forward by Herder, the seats needed to be filled with paying customers. Schröder had opened his principalship with a performance of Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* to signal the continuity of artistic standards and social aspirations.[30] Intellectual propositions such as Lenz's emphasis on Louis-Sébastien Mercier's call to adapt plays to the audience's intellectual capacity in his 1773 *Du théâtre ou Nouvel essai sur l'art dramatique* [*On the Theatre or New Essay on Dramatic Art*] fitted in well with Schröder's overall undertaking.[31] Schröder might have heartily agreed with Lessing's emphasis on the emancipation and formation of "an educated people",[32] but he also needed to keep the lights on and make a living for himself and his company.

Schröder's audience expected recognisable novelty: new plays, stage sets, and musical scores were always welcome, but they were not to break with well-known patterns. Schröder imported and adapted what had been effective elsewhere (including translations of contemporary plays from France, Italy, and Great Britain). His source materials were often available as print copies, though most of them were not widely read; notions of "fidelity" to an "original" were lenient (to non-existent). The audience preferred comedies and was used to prologues and epilogues, e.g., ballets and musical interludes. Musical comedies and operas were also popu-

27 Cf. Hoffmann 1939, 74–91, 152–158.

28 Cf. Hoffmann 1939, 74–91.

29 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 129f.

30 Cf. Häublein 2005, 68f.

31 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 130.

32 Cf., for example, Haider-Pregler 1980.

lar main acts.[33] A happy ending was in no way mandatory as far as the authorities were concerned (unlike the "Wiener Schluß" [Vienna ending], which had been decreed in Vienna in 1776).[34] But if a play did not have a happy ending, it had better have had an uplifting one. If that was not the case, at the very least the closing music needed to elate the audience.[35]

Schröder prided himself on trying to "educate" his audience on many of these matters (and on taking risks in doing so). But practical circumstances only allowed so much. The work of Schröder's company drew its inspiration from the dramaturgical programmes that had been implemented in the spirit of Diderot's mid-century writings, which had been translated by Lessing into German and then advanced by a host of critics.[36] Plays and performances were ideally conceived of as self-contained illusions behind a fourth wall. Actors were to avoid pandering to the audience so as not to interrupt the aesthetic illusion. Diderot hoped that spectators would thus be absorbed by the performance as if they were looking at a picture.[37] Lessing added that watching a play could train spectators' capacity for compassion.[38] In this vein, Schröder came to consider Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson* as a model tragedy, and he put it on regularly despite its lack of commercial success.[39] He restricted extemporisation on stage and introduced regular rehearsals, preventing the performance from being split up into individualised acting showcases. But there was not much point in trying to mould the audience into a state of Diderotian discipline (although he did prohibit them from visiting actors backstage in their dressing rooms or entering the stage itself).[40] It was not possible to completely dim the auditorium by technical means, nor was this desired by an audience who was used to seeing and being seen – and to reacting cheerfully or rowdily to whatever happened on stage. Therefore, the audience's devout absorption in the performance remained unattainable.[41] The audience remained interested in comedy, music, and ballet. However, Schröder managed to regularly deprive its members of prologues and epilogues, and simply focussed on the main play (with the usual musical interludes between acts once the curtain had been lowered and

33 Cf. Chapter 1.

34 Cf. Roger 2007.

35 Cf. Kramer 2016.

36 Cf. J. F. Lehmann 2000; cf. Weinstock 2019, 140–164.

37 Cf. Diderot 1936; cf. J. F. Lehmann 2000, 97–102.

38 Cf. Weinstock 2019, 61–69.

39 Cf. Hoffmann 1939, 74f.

40 A significant amount of recent research has shown that the disciplined audience was more of an ideal constructed by critics of the time than a reality. Cf. Korte/Jakob 2012; cf. Korte/Jakob/Dewenter 2014.

41 Cf. Malchow 2022, 109–124, 164–172.

before it was raised again). His 1776 production of *Hamlet* (in collaboration with in-house author Johann Christian Bock[42]) was a case in point: at that time, his concentration on the main play alone was still rather unusual.[43]

At the same time, Schröder needed to keep the tastes and expectations of his audience in mind. The paying audience was vital to the commercial success of the company. As seen in the previous chapter, Schröder also had to consider the watchful eye of the authorities.[44] In the case of *Hamlet*, it was obvious that neither the authorities nor large parts the audience – or probably even most members of the theatre company themselves – would have appreciated Shakespeare's exuberant play with its frequent use of foul language and obscenities (of which Wieland's 1760s translation had already left many out). But it was three other aspects above all that seem to have led Schröder to rework the play that was available in print translations. The lack of set design in Shakespeare's theatre, where every change of scenery could be implied by the actors' words, contrasted with the eighteenth-century aesthetics of elaborate stage sets. In order to avoid having to take breaks for scene changes, the number of fast-changing locations in Shakespeare's play had to be reduced and separate parts fused together.[45] Such practical necessities aligned well with Schröder's own Enlightenment temperament and tastes. Following Lessing, he considered the open form of Shakespeare's plays to be a welcome antidote to the limitations that critics like Gottsched had tried to impose on the German stage. But he also agreed with Lessing that English plays were too episodic. Aside from the relaxing of such exaggerated restrictions, a great amount of order needed to be maintained for a play to work.[46]

Most importantly, Schröder's letters and conversations (related by his contemporaries) bear witness to the extent to which he felt the need to pander to the audience (or to address it at a level that was immediately comprehensible) when introducing Shakespeare.[47] Always on the lookout for new material, Schröder was well aware of the impact that David Garrick had had on the London stage as the title character of a (heavily adapted) *Hamlet* from 1742.[48] In Prague in 1776, Schröder watched a guest performance by the Vienna-based Theatre at Kärntnertor, which had been performing Franz Heufeld's trimmed-down, six-character adaptation

42 Cf. Malchow 2022, 98f.

43 Cf. Eigenmann 1994, 27–34.

44 Later parts of this chapter will take a closer look at the relationship between print, handwriting, and censorship.

45 Cf. Häublein 2005, 70–76; cf. Birkner 2007.

46 Cf. Hoffmann 1939, 91–106.

47 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 46–53.

48 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 28.

since 1773 to little effect.[49] On 20 September 1776, *Hamlet* debuted at Schröder's Hamburg company, possibly in Heufeld's version, which had been readily available in print since 1771.[50] The respective prompt book has not survived; it may very well have consisted of the printed Heufeld book with a few handwritten annotations.

Whether the first performances were based on Heufeld or not, Schröder and his company quickly created their own version that was largely based on Wieland's printed translation, which debuted in November.[51] The details of the adaptation are well known as Schröder had it published as an octavo print in 1777, titled *Hamlet, Prinz von Dännemark. Ein Trauerspiel in sechs Aufzügen. Zum Behuf des Hamburgischen Theaters*[52] [*Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. A Mourning Play*[53] *in Six Acts. For the Benefit of the Hamburg Theatre*]. The adaptation needed six acts instead of Shakespeare's (and Heufeld's) five to organise the set changes. Conspicuously, the name of the author, Shakespeare, who was soon to become the "author of authors", was missing. Instead, a later 1779 edition included a copperplate image of Schröder's lead actor Johann Brockmann, who had already been a local star before he got involved with the production, as frontispiece and mentioned it beneath the title: *Nebst Brockmann's Bildniß als Hamlet* [*Besides a Portrait of Brockmann as Hamlet*].[54] When re-adapting *Hamlet* from the theatre into print, it was thus the virtuosic actor rather than the unknown author who was to draw attention to the Hamburg stage (and, at the same time, to sell copies). Schröder might have been trying to emulate a practice that was common in London (and in Paris). Printed books with the content of prompt books were all the rage – and were confusingly also called "prompt books".[55] While the practice continued well into the nineteenth century (and still occurs sporadically in twenty-first-century "Western" theatre), using the leading actor as a selling point did not catch on. In print, and increasingly in general culture, theatrical plays were a matter of the authors who wrote them, not the actors who performed them (and rarely the practitioners who adapted the texts for the stage).

Schröder's actual adaptation of the play differed from approaches such as the one taken by Weiße in that he did not change the main plot – only the ending. When shortening a play, Schröder would generally try to streamline and simplify the overall structure but then intensify the main elements.[56] He had a new respect for

49 Cf. Häublein 2005, 70; cf. Malchow 2022, 84; cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 27–31; cf. Weilen 1914.

50 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 36.

51 Cf. Häublein 2005, 72.

52 Schröder/Shakespeare 1777.

53 In practice, not much of a distinction was made between the "Trauerspiel" and the "tragedy" around 1800.

54 Cf. Schröder/Shakespeare 1779. There were reissues in 1780, 1781, 1784, 1789, and 1795.

55 Cf. Stone Peters 2000, 129–145.

56 Cf. Hoffmann 1939, 74; cf. Marx 2011.

the content of the adapted text available in print. Unlike in Heufeld's adaptation of *Hamlet* (which had not intervened into the sequence of events before the conclusion either), Schröder's version now included subplots and minor parts such as Laertes and the gravediggers, while Ophelia's status was upgraded to a level similar to the one she had had in the original. But, like Heufeld, Schröder still made do without the Norway plot in the background and got rid of the play's political urgency. The conflict between Hamlet and the court was boiled down to a family drama. The plot line of the comic duo of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was incorporated but conflated into a single part. Perhaps due to Hamburg's location near areas under Danish administration, Schröder retained the changes that Heufeld had made to the characters' names, which made them sound more Scandinavian: Polonius became Oldenholm; Horatio became Gustav. Most importantly, Schröder took his cue from Heufeld in transforming the ending according to the standards of poetic justice.[57] In the final duel, Hamlet's mother and stepfather died, as Ophelia had before them, but the hero Hamlet survived to become king. In Schröder's version, Hamlet is more energetic than the procrastinator later made famous by Romanticism. Hamlet reconciles with Laertes and is the obvious king in waiting. Schröder, who had voiced his "Furcht"[58] [fear] of the Hamburg audience's reaction, gave his spectators an adequate ending. Perhaps Schröder did not need to square such pandering with his own artistic ambitions: the published opinions of contemporary critics, which he could read in print generally considered *Hamlet's* fatal finale to be one of Shakespeare's "Fehler" [mistakes] (except for the reviews written in the Herderian mould).[59]

The production was a success (with eleven known performances staged over the next two and a half months in 1776 alone). But when the production's lead actor, Brockmann, left for a better-paid position in Vienna, he spent the winter of 1777/78 in Berlin and performed the part of Hamlet in Schröder's adaptation with members of Karl Döbbelin's local theatre company (which was deemed to be much inferior to Schröder's[60]). The reception was so enthusiastic that it led to the creation of fan merchandise such as a coin with Brockmann's face on it and etchings of his performance by well-known artists.[61] Brockmann's guest performance launched the persistent German fascination with *Hamlet* as a play and contributed to the reputation of Schröder and his actors in the German-speaking world and beyond.[62] Schröder's adaptation would be taken up by various other German-speaking companies, which had the print publication to rely on.

57 Cf. Malchow 2022, 106–108.

58 Schröder 1978a, V.

59 Cf. Häublein 2005, 76.

60 Cf. Häublein 2005, 118.

61 Cf. Schink 1778; cf. Weilen 1914, 41; cf. Häublein 2005, 83; cf. Birkner 2007, 21.

62 Cf. Häublein 2005, 79–93.

Soon they were spoiled for choice. It was perhaps due to Brockmann's departure that Schröder reworked his own adaptation in 1778. Eschenburg's revision of Wieland's translation had appeared in print in 1777 and was generally viewed as an improvement. Schröder himself had criticised the stiffness of his own adaptation and aimed for a more fluid line delivery.[63] This also applied to the overall structure, which Schröder cut back to five acts. He also got rid of some lines and reexcluded the comedy of the gravediggers (which might have seemed inappropriate), but also added even more complexity to the Shakespearean characters.[64] Before the year 1778 was out, Schröder had had his revised version published in print as well. It was included in a book series called *Hamburger Theater* [*Hamburg Theatre*] which Schröder himself had established to promote trendsetting plays (including his own work and that of his ensemble) as models for a future "Nationaltheater" [national theatre] in the spirit of Lessing.[65] This print version did point out that it had been adapted but only included an attribution to the author, not the adapter: *Hamlet, Prinz von Dännemark: Ein Trauerspiel in fünf Akten; Nach Shakespear* [*Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: A Mourning Play in Five Acts; After Shakespear*].[66]

Both editions were reprinted numerous times (including in a number of bootlegs) and were widely available. After Brockmann's departure, Schröder offered the Hamburg audience the choice of three possible Hamlet successors, before graduating from the role of the ghost to playing Hamlet himself.[67] Locally, Schröder's 1778 version was (infrequently) performed until well into the 1840s[68] – and thus until a time when, at least in critical discourse, Schröder's undertaking had been replaced by the Romantic ideal of the metric Shakespeare translation that conformed to the poetic shape of the original.[69] However, Schröder's radical interventions, which had merely seemed pragmatic in the 1770s, had inaugurated a tradition that had been imported from England, was upheld by the older Goethe and then advanced by the proponents of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft [German Shakespeare Society] (founded in 1864), which would endure at least until the end of the nineteenth century: as a text (for reading from a printed book) Shakespeare was sacrosanct; as a text adapted for the stage, experimentation was allowed – even if the tradition of loose Shakespeare adaptations slowly faded

63 Cf. Schröder 1778a, VI.

64 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 51–55; cf. Marx 2011, 518–523.

65 Cf. Hoffmann 1939, 237–246; cf. Häublein 2005, 57f.

66 Cf. Schröder 1778b.

67 Cf. Malchow 2022, 317–322.

68 Cf. Jahn/Mühle/Eisenhardt/Malchow/Schneider (https://www.stadttheater.uni-hamburg.de).

69 Cf. Paulin 2003, 253–255, 304–308.

away.[70] The point of reference for the text spoken on stage would increasingly be the text by the "author of authors" circulating in print copies.

While the printed books of Schröder's adaptations played no little part in the reception of *Hamlet* and Shakespeare in the German-speaking world, day-to-day theatre operations were carried out in handwriting. As stated above, it was only in a minority of cases that a printed book would form the basis of a prompt book, usually when a printed book contained a version of the text that was not too far removed from the text that was to be performed by the company. That was the case for the Hamburg *Hamlet* – and for many of the other Shakespeare adaptations staged by Schröder as well. As we will explain below, when Schröder's company started preparing their Shakespeare prompt books for the French imperial censor in 1811, it used the self-published prints from the *Hamburger Theater* series as a basis, which were then enriched by hand. Schröder's *Hamlet* seems to have been an exception in that the company started using a print copy of its own 1778 adaptation much earlier. Although no handwritten manuscript of the prompt book has survived in the Theater-Bibliothek collection, a heavily enriched copy of the 1778 printed book has been preserved as the written artefact *Theater-Bibliothek: 1982 (1)*. The prompt book does bear the French censor's signature, but it is clearly from an earlier date: Brockmann's name is spelled out as the performer next to the name of Hamlet.[71] In 1785, Brockmann actually returned to Hamburg for a guest performance. While the surviving playbill of 4 March names different actors to the ones written down in *Theater-Bibliothek: 1982 (1)* for the other parts, it could very well be from that time or even earlier. The revisions are extensive and sometimes run counter to the core of Schröder's principle of adaptation, e.g., cut or heavily reduced scenes have been reintroduced. Altogether, the written artefact is so worn out that it might indeed have been used until the 1840s. The manuscripts might have been thrown away at that point, or someone might have sold them or taken them home as souvenirs at one time or another. When it came to introducing *Hamlet*, first to Hamburg and then to the German-speaking world, printed books supported the amplification and proliferation of *Hamlet* euphoria. But in the *Hamlet* prompt book, print also merged with handwriting, creating a hybrid written artefact at the very centre of the *Hamlet* performances: in the prompter's box on stage.

Because the extensively researched[72] *Hamlet* prompt book *Theater-Bibliothek: 1982 (1)* was used for many decades, the entanglement between print and handwriting is not always easy to declutter or contextualise. For the purposes of this study, it is more feasible to demonstrate the crucial points with respect to more

70 Cf. Habicht 1994b, 50–55.

71 Cf. *Theater-Bibliothek*: 1982 (1), 3.

72 Cf. Häublein 2005, 70–91; cf. Malchow 2022, 284–333.

clear-cut cases: firstly, a handwritten Shakespeare prompt book in both its print and theatrical contexts (*Theater-Bibliothek: 571*); secondly a printed Shakespeare copy that was converted into a prompt book and enriched by hand for a specific occasion (*Theater-Bibliothek: 2029*).

III. The 1776 *Othello*: Adapting *Theater-Bibliothek: 571* from Various Printed Sources

Theater-Bibliothek: 571 is a prompt book that was handwritten by an unidentified scribe for Schröder's 1776 *Othello* production. It premiered on 26 November to build on the overwhelming success of *Hamlet*. In contrast to the *Hamlet* prompt book, hardly any traces of wear and tear are visible at first glance; instead, the prompt book displays just a few enrichments in Schröder's and the original scribe's hands. The prompt book was probably only put to use six times or less: for four performances in Hamburg in 1776 and for two guest performances in Hannover in January 1777.[73] While a production with more than one or two performances hardly qualified as a failure in the hustle and bustle of the Hamburg Stadt-Theater, its comparative lack of success meant that it differed markedly from *Hamlet*. There was no reason whatsoever to have a permanent version of the Hamburg adaptation published as a printed book in Schröder's own series. However, the manuscript can be examined with respect to the ways in which the production and upkeep of prompt books were situated at the intersection between the print culture of the time and the practicalities of running a theatre, especially meeting the demands of a live audience. There are extensive indications that the written artefact was reworked rather hectically at some point, probably after the second performance, but to little avail. Audience feedback was negative; attendance was dwindling.[74] The first impression had been as unfavourable as could be. Moreover, the use of *Theater-Bibliothek: 571* became tied to the most notorious scandal, i.e., audience upset, of Schröder's career when his *Othello* premiered in late November 1776.

Schröder's company staged *Othello* just five weeks after *Hamlet* and an even shorter time after it started performing Schröder's own adaptation of *Hamlet*, which still took some liberties. This time, however, Schröder would confront his audience with Shakespeare's unhappy ending. Together with *Hamlet*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's tragedy *Othello* had been made out by Herder to be one of the bard's four most significant plays (in accordance with the English critics)[75]; it was also the nearest a Shakespeare tragedy came to a regular play reflecting

73 Cf. Häublein 2005, 129.

74 Cf. Schütze 1794, 453f.; cf. Häublein 2005, 132–141.

75 Cf. Herder 1993, 504–511.

eighteenth-century norms[76]: there were few changes of scenery; the plotline did not have to be altered drastically to avoid lengthy set conversions. An announcement of "neuer Kleidungen, neuer Theaterverzierungen"[77] [new clothes, new stage designs] indicated that the company had been investing heavily and planned to build on its success with the newly introduced author. Lawyer, critic, and author Christian H. Schmid had categorised *Othello* as a "bürgerliche Tragödie"[78] [bourgeois tragedy] in 1768, meaning that the play fitted in perfectly with Lessing's contemporary avantgarde plays, which Schröder wanted his audience to get used to.

It has so far been overlooked by research that, at a later point, while frantically revising the play, Schröder (or a collaborator) surprisingly seems to have consulted the English original – i.e., a printed book containing one of the contemporary English editions – on some minor points. But as in the case of *Hamlet*, Schröder started out working with, building on, or rejecting existing German adaptations in print, two of the latter in the case of *Othello*. Both of these German adaptations had received poor reviews, had had little influence so far, and were hardly ever staged.[79] They were still interesting starting points for Schröder since both presented themselves as modifications of Shakespeare's play, not as complete makeovers, and both freely made use of Wieland's translation, which they transformed into simpler sentences and fewer lines. Johann Heinrich Steffens's 1770 version, *Das Schnupftuch oder der Mohr von Venedig, Othello* [*The Handkerchief or the Moor of Venice, Othello*], focussed on the external action, deprived Othello of his dramatic fall from grace, and suggested that the brutishness of the foreign "Mohr" [Moor] was to blame for his unnecessary jealousy. According to the principle of poetic justice, which had already saved Heufeld's and Schröder's Hamlets, the innocent Desdemona was rescued before the mortified Othello committed suicide and died in Desdemona's (still) loving arms.[80] In contrast, the aforementioned 1769 adaptation by Christian H. Schmid aimed to make the tragedy playable with regard to the conditions of the German stage (i.e., its scene changes, linguistic standards, etc.) instead of amending it. His adaptation (which was published in a second 1772 edition and was bootlegged in 1769 and 1775) focussed on the internal action of Othello's jealousy. It reduced the number of locations, cut down on characters and subplots, and trimmed down the dialogue to pointed exchanges. Schmid's Othello did not hit Desdemona; her erotically charged strangulation became the more straightforward stabbing that German audiences were used to on stage. Critics largely panned Schmid's work because its reductions distorted the inner logic of

76 Cf. Häublein 2005, 95f.

77 Schütze 1794, 453.

78 Schmid 1768, 311.

79 Cf. Häublein 2005, 98–120.

80 Cf. Steffens 1770, 105–108.

the play. He prominently left out the pigment of Othello's skin and his foreign cultural background as the reasons for Othello being treated an outsider. He instead became a "bürgerliche[r] Kerl"[81] [bourgeois fellow] "von geringer Herkunft"[82] [from humble origins] in contrast to Shakespeare's noble "Moor". Othello thus had much less reason to fall for his ensign's seduction. The novelty of having a non-white character being something other than an exotic foil[83] had completely vanished.

To state the obvious, Schröder was immersed in a culture of printed books and journals. As he hastily adapted *Othello*, he was probably well aware of these two unsuccessful publications and their reception. That is how the two adaptations had come about within the context of printed Shakespeare books in German in the first place. Schröder therefore already had some notion of the problems that would need to be solved or avoided as he frantically put together his *Othello*. None of Schröder's notes or any trial version (such as those that exist for *Die Sonnen-Jungfrau*) have survived. But the version he came up with has been neatly written down in *Theater-Bibliothek: 571*. In the absence of an Eschenburg translation, Schröder largely relied on the language of Wieland's 1766 translation, with its in part streamlined and tightened-up dialogue. As for adapting the 1603 or 1604 play for the 1776 Hamburg stage, Schröder's fair copy steered clear of Steffens's semi-happy ending altogether. However, the sequencing of scenes relied relatively heavily on the way that Schmid had organised the play around the protagonist's inner turmoil. Schröder staged Wieland's text but generally followed Schmid's reorganisation of it, i.e., his omission of scenes and characters. Nevertheless, on the occasions when Schmid's cuts hindered understanding of the action or the characters, Schröder stuck with Wieland. Othello is a "Moor"; his initial authority and dignity are emphasised; the audience actually sees him slapping Desdemona, which now comes as a great shock, etc. But Schröder mitigated the provocative impact of Shakespeare's language in a fashion similar to Schmid's and also substituted Desdemona's death by strangulation with the stabbing proposed in Schmid's adaptation.

The ways in which Schröder's version merged the two printed book templates of Wieland and Schmid have been analysed elsewhere in great detail.[84] In the context of this study, it is the material dynamics of *Theater-Bibliothek: 571* that are of relevance. *Theater-Bibliothek: 571* consists of ninety-three folios stitched together using rough thread, mostly in quires of four bifolios. These are still in the original small quarto size, measuring 16.5 x 20.5 cm, with the inexpensive cardboard binding intact. The sprinkled yellowish-brown of the cardboard indicates that this written artefact was part of Schröder's personal collection. However, the num-

81 Schmid 1772, 161.

82 Schmid 1772, 154.

83 Cf. Sadji 1992, 117, 153–160.

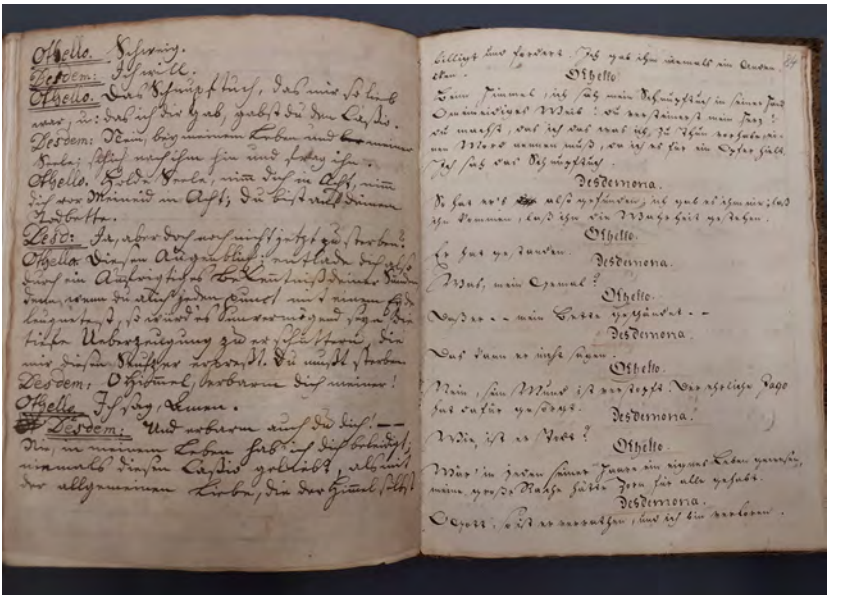
84 Cf. Häublein 2005, 122–132.

ber of pages varies wherever one act ends and another begins. Since each new act begins at the start of a new quire, the final quire of the preceding act can differ in length. The final quire of the first act consists of three bifolios, but that of the third act of only two. At the end of the second and fourth acts, a single bifolio has been added. The folios were numbered later. Each character's dialogue has been written in *Kurrent* script (German cursive) in black ink, while all other parts of the text, such as the character names and the details of the act, scene, and plot, have been written in the blackletter script *of German Fraktur,* a standard practice to distinguish between the "primary text" and "secondary text". References to acts, entrances, locations, and the plot as well as the speaking characters' names have been twice underlined in reddish ink. Two vertical pencil lines to the left and right delineate the part of the page that was to be written on, and it is quite likely that the very orderly and easily readable text was written with the help of line marking.

While the overall organisation of what can be assumed to be the original fair copy of *Theater-Bibliothek: 571* before any revisions were made comes across as very neat, there is also some evidence that the creators were either pressed for time or were affected by some technical mishap. At the beginning of Act V, Scene 5, the scene with the grisly murder, the bifolio containing 82r to 83v has been written on in a different hand on darker, rougher paper. Here, the characters' lines are in German cursive as in the rest of the prompt book; the characters' names, however, are in Latin cursive instead of blackletter. On these pages, horizontal pencil lines are visible in addition to the vertical lines that delineated the margins and apparently served as a writing aid. Although this section looks like it was a later revision, an analysis of the stitching has shown that it was probably part of the book's original binding. It has been bound into the book in the usual manner, as the fourth of four bifolios in the quire. However, the handwriting is much untidier. There is no evidence whatsoever that the written artefact was first unbound and then rebound at some point, which would have been highly impractical and not worth the effort.[85] The bifolio either replaced one the other scribe had written on, or, for some reason, a replacement scribe filled in at the beginning of Act V, Scene 5. The latter seems more likely since the main scribe's transition to the next quire was as neat as could be. In both scribes' work, Schröder's original version of Act V, Scene 5, sticks closely to the text of Wieland's translation but mixes it with Schmid, e.g., by adopting the less formal "du" [thou] instead of Wieland's "Sie" [you]. It is on occasions like this that the fissures within a fair copy become visible: it is not a monolith but has been put together from heterogenous parts, which form a unit because they are bound together within one cover. (Cf. figure 48.)

85 Häublein assumes that the bifolio was part of the subsequent revision process. Cf. Häublein 2005, 122–124.

Figure 48: O, 83v and 84r.



The fair copy had soon been enriched by numerous interventions: corrections, cuts, additions, sometimes written into, sometimes glued over the existing handwriting. These enrichments might have been part of the fine tuning carried out before the actors' parts were copied out or even during the rehearsal process. However, it seems more likely that they were part of hasty revisions made shortly after the premiere (and perhaps also after the repeat performance the following night). It is well known from historical sources that, shortly after its premiere, Schröder's *Othello* underwent fundamental changes. It is obvious in the case of some changes whether they were done before or after the disastrous first night. For some, this question cannot be answered. To take one example, Desdemona and Iago's quarrel about the nature of womanhood in Act II, Scene III, has been pasted over with new text. Wieland's translation has been replaced with a German version, in which Iago's lines come across as somehow more vernacular but also much coarser.[86] Since Schröder still included bits and pieces of the original translation in the revision after the premiere, and because some of it was glued in as well, the new song might also be part of the later revisions. But the update does not seem as dramaturgically necessary as other revisions.

86 Cf. O, 25r and v; cf. http://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.13916 (Felser/Funke/Göing/Hussain/Schäfer/Weinstock/Bosch 2024, especially RFD08[HandwrittenTheatre]_Theater-Bibliothek571_OTHELLO_Masterdatei_xls.xlsx).

The opening night of the *Othello* production did not go to plan at all. What ensued was one of the most notorious scandals in German spoken-word theatre history. However, Schröder's *Othello* may have owed a great deal of its subsequent impact to the bombastic style in which Johann Heinrich Schütze reported on the first night in his *Hamburger Theater-Geschichte* [*Hamburg Theatre History*] some eighteen years after the fact:

> Ohnmachten über Ohnmachten erfolgten während der Grausszenen dieser ersten Vorstellung. Die Logenthüren klappten auf und zu, man gieng davon oder ward nothfalls davon getragen, und (beglaubten Nachrichten zu Folge) war die frühzeitige misglückte Niederkunft dieser und jener namhaften Hamburgerin Folge der Ansicht und Anhörung des übertragischen Trauerspiels.[87] [Faints upon faints occurred during the horrific scenes of that first performance. The doors of the boxes were flung open and slammed shut, people walked out or were carried out if necessary, and (according to certified reports) some notable Hamburg woman or other went into premature and unsuccessful childbirth as a result of viewing and hearing the tragic play.]

The veracity of the details notwithstanding, all contemporary sources agree with Schütze's account that the action had been too crass and too hopelessly negative. It was commonplace for the next day's playbill to be announced after the performance,[88] which would have given the audience a direct chance to complain. An additional performance the next day did not draw the expected crowd.[89] Afterwards, pointed rewrites took place in a very short space of time to save the *Othello* production from economic failure. New performances were scheduled for the next week.[90] As seems to have been customary, the creation of a new prompt book was avoided if the enrichment of the existing one was feasible. Thus, additional sheets and pieces of paper were glued into the existing prompt book; words, phrases, and complete scenes were crossed out and added; the plot was changed, and dialogue rewritten. All these material changes resulted in a "new" version of the play with a single goal: to give the rather gloomy play a happy ending by preventing Othello from tragically murdering his wife Desdemona in a jealous rage. Perhaps because he was pressed for time, Schröder surprisingly turned towards a print of the Steffens adaptation he had originally avoided.[91]

87 Schütze 1794, 454.

88 Cf. Malchow 2022, 113f.

89 Cf. Schütze 1794, 454.

90 Cf. Schütze 1794, 455; cf. Jahn/Mühle/Eisenhardt/Malchow/ Schneider (https://www.stadttheater.uni-hamburg.de).

91 Cf. Häublein 2005, 133f.

IV. In Search of an Audience: Hasty Prompt Book Revisions in *Theater-Bibliothek: 571*

Theater-Bibliothek: 571 is full of revisions until Act 5, Scene 5. But the prompt book does not contain the new (happier) ending that Schütze and all the other sources reported on. It can be safely assumed that the actors received their parts while the updated text was being inserted into the prompt book in the form of loose sheets – which was a common practice, traces of which can still occasionally be found at the Theater-Bibliothek.[92] While only the last scenes of the revised version seem to be missing, in the four and a half acts leading up to the murder, the folios contain significant elements of "an amending revision"[93] (in the words of Uwe Wirth). A "new" *Othello* was created with the help of glued-in, retracted, and newly added scenes that effected the rewriting of events and dialogue in the prompt book. These enrichments did not take place because the "old" *Othello* prompt book had been corrupted as a transcript or dramatic text, but because the production had not met the expectations of an audience that was consequently refusing to attend the theatre (and therefore not paying for tickets). The amendments correspond to what Uwe Wirth calls "late corrections" and "late cancellations"[94]: they were "strategic interventions" that were made locally but carried out in relation to an already existing textual whole, in reference to which "the validity of individual sections and parts of the text [was] decided".[95] In the case of *Othello*, these decisions were attempting to meet a twofold requirement: they had to take the expectations of the audience into account but also the norms of theatre aesthetics. The happier outcome of the play could not simply be proclaimed; it had to be motivated by preceding events. Therefore, the interventions not only had to change the action that would allow Desdemona to be rescued but also had to coherently pave the way for her rescue.

One example of a significantly changed scene can be found in Act IV, Scene 10, where a complete page has been glued over. Theoretically, a revision like this could have been part of the preparation process for the first night of the production. However, the content of the enrichment is clearly in line with the overall preparations for Desdemona's rescue. The handwriting can also be clearly attributed to Schröder himself, making it likelier that he was dealing with an emergency.[96]

92 Cf. Häublein 2005, 123.

93 "eines korrigierenden Überarbeitens", Wirth 2011, 23.

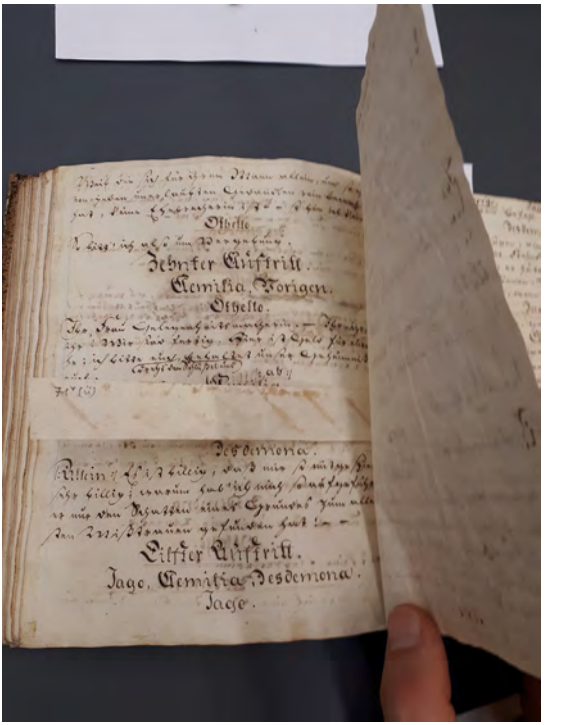
94 "Spätkorrekturen" and "Spätstreichungen", Wirth 2011, 32.

95 "strategische Eingriffe", "über die Geltung von einzelnen Abschnitten und Textteilen [entschieden] wird", Wirth 2011, 32.

96 We agree with Häublein 2005, 122f. However, the revisions in prompt books from the time under principal Schröder are often from his hand, emergency or not.

Restoration work carried out by the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg has revealed that the emphasis of the original transitional scene between Desdemona and her chambermaid Aemilia (Wieland's version of Shakespeare's Emilia) was lengthened and pasted over twice. In this minor transitional scene, Desdemona reproaches herself for having brought about her husband's increasingly threatening, jealous behaviour – without knowing exactly how: "Es ist billig, daß mir so mitgespielt wird, sehr billig; warum hab ich mich so aufgeführt, das er nur den Schatten eines Grundes zum allerkleinsten Mißtrauen gefunden hat!" (O, 71v) [It serves me right that I am mistreated in this fashion, very right; why have I acted in such a way that he has found only the shadow of a reason for the slightest mistrust!]. In the initial underlying version, Schröder had merged Schmid's template with Wieland's. The latter had used "billig" for Shakespeare's "'Tis meet I should be used." But Shakespearean Desdemona's open question as to "how" she had acted to provoke her husband becomes a self-reproach in Schmid's determinative "warum" [why][97]. (Cf. figure 49.)

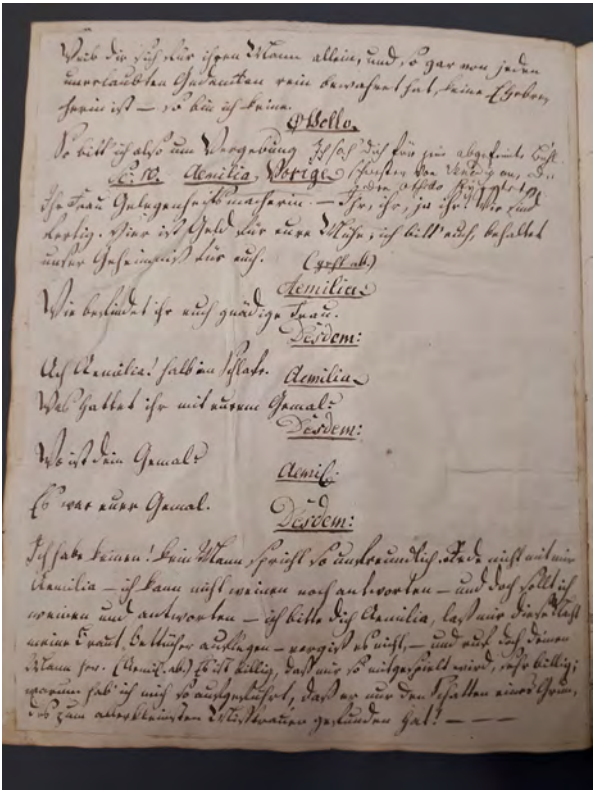
Figure 49: O, 71v, primary layer.



97 Wieland 2003, 750; Shakespeare 2016, 2141; Schmid 1772, 251.

In the course of the revisions, this scene was extended and re-accentuated: first, a narrow, blank strip of paper was used to cover up one of Aemilia's lines. Next to it, a note by Schröder written in dark ink was inserted: "12 Zeilen Plaz in den Rollen" [[Leave] 12 lines of space in the actors' parts]. This presumably referred to a planned (but not yet decided upon) change in the manuscripts to be handed out to the actors at a later point. These changes, or at least one of them, were then finally integrated into the prompt book. They were written on the second piece of paper glued into the book that now covered the whole page. The type of paper used in both cases was similar to the original; the new handwriting was, once again, Schröder's. The visual organisation of the glued-in page suggests that these changes were carried out somewhat hastily: the notes about the scene and its characters have been added right in the middle of Othello's lines in the preceding scene, while the names of the characters have been neither underlined in red nor spelled out entirely. However, the distinction between the two types of script has been retained, although it is now between German and Latin cursive. (Cf. figure 50.)

Figure 50: O, 71v, glued over.



While the focus of Schröder's original version is Desdemona's self-reproach, in the new version, she urges Aemilia to fetch her husband of all people, the conniving Iago, and "diese Nacht meine Braut bettücher auflegen" [to put out my bridal sheets this night]. At this point, Schröder (or a collaborator) seems to have consulted an English Shakespeare edition available in print.[98] (Schröder could easily have asked someone to bring one back from London or could have come into possession some other way.) By faithfully following his template, Warburton's controversial 1740s *Works of Shakespeare*,[99] Wieland's translation had left out the lines "Prithee tonight / Lay on my bed my wedding sheets"[100] – with all their importance for the psychological minutiae, i.e., the subsequent sexualised strangulation. Accordingly, the lines had also been left out in both Schmid's and Steffens's Wieland adaptations. In order to consult Eschenburg's revision of Wieland, Schröder would have had to have waited some time until 1777, but he clearly chose a leaner version than Eschenburg's later "Diesen Abend lege doch die Bettücher von meiner Brautnacht auf mein Bette"[101] [This evening, why don't you lay the sheets of my bridal night on my bed].

The reintroduction of Shakespearean text by Schröder stresses the disruption to Desdemona's and Othello's relationship. The upcoming night is now built up as a crucial moment in the plot. Importantly, Aemilia is already involved in the events. At the end of the scene, she emphatically tells the audience about her concern regarding Desdemona's peculiar behaviour. A few scenes later, this concern will allow her to sense the danger hovering above her mistress, to get help, and to save her from being murdered. The corrections in Act IV, Scene 10, were made as a combined addition of text and paper because the changes could not have been inserted in any other way. Although the everyday practices of the theatre business almost certainly led to enrichments in the prompt book at some point, the visual organisation of most prompt books is not conducive to such change. Neither margins, nor line spacing, nor any other formatting allowed for any more extensive enrichments. Paste-ins therefore provided space to revise the content of the corrected section and thereby visually erased the original version. Because of this visual erasure of the replaced text, such "over-pasting" differs from the far more common corrective procedure of adding a changed text as close as possible to the passage to be replaced not only materially but also in terms of its "graphic dimension", i.e., in terms of the "conditions for perceiving the crossed-out expres-

98 Schröder's biographer claims that it was 1779 when Schröder started reading English editions of Shakespeare. Cf. Meyer 1819a, 290.

99 Cf. Warburton 1769. Despite the early English criticism of Warburton's opinionated edition (cf. Edwards 1970, from 1748) Wieland followed his mentor Bodmer's recommendation and chose Warburton as a template. Cf. Kofler 2008, 394.

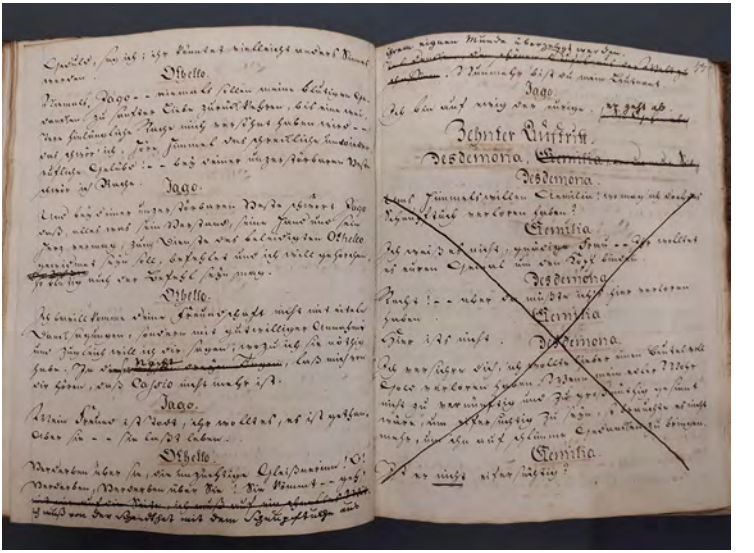
100 Shakespeare 2016, 2141; cf. Warburton 1769, 262–265; cf. Wieland 2003, 749–751.

101 Eschenburg 1779, 165f.

sion"[102]. In most cases, the cancelled validity has been signalled by one of the most common forms of cancellation, where what has been cancelled has been marked but not erased – and thus remains legible as something that has been retracted.[103]

Most corrections in *Theater-Bibliothek: 571* are of the latter type. With regard to the plot, they accelerate the action and intensify the tension, sometimes outdoing Shakespeare, Wieland, and his adapters. At the end of Act III, Scene 9, Othello no longer wants his wife's supposed lover out of the way "in den nächsten dreyen Tagen" [in the next three days] (as it says in the fair copy that follows Wieland, who is taken up by both Schmid and Steffens) but "in dieser Nacht" (O, 54v) [this night] in the revision, which intensifies the plot and at the same time emphasises the character's determination and willingness to use violence. On the other hand, Othello's desire to kill Desdemona has been somewhat downplayed. Schröder's Othello originally wanted "auf ein schnelles Mittel denken, den schönen Teufel aus der Welt zu schaffen" [to think of a quick means to rid the world of the beautiful devil] as in Wieland and all other sources. Now, after the revision, Othello first wants to be convinced of the legitimacy of his jealousy, i.e., "von der Schandtat mit dem Schnupftuche aus ihrem eignen Munde überzeugt werden" (O, 55r) [to hear of the infamy with the handkerchief from her own mouth]. (Cf. figure 51.)

Figure 51: O, 54v and 55r.

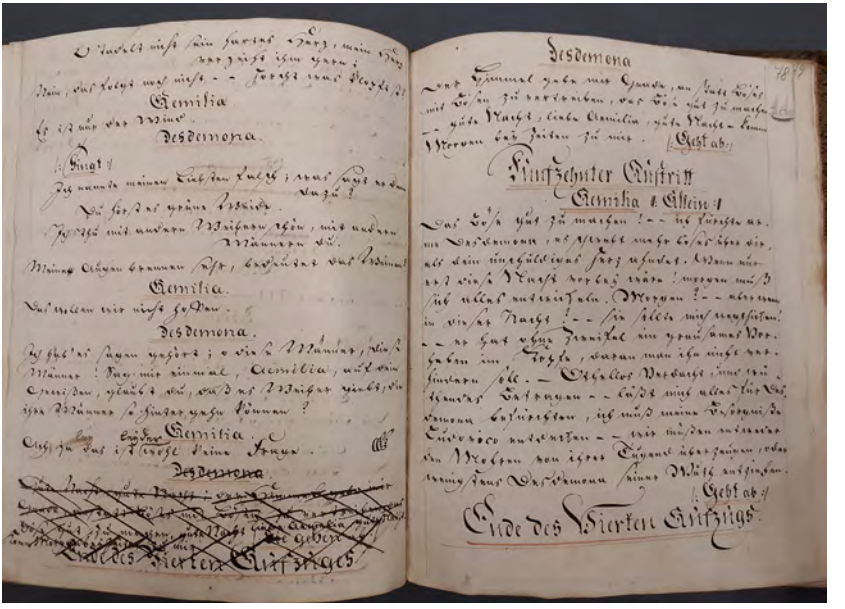


102 "graphischen Dimension", "Wahrnehmungsbedingungen des gestrichenen Ausdrucks", Wirth 2011, 26.

103 Cf. Grésillon 2010, 289f.

In order to relieve the now heightened tension, Schröder followed Steffens at the end of Act IV. The chamber maid Aemilia realises that Desdemona's life is in acute danger. At this point, an entire additional scene inspired by Steffens, for which there is no template in Wieland, Shakespeare, or Schmid, has been inserted on top of a page habitually left blank at the end of the act, i.e., text has been added without the addition of any extra paper. On the previous manuscript page, an indication that Act IV is going to end has been retracted, and a small manicule has been inserted to signal the addition: Aemilia remains alone on stage; in a soliloquy she expresses her concern for her mistress and ponders if there is a way out (cf. figure 52).

Figure 52: O, 77v and 78r.



The template now being used was Steffens's. In his adaptation, Aemilia's vigilance paves the way for Desdemona's survival. Schröder not only shortened Steffens's scene but made it more pointed. In Steffens's version, Aemilia's meditations on what is about to happen had been mostly informative and explanatory:

> Mein Herz sagt es mir, es ist ein Unglück unterwegs. Wenn nur erst diese Nacht vorbey wäre. Morgen soll sich vieles ändern. […] Seine Eifersucht ist reif und sie kann bald, bald in Wuth und Grausamkeit ausbrechen. Wer so weit gegangen ist, der besinnet sich auch nicht lange, weiter zu gehen. Warum soll ich weggeschickt werden? War es ihm doch sonst nicht zuwider, wenn ich ganze Nächte hindurch an der Seite seiner Schlafkammer bey ihr blieb. Er hat ohne Zweifel ein grausames

> Vorhaben im Kopfe, daran ich ihn nicht verhindern soll. Gut, daß ich daran denke; ich muß Schildwache halten, und fleißig patrulliren. Die kleine Thür hinter der Tapete soll mir den Eingang eröffnen, wenn es nöthig seyn sollte. Vor allen Dingen aber muß ich mit unsern beyden Gästen Abrede nehmen.[104] [My heart tells me there is a disaster on the way. If only this night were over. Tomorrow, much will change. […] His jealousy is ripe and could soon, soon break out in rage and cruelty. He who has gone so far does not have to think long about going further. Why should I be sent away? At other times, he had no problem with me staying with her all night long at the side of his bedchamber. He undoubtedly has a cruel plan in mind, which he does not want me to hinder. It is good that I realise this; I must keep watch and stay diligent on my patrol. The small door behind the wallpaper shall act as an entrance for me if necessary. Above all, however, I must make arrangements with our two guests.]

Schröder's version of the soliloquy dramatizes Aemilia's realisation into an inner back-and-forth, making it more pressing. She is now already planning to get help should the worst come to pass:

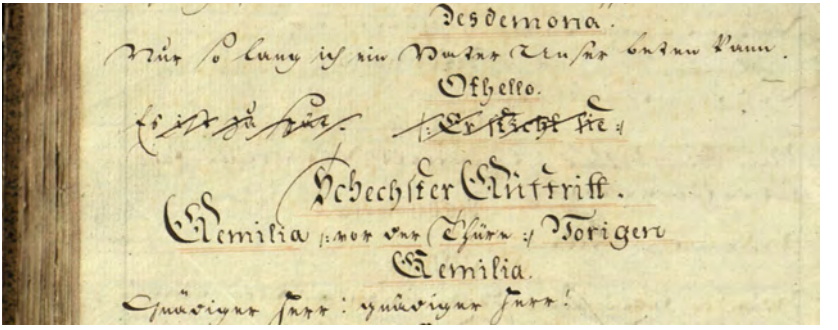
> Das Böse gut zu machen! – – ich fürchte arme Desdemona, es schwebt mehr böses über dir, als dein unschuldiges Herz ahndet. Wenn nur erst diese Nacht vorbey wäre! morgen muß sich alles entwickeln. Morgen? – – aber wenn in dieser Nacht? – – sie sollte mich wegschicken! – – er hat ohne Zweifel ein grausames Vorhaben im Kopfe, daran man ihn nicht verhindern soll. – – Othellos Verdacht, und wüthendes Betragen – – läßt mich alles für Desdemona befürchten, ich muß meine Besorgniße Ludovico entdecken – – wir müßen entweder den Mohren von ihrer Tugend überzeugen, oder wenigstens Desdemona seiner Wuth entziehen. (O, 78r) [To make evil good! – – I fear, poor Desdemona, there is more evil hovering over you than your innocent heart suspects. If only this night were over! Tomorrow everything must unfold. Tomorrow? – – but if this night? – – she was to send me away! – – he has no doubt a cruel plan in mind, which he does not want to be prevented from carrying out. – – Othello's suspicions and angry behaviour – – make me fear all for Desdemona, I must reveal my concerns to Ludovico – – we must either convince the Moor of her virtue, or at least remove Desdemona from his rage.]

As mentioned before, we must reconstruct how exactly Desdemona was recused in *Othello* from contemporary accounts. There are no further revisions in *Theater-Bibliothek: 571* after a certain point in the fifth act. Nevertheless, this very point is precisely the one at which the decisive twist has been added. It is the simple, almost inconspicuous crossing-out of three words that, however, points to the

104 Steffens 1770, 86f.

greatest possible change in content. Towards the end of Act V, Scene 5, in the fair copy, Desdemona is murdered – as she is in Wieland and Schmid as well. Her pleas for Othello to desist from his terrible deed, or to at least to postpone it, go unheard. Accordingly, the prompt book contains the respective instruction as adapted from Schmid: "Er sticht sie" (O, 84v) [He stabs her]. Since Desdemona is now to survive, the instruction can no longer apply. Five small ink strokes have struck through the stage direction – and therefore the decisive moment of revision in the *Othello* prompt book. Due to the previous interventions inspired by Steffens, this kind of change is now dramaturgically plausible. They signify nothing less than the fact that the deed has been omitted: Othello does not stab her after all. The material performance and the stage performance, i.e., the inobtrusive material revisions and radical interventions into the course of the action in *Othello*, could not be any further apart at this moment (cf. figure 53).

Figure 53: O, 84v.



After this, the revisions stop. The stage direction "giebt ihr noch einige Stiche" (O, 85r) [gives her several more stabs][105] on the next folio has not been retracted. Getting the revised version to the actors seems to have taken priority at this point. As stated above, the prompter probably made do with loose sheets for the next performances. After that, the prompt book was no longer needed.

The revision practices used during the enrichment of *Theater-Bibliothek: 571* can be distinguished with respect to their form but were identical in their effect: they suspended certain parts of the dramatic text and, if necessary, substituted updated content. At the same time, they demonstrate how this dramatic text in the prompt book may have been the basis of the performance but was also an object of use in everyday theatre practice. It therefore had to be adapted to the circumstances, i.e., specific requirements. These requirements were not only artistic or

105 Schröder increases the intensity from Schmid's single "giebt ihr noch einen Stich" [stabs her once more] (Schmid 1772, 275).

technical but also social: in the case of *Othello*, it was first the intervention and then the absence of the paying audience that effected the transformation of the prompt book. Viewer expectations and habits, which are interwoven with poetic norms of representation, have thus been inscribed into the Hamburg *Othello* prompt book through very concrete material practices. But it was the choice of printed German Shakespeare translations, adaptations, and perhaps even an English edition of the "original" Shakespeare that these practices took up, collated, and transformed.

V. Prompt Books on the Censor's Desk: Handwriting, Print, and Shakespeare

It was not only the paying audience that necessitated the handwritten revisions in the prompt books for the Hamburg Shakespeare performances. As explained in Chapter 4 with regard to *Die Sonnen-Jungfrau*, the company also had to take the authorities into account. Obscene or seditious language or actions were not permitted. Unlike in Vienna, the Hamburg prompt books of the time do not seem to have been submitted to a common approval procedure. There are no signs of acceptance or rejection in the written artefacts. There are no indications of visits from the authorities to control whether the text spoken on stage was the same as the one that had been permitted.[106] This by no means indicates that a more liberal attitude was being taken. Schröder's private company was in many respects in a much more precarious position than, for example, the Vienna court theatre. The ability to obtain performance permits depended on a whole range of factors. There was, for example, an entrenched tradition of hostility towards the theatre in the Hamburg clergy. It was near impossible to put on performances on weekends or during Lent.[107] Interventions such as Schröder's downplaying of the pregnancy in *Die Sonnen-Jungfrau* and his mitigation of Shakespeare's coarse language probably addressed demands being made by the paying audience and Hamburg authorities at the same time.

However, towards the end of Schröder's life, there was an official censorship office in place for three years, from 1811 to 1814. Schröder still owned the theatre (and the prompt books)[108] but, in 1798, he had retired from his position as principal and actor to a country estate at the gates of Hamburg. However, from 1811 to 1812, Schröder came out of retirement for more than a year. The aim was presumably to utilise his national and international prominence to improve the standing of the

106 Cf. Pieroth 2018, 19–22. For theatre censorship in general, cf. Wagner 2023.

107 Cf. Malchow 2022, 31–46.

108 Cf. Uhde 1879, 6f.

company in view of rising censorship pressures.[109] The revival of one of his Shakespeare productions from the late 1770s is perhaps the most prominent example of this, which we will discuss in detail below.

The French army had captured Hamburg in 1806. As the capital of the newly founded Bouches-de-l'Elbe department, the city formed part of the French Empire from late 1810 until the expulsion of the occupying forces in 1814. Napoleon decreed the reintroduction of censorship in France in 1810; the new laws were applied in the new territories in the course of 1811.[110] The central Direction de l'imprimerie et de la librairie [Department of Printing and Publishing] in Paris had a Hamburg-based agency that was closely aligned with the local police. Besides controlling printing and bookselling, the agency's resident censor was former Hamburg journalist Johann Philipp Nick (1777–1815),[111] who was responsible for newspapers and all published literature, as well as for the stage. Playbills, which advertised the venue, the date, and the name of the play, needed to be bilingual. An overall list of the plays to be performed had to be presented to Nick's supervisor, Louis-Philippe Brun d'Aubignosc, for approval. D'Aubignosc had the power to prohibit the performance of a play and to close down a theatre if his orders met with resistance. He could also intervene after the fact in the event that an approved play was deemed to have had an undesirable effect upon the public.[112]

As the local censor, Nick would note down pages in need of changes, suggest and insert amendments, and sign the final version with "vu et approuvé" [seen and approved] by "Nick censeur" [censor Nick] or simply "Nick". The 136 written artefacts that bear the censor's, i.e., Nick's, signature[113] account for nearly all the plays known to have been performed during his tenure from 1811 to 1814. The overwhelming bulk of them have been signed with the aforementioned "vu et approuvé" in black or brown ink. In various prompt books, page numbers have been listed on one of the final pages, referring to pages with objectionable content. They contain minor or major annotations as well as edits but – as in the case of *Die Sonnen-Jungfrau* – do not seem to have been made by Nick himself. Only in very few cases did prompt books include rejection notices: the most explicit one is on display in Gustav Hagemann's 1790 one-act-comedy *Leichtsinn und Edelmuth* [*Frivolity and Magnanimi-*

109 Cf. Meyer 1819b, 317–322.

110 Cf. Hellmich 2014, 123–124.

111 Cf. Schröder/Klose 1870, 519; cf. Hellmich 2014, 30f.

112 Cf. Hellmich 2014, 124–27.

113 Cf. Stoltz 2016 and according to the index of the Hamburg Staatsbibliothek "Handschriftenkatalog". Stoltz counts 135 because he does not yet include the *König Lear* prompt book analysed below. The written artefact clearly belongs to the Theater-Bibliothek but was found by one of the authors of this study in the general inventory of the Hamburg Staatsbibliothek in 2015 (based on references in Drews 1932 and Hoffmeier 1964). It has since been included in the special collection.

ty]. It had been performed on a regular basis until 1798 but was deemed by Nick to be too critical of the military. His rather genial commentary on the last page reads:

> In einem monarchischen Staate kann und darf der Soldatenstand als kein Unglück betrachtet werden. Der 15. Auft[ritt] wirft auf jeden Fall ein ungünstiges Licht auf ihn. Die anderen Scenen sind nicht gantz von diesem Vorwurfe frei. Sie werden es mir daher nicht übelnehmen hochzuverehrender Herr Director! wenn ich dieses Lustspiel nicht genehmigen kann.[114] [In a monarchy, the military cannot and must not be regarded as a misfortune. In any case, the 15th scene shows it in an unfavourable light. The other scenes are not entirely free of this reproach. You will therefore not hold it against me, Honourable Director! if I cannot approve this comedy.]

In general, plays needed to avoid statements that could be construed as being critical of France and all things French. Enemies like the English were best not mentioned – or at least not drawn in a favourable light. Words such as "homeland", "patriotism", "freedom", "tyranny", "oppression", etc. were to be avoided. As a matter of consequence, the agency tended to reject works by popular authors such as Friedrich Schiller wholesale.[115] However, Schröder and others found that many of the plays that reached Nick's desk were treated with a great deal of good will and attention to detail, while other plays hardly suffered any interventions at all.[116]

Whereas Nick signed off on the somewhat revised prompt books that had been in use for decades for *Die Sonnen-Jungfrau* and *Hamlet*, some other written artefacts that bear his signature look like they were newly produced copies instead of the existing prompt books of long-term productions. The previously used prompt books had possibly been worn out by their long-term use; the information stored in them might have been deemed too valuable to be messed around with by a (perhaps) temporary occupying power. An additional layer of writing by an outside hand was always at risk of rendering the prompt book as a whole illegible and thus unsuitable for practical use. When the theatre company feared a play might be problematic, Nick seems to have received freshly created written artefacts, i.e., prompt books that were produced from scratch and then – once they had Nick's signature of approval – further amended during what was sometimes decades of use.

In fifteen instances, the company did not create a new manuscript at all but used an existing print copy of the respective play as a basis. Usually, the print copy was not interleaved in order to prevent it from becoming too bulky to be handled in the prompt box. However, it was given a new cover and one or two extra sheets for blank

114 *Theater-Bibliothek*: 477, 34v; cf. Stoltz 2016.

115 Cf. Stoltz 2016. (Dominik Stoltz was part of the team that compiled the Theater-Bibliothek index but has only published this blogpost.)

116 Cf. *Allgemeine Zeitung* 1815, 1236.

pages in the front and back. The print was then enriched in handwriting that added technical information or changes to the content of the play. The print copy thus served as the primary layer of a hybrid printed and handwritten document. Revising a print copy was convenient (and common practice) whenever the stage adaptation of a play would not differ greatly from a published version of a text. Most of the fifteen "hybrid" prompt books signed off on by Nick were commercially successful (and politically non-threatening) comedies that had been part of the Hamburg repertory for a long period of time. Submitting a prompt book based on a print copy also conveyed the not-so-subtle point that a work allowed in print should also be allowed on stage.

Submitting a print-based prompt book also made sense in cases where the theatre company itself had published a particularly successful stage adaptation, as had been the case for some of the Hamburg Shakespeare productions back in the 1770s. Although the intellectual discourse and debate on Shakespeare had moved on since the 1790s, these adaptations were still the ones being performed in the 1810s. Out of the five Shakespearean plays performed under Nick's aegis, two were classified as comedies (the 1777 *Kaufmann von Venedig* [*Merchant of Venice*] and the 1792 *Viel Lärmen um Nichts* [*Much Ado About Nothing*]) and made use of the original revised handwritten artefacts (the inspection book *Theater-Bibliothek: 429a* for the *Merchant*, the prompter's version *Theater-Bibliothek: 948b* for *Much Ado*). With *Hamlet*, the company itself had switched to a print copy of Schröder's own version at some point, probably in the 1780s. As a family drama (and without the Fortinbras plot), there was little that could have unsettled the censor. Two other Shakespearean plays with potentially problematic content, however, were submitted to the censor as print copies with handwritten enrichments. Like *Hamlet*, Schröder's 1770s Hamburg adaptations of *Maaß für Maaß* [*Measure for Measure*] and *König Lear* had both privileged the family drama over the political dimension, but they still included tales of revolutionary struggle that could have been deemed problematic by the French authorities. Submitting them as print copies with handwritten enrichments thus meant less work for the scribes in the event of a possible rejection. If they were accepted, the company would now take the print copy as a starting point for the new prompt book. The resulting hybrid of print copy and multi-layered handwriting by multiple users made it easier to distinguish between the starting version (i.e., the play submitted to Nick), the additions made for the censor, and possible responses and counteractions. Additional technical information could then be seamlessly added at a later point in time.

VI. A 1778 *König Lear* Print Copy and Its 1812 Context

The 1812 prompt book for *König Lear, Theater-Bibliothek: 2029*, is of special interest. This print copy with handwritten enrichments has been preserved at the Theater-Bibliothek, while former versions that may have been in use from the 1770s to the 1800s have not survived. Against the backdrop of French censorship, it seems at first rather curious that an adaptation of William Shakespeare's tragedy was performed at all – and frequently at that: five times in the course of 1812.[117] This play by a playwright from one of France's enemy nations is set in a mythical (or early medieval) England and portrays the disintegration of authority, various instances of brutal upheaval, and the invasion of a French army.[118] Many of the red flags that Nick's censorship office disapproved of can be found here. On the other hand, it had by this point been more than a decade since Shakespeare had been appropriated by the German Romantics. He was widely considered to be more at home in the German-speaking world than in the London theatre districts.[119] In the growing Romantic imagination, the England-based *Lear* plot had more the makings of a fairy tale than of an analogy of current political events. Above all, Schröder's own performance as the lead character had arguably been his greatest critical achievement as an actor from the 1770s to the 1790s.[120] Next to its success on a national level (aided by some guest performances in Mannheim and Vienna), it also received a three-page description in Mme de Staël's 1810 famous, quasi-ethnographic exploration of Germany for the French reading public, *De l'Allemagne* [*On Germany*].[121] Despite the subsequent ban on de Staël's work, its stunning initial success would have contributed to whatever standing Schröder's Shakespeare-adaptations had with the French censorship office in Hamburg.

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117 According to the playbills accessible on Jahn/Mühle/Eisenhardt/Malchow/Schneider (https://www.stadttheater.uni-hamburg.de), performances took place on 13, 20, 22, and 25 March as well as on 11 May and 28 October.

118 Cf. Shakespeare 2016, 2507–2513, 2540–2543, 2549f.

119 Cf. Habicht 1994a; cf. Paulin 2003, 211–296; cf. Blinn 1982.

120 Schröder's performance was generally considered to have set a new benchmark for a psychologically intricate, subtly nuanced, yet immediately comprehensible style of acting. For a comprehensive analysis of Schröder's König Lear, his acting style, and its contexts, cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 119–266; cf. Schäfer 2017. From 1778 to 1827, *König Lear* was performed fifty-four times in Hamburg based on Schröder's adaptation: nine in 1778; four in 1779; three in 1780; three in 1786; one each in 1787 and 1788; two in 1789; one in 1790; two each in 1791, 1793, 1794 and 1795; one in 1796; two in 1798; three each in 1802 and 1806; five in 1812; two in 1816; one each in 1817 and 1818; two in 1819; and one each in 1822, 1823, and 1827. Schröder played Lear for the last time in 1798. Cf. Jahn/Mühle/Eisenhardt/Malchow/Schneider (https://www.stadttheater.uni-hamburg.de).

121 Cf. de Staël Holstein 1810, 293–96.

After the failure of his 1776 *Othello*, Schröder initially refrained from staging the other "great" tragedies. But he had not given up on the idea of establishing Shakespeare on the Hamburg stage, preferably with an at least similar ending to the ones known from the printed books. Schröder took time to prepare his audience. In 1777, the company staged two Shakespearean plays. Both were classified as comedies at the time and had their own finales. However, they both included a dark and tragic subplot for some of the characters, which Schröder accentuated. In *Der Kaufmann von Venedig* [*The Merchant of Venice*], Schröder shortened the love story and strengthened the parts of the plot in which Antonio's life is under threat. He kept the happy ending, of course, but toned down the serenity and reconciliatory mood that it had in the original and the print translations.[122] In *Maaß für Maaß*, which has been considered a model example of a hard-to-classify Shakespearean "problem play" since the twentieth century, Schröder got rid of the entire premise of his template: the near-tragic end to Angelo's rule was now no longer a test of his skill; Schröder's duke did not intervene by chance alone. Instead, the duke was now portrayed from the outset as an energetic figure who then learns about his regent's misdeeds. What had been a lucky interference in Shakespeare thus became a hero's intervention in Schröder.[123] While the content of the handwritten prompt book *Theater-Bibliothek: 514* had originally been classified as the "Lustspiel" [comedy] that it had been in Wieland's print translation, the first syllable was crossed out at some point and changed into a simple "Schauspiel" [play][124].

Overall, it seems as if Schröder made use of his audience's preference for comedies to get them used to the more serious aspects of Shakespeare. In July 1778, Schröder ventured into the "great" tragedies once more. It was not only his renowned acting skills that allowed not-yet-thirty-four-year-old Schröder to shine as the aging king – he also chose a different approach from that of *Othello*. The adapted Lear that he developed in collaboration with his brother-in-law Johann Christoph Unzer[125] was a less complex character than Shakespeare's had been. The first scenes in which the old absolute monarch gives away his kingdom to his two evil daughters while banishing the loving one to exile were turned into a messenger's report. The audience first encountered Lear as a frail man who had been mistreated at the hands of his children. As in *Hamlet*, the political dimension of the play faded into the background while the family conflict received greater attention. There was no trace left of the Shakespearean ambivalence. Schröder's Lear implored

122 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 120.

123 Cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 120f.

124 *Theater-Bibliothek: 514*, title page (recto of folio 1, but numbered differently in the written artefact itself).

125 Cf. Drews 1932, 27.

compassion; he died of exhaustion and old age rather than grief .[126] Having learned from the audience's reaction to Desdemona's death, Schröder also saved Lear's innocent and loving daughter Cordelia. Instead of having a mourning Lear carry her murdered corpse out onto the stage, Cordelia merely fainted and remained unconscious in Schröder's initial version. For the Hamburg audience, however, this was still too ambiguous, as several sources report. An actor playing a corpse could hardly be distinguished from an actor pretending to have blacked out. In response to the protests (even though they were milder than those regarding Desdemona's death), Schröder had Cordelia wake up at the end – only to lay eyes on her deceased father and dramatically faint once more.[127] Now, there was no doubt that she was still alive but had fainted as she glimpsed the horror, much like the female audience members were rumoured to have done in the case of *Othello*.[128]

Shortly after the play's initial success, Schröder had the version in which Cordelia's fainting had been further mitigated published as a printed book "nach Shakespear"[129] [after Shakespeare]. In 1781, it also became part of his *Hamburgisches Theater* series.[130] It was soon reenacted at other German theatres, but also received competition from another German *Lear* with an even happier ending. Schröder's former collaborator, Johann Christian Bock, produced a version of *König Lear* at the Leipzig court theatre in 1779 in which Lear survived and took the reins once more.[131] Bock's adaptation was soon also available in print.[132] Theatres sometimes performed hybrids of the two and published a bootlegged printed book that mixed the two templates.[133]

In Hamburg, Schröder's version was last performed in 1827, nearly fifty years after its premiere. But generally speaking, Schröder's and Bock's adaptations persisted on German stages until the 1840s.[134] In retrospect, this is surprising as the intellectual discourse about Shakespeare had shifted dramatically since the late 1790s. There was a new paradigm for the German Shakespeare in print! Starting in the mid-1790s, August Wilhelm Schlegel (in collaboration with his partner, Caroline Böhmer, and with theoretical input from his brother Friedrich) had taken a lead role in the early German Romantics' translations of Shakespeare according to aesthetic and poetic principles, i.e., in metric form instead of Wieland's and Eschenburg's prose. The Romantics no longer revered Shakespeare as "nature's child" but for the

126 Cf. Schäfer 2016, 528–533.

127 Cf. Schröder 1778c, 110; cf. Hoffmeier 1964, 142f.

128 Cf. Schäfer 2018, 49.

129 Cf. Schröder 1778c, 1.

130 Cf. Schröder 1781.

131 Cf. Schäfer 2016, 528–539.

132 Cf. Bock 1779.

133 Cf. Bock/Schröder 1779.

134 Cf. Drews 1932, 92f.; cf. Gazdar 1979, 227–231.

artistry of his language and plot construction. While the new translation captured previously overlooked dimensions of Shakespeare, it also adjusted the plays to reflect the new aesthetic trends. The more drastic aspects of Shakespeare were still softened but also sublated into a highly stylised language that closely resembled the one that the now older Goethe and Schiller were working on for the Weimar stage. In addition, the proto-naturalistic acting style that Schröder had championed in Hamburg was no longer considered avantgarde. In a lot of places, it had gone out of fashion in favour of emphatically artificial delivery, i.e., "declaiming" lines, which fitted in well with the aesthetics of the new print translations.[135]

However, such differences were not clear-cut oppositions. The Schlegel translation took time to become established among readers and more so on the stage. Schlegel himself temporarily stopped translating in 1804, after finishing a good half of the plays, and then came to a complete stop in 1810.[136] The circle surrounding Ludwig Tieck began by completing the Romantic translation in 1817, but did not finish until the 1830s, with their German *König Lear* only appearing in 1832.[137] Rival translations did not catch on. The Wieland approach to Shakespearean language often existed alongside the Romantic one, while Schröder's approach to theatre persisted alongside the one put into practice in Berlin and Weimar. At the height of the Weimar "Classicism" period, in 1806, Goethe commissioned Johann Heinrich Voß, son of the renowned translator of Homer, to translate *King Lear* in the Romantic mould. Voß delivered the translation (and then swiftly published it in print),[138] but Goethe then relied on Schröder's tested stage adaptation after all.[139] Vice versa, Schröder's 1777 prose version of the *Kaufmann von Venedig* [*Merchant of Venice*] was performed seven times during its first year and then twenty-five more times from 1781 to 1822. Six took place during the French censorship period. But at some point, the pasted-in pieces of paper that enriched prompt book *Theater-Bibliothek: 429b* started following the text of Schlegel's 1799 metric translation. This was probably for purely pragmatic reasons: the Schlegel edition was what the guest actor playing Shylock from 1816 onwards was used to.[140] With respect to the Hamburg *Hamlet*, the preserved playbills show that the Schlegel translation was performed twenty-six times between 1830 and 1850. (It has survived as prompt and inspection book *Theater-Bibliothek: 1982 (2) a&b*.) But until 1843, there were also six performances of the 1770s Schröder adaptation, with fifteen performances of Schlegel during the same period.[141]

135 Cf. Heeg 1999.

136 Cf. Paulin 2003, 315–330.

137 Cf. Paulin 2003, 344–348; cf. Baudissin 1832.

138 Cf. Voß 1806.

139 Cf. Ermann 1983, 224–226, 231.

140 Cf. Eickmeyer 2017, 102f.

141 Cf. Jahn/Mühle/Eisenhardt/Malchow/Schneider (https://www.stadttheater.uni-hamburg.de).

Although no longer considered avantgarde in intellectual circles around the turn of the nineteenth century, the Hamburg theatre largely stuck to Schröder's aesthetics and continued to enjoy some success with the audience. However, theirs was no longer an educational mission. Accordingly, in-house adaptations no longer made it from the handwritten prompt book to the published printed book. One last attempt had been Schröder's *Maaß für Maaß* adaptation. Having been a steady part of the repertory from the end of 1777 to autumn 1778 (i.e., shortly after the premiere of their *König Lear*), the production was dropped until March 1789. After four performances that year, Schröder had his (rather liberal) adaptation published in 1790, a few years before the onset of the Romantic project. This time, "von Schröder" [by Schröder] was added to "nach Shakespeare" [after Shakespeare][142]. The prompt book *Theater-Bibliothek: 514* is the handwritten 1777 prompt book that was used originally and then slightly revised, probably for the 1789 reprisal. It then provided the content for the 1790 print version, which was part of a new publication series of plays as adapted by Stadt-Theater. After only one additional performance of *Maaß für Maaß* in 1791, two performances in early 1813 under French censorship were the last times that Schröder's adaptation, and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* altogether, were performed in Hamburg for decades. On these two occasions, a print copy of Schröder's adaptation provided the basis of the prompt book handed in to the censor and signed off by him, *Theater-Bibliothek: 948a*. What seems to be the inspection book, but may also have been used as a draft to try out the changes for the censor, was also based on a print copy, *Theater-Bibliothek: 948b*.[143] In 1813, hardly any changes seem to have been deemed necessary or required by the censor. It was only at the very end that Schröder's more heroic duke received four additional, probably explanatory handwritten lines. An initial draft has been erased before the final one is also written out in graphite pencil in the inspection book. It was probably then copied into the prompt book in ink. In contrast to Schröder's published adaptation, the duke no longer has the final word, which goes to the people, who applaud his rule – and thus affirm any authority, including that of the occupying French forces: "Es lebe unser Herzog!"[144] [Long live our duke!] – Such was the context in which, one year earlier, Schröder's *König Lear* had been staged. Schröder no longer played the lead but was at the helm of the theatre once more, on the brink of his final retirement.

142 Schröder 1790, 1.

143 While text and layout in both copies are identical, only *Theater-Bibliothek: 948b* has the date of publication, the publisher and the "nach Schröder" on its first page. *Theater-Bibliothek: 948a*, with only "Maaß für Maaß / Ein Schauspiel in fünf Aufzügen / nach Shakespear", could very well be a readily available bootlegged version.

144 *Theater-Bibliothek: 948a*, 125; *Theater-Bibliothek: 948b*, 125.

VII. Appeasing the Censor: The Handwritten Revision of *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029* in 1812

It was against this political and aesthetic backdrop that Nick, the censor, received a revised print copy of the original, fabled, but now old-fashioned 1778 *König Lear, Theater-Bibliothek: 2029*. The company used a copy of the original 1778 print edition rather than one of the 1781 or 1785 editions.[145] Next to the printed "after Shakespeare", Schröder's own hand had added "von Schröder" [by Schröder] in black ink on the title page: the famous principal was not so much asking to stage a play by the English enemy as he was stressing the local aspect of the play (and his authority as a renowned artist). As a whole, *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029* consists of fifty-nine folios, fifty-five of which (4–58) are the printed pages. In addition, some empty sheets have been glued inside the front and back of a similar, sprinkled yellowish-brown cover to that of the *Othello* prompt book, i.e., a prompt book that Schröder considered part of his personal collection. In black ink, a faded sticker on the cover not only states the title "König Lear" and the numbers of an earlier index (47 29) but also clearly assigns the book to the "Soufleur" [prompter] in Schröder's own handwriting.

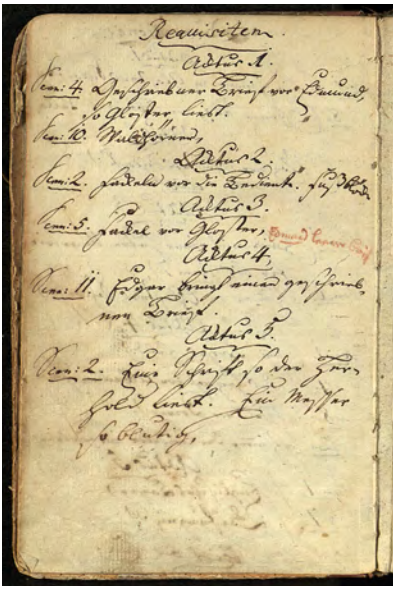
On both sides of the second folio, a set list and prop list have been written out in black ink. A different hand using a red pencil has added some other minor information.[146] On the recto of the third folio, more prop information has been inserted by different hands writing in black ink and in a faded grey pencil that has also cancelled out some of the black ink. Presumably, the same grey pencil was at work on the verso of the last folio and the inside of the back cover. A list of eight or nine single words might contain the performers' last names but is largely illegible. However, none of the last names on the existing Hamburg *König Lear* playbills from the 1770s to the 1820s are an obvious match. On the fifty-five printed folios, at least the same three writing tools have left their mark. But a graphite pencil has clearly been used by different hands at different points in time, while a hand that has added technical remarks made use of a pencil as well as some black ink. At least three different hands (including Nick's) used ink. One of them, which has made some textual additions, was clearly Schröder's himself. Altogether, eighty-two of the 110 printed pages in *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029* have been slightly or heavily redacted by sometimes more than one hand and often more than one writing tool or ink. The modes of written artefact enrichment range from the addition of technical information (entrance, exits, or sound cues) to textual changes. Inter-

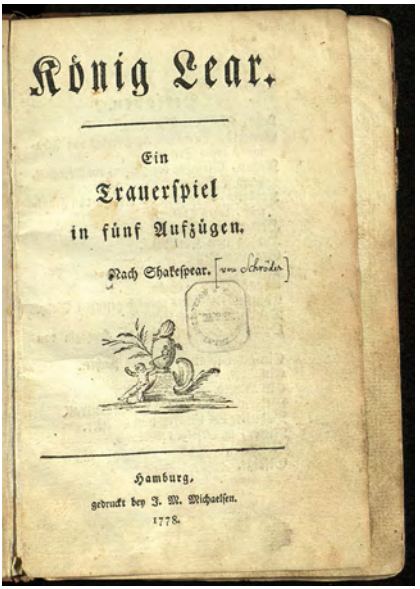
145 For this reason, scholarship has considered the prompt book to be the one from the original production until now. Cf. Drews 1932, 42f.; cf. the figures and explanations 24–29 in the appendix of Hoffmeier 1964; cf. Schäfer 2016, 527.

146 Cf. added flyleaves before page 1 of the printed pages in L.

ventions that were either carried out by the censor himself or that addressed censorship demands feature prominently in the latter category. (Cf. figures 54 and 55.)

Figure 54: L, verso of second folio with prop list, and Figure 55: L, 1.





The more than 200-year-old enrichments made in graphite pencil (which are mostly technical and were probably added by an inspector or prompter at some point) are not only near-impossible to decipher but also difficult to distinguish by means of material analysis. A material analysis was carried out, however, on the different shades used, from black to brown ink (with some instances of red). But matters become complicated here as well. The different shades sometimes seem to indicate that the ink in the quill was running out; sometimes they seem to have been caused by the process of yellowing; sometimes they belong to three different types of red ink (ochre, realgar, and an unidentifiable substance that is probably organic) and two types of plant-based ink,[147] all used only occasionally. For the bulk of the enrichments, up to five different types of iron-gall ink might have been in play. However, the results for the latter are partly inconclusive. Other findings came back showing that up to three different inks were clearly being used for the same sentence or

147 Cf. the results of the ink analysis undertaken by Sebastian Bosch, in http://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.13916 (Felser/Funke/Göing/Hussain/Schäfer/Weinstock/Bosch 2024, especially files: RD08[HandwrittenTheatre]2029_black_ink.xls.xlsm and RD08[HandwrittenTheatre]2029_red_final.xls.xlsm).

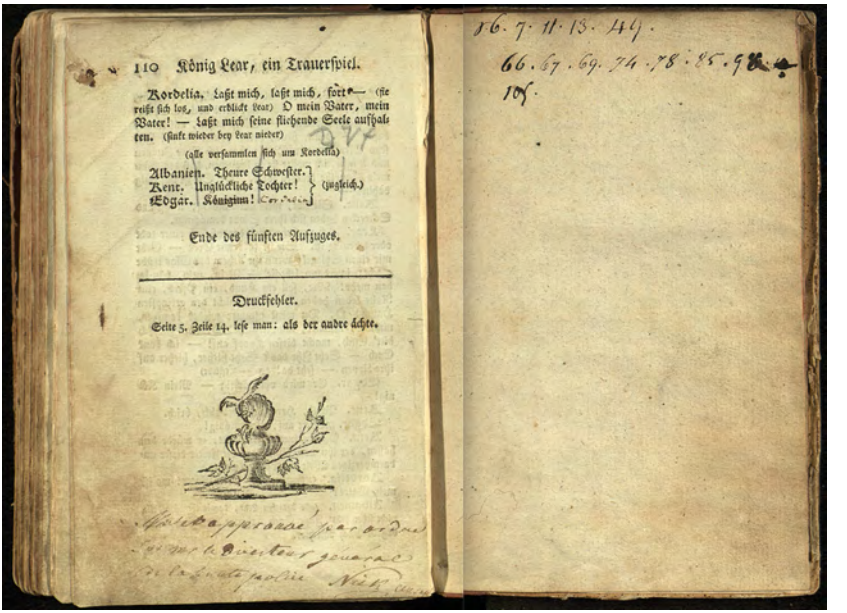
word in the same hand, which seems rather unlikely. At some points, that may have been due to the quill being re-dipped or an instruction being retraced later. Generally speaking, it seems that the prompt book's state of preservation means that it simply does not lend itself to the examination of miniscule details. However, there are two additional iron-gall inks which are more distinctive and were clearly used at other points in the prompt book, one of them by Nick, the censor.

To complicate matters further, Schröder's hand, which seems to have been responsible for many of the content revisions, clearly used different inks on different occasion. The same goes for another hand, which seems to have been in charge of making technical changes. While some changes were made to the technical setup in the prompt book and then retracted, very few of the content revisions seem to have been changed when *König Lear* was staged after the French left, between 1816 and 1823. Thus, the different inks seem to have been employed to make scattered and perhaps even occasional updates to *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029* with whatever ink was at hand.

Nevertheless, it is possible to draw some conclusions. The bottom of the last page of the printed text has been signed by Nick's hand in the aforementioned brown ink: "Vu et approuvé par ordre / de Mr le directeur général / de la haute police / Nick censeur"[148] [Seen and approved by the order / of the general director / of the state police / censor Nick]. On the next, empty end page, page numbers have been listed at the top, but in a different ink – the same one used for the prop list at the beginning, i.e., an ink that could have been used in the theatre and not by the censor. It seems that all the pages in the list were considered to be in need of amendment. Similar paratextual indices can be found in various written artefacts submitted to Nick. It is possible that page numbers like these were added when there was an expectation that a given version of a play was not going to be accepted or would be rejected wholesale. According to the ink analysis, it is unlikely that the numbers were added by the censor, meaning that there were probably other means by which to communicate with him. In this instance, each referenced page number has been separated from the next by a full stop: "S. 6. 7. 11. 13. 49. / 66. 67. 69. 74. 78. 85. 96 [or 97]. / 109." (L, 111) The second number after the 9 has been blotted out, but pages ninety-six and ninety-seven both have similar entries to the other ones. Another blot next to the 96 (or 97) looks like a mistake or a correction (cf. figure 56).

148 Similar marks of approval in other books include a date but often lack the reference to the "directeur general". Cf. Chapter 4 on *Theater-Bibliothek: 1460*.

Figure 56: L, 110 and 111.

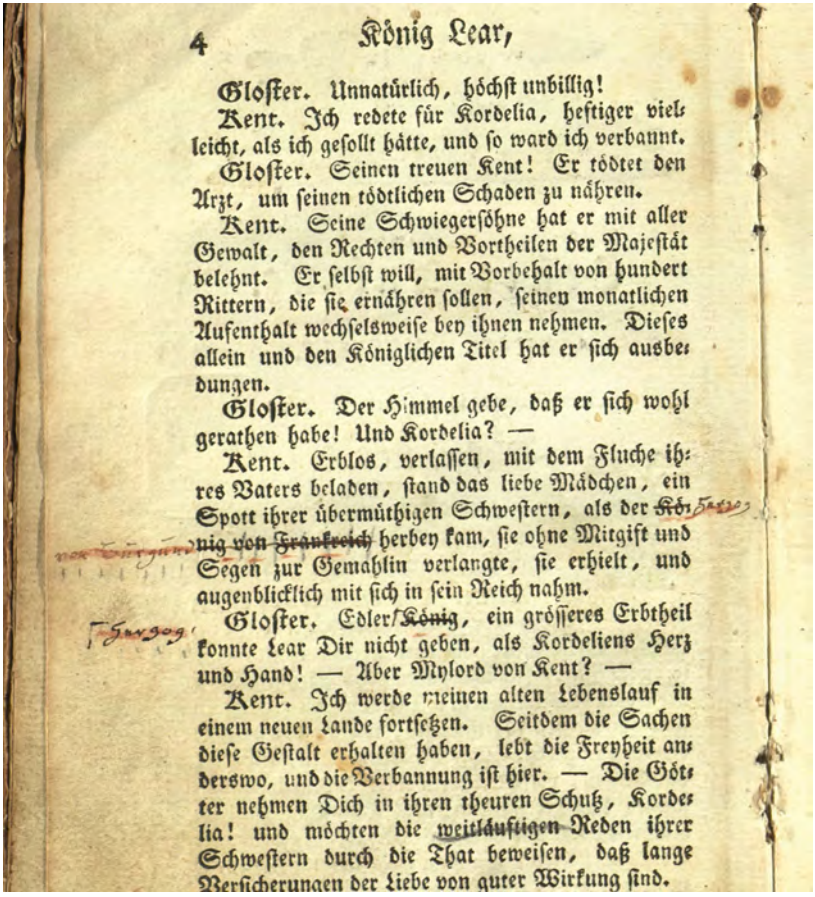


In the print copy, page ninety-seven contains the end of Act IV. The whole of the short Scene 9 has been cut by means of a square frame and three cursory slashes made in a plant-based ink. "Actus" [act] has been written in thick pencil above the scene and indicates that the curtain is to fall earlier. The hand writing in iron-gall ink that was responsible for most of enrichments has scrawled "Ende" [The End] in the right margin and has also added a diacritical sign (probably highlighting the cessation of the music) above it. While in Scene 8, Cordelia takes care of her recovering father, in Scene 9, she goes from being a loving daughter to a military commander. A knight informs her that "das Brittische Heer […] das unsere angegriffen [hat]" [the British armies have attacked ours] (L, 97), a line that might have attracted protest-like applause in Hamburg at the time. Together with the mercurial rejoinder made by the Queen of France, the line has been unceremoniously cut – and thus a whole scene that a censor would certainly have found insidious.

Page ninety-six also reveals a correction made for the censor: most pages noted at the end include references to the names "England" and "France". In Shakespeare's play, Lear's daughter has been simultaneously promised to the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France – and after her banishment, she is married to the latter without a dowry. In his 1778 adaptation, Schröder had cut the part of Burgundy and only featured the King of France (to reduce the number of actors needed). Thirty-four years later, all respective references and salutations were

changed into the Duke of Burgundy instead. Cordelia is consequently addressed as "Duchess" rather than "Queen" throughout the play. These changes amount to eight of the thirteen listed, deficient pages.

Figure 57: L, 4.



4 König Lear,

Gloſter. Unnatürlich, höchſt unbillig!

Kent. Ich redete für Kordelia, heftiger vielleicht, als ich geſollt hätte, und ſo ward ich verbannt.

Gloſter. Seinen treuen Kent! Er tödtet den Arzt, um ſeinen tödtlichen Schaden zu nähren.

Kent. Seine Schwiegerſöhne hat er mit aller Gewalt, den Rechten und Vortheilen der Majeſtät belehnt. Er ſelbſt will, mit Vorbehalt von hundert Rittern, die ſie ernähren ſollen, ſeinen monatlichen Aufenthalt wechſelsweiſe bey ihnen nehmen. Dieſes allein und den Königlichen Titel hat er ſich ausbedungen.

Gloſter. Der Himmel gebe, daß er ſich wohl gerathen habe! Und Kordelia? —

Kent. Erblos, verlaſſen, mit dem Fluche ihres Vaters beladen, ſtand das liebe Mädchen, ein Spott ihrer übermüthigen Schweſtern, als der ~~König~~ von ~~Frankreich~~ herbey kam, ſie ohne Mitgift und Segen zur Gemahlin verlangte, ſie erhielt, und augenblicklich mit ſich in ſein Reich nahm.

Gloſter. Edler ~~König~~, ein gröſſeres Erbtheil konnte Lear Dir nicht geben, als Kordeliens Herz und Hand! — Aber Mylord von Kent? —

Kent. Ich werde meinen alten Lebenslauf in einem neuen Lande fortſetzen. Seitdem die Sachen dieſe Geſtalt erhalten haben, lebt die Freyheit anderswo, und die Verbannung iſt hier. — Die Götter nehmen Dich in ihren theuren Schutz, Kordelia! und möchten die weitläuftigen Reden ihrer Schweſtern durch die That beweiſen, daß lange Verſicherungen der Liebe von guter Wirkung ſind.

However, the reintroduction of a character taken from the original Shakespeare play was clearly not the censor's work but that of the theatre. While the respective strike-throughs could very well have been made in the same ink and hand as the final approval note, the corrections themselves have been written by a different hand, mostly Schröder's, and most of the time in a clearly different ink, i.e., one or more of the aforementioned three closely related types. Moreover, the changes do not start on page six, as suggested by the list, but right in the *dramatis personae* register on page two, where "France" has been changed to "Burgundy". The first time

that the King of France is mentioned in the main text of the play is on page four. Here, a fascinating back-and-forth between different writing tools, and perhaps different hands as well, takes place. "König" [King] has been crossed out twice in black ink; "Duke of Burgundy" has been written in the blank space in the left margin in what is probably the same ink. A hand writing in thick red crayon has then retracted the correction; red dots beneath the strike-through nullify the previous cancellation. A graphite pencil seems to have had the last word: grey dots underneath the red strike-through cancel out the previous cancellation of the correction. Grey vertical lines through the strike-through and its retraction in the main text reinstate the primary retraction (cf. figure 57).

The comparatively clear differences between the editing stages make it much easier to identify the revision layers by the writing tools used in the written artefact as a whole. Nevertheless, it remains unclear when the back-and-forth took place. It could very well be that it bore witness to a discussion among the members of the theatre company before the prompt book was presented to the censor. After all, later mentions of France have all duly been crossed out and corrected. It is also likely that the interaction between the grey and red pencils took place when performances of Schröder's *Lear* version were being revived years after the occupation. Twelve additional performances between 1816 and 1823 have been identified. The red crayon revisions suggested changing "Burgundy" back to "France"; the hand working in graphite pencil disagreed and seems to have gained the upper hand – as it is then displayed throughout the rest of *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029*. Indeed, the preserved playbills demonstrate that Cordelia remained the Duchess of Burgundy for as long as Schröder's version was being staged in Hamburg.[149] Perhaps it was the enmity with post-war France that led to such a preference; perhaps it was a matter of convenience as the play was only taken up again every few years for one or two performances. This miniscule but time-consuming change to the prompt book would have had to be copied into all the actors' parts as well. Overall, surprisingly little seems to have been changed back after the occupation ended. The overall spirit of the censorship revisions seems to have fitted in neatly with the deference to authority prevalent in the post-Napoleonic era. Nevertheless, the initial change from "France" to "Burgundy" on pages two and four might have been an initial suggestion made by the theatre for the censor. The censor would have taken up the theatre's suggestion and then demanded that it be consistently implemented on some of the additional pages listed at the end of *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029*.

Apart from references to France and England, most of the other numbers refer to pages containing passages of a seditious nature. On page eleven, old Gloster's

149 As stated above Jahn/Mühle/Eisenhardt/Malchow/Schneider (https://www.stadttheater.uni-hamburg.de), list two performances in 1816, five in 1817, one in 1818, two in 1819, and one each in 1822 and 1823.

(the Germanised version of Shakespeare's Gloucester) long monologue about what he perceives to be the deterioration of politics and private morals has been largely cut by a slash made in the ink used by the theatre to mark most changes. In the midst of it all, Gloster states, "in Städten Empörung, in Provinzen Zwietracht, in Pallästen Verräthrrey" [in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason]. Traces of red varnish in the margins of the middle of the page, at the end of his monologue, indicate that a piece of paper had been glued over the last parts of the section. The addition was then removed at some later point, probably after the occupation had ended. Under the removed sheet, there is only one part that has been cut, with horizontal strike-throughs over three lines made in the ink that was also used to sign Nick's name. The fatalistic "Ränke, Treulosigkeit, Verrätherey und alle verderblichen Unordnungen verfolgen uns bis ans Grab" [Plots, disloyalty, treachery, and all pernicious disorders haunt us to our graves] (L, 11) seems to be the only part of the passage that had caught the censor's eye at first. Pasting over the rest of the passage meant playing it safe on Schröder's part. However, the strike-through underneath still stood after the additional sheet had been torn out; so, too, did the initial cancellation (cf. figure 58).

Similar changes pertaining to form and content were made using a similar writing tool throughout *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029* on the pages that were not singled out at the end. In his 1778 version, Schröder had already moved the section deemed most scandalous in the eighteenth century to the off, where the brutal blinding of old Gloster now took place.[150] The respective passages on pages seventy and seventy-one are now surrounded by a box that was also drawn in the same ink as the censor's signature. There is a strike-through from the top left to the bottom right indicating a complete retraction of the respective scene. Here, the treason in the palaces lamented earlier is in full swing: not only is the character of Gloster brutalised by a fellow nobleman in his own home, but the perpetrator, in turn, is also attacked by a defiant subordinate. Evidently, even the messenger's report was too seditious for the censor. Again, none of these cancellations were reversed after occupation, except for one minor sentence. On the contrary, the aforementioned hands working in red and grey pencils were also at work on these pages, using the latter to affirm and add retractions.

150 Cf. L, 70f.; cf. Wimsatt 1960, 98.

Figure 58: L, 11.

und Euch von allen Nachricht geben.

Gloſter. Die neulichen Verfinſterungen der Sonne und des Mondes bedeuten uns nichts Gutes; Wenn gleich die Ordnung der allzeit weiſen Natur nicht dadurch aufgehoben wird, ſo leidet ſie doch unter den Folgen. Liebe erkaltet; Freundſchaft wird abtrünnig; Brüder ſind uneins. In Städten Empörung; in Provinzen Zwietracht; in Palläſten Verrätherey; und das Band zwiſchen Sohn und Vater zerreißt. Dieſer, mein gottloſer Sohn, iſt mit unter der Weiſſagung begriffen; hier iſt ein Sohn wider den Vater; der König tritt aus dem Gleiſe der Natur; dort iſt ein Vater wider ſein Kind. Das beſte unſers Zeitalters haben wir ſchon erlebt. Ränke, Treuloſigkeit, Verrätherey und alle verderbliche Unordnungen verfolgen uns unruhig bis ans Grab. — Suche dieſen Buben auf, Edmund, Du ſollſt nichts dabey verlieren, thu' es mit allen Fleiß. — Und der edle und aufrichtige Kent verbannt! Sein Verbrechen, Redlichkeit! — Seltſam! ſeltſam! (geht ab)

Sechſter Auftritt.

In the case of the Hamburg *König Lear*, restrictions on individual and artistic freedom seem to have started not with the reconstruction of the old European order after 1815 but with Napoleon's reintroduction of censorship. The various hands that interacted in *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029* in a multi-layered fashion were all working together towards the same goal: an even less brutal and inflammatory version than the tame one that the theatre had been staging in Hamburg since 1778. The ink that changed "France" into "Burgundy" was also behind an artistic choice that was in no way related to the necessities of censorship: the heavy reworking of the dialogues between Goneril, Lear's power-hungry daughter, and the Duke of Albany, her well-meaning husband. Goneril's part has been trimmed down by a thick graphite pencil. In turn, Schröder's own hand used ink to first cancel out Albany's lines and then to replace them altogether. Like Schröder's 1778 adaptation as a whole, the dialogue is based on Eschenburg's at the time freshly published prose translations, with a few throwbacks to Wieland whenever it seemed more apt. Schröder now replaced Albany's lines with parts from the new early nineteenth-century Romantic poetic translations and the aforementioned

metric *König Lear* by the younger Voß, which was readily available in print.[151] In Schröder's 1812 update, however, the metric translation did not stand for an overall aesthetic principle but was intended to give additional contrast to the two characters. For example, Albany's line, "Vielleicht machst du dir zuviel Bedenklichkeit" [Perhaps you trouble yourself too much], uttered as he attempts to placate his wife's anger towards Lear, has been replaced by Voß's more rhythmic "Doch gehst du in der Furcht vielleicht zu weit" [But perhaps in fear you go too far].[152] Albany is presented as even more of a well-tempered nobleman. His wife's eight-line prose explanation has been cut down to one single line that remains faithful to Eschenburg; she is not only evil but brusque: "Besser, als zu viel Zutrauen haben" (L, 27) [Better than having too much trust]. As a contrasting rejoinder, Albany has been permitted some worldly metric wisdom in lines that the Shakespearean play had already compelled into an orderly rhyme. In Voß, Albany's "How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell; / Striving to better, oft we mar what's well"[153] becomes "Wie weit ihr ins Verborgene dringt, ich weiß es nicht, doch raubt ein Streben nach dem Besseren uns oft das Gute" (L, 27). As a result, Shakespeare's complex, fully fledged characters, who Schröder's original version had at least partially captured, are presented more as clear-cut stereotypes of evil (woman) and good (man) in the revision of his own adaptation. The handwritten interjections taken from the print copy of a Romantic translation have been used to draw out this contrast rather than to render Shakespeare's aesthetic complexities in the style stipulated by the Schlegels. Always the pragmatist, Schröder would use whatever he could find – mostly in printed books – to create something he hoped would work on stage for the audience in question – be it the paying audience, the authorities, or both. On a material level, this led to *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029*'s hybrid form comprising the 1778 printed prose and the 1812 metric handwriting.

Of the five performances of the censored *König Lear* in 1812, three took place in late March, shortly before Schröder's ultimate retirement. Two took place later in the same year. The play was then taken up again nearly two years after the French left in January 1816.[154] (Schröder would pass away in September of the same year.) Some changes to the technical procedures such as lighting might date to this period. However, the handwritten simplification of Schröder's adaptation and its increased loyalty to the authorities presumably remained in place until *Thea-*

151 Cf. Voß 1806, 63; cf. http://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.13916 (Felser/Funke/Göing/Hussain/Schäfer/Weinstock/Bosch 2024, especially file RFD08[HandwrittenTheatre]-Theater-Bibliothek2029-LEAR_Masterdatei.xls).

152 Voß 1806, 65.

153 Shakespeare 2016, 2513.

154 See above and cf. Jahn/Mühle/Eisenhardt/Malchow/ Schneider (https://www.stadttheater.uni-hamburg.de).

ter-Bibliothek: 2029 was used one last time in 1827. But while the content of the *König Lear* adaptation had been simplified in the process of censorship and beyond, the process itself in *Theater-Bibliothek: 2029* reveals a complex scene involving multiple hands. They intervened into the print copy and also interacted with each other within it. The dynamics of the 1812 censorship procedure unintentionally turned the 1778 print copy into a unique hybrid comprising print and handwriting that simultaneously testifies to the negotiations of aesthetic standards taking place at the time as well as the demands being made by the audience and the censor. In the world of prompt book making and revision, the "author of authors", Shakespeare, was no different to any other, becoming a nodal point for diverse hands, tools, and writing and paper practices.