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# Brome, Covent Garden, and 1641

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1. This article seeks to clarify the date and circumstances of the revival, around 1641, of Richard Brome's comedy *The Weeding of Covent Garden*, first performed around 1633. While this is in some ways a narrowly factual goal, the investigation is of wider interest, as it calls into question the integrity of the text of what is normally seen as a classic early 1630s drama. Furthermore, it opens up questions about the relations between Caroline professional theatre, politics, and pamphlet literature, and about the whole relatively obscure field of revisions and revivals on the early modern stage.
2. The scholarly consensus on *The Weeding of Covent Garden* has been that it is very much a product of its historical moment. R.J. Kaufmann's comment that the play is 'larded with references to the intensified royal paternalism of 1632-4' has been repeated and amplified by subsequent writers (Kaufmann 1961, 57-61; Butler 1984, 151-7; Sanders 1999, 51). Indeed, even architectural historians have been able to use the play as evidence for the sequence of building at Covent Garden, thanks to its precise references to the project's half-complete state: proof, one might think, that the play is a 'fixing' of one historical moment (Sheppard 1970, 301). On the contrary, I want to suggest, crucial importance should be attached to the events that intervene between the play's composition around 1633 and the printing twenty-five years later of the only text by which it is known. To consider the play solely relative to the date of its composition is to overlook several important things that relate to the text as we know it.
3. On 4 August 1640, six plays by Brome were registered with the Stationers' Register by Croke: *Christianetta*, *The Jewish Gentleman*, *The New Academy*, *The Love-Sick Court*, *The Weeding of Covent Garden*, and *The English Moor*. Nothing is known about the first two, which are lost while the other four, including *The Weeding*, appeared in the volume *Five New Plays* of 1659, although all four have separate title-pages dated 1658 (Bentley 1941-68 3.89). However, in the case of *The Weeding* at least, the text that saw print in 1658, which comprises the only text of the play we possess, was almost certainly not identical to that submitted for publication in 1640. The evidence for this is the poems included in the prefatory matter to the play, which certainly postdate the original performance, and almost certainly postdate the 1640 register entry. They can be linked to a variant Prologue and Epilogue indicating a revival of the play in the early 1640s. Furthermore, pamphlet literature from the year 1641 registers a sudden surge of interest in two of the catchphrases of Brome's play. Seen from this point of view, the revival of *The Weeding of Covent Garden* assumes a new interest, and a new importance to the text as we have it: it also may make the play a contribution to Brome's running battle with his enemies John Suckling and William Davenant.
4. First of all, then, it is necessary to consider the 1658 printing, the sole authoritative text of the play. The preliminaries contain not merely two versions of the Prologue, but also three extra, anomalous, items. The first, 'Upon *Aglaura* printed in Folio', is a verse satire by Brome known from numerous other manuscript and print versions (Suckling 1971, Appendix 1). It consists of a long attack on the vanity and literary worthlessness of the printing of Sir John Suckling's best play, and clearly postdates

the printing of *Aglaura* in 1638. Therefore, it is nothing to do with the original production of *The Weeding* in 1633, but a later addition. The second is an eight-line 'song', beginning 'Away with all grief and give us more sack', of which the last two lines are identical with a song which occurs twice in Brome's 1641-2 play *A Jovial Crew*. Little is known about this song, and it makes very little sense in its context, since no explanation is offered of what it is doing among the preliminary matter of an entirely different play. However, it strongly suggests a 1641-2 date. The third piece, placed *after* the two Prologues, is a commendatory poem for William Cavendish's comedy *The Variety*, a play normally supposed to have been written in 1641-2 (Bentley 1941-68, 3.149). Either the received date for *The Variety* is wrong, then, or this poem postdates not merely the text as performed in 1633 but also the text offered for printing in 1640.

5. These items which are datable to the early 1640s are especially interesting because of the assertion of the printers of the rest of the volume that: 'As for the *Stationers*, they bring these *Poems* as they had them from the *Author*: not suffering any false or busie hand to adde or make the least mutilation' (Brome 1873, 2.A5v). These paratexts would therefore seem to be authorial, and they are 'larded with references', not to the years 1632-4, but to the years 1641-2. The same is true of the variant Prologue and Epilogue:

Another Prologue.

'Tis not amisse ere we begin our Play,  
T' intreat you, that you take the same surveigh  
Into your fancie, as our Poet took,  
Of *Covent-Garden*, when he wrote his book,  
Some ten years since, when it was grown with weeds,  
Not set, as now it is, with Noble Seeds.  
Which make the Garden glorious. And much  
Our Poet craves and hopes you will not grutch  
It him, that since so happily his Pen  
Foretold its faire emprovement, and that men  
Of worth and honour should renown the place.  
The Play may still retain its former grace.

.....

Another [epilogue].

'Tis done. And now that Poets can divine,  
Observe with what Nobility doth shine  
Faire *Covent-Garden*. And as that improves,  
May we finde like Improvement in your Loves. [1](#)

Clearly, these attest to a revival of the play for which previous scholars have suggested a tentative date of 1641 or 1642. Among Brome's other plays, only *The City Wit* and *The Northern Lass* are known to have undergone similar revivals in the pre-1642 period, and almost nothing is known about those (Bentley 1941-68, 3.60, 82).

6. What was the date of this revival? As noted above, numerous and specific topical allusions tie the original play to the year 1632 or (more likely) 1633, so Brome's 'some ten years' would take us, strictly speaking, to 1643. This has seemed unlikely, and recent work on the very few traces of professional dramatic activity after the closure of the theatres in September 1642 does not challenge this conclusion;

particularly since the specially written Prologue makes no reference to any such extraordinary conditions (Randall 1995, 43-4). Previous scholars, therefore, have treated 'some ten years' as an approximation, and suggested it can be dated to the years 1641 or 1642 (Kaufmann 1961, 180; Bentley 1941-68, 3.92; McClure 1980, 386): one can also note that this tallies with the other prefatory material.

7. No conventional archival record remains of this revival, but some evidence that seems to relate to it is to be found in the raucous, politically radicalised pamphlet literature of the year 1641, a genre which, Martin Butler has noted, naturally has affinities with the professional stage, and with Brome's comedies especially. For the space of a few months in summer 1641, the pamphlet literature frequently makes use of the catchphrases of Brome's play. The return of these phrases is what I would like to go on to explore. Much of *The Weeding* is given over to the activities of a gang of tavern-haunting hooligans, both male and female, and one of the catch-phrases of the play is their self-description as 'Brothers and Sisters of...The Blade and the Scabberd' (70:IV.ii.261-2). The play contains eight references by name to the brotherhood of the blade, the self-styled 'society' of these prototype Hell's Angels, and four to its female equivalent, the sisterhood of the scabbard. These phrases appear to be original to Brome's play, and no uses of them before 1633 have come to light, nor indeed have any uses of them between 1633 and 1641.
8. But in June 1641, the disgrace and exile of Dr William Roane, and the subsequent collapse in authority of Doctors' Commons, provided much useful material to the writers of pamphlet dialogues (Levack 1973, 266). In *The Pimpe's Prerogative*, for example, Pimp-Major Pig celebrates in the following terms:

There's not a reverend Matron in all the Suburbs, but (for joy to heare of this News, will make her Bottle ale flye like Chambers at the Bank-side on a Lord Mayor's day; Wee'l have this day registred in the Sister of the Scabberds Calender, and annually kept holiday. (Anon. 1641e)

Disallowing for the moment the Brome play in question, this would appear a first usage of 'sister of the scabbard' as a euphemism, apparently, for prostitute. No earlier uses are to be found in *OED*, or in *Literature Online* (with the exception of the Brome play). Pig (who shares his unusual name with a prostitute's servant in Brome's play) works for prostitutes based in Bloomsbury and Long Acre, two areas in West London immediately adjacent to Covent Garden. These areas are also the location of the prostitutes in *The Sisters of the Scabards Holiday*, another item datable to around June 1641, and also responding to the collapse of Doctors' Commons (Anon. 1641f). This pamphlet dialogue, like the former, sees no need to gloss the phrase 'sisters of the scabbard' – the milieu of prostitution, drunkenness and casual violence in the West End seems to be enough.

9. A third pamphlet also datable to around June of that year combines discussion of Doctors' Commons with a wider satirical view of events since the beginning of the Parliament: *Old Newes Newly Revived*. At one point it describes the fall from grace of John Finch in terms of a lapse of personal behaviour: Finch 'was so weary with determining controversies upon the Bench, that he resolv'd hereafter to end them with the sword: he became a brother of the blade... with a tilting feather, a flaunting periwig, Buffe doublet, scarlet hose, and sword as broad as a lath' before fleeing into exile to avoid impeachment (Anon. 1641c). Here we have another phrase which (apart

from Brome's play) would seem to be a first usage: again, however, its meaning seems already self-evident.

10. Through August 1641, the phrases continue in use. A pamphlet entitled *Bartholomew Faire* offers an account of the delights that are to be experienced at that Fair. Among them are the thieves, and 'their wenches, (the sisters of the scabard)', who are pickpockets and prostitutes simultaneously: 'your hand is no sooner in one of their plackets, but theirs is as nimble in one of your pockets' (Anon. 1641a, 3-4: an edited text, without comment, is in Jonson 1960, 167-9). At around the same moment in August the two phrases are finally combined in one pamphlet, a dialogue entitled *The Brothers of the Blade*. In this, two 'Hot-spurres of the Times' back from the army describe their racy London lifestyle – drink, venereal disease and violence. The duties of the brotherhood include a pact to help one another fight off arresting sergeants – a duty they're not very good at fulfilling – and they spend their income with their friends 'the sisters of the scabbard'. [2](#)
11. Interestingly, these pamphlets draw heavily on theatre for their reference points and their vocabulary. *Bartholomew Fair* is obviously aware of Jonson's play: *The Pimpes Prerogative* discusses the Fortune and the Bull: in *The Brothers of the Blade* one character says that he is borrowing a phrase from *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, and at least one character-name in that pamphlet, Mulligrub, is derived from a play. [3](#) In short, five pamphlets from the summer of 1641, thick with theatrical reference, use these two strikingly unusual phrases in a way which suggests that they have suddenly become buzz words. Furthermore, the particular associations that they bear show continuity with Brome's play: the West End setting of *The Pimpes Prerogative* and *The Sisters of the Scabbards Holiday*, the failed pact to rescue one another from sergeants. It is of course possible that the revival of the play was in some way a response to the new currency of the phrase in pamphlets, although this would seem to be putting the cart before the horse. The best explanation of this link is that a revival of *The Weeding* put these phrases into circulation, or at least helped their circulation, in the summer of 1641: an interpretation that squares with the evidence of the variant prologue and of the later preliminary material.
12. In that case, it is worth considering what a 1641-2 audience might have made of *The Weeding*, and why it might have been the success that it seems to have been. In some ways it must have seemed badly dated – the genre of which it forms part, 'place-realism' comedy, is thought to have flourished briefly in the early 1630s, and very little thereafter (Miles 1942). As this article started by pointing out, the play itself is full of references specific to 1633 that would hardly be intelligible eight years later. On the other hand, many of its topical referents, from Puritanism to soap-monopolies, were still topical eight years later, but now seen in a slightly different light. Above all, a central concern of the play – the question of how best to exercise the rule of law on people who consider themselves above it – was very topical to a year when, at least according to the pamphlet literature, the practical machinery of law and justice was being held in increasing contempt by Charles' more radical supporters.
13. Indeed, while the variant Prologue itself is eager to deny that the play contains any topical reference, that very formula, commonly abused in Renaissance drama, might make us suspicious of one very specific referent. In Spring 1641, Covent Garden had not been the unproblematically blameless place that the revival's prologue would have us believe.
14. Among the residents of Covent Garden in Spring 1641 were William Davenant and (it seems) Sir John Suckling. The previous summer they had used court influence to seize the theatrical company of Brome's friend and employer William Beeston,

provoking in the process Brome's *The Court Begger*, a play in which they were specifically and personally satirized with some venom. But their current project, to use military force to overthrow Parliament and reassert the authority of the King, was in a different league altogether: and their enterprise, generally known as the Army Plot, appears to have been quite strongly associated with the Covent Garden area where they lived. [4](#)

15. This is documented in the trial depositions which were printed the following year. Colonel Goring, coming out of Covent Garden in his coach, was accosted by Suckling's co-conspirator Henry Jermyn, who asked him to come into a nearby house '(to which house, as this Examinee was but yesterday informed, Sir *John Suckling* did then usually resort)', and took him to the top of the stairs before apparently deciding that the moment was not right to let Goring in on the secret. Another witness, John Lanyon, was approached several times: 'Captaine *Billingsley*... left word he must needs come to the Covent Garden to Sir *John Sucklings* lodging' (Anon. 1642, 23, 44).
16. The plot had a distinctly pseudo-military quality. Suckling's idea of secret plotting involved a series of indiscreet rendezvous of armed men in taverns around the city: the Dog Tavern, the White Horse Tavern in Bread Street, the Dolphin in Grays Inn (Clayton 1971, lv; Anon. 1642, 43, 44). The professional soldiers that they tried to bring into the coup were unhappy with Davenant and Suckling's leadership, presumably because of this amateurish, unprofessional approach (Clayton 1971, xlvii; Edmond 1987, 78). Inevitably, the plot was betrayed by one of those involved, and both men fled: Suckling made it to Paris, and only much later did the news filter through that he had committed suicide there. As for Davenant, he was caught at Faversham, charged, and held under house arrest in the place where the coup originated:

Suspected for the same's *Will D'Avenant*,  
Whether he have been in't, or have not,  
He is committed, and like Sloven,  
Lolls on his bed, in garden Coven. [5](#)

As the trial went on until August 12, he would be stewing there for a few months (Edmond 1987, 90). The immense newsworthiness of the Army Plot story can be seen from the fact that it, and Suckling's flight, were featured or referred to in at least sixteen topical pamphlets published that year: it was a sensational news story (Clayton 1971, lxvi).

17. In the context of these events, a topical 'application' of *The Weeding* would be easy to make. A full parallel might run as follows: The Philoblathici (also known as 'the brothers of the blade') are based in Covent Garden and meet in taverns. They are a lawless gang who believe they are above the authority of the magistrates: 'I would but see the carcass of authority prance in our Quarter, and we not cut his legs off.' (86: V.iii.23-4). They swear elaborate oaths of secrecy, and aspire to a pseudo-military discipline, although, when faced with a true threat, such as the mere arrival of the magistrates, they are unable to offer any resistance. They are betrayed by a disgruntled informer, and driven out of the place they have terrorised: an action described as 'a special piece of service' to 'the Commonwealth' (95: V.iii.264). In the light of the events of May 1641, Brome did have cause to crow a little about his apparent ability to prophesy about what the play 'so happily... foretold'.

18. In addition, other jokes that were quite possible in 1633 in a general sense have acquired by 1641 a delicious contemporary appropriateness. One of the *Philoblastici* remarks upon the nasal tone of voice caused by the disintegration of the nose through syphilis: 'many of us speak i'th' nose... by the wantonnesse of the flesh' (71: IV.ii.278-80). By 1640, Brome had been making a similar joke with specific reference to Davenant's missing nose in *The Court Begger*. Court-Wit (a caricature of Davenant), who has lost his nose through syphilis and who has ambitions to run a drama company, would be no good as a voice coach, we are told, because of the 'unsavory tunes' of his voice (Brome 1873, 1.215, 244). The noselessness joke here may have started as an innocuous general remark, but by 1641, and in this context, a specific application is available.
19. Similarly, *The Weeding* spends a lot of time exploring the difference between real soldiers, and amateur imitations. A hallucinating Gabriel beats the *Philoblastici*, describing them as 'Mutineers' (87: V.iii.62) – another term that acquires a disquieting new aptness on the play's revival – and at the same time mocks amateur officers for their inadequacy and physical incontinence on the field of battle:

What would Captain, my Lords man, or Sergeant-major, my Ladies Kinsman, sent in by honourable favour, do or say in such an expedition? ...Or how would their braines lie in their breeches, when the able Captain leads up his men in the Head of a Troop bravely, charges with his shot, makes a stand with his Pikes, does execution with his Sword... (88-89: V.iii.100-2, 105-8)

In 1638, five years after this play was first staged, Suckling had decided to enter the military arena himself, taking a troop of his own soldiers up to fight in the first Scottish war. Even Suckling's fellow-courtiers remarked on the extreme dilettanteism of his approach to war, exemplified by the crimson-and-white silk uniforms he bought for his horsemen (Clayton 1971, xlvii). Naturally, the battle was a disaster, particularly as Suckling himself was incapacitated by a sudden attack of dysentery and was absent from the battlefield for most of the critical period. Sir John Mennes celebrated his achievements in these terms:

For when the Scots Army came in sight  
And all men prepar'd to fight a,  
He ran to his Tent, they ask'd what he meant,  
He swore he must needs go shite a. [6](#)

Again, by 1641, Brome's lines about would-be soldiers shitting themselves, written eight years earlier have acquired a new and specific biographical resonance for anyone who chooses to apply them.

20. One joke is so strikingly topical to 1641, and so inappropriate to 1633, the supposed year of composition, as to threaten our certainty about the status of the text. One of the oaths sworn by the *Philoblastici* is 'that you be ever at deadly defiance with all such people, as Protections are directed to in Parliament, and that you watch all occasions to prevent or rescue Gentlemen from the gripes of the Law brissons'. [7](#) This looks like an innocuous joke which may have become topical again in the light of the plotters' objective of rescuing Strafford, but the reference to 'protections' repays attention. The word has a technical, Parliamentary meaning: it refers to the extension of parliamentary privilege to non-MP's, notably members' servants. To be under a

'protection' offered benefits including 'freedom from arrest during a session' of parliament, especially arrest for debt. <sup>8</sup> Thus 'such people, as Protections are directed to in Parliament' is a comic periphrasis for 'bailiffs'.

21. But the word 'are' presents difficulties. Protections were only in force for the duration of a parliament, so that in 1633, they hadn't been topical for four years. In 1633, with no prospect of a Parliament in the immediate future, and indeed, in a play seen as very centrally concerned with the problems of Charles' personal rule, even a vague reference to 'protections' administered by Parliament is redundant and jarring. In 1641, on the other hand, protections were being handed out freely – so freely, indeed, that it was something of a scandal. (Russell 1991, 418; D'Ewes 1923, 304-5). This reference makes much more sense in the context of the revival than it did in 1633.
22. Since only one version of *The Weeding* survives, only one good example of a possible later interpolation is needed to throw into question the whole status of the text, and the line under discussion provides that example. Although it is clear that the text remains largely that of a 1633 play – as discussed above – there is certainly the possibility that material that postdates that year lurks within it.
23. One might be happy to accept the conclusion that the revival of *The Weeding* addressed intensely topical issues of law and discipline, while still doubting that there is a necessary relationship with the Army Plot. But we can now return to the texts discussed earlier as dating evidence: firstly, to the 1641 pamphlets, and secondly to the paratexts of the 1658 publication. In the light of what is argued above, both of these groups of texts strengthen the connection between the revival and the Army Plot.
24. Firstly it is necessary to return to the 1641 pamphlets. We have established that pamphlets referring to 'the brothers of the blade' suggest that the revival can be dated to summer 1641, and argued too that in summer 1641 the 'brothers of the blade' portrayed in the play would remind contemporaries strongly of the Army Plotters. But might one not then expect the references in the pamphlets also to connect the 'brothers of the blade' with the Army Plotters? Fortunately, one of them does just this. *Old Newes Newly revived* was using the phrase to describe Sir John Finch, whose flight to the continent is presented as just the most extreme manifestation of a courtly abandonment of due process of law. Finch

was so weary with determining controversies upon the Bench, that he resolv'd hereafter to end them with the sword: he became a brother of the blade, and with a tilting feather, a flaunting periwig, Buffe doublet, scarlet hose, and sword as broad as a lath, hee looked as like a Dammee newly come out of the North, as could be imagined: and under that disguise fled most swiftly to France.

The interlocutor suggests that Finch must have been a coward, but the speaker defends him, since 'I am sure, that valiant men and brave Commanders followed his example, and no worse men then Sir *John Sucklin*, the discontented Colonell, and his associates' (Anon. 1641c, A3r).

25. So for this pamphlet, Finch and Suckling are on a par, examples of disrespect for parliamentary law in the context of supposedly courtly, and indeed pseudo-military, gallantry: and this is a connection made elsewhere in the 1641 pamphlets, notably *Foure Fugitives Meeting*, imagining a meeting of English exiles in France, in which Suckling and Finch are among the 'brave boyes' seeking to cheat their way to adequate supplies of drink (Anon. 1641b, 5). In short, other texts from 1641 make



explicit a connection between courtly excess, the Army Plot, and 'the brothers of the blade'.

26. On the other hand, an anti-Suckling frame of reference also informs the texts associated with the play in its 1658 printing. As we have seen, the first page of the play's 1658 publication is given over to a specific and personal attack on the worthlessness of Suckling's best play. And even the panegyric to Newcastle's *The Variety* might seem politically rather loaded, given that Newcastle had himself been uncomfortably near to being involved in the Army Plot. Brome says that he would normally be happy to lie, but if asked to swear in Chancery, or 'On my life unto a Parliament / Of wit and judgement, there to certifie / What I could say of your VARIETY', he would be forced to tell the truth and say it was wonderful. So the ultimate authority for Brome, and for Newcastle, takes the form here of a Parliament. For Newcastle, and for Brome, the implication runs, good art takes place strictly within a constitutional framework. <sup>9</sup> Of course, the matter at the start of the 1658 *Weeding* can hardly be said to represent a finished statement, but does seem to invite a binary contrast between the work of two playwrights, an unreasonable, egotistical Suckling and an orderly, peer-assessed Cavendish. In short, *The Weeding* can be linked to two anti-Suckling texts, *Old News*, and *Upon Aglaura in Folio* – three, if you count *The Court Begger*, which looks likely to have been the most recent new Brome play when this revival was staged.
27. Therefore, the bare narrative that can be established goes as follows: *The Weeding* was revived by an unknown company at some point in 1641 or 1642, while its catchphrases were highly quotable in the summer of 1641. It is a remarkably apt play to have been revived at this moment, especially in the light of the Army Plot. The fuller version I suggest offers an expansion of that narrative which cannot be confirmed from it, but which explains it in the most economical way: in May 1641, Brome and Beeston, unexpectedly back in control of the Cockpit theatre following the spectacular fall from grace of Suckling and Davenant, celebrate by staging a strangely appropriate item from Brome's back catalogue, and even, in one case at least, seemingly updating the text. <sup>10</sup> For the duration of the run, William Davenant is still under house arrest in Covent Garden, a few dozen yards from the Cockpit in Drury Lane and perhaps even within earshot of the laughter – a fact not lost on Brome, Beeston, or the audience.
28. On a micropolitical level, then, one could say that the revival continues where Brome's previous play *The Court Begger* left off, in using sentiment against Suckling and Davenant as a rallying point for Brome's audience. The revival of *The Weeding of Covent Garden* can be seen as a late contribution to the Second War of the Theatres – an idea which previous critics have profitably applied to plays, prologues, printed dedicatory poems, manuscript-circulation satires, and even paintings, and which proves here to be useful in examining a play revival (Steggle 1998, 111-26; Edmond 1987, 75). In this context, the revised Prologue and Epilogue carry more than a hint of a smirk.
29. On a wider political level, Martin Butler's contention that the ephemeral and politically radical pamphlet dialogues of the early 1640s provide an immediate context for Brome's late plays proves to be very true for this late revival also. By and large the pamphlets use the perceived moral bankruptcy of Suckling and his plot as a synecdoche for the moral bankruptcy of the political cause in whose name Suckling had been acting, and this seems a reasonable deduction about Brome's revival too. Influential accounts of *The Weeding* in the context of 1633 have seen it as a play about a failure of central authority, and by indirect implication, of the king: this

interpretation would be even less avoidable in 1641. But whether, ultimately, this should be fitted into a narrative of Brome himself as a political radical (Butler 1984), or Brome as a conservative, nostalgic for the strong royal leadership Charles failed to provide (Kaufmann 1961), remains a difficult question (evidence reviewed by Clark 1992).

30. One implication the for study of Renaissance drama as a whole should also be considered. It seems as if revivals of old plays were particularly prone to 'application', or topical reading (Dutton 1999). As one seventeenth-century writer observed, 'Fancy hath made actions . . . and persons of a 1000 year standing to poynt at those of our own time imagining that the Actors of an old play resembled some of their new spectators' (Evans 1994, 53). The Master of the Revels himself seems to have been caught out by a topically applicable revival in 1633 – coincidentally, the year this play was new – and put on record his displeasure: 'it concernes the Master of the Revells to bee carefull of their ould revived plays, as of their new' (Dutton 1999, 46-7). *The Weeding of Covent Garden*, known only from a text that appears to have been influenced by the 1641 revival, needs perhaps to be reconsidered in this light: but so do other Stuart revivals of earlier plays.

## Notes

1. Richard Brome, 'Another Prologue', 'Another [epilogue]', *The Weeding of the Covent-Garden* (Brome 1873, 2.[A3v], 96). This text is old-spelling, but discontinuously paginated and unlineated: therefore, cross-references are also made to the modern-spelling text (Brome 1980).
2. Anon. 1641d. A footnote on dating: Fortescue (1908, I.18, 19, 32, 51) conjecturally dates *Old Newes* to June, *The Pimpe's Prerogative* to June (which dates a mock testament 26 June), and *The Sisters of The Scabbards Holiday* to September. I cannot accept or explain this last dating, given that the pamphlet is so obviously about the topical events of June. Equally inexplicably, he dates *The Brothers of the Blade* to December 1641, in spite of the fact that internal references show that the dialogue takes place on or close to August 22. *Bartholomew Fair*, not catalogued by Fortescue, closes with an injunction to the reader to be careful of pickpockets when he goes: hence it probably coincided with the Fair, again around the middle of August.
3. Anon. 1641d, 6; Bentley 1941-68, 2.690 discusses *The Merry Devil's* perennial popularity; Anon. 1641d, 8 for Mr Mulligrub the vintner, a character from Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* whose continuing popularity was such that he starred in a droll derived from the play, generally ascribed to the post-1642 period (Wine 1965, xiii).
4. On the Army Plot see Russell 1991; Clayton 1971, liii-lix; Edmond 1987. Edmond (88-90) cites a tax list of 1641 and the baptism of a daughter in 1642 as evidence Davenant was living in or near Covent Garden, but the point is further clinched by Mennes' poem discussed here.
5. Sir John Mennes, 'To a friend upon his marriage' ll.23-26 (Mennes and Smith 1874, I.26). *Old Newes Newly Revived* also refers to Davenant's house arrest (Anon. 1641c, A3v).
6. Sir John Mennes, 'Upon Sir John Sucklings most warlike preparations for the Scottish Warre,' ll.25-29 (Mennes and Smith 1874, I.97). See also Suckling 1971, 204-9.
7. On the textual crux of the last word, see McClure 1980, 393.
8. Johnson *et al.* 1977, 22n1, 148n18. Cf. Russell 1979, 127; *OED* s.v. 'protection' n. 3. Brome had joked about the 1629 protections in *The Northern Lass* (Brome 1873, 3.99).

9. Brome 1873, 2.A4r, ll.8-9. On dating *The Variety*, Bentley 1941-68, 3.149-51: on its political content, Butler 1984, 195-8.
10. No documents survive linking Brome to any theatrical company other than Beeston's at this date, while *A Jovial Crew* clearly was written for Beeston: no documents show when Beeston regained his theatre, but it is usually conjectured to have been a consequence of the Army Plot (Gurr 1996, 157; Bentley 1941-68, 1.335).

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Brome's Sparagus Garden was a huge success at the Salisbury Court in 1635, earning over £1000. As a result, Brome signed a three-year contract with Richard Heton, manager of the Salisbury Court, to write three plays annually at a salary of 15 shillings per week plus one day's profit per play. Brome, however, was unable to produce dramas at the promised pace; and the stipulated payments to Brome were not kept up. In need of money, Brome resorted to Christopher Beeston, actor, impresario, and owner of the Cockpit Theatre (also known as the Phoenix) as well as the Red Bull. In the 1659 volume, three plays are individually dated 1658 instead of 1659: The Lovesick Court, The Weeding of Covent Garden, and The New Academy. References. "Brome, Richard", Lost Plays Database, ed. BROME, RICHARD (d. 1652), English dramatist, was originally a servant of Ben Jonson, and owed much to his master. The development of his plots, the strongly marked characters and the amount of curious information to be found in his work, all show Jonson's influence. The relation of master and servant developed into friendship, and our knowledge of Brome's personal character is chiefly drawn from Ben Jonson's lines to him, prefixed to The Northern Lasse (1632), the play which made Brome's reputation Weeding Covent Garden book. Read reviews from world's largest community for readers. From Richard Brome, master of the new seventeenth century city come... From Richard Brome, master of the new seventeenth century "city comedy," comes this wild story of disguised parents, scheming children, drunken Puritans and swordfighting prostitutes, all living in the new and controversial neighborhood of Covent Garden.