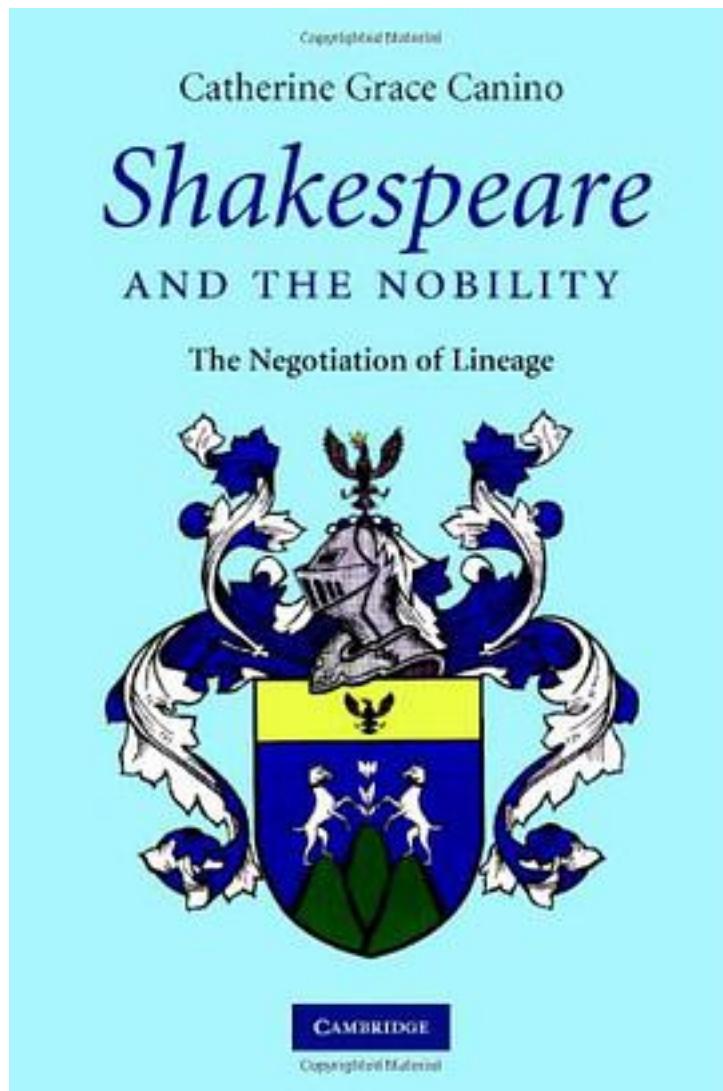


Shakespeare and the Nobility



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Shakespeare and the Nobility, first published in 2007, examines how Shakespeare was influenced by the descendants of the aristocratic characters in his early history plays. The Henry VI trilogy and Richard III are among the first plays in the English dramaturgy that reflect the lives and activities of the ancestors of sixteenth-century aristocrats. In a time when the upper classes of England were obsessed with family lineage and reputation, the salient question is how William Shakespeare, a socially inferior playwright and actor, handled the delicate matter of portraying the complex and often unattractive ancestors of the most powerful people of his day. In answer to this question, this study examines the lives of the historical figures and their descendants, presenting fresh readings of the early histories, and argues that Shakespeare consistently modified his portrayal of the ancestors with their descendants in mind.

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