

Shakespeare, the King's Playwright



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出版者:Yale University Press

出版时间:1997-9-23

装帧:Paperback

isbn:9780300072587

Soon after James Stuart became King of England in 1603, William Shakespeare, while still working in the public theatre, became the royal playwright, and his acting troupe became the premier playing company of the realm. How did this courtly setting influence Shakespeare's work? What was it like to view, perform in, and write plays conceived for the Stuart king? In this book the author explores these questions by looking at the court performances of some of Shakespeare's most famous plays, examining them in their settings at the royal palaces of Whitehall and Hampton Court. Alvin Kernan looks at Shakespeare as a patronage playwright whose work after 1603 focused on the main concerns of his royal patron: divine-right kingship in *Lear*, the corruption of the court in *Antony*, the difficulties of the old military aristocracy in *Coriolanus*, and other vital matters. Kernan argues that Shakespeare was neither the royal propagandist nor the political subversive that the New Historicists have made him out to be. He was, instead, a great dramatist whose plays commented on political and social concerns of his patrons and who sought the most satisfactory way of adjusting his own art to court needs.

作者介绍:

目录:

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