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978-0-521-50639-7 - Religion and Revelry in Shakespeare's Festive World

Phebe Jensen

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SHAKESPEARE'S FESTIVE WORLD

Religion and Revelry in Shakespeare's Festive World examines the relationship between traditional festive pastimes – such as Midsummer pageants, May games, and Whitsuntide celebrations – and Shakespeare's plays. Beginning with C. L. Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, work on this topic has stressed the political and social meanings of early modern festivity; in contrast, this study seeks to restore a sense of the devotional issues surrounding festivity to our understanding of early modern cultural representations. After establishing the continued religious controversies surrounding festivity expressed in a range of early modern literature, the book argues that Shakespeare is a festive traditionalist who not only acknowledges the relationship between traditional pastimes, stage plays, and religious controversy, but also aligns his own work with festive energies identified with the old religion. *Religion and Revelry* therefore intervenes in recent controversies over the role of religion in Shakespeare's theater, as well as the particular place of Catholicism in Shakespeare's work and world.

PHEBE JENSEN is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Utah State University. Her writing has appeared in publications including *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *Renaissance and Reformation*. This is her first book.

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For Paul

But shall we make the welkin dance indeed?

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Acknowledgments

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Acknowledgments

book. The series has opened up new worlds in the study of early modern revelry, and forthcoming volumes will no doubt yield new treasures, as well as definitive texts for some of the material I less expertly mine here.

I am lucky to have benefited from the learnedness, intellectual generosity and friendship of many scholars over the course of this project. I am particularly indebted to Lowell Gallagher, Gerard Kilroy, Arthur Marotti, Robert Miola, and Alison Shell. Lawrence Danson and Darryl Gless have supported me and my work since long before there was any rational basis to do so. Over the past eight years I have keenly felt the absence of Dennis Kay, true Renaissance man, teacher, scholar, and friend. Many have helped with the book in ways large and small, responding to emails, providing references, asking questions, sharing their work, and showing interest in mine; for those kindnesses and the intellectual stimulation of their own scholarship, I would like to thank Deborah Aldrich-Watson, Sarah Beckwith, Mary A. Blackstone, John D. Cox, Huston Diehl, Frances E. Dolan, Mary Floyd-Wilson, Katharine Goodland, Kenneth Graham, Andrew Hadfield, Christopher Haigh, Donna Hamilton, Christopher Highly, Arnold Hunt, Alexandra F. Johnston, Siobhan Keenan, Mark Lawhorn, Karen Sawyer Marsalek, Kevin McGinley, Paula McQuade, Annabel Patterson, John Pitcher, Christine Cooper Rompato, James Schiffer, Monica Smialkowska, James Stokes, Masahiro Takenaka, David Thimmes, Valerie Wayne, Suzanne Westfall, Paul Whitfield White, and Elizabeth Williamson.

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My mother, Lucy Jensen, and my sister, Natalie Jensen, who made me play Friar Tuck to their Robin Hood and Little John on childhood woodland walks on the grounds that I was too short for Maid Marian, must shoulder some blame for my scholarly interests. They have more than made up for that early insult by years of love, support, and childcare, and this book would never have been finished without their help. I am especially grateful to my mother, who has supported my academic journey in so many ways, and showed up in Utah to help with her granddaughters through every extended absence. I am lucky to have the world's most loving and entertaining children, Nell and Emma Crumbley, who got a year in England out of this project, but are now very happy it is drawing to a close. My greatest debt is to my husband, Paul Crumbley, who so often puts aside his own research to support mine, and who makes every day a holiday into the bargain.

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Note on the text

In direct quotations from early modern books and manuscripts original spelling and italics have been retained, with contractions expanded and orthography (long s to s, j to i, u to v) silently modernized. Capitalization in early modern book titles (though not text) has also been standardized.