

RELIGION AND REVELRY IN  
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.

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PHEBE JENSEN



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*For Paul*

*But shall we make the welkin dance indeed?*

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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.