

SHAKESPEARE,
THE QUEEN'S MEN,
AND THE ELIZABETHAN
PERFORMANCE OF HISTORY

The Elizabethan history play was one of the most prevalent dramatic genres of the 1590s, and so was a major contribution to Elizabethan historical culture. The genre has been well served by critical studies that emphasize politics and ideology; however, there has been less interest in the way history is interrogated as an *idea* in these plays. Drawing in period-sensitive ways on the exciting field of contemporary performance theory, this study looks at the Shakespearean history play from a fresh angle, by first analyzing the foundational work of the Queen's Men, the playing company that invented the popular history play. Through innovative readings of their plays *The Famous Victories of Henry V* and *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, before moving on to Shakespeare's 1 *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, and *Henry V*, this book investigates how the Queen's Men's self-consciousness about performance helped to shape Shakespeare's dramatic and historical imagination.

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BRIAN WALSH



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Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> vi
Introduction	I
1 Dialogues with the dead: history, performance, and Elizabethan theater	10
2 Theatrical time and historical time: the temporality of the past in <i>The Famous Victories of Henry V</i>	48
3 Figuring history: Truth, Poetry, and Report in <i>The True Tragedy of Richard III</i>	74
4 “Unkind division”: the double absence of performing history in <i>1 Henry VI</i>	108
5 <i>Richard III</i> and <i>Theatrum Historiae</i>	139
6 <i>Henry V</i> and the extra-theatrical historical imagination	178
Conclusion: traces of Henry/traces of history	214
<i>Bibliography</i>	221
<i>Index</i>	235

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