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0521820065 - Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama

Jeremy Lopez

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## THEATRICAL CONVENTION AND AUDIENCE RESPONSE IN EARLY MODERN DRAMA

This book gives a detailed and comprehensive survey of the diverse, theatrically vital formal conventions of the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Besides providing new readings of plays such as *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Titus Andronicus*, it also places Shakespeare emphatically within his own theatrical context, insisting on his identity as just one of many working playwrights, and focusing on the relationship between the extremely demanding repertory system of the time and the conventions and content of the plays. Lopez argues that the limitations of the relatively bare stage and non-naturalistic mode of early modern theatre would have made the potential for failure very great, and he proposes that understanding this potential for failure – the way playwrights anticipated it and audiences responded to it – is crucial for understanding the way in which the drama succeeded on stage. The book offers new perspectives on familiar conventions such as the pun, the aside, and the expository speech; and it works toward a definition of early modern theatrical genres based on the relationship between these well-known conventions and the incoherent experience of early modern theatrical narratives.

JEREMY LOPEZ is Assistant Professor of English Literature at the College of William and Mary, Virginia. He is the author of “An Annotated Bibliography of Textual Scholarship in Elizabethan Drama, 1973–1998,” *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 39 (2000).

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*For my parents*

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