

PERFORMANCES AT COURT IN THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Even though Shakespeare openly dramatizes aristocratic shows in his own plays, the circumstances of early modern performance at court have received relatively little critical attention. With so much written on the playwright's wide and multi-layered audiences, the entertainment of the court itself has too long been dismissed as a secondary issue. This book aims to shed fresh light on the multiple aspects of Shakespearean performances at the Elizabethan and early Stuart courts, considering all forms of drama, music, dance, and other entertainment. Taking the specific scenic environment and material conditions of early modern performance into account, the chapters examine both real and dramatized court shows in order to break ground for new avenues of thought. The volume considers how early modern court shows shaped dramatic writing, and what they tell us of the aesthetics and politics of the Tudor and Stuart regimes.

SOPHIE CHIARI is Professor of Early Modern Studies at Clermont Auvergne University, France. She is the author of several monographs on Elizabethan drama, including *Shakespeare's Representation of Weather, Climate, and Environment: The Early Modern 'Fated Sky'* (2019).

JOHN MUCCILO, PhD, is an independent scholar and founding editor, with W. R. Elton, of *The Shakespearean International Yearbook*. He is particularly interested in Shakespeare's late plays and early modern political, intellectual, and theatrical backgrounds.

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'April is the cruellest month' (T. S. Eliot)
This volume is dedicated to the memory of Francesca
Mucciolo and Roy Eriksen

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Acknowledgements

We were both involved in the tenth World Shakespeare Congress which took place in Stratford-upon-Avon and London in the summer of 2016. John had the idea of proposing a seminar entirely devoted to performances at court in Shakespeare's time.

We received thought-provoking proposals and, during our seminar, an attentive and generous audience asked questions and encouraged us to discuss several issues and concepts that came to shape this book. After the Congress, we immediately felt that it would be both stimulating and rewarding to continue our work on this topic. That is how the idea for this book came about.

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Textual Note

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References to *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson, 7 vols, 2012, will be abbreviated as *CWBJ*.