

A Companion to Shakespeare

Edited by David Scott Kastan

This *Companion to Shakespeare* is an indispensable book for students and teachers of Shakespeare, indeed for anyone with an interest in his plays. It offers a remarkably innovative and comprehensive picture of the theatrical, literary, intellectual, and social worlds in which Shakespeare wrote and in which his plays were produced. The twenty-eight newly commissioned essays, written by the most distinguished historians and literary scholars working today (including Ian Archer, David Bevington, Michael Bristol, David Daniell, Richard Dutton, Andrew Gurr, Jean Howard, Roslyn Knutson, and Peter Lake), represent the very best of modern scholarship. Each individual essay stands as an authoritative account of the state of knowledge in its field, and in their totality the essays provide a new and compelling portrait of the historical conditions, both imaginative and institutional, that enabled (and in some cases inhibited) Shakespeare's great art. Including essays on the organization and regulation of Elizabethan playing, on the printing, publication, and circulation of the play-texts, on Shakespeare's reading, on religion and political thought in late Elizabethan and Jacobean England, and on the linguistic and literary environment in which he wrote, the *Companion to Shakespeare* remarkably allows us to see Shakespeare anew by restoring his artistry to the rich interactions of the historical world in which he worked and flourished. The lucid, engaging, and authoritative essays in this imaginatively conceived collection will definitively change the ways in which we read, see, and perform Shakespeare's plays.