

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements vi

1 Introduction 1

Part One The British past: Medieval England and
Scotland

2 *King John*, the Magna Carta and the medieval
English monarchy 17

3 *Macbeth*, thanes and medieval Scottish feudalism 49

Part Two The European past: Ancient Rome

4 *Julius Caesar*, factions and the end of the Roman
republic 77

5 *Coriolanus* and the tribunes in the early Roman
republic 101

Part Three Contemporary Europe: The Venetian
republic

6 *The Merchant of Venice* and the weak dukes of
Venice 127

7 *Othello*, soft power and the search for truth 147

8 Conclusion: *Measure for Measure*, topicality and
performance 161

Notes 178

Works cited 206

Index 222