Performances at Court in the Age of Shakespeare

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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.