



# Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History

*Brian Walsh*

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The Elizabethan history play was one of the most prevalent dramatic genres of the 1590s, and so was a major contribution to Elizabethan historical culture. The genre has been well served by critical studies that emphasize politics and ideology; however, there has been less interest in the way history is interrogated as an idea in these plays. Drawing in period-sensitive ways on the field of contemporary performance theory, this book looks at the Shakespearean history play from a fresh angle, by first analyzing the foundational work of the Queen's Men, the playing company that invented the popular history play. Through innovative readings of their plays including *The Famous Victories of Henry V* before moving on to Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI*, *Richard III*, and *Henry V*, this book investigates how the Queen's Men's self-consciousness about performance helped to shape Shakespeare's dramatic and historical imagination.

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