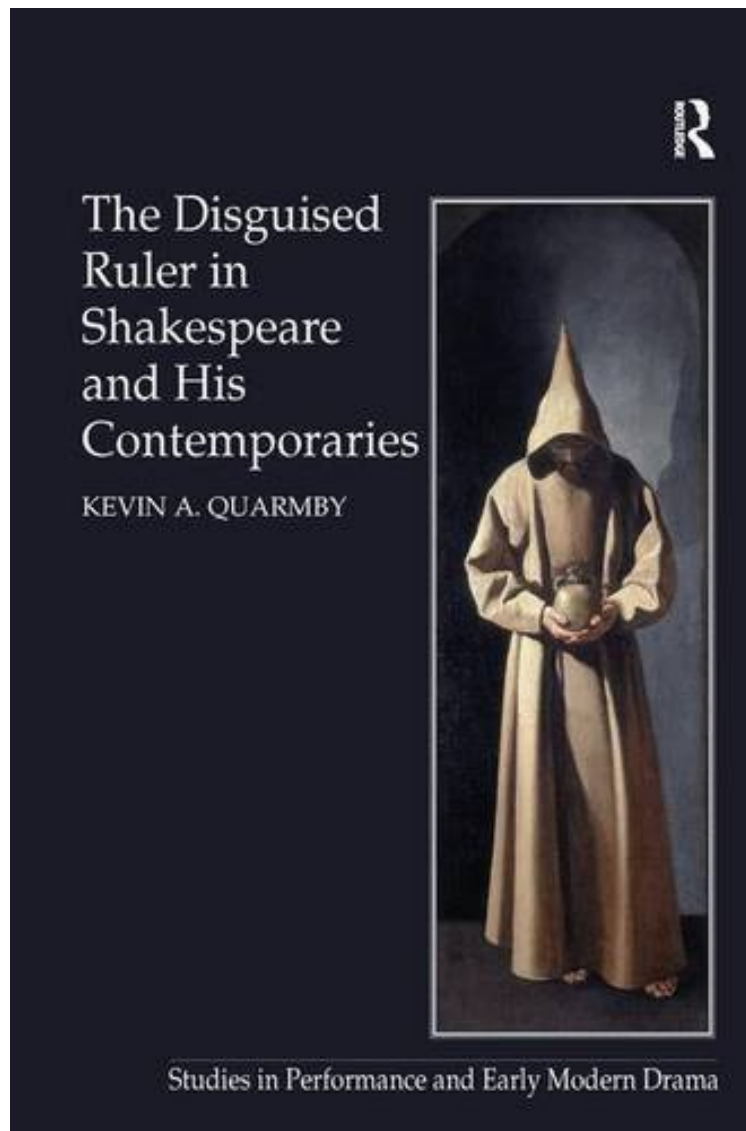


(Download pdf ebook) The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama)

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Kevin A. Quarmby

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Kevin A. Quarmby : The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries (Studies in Performance and Early Modern

Drama):

In the early seventeenth century, the London stage often portrayed a ruler covertly spying on his subjects. Traditionally deemed 'Jacobean disguised ruler plays', these works include Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Marston's *The Malcontent* and *The Fawn*, Middleton's *The Phoenix*, and Sharpham's *The Fleer*. Commonly dated to the arrival of James I, these plays are typically viewed as synchronic commentaries on the Jacobean regime. Kevin A. Quarmby demonstrates that the disguised ruler motif actually evolved in the 1580s. It emerged from medieval folklore and balladry, Tudor Chronicle history and European tragicomedy. Familiar on the Elizabethan stage, these incognito rulers initially offered light-hearted, romantic entertainment, only to suffer a sinister transformation as England awaited its ageing queen's demise. The disguised royal had become a dangerously voyeuristic political entity by the time James assumed the throne. Traditional critical perspectives also disregard contemporary theatrical competition. Market demands shaped the repertoires. Rivalry among playing companies guaranteed the motif's ongoing vitality. The disguised ruler's presence in a play reassured audiences; it also facilitated a subversive exploration of contemporary social and political issues. Gradually, the disguised ruler's dramatic currency faded, but the figure remained vibrant as an object of parody until the playhouses closed in the 1640s.

Shortlisted for the Shakespeare's Globe Book Award 2014 'This excellent book fills a gap in the fields of English literature and history, and destabilizes some *idee fixes* of the Shakespeare field - for instance, the idea, often promulgated, that the Friar in *Measure for Measure* is a reflection of James I. Written with Quarmby's typical charm and clarity, this important book is so cogent and accessible that scholars from undergraduates to professors will profit from it.' Tiffany Stern, Professor of Early Modern Drama, University College, Oxford, UK 'Kevin A. Quarmby's *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* offers a convincing rejoinder to a new historicist orthodoxy: that the beginning of James I's reign witnessed the emergence and brief flowering of a distinctly Jacobean subgenre, the disguised ruler play.' *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* '...Quarmby's monograph is an important contribution to theatre performance criticism which will hopefully lead to a reappraisal of the disguised ruler motif among Renaissance scholars.' *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* '...a valuable re-examination of familiar assumptions about the disguised ruler motif.' *Around the Globe* About the Author Kevin A. Quarmby is Assistant Professor of English at Oxford College of Emory University, Atlanta, and Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the Halle Institute for Global Learning. His prior career was professional UK actor.