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## The Life and Times of William Shakespeare 1564-1616

In this extraordinary study, Professor Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel sets the great English playwright firmly in his time and reveals his deep involvement in the dramatic political events of the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. After coming to the throne, Queen Elizabeth I made Anglicanism, a version of the Protestant faith, the official State religion. Catholicism was to be eradicated within her own lifetime. Brutal persecution of priests and believers in the Old Religion followed, and they were forced to go underground or into exile. This background of religious ferment meant that, due to their potentially explosive content, nearly half of Shakespeare's works could not be published during his lifetime, only becoming public seven years after his death. Hammerschmidt-Hummel demonstrates how this turbulent religious and political backdrop is the key to understanding so many of the secrets and puzzles of Shakespeare's life and work.

Who were Shakespeare's friends and enemies? What did he do during his 'lost years'? How did he manage to become the most influential writer in England in such a short time? What did his contemporaries think and write about him? Why did he stop writing comedies, suddenly producing mainly tragedies and problem plays? Is *Hamlet*, the tragedy of a great Prince in a rotten State, a reflection of the dramatic and tragic events at the end of the Elizabethan age? And why did Shakespeare fail to write one word of homage to the dead Queen after her 45-year reign? Professor Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel answers these and other key questions in this comprehensive and groundbreaking biography of William Shakespeare.

*Front jacket image: **The Davenant Bust**, a true image of Shakespeare, terracotta, c. 1613, Garrick Club, London, scientifically authenticated by the author (1998-2005).*

***View of London from Southwark**, Anglo-Dutch School, 17th century, Chatsworth; formerly attributed to Thomas Wyck (?1616-1677)*

For more information see:

**[www.hammerschmidt-hummel.de](http://www.hammerschmidt-hummel.de)**

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