



Shakespeare's Consuls, Cardinals, and Kings: The Real History Behind the Plays

Dick Riley

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William Shakespeare brings history to life. His plays take us from the Forum in Rome to the palaces of London and the battlefields of France. He dramatizes the personal and political conflicts that cost Julius Caesar his life, Marc Antony and Cleopatra an empire, and a succession of English kings their thrones.

Dick Riley, co-author of Continuum's *The Bedside, Bathtub and Armchair Companion to Shakespeare* ("an engaging blend of homage and irreverence ..." *Publishers Weekly*) has now created a popular volume specifically designed to help illuminate the Bard's "history" plays.

Shakespeare's Consuls, Cardinals and Kings sets the historical context for the events portrayed in Shakespeare's major histories. It reviews the sources he used and analyzes how he reshaped that material -- often telescoping events and combining characters -- to create his dramas. It also offers the insights of later historians about the lives and careers of Julius Caesar, Marc Antony, and the English monarchs King John, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Richard III and Henry VIII.

Designed to give both students and casual readers a deeper understanding and a more enjoyable experience of the "history" plays, each chapter of Shakespeare's Consuls, Cardinals and Kings focuses on the period and lives portrayed in one of these dramas, and also provides a brief guide to available film and video versions.

While focusing on the most important of Shakespeare's sources -- the Greco-Roman historian Plutarch and the English histories of Raphael Holinshed -- Shakespeare's Consuls, Cardinals and Kings also discusses other writers who helped inform Shakespeare's work, from Suetonius, author of *The Twelve Caesars*, to John Foxe, whose *The Book of Martyrs* memorialized the struggles of English religious reformers.

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