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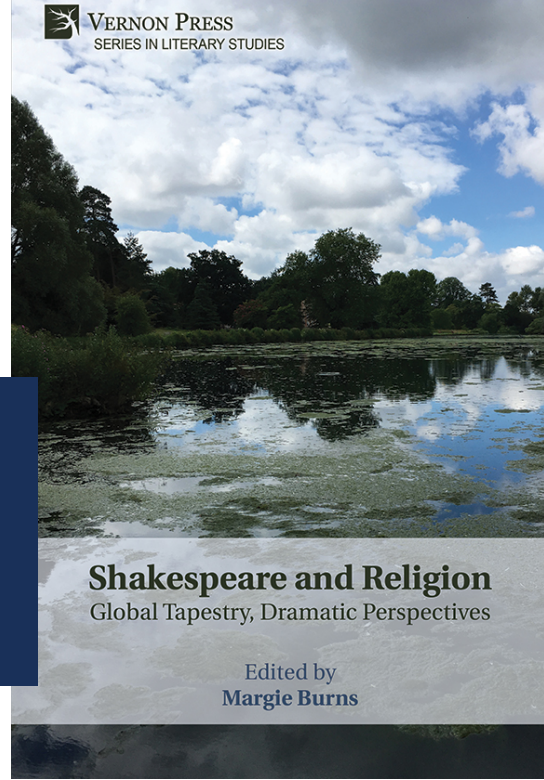
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SERIES IN LITERARY STUDIES



Edited by Margie Burns

# Shakespeare and Religion

*Global Tapestry, Dramatic Perspectives*

**Shakespeare and Religion**

Global Tapestry, Dramatic Perspectives

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Margie Burns

SERIES IN LITERARY STUDIES

*Religion informs all the Bard's writing. In his plays, the transcendental may execute justice according to different faiths, separate dissembling from conversion, offer a pathway to salvation, diffuse the Gods between Homer, Rome, Israel, Islam, fairies, devils, Popes and Protestants: intervening and confusing characters and audiences, then and now. The spiritual inflects history, comedy, romance, and tragedy—as classical hubris or Pirandello's modern "hole torn in a paper sky." These inspiring, learned, moving essays can floodlight classrooms and stages: they contribute vividly to recent reassessments of religious foundations in literature and art.*

**Robert L. Patten**

Lynette S. Autrey Professor Emeritus in Humanities  
and Emeritus Professor of English  
Rice University

## About the editor

**Margie Burns, Ph.D.**, author of "Religion and Reconstitution in 'Cymbeline,'" lectures part-time in English at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Publications include scholarly and general-interest articles, print and online journalism, and four nonfiction books, most recently "Publishing Northanger Abbey: Jane Austen and the Writing Profession" (Vernon Press, 2021). Current book projects include "Jane Austen, Abolitionist: The Loaded History of the Phrase 'Pride and Prejudice'" (McFarland, 2024).

## Summary

Twelve research articles deal with aspects of religion in the plays of William Shakespeare, from early in the dramatist's career to the end. Ordered by chronology, two chapters focus on history plays; three chapters focus on comedies and three on tragedies; one deals with "Troilus and Cressida," and three chapters deal with the late romances. The anthology does not cover all of Shakespeare's plays and collaborations or the lyric poems.

The collection is ecumenical and transnational. While the contributors all recognize that Shakespeare wrote in a Renaissance Christian universe, Christianity is not the only world religion dealt with. Approaches involve history and philosophy as well as theology, and individual perspectives vary. One thing the collection makes clear is that religion, in some sense, operates in every Shakespearean work, and its large spectrum ranges through plot and character from shallow to deep, self-interested to elevated, bloody to harmonious. Religion and religious differences were also part of the fabric and history of the playwright's world, manifesting in the plays in situation, language, and iconography. From various perspectives, a common denominator is that the authors approach aspects of religion as one element in an informed analysis of the works.

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**SUBJECTS** Art, Language and Linguistics, Theater

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