



**Staging Authority in Caroline England:
Prerogative, Law and Order in Drama, 1625-1642
(Studies in Performance and Early Modern
Drama)**

Jessica Dyson

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Considering plays by Philip Massinger, Richard Brome, Ben Jonson, John Ford and James Shirley, this study addresses the political import of Caroline drama as it engages with contemporary struggles over authority between royal prerogative, common law and local custom in seventeenth-century England. How are these different aspects of law and government constructed and negotiated in plays of the period? What did these stagings mean in the increasingly unstable political context of Caroline England? Beginning each chapter with a summary of the legal and political debates relevant to the forms of authority contested in the plays of that chapter, Jessica Dyson responds to these kinds of questions, arguing that drama provides a medium whereby the political and legal debates of the period may be presented to, and debated by, a wider audience than the more technical contemporary discourses of law could permit. In so doing, this book transforms our understanding of the Caroline commercial theatre's relationship with legal authority.

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