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Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory

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On the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, this collection opens up the social practices of commemoration to new research and analysis. An international team of leading scholars explores a broad spectrum of celebrations, showing how key events - such as the Easter Rising in Ireland, the Second Vatican Council of 1964 and the Great Exhibition of 1851 - drew on Shakespeare to express political agendas. In the USA, commemoration in 1864 counted on him to symbolise unity transcending the Civil War, while the First World War pulled the 1916 anniversary celebration into the war effort, enlisting Shakespeare as patriotic poet. The essays also consider how the dream of Shakespeare as a rural poet took shape in gardens, how cartoons challenged the poet's élite status and how statues of him mutated into advertisements for gin and Disney cartoons. Richly varied illustrations supplement these case studies of the diverse, complex and contradictory aims of memorialising Shakespeare.

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