



Calderon: The Schism in England: La cisma de Inglaterra (Hispanic Classics) (Spanish Edition)

K. Muir

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Admired by Shelley for 'its satisfying completeness', this thought-provoking and skilfully constructed play, which dramatizes the same subject as Shakespeare's Henry VIII, is one of its creator's most outstanding achievements. Understandably, Calderon offers an interpretation of King Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and break with the Church of Rome which is markedly different from that given in Shakespeare's work. Yet, despite his Counter-Reformation allegiances, Calderon brings Henry VIII sympathetically to dramatic life. The schismatic English monarch is portrayed by the Roman Catholic Spanish playwright as a man endowed with moral awareness and with exceptional talent for spiritual leadership, who is, nevertheless, morally and spiritually destroyed by his extraordinary surrender to the forces of physical passion. In this first published translation of the play into English Kenneth Muir and Ann MacKenzie have adhered to methods effectively adopted in their previous books (*Four Comedies by Calderon*, and *Three Comedies by Calderon*). They have composed, almost entirely in blank verse, an accurate yet elegantly poetic version, after the manner of the Elizabethans, but avoiding vocabulary which might seem affected to a modern audience, in order to produce a 'script' that could be performed with success on the stage. The critical edition, prepared by Ann Mackenzie to accompany the translation, is based on the editio princeps (published by Vera Tassis in Calderon's *Octava parte de comedias* [Madrid, 1684]). Her substantial Introduction and comprehensive Commentary together constitute the most detailed critical evaluation accomplished to date of this key-drama from the Golden Age in Spain. The Introduction, in particular, supplies new evidence as to the date of the play (1627) and the circumstances of its composition, and provides an analysis of Calderon's creative treatment of his historical source-work: Ribadeneyra's *Historia eclesiastica del cisma del reino de Inglaterra* (1588). Spanish text with facing-page translation, introduction and commentary .

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