

became convinced about the reality of witchcraft and its danger

King James I of England (and VI of Scotland) came to throne in 1603 following the death of Queen Elizabeth I.

→ play pays homage to the king's Scottish lineage

Plot partly based on real 11th century king Macbeth who reigned Scotland 1040-57.

→ play published year after gun-powder plot and highlights insecurities of Jacobean politics.

The Great Chain of Being → strict religious hierarchy structure of all matter

→ God, kings, nobles, commoners, animals (decreasing importance)

only a century before Macbeth was written, England had suffered under disorder of Wars of the Roses

→ civil disorder now seen as ultimate disaster and an impending state.

important CONTEXT for Macbeth:

Shakespearean Tragedy:

climax involves tremendous catastrophe involving death of main character, caused by their hamartia (fatal flaw)

→ the dramatic role something audience can identify with.

The Divine Right of kings

→ king has right to rule directly from will of God and any attempt to deprive him runs contrary to the will of God.

→ action of having a king = requisite.

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