

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910787468003321
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Titolo	King Lear and the gods / / William R. Elton
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Lexington, Kentucky : , : The University Press of Kentucky, , 1988 ©1988
ISBN	0-8131-6005-7 0-8131-6130-4
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (386 p.)
Disciplina	822.3/3
Soggetti	Christianity and literature - England - History - 17th century Christian drama, English - History and criticism Religion in literature Gods in literature
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Includes index.
Nota di bibliografia	Bibliography: p. ix-x. "King Lear studies, 1967-1987": p. 339-345.
Nota di contenuto	Cover; Title; Copyright; Contents; Acknowledgments; Note on the Text; Part I; I. The Problem; II. Renaissance Concepts of Providence; III. Sidney's Arcadia: Four Attitudes to Providence; IV. From Leir to Lear; Part II; V. Prisca Theologia: Cordelia and Edgar; VI. Pagan Atheism: Goneril and Regan, Edmund; VII. Pagan Superstition: Gloucester; VIII. Deus Absconditus: Lear; Part III; IX. Double Plot; X. Minor Characters: Kent, Cornwall, Albany, the Fool; XI. Irony as Structure; XII. Conclusion; King Lear Studies: 1967-1987; Index; A; B; C; D; E; F; G; H; I; J; K; L; M; N; O; P; Q; R; S; T; U; V WX; Y; Z
Sommario/riassunto	<P>Many critics hold that Shakespeare's <l>King Lear</l> is primarily a drama of meaningful suffering and redemption within a just universe ruled by providential higher powers. William Elton's <l>King Lear and the Gods</l> challenges the validity of this widespread optimistic view. Testing the prevailing view against the play's acknowledged sources, and analyzing the functions of the double plot, the characters, and the play's implicit ironies, Elton concludes that this standard interpretation

constitutes a serious misreading of the tragedy.</P>
