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WORK AND PLAY ON THE SHAKESPEAREAN STAGE

Time and again, early modern plays show people at work: shoe-making, basket-weaving, grave-digging and professional acting are just some of the forms of labour that theatregoers could have seen depicted on stage in 1599 and 1600. Tom Rutter demonstrates how such representations were shaped by the theatre's own problematic relationship with work: actors earned their living through playing, a practice that many considered idle and illegitimate, while plays were criticised for enticing servants and apprentices from their labour. As a result, the drama of Shakespeare's time became the focal point of wider debates over what counted as work, who should have to do it, and how it should be valued. This book describes changing beliefs about work in the sixteenth century and shows how new ways of conceptualising the work of the governing class inform Shakespeare's histories. It identifies important contrasts between the way the work of actors was treated in plays written for the adult and child repertoires. Finally, it examines whether different playing companies depicted work and workers in different ways in the decade between the reopening of the playhouse at St Paul's in 1599 and the move of the King's Men to the Blackfriars.

TOM RUTTER is Senior Lecturer in Renaissance Literature at Sheffield Hallam University. He has published articles in journals, including *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* and *Studies in English Literature*, and is a regular reviewer for *Modern Language Review* and *Early Modern Literary Studies*. This is his first book.

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To Sophie, Cædmon, and Aphra

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Note on texts and dates

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- THOMAS DEKKER, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953–61).
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 JOHN MARSTON, *The Plays of John Marston*, ed. H. Harvey Wood, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1934–39). As Wood does not supply lineation, volume and page number are given.
 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

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