

SHAKESPEARE'S WORKPLACE

Essays on Shakespearean Theatre

Shakespeare was easily the most inventive writer using the English language. His plays give us intricacies of vocabulary and usage that have enriched us immeasurably. This book provides a series of analytical essays on the marginalia relating to the plays. Each of them is a searching and authoritative account, packed with details, of some of the more peculiar conditions under which Shakespeare and his peers composed their playbooks. Among the essays are two completely new contributions. Altogether they reveal fresh details about the input of the playing companies, playhouses, individual players and even their controller, the Revels Office, to the complex fragments that we now have of the Shakespearean world. Gurr examines Shakespeare's own choice between playwriting and poetry, the requirements of working in a playhouse that wraps itself around the stage, and its impact on the creation of such figures as Henry V, Shylock, Isabella, King Lear and Coriolanus.

ANDREW GURR is Professor Emeritus at the University of Reading, and for the past thirty years has been the first Director of Research in London for Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. His books on the subject of theatre history include *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642* (1992), now in its fourth edition, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (1996), *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge, 2004), *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* with Mariko Ichikawa (2000), *The Shakespeare Company 1594–1642* (2010), and *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company 1594–1625* (2012). He has also edited the New Cambridge Shakespeare's *King Richard II* (1984) and *King Henry V* (1992).

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‘The cause is in my will’.
Julius Caesar, 2.2.71

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Illustrations

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I have also made extensive use of the pictures supplied here, along with the various analyses to which they have been subjected. Pictures are a massively attractive way of entering a subject, though the lack of photography four hundred years ago is a loss that we all suffer from.

Finally I would like to record my enduring gratitude to Sarah Stanton, at CUP, with whom I have worked on and off for more than forty years. The fertile interaction between authors and their publishers is often noted, but in my view has rarely been so productive as ours.

Note on the Text

Many of the sixteen chapters comprising this volume first appeared as book chapters or journal articles in a variety of sources. It would be difficult to achieve consistency in the footnotes across all sixteen chapters. For this reason, the style and numbering of the footnotes in each chapter have been modified as little as possible.