

What is the significance of Shylock's ring in *The Merchant of Venice*? How does Shakespeare create Gertrude's closet in *Hamlet*? Why does Ariel prepare a banquet in *The Tempest*? In order to answer these and other questions, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* explores performance from the perspective of the material conditions of staging. In a period just starting to recognize the allure of consumer goods, this book argues that material culture plays a particularly complex and resonant role in Shakespeare's employment of his audience's imagination.

Chapters address how props and costumes work within Shakespeare's dense webs of language; how Shakespeare constructs rooms on the stage; and investigate the different kinds of early modern practices which could be staged. *Shakespeare and Material Culture* ends with a discussion of the way characters create unique languages by talking about things, bringing into play unstageable objects and spaces. Exploring things both seen and unseen, this book shows how the sheer variety of material cultures which Shakespeare uses on the stage can shed fresh light on the relationship between the dynamics of drama and its reception.