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Gray's Inn Revels, 1594-5

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in *The Machine in the Text: Science and Literature in the Age of Shakespeare and Galileo*

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This chapter examines the textual record of the Christmas-season festivities staged by Gray's Inn, 1594-5: the *Gesta Grayorum*. These Revels, together with critical readings of them, allow for an interrogation of the nature of disciplinary knowledges and the ways in which the meanings of objects are determined by the disciplinary practices brought to bear upon them. Thus the *Gesta Grayorum* has meaning for Shakespeareans for the information it contains concerning the first performance of *The Comedy of Errors*. For others—including historians of science—the *Gesta Grayorum* is important for light it sheds on an obscure text by a major figure in the history of science: Francis Bacon's *Device*. Taking the *Gesta Grayorum* as a case study and by submitting the literary text to the methods of natural philosophy and the natural philosophical to the methods of literary analysis, this chapter demonstrate how thoroughly imbricated are these two discourses.