Much Ado has always been popular on the stage. This edition pays especial attention to the
history and range of theatrical interpretation, in which the most famous actors, from the time
of Garrick to the present, have appeared as the sparring lovers Benedick and Beatrice. A full
commentary includes annotation of the many sexual jokes in the play that have been obscured
by the complexity of Elizabethan language.

For this updated edition Angela Stock has added a new section to the Introduction in which
she reviews the romantic and the darker, more cynical aspects of the play in the light of
late twentieth-century stage, film and critical interpretations. She also tackles the interesting
question of Beatrice’s proper age and the critical fortunes of Hero and Claudio in terms of the
play’s interest in sexuality and misogyny, eavesdropping and deception.
THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Updated edition

Edited by

F. H. MARES
THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

The New Cambridge Shakespeare succeeds The New Shakespeare which began publication in 1921 under the general editorship of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, and was completed in the 1960s, with the assistance of G. I. Duthie, Alice Walker, Peter Ure and J. C. Maxwell. The New Shakespeare itself followed upon The Cambridge Shakespeare, 1863–6, edited by W. G. Clark, J. Glover and W. A. Wright.

The New Shakespeare won high esteem both for its scholarship and for its design, but shifts of critical taste and insight, recent Shakespearean research, and a changing sense of what is important in our understanding of the plays, have made it necessary to re-edit and redesign, not merely to revise, the series.

The New Cambridge Shakespeare aims to be of value to a new generation of playgoers and readers who wish to enjoy fuller access to Shakespeare’s poetic and dramatic art. While offering ample academic guidance, it reflects current critical interests and is more attentive than some earlier editions have been to the realisation of the plays on the stage, and to their social and cultural settings. The text of each play has been freshly edited, with textual data made available to those users who wish to know why and how one published text differs from another. Although modernised, the edition conserves forms that appear to be expressive and characteristically Shakespearean, and it does not attempt to disguise the fact that the plays were written in a language other than that of our own time.

Illustrations are usually integrated into the critical and historical discussion of the play and include some reconstructions of early performances by C. Walter Hodges. Some editors have also made use of the advice and experience of Maurice Daniels, for many years a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Each volume is addressed to the needs and problems of a particular text, and each therefore differs in style and emphasis from others in the series.

PHILIP BROCKBANK

Founding General Editor
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PREFACE

The best an editor of Shakespeare can hope for is to emulate the wren that flew a little higher from the back of the eagle – only in this case there are a number of eagles. I have made considerable use of my predecessors. Of particular value have been Quiller-Couch and Dover Wilson's New Shakespeare (1923), R. A. Foakes’s Penguin edition (1968) and A. R. Humphreys's Arden (1981). A. G. Newcomer’s edition (Stamford Studies in English, 1929), which brings together similar uses of language or imagery from other plays of Shakespeare, was often enlightening.

My work was almost complete when I retired from the University of Adelaide at the end of 1985. I am grateful to the University for its support, especially for various periods of leave which allowed me to meet other scholars and visit great libraries in America and Europe. These include the Huntington and Folger Libraries, and the British Library. Other institutions are mentioned in my Note on the Text and in other places. In the spring of 1981 I had a Fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in Edinburgh. There one day I had a clear illustration of Benedick's simile 'like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me' (2.1.193–4). I saw the Royal Company of Archers at practice in the Meadows, and they had a man at the mark, who would run in with a little flag, to show where the arrows fell in relation to the target: Her Majesty's bodyguard in Scotland were preparing for a Royal visit. In 1983 I spent a semester as an exchange professor at the University of Trondheim in Norway, where my generous colleagues asked me to do so little teaching that my research flourished. To all these institutions, and to the librarians who serve in them, I am most grateful. My greatest obligation is to the staff at the Barr-Smith Library of the University of Adelaide.

I have many debts to many colleagues, but would thank specifically Alan Brissenden and Marea Mitchell in Adelaide and Sigmund Ro in Trondheim, who have all read various parts of my work in progress, and commented on it to my advantage. The secretaries of the Adelaide English Department have been most helpful; Joan Alvaro has produced elegant copy on the word-processor from my corrected and recorrected drafts with unfailing patience and skill. My colleague and companion Robin Eaden has given me much help, especially in research and in matters of style – and my gratitude to her is for much more than that.

From the start Philip Brockbank, the General Editor, and later Brian Gibbons have given valuable advice and – along with Cambridge University Press – been patient with my slow progress. Sarah Stanton of the Press has been very helpful in obtaining illustrations, and checking the quality of photographs which, from this side of the world,
Much Ado About Nothing

I could not examine for myself. The meticulous reading of my typescript by Paul Chipchase has saved me from many errors and solecisms and spared my readers many confusions and ambiguities. The shortcomings which remain, in spite of all this help, I must acknowledge mine.

Adelaide

F.H.M.
ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Shakespeare’s plays, when cited in this edition, are abbreviated in a style modified slightly from that used in the Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare. Other editions of Shakespeare are abbreviated under the editor’s surname (Newcomer, Knight) unless they are the work of more than one editor. In such cases, an abbreviated series name is used (NS, Riverside). When more than one edition by the same editor is cited, later editions are discriminated with a raised figure (Rowe³). All quotations from Shakespeare, except those from Much Ado About Nothing, use the text and lineation of The Riverside Shakespeare, 1974, under the general editorship of G. Blakemore Evans.

1. Shakespeare’s plays

<table>
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<td>Much Ado About Nothing</td>
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<td>Ant.</td>
<td>Antony and Cleopatra</td>
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<td>iH4</td>
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<td>iH6</td>
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<td>3H6</td>
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<td>Rom.</td>
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<td>STM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim.</td>
<td>Timon of Athens</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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2. Other works cited and general references

Abbott
E. A. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar*, 1869 (references are to numbered paragraphs)

Arber

Bang

BL
British Library

Boas

Brisenden

Bullock
Geoffrey Bullock (ed.), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols., 1957–75 (for *Much Ado*, vol. ii, 1958)

Campbell
T. Campbell (ed.), *The Dramatic Works of Shakespeare*, 1838

Capell
Edward Capell (ed.), *Mr William Shakespeare his Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, 10 vols., 1767–8

COED
*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1982 edn

Collier

Collier²

conj. noun
*conjecture*

corr.
corrected forme in q

Cotgrave
Randall Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*, 1611

CQ
*Critical Quarterly*

Dyce

ELR
*English Literary Renaissance*

ES
*English Studies*

F
*Mr William Shakespares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, 1623 (First Folio)

F²
*Mr William Shakespares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, 1632 (Second Folio)

F³
*Mr William Shakespares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, 1664 (Third Folio)

Foakes

FQ

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Mason J. M. Mason, Comments on the Last Edition of Shakespeare's Plays, 1785
MLN Modern Language Notes
MLQ Modern Language Quarterly
MLR Modern Language Review
MLS Modern Language Studies
Newcomer A. G. Newcomer (ed.), Much Ado About Nothing, 1929
N&Q Notes and Queries
NS Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson (eds.), Much Ado About Nothing, 1923 (New Shakespeare)
OED Oxford English Dictionary
Oxberry W. Oxberry, Comedian (ed.), The New English Drama, with Prefatory Remarks, 20 vols., 1818-23
PMLA Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
Prouty C. T. Prouty, The Sources of 'Much Ado About Nothing', 1950
Q Much Ado About Nothing, V.S. for Andrew Wise and William Aspley, 1600 (quarto)
REL Review of English Literature
RES Review of English Studies
Ritson J. Ritson, Remarks Critical and Illustrative, 1783
Riverside G. Blakemore Evans (textual ed.), The Riverside Shakespeare, 1974
Rowe Nicholas Rowe (ed.), The Works of Mr William Shakespeare, 6 vols., 1709
Rowe2 Nicholas Rowe (ed.), The Works of Mr William Shakespeare, 2nd edn, 1714
RSC Royal Shakespeare Company
SB Studies in Bibliography
sd stage direction
SEL Studies in English Literature
Seymour E. H. Seymour, Remarks, Critical, Conjectural and Explanatory, 1805
sh speech heading
SJ Shakespeare Jahrbuch
Much Ado About Nothing

SP
Studies in Philology

SQ
Shakespeare Quarterly

S. Sur.
Shakespeare Survey

Staunton
H. Staunton (ed.), The Plays of Shakespeare, 4 vols., 1858–60

Steevens
Samuel Johnson and George Steevens (eds.), The Plays of William Shakespeare, 10 vols., 1773

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subst.
substantively

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uncorr.
uncorrected form in Q

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