THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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From the publication of the first volumes in 1984 the General Editor of the New Cambridge Shakespeare was Philip Brockbank and the Associate General Editors were Brian Gibbons and Robin Hood. From 1990 to 1994 the General Editor was Brian Gibbons and the Associate General Editors were A. R. Braunmuller and Robin Hood.

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

Philip Edwards aims to bring the reader, playgoer and director of Hamlet into the closest possible contact with Shakespeare's most famous and most perplexing play. In his Introduction Edwards considers the possibility that Shakespeare made important alterations to Hamlet as it neared production, creating differences between the two early texts, quarto and Folio. Edwards concentrates on essentials, dealing succinctly with the huge volume of commentary and controversy which the play has provoked and offering a way forward which enables us once again to recognise its full tragic energy.

For this updated edition, Robert Hapgood has added a new section on prevailing critical and performance approaches to the play. He discusses recent film and stage performances, actors of the Hamlet role as well as directors of the play; his account of new scholarship stresses the role of remembering and forgetting in the play, and the impact of feminist and performance studies.
THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet, edited by Lukas Erne
The Taming of a Shrew: The 1594 Quarto, edited by Stephen Roy Miller
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
What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

To the memory of my great-grandfather

ROBERT EDWARDS
1829–1908

Sexton of St John’s Church, Rhydymwyn, Flintshire
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10. Kenneth Branagh’s film of Hamlet 1996, with Branagh in the title role between Claudius (Derek Jacobi) and Gertrude (Julie Christie) (Photofest)

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PREFACE

The vastness of the commentary on Hamlet gives an editor of the play a rather special freedom. Even if he could read them all, he could not accommodate within the covers of a book an account of the multitude of theories and ideas generated by the play; and to attempt to sum up even the enduring contributions would so overload the work that it would defeat the main purpose of an edition, which is to make an author’s work more accessible. This edition of Hamlet is selective in its account of what has gone before, and the view of the play presented in the Introduction, the Commentary – and the text – is personal without I hope being idiosyncratic. Everything that I consider essential to the meaning of the play I have endeavoured to discuss; where I consider problems insoluble, or not central, I have avoided prolonged debate.

The text of Hamlet presents great difficulties, and any discussion of it affects and is affected by our understanding of the play. I have not therefore been able to separate my account of the text from the main part of the introduction, as is the custom in this series. In trying to offer help towards the understanding of this great and perplexing play, it is essential to make clear at the outset that there is more than one Hamlet we might be talking about.

Most of the work for this edition was completed before the appearance of Harold Jenkins’s masterly edition in the New Arden series in the spring of 1982. It has nevertheless been of immense benefit to have his work before me since that time, as my commentary frequently acknowledges. All students of Hamlet are in debt to Harold Jenkins for the results of his patient and exacting research.

Some of the material in the critical account of the play in the Introduction appears also in an essay, ‘Tragic balance in Hamlet’, in Shakespeare Survey 36 (1983); I am grateful to the editor of Shakespeare Survey for accepting this overlap.

In acknowledging assistance in this edition of Hamlet, I ought to start with John Waterhouse in 1942 and Allardyce Nicoll in 1945, from whom I learned so much about the play. In recent times, my greatest debt is to Kenneth Muir, an untiring lender of books, a patient listener, and a generous adviser. John Jowett gave me great help in checking parts of my typescript, and in sifting through recent writings on the play. I am grateful to Joan Welford for typing the Commentary.

This edition was prepared during a period of rather heavy administrative duties in the University of Liverpool. I am most grateful to the University for two periods of leave, and to the University of Otago, the British Academy and the Huntington Library for enabling me to make the most of them.

P.E.

University of Liverpool, 1984

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT TITLES

All quotations and line references to plays other than *Hamlet* are to G. Blakemore Evans (ed.), *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1974.

Adams *Hamlet*, ed. Joseph Quincy Adams, 1929


Bullough Geoffrey Bullough (ed.), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols., 1957–75


Capell *Mr William Shakespeare, His Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*, ed. Edward Capell, 1767–8, x


conj. conjectured

Dowden *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, ed. Edward Dowden, 1899 (Arden Shakespeare)

Duthie George Ian Duthie, *The ’Bad’ Quarto of ’Hamlet’: A Critical Study*, 1941


f Mr William Shakespeare’s Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, 1623 (First Folio) [see Introduction, p. 9]

Hanmer *The Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Sir Thomas Hanmer, 1743–4, vi


Jenkins *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins, 1982 (Arden Shakespeare)

Johnson *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, ed. Samuel Johnson, 1765, viii

Kittredge *Hamlet*, ed. George Lyman Kittredge, 1939


MacDonald *The Tragedie of Hamlet*, ed. George MacDonald, 1885


MLN *Modern Language Notes*

MSH J. Dover Wilson, *The Manuscript of Shakespeare’s ’Hamlet’*, 2 vols., 1934; reprinted 1963

N & Q *Notes and Queries*


OED *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1884–1928, reprinted 1933

PMLA *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*


Q1 *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmark*, by William Shakespeare, 1603 (first quarto)
xi

Abbreviations and short titles

Q 2
The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, by William Shakespeare, 1604, 1605 (second quarto)

Q 1 611, Q 1 676
Quarto editions of those dates

RES
Review of English Studies

Ridley
Hamlet, ed. M. R. Ridley, 1934 (New Temple Shakespeare)

Rowe
The Works of Mr William Shakespear, ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709, v

Schmidt
Alexander Schmidt, Shakespeare-Lexicon, 2 vols., 1874–5; 2nd edn, 1886

SD
stage direction

SH
speech heading

Spencer
Hamlet, ed. T. J. B. Spencer, 1980 (New Penguin Shakespeare)

SQ
Shakespeare Quarterly

Staunton
The Plays of Shakespeare, ed. Howard Staunton, 1858–60, reissued 1866, iii

Steevens
The Plays of William Shakespeare, ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1773, x

Steevens2
The Plays of William Shakespeare, ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 2nd edn, 1778, x

Steevens3
The Plays of William Shakespeare, ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 4th edn, 1793, xi

Sternfeld
F. W. Sternfeld, Music in Shakespearean Tragedy, 1963

Theobald
Lewis Theobald, Shakespeare Restored, 1726

Theobald2
The Works of Shakespeare, ed. Lewis Theobald, 1733, vii

Theobald3
The Works of Shakespeare, ed. Lewis Theobald, 1740, viii

Tilley
Morris Palmer Tilley, A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, 1950 [references are to numbered proverbs]

TLS
The Times Literary Supplement

Verity
The Tragedy of Hamlet, ed. A. W. Verity, 1904

Walker
William Sydney Walker, A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare, 3 vols., 1860

Warburton
The Works of Shakespeare, ed. William Warburton, 1747, viii

White

Wilson
Hamlet, ed. J. Dover Wilson, 1934; 2nd edn, 1936, reprinted 1968 (New Shakespeare)