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.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM

Professor Foakes offers a new perspective on Shakespeare’s most popular comedy, and also a profound archetypal play.

The Introduction describes the two main traditions in the stage history of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, one emphasising charm and innocence, the other stressing darker suggestions of violence and sexuality, and relates them to similar traditions in critical interpretation, showing that both are necessary to a full understanding of the play.

Illustrations show the variety of ways in which the play has been staged, including Peter Brook’s 1970 production. The editorial commentary is especially concerned to help the reader visualise the play in performance.

For this updated edition of A Midsummer Night’s Dream the editor has added a new section to the Introduction which takes account of the number of important professional theatre performances since 1970, and the large output of scholarly criticism on the play which has appeared in recent years. The Reading List has also been revised and augmented.
THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

All's Well That Ends Well, edited by Russell Fraser
Antony and Cleopatra, edited by David Bevington
As You Like It, edited by Michael Hattaway
The Comedy of Errors, edited by T. S. Dorsch
Coriolanus, edited by Lee Bliss
Cymbeline, edited by Martin Butler
Hamlet, edited by Philip Edwards
Julius Caesar, edited by Marvin Spevack
King Edward III, edited by Giorgio Melchiori
The First Part of King Henry IV, edited by Herbert Weil and Judith Weil
The Second Part of King Henry IV, edited by Giorgio Melchiori
King Henry V, edited by Andrew Gurr
The First Part of King Henry VI, edited by Michael Hattaway
The Second Part of King Henry VI, edited by Michael Hattaway
The Third Part of King Henry VI, edited by Michael Hattaway
King Henry VIII, edited by John Margeson
King John, edited by L. A. Beaurline
The Tragedy of King Lear, edited by Jay L. Halio
King Richard II, edited by Andrew Gurr
King Richard III, edited by Janis Lull
Love's Labour's Lost, edited by William C. Carroll
Macbeth, edited by A. R. Braunmuller
Measure for Measure, edited by Brian Gibbons
The Merchant of Venice, edited by M. M. Mahood
The Merry Wives of Windsor, edited by David Crane
A Midsummer Night's Dream, edited by R. A. Foakes
Much Ado About Nothing, edited by F. H. Mares
Othello, edited by Norman Sanders
Pericles, edited by Doreen DelVecchio and Antony Hammond
The Poems, edited by John Roe
Romeo and Juliet, edited by G. Blakemore Evans
The Sonnets, edited by G. Blakemore Evans
The Taming of the Shrew, edited by Ann Thompson
The Tempest, edited by David Lindley
Timon of Athens, edited by Karl Klein
Titus Andronicus, edited by Alan Hughes
Troilus and Cressida, edited by Anthony B. Dawson
Twelfth Night, edited by Elizabeth Story Donno
The Two Gentlemen of Verona, edited by Kurt Schlueter
The Two Noble Kinsmen, edited by Robert Kean Turner and Patricia Tatspaugh
The Winter's Tale, edited by Susan Snyder and Deborah T. Curren-Aquino

THE EARLY QUARTOS
The First Quarto of Hamlet, edited by Kathleen O. Irace
The First Quarto of King Henry V, edited by Andrew Gurr
The First Quarto of King Lear, edited by Jay L. Halio
The First Quarto of King Richard III, edited by Peter Davison
The First Quarto of Othello, edited by Scott McMillin
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
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Illustrations 1, 2, 3, 5, 13 and 14 are reproduced by permission of the Shakespeare Centre Library, Stratford-upon-Avon; illustrations 6, 7, and 8 by permission of the Governors of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and Angus McBean; illustrations 9 and 10 by permission of the Shakespeare Centre and the Governors of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre; and illustration 4 by permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
PREFACE

Innocent fantasy or sinister nightmare – *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* seems, in the twentieth century at any rate, to yield anything we might wish to find in it. The stage history and the history of its treatment in criticism alike show how this apparently simple and delightful play can yield strange and complex resonances, profundities as fathomless as Bottom’s dream. In the Introduction I have therefore dealt at some length with the stage history of the play, and its bearing upon critical interpretation. In the Commentary, too, there is much emphasis upon staging, groupings of characters and the significance of stage directions. I hope this will help the reader in what is perhaps the most difficult aspect of studying a play-text – I mean in visualising in the imagination what action is taking place, and how the characters relate to one another on stage. The sources of the play have been analysed in detail by Kenneth Muir in *The Sources of Shakespeare’s Plays*, and by H. F. Brooks in his edition of the play, and most of them are readily available in Geoffrey Bullough’s *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 1. I have not attempted to duplicate their work, but have rather tried to show, on the one hand, how Shakespeare transformed his source-materials, and to distinguish, on the other, between genuine sources, consciously used as such, and images, ideas, hints drawn, probably unconsciously, from the capacious storehouse of a well-read dramatist’s memory. Over all, I have tried to keep the Commentary and other editorial matter brief, so as not to intervene more than is necessary between the reader and the play, but only to display and elucidate its richness of meaning.

I am grateful to many colleagues and friends who have willingly talked over problems or helped in various ways, and to the staff of a number of libraries, especially the Huntington Library in San Marino, and the Shakespeare Centre Library in Stratford-upon-Avon. The work of two recent editors of the play, Stanley Wells and H. F. Brooks, has made my task much lighter than it might have been, but also, I am glad to say, left me plenty to do in presenting the play with a very different emphasis from theirs. To the General Editors, especially Brian Gibbons, and to Paul Chipchase of Cambridge University Press, I am indebted for their guidance, and their sharp eyes in noticing errors or inconsistencies; they are, of course, in no way responsible for any that remain.

R. A. F.
ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

1. Shakespeare's plays

The abbreviated titles of Shakespeare's plays have been modified from those used in the Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare. All quotations and line references to plays other than A Midsummer Night's Dream are to G. Blakemore Evans (ed.), The Riverside Shakespeare, 1974, on which the Concordance is based.

Ado  Much Ado about Nothing
Ant.  Antony and Cleopatra
AWW  All's Well That Ends Well
AYLI  As You Like It
Cor.  Coriolanus
Cym.  Cymbeline
Err.  The Comedy of Errors
Ham.  Hamlet
1 H4  The First Part of King Henry the Fourth
2 H4  The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth
H5  King Henry the Fifth
1 H6  The First Part of King Henry the Sixth
2 H6  The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth
3 H6  The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth
H8  King Henry the Eighth
JC  Julius Caesar
John  King John
LLL  Love's Labour's Lost
Lear  King Lear
Mac.  Macbeth
MM  Measure for Measure
MND  A Midsummer Night's Dream
MV  The Merchant of Venice
Oth.  Othello
Per.  Pericles
R2  King Richard the Second
R3  King Richard the Third
Rom.  Romeo and Juliet
Shr.  The Taming of the Shrew
STM  Sir Thomas More
Temp.  The Tempest
TGV  The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Tim.  Timon of Athens
Tit.  Titus Andronicus
TN  Twelfth Night
TNK  The Two Noble Kinsmen
Tro.  Troilus and Cressida
### A Midsummer Night's Dream

#### Wiv.

**The Merry Wives of Windsor**

#### WT

**The Winter's Tale**

#### 2. Editions

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Abbreviations and conventions

Rowe¹

_The Works of Mr. William Shakespear_, ed. Nicholas Rowe, third edition, 8 vols., 1714

Singer

_The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare_, ed. S. W. Singer, 10 vols., 1826

Staunton

_The Plays of Shakespeare_, ed. Howard Staunton 3 vols, 1858–60

Steevens

_The Plays of William Shakespeare_, ed. George Steevens, 10 vols., 1773

Theobald

_The Works of Shakespeare_, ed. Lewis Theobald, 7 vols., 1733

Var. 1778

_The Plays of William Shakespeare_, with the corrections and illustrations of various commentators, to which are added notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 10 vols., 1778

Warburton

_The Works of Shakespeare_, ed. William Warburton, 8 vols., 1747

Wells


White

_Mr. William Shakespeare’s Comedies Histories Tragedies and Poems_, ed. Richard Grant White, 6 vols., 1883

Wright, Aldis

_A Midsummer Night’s Dream_, ed. W. Aldis Wright, 1877 (Clarendon Shakespeare)

Wright, Martin

_A Midsummer Night’s Dream Edited from the Quarto of 1600_, Martin Wright, 1968

3. Other works, periodicals, general references

Bullough

_Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare_, ed. Geoffrey Bullough, 1, 1957

Chambers, Shakespeare


conjecture

EETS

Early English Text Society

_ELH_

_ELH: A Journal of Literary History_

Folks

Martin Folks, conjectural emendations in Theobald

Geneva

Geneva translation of the Bible (1560)

Golding

_Shakespeare’s Ovid: being Arthur Golding’s Translation of the Metamorphoses_, ed. W. H. D. Rouse, 1961

Greg

W. W. Greg, _The Shakespeare First Folio_, 1955

Henslowe’s Diary


Kökeritz

Helge Kökeritz, _Shakespeare’s Pronunciation_, 1953

Linthicum

M. Channing Linthicum, _Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries_, 1936

McKerrow


MLQ

_Modern Language Quarterly_

Muir

Kenneth Muir, _The Sources of Shakespeare’s Plays_, 1977

North

_The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, compared together by...Plutarke...translated...into French by Sir James Amyot, and...into English by Sir Thomas North_ (1579, reissued 1595)
A Midsummer Night's Dream

OED

Onions

QQ

SD

Shakespeare's England

Sisson

ST

SQ

S.Sur.

subst.

Thirlby

Tilley

Tyrwhitt

Williams, ‘Discord’

Williams, ‘Vestris’

C. T. Onions, A Shakespeare Glossary, 2nd edn, 1946
Both quartos
stage direction
C. J. Sisson, New Readings in Shakespeare, 2 vols., 1956
Shakespeare Jahrbuch
Shakespeare Quarterly
Shakespeare Survey
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M. P. Tilley, A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, 1950 (references are to numbered proverbs)
Thomas Tyrwhitt, Observations and Conjectures upon Some Passages of Shakespeare, 1766
Gary Jay Williams, “‘The concord of this discord’; music in the stage history of A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, Yale/ Theatre 4 (1973), 40–68