

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-82540-5 - *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Updated  
Edition Edited by R. A. Foakes  
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## THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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Brian Gibbons

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A. R. Braunmuller, *University of California, Los Angeles*

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.

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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

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# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Updated edition

*Edited by*

**R. A. FOAKES**

*Emeritus Professor of English, University of California, Los Angeles*



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## 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

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.



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# 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.

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

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<i>Wiv.</i>	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
<i>WT</i>	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
<b>2. Editions</b>	
Alexander	<i>William Shakespeare: The Complete Works</i> , ed. Peter Alexander, 1951
Brooks	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , ed. Harold F. Brooks, 1979 (Arden Shakespeare)
Cam.	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. W. G. Clark, John Glover and W. Aldis Wright, 9 vols., 1863–6 (Cambridge Shakespeare)
Capell	<i>Mr. William Shakespeare his Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , ed. Edward Capell, 10 vols., 1767
Chambers	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , ed. E. K. Chambers, 1897 (Warwick Shakespeare)
Cunningham	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , ed. Henry Cunningham, 1905, rev. edn 1930 (Arden Shakespeare)
Dyce	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 6 vols., 1857
F	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, &amp; Tragedies</i> , 1623 (First Folio)
F2	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories &amp; Tragedies</i> , 1632 (Second Folio)
F4	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, &amp; Tragedies</i> , 1685 (Fourth Folio)
Halliwel	<i>The Complete Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. J. O. Halliwell, 3 vols., 1852
Hanmer	<i>The Works of Shakespeare . . . Carefully Revised and Corrected by the former Editions</i> , ed. Thomas Hanmer, 6 vols., 1744
Johnson	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson, 8 vols., 1765
Knight	<i>The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Charles Knight, 8 vols., 1839–43
Malone	<i>The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Edward Malone, 10 vols., 1790
NS	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, 1924, rev. edn 1968 (New Shakespeare)
Pope	<i>The Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 6 vols., 1723–5
Q1	<i>A Midsommer nights dreame</i> , Imprinted at London for Thomas Fisher, 1600 (first quarto)
Q2	<i>A Midsommer nights dreame</i> , Printed by James Roberts, 1600 (in fact by William Jaggard, 1619: second quarto)
Rann	<i>The Dramatic Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Joseph Rann, 6 vols., 1786–91
Rolfe	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , ed. W. J. Rolfe, 1877
Rowe	<i>The Works of Mr. William Shakespear</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 6 vols., 1709 (second edition also 1709)

xi	Abbreviations and conventions
Rowe <sup>3</sup>	<i>The Works of Mr. William Shakespear</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, third edition, 8 vols., 1714
Singer	<i>The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. S. W. Singer, 10 vols., 1826
Staunton	<i>The Plays of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Howard Staunton 3 vols., 1858–60
Steevens	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. George Steevens, 10 vols., 1773
Theobald	<i>The Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 7 vols., 1733
Var. 1778	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , with the corrections and illustrations of various commentators, to which are added notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 10 vols., 1778
Warburton	<i>The Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. William Warburton, 8 vols., 1747
Wells	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , ed. S. W. Wells, 1967 (New Penguin Shakespeare)
White	<i>Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies Histories Tragedies and Poems</i> , ed. Richard Grant White, 6 vols., 1883
Wright, Aldis	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , ed. W. Aldis Wright, 1877 (Clarendon Shakespeare)
Wright, Martin	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream Edited from the Quarto of 1600</i> , Martin Wright, 1968

### 3. Other works, periodicals, general references

Bullough	<i>Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Geoffrey Bullough, 1, 1957
Chambers, <i>Shakespeare</i>	E. K. Chambers, <i>William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems</i> , 2 vols., 1930
conj.	conjecture
EETS	Early English Text Society
<i>ELH</i>	<i>ELH: A Journal of Literary History</i>
Folks	Martin Folks, conjectural emendations in Theobald
Geneva	Geneva translation of the Bible (1560)
Golding	<i>Shakespeare's Ovid: being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses</i> , ed. W. H. D. Rouse, 1961
Greg	W. W. Greg, <i>The Shakespeare First Folio</i> , 1955
<i>Henslowe's Diary</i>	<i>Henslowe's Dairy</i> , ed. R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert, 1961
Kökeritz	Helge Kökeritz, <i>Shakespeare's Pronunciation</i> , 1953
Linthicum	M. Channing Linthicum, <i>Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries</i> , 1936
McKerrow	R. B. McKerrow, <i>Printers' &amp; Publishers' Devices in England and Scotland 1485–1640</i> , 1913
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
Muir	Kenneth Muir, <i>The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays</i> , 1977
North	<i>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</i> (1579, reissued 1595)

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<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , ed. Sir J. A. H. Murray, W. A. Craigie and C. T. Onions, 13 vols., 1933
Onions	C. T. Onions, <i>A Shakespeare Glossary</i> , 2nd edn, 1946
QQ	Both quartos
SD	stage direction
<i>Shakespeare's England</i>	<i>Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of his Age</i> , ed. Sidney Lee and C. T. Onions, 2 vols., 1916
Sisson	C. J. Sisson, <i>New Readings in Shakespeare</i> , 2 vols., 1956
<i>SJ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Jahrbuch</i>
<i>SQ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
<i>S.Sur.</i>	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
subst.	substantively
Thirlby	Styan Thirlby, conjectural emendations in Theobald
Tilley	M. P. Tilley, <i>A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</i> , 1950 (references are to numbered proverbs)
Tyrwhitt	Thomas Tyrwhitt, <i>Observations and Conjectures upon Some Passages of Shakespeare</i> , 1766
Williams, 'Discord'	Gary Jay Williams, "'The concord of this discord': music in the stage history of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> ", <i>Yale / Theatre</i> 4 (1973), 40–68
Williams, 'Vestris'	Gary Jay Williams, 'Madame Vestris, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> and the web of Victorian tradition', <i>Theatre Survey</i> 18 (1977), 1–22