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Edited by Philip Edwards
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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.

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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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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

*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

CONTENTS

List of illustrations	<i>page</i> vii
Preface	ix
Abbreviations and short titles	x
Introduction	i
Source and dae	i
The play's shape	8
The play and the critics	32
The action of the play	40
<i>Hamlet</i> and the actors	61
Names	70
Recent stage, film and critical interpretations by Robert Hapgood	72
Note on the text	83
List of characters	86
THE PLAY	87
Reading list	256

ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | | |
|----|---|----------------|
| 1 | Suggested Elizabethan staging of the Ghost scenes (1.4 and 1.5). Drawing by C. Walter Hodges | <i>page</i> 44 |
| 2 | Henry Irving as Hamlet and Ellen Terry as Ophelia in the ‘nunnery’ scene (3.1), as painted by Edward H. Bell, 1879 (Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection) | 49 |
| 3 | Suggested Elizabethan staging of the play-within-the-play (3.2). Drawing by C. Walter Hodges | 51 |
| 4 | ‘Now might I do it pat’ (3.3.73). One of a series of lithographs of the play published by Eugène Delacroix in 1844 (Trustees of the British Museum) | 53 |
| 5 | Possible Elizabethan staging of the graveyard scene (5.1). Drawing by C. Walter Hodges | 57 |
| 6 | ‘Do you not come your tardy son to chide?’ (3.4.106). Redrawn by Du Guernier for the 1714 edition of Rowe’s Shakespeare | 65 |
| 7 | J. P. Kemble as Hamlet, by Sir Thomas Lawrence (Royal Academy, 1801) (Tate Gallery) | 68 |
| 8 | ‘Go on, I’ll follow thee’ (1.4.86). Forbes Robertson as Hamlet in a 1913 film (Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection) | 69 |
| 9 | The burial of Ophelia (5.1). Modern-dress production at the London Old Vic, 1938 (Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection) | 70 |
| 10 | Kenneth Branagh’s film of <i>Hamlet</i> 1996, with Branagh in the title role between Claudius (Derek Jacobi) and Gertrude (Julie Christie) (Photofest) | 73 |
| 11 | Simon Russell Beale as Hamlet, with Yorick’s Skull, National Theatre, 2001 (Photo: Zoe Dominic) | 75 |

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Edited by Philip Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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

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	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. Joseph Quincy Adams, 1929
N. Alexander	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. Nigel Alexander, 1973 (Macmillan Shakespeare)
P. Alexander	<i>William Shakespeare, The Complete Works</i> , ed. Peter Alexander, 1951
Bullough	Geoffrey Bullough (ed.), <i>Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare</i> , 8 vols., 1957–75
Cambridge	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. William George Clark, J. Glover and William Aldis Wright, 1863–6, viii; 2nd edn, 1891–2, vii (Cambridge Shakespeare)
Capell	<i>Mr William Shakespeare, His Comedies, Histories and Tragedies</i> , ed. Edward Capell, 1767–8, x
Clark and Wright	<i>Hamlet Prince of Denmark</i> , ed. William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, 1872 (Clarendon Press Shakespeare)
Collier	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. J. Payne Collier, 1842–4, vii
conj.	conjectured
Dowden	<i>The Tragedy of Hamlet</i> , ed. Edward Dowden, 1899 (Arden Shakespeare)
Duthie	George Ian Duthie, <i>The 'Bad' Quarto of 'Hamlet': A Critical Study</i> , 1941
Dyce	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 1857, v
F	<i>Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1623 (First Folio) [see Introduction, p. 9]
Hanmer	<i>The Works of Shakespear</i> , ed. Sir Thomas Hanmer, 1743–4, vi
Hoy	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. Cyrus Hoy, 1963 (Norton Critical Editions)
Jenkins	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. Harold Jenkins, 1982 (Arden Shakespeare)
Johnson	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson, 1765, viii
Kittredge	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. George Lyman Kittredge, 1939
Knight	<i>The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakspeare</i> , ed. Charles Knight, 1838–43, 1, 'Tragedies'
MacDonald	<i>The Tragedie of Hamlet</i> , ed. George MacDonald, 1885
Malone	<i>The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Edmond Malone, 1790, ix
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
MSH	J. Dover Wilson, <i>The Manuscript of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'</i> , 2 vols., 1934; reprinted 1963
N & Q	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
NV	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. Horace Howard Furness, 2 vols., 1877; reprinted 1963 (A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare)
OED	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 1884–1928, reprinted 1933
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
Pope	<i>The Works of Shakespear</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 1723–5, vi
Pope ²	<i>The Works of Shakespear</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 2nd edn, 1728, viii
Q1	<i>The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke</i> , by William Shakespeare, 1603 (first quarto)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xi

Abbreviations and short titles

Q2	<i>The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke</i> , by William Shakespeare, 1604, 1605 (second quarto)
Q 1611, Q 1676	Quarto editions of those dates
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
Ridley	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. M. R. Ridley, 1934 (New Temple Shakespeare)
Rowe	<i>The Works of Mr William Shakespear</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709, v
Schmidt	Alexander Schmidt, <i>Shakespeare-Lexicon</i> , 2 vols., 1874–5; 2nd edn, 1886
SD	stage direction
SH	speech heading
Spencer	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. T. J. B. Spencer, 1980 (New Penguin Shakespeare)
SQ	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
Staunton	<i>The Plays of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Howard Staunton, 1858–60, reissued 1866, iii
Steevens	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1773, x
Steevens ²	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 2nd edn, 1778, x
Steevens ³	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 4th edn, 1793, xi
Sternfeld	F. W. Sternfeld, <i>Music in Shakespearean Tragedy</i> , 1963
Theobald	Lewis Theobald, <i>Shakespeare Restored</i> , 1726
Theobald ²	<i>The Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1733, vii
Theobald ³	<i>The Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1740, viii
Tilley	Morris Palmer Tilley, <i>A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</i> , 1950 [references are to numbered proverbs]
TLS	<i>The Times Literary Supplement</i>
Verity	<i>The Tragedy of Hamlet</i> , ed. A. W. Verity, 1904
Walker	William Sydney Walker, <i>A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare</i> , 3 vols., 1860
Warburton	<i>The Works of Shakespear</i> , ed. William Warburton, 1747, viii
White	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Richard Grant White, 1857–66, xi
Wilson	<i>Hamlet</i> , ed. J. Dover Wilson, 1934; 2nd edn, 1936, reprinted 1968 (New Shakespeare)