

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## MEDIEVAL SHAKESPEARE

For many, Shakespeare represents the advent of modernity. It is easy to forget that he was in fact a writer deeply embedded in the Middle Ages, who inherited many of his shaping ideas and assumptions from the medieval past. This collection brings together essays by internationally renowned scholars of medieval and Early Modern literature, the history of the book and theatre history to present new perspectives on Shakespeare and his medieval heritage. Separated into four parts, the collection explores Shakespeare and his work in the context of the Middle Ages, medieval books and language, the British past, and medieval conceptions of drama and theatricality, together showing Shakespeare's work as rooted in late medieval history and culture. Insisting upon Shakespeare's complexity and medieval multiplicity, *Medieval Shakespeare* gives readers the opportunity to appreciate both Shakespeare and his period within the traditions that fostered and surrounded him.

RUTH MORSE is professeur des universités at the Université Paris-Sorbonne-Cité. Her books include two edited volumes, *Shakespeare, les français, les France* (2008), and a volume of *Great Shakespeareans*; the monograph *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Reality, and Representation* (1991), and she is currently completing *Imagined Histories: Fictions of the Past from Beowulf to Shakespeare*.

HELEN COOPER is Professor of Medieval and Renaissance English at the University of Cambridge. Beginning with her *Pastoral: Mediaeval into Renaissance* (1978), she has published extensively across the periods, most recently with *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (2004) and *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (2010).

PETER HOLLAND is Associate Dean for the Arts, College of Arts and Letters, and McMeel Family Professor in Shakespeare Studies at the University of Notre Dame. From 1997 to 2002 he was Director of the Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon and Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of Birmingham. He is Editor of *Shakespeare Survey*, co-General Editor with Stanley Wells of *Oxford Shakespeare Topics* and with Adrian Poole of the eighteen-volume series *Great Shakespeareans*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# MEDIEVAL SHAKESPEARE

*Past and Present*

EDITED BY

RUTH MORSE, HELEN COOPER AND  
PETER HOLLAND



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107016279](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107016279)

© Cambridge University Press 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written  
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by the MPG Books Group

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Medieval Shakespeare : past and presents / edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper, and  
Peter Holland.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-01627-9

1. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616 – Criticism and interpretation. 2. Shakespeare, William,  
1564–1616 – Knowledge – Middle Ages. 3. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616 – Sources.  
4. Middle Ages in literature. 5. English drama – Early modern and Elizabethan,  
1500–1600 – Medieval influences. I. Morse, Ruth, editor of compilation.  
II. Cooper, Helen, 1947 – editor of compilation. III. Holland, Peter, 1951 – editor  
of compilation.

PR3069.M47M43 2013

822.3'3 – dc23 2012035061

ISBN 978-1-107-01627-9 Hardback

---

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or  
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to  
in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such  
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

---

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present  
Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page vii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Note on the text</i>	xiv
 Introduction <i>Helen Cooper</i>	 I
 PART I THE MIDDLE AGES AND SHAKESPEARE	 17
1 Shakespeare’s Middle Ages <i>Bruce R. Smith</i>	19
2 Late Shakespeare and the Middle Ages <i>Bart van Es</i>	37
 PART II BOOKS AND LANGUAGE	 53
3 The mediated ‘medieval’ and Shakespeare <i>A. E. B. Coldiron</i>	55
4 ‘Not know my voice’: Shakespeare corrected; English perfected – theories of language from the Middle Ages to modernity <i>Jonathan Hope</i>	78
5 The afterlife of personification <i>Helen Cooper</i>	98

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Pasts and Presents  
Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
PART III	THE BRITISH PAST	117
6	Shakespeare and the remains of Britain <i>Ruth Morse</i>	119
7	<i>King Lear</i> in BC Albion <i>Margreta de Grazia</i>	138
PART IV	THE THEATRICAL DIMENSION	157
8	The art of playing <i>Tom Bishop</i>	159
9	Blood begetting blood: Shakespeare and the mysteries <i>Michael O’Connell</i>	177
10	From scaffold to discovery-space: change and continuity <i>Janette Dillon</i>	190
11	Performing the Middle Ages <i>Peter Holland</i>	204
12	Conclusion: the evil of ‘medieval’ <i>David Bevington</i>	223
	<i>Bibliography</i>	238
	<i>Index</i>	258

# *Illustrations*

1.1 St Saviour's Church, Southwark, tomb of John Gower †1408. Photograph by Sara N. James, reproduced by permission	page 20
7.1 C. Walter Hodges, possible staging of 5.3 in <i>The Tragedy of King Lear</i> , ed. Jay Halio (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 30. By permission of Cambridge University Press	144
7.2 Doom, Holy Trinity Church, Coventry, fifteenth century. By permission of Robert Orland, Historic Coventry	145
7.3 Doom, details, St Mary's Church, Fairford, Gloucestershire, fifteenth century	146
7.4 Title-page, detail, John Foxe, <i>Actes and Monuments of matters most speciall and memorable</i> (London: Company of Stationers, 1610). By permission of Rare Book Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library	147
7.5 Pietà, English, fifteenth century, Musée de Cluny, Paris	149
7.6 Pietà, English, Thomas à Kempis, <i>A Treatyse of ye Imytacion of Cryst</i> (London: Richard Pynson, 1503/4), in Edward Hodnett, <i>English Woodcuts, 1480–1535</i> (Oxford University Press, repr. 1973). By permission of Oxford University Press	150
7.7 Pietà, Church of St Peter and St Paul, East Harling, Norfolk, 1463–80. By permission of Harling United Benefice	151
7.8 Pietà, damaged wall painting, detail, Thame Parish Church, Oxfordshire, c. 1500. By permission of Holly Hayes/Art History Images	152

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present  
Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

viii	<i>List of illustrations</i>	
10.1	Frontispiece to Francis Kirkman, <i>The wits; or, Sport upon sport: in selected pieces of drollery, digested into scenes by way of dialogue . . .</i> (London: Printed by E. C. for F[r]ancis Kirkman, 1672)	202



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Notes on contributors*

DAVID BEVINGTON is the Phyllis Fay Horton Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in the Humanities at the University of Chicago. His books include *From 'Mankind' to Marlowe* (1962), *Tudor Drama and Politics* (1968), *Action Is Eloquence* (1985), *Shakespeare: The Seven Ages of Human Experience* (2005), *This Wide and Universal Theater: Shakespeare in Performance, Then and Now* (2007) and *Shakespeare's Ideas* (2008). He is the editor of *Medieval Drama* (1975, reissued in 2012), *The Bantam Shakespeare* and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (7th edn 2012). He is a senior editor of the Revels Student Editions, the Revels Plays, *The Norton Anthology of Renaissance Drama* and *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*.

TOM BISHOP is Professor of English and Head of Department at the University of Auckland. He is the author of *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), and the translator of Ovid's *Amores* (2003). His articles include a number on music, drama and the court masque, one of which, Jonson's *Oberon*, he has also produced on stage. He is a general editor of the *Shakespearean International Yearbook*, is currently editing *Pericles* for the Internet Shakespeare editions, and writing books on aspects of Shakespeare's use of Scripture and on the general subject of 'Shakespeare's theatre games'.

A. E. B. COLDIRON, Professor of English, Florida State University, is the author of *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans: Found in Translation* (2000) and *English Printing, Verse Translation, and the Battle of the Sexes, 1476–1557* (2009), and of essays about cross-border issues between medieval and Renaissance and between French and English literary cultures. Her *Printers without Border* will appear shortly.

HELEN COOPER is Professor of Medieval and Renaissance English at the University of Cambridge. Beginning with her *Pastoral: Mediaeval into*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

*Notes on contributors*

*Renaissance* (1978), she has published extensively across the periods, most recently with *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (2004) and *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (2010).

MARGRETA DE GRAZIA is the Rosenberg Professor in the Humanities and Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of *Shakespeare Verbatim* (1991) and *'Hamlet' without Hamlet* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). She has also co-edited *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* with Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge University Press, 1996), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* (2001) and *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* (2010), both with Stanley Wells.

JANETTE DILLON is Professor of Drama at the University of Nottingham. Her recent books include *The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre* (2006) and *The Cambridge Introduction to Shakespeare's Tragedies* (2007), and she has edited revised Penguin editions of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (2005). Her book *The Language of Space in Court Performance, 1400–1625* appeared in 2010 with Cambridge University Press.

PETER HOLLAND is Associate Dean for the Arts, College of Arts and Letters, and McMeel Family Professor in Shakespeare Studies at the University of Notre Dame. From 1997 to 2002 he was Director of the Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon and Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of Birmingham. He is Editor of *Shakespeare Survey*, co-General Editor with Stanley Wells of *Oxford Shakespeare Topics* and with Adrian Poole of the eighteen-volume series *Great Shakespeareans*.

JONATHAN HOPE is Professor of Literary Linguistics at Strathclyde University in Glasgow. He has published widely on Shakespeare's language, including *The Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays* (1996) and *Shakespeare's Grammar* (2003). His most recent book discusses ideas about language in Shakespeare and the Renaissance generally, *Shakespeare and Language: Reason, Eloquence and Artifice in the Renaissance* (2010).

RUTH MORSE is professeur des universités at the Université Paris-Sorbonne-Cité. Her books include two edited volumes, *Shakespeare, les français, les France* (2008), and a volume of *Great Shakespeareans*; the monograph *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Reality, and Representation* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), and she is currently

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Pasts and Presents

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*Notes on contributors*

xi

completing *Imagined Histories: Fictions of the Past from Beowulf to Shakespeare*.

MICHAEL O'CONNELL is Professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His books include studies of Spenser and Robert Burton, and also *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early Modern England* (2000).

BRUCE R. SMITH is Dean's Professor of English at the University of Southern California. He has published extensively on Early Modern English literature and Shakespeare in particular; his many books include *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (2010), *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (2000) and *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage, 1500–1700* (1988).

BART VAN ES is Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of St Catherine's College. He is the author of *Spenser's Forms of History* (2002), the editor of *A Critical Companion to Spenser Studies* (2006) and has published articles on Shakespeare, Daniel, Drayton, Renaissance historiography and pastoral poetry. His new book, *Shakespeare in Company*, will be published early in 2013.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## *Acknowledgements*

The first step towards the creation of this volume took the form of a small and noisy conference held in London over two days in the summer of 2010, at the Notre Dame Center, then at Shakespeare's Globe. Their early support made the conference possible, and offered venues for the intellectual exchanges which helped lead to its completion here. For this relief, much thanks to Greg Kucich, director of the Notre Dame Center, and his Events Co-ordinator Charlotte Parkyn; and to Farah Karim-Cooper and Patrick Spottiswoode at Globe Education. Generous financial support was further provided by Notre Dame from the College of Arts and Letters, the Henkels Lecture Series, the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, the Nanovic Institute, the Offices of Research and of International Studies and, through the assistance of Scott Jackson and his staff, from Shakespeare at Notre Dame. Harriet Baldwin and Chantelle Snyder provided much-appreciated practical help. The Faculty of English at the University of Cambridge offered further support both financial and moral; and more moral support came from the UFR d'Études Anglophones at Université Paris-Sorbonne-Cité (Diderot).

Sarah Stanton at Cambridge University Press encouraged us from the outset, which helped at every stage. In production, Damian Love was a patient as well as reliable copy-editor.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-01627-9 - Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Present

Edited by Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper and Peter Holland

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## *Note on the text*

Unless otherwise indicated, references to Shakespeare are to the second edition of *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, J. J. M. Tobin *et al.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997; 1st edn 1974).