

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

Second edition

This revised and updated *Companion* acquaints the student reader with the forms, contexts, critical and theatrical lives of the ten plays considered to be Shakespeare's tragedies. Thirteen essays, written by leading scholars in Britain and North America, address the ways in which Shakespearean tragedy originated, developed and diversified, as well as how it has fared on stage, as text and in criticism. Topics covered include the literary precursors of Shakespeare's tragedies, cultural backgrounds, subgenres and receptions of the plays. The book examines the four major tragedies and, in addition, *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*. Essays from the first edition have been fully revised to reflect the most up-to-date scholarship; the bibliography has been extensively updated; and four new chapters have been added, discussing Shakespearean form, Shakespeare and philosophy, Shakespeare's tragedies in performance, and Shakespeare and religion.

CLAIRE MCEACHERN is Professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is the author of *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590–1612* (1996), co-editor (with Debora Shuger) of *Religion and Culture in the English Renaissance* (1997), and editor of the Arden 3 *Much Ado About Nothing*, as well as several other Shakespeare plays for various series.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of the book.

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY

Second Edition

EDITED BY

CLAIRE McEACHERN



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-107-01977-5 — The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy 2nd Edition
 Edited by Claire McEachern
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
 a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
 education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107019775

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 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 & Assessment.

First published 2002

Second edition 2013

Reprinted 2018

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

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

The Cambridge companion to Shakespearean tragedy / edited by Claire McEachern. – Second edition.
 pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-01977-5 (Hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-64332-1 (Paperback)

1. Shakespeare, William, 1564–1616 – Tragedies – Handbooks, manuals, etc.

2. Tragedy – Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. McEachern, Claire, 1963–

PR2983.C28 2013

822.3'3–dc23

2013004142

ISBN 978-1-107-01977-5 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-64332-1 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment 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.

Contents

	<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
	<i>List of contributors</i>	viii
	<i>Preface to the second edition</i>	ix
	<i>Chronology</i>	xi
	<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xiii
1	What is a Shakespearean tragedy? <i>Colin Burrow</i>	1
2	The language of tragedy <i>Russ McDonald</i>	23
3	Tragedy in Shakespeare's career <i>David Bevington</i>	51
4	Shakespearean tragedy printed and performed <i>Michael Warren</i>	71
5	Religion and Shakespearean tragedy <i>Claire McEachern</i>	89
6	Tragedy and political authority <i>Michael Hattaway</i>	110
7	Gender and family <i>Catherine Belsey</i>	132
8	The tragic subject and its passions <i>Gail Kern Paster</i>	152
9	Tragedies of revenge and ambition <i>Robert N. Watson</i>	171
10	Shakespeare's tragedies of love <i>Catherine Bates</i>	195

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
11	Shakespeare's classical tragedies <i>Coppélia Kahn</i>	218
12	Why think about Shakespearean tragedy today? <i>Paul A. Kottman</i>	240
13	Shakespeare's tragedies in performance <i>Lucy Munro</i>	262
	<i>Select bibliography</i>	289
	<i>Index</i>	300

Illustrations

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1 <i>Hamlet</i> , 1603 Quarto. Sigs. H2v–H3r. Courtesy of the Huntington Library. | <i>page</i> 84 |
| 2 J. F. Ducis, <i>Othello</i> , Works 1913. <i>Oeuvres de J. F. Ducis, ornées du portrait de l'auteur, d'après m. Gérard, et de gravures d'après mm. Girodet et Desenne</i> , after p. 242: Othello standing, Hédelmone asleep. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library. | 268 |
| 3 Monadhil Daood's <i>Romeo and Juliet in Baghdad</i> , Swan Theatre, 2012. Photograph by Ellie Kurtz © Royal Shakespeare Company. | 269 |
| 4 <i>Macbeth</i> , Act 2. Sir Henry Irving as Macbeth, Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth; Lyceum Theatre, 26 January 1889/J. Jellicoe; H. Railton. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library. | 272 |
| 5 Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) as Hamlet in the 1899 production at the Adelphi Theatre. Private collection/The Stapleton Collection/The Bridgeman Art Library. | 279 |
| 6 Kate Eastwood Norris as Lady Macbeth in a 2008 production of <i>Macbeth</i> , directed by Teller and Aaron Posner, Folger Shakespeare Theatre/Two River Theater Company. Photograph by T. Charles Erikson. | 283 |

Contributors

- CATHERINE BATES, University of Warwick
CATHERINE BELSEY, University of Cardiff
DAVID BEVINGTON, University of Chicago
COLIN BURROW, University of Oxford
MICHAEL HATTAWAY, New York University in London
COPPÉLIA KAHN, Brown University
PAUL A. KOTTMAN, The New School for Social Research
RUSS MCDONALD, Goldsmiths, University of London
CLAIRE MCEACHERN, University of California, Los Angeles
LUCY MUNRO, Keele University
GAIL KERN PASTER, Director Emerita, Folger Shakespeare Library,
Washington, DC
MICHAEL WARREN, University of California, Santa Cruz
ROBERT N. WATSON, University of California, Los Angeles

Preface to the second edition

The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy seeks to acquaint the undergraduate reader with the forms, context, kinds and critical and theatrical lives of the ten plays we consider Shakespeare's tragedies: *Titus Andronicus*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*. The following thirteen chapters address the ways in which Shakespearean tragedy originated, developed and diversified, as well as how it has fared on stage, the page and in critical history.

Although the first edition of this volume has remained in print throughout the decade since it first appeared, the amount of Shakespeare criticism extant in the world has done nothing to abate its current volume and pace, just as Shakespeare's tragedies and works inspired by them continue to occupy a vital place in today's performance repertoire. Shakespeare's work remains as insistent a presence in our culture as ever, even as many of the historical or cultural frames of reference necessary to an informed understanding of his work ever recede from today's undergraduate audience. A revised edition of this text seemed not inopportune, and I was happy to respond to the request of the Press to ask the authors of the chapters to revisit their work with an eye to accounting to recent developments in the field. I was guided in this process by the reports commissioned by Cambridge University Press, which also urged the inclusion of four new chapters. I hope the result reflects an adequate response to their thoughtful suggestions, and also that the present list of contributors reflects the worldwide distribution achieved by the first edition.

The book is structured in four parts. The initial group of chapters takes up the forms and definitions of the genre which Shakespeare inherits and develops. Colin Burrow introduces the models of tragedy that may have influenced Shakespeare's composition and the ways these have influenced critical apprehension of the tragedies; Russ McDonald reviews the rhetorical resources which fuel Shakespeare's tragic voice; David Bevington

undertakes a holistic account of Shakespeare's repeated revisitations of the form throughout his career (often in plays not considered tragedies), and Michael Warren provides an account of the curious nature of the material texts on which critical castles are built.

The second section treats the Tudor–Stuart political and social identities which inform these plays. My own chapter considers the religious cultures of Shakespeare's moment, and Michael Hattaway the political. Catherine Belsey introduces us to the early modern family, and Gail Paster to the mysterious realm of the early modern body. The next three chapters, on 'themes', address traditional subgenres of Shakespearean tragedy – the plays of revenge and ambition, love, and classical history – albeit from new perspectives. R. N. Watson re-evaluates the contemporary historical and philosophical understandings of the revenge form; Catherine Bates explores the paradoxes of love and loss that tragedy forces, and Coppélia Kahn describes the ways in which early modern understandings of classical civilization inform the texture of the five Greco-Roman plays. The final two pieces treat the ways in which reading and playing have shaped our experience of these plays. Paul A. Kottman introduces the reader to the important role of Shakespeare in philosophical thought and the ways in which philosophical thinkers have served to shape our notion of Shakespeare. Lucy Munro provides an account of performance traditions, with special attention to the role of texts, spectacle and the actor's body; her chapter concludes with consideration of two hallmark features of Shakespearean tragedy, the soliloquy and the representation of violence.

While this book will profit from being read sequentially, each chapter is designed to be a self-contained study of its object. The authors have avoided a chapter-per-play approach, and thus the reader will encounter different plays in different lights and from different perspectives (*Titus Andronicus*, for instance, receives consideration in terms of the family, revenge tragedy and classical models). At the same time, care has been taken to provide sustained coverage of each tragedy somewhere in the volume (the index reveals these concentrations). This prismatic design, in which a given play appears from multiple vantage points, is intended to avoid the restriction of the identity of any one play to any particular critical category or meaning, and urge the reader to the juxtapositions of an organic and cross-referenced critical appreciation.

Chronology

Dates given for plays are of first performance unless otherwise specified; most of these dates are approximate and those cited in individual chapters of the *Companion* may differ. For a fuller record of plays in the period, see the *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Braunmuller and Hattaway.

- 1564 Shakespeare born in Stratford-upon-Avon
- 1566 Red Lion playhouse opens
- 1576 The Theatre opens
- 1577 Curtain playhouse opens; Blackfriars Theatre opens
- 1581 *Seneca His Tenne Tragedies* (trans. Newton) published
- 1582 Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway; the licence is issued on November 27 and the first child (Susanna) is born six months later
- 1585 Shakespeare's twin son and daughter, Hamnet and Judith, born
- c. 1586 Shakespeare leaves Stratford; nothing is known for certain of his life between this date and 1592, by which time he is in London
- 1587 Rose playhouse opens. Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*; Marlowe, *Tamburlaine 1* and *2*
- 1590 Anon., *King Leir*
- c. 1591 Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*
- c. 1592 Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, *Edward II*
- 1593 Marlowe, *The Massacre at Paris*
- c. 1594 Around this time Shakespeare becomes a sharer in the Chamberlain's Men. Swan Theatre built
- c. 1595 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*
- c. 1599 Globe Theatre opens; Shakespeare's principal clown, Will Kempe, leaves the company; his successor is Robert Armin. Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*
- 1600 Fortune Theatre built. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

- 1603 Queen Elizabeth dies and is succeeded by James I, who takes the acting companies under royal patronage; Shakespeare's company, the Chamberlain's Men, becomes the King's Men. Jonson, *Sejanus*
- 1605 Shakespeare, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, *Othello*
- 1606 Marston, *The Revenger's Tragedy*; Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*
- c. 1608 Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*
- c. 1610 Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy*
- 1611 Jonson, *Catiline*; Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy*
- 1612 Webster, *The White Devil*
- 1614 Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*
- 1616 Shakespeare dies in Stratford
- 1623 Publication of the First Folio, the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays

Abbreviations

Shakespeare's works

Cor. *Coriolanus*
Ham. *Hamlet*
H5 *King Henry the Fifth*
JC *Julius Caesar*
Lear *King Lear*
Luc. *The Rape of Lucrece*
Mac. *Macbeth*
Oth. *Othello*
R3 *King Richard the Third*
Rom. *Romeo and Juliet*
Tim. *Timon of Athens*
Tit. *Titus Andronicus*

General

F Folio
Q1 First Quarto
Q2 Second Quarto
s.d. stage direction