

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

GENERAL EDITOR Brian Gibbons, *University of Münster*

ASSOCIATE GENERAL EDITOR
A. R. Braunmuller, University of California, Los Angeles

THE TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

For this updated critical edition of *King Lear*, Lois Potter has written a completely new introduction, taking account of recent productions and reinterpretations of the play, with particular emphasis on its afterlife in global performance and adaptation.

The edition retains the Textual Analysis of the previous editor, Jay L. Halio, shortened and with a new preface by Brian Gibbons. Professor Halio, accepting that we have two versions of equal authority, the one derived from Shakespeare's rough drafts, the other from a manuscript used in the playhouses during the seventeenth century, chooses the Folio as the text for this edition. He explains the differences between the two versions and alerts the reader to the rival claims of the quarto by means of a sampling of parallel passages in the Textual Analysis and by an appendix which contains annotated passages unique to the quarto.



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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 TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

Third Edition

Edited by

JAY L. HALIO

Emeritus Professor of English, University of Delaware

With a new introduction by

LOIS POTTER

Emeritus Professor of English, University of Delaware

Textual Introduction edited, with a new preface, by BRIAN GIBBONS





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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

This edition of *King Lear* retains the text established by Jay L. Halio, which is based on the version published in 1623 in the collection of Shakespeare's plays known as the First Folio. It also retains the magisterial textual introduction, slightly shortened by General Editor Brian Gibbons, in which Professor Halio shows the complexity of the arguments about the relationship of the Folio text to the one published in 1608. I have also retained Professor Halio's notes.

My contribution has been the writing of a new critical introduction. In doing this, I have been conscious of two enormous differences between my situation and that of my predecessor. First, my readers will have access, on the internet, to far more information than a single introduction can summarize. Second, much current academic study is 'presentist' – that is, more concerned with the reception of a work in the present than with how it might have looked to its original public.

I have tried to indicate how *King Lear* has been transformed over the centuries in accordance with changing expectations and desires. This has meant paying more attention than usual to adaptations of the play and to modern productions that have challenged what they took to be its attitude to family, gender, authority, and religion. This is not a definitive account of *King Lear*; it simply indicates the richness of creative and critical responses that it has inspired. Professor Halio's notes to the play offer a more consistent interpretation and thus provide an alternative to my approach. I hope that readers will arrive at their own interpretations of the play by choosing among the various alternatives presented here. There are as many *Lears* as there are productions and critical interpretations of the play. Some of these are 'wrong' in the sense that they approach the play from perspectives that can be shown not to have existed when it was first performed, and yet 'right' in that they speak to the needs of a modern reader or spectator. It is important to bear this distinction in mind.

Professor Halio, a former colleague at the University of Delaware, has been consistently generous in his response to my work. Brian Gibbons, the General Editor of this series, has been very helpful, as has Emily Hockley of Cambridge University Press. I have benefitted greatly from their suggestions. Thanks also to Leigh Mueller, my copy-editor, and to Margaret Berrill, for reading the proofs. For permission to use their photographs, I thank the British Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at The New York Public Library, the Stratford Festival of Canada, Mark Douet, Jonathan Keenan, and Sara Krulwich. I am particularly grateful to Nancy Meckler for helping me get a photograph of her 2017 production for Shakespeare's Globe.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In the quarto and the Folio, *King Lear* presents two significantly different versions of Shakespeare's play, one closer to the composition as he originally conceived it (Q), the other closer to an actual staged production after revision (F). The two versions involve a host of variant readings in addition to unique passages, alternative speech assignments, missing stage directions, and other divergences, besides numerous printer's errors. Editors have hitherto thought that by conflating, or splicing, the two versions they could approach what they assumed to be the 'ideal' form of the play, apparently lost; but this belief violates theatrical tradition and otherwise has little to support it.

Establishing the definitive text of such a fluid enterprise as a play is in its evolution from conception through performance under a variety of exigencies becomes impossible, unless one arbitrarily decides (as past scholars usually have done) that the last published version in the author's lifetime in which the author had a hand is 'definitive'. Questions about the soundness of this procedure aside, what if the author had no hand in the publication of the work? Shakespeare was dead before half of his plays were published, and it is uncertain what role, if any, he played in the publication of any of the others, including King Lear in 1608. Although he oversaw the printing of his long poems, Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece, dedicated to his patron Southampton, he apparently cared much less about the publication of his dramatic works, leaving to generations of scholars the fascinating problems of establishing an authentic, if not definitive, edition of his plays. An authentic, not definitive, edition of King Lear is the goal of this one. Founded on a fresh examination of the texts as well as on the best available scholarship and criticism regarding the text, the total historical context (including theatrical data), and the study of extant sources, this edition tries to provide a clear, up-to-date, readable, and reliable version based on the Folio text of Shakespeare's King Lear. Throughout, the emphasis is upon the play as a play, not just a literary document, though it is that too, of course, and the Commentary accordingly ignores neither aspect of the work.

Modern editors of Shakespeare owe enormous debts to the countless scholars, editors, critics, and theatre professionals who have preceded them. Wherever possible, I have tried to record specific debts in footnotes or Commentary, but more generalized and personal debts must be acknowledged here. Many friends and scholars have lent assistance by reviewing various parts of the typescript in preparation and making invaluable suggestions and often corrections of error or misunderstanding. Donald Foster, Trevor Howard-Hill, and Gary Taylor all read the Textual Analysis in its original form; it appears here much changed as a result of their suggestions and those of Philip Brockbank who, until his death, served as General Editor of the New Cambridge Shakespeare. Thomas Clayton, Richard Knowles, and George Walton Williams read the original *and* the revised versions of that analysis – a service well

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Preface to the First Edition

beyond the call of collegiality and friendship. Indeed, Thomas Clayton read all of the Introduction, except the stage history, which Marvin Rosenberg read in an earlier form. Philip Brockbank also vetted the original version of the section on dates and sources, which (like the Textual Analysis) has been entirely reorganized and revised according to his recommendations. I am sure, had he lived, he would have made further recommendations concerning other sections of the Introduction, which then would have profited from his advice and counsel. Since his death, Brian Gibbons, who has succeeded him as General Editor, has been of great assistance, offering many suggestions and not a few corrections of detail. It was, in fact, his suggestion to follow the example of John Hazel Smith's edition of Bussy D'Ambois, and include a sampling of parallel passages from quarto and Folio to highlight the kinds of changes that occur between them. The Associate General Editors, Robin Hood and A. R. Braunmuller, have also been most helpful in making suggestions and corrections. Sarah Stanton has advised me on various aspects of format and procedure, and Paul Chipchase's copyediting has been both thorough and acutely perceptive. To all of these dedicated professionals, I express my gratitude and exempt them from any errors or infelicities that remain. They are of my own making and my own responsibility.

Several scholars have generously permitted me to see their work in typescript or in proof. Among them are J. Leeds Barroll, Peter Blayney, Frank Brownlow, G. Blakemore Evans, F. D. Hoeniger, Arthur King, Alexander Leggatt, and Stanley Wells. Others have kindly sent me offprints or pre-prints of articles or have answered queries concerning some aspect of *King Lear*. These scholars have demonstrated once again that Shakespearean – indeed, all – scholarship at its best is always a collaborative venture.

I must also express gratitude to the following libraries and their staffs, who have been unfailingly co-operative and helpful: the University of Delaware Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the British Library, the Shakespeare Centre Library, and the Library of Congress. Several graduate students and secretarial staff have assisted in various aspects of research or preparation: Kate Rodowsky, Patience Philips, Susan Savini, Suzanne Potts, and Victoria Gray cheerfully carried out duties that must often have seemed at least tedious. To the Trustees of the University of Delaware, I owe thanks for awarding me a sabbatical leave in the autumn term of 1987 and for a research grant in the summer of 1988. Such assistance has greatly facilitated work on this edition.

J. L. H.



ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Shakespeare's plays, when cited in this edition, are abbreviated in a style modified slightly from that used in the *Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare*. Other editions of Shakespeare are abbreviated under the editor's surname (Theobald, Duthie) unless they are the work of more than one editor. In such cases, an abbreviated series title is used (Cam.). When more than one edition by the same editor is cited, later editions are discriminated with a raised figure (Rowe²). All quotations from Shakespeare, except those from *King Lear*, use the text and lineation of *The Riverside Shakespeare*, under the general editorship of G. Blakemore Evans.

1. Shakespeare's Plays

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

The First Part of King Henry the Fourth
 The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth

H₅ King Henry the Fifth

The First Part of King Henry the Sixth
 The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth
 The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth

H8 King Henry the Eighth

JC Julius Caesar John King John Lear King Lear

LLL Love's Labour's Lost

Mac. Macbeth MM Measure

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

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Temp. The Tempest

TGVThe Two Gentlemen of Verona

Tim. Timon of Athens Tit Titus Andronicus TNTwelfth Night

TNKThe Two Noble Kinsmen Tro. Troilus and Cressida Wiv. The Merry Wives of Windsor

WTThe Winter's Tale

2. Other Works Cited and General References

E. A. Abbott, A Shakespearian Grammar, 1894 Abbott

Bell's Shakespeare [Francis Gentleman], note to King Lear in Bell's Edition of

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Berlin Normand Berlin, The Secret Cause: A Discussion of Tragedy, 1981

Bevington King Lear, ed. David Bevington, 1988 (Bantam)

Blayney Peter W. M. Blayney, The Texts of 'King Lear' and Their Origins, 2

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Edmond Malone, 21 vols., 1821

Bradlev A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, 2nd edn, 1905 Bratton King Lear, ed. J. S. Bratton, 1987 (Plays in Performance)

Brockbank Philip Brockbank, 'Upon Such Sacrifices', The British Academy

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Cercignani Fausto Cercignani, Shakespeare's Works

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Rosalie Colie, 'The energies of endurance: biblical echo in King Colie

Lear', in Some Facets, pp. 117-44

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1858

Colman E. A. M. Colman, The Dramatic Use of Bawdy in Shakespeare, 1974

conj. conjecture corr.

Cotgrave Randall Cotgrave, A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues, 1611



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Duthie King Lear: A Critical Edition, ed. George Ian Duthie, 1949

Dyce The Works of William Shakespeare, ed. Alexander Dyce, 6 vols., 1857

ELR English Literary Renaissance

Elton William Elton, 'King Lear' and the Gods, 1966

F Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, 1623

(First Folio)

F2 Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, 1632

(Second Folio)

F3 Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, 1663–

4 (Third Folio)

F4 Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, 1685

(Fourth Folio)

FQ Edmond Spenser, The Faerie Queene, 1596

Furness King Lear, ed. Horace Howard Furness, 1880 (New Variorum)
Globe The Globe Shakespeare, ed. W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright, 1864
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Greg, SFF W. W. Greg, The Shakespeare First Folio, 1955

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editorial annotation', in Clifford Leech and J. M. R. Margeson

(eds.), Shakespeare 1971, Toronto, 1972, pp. 244-59

MLR Modern Language Review

Montaigne The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne, trans. John Florio, 6 vols.,

1897 (Temple Classics)

MP Modern Philology

Muir King Lear, ed. Kenneth Muir, 1963 (Arden)

NGQ Notes and Queries

Noble Richmond Noble, Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge, 1935

NS King Lear, ed. George Ian Duthie and John Dover Wilson, 1960,

1968 (New Shakespeare)

OED Oxford English Dictionary

Onions C. T. Onions, A Shakespeare Glossary, enlarged and revised, Robert

D. Eagleson, 1986

Oxford William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, gen. eds. Stanley Wells

and Gary Taylor, 1986

Partridge Eric Partridge, Shakespeare's Bawdy, 3rd edn, 1969
PBSA Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America

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Q M. William Shake-speare: HIS True Chronicle Historie of the life and

death of King Lear and his three Daughters, 1608 (first quarto)
M. William Shake-speare, HIS True Chronicle Historie of the life and

death of King Lear, and his three Daughters [1619] (second quarto)

Qq quartos

02

Reibetanz, The Lear World, Toronto, 1977

RES Review of English Studies

Riverside The Riverside Shakespeare, gen. ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 1974

Rosenberg Marvin Rosenberg, The Masks of 'King Lear', 1972

Rowe The Works of Mr William Shakespeare, ed. Nicholas Rowe, 6 vols.,

1709, V



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8 vols., 1714

Rubenstein Frankie Rubenstein, A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and

Their Significance, 1984

Salingar Leo Salingar, Dramatic Form in Shakespeare and the Jacobeans,

1986

SB Studies in Bibliography

Schmidt Alexander Schmidt, A Shakespeare-Lexicon, 3rd edn, Breslau, 1901

Schmidt 1879 King Lear, ed. Alexander Schmidt, Berlin, 1879

SD stage direction

SFNL Shakespeare on Film Newsletter

SH speech heading

Shaheen Naseeb Shaheen, Biblical References in Shakespeare's Tragedies, 1987 Sisson C. J. Sisson, New Readings in Shakespeare, 2 vols., 1956, 11 Some Facets Rosalie L. Colie and F. T. Flahiff (eds.), Some Facets of 'King Lear':

Essays in Prismatic Criticism, 1974

SP Studies in Philology

Spurgeon Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us,

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SQ Shakespeare Quarterly S.St. Shakespeare Studies S.Sur. Shakespeare Survey

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