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.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

*The Comedy of Errors* has been popular on the stage during the last three centuries and has proved itself admirably suited to adaptation as pure farce and musical spectacle. For this updated edition, Ros King has revised the text and commentary and provided a completely new Introduction, in which she argues that the play cannot be regarded merely as a farcical romp based on a classical model, but belongs to the critically misunderstood genre of tragicomedy. In stressing the seriousness which underlies the story, the Introduction picks out the play’s religious imagery for special attention, while also engaging fully with the play’s deft lightness of touch and its continuing popularity in the theatre. A fresh Reading List guides the reader towards further study.
THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKE

All's Well That Ends Well, edited by Russell Fraser
Antony and Cleopatra, edited by David Bevington
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Cymbeline, edited by Martin Butler
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The First Part of King Henry VI, edited by Michael Hattaway
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The Third Part of King Henry VI, edited by Michael Hattaway
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King John, edited by L. A. Beaurlne
The Tragedy of King Lear, edited by Jay L. Halio
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King Richard III, edited by Janis Lull
Love's Labour's Lost, edited by William C. Carroll
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Measure for Measure, edited by Brian Gibbons
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The Merry Wives of Windsor, edited by David Crane
A Midsummer Night's Dream, edited by R. A. Foakes
Much Ado About Nothing, edited by F. H. Mares
Othello, edited by Norman Sanders
Pericles, edited by Doreen DelVecchio and Antony Hammond
The Poems, edited by John Roe
Romeo and Juliet, edited by G. Blakemore Evans
The Sonnets, edited by G. Blakemore Evans
The Taming of the Shrew, edited by Ann Thompson
The Tempest, edited by David Lindley
Timon of Athens, edited by Karl Klein
Titus Andronicus, edited by Alan Hughes
Troilus and Cressida, edited by Anthony B. Dawson
Twelfth Night, edited by Elizabeth Story Donno
The Two Gentlemen of Verona, edited by Kurt Schlueter
The Two Noble Kinsmen, edited by Robert Kean Turner and Patricia Tatspaugh
The Winter's Tale, edited by Susan Snyder and Deborah T. Curren-Aquino

THE EARLY QUARTOS

The First Quarto of Hamlet, edited by Kathleen O. Irace
The First Quarto of King Henry IV, edited by Andrew Gurr
The First Quarto of King Lear, edited by Jay L. Halio
The First Quarto of King Richard III, edited by Peter Davison
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 COMEDY OF ERRORS
Updated edition

Edited by
T. S. DORSCH

Revised and with a new Introduction by
ROS KING
University of Southampton
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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

We all learn from those who came before us. How can an editor of today adequately express his indebtedness to the prodigious labours of such scholars as Chambers, Greg, and Bullough? I hope that, when I have drawn upon the work of earlier editors and critics, I have never neglected to acknowledge my debt.

Of recent editions of *The Comedy of Errors* I have found most helpful those of Quiller-Couch (the New Shakespeare), R. A. Foakes (the Arden Shakespeare), Stanley Wells (the New Penguin Shakespeare), and G. Blakemore Evans (the *Riverside Shakespeare*).

I must give special thanks to Professor John W. Velz, of the University of Texas at Austin, with whom I have discussed aspects of the play. Mrs E. E. Morse, of Dove Cottage, read my introduction in manuscript and suggested some improvements. My son Alan Dorsch provided some helpful historical material. I owe much to students in universities in England, Australia, Germany, and America with whom I have, in tutorials and seminars, dissected the play; even more to colleagues in these universities who have put their knowledge of Shakespeare at my service.

I must also express my gratitude to Mrs K. Stenhouse, of the Department of French at Durham, and to Mrs Sue Jones, of Dove Nest, Windermere, who have triumphed over my difficult handwriting and produced an elegant typescript for the press. Miss Sarah Stanton, Miss Janet Coombes, and Mr Paul Chipchase, of the Cambridge University Press, have given me invaluable help in the shaping of this volume, especially Mr Chipchase as my copy-editor. They too have earned my warm thanks.

My greatest debt is to Philip Brockbank, in whom I, as a contributor to the series, have found everything that could be desired in a General Editor.

T.S.D.
1988
I would like to thank Brian Gibbons for asking me to pay attention to this extraordinary play and for his extremely helpful comments, and Sarah Stanton at Cambridge University Press for her firm support. Sections of this introduction dealing with matters of religion were given as a paper at the Tudor Symposium conference ‘Writing and reform in sixteenth-century England’ organised by Mike Pincombe at the University of Newcastle, September 2002. I am immensely grateful to Susan Brock and the staff at the Shakespeare Centre Library, and those at the Theatre Museum, for their help in locating pictures and other archival material, as well as to Globe Research and Sara Wilbourne at Shakespeare Santa Cruz. Charles Edelman, Mike Edwards and Mike Jensen all answered queries, Nigel Alexander, as ever, read several drafts, while Fred Owens kept my nose to the grindstone. To all, much thanks.

Ros King
2003
# ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

1. Shakespeare's plays

The abbreviated titles of Shakespeare's plays are those of the *Harvard Concordance*, a few of them modified by the General Editors. Other editions of Shakespeare are abbreviated under the editor’s surname (Malone, Rann) unless they are the work of more than one editor. In such cases an abbreviated series name is used (NS, Var. 1778). Except where it has been necessary to quote from the Folio, quotations and line-references throughout this edition are from The *Riverside Shakespeare*, edited by G. Blakemore Evans, 1974, on which the *Harvard Concordance* is based.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Title</th>
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<td><em>As You Like It</em></td>
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<td>Rom.</td>
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<td>Shr.</td>
<td><em>The Taming of the Shrew</em></td>
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<td>STM</td>
<td><em>Sir Thomas More</em></td>
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<td>Temp.</td>
<td><em>The Tempest</em></td>
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<td>TGV</td>
<td><em>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim.</td>
<td><em>Timon of Athens</em></td>
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<td>Tit.</td>
<td><em>Titus Andronicus</em></td>
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</tbody>
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The Comedy of Errors

TN Twelfth Night
TNK The Two Noble Kinsmen
Tro. Troilus and Cressida
Wiv. The Merry Wives of Windsor
WT The Winter's Tale

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Capell Mr William Shakespeare his Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, ed. Edward Capell, 1768
Chamber Accounts See E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, 4 vols., 1923
Coleridge Coleridge’s Writings on Shakespeare, ed. Terence Hawkes, 1959
Collier The Works of William Shakespeare, ed. John Payne Collier, 1842–4
conj. conjecture
Cunningham The Comedy of Errors, ed. Henry Cunningham (Arden Shakespeare), 1907, reprinted 1926
D&P Richard Edwards, Damon and Pythias, 1571 (see King)
DNB The Dictionary of National Biography
Dowden Edward Dowden, Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art, 8th edn, 1886
Eph. Ephesians
F Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies, 1623 (First Folio)
Abbreviations and conventions

F2 Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies, 1632 (Second Folio)
F3 Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies, 1664 (Third Folio)
F4 Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies, 1685 (Fourth Folio)
Ff The four Folios


Foakes The Comedy of Errors, ed. R. A. Foakes, 1962 (Arden Shakespeare)
Gen. Genesis
Greg, Gesta Gesta Grayorum: or the History of the High and Mighty Prince Henry, Prince of Purpoole. . . who Reigned and Died, A.D. 1594, ed. W. W. Greg (Malone Soc. Reprints), 1914
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Matt. Matthew
The Comedy of Errors

Method of Study


Miola, CofE


Miola, Comedy


Muir

Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare's Sources, 1: Comedies and Tragedies, 1957

Nashe

The Works of Thomas Nashe, ed. R. B. McKerrow, 5 vols., 1904–10

Nelson


Noble

Richmond Noble, Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge, 1935

NS

The Comedy of Errors, ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, 1922

Odell

G. C. D. Odell, Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving, 2 vols., 1920

OED

Oxford English Dictionary

Onions

C. T. Onions, A Shakespeare Glossary, rev. edn., 1919

Pelican


Pigman


Pope


Rann


Richle


Riverside

G. Blakemore Evans (ed.), The Riverside Shakespeare, 1974

Rouse


Rowe

The Works of Mr William Shakespeare, ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709

Rowe2

The Works of Mr William Shakespeare, ed. Nicholas Rowe, 2nd edn, 1790

SD

stage direction

SH

speech heading

Singer

The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare, ed. S. W. Singer, 1826

Sisson

C. J. Sisson, New Readings in Shakespeare, 2 vols., 1956

Stationers' Register


Staunton

The Plays of William Shakespeare, ed. Howard Staunton, 1858–60

Steevens

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subst.

substantially

Terence


Theobald

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Thirlby

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Var. 1778

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Walker

William S. Walker, A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare, 1860

Warburton

The Works of Shakespeare, ed. William Warburton, 1747

Wells

The Comedy of Errors, ed. Stanley Wells, 1972 (New Penguin Shakespeare)

Werstine


Wilson

F. P. Wilson, The Plague in Shakespeare’s London, 1927

Wright


Biblical quotations are taken from the Geneva Bible, 1589