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# ROMEO AND JULIET

UPDATED EDITION

Edited by G. Blakemore Evans

# ROMEO AND JULIET

Updated edition

*Edited by*

**G. BLAKEMORE EVANS**

*Cabot Professor of English Literature, Emeritus, Harvard University*

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# THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

GENERAL EDITOR: Brian Gibbons

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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.

## ROMEO AND JULIET

Professor Evans helps the reader to visualise the stage action of *Romeo and Juliet*, a vital element in the play's significance and useful to students approaching it for the first time. The history of the play in the theatre is accompanied by illustrations of notable productions from the eighteenth century onwards. A lucid commentary alerts the reader to the difficulties of language, thought and staging.

For this updated edition Thomas Moisan has added a new section to the Introduction which takes account of the number of important professional theatre productions and the large output of scholarly criticism on the play which have appeared in recent years. The Reading List has also been revised and augmented.

## THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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*The Taming of the Shrew*, edited by Ann Thompson  
*The Tempest*, edited by David Lindley  
*Titus Andronicus*, edited by Alan Hughes  
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*The First Quarto of King Lear*, edited by Jay L. Halio  
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*The Taming of a Shrew*, edited by Stephen Roy Miller  
*The First Quarto of Othello*, edited by Scott McMillin  
*The First Quarto of King Henry V*, edited by Andrew Gurr

## PREFACE

Anyone who undertakes to edit *Romeo and Juliet* today owes a heavy debt to the whole editorial tradition, both textual and critical, especially to the work of Theobald, Capell, W. A. Wright, Dowden, Kittredge, Dover Wilson, G. I. Duthie, Richard Hosley and George W. Williams. I have tried as fully as possible to acknowledge this debt. But I must add a particular word of thanks to Professor Brian Gibbons, an Associate General Editor of this series, whose own Arden edition of *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in 1980, shortly after my work was under way, and to Professor Philip Brockbank, the General Editor. Their example and careful criticism, as well as their patience, though sorely tried, have been a source of great comfort and support.

I am, of course, deeply indebted to other friends and colleagues – to Dr Marie Edel, Professors John Klause, Richard Marius, Charles Shattuck and John H. Smith, all of whom read substantial parts of the manuscript and offered much helpful criticism, and to Professors Henry Hatfield, Albert Lord, Harry Levin, Marvin Spevack, Donald Stone and John Tobin, each of whom assisted me with information when I most needed it. My special thanks must also go to Miss Anne Macaulay, my secretary, and to my former student, Dr Kevin Cope, who checked the text and textual collations.

The Houghton Library and the Harvard Theatre Collection have been unfailingly helpful and have generously granted me permission to draw on some of their riches for most of the photographic illustrations. I am particularly grateful to Dr Jeanne Newlin, Curator of the Theatre Collection, and Miss Sandra LaFleur for their aid in assembling these illustrations. I also wish to thank Miss Sarah Stanton, Mr Michael Black, and, especially, Mr Paul Chipchase of the Cambridge University Press for their continual good offices in wrestling with a large and intractable manuscript and reducing it to something resembling form and substance. Some welcome financial aid was granted to me by the Harvard Graduate Society and the Hyder E. Rollins Memorial Fund.

Finally, as always, my deepest debt, and most lasting, is to my wife, whose support and companionship continue to be a 'bounty as boundless as the sea'.

G. B. E.

*Harvard University*

# ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

## 1. Shakespeare's plays

The abbreviated titles of Shakespeare's plays have been modified from those used in the *Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare*. All quotations and line references to plays other than *Romeo and Juliet* are to G. Blakemore Evans (ed.), *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1974, on which the *Concordance* is based.

<i>Ado</i>	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
<i>AWW</i>	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
<i>AYLI</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>
<i>Cym.</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>
<i>Err.</i>	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
<i>Ham.</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>
<i>1H4</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>2H4</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>H5</i>	<i>King Henry the Fifth</i>
<i>1H6</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>2H6</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>3H6</i>	<i>The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>H8</i>	<i>King Henry the Eighth</i>
<i>JC</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>King John</i>
<i>LLL</i>	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
<i>Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>Mac.</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
<i>MND</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>MV</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
<i>Oth.</i>	<i>Othello</i>
<i>Per.</i>	<i>Pericles</i>
<i>R2</i>	<i>King Richard the Second</i>
<i>R3</i>	<i>King Richard the Third</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>Shr.</i>	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
<i>STM</i>	<i>Sir Thomas More</i>
<i>Temp.</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>
<i>TGV</i>	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
<i>Tit.</i>	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
<i>TN</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>TNK</i>	<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>

<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
<i>Wiv.</i>	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
<i>WT</i>	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>

## 2. Editions

Alexander	<i>Works</i> , ed. Peter Alexander, 1951
Bevington	<i>Works</i> , ed. David Bevington, 1980
Boswell	<i>Works</i> , ed. James Boswell, 1821
Bryant	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Signet), ed. J. A. Bryant, 1964
Cam.	<i>Works</i> (Cambridge), ed. W. G. Clark, John Glover and W. A. Wright, 1863–6
Cam. <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> (Cambridge), ed. W. A. Wright, 1891–3
Capell	<i>Works</i> , ed. Edward Capell, [1768]
Collier	<i>Works</i> , ed. John P. Collier, 1842–4
Collier <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , 2nd edn, 1853
Cowden Clarke	<i>Works</i> , ed. Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, 1864–8
Craig	<i>Works</i> (Oxford), ed. W. J. Craig, 1891
Crofts	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Warwick), ed. J. E. Crofts, 1936
Daniel	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , ed. P. A. Daniel, 1875
Deighton	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , ed. K. Deighton, 1893
Delius	<i>Werke</i> , ed. Nicolaus Delius, 1854–60
Dowden	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Arden), ed. E. Dowden, 1900
Durham	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Yale), ed. W. H. Durham, 1917
Dyce	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 1857
Dyce <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , 2nd edn, 1864–7
F	First Folio, <i>Works</i> , 1623
F <sup>2</sup>	Second Folio, <i>Works</i> , 1632
F <sup>3</sup>	Third Folio, <i>Works</i> , 1664
F <sup>4</sup>	Fourth Folio, <i>Works</i> , 1685
Furness	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Variorum), ed. H. H. Furness, 1871
Gibbons	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Arden), ed. Brian Gibbons, 1980
Globe	<i>Works</i> , ed. W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright, 1864
Hankins	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Pelican), ed. J. E. Hankins, 1960
Hanmer	<i>Works</i> , ed. Thomas Hanmer, 1743–4
Hazlitt	<i>Works</i> , ed. William Hazlitt, 1852
Hoppe	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , ed. H. R. Hoppe, 1947
Hosley	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (New Yale), ed. Richard Hosley, 1954
Houghton	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (New Clarendon), ed. R. E. C. Houghton, 1947
Hudson	<i>Works</i> , ed. Henry Hudson, 1851–6
Johnson	<i>Works</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson, 1765
Keightley	<i>Works</i> , ed. Thomas Keightley, 1864
Kittredge	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , ed. G. L. Kittredge, 1940
Knight	<i>Works</i> , ed. Charles Knight, 1838–43
Malone	<i>Works</i> , ed. Edmond Malone, 1790
Mommsen	<i>Romeo und Julia</i> , ed. Tycho Mommsen, 1859
Munro	<i>Works</i> (London), ed. John Munro, 1958
NS	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (New Shakespeare), ed. J. Dover Wilson and G. I. Duthie, 1955
Neilson	<i>Works</i> , ed. W. A. Neilson, 1906



Pope	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 1723–5
Pope <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , 2nd edn, 1728
Q1	First quarto, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , 1597
Q2	Second quarto, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , 1599
Q3	Third quarto, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , 1609
Q4	Fourth quarto, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , n.d. [c. 1622]
Q5	Fifth quarto, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , 1637
Rann	<i>Works</i> , ed. Joseph Rann, 1768–[94]
Ridley	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (New Temple), ed. M. R. Ridley, 1935
Riverside	<i>The Riverside Shakespeare</i> , textual ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 1974
Rolfe	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , ed. W. J. Rolfe, 1879
Rowe	<i>Works</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709
Rowe <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , 2nd edn, 1709
Rowe <sup>3</sup>	<i>Works</i> , 3rd edn, 1714
Singer	<i>Works</i> , ed. S. W. Singer, 1826
Singer <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , 2nd edn, 1855–6
Sisson	<i>Works</i> , ed. C. J. Sisson, 1954
Spencer	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (New Penguin), ed. T. J. B. Spencer, 1967
Spevack	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Blackfriars), ed. Marvin Spevack, 1970
Staunton	<i>Works</i> , ed. Howard Staunton, 1858–60
Steevens	<i>Works</i> , ed. George Steevens, 1773 (with Johnson), 1778, 1793
Theobald	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1733
Theobald <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , 2nd edn, 1740
Ulrici	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , ed. H. Ulrici, 1853
Warburton	<i>Works</i> , ed. William Warburton, 1747
White	<i>Works</i> , ed. Richard Grant White, 1857–66
Williams	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , ed. G. W. Williams, 1964

### 3. Other works, periodicals, general references

Abbott	E. A. Abbott, <i>A Shakespearian Grammar</i> , 1869 (references are to numbered paragraphs)
Allen	see Furness
<i>AN&amp;Q</i>	<i>American Notes and Queries</i>
Bailey	Samuel Bailey, see Cam. <sup>2</sup>
Becket	Andrew Becket, see Cam. <sup>2</sup>
Brooke	Arthur Brooke, <i>The Tragickall Historie of Romeus and Juliet</i> (1562)
Bulloch	John Bulloch, <i>Studies on the Text of Shakespeare</i> , 1878
Bullough	Geoffrey Bullough, <i>Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare</i> , 1, 1957
Burton	Robert Burton, <i>The Anatomy of Melancholy</i> , ed. A. R. Shilleto, 3 vols., 1896
Capell	Edward Capell, <i>Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare</i> , II, 1780
Carr	see Cam. <sup>2</sup>
Chambers	E. K. Chambers, <i>The Elizabethan Stage</i> , 4 vols., 1923
Chapman	George Chapman, <i>Comedies</i> , ed. Allan Holaday et al., 1970; <i>Tragedies</i> , ed. T. M. Parrott, 1910
Chaucer	Geoffrey Chaucer, <i>Works</i> , ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd edn, 1957
Collier MS.	in Perkins's Second Folio (1632), Huntington Library
conj.	conjecture

- Cotgrave Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611)
- Crow John Crow, 'Editing and emending', *Essays and Studies*, 1955
- Daniel Samuel Daniel, *Poems and 'A Defence of Ryme'*, ed. A. C. Sprague, 1930
- Daniel, P. A. P. A. Daniel, *Notes and Conjectural Emendations... in Shakespeare's Plays*, 1870
- Dekker Thomas Dekker, *Dramatic Works*, ed. Fredson Bowers, 4 vols., 1953-61
- Drayton Michael Drayton, *Works*, ed. J. W. Hebel, 5 vols., 1931-41
- Douai MS. MS. of *Romeo and Juliet* (1694) in Douai Public Library
- Duthie see NS
- ELN *English Language Notes*
- Farmer Richard Farmer, see Cam.<sup>2</sup>
- Fleay F. G. Fleay, see Cam.<sup>2</sup>
- Franz Wilhelm Franz, *Die Sprache Shakespeares*, 1939 (4th edn of *Shakespeare-grammatik*)
- G Geneva translation of the Bible (1560)
- Gascoigne George Gascoigne, *The Posies* (1575), ed. J. W. Cunliffe, 1907
- Golding Arthur Golding, *The .xv. Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis* (1567), ed. W. H. D. Rouse, 1904
- Greene Robert Greene, *Works*, ed. A. B. Grosart, 15 vols., 1881-6
- Greg W. W. Greg, *Principles of Emendation in Shakespeare* (British Academy Lecture), 1928
- Hazlitt W. C. Hazlitt, see Cam.<sup>2</sup>
- Heath Benjamin Heath, *Revisal of Shakespeare's Text*, 1765
- Hoppe H. R. Hoppe, *The Bad Quarto of 'Romeo and Juliet'*, 1948
- Jackson Zachary Jackson, see Cam.<sup>2</sup>
- JEGP *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
- Jonson Ben Jonson, *Works*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, 11 vols., 1925-52
- Kellner Leon Kellner, *Restoring Shakespeare*, 1925
- Kermode Frank Kermode, see Riverside
- Kinnear B. G. Kinnear, *Cruces Shakespearianae*, 1883
- KJ King James translation of the Bible (1611)
- Kyd Thomas Kyd, *Works*, ed. F. S. Boas, 1901
- Lettsom W. N. Lettsom, see Cam.<sup>2</sup>
- Lyly John Lyly, *Works*, ed. R. W. Bond, 3 vols., 1902
- Mahood M. M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay*, 1957
- Marlowe Christopher Marlowe, *Works*, ed. Fredson Bowers, 2 vols., 1973
- Mason J. Monk Mason, *Comments on... Shakespeare's Plays*, rev. edn, 1807
- Mitford John Mitford, see Cam.<sup>2</sup>
- MLN *Modern Language Notes*
- MLR *Modern Language Review*
- Montemayor Jorge de Montemayor, *Diana*, trans. Bartholomew Yong (1598), ed. J. M. Kennedy, 1968
- MP *Modern Philology*
- MSR Malone Society Reprints
- Muir Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays*, rev. edn, 1977
- Nares Robert Nares, *A Glossary... of Words*, ed. J. O. Halliwell and Thomas Wright, 2 vols., 1882
- Nashe Thomas Nashe, *Works*, ed. R. B. McKerrow, 5 vols., 1904-10, rev. F. P. Wilson, 1958

- N&Q** *Notes and Queries*  
**OED** *Oxford English Dictionary*  
**Otway** Thomas Otway, *Caius Marius* (1680), in *Works*, ed. J. C. Gosh, 2 vols., 1932  
**Painter** William Painter, 'Rhomeo and Julietta', ed. P. A. Daniel, 1875  
**Partridge** Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, rev. edn, 1968  
**PBSA** *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*  
**PMLA** *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*  
**PQ** *Philological Quarterly*  
**RES** *Review of English Studies*  
**Ritson** Joseph Ritson, *Remarks, Critical and Illustrative . . . on the Last Edition of Shakespeare*, 1778  
**SB** *Studies in Bibliography*  
**Schmidt** Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare-Lexicon*, rev. Gregor Sarrazin, 2 vols., 1902  
**SD** stage direction  
**Seymour** E. H. Seymour, *Remarks . . . upon the Plays of Shakespeare*, II, 1805  
**SH** speech heading  
**Shirley** James Shirley, *Works*, ed. Alexander Dyce, 6 vols., 1833  
**Sidney** Philip Sidney, *Poems*, ed. W. A. Ringler, 1962  
**Singer MSS.** S. W. Singer, *see* Cam.<sup>2</sup>  
**Sisson,** C. J. Sisson, *New Readings in Shakespeare*, II, 1956  
     *New Readings*  
**Smith** C. G. Smith, *Shakespeare's Proverb Lore*, 1963  
**Spenser** Edmund Spenser, *Works* (Variorum), ed. Edwin Greenlaw *et al.*, 8 vols 1932-49  
**SQ** *Shakespeare Quarterly*  
**S.St.** *Shakespeare Studies*  
**S.Sur.** *Shakespeare Survey*  
**subst.** substantively  
**Tilley** M. P. Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 1950 (references are to numbered proverbs)  
**Tyrwhitt** Thomas Tyrwhitt, *Observations and Conjectures upon Some Passages of Shakespeare*, 1766  
**Upton** John Upton, *Critical Observations on Shakespeare*, 1746  
**Walker** Alice Walker, *see* NS  
**Walker,** W. S. Walker, *Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare*, III, 1860  
     *Critical Examination*  
**Webster** John Webster, *Works*, ed. F. L. Lucas, 4 vols., 1928  
**Wilson** Dover Wilson, *see* NS

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# INTRODUCTION

## The date

The date of composition for *Romeo and Juliet* is uncertain, and dates ranging from 1591 to 1596 have been proposed. A terminal date is set by the publication of the first quarto (Q1) in 1597,<sup>1</sup> but a *terminus a quo* is more difficult to establish, since much of the external and internal evidence is ambiguous.

External evidence, though meagre, seems to point to a later rather than an earlier date. On the strength of Q1's reference to performance by 'the L. of Hunsdon his Servants', Malone confidently dated the play (in Boswell, 1821) as first produced between 22 July 1596 and 17 March 1597, the only period when Shakespeare's company could properly have been called Lord Hunsdon's.<sup>2</sup> But the reference may be only a publisher's device to capitalise on the most recent performances and does not prove that the play was not acted earlier when Shakespeare's company was known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

Although two probable echoes of *Romeo and Juliet* may be found in works appearing in 1597, no direct allusions to the play appear until 1598.<sup>3</sup> In that year, Francis Meres included it among Shakespeare's tragedies in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598) and John Marston commented on it in his *Scourge of Villanie* (1598). The Meres reference for the first time affirms Shakespeare's authorship, but throws no light on the dating problem. Marston's reference, however, is perhaps more significant than has been allowed. In Satire xi ('Humours'), seven lines after an echo of *Romeo and Juliet* (1.5.25: 'A hall, a hall') and a reference to Will Kemp, who acted Peter, Marston continues (lines 37-48):

Luscus what's playd to day? faith now I know  
I set thy lips abroach, from whence doth flow  
Naught but pure *Iuliat* and *Romio*.  
Say, who acts best? *Drusus* [? Burbage], or *Roscio* [? Alleyn]?  
Now I have him, that nere of ought did speake  
But when of playes or Plaiers he did treat.  
H'ath made a common-place booke out of plaies,  
And speaks in print, at least what ere he sayes

<sup>1</sup> See Textual Analysis, pp. 222-4 below.      <sup>2</sup> See Textual Analysis, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> See Commentary, 2.2.33-42. A sudden rash of echoes from *Rom.*, mostly unnoticed, appeared in four plays written in 1598 (Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abingdon*, Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money* and Munday and Chettle's *Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon* and *Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*); these echoes are noted in the Commentary. From 1598 to 1642 allusions to (or lines and passages imitated from) *Rom.* are outnumbered only by those to *Ham.*, *Venus and Adonis* and *1H4* (see *Shakespeare's Centurie of Prayer*, ed. L. T. Smith, 1879, and *Some 300 Fresh Allusions to Shakespeare*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, 1886).

Is warranted by Curtaine *plaudeties*,  
If ere you heard him courting *Lesbias* eyes;  
Say (Curteous Sir) speakes he not movingly  
From out some new pathetique Tragedie?<sup>1</sup>

Apart from attesting to the popularity of *Romeo and Juliet* on the stage in 1598, Marston here appears to be linking it with 'some new pathetique Tragedie', which Luscus pilfers in wooing his lady. No other known play which might have been considered 'new' in 1598 fits the description so well,<sup>2</sup> and this suggests that *Romeo and Juliet* was comparatively new in 1598.

Internal evidence for dating rests on (a) possible references to topical events and conditions; (b) Shakespeare's apparent dependence on datable published (and unpublished) works by other writers; and (c) the interrelations between *Romeo and Juliet* and Shakespeare's other plays and poems written before 1597.

Of the topical events to which the play may be thought to refer, the most discussed has been the earthquake recalled by the Nurse in 1.3.24-36. She twice insists that this had occurred eleven years earlier on the day Juliet was weaned, just before her third birthday. Thomas Tyrwhitt was the first to suggest that Shakespeare was referring to an actual earth tremor which was felt strongly in England on 6 April 1580, and he extrapolated a date of composition, at least for this part of the play, between 7 April and the middle of July 1591, because, as the Nurse tells us, Juliet was born on Lammas Eve (31 July) and her fourteenth birthday is now only 'A fortnight and odd days' away.<sup>3</sup> Other earthquakes have been canvassed since Tyrwhitt wrote. Sidney Thomas<sup>4</sup> has called attention to another 'terrible earthquake' on 1 March 1584/5, alluded to in William Covell's *Polimanteia*, published in 1595, a book perhaps known to Shakespeare since Covell makes an appreciative sidenote reference to '*All praise worthy. Lucrecia Sweet Shakspeare*' (sig. r2<sup>v</sup>). The allusion, made by an interlocutor called 'England', who includes the 1584/5 earthquake among 'Threatnings of God against my subjects lives', seems definitely to imply that this earthquake had been felt in England. If this is the Nurse's earthquake, a date for the play of 1595/6 might be indicated. Similar speculative computations, however, can be made on the basis of landslips at Blackmore, Dorset, on 13 January 1583, and at Mottingham, Kent, just eight miles from London, on 4 August 1585.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the supposed earthquake clue, even if it represents anything more significant than an imaginative detail thrown in for dramatic effect, can be adjusted to fit almost any year between 1591 and 1596.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. Arnold Davenport, 1961, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> This interpretation finds some support in *The Return from Parnassus, Part I* (performed between Christmas 1598 and Christmas 1601 at St John's College, Cambridge), where, in a passage apparently inspired by Marston, as Davenport points out (*Poems of Marston*, p. 359), Gullio, accused in his wooing of speaking 'nothing but pure Shakspeare', lets go with a version of *Rom.* 2.4.35-7.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Furness, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> 'The earthquake in *Romeo and Juliet*', *MLN* 64 (1949), 417-19.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Dodson, 'Notes on the earthquake in *Romeo and Juliet*', *MLN* 65 (1950), 144.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Hunter (1845; cited in Furness, p. 44) calls attention to a severe earthquake near Verona in 1570, another warning against interpreting the Nurse's reference too literally.

Two other possible topical references have been noted. In 1.4.82–8 Mercutio describes the soldier's dream of 'cutting foreign throats, / Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades, / Of healths five fathom deep'. It has been suggested that Shakespeare is here glancing at the Cadiz expedition of June 1596.<sup>1</sup> An examination of the phases of the moon and their relation to when Monday, the day after the Capulets' feast, fell on 12 or 14 July (O.S.) in the 1590s (i.e. 'A fortnight and odd days' before Lammas-tide) shows that the only Monday which fits the phases of the moon 'described' in the 'balcony scene' (2.2) is 12 July 1596. This date, like that of the Cadiz expedition, may be linked with Malone's hypothesis that *Romeo and Juliet* was first performed between 23 July 1596 and the following April,<sup>2</sup> but neither is much more than suggestive.

More solid evidence begins to emerge when we turn to literary influences. Two works have frequently been cited as having influenced *Romeo and Juliet*: Samuel Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond* (1592) and John Eliot's *Ortho-epia Gallica* (1593). Since Daniel's *Complaint* has left its mark throughout the play<sup>3</sup> and furnishes one of its recurring images (Death as Juliet's lover and husband), Shakespeare's indebtedness to it seems to rule out any date earlier than 1592;<sup>4</sup> and the influence of Eliot's *Ortho-epia*, though confined to a single passage (3.5.1–7, 22), may fairly be taken as advancing the date another year, to 1593. Recently, however, J. J. M. Tobin has suggested Shakespeare's use of a third work, Thomas Nashe's *Have with You to Saffron-Walden*. Although this was not published until after September 1596, parts of it must have been written before the end of 1595, and there is evidence that the last three-quarters, at least, circulated in manuscript among friends in May–June 1596, some three months before publication.<sup>5</sup> Tobin's evidence is of two kinds: (1) passages from which Shakespeare may have taken hints for the presentation of certain characters;<sup>6</sup> and (2) nine words or phrases scattered throughout *Romeo and Juliet*, which occur nowhere else in Shakespeare's work but which are to be found also in *Have with You to Saffron-Walden* – most of them employed there by Nashe for the first time in his own writing.<sup>7</sup> The nature and number of the parallels suggested are

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Babcock, 'Romeo and Juliet, 1.iv.86: an emendation', *PQ* 8 (1929), 407–8.

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Draper, 'The date of *Romeo and Juliet*', *RES* 25 (1949), 55–7.

<sup>3</sup> See Commentary, 1.1.206–7, 209–11; 1.4.109; 3.2.5; 5.1.61; 5.3.92–115.

<sup>4</sup> Against this statement must be set the possibility that Shakespeare was able to read Daniel's poem, as he did some other works, before publication.

<sup>5</sup> Nashe, *Works*, iv, 302. There is a reference to projected publication in Hilary Term (23 Jan. to 12 Feb.), but Hilary Term of what year is uncertain (see Nashe, *Works*, iii, 133, and iv, 369). Nashe complains in the dedication to *The Terrors of the Night* (1594) that the 'Coppie [of his MS.] progressed from one scrivens shop to another, and at length grew so common, that it was readie to bee hung out for one of their signes, like a paire of indentures' (*Works*, i, 341).

<sup>6</sup> 'Nashe and the texture of *Romeo and Juliet*', *Aligarh Journal of English Studies* 5 (1980), 162–74. Tobin notes some suggestive hints in *Saffron-Walden* for the language and characters of Mercutio, Benvolio, the Nurse and the Capulet servants (1.1), and a reference to the 1580 earthquake (Nashe, *Works*, iii, 69–70).

<sup>7</sup> 'Nashe and *Romeo and Juliet*', *N&Q* 27 (1980), 161–2. To these may be added the quite rare word 'coying' (2.2.101; Nashe, *Works*, iii, 116). Tobin argues for adopting Q1's 'fantasticoes' for Q2's 'phantasies' (2.4.25) (see supplementary note) because it appears in *Saffron-Walden* (Nashe, *Works*, iii, 31).



more than usually persuasive. Shakespeare's fascination with Nashe's rich, innovative and free-wheeling vocabulary is well attested<sup>1</sup> and is evidenced elsewhere in *Romeo and Juliet* by similar echoes from earlier works by Nashe.<sup>2</sup> It may be argued that Nashe, not Shakespeare, is the borrower, but a fair analysis of the evidence makes this view highly unlikely. If then we are willing to admit the probable influence of *Have with You to Saffron-Walden*, we may postulate a date of composition for substantial parts of *Romeo and Juliet* between May-June 1596 and the end of the year. This agrees well enough with some of the other external and internal evidence and is not ruled out by any definite evidence to the contrary.

How does this late date for *Romeo and Juliet* fit into the generally accepted chronology of Shakespeare's plays during the 1590s, particularly those most often associated with *Romeo and Juliet*: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1594), *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594-5, revised 1597), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-6)? Although Meres (in *Palladis Tamia*) sets a terminal date of 1598 for these plays, including *Romeo*, the several dates assigned above are provisional, the problems involved being similar to those encountered with *Romeo*. But these three plays and *Romeo*, and, in certain respects, *Richard II*,<sup>3</sup> constitute a group which shares a common lyrical quality, evidenced by the high frequency of rhyme, a fondness (sometimes excessive and self-conscious) for the figures of rhetoric, a central concern with the vicissitudes of love and the materials of romance (characteristics that link the group to the poems and *Sonnets*), and a unity of comic tone, particularly, except perhaps in the *Dream*, in what may be called low comedy. In addition, various kinds of connections, thematic, rhetorical and verbal, echo and re-echo from play to play within the group. An examination of some of these echoes may help to place *Romeo* in relation to the other plays in this group.

*Two Gentlemen*, like *Romeo*, draws upon Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet* (1562), particularly for aspects of the Valentine-Silvia plot, and is generally thought of as Shakespeare's earliest essay in romantic comedy; the question is, *how* early. Considering the usually assigned date of 1594 too late, Clifford Leech has argued for a preliminary and partial draft as early as 1592, reworked and completed in late 1593.<sup>4</sup> That the play was written earlier than *Romeo* is suggested by its groping and uncertain quality in style and structure and by what seems to be Shakespeare's merely general memory of Brooke's poem, drawing on plot situations more than on exact verbal echoes. This kind of indebtedness would be less likely had Shakespeare already written *Romeo*. An earlier date is also suggested by the connections between 3.1 of *Two Gentlemen* (particularly Valentine's lament on his banishment, lines 170-87), 2 *Henry VI* 3.2.300-412 (Suffolk's parting from Queen Margaret following his banishment), and

<sup>1</sup> See Rupert Taylor, *The Date of 'Love's Labour's Lost'*, 1932 (Taylor does not allow for a later revision of the play); John Dover Wilson (ed.), *1H4*, 1946, pp. 191-6; G. B. Evans (ed.), 'Variorum "Supplement" to 1 Henry IV', 1956, p. 53; G. B. Evans, *N&Q* 204 (1959), 250; J. J. M. Tobin, *English Studies* 61 (1980), 318-28, and *ELN* 18 (1980), 172-5.

<sup>2</sup> See Commentary, 4.5.96 (and supplementary note) and 99.

<sup>3</sup> Harold Brooks (ed.), *MND*, 1979, pp. xlv-li, examines in detail the rhetorical devices common to that play, *R2*, and *Rom. Rom.* also shows two interesting links with *John*; see Commentary, 1.3.82-95, 98.

<sup>4</sup> Leech (ed.), *TGV*, 1969, pp. xxii-xxxv.