NARRATIVE AND DRAMATIC SOURCES OF SHAKESPEARE

Edited by

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Volume I

EARLY COMEDIES
POEMS
ROMEO AND JULIET

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PREFACE

IN THE PAST two hundred years considerable attention has been given to Shakespeare's indebtedness for elements of his plots and characterization to earlier English and foreign authors. Editors of individual plays (as in the New Variorum and Arden editions) have provided whole texts or extracts from alleged sources and analogues, and Sir Israel Gollancz in his valuable 'Shakespeare Library' printed material bearing on thirteen plays with introductions by various scholars to which subsequent students must be gratefully indebted. This collection is now however very rare.

There have been three major works bringing together a large body of parallels. In 1753–4 Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, author of *The Female Quixote*, published in three volumes *Shakespeare Illustrated, or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakespeare are founded, collected and translated from the original authors. With critical remarks.* In these remarks she unwisely tried to show that Shakespeare spoiled many of his stories by complicating the intrigue and introducing absurdities. In Germany K. Simrock produced (1831) a collection of narrative sources. Then came J. P. Collier's *Shakespeare's Library* (1843) (2 vols.) with illustrations for fifteen plays. This work was expanded into six volumes by W. C. Hazlitt in 1875, since when there has been no compendium of equal scope.

That is perhaps not surprising, for though research has since brought to light comparatively few new parallels, it has become increasingly apparent how much more often one can say, 'This is like Shakespeare', than 'This is definitely Shakespeare's source'. Any attempt to bring together all known parallels must fail by reason of the space required, since some of the stories (e.g. the Bond-theme of *The Merchant of Venice*) are found all over the world. On the other hand some probable sources (e.g. the Jew-play mentioned by Stephen Gosson) have disappeared.

Furthermore there must often remain a doubt as to which one or more of several available sources the dramatist used. To give only some of the many texts about which scholars have argued, and are still arguing, is bound to bring more than the usual criticism encountered by an anthology. But the need of a working collection of sources and analogues has long been felt by students of Shakespeare's technique and of comparative literature.

The work of which this is the first volume will assemble what the editor believes to be the chief narrative and dramatic sources and analogues of Shakespeare's plays and poems so as to assist the reader who, not being a specialist, wishes to explore the working of Shakespeare's mind. The arrangement of material will be as follows: Vol. I Early comedies, Poems and *Romeo and Juliet*; Vol. II Comedies 1598–1603; Vol. III The English Histories; Vol. IV Plays on Classical Themes; Vol. V Major Tragedies and Romances.

In discussing parallels it is always well to bear in mind Dr Johnson's warning against seeking an external origin for every phrase, however brilliant or commonplace, in a great author: 'I have found it remarked that, in this important sentence, *Go before, I'll follow*, we read a translation of *I prae, sequar*. I have been told that when *Caliban*, after a pleasing dream, says, *I cry'd to sleep again*, the author imitates *Anacreon*, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.' (*Preface to Shakespeare.*)

Derived phrases, images and the germs of images there are nevertheless, and the student will have not only the joy of discovering them for himself, but also the deeper pleasure of realizing how often Shakespeare has transformed them in weaving them into the texture of his poetry.

Johnson believed that Shakespeare knew less Latin than, after the work of Professors T. W. Baldwin and V. Whitaker and Dr Percy Simpson, we now think. Of modern languages Johnson was 'inclined to believe that he read little more than English and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.' We can still agree broadly with this though most scholars now allow Shakespeare some French and Italian. In the present work, English translations (wherever possible those which Shakespeare may have seen) are given. Chiefly to make

room for more analogues and also because comparatively few readers today can cope with Plautus, Ovid and Livy in the original, Latin originals are not usually supplied. This decision was made with reluctance, especially for *Venus and Adonis*, where Professor Baldwin has shown that the poet probably used an edition of the *Metamorphoses* with the Latin commentary of Marsus. But to give the latter would have swollen the section inordinately. A separate reprint of Marsus' Ovid is greatly to be desired. For *Lucrece* a sixteenth century Latin text of the *Fasti* is given—with a later translation—because this work had not been Englished when Shakespeare wrote his poem.

During the adulatory phase of Shakespeare criticism it was customary to extol his virtues at the expense of most previous writers, and Johnson, himself no Bardolater, expressed a long-enduring opinion when he wrote: 'except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which showed life in its native colours.' Today we may accept Professor C. S. Lewis's division of later sixteenth century literature into 'Drab' and 'Golden' writings—and who can read through Arthur Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet* with sustained delight?—but we realize that Elizabethan readers had not our standards. Shakespeare probably enjoyed many of the 'Drab' writers when he first read them, as well as Lyly's 'transitional' *Euphues*, although he came to laugh at them later. On the whole, the works which we can regard as major sources, Gower, Gascoigne, Golding's *Ovid*, Painter, North, Holinshed, etc., have, *pace* Dr Johnson, something both in matter and manner to commend them, and the plays which Shakespeare remodelled were good of their kind. A collection such as this, therefore, is not without merit as an anthology of Elizabethan reading.

After a quarter-century during which scholars have been preoccupied with Shakespeare's text and Shakespeare's poetry sometimes to the exclusion, or denigration, of character and plot, the pendulum is swinging back to the more purely dramatic side of his art. This work was begun in the conviction that Shakespeare was essentially a poet *in the theatre*, that his imagination worked best when stimulated by a tale or a situation involving a conflict between human beings, and that a full appreciation

must relate his imagery, rhythms and ideas to the dramatic handling of the stories and personages as he re-made them. To trace this in detail is not the purpose of these volumes, which will present mainly what Henry James called the 'données'—for to Shakespeare part of a romance by Montemayor or a play of *King Leir* served as a seminal impulse just as an anecdote at a dinner-party did to the American novelist. On the whole Shakespeare kept close to his sources, but his deviations are at least as significant as his borrowings. Without a knowledge of the material available to him neither his debts nor the transcendent scope of his creative energy can be assessed. In the Introduction to each play, after a brief discussion of the date of composition in which E. K. Chambers's chronology is usually followed, the general relationship of the play to the sources and analogues available to the dramatist is described, and quotations are often given from analogues which cannot be cited fully. The major texts are given in the order in which they are mentioned in the Introduction, and I have ventured to suggest in the heading of each whether it is a certain or a probable source or an analogue only. Original spelling and punctuation are kept except (rarely) where they cause ambiguity or difficulty in comprehension. No attempt is made to imitate Elizabethan typography: contractions are expanded, and *v*, *u*, *i*, *j*, become *u*, *v*, *j*, *s*, where modern practice would have it so. Words and letters within square brackets are my own or former editors' insertions. Significant or rare title-pages are cited.

The Introductions cannot be exhaustive, but it is hoped that they will stimulate readers to more detailed comparisons and inquiry. The Bibliography is selective, providing a list of works especially valuable for the study of Shakespeare's attitude to plot and characters and his reading; also a list of books and articles concerning the source-material of individual plays and poems. This second section is not limited to the authorities cited in the Introductions but includes supplementary material for readers who wish to trace more fully, and from other points of view, the parallels between Shakespeare and other writers.

To select is to oversimplify, but that danger is inseparable from this undertaking. Professor K. Muir in a book which appeared while this volume was in press has rightly laid emphasis on the 'multiple sources' of Shakespeare. In the last

volume of the series I hope to discuss this and other problems suggested by a survey of the whole field. A work such as this is bound to owe much to other men's labours, and grateful acknowledgement is here made to predecessors such as J. P. Collier, W. C. Hazlitt, F. J. Furnivall, Sir I. Gollancz, W. H. D. Rouse, Dr F. S. Boas, and Shakespeare's editors, particularly in the New Variorum edition and the Arden (old and new); to editors of other works such as J. Cunliffe (Gascoigne), Sir S. L. Lee (*Huon of Bordeaux*), E. A. Arber and R. W. Bond (Lyly), to translators such as W. G. Waters (Masuccio) and E. H. Sugden (Plautus); as well as to many other critics and writers on sources listed in the Bibliography. References to Shakespeare's works are to the three-volume Oxford edition, ed. W. J. Craig. Permission has been kindly given by the Council of the Malone Society to print passages from Sir W. W. Greg's reprint of *Gesta Grayorum*; by the Delegates of the Clarendon Press to print from G. C. Macaulay's edition of *The Works of John Gower*; and by Messrs Macmillan and Co. Ltd. to print passages from *The Legend of Good Women* and *The Knight's Tale* from the 'Globe' *Chaucer*, edited by A. W. Pollard and others.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. *Shakespeare's Works and Apocrypha*

Ado	*Much Ado about Nothing*
AFev	*Arden of Feversham*
AShrew	*The Taming of A Shrew*
AYL	*As You Like It*
CE	*Comedy of Errors*
Cor	*Coriolanus*
Cym	*Cymbeline*
Ham	*Hamlet*
1H4	*Henry the Fourth, Part I*
2H4	*Henry the Fourth, Part II*
H5	*Henry the Fifth*
1H6	*Henry the Sixth, Part I*
2H6	*Henry the Sixth, Part II*
3H6	*Henry the Sixth, Part III*
H8	*Henry the Eighth*
KJ	*King John*
LComp	*Lover's Complaint*
Lear	*King Lear*
LLL	*Love's Labour's Lost*
Luc	*The Rape of Lucrece*
Mac	*Macbeth*
MM	*Measure for Measure*
MND	*A Midsummer Night's Dream*
More	*Sir Thomas More*
MV	*The Merchant of Venice*
MWW	*The Merry Wives of Windsor*
NobKin	*Two Noble Kinsmen*
Oth	*Othello*
Per	*Pericles*
PhT	*The Phoenix and the Turtle*
PPil	*The Passionate Pilgrim*
R2	*King Richard the Second*
R3	*King Richard the Third*
RJ	*Romeo and Juliet*
Son	*Sonnets*
TA	*Titus Andronicus*
Tem	*The Tempest*
TGV	*Two Gentlemen of Verona*
Tim	*Timon of Athens*
TN	*Twelfth Night*
TrC	*Troilus and Cressida*
TSh	*The Taming of The Shrew*
VA	*Venus and Adonis*
WT	*The Winter's Tale*

2. *Modern Editions and Criticism*

Arden	The Arden Shakespeare.
Boas	*The Taming of A Shrew*, edited F. S. Boas
Camb	The Cambridge edition of Shakespeare, edited A. Quiller-Couch and J. Dover Wilson
Coll	*Shakespeare's Library*, edited J. Payne Collier, 2 vols.
ELH	*English Literary History* (Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.)
ElSt	E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols.

MedSt	E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, 2 vols.
WSh	E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, 2 vols.
5ActS	T. W. Baldwin, *Shakspere's Five-Act Structure*
Genetics	T. W. Baldwin, *On the Literary Genetics of Shakspere's Poems and Sonnets*
JEGP	*The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
Jest Books	*Shakespeare Jest Books*, edited W. C. Hazlitt
Lee	Sir Sidney Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*
MalSoc	Malone Society Reprints
MLR	*The Modern Language Review*
MPhil	*Modern Philology*
New Arden	The Arden Edition of Shakespeare, re-edited 1949–
N&Q	*Notes & Queries*
Oxf.	The Oxford Edition of Shakespeare, text by W. J. Craig; Introductory Studies by E. Dowden
PhilQ	*Philological Quarterly*
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
RES	*The Review of English Studies*
SAB	*Shakespeare Association Bulletin* (U.S.A.)
ShJb	Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare—Gesellschaft
ShLib	*Shakespeare's Library*, 6 vols. 2nd Edn. 1875, edited J. P. Collier and W. C. Hazlitt. (Also Collier-Hazlitt)
SPhil	*Studies in Philology* (U. of N. Carolina)
ShQ	*Shakespeare Quarterly*
Sh.Soc. Trans.	*Transactions of the (New) Shakespeare Society*
Texas	*University of Texas Studies in English*
TLS	*The Times Literary Supplement* (London)
Var.	*The New Variorum edition*, ed. H. H. Furness, &c.

3. *Other Abbreviations*

Arg	Argument
Chor	Chorus
Prol	Prologue
Rev.	Review
F	Folio edition
Q	Quarto edition
n.d.	No date
S.R.	The Stationer's Register
STC	*A Short-Title Catalogue of Books printed ... 1475–1640* (1950)

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THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

INTRODUCTION

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS was first printed in F1. Divided into Acts and first scenes, it was Shakespeare's shortest play (1,777 lines), and there is little evidence to support Dover Wilson's argument that it was considerably abridged. The doggerel in Act III.1 etc. has been taken to show that the play revised an earlier work, maybe the lost *The historie of Error* played by Paul's in 1577, or 'A historie of fferrar' played by Sussex's men in 1583. More probably Shakespeare was, as in *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, 'consciously experimenting with an archaistic form for comic effect' (E. K. Chambers). The date of composition is unknown. The first recorded performance was at Gray's Inn on 28 December, 1594, but verbal resemblances in Nashe and *Arden of Feversham* suggest an earlier date, perhaps 1592. There is some likeness in theme and style to *The Taming of the Shrew*, which maybe it preceded.

PROBABLE SOURCES

The play is based mainly on the *Menaechmi* of Plautus but it also draws on his *Amphitruo*. There were many editions of Plautus in the century, and Shakespeare doubtless knew enough Latin to read him in the original. The Folio's opening stage-direction in II.1 calls Antipholus of Ephesus 'Antipholis Sereptus', obviously recalling Plautus's Prologue to the *Menaechmi*, which has (l.38) 'puerum surreptum alterum', and (41) 'qui subreptus est'. In Act I(F) the other twin is called 'Antipholis Erotis', and in Act II.2 'Errotis', referring to the Plautine courtesan Erotium (Erotium's Antipholus), or misprints perhaps for 'Errans' or 'Erraticus'. No English translation of the *Menaechmi* was printed until 1595 when William Warner's version (Entered S.R. 10 June, 1594) appeared. Shakespeare may possibly have read this play of 'much pleasant error' in MS, since Warner

rendered it and other Plautine comedies 'for the use and delight of his private friends', and presumably it was handed about. Also, Warner, an attorney of the common pleas, wrote his prose tales *Pan his Syrinx or Pipe* (1585) and his long epic *Albion's England* (1586) under the patronage of Henry Carey Lord Hunsdon, who was Lord Chamberlain from 1585 to 1596, and Shakespeare belonged to his company of players, newly formed in 1594, which may have been the 'company of base and common fellows' jestingly described as having played 'a Comedy of Errors' at the lawyers' Revels at Gray's Inn on 28 December, 1594 (cf. inf. p. 431). Warner's reference to 'much pleasant error' in The Argument may have suggested Shakespeare's title, which, in directing attention to the chief comic devices used, recalls Gascoigne's *Supposes* ('mistakes', 'pretences', 'deceptions') (q.v. pp. 112). The Wife's reference to herself as a 'stale' in Warner V.73 is found in Shakespeare (II.1.101, 'poor I am but his stale'). There are few other verbal resemblances.

Warner's version, given here [I], keeps fairly close to the original, scrupulously marking any large deviations. It provides a good example of Tudor translation, worthy of being compared with Shakespeare's more creative adaptation; it is indeed quite actable, and Rouse declares that Warner's 'brisk exchange has often the advantage over Plautus!'[1] *The Comedy of Errors* must, however, be compared directly with Plautus and considered as one of a long line of adaptations.

The *Menaechmi*, itself taken from a Greek play of unknown authorship, was frequently edited in the Renaissance, acted in Latin or in Italian versions, and adapted or pillaged for incidents, e.g. in the *Calandra* of Cardinal Bernardo Bibbiena (acted 1513); the *Moglie* (1550) of G. Cecchi; G. G. Trissino's *I Simillimi* (1548); and Agnolo Firenzuola's *I Lucidi* (1549). A Spanish version by Juan de Timoneda appeared in 1559, and it was worked over in French and German. In England Plautus was popular from Henry VIII's reign at least, and Stephen Gosson was right in asserting that the early comedies 'smelt of Plautus'. *Thersites* (1537) and *Ralph Roister-Doister* (1534 *c.*) owed much to the *Miles Gloriosus*, and *Jacke Juggler* (1563)

[1] *The Menaechmi . . . The Latin text together with the Elizabethan Translation*: ed. W. H. D. Rouse (The Shakespeare Classics) n.d., p. xi.

anticipated Shakespeare in using Mercury's impersonation of Sosia in the *Amphitruo*. It is interesting to find Shakespeare, in what may be his first comedy, going back to the classical source of modern drama; but the remarkable thing is the complexity he wove within the simple outline provided by Plautus's *Menaechmi*.

To the Renaissance Roman comedy seemed a hilarious combination of realism with ingenuity of story and style. Thus the essay *De Carminibus Comicis* prefaced to the 1558 (Basle) edition[1] of Plautus calls Comedy a versified exposition, 'a complete poem intricate in action or knit together by its characters, concerning a fictitious plot, about things, incidents and affairs taken from common life and resembling everyday occurrences.' It discusses the rise of comedy from rude realistic beginnings and asserts that in language and metrical licence it attempted to approximate to real speech. 'It chooses these rhythms as being apt and fitting, and agreeing closely with the sounds of the human voice. What nature produces with the voice should be included in our rhetoric.'

The Latin Prologue to *Menaechmi* promised lavishness of plot 'measured not by the peck or bushel, but by the barnful'. Shakespeare's comedy is an attempt to outdo the Roman by a manifold complication of his effects. He was almost obliged to this by the brevity of the *Menaechmi* (1,162 lines) which must be expanded for the Elizabethan popular stage. Seeing it as a play of errors he increased the number of misadventures, and added other ingredients more English than Roman.

In the Latin play the first Act lays a solid basis in ordinary life, revealing the relationships of Menaechmus the Citizen with Peniculus the Parasite, the Wife, and Erotium. The confusion of identities begins only in II.2, when Cylindrus encounters the Traveller and Messenio his slave. In II.3 Erotium confuses their identity; in III.2.3 Peniculus and the Maid fall into error. Then we see the results of all this on Menaechmus the Citizen, who is confronted with his Wife (IV.2), the Parasite (IV.2) and Erotium (IV.3) in turn. In the fifth Act the Traveller is thought mad by the Wife (V.1), the Father (V.2) and the Doctor (V.5). The Citizen encounters Messenio (V.7) before

[1] *M. Acii Plauti comoediae XX diligente cura . . . Joachimi Camerarii . . . editae Basileum per Joannem Hervagium et Bernhardum Brand.* (MDLVIII.)