The Comedy of Errors

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE:
COMPLETE WORKS

莎士比亚全集·英文本

Jonathan Bate　Eric Rasmussen　编

错误的喜剧

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序

辜正坤

横亘于案的这版《莎士比亚全集》可谓划时代的作品汇集。我所谓的"划时代",非指莎士比亚作品本身的价值。在许多学者眼中,莎氏作品的价值不仅仅属于某个历史阶段,而是——用本·琼森的话来说——属于所有的时代。所以,我这里所谓的"划时代"是另有所指。我指的是这版由享誉世界的英国皇家莎士比亚剧团隆重推出的《莎士比亚全集》辉煌的辑注成就。毫无疑问,这版全集的编辑原则与撰注实绩,与前此所有林林总总的莎士比亚版本判然有别。它一举打破了延续300多年的传统莎士比亚著作辑注取向,开创了崭新的辑注、阐释原则与独特的审美趣味。它是莎士比亚著作在21世纪重树的一块丰碑,也同时昭示着躁动于国际莎学界的一场革命。要而言之,这一新版《莎士比亚全集》至少有如下几个特点,使之在众多的莎士比亚版本中独树一帜,领秀群芳。

一、1623年版对开本重出江湖

皇家莎士比亚剧团(the Royal Shakespeare Company)推出的《莎士比亚全集》(*William Shakespeare: Complete Works*,以下简称皇家版《莎士比亚全集》或《皇家版》)最大的特点,是重新确立了1623年第一对开本莎士比亚作品集的权威地位,使其成为新莎士比亚全集剧文的权威依据。在粗心的读者看来,彰扬这个特点似乎是在夸大其词,因为前此的一切莎士比亚作品集或作品全集也绝非不重视第一对开本。那么,皇家版《莎士比亚全集》在处理第一对开本的态度和方法上是否与前此的莎士比亚编撰家们迥然有别呢?答案是肯定的。为此,有必要简述数百年来莎士比亚专家在辑撰莎士比亚作品时处理第一对开本及其他四开本莎士比亚著作的方式。皇家版《莎士比亚全集》的主编乔纳森·贝特(Jonathan Bate)先生在原书导言里对此有绝妙的追溯,我这里只是用中文简单地转述一下他的观点,以使中国读者明白1623年版第一对开本与后来的所有其他版本在价值上的根本区别。

贝特先生批评的矛头首先指向18世纪初的诗人和剧作家尼古拉斯·罗伊(Nicholas Rowe)。罗伊注意到哈姆莱特最后的一大段独白只见于早期的一个四开本,却不见于第一对开

本，便自作主张地将两个版本的文本拼合起来，产生了一个合成本《哈姆莱特》，并希望这个本子代表莎士比亚的原本。但现代莎士比亚版本目录学家的研究证明，早期不同的《哈姆莱特》文本，和戏剧演出的舞台历史相关，代表了该剧在不同演出时期的面目。所以罗伊的合并本绝非莎士比亚的原作。

贝特先生认为，罗伊的拼合法为后世的许多莎士比亚剧本辑撰者所仿效，例如蒲柏（Alexander Pope）即进而使用所谓"取精融汇法"（pick-and-mix），把许多四开本和对开本剧文混为一体，许多学者却以为这是处理莎士比亚版本问题的绝妙法门。此法于是为后世莎士比亚版本领域各家所宗，200余年，竟无人质疑。

贝特先生特别提到1986年牛津版《莎士比亚全集》开始对早期文本进行单独处理，即承认《哈姆莱特》和《李尔王》的不同文本都具有独立价值。但他同时指出，牛津版在处理不同文本时依然缺乏统一的准则，例如它使用了对开本的《亨利六世》剧文，但是其标题则又取自四开本。由此而来的必然结论是：此前的一切莎士比亚版本都是有缺陷的。其缺陷最主要的根源，即滥用所谓"取精融汇法"将多个版本进行随意拼凑，而始作俑者，则为罗伊。300多年来，谬种流传，殊令人慨叹！

贝特先生进一步指出，如果说莎士比亚早期各种不同版本的剧文都各具独立价值，那么第一对开本毫无疑义是其中最重要的版本。但是由于上述原因，这个版本居然300多年来从未被单独进行过辑注处理，例如对其进行系统的勘误、将其拼写和标点现代化等。当然，1632年、1663年和1685年这三个重印对开本中亦不乏纠误和现代化处理之处，但是其总体成就微不足道。许多莎士比亚著作的编辑们往往以四开本为据，同时吸收来自对开本的舞台提示语等。换句话说，对开本的独立价值并没有得到充分的重视，它只是被当作一个重要或较重要的参照物。相比之下，四开本，尤其是所谓"善本"四开本却受到更多的青睐。

贝特先生和拉斯马森（Eric Rasmussen）先生共同主编的皇家版《莎士比亚全集》采取了截然不同的做法：它坚定地维护对开本的固有完整性、真实性和权威性，竭尽全力恢复对开本的本来面目。当然，有一点必须指出，他们虽然始终把第一对开本作为基础辑撰对象，但是在具体甄别剧文时，也并不完全排斥其他四开本的参考作用。实际上，当发现对开本中明显的错误（尤其是印刷错误）时，他们也据四开本来进行纠正。换句话说，在某些特定的方面，他们也注意吸收四开本之长。此外，这个本子在力求保持剧文真实性的同时也力求使之具有当代性，例如对拼写、标点等加以现代化，以便使莎士比亚总是活生生的莎士比亚。

简而言之，如果说前此的莎士比亚学者侧重以所谓"善本"四开本为权威，同时参考第一对开本等来进行所谓莎剧真本的甄别、校正、注释、评论的话，贝特先生和拉斯马森先生的做法则刚好相反。他们重新确立了1623年第一对开本莎士比亚作品集的权威地位，并以之作为新莎士比亚全集剧文的权威依据，而其他版本，例如善本或劣本四开本等，则主要作为参考本。这无疑颠覆了延续300多年的传统编辑原则，在莎士比亚著作辑撰工作或者说莎士比亚版本研究工作方面开拓出了一片新天地。

二、用于演出的脚本与用于出版的文学剧本其艺术价值各有所宗

文字剧本只是一维性表达，戏剧演出却是多维的立体性全方位表达。研究过电影艺术的学者就知道发表在刊物上的电影文学剧本与拍电影时导演手中的电影脚本有很大的区别。当然，莎士比亚时代正式发表的戏剧文本和供演出用的脚本之间没有这么大的差异，但是，二者之间存在着明显的区别却是勿庸置疑的。我们万万不能忘记，莎士比亚在成为剧作家之前，首先是一个演员。演员眼中的剧本和普通读者眼中的剧本是很不一样的。普通读者阅读一个剧本的时候，比较留心剧中的情节和剧文本身的文学色彩。而演员看着剧文，却要能够立刻在大脑中将之呈现为舞台上活生生的行动、声音、表情等等。换句话说，演员（包括导演和有演出经验的剧作家）具有比普通读者强得多的**舞台呈象能力**。正如贝特先生所指出的，"莎士比亚最初写的剧本是用于排练演出的脚本，而不是用于出版的精雕细刻的文学作品"。不用说，用于"排练演出的脚本"比之"用于出版的文学作品"必定有更多附属于舞台条件的因素。而正是这些因素势所必然地构成了"排练演出的脚本"的独特性。这种独特性也是一种艺术性，只不过它的艺术性主要借助于舞台条件和舞台空间来完成。"用于出版的文学作品"则可以相对独立于舞台条件，它的艺术性主要借助于读者大脑的想象空间来完成。读者不必受制于舞台条件，他以自己想象的现实生活空间来对剧情加以呈象。从这个意义上来说，普通读者使用的不是舞台呈象能力，而是**现实生活呈象能力**。那么剧作家、演员、导演等有没有现实生活呈象能力呢？当然也有，而且由于创作的需要，他们还必须比一般读者拥有更强的现实生活呈象能力。因此，剧作家、演员、导演既有舞台呈象能力，也有现实生活呈象能力。他们创造出的艺术世界既要与**现实生活想象空间**吻合，也要与**舞台表现空间**契合。后者正是剧院所使用剧本的独特价值，而1623年版第一对开本中收集的剧本恰恰就是这样的剧本。这个特点300多年来却为莎学界的诸多学者有意或无意地忽略了。

三、莎士比亚剧本回归剧院老家

与数以千计的莎士比亚版本相比较，皇家版《莎士比亚全集》的价值还在于它是在权威的皇家莎士比亚剧团的支持下来进行编辑、注释的。它的主编之一贝特先生本人就是一位常常出现在剧团排演间的莎士比亚专家，因此，他很容易从戏剧演出这个视角来思考和辑注莎士比亚，从而发现传统莎士比亚辑撰者们的疏漏。贝特先生在《莎士比亚全集》导言中说："在某种情形下，四开本可能比较接近莎士比亚的原作手稿，而第一对开本则可能比较接近于这些剧本在莎士比亚剧院演出的实际情形。"这个判断是很精到的。贝特先生认为，作为单行本的四开本开本较小，而对开本开本幅面大，所以有理由推论，对开本可能是用来保存原有演出剧本的形式，而不是原本书写下来的形式。也正是出于这种艺术考量，皇家莎士比亚剧团对经过仔细辑校的第一对开本情有独钟！在这样的情况下，闻名遐迩的 1623 年版莎士比亚可谓结束了300 多年的文学性阅读剧本身份，终于在 21 世纪初实至名归地以戏剧演出本的身份走回诞生它的剧院老家。从一定的角度来看，这似乎标示着莎士比亚戏剧审美过程中的一个转折：经典剧本向剧院回归，而不是仅仅作为书斋学者进行繁琐考据与精妙阐释的对象。这种转折之意义的深远程度还需要进一步观察。但是，这至少是一个令人振奋的开端，因为它开创或者毋宁说恢复了一种赋予剧院以剧本仲裁者角色的传统。在这一传统中，演出目的、效果、条件等诸因素，成为剧本生发衍变的互动要素。当然，对剧院派剧本的重新定位不应该排除书斋式剧本存在的理由。文人墨客仍然可以利用已有的版本在想象的空间里使剧本在文学性质的其他可发挥层面上得到更丰富的展现，满足人们别样的审美需求，从而使脱离舞台的文学剧本也能够完成自己独特的文学审美使命与功能。换句话说，剧院里的剧本和书斋里的剧本各有千秋，互动互补互彰。

四、释义贵精，详略适当

对于一般读者，尤其是中国读者而言，莎士比亚版本的注释是一个关键部分。没有理由要求普通中国读者对英国早期现代英语的了解达到英美读者那样的程度。恰恰相反，中国读者对那个时期的英语通常是陌生的。因此，适当的注解对中国读者而言变得至关重要。《新集注本》和《阿登版莎士比亚》的注释详尽，资料极丰富，确实是莎士比亚版本界的骄傲。但是大有大的难处，例如有的地方释义过分繁琐、文献过分累赘。作为学者型版本，这些也许不可或缺，但是庞大的规模不易普及，同时也缺乏市场效应。牛津版和剑桥版莎士比亚倒有普及版的

功能，但是也如贝特先生所指出的，在编辑方针上，它们依然未完全跳出传统藩篱，把第一对开本和其他的四开本混在一起处理的地方时有所见。《河畔版莎士比亚》（以下简称《河畔版》）亦有同样的长处，同时亦未免同样的弊端。鉴于《河畔版》在中国英语界使用得比较广泛，现特就文本、注释等相关层面，将《皇家版》与之作简单比较，以见出二者各自的特点与优劣。

仅以《哈姆莱特》一剧第一幕第一场为例。两个剧本都有相关的剧情介绍、背景知识与评论。导论文字长度也相当，各占 16 开 6 页左右篇幅，差异不大。差异较大的是注释。两个版本均用脚注方式，黑体字注明要注释的词条。以黑体字为条目计算，《河畔版》共有注释 80 条，《皇家版》共有注释 98 条。《皇家版》比《河畔版》的注释多出 18 条。抽样看了其他幕、场的注释，情况与此相似。总的说来，《皇家版》注释要更仔细一点，注释条目也明显多于《河畔版》。对于普通读者，尤其是中国读者来说，《皇家版》的注释量比较适中，剧文中凡是费解的地方，几乎都给了注解。相比之下，《河畔版》则略掉了一些可能有必要注释的地方。下试举数例以证此说。

如皇家版《哈姆莱特》第一幕第一场第 29 行（记为 L29，下同）有注释两处，即对 touching 和 by 加了注释（黑体字是词条原文，后面的白体字是注释内容，下同）：**Touching** concerning；**of** by。但是《河畔版》却对这两个词都没有注释。一般读者，至少中国普通英语读者，是不大知道 touching 可作 concerning 解的。of 可作 by 解，对许多英美读者虽然不是太陌生，但是对于中国英语读者来说，也是难处。所以省略这两处注释势必为中国英语读者理解原文造成障碍。又如紧跟着的 L30：I entreated him along 句中 along 的用法，《皇家版》注：**along** to come along。注中增补了不定式动词 to come，读者自然对这种用法一目了然。《河畔版》未加注，显然有碍理解。再如紧接着的 L31 中的 watch 一词，《河畔版》未加注解，《皇家版》则注为：**watch** remain awake during/keep guard through。这一注释指明 watch 非一般的"观看，观察"，还含有"细心守望"之意，故《皇家版》的注释是颇周到的，尤其对中国英语读者而言。下面紧接着还有许多类似情况，这里限于篇幅，只顺次列出《皇家版》第 36 至 43 行中的注释，略加解说，以资比较：

L36：**assail** attack。《河畔版》对 assail 一词未加注，对英美读者而言，也许可以省掉，因这两个词同义。但是对中国读者而言却是适当的，因为 assail 比 attack 更生僻一些。

L41：**last night of all** this very night past。 其中 of all 这种搭配，现代读者一般相当陌生。《河畔版》对此未加注，显然不妥。

L42：**yond** yonder, that。其中的 yond 用法颇旧。《河畔版》未加注，不妥。

L43：**t'illume** to illuminate。特殊缀合用法和特殊动词用法。《河畔版》未加注，不妥。

L43：**his**。此词《皇家版》未加注。《河畔版》注：**his** its (the commonest form of the neuter possessive singular in Shakespeare's day)。此是《河畔版》迄今为止略优于《皇家版》处。

有的注释，《皇家版》和《河畔版》都加了注释，但是注释的质量是有区别的。例如同一个地方的两条注释：

L33：**approve** corroborate the reliability of。《河畔版》注而未详：**approve** corroborate。《皇家版》加上 the reliability of 之后，置换进原文 He may approve our eyes，则成：He may corroborate the reliability of our eyes，在搭配上明显更贴切。此条注释《阿登版莎士比亚全集》注为：**approve our eyes** confirm or corroborate what we saw 也优于《河畔版》，但仍不及《皇家版》更贴切。

L42：**pole** pole star (i.e. North Star)。《河畔版》注而未详：**pole** pole star。《皇家版》加上了 (i.e. North Star)，释义更到位，更完整。

注释问题牵涉许多方面，《河畔版》出版在前，经多方采用，其长处不可掩盖。但就上述随机所选注释条目情况而言，《皇家版》在注释方面确实下过很大的功夫，在总体上无疑超过了《河畔版》。对于目前中国英语界来说，《皇家版》对莎士比亚著作许多词义的注释释义精审，详略得当，中国读者通过这个版本的注释部分，完全能够较好地理解莎士比亚的原文，所以这是颇具实用性的莎士比亚注释本，很值得赞扬，也很值得向中国读书界和出版界推荐。

五、对中国广大英语读书界而言确为上选的莎士比亚版本

每一个伟大民族都有一些本真的、可代代相传的辉煌的文化积淀。对于英格兰民族而言，莎士比亚是这种文化积淀的代表。阅读莎士比亚就是在阅读一个伟大民族的灵魂。

伟大的文化积淀最终都会突破时空藩篱而融入世界文化遗产的宝库，成为世界各民族集体的精神财富。

莎士比亚作品即这样的财富。它历经 400 年而长盛不衰，且日益焕发出艺术魅力，这可说是突破了时间的藩篱；它被译成无数的语言，远播天涯海角，风靡世界各国，这可说是突破了空间的障碍。

中国人接受莎士比亚已经有百年历史，不胜枚举的莎士比亚译本总是在中国的图书市场

上受到青睐，标志着华夏民族对远在西方的文化巨人的景仰与爱戴。近 30 年来，随着当代中国波澜壮阔的外语学习，尤其是英语学习浪潮的掀起，相当多的中国读者已经可以不仅借助译本、而且经由英文原著来学习和欣赏莎士比亚。这一现象潜藏着深刻的文化含义。对此，我在为推荐引入《阿登版莎士比亚》(*The Arden Shakespeare*) 的一篇文章中曾加以阐述："中国正在成为一个英语图书大市场。毋庸说，这一现象理所当然地应该引起中国英语界学者的警醒：大市场需要正确的引导，确保它不被随之而来的英语垃圾文化所淹没。而中国出版界的同仁尤其应该在引入外版书方面尽可能披沙检金、将西方的最有价值的原版书送到中国读者手上。"以莎士比亚各种版本而言，不胜枚举，目前已经达到 1300 余种！因此在引入我国时，应该尽可能择善而从，使少数真正优秀的版本得到优先考虑。经过仔细比较，我以为外语教学与研究出版社引进的皇家版《莎士比亚全集》(英国麦克米伦公司 2007 年出版) 正是这类"最有价值的原版书"的代表。

总而言之，皇家版《莎士比亚全集》在莎士比亚著作的编辑原则方面能够跳出 300 多年来的窠臼、横空出世、别树大旗，在当今莎学界可谓异军突起，独步莎坛。其识见幽明，能烛照先贤疏漏；其注释精审，多兼采百家之长。倘莎氏地下有知，亦当颔首示谢。中国读者沾溉于当今世界繁荣兴旺的出版业，一俟皇家版《莎士比亚全集》长编付梓，即可来年诵读于中华，实为幸中之幸。今奉命为序，恭疏短引，实指望来哲方家，相与赏此佳编，共成莎学界一段佳话。

是为序。

USER'S GUIDE

Titles follow the First Folio, where there are sometimes minor variations of nomenclature between contents list, title at head of play and running header – our default preference is the title at the head of the play (thus, for example, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Tragedy of Cymbeline* as opposed to the contents list's *Love's Labour Lost* and *Cymbeline King of Britain*). Some of the plays were originally staged with different titles (e.g. *The Second Part of Henry the Sixth* began its life as *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, and *Henry the Eighth* seems to have been called *All is True*).

Lists of Parts are supplied in the First Folio for only six plays, so these are predominantly editorial, arranged by groups of character (thus for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the court, the genteel lovers, the artisans, the fairies). Capitals indicate that part of the name which is used for speech headings in the script (thus '**PROSPERO**, the right Duke of Milan' and 'Sir John **FALSTAFF**').

Locations are provided by the Folio for only two plays (*The Tempest* is set on 'an uninhabited island' and *Measure for Measure* in Vienna). Eighteenth-century editors, working in an age of elaborately realistic stage sets, were the first to provide detailed locations. Given that Shakespeare wrote for a bare stage and often an imprecise sense of place, we have relegated locations to the explanatory notes at the foot of the page, where they are given at the beginning of each scene where the imaginary location is different from the one before. We have emphasized broad geographical settings rather than specifics of the kind that suggest anachronistically realistic staging. Thus Sicilia and Bohemia or court and country in *The Winter's Tale*, Venice and Cyprus in *Othello*, not usually such locations as 'another room in the palace'. Indications of movement from outdoors to indoors are given where appropriate.

Act and Scene Divisions were provided in the Folio (they were absent from the Quartos published in Shakespeare's lifetime). Sometimes, however, they were erroneous or omitted; corrections and additions supplied by editorial tradition are indicated by square brackets. Five-act division is based on a classical model, and act breaks provided the opportunity to replace the candles in the indoor Blackfriars playhouse which the King's Men used after 1608, but Shakespeare did not necessarily think in terms of a five-part structure of dramatic composition. The Folio convention is that a scene ends when the stage is empty. Nowadays, partly under the influence of film, we tend to consider a scene to be a dramatic unit that ends with either a change of imaginary location or a significant passage of time within the narrative. Shakespeare's fluidity of composition accords well with this convention, so in addition to act and scene numbers we provide a *running scene* count at the beginning of each new scene. Where there is a scene break caused by a momentary bare stage, but the location does not change and extra time does not pass, we use the convention *running scene continues*. There is inevitably a degree of editorial judgement in making such calls, but the system is very valuable in suggesting the pace of the plays (it reveals, for instance, the great compression of *Othello*).

Speaker's Names are often inconsistent in Folio. We have regularized speech headings, but retained an element of deliberate inconsistency in entry directions, in order to give the flavour of Folio.

Verse is indicated by lines that do not run to the right margin and by capitalization of the first letter of each line. The Folio printers sometimes set verse as prose, and vice versa (either out of misunderstanding or for reasons of space). We have silently corrected in such cases, although in some instances there is ambiguity, in which case we have leaned towards the preservation of Folio layout. Folio sometimes uses contraction ('turnd' rather than 'turned') to indicate whether or not the final '-ed' of a past participle is sounded, an area where there is variation for the sake of the five-beat iambic pentameter rhythm. We use the convention of a grave accent to indicate sounding (thus 'turnèd' would be two syllables), but would urge actors not to overstress. In cases where one

speaker ends with a verse half-line and the next begins with the other half of the pentameter, editors since the late eighteenth century have indented the second line. We have abandoned this convention, since the Folio does not use it, and nor did actors' cues in the Shakespearean theatre. An exception is made when the second speaker actively interrupts or completes the first speaker's sentence.

Spelling is modernized, but older forms are occasionally maintained where necessary for rhythm or aural effect. For instance, 'y'are' is generally modernized to 'you're', but the old form is retained in Regan's 'I know you are of her bosom ... Y'are. I know't.'

Punctuation in Shakespeare's time was as much rhetorical as grammatical. 'Colon' was originally a term for a unit of thought in an argument. The semi-colon was a new unit of punctuation (some of the Quartos lack them altogether). We have modernized punctuation throughout, but have given more weight to Folio punctuation than many editors, since, though not Shakespearean, it reflects the usage of his period. In particular, we have used the colon far more than many editors: it is exceptionally useful as a way of indicating the way in which many Shakespearean speeches unfold clause by clause in a developing argument that gives the illusion of enacting the process of thinking in the moment. We have also kept in mind the origin of punctuation in classical times as a means of assisting the actor and orator: the comma suggests the briefest of pauses for breath, the colon a middling one and a full stop or period a longer pause. Semi-colons, by contrast, belong to an era of punctuation that was only just coming in during Shakespeare's time and that is coming to an end now: we have accordingly only used them where they occur in our copy-texts (and not always then). Dashes are sometimes used for parenthetical interjections where the Folio has brackets. They are also used for interruptions and changes in train of thought. Where a change of addressee occurs within a speech, we have used a dash preceded by a full stop (or occasionally another form of punctuation). Often the identity of the respective addressees is obvious from the context. When it is not, this has been indicated in a marginal stage direction.

Entrances and Exits are fairly thorough in Folio, which has accordingly been followed as faithfully as possible. Where characters are omitted or corrections are necessary, this is indicated by square brackets (e.g. '[*and Attendants*]'). *Exit* is sometimes silently normalized to *Exeunt* and *Manet* anglicized to 'remains'. We trust Folio positioning of entrances and exits to a greater degree than most editors: thus, for instance, we follow Folio in having the other characters enter in the middle of Petruchio's speech to Kate at *Taming of the Shrew*, 2.1.268–81, making the latter part of the speech into a kind of game for the benefit of the onstage audience (an interpretation that strongly shaped Greg Doran's RSC production).

Other Stage Directions such as stage business, asides and indications of addressee are rare in Folio. Modern editions usually mingle editorial directions with original Folio and Quarto ones, sometimes marking interventions by means of square brackets. We have sought to distinguish what could be described as *directorial* interventions of this kind from Folio-style directions (either original or supplied) by placing the former in the right margin in a different typeface. There is a degree of subjectivity about which directions are of which kind, but the procedure is intended as a reminder to the reader and the actor that Shakespearean stage directions are often dependent upon editorial inference alone and are not set in stone. We also depart from editorial tradition in sometimes admitting uncertainty and thus printing permissive stage directions, such as an ***Aside?*** (often a line may be equally effective as an aside or a direct address – it is for each production or reading to make its own decision) or a ***may exit*** or a piece of business placed between arrows to indicate that it may occur at various different moments within a scene.

Line Numbers in the left margin are editorial, for reference and to key the explanatory and textual notes.

Explanatory Notes at the foot of each page explain allusions and gloss obsolete and difficult words, confusing phraseology, occasional major textual cruces, and so on. Particular attention is given to non-standard usage, bawdy innuendo and technical terms (e.g. legal and military

language). Where more than one sense is given, commas indicate shades of related meaning, slashes alternative or double meanings.

Textual Notes at the end of each play indicate major departures from the Folio. They take the following form: the reading of our text is given in bold and its source given after an equals sign, with 'Q' indicating that it derives from the principal Quarto and 'Ed' that it derives from the editorial tradition. The rejected Folio ('F') reading is then given. A selection of Quarto variants and plausible unadopted editorial readings are also included. Thus, for example, at *Hamlet*, 3.4.180, *'bloat* = Ed. F = blunt. Q = blowt', indicates that we have adopted the editorial reading 'bloat' where Folio has 'blunt' and Quarto has 'blowt'.

'Key Facts' boxes at the beginning of each work give information on plot, sources, proportion of verse and prose, textual issues, authorial attribution when doubtful or collaborative, date of composition and first performance. They also include lists of substantial parts (characters who speak more than about forty lines) in descending order of size. Since the definition of a line spoken is variable (because of prose and half-lines), figures are given in terms of a percentage of the whole, the number of speeches delivered and the number of scenes the character is onstage. These lists make it possible to distinguish between works that are more ensemble-based (e.g. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *2 Henry IV*) and those that are dominated by a small number of characters (e.g. *Othello* and *1 Henry IV*). Though there is a degree of imprecision about these lists as a result of editorial interventions, they offer much valuable information – for instance that Sir Toby Belch has the largest part in *Twelfth Night* and that only six lead characters so dominate their world that their part is over three times the length of anyone else's in the play (Hamlet, Richard III, Timon, Macbeth, Prospero, Henry V).

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

A merchant of Syracuse has identical twin sons. One is stolen at the age of seven. The other's name is changed to that of the lost boy, in his memory. When grown up, he wanders the Mediterranean in search of his brother, finally chancing upon the seaport where the latter lives. The wanderer encounters the mistress, the wife and other acquaintances of the brother and is inevitably mistaken for him. When he denies all knowledge of the people who greet him, they assume that he is mad and attempt to have him locked up – save that by a further confusion they apprehend the other twin, the one who *does* know them. The audience awaits the moment of resolution that will come when the twins appear on stage together.

Such is the plot of Plautus' *Menaechmi*, a Roman comedy familiar to any Elizabethan with a classical education – which is to say any young man who had been to university and many who had reached no further than the upper level of grammar school. When The *Comedy of Errors* was performed before an audience of London lawyers and their patrons in the Christmas festivities of 1594, it was instantly recognized as being 'like to Plautus his *Menaechmus*'. Some years later, a lawyer named John Manningham made the same link, describing *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare's later comedy of twins and mistaken identity, as 'much like *The Comedy of Errors* or *Menaechmi* in Plautus'. Whilst we applaud difference, Shakespeare's first audiences favoured likeness: a work was good not because it was original, but because it resembled an admired classical exemplar, which in the case of comedy meant a play by Terence or Plautus.

Imitation was at the core of both education and artistic theory in Shakespeare's world. But good imitation was never slavish: it necessitated a surpassing of the original, often achieved by the fusion of different sources or the complicating of an already complicated plot line. Thus Shakespeare proved his cleverness to his audience of clever young lawyers. It is as if he is saying: Plautus presented one pair of identical twins, so I will give you two. The possibilities for confusion

are greatly multiplied by this device. As well as the stranger being mistaken for the local man, and the local mistaken for the stranger, we have the servants of each being mistaken by their own master and the other's master and the locals. Not to mention the masters mistaken by their servants. The comedy whereby an unmarried man in an alien environment is told that his wife is expecting him at home for dinner is doubled by the comedy of his slave receiving the unlooked-for attentions of the spherical kitchen-maid with whom his twin has been sexually involved.

The Comedy of Errors turns on the essential device of farce: exits and entrances. The wrong person keeps coming out of the door. Classical comedy provided a model in which the action of a drama takes place in a single location during the course of a single day. *Errors* is one of the few Shakespearean plays to follow this convention. The entire action takes place in the marketplace of Ephesus, its temporal structure framed by the Egeon plot (condemned in the morning, released in the evening). Unusually for Shakespeare, the exit and entrance doors represent specific locations: the Phoenix (Antipholus' and Adriana's house), the Porcupine (the courtesan's house) and the Priory. They may even have been labelled thus in performance. From the point of view of staging, this device was well fitted to indoor academic drama – as the play's brevity was suited to its being but a small part of a longer evening's entertainment at the Inns of Court. *Errors* is by some margin the shortest of Shakespeare's plays. It has around 1800 lines; some of the tragedies and histories are more than twice as long. There is no surviving evidence of performance on the public stage, but this is no guarantee that the play was kept in reserve for private performance to elite audiences. The device of the doors could have been adapted for the public theatres, perhaps with the upstage-centre 'discovery space' serving for the Priory in which the lost mother is found.

Though the Ephesian market economy is brought to life by means of Angelo the goldsmith and various merchants, the largest parts in the play belong to the strangers and the wife. The central comic device of mistaken identity is a means to the discovery of identity. Meeting someone who thinks you are someone you are not is a disturbing but ultimately invaluable way of finding out who you really are. Antipholus of Syracuse has been travelling in search of his family. On arriving in Ephesus and being mistaken for his long-lost brother, he realizes that his own self is not secure. His lines comparing himself to a drop of water cut to the quick of that experience of wandering