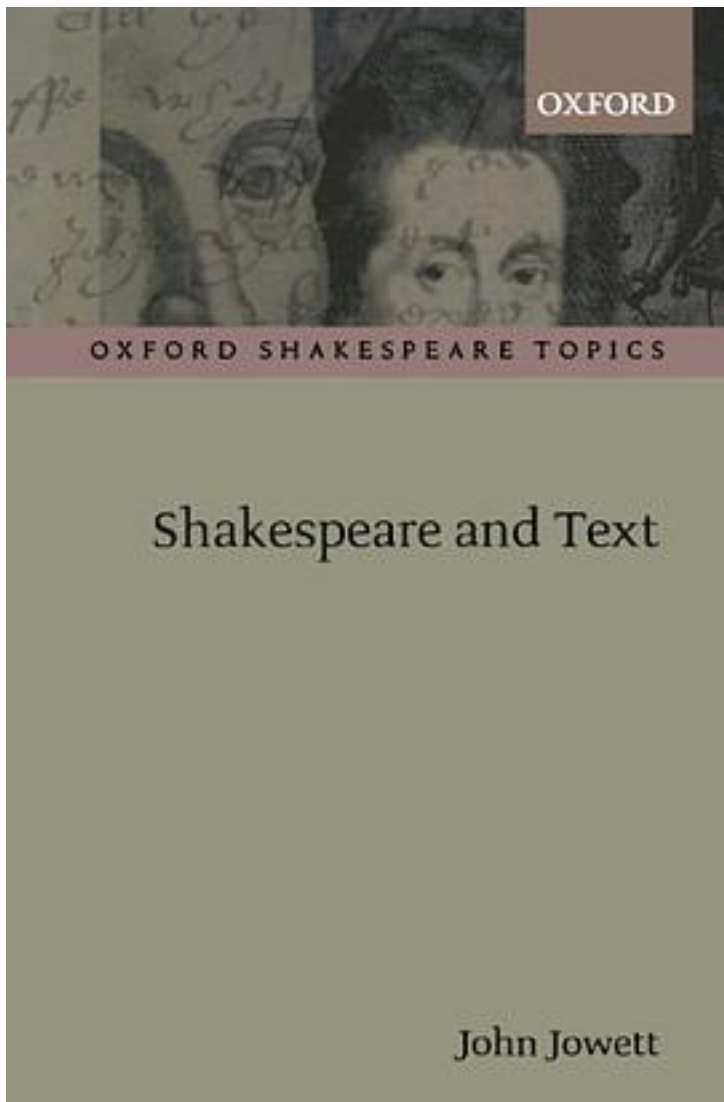


Shakespeare and Text



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Oxford Shakespeare Topics provide students and teachers with short books on important aspects of Shakespeare criticism and scholarship. Each book is written by an authority in its field, and combines accessible style with original discussion of its subject. Shakespeare and Text is an indispensable and unique guide to its topic. It takes Shakespeare readers to the very foundation of his work, explaining how his plays first took shape in the theatre where writing was part of a larger collective enterprise. As the resulting manuscripts are virtually all lost, the account then turns to the early modern printing industry that produced the earliest surviving texts of Shakespeare's plays. It describes the roles of publisher and printer, the controls exerted through the Stationers' Company, and the technology of printing. A chapter is devoted to the book that gathered Shakespeare's plays together for the first time, the First Folio of 1623. Shakespeare and Text goes on to survey the major developments in textual studies over the past century. It builds on the recent upsurge of interest in textual theory, and deals with issues such as collaboration, the instability of the text, the relationship between theatre culture and print culture, and the book as a material object. Later chapters examine the current critical edition, explaining the procedures that transform early texts in to a very different cultural artefact, the edition in which we regularly encounter Shakespeare.

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