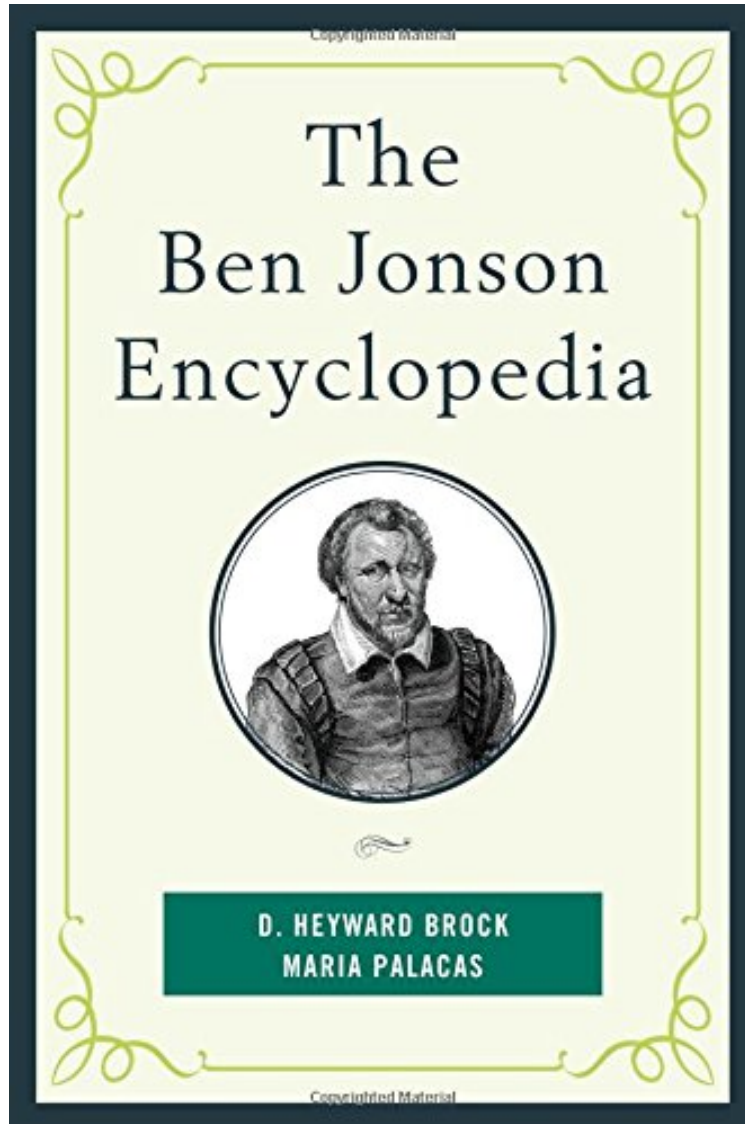


## The Ben Jonson Encyclopedia

*D. Heyward Brock, Maria Palacas*  
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**D. Heyward Brock, Maria Palacas : The Ben Jonson Encyclopedia** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ben Jonson Encyclopedia:

Friend and rival of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson was one of the most learned and interesting men of his age. Throughout his fascinating life, he served not only as a bricklayer but also a soldier, an adventurer, an actor, a poet, and a

playwright. The breadth of his experiences, acquaintances, friends, and enemies was legendary, and his literary canon is equally as diverse. The Ben Jonson Encyclopedia covers in detail the works, life, and times of this seminal figure of the English Renaissance. The cross-referenced entries include summaries of all Jonson's plays, masques, and entertainments, as well as sketches of Jonson's friends, enemies, patrons, disciples, actors, and fellow writers. In addition, the book identifies historical figures, mythological characters, and classical authors, as well as Jonson's contemporaries and London place names mentioned in the works. Individuals who danced or participated in the masques and entertainments or tournaments for which Jonson wrote speeches are noted, as are the main actors known to have acted in the plays. All major scholars from Jonson's own day until the twenty-first century who have commented on Jonson or his works are also included. An extensive bibliography completes this invaluable scholarly reference tool. Because of Jonson's centrality to and influence in and beyond his age, this encyclopedia provides a dynamic, unparalleled vision of the English Renaissance literary scene. Capturing the depth and breadth of Jonson's understanding of early Modern England, The Ben Jonson Encyclopedia will be especially useful for students, librarians, and academics interested in the literary and cultural scene from 1500 to 1650.

An expanded, enhanced version by Brock and independent scholar Palacas of Brock's *A Ben Jonson Companion* (1983) and his coauthored *Ben Jonson: A Quadricentennial Bibliography, 1947-1972* (1974), this encyclopedic work paints a panorama of the English Renaissance literary and social scene. It encompasses every piece of information associated with the man's experiences, works, associates, and contemporaries. The encyclopedia not only features entries pertaining to Jonson's life and time and provides a synopsis of each component of his diverse canon (plays, masques, entertainment, poems, and sketches) but also names players, characters, allusions, classical and mythological figures, inscriptions, and editions of his works. The alphabetical entries vary in length, from short clauses (e.g., Chronos, a character, identified with Saturn as time itself) to long articles (the entry on Masquers and Tilters offers an 11-page listing of characters). Some entries record compilers of Jonson's works (e.g., 18th-century Charles Lamb) or adapters (20th-century Stefan Zweig), and remote details find their way into this comprehensive work: Cypus (a citizen of the Roman state), Harper (a London printer), Suetonius (a Roman biographer). Cross-references; an up-to-date, 15-page selected bibliography; and a comprehensive, 75-page index complete the tome. A very useful resource for advanced research on Jonson and the period. Summing Up: Recommended. Graduate students; researchers/faculty. (CHOICE) What a marvelous tribute this update is to an almost forgotten genius. It's been 35 years since the first edition, the *Companion*, appeared. It is more than time enough for an updated and expanded version, the present *Encyclopedia*, to make its face known. In alphabetical arrangement, scholars and students alike will find words, phrases, plays, characters, actors, critics, and more as all things Jonson bubble up from every page. Whether the entry is from an actual play or poem, or whether a particular work evokes a philosopher or philosophic work, users will find it here. Although it cannot be said that the work is exhaustive for Jonson, readers will be hard-pressed to find glaring omissions, or even minuscule ones. Particularly useful are the synopses of the plays that appear throughout this handsome tome. A selected bibliography and fulsome index round out this work. As a quick resource for identifying names, places, or people, or as a companion for refreshing one's memory about a particular play, this volume does tribute to the playwright, poet, actor, critic, and notable friend. It should be on every desk of every Jonson scholar, and all library shelves. (American Reference Books Annual) About the Author D. Heyward Brock is professor and archivist at the University of Delaware. He is the author of *Ben Jonson: A Quadricentennial Bibliography, 1947-1972* (1974) and *A Ben Jonson Companion* (1983). Maria Palacas is an independent scholar and has taught courses at The University of Akron and the University of Delaware.