

Doctor Faustus, Tamburlaine and The Taming of The Shrew

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The sole authority for the text of *The Taming of The Shrew* is the Folio of 1623. It is the eleventh play, appearing amongst the comedies, after *As You Like It* and before *All's Well That Ends Well*. It occupies twenty-two folio pages, pp 208-29. Page 214 is wrongly numbered 212.

Of the thirty-six dramas in the Folio, eighteen had already been published as Quartos. The Folio, therefore, includes eighteen unpublished plays. Sixteen were registered on 8 November, 1623.

Significantly, the remaining two, *King Iohn* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, were not registered as they probably passed as reprints of older plays, *The Troublesome Raigne of Iohn King of England*, an anonymous play in two parts published in 1591, and *The Taming of a Shrowe* registered "Secundo die Maij, 1594, Peter Shorte." This second play was printed in a quarto edition in the same year, with the following information on its title page:

A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called *The Taming of a Shrew*.
As it was sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earl of
Pembrook his seruants. Printed at London by Peter Short and
are to be sold by Cuthbert Burbie, at his shop at the Royall
Exchange, 1594.

A single copy of this edition survives, owned by the Duke of Devonshire.

First Known Performance

On 11 June 1594 a performance of "*the taming of a Shrow*" at the Newington Butts theater, in the village of Newington, Surrey, is recorded in Henslowe's diary. Henslowe does not mark the play "ne" (believed by some to mean "new"). Both the Admiral's Men and the newly formed Chamberlain's Men played at this theater 5-15 June, 1594. On 9 June the two companies played the old(?) *Hamlet*. Two years later Thomas Lodge (c.1557-1625) mentioned in a pamphlet titled *Wits Miserie* "the ghost which cried so miserably at the Theater like on oister wife Hamlet revenge".

The Newington Butts Theatre, in the Surrey village of Newington where the archery butts were located, is about a mile south-west of London Bridge. The first mention of plays there is in a Privy Council letter of 13 May 1580, ordering the Surrey Iustices to prohibit the performance of plays because of infection (plague). "Nevertheles certen players do playe sundrie dayes every weeke at Newington Buttes."

A letter dated 11 May 1586 informs the Lord Mayor that "their Lordships have taken the like order for the prohibiting of the use of playes at the theater and th'other places around Newington out of his charge."

It was probably during the summer of 1592 that the Privy Council withdrew an order restraining "the Lorde Straunge his seruauntes from playinge at the *Rose* on the banckside," and "enioning them to plaie three daies at Newington Butts." By 1594, when the theatres were reopened following the plague of 1593, the Newington Butts theatre had come under the management of Philip Henslowe (?-1616), when he recorded "in the name of god Amen

beginninge at Newington my Lord Admeralle men & my Lorde CHamberlain men As
ffolowethe 1594.”

It is mysterious and puzzling that while Philip Henslowe was the leading speculative theatrical manager of his time, in 1587 he built and managed the first Bankside theatre, *The Rose*; managed the theatre in Newington Butts; built the *Fortune Theatre* in 1600 (in association with Edward Allen who had married his step-daughter, Joan Woodward) and had built *The Hope* theatre in 1613, yet he never once mentioned in his extant detailed business diary of 1592-1603 (in which he recorded his receipts, loans, payments of fees to individual actors and royalties to dramatists) the names Shakspere, Shakespeare, or Shake-speare! (Adams, 142-160; Ogburn 100).

It is equally remarkable that while sixteen First Folio plays were entered for publication at the Stationer's Register before 1610, not a single one was entered in the names Shakspere or Shakespeare. (Looney/Miller, Vol.1, p.66 footnote).

The first Shakespeare play to be published bearing his name was

A Pleasant Conceited Comedie Called, Louves labors lost, / As it was presented before her
Highnes this last Christmas. / Newly corrected and augmented by William Shakespeare. /
Imprinted at London by W.W. for Cuthbert Burby, 1598.

On 22 Jaunuary, 1607, *The taming of a Shrowe*, *Romeo and Juliett* and *Loves Labour Lose*, were entered in the Stationers Register to “Master Linge by direccon of A Court and with consent of Master Burby under his handwrytinge.” A third quarto of *A Shrew* appeared immediately with the imprint “Printed at London by v.s. for Nicholas Ling and are to be sold at his shop in Saint Dunstons Church-yard in Fleet street, 1607”.

The third quarto again had a few modifications. In the same year Ling (?-1610) transferred his rights in *A Shrew* to John Smethwick (?-1641). In 1623, *The Shrew* was first printed in the Folio of Shakespeare's plays. In 1631 John Smethwick printed a quarto edition, not of *A Shrew* (whose rights he owned) but of *The Shrew*, with a text derived from the *First Folio*.

Does it not seem far more reasonable that the ‘Soule of the Age’ anonymously wrote A Shrew and subsequently corrected and augmented it?

It is a teasing puzzle whether the twin plays are separate versions of an earlier but now lost original, or whether Shakespeare refurbished the anonymous *A Shrew* to produce *The Shrew*, or whether Shakespeare wrote both plays.

I maintain that it is difficult to believe that Shakespeare, who wrote to the very edges of the human imagination, would have found it necessary to plagiarize the current and anonymous play *A Shrew*, first publicly performed in 1594, just one year following the first publication of his own highly acclaimed *Venus and Adonis*, and in the very same year as the publication of *Lucrece*. If he was guilty of plagiarism, certainly no one objected.

Does it not seem far more reasonable that the “Soule of the Age” anonymously wrote *A Shrew* and subsequently corrected and augmented it?

It is apparent that John Smethwick, whilst owning the rights of *A Shrew* deliberately chose to print *The Shrew*, not differentiating between the two. He obviously believed that the Shakespeare 1623 Folio play *The Shrew* must have been a corrected and augmented version of the 1594 published *A Shrew*, as presented that year at the Newington Butts theatre.

Shakespeare is not known to have displayed any personal interest in the publication of any of his writings. Neither, it would seem, did anyone else ever claim to have written *A Shrew* nor does

anyone know why the opening words spoken by the “Lord” in the Induction (I.i.10-13) of the anonymous *A Shrew*:

Now that the gloomie shadow of the night
Longing to view Orions drisling lookes,
Leapes from th`antarticke World unto the skie
And dims the Welkin with her pitchie breath.

are identical to the words spoken by Faustus (*Doctor Faustus* I.iii.1-4) - a play posthumously credited to Christopher Marlowe (1564-93).

Doctor Faustus was entered to Thomas Bushell in the Stationer`s Register on 7 January, 1601 as “the plaie of Doctor FAUSTUS”. On the 13 September 1610 “The tragicall history of the horrible life and Death of Doctor FFAUSTUS, written by C.M.” was assigned by Busshell to John Wright.

The source of the play was “The historie of the damnable life, and deserved death of Doctor John Faustus” (1592), a translation by P.F. from the German of 1587.

On 22 November 1602, two years before *Doctor Faustus* appeared in print, Philip Henslowe paid £4 to “Wm Burde and Samwell Rowle” (William Bird alias Borne, and Samuel Rowley) for “ther adicycnes in doctor fostes”. Both men were actors in the Admiral`s Men. Thus in 1604—the year of Edward de Vere`s death—the play *Doctor Faustus*, incorporating identical lines published ten years previously in the anonymous *A Shrew*, was first published.

The title-page of *Faustus* indicates that it was performed by the Earl of Nottingham`s Men, i.e., the Admiral`s Men. Henslowe`s extant records of receipts reveal twenty-four performances between 30 September 1594 and 5 January 1597.

Earliest Reference

The earliest known reference to *Faustus* is after the publication and performance of *A Shrew*. It would appear on factual evidence that the *Faustus* lines, credited posthumously to Marlowe, had been duplicated from the anonymous play *A Shrew*.

Intriguingly, compare *A Shrew*, III.vi.67-69

Eternal heaven sooner be dissolude,
And all that pearseth *Phoebus`* silver eie,
Before such hap befall to *Polidor*

with Marlowe`s *Tamburlaine*, III. Ii.16-18:

Eternal heaven sooner be dissolv`d,
And all that pierceth *Pheobe`s* silver eye
Before such hap fall to *Zenocrate*.

No one knows when these lines were written. Robert Greene (1558-92) the dramatist, in his epistle to *Perimedes*—entered in the Stationer`s Register on 29 March, 1588—scorned the tragic style described by him as “daring God out of heaven with that Atheist *Tamburlan*.”

Tamburlaine the Great was entered in the Stationer`s Register to Richard Jones on 14 August 1590 as “The twooe commical discourses of *TOMBERLEIN* the Cithian shepparde”. The play was anonymous. Neither was the author named in the black-lettered octavo, under Jones` imprint, of the same year.

It is evident, that pre-1594 the anonymous author of *A Shrew* must have been familiar with the then anonymous *Tamburlaine the Great*, together with the unpublished and, at the time, anonymous *Doctor Faustus*.

It is also evident, unless it can be proved that *The Shrew* (first published in 1623) was written pre-1594, that Shakespeare must have based his play on the anonymous *A Shrew* and its source references. These sources included the English translation by Arthur Golding of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1566-7) and *Supposes* (written in 1566, and first published in 1573) reprinted in *The Whole woorkes of George Gascoigne Esquyre*, in 1587.

While there is not a scintilla of evidence that Arthur Golding and George Gascoigne had ever met or even heard of William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, the case of Edward de Vere is quite different. Arthur Golding, eminent lawyer and translator, was a brother-in-law of John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford, and thus was the uncle of Edward de Vere. At the time that Arthur Golding was translating Ovid, he was, most significantly, living in the household of William Cecil along with Edward. Also he likely was a personal tutor to his nephew. It is quite possible that they may have even worked together on the translation of Ovid. Regardless, Oxford would have been knowledgeable of and inspired by this work as, obviously, was Shakespeare.

George Gascoigne

George Gascoigne (c.1530-77) had close literary associations with Edward de Vere from at least 1562. He was a poet-soldier, translator, and a pioneer in many forms of literature, including the writing of the earliest regular satire, *The Steele Glas* (1576), the second English blank verse tragedy *Jocasta*; the earliest play in English prose, *Supposes*—an adaptation of Ariosto's *I Suppositi*—first performed in 1566 and published in 1573. George Gascoigne, step-father of the poet Nicholas Breton (?1545-?1626), who also wrote under the pseudonym Salochin Trebown (Nicholas backwards, with a variation of Breton), was also related through marriage to Edward de Vere.

In 1575, Gascoigne published his *Certayne Notes of Instruction* addressed to, and at the request of, the laureate “Master Eduardo Donati”. The *Notes* concerned the making of verse and sonnets. No one knows with certainty the true identity of Eduardo Donati, laureate, for the reference by Gascoigne to anyone by this name is unique.

It's likely that by coining the pseudonym *Donati*, Gascoigne had in mind Donatus, a 4th-century grammarian and the foremost writer of comedies of his time. I further believe that Gascoigne deliberately coined this particular name to address his *Notes* to, and at the request of, Edward de Vere. By 1575, de Vere was the foremost writer of English comedies, although none of his plays are extant, at least under his name.

It is essential that careful consideration be given to the proposition that de Vere was the one Gascoigne referred to as “Eduardo Donati” if one is to make the case that the anonymous *A Shrew* is an early play by Oxford performed on 11 June, 1594, at Newington Butts by either the Chamberlain's or the Admiral's men. In 1576, following Eduardo Donati's request to George Gascoigne and the publication of Gascoigne's *Notes* (which included the art of making sonnets), the sonnet “Love Thy Choice”, subscribed the “Earle of Oxenforde” was published in the Rawlinson Manuscript (and found in the BL, Harleian MS 7392(2), folio 70v:

Who taught thee first to sigh, alas, my heart?
 Who taught thy tongue the woeful words of plaint?
 Who filled your eyes with tears of bitter smart?
 Who gave thee grief and made thy ioyes so faint?

Who first did paint with colors pale thy face?
 Who first did break thy sleeps of quiet rest?
 Above the rest in court who gave thee grace?
 Who made thee strive in honor to be best?
 In constant truth to bide so firm and sure,
 To scorn the world regarding but thy friends?
 With patient mind each passion to endure,
 In one desire to settle to the end?
 Love then thy choice wherein such choice thou bind,
 As naught but death may ever change thy mind.

Although this draft of an early sonnet by Edward de Vere is unpolished, it represents the approach, style, and thought of an exceptional penman.

In 1582, Thomas Watson (?1557-92), poet, tutor, accomplished linguist, translator and friend of de Vere and Marlowe, published his *Hekatompathia*: a collection of one hundred English sonnets, which he dedicated to Oxford with the words: “reconciliation of all foes”.

In Watson’s posthumous *Tears of Fancy* (1593) there appears:

Who taught thee first to sigh Alasse sweet heart?
 Who traught thy tongue to marshall words of plaint?
 Who fild thine eies with teares of bitter smart?
 Who gave thee grieffe and made thy ioyes so faint?
 Who first did paint with coullers pale thy face?
 Who first did breake thy sleepes of quiet rest?
 Who forst thee unto wanton love give place?
 Who thrald thy thoughts in fancie so distrest?
 Who made thee bide both constant firme and sure?
 Who make thee scorne the world and love thy friend?
 Who made thy mind with patience paines indure?
 Who made thee settle stedfast to the end?
 Then love thy choice though love be never gained
 Still live in love, dispaire not though disdained.

This sonnet was posthumously credited to Watson, but did he compose it? Would he have plagiarized a sonnet credited in print to his trusted friend and employer, Edward de Vere, the Lord Great Chamberlain? Or was it, in all possibility, rewritten and polished by de Vere, put aside and later mistakenly as Watson’s?

Dedications

In considering the possibility that the 1594 anonymous *A Shrew* was written by “the foremost writer of English comedies”, Edward de Vere, it is necessary to examine a few of the extant dedications to, and high praises of, his varied literary and musical accomplishments, as attributed to him by eminent Elizabethan writers and musicians.

The numerous dedications include those by Arthur Golding in his *The Abridgement of the Histories of Trogus Pompeius* (1564) and his translation of *The Psalms of David* (1571); Thomas Watson’s *Hekatompathia*, *The Passionate Century of Love* (1582); Antony Munday’s *Zelauto*, *The Fountain of Fame* (1580); a recognized source for the *Merchant of Venice*; John Lyly’s *Euphues and His England* (1580); and Robert Greene’s *The Card of Fancy* (1584).

Edward de Vere was directly referred to by Edmund Spenser, Thomas Nashe, George Gascoigne, Thomas Churchyard, Thomas Dekker, Giles Fletcher the Elder, George Puttenham, Barnabe Barnes, George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and Gabriel Harvey. He was also highly praised by the three foremost Elizabethan musicians, John Dowland, William Byrd, and John Farmer. The latter dedicated to him his *First Set of English Madrigals* (1599). Significantly, with the two notable exceptions of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, every prominent Elizabethan writer and musician praisingly referred, by name, to Edward de Vere.

The varied and extensive tributes to de Vere's literary skills included those by William Webbe in his *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586):

I may not omit the deserved commendations of many honorable and noble Lords and Gentlemen in her Majesty's Court, which in the rare devices of poetry have been and yet are most skillful; among whom the Right Honorable the Earl of Oxford may challenge to himself the title of the most excellent among the rest.

George Puttenham in his *Art of English Poetrie* (1589) also wrote:

A crew of Courtly makers (poets), Noblemen, and Gentlemen, who have written excellently well, and as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest, of which number is first that noble Gentleman, the Earl of Oxford.

Francis Meres in his 1598 *Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury* stated: "The best for comedy among us bee Edward Earl of Oxford", while Gabriel Harvey, in his Latin address of welcome to Lord Oxford at Audley End, said:

...For a long time past Phoebus Apollo has cultivated thy mind in the Arts: English poetical measures have been sung by thee long enough...I have seen many Latin verses of thine, yea, even more English verses are extant; thou hast drunk deep draughts not only of the Muses of France and Italy, but hast learned the manners of many men, and the arts of foreign countries...O thou hero worthy of renown, throw away bloodless books and writings that serve no purpose. Now must the sword be brought into play, now is the time for thee to sharpen the spear. Thine eyes flash fire/Thy countenance shakes-a-spear.

In 1599, the organist John Farmer, in dedicating to Edward de Vere his second book, *The First Set of English Madrigals*, wrote:

...it cometh not within the compass of my power to express all the duty that I owe, nor to pay the least part... I have presumed to tender these Madrigals only as remembrances of my service and witness of your Lordship's liberal hand, by which I have so long lived...without flattery be it spoke, those that know your Lordship know this, that using this science as a recreation, your Lordship have overgone most of them that make it a profession.

That Edward de Vere was a most accomplished musician, with a life-long love of music, is evident. The sweet-content of music was often extolled by Shakespeare, e.g. Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice*, V.i.83:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is moved by with conford of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;

The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
 And his affections dark as Erebus:
 Let no such man be trusted - Mark the music.

Shakespeare “marked the music” with his marvelous musical references to bird-Song—the music of life—and such varied musical instruments as lutes, tabors, viol-de-gamboys, bagpipes and psaltries.

Did William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon, or his family, ever own or play a musical instrument, or even display an enthusiasm—as did Caliban—for “twangling sounds”? The contents of his own celebrated 1616 will, together with the vacuum of Stratfordian musical silence, would indicate a dull “no”.

The Lord in both *A Shrew* (1594) and *The Shrew* (1623) displayed a Veresque high enthusiasm for music, the food of love, to the extent that the quantity, quality, and consistency of the musical allusions in *The Shrew* have often been advanced to support the claim for Shakespeare’s sole authorship.

While it is generally accepted that Shakespeare was the writer of *The Shrew*, it has often been suggested that John Lyly (c.1554-1606), of *Euphues* fame, the oldest of the University Wits and one who certainly influenced the writings of Shakespeare, contributed directly to the structure of the play. Intriguingly, the same John Lyly was, for many years, a personal secretary to Edward de Vere, and later his theatrical manager.

Remarkable Coincidence

It was while contemplating this remarkable coincidence together with the possibility that the literary, music and play-loving Lord in *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* could have represented the personification of Edward de Vere, that I read a copy of the ancient ballad *The Frolicksome Duke, or The Tinker’s Good Fortune* set to the tune of “Fond Boy”. This undated ballad, given in a black-lettered copy in the Pepy’s Collection, Cambridge, is composed of twelve six-lined verses. It appears to record, in beautiful simplicity, a true occurrence, one that refers directly to the story-line of *A Shrew*. It is as though the anonymous writer of the play had either read the ballad or participated first-hand in the event upon which the ballad was based.

The Frolicksome Duke or The Tinker’s Good Fortune

Now as fame does report, a young duke keeps a court
 One that pleases his fancy with frolicksome sport;
 But amongst all the rest, here is one I protest,
 Which will make you to smile when you hear the true jest:
 A poor tinker he found, lying drunk on the ground,
 As secure in a sleep as if laid in a swoond.

The duke said to his men, “William, Richard, and Ben
 Take him home to my place, we’ll sport with him then.”
 O’er a horse he was laid, and with care soon convey’d
 To the palace, altho’ he was poorly arrai’d:
 Then they stript off his cloaths, both his shirt, shoes and hose,
 And they put him to bed for to take his repose.

Having pull’d off his shirt, which was all over durt,
 They did give him clean holland, this was no great hurt;

On a bed of soft down, like a lord of renown,
 They did lay him to sleep the drink out of his crown.
 In the morning, when day, then admiring he lay,
 For to see the rich chamber, both gaudy and gay.

Now he lay something late, in his rich bed of state,
 Till at last knights and squires they on him did wait;
 And the chamberlain bare, then did likewise declare,
 He desired to know what apparel he'd ware:
 The poor tinker amaz'd, on the gentleman gaz'd,
 And admired how to this honour was rais'd.

Tho' he seem'd something mute, yet he chose a rich suit,
 Which he straightways put on without longer dispute,
With a star on his side, which the tinker oft ey'd,
 And it seem'd for to swell him "no" little with pride;
 For he said to himself, "Where is Joan my sweet wife?
 Sure she never did see me so fine in her life".

From a convenient place, the right duke, his good grace,
 Did observe his behaviour in every case.
 To a garden of state, on the tinker they wait,
 Trumpets sounding before him: thought he, this is great:
 Where an hour or two, pleasant walks he did view,
With commanders and squires in scarlet and blew.

A fine dinner was drest, both for him and his guests;
 He was plac'd at the table above all the rest.
 In a rich chair "or bed", lin'd with fine crimson red,
 With a rich golden canopy over his head;
 As he sat at his meat, the musick play'd sweet,
 With the choicest of singing his joys to compleat.

While the tinker did dine, he had plenty of wine,
 Rich canary, with sherry and tent superfine.
 Like a rich honest soul, faith, he took off his bowl,
 Till at last he began for to tumble and roul
 From his chair to the floor, where he sleeping did snore,
 Being seven times drunker than ever before.

The the duke did ordain, they should strip him amain,
 And restore him his old leather garments again;
 'Twas a point next the worst, yet perform it they must,
 And they carry'd him strait, where they found him at first,
 Then he slept all the night, as indeed well he might;
 But when he did waken, his joys took their flight.

For his glory "to him" so pleasant did seem,
 That he thought it to be but a meer golden dream.
 Till at length he was brought to the duke, where he sought
 For a pardon, as fearing he had set him at nought,
 For his highness, he said, "Thou'rt a jolly bold blade;

Such a frolick before I think never was plaid".

Then his highness bespoke him a new suit and cloak,
Which he gave for the sake of this frolicksome joak,
Nay, and five hundred pound, with ten acres of ground:
"Thou shalt never," said he, "range the countries round,
Crying old brass to men, for I'll be thy good friend,
Nay, and Joan thy sweet wife shall my duchess attend".

Then the tinker reply'd, "What! Must Joan my sweet bride
Be a lady in chariots of pleasure to ride?
Must we have gold and land ev'ry day at command?
Then I shall be a squire, I well understand.
Well I thank your good grace, and your love I embrace;
I was never before in so happy a case".

Scarlet and Blue

The ballad describes a "true jest" about a young Duke, together with three of his servants "William, Richard, and Ben" when they found a poor tinker "lying drunk on the ground". The story line is clear and needs no explanation except to point out, as illustrated in italics, the significance of the suit with the stars on its side and the livery colors of the commanders and squires, scarlet and blue. The specific reference to the "rich suit" belonging to the Duke, emblazoned with an heraldic "star" on its side (which the tinker was so proud to wear and "offt ey'd) is pointedly descriptive of the singular heraldic star worn by the Earls of Oxford.

The description of "commanders and squires in scarlet and blew" highlights that blue was a livery color worn by the servants of Edward de Vere.² Edward de Vere, in his capacity as Lord Great Chamberlain, wore scarlet. (Ward, 60). His personal entourage of commanders would also likely have worn matching scarlet.

I suggest that the enigmatic appearance of Christopher Sly in the Induction of both *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* reflects the actions of the tinker referred to in the ballad, and that the ballad possibly recounted an actual event that directly involved Edward de Vere. If he were the anonymous writer, would it have not been appropriate to incorporate a true event into one of his early comedies?

In support of my theory that the enigmatic Induction Scene in *A Shrew* was not based on a primitive fable, but highlighted a true occurrence which involving de Vere, I call attention to an otherwise inexplicable question, addressed by Christopher Sly to the authentic Duke (whom I propose represented Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford) referred to in *A Shrew* by the pseudonym "Sim":

Why Sim am I not Don (Lord) Christo Vary?

A Shrew V.i.48

The above identifying line referring to Don (Lord) Christo Vary was deliberately omitted from *The Taming of The Shrew*, first published in the 1623 Folio. I am attempting to trace any unexampled archival references to Edward de Vere having been referred to by the pseudonym 'Sim' (Simon or Simion).

Here lie the riddles, fenced around with "whys". Why the singular, totally unexpected reference to Don (Lord) Christo Vary, when throughout the rest of the play the tinker is simply referred to as "Slie" and "Lord"? Why was the reference to "Christo" mirrored in *The Shrew*:

“....Am not I Christopher Slie?” (Induction II.15), but the self-revealing “Vary” deleted? Why is the pseudonym “Vary” such an obvious pun on the surname “Vere”? Why did the tinker, in the ballad, emphasize that the “rich suit” given to him by the Duke was emblazoned with a single heraldic star, and that the young Duke’s commanders wore “scarlet”, and his servants wore “blue” as did the personal staff of young Edward de Vere?

Essential Difference

The essential difference between the two plays is that in *A Shrew* Slie participates throughout the acts to the final scene, whereas in the ballad he changes back into his old clothes as he prepares to return to his wife. In this respect *A Shrew*, with its additional Slie participation, is vastly superior to the reworked 1623 *The Shrew* in which so much of the Slie material has been deleted. Why, in *The Shrew* should the pronounced prologue of the Induction so lengthily and revealingly introduce Slie, only to totally disregard his presence throughout the remainder of the play? It is illogical. What became of the essential epilogue? No other Shakespeare play is thus so uneven. Why?

Did someone, during the preparation of the First Folio suddenly realize that something concerning Slie’s identification was too revealing? Something that inadvertently highlighted both the name of the anonymous author of *A Shrew*, and the true name of the pseudonym William Shakespeare, author of *The Shrew*? If so, whatever the secret was, it must have been written into the 1594 published *A Shrew*, of which only one copy has come to light.

It is evident, from the foregoing, that the anonymous A Shrew could represent one of the lost comedies of Edward de Vere. His abilities are echoed by the numerous Elizabethan praises of his eminent literary and musical abilities.

It is probable that Shakespeare created additional meaningful character names other than the pseudonym Don Christo Vary. John Thomas Looney highlighted the fact that the half-sister of Edward de Vere was named Kate (Katherine), and that during Oxford’s 1575 visit to Padua he mentioned in extant letters to his father-in-law Lord Burghley, the names Baptista Nigrone and Benedict Spinol’. Looney reasoned that the name of Kate’s father, Baptista Minola, could be a composite of these two names.

It is evident, from the foregoing, that the anonymous *A Shrew* could represent one of the lost comedies of Edward de Vere. His abilities are echoed by the numerous Elizabethan praises of his eminent literary and musical abilities.

One quintessential question remains. In what year was the anonymous *A Shrew* written? A reference in the Revels Accounts (Feuillerat, 286) records a performance at Richmond, before the Queen, on “Newyers day at night” 1578-9, by the Children of Pawles, of an anonymous play *A Morrall of the mariage of Mynde and Measure*. At that time, John Lyly, High Master of St.Paul’s, produced the Court performances by the Children of Pawles, under the patronage of Edward de Vere.

While, as yet, there is insufficient evidence to precisely identify the year of the penning of *A Shrew*, the fact that it has an Induction Scene fashionably dates it to pre-1590. Dating parallels have been drawn between *A Shrew* and *The Spanish Tragedy* attributed to Thomas Kyd, the composition of which may be 1582-92. Whatever the date for *A Shrew*, Oxford would have had the time to revise it into the more polished *The Shrew* subsequently published in the Folio of 1623.

Notes:

¹ The ballad is printed in a black-letter copy in the Pepysian Library at Magdalen College, Cambridge. The founder of the college, Samuel Pepys, Secretary of the Admiralty in the reigns of Charles II and James II, had made a large collection of ancient English ballads (near 2000) which he left pasted in five volumes in folio beside garlands and other smaller miscellanies. The ballad was printed in *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* by Thomas Percy in 1775, and reprinted in subsequent editions.

² Whereas 'Reading tawny' has long been recognized as a livery color for the Earls of Oxford (Nelson 265), the importance of the colors scarlet and blue is also illustrated by several references. First, note the will of the 16th Earl where he described the furnishings of his bed and chamber were mostly of scarlet (or crimson) and blue (Nelson website, socrates.berekley.edu/~ahnelson/DOCS/16will2.html) as well as the heraldic "Blue Boar" of the Earls of Oxford. Then there is the report in a letter by George Delves to the Earl of Rutland reporting that "The Earl of Oxford's livery was crimson velvet, very costly". (Ward 60). Even later, in 1661, there was formed a Regiment that was to become the Royal Horse Guards, given the nickname of "Oxford Blues", a reference to the first Colonel, Aubrey de Vere, the twentieth and last Earl of Oxford, and to their blue uniforms. (www.regiments.org/regiments/uk/guards/c-RHG.htm).

Richard Malim, Honorary Secretary of the English De Vere Society, and the General Editor of *Great Oxford* has kindly drawn my attention to his apt comments in *Great Oxford*, pp 247ff.: "Serious consideration must be given to the tinker in *Taming of The Shrew*, Christopher Sly. His career is an allegory of William Shakespeare's. He is picked out of the gutter and endowed by the poet's expertise with all the attributes of lordship: the critic Wilson Knight wondered, "Why does the poet lavish such lyrical beauty on this queer theme?" Sly first appears in the introductory interlude in the first version of the play *The Taming of A Shrew*, 1594. There are other interlude scenes in this version. In it Sly wakes up to object to a character being carted off to prison, saying, "Am not I Don Christo Vary?" In Tudor times the vowel sound "ere" would have sounded "air": *Vair* and not *Vere*.

From the 1598 version (*The Taming of The Shrew*) this small interlude is cut out and so is the final scene where Sly is returned to the gutter. Again these changes are baffling to orthodox critics, who can offer no explanation. By cutting out the final interlude, the author leaves him on the stage, still in charge of all the lord's luxuries. This might be a metaphor whereby William Shakespeare is shown as the unworthy recipient and custodian of Oxford's literary riches.

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