

The Playwright's Progress: Edward de Vere and the Two *Shrew* Plays

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For more than 400 years the two *Shrew* plays—*The Tayminge of a Shrowe* (1594) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1623)—have been entangled with each other in scholarly disagreements about who wrote them, which was written first, and how they relate to each other. Even today, there is consensus on only one of these questions—that it was Shakespeare alone who wrote *The Shrew* that appeared in the *Folio*. It is, as J. Dover Wilson wrote, “one of the most difficult cruxes in the Shakespearian canon” (vii).

An objective review of the evidence, however, supplies a solution to the puzzle. It confirms that the two plays were written in the order in which they appear in the record, *The Shrew* being a major revision of the earlier play, *A Shrew*. They were by the same author—Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, whose poetry and plays appeared under the pseudonym “William Shakespeare” during the last decade of his life. Events in Oxford’s sixteenth year and his travels in the 1570s support composition dates before 1580 for both plays.

These conclusions also reveal a unique and hitherto unremarked example of the playwright’s progress and development from a teenager learning to write for the stage to a journeyman dramatist in his twenties. De Vere’s exposure to the intricacies and language of the law, and his extended tour of France and Italy, as well as his maturation as a poet, caused him to rewrite his earlier effort and produce a comedy that continues to entertain centuries later.

Tayminge A Shrowe

The first appearance of any *Shrew* play was the quarto of *A plesant Conceyted historie called the Tayminge of a Shrowe* that Peter Short registered on May 2, 1594 (Arber II, 648) and printed later the same year. Only a single copy survives from the stock of the bookseller Cuthbert Burby, who later published several Shakespeare plays. Neither the Stationers’ Register entry nor the title page named an author. According to the title page, the play had been performed by the Earl of Pembroke’s Men, a company for which no record exists before 1592. The company disbanded in 1593 after having apparently sold several plays to booksellers, including *A Shrew* and *Titus Andronicus* (Chambers, *ES* II, 128-9).

In his Diary, Philip Henslowe subsequently recorded a group of plays performed by “my Lord Admerall men and my Lorde Chamberlen men” in his theater at Newington Butts in June 1594. Onstage, just a few days apart, were *Hamlet*, “*Andronicous*,” “*the Tamynge of A Shrowe*” and four other plays (Chambers, *WS* II, 319). By coincidence perhaps, two acknowledged Shakespeare plays were published in the same year—*Titus Andronicus* (registered Feb. 6th) and *The Con-*

tention (registered March 12th). Peter Short printed a nearly identical Q2 of *A Shrew* in 1596. When he died in 1603, ownership passed to Nicholas Ling, who registered the play again in January 1607, along with *Romeo and Juliet* and *Love's Labor's Lost* (Arber III, 337). Ling had a third quarto printed within a few months, with minor variations from the first two. In April 1607 Ling died, and ownership of these three plays, plus “A booke called *Hamlett*” and fourteen other works of the period, was transferred from Ling’s widow to publisher and bookseller John Smethwick in November (Arber III, 365). It appears that these four plays were Smethwick’s contribution when he and his colleagues published the First Folio in 1623. There is only one other mention of *A Shrew* in this period. In his *Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596), Sir John Harington made an isolated reference to “the book of Taming a Shrew” (153).¹

The first probable citation of the canonical *The Taming of the Shrew* was by the satirist Samuel Rowlands in a so-called “gossip pamphlet,” *A whole crew of kind Gossips, all met to be merry*, published in 1609:

The chiefest Art I have I will bestow
About a work cald taming of the Shrow

—Rowlands II, 33²

Shakespeare’s name was not associated with any *Shrew* play until the initial printing of *The Taming of the Shrew* in the First Folio. It was not among the twelve Shakespeare plays that Francis Meres listed in his *Palladis Tamia* in 1598. Nor was any *Shrew* play included in the list of plays in the Stationers’ Register entry for the Folio by Edward Blount and William Jaggard in November 1623, a list containing only those plays “not formerly entred to other men” (Arber IV, 107). Thus, John Smethwick’s acquisition of the rights to *A Shrew* in 1607 apparently sufficed to allow the printing of *The Shrew* in the Folio. Smethwick published a quarto of *The Shrew* in 1631, using the Folio text. In the words of E. K. Chambers:

The bibliographical *data* up to 1607 relate to *The Taming of A Shrew*, but it is clear that *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* were regarded as commercially the same, and that the copyright acquired by Smethwick in 1607 [for *A Shrew*] covered both F1 and the Q of 1631 . . .

—William Shakespeare, I, 323.

The bibliographical evidence thus associates *A Shrew* with canonical Shakespeare plays in four different contexts—as part of a sale (1593), on the same weekly playbill (1594), in a group of plays registered together (1607), and in a group of twenty plays transferred to one of the publishers of the *First Folio* (1607). In the face of this array of documentary and interpretative evidence, it is hard to understand why nearly all modern scholars deny that Shakespeare wrote any part of *The Taming of a Shrew*, and insist that it was the work of a playwright

they are unable to identify. Some even claim that it is an imitation of Shakespeare's play.

A Source Play?

Such was not always the case. The earliest commentators on the authorship of *A Shrew*—Alexander Pope and several German scholars—assigned it to Shakespeare. Pope considered it an “alternative version” of *The Shrew*, and even introduced scenes from it, including the final dialogue between Sly and the Tapster, into his edition of the plays in 1723. Other early editors, such as Theobald (1733), Hanmer (1744), Warburton (1747), Johnson (1765), and Capell (1768), included some or all of the Sly passages in their versions of the canonical *Shrew*. However, in his edition of 1790, Edmond Malone asserted that Shakespeare did not write *A Shrew*, but drew on it as a source.

The view that the anonymous *Shrew* preceded Shakespeare's play prevailed until 1926, when Peter Alexander of Glasgow University argued that *A Shrew* was a “bad quarto” that had been reconstructed from *The Shrew* by a pirate (614).

The opposing views about the order of the plays among editors and critics at that time are plainly apparent in the 1928 New Cambridge *The Taming of the Shrew* edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and J. Dover Wilson. “*A Shrew*...is demonstrably based upon the Shakespearian play,” wrote Wilson (126). But his co-editor Quiller-Couch was not so sure, and leaned to the “inherent probability” that it was Shakespeare's play—an adaptation of the anonymous *Shrew*—that was performed at Henslowe's theater in 1594 (xxiii).

The view that the canonical *Shrew* was the earlier play was rejected over the next several decades by such editors and scholars as E. K. Chambers (*WS*, I, 327), G. B. Harrison (328), and Geoffrey Bullough (I, 57-8). But in most editions, texts, and standard works of reference, *A Shrew* continued to be regarded as the earlier play.

Beginning in the 1960s, however, Alexander's theory was resurrected, and a majority of editors and commentators agreed that the 1594 quarto of *A Shrew* was a “piracy,” “plagiarism,” a “derivative,” an “imitation,” or simply a “bad quarto” produced by one or more actors, pirates, or stenographers. Recent editors—Miller (of *A Shrew*, 10-11) and Morris (of *The Shrew*, 32)—refuse to assign an author to



A Shrew, and instead call the play the product of an “adapter” or a “compiler.” To explain the extraordinary similarities between the two *Shrew* plays, some critics resort to a second theory proposed by Charles Knight in 1842—that yet another anonymous play, an *Ur-Shrew*, now lost, was the source of both extant *Shrew* plays (II, 119-120).

Nevertheless, the opinion of the earliest commentators—that *A Shrew* was Shakespeare’s first version of the story—has persisted until today. In the 19th century, such prominent scholars as Albert W. Frey (37-8) and Walter Raleigh assigned it wholly to him, the latter commenting that

The play is nevertheless a work of comic genius; and contains, without exception, all the ludicrous situations which are the making of Shakespeare’s comedy (110).

The respected 19th-century scholar and poet, William Courthope, described the play as “the first rude sketch of the philosophical idea of life which characterises all Shakespeare’s mature creations” (IV, 75). In the first Arden edition of *The Shrew*, R. W. Bond wrote about the anonymous *Shrew* that

...I feel the Induction to be so vigorous and natural a piece of imaginative work, and the conception of Kate and Ferando so powerful and humorous...that one knows not to whom to attribute these creations if not to Shakespeare (xlii).

Throughout the 20th century, respected editors and critics, such as Geoffrey Bullough (I, 58), and Eric Sams (136-45), recognized Shakespeare’s hand in *A Shrew*, albeit an early and inept one, in the ingenious plotting, the exuberant action, and even in the irregular and bombastic verse.³

The Anonymous *Shrew*

The anonymous *Shrew* of 1594 consists of 1520 lines of mixed verse and prose printed continuously without act or scene divisions, and without a list of characters. Later editors added a cast list and scene divisions, the most logical being an arrangement in 15 scenes, including the two “Induction” scenes, such as in Steven Roy Miller’s New Cambridge edition (1998). The numerous, but incomplete, stage directions have been amended by modern editors. A doubling chart suggests that ten men and four boys would be needed to stage the play (Miller 146).

In the plotting and structure of *A Shrew*, the author demonstrates an exceptional competence. In the words of a modern editor, “The structural and thematic sophistication of *A Shrew* (which contains all three of the plot-strands of *The Shrew*) is...outstanding...” (Thompson 9). Frederick Boas remarked that “the author shows a true instinct for dramatic technique” (*Shrew* xxvi). The playwright’s skillful handling of a three-action play is admitted by nearly all commentators, and has been termed “without parallel in Elizabethan drama” (Hosley 294). This unusual feature has led a few to the conclusion that *A Shrew* was an early

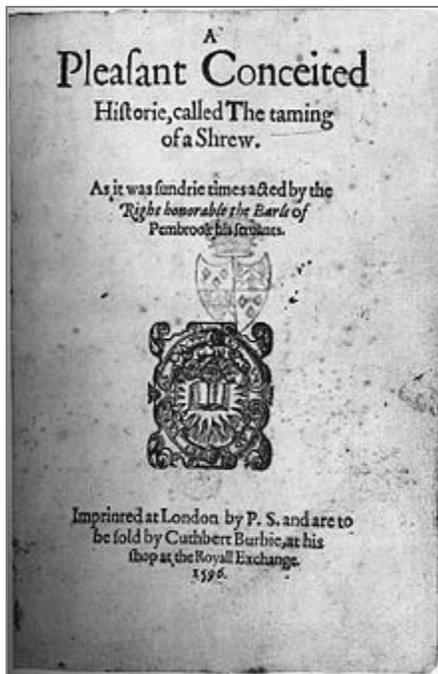
Shakespeare play. In the words of Geoffrey Bullough, “A *Shrew* may not be so much the source-play as Shakespeare’s first shot at the theme” (I, 58).

Most modern editors of *The Shrew* print as “additional passages” the five short scenes of the “Sly Frame” that appear in the anonymous *Shrew*, but not in the Folio text. Besides the additional scenes from the “Sly Frame,” Ann Thompson, in her New Cambridge edition (1984), printed another 46-line scene from *A Shrew* “which I believe may similarly relate to a Shakespearean scene missing from the Folio text” (175).

The publication and performance details of *A Shrew* are similar to those of *Titus Andronicus* and the second and third parts of *Henry VI*, each of which has been, in modern times, accepted as a genuine Shakespeare play, although some consider them collaborations. But as Leah Marcus observes:

...*A Shrew* remains in a curious limbo. It is too regular and original to be a “bad quarto,” yet somehow too derivative and uncouth to be acceptable Shakespeare (181).

A Shrew is notable for two dozen phrases and lines that are identical or nearly so to those in other literary works of the period, notably Marlowe’s two *Tamburlaine* plays and *Doctor Faustus*, and Robert Greene’s *Menaphon*. There are also ten lines in scene 14 that are very similar in wording to lines in the first section, the *Premiere Sepmaine*, of the long poem *La Création du Monde* published in 1578 by the French poet Guillaume Salluste du Bartas. These are discussed in “Dates of the Two Shrews” below.



The Canonical *Shrew*

Of the 2597 lines in *The Shrew* of the Folio, approximately 22% are in prose, 72% in blank verse, and 6% rhymed verse. The eccentric act division in the Folio has been reorganized by later editors, the most common arrangement being in 14 scenes, including the Induction, spread over five acts (*Riverside* 2nd ed.).

The Shrew is generally thought to be one of the earliest plays in the canon. It has many stylistic and technical affinities with *The Comedy of Errors*, such as the device of mistaken identities, the treatment of the husband/wife relationship, and the unusually detailed stage directions relating to locality, property, costume and action.⁴ By comparing style, workmanship, complexity,

and the use of classical imagery, Marco Mincoff makes a strong case that *The Shrew* predated *Errors* and was Shakespeare's first comedy. Orthodox scholars propose dates of composition ranging from 1588 to 1598 (Morris 57-65; Parrott 56).

The structure, characterization, and verse of *The Shrew* are of such uneven quality that until the mid-20th century many scholars considered it to be only partially by Shakespeare, and some proposed another author entirely. In 1857 Grant White suggested that Shakespeare had two collaborators and that he had nothing to do with the underplot (IV, 390). In his analysis of the play in the 1870s, F. G. Fleay complained of numerous "metrical peculiarities," "doggerel," and inappropriate classical allusions, and proposed that it was a reworking of *A Shrew*, which had been written by Shakespeare and Marlowe for Pembroke's Men (186). Chapman and Greene have also been suggested as Shakespeare's partners.

E. K. Chambers assigned only three-fifths of the play to Shakespeare, and the subplot to an unknown collaborator. He complained that the writer of the subplot was "much less vigorous" than Shakespeare, and that he wrote "many awkward lines which disregard stress or contain unmanageable trisyllabic feet...The numerous scraps of Latin and Italian and the doggerel belong to his part" (WS, I, 324). Later editors (Quiller-Couch and Wilson 124-6; Hodgdon 313-316) have pointed out puzzling remarks by Hortensio, who does not exist in the "source play," and confusion about his place in the plot.

But the view that Shakespeare alone was responsible for *The Shrew* has had advocates throughout the 20th century. Brandes in 1898 (113-116), Raleigh in 1907 (110), Boas in 1908 (xxxix), and Quiller-Couch in 1928 (vii-xii) all argued for his single authorship. More recently, scholars have assembled credible evidence of Shakespeare's responsibility for the entire play. In 1925 Kuhl found a unity of structure, characterization, and mood throughout the play. In 1954 Wendersdorf concluded that "the imagery indicates that the play was the work of but one playwright, and that this playwright was Shakespeare" (31-2). On the basis of both simple and complex allusions to music and musical instruments, Waldo and Herbert asserted that it was Shakespeare's work throughout. Today most scholars assign the entire play to Shakespeare.

Sources of the Plays

As mentioned above, there are two main schools of thought about the relationship between the two *Shrew* plays—one that the "compiler" of the anonymous *Shrew* obtained a manuscript of Shakespeare's *Shrew* and used it as a model or a source, the other that the anonymous *Shrew* was written first, and used by Shakespeare as a template for the play in the Folio. Another theory is that each author used a lost or *Ur* version of the play as a source for his own. Some critics assert that this lost play was by Shakespeare himself, others that it was written by an unknown playwright.

The main plot was apparently derived from a folktale group, a “Shrew-taming complex,” consisting of more than 400 oral and written versions that have been identified in the folklore of various countries from Ireland to India (Miller 12-16). Folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand found more than a dozen elements in the folkloric versions of the taming plot that appeared in both *Shrew* plays, as well as others that appeared in one play, but not the other (1991, 188-9). In many cases, elements from the traditional tales that are common to both plays are presented more rationally and handled with greater skill in *The Shrew*.⁵

The origin of the subplot in both plays, which involves a visiting student and the sister(s) of the shrew, lies in the Italian comedy *I Suppositi*, written by Ludovico Ariosto in the first decade of the 16th century in imitation of the Roman comedies of Plautus and Terence. It was published in prose in 1524, and rewritten in verse and published in 1551. It was translated into English prose as *Supposes* by George Gascoigne for the revels at Gray's Inn late in 1566, and published in 1573. The subplot of each play contains characters, incidents and dramatic devices based on *Supposes*, and each play contains incidents from it that do not appear in the other.

It is noteworthy that *Supposes* is also a source for circumstances and dramatic devices in *The Comedy of Errors* (Salinger 207-8). Also, a masque of Gascoigne's that was also published in 1573 has been shown to be a source for details in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*.⁶

The source or sources of the “framing plot” are more obscure. The story of a sleeping drunkard who awakes to find himself a wealthy noble is a staple of traditional folklore. A more specific source, a collection of short comic stories in prose made by Richard Edwards and allegedly printed in 1570, has been cited by several critics. Although this book has never been found, the pages containing one of the stories, “The Waking Man's Dream,” turned up in the mid-19th century and were printed by the Shakspeare Society (Mish).

Another possible source, an anonymous and undated ballad called “The Frolicksome Duke or The Tinker's Good Fortune,” has been suggested by Derran Charlton (114-116). In twelve verses the ballad describes an episode that is nearly identical to that in both plays. The play is not mentioned in the ballad, so it is possible that it preceded the play, and that the playwright was familiar with it.

Relationships between the Two Shrews

The plot in both plays is an extended farce, set in Athens in *A Shrew*, and in Padua in *The Shrew*. It involves the courtship and marriage of the three daughters of an Athenian merchant (Alfonso) in *A Shrew*, and the two daughters of a wealthy citizen of Padua (Baptista) in *The Shrew*. Each of the main characters, except Gremio, and several minor ones, has a counterpart in the same role in the other play. But except for Sly and Kate/Katherina, their names are different. In each play the eldest daughter Kate/Katherina is a scold and a shrew whom her father demands be the first to marry.

The two plays agree in theme, plot, and subplot, and in dozens of details of characterization, action and language. Of the 15 scenes in *A Shrew*, all but three occur in *The Shrew*. If the Sly epilogue in *A Shrew* is set aside (and it is absent from the Folio text), both plays divide into 14 scenes, the first two and the last three of which are “roughly equivalent” (Miller 23).

A Shrew is the shorter and simpler play. The characters are less well-rounded, and their motivations are less clear than in *The Shrew*. In *A Shrew* three young men each court a different daughter of the merchant Alfonso, one of whom is the shrew. In *The Shrew* one man courts the shrew, and three other men, including one much older (Gremio), court the shrew’s only sister Bianca. In the fourth act, one abandons his courtship of Bianca and transfers it to an unnamed Widow.

The three structural components in each play—the main “taming” story, the subplot of the wooing of the shrew’s sister(s), and the frame in which a lord plays tricks on a sleeping drunkard, Christopher Sly—are similar, and are arranged with each other in the same way. On the other hand, there are noteworthy differences in the casts of the two plays, in the interactions among the characters, and in the sequence of incidents in each plot.

The ‘Sly Frame’

Much critical attention has been devoted to the “Sly Frame” that is present in both plays. It encloses the entire plot and subplot of the anonymous *Shrew*, but in *The Shrew* Sly and the others disappear after the second Induction scene. In *A Shrew* he and the lord are part of the extended dramatic framework, and reappear throughout the play, and in the 23-line closing scene.

The two opening scenes that are common to both plays are the most nearly alike of all the scenes in the two plays. There are more than 30 details of action, characterization, and language that are virtually identical. The most obvious are the following:

Both plays open with a drunkard named Sly exiting a tavern after quarreling with the proprietor, and then falling asleep. A lord who has been hunting enters with his men, and tells his servants to attend to his dogs. He regards the sleeping Sly with disgust, but then orders him taken to a luxurious setting in his own house. He instructs his servants to address, and to treat, Sly as “Lord” when he awakes. He also arranges for a boy to pretend to be a woman and Sly’s wife. He instructs him at length in the seductive behavior he is to use. A servant announces that the lord’s players have arrived. The lord welcomes them and arranges for them to put on a play that evening before the “Lord” Sly. He orders his servants to see that the players are given food and whatever else they need.

In the first scene of *A Shrew*, the lord asks the players, “Now sirs, what store of plays have you?” A player answers, “Marry my lord, you may have a ‘tragical’

or a 'commodity' or what you will" (1.57-8).⁷ In *The Shrew* the malapropism comes from the mouth of Sly, who confuses "comedy" and "comonty."

Marry, I will, let them play it. Is not a
comonty a Christmas gambold, or a tumbling trick?
—Ind.ii.137-8⁸

In the second scene in both plays, music is playing when Sly awakes; he is dressed in luxurious garments with a banquet set before him. He calls for ale; servants offer him wine and refer to his horses and dogs. The lord presents himself as a commoner and addresses Sly as though he were a lord, offering him activities appropriate for a wealthy nobleman. Sly asks, "Am I a lord?" The servant boy enters, disguised as Sly's wife. Sly suggests that they go to bed shortly, but she puts him off. The players are announced, and the group prepares to watch.

The first two scenes of *The Shrew* contain about twice as many lines as the same scenes in *A Shrew*. While they also contain the same elements, the dialogue is drawn out and elaborated. Except for a five-line exchange between Sly and the lord after the first scene in Padua (I.i), the characters in the first two scenes of *The Shrew* do not appear again. However, in *A Shrew* Sly and the lord or the tapster reappear five more times, and the final scene (15) consists entirely of a 23-line dialogue between Sly and the tapster. In each of these short reappearances, Sly and the lord maintain their reversed relationship, and actually comment on the progress of the play. In the last scene Sly awakens in his previous state, and exclaims to the tapster that he has had a wonderful dream. He adds that now he knows "how to tame a shrew."

It is clear that the author of the Folio *Shrew* has simply taken over the situation and characters in the "Sly frame" in *A Shrew* and rewritten the dialogue.

The Subplot

The subplots of both plays contain more than a dozen identical elements:

In the third scene of both plays the action of the subplot begins with the arrival in Athens/Padua of Aurelius/Lucentio, a well-to-do young man who is accompanied by his servant Valeria/Tranio. In the Folio, Lucentio has an additional servant, Biondello, a boy.

Aurelius/Lucentio arrives in a university town to study. In *A Shrew* he is the son of the Duke of Sestos; in *The Shrew* he is the son of a Pisan merchant "of incomparable wealth." He promptly falls in love with Phylema/Bianca, the younger sister of Kate/Katherina, the shrew.

Aurelius/Lucentio learns that Kate/Katherina's wealthy father, Alfonso in *A Shrew*, Baptista in *The Shrew*, requires that his oldest daughter, the shrew, be the first daughter to marry.

In order to gain access to Phylema/Bianca and to court her more effectively, the student disguises himself as a person of lower rank by exchanging identities with his servant. He is encouraged when the tamer (Ferando/Petruchio) appears as a suitor for the shrew.

Music lessons for the shrew are attempted by a disguised music instructor, who makes sexual advances toward her. She rejects him, and the lesson ends badly.

After the wedding of the tamer and the shrew is arranged, her father agrees to the marriage of Aurelius/Lucentio to his younger daughter Phylema/Bianca if the groom's father will vouch for her dowry.

The servant disguised as Aurelius/Lucentio recruits a man to pretend to be the father of Aurelius/Lucentio. The scheme is successful, and the wedding is arranged.

The true father of Aurelius/Lucentio arrives in Athens/Padua and meets the tamer and the shrew.

The true father encounters his and his son's impersonators, berates them both, and threatens them with prison. After explanations and apologies all around, the true father of Aurelius/Lucentio agrees to his marriage to Phylema/Bianca.

Each of the new husbands wagers the others that his wife is the most obedient.

Aside from the rearrangement of suitors and daughters, therefore, the subplots of the two plays are the same. But the verse has been entirely rewritten. Scholars have noted that in both subplots events are dramatized that are only narrated in the source, Gascoigne's *Supposes*, and there are circumstances and details in both that do not appear in Gascoigne at all. According to *A Shrew's* latest editor, the two *Shrew* plays "have more in common with each other than either has with *Supposes*," supplying further evidence that "one must derive from the other" (Miller 16-17).

The 'Taming' Plot

Once the characters of the subplot have been introduced in both plays, those in the taming plot, Ferando/Petruchio and his servant Sander/Grumio, join them in Ath-

ens/Padua. The tamer is in search of a wife. The following identical details of plot and action in the taming component, upwards of thirty, appear in both plays:

The tamer hears of the shrew, Kate/Katherina, and her wealthy father Alfonso/Baptista.

Before he even meets Kate/Katherina, the tamer arranges for a large cash payment from her father upon their marriage.

The tamer flirts with the shrew in a bantering way. She rebuffs him with witty and scornful replies.

After a display of erratic behavior by both the tamer and the shrew, the tamer announces their wedding, with the assent of her father.

The wedding is delayed because Ferando/Petruchio arrives late. The bride's father and the other guests are dismayed by his "base attire" in *A Shrew*, "un-reverent robes" in *The Shrew*. They try to persuade him to change into more suitable clothes, but he refuses.

The tamer behaves like a boor at the wedding. Doubts about the success of the marriage are expressed by several characters.

After the wedding, Ferando/Petruchio announces that he and his bride will depart immediately and not join the other guests at dinner. As Kate/Katherina and the others entreat him to stay, he calls for his horse and the two of them leave.

When they arrive at home, Ferando/Petruchio berates his servants, rejects the meat they bring them, and strikes several of them.

The tamer departs with the shrew, but then returns to explain to the audience that he will tame his "headstrong" wife in the same way that men tame wild birds—by denying her food and sleep.

Mention is made of a "taming school" where Ferando/Petruchio is the master.

In similar scenes of approximately 50 lines each, Kate/Katherina asks the tamer's servant, Sander in *A Shrew*, Grumio in *The Shrew*, to bring her food. He brings her beef and mustard and two other dishes, but as soon as she displays interest, he finds a reason to withdraw each one. Finally, beset with anger and frustration, she "beats him."

A haberdasher and a tailor are brought in to furnish Kate/Katherina with a hat and a gown, but the tamer rejects them immediately, even though she thinks them fashionable and wishes to wear them.

On the tamer's demand, the shrew agrees to call the sun the moon, pretends that an old man is a woman, etc.

In the outcome of the wager scene, Kate/Katherina comes to her husband when commanded by him, after the other two wives have refused.

At the tamer's command Kate/Katherina throws down her cap and then fetches the other two wives.

At the tamer's command Kate/Katherina exhorts the other two wives to love and obey their husbands. As an example, she offers to place her hand under her husband's feet.

Two Playwrights?

As this catalog reveals, Shakespeare appears to have appropriated all three elements of *A Shrew's* plot, nearly all of its characters, and dozens of its details of plot and action. Another theory that has some support among scholars explains the similarity of the two plays as the result of the two playwrights basing their versions of the story on an earlier play—a text that has been lost. But it is not necessary to postulate a lost play and an unknown author to account for this scenario. The juxtaposition of the two *Shrews*, and their undoubted correspondences, are identical with those of four other pairs of plays in which Shakespeare has rewritten an anonymous text, and the result published under his name.⁹

A further significant similarity between the two plays is the modification of a basic assumption in the Shrew-taming folktale complex—that a shrew can be tamed by physical violence. In both plays the tamer manipulates and humiliates her, but does so without violence, a “revolutionary” alteration of the method used in the folktale complex (Miller 14). But although the tamer's actions in both plays are roughly similar, in *The Shrew* Shakespeare offers a rationale for them that is absent from the earlier version.

Despite these similarities in the taming plots of both plays, there are also noticeable differences. Ferando is clearly less demeaning toward Kate in *A Shrew*, and his taming techniques are less effective. In *A Shrew* “Kate appeals to wives to obey because their husbands need their assistance.” In *The Shrew* “the rationale is precisely reversed: women are presented as helpless, passive, creatures of the household,” etc. (Marcus 187).

Style and Vocabulary

As both *Shrew* plays share the same farcical plot and characters, their styles are similar, and share numerous comedic characteristics—puns, ribald word play, and racy vernacular. *A Shrew* is shorter, faster-moving and less complicated than its companion, and simpler and plainer in style. Its poetry is less polished and less refined, and more given to exaggeration and bombast. Both plays contain similar rhetorical devices, such as repetition and alliteration, and both contain numerous compound adjective and irregular inflections of verbs.

Many passages in *The Shrew* closely resemble corresponding passages in *A Shrew*, but the verse has been entirely rewritten. Eric Sams found “over 100 phraseological parallels” in the two plays and more than a dozen exact repetitions or “verbatim echoes” (142-3). Moreover, in *A Shrew* we find images, metaphors and allusions to birds and falconry, dogs, music, and classical and mythological names in the same profusion as in *The Shrew*, and throughout the Shakespeare canon. One exception is the use of legal terms, which are virtually absent from *A Shrew*, but frequent in the *Folio Shrew*.

The author of *A Shrew* was prolific in the creation of new words and new meanings of words, in the familiar Shakespearean manner, and the *OED* cites him at least six times as the first user of neologisms or new usages. Another 30 words that appear in *A Shrew* are listed in the *OED* as new words or usages introduced by other authors, but in works published after 1594, the publication date of *A Shrew*. Half of those words are in canonical Shakespeare plays. The particular usages of seven additional words in *A Shrew* are not listed in the *OED*.

Shakespeare made abundant use of words about language—*speak, speech, language, name, voice, tongue, mouth, throat, ear, breath, pen, paper, ink, and parchment*—and every play is replete with them. In the early plays he used these words at the rate of once every 24 lines, and for the entire canon, once every 26 lines (Donawerth 141, 161). In *A Shrew* they are used 60 times, once every 25 lines. Curiously, the ratio for *The Shrew* is among the lowest in all the canonical plays, once every 30 lines.

A Shrew and the Shakespeare Canon

Despite its shortcomings, when compared to the *Folio Shrew* the anonymous version exhibits unmistakable characteristics that are evident throughout Shakespeare's canonical plays—structural competence, thematic unity, multiple plots, specific dramatic devices, farcical humor, and innovative vocabulary.

One shared dramatic device is the play-within-the-play, a common feature in Elizabethan dramaturgy, but especially prominent in the Shakespeare canon. It is found in *1 Henry IV, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Hamlet, Love's Labor's Lost, The Tempest, and Henry VIII*. In *A Shrew* this device is carried to the extreme, the entire play being enclosed in the Christopher Sly framing story.

In several canonical plays, the inserted play is offered by a company of players that arrives on stage in the same way as they do in *A Shrew*. In three of them,

A Midsummer Night's Dream, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*, the inserted play illustrates, in Frederick Boas' words, "the eternal problem of shadow and substance, appearance and reality," just as it does in *A Shrew* ("Play" 154-5).

On arriving in Athens, Aurelius, the student in *A Shrew*, falls in love at first sight with Phylema, the second daughter of Alfonso, whom he describes as

The image of honour and nobility,
In whose sweet person is comprised the sum
Of nature's skill and heavenly majesty.

—3.63-6

He has this in common with Antipholus of Syracuse in *The Comedy of Errors*, and Valentine and Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, all of whom are similarly smitten on arriving in a strange city. The courtiers in *Love's Labors' Lost* experience the same fate.

Particular parallels of language, thought and situation in *A Shrew* have been identified in a dozen Shakespeare plays, especially *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, and *Hamlet*.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

The scene in which the lord and his hunting dogs enter to find Sly asleep (Ind.) is echoed in the first scene in Act IV of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when The-seus and his hunting dogs enter to find the four lovers and Bottom asleep. The verb *couple*, referring to the leashing together of two dogs, is used in both passages, as well as in *The Shrew*, where the conversation about the dogs is extended, as in the episode in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The inverted syntax of Ferando's comment about himself and Kate, "Not lambs to lions never was so tame" (4.121) is echoed in a similar context by Pyramus and Thisbe:

Pyramus Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.
Thisbe As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

—V.i.198-9

When Sly awakes for the last time in the final scene of *A Shrew*, he says to the Tapster

Who's this? Tapster? O Lord, sirrah,
I have had the bravest dream tonight
That ever thou heardest in all thy life.

—15.11-13

This anticipates the start of Bottom's account of his dream in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (IV.i.204ff.): "I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was..."

"Sly's suggestion that "we'll flout the players out of their coats" (2.53) is an early example of situations in the canon where characters interrupt others who are performing, as the lovers do in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Love's Labor's Lost*, and as Hamlet does.

Love's Labor's Lost

In scene 13 of *A Shrew*, Sly says "That's flat!" (13.48), which is defined in the *OED* as "A defiant expression of one's final resolve" (*Flat* II 6b). The identical phrase appears in *Love's Labor's Lost*, III.i.101, and twice with a similar meaning in *I Henry IV* at I.iii.218 and IV.ii.39.

The student Polidor courts Emelia in scene 4, and praises her in an extravagant passage:

Come, fair Emelia, my lovely love,
Brighter than the burnished palace of the sun,
The eye-sight of the glorious firmament,
In whose bright looks sparkles the radiant fire,
Wily Prometheus slyly stole from Jove,
Infusing breath, life, motion, soul,
To every object stricken by thine eyes.

—II. 56-62

A passage using similar language appears in Act IV of *Love's Labor's Lost* in which Biron scolds the courtiers:

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire

—IV.iii.347-8

In both passages, the beams that were thought to shoot from the eyes are compared to the fire that Prometheus stole from Zeus. The words *eye(s)*, *sparkle*, *fire* and *Prometheus* or *Promethean* occur in both passages.

The two long conversations in *A Shrew* between Polidor's clever boy servant and Sander, a swaggering, sharp-tongued clown, at 3.209-51 and 5.1-46 are not carried over into *The Shrew*. Nevertheless they are similar to several such exchanges in the canon, most notably the badinage between Don Armado and Moth in I.ii and III.i in *Love's Labor's Lost*.

In *A Shrew* Sly asks, "Why Sim, am not I Don Christo Vary?" (13.49). The same jocular title *Don* or *Dan* is used in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Don Worm), in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Don Alphonso), and twice in *LLL* (Don Armado, Dan Cupid).

Hamlet

In scene 1 of *A Shrew*, a messenger announces that the lord's players have arrived and are prepared to entertain him. The lord orders them to play before Sly the same night, and advises them not to be disconcerted by what he says. As noted, he also arranges for a boy to pretend to be Sly's wife and instructs him at length in the seductive behavior he is to use. He calls on his servants to see that the players "want nothing" (1.64-85).

This episode is echoed in the second act of *Hamlet*, where a group of players arrives at the court and Hamlet welcomes them as familiar friends. He addresses a boy among them as a woman and then demands that Polonius treat the players well (II.ii.521-33). Two scenes later he instructs the players at length on how they should perform—"Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you" (III.i.1-2).

In scene 13 of *A Shrew*, Polidor addresses the Duke of Sestos: "Taint not your princely mind with grief my Lord," (13.97). Similarly, in Act I of *Hamlet*, the Ghost adjures Hamlet: "But howsomever thou pursues this act, / Taint not thy mind..." (I.v.84-5). The *OED* records a line in *Twelfth Night*—"...for sure the man is tainted in's wits." (III.iv.13) as the first use of this sense of "taint."

Other Canonical Plays

In scene 4 Alfonso says "I cared not I, what cost he did bestow" (4.103) This formulation, "I care not," with an extra "I," is also used in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*: "Sir Valentine, I care not for her, I" (V.iv.132) and in *Titus Andronicus*: "I care not, I, knew she and all the world" (II.i.71).

In scene 4 Valeria, disguised as a music teacher and carrying a lute, reminds Kate that trees have been moved and savage beasts have hung their heads to the sound of "pleasant tuned strings" (1-4). In the last act of *The Merchant of Venice*, Lorenzo presents the identical idea to Jessica as music is playing (V.i.70-8). Lorenzo continues the thought by citing Ovid's description in *Metamorphoses* (X) of the power of Orpheus over "trees, stones and floods." Later in *A Shrew* Emelia refers to the calming power of the music of Orpheus as she promises to entreat Pluto to leave Polidor harmless (11.28-34), just as the servant of Queen Katherine comforts her in *Henry VIII* with her song about the lute of Orpheus "Killing care and grief of heart" (III.i.3-14).

The Two Shrews and Edward de Vere

In addition to the overall evidence that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the playwright of the Shakespeare canon, the facts surrounding the two *Shrew* plays further support his authorship of both.

It is highly likely that he had access to the source of the subplot of both plays—Gascoigne's *Supposes*, which the author prepared for the revels at Gray's Inn late in 1566, just a few months before Oxford began his studies there. Given de Vere's early interest in the drama—he had inherited his father's playing com-

pany in 1562—and the fact that Gray's Inn was only a mile from his home at Cecil House, he may have attended the performance of *Supposes* in 1566, and quite possibly had access to the manuscript at that time or soon afterward.¹⁰

What is more important is that Oxford visited Padua, the setting of the play, in November 1575, during his extended tour of France and Italy (Anderson 98). The anonymous *Shrew* is set in Athens, and most of its characters' names can be associated with classical Greece or Rome. The Folio *Shrew* is set in Padua, the characters have Italian names, and it contains a wealth of details that reveal first-hand knowledge of the customs, geography, and language of 16th-century Italy. This suggests a scenario in which the dramatist, perhaps as early as 1567, set the first version of his comedy in classical times, as was common during the reign of Elizabeth. But after his tour of France and Italy, he rewrote the entire play and set it in Padua. He gave the characters modern Italian names and introduced Italian phrases and references to Italian customs and art.

The *Shrew* and Northern Italy

There is substantial evidence that the author of Shakespeare's *Shrew* must have traveled in Northern Italy and visited specific cities. In *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* (2011), Richard Roe examines several locations mentioned in *The Shrew*, as well as a number of phrases that have been erroneously explained or emended by editors. By associating clues in the text with historical information about travel in northern Italy in the 16th century, he locates the precise spot described in the first scene of the play—the landing place of Lucentio and Tranio on Padua's interior canal in front of Baptista Minola's house. He also identifies the adjacent bridge and hostelry they speak about, and the nearby parish church, Saint Luke's, dating from well before 1350, in which Lucentio and Bianca are to be married (96-105).

Roe also enumerates details in *The Shrew* that conform to facts and practices in 16th-century Italy that would be unknown to an Englishman, unless he had traveled there. These include mention of the Duke of Mantua's seagoing ships, and the sail makers in landlocked Bergamo, as well as descriptions of banking practices in Padua and the character of the Pedant, who was actually a merchant (106-113).

As de Vere biographer Mark Anderson points out, Oxford also knew that Padua was the “nursery of arts” (*The Shrew* I.i.2). Thus it is appropriate that Hortensio, one of the few natives of Padua in the play, proposes that he disguise himself as a music teacher (I.ii.131-4). Later the Pedant remarks that he has “bills for money by exchange / From Florence and must here deliver them” (IV.ii.89-90), suggesting that the author was aware that Florence was a banking center (Draper 288). Moreover, these observations are made in a natural and unobtrusive way and are entirely appropriate in their context.

The original Italian paintings that inspired the three “wanton pictures” described in *The Shrew* (Ind. ii. 49-60) have been located and identified with a high

degree of certainty. During the 1570s they could be seen at three places on Oxford's itinerary—Fontainebleau, Mantua, and Florence (Magri 4-12).

Another detail that links de Vere to *The Shrew* is the name of Katherina's father, Baptista Minola, a name that appears to be drawn from the names of several Italians with whom de Vere had financial dealings while in France and Italy. In his letter of September 24, 1575 to William Cecil, de Vere wrote that he had obtained a loan of 500 crowns from one Baptisto Nigrone, presumably in

Venice, where de Vere was recovering from a fever (Chiljan, *Letters* 19-20). Other documents record that Cecil had arranged, through an Italian merchant in London, Benedetto Spinola, for de Vere to be advanced nearly £4000 during the course of his trip.*

Immersed as he was in Italian language and culture, and exposed to its theaters and dramatic productions, it is likely that de Vere was stimulated to set his next play in Italy. But rather than create an entirely new play, he chose to rewrite one that he had composed nearly a decade earlier. Since the subplot of *A Shrew* was based on



Richard Burton,
Elizabeth Taylor, 1967

an old Italian play, relocating the action from Athens to Padua made perfect sense. This allowed him to apply his considerably improved poetic talent to a familiar plot and set of characters, and situate the story in a city he had just visited.

The characters in both Inductions suggest another connection to de Vere. The players who arrive while the lord is contemplating the sleeping Sly appear to be sponsored or supported by the lord himself. In *A Shrew*, the messenger who announces them says “your players be come / And do attend your honour's pleasure here” (1.50-1). In *The Shrew* it is clear that the lord is acquainted with them already; he recalls a previous performance in which one of them had “play'd a farmer's eldest son” (Ind. i.84). De Vere was one of the few members of the Elizabethan nobility who wrote plays, and the tradition of dramatic performances at Hedingham Castle by the playing companies of the Earls of Oxford began no later than 1490 (Lancashire 407). The 17th Earl continued the tradition during the 1580s, and as late as 1602. In 1583 he leased one of the earliest private Elizabethan

* www.oxford-shakespeare.com/oxfordsbio.html click on link for detailed biography, see page 14.

than theaters, the Blackfriars, for the use of his own troupe, the Earl of Oxford's Boys (Anderson 187-8).

Lastly, the activities of Cuthbert Burby, the publisher of the early quartos of *A Shrew* in 1594 and 1596, reveal links to works in the Shakespeare canon and to Edward de Vere. In May 1592 Burby published a translation of *Axiochus*, which he described as a dialogue of Plato "translated out of Greek by Edw. [sic] Spenser." The title page of the *Axiochus* bears the words, "Heereto is annexed a sweet speech or Oration, spoken at the triumphe at White-Hall before her Majestie, by the page to the right noble Earle of Oxenforde." The occasion for the recitation by the page was a tournament at Whitehall on January 22, 1581, a tournament at which Oxford was awarded the victor's prize (Swan 166-68).

Scholars disagree about the actual identity of the translator and the author of the page's speech, but the prevalent opinion is that the page's speech, and probably the *Axiochus* translation, are the work of Anthony Munday, a poet, translator, and writer of plays and romances who had entered Oxford's service in 1578 (Swan 170-2). The prolific Munday produced a poem or prose work nearly every year during the 1580s and 1590s, and dedicated many of them to Oxford. Several of them were published by William Wright, to whom Burby had been apprenticed until he gained his freedom in 1592.

Besides the two *A Shrew* quartos and the *Axiochus*, Burby published several more of Munday's works during the 1590s, and issued three of the earliest Shakespeare plays to reach print—two quartos of *Edward III* in 1596 and 1599, Q1 of *Love's Labour's Lost* in 1598, and Q2, the "good Quarto," of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1599. Three of these four quartos were anonymous. The title page of Q1 of *Love's Labour's Lost* bore the phrase "Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespere." Thus, it appears that Munday was a likely conduit for the movement of manuscripts from Oxford's household to Burby, the earliest publisher of the anonymous *Shrew*.¹¹

Contrary Evidence

The only internal evidence that conflicts with Oxford's authorship of *The Shrew* is several proper names mentioned in the Induction that orthodox scholars assert are references to people and places in the vicinity of Stratford-upon-Avon. In scene ii of the Induction, Sly has awakened and is addressed as "lordship." This is his response:

What, would you make me mad? Am not
I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath,
by birth a pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by
transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present
profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat
ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not.

—II. 17-22

Editors of the play claim that these allusions confirm that it was written by the Stratfordian William Shakspere, or Shakespeare, because they refer to locations near his birthplace. But further investigation reveals that they do nothing of the kind, and actually support the other evidence that the author of the play was the Earl of Oxford.

It is true that the “Wincot” mentioned by Sly might be construed as a reference to the village of Wilmcote, about three miles from Stratford, as orthodox scholars claim, or to Wincot Farm, two miles farther away to the southwest. But it is more likely that it is a reference to Wilnecote, pronounced “Wincot,” a village in Staffordshire astride the ancient Watling Street, along which are found numerous other towns mentioned in Shakespeare’s history plays, such as Shrewsbury, Tamworth, Stony Stratford and Hinckley. Moreover, there were five inns or alehouses in Wilnecote in the late sixteenth century, and one has been associated with a Hacket family—a common name in the area.¹²

Lastly, Sly’s description of himself as “old Sly’s son of Burton-heath” is probably not a reference to Barton-on-the-Heath, a village 15 miles south of Stratford, as orthodox scholars claim, but more likely a reference to Bourton Heath, a village on Dunsmore Heath, just west of Rugby and about 20 miles north of Stratford. An extensive tract of open, uncultivated ground, Dunsmore Heath is one of England’s many upland moors, and has the distinction of not only being mentioned in another Shakespeare play—*3 Henry VI*—but identified as the location of a host of soldiers hurrying toward Coventry under the leadership of John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford. In V.i Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, is under siege within the walls of Coventry, anxiously awaiting reinforcements from the direction of London.

Warwick: Where is the post [messenger] that came from valiant Oxford?
How far hence is thy lord, mine honest fellow?
I Messenger: By this [time] at Dunsmore, marching hitherward.

—II.1-3

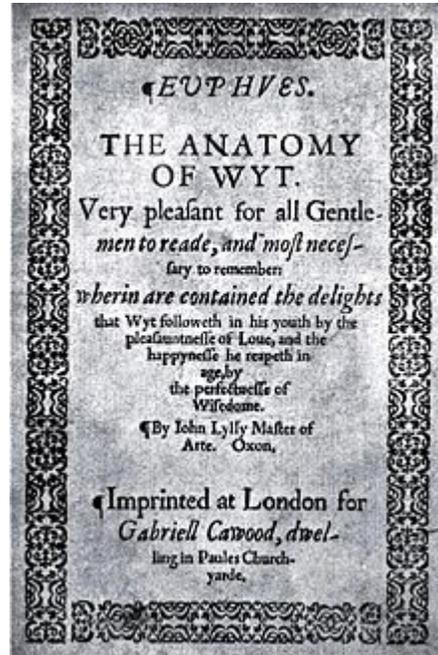
The location of both Sly’s birthplace and the troops of the 13th Earl of Oxford in the area west of Rugby are best explained by Edward de Vere’s connection with the area. It is well-established that the manor of Bilton Hall in the Avon River Valley a few miles west of Rugby was in de Vere’s possession until well into Elizabeth’s reign, perhaps as late as 1580. It is also well-known that Oxford was an important participant in the festivities arranged for Queen Elizabeth’s visit to Warwick Castle, about 16 miles west of Rugby, in August 1572.¹³

Thus, the purported references to places in the vicinity of Stratford-upon-Avon are actually references to places on or near the ancient road that Shakespeare’s characters travelled, or to places that Oxford owned and/or visited before 1580. It is telling that Stratford-upon-Avon is nowhere mentioned in the Shakespeare canon.

Dates of the Two *Shrews*

The evidence of Oxford's authorship of both *Shrew* plays and the fact that he toured Italy and France between January 1575 and April 1576 establish parameters for dating *A Shrew* before 1575 and *The Shrew* in 1576 or later. The fact that there are no legal terms, as such, in *A Shrew* and some 23 in *The Shrew* (Sokol 483; Sherbo 114), suggests that a further refinement of the composition dates can be made, namely that Oxford probably wrote *A Shrew* early in 1567, before, or very early after, his admittance to Gray's Inn, and rewrote it entirely at some time during his visit to Italy or soon after he re-turned to England in 1576.

Supporting evidence for the composition of *The Shrew* at this early date lies in several images and phrases in John Lyly's *Euphues*, *The Anatomy of Wit*, published in 1578, that have been shown by Katherine Chiljan to have been borrowed from the text of *The Shrew* (*Suppressed* 345-6). Four years younger than Oxford, Lyly was hired as his secretary in 1578 or earlier, probably on the recommendation of Lord Burghley, to whom Lyly was related by marriage (Bond, *Lyly* I, 17-18). His many subsequent interactions with Oxford, both literary and personal, are well-known. In *Euphues* he copied freely from, among others, Pliny, Plutarch and Erasmus, and in his employment with Oxford probably made the same use of the manuscript of *The Shrew*. In 1580 he dedicated to Oxford the sequel to *Euphues*, and later portrayed him as *Endimion* in his play of that name.¹⁴



Thus it appears that there were two different *Shrew* manuscripts in existence before 1580, but the sketchy theatrical documentation remaining from this period does not record a performance of either until 1594. The flux of actors, playing companies, and manuscripts during the 1590s makes it difficult to trace the history of a particular MS and its variations from composition to performance to print, but in this case there are a few clues on which to base a probable path.

Because of the phrases and lines in *A Shrew* that are identical, or nearly so, to those in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* plays and *Doctor Faustus*, E. K. Chambers speculated that it was staged c. 1589, that is, within a year or two of performances of those plays (*ES IV*, 48), most likely by the Admiral's Men (*ES III*, 421-3). Chambers further suggested that "Probably Pembroke's in their turn got the play from the earlier Admiral's or Strange's" (*ES IV*, 48).

There is evidence that the text of *A Shrew* was changed by someone connected to the Pembroke company before the play was sold to Cuthbert Burby in 1594. The names of four of the play's characters, Sly, Simon, Sander, and Tom, can be associated with actors or sharers in Pembroke's Men—William Sly, Simon Jewell (sharer), Alexander Cooke, and Thomas Goodale (George 312-13). All four appear in the Induction; Simon also appears as Alfonso in the subplot, and Sander in the taming plot. Tom and Sander also appear in *The First Part of the Contention* (printed 1594), another Pembroke play that is considered either a precursor or a reconstruction of *2 Henry VI*.

If it is correct that Oxford wrote both plays before 1580, the names of the four actors in the Pembroke company in the early 1590s cannot have been in the original text of either play. They were clearly added to the manuscript of *A Shrew* at the time that the company performed the play, and remained in the text when it was printed in 1594, and again in 1596 and 1607. It is likely that the phrases and lines from the Marlowe plays were inserted at the same time.¹⁵ The same reasoning applies to the image from Greene's *Menaphon* (printed 1589), and the passage from du Bartas mentioned above. The *Premiere Sepmaine* of du Bartas' poem was published, in French, in 1578, and various translations into English were made during the 1580s and 1590s.¹⁶

Marlowe

The two dozen phrases and lines that are similar to passages in Marlowe's two *Tamburlaine* plays and *Doctor Faustus* led T. W. Baldwin to assert in 1959 that the actual author of *A Shrew* was Christopher Marlowe, and that he wrote it in 1589 after the *Tamburlaine* plays and before *Doctor Faustus*. According to his analysis, Marlowe used language from the *Tamburlaine* plays when he wrote *A Shrew*, and later included material from *A Shrew* in *Doctor Faustus* (137-9). This opinion has gained little support, particularly because Marlowe wrote no comedies and, indeed, is generally thought to have been incapable of doing so. Baldwin does not mention the passage in *A Shrew* that is similar to one in the du Bartas poem.

The preponderance of the evidence suggests that the *Shrew* play performed by "my Lord Admerall men and my Lorde Chamberlen men" at Newington Butts in June 1594, as recorded by Henslowe, was the anonymous *Shrew*, and that it contained the additions made by someone connected to the Pembroke company. It appears that at some time during the ensuing years, the Chamberlain's Men acquired and performed the Folio *Shrew*, which Chambers calls "Shakespeare's revision" (*ES IV*, 48), and that it took the place on the stage of the anonymous *Shrew*, although there is no record of it. The fact that the actor William Sly moved to the newly-formed Chamberlain's Men in 1594 (*ES II*, 340) and the appearance of the same character "Sly" in the Folio text of *The Shrew*, tends to confirm this scenario. In addition, an actor's name, Sincklo, is listed as one of the lord's play-

ers in the first scene in the Folio text. A John Sincler or Sincklo was an actor with both Lord Strange's and the Lord Chamberlain's Men during the 1590s.¹⁷

Conclusions

In every category of evidence—the dates that it was cited and printed, its stylistic deficiencies, its one-dimensional characters, its startling similarities to the Folio *Shrew*, and the treatment of the rights to print it—the facts surrounding *The Taming of a Shrew* all point to a single, simple conclusion: it was written, before he was twenty, by the man who was Shakespeare, and was probably his first comedy. The evidence indicates that he alone was the originator of this unusual comedy in which two different narratives are woven together into a single story, set in a Mediterranean country, and then enclosed by a traditional folktale set in feudal England. After what was a lengthy and surely life-changing tour of France and Italy, he rewrote it completely, perhaps for some festive occasion. But in terms of plot, characters and action, his second version follows his first much more closely than his canonical plays follow their sources.

None of the claims to the contrary are sufficient to refute the evidence that *A Shrew* was the earlier play, and served as a template on which the canonical *Shrew* was based. In the words of R. W. Bond, the first Arden editor of *The Taming of the Shrew*,

is one which it is difficult to believe can have commended itself to anybody, so much more fully developed and finished is our play, so far does it surpass the other in fluency and naturalness of dialogue, in the handling of the plot, and in small but telling points of characterization; while in diction too, and partly in versification, *A Shrew* represents an earlier style (xv).

Those scholars who deny that Shakespeare wrote *A Shrew* routinely associate it with the other “apprenticeship” plays that I have described elsewhere.⁹ E. A. J. Honigmann, who once called Shakespeare a “reviser of genius,” described the *Shrew* plays as “the non-identical twins whose relationship so strangely resembles that of *KJ* [*King John*] and *TR* [*Troublesome Raigne*]” and speculated that the authors of *A Shrew* and *Troublesome Raigne* were “perhaps one and the same man” (124-5).

Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor are “entirely confident that (despite claims to the contrary from Sams and Everitt) Shakespeare wrote neither” *A Shrew* nor *Troublesome Raigne*. In their opinion, “[b]oth plays resemble “bad quartos” less than they do plays like *King Lear* and *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, which served as sources for plays by Shakespeare” (85-6). Such statements tend to confirm the special nature of these four anonymous plays that, with *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, constitute a unique group of preliminary treatments that the author rewrote ten to twenty years after their initial composition.

The evidence given above also supports Edward de Vere as the author of *A Shrew*. His access to George Gascoigne and the translation and production of the

source play *Supposes* are firmly documented. Other details, such as the similarity of his activities and background to those of the lord in *A Shrew*, and the close connection between Cuthbert Burby, the original publisher of *A Shrew*, and Anthony Munday, a writer and translator who entered de Vere's service in 1578, are additional details that tend to confirm de Vere's authorship. Lastly, the allusions in *The Shrew* to the language, customs and geography of Italy, and the circumstances and facts of de Vere's tour of the country strongly confirm the conclusion that after visiting Padua in 1575 he completely rewrote his *A Shrew*, and the result was *The Taming of the Shrew* found in the *First Folio*.

Notes

¹ Harington owned a copy of *A Shrew*, along with 15 quartos of Shakespeare plays. See Furnivall.

² The rhyme with "bestow" accords with the pronunciation called for in both the anonymous *Shrew* (3.154; 15.16) and the canonical *Shrew* (V.ii.28-9 and V.ii.188-9).

³ In *The Real Shakespeare*, Eric Sams makes the most compelling case on record for Shakespeare's authorship of *A Shrew* (136-45). But he assigns it to William Shakespeare of Stratford, and dates it to 1588.

⁴ Stage directions are similarly varied and elaborate in *A Shrew*.

⁵ Aside from Brunvand's own book, and his later article in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, useful discussions of his findings can be seen in Hodgdon's edition of *The Shrew* (44-5) and in Stephen Miller's edition of *A Shrew* (12-16).

⁶ *Gascoigne's devise of a maske for the right honourable Viscount Mountecute*, published in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* in 1573 (Prior 444-49).

⁷ Quotations from *A Shrew* are from the Miller edition (1998).

⁸ Quotations from the Shakespeare canon are from G. Blakemore Evans and J.J.M. Tobin, eds. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. 1997.

⁹ The five pairs of plays are described in my article in *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Winter 2008.

¹⁰ Ward claims that Gascoigne and Oxford were well-acquainted by 1566, but his evidence is flimsy (36-9). In 1561 Gascoigne married Elizabeth, daughter of John Bacon (1521?-1559), cousin of Sir Nicholas Bacon (1509-1579). In 1553 Sir Nicholas had married Anne Cooke, sister of Mildred, William Cecil's wife (Ward 312). It appears that in 1576 Gascoigne performed diplomatic services for Cecil (Ward 25, 55).

¹¹ Further details of Burby's acquaintance with Munday can be found in Wright's article.

¹² The subject is treated more completely in Pointon at 146-8.

¹³ The details of Oxford's connections to the area, and a map showing Bilton and Bourton can be found in the Barrell article.

¹⁴ Lyly's literary debt to Oxford is described by Looney in v. I at 268-84.

¹⁵ The *Tamburlaine* plays were written in the late 1580s, printed in 1590, and performed by the Admiral's Men during the same summer that they performed *A Shrew* (1594). According to Berek (58), at least ten plays staged between 1587 and 1593 "show clear debts to *Tamburlaine*."

¹⁶ The image in *A Shrew* at 4.150 that is also found in *Menaphon* is "Whiter than are the snowy Apennines / Or icy hair that grows on Boreas' chin." An extended discussion of

the composition, translation, and printing of the du Bartas poem can be found in App. 3 of Miller's edition.

¹⁷ Further details about "Sincklo" can be found in Morris's ed. of *The Shrew* (158), the Eccles article (168-9), and Chambers, *WS I*, 50, 288, 323.

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