

# Shakespearean Authorship Trust



## Collaboration

**Paper presented by Mike Llewellyn at the Shakespearean Authorship Trust Conference July 9 2005 at the Globe Theatre, London.**

My talk is an introduction to collaboration in Shakespeare's day.  
First, I'm going to look at collaboration generally in the period.  
Then I'll look at Shakespeare himself as a collaborator.  
Finally, I'll look briefly at 3 specific plays –*Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles*.

Please remember, this is a very big field – a great amount of work has been done and is being done on attribution.

## COLLABORATION GENERALLY

Francis Meres (1598) said that amongst the best for comedy were Edward de Vere, Shakespeare and other playwrights

If he were alive today, I'm sure he'd say that amongst the best for comedy were these famous collaborators:

### British Comedy – Collaboration Today

Graham Lineham & Arthur Mathews	<i>Father Ted</i>
Rob Grant & Doug Naylor	<i>Red Dwarf</i>
John Cleese, Eric Idle, Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones	<i>Monty Python</i>
Dick Clements & Ian le Frenais	<i>Porridge, Auf Wiedersehen Pet</i>
Matt Luca & David Walliams	<i>Little Britain</i>
John Cleese & Connie Booth	<i>Fawlty Towers</i>
Richard Curtis & Ben Elton	<i>Blackadder</i>
Ricky Gervais & Stephen Merchant	<i>The Office</i>

[Ref: My own information, mostly from the BBC website]

In film, screenplays often have more than one writer.

And in playwrighting too, modern writers such as T.S Eliot, Ezra Pound, David Hare, Trevor Griffiths, David Edgar and others have written plays collaboratively.

In fact, collaboration has existed ever since plays were first written in English, well over 400 years ago.

But of course collaboration isn't the image people have of playwrights – generally, the image is the single author. And the all-powerful image of Shakespeare dominates:

Shakespeare with quill on parchment, solitary in thought and deed.



[Ref: The Faed Portrait from [www.just-shakespeare.com/faed-shakespeare.htm](http://www.just-shakespeare.com/faed-shakespeare.htm)]

In this talk I will show that Shakespeare was sometimes a co-author, and in this he was doing something seen as quite normal by his contemporaries. My investigation has led me to agree with Professor Jeffrey Masten, that collaboration was “...the Renaissance English theatre’s dominant mode of textual production” (Masten 1992, p 339).

As Dr Gordon McMullan of King’s College says - “... it has begun to be clear that collaboration – in its insistent ‘impurity’ – is a much more appropriate model for textual production in general than is ... ‘solo’ writing” (McMullan 1996, p 438).

We'll see that there were broadly two types of collaboration:

**Direct collaboration.** This is when writers' names are on the title page (although attributions are sometimes inaccurate), or where there is some external evidence referring to a play as a collaboration;

and **indirect collaboration**, which is when a writer or writers have taken a pre-existing, possibly unfinished play, and added their parts.

Both these forms of collaboration exist for Shakespeare's contemporaries, and for Shakespeare himself.

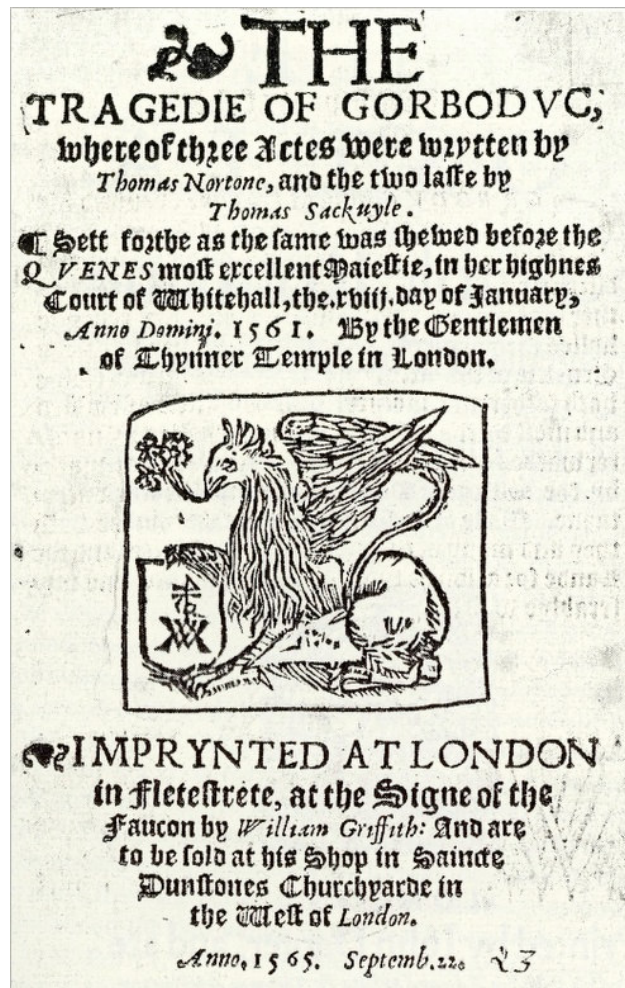
### **When did it start?**

Until Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, most plays, apart from medieval dramas such as the York Mystery plays, consisted of Greek tragedies translated into Latin. But in 1558 came the first English translation of Seneca's *Thebais* by Thomas Browne, performed at the Inns of Court.

Then, in 1562, came the first major drama work in English which was not a direct translation. This was *Gorboduc*.

*Gorboduc* was a collaboration between Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. It was performed at the Inner Temple, and tells the story of a succession struggle between two brothers, Ferrex and Porrex.. *Gorboduc* is also the earliest extant five-act verse tragedy in English, and the earliest surviving drama in blank-verse. We even have a contemporary critic's comment: "...many things were said for the succession to put things in certainty" (Brooks, 2000, p 24).

The title page of *Gorboduc* set the standard for title pages for the next 75 years:



[Ref: *From Play House to Printing House* by Douglas A. Brooks CUP 2000, page 25]

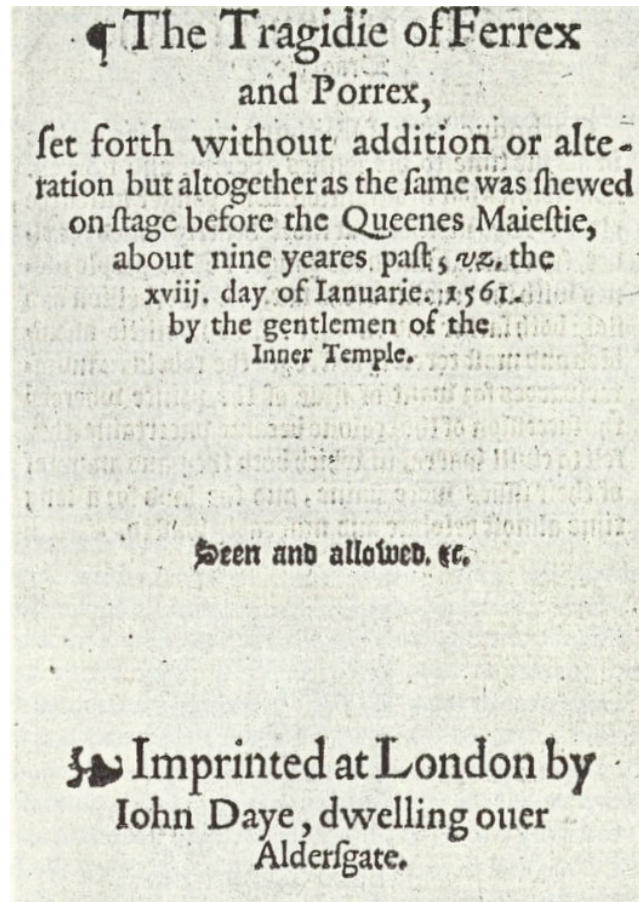
- The title is at the top
- Above the central printer's emblem – details of the first performance:  
("Set forth as the same was showed before the Queen's most excellent majesty in her highness Court of Whitehall, the 18<sup>th</sup> day of January 1561. By the gentlemen of the Inner Temple, London")
- At the bottom - Who printed and/or published it, and where you could buy it
- Finally, the date it was printed.

Notice who the authors were. It tells us exactly who wrote what:

**"whereof three Actes were written by *Thomas Norton* and the two laste by *Thomas Sackuyle*".**

As Professor Brooks says "...the mind boggles at how much scholarly labour might have been spared if all subsequent dramas had been so precisely attributed". (Brooks 2000, p27)

Alas, it didn't last! By the time the second edition came out, all was changed.

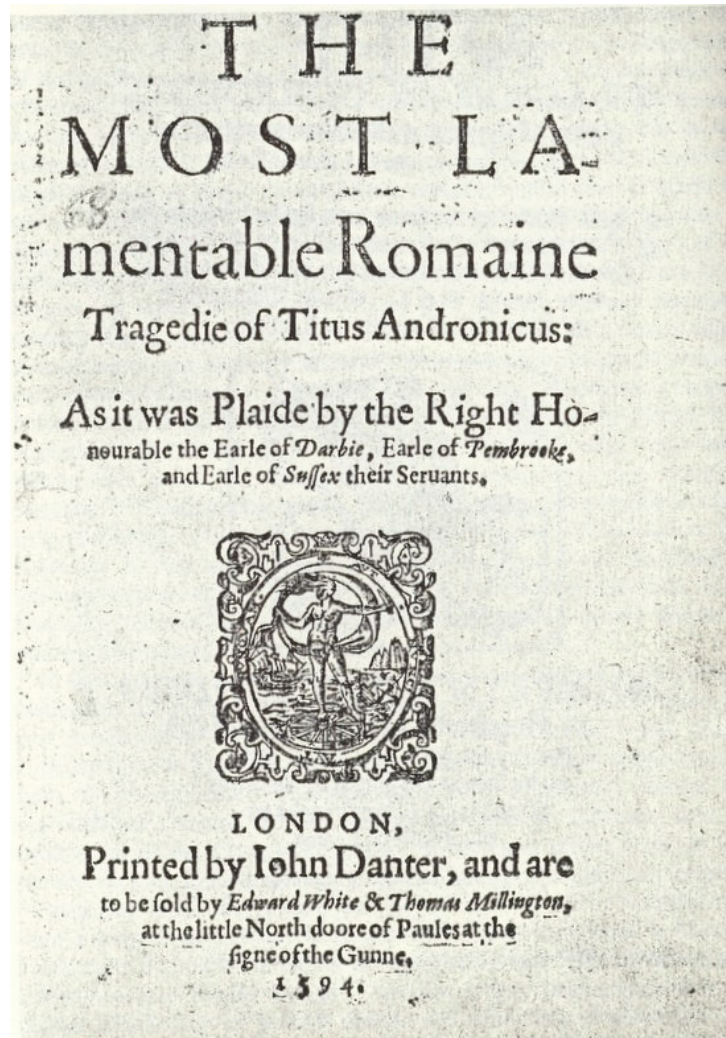


[Ref: *From Play House to Printing House* by Douglas A. Brooks CUP 2000, page 28]

Notice, even the name of the play has changed.

Never again were we going to see such wonderful detail about the author's contributions. From now on, it's the printers and publishers whose details are on the title pages; the playwrights are only added when their names would help sales.

Here's *Titus Andronicus*, an example of a typical title page printed from this point on.



[Ref: *From Play House to Printing House* by Douglas A. Brooks CUP 2000, page 26]

## What was the extent of collaboration?

Gerard Bentley noted that of all the 900 plays written by professional dramatists of the period, “...as many as half ... incorporated the writing of more than one man” (Bentley 1971, p199).

In Henslowe’s Diaries, commenting on plays performed at his theatre, the Rose, nearly two-thirds of plays mentioned are attributed to more than one writer.

However, there are problems finding the full extent of collaboration. Many plays were lost: in his *Annals of English Drama*, Harbage lists 1,200 plays from 1576 when the first play was performed at Burbage’s theatre, to the closure of all theatres by the Puritans in 1642. But of these 1,200, only 469 full plays are extant.

Douglas Brooks developed Harbage’s investigation and compiled this table:

	<b>1580 – 89</b>	<b>1590-99</b>	<b>1600-09</b>	<b>1610-19</b>	<b>1620-29</b>	<b>1631-40</b>
<b>Ave Titles <i>Per Year</i></b>	10	26	30	22	23	26
<b>% Attributed</b>	58	54	75	74	81	89
<b>% Collaborations</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>

Note: ‘Attributed’ means playwright(s) names on the title page

[Ref: *From Play House to Printing House* by Douglas A. Brooks CUP 2000, page 176]

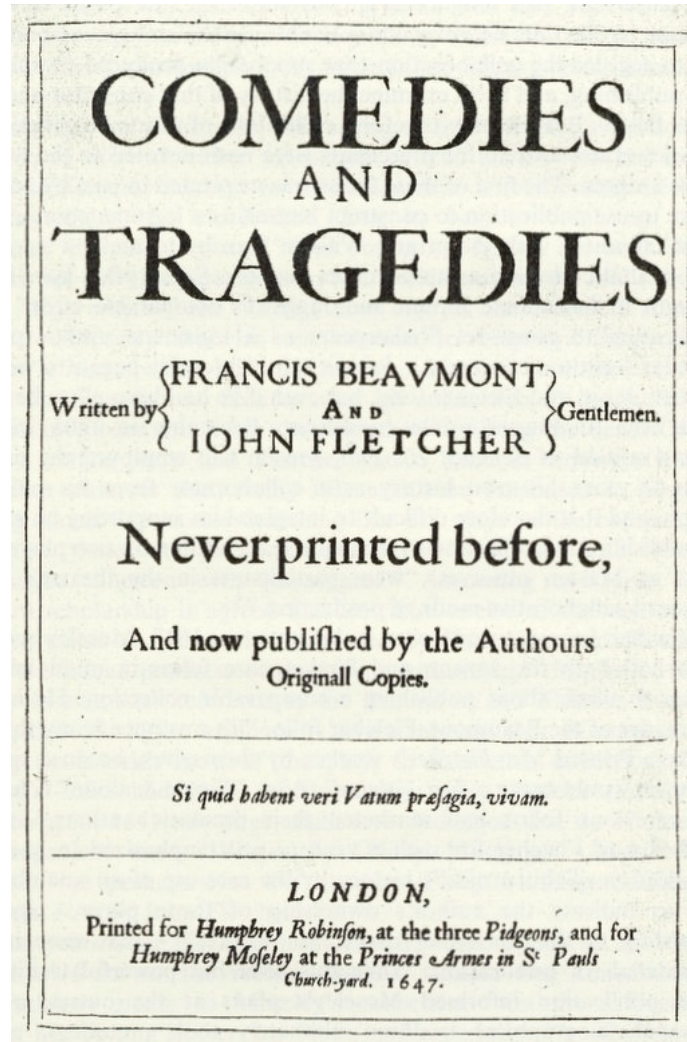
This shows that the two decades 1590-1610 saw the most plays published and highest percentage of collaborations.

## What was the reason for collaboration?

Certainly some writers were close friends. Kyd and Marlowe lived together, as did John Fletcher (1579-1625) and Francis Beaumont (1585-1616). Aubrey said of Fletcher and Beaumont: “They lived together on the Bank Side, not far from the Play-House, both bachelors; lay together; had one wench in the house between them, which they did so admire; the same cloathes and cloake, & C.” (Aubrey ed 1958 p 21-22)

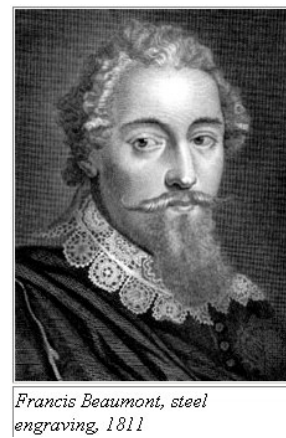


Here is the front page of their joint folio, printed by Moseley in 1647:



[Ref: *From Play House to Printing House* by Douglas A. Brooks CUP 2000, page 143]

And here are portraits of the two:



[search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/211/91.html](http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/211/91.html)

[search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/58/62.html](http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/58/62.html)

But Fletcher is actually buried with another playwright, Philip Massinger, in the same grave in Southwark Cathedral. Here are the words of Sir Aston Cokain, a friend of both Fletcher and Massinger:

“In the same Grave *Fletcher* was buried here  
Lies the Stage-Poet *Philip Massinger*:  
Playes they did write together, were great friends,  
And now one Grave includes them at their ends:  
So whom on earth nothing did part, beneath  
Here (in their Fames) they lie, in spight of death”

[Ref: 1658 Poem “*An Epitaph on Mr John Fletcher and Mr. Philip Massinger ...Masten 1997, p 1*]

Cokain’s second verse credits Fletcher as the most prolific of these three collaborators:

“In the large book of Playes you late did print  
(In *Beaumonts* and in *Fletchers* name) why in’t  
Did you not justice? give to each his due?  
For *Beaumont* (of those many) writ a few:  
And *Massinger* in other few; the Main  
Being sole Issues of sweet *Fletchers* brain.

[Ref: F & B’s Folio 1647 – epigram to the publishers...from Masten 1997, p153]

And Fletcher collaborated with many other playwrights, too, as this summary of his work shows –

Fletcher on his own:	<b>15</b>	} <b>35 collaborations</b>
F + Beaumont	<b>10</b>	
F + Philip Massinger	<b>11</b>	
F + Massinger + Beaumont	<b>3</b>	
F + Massinger + Nathan Field	<b>3</b>	
F + Massinger + James Shirley	<b>1</b>	
F + Massinger + John Ford + John Webster	<b>1</b>	
F + Massinger + Ben Jonson + George Chapman	<b>1</b>	
F + Thomas Middleton	<b>1</b>	
F + Ben Jonson + Thomas Middleton	<b>1</b>	
F + William Rowley	<b>1</b>	
F + <b>Shakespeare</b>	<b>2</b>	

[Ref: Mostly from the web site [search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/211/91.html](http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/211/91.html) ]

Regardless of friendship, the main reason for collaboration was probably commercial. It was presumably quicker to get two or more playwrights to work on something – especially when there was such a voracious appetite for plays. Collaboration was probably used when a play was needed quickly. Perhaps writers who could write in diverse styles were employed to put together, say, sombre scenes and comic scenes.

Also a play might have to be shortened for a provincial tour, or might have new parts added if musical interludes were removed (Webster did this with Marston's *Malcontent*). Writers might need to add spectacle – as Middleton did by inserting parts from his play *Witch* into *Macbeth*. These are not exactly 'collaborations', but show the flexibility of writing in those days.

Writers probably also collaborated because they needed money quickly. According to Henslowe's records, the average life of a play was only twelve performances, except for perennial favourites such as *Titus Andronicus*, which had repeated runs.

The writers did not get much for their work – Henslowe paid on average £6 for a play and about £2 for a re-write. We know how hard up most of them were because they said so. Striking evidence comes in this letter to Henslowe from the playwrights Nathan Field, Robert Daborne and Philip Massinger. (Vickers, 2002 pp 30-31). Written from debtors' prison in 1613, it reads:

**“Mr Henslowe,**

**You understand our unfortunate extremity, and I do not think you so void of Christianity but that you would rather throw so much money into the Thames as we request now of you, rather than endanger so many innocent lives. You know there is £10 more, at least, to be received from you for the play: we desire you lend us £5 of that (which shall be allowed to you), without which we cannot be bailed, nor I play [*act*] any more. Till this be dispatched it will lose you £20 ere the end of next week, beside the hindrance of the new play. Pray sir, consider our cases with humanity, and now give us cause to acknowledge you our true friend in time of need. We have entreated Mr. Davison to deliver this note, as well to witness your love as our promises, and always acknowledgment to be ever your most thankful and loving friends.**

**Nat: Field**

**The money shall be abated out of the money remains for the play of Mr. Fletcher and ours.**

**Rob: Daborne**

**I have ever found you a true loving friend to me, and in so small a suit, it being honest, I hope you will not fail us.**

**Philip Massinger**

The letter:

Mr Hinchlow  
 you vnderstand e<sup>e</sup> vnfortunats extremitie and  
 I doe not thincke you so void of christianitie,  
 but that you would throw so much money into the  
 Thames as we request now of you; rather then  
 endanger so many innocent liues; you know  
 there is e<sup>e</sup> more at least to be rescued of  
 you, for Mr. play, we desire you to send vs  
 w<sup>ch</sup> of that, wh<sup>ch</sup> shall be allowed to you who  
 wh<sup>ch</sup> we cannot be bayted, nor I play any more  
 till hee be dispatch'd, it will loose you e<sup>e</sup>  
 ere the end of the next weeke, beside the hin-  
 derance of the next new play, pray Sr. consider  
 our cases w<sup>ch</sup> humanitie, and now giue vs cause  
 to acknowledge you our true friend in time of  
 neede; weel haue entreated Mr. Basifox to  
 deliuer this note, as well to witteffe yo<sup>ur</sup> loue  
 as e<sup>e</sup> promises, and alwayes acknowledgements to  
 be. Ever  
 yo<sup>ur</sup> most hartfull; and loving friend,  
 Nat: Field  
 the more shall be abated out  
 of the money remainge for the  
 play of m<sup>r</sup> Reolger & owne  
 Rob: Dubonir } I haue euer founde you  
 a true loving friend to  
 me & in so small a suite  
 haue euer founde you will not  
 fail me in any matter

[Ref: Shakespeare Co-Author Brian Vickers OUP 2002 page 31. Permission to BV from the Governors of Dulwich College, London]

Portraits of Field and Massinger:



Nathan Field, c. 1610

Hulton Getty



Philip Massinger, engraving by William Henry Worthington

Hulton Getty

[search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/208/31.html](http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/208/31.html)

[search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/380/24.html](http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/380/24.html)

Henslowe sent them £5, releasing them from jail. This letter shows direct collaboration, and also the meagre income writers had from playwrighting.

Here are some more of Shakespeare's contemporaries who collaborated. The chart shows the number of plays they wrote in collaboration and alone:

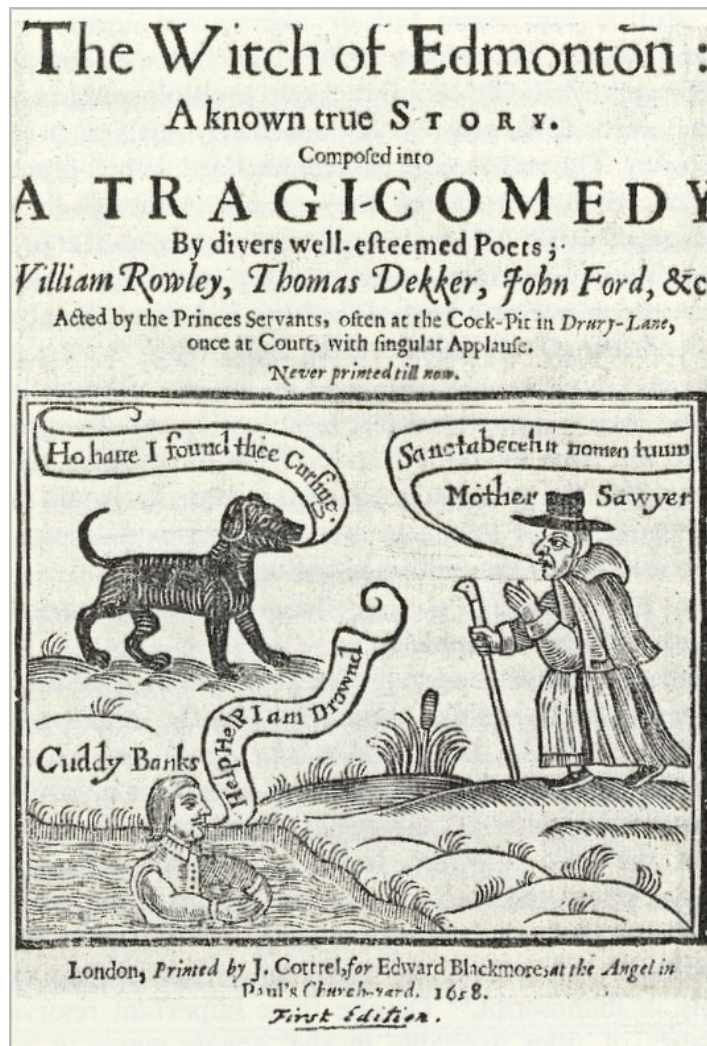
<b>Philip Massinger</b> (1583-1639)	Fletcher (22), Nathan Field (1), Thomas Dekker (1) <i>on his own:</i> 16 (many lost)
<b>Thomas Dekker</b> (1572-1632)	(11): Middleton, Massinger, John Webster, John Ford, William Rowley Anthony Munday <i>on his own:</i> 5 (some lost)
<b>John Ford</b> (1557-1625)	(At least 6): Dekker, Rowley, Middleton, Fletcher, Fletcher +Beaumont <i>on his own:</i> 8
<b>Thomas Lodge</b> (1557-1625)	Robert Greene <i>on his own:</i> about 3
<b>William Rowley</b> (1585-1642)	Middleton, Massinger, Thomas Heywood, Fletcher, George Wilkins <i>on his own:</i> about 50
<b>John Webster</b> (1580-1625)	Anthony Munday, Michael Drayton, Middleton, Heywood, Rowley John Marston, Dekker <i>on his own:</i> 3
<b>Robert Greene</b> (1558-1592)	Thomas Lodge <i>on his own:</i> 3 ?
<b>Anthony Munday</b> (1553-1633)	(At least 11, all before 1604): Drayton, Henry Chettle, Robert Wilson, Richard Hatherwaye, Dekker, Wentworth Smith, Middleton <i>on his own:</i> 5
<b>Ben Jonson</b> (1572-1637)	Dekker, Marston <i>on his own:</i> 14
<b>Thomas Middleton</b> (1580-1627)	Dekker, Field, George Wilkins, Fletcher, Rowley, Webster, Munday and <b>Shakespeare</b> <i>on his own:</i> 16
<b>Thomas Heywood</b> (c1575-c1650)	(2): Richard Brome, Rowley <i>on his own:</i> 200 (of which less than 24 survive)

[Ref: Mostly via web site "Playwrights of Shakespeare's Day" [search.eb.com/shakespeare/bios\\_purport.html](http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/bios_purport.html)]

Incidentally, you might ask why so many plays were lost. We know one reason: John Warburton's cook. John Warburton was an avid collector of manuscripts in the early eighteenth century. But he had a cook called Betsy, who made lots of pies. Unfortunately, when Betsy needed pie-covers, she used the old manuscripts! Betsy is believed to have destroyed lost plays of Shakespeare including a collaboration called "*Henry ye 1<sup>st</sup> by Will Shakespeare & Rob Davenport*", a play called "*Duke Humphrey*", and something called "*A Play by Will Shakspear*", not to mention plays by Massinger, Fletcher, Dekker and so on. We know these existed because Warburton listed them all. Sir Walter Scott described Warburton as "the painful collector, but ah! the too careless custodian, of the largest collection of ancient plays ever known". (Freehafer, 1970; Greg 1911)

[Ref: The list of plays is given in British Museum, Folio 1 MS Lansdowne 807 ]

Before I go on to talk about Shakespeare, here's a rare example of multiple attribution - *The Witch of Edmonton*. It's "By divers well-esteemed poets William Rowley, Thom Dekker, John Ford, & C":



[Ref: *From Play House to Printing House* by Douglas A. Brooks CUP 2000, page 171]

# SHAKESPEARE AS COLLABORATOR

**So, collaboration was normal practice. But did Shakespeare collaborate? And if so, how much?**

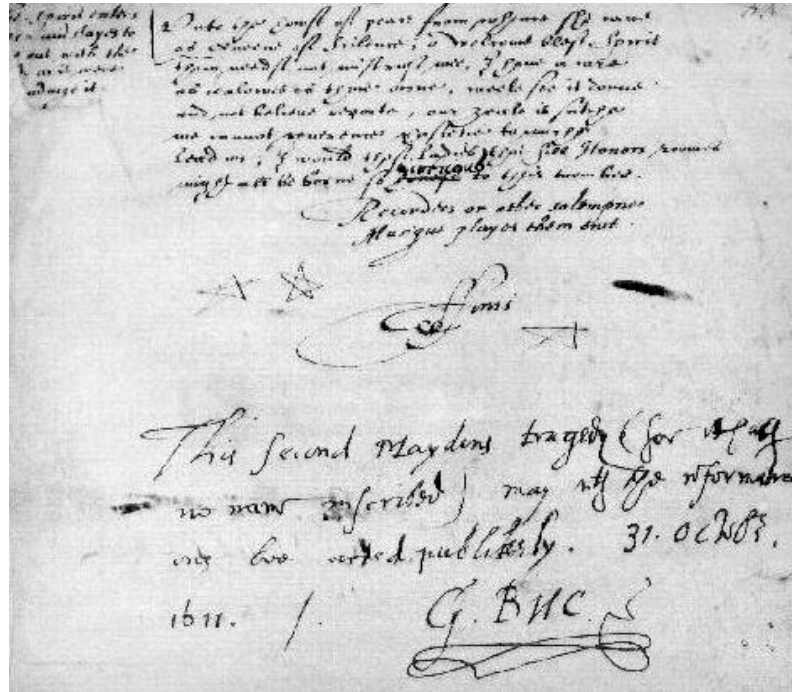
Some commentators think the entire Shakespeare canon cannot include any collaboration. But I agree with Ashley Thorndike that this shows "...the common fallacy of always regarding Shakspeare as a world genius and never an Elizabethan dramatist.... his collaboration ... would be no cause for wonder." (Thorndike 1901/1966, p 35)

Those who accept that Shakespeare sometimes collaborated, generally see these plays as collaborations –

<b>Henry VI Part 1</b>	At least 2 collaborators, one possibly being Thomas Nashe – some suggest Shakespeare wrote no more than 20%
<b>Henry VI Parts 2 &amp; 3</b>	Some collaboration, unidentified
<b>Henry VIII</b>	Generally considered a collaboration with Fletcher
<b>Macbeth</b>	Revised by Thomas Middleton in 1615
<b>Measure for Measure</b>	Possible 'light' revisions by Middleton
<b>Pericles</b>	Significant contributions by George Wilkins
<b>Timon of Athens</b>	With Thomas Middleton.
<b>Titus Andronicus</b>	Collaboration with/revisions by George Peele
<b>The Two Noble Kinsmen</b>	With Fletcher – about half each.
<b>Cardenio (Lost)</b>	With Fletcher or Middleton ?
<b>Edward III</b>	Possibly Marlowe and Peele

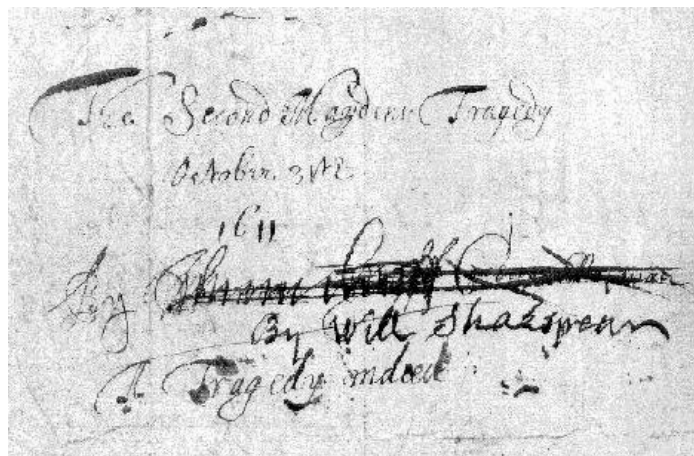
In Henry VI Parts 2 & 3, very early plays, the possible collaborators are Robert Greene and Marlowe.

Charles Hamilton in 1994 proposed that *Cardenio* was actually *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, which most believe was written by Thomas Middleton. We have the authorisation for its performance, from Sir George Buc, Master of the Revels:



[Ref: <http://www.tech.org/~cleary/2mt.html> This is probably the best Thomas Middleton website on Earth!]

There are some interesting signatures on the back page:



The first two crossed out (Thomas Goffe & George Chapman) followed by a very doubtful Shakespeare signature – Are they past owners or collaborating authors?

**How did people conclude that these were collaborations – how can you tell?**

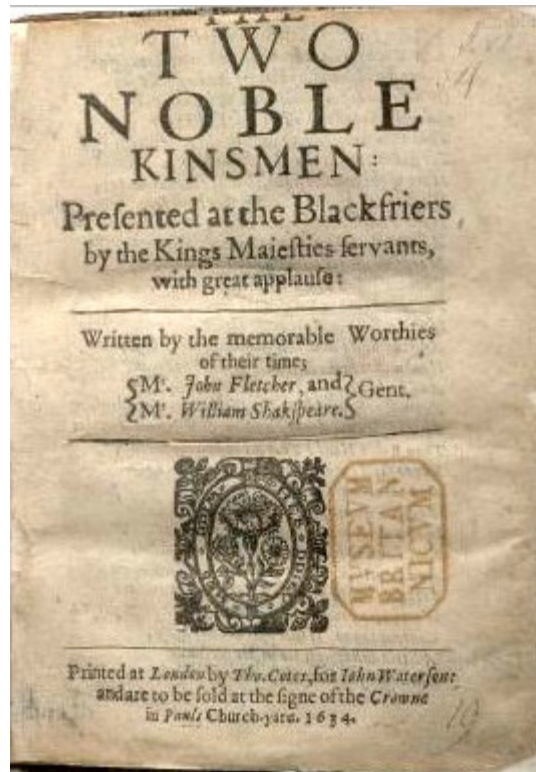
To try to answer these questions I'm going to use *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles* as examples.



# THREE SHAKESPEARE COLLABORATIONS

## *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

TNK was first printed in 1634 – here’s the title page:



[Ref: [libnt4.lib.tcu.edu/SpColl/Shakespeare/Shakesp...](http://libnt4.lib.tcu.edu/SpColl/Shakespeare/Shakesp...)]

It states clearly “**written by John Fletcher and William Shakespeare**” and surely you cannot be more definite than that? Certainly, most do think it is a collaboration. In fact, it has been suggested that Fletcher’s name is first because he wrote most of it.

Even so, not everyone agrees – some think that because it eventually found its way into the Folio of 1634, it must have been by Shakespeare alone.

However, the consensus now is that Shakespeare probably wrote Act 1, the bulk of Act 5 and one or two scenes in Acts 2 and 3.

To verify who the authors were, Harold Littledale used metrical tests (Littledale, 1885). In these he was able to show how the two writers could be distinguished.

His results can be summarised as follows, with Chambers' analysis in the last column:

	<b>Fletcher</b>	Non-Fletcher	Shk – CYM/WT/TMP/H8
Light Endings	<b>3</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>55</b>
Weak Endings	<b>1</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>
Light + Weak	<b>4</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>95</b>
% feminine endings	<b>52.9</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>32</b>

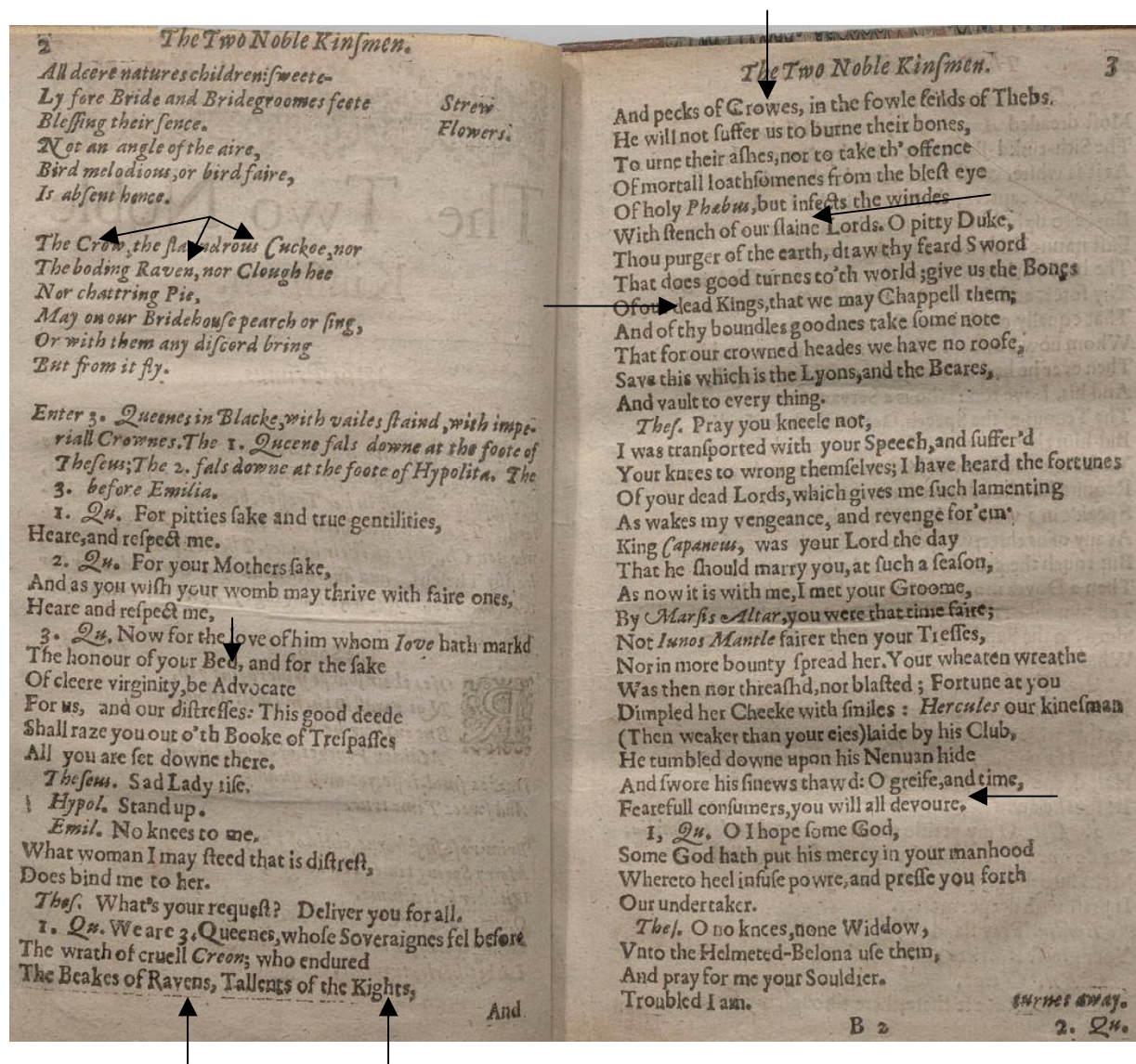
Professor Una Ellis-Fermor (1949) thought the non-Fletcher parts could be the work of a clever imitator of Shakespeare. But later detailed analysis of phrase lengths strengthened the argument in favour of Shakespeare and Fletcher.

Marco Mincoff commented that the descriptions of nature, illnesses, references to Gods, etc - which characterise the scenes attributed to Shakespeare and occur in his other plays, could not be the work of an imitator. He said that the idea of such a person, "... unschooled in philological analysis, imitating the minutiae of Shakespeare's style at a definite period down to the very metrical percentages, capable too of such splendid poetry, yet never, apparently, repeating the attempt, is too fanciful to need refutation." (Mincoff 1952, p97)

Another method of attributing authorship is by analysing word clusters. For example, Edward Armstrong looked at references to 'kites' (that is, the bird) in all of Shakespeare's plays and found references to the bird are invariably linked to death, food, spirits, bed and other birds – usually with at least three of these in the same cluster (Muir 1960, p 118).

He makes the point that if 'kites' were to appear without the other cluster words then it's a reasonable guess that it's not by Shakespeare. He found references to 'kites' in Fletcher's writing, but none of the associated cluster words.

In the first scene of TNK, we see the following .....



kites

[Ref: The British Library – Shakespeare Quartos: <http://prodigi.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/record.asp>]

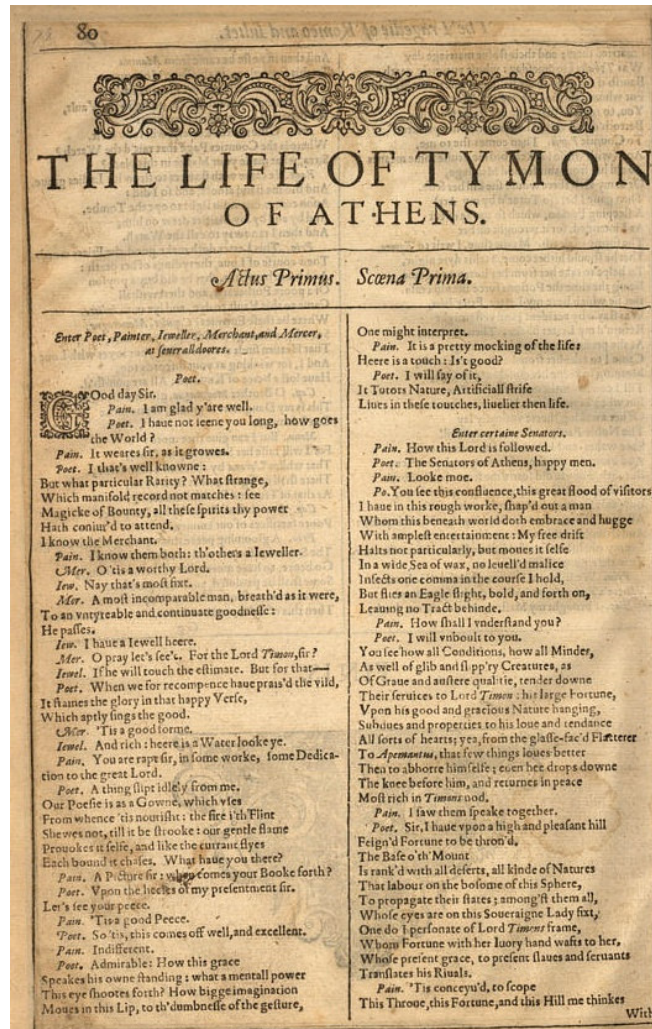
This is a good indicator that this part of the play is by Shakespeare.

These and other tests by scholars in the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have confirmed in my view beyond reasonable doubt that Shakespeare and Fletcher were the co-writers of the play. Such analyses confirm that Fletcher and Shakespeare wrote *Henry VIII* as well. And very detailed studies were also used to eliminate other writers, especially Massinger and Beaumont. (Vickers 2002, pp 402-432)

Incidentally, it is interesting that at least one academic, Frederick Waller (Waller 1958, p 82), suggests that there is evidence of **archaic spelling** in the scenes attributed to Shakespeare, and that, in his view, there is the general appearance of carelessness in these scenes, supporting the view that Fletcher's collaborator was a much older man.

## Timon of Athens

*Timon of Athens* first appeared in the First Folio, 1623. Here's the title page:



[Ref: [http://www.hudsonshakespeare.org/Shakespeare%20Library/main%20pages/main\\_timon\\_of\\_athens.htm](http://www.hudsonshakespeare.org/Shakespeare%20Library/main%20pages/main_timon_of_athens.htm)]

The Folio text has many oddities. For example, the play begins, 'Actus Primus, Scaena Prima', but after this there are no act or scene breaks.

From the mid-nineteenth century, the many problems and oddities in *Timon* led to several studies (Knight 1840s, Delius 1867, Fleay 1869 & 1874, Wright 1910) - and the conclusion that about a third of *Timon* was not written by Shakespeare. In the early 1920s Wells and Sykes independently identified the co-author. Recent developments in measuring the unique 'hand' of a writer have endorsed this identity and the ascription to him of about a third of the play:

*Timon of Athens* - Scenes ascribed to co-author:

1.1 (272-83); 1.2

2.2 (195-229)

3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7 (1-36, 104-10)

4.2 (30-51); 4.3 (458-536)

5.1 (1-50); 5.3

(Vickers, 2002)

The writer was this man – the prolific Thomas Middleton.



*Thomas Middleton, engraving*

[Ref: [search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/392/71.html](http://search.eb.com/shakespeare/micro/392/71.html) ]

Many techniques have been used which confirm these findings, including –

- Short lines used for no apparent reason
- Un-Shakespearean frequent use of rhyming couplets
- Comparing % of rhymed verse, blank verse & prose
- Comparing imagery
- Comparing characterisation
- Problems in structure
- Spellings of names

For example, here's a summary from Fleay, comparing the use of rhymed verse, blank verse and prose:

<b>Fleay's metrical analysis, 1874</b>			
	<b>Length</b>	<b>% rhyme to blank verse</b>	<b>% prose to all verse</b>
<b>Shakespeare's scenes:</b>	<b>1,385 lines</b>	<b>3.28</b>	<b>18.3</b>
<b>Co-author's scenes:</b>	<b>977 lines</b>	<b>23.64</b>	<b>34.7</b>

The figures reflect Shakespeare's preference for blank verse

[Refs: *Shakespeare Co-Author* Brian Vickers OUP 2002 page 258  
*E.G Fleay On the Play of Pericles (1876 TNSS and Shakespeare Manual (London 1876) ]*

I've chosen just four of many examples for you to hear the differences in style, imagery and characterisation. First, two passages where Timon's servants lament his departure to the wilderness: the first is ascribed to Middleton -

Oh the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us!  
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,  
Since riches point to misery and contempt?  
Who would be so mocked with glory, or to live  
But in a dream of friendship,  
To have his pomp, and all what state compounds,  
But only painted like his varnished friends:  
Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,  
Undone by goodness! Strange unusual blood,  
When man's worst sin is, he does too much good.  
Who then dares to be half so kind again?  
For bounty, that makes gods, does still mar men.

(4.2. 30-41)

Compare this with a soliloquy which comes shortly before, ascribed to Shakespeare:

*1<sup>st</sup> servant:*

Such a house broke?  
So noble a master fall'n, all gone, and not  
One friend to take his fortune by the arm,  
And go along with him.

*2<sup>nd</sup> servant*

As we do turn our backs  
From our companion, thrown into his grave,  
So his familiars to his buried fortunes  
Slink all away, leave their false vows with him  
Like empty purses picked; and his poor self  
A dedicated beggar to the air,  
With his disease of all-shunned poverty,  
Walks like contempt alone.

(4.2.5-15)

Now here's part of a speech by the character Apemantus, full of superficial moralizing, ascribed to Middleton:

Here's that which is too weak to be a sinner:  
Honest water, which ne'er left man i' th' mire.  
This and my food are equals; there's no odds.  
Feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods.

(1.2. 57-60)

Later the same character Apemantus addresses Timon in these richly fused metaphors, in a passage ascribed to Shakespeare:

What think'st  
That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain  
Will put thy shirt on warm? Will these moist trees,  
That have outlived the eagle, page thy heels  
And skip when thou point'st out? Will the cold brook  
Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste [caudle: make warm gruel]  
To cure thy o're-night's surfeit? Call the creatures  
Whose naked natures live in all the spite  
Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhousèd trunks,  
To the conflicting elements exposed  
Answer mere nature: bid them flatter thee.

(4.3.222-232)

I think these examples illustrate clearly the voices of two different poets.

Nevertheless, Oliver, the Arden editor, maintains that all the **imagery** in *Timon* is 'of a Shakespearean kind although not perhaps of a Shakespearean intensity.'

However, all critics do agree that **characterisation** in *Timon* is problematic. Chambers complained that key characters didn't interact together. Una Ellis-Fermor pointed out that Timon himself, 'simply does not exist as a person'. For a tragic hero he is 'curiously colourless and neutral' (1942, p283).

**Plotting and structural cohesion** are problematic too. Some scenes seem unconnected to the rest of the play. Chambers called the structure as a whole 'incoherent' (1930 p481).



And the **spellings of names** are very inconsistent, even for Shakespeare.

**Timon** is *Tymon* on the title page

*Lucilius/Lucillius* (within four lines)

*Apemantus/Apermantus/Appemantus*

*Ventidius/Ventiddius/Ventidgius/Ventigijs*

and two characters change names -

**STEWARD/FLAVIUS**

**2<sup>ND</sup> SERVANT/HOSTILIUS** (3.2)

### **Where did the errors come from?**

The earliest explanation was that the text was corrupted by the typesetters. But this is no longer accepted: there are far too many loose ends and inconsistencies to blame it all on the type-setter (Oliver xvii).

Chambers (1930) conjectured, with no external evidence, that Shakespeare abandoned *Timon* due to a nervous breakdown. Oliver decided that Shakespeare abandoned *Timon* as an early draft

Vickers surmises that Shakespeare and Middleton drafted *Timon* together, each writing allocated scenes, but the two did not check and revise the play. Vickers guesses that they lost interest, as the story of Timon's misanthropy – Timon against everyone – wasn't dramatic enough. (Vickers 2002, 479).

### **How was the co-author identified?**

In 1874, Fleay rejected the idea that *Timon* was a partial revision by Shakespeare of an earlier play. He pointed out that the un-Shakespearean parts are in a *newer* style.

He analysed stylistic features in the co-author's sections, comparing the results with 200 other plays. He found only one play that came close: *The Revenger's Tragedy*, published anonymously in 1607-8 and now accredited to Thomas Middleton.

Fleay's analysis found the proportion of rhymed verse as follows:

<b>Middleton's Versification Compared with Shakespeare's</b>			
<b>Proportion of rhymed verse</b>			
(F.G. Fleay 1874)			
<i>The Revenger's Tragedy</i>	=	<b>19.1%</b>	
Co-author's scenes in <i>Timon</i>	=	<b>23.6%</b>	(17.3% Vickers )
Shakespeare in <i>Timon</i>	=	<b>3.3 %.</b>	

[Ref: *Shakespeare Co-Author* Brian Vickers OUP 2002 page 260 ]

He discovered the co-author's mixture of blank verse, rhyme and prose was exactly the metre of the *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and is typical of Middleton.

Later investigators have consistently found Middleton's frequently used words and phrases, which don't or very rarely appear in other Shakespeare plays, occurring in the parts of *Timon* ascribed to Middleton (Vickers 2002).

For example this chart shows the number of times various contractions appear in the scenes ascribed to Middleton and to Shakespeare:

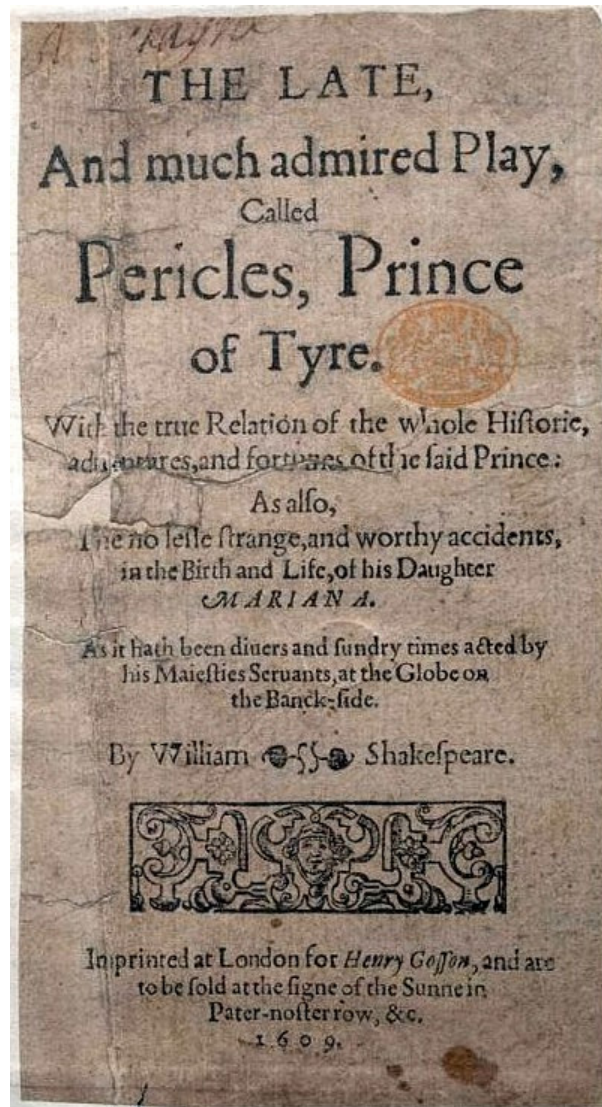
Ascription	Length	'em	them	has	hath	does	doth	I'm	I am	't is	't is	me
Middleton scenes	897 lines	16	16	25	8	16	0	3	13	4	2	0
Shakespeare scenes	1,418 lines	4	50	6	21	8	9	0	27	1	0	4
Whole Play	2,315 lines	20	66	31	29	24	9	3	40	5	2	4

[Ref: Lake 1975 – quoted by Vickers page 277]

A few modern critics, like Klein (2001), still ignore the evidence for co-authorship. But most, like Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells, accept that about a third was written by Middleton.

## Pericles

Described by Ben Jonson as “.. a mouldy tale”, *Pericles* was a very popular play. It was first printed in 1609.

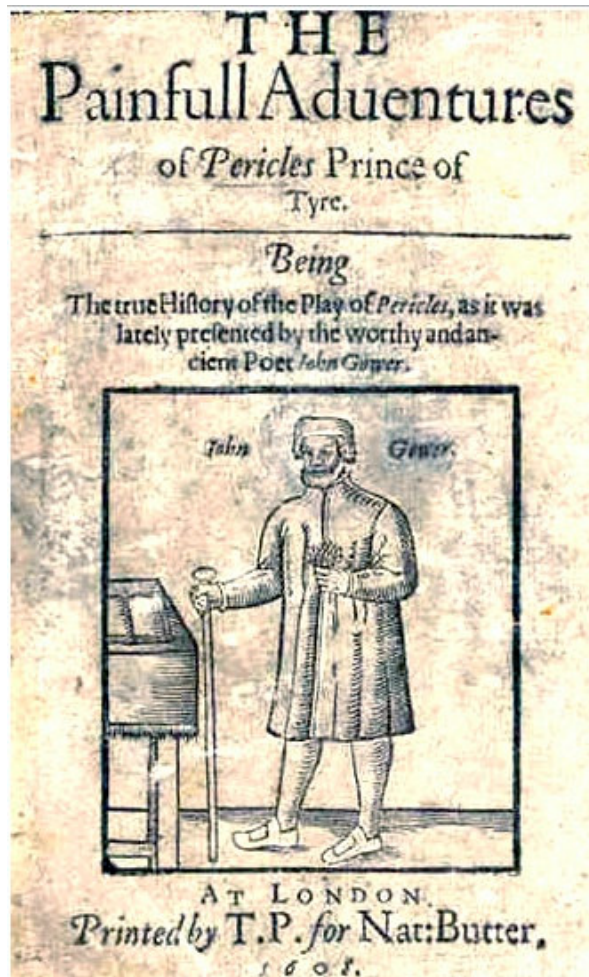


[Ref: The British Library – Shakespeare Quartos: <http://prodigi.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/record.asp>]

It's thought the text was put together from corrupted and badly recalled documents, probably obtained from actors.

*Pericles* was not included in the First Folio of 1623, probably because of the state it was in.

In 1608 George Wilkins's novella *The Painfull Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre*, was published.



[Ref: [http://www.hudsonshakespeare.org/Shakespeare%20Library/main%20pages/main\\_pericles1.htm](http://www.hudsonshakespeare.org/Shakespeare%20Library/main%20pages/main_pericles1.htm) ]

The suggestion is that Wilkins could have started *Pericles* the play in 1608. Indeed, the first two acts resemble the style of Wilkins rather than Shakespeare. One Stratfordian view is that Wilkins wrote the first complete play and Shakespeare re-wrote key parts. But, Kenneth Muir believes the play is largely Shakespeare's, and that he made more revisions of the later acts than the earlier acts, for some reason.

However, over the past 140 years, studies have found a vast difference in content, style and tone. Numerous lexical, metrical, and computerised stylistic tests on the Folio as well as other works by Shakespeare and Wilkins and their contemporaries, revealed very strong correlations between Acts 1 and 2 and Wilkins's *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, published in 1608.

No such parallels existed in Acts 3 to 5, the 'Shakespeare' parts. These had the closest fit with *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest* (Jackson 2003, p330).

One methodology used is word occurrences. Words such as *yon* and *yonder* appear very frequently in Wilkins's works, but hardly ever in Shakespeare. The word *sin* appears regularly in Acts 1 & 2 and Wilkins's other works, but never in Acts 3 to 5.

Other tests which have helped confirm the Wilkins/Shakespeare split include:

- Pauses within the blank verse line
- Verse tests – e.g. number of rhyming lines, short lines, double endings
- Occurrence of assonances (e.g. home-drone, moonies-doomes etc)
- High frequency word occurrences e.g. and, but, for, that etc
- Use of auxiliary and relative markers e.g. *do* as in ‘I did go home’ & ‘I went not home’

Other scholars have investigated Rowley, Day and Heywood as potential authors for Acts 1 & 2 and rejected them. It has also been suggested that the first two acts are so different to the last three because they come from a much earlier period of Shakespeare’s writing. Sidney Thomas flatly rejected this idea, saying that the style of the first two acts “is not archaic or formalised; it is simply incompetent, flat in diction, lifeless in rhythm and unconvincing in content” (Thomas 1983).

Jackson summarised the two parts by saying that whereas “Shakespeare’s poetic style is marked by its concentration, energy, particularity and concreteness” Wilkins displays “a wordiness that seems half way between the pointless and the cryptic” (Jackson 1999). Wells & Taylor accept the attribution of the early scenes to Wilkins. Indeed, Gary Taylor used Wilkins’ novel as the basis for their re-construction of the play (Wells & Taylor 1990, p 851).

To illustrate the two styles, here are two passages – one from scene 3 by Wilkins and the other from scene 11 by Shakespeare (Wells and Taylor):

### Wilkins

*Cleon:* The which when any shall not gratify,  
Or pay you with unthankfulness in thought,  
Be it our wives, our children, or ourselves,  
The curse of heaven and men succeed their evils!  
Till when – the which I hope shall ne'er be seen –  
Your grace is welcome to our town and us.

*Pericles:* Which welcome we'll accept; feast here awhile,  
Until our stars that frown lend us a smile.

(Scene 3, lines 100 - 107)

### Shakespeare

*Pericles:*  
A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear,  
No light, no fire. Th'unfriendly elements  
Forget thee utterly, nor have I time  
To give thee hallowed to thy grave, but straight  
Must cast thee, scarcely confined, in the ooze,  
Where, for a monument upon thy bones  
Any aye-remaining lamps, the belching whale  
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,  
Lying with simple shells.

(Scene 11, lines 55 - 63)

It is now believed that Wilkins copied from *Pericles* to write his novella. Here we see examples of similarities between the two:

### **Wilkins**

And in your eies so lovingly being wed  
We hope your hands will bring us to our bed  
(*Miseries* 2867-8)

### **Pericles**

It pleaseth me so well, I'll see you wed  
The with what haste you can get you to bed  
(2.5.92-3)

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### **Wilkins**

*Joculo*: But madam, do you remember what a multitude of fishes we saw at sea  
And I do wonder how they can all live by one another

*Emilia*: Why, fool, as men do on the land; the great ones eat up the little ones.  
(*Law Tricks* Act 1 Sc 2 p.25)

### **Pericles**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Fishman*: Master, I do marvel how the fishes live in the sea.

*1<sup>st</sup> Fishman*: Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the little ones  
(2.1.29-34)

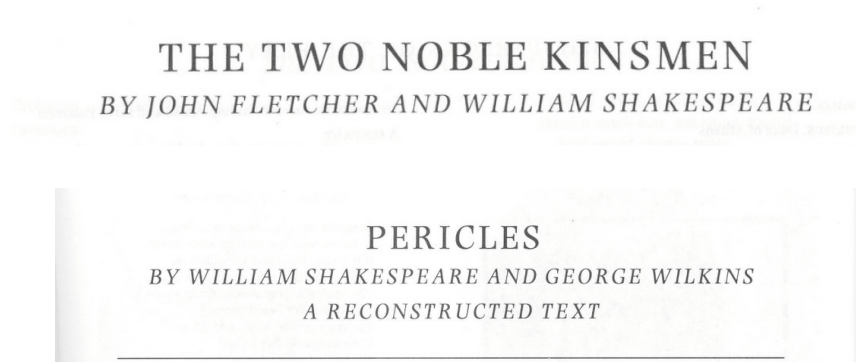
I suggest he wrote his novella because he had a hand in the play's construction, but was prevented from gaining financially from it because the King's Men, who had not attributed any part of the play to him, as we have seen on the title page, owned it. So, to gain something, he wrote the novella – copying much from the play in the process.

## To End

Most scholars now agree that these plays were collaborations. What hasn't been agreed is how the playwrights collaborated. Did they work together, or did the plays already exist in some form and were re-written? So far, no contemporary evidence has been found linking the co-authors, and the actual process of collaboration remains speculative.

At least most now agree that collaboration, even if it was 'indirect', occurred with the three plays – I say most, but perhaps not all, as we see from this...

### **From “The Complete Oxford Shakespeare – Wells & Taylor (1990)**



### **From the 2005 Globe Programme**



I'll end by mentioning a report in last summer's newsletter (2004) of the American Shakespeare Oxford Society. A two-year research programme into collaboration in Shakespeare is planned by the University of Newcastle in Australia and the University of Massachusetts. The bulk of the grant will be used to create new computer programs to analyse the writing.

Collaboration is a vital area of study. Collaboration can help us understand Shakespeare's context, and may also help illuminate his identity.

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