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Edited by Ann Thompson

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW



THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

One of Shakespeare's most popular yet controversial plays, this edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* considers its reception in the light of the hostility and embarrassment it often arouses, taking account of both scholarly defences and modern feminist criticism of the play.

For this updated edition Ann Thompson has added new sections to the Introduction which describe the 'deeply problematic' nature of debates about the play and its reception since the 1980s. She discusses recent editions and textual, performance and critical studies.

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THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Updated edition

Edited by

ANN THOMPSON

Professor of English, King's College, London



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521825429

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First published 1984

Reprinted 1985, 1988, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001

Updated edition 2003

7th printing 2012

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-82542-9 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-53249-5 Paperback

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THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

The *New Cambridge Shakespeare* succeeds *The New Shakespeare* which began publication in 1921 under the general editorship of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, and was completed in the 1960s, with the assistance of G. I. Duthie, Alice Walker, Peter Ure and J. C. Maxwell. *The New Shakespeare* itself followed upon *The Cambridge Shakespeare*, 1863–6, edited by W. G. Clark, J. Glover and W. A. Wright.

The New Shakespeare won high esteem both for its scholarship and for its design, but shifts of critical taste and insight, recent Shakespearean research, and a changing sense of what is important in our understanding of the plays, have made it necessary to re-edit and redesign, not merely to revise, the series.

The *New Cambridge Shakespeare* aims to be of value to a new generation of playgoers and readers who wish to enjoy fuller access to Shakespeare's poetic and dramatic art. While offering ample academic guidance, it reflects current critical interests and is more attentive than some earlier editions have been to the realisation of the plays on the stage, and to their social and cultural settings. The text of each play has been freshly edited, with textual data made available to those users who wish to know why and how one published text differs from another. Although modernised, the edition conserves forms that appear to be expressive and characteristically Shakespearean, and it does not attempt to disguise the fact that the plays were written in a language other than that of our own time.

Illustrations are usually integrated into the critical and historical discussion of the play and include some reconstructions of early performances by C. Walter Hodges. Some editors have also made use of the advice and experience of Maurice Daniels, for many years a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Each volume is addressed to the needs and problems of a particular text, and each therefore differs in style and emphasis from others in the series.

PHILIP BROCKBANK
Founding General Editor

For SUSANNA AND JUDITH

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PREFACE

Like all other editors of Shakespeare I must express a heavy debt to my predecessors. I have made particular use of the previous Cambridge edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson in the New Shakespeare series (1928), and of the excellent New Penguin edition by G. R. Hibbard (1968). I have also found much of interest in R. Warwick Bond's Arden edition (1904) and in the Riverside edition (1974). Brian Morris's Arden edition (1981) was published when my own work was already well advanced, and I am especially grateful to the editor for letting me see the proofs in advance of publication and for encouraging me at a time when I felt that my efforts had become redundant. H. J. Oliver's edition in the Oxford Shakespeare (1982) also appeared at a very late stage, just before this edition went to press, but I have tried to take his findings into account.

I should like to express my thanks to the General Editors of this series and in particular to Robin Hood, who has commented on my work most promptly and thoroughly at every stage, offering innumerable fruitful suggestions and saving me from a world of errors. Others who have read drafts and commented very helpfully on all aspects of the edition are Philip Edwards, Kenneth Muir, Richard Proudfoot and my husband, John Thompson. In addition I have had expert advice from Gary Taylor on textual matters, from Tom Craik, C. Walter Hodges and Marion Lomax on questions of staging, from Maurice Daniels and Russell Jackson on stage history and from Helen Wilcox on music. All errors that remain are of course my own responsibility and I should be grateful to be told about them.

Although this edition is published at Cambridge it is very much a product of Liverpool. I should like to thank the University for a number of research grants over the last three years, as well as for a period of study leave at the beginning of the project. I am grateful to the students who took the optional Shakespeare course in 1980–1 and 1981–2 for providing me with a lively series of discussions on the play. And I must once again express my gratitude for the endless patience and skill of the English Department secretaries, especially Catherine Rees and Joan Welford.

Finally, I am grateful to Liverpool University Library, the British Library, Birmingham Reference Library, the Shakespeare Centre Library in Stratford-upon-Avon and the Henry E. Huntington Library in California for the use of their resources and the helpfulness of their staff.

A. T.

University of Liverpool

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

1. Shakespeare's plays

The abbreviated titles of Shakespeare's plays have been modified from those used in the *Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare*. All quotations and line references to plays other than *The Taming of the Shrew* are to G. Blakemore Evans (ed.), *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1974, on which the *Concordance* is based.

<i>Ado</i>	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
<i>AWW</i>	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
<i>AYLI</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>
<i>Cym.</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>
<i>Err.</i>	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
<i>Ham.</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>
<i>1H4</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>2H4</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>H5</i>	<i>King Henry the Fifth</i>
<i>1H6</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>2H6</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>3H6</i>	<i>The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>H8</i>	<i>King Henry the Eighth</i>
<i>JC</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>King John</i>
<i>LLL</i>	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
<i>Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>Mac.</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
<i>MND</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>MV</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
<i>Oth.</i>	<i>Othello</i>
<i>Per.</i>	<i>Pericles</i>
<i>R2</i>	<i>King Richard the Second</i>
<i>R3</i>	<i>King Richard the Third</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>Shr.</i>	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
<i>STM</i>	<i>Sir Thomas More</i>
<i>Temp.</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>
<i>TGV</i>	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
<i>Tim.</i>	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
<i>Tit.</i>	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
<i>TN</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>TNK</i>	<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>

<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
<i>Wiv.</i>	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
<i>WT</i>	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>

2. Editions

Editions of Shakespeare are abbreviated under the name of the editor unless they are the work of more than one editor, when an abbreviated series name is used, e.g. Cam., Riverside. When more than one edition by the same editor is cited, later editions are discriminated by a raised figure, e.g. *Rome*³. This list includes all editions referred to in the collation and Commentary. It is not a complete list of editions collated.

Alexander	<i>William Shakespeare, The Complete Works</i> , ed. Peter Alexander, 1951
Bond	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , ed. R. Warwick Bond, 1904; rev. edn, 1929 (Arden Shakespeare)
Cam.	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. William George Clark and John Glover, 1863–6 (Cambridge Shakespeare)
Capell	<i>Mr William Shakespeare his Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , ed. Edward Capell, 1768
Collier	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. J. Payne Collier, 1842–4
Dyce	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 1857
F	<i>Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1623 (First Folio)
F 2	<i>Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1632 (Second Folio)
F 3	<i>Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1664 (Third Folio)
F 4	<i>Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1685 (Fourth Folio)
Gentleman	<i>Bell's Edition of Shakespeare's Plays</i> , ed. F. Gentleman, 1774
Halliwell	<i>The Complete Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. James O. Halliwell, 1852
Hanmer	<i>The Works of Shakespear</i> , ed. Thomas Hanmer, 1744
Hibbard	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , ed. G. R. Hibbard, 1968 (New Penguin Shakespeare)
Hudson	<i>The Complete Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. H. N. Hudson, 1881 (Harvard Shakespeare)
Irving	<i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Henry Irving and F. A. Marshall, 1888–90 (Irving Shakespeare)
Johnson	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson, 1765
Keightley	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Thomas Keightley, 1864
Kittredge	<i>The Complete Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. George Lyman Kittredge, 1936
Knight	<i>The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakspeare</i> , ed. C. Knight, 1839–42

Malone	<i>The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Edmond Malone, 1790
Morris	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , ed. Brian Morris, 1981 (Arden Shakespeare)
NS	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson, 1928 (New Shakespeare)
Neilson	<i>The Complete Dramatic and Poetic Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. W. A. Neilson, 1906
Oliver	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> , ed. H. J. Oliver, 1982 (Oxford Shakespeare)
Pelican	<i>William Shakespeare: The Complete Works</i> , ed. A. Harbage, 1956 (Pelican Shakespeare)
Pope	<i>The Works of Shakespear</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 1723–5
Pope ²	<i>The Works of Shakespear</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 2nd edn, 1728
Q	<i>A Wittie and Pleasant Comedie Called The Taming of the Shrew</i> 1631 (quarto)
Rann	<i>The Dramatic Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Joseph Rann, 1786–94
Reed	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Isaac Reed, 1803
Riverside	<i>The Riverside Shakespeare</i> , textual ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 1974
Rowe	<i>The Works of Mr William Shakespear</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709
Rowe ²	<i>The Works of Mr William Shakespear</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 2nd edn, 1709
Rowe ³	<i>The Works of Mr William Shakespear</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 3rd edn, 1714
Singer	<i>The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Samuel Weller Singer, 1826
Sisson	<i>William Shakespeare: The Complete Works</i> , ed. C. J. Sisson, 1954
Steevens	<i>The Plays of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1773
Stockdale	<i>Stockdale's Edition of Shakespeare</i> , ed. J. Stockdale, 1784
Theobald	<i>The Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1733
Warburton	<i>The Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. William Warburton, 1747

3. Other works, periodicals, general references

Abbott	E. A. Abbott, <i>A Shakespearian Grammar</i> , 1869 (references are to numbered paragraphs)
Bullough, <i>Sources</i>	Geoffrey Bullough (ed.), <i>Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare</i> , 8 vols., 1957–75
conj.	conjecture
ELR	<i>English Literary Renaissance</i>
ES	<i>English Studies</i>
Greg	W. W. Greg, <i>The Shakespeare First Folio</i> , 1955
Hinman	Charlton Hinman, <i>The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare</i> , 2 vols., 1963
HLQ	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>

Hosley, 'Sources and analogues'	Richard Hosley, 'Sources and analogues of <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> ', <i>HLQ</i> 27 (1963–4), 289–308
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
Kökeritz, <i>Pronunciation</i>	Helge Kökeritz, <i>Shakespeare's Pronunciation</i> , 1953
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
<i>MLR</i>	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
<i>MLS</i>	<i>Modern Language Studies</i>
Muir, <i>Sources</i>	Kenneth Muir, <i>The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays</i> , rev. edn, 1977
<i>N&Q</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
Partridge, <i>Bawdy</i>	Eric Partridge, <i>Shakespeare's Bawdy</i> , 1948
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>REL</i>	<i>Review of English Literature</i>
<i>RES</i>	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>Studies in Bibliography</i>
SD	stage direction
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studies in English Literature</i>
SH	speech heading
Sisson, <i>New Readings</i>	C. J. Sisson, <i>New Readings in Shakespeare</i> , 1956
<i>SJ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Jahrbuch</i>
<i>SQ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
<i>S.St.</i>	<i>Shakespeare Studies</i>
<i>S.Sur.</i>	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
subst.	substantively
Tilley	M. P. Tilley, <i>A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</i> , 1950 (references are to numbered proverbs)
Tillyard	E. M. W. Tillyard, 'Some consequences of a lacuna in <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> ', <i>ES</i> 43 (1962), 330–5
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>
Tyrrwhitt	Thomas Tyrrwhitt, <i>Observations and Conjectures upon some Passages of Shakespeare</i> , 1766
Vickers, <i>Prose</i>	Brian Vickers, <i>The Artistry of Shakespeare's Prose</i> , 1968
Walker	W. S. Walker, <i>A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare</i> , 1860
Wells	Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, <i>Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling, with Three Studies in the Text of 'Henry V'</i> , 1979

INTRODUCTION

Date and theatrical context

It is generally agreed that *The Taming of the Shrew* is among Shakespeare's earliest comedies, but to date it more precisely we need to examine the surviving references to its first publication and performance. Enquiry is complicated by the existence of two closely related plays: *The Taming of the Shrew*, printed in the Shakespeare Folio of 1623, and *The Taming of a Shrew*, a different version whose connection with the Folio play remains puzzling; it is convenient to refer to them as *The Shrew* and *A Shrew*. While the distinction between the two is important to us, however, it is not clear that it was consistently made in the early references. The preliminary evidence can be set out as follows:

- 1 On 2 May 1594 a play was entered to Peter Short in the Stationers' Register as 'A plesant Conceyted historie called the Tamyng of a Shrowe'.¹
- 2 A play was printed in a quarto edition in the same year with the following information on its title page: 'A Pleasant Conceited Historie, called The taming of a Shrew. As it was sundry times acted by the Right honorable the Earle of Pembrooke his servants. Printed at London by Peter Short and are to be sold by Cutbert Burbie, at his shop at the Royall Exchange, 1594'. A single copy of this edition survives. It is the play known today as *A Shrew*.²
- 3 On 11 June 1594 a performance of a play called 'the tamyng of A shrowe' at the Newington Butts theatre is recorded in Henslowe's diary.³ Henslowe does not mark the play 'ne' (meaning 'new'). Both the Admiral's Men and the newly formed Chamberlain's Men (Shakespeare's company from this time onwards) seem to have been playing in this theatre in 1594.
- 4 In 1596 Peter Short and Cuthbert Burby reprinted the quarto of *A Shrew* with a few minor modifications.
- 5 On 22 January 1607 three plays, 'The taming of a Shrewe', 'Romeo and Juliette' and 'Loves Labour Lose', were entered in the Stationers' Register to 'Master Linge by direcon of A Court and with consent of Master Burby under his handwrytinge'. A third quarto of *A Shrew* appeared immediately with the imprint 'Printed at London by V.S. for Nicholas Ling and are to be sold at his shop in Saint Dunstons Church-yard in Fleet street. 1607.' This edition again had a few minor modifications.⁴ In the same year Ling transferred his rights in *A Shrew* to John Smethwicke.

¹ Edward Arber (ed.), *The Stationers' Registers, 1554–1640*, 2 vols., 1875, II, 648. See also the discussion of the descent of the copyright in this play from 1594 to 1623 in Greg, p. 62.

² Quotations from *A Shrew* throughout this edition are from the text given in Bullough, *Sources*, I, 69–108.

³ R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (eds.), *Henslowe's Diary*, 1961, p. 22.

⁴ For details of the variants between these early editions, see F. S. Boas (ed.), *The Taming of a Shrew*, 1908.

6 In 1623 *The Shrew* was printed in the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays.

7 In 1631 John Smethwick printed a quarto edition, not of *A Shrew* as one might expect, but of *The Shrew*, with a text clearly deriving from the First Folio.

It appears that Smethwick, owning the rights of *A Shrew* but printing *The Shrew*, did not discriminate between the plays. Neither, apparently, did Burby, when he consented to the association of *A Shrew* with *Romeo and Juliet* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. It seems clear, however, that both Pembroke's Men and the Chamberlain's Men had *Shrew* plays in their respective repertoires by 1594.

A close estimate of the date of *The Shrew* depends upon our interpretation of (1) the relationships between the two versions, (2) theatre-company history in the 1590s, and (3) connections with other relevant plays of the time. The relationship between *A Shrew* and *The Shrew* has been vigorously debated; it was once thought that *A Shrew* was the source for *The Shrew*, but it is now generally agreed that *A Shrew* is some kind of memorial reconstruction of *The Shrew* itself,¹ and it would therefore follow that *The Shrew* was performed before 1594. The troubled theatre history of the period leads us to suppose that it was at least two years before. A severe outbreak of the plague closed the theatres, apart from one short interlude, from June 1592 right on into 1594. The companies dispersed, some splitting into smaller groups and some reorganising under new patrons. Shakespeare's career at that time is not known with any certainty, but there are indications that he was with the Queen's Men before 1592, left with others to join Pembroke's Men in the same year, and finally joined the newly established Chamberlain's Men in 1594.²

Shakespeare's association with Pembroke's Men, which may have been co-extensive with the life of that company, may help to explain the existence of *A Shrew* and of two other abbreviated and reconstructed plays of this period: *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* (a version of 2 *Henry VI*), printed in 1594, and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (a version of 3 *Henry VI*), printed in 1595, naming Pembroke's Men on its title page. Behind these garbled plays, it has been claimed, we can detect 'good acting versions', deliberately (and perhaps even authorially) cut and rearranged for performance by a cast slightly smaller than originally intended.³ It has been shown that all three 'bad' texts, including *A Shrew*, can be performed by a company of eleven adult actors, four boys and about five supernumeraries playing soldiers, attendants and so on. Certain actors' names ('Tom', 'Sander', 'Will') appear in speech headings and stage directions in all three texts, making it appropriate to treat them as a group. The relationship of *A Shrew* to *The Shrew*, however, is not quite like that of the *Henry VI* derivatives to the Folio texts. Although *A Shrew* contains evidence of memorial reconstruction

¹ For a full discussion of the relationship between *The Shrew* and *A Shrew*, see Textual Analysis, pp. 163–81 below.

² See Scott McMillin, 'Casting for Pembroke's Men: the *Henry 6* quartos and *The Taming of a Shrew*', *SQ* 23 (1972), 141–59; G. M. Pinciss, 'Shakespeare, Her Majesty's Players, and Pembroke's Men', *S.Sur.* 27 (1974), 129–36; and Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The origin and personnel of the Pembroke company', *Theatre Research International* 5 (1980), 45–68.

³ McMillin, 'Pembroke's Men', p. 148. Gary Taylor has reached similar conclusions about the 1600 'bad' quarto of *Henry V*: see Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling, with Three Studies in the Text of 'Henry 5'*, 1979.

and of cutting, it is much more freely rewritten. The Folio text of *The Shrew* itself, moreover, appears to have been cut, since Sly and his companions disappear at the end of 1.1 instead of staying, as they do in *A Shrew*, to watch the play and conclude the action. Neither surviving text, therefore, seems wholly to preserve the play as it was performed before the closing of the theatres.¹

Two further pieces of peripheral evidence tend to support a date before 1592. At one point in *A Shrew* we find the stage direction *Enter Simon, Alphonsus, and his three daughters*. Since the play's character 'Simon' is already on stage, it has been suggested that this was also the name of the actor who played 'Alfonsus', and therefore to be identified as Simon Jewell, of either the Queen's or Pembroke's Men, who died (probably from the plague) in August 1592.² Another intimation of an early performance of *The Shrew* is found in an allusion in Antony Chute's poem *Beawtie Dishonoured written under the title of Shores Wife*: 'He calls his Kate and she must come and kisse him'; *A Shrew* does not have the kissing sequences of *The Shrew* 5.1 and 5.2.³

Verbal parallels with non-Shakespearean plays may be adduced to confirm a date before 1592, perhaps as early as 1590. A number have been noted between the anonymous play *A Knack to Know a Knaue* and both *Shrew* plays.⁴ *A Knack* was first performed by Strange's Men at the Rose on 10 June 1592 and marked 'ne' (meaning 'new') in Henslowe's diary. It was printed in 1594. While we cannot be sure that the published text of *A Knack* was the same as that acted in 1592, any detectable borrowings from the *Shrew* plays must date back to pre-plague performances. If we assume from the borrowings from *A Shrew* that a performance of the derivative text intervened between the original performance of *The Shrew* and the first of *A Knack*, the date of *The Shrew* is pushed back even earlier. Parallels with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* are of interest but do not give much help with the precise dating of *The Shrew*, as the date of Kyd's play itself cannot be established with certainty within the range 1582–92. Recent scholars, however, favour a date towards the end of the period. A trace of the old play *King Leir* may be left at 4.1.58–9; it belonged to the Queen's Men and it has been argued that Shakespeare acted in it.⁵

The evidence so far suggests, therefore, that Shakespeare originally wrote his play, complete with all the Sly material, for a large company (possibly the Queen's Men) either in the season ended by the closing of the theatres in June 1592 or in the preceding season. During the turbulent years 1592–4 two companies came to possess cut versions of the play – *The Shrew*, which remains close to the original, and *A Shrew*, a memorial reconstruction of the original. It remains possible that *The Shrew* was among the first of Shakespeare's plays and dates back to 1590, but since there is no controlling external evidence, such a speculation depends upon a judgement of the play's maturity in relation to Shakespeare's other early work.

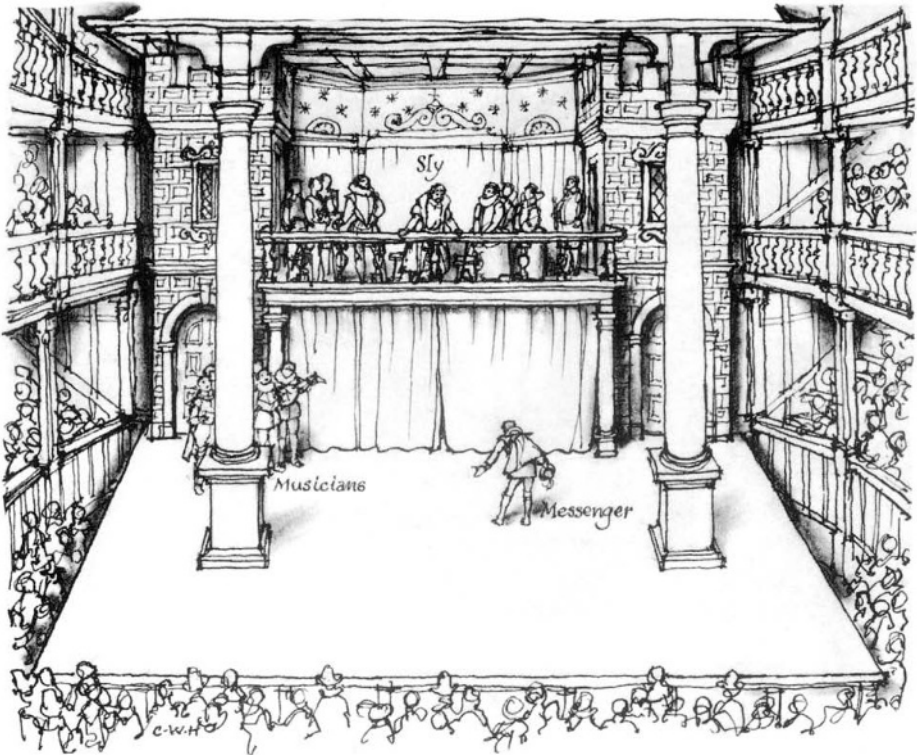
¹ For a fuller discussion of the origins of the Folio text, see Textual Analysis, pp. 163–81 below.

² See Mary Edmond, 'Pembroke's Men', *RES* 25 (1974), 129–36; Scott McMillin, 'Simon Jewell and the Queen's Men', *RES* 27 (1976), 174–7; and Wentersdorf, 'Pembroke company', pp. 48 and 63.

³ See William H. Moore, 'An allusion in 1593 to *The Taming of the Shrew*?' *SQ* 15 (1964), 55–60.

⁴ See G. R. Proudfoot (ed.), *A Knack to Know a Knaue*, Malone Society Reprints, 1963, and Ann Thompson, 'Dating evidence for *The Taming of the Shrew*', *N&Q* 29 (1982), 108–9.

⁵ See Kenneth Muir (ed.), *Lear*, 1952, pp. xxiv–xxix, and Pinciss, 'Her Majesty's Players', p. 133.

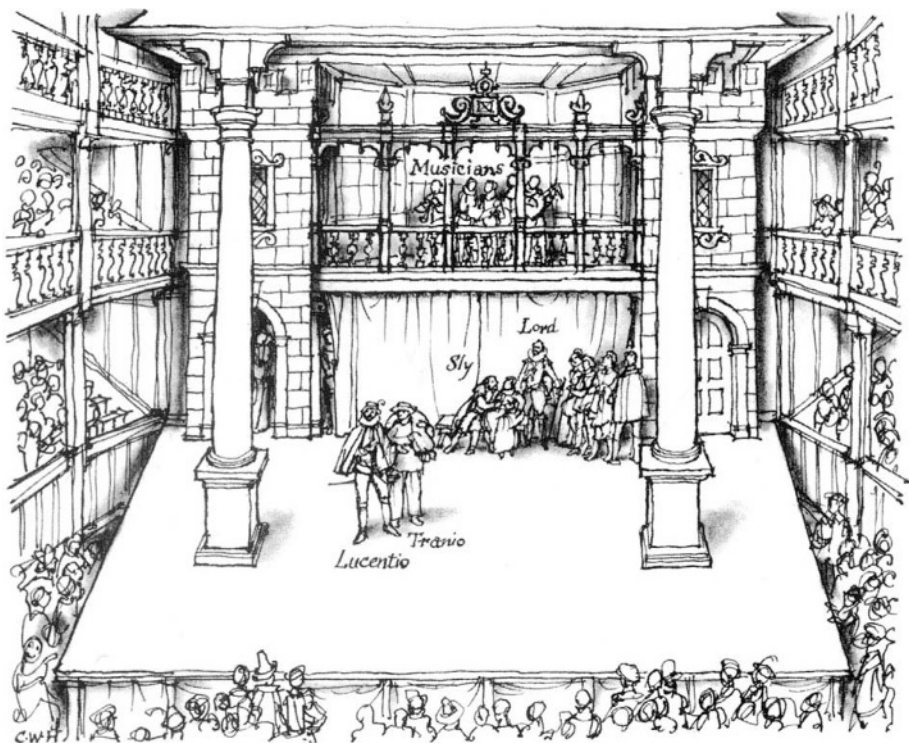


1 A possible staging of Induction 2 with the use of a gallery, by C. Walter Hodges. The scene is played 'aloft', as in a playhouse of the 1590s provided with a spacious upper stage. It is here suggested that the musicians, if seen at all, need not be placed above. The Messenger is shown announcing the performance from the acting-area below

The Shrew in the context of Shakespeare's own work

Among Shakespeare's comedies, *The Shrew* has particularly close affinities with *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. It is generally agreed that these three plays are Shakespeare's earliest comedies but the order in which they were written has not been definitely established. In the absence of other arguments it has seemed logical to suppose that Shakespeare progressed away from writing plays directly based on classical or Italian models towards the less plot-bound mode of romantic comedy which he subsequently developed from *Love's Labour's Lost* to *Twelfth Night*. If we accept this view, *The Comedy of Errors*, which is most heavily dependent on classical sources, would come first, *The Taming of the Shrew*, with its mixture of classical and romantic materials, would follow, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Shakespeare's first attempt at fully romantic comedy, would be the latest of the three.

There are obvious objections to this theory: one might claim, for example, that the ending of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is comparatively weak and that



2 A possible staging of Induction 2 on the main stage, by C. Walter Hodges. The scene is all placed below, as in a playhouse with a restricted upper stage. The Messenger has just withdrawn and the first players have entered

Shakespeare could hardly have written it after dealing competently with much more complicated dénouements in *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Shrew*,¹ or one might object that Shakespeare did not in fact jettison classical motifs after *The Shrew* but continued to use them throughout his career.² Marco Mincoff has argued that *The Shrew* must precede *The Comedy of Errors* on the grounds that it is stylistically more primitive,³ and Brian Morris has gone so far as to suggest that *The Shrew* 'might be not simply Shakespeare's first comedy: it might be his first play'. He draws our attention to the evocation of Warwickshire in the Induction, suggesting that Shakespeare is here 'recalling a countryside he had quite recently left', and he proposes a date of 1589.⁴ Another recent editor, H. J. Oliver, agrees that *The Shrew* must have been written at least as early as 1592 but supposes on internal evidence that *The Two Gentlemen* came first.⁵ The whole question of the dating of Shakespeare's

¹ In Clifford Leech (ed.), *TGV*, 1969, pp. xxi–xxxv, it is argued that the first draft of that play preceded *The Shrew* but that the present (revised) text is later.

² This is well demonstrated by Richard Hosley in 'The formal influence of Plautus and Terence', in J. R. Brown and B. Harris (eds.), *Elizabethan Theatre*, 1966, pp. 131–45.

³ M. Mincoff, 'The dating of *The Taming of the Shrew*', *ES* 54 (1973), 554–65.

⁴ Morris, pp. 50–65.

⁵ Oliver, pp. 29–33.

earliest plays has been reopened recently by E. A. J. Honigmann, who draws our attention to the number of independent arguments that have been advanced for pushing back the dates of various early plays, thus giving greater weight to the theory that Shakespeare began his career as a dramatist in the 1580s and not around 1590 as traditionally accepted.¹

The links between *The Shrew* and *The Comedy of Errors* are most obvious in *The Shrew*'s sub-plot, though they are not confined to it. In both plays we find the plot-device of the threat to the life of an innocent merchant: *The Comedy of Errors* opens dramatically with the Duke of Ephesus telling the Syracusan merchant Egeon that his life and goods are forfeit because of newly begun hostilities between the two dukedoms (1.1.1–22), and Tranio invents a similar situation in *The Shrew* when the hapless merchant he has chosen for the role of 'supposed Vincentio' says he comes from Mantua (4.2.72–87). Both plays also have a comic scene in which a man is refused entry to a house (either his own or his son's) because another man masquerading as him is already inside and is accepted as the genuine character by the other occupants: this happens to Antipholus of Ephesus in *Errors* (3.1) and to Vincentio in *The Shrew* (5.1). These two plot-devices derive ultimately from Roman comedy but Shakespeare's immediate source for both of them was probably George Gascoigne's *Supposes*, which served him for most of *The Shrew*'s sub-plot.²

There are several other similarities between *Errors* and *The Shrew*. Both plays have a 'framing action' outside the main narrative: the Egeon story in *Errors* and the Sly material in *The Shrew*. The Egeon story has a simple narrative link with the main plot of *Errors*, since Egeon is the father of the twins whose mistakes and adventures constitute the main action, while the Sly story is related to the main plot of *The Shrew* in a more indirect thematic way, particularly in its concern with deception and transformation. Sly's confusion as to which part of his experience is dream and which part is reality comes to a head when he is presented with a 'wife':

Am I a lord, and have I such a lady?
Or do I dream? Or have I dreamed till now? (Induction 2.64–5)

Antipholus of Syracuse undergoes a similar confusion when his twin brother's wife addresses him as her husband:

To me she speaks, she moves me for her theme:
What, was I married to her in my dream?
Or sleep I now and think I hear all this? (2.2.181–3)³

Both men decide to accept the 'dream' since it appears so agreeable, but for Antipholus of Syracuse the experience becomes frightening and nightmarish and a potentially cruel 'awakening' awaits Sly. *Errors* develops the darker side of the mistaken-identity theme which is only hinted at in *The Shrew*, but in both cases the potentially disturbing 'man denied entry' scene discussed above may have suggested these developments.

¹ E. A. J. Honigmann, *Shakespeare's Impact on his Contemporaries*, 1982, pp. 53–90.

² For a fuller discussion of Shakespeare's use of *Supposes* in *The Shrew*, see pp. 9–17 below.

³ Quotations and line references to plays other than *The Shrew* are from Riverside.

Both plays have two contrasted heroines, one of whom in each case is a shrew. Antipholus of Ephesus complains of the shrewish behaviour of his wife Adriana and she is reproved by her sister Luciana, who argues the case for male supremacy and female obedience in terms similar to those used by Katherina (*The Shrew* 5.2.136–79, *Errors* 2.1.10–31). Like Hortensio's Widow in *The Shrew*, Adriana rejects this 'fool-begged patience' but finally confesses her fault when she is severely scolded by the Abbess in the last scene. Mincoff and Morris consider that the reproof of shrewishness in *Errors* represents a moral and artistic advance on that in *The Shrew*, but this seems debatable, since Adriana is publicly humiliated despite the fact that in her husband's behaviour she has far more provocation for her attitude than Katherina. Even if one did accept that *Errors* was more sophisticated in this respect, it seems dubious to use the comparison for dating evidence as Mincoff and Morris do: one might as well argue that the treatment of jealousy in *Othello* is more sophisticated than that in *The Winter's Tale*, so *Othello* must be the later play.

The setting of *The Shrew* in Padua may be a deliberate contrast with the setting of *Errors* in Ephesus since Padua was renowned in the Renaissance as 'a citadel of common sense against the new mythology [of witchcraft]' typically associated with Ephesus.¹ Shakespeare exploits the reputation of Ephesus for superstition and sorcery in *Errors*, while in *The Shrew* there are several suggestions that Katherina is possessed by a 'devil' (the archetypal shrew being 'the devil's dam') and hence that the taming process is a kind of exorcism. Padua was also famous as an ancient university town, so it is appropriate that Lucentio should go there to pursue 'A course of learning and ingenuous studies' (1.1.9). He sees the move as an important part of his education and of his initiation into adult life:

for I have Pisa left
And am to Padua come as he that leaves
A shallow plash to plunge him in the deep. (1.1.21–3)

Petruchio also seems to have 'left home' in a significant sense, as he tells his friend Hortensio that he has been blown from Verona to Padua by

Such wind as scatters young men through the world
To seek their fortunes farther than at home
Where small experience grows. (1.2.47–9)

This theme provides a strong link with *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* where the plot is similarly activated by young men travelling from one part of Italy to another for education and general profit. Valentine departs on his travels with the remark that 'Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits' (1.1.2) and there is some concern that his friend and cousin Proteus is not going to have the same opportunities (1.3.4–16). Of course the chief result of all this educational travel, as in the Roman comedies which again lie behind this motif, is romantic involvement with the women in the new location. As Tranio points out in 1.1 of *The Shrew*, the advanced study of Ovid (meaning the pursuit of amorous adventures) is a major reason for leaving home. The

¹ See H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 1969, pp. 58–61.