

NARRATIVE AND DRAMATIC SOURCES OF SHAKESPEARE

Edited by
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Volume II
THE COMEDIES, 1597-1603



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PREFACE

THIS second volume follows the pattern of the first, providing texts of the major narrative and dramatic pieces (Sources) which most probably influenced Shakespeare in the composition of the plays, and in addition some other passages (Analogues) which, whether he knew them or not, may help us to appreciate his attitudes and methods in the light of other men's treatment of the same or similar themes. The space at my disposal, generous though it is, has affected both the arrangement of the plays and the selection of material. Thus, while following chronologically the order of the comedies written probably between 1597 and 1603, I have omitted *Troilus and Cressida* for the present. There are, however, certain advantages in treating it with other plays on classical themes in Volume IV.

In choosing material I have tried to give not only the well-known sources and analogues but others not easily accessible to students away from the great libraries. Thus, in considering *Measure for Measure* I have included St Augustine's story of the betrayed wife because, although Shakespeare may not have known it, it is one of the earliest sources of the 'monstrous ransom' tale, and it was well known in and before the sixteenth century. I include Whetstone's lengthy play *Promos and Cassandra*, but omit his novella on the same subject. Some scholars may regret this, but in this way I have found room for a summary of Cinthio's debatable *Epitia*, as well as the little-known tale from T. Lupton's *Too Good to be True*, Pt. II, and a relevant section from B. Riche's *The Adventures of Brusanus*.

As before the Introductions are intended, not to list all resemblances and differences between the texts and Shakespeare's plays, but to stimulate students to explore them, and their significance, for themselves, with or without the help of the works specified in the Bibliography, which in this volume refers only to the plays and sources here treated. A long list of useful general works will be found in Volume I.

In the main the original spelling of the editions cited is preserved, but I have normalized or modernized occasionally to avoid ambiguity or obscurity (e.g. printing where desirable

modern 'lest' for the compositor's 'least'; 'heere' for 'heare'; 'ere' or 'e'er' for 'eare'; 'whither' for 'whether'; 'Aye' for 'I'). Similarly the punctuation has occasionally been modernized to avoid a rash of commas or possible misunderstanding (as in *Promos and Cassandra*).

Many of the acknowledgements made in Volume I apply also to this also. In particular I wish to thank the Librarian and Trustees of the Folger Library, Washington, D.C., for permission to use the text of their copy of the 1590 edition of Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*. This copy being incomplete, lacking Sheet R, the gap has been supplied from the unique copy in the Carl H. Pforzheimer Library, and I am grateful to the authorities of that fine collection for permission to print (pp. 248-54) from the facsimile in their catalogue: *The Carl H. Pforzheimer Library: English Literature 1475-1700*, N.Y. 1940, Vol. II, Item 619, pp. 639-41, and Plates, XVIII. The Council of the Malone Society has allowed me to use its reprint of *Fidele and Fortunio, The Two Italian Gentlemen* (1909 and 1933), and I thank the directors of the Newman Press, Westminster, Md., U.S.A. for letting me print from Dr J. J. Jepson's translation of St Augustine's *De Sermonibus Domini in Monte Secundum Matthaeum* (1948). The librarians of the British Museum, of King's College and the Goldsmith's Library, University of London, and of Edinburgh University have made possible much necessary reading and copying. I thank Mr John Crow for the loan of books and photostats; Mr F. M. Guercio for help with obsolete Italian words when translating *Gl'Ingannati*; Miss Rosemary Jackson for her careful typing and ability to read some bad handwriting; and my wife for making the Index.

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

21 April, 1958

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. <i>Shakespeare's Works and Apocrypha</i>		<i>R2</i>	<i>King Richard the Second</i>
		<i>R3</i>	<i>King Richard the Third</i>
		<i>RJ</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>Ado</i>	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Sonnets</i>
<i>AFev</i>	<i>Arden of Feversham</i>	<i>TA</i>	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
<i>AShrew</i>	<i>The Taming of A Shrew</i>	<i>Tem</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>
<i>ATL</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>TGV</i>	<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
<i>CE</i>	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Tim</i>	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
<i>Cor</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>Cym</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>TrC</i>	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
<i>Ham</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>TSh</i>	<i>The Taming of The Shrew</i>
<i>1H4</i>	<i>Henry the Fourth, Part I</i>	<i>VA</i>	<i>Venus and Adonis</i>
<i>2H4</i>	<i>Henry the Fourth, Part II</i>	<i>WT</i>	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
<i>H5</i>	<i>Henry the Fifth</i>	2. <i>Modern Editions and Criticism</i>	
<i>1H6</i>	<i>Henry the Sixth, Part I</i>	<i>Arden</i>	<i>The Arden Shakespeare, 1889-1944</i>
<i>2H6</i>	<i>Henry the Sixth, Part II</i>	<i>Boas</i>	<i>The Taming of A Shrew, edited F. S. Boas</i>
<i>3H6</i>	<i>Henry the Sixth, Part III</i>	<i>Camb</i>	<i>The New Cambridge edition of Shakespeare, edited J. Dover Wilson, A. Quiller-Couch, &c.</i>
<i>H8</i>	<i>Henry the Eighth</i>	<i>Coll</i>	<i>Shakespeare's Library, edited J. Payne Collier, 2 vols.</i>
<i>KJ</i>	<i>King John</i>	<i>ELH</i>	<i>English Literary History (Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C.)</i>
<i>LComp</i>	<i>Lover's Complaint</i>	<i>ELSt</i>	<i>E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, 4 vols.</i>
<i>Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>EngSt</i>	<i>Englische Studien</i>
<i>LLL</i>	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>		
<i>Luc</i>	<i>The Rape of Lucrece</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>More</i>	<i>Sir Thomas More</i>		
<i>MV</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>		
<i>MWW</i>	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>		
<i>NobKin</i>	<i>Two Noble Kinsmen</i>		
<i>Oth</i>	<i>Othello</i>		
<i>Per</i>	<i>Pericles</i>		
<i>PhT</i>	<i>The Phoenix and the Turtle</i>		
<i>PPil</i>	<i>The Passionate Pilgrim</i>		

<i>MedSt</i>	E. K. Chambers, <i>The Medieval Stage</i> , 2 vols.	<i>SAB</i>	<i>Shakespeare Association Bulletin</i> (U.S.A.)
<i>WSh</i>	E. K. Chambers, <i>William Shakespeare</i> , 2 vols.	<i>ShJb</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft</i>
<i>5ActS</i>	T. W. Baldwin, <i>Shakespeare's Five-Act Structure</i>	<i>ShLib</i>	<i>Shakespeare's Library</i> , 6 vols. 2nd Edn. 1875, edited J. P. Collier and W. C. Hazlitt. (Also Collier-Hazlitt)
<i>Genetics</i>	T. W. Baldwin, <i>On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Poems and Sonnets</i>	<i>SPhil</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i> (U. of N. Carolina)
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>The Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>	<i>ShQ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
<i>Jest Books</i>	<i>Shakespeare Jest Books</i> , edited W. C. Hazlitt	<i>Sh.Soc. Trans.</i>	<i>Transactions of the (New) Shakespeare Society</i>
<i>Lee</i>	Sir Sidney Lee, <i>Life of Shakespeare</i>	<i>Texas</i>	<i>University of Texas Studies in English</i>
<i>MalSoc</i>	Malone Society Reprints	<i>TLS</i>	<i>The Times Literary Supplement</i> (London)
<i>MLR</i>	<i>The Modern Language Review</i>	<i>Var.</i>	<i>The New Variorum edition</i> , ed. H. H. Furness, &c.
<i>MPhil</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>	3. Other Abbreviations	
<i>New Arden</i>	The Arden Edition of Shakespeare, re-edited 1950?—	<i>Arg</i>	Argument
<i>N & Q</i>	<i>Notes & Queries</i>	<i>Chor</i>	Chorus
<i>Oxf.</i>	The Oxford Edition of Shakespeare, text by W. J. Craig; Introductory Studies by E. Dowden	<i>Prol</i>	Prologue
<i>PhilQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>	<i>Rev.</i>	Review
<i>PMLA</i>	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America	<i>F</i>	Folio edition
<i>RES</i>	<i>The Review of English Studies</i>	<i>Q</i>	Quarto edition
		<i>n.d.</i>	No date
		<i>S.R.</i>	The Stationer's Register
		<i>STC</i>	<i>A Short-Title Catalogue of Books printed ... 1475-1640</i> (1950)

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THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

1—S.N.D.2

INTRODUCTION

THIS PLAY presents many problems of dating and provenance. There was a tradition at the beginning of the eighteenth century that it was composed specially to please the Queen. John Dennis in the dedicatory epistle to his 'improvement' of the play wrote:

'This comedy was written at her command, and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it acted, that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterwards, as tradition tells, very well pleased at the representation.' (1702)

Soon afterwards Charles Gildon declared in his *Remarks on the Plays of Shakespeare* (1710):

'The fairies in the fifth act make a handsome compliment to the Queen, in her palace of Windsor, who had obliged him to write a play of Sir John Falstaff in love, and which I am very well assured he performed in a fortnight; a prodigious thing, when all is so well contrived, and carried on without the least confusion.'

The tradition may be true, but it tells us little except that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was not the first Falstaff play. The events narrated must come between *Henry IV*, Pt. 2 and *Henry V*, for in the latter play Falstaff dies and Pistol is married to Mrs Quickly. Sir E. K. Chambers thought that it was written in 1600 or 1601 for performance at Windsor (*WSH* I.434) where the choirboys could be fairies, and that the Queen asked for it after Shakespeare had made so little of Sir John in *Henry V* (1598/9). The intuitive researches of J. L. Hotson have shown that the play was perhaps written for the Garter festivities in April/May 1597¹ when the Lord Chamberlain, Hunsdon, was himself made a member of the Order. Hotson further argues

¹ J. L. Hotson, *Shakespeare versus Shallow*, London, 1931, pp. 111-31.

that it was 'acted on 23 April before the Queen at Westminster, on the occasion of the Garter election and feast', and not at Windsor a month later. It was entered in S.R. 18 January, 1602 to Arthur Johnson by assignment from John Busbye, and in the same year a Quarto was printed by T(homas) C(reede) for Arthur Johnson. This is a 'bad' Quarto, a 'garbled and corrupt' text, though many of its divergences from the First Folio are significant. Another appeared in 1619. Neither Q1 nor F1 makes a satisfactory play, but they supplement each other. J. D. Wilson (*Camb*) argues brilliantly 'that the Folio text derives from a play written by Shakespeare (with help, perhaps, from others) under royal command, in 1598 or thereabouts; that this play was improvised (almost) upon a pre-existent "jealous comedy" of middle class London life, of date about 1593, and having a high-falutin Euphuistic lover for its victim; that Shakespeare worked the transformation, but that his hand tired . . .' (*ibid.*, xxvi). This raises the 'ghost-play'-source in an aggravating form which has led K. Muir (*Shakespeare's Sources*, I) to assert that 'in the present state of our knowledge it is useless to pursue the matter further'. A *Jealous Comedy* was played by Alleyn's men in 1593, but since nothing else is known, nothing can be built on it. Shakespeare might well have written a play of middle-class married life soon after *The Taming of the Shrew*, the tone of which is not unlike that of *The Merry Wives*. But it seems unnecessary to postulate an earlier play. In the circumstances it is worth while to present here some of the analogues to the Q and F texts, and to treat them as possible Shakespearian sources.

In the play as we have it the main elements, apart from those connecting it with the other Falstaff plays, are:

- (a) the tricking of Falstaff;
- (b) the wooing of Anne Page;
- (c) the horse-stealing episodes;
- (d) the 'fairy' scene.

THE TRICKING OF FALSTAFF

Medieval story included many tales of gallants who, seeking to seduce other men's wives, were interrupted and hidden in strange places. Usually such tales fall into two classes: (i) those

where the gallant is welcome and his misadventures lead to his success, the fun being mainly at the husband's expense; (ii) those where the suitor is unwelcome and the wife makes him ridiculous and uncomfortable.¹ Examples of the first kind in Boccaccio's *Decameron* are, Day VII.2, where the lover is hidden in a tub and the husband is finally made to clean it; VII.1, where an untimely lover is exorcized as an evil spirit; VII.7, where the husband disguises himself as his wife and is beaten by her lover disguised as a servant. Examples of the second kind are, Day VIII.7, where a foolish scholar is locked in the courtyard all night in the snow; Day IX.1, where a woman gets rid of two unwanted suitors by making one of them go and lie in a new grave and the other go and fetch his 'dead' body in a sack.

A very relevant example of the 'duped husband' story is that in Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone*, Day 1, Novella 2, of which a translation is given later [Text I]. In this a student learns at his professor's expense by falling in love with the wife of the man who instructs him in the art of love. Much of the comedy arises because the student informs his mentor of every stage in his amorous progress, and when the professor becomes suspicious and tries to catch him the young man always goes back next day and explains how he escaped. The crowning irony is that he does not know whom he has been cuckolding till too late, when his benefactor has been accused of insanity. Usually in such stories there are three adventures. In this the lover is first hidden under a pile of newly washed linen (*panni di bucato*), and adultery takes place afterwards; next the wife holds the husband fast at the door while her lover escapes; and finally the student comes with other students to visit the sick man, only to discover the truth. No English translation of this excellent tale is extant before the abridged version in an anonymous collection, *The Fortunate, the Deceived, and the Unfortunate Lovers*,² (1632).

¹ The title of the 'jealous comedy' (above) suggests that the comedy would be mainly directed against the jealous person. It would be a 'duped husband' rather than a 'duped suitor' play, and the part of Ford would be very different from what we find in *MWW*. If Shakespeare worked over such a piece he greatly changed the emphasis. The Cambridge editors' discussion of the possible old play does not include this point (cf. *Camb. po.* xxii-xxiii).

² A brief version of Ser Giovanni's tale occurs in the *Rime del Burchiello*, ed. F. Doni (1553); a longer one in *Le Giornate de Novizi* by Pietro Fortini, not printed

A similar story occurs in *Le Piacevoli Notti* (IV.4) of G. F. Straparola (published 1550-3; translated into French 1560-3). Prince Nerino of Portugal, visiting Italy, thinks his own mother the most beautiful woman in the world until the eminent physician Raimundo Brunello boasts that he knows one more lovely and shows his wife to Nerino without saying who she is. Nerino pursues her and finally gets admission to the house. When her husband enters she hides Nerino in the bed, and Raimundo suspects nothing until Nerino tells him of it. Next day the youth returns, Raimundo interrupts them full of suspicion, and she hides Nerino in 'a chest, before which she placed a quantity of clothes'. Raimundo fails to find Nerino and is told why next day. The third time she hides Nerino in 'a large desk which was in her chamber'. The enraged husband, unable to find the intruder, sets fire to the room, and Genobbia saves Nerino by persuading the doctor to have the desk with its valuable documents carried out. Having described his escape to his friend, the youth is invited to a feast in another house where he is asked to tell the story. He does so, not mentioning names, and Genobbia, who is listening outside, manages to warn him by sending in a cup of wine containing a diamond he has given her; whereupon Nerino declares that his adventures were simply a dream. He elopes with Genobbia and the doctor dies of despair.

The 'duped lover' type of story is well illustrated in the first part of Straparola's tale of Filenio Sisterno (Night II, Fable 2). Here the student Filenio makes overtures to three ladies at a ball and writes them a letter. They tell each other and resolve to punish his effrontery. The first, Emerentiana, invites him to her room, then when her husband comes hides the youth under the bed all night, having carefully strewn the floor with thorns; Panthemia lets him undress, then sends him in his shirt into a closet where he falls through the floor into a warehouse whence he has to dig himself out; Sinforosia drugs him and with her maid's help deposits him in the street. Here the tale might end, but like the hero of Boccaccio's Day VIII.7, Filenio determines on revenge. Inviting the women to a feast he makes them strip

till 1888 (*Bibliotechina Grassoccia*, I.122-205). In this latter the hero hides by draping himself over a towel-rail; then in a linen basket; thirdly by hiding behind the door. See R. S. Forsythe, *PhilQ* VII, 1928, 390-8.

naked and get into bed together in a locked room. Then he boasts of his prowess to their husbands, takes them to the room and shows off most of the ladies' charms from the feet upwards, but does not reveal who they are, though the husbands begin to suspect when they see their wives' clothing. The women are hard put to it to prove their alibis, but Filenio does not betray them. This story was translated by Painter in his *Palace of Pleasure* (I.49).

Shakespeare may have known these stories or some variant of them. The hiding of Falstaff in a 'buck basket' is near to Ser Giovanni whose collection he probably used for *The Merchant of Venice*. He certainly knew *Tarltons Newes out of Purgatorie* (1590) a collection posthumously fathered on the famous comedian Richard Tarlton (d. 1588) and narrated by his 'ghost'. It contains references to Robin Goodfellow, the merry pranks of goblins and sprites, and to the doctrine of Purgatory. Thus it has links with *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as well as with *The Merry Wives*. The last of its eleven stories, *The Tale of the Two Lovers of Pisa, and why they were whipt in Purgatorie with Nettles*, is a duped husband story modelled on Straparola's *Nerino of Portugal*. The heroine is a young wife given by her father to a rich old doctor of Physic [Text II].

Also known to the dramatist was the fifth tale in *Riches Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1581), about the wilful wives of two brothers, one kept happy by his Mistress Doritie 'although she cunnyngly armed his hedde with hornes', the other miserably henpecked until he rebelled and treated her like a mad-woman. This second husband Shakespeare recalled when considering how to punish Malvolio (cf. *inf.* p. 283). Mistress Doritie is gay and easy. She is besieged by a doctor of physick who with amusing hypocrisy offers to help her have a child as an act of friendship to her husband and herself. For these medical reasons she accepts him. Then a lawyer pleads in legal terms, so 'as within a verie little space after, he so handeled the matter, that he had entred his action in her common place'. When a soldier comes he wins her from the others, and after correspondence with them during which the doctor writes her an ambiguous letter which punctuated in one way is a series of insults,¹ she gets rid of both men by getting the

¹ Cf. Quince's Prologue in *MND* V.1.108-17.

lawyer to lie in a trunk and the doctor to carry it into the fields, where the soldier beats the doctor and taunts them both [Text III].

The Merry Wives combines elements found in these and similar stories. Straparola's Filenio has the wooing of more than one woman, the writing of a common letter, and the women's agreement to torment the immoral tempter. Filenio is carried out of a house and exposed, though not in a 'container' like Straparola's Nerino and Riche's lawyer. In the medieval romance of Virgilius, based on the treatment of Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, the philosopher is suspended in a basket from an upstairs window. It is unlikely that Shakespeare went deliberately to all these 'sources'; but he was writing consciously in the tradition of the novella when he made Falstaff undergo three ordeals, first in the linen basket, second disguised as Mother Prat, and third as Herne the Hunter in Windsor Park. Some irony is lost by making Ford suspicious from the first and disguise himself as Brook to test his wife, but this enables Falstaff to confide in the husband he proposes to wrong, ensures interruptions and revenge, and also shows the unvirtuous knight as a pandar and cheat.

THE WOOING OF ANNE PAGE

This part of the play may have been prompted by the marriage of convenience at the beginning of the 'Tarlton' story, where Margaret

'was desired of many; but neither might their sutes, nor her owne cie prevaile about her fathers resolution, who was determined not to marry her, but to such a man as should be able in abundance to maintaine the excellence of her beautie. Divers young gentlemen proffered large feoffments, but in vaine. . .'

Page prefers Slender, the rich relation of the influential Justice Shallow. The 'Tarlton' father prefers 'an old Doctor in the town that professed Physic'. This Italian doctor, who appears also in Riche as the first suitor, may have helped in the invention of Dr Caius the French doctor preferred by Mistress Page. Like Shakespeare Riche had three suitors, but in the