SHAKESPEARE AND THE IDEA OF APOCRYPHA

In addition to the thirty-six plays of the First Folio, some eighty plays have been attributed in whole or part to William Shakespeare, yet most are rarely read, performed or discussed. This book, the first to confront the implications of the 'Shakespeare Apocrypha', asks how and why these plays have historically been excluded from the canon. Innovatively combining approaches from book history, theatre history, attribution studies and canon theory, Peter Kirwan unveils the historical assumptions and principles that shaped the construction of the Shakespeare canon. Case studies treat plays such as Sir Thomas More, Edward III, Arden of Faversham, Mucedorus, Double Falsehood and A Yorkshire Tragedy, showing how the plays' contested 'Shakespearean' status has shaped their fortunes. Kirwan's book rethinks the impact of authorial canons on the treatment of anonymous and disputed plays.

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The leaning of sophists towards the bypaths of apocrypha is a constant quantity, John Eglinton detected. The highroads are dreary but they lead to the town.

*James Joyce, Ulysses, 187.*
### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of illustrations</th>
<th>page ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Introduction: the idea of Apocrypha
- Falsehoods: 1
- New directions: 5
- The return of the author: 12

### 1 Canonising the Apocrypha
- The 43-play canon: 1664–1734: 15
- Restoring reputations: 1723–65: 18
- Biography, chronology, Bardolatry: 1760–1844: 28
- Canonising the Apocrypha: 1780–1908: 36
- C.F. Tucker Brooke and the canonising of the Apocrypha: 48

### 2 The Apocrypha in rep
- Prodigal husbands and patient wives: 66
- Absent kings and common voices: 11
- Romance and nostalgia: 11
- Ensemble comedy: 106
- Conclusions: 111

### 3 Defining ‘Shakespeare’
- The Shakespearean corpse: physical traces of Shakespeare: 15
- Sample size, the ‘problem’ of revision and *Locrine*: 119
- Theory ‘versus’ history: 127
- The integration of disintegration: *Edward III* and *Arden of Faversham*: 138
- Conclusions: 146

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## Contents

4 Apocryphising the canon 164  
   The [Bibliographic] Complete Works of Shakespeare 169  
   The [Performative] Complete Works of Shakespeare 189  
   Conclusions 203  

Epilogue: an apocryphal identity 207  
Appendix 215  
Works cited 230  
Index 253
Illustrations

1.1 Frontispiece and title page of the third Shakespeare folio (1664). Reproduced with permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University. [HEW 7.11.3] 19

1.2 Title page of Tyrrell, Henry, ed. The Doubtful Plays of Shakspere (1853?). Reproduced with permission of the Widener Library, Harvard University. 61

2.1 Title page of The London Prodigal (1605). Reproduced with permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University. [STC 22333] 78

2.2 Title page of A Yorkshire Tragedy (1608). Reproduced with permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. 79

3.1 Title page of Locrine (1595). Reproduced with permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. 131
Acknowledgements

As this book argues throughout, the presence of an author’s name on a title page represents but one of the forces that have shaped the text within. My ‘collaborators’ are too numerous to list in full, but I hope I can at least begin to pay proper tribute here to those who may recognise their influence on the finished book.

This book was developed initially alongside my work on the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project at the University of Warwick that generated Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen’s edition William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays (Basingstoke, 2013). I am indebted to Jonathan for his mentorship and support throughout the project, and this book would not have been possible without him. The rest of the team – Eric, Will Sharpe and Jan Sewell – were generous collaborators throughout, and I particularly benefitted from several bracing discussions with Will in the gardens of the Shakespeare Institute. The AHRC provided essential financial support. My teachers during several degrees at Warwick are entirely to blame for any interest I have in Shakespeare, and I’d like to thank Charlotte Scott, Tony Howard, Carol Rutter (who was responsible for introducing me to Sir Thomas More), Paul Prescott and Susan Brock.

Part of Chapter 1 has previously appeared in Philological Quarterly 91.2 (2012), and I am grateful to my editor Adam Hooks and the participants in the Shakespeare Association of America seminar that preceded it for their comments, especially Emma Depledge and Vimala Pasupathi. My work here on Mucedorus and The Merry Devil of Edmonton follows on from chapters published in, respectively, The Elizabethan Top Ten (eds. Andy Kesson and Emma Smith, Farnham, 2013) and Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage (eds. Helen Ostovich and Lisa Hopkins, Farnham, 2014), and I thank my editors and the reviewers of those books for their productive comments. David Carnegie, Gary Taylor, Paul Raffield and Gary Watt gave useful opportunities to trial material that I
revisited in Chapter 4, and I am also grateful to the organisers and audiences of events in Portsmouth, Roehampton, Stratford-upon-Avon, Bristol, London, Boston, Prague, Seattle and Montpellier for allowing me to share ideas at formative stages. I have benefitted from the kindness of several scholars who shared work with me in advance of publication: Ward Elliott, Brean Hammond, Christa Jansohn, John Jowett, Edmund King, Tom Merriam, Richard Proudfoot, Tiffany Stern and Brian Vickers.

Jem Bloomfield, Emma Depledge, Andy Kesson, Lucy Munro, Julie Sanders and Nathan Waddell gave up far too much of their own time reading parts of this book, and I am eternally grateful for their friendship and generosity, while also hoping that the finished version rewards their scrutiny. Laurie Maguire and Jim Davis gave instructive advice on an early version, and the anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press were a model of diligence and supportive rigour, ensuring the book would be as strong as possible. Any remaining errors are, of course, entirely my own. Sarah Stanton saw potential in the book from an early stage and has been patient and supportive throughout the process, and I feel privileged to be part of the long line of scholars indebted to her labours. I would like also to thank Rosemary Crawley and the team at Cambridge University Press for their professionalism and efficiency.

The School of English at the University of Nottingham provided a vibrant and stimulating environment for the final stages of writing, and I’m grateful to my friends and colleagues for their support while completing this book, especially Sarah Davison, Janette Dillon, Sarah Grandage, Josephine Guy, Joe Jackson, Mike Jones, Christina Lee, Jim Moran, Ana Pellicer-Sánchez, Jo Robinson, Nicola Royan, Lucie Sutherland, Abigail Ward and Matt Welton, who make work a pleasure – as well as, of course, several generations of fantastic students.

I am lucky to have been surrounded by a huge number of exceptional people during the years working on this book, whose encouragement and support has had as much impact on the pages that follow as anything in the bibliography. Thanks and love to Cassie Ash, Nicola Boyle, Lia Buddle, Abi Caldwell, Christie Carson (whose invitation to collaborate on a previous book taught me a great deal), Ellie Collins, Tim Connor, Rachele De Felice, Derek Dunne, Kerry Cooke, Kate Harvey, Brett Hirsch, Alice Leonard, Ollie Jones, Sarah Jowett, Fionnuala O’Neill, Maud Perrier, Eoin Price, Krisztina Radi, Kate Rumbold, Ellie Rycroft, Kate Scarth, Maria Shmygol, Erin Sullivan, Sara Thompson (who was right) and Justine Williams. I owe especial debts to Charlotte Mathieson, Deb
xii  

Acknowledgements

Mitra and Yolana Wassersug, without whom this book would never have been written.

Finally, my family has been with me every step of the way, and their love and belief continue to mean everything: Mark, Ruth, Sharon and Isla and my parents Barbara and Paul. This book is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Kath, who passed away while I was completing the final revisions but would have been over the moon to see the finished book.