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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Love's Labour's Lost

The Cambridge Dover Wilson Shakespeare

VOLUME 18

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

EDITED BY JOHN DOVER WILSON



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Cambridge University Press
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William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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BY

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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST



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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION	PAGE vii
INTRODUCTION	xxiv
THE STAGE-HISTORY	lix
TO THE READER	lxii
TITLE-PAGE OF THE QUARTO OF 1598 (Reduced Facsimile)	i
<i>LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST</i>	2
THE COPY FOR <i>LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST</i> , 1598 AND 1623	98
NOTES	136
GLOSSARY	190

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - *Love's Labour's Lost*, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since I edited the text of *Love's Labour's Lost* over thirty-five years ago, taking about two years over it I remember, I have scarcely given it a thought. For a serial editor of Shakespeare, being mortal, has to push on from play to play without looking back or even troubling much about his critics if he is to have any hope of getting through the canon. True, I imagined, as did the publishers, at the outset of the journey that it would not take more than ten or a dozen years, but I very soon came to realize the folly of that estimate. Nevertheless, thanks chiefly to good doctors, the long road has been traversed and the end is in sight: I shall never have to edit another play from the beginning. I can, therefore, turn back at last and reconsider some of the texts edited in salad days.

As almost all the important advances in Shakespearian research, textual and exegetic, have been made from 1930 onwards I am surprised to find how little in the first edition of *Love's Labour's Lost*, published in 1923, is out of date in 1960. I cannot hope for a like good fortune when I pass on to look at other plays edited in the twenties, and in this one, of course, a good deal of addition and excision has been needed. A brief account of those changes will be found in the following paragraphs.

I. *The Text*

In the purely English portion I have ventured to introduce about half a dozen fresh emendations, most of them readings or conjectures taken from previous

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

editors. Otherwise the text below is virtually that of the first edition, with two important exceptions:

(a) The punctuation has been revised throughout, chiefly in order to rid the page of an ugly and, as I long ago came to realize, misguided notation by means of dots and dashes intended to represent a conjectured dramatic punctuation in the original manuscript. For these the traditional commas, semi-colons, colons, and full stops are now substituted.

(b) The Latin of Holofernes and his associates has been regularized,¹ inasmuch as I have now reached the conclusion that the quarto's distortion of familiar tags from Lyly's grammar, the colloquies of Erasmus, etc. with which Shakespeare interlards their talk is far more likely to have originated in the printing office than to have been deliberately intended by the dramatist as a rather clumsy and often obscure device of heaping additional ridicule upon pedants already exceedingly funny without it. Only some half a dozen solecisms are in question, and every one can be explained either as an ordinary compositor's slip or as a simple misreading often stroke for stroke of the correct Latin form as written in the secretary hand. They are indeed best considered in the light of other misprints in the Latin, the correction of which by later folios or by Rowe are now accepted by all without question. Here are a few of the latter together with their corrections: Dictisima (Q), Dictynna (Rowe); dictinna (Q), dictynna (Rowe); primater (Q), pia mater (Rowe); vir sapis (Q), vir sapit (F 2); hominum (Q), hominem (F 3); gaudio (Q), gaudeo (F 3); puericia (Q), pueritia (F 2). Clearly the compositor and press-reader knew little or no Latin, or perhaps he knew that little which might prove even

¹ The first stimulus in this direction came from the illuminating pages on Holofernes in J. A. K. Thomson's *Shakespeare and the Classics* (1952).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

ix

more dangerous than none. The queer 'Dictisima', for example, looks like the superlative of some imagined adjective.

Consider further the following scrap of dialogue in Q which is acknowledged to be thoroughly corrupt by all (5. 1. 24–9):

(*Peda.*) ...it insinuateth me of infamie: *ne intelligis domine*, to make frantique lunatique?

Curat. *Laus deo, bene intelligo.*

Peda. Bome boon for boon prescian, a little scratcht, twil serue.

For this gibberish Alexander and Sisson, following Theobald, give us:

(*Hol.*) ...it insinuateth me of insanie: *ne intelligis, domine?* to make frantic, lunatic

Nath. *Laus Deo, bone intelligo.*

Hol. 'Bone'?—'bone' for 'bene'. Priscian a little scratch'd: twill serve.

Theobald was clearly right to emend 'infamie' since Holofernes is speaking of madness not infamy; but though 'infamie' is a very easy minim misreading of 'insanie', in view of the following, Q misprints of English words for example: Epithat' for 'epithet'; 'cennot' for 'cannot'; 'estetes' for 'estates', I see no reason why 'infamie' should not be similarly a misprint of the Latin 'insania' which would well accord with the pedant's diction elsewhere. As for 'ne intelligis' which Johnson wished to read 'anne intelligis' to make good Latin out of it, this I take to be a simple case of compositor's inversion, since, as Thomson observed, 'intelligisne domine' would give us 'what is by far the most probable form of the question in Latin'.¹ Inversion again will explain the first words that fall from Holofernes' lips which have perplexed everyone. 'The Deare was (as you know),' he tells the Curate,

¹ Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 71.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

according to Q, 'sanguis in blood'. If, however, he says 'in *sanguis*, blood' he speaks dictionary-wise as he does when later in the same speech he says 'and anon falleth like a crab on the face of *terra*, the soil, the land, the earth', or as I think he does also in 'hangeth like a jewel in the ear of *caelum*, the sky, the welkin, the heaven'; for Greg is probably right in conjecturing that 'caelo' (Q 'Celo') is a misreading of 'celū'. And if that be granted the only serious crux left in the Latin is the first word of the quotation from Mantuan which the Q prints as 'Facile' when it ought to be 'Fauste'. Why in 1923 I wrote that this error could hardly have originated with a compositor I cannot now imagine. Certainly, having edited thirty or more plays in the meantime, I should regard it today as a very obvious example of misreading: *u* read as *ci* and *st* as *//* and set up as *l*. If, on the other hand, we suppose these errors are not compositorial, but intended as blunders on Holofernes' part, they make pretty poor fun. One cannot believe that some of them would have been intelligible or that any could have brought even a smile to the lips of a scholar, however 'judicious', in Shakespeare's audience.

But, it may be objected, Shakespeare certainly makes Holofernes blunder once elsewhere; since he hums the hexachord in the wrong order, as Nathaniel reads Jaquenetta's letter.¹ If so, such an elementary aberration would have been instantly detected and laughed at by most of the spectators in that musical age, and it may be that Shakespeare wished to demonstrate that a pedant with his spirits 'prisoned in the arteries' by 'leaden contemplation' could have no music in his soul. I leave the text, therefore, as the Q has it, though I suspect that here too the compositor may be responsible. He often omitted words elsewhere and at times after discovering the omission inserted them at the wrong point. If then

¹ 4. 2. 104

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

xi

he overlooked 'sol, la' as he first set the type, he may well have himself got the hexachord in the wrong order when he came to correct the forme.

II. *Topical Allusion*¹

That this play, which did for the nineties of the sixteenth century something that Gilbert's *Patience* did for the nineties of the nineteenth, bristles with topical allusions has long been recognized; and the determined effort by Q and myself in the Introduction of 1923 reprinted below to bring the matter to a head, following a trail laid by Arthur Acheson twenty years earlier, has been followed in turn by a number of later critics. Of these the most notable seem to be:

(1) O. J. Campbell, whose article entitled '*Love's Labour's Lost* restudied' in *Studies in Shakespeare, Milton and Donne* (Macmillan Company, 1925), was written independently of our introduction;

(2) Frances Yates, *A Study of 'Love's Labour's Lost'*, (Shakespeare Problems Series, 1936);

(3) Muriel Bradbrook, *The School of Night* (1936);

(4) Richard David: an edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* (New Arden Shakespeare, 1951);

(5) Ernest A. Strathmann, *Sir Walter Raleigh* (Columbia University Press, 1951);

(6) J. A. K. Thomson: sections on '*Love's Labour's Lost*' (pp. 66-77) and Chapman (pp. 183-76) in *Shakespeare and the Classics* (1952);

(7) W. Schrickx, *Shakespeare's Early Contemporaries: the Background of the Harvey-Nashe Polemic, and 'Love's Labour's Lost'*, (Antwerp, 1956);

(8) Walter Oakeshott, *The Queen and the Poet* (1960). Ch. iv *Raleigh and 'Love's Labour's Lost'* is especially valuable, but reached me too late for full use.

¹ The reader will do well to study vi-xi of the introduction before continuing

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - *Love's Labour's Lost*, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

Certainties are hardly to be looked for in this field, but each of these writers has either added to the possibilities or rendered some possibilities more probable. On the other hand, nothing so far advanced seems to run seriously counter to what was set forth thirty-three years ago in §§ VI–XI of our original Introduction or §§ C and D of the Note on the Copy, which may, therefore, be allowed to stand when supplemented by the modifications and suggestions to be now noted.

Professor Campbell, for instance, made a new and important point when he observed that the characters in the underworld of *Love's Labour's Lost* were closely modelled upon the stock figures in the *commedia dell'arte*, figures familiar at that date upon every stage in Europe. Armado and Moth, Holofernes and Nathaniel, Costard and Jaquenetta would, therefore, have been accepted directly they entered as representing the traditional Braggart, Zany, Pedant, Parasite and Clowns (male and female). This enabled Shakespeare to give each or any of them speech or action that might suggest persons recognizable by the audience (or even different persons at different times) without necessarily incurring the risk of being charged with deliberately lampooning or caricaturing any one in particular. Moreover, as J. A. K. Thomson has well said, 'the portraits of a great artist are never mere caricatures, and for this reason, that a mere caricature is not a living man or woman. What the great creators do is to invent a living character, and then endow him with the more striking idiosyncrasies of the person satirized'.¹ And, above all, Shakespeare is jesting throughout; poking fun, not attacking:² his aim especially in the sub-plot is to keep his audience (a select one) in fits of laughter, tickle o' th' sere for anything he offers them; to excite hilarity, not hostility. Oscar Wilde no doubt

¹ Thomson *op. cit.* p. 66.

² Cf. Bradbrook *op. cit.* p. 154.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

xiii

laughed with the rest at Bunthorne; and if he had enough humour, Raleigh might equally have laughed at Armado, except perhaps when Costard interrupts him at 5. 2. 670.

This being so, there will be little or nothing about Raleigh's notorious 'school of atheism' for though Parsons' libel may have suggested the reference to 'the school of night' at 4. 3. 251, that was undoubtedly more directly inspired by Chapman's *Shadow of Night*. The audience, however, being it may be assumed, of the Essex party, would be familiar with Parsons' words and with rumours of the charges brought against Raleigh at Cerne Abbas. And it looks as if Shakespeare may have availed himself of this knowledge at two points. But the allusions were so distant, if intended, and so amusing, if taken, as to be entirely devoid of malice.¹ It follows, too, I think, that though Chapman was probably the rival poet of the *Sonnets* and the relations between him and Shakespeare can hardly have been cordial, and though his *Shadow of Night* probably suggested the groundwork of the whole play, he is never brought on to the stage in caricature. Shakespeare indeed was surely not the man to start a poetomachia. He had not even replied to Greene's outrageous attack of the year-before except by a private and 'civil' expostulation with the editor of the pamphlet.² Anyhow I feel confident that, if only on the principle that dog does not eat dog, there is no personal caricature of fellow poets in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Marlowe of course by '1593 was a 'dead shepherd', but there were other poets more or less associated with Raleigh and his circle; Matthew Royden for example, and Edmund Spenser. How easily the latter might have been made game of, had the dramatist wished! But one has only to voice the possibility to see that such a wish was out of the question. True, Moth I do not

¹ See p. xiv, 5. 1. 45-6 and note 5. 2. 522.

² See p. 61 in *Shakespeare Survey*, 4 (1951).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - *Love's Labour's Lost*, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

doubt,¹ was intended to suggest 'young Juvenal, that biting satirist' Thomas Nashe. But Nashe hardly ranked as a poet and the portrait is rather complimentary than otherwise. Had the original recognized it on the stage he might have felt flattered. For he is represented as an ally, his function being to provide fresh occasions for laughter at the two principal butts, Armado and Holofernes.

That Armado was intended to suggest Raleigh it is not necessary at this stage to argue further, since most of those who find any topicality in the play at all would now accept it as likely. Certainly the two critics who have devoted most study to him, Miss Bradbrook and Dr Oakeshott, have no doubt about it.² They agree also in pointing out that the select audience would almost certainly have been aware before the play opened that Raleigh was somehow to figure in it, so that when the king in the first scene describes Armado before he appears as

a refinéd traveller of Spain—
A man in all the world's new fashion planted,
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain:
One who the music of his own vain tongue
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony

and so on, concluding

How you delight, my lords, I know not, I,
But I protest I love to hear him lie,

Shakespeare was telling them what to expect, namely 'the dandy and planter of Virginia, spinner of travellers'

¹ see below pp. xxxviii–xlii.

² It is true that Professor Strathmann is sceptical, but his interesting book is rather a treatise on freedom of thought under Elizabeth than a study of Raleigh himself. Its value for students of *Love's Labour's Lost* is that it shows the 'school of atheism' canard to have been much overstressed by critics.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

xv

tales', whose poem 'The Lie' must have been known to all.¹ To make him a Spaniard and call him Armado four or five years after he had helped to defeat the Armada of Philip II were excellent strokes, and others later in the play which the audience would be likely equally to appreciate are recorded in the notes. But the point which to my mind fixes Armado's cap most firmly upon Raleigh's head is the identity of the other 'arts-man' Holofernes.

Miss Yates has argued that in Holofernes, the school-master who enters talking like a dictionary and who quotes an Italian tag which John Florio had quoted in print, Southampton may well have been intended to see a reflexion of his Italian tutor, the said Florio. This suggestion, first made by Warburton, was brushed aside by Malone who pointed out that the young earl would hardly have relished this lampooning of his Italian teacher.² Miss Yates shows, however, that Florio was an Italian Protestant imposed by Burghley, Southampton's official guardian, upon a Catholic household, and therefore hardly *persona grata*, so that a jest at his expense, so far from being resented, would be more likely to have provided welcome entertainment.³ Yet Holofernes, as Malone first noted, gets his name from Rabelais, where he acts tutor to Gargantua—not in Italian, but in Latin and particularly in mathematics. So that by equating Holofernes with Florio Shakespeare would have been suggesting that Southampton was a Gargantua. Is the young patron likely to have relished *that*? I think not.

Raleigh, on the other hand, was to Englishmen of the nineties an obvious Gargantua, being an obscure Devonshire squire who within a few months after his arrival

¹ Cf. Bradbrook, *op. cit.* pp. 154 f., and Oakeshott, *op. cit.* p. 107.

² Boswell's *Malone*, IV, 482.

³ Yates, *op. cit.* p. 28.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

at court in 1582 had grown so great that the noblest in the land cowered beneath his insolent eyes. And behind Raleigh stood an obvious Holofernes, his mathematical tutor Thomas Harriot, one of the leading astronomers of the age. The Introduction of 1923 did not allow scope to develop the thesis that Harriot was Shakespeare's chief target when he put Holofernes on the stage. But my belief in it has grown stronger in the interval. For Harriot the friend of Chapman and Roydon, and probably of Marlowe, who was vulgarly reputed to be a 'conjurer' and the Master of 'Sir Walter Rawley's school of Atheism', forms a natural link between the 'great sophister-doctor, Master Tubal Holofernes' in Rabelais, and his namesake in *Love's Labour's Lost*. The Holofernes of the French classic teaches his pupil, among other things, 'the comport¹ for knowing the age of the moon, the seasons of the year, and the tides of the sea';² Harriot instructed his Gargantua in mathematics and astronomy because they were the key to navigation; and Shakespeare's pedant is ludicrously connected with astronomy by his readiness in solving the riddle about the age of the moon,³ while his description of his own genius as 'full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions'⁴ would gain point if the 'spirit' he speaks of were that of a mathematician. Further, it is noteworthy that all three are described as teaching their pupils to spell backwards,⁵ which in Harriot's case glances at Parsons' accusation that in Raleigh's school of atheism 'the conjurer that is Master thereof' taught his scholars 'to spell God backward'.

¹ 'A calendar or computation of astronomical data', O.E.D.

² Rabelais (Urquhart's trans.), Bk. I, ch. IV.

³ 4. 2. 34 ff.

⁴ 4. 2. 73 ff.

⁵ Rabelais, *op. cit.*; *L.L.L.* 5. 1. 46; Parsons cited in Bradbrook, *op. cit.* p. 12.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

xvii

But what finally convinced me that Shakespeare had Harriot in mind was what I had already found in 1922 as I turned over the pages of his mathematical papers in the British Museum. There are eight volumes of them, consisting mostly of arithmetical and geometrical (probably astronomical) calculations. Here and there however are to be found pieces of doggerel verse, one of which runs as follows:

If more by more must needs make more
Then lesse by more makes lesse of more
And lesse by lesse makes lesse of lesse
If more be more and lesse be lesse.

Yet lesse of lesse makes lesse or more
Use which is best keep best in store
If lesse of lesse thou wilt make lesse
Then bate the same from that is lesse

But if the same thou wilt make more
Then adde to it the signe of more
The sign of more is best to use
Except some cause the other choose

For both are one, for both are true,
Of this inough, and so adew.¹

That this, evidently a riddle on Plus and Minus, is of Harriot's own composition is suggested by the alterations and interlineations in the manuscript, while the occurrence of a somewhat different version (dated, it may be noted, 23 November 1598), in a later volume of the papers² suggests that he rather fancied himself as the author of this 'more or lesse' jingle. And can it be doubted that it had come Shakespeare's way or that he had it in mind when he composed Holofernes' octosyllabic epitaph on the 'pretty pleasing pricket'? Listen in particular to these lines:

¹ Add. MSS. 6784, fo. 321 verso.

² Add. MSS. 6785, fo. 384 verso.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

Some say a sore, but not a sore
Till now made sore with shooting

· · · · ·
If sore be sore, then L to sore
Makes fifty sores o' sorel:
Of one sore I an hundred make
By adding but one more L

Are they not exactly what Harriot might be expected to write, if required to apply his muse to the chase? He had only to harp upon 'sore' instead of 'more' and the trick was done. It will be noticed too that the parody is scarcely less mathematical than the original.

Finally—and this seems to me to place the Harriot-reflexion beyond all reasonable doubt—both Holofernes and Harriot had a parson follower, disciple or parasite, called Nathaniel. One of the letters preserved among Harriot's papers congratulates him on his 'deserved good fortunes', is signed 'y^{rs} ever in true fidelitie, Nath Torporley', and is addressed 'To my very good frende Mr Thomas Hariots at Durhā House', which as Durham House was Raleigh's town residence would seem to imply that Harriot had recently been accepted as his instructor and gone to live there, while it fixes the date as some time before Raleigh's fall from power and imprisonment in 1592. Moreover, it was written from Paris where the writer was acting as secretary to the celebrated French mathematician François Viète, and whence he returned to England in 1591 and soon after became like Harriot himself a pensioner of the 'wizard' Earl of Northumberland, another member of the School of Night: both mathematicians being given quarters apparently at Sion House, Isleworth, where the earl himself resided.¹ And if as seems more than probable

¹ For Torporley see Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, I, 566. Cf. David, *op. cit.* (Introduction, p. xlvi), who accepts Harriot's reflexion in Holofernes.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E

xix

Harriot gave lessons at *Ston* House to young men wishing for instruction in mathematics, is not this one explanation of the reference to Holofernes educating 'youth at the charge-house on the top of the mountain'?¹

So much for the underworld of the play, which has tended to receive a disproportionate share of critical attention, and to have set up, by attraction so to speak, distorted notions of the main plot. Ferdinand the king of Navarre and his three companions may have been intended, as some have thought, to suggest (very distantly) Ferdinando Stanley, Earl of Derby and King of Man, and the earls of Essex, Southampton and Rutland, all three young men in 1593 and hostile to Raleigh. And as the formation of stoical and platonic academies was a fashion in courtly circles at this date, a fashion set by Ficino at Florence in the mid-fifteenth century,² it is quite possible that this group of Elizabeth's courtiers had for a time toyed with the idea of establishing such 'a little academe'. On the other hand there is no need to suppose any such thing, or even to suppose that the Raleigh circle had actually constituted itself into any formal association called, or aptly described, as the School of Night. The whole business may very well have been the creation of Shakespeare's fertile brain. Chapman's *Shadow of Night*, its pompous absurdities and the fact that some of its ideas were known by the Southampton circle to be shared by Harriot, if not by Raleigh himself, would have been enough to set that comic imagination awork. Stanley, whom Chapman mentions (in a dedicatory epistle to Roydon) with 'deep-searching Northumberland', and Sir George Carey, as 'profitably entertaining learning—to the vital warmth of

¹ Cf. 5. 1. 79.

² See Frances Yates's admirable monograph on *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (1947), and Schrickx, *op. cit.* ch. 1.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xx LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

freezing science' (i.e. subsidizing poor scholars), may indeed have discussed Chapman's midnight-oil philosophy with the others and Southampton may have been for a time attracted by it, a hypothesis which would fit in with the reference in the *Sonnets* to the rival poet. But this is to beat the air. It is enough to realize that it was the age of such 'academic' coteries and that Shakespeare made glorious fun of them in the play that follows.

III. '*The Copy for "Love's Labour's Lost",
1598*'

This section, like the Introduction, is left as it was in 1923, except for sub-section A and one or two trivial alterations elsewhere. Not that the remainder if drafted today would not be cut down, rearranged and expressed less confidently. But they retain a certain interest as a specimen of textual exploration thirty-five years ago and the main thesis, though later contested by eminent authorities, has never been disproved and has indeed been revived and developed by Mr David in his New Arden edition. The only section I felt obliged to revise was the first, which is based upon the idea, generally accepted by scholars in the twenties, that author's manuscript and theatrical prompt-book were often if not generally identical, an idea first shown by McKerrow to be mistaken in a couple of articles published in 1931 and 1935.¹ At the same time it should not be forgotten that a prompter may leave jottings in the author's draft as he reads it through in preparation for the construction of his own 'book', a possibility also not recognized in 1923.²

As for the variants between Q and F it is now clear that the explanation Professor Charlton furnished in

¹ See my account of this in *Shakespeare Survey*, 11 (1958), pp. 83-7.

² See Greg, *Editorial Problem* (1942), pp. 124-5.

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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

xxi

1917 was all along the correct one. Even the most striking of them, the addition at the end of the play of the words 'You that way, we this way' is now accounted for as a Folio 'editor's desperate attempt to fit the final words of Q into the structure of the play'.¹

Section B which was inspired by Pollard's work on *Richard II* represents my first serious attempt to get to grips with the compositors of Shakespeare's texts, and was followed up ten years later by the more elaborate study of the printing of the Second Quarto of *Hamlet*. Much has been written of late years upon Shakespeare's compositors, mainly in reference to the First Folio. But I do not know that anything has yet appeared which renders the little essay of 1923 out of date.

Sections C and D, an attempt to relate the bibliographical anomalies of the Quarto to the copy, that is Shakespeare's manuscript, and to extract therefrom some clue as to the date or dates when the play was produced, have fared worse at the hands of critics. The facts, then fully elucidated for the first time, have not been questioned. But whereas to me they seemed best explained on the assumption of a play first drafted, probably for a private performance, round about 1593 and 1594, and later revised for the court performance at Christmas 1597 mentioned on the quarto title-page, Chambers could see no reason to suppose such a revision. He

¹ Greg, *Shakespeare's First Folio* (1955). He adds in a footnote 'On the strength of this [addition] Wilson makes the surprising suggestion that F was printed from a copy of Q that had been used as a prompt book: it is, of course, inconceivable'. It is inconceivable now, but was it, even to Greg, in 1923? Certainly Chambers as late as 1930 was attributing to a prompter the occurrence of actor-names in quarto and folio texts now known to be printed from Shakespeare's foul papers. See his *William Shakespeare*, I, p. 237.

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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxii LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

declared, for example, that the cancelled passages, etc., which I regarded as evidence for it 'can be just as well interpreted as false starts at the time of the original writing', a view with which Greg agreed.¹ Furthermore, the argument I brought forward from 'confused and inconsistent speech-headings' has been weakened by the second of McKerrow's articles above mentioned, which established such irregularity as normal in Shakespearian drafts. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that they are unusually prevalent in the *Love's Labour's Lost* of 1598 or that their presence is just what one would expect in a drastically revised text. Moreover, whereas Chambers puts the date at 1595, he admits that most of the numerous topical and literary allusions point to 1593-4 if not earlier, while it has since been discovered that the cuckoo-song in 5. 2 could not have been written before the appearance of Gerard's *Herbal*, which was entered in the Stationer's Register on 6 June 1597.² Clearly the last word in favour of revision has not yet been heard. Fortunately the problem, whatever be the solution finally accepted, has little or no bearing upon the task of an editor. What matters to him are the textual facts and they are not in dispute.

Section E repeats the 'Note on the Folio Text' in the first edition.

IV. *Notes and Glossary*

Both these have been revised and the Glossary considerably enlarged, my special thanks as regards textual points in the former being due to the ever generous Mr Maxwell and as regards the latter to Mr David

¹ Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, I, 333; Greg, *Editorial Problem*, p. 127; and *The Shakespeare First Folio*, p. 222.

² See note on 5. 2. 890-907.

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978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

xxiii

whose store of exegetic notes in the New Arden edition I have freely plundered.

A good deal of the theorizing about the details of revision which appeared in 1923 have been removed from the Notes, not necessarily because I now consider it incorrect or far fetched, though some of it may be, but because it took up a disproportionate amount of space and was at best highly speculative in character.

J.D.W.

1960

Postscript. As this goes to press there reaches me *Shakespeare's Rival* by Mr Robert Gittings who seeks to shift the problem on to an entirely new basis by claiming Armado as a caricature of (a) Antonio Perez, (b) Gervase Markham, and the latter as the rival poet of the *Sonnets*. It was, I think, unfortunate for him that his book appeared almost simultaneously with Dr Oakeshott's *The Queen and the Poet*, the most important treatment of the subject yet published.

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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

I

Critics have dealt harshly with *Love's Labour's Lost*, and commentators—it may be for that reason—neglectfully. ‘In this play,’ says Johnson, ‘which all the editors have concurred to censure, and some have rejected as unworthy of our Poet, it must be confessed that there are many passages mean, childish and vulgar; and some which ought not to have been exhibited, as we are told they were, to a maiden queen.’ He adds, however, a saving clause—‘But there are scattered, through the whole, many sparks of genius; nor is there any play that has more evident marks of the hand of Shakespeare.’ Dryden had classed it, in his *Defence of the Epilogue*, among the plays ‘which were either grounded on impossibilities, or at least so meanly written that the comedy neither caused you mirth nor the serious part your concernment’—relegating, we assume, *Love's Labour's Lost* to the second of these categories. Hazlitt, the avowed impressionist, confesses, ‘If we were to part with any of the author’s comedies it would be this’. To the good Gervinus it ‘gives the idea of an excessively jocular play’: and even to Brandes Shakespeare seems here to bury himself in the follies he attacks and ‘is still too inexperienced to realise how he thereby inflicts upon the spectator and the reader the full burden of their tediousness’. All this bewilders us who would, if only for its poetry, rank *Love's Labour's Lost* well above *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* or *The Comedy of Errors*, its nearest competitors among Shakespeare’s juvenile efforts. But, though bewildered, we dissent point-blank, and specially from the epithet ‘mean’. The combined

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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xxv

weight even of two such giants as Dryden and Johnson cannot stamp that censure upon this pretty fable, lyrically told, always polite while most audacious.

II

We shall return to the critics; but leave them awhile, to deal with the learned editors and the theorists. Well enough we can distinguish between these—their methods and mental processes—as soon as they get to work upon any given play. But in handling this one their methods and processes, still separable in kind, scarcely differ in degree of inutility.

For the learned editors, confronted with one of the most puzzling texts in the whole canon, have commonly scamped it; dismissing it as immature stuff, 'Euphuistic' or a parody of Lyly's manner, a thing thrown off in effervescence by a lad of genius who had yet to find himself. By verse-countings they prove that it is immature work indeed, worth their inattention: and on proving it immature, and its meaning consequently not worth attention, they bestow great pains, as we may exemplify by quoting from Furnivall's Introduction (or 'Forewords') to Griggs' facsimile of the Devonshire Quarto. Says he:

The Comedy of Errors is the only play which can be earlier (original) work. Now as to metre, *L.L.L.* has 1028 rymelines to 597 blank-verse ones, nearly twice as many, 1 to .58; the *Errors* 380 rymes to 1150 blank, or 1 in 3.02. *L.L.L.* has only 4 per cent. of eleven-syllable lines, while the *Errors* has 12.3 per cent. (Hertzberg). *L.L.L.* has as many as 236 alternate rymes or fours, that is, 1 in 4.78; while the *Errors* has only 64, or one in every 18 lines. *L.L.L.* has 194 lines of doggerel, or one in 5.3 lines, while the *Errors* has 109, or 1 in every 10.55; *L.L.L.* has only one run-on line in 18.14, while the *Errors* has 1 in every 10.7. Further, *L.L.L.* has more Sonnets, and more eight- and six-line stanzas in the dialogue than the *Errors*.

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978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxvi LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

We neither dare nor care to dispute the arithmetic of all this; and in our General Introduction we paid full tribute of respect to those minute investigators who in the last century, by verse-counting and similar tests, did so much *towards* determining the chronological order of the Plays. If we follow their processes, however, without extreme wariness in accepting their conclusions, we shall find ourselves trapped in a double fallacy. In the first place all this helpful arithmetic rests on the assumption—demonstrably absurd—that each play was originally written in the form in which it has come down to us: and secondly it proceeds on an assumption that a poet grows by mathematical rule, whereas we all know that he does nothing of the kind. Shakespeare, as he developed, might—nay, certainly did—tend to discard rhyme for blank verse, ‘closed’ lines for ‘run-on’ lines, and so on. But a poet is not only not an india-rubber plant, to be counted upon to throw out a certain proportion of leaves (or of ‘strong-endings’) next year. He is an artist, and therefore incalculable; a man, and therefore a doubtful master of warring members: he and his art together are pent in ‘the body of this death’, and break prison on no scheduled permit but by fits and starts, just how and when they can. The artist essays, hits or misses, retreats to try afresh:

Or as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
And there all smother'd up in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to creep forth again.

Moreover, being an artist in words, he unconsciously shapes his language to his theme. Romeo speaks verse, Falstaff prose, not because so many years separate them, but simply because Romeo is Romeo, Falstaff Falstaff, and Shakespeare all the while Shakespeare. To argue therefore that *Love's Labour's Lost*, a lyrical fantasy,

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William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xxvii

must be earlier than *The Comedy of Errors*, a farce of domestic intrigue copied out of Plautus, because it contains more lyrical lines, were as wise as to date *Romeo* against *Hamlet* by counting the corpses in the last act. If pressed, indeed, on this point, we should cite Berowne's great speech (4. 3. 286 ff) beginning

'Tis more than need.

Have at you then affection's men at arms!...

or the King's sonnet (4. 3. 24 ff):

Nor shines the silver moon one half so bright
 Through the transparent bosom of the deep,
 As doth thy face through tears of mine give light:
 Thou shin'st in every tear that I do weep,
 No drop but as a coach doth carry thee:
 So ridest thou triumphing in my woe....

and ask any reader to say if either *The Comedy of Errors* or *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* have anywhere a comparable resonance. *Venus and Adonis* has it—*Venus and Adonis*, published in 1593, to the close of which year we shall by-and-by assign, with reasons given, the first performance of *Love's Labour's Lost*: and the *Sonnets* have it—even that inferior 'dark lady' series (CXXVII–CLII) which, with the group XXXIII–XLII, we shall give reasons for assigning to 1593 or thereabouts and tying up pretty closely with our play. But this is to anticipate.

III

For the while we may content ourselves with knowing *Love's Labour's Lost* to be early work; and for this knowledge we have no need either to tax our own judgment between immaturity and maturity or to invoke arithmetic to our help: for we have direct evidence.

We have only one Quarto of the play before the

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978-1-108-00590-6 - Love's Labour's Lost, Volume 18

William Shakespeare

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxviii LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

appearance of the 1623 Folio. But that Quarto bears the date 1598. Its title runs:

A | Pleasant | Conceited Comedie | called, | Loues labors
lost. | As it was presented before her Highnes | this last
Christmas. | Newly corrected and augmented | By W.
Shakespere. | Imprinted at London by W. W. | for Cut-
bert Burby. | 1598

—and this Quarto, whether or not set up from Shakespeare's actual manuscript, gives us our basic text, recognized as most authoritative by the Cambridge editors of 1863. 'The Folio edition,' they pronounce, 'is a reprint of this Quarto, differing only in its being divided into Acts.' The reader at pains to study our Note on the Copy will, we believe, discount this assertion somewhat and find that even with the Quarto we are by no means at the end of our troubles. Still the 1598 Quarto remains our text. The Folio corrects several obvious misprints, while omitting to correct others; and once at least (I. I. 109) it massacres a good line, converting

Clymbe ore the house to unlocke the little gate

into

That were to clymbe ore the house to unlocke the gate.

But the prepollency of the Quarto over the Folio version may wait. For our present purpose we are back to the year 1598 and a version in that year published as 'newly corrected and augmented'. In that same year Meres mentions it along with the 'Sugred Sonnets,' in his famous list in *Palladis Tamia*; and in that same year also Robert Tofte undoubtedly alludes to it in his *Alba, or the Months Mind of a Melancholy Lover*: