

English Summary

The possibilities of computerized stylometry, which have developed only in the last ten years, were applied to selected apocryphal and anonymous plays of English Renaissance drama. It was particularly program tools of R Stylo such as Rolling Delta and Rolling Classify, as well as the General Imposters method, which through their ability to handle larger amounts of data than traditional stylometry had previously been able to do, produced attribution results that confirmed a theatrical apprenticeship of the young William Shakespeare in the 1580s. These plays were simple and followed the public taste with romance-like and popular themes, but they already contained the basic features that made the later Shakespeare: familiarity with biblical content, with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with legal positions and with metaphorical language that drew from processes in nature. There is a strange irony in Shakespeare's intention to leave only his best works with his 1623 First Folio, for he inadvertently provided Oxfordians and Marlovians with the argument that he had suddenly emerged with great works without having published anything before. This study proves an early Shakespeare with a methodologically and statistically sound revision of such plays as *Edmund Ironside*, *Fair Em*, *Mucedorus*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, and *The True Tragedy of Richard III* to name just a few. Collaborative elements point to Thomas Kyd and Samuel Rowley. A particular surprise is the extent of Shakespeare's involvement in the Marlowe corpus which shows considerable stylistic discrepancies with the two *Tamburlaine* parts. On the other hand, Thomas Merriam's assumption that Shakespeare drew on a Marlowe pretext in making *Henry V* is confirmed. There is also strong evidence that *1-3 Henry VI* was first prepared for F1; the prequels *Contention 1* and *2* are by no means memorial reconstructions, as Alexander propagated, but independent plays in which Shakespeare was involved. In the case of *Sir John Oldcastle*, the stylometric result trumps the previously valid empirical evidence of a diary entry by Henslowe. As Thomas Pavier noted on the title page of his 1619 edition, William Shakespeare is indeed the author. In August 1599, the combination of a threat to London from the Spanish and the reopening of the Globe Theatre led to a hasty and careless transposition of a 1576 eyewitness account of the 1576 siege of Antwerp by Gascoigne. The result was a poor play called *A Larum for London* that could only convince by its topicality. But the frequencies of z-scores proved a clear Shakespearean origin. Of the plays associated with Shakespeare only after his death, *The Birth of Merlin* actually proved to be by Shakespeare and William Rowley. *Double Falsehood* by Lewis Theobald from 1727 is based entirely on *Cardenio*, which has been lost, but was written by Shakespeare and Fletcher in 1612/13.

All in all, 35 plays were subjected to stringent investigation, five of which were taken from F1 and included collaborative elements. With statistically secure frequencies of z-scores, reliable assignments became possible. *Arden of Faversham*, for example, was fully assigned to Shakespeare. Small passages supposedly by Watson, as Gary Taylor asserted, had to be disregarded because of the unreliable statistical base set.