

## PART XIII

### SHAKESPEARE'S FELLOWS

*Stanley Wells, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom*

More often than not, playwrights in Shakespeare's time wrote in collaboration with other writers. And they worked exceptionally closely with their actors, often writing with specific performers in mind for leading and even for lesser roles, reading plays to the company before they were accepted for performance, and no doubt consulting with backstage personnel about costumes, music, and technicalities of staging. At a more private level, they interacted with other members of the playwriting community of their time, in an active fellowship of shared influence. All of these people were Shakespeare's fellows.

There is a sense in which Shakespeare shared fellowship with all the writers of the past and those of his own time who influenced his works – Ovid, Plautus, Plutarch, Holinshed, Boccaccio, Painter, and Sir Philip Sidney among them – but this chapter will confine itself to those of his contemporaries with whom he worked personally, or at least who formed part of the playwriting and performing community of his time. Each of these individuals receives a biography in other chapters in this section. They include playwrights John Fletcher, Robert Greene, Ben Jonson, Thomas Kyd, John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Nashe, and John Webster; actors and fellow shareholders Richard Burbage, William Heminges, and Henry Condell; comedians Richard Tarlton, Will Kemp, and Robert Armin; boy actor (and later playwright) Nathan Field; musical composer Robert Johnson; and rival actor Edward Alleyn and rival theatrical entrepreneur Philip Henslowe.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Joining the fellowship of players
- Emergent playwright and actor
- The Lord Chamberlain's Men
- Surviving fellows
- The King's Men
- Late collaborations

### 113. ROBERT GREENE

*Sophie Chiari, University of Provence, France*

Like Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene (1558–92) kept haunting the creative imagination of Stratford playwright William Shakespeare, who indirectly quoted from him, borrowed his plots, and possibly caricatured him in some of his great comic creations. Six years Shakespeare's senior, Greene was an extremely prolific writer, turning out several romances, pamphlets, lyrics, and plays in just a few years' time. If Shakespeare only went to the Stratford grammar school, Greene must have been proud to be a University Wit, given that he took his BA at St. John's College (1578) and his MA at Clare Hall (1583). Robert Greene, or someone masquerading as Greene, became famous for overtly attacking Shakespeare in a pamphlet entitled *Greenes Groats-worth of witte* (1592) – the earliest allusion to Shakespeare in print.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Greene, Shakespeare, and the Queen's Men
- Greene and Shakespeare's early comedies
- *Greenes Groats-worth of witte*
- Shakespeare's hypothetical reactions to *Groats-worth*
- Greene's influence on the late plays
- Greene's embodiment onstage: Falstaff and Autolycus

## 114. CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

*Arata Ide, Keio University, Japan*

Playwright and poet “by practice” and “by profession a scholler,” Christopher Marlowe (1564–93) was already a person of note when Shakespeare arrived in London in the late 1580s or early 1590s. Shakespeare, just starting his writing career, likely worked on assimilating the techniques of his predecessors – and particularly to gain a perfect command of the mighty Marlovian line. Marlowe’s influence can be witnessed not only in Shakespeare’s hendecasyllabic verse but in the military nationalism of Talbot, the scourge-like character of Joan of Arc in *1 Henry VI* (both indebted to Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*), and the Machiavellian schemer Richard III (indebted to Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*). Both poets were working on Ovidian erotic poems in 1592–93 when Marlowe’s career was violently cut short.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- University playwright
- London
- Marlowe and Shakespeare
- Marlowe’s “Ghoast”
- A portrait of Marlowe?

## 115. THOMAS NASHE

*John Tobin, University of Massachusetts, United States*

Shakespeare mined the works of Thomas Nashe (1567–1601) throughout his career, so that we may say that scarcely a comedy, history, or tragedy is without some phrases, images, and motifs borrowed from Nashe. Nashe’s profession was a fluid one: satirist, pamphleteer, playwright, introducer of other men’s works, moral journalist, jack of all literary trades. Presumably, Shakespeare saw what we see today, that Nashe’s pamphlets have a dramatic aspect and that his language itself is famously lively in both turns of phrase and images. Nashe seems to have returned the compliment in *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Devil*, which includes an encomium of the moral value of history plays that may allude to Shakespeare’s *1 Henry VI*.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Nashe’s early years
- Three rich years of work
- A mock biography, real danger, and a mock encomium
- The end of Nashe the pen man and his recirculation

## 116. THOMAS KYD

*Clara Calvo, University of Murcia, Spain*

As a near contemporary of the early Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and the University Wits, the fame of Thomas Kyd (1558–94) mostly rests on the attribution to him of an anonymously printed Elizabethan blockbuster, *The Spanish Tragedy*. Like Shakespeare, Kyd enjoyed an excellent grammar school education that trained him in Latin and the major Roman authors, but unlike Marlowe, Thomas Lodge, George Peele, and Thomas Nashe, he never read for a university degree. Kyd is believed to be the author of an earlier version of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, vestiges of which could perhaps remain in the 1603 quarto *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*. The influence that Kyd exerted on Shakespeare was ample and lasting, extending beyond *Hamlet*. Verbal parallels between *The Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare’s early plays are not rare.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Kyd and Elizabethan London
- *The Spanish Tragedy*
- Kyd and Shakespeare

## 117. RICHARD TARLTON

*Nora Johnson, Swarthmore College, United States*

The comedian Richard Tarlton (d. 1588) was not a member of Shakespeare's company, but no figure so fully embodies the pleasures, the tensions, or the rich possibilities that made theatrical performance vital in Shakespeare's day. Tarlton's reputation for comic improvisation, heavily inflected by bawdry, pugnacity, and strong opinions about topical subjects, is attested by numerous references to him throughout his life and for many years after his death in 1588. Reference is also made to his homely appearance and homespun presentation. Other information about Tarlton's reputation and performance style can be inferred from jest books that were written after his death. *Tarlton's Jests*, printed in full by 1611, shows the clown moving easily from the tavern to the court to the stage.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Tarlton and authorship
- Cultivating a rustic persona
- Improvisation and self-reference
- *Tarlton's Jests*
- Improvisation and ideology

## 118. GEORGE PEELE

*Charles Whitworth, University of Montpellier, France*

If the notion of collaboration may be broadened to include direct influence, provision of models, examples, sources, and perhaps professional counsel, as well as immediate side-by-side co-writing, furnishing individual acts and scenes, and varying degrees of these kinds of interventions, then George Peele (1556–96) must surely be the most prominent of Shakespeare's playwriting partners in the early years of his career, much as Middleton and Fletcher would be in later years. Recent textual analyses of *Titus Andronicus* concur in attributing to Peele the entirety of scene 1.1, as well as 2.1, 4.1, and probably 2.2 – four scenes in all. A hitherto anonymous Elizabethan English history play, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, long considered a source for Shakespeare's *King John*, has recently been attributed unequivocally to Peele.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Early life
- University Wit in training
- Pageants made to order
- Major works
- Peele and Shakespeare

## 119. JOHN LYLY

*Francis Guinle, University of Lyon, France*

Born into a noted family of humanist scholars, John Lyly (1554–1606) took a degree at Oxford, then pursued a literary career in London. He gained fame by writing three of the most famous prose fictions of the day: *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* and its sequels *Euphues: His England* and *Euphues' Golden Legacy*. The last of these is the plot source of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, which also parodies Lyly's playful "euphuistic" style. Repeatedly unsuccessful in getting a position at court, Lyly eventually made his mark there as a writer of plays for two companies of boy actors who regularly performed before the queen. Echoes of Lyly's distinctive style, as well as some of his dramatic situations, abound in Elizabethan drama.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Joining the "University Wits"
- *Euphues* and euphuism
- John Lyly and the boy actors

- Lyly's plays
- The staging of the plays

## 120. RICHARD BURBAGE

*David Kathman, independent scholar, United States*

Richard Burbage (1568–1619) was one of the greatest actors of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage, and originator of most of Shakespeare's major roles. As the leading man of the Lord Chamberlain's–King's Men for the first twenty-five years of the company's existence, he worked closely with Shakespeare when both men were at the height of their creative powers. They were often linked in the popular imagination during their lifetimes, and Burbage is remembered today primarily for acting in Shakespeare's plays. Burbage was also one of the most important theatrical entrepreneurs of the Elizabethan era.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- James Burbage and the theater
- James Burbage builds a playhouse
- Cuthbert Burbage's early life
- Richard Burbage's career before 1603
- The Burbages, the Blackfriars, and the Globe
- Richard Burbage and the King's Men
- The King's Men take over the Blackfriars
- Richard Burbage's later life and his death
- The Burbages after Richard's death

## 121. JOHN HEMINGES AND HENRY CONDELL

*David Kathman, independent scholar, United States*

John Heminges (1566–1630) and Henry Condell (1576–1627) are famous as the compilers and editors of the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, popularly known as the First Folio. Their introduction "To the Great Variety of Readers" and their dedication to the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery are widely quoted in books about Shakespeare and are reprinted in many modern editions of the works. Heminges and Condell deserve enormous credit for their work in maintaining the legacy of their "friend and fellow" Shakespeare, but both were very interesting men in their own right, not just as longtime actors and friends of Shakespeare but as active participants in the life of London during one of the most dynamic periods in the city's history.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- John Heminges, 1566–1630
- Heminges's acting career
- Heminges as businessman
- Henry Condell, 1576–1627
- Condell's acting career
- Condell as a man of property
- Heminges and Condell and the First Folio
- Compiling and printing the Shakespeare First Folio
- The legacy of Heminges and Condell

## 122. EDWARD ALLEYN AND PHILIP HENSLOWE

*Susan P. Cerasano, Colgate University, United States*

Edward Alleyn (1566–1626) and Philip Henslowe (c.1555–1616) altered the face of the theater industry in early modern London. Together they were instrumental in creating an entertainment network – particularly through the construction of two public playhouses and a dual-purpose playhouse/bear-baiting arena – that was unparalleled anywhere in Western Eu-

rope. Their ownership of the Rose and Fortune playhouses promoted the plays of Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Heywood, Thomas Middleton, and Thomas Dekker, among other popular dramatists. Additionally, the Rose Playhouse showcased the talent of numerous actors of the period, chief of whom was Edward Alleyn. The successful, long-term management of the businesses created by Henslowe and Alleyn gave the owners prominence as entrepreneurs within greater London and as purveyors of entertainment at court.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Early years
- The Rose Playhouse
- Henslowe's diary and the 1590s
- A theatrical family
- A new investment: the first Fortune Playhouse
- Later investments
- Alleyn's later years
- Alleyn and Henslowe as early modern entrepreneurs

### 123. NATHAN FIELD

*Antonia Southern, independent scholar, United Kingdom*

Nathan Field (1587–1619) was pitchforked into the acting profession in autumn 1600, when he was thirteen years old. He was “taken up” or press-ganged into service on his way to school by men misusing the royal patent by which children who could sing might be conscripted into the choirs of the Chapel Royal and St. Paul's School. The same boys acted in plays at court and before paying audiences in supposedly “private” houses such as the newly fitted Blackfriars Theatre. When the fashion for all-boy companies came to an end in 1609, Field became the star and in effect the manager of an adult company. After acting with Lady Elizabeth's Men, Field joined the King's Men in 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death. He is listed among the “Principal Actors” of Shakespeare's plays in the First Folio.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- A “little eyase” who joined the business
- Acting career and style
- Nathan Field as playwright
- The Church and the stage
- Reputation

### 124. WILLIAM KEMP

*Nora Johnson, Swarthmore College, United States*

The professional actors of Shakespeare's day were among the first famous entertainers in early modern England, and Will Kemp (d. 1603) was among the most important figures to cultivate the idea of his own fame. Will Kemp appears to have been the leading clown in the Lord Chamberlain's Men from the company's beginnings to 1599, and there is solid evidence that major comic roles were scripted with him in mind. Outside the roles scripted for him by Shakespeare or others, Kemp's specialty was the jig, a short song-and-dance performance that enacted what was usually a tale of comic sexual adventure. (See Chapter 22, “Entertainments: Baiting, Dances, Contests.”) A number of jigs attributed to Kemp were published during his lifetime. After leaving Shakespeare's company in 1599, Kemp published a pamphlet, *Kemps Nine Daies Wonder*, narrating his performance of a morris dance all the way from London to Norwich.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Kemp high and low
- Kemp and the public theaters
- Kemp's departure from the Globe
- Kemp as entrepreneur
- After 1601

## 125. ROBERT JOHNSON

*Catherine A. Henze, University of Wisconsin Green Bay, United States*

Robert Johnson (c.1583–1633) is best known as the composer of solo vocal music for dramas produced by the King's Men, particularly those of William Shakespeare. His settings of songs from *The Tempest* survive in seventeenth-century manuscripts, along with his settings for songs in plays by Webster, Middleton, Beaumont, and Fletcher, who also wrote for the King's Men. In addition, Johnson wrote and/or arranged music for masques (notably by Ben Jonson and George Chapman) and composed solo instrumental music, primarily for the lute. Johnson, a versatile musician, is highly acclaimed both for his declamatory theatrical songs and for his expressive lute music. In addition, he served as lutenist in the courts of King James I, Prince Henry, and King Charles.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Johnson's songs for the King's Men
- Robert Johnson's life
- Johnson's compositions
- Attribution challenges
- Johnson's lute and masque compositions
- Declamatory songs
- Songs for *The Tempest*
- Songs for plays by Webster, Middleton, Beaumont, and Fletcher
- Sources for Robert Johnson's music

## 126. ROBERT ARMIN

*Catherine A. Henze, University of Wisconsin Green Bay, United States*

Robert Armin (c.1563–1615) was a versatile comic player in Shakespeare's acting company, best known for his probable roles as Touchstone in *As You Like It*, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, and the Fool in *King Lear*. When he joined the Lord Chamberlain's Men, his leading comic role shifted from rustic, buffoonish clown to witty, wise fool. In addition to his sophisticated wit, Armin was known for his musicality; with his arrival, there was a marked increase in singing in Shakespeare's plays. Previously, Armin had been an apprentice goldsmith, solo comic performer, and, in a career that continued while he was acting, writer of comic pamphlets and plays that focused on fools.

### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Armin's life
- Armin as author
- Armin's acting career
- Armin's roles
- Armin as Feste in *Twelfth Night*
- The "Sir Topas" scene

## 127. BEN JONSON

*Sean McEvoy, Varndean College, United Kingdom*

Poet, playwright, deviser of court masques, literary critic, friend of Shakespeare: Ben Jonson (1572–1637) was all of these things. To the repertory of Shakespeare's company Jonson contributed a series of successful comedies, including *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*. There has been a long – and unfair – critical tradition portraying Jonson as Shakespeare's other: an opinionated, insecure intellectual show-off, hamstrung artistically by his servitude to classical models. It can even be argued that the construction of Shakespeare's greatness for earlier generations was done at the necessary expense of Jonson's reputation, for Shakespeare was said to possess all the opposite qualities of Jonson. For all this, Jonson's memorial poem in the First Folio colors how we see Shakespeare today.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Jonson's early career
- Jonson's prime
- Friendship with Shakespeare
- The purpose of playing
- Playing seriously
- Style
- The poet and masque-maker

### 128. JOHN FLETCHER

*Sarah Lewis, Kings College, University of London, United Kingdom*

One of the most prolific professional playwrights of the early modern period, John Fletcher (1579–1625) wrote more than fifty scripts, many in collaboration with other writers – including Shakespeare. During 1612 and 1613, Fletcher and Shakespeare wrote the no longer extant *Cardenio*, *Henry VIII (All Is True)*, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, all of which were performed by the King's Men. This intense twelve-month period of collaboration did not, however, exist in isolation: resonances between Fletcher's and Shakespeare's works suggest that the playwrights influenced one another's dramatic output for a sustained period. Fletcher appears to have taken on the role of principal dramatist for the King's Men in 1613, and between then and his death in 1625, he produced some forty plays for the company.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Early career: collaboration with Beaumont and first solo works
- Other early solo works and later collaborations with Beaumont
- *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*
- Collaborations with Shakespeare
- Collaboration with Massinger and the end of his career

### 129. THOMAS MIDDLETON

*Michelle O'Callaghan, University of Reading, United Kingdom*

Thomas Middleton (1580–1627) is a definitively Jacobean playwright. He produced devices for James I's coronation pageant; his earliest extant play, *The Phoenix* (1604), was performed before James in the same year; and his last play, *A Game at Chess* (1624) – a politically dangerous play – was produced in the last years of James's reign. Middleton, who wrote mostly for the King's Men, is celebrated today for "city comedy," satiric plays focused on the lives of merchants and the lower gentry in early modern London. He brought the genre to fruition in *The Roaring Girl* (1611), co-written with Thomas Dekker, and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613). Middleton also wrote tragedies, including *Women Beware Women* (c.1621) and *The Changeling* (1622), co-written with William Rowley. Middleton's hand has been identified in at least three of Shakespeare's plays: *Timon of Athens*, *Macbeth*, and *Measure for Measure*.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- *Timon of Athens*
- *Macbeth*
- *Measure for Measure*
- Debates: disintegrators and collaborators

### 130. JOHN WEBSTER

*Robert Henke, Washington University, United States*

The life of John Webster (c.1579–1634) registers a paradox. On the one hand, the entire course of his life appears to have been deeply conditioned by social and professional networks in the worlds of the city and the theater, as well as at court. On the other hand, a distilled body of "dramatic theory" nestled in his publications, the considerable erudition displayed in his

plays, and one or two contemporary accounts of him suggest a man who, like Jonson, was suspicious of theatrical crowds and collective opinion. Webster will, and should, forever be associated with two great tragedies, at whose centers lie two of the most compelling female protagonists in all of English early modern drama: Vittoria Corombona in *The White Devil* and the title character in *The Dutchess of Malfi*.

#### TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Education
- Apprenticeship
- Tragicomedy and city comedy
- The great tragedies
- Nondramatic works
- Final phase
- Page versus stage
- Dramaturgy
- Borrowings and collaboration
- Female protagonists