



Shakespeare's Puzzles:

The Woman Who Created Shakespeare

John and William Yeomans

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About The Authors

John and Bill Yeomans grew up in Los Angeles as choral singers and foreign movie aficionados. Their love of Shakespeare developed slowly out of their love for opera and for films. Their sister, Ann Yeomans, studied Shakespeare at Occidental College and under the mentorship of Dr. Robin Williams, who asked two important questions: Why are brilliant women so central to the plays of Shakespeare? Did a woman write *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and many plays about women?

To answer these questions, John and Bill explored the puzzles in the Dedication to the Sonnets. They studied the history of the early plays that were co-authored by Marlowe and Shakespeare and performed by the Pembroke family, according to *The New Oxford Shakespeare* researchers (2016-7). Computer analysis of the words in Elizabethan poems showed that poems of Shakespeare were best linked with the poems of Mary Sidney Herbert's family. "Muse of the Poets of our time" wrote Christopher Marlowe of the Countess of Pembroke in 1592. Marlowe and 20 other poets identified the Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney Herbert, as their leader and "Goddess of Wisdom" in dozens of poems and dedications.

By exploring original documents, John and Bill discovered that Mary Sidney Herbert had revealed her authorship of *The Taming of a Shrew* for the Pembroke family touring group in 1593. *Shakespeare's Sonnets* revealed her life as mother of William Herbert, "Mr. W.H" of the Dedication, and then her role as the poet. The brilliant puzzles of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* are solved by her family history and symbols, and by her revelations in the final Sonnet 126, where she becomes the creator of wisdom and virtue, represented by Mother Nature.



Back Cover:

Shakespeare's Puzzles

- Shakespeare's First Folio (1623) was dedicated to two Earls of Pembroke, William and Philip Herbert.
- Their mother was the celebrated poet, Mary Sidney Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, and sister of Sir Philip Sidney.
- In 1592-93, the 2nd Earl of Pembroke's servants toured plays of Christopher Marlowe and other poets. Four of these were the first published plays (1594-5) later attributed to William Shakespeare.
- In 1592, Marlowe wrote that the Countess of Pembroke was "Muse of the Poets of our time", whose "virtue shall overcome...even eternity".
- In 1593, the Countess of Pembroke claimed that she wrote a comedy about "Sir Bombarduccio". Was "Her Old Comedy" an early version of *The Taming of the Shrew*?
- Did Mary Sidney Herbert co-write Shakespeare's plays for the Earl of Pembroke's servants?
- *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1609) were dedicated to "W.H.", suggested to be again William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke.
- *Shakespeare's Sonnets* are proposed here to be Pembroke family puzzles, with solutions throughout the Sonnets. In the end, Mother Nature conquers Father Time, and makes her final judgments.
- Shakespeare's major poems all have women protagonists, and use words and images associated with the Sidney family of poets.



Frontispiece: Portraits of Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert from *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, a French translation by Jean Baudoin (1625). Engravings by Jean de Courbes, National Portrait Gallery. A laurel wreath and swans are above Philip's head, while the Sidney spearhead and coronet are above Mary's. In the poems below, Philip's skills are compared with Apollo and Mars, while Mary is identified with Pallas Athena.

TO.OUR.EVER-PRAISEWORTHY.

OUR.EVER-LIVING.

POET.

Table of Contents:

Title Page: Miniature portrait of Mary Sidney Herbert by Nicholas Hilliard, c.1590. National Portrait Gallery	
Frontispiece: Portraits of Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert by Jean de Corbes for the French translation of <i>The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia</i> (1625).	4
Acknowledgments	6
Chapter 1. Shakespeare's Patrons, the Earls of Pembroke.	7
Chapter 2. Who Were the Pembrokes? Herbert, Sidney and Dudley Families.	15
Chapter 3. Plays for Pembroke's Men.	26
Chapter 4. Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe and the Countess of Pembroke.	35
Chapter 5. <i>Shake-speares Sonnets: Puzzles</i> by Mary Sidney Herbert.	45
Chapter 6. Dark Sonnets: Family Conflicts and the Dark Lady.	62
Chapter 7. Poems of "Shakespeare" on Women and Love.	71
Chapter 8. Mary Sidney Herbert, as "Shakespeare".	83
Some Conclusions Regarding Shakespeare's Puzzles.	95
Appendix 1. The Phoenix Nest (1593).	97
Appendix 2. List of Works dedicated to Mary Sidney Herbert.	98
Appendix 3. Works of Mary Sidney Herbert.	101
Appendix 4. "To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney".	103
References	105
Figures and Tables	115

Acknowledgments

The world of the Pembrokes opened for us through Robin P. Williams' 2012 book, *Sweet Swan of Avon: Did a Woman Write Shakespeare?* and biographies of Mary Sidney by the late Margaret Hannay. Northrop Frye at the University of Toronto wisely advised readers to study Shakespeare's words and images, not his perplexing biography. Many others led us to informative Renaissance documents.

The greatest boon to our work has been 4 thick volumes from *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (2016-17). Their professional literary, historical and computer analyses made all our studies of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* timely. Every step in our journey has brought surprises and satisfactions, so much like scientific journeys. Resolving the many puzzles in *Shakespeare's Sonnets* proved easier for John than solving brain circuits, thanks to the wise author of the Sonnets.

Our sister, Ann Yeomans, introduced us to the problems of the Sonnets and the questions of authorship, and served as our closest advisor. We all enjoyed liberal arts educations at Occidental College and the University of Redlands, where poetry and history were taught together with civilization and science. We are lifelong choral singers and opera fans. Claudio Monteverdi, the father of opera, used classical and Renaissance stories to enrich the stage. Monteverdi's contemporary, Shakespeare, inspired composers, from Purcell to Berlioz, from Verdi to Britten.

Our loving wives, Mary-Ellen and Suzie, supported our efforts with patience, humor and appreciation. Our parents, Ed and Pat Henry Yeomans, enjoyed history and literature and were models of wisdom and good works. We thank our many music, history and science teachers, and especially Joseph Walker at Los Angeles High School, who baptized each of us (mother, daughter, sons) in the plays *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Macbeth*. Kristin Bundesen, Ph.D., provided generous editorial advice. Martino Zanetti supported our studies in Veneto.

We encourage every "well-wishing Adventurer setting forth", to quote the Dedication to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, in the continuing joy of re-discovering Shakespeare. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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Pasadena, California

***"Admit me Chorus to this history;
Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play."*** Henry V, End of Prologue, Lines 32-4

Chapter 1: Shakespeare's Patrons, the Earls of Pembroke.

*“O for a Muse of Fire, that would ascend
The brightest Heaven of Invention:”* Henry V, Prologue, Lines 1-2

Shakespeare's greatest works, foundations of the Modern English language, were published in two large collections. The First Folio (1623) included 36 plays dedicated to the 3rd Earl of Pembroke, William Herbert (1580-1630), and Philip Herbert (1584-1649) who became the 4th Earl of Pembroke after his older brother's death. Large letters above their names, praised “the most noble and incomparable pair of brethren” (Fig. 1-1). The exotic picture above their dedication was borrowed from the Welsh Bible (1588), a reminder that their Herbert ancestors were the first Welsh Earls in British history.

Shakespeare's Sonnets (1609) included 154 sonnets in a numbered sequence, dedicated to “Mr. W.H.”, described cryptically as “the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets”. Many scholars (e.g., Boaden, 1837; Chambers, 1930; Wood, 2003; Duncan-Jones, 2010) have suspected that “Mr. W.H.” was William Herbert again. His uncle, Sir Philip Sidney, had inspired the fashion for English sonnets by writing *Astrophel and Stella* before his death in 1586. William Herbert himself wrote many love poems (Herbert, 1660). Was he perhaps the youth named “Will” who wrote sonnets to the “Dark Lady”?

So why were Shakespeare's two most historic publications dedicated to these two successive Earls of Pembroke, and why were the brothers credited in such a puzzling way? Recent evidence is used here to re-consider the deep involvement of the Pembroke family.

Shakespeare's collaborators. *The New Oxford Shakespeare (TNOS)* (2016; 2017a,b) scholars re-evaluated the history of Shakespeare's complete works. They concluded that 16 of the 36 First Folio plays were not the work of a single author, but had co-authors along with Shakespeare, including Christopher Marlowe, George Peele, Thomas Nashe, John Fletcher and Thomas Middleton, each with identifiably different writing styles. None of these co-authors, however, was credited in the First Folio, except in Ben Jonson's poem “To the memory of my beloved, The AUTHOR, Mr. William Shakespeare”, which praised “Marlowe's mighty line”.

Marlowe, Nashe, Peele and other co-authors appear to have written large parts of several early Shakespeare plays in 1588-93, especially *Henry VI, parts 1, 2 and 3*, and *Titus Andronicus*. Gary Taylor and Rory Loughnane of *TNOS* proposed that Marlowe, before his death in 1593, made important contributions to Shakespeare's development as an author. How did these poets work together, and for what purposes, in those formative years 1588-93?

Pembroke's players. The 2nd Earl of Pembroke, Henry Herbert, father of William and Philip Herbert, sponsored a theater company that travelled widely in England in the 1590s. Three of the first published plays of Shakespeare, that became *Henry VI, part 3*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and

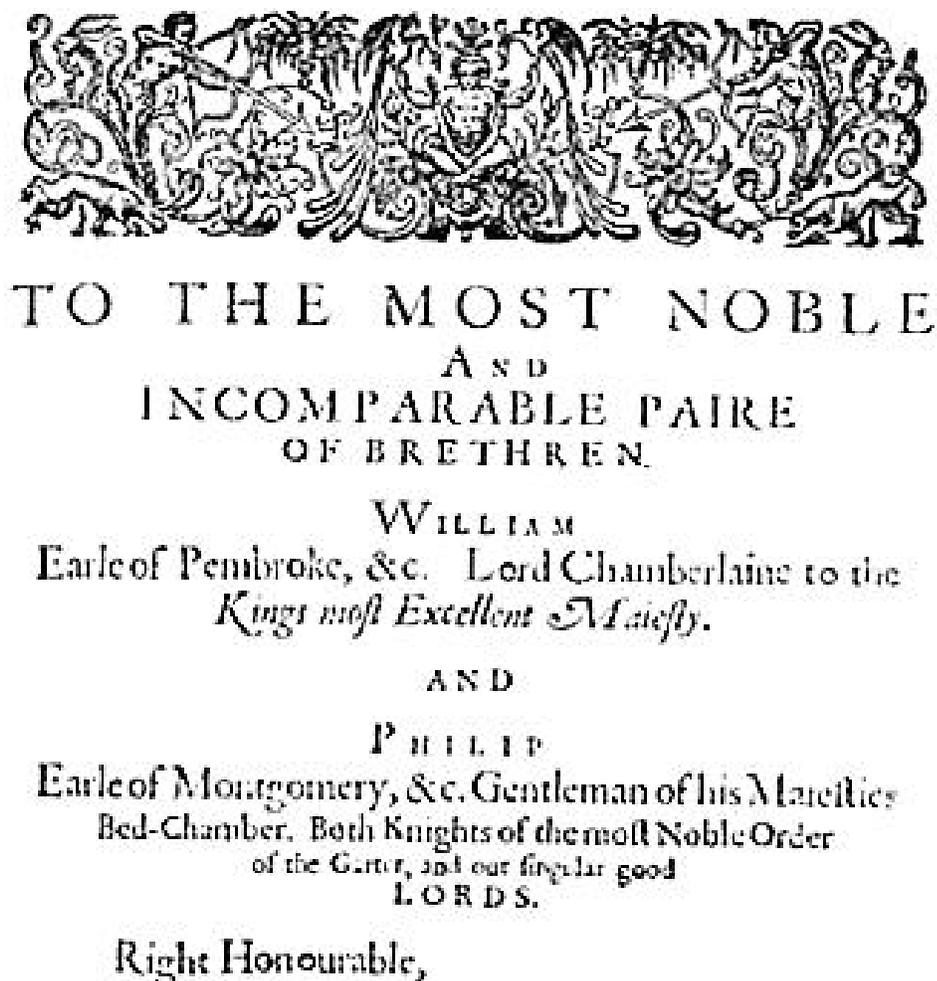


Fig. 1-1. Dedication page from the *First Folio* (1623).

Titus Andronicus in the First Folio, were performed “sundry times” by the Earl of Pembroke’s servants, as stated on each of the title pages. Pembroke’s servants also performed Marlowe’s *Edward II* (see the 1594 title page in Fig. 1-2). This supports the conclusion of *TNOS* that Marlowe was writing plays with Shakespeare in these years, performed by Pembroke’s players, and published in 1594, the year after Marlowe’s death.

In 1592, Marlowe credited the Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney Herbert, as his patron and inspiration: “Muse of the Poets of our time...Deign to be [my] patron” (Newman, *Amintas Gaudiae*, Preface by Christopher Marlowe). How did the Countess of Pembroke become “Muse of the Poets” of 1592? (Chapter 3). Did the Countess participate in the preparation of plays for Pembroke’s servants that led to the publication of Shakespeare’s first plays? (Chapter 4). Was she also a muse for *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594) the first published poems of William Shakespeare? (Chapter 6).

We propose here that the Pembrokes, Henry Herbert, his poet-wife Mary Sidney Herbert, and their two sons, William and Philip (Fig. 1-3) were deeply involved in the initiation of Shakespeare's career in the early 1590s, as well as in the final rendering of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and the First Folio plays. This brief history of the Pembrokes will suggest how Shakespeare became the poet we know and love.

The thesis of this book is that the Pembroke family used poetry and plays to enhance their status among the nobility of Renaissance England. They accomplished this by working collaboratively over 4 decades with many poets, especially with Philip Sidney and his circle in the 1570s and 1580s, and with Shakespeare, Marlowe, Peele, Nashe, Samuel Daniel and Edmund Spenser in the 1590s. They performed and published poetic and dramatic works for their families, for the English public, and for their monarchs Elizabeth I and James I.

Mary Sidney Herbert (1561-1621) was the key player in these collaborative family efforts. Many contemporary sources identified her as the leading female poet of the Elizabethan era (Hannay, 1990). She translated several classics into English, and wrote many poems of her own. She was also a patroness of Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe, Samuel Daniel and many other poets (Harvey, 1593; Hannay, 1990; Faulkes, 2007; Williams, 2012).

Mary Sidney grew up in a family of writers, poets, courtiers, diplomats and military leaders. In the 1570s, her brother Philip Sidney travelled to Italy, then collaborated with a small circle of poets to discuss classics and to write new works in English. Between 1578 and 1586, he often lived at the Earl of Pembroke's Wilton House with his sister and brother-in-law. During these years, he wrote an important essay, a one-act masque and many poems and stories (Hannay, 1990). Sir Philip's declared motivation was to provide "ever-praiseworthy *Poesy*...full of virtue-breeding delightfulness" using the English language (*The Defense of Poesy*, 1595).

After Sir Philip's death in 1586, Lady Mary Sidney Herbert revised and collected his works in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593; 1598) one of the most admired volumes of the Elizabethan era. The title page (Fig. 1-4) shows Sir Philip and Lady Mary Sidney as Roman statues on either side of the title, with Sir Philip (left) as a travelling poet, and the Countess (right) in armor with a sword at her side. In the same year, a court poet, Thomas Churchyard, likened the Countess to the Roman Goddess of Wisdom, Minerva, perhaps due to this representation of her. Marie de Medici published a French translation in 1625 identifying Mary Sidney similarly as Pallas Athena, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom (frontispiece).

From 1581-1621, tributes to Sir Philip and Lady Mary Sidney were written by authors including Sir Walter Raleigh, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe, Gabriel Harvey, Edmund Spenser, Samuel Daniel, John Donne, John Davies of Hereford, Emilia Bassano Lanier and Ben Jonson. Twenty-four authors dedicated a total of 37 works to Mary Sidney Herbert (Appendix 2) identifying her as the most inspiring and prolific female writer of that era. Yet this widely admired woman published no further major works under her own name after *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. Her biographer, Margaret Hannay, concluded that many of Mary Sidney's writings were somehow lost or misattributed: "references in her own letters indicate that we may have but a small fragment of her writings" (p. 141, Hannay, 1990). Indeed, 5 later poems of the

Dowager Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney (as she was known after 1601), were recently discovered in Kassell, Germany (Schlueter & Schlueter, 2010; Schlueter, 2013).

Sonnets. The conclusion that the Countess of Pembroke was central to Shakespeare's works is most apparent to us in *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1609). Commentators agree that these sophisticated sonnets were written over a period of more than 2 decades by the author of Shakespeare's plays (Slater, 1988; Vendler, 1999; Hannay et al., 2006; Duncan-Jones, 2010; Conner, 2017). Further, that they were strongly influenced by Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet cycle, *Astrophel and Stella*.

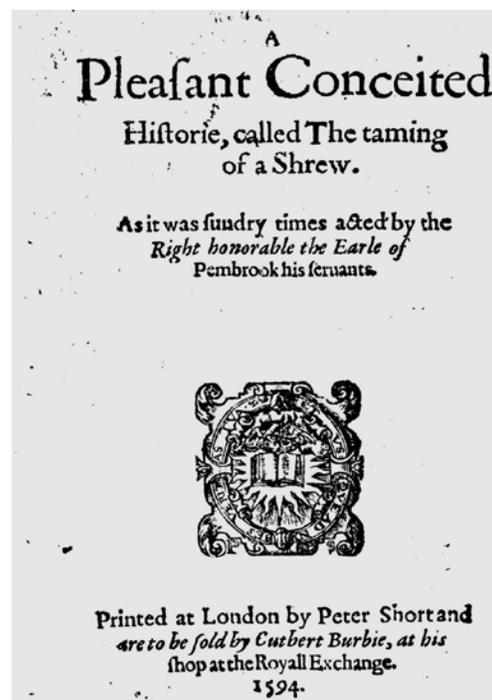
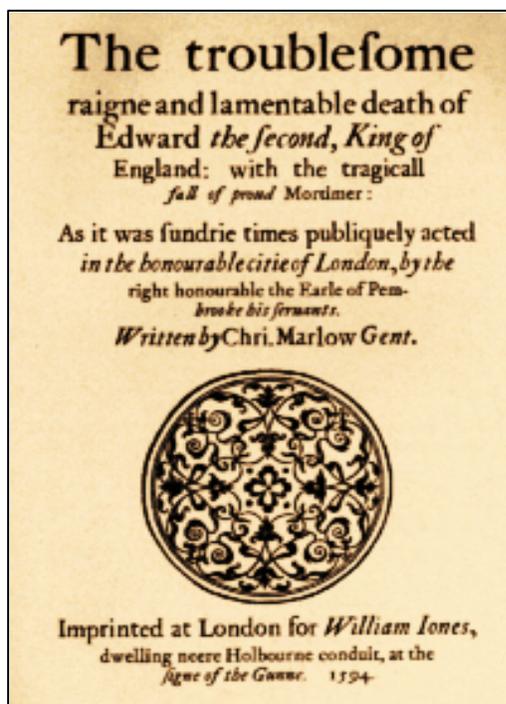


Fig. 1-2. Title pages of *Edward II*, “Written by Chri. Marlowe” (1594) and *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594).

Yet *Shakespeare's Sonnets* have been questioned as a complete work, largely due to the troubling fascinations of the poet for “O Thou my lovely Boy” (Sonnet 126, line 1). The 154 sonnets are said to have no complete sonnet sequence, “no coherent story” (Burto et al., 1988) and no virtuous overall message (Auden, 1907; Slater, 1975; Everett, 2008; Duncan-Jones, 2010; Conner, 2017, among many other reviews). These readings of the Sonnets have cast a dark shadow over the presumed ambivalent sexuality and moral judgments of Shakespeare (Slater, 2016; Winkler, 2019). As such, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* as a whole are often seen as unworthy of the mature poet.

On the contrary, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* suggest to us stories of the Pembroke family between 1580 and 1609 (Williams, 2012; Yeomans, 2017). Long recognized as Shakespeare's most personal work, the Sonnets express the viewpoints and turbulent history of the Countess of

Pembroke, her son William, her husband Henry, and her brother Sir Philip (Chapters 5 and 6). As such, they form a “virtue-breeding” cycle of poems on maternal love, full of rich images, allegories and moral judgments based on sonnet models of Sir Philip Sidney, and of Petrarch, the father of humanism and the Italian Renaissance (Yeomans, 2018).

In particular, Sonnet 126 provides the conclusion of the sonnet sequence. The 12 lines of this 6-couplet poem answer the puzzles in the 12-line Dedication to W.H. In the first couplet, the boy “W.H.” becomes Father Time, holding “his sickle” and an hourglass called “time’s fickle glass”. Then, the poet becomes Mother Nature, “sovereign mistress over wrack” in the 3rd couplet. In the final 3 couplets, Nature kills time using her poetry, and then makes final judgments, called “Her *Audit*” and “her *Quietus*”. Does this imply that the poet is the mother of William Herbert, Mary Sidney Herbert? If so, how did she become the author of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, and how could this be missed for 400 years?

Plays. Several non-traditional commentators have wondered whether Mary Sidney Herbert had a larger role than patron, muse, and collaborator of poets (Slater, 1931; Williams, 2012). Was she the organizer of Pembroke’s theater company and playwrights in 1589-93, as she was for the Sidney Circle of poets from 1586 to 1601? Was she working with Christopher Marlowe and others to develop plays for the Pembrokes’ many performances of Marlowe and Shakespeare plays throughout England in 1592-93 (Faulkes, 2007; 2016; Star, 2016)? Was Mary Sidney Herbert a co-author of these early plays later attributed to Shakespeare, possibly writing dramatic scenes involving nobles, courtiers and women to suit the interests of the Pembrokes? Most controversially, was the Countess of Pembroke herself the creative force behind many plays attributed to Shakespeare, as proposed by Slater, Faulkes and Williams.



Fig. 1-3. Portraits of Pembrokes featured in Chapter 1, William Herbert and Mary Herbert (engravings by Simon van de Passe, 1618) and Henry Herbert (right).

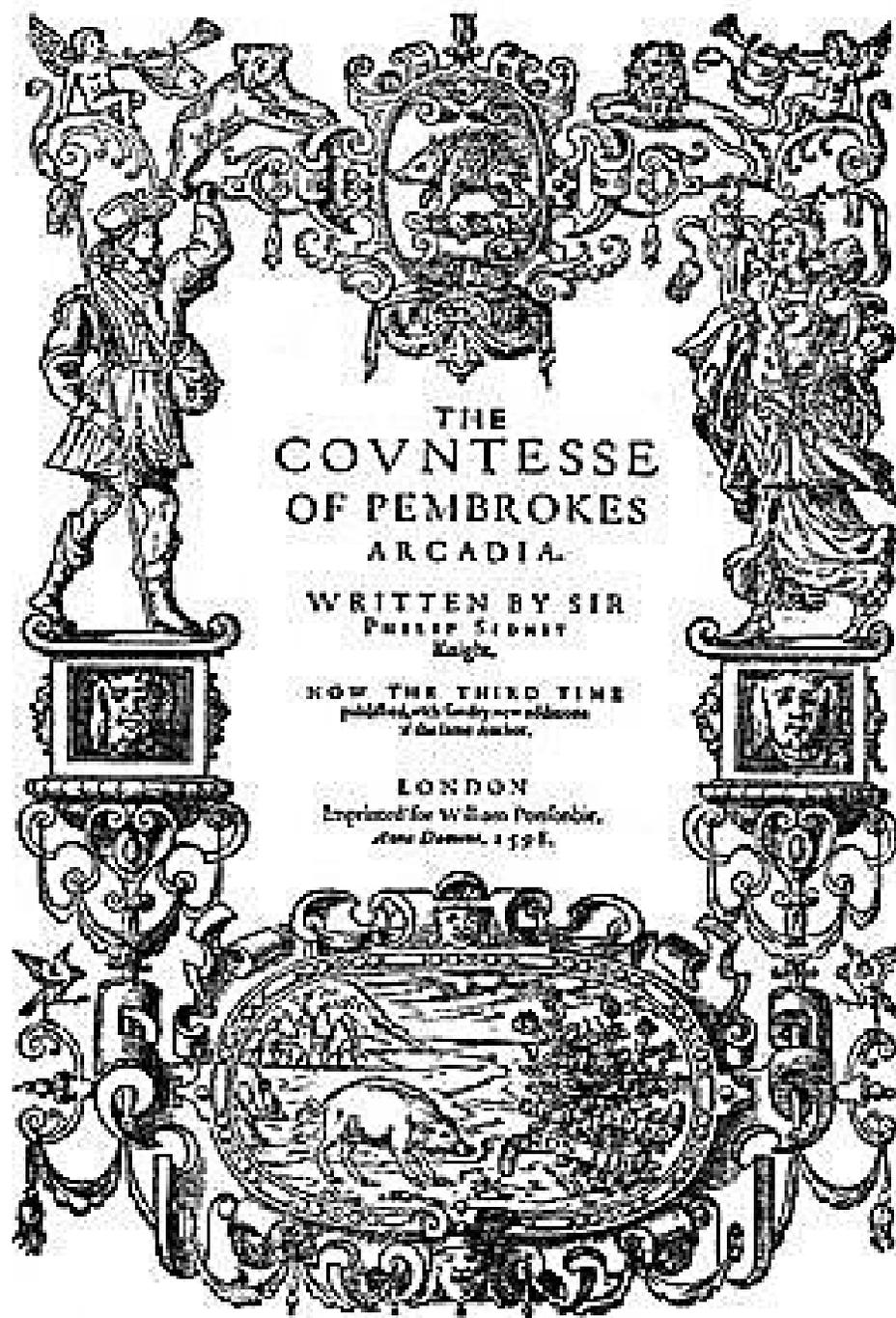


Fig. 1-4. Title page, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, 1593 and 1598.

Over the last decade, the central roles of strong women characters in Shakespeare's plays, and in each of the poem sequences, have been discussed (Williams, 2012; 2018; Chapters 7, 8 here). Feminist messages in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, long overlooked, have been increasingly emphasized (Williams, 2012; Chapters 5, 6 here). The central role of a woman author can no longer be ignored.

Summary of this book. To test these hypotheses, we will review Pembroke family history and texts. Stories in the early collaborative plays might reflect the history of the Pembroke family (Chapters 2 and 3). If Mary Sidney Herbert was an unacknowledged co-author of plays, as were Marlowe, Peele and Nashe, then her words, styles, imagery and attitudes should be evident in plays and poems of Shakespeare (Chapter 4). We will review style and word-frequency analyses used by *The New Oxford Shakespeare (TNOS)* scholars on the published works of these authors, and of Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, as tests of their possible co-authorship (Chapters 4, 7 and 8).

Chapter 2 begins by asking "Who were the Pembrokes?" The powerful Herbert, Sidney and Dudley families of Mary Sidney's husband and parents have well-documented histories. These families took leading military, political and social roles in England, Wales, Ireland and the Netherlands from the Wars of the Roses through the Tudor monarchs and James I.

Marlowe, Nashe, Harvey, Spenser and Daniel each praised the Countess of Pembroke as their inspiring muse. We review evidence that Marlowe and Nashe worked collaboratively with Mary Sidney Herbert between 1591 and 1593 to develop plays for performances by the Pembrokes (e.g., Warren, 2003; *TNOS*, 2017a) (Chapters 3 and 4).

In 1593, Mary Sidney Herbert wrote a sonnet entitled "Her Old Comedy" in which she claimed to write a satire about the playwright Thomas Nashe, whom she ridiculed as "Gnasharduccio" and "Sir Bombarduccio" (Harvey, 1593). Nashe's pamphlets in these years first praised and then criticized his patron, Mary Sidney Herbert. Is "Her Old Comedy" an early version of *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), the only comedy that Pembroke's servants is known to have performed (Fig. 1-2) (Chapter 4)?

Chapter 7 reviews major poems of Shakespeare and of the Sidney Circle. All five of Shakespeare's poem sequences use the central viewpoint of a goddess or noblewoman protagonist to develop allegorical themes on love, following the styles and goals of Mary Sidney Herbert. Word-frequency analysis of Arefin et al. (2014) found that *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594) were similar in word frequencies to poems written by authors of the Sidney family and their circle. Why were Shakespeare's poetic word styles so much like those of Philip and Mary Sidney and their closest colleagues?

Authorship: Does it matter who wrote these poems and plays? Chapter 8 reviews how the plays attributed to Shakespeare can be appreciated better when seen from the evolving viewpoints of Mary Sidney Herbert and of her fellow poets, especially as seen in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

The traditional attribution of the First Folio plays to a single male author, William Shakespeare, is based largely on forewords in the First Folio by the Globe actors Heminges and Condell, and a poem by Ben Jonson. Each of these presumed writers depended on the patronage of William Herbert, the Lord Chamberlain of James I from 1615-25. Seven years after the death of William Shakespeare, the Globe actor, the name “William Shakespeare” was re-interpreted in the 1623 Folio. Many skeptics have found it hard to square the praises to “William Shakespeare” in the First Folio with the lack of praise for William Shakespeare of Stratford from other writers during his lifetime or upon his death (Price, 2013).

Should readers trust the sole-authorship attributions in the prefaces to the First Folio (1623), or should they trust the abundant evidence for multiple co-authors of Shakespeare’s plays reviewed in *TNOS* (2017a)? Or should the alternate authorship claims of the Countess of Pembroke in 1593, and throughout *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1609) be considered? This is literature’s greatest mystery. Whatever one’s views on authorship or co-authorship of individual works might be, this book will help readers appreciate better the career of “Shakespeare” through the leading roles of the Pembrokes and Sidneys (Chapter 8).

Chapter 2: Who Were the Pembrokes? Herbert, Dudley and Sidney Families.

The Herberts, Dudleys and Sidneys were three of the most powerful Protestant families in Elizabethan England, due to their close personal relationships with the Queen (see timelines in Table 2-1). The public and literary lives of Robert Dudley, Henry Sidney, Philip Sidney, Robert Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert have been documented in many biographies (e.g., Ringler, 1962; Croft, 1984; Hannay, 1990; Duncan-Jones, 1991; Brady, 2002; O’Farrell, 2011). After review of these family histories, we look at the literary careers of Philip, Mary and Robert Sidney in relation to the works of Shakespeare.

Table 2-1. Timeline of Herbert, Dudley and Sidney Lineages and Titles, in Relation to Monarchs. Dates of assuming titles are shown in parentheses. Henry VI and Edward IV each assumed the title of King twice. The titles “Sir” and “Lady” are not included here.

<u>Monarchs</u>	<u>Earls of Pembroke</u>	<u>Earls of Leicester</u>	<u>Sidneys</u>
Birth (Crown) Death	(Ascension and marriage dates)		
Henry VI 1421 (1422, 1470) 1471	William Herbert, 1 st Earl (8 th creation) 1423 (1468) 1469		
Edward IV 1442 (1461, 1471) 1483			
Richard III 1452 (1483) 1485			
Henry VII 1457 (1485) 1509			William Sidney c.1482-1554
Henry VIII 1491 (1509) 1547	William Herbert, 1 st Earl (10 th creation) c.1506 (1551) 1569		Henry Sidney 1529-1586 (m. 1551)
Edward VII 1537 (1547) 1553			Mary Dudley c.1530-1586
Mary I 1516 (1553) 1558		Robert Dudley 1532 (1559) 1588	
Elizabeth I 1533 (1558) 1603	Henry Herbert, 2 nd Earl 1534 (1570) 1601 (m. 1576 Mary Sidney 1561-1621)		
James 1566 (1603) 1625	William Herbert, 3 rd Earl 1580 (1601) 1630 Philip Herbert, 4 th Earl 1584 (1630) 1650	Robert Sidney 1563 (1618) 1626	Philip Sidney 1554-1586

Welsh Earls of Pembrokes (1468-1630). The Herberts held lands in South Wales around Pembroke Castle, in Wiltshire around Wilton House, Ramsbury Manor, and Ivychurch, and in London at Baynard’s Castle on the Thames River. These properties were granted to the Herberts as a result of their long military service to York and Tudor monarchs.

Pembroke Castle (Fig. 2-1) was the bastion that English Earls of Pembroke occupied from 1138-1468 to protect the large harbor around Milford Haven for English monarchs. This site is important in *Cymbeline*, the last play of the First Folio. The first Welsh Earl of Pembroke, named William Herbert, was elevated to the nobility by Edward IV of York for his critical military support in the Wars of the Roses, first as a Baron in 1461, then as the Earl of Pembroke in 1468.

In the Battle of Mortimer's Cross near the Welsh border with England in February, 1461, William Herbert led Welsh troops against Lancaster and Tudor forces. Herbert's soldiers fought with York troops led by two sons of the murdered Duke of York. These two sons later became Kings Edward IV and Richard III. This story of the Yorks' victory over the Lancasters in the Wars of the Roses is told in the 1595 play, *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York*, performed by Pembroke's servants. This play, later known as *Henry VI part 3*, was written by Marlowe, Shakespeare and at least one other author, according to TNOS (2017a).

After the battle, William Herbert became guardian of the boy Henry Tudor, who had $\frac{1}{4}$ Welsh blood, at Pembroke Castle from 1461-69. By protecting the future Henry VII, the first Tudor King, William formed a long-term alliance between the Pembrokes and the Tudors that continued until the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign.



Fig. 2-1. Pembroke Castle, Wales.

As founder of the Herbert/Pembroke family line that continues to the present day, William Herbert (1423-69) became “the only begetter of these ensuing” sons of Pembroke. These quoted words are the opening words of the Dedication to “Mr. W.H.” in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*. These words reflect the Pembroke family line of succession, via William and Philip Herbert, the sons of Mary Sidney Herbert (see Chapter 5).

Sir William Herbert (c.1506-1569) was grandson of the first William Herbert through his father, the illegitimate son of William Herbert (see timeline in Table 2-1). Sir William protected Wales and Western England for Henry VIII. In 1538, Sir William married Anne Parr, sister of Henry VIII’s last wife, Catherine Parr. Henry VIII provided estates in Wiltshire, Cardiff Castle and Baynard’s Castle in London for his brother-in-law and ally. (The title “Sir” is used in his name here to distinguish the 3 Pembrokes named William Herbert, for the sake of clarity).

When Henry VIII died in 1547, Sir William became guardian of Edward VI, who then revived the title 1st Earl of Pembroke in 1551 for his guardian. Sir William administered Wales and several counties in Western England as “Lord President of the Council of Wales and the Marches” at Ludlow Castle, two times between 1550 and 1558. Sir William was father of the 2nd Earl, Henry Herbert (1534-1601), patron of Pembroke’s players and husband of Mary Sidney Herbert. Therefore, Sir William was the grandfather of the “incomparable pair of brethren” William and Philip Herbert, who later became the 3rd and 4th Earls of Pembroke (Table 2-1).

Queen Elizabeth’s Trusted Nobles: Robert Dudley, Mary Dudley Sidney and Henry Sidney (Fig. 2-2). Philip, Mary and Robert Sidney’s parents were Henry Sidney and Mary Dudley Sidney. The Dudley family rose quickly from the 1558 to 1580, due to the close personal relationships of Robert Dudley (c.1533-1588) and of his sister Mary Dudley Sidney, with Queen Elizabeth. Upon the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558, Dudley became Master of the Horse, leading her royal forces and parades. She granted Dudley vast lands in North Wales and the Midlands in 1563, elevating him to the title of Earl of Leicester in 1564.

Robert Dudley was a major patron of the arts, sponsoring an acting company called Leicester’s Men from 1559-85, led by actor James Burbage after 1570 (Chapter 3). Leicester’s troupe performed widely in England, and for 3 visits of the Queen to Dudley’s country house, Kenilworth. Her 3-week visit in July, 1575, featured music, masques, poetry, dancing, tilting, hunting, and bear-baiting, accompanied by sumptuous food and drink. For Dudley, this expensive party at Kenilworth was his final unsuccessful attempt to win Queen Elizabeth’s hand in marriage.

The Sidney family estate at Penshurst Place in Kent was granted by Edward VI in 1552 to Henry Sidney’s father, William Sidney (1482-1554). He had tutored Prince Edward with young Henry Sidney as the Prince’s companion. Edward VI died at the age of 15 in Henry Sidney’s arms in 1553 (Brady, 2002, p. 106).

Robert Dudley
1532-88

Mary Dudley Sidney
1530-86

Henry Sidney
1529-86



Fig. 2-2. Portraits of Leicester, Mary Dudley Sidney and Henry Sidney, uncle and parents of Philip, Mary and Robert Sidney, by an unknown artist c. 1565, by Hans Eworth c. 1555, and by Arnold van Brockhorst, 1573, respectively.

Sir Henry Sidney then served Elizabeth as Lord President of the Council of Wales at Ludlow Castle from 1560-86. Sir Henry was sent to Dublin by the Queen from 1565 to 1571 and from 1575 to 1578 to deal with the Irish rebellion. Ireland was divided, with English coastal enclaves surrounded by territory held by hostile Irish natives. Pacification of Ireland by England was not achieved, to the disappointment of the Queen. In 1583, Sir Henry wrote that he was never rewarded sufficiently for his decades of services to the Queen (see *Sir Henry Sidney's Memoirs of Service in Ireland*, Brady, 2002). He refused the title of Baron offered in 1572, lacking the wealth needed to serve as a noble at her court.

Mary Dudley married Henry Sidney in 1551, the same year that he was knighted, and that Sir William Herbert was elevated to Earl of Pembroke. Mary Dudley Sidney then served Queen Elizabeth as lady-in-waiting from 1558-1562. During the smallpox epidemic of 1562, Mary Dudley Sidney nursed the Queen back to health, but the smallpox infection left them both physically scarred for life (Brady, 2002, p. 105). Mary Dudley Sidney was fluent in French and Italian, and interested in poetry, romances and alchemy, passions she passed to her many children.

Two sons of Henry and Mary Dudley Sidney, Philip and Robert Sidney, were admired as poets, courtiers and military leaders (Fig. 2-3). Robert Sidney became the heir to Penshurst in 1586 after the deaths of his father and older brother. Robert Sidney was elevated to the Earl of

Leicester in 1618, 30 years after the death of his uncle Robert Dudley, who died in 1588 without male heirs.

Marriage of Mary Sidney to Henry Herbert. Mary Sidney (1561-1621) grew up with her brothers and sisters at Penshurst Place and at Ludlow Castle. She became the third wife of Henry Herbert in 1577, bearing him 4 children, 2 daughters who died young and 2 sons, William and Philip Herbert. Mary Herbert's husband, Henry Herbert, became the Lord President of the Council of Wales (1586-1601), replacing her father after his death.

Kenilworth, 1575, was a debut of sorts for Leicester's 14-year-old niece, Mary Sidney, who served the Queen as a "maid of honor" for 2 years. In 1576-7, Robert Dudley negotiated the marriage of 15-year-old Mary Sidney with his friend, the middle-aged Earl of Pembroke, to unite 3 powerful families. Pembroke's previous 2 wives had not borne him an heir, so the birth of William Herbert in 1580 ensured a successor for the Earl (Hannay, 1990).

In Chapters 5 and 6 on *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, we show that William Herbert is "Mr. W.H.", the "tender heir" of Mary Sidney and Henry Herbert in Sonnet 1, Line 3. He is also "O Thou, my lovely Boy" of Sonnet 126, and "Will" in several later sonnets to the Dark Lady.

Literature and Libraries. Shakespeare's poems and plays reflect a deep knowledge of ancient, Renaissance and English literature. Scholars have documented over 200 sources that Shakespeare must have accessed, based on stories used in plays and poems. Many of these sources were not translated into English at the time, suggesting that the author read Italian and French fluently, and some Latin and Spanish as well (Dobson & Wells, *Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, 2001).

The private libraries at Penshurst Place, Wilton House, Kenilworth and Leicester's London House were among the few in England at the time with the size and quality to provide these books to the author(s) (Williams, 2012). "Leicester was the most active non-Royal patron of bookbinders leaving 220 volumes at Leicester House alone on his death" (Hilton, 2015). Penshurst was admired for its gardens, classical beauty, and refined patrons when Robert Sidney was the lord (see Ben Jonson's poem "To Penshurst", 1616). The catalogue of the Sidneys' 17th Century library at Penshurst is available (*The Library of the Sidneys at Penshurst Place, circa 1665*, 2013).

Leicester and the Pembrokes were major patrons of Oxford University, where Robert Dudley was Lord Chancellor from 1564-85, as was William Herbert from 1616-30. William Herbert's statue still stands in front of the entrance to the Bodleian Library (Fig. 2-3).

Leicester and Sidney's leadership in politics and in the Netherlands. During the 1580s, Robert Dudley's enemies in England wrote pamphlets attacking his morality, his romantic affairs, and his failed courtship of the Queen (e.g., *Leicester's Commonwealth*, 1584). In 1585, Dudley led a military force to the Netherlands to support Dutch Protestant rebels against Spanish rulers, with the Queen's permission, but without her financial support. This adventure exhausted

his personal treasure, ended his patronage of Leicester's Men, and led to the tragic death of his nephew, Sir Philip Sidney, in 1586.



Fig. 2-3. Portraits of Sir Philip Sidney (left) (c. 1576, unknown artist, National Portrait Gallery), and Mary Sidney (center) and Robert Sidney (right) (both 1618, by Simon van de Passe).

Death of Sir Philip Sidney. In 1585, Sir Philip and Robert Sidney joined Dudley's forces in the Netherlands, each serving as Governor of Flushing, the Dutch port city of Vlissingen. Sir Philip died in his brother's arms after being shot in the thigh at the Battle of Zutphen in 1586. This event is important to the interpretation of *Venus and Adonis* (1993), where Adonis is wounded in the thigh, and his death is mourned by Venus (Buxton, 1986).

Queen Elizabeth provided a state funeral procession to St. Paul's Cathedral in 1587 (Fig. 2-5), unprecedented for a commoner. Sir Philip's casket was accompanied by family members carrying flags showing the family badge, the Sidney "Pheon", in the upper left corner. His casket was followed on horses by his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, his brother-in-law, the Earl of Pembroke, and many other nobles. Although Sir Philip lacked a noble title, he was the closest male heir to two of his uncles, the Earls of Leicester and of Warwick at the time of his death.

Robert Dudley, chosen by Elizabeth I to lead England's defenses against the anticipated invasion of the Spanish Armada, died suddenly in 1588. He left no legitimate male heirs and little money. His title as Earl of Leicester was vacated. Dudley, Sir Philip Sidney and Queen Elizabeth each died without a legitimate son. The theme of succession by begetting a son was central to Tudor and Pembroke history, to several of Shakespeare's plays, and especially to *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Chapter 5).



Fig. 2-4. Statue of William Herbert, in front of the Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

Philip Sidney led English poetry groups. In the late 1570s, Philip Sidney led a circle of friends and poets, including Fulke Greville and Edward Dyer (seen to the left of his casket in Fig. 2-4, below), Gabriel Harvey and Edmund Spenser (Harvey, 1583; Hannay, 1990; Williams, 2012). Their goal was to improve English poetry using classical, Italian and French verse as models, as stated by Philip in *The Defense of Poesy* (written 1580s; published 1595). Philip's only play was a one-act allegorical masque, *The Lady of May*, written in 1578 for Queen Elizabeth's visit to Leicester's country house, Wanstead. Philip's sonnet cycle, *Astrophel and Stella*, written in the early 1580s, became the inspiration for many other sonnets by English poets, such as Spenser, Daniel, Robert Sidney, and, much later, of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Between travels, Philip lived at Wilton House and Penshurst Place.

The Sidney Pheon is a downward-pointing spearhead, in which 3 broad points join into one sharp point. It has represented the military service of Sidneys from the 1570s to the present. It also represents the power of the pen, and of the Sidney sonnet form in which 3 quatrains join into one powerful final couplet. This image is also used in Shakespeare's Sonnet 105 "Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords". Note the Pheon in Fig. 2-3 above the heads of Mary and Robert Sidney, who also wrote many sonnets.

Poetic legacies of Sir Philip Sidney and Lady Mary Sidney Herbert. After Sir Philip's death, several friends dedicated poems to him. In 1593, Robert Sidney ("R.S.") collected elegiac and poetic tributes to the late Philip Sidney and Robert Dudley in *The Phoenix Nest* (see Appendix 1). Sir Walter Raleigh wrote *An Epitaph upon the Right Honourable Sir Philip Sidney, Knight, Lord Governor of Flushing* (1586). In *The Ruins of Time* (1590), Edmund Spenser dedicated poems on the death of Sir Philip to Mary Sidney Herbert. Spenser later acknowledged his debts to Sir Philip with several lengthy poems including *Astrophel* (1595). But Spenser placed Mary Sidney Herbert "highest" in *Colin Clout Comes Home Again* (1595):

"They all, quoth he, me graced goodly well,
That all I praise: but in the highest place,
Urania, Sister unto Astrophel,
In whose brave Mind, as in a golden Coffe,
All heavenly Gifts and Riches locked are:
More rich than Pearls of Inde, or Gold of Ophir,
And in her Sex more wonderful and rare."

After 1586 Mary Sidney Herbert was leader of the Sidney Circle poets at Wilton House (Hannay, 1990; Faulkes, 2007; Williams, 2012). These poets included Nicholas Breton, Thomas Watson, Abraham Fraunce, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Samuel Daniel, tutor to her children. Appendix 2 lists 37 dedications to her from 24 authors, 3 of whom will be especially important in later chapters:

Robert Garnier's play, *The Tragedy of Antony*, were translated in 1590 and published together in 1592. Mary Sidney Herbert's translation of *The Tragedy of Antony* influenced Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* (Bourus, 2017b, p. 3251).

Her translation of Petrarch's *Triumph of Death* from Italian (completed by 1599) retold the story of a "gallant lady" facing death. In his *Triumphs* (*I Trionfi* in Italian) Petrarch portrayed allegorical victories, 3 that proceed from love to death for the lady, followed by 3 that proceed from fame to eternity for the poet. These 6 themes are reflected in the 6 autobiographical couplets of Shakespeare's Sonnet 126, proceeding from love for a boy (couplet 1) to final judgments of the poet (couplet 6) (Chapter 5).

***The Sidney Psalms and The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* were co-authored by Philip and Mary Sidney.** Philip's translations of *Psalms* 1-43, followed by *Psalms* 44-150 by his sister Mary, were presented to Queen Elizabeth in 1599 (Brown et al., 2006). The *Psalms* by Mary show a wider range of poetic forms, from sonnets in *Psalms* 100 and 150 to anagrams, varying stanza patterns and meters with unprecedented virtuosity (Williams, 2012, pp. 48-9). John Donne's c.1610 poem, *Upon the translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip Sidney, and the Countess of Pembroke, his sister* concluded: "They tell us why, and teach us how to sing."

Sir Philip's longest work, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, was written for his sister: "To my dear Lady and sister...only for you, only to you...that you may long live, to be a principal ornament to the family of the *Sidneys*". Mary Sidney Herbert's 1593 version completed an earlier edition published by Philip Sidney's friend, Fulke Greville (1590). A second dedication in 1593 "To the Reader" by "H.S." concluded: "[I]t is now by more than one interest *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* done, as it were, for her: as it is, by her. Neither shall these pains be the last (if no unexpected accident cut off her determination) which the everlasting love of her excellent brother, will make her consecrate to his memory." "H.S." is presumed to be Hugh Sanford, first tutor for Mary Sidney Herbert's children from 1586, and thus a witness in the house to writing by her in those years.

Her 1598 edition included Sir Philip's other major works, *The Lady of May*, a masque for Queen Elizabeth, *The Defense of Poesy*, *Astrophel and Stella* and other shorter poems. This edition added the missing sonnet 37 that revealed the name of Philip's love "Stella", i.e., Lady Rich, Penelope Devereaux. This method of revealing love by means of sonnets was used by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

Many Elizabethan poets of the Sidney Circle acknowledged that Philip's sister Mary was a partner in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, such as Abraham Fraunce in *Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch* (1591), Nicholas Breton (1590) in *The Pilgrimage to Paradise*, and *The Countess of Pembroke's Passion*. Scholars, however, have debated how much of the final edition of *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1598) was the work of Philip or of his sister. Mary's revisions were once dismissed as destructive of her brother's work (e.g., Feuillerat, 1939), but recent biographers have credited more originality to her contributions (Hannay et al., 1998; 2005). Mary Sidney Herbert is now widely recognized as the leading female poet of the

Elizabethan era based on the testimony of her colleagues (Appendix 2) and the growing list of her identified writings (Appendix 3) (The Orlando Project, Mary Sidney Herbert, on-line).

Conclusions. The Herbert, Sidney and Dudley families rose in power together in the 1560s and 1570s. By the 1580s, the Sidneys were leaders of a large circle of poets. The deaths of Henry Sidney, Mary Dudley Sidney and Philip Sidney in 1586, and of Robert Dudley in 1588, left these families weakened. The Pembrokes remained the strongest of the 3 families in the 1590s to support their futures with Queen Elizabeth.

In the 5 years following Leicester's death, the Pembrokes became deeply involved in ambitious theatrical productions, especially English history plays on the Wars of the Roses. Why did the Pembrokes invest in these new ventures, so different from the classical poetry of the Sidney Circle?

Chapter 3: Plays for Pembroke's Men.

EDWARD Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?

RICHARD Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.

In this the heaven figures some event. 3 Henry VI, Act 2, Scene 1

Leicester and Pembroke's performances at court. The Queen's Accession Day ceremonies on November 17 celebrated her coronation day with pageantry, poetry and tilts. Noble families showed their wealth, heritage and strength by parading flags, horses and armor. Poetic tributes to the Queen flattered her history, intelligence and virtue.

As Master of the Horse from 1559-87, Robert Dudley was a leader of these events for many years. In the 1570s, Philip Sidney was featured by his family for his mastery of horsemanship and poetry (Ringler, 1962; Duncan-Jones, 1991).

These events were especially important for the Pembrokes, who had risen as a result of their military power supporting Tudor monarchs. In 1588, Henry Herbert promised hundreds of horses and arms to Queen Elizabeth for the defense of England against the Spanish Armada. At Wilton House, Pembrokes kept a large armory for horses and soldiers (O'Farrell, 2011, p. 3; Aubrey, c.1680). Three generations of Pembrokes (1st, 2nd and 3rd Earls) purchased the finest armor from the royal workshops at Greenwich. Henry Herbert's armor was made of iron alloy, steel and gold, with markings that displayed his family history with heraldry (Fig. 3-1). Several Pembroke suits of armor are still featured at museums in England, Toronto and New York City.



Fig. 3-1. Armor of Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke. c. 1586. Metropolitan Museum. "This armor was made for Henry Herbert (1534-1601) in the royal workshops at Greenwich... Herbert's antiquarian and heraldic interests are reflected in the armor's decoration, which traces the lineage of the great Pembroke family through its complex coat of arms, consisting of twenty-two quarterings. The complete arms are displayed on the cheeks of the helmet, while individual quarterings are found on every element of the armor. The Order of the Garter, awarded to Pembroke in 1574, also figures prominently in the decoration."

Leicester's theater group performed at court between 1560 and 1583. Queen Elizabeth granted the company a license by royal patent in 1574 to become the first official troupe in England. "From 1570 to 1583 the Earl of Leicester's Men enjoyed their greatest success. James Burbage was leader of Leicester's Men from 1572. In 1576, the Burbage brothers built The Theater on the outskirts of London in Shoreditch, the first full-time building for dramatic performances in the growing capital. In 1583, however, the company lost royal favor after the formation of the Queen's Men" (*Earl of Leicester's Men*, Britannica.com, on-line).

After Leicester's troupe dissolved in 1585, their actors joined Lord Strange's and the Lord Admiral's players. Many new works of Marlowe, Lyly, Peele, Greene, Nashe, Kyd and others were debuted in those years by several performing groups. A few plays each year were approved for full production at court by the Queen's Master of Revels.

By 1592, James Burbage's son Richard had become lead actor for a new company sponsored by the Earl of Pembroke. These players performed in London, at court, and in at least 10 English towns in 1592-3 (Knutson, 2001). In 1594, the Burbages organized a new company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, with the full support of the Queen for court performances. In February, 1596, the Burbages purchased Blackfriars Theater, near the Thames in central London close to Pembroke's home at Baynard's Castle for indoor performances, then built the Globe in 1599 for large-scale theater (Fig. 3-2).

The rise of Pembroke's players, 1588-93. Pembroke's servants had for years performed masques and music at Wilton House, led by the Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney Herbert. In November, 1588, the Countess moved her large retinue of servants into London for the Accession Day and court holiday celebrations (Hannay, 1990, pp. 59-60). Her parade of 100 horses and several coaches was described by the Spanish Ambassador as "a superb entrance into the city". The Queen's visit in August, 1592 to Pembroke's country house led to 2 performances of Pembroke's players at court December 26, 1592 and January 6, 1593. The titles of those 2 court plays are not known, however.

In 1594-95 "The Earl of Pembroke, his servants" were identified on the title pages of 4 published plays, 3 plays later attributed to Shakespeare, and one by Marlowe (see Fig. 3-3). The only play of the 4 that listed an author was Marlowe's *Edward II* (1594) (Fig. 1-2). The bloody Roman tragi-comedy *Titus Andronicus* (1594), and the satirical comedy *A Pleasant Conceited History, entitled The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) also identified Pembroke on the title pages. *Titus Andronicus* (1594) listed 3 performing companies, of the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Pembroke, and the Earl of Sussex. Pembroke's players were listed as first of the 3 companies on the 1600 Quarto for *Titus Andronicus*, the year that the Pembrokes leased the Rose Theatre from Philip Henslowe (Knutson, 2001).



Fig. 3-2. View of London, 1616, by Visscher.

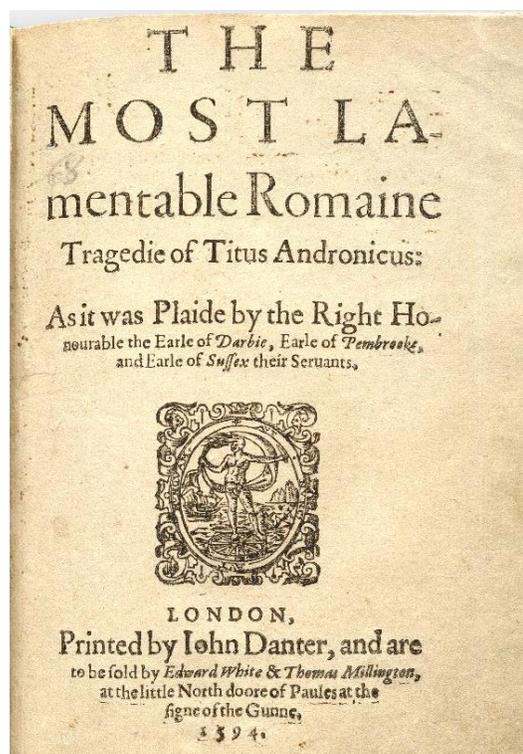
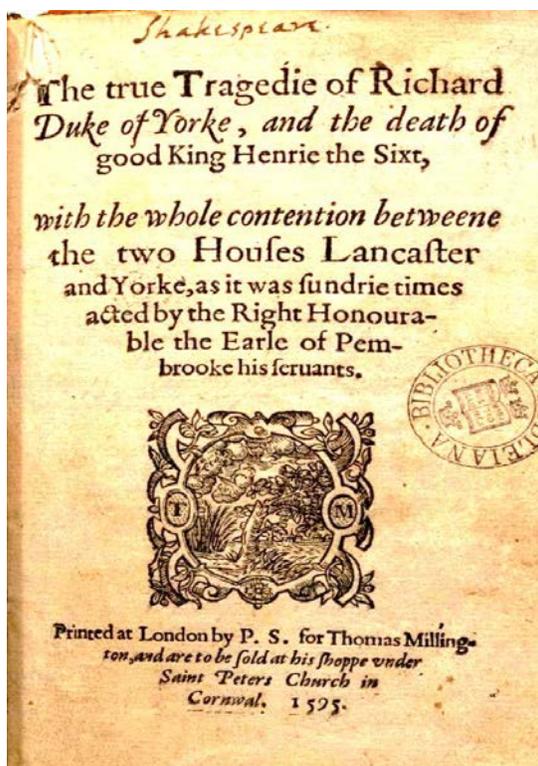


Fig. 3-3. Title pages of *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (1595) and *Titus Andronicus* (1594).

The casts for these plays were the largest ever used for Shakespeare's plays (Taylor and Loughnane, 2017a, p. 450). The two largest stage productions of the Elizabethan era were *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* on the Wars of the Roses. At least 22 actors were required, along with dozens of props, including drums, trumpets, and military equipment for the many battle scenes (Power, TNOS 2017b, p. 2569). White and red roses identified the opposing soldiers. Pembroke's arms, transportation equipment and servants were useful for these large touring productions.

The True Tragedy portrays the House of York's victory over the House of Lancaster in 1461. The "Sun-in-Splendor" scene that begins Act 2 uses 3 rising suns as props to dramatize the Battle of Mortimer's Cross on February 2 when William Herbert's Welsh troops fought with the Yorks. The battle was preceded by the illusion of a 3-part sun on the horizon that united into a single sun as it rose. This rare astrophysical event, called "parhelion" or "sun dog", occurs when the rising sun is seen through icy clouds. The York brothers, Edward and Richard, saw this as an omen that the united 3 sons of York would win the battle. Thereafter, Edward IV used the "Rose-en-Soleil" as the badge of the House of York (Fig. 3-4, below) to recall their dramatic victory with the army of the Herberts, as a sign that their rule was sanctioned by heavenly authority.

EDWARD Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?

RICHARD Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun;

See, see! They join, embrace, and seem to kiss,

As if they vow'd some league inviolable:

Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.

In this the heaven figures some event.

EDWARD 'Tis wondrous strange, the like yet never heard of.

I think it cites us, brother, to the field,

That we, should join our lights together

And henceforward will I bear

Upon my target three fair-shining suns.

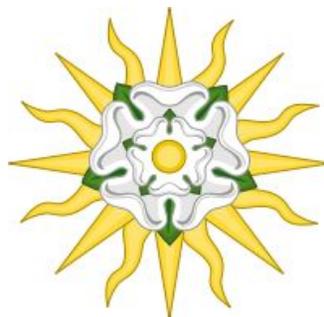


Fig. 3-4. "Sun-in-Splendor" scene from Henry VI, part 3, and York "Rose-en-Soleil".

This "Sun-in-Splendor" battle scene, may explain why Wars of the Roses history plays were chosen by the Herberts to please Queen Elizabeth in the 1590s. The Wars of the Roses plays ended with *Richard III* on the victory of Henry Tudor over the Yorks to found the House of Tudor, whose badge became the red and white rose. The image of Rose-en-Soleil as "beauty's Rose" is also central to the "rising sun" imagery of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (see Chapter 5).

Who wrote the plays for Pembroke's servants and when? According to controversial, but carefully documented, conclusions of TNOS (2016-7) Marlowe was a co-author with Shakespeare for each of the three Henry VI plays. Based on internal evidence from the plays, Marlowe, Nashe and Shakespeare each wrote scenes for *Henry VI, part 1*, with Nashe responsible for most of Act 1. At least one unidentified co-author, possibly Kyd or Greene, also contributed to each of the 3 plays. Shakespeare's contributions were greatest for *Henry VI, part 3*, with the "Sun-in-Splendor" scene apparently written by Shakespeare (Burrows & Craig,

2017a; Taylor & Loughnane, 2017a). This scene from *The True Tragedy* (1595) was not changed, except for a few words, in the First Folio (1623) version of this play.

All 5 plays performed by Pembroke's players were written between 1589 and August, 1593, when they ended their tours and sold their costumes (Knutson, 2001; *Henslowe's Diary*). According to *TNOS*, Peele began the opening scene of *Titus Andronicus* around 1589, followed by Shakespeare's revisions before publication in 1594. *The Contention of the Two Famous Houses* (later *Henry VI, part 2*) was written first in about 1590, followed by *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (later *Henry VI, part 3*) in late 1590. *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594 Quarto) was written in late 1591 by "Shakespeare" without an identifiable co-author. *Henry VI, part 1* was written in roughly March, 1592. Marlowe's *Edward II* (1594 Quarto) was entered into the Stationers' Register on July 6, 1593, five weeks after Marlowe's death, and so was likely written in 1592 or early 1593. Pembroke's players continued to perform occasionally until 1600, especially with Henslowe in 1597 (*Records of Early English Drama*, 2018).

Computer analysis of word frequencies and caveats. *TNOS* (2017a) featured a large study of word frequencies by Arefin et al. (2014) that tested associations between 256 plays and poems of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Computers calculated how often each work used 66,907 identifiable English words. Computer programs then displayed the plays that were most similar to one another on a 2-dimensional plot, using a statistical method called Principal Component Analysis. The plays that were closest to one another in their use of word frequencies then formed clusters on the plot (Fig. 3-5). For this analysis, only the final published versions of Shakespeare's plays in the First Folio were used.

Word-frequency studies are correlational studies limited in several ways. Short, common words are weighted heavily. The resulting associations can result from shared subject matter, common dates of writing, style similarities, or, in some cases, identifiable authorships. For example, Mary Sidney Herbert's translation of Garnier's *The Tragedy of Antony* (1592) was closely associated in Cluster 2 with Daniel's *Cleopatra* (1594) and with Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606-7) on the same subject. Historical information, including publication dates and known collaborations, is needed to understand which authors may have influenced others.

The plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare from 1580-95 were associated in Cluster 4 showing 24 plays. Strong links were found between 7 early plays of Shakespeare (shown in purple) and many other plays of Marlowe, Kyd, Nashe and Peele (Fig. 3-6). The linked circle at the center of Cluster 4 shows 6 plays attributed in large part to Shakespeare (*Henry VI, parts 1-3*, *Richard II* and *III*, and *Edward III*). Nearby were 2 plays of Marlowe (*Massacre at Paris*, *Edward II*) and *The Wars of Cyrus*, a play often attributed to Marlowe. If the co-authored plays of Shakespeare and Marlowe (*Henry VI, parts 1-3*) are added, then Marlowe was an author of 6 plays in this cluster. The circle is completed by 1 play of Kyd (*The Spanish Tragedy*), and one of Peele (*Edward I*). *Titus Andronicus* by Peele and Shakespeare was not included.

Marlowe, Kyd, Nashe and Peele also wrote several other plays found on spokes just outside this circle. Marlowe wrote *Tamburlaine, parts 1 and 2*, while *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, had both Marlowe's and Nashe's names on the title page. Above Shakespeare's *King John*, Peele is often

assigned authorship of *Battle of Alcazar*, *King David and Fair Bathsheba*, and *The Troublesome Reign of King John, parts 1 and 2*. In addition, Robert Greene's plays *Orlando Furioso*, and *Selimus, part 1* were linked with two of the *Henry VI* plays.

These data support the idea that authorship is one important factor contributing to clusters, as is the date of the writing. These data also support the idea that these different authors were writing in a similar style in these years, perhaps by writing in collaborations.

Cluster 4 included two historical "tetralogies" with strong links to Shakespeare (Fig. 3-6). First, the Wars of the Roses Tetralogy, *Henry VI, parts 1-3* was completed by *Richard III* (written by Shakespeare, c.1592). Second, the Plantagenet Tetralogy was also written in these years according to *TNOS: Edward I* (1593 Quarto by Peele), *Edward II* (1594 Quarto by Marlowe), and *Edward III* (written in early 1592 by "Shakespeare and others" according to Taylor & Loughnane, 2017a, pp. 503-6, then registered anonymously in 1595). The Plantagenet Tetralogy was completed by *Richard II*, written in 1595 by Shakespeare (1597 Quarto) (see Table 4-2).

Interpretations of data reviewed by TNOS. These results suggest that plays written in 1589-95 by Peele, Marlowe, Nashe, Kyd and Greene were similar in style and/or subject matter to many history plays attributed to Shakespeare. Nine history plays (2 tetralogies and *King John*) were closely associated in Cluster 4. These dates of writing and authors included the same years when Shakespeare, Marlowe and Peele wrote plays performed by Pembroke's servants. The history plays written for the Pembrokes (1589-93) were followed by history plays performed after 1593 by Burbage's new company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Ten of these plays were eventually published in the First Folio in correct historical sequence from *King John* to *King Henry VIII*. *Edward III* was not included in the First Folio, so authorship of that play by Shakespeare and, perhaps, Marlowe and Kyd, is still debated (Folger Library, 2018 website).

Twenty-eight of Shakespeare's later plays (1595-1611, all in the First Folio) were found in Cluster 3 (Arefin et al., 2014) (Fig. 3-5, bottom left). Eleven of these formed a tight cluster of Shakespeare's best-known plays. Nine comedies extended to the upper right of the circle, associated with comedies of Chapman which were even further to the right. To the lower left, were several dramas on Roman and Greek subjects, *Pericles*, *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*. This cluster suggests that Shakespeare's style, word usage and subject matter changed over time.

The Taming of the Shrew (the First Folio version) was the only Shakespeare play in Cluster 2, where it was linked with "City Comedies" about women (e.g., *The Wise Woman of Hoxton*, 1604, by Thomas Heywood, *Two Angry Women of Abington*, 1599, by Henry Porter, and *The Old Wives Tale*, 1595, by George Peele).

Just above the Roman dramas were the 3 plays of the Sidney Circle: *Antonie*, or *Tragedy of Antony*, as translated by Mary Sidney Herbert (1592), *Cleopatra* (1594) by Samuel Daniel, and a translation of Garnier's closet drama *Cornelia* (1594) by Thomas Kyd, published in the year of Kyd's death. This small cluster shows associations between Mary Sidney Herbert, her Pembroke

family tutor, Samuel Daniel, and a likely collaborator of Pembroke's players, Thomas Kyd. Regarding *Antony and Cleopatra* (c.1606-7), Bourus (*TNOS*, 2017b, p. 3251) concluded: "The 2 plays that most probably influenced him [Shakespeare] were both closet dramas: Robert Garnier's French *Antonius*, translated by the Countess of Pembroke (Mary Sidney Herbert) as *The Tragedy of Antony* (1595) [first in 1592] and Samuel Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*, published...in 1594". These recent conclusions further support a role for Mary Sidney Herbert as an author or editor of co-authored plays for Pembroke's players, later attributed to Shakespeare.

Studies of rare words also connect these co-authors. Shakespeare invented many new words, including hyphenated words "ever-living", "self-killed", "tongue-tied" from *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. These rare words have proven useful for identifying authors and dates. After counting over 5000 rare words in dozens of plays, strong statistical associations were again found between several plays by Shakespeare, Marlowe, Nashe and Kyd from 1587-92 (*Bartlett's Concordance*, 1927; Slater, 1975b; 1988; Wells & Taylor, 1987; Jackson 2015b, in Table 25.3 of Taylor & Loughnane, 2017a). These were many of the same plays that were linked in Cluster 4 of word-frequency studies (Fig. 3-6). Rare-word associations were found between *Henry VI, parts 1,2,3* and Mary Sidney Herbert's translations of *Psalms 95-150* and of *The Tragedy of Antony* (1592) in a study entitled "The Proof is in the Pembroke" (Warren, 2003). Did the Countess of Pembroke collaborate with Marlowe, Nashe, Kyd and Shakespeare in these years when Pembroke's servants were performing their co-authored plays?

According to Gurr (1996) and Erne (2001), Marlowe and Kyd each wrote plays performed by Pembroke's servants in 1592-93 shortly after Marlowe and Kyd were roommates in London. Erne (p. 229) argues that Kyd's patron was the Earl of Pembroke at the same time that Marlowe wrote *Edward II* for Pembroke's players. Further, Kyd's translation of *Cornelia* (1594) was influenced by the Countess of Pembroke's translation of *The Tragedy of Antony* (1592) also by Garnier. This is further evidence that Marlowe, Kyd and Mary Sidney Herbert worked together under Pembroke's patronage in these critical years for Shakespeare's development.

Summary and questions. According to *TNOS* experts, Shakespeare's co-authors in 1589-93 for plays performed by Pembroke's servants were well-known London playwrights (Marlowe, Nashe, Peele and, perhaps, Kyd and Greene). William Shakespeare, an actor without credits in 1592, is presumed to have finished 4 plays begun by Marlowe, Peele and Nashe (*TNOS*, 2017a,b). A challenge to this interpretation is the lack of historical evidence that William Shakespeare of Stratford was working with the Pembrokes in these years (e.g., Schoenbaum, 1975, pp. 111-36; Knutson, 2001). Much later, Shakespeare was given sole-author credit for these plays in the First Folio.

Why would the least experienced playwright among the co-authors be assigned the responsibility for writing and revising these plays by the Pembrokes for the 1594-95 publications, and then be given all the credit in 1623? The central role of the Countess of Pembroke in organizing authorship of these plays, and in choosing, writing and revising these plays, needs to be re-considered.

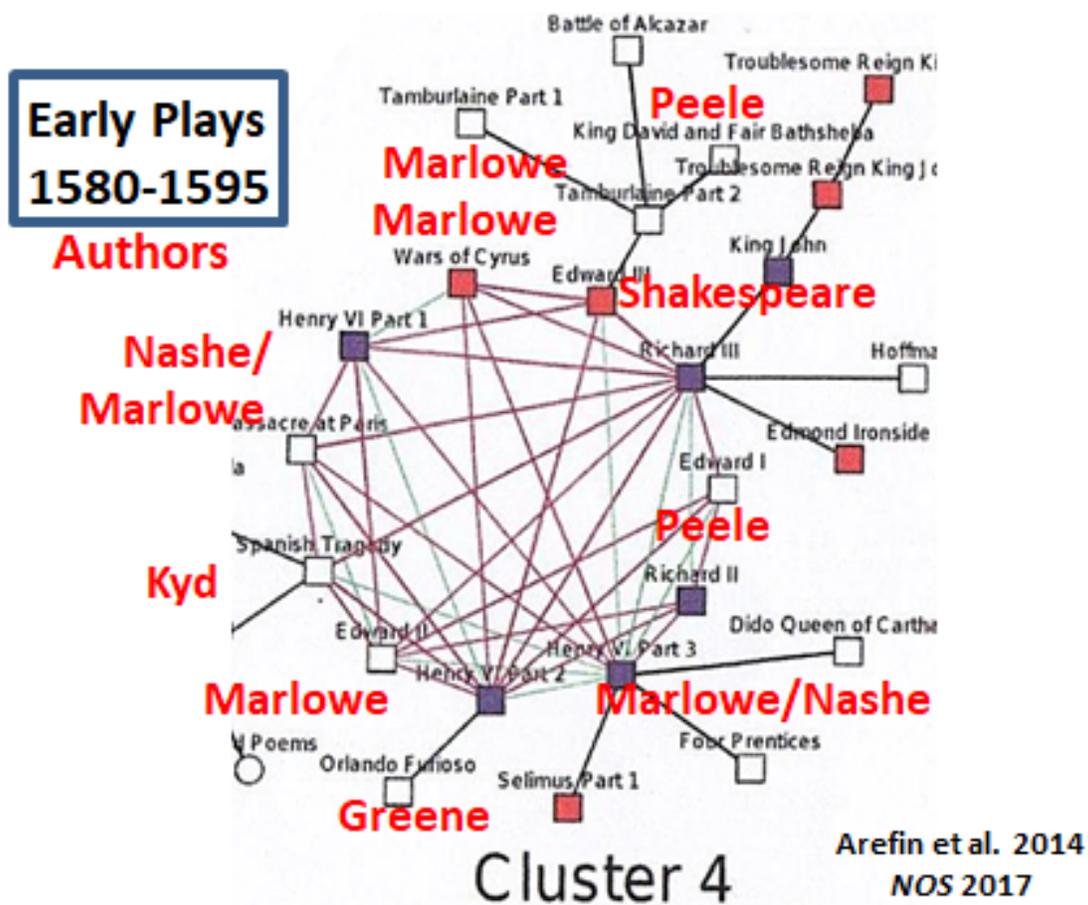


Fig. 3-6. Word-frequency associations in Cluster 4 from Arefin et al. (2014). Plays of Shakespeare (purple squares), Marlowe, Nashe, Peele and Kyd from 1580-95 are closely associated. Names of author attributions discussed in the text have been added in red.

Chapter 4: Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe and the Countess of Pembroke.

*“I knew a glorious and braving knight,
That would be deemed a truculental wight,
Of him I scrawled a doughty comedy...”* Mary Sidney Herbert, *Her Old Comedy*, 1593

Pembroke’s Players 1590-95. According to *TNOS*, four plays of Shakespeare were written with Peele, Marlowe and Nashe between 1589 and 1593. These plays, and Marlowe’s *Edward II*, were then acted by the “Earl of Pembroke his servants” as stated on their title pages in 1594 and 1595 publications. *TNOS* concluded that Peele, Nashe, Marlowe and the author later known as “Shakespeare” were working collaboratively in 1590-93 on these plays.

How did these authors work together in these years? A detailed timeline of events and publications involving each of these authors is shown below in Table 4-1. In dedications to Mary Sidney Herbert, Marlowe and Nashe each credited the Countess as his poetic inspiration, publicly seeking her patronage before the tours of Pembroke’s players in 1592-93. The Countess then claimed in July, 1593 that she had written a comedy satirizing Nashe, whom she called “Gnasharduccio”. If “Her Old Comedy” was an early version of *The Taming of a Shrew*, then Mary Sidney Herbert was sole author of the play performed by Pembroke’s servants that was later attributed to the author “William Shakespeare”. A portrait by Nicholas Hilliard shows her appearance as a young Countess in these years (Fig. 4-1).



Fig. 4-1. Miniature portrait of Mary Sidney Herbert by Nicholas Hilliard, c.1590. National Portrait Gallery.

Table 4-1: Timeline of Events for Poets Collaborating on Pembroke Plays, 1590-95.

--In 1590, the Countess completed translations of de Mornay's *A Discourse of Life and Death* (dated "the 13 of May 1590. At Wilton.") along with Garnier's *The Tragedy of Antony*, a long drama in 5 acts (dated "At Ramsbury. 26 of November. 1590"). These were registered May 3, 1592, and published together in 1592.

--Nashe's preface to Newman's unauthorized version of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* was published in 1591. This preface was Nashe's 2-page tribute to Sir Philip and Lady Mary Sidney.

--Marlowe was deported from Flushing to London January 26, 1591, by Mary Sidney Herbert's brother, Robert Sidney, the governor of Flushing (Wernham, *The Flushing Letter*, 1976). Marlowe's translations of Ovid's *Elegies* were published in Holland c.1592-93 (Nicholl, 1996).

--Samuel Daniel's *Delia* was registered February 4, 1592 and published the same year.

--The 5 plays that later became *Titus Andronicus*, *Henry VI, parts 1-3* and *The Taming of the Shrew* were written c.1589-93 for undated performances by Pembroke's troupe. *Henry VI, part 1* was performed by Henslowe's troupe at the Rose Theatre on Mar. 3, 1592 (*TNOS*, 2017a,b; *Henslowe's Diary*).

--The bubonic plague closed all London theatres for over a year beginning June 23, 1592. From December, 1592-December, 1593, 10,675 deaths from the plague were recorded by the London archivist, John Stow (Berry, 1995). Many actors joined companies that toured outside London.

--Pembroke's players toured in 10 English towns from June, 1592-August, 1593 with a cast of over 20 actors led by Richard Burbage (*Records of Early English Drama*, 2018).

--Queen Elizabeth visited the Pembrokes at Ramsbury Manor Aug., 26-28, 1592 on her summer tours. Pembroke's players then performed at her court Dec. 26, 1592 and Jan. 6, 1593.

--Disputes between Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey concerning the Countess went public after Nashe wrote *Pierce Penniless*, registered Aug. 8, 1592. Harvey replied with *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*, registered Dec. 4, 1592. Nashe answered with *Strange News*, registered January 12, 1593.

--Marlowe's dedication to Mary, Countess of Pembroke, seeking her patronage, was registered Nov. 10, 1592 as the preface to Thomas Watson's *Amintae Gaudia*.

--*Titus Andronicus* was registered Feb. 6, 1593, after January performances by the Earl of Suffolk's troupe at Henslowe's Rose Theater. "Peele thus wrote the beginning of the play, which Shakespeare finished" (Taylor et al., *TNOS*, 2017b, p. 128). *Titus Andronicus* was published in 1594 without an identified author "as it was played by the...Earl of Derby, Earl of Pembroke, Earl of Suffolk, their servants."

--*The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* was published in 1593, date unknown. Mary Sidney Herbert's "authorized" edition (Fig. 1-4) was reprinted many times in later years.

--*Venus and Adonis* by "William Shakespeare" was registered April 18, 1593, and reprinted over 10 times in the next decade.

--*Pierce's Supererogation* by Gabriel Harvey was published in response to Nashe, dated April 27, 1593 in the text. Harvey included on pp. 5-6 of his book three sonnets by the Countess of Pembroke, dated July 16, 1593. One sonnet entitled "Her Old Comedy" identified "Gnasharduccio" as the model for a braggart "Sir Bombarduccio".

--Kyd was arrested May 12, 1593 for "lewd and mutinous libels", as stated in the Privy Council decree of May 11. He was tortured and provided testimony against his former roommate, Marlowe. Marlowe was then arrested May 20 on similar grounds.

--Marlowe was killed May 30, stabbed in a Deptford house according to the inquest. Marlowe's *Edward II*, the history of an apparently homosexual English King, was registered July 6, 1593 and published in 1594, as acted by Pembroke's servants.

--Pembroke's Men sold their costumes Aug., 1593, according to *Henslowe's Diary*.

--Peele's *Edward I* was registered October 8 and published in 1593. *Edward III* was written c.1592 by "Shakespeare and co-author(s)" then registered Dec. 1, 1595 for publication in 1596 (Loughnane, *TNOS*, 2017b, p. 275).

--*The Phoenix Nest*, a collection of poems and essays "set forth by R.S.", was registered Oct. 8, 1593.

--*The Taming of a Shrew* was registered May 2, 1594. *The Taming of a Shrew* and *The Contention betwixt the two Houses of Lancaster and York* were published in 1594.

--*Lucrece* by "William Shakespeare" was registered May 9, 1594 and published in 1594.

--*The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* was written c.1590, then published in 1595. *Richard III* was written c.1592, then registered and published in 1597 (Jowett, *TNOS*, pp. 2643-2742, 2017b).

No direct evidence has been found that William Shakespeare from Stratford was an actor or writer with the Pembrokes or any other company in these years (e.g., *TNOS*, 2017a,b; *REED*, 2018). Robert Greene's (1592) deathbed insult to "the only Shake-scene in a country...an upstart Crow, beautified in our feathers", regarding *The True Tragedy* (1595) has been seen by some (e.g., Schoenbaum, 1975, pp. 111-117) as an indirect reference to Shakespeare, but this claim is disputed (Faulkes, 2007; Williams, 2012; Price, 2013).

Churchyard, Marlowe and Nashe identified Mary Sidney Herbert as a leading poet in these years. The Countess led a “school for poets” at Wilton House in the 1580s with Sir Philip that continued after his 1586 death through 1600. Thomas Churchyard, who had written poems for Queen Elizabeth throughout these years, praised Mary Sidney Herbert as teacher, Muse, and source of wisdom for “our poets everywhere”:

A Pleasant Conceit by Thomas Churchyard, for Elizabeth I.

Quoted in *The Progresses, Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (1593), v.3, p. 236, Nichols (1893).

“PEMBROKE a Pearle, that orient is of kind,
A *Sidney* right, shall not in silence sit:
A gem more worth, than all the gold of Ind,
For she enjoys, the wise Minerva’s wit
And sets to school, our poets everywhere:
That do presume, the laurel crown to wear,
The Muses Nine, and all the Graces Three
In *Pembroke’s* books, and verses shall you see.”

Mary Sidney Herbert’s circle of poets appears to have added Nashe, Marlowe, and perhaps Peele and Kyd, sometime in 1590-93. The Pembrokes performed for the Queen at their country house, Ramsbury Manor, in August, 1592, then twice for Elizabeth’s court at New Year’s, and for many other audiences on their 1592-93 tours (Nichols, 1893).

Christopher Marlowe’s dedication to Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1592). To begin, Marlowe identified the Countess as sister of Philip Sidney, and as Samuel Daniel’s *Delia* (1592): “*Delia*...fostering parent of letters”. Marlowe then humbly asked for her support: “Deign to be patron...as to thine adoptive son”. Finally, he acknowledged her “glorious” history of writing, editing and publishing virtuous poems. “To sum up, thy virtue, which shall overcome virtue herself, shall likewise overcome even eternity”. She was thereby in a position to choose Marlowe, the most famous playwright of the era, to write plays for performances by Pembroke’s servants in 1592.

(Preface to Watson’s *Amintae gaudia* Stationer’s Register, November 10, 1592) (Eccles, 1934).

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS NOBLE LADY ADORNED WITH ALL
GIFTS BOTH OF MIND AND BODY, MARY COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

Delia born of a laurel-crowned race, true sister of Sidney the bard of Apollo, fostering parent of letters, to whose immaculate embrace virtue, outraged by the assault of barbarism and ignorance, flieth for refuge, as once Philomela from the Thracian tyrant; Muse of the Poets of our time, and of all most happily burgeoning wits; descendant of the gods, who impartest now to my rude pen breathings of a lofty rage, whereby my poor self hath, methinks, power to surpass what my unripe talent is wont to bring forth: Deign to be patron to this posthumous Amyntas, as to thine adoptive son: the rather that his dying father had most humbly bequeathed to thee his keeping.

And though thy glorious name is spread abroad not only among us but even among foreign nations, too far ever to be destroyed by the rusty antiquity of Time, or added to by the praise of mortals (for how can anything be greater than what is infinite?), yet, crowned as thou art by the songs of many as by a starry diadem Ariadne, scorn not this pure priest of Phoebus bestowing another star upon thy crown: but with that sincerity of mind which Jove the father of men and of gods hath linked as hereditary to thy noble family, receive and watch over him. So shall I, whose slender wealth is but the seashore myrtle of Venus, and Daphne's evergreen laurel, on the foremost page of every poem invoke thee as Mistress of the Muses to my aid: to sum up all, thy virtue, which shall overcome virtue herself, shall likewise overcome even eternity.

Most desirous to do thee honor,
C.M.”

Thomas Nashe praised the Countess similarly in his preface to Newman's edition of *Astrophel and Stella* (1591). Nashe first lauded Sir Philip, then called Lady Mary “a second *Minerva*” whom “our Poets extol as the Patroness of their invention”. “[I]n thee...the Laurel Garland is still kept green in the Temple of *Pallas*” that is, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom, Pallas Athena.

Referring to Sir Philip, “Phoebus” was the rising sun of Apollo and “Castalia” was Apollo's fountain to inspire poets in Greece. *Venus and Adonis* (1593) by “William Shakespeare” refers similarly to Apollo and the springs of Castalia in the title page quotation from Ovid (Chapter 6).

“Amongst the which, fair sister of *Phæbus*, and eloquent secretary to the Muses, most rare Countess of *Pembroke*, thou art not to be omitted, whom Arts do adore as a second *Minerva*, and our Poets extol as the Patroness of their invention; for in thee the *Lesbian Sappho* with her lyric Harp is disgraced, and the Laurel Garland which thy Brother so bravely advanced on his Lance is still kept green in the Temple of *Pallas*. Thou only sacrificest thy soul to contemplation, thou only entertainest empty handed *Homer*, & keepest the springs of *Castalia* from being dried up. Learning, wisdom, beauty, and all other ornaments of Nobility whatsoever seek to approve themselves in thy sight and get a further seal of felicity from the smiles of thy favor.”

So Nashe was asking for her patronage in the same year that he wrote the first act of *Henry VI*, part 1. “There is general agreement that Nashe wrote all, or the great majority, of Act 1” (Neville, p. 2387, *TNOS*, 2017b). *TNOS* does not credit Nashe as a co-author on any other plays of Shakespeare. In Shakespeare's time, Nashe was never credited for his work on *Henry VI, part I*, which was published only in the First Folio of 1623.

The Countess, however, did not appreciate Newman's clumsy pirated editions of her late brother's *Astrophel and Stella* and other poems in 1591. Nashe's preface was, therefore, evidence of his disloyalty to her. Nashe's preface was deleted from Newman's second edition in late 1591 (*Thomas Nashe*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, on-line).

This suggests to us that the Countess of Pembroke supported Nashe in 1591, but then severed associations with Nashe in late 1591, as proposed by Faulkes (2007). Soon after being fired by

the Countess, a dispute between Nashe and Gabriel Harvey in 1592-3 brought years of conflict to the Countess and the poets around her (Hannay, 1990, pp. 139-42). First, *Pierce Penniless* (registered August 8, 1592) a 47-page satirical dialogue between Nashe and the Devil, proclaimed Nashe's disappointment about not being adequately paid or credited by noble patrons. Harvey's angry reply to Nashe was *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets* in December, 1592, defending virtuous poets including Edmund Spenser. One month later, Nashe declared his innocence from Harvey's accusations line-by-line in *Strange News*. Nashe wrote that he only wanted modest recognition and patronage (e.g., "Saint Fame for me" p. 8), and begged not to be judged harshly by the Countess.

"Her Old Comedy". Harvey then strenuously defended the Countess in *Pierce's Supererogation, or a New Praise of the Old Ass* (1593), against "*Nashe's St. Fame*". This included 3 clever sonnets "from the excellent gentlewoman, my patroness...an enchanting angel with her white quill" (pp. 5-6). The "above-mentioned gentlewoman" was revealed 85 pages later (pp. 90-93) as the sister of Sir Philip Sidney by Harvey's effusive praise for the Countess. (See also "...Why not Mary?" McCarthy, 2001; and *Shakespeare Authorship Question*, Star, 2016).

Harvey's reference to "her white quill" speaks of the white swan quills that Mary Sidney Herbert wrote with, as shown on her 1618 portrait (Fig. 1-3). Harvey boasted on p. 91 that his "gentlewoman" was a most prolific author in 1593, not simply a wise patroness: "[W]hat if she can publish more works in a month than Nashe hath published in his entire life...?...Her pen is a very Pegasus indeed, and runneth like a winged horse, governed with the hand of exquisite skill...a quill as quick as quicksilver." This refers to the speed of the god Mercury, since "quicksilver" is the common name for the element, mercury. This may also compare her quill's speed to that of Marlowe's, the prolific author who wrote of Mercury in *Hero and Leander*. No "gentlewoman" author of the period fits Harvey's description other than Mary Sidney Herbert.

In Sonnet 3, the Countess states that she once wrote a satire about "Gnasharduccio" (pronounced Nashe-are-doo-chee-oh) or "Sir Bombarduccio". These Italian names sound like Petruchio, the bragging knight who tamed the shrew. *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) was the only comedy with the Earl of Pembroke's name on the title page. Therefore, *Shrew* is the only candidate for "Her Old Comedy" of Mary Sidney Herbert.

"Gnasharduccio", the "braving knight" whom she once "knew", is then called "the sole bruit of Fame", the braying "kill-cow ass". Harvey's title page identifies "Nashe's St. Fame" with "the Old Ass". So *Shrew* is apparently Mary Sidney Herbert's comedy about Thomas Nashe, the troublesome playwright she fired in 1591.

"Sonnet 3: Her Old Comedy, newly entitled. (pp. 5-6, Harvey, dated July 16, 1593)
[our bold type and comments are added]

My prose is resolute as Bevis' sword;
March, rampant beast in formidable hide,
Supererogation squire on cock-horse ride;
Zeal shapes an answer to the bloodiest word.

[*Pierce's Supererogation*]

If nothing can the booted soldier tame,
 Nor rime, nor prose, nor honesty, nor shame,
 But Swash will still his trumpety advance,
 I'll lead the gag-toothed fop a new-found dance.
 Dear hours were ever cheap to piddling me;
**I knew a glorious and braving knight,
 That would be deemed a truculental wight,
 Of him I scrawled a doughty comedy,
 Sir Bombarduccio was his cruel name,
 But Gnasharduccio the sole bruit of Fame.** [Nashe, the braggart St. Fame, as Petruchio]

L'Envoy

[The final message]

**See, how he brays and fumes at me, poor lass,
 That must immortalize the kill-cow ass."** [Nashe, the ass, brayed at Mary, the poor lass]

The last couplet implies that Mary Sidney Herbert wrote her comedy for future audiences, not just for the tours of the Pembrokes, but that she regretted immortalizing Nashe.

According to *TNOS*, *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) was likely written by "Shakespeare" alone in about 1591 (Pruitt, *TNOS*, 2017b, pp. 1923-4). This was the same year that Nashe wrote Act 1 of *Henry VI, part 1* with Marlowe, as revised by "Shakespeare", and that Nashe's prologue to the unauthorized *Astrophel and Stella* was published.

The Taming of a Shrew (registered May 2, 1594) showed several changes, however. First, the setting was changed from Padua to Athens without textual development for the new setting. Second, the name of the bragging suitor was changed from "Petruchio" to "Ferando". By contrast, the name of the leading lady, Katherine, was among the few retained in all versions of *Shrew*--This was the name of the Countess's first daughter, Katherine Herbert, who died in 1584.

Third, satirical references to Nashe are not apparent in the 1594 Quarto, presumably so that the publication would not "immortalize the kill-cow ass". Instead, passages from Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* and *Tamburlaine* are quoted almost verbatim in *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), that are not in the First Folio (1623) version *The Taming of the Shrew*, where Petruchio is the knight (Hickson, 1850; Pruitt, *TNOS*, 2017b, p. 1924).

Consequently, Marlowe's memory was honored by *The Taming of a Shrew* after his death in 1593, but Nashe's bitter associations were apparently deleted. Marlowe's words were also quoted in later plays of Shakespeare. Marlowe's links with poems of "Shakespeare" based on Ovid, such as *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece* and *Hero and Leander*, are discussed in Chapter 7.

Words in Marlowe's plays linked with those of the Pembroke plays. Marlowe was renowned for dramatic scenes with scandalous characters (e.g., *Tamburlaine the Great, parts 1 and 2*, c.1587-8; "Machiavel" and "Barabas" in *The Jew of Malta* c.1589-90; *Doctor Faustus*, c.1592; *Edward II*, c.1592; *The Massacre at Paris*, c.1593 on the St. Bartholomew's Day

massacre that Sir Philip Sidney witnessed in Paris). Marlowe's personal scandals included arrests in London with Thomas Watson after a dueling death (1590), for counterfeiting in Flushing (1592), and for libel and blasphemy in London with Thomas Kyd (May, 1593).

Both Marlowe and Peele had written violent, popular plays before their work with Pembroke's players. Bloody scenes were common in the theater of the time, as in *Titus Andronicus*, but murders of English nobles and kings were rare. The Wars of the Roses and Plantagenet plays, however, presented two series of violent royal history plays on the stage, a daring innovation.

In their analysis of *The True Tragedy of Richard of York* (1595), Craig and Burrows (2012) attributed 13 scenes to Marlowe (1.1, 1.2, 2.3, 3.3, 4.4, 4.2-4.9, 5.2 of *Henry VI, part 3*) and the remaining 16 scenes to Shakespeare. Shakespeare's scenes included Act 1, Scene 4 (1.4), Richard of York's long death-speech attacking Margaret of Anjou's cruel murder of his son, that begins: "My ashes, as the Phoenix, may bring forth /A Bird, that will revenge upon you all" (lines 35-36). After Margaret has Richard wear a crown bathed in his own son's blood then condemns him to death, Richard replies: "She-Wolf of France,.../Whose tongue more poisons than the Adder's Tooth.../Oh Tiger's Heart, wrapt in a Woman's Hide, /How could'st thou drain the Life-blood of the Child." After Richard's beheading, the Sun-in-Splendor scene (2.1), attributed to Shakespeare, describes the rising hopes of his surviving sons, and their victory in battle. The bloody murder of Richard of York by the French Queen's guards is thereby followed by heaven-sanctioned "resurrection" of the House of York aided by William Herbert's Welsh troops.

Why did Pembroke's players stop performing in August, 1593? A few commentators proposed that Pembroke's troupe ended their tours and sold their costumes and plays simply because they ran out of money (Murray, 1911; Knutson, 2001; Taylor & Loughnane, *TNOS*, 2017b, p. 499). The Pembrokes, however, were wealthy and their 5 plays were all successful, as shown by continuing performances and quartos of all 5 plays by other companies after 1594 (Cairncross, 1964). Knutson (2010, pp. 457-9) recently argued that the sale of *Edward II* and *The Taming of a Shrew* by Pembroke's troupe was not based only on financial problems.

Our view is that the Pembrokes stopped performing for personal and political reasons. 1) Marlowe's death May 30, 1593 must have troubled the players who spoke his words, and the Pembroke family who patronized his plays in 1592-93. Post-mortem registration of Marlowe's *Edward II* on July 6 and *Hero and Leander* on September 28, 1593 by someone associated with the Pembrokes seems likely. 2) Nashe's widely read pamphlets (*Pierce Penniless*, 1592; 1593, and *Strange News*, 1593) defending poor poets and berating noble patrons, may have damaged the Pembrokes' public reputations as patrons. 3) The end of the plague in late 1593 allowed theater performances in London again, where the Burbages and Philip Henslowe were more established. In June 1594, Queen Elizabeth decreed that only 2 companies patronized by her closest allies would be allowed to perform at court. These 2 companies were the Lord Admiral's Men of Henslowe, and the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the Burbages' new company. And so, Pembroke's players and other troupes were excluded from her court.

The Burbages owned The Theater and now had secure access to court performances. In 1594 actors from Pembroke's players (Richard Burbage and possibly William Slye, Henry Condell

and Alexander Cooke) joined the Lord Chamberlain's Men (Knutson, 2001). In 1599, the Burbages moved their company and properties to The Globe theater on the south bank of the Thames. The name "Shakespeare" was first used for a play on the 1598 Quarto *Love's Labours Lost*. William Shakespeare from Stratford worked as an actor after 1596, and as a 1/8 owner of The Globe after 1599 (Schoenbaum, 1975; Price, 2013).

The Countess of Pembroke and her troupe become less visible from 1593-1603. Pembroke's players continued performing occasionally in the provinces from 1595-1600. They leased The Swan theatre in London in 1597 from Francis Langley (contract February, 1597, Knutson, 2001, p. 44) then performed plays with Henslowe's troupe that year (*Records of Early English Drama*, 2018). *The Isle of Dogs* (a lost play by Nashe and Jonson) was performed at The Swan theatre in the same year. In August, 1597, the Privy Council condemned *The Isle of Dogs* as a "seditious and slanderous" satire. As a result, all London theatres were closed, Ben Jonson was sent to prison, and Nashe exiled himself. In 1599, all of Nashe's satirical works, and all of the Harvey brothers' replies, were banned by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Hannay, 1990, p. 142).

To add insult to injury, the Countess presented a poem c.1600 praising the Queen and mocking Nashe, with the title "A Dialogue between Two Shepherds, Thenot and Piers". Elegant praises from Thenot to the Queen were contrasted with the brutish negativity of Piers, the author of *Pierce Penniless* (Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 1893). Nashe died c.1601, aged 34, under unknown circumstances.

Conclusions. We have recounted the rise and fall of Pembroke's troupe from 1589-94. The Countess of Pembroke was the ambitious leader of a renowned "school for poets" in those years, evidenced by tributes from Churchyard, Daniel, Harvey and 20 other poets. Thomas Nashe (1591) and Christopher Marlowe (1592) praised her patronage and inspiration shortly before their co-authored plays on Henry VI toured with Pembroke's players in 1592-3. The Countess wrote a sonnet "Her Old Comedy" (1593) claiming that she wrote a comedy about Nashe. This was apparently an early version of *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594). Her stated goal was to "immortalize" authors by presenting plays, much as she had immortalized her brother's writings in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593).

Nashe and Harvey's pamphlets, however, led to the escalating "War of the Poets". The Pembrokes withdrew their touring company in late 1593, except for occasional performances until 1600. Other than Marlowe's *Edward II*, the Pembroke-performed plays were later attributed to a single author "Shakespeare" in Quartos after 1598 and in the First Folio of 1623.

The evidence reviewed in this chapter suggests that the young Countess of Pembroke co-wrote, and then completed, the collaborative plays performed by Pembroke's players from c.1590-93, and that she wrote *The Taming of a Shrew* alone. This is exactly the role that TNOS (2017a,b) assigned to "William Shakespeare". Between 1589 and 1595, 11 plays were written by the collaborating authors Peele, Marlowe, Nashe and "Shakespeare" (Table 4-2). Their leader, patroness and final editor for publications was apparently Mary Sidney Herbert.

In these same years, the unknown poet “William Shakespeare” wrote *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594) on classical themes of Ovid influenced by Marlowe (see Chapter 7). These are the events that shaped the first publications of the great author.

Table 4-2. Early Collaborative Plays of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Peele, Nashe, 1589-95. Dates and authors based on title pages, and conclusions of Taylor & Loughnane, *The New Oxford Shakespeare* (2017, Ch. 25) with our added conclusions in italics.

Play Title(s)	Written (est.)	Published	Author(s)	Performing Company(s)
Titus Andronicus	1589	1594	Sh., Peele et al.	Derby, Pembroke, Sussex
Dido, Queen of Carthage	1590	1594	Marlowe, Nashe	Children of Chapel
Edward I	1590	1593	Peele	?
2 Henry 6 “Contention”	1590	1594	Sh., Marlowe et al.	Pembroke
3 Henry 6 “True Tragedy”	1590	1595	Sh., Marlowe et al.	Pembroke
The Taming of a Shrew	1591	1594	Sh. <i>a.k.a. Mary Sidney</i>	Pembroke
1 Henry 6	<i>1592</i>	1623	Nashe, Marlowe, Sh. et al.	<i>Pembroke</i> , Strange
Edward II	1592	1594	Marlowe	Pembroke
Edward III	1592	1596	Sh. et al.	?Pembroke
Richard III	1592	1597	Sh.	?Pembroke or Strange
Massacre at Paris	1593	1593	Marlowe	Strange
Shakespeare plays written in the same years, without clear patronage by Pembrokes or authorship by collaborators.				
Comedy of Errors	1594	1623	Sh	?
Love’s Labours Lost	1594	1598	Sh.	Chamberlain
Two Gentlemen of Verona	1589, ‘94?	1623	Sh.	?
Richard II	1595	1597	Sh.	Chamberlain
Romeo and Juliet	1595	1597	Sh.	Hunsdon

Chapter 5: *Shake-speares Sonnets*: Puzzles by Mary Sidney Herbert

“And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work...

Turning the accomplishment of many years /Into an hour-glass:” Henry V, Prologue

The Sonnets are Shakespeare’s most personal work, using the first person over 1000 times to describe deeply emotional events. Yet for centuries, scholars and critics have been unable to agree on who the central characters might have been (“my lovely Boy”, his parents, his mistress, the rival poets). Did Shakespeare, who apparently wrote the main set of sonnets (S1-126), also write the Dedication, or the “Dark Lady” sonnets (S127-154), and if so why? Is there anywhere a complete sonnet sequence, or any virtuous meaning to these fine poems?

Shake-speares Sonnets appear to be a key to understanding the author, if only the messages could be deciphered (Slater, 1975a; 1988). We show here that the stories follow those of the Pembroke family, Henry, Mary and William Herbert, including their ambitions and their conflicts. Once the characters and images are decoded, *Shake-speares Sonnets* form a complete 126-poem sequence full of personal and allegorical meanings about the Pembrokes and “Shakespeare”. The Dark Lady sonnets and deeper family conflicts are discussed in Chapter 6.

Overview: *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609) describe a noble family seeking power by raising a son named *Will*, and by writing beautiful poems. *Will* rises to power when his father dies in S63, which divides the 126-poem sonnet cycle into 2 equal parts. The 2-part Dedication to “W.H.” from “OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET” defines the puzzles of the sonnets, and the 2-part structure of the cycle (Fig. 5-1). The answers to the puzzles are revealed slowly throughout the sonnets. The poet’s ambitions for a son and for beauty are introduced in S10. The roles of mothers and Mother Nature as creators are provided in S3, S11, S12, S20 and S22.

The riddles of the 12-line Dedication are answered allegorically in the parallel 12-line S126: “O Thou, my lovely Boy” becomes Father Time, then Mother Nature conquers Father Time through immortal poetry. The poet uses the female gender 8 times to make final judgments on her “Boy” and on “ever-living” poetry. In S143, *Will*’s mother chases “feathered creatures”, that is, her poems written with feathers. Will Herbert’s mother, Mary Sidney Herbert, is thereby revealed as the poet of *Shake-speares Sonnets*, inspired by her son.

Background. The Sonnets (1609) were published near the end of Shakespeare’s career, long after the Elizabethan fashion for sonnets had passed. These technically brilliant sonnets have troubled Shakespeare scholars for centuries (see recent reviews by Vendler, 2007; Duncan-Jones, 2010; Conner, 2017). The first 10 sonnets describe an ambitious family (“From fairest creatures we desire increase”) desiring a “tender heir” for “succession” (S1 and S2, Fig. 5-2). Yet most of the sonnets express obsessive love of the first-person poet for a boy. Why would Shakespeare publicly reveal his own homoerotic feelings in an era when these sentiments were not accepted, even criminal? Were the Sonnets published without Shakespeare’s consent? Was the strange Dedication written by the publisher, the poet, or a pirate of the sonnets? Do these sonnets have hidden meanings about the first-person poet? “All the riddles of the Sonnets...elude solution” (Schoenbaum, 1975, p. 219).



TO. THE. ONLIE. BEGETTER. OF.
THESE. INSVING. SONNETS.
M^r. W. H. ALL. HAPPINESSE.
AND. THAT. ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.

BY.

OVR. EVER-LIVING. POET.

WISHETH.

THE. WELL-WISHING.

ADVENTVRER. IN.

SETTING.

FORTH.

T. T.

Fig. 5-1. Original title and Dedication from the 1609 Quarto.

The title is plain and prosaic, without the typical reference to a beautiful subject or theme. The Dedication is constructed in block capital letters, with dots rather than spaces between words. This style is unique for a dedication, which typically praised the patron effusively. The words of the Dedication immediately raise questions: Who is “Mr. W.H.”? How is he “THE.ONLY.BEGETTER.OF./THESE. ENSUING.SONNETS.”? What is his relationship to “OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET.”, who should be “the only begetter” of these poems? Who is “THE.WELL-WISHING./ADVENTURER.../SETTING./FORTH”?

The Dedication and pictures are part of the puzzles. Previous scholars have believed that the Dedication is a clumsy advertisement from the publisher, Thomas Thorpe (“T.T.”). For example, Duncan-Jones (2010, p. 59) concludes that “the over-rhetorical wording is Thorpe’s”. Conner (*TNOS*, 2017b, p. 1441) claims that “the preface is not likely a riddle to be solved”.

We show here that the Dedication is a series of riddles that must have been written by the clever poet, and that are solved in the sonnets. The riddles in the Dedication are answered by clues about the characters and their symbolic roles throughout the sonnet cycle (S1-126) especially in the final S126. To show the poet’s original intentions, we display the original pictures, punctuations, italics and capitals of the 1609 Quarto in this chapter, for example, by the original title “*Shake-speares Sonnets*” (Booth, 1977). For ease of reading (at least for North American readers), we use modern American English spelling, except in reproductions of the original Title Page, Dedication, Opening Page and final S126.

Pronouns. The poems include a maze of personal pronouns, “we”, “he”, “thee”, “she”, “I”, “you”, without names attached. The first-person is used first as “OUR...POET” in the Dedication and then “we” in S1, later as “I” and “me” in S10, continuing with “I”, “me”, “my” and “mine” through S125 for the mature poet. A second first-person poet is introduced in S127-154. He is usually a selfish young man identified by the name “*Will*” a total of 11 times in S135, 136, 143, always in italics. Pronouns and subjects in the sonnets from *Will*, generally called the “Dark Lady” sonnets, are discussed separately in Chapter 6.

The questions about the Sonnets have grown over 4 centuries of speculation, without an adequate solution. Is “*Will*” William Shakespeare, William Herbert, or another Will? Why does the first-person poet of S10-126 love the growing boy throughout his infancy, childhood, teen and adult years so much? Nothing in William Shakespeare’s biography (Schoenbaum, 1975) explains the family stories in the Sonnets, nor the homosexual, or possibly parental, obsessions—He left his wife and family in the 1580s, and his only son died in 1596. So is “OUR.EVER-LIVING. POET” some other poet inspired by “*Will*”, the child and youth? Who is the “Dark Lady”, the mistress of “*Will*” in S42, 127-152? W.H. Auden (1907) wrote: “More nonsense has been written about the Sonnets than any other work”. Over a century later these legendary problems persist.

Riddles and their solutions by Sidney sonnets. Sir Philip Sidney’s *Astrophel and Stella* was itself a riddle hidden within a sonnet cycle: Who was the woman “Stella” loved by “Astro-phil”, that is, Philip, the star-lover? The answer, Lady Rich, Penelope Devereaux, his one-time fiancée, was finally published by Mary Sidney Herbert in Sonnet 37 of *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (1598): “Listen my Lordings with good ear to me, /For of my life I must a riddle

tell.../Who though most rich in these and every part, /Which make the patents of true worldly bliss, /Hath no misfortune, but that Rich she is.” This word play on “rich...Rich” is like that in S135 of “Shake-speare”: “thou hast thy *Will*...thy sweet will”.

Solving the Sonnets’ puzzles begins by understanding the family of William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke. First, we need to disentangle the many pronouns in the Sonnets. All commentators see that the first 126 sonnets form a set of poems centered on the lovely boy “thee” and the poet “I”. When the 126 sonnets are seen as a Pembroke family story, the pronouns identify the leading characters: William Herbert (“Mr. W.H.” of the Dedication) is “thee”, Henry Herbert is “he” the father, and Mary Sidney Herbert is the loving mother “she”, in most cases (Yeomans, 2017) (Table 5-1).

Table 5-1. Pronouns Used in Sonnets 1-126.

<u>PRONOUN</u>	<u>PERSON(S)</u>	<u>REPRESENTS</u>	<u>SONNET, LINE</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
“we”	Earl & Countess of Pembroke	Parents	S1, L1	refers to “OUR...POET” of the Dedication
“he”	<u>Henry Herbert</u>	Father	S1, L4 & S3 S2 presents a Father’s view on “succession”	“he” dies in S63 (1601)
“thee”	William Herbert “W.H.”	Son BEGETTER	S1, L4-14 Dedication	“I” “me” in S127-152 Father Time in S126
“she”	Mary Herbert Nature	Mother Creator	S3, L9 S4, L4	Mother Nature in S126
“I”	Poet “Shake-speare”	Eternal	S10, L9, 13	Mother Nature in S126
“you”	Sir Philip Sidney Matthew Lister	Poet’s brother Poet’s lover	S32, 33, 52-59, 106 S112-120	Also “he” in S32, 33

The first-person plural “we” in the first line of S1 indicates the parents of their “tender heir” (line 4) (Fig. 5-2, S1 and picture). Their “desire” for “increase” is not only personal, but could apply to all ambitious parents who want heirs “From fairest creatures”. This establishes the sonnet cycle as an allegory that can relate to all life.

The first quatrain contrasts Beauty, in the image of a *Rose*, with Time, resulting in age and death. The father’s goal of passing on “his memory”, is achieved through an heir to bear his title, and through “ever-living” sonnets.

Decoding the Dedication. The Dedication has 2 parts. The first 6 lines are to “W.H.”, their son, William Herbert, in a waning triangle of words. The next 6 lines are from “OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET” in a second descending triangle. This introduces the idea that the sonnet cycle

has 2 parts, the first to the “son” (or progeny, in general), and the second to “sonnets” (or poetry, in general).

The poet urges their heir to procreate in the first 17 sonnets. Bearing a son was critical for noble families, especially the Pembrokes. The widower Henry Herbert married Mary Sidney in 1576 after his first 2 wives had died without providing a son. Sir Philip Sidney died in 1586 without a son, a serious problem for his surviving widow and daughter. Neither Queen Elizabeth nor Leicester had a legitimate son, resulting in loss of succession for their houses. In 1609, William Herbert had no son to inherit his Earl of Pembroke title.

The opening words “TO.THE.ONLY.BEGETTER.OF./THESE.ENSUING.SONNETS” refer to “son-nets” as little sons needed for succession. The father desires to “sum [his] count...by succession” (S2). Earls of Pembroke, as English Counts, summed their wealth through harvesting their lands, and passing on their estates to their first-born son. Allegorically, this “count” becomes Father Time (S126), who holds an hour-glass to measure time, and a sickle to harvest crops to accumulate wealth. These images also represent aging and death.

If “we” the parents of S1, L1 refers to “OUR.EVER-LIVING POET”, the poet is somehow part of “our” family. The Dedication was carefully written to suggest that W.H.’s family (considered both personally and historically) included “our ever-living poet”. For the Herberts, the family poet was Mary Sidney Herbert: Thus, “Shake-speare” was the Pembrokes’ poet, who wrote the Sonnets for them.

Who is “THE.WELL-WISHING.ADVENTURER./IN.SETTING./FORTH”? The second ambition of the poet was to write memories for the family through poems. “Well-wishing” reminds us that poets create dreams and memories by dipping feathers into ink-wells, as shown in Mary Sidney’s portrait (Figs. 1-3 and 5-6 below). Poets create wisdom by writing “ever-praiseworthy” lines to inspire future readers, as expressed by Sir Philip Sidney in *The Defense of Poesy* (1598). The Dedication thereby invites readers to adventure through the “virtue-breeding delightfulness” of the poet’s sonnets.

Pictures. Two woodcuts are provided above the 3 opening pages of the Quarto. These woodcuts show flowers, animals and faces that suggest characters and images in the text of the following sonnets.

The Title Page woodcut (Fig. 5-1, top) shows a garden scene, with roses, angels, fish, and angry rabbits. The 3 central faces in the garden introduce the 3 central characters, a child’s shining face within a rose, flanked by 2 attentive adults as bee-like angels. These represent the 3 characters of S1, that is, 2 parents rearing a son. The growth and beauty of their son, compared with “beauties *Rose*” in S1, L2, is shown in the central picture, as a rising rose or sun. The adults (shown as pollinating bees or celestial angels) attend to his shining face, and to his sustenance by food and water (shown by fish fertilizer and water splashes on the roots of the roses). The parents provide for his safety by pushing away foraging rabbits. In the sonnets, the poet repeatedly refers to cultivation of roses, in S1, 18, 54, 67, 95, 98, 99 and 109, for example.

Allegorically, this garden scene represents the creation of all life, as in the Garden of Eden. “From fairest creatures we desire increase” (S1) refers to the procreation of all God’s creatures in Genesis 1: 21-22: “every living creature that moveth...be fruitful and multiply” (King James Bible, 1611).



SHAKESPEARES,
SONNETS.

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauties *Rose* might neuer die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heire might beare his memory:

Fig. 5-2. Original title and picture above Sonnet 1.

Above S1, a second woodcut shows 3 birds at the top, with ivy, scrolls, feathers and an urn (Fig. 5-2). This woodcut was also used in the first Quarto of Hamlet (1603) above Scene 1. The large central bird rests on top of the urn, with a few detached feathers pointing at angles toward the urn, like quills into an inkwell. Throughout the sonnets, birds represent the ascendant works of poets who use feathers and ink to create immortal memories and judgments (e.g., S78, “Have added feathers to the learned’s wings”).

This picture represents a Phoenix rising from the ashes. The Phoenix is an allegorical symbol of wisdom of the past, when great poets created eternal beauty with feathers. The new Phoenix is female in S19, L4 (“And burn the long-lived Phoenix in her blood). In S73, “Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.../In me thou seest the glowing of such fire /That on the ashes of his youth doth lie” (L4, L9-10). Therefore, the 2 pictures represent the 2 parts of the Sonnets, first to the son in a rose, representing the renewal of life, and the second to poetry via the female Phoenix, who renews the eternal meanings of life.

This Phoenix also represents the poet, Mary Sidney Herbert (see *Philip's Phoenix* by Hannay, 1990) who used classical poetry to revive English literature after the death of her brother. In Shakespeare's allegorical poem *The Phoenix and Turtle* (1601), two birds, a female Phoenix and a male Turtledove, martyr themselves on a funeral pyre. This may represent the platonic "chaste" love between two poets, Mary Sidney Herbert and Sir Philip Sidney (see Chapter 7 below).

The central image of descending triangles in the pictures and the Dedication is discussed later in this chapter, in connection with the image of the hour-glass (S126) and of the Sidney Pheon, or spear-head.

Overall structure of the 126-sonnet cycle. The first half of the Sonnets describes the growth of their son, who is urged to beget children. Then the old father ("he" for Henry Herbert) dies in S63, the midpoint of the sonnet cycle: "When his youthful morn /Hath travelled onto Age's steepy night" (L4, 5) (Yeomans, 2017, p. 63). The raging sea of death in S64-65 is diminished only by the poet's hope "That in black ink my love may still shine bright" (L14).

The second half of the Sonnets cycle describes the difficult progress of the poet to create immortal sonnets inspired by her son. These reflect the poet's appreciation of the classics, especially Ovid, Chaucer and Petrarch. "Vita brevis, ars longa" is the Latin aphorism in 2 parts, similar to Chaucer's later interpretation (c.1380, *Parliament of Fowls*, line 1) "The life so short, the craft so long to learn."

Francesco Petrarca "The Father of Humanism" (1304-74) used his love for a young woman named Laura to inspire his 2-part allegorical journey from love for Laura, to her death in the middle sonnet, to his development as a poet receiving the laurel wreath. In his song book (*Il Canzoniere*) he used 14-line Petrarchian sonnets ("sonnetos", or little songs) made up of 2 quatrains followed by a 6-line sestet. In his *Triumphs (I Trionfi)* Petrarch traced the poet's journey in 6 parts from love, to death of Laura in the 3rd part, to immortality for the poet at the end. In the 1590s Mary Sidney Herbert translated into English Petrarch's *Triumph of Death* (the 3rd of Petrarch's *Triumphs*).

Shake-speares Sonnets similarly trace the 2-part allegorical journey from love for a growing boy (S1-63) to the creation of immortal poetry (S64-126). The poet's journey from maternal love to her final judgments can be understood as Mary Sidney Herbert's re-interpretation of Petrarch's sonnets and *Triumphs*, a Renaissance model for her poetic ambitions. She reverses gender roles, however, from the romantic love themes used by male authors, such as her brother Sir Philip in *Astrophel and Stella*, to the more essential role of mothers for procreation and nurturing of beauty.

The first-person poet is introduced in S10. The poet "I" advises her son in the final couplet: "Make thee another self for love of me, /That beauty still may live in thine or thee." How can the boy succeed? By having a son and creating beauty, as mothers do in S3. Families without a son cannot maintain their houses: "Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate, /Which to repair should be thy chief desire" (S10, L7-8).

The poet reinforces the 2-part message of the Dedication and S1, quatrain 1: 1) Have a son for life and wealth; 2) Make lasting beauty through poetic memories. Creation (S11, L5) is the special role of mothers (S3) and of Mother Nature (S4, S11): “She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby /Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.” (S11, L13-14). So the mother and the poet are repeatedly associated with Mother Nature. They create lasting beauty through procreation and publishing poetry, just as Mary Sidney Herbert had borne sons for Henry and had immortalized her brother’s poems and stories in *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*.

The central themes of beauty provided by Nature, and of aging resulting from Time, are developed in S11, where Nature’s gifts include “wisdom, beauty, and increase” delivered by a female four times in L11-13. Nature’s “*Audit*” S4, L12, becomes the final “*Audit*” of Mother Nature in S126, where “Nature (sovereign mistress over wrack)” is identified as female 8 times. Allegorically, the contrast between “Nature” (“she” in S4, S11, S126) and “Time” (“he” in S5, S12, S126) links the family characters throughout the entire sonnet cycle, concluding with S126.

The “riper” father who “should by time decease” (S1, L3) is associated with inevitable aging. This is represented by images such as the passing sun in the sky (S7), “Time’s scythe” in S12, L13 and S60, L12, and the waves on the shore (S60, L1). The corrosive effects of Time are “folly, age and cold decay” delivered by powerful males, called “fools of time” in S124, L13. “Age’s cruel knife” (S63, L10) “filled his brow /With lines and wrinkles...” (S63, L3-4) like furrows in the field.

So the poet contrasts female virtues in the nurturing Mother Nature with male flaws in the decaying person of Father Time (S126, Fig. 5-3). This feminist perspective is a central message of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* that has been misunderstood for 4 centuries.

Sonnets 1-3. The desires of the newborn, suckling boy to eat and grow are expressed in quatrains 2 and 3. “[T]hy sweet self” is used for the lovely boy in S1, L8, in S4, L10 and again in S126, L4 to identify the central subject throughout the sonnet cycle, from his birth to his ascent to 3rd Earl of Pembroke in S63, to his aging fate as Father Time.

In S2, the father desires his son to “sum my count...by succession” (S2, L11-12). Here, the father speaks in the first person (the only time in the Sonnets) through quotation marks, rather than in the third person.

In S3, the boy’s mother wishes to reproduce her beauty by way of her son: “Thou art thy mother’s glass, and she in thee /Calls back the lovely April of her prime” (S3, L9-10). And yet, each of these first 3 sonnets on the 3 central archetypes (son, father and mother) warns of the inevitability of death in the final couplet. Final couplets are often the dark conclusions that summarize the downward course of life in the Sonnets.

The second ambition of the parents is to create lasting memories. The Count’s son will “bear his memory” by passing on his title (S1, L4). The mother’s son will reproduce her beauty (S3). Similarly, “OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET” will make family memories and judgments through immortal sonnets, just as the mother reproduces her beauty through begetting her son.

The first 42 sonnets are grouped into sets of 3. The first 3 sonnets on the desires of the 3 central characters are followed by 3 sonnets on the themes of beauty vs. aging, Nature vs. Time. Then, in S7-9, happy families are compared with the rising sun and with music (“sire, child and happy mother”) vs. sad families of widows without sons. In S10-12, the work of women in making sons and poetry, and of men in cutting harvests with their scythes, is contrasted with the negative effects of Time without sons.

In S13-15, a new pronoun “you” introduces a male poet who invested in “stars” and “wasted time” rather than a son. We identify these sonnets with Sir Philip Sidney who wrote poems about “Stella”, but did not have a son. Yet his creation of immortal poetry is treasured in S16-18: “His eternal summer shall not fade”. His legacy is carried on by “the long-lived Phoenix in her blood.../My love shall in my verse ever live young” (S19-21). The first-person poet, that is, Mary Sidney Herbert, chooses to write of a mother’s love, not of stars and romance: “So it is not with me as with that Muse, /Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse, /Who heaven itself for ornament doth use.” “O let me true in love but truly write, /And then believe me, my love is as fair /As any mother’s child...” (S21, L9-11). This declares the poet’s preference for the truth of a mother’s love over star-struck male love.

The poet continues in S22-24 by seeking beauty in “her babe”, in poetry hidden in her “heart”, her “bosom’s shop” and her “breast”. This is contrasted with the pride of male knights (S25-27) “The painful warrior famous for fight” (S25, L9) and with their journeys and duty. Her search for lasting truth and beauty through a mother’s love and poetry contrasts with the quest for military and political glory by males.

But as her son grows, his masculine development leads to a sexual affair with a friend of the poet that leads to family conflict (S40-42). This affair is described in Chapter 6 from the viewpoints of the son, and of the mother-poet, in the Dark Lady sonnets (S127-152).

Poetry and rival poets. The male poet (“you”) continues later in S52-55. He brings classical beauty into the poet’s life (“Blessed are you” S52, L13). But the poet’s love leads to a slave-like devotion (S57-59) to “your image in some antique book”, looking backward to “500 courses of the sun” (S59, L5-7). This recalls the devotion of Mary Sidney Herbert to publish Sir Philip’s works, to immortalize her brother’s poems based on ancient poetry models. “In me thou seest the glowing of such fire /That on the ashes of his youth doth lie” (S73). She becomes Philip’s Phoenix creating her fire from her brother’s ashes (Hannay, 1990). These words remind us of the “Muse of Fire” sought in the Prologue of Henry V (see our Chapter 1 heading).

After slavishly completing the works of her late brother (S57-59), the poet suffers through the injustice of censorship and suppression (S66-67). She is frustrated by her failure to create worthy poetry in the shadow of her beloved brother’s sonnets (S76). The poet relies on the memories and forms of her immortal brother, whose name and methods she shares. But most of all, she desires to exceed him, and to create her own legacy.

Sonnet 76

[our comments and bold type]

Why is my verse so barren of new pride?
So far from variation of quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside

To new found methods, and to compounds strange?
 Why write I still all one, ever the same,
 And keep invention in a noted weed,

[Sonnets]

**That every word doth almost tell my name,
 Showing my birth, and where they did proceed?**

[Sidney]

O know sweet love I always write of you,
 And you and love are still my argument:
 So all my best is dressing old words new,
 Spending again what is already spent:
 For as the Sun is daily new and old,
 So is my love still telling what is told.

[Philip, Adonis]

The pronoun “you”, in this sonnet, refers to her famous brother, Sir Philip; She is also inspired by the beautiful face of “thee” her son, who reflects her beauty. Although Marlowe, Spenser and Chapman are important competitors who have been correctly seen as rival poets, *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* are more about her brother, her ambitious families, and their desires for immortality.

The inspiration of her knighted brother and the classics continues to inspire her quest:

Sonnet 106

When in the chronicles of wasted time,
 I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
 And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
 In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
 Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty’s best,
 Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
 I see their antique pen would have express’d
 Even such a beauty as you master now...”

The frustration of writing is further complicated by comparisons with rival poets and ongoing conflicts with her powerful son. These problems are resolved later by the poet’s mature relationship with a new lover. Williams (2012, pp. 77-83 and 133) identifies these sonnets with the late-life relationship of Mary Sidney Herbert with Dr. Matthew Lister after 1604. In these later sonnets, loving memories of her poet brother Sir Philip (“you”) become merged with her new love for Dr. Lister (also “you”), which inspires forgiveness for her son.

Mary Sidney Herbert’s dedication to the English sonnet form, and to the civilizing power of poetry, influenced several of her closest family members. William Herbert wrote many love sonnets to women after 1600 (Chapter 6). Robert Sidney and his daughter, Mary Sidney Wroth, each wrote long sonnet sequences on their loves (Croft, 1984). Samuel Daniel wrote poems throughout his life, crediting Mary Sidney Herbert for making him a poet. These poems, styles and authors can all be linked with *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (Chapter 7).

126

O Thou my louely Boy who in thy power,
 Doeſt hold times fickler glaſſe, his ſickle, hower:
 Who haſt by wayning growne, and therein ſhou'ſt,
 Thy louers withering, as thy ſweet ſelfe grow'ſt.
 If Nature (ſoueraine miſteres ouer wrack)
 As thou goeſt onwards ſtill will plucke thee backe,
 She keepes thee to this purpoſe, that her ſkill.
 May time diſgrace, and wretched mynuit kill.
 Yet feare her O thou minnion of her pleaſure,
 She may detaine, but not ſtill keepe her treſure!
 Her *Audite* (though delayd) anſwer'd muſt be,
 And her *Quietus* is to render thee.

{ }
{ }

Fig. 5-3. Original "Sonnet" 126.

The concluding poem 126 is not a sonnet with quatrains, but 12 lines and 6 couplets. By concluding with 6 couplets, the poet summarizes the allegorical meanings of the entire sequence. The first 3 couplets make conclusions about the course of life, first, for the boy, second, for his loving parents, third, for Mother Nature who creates life and delivers death. The last 3 couplets make conclusions about the meaning of life, through the power of poetry. The mother-poet ("she") first creates delight, then threatens her son's future, and then makes her final judgments.

The grand plan here is to create a legacy, an "ever-living" document like the Bible, that proceeds from Genesis (Creation of Life) in S1 to Revelations (Last Judgments) in S126. Again, this is influenced by the sonnets of Petrarch's *Il Canzoniere*, which proceed from the first meeting of the poet with Laura on Good Friday, to his final resurrection into Heaven and receipt of the laurel crown. The six couplets here may be compared with Petrarch's six *Triumphs (I Trionfi)*, allegorical poems that depict the poet's progression from Love to Eternity.

**"O Thou my lovely Boy, who in thy power,
 Doeſt hold time's fickler glaſſe, his sickle, hour;"**

Her "lovely Boy" has risen to the Earl of Pembroke, and now holds the power of Time (the hourglass) and of Death (the sickle). So her son has become the allegorical Father Time, who will beget sons for family succession, who "counts" time, holding "fickle" temporal power. The image of the hourglass is a symbol of life waning, a descending triangle where the fickle sands of Time descend toward death. This image is used throughout the sonnets, first, in the Dedication as descending word-triangles, later in the receding shore (S64) and then in the fading pyramids (S123--"No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change" L1). The poet then boasts that her wisdom outlasts Time and Death (L14): "I will be true despite thy scythe and thee."

**“Who hast by waning grown, and therein show’st,
Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow’st.”**

This 2nd couplet contrasts the aging of parents (“Thy lovers withering”) with the growth of their son, again using the image of the waning of life. In S1, the boy is “thy sweet self” and the aging father who wants an heir “should by time decease”. So this couplet closes the sonnet cycle by referring to the boy and his parents, not to the boy’s sexual partners, as most commentators have assumed.

**“If Nature (sovereign mistress over wrack)
As thou goest onwards still will pluck thee back,”**

This 3rd couplet contrasts the power of Mother Nature over life and death, like the power Queen Elizabeth held over her subjects. Allegorically, Mother Nature is stronger than Father Time. In *The Triumphs* of Petrarch, also in 6 parts, the 3rd poem describes *The Triumph of Death* over his beloved Laura.

**“She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill,
May time disgrace, and wretched minute kill.”**

The 4th couplet shifts to the power of poetry, following the ideas of Sir Philip Sidney that “ever-praiseworthy poetry” creates delight, virtue and philosophical judgments (*The Defense of Poesy*, 1595). Here, the female poet kills time by creating delightful poems for her boy.

**“Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure,
She may detain, but not still keep her treasure!”**

As parent she may threaten her boy, but he will go his own way in spite of her poetry. “Treasure” may refer to his inheritance of the family estates, and to her loss of wealth, after the death of her husband in 1601.

**“Her *Audit* (though delayed) answered must be,
And her *Quietus* is to render thee.”**

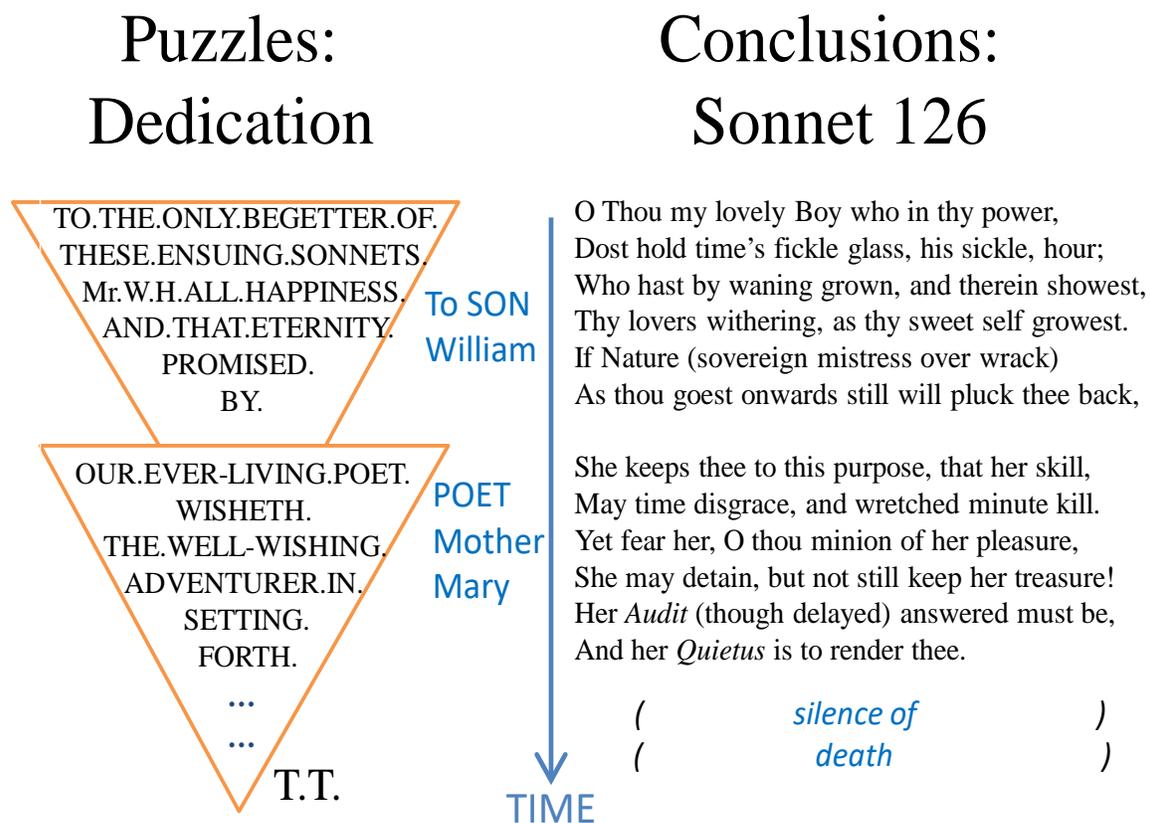
“Her *Audit*” is her final summation of the boy’s sins and virtues in the Sonnets, as by an accountant. “And her *Quietus*” is her final judgment, as in a court of law, or in the book of *Revelations* by St. Peter at the gates of heaven. The judge here, however, is the wise mother-poet, in the allegorical person of Mother Nature.

The word “render” has several meanings. A judge renders a verdict; An artist renders a portrait; A poet renders the subjects of verse. In S125, the mother-poet delivers her love “But mutual render, only me for thee”, allowing her son to judge her in the following Dark Lady sonnets. She prays that her son will accept her “oblation, poor but free” that is, her poetic offering to her rich son as the poor, but free, Dowager Countess (L10). Then she becomes the Final Judge as Mother Nature, the poet, in S126.

In the original Quarto (Fig. 5-3), the last couplet of S126 is followed by 2 lines defined by empty parentheses in italics, each indented like the final couplet of all other sonnets. This final couplet is the final conclusion of all life that completes the 14 lines, that is, by the silence of death. As the dying Hamlet says “the rest is silence”. S126 thereby completes the meaning of life, delivered as final judgments of “Shake-speare”, the mother-poet, Mary Sidney, Dowager Countess of Pembroke to her son, William. Her judgments do not provide an ascent into heaven’s proud afterlife, as in Dante’s *Paradiso* or in Petrarch’s concluding sonnets, but a descent into silence.

The puzzles of the Dedication are solved in S126. The riddles in *Shake-speare’s Sonnets* are solved by comparing the 12 lines of S126 with the 12 lines of the Dedication (see Fig. 5-4). The first 6 lines of the Dedication to W.H. praise him as the begetter of future sons (i.e., “son-nets” as little sons) for the Pembrokes, and as the begetter of sonnets that he inspired or wrote. The next 6 lines praise “OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET”, who delivers judgments for future readers, “THE.WELL-WISHING.ADVENTURER”. In other words, 6 lines are to the son’s temporal power as Father Time, and 6 lines are to the poet’s eternal power as Mother Nature. This demonstrates that the poet of S126 must have designed the parallel Dedication.

Fig. 5-4. Comparison of Sonnet 126 with the Dedication.



The words of the Dedication are placed within 2 descending word-arrows in Fig. 5-4, like waning arrows of life, for the “only begetter” Son and for his loving mother Mary. These may suggest Christ, the “only begotten Son”, and his mother Mary at the foot of the cross. These also represent “time’s fickle glass”, the hourglass of Father Time in the 3 couplets on Life (S126, L1-6).

So why are the words shown as capital letters with dots between? Duncan-Jones (2010) has pointed out that the capital letters look like the epitaph on a Roman tombstone, a good idea. But the picture shows a triangle, not a rectangle. For us, the Dedication picture represents the top of an hourglass (“time’s fickle glass”) that is full of sand that falls toward the waning center of the glass. Accordingly, the sands of time, shown as dots between each word, pull all life down in a waning triangle towards the final destination of rest at the bottom of the glass. And so, “Mr. W.H.”, “OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET” and “THE.WELL-WISHING.ADVENTURER” are all inevitably pulled down toward death by the sands of time.

“THE.WELL-WISHING.ADVENTURER.SETTING.FORTH” of the Dedication is located in the position of the final judge in S126. The poet passes her words on to future readers, those who wish well for, and then judge, the words coming out of her pen and inkwell.

This hour-glass also represents her downward-pointing spear, the Sidney Pheon, “Turning the accomplishment of many years into an hour-glass” (Henry V, Prologue, shown here in the heading to Chapter 5). “THE.WELL-WISHING.ADVENTURER”, the dedicated reader, becomes solver of the puzzles of *Shake-speare’s Sonnets*: “And let us, ciphers to this great accompt, /On your imaginary forces work” (Henry V, End of Prologue). In this way, we are all beneficiaries of her Sonnets, finally revealed after 400 years of misunderstandings.

At the bottom of the 12-line Dedication are 2 empty spaces, defined by the initials “T.T.” below the spaces. The parallel structures of the 12-line Dedication and the final 12-line S126 show that the author of *Shake-speares Sonnets* wrote the Dedication. The poet defined the puzzles in the 12 lines of the Dedication, which were then solved in the 12 lines of S126. These parallel solutions define “Mr. W.H.” of the Dedication as “my lovely Boy” in S126, then define “OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET” of the second half of the Dedication as Mother Nature in the second half of S126. Thus, the poet “Shake-speare” in the title becomes William Herbert’s poet-mother, Mary Sidney. The initials “T.T.” are a necessary placeholder--The initials of the true author M.S. would have spoiled the riddles. So the initials of the publisher, which have confounded readers for 4 centuries, were used.

No other solutions for this puzzle are possible based on this design. The poet must be a mother, representing Mother Nature, just as her son must represent “the only begetter” Son who becomes Father Time. She must be the poet of the family, and the mother of her boy “W.H.” Further, these answers explain the prosaic title *Shake-speares Sonnets*, using 2 meanings of “sonnet” and “sonnet”. “Shake-speare” is the pen-name of “our ever-living poet”, who uses Sidney sonnets and images to write eternal poems. These poems reveal hidden meanings of the poet’s identity, as well as her poetic views on the meaning of life.

Pictures and images of *Shake-speares Sonnets* identify two family badges of Mary Sidney Herbert, the rising sun and the falling arrow. The downward arrows in the Dedication, the hourglass and in the text of many sonnets represent the family badge of the Sidneys, the Sidney Pheon (Fig. 5-5). The Sidney sonnet uses 3 quatrains and then 1 couplet at the conclusion. The waning Arrows point downward toward death, like the spear-head. These arrows also represent the power of the Sidney pen that points downward toward the page, to inscribe black ink to make memories that last beyond death.

The Title Page picture shows an Eden-like Garden, with 3 large roses and 3 faces at the top, that rise toward heaven (Fig. 5-1). The 3 roses on the horizon, therefore, can be seen to represent the 3 rising suns of the “Sun-in-Splendor” scene from *Henry VI, part 3*, that represented the creation of their Herbert-Pembroke earldom, as well as the rise of the 3 sons of York in the Wars of the Roses.

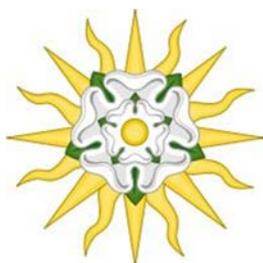
The son’s shining face is surrounded by 7 petals that radiate upwards, like the rays of the rising sun (S7). Indeed, the York badge, the “Rose in Sun” (Fig. 5-5) shows 7 rays of the sun above the midline. This is like the coronet of an Earl, in which the 5 points of the coronet are like the rays, or corona, of the rising sun, here representing the rise of William Herbert.

In the center of the Rose Garden picture, the stems of the 3 roses point down together, like the 3-into-1 Pheon, toward the 3 dead fish providing fertilizers on the cold earth. As in Sonnet 1, the bottom of the picture ends in “the grave” (L14). And so the Creation of Life is connected with the end of life.

The Bird picture above Sonnet 1 (Fig. 5-2) shows 3 birds and their feathers at the top of the woodcut, with the 3 detached feathers pointing down like arrows. A large bird rests on an urn that also points downward, like an arrow toward the title “Shake-speares Sonnets”. The urn suggests ashes of death below the Phoenix. The downward arrows of the feathers and inkwell represent the Sidney pens for poetry, while the urn below represents the ashes of the dead Phoenix, the poet’s brother, Philip. In the first Quarto of *Hamlet* (1603) this same picture may represent the poet contemplating life, death and immortality in the years after *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601) and her husband’s death.

In summary, the 2-part organization of *Shake-speares Sonnets* is represented by two family badges, the rising Rose-in-Sun on Life, and the Pheon on the meaning of Life through Poetry. This 2-part design begins with the 2-part Dedication, the 2 pictures, the 2 families, and the 2 parts of the sonnets on the rise and the waning course of life (Fig. 5-5).

The ambitions of the Herberts are represented in the left column by creation of the son, and male temporal power signified by wealth, crops and titles, using the scythe and the hourglass. The ambitions of the Sidneys are represented in the right column by poetry, using their pen as an implement of wisdom and meanings. The creative power of the woman author, Shake-speare, becomes the realization of their ambitions. Her concluding allegory in S126 declares the eternal power of Mother Nature over Father Time.



Son (Life)

Dedication:	W.H.
Picture:	Rose Garden
Family:	Herberts
Badge:	Rose-in-Sun
Strengths:	Wealth, Titles
Archetype:	Father Time
Tools:	Hourglass, Scythe
Scope:	Temporal
Gender:	Male



Sonnets (Poetry)

Poet
Phoenix
Sidneys
Pheon
Wisdom
Mother Nature
Mirror, Quill
Eternal
Female

Fig. 5-5. Two-part imagery of *Shake-speares Sonnets* for the Son (middle column) and for the Sonnets (right column).

Mary Sidney's portrait (1618). In her final portrait, the Dowager Countess of Pembroke is rendered surrounded by Latin scrolls ("Anno 1618"), swan feathers, and inkwells (Fig. 5-6). Above her head is the Sidney Pheon, crowned with a 5-point coronet, and the laurel wreath of great poets. Her right hand holds her translations of "Davids Psalms", the finest poems of the Bible. The Latin text framing her portrait is translated below into English: "Right Honorable most Virtuous Lady Mary Sidney, wife of the late deceased Henry Herbert Earl of Pembroke". Her lace collar and sleeve display dozens of tiny swans (Williams, 2012, pp. 207-8). Mary Sidney presents herself as a "most virtuous poet", as predicted by Marlowe (1592), not as a playwright.

Conclusions: *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609) tell stories of the Pembroke family, within an allegory on life. Sidney family images are used throughout, such as the Sidney Pheon, or spearhead, to represent the pen of the poet "Shake-speare" and the 3-in-1 sonnet form. The riddles of the 12-line Dedication are solved by the 12-line S126: "W.H." is "my lovely Boy", the poet's son, who becomes Father Time. The Countess of Pembroke is revealed as the poet, writing sonnets using her pen name "Shake-speare", and making last judgments. The allegory concludes that Mother Nature triumphs over Father Time. All works of "William Shakespeare" should be re-considered in the light of these conclusions.

Why has it take 4 centuries to solve the riddles of *Shake-speares Sonnets*? Authorship debates have seriously considered only male candidates for almost 2 centuries. The solution to the riddles, however, requires that the author become the mother of the boy, "*Will*", that is, "Mr. W.H." of the Dedication.

Several previous authors discussed Mary Sidney as “Shakespeare”, but did not solve the riddles. Gilbert Slater (1931) proposed that Mary Sidney was the likely author of Shakespeare’s late plays, but did not consider her as the poet of Shakespeare’s early poems. Fred Faulkes (2007) proposed that Mary Sidney was author of the early plays of Shakespeare with Marlowe, Nashe and others, and likely other works of Shakespeare (2016). Robin Williams (2012) first proposed that Mary Sidney was the author of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, but did not consider her the author of *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece* or *A Lover’s Complaint* (see Chapter 7). Williams did not comment on the riddles of the Dedication in relation to the final sonnet. Each of these three commentators were important for leading the discussions of Mary Sidney’s authorship, and deserve great credit.



Fig. 5-6. Portrait of Lady Mary Sidney, 1618, by Simon van de Passe.

Chapter 6: The Dark Sonnets: Family Conflicts and the Dark Lady.

“My life.../Sinks down toward death, oppressed with melancholy”

Shake-speares Sonnet 45, lines 7-8.

The first 34 sonnets, and the last 5 (S122-126), tell of an ambitious family that achieves success through a son and sonnets. The middle sonnets, however, tell an entirely different story. These begin with S35 where “Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud” and continue through S121, ending “All men are bad, and in their badness reign”. The dominant themes are the anger and frustration of the beleaguered poet. She reveals a family wracked by tragedies, divisions, doubts and deaths.

The quality of the words and phrases in these sonnets is so strong (Vendler, 2007; Hughes, 1991) that no commentator, even one who questions the purposes of the Sonnets as a whole, has doubted seriously that *Shake-speares Sonnets* were written, in large part, by the prime author of the First Folio plays.

The Dark Lady sonnets (S127-152) expose a mother and her young son, named *Will*, waging poetic battles with each other on the subject of his lover. We consider here which of these sonnets appear to be written by the author “Shake-speare”, and which were by her son, *Will*.

We first review evidence on the dates for *Shake-speares Sonnets* in order to set the context for these family events. We then speculate on how the dark sonnets relate to the lives of Mary Sidney Herbert and her son, William.

Dating the Sonnets. Internal and external evidence suggests that the Sonnets were written over 2 decades from the 1580s to 1609 spanning almost the entire career of “Shakespeare” (Duncan-Jones, 2010; Conner, *TNOS*, 2017b, p. 1435). Two sonnets to the Dark Lady from *Will* (S138 and 144) were published in *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, when William Herbert was still a teenager. These poems can be dated, then, to the late 1590s (Duncan-Jones, 2010, pp. 1-12).

Eliot Slater (1988) studied over 5000 rare words in Shakespeare’s four longest poems and in the 36 plays of the First Folio. He found a progression in the rare words used from early plays and poems, such as *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), to late plays and poems, such as *A Lover’s Complaint* and *Cymbeline*, c.1609. *Shake-speares Sonnets* were the exception, including rare words from early, middle and late periods. Further work by Jackson (2001; 2015) found irregular historical progressions of rare words used through the first 126 sonnets. The first and last sonnets of the main sequence may have been written nearer to the publication date of 1609. Many of the Dark Lady sonnets, however, use rare words associated with c.1600.

If we relate these dates to the life of William Herbert (1580-1630), the Sonnets begin with S1-3 on his birth and the pride of his parents. They progress through his teenage affairs with the Dark Lady in the late 1590s (S40-42). Between 1595 and 1601, Henry Herbert, suffered through years of disability, described as “a decrepit father” in S37, L1. The death of Henry Herbert in

January, 1601, after which William became the Earl of Pembroke, is described in S63 and S64 (“by time’s fell hand defaced” S64, L1) at the exact middle of the main sequence of 126 poems.

Henry’s death diminished the status of Mary Herbert to Dowager Countess, and her wealth to a modest income from his will (Hannay, 1990). In the winter of 1601, William was jailed in Fleet Prison for a few months after he impregnated Lady Mary Fitton, but refused to marry her. He was released from prison after their baby died at birth. So William’s rise to power was followed by deep embarrassment and loss of status for the Pembrokes in Elizabeth’s court. This humiliation was compounded for his mother, who had written two fine poems in her own name to the Queen c.1599 to obtain a court position for William (see Chapter 7).

Did the poet suffer from depression? Eliot Slater (1975a), a British psychiatrist, identified 3 periods of melancholia for the poet, in S27-45, S61-74 and S85-105. The poet confesses in S45, L7,8 “My life.../Sinks down toward death, oppressed with melancholy”. This first period may begin with 4 deaths in Mary Sidney Herbert’s immediate family in 1586. Sonnets from the 1590s are associated with William becoming a teenager while attending Oxford in 1593-5, and his affair with the Dark Lady. The second period of depression in the middle sonnets is associated with Henry’s death and William’s imprisonment and estrangement in 1601. The third period reflects Mary Sidney’s loneliness and frustration as Dowager Countess, and with the writing of the great tragedies of “Shakespeare” in 1602-8 (Williams, 2012, pp. 61-66).

Slater identified the poet of these “autobiographical” Sonnets as an “anonymous” male, who was not the actor from Stratford. This conclusion prevented Slater from making any connection between these periods of melancholia and the unknown poet’s life. Ironically, his father Gilbert Slater (1931, pp. 207-306) was the first to propose that the author of the late works of Shakespeare was Mary Sidney Herbert, whom he called the “Sweet Swan of Avon” using Jonson’s words in the First Folio (L71). Recent biographical work on the lives of Mary Sidney and William Herbert, helps us connect these dark sonnets with the sad events in her life (Waller, 1979; Hannay et al., 2005; O’Farrell, 2011; Williams, 2012).

The first period of serious depression for Mary Sidney Herbert, recorded by many of her closest friends, occurred from 1586-8, after the successive deaths of her 3-year old daughter, Katherine, her brother Philip, and both of Mary’s parents (Hannay, 1990). Her energetic return to London in November, 1588, was followed by her 1590 translations of *The Tragedy of Antony*, *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (1593), honoring Sir Philip, and *Venus and Adonis* (1593) (see Chapter 7). Meanwhile, she led Pembroke’s writers in 1590-5 to provide plays for performances and publications. It seems that Mary Sidney Herbert used these projects to rebound from her depression in 1586-8.

Alienation from William in the 1590s and 1600s. William Herbert was a precocious child, tutored at Wilton House by poets Hugh Sanford after 1586 and Samuel Daniel after 1590 (O’Farrell, 2011). His mother bragged how William was trained to write poems for her in S134, L7: “He learned but surety-like to write for me”. In his later years William Herbert wrote many poems on the subjects of love and reason (Krueger, 1961, *Poems of William Herbert*).

From ages 12-14, he attended Oxford, beginning in March, 1593 during the plague year when Pembroke's players were touring. *Venus and Adonis* was published in April, 1593 to great popularity among students at Oxford for their erotic fantasies. William may have been embarrassed by these poems, especially if he suspected that his mother was the author imagining herself as the Goddess of Love, Venus, seducing a beautiful young man (see Chapter 7).

The poet identified strongly with her son in sonnets from these years ("thou art all the better part of me" S39, L2) and later "'Tis thee, myself, that for myself I praise" (S62). In her personal letters, Mary Sidney Herbert wrote of her son William as "this part of me", "the dearest part of me" (Hannay, 1990, p. 184).

Dark Lady Sonnets (S127-152). The poet becomes troubled, however, by her son's sexual affairs with a Dark Lady (S42 L1,2) "That thou hast her is not all my grief, /And yet it might be said I loved her dearly". So the Dark Lady was the poet's beloved friend (S40-42) who could not become her enemy: "Lascivious grace.../Kill me with spites yet we must not be foes" (S40, L13-14). In S134, she addresses the Dark Lady in a similar way "So, now I have confessed that he is thine, /And I myself am mortgaged to thy will (L1-2)...Him I have lost; thou hast both him and me; /He pays the whole, and yet I am not free. (L13-14)"

Most of the Dark Lady Sonnets are written from the viewpoint of the youth, who is identified as *Will* 11 times in S135, 136 and 143 (Tables 5-1 and 6-1). Will Herbert is, thus, the first-person teenager "I", pursuing his Dark Lady in these sonnets. Will addresses several poems to his mistress, and several others to his critical mother. Therefore, "thee" is sometimes his mistress and sometimes his mother, with the woman who is not being addressed taking the pronoun "she" in that sonnet.

Table 6-1. Pronouns in Dark Lady Sonnets.

Sonnets 127-154

(Pronouns are less specific to a person here than in S1-126.)

<u>PRONOUN</u>	<u>PERSON</u>	<u>REPRESENTS</u>	<u>SONNETS</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
"I"	" <i>Will</i> "	Youth	S127-132, 135-151	Eros-driven teen The youth becomes "he" in S134, written by his mother to the Dark Lady.
"she"	Dark Lady	Will's mistress	S42, 127-153	Friend of poet The Dark Lady becomes "thee" in S131, 132.
"thee"	His mother	A critical voice	Several sonnets	The mother becomes "she" in S143, and then "I" as poet in S133, 134.
"he"	Cupid	Eros	S153, 154	

Who was the Dark Lady? The elusive Dark Lady must have been a close friend of Mary Sidney Herbert in the late 1590s. In S42, the poet addresses her son "Thou dost love her, because

thou knowst I love her” (S42, L6-7). Neither woman was apparently willing to sacrifice their close relationship when Will became fascinated with the Dark Lady. Who held such power over both Will and his mother?

The Dark Lady’s eyes are described as “raven black” (S127, L8), her hair as “black” (S130, L4), and “her breasts are dun” (L3), or grayish in color. Her breath “reeks” (S130, L8). Three candidates with dark hair and eyes in their portraits have been proposed: The poet and court musician, Emilia Bassano Lanyer (1569-1645) (Rowse, 1984; Green, 2006), Lady Mary Fitton (1578-1647) the lady at court whom Will impregnated in 1600, and Will’s younger first cousin, the poet and musician, Lady Mary Sidney Wroth (1587-1652) (Williams, 2012, and others). When S138 and 144 were first published in 1599, Emilia Bassano Lanyer turned 30, Lady Mary Fitton 21, and Will’s cousin Lady Mary Sidney turned 12, then married Sir Robert Wroth in 1604 at age 17.

On the surface, none of these ladies seems an ideal candidate. Sidney (Wroth) was perhaps too young, and Bassano Lanyer was 11 years older than William. The skin of each woman appears light in the few portraits available, but perhaps more grayish-white than rosy (see Fig. 6-1). Fitton may not have been available to William in 1599, because he did not join Elizabeth’s court until 1600.

The evidence is stronger for Wroth and for Lanyer on the subjects of musicianship, personality, and friendship with the Countess. The Dark Lady’s dexterity on the keyboard was irresistible to *Will*, as were her fingers and lips (S128). Bassano Lanyer and Sidney (Wroth) were each outstanding musicians. Bassano Lanyer was an experienced courtesan from an Italian family of royal court musicians. She is preferred as the Dark Lady by authors who admire her exceptional intelligence (Rowse, 1984; Green, 2006), her musicianship, her foreign appearance and, perhaps, her odorous breath.

Both women had noble lovers outside their long marriages to other partners. Bassano had a child with Sir Henry Carey in the 1590s, legitimized by marriage to her cousin, Alfonso Lanyer. Wroth had 2 illegitimate children with William Herbert in the 1620s. Bassano Lanyer and Sidney Wroth each became distinguished writers after 1610, deeply influenced by Mary Sidney Herbert, suggesting that they were close to the Countess in the years the Sonnets were written (Hannay, 2010). Each advocated eloquently for strong women in their writings (Rowse, 1984; Hannay, 2010).

If Mary Sidney (Wroth) is seen as mature well beyond her pre-teen years in 1599, she had the advantage of immediate access to William and her aunt. Her father’s love sonnets to his wife, Barbara Gamage, were dedicated to his older sister, Mary Sidney Herbert, around 1600 (Croft, 1984). When Robert Sidney was Governor of Flushing in the 1590s, Sidney (Wroth) lived at Penshurst, and at Baynard’s Castle in London with her namesake aunt. Her first cousin, Will, must have admired her musical skill during performances at their family homes. Mary Sidney Wroth’s portrait from c.1610 shows her holding a long lute, or theorbo (Fig. 6-1).

Most importantly, Mary Sidney Wroth had 2 illegitimate children by William Herbert c.1624 after her husband’s death in 1614 (Hannay, 2010). Wroth’s major literary work, *The Countess of*

Montgomery's Urania (1621) is a romance strongly influenced by *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1598). Included in *Urania* is Wroth's complete sonnet cycle *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, influenced by *Astrophel and Stella*. *Pamphilia* tells the love story of first cousins who must hide their relationship. They also have 2 love children, which resembles her affairs with William Herbert. Pamphilia's love is constant in spite of the infidelity of her cousin Amphilanthus. His mother, the Queen of Naples, is generally seen as the character of Mary Sidney Herbert. Word frequencies in the sonnets of *Pamphilia* are closely associated with those of Philip Sidney's *Astrophel* and of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Chapter 7; Arefin et al., 2014), suggesting poetic lineages to her uncle and aunt.

Were either of these accomplished women William's Dark Lady? We cannot be certain at this point.



Fig. 6-1. Portraits of Mary Sidney Wroth (c.1610, attributed to John de Critz) and Emilia Bassano Lanyer (c.1595, Miniature by Nicholas Hilliard).

Sonnet 143: *Will's* mother cares most for her “feathered creatures”. *Will* complains to his mother, “a careful housewife”, that he is a “neglected child” (L1,5). He chases his mother “whose busy care is bent /To follow that which flies before her face, /Not prizing her poor infant’s discontent” (L6-9). *Will's* mother, however, “sets down her babe” (L1,2) and chases “feathered creatures”, that is, her poems, “the thing she would have stay” (L4). *Will* portrays a mother more obsessed with her poems, represented as “feathered creatures”, than her son.

A.L. Rowse’s ridiculous conclusion (1984, p. 289) that her “feathered creatures” are merely barnyard “chickens” must be dismissed. Duncan-Jones (2010, p. 400) repeats this error: “Shakespeare here shows a child in desperate pursuit of a woman who prefers hunting for a chicken to caring for her infant.” And so the pursuit of immortal poetry by *Will* Herbert’s mother is passed off as mere chicken-chasing. The assumption that the author must be the actor, Shakespeare, whose mother was illiterate, has once again prevented appreciation of the Sonnets.

This image of “feathered creatures” reminds us that “fairest creatures” in the first line of the Sonnets (S1, L1) are not only all living creatures that multiply, but the creations of poets who use feathers to make memories (S1, L4). The poet’s “desire for increase” leads to bearing a son, and to writing sonnets for posterity. The poet’s life is marred, however, by her failure to please her son, who turns away from his mother toward his Dark Lady and politics. In this way, S143 confirms the identity of the 2 central characters, the mother-poet and her son *Will*, and their mutual frustrations.

Third period of melancholy. The Dowager Countess was estranged from William from c.1602-9 (S87-90). They had years of bitter conflict over a court case involving the murder of her servant, and the theft of her jewels. Her personal letters complain that William would not support her case (Hannay, 1990, p. 184; Williams, 2012, pp. 63-5). During the same years, Mary Sidney’s only surviving daughter, Anne, died in 1606 at age 23, after a long illness.

Mary’s younger son, Philip, led a playboy’s life as a handsome courtier and “favorite” of King James, to the disgust of his mother (Williams, 2012, p. 64, pp. 177-8). Philip became a “gentleman of the bedchamber” for James in 1605, who later named him the Earl of Montgomery (see Fig. 6-2). Philip Herbert was involved in violent fights, yet James I paid Philip grants for “services” in 1603, and for gambling debts in 1606. As the Lord Chamberlain for James I from 1615-25, William controlled access to the King’s chambers, including his bed. This troubling history gives an entirely different meaning to the flattering words “incomparable pair of brethren” given to William and Philip in the Dedication to the First Folio in 1623.

S121 ends “All men are bad, and in their badness reign”. Sonnets 122-6, which compare the foolishness of power-seeking males to the wisdom of poets can be seen, in part, as Mary Sidney’s lectures to her 2 sons and King James. These prophetic words can also be compared with those of Seneca, Dante, Petrarch, Chaucer and other poets to powerful men of their times.

The second and third periods of isolation and suffering coincide with the great tragedies of Shakespeare written from 1601-8. S146 expresses the poet’s intimations on death in words that resemble those in Hamlet’s soliloquy and grave scene.

Sonnet 146

Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
 Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?...
 So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
 And death once dead, there's no more dying then."

The final 3 sonnets (S152-4), and the 47 poems in *A Lover's Complaint*, are more forgiving in tone. S152 appears to express regrets from Mary Sidney Herbert to her son, concluding "For I have sworn thee fair; more perjured I, /To swear against the truth so foul a lie." (L13-14). The references to lying and perjury suggest re-consideration by the poet in 1609 of the earlier court case that had divided her from William.

The final 2 sonnets on Cupid's power over youth lead into the 47-stanza allegorical poem *A Lover's Complaint*, in which a "gentle maid" (L177) is seduced by a poet-horseman (Duncan-Jones, 2010, p. 95). These poems can be seen as a confession by the poet of her own vulnerability to love and to poetry. The poet-horseman who seduces the maid may be seen as her brother Philip. Indeed, the second line "A plaintive story from a sistering vale" appears to us as Mary's sad confession of authorship of this autobiographical tale. In Chapter 7, we place *A Lover's Complaint* in the context of the complete set of Shakespeare's poems on love.

Why were the Dark Lady Sonnets published with the Main Sonnets? Most of *Will's* Dark Lady sonnets betray his teenage impulsivity, and his vulnerability to women, a recurring theme in his life and in his own later poems. Were his inferior sonnets to the Dark Lady included in the 1609 Quarto to permit his poetic responses to his mother's criticisms? Or were they included to explain her sufferings in response to his youthful misdeeds, for the purposes of dramatic contrast, or even of vengeance? We don't have confident answers to these dark questions any more than we have to the Dark Lady's identity.

Why were *Shake-speares Sonnets* neglected in the 17th Century? Only a few copies of *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609) survived to the 20th Century. Almost no 17th century commentary on *Shake-speares Sonnets* has been found (Rowse, 1984, p. xxv; Duncan-Jones, 2010, pp. 69-74), suggesting loss of most copies of the Quarto shortly after publication. The first reprint was an incomplete set of "*Poems* by Wm. Shakespeare" published in 1640 by Benson, followed by a complete sequence of the Sonnets in 1711 by Lintott (Conner, *TNOS*, 2017b, pp. 1435-48). By then, four Folios of Shakespeare's plays had been published, with several further reprints. The contributions of Mary Sidney Herbert and her Pembroke's players had become obscured beneath the growing legends of Sir Philip Sidney and William Shakespeare.

Shake-speares Sonnets must have offended William Herbert. They criticize his power-seeking lifestyle, his rejection of his mother, and his affairs with the Dark Lady. He is portrayed as a selfish and immature womanizer, especially in the Dark Lady sonnets where *Will* is the first-person author. Furthermore, criticisms in the Sonnets of short-sighted men, court politics and religious conventions were risky to William, especially coming soon before publication of the King James Bible (1611). Suppression of *Shake-speares Sonnets* by William seems likely,



Fig. 6-2. Portrait of Philip Herbert, National Portrait Gallery, c. 1630, unknown artist.

similar to banning of satirical works of Nashe, Jonson and others by Queen Elizabeth and the Privy Council in the previous decade (Williams, 2012, Chapter 14). Neglect of Shakespeare's poetic treasure for decades, followed by its misinterpretation for 3 more centuries, is, for us, a tragedy of literary history.

William Herbert was generally considered a wise and worthy Lord Chamberlain for King James from 1615 to 1625 (O'Farrell, 2011). William was a patron of many poets, some of whom had worked with his mother. At Oxford University he was Lord Chancellor from 1616 until his death in 1630, and a founder of Pembroke College in the 1620s. William may not have achieved these positions if portrayals of him in the Sonnets had been widely distributed and understood. His patronage of the First Folio (1623), with the misleading author attributions by Hemings and Condell, Jonson and of other minor poets can be seen as a sequel to William Herbert's suppression of *Shake-speares Sonnets* (Williams, 2012).

Summary. The Sonnets were composed over at least a two-decade period. The melancholy that dominates S35-121 can be related to conflicts in the lives of Mary Sidney Herbert and her family. The Dark Lady Sonnets (127-152) are written largely from the viewpoint of *Will* Herbert in a poetic dialogue with his mother about his lover.

Shakespeare's harsh judgments of men appear to reflect, in part, Mary Sidney's judgments of the corrupt lives of her sons, William and Philip Herbert, in the reign of King James. Their likely response to her criticisms in *Shake-speares Sonnets* was suppression of the 1609 Quarto, followed by misattribution of all 36 plays in the First Folio (1623) to the minor actor, William Shakespeare. The "incomparable" brothers were credited as generous patrons, while their mother received no acknowledgement. Their behavior toward their mother in the First Folio after her death appears to justify her previous judgments of them in *Shake-speares Sonnets*.

Chapter 7: Poems of Shakespeare on Women and Love

*“Now, after all, let no man
Receive it for a Fable,
If a Bird so amiable,
Do turn into a Woman.”* Ben Jonson, *The Phoenix Analysed* (1601)

If Mary Sidney Herbert was the author of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, then who wrote the other poems of “William Shakespeare”, the name shown prominently on all 5 major poems? (Table 7-1). The author’s name was on *Venus and Adonis* 5 years before it was ever shown on plays.

Each sequence used classical poetic forms with expertise, influenced by Ovid, Petrarch, Chaucer, Sir Philip Sidney or Samuel Daniel. Each developed allegories on major love themes, that is, erotic love, rape, ideal love, maternal love, and love for poetry. Each used word frequencies and styles similar to those of poems of the Sidney family. Each was presented from a noble female’s viewpoint, reflecting the poetic viewpoints and goals of Mary Sidney Herbert. We propose here that she was author of all of these poems, and that she chose “William Shakespeare” for her nom de plume in 1593 for *Venus and Adonis*, her reflections on the death of her handsome brother, Sir Philip.

Table 7-1. Poems of “William Shakespeare”.

--*Venus and Adonis* (1593) (199, 6-line stanzas = 1194 lines). The first publication using the name “William Shakespeare” (signed under the dedication to Southampton) was based on a story from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Book X. *Venus and Adonis* became the best-selling poem of the Elizabethan era with many reprints (Conner, *TNOS*, 2017b, pp. 82-93).

--*Lucrece* (1594) (265, 7-line stanzas = 1855 lines). *Lucrece* (signed “William Shakespeare” below the dedication to Southampton) was based on a story from Ovid’s *Fasti*, Book II, available in 1594 only in Latin or Italian (Conner, *TNOS*, 2017b, pp. 214-27).

--*The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601) (13, 4-line stanzas, and 5, 3-line stanzas = 67 lines, signed “William Shakespeare” after the poems). These short poems were included in the book *Love’s Martyr or Rosalin’s Complaint* by “Robert Chester” with poems on the same theme by Jonson, Chapman and others. Shakespeare’s contribution was possibly influenced by Chaucer’s *The Parliament of Fowls* and *The House of Fame*.

--*Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1609) (154, 14-line sonnets except S99 and S126 = 2155 lines, no signature, other than the title, which is also shown on page headers). Influenced by sonnets of Petrarch, Sir Philip Sidney and Samuel Daniel (*Delia*, 1592, sonnets dedicated to Mary Sidney Herbert).

--*A Lover’s Complaint* (1609, appended to *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*) (47, 7-line stanzas in rhyme royal form = 329 lines). Signed “by WILLIAM SHAKE-SPEARE” under the title. Influenced by Samuel Daniel’s *Complaint of Rosamund*, also in rhyme royal form, appended to *Delia* (1592).

Total of 683 stanzas and 5600 lines.

Each of the 5 major poems of “Shakespeare” was written from the viewpoint of a female protagonist. Venus tells of her frustrated attempts to seduce Adonis; Lucrece describes her vicious rape by Tarquin; A female Phoenix is immortalized with a male Turtledove, as “stars of love”; A poet portrays love for her son and for poetry; A noblewoman recalls her seduction by a poet. Each poem contrasts the leading woman’s voice with her male counterpart: Venus/Adonis, Lucrece/Tarquin, Phoenix/Turtledove, Mother/Son, A “gentle maid”/A poet-horseman.

Gilbert Slater (1931) proposed Mary Sidney as a candidate author for Shakespeare’s late plays, but dismissed her involvement in *Venus and Adonis* or *Lucrece* (his pp. 300-1). Williams (2012) advocated for Mary Sidney as author of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* and plays. She was skeptical, however, about whether *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, or even *A Lover’s Complaint*, were Mary Sidney Herbert’s poems (her pp. 67-96). These opinions were defensible, since many male Elizabethan authors wrote erotic poetry on the complaints of women who were targets of desire. Word-frequency analysis by Arefin et al. (2014), however, suggests that *Venus* and *Lucrece* are closely linked with *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* and with many other poems of the Sidney Circle (see below). This new evidence supports a central role for Mary Sidney Herbert, or her immediate circle, in writing all 5 poem cycles.

***Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*.** These poems raise difficult questions for authorship of William Shakespeare from Stratford (e.g., Twain, 1909; Price, 2013; E. Slater, 2016). How did an unknown poet with at best a grammar school education in a provincial town learn the Latin classics, then write the most popular poems of the Elizabethan era in excellent meter and form as his debut in 1593? For the actor from Stratford, 1585-92 are “lost years” for which no records of creative activities have been found (Schoenbaum, 1975). *Lucrece* (1594) was an even longer poem, based on a violent story from Ovid’s *Fasti* that was available only in Italian and classical Latin? The sexual and abusive content of the 2 poems raises further questions about the purposes of these poems for the subsequent reputations of the new author, and of his noble patron, the Earl of Southampton.

By contrast, the Countess of Pembroke was deeply involved in training poets of her circle in classics, and in publishing poetry and plays in 1593. Gabriel Harvey (1593) referred to Venus in his book praising Mary Sidney Herbert (*Pierce’s Supererogation*, p. 91, dated April 27): “that fair body of Venus in print, as it is redoubtably armed with the complete harness of the bravest Minerva”. Harvey appears to be referring to the Countess of Pembroke as the author of *Venus and Adonis*, armed as “the bravest Minerva” with a harness and sword on the title page of the *Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (1593, as seen on Fig. 1-4 here)(see Star, 2016). Harvey delayed the date that his book was published (“The stay of publication resteth at my insistance”) until 9 days after *Venus and Adonis* was registered, suggesting that he was in close contact with the author, whom he identified as his “patroness”.

Is *Venus and Adonis* an allegory on the death of Sir Philip Sidney? In comparison with Ovid’s text “Shakespeare concentrates his whole interest on Venus—her attempt at seduction,” then her fear for the safety of Adonis when he leaves for the hunt, and her loss when he dies (Simon, 1951, p. 128). Buxton (1986) concluded that poets of the Sidney Circle associated the death of the handsome Sir Philip with that of Adonis. In particular, the thigh wound that killed

Sir Philip after the battle of Zutphen was similar to that of Adonis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in Spenser's *Astrophel* (1593), and in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. "*Venus and Adonis* is not primarily about the death of Adonis, but about the love of Venus for him and her grief at his death" (Buxton, p. 109).

Venus and Adonis may be seen as Mary Sidney Herbert's expression of love for her older brother, and her profound sense of loss seven years after his death. The length of the poem sequence suggests her motivation to exceed the tributes of other poets in *The Phoenix Nest* (1593) and in Spenser's *Astrophel* (1593). Eight years later, "Shakespeare" used a similar classical theme on the love between two "dead birds" in the allegorical poem, *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (Buxton, 1980).

The Latin quotation placed prominently on the title page of *Venus and Adonis* (Fig. 7-1) is from Ovid:

"Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua."

Marlowe, a Latin scholar who translated Ovid's *Elegies* (c.1592-3) and *Lucan's First Book* (1593), translated these 2 lines "Let base-conceited wits admire vile things, /Fair Phoebus lead me to the Muses' springs" (*Elegies*, Book I, XV, lines 35-6). Phoebus Apollo, was god of the sun and of poetry. The "Muses' springs" refers the springs of Castalia where poets went for Apollo's inspiration. Marlowe's 1592 dedication to the "true sister of Sidney the bard of Apollo", written to solicit her patronage, swears that Marlowe was a "pure priest of Phoebus" (Chapter 4 here).

Shakespeare's title-page quotation from Ovid thereby urges Marlowe to follow Apollo's virtuous path to immortality, that is, Philip Sidney's "virtue-breeding" goals for "ever-praiseworthy poesy" (*The Defense of Poesy*, 1593). Mary, as "Muse of the Poets of our time", attracted English poets to Wilton House, much like Castalia's springs had attracted Greek poets. The large circle poets at Wilton House must have understood that these images declared Mary Sidney Herbert's goals as author of *Venus and Adonis*.

Was the name "William Shakespeare" Mary Sidney Herbert's "invention"? "William Shakespeare" proclaims *Venus and Adonis* to be "the first heir of my invention" in the dedication to the Earl of Southampton. If *Venus and Adonis* was written by Mary Sidney Herbert, her "first heir" becomes William Herbert, who was 12 years old at the time. Thus, her pen-name "William" may have been chosen to remember her first son, long before *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

The name "Shakespeare" may represent Mary Sidney Herbert as Minerva, the Roman goddess of war and wisdom. "For she enjoys the wise Minerva's wit" wrote Churchyard in 1593, the year Mary Sidney Herbert was portrayed as Minerva on the title page of *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. Jonathan Star reviewed how Minerva was described as "shaking her spear" by Ovid, Spencer and Daniel (2016, Shakespeare Authorship Question, *Pierce's Supererogation*). Emilia Bassano Lanyer (1611) described Lady Mary Sidney as "A Lady whom Minerva chose" in "The Author's Dream of Ladie Marie" (*Salve Deus Rex Judeorum*, pp. 1-4). Ben Jonson (1623, First Folio) described "William Shakespeare" thus: "he seems to shake a lance...at the eyes of

ignorance". In *Venus and Adonis*, Mary Sidney Herbert's shaking spear, or pen, becomes the tool of her "invention", hence, "William Shakespeare".

Her shaking spear also represents the power of the Sidney Pheon, their family badge. Her 2-part pen-name, thereby, represents her heir, William, and her poetic inheritance from Sir Philip. This image is repeated in the 2-part design of *Shake-speares Sonnets*, first in the 2-part Dedication to her son and to poetry, then in the 2-part design of the Main Sonnets. The first part describes the rise of her son/sun "William", representing Pembroke temporal power, while the second part describes the power of her immortal poetry as "Shake-speare", using the spear-head of the Sidney family (Fig. 5-5).

Why did Mary Sidney Herbert choose a male pen-name? *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* describe explicit sexual encounters from the viewpoints of a Love Goddess and of a rape victim, respectively. These subjects were in no way acceptable for the lady whose *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* was published in the same year. The use of an anonymous male pen-name protected the identity of Mary Sidney Herbert. The handsome young Earl of Southampton was likely more comfortable to be associated with Adonis than the Countess was to be identified with abusive sexual relationships. We are not sure why Southampton allowed his name to be used in the dedication, however, or what his relationship with the Countess might have been

This further suggests that the Countess of Pembroke in 1593 descended into a double life: First, as a noble poetess translating classics into English verse and presenting her brother's romances and poems; Second, as an unknown male poet "William Shakespeare" writing erotic poems on the misbehavior of Roman goddesses and pagans. This theme of brilliant women leading double lives as men is found in many of "Shakespeare's" plays (e.g., Portia in *Merchant of Venice*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*; Imogen in *Cymbeline*)(Chapter 8). The name "Shakespeare" was not used on the title page of any play until 1598 when *Love's Labours Lost*, "Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespere", was published.

Marlowe's role. Christopher Marlowe has been proposed as the author of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* by many advocates, based on his demonstrated skill as a poet, and his expert knowledge of Ovid (Barber, 2012). The word-frequency data of Arefin et al. (2014), however, show no links between these 2 early poems of "Shakespeare" in Cluster 1, and Marlowe's many plays in Cluster 4, nor with Marlowe and Chapman's 1598 edition of *Hero and Leander* (see Fig. 7-2 below).

While Marlowe was not likely the principal author of *Venus and Adonis* or *Lucrece*, he may have influenced themes and dramatic styles found in these early poems. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* was incomplete on his death in 1593, 5 weeks after *Venus and Adonis* was registered April 18, 1593. So Marlowe, in his last months, was working on an erotic poem based on Ovid while his collaborator, Mary Sidney Herbert, was completing longer erotic poems based on Ovid using the pen-name "William Shakespeare". This suggests an intense competitive poetic relation between them in the 2 years that they were collaborating on history plays, reflected on the title page of *Venus*. There is no evidence that they met directly, however, perhaps because Robert Sidney, who deported Marlowe from Flushing to London, advised his sister on Marlowe's qualities as a brilliant poet and as a troublemaker.

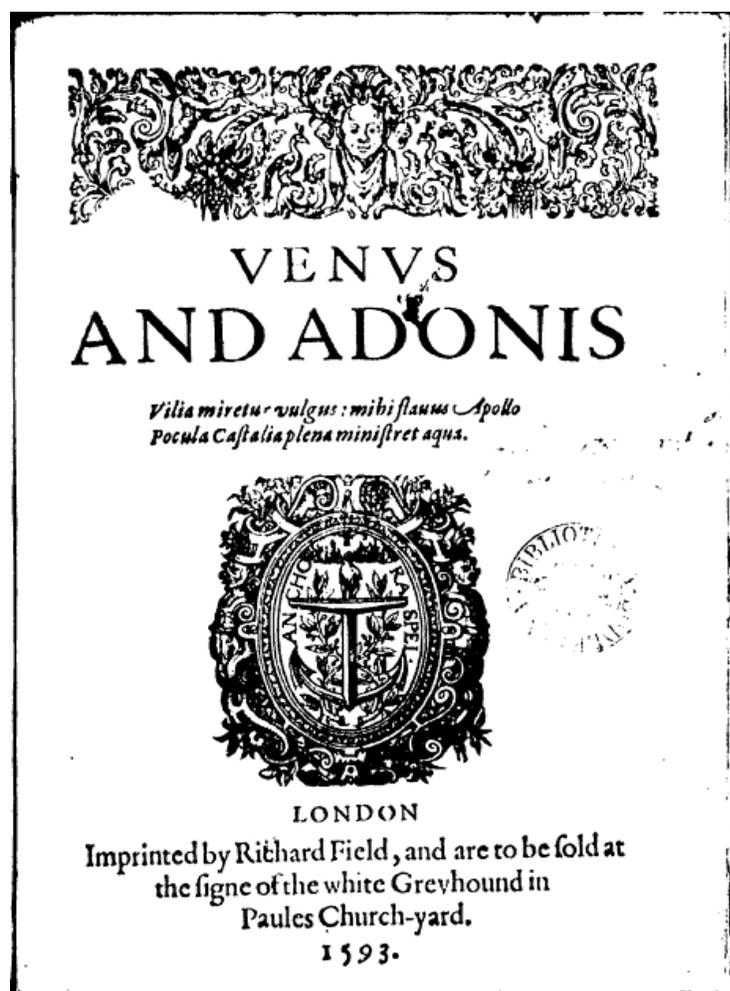


Fig. 7-1. Title page of *Venus and Adonis* (1593).

Shakespeare's poems are associated by word frequencies with poems of the Sidney Circle. In the word-frequency analysis of Arefin et al. (2014), 55 poem collections were studied, including the 4 longest poems of Shakespeare. (Note: *The Phoenix and the Turtle* is too short to be useful for word-frequency analysis.) Shakespeare's 3 longest poems were tightly linked in the star-like Cluster 1, centered on *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Fig. 7-2). The closest link to *Shakespeare's Sonnets* was with *Lucrece*, which was then linked with *Venus and Adonis* (shown in purple for Shakespeare). *A Lover's Complaint* (1609) was not found in Cluster 1, but was best linked with *Cymbeline* (c.1610) a late play of Shakespeare in Cluster 3 (Fig. 3-5).

Other than *Lucrece*, Samuel Daniel's *Delia* (1592) dedicated to Mary Sidney Herbert, was closest to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (1598) was directly linked to *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and then to *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (1621)—*Pamphilia* is the sonnet sequence by Mary Sidney Wroth, Mary Sidney Herbert's niece and namesake, on the subject of Wroth's relationship and 2 children with William Herbert. *The Temple* (1633) was written many years later by Mary Sidney Herbert's younger cousin-in-law, George Herbert.

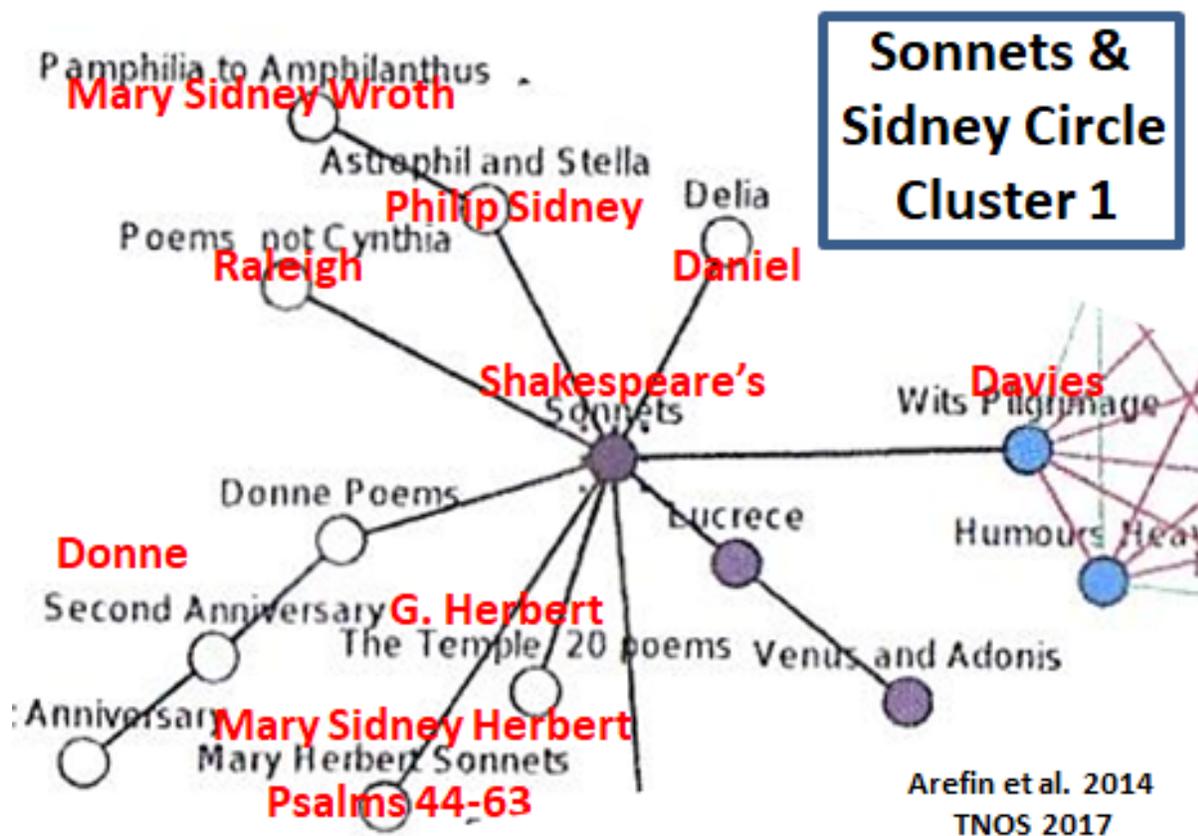


Fig. 7.2. Word-frequency associations in Cluster 1 from Arefin et al. (2014). Poems of Shakespeare (purple circles) are linked with 7 works of John Davies (2 shown here in blue) and of other Sidney Circle authors (open circles). We have added authors names in red, along with a correction for Psalms 44-63.

To the left, John Donne's *Poems* and 2 *Anniversary* poems (1608-33) were linked to the *Sonnets*, as were Sir Walter Raleigh's *Poems*, excluding *Cynthia* (1593, 1600). Donne dedicated a poem to the *Psalms* of Sir Philip and his sister (c. 1610, see p. 25); Raleigh was a cousin by marriage who wrote a poetic tribute to Sir Philip. To the right outside the circle, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* were linked to 7 poems and plays of John Davies of Hereford (Mary Sidney Herbert's long-time secretary) (2 of the 7 blue dots are shown here). The closest of Davies' links to *Shakespeare's Sonnets* was his *Wit's Pilgrimage* (1605) (see Chapter 8).

Another direct link was Mary Sidney Herbert's translations of *Psalms* 44-63, the only poems of hers included in the study. These were incorrectly labelled "Mary Herbert Sonnets" in their figure--These are not sonnets, but a subset of her translations of *Psalms* 44-150. Still these *Psalms* translations link best with the word frequencies of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Poems of Spenser, Chapman, Marlowe and Ford were not linked with any of Shakespeare's poems, but were found in separate clusters of their own. Once the Countess of Pembroke is seen as the poet of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, she becomes the central figure linking the poems of Shakespeare with many poems of her closest associates.

The Phoenix and the Turtle (1601). This short poem, beginning “Let the bird of loudest lay”, was published within a larger collection entitled “*Love’s Martyr or, Rosalin’s Complaint, Allegorically shadowing the truth of Love in the constant Fate of the Phoenix and the Turtle.*” In these poems, the male is the Turtledove, whose ideal love is shared with the female Phoenix. Chester’s opening poem is said to be “first translated out of the venerable Italian Torquato Caeliano, by Robert Chester”. Neither Caeliano nor Chester are known authors, suggesting that these names are pseudonyms.

In Chester’s long introductory poem, Dame Nature (“Rosalin”) consoles the sad Phoenix. A male writer (“Envy”) has embarrassed the female Phoenix. Rosalin and the Phoenix visit Paphos, the island of Venus, to restore delight and hope to the Phoenix. Eventually, they meet a Swan and a Turtledove, after which the sorrowful Phoenix and Turtledove martyr themselves together on a funeral pyre (Conner, *TNOS*, 2017b, p. 1075). The subjects of these poems have confused Shakespeare scholars who proposed that Queen Elizabeth might be the Phoenix (e.g., Chiljian, 2012-3).

Are *The Phoenix and the Turtle and Rosalin’s Complaint* allegorical tributes to Sir Philip Sidney and his sister, Lady Mary? In 1601, the Countess’ husband died, and her son was put in prison. Her fellow poets may have used *Rosalin’s Complaint* to console their leader, Mary Sidney Herbert. Chester’s use of the name “Rosalin” for Mother Nature, suggests the name “Rosalind”, the heroine of *As You Like It* (registered Aug. 4, 1600). Rosalind translates as “beautiful rose” in Spanish (“rosa linda”), and as “beauty’s Rose” in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (S1, L2), which is also an allegory about Mother Nature as Mary Sidney Herbert. *As You Like It* was then performed at Wilton House for King James on December 2, 1603 (see Chapter 7). These images further connect the Countess of Pembroke with *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, with *As You Like It*, with Rosalind, the female Phoenix, and Mother Nature and beauty’s Rose in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (Chapter 5).

In Shakespeare’s poem, the male Turtledove and the female Phoenix ascend together in a funeral pyre attended by fellow poets represented as a Swan, a Crow and an Eagle. The final quatrain of Shakespeare’s poem concludes that “the Phoenix and the Dove [are] /Co-supremes and stars of Love, /As *Chorus* to their tragic scene”. Philip Sidney was the famous “star-lover” Astrophel. By concluding that the Phoenix and Dove are “Co-supremes”, Mary Sidney Herbert appears to place herself as Philip’s equal. *Chorus* is the voice that sets the tragic scene for the “star-crossed lovers” in *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), by means of sonnets before Act 1 and Act 2.

Immediately after Shakespeare’s poem, Ben Jonson’s poems comment on the Phoenix allegory. “The Phoenix Analysed”, in particular, can be seen as his testament to Mary Sidney Herbert as female successor to Philip: “Now, after all, let no man /Receive it for a Fable, /If a Bird so amiable, /Do turn into a Woman.”

Jonson later wrote the dedication poem in the First Folio “To the memory of my beloved, The AUTHOR, Mr. William Shakespeare”. “He” is described as “Sweet Swan of Avon” and “Star of Poets” near the end of the poem. Because “le cygne”, the swan in French, sounds like the name “Sidney”, the swan was used for images of Philip Sidney (for example on the 1625 French

publication of *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, frontispiece here) and for the portrait of the Countess (Fig. 5-6). The South Avon River flowed through her properties in Ivychurch, near Wilton House.

Therefore, Jonson's poem is seen by Williams (2012, pp. 222-31) and by Star (2013, pp. 39-50) as having double meanings regarding the Sidney swan who turns from a man into a woman. "William Shakespeare" is a man's name used by the woman, Mary Sidney, who became *Philip's Phoenix* after Philip's death. Portraits of Philip Sidney (frontispiece, 1625) and of Mary Sidney (1618) (Fig. 5-6) feature swans to represent their Sidney family heritage.

***A Lover's Complaint* (1609)** "A plaintive story from a sistering vale" (line 2) is often dismissed as a minor addition to the Sonnets, written by "William Shake-speare", the name below the title (Slater, 1975; Duncan-Jones, 2010; Jackson, 2015; *TNOS*, 2017a) or possibly by John Davies of Hereford (Vickers, 2007). "Complaints" were often added to sonnet sequences in the Elizabethan period (e.g., Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamund*, 1592, Lodge's *Phyllis*, 1593, Spenser's *Amoretti*, 1595).

If Mary Sidney Herbert was the author, however, *A Lover's Complaint* can explain how, as a "Gentle maid" (L177), she became seduced by poetry, in the person of her poet-horseman brother, Philip ("upon his chin, /His phoenix down", L94-5). After dwelling on her sad life as Will's mother in the Sonnets, she returns sentimentally to the origins of her devotion to her brother and to poetry with "A plaintive story from a sister...".

At the end of the poem, after giving up her innocence to the poet, she asks "What should I do again for such a sake" (L322). She admits that she would do it all again: "[I] Would yet again betray the fore-betray'd, /And new pervert a reconciled maid!" (L328-9). This apology softens her critique of her son's erotic failings in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*: She admits frailty after judging her son (e.g., S126, 132) while neglecting him through her obsessive pursuit of poetry (S143). Yet she asserts no regrets for her sacrifices for poetry, a truly happy/sad ending.

***A Lover's Complaint* (1609) is best linked with *Cymbeline* (c. 1610)** by word frequencies (Cluster 3 from Arefin et al., 2014, Fig. 3-5 here) and by rare-words previously (Slater 1975b, his Table III). Both *Cymbeline* and *A Lover's Complaint* develop themes of love, poetry and legacy. In *Cymbeline*, Princess Imogen falls in love with, and secretly marries, a poet named Posthumus Leonatus. After his exile in Italy, they attempt to re-unite at Milford Haven in the shadow of Pembroke Castle. Imogen adopts the name "Fidele" or faithful, when she disguises herself as a man. In the end, they celebrate the unification of Rome and Britain by marching into "Lud-Town", where Imogen becomes the "tender air" as Jupiter's chosen successor for classical poetry (final scene of the final play of the First Folio).

Cymbeline has been called the "Welsh play", since "Cymru" is the Welsh name for Wales. Ludlow and Pembroke Castles were places where Philip played with his sister Mary--Indeed, the word "lud" in Latin means "play". These stories identify *Cymbeline* with the life of Philip, who brought classical poetry of Rome and Italy to Britain, and to his sister Mary, who completed and published his works. Sir Philip died in 1586, then was lionized posthumously at his State Funeral (Fig. 2-3), hence "Posthumus Leonatus" (see Chapter 8).

Therefore, *A Lover's Complaint* and *Cymbeline* each remember the faithful love of Mary Sidney for her brother Sir Philip. With *Shakespeare's Sonnets* they represent Mary Sidney's epitaph on her contributions to English literature, as fulfillments of classical poetry.

Mary Sidney Herbert's signed poems use rare words similar to those in *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. Mary Sidney Herbert signed two poems for Queen Elizabeth in 1599 were used to secure a court position for her 19-year old son, William. The first poem flattered the Queen (*To the Thrice-sacred Queen Elizabeth*), while the second praised the memory of Sir Philip, whom the Queen had given a State Funeral (*To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney*). Mary Sidney Herbert also is believed to have written an earlier elegy to Sir Philip, *Doleful Lay of Clorinda*, published in Spenser's *Astrophel* (1595) portraying herself as "Clorinda" (Hannay, 1990).

The words and phrases of *Angel Spirit* anticipate those of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. For examples, "Nature...Phoenix...sum...reckoning...audit" in stanzas 6 and 7, and then "render" in stanza 12 are words used in both poems:

***To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney (c.1599)* [See Appendix 4]**

by Lady Mary Sidney Herbert

[our comments and bold type added]

"To thy great worth. Exceeding **Nature's** store,
Wonder of men, sole born perfection's kind,
Phoenix thou wert... (stanza 6)

Oh! When to this accompt, this cast-up **sum**,
This **reckoning** made, this **audit** of my woe... (stanza 7) [as in S2 and S126]

To which these dearest offerings of my heart,
Dissolved to ink, while pen's impressions move
The bleeding veins of **never-dying** love,
I **render** here.... (stanza 12) [as in S125 and S126]

Receive these hymns, these **obsequies** receive: [as in S125, L9]
If any mark of **thy sweet sprite** appear, [as in "thy sweet self", S1 and S126]
Well are they born; no title else shall bear.
I can no more. Dear soul, I take my leave;" (stanza 13)

The hyphenated adjectives ("cast-up sum", "never-dying love" for Philip, and then "thy ever-praised name" in stanza 11, resemble "ever-living poet" of the Dedication to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, or "ever-praiseworthy poesy" of *Defense of Poesy*. Many previous authors have associated these hyphenated words with Shakespeare's style (Bartlett, 1937; Slater, 1988; Jackson, 2015). In *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601), hyphenated adjectives include a "death-divining swan" (stanza 4) and a "treble-dated crow" (stanza 5). *The Phoenix and the Turtle* is especially rich in unique words not found elsewhere in Shakespeare (Slater, 1975b, his Table II).

The rare word “obsequy” in line 12 of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, is used as a plural in the final stanza 13, line 1 of *Angel Spirit*, and as “obsequious” in S125, L9. The final invocations are also similar in words and style:

Shakespeare’s Sonnet 125:

“No, let me be **obsequious** in thy heart,
And take my oblations poor but free,
Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual **render**, only me for thee.”

The Phoenix and the Turtle

Threnos:

“Death is now **the Phoenix nest**,

[as in the 3-in-1 Sidney Pheon]

And the *Turtle’s* loyal breast

[as in *The Phoenix Nest* 1593 of “R.S.” to Philip]

To eternity doth rest,...

To this **urn** let those repair

[as in the woodcut above S1, with urn and birds]

That are either true or fair;

For these **dead birds** sigh a prayer.”

“R.S.” is identified as Robert Sidney in Appendix 1. *The Phoenix Nest* (1593) includes his elegies to his brother, Philip Sidney, and to his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, Robert Dudley.

Mary Sidney’s 1615 funeral memorial to Sir Philip’s only daughter, Elizabeth was recently discovered by Schlueter & Schlueter (2010). It includes several references to writings of Philip and Mary Sidney (noted in our added comments and bold type).

***Upon the death of the Countess of Rutland (1615)
daughter to Sir Philip Sidney.***

That thou art dead (fair life) and cannot die

No wonder is, Fame doth thy place supply,

A sweet Exchange a double bliss

In heaven thy soul, thy earth with his

Who gave thee life, and of his store

What all admired and most adore,

And now resumed, all powers contest

Heaven and earth to make the blest.

Thy **Angels spirit’s** thither fled

[as in MSH’s elegy to Sir Philip Sidney]

Rejoined in glory lives not dead,

Thy mortal parts so graced remains

Anent to His: immortal gain

Earth enriched with **nature’s** treasure

All in each perfections measure

Triumph of death, oh death but stay

[as in MSH’s translation of Petrarch]

T’is praise not passion I assay.

All praise is said: I say thou wert his heir

Phoenix Sidneys, the world hath no such pair.

[as in *Philip’s Phoenix*]

The Phoenix and the Turtle and *A Lover's Complaint*, therefore, express words and feelings on immortality like those expressed in *To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney*, in *Upon the Death of the Countess of Rutland*, and in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. These poems of Mary Sidney therefore support the idea that Mary Sidney wrote poems signed "William Shakespeare".

Is the author of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* also the author of Shakespeare's other poems?

The evidence in this chapter is not a unique proof of Mary Sidney Herbert's authorship of all Shakespeare's poems, as it was in Chapter 5 for *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Rather it provides converging evidence that Mary Sidney Herbert's poems are similar in words, styles, themes and motivations with those in Shakespeare's poems of the same years.

After 1603, Mary, Dowager Countess of Pembroke, identified herself as "Lady Mary Sidney", not as "Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke" the name adopted by William Herbert's new wife, Mary. Lady Mary Sidney signed her correspondence with a Sidney Pheon and an "S-ferme", using an upward slash (Hannay, 1990), like the upward hyphen in *Shake-speares Sonnets* (Figs. 5-1, 5-2). Lady Mary Sidney's death was memorialized in 1621:

Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke (1621)

Attributed to William Browne (c.1590-c.1645), Ben Jonson (1572–1637) or William Herbert (1580-1630).

UNDERNEATH this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
Death! ere thou hast slain another,
Learn'd and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

Dedications, elegies and epitaphs are often rich in hyperbole. Although Mary Sidney was not "the subject of all verse", she was the subject of dozens of poems in her time (Appendix 2). She was also the likely author and central subject of all verse sequences by "Shakespeare", and the likely inspiration of many characters in plays of Shakespeare discussed in Chapter 8.

Summary. Shakespeare's 5 poem sequences are each told from the viewpoint of a noble or immortal female protagonist. In word-frequency studies, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* are closely linked with *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and with poems of Philip Sidney, Mary Sidney Wroth, Mary Sidney Herbert, Mary Sidney Herbert's tutor, Samuel Daniel, and her secretary, John Davies of Hereford. Themes, word styles, and rare words in *The Phoenix and the Turtle* are similar to those in poems of Mary Sidney Herbert written c.1599, and in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

Her pen-name "William Shakespeare" was first used for *Venus and Adonis* (1593) apparently to honor Mary Sidney Herbert's "first heir" William, and the tool "of my invention", that is, the shaking spear of the Sidney family and of Minerva. This 2-part design is found again in *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1609) to her son, William, and to her inventive sonnets. The title page quotation for *Venus and Adonis* from Ovid ("Vilia miretur...") contrasts vile, attention-seeking poetry with "virtue-breeding" poetry of the Sidneys. Mary Sidney Herbert's advice to Christopher Marlowe and poets of her circle is to pursue the ideals of Ovid and Sir Philip.

In *A Lover's Complaint* (1609) "A plaintful story from a sisting vae", "a gentle maid" is seduced by a poet-horseman. Its themes and word frequencies are similar to those in *Cymbeline* (c. 1610). *The Phoenix and the Turtle* and *A Lover's Complaint* appear to be based on relationships between Mary Sidney and her brother Sir Philip Sidney, as "stars of love". Although these converging results suggest a single female author, Mary Sidney Herbert, for all the poem sequences of William Shakespeare, more studies are needed of relationships between poems of the Sidney Circle and of Shakespeare.

A time-line for these conclusions on Shakespeare's lineage is summarized in Table 7-2. Poems were developed by the Sidney Circle of poets (c.1580-1610). Leicester's Men (1559-85) was succeeded by Pembroke's Men (1589-93), whose playwrights were led by Mary Sidney Herbert. Plays by Mary Sidney Herbert, Marlowe, Peele and Nashe for Pembroke's Men led to conflicts with Nashe. Her pen-name "William Shakespeare", used for poems based on Ovid in 1593-4, was then used for plays after 1598. After 1594, Richard Burbage produced Shakespeare's plays for the Lord Chamberlain's Men and then King's Men. Mary Sidney Herbert authored *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1609) with added sonnets by her son William. William and Philip Herbert used the *First Folio* (1623) to attribute sole authorship of the 36 plays to the minor actor named William Shakspere.

Table 7-2. Shakespeare's lineage.

	<u>1558 ELIZABETH I (1533-1603)</u>		
Robert Dudley (1532-88)	Mary Dudley --1551-- (1530-86)	Henry Sidney (1529-86)	
		<i>Memoirs</i> 1583	
<u>Actors:</u>	<u>Poets:</u>		
Leicester's Men (1559-85) James Burbage (1531-97)	Philip Sidney (1554-86) <i>Astrophel</i> 1580, <i>Antony</i> 1590, <i>Arcadia</i> 1593 <i>Psalms</i> 1-43, <i>Psalms</i> 44-150	MARY SIDNEY --1576-- (1561-1621)	Henry Herbert (1534-1601)
			Robert Sidney (1563-1626) <i>Phoenix Nest</i> 1593
Pembroke's Men (1589-93) Richard Burbage (1567-1619)	William Herbert & Philip Herbert (1580-1630) (1584-1650)		
		<u>Co-Authors:</u>	
	Chamberlain's Men (1594-1603) Wm. Shakspere (1564-1616)	<i>The Taming of a Shrew</i> 1594 → Thomas Nashe 1591-3 <i>I Henry VI, Pierce</i> "WM. SHAKESPEARE" Thomas Kyd 1590-4, G. Harvey 1593 <i>Venus and Adonis</i> 1593 → Marlowe 1592-4 <i>1-3 Henry VI, Edward II</i> <i>Lucrece</i> 1594 Samuel Daniel 1592-4 <i>Delia, Cleopatra</i>	
		<i>The Phoenix and the Turtle</i> 1601	
King's Men (1603-42)	<u>1603 JAMES I (1566-1625)</u>		
	<i>Shakespeare's Sonnets</i> 1609 → William Herbert (W.H.) late 1590s <i>A Lover's Complaint</i> 1609 <i>The First Folio</i> 1623	Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher 1600s	

In pursuit of the thing she would have stay; [her ambition for enduring poems]
 Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
 Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
 To follow that which flies before her face,
 Not prizing her poor infant's discontent:
 So run'st thou after that which flies from thee,
 Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind; [Will chases his mother]
 But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me
 And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind.
 So will I pray that thou mayst have thy Will, [Will begs her to love him over poetry]
 If thou turn back and my loud crying still."

Her "neglected child", Will, cannot have appreciated the humor of this farcical portrayal of his dysfunctional family. So his mother's memory was erased in the First Folio, and replaced by a new Will Shakespeare, celebrated ironically by Jonson: "Nature herself was proud of his designs". The price of William Herbert's selfish victory has been centuries of injustice for his mother and for creative women. Her comedy was turned into a tragedy.

The Countess of Pembroke's progress as a poet and playwright to become Shakespeare.
 From 1590-93, Mary Sidney Herbert published translations, and many poems and stories in her folio edition of *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. But Marlowe was a better dramatist in 1592, when he praised the Countess as his poetic inspiration. This has led some experts to argue that early Shakespeare was Christopher Marlowe, not Mary Sidney (Hickson, 1850; Eriksen, 2005; Barber, 2012).

Two of Mary Sidney Herbert's signed works are worth reading to follow this progression. First, *The Tragedy of Antony* (completed in November, 1590) has a long speech in Act 5 by the dying Cleopatra. This play displays her dramatic sensibilities just before Henry VI plays were written with Marlowe, and well before *Antony and Cleopatra*. This translation should be compared with better scenes in *The Taming of a Shrew* and in the Henry VI plays written with Marlowe, Nashe and others and published in 1594-5. Her progress as a playwright developed by directing her anger with Nashe into satire, then by intensifying the action and emotions in Henry VI plays, using the influence of Marlowe's powerful style.

In 1599, Mary Sidney Herbert wrote 2 fine poems for Queen Elizabeth, the first praising the Queen, *To the thrice-sacred Queen Elizabeth*, and the second honoring her brother's memory. *To the Angel Spirit of the most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney* (Appendix 4) compares well with Shakespeare's *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601). *Angel Spirit* is similar in style and word use, but is more personal and emotional than *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601).

In *The Merchant of Venice* (c.1597), Shakespeare improved on Marlowe's earlier work in *The Jew of Malta* by adding Mary Sidney Herbert's understanding of law courts, of women, and of forgiveness. One example is the Act 4 speech of Portia on "The quality of mercy...". Mary Sidney raised larger issues of justice and virtue, familiar to her in the Welsh law courts of her father and husband from 1580-1601, to become the voice of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us. Caroline Spurgeon (1935, 1961) studied the imagery in all of Shakespeare's plays to examine "his" life and character. She concluded that Shakespeare was a healthy noble from the countryside, who rarely, if ever, left England. Shakespeare's friends were gardeners, doctors, cooks and military. Natural images were prevalent, especially gardens and birds. Shakespeare loved riding horses, and played games, especially archery, falconry, lawn bowling and shooting. "He" had a particular delight in boys, and sympathy for wounded animals. Indoor life featured a busy kitchen, homely occupations, and women's work, with special concerns for foul odors, fires, and sickness. "He" had a severe family crisis around 1600, resolved in 1608 (Spurgeon, Chapter XI, p. 200).

Spurgeon never asked the question raised recently by Williams (2012, pp. 157-64): Was this healthy noble from the countryside, interested in women's work, kitchens, boys, doctors, horses and games, the Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney Herbert? Williams (pp. 143-56) documented dozens of strong, complex women in Shakespeare's plays who speak out in defiance of men and their misdeeds. This feminist perspective is often as strong in the plays as in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

Shakespeare in Italy: Thirteen First Folio plays have Italian venues: *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello or the Moor of Venice*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*. In addition, *Measure for Measure* (after Boccaccio, which Middleton re-set in Vienna), and *Twelfth Night* (set in Illyria) have Italian sources, characters and influences. How did the author find Roman and Italian plays and subjects, then use them for the English theater?

Mary and Philip Sidney learned Italian at a young age from their mother, Mary Dudley Sidney. Philip Sidney travelled in Italy for 11 months from November, 1573 to October, 1574. He was based in Venice and Padua, and took side trips to Genoa and Florence (Rosand, 1991). On his returns to England, Philip shared stories and books with his sister. Philip's major works were each based on Italian sources (*Astrophel and Stella* on Petrarch, *Defense of Poesy* on Scaligeri, *Arcadia* on Sannazaro).

Mary Sidney Herbert's family tutor, Samuel Daniel, was sent to Italy 7 years later, crossing the Alps in 1590, then travelling in Northern Italy from bases in Venice and Padua in 1590-91 (Schlueter, 2012). Upon his return, Daniel published *Delia* (1592) and *Cleopatra* (1594), each dedicated to his mentor, Mary Sidney Herbert.

The conclusion of Spurgeon (1961) that Shakespeare rarely left England [and Wales, we would add], but knew much about Italy, is consistent with Mary Sidney Herbert. The conclusion of *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* (2001) that the author read Italian and French fluently, and some Latin and Spanish as well, is also consistent with Mary Sidney Herbert, who translated major works in Italian and French, and read Latin and Spanish (Williams, 2012).

Bruno and Sidney. An early influence on the Sidneys was the Italian astronomer and philosopher, Giordano Bruno, who, with Thomas Digges, was the first to speculate that the universe is infinite. Bruno was at Oxford and London in 1583-85, and dedicated 2 books to Sir Philip Sidney. In one of these books, he wrote an English sonnet (Shumaker, 2018):

On the Infinite Universe and Worlds

“Who warms my heart, and rears me up for flight?
 Who makes me fearless before Death and Chance?
 Who breaks the chains and gates, else barred so tight
 That seldom souls are freed to wander thence?
 Epochs and years, months, days, and hours of day—
 The Court of Time, his daughters and his arms—
 Against whom iron stands not, nor diamond may—
 Have given me a shield against his harms.
 Wherefore I give my steady wings to Sky,
 Fearing no crystal barrier or glass;
 But, splitting heavens, to the Infinite I pass;
 And from my globe to others rising high
 Through empyrean fields, further I wind:
 What others see from far, I leave behind.

In this sonnet, Bruno rejected the idea of the enclosed firmament, by asserting that he feared “no crystal barrier or glass”. Although Bruno was “fearless before Death and Chance”, he was burned at the stake in Rome in 1601 after a long Vatican trial for heresy.

Shakespeare’s S14 can be read as Mary Sidney Herbert’s reply to Bruno (Shumaker, 2018):

Sonnet 14

“Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck;
 And yet methinks I have Astronomy,
 But not to tell of good or evil luck,
 Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;
 Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
 Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,
 Or say with princes if it shall go well
 By oft predict that I in heaven find:
 But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
 And, constant stars, in them I read such art
 As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
 If from thyself, to store thou wouldst convert;
 Or else of thee this I prognosticate:
 Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.”

A theme of the Sonnets is that men search for stars to control their fates (as in Astrophel’s fixation on Stella). Shakespeare rejected stars and astrology, searching for beauty in the eyes of her rising son/sun (S7). Shakespeare sought to be a poet to transcend history, science and philosophy, a “Muse of Fire that would ascend the brightest Heaven of Invention” (Henry V,

Prologue). The intimate experiences of Mary Sidney Herbert with astronomers, medical doctors, court procedures, and horticulture provide insight into the scientific and legal acumen of “Shakespeare”, a Renaissance woman.

After 1601, who knew best that Mary Sidney was the author “Shakespeare”, other than her immediate family? John Davies of Hereford was her personal secretary and a prolific poet. As teacher of penmanship at Oxford and in London, he beautifully transcribed the *Psalms* translations of Philip and Mary Sidney in 1599 (Hannay, 1990, pp. 193-4). He then wrote four poems praising “Mary, Countess-Dowager of Pembroke” (see Appendix 2).

The Muse’s Sacrifice, Or Divine Meditations (1612) was dedicated to three Ladies “Lucy, Countess of Bedford; Mary, Countess-Dowager of Pembroke; and Elizabeth, Lady Carey...Glories of Women”. Davies wrote that the Dowager Countess’s poetic accomplishments “out-shine the Sun”. Davies predicted that her poetry would outlast the “spheres gyring”, when “Men and Angels...past Time shall sing thy Praises & Pains.” Was her pursuit of art over personal fame *The Muse’s Sacrifice*? Davies suggests that through her sacrifice, Nature’s Art exceeded all others.

“Pembroke, ...

Where Art seems Nature; Nature seemeth Art;

And Grace in both makes all out-shine the Sun... [her son, and Philip’s star?]

And didst thou thirst for Fame (as all Men do)

Thou wouldst, by all means, let it come to light;

But even though thou cloud it, as doth Envy too, [Nashe’s St. Fame and Envy?]

Yet through both Clouds it shines, it is so bright!”

Shakespeare’s Sonnets (1609) show that the poet expected future recognition for her immortal poetry (e.g., S71 “Don’t mourn for me when I am dead”, S107 “I’ll live in this poor rhyme”, S123 “I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee.”). For her, poetry transcends history, philosophy, religion and science. In the final prophetic sonnets (S121-126), Mary Sidney, as Mother Nature, proclaimed that her words and judgments would transcend time, even the records and remnants of civilizations.

In *To Worthy Persons* (1611), Davies thanked the Countess for a recent publication, apparently *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1609). He credited her as the “judicious and ingenious” poet (i.e., final judge in S126). Yet Davies kept her secret, that she wrote the 1609 Sonnets using her now-famous pen-name “William Shakespeare”.

“To the right noble, judicious and ingenious sister of the never-too-much renowned Sir Philip Sidney: Mary, Countess Dowager of Pembroke. [our comments added]

Gods me! How now, what present have we here? [*Shakespeare’s Sonnets*]

A book that stood in peril of the press;

But now it’s past those pikes, and doth appear [Attempts to suppress the Sonnets]

To keep the lookers on from heaviness.

What stuff contains it? Fustian, perfect spruce;
 Wits gallimalfrey, or Wit fried in steaks.
 From Whom came it, a God's name! from his Muse [Shakespeare from Mary]
 (O do not tell) that still your favor seeks. [We all keep your secret]

You cannot choose but know me know? No do! [Davies knows]
 I am the least in yours and world's esteem;
 I am the same: Madam go to, go to,
 You know me now (I know) though strange you seem...

The triton of your praise, [Triton, as the 3-in-1 Pheon in her Sonnets]
 I.D." [John Davies]

In the same year, Davies wrote epigrams praising worthy men, including Ben Jonson, Samuel Daniel and William Herbert, whom he knew well (*Scourge of Folly*, 1611). Davies identified "Mr. Will: Shake-speare", the stage actor, however, with a comic playwright of dubious worth, the Roman Terence (Williams, 2012, p. 95; Star, 2016). Sadly, Stratfordians have taken this mocking poem, and Greene's insults to "an upstart crow, beautified in our feathers" (*Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592) as evidence of authorship for the modest male actor. Compare Davies' Epigram 159 below with his praise of Mary Sidney in the poems above.

Epigram 159: "To our English Terence, Mr. Will: Shake-speare"

Some say good *Will* (which I, in sport, do sing)
 Had'st thou not played some Kingly parts in sport,
 Thou hadst been a companion for a *King*;
 And, been a *King* among the meaner sort.
 Some others rail; but rail as they think fit,
 Thou hast no railing, but, a reigning Wit:
And honesty thou sow'st, which they do reap;
So, to increase their stock which they do keep."

"The Author's Dream to the Ladie Marie" (1611). Emilia Bassano Lanyer, whose father was a Venetian-born musician in the English court, wrote a book entitled *Salve Deus Rex Judeorum*. These fine poems reinterpret Bible stories, such as those of Eve and Mary Magdelene, from a Judeo-Christian feminist perspective.

In "The Author's Dream to the Ladie Marie" Bassano praises Lady Mary Sidney, identified with Minerva, "Goddess of War and Wisdom.../With speare and shield". Lady Mary's translations of the *Psalms* are compared favorably with those of Sir Philip's:

"And far before him is to be esteemed
 For virtue, wisdom, learning and dignity..."

Directing all by her immortal light,
 In this huge sea of sorrows, griefs, and fears;
 With contemplation of God's powerful might,
 She fills the eyes, the hearts, the tongues, the ears
 Of after-coming ages, which shall read
 Her love, her zeal, her faith, and piety."

According to Bassano, Lady Mary Sidney was still writing her most powerful works in 1611: "Though your fair mind is plac'd, /On works that are more deep, and more profound". Bassano's poems recognize her debt to Lady Mary.

Women named Emilia are found in four of Shakespeare's plays: *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Comedy of Errors*, and most prominently Iago's wife in *Othello*. These characters have been compared with Emilia Bassano by several authors, most recently Malcolm's play *Emilia* (2018).

Middle and late plays of Shakespeare. Between 1593 and 1609, Mary Sidney Herbert led a more private life as a Countess, and as a Dowager Countess after 1601. We have not yet discussed the larger question of how 31 middle and late plays of "Shakespeare" may result from personal experiences of Mary Sidney Herbert and her family. (28 of these 31 plays are associated by word frequencies in Cluster 3 of Arefin et al., 2014.) The prominent roles of accomplished women who stand up to men are apparent. A few examples suggest how these plays might be understood better through the life of Mary Sidney. See Slater (1931, pp. 207-38), and Williams (2012, pp. 127-56) for more examples and a larger overview.

Romeo and Juliet (1597 Quarto). The "star-cross'd lovers" fall in love by touching palms, while Juliet completes Romeo's sonnet in Act 1, Scene 4. Two other sonnets that frame the tragedy of their love are spoken by "Chorus" to introduce Acts 1 and 2.

Philip and Mary Sidney were "stars of love" immortalized through Philip's 108 love sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella*, completed and published after his death by Mary Sidney in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1598), and then in *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601).

Midsummer Night's Dream (1600 Quarto, written c.1596, one of Shakespeare's most original stories). The Duke of Athens, who manages a troupe of players, arranges a political marriage for Hermia via her father, just as Leicester did for his niece Mary Sidney in 1576. The egotistical actor Bottom is converted into an ass (like Thomas Nashe in 1592) by the clever sprite Puck, who arranges a dream ending for Hermia. Peter Quince is the sensible leader of the actors trying to keep them on script, just as James Burbage did for Leicester's Men, and Richard Burbage did for Pembroke's and the Lord Chamberlain's Men.

Henry IV, parts 1 and 2 (written c.1597). Prince Hal disappoints his old father by his drinking and womanizing. Before his ailing father dies, he realizes his responsibility to lead England.

William Herbert disappointed his parents after returning from Oxford in 1595 by refusing 2 arranged marriages (to Elizabeth Carey and Bridget de Vere). He was a womanizer throughout his life, with 3 illegitimate children (one by Mary Fitton in 1601, and 2 by his first cousin Mary Sidney Wroth), and a heavy smoker.

Henry V (first performed 1600). In the Prologue, “Chorus” seeks “a Muse of Fire to ascend the brightest Heaven of invention”. The imagination of the Muse, rising like a Phoenix from Sir Philip’s ashes, immortalizes the great military victory at Agincourt. Ben Jonson in *The Phoenix Analysed* reminded readers of *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601) that the Phoenix turns into “a Woman” (Chapter 7).

The Merchant of Venice (1600). (Adapted from *Il Pecorone*, 1558, a source available only in Italian.) Portia obtains justice for Antonio by posing as a male “doctor of law” in court. For 3 decades (c.1570-1601), Mary Sidney Herbert observed court justice in Wales, administered by her father and her husband.

Much Ado about Nothing (1600, based on sources in Italian). Clever Beatrice plays word games with Benedick, leading to love that is revealed by their hidden sonnets to each other discovered in the final scene.

As You Like It (registered Aug. 4, 1600). Rosalind disguises herself as a shepherd, then returns to marry her faithful lover, Orlando. “The play’s playfulness with gender may derive from Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia* (1590...1598)” (Conner, *TNOS*, 2017b, p. 1845). Other sources cited by Conner include Psalm 73, Nashe’s *Strange News* (1593), Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander* (1598), and Spenser’s *Faerie Queen* (1596).

“A letter written by Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, to her son William Herbert, supposedly seen by William Cory in 1865, identifies *As You Like It* as staged by King’s Men at Wilton House on 2 December 1603 while James I was attending. The letter has never otherwise been seen” (*TNOS*, Conner, p. 1845). The precise quote urges William to tell the King “we have the man Shakespeare with us” at Wilton (Hannay, 1990, p. 122). In our view, Mary Sidney’s letter dared her son to introduce her to the new King as “the man Shakespeare” when William brought James I and his court to stay at Wilton House for several months in 1603.

Hannay, however, was reluctant to consider Mary Sidney as an original playwright, only as an excellent poet, translator and leader, based on the Countess’ signed works. Neither was Mary Sidney considered as an author or subject of plays and poems of Shakespeare (Hannay’s Chapter 5).

Measure for Measure (written c.1603, 2 years after William Herbert was sent to jail for impregnating Lady Mary Fitton. Later revisions by Thomas Middleton). Claudio is sent to jail for impregnating his fiance. His sister, Isabella, a novice in the church, advocates for his life, but

is then sexually assaulted by the prosecutor, Angelo. Angelo demands that Isabella forsake her vows of chastity to save Claudio's life (Bourus, *TNOS*, 2017b, p. 1711).

After Henry Herbert died in 1601, Mary Sidney Herbert had to defend her son, William, in Fleet Prison for impregnating a lady at court.

All's Well That Ends Well (1604-5, with Middleton's later revisions). Helena, a healer, cures the King of France. She then uses her success to become wife of the Countess's son, Bertram. At the time, Mary Sidney was beginning a long-term relationship with Matthew Lister, doctor to Queen Anne of Denmark.

Antony and Cleopatra (c.1607). An Egyptian Queen tries to protect her country from Roman armies by using her wits and feminine charms. "[M]ost probably influenced" by Mary Sidney Herbert's *The Tragedy of Antony* (1592) and Samuel Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* (1594), according to Bourus (*TNOS*, 2017b, p. 3251).

King Lear (1608 Quarto). Truth-telling Cordelia is exiled and disinherited, leading to tragedy for her old father. Gloucester's subplot is based on a story in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, book 2, according to Jowett (*TNOS*, 2017b, p. 1233). Mary Sidney was estranged from her sons after 1604, perhaps due to conflicts about recognizing her authorship of plays about their family, and a murder case about her servants.

Mary Sidney as a co-author of Shakespeare's plays. *TNOS* experts found evidence that several different playwrights wrote parts of 16 First Folio plays. *TNOS* never considered Mary Sidney Herbert as a co-author in any writings of Shakespeare, despite dozens of references in the 4 *TNOS* volumes to publications of Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert that influenced "Shakespeare". In particular, they should have considered Mary Sidney Herbert's contributions to the plays performed by Pembroke's Men, including the 4 plays that *TNOS* authors assert were written with Marlowe, Nashe, Peele and others. *TNOS* never considered evidence from other books (beginning with *Seven Shakespeares*, 1937, by Gilbert Slater) that Mary Sidney was a likely author or co-author of many plays of Shakespeare. Why was the most celebrated female poet of the era, the Countess of Pembroke, excluded from *TNOS*'s consideration of co-authors, especially for the 1590-95 collaborations?

We can now see that Mary Sidney had many collaborators, beginning with Sir Philip Sidney for *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593; 1598) and for their translations of *David's Psalms*. She used French and Italian poets as models to invigorate English poetry with her circle of poets. By the time Mary Sidney Herbert wrote *The Taming of a Shrew*, and apparently *Venus and Adonis* influenced by Ovid and Marlowe, she was prepared to become the voice of an age.

How the middle and late plays developed with other writers and sources is not yet clear. Late collaborative plays of Shakespeare were, according to *TNOS*, written with Thomas Middleton (e.g., *Timon of Athens*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*), with George Wilkins

(*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, a 1609 Quarto not published in the First Folio), and with John Fletcher (*Henry VIII*, 1613, 1623, and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, 1613-14, Quarto 1634). Connections between these plays and authors with Mary Sidney and her circle should be studied further. The authorship debate is not over, even though the author using the name “Shakespeare” has been found.

Further studies of words of the Shakespearean era should include works of Mary and Philip Sidney. Poems and translations of Mary Sidney that are currently available on-line are shown in Appendix 3 for consideration. Those with over 10,000 words are useful in word-frequency studies. Rare words and phrases identified in Shakespeare’s works (e.g., Slater, 1988; Jackson, 2015) can be compared with those in works of the Sidneys.

Our hope is that this new history of Mary Sidney and the Pembrokes will help future readers understand and appreciate messages of Shakespeare better. The depth and beauty of these messages are just beginning to be appreciated.

Shakespeare’s valedictory in *Cymbeline* (c.1610), the final play of the First Folio. Princess Imogen’s wit is central to the plot: “If she be furnish’d with a mind so rare /She is alone the Arabian-Bird” (Act 1, Scene 6), that is, “the bird of loudest lay /On the sole Arabian tree” (*The Phoenix and the Turtle*, 1601). Loughnane concluded (*TNOS*, 2017b, p. 3354) “For the romance elements of the play [*Cymbeline*],...Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia* (1590) probably had a broader influence [than previous sources]”.

In the last 2 Acts, Posthumus Leonatus returns from Italy to re-unite with his faithful wife Princess Imogen, heir to Cymbeline’s kingdom in Britain. Leonatus receives a message from Jupiter’s Roman Eagle in a dream (like Chaucer in *The House of Fame*). This dream is interpreted in the final scene by the Soothsayer, Philarmonus. Princess Imogen is “The peece of tender Ayre, thy virtuous daughter, which we call *Mollis Aer*, and *Mulier*”. In Latin, “mollis aer” translates as “tender air”, and “mulier” as “woman”. Love and peace come to Britain from Rome through Jupiter’s prophesy, so that Imogen, becomes the “tender Ayre”, singing her immortal songs.

In *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1609), Mary’s son William is the “tender heir” in the first quatrain of S1, who inspires his mother’s sonnets. The Dedication arrows point from their little son, “W.H.” to “OUR EVER-LIVING.POET” and her sonnets. The Phoenix becomes a woman in S19. Then in S126, the power of “O Thou my lovely Boy” is transcended by the power of Mother Nature, the poet and final judge.

In *Cymbeline*, Imogen provides “inspiration” through her airs and her imagination (Imogen-ation, perhaps). So again, our immortal woman-poet delivers beauty, virtue and wisdom to the future world. *Cymbeline* is Shakespeare’s final allegorical message that Mary Sidney Herbert is the same powerful woman-poet as in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*.

Shakespeare's legacy as seen through the life of Mary Sidney. In Italy and elsewhere, allegorical paintings of the High Renaissance decorate churches, palaces and villas. Religious and pagan images adorn the walls and ceilings of these buildings. For example, "The Triumph of Virtue and Nobility over Ignorance" by Tiepolo is represented by two heavenly women, one holding the laurel wreath, the other holding a statue of Minerva (Figure 8-1).

Poetry was seen as "Queen of the Arts", in which personal, historical and religious stories create larger images about the meaning of life. Sir Philip Sidney's essay "Defense of Poesy" argued that allegorical poetry could inspire similarly worthy poetry in English. Petrarch's *Il Canzoniere* (1370) became a model for early versions of *Astrophel and Stella*. Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (1504) foreshadowed Philip's *Arcadia* in the 1580s. In 1591, Samuel Daniel wrote *Delia* (1592) for his patroness after returning from Venice.

These poems and stories, in turn, motivated Mary Sidney in the 1590s. By translating Petrarch's *Triumph of Death* and *David's Psalms* into English, Mary Sidney fulfilled Philip's ambitions. Her allegorical poems about her brother and her son, were disguised by a pen-name that only poets and friends understood. She increasingly placed women and Goddesses as leading figures in her stories and poems. These became our English language heritage. As Sir Mark Rylance said in 2020, Shakespeare wrote better roles for women than any other author.

On the enduring relevance of poetry. *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and *Cymbeline* on power and poetry, on men and women, remind us of the Commencement speech of John F. Kennedy in honor of Robert Frost (October 26, 1963, Amherst College):

"When power leads man towards arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of his existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses."

Let us honor "William Shakespeare", the pen-name chosen by Mary Sidney Herbert in 1593. By presenting comedy, history and tragedy through women and men as complementary partners, she exposed a range of emotions more fully than any previous author. Through allegory, she reached deeper into the human condition. By exploring the frailty of power and ambition, even in herself and her family, she searched for justice in life as well as in death. Women can appreciate her models of wisdom and creativity, overlooked for so long. Our age and future ages can benefit from her healing poetic voice.



Fig. 8-1. “The Triumph of Virtue and Nobility over Ignorance” by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, c. 1740. Virtue holds a laurel wreath, a spear and a small statue of Minerva, while supported by angels dismissing dark Ignorance. The images of the sun on her breast, and choirs of angels accompanying her, suggest the allegorical visions of Mary Sidney as Shakespeare.

Some Conclusions Regarding Shakespeare's Puzzles:

1. We propose a solution to the puzzles in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. The Dedication "TO.THE.ONLY.BEGETTER.OF.THESE.ENSUING.SONNETS.Mr.W.H." from "OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET" is a set of riddles by the author that are answered throughout the Sonnets, and especially in Sonnet 126.
2. The stories of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* largely concern the ambitions and vulnerabilities of the Pembroke family from 1580-1609. The family gains power through the rise of their first son, "Will" Herbert, and through writing sonnets.
3. The lead characters are William Herbert ("W.H." and "thee"), his parents, Henry Herbert ("he") and Mary Sidney Herbert ("she" and then "I"), and his uncle Sir Philip Sidney ("you") in most cases.
4. The first part of the Sonnets tells of the rise of family ambitions through the growth of the poet's son. The second part tells of the frustration of those ambitions, resolved by the healing power of poetry. Sonnets 63 and 64, at the midpoint of the 126-sonnet sequence, portray the father's death in 1601 leading to the succession of William.
5. Of the two woodcuts that begin *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, the first shows a rose garden and angels with a central rising son/sun representing the Creation of Life. The second shows birds, feathers and an urn representing a Phoenix and her Creation of Poetry from the ashes of her deceased brother. These reflect the 2-part structure and imagery of the Dedication to the Son (6 lines) from our Poet (6 lines).
6. In the first picture, the son "W.H." is represented as a "sun-in-rose" based on the rise of the first Welsh Earl of Pembroke, William Herbert, in the Wars of the Roses, described in the "Sun in Splendor" scene of 3 Henry VI, Act 2, Scene 1. In 1461, William Herbert fought with two York sons, whose badge became the "Rose-en-Soleil" as Kings of England. William Herbert was founder of the Herbert-Pembroke line in 1468. He was therefore "the only begetter of ensuing" Pembroke sons through his grandson, Sir William Herbert, and great-great-grandson William Herbert, to whom *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and the First Folio are dedicated.
7. In the second picture, "OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET" is represented by a Phoenix on an urn. The feathers represent the pens of the poet pointing into an inkwell and toward Sonnet 1, using the 3-into-1 design of the Sidney Pheon, or spear, and of Sidney Sonnets.
8. The allegory of the Sonnets is revealed in Sonnet 126, in which William ("O Thou my lovely Boy") becomes Father Time and his mother becomes Mother Nature, the poet.
9. The 12-line Dedication is parallel to the 12-line final Sonnet 126, with 2 empty lines after each, showing that these were designed together by the author.
10. Therefore, William Herbert is "my lovely Boy", "the only begetter" first son of the Pembroke family; "OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET" is Mary Sidney Herbert, the mother-

poet who reveals her identity as “Shakespeare” in the final Sonnet, and makes Final Judgments (“Her *Audit*” and “her *Quietus*”), as in Revelations.

11. Collaborations between Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe, George Peele, Thomas Kyd and “William Shakespeare” occurred in 1590-94 under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke, Henry Herbert, whose “servants” performed the first published plays later attributed to “Shakespeare”.
12. The Countess of Pembroke in 1593 wrote “Her Old Comedy”, a sonnet satirizing Thomas Nashe, whom she called “Gnasharduccio”. Her comedy became *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594) performed by Pembroke’s servants. She apparently fired Nashe in late 1591 for his involvement in the unauthorized publication of *Astrophel and Stella*, Sir Philip Sidney’s sonnets and poetic songs.
13. Nashe then embarrassed the Countess in *Pierce Penniless* (1592) and *Strange News* (1593), published shortly before Marlowe was killed in May, 1593, and Pembroke’s Men sold their costumes as a touring company in August, 1593.
14. *The Phoenix Nest* (1593) was “set forth by R.S. Gentleman of The Inner Temple”, whom we identify as Robert Sidney, the younger brother of Sir Philip and Mary Sidney, as previously proposed by Hughes (2003, note 17)
15. Female protagonists in plays and poem sequences of “Shakespeare” reflect, in most cases, the life, imagery and/or values of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke.
16. *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (1601) honored the ideal love of Sir Philip and Lady Mary Sidney. *The Phoenix Analyzed* by Ben Jonson then concluded that the long-lived Phoenix “a Bird so amiable” was indeed “a Woman”.
17. The poems of Shakespeare (*Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*) are linked with poems of the Sidney Circle, including Philip and Mary Sidney, their niece Mary Sidney Wroth, and Mary Sidney’s servants, Samuel Daniel and John Davies of Hereford. *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* by Mary Sidney, Dowager Countess of Pembroke, is the center of this cluster in the word-frequency analysis of Arefin et al. (2014).
18. The name “William Shakespeare” was used first in 1593, in the Dedication to *Venus and Adonis* described by the author as “the first heir of my invention”. Mary Sidney Herbert’s “first heir” was William Herbert; The tool of her “invention” was her “shaking spear” or pen. She is seen as the Goddess of Wisdom, Minerva, with her spear on the title page of *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (1593).
19. The quotation from Ovid (“Vilia miretur vulgus...”) on the title page of Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* urges “base-conceited wits” to admire “the Muses’ springs”, according to Marlowe’s translation. This quotation urges poets to write “virtue-breeding” poetry in the manner of the Sidneys in 1593, when Marlowe was writing *Hero and Leander*.
20. *Cymbeline* identifies Imogen, heir of Britain’s king, as the Phoenix and “tender Ayre” who brings peace between Rome and Britain, and love between women and men.

Appendix 1: *The Phoenix Nest* (1593)

The Phoenix Nest (1593) is a collection of essays and poems, written by at least 10 authors, in honor of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and of Sir Philip Sidney “Lord Governor of Flushing”. The title page states that the collection was “set forth by R.S. of the Inner Temple, Gentleman”. The identity of “R.S.” has long been considered an unsolved mystery in English literature. We identify R.S. here as Robert Sidney, the nephew, namesake and heir of Robert Dudley, and the younger brother and heir of Sir Philip Sidney, neither of whom had sons. Hughes (2003) reached a similar conclusion previously.

Robert Sidney led troops with his brother and uncle in Holland, then became Lord Governor of Flushing after the death of Sir Philip in his arms after the Battle of Zutphen. In 1593, Robert Sidney was heir to Henry Sidney’s estate at Penshurst, and was also the presumptive heir of the vacated title of Leicester as Dudley’s oldest surviving legitimate nephew. Robert Sidney was therefore entitled to Dudley’s honorary office at the Inner Temple, where Leicester was the “Patron and Head of the Inner Temple” in the 1570s and 1580s (*History of the Inner Temple* website, 2017). The title page designation “R.S. of the Inner Temple” recognizes Robert Sidney’s debt to his uncle and patron at the Inner Temple. Sidney is not listed on the permanent record as a full legal member of the Inner Temple, however, since his post was honorary, not as a lawyer. Robert Sidney eventually became the Earl of Leicester in 1618.

The Phoenix Nest begins with Robert Sidney’s poetic elegy to his late uncle Robert Dudley and to his late brother Sir Philip. Then Robert Sidney writes a 4-page essay on Dudley’s virtue, entitled “The dead man’s Right /Written upon the death of the Right Honourable Earl of Leicester”. This was a defense of Dudley’s reputation against libels in *Leicester’s Commonwealth* (1584), claiming that Dudley was a “Machiavellian”, an adulterer, and had murdered his wife to seek Queen Elizabeth’s hand. These are followed by “refined works of Noble men, worthy knights, gallant Gentlemen, Masters of Arts, and brave Scholars.” Two unsigned poetic tributes to “Philip Sidney knight, Lord governor of Flushing”, the title that Robert Sidney took on after Philip’s death, remember their military service together in the Netherlands. The gentleman authors are often identified only by their initials, such as Nicholas Breton (N.B), Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford (E.O.), Thomas Lodge (T.L.) and George Peele (G.P.). Other authors identified later by their writings and styles include Sir Walter Raleigh, Edward Dyer, Mathew Roydon, William Smith and Thomas Watson.

Robert Sidney’s full stature as a poet has only recently been recognized. Before 1600, Robert Sidney handwrote 35 sonnets, along with many other poems, for his wife, Barbara Gamage, a Welsh cousin of Raleigh, dedicated to The Countess of Pembroke, Robert’s sister. Discovered and published in 1960, these poems have been seen as Robert Sidney’s response to *Astrophel and Stella* (Croft, 1984).

Sidney’s 1593 book may have been an attempt to bolster his legitimacy for Leicester’s vacated title among nobles. In 1618, James I, at long last, named Robert Sidney the Earl of Leicester, possibly through efforts of Queen Anne of Denmark and the Lord Chamberlain, William Herbert, Sidney’s nephew. So Robert Sidney was heir to Sir Philip’s title in Flushing, their father’s estates, to Sir Philip’s sonnets as a poet, and to their uncle’s office and title.

Appendix 2: List of Works Dedicated to Mary Sidney.

Adapted from *Tudor Times*, August 10, 2017 “Mary Sidney, Patron of Letters” with thanks to the authors.

“The list below is of works dedicated to her, or where she is named or alluded to as a muse, a patron of poets, or an author herself. Many of the dedications run to pages of prose, so only a few lines are quoted here, where they tell us something about Mary’s generosity to authors. Dates are of contemporary publication. Some works circulated only in manuscript.”

Barnabe Barnes: Dedicatory sonnet.

Nathanial Baxter: *Sir Philip Sidney's Ourania*, 1606.

Nicholas Breton: *The Pilgrimage to Paradise*, 1592.

The Countess of Pembroke's Passion.

Auspiciante Jehovah: Marie's Exercise, 1597.

A Divine Poem, divided into two parts: the Ravished Soul and the Blessed Weeper, 1601.

W. C. (possibly William Clerke, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge): *Polimanteia*.

Thomas Churchyard: A verse within *A Pleasant Conceit, set in verse*. 1593. [Quoted here in Chapter 4.]

Samuel Daniel: *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars* 1595 (about the Wars of the Roses).

Sonnets to *Delia*, 1592.

Cleopatra, 1594.

Michael Drayton: *Shepherd's Garland, Fashioned in Nine Eclogues*, 1593.

John Davies of Hereford: [See Chapter 7, with additions and corrections here]

Wit's Pilgrimage, 1605, pp. 38-39.

Microcosmos, 1603, Sonnet, p. 97.

To Worthy Persons, 1611.

The Muse's Sacrifice, 1612, p. 1. “To the most noble Ladies... Lucy Countess of Bedford, Mary, Countess Dowager of Pembroke; and Elizabeth Lady Cary, Glories of Women.”

John Donne: *Upon the Translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke, his sister*. In this work, Donne refers to them as ‘*Moses and Miriam*’.

Abraham Fraunce: *The Lamentations of Amyntas for the death of Phillis*, paraphrastically translated out of Latin into English Hexameters, 1587.

Arcadia Rhetoric, 1588.

The Countess of Pembroke's Emanuel, 1591.

The Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch. Containing the affectionate life, and unfortunate death of Phillis and Amyntas, 1591.

The third part of the Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch, entitled Amintas Dale. Wherein are the most conceited tales of the Pagan Gods in English Hexameters, 1592.

Charles Fitzgeoffrey: *Caroli Fitzgeofridi Affaniae*, 1601.

Thomas Howell: *Devises*, 1581.

Aemilia Lanyer: *Salvatore Deus, Rex Judaeorum*, 1611. *The Author's Dream*.

Henry Lok: *Extra Sonnets*.

Francis Meres: *Palladis Tamia: A Comparative Discourse of Our English Poets with the Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets*, 1598.

“Mary, the honourable Countess of Pembroke, the noble sister of immortal Sir Philip Sidney, is very liberal unto Poets; besides she is a most delicate Poet.”

Thomas Morley: *Canzonets, or little short songs, to three voices*, 1595?

Thomas Moffet: *The Silkworms and their Flies*, 1599.

‘Who [Mary] never yet on meanest scholar frowned...
... the most renowned
Patroness and noble Nurse of learning.’

Thomas Nashe: *Astrophel and Stella*, 1591 Preface. [Quoted in Chapter 4].

Robert Newton: *The Countess of Mountgomerie's Eusebeil*, 1620.

On Mary's daughter-in-law, Lady Susan de Vere, Countess of Montgomery, but with Mary included in the dedication.

Daniel Rogers: *Epigrammatum*, 1586.

This gives an insight into another skill for which Mary was apparently known – needlework:

“A pattern & a patroness she was,
Of virtuous industry, and studious learning:
And she her earthly pilgrimage did pass
In acts, which were high honour most concerning.
Brave Wilton-house in Wiltshire well can show,
Her admirable works in Arras framed:
Where men, and beasts, scene-like, trees seem to grow,
And Art (surpassed by Nature) seems ashamed.

Thus this renowned honourable dame,
Her happy time most happily did spend:

Whose worth recorded in the mouth of fame
(Until the world shall end) shall never end.
She wrought so well in needle-work that she,
Nor yet her works, shall ere forgotten be.”

William Smithe: *A New Year's Gift*: Made upon certain flowers.

Edmund Spenser: *The Ruins of Time*, 1591.

A sonnet within the '*Faerie Queen*' 1590.

References within '*Colin Clouts come home again*', 1595. [See Chapter 2].

Sir John Stradling: *Epigrammatum, Libri Quatuor*, 1607.

Thomas Watson: *Amintae Gaudia*, 1592. Dedication by Christopher Marlowe [See Chapter 4].

Appendix 3: Works of Mary Sidney Herbert

(available on-line in LION or EEBO)

Poems of Mary Sidney Herbert:

Doleful Lay of Clorinda (before 1595) 84 lines; 3 sonnets in Harvey (1593) 44 lines; *Oh what a lantern* (before 1595) 24 lines; *A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds, Thenot and Piers* (1600) 60 lines = 212 lines total. [Chapter 4].

To the Angel Spirit of the most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney (c.1599) 91 lines; *To the thrice-sacred Queen Elizabeth*: Opening line “Even now that Care” (c.1599) 64 lines; = 155 lines total.

Shakespeare’s Sonnets 1-126 (1609) 1763 lines. [Attributed in Chapter 5 here to MSH]

Kassell poems of Mary Sidney (1615): *De profundis* (Psalm 130); 3 Sonnets; *Upon the death of the Countess of Rutland (1615) daughter to Sir Philip Sidney*. 104 lines total. [See Chapter 4, Schlueter, 2013].

Translations of Mary Sidney Herbert:

David’s Psalms 44-150 (transcribed by John Davies c.1599) 97 pp. on-line, 218 pp. with notes in Hannay et al., 1998, 5582 lines total.

de Mornay’s Meditations on Life and Death (1592, completed May, 1590) 13 pp. in Hannay et al. (1998).

Garnier’s Tragedy of Antony (1592, completed November, 1590) 5 acts, 2022 lines.

Petrarch’s Triumph of Death (1590s) 401 lines.

Texts and Poems of Philip Sidney (with possible contributions from Mary Sidney Herbert):

A Lady of May, a masque for Queen Elizabeth at Wanstead (1579, published in *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, 1598) 7 pp. including 10 sextet poems.

The Defense of Poesy (written c.1579-1586, published 1595) essay, 28 pp. as published in *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, 1598.

David’s Psalms 1-43 (written before 1586) 55 pp. on-line.

A Dialogue between Two Shepherds (1580) 48 lines.

The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia (books 1-5) (1593) 471 pp. including over 20 poems.

Astrophel and Stella, 108 sonnets and 11 songs (written 1580s) 2017 lines total, 53 pp. (as published in *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, 1598).

Appendix 4: *To the Angel Spirit of the most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney (c.1599)*

To thee, pure sprite, to thee alone's addressed
 This coupled work, by double int'rest thine:
 First raised by thy blessed hand, and what is mine
 Inspired by thee, thy secret power impressed.
 So dared my Muse with thine itself combine,
 As mortal stuff with that which is divine.
 Thy light'ning beams give luster to the rest,

That heaven's king may deign his own transformed
 In substance no, but superficial 'tire;
 By thee put on; to praise, not to aspire
 To those high tones, so in themselves adorned,
 Which angels sing in their celestial choir,
 And all of tongues with soul and voice admire
 These sacred hymns thy kingly prophet formed.

Oh, had that soul which honor brought to rest
 Too soon not left and reft the world of all
 What man could show, which we perfection call,
 This half-maimed piece had sorted with the best.
 Deep wounds enlarged, long festered in their gall,
 Fresh bleeding smart; not eye- but heart-tears fall:
 Ah, memory, what needs this new arrest?

Yet here behold (oh, wert thou to behold!)
 This finished now, thy matchless Muse begun,
 The rest but pieced, as left by thee undone.
 Pardon (oh, blessed soul) presumption too too bold,
 If love and zeal such error ill become,
 'Tis zealous love, love which hath never done,
 Nor can enough in world of word unfold.

And sith it hath no further scope to go,
 Nor other purpose but to honor thee,
 Thee in thy works, where all the Graces be,
 As little streams with all their all do flow
 To their great sea, due tribute's grateful fee;
 So press my thoughts, my burdened thoughts, in me,
 To pay the debt of infinites I owe

To thy great worth. Exceeding Nature's store,
 Wonder of men, sole born perfection's kind,
 Phoenix thou wert. So rare in fairest mind,
 Heav'nly adorned, Earth justly might adore,

Where truthful praise in highest glory shined,
 For there alone was praise to truth confined;
 And where but there to live forevermore?

Oh! When to this accompt, this cast-up sum,
 This reckoning made, this audit of my woe,
 I call my thoughts, whence so strange passions flow,
 How works my heart, my senses stricken dumb?
 That would thee more than ever heart could show,
 And all too short: who knew thee best doth know
 There lives no wit that may thy praise become.

Truth I invoke (who scorn elsewhere to move,
 Or here in aught my blood should partialize),
 Truth, sacred Truth, thee sole to solemnize.
 Those precious rights well known best minds approve;
 And who but doth, hath wisdom's open eyes,
 Not owly blind the fairest light still flies,
 Confirm no less? At least 'tis sealed above,

Where thou art fixed among thy fellow lights:
 My day put out, my life in darkness cast,
 Thy angel's soul with highest angels placed
 There blessed sings enjoying heav'n-delights,
 Thy maker's praise, as far from earthly taste
 As here thy works so worthily embraced
 By all of worth, where never envy bites.

As goodly buildings to some glorious end
 Cut off by Fate, before the Graces had
 Each wond'rous part in all their beauties clad,
 Yet so much done, as art could not amend;
 So thy rare works to which no wit can add,
 In all men's eyes, which are not blindly mad,
 Beyond compare, above all praise extend.

Immortal monuments of thy fair fame,
 Though not complete, nor in the reach of thought,
 How on that passing peacetime would have wrought,
 Had Heav'n so spared the life of life to frame
 The rest? But ah, such loss! Hath this world aught
 Can equal it? Or which like grievance brought?
 Yet there will live thy ever-praised name.

To which these dearest off'rings of my heart,
 Dissolved to ink, while pen's impressions move

The bleeding veins of of never-dying love,
I render here: these wounding lines of smart,
Sad characters indeed of simple love,
Nor art nor skill, which abler wits do prove,
Of my full soul receive the meanest part.

Receive these hymns, these obsequies receive:
If any mark of thy sweet sprite appear.
Well are they born; no title else shall bear.
I can no more. Dear soul, I take my leave;
Sorrow still strives, would mount thy highest sphere,
Presuming so just cause might meet thee there.
Oh happy change, could so I take my leave!

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Figures and Tables

Frontispiece: Portraits of Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, from *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. French translation by Jean Baudoin (1625). Engravings of Jean de Courbes. National Portrait Gallery. A laurel wreath and swans are above Philip's head, while the Sidney spear and coronet are above Mary's. In the poems below, Philip's skill is compared with Apollo and Mars, while Mary is identified with Pallas Athens.

1-1. Dedication page from the *First Folio* (1623).

1-2. Title pages of *Edward II* "Written by Chri. Marlowe" (1594) and *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594).

1-3. Portraits of Pembrokes featured in Chapter 1, William Herbert and Mary Herbert (engravings by Simon van de Passe, 1618) and Henry Herbert (right).

Table 2-1. Timeline of Herbert, Dudley and Sidney lineages and titles discussed in Chapter 2, in relation to English Monarchs 1450-1625.

2-1. Pembroke Castle, Wales.

2-2. Portraits of Leicester, Mary Dudley Sidney and Henry Sidney, uncle and parents of Philip, Mary and Robert Sidney, by an unknown artist c.1565 (Yale Center of British Art) , by Hans Eworth c.1555 (National Trust), and by Arnold van Brockhorst, 1573 (National Trust), respectively.

2-3. Portraits of Sidney siblings, Sir Philip Sidney (left) Mary Sidney (center) and Robert Sidney, Elizabethan poets.

2-4. Statue of William Herbert, in front of Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

2-5. State Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney, 1586, with Sidney Pheons displayed on flags (engraving by Thomas Lant, 1587-8)..

3-1. Armor of Henry Herbert c. 1586 from Metropolitan Museum, New York.

3-2. View of London, 1616, by Visscher.

3-3. Title pages of *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (1595).

3-4. Henry VI, Act 2, Scene 1 ("Sun-in-Splendor" Scene).

3-5. Word-frequency associations in 256 plays and poems of the Shakespearean era (from Arefin et al., 2014, Fig. 2, as featured in *The New Oxford Shakespeare, Authorship Companion*, 2017a). Plays of Shakespeare, Jonson, Kyd, Daniel, Mary Sidney Herbert et al. are found in Cluster 3 (lower left).

3-6. Word-frequency associations in Cluster 4 from Arefin et al. (2014). Plays of Shakespeare (purple squares), Marlowe, Nashe, Peele and Kyd from 1580-95 are closely associated. Names of author attributions discussed in the text have been added in red.

4-1. Miniature portrait of Mary Sidney Herbert by Nicholas Hilliard c.1590. The National Portrait Gallery.

Table 4-1. Timeline of events for poets co-authoring plays of Pembroke servants, 1590-95.

5-1. Title Page (top half) and Dedication page (bottom half) reproduced from *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609).

Table 5-1. Pronouns used in Sonnets 1-126.

5-2. First sonnet page reproduced from the 1609 quarto, showing the heading picture, title and quatrain 1.

5-3. Sonnet 126 reproduced from the 1609 quarto.

5-4. Dedication and Sonnet 126, interpreted here as “Shakespeares Puzzles” in the Dedication, and the Conclusions revealed in S126.

5-5. Two-part imagery in *Shake-speares Sonnets*, as interpreted here for the Son (left) and the Sonnets (right).

5-6. Mary Sidney’s final portrait by Simon van de Passe, dated 1618 on the scrolls.

Table 6-1. Pronouns used in Dark Lady sonnets.

6-1. Portraits of Mary Sidney Wroth (c.1610, attributed to John de Critz) and Emilia Bassano Lanier (c.1595, Miniature by Nicholas Hillyard).

6-2. Portrait of Philip Herbert, 4th Earl of Pembroke (c.1615 National Portrait Gallery, unknown artist.)

Table 7-1. Poems of “William Shakespeare”.

7-1. Title page of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) by “William Shakespeare”.

7-2. Word-frequency associations in poems of Shakespeare and of Sidney Circle poets, shown in Cluster 1 of Arefin et al. (2014).

Table 7-2. Shakespeare’s Lineage. Performing groups and actors are listed in the left column (1559-1630). Poets and their co-authors are shown in the middle and right columns.

8-1. "The Triumph of Virtue and Nobility over Ignorance" by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, c. 1740. Virtue holds a laurel wreath, a spear and a small statue of Minerva, while supported by angels dismissing dark Ignorance. The images of the sun on her breast, and choirs of angels accompanying her, suggest the allegorical visions of Mary Sidney as Shakespeare.

A few questions we cannot answer:

- Did Richard Burbage work with the Pembrokes and their servants when he staged Shakespeare's plays at The Globe, and at Blackfriars Theaters, close to the Pembroke's Baynard's Castle, after his years with Pembroke's players?
- Henry Condell likely toured with Pembroke's players in 1592-3, according to Knutson (2001). Hemings and Condell identified script-provider Shakespeare as a "servant" of the Herbert brothers in 1623. How did these actors work for the Pembrokes and Burbage in these years? Were scripts provided by Mary Sidney's secretary John Davies of Hereford known for his penmanship? As Hemings and Condell wrote in the First Folio: "we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers".
- Was the contract of Pembroke's players at the Swan Theater in January, 1597, and in performances with Henslowe at the Rose Theater in 1601 organized with the Countess of Pembroke or not? Was she involved in the plays performed there, especially the lost play *The Isle of Dogs* by Nashe (her nemesis) and Jonson (her friend)?
- Did the Dowager Countess of Pembroke collaborate with Middleton, Fletcher and Wilkins on several Shakespeare plays from 1605-1623? Did other authors help Mary Sidney write plays identified with the name "Shakespeare"? Did she help authors write their plays, such as Fletcher's *Two Noble Kinsmen*?
- Who was the "Excellent Lady" who received a letter from William Strachey of the Bermuda hurricane shipwreck in 1609 that inspired the opening scene of *The Tempest* in 1611 (Vaughn and Vaughn, 2012, p. 8)? The ship was owned by the Virginia Company of London sponsored prominently by William and Philip Herbert, Robert Sidney and others close to Mary Sidney Herbert, according to the Second Charter of the Virginia Company (1609).
- Who prepared the plays for the First Folio (1623)? The actor "Wm. Shakespeare" died unnoticed in 1616. Mary Sidney was available to revise and edit plays for the collection between 1611 and 1621. Jonson's Folio (1616) was a model, so he might have participated. Middleton was active in rewriting plays with "Shakespeare" in these years.
- Hemings and Condell described Wm. Shakespeare as "a happy imitator of Nature, . . . a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." Was this "most gentle", "happy imitator of Nature", the "most gentle" writer, Mary Sidney (aka "Shakespeare")? Were the actors aware that Mary Sidney was the author, or that Davies copied scripts for the actors?
- What was Ben Jonson's relationship with Mary Sidney? In *Love's Martyr* (1601) Jonson wrote poems on *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, such as *The Phoenix Analyzed*, and later a poem to Robert Sidney, *To Penshurst* (1616). Did he know Mary Sidney's pen name from 1593?
- What was Jonson's relationship with William and Philip Herbert in 1621-23 when he wrote "To the memory of my beloved, The AUTHOR Mr. William Shakespeare" which praised a single male author, "Sweet Swan of Avon!". Was this poem Jonson's disguised praise for Mary Sidney, as proposed by Williams (2012), and her pen-name as suggested by Star (2013)? Why did he participate in their cover-up of Mary Sidney's contributions?
- How did William and Philip Herbert use the First Folio with King James, and with their mother's many friends at court, in the 1620s?