Charlotte Artese
Agnes Scott College

"Like the old tale": The Folktale Sources of Shakespeare's Plays

Considering folktales as sources of Shakespeare's plays creates tensions with the traditional practice of source study. We can never know precisely which forms of a folktale circulated in Shakespeare's England and were accessible to author and audience. We are left with two kinds of evidence from which we can triangulate: literary versions dating before and around the time of the plays in question, and oral versions collected since the rise of folktale studies in the nineteenth century. Studying the folktale source puts us in the peculiar tradition of violating chronology and geography. A Chilean version of the "Pound of Flesh" folktale collected in 1951 becomes valuable as a trace of a tradition, and so may be treated as a source of sorts for <u>The Merchant of Venice</u>. A traditional story is multiple, studied and defined as an aggregate, rather than singular like a literary text, and can never be entirely known. My paper addresses the theoretical and methodological issues involved in considering folktales as sources for Shakespeare's plays, and derives from the introduction to my book manuscript.

Meredith Beales
Washington University in St. Louis

Fighting Cassibelan's Shadow: Microscopic British History in *Cymbeline*

In Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, he makes four references to the legendary British commander and king Cassibelan, who drove Julius Caesar away twice before Britain fell to the Roman yoke. This paper examines each reference, placing it in the context of Shakespeare's reading of Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Holinshed's reading of Roman and British history. This paper asks what, if anything, can be gained by the process of putting brief references to specific historical figures under a microscope, asking to what extent these brief references can add to *Cymbeline* scholarships' already sophisticated breakdown of British and Roman influences in the play. The paper suggests that the presence of references to the historical Cassibelan in *Cymbeline* reveals that the play functions as an idealized re-imagining of the Roman-British historical relationship, but that this image is disturbed by the knowledge that Britain was, in fact, a Roman colony.

Kent Cartwright
University of Maryland

Probable Impossibilities:
The Comedy of Errors and Two Conjectured Sources

My paper is less a thesis-driven argument than a discussion of two puzzles in source study that I have encountered as I complete my Arden 3 edition of *The Comedy of Errors*. The first, alluded to in my initial message, is the problem of *Errors'* relationship to late cinquecento Italian comedy. My basic question is, how could Shakespeare's play track so closely with the conventions of Italian comedy, as analyzed by Louise George Clubb applying her notion of theatergrams, when, to the best of our knowledge, Shakespeare had virtually no first-hand opportunity to become acquainted with it? The critical terms that we have for understanding this kind of transmission (theatergrams, intertextuality) are helpful, but they feel a little magical. Can we accept arguments for transmission when they do not predicate an explicit vehicle? Perhaps memes?

My second problem is another kind of impossibility. What does it mean when incidents in *Errors* (c. 1594) seem manifestly to be drawing upon a specific source text, except that the source text has not yet been published or written? Some of the language in two scenes in Act Four – language about arrest and imprisonment for debt – bears striking relationship to language in William Fennor's *The Compter's Common-wealth* (London, 1617). Because the imagery in *Errors* is scattered and piecemeal, it seems unlikely that Fennor was drawing on the play for his more extended and detailed narrative. While there is some urban pamphlet literature contemporary with *Errors* that deals with arrest and debtor's prison, none of it matches up with the play the way *The Compter's Common-wealth* does.

So, in one case, we have immaculate transmission from abroad; in the other, immaculate transmission from the future. Yes, maybe source study needs to accept the possibility of magic.

Phil Collington
Niagara University

"If, Like a Crab, You Could Go Backward":
Hamlet, Hamblet, Amleth, Oedipus, and Riddles

This study will revisit the Hamlet-Oedipus connection by situating Shakespeare's 1603 tragedy in the historical context of Renaissance cultural ideas about the Oedipus legend – as found, for example, in Thomas Newton's _Tenne Tragedies of Seneca_ (1581), and Thomas Evans's _Oedipus: Three Cantoes_ (1615). What emerges from these Renaissance versions of the Theban story is a prince who, like Shakespeare's Hamlet, demonstrates an unrivaled facility with "propounding Riddles intricate" (Newton 90), and who – again, like Hamlet – quests for self-knowledge: "To whom is mans corrupted inside knowne?" (Evans C5v). Oedipus's encounter with the Sphinx was prominent in the early cultural imagination; and although Renaissance readers were revolted by his patricide and incest, they greatly admired his intellect, his introspection, and above all his solution to the Sphinx's riddle: What goes on four legs in the

morning, two in the afternoon, three in the evening? (Answer: Man). In short, in the Renaissance imagination Oedipus was a man of formidable cognitive powers. Hamlet shares Oedipus's affinity for riddles, and early audiences would have recognized many of Hamlet's bizarre pronouncements as riddles (e.g., Question: How might a man "be bounded in a nutshell and count [himself] king of infinite space"? Answer: by using his imagination. Question: Why doesn't he do so? Answer: Because he "[has] bad dreams" [2.2.247-49]). The proposed study will demonstrate that riddles pervade Hamlet to an extent unrecognized in current scholarship. Hamlet uses riddles: a) to explore important philosophical and moral issues, b) to censure the moral corruption in the Danish court, c) to distinguish supporters from enemies, and d) to conceal his murderous intentions behind a veil of feigned madness. My general thesis is that Shakespeare's Hamlet – like Saxo's Amleth and Belleforest's Hamblet – is a chronic riddler; that his strange pronouncements have not been recognized as riddles in scholarship; and that far from being childish pastimes or frivolous language-games (as they are generally considered today), riddles were viewed by Renaissance readers and playgoers as profound explorations of philosophical, moral and social issues.

Mark Houlahan
University of Waikato

The Curious Case of Mr. William Shakespeare and the Red Herring:
12th Night and its sources

Re-examining the sources for *Twelfth Night* is a useful pathway for rethinking our approaches to sources. There is one clear narrative source, Barnabe Riche's *Apollonius and Silla*. Variants of this story, with its core meme of identical, and identically lovely girl/boy twins, circulated in Italian comedies and in Italian and French fictions (which Riche adapts and responds to). But how much of this material did Shakespeare know? Had he actually seen, let alone read, an Italian comedy? It is difficult to be certain, as *Twelfth Night* interpenetrates a very wide range of possible "sources" and analogues. The paper concludes by reflecting on the subtlest source Shakespeare deploys the decentring "red herring". Here the play appears to invoke a prior source, but the source is a bogus invention; a self-regarding, meta-fictional tactic borrowed in advance from the dazzling simulations of "source"and "text" offered by Nabokov in *Pale Fire* and Borges in his *Ficciones*.

Maurice Hunt
Baylor University

Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*

For more than two centuries, scholars have claimed that *Love's Labour's Lost*, more so than any other Shakespeare play, abounds in dark topical allusions to a variety of contemporary Englishmen and Frenchmen, including Henry, King of Navarre, Gabriel Harvey, John Florio,

and Sir Walter Ralegh. According to William Carroll, editor of the recent New Cambridge Shakespeare edition of the play, the most persuasive of these allusions involves the Elizabethan journalist and playwright Thomas Nashe, notably as Moth, Don Armado's witty page. This paper extends the importance of Nashe for interpreting *Love's Labour's Lost* by describing hitherto-unnoticed collocations of passages in Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveler* and their counterparts in the play. In each case, the constellations consist of references to "mote," especially the biblical mote in the eye; to the Nine Worthies, and to Neo-Platonic imagery of light, eyes and soul in love sonnets. Since *The Unfortunate Traveler* arguably predates Shakespeare's play, these constellations, along with other evidence, such as the repeated use of the word "infant" in each work, confirm Shakespeare's remarkable receptiveness to Nashe's diction and imagery. In fact, Nashe can be said to have been a source for the Pageant of the Nine Worthies in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

David Kay
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Dramatic Paradigms & Sources:
Macbeth as an Elizabethan Crime Drama

This paper looks more closely at the murder pamphlets and plays that Peter Lake and Michael Questier have linked to *Macbeth*, raising questions about genre and about Shakespeare's blending of historical sources, Senecan tragedy, and Elizabethan dramatic paradigms. Holinshed's crime narratives, contemporary crime drama, and *Macbeth* all share a common assumption—that for all but the most hardened criminals murder is a traumatic experience that immediately induces guilt and fear—but this is communicated primarily through side notes rather than narrative. Shakespeare and Elizabethan crime dramatists both rearrange their narrative sources and develop scenes dramatizing the emotional impact of murder. Like *Two Lamentable Tragedies* and *A Warning for Fair Women*, *Macbeth* shows its murderous protagonist hearing voices, suffering restless torment, feeling estranged from himself, fearing to look on his victim's body, and anxious that even stones will speak and reveal his crime. As in Senecan drama, murder is a bloody business in these plays, which all speak of wading in blood and of the difficulty of cleansing one's conscience. While Shakespeare's ending avoids the moralism of other crime dramas and his characterization of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is partly modeled on figures like Hercules, Medea, and Clytemnestra, his assimilation of Elizabethan crime drama paradigms engages audiences with the Macbeths' inner transformation as murder exacts its psychic cost on their souls.

Ikuko Kometani
Chuo University

Homoerotic Love in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*
—with New Source Studies in mind

What sources Shakespeare used for *Troilus and Cressida* is still not known for certain. For instance, the connection between Achilles and Patroclus draws not only from classical texts but also from medieval ones as well. The pair is absent from Chaucer's version of the tale, but John Lydgate's *Troy Book* (1412-1420) tells us that Achilles and Patroclus "hertis were lokkid in o cheyne" (3.311). Here Lydgate echoes the classical notion of friends sharing one heart, with one friend objectively confirming the other's thoughts and feelings. George Chapman's *Seaven Bookes of the Iliades* was first published in 1598 and could have been a source for an early production of *Troilus and Cressida* at the Inns of Court. This version of Chapman's translation presents Books 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of Homer's text, and Chapman's fifth book (i.e. Homer's ninth book) shows "the Ambassie and great Achilles sterne replie." Like Homer, Chapman here depicts Ulysses, Phoenix, and Ajax as Agamemnon's representatives, with Ulysses as interlocutor. On the other hand, Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* depicts the embassy to Achilles including Agamemnon himself, accompanied by Ajax and Ulysses. This less remarked but worth notable change signifies that Shakespeare focuses on Patroclus' role as interlocutor for Achilles, whereby emphasizing the earlier motif of Patroclus as Achilles' friend-lover (or "amor" if you like) or "other self." I would think about the dramatic presentation of Patroclus as an interlocutor, agent, negotiator or "another self" who extends his reach into the public worlds of both the court (or one could say "the state") and the marketplace, by comparing Shakespeare's text and its possible sources.

Lori Humphrey Newcomb
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Toward a Sustainable Source Study

As this seminar prepares to move source studies forward, my paper meditates on certain anomalies in the history of Shakespearean source study. I focus on some of the methodological, political, and ecocritical stakes of "source-hunting," especially in its first century, which coincided with Britain's last era of empire-building. My concern is that an undertheorized practice of source study may still have traces of a territorialism that guarantees Shakespeare's cultural supremacy while devaluing non-Shakespearean texts that are equally rare resources. I then briefly discuss my own current work in source studies, and how and why I draw on histories of the book and of reading to situate early modern drama *and* its intertexts in material processes of cultural production and consumption. I offer this method not as a singular model for a "new source study," but as one example of source studies pursuing explicitly-defined goals, in this case of cultural inclusiveness and sustainability.

Dimitry Senyshyn
University of Toronto

Reconstructing Holinshed: History and Romance in *Henry VIII*

My paper figures Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* as a history play that self consciously draws upon the tropes of the romance tradition in order to put the darkness and vicissitudes of its main action into starker relief while insisting on the failings of an exclusively romantic or providentialist perspective on history. Through his use of romance, Shakespeare borrows the thematic and iconographic resources of Tudor propaganda to facilitate a critique of Tudor history and Jacobean historiography. Given the ubiquity of romance in Early Modern culture, I submit that Shakespeare could rely upon his audience's familiarity with the mode's tropes and use them as a conceptual 'source' to inform his adaptation of Holinshed's account of key events in Henry's reign. In his romantic tragicomedies, Shakespeare used the fantastical motifs of romance in part as a kind of shorthand to draw attention to his plays' artifice and to activate in his audience a critical awareness of his dramaturgical techniques. Here, the conspicuous failure of romance to convincingly subsume or transcend the play's political realities points out the speciousness of using romance as an historiographical lens and fosters a skeptical view on the construction and uses of history.

Meredith Skura
Rice University

When Is A Source Not A Source?

Once we know the major sources for a Shakespearean play, what do we know? Merely listing them produces something like a list of recipe ingredients without the rest of the recipe. I'm interested in sources because knowing the raw materials for a play can do more. It often facilitates sketching out a likely process of composition whose dynamics can parallel those of the text itself. I will be writing about *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, about the way different editors prioritize the two major sources differently, about the role of the play's minor sources (beyond leaving verbal echoes of themselves), and about what we can learn from thinking about the way all the sources are combined.

Timothy Turner
Soutwestern University

Shakespeare, Contarini, and the Politics of Exclusion in *Othello*

This paper offers a revised and contrarian account of Shakespeare's (supposedly well-known) engagement with Gasparo Contarini's *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice* for the composition of *Othello*. "Old" source study had succeeded in showing that the playwright drew from this text for his verisimilar portrayal of Venice, but too often, even newer critics see Contarini's hagiographic idealization of the city-state simply reflected in the play. (Contarini is obviously not the "source" of *Othello*'s plot--that comes from Cinthio--but there are strong echoes of its language in the play, specifically of Lewes Lewkenor's 1599 translation.) Instead, I suggest that Shakespeare engages with and ultimately rejects the basic political philosophy of exclusion found in Contarini, who is in this sense a more important "source" for *Othello* than is commonly understood.