
OXMYTHS AND STRATMYTHS: SECTION IV

The 'myths' below are found in various Oxfordian and Stratfordian publications, and on Oxfordian and Stratfordian websites.

MYTH: Hasti-vibrans ('spear-shaker') was the sobriquet of the goddess Pallas Athena.

The term 'hasti-vibrans' was first coined as a Latinization of the name Shakespeare by Thomas Fuller in his 1662 *Worthies of Warwickshire*. The goddess Pallas Athena was never known as 'hasti-vibrans'.

References:

- (1) Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., (McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1992), p. 97.
- (2) E-mail message of July 21, 2000 from Terry Ross.

MYTH: Pallas Athena was the patron of the theatre.

The Greek goddess Pallas Athena was not the patron of the theatre. It has also been claimed, in connection with patronage of the theatre, that by a decree of the Senate in 206 B.C. the *scribae* (writers) and *histriones* (actors) in Rome obtained a right to meet in the Aventine temple of Pallas Athena's Roman counterpart, Minerva. However that fact could not have been known to the Elizabethans, including Elizabethan classical scholars, as the sole source for the decree, the epitome by Sextus Pompeius Festus of the *De Verborum Significatu* of Verrius Flaccus, is a single damaged 11th century manuscript, the Codex Farnesianus at Naples, while of Flaccus' work only a few fragments remain. It has also been claimed that the decree is referred to by Livy (27.37.7); however there is no mention of the decree in Livy.

Moreover it is significant that the *collegium poetarum* (college of poets) of the time in Rome met at the temple of Hercules of the Muses in the Campus Martius, not at the temple of Minerva.

References:

- (1) Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., (McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1992), p. 97.
- (2) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed.
- (3) E-mail message of July 21, 2000 from Terry Ross.

(4) E-mail message of August 25, 2000 from Robert Detobel, after having checked the *Pauli Reallexicon* and other sources.

(5) Gruen, Erich S., *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), pp. 87-90 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=DNm4WkaQd6gC&pg=PA89&lpg=PA89&dq=%22scribae%22+%22histriones%22+%22Aventine%22&source=bl&ots=3P_jHLkvia&sig=u1tf5etA7GorWHZWFAkxKXAeLok&hl=en&sa=X&ei=OzkXVK7FCujQiwLpqlIGQBw&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22scribae%22%20%22histriones%22%20%22Aventine%22&f=false.

(6) Livy 27.37 in Latin: <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/livy/liv.27.shtml#37>

(7) Livy 27.37 in English:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0158%3Abook%3D27%3Achapter%3D37>

(8) Wikipedia article on Sextus Pompeius Festus:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sextus_Pompeius_Festus.

MYTH: The ancients dedicated the penning of plays to Minerva.

In *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), Steven Gosson wrote that:

Tertullian teacheth us that every part of the preparation of plays was dedicated to some heathen god or goddess, as the house, stage, and apparel to Venus; the music to Apollo; the penning to Minerva and the Muses; the pronounciation and action to Mercury.

However Gosson took liberties with his source, as the pertinent passage in Tertullian's *De Spectaculis* does not state that the ancients dedicated the penning of plays to Minerva.

And quite obviously Liber and Venus are the patrons of the arts of the stage. Those features of the stage peculiarly and especially its own, that effeminacy of gesture and posture, they dedicate to Venus and Liber, wanton gods, the one in her sex, the other in his dress; while all that is done with voice and song, instrument and book, is the affair of the Apollos and the Muses, the Minervas and Mercuries.

References:

(1) Pollard, Tanya, ed., *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 98 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=QRcaa6eIhCwC&pg=PA98&lpg=PA98&dq=%22Tertullian%22+%22Minerva%22+%22dedicated%22+%22plays%22&source=bl&ots=uohxb3pFEP&sig=BE17aRtJQfxeVdgJnzXilmgkL2E&hl=en&sa=X&ei=R1AWVOBMw7eKAvnwgIAN&ved=0CCkQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=%22Tertullian%22%20%22Minerva%22%20%22dedicated%22%20%22plays%22&f=false>.

(2) Glover, T.R., *Tertullian: Apology; De Spectaculis*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1977), pp. 259-61 at:

<http://www.archive.org/stream/apologydespectac00tertuoft#page/260/mode/2up>.

MYTH: B.M. Ward's 'Thy countenance shakes a spear' is an accurate translation of the phrase vultus/Tela vibrat' in Gabriel Harvey's praise of Oxford in *Gratulationes Valdinenses*.

Firstly, the translation is inaccurate in that 'tela' is the plural of the Latin 'telum', and at the least the translation would have to be in the plural, i.e., 'Thy countenance shakes spears', not 'Thy countenance shakes a spear'. Secondly, Ward took liberties in translating 'tela' as 'spear', since the Latin word which specifically means 'spear' is 'hasta'. Thirdly, 'telum' was a generic term which included a wide variety of weapons, both thrown and hand-held, and was not confined to spears. In *A Compendious Dictionary of the Latin Tongue*, 'telum' is defined as 'a missile weapon, anything thrown by the hand or an engine to strike an enemy, a dart or javelin, a lance, an arrow'. T. H. Jameson translates the phrase as 'your glance shoots arrows'.

References:

(1) Adam, Alexander, *A Compendious Dictionary Of The Latin Tongue*, (Edinburgh: C. Stewart, 1805), pp. 191, 631, 823, 907 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=TwEUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA632&lpg=PA632&dq=%22Latin%22+%22telum%22&source=bl&ots=2xn6IciRj&sig=q4PsGOW3TD20W6SThk ekfLpNZEE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=_G8fVNvKN8iEjALAhYCAAQ&ved=0CCEQ6AEwATgK#v=onepage&q=%22Latin%22%20%22telum%22&f=false.

(2) Jameson, Thomas Hugh, *The Gratulationes Valdinenses of Gabriel Harvey*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1938, p. 127 (see STC 12901 on this website).

(4) Ward, B.M., *The Seventeenth Earl Of Oxford 1550-1604 From Contemporary Documents*, (London: John Murray, 1928), p. 158.

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<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/>

MYTH: Andrew Hannas's 'Thy will shakes spears' is an accurate translation of the phrase vultus/Tela vibrat' in Gabriel Harvey's praise of Oxford in *Gratulationes Valdinenses*.

Although an entry in Sir Thomas Elyot's Latin-English dictionary (1538, 1542, 1545) states that 'Vultus, of olde wryters is taken for wylle, a Volendo', Elyot provides no examples, and the translation of 'vultus' as 'will' appears to be otherwise without precedent in either classical or late medieval sources. Quare whether Thomas Cooper retained the statement when he revised Elyot's *Dictionary* circa 1548. In any event, Cooper did not include a definition of 'vultus' as 'will' in his own *Thesaurus*, published in 1565.

References:

(1) Hannas, Andrew, 'Gabriel Harvey and the Genesis of "William Shakespeare"', *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, Winter 1993, Vol. 29, No. 1B, pp. 1-8 at:

<http://www.sourcetext.com/sourcebook/essays/harvey.html>.

(2) Terry Ross, posting on hlas on 4 February 2000:

[https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/humanities.lit.authors.shakespeare/LBRNVq_Kl_xk\[101-125-false\]](https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/humanities.lit.authors.shakespeare/LBRNVq_Kl_xk[101-125-false]).

(3) Tom Veal, posting on his *Stromata* website, 17 August 2002 at:

<http://stromata.tripod.com/id317.htm>.

(4) Entries for Sir Thomas Elyot (c.1490-1546) and Thomas Cooper (c.1517-1594) in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

MYTH: In *Gratulationes Valdinenses*, Gabriel Harvey identifies Oxford's literary pursuits with the goddess Minerva.

In *Gratulationes Valdinenses*, Gabriel Harvey associates Oxford's literary pursuits with Phoebus Apollo.

References:

(1) Jameson, Thomas Hugh, *The Gratulationes Valdinenses of Gabriel Harvey*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1938, p. 127 (see STC 12901 on this website).

MYTH: Gabriel Harvey praises Oxford in *Gratulationes Valdinenses*.

In *Gratulationes Valdinenses*, Harvey descants on Oxford's motto to the point of rendering the motto ridiculous, and urges Oxford to abandon the literary and musical pursuits at which Oxford excelled, and to take up a military command which Oxford fervently desired and which the Queen had consistently denied him. Given that Harvey was in Leicester's service at the time of composition, it seems not unreasonable to suspect that Harvey's intention was to belittle Oxford under the guise of praising him. At the same time, both Harvey's personality and writing style are so genuinely idiosyncratic that the reader cannot be entirely certain of Harvey's malice. It is possible that his insulting comments were really not meant to be insulting, although on the whole that seems doubtful.

References:

(1) Jameson, Thomas Hugh, *The Gratulationes Valdinenses of Gabriel Harvey*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1938, p. 127 (see STC 12901 on this website).

MYTH: The hyphenated name 'Shake-speare' first appears in a work by Shakespeare.

The first instance of the hyphenated name Shake-speare occurs in *Willobie His Avisia* (1594).

References:

(1) De Luna, Barbara N. *The Queen declined; An interpretation of Willobie His Avisia with the text of the original edition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970, p. 128.

(2) Hughes, Charles, ed. *Willobie His Avisia*. London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1904, p. 15 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924013117332#page/n49/mode/2up>.

MYTH: The first syllable of Shakespeare was pronounced like our modern word 'shake'.

Track 18 of Ben Crystal's CD on Shakespeare's Original Pronunciation gives the Elizabethan pronunciation of Prospero's speech from *The Tempest* which contains the words 'lakes', 'shake' and 'break':

PROSPERO

*Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him
When he comes back; you demi-puppets that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid,
Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimm'd
The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar: graves at my command
Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
By my so potent art. But this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have required
Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
To work mine end upon their senses that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.*

The Elizabethan pronunciation of 'lakes', 'shake' and 'break' is similar to our modern 'lecks', 'sheck' and 'breck', with the vowel sound drawn out.

(1) See the full description of the CD, which can be ordered from the British Library at http://shop.bl.uk/mall/productpage.cfm/BritishLibrary/ISBN_9780712351195.

MYTH: In his marginalia, Gabriel Harvey referred to Oxford as 'Axiophilus'.

It was Gabriel Harvey's habit to refer to himself by a variety of personae in marginalia he wrote in books in his personal library. These personae included Angelus Furius, Anonymus, Chrysotechnus, Eudromus, Euscopus, Eutrapelus and Axiophilus. Axiophilus is Harvey's name for himself as a 'writer or lover of worthy poetry'.

Stern, Virginia. *Gabriel Harvey; His life, marginalia and library*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, p. 126.

MYTH: *Shakespeare ‘erred’ in Merchant of Venice. Shylock would not have been permitted to leave the Jewish ghetto in the evening; moreover in the play the window of Shylock’s house opens onto a street, whereas the ghetto was self-contained.*

Shakespeare's source, Ser Giovanni's prose collection *Il Pecorone*, is said to have been written at the end of the fourteenth century. At that time there was no Jewish ghetto in Venice. It was not until 1516 that the ghetto was established, and Jews were locked into it at night. See:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Venice.html>

In 1516, the doges, Venice’s ruling council, debated whether Jews should be allowed to remain in the city. They decided to let the Jews remain, but their residence would be confined to Ghetto Nuova, a small, dirty island; it became the world’s first ghetto.

MYTH: *John Florio's personal familiarity with Italy enabled him to assist both Shakespeare and Jonson with details of Italian geography.*

John Florio, the son of a former Franciscan friar from Tuscany, Michael Angelo Florio (d. 1566x71), and of an unidentified English mother, was born in London. in 1553. His father taught Italian during the reign of Edward VI, numbering among his pupils Henry Herbert (d.1601), 2nd Earl of Pembroke, and Lady Jane Grey (1537–1554), ‘to each of whom he dedicated an Italian grammar’. On Queen Mary’s accession, an edict was proclaimed ordering foreign exiles to leave England, and in March 1554 Florio’s family left the county, settling first for a year in Strasbourg, and then in Soglio in Switzerland ‘in the Val Bregaglia, just beyond the Italian border’. According to the *ODNB*, ‘There is no evidence that John ever set foot in Italy during these years.’ At age 10, Florio was sent to study at Tübingen, and by 1576 had returned to London.

There is no historical evidence that John Florio was in Italy at any time during his life.

References:

(1) Yates, Frances A. *John Florio; The life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 21.

(2) John Florio (1553-1625), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online.

MYTH: Shakespeare used John Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essais*, published in 1603, in *The Tempest*.

Montaigne's *Essais* were first published in French in 1580. An English translation by John Florio, entered to Edward Blount in the Stationers' Register on 4 June 1600, was published in 1603. The claim is made by orthodox scholars that Florio's 1603 translation of a passage in Montaigne's essay 'Des Cannibales' was the source of lines in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Stephen Greenblatt provides Florio's translation of the relevant passage in Montaigne's 'Des Cannibales':

. . . hath no kind of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politic superiority; no use of service, of riches, or of poverty; no contracts, no successions, no dividences, no occupation but idle; no respect of kindred, but common; no apparel, but natural; no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corn, or metal. The very words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulations, covetousness, envy, detraction, and pardon were never heard of amongst them.

Shakespeare makes use of Montaigne in this passage in *The Tempest*:

*no kind of traffic
 Would I admit, no name of magistrate;
 Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
 And use of service, none; contract, succession,
 Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
 No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
 No occupation, all men idle, all;
 And women too—but innocent and pure;
 No sovereignty –

 All things in common nature should produce
 Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,
 Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
 Would I not have; but nature should bring forth
 Of it own kind of foison, all abundance,
 To feed my innocent people.
 (II .i.148–64)*

The passage in Montaigne's original French can be found here:

<http://www.bribes.org/trismegiste/es1ch30.htm>

C'est une nation, diroy-je à Platon, en laquelle il n'y a aucune espece de trafique; nulle cognoissance de lettres; nulle science de nombres; nul nom de magistrat, ny de

superiorité politique; nul usage de service, de richesse, ou de pauvreté; nuls contrats; nulles successions; nuls partages; nulles occupations, qu'oysives; nul respect de parenté, que commun; nuls vestemens; nulle agriculture; nul metal; nul usage de vin ou de bled. Les paroles mesmes, qui signifient la mensonge, la trahison, la dissimulation, l'avarice, l'envie, la detraction, le pardon, inouyes. Combien trouveroit il la republicue qu'il a imaginée, esloignée de cette perfection?

Are Shakespeare's lines so close to Florio's translation as to preclude Shakespeare having worked from Montaigne's original French edition of 1580? They are not. In fact, it can be seen by comparing the foregoing excerpts that the only words and phrases which Florio's translation of 'Des Cannibales' and Shakespeare's verse have in common are those which really could not be translated from Montaigne's original French in any other way: 'aucune espece de trafique', 'nulle cognoissance de lettres', 'nul nom de magistrat', 'nul usage de service', 'richesse', 'pauvreté', 'contrats', 'successions', 'occupations', 'nul metal', 'nul usage de vin ou de bled' etc.

For the rest, Shakespeare departs markedly from Florio, omitting entirely some points found in Florio, adding others not found in Florio, and revising still others (e.g. 'No occupation, all men idle, all' for Florio's 'no occupation but idle'), thus making it clear that Shakespeare's source for the lines in *The Tempest* was Montaigne's original French version published in 1580.

See also Capell, who says of Shakespeare's use of Montaigne in *The Tempest*:

The person who shall compare this passage with the translations of it that were extant in Shakespeare's time will see reason to think he read it in French.

Capell italicizes the phrases in Montaigne's original French which Shakespeare has made use of in *The Tempest*, making it easier to see that, for example, 'nul usage de service', would have to be translated by virtually anyone as 'no use of service', and that Shakespeare obviously would not have had to rely on Florio's translation for phrases of that sort:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=6eVWAAAACAAJ&pg=RA2-PA63&lpg=RA2-PA63&dq=%22The+person+who+shall+compare+this+passage+with+the+translations+of+it+that+were+extant+in+Shakespeare%E2%80%99s+time+will+see+reason+to+think+he+read+it+in+French%22&source=bl&ots=W3vF-At9-n&sig=977Jd1-bPOuKCVPvVFjmk_msrJA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiF_5Om0ufMAhXFxYMKHR9xD14Q6AEIJzAF#v=onepage&q=%22The%20person%20who%20shall%20compare%20this%20passage%20with%20the%20translations%20of%20it%20that%20were%20extant%20in%20Shakespeare%E2%80%99s%20time%20will%20see%20reason%20to%20think%20he%20read%20it%20in%20French%22&f=false

References:

(1) Greenblatt, Stephen, 'Stephen Greenblatt on Shakespeare's debt to Montaigne', *The Telegraph*, 7 June 2014, at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10877821/Stephen-Greenblatt-on-Shakespeares-debt-to-Montaigne.html>.

(2) Capell, Edward, *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare*, Part III, Vol. II, (London: Henry Hughs), p. 63 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=6eVWAAAACAAJ&pg=RA2-PA63&lpg=RA2-PA63&dq=%22The+person+who+shall+compare+this+passage+with+the+translations+of+it+that+were+extant+in+Shakespeare%E2%80%99s+time+will+see+reason+to+think+he+read+it+in+French%22&source=bl&ots=W3vF-At9-n&sig=977Jd1-bPOuKCVpVVFjmk_msrJA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiF_5Om0ufMAhXFxYMKHR9xD14Q6AEIJzAF#v=onepage&q=%22The%20person%20who%20shall%20compare%20this%20passage%20with%20the%20translations%20of%20it%20that%20were%20extant%20in%20Shakespeare%E2%80%99s%20time%20will%20see%20reason%20to%20think%20he%20read%20it%20in%20French%22&f=false.

MYTH: The Strachey letter describing the 1609 wreck of the Sea Venture was the source of *The Tempest*.

In his 2002 New Cambridge Shakespeare edition of *The Tempest*, David Lindley stated that there is 'virtually nothing' in the manuscripts and pamphlets describing the 1609 wreck of the Sea Venture which indicates 'close verbal affinity' with *The Tempest*. See pp. 30-1:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=QxvcXItXYtoC&pg=PA31&lpg=PA31&dq=%22Rosier%22+%22A+true+relation%22+%22Kinney%22&source=bl&ots=h0ovZWHgRZ&sig=XNLI4nK_tFV3P4A4_1mFGdOMEmY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi9msiFsYfNAhVSzWMKHTDFDN8Q6AEIGzAA#v=onepage&q=%22Rosier%22%20%22%20A%20true%20relation%22%20%22Kinney%22&f=false

This returns us to the material which has for the last two hundred years been consistently claimed as a direct 'source' for the play [the Strachey letter and Bermuda pamphlets]. In fact there is virtually nothing in these texts which manifests the kind of unambiguous close verbal affinity we have seen in the other sources so far considered. Strachey's account of the storm is itself a variation on a standard set-piece topic, and as the Commentary indicates, many other literary parallels are equally close to Shakespeare's text. Kenneth Muir was not convinced that these accounts were necessarily sources . . . it is difficult to demonstrate that any of these individual texts were direct sources for the play.

David Kathman claims to have identified fifty-three alleged parallels between Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the pamphlets concerning the 1609 wreck of the Sea Venture in Bermuda. All these alleged parallels have been refuted in a 2005 paper by the author of this website to which David Kathman has not responded.

References:

(1) Lindley, David, ed., *The Tempest*, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 30-1.

(2) Kathman, David, 'Dating *The Tempest*', at:

<http://shakespeareauthorship.com/tempest.html>.

(3) Green, Nina, 'David Kathman's False Parallels Between The Strachey Letter, The Jourdain Account, The Anonymous True Declaration and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*' (2005) which can be accessed at the foot of the page here:

<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/documents.html>

and which can also be downloaded using this link:

www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Kathman/Kathmanrefutation.pdf.

MYTH: Phineas Pett's account of the launch of the Prince Royal on 25 September 1610 was the source of *The Tempest*.

The dissimilarities between Pett's account and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* are so very great as to vastly outweigh the similarities, particularly when one considers that the only alleged similarities are between a violent storm which sinks the king's ship in *The Tempest* and a half-hour squall in Pett's account which doesn't even actually delay the Prince's Royal's launching, and that the violent storm/half-hour squall were caused by an agent with supernatural powers on the one hand (Prospero in *The Tempest*) and suspected of being caused by an agent with supernatural powers on the other hand (Pett's 'enemies' in his account ('which made me doubt that there was some indirect working amongst our enemies to dash our launching')). However the latter alleged similarity is negated by the fact that although Shakespeare might well have heard about the half-hour squall, he certainly could not have divined Pett's innermost thoughts that night about the workings of his 'enemies', since Pett's private manuscript account of the launching of the Prince Royal wasn't written down until after the first performance of *The Tempest*. The preface to Pett's account states that his manuscript was written in sections. See p. vii:

<https://archive.org/stream/autobiographyofp00pettuoft#page/viii/mode/2up>

The first and largest of these, written apparently in 1612, narrates the events down to September 1610, and stops at the word 'ordered' on line 15 of page 80 below.

This means that Pett's manuscript up to the account of the launch of the Prince Royal on 25 September 1610 wasn't written down by Pett until 1612, after the first performance of *The Tempest*, and it was thus impossible for Shakespeare to have even seen a *manuscript* containing Pett's private thoughts about the working of his enemies before *The Tempest* was written. Thus the only remaining parallel between *The Tempest* and the Prince Royal is between a violent storm which sinks a ship and a half-hour squall which doesn't even ultimately interfere with the launching of the ship, which is no parallel at all.

From Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tempest#Shakespeare.27s_day

The Tempest is a play by William Shakespeare, believed to have been written in 1610–11

A record exists of a performance of The Tempest on 1 November 1611 by the King's Men before James I and the English royal court at Whitehall Palace on Hallowmas night.

References:

(1) Perrin, W.G., *The Autobiography of Phineas Pett*, (Navy Records Society, 1918), pp. 80-84:

<https://archive.org/stream/autobiographyofp00pettuoft#page/82/mode/2up>.

(2) Malvern, Jack, 'Tempest ship's discovery is the stuff of dreams for RSC director', *The Times*, 8 October 2016, at:

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tempest-ship-s-discovery-is-the-stuff-of-dreams-for-rsc-director-7wgdswnf>.

MYTH: *The Tempest was performed at court on 11 February 1605 under the alternative title The Spanish Maze.*

According to Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky:

Whether The Tempest was originally known by an alternative title is ultimately unprovable, barring further discovery.

References:

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<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/>

(1) Malim, Richard, 'The Spanish Maze', *Great Oxford*, (Tunbridge Wells: Parapress Ltd., 2004), pp. 284-8.

(2) Stritmatter, Roger and Lynne Kositsky, *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare's The Tempest*, (London: McFarland & Company Inc., 2013), pp. 55-7 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=4fJtAAAAQBAJ&pg=PA55&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

MYTH: The second volume of Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations (1599)* 'contains Henry May's account of the wreck of the *Edward Bonaventure* in the Bermudas in 1594'.

Henry May was aboard a French ship wrecked in Bermuda on 17 December 1593. See:

<http://www.bermuda-online.org/history.htm>

1591. April 10. Three ships sailed from Plymouth, England for the East Indies. They were the Penelope, Merchant Royal and Edward Bonaventura. In the latter was English seaman Henry May, transferred by his captain, James Lancaster, to a French vessel. The French ship was under the command of M. de la Barbotiere.

1593. November 30. Captain de la Barbotiere sailed from Laguna, Hispaniola, on the voyage described above.

1593. December 17. Seventeen days after leaving Laguna, Captain de la Barbotiere and his pilots thought they were out of danger of the Isle of Devils or Bermuda. They got their wine of height for a safe latitude, drank long and deep, with a minimal deck watch, but erred severely in their navigation. At midnight on December 17, the ship struck the north-west reefs of Bermuda and was so badly damaged that out of fifty five men, only twenty six reached the shore alive. Henry May and Captain de la Barbotiere were among the survivors. It is the wreck of this French ship on the Bermuda coat of arms. The crew cut down Bermuda cedar trees and built a seaworthy craft of eighteen tons. They caulked her seams with lime salvaged from the ship and oil extracted from local turtles they caught for food. They ate turtle meat fish, birds - and wild hogs.

1594. May 11. Captain de la Barbotiere and his repaired ship sailed from Bermuda to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, on May 20, where the Englishman, de la Barbotiere and crew observed the settlement before continuing to Newfoundland, where May boarded another French ship directly for Europe. He reached Falmouth, Cornwall, two months later in 1594.

The *Edward Bonaventure* returned safely to England, and was wrecked in 1603 at Boulogne.

References:

(1) Gilvary, Kevin, ed., *Dating Shakespeare's Plays: A Critical Review of the Evidence*, (Tunbridge Wells: Parapress, 2010), p. 43.

(2) 'A briefe note of a voyage to the East Indies, begun the 10 of April 1591, wherein were three tall ships, the Penelope of Captaine Raimond, Admirall, the Merchant royall, whereof was Captaine, Samuel Foxcroft, Viceadmirall, the Edward Bonaventure, whereof was Captaine, M. Iames Lancaster, Rereadmirall, with a small pinnesse. Written by Henry May, who in his returne homeward by the West Indies suffred shipwracke vpon the isle of Bermuda, wherof here is annexed a large description', University of Oxford Text Archive at:

http://tei.it.ox.ac.uk/tcp/Texts-HTML/free/A02/A02495.html#index.xml-group.1_text.3_body.1_div.13_div.16.

(3) Edward De Vere Newsletter, Number 2 (April 1989).

MYTH: In writing Othello, Shakespeare relied on Richard Knolles' A Generall Historie of the Turkes, published in 1603, in which Knolles correctly stated that the Turkish fleet which attacked Cyprus in 1570 had 200 galleys.

Although Knolles' 1300 page *Generall Historie* was the first major work on the subject in English, it was a compilation of earlier sources in several languages, and there was thus no need for Shakespeare, whose principal source for *Othello* was *Il Pecorone* in Italian, not available in translation at the time, to rely on Knolles. From the *ODNB*:

[Richard Knolles (d.1610)] is best known for The Generall Historie of the Turkes, first published in 1603. Compiled from a range of Byzantine and western histories, travellers' reports and letters, together with material from Leunclavius's recent Latin translation of a late fifteenth-century Ottoman chronicle, Knolles's was the first major work on the subject to appear in English, and was quickly recognized as a masterpiece of narrative synthesis.

In his 1997 Arden edition of *Othello*, Honigmann does not mention Knolles, and in an earlier article in 1993 Honigmann specifically took issue with the claim that Knolles was one of Shakespeare's sources for *Othello*, pointing out that the only two alleged parallels (the movement of the Turkish fleet to Rhodes before it proceeded to Cyprus, and the alleged number of 200 galleys in the Turkish fleet) were available to Shakespeare in earlier sources.

In 1993, in 'The First Quarto of Hamlet and the Date of *Othello*', Honigmann discussed Emrys Jones' article '*Othello*, "Lepanto" and the Cyprus Wars' in which Jones quotes these lines from Act I, Scene 3 of the play:

1 Senator. My letters say, a hundred and seven galleys.

Duke. And mine a hundred and forty.

2 Senator. And mine two hundred.

Relying on Knolles, Jones states (p. 339):

The Turks had two hundred galleys.

https://books.google.ca/books?id=rATFdWxoxREC&pg=PA340&lpg=PA340&dq=%22and+at+the+RHODES+met+with%22&source=bl&ots=z_C39263KO&sig=DJ0JtPmUc2AXnN6ZVhjrQzOfWKI&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjoiITw-_3MAhUX_WMKHV3aB-kQ6AEIIDAC#v=onepage&q=%22and%20at%20the%20RHODES%20met%20with%22&f=false

However Setton, a modern historian, says:

The Turks never had more than 165 galleys.

See:

https://www.google.ca/?gws_rd=ssl#q=%22The+Turks+never+had+more+than+165+galleys%22

Knolles states with certainty (wrongly it turns out) that the number of Turkish galleys was 200, whereas Shakespeare's lines reflect the contemporary uncertainty which surrounded the actual number. It thus seems clear Shakespeare used other sources, not Knolles. According to Honigmann, among earlier sources available to Shakespeare were *The Mahumetane or Turkish Historie*, translated by Robert Carr, published in 1600, 'a more condensed account than Knolles', and the 1600 edition of Sansovino's *Historia Universale*, 'one of the authors named and pillaged by Knolles', which contains the information that the Turkish fleet, divided in two, 'joined forces again at Rhodes before attacking Cyprus':

https://books.google.ca/books/about/Historia_universale_dell_origine_et_impe.html?id=yCI8AAAACAAJ&redir_esc=y&hl=en

Piali a' 18. di Maggio, hauendo a Negroponte impalmato, & fornita l'armata di uettouaglie si leuò di là per nauigare à Rhodi, & nel camino ritouò il resto dell' armata: & cosi tutti insieme al primo di Giugno giusero a Rhodi.

For Knolles' erroneous claim that the Turks had 200 galleys, see p. 845 at:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A04911.0001.001/1:46.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>.

Selymus throughly furnished with all things necessarie for the inuasion of Cyprus, in the beginning of Februarie sent a great power both of horse and foot into Epirvs and the frontiers of Dalmatia, to forrage the Venetian territorie, especially about Iadera; of purpose by that warre so neere at home to withdraw them from the defence of Cyprus so farre off. About the middle of Aprill following he sent Piall Bassa with fourescore gallies and thirtie galliots to keepe the Venetians from sending aid into Cyprus. This Piall was an Hungarian, borne of base parents, but turning Turke, and giuing himselfe to armes, was first preferred for his valour shewed against the Christians at Zerbi, and afterward by many degrees rise to the honour of one of the greatest Bassaes.

and p. 846 at:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A04911.0001.001/1:46.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>

All this being now in readinesse, and a most royall gallie of wonderful greatnesse and beautie by the appointment of Selymus prepared for the great Bassa the Generall; he together with Haly Bassa and the rest of the fleet, departed from Constantinople the six and twentieth of May, and at the Rhodes met with Piall as he had before appointed. The whole fleet at that time consisted of two hundred gallies, amongst whom were diuers galliots, and small men of war, with diuers other vessels prepared for the transportation of horses: with this fleet Mustapha kept on his course for Cyprus.

References:

(1) Honigmann, E.A.J., "The First Quarto of Hamlet and the Date of Othello," *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 174 (May, 1993), pp. 211-219.

(2) Jones, Emrys, 'Othello, "Lepanto" and the Cyprus Wars', *Shakespeare Survey*, 21 (1968), p. 49.

(3) Setton, Kenneth M., *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, Vol. IV, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984), p. 995:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=SrUNi2m_qZAC&pg=PA995&lpg=PA995&dq=%22Paruta%22+%22Cipro%22+%22first+published%22&source=bl&ots=J6mIeDmfSc&sig=cR_jgFXbwUOvxbmxMlhAZk-tXno&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjQ3_KGzP3MAhVL6WMKHwUDzMQ6AEIGzAA#v=onepage&q=%22Paruta%22%20%22Cipro%22%20%22first%20published%22&f=false.

(4) A transcript of the 1603 edition of Knolles is available online at:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A04911.0001.001/1:46.2?rgn=div2;view=toc>.

(5) A facsimile of the 1610 edition of Knolles is available online at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=XC9RAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA846&lpg=PA846&dq=%22of+two+hundred+gallies,+amongst+whom+%22&source=bl&ots=icaUoIXF8z&sig=S-Oerv-LvykCQsqm_NEW1W_qXA0&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj4psrx1P_MAhUfKWMKHd3AD78Q6AEIIDAC#v=onepage&q&f=false.

(6) Carr, Robert, trans., *The Mahumetane or Turkish Historie* (1600).

(7) Sansovino, Francesco 'Guerra del Regno di Cipri, l'anno MDEXX' (i.e. MDLXX), *Dell'istoria Universale dell'origine et imperio de Turchi* (1600) at:

http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/9200386/BibliographicResource_3000044836648.html.

MYTH: *In writing Othello, Shakespeare used the name 'Angelus Surianus' in Richard Knolles' A Generall Historie of the Turkes, published in 1603, as a source for the mention of 'Signior Angelo'.*

'Signior Angelo' is mentioned in these lines:

SAILOR

*The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes,
So was I bid report here to the state
By Signior Angelo.*

Since Shakespeare merely refers to 'Signior Angelo', it seems somewhat far-fetched to claim that he had Angelus Surianus in mind, particularly since in none of the passages in which Surianus is mentioned in the historical sources does he report on the Turkish fleet's movement towards Rhodes.

However if Shakespeare did take the name 'Signor Angelo' from a historical source, he could as easily have found the name in Contarini (1572) as in Knolles (1603).

References:

(1) For mention of Angelo (or Anzolo) Soriano (or Suriano) in Contarini, see Contairini, Gianpietro, *Historia Delle Cose Successe dal Principio Della Guerra Mossa da Selim Ottomano a Venetiani*, (Venice: Francesco Rampazetto, 1572), pp. 3, 4, 12, 20, 21 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=o008AAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

For mention of Angelus Surianus in Knolles, see Knolles, Richard, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes*, (London: Adam Islip, 1603), pp. 839, 891 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=nxRlAAAACAAJ&pg=PA839&lpg=PA839&dq=%22where+Angelus+Surianus%22&source=bl&ots=aCijmki_16&sig=oTv-EfYLUzVEFR5Oj_dHJv17z-M&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj4wubR2IzNAhUC0mMKHRRdDckQ6AEIGzAA#v=onepage&q=%22where%20Angelus%20Surianus%22&f=false

and:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A04911.0001.001/1:46.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>.

MYTH: The epistle to the 1609 edition of Troilus and Cressida establishes that Shakespeare was alive in 1609.

The unsigned epistle to the 1609 edition of *Troilus and Cressida* begins:

Eternall reader, you have heere a new play, neuer stal'd with the Stage, neuer clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulgar

The author of the unsigned epistle later says:

And beleeeue this, that when hee is gone, and his Commedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set vp a new English Inquisition.

In contradiction to the claim in the unsigned epistle that *Troilus and Cressida* had never been performed, the entry to James Roberts in the Stationers' Register on 7 February 1603 contains the words 'As yt is acted by my Lord Chamberlain's Men'.

Moreover two versions of the title page to the 1609 edition exist, both stating that they were 'Imprinted by G. Eld for R. Bonian and H. Walley'. One version of the title page states that the text of the play is given 'As it was acted by the Kings Maiesties seruants at the Globe'; the other version omits that statement, and contains the aforementioned unsigned epistle terming the play 'new', and stating that it had never been publicly performed.

Thus, both the entry in the Stationers' Register and one version of the title page directly contradict the opening lines of the unsigned epistle, suggesting that the epistle dates from a time when the play had never been performed. The unsigned epistle thus appears to predate the 1603 entry in the Stationers' Register, and does not establish anything with

respect to the issue of whether Shakespeare was alive or dead in 1609. According to Wells and Taylor, p. 424, Honigmann dates the composition of *Troilus and Cressida* to the first half of 1601, at which time Oxford was still alive:

Honigmann has urged that the play dates from the first half of 1601, that the epistle should be trusted, that the play had by 1609 never been publicly acted, and that it remained unacted because of fears that it might be interpreted as a political allegory on the Earl of Essex.

It seems likely that Oxford himself penned the epistle circa 1601, and definitely at some time prior to 7 February 1603 since by that time, as stated in the entry in the Stationers' Register, the play had been performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men. It also seems likely that there is validity to Honigmann's suggestion that the play is in some respects a 'political allegory on Essex', and if so, the Essex Rebellion in February 1601 would have had a significant impact on public performances of the play.

References:

(1) Wells, Stanley and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

(2) Honigmann, E.A.J., 'The Date and Revision of *Troilus and Cressida*', in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, (Chicago, 1985), 38-54.

(3) Honigmann, E.A.J., 'Shakespeare Suppressed: The Unfortunate History of *Troilus and Cressida*', in *Myriad-Minded Shakespeare: Essays, Chiefly on the Tragedies and Problem Comedies*, (New York, 1989), pp. 112-29.

(4) For facsimiles of the two title pages and the epistle, see Stritmatter, Roger, 'The Tortured Signifier: Satire, Censorship, and the Textual History of *Troilus and Cressida*', *Critical Survey*, Vol. 21, Number 2, (2009), pp. 60-82 at:

shake-speares-bible.com/pdf/tortured.pdf.

MYTH: 'Willy' was a generic term for 'poet' in the Elizabeth period.

There is no evidence of this.

References:

(1) 'Willy', *Oxford English dictionary, second edition, on compact disc*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

MYTH: Elizabethan actors were called 'crows'.

There is no evidence of this.

References:

(1) 'Crow', *Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, on compact disc*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

MYTH: Will Kempe and Edward Alleyn were playwrights.

There is no evidence of this.

MYTH: Queen Hermione's opening words in her trial in *The Winter's Tale* are identical to Edmund Campion's opening words in his 1581 treason trial.

There is no resemblance whatever between Edmund Campion's opening words at his 1581 treason trial, and Queen Hermione's opening words in her trial in *The Winter's Tale* at 3/2/22 ff.

References:

(1) Howell, T.B. *A complete collection of state trials and proceedings for high treason and other crimes and misdemeanors from the earliest period to the year 1783*. 21 vols. London: T.C. Hansard, 1816, vol. 1, p.1050.

MYTH: In composing *The Tempest*, Shakespeare took details from William Strachey's unpublished letter and from Sylvester Jourdain's *A Discovery of the Bermudas (1610)* describing the wreck of the *Sea Venture* in Bermuda in 1609.

In *The Tempest*, Ariel says:

*Safely in harbor
Is the king's ship. In the deep nook where once
Thou called'st me up at midnight to fetch dew
From the still-vexed Bermoothes, there she's hid.*

William Strachey's original letter is no longer extant. However the Strachey letter as reprinted by Samuel Purchas in 1625 as 'A True Reportory' uses Bermuda/s throughout. See:

<https://archive.org/stream/hakluytusposthu19purc#page/4/mode/2up>.

Similarly, Jourdain's 1610 pamphlet uses 'Barmvdas', not Shakespeare's 'Bermoothes'. See:

http://shakespeare.berkeley.edu/gallery2/main.php?g2_itemId=17612.

Shakespeare's use of 'Bermoothes' in his sole mention of the islands or anything on them in the play is thus evidence that neither the Strachey letter nor the Jourdain pamphlet was used in the composition of *The Tempest*.

Moreover after the wreck of the Sea Venture in 1609 the islands also came to be known (although not exclusively) in England as the Somer or Summer Islands, further evidence that the composition of *The Tempest* predates the Bermuda pamphlets.

Some earlier editors considered Shakespeare's 'Bermoothes' in *The Tempest* to be a Spanish pronunciation because the islands were discovered by Juan de Bermudez. See Furness, Horace Howard, ed., *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, 6th ed., (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1892), Vol. 9, p. 275:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=fVpD7kX51KcC&pg=PA55&lpg=PA55&dq=%22Bermoothes%22+%22Spanish%22&source=bl&ots=lp98Kp7_DJ&sig=VCc0ZjTuf73X39ILM9djIkUdFSA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjexP23-KXNAhVq7oMKHTFA7QQ6AEIRjAJ#v=onepage&q=%22Bermoothes%22%20%22Spanish%22&f=false.

The first to make the suggestion appears to have been Sir Thomas Hanmer (1677–1746). See Hanmer, Thomas, *The Works of Shakespeare In Six Volumes*, (Oxford, 1744), p. 15 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=UtVBAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA15&lpg=PA15&dq=%22Hanmer%22+%22Bermoothes%22+%22pronunciation%22&source=bl&ots=xAskUN3Byf&sig=eF9ZQLb13tLcxSXwpNvACyNuO_U&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj_0JT6_KXNAhVq7oMKHT-OCjQQ6AEIMTAI#v=onepage&q=%22Hanmer%22%20%22Bermoothes%22%20%22pronunciation%22&f=false.

MYTH: *There was a London district called the 'Bermoothes' during Oxford's lifetime.*

There is no evidence of this. The first mention of a London district called the 'Bermoothes' is in *Bartholomew Fair* in 1614 (if indeed the reference in the play is to a London district, which is not entirely clear).

MYTH: *The 1604-1606 voyage of the Tiger is alluded to in Macbeth ('Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' Tiger')*.

The 1604-1606 voyage of the Tiger was to the East Indies, not to Aleppo. See the first person account of the voyage at:

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/kerr/vol07chap09sect11.html>.

The only recorded voyage of the Tiger to Aleppo was in 1583, a voyage with important trading consequences for England, backed by Lord Burghley and the Queen. See the *ODNB* article on Ralph Fitch (1550?-1611):

*Fitch was the first Englishman to make an extensive journey through India and south-east Asia. He travelled in 1583 with John Newberry, a merchant, John Story, a painter, and William Leeds, a jeweller, as far as Fatehpur Sikri, the court city of Akbar, the Mughal emperor (r. 1556–1605). From there he left his compatriots and sailed first down the Ganges and then to Bengal, Burma, and as far as Malacca, returning by way of Ceylon and Cochin. Fitch wrote an account of this journey, which was published by Richard Hakluyt in his 1598 edition of *The Principal Navigations ... of the English Nation*.*

Fitch's journey to Asia was part of an attempt to break Venetian and Portuguese control of the pepper and spice trade. In 1578 Richard Staper and Edward Osborne had provided the financial and William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the political backing for William Harborne to negotiate commercial privileges and establish a trade with the Ottoman empire. In 1581 this same group founded the Turkey Company. At the same time John Newberry, twice between 1578 and 1582, explored the commercial potential of the overland route, including the Euphrates valley, Armenia, and Persia. A similar motive to negotiate commercial privileges can be inferred for the journey of 1583 from the official letters of Elizabeth I which Newberry and Fitch were to present to the Mughal and Chinese emperors.

In February 1583 Fitch, Newberry, Story, Leeds, and two merchants, John Eldred and William Shales, left London on the merchant ship Tiger. From Aleppo it took them three weeks to reach Basrah

MYTH: *The witch's spell in Macbeth 'Weary sennights nine times nine/ Shall he dwindle, peak and pine' alludes to the 567-day duration of the 1604-1606 voyage of the Tiger to the East Indies.*

The duration of the 1604-1606 voyage of the Tiger to the East Indies (significantly *not* a voyage to Aleppo), which began on 5 December 1604, was either 570 days or 582 days, depending on whether it ended at Milford Haven in Wales on 27 June 1606 or at Portsmouth in England on 9 July 1606. The latter date is the one given for the voyage's end by the author of the first-person account ('The 9th of July, 1606, we came to anchor in the roads of Portsmouth, where all our company was dismissed, and here ended our voyage'). See:

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/kerr/vol07chap09sect11.html>.

References:

(1) Loomis, Edward Alleyn, 'Master of the Tiger', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 4, (Autumn, 1956), p. 457 at:

http://www.jstor.org/stable/2866386?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

(2) For a transcript of Loomis' article, see:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/humanities.lit.authors.shakespeare/NHOhqwnLTA>.

(3) Brooke, Nicholas, ed., *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 62 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=khVwAgAAQBAJ&pg=PA62&lpg=PA62&dq=%22The+master+of+the+Tiger%22+%22Loomis%22&source=bl&ots=bK0hJ4FzUa&sig=EU E-Og5G5jF0qG7GvMZemUVWuaY&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwid2NDSx5TNAhVYImMKHaiUCCEQ6AEIGzAA#v=onepage&q=%22The%20master%20of%20the%20Tiger%22%20%22Loomis%22&f=false>.

(4) For a calendar for the years 1604-1606 see:

<http://5ko.free.fr/en/year.php?y=1604>.

MYTH: *In 1596 Sir John Oldcastle's descendants were prominent courtiers, and one of them, Sir William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham, lived in the Blackfriars.*

Many modern sources assert that the Lord Cobham of Queen Elizabeth's day, William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham, was a direct descendant of Sir John Oldcastle (executed 14 December 1417). However a pedigree of the Cobham family from the time of Henry III to 1565 drawn up by Robert Glover (1543/4 – 10 April 1588), Somerset Herald, at the request of William Brooke (1527-1597), 10th Baron Cobham, establishes that, on the contrary, William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham, was a direct descendant of Joan de la Pole (d. 13 January 1434), Lady Cobham, by her *second* husband, Sir Reginald Braybrooke (d. 20 September 1405). Although Joan de la Pole did indeed marry Sir John Oldcastle as her fourth husband, she had no issue by him. Joan de la Pole (d. 13 January 1434) had, in fact, five husbands. She married firstly Sir Robert de Hemenhale (d. 25 September 1391); secondly Sir Reginald Braybrooke (d. 20 September 1405); thirdly Sir Nicholas Hauberk (d. 9 October 1407); fourthly Sir John Oldcastle (executed 25 [sic?] December 1417); and fifthly Sir John Harpenden (d. May 1438).

On the basis of the alleged descent of William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham, from Sir John Oldcastle, many modern sources claim that he found Shakespeare's portrayal of Oldcastle in *Henry IV* personally offensive, and forced Shakespeare to change the name of the character to Sir John Falstaff. However since Sir John Oldcastle was not an ancestor of William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham, and had only held the title Lord Cobham in right of his wife, Joan de la Pole, and only for a few years at that, and had been executed in 1417, a century and a half before Shakespeare's play, there is reason to question whether William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham, would have taken personal offense at Shakespeare's portrayal of Oldcastle.

The *ODNB* is among the sources which allege that William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham, took personal offence and forced Shakespeare to change the name of the character, but the *ODNB* goes no further than stating that Oldcastle was 'a previous holder of the title', rather than asserting that he was a direct ancestor of William Brooke, 10th Baron Cobham:

The perceived insult to a previous holder of his title led to protests by the tenth Baron Cobham, which in turn caused Oldcastle's name to be replaced by that of Falstaff (itself adapted from that of the fifteenth-century soldier Sir John Fastolf).

The *ODNB* article then offers a more plausible reason for the change in the name of the character from Oldcastle to Falstaff. Oldcastle, largely forgotten for more than a century after his death, had been brought to national prominence by the publication in 1563 of John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. It thus seems likely that it was the general public, and predominantly Elizabethans with Puritan leanings, who were offended by the depiction of a prominent Protestant martyr as the 'malign companion of Henry V's youth'. From the *ODNB*:

Protestant opinion must also have favoured the change, which in 2 Henry IV resulted in the epilogue's being extended to include a formal disclaimer, 'for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man'.

References:

(1) McKeen, David, *A Memory of Honour; The Life of William Brooke, Lord Cobham*, (Salzburg: Universitat Salzburg, 1986), 2 vols., pp. 5, 21, 291.

(2) Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. IV, pp. 124-5, 377-9.

(3) *ODNB* entry for Sir John Oldcastle.

(4) For the pedigree drawn up by Glover, see CP 225/1 on this website.

(5) Laoutaris, Chris, *Shakespeare and the Countess*, (London: Fig Tree, 2014), p. 231.

MYTH: The use of the past tense in Barksted's *Mirrha*, *The Mother Of Adonis* proves that Shakespeare was dead in 1607.

The use of the past tense in reference to Shakespeare in Barksted's *Mirrha* (1607) in the lines 'His song was worthie merrit, Shakspeare hee/ sung the faire blossome, thou the withered tree' can be interpreted in more than one way. It may imply that Shakespeare, the author of *Venus and Adonis* is dead. However, it may also be a mere acknowledgement of the fact that *Venus and Adonis* was written before Barksted's *Mirrha*.

References:

(1) Kathman, Dr. David and Terry Ross. "Barksted and Shakespeare", posted on the Shakespeare Authorship Page website at <http://www.clark.net/tross/ws/barksted.html>.