

Shake-speare's "Mr W.H.", the "Dark Lady" and the "Lovely Boy"¹

For two centuries an unfortunate misconception has bedevilled scholarly attempts to interpret the "Shake-speare" Sonnets, hindering progress and generating bitter argument. This fallacy is the totally unwarranted assumption that all of the Sonnets, apart from those addressed to the "Dark Lady", must be addressed to the same individual, "Mr W.H.", who must also necessarily be the same person as the "lovely boy" (Sonnet 126) and the "youth urged to marry" of Sonnets 1-17. It would of course be very convenient for literary investigators if all of these individuals turned out to be one and the same person, but unfortunately real life tends to be rather more complicated. The truth is that the Sonnets are in fact addressed to a number of individuals, often as "verse-letters".

In a previous article², I offered my own interpretation of the cryptic Dedication to the Shake-speare *Sonnets* and argued that their very belated publication, in early June of 1609, was linked to the recent departure of the Virginia Company's flagship, the Sea Venture, which was later wrecked on the island of Bermuda, an event which inspired the Shake-speare play *The Tempest*³. I have argued that the "Mr W.H." of the 1609 Dedication was in fact Christopher Marlowe's Patron, Sir Thomas Walsingham, whose name was encrypted in an elegant Rebus Cipher as "Mr WALL - HARP - HOUSES". The cryptic "Mr W.H" was thus shorthand for "Mr W.H.H."

Nevertheless, this does *not* mean that Thomas Walsingham was Marlowe's *only* Patron, simply that he was his *most important* Patron, and one to whom the poet owed an immeasurable debt of gratitude. The word "ONLIE" was incorporated in the 1609 Dedication primarily to provide the "O" of the encrypted word "HOUSES", and at the same time to acknowledge Walsingham's special status as the poet's dearest friend and protector - he was, to use A.D. Wraight's term, the "True Patron". Marlowe had previously been in the patronage of Sir Roger Manwood and the Earl of Derby (Lord Strange); also possibly the Earl of Southampton and others. It was Thomas Walsingham who had enabled Marlowe to escape from the Court of Star Chamber in 1593, thus saving him from execution on charges of Heresy.

Returning to the Shake-speare *Sonnets*: I agree with Rowse, Wraight and others that the first seventeen Sonnets are addressed to the young Earl of Southampton, and were almost certainly presented to him in October 1590 on the occasion of his 17th birthday. These Sonnets attempt to persuade the

¹ This is an updated version of an article originally published in two parts in Marlowe Society Newsletters #22 (<http://www.marlowe-society.org/pubs/newsltr/newsltr22.html>) and #23 (<http://www.marlowe-society.org/pubs/newsltr/newsltr23.html>).

² My article *The Cryptogram of 1609* in Marlowe Society Newsletter #21 (see <http://www.marlowe-society.org/pubs/newsltr/newsltr21.html>).

³ See my book *Shake-speare's Voyage to America*, <http://www.cappella-archiv.com>.

young Earl to marry, not least because he was the sole heir to the title. A number of other Sonnets may also be addressed to Southampton (e.g. 18, 19, 20), but this fact does not make him the "lovely boy", the poet's "better angel" (Sonnet 144) who was to become his love-rival, since we know that that person's first name was *Will* (Sonnets 135, 136 and 143). (For a number of reasons, William Herbert, later Earl of Pembroke, could not have been the recipient of the "marriage" Sonnets; for example, Sonnet 13 states "You *had* a father", Southampton's father having died in 1580, whereas Herbert's father did not die until 1601; also, unlike Southampton, Will was *not* the sole heir to his title, as he had a brother).

The majority of scholars agree that William Herbert cannot possibly be the "Mr W. H." of the 1609 Sonnets, because he had succeeded to his Earldom in 1601, and it would have been not only inappropriate but in fact extremely insulting to use the lowly title "Mr" in connection with an Earl. A secondary objection is that, as the Sonnets reveal, their author had "fallen out" with his former friend, his love-rival "Will", long before 1609; the many resentful quarrels between them had culminated in a final and permanent rift which is the subject of Sonnet 87: "Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing," etc.

It is true that Marlowe and Walsingham also had their quarrels - over the rival poet, for example - but ultimately the bond between these two men was too strong to be broken by misunderstandings or feelings of wounded pride - it was a friendship founded on immovable loyalty, for, above all, Marlowe knew that, after Deptford, he owed his life itself to Walsingham (this is the background to a number of Sonnets, but particularly Sonnet 26, "duty so great", etc). Even in the midst of their disagreements, the bond was still extremely strong, which is why Marlowe speaks of having passed "a hell of time" (Sonnet 120).

Among the earlier proposed candidates for "Mr W.H." was one William Hatcliffe, an identification originally put forward by the Shakespearean scholar Dr. Leslie Hotson, in his book *Mr W.H.* (London, 1965). While Hotson's erudition and his earlier discoveries are widely and deservedly admired, the majority of scholars have rejected his arguments concerning Hatcliffe, for reasons which are summarised below. Hotson recognised the 1609 Dedication as a Cryptogram and rearranged the lines of the Dedication in an attempt to demonstrate that the word "HATLIV" was encrypted in it. However, this thesis was not at all convincing; for one thing, Hotson gives a long list of variant spellings of the name "Hatcliffe", but *not one* includes a letter "V"!

More recently, Hotson's theory has been re-interpreted by the late A.D. Wraight in her books *The Story that the Sonnets Tell*, and *Shakespeare - New Evidence*⁴, alleging a link between Hatcliffe and Marlowe. I should make it clear at this point that I have the greatest admiration for Mrs Wraight's scholarly works, which have much influenced my own research; however, her

⁴ A.D. Wraight, *The Story that the Sonnets Tell* (Adam Hart, London, 1994) and *Shakespeare - New Evidence* (Adam Hart, London, 1996)

adoption of Hotson's theory, suggesting William Hatcliffe as "Mr W. H.", is the one point on which I must respectfully disagree.

Unfortunately, the alleged link between Marlowe and Hatcliffe is based on very slender evidence. Their years of study at Cambridge University do overlap (by four years), but they were at different Colleges and there is no evidence that they ever met. Furthermore, between 1584 and 1586 Marlowe was frequently absent from the University, particularly during the third and last terms of 1584-5 and the third term of 1585-6.⁵

The main objections to Hatcliffe's candidacy may be summarised as follows:

1. His age - Hatcliffe was only four and a half years younger than Marlowe (or, for that matter, William Shakespeare, who was born in the same year). To my mind, it is unlikely that a 19-year-old young man would address a 15-year old adolescent youth as "my lovely boy". This affectionate epithet has, in fact, a paternal or avuncular ring to it, implying a considerable difference in age.
2. His social position - although of good family, Hatcliffe was *not* an aristocrat, whereas there are strong indications in the Sonnets that the "lovely boy" was of a high social position.
3. The obscurity and mundane character of his later life (he had a respectable if undramatic career as a country solicitor).

A. D. Wraight herself admitted to having had serious doubts about William Hatcliffe as "Mr W.H."⁶; she also insisted (rightly) that Thomas Walsingham was the "True Patron".

I will shortly set out a number of arguments to demonstrate that the young William Herbert is a much better candidate for the "lovely boy" than Hatcliffe. Herbert was born in 1580 and became Earl of Pembroke at the age of 21. I hope also to show that A. L. Rowse's candidate for the "Dark Lady", Emilia Lanier, is far more likely than Hotson's candidate, the harlot Lucy Morgan, known as "Lucy Negro" or "Black Luce".

"Black Luce"

After leaving Cambridge, William Hatcliffe went to London and entered Gray's Inn to study Law. Leslie Hotson discovered that in December 1587 Hatcliffe was elected to act as Gray's Inn's "Prince of Purpoule", who by tradition ruled over a mock "Court" during the 12 days of Christmas, a festival known as the "Gesta Grayorum".

⁵ A.D. Wraight, *In Search of Christopher Marlowe* (MacDonald & Co., 1965) - p.70.

⁶ A.D. Wraight, *Shakespeare - New Evidence* - p.19.

"Black Luce" is known to have taken part in the "Gesta Grayorum" of 1594, a full seven years later, but Hotson assumes, without any evidence, that she must also have been present during the 1587 festivities.

Hotson and A. D. Wraight interpret the word "black" as a reference either to Luce Morgan's black hair or to her profession as a prostitute; as regards skin colouration, there is never any suggestion that she was anything other than "white", i.e. of Anglo-Saxon or Celtic (perhaps Welsh) extraction. Both Hotson and Wraight agree that in this context, the term "Negro" or "black" "has no ethnic connotation".⁷ It would certainly have been mentioned if "Black Luce" had been of a "swarthy" or "Mediterranean" complexion, as most people regarded this as a serious defect. Her eye-colour is unknown, although both Hotson and Wraight make the unwarranted assumption that she was "black-eyed".

Since we do not know the date of Luce Morgan's marriage, we cannot say that broken "bed-vows" would have any relevance to her ("In act thy bed-vow broke", Sonnet 152); but in any case, since "Black Luce" was a notorious courtesan, it seems unlikely that broken marriage vows, or acts of infidelity, would be a source of guilt for her.

Emilia Lanier's promiscuity was more discreetly practised, and it might be inferred from her later devotional poems that there was a latent religious aspect to her personality.

As regards the Dark Lady's musical abilities (Sonnet 128), in the case of "Black Luce" there is absolutely no evidence of any musical accomplishment, whereas Emilia Lanier's musical gifts were very well known, indeed her skill at playing the virginals (Sonnet 128) was so exceptional that she had played for the Queen herself. As we will see, Emilia moved in very exalted circles at Court.

A Lady of Dark Complexion

*Then will I swear beauty herself is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.*

Sonnet 132

"The Lily and the Rose - medieval emblems of romantic chivalry - represented the Elizabethan idea of a perfect complexion".⁸

Shake-speare's Dark Lady was evidently a great beauty, but she was of *dark complexion*, a feature which was the direct opposite of the fashion of the time (hence "a woman colour'd ill", Sonnet 144). Women went to extreme lengths to lighten their features to produce as pale an appearance as possible, using

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ *The Past All Around Us* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1979)

lead-based compounds which were extremely harmful; this strange historical phenomenon is of course well known (see Appendix 1).

This word "complexion" is therefore an important clue to identifying the "Dark Lady"; while the word can occasionally mean "temperament", in Elizabethan English it more often means "colour" or, more specifically, "skin colour" - as it does today. The meaning is usually clear from the context: in Sonnet 132, it is obvious that "complexion" means "skin colour", and numerous examples of this usage may be given from Shake-speare's works:

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd

Sonnet 18

the swart complexion'd night

Sonnet 28

*What see you in those papers, that you lose
So much complexion⁹*

Henry V - II.ii.72

Antipholus: *What complexion is she of?*

Dromio: *Swart, like my shoe*

The Comedy of Errors - III.ii.1001

Prince of Morocco:

*Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun*

The Merchant of Venice - II.i.1-2

turn thy complexion (i.e. change colour)

Othello - IV.ii.61

*Men judge by the complexion (i.e. colour) of the skie
The state and inclination of the day.*

Richard II - III.ii.194

As regards the fashion of the time, these are to be compared with the following:

- In *Twelfth Night*, speaking with Duke Orsino about the "complexion" of "her father's daughter" (i.e. herself), Viola mentions "her damask cheek": this is the conventional Elizabethan image of female beauty, a bold contrast of red (rouge) and white.

⁹ This is the moment when the traitors' faces turn pale with fear.

- As also in *The Taming of the Shrew*: "Such war of white and red within her cheeks" (IV.v.30) and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, the besotted Don Armado declares: "My love is most immaculate white and red" (I.ii.87).
- Compare also "too brown for a fair praise" (*Much Ado about Nothing* - I.i.162) and "Your mistresses dare never come in rain / For fear their colours should be wash'd away" (*Love's Labour's Lost* - IV.iii.266) - the entire scene is relevant: for a note on the dark-complexioned Rosaline in this play, see Appendix 2).

Emilia Lanier (1568/9-1645)

The reader will doubtless have anticipated the conclusion to be drawn from this: of all of the candidates for the "Dark Lady", Emilia Lanier is the only one who is likely to have had a dark or "swarthy" Mediterranean complexion, since she was of part Italian, part Jewish ancestry (also part-Moorish, according to some scholars, e.g. Lasocki and Prior).

Much of what we know about Emilia comes from the diaries and notes of the astrologer and "quack" physician Simon Forman, who was consulted by her on several occasions from 1597 onwards. She was the daughter of Giovanni Baptista Bassano, an Italian Court musician, and was brought up in the household of the Countess of Kent, who took her to London and presented her to the Queen. Emilia found much favour at Court, and received lavish gifts of jewels and money from the Queen; subsequently she became the mistress of the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon, who was a cousin of the Queen and a Privy Counsellor. Carey's son George was also a Privy Counsellor and, significantly, a member of Raleigh's "School of Night", providing a further connection with Marlowe. The Lord Chamberlain's Men performed many of the "Shake-speare" plays.

When Emilia became pregnant by the Lord Chamberlain in 1592, she was "married off" to a French Court musician named Alphonse Lanier, whom she describes (scornfully) as a "minstrel". This marriage brought her into another musical family, and undoubtedly instruments such as the virginals would have been in their house. As a married woman, Emilia certainly had a "bed-vow" to keep (Sonnet 152).

Emilia Lanier is known to have been promiscuous; she allowed Forman sexual favours, but later he writes: "She was a whore and dealt evil with me after."

In Sonnet 131, the Dark Lady is described as "cruel" and "tyrannous"; this too matches Emilia's superior and haughty attitude.

It is interesting that, according to A. L. Rowse, Emilia told Simon Forman that "she was very brown"¹⁰ in youth" - this may indicate that she asked him for

¹⁰ The reading "brown" in Forman's notes has been disputed, as possibly "brave".

cosmetics or drugs to artificially lighten her appearance. There were many such concoctions on offer, including "Aurum Potabile" (a drink containing gold and ground pearls); facial creams made with pearl-powder; and "cullis" potions.

William Herbert (1580 -1630)

We should now briefly consider how William Herbert qualifies as the "lovely boy" of the Sonnets and as the author's love-rival.

Herbert's character was certainly full of contradictions. Francis Bacon described him as "a learned and most noble Patron of Learning", but added that he was "for his person not effectual". It is far from clear what Bacon might have meant by that phrase - perhaps "feckless", "unproductive", or "easily led"?

Herbert was to become the wealthiest man in England; H. C. Wilkinson wrote¹¹ that "he inherited great wealth, and his marriage brought him even more ... with some £22, 000 a year, he was the richest peer in England", but he also quotes Clarendon's disapproving comment: "but all served not his expense" (£22,000 is equivalent to about 10 million pounds per annum today).

Francis Bacon calls William Herbert "the most universally beloved and esteemed of any man of that age".¹² Herbert's popularity certainly matches the "lovely boy" of the Sonnets: (e.g. Sonnet 70):

*If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe. [i.e. own]*

Sonnet 70

(A cynic might suggest that the youth's universal "popularity" was not entirely unrelated to his vast wealth.)

In the *Sonnets*, the "lovely boy" is frequently reprimanded for "lasciviousness" (e.g. 95, 96); this is to be compared with the Earl of Clarendon's comment that Herbert was "immoderately given up to women", indulging in "pleasures of all kinds, almost in all excesses".¹³ Herbert's numerous love-affairs are well documented; in 1601 he was banished from the Court and imprisoned over his affair with Mary Fitton, one of the Queen's Maids of Honour. He is also known to have had two illegitimate children by Mary Wroth. Due to his status as an Earl-to-be, and perhaps his personal charisma, Will Herbert had a magnetic attraction, particularly for women; he did not marry until 1604.

There are many indications in the Sonnets that "Shake-speare"s "lovely boy" was of noble birth (e.g. Sonnet 95: "O what a mansion have those vices got" and "the beauty of thy budding name"). When the final breach came and the

¹¹ H.C. Wilkinson, *The Adventurers of Bermuda* (Oxford, 1958).

¹² *Ibid* - p.85.

¹³ *Dictionary of National Biography*.

poet ended the friendship, he did so with acerbic reference to the younger man's aristocratic status and his wealth:

*Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou knowst thine estimate*

*The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing,
My bonds in thee are all determinate.*

When did Marlowe first meet William Herbert ?

The first point to note is the close family link between the Herberts and the Walsinghams. Herbert's uncle was the universally-admired Sir Philip Sidney, poet soldier and courtier, the brother of Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke. Sidney was to die heroically at the battle of Zutphen in September 1586, at which time Will was only six years old; the dead poet was honoured with a State Funeral in February 1587. Back in 1583, Sidney had married Frances Walsingham, only daughter of the Queen's spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham, by which marriage Lady Frances had become young William's aunt.

Although Sir Philip Sidney owned a house at Penshurst in Kent, the couple were in residence for long periods at Sir Francis Walsingham's house in London. Since Christopher Marlowe was in Francis Walsingham's direct employment from 1585,¹⁴ it is virtually certain that he met Walsingham's daughter Frances at that time, as well as her husband Sir Philip. After her husband's death, Frances was in residence there until 1590, so Marlowe could well have met the young Will Herbert on numerous occasions in the late 1580s when the boy was visiting his aunt.

For young Will, the loss of his celebrated uncle in the autumn of 1586 must have been deeply traumatic. A few months later, however, in the summer of 1587, an equally flamboyant and gifted poet comes onto the London scene - Marlowe has his moment of glory with the brilliant success of his play *Tamburlaine the Great*. This man is no mere "player", but a highly popular and successful playwright, with a Patron in the elevated Walsingham family. In these circumstances, it would be very natural for Will to begin to regard the eminent playwright as his new "mentor", while Marlowe, with an age gap of 16 years, could appropriately call William "my lovely boy", like a respected uncle.

Incidentally, none of the above could have any application to William Shakespeare of Stratford, since there is no evidence of him being in London before December of 1594, and furthermore, as a humble "player", he did not move in such elevated circles as Marlowe evidently did.

Christopher Marlowe has further known links to the Herbert family. The Earl of Pembroke's Men performed his *Edward II* in 1592; Will Herbert's mother, the Countess of Pembroke, was a patroness of poets, among whom was

¹⁴ A.D. Wright, *In Search of Christopher Marlowe* (Adam Hart, 1965) - pp.69ff.

Marlowe's friend Thomas Watson, the author of *Amyntae Gaudia*. After Watson's death in 1592, Marlowe provided for that work an eloquent Dedication to the Countess, which hints at hopes of future patronage. There is also the intriguing story of Lady Herbert's letter of 1603 (now lost) to her son, stating strangely: "We have the man Shakespeare with us".

Emilia's Cunning Scheme

What was Emilia's purpose in consulting an astrologer like Forman, and what elaborate scheme was she hatching? Extraordinary as it may seem, from Forman's notes it appears that she was hoping to entrap a wealthy aristocratic husband by supernatural means, i.e. the use of spells, charms, "limbecks", etc (at that time, several other women were consulting Forman for the same ends). The concept of "love-potions" seems strange to a rational 21st century mind, but in fact this was one of Forman's most popular services, and it was evidently a highly lucrative line of business. The abilities of these necromancers were highly regarded, for all the light-hearted mischief of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; alongside the "love potions" and charms, more malevolent concoctions could be purchased: "anti-love" potions, designed to destroy existing liaisons and to make their victim fall "out of" love or become impotent.¹⁵

This is a subject that seems to somewhat preoccupy our author "Shakespeare", suggesting personal experience: whether treated humorously, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or more seriously, as in *Othello*. In that play, Desdemona's father, Brabantio, accuses Othello of using the "black arts" to win his daughter's love: "... thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms" (I.ii.73), using "mixtures powerful o'er the blood, or with some dram conjur'd to this effect" (I.iii.104-5); to which, in answer, Othello protests that he has used no "drugs... charms... conjurations" or "mighty magic" (I.iii.91-3), insisting that "She lov'd me for the dangers I had passed: And I lov'd her that she did pity them. This only is the witchcraft I have us'd" (I.iii.167-9).

One cannot be certain when William Herbert first caught Emilia's eye as a prospective husband, but I would suggest that it was soon after the newly-knighted Earl-to-be returned from Essex's highly successful Cadiz expedition, doubtless exulting in his dashing military exploits - the returning fleet reached home ports in early August of 1596, having left England in June (it is notable, in this connection, that Emilia's husband Alphonse was also in the service of the Earl of Essex in the mid-1590s, as was Marlowe, as "Monsieur Le Doux", according to the Anthony Bacon Papers.¹⁶

In the spring of 1597, preparations were under way to send another fleet against the Spanish treasure-galleons, the "Islands Voyage" to the Azores, again under the command of the Earl of Essex and Sir Walter Raleigh;

¹⁵ Sonnet 119 mentions "limbecks [=alembics] foul as hell within"

¹⁶ See Wraight, *Shakespeare - New Evidence - op.cit.*

Alphonse Lanier joined this expedition in June, and was away for several weeks. Presumably her husband's long absence on the voyage made matters less complicated for Emilia in the pursuit of her affairs.

Emilia's first recorded consultation with Simon Forman took place on the 17th May 1597. After her second consultation, in early June of 1597, Forman makes the following significant comment in his notes: "*She is high-minded, she hath something in her mind she would have done for her*" ["high-minded" probably implies "ambitious" or "superior", an allusion to Emilia's wish to re-ascend the social ladder].

After the Azores Fleet had sailed, she again consulted Forman on the 16th June 1597, wanting to know what the future might hold for her absent husband, i.e. would he return or be killed. It looks very much as if ambitious Emilia was hoping that her extravagant (and inconvenient) husband would catch a bullet! Unfortunately Alphonse's continuing existence had become a serious obstacle to her plans.

Then in August there is a fourth Consultation: "A certain gentlewoman - Emilia Lanier - whose husband was gone to sea with the Earl of Essex - *was desirous to know....whether she should be a lady or no*. She hath been much favoured of her Majesty and of many noblemen and has great gifts and been made much of - a nobleman that is dead hath loved her well and kept her".¹⁷ There was only one way for Emilia to become a "Lady", and that was to marry a person of high rank, preferably an Earl, which would then make her a Countess.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that in April of 1597, Herbert "was persuading his father to allow him to live in London" - to be closer to Emilia? Herbert was now aged 17. In August of that year, his parents, perhaps worrying about their son's amorous adventures, wrote to Lord Burghley about the proposed marriage to Burghley's grand-daughter Bridget De Vere, to whom Herbert was officially engaged. The next development, according to the *D.N.B.*, was Will's permanent move to London in the spring of 1598.

By 1600 Forman was becoming tired of Emilia's demands, but he made a note to investigate "Lanier's tales of invoking spirits"; had she succeeded in summoning up an "incubus"? He also wanted to establish "whether she intendeth any more villainy". Had Emilia by this time, in her desperation to achieve her purpose, tried to invoke a "spirit", an "incubus" or "succubus", using this "spirit" to entrap her prey ?

As regards Emilia's love-affair with the author of the Sonnets, this probably began in the mid-1590s, although it is possible that Marlowe had met her during the 1580s. A. D. Wright's admirable exposition of the Anthony Bacon Papers has shown that Marlowe (as "Le Doux") was in residence with the family of Sir John Harington at Burley in Rutland from October 1595 to

¹⁷ Judith Cook, *Dr. Simon Forman* (Vintage, 2002) - p.107.

February 1596.¹⁸ The Harington family was related to the Sidneys; William Herbert was later to stay with Sir John Harington at Exton over the Christmas of 1602,¹⁹ while Sir John's daughter Lucy, the Countess of Bedford, represented herself as a close friend of William Herbert.

In view of the above, I ask the reader to consider an interesting hypothesis that seems to fit all the circumstances - was "Dark Lady" Emilia among the musical entourage providing entertainment at Burley over the Christmas season of 1595-6, when "Le Doux", i.e. Marlowe, was staying there? We know that plays were performed there at that time, including his own *Titus Andronicus*. According to Jacques Petit no expense was spared, for he describes the Earl's mansion as "a Court in terms of expense and order".²⁰ If Emilia was present with her son Henry, born shamefully "out of wedlock", was this the time when Marlowe began to care for her, feeling compassion for her situation, remembering also her humiliating enforced marriage of 1592? In Sonnet 150 the poet recalled how "thy unworthiness raised love in me". At present this is hypothesis, but these notes are offered as a basis for further research.²¹

Conclusion

Over the course of many years, a genuine affection and deeply-felt friendship had developed between the author of the Sonnets and the "lovely boy"; one can understand how this friendship later turned sour, with the youth ignoring the older man's advice and later "stealing" his mistress, an act which clearly caused the poet profound anguish. William Herbert, being in his late teens in the late 1590s, was at exactly the right age to qualify as the formerly angelic "fair youth" who became ensnared and corrupted by this beautiful temptress, the unconventional "Dark Lady" of the Sonnets. This story is no mere "literary exercise", as some have suggested; these are real people, and the heart-ache so evident in the Sonnets was the consequence of real relationships and events.

Many will agree that the evidence concerning "Monsieur Le Doux", discovered among the Anthony Bacon Papers, is of the greatest significance, and I believe that the letters and the Book-List constitute proof not only of Marlowe's survival of the Deptford "murder", but also of his identity as "Shakespeare". We owe much to the scholarship and achievements of the late A. D. Wraight, but in my view it is regrettable that the documentary evidence concerning "Monsieur Le Doux" was presented in conjunction with Leslie Hotson's implausible theory about William Hatcliffe, which in any case has no bearing on the new evidence.

© C.W.H. Gamble 2011

¹⁸ Wraight, *Shakespeare - New Evidence*.

¹⁹ McClure, Norman Egbert, ed. *Letters*, by John Chamberlain (London: Greenwood Press, 1979) - p.171.

²⁰ Wraight, *Shakespeare - New Evidence* - p.94.

²¹ For the later career of "Monsieur Le Doux", see my article *The French Connection: New Leads on Monsieur Le Doux* in the Marlowe Society Online Research Journal #6 (<http://www.marlowe-society.org/pubs/journal/journal06.html>).

Appendix 1: The Use of Cosmetics, Potions etc, to whiten the Complexion

(A) *The Past All Around Us*²²

The Lily and the Rose - medieval emblems of romantic chivalry - represented the Elizabethan idea of a perfect complexion.

Influenced by the women of Renaissance Italy, the Elizabethans were the first to make great use of cosmetics in England, particularly in London and at Court. They used mainly white powder, rouge and lip colouring.

The Queen and her maids-of-honour....would first cover their faces with white powder made from lead. Although this dried the skin, turned hair snow-white and poisoned the system, it remained the chief cosmetic base for many years.

Cheeks were rouged with red ochre or a red dye made from cinnabar (mercuric sulphide) - also dangerous to the user. Lip colouring was made from a mixture of cochineal, egg-white, milk of green figs, alum and gum arabic. This was mixed into a paste with powdered Plaster-of-Paris or ground alabaster, rolled into a crayon, then dried in the sun to make a lip pencil.

To prevent make-up rubbing off, it was given a protective glaze of egg white. Out of doors, ladies wore a mask - held by a button between the teeth - to guard against sun-tan spoiling their milky-white complexions. Hands were kept lily-white by wearing gloves. A high, broad expanse of white forehead was considered most desirable, and eyebrows and low-growing hair were carefully plucked. Queen Elizabeth even painted artificial veins on her brow to give the impression of a pale, translucent skin. At night, ladies tied a cloth round the forehead to prevent the brow wrinkling.

(B) *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem*

In *Christ's Teares over Jerusalem* (1593), Thomas Nashe attacks women who "diet their faces":

Why dye they and diet their faces with so many drugs as they do, as it were to correct God's workmanship ... why tip they their tongues with aurum potable? ... they have their broths and their cullises, with pearl and gold sodden [boiled] in them.

Nashe goes on to complain that "...with painting and physicing thy visage thou so deformedst it ..." and writes of "her counterfeit red and white". This may be compared also with a remark in *Hamlet*:

Let her paint an inch thick, to this favour [appearance] she must come.

Hamlet - V.I.214

²² *The Past All Around Us*, (Hodder and Stoughton, 1979) - p.31.

Appendix 2: The Beautiful, but Dark-Complexioned, Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost*

Among the many curious features of *Love's Labour's Lost*, with its autobiographical elements, are the passages celebrating (or mocking) the physical appearance of Berowne's beloved Rosaline, the "Dark Lady" of this play.

Owing to certain variations and changes in the text, the depiction of "the heavenly Rosaline" has sometimes been held to be contradictory, but a careful analysis of the difficult passages confirms the immediate impression received, i.e. that this lady-in-waiting of the Princess of France is clearly portrayed as having a very dark complexion:

King: *By heaven, thy love is black as ebony.*

Berowne: *Is ebony like her? O wood divine!
A wife of such wood were felicity.
O who can give an oath? Where is a book?
That I may swear beauty doth beauty lack,
If that she learn not of her eye to look.
No face is fair that is not full so black.*

Berowne continues as follows:

Berowne: *O, if in black my lady's brows be deckt,
It mourns that painting and usurping hair
Should ravish doters with a false aspect;
And therefore is she born to make black fair.
Her favour²³ turns the fashion of the days;
For native blood is counted painting now;
And therefore red that would avoid dispraise
Paints itself black, to imitate her brow.*

Dumaine: *To look like her are chimney-sweepers black.*

Longaville: *And since her time are colliers counted bright.*

King: *And Ethiopes of their sweet complexion crack. [boast].*

Dumaine: *Dark needs no candles now, for dark is light.*

Berowne: *Your mistresses dare never come in rain
For fear their colours should be washed away.*

King: *'Twere good yours did; for, sir, to tell you plain,
I'll find a fairer face not wash't today.*

²³ I.e. appearance

This is all very clear: Rosaline is dark-complexioned. The OED confirms that the plural "brows" denotes the forehead ("Brow" sb., 4 & 5), and by extension the face:

*Therefore my mistress' brows are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, while they mourners seem*

Sonnet 127

while the word "brow" (as in "to imitate her brow") means "face", as it often does in Shake-speare (compare, for example, *1 Henry IV* - IV.iii.83; *Macbeth* IV.iii.23; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* V.I.10; and *Hamlet* I.ii.4: "one brow of woe").

Now, an apparent problem arises in Act III of *Love's Labour's Lost*, where Berowne, speaking of Rosaline, says that he is in love with:

*...the worst of all,
A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
With two pitch balls stuck in her face for eyes.*

The description of Rosaline's eyes as "pitch balls" is not as uncomplimentary as it might seem; Berowne's love-stricken phrase recalls the beautiful black eyes of Shake-speare's Dark Lady which are so memorably praised in the *Sonnets* (especially 132 and 127). And there is more than a hint of bewitchment here, of the kind of "love-magic" which Emilia Lanier was actually trying to effect, with the assistance of Simon Forman.

The superficial difficulty with "whitely" is explained variously by commentators; the most likely explanation is that this is a printer's error for "wightly" meaning "energetic" (OED), "active, nimble" (C. T. Onions' *Shakespeare Glossary*, following the suggestion of Aldis Wright). This interpretation makes much better sense of "a wightly wanton".

"Brow", as we have seen, means "face" in this context. "Velvet" has connotations of darker colours; this fabric, made from silk, was very expensive in Elizabethan times, and the most sought-after colours were dark brown, dark red and black (the *O.E.D.* gives the phrase "velvet black", dating it to 1588).

Thus the depiction of Rosaline in *Love's Labour's Lost* confirms the following:

1. that in Elizabethan eyes, a dark complexion was seen as very unattractive, especially in a woman; and
2. that the author of this play was more open-minded, reflecting his own love for his "Dark Lady", Emilia Lanier; in the person of Rosaline, he celebrates the natural beauty of a dark complexion. At the same time, he attacks the artificiality of the prevailing fashion and the practise of "painting" with cosmetics.