

## A Wedding Joust in Trebizond: *Commedia Erudita* and Sinister Politics in 1575

by W. Ron Hess, assisted by Jan Scheffer, A. Colin Wright and Concetta Thibideaux

### I. Introduction

Thanks to Cotticelli et al.<sup>1</sup> we have a 2008 translation of Andrea Perrucci's *Dell'Arte rappresentativa, premeditata ed all'improvviso* (originally published in 1699 in Naples), featuring parallel columns, on one side the original Italian (often archaic) and on the other a quite competent English translation. This is an invaluable treatise on the arts of acting and rhetoric which all Oxfordians should consider reading.

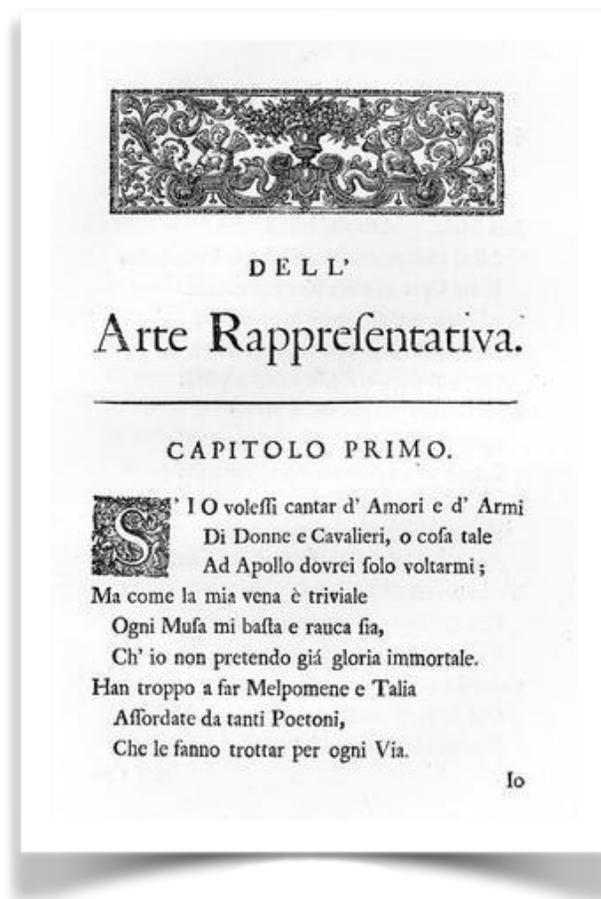
Oxfordians will recognize the original Italian of the Perrucci book as having (on pp. 137-142) the text noted in 1956 by Julia Cooley Altrocchi,<sup>2</sup> where she found that a six-page "Tirata Dell Giostra" (tirade or rant about the Joust or Tournament) had as a major character one "Elmond Milord of Oxford" in a seemingly fantastical array of jousting knights and amazons. The "Tirata" was an example Perrucci had found of the types of learned expositions often used for comic effect by Italian actors performing the role of "Il Dottore" (the Professor), a pedantic self-important stock character who declaims breathlessly for an hour or more, comically exasperating the other characters in the skit, who improvise in the background with demonstrations of all sorts (such as intense interest, grudging tolerance, utter boredom, spoofery, while acting out what was narrated, with "Dottore" comically demonstrating prodigious memory and absurd tale-telling). It would be nice to someday see a reconstruction of the "Tirata" on stage with gorgeous props and a cast of about twenty.

Yet, as accurate as the Cotticelli translation of Perrucci is, at least for the "Tirata" the translators overlooked, or decided not to address, hidden subtext. This is because the "Tirata" has constantly changing available translations due to changed spelling, truncated words, hidden myth and lore, etc. To allow for a better understanding of that often sinister subtext, an alternate "Tirata" translation and commentary is given below.

But first, let's examine whether or not the "Tirata" is an example of *commedia dell'arte*. Getting that question right will prove important for real understanding of the Italian sources of Shakespeare's comedies.

### II. *Commedia erudita*, not *dell'arte*

Shakespeare's plays have several "play within a play" examples of "palace dramas," such as *Hamlet* Q2, II.ii, "The Murder of Gonzago," and *Love's Labour's Lost*, V.ii, "Mask of the Nine Worthies" (one could offer other examples, such as the "Muscovite" masque and the "Muscovite" interrogation of Parolles in *All's Well*, IV.i & V.ii, both of which include *dell'arte* gibberish). The examples are truncated: while watching "Gonzago" the King of Denmark betrays his guilt by a violent reaction and exit, a prelude to even greater violence; in "Worthies"



the noble audience hoots down Holofernes by deliberately confusing his character of Judas Maccabeas for Judas Iscariot. In "Gonzago" we have a supposedly lost play based on the 1538 murder of a Duke of Urbino,<sup>3</sup> to which Prince Hamlet adds a few lines, thus showing that stock scripts could be modified as desired for Court performances. The "Worthies" play was entirely impromptu, albeit prerehearsed and based on a rich medieval literature of various combinations of "nine worthies."<sup>4</sup> In the "Worthies" nobles were acting in a skit to entertain fellow nobles, which was possible but unlikely in "Gonzago," because the latter was too political in its subject (let lowlife actors take the blame!). No women were involved in either play. Even though there was a "female" role in "Gonzago," the earlier discussions between Prince Hamlet and the players involved a boy whose chin was beginning to show hair and whose voice was soon to crack, limiting his usefulness for playing female roles. But we know that in Shakespeare's time there were Masques at Court which involved courtier men and women taking roles, some involving members of the family of the 17th Earl of Oxford.<sup>5</sup>

Commedia dell'arte was a largely unscripted, improvisational type of comedy whose writers were generally the troupe managers; the first collection of dell'arte scripts (or actually sketches, since they were just brief summaries of simple and repetitive plot lines) appeared in 1611 in Flaminio Scala's *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* book, much too late to have influenced Shakespeare. "Commedia dell'arte" didn't even exist as a name until the 1670s, when it was coined by a French critic. Which explains Perrucci's use of it in 1699, even though his own works were largely "palace comedies," or "commedia erudita," prepared for the King of Naples.

By contrast, commedia erudita was the premier comedy tradition from late medieval to late Renaissance times, typically written by authors who were also noted poets (e.g., Marsilio Ficino, Pietro Bembo, Ludovico Ariosto, Niccolo Macchiavelli, Baldassare Castiglione, the Intronati [a group of Siena nobles who wrote *The Deceived*], Pietro Aretino, Ruzante, Giambattista Guarini, Giambattista Della Porta, Giordano Bruno, etc.). Derived from translations into Italian of ancient Greek and Roman comedies, it evolved to original compositions, and later was adapted by French and other writers. Shakespeare directly or indirectly benefited from those writers and the Italians and French who adapted from them but, we argue, not from the commedia dell'arte tradition.<sup>6</sup>

In Table 1 below, we outline the attributes of "erudita," "dell'arte," and the "Tirata," and suggest that for the most part, both the "Tirata" and Shakespeare's

sources for comedy were principally from "erudita," and rarely from "dell'Arte."

Shakespeare's comic inspiration could not have been "dell'arte," because "dell'arte" was well on its way to dispensing with the need for dialogue; as we all know, Shakespeare dearly loved his dialogues. Although the "Tirata" as now received was a monologue, or rant, by the Il Dottore character, there may have been room for witty impromptu utterances by any of the jousters (or the imperials), particularly as the gifts were being distributed. If we're right that the "Tirata" was a 1575 product, it may serve as an interesting artifact of transition between the quite wordy comedies of "commedia erudita" before that time and the future "commedia dell'arte" skits of Scala in 1611.

### III. Exposition on The "Tirata dell Giostra" (Tirade of the Joust)

As noted, we believe there's much more to the "Tirata" than a faithful translation reveals. We provide a different translation of the "Tirata" (the Appendix below), which is accompanied by a sweeping discussion about the vast landscape of European-Mediterranean politics, geography, and "revenge motives" from c. 1453 to c. 1575. It was far more than mere fantasy.

The "Tirata" was almost certainly a relic of an actual event: the challenge to the world to engage in a joust, made by the 17th Earl of Oxford, in the summer of 1575, as reported in Edward Webbe's *Travels* (1590). That

**Table 1 – Time frame: 15th to 17th centuries**

Keys to the answers:

Yes = Almost Always

No = Hardly Ever

Tr = Transactional

#### Attributes

	<u>Erudita</u>	<u>Dell'arte</u>	<u>Tirata</u>	<u>Sh's Comedies</u>
Improvisational (sketchy scripts)	Tr	Yes	No	No
Noble, well-educated audiences	Yes	Tr	Yes	Yes <sup>7</sup>
Acted in plazas, streets, & public venues	No	Yes	?	Yes <sup>8</sup>
Often has "Il Dottore" character	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>9</sup>
Often has "Miles Gloriosus" character	Yes	Yes	Tr <sup>10</sup>	Yes
Authors were well-known, published poets	Yes	No	? <sup>11</sup>	Yes
Authors were often nobles themselves	Yes	No	?	? <sup>12</sup>
Often had women or girls in female roles	No	Yes	? <sup>13</sup>	No
Often "went on the road" in Italy	Yes	Yes	?	No
Seasonally traveled abroad	Tr	Yes	?	No <sup>14</sup>
Occasionally traveled to England	Likely <sup>15</sup>	Tr	?	Yes
Over time, dialogues gave way to gibberish	No	Yes	No <sup>16</sup>	No

challenge was issued in Palermo, the administrative capital of Spanish Sicily. As it so happens, in the summer of 1575 in Palermo there was a minor Spanish officer named Miguel Cervantes who had served in 1571 in the great Battle of Lepanto, in which the Pope's "Holy League" of Spain, Venice, the Empire, and Tuscany had gathered an armada under command of Don Juan "of Austria," the half-brother of Spain's King Philip II. We contend that in 1575, after issuing his challenge, Oxford had been "escorted" to the Neapolitan palatial headquarters of Don Juan, from which Juan had, since 1574, been preparing for another assault on the Ottoman Empire, only to be frustrated by Philip II's indecision about committing his forces so far away from Spain. Philip was equally hesitant about committing forces to a quixotic mission to free Mary Stuart, then captive in England, so that she could seize the English throne, particularly since Philip had aspirations for that throne himself (his 1554-58 marriage to Mary Tudor solidified the Spanish claim to the English throne, which derived from the first marriage of John of Gaunt to a Castilian Princess, whereas the Tudor lineage derived from an originally bastard Beaufort line from Gaunt's afterthought marriage to his mistress).

First, let's have a few teasers to show how the "Tirata" is far more complex than it appears. Let's begin with this assertion:

From 1521 to 1559 "something" was "rotten in Denmark," and a ghost of an Imperial dream of a united Europe strode the continent, while a living ghost was condemned in a tower near Elsinore and "reformers" were arriving from Wittenberg to overthrow the "rightful order" (does this sound familiar?).<sup>17</sup>

As we grapple with that assertion, let's address these questions in a 1575 time frame (look to the endnotes for answers):

1. Who was meant to be connoted by the "infant" Prince of Denmark, whose "destiny" might have been to "avenge" that ghost near Elsinore?<sup>18</sup>
2. Who was meant to be connoted by "The Emperor of Trebizond?"<sup>19</sup>
3. Who were to be connoted by "Doralba Princess of Dacia" and "Ernelinda Great Czarina of Muscovy" (hint, both of their analogues were named "Elizabeth")?<sup>20</sup>



### Appendix: Translation of the Oxford-related *Tirata dell Giostra* (Tirade about the Joust)

by W. Ron Hess, with A. Colin Wright and Concetta Thibideaux

This 2005 sometimes too-literal translation isn't the same as that offered in Cotticelli et al. (137-142).<sup>21</sup> It's abstracted from the Appendix H to my unpublished Vol. III of *The Dark Side of Shakespeare*, which is essentially being published as separate articles henceforth.

Oxfordians will recognize the "Tirata" as what Julia Altrocchi introduced to us in 1956, with the 17th Earl of Oxford as a jousting contestant in the Court of the "Emperor of Trebizond." The Italian text (with accent marks omitted it will be posted as Article #18 on <http://home.earthlink.net/~beornshall/index.html/>) was sent to me by the late Prof. Noemi Magri of Mantua, who was collaborating with me in the first ever translation of seventeen archaic Spanish letters of Don Juan of Austria to his cousin, the Duke of Savoy. She declined to translate the "Tirata" herself because she believed it was in a Bolognese dialect (every region and city in Italy has its own dialect, often unintelligible to others, and only about 150 years ago did standard Italian become dominant). In any case she felt the text was silly, but we'll see there's much more serious matter in it.

It was usual for Bolognese to be inserted as part of "Il Dottore's" comic persona, since for humor he was meant to be partly unintelligible, with the actions of the other actors helping the audience to understand. It's likely that the "Tirata" was intended to be read as well as acted, since the anomalies discussed below only show up in the writing.<sup>22</sup>

My original translation was vastly improved by Prof. A. Colin Wright and improved even more by Prof. Concetta Thibideaux. The notes included here are a small subset of my full exposition, which runs to sixty pages. My frequently "too literal" full exposition shows that the "Tirata" was complex, funny, and sinister, and that there is no obstruction to it having been written in the summer of 1575 in Naples.<sup>23</sup>

In 2005 I traced two likely chains of provenance for the "Tirata." One was through Andrea Perrucci's 1699 patroness, Donna Aurora Sanseverini, and a series of princes and dukes of Sabbionetta, Fondi, and Traetto. The other was through the Knights of the Golden Fleece.<sup>24</sup> The Knights' roll had a number of Netherlanders, mostly

from modern Belgium's southern and French-speaking Walloon area, whose official titles were Princes or Lords of "Vere" or "deVere."<sup>25</sup> Thus it's possible that, in addition to financial bribes,<sup>26</sup> Oxford was enticed in 1575 with offers to join Europe's most prestigious order, as his possible kinsmen had been. I further believe that Oxford was at the time actually on a covert mission to encounter, befuddle, and eventually destroy Don Juan, Europe's most dangerous warmonger.

Dr. Thibideaux believed the "Tirata" was written principally in her own native Neapolitan dialect (where Andrea Perrucci lived a century later), but had in it some Spanish (Spain ruled Naples and Sicily for centuries). I believe it was possible that Miguel Cervantes (author of 1605 *Don Quixote* and proud of his Italian mastery) contributed to this skit, since he was at the Neapolitan Court of Don Juan in late summer 1575. I noted a few "jokes" in English, one of which is line 161, which makes little sense in Italian. A critic might say that ten per cent of English is Latin, so possibly what I've identified is just an artifact of that; but Italian is far more Latinate than English. So, if something makes sense in English but not in Italian, we must consider whether an Englishman was involved. How many Englishmen, other than Oxford and Edward Webbe, were in southern Italy in 1575? How many had the linguistic and literary qualities to contribute to the "Tirata"? We know of only one: Oxford himself, the star of the "Tirata," as we'll see, as well as the only character who had a real name as well as a fantasy name and title.

My larger analysis of the "Tirata" uncovered eight general patterns:

a) As the comments to line 26 and others show, all the deliberate misspellings, contractions, truncations, allegorical portmanteaus, and even homonyms indicate that this "Tirata" was meant to be read, in addition to acted. Much like Shakespeare's works.

b) The characters of "milord Oxford" and "Alvida Countess of Edinburgh" (= Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots) are central, with their dramatic situation at the end of the skit and the meaning of their Imperial "awards" very important.

c) Transparently, this was a grand crusade against the Ottoman Empire (whose fleet Don Juan had defeated at Lepanto in 1571), with virtually all of the powers of the earth arrayed against that fearsome menace to Christianity.<sup>27</sup>

d) But there was a less transparent theme of another menace to Christianity, namely Protestant heretics, embodied in "Ernelinda Great Czarina of Muscovy" (or Ermelinda = Queen Elizabeth I of England), and in the shabby treatment she receives (e.g., she reflects the real-life laughable quests by Ivan the Terrible to have "the Virgin Queen" marry him, and the short lifespans of various tsarinas, with Ivan having married and murdered

no less than three within four months in 1574, having presumably found them "less than virgin"). The solution for handling Elizabeth was to ship her to Moscow, into Ivan's loving embrace!

e) In each "roster" (the menu of those to joust in a given round) Oxford's character hovers near the middle, until rosters 7 and 8, when for maximum drama he's the last male. Oxford was the primary focus of the entire "Tirata," which I believe resulted from his "challenge to a joust" to the world from Palermo, as reported by Webbe. As such, the "Tirata" was a "commedia erudita," or palace comedy.

f) Pope Gregory XIII had issued a Papal Bull in 1573 that confirmed the 1570 excommunication of Elizabeth by Pius V, deposed her, and named Mary Stuart (Elizabeth's prisoner) as the real Queen of England. Gregory then began a fairly open campaign to declare Don Juan married to Mary (even though Mary was already married), and advocated various schemes for Don Juan to take the Spanish fleet to the British Isles, free Mary, and seize the throne.<sup>28</sup> Thus, a covert theme of the "Tirata" is what was required to fulfill the schemes of that Papal Bull: specifically, a high-ranking English nobleman to act as Don Juan's covert agent, putting him into contact with Mary and the Marianist conspirators in England, and preparing the way for invasion.

g) Lines 19, 64, 65, 110, 112, 148, 176 (and others) outline a Marianist agenda for the overthrow of Queen Elizabeth, with Oxford associated with "Astolfo," or Don Juan's "Paladin." Accordingly, Oxford was on record as having pretended to adopt Catholicism while in Italy, and when he returned to England he remained aloof from his wife and her very Protestant family. Yet, later events of 1578 show Oxford's servants Denny the Frenchman and others stalking Don Juan across the Netherlands, and possibly succeeding in assassinating him (if he didn't die of "the plague," or cholera instead). It seems that Oxford was in Italy 1575-76 on assignment from the Privy Council to encounter, beguile, and eventually destroy Don Juan of Austria.

h) Remarkably, this 1575 "Tirata" has, in lines 110-111, eerie connections to the 17th Earl of Oxford, Terence, John Davies of Hereford, and Shakespeare. It also reminds us of Francis Meres's later comparison of Plautus, Terence, and other Latin comic dramatists to those English dramatists he calls "the best poets for comedy": Oxford (first), and, among others, these men in Oxford's circle of literati—Lyly, Lodge, Greene, Nash, and Munday, plus Munday's partner Chettle, and "Shakespeare." We've underestimated this "Tirata."

To emphasize the patterns noted above, a subset of my bracketed analyses are in endnotes, and some possible translations of words/phrases are retained. To save space, explication is given chiefly for the characters of Elmond (= Oxford), Alvilda (= Mary Stuart, Q. of Scots), and Ernelinda (= Queen Elizabeth).

## Organization of the “Tirata”

The “Tirata” is an elaborate description of a tourney with eighteen participants—nine men and nine women. It consists of nine sections, or what we are calling “rosters.” The first roster names the participants; the second identifies their respective mounts; the third names those mounts; the fourth describes the jousters’ colors; the fifth mentions their weapons; the sixth sets forth their mottoes; the seventh sets out the actual jousting lineup (who will face whom); the eighth gives the results of the nine jousts; and the ninth enumerates the gifts presented to the competitors.

### *Tirade about the Joust*

1/ Finding myself as Ambassador for my most Illustrious homeland of Bologna close [in friendship?] to Polidor the Emperor of Trebizond, I also found myself at the joust and the festivities for his marriage to Irene Empress of Constantinople; where there was prepared a most renowned stockade with an infinite number of Knights, Ladies and Commoners; seated by the Judge [of the Joust?], the Doge of the Noble Republic, were the Sultan of Calcutta, the Caliph of Mecca, the Mikado of Japan and the Dealkhan of Angora. They made their entry into the field.

#### [First roster; each roster features the same eighteen characters]

- 2/ Basil King of Zelconda.
- 3/ Doralba Princess of Dacia.
- 4/ Arcont Vaivade (= Chieftain) of Moldavia.
- 5/ Floralba Lady-Despot of the Serbia.
- 6/ Arfileo Prince of Denmark.
- 7/ Belinda Duchess of Lithuania.
- 8/ Isuf Pasha (or Knight-Commander) of Aleppo.
- 9/ Fatima Sultana of Persia.
- 10/ Elmond Milord of Oxford. (likely = Edward De Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford)
- 11/ Alvilda Contessa of Edemburg. (likely = Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots)
- 12/ Fiordalis Peer (or Paladin) of France.
- 13/ Armila Marchioness of Baden.
- 14/ D. (later Don) Veremond Grandee of Spain.
- 15/ Siveria Baroness of Flanders.
- 16/ Amor Sharif of Morocco. [If an Englishman helped to write the “Tirata,” this name could be “A Moor... of Morocco”]
- 17/ Belisa Her Ladyship of Alsace.
- 18/ Dealcan Great Khan of the Tartars.
- 19/ And Ernelinda Great Czarina of Muscovy (likely = Queen Elizabeth of England).

#### [Second roster]

- 20/ Basili King of Zelconda went on a jet black horse, Black Star.

- 21/ Doralba Princess of Dacia mounted an ermine-colored horse [white with black tufts].
- 22/ Arcont Vaivode of Moldavia whipped a dapple-grey horse with three white socks.
- 23/ Floralba Despotess of Serbia bridled-restrained a light bay horse.
- 24/ Arfileo Prince of Denmark spurred a Moor-faced horse.
- 25/ Belinda Duchess of Lithuania pressed on the back of a dapple-grey horse.
- 26/ Isuf Pasha of Aleppo pushed a thin Turkish horse to a run.
- 27/ Fatima Sultana of Persia guided a sorrel horse.
- 28/ Elmond Milord of Oxford drove a tawny horse. [= light brown to orangish gray]
- 29/ Alvilda Countess of Edinburg was on a spotted dapple-grey horse.
- 30/ Fiordalis Peer of France came on a piebald horse.
- 31/ Armila Marchioness of Baden appeared on a mare.
- 32/ Don Veremond Grandee of Spain appeared on a Jennet horse from the Tagus [river].
- 33/ Silveria Baroness of Flanders entered on a Frisian [horse].
- 34/ Amor Sharif of Morocco was sitting bareback on a swift barbary [horse].
- 35/ Belisa Her Ladyship of Alsace was seated on a tawny honey-colored [or apple horse].
- 36/ Dealcan Great Khan of Tartars for a horse used an Elephant.
- 37/ And Ernelinda Czarina of Muscovy availed herself of a Giraffe.

#### [Third roster]

- 38/ The Giraffe of Ernelinda Grand Duchess of Muscovy was called Intrepid.
- 39/ The Elephant of Dealcan Great Khan of Tartars, Bronze Bull.
- 40/ The honey-colored [or apple horse] of Belisa Her Ladyship of Alsace, Shining.
- 41/ The Barbary [horse] of Amor Sharif of Morocco, Earthquake [or World Terror?].
- 42/ The Frisian [horse] of Silveria Baroness of Flanders, Creeper [or Climber?].
- 43/ The Jennet [small Spanish horse] of Don Veremond Grandee of Spain, Zephyr.
- 44/ The Mare of Armila Marchioness of Baden, Intrepid [or Undaunted?].
- 45/ The Piebald [horse] of Fiordalis Peer of France, Hair Piece [or False-front?].
- 46/ The Dapple-grey spotted [horse] of Alvilda Countess of Edinburgh, Sweetish.
- 47/ The Tawny [horse] of Elmond Milord of Oxford, Ultramarin. [By truncating the *e*, possibly “Ultramarin” = in advance of Mary. “Ultramarine,” or overseas, was the French Crusaders’ name for the Holy Land. In addition to an anti-Turk crusade, Oxford’s character appears to be on a Marianist crusade].

- 48/ The roan [horse] of Fatima Sultana of Persia, Break-bridle [or Crazy, Flametrap?].  
 49/ The Turkish [horse] of Isuf Pasha of Aleppo, Iron Heart.  
 50/ The dapple-gray [horse] of Belinda Duchess of Lithuania, Beauty [or Belligerent].  
 51/ The Moor-faced [horse] of Afileo Prince of Denmark, Lightning.  
 52/ The light bay [horse] of Floralba Despotess of Serbia, Parts rivers.  
 53/ The dapple-gray [horse] of Arcont Vaivode of Moldavia, Frankish lance.  
 54/ The Ermine-colored [horse] of Doralba Princess of Dacia, Snowflake.  
 55/ And the Black horse of Basili King of Zelconda, Furious.

#### [Fourth roster]

- 56/ The King of Zelconda Basili on the black horse, Furious, carrying the over- / clothes of color of fire.  
 57/ The Princess of Dacia Doralba on the Ermine-like Horse, Flower of snow / was dressed in color of gold.  
 58/ The Vaivode of Moldavia Arcont upon his grey-coat horse, Frankish Lance, had on / the tawny finery.  
 59/ The Dispotess of Serbia Floralba on the bay horse, Parts rivers, had / of flame-red.  
 60/ The Prince of Denmark Arfileo on black-faced horse, Lightning, had / the crimson ornament.  
 61/ The Duchess of Lithuania Belinda on the dapple grey horse, Beautiful-belligerent, had the device-uniform-plan / greenish grey [or child's cap, malignant].  
 62/ The Pasha of Aleppo Isuf on the Turkish horse, Heart of ferocity, had the badge green-verdict.  
 63/ The Sultana of Persia Fatima on horse, Broken bridle [or crazy], had the over- / clothes flesh color [or incarnate, incorrigible].  
 64/ The Milord of Oxford Elmond on his Tawny horse, Ultramarine-overseas, had the color / violet. [Truncation allowed "violent," in English no less. The text often forced us to interpolate the word "called" or a comma before each horse's name, thus allowing for this line to be written and translated "...violently over Mary"].  
 65/ The Countess of Edinburg Alvilda on a dapple grey horse, Sweetish, was dressed / in color redwood.  
 66/ The Peer of France Fiordalis on his piebald horse, Hair-Piece, had a deep blue overgarment sewn with lilies.  
 67/ The Marchessa of Baden Armila on the mare, Undaunted, had a steelish trimming.  
 68/ The Grandee of Spain Don Veremond on the Jennet horse, Zephyr, had colors of a Lioness.  
 69/ The Baroness of Flanders Silveria on the Frisian horse, Climber, was in iridescent color [or singing-teasing?].  
 70/ The Sharif of Morocco Amor on the Barbary horse, Earthquake, had ornaments [or grazing strokes] of rose-violet.  
 71/ Her Ladyship of Alsace Belisa on the honey-colored [horse called] Shining had silver trimmings.

- 72/ The Great Khan of Tartary Dealcan on the Elephant, Bronze Bull, was in black.  
 73/ And the Czarina of Muscovy on the Giraffe [horse], Intrepid, was in pure white.  
 74/ Each of the jousts or Knights, or Amazons, had the arms of their taste:

#### [Fifth roster]

- 75/ Ermelinda [now = ermine, symbol of virginity] was armed with an axe.  
 76/ Dealcan with an iron mace.  
 77/ Belisa with a pike.  
 78/ Amor with a sabre.  
 79/ Silveria was armed [or "d'arm" can mean "disarmed"] with a spear.  
 80/ Don Veremond with a dagger [or "stoc" can mean a sudden demand for money].  
 81/ Armila with a small spear.  
 82/ Fiordalis with a ceremonial sword [or dirk].  
 83/ Alvilda with a Germanic lance.  
 84/ Elmond with a broadsword. [Oxford's title "Lord Great Chamberlain" entitled him to bear "the Sword of State" in royal ceremonies]  
 85/ Fatima with quiver and bow.  
 86/ Isuf with a scimitar.  
 87/ Belinda with a shot-grenade.  
 88/ Arfileo with a halberd.  
 89/ Floralba with a dart-arrow.  
 90/ Arcont with a blade.  
 91/ Doralba with a large broadsword.  
 92/ And Basil with a lance.  
 93/ Each of them bore on their Shield an emblem with a motto [or motive] derived from the most celebrated Authors [or perpetrators].

#### [Sixth roster]

- 94/ Thus Basili armed with a lance, in a fire-colored costume, had for an emblem a lion, with motto derived from *Tragic Seneca*:  
 95/ *The swords are bared.*  
 96/ Doralba armed with a long sword, colored in gold, had painted on her brocchiere [shield with spike in its center] a butterfly, with the motto from *Petrarch*:  
 97/ *Love inflames me more where it burns me more.*  
 98/ Arcont armed with a blade, in chestnut color, had outlined on his shield a Tiger, with the motto from *Horace*:  
 99/ *More bold for having considered death.*  
 100/ Floralba armed with a dart, with flame color, on her breastplate neither on her shield / on the contrary-back a Phoenician [= Dido], with the motto derived from *Tasso*:  
 101/ *And with the death is gained immortal life.*  
 102/ Arfileo armed with a halberd, in crimson, bore on his crest a Palm from Java, with an iron core, with the motto from *Tibullus*:  
 103/ *Hard are the iron-hearted.*

- 104/ Belinda armed with a shot, with the color greenish-grey, portraying the painting on / her breast a Roman column; with the motto of *Marin* ["of the Sailor" or "of Mary"]:
- 105/ *She is still beautiful, and superb, in the ruins.*
- 106/ Isuf armed with scimitar, in green, bore on his turban a diamond, with the motto from *Ovid*:
- 107/ *Sexual purity [or virtue] in adversity.*
- 108/ Fatima armed with a bow and arrow, and quiver, with the color flesh-rosy-pink, wore for adornment [or "decoration"] with the head of [or "headstrong," "obstinate"] a Rose with motto derived from the *Bracciolini* [or "*Brazen line*," "*tongue*"]:
- 109/ *Armed with points the gatherer [or coxcomb, fop] threatens.*
- 110/ Elmond armed with broadsword, in violet, raised as an emblem a Falcon with the motto taken from *Terence*:
- 111/ *Virtue seeks out difficulties [or challenges?].* [Compare the "Terenz" here with John Davies of Hereford's epigram #159 from *The Scourge of Folly* (1610), that "Shakespeare" was "Our English Terence." It also compares to Francis Meres's 1598 likening of Plautus, Terence, and other Latins with Oxford (first), many in Oxford's circle of comic playwrights, plus Shakespeare. It's ironic that Terence was aimed at Oxford in 1575. Or he may have aimed it at himself if he helped write this "Tirata"!]
- 112/ Alvilda armed with a German lance, in redwood color, bore between the feathers of her crest an oak with the epigraph taken from the *German*:
- 113/ *And with the proud panting of the twenty jousts [or the jousting winds?].*
- 114/ Fiordalis armed with a ceremonial sword, in deep blue, bore on his overgarment a rock with the motto from *Catullus*:
- 115/ *Smashes everything.*
- 116/ Armila armed with a small lance, in steelish trimming, had for her shield a mirror, with the motto taken from *Preti* [or *Priests?*]:
- 117/ *That still throws flames [or love?] from afar.*
- 118/ Don Veremond armed with a dagger, lion-coloured, had as emblem on his shield, called a clipeus, an Eagle, with the motto from *Virgil*:
- 119/ *Hostile to long snakes.*
- 120/ Silveria armed with a spear, in iridescent colors bore for the band of her shield a crossbow with the motto from *Guarin*:
- 121/ *What is calmly expected often happens.*
- 122/ Amor armed with a sabre, in pale lilac, bore on his shield called a Pelta [an ancient Greek light shield] a crescent like a half moon, with the motto from *Claudianus*:
- 123/ *Set fire to the lands with wars [or with prettiness?].*
- 124/ Belisa armed with a pike, in silver, had on a shield called a Parma a Panther, with the motto from my kinsman *Grazian* [unitalicized]:
- 125/ *It both threatens and entices with sweet severity.*
- 126/ Dealkhan armed with a mace of iron, in black, showed on his standard a laurel, with the motto from *Propertius*:
- 127/ *In glory there is no death.*
- 128/ And Ernelinda armed with an axe, dressed in White, showed on her gladiator shield a comet with the motto from *Test* [unitalicized, a truncation or misspelling?]:
- 129/ *The greater someone is, the more he threatens.* [Johann Tetzl was inquisitor of Poland and Saxony, whose selling of indulgences sparked Luther's "95 Theses" and the Reformation. Ignoring the "Test" attribution, Cotticelli (p.141) gives this as: "...motto by Tasso: *The bigger, the more threatening*. But Tasso was already used above for lines 100-101, making reuse here unlikely. English joke: Could this motto simply be an English "Test" in that a contestant need not be large or belligerent to win? If so, no better place for an English joke than under Ernelinda = Queen Elizabeth of England]
- 130/ These famous warriors passed across the camp, they each took their place in the lists [jousting areas], and, waiting for the sound of the trumpet, this being given as a sign with kettle-drums, fifes and tambourine, they drove their horses to a gallop.
- [Seventh roster]**
- 131/ The King Basil of Zelconda on the black horse, Furious, dressed in fire color, armed with a Lance, with the emblem of a Lion, met with
- 132/ Dealcan Great Khan of the Tartars, on the Elephant Bronze Bull, dressed in black, with the emblem of the Laurel.
- 133/ Doralba Princess of Dacia on the Ermine Horse called Snowflower, dressed in gold, armed with a broadsword, with the emblem of the butterfly found herself confronting
- 134/ Ernelinda Czarina of Muscovy, on the giraffe called Undaunted, dressed in white, armed with an axe, with the emblem of the Comet.
- 135/ Arcont Vaivode of Moldavia, on the dapple-grey Horse, Frankish Lance, in tan color, armed with a blade, with the emblem of the Tiger, came to blows with
- 136/ Amor Sharif of Morocco, on the Barbary Horse, Earthquake, in lilac, armed with a sabre, with emblem flame-crescent (or "Faz" can mean "handkerchief," suggesting surrender).
- 137/ Floralba Despot of Serbia, on the bay Horse Parts rivers, in flame red, armed with Dart, with the Phoenix, entered to contest with
- 138/ Belisa Her Ladyship of Alsace, on the honey-colored horse Shining, dressed in silver, armed with the Panther.
- 139/ Arfilei [now = "arch son" or heir] Prince of Denmark, with moor-faced Horse, Lightning, dressed in crimson, armed with a halberd, with the palm, facing
- 140/ Don Veremond Grande of Spain, on the Jennet horse,

- Zephyr, lion colored, armed with a dagger, with the eagle.
- 141/ Belinda Duchess of Lithuania, upon the dapple grey horse, Beauty, dressed in greenish grey, armed with a grenade, with the Column, fought with
- 142/ Silveria Baroness of Flanders, upon the Frisian horse, Climber, dressed in iridescent colors, armed with a spear, with the crossbow.
- 143/ Isuf Pasha of Aleppo, on the Turkish horse Iron Heart, dressed in green, armed with a scimitar, with Diamond, took his chance with
- 144/ Fiordalis Peer of France, on the piebald horse, Hair Piece, in deep blue, armed with ceremonial sword, with the scoio (possibly “scogliera,” cliff).
- 145/ Fatima Sultana of Persia, on the bay horse Break-bridle, dressed in carmine, armed with a bow, with the rose, collided with
- 146/ Armila Marchiness of Baden, on the mare Undaunted, in steelish trim, armored with spear, with the Specc. (possibly “Mirror,” which can mean “bait” for the simpleminded).
- [Note on line 147: In Ariosto’s 1516 *Orlando Furioso*, Canto 10.81, the virtuous “Astolfo’s” men paraded thru Paris with a falcon banner, and an Earl of Oxford’s colors were “sable and azure” (= ultramarine?). That should be compared here with colors of Oxford’s retinue on his entry into London in 1562. Did Oxford in 1575 help write this “Tirata,” choosing the emblem and colors he’d used in 1562 from Ariosto’s epic?]
- 147/ And Olmond [= the pure] milord of Oxford, on the tawny horse Oltramarin [= overseas, or the Holy Land], dressed in violet, armed with broadsword, with the Falcon, charged on [Marianist option: ...on saving (Falv with a long s = salvare) ...to go forward (= oltrare) ...Marian (= mariano)]
- 148/ Alvida Countess of Edinburgh, on the dapple-grey spotted horse Sweetish, dressed in redwood, armed with a Germanic lance, with the Oak. [The Tudor Age was “the Age of Oak” because of non-Catholic traditions in architecture and furniture, and the Tudor Rose was carved in oak (= sub rosa). Though Mary Stuart had Tudor blood, this “Oak” forebade bad news for Elizabeth Tudor.]

**[Eighth roster]** [Here, each pair parades from the “ground” or spectators’ level up to the second level, where the actual jousting occurs (below the imperial couple and their honored guests seated on the third level), then parades back down to the ground. This helps explain line 157, where “Edward and Alvilda went from a planking (dais) right to the ground.”]

- 149/ And everyone striking their blows in the scuffle, Basili struck Dealcan’s visor, and Dealcan wounded Basil’s horse.

- 150/ Doralba stripped Ernelinda of her plume, and Ernelinda struck Doralba in her gorget (throat protector). [Per lines 3 and 19, this was Elizabeth Bathory pitted against Elizabeth Tudor, thus helping confirm identification of both.]
- 151/ Arcont dazed Amor with a blow of his flat sword and Amor cut off the reins of Arcont’s horse.
- 152/ Floralba confused Belisa in her saddle, and Belisa disarmed Floralba of a shoulder-piece.
- 153/ Arfileo struck at the collar of Don Veremond, and Don Veremond unseated Arfileo.
- 154/ Belinda hit Silveria on the glove, and Silveria struck the buckler-hold of Belinda’s lance.
- 155/ Isuf ran the arena in vain against Fiordalis, and Fiordalis hit Isuf on his armour.
- 156/ Fatima caused Armila to lose her stirrup, and Armila forced Fatima to drop her shield.
- 157/ And at last, Elmond and Alvilda went from a dais (“Facs” short for “fasciame,” or planking) to the ground. [Or a misspelling of “Facs” suggesting “facilita” or easiness; thus Oxford and Alvilda (= Mary Stuart) performed more gracefully than the other jousting.]
- 158/ The Emperor Polidor now turned to honor all the Knights, and the Empress Irene all the Amazons, giving each one a present from the wardrobe of Antiquity.

**[Ninth roster]** [For reasons of brevity interpretations of many of the gifts below are not included. It should be noted that, with the exceptions of those to Ermond and Alvilda, almost all of the gifts are associated with suicide or other unpleasant fates.]

- 159/ So that Polidor gave to Basili the helmet once belonging to Mambrin,
- 160/ And to Arcont the buckler once belonging to Epaminonda,
- 161/ And to Arfileo the Column of Manlius Torquatus, [English Joke: the cologne (sweat) of manly twisting-turning. There is no Italian word “manli” (or our English “manly”) as was used here, with “virilis” (English “virile”) as the Latin-based equivalent word. Titus Manlius Torquatus (fl. 340 BC) was a Consul and Dictator who disciplined the early Roman army and executed his own son for disobedience (similar to Shakespeare’s fictional *Titus Andronicus*). Ironically, in *Hamlet* a similar result was the ghostly father driving his son to his death.]
- 162/ And to Isuf’ the turban of the Ottoman,
- 163/ And to Ermond the horn of Astolf, [Astolfo = sexually pure English Paladin in Boiardo’s 1485 *Orlando Innamorato* and Ariosto’s 1516-32 *Orlando Furioso*; his name derived from his magic Spear (which he did shake!). His magic horn routed his enemies, the evil Saracens of lands later under the Ottomans. His mission was to save Christendom

from the Saracens, restore sanity to Orlando, resist the bewitchments of the sorceress Angelica, and help lead an attack on the Saracen capital. Note: Here “Ermond” may be a portmanteau of Eroë (Hero) and Mondo (cleaned), thus matching Astolfo’s personality.]

164/ To Fiordalis the (plural) glove (singular) of Orlando,  
[Note: getting a glove (singular) meant Orlando’s

insult of honor, or a challenge to the death in a duel.]

165/ To Don Veremondo the goliglia of King Bambara,

166/ And to Amor the codpiece of Mohammed,

167/ And to Dealcan a horse of the race of Bucephalus of Alexander, (risque Latin: Bucerus [horned] + phallus [male member])

168/ And now the Empress gifted to Doralba the comb of the Queen Semiramis,

169/ To Floralba the belt of the Amazon Hippolyta,

170/ To Belinda a breastplate of Thalia,

171/ To Fatima a Pearl of Cleopatra,

172/ To Alvida the zealous-hot saddle of Zenobia, [Note that Don Juan had a Sicilian mistress, Zenobia Saratosia, who in 1574 had given him his only known son, a crib death, before she entered a convent. Septimia Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, rebelled from Rome, and briefly conquered most of the mideast lands later under the Ottomans. After she was defeated by Emperor Aurelian in 272 CE, Zenobia was taken as wife by a Senator from Tivoli, but her son Vaballathus disappeared from history. Was this the plan for young James VI of Scotland in 1575 after his mother, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, had been taken captive in 1567? Note here “Alvida” (“of evilness”) ends up as “Alvida” (“of the life, lively”) and joined Oxford in a promising end, compared to most of the others.]

173/ To Armida a curling-iron of the Empress Julia,

174/ To Silveria the club wielded by Iole,

175/ To Belisa the Scepter of Queen Dido,

176/ And to Ernelinda the enchanted wand of Medea, [Medea = the sorceress from Colchis-Georgia (later under the Ottomans), who killed her sons to spite her Greek husband Jason, then committed suicide. As a stand-in for Queen Elizabeth, the “Tirata” has her “the Virgin Queen” only because she killed her children.]

[Thus ends the series of nine rosters (balancing the nine male and nine female jousting), with (curiously) Oxford and Alvida as the only mixed-gender pair. They also seem to have received better gifts than the others. Below, the “Tirata” wraps up with a deceptive double meaning]

177/ So at last each one received prizes

178/ *According to their caprice, grace, and fortitude;*

179/ *And to you they will give **the strength**, and **the reins**.*

[Sinister option: ...give you *the gallows*, and *the hangman’s noose*.

[Here Cotticelli et al. (p. 142) for once prefer the sinister option by offering this pleasing non-literal rhyme for the last two lines:

For novelty, grace, or strength, and yet

The gallows or a halter are what you will get.]

#### Endnotes

1. Cotticelli, Francesco, Anne Goodrich Heck and Thomas F. Heck (editors & translators), *A Treatise on Acting, From Memory and by Improvisation (1699) by Andrea Perrucci: Bilingual Edition in English and Italian Bilingual Edition*, 2008, Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland.

2. *Shakespearean Authorship Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Autumn 1995. See Hank Whittemore’s URL <https://hankwhittemore.com/tag/commedia-dellarte/>.

3. <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ariel/article/viewFile/31783/25856> and [www.geni.com/people/Francesco-Maria-I-della-Rovere-duca-di-Urbino/6000000015133327263](http://www.geni.com/people/Francesco-Maria-I-della-Rovere-duca-di-Urbino/6000000015133327263) describe Hamlet’s “Gonzago” play within a play and Francesco Maria I Della Rovere, Duke of Urbino (1490-1538), who married Elionora Gonzaga in 1508/9 and then was murdered by his nephew Luigi in 1538, allegedly by pouring poison in his ear. The real debate is which were the few lines that Prince Hamlet added to the stock drama in order to turn it into a “mousetrap.”

4. See [http://medieval\\_literature.enacademic.com/436/Nine\\_Worthies](http://medieval_literature.enacademic.com/436/Nine_Worthies).

5. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Masque\\_of\\_Blackness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Masque_of_Blackness), which had a January 6, 1604/5 sequel, “Mask of Beauty,” by Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, performed before King James I, and had in it Oxford’s daughter the Countess of Derby, and other Vere relatives.

6. See <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/a-scholar-and-ripe-good-one/> by Dr. Dan Wright, who states (abbreviating): “his acquaintance with Italian art, narrative, and dramaturgy is everywhere evident in such plays as *MOV*, *R&J*, *OTH*, *JC*, *A&C*, *TGV*, *MA*, *TOS*, *TN*, *AW*, *MND*, *AYL*, *LLL*, *COR*, and even sections of *WT*, *CYM*, and *1&2H4*.” The French adapted or translated from Italians, though in most cases Shakespeare likely was familiar with both sources, and often with the original Greek and Latin.

7. Shakespeare’s principal audiences were those at Court or other elite venues, since the Lord Chamberlain’s Men were often summoned to perform, usually during Christmas seasons. Yet, as practice for courtly performances, versions of highbrow plays could be performed at public playhouses, where lowbrow audiences were in attendance alongside of “slumming” nobles and literati.

8. “Commedia erudita” = “learned/erudite comedy,” but due to its usual venues we often call it here “palace comedy,” whereas “dell’arte” (= “of the art”) was “anywhere comedy.” Here we focus on venues, but scholars also recognize “commedia grave” (serious) and “tragicomedy,” among other types. As noted, Shakespeare’s works were principally aimed at palace performances (or at least in manor houses), but later were adapted for public playhouses. Did Shakespeare’s company

ever perform on street corners and other public venues? Of course The Theatre and The Globe were “public,” but those were often rehearsal venues for Court performances. Another venue, Blackfriars, was semi-public, since it was typically used for boy companies to perform, again in rehearsal for Court performances. A note left by William Lambarde shortly before his death in August 1601 tells us that, as Queen Elizabeth reflected on the Essex Rebellion of the prior February, which was aimed at overthrowing her regime, she suddenly asked Lambarde, “I am Richard II, know ye not that?” and went on to reflect on the ingratitude of the executed Earl of Essex: “He that will forget God will also forget his benefactors; this tragedy was played forty times in open streets and houses.” In fact, several members of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men (Shakespeare’s company) had been arrested and compelled to testify about their involvement in presenting *Richard II* the day before the rebellion, but not Shakespeare himself. That’s because he had nothing to do with whatever interlude (something short enough to be presented forty times in an afternoon) was repeatedly exhibited in the London streets. The deposition scene was not in the play until the 1608 “good” Q4. So, we doubt that Shakespeare’s company did any street-acting in London, though some of their actors may have, and the company may have done so in the provinces.

<sup>9</sup> The characters of Holofernes in *Love’s Labours Lost* and Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* seem to derive from “Il Dottore.” Also in *Hamlet*, Corambis/Polonius benefited from “Dottore,” as well as from the real-life admonitions of William Cecil, which were published in 1611 as *The counsell of a father to his sonne*.

<sup>10</sup> All of the “Tirata” jousting characters were versions of “Miles Gloriosus,” though they were essentially speechless (their swagger and antics would convey their pride). In Shakespeare’s plays, Falstaff, Pistol, Bardolf, Fluellen, Parolles and boasting lords in the histories and tragedies all qualify. Indeed, some have theorized Shakespeare had been a soldier himself.

<sup>11</sup> The “Tirata” author(s) is/are anonymous. I believe that one contributor to it was Miguel Cervantes and another was an Englishman then present in Naples. In the early summer of 1575 Cervantes was a minor officer in Palermo, after having served Don Juan at Lepanto, Tunis, Sardinia, and then Palermo. In late summer he went to Naples, obtained letters of introduction from Don Juan, and in mid-September sailed for Spain, when his ship was taken by pirates and he was enslaved and held for ransom for five years. It was likely in the summer of 1575 that Edward Webbe (then a mercenary gunner for Don Juan) saw the Earl of Oxford in Palermo, challenging the world to a joust, as he described in his 1590 book, *Trauailes*:

One thing did greatly comfort me which I saw long since in Sicilia, in the citie of Palerms, a thing worthie of memorie, where the right honourable the Earle of Oxenford a famous man for Chiualrie, at what time he trauailed into forraine countries, being then personally present, made there a challeng against all manner of persons whatsoever, and at all manner of weapons, as Turniments, Barriers with horse and armour, to fight and combat with any whatsoever, in the defence of his Prince and countrie: for which he was very highly commended, and yet no man

durst be so hardie to encounter with him, so that all Italy ouer, he is acknowledged euer since for the same, the onely Chiuallier and Noble man of England.

It is possible that Cervantes escorted Oxford from Palermo to Don Juan in Naples, and mid-voyage the two began what was later to become the “Tirata.” This might also explain “Cardenio,” a plot theme in Cervantes’s 1605 *Don Quixote* which had much the same theme as did *Much Ado About Nothing*, as well as an allegedly “lost” *Cardenio* Shakespeare play of c. 1610.

<sup>12</sup> Will Shakspeare of Warwickshire wasn’t a noble. But many believe he was a front for someone, like the Earl of Oxford, who was Elizabeth’s highest ranked Earl.

<sup>13</sup> I argue that, aside from the non-European visitors described in the first paragraph of the “Tirata” (roles which could be acted by anyone) and “Il Dottore” (who needed to be a practiced professional), all other roles may have been acted by Don Juan (as the Emperor), his mistress Diana Fallanga (as the Empress), and the officers and their wives or significant others. On the other hand, since this would have obviously been celebrated as a palace comedy, the women’s roles may have been acted by boys, and the men’s roles by professionals. I suggest that the role of Oxford would have been played by Oxford himself, or one of his servants.

<sup>14</sup> Shakespeare’s known play companies didn’t travel abroad. Yet, if Oxford was Shakspeare’s hidden patron, it’s notable that the 1580-86 Oxford’s Men may have “amalgamated” with Worcester’s Men as early as 1586, and traveled to the Netherlands and Germany until circa 1598, where Oxford’s cousins, Francis and Horatio Vere, were in command of the English expeditionary forces (i.e., Oxford’s Men were patriotically “entertaining the troops”). By 1602 the amalgamated companies were acting at the Boar’s Head Inn in Aldgate, before they became Queen Anne’s Men.

<sup>15</sup> Scholars count as “commedia dell’arte” any references to “Italian players.” But, from 1572 to 1593, the French and Netherlands Civil Wars made it difficult for troupes to get to Paris, let alone to London, because royal free passage guarantees were dubious. What we now call “dell’arte” actually had begun only circa 1565 with the formation of Scala’s troupe, which, as noted, had its improvisational skits published only in 1611. The chances were greater that any Italian troupes reaching England in the 1570s to 1590s were “erudita,” with payments and guarantees for royal performances in London part of the lure for their dangerous passage.

Erith Jaffe-Berg in 2008 wrote an excellent book dedicated to the *Multilingual Art of Commedia dell’arte* (2009, New York, Legas), which describes the progression of improvised comedy from Italy to the rest of western and central Europe. As it did so, the need for erudite lyrics diminished altogether, substituting animated activity, gibberish and noises to convey meaning. Today’s heirs to dell’arte, miming and the Cirque du Soleil, have eliminated dialogue entirely, and Harpo Marx similarly used a bicycle horn instead of speaking.

<sup>16</sup> “Dottore,” the narrator, had his spoken lines. But all other actors were mimes, conveying their emotions and meaning with gestures, action, and possibly gibberish. Shakespeare’s

comedies are full of erudite dialogue, supplemented by erudite acting. So erudite, in fact, that we return to the argument that the “Tirata” (and Shakespeare’s works) were meant to be published and read, as well as performed (witness all the deliberate misspellings, contractions, etc.).

<sup>17</sup>. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian\\_II\\_of\\_Denmark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_II_of_Denmark) for Denmark’s last Catholic King, whose wife Isabella/Elizabeth of Hapsburg was a sister of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, whose domains included Germany, Austria, the Empire, Milan, Naples, Sicily, Spain, the Netherlands, several enclaves in north Africa, and much of the New World.

Christian was first imprisoned in South Jutland and later in a castle on the far side of Zeeland island from Elsinore. Still, as King he reigned from and was married in Elsinore.

<sup>18</sup>. Note that Christian II’s son was Hans/John, who was seven years old when his father was deposed by his father’s uncle Frederick I in 1521-22, nine when his father was first imprisoned after an invasion fleet financed by Charles V went awry in Norway, and eighteen when he died of dysentery while being nursed by his uncle, the Emperor, in 1532 in the Netherlands. I suggest that after Charles’s death in 1549, it may be that through his Chamberlain, Don Juan’s foster father, he left instructions that Don Juan be raised with a mission, among many missions, to avenge the loss of Denmark from Catholicism.

From a Catholic perspective, Christian II remained King of Denmark all the way to his death in 1559 (outliving his usurping uncle Frederick I and cousin Frederick II). Christian’s daughter Christina (b. 1521), who married the Duke of Lorraine in 1541, gave birth to the future Duke Charles III, who likely was thought a rightful heir to Denmark, and would later be a primary rival to King Henri IV of France during the French Civil Wars. Christina was not only regent of Lorraine from 1545 to 1552, but also a claimant to the thrones of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden from 1561 to 1590, as was her son Duke Charles.

<sup>19</sup>. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_of\\_Austria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_of_Austria). Born c. 1545 of a German woman, widower Emperor Charles V’s natural son Don Juan (“of Austria” because he was an illegitimate birth from the Hapsburg line) was first raised at Charles’s imperial Court in Ghent. Ghent was also the Netherlands headquarters of the chivalric Order of the Golden Fleece, a Burgundian order founded by Charles’s ancestor with the express purpose of organizing a crusade to avenge the 1453 sack of Constantinople by the Turks, and to rescue the last vestige of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire (called the Empire of Trebizond) on the Black Sea near to today’s Georgia. The Turks took Trebizond in 1461, but the Golden Fleece continued, especially under Charles V, who tried to use it to sew together his polyglot empire through a chivalric code. When Charles died in 1559, he left Austria and the Imperial title to his brother Ferdinand, but all the rest of his empire to his legitimate son, Philip II, King of Spain, who was, from 1554 to 1558, King Consort of England as husband of Mary Tudor. Juan was left a princely income from extensive properties in southern Italy. The order divided when Philip refused to swear fealty to his uncle; separate Spanish and Austrian orders remain to this day.

Raised after age eight in Philip II’s court, and winning his first joust at age sixteen, in 1569 Don Juan was made

commander of suppressing the Moriscos Rebellion in Granada. In 1571, with the Pope’s urging, Juan was made commander of the Spanish fleet and Captain-Vicar of Spanish possessions in Italy, heading the Pope’s “Holy League” against the Turks, which briefly united Spain, Venice, the Empire, and Tuscany, with a mission to relieve the Turkish siege of Famagusta in Cyprus. In August 1571 the combined fleet met the fleet of Ali Pasha in the headwaters of the Gulf of Corinth, offshore from Lepanto, and their ragtag fleet of 150 ships annihilated all but a few of the 200 Turkish vessels in the “miracle” of Lepanto (as the Pope dubbed it). From that day forth Don Juan was “The Victor of Lepanto,” and next only to Philip II (who was Grand Master) in esteem within the Spanish line of the Golden Fleece.

<sup>20</sup>. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth\\_Bathory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Bathory). The only possible bar to the “Tirata” having been written entirely in 1575 might be if the character of Doralba Princess of Dacia was Elizabeth Bathory, now known as “the Blood Countess of Transylvania.” Her infamous crimes began only after 1585. But the “Tirata” never links Doralba to grotesque crimes, just to the general geographic region of “Dacia.” Still, Bathory may have inspired part of the character in that her May 1575 wedding was attended by thousands, at a time when the Turks ruled her whole region. Also, line 150 has this Elizabeth in a joust with a character we identify as another Elizabeth, each character thereby strengthening the other.

<sup>21</sup>. In their “Tirata” (pp. 137-142), Coticelli and the other translators generally prefer the least controversial possible translation, ignoring more risqué or seditious translations. The latter devolve from truncations, misspellings, jokes, portmanteaus, etc., which invite variation. In my 2005 translation, I tried to highlight both types of translations, which yielded a sixty-page document.

<sup>22</sup>. In line 125 “Dottore” will claim he’s actually from Florence—which is more evidence that the “Tirata” was written to be read, as well as performed, since this flip-flop as an intentional joke would be hard to appreciate during performance.

<sup>23</sup>. A later tinkering that might have modified some “Tirata” details is possible, though unlikely. There were names listed (e.g., in lines 94 to 129) which make little sense for a writing after 1575, such as Tasso in line 101 (who started going insane in 1576, and was later committed to an asylum). Certainly the grim fate planned for Ernelinda Tsarina of Muscovy (= Queen Elizabeth) made no sense after Ivan the Terrible’s death in 1584. Similarly, a marriage for Don Juan made no sense after his 1578 death. Appendix C to My Vol. II of *The Dark Side of Shakespeare* (2003, pp. 309-398) and Mark Anderson’s “*Shakespeare*” by Another Name (2005, pp. 90-91) independently dated Oxford’s visit to southern Italy to the summer of 1575, following an excursion to Greece, and returning to Venice in late September via Genoa. By contrast, Charlton Ogburn’s *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (1984, pp. 544-545, 773) and B.M. Ward’s biography of Oxford (1930, p. 111), were less specific (Ward implied a visit to Sicily in 1576). The Edward Webbe who saw Oxford in Palermo was not “a senior English army officer” (Ogburn, 551), but rather a mercenary who was enslaved more than once by the Turks or their Tartar allies, then became a “master gunner” for Don Juan, and later for France’s King Henri IV, before returning to England to write his 1590 book.

<sup>24</sup>. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Knights\\_of\\_the\\_Golden\\_Fleece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Knights_of_the_Golden_Fleece) for a list of names (but not membership numbers).

<sup>25</sup>. E.g., Wolfart de Borsele, Seigneur de Vere (1430-1487); Philibert, Seigneur de Vere (d.1512); Maximilien de Bourgogne, Marquis de Vere (1514-1558).

<sup>26</sup>. Oxford allegedly boasted in 1579 or 1580 about bribery from Don Juan, Philip II, and the Pope “in Naples,” if the 1581 Libels by Oxford’s likely Marianist cousins are believed.

<sup>27</sup>. The female lion alluded to in line 68 may be a contrast with the huge maned lion that Don Juan inherited on conquering Tunis in 1573, formerly a pet of the Turkish “King of Tunis.” The Pope then awarded that title to Juan, which is why, as the only Christian ever styled “King of Tunis,” Juan was referred to several times in *The Tempest* backstory in dialogue between characters (“first in Afric, at the marriage of the [Naples] King’s faire daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis”). The irony is that, after conquering Tunis, Juan’s fleet sailed toward Sicily and was scattered by a tempest, with his command ship lost for three days until it appeared out of the fog off Palermo. Shakespeare’s *Tempest* was set precisely in 1573-74, shortly before Oxford’s encounter with Juan in 1575, when the

prospects of marriage for Juan were viable. The “Tirata” was similarly oriented in time and intent. See my *Dark Side of Shakespeare* Vol. I (pp. 170-174, 206, 451-472). A last point is that the lion clearly was a symbol of “lese majestie” to Juan, as he explained in one of the seventeen 1576-77 letters to the Duke of Savoy which Dr. Magri helped me to translate. Sadly, the lion died before it could be transported overland to Don Juan in the Netherlands, where Juan’s fate neared its conclusion.

<sup>28</sup>. For references concerning Don Juan, see chapter 3 of my book, *The Dark Side of Shakespeare*, 2002, Writer’s Club Press, NY, particularly pp. 95-155. My principal source there was William Stirling-Maxwell, *Don John of Austria, or Passages from the History of the Sixteenth Century 1545-1578*, 2 vols. (London, 1883, Longmans, Green, & Co.). My allusions to myth and history were principally from *Encyclopedia Britannica* or various internet sites, the details of which are in my unpublished manuscript, but for lack of space are omitted here.

