

The False Steward in the *Second Historie* of Wotton's *Cupids Cautels*: A Neglected *Hamlet* Source

by

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Consisting of five histories, each treating of the evils of love, Sir Henry Wotton's *A Courtlie Controuersie of Cupids Cautels* (1578) has been recognized as a major source of several important Elizabethan dramas.¹ Atkinson and Pogue demonstrate that the *Fifth Historie* was Shakespeare's source for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*;² McIlvain argues convincingly that Kyd used the *First Historie* as a source for *Soliman and Perseda*;³ Baldwin considers the same tale in connection with his study of the sources of *The Spanish Tragedy*;⁴ and Watson identifies the *Fourth Historie* as the source of the anonymous *Fair Em*.⁵ Of the two remaining histories, the *Second*, containing the story of a virtuous maiden seduced by a false steward, echoes many situations found in *Hamlet*. Its plot may be summarized as follows:

In the German city of Mens, two virtuous young people, Herman and Floria, are betrothed. Ponifre, a steward in Floria's household, is also secretly in love with her, although her social position is a serious problem for him. Nevertheless, he plots to win her hand. He boldly confesses his love for her on two occasions, but she rejects him. Not understanding the depth of his passions, Floria treats the matter lightly and does not mention the nature of his ambitious suit to others. Her kind and gentle nature, however, is made the basis of the ensuing tragedy. In desperation, Ponifre seeks the assistance of an old bawd who, while she takes his money and promises that her sorceries will succeed, can do nothing. Ponifre, next, engages a magician who conjures up a shadow in the shape of Floria, and, for a time, Ponifre is deceived into thinking that the shadow is the real Floria. Eventually, he discovers the trick and realizes that the illusion actually proceeds from his own evil thoughts, although he continues his lustful suit. With the aid of Floria's chambermaids, he causes her to become intoxicated, at which time he rapes her. Remembering nothing of this episode, she is shocked, later, when she discovers she is pregnant, a condition which she cannot explain. Her true lover, Herman, deserts her, expressing contempt for all women. Later, he marries Charita, Floria's rival, and is happy for a short time. However, upon tiring of Charita, he

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¹The complete title is *A Courtlie Controuersie of Cupids Cautels Containing fife tragicall Historyes by 3 gentleman & 2 gentle women translated out of French by Hen. Wotton & dedicated to his sister the Lady Dacre of the South*. The text of the *Second Historie* used in this study is that of the British Museum copy of 1578. Citations are to page.

²Dorothy Atkinson, "Sources of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*," *SP*, XL (1944), 223-234; Jim C. Pogue, "*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Henry Wotton's *A Courtlie Controuersie of Cupids Cautels*," *Emporia State Research Studies*, X (June, 1962), 17-21.

³Clarice D. McIlvain, *A Study of the Sources of Thomas Kyd's Soliman and Perseda*. Unpublished master's thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, 1960.

⁴T. W. Baldwin, *On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Plays*, pp. 180; 514.

⁵Roy A. Watson, *Fair Em and Cupids Cautels: A Study of the Date, Sources, and Authorship*. Unpublished master's thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, 1963.

takes leave of her and goes to Antwerp. In the meantime, the wretched Floria consents to marry Ponifre, since he is the only willing suitor at hand. During preparations for the wedding, Ponifre, exulting in his triumph, becomes drunk and reveals the circumstances of his seduction of Floria. At once, he is exposed and tried along with the guilty chambermaids; later, tortured and put to death. Floria approves of the punishment as a means of redeeming her honor. On the other hand, Charita, anxious to have Herman return from Antwerp and desirous of testing his loyalty, sends word to him that she (Charita) is dead. This information reaches Herman at a time when the news of Floria's widowhood is made public. He sets out to find Floria. In the meantime, Floria's sense of guilt increases, and she sacrifices herself in the cause of chastity. Leaving a letter pinned to the bosom of her illegitimate child, she commits suicide by drinking a cup of boiling wine. She is allowed a maiden's funeral, however, and a monument is erected in memory of her noble action. When Herman learns of her suicide while he is journeying from Mens, he dies of a "mortal convulsion," described as the result of extreme passion. Only Charita lives to explain these tragic events.

A study of the parallels between *Hamlet* and Wotton's *Second Historie* revives the problem of Kyd's authorship of the *Ur-Hamlet*, since it is known that he used the *First Historie* in *Soliman and Perseda* and *The Spanish Tragedy*. Furthermore, it is significant that most of the parallels between the *Second Historie* and *Hamlet* occur in that portion of the play usually ascribed to Kyd, namely in what is hereafter referred to as the Ophelia plot.

In Shakespeare's source in Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* (1570), Ophelia is a beautiful young woman used as a decoy to reveal the extent of Hamlet's "madness." She meets Hamlet only once and promptly discloses the nature of the plot against his life and, as a result, is ruined. In Shakespeare, she is, again, used as a decoy, the agent of Polonius and Claudius. Since she is obedient and does what she is told to do, her mentors gain (or think they gain) insight into Hamlet's condition, yet her obedience destroys her. In this respect, she resembles Wotton's heroine, Floria, who is also obedient and virtuous and ruined by the tricks or cautions of others. Ophelia appears first in *Hamlet* in the scene of Polonius' advice to Laertes (I.iii). Although similar precepts have been discovered in the works of Lyly, Lodge, and Greene, to mention but a few,⁶ and while the fatherly-brotherly advice given Ophelia has been found in Renaissance commonplaces, there are, nevertheless, significant resemblances between *Hamlet* and the *Second Historie* related to this advice. For example, as noted earlier, the heroines in the two works are similar, with one exception: Ophelia is beneath the station of her princely suitor; whereas, Floria is of a higher rank than Ponifre, her would-be suitor. Nevertheless, Polonius is court chamberlain or steward, and Ponifre is steward in Floria's household. Furthermore, both works are concerned with the subject of female chastity. Although the word, *cautel*, does not appear in the text of the *Second Historie*, its meaning is reflected in

⁶G. K. Hunter, "Isocrates' Precepts and Polonius' Character," *SP*, VIII (Autumn, 1957), 501-506; also, Josephine Bennett, "Characterization in Polonius' Advice to Laertes," *SQ*, VI (January, 1953), 3.

Ponifre's actions throughout the tale. On the other hand, Shakespeare employs the word in Laertes' first warning to Ophelia:

Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor *cautel* doth besmirch
The virtue of his will⁷
(I.ii.14-16)

Since the word does not occur in any of Shakespeare's other plays, its use, here, is worth noting, particularly as Laertes contrasts *cautel* with *virtue*, and Polonius, later, lectures Ophelia on the "tricks" of lovers, recalling Wotton's description of Ponifre's plans for the courtship of Floria:

Hamlet

Pol. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl, / Unsifted in such perilous circumstance. / Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think My lord, he hath importuned me with love / In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord / With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know, / When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul / Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter, / Giving more light than heat, extinct in both, / Even in their promise, as it is a-making, / You must not take for fire. From this time / Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence (I.iii.101-121)

Second Historie

. . . so as the faire fire of *Fleuria*, being so neare hym, embraced him so liuely, as it constrained him to determine a resolution too hautie for his feeble forces, that is to saye, to require of hir the guages, whiche they that fight vnder the ensignes of Loue, doe accepte for their safety . . . the simple Maiden, who knewe not what loue ment, regarded not his courtesies, neither had the capacitie to marke I know not what particular affection: The whyche the factor considering, incontinently made his reckning that it behoued him to speake clearly, and not betweene his teeth, if he would practise surely, and made a happy conquest of hir good graces. Wherefore with newe apparell, taking newe counsayle, he made him fine and braue, he kembed, he froted, he frised, and prinked him in his glasse, and carefully set euery poynt in as neate maner as loue could instruct him . . . with trembling tounge he discovered vnto hir the forces of loue, which . . . constrayneth Goddesses to abandon the heauens. Wherefore Mistresse (sayde he) I beseeche you . . . if you accept nothing but that which is worthy of your beautie, you muste ascende into heauen (93-94)

Here, Polonius' remarks about Ophelia's innocence in the ways of love are similar to Wotton's presentation of Floria (through the observations of Ponifre) as a "simple Maiden who knewe not what loue ment." Both are, in Polonius' terms, "green girls." Furthermore, his seizure upon the word, *fashion*, reveals his own acquaintance with such tricks as *kembing*, *froting*, *frisling*, and *prinking* employed by Ponifre in pursuit of Floria.

⁷The italics are the present author's. All quotations from Shakespeare in this study are from Hardin Craig (ed.), *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*.

His use, as well, of *fire*, *blazes*, and *burns* echoes the *fire* that kindles Ponifre's lust. Finally, Ponifre's *incontinent* decision to ". . . speake clearly and not betweene his teeth" parallels Polonius' advice to Ophelia, ". . . prodigal the soul / Lends the tongue vows."

Further elements in Polonius' advice to Ophelia recall, perhaps, another aspect of Ponifre's suit, revealed in the following parallel passages:

Hamlet

Set your entreatments at a higher
rate / Than a command to parley.
(I.iii.122-123)

Do not believe his vows; for they are
brokers, / Not of that dye which
their investments show, / But mere
implorators of unholy suits, / Breathing
like sanctified and pious bawds,
/ The better to beguile. (I.iii.127-131)

Second Historie

For since Maydens which harken, and
castels that consent to parle . . . doo
easily agree to composition, it ensueth
rightly that a deafe woman is vneasie
to winne (94)

. . . determined to aide his suite
by . . . bawdes In this deuotion
one Sondag comming to the
parish church, he bourded an olde
mother Bee, who solde candell of
consideraunce, praying hir to giue him
light in this businesse (96)

Terms like *brokers*, *investments*, *implorators*, and *suits* (and in an earlier exchange *tenders*) are appropriate to Polonius, who is the court chamberlain. Ponifre, also a steward, is similarly concerned with expenses, and his courtship of Floria is, indeed, costly, involving his employment of a magician and an old bawd who assist him. Following her father's advice, Ophelia refuses to "parley" with Hamlet, an action that resembles Floria's "deafe" attitude toward Ponifre, as illustrated in the following parallels:

Hamlet

Pol. I would not, in plain terms,
from this time forth, / Have you so
slander any moment leisure, / As to
give words or talk with the Lord
Hamlet. / Look to't, I charge you:
come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord.
(I.iii.132-136)

Second Historie

. . . so likewise this vertuous young-
ling, (whose sage youth ought to be a
myrror vnto ye eldest) made hir hearing
deafe vnto his sugred talke imi-
tating the prudent *Aspe* . . . who
stoppeth hir eare with hir tayle, that
she may not heare the sounde of hir
deceitfull enimie. (95)

Although Ophelia's meetings with Hamlet at court are probably Shakespeare's expansion of Belleforest's meeting that takes place in the woods, there are, nevertheless, similarities between *Hamlet* and the *Second Historie* which bear upon the encounter. For example, when a frightened Ophelia tells her father about Hamlet's odd behavior, her description of the prince is similar to Wotton's account of Ponifre's first meeting with Floria:

Hamlet

Oph. . . . a look so piteous in pur-
port / As if he had been loosed out
of hell / To speak of horrors . . . /

Second Historie

. . . with a cruell looke and shame-
fast countenance, enflamed with
choler and disdayne, she closed his

He raised a sigh so piteous and profound / As it did seem to shatter all his bulk / And end his being . . .

Pol. Come, go with me This is the very ecstasy of love What, have you given him any hard words of late? (II.i.82-107)

mouth, and after a rude threatenng, gaue him suche a bone of repentaunce to chewe vpon, for his too headlong hardynesse, as beeing left alone hauing by silence supported a pearcing rage, he resembled one of the damned soules in time past that *Iupiter* threwe into the bottomlesse lake (94)

Here, it is conceivable that the naive Ophelia has interpreted Hamlet's silence as supporting "a pearcing rage," so that, to her, he does resemble "one of the damned soules in time past that *Iupiter* threwe into the bottomless lake," inasmuch as she confesses to Polonius that Hamlet looked as if he had been "loosed out of hell / To speak of horrors." Immediately, Polonius fears that Hamlet's "madness" has been occasioned by Ophelia's "hard words," an idea which suggests the "bone of repentance" given Ponifre during his first meeting with Floria in the *Second Historie*. Consequently, Polonius repents his false judgment of Hamlet and rationalizes his error in platitudes echoing Wotton's description of Ponifre's rashness:

Hamlet

By heaven, it is as proper to our age / To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions / As it is common for the younger sort / To lack discretion (II.i.114-117)

Second Historie

. . . you esteeme me very rashe and vnaduised to plant mine affections in so hawty degree (94)

In addition, Floria rebukes Ponifre for his brand of "headstrong hardynesse," in effect suggesting that he also shows a lack of discretion and a "casting beyond himself."

The nunnery scene reveals Shakespeare's further debt to the *Second Historie*. In the play, Polonius gives Ophelia a book, presumably a prayer book, explaining his plan as follows:

We are oft to blame in this, —
'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

(III.i.46-49)

Claudius, then, speaks in an aside:

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word
(III.i.51-53)

And Hamlet's first words to Ophelia are "Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remember'd." (III.i.89-90) Thus, the theme of the nunnery scene has been introduced, both in action (Ophelia's false attitude of prayer) and in imagery ("pious action," "harlot's cheek"). Hamlet's disillusionment with women becomes paramount as the scene progresses, ending with his "nunnery" pronouncement in which chastity and vice are

contrasted in terms of the religious images initiated by Polonius and Claudius. The underlying thought in this scene is recalled in the *Second Historie* by Ponifre's meeting with the bawd ("olde mother Bee") at the church where he "prayd hir to giue him light in [his] businesse." Wotton's statements about beauty and virtue in the following passage coincide with the sentiments expressed in the nunnery scene and reflect Hamlet's various attitudes about "false show," paralleling, at the same time, his use of *double-entendres*:

. . . what demeanour or countenance soeuer Maidens shew, they are very easie to be loued, esteeming them selues louely. And yet shame founded vpon I know not what opinion of honour, suffreth them not to agree vnto that which chiefly they desire, which causeth them then to craue willingly [that] men shuld force them, thereby to shadow their willing consentes. (95)

Furthermore, Hamlet's contrast of *beauty* and *honesty* parallels Wotton's *beauty* and *bounty*, as the following passages reveal:

Hamlet

. . . the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. (III.i.111-114)

Second Historie

So as there is so great enmity betwixt beauty & bounty, as they neuer remaine together in one mansion. And al that is reported of *Lucesie*, *Cassandra*, & others, are but fayned fables. (103)

Here, the phrasing in the two passages is similar, even to the concepts of "sometime a paradox" and "fayned fables."

Of greater importance, however, is the parallel between Hamlet's problematical "god/good kissing carrion" speech and Herman's lament for women's frailty in the *Second Historie*, supporting the Q₂ and F₁ reading of *good*, as the following parallels demonstrate:

Hamlet

Ham. . . . to be honest as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a *good* kissing carrion—Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i'the sun: conception is a blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive.

(II.ii.178-185)

Second Historie

So as it is a gret ouerwening vnto a man to promise himselfe a shamefast woman, considering it is a thing rarer than the only *Phenix* . . . but the beautiful woman is like the *Ermine*, whose skinne is estimable, and carcas carion . . . wherefore we must conclude, that Nature hath engendered the worme to gnawe vpon our dead carcasses, & women to feed vpon our liuing bodies, our substance & renoume (103)

A closer analysis of the phrasing in these two passages reveals the following parallels:

Hamlet

. . . sun . . .
. . . breed . . .
. . . maggots . . .

Second Historie

. . . Nature hath . . .
. . . engendered . . .
. . . worms [equated with
women] . . .

. . . dead dog dead carcasses [equated with men] . . .
. . . god/good kissing carrion women . . . whose skinne is estimable, and carcass carion . . .

The idea of spontaneous creation and corruptible flesh is well established in Renaissance thought, and it is possible (as Warburton first suggested) to interpret Hamlet's advice about keeping Ophelia from the sun (god) in terms of this view.⁸ At the same time, the allusion to spontaneous generation contained in the anti-feminist harangue delivered by Herman in the *Second Historie* associates women with carrion and clearly supports a reading of *good* in Hamlet's controversial speech, particularly since, in both works, the idea of virtue as a rare trait precedes both discussions of corruptible flesh in the context of women's frailty.

In the *Second Historie*, Floria does not go mad, as does Ophelia in the play, but she suffers incredible torments over her loss of chastity and eventually commits suicide, thinking to save her soul. Because Ophelia's madness appears to have little to do with the plot of *Hamlet*, some have attributed it to the work of the unknown author of the *Ur-Hamlet*.⁹ On the other hand, her condition is treated farcically in the older German play in which she meets death by throwing herself from a hill, cited, also, as possible evidence for Kyd's authorship of the earlier *Hamlet* play.¹⁰ Regarding Shakespeare's drama, however, the circumstances of Ophelia's madness and death are echoed in the account of Floria's suicide in the *Second Historie*. While singing her ballads, Ophelia suddenly pauses to exclaim: "O, how the wheel becomes it! *It is the false steward that stole his master's daughter*."¹¹ To date, there has been no identification of the allusions contained in this speech. Like most editors, Craig states that there is no known story for the idea,¹² and the variorum suggests an unknown ballad containing, perhaps, a reference to a wheel (possibly to the bob and wheel device in medieval verse?).¹³ Certainly, there is no wheel in the *Second Historie*, unless it be the "tickle wheel" of life in the prefatory poems that set the mood for the story to come. Because of the many parallels that exist between *Hamlet* and the *Second Historie*, Ophelia's qualification, *the false steward who stole his master's daughter*, clearly points to Wotton's story of Floria and Ponifre as Shakespeare's source for the details of the Ophelia plot. The concept of Polonius as a false steward responsible for the ruin of a maiden is in line with Hamlet's assessment of the man throughout the play, illustrating what Isaacs calls

⁸John E. Hankins, "Hamlet's 'God Kissing Carrion': A Theory of the Generation of Life," *PMLA*, LXIV (June, 1949), 507.

⁹Sir Israel Gollancz, *The Sources of Hamlet*, p. 85; Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare's Sources*, I, 110-112; Ashley H. Thorndike, "Hamlet and Contemporary Revenge Plays," *PMLA*, XVII (1902), 129; J. Dover Wilson, "Nashe's 'Kid in AEsop': A Danish Interpretation by V. Osterberg," *RES*, XVII (October, 1942), 385-394; Sir E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, I, 412-422.

¹⁰Muir, *op. cit.*, I, 112; also, *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, edited by Thomas Marc Parrott and Hardin Craig, p. 11.

¹¹The italics are the present author's.

¹²Craig (ed.), *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, p. 932.

¹³H. H. Furness (ed.), *Hamlet, A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, I, 345.

the "Shakespearian mechanism of poetical coalescence."¹⁴ Furthermore, it is worth noting that Ophelia *sings* her ballads but *speaks in prose* her allusion to "the false steward."

The graveyard scene in *Hamlet* contains further evidence of Shakespeare's familiarity with Wotton's *Second Historie*. In Floria's story, the plot takes on the characteristics of a traditional bittersweet funeral of a young woman. Her body is conducted in state to the grave in a perfectly conventional manner. Although she is praised in the narrative for her suicide, members of a courtly group who have heard the tale later discuss the merits of suicide, echoing the arguments offered by Shakespeare's Clowns concerning Christian and heathen burial. In the *Second Historie*, the courtly discussion cites pagan authorities and alludes to "great folk" who were praised for their suicides:

For so muche as sith the one slewe hir selfe, and the other not, it ensueth there was a fault in the one and the other. And although the Historians affirme, that *Sardanapalus* neuer dyd any vertuous deede vntill he slewe him selfe, bicause such actes require great outrage: so it is that the very Pagane lawes haue allowed suche death, principallie when it commeth by the scruple of the conscience True it is, the Paganisme also pardoned those that slewe them selues for anye allowable cause, as for the sauogarde of their virginitie . . . or to knowe what men dyd in the other world To conclude, worthy *Plinie* affirmed, that the greatest benefite whiche nature hath bestowed vpon man, is to dye when he pleaseth, the which neuerthelesse is farre from the good opinion of *Plato*, who denieth that a matter of so great importance ought to be in mans power: but that whosoeuer killeth himselfe, is punishable (119)

Furthermore, the conduct of Ophelia's funeral is similar to Wotton's description of Floria's burial. Ophelia's corpse is followed to the grave by mourners, and, although her rites are "maimed," she is allowed her ". . . virgin crants, / Her maiden strewments and the bringing home / Of bell and burial." (V.i.255-257) In the *Second Historie*, "townish Dames" are Floria's mourners:

. . . al the townish Dames apprellled like Mourners both in bodye and minde, wyth greate pompe conducted the corpes (whilome the vessel of al perfections) vnto hir sepulchre: wher vppon for a perpetuall memorie of a facte so couragious was erected at the townes charges a sumptuous & stately Tombe. O happy monument, the Christall skies mollifie thy grauestone with the deawe of *Manna*, and make the odiferous roses and violets continually spryng about thee, as a crown vnto the beautie which lodge within thee, and lette the Bees and gallant Butterflies make their perpetuall abode therein to accompany the graces whiche inhabite thee. But lette thornes and thistles wither, rather than take roote neare thee, and lette all venemous and filthy wormes feare to approche the entrance of this holy Temple of Chastitie, sithence thys beautifull dame hated vice so hartily.¹⁵

¹⁴J. Isaacs, "Shakespeare's Earliest Years in the Theatre," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XXIX (1953), 126.

¹⁵Pagination in the British Museum text of Wotton's *Cupids Cautels* is often incorrect, as it is here, the result of a printer's error in setting 311 for 113; the correct citing is 113-114.

Laertes' conventional lament for his sister echoes the Arcadian rhetoric of the *Second Historie* in the account of Floria's obsequies, as revealed in the following parallel passages:

<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Second Historie</i>
Lay her i'the earth: / And from her fair and unpolluted flesh / May violets spring! (V.i.262-264)	. . . and make the odiferous roses and violets continually spring about thee (114)

His reference to "fair and unpolluted flesh" also recalls the "Temple of Chastitie" and "vesell of al perfections" in the *Second Historie*, while, in both passages, the similar employment of *spring* is arresting. In addition, the priest's reference in *Hamlet* to "shards and pebbles" injects the same threatening note into the ceremony as Wotton's "thornes and thistles" noted earlier.

A final parallel between the two works related to the burial episodes concerns Claudius' order in *Hamlet* that a monument be erected to the memory of Ophelia: "This grave shall have a living monument." (V.i.320) It is, of course, an ironic statement. However, the idea of a monument proclaimed by civil authority recalls the "perpetuall memorie" of a "stately Tombe" to be erected at the "townes charges" in Wotton's account of Floria's burial.

There is a similarity to be noted in the manner in which the two heroes receive the news of the suicide. Both men are returning from a journey—Hamlet from an interrupted trip to England, and Herman from Antwerp (from whence he, too, had planned to travel to England). In the *Second Historie*, the "bruite of [Floria's] piteous death . . . sounded in the eares of Herman." Similarly, Hamlet learns of Ophelia's death by overhearing the loud argument (*bruite?*) between Laertes and the priest at the graveside. When Herman swoons upon hearing the tragic news, his friends use "vinegar" in an attempt to revive him, echoing, perhaps, Hamlet's challenge to Laertes to drink up "eisel," usually glossed as vinegar.¹⁶ Finally, it is Horatio who lives to explain the tragedy to the court of Denmark; whereas, this lot falls to Charita in the *Second Historie*.

While there are other similarities between *Hamlet* and Wotton's tale, mainly in Hamlet's views on drinking and his relationship with Gertrude, one thinks that the high concentration of parallels occurring within the area of the Ophelia plot is conclusive evidence of Shakespeare's use of the *Second Historie* as a source for *Hamlet*.

¹⁶H. H. Furness (ed.), *Hamlet, A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, I, 408.

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