

Textual Criticism of the Last Fifteen Lines  
of Romeo and Juliet

Darlene Logan  
Teaching Shakespeare Institute  
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Romeo and Juliet: The Last Fifteen Lines

In her lecture Lynn Swift presented the argument that the love poetry of Romeo and Juliet seduces its audience. We are - Swift posited - pulled into the lovers' grand passion and become absorbed in and enthralled by the excesses of love. As Romeo and Juliet lose their rationality (if they ever had it to begin with, given their environment) during the course of the play, so we the audience lose our own through the power of Shakespeare's poetry.

Discussions with and comments from students and colleagues indicate that the lovers' plight is indeed their focus during and fascination with the play. Four of the fine prompt books (1763-1954) I perused reveal editing which cuts the end of the play closer to the death of the lovers. The omission of the last lines in later scripts and texts makes me suspect the Elizabethan audience was not as blended by love as later audiences - especially given the Elizabethans' strong anti-Catholic sentiments and fiercely nationalistic, ethnic attitude.

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Certainly they were aware of the great divergence between their culture and the Italian<sup>1</sup> - covering the spectrum of religious, social, ethical, economic, and aesthetic values. One need only glance at the dynamic richness of Italian art of the period and contrast it with the stiff and even rather deadly paintings in England at the time.<sup>2</sup> As a people, the English were suspicious of what they perceived to be the excesses of Italian society: city states immersed in Rome Catholicism and moving toward the Baroque of the Counter-Reformation.

Therefore, an Elizabethan audience would be keenly aware of even subtle criticisms of Italian society. No doubt they could resist the sirens' song of seduction, somewhat better than later audiences, and balance their perspective of the "star-crossed lovers" with a critical eye on the yuppie decadence of "fair Verona" and its "two households, both alike in dignity" with "fatal loins" and an "ancient grudge" spilling "civil blood," making "civil hands unclean."

To achieve this balance, however, they needs must listen to the play in its entirety - including the friar's final baroque and the



speeches of "glooming peace" between Capulet and Montague. For without them - at least by the Elizabethan standards of Shakespeare - the play would be incomplete, misdirected.

This paper posits, then, that these last lines of the play - and I limit this brief textual study to the exchange between Capulet and Montague and the conclusion by the Prince - complete the play and retain for the Elizabethan audience that balanced perspective: the seductive power of magnificent love poetry, to be sure, but the awareness of the tragic end of young lovers engendered by a society whose vanities, greed, and excesses victimized their own children. This fact would not have been lost on Elizabethan audiences; for them it may have been the dominant theme of the play.

The Folger 1991 text reads as follows:

Capulet O brother Montague, give me thy hand.  
This is my daughter's picture, for no more  
Can I demand.

Montague But I can give thee more,  
For I will raze her statue in pure gold,  
That whiles Verona by that name is known,  
Here shall no figure at such rate be set  
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

Capulet As rich shall Romeo by his lady's lie,  
Poor sacrifice of our enmity.

Prince A glooming peace this morning with it brings  
The sun for sorrow will not show his head.  
Go hence to have more talk of these sad things:  
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished.  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

[All exit.]

These lines are basically the same in  
the "bad quarto" (1) and the "good quarto" (2)  
from which recent editors select as the  
basis for their editions. The First Quarto  
uses dowry rather than picture, "that's all

I have "for" "no more / Can I bestow,"  
erect for ray ["her statue"], no  
 apostrophes or 's to show possession  
 in "As rich shall Romeo by his Lady lie,"  
 and the Prince's "Come, let us hence"  
 rather than the imperative "Go hence."  
 Folio, changes the second Quarto's ray  
 to raise ["her Statue"] It also omits the  
 possessive. The 1899 Variorum Edition  
 follows the First Quarto—at least  
 pertaining to these fifteen lines.  
 In tracking down the etymology of key  
 words in this passage, I discovered  
 that even these minor changes subtly  
 play up or down the connotations of  
 decadence in Veronese society.

Even at first reading we see these  
 lines are not great poetry. That seemed  
 to cease with Romeo's fantastic death  
 scene and Juliet's "Here rust, and let  
 me die." The rhymes of these lines  
 are erratic couplets, though a connection  
 exists in the pentameter breaking naturally  
 when Capulet ends his "demand" and  
 Montague picks up "but I can give...."

the beginning to replicate these lines  
as a unit, the remainder of Rome

Machinelli's lecture on the language  
and the plays' frequent use of epigrams -  
there are interjections to spread emotion  
centrally the motif I've repeated here -  
a frequent occurrence, even to ending  
the play with the abeyance we are  
Rome

That Capulet would call Montague

"brother" reminds us that Verona is a

community of close knit people where

families of dignity "have been engaged

in a civil war. Centurion brother killing

brother is a biblical allusion to Cain and

Abel. Also, Romeo, Capulet asking if

Montague "give me thy hand, we are

the sign of sealing peace and burying

that "sting" from ancient grudge.

Immediately Capulet comes in with

"There is my daughter's promise. In the

antecedent of the "the handshake?"

look with the word "promise" - a legal

term (can make wedding gift & the

bride by the groom's family, but

Conkey

appears to be one groupie trying to  
put the other in. I can give... more.

Don't the tree, Montague isn't gold -  
plating 'Gulietti' statue <sup>to ensure interesting</sup> ~~for the statue~~,  
but rather that Verona will get a  
"name": "But while Verona by that  
name is known, I shall not figure  
at much rate he set...."

Besides, the word very "has interesting  
history, and it's one most editions  
change to raise - unfortunately. In 1450  
very was used as a verb to indicate the  
application of gold-leaf to art objects; but  
another common use was negative: to  
sneer, spatter, or soil with blood -  
quite appropriate and a reminder of  
the protagonist's "civil blood."

The statue is pure gold "probably  
referred to the figure in the crypt & be  
sculpted after the death & found it  
interesting. Romeo will lie by her  
body - in the Capulet tomb? & ca.  
I can imagine the Elizabethan reacting  
negatively to this gaudy display of  
wealth heaped upon the lower



a fairly common practice in Italy at the time.

Thank. One instant allusion which

comes to mind in Henry James where

greedy soul transformed his own

daughter - from life to death in gold

that Montague was "a figure

at such rate he set "has many lengths

meanings; an obvious in monetary.

Let was the "fixed price", the rate in

"estimated worth in proportion to value."

The figure, of course, could refer to the

status of gold, but that status

represents for "at what point

could one begin to give a market value

for the invaluable worth of a child?

Gold is described by her father -

in - has a "true and faithful" -

words which had legal and market

character in the 15th or 16th

centuries. Certainly the many forms

gold had used from 15th

about Rome, especially true,

they carried connotation of love

not \$.

Not to be outdone in extravagance,

Capulet refers to the "the rich shall

Logan (10)

Romeo's by his lady's lies, / Poor  
savior of our unity." The contrast  
between the words rich and poor  
presents out. The word lie is ambiguous.

One realizes these gold-plated  
statues are to cover the tombs, lying  
side by side. Death the great  
equalizer has both sexes on their  
backs. But lie also means to  
tell untruths - a contrast to the  
"true and faithful Juliet" The  
statues - are they a monument to  
a new brotherhood between feeding  
familiar or a city's wealth? Lie  
also suggests loremaking - a sad  
ending for young lovers now to lie  
together only in death.

That these children have been  
"sacrifices" remembered throughout  
the play - in their youth and in  
the many references to Juliet's being  
a lamb.

The Prince has the final words -  
an appropriate end, but perhaps  
shows hyperbole, to Elizabethan



A "gloomy scene," he says  
appears this morning - gloomy  
- a word which suggests only reflected  
light (from the <sup>subliminal</sup> gold - ?). In any  
case, the play has abounded in  
light-dark imagery, opening for the  
unreal light - not the sun. Words  
of grief used by the Prince are sorrow,  
sad, and gloomy. Sad, of course,  
comes from "sated," and a suicide could  
indicate one has "sated" of living.  
One might see an awful pun with  
"The sun for sorrow will not show  
his head"; after all, Romeo is a  
son and will not "show his head" -  
in any case, again.

By many editors' omitting "Some  
shall be pardoned, and some  
punished," we tend to forget what  
Elizabethan knew: the play did  
not end with the lovers' death.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, I imagine the Elizabethan  
audience would have seen the  
Prince's last words as hyperbole.

For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

Come now! Wouldn't Shakespeare's  
contemporaries have seen this story -  
despite its intoxicating, seductive  
love poetry - <sup>NOT</sup> as an unsurpassed  
"story of woe"?

Inductive

Of the few prompt books &

renewed - from productions in

1763, 1812, 1882, 1904, and 1954 - only

the last included the final Capital -

Montague knew. The 1763 and 1812

productions omitted the gathering

intending and included a new script

for the Prince:

All may you mean, my lords, now

will rise too late,

These troops receive of your mutual love

from private friends what due misfortune

flows!

White in the house, the new report

is new.

Henry Irving 1882 production

at the Lyceum Theatre and with Gaiety

at the major character

forming a tableau with the Prince

stepping forward and stating as

follows:

A glooming peace this morning with  
it brings;  
The sun for sorrow will not show his  
head:

For never was a story of more woe,  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

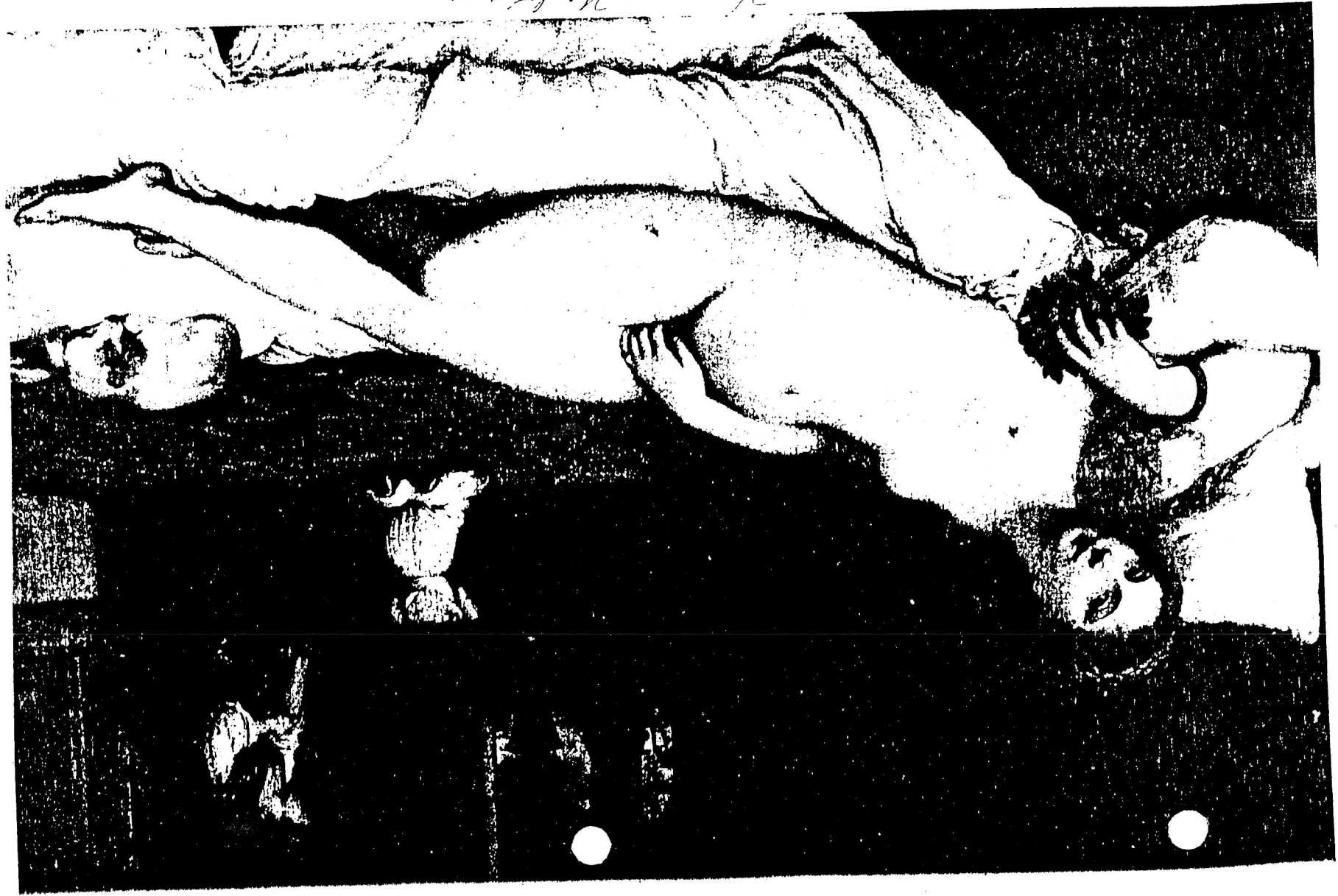
The 1904 performance at Booth's -  
Marlowe in Chicago ends even more  
abruptly - with Juliet's "There rises  
and let me die," falling on Romeo's  
body and dying "with her lips pressed  
on his" as the curtain falls.

<sup>2</sup> The following are examples of  
Italian and English painting of the  
16th century. Note the stilted,  
formal, frontal poses of the English  
painters with no use of dramatic  
lights and darks, a total lack  
of perspective, with all figures on the  
same plane whereas the Italian embody  
all of the concepts of late Renaissance  
and early Baroque in that they use  
perspective and depth. The figures

are in motion and are modeled  
in light and dark.

for Anatomical Museum of Art + Architecture

Verona, N. J.



from *Illustrations* *Dischering* 161 - 1 inch

March 1885

0.585

200000

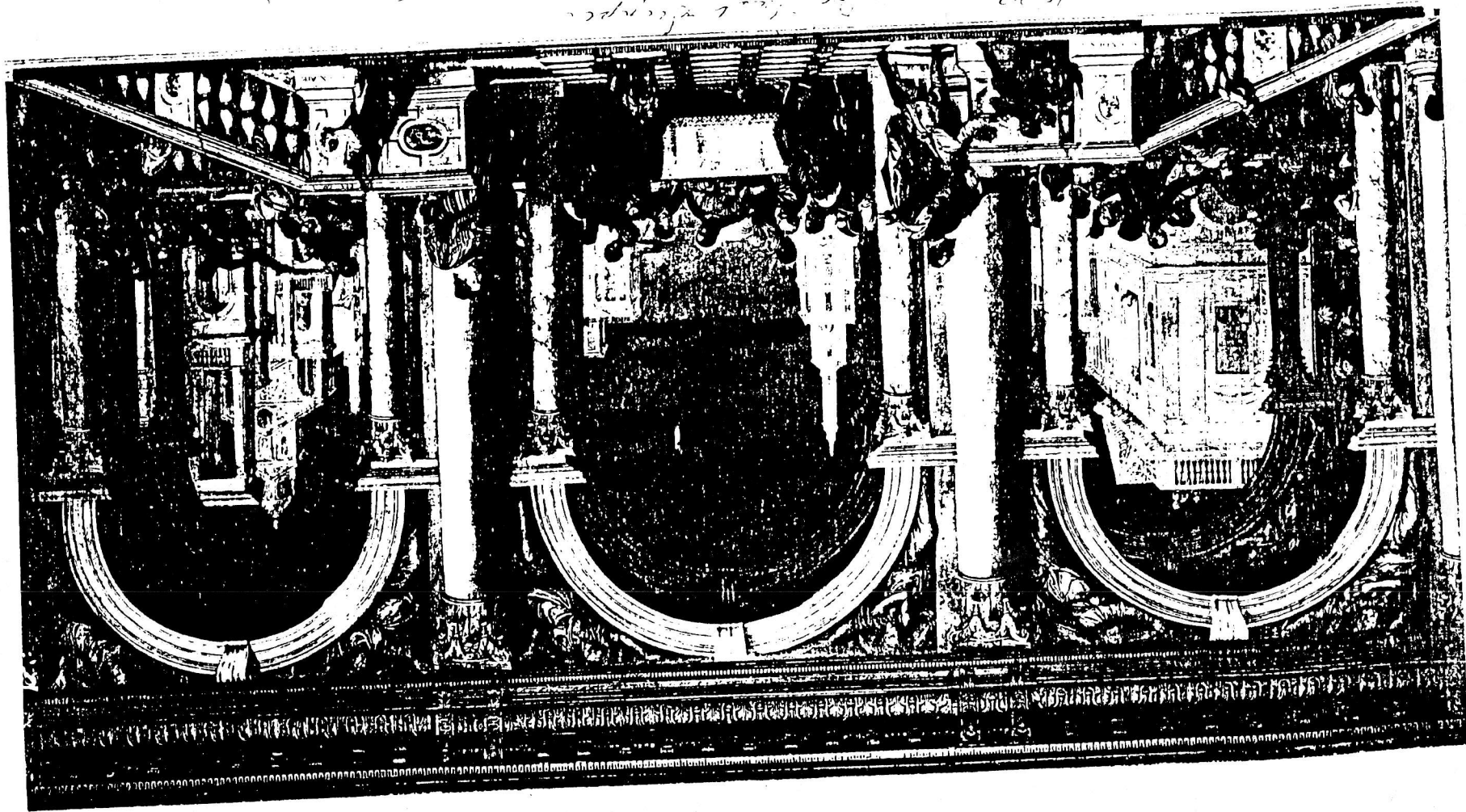




from Antiquarian Dictionary 3 Dec 1873

Antiquarian Dictionary 3 Dec 1873

1873







Note -  
 Italian painter  
 commissioned  
 by the queen.

Orazio Gentileschi, 1563-1639. 'Allegory of Peace and the Arts under the British Crown'.  
 c.1636-1638. Originally in the Queen's House, Greenwich; now at Marlborough House,  
 London. Crown copyright: Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery  
 Office.



A.  
ATA SN  
.16.

HANSEWORTH, fl. 1540-c. 1573. 'Mary Fitzalan, Duchess of Norfolk'. 35ins. x 28ins. c. 1555.  
B.A.C. Yale, Paul Mellon Fund.

from Dictionary of 16th - 17th Cent. British Painters



CORNELIUS JOHNSON (i), 1593-1661. 'The 1st Baron Capel and his family'. 63ins. x 102ins. c.1640. N.P.G.

**JOHNSON (JONSON), Cornelius (i)**

**1593 - 1661**

Portrait painter and miniaturist. Baptised London (at the Dutch Church) 14 October 1593; died Utrecht 5 August 1661. His parents had been refugees from Antwerp, but the family hailed from Cologne (and, after retiring to Holland in 1643, he signs his name as 'Jonson van Ceulen'). It is probable he was trained in Holland and that he returned to London, a fully formed painter, about 1618. The earliest (apparently) signed portrait by him is 1617, but there is a long series of signed and dated portraits (usually in the form 'C.J.') from 1618 until 1643. At first he favoured panel, but later canvas, and he always preferred the feigned oval (suggestive of miniatures, of which his own begin in 1625), and his earlier works have a high and glossy enamel. His portraits are very sensitive to character and are beautifully drawn and meticulously painted. After Van Dyck's arrival, he 'smartened' his style and even painted some full-lengths. He was sworn as 'King's Painter' in 1632. His wife's fears of the Civil War caused him to retire to Holland in October 1643 and he was at Middelburg 1644, Amsterdam 1646 and Utrecht 1652.

(Preliminary list of works in A.J. Finberg, *Walpole Soc.*, X (1922), but twice as many are now known.)

from Dict of 16th + 17th Cent Brit Painters



MARCUS GHEERAERTS (ii), 1561/62-1635/36. 'The Countess of Leicester and her children'.  
1596. By permission of Viscount de L'Isle, V.C., K.G., from his collection at Penshurst Place.

from Dict. of 16th + 17th Cent. Brit. Painting



ROWLAND BUCKETT,  
c.1570-1639. 'The  
Annunciation'. Courtesy the  
Marquis of Salisbury.  
Photograph Courtauld  
Institute of Art.



**BUCKETT (POQUET), Rowland**

c.1570 – 1639

Religious and general decorative painter. His father, a German, was made a denizen 1571/72; will proved London 6 November 1639. He was twice Master of the Painter-Stainers (1626/27 and 1630/31). He was employed by the Earl of Salisbury from 1608 for various purposes and two large religious pictures, painted for the Chapel at Hatfield 1611/12, still survive (conceivably taken from foreign engravings).

(C. Kingsley Adams and E. Auerbach, *Paintings and Sculpture at Hatfield House*, 1971; E.C.M.)

**BUCKSHORN (BOKSHOORN), Joseph**

fl.1670s

Portrait painter and copyist. Said to have been born at The Hague, to have come to England c.1670, and to have died in London aged 35 (probably before

*Sketching 16th-17th Cent*

*Joseph Bockshoorn*

<sup>3</sup> According to Spivack the rhyme O, woe, Romeo and the pun on wood appear seventy-two times.

<sup>4</sup> All word histories are from the OED.

<sup>5</sup> A few sources referred to Brooke's poem which accounted for the Nurse's banishment, the friar's banishment & a heritage and death, the apothecary's hanging for the crime of selling poison.

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- R+J, Prompt book #23. Henry  
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Theatre in London. March 8, 1882.

- R+J, Prompt book #39. L. Garrick, ed.  
London performance "with alterations  
and an added scene," 1763.

- R+J. Script same as Garrick's  
Drury Lane production, 1812.