

# Attributing John Marston's Marginal Plays

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**Abstract:** John Marston (c. 1576–1634) was a dramatist of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, known for his satirical wit and literary feuds with Ben Jonson. His dramatic corpus consists of nine plays of uncontested authorship. This article investigates four additional plays of uncertain authorship which have been associated with Marston: *Lust's Dominion*; *Histriomastix*; *The Family of Love*; and *The Insatiate Countess*. The internal evidence for Marston's hand in these four texts is examined and an analysis made of the potential divisions of authorship. The essay provides a survey of Marston's individual style by testing vocabulary; prosody; collocations of thought and language; and versification habits within both his acknowledged plays and the contested texts, in comparison to plays written by other authorship candidates.

**Keywords:** Marston; Dekker; Lording Barry; authorship attribution studies; vocabulary; collocations; versification analysis

## Introduction

Interest in the authorship of Elizabethan dramas has grown exponentially during the past several decades. Computerized studies have become a powerful means of uncovering minute details of poetic texts, and online concordances, such as *Literature Online (LION)*<sup>1</sup> and *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*,<sup>2</sup> have become available. Nonetheless, some analyses can still be made only by hand. The most productive evidence for the authorship of Renaissance plays is a linguistic approach. Scholars have been able to enhance our knowledge of early modern canons through analyses of authorial preferences for morphological, syntactic, and orthographic forms; authors' vocabularies, including

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<sup>1</sup> Available online at <http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk>.

<sup>2</sup> Available online at <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>.

preferred contractions, colloquialisms, and interjections; parallelisms of thought and language; as well as versification habits.

In the Elizabethan period, dramas were not considered works of art worthy of respectful publication and preservation. For instance, John Suckling, in his poem *A Session of the Poets* (1637), makes Ben Jonson claim that “he deserves the bays / For his were called works, while others were but plays”. Plays were often composed by two or more co-authors, copied by semi-literate scribes, prompters, or actors, and frequently published anonymously. Shakespeare has always been the primary focus of attention in attribution studies. Though the central part of his canon suggested by E. K. Chambers is still intact (Chambers 1930), new plays where Shakespeare was a co-author or later refurbisher keep being added to the canon, such as *Edward III* (1593)<sup>3</sup> and the 1602 additions to *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587). However, in recent years there has been new interest in other dramatists of the period, exemplified by editions of playwrights such as Thomas Middleton, John Webster, John Ford, and James Shirley. After all, Shakespeare did not work in a vacuum. He had notable predecessors, he was surrounded by contemporaries, and by younger colleagues who had not followed in his footsteps. Indeed, it is the minor poets who consolidate a poetic tradition, and there was a host of hard-working but less notable dramatists writing during this period, such as John Marston (1576–1634), the focus of our attention in this article. Marston was an Elizabethan and Jacobean poet, playwright, and satirist. His career as a writer lasted around a decade; he ceased writing plays after he was ordained deacon in 1609, getting a living as a parish priest.

Marston's dramatic corpus consists of nine plays of uncontested authorship. His sole-authored plays are *Antonio and Mellida* (1599); *Antonio's Revenge* (1600); *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600); *What You Will* (1601); *The Malcontent* (1603); *The Dutch Courtesan* (1604); *Parasitaster* (1605); and *The Wonder of Women* (1605). He co-authored *Eastward Ho* (1605) with Ben Jonson and George Chapman. However, the boundaries of Marston's dramatic canon remain uncertain, for he sometimes worked with collaborators and may have refurbished old plays. We examine four plays of uncertain authorship which have been associated with Marston: *Lust's Dominion* (1600); *Histriomastix* (1602); *The Family of Love* (1607); and *The Insatiate Countess* (1610). This study surveys some of the internal evidence we have discovered for Marston's hand in these texts, with the aim of providing firm foundations for future researchers to examine Marston's impact on early modern drama. We outline the complex attribution histories of the four contested plays below.

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<sup>3</sup> We have followed Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson's *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* for dating.

### *Lust's Dominion*

*Lust's Dominion; Or, the Lascivious Queen* is a revenge tragedy, printed in 1657. Gustav Cross proposed that Marston had a hand in the play in 1958 (39–61). He claimed that the play exhibited Marston's idiosyncratic vocabulary and could be identified with *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy* – for which Philip Henslowe paid Thomas Dekker, John Day, and William Haughton in 1600 – and that it was also the unnamed tragedy for which Henslowe paid Marston in September 1599 (Collier 1825: 311). Cyrus Hoy concurred that *Lust's Dominion* and *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy* were the same play, but suggested that Marston began a revision of an older play for Henslowe in 1599, which was completed by Dekker, Haughton, and Day the following year (Hoy 1980). Charles Cathcart has argued that the play originated with Marston, was revised by Dekker, Haughton, and Day, and perhaps went through a subsequent limited revision, most likely in 1606 (2001: 360–375).

### *Histriomastix*

*Histriomastix, or the Player Whipped* was entered in the Stationers' Register on October 31 1610, and published by Thomas Thorpe that same year. The anonymous play was first assigned to Marston by Richard Simpson (1878: 1–89). Simpson suggested that Marston had revised an older, lost text, a theory that convinced R. A. Small (1899: 67–90) and Chambers (1923: 17–19). Other scholars, including F. G. Fleay (1891: 69–72), Alvin B. Kernan (1958: 134–150), and George L. Geckle (1972: 205–222), argued for Marston's sole authorship. David J. Lake's linguistic analysis led him to conclude that Marston had "a main finger" in the play (1981a: 152). Marston's involvement, either as co-author or reviser, hardened into orthodoxy until Roslyn Knutson contended that the play does not belong in Marston's canon (2001: 359–377). Knutson's arguments have since been challenged by James P. Bednarz (2002: 21–51), John Peachman (2004: 304–306), and Cathcart (2008: 8–13).

### *The Family of Love*

*The Family of Love* was entered into the Stationers' Register on 12 October 1607 and was published the following year in quarto form by John Helmes. This city comedy was performed by the Children of the King's Revels. Edward

Archer ascribed the comedy to Middleton in 1656, and the play was included in Middleton's oeuvre by Alexander Dyce in 1840 and A. H. Bullen in 1885. Gerald J. Eberle contended that the play was co-authored by Dekker and Middleton (1948: 726). George R. Price argued in 1969 that neither dramatist was responsible for the play (177–178). In 1975, Lake concluded that the play contains the hands of Middleton, Dekker, and Lording Barry (91–108). In 1999, MacDonald P. Jackson, Gary Taylor, and Paul Mulholland refuted the attribution to Middleton and argued that Lording Barry was sole author (213–241). They concluded that “If, as the 1608 edition explicitly tells us, *The Family of Love* had a single author, Lording Barry is the obvious candidate, on the basis of both external and internal evidence” (227). However, Cathcart has proposed that Marston “is likely to have been an original composer of the play” (2008: 79).

### *The Insatiate Countess*

*The Insatiate Countess* was published by Thomas Archer in 1613; the title page announced Marston as the author. However, one copy of the 1613 quarto contains a cancel-leaf attributing the play to William Barksted and Lewis Machin, while a third quarto, published by Hugh Perrie in 1631, assigns the play to Marston. Shortly afterwards, Perrie provided an alternative title page, which names Barksted as the author. The confusion in title page attributions has inevitably polarized attribution scholars: Lake concluded that the play was non-Marstonian (1981b: 166–170). Conversely, Giorgio Melchiori argued that there was strong evidence for “the existence of a first draft by Marston, extending to the first part of the comic plot and to the whole of the tragic one, but limited, after Act I, to certain passages and scenes” (1984: 12). Melchiori elaborated that “Marston devised the plot and underplot of the play, wrote a first draft of Act I, part of II.i, some speeches and outlines of the rest, particularly II.ii, II.iv and, to a lesser extent, III.iv, IV.ii and V.i” (16). Cathcart has more recently proposed that the play was “written in or soon after 1601, probably during the time of Marston's connection with the Children of Paul's [...] its first published text reflects a version prepared with a view to performance at the Whitefriars by the Children of the King's Revels”, and that “Barksted and Machin treated the playscript” for “The Whitefriars performances” (2008: 59–60).

## Methods

We examined Marston’s acknowledged sole-authored plays to identify authorial markers, such as spelling distinctions; vocabulary; recurrent collocations; and versification features. Some of our methods were computational, while others involved manual analyses of old spelling texts downloaded from *LION*. We also made use of the search functions available for the database *EEBO*, within the time period 1590–1610. We explore some of our findings below.<sup>4</sup>

## Spelling Distinctions

Spelling particulars can provide a useful discriminator test. Shakespeare, for example, displays an “overwhelming preponderance of O spellings”, which helps to distinguish his hand in collaborative texts from Middleton’s, who “strongly preferred the spelling Oh” (Jackson 1979: 214–215). We tested Marston’s eight sole-authored plays and found that the dramatist seems to have overwhelmingly preferred the spelling “O”, with 680 instances, compared to 91 examples of the spelling “Oh”. Compare Marston’s disputed plays:

Table 1. “O” and “Oh” Spelling Distinctions

Play	O	Oh
<i>Lust’s Dominion</i>	4	79
<i>Histrionastix</i>	48	0
<i>The Family of Love</i>	52	1
<i>The Insatiate Countess</i>	52	6

The most notable play in this list is *Lust’s Dominion*, which is unlike any text in which Marston’s hand can be found. *The Family of Love* accords with other Marston texts in its preference for “O”, though Lording Barry also displays this preference in his *Ram Alley* (1608). *Histrionastix* and *The Insatiate Countess* are typical for Marston.

<sup>4</sup> For further explanation of the methods and data employed in this article, see Freebury-Jones, Tarlinskaja, Dahl 2018 (forthcoming).

We also tested the fifty most frequent lexical words, using the software programs *Wordstat*<sup>5</sup> and *QDA Miner*.<sup>6</sup> We examined Marston texts plus texts from the canons of Dekker, Jonson, and Day. Global mean figures for all the top occurring non-character frequent words were compared to the top fifty global mean occurring words. We compared a separate list for those words in Marston only, and then compared the top ten words for their respective commonalities. This enabled us to tell which words from the common Marston list differed from the global group common words, therefore helping us to determine “Marston-like” spelling preferences. We discovered that Marston texts favour “foole” over “fool”, “onely” over “only”, and “lord” over “lorde”. According to these orthographic tests, *Histriomastix*, *The Family of Love*, and *The Insatiate Countess* largely comply with Marston’s sole-authored texts, whereas *Lust’s Dominion* does not. The first three plays could be, at least in part, by Marston, while the latter play seems unlikely on this basis.

## Vocabulary and Diction

We examined Marston’s plays for word preferences such as “whilst” versus “while”; “among” versus “amongst”; and “betwixt” versus “between”. This test offered an insight into Marston’s linguistic habits. For example, Marston’s sole-authored plays display an overwhelming preference for “whilst”: 60:9. Nonetheless, the overall preference for “whilst” (8:5) in *Lust’s Dominion* does not provide strong evidence for Marston’s hand, given that Dekker “nearly always writes whilst” (Lake 1975: 50), and Houghton and Day also seem to have preferred “whilst”. The high count for “while” in *Histriomastix* (seven instances, more than any uncontested Marston play, as opposed to ten instances of “whilst”) could be the result of either revision or non-Marstonian authorship. The ratio for *The Family of Love* (4:9) does not support an attribution to Marston, but accords with the ratio for Lording Barry’s *Ram Alley*: 4:14. *The Insatiate Countess* displays an overwhelming preference for “while” (eight instances), with the sole appearance of “whilst” in Act I possibly pointing to Marston’s hand.

We found that Marston almost never used “amongst”: there is just one example in his sole-authored canon (in *The Wonder of Women*) as opposed to twelve instances of “among”. It is therefore surprising to discover that

<sup>5</sup> Available online at <https://provalisresearch.com/products/content-analysis-software/>.

<sup>6</sup> Available online at <https://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/>.

“amongst” features in every act of *Histriomastix* except Act II and Act V (the sole occurrence of “among” can be found in Act IV). In *Lust’s Dominion*, the single instance of Marston’s preferred form, “among”, occurs in V.i (there are three examples of “amongst” in this text overall). *The Family of Love* contains two more instances of “among” than “amongst”. Lording Barry’s *Ram Alley* has three instances of “amongst” and one “among”. *The Insatiate Countess* has one “among”, which occurs in the play’s second act, and zero examples of “amongst”.

Lake pointed out that “Marston hardly ever uses” the connective “between” (1975: 46). Our searches validate this observation: we found sixteen instances of “betwixt” in Marston’s sole-authored plays but only two instances of “between”. In this respect, *Histriomastix* does not resemble Marston, for it has no instances of “betwixt”, but two examples of “between”; nor does *The Insatiate Countess* correlate with Marston (the play contains seven examples of “between”), although Marston’s preferred form can be found in I.i, III.i, and IV.i. The sole example of “between” is found in III.v of *Lust’s Dominion*; Dekker preferred “between”. *The Family of Love* contains a single example of “betwixt” and three examples of “between”. Lording Barry uses “betwixt” on six occasions in *Ram Alley*, but not “between”.

Marston is notorious for his “indiscriminate use of Latinate terminations, especially words ending in *-ate*” (Vickers 2002: 226). We searched Marston’s uncontested plays for polysyllabic words ending in *-ate* and found that he averages one *-ate* suffix per 742–1518 words. Following Jackson, we totalled the number of words in each play and divided them by our counts for polysyllabic words ending in *-ate* (Jackson 1979). We found that *Lust’s Dominion* is again well outside the range for plays in which Marston’s hand can incontestably be found: one *-ate* suffix per 1846 words. Dekker is known to have used words of Latin origin sparingly (Pierce 1909: 5), so a low count for *-ate* supports a theory of Dekker’s being the main hand in *Lust’s Dominion*. Conversely, *Histriomastix* is commensurate with Marston’s practice of using words ending with *-ate* frequently: one per 845 words. *The Insatiate Countess* is close to Marston’s range (one *-ate* suffix per 729 words), while *The Family of Love* is doubtful, but not unlike some of Marston’s later plays: one *-ate* per 1384 words. On the basis of Latinate diction, *The Family of Love* and *The Insatiate Countess* are close to Marston’s style; *Histriomastix* unquestionably points to Marston; while *Lust’s Dominion* again does not.

## Collocations

We employed the software *Pl@giarism* to compare the four contested plays with the undoubted Marston canon, as well as the plays of other authorial candidates.<sup>7</sup> The length of the collocations was limited to three words (known as “trigrams”). This generated a list of 8092 phrases, which was then run through a program which compared all those matches with the texts in the rest of a database of forty-nine early modern author groups. We compared the matches that occurred in the Marston canon and each of the candidate texts, but nowhere else. *Histriomastix* and Lording Barry’s *Ram Alley* share the most unique trigrams plus with Marston’s uncontested plays according to this round of analysis, while *Lust’s Dominion* and *The Family of Love* share the least.

Pervez Rizvi has developed an electronic corpus of 527 plays dated between 1552 and 1657, titled *Collocations and N-grams*.<sup>8</sup> Rizvi’s results are fully automated and enable scholars to check for every contiguous word sequence (including lemmas), as well as all discontinuous word associations within a ten-word window, shared between plays. Searches of the normalized and lemmatized texts – drawn from Martin Mueller’s corpus *Shakespeare His Contemporaries*<sup>9</sup> and the *Folger Shakespeare Editions* website<sup>10</sup> – allow a wider range of matches to be discovered than by searches using original spelling or the unlemmatized forms of words. In order to broaden our analysis, we cite some of Rizvi’s data. According to this publicly accessible corpus, Dekker figures prominently in terms of texts sharing dense verbal relations (weighted according to the length and rarity of shared phrases) with *Lust’s Dominion: his The Noble Spanish Soldier* (1622) is ranked third in a summary list of 620 play pairs involving the revenge tragedy. *Old Fortunatus* (1599) is ranked twelfth. The highest ranking uncontested Marston play in this list is *Parasitaster*, ranked seventeenth.

Marston is prominent in the list of plays sharing dense verbal relations with *Histriomastix*: his *What You Will* is ranked third and *Jack Drum’s Entertainment* is ranked thirteenth. However, according to Rizvi’s data, *The Family of Love* shares even more rare verbal links with Marston: *The Dutch Courtesan* is ranked second in comparison to all drama of the period, whereas Barry’s

<sup>7</sup> Available online at <http://pl-giarism.software.informer.com/0.9/>.

<sup>8</sup> Rizvi provides detailed explanations for how these play links were recorded and weighted on his website. Available online at <http://www.shakespearestext.com/can/index.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Available online at <https://shc.earlyprint.org/shc/home.html#>.

<sup>10</sup> Available online at <http://www.folger.edu/folger-shakespeare-library-editions>.

*Ram Alley* is ranked eighty-fourth. The results for *The Insatiate Countess* are yet more striking, with Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* topping the list, followed by *Jack Drum's Entertainment* in third place. We should remember, however, that large quantities of verbal links between plays can be due to other factors than common authorship, such as genre, influence, plagiarism, and shared playing companies.

We therefore ran another batch of tests using *WCOPYFIND*,<sup>11</sup> examining both old spelling texts, drawn from *LION*, as well as normalized texts,<sup>12</sup> for accurate results, and determined the rarity of these matches using *EEBO*. This time we recorded all matches occurring only within each targeted text and the acknowledged plays of authorial candidates first performed 1590–1610. Once again, we limited our searches to matches consisting of at least three contiguous words in order to examine meaningful utterances (admitting two-word units in our study would increase the number of meaningless fragments that we would need to check against *EEBO*, e. g., “of the”, “at a”, and so forth). The purpose of this round was to focus on the quality of matches within a shorter time period. As Muriel St. Clare Byrne pointed out in a classic essay: “Quality is all-important, and parallels demand very careful grading – e. g. mere verbal parallelism is of almost no value in comparison with parallelism of thought coupled with some verbal parallelism” (1932: 24). We tested Marston, Dekker, Day, and Haughton's sole-authored plays against *Lust's Dominion*. Our analysis indicates that Haughton and Day's contributions to the revenge tragedy are minimal. Haughton was largely responsible for the scenes featuring the friars, Crab and Cole, whereas Day may have helped with the portions in which Maria encounters Oberon and the fairies, and some martial scenes in acts III and IV. Dekker's hand is evident throughout much of the play, especially in the verbal fabric of Act I, e. g., “**Death's frozen hand** holds Royal Philip's **heart**” (*Lust's Dominion*, I.ii) closely parallels Dekker's: “I faint, **Death's frozen hand** / Congeals life's little river in my **breast**” (*Old Fortunatus*, V.ii.168–169). Conversely, there are few matches between the revenge tragedy and Marston plays that suggest common authorship, despite the fact that his uncontested sole-authored canon is larger than the other candidates' unassisted plays of the period.

We discovered around thirty unique phrases shared between acknowledged Marston plays and *Histrionomastix*. Compare this figure to an undoubted text relatively close in date, *What You Will*, which shares forty-six unique phrases

<sup>11</sup> Available online at <http://plagiarism.bloomfieldmedia.com/z-wordpress/software/wcopyfind/>.

<sup>12</sup> Available online at <https://shc.earlyprint.org/shc/home.html#>.

with the remainder of Marston's sole-authored canon. The large majority of shared phrases in *What You Will* are three and four-word units, but Marston sometimes repeated much larger chunks of speech:

That casts out beams as **ardent as those flakes**  
Which **singed the world by** rash-brain'd **Phaethon**  
(*What You Will*, IV.i.195–196)

**ardent as those flames** that **singed the world by** heedless **Phaeton**.  
(*Malcontent*, I.v.44–45)

The phrase, “remember to forget”, co-occurs with *Histriomastix* (IV.i), *Antonio and Mellida* (IV.i.125), and *What You Will* (III.i.4–5). In the fourth act of *Histriomastix* we also find: “Should stand and **lick the pavement with his knee**” (IV.i). This line provides a verbal match with *The Malcontent*: “petitionary vassals **licking the pavement with** their slavish **knees**” (I.v.28–29). We find another distinctive image in the following act: “**Spit on thy bosom**; vowing here by **heaven**” (*Histriomastix*, V.i). This line is matched in *Antonio's Revenge*:

I'll skip from earth into the arms of **heaven**,  
And from triumphal arch of blessedness  
**Spit on thy** frothy **breast**.  
(II.ii.81–83)

Verbal links between *The Family of Love* and Marston exceed what we might expect for an authentic Marston text (around sixty unique links). However, as noted above, we also discovered copious phrasal relations between Lording Barry's *Ram Alley* and Marston's corpus, which suggests that matches between these texts could be due to plagiarism. Lording Barry, who was a pirate, was probably a literary pirate also; he has been accused of “shameless plagiarism” (Fraser 2015: 74–88). The verbal evidence therefore suggests that either Marston had a hand in both *Ram Alley* and *The Family of Love*, or, more likely, that Barry was a borrower who incorporated Marston's phraseology within his own passages. We have traced Lording Barry's collocations of thought and language throughout *The Family of Love*: there are over twenty unique verbal links between this play and *Ram Alley*, e. g., “**short tale to make, I** got her ring” (*Family of Love*, V.iii), which parallels, “**Short tale to make, I** fingered have your daughter” (*Ram Alley*, IV.iv.95); and “**pity the state of a poor** gentleman” (*Family of Love*, I.iii), which matches: “Dear widow, **pity the state of a young, / Poor**, yet proper **gentleman**” (*Ram Alley*, V.i.62–63).

There are close to fifty unique verbal links between *The Insatiate Countess* and Marston's dramatic corpus. The distribution of these parallelisms of thought and language (seven matches in Act I; eleven in Act II; eight in Act III; ten in Act IV; and twelve in Act V) suggest that Marston had written much of the play before it was revised. Our findings suggest that William Barksted had a hand in the beginning and the end of the play. For instance, the line, "like **beauty in a cloud**" (*Insatiate Countess*, I.i.12), closely parallels Barksted's poem, *Hiren, or The Fair Greek* (1611): "Let not thy sunne of **beauty in a cloud**" (l. 87). Parallels with Marston are also strong, e. g., "Well sir, your visor gives you **colour for what you say**" (*Insatiate Countess*, II.i.98) and *Antonio and Mellida*: "good **colour for what he speaks**" (V.ii.61). The lines, "My husband's not the man I **would have had**. / O my new **thoughts** to this brave sprightly lord" (*Insatiate Countess*, II.iii.45–46), seem to derive from Marston's lexicon: "you **should have had my thought** for a penny" (*Antonio & Mellida*, II.i.74–75). There are also several long collocations shared between Marston's acknowledged plays and passages in Act V of *Insatiate Countess*. For example, in *Antonio's Revenge* we find: "**Blest be thy hand, I** taste the joys of heaven" (V.v.36), cf. with *The Insatiate Countess*: "**Blessed be thy hand: I** sacrifice a kiss" (V.i.77). The line, "**Flesh and blood cannot endure it**" (*Insatiate Countess*, V.ii.57–58), closely parallels *Jack Drum's Entertainment*: "**flesh and blood cannot endure** your countenance" (IV.i). It thus seems that Marston's hand is very prominent in *The Insatiate Countess*.

## Versification Analysis for the Purpose of Authorship

Versification analysis is a good tool for attribution, especially if the text is long enough; unlike verbal tests, it cannot attribute a single line. The earliest parameters in versification analyses were line endings; next came the distribution of "pauses" (not to be confused with strong syntactic breaks) in the lines of the texts. "Pauses" and "strong syntactic breaks" are not synonymous. Ants Oras, the pioneer in researching the placement of "pauses" in Renaissance plays, associated "pauses" in declamation with punctuation (Oras 1960). He studied hundreds of texts, mostly dramas. "Pauses" were identified with commas; with other punctuation marks; and places where lines are divided between characters. The disadvantage of this method is the reliance on the literacy of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century scribes, prompters, and actors. A later approach developed by Marina Tarlinskaja relies on syntax (Tarlinskaja 1984: 1–26). The advantages of her methodology are objectivity

and uniformity of the approach; the disadvantage is the painstaking manual work. Tarlinskaja's versification analysis is not limited to syntactic breaks; this and other parameters of versification research as applied to Marston's plays will be described below.

## Ants Oras's Methodology Applied to Our Material

Oras studied the positions that "pauses" occur in the verse lines to answer questions of periodization and authorship. The number of "pauses" after every syllable was calculated as a percentage from the total number of all "pauses" after every syllable of the line (Oras 1960: 1–2). Oras recorded patterns for numerous Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists formed by all the "pauses" indicated by internal punctuation, including "pauses" shown by punctuation marks other than commas (Oras 1960: 3). We follow Oras's approach, recording all punctuation marks in Marston's pentameter lines. The remarkable similarities in patterns for same-author plays examined by Oras suggest that punctuation marks can help to identify a dramatist's individual prosodic characteristics. We examined the "pause" patterns for Marston's unaided texts and found that Marston was consistent in the placement of "pauses" throughout his career. All of the plays exhibit a major peak after position 4 and a minor peak after 6:

Table 2. Ants Oras Pause Patterns: Uncontested Plays

Play	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Antonio and Mellida 1–2</i>	6.8	10.2	4.4	25.3	18.0	20.1	7.0	5.9	2.3
<i>Jack Drum's Entertainment</i>	4.0	8.1	4.9	31.9	21.5	20.0	7.1	1.8	0.7
<i>What You Will</i>	2.9	9.4	5.5	26.4	19.9	19.6	8.2	5.5	2.7
<i>The Malcontent</i>	5.0	10.2	4.1	31.4	10.9	23.2	7.1	6.3	1.8
<i>Parasitaster</i>	1.4	4.9	3.5	36.7	17.9	22.6	7.4	4.9	0.7
<i>The Dutch Courtesan</i>	2.7	8.5	2.4	27.9	14.8	23.0	12.4	7.3	0.9
<i>The Wonder of Women</i>	2.4	6.9	3.3	31.8	15.6	21.4	9.4	6.7	2.4

We also examined Act I of *Lust's Dominion*, according to Hoy's hypothesis that Marston's hand can be traced in the beginning of the play (Hoy 1980: 69), as well as the three other contested texts (Oras only examined breaks dividing speakers, in just twenty lines of verse from *The Family of Love*):

Table 3. Ants Oras Pause Patterns: Contested Plays

Play	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Lust's Dominion</i> (Act I)	4.1	8.9	6.5	19.1	15.0	26.4	13.4	5.7	0.8
<i>Histrionomastix</i>	7.3	9.7	5.5	24.9	19.4	18.4	10.7	3.2	0.9
<i>The Family of Love</i>	2.7	6.8	0.9	35.2	14.2	30.1	5.5	4.6	0
<i>The Insatiate Countess</i>	2.6	7.0	4.0	25.9	22.0	24.3	9.8	3.2	1.2

*Histrionomastix* is consistent with the patterns found for unaided Marston plays. "Pauses" after syllabic positions 4 and 6 are lower than in Marston's uncontested texts (the play is filled with numerous polysyllabic words that somewhat efface the frequency of "pauses" after 4 and 6), but the overall profile fits with Marston's style. *The Insatiate Countess* also follows Marston's style.

On the other hand, our results contradict the argument that Marston's verse can be found in *Lust's Dominion*: "pauses" after position 4 are too low for Marston, while the predominant peak after position 6 is too high, quite unlike Marston. On the basis of these data, it is hard to imagine that Marston's hand can be found in the scenes analyzed. The majority of Dekker's plays, including *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) and *Old Fortunatus*, also display a major peak after position 6, as we might expect at the period of writing. Day's *The Isle of Gulls* (1606) and *Humour Out of Breath* (1607) display peaks after position 4 (Oras 1960: 53–55). The evidence for Dekker's sole authorship of Act I of *Lust's Dominion* is therefore compelling.

The "pause" profile for *The Family of Love* shows some correlations with Marston. The percentage for position 1 is identical to that found for *The Dutch Courtesan*; the percentage for "pauses" after the second syllable is very close to *The Wonder of Women*; and the percentage of "pauses" after syllable 4 accords with Marston. But there are some major differences: the dramatist(s) responsible for this play employed "pauses" after position 6 far more frequently than Marston, whose style remains in the pre-1600 versification mode. Having just one Lording Barry play for comparison problematizes analysis of this kind, but the profile for *Ram Alley* corresponds to that in *The Family of Love*: a high peak at position 4, closely followed by position 6. Our tests so far do not rule out Marston's authorship of *The Family of Love*, but neither do they rule out Barry.

## Marina Tarlinskaja's Tests Applied to Our Material

Tarlinskaja's versification analysis includes twenty parameters. Some of them are used in this essay. Let us start with syntactic breaks. The analysis of syntactic breaks is based solely on syntax, not on punctuation, as it had been in Oras's analysis. The approach based on syntax makes it possible to disregard punctuation inserted by copyists and later editors. There are many nuances in syntactic affinity between adjacent words in connected speech, but only three degrees are differentiated: (1) close links, marked by [/], as between a modifier and a modified noun, or a verb and its direct object, e. g., "the humble / slave, desire / increase"; (2) medium links that are also medium breaks, marked [//], as between the subject and the predicate; a verb and an adverbial modifier of time or place; or adjacent words that have no immediate syntactic links, e. g., "thy fingers // walk; alive // that time; My heart // my eye // the freedom / of that right"; and (3) strong breaks, as between the author's direct speech, or between two sentences, e. g., "'For shame,' /// he cries, /// 'let go, /// and let me / go'". The links and breaks are calculated as percentages from the total number of lines. In Elizabethan times, the most frequent break fell after syllable 4, emphasizing the hemistich segmentation 4+6 syllables. After 1600 the most frequent break began to fall after syllable 6, or even 7. The line segmentation became 6+4 or 7+3 (or 7+4).

Another parameter of analysis is stressing. We separate the abstract metrical scheme from actual stresses in actual lines of the metrical text, in our case, iambic pentameter. Metre is a scheme "distilled" from many actual texts. It is a string of metrically weak (W) and metrically strong (S) syllabic positions: W S W S W S. Positions W tend to be filled with unstressed syllables, and positions S tend to be filled with stresses. "Tend" means that W allow some stresses, and S allow some unstressed syllables. Metre also incorporates rules that the author is aware of, so he chooses a limited set of words and word combinations in a particular syntactic arrangement. For example, "The divine Desdemona" is permissible for Shakespeare, but "Who's divine? You refer to Desdemona?" is not: "divine" on positions SW cannot occur before a strong syntactic break.

The problem of stressing monosyllables is particularly challenging; our approach is explained in detail in Tarlinskaja 1976 and 2014. Here is the explanation in a nutshell: monosyllables have no sense-differentiating stress, as do polysyllables (cf. "a PREsent" – "to presENT"), therefore they easily acquire and lose phrasal accentuation. However, in the flow of speech some monosyllables tend to be unstressed, others tend to be stressed, while yet others can be either stressed or unstressed. Thus, in versification analysis, all monosyllables are

formally divided into three stressing categories: always stressed (on S as well as on W): nouns, lexical verbs, adjectives, adverbs, numerals, pronominal nouns; always unstressed: articles, prepositions, the particle “to”, conjunctions; and “ambivalent”: stressed on S and unstressed on W, such as pronouns. In the “ambivalent” category, for a more nuanced analysis, we differentiate unstressed pronouns on S that are placed immediately before its syntactic partner, and those that are divided from its syntactic partner by a phrase. Cf. stressing of the pronoun “I”, in the lines: “Most true it is, that I have looked on truth” and “When I against my self with thee partake”. Pronouns are considered stressed in the cases of overt contrast (but not our subjective “gut feeling”): “Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind”. Stressing also depends on the period: in the early Elizabethan iambic pentameter, pronouns occurred on S more often than in later periods and were probably felt to be stressed stronger in the minds of Elizabethans than the Jacobean.

The three groups of monosyllables are, as stated above, a formal differentiation. In recitation, many variants of stressing are possible. Nouns on W, for example, may lose their stress. But formally they are considered stressed, otherwise every person will stress texts subjectively, and the results will never be comparable. Thus, in John Donne’s line, “Makes mee her Medall, and makes her love mee”, all four last words are counted as stressed: “MAKES HER LOVE MEE”, even though in recitation “makes” and “love” may lose their stress. But both “makes” and “love” belong to the group “always stressed”, so we count them as “stress” on W positions 7 and 9. To get a picture of how a text is stressed, we calculate the percentage of stresses on each syllabic position (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6...) from the total number of lines. The resulting string of numbers is called the stress profiles of the text. It is convenient to tabulate stressing on S and W separately.

We also examine phrasal stressing: a stress on W adjacent to the stress on S on its left or its right, e. g., “dear LOVE”, and “with TOO much pain”. In the first example, the stress on W occurs to the left of the stress on S, in the second example, to the right. The first type of micro-phrase is conditionally called proclitic, the second type is enclitic. The ratio of enclitic phrases (calculated per 1000 lines) is a particularly good way of differentiating authorship, e. g., the scenes belonging to Shakespeare and John Fletcher in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613).

Among other parameters of analysis are the types of line endings, syllabic, accentual, and syntactic. Syllabic types fall into masculine, feminine, dactylic, and very rarely hyperdactylic. Masculine endings can be stressed and unstressed, and the unstressed syllable on position 10 may be created by a polysyllabic word or by a weakly stressed or unstressed monosyllable, such

as a preposition or a conjunction. Feminine endings can be simple (“LOVing”) or compound (“LOVE it”). Compound feminine and dactylic endings can be light (no stress on syllable 11) and heavy (with a stress on syllable 11), e. g., “in LOVE too”. Syntactically, line endings can be end-stopped or run-on.

Additional parameters include the frequency of syllabic suffixes *-ed* and *-eth*; or disyllabic variants of the suffixes *-ion* and *-ious*. The disyllabic variant of *-ion* was still used in the seventeenth century; Suckling, for example, rhymed “go on” with “pre-sump-ti-on” in *A Session of the Poets*: “Apollo stopped him there, and bade him not go on, / ’Twas merit, he said, and not pre-sump-ti-on”. Other features include the frequency of pleonastic verb “do”; grammatical inversions; the frequency of alliterations; and the use of deviations from the metre to emphasize the meaning of the micro-situation, for example, “Duck with French nods and apish courtesy”, instead of something more “iambic”, like: “Or duck with nods and apish courtesy”. Verbs occur in rhythmical italics three times more frequently than in the text outside the italics, and in the majority of cases these are verbs of action (Tarlinskaja 2014: 275).

## Syntactic Breaks in Marston Plays

In Elizabethan verse before 1600, the most frequent syntactic break fell after syllabic position 4, while after 1600, in Jacobean plays, the break fell after syllable 6 and even after 7 (cf. with Oras, above). For comparison with Marston's texts we shall look at Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1595), *Henry V* (1599), and *King Lear* (1605), because Shakespeare's versification style reflects the general tendencies of the periods. *Antonio and Mellida* was taken as a sample of Marston's style. Lording Barry's *Ram Alley* was analyzed for comparison with *The Family of Love*, and Dekker's *The Noble Spanish Soldier* for comparison with *Lust's Dominion*.

Table 4. Strong Syntactic Breaks after Syllables 2–9, in % from the Total Number of Lines

Play	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Tamburlaine 1</i> (1587)	6.5	2.2	<u>12.0</u>	6.7	4.6	2.0	1.7	0.2
<i>Antonio</i> (1599)	11.5	4.5	<u>23.5</u>	16.8	14.6	7.7	4.7	2.4
<i>Histrionmastix</i> (1599)	7.7	4.4	<u>10.8</u>	<u>10.1</u>	<u>9.4</u>	5.4	1.9	0.7
<i>Lust's Dominion</i> (1600)	7.8	4.1	13.0	12.6	<u>23.8</u>	11.5	5.9	1.1
<i>The Family of Love</i> (1607)	5.7	1.1	<u>22.2</u>	10.4	<u>23.6</u>	3.2	4.6	0.0
<i>Ram Alley</i> (1608)	8.2	5.6	<u>26.6</u>	8.2	<u>25.2</u>	10.2	5.6	3.9
<i>Countess</i> (1610) Act 1	6.6	2.3	<u>18.8</u>	8.8	11.0	3.7	2.2	0.7
<i>Countess</i> Act 5	6.0	5.4	<u>20.7</u>	12.3	14.3	6.9	3.7	1.0
<i>Romeo</i> (1595)	10.2	4.8	<u>25.7</u>	13.0	14.0	4.4	3.4	1.6
<i>Henry V</i> (1599)	6.6	3.2	<u>14.3</u>	<u>11.1</u>	<u>13.5</u>	6.8	2.8	1.0
<i>King Lear</i> (1605)	8.2	4.8	18.2	15.2	<u>27.7</u>	15.4	8.9	3.7
Dekker, <i>Soldier</i> (1622)	7.2	4.2	14.4	12.8	<u>23.2</u>	16.8	8.0	2.6

Marston's tendency is much like early Elizabethans, in particular Christopher Marlowe's, though all of Marston's plays were composed close to or after 1600. Marlowe uses many polysyllabic words, particularly in *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587); therefore, though most breaks fall after syllable 4, the peak is not too high. Shakespeare's plays follow the trends of the periods: a peak after syllable 4 in the early *Romeo and Juliet*; breaks after 4, 5, and 6 are almost equal in *Henry V*, a transitional play; and a peak after syllable 6 in the later *King Lear*. Breaks in later Shakespeare, as in most other post-1600 authors, become more frequent towards the end of the line. Dekker's *The Noble Spanish Soldier* displays a firm peak of breaks after syllable 6. In Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* the major peak of syntactic breaks falls after syllable 4 in almost a quarter of the lines.

Now look at Marston's questionable plays. *The Insatiate Countess*, Act I (all) and Act V (ending with the execution of the countess), though a Jacobean play, is unquestionably Marstonian, with a peak after syllable 4. *Histrionmastix* has a high peak of breaks after syllables 4 and 6 in an almost equal proportion, so this test does not tell us much about its authorship. *Lust's Dominion* is completely unlike Marston with its major peak of breaks after syllable 6. It reminds us of Dekker, as has been suggested above. The places of major breaks in *The Family of Love* are very much like Barry's *Ram Alley*: their breaks create firm maxima after syllables 4 and 6.

## Stressing

Table 5. Stressing on Positions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 (in % of all Lines; Minima Underlined)

Play	2	4	6	8	10
<i>Tamburlaine 1</i>	<u>70.2</u>	86.9	<u>66.3</u>	79.0	<u>77.2</u>
<i>Antonio and Mellida</i>	<u>75.6</u>	92.1	<u>70.6</u>	86.9	<u>81.8</u>
<i>Lust's Dominion</i>	72.1	83.8	<u>74.2</u>	<u>74.9</u>	86.2
<i>Histriomastix</i>	77.8	87.9	<u>76.5</u>	81.1	<u>79.9</u>
<i>The Family of Love</i>	86.4	91.4	<u>78.1</u>	83.5	91.4
<i>Ram Alley</i>	74.1	87.9	<u>79.9</u>	<u>78.1</u>	94.4
<i>Countess Act I</i>	63.6	87.5	<u>63.6</u>	76.5	85.7
<i>Countess Act V</i>	69.5	87.2	<u>66.0</u>	77.8	82.3
<i>Romeo</i>	66.7	87.2	<u>68.3</u>	73.6	88.5
<i>Henry V</i>	63.5	81.7	<u>70.8</u>	<u>71.9</u>	86.8
<i>King Lear</i>	69.9	82.0	77.6	<u>67.8</u>	95.7
Dekker, <i>Soldier</i>	68.1	84.5	80.4	<u>73.6</u>	90.6

*Antonio and Mellida* and *Histriomastix* display, similarly to *Tamburlaine*, a wave-like tendency of stressing on S: the “dips” are on syllables 2, 6, and 10. Both *The Family of Love* and particularly *The Insatiate Countess* resemble Marston's style, with a “dip” on 6, but the stressing on syllable 10 is higher and on 8 lower than in Marston's earlier plays, because there are fewer polysyllables at the end of its lines, such as long names of personages (*Antonio and Mellida*) and Romance borrowings (*Histriomastix*), and more verse lines scattered among long passages of prose and non-iambic verse (*The Family of Love*), therefore the ends of iambic pentameter lines need to be made clearly marked by a stress.

A missing stress on syllable 6 is often accompanied by grammatical symmetry, expressed most often in two attributive phrases. In *Histriomastix*, symmetrical rhythmical-syntactic lines, or “clichés” (Gasparov 1999), constitute 13.5% of all lines with an omitted stress on 6, e. g., “Then sacred knowledge by divinest things” (*Histriomastix*, I.i); “All other pity is but foolish pride” (III.i); and “Th'impatient spirit of the wretched sort” (III.i). The same types of lines are obvious in *The Insatiate Countess*: “Of Dian's bowstring in some shady wood” (I.i.329); “Some little airing of his noble guest” (I.i.417). Here too Marston followed earlier playwrights. There are also symmetrical rhythmical-syntactic patterns of other types.

## Other Features of Versification Analysis

Table 6. Additional Features, per 1000 Lines

Play	Procl.	Encl.	Pleon. “do”	Syllabic <i>ed, eth</i>	Disyllab. <i>ion, ious</i>	Gramm. invers.	Rhythm- meaning	Alliter.
<i>Tamburlaine I</i>	<u>161.4</u>	<u>11.1</u>	<u>10.1</u>	<u>38.0</u>	<u>13.4</u>	<u>27.5</u>	<u>70.6</u>	<u>237.5</u>
<i>Antonio</i>	446.3	75.1	16.7	45.9	13.6	10.4	100.1	137.6
<i>Histrionmastix</i>	343.5	57.8	19.8	19.8	17.8	25.7	64.3	177.2
<i>Lust’s</i>	<u>508.8</u>	56.5	31.8	<u>0.0</u>	<u>3.5</u>	21.2	95.4	144.9
<i>Family</i>	309.0	32.1	39.4	21.5	<u>7.1</u>	21.5	35.8	111.1
<i>Ram Alley</i>	389.8	60.5	16.9	7.3	4.8	7.3	48.4	41.2
<i>Countess Act I</i>	330.9	55.1	14.7	11.0	11.0	33.1	154.6	117.6
<i>Countess Act V</i>	305.4	20.0	29.5	29.5	10.0	39.4	98.5	113.3
<i>Romeo</i>	370.3	49.6	36.3	23.5	3.7	12.8	62.2	121.4
<i>Henry V</i>	322.9	33.4	40.1	26.7	13.9	37.3	138.6	206.6
<i>King Lear</i>	363.7	39.4	35.8	11.8	1.6	36.4	116.1	161.8
<i>Dekker, Soldier</i>	<u>457.8</u>	96.4	18.1	<u>0.0</u>	<u>6.0</u>	30.3	84.3	101.1

Marston’s line endings are predominantly masculine in all plays except the later text, *The Insatiate Countess*: 17.3 and 19.2%. Among them we find compound feminine, mostly light, but in three lines they are heavy, with a stressed monosyllable on position 11. Run-on lines are particularly numerous in *Antonio and Mellida* and *The Family of Love* (21.5 and 29.2%). Here *The Family of Love* resembles Marston’s style.

Marston’s plays contain numerous stresses on W: the indices of proclitic phrases are in the mid-300s in *Antonio and Mellida*, *Histrionmastix*, *The Insatiate Countess*, *The Family of Love*, and also in *Ram Alley*. *Lust’s Dominion* stands out: its index is over 500 per 1000 lines, similarly to Dekker. The indices of enclitics are within a narrow range, except for *The Insatiate Countess Act I*, where the ratio of enclitics is much lower than Marston. *The Family of Love* is

similar to *The Insatiate Countess* Act I. The ratio of pleonastic “do” is relatively low, the two exceptions being *The Family of Love* and *Lust's Dominion*.

A difference exists in the ratio of syllabic *-ed* and disyllabic *-ion*. *Lust's Dominion*, exactly like Dekker's *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, has no syllabic *-ed* at all, and very few disyllabic variants of *-ion*, again, like Dekker's play. Notice that Barry's *Ram Alley*, similarly to Dekker's play, has few syllabic *-ed*, few disyllabic suffixes *-ion*, but numerous enclitic phrases. *The Family of Love* resembles both Marston and Lording Barry's *Ram Alley*. *The Insatiate Countess* reminds us of *Antonio and Mellida*, Marston's earlier play.

Marston was fond of making polysyllabic words even longer: in addition to the cases of words with disyllabic *-ion*, we find “phy-si-ci-an”, “mar-ri-age”, “for-be-a-rance”, and “ven-ge-ance”. Such cases are few in *Ram Alley*, which is unlike the Marstonian mode, and there are none in *Lust's Dominion*, which resembles Dekker's habits in other ways too. Rhythmical italics are particularly frequent in *Antonio and Mellida* and *The Insatiate Countess*, plays about love and death. Examples include: “Cropped by her hand” (V.i.63); “Mixed in his fear” (V.i.171); and “down with my ashes sink” (V.ii.218), all from Act V of *The Insatiate Countess*.

## Conclusions

Of the four uncertain plays, we assign two to Marston. Our findings suggest that *Histrionmastix* can be attributed to Marston, though it seems to contain some non-Marstonian material, probably as later alterations. The play shows affinities with Marston in its Latinate diction, the stress profile, and recurrent collocations. The play was probably composed wholly by Marston, but at some point the text might have been “lightly overwritten by another hand” (Cathcart 2008: 10).

Our findings for *The Insatiate Countess* largely agree with Melchiori's arguments for Marston's authorship, but we have also detected lexical evidence for his hand in II.iii; IV.i and IV.iv; and some speeches in Act V (V.i and V.ii), which might explain why we find “Marston's initial choice” of character names in V.ii (Melchiori 1984: 16). The evidence for recurrent collocations is generally supported by the co-occurrence of Marston's preferred word forms, such as “whilst” and “betwixt”, although it seems possible that substantial overwriting diluted the evidence for Marston's linguistic habits. Our findings suggest that Barksted, and not “some hack writer” (Melchiori 1984: 16), was largely responsible for the last scene of the play, while our verbal evidence corroborates with

Martin Wiggins's observation that Act I seems "to have been worked over by Barksted" (Wiggins 2015: 43). Our versification analysis, however, attributes Act I to Marston alone.

*Lust's Dominion* and *The Family of Love* suggest Marston's dramaturgical and phraseological influence, but it seems unlikely that Marston actually had a hand in these plays. Dekker seems to have compiled his co-authors' sections of *Lust's Dominion* for a final copy of the whole play, sometimes touching up dialogue, while Haughton and Day probably helped with some episodes. Our battery of tests rules Marston out as a serious candidate for the authorship of *Lust's Dominion*. *The Family of Love* is akin to Lording Barry in terms of the play's preference for "while" over "whilst", and the high count for "amongst", while spelling preferences do not correspond with Marston's accepted stage plays. The stress profile for the play is not unlike Marston's, but its placement of syntactic breaks is similar to Barry's *Ram Alley*. Furthermore, both *The Family of Love* and *Ram Alley* share dense verbal relations with Marston's oeuvre, indicative of close imitation. Our results suggest that the author of *The Family of Love* was "highly influenced by Marston's own writings" (Cathcart 2008: 89), and that its author was probably Lording Barry. We suggest that the dramatic relationship between Marston and Barry should be explored further. Having employed diverse and mutually-enforcing approaches in order to ascertain the limits of Marston's dramatic corpus, we hope that future researchers will afford him the critical attention he deserves.<sup>13</sup>

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