

## Question 25

Is it possible that Shakespeare collaborated in minor ways with other authors?

Eric Rasmussen

We know from a wide body of evidence, related both to Shakespeare and to other theater workers (notably the stable of playwrights that worked for Phillip Henslowe at the Rose Theater), that drama was, as it remains, an essentially collaborative art form. Shakespeare was a frequent collaborator in the writing of scripts, especially at the beginning and end of his career. Recent attribution studies have provided compelling evidence that Shakespeare got a toehold in the profession by contributing a few scenes to plays such as *Edward III* and the *Arden of Faversham* in the early 1590s. Shakespeare then collaborated with George Peele on *Titus Andronicus*, with either Thomas Nashe or Thomas Kyd on *1 Henry VI*, with Thomas Middleton on *Timon of Athens*, and with George Wilkins on *Pericles*. He latter passed the baton of principal dramatist for the King's Men to John Fletcher by collaborating with the younger playwright on *Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and the lost *Cardenio*.