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Teaching Shakespeare Through Performance

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Source of *The Taming of the Shrew*

As with many of William Shakespeare's plays, a multitude of sources contribute to the makeup of *The Taming of the Shrew* (*The Shrew*), an early romantic comedy written in 1591 (Thompson 108). Shakespeare drew from many sources to create the main plot of his drama: the taming of Kate and her marriage to Petruchio, and the two subplots, the story of Christopher Sly and Lucentio's courtship of Bianca. To avoid this source study of *The Shrew* from "developing into a fixation that outgrows its purpose," (Wiggins 221) this paper will only discuss major sources Shakespeare borrowed from to create the aforementioned plot and two subplots of *The Shrew*. Specifically, he borrowed from George Gascoigne's *Supposes* when building his main plot. He took ideas from the Arabian Night story to create the induction and used the shrew taming folk tale to develop the plot concerning Kate's taming.

Before launching into the origins of Shakespeare's play, one must consider whether *The Shrew* is a derivative of *The Taming of a Shrew* (*A Shrew*) or *The Shrew*. To complicate matters further, there has also been much debate over whether or not both *The Shrew* and *A Shrew* were derivatives repeated word of a "supposedly" lost play, *Ur Shrew*. To put this argument at