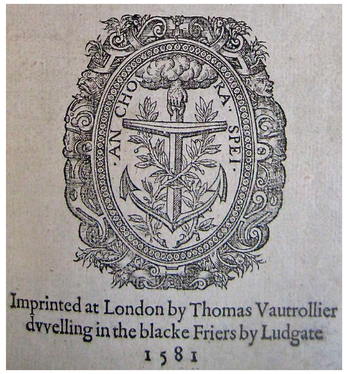
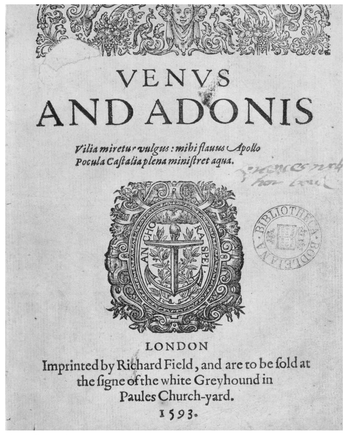
The Tudors and Stuarts



Thomas Vautrollier arrived in England from Troyes in 1562 and established one of the greatest printing houses of the Elizabethan age. He made vital contributions to the intellectual culture of Elizabethan England by producing some of the most important works on education, and key translations of the protestant theologians Martin Luther and Jean Calvin. He was one of the first to print music in England.

At a time when English spelling was still chaotic, Vautrollier's publication of Richard Mulcaster's *Elementarie* offered a standardised spelling for 8,000 words, helping to stabilise the language.

Shakespeare's prose poems Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece were published in Vautrollier's workshop by his apprentice and eventual successor Richard Field.



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They were dedicated to the 21 year old, handsome and charismatic Earl of Southampton, the object of the Bard's further poetic adoration in the sonnets. The original stories were drawn from Ovid's Metamorphoses, also published by Vautrollier.

Shakespeare refers with sympathy to the plight of the Huguenots in Sir Thomas More, a co-authored play involving immigration and civil disobedience:

"Imagine that you see the wretched strangers, Their babies at their backs and their poor luggage, Plodding to th' ports and costs for transportation."

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John de Critz the Elder (attr), Portrait of Henry Wriotheseley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, c. 1590.

From 1604 Shakespeare lodged in Silver Street, Cripplegate with the Mountjoys, a Huguenot family of tiremakers (ladies' ornamental headgear), who had fled Picardy in the early 1580s.

From Silver Street it was a short walk to Blackfriars, where Vautrollier had established his printing works and bookshop. Shakespeare obtained key source material from books published there, including Cicero's Orations and Plutarch's Lives.

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The Cobbe Portrait of William Shakespeare.

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Isaac Oliver: Countess of Suffolk

Isaac Oliver (1565-1617), one of the most celebrated of Tudor miniaturists, was born in Rouen into a Huguenot goldsmith's family. They settled as refugees in England in c1568 and although Oliver was fully naturalized in 1606, he considered himself French first and foremost; his command of English always remained shaky.

His son, Peter (1594-1647), was also a miniaturist.

Nicholas Lanier (1588-1666) was born in London to a family of Huguenot musicians from Rouen. Three generations of the family served British royalty. This truly Renaissance man was a composer, lutenist, singer, viol player, art collector, painter, linguist and spy.

He became the first 'Master of the King's Musick' and helped build up Charles I's vast collection of art by negotiating the purchase of many important paintings and sculptures from the bankrupt Duke of Mantua.

Nicholas Lanier had long provided music for court entertainments, but it was during his art-buying visits to Italy that he absorbed new musical ideas. He introduced to England the concept of an all-sung, Italian-style entertainment, sowing the seeds of the English opera tradition which flowered later in the century with Henry Purcell.

Lanier facilitated Anthony Van Dyck's move to England after his brilliant portrait of Lanier determined Charles I to secure Van Dyck's services as court painter in 1632.

One of Lanier's direct descendants was Tennessee Williams, still signing his typescripts as Thomas Lanier Williams in the 1930's.

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Sir Anthony van Dyck: self portrait

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Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599 - 1641)
Study for the Portrait of Nicholas Lanier