



# Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice  
of the  
Shakespeare  
Fellowship"

Vol.3:no.3

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments..."

Spring 2004

## In Search of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

By C. V. Berney

Ursurping powers start wars and plot assassinations while two minor characters participate without affecting or even understanding the historic events taking place around them. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern thus seem to embody the situation of the average citizen in today's world, and for some have become the most poignant figures in *Hamlet*. They are twentieth-century characters trapped in a sixteenth-century drama, a quality Tom Stoppard took as the basis for his 1967 play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

Oxfordian scholars have long recognized that most of the characters in *Hamlet* can be linked to real-life historical characters: Polonius with Burghley, Gertrude with Elizabeth, Claudius with Leicester, and so forth. Eva Turner Clark provides a list of such identifications, but omits the ill-fated Danish courtiers.<sup>1</sup> Is it possible to find their real-life equivalents? There should be plenty of candidates, since the families Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstierne (to use the Danish spellings) were among the most powerful in Denmark, and had many members in government and court circles. More immediately, how did the author of *Hamlet* learn of these real-life Danish names? Several Stratfordian scholars have speculated about this. Their suggested scenarios are discussed below.

**Scenario 1: the Tycho Connection.** In 1938 the indefatigable orthodox scholar Leslie Hotson published a book entitled *I, William Shakespeare, Do Appoint Thomas Russell, Esquire*. This sounds like a quote from Shakespeare's will, but as the indefatigable heterodox scholar Richard Whalen points out,<sup>2</sup> it is not. Hotson identified a Thomas Russell of Strensham as one of the overseers of the will of William Shakspeare of Stratford, the man to whom the works of Shakespeare are commonly attributed. He further determined that Russell's stepson was Leonard Digges (1588-1635), whose verse "To the Memorie of the deceased Authour Maister W. Shakespeare" is in the preface to the First Folio and contains the phrase "thy Stratford Monument," one of the foundation stones of the Stratfordian attribution. On the basis of this connection, Hotson posits a close friendship between Leonard  
*(Continued on page 12)*

## 8th Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference



*Edward de Vere Studies Conference keynote speaker Mark Anderson presented material from his forthcoming 2005 biography of Edward de Vere, "Shakespeare" by Another Name.*

The 2004 edition of the Edward de Vere Studies Conference (April 15th to 17th, Concordia University, Portland, OR) continued in its now well-established tradition of provocative papers, interesting special events and a full-schedule that can leave attendees—like marathon runners—tired but deeply satisfied by the event's conclusion.

This year the featured event for the weekend was a much-anticipated confrontation with Prof. Alan Nelson over his 2003 Oxford biography, *Monstrous Adversary*. A full afternoon was set aside for the "Interrogation of Alan Nelson," but the 3-part session did not go as expected  
*(Continued on page 8)*

### News/Commentary

## The Interrogation of Prof. Alan Nelson

The most anticipated event at the 8th Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference unfortunately turned out to be a bit less productive than expected. Billed as the "Interrogation of Dr. Alan Nelson" in the program, the afternoon-long event was divided into three parts: first, a one-on-one examination of Nelson by Dr. R. Thomas Hunter (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan), to be followed by questions from a panel of prominent Oxfordians (Richard Whalen, Mark Anderson, Stephanie Hughes, Hank Whittemore and Bill Farina), and finally by a Q&A session with the audience of conference attendees.

But the afternoon got off on the wrong foot with Dr. Hunter's  
*(Continued on page 7)*

## Letters:

To the Editor:

As professional linguists, we wish to point you to one passage that touches on language in Nelson's recent *Monstrous Adversary*. We do so by way of emphasizing our own profession only because Nelson condescendingly dismisses Oxfordians as amateurs, while these passages all cogently reveal that he himself exhibits a worse than amateurish approach to comprehending the language of Oxford's poetry. Additional linguistic points will be made at a later date.

On page 159 of his recently published biography of Oxford, Nelson authoritatively asserts: "Unnatural stresses occur not infrequently in Oxford's poems," citing Oxford's iambic 'LEADS ME' as "unnatural" in contrast to 'LEADS me,' and Oxford's 'drowns ME' as "unnatural" versus 'DROWNS me.'

Has the professional failed to read Shakespeare's sonnets with care? Apparently so, for the following lines drawn from Sonnet 133 and Sonnet 143 place Shakespeare squarely in the same league with Oxford.

Sonnet 133: Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard,  
Sonnet 143: And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind.

By Nelson's fixation on the iambic foot, we find Shakespeare's "unnatural" 'keeps ME' and 'kiss ME' in contrast to what Oxford's critic considers natural: 'KEEPS me' and 'KISS me.' The same point can be made by altering the pronoun, as we encounter examples wherein 'hast HER,' 'love HER,' and 'lose THEE' are "unnatural" feet in Shakespeare's verse.

Sonnet 42: That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,  
Sonnet 42: Thou dost love her, be cause thou know'st I love her,  
Sonnet 42: If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,

Additional examples confirm Nelson's carelessness, marking him as a bona fide

amateur. Thus, in *The Rape of Lucrece*, we encounter lines such as the following, again squaring with Oxford's verse: 'This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.' By Nelson's reasoning, this line is unnatural in the precise sense that he claims for Oxford's verse, since the iambic stress pattern is 'doth ME.'

Or turning to *A Lover's Complaint*, we meet with the following example, where 'made HIM' is an instance of Nelsonian unnaturalness: 'Love lacked a dwelling and made him her place.' Just so, passing to Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, we find the following related example: 'He will not manage her, although he mount her.' By Nelson's reasoning, the first instance of 'her' is stressed and therefore "unnatural", whilst the second is not, and therefore is natural. In the same vein within the same narrative poem, we find:

He kisses her, and she by her  
good will  
Will never rise, so he will kiss her  
still.

The first line of this couplet involves a Nelsonian "unnatural" stress on the pronoun 'her,' while the second line does not. But just what is Nelson's criterion for natu-

ral stress? Quite obviously he conceives natural stress in terms of ordinary stress patterns of spoken English, i.e., independent of poetry. Excluding contrastive and emphatic stress, a verb-pronoun combination in English bears relatively stronger stress on the verb; accordingly, one says 'KISS me,' not 'kiss ME.' By fixating on iambic pentameter, Nelson is thus noting a clash between ordinary stress patterns of the spoken language and what results if one strictly adheres to iambic meter. By this reasoning, both Oxford and Shakespeare adopt "unnatural" stress in their poetry and this just goes to show that the poetry of Oxford and Shakespeare are entirely compatible, which is not surprising if Oxford is the man behind the renowned mask.

Nelson seems unaware of the possibility that a poet may countenance violations of strict iambic meter via trochaic feet, in which case the question of "unnatural" stress is quite beside the point and again Oxford and Shakespeare emerge divided as one.

Michael Brame & Galina Popova  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington  
24 April 2004

### Shakespeare Matters

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Editorial Offices  
P.O. Box 263  
Somerville, MA 02143

Editor:  
William Boyle

Contributing Editors:  
Mark Anderson, Dr. Charles Berney,  
Charles Boyle, Dr. Felicia Londre,  
Lynne Kositsky, Alex McNeil,  
Dr. Anne Pluto, Elisabeth Sears,  
Dr. Roger Stritmatter, Richard Whalen,  
Hank Whittmore, Dr. Daniel L. Wright.

Phone (Somerville, MA): (617) 628-3411  
Fax (Somerville, MA): (617) 628-4258  
email: newsletter@ShakespeareFellowship.org

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The Shakespeare Fellowship  
P.O. Box 561  
Belmont MA 02478

The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship is to promote public awareness and acceptance of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), and further to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication into all aspects of Shakespeare studies, and also into the history and culture of the Elizabethan era.

The Society was founded and incorporated in 2001 in the State of Massachusetts and is chartered under the membership corporation laws of that state. It is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit (Fed ID 04-3578550).

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The Shakespeare Fellowship

To the Shakespeare Fellowship:

I am both honored and pleased to have received second place in the 2004 Shakespearean Essay Competition (11th/12th Grade). I intend to use [my award] to further my studies at Boston College. On a personal note, I wish to thank the Shakespeare Fellowship for holding this contest to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of the greatest English poet of them all. I greatly enjoyed my work on "The Two R's: Revenge and Resolution."

Thank you again for recognition of my humble efforts.

Sincerely,  
Aaron Lemmon  
Johnstown, Pennsylvania  
5 May 2004

To the Shakespeare Fellowship:

Thank you notifying me that I received third place in the Shakespeare Fellowship essay contest. The award was a pleasant surprise, and I appreciated your highly personalized response.

I do plan to attend college (beginning this fall). Though I plan to major in music (piano performance), literature is also an area of great interest to me. I hope to obtain at least a minor in English, and perhaps even double major in music and English.

Sincerely,  
Marie Erichsen  
Montgomery, Alabama  
28 March 2004

### ***Corrections***

In the article reviewing presentations at the Fellowship's 2003 Conference in Carmel (*Shakespeare Matters*, Winter 2004) in the section reviewing Marty Hyatt's presentation on the Sonnets (page 9), the reference "in the King James Bible" should have read: "in contemporary versions of the bible."

In Richard Whalen's review of Alan Nelson's *Monstrous Adversary* (*Shakespeare Matters*, Fall 2003), his reference to Nina Green's publication history was in error. Whalen informs us: "Contrary to what I wrote in a review of Alan Nelson's book in the Fall 2003 issue, Nina Green has published articles in Oxfordian publications, most recently in *The Oxfordian*, Vol. 1 (1998) and Vol. 2 (2000)."

### ***From the Editor***

## The Debating Game

In the course of preparing this issue we had some interesting choices to make about how to cover the "Interrogation of Alan Nelson," and this process has been as educational as anything we have encountered in our involvement in the authorship debate over the years.

In short, we found ourselves stuck between the rock of straight reporting and the hard place of commentary. How to cover what happened Saturday without some commentary on what went right and what went wrong, and why. And how to deal with Prof. Nelson's book without finally stepping hard—real hard—on his toes?

At first we were going to say next to nothing about this event, then just the bare facts—that it didn't go as well as expected, but, OK, stuff happens. Finally we moved onto a more thorough report, and contacted both Dr. Hunter and Prof. Nelson for their thoughts and comments. And in the end we felt obliged to place a header over the article ("News/Commentary") as a sort of "truth in packaging" move that acknowledges right up front that the reporting moved directly into some opinions strongly expressed.

What we have learned in the process is that, as Dr. Hunter related to us in a phone conversation afterwards, the critical factor in how the whole afternoon went was his decision to refrain from making the event a hostile "interrogation." Instead, Hunter decided to create a more collegial atmosphere for the proceedings, and in his opening remarks he invoked an authorship moment that had occurred in November 2002 in Toronto at the Sanders Portrait Symposium to explain his decision.

In Toronto, where the Ashbourne portrait was to be discussed along with other "putative" Shakespeare portraits, a number of Oxfordians (including this writer and Dr. Hunter) had gathered to make our presence felt and to advertise Barbara Burris's work on the Ashbourne, published in *Shakespeare Matters* over the past two years. Prof. Nelson was also present, scheduled to appear on the same panel with the Folger Shakespeare Library's Curator of Art Erin Blake, who was there that day to debunk

Burris's work without mentioning it.

It was during this panel that Prof. Nelson made some authorship debate comments that were—in our estimation—inaccurate, and which—further—ran contrary to what he had intimated to this writer earlier in the day he might say about Burris's work on the Ashbourne—namely that the Ashbourne sitter most likely wasn't Hugh Hamersley and the Folger should probably just say so. His anti-Oxfordian comments garnered some cheering from the overwhelming Stratfordian audience, followed immediately by loud booing and hooting when a response was attempted.

So, in an event taking place on Oxfordian home turf, Dr. Hunter decided *not to return the favor*, so to speak. But at this stage of the debate, with the overwhelming case most Oxfordians know has been made against the Stratford story and for Oxford, can we afford not to meet head on the authorship counteroffensive that is now underway—the Folger's stonewalling the problems with their Ashbourne sitter attribution, Wood's neo-Stratfordian book, Nelson's anti-Oxfordian book, and now Harvard professor Stephen Greenblatt's new Stratfordian biography (*Will in the World*) due out in September?

Prof. Nelson should have been vigorously and unrelentingly interrogated all afternoon on the numerous errors and biases that permeate every page of his book. That is what some of us had expected, and, we believe, it is what is required at this stage of the debate. Hunter says as much in the statement he gave us for our interrogation article: "I do believe that it is absolutely essential that the work done by Oxfordians to expose the errors and scholarly abuses of the book be made available to the world."

We heartily agree.

Our coverage of Nelson and his book will continue in our next issue with a review of the recently published, prominent front-page review of *Monstrous Adversary* in the Stratfordian *Shakespeare Newsletter*. Also, Dr. Hunter will be in our next issue with some further thoughts on the event in Portland and debating Nelson.

# Winners of 2003 Essay Contest

The Fellowship's second annual student essay contest proved enormously popular. More than 700 papers were received from secondary students living in 47 states and 10 countries. The number of submissions was three times higher than in 2002, when 238 entries were received. By the time of the filing deadline in mid-January, some 50 or more envelopes were arriving daily!

Three Fellowship trustees volunteered to judge this year's essays: Steve Aucella, Alex McNeil and Sarah Smith, all of whom share firsthand experience with the world of writing and publishing. They were impressed with the caliber of work shown by many of the students. "Quite a few of them showed much keener insight into the Shakespeare Canon than I could have attempted in high school, or even in college," observed McNeil. Aucella noted that he was "surprised by the volume of submissions this year.

Teachers are obviously finding out about us. Whether they're pushing classwork or are having their students write something original for the contest is almost immaterial to the fact that students are enthusiastically submitting their work."

The winners were notified in late March. They are:

Senior Division (11th and 12th Grade):  
First Place – Mary Allison Taylor, Fort

Worth TX; Second Place – Aaron Michael Lemmon, Johnstown PA; Third Place – Marie Erichsen, Montgomery AL. Honorable Mention – Cortney Breitschwerdt, Harwood MD; Josh Dzieza, Olympia WA; Brook Erspamer, Corbett OR; Gabe Martin, Ashland OH; Koki Momose, Bloomfield Hills MI; Amy Troeger, Elkhart IN; Sijia Wang, Beavercreek OR; Kelly Whitebread, Sugar Land TX; Aaron Yazzie, Holbrook AZ; Jenny Zhang, Athens GA.

Junior Division (9th and 10th Grade):  
First Place – Jenny Mahlum, Provo UT; Second Place – Kirsten Callahan, Pearl MS; Third Place – Monika Grzesiak, Macomb Township MI. Honorable Mention – James Dong, Pearland TX; Jordin Saunders-Jensen, Puyallup WA. First, second and third place winners received cash awards, and senior first place winner Mary Taylor's essay has been posted on our web site.

Students could choose from eight suggested topics in the 2003 Contest. Two of the eight topics, however, proved by far to be the most popular – the problem of evil in *Macbeth* or *Othello*, and the nature of Hamlet's indecisiveness. Only a few students dealt directly with the authorship controversy in 2003.

For the 2004 Contest, the Board of Trustees voted to modify the requirements somewhat. First, the two divisions have been eliminated (not many ninth or tenth



Jenny Mahlum, Junior Division Winner.

graders participated in either of the first two contests), and the cash awards have been increased slightly. Second, the number of suggested topics has

been reduced, and students are specifically encouraged to explore the authorship question. Third, the formal requirements for submission have been tightened (minimum word length, etc.). Essays will be due by January 15, 2005. Full details may be found on the Fellowship web site.

It is hoped that the changes made in this year's contest will lead more students to look into, and inform themselves about, the authorship issue. As contest judge Aucella pointed out, "One common thread I found this year was the general lack of understanding Shakespeare the author. Virtually none of the essays even scratched the surface of how Shakespeare's life entered into his works, which is really what it's all about."

## *Soul of the Age* — a feature film on Oxford

In postings that appeared on two different film news sites within two days in May, breaking news about a planned film on Oxford and the Shakespeare authorship from Hollywood director Roland Emmerich was reported. Emmerich is a big-time action/adventure/science fiction director (*Godzilla*, *Independence Day* and the just-released *The Day After Tomorrow*), so this news may come as a mixed-blessing to Oxfordians—i.e., the good news is "Hollywood, big-time!!!" and the bad news (maybe) is, "Action/adventure/science fiction????!! Oh, my!"

Anyway, quoting from the brief press release stories we have:

**"Emmerich vs. Shakespeare! Independence Day meets St. Crispin's Day" (May 11, 2004 - <http://filmforce.ign.com>)**

ScreenDaily reports that filmmaker Roland Emmerich (*The Day After Tomorrow*) will next direct *The Soul of the Age*, a \$30m to \$35m "intense 16th century drama about the question of the authorship of Shakespeare."

The pic was scripted by John Orloff (HBO's *Band of Brothers*). Emmerich is reportedly scouting locations in the United Kingdom. The financing for *Soul*, however, is proving to be "a risky undertaking," Emmerich advised ScreenDaily this past weekend. "It's very hard to make get a movie like this made and I want to make it in a certain way."

**"Emmerich Directs Literary Drama" (12**

**May 2004 - [www.empireonline.co.uk](http://www.empireonline.co.uk))**

Roland Emmerich has committed to direct an intense 16th Century drama, exploring a theory about the true authorship of Shakespeare's works. No, no, it's all right, you're not dreaming, nor has that suspicious guy by the copier slipped ketamine in your coffee again. Ladies and gentlemen Roland Emmerich is back, and this time... he's serious.

... the film tells the tale of Edward De Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford and an acclaimed poet and playwright. While De Vere was respected for his own work, recent literary conspiracy theorists (yes, such troubling people do exist [*Oh, please!* — Ed.]) have postulated that it was he, rather than Shakespeare, who truly penned the works for which The Bard is famous.

## Terry Eagleton Attacks Oxfordians in *The Nation*

In our Winter 2004 issue (page 5) we reported on Terry Eagleton's long overdue recantation of postmodernism and quoted Eagleton's thoughtful statement that "we know as much about the historical Shakespeare as [we know] about the Yeti." Alas, our optimism in supposing that Eagleton had fully recovered from his own political correctness was premature.

In the March 1 issue of *The Nation* Eagleton launches an acerbic, convoluted, and uninformed attack on the Oxfordians. According to Eagleton, Oxfordians are "conspiratorial souls" motivated by envious disbelief in the power of the common man's natural genius. They imagine that "the real Shakespeare was a nobleman who stole the name of this country bumpkin [from Stratford-upon-Avon]."

"The only drawback to this eminently plausible case," opines a bewildered Professor Eagleton, "is that there is not a scrap of evidence for it." Setting aside the tortured reasoning of that sentence, we'd like to remind Dr. Eagleton that the internet does exist. Any eighth-grader with access to a computer terminal can disprove the second half of the sentence, merely by visiting the Shakespeare Fellowship web site. This site contains an abundance of evidence substantiating the "eminent plausibility" of the case for Oxford's authorship. Nor is it true, thank you, that Oxfordians are motivated by envy or snobbery. Such accusations merely testify to the intellectual poverty of Professor Eagleton's *ex cathedra* pronouncements. We'd be glad to debate Dr. Eagleton on that point, any time, any place.

## New Cambridge Press Issue Supports a "Literary" View of the Bard

A new book by Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), revives the once well-accepted view that Shakespeare's plays are literature, as well as fine stagecraft. Reviewer Stephen Roth, writing for *Early Modern Literary Studies*, begins his review by noting the contradictory stance of most contemporary Shakespearean scholars with respect to this question: "One of the greater ironies of Shakespeare scholarship over the last century is the ongoing effort by Shakespeare scholars—most of whom spend dozens of hours a week enjoining, cajoling, and browbeating their students into addressing Shakespeare's plays as literature—to deny that those plays are literature. Shakespeare, these scholars say, thought of his plays as disposable, populist ephemera, like Hollywood scripts; they were created for performance, and that's all." Oxfordians have always insisted the plays are literature as well as fine theatre—intended as much for posterity as for contemporary Elizabethan or Jacobean performance.

Although Roth supports Erne's central thesis, his comment on the chronology of quarto publication also deserves to be quoted: "Erne *does not provide a satisfying explanation for the sudden halt in registration of new Shakespeare plays* around the time of James' accession." Oxfordians have argued, *since 1920*, that the abrupt cessation of publication of new Shakespearean quartos in 1604 is most plausibly explained by the author's death on June 24, 1604.

Even with these imperfections, writes Roth, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* effectively puts paid to a complex of largely-assumed and reactive truisms that have increasingly dominated Shakespeare scholarship over the last century. It's difficult to come away from this book with any impression other than the perhaps-obvious one: that Shakespeare was writing for both the page and the stage.

"A complex of largely-assumed and reactive truisms that have increasingly dominated Shakespeare scholarship over the last century...." Hmm. Why would that be?

## Oxfordian Writer Publishes in *The Weekly Standard*

Washington DC researcher Peter Dickson scores again with a review of Michael Wood's florid BBC documentary, "In Search of Shakespeare," in the most recent issue of the *The Weekly Standard*. "As fascination with Shakespeare's dramas and poems endures," writes Dickson, "the desire to know more about the inner life of the greatest literary figure in the English language intensifies—though scholars have always failed to satisfy it, because 'there is no evidence, you know.' That was the pithy response of Simon Schama when he warned British historian-turned-documentary filmmaker Michael Wood about the pitfalls in trying to make the first-ever film that would make Shakespeare come alive."

So perhaps we can now add Columbia historian Schama, one of the greatest cultural historians in recent memory, to the growing list of apostates to the Stratford myth.

Recent issues of *Shakespeare Matters* (Summer 2003 and Winter 2004) have featured commentary on the Wood documentary.

## Shakespeare Fellowship Featured in *Renaissance*

The Jan.-Feb. 2004 issue of *Renaissance* magazine features an extensive article by Jonathan Dixon favorable to Oxford as Shakespeare, including a full-page picture of the disputed Ashbourne portrait of Oxford. Shakespeare Fellowship member Barbara Burris has published extensive analysis of the Ashbourne portrait in *Shakespeare Matters* (Fall 2001 (I.1), Winter 2002 (I.2), Spring 2002 (I.3) and Fall 2002 (II.1)).

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<http://www.shakespearefellowship.org>

## Authorship Conference in Holland

Two Dutch psychologists have organized the first ever Dutch conference on the authorship question, scheduled for July 8th to 10th in Utrecht, Holland. The "Who Was 'Shakespeare'? - The Man Behind the Mask" call for papers reads in part:

"'Shakespeare', voted Man of the Millennium, was the greatest literary genius known to the world; yet what is known of the life of William is strangely divorced from the poems and plays ..."

"This yawning gulf between the person and the works has led many to question whether William of Stratford was in fact the real author ... 'Shakespeare' was almost certainly a pseudonym for the real writer of genius. We should look for the author elsewhere in the Elizabethan world."

The conference aims to bring together a wide variety of professional scholars, literary and theater people, and Shakespeare admirers in general. Among the scheduled speakers at Utrecht are Prof. Daniel Wright and former SF President Chuck Berney ("The Earl of Leicester in the plays of Shakespeare").

For further information on the conference contact: Jan Scheffer, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst at the Pieter Baan Centre, Utrecht ([jhs@worldonline.nl](mailto:jhs@worldonline.nl)) or Sandra Schruijer, professor of organizational psychology at Tilburg University ([schruijer@yahoo.com](mailto:schruijer@yahoo.com))

## Tennessee Seminar

There will be a two-day Shakespeare authorship seminar held at the University of Tennessee Law School in Knoxville on June 4th and 5th, 2004.

The event, "Shakespeare and the Law," sponsored by the Law School, will bring together a number Stratfordian and anti-Stratfordian scholars before an audience of lawyers and law students. It will focus on issues relevant to the authorship debate within the context of Shakespeare's legal knowledge. Among those presenting will be Dr. Roger Stritmatter and Richard Whalen. We will report on this event in our next issue.

## Oxford in Westminster Abbey?



Professor Daniel Wright (left) and the Most Rev'd Dr. A. Wesley Carr, Dean of Westminster Abbey.

In February, Concordia University Professor Daniel Wright met with the Most Rev'd Dr. A. Wesley Carr, Dean of Westminster Abbey, to discuss progress on the proposal for commemorating the life and work of Edward de Vere in Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, in the Jerusalem Chamber on the spot where Henry IV died.

Last year, through the Edward de Vere Studies Conference at Concordia University, Dr. Wright raised \$10,000 and solicited a host of letters in support from Oxfordian supporters to finance a memorial to Edward de Vere. Last July, he presented the proposal and the offer of full payment for

an Oxford memorial to Dr. Carr, who embraced the application while pointing out that acceptance of a proposal for memorialization in the Abbey is a process that sometimes involves years of examination and debate among the members of the Abbey chapter with results usually leading to rejection or deferral of the proposal.

Still, with the Dean's promising efforts to facilitate our attempts to achieve the memorial for Oxford (although the Dean is not, himself, an Oxfordian), the prospects for the commemoration of the Elizabethan era's most acclaimed court poet-playwright remain hopeful.

## Fellowship Meets in Baltimore

The Shakespeare Fellowship's 3rd Annual Conference will be held October 7th-10th, 2004, at the Doubletree Inn at the Collonade in Baltimore, MD, near the waterfront. Along list of confirmed speakers includes Dr. Daniel Wright, Dr. Ren Draya, Dr. Kevin Simpson, Dr. Alan Nelson, Dr. Roger Stritmatter, Tim Holcomb, KC Ligon, Terry Ross, Bill Boyle, Charles Boyle, Ken Kaplan, Hank Whittemore, Stephanie Hughes, William Niederkorn, Ron Hess, Michael Dunn, Marty Hyatt, Dick Desper, Kevin Simpson, Andy Hannas, Barbara Burris, Ron Halstead, Thomas Hunter, David Yuhas, Gordon Cyr, and Thomas Regnier.

The conference will feature performances by the local Baltimore Shakespeare Festival (*Julius Caesar*) and an Australian performance troupe, Kinetic Energy (*Shake-Speare*), as well as a major debate, co-sponsored by the Baltimore Shakespeare Festival, with Terry Ross and Dr. Nelson squaring off against Hank

Whittemore and Dr. Stritmatter. A field trip to the Folger Shakespeare Library, probably scheduled for Monday, October 11th, is also in the works.

The standard conference registration, for papers and performances from Oct. 7-10, Saturday's big debate, and four meals, will be \$195. Registrants will pay separately for Sunday's Awards' Luncheon (\$30). Two discount packages are available: 1) \$75 for papers, plays and debates or 2) \$50 (\$15 per day) for papers only.

The conference rate (single or double) at the Doubletree is \$134 (800-222-8733). Just two blocks from the Doubletree rooms have also been reserved at the Quality Inn, starting at only \$85/night.

Lynne Kositsky will arrange roommates for those who wish to share a Doubletree room with another Fellowship member. Email Lynne at [Lynnekositsky@sympatico.ca](mailto:Lynnekositsky@sympatico.ca). The deadline for registrations is Sept. 25. After Sept. 25 there will be a 15% surcharge.

*Nelson interrogation* (continued from page 1) first hour, during which Hunter showed both Prof. Nelson and the audience the great abundance of commentary that had been generated over the past six months about Nelson's book—commentary that had been published in *Shakespeare Matters*, the Shakespeare Oxford Society newsletter, on the Fellowship website's Discussion Forum, and on the listservs managed by Nina Green (Phaeton), Robert Brazil (Elizaforum) and Dr. Daniel Wright (De Vere).

Unfortunately this preliminary overview of the great amount of commentary, error corrections and basic questioning by others about Nelson's methodology and biases wound up consuming the entire first hour. Nelson was never engaged in any dialogue at all by Dr. Hunter.

We learned later from Hunter that the manner in which this first hour unfolded was the result of last-minute changes in the format, compounded by some misunderstanding about how the hour should proceed. Dr. Hunter, just before the session began, talked with Prof. Nelson and suggested that they not engage in an "interrogation," which he felt would create a hostile environment for the whole afternoon. He suggested that, instead, he survey all the critiques of Nelson's work generated to date and then discuss them with Nelson. Prof. Nelson, Hunter recalls, then asked to use his rebuttal time at the beginning of the hour, in order to explain corrections he had already posted on his web site (such as his misreading "white herrings" for the proper name "Whythering"; the latest count from his website on errata of fact or interpretation is 10). Nelson, in a post-conference email to us, said that he didn't think he was giving up rebuttal time, and was, he said, "in the dumps" when the hour proceeded without any chance for him to respond to any of the statements Dr. Hunter was reading.

Dr. Hunter, in comments to *Shakespeare Matters* after the conference, said that

I will certainly take responsibility for the disappointing result of the Alan Nelson segment of the Portland conference. Instead of trying to survey the impressive Oxfordian response to *Monstrous Adversary*, it would have been more helpful and interesting to focus on specific but representative issues with Alan. But, after much discussion with others, I don't know if the expectation—that this program would finally put *Monstrous Adversary* to rest for what it is—could have ever been

met, interrogation or no interrogation. I do believe that it is absolutely essential that the work done by Oxfordians to expose the errors and scholarly abuses of the book be made available to the world.

It should be noted that the panel section of the afternoon did afford the opportunity for some detailed commentary and questioning of Nelson, but within a restricted format that precluded any extended give and take between each panelist and Nelson. Each of the panelists first read a statement/commentary about *Monstrous*, and then asked a specific question based on their commentary for Nelson to answer.

Briefly, these commentaries and questions touched on significant issues, but the result—given the time constraints on the five panelists—was that Oxfordians did most of the talking and Nelson just gave brief answers to points raised by one panelist, and then it was on to the next panelist.

Richard Whalen pointed out errors and misstatements that begin in the book's Introduction, which he cited as an ominous sign for the credibility of the rest of the book. Whalen also noted what he described as Nelson's complete misreading of the four interludes in B.M. Ward's 1928 biography of Oxford. Nelson says that Ward speculated about the authorship issue in the interludes. But, Whalen pointed out, Ward never speculated about the issue and specifically said he would refrain from commenting on it.

Stephanie Hughes took special note of Nelson's spending only two pages in his entire book on Oxford's education, concluding that he was not well educated. Hughes cited her own work on Oxford's childhood years spent with preeminent scholar Sir Thomas Smith as his tutor, and said Nelson's failure to mention these years struck her as clear evidence of the book's biased agenda.

Mark Anderson pointed out that Nelson appeared to be entirely too ready to take at face value anything said about Oxford in the Howard-Arundel documents and asked him whether he thought he had been too credulous in accepting the Howard-Arundel



Hank Whittemore (left) talks with Prof. Alan Nelson during a break in the afternoon-long event examining Nelson's Oxford biography.

charges. Nelson replied, "No, I don't."

Bill Farina thanked Nelson for all the new material his book makes available, but emphasized that all the negative material about Oxford did not preclude his being Shakespeare. Farina also brought up the important fact that in the 16th century there was really no such thing as a spelling error, thus calling into question Nelson's continual claims that Oxford's spellings somehow showed he "misheard" words.

Finally, Hank Whittemore emphasized the beauty (which Nelson dismisses) of Oxford's verse and also emphasized another instance of Nelson's biases, namely his omitting entirely from *Monstrous Oxford's* Latin letter in praise of Clerke's Latin translation of *The Courtier* and his partial excerpts only of Oxford's English letter in praise of Bedingfield's English translation of *Cardanus Comforte*.

Whittemore also made an interesting point when he hypothesized that what Nelson had written could really be seen as a book called "Big, Fat Slob" that went on and on about how awful the big, fat slob was, but left out that the big, fat slob was Babe Ruth. This left the door open for Nelson to lean into the microphone and say, "But Oxford was not Babe Ruth."

And that exchange illustrates the real problem here—that Oxfordians see Nelson as fearing that Oxford *might be* Babe Ruth and so trashes him at every turn, but when pressed on the issue, he simply shrugs and says, "No, I'm just writing about an interesting but *little known* earl named Oxford."

An example of how this disconnect between "Oxford the earl" vs. "Oxford as Shakespeare" plays out point by point in *Mon-*

(Continued on page 8)

*De Vere Conference (cont'd from page 1)* (see related story, page one), and many felt that Nelson got off too easy in this encounter in the ongoing debate.

Nonetheless, the full schedule of 20 papers, a performance by the Pacific University Chamber Singers as part of the Eric Altschuler/William Jansen presentation on "Watson and Shakespeare: What's the Connection?" (a continuation of work they have presented at previous conferences), the screening of a new authorship film (*The Shakespeare Enigma*), and actor Michael Dunn's one-man show *The Shakespeare Mystery* filled out a busy, satisfying weekend.

*The Shakespeare Enigma* was introduced by Concordia University student and Sigma Tau Delta President Kiersten Brady. It featured views of the Marollian, Baconian and Oxfordian theories of authorship, with the Oxfordian view presented by Daphne Pearson of England. Pearson has presented in Portland in the past, and is a past editor of the *De Vere Society Newsletter*. She earned a doctorate from Sheffield University for her study of Oxford's financial dealings. The film offered nothing that veteran Oxfordians had not seen or heard before, but the real news here was, "Hey, another film!"



Chicago Oxford Society President Bill Farina.

Actor Michael Dunn of Los Angeles delighted everyone with his one-man show, *The Shakespeare Mystery*, in which he performs as Sherlock Holmes investigating the authorship mystery, taking his audience through a carefully thought-out overview of the debate—from doubts about Stratford, to theories about Marlowe, Bacon, etc., and finally to the inevitably correct answer of Oxford. The show is available for booking for any local groups who'd like to promote the authorship debate in their

*Nelson interrogation (continued from page 7)* *strous* can be seen in an interesting point Hank Whittemore has made—but didn't use during the panel—about arguments in *Monstrous* involving Nelson's denigration of Oxford's mastery of the English language.

On page 159, Nelson writes: "Other faults in Oxford's verse include inverted word order...." and he then goes on to give four examples from Oxford, such as "With due desert reward will never be." But, as Whittemore points out, how is this example of "inverted word order" any different from, "And by addition me of thee defeated / By adding one thing to my purpose nothing' [Sonnet 20, lines 11-12, ]?" We later contacted Prof. Nelson about this point, and he replied that, "Of course inverted word order is found in Shakespeare. So inverted word order itself is not evidence that Oxford did not write Shakespeare."

By coincidence, University of Washington linguists Michael Brame and Galina Popova have written a Letter to the Editor (see page 2) about Nelson's arguments against Oxford's mastery of English in which they too draw examples from page 159 of *Monstrous*, where Nelson claims that "unnatural stress patterns" occur in Oxford's

verse, and they too make comparisons to Shakespeare's sonnets to debunk the claim.

It is this sort of narrow focus on Nelson's arguments and reasoning that many observers thought should have occurred throughout the afternoon in examining him, but didn't. Further, there is a broader point embedded within these seemingly small points that illustrates the larger problem all Oxfordians have with Nelson's book.

As Richard Whalen commented to us after the conference, Nelson is "transparent" when he tries to contend that he is not writing about Oxford as Shakespeare—the book is a veritable Mt. Everest of charges about all that Oxford did wrong, with special emphasis on his education (next to none), his writing ability (inferior), and his character (a monster). Yet, when one or two simple little "faults" about his "inferior" writing are closely examined, it turns out Shakespeare is "guilty" of the same faults!

So, then, Oxfordians may ask, what is the point in listing all these "faults" if not to state implicitly that a man with *so many faults* can't—or shouldn't—be Shakespeare? And how credible are these attacks on Oxford's writing when his "faults" turn out to be the same as Shakespeare's? One can only conclude that, in Nelson's eyes, Oxford's

hometowns. Comedy is probably the best way to engage people on controversial issues, and *The Shakespeare Mystery* succeeds admirably at that. Call 310-230-2929 or email [mdunn@truebard.com](mailto:mdunn@truebard.com) for further information.

As is the custom each year, the Dean of Concordia, Dr. Charles Kunert, opened the proceedings Friday morning with his welcoming address. Dr. Kunert noted his pleasure in how the conference has grown, and that Concordia University is proud to be hosting it each year.

### Keynote Speaker

*Shakespeare Matters* columnist Mark Anderson was this year's keynote speaker, and he treated the audience to excerpts from his forthcoming book on Oxford's life as revealed through his writing ("*Shakespeare*" *By Another Name*, due out in April 2005).

One significant example of new revelations in his talk ("Between Hagiography and Demonology: Writing the Literary Life of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford") was the story of the months leading up to the famous defeat of the Spanish Armada in the summer of 1588. Anderson, citing re-

"faults" are that he thinks like a poet.

In our recent email contacts with Prof. Nelson we also asked him directly about why he wrote this book at all, if not for the "Shakespeare" factor, and he responded that it was *not* just because Oxford was a "Shakespeare" candidate. He said he was first attracted to the unexamined material in the Howard-Arundel libels (which he says "Ward dismissed as mere lies") and had, in fact, originally started *Monstrous* as a book on just the libels and what they said about Oxford.

Finally, in response to an email question from us asking whether "facts" [i.e. documents] can "speak for themselves," Nelson replied:

If facts could speak for themselves, I could have stopped with my website. Obviously, interpretation is an inevitable, unavoidable part of writing history, or biography. Nevertheless, a biographer can stick more or less closely to the documents: I chose to stick very closely, and have been criticized even by highly positive reviewers for citing documents without fully digesting them.

Well, yes.

—W. Boyle

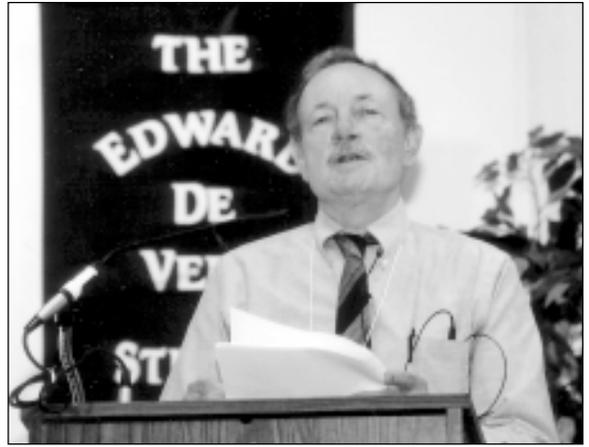
cent works such as Harry Kelsey's *Sir Francis Drake*, *The Queen's Pirate* (1998) and M.J. Rodriguez-Salgado's *Armada 1588-1598* (1988), noted that pre-Armada defensive missions in May-June 1588 could well have included Oxford. Such a circumstance would in turn explain his absence from Anne Cecil's funeral in June 1588, one of the enduring mysteries of the overall Oxford story. Anderson also drew some interesting parallels between this mission and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and noted that Shakespeare seems to be referring to these missions in the play.

Anderson noted that this new material he is finding for his book is the product of existing mainstream research (both in history and literary studies) that open the door to Shakespeare, but only for those willing to entertain the possibility that the Earl of Oxford was Shakespeare.

### Plays and poems

Papers presented this year covered a wide variety of topics, from the works themselves to the debate itself, thoughts on the history of Shakespeare biography, thoughts on what the true role of the Stratford man was in all this—plus several interesting excursions into the politics of the Elizabethan era, the true value of a pound 400 years ago, and even the notion of nobility down through the ages in both England and America.

Among the papers touching on the works themselves were back-to-back presentations on *The Winter's Tale* from Dr. Ren Draya and Dr. Michael Delahoyde. Draya presented perspectives on the mechanics of the play itself ("Paulina and the Dynamics of Control: *The Winter's Tale* in the Cruellest Month"), while Delahoyde spoke about the Tudor allegories that Oxford wove into his story-telling ("*The*



Among the presenters at the 8th Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference were: Prof. Ren Draya (top left), Ramon Jiménez (top right), Dr. Roger Stritmatter (bottom left) and Dr. Frank Davis (bottom right).

*Winter's Tale* as Tudor Allegory"). And, of course, the well-known word play of the title itself (i.e. *The Winter's Tale* in French = Le Conte d'Hiver = [sounds like] "Count de Vere") was not overlooked.

Ramon Jiménez gave another of his well-researched, masterful looks into the links between established Shakespeare plays and their possible earlier versions—ground untillied by Stratfordians who are locked into the 1590s plus timeframe. Jiménez, ably assisted by actor Michael Dunn, spoke on *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, and made a compelling case that this was probably an earlier version of the Shakespeare play.

While Jiménez emphasized that much of the text from *True Tragedy* was "not too good," the selections performed by Dunn had most in the audience thinking, yes, this is the same voice, the same Richard. This was especially true of the passage in which Richard both contemplates and relishes his revenge.

Dr. Michael Brame and Dr. Galina Popova asked "Who's Bottom?" in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, and made a case for the character being a caricature of Ox-

ford himself. They asked the audience to recall that the whole play pivots around marriage and that Bottom receives the coronet from Titania (by Oberon's recounting), symbolizing, well, who knows what? Further, Bottom is also a figuration of Oxford's comedic persona (with Oberon-Theseus being another side (or sides), as the authors set forth in their book *Shakespeare's Fingerprints*. In considering the comedic side of the equation they delved into the more scatological meanings of Bottom, and made comparisons between the language of the play and the language found in *The Adventures of Freeman Jones*, a work they consider to be by an anonymous Oxford.

Prof. Sam Saunders presented an unusual but quite engaging look at a little thought about topic: "Did Shakespeare Know the Odds in Hamlet's Duel?" As it turns out, other scholars have looked at this problem (is there anything about *Hamlet* that hasn't been studied and written about somewhere, sometime?). The text in question is spoken by Osric in Act V, scene ii—"The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen  
(Continued on page 10)

*Conference (continued from page 9)*

passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.”)

Saunders explored the meaning of these odds in straight, numeric betting terms, but of special interest for Oxfordians was his observation that the “twelve for nine” odds can also be found in earlier sources that Oxford may well have had access to.

### Politics, history, biography

Other papers over the weekend examined various aspects of Elizabethan society, culture and politics as they related to the theatre and/or to the authorship debate.

Dr. Frank Davis (“Lyly-Oxford-Shakespeare Connection”), William Farina (“Puritan Politics and the First Folio”), Dr. Daniel Wright (“Knocking on Wood: Why Michael Wood’s Recent Biography of the Stratford Man Undermines Shakespearean Orthodoxy”), Stephanie Hughes (“Say, Who Was that Masked Man? Secrecy in Politics and History, Then and Now”), and Ian Haste (“Oxford’s Annuity from the Crown: The value of £1000 between 1586 and 1604”) all explored aspects of Elizabethan history that help clarify issues that Oxfordians deal with regularly in their “new-historicist” efforts to establish the truth about the Shakespeare authorship.

Dr. Frank Davis, in taking a close look at the connections between Lyly and Oxford reminded us that there clearly was one—which in itself should remind us that this is the sort of connection between Shakespeare and his acknowledged source material that Stratfordian scholars can only dream of. Their boy was just 16 years old when Lyly went to work for Oxford at the original Blackfriars, and within five years—as many traditional scholars attest—modern drama was born as the meeting of the public and court theatres took place at the Blackfriars.

But of course—in traditional lore—Oxford’s involvement was minimal or coincidental—just a patron. And to even consider that it might have been a young Shakespeare (i.e., Oxford) who launched the birth of modern drama, with Lyly taking from him rather than a Stratfordian Shakespeare later taking from Lyly—well, perish the thought.

Readers of *Shakespeare Matters* are already familiar with the ongoing debate over Shakespeare’s religion (i.e. was he a Catholic?) and how this debate entered into



*Concordia University graduate Andrew Werth has spoken at seven consecutive EDVSCs.*

Michael Wood’s neo-Stratfordian biography. Dr. Wright explored the Catholic issues as used by Wood in both his book and documentary *In Search of Shakespeare* (see his article “Knocking on Wood” in *Shakespeare Matters*, Fall 2003, p. 10ff).

Meanwhile, William Farina looked at the other key political-religious story of the era—the role of the Puritans in Elizabethan and Jacobean society—and explored how this may have affected the publication of the First Folio in 1623.

In his talk on “Puritan Politics and the First Folio,” Farina reviewed the political circumstances surrounding the First Folio publication; he emphasized that the politics of the Puritans, who were virulently anti-theatre (plays = the work of the devil, actresses = whores) must have been a key consideration in suppressing Oxford’s authorship, even though King James himself

was anti-Puritan and pro-theater. Farina also emphasized the fact that just two decades after the Folio project came the Civil War, Cromwell and an era of suppression of the theater that lasted for several decades.

In both instances (Catholic politics or Puritan politics) the Oxfordian paradigm makes better sense of the fit between the author Shakespeare and the world he lived in than any paleo- or neo-Stratfordian views.

Stephanie Hughes’s paper gave a broad overview of the politics of secrecy that prevailed during this era and which most certainly played a role in the use of pseudonyms by many writers, culminating in the incredible circumstance of the pseudonym “Shakespeare” becoming associated with Shaksper of Stratford.

Ian Haste provided all Oxfordians with some very useful information about the true value of £1000 during this era. He used this amount to show us how much buying power Oxford would have had with his £1000 annuity. The answer was that he would have had considerable buying power, and could have easily maintained a household with dozens of servants, plus acting troupes with dozens of actors and related expenses.

Several other papers shed some light on the history of the times and the traditional Stratford story. Richard Whalen covered a topic that’s been covered before, but can probably never be covered too much. In “The Stratford Bust: A Monumental Fraud,” Whalen spoke about all the holes in the traditional Stratford story of the bust, and delved into the dubious history of the monument in the 18th century, when available evidence seems to indicate that the

## ***The 3rd Annual Institute of Oxfordian Studies Summer Seminar***

The Institute of Oxfordian Studies convenes its 3rd annual week-long seminar from the 8th to the 13th of August 2004 on the Concordia University campus.

This year the principal topic for 2004 will be “Prince Tudor: Truth or Delusion?” Equal time will be given to advocates for and against the Prince Tudor thesis. Leading the advocacy for Prince Tudor will be author and actor Hank Whittemore; leading the opposition to the Prince Tudor thesis will be retired statistician Dr. John Varady.

The cost of \$995 per registrant for the six-day seminar includes housing (double-occupancy) on the CU campus, linen ser-

vice, all breakfasts and lunches, instructional costs, books, classroom supplies and the cost of all day trips (former trips have included visits to Portland’s Japanese Gardens and Chinese Gardens, attendance at an outdoor performance of a Shakespeare play, a Saturday picnic lunch, and a luncheon cruise on the Willamette River aboard the yacht, The Portland Spirit).

To register, send a check payable to the Edward de Vere Studies Conference, Concordia University, 2811 NE Holman, Portland, OR 97211-6099. Please include a return address, a telephone number and an email address. Prof. Wright will contact you to supply you with more details.

bust underwent more than a refurbishment—it could well be that the bust we have today was created then to replace the “holding a sack” rendition sketched by Dugdale in the mid-17th century.

Also speaking of Stratford and the traditional story, doctoral student Daniel MacKay (University of Oregon) gave an interesting presentation on the history of Shakespeare biography in his “Fashioning a Mask: An Attempt to Account for a Century of Silence About the Author...” MacKay noted that it was Malone’s interest in the Sonnets in the late 18th century that really gave birth to modern Shakespeare biography.

Until then there had been little interest demonstrated by anyone, but once Malone wrote of the Sonnets as being autobiographical—and then, of course, became the first of many trying to grapple with the Fair Youth problem—interest in Shakespeare biography picked up. It wasn’t long after that the authorship debate began in earnest, seeking to reconcile the author’s life with his writing. And the Sonnets continue today to be the talisman of Shakespeare biography and theories about his life (i.e. homosexual, royal, etc.).

### Other research

Several other papers offered some interesting insights into research. Dr. Paul Altrocchi, who has been conducting much original research in recent years, gave a paper on the importance of research, and challenged all Oxfordians to engage in new research. His paper focused on “Searching for a Smoking Gun in Oxford’s Personal Letters,” but his message was that the more Oxfordian eyes that are out there looking, the more likely that obscure—but important—references that traditional scholars might overlook will come to light.

Dr. Roger Stritmatter revisited *Minerva Britanna*, the enigmatic 1612 emblem book by Henry Peacham which has been extensively analyzed for its possible connections to de Vere. Stritmatter presented for the first time a theory that *MB* is structured around a simple but elegant numerical formula derived from Pythagorean number theory. He noted that the total number of verses contained in the book is 3003,



*Pictured above with Dr. Daniel Wright is Michael Dunn (right), co-winner with Stephen Moorer of the 2004 Artistic Achievement Award. Below Stephanie Hughes accepts a \$6,000 scholarship check, the EDVSC's first award of a scholarship stipend to an Oxfordian researcher.*

corresponding to a Pythagorean triangular number with sides of 77. Stritmatter’s analysis showed that the numbers 6, 7, and 11—and by extension their multiples and derivatives—66, 77, and 3003—are fundamental to the structure of *MB*. Although primarily remembered as a writer of emblem books and verses, Peacham was a renaissance polymath with special interest in astronomy and mathematics.

Andrew Werth, a graduate of Concordia who has spoken at the last seven De Vere Studies Conferences, gave a unique presentation. For those Oxfordians who would like to look ahead to the days when Shakespeare will be taught as “Oxford was Shakespeare” Werth’s paper was a wonderful preview.

Briefly, he explored the notion of nobility as expressed by Shakespeare/Oxford, and compared it with the notion of nobility as expressed by Walt Whitman two centuries later. Since Whitman was a well-known anti-Stratfordian who had speculated that only one of the wolfish earls could have authored these amazing works, the comparison was both illuminating and ironic (we hope to publish this paper in the coming year).

### Banquet

The Awards Banquet on Friday evening also had its share of entertainment and a delightful time for all. Regular attendees at the conference thought it was probably the best banquet to date at the EDVSC.

Humorist Dee Hartman was the featured speaker and spoke of her experiences in bringing the debate to her classes, especially a prison-outreach program she once taught. “Can bringing Oxfordianism to prisoners be legal?” she wondered. And furthermore, “Is it dangerous?”

There were three achievement awards and one scholarship stipend presented, and each of the recipients gave engaging and heartfelt observations about their role in the great debate. 2004 Achievement in the Arts co-recipients Michael Dunn and Stephen Moorer—both theater professionals—were hilarious in their remarks and observations about the debate.

Distinguished Scholarship award winner Dr. Paul Altrocchi was magnanimous in his comments on Prof. Alan Nelson, and Nelson then came to the podium to praise Altrocchi (the two are working together on an article about the “Roscius” annotation discovered by Altrocchi last year and presented at the 2003 EDVSC conference).

Stephanie Hughes, recipient of the first conference scholarship stipend of \$6,000, was delighted, and promised to make the most of her six-week, stipend-financed research trip to England later this spring.

And finally, there were moments of silence for Oxfordians who have left us this past year. Dr. Merilee Karr spoke about her father Sam and his influence on her life and their mutual interest in the authorship issue.

Fran Gidley of Texas spoke about her friend, Edith Duffy of Durham (NC), who passed away in February at the age of 91. Local papers led their obituaries with reference to her passionate Oxfordian beliefs, a remembrance of her life that surely would have made her proud, and makes all of us who knew her proud.

Next year’s 9th Annual Conference will be held the second weekend in April, from the 7th to the 10th, 2005.

—W.Boyle

*Rosencrantz-Guildenstern (continued from page 1)*

Digges and Shakspeare, although (as Whalen points out) there is no documentary evidence that they were acquainted, and Digges was 24 years younger than the Stratford man.

Leonard Digges' father was Thomas Digges (c. 1546-1595). As Peter Usher has emphasized,<sup>3</sup> the elder Digges was a mathematician and astronomer of enormous stature in the scientific world of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Digges published works advocating the revolutionary Copernican theory of the cosmos, and was the first to envision an infinitely large universe filled with stars. Hotson cites a letter (December 1590) from the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe to the English scholar and antiquary Thomas Savile in which Tycho desires to be remembered to the astrologer Dr. John Dee and to "the most noble and most learned mathematician Thomas Digges," whom he heartily wishes well. In a postscript Tycho writes "I included four copies of my portrait recently engraved in copper at Amsterdam."<sup>4</sup> This portrait is presumably similar to the one included as the frontispiece to Tycho's collected letters, *Epistolæ*, published in 1596 (Fig. 1).<sup>5</sup> It shows Tycho framed by an arch supported by columns. It bears the names and arms of his ancestors (paternal on the left, maternal on the right). The portrait shows the name ROSENKRANS on the left side of the arch and GVLDENSTEREN on the bottom of the left column. Hotson concludes "There is little doubt that from 1590 Digges had a copy of his learned friend's portrait, bearing the names *Rosenkrans* and *Guldensteren*, at his house in Heminges's parish. Perhaps Shakespeare saw them there."

Hotson's scenario was accepted by A. J. Meadows in *The High Firmament* (1969), a lucid history of astronomical thought. Meadows writes:

Thomas Digges was the leading English mathematician of his time. His father, Leonard Digges, was a friend of John Dee (both had an equal interest in astronomy and astrology) and he, himself, had been Dee's pupil. Thomas' younger son, also called Leonard, was a friend of Shakespeare, and wrote one of the prefatory verses to the first folio. When Shakespeare was in London he lived close to the Digges' house and may have been acquainted with Thomas Digges. Certainly this would explain a reference in *Hamlet* where the names, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, happen to be the names of two ancestors of the Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe. Shakespeare could have learnt of this from Digges, who was the leading English correspondent of Tycho Brahe, and would therefore probably have been acquainted with his ancestry (of which Tycho was proud).

There are several statements here that could be challenged, but the most interesting development is that Hotson's conjectured friendship between Leonard Digges and Shakspeare (which Whalen's observations render highly improbable) has now been elevated to established fact. Meadows is still relatively cautious when it comes to drawing the final link ("Shakespeare could have learnt of this from Digges..."), but the caution has given way to virtual certainty by May 1981, when astronomer Owen Gingerich (in the periodical *Sky and Telescope*) writes:

Tycho, from his Uraniborg palace on Hven, could easily look northward across the strait to the Elsinore castle, the setting of *Hamlet*. Shakespeare may well have seen Digges' copy of the *Epistolæ*. In any event, the coincidence with the names Rosencrantz



(Fig. 1) Frontispiece from Tycho's *Epistolæ* of 1596

and Guildenstern in the play is so striking that we may be reasonably sure that Tycho's portrait was one of the sources for *Hamlet's* cast of characters.

Hotson's hypothesized chain of transmission for the Tycho portrait is quite extended: [Tycho —> Savile —> T. Digges —> L. Digges —> Shakespeare]. By claiming that the elder Digges was Tycho's leading English correspondent, Meadows eliminates Savile from the chain, and by ignoring Leonard he shortens the chain further to [Tycho —> T. Digges —> Shakespeare], but loses specificity in that he no longer identifies the source of the portrait. Gingerich speaks of "Digges' copy of the *Epistolæ*": unfortunately Digges died in 1595 and publication of the *Epistolæ* didn't take place until 1596. So unless new documents come to light, Savile must be included in the chain, and Shakespeare must have seen Tycho's portrait between 1590 (when it was printed) and 1593 (when Savile died) if this scenario is to be historically accurate.

These three authors are all Stratfordians—that is, they believe that Shakespeare, the author of *Hamlet*, was in fact Will Shakspeare of Stratford. An alternative view is that 'Shakespeare' was the pen name of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford (1550-1604).<sup>6</sup> The above scenarios can easily be adapted to the Oxfordian view by assuming that Digges knew de Vere. This is less far-fetched than Hotson's hypothesized friendship between Shakspeare and Leonard Digges. Thomas Digges and de Vere were within four years of being

the same age, rather than separated by a 24-year interval. Digges was well-connected at the Elizabethan court, and de Vere was one of its foremost courtiers. Moreover, there was a close connection between Digges and William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Digges' book on the "new star" of 1572 (now known as Tycho's supernova) was dedicated to Burghley, and found an honored place in his extensive library. De Vere grew up in the Burghley household and eventually married Burghley's daughter Anne. He had unrestricted access to Burghley's library.

Authorship aside, there is an unsatisfying facet to the theory that the Danish courtiers' names were chosen from Tycho's portrait. It seems arbitrary. Did the author look at the portrait and exclaim 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern! The very names I need for the characters in my new play!' There are 14 distinct names on the structure surrounding Tycho. Why 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern'? Why not 'Markeman and Rosenspar'? Why not 'Axellson and Stormvase'? A defender of the Tycho connection would say 'Shakespeare had his own reasons. He liked the imagery—"Rosy Wreath" and "Golden Star"—and if he had chosen "Axellson and Stormvase" we'd be wondering why he hadn't chosen "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern".' Maybe so. But it still seems arbitrary.

Another difficulty with the above scenarios is that the author of *Hamlet* displays a deeper and more detailed knowledge of Danish customs than can be accounted for by supposing he lifted his Danish names from a portrait of Tycho. One example of this is the very fact that he names Wittenberg as the university which Hamlet and his two friends attend. Wittenberg was the nearly universal choice among Danish nobility. Thoren writes

[Anders] Vedel was already in Wittenberg . . . Many other Danish students were there too. They habitually came in such numbers, in fact, that Danish kings paid regular pensions to Wittenberg professors to ensure that their subjects would be well received. One modern scholar described the university as the postgraduate school of the University of Copenhagen in that era.<sup>7</sup>

Another example is the author's awareness of Danish drinking habits. Ferguson quotes an example from Tycho himself.

A letter from Tycho to Bartholomew Schultz—evidently written at the dining table—reported that he and his companions were

drinking "one mug after the other, filled to the brim" and exclaimed that such drinking "to the very dregs" was a learned art in itself. . . "We dedicate these toasts to you to the sound of trumpets, recorders and lutes . . ." he told Schultz.<sup>8</sup>

It is impossible for me to read this description without thinking of Act 1, scene 3 in *Hamlet*:

[A flourish of trumpets . . . ]

Horatio: What does this mean, my lord?

Hamlet: The King doth wake tonight, and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail, and the swagg'ring up-spring reels;  
And as he drains his drafts of Rhenish down,  
The kettle-drum and the trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

**Scenario 2: the Willoughby Connection.** Peregrine Bertie (1555-1601), later known as Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, married Oxford's sister, Mary Vere, in 1578. In 1582 he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Denmark to award Frederik II the Order of the Garter and to negotiate for British shipping rights in the Baltic. While in Denmark he visited Tycho Brahe's astronomical castle, Uraniborg, on the island of Hven.<sup>9</sup>

The British Library possesses a collection of Willoughby's correspondence (Cotton MS Titus C VII). Some refer to his travels in Denmark, and among these is a roster of names entitled *Noblissimi ad Generosi, Regni Daniae Incljti Cosiliarij et Senatores*.<sup>10</sup> It is a list of 24 guests at a state dinner given for him during his mission. Three of the names are

Petrius Guildenstern de Thim  
Georgius Rosenkrantz de Rosenholm  
Axellius Guildenstern de Lingby

(Note that the Latinized spelling of Gyldenstjerne as it appears here is the spelling adopted in the final version of *Hamlet*.) Here are brief biographies (using the Danish spelling) of the three men:

Jørgen Rosenkrantz (1523 – 1596) was a member of the state council (rigsraad), a member of the regency council that ruled Denmark during the minority of Christian IV, one of the most powerful men in the Danish government, and a patron and ally of Tycho Brahe. He finished his education at the University of Wittenberg, as did most of the Danish nobility. His ties to the family of Tycho Brahe were unusually close: after the death of his parents he was raised by an aunt who was married to the elder Axel Brahe (also a rigsraad). Jørgen's son, known as "Holger the Learned," married a daughter of the younger Axel Brahe, Tycho's brother. Holger Rosenkrantz and Tycho were close friends, and their correspondence is an important source for Tycho's biographers.

Peder and Axel Gyldenstjerne (both rigsraads) were sons of the elder Knud Gyldenstjerne (also a rigsraad). Peder (1533 – 1594) was raised in the warrior tradition and served eighteen years as Marshal of the Realm. Axel (1542 – 1603) served for some years as viceroy of Norway. Again, there are blood ties to  
*(Continued on page 14)*

*Rosencrantz-Guildenstern (continued from page 13)*

Tycho: Axel was a son of Tycho's mother's aunt. The two men were close friends and political allies, and one of Tycho's leading assistants, Flemløse, later served as Gyldenstjerne's personal physician.

Lord Willoughby's negotiations over shipping rights would have involved the most powerful members of the Danish court, probably including the men described above. Did he go back to London and regale his brother-in-law with amusing stories of the foibles of the Danes? In any event, Oxford would have had access to the guest list mentioned above. There is no known connection between Willoughby and Shakspeare of Stratford.

There are two objections to identifying Jørgen Rosenkrantz and Peder or Axel Gyldenstjerne with the Danish courtiers in *Hamlet*. One is the objection raised above—the nagging sense of arbitrariness. There were two dozen names on the guest list—why choose Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? The other objection, perhaps more fundamental, is the lack of correspondence between the high positions held by these formidable men (rigsraads all) and the relatively lowly status of Hamlet's two friends in the play. Jørgen, Peder and Axel were haughty nobles who held great power in the Danish court—hardly the type to be summoned hastily to renew a friendship and spy on a moody prince.

**Two More Candidates.** If the above candidates possess characteristics that render them unlikely as models for the courtiers in *Hamlet*, what characteristics would we find in more acceptable candidates? From reading the play, we know that the two are friends, that they travel together, and that they both attended school in Wittenberg. As we noted above, there is already a set of associations linking characters in the play with figures in Elizabeth's court, so ideal candidates for Hamlet's friends should be of approximately Hamlet's age—that is, a generation younger than Claudius (Leicester) or Gertrude (Elizabeth).

In 1941 the Danish writer Palle Rosenkrantz published a two-volume novel entitled *Rosenkrantz og Gyldenstjerne: Roman fra Renæssancetiden* ("Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne: A Novel from the Renaissance Era"). Although it was a work of fiction, the book featured two real-life figures as its protagonists: Frederik Rosenkrantz (1571 – 1602) and Knud Gyldenstjerne (1575 – 1627). They are of the appropriate generation, both attended Wittenberg, and they traveled together to England in 1592, though apparently they were not beheaded on their arrival at the English court. Recent biographers of Tycho Brahe have mentioned them as the prototypes of the courtiers in *Hamlet*.<sup>11</sup>

The distinguished historian John Robert Christianson has kindly allowed us to include as appendices his biographical sketches of these two historical figures. The level of detail provided in these sketches is useful in enabling us to avoid misconceptions. For example, Ferguson states "... the two kinsmen were in England on a diplomatic mission in 1592 . . ." <sup>11</sup> The phrase "diplomatic mission" leads one to imagine an enterprise of great pith and moment, such as dealing with Lord Burghley about Baltic trade routes, or reporting to Robert Cecil about Catholic activities in Scandinavia. Referring to the information provided by Christianson, however, we find that in 1592 Rosenkrantz was 21



Photo courtesy of Questors Theatre

(Fig. 2) Lounging backstage, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern wait for their next entrance in a drama they don't understand, unaware of their cosmological significance. Photo from the Questors Theatre 1974 production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

and Gyldenstjerne 17. Rosenkrantz had just finished his tour of Italy and had not yet entered service in the Danish court. Gyldenstjerne had been studying and traveling in Germany with his tutor, Bacmeister. Unless documents turn up with information to the contrary, it seems likely that the kinsmen's visit to England was simply the last leg of the Grand Tour.

**Timelines.** When was *Hamlet* written? The answer depends on one's authorial orientation. The play was entered in the Stationer's Register in 1602.<sup>12</sup> Stratfordians assume it was written about 1600. If Frederik and Knud are assumed to be the original sources for the Danish names in *Hamlet*, the timing works out well for Stratfordians—Shakspeare meets them during their 1592 visit (possibly in the Mermaid Tavern), the names are filed in his capacious memory, and when he starts writing *Hamlet* in 1600, they bubble up ready to hand.

However, there are indications of *Hamlet's* existence well before 1600. In particular, Thomas Nashe's preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) speaks of "whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfuls of tragical speeches."<sup>13</sup> Since Shakspeare was manifestly still in Stratford in 1589 (he's named in legal proceedings) Stratfordians have decided that the play Nashe is referring to is somebody else's *Hamlet*, though there is no documentary evidence to this effect. Oxfordians, of course—embracing an older playwright, one who lived in London—have no difficulty in accepting a version of the *Hamlet* we know and love in 1589, or even earlier. Clark<sup>14</sup> has suggested that initial work on *Hamlet* was inspired by two events: the diplomatic mission to Denmark in 1582 carried out by Lord Willoughby (Oxford's brother-in-law), and the death in June 1583 of Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex. Sussex had been a father figure to the young Oxford and had overseen his introduction to military action, putting down the Northern Rebellion of 1569. It was widely suspected that he had been poisoned at the behest of his political antagonist, Robert

Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, who had a reputation as a poisoner rivaling the Borgias.<sup>15</sup> The Gertrude-Claudius parallel is suggested by the close relationship between Elizabeth and Leicester, which lasted until his death in 1588.

If *Hamlet* was started in 1583, Frederik and Knud are effectively eliminated as the sources of the Danish names (Frederik was twelve, Knud eight). Also eliminated is the 1596 portrait of Tycho Brahe. We are left with the guest list brought back from Denmark by Lord Willoughby, in spite of the objections of arbitrariness and inappropriateness raised above. Apparently the playwright *did* like the imagery of 'Rosy Wreath' and 'Golden Star.' I still harbor the fantasy that sometime in 1592 Frederik and Knud met Oxford. Perhaps they dropped in on Willoughby to reminisce about when he negotiated with Uncle Jørgen and Papa Henrik, and Oxford, hearing of the presence in England of the bearers of the names he appropriated for his play, invited them to dinner.

**The Cosmological Connection.** In 2001 Peter Usher opened up a completely new dimension in this inexhaustible play by pointing out the existence of a cosmic allegory in *Hamlet*.<sup>3</sup> According to Usher, Claudius (and Elsinore) represent the Ptolemaic cosmology, in which the stationary Earth is orbited by the seven ancient planets (the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn). Hamlet (and Wittenberg) represent the heliocentric Copernican system, which forms the basis of our present beliefs. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are identified with the short-lived Tychonic cosmology (a compromise proposed by Tycho in 1577), in which a stationary Earth is orbited by the Sun and Moon, while the other planets revolve around the Sun. Usher presents a number of arguments in support of his thesis, including Shakespeare's use of technical terms associated with astronomy ('opposition' and 'retrograde,' etc) and the name of the usurping king ('Claudius' appears nowhere in the source materials,<sup>16</sup> but is in fact Ptolemy's first name). Wittenberg had been a hotbed of heliocentrism since 1541, when the mathematician Georg Joachim von Lauchen ('Rheticus') visited Copernicus in Poland and returned to Wittenberg to teach his views. Just as the Tychonic system had little support among 16<sup>th</sup>-century astronomers, so Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are relatively minor characters in the play—their deaths occur offstage and do not lead to any confrontations—while the battle between the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems results in the climactic bloodbath of the final act, followed by the arrival of Fortinbras from Poland (the home of Copernicus). It is then that Hamlet passes the cosmological baton ("... the election lights on Fortinbras, he has my dying voice.").

The Tychonic cosmology was a hybrid system, combining elements of the Ptolemaic and the Copernican. In the play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are ambiguous figures, currying favor with both Claudius and Hamlet. Historically, England was the home of an active group of Copernicans (including Thomas Digges, his father, and others) who advanced and elaborated Copernican astronomy, administering the *coup de grâce* to the Tychonic system. In the play, Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern are sent to England and beheaded.

Once the Tycho-<—>R&G association is made, the penny drops and the light comes on. Thoren<sup>17</sup> has pointed out that while there were over 100 noble families in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Denmark, some

were more noble than others. Four families were the most noble of all—the Brahes, the Billes, the Rosenkrantzes, and the Gyldenstiernes—and their lines had so intertwined that they were essentially one big family. Tycho's father was a Brahe and his mother was a Bille; the names Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne simply complete the quartet. The effect is similar to writing a *roman à clef* about America in the 1960s and naming a presidential candidate 'Fitzgerald.' Everybody (in America at least) would know whom you meant. Now the previously-voiced objections—arbitrariness and inappropriateness—fall away. Now it is clear

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*"Now it is clear there is  
nothing arbitrary about  
the choice of names—the  
battle of cosmologies is  
part of the warp and woof  
of the play, and the names  
of the Danish courtiers are  
as close as the author  
could come to saying  
'Tycho' without giving up  
the claim that he was  
writing fiction."*

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there is nothing arbitrary about the choice of names—the battle of cosmologies is part of the warp and woof of the play, and the names of the Danish courtiers are as close as the author could come to saying 'Tycho' without giving up the claim that he was writing fiction. The fact that Jørgen Rosencrantz and Peder and Axel Gyldenstjerne were powerful individuals no longer bothers us, since the reference is not to them, but to a cosmological system.

There is just a bit more to be said. Earlier I facetiously quoted a hypothetical defender of 'the Tycho connection' as saying that Shakespeare chose the names Rosencrantz and Guildenstern from Tycho's portrait because he liked

the imagery—'Rosy Wreath' and 'Golden Star.' But Shakespeare, the master weaver, has indeed woven these names into the fabric of the play. The first act opens with a description of the appearance of the Ghost ("When yond same star that's westward from the pole had made his course t'illuminate that part of heaven where now it burns . . ."). There's our Golden Star. And it has been identified<sup>18</sup> as Tycho's supernova, which was first observed 6 November 1572. Where? In Wittenberg. The image of a Rosy Wreath suggests Ophelia, "larded all with sweet flowers." When Gertrude describes her drowning (4.7) she talks of Ophelia's "fantastic garlands" and "crownet weeds," both phrases suggesting wreaths. The reference is even more specific at Ophelia's burial (5.1), where the Doctor of Divinity protests "Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants . . ." The rare English word 'crants' does not appear in desk dictionaries, but the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "a garland, chaplet, wreath."<sup>19</sup>

*(Continued on page 16)*

*Rosencrantz-Guildenstern (continued from page 15)*

**The Oxford Scenario.** From the age of four until he was twelve, Edward de Vere lived with and was tutored by the renowned scholar Sir Thomas Smith (1513-77).<sup>20</sup> Smith was known to be an enthusiastic student of astrology and astronomy (Hughes writes that he had “a professional’s knowledge” of these subjects). When

his father died, de Vere became the ward of William Cecil, Lord Burghley. We have already noted that de Vere had unrestricted access to Cecil’s extensive library, which not only contained Thomas Digges’s book on Tycho’s supernova, but also Copernicus’s seminal volume, *De revolutionibus*.<sup>21</sup> Thus, throughout his childhood, de Vere had the encouragement and opportunity to develop an active interest in astronomy and cosmology. His brother-in-law, Lord Willoughby, was interested enough in these topics to visit Tycho’s observatory Uraniborg during his 1582 mission. From Tycho’s letter to Savile

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*“Those with a  
knowledge of  
Oxford’s life will,  
on reading the  
biographical  
sketch of Frederik  
Rosenkrantz, have  
a strong sense  
of déjà vu.”*

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(cited above) we know that Tycho was not shy about describing his work and seeking credit for it, and he probably would have been eager to explain his hybrid cosmology to the distinguished English visitor. It is easy to imagine that Willoughby’s tales of his encounter with Tycho (together with a report on Danish customs, such as the ritualized drinking at banquets, the preference for sending young nobles to Wittenberg, and the political ascendancy of the four foremost families) started working in Oxford’s imagination, and coalesced the next year when his mentor Sussex died, perhaps by poison. In mystery-novel terms, Oxford had the means, the motive, and the opportunity to write a *Hamlet* with a cosmological subtext well before Nashe mentioned the play in 1589. Some Oxfordian scholars believe he continued working on *Hamlet* throughout the rest of his life.

**Epilogue.** Those with a knowledge of Oxford’s life will, on reading the biographical sketch of Frederik Rosenkrantz, have a strong sense of *déjà vu*. Both lost their fathers at an early age and then were raised by a powerful politician. Both received exemplary educations and then toured Europe, especially Italy. Both got into trouble from an affair with a lady of the court—Oxford with Anne Vavasor, Rosenkrantz with Rigborg Brockenhuus—resulting in the birth of a son. Both sons, when they reached manhood, saw military service. Both Oxford and Rosenkrantz were wounded in a duel in their early thirties: Oxford was lamed by Thomas Knyvet in 1582; Rosenkrantz died in 1602 from injuries received when he tried to separate two duelists. Although I have rejected the notion that Frederik and Knud were the original models for the Danish

courtiers in *Hamlet*, I think that these and other correspondences mentioned above should qualify them as honorary, or *ex post facto* members of the play’s *dramatis personæ*, along with Burghley, Elizabeth, Leicester, and, of course, Oxford. Long live Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstierne!

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** *I am extremely grateful to Professor John Robert Christianson of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, for invaluable help during the preparation of this work, and for permission to use his biographical sketches.*

#### Notes:

1. Eva Turner Clark, *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare’s Plays*, Kennikat Press, New York, 1974, p. 637.
2. Richard Whalen, “Cross-Examining Leonard Digges on his Stratford Connections,” *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* 37.1, Spring 2001.
3. Peter Usher, “Advances in the Hamlet Cosmic Allegory,” *The Oxfordian* IV, 2001, pp 25-49.
4. Letter printed in Tychonis Brahe *Dani opera omnia*, J. L. E. Dreyer, ed., Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1913-29, 7: 283-5.
5. Engraved by Jacques de Gheyn II (see J. R. Christianson, *On Tycho’s Island* (2000), pp. 117, 286)
6. Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, EPM Publications, McLean VA, 1984.
7. Victor Thoren, *The Lord of Uraniborg*, Cambridge, London, 1990, p. 22.
8. Kitty Ferguson, *Tycho and Kepler*, Walker, New York, 2002, p. 112.
9. John Robert Christianson, private communication.
10. *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* 29.1A, Winter 1993, p. 18.
11. Thoren, 429; Ferguson, 265n.
12. Frank Kermodé in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1974, 1136.
13. E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, Oxford, 1923, Vol. IV, 234.
14. Clark, p. 634 et seq.
15. *Leicester’s Commonwealth*, Dwight C. Peck, ed., Ohio University Press, 1985.
- 15a. Usher, op. cit.
16. The generally acknowledged sources for *Hamlet* are *Historica Danica* by Saxo Grammaticus, printed in Latin in 1514 and translated into Danish by Anders Vedel in 1575, and a free adaptation of Saxo’s material by François de Belleforest, *Histoires tragiques*, published in Paris in 1576. The name of the Claudius character in the first source is ‘Feng’; in the second it is ‘Fengon.’
17. Thoren, 341.
18. D. W. Olson, M. S. Olson and R. L. Doescher, “The Stars of Hamlet,” *Sky and Telescope*, November 1998, 68-73.
19. Alternate spellings: cranse, crance, craunce, corance. The *OED* offers a quote from 1890: “The ‘crants’ were garlands which it was usual to make of white paper, and to hang up in the church on the occasion of a young girl’s funeral.” In a post-Freudian era, the symbolism seems almost embarrassingly explicit.
20. Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, “‘Shakespeare’s’ Tutor: Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577),” *The Oxfordian* III, 2000, 19-44.
21. Eddi Jolly, “‘Shakespeare’ and Burghley’s Library: Bibliotheca Illustris: Sive Catalogus Variorum Librorum,” *The Oxfordian* III, 2000, 3-18.

## Appendix A

### Frederik Rosenkrantz

by J. R. Christianson<sup>1</sup>

Frederik Rosenkrantz of Rosenvold and Stjernholm was baptized 2 September 1571 in Skanderborg Castle chapel, died 18 August 1602 in Wessely, Moravia, and was buried in Týn Church in Prague, where Tycho Brahe was also buried. He was a son of state councilor Holger Rosenkrantz (1517–75) and Karen Gyldenstjerne (1544–1613). His father died when he was a child, and his uncle, state councilor Jørgen Rosenkrantz (1523–96), was appointed his ward.

Rosenkrantz received an excellent education, first in Ribe School, where he lived in the household of Tycho Brahe's friend, Peder Hegelund (Bishop of Ribe 1595–1614), and then abroad with Hans Poulsen Resen as his preceptor.<sup>2</sup> They studied in Rostock 1584–86 and Wittenberg 1586–89. During a short trip home to Denmark in 1589, they sailed out to the island of Hven and spent two days as guests of Tycho Brahe at Uraniborg, where Anders Sørensen Vedel was also visiting at the time. During 1589–91, Rosenkrantz and Resen studied in Padua and Siena and also visited other parts of Italy, including Rome, Sicily, and even Malta.<sup>3</sup>

Rosenkrantz was in England in 1592, but not with Resen. The Danish biographical dictionary simply noted that he traveled with Knud Gyldenstjerne.<sup>4</sup>

After completing his education abroad, Rosenkrantz entered the service of the Danish court in 1593. In the years 1595–99, he held the fief of Giske in Norway.<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1599, Rosenkrantz advanced to the fief of Lundenæs in Denmark. He was brilliant, charming, learned, and polished, and had prospects of a splendid career as a courtier when he threw it all overboard in 1598 by seducing Rigborg Brockenhuus (1579–1641), a maiden-in-waiting in the court of Queen Anna Catherine. Rigborg bore him a son in 1599. Because this took place in court between two courtiers, it was a grave offence to the laws governing conduct at court. Rigborg Brockenhuus lost all rights of inheritance and was walled into a room in her father's castle at Egeskov until after his death in 1604.

Frederik Rosenkrantz fled to Hamburg but was brought back to Denmark and sentenced by a court of his peers to the loss of honor and two fingers, which would have deprived him of his name, property, and all future prospects. However, the sentence was commuted to exile when he agreed to travel to Hungary and fight against the Ottoman Turks. On the way, he visited Tycho Brahe in Prague. He regained his honor on the field of battle, but his petition to return to Denmark was denied by King Christian IV. Rosenkrantz died from wounds suffered while attempting to break up a duel.

His son with Rigborg Brockenhuus was eventually granted the name and arms of Rosenkrantz and fought in the battle of Lutter am Barenberg in 1626, where he was taken prisoner by the imperials but later released. He died in 1634.

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2. Resen was Bishop of Roskilde 1615–38, and later a Gnesio-Lutheran foe of Tycho Brahe's circle.
3. These years of study abroad are described in detail in Bjørn Kornerup, *Biskop Hans Poulsen Resen*, (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1928–68), 1: 60–132.
4. *Dansk biografisk leksikon* 1982, 12: 335.
5. The kings of Denmark also ruled Norway, Iceland, and Schleswig-Holstein.

## Appendix B

### Knud Gyldenstjerne

by J. R. Christianson<sup>1</sup>

Knud Henriksen Gyldenstjerne of Aagaard was born on the ancestral estate of Aagaard in Jutland on 31 July 1575 and died in Bergen, Norway, in 1627. His father, Admiral Henrik Gyldenstjerne (1540–92), had first been married to Tycho Brahe's eldest sister, and after her death to Mette Rud, who was the mother of Knud.

In 1584, Knud Gyldenstjerne entered the noble academy at Sorø, where he studied until he and his cousin, Corfitz Rud, (1573–1630), traveled abroad in 1589 with Johan Bacmeister as their preceptor. They studied in Zürich in 1589, Strasbourg 1590–91, Rostock 1591, and Wittenberg at some time during these years. Then the two cousins parted. Knud Gyldenstjerne visited Scotland and England in 1592, while Corfitz Rud continued his studies abroad from 1592–97 in Padua, Bologna, Siena, Malta, Spain, and France, visiting England and Holland on his way home to Denmark.<sup>2</sup>

Upon returning to Denmark, Knud Gyldenstjerne served at the Danish court until 1598, when he assumed the management of his inherited estates. He married a noblewoman, Sophie Lindenow, in 1608, and served with distinction as standard bearer in the Kalmar War with Sweden (1611–13).

He was named governor of the fief of Vestervig Cloister in Jutland in 1612–18. He accompanied King Christian IV on a journey to Germany during these years, together with his own squires in the royal livery. He and another nobleman, Otto Skeel, were sent on a mission to Muscovy as royal Danish couriers, where they were held hostage for a time.<sup>3</sup>

From 1618 until his death in 1627, Knud Gyldenstjerne held the important command of Bergenhus Castle in Norway. He ruled Bergen, the largest city in Norway, and an immense surrounding fief, and had frequent opportunity to deal with the Scottish merchants who were numerous in the thriving port city. His widow, Sophie Lindenow, governed Bergenhus fief during the year of grace after his death.<sup>4</sup>

1. © 2003 by J. R. Christianson. All rights reserved.
2. Vello Helk, *Dansk-norske studierejser fra reformationen til enevælden 1536-1660* (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1987), 229, 336.
3. H. A. Riis-Olesen, "De kongelige lensmænd på Vestervig Kloster," *Historisk årbog for Thy og Mors* 1971:28–43, at <http://www.thistedmuseum.dk>.
4. Kr. Erlsev, *Danmark-Norges Len og Lensmænd 1596-1660* (Copenhagen: Hoffensberg & Trap, 1885), 42, 43, 79.

# “Lillies that Fester”

## *A Tale of Two Queens*

By Virginia J. Renner

**A**mong the myriad volumes of literary criticism on the Shakespeare canon, some works stand out as worthwhile reading for Oxfordians despite their Stratfordian assumptions. Giorgio Melchiori's *Shakespeare's Dramatic Meditations: An Experiment in Criticism* (Oxford, 1976) stands in this category. As I read this book and substituted my Oxfordian viewing lens for the author's traditional Stratfordian one, I came to the interpretation of Sonnet 94 discussed below. Since my explication is based on Melchiori's work, I will summarize his premise and briefly review his analysis of Sonnet 94.

Melchiori's insightful study analyzes four sonnets, 94, 121, 129, and 146, sonnets unique among all 154 in being what the author terms the only *non-You* and *non-Lovesonnets*. That is, they do not, as is the norm, use the second person to set up an *I-Thou* dialogue, nor do they use *Love* as a subject.<sup>1</sup> He contends these four sonnets "...are explorations of the contradictions—in themselves dramatic—existing in the various views on the exercise of power, social behaviour, sex, and religion."<sup>2</sup> This summary is reflected in the chapter titles, for example: "Lilies that fester: the Strategy of Sonnet 94 and the Ethics of Power."

Sonnet 94 is the first sonnet Melchiori examines at length. The author sees this poem as a silent debate on the use and misuse of political power. He insists that it should not be considered as part of a group of sonnets and that it has nothing to do with a personal relationship with a beloved or a youth. On this we agree. Melchiori concludes, however, that it was not created from any personal experience, but as theoretical musings on ethical principles.<sup>3</sup> I disagree with this statement and believe as Oxfordians we can view Sonnet 94 in both ways. It is a dramatic interior soliloquy on the ethics of political power, but it grew, I argue, from de Vere's personal experience. I think the specific situation rendered into Sonnet 94 was the threat that Mary, Queen of Scots posed to England, her trial and execution, and the actions of Queen Eliza-

beth, Lord Burghley, Oxford and his peers at the time. Melchiori's analysis, precedent to my reading, is summarized in the fol-

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***“Sonnet 94 is the  
first sonnet Melchiori  
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***The author sees  
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---

lowing section.

Melchiori states that we are not now in “the world of *I* and *Thou*, but the world of *It, They, and Others*,” declaring “...Sonnet 94 seems to be the one political sonnet of Shakespeare,”<sup>4</sup> dealing with people in power. He gives a lexical analysis and diagrams the structural schema of the sonnet before plunging into a discussion of *Edward III*, which he thinks Shakespeare “remembered” or in the case of some scenes “wrote himself or revised.” Melchiori also opines that Sonnet 94 was “...written *after* and not before *Edward III*.”<sup>5</sup> Since the publication of Eric Sams' edition of *Shakespeare's Edward III*,<sup>6</sup> the play has gradually been accepted as part of the canon by many, though Melchiori regards Shakespeare only as a contributor, not sole author. Regardless of the date one accepts for the play, the Sonnet could have been written after it.

Anyone fortunate enough to have seen a production of *Edward III* will remember Act II, scene 1, when the King tricks Warwick into pleading with his own daughter, the Countess of Salisbury, to become the King's mistress. Warwick, having vowed his oath of allegiance, is bound to keep his word to his royal master in order to maintain his worth as steward of himself and remain honorable, though he loathes his task. Melchiori's paraphrase relative to the Sonnet and the play reads:

The mighty, only apparently just, have absolute control over outer forms; the others their stewards, may be honest like Warwick, and masters of their honour, but are in honour bound to serve the “excellence,” that is to say the superior state, of their lords and masters, whatever form this superiority may take.<sup>8</sup>

Reading the lines from that scene is to find a longer version of the Sonnet's thought and imagery, including this line, “Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.”<sup>9</sup>

In Melchiori's more recent, extended commentary on *King Edward III* in his 1998 edition for The New Cambridge Shakespeare series, he surveys all the plays for cases of power warranting loyalty and for power misused, thereby provoking censure or rebellion. His final stance is that “ambiguity” and “ambivalence” come nearest the mark in describing the author's apparent attitude. *Edward III*, he declares, is “a play whose central theme is exactly the ambivalence of power.”<sup>10</sup>

There are few references to *Measure for Measure* in his earlier work, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Meditations*, the relevance of which he leaves, he admits, to other commentators, only noting that King Edward III is like Angelo in an “extremely ambiguous moral position.”<sup>11</sup> Certainly many Oxfordians, Stratfordian literary critics, theater directors and drama reviewers have brought the cogency of this “problem play” to the Sonnet. The ambiguous aspects, not only of Angelo, but the Duke, Claudio, and the variously staged

unspoken response of Isabella at the end, have often been seen to lead to Sonnet 94.

*Edward III* is not the only text brought to bear on the author's reading of the Sonnet. One section is headed "Sidney versus *Edward III* (lines 1-4)." Melchiori cites actions in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *All's Well* and the Bible. Calling on the text of Matthew 5:5, he contrasts the meek who "inherit the earth" with the mighty who "rightly do inherit heavens graces" in line five at the beginning of the second quatrain. "The equation can only be sardonic," he points out, "since 'rightly' does not mean morally or legally right, but 'in the right form' or even 'according to the accepted norm.'"<sup>12</sup> The qualities befitting those with (royal) power he finds in *Macbeth*, when Malcolm wants to test the loyalty of Macduff in what the author calls "perhaps Shakespeare's most extensive 'political' statement in any of the plays."<sup>13</sup>

... The king-becoming graces  
As justice, verity, temperance,  
stability,  
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, low  
liness,  
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,...<sup>14</sup>

He goes on to distinguish the garden flower from the wild flower and recalls the Garden State images of *Richard II*.<sup>15</sup> This distinction turned my images of the "lilies of the field" into lilies *on* a field—a blue field—and I was ready to accept Melchiori's view of the sestet or the Garden as a metaphor for the octave, the State. He does not cite Richard's familiar lines against regicide, which remind us of traditional attitudes toward a crowned sovereign and which I find especially relevant.

Not all the water in the rough sea  
Can wash the balm off from an anointed  
king;  
The breath of worldly men cannot depose  
The deputy elected by the Lord.<sup>16</sup>

### Ethics vs. loyalties

Convinced that Sonnet 94 is indeed a meditation on political ethics, but disregarding some of the author's assumptions,

such as the poet's non-aristocratic background and the traditional Stratfordian time frame, I asked—What special events in Edward de Vere's life might have led him to meditate on the ethics of power? Though his life near the center of the court as Burghley's son-in-law often brought him face to face with problems that inevitably involved ethical choices, would there have

### Sonnet 94

(as published in the 1609 Quarto)

They that haue powre to hurt, and will  
doe none,  
That doe not do the thing, they most do  
showe,  
Who mouing others, are themselues as  
stone,  
Vnmooued, could, and to temptation slow:  
They rightly do inherit heauens graces,  
And husband natures ritches from  
expençe,  
They are the Lords and owners of their  
faces,  
Others, but stewards of their excel-  
lence:  
The sommers flowre is to the sommer  
sweet,  
Though to it selfe, it onely liue and die,  
But if that flowre with base infection  
meete,  
The basest weed out-braues his dignity:  
The sweetest things turne sowrest by  
their deedes,  
Lillies that fester, smell far worse then  
weeds.

been one circumstance he relived, some powerful situation he might revisit and concentrate into these 14 lines? The trial and execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, a momentous event for England, for Elizabeth and Oxford, seems a fitting answer.

As the second ranking peer assigned to sit in judgment in the case of treason allegedly committed by Mary, Queen of Scots, against Queen Elizabeth, de Vere had a painful duty to perform. He was present at the spirited speeches Mary gave in her defense at the trial. The most routine reports of her demeanor and words still evoke a sympathetic response from readers, as they evidently did from contempo-

rary onlookers. It is unlikely de Vere witnessed her beheading, but that scene, and his part in bringing it about, might have provided a traumatic crux, repeatedly drawing his mind to meditate upon it. The speech by Richard II against regicide, cited above, immediately comes to mind. Alternatively, when a play's action spotlights powerful persons committing heinous acts, leaders are subverted into tyrants and warrant rebellion or overthrow.

Several circumstances may have led the 17th Earl to have divided loyalties and conflicted feelings as he participated in these events. Whether the origin of the de Vere family was Dutch or Danish, there is no doubt that Oxford's ancestors crossed the English Channel with William the Conqueror and regarded themselves as Norman.<sup>17</sup> Oxford had visited the French court, perhaps more than once, and spoke and wrote French well. Mary Stuart, crowned Queen of Scotland when six days old, reigned briefly as Queen of France when her husband, Francis, Catherine de Medici's oldest son, became king in 1559. At that time she used not only the royal coats of arms of France and Scotland, but was persuaded to add those of England as well. She was, in the eyes of the Catholics, the rightful ruler of England, rather than Queen Elizabeth, who had been crowned the previous year.

The lily figured at that point in both English and French royal coats of arms. The golden lily or fleur de lis (lys) had been used in French arms since the twelfth century and was on the royal seal of Louis VIII early in the eleventh century. During the reign of Edward III, the English royal arms quartered three lions rampant with fleur de lis in the first and fourth quarters to reflect the claim to the French throne. From Henry IV's time forward the three golden "lilies" on a blue ground were on the royal coat and remained there throughout Elizabeth's reign into that of James I. Though many royal and noble houses of the period in England, France, and Germany used the fleur de lis, it was associated especially with French royalty and the Roman Catholic Church. In

(Continued on page 20)

*Two Queens (continued from page 19)*

1546, the year Luther died, the Order of the Lily was established by Pope Paul III in the Roman states and “its members were pledged to defend the patrimony of St. Peter’s against the enemies of the church.”<sup>18</sup>

For Oxford, a peer acutely aware of heraldic symbols, there were two queens bearing lilies on their arms during this trial. Both believed in their right to rule England, but with the difference that at the time made *all* the difference, their religion. He knew where he must stand in relation to both, but in this matter Queen Elizabeth could not be seen as the pure white lily.

### The power to hurt

For years Queen Elizabeth had held the “power to hurt” her cousin and, according to her counselors, should have moved against her. As long as Mary lived to head the Catholic faction, Elizabeth and the Protestants were in danger. But Elizabeth created many delays even after the trial and before signing the warrant sentencing Mary to death. This story is repeated by many of her biographers and the detail of events must have been known by Edward de Vere soon after they happened, or more likely, were followed by him as they unfolded. With the Sonnet text in mind, let us briefly reconstruct the events.<sup>19</sup>

After the disclosure of Anthony Babington’s plot to murder Elizabeth and place Mary on the throne, Elizabeth finally had to summon Parliament to put those involved on trial. With the trial and subsequent executions the public’s panic and demand for Mary’s death had increased, whereas Elizabeth had hoped it would subside. She felt Mary “was not only a foreigner who was not subject to English law, but an anointed sovereign, answerable to God alone for her actions.”

Mary’s trial began on October 14th, 1586, before 36 commissioners, including Burghley, Walsingham, Hatton and Oxford at Fotheringhay, “a medieval castle in Northamptonshire.” The Earl of Oxford found himself in the unsavory position of doing his duty, very probably feeling some of the same scruples against regicide expressed so persuasively in the plays. Mary pleaded her own case, was found guilty of treason and was about to be pronounced guilty “when a messenger arrived with the



*Queen Elizabeth (left) and Queen Mary (right) came to represent the two directions—Protestant or Catholic—that the evolving nation of Great Britain could take. Shakespeare/Oxford was on the jury that condemned Mary to death and would undoubtedly have had strong views about killing a “deputy elected by the Lord.”*

Queen’s command, issued in the middle of the night since Elizabeth had been unable to sleep, that the court be adjourned to London to reconvene in ten days’ time.” The commissioners traveled back to London. The judges and the Court of Star Chamber pronounced Mary guilty, but Parliament had to ratify the verdict and assembled on October 29. They demanded her execution and a “delegation of twenty peers and forty MPs” delivered a petition to Elizabeth on November 12th at Richmond.

Mary had not confessed her guilt and this made it harder on the Queen, who had secretly written her “promising that, if Mary confessed all, she would cover her shame and save her from reproach.” In other words, she would save Mary from death. Elizabeth asked Parliament to find another way to deal with the situation, but on November 24th another deputation came to Richmond, urging Mary’s death. Elizabeth adjourned Parliament for another week. On December 4th, a royal proclamation of the sentence, rewritten jointly by Burghley and the Queen, was published. The order for execution was in her hands at once, but she “prorogued Parliament until 15 February in order to give herself ten weeks in which to steel herself to do it.”

The description of the Queen’s agonizing over the final order to execute her kinswoman as recounted in detail in the Weir biography is strikingly vivid. Was she “to temptation slow?”

Christmas came and went, as did January. On February 1st, 1587, the Queen

summoned Sir William Davison, who presented her with the death warrant, which she signed. Afterward, Davison’s and Elizabeth’s accounts varied as to exactly what her instructions to him had been. As Weir and others have surmised, it was more likely Davison’s account that was truthful. She claimed he was instructed not to have the Lord Chancellor, Christopher Hatton, append the Great Seal to the warrant without first checking back with her. He said the Queen had indicated he was to obtain the Seal and give the document to Walsingham, which he had done before she asked for the document again. Davison, probably chosen for the role by Burghley, became the scapegoat of the affair.

Finally, the Queen, unaware of Burghley’s next actions at this point, insisted Davison contact Sir Amyas Paulet, the guardian of Mary during her close arrest, asking him to arrange to “quietly do away with Mary” so it could appear she “had died of natural causes.” Clearly, Elizabeth pressured Paulet to murder Mary, to effect a private execution, as she did not want to be “held responsible for her death.” Burghley was after a public execution, while Elizabeth saw assassination as preferable. The Queen festered. Davison wrote to Paulet. Paulet refused. Meanwhile, after a secret meeting, Burghley had drafted the order for the sentence and on February 4th had it sent with the warrant to Fotheringhay without informing Elizabeth. It arrived on February 7th when the Queen was still hoping Paulet would arrange to do the deed for her, though he had already sent one letter in reply saying no.

When the news of the February 8th execution arrived on the 9th, the Queen became “almost hysterical” and hoped to convince the world she was not to blame for Mary’s death. She wanted Davison hanged, but Burghley talked her out of it. The 10 Councilors who had secretly signed and agreed with Burghley to shoulder any blame were humiliatingly questioned by the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice and Archbishop Whitgift. All 10 were in disgrace. Burghley was not allowed to come back to Court until May. Only Paulet came out of it unscathed, by receiving the Order of the Garter. In this century it looks like the equivalent of hush money.

### The true power?

Was Elizabeth’s wrath at Mary’s execution genuine? It appears it was.

In an article in *The London Times*, November 11th, 2001, and in speeches given recently in the United States, John Guy, Professor of History, Clare College, Cambridge, has made major revisionist arguments against the usual view of power held by Queen Elizabeth, particularly in the matter of Mary’s execution. According to Professor Guy, William Cecil was clearly responsible for the death of Mary, Queen of Scots, not Queen Elizabeth. This goal had been determined by Burghley before Mary returned to Scotland from France, some two dozen years before he finally accomplished it. Elizabeth’s priority was to hereditary descent before the matter of religion, but Burghley felt he had a mission—a call, if you will—as a Protestant of power to see that a Protestant ruler succeeded the Queen, who was “not Protestant enough.”<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth and Mary, in Guy’s presentation, were together in a “monarchist trade union,” both understanding that Mary’s death would set a precedent for Elizabeth’s possible overthrow, or the public execution of any English ruler thereafter, which indeed it did in the case of Charles I.<sup>21</sup> Even if Professor Guy’s research places the blame for Queen Mary’s death squarely on Lord Burghley, many questions remain.

We wonder about the inner feelings and attitudes of the major players in the drama. Was Queen Elizabeth pushed or maneuvered into taking action? Today it is not her signing of the warrant, but her letters to Paulet advocating assassination that give us pause. Did Oxford know all the

events at the time or shortly after they occurred? He was in a position to learn the details of the actions of both Queens and his father-in-law eventually, if not at the moment. How much did he know of their inner motivations? I imagine the author of the plays, understanding human nature as he did, knew or guessed as much as we can now discover.

I think in Oxford’s eyes *either* Queen might have refrained from using her power

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to plot the death of the other. Might not these lily-bearing leaders have resisted the infection of regicide? I contend that de Vere would have preferred Queen Elizabeth’s view of the sanctity of monarchy to that of Lord Burghley’s, of assuring the Protestant succession at all costs. It is my opinion that if any Englishman outside the Elizabethan court had seen the poem and connected its language to current events, the lily image might have been associated with Mary, but probably not with Elizabeth. Bearing in mind the scenes from *Edward III* explored by Melchiori and other relevant passages about political power and monarchical status cited above, I am not persuaded Edward de Vere was only thinking of Mary. The Earl’s sensitivity to heraldic symbols, his background in and knowledge of English and French culture, his insight into motives

and actions of contemporary courtly society, his own position and his role in events surrounding Mary’s trial are, I have argued, distilled in this poem. In fact, Sonnet 94 very well may be as close as we’ll come to his final word on these events. I cannot imagine any more perfect.

### Notes:

1. *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Meditations: An Experiment in Criticism*. By Giorgio Melchiori. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976, 31-32. The “You” in 146 is “not the Loved one or Love itself, but the subject’s Soul.” Citations to *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Meditations* will be referred to as Melchiori. For citations from his 1998 edition of the play I will use the title, *King Edward III*.
2. *Ibid.*, 32.
3. *Ibid.*, 68. “It is not a case of personal experience projected on to a universal level, but of a reconsideration of basic principles in order to clear away the deformations in thought brought about by private passions.”
4. *Ibid.*, 35.
5. *Ibid.*, 45.
6. *Shakespeare’s Edward III*. Edited by Eric Sams. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1996.
7. Stephen Moorer directed a production in Carmel, California, in 2001.
8. Melchiori, 46.
9. *King Edward III*. Ed. by Giorgio Melchiori. Cambridge, C.U.P. [c1998, 2001] 11, 1, 435-453.
10. *Ibid.*, Introduction, 41.
11. Melchiori, 45.
12. *Ibid.*, 49.
13. *Ibid.*, 51.
14. *Macbeth*, IV, iii, 91-94. Citations from plays other than *Edward III* are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2d edition, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997.
15. Melchiori, 64-65.
16. *Richard II*, III, ii, 54-57. Other possibilities: *Richard II*, V, i, 72-73. “A twofold marriage twixt my crown and me, And then betwixt me and my married wife.”
17. *The De Veres of Castle Hedingham* by Verily Anderson. Lavenham, Suffolk, Terence Dalton Ltd., 1993. 4-5.
18. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 12th ed. 1922. v. 10. Fleur-De-Lis.
19. The following summary of details and quotations are found in Alison Weir’s *Elizabeth the Queen*, 1998, 367-383.
20. John Guy. Lecture given April 22, 2003, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
21. See John Guy’s forthcoming biography of Mary, Queen of Scots, to be published early in 2004.

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# “My Turk”

## *Why the nickname?*

By Paul H. Altrocchi, MD

*I cannot tell what the dickens his name is.*  
(The Merry Wives of Windsor)

Queen Elizabeth loved nicknames—not Ed for Edward, but names which connoted some personal attribute, quirk, hobby, or idiosyncrasy.

Such specially chosen names imply greater familiarity and sense of camaraderie, as was meant by the Middle English word *ekenam* from which our word nickname is derived. But nicknames in a royal court also may serve to maintain a superior-inferior hierarchy and to denigrate the passive receiver by “assuming the right to boil down someone’s persona to a sole characteristic and then legitimizing it through repeated use.”<sup>1</sup>

The Elizabethans relished nicknames as much as the Mafia, the boxing world, and President George W. Bush do today. Queen Elizabeth devised special names for many court personnel and politicians with whom she interacted the most, e.g. :

1. Based upon esteem—“Spirit” or “Leviathan” for her chief counselor, William Cecil, and “Sweet Robin” for her lover, Robert Dudley.

2. Based upon physical characteristics—“Pygmy” for hunchbacked, small-statured Robert Cecil.

3. Based upon Walter Raleigh’s pronunciation of his first name with a Devon accent—“Water.”

4. Based upon flocks of sheep around his family home in Holdenby, Northamptonshire—“Sheep” or “Mutton” for Christopher Hatton.

Were courtiers helpless victims of nicknaming? Yes, when chosen by their absolute monarch. But they often created their own nicknames for politicians and other courtiers, usually not spoken directly to the recipient, e.g., “Pondus” for William Cecil because of his slow ponderous speech, and “Gypsy” for Robert Dudley

because of the bronze tint of his skin.

Poets like Edward de Vere used many alternative names for the Queen in their poetry and plays, e.g., Diana, Aphrodite, Venus, Sun, Moon, Fortune, Cynthia, and Sylvia.

But why “My Turk” for Edward de Vere? It is a curious nickname for the Queen’s favorite courtier, her genius-playwright who, under her own stimulation, brought lasting glory to her realm. Four possible explanations will be analyzed.

### A. Derived from “Torc” ?

The Senior Ogburns suggest an origin from the Gaelic word, *torc*, meaning “boar”, the family rebus of de Vere.<sup>2</sup> Against such an interpretation:

1. The Queen and De Vere spoke many languages, but not Gaelic. It was not a language heard at Court.

2. The Irish were looked down upon as an inferior peasant society by English nobility. It would hardly be appropriate to use an Irish nickname for a premier earl of the realm.

3. If derived from *torc*, why “My Turk” and not “My Torc”?

### B. A tribute to his poetic bent?

Since all literate Turks in the Ottoman Empire were encouraged to write poetry, was Elizabeth paying homage to his extraordinary poetic skills? This seems doubtful since the word “Turk” also carried an implication of duplicity, brutality, and being an “infidel.”

### C. Diplomatic Assignment to Turkey?

During de Vere’s 16-month trip abroad in 1575-1576, did he travel to Turkey on a diplomatic mission for the Queen to initiate the groundwork for establishing trade agreements between England and Turkey

of the type already granted to Venice and France?

In a letter to Burghley written in Paris on March 17, 1575, de Vere says, “the king hath given me his letters of recommendation to his ambassador in the Turk’s court ... perhaps I will bestow two or three months to see Constantinople and some part of Greece.”<sup>3</sup>

Only three letters survive from de Vere’s 16-month European trip. Between his letter from Venice on Sept. 24th, 1575, and his letter from Padua on Nov. 27th, a total of 64 days, his whereabouts are unknown. He had finally recovered from a debilitating febrile illness but it left him discouraged with Italy. He wrote Burghley from Venice: “For my liking of Italy, my Lord, I am glad to have seen it, and I care not ever to see it any more, unless it be to serve my prince or country.”

In 1553, Suleyman the First allowed individual Englishmen to trade with Turkey<sup>4</sup> but only a few did.<sup>5</sup> In later years, de Vere did carry out several personal diplomatic tasks to France at the Queen’s request,<sup>6</sup> but there is no English archival evidence of any mission by him to Turkey.

### D. Did de Vere take a personal trip to Turkey?

We know that de Vere intended to visit Turkey, as documented by his letter from Paris. Also, one of his retinue, William Lewyn, who may have been fired for spying on de Vere for Burghley, wrote to Burghley in July 1575 that he didn’t know whether de Vere had already started for Greece or was still in Italy.<sup>7</sup> September 24 to November 27 was certainly time enough to visit Greece and Istanbul.

Along with many Oxfordians, including Ruth Loyd Miller and Richard Roe,<sup>8</sup> the senior Ogburns thought de Vere had visited Turkey. In a letter to Julia Cooley Altrocchi dated Oct. 27, 1959, Dorothy Ogburn wrote: “E.O. may well have gone to

Turkey. Ben Jonson speaks of Puntarvolo 'at the Turk's court ...'"

Malim not only agrees with others that Puntarvolo, from Ben Jonson's 1599 play *Every Man Out of His Humour*, is a caricature of Edward de Vere but suggests that the name Puntarvolo derives from Latin and Greek words meaning Spear-Shake-Will.<sup>9</sup>

According to the Oxfordian chronology of Eva Turner Clark,<sup>10</sup> the first plays which de Vere wrote and/or polished upon returning from his foreign trip were:

1. *Timon of Athens*, set in Greece (1576).
2. *Comedy of Errors*, set in Ephesus, Turkey (1576).
3. *Titus Andronicus*, set in Rome (1576).
4. *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, set in Antioch, Tarsus, Tyre and other cities of Turkey (1577).

Before he left for Europe, the only play we know about by Edward de Vere is *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, written in 1574. Is it mere coincidence that two of de Vere's first four plays after his continental travels were set in Turkey?

Does the following passage from *Othello* hint a specific personal knowledge of the constant direction of currents from the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea, not gleanable from books or general knowledge?

Like to the Pontic Sea,  
Whose icy current and compulsive course  
Ne'er knows retiring ebb, but keeps due on  
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,  
Even so my bloody thoughts with violent  
pace  
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble  
love...<sup>11</sup>

Most likely this was available information without specific import.

There is reference in *King Henry IV, Part II* to the Turkish Sultan's habit of fratricide to forestall conspiracies, but these were also accessible historical facts:

Brothers, you mix your sadness with some  
fear:  
This is the English, not the Turkish Court;  
Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,  
But Harry, Harry.<sup>12</sup>

There are no specific personal-knowledge allusions anywhere in the Shakespeare canon which verify a trip to Turkey by de Vere. Such proof must come from another source.

### Research in Turkey's Archives

Seeking evidence of a diplomatic assignment for Edward de Vere to Turkey, the official archives of the Ottoman State

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***"Only three letters***

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were comprehensively examined by two research associates of the author: (a) Prof. Fikret Saricaoglu, History Department, Istanbul University, and (b) Gultekin Yildiz, Masters' Degree candidate, History Department, Marmara University.

In the 1500s, the Turks had a very efficient civil service and were meticulous record keepers. All relevant archives, some quite difficult of access to outsiders, were searched including:

1. The Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archives.
2. The Archives of Topkapi Palace.
3. Three catalogs which register other state documents.
4. Three contemporary Turkish Court chronicles reporting events of importance day by day.

The results of these searches were that no evidence was found to confirm a diplomatic mission by Edward de Vere in 1575-1576.

### Comments

Does this research rule out any kind of official mission to Turkey by Edward de Vere? The answer is "no," according to these Turkish scholars. While Murad III's primary interests were in the harem, a highly intelligent, skilled and powerful Grand Vizier, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, had almost total control over domestic and foreign policy. He could have discussed trade relations with de Vere in private, "off the record."

These modern scholars also confirm that, even though the Turks had a highly developed "secret service," a private trip to Turkey by de Vere might have been well known to them but not recorded.

Queen Elizabeth was fascinated by things Islamic. In 1575, with her approval, Edward Osborne and Richard Staper sent two agents overland to Istanbul to obtain safe conduct for William Harborne to begin discussing trade relations.<sup>13</sup> This was not accomplished until September 1579, when the first official Turkish envoy arrived from Sultan Murad III offering unrestricted commerce between Turkey and England.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps it is only coincidence, but an intriguing one, that after centuries without significant commerce between England and Turkey, there began a flurry of trade-related activities with Turkey by Englishmen in 1575, the only year de Vere could have visited Istanbul.

### Summary of conclusions about the origin of "My Turk"

1. Was "My Turk" derived from the Gaelic word "Torc"? Unlikely.
2. Was "My Turk" derived from Queen Elizabeth's awareness that poetry was held in high esteem in Turkey? Unlikely.
3. Was "My Turk" applied to de Vere because he succeeded on an official diplomatic assignment from Queen

*(Continued on page 24)*

# Book Reviews

**A Biography of Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox (1515-1578): Niece of Henry VIII and Mother-in-Law of Mary Queen of Scots.** By Kimberly Schutte (Lewiston NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

By Richard F. Whalen

Strong-willed, outspoken, loving wife and mother, ambitious for her family, the Countess of Lennox was a powerful force in Elizabethan power politics. She and her relatives had strong claims to the thrones of both Scotland and England. Her grandson was James VI of Scotland who would become James I of England. She was not a favorite of Queen Elizabeth, but she held her own in the dangerous swirl of Elizabethan politics.

In this first book-length biography of the Countess of Lennox, Kimberly Schutte, adjunct professor at Missouri Western State College, describes a woman not easy to like but impossible to ignore. Despite her overweening ambition for her family and propensity for marital scheming, she commanded respect by her powerful personality as well as by her position in the nobility.

She lived most of her life in England, and it intersected that of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, at least twice. (Both were such prominent aristocrats that as yet undiscovered records may well disclose more connections.)

She and Oxford were both guests of

William Cecil, Lord Burghley, at a country house party in 1574 that included figures prominent in Scottish-English politics. The assassination of her son, Henry, Lord Darnley, consort of Mary Queen of Scots, is thought by some Stratfordians and Oxfordians to have inspired Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The parallels are striking. She had a keen interest in history, and scholars have also suggested that she probably had in her possession the rare manuscript history of Scotland that seems to have inspired passages in *Macbeth*. (See this reviewer's article, "Shakespeare in Scotland," in the 2003 issue of *The Oxfordian*.)

And, like Oxford, she spent the last decade of her life at Hackney, outside London, where she died in 1578.

Schutte's straightforward biography describes the complex relations among the powerful aristocrats of the time, their shifting loyalties and the countess's role in it all. She cites primary sources extensively, and her 12-page bibliography might well prove useful for Oxfordians who want to do further research into the life of this extraordinary woman and her connections with the earl of Oxford.

The 324-page biography is one of Mellen's 67 volumes in its "Studies in British History." Another volume that might interest Oxfordians is *The Anonymous Life of William Cecil, Lord Burghley*, edited by Alan G.R. Smith. But candor requires that potential buyers be forewarned. Mellen books are expensive; Schutte's is \$120.

## New Book on the Holocaust from Fellowship VP

Shakespeare Fellowship founder and Vice-President for Communication Lynne Kositsky, the award-winning Canadian novelist whose 2000 novel, *A Question of Will* (Roussan), brought de Vere's authorship of the Shakespearean canon to many young readers for the first time, has scored again with her most recent young adult novel, *The Thought of High Windows*.

The novel, about a group of young Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi death camps who take shelter in a deserted castle in France, has earned highest marks from *Kirkus Review*:

Superb, wrenching Holocaust fiction. Esther is a Jewish teen snatched out of Germany at the beginning of WWII by the Swiss Red Cross to live briefly in Belgium and later in a castle in France, under the nose of the Vichy government.... Swirling through the story is her tumultuous, ever-changing relationship with mercurial peer Walter. Esther is plagued with guilt and self-hatred as well as terror of dying in the looming Holocaust. Kositsky deftly describes the twisted pains of war, genocide, and cruelty. Kositsky's poetic and piercing language honors Esther's severe loneliness and the horrors she witnesses.

*My Turk* (continued from page 23)

Elizabeth to Turkey? Ruled out by Ottoman archival research described in this article.

4. Did "My Turk" derive because de Vere went to Turkey in 1575 on an unofficial diplomacy-trading mission for the Queen? Still possible but no proof.
5. Did "My Turk" derive because de Vere went to Turkey for personal reasons in 1575, arousing the Queen's admiration? Possible, but no proof.

In sum, the source for Queen Elizabeth's favorite nickname for Edward de Vere, "My Turk," remains an enigma.

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2. Charlton Ogburn & Dorothy Ogburn. *This Star of England*, Coward McCann, Inc., New York, 1952.
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5. Nabil Matar. *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1999.
6. Ogburn, op. cit.
7. Ibid.
8. Personal communications with Ruth Loyd Miller and Richard Roe.
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10. Eva Turner Clark. *Hidden Allusions In Shakespeare's Plays*. William Farquhar Payson, NY, 1931.
11. *Othello*. Act III, scene 3, line 456.
12. *King Henry IV, Part II*. Act V, scene 2, line 47.
13. Alfred C. Wood. *A History of the Levant Company*. Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1964; also, Matar, op. cit.
14. Matar, op. cit.

*Column**A year in the life*

By Hank Whittemore

## 1604: Part II — The rest of the story

The reported death of Edward de Vere on June 24, 1604, at age 54 is accompanied this year by publication of the second quarto of *Hamlet*. This version, containing nearly 4,000 lines, is twice the size of the first quarto published the previous year, in 1603, and even a bit longer than the text to appear 19 years hence in the First Folio of 1623. The current edition is entitled:

The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect Copie. At London, Printed by I. R. (James Roberts) for N. L. (Nicholas Ling) and are to be sold at his shoppe under Saint Dunstons Church in Fleet-street. 1604.<sup>1</sup>

Issuance of authentic editions of hitherto-unpublished plays as by “Shakespeare” had begun in 1598, only to cease after the Essex Rebellion in February 1601, when Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton was imprisoned in the Tower of London. With Southampton’s liberation by King James in April 1603, and now upon Oxford’s apparent death, the appearance of *Hamlet* Q2 represents a remarkable exception to this shutdown until a flurry of new titles<sup>2</sup> in 1608 and 1609, followed by another dozen years of silence.

From an Oxfordian perspective, the timing of *Hamlet* is no accident. Publication of this quintessential autobiographical play in 1604 would seem a deliberate announcement that the dramatist had died or disappeared from England. It also appears to contain his final statement that “things standing thus unknown shall live behind me,” along with his dying request to “report me and my cause aright to the unsatisfied” and to “tell my story.”

The silence surrounding Oxford’s death is hereby counterbalanced by the blazing triumph of *Hamlet* as well as by the unprecedented number of Shakespeare plays (seven) to be performed at Court during the upcoming Christmas-New Year sea-

son, amid celebrations of the marriage of Susan Vere and Philip Herbert – two of the “grand possessors” of the great stage works yet to be published. Even as Edward de

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Vere’s name is buried along with his body, the words he left behind are reverberating in ghostly, glorious resurrection, surely the result of a conscious effort to pay tribute to him with a proper memorial.

An extraordinary aspect of traditional biographies of William of Stratford is the presumption that, just at this moment, his acting career has ended. “We suppose Shakespeare to have ceased to act in the summer of 1604,” reports the “Life of Shakespeare” section in the 1913 Irving edition of the poems and plays, with this notable observation about the consequences of his retirement:

“No sooner had our great dramatist ceased to take part in public performances of the King’s players, than the company appears to have thrown off the restraint by which it had been unusually controlled ever since its formation, and to have produced plays which were objectionable to

the court, as well as offensive to private persons. Shakespeare, *from his abilities, station, and experience, must have possessed great influence with the body at large*, and due deference, we may readily believe, was shown to *his knowledge and judgment in the selection and acceptance of plays* sent in for approbation by authors of the time. The contrast between the conduct of the association immediately before, and immediately after, his retirement, *would lead us to conclude, not only that he was a man of prudence and discretion, but that the exercise of these qualities had in many instances kept his fellows from incurring the displeasure of persons in power...”*<sup>3</sup>

The above description of “Shakespeare” as the guiding hand behind the Lord Chamberlain’s Men (now the King’s Men) can be applied far more logically to Oxford, upon whose apparent death the company begins encountering friction at Court for the first time since its formation in 1594.

**July 7: Southampton in House of Lords**

Southampton is present at the prorogation of Parliament.<sup>4</sup>

**July 11: Pembroke is Married**

William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke, who had been promoted as a husband for Oxford’s daughter Bridget Vere in 1597, has married Lady Mary Talbot, daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury.<sup>5</sup>

**July 25: Southampton Favored**

King James grants Southampton three manors (Romsey in Hampshire, Compton Magna in Somerset and Dunmow in Essex) plus the grange of Basilden in Gloucester.<sup>6</sup>

**August: “Sejanus” at the Globe**

Apparently the King’s Men, who presented *Sejanus his Fall* in the autumn or winter of 1603 at the Court of James, now (or earlier this year) perform Ben Jonson’s tragedy at the Globe, with the actors being booed and hissed off the stage!<sup>7</sup>

Thomas Thorpe will publish *Sejanus* in 1605 with Jonson telling readers in his preface that a “second Pen” had been involved in creating the original version, but that he had taken it upon himself to rewrite

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*Year in the Life* (continued from page 25)  
the play to its detriment:

"I would inform you, that this book, in all numbers, is not the same with that which was acted on the public stage, wherein a second Pen had good share: in place of which I have rather chosen to put weaker and no doubt less pleasing (lines) of mine own, than to defraud so happy a *Genius* [sic] of his right, by my loathed usurpation."<sup>8</sup>

In his 1616 folio Jonson will list "William Shake-speare" as having headed the cast of *Sejanus* as presented at Court in 1603. A few years later he will tell Drummond that the play provoked considerable displeasure in the Privy Council, where he was called to answer charges "of Popery and of Treason." Meanwhile it has been widely assumed that the original "Genius" behind the play must have been George Chapman, while other traditional scholars have suspected the hand of "Shakespeare" himself. If the latter are correct, Oxfordians may well consider that Jonson is testifying in 1605 that he took a play originally written by Edward de Vere and reworked it (poorly so) with his own language for publication under his own name.

(Fritz Levy in 1995 makes a fascinating case that *Sejanus* appears to be an earlier work reflecting the attitude of the Essex faction toward Queen Elizabeth and Secretary Robert Cecil. The play is a "portrait of a society torn by faction, ruled by a prince of great power, but a power exercised erratically and whimsically ... Elizabeth's dilatoriness, her reluctance to heed the advice of her Council, could look very like the actions of the imperial Tiberius; and the factions of the last decade of the old queen's reign bore more than a passing resemblance to their Roman counterparts...").<sup>9</sup>

It appears that Jonson has been receiving access to some of Edward de Vere's unpublished manuscripts and that, after reworking them either partially or wholly, has been issuing them under his own name along with torrents of scholarly notes displaying his classical knowledge. To what degree these dramatic works are based on Oxford's previous writings is a matter for further research and debate; what's clear is that Jonson has been tied politically to Robert Cecil ever since his imprisonment for the *Isle of Dogs* fiasco of 1597; and even

now he is working on *Masque of Blackness* for performance in January by a cast including Susan Vere, Oxford's daughter and Cecil's niece. The masque is to be part of the ongoing celebrations of her marriage to Sir Philip Herbert, brother of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke; and Jonson will be working with this "incomparable pair of brethren" on the First Folio of Shakespeare to be dedicated to them in 1623.

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Ben Jonson, the rapidly rising star of poets, is already closely allied with the "grand possessors" of the Shakespeare works, that is, with those who hold the texts of most of Oxford's unpublished plays. More to the point, it would seem that he himself, to one degree or another, is already a possessor.

#### **August 9: Spanish Delegation**

Arriving in London from the Court of Spain is Don John de Velasco, Constable of Castile and Great Chamberlain to King Phillip III, who has empowered this Ambassador Extraordinary to negotiate a peace treaty with the new English sovereign.<sup>10</sup> Accompanying the Constable (and a special emissary from Archduke Albert of Austria) is a party of "Marquesses, Earles, Barons, Knights, and Gentlemen to the number of one hundred persons." The Spanish delegation is to be lodged in Somerset House, one of the royal residences and the most splendid London palace other than Whitehall.

A dozen members of the King's Men are ordered to "wait and attend" on the Spanish guests as Grooms of the Chamber, performing no plays for the visitors. On

this day the actors, wearing red doublets and hose, assist in welcoming the Spanish Ambassador upon his arrival at Somerset House after a triumphal progress up the Thames.<sup>11</sup> The account of their payment of 21 pounds, 12 shillings (each actor receiving 2s per day) is to be found among the other expenses listed by the Treasurer of the Chamber:

"To Augustine Phillipps and John Hemyngs for th'allowance of themselves and tenne of their fellows his Majesties Groomes of the Chamber and Players, for waytinge and attending on his Majesties Service, by commandmente, upon the Spanish ambassador at Somerset House for the space of 18 dayes viz. from the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Auguste 1604 until the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the same as appeareth by a bill thereof signed by the Lord Chamberlain..."<sup>12</sup>

Although the name "Shakespeare" is nowhere mentioned in this or any other account, most orthodox biographers of the poet-dramatist have assumed, with little or no question, that William of Stratford must have been among the King's Men in residence at Somerset House during these 18 days.

#### **August 10: Southampton & Queen Anne**

Southampton is appointed Councillor to Queen Anne.<sup>13</sup>

#### **August 10: Southampton to Court**

The Constable of Castile comes to greet King James at the Court at Whitehall Palace, attended by Southampton and Lord Effingham, son of Charles Howard, the Lord Admiral.

#### **August 19: State Dinner**

An extraordinary State dinner is held, with unusual pomp and splendor, in the Banqueting House that Queen Elizabeth had erected on the southwest side of Whitehall Palace. The earls of Pembroke and Southampton officiate as gentlemen-ushers for this celebration of the Anglo-Spanish peace, signed today, consisting of a three-hour banquet followed by a grand ball with more than fifty ladies-of-honor on hand.

Ten-year-old Prince Henry (apparently a boy-companion of Henry de Vere) is commanded by his parents to dance a galliard. They point to a lady who is to be his partner and the Prince dances "with much sprightliness and modesty, cutting several capers," according to a Spanish eyewitness account, which adds:

"The Earl of Southampton then led out the Queen, and three other gentlemen their several partners, who all joined in dancing a brando ... In another the Queen danced with the Duke of Lennox ... The Prince stood up to dance a correnta which he did very gracefully ... The Earl of Southampton was now again the Queen's partner and they went through the Correnta likewise..."

Afterward they gather at the windows overlooking a platform set up on a square where a "vast crowd" has assembled; and with great amusement the royal party watches bear baiting, i.e., the King's bears fighting with greyhounds.

"Presently a bull, tied to the end of a rope, was fiercely baited by dogs. After this certain tumblers came, who danced upon a rope, and performed various feats of agility and skill on horseback..."<sup>14</sup>

### August 20: Cecil is a Lord

Robert Cecil, having engineered the peaceful succession of James and retained all and more of his former governmental power, is created Viscount Cranborne. Cecil has been the prime mover behind the successfully completed Proclamation of Peace with Spain; next year he will become the First Earl of Salisbury.

The treaty with Spain has been carried out amid elaborate festivities that were "dumbly watched by the general public," writes Cecil biographer P. M. Handover, referring to the tough time the English people will have in reconciling themselves to a changed relationship with the nation that bred the Inquisition, the Jesuits and the Armada. From the Tower, where he has been imprisoned for the Main Plot since last November, Sir Walter Raleigh will continue to voice his defiance of Spain—and therefore, his defiance of Cecil, who will go through the rest of his life until 1612 with the weight of public opinion against him.

To give the hunchbacked son of Lord Burghley the credit he is due, however, Handover writes that the peace with Spain "opened a new world to English trade, and assured that 'vent' for English cloth which had been the object of search for more than half a century..."

"The hunt for new markets was no longer compelled to bay outside the ice-locked ports of the Baltic and northern

Russia, but could stream in safety down past southern France, on through the Mediterranean to the Near East, or round a new continent, that of Africa. After 20 August 1604 the sea roads were free."<sup>15</sup>

### August 20: The Oxford Annuity

By this date, Alan Nelson reports, the Dowager Countess of Oxford writes in her own hand appealing to Cecil for continuation of Oxford's £1,000 annuity at £500 rather than at the £200-per-year the King had offered "for my own, and my Child's maintenance."<sup>16</sup>

Elizabeth Trentham's son Henry de Vere, Eighteenth Earl of Oxford, is now 11. It would seem pathetically ironic that the Dowager Countess refers in her letter to the "consideration" in this matter shown by her late husband's Catholic cousin Henry Howard, Lord Northampton, whom Oxford had accused of treason in 1581 and who is now enjoying royal favor in the new reign. The contents of her letter seem pathetic as well:

"I was very glad that the relief of this ruined estate, best known to your Lordships, rested in the favor of such persons, as both in honor, nature, and affection would regard the desolate estate of my poor Child and myself. But now hearing from your Lordship that the rate was set down by his Majesty's own determination, and not left to your discretion, I earnestly entreat your Lordship that you would present my humble petition to his gracious Majesty to enlarge his gift to five hundred pounds rent yearly. Your Lordship may truly inform his Highness that the Pension of a thousand pounds was not given by the late Queen to my Lord for his life and then to determine (cease or stop), but to continue until she might raise his decay by some better provision."

Queen Elizabeth had left it open as to whether she might make some "better provision" for Oxford's finances, but she had never done so; instead, the annual grant had simply continued in both reigns until his death in June.

"And as I hear, his Majesty is most respective (respectful?) in performing of the late Queen's intentions, which makes me the more hopeful, in my great distress, of his Majesty's favor. It hath been enjoyed but one year by his Majesty's gift (1603-1604), and it is all the relief I ever look for to sustain my miserable estate."

### August 27: The Constable Departs

Ambassador Don John de Velasco, Constable of Castile, having suffered an attack of lumbago following the State dinner at the Banqueting House, has been in bed recovering. Today, at last, King James bids him a formal farewell as he departs for Spain.

### September 24: Oxford Post Mortem

The first Inquisition post mortem to record the remains of Oxford's estate, filed for Essex, reports that the Dowager Countess, while still remaining at Hackney for a time, is also residing in Essex at Hornchurch. Nelson observes this is "evidently a second home near the forest estates"<sup>17</sup> that the King granted to Edward de Vere before his death.

### October 16: Wedding Plans

William Herbert Lord Pembroke informs his father-in-law the Earl of Shrewsbury that his brother Philip Herbert will marry Susan Vere:

"I rather chose to write by post than leave you understand of that which is as joyful unto me as anything that ever fell out since my birth ... The matter in brief is that, after long love, and many changes, my brother on Friday last was privately contracted (engaged) to my Lady Susan, without the knowledge of any of his or her friends. On Saturday she acquainted her uncle (Cecil) with it, and he me. My Lord of Cranborne (Cecil) seemed to be much troubled at it at first, but yesterday the King, taking the whole matter on himself, made peace on all sides..."<sup>18</sup>

### October 26: The Oxford Annuity

Despite the pleadings of Oxford's widow, King James issues a royal grant from Westminster stipulating that she receive an annuity of £200 rather than £500, to be drawn from the Exchequer in quarterly payments:

"Know ye that we of our special grace ... do give and grant unto our right trusty and right well-beloved cousin Henry Earl of Oxon a certain annuity or pension of two hundred pounds of lawful money of England by the year..."<sup>19</sup>

### November 1: "Othello"

The special attendants assigned to the Royal apartments will send in their bill to the Treasurer of the Chamber for making preparations for an unprecedented Shakespeare festival at the English Court, pre-

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*Year in the Life* (continued from page 27)  
sented by the King's Men:

"The greate Chamber at Whitehall for 2 days in November 1604, for the King's Majestie to see the plaies ... For making ready the Banqueting House at Whitehall against the plaie, November 1604 ... For making ready the great Hall for Sir Philip Herbert's wedding the same month December 1604. For making ready the Banqueting House at Whitehall for the mask ..."<sup>20</sup>

The Revels Office reports: "Hallowmas Day, being the first of November a play in the Banqueting House at Whitehall called *The Moor of Venice*".<sup>21</sup>

#### November 4: "Merry Wives"

The King's Men perform *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in the Great Hall of the Palace.

#### November 19: Silver Street Wedding

William Shakspeare of Stratford may or may not be still residing in the home of Christopher Mountjoy, a French Huguenot tire-maker (manufacturer of ladies' ornamental headgear) in the ward of Cripplegate. Whatever the case, Mountjoy's daughter Mary is married today to Stephen Bellot, a former apprentice and now an employee, as a result of his help.

Bellot left London earlier this year "to see the world," but he soon returned to Silver Street on a fixed salary. During his recent courtship of Mary Mountjoy, according to later court records, her father not only gave his blessing but also "did send and persuade one Mr. Shakespeare that lay in the house to persuade the plaintiff (Bellot) to the same marriage." That is, the Stratford man was enlisted as a matchmaker, because the groom was holding out for a more advantageous marriage settlement; and soon the two lovers "were made sure by Mr. Shakespeare by giving their consent, and agreed to marry."

The wedding took place today in the parish church of St. Olave in Silver Street; but the records, Samuel Schoenbaum notes, "do not show whether Shakespeare attended."

This episode of traditional Shakespearean biography will be revealed by court documents of 1612, when attempts will be made to determine exactly what financial settlement for the marriage had been agreed upon. Mr. Shakspeare will make an appearance at these hearings eight years

hence, but will fail to recall precisely what sum of money Mountjoy had promised his son-in-law. For Schoenbaum, this lapse will "reveal the poet-dramatist of superhuman powers as a somewhat baffled mortal" after all.<sup>22</sup>

#### December 11: Gunpowder Plotters

Seven conspirators of the Gunpowder Plot, to be discovered about a year from now in November 1605, assemble in London and begin to work in earnest.<sup>23</sup>

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***"Love's Labour's Lost, which  
for wit and mirth, he says,  
will please her exceedingly  
...[and] is appointed  
to be played tomorrow  
night at my Lord of  
Southampton's..."***

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#### December 18: The Gossip Mill

John Chamberlain writes to Sir Ralph Winwood:

"Sir Philip Herbert and Lady Susan Vere are to be married on St. John's Day at Whitehall. Three thousand pounds are already delivered for the expenses of the great Masque to be performed on Twelfth Night (*Masque of Blackness* by Jonson)  
..."

Chamberlain also cites an example of how the King's Men are suddenly making choices that are not quite politically correct:

"The tragedy of Gowry has been twice performed by the King's Players to crowded audiences, but the King is displeased and it will be forbidden. Princes should not be set on the Stage during their lifetime."<sup>24</sup>

#### December 26: "Measure"

The King's Men perform *Measure for Measure* in the Great Hall.

#### December 27: Vere-Herbert Wedding

Susan Vere and Philip Herbert are married.<sup>25</sup> The wedding takes place liter-

ally between two performances of plays (*Measure for Measure* on the 26th and *Comedy of Errors* on the 28th) that had been written by the bride's father, whose name seems to be never mentioned in public.

According to John Chamberlain, writing to Dudley Carleton, the King has contributed to the marriage with 500 pounds in land (in the Isle of Sheppey) plus gifts amounting to £2,000. The wedding was "performed with as much ceremony and grace as could be done a favorite," he reports, noting that Prince Henry and the Duke of Holstein led the bride to church while Queen Anne followed and King James himself gave her away.

"And she brided and bridled it so handsomely and indeed became herself so well that the King said if he were not married he would not give her but keep her himself ... They were married in the chapel, feasted in the great chamber, and lodged in the council chamber, where the King gave them in the morning before they were up a *reveille-matin* in his shirt and nightgown and spent a good hour with them in the bed or upon, choose which you will believe best ..."<sup>26</sup>

The groom will become Earl of Montgomery on May 4<sup>th</sup> next year.

#### December 28: "Comedy of Errors"

The King's Men perform *The Comedy of Errors* for the royal audience in the Great Hall.

Festivities surrounding the Herbert-Vere marriage will continue in early January with *Love's Labour's Lost* performed for Queen Anne, apparently with Southampton hosting the occasion. (The play was one of the earl's favorites in his younger days, circa 1592.) Sir William Cope, charged with furnishing Her Majesty with a suitable performance, will write to Cecil:

"Sir, I have sent and been all this morning hunting for players, jugglers, and such kind of creatures, but find them hard to find; wherefore, leaving notes for them to seek me, Burbage is come, and says there is no new play that the Queen hath not seen, but they have revived an old one called *Love's Labour's Lost*, which for wit and mirth, he says, will please her exceedingly. And this is appointed to be played tomorrow night at my Lord of

Southampton's..."<sup>27</sup>

With the wedding celebrations continuing, *Masque of Blackness* by Ben Jonson will be performed for Queen Anne at the Old Banqueting House on January 6<sup>th</sup>, with the bride Susan Vere as a dancer in the cast; *Henry Fifth* will be played on January 7<sup>th</sup>; *Every Man Out of His Humour on January 8<sup>th</sup>*; *Every Man In His Humour* on February 2<sup>nd</sup>; and *The Merchant of Venice* will be performed twice, on February 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, presumably because King James and/or Queen Anne so thoroughly enjoy that stage work. In all the Court festival will have included seven plays attributed to William Shakespeare and two others, the *Every Man* works, attributed to Ben Jonson, who will tell readers of his own Folio in 1616 that Shakespeare had headed the cast of the original performance of *Every Man In His Humour* in 1598.

#### Late 1604: "Great Oxford"

"My little beagle," King James begins a final letter to Cecil this year, presenting him with an account of how Lord Sheffield, President of the Council of the North, has been demanding a bigger share of the royal largesse:

"And yet, that he might have a taste of my favour for his further enabling in my service, I was contented to give him a pension for his lifetime of as great value as ever either the late Queen or I gave to any subject, to wit 1,000 pounds. To this he answered that this would do him no good, he was already ten thousand pounds in debt..."

"I had already told him, never greater gift of that nature was given in England. Great Oxford when his state was whole ruined got no more of the late Queen. I myself bestows (sic) no more upon Arbella my only near cousin. Nay, a foreign prince of Germany that was here the last year got not so much..."<sup>28</sup>

#### Lingering questions about 1604

At the end of the previous column, which dealt with events during the first half of 1604, we listed some unanswered questions. Here are some brief, and no doubt unsatisfactory, answers based on my personal opinions:

- Ben Jonson and William of Stratford must have known each other, but the

nature of their relationship remains entirely unclear. They appear to be two sides of the same coin, that is, part of the same overall effort (directed by Robert Cecil) to obscure Oxford's authorship of the Shakespeare works.

- Jonson's services had been thrust upon both Edward de Vere and the Lord Chamberlain's Men by Cecil, who had orchestrated the demise of Oxford's previous circle of writers while gaining unprecedented governmental control over play companies and public theaters, not to mention stricter censorship. Ben was to be the new popular dramatist, taking attention away from Shakespeare, and Will was to receive the eventual (posthumous) recognition as the author.

- Regardless of the similarity of his title as Lord Great Chamberlain to that of the Lord Chamberlain, Oxford had been the guiding force of the great acting troupe to continue as the King's Men. By whatever practical means, Shakespeare's company had been Edward de Vere's most important company.

- William of Stratford may have been a member of the Chamberlain's-King's Men on the business side and a shareholder of the Globe, but whether he ever walked on the stage as an actor cannot yet be determined. It would seem, however, that over time such became the fairly common perception.

- Oxford must have taken great interest in the decision to produce a new translation of the Bible, to eventually become the King James Version of 1611. That decision had been made at the Hampton Court Conference early this year (January 1604), when Oxford was still very much alive, and he could have contributed (in various ways) over the next five months until his death in June.

- Whether Edward de Vere actually died this year is unclear. (The reader is directed to the fascinating work on this subject by researcher/writer Christopher Paul.) Some students of Oxford now lean to his possible suicide

(suggested by William Niederkorn of *The New York Times*, with further work being done by Robert Detobel). I believe that Oxford may have voluntarily disappeared—perhaps into his beloved Forest of Waltham, i.e., the Forest of Essex, of which he was granted custody in 1603, or to a remote place such as the Isle of Man, owned by his son-in-law the Earl of Derby—and that the 1609 dedication of *Shake-Speares Sonnets* may have served to announce that "our ever-living poet" had finally departed from this world. If such were the case, his contributions to the King James Version of the Bible (given an additional five years of life) might have been much greater than supposed.

- To dismiss the arrest of Southampton on June 24, 1604, within hours before or after Oxford's reported death on that date, would seem dangerously rash. My strong opinion is that Edward de Vere had worked behind the scenes with Cecil, his brother-in-law, during 1601-1603, to ensure Southampton's eventual release by James with restoration of his earldom and a royal pardon. (Nina Green, host of the Internet discussion group Phaeton, has suggested that Oxford was the unidentified "40" who appears briefly in the secret correspondence with James led by Cecil.) If so, Oxford would have given his personal assurance of Southampton's loyalty (i.e., that he would attempt no sequel to the Essex Rebellion); but once Edward de Vere was gone, the Crown would have needed to assess the younger earl's commitment for itself.

James was paranoid and needed such assurances; and Cecil would have admitted (grudgingly) that the popular Earl of Southampton's continued presence in the Tower could constitute a potential rallying point for those dissatisfied with the new reign. It was far safer for the King to free Southampton and heap honors upon him, while giving him no genuine political power and dispatching him to the Isle of Wight. The new monarch had swiftly favored both Southampton and Oxford during the first year of the reign; and in that respect, despite his financial

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# An Interview with *Beard* of Avon author Amy Freed

By James Sherwood

**A**my Freed lights up a room when she speaks like the messenger of good news in a renaissance painting, and she is just the slightest bit impish to boot. Married to a newspaperman, living in San Francisco and lecturing in drama at Stanford, she is 45, has been a playwright since 1990, with six completed works to date, most recently, *The Beard of Avon* which opened in New York last December with rave reviews from *The New York Times*, making it one of the season's hits.

In 1998 Ms. Freed was a Pulitzer Prize Finalist for her play, "Freedomland." Earlier works also reveal a focus on characters who make literature and art - "The Psychic Life of Savages", "Claustrophilia", "The Ghoul of Amherst" and "Still Warm." Their characters include Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath, journalist Jessica Savitch and a family of artists.

In recent interviews she has said, "My play is not a vote for de Vere; it's a mystery," and "I began to write a comedy about people who are obsessed by conspiracies and I became obsessed with this conspiracy." She noted that in her writing, "I have the release of comedy. I can sleep with the uncertainty" that the authorship of Shakespeare is in doubt.

Amy James Freed, in this short interview, shows how to end some serious thoughts on a Neil Simon note of laughter. To wit:

**Newsletter:** Isn't it inevitable that the Earl of Oxford will become the designated "interpretive instrument" if not the proven author, the lens through which Shakespearean studies inevitably must pass to be seen clearly, and so, eventually, because he appears to be Hamlet, the model for Hamlet, perhaps the only person who lived Hamlet, probably generally occupying a significant place in any study of Hamlet? In other words, the *de facto* "author"?

**Freed:** This question contains its own answer—I'll pass until I finish my "Oxford" studies.

**NL:** I believe you said that "The intellect of Oxford attracts" while Shakespeare remains dull, meaning that finally the winner will be Oxford.

**Freed:** The intellect of Shakespeare attracts and confounds and the relationship of nascent talent to learning and the degree to which each contribute to the making of a writer of his caliber is the driving



Amy Freed

investigation of "Beard of Avon."

**NL:** Which leads to a second question concerning experiential writing, given that there are probably no other writers in western literature who did not write from what they know. Are we not looking at the written experience of the Earl of Oxford in Shakespeare even though we do not have the author's signature?

**Freed:** We are looking at the written experience of the author, certainly, a man of considerable development, mature insight, philosophical preoccupation, and a highly sophisticated understanding of power, human nature and behavior.

**NL:** Which leads me to note that I believe you appeared in "The Beard of Avon" through the character of Anne Hathaway. She made some mighty modern and relevant comments and seemed to transcend herself. A thoroughly modern and delightful woman!

**Freed:** Anne H. is conveniently unknown to history, and so is available to the modern imagination. But she's not me.

**NL:** Is Anne Hathaway the spokeslady of your life view?

**Freed:** No, Edward de Vere is. Especially when he longs for the depraved banquets of his youth.

**NL:** You really sounded expert on the subject of research, reading the old plays from pre-Shakespearean times, with the vaudevillian mouse-man boasting how he beats his wife, until she comes on stage. I certainly see where you began "The Beard."

**Freed:** I love the silliness of the early English comedies. They remind me of "The Honeymooners" and "The Three Stooges" which are among my most important artistic influences.

**NL:** How about giving us a "Saturday Night Live" with Dumb Will Shax, Nimble Ned Ox, Miss Prissy Queen Liz and that beautiful, glamorous Anne? Are you willing to go on adding more scenes, more playwrights, a third act?

**Freed:** It would be fun, but I have to get out of the 16th century for a while.

**NL:** Can you see "The Beard" as a musical? "Hellzapoppin" for history buffs?

**Freed:** Yes.

**NL:** Doubtless I am not paying adequate respect to your years of study of Elizabethan speech patterns.

**Freed:** No, you are.

**NL:** From the New School in New York where you started, and the St. John's College Great Books program, to SMU in Dallas and a Master's from the American Conservatory Theater, you not only learned, you shaped a literary vision. How does that "literary" thing, the urge to "write well" grab you? As an actress first, and studying with Kirsten Linklater, clearly you found the fun in writing.

**Freed:** Writing well, for a playwright, means you are writing well for the dramatic moment - that your words serve actions, be they violent, ugly, broken, exalted, ridiculous. I think to write well for theater you have to let go of the idea of writing as a precious artifact. But I do like moments of beauty, when they are organic to a scene or a world... and you get to create a world, as a playwright, where someone can say something stunning. Might be short or simple, but in some way perfect in its truth. Better than hemming and hawing one's way through real life, never thinking of the right thing until the scene is long over, and the moment gone!

**NL:** Hasn't the "sound" and the physical shape of your writing for stage always been

stronger than stuffy old rules? I mean, what would you do if it sounded good and didn't play well?

**Freed:** Cut it.

**NL:** Would you tell me again about your teachers who drilled the essentials of the iambic line into you, and how you learned what you described as "the power" of the breaks in formal rhythm and structure, especially as our Shakespeare moved into what you so beautifully said "was 'King Lear' like Beethoven"?

**Freed:** When I was an acting student at ACT my teachers, especially William Ball and Debora Sussel, taught us to look to Shakespeare's text as a guide to the actor. To be sensitive to the psychological effects of his metrics - from the forward gallop of the iamb, to the hammer-stroke of a spondee - to the odd, unnatural sound of the trochees that the witches in 'Macbeth' use when they incant.

**NL:** It seems to me you were quite moved by Ted Hughes "writing well about poets" and "Shakespeare primarily and supremely as a poet." Then you noted the "intersection of poetry and theater." What do you think about mostly when you write? Is it to tell your story, your feelings, to love the geniuses, to rehabilitate all these misunderstood great minds like Poe and Plath?

**Freed:** Mostly I'm looking for an imagined voice of power and singularity, that gives me a character that has its own life. From that point on, it tells me what to do.

**NL:** Isn't that where all the beautiful

writing and rhyming are tossed out? I seem to be mixing my questions up, falling all over myself in contemplation of "a real thinker" and a "great entertainer" and a "truly funny lady" all in one. Did Elaine May influence you?

**Freed:** I'm not really all that familiar with Elaine May's work, to be honest. But there are others: Shaw, Chekhov, Mel Brooks, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Mamet, Buster Keaton, Jackie Chan, Aristophanes, BBC Comedy Channel, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Edith Sitwell, Edith Bunker, and on and on.

**NL:** I can't believe you never realized your own name was in "Freedomland" (play nominated for Pulitzer Prize in 1998) but then I can believe it. Yes, you have a purity. Does the innocent heart, the trusting and maybe almost naive person still interest you, have your sympathy?

**Freed:** As a hypothetical, I suppose. I'm depressed by how rare those qualities are anymore. My students seem so oversophisticated in a sort of surface way. My students from other countries seem more intact, sometimes, than American kids.

**NL:** I'm told by others that you said that "The Beard" has been through three stages of revision. Between the South Coast Repertory, Salt Lake and Seattle, San Francisco, Chicago and now New York. What has been the most painful cut of all? Or most difficult development?

**Freed:** Losing two final scenes, one that dealt with Queen Elizabeth as a frailer, older and wiser lady, and another that

dealt with Shakespeare, years later, at home in Stratford. There was also, in an earlier draft, a scene that accounted for the loss of Shakespeare's manuscripts and answered the question, "Whatever happened to 'Love's Labour Won'?" They were good scenes, too. Just not right for the final form of the play.

**NL:** Assuming the agnostic position allowed you to avoid preaching from a soapbox and simply to find the humor in all the positions but: Would you consider doing a comedy about that terrible sense of loneliness and loss, that personal isolation, which is (or is not?) the central character of Oxford's dilemma?

**Freed:** Maybe. I consider all kinds of ideas. Whether I can pull them off is another matter.

**NL:** Or do you see Oxford as something other than a man tormented?

**Freed:** The Oxford character that I created for "Beard of Avon" has taken on such reality for me that it supersedes anything else - and probably all facts. That Oxford has an irrepressible amusement and bemusement with all things human - he's sort of an Olympian, who is fascinated, but can't quite ultimately take seriously the heartbreaks of lesser mortals.

**NL:** Or do you believe that maybe Will Shax did it the way craftsmen put in eight hours a day at the studio and go home to forget it all like any other job holder? Or was he a genius at playing like he wasn't a genius - the way a lot of louts seem?

(Continued on page 32)

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*Freed interview (continued from page 31)*

**Freed:** I don't know.

**NL:** You mentioned that not a lot has changed in the theater from 16th Century slapstick comedy to 1950s "The Honey-mooners." Are you looking forward to writing a tragedy?

**Freed:** No!!

**NL:** You mentioned that now you've broken the mold (of writing about genius and literary icons - Poe, Plath, etc.). I hope you're not abandoning the obvious fun and joy and sympathy you have in portraying brilliant misfits. Is "The Cotton Mather Story" going to make us laugh?

**Freed:** Yes.

**NL:** I think you said that the supreme moments in Shakespearean writing "come like flights" unconnected to the events then in play, suggesting that the author began as a constructor of stories and skits, but ended alone at his desk writing literature for the printer. Are you going to continue revising your plays as time passes, shaping them and adding as you change?

**Freed:** Future plays, yes. But what I've written to date is on its own.

**NL:** What's your favorite question?

**Freed:** How would you like your honorarium?

—James Sherwood (interview conducted during January 2004). James Sherwood has done author interviews for *The Paris Review*, *Writers At Work*, *Playboy*, *Esquire*, *the Village Voice*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *of L-F Celine*, *Mason Hoffenberg*, *Clifford Irving*, *James Cagney* and many more over 50 years.

*Year in the Life (continued from page 29)*

ruin, Edward de Vere departed from the scene this year in quite the opposite of disgrace.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, O. J., *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, (New York: MJF Books, 1966), 284.

<sup>2</sup> Unauthorized editions of plays under the Shakespeare name between now and the Folio will include *King Lear* of 1608, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Pericles* of 1609, and *Othello* of 1622.

<sup>3</sup> *The Irving Shakespeare*, "The Life of William Shakespeare" (New York: Books, Inc, 1913), Introduction, xxx (Italics added for emphasis).

<sup>4</sup> Stopes, Charlotte Carmichael, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton* (New York: AMS Press, 1922), 283.

<sup>5</sup> Nelson, Alan, *Monstrous Adversary* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 428.

<sup>6</sup> Akrigg, G. P. V., *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 142.

<sup>7</sup> Jonson's account is in his Folio of 1616. Although *Sejanus* was performed at Court in 1603, exactly when it was first acted in public is not known for sure, but 1604 is usually cited.

<sup>8</sup> Procter, Johanna, ed., *The Selected Plays of Ben Jonson*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 9.

<sup>9</sup> Levy, Fritz, "The Theatre and the Court in the 1590s" in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, edited by John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 274-300.

<sup>10</sup> Adams, J. Q., *A Life of William Shakespeare*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), 365.

<sup>11</sup> Rye, W. B., *England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James the First* (London, 1865), 118; a Spanish pamphlet of 1604 is reprinted.

<sup>12</sup> Stopes, op. cit., 284, citing "Dec. Acc. Treas. Ch., Audit Off. 388, 41; Pipe Off. 543."

<sup>13</sup> Stopes, op. cit. 285, citing *Nichols' Progresses*, 268.

<sup>14</sup> Rye, op. cit., 123.

<sup>15</sup> Handover, P. M., *The Second Cecil* (Great Britain: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1959), 313-315.

<sup>16</sup> Nelson, op. cit., 427 (I have modernized his transcript).

<sup>17</sup> Nelson, op. cit., 431.

<sup>18</sup> Nelson, op. cit., 428 (I have modernized the English here, too).

<sup>19</sup> Nelson, op. cit., 428 (modernized English).

<sup>20</sup> Stopes, op. cit., 287, citing *Cecil Papers*, cix, 40.

<sup>21</sup> Public Record Office, Audit Office, Accounts Various, A.O.3/908/13; this and the other citations of plays performed by the King's Men, from an account prepared under supervision of Edmund Tilney, the longtime Master of the Revels.

<sup>22</sup> Schoenbaum, Samuel, *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 260-264.

<sup>23</sup> Bowen, Catherine Drinker, *The Lion and the Throne* (Boston: Little-Brown, 1956), 239.

<sup>24</sup> Stopes, op. cit., from *Windwood's memoirs*, I., 41.

<sup>25</sup> Miller, Ruth Loyd, "Oxfordian Vistas" (in *Shakespeare Identified*. Jennings, LA: Minos Publishing Company, 1975, vol. 2), 4.

<sup>26</sup> Nelson, op. cit., 429-430 (modern English).

<sup>27</sup> Adams, 370-371.

<sup>28</sup> Akrigg, G. P. V., editor, *Letters of King James VI & I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 242-245, emphasis by italics added.

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