



Shakespeare Matters

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Shakespeare
Fellowship"

Shakespeare's Plutarchan Nomenclature: The Company of Noble Grecians

by Earl Showerman

"Plutarch's Lives built the heroic ideal of the Elizabethan age." C.S. Lewis (1954)

Plutarch's *Parallel Lives of the Greeks and Romans* provided a vision of Greece and Rome which during the 16th century "held the imagination" of all of Europe according to T.J.B. Spencer in the introduction to his study, *Shakespeare's Plutarch* (1964). Shakespeare scholars today universally confirm Lewis' and Spencer's judgment on the importance of *Plutarch's Lives* to the plots, poetics and characterization of the Roman plays, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Coriolanus*, as well as *Timon of Athens*. Spencer's study closely examines Plutarch's lengthy text (1,300 pages in the Modern Library edition), repeatedly identifying concordances between Plutarch's and Shakespeare's very words. Noting the challenge to Shakespeare in mastering *Lives* so well, Spencer assumes the author must have used North's 1579 English translation:

In Shakespeare's time, the *Lives* were confined to large and cumbrous folios. There were no convenient selections comparable to the present volume. One reads 1010 pages before coming to the death of Cleopatra....The reading of North was rather a serious thing for a busy man of the theatre, probably his most serious experience of the bookish kind. (13)

While Spencer and many other scholars have noted Shakespeare's profound debt to Plutarch, editors Horace Howard Furness (1898) and J.H.P. Pafford (1963) have also identified *Plutarch's Lives* as the likely source for many of the character names in *The Winter's Tale*. Similar nomenclature adoptions have been noted by other editors including Stephen Orgel (*Pericles*, 2001) and H.J. Oliver (*Timon of Athens*, 1969). This pattern of Plutarchan nomenclature is also evident in *A Midsummer Night's*

(Continued on page 7)



"Shepherd Piper" by Sophie Anderson.

Song in Shakespeare's Plays

by Ren Draya

Presented at the 13th Annual Authorship Studies Conference,
Concordia University, 18 April 2009.

We automatically think of the actors' lines in a play — as Hamlet would say, the "words, words, words." But any director, of course, notes the variety of sounds a given play may require: trumpet fanfares, battle alarms, crows cawing, a knocking at the door. And there is music. Shakespeare's plays are replete with references to music, with snatches of lyrics, and with full songs. Often, the *dramatis personae* include "musicians": see, for example, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Twelfth Night*. In *Taming of the Shrew*, one of Bianca's suitors (Hortensio) is disguised as a musician in order to gain access to the lovely maiden. As Tranio remarks to his master:

... practice rhetoric in your common talk,
Music and poesy use to quicken you
(1.1.35-36)

(Continued on page 12)

Letters

To the Editor:

Let me offer up praise to Mr. Ian Haste for his superb article in the latest issue of the *Shakespeare Matters*, concerning the question of why Shakespeare chose to emphasize the word "ring" throughout *Merchant of Venice*: wedding ring in Italian is *vera*; the plural in Italian is *vere*.

Haste displays the interdisciplinary skills needed to uncover the multiple layers of evidence that point directly at the real author of the canon — knowledge of contemporary English and Italian history, English poetry, Italian society and its dialects, as well as typography, biographical information of historical figures, and more. His seamless integration of evidence shows how the author left distinctive clues in the plays themselves that, exposed to the keen eye of a diligent researcher, can still offer up positive evidence that identify the real Shakespeare.

Sincerely,

Gary Goldstein

To the Editor:

How do we know that there are no elephants wandering our neighborhoods? The obvious short answer is, "Because we have not seen any." A more precise answer is, "Because we have seen no evidence of them." A still better answer is, "Because we have seen none of the expected evidence of them." If there were such elephants, we would expect to see footprints, droppings, and crushed shrubbery, as well as the elephants themselves.

What does this have to do with the authorship question? In response to some key arguments of Oxfordians, many Stratfordians will say, "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." The appropriate reply to that is, "Absence of expected evidence is indeed evidence of absence."

In the case of the authorship of the

Shakespeare canon, Diana Price [1], for example, has listed some of the external evidence that one would expect to see connecting an author to his or her works or to the act of writing:

- school records
- correspondence
- payment for writing
- connection to a patron
- manuscripts

and several other items, most of which Ms. Price has shown to exist for each of a dozen writers who were Shakespeare's contemporaries, but none of which exist for the Stratford man.

An honest person would thus acknowledge that it is unlikely that the Stratford man was Shakespeare. But he or she might also add, "This lack of expected external evidence would also exclude Oxford." This is true, with respect to external evidence. However, Oxfordians and Stratfordians alike can list several dozen realistic expectations based upon the internal evidence of the plays and sonnets, all of which can be connected to Oxford but not to Stratford.

These include evidence of fluency in Latin and Italian, familiarity with Italy itself, a deep knowledge of the law, famil-

ilarity with various aristocratic sports and other activities, and many, many more.

So here, too, the absence of expected evidence points to the unlikelihood that Stratford is the author, while the presence of that expected evidence in the life of Oxford allows us, at the very least, to postulate that Oxford is the author.

It bears repeating: "The absence of expected evidence is evidence of absence." It is a maxim that applies to the question of elephants in your neighborhood, little green men on Mars, a teapot in orbit around the earth, and the Shakespeare question.

Sincerely Yours,

David Moffatt

[1] Price, Diana, *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001.

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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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Shakespeare Matters welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Fellowship as a literary and educational organization.

From the Editors:

Shakespeare's Missing Shoe

Shakespeare has lost a shoe. 37 plays, two narrative poems, and 154 sonnets are in search of a foot. It is not just, as the great 19th century literary historian Henry Hallam remarked, that of the writer whom “we seem to know better [through his work] than any human writer,” we may yet be said to “scarcely know anything” of a substantive biographical nature. Nor is it even, as Hallam in 1839 supposed, that “all that insatiable curiosity and unwearied diligence have hitherto detected about Shakespeare serves rather to disappoint and perplex us than to furnish the slightest illustration of his character.”

In fact, it can be argued that by early modern standards we now know a great deal about the man who supposedly wore the shoe. No, the problem is more fundamental, more damning, than Hallam could bring himself to admit: the more we learn, the less the shoe fits. Its a size twenty-seven, and Mr. Shakespeare of Straford wears a seven. Hallam's contemporary W.H. Furness, the father of the editor of the first variorum Shakespeare put the point with characteristic elan: “I am one of the many who has never been able to bring the life of William Shakespeare within planetary space of the plays. Are there any two things in the world more incongruous?”

I was reminded of these potent remarks when reading that extraordinary recent specimen of orthodox reasoning, Michael Shermer's August 2009 *Scientific American* screed, “Shakespeare Interrupted.” Shermer, the editor of *Skeptic* magazine, apparently discovered the authorship question sometime between April, 2009, when Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens was quoted on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* to the effect that the Earl of Oxford's authorship of the Shakespearean canon was “beyond a reasonable doubt,” and August of the same year.

But, make no mistake about it, he knows who the shoe fits—just like Othello knows that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him when Iago supplies “ocular proof” of her infidelity in the form of a handkerchief in Cassio's hand.

Never mind that generations of skeptical and inquiring minds have prepared the fertile ground that Justice Stevens now tills. Never mind that Justice Stevens himself, as long ago as his 1991 *Pennsylvania Law Review* article, “The Shakespeare Canon of Statutory Construction,” set forth a principled approach to the authorship question that disproves Shermer's 2009 assumptions. Never mind that a simpleton, if he possessed a modicum of true “skepticism,” could see that the monument of the orthodox belief in Shakespeare, the 1623 first folio, already contains in miniature the seeds of our modern apostasy.

As George Greenwood wrote of the Droeshout engraving affixed to that volume: “I can never understand how any un-

prejudiced person, endowed with a sense of humor, can look upon it without being tempted to irreverent laughter. Not only is it, as many have pointed out, and as is apparent even to the untrained eye, altogether out of drawing; not only is the head preternaturally large for the body; not only is it quaintly suggestive of an unduly deferred razor; but it looks at one with a peculiar expression of sheepish oafishness which is irresistibly comic.”

No, Michael Shermer does not find the Droeshout funny or appreciate the political spoof of “Shake-speare.” He is a “skeptic,” and skeptics (by his example) apparently don't go in for ideas which have not been *a priori* sanctioned by authority, or bother to study the objects of their skepticism long enough to reach an informed opinion about them. Why bother? The authorship question, Shermer assures us, is not a matter for literary or even historical study, let alone (God forbid) legal inquiry—it is, rather, a matter for “science,” a topic on which Mr. Shermer evidently feels qualified to lecture Justice Stevens. In his words, in science “a reigning theory is presumed provisionally true and continues to hold sway until a challenging theory explains the current data as well and also accounts for anomalies that the prevailing one cannot.”

For anyone who has studied the history of the authorship question with attention to how orthodox beliefs are constructed and perpetuated, Shermer's rhetoric will come as little surprise. He unblinkingly asserts that there is “zero evidence” that de Vere used the name Shakespeare as a pseudonym. What is perhaps new and different about Shermer is his attempt, made on behalf of an increasingly insecure Shakespearean *status quo*, to appropriate the high ground of “skepticism” for orthodox Shakespeareans. All legitimate intellectual inquiry, naturally, involves a complex interaction between faith and skepticism. Science, like law, needs skepticism, but it also needs faith; skepticism of established beliefs and paradigms, and faith in the self-corrective process by which moribund paradigms are replaced by those with a greater vitality to reveal the world they purport to describe. Needless to say, that's different from defending a controversial position just because it happens to be the one that all the so-called “experts” endorse, or insisting that it is beyond rational controversy simply because critics have allegedly failed to articulate an “overwhelming” case for an alternative.

The sad thing about Shermer's attempt to shore up the foundations of the shaking throne of Stratford, is that it is based neither on real faith nor authentic skepticism. His faith is the *credo quia absurdum* of a deacon in in the postmodern church of Stratfordology; his skepticism that of the Cartesian ego, unable to escape the confines of its own need for irrational certainty in a world where belief in “Shakespeare” seems to restore a damaged confidence in Iago's dictum that “men *should be*

(Continued on page 28)

From a Never Writer to an Ever Reader: News...

NextGen Oxfordians: Fiore, Hawley and Swift Win Essay Contest

Winners have been announced for the Fellowship's 2008-9 essay contest. They are as follows:

1st Prize: Nora Fiore, of Pawlet, VT, for her "Hamlet and Much Ado: The Keys to "Shakespeare" (see p. 19, this issue of *SM*); 2nd Prize, Emily Hawley of Homerville, OH, for "What's in a name?"; 3rd Prize, Adrienne Swift, of Arlington, TX, for her "Taming of the Shrew: Disguises and Identity." Samantha Berstler, Julia Pale, and Jason Huh each received honorable mentions for their essays, "Draw Thy Breath in Pain to Tell My Story," "William Shakespeare: The 'Rose' by Many Other Names," and "William Cecil as a Prototype for Shakespeare's Polonius."



Fiore.



Pale.

The judges of the Shakespeare Fellowship Essay Contest wish to extend their congratulations to the many writers of the contest entries, and in particular, to comment on the high quality of the entries received. Because so many quite excellent entries were received, the judges were hard pressed in their efforts to render their verdicts. This high quality of writing, although it

extended the efforts involved in judging the contest, was most pleasing not only to the judges but also to the officers and members of the Shakespeare Fellowship, in terms of the attention brought to and the light shed upon the subject matter. Bravo to all the entrants!

The winners have received their award checks.

The board of Trustees solicits volunteers to assist with promoting and judging the next contest cycle. Please contact Dr. Stritmatter at stritmatter24@hotmail.com if you would be willing to assist in this effort.

— contributed by Richard Desper

Showerman at the Lifelong Learning Institute

Fellowship member Earl Showerman (see "Shakespeare's Plutarchan Nomenclature," this issue, *SM*) recently completed teaching a 10-hour class at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute of Southern Oregon University in Ashland. Dr. Showerman's course was titled "Shakespeare's Greater Greek" and consisted to a series of lectures he had previously presented at recent conferences sponsored by the Shakespeare Fellowship and by Concordia University. 20th century criticism has mostly disputed the possibility that Shakespeare employed Greek dramatic sources in writing his plays since most of the Greek canon, including the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, had not been translated or printed in England by Shakespeare's time.

In his 1903 *Classical Mythology in Shakespeare*, Robert Kilburn Root asserted his opinion on Shakespeare's 'lesse Greek' that presaged a century of scholarly neglect: "It is at any rate certain that he nowhere alludes to any characters or episodes of Greek drama, that they extended no influence whatsoever on his conception of mythology." One hundred years later A. D. Nuttall succinctly summarized the continued prevailing opinion on the author's use of Greek sources, "That Shakespeare was cut off from Greek poetry and drama is probably a bleak truth that we should accept. A case can be made – and has been made – for Shakespeare's having some knowledge of certain Greek plays, such as Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Orestes*, *Alcestis*, and *Hecuba*, by way of available Latin versions, but this, surely, is an area in which the faint occasional echoes mean less than the circumambient silence."

There exists, however, a century-old tradition of scholarship, including the works of W.W. Lloyd, A.E. Haigh and H.R.D. Anders, who recognized elements derived from Euripides' *Alcestis* in the statue scene of *Winter's Tale*. Renowned Greek scholars Gilbert Murray and H.D.F. Kitto found potent traces of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* in *Hamlet*. George Stevens, J.A.K. Thompson, J. Churton Collins and Emrys Jones have variously suggested that *Titus Andronicus* was indebted to Euripides' *Hecuba* and Sophocles' *Ajax*. A.D. Nuttall himself has argued for a profound Sophoclean influence on *Timon of Athens*, comparing it repeatedly to *Oedipus at Colonus*. Nuttall nonetheless refers to his analysis as only pressing "an analogy" and he retreats from ever suggesting there was a "direct influence" on Shakespeare by Sophocles.

In his lectures Dr. Showerman summarized the evidence for Shakespeare's "greater Greek" as reflected in a number of dramas including *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Winter's Tale*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Timon of Athens* and *Hamlet*. Besides identifying sources and approaches that scholars may take to investigate this rich vein of neglected scholarship, Showerman emphasized what these rare, untranslated sources imply regarding the Shakespeare



Berstler.

authorship question.

Next fall Showerman plans to teach a five-week course titled "Much Ado about Something," which will focus on the sources of *Much Ado*, which is in production this season at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

From Port Townsend

Following the injunction to address local meetings, in May,



Sharpe in Port Townsend.

Wenonah Sharpe challenged the Strait Freethinkers, at Port Angeles, WA, to consider the identity of Shakespeare.

Sharpe had a copy of the first folio displayed, and also materials on the Droeshout engraving's peculiarities. The point was made that we believe this image was meant to be seen as a jest and a warning, with the expectation that persons interested in the works would "get" the implication and understand that a certain level of subterfuge was still necessary, although twenty years had passed since the author's death. She pointed out that even after 400 years, the majority who "look on the image here set" have not got the joke and are willing to be convinced that the first folio harlequin presents a true image of the author.

Looney's rational rather than emotional research methods interested one onlooker; another was impressed that the manuscripts and funding came from the husband and brother-in-law of de Vere's youngest daughter. As a "youngest daughter" she also finds herself to be the final recipient of many family documents.

The gathering was small, but Sharpe feels anytime we can gather a dozen people to discuss for an hour the identity of Shakespeare, we advance our cause.

More From the Ashland Front

On the heels of the Authorship Studies Conference at Concordia University, Hank Whittemore performed his one-man show, *Shakespeare's Treason*, on April 20 in Carpenter Hall on the campus of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) in Ashland. The show, which is co-authored and directed by Fellowship trustee Ted Story, was enthusiastically received by an audience of about 80 theatre patrons, many of them new to the authorship question.

Local interest in *Shakespeare's Treason* was no doubt influenced by a fine report by Bill Varble in the *Medford Mail Tribune* on the 19th which described the show as a "ripping tale of murder, treason, hangings, bastardy, betrayal and danger." Varble, who has a copy of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt hung next to his desk, is a humorist, doubling as theater and music critic. His published interview of Whittemore was excellent and his concluding comments were provocative, "Let's just say Whittemore's theory is one of those Big Thoughts that, if you embrace it, seems to clear up a lot of mystery. It also speaks to maybe the biggest weakness in the whole Oxfordian case: that Oxfordians don't have a story to put up against the powerful Stratford story of the poor boy from Stratford who goes to London and makes good."

The audience included Varble, Paul Nicholson, Executive Director of OSF, and Livia Genise, Artistic Director of Camelot Theater in nearby Talent, which staged Amy Freed's *The Beard of Avon* three years ago. Genise was accompanied by several actors from the Camelot company, including one who played the Earl of Southampton, and she was an animated participant in the question and answer period that followed Whittemore's performance.

In his Sunday column Varble compared *Shakespeare's Treason* to *Equivocation*, Bill Cain's new play which opened recently at OSF. *Equivocation* explores the theory that the Gunpowder Plot of dissident Catholics to blow up Parliament and kill King James was in fact a device orchestrated by Robert Cecil to frame the innocent. Cain's protagonist is the playwright "Shagspeare" who has been commissioned by the King to write a play about the this treason, with a special request that it include witches. The result? *Macbeth*. Who was Cain's primary source in crafting his concept? English Oxfordian Father Francis Edwards, who wrote *Guy Fawkes, The Real Story of the Gunpowder Plot*.

In his review Varble notes that Cain's assumption that Guilielmus Shaksperere of Stratford was the author of *Macbeth* is a belief subject to question these days, and cites the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt, the advocacy of Derek Jacobi and Mark Rylance, and the recent report in the *Wall Street Journal* on Justice John Paul Stevens authorship preference for Oxford. Calling *Equivocation* "probably the most brilliant new play I've seen in years," Varble concludes that "a drama can be wrong about almost everything and still be incandescent theatre."

— contributed by Earl Showerman

What Do “the Oxfordians” Think?

by Alex McNeil

At the 2008 Shakespeare Fellowship/Shakespeare Oxford Society Joint Conference, I distributed a survey. It contained about thirty statements on various aspects of the authorship controversy, with which the respondents indicated whether they agreed or disagreed.

Before I analyze the results, maybe you'd like to answer the survey yourself. Here it is – indicate your agreement or disagreement by using a 1-to-9 scale (1 means strong disagreement, 9 means strong agreement).

Authorship

1. Edward de Vere is the principal author of the Shakespeare Canon.

2. The Canon was written by several authors under de Vere's general “supervision.”

3. William Shakspeare of Stratford wrote no literary works.

4. Shakspeare of Stratford served as a literary “front man” for the true author(s).

5. De Vere's authorship role was widely known in his literary community.

6. De Vere's authorship role was widely known in Queen Elizabeth's court.

7a. De Vere himself did not wish his authorship role to be known even after his death.

7b. De Vere's posthumous literary anonymity was arranged by his daughters and by Pembroke and Montgomery, with help from Ben Jonson.

7c. De Vere's literary anonymity was imposed by the State.

Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford

8. He was the natural son of the 16th Earl and Margery Golding.

9. The 16th Earl died of natural causes in 1562.

10. Edward was the biological father of his wife's (Anne Cecil's) first child in 1576.

11. Edward had a sexual relationship with Queen Elizabeth.

12. The 1000-pound annual grant to him in 1586 was made in connection with his literary activities.

13. Edward did not die in 1604, but

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lived on for several more years.

14. He is buried in Westminster Abbey.

15. He wrote many other literary works which are not attributed to him.

Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton

16. He was the natural son on the 2nd Earl and his wife.

17a. He was the son of Queen Elizabeth.

17b. He was the son of Edward de Vere.

17c. He was the son of Edward de Vere and the Queen.

18. The dedications to him in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* were for political reasons as much as, if not more than, literary reasons.

19. He is the “Mr. W. H.” to whom the Sonnets are dedicated.

20. De Vere played a key role in sparing Southampton's life after the latter's conviction for the Essex Rebellion.

The Sonnets

21. The Sonnets are published more or less (or entirely) in correct order.

22. The Sonnet Dedication is some sort of anagram or word puzzle.

23. The “Fair Youth” is Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton.

24a. The “Dark Lady” is Queen Elizabeth.

24b. The “Dark Lady” is Emilia Bassano.

24c. The “Dark Lady” is Elizabeth Trentham, Oxford's second wife.

24d. The “Dark Lady” is someone else.

25a. The principal story of the Sonnets is concerned with love and romance among real persons.

25b. The principal story of the Sonnets is about politics and succession.

25c. The Sonnets are just literary works and aren't “about” anything.

25d. We don't yet know what the Sonnets are about.

Miscellaneous

26. The illustration on the title page of *Minerva Britanna* (the hand behind the curtain) is an allusion to the authorship issue.

27. The publication of the Folio was organized by de Vere's daughters and Pembroke and Montgomery, with Ben Jonson's assistance.

(continued on p. 15)

(Plutarch, cont. from p. 1)

Dream. Shakespeare's purpose in choosing fictional character names from Plutarch's tome on ancient history and mythology is worth exploring in some detail because it suggests the conscious introduction of a historical context into romance and comedy. Shakespeare 'historicizes' his non-historic dramas by recruiting his *dramatis personae* from Greek and Roman nobility whose personalities would have been understood by a classically trained audience.

Plutarch (c. 46-127 CE) was a popular Greek writer who was born and lived near

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Delphi most of his life, where he served as the senior priest of the Oracle of Delphi, as well as archon of his region. He studied mathematics and philosophy in Athens, was a Platonist in his philosophy and traveled throughout the ancient world. His major works included *Parallel Lives*, which consisted of multiple pairings of historic noble Greeks and Romans, and the *Moralia*. *Parallel Lives* includes 23 pairs plus 4 single biographies: among the Greeks are Alexander, Pericles, Theseus, Dion, Demetrius, Cleomenes, Lysander, Alcibiades and Pyrrhus; the Romans include Caesar, Brutus, Antony, Cicero, Pompey,

Coriolanus, Camillus, Lucullus, Flavius, and Flamininus.

Scholars generally agree that Plutarch was very concerned with the interplay of character and destiny of famous men and that his biographies should be read like moral tales. His 'Life of Pyrrhus' was also a critically important text in Roman history of the 3rd century BCE as very few other sources of this period are extant. Plutarch was also considered to be biased in preferring the Greeks to the Romans throughout many of his biographical comparisons. Plutarch's original Greek was translated into French by Jaques Amyot who published *Parallel Lives* in 1559 and the *Moralia* in 1572. Sir Thomas North published the first English edition of *Lives* in 1579, which was based entirely on Amyot's translation; additional lives were added by North in the 1595 and 1603 editions. Philemon Holland translated the *Moralia* into English in 1603. Many scholars agree that Plutarch's writings profoundly influenced not only Shakespeare, but also Ben Jonson, John Dryden, Francis Bacon, John Milton and Michel de Montaigne.

Plutarch's influence on Shakespeare has been robustly explored by a number of scholars, with unstinting praise for what the playwright accomplished by adapting Plutarch's prose and character development to the dramatic form. Here are some representative commentaries:

Shakespeare, if anything deepens the 'mystery and opacity' in Plutarch's portraits, while keeping his dramatic lines open and clear.... Shakespeare seamlessly fuses together elements which Plutarch keeps separate and distinct.... In Antony and Cleopatra Shakespeare proved selective in his reading of the Life of Antony, carefully ignoring aspects that Plutarch deplored and that could damage a sympathetic portrayal.

— "Character' in Plutarch and Shakespeare," John Roe, *Shakespeare and the Classics* (2004), ed. Charles Martindale and A.B. Taylor

Some of Shakespeare's closest appropriations of North are among

the most famous moments in their respective plays: Portia's conversation with Brutus, Volumnia's final meeting with Coriolanus, Cleopatra on her barge.... The general picture is of a kind of professional collaboration, Shakespeare as script doctor to Plutarch's very promising first draft.

— "Plutarch, Shakespeare and the alpha males," Gordon Braden, *Shakespeare and the Classics* (2004)

What happens...in Shakespeare's

Scholars generally agree that Plutarch was very concerned with the interplay of character and destiny of famous men and that his biographies should be read like moral tales....His original Greek was translated into French by Jaques Amyot who published *Parallel Lives* in 1559 and the *Moralia* in 1572. Sir Thomas North published the first English edition of *Lives* in 1579, which was based entirely on Amyot's translation; additional lives were added by North in the 1595 and 1603 editions.

conversion of (Plutarchan) narrative into drama, is the establishment of our culture's prevailing model of character as one that is at once intensely performative and putatively interiorized,... marking off the richly inventive but largely plot-driven plays of the 1590's from the deeply characterological dramas that follow....

— "Shakespeare Crossing the Rubicon," Cynthia Marshall, *Shakespeare Studies* (2000)

I believe that it is from Plutarch that Shakespeare learned how to make

(Plutarch, cont. from p. 7)

a tragedy of the kind exemplified in *Hamlet* and *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Lear*. It was, I think, in the course of writing Julius Caesar that he learned it.

—*Shakespeare and the Classics*, J. A. K. Thompson (1952)

For all the attention scholars have applied to these dramatic elements linking Plutarch with Shakespeare, only a few editors of individual editions of the plays have addressed the question of nomenclature adaptation and none seems to have ever compiled a comprehensive list or examined them for characterological implications. The prevailing opinion, expressed by Horace Furness more than 100 years ago, raises some doubt about Shakespeare's knowledge of Plutarch in this regard. Commenting on the naming

In his nomenclature, Shakespeare is never merely servile in following his originals; but exercises a remarkable independence, sometimes simply adopting, sometimes slightly varying, sometimes wholly rejecting, the names he found in them. It is difficult to imagine that this conduct was merely arbitrary and careless. Euphony must of course have had its influence; often there must have occurred other considerations of no trifling interest, if only we could discover and understand them....

— Howard Horace Furness

scheme in *The Winter's Tale*, he writes:

In his nomenclature, Shakespeare is never merely servile in following his originals; but exercises a remarkable independence, sometimes simply adopting, sometimes slightly varying, sometimes wholly rejecting, the names he found in them. It is difficult to imagine that this conduct was merely arbitrary and careless. Euphony must of course have had its influence; often there must have occurred other considerations of no trifling interest, if only we could discover and understand them.... Shakespeare's names are curiously – often barbarously – much by Providence, – but assuredly not without Shakespeare's cunning purpose – mixed out of the various traditions he confusedly adopted, and languages, which he imperfectly knew.

— *New Variorum edition* (1898)

A more recent Arden edition of *The Winter's Tale* (1963) is less inclined to suggest confusion on Shakespeare's part, but concedes that the meaning of the nomenclature adoptions from Plutarch has not been explicated.

In Plutarch, the names occur chiefly in the lives of Camillus, and of Agis and Cleomenes; and Shakespeare was possibly indebted to the Lives for rather more than the names: Camillus, for example, is a kind of nobleman in Plutarch as Camillo is in the play, where he is mainly Shakespeare's creation. Apart from the Roman plays, Shakespeare's debt to Plutarch has not been fully explored.

— J.H.P. Pafford

The integrated nature and dramatic importance of Shakespeare's naming scheme in *Winter's Tale* is potentially revelatory. For instance, Paulina's expressed faith in the worthiness of Alexander the Great's successor in Act 5 is a subtle allusion to own husband, Antigonus. Antigonus I became King of Macedonia on Alexander's death:

Care not for issue;
The crown will find an heir.
Great Alexander
Left his to th' worthiest; so his successor
Was like to be the best. (5.1.46-49)

By examining the personalities of the historic characters whose names Shakespeare used for the characters of *Winter's Tale*, one can better appreciate the Greek context that the playwright used to build his story of jealousy, forgiveness, redemption and reunion. The mystical power of this play is enhanced by the famous characters' names. The same nomenclature scheme applies to *Pericles*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Timon*, the other Shakespeare plays that are set in Greece; Sicily was colonized by Greece and remained culturally Greek even into the Middle Ages.

We will take these plays, one at a time, and identify the Plutarchan cast, as well as the handful of other Greek historic and mythic characters not included in Plutarch, but described in Ovid, Herodotus, Homer or Hesiod. Listed alphabetically are the pertinent Shakespeare character names and the likely historic and literary source names:

Winter's Tale

Antigonus: Antigonus I (382-301 BCE) was a Macedonian general under Alexander the Great, called 'Monophthalmos' and 'Cyclops' because of the loss of an eye. He participated in the Asiatic campaigns, became governor of Phrygia, and in 306, after the death of Alexander, he took the royal title, briefly uniting Macedonia. Shortly thereafter, he was defeated by an alliance that included Lysimachus and died at the Battle of Ipsus. He is the father of Demetrius I.

Archidamus: Archidamus II was King of Sparta from 469-427 BCE, and ruled during the first phase of the Peloponnesian War. During the first peace negotiations with Athens, he befriended the Athenian leader, Pericles. He attempted to prevent the renewal of conflict between Athens and Sparta in 431, but was overruled by the Spartan warmongers. Archidamus conducted so aggressive a campaign that the Athenians called that phase of the conflict the 'Archidamian War.'

Autolycus: Autolycus was the son of Hermes and the beautiful maiden Chione. He was among the Argonauts, taught wrestling to Hercules, and became a renowned thief who could even make himself invisible. He had a magic helmet that was passed down to his grandson, Odysseus, who wore it during the Trojan War.

Camillo: Camillus (446-365 BCE), or Marcus Furius Camillus, was reported by Plutarch as being "in the highest commands, and obtained the greatest successes, was five times chosen dictator, triumphed four times, and was styled the second founder of Rome." After a victory over the Gauls, who had waged a prolonged siege of the Capitoline Hill in Rome, he is reported to have said, "Rome buys its peace with iron, not gold."

Cleomenes: Although accused of being slightly mad, Cleomenes I, King of Sparta from 521-491 BCE, was the undisputed leader of the Peloponnesian League. He had many military successes, including a brutal and treacherous victory over the Argives in 494. He frequently consulted with the Oracle of Delphi, and was meticulously attentive to the omens and superstitions that governed Spartan war rituals. Once, after the bribed Delphic Oracle advised war, Cleomenes attacked Athens.

Dion: Dion was the 4th century ruler of Syracuse in Sicily, and a friend of Plato. Dion brought the philosopher to Sicily to counsel King Dionysius II, but the ruler became incensed by Plato's argument that tyrants are not valiant, took Plato hostage and sold him into slavery. Dion is described by Plutarch as being naturally serious, solitary, and valorous. Although banished to Italy in a conspiracy, Dion later returned triumphantly and ruled Sicily, becoming in time a tyrant himself who was assassinated by one of his own followers.

Hermione: Hermione is a character in Homer, Euripides, Plutarch, and Ovid, and was the daughter of Menelaus and Helen of Troy. Although first betrothed to Orestes, she was awarded to Neoptolemus (Pyrrhus) after the Trojan War. She is portrayed in several dramas of Euripides with markedly different treatments. In *Orestes* (408 BCE) she is depicted as an honorable and innocent Spartan princess who is victimized and held hostage by the vengefully agitated Orestes; twenty years earlier, at the height of the Peloponnesian war, Hermione in the *Andromache* was portrayed as murderously jealous.

Ovid's Heroides, a collection of love letters from mythic heroines in distress, includes Hermione's 120-line pathetic appeal to Orestes to save her from having to marry Pyrrhus.

Hermione appears as a female character and the daughter

of Menelaus and Helen in only one other Elizabethan drama, *Horestes* (1567), attributed to the enigmatic John Pikerlyng.

Leontes: Leonidas I was King of Sparta and succeeded his half-brother, Cleomenes, in 489 BCE. He was renowned as the leader of the Spartans at the battle of Thermopylae against Xerxes of Persia in 480, the legendary Gates of Fire. Some sources suggest he took only a small force to the battle because he knew he was likely going to his doom, since the Oracle had foretold that victory would require the death of one of the Spartan kings. Against overwhelming forces, the Greeks heroically held the pass, delaying the Persian army long enough to enable forces to gather, resulting in the triumph of the combined Greek forces at Salamis and Plataea. A monument of a carved lion was dedicated at the

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battleground bearing this inscription written by the Athenian poet, Simonides: "Go, tell the Spartans, stranger passing by, that here, obedient to their laws we lie." Leonidas was also a renowned misogynist according to the report of Atheneus (c. 170-230 CE) in his *Deipnosophists* Book XIII, "Concerning Women."

Paulina: Gaius Suetonius Paulinus became governor of Britain in 58 CE, during the reign of Emperor Claudius. He was the first Roman general to cross the Atlas Mountains. Although vastly outnumbered by a Druid army, his legions destroyed the Britons during a revolt in 61, wreaking a brutal revenge; Tacitus reports a death toll of 80,000 Britons to only a few hundred Roman dead. Suetonius Paulinus was recalled to Rome, but was not disgraced and eventually rose to the office of Counsel in 66.

(Continued on page 10)

(Plutarch, cont. from p. 9)

Polixenes: Polyxena of Troy was the youngest daughter of Priam and Hecuba, noted for her beauty and close relationship with Troilus, son of Hecuba and Apollo. Although Homer does not mention her, she is a character in Euripides' *Hecuba* and *The Trojan Women*, and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. After the sack of Troy, in one of the greatest sins committed by the conquering Greeks, she is sacrificed on the command of the ghost of Achilles. In Ovid the sacrifice is performed by a priest; in Euripides, Achilles son, Neoptolemus, performs the murderous rite. Another possible name source for Polixenes among the famous or mythic Greeks

Theseus was the founder-hero and King of Athens. He was fathered by both Aegeus and Poseidon, and emulated Heracles, according to Plutarch, who begins his Lives with 'Theseus.' Theseus united Attica under Athenian rule and had a palace built on the Acropolis. Theseus killed the Minotaur at Knossos, defeated the Amazons, and married the Queen of Thrace, Hippolyta. He was rescued from Hades by Hercules and offered hospitality to Oedipus in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*. Oberon's catalogue of Theseus' sexual conquests (2.1.77-80) came directly from Plutarch.

would be Polyxenus, son of Agasthenes, who was a high priest of Demeter and one of the first to learn the Eleusinian Mysteries. This Polyxenus is also listed among the suitors for Helen of Troy by Apollodorus.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Antiochus, King of Antioch: Antiochus I Soter (The Savior) ruled as emperor of the Selucid Empire from 281-261 BCE. and married his stepmother, who was the daughter of Demetrius I. Antiochus is the only character name in this list, aside from the Greeks in Timon of Athens, adapted directly from Shakespeare's primary source, in this case John Gower's story of Apollonius of Tyre in his *Confessio Amantis*.

Cleon of Tarsus: Cleon of Athens (d. 422 BCE) was the leader of the opposition party during Pericles' last years and became a virtual tyrant after Pericles' death. Cleon gained particular notoriety for his proposed policy of exterminating all the citizens of

Mytilene after an Athenian military victory. His death resulted in a temporary suspension of the Peloponnesian War with the Peace of Nicias. He was reviled by the comic playwright Aristophanes in *The Knights*, where the Chorus attacks Cleon with these words:

Strike, strike the villain, who has spread confusion among the ranks of the Knights, this public robber, this yawning gulf of plunder, this devouring Charybdis, this villain, this villain, this villain! I cannot say the word too often, for he is a villain a thousand times a day. Come, strike, drive, hurl him over and crush him to pieces.

In *Pericles* Cleon is portrayed as weak and easily manipulated king whose conniving wife, Dionyza, attempts to have Marina assassinated because of her envy of Marina's beauty and virtue.

Lysimachus, Governor of Mytilene: Lysimachus was a general under Alexander the Great who became King of Thrace and Asia Minor. He joined the coalition that defeated Antigonus I at the Battle of Ipsus and later vied for power with Demetrius I. Regarding Shakespeare's choice of this name, Pelican editor Stephen Orgel comments that Gower's "Athenagoras becomes Lysimachus (and) the change, if history is relevant, is not trivial: Athenagoras was an early Christian philosopher, who wrote a treatise on the Resurrection, and should be very much in tune with the play. Lysimachus, however, was one of Alexander's generals, who became ruler of Macedonia and was notorious for his tyranny and cruelty. Perhaps this is another case in which Pericles fails to see beyond the surface – and perhaps Jacobean audiences with classical educations did not foresee a happy future for Marina." (xxxviii) Actually, Lysimachus was very much like the historic Pericles in Athens, as he rebuilt Ephesus in 292 BCE, which became the greatest metropolis of Asia and home to the world-famous Temple of Diana, the scene where Shakespeare's romance *Pericles* concludes.

Pericles: Pericles of Athens (c. 495-429 BCE) was the most renowned first citizen of Athens during the 30-year 'Golden Age.' He was greatly admired for his democratic leadership, rhetorical brilliance, and patronage, which included serving as archon for the production of Aeschylus' *Persians* in 472 BCE. He promoted the rebuilding of temples on the Acropolis that had been destroyed by the Persians. Pericles led the Athenians as they grew to dominate the Delian League and led the Athenian army in a number of battles, including the Battle of Delphi. Thucydides and Plutarch both treat him with great respect in their histories and he was reported to be a personal friend of Archidamus, King of Sparta. He was, however, blamed for Athens' plague at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War by Sophocles in his *Oedipus Tyrannous*. Pericles died in 429, still grieving for the deaths of his two legitimate sons; all three died of the plague. There are marked similarities in Shakespeare's portrayal of Pericles of Tyre and the Athenian. Both were highly intelligent, generous, loved by their people, and associated with the arts. Both also suffered the loss of a child and were politically threatened by unhappy nobility. Finally, both are opposed by characters named Cleon.

Philemon: Philemon (c. 362-262 BCE) is not mentioned by Plutarch, but he was a noteworthy Athenian poet and New Comedy playwright. Philemon was very popular and had repeated victories over his chief rival, Menander, in the play competitions. Philemon is also the name of a character in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII who gives shelter and shows piety to Zeus and Hermes, and is saved along with his wife, Baucis, from a great flood.

Simonides, King of Pentapolis: Simonides of Ceos (c. 556-459 BCE) was a lyric poet whose work was included in the Greek Anthology. He lived in both Athens and Thessaly and wrote elegies, paeans to Apollo, and poems celebrating the Greek battles with the Persians at Marathon and Thermopylae. Simonides once even gained the victory over Aeschylus in the Athenian trilogies competition.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Demetrius: Demetrius I, Poliorcetes (The Besieger), son of Antigonos I, was King of Macedon from 294 to 288 BCE. He liberated Athens from Cassander and Ptolemy and was worshipped as a god by the Athenians, who erected a Temple where his foot first touched the ground on his arrival. Demetrius was especially renowned for his ingenuity in devising huge siege engines over 100 feet tall and giant battering rams requiring 1,000 men. For these inventions, he was given the surname "Poliorcetes." In Plutarch he is compared to Antony for his licentiousness and extravagance. Demetrius' reign was threatened continually by aggression from Pyrrhus, and while he ravaged the territories of Lysimachus, he was eventually driven from Macedon and finally defeated by Seleucus, his son-in-law, after being forsaken by his troops.

Aegeus is the father of Theseus in both Plutarch and Chaucer. The Aegean Sea is named after him. As King of Athens and lacking an heir, he consulted the Oracle of Delphi and was warned that he might 'die of grief' if he "loosened the wineskin" before returning to Athens, but drunkenly he fathered Theseus. Father and son were united after Theseus reached manhood and traveled to Athens, defeating numerous thieves and murderers along the road. Aegeus welcomed the disguised Theseus, but Queen Medea tried to poison Theseus; her plot was foiled and she was banished from Athens. The Oracle is fulfilled when Theseus fails to fly white sails on his return from Crete to show he survived the Minotaur and Aegeus leaps from a cliff into the sea and is drowned.

Hippolyta was Queen of the Amazons and possessed a magic girdle, which was the object of Hercules' 9th labor. There are numerous versions of this story including the marriage of Theseus to either Hippolyta or her sister, Antiope. The death of Hippolyta is also related in several versions including by the hands of Hercules, by her own subjects, or by Theseus' men.

Lysander (? – 395 BCE) was commander of the Spartan fleet based in Ephesus when Alcibiades had rejoined the Athenian forces. Under his leadership, the Athenian fleet was utterly destroyed by

the Spartans in 405, effectively ending the Peloponnesian War. Although Lysander showed mercy to the Athenians after their defeat, Plutarch noted that the oligarchy of Thirty Tyrants that Lysander appointed to rule Athens committed many outrages. Later Plutarch reports that Lysander was ordered to execute Alcibiades because he was a popular democratic threat to the rule of the oligarchs. In a letter to Marcus Aurelius, Athenagoras of Athens (c. 176) accused the people of Samos of having deified Lysander.

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was rescued from Hades by Hercules and offered hospitality to Oedipus in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*. Oberon's catalogue of Theseus' sexual conquests (2.1.77-80) came directly from Plutarch. Theseus and Hippolyta also appear in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* where the drama begins with their wedding. Euripides' Hippolytus dramatizes Theseus' fatal curse on his chaste son for having raped Phaedra, who committed suicide after unjustly slandering Hippolytus for repelling her advances. In addition to Plutarch and Euripides, Thucydides, Pindar, Plato, Apollodorus, Pausanias and Diodorus all wrote about Theseus.

Timon of Athens

Alcibiades (450-404 BCE) was one of the most complex characters described by Plutarch and gained a degree of infamy during the Peloponnesian war, changing his allegiance no less than three times. He was a favorite of Socrates in his youth, a prominent orator and general, and is compared favorably to Coriolanus in *Lives*. His military and political talents were matched by his abil-

(Continued on page 27)

(Song, cont. from p. 1)

“To quicken,” to infuse with life: the phrase captures the importance of music and poetry for the people of the Renaissance. Music and poetry make us feel refreshed, alive. For the Elizabethan well-born, certainly, good manners included training in musical skills and an enjoyment of songs. Thus, the sheer number of songs in the plays and the more than 400 references to music are yet another link to the seventeenth Earl of Oxford as rightful author, for we *know* that Edward de Vere was given musical training and was known by his contemporaries as a dedicated and talented musician. As Peter Seng, points out in a full-length book on the vocal songs, “The attitudes of the upper classes are

(1.1.183-184)

Or, note Iago’s metaphor as he watches the loving reunion between Othello and Desdemona:

Oh, you are well tuned now!
But I’ll set down the pegs that make this music. (2.1.200-1)

In fact, a character is marked as an outsider if he dislikes music or does not understand its appeal—neither Shylock, for instance, nor Othello have an appreciation for music. Lorenzo’s lovely lecture to Shylock’s daughter reminds us of the Christian context for music: Lorenzo likens “the sweet touches of harmony” to that which is in “immortal souls.” He goes on to assert:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils . . . (5.1.83-85)

Boethius spoke of *musica humana*, the music of human life, which meant an “inner principle of harmony unifying body and soul with all one’s interior faculties; and it was from this interior order, based on truth and beauty, that outward action was to proceed” (Waddell 1). So, in the world of Shakespeare’s plays, music is an essential: music refreshes, it communicates, it marks the listener as a person of harmony and goodness and Christian civility. If the music is without words – instrumental, rather than a song – it is nonetheless integral to the drama. Richard II, for example, alone in his prison cell, hears music as he contemplates his life; when the chord goes sour, Richard realizes that he is about to die. John Long points out that, in the plays, instrumental music is often associated with the world of action and appearance; vocal music often portrays the inner world of character (145).

Richmond Noble, author of one of the first full-length studies of the songs, points out that songs had been attached to plays well before Shakespeare. But “attached” is all they were: the songs were “extras,” mere diversions. Shakespeare, however, was the first to integrate the songs into the dramas. Noble praises Shakespeare’s songs for their “ease, brevity of expression and rapidity of development” (9). The words — lyrics to these songs — convey meaning directly connected to the play. Unlike many modern musicals, when we find actors suddenly bursting into song, with lyrics that may or may not be relevant to the plot, Oxford’s songs always serve a purpose. The words accomplish something essential to the drama: songs advance the plot, songs reflect on the setting or on an important theme, and songs provide clues to help the audience better understand a character. Consider, for example, “Men were deceivers ever. . .” in *Much Ado About Nothing* — this refrain from a song accurately labels dastardly actions brought about by Don John and by Claudio. And the title itself offers a pun having to do with music: *Much Ado About Nothing* becomes *Much Ado About Noting* (as in noticing) or noting (as in the notes of a song). Consider, also, the importance of a song in *Merchant of Venice*. While Bassanio examines the three caskets — gold, silver, lead — a song is being sung, a song which contains the

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reflected in the handbooks of nurture and education for their offspring; nearly all of these books prescribe some training in musical skills” (xii). Thus, the songs themselves and the depth and range and sheer numbers of musical references all point to the author being a well-born person of learning.

In the history plays, the various fanfares, drum rolls, and flourishes remind us that he was familiar with the rituals and pageantry of court life. And the author’s battle scenes contain alarums, tuckets, sennets, etc. — various details to remind us that this author had military training. We have no proof, no documentation, that the Stratford man had experience in court or in the military, or that he received any musical education.

In Oxford’s plays, references to music abound; as far as I can determine, only one play, *King John*, contains none. Consider *Midsummer Night’s Dream*: Helena complains that all the men admire Hermia:

Your eyes are lodestars, and your tongue’s sweet air
More tunable than lark to shepherd’s ear.

line “Tell me where is fancy bred.” The rhyme (bred/lead) helps Bassanio to choose the correct casket and avoid the tempting gold and silver. Other lines in the song contain clues about judging on the basis of internal strength.

I hope that you’ll investigate the songs and consider the ways in which they function, both in advancing details of plot or in illuminating character. One warning: determining origin of the songs can be frustrating or impossible. Some of them are from traditional ballads, and we can find them included in various books of music. Some were adapted by Oxford, with verses or lines changed to fit a specific play. Some of the songs were written by Oxford. Often, it is very difficult to trace a song’s origin!

For the scope of this paper, I’d like to turn to the music and songs in *Othello*. The instrumental music in this tragedy includes three trumpet calls: The first trumpet call (or “tucket”) announces the arrival of Othello in Cyprus (2.1.179) and thus is a clever shorthand way of representing action occurring off stage. “The Moor! I know his trumpet,” says Iago (2. 1.179), meaning that a particular rhythm and melody serves like a personal calling card, almost an aural heraldic device. The second trumpet call announces Lodovico’s arrival from Venice (4.1.225); Lodovico comes as an emissary of the Doge and would thus be entitled to a fairly elaborate flourish (Long 145). As Frederick Sternfeld has commented, Lodovico’s ceremonial music accomplishes a change in mood. The music reestablishes a formal, diplomatic atmosphere after the disruption caused when Othello publicly strikes Desdemona. The third trumpet piece in *Othello* serves both a dramatic and a ceremonious purpose. It occurs after Othello has struck his wife in public; Othello then storms off. A frantic and confused Desdemona questions Iago in order to determine the cause of Othello’s anger. Iago offers a feeble excuse:

I pray you be content, ‘tis but his humor,
The business of the state does him offense,
And he does chide with you.

(4.2.165)

Desdemona nervously responds, “If it were no other —” and Iago interrupts her

with the patronizing “‘tis but so, I warrant.” It is at this moment that the trumpets sound from within the citadel, announcing supper. Renaissance audiences were apt to understand all the information efficiently “encoded” in the fanfare: supper is about to be served, and the meal will be a formal, state occasion. John Long analyzes the moment:

Iago, of course, is not invited: he uses the interim to plot with Roderigo. Othello and Desdemona dine with

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Lodovico and the other emissaries. How hollow must this pomp sound to Othello, whose occupation is gone, whose commission has been revoked, and who is resolved to do away with his wife as soon as the banquet concludes! To Desdemona, perhaps, the trumpet music gives hope, suggesting to her those affairs of state which Iago has just said might be the cause of her husband’s distemper. (146)

Whether or not Long’s interpretation is completely correct, the author of this play clearly was familiar with state dinners. And, yes, the sounding of trumpets during state banquets and diplomatic events was customary in Queen Elizabeth’s reign — events to which Oxford would have been invited (and to which the man from Stratford would not have been).

There is one more musical piece in *Othello*: an *aubade*. Musicians, hired by

Cassio, perform this morning serenade under the window in Othello and Desdemona’s quarters on Cyprus. Some commentators have called the piece “relaxation before the tense main business of the tragedy” (Granville-Barker). And because of the coarse remarks of the clown, the scene can also be considered a touch of comic relief.

But these instrumental few moments are not just fillers, for the music illuminates characterization and supplies dramatic foreshadowing. In the spirit of an unsuccessful lover or petitioner, Cassio has arranged for these musicians. Obviously, Cassio does not know that Othello dislikes music; the audience will immediately realize the ironic foreshadowing here: Cassio does not know Othello well and has clumsily chosen the wrong way to regain his approval. This failure means that Cassio is thus bound to fail in regaining his lieutenantcy. Desdemona will therefore not be a successful petitioner for Cassio, and *her* failure is emblematic of the dire breach growing between this new bride and her powerful husband.

Othello contains two vocal songs, both integral to the plot. The first is a drinking song — more accurately, parts of two drinking songs — which Iago uses as a means to entice Cassio to relax. Iago’s drinking song establishes a convivial atmosphere and also creates the illusion of the passage of time. Peter Seng notes that Iago does not rely on someone else singing but actually is himself the singer, which highlights the fact that Iago is in control: Iago sings, Iago causes Cassio to drink too much, Iago thus insures Cassio’s disgrace. Cassio, who has admitted he does not have a good head for drink, falsely sees Iago as his friend.

Just before the song Cassio says, “they have given be a rouse already” (line 58): a rouse is a large glass for drinking toasts (Furness 130). It is interesting that Montano, Governor of Cyprus, is present as the soldiers drink. Thus, Iago’s drinking song calls our attention to two unusual features: 1) that a high official has let his hair down and is drinking along with the various guards and lower-ranked soldiers; 2) that Cassio joins in the seemingly good-natured fun—perhaps encouraged by the fact that Montano is part of the company

(Continued on page 14)

(Song, cont. from p. 13)

and certainly urged on by the seemingly jovial Iago.

“And let me the cannikin clink, clink” — a cannikin is simply a little can. This diminutive word, cannikin, adds to the sense of innocent fun. It may even call to mind the rhyme with “manikin,” suggesting that Cassio is a small man, a toy man, a puppet being manipulated by Iago. Scholars believe that “And let the cannikin clink” is either a verse of a traditional ballad or is adapted from a similar German song (Long 188).

And let me the cannikin clink, clink
And let me the cannikin clink
A soldier's a man,
O man's life's but a span,
Why then, let a soldier drink.

(2.3.61-65)

For “Man's life's but a span,” Peter Seng notes the similarity to Psalm 36, “thou has made my days as it were a span long.” This suggests that a kind of throw-away fatalism is being tossed in the face of the naïve Cassio. No big deal, lieutenant: your life is just a set of years--if you're a man and a soldier, what's wrong with a few friendly drinks? Cassio hasn't a chance!

The second part of the drinking song, “King Stephen was and-a worthy peer” is brilliantly appropriate here.

King Stephen was and a-worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he called the tailor lown.
[a rogue]
He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree;
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
And take thy auld cloak about thee.

(2.3.81-88)

Scholars disagree on the origin of this song, and variations can be found from different time periods with different kings being named. The anecdote about the twelfth-century King Stephen also appears in *Tempest*; a drunken Trinculo teases Stephano, “O King Stephano, oh peer, look what a wardrobe is here for thee.” Some

believe the song to be a traditional ballad, some claim it was originally from the North or from Scotland (*lown* is a Scottish word), some can find no proof that the song was handed down at all — which would mean that the author wrote it, or adapted it, specifically for *Othello*.

Whatever its origin, the song is no casual adjunct to the action. “'Tis pride that pulls the country down,” reminds us of one of the major themes in *Othello* — that of reputation, pride, place. This jolly drinking song actually voices Iago's own impatience with privilege; the singer resents the attitudes of someone in a high position, someone like Cassio (who has the job Iago wants). Cassio is not clear-headed

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and thus does not notice the implicit warning; Cassio, relaxed and (perhaps) trying to be “one of the guys,” does indeed become too drunk to make clear decisions. He picks a fight — or is goaded into picking one — and the ensuing ruckus rouses Othello and leads to Cassio's dismissal.

Let's close with a look at Desdemona's plaintive “Willow Song.” This is indeed a traditional folk ballad, from England (Desdemona calls it “an old thing”), and would likely be well known to the author's original audiences. Several melodies are associated with the “Willow Song,” all of them haunting; one is contained in a 1540 collection now housed in the Brit-

ish Museum. With its many verses, the song gives a conventional treatment of unrequited love and is eminently suitable to the sadness and confusion Desdemona is feeling at this point in the play. And, I call your attention to the poignant effect caused by the accumulation of women: the quiet scene between Desdemona and Emilia, the mention of Desdemona's mother and of a disappointed maid. The song also highlights the intimate setting. A well-born woman would not sing in public, but can do so in her own chamber.

My mother had a maid called Barbary;
She was in love and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her. She had a Song of
“Willow” —

And old thing was, but it expressed her
fortune-- And she died singing it.
That song tonight
Will not go from my mind.

(4.3.26-31)

A perfect song for Desdemona. She is in love and Othello's actions do indeed seem those of a mad man. The name “Barbary” suggests the Barbary coast--home of the Moors and thus a link to Othello himself. As Desdemona is readied for bed, she continues the song,

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve. (51-52)

Utter irony here: it was an old custom for those forsaken in love to wear a willow garland, the weeping willow tree a traditional symbol of tears and sadness. And, as Pidge Sexton has noted, a willow tree can symbolize a fallen woman. “Let nobody blame him” foretells Desdemona's refusal as she lies dying (in Act V) to identify Othello as her killer. And, to add poignancy at the ending of the tragedy--accented by Othello's knowledge, finally, of what has happened — Emilia asks the rhetorical question, “What did thy song forebode, lady?” (5.2.252) and sings “willow, willow, willow” as she dies. Two needless deaths, two innocent women each killed by her husband.

In its Act IV context, Desdemona breaks off her singing with “Nay, that's

not next" (4.3.53), for she has forgotten or mixed up a verse. This omission signals the moment of deepest pathos in the play, for (depending on which version of the ballad one consults) the line Desdemona has forgotten is "She was born to be fair, I to die for his love," or "He was born to be fair, I to die for his love." All the permutations of this line produce irony: Desdemona was born to be fair — i.e., true and loyal to her husband; and she is fair, if "fair" refers to her white complexion. If we use the masculine pronoun, "He was born to be fair," the irony still holds, for in neither way is Othello fair. Desdemona is indeed destined to die because of his love--albeit at this point a love twisted by jealousy and deceit.

In conclusion, I believe that the music and songs in *Othello* add power and emphasis to this sad tale of love and betrayal, and I urge deeper investigation of the songs in Shakespeare's plays as a means of gaining greater enjoyment of the drama and of revealing concrete links to Edward de Vere.

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(What do we think, cont. from p. 6)

28. Many academics privately harbor doubt about the case for Shakspere of Stratford as author, but won't publicly admit it.

The Results

As one might expect at any meeting of Oxfordians, there wasn't very much consensus, and there was no true unanimity. However, the six statements that achieved the highest degrees of consensus -- agreement or disagreement -- were the following (note: I'm treating responses of 1-3 to a statement as disagreement; responses of 7-9 as agreement; and responses of 4-6 as uncertainty):

- That Oxford was the principal author of the Shakespeare Canon. Twenty-seven of thirty respondents strongly agreed, rating it a 7 or higher, with twenty persons giving it a 9. Two persons disagreed, however, obviously indicating that not everyone in attendance was a devoted Oxfordian. [Median score = 9.]
 - That the Stratford man wrote no literary works. Twenty-two of twenty-eight respondents gave this a 9, and only four disagreed. [Median = 9.]
 - That the Sonnets are not "about" anything. This statement received the highest disagreement, with twenty-two of twenty-eight respondents disagreeing, and sixteen persons scoring it at 1. [Median = 1.] But, as will be seen below, although Oxfordians think the Sonnets are about something, there is no clear consensus as to what that something is.
 - That Oxford wrote many other literary works which are not attributed to him. Twenty-one of thirty respondents agreed, and only one disagreed (however, eight persons expressed uncertainty). [Median = 8.3]
 - That the publication of the First Folio was arranged by Oxford's daughters and by Pembroke and Montgomery, with help from Ben Jonson. Twenty-one of twenty-six respondents agreed, and only one person disagreed. [Median = 8] A similar statement -- that Oxford's posthumous literary anonymity was arranged by the same persons -- received a median score of 6.5.
 - That Oxford's literary activity was known at Elizabeth's court. Twenty-three of thirty respondents agreed, and only two disagreed. [Median = 8.] Interestingly, more persons agreed with this statement than with the statement that Oxford's literary career was known in the literary community, which had a median score of only 6.7.
- There was less consensus about the next group of statements, all of which scored between 7.0 and 7.9 (indicating significant agreement) or between 2.1 and 3.0 (indicating significant disagreement):
- That the principal story of the Sonnets is love and romance among real persons. Twenty of twenty-seven respondents agreed with this statement, though four strongly disagreed. [Median = 7.8]
 - That Oxford was the son of the 16th Earl and Margery Golding. Nineteen of twenty-seven respondents agreed, four disagreed and four were uncertain. [Median = 7.8].
 - That Oxford's annual grant of 1000 pounds was connected with his literary activity. Eighteen of twenty-nine respondents agreed, although eight persons expressed uncertainty. [Median = 7.7]
 - That Oxford did not die in 1604. Nineteen of thirty respondents disagreed, and only four agreed. [Median = 2.5]
 - That Southampton is the "Fair Youth" of the Sonnets. Twenty of twenty-eight respondents agreed, and only two disagreed. [Median = 7.3]

(Continued on p. 18)

Book Review

Elizabeth and Shakespeare: The Meeting of Two Myths, by Helen Hackett

Princeton University Press, 2009, \$35

Reviewed by Helen Heightsman Gordon

It is refreshing to see the word “myths” aptly used to characterize the apotheosis of the author William Shakespeare into a cultural deity and Elizabeth Tudor, his Queen, into an icon of virginity with ambiguous masculine powers. Helen Hackett bases her book on a provocative question: Why is it that readers and writers over four centuries have tried to put Shakespeare and his Queen into a relationship – or at least acquaintanceship – although there is no evidence that the two ever met?

Helen Hackett, a reader in English literature at University College in London, has previously written a book (now rare and expensive) entitled *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Macmillan, 1995). In her new book she elaborates upon that study by showing how the myths about Shakespeare have sometimes paralleled, sometimes counterpoised, and frequently intertwined, those about Elizabeth.

Hackett explains beautifully the process by which such mythologies arise. The myths are affected by time and place, according to the needs of a given culture, and thus they give us a window into the culture they reflect (6). In England, for example, stories of imaginary meetings of the queen and the author have become one of England’s (and Britain’s) “most entrenched and persistent cultural myths” (3). As the British Empire expanded its power and influence around the world, British myths represented the superiority of the empire’s cultural richness. As time passed, the stories became elaborated in both fiction and history, each building upon the other until fact became inseparable from fiction.

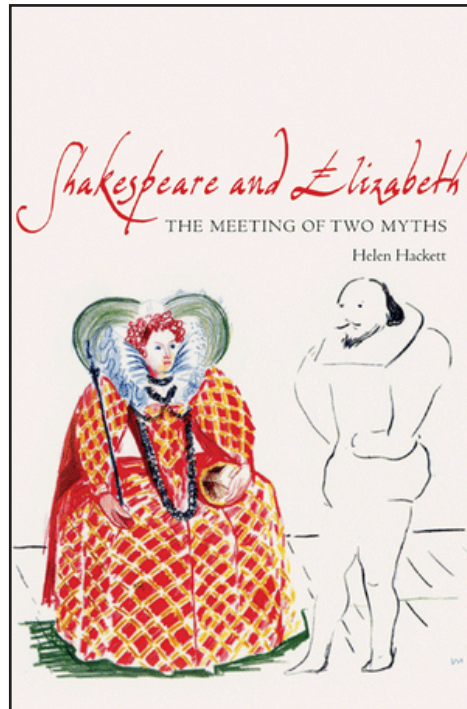
Elizabeth’s image mutated from a national icon in the sixteenth century, embodying Protestant England, to a passionate woman with a scandalous private life, and many lovers, in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, she was envisioned as complex and contradictory – majestic for having presided over

a golden era, but personally coarse and unfeminine, vindictive and mean-spirited (62-63). From her own reign through the present, she has been seen to reflect supposedly masculine qualities of a ruler (warlike courage, authority, judgment, dominance) and the qualities of the ideal woman (beauty, softness, mercifulness,

etc.) (35). Writers have emphasized whatever traits they find useful to portray her with admirable or despicable qualities, as Hackett demonstrates through an impressive array of examples from literature and drama.

In the eighteenth century Shakespeare’s image was in the ascendant, beginning with Rowe’s 1709 biography. As Shakespeare was elevated to higher levels of admiration, Elizabeth’s relative status diminished (38). In the early 1700s, she had been represented as a gracious imperial lady whose patronage refined Shakespeare’s art, whereas he was portrayed as a humble, provincial prankster, endowed with natural gifts that he developed under the Queen’s benign influence. But as the century proceeded, Shakespeare was converted into a secular god; whereas Elizabeth’s androgynous sexuality was at odds with eighteenth century feminine ideals of modesty, politeness, and sensibility (38). The two were sometimes represented as opposing social forces — aristocratic versus more egalitarian ideologies. Sometimes, influenced by French literary tastes, authors envisioned them as sexually attracted, irrespective of the age difference.

Across the Atlantic, Americans were adapting the myths to emphasize the lowly origins and meteoric rise of a genius, consistent with American ideals of equality and opportunity. In America, the Queen was not vilified, but she definitely took second place to the Bard. The nineteenth century spawned new interest in the plays and poetry, as education became available to the working classes, and women became more self-reliant. Quoting Shakespeare became a mark of prestige and refinement. Yet inquiries into the authorship began to emerge, beginning with Delia Bacon (1850) and Thomas Looney (1920), since a gap was



perceived between the content of the plays and the traditional biography offered.

Because there is no evidence for this much-desired meeting of idols, the hypothetical meeting has been imagined variously by authors and dramatists. To that end, Shakespeare's meager biography shades into historical fiction. In the nineteenth century, Walter Scott's novel *Kenilworth* built a fictional world which presumed that Shakespeare was present at the celebrations to entertain Queen Elizabeth in 1575. This and other Scott-invented details have subsequently been taken for fact. In the twentieth century, movies such as "Shakespeare in Love" caught the public's imagination, despite being historically inaccurate.

For two hundred years myths of Shakespeare and Elizabeth have converged in America as well as in Britain (110). Although the British generally consider Shakespeare's legacy to be theirs alone, most Americans identify with Shakespeare's compassionate ideals and believe all English-speaking peoples to be his heirs. The relationship of the two nations to the double myth is a complex mixture of commerce, collaboration, and competition. Each country adapts and embellishes the myths, sending them abroad and returning them in altered form.

Hackett devotes a chapter to the authorship controversy, after which she segues smoothly into twentieth century dramatic arts and literature on both sides of the Atlantic. She speculates good-humoredly about what the future might hold as these two myths continue to evolve and circulate back and forth among British, American, and other international cultures.

Although her summation of the authorship controversy makes an effort to be fair-minded and even-handed, including English as well as American doubters, it raises a number of questions. Most disturbingly, Hackett has not made the very important distinction between the core constructions of the two myths she examines. It is the difference between a political *persona* built around a well-known queen whose life has been thoroughly documented, and that based on a highly questionable set of conjectures built around an obscure person whose name did not appear in print until 1593. Elizabeth was probably neither the virgin nor the virago envisioned in myths, but she was definitely a real woman fulfilling an important national role. The shadowy figure from Stratford, however, has left so few biographical details that many reasonable people have suspected a deliberate suppression of evidence, perhaps a "front man" arrangement. He left no written evidence that conclusively identifies him as the same person who authored the works in the Shakespearean canon. Hackett observes that movements of Baconians and Oxfordians continue to thrive, and she mentions the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt initiated by Shahan, Rylance, and Jacobi (172). But we see no evidence that Hackett has understood the core of dissatisfaction they articulate.

She thus misses the main Oxfordian point: that writers always write from their own experiences, shaping them creatively into a work of art. The works of Shakespeare demonstrate intensive study, extensive travel, and expansive vision. No Stratfordians can explain how the raw material of Shakspeare's life enlightens our understanding of the plays and poems. Stratfordians must

guess how Shakspeare might have attained such a background; Oxfordians know how Oxford did.

By treating Shakspeare of Stratford as the default "true" candidate, Hackett misjudges the potency of the Shakespeare myth, which is built like the proverbial museum dinosaur—gobs of plaster around a few small bones. Though avoiding the trite *ad hominem* accusation of snobbery, she implicitly assumes it to be motivating the authorship theories. Thus Hackett's criticisms of the anti-Stratfordians miss the mark. She says a paradox exists in the writings of many anti-Stratfordians, who want to elevate their hero to royalty or aristocracy, yet simultaneously claim Prince "Shakespeare" as a man of the people (176). Yet can't an aristocrat have empathy for the common people? And haven't all the other myth-makers "elevated" their hero to superhuman status? Passionate Stratfordians interpret any investigation of

For two hundred years myths of Shakespeare and Elizabeth have converged in America as well as in Britain. Although the British generally consider Shakespeare's legacy to be theirs alone, most Americans identify with Shakespeare's compassionate ideals and believe all English-speaking peoples to be his heirs. The relationship of the two nations to the double myth is a complex mixture of commerce, collaboration, and competition. Each country adapts and embellishes the myths, sending them abroad and returning them in altered form.

the authorship question as an assault upon their cherished beliefs — that their idol can make effortless ascents to literary heights, powered solely by tugs on the bootstraps of his genius.

Hackett speculates on the motives of Baconians and Oxfordians, suggesting that by identifying with their new paternal hero, they elevate themselves, too (176). Yet don't such motives apply more appropriately to Stratfordians? Some believe that if a man of lowly origins can achieve such greatness, there is hope that they, too, can have a stroke of luck, can be discovered by a talent scout, and be promoted by powerful mentors. This idea fits well with the European Cinderella myth and the American Horatio Alger myth, which offer hope that fame and success are within reach of even the most ordinary mortal.

But is it fair to say that Baconians seek self-importance? Many

(Continued on page 22)

Baconians believe that Francis Bacon was an unacknowledged illegitimate son of Elizabeth, so their depiction of her tends to be that of a cruel, rejecting mother. Can it be called “elevating” their hero if their goal is just to have his alleged birthright recognized?

Is it fair to say that Oxfordians seek to elevate themselves symbolically? Those Oxfordians who believe Elizabeth and Oxford were lovers tend to depict Elizabeth as seductive, sexually liberated, and tragically torn between desire and duty. Can the alleged love child issuing from the couple’s affair be “elevated” to royal or aristocratic status, if he actually *is* the son of a queen and an earl? Perhaps their motive is simply to restore the good name of Edward de Vere and “report his cause aright to the unsatisfied.”

Hackett speculates on the motives of Baconians and Oxfordians, suggesting that by identifying with their new paternal hero, they elevate themselves, too [176]. Yet don’t such motives apply more appropriately to Stratfordians? Some believe that if a man of lowly origins can achieve such greatness, there is hope that they, too, can have a stroke of luck, can be discovered by a talent scout, and be promoted by powerful mentors. This idea fits well with the European Cinderella myth and the American Horatio Alger myth, which offer hope that fame and success are within reach of even the most ordinary mortal.

Further, Hackett says the elevation of “Shakespeare” to royal or aristocratic blood may also be read as a Cinderella-style wish fulfillment fantasy, reminiscent of Sigmund Freud’s theories of “family romance” (176-77). She questions why Freud, aware of subconscious attractions to father figures and mother figures, did not apply his theories to the authorship question, but instead became convinced by J. Thomas Looney’s case for the Earl of Oxford. Perhaps, she says, Looney’s book attracted Freud as an iconoclast, as an originator of theories which were often at odds with the academic establishment.

But perhaps Freud’s convictions were consciously made and logical. Obviously, Hackett has not read the Freud-persuading arguments in Looney’s 1920 book, *Shakespeare Identified*, which still makes good reading on the Internet. Nor, it would seem, has she consulted the classic work by Charlton Ogburn, Jr., *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality* (1984). Too bad, because Ogburn could explain why he calls the embroidered Stratfordian biography a “myth” in opposition to the reality of history as it is being discovered and renewed.

Ogburn could easily answer the question that drives Hack-

ett’s inquiry – why do writers, readers, and playgoers have such a curious compulsion to bring the two myths together? Ogburn would have shared the fact that the 17th Earl of Oxford, Elizabeth’s favorite court playwright, did in fact meet her in person, beginning when she visited his father’s estate (he was ten), resuming when he came to court as her ward in 1562 (he was twelve). It continued through a course that never did run smooth, but fed the wellsprings of his creativity and the glory of her reign. (She died in 1603; he wrote Sonnet 107.)

Perhaps Hackett, applying her skeptical eye and methodical proficiency, would be inspired to write another book. It would be most welcome. But this one will suffice for now: it is charming, thought-provoking, and richly informative about the way cultures and myths interact to shape national identities and ideals.

(What do we think, cont. from p. 15)

- That de Vere played a key role in sparing Southampton’s life after the Essex Rebellion conviction. Sixteen of twenty-eight respondents agreed, ten were uncertain and only two disagreed. [Median = 7.3]
- That the Sonnets Dedication is some sort of anagram or word puzzle. Fourteen of twenty-six agreed, nine were uncertain and three disagreed. [Median = 7.3]
- That Oxford’s literary anonymity was state-imposed. Eighteen of twenty-eight persons agreed, though ten expressed uncertainty. [Median = 7.2]
- That Oxford did not wish his authorship role to be known after his death. Seventeen of twenty-seven respondents disagreed, though six persons agreed. [Median = 2.8]
- That many academics secretly harbor doubt about the Stratford man as author. Eighteen of twenty-eight respondents agreed, and only one disagreed. [Median = 7].

All of the remaining statements scored between 3.5 and 6.8, which indicated increasing levels of disagreement or uncertainty. Curiously, the highest-scoring statement in this group was that de Vere had a sexual relationship with the Queen, with a median of 6.8 (sixteen of thirty agreed, seven disagreed, and seven were uncertain). The notion that Shakespeare of Stratford served as a literary “front man” scored a 6.7 (fourteen of twenty-nine agreeing). Does the title page illustration in *Minerva Britannia* allude to authorship? The median here was 6.5, with fourteen persons agreeing, but with ten uncertain and four disagreeing.

Who is the “Dark Lady” of the Sonnets? According to our survey, we’re hardly of one mind. Elizabeth Trentham emerged as the least likely candidate with a median score of only 3.5, with twelve persons disagreeing, nine uncertain and only three agreeing. None of the others fared much better, however. Emilia Bassanio received a 4.0 (eleven disagreeing, eight uncertain and three agreeing). “Someone Else” got a 4.3 (eleven disagreeing, eight uncertain and six agreeing), and Queen Elizabeth elicited the sharpest contrasting responses (eleven agreeing, nine disagreeing and six uncertain, thus rendering the median at 5.5).

The responses to the remaining statements generally elicited medians clustering between 4 and 6, or within the “uncertain” range. Were the Sonnets published in correct order? Twelve of twenty-eight persons said yes, but twelve were uncertain and four said no [Median = 6]. Are the Sonnets principally about politics and succession? Nine persons disagreed, ten were uncertain and seven agreed [Median = 5.7]. Do we (yet) know what the Sonnets are about? Twelve respondents said we do know, six said we don’t know, and (oddly) eight didn’t know if we know [Median = 4.6].

Was de Vere the “supervisor” of several authors who contributed to the Shakespeare Canon? Twelve said no, twelve were uncertain and six said yes [Median = 4.5]. Did Edward’s father, John, die of natural causes? Nine said yes, six said no, but thirteen were uncertain [Median = 5.7]. Was Edward de Vere the biological father of Anne Cecil’s child in 1576? Ten said yes, eight said no, and eight were uncertain [Median = 5.8]. Is Edward de Vere buried in Westminster Abbey? Eleven said yes, but eighteen were uncertain (interestingly, no one expressed actual disagreement) [Median = 5.3].

And finally, what about Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton? Was he the natural son of the Second Earl and his wife? Eleven respondents agreed, seven disagreed and seven were uncertain [Median = 5.2]. Was he the son of Queen Elizabeth? Seven said yes, twelve said no, and six were uncertain [Median = 4.5]. Was he the son of Edward de Vere? The son of de Vere and the Queen? The responses were the same, though the medians are slightly different [4 and 4.3, respectively] because some respondents circled different numbers within the “agree,” “disagree” or “uncertain” ranges. Were the dedications to Southampton in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* made for political reasons? Nine persons agreed, four disagreed and thirteen were uncertain [Median = 5.8]. Is he the “Mr. W. H.” to whom the Sonnets are dedicated? Twelve persons said yes, six said no and eight were uncertain [Median = 6].

Analysis

What are we to make of all this? It’s hard to say. I’m neither a professional pollster nor a statistician. Maybe a sample of thirty persons is too small to be meaningful, but I think it’s large enough, especially since it was a sample of Conference attendees, who for the most part are knowledgeable and committed Oxfordians.

One can hardly be surprised that the group most strongly agreed that Oxford is the principal author of the Shakespeare Canon, and that William Shakspeare of Stratford wrote no literary works. And I’m reassured that there is strong disagreement with the notion that the Sonnets aren’t “about” anything; I’ve always felt that the weakest explanation of the Sonnets was that they’re merely literary exercises.

I have to admit I’m a little surprised there was not stronger consensus on the notion of Shakspeare of Stratford as a literary front man; I had assumed that this idea had emerged, especially in the last 10-15 years, as the paradigm. But it scored only 6.7 out of a possible 9. Indeed, the notion that Oxford had a sexual relationship with the Queen – a proposition I thought would be

more controversial – scored higher (6.8) on the agreement scale. I was also surprised that so many people thought that Stratfordian academics secretly harbor doubt the Stratford man’s claim to authorship; if that’s true, the academics have done an awfully good job keeping quiet about it!

It is especially interesting that there is no real consensus about the Sonnets or about who Southampton really was. There was strong consensus that the principal story of the Sonnets is love and romance among real persons (7.8), somewhat less consensus that Southampton is the Fair Youth (7.3), but a lot of uncertainty about the identity of the Dark Lady, about whether the story of

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the Sonnets is about politics and succession, and even whether the poems are published in the correct order. As for Southampton, there is general agreement that Oxford played a key role in sparing his life after the Essex Rebellion (7.3), but uncertainty as to who Southampton’s parents were, as to whether he is “Mr. W. H.,” and as to whether the *Venus* and *Lucrece* dedications to him were made for political reasons.

To me, these results suggest that the strongest issues that Oxfordians need to address – among themselves and with outsiders – is whether, at its core, the Shakespeare Authorship Issue is primarily a literary mystery or is primarily a political and historical mystery. Only when that pivotal question is answered will Oxfordians be able to build the “convincing case” that to U. S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens is so necessary for the advancement of the cause.

Book Review

The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England, by Marcy L. North

University of Chicago Press, 2003, \$46

Reviewed by Richard M. Waugaman, M.D.

North's book promises to be a major weapon in undermining the legitimacy of Stratfordian authorship claims, even though she keeps a cautious distance from the authorship debate. She seems more interested in persuading us to tolerate the ambiguity of unattributed works than in trying to attribute them correctly to any specific author. Her book focusses on lyric poetry and on prose, not on plays. She calls anonymity "the familiar signature of the lyric poet" (24).

Oxfordians constantly hear the question, "Why would de Vere have used a pseudonym?" North's book suggests a clear answer: "Why *wouldn't* he?" Most early modern plays were published anonymously. As North puts it, "Anonymity's importance as a Renaissance convention... the frequency of its use, and especially its cultural meanings remain critically undervalued... Few early modern authors avoided anonymity entirely" (3). More than 800 authors from 1475-1640 are known to have published anonymously, in addition to all the pseudonymous and not yet identified works. North observes that even when an author's name is printed in a book, that name may still be "a fiction created by the author, that is subject to interpretation and that is unreliable historically" (19). Our understanding of anonymous authorship will never be the same again, after scholars digest and ponder the far-reaching implications of North's thoroughly documented and carefully reasoned book.

North traces early modern anonymous authorship to the medieval tradition out of which it grew. Intellectual history is riddled with misleading false dichotomies. North shows that there was more continuity from the Middle Ages to the

Renaissance than some historians have implied. I suspect that looking for such continuities in the works of Shakespeare will uncover further instances of de Vere's engagement with intellectual and religious tensions between contemporary and earlier viewpoints, including both classical and medieval ones.

Popular and scholarly support for the traditional Shakespeare unconsciously perpetuates one specific medieval as-

North offers a wealth of often overlapping motivations for the use of pseudonyms. One eventually wonders why intelligent scholars ever jumped to their now crumbling assumption about the authorship of Shakespeare's works. Take, for example, the words of Robert Burton, author of the semi-anonymous 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy*. He said he wrote under the name Democritus "to assume a little more liberty and freedom of speech" (7).

sumption about anonymous authorship: "authors were viewed as instruments of divine truth and as scribes for a divine author" (40). A highly respected psychoanalyst who adores Shakespeare told me,



only half facetiously, "It's clear that his works were written by God." We still deify Shakespeare, which is one of many reasons that non-Oxfordians have been slow to realize they have been worshipping a false god. The human scribes who wrote the Bible were simply taking divine dictation; on some level, people regard Shakespeare of Stratford as inspired by some divine literary Muse.

Readers will search North's book in vain for a simplistic answer to the question of why authors published anonymously or used pseudonyms. Instead, North offers a wealth of often overlapping motivations. One eventually wonders why intelligent scholars ever jumped to their now crumbling assumption about the authorship of Shakespeare's works. Take, for example, the words of Robert Burton, author of the semi-anonymous 1621 *Anatomy of Melancholy*. He said he wrote under the name Democritus "to assume a little more liberty and freedom of speech" (7). Pseudonyms often took the form Verb-hyphen-noun, such as Smell-knave, Tell-troth, and Marprelate (not to mention Shake-speare).

North makes the crucial observation that nature seems to abhor an authorship vacuum. Scholars of the early modern period lose interest in anonymous works. This leads them to correctly attribute, misattribute, or ignore them. "Much anonymous literature from the first two centuries of print has been assigned a conjectural author or forgotten... [A]nonymous texts

(Continued on page 24)

Hamlet and Much Ado About Nothing: The Keys to “Shakespeare

By Nora Fiore

The identity of “Shakespeare,” more elusive and enigmatic than any of the characters born of his genius, can be discovered only through analyzing his plays for the keys to the life of one of the greatest writers of all time. Treating two of Shakespeare’s most beloved pieces, *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, as historical documents, a discerning eye can reveal aspects of the playwright that are integral to understanding both the works and the man. From his unequivocal accuracy in describing the lives of the upper classes, Shakespeare betrays his high breeding and circulation within the royalty and nobility of the 1500s. One can deduce his tempestuous familial and romantic relationships from the troubled rapports of his conflicted, multi-faceted personages that, no doubt, reflect their creator. Yet, even beyond the broad strokes of his existence, the details of Shakespeare’s tastes emerge: his love of Italy, his musical predilections, his religious sympathies, and, most salient of all, his consuming passion for the theater. Within the frame of 16th century England, a complex portrait of Shakespeare can be painted based on the insights provided in *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

If an unbiased survey of *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* were to be performed, it would lead to the conclusion that Shakespeare was a high-born man who had access to the uppermost spheres of society. Both of these plays are concerned primarily with royal or noble characters: the court of Denmark and, to some extent, those of Norway and England in *Hamlet* and the entourage of Don Pedro of Aragon in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Furthermore, unlike many playwrights of his time, Shakespeare’s awareness of the customs and mannerisms of the noblesse is far more than superficial. For example, the protocol shown in Act I, Scene 2 of *Hamlet* is recounted clearly from the eyes of someone who had been a frequent observer in a royal court, watching petitioners and messengers deliver their speeches to the monarch. Additionally, the formal, ingratiating language with which Leonato addresses Don Pedro indicates that Shakespeare had considerable expertise in the gallantries befitting a gentleman of his time: “Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace, for trouble being gone, comfort should remain, but

when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave” (1.1.93-6).

Additionally, the courtly, romantic language of Hamlet towards Ophelia and Claudio towards Hero is a powerful indicator of a tradition found among the upper classes.

Perhaps there is no greater sign of Shakespeare’s experiences within high society than his insider’s disdain for it. When Rosencrantz, in *Hamlet*, asks the prince, “Take you me for a sponge, my lord?” the angered prince replies, “Ay, sir, that soaks up the King’s countenance, his rewards, his authorities” (4.2.14-

Perhaps there is no greater sign of Shakespeare’s experiences within high society than his insider’s disdain for it. When Rosencrantz, in *Hamlet*, asks the prince, “Take you me for a sponge, my lord?” the angered prince replies, “Ay, sir, that soaks up the King’s countenance, his rewards, his authorities” (4.2.14-16). This exchange, one of several similar in the play, convey Hamlet’s righteous disgust for the backstabbing and affected manners of the courts, a sentiment that pervades the play from Claudius’s unctuous but charismatic speeches to the decadence of the court’s nighttime carousals.

16). This exchange, one of several similar in the play, convey Hamlet’s righteous disgust for the backstabbing and affected manners of the courts, a sentiment that pervades the play from Claudius’s unctuous but charismatic speeches to the decadence of the court’s nighttime carousals. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, similar messages appear, largely through the manipulative, yet semi-noble Don John. Beatrice, too, rails against the hypocrisy of supposedly honest men who are able to destroy someone with

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(Keys, cont. from p. 21)

their prestige. Nevertheless, this common feeling is not the satire of the wealthy and well-to-do by a poor man, but rather takes on the flavor of Shakespeare's own occasional weariness of the circles in which he travels. However, if the two plays reveal Shakespeare as a product of the upper classes, he also had clearly spent time with the *hoi polloi*. Including the witty, yet earthy gravediggers in *Hamlet* and comical Dogberry and his troupe of men in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Shakespeare creates characters pulled from the masses who are vibrant and accurate, from their diction to their worldviews. Despite most likely having been from upper class society, Shakespeare also reveals his comfort with commoners.

Throughout *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare displays his wide literary knowledge with frequent references, both classical and contemporary. *Hamlet* is a play rich with allusions. For example, Prince Hamlet's "Like Niobe, all tears" (1.2.149), compares his mother to the mythic Greek figure transformed into a weeping stone and the great speech of the First Player relates to the Trojan War (II.2) and the body of literature concerning it. Similarly, when Benedick is exasperatedly attempting to write verses for Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, he speaks of "Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole book of these quondam carpetmongers" (5.2.30-2), adding a depth of education to the lover's frustrations. Thus, the true mark of Shakespeare's classical learning is not merely his demonstrated knowledge, but how he is able to apply his education to various scenes, both tragic and comic, each for a brilliant effect.

Shakespeare's characters display their creator's familiarity with books of his time, as well. For instance, Beatrice is angered upon finding herself accused of having stolen her witticisms from the *Hundred Merry Tales* (2.1.124). Hamlet, feigning madness, calls Polonius "Jephthah" and goes on to quote the popular ballad Jephthah, Judge of Israel in Act II, Scene 2. Within the two plays, Shakespeare amply reveals his fluency in the world of literature through many allusions that contribute to the overall scope the dra-

mas. Beyond Shakespeare's acquaintance with literature, his education in the scientific and cultural beliefs of his era is clearly discernable. Foremost among Shakespeare's metaphorical vocabulary are celestial descriptions. For example, Hamlet's verse to Ophelia, "Doubt thou the stars are fire,/Doubt thou the sun doth move" (2.2.115-6) betray that the

Perhaps one of Shakespeare's most vivid patriarchs, Polonius is ostensibly a slightly tottering but loving father, dispensing wise advice to his children in a speech that remains a model of guidance. Nevertheless, the resounding impression of Polonius is negative: he is not only a sycophant to royalty and unbearably dull, but he is also cruelly hypocritical. Despite telling Laertes "to thine own self be true," he hires Reynaldo to clandestinely gather information about his son's activities and represses Ophelia, first forbidding her love for Hamlet then using her as bait for the prince...The aged, controlling, and faithless father figure, recurrent in the two plays, hints at patriarchal issues in Shakespeare's experiences.

playwright had been schooled in Ptolemaic astronomy. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, a particularly humorous passage shows Shakespeare's multifaceted historical, geographical, and anthropological expertise as Benedick begs his prince to send him to "the Antipodes" or "Asia" or to fetch "the length of Prester John's foot" of "a hair off the Great Cham's beard" or to serve as an

ambassador to the "Pygmies" (2.1.250-5). Shakespeare as a naturalist comes across as well. Evidencing this are the Ghost's descriptions of "cursed hebenon" (1.5.62) as a poison and Ophelia's deranged ravings about herbs and their significances. Within *Much Ado About Nothing*, the author even uses his knowledge of plants, as well as Latin, to pun on the scientific name of holy thistle (*Carduus benedictus*) and the name Benedick. Finally, Shakespeare was also abreast of current events. This is shown in *Hamlet* when "The Murder of Gonzago," in fact, reflects the real killing of the Duke of Urbino in 1538. Through references in just two of Shakespeare's plays, one is able to recognize the diverse assortment of his knowledge and education.

The reader of *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* may analyze religious characters and passages to come to the conclusion that Shakespeare must have been a man of Catholic leanings. Possibly the most conclusively Catholic reference in all of the Shakespeare canon occurs in *Hamlet* through the personage of the ghost. Firstly, the supernatural elements in *Hamlet* tend to be in accordance with the Catholic worldview, as opposed to the more cynical, logical perspective represented by Horatio and Wittenberg, the birthplace of Luther's 95 theses. The ghost, furthermore, witnesses conclusively to the existence of purgatory when he declares, "I am.../ Doomed for a certain time to walk the night,/ And for the day confined to fast in fires,/ Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature/ Are burnt and purged away" (1.5.9-13).

While the Protestant philosophy argues that only faith and relatively good behavior are necessary for attainment of heaven, the world that Shakespeare creates demonstrates that such criteria are not enough. Rather, penance and certain sacraments are integral in avoiding the torments faced by the late King Hamlet. Pro-Catholic undercurrents exist also in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Apparent through the characterization of Friar Francis. The Friar is one of the most positively portrayed characters in the play, both innately likable and lacking, the hypocrisy often associated with religious figures. He is kind to Hero when even her father turns his back upon her and displays deft knowledge of human

nature and even a sense of humor, saying at Hero's wedding after her period of hiding, "I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death" (5.4.69). The two plays both betray Catholic sympathies in the philosophy of Shakespeare.

From the struggles related in the events of *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, the tumultuous relationships of Shakespeare's own life can be inferred. Some features of the plays suggest that Shakespeare may have had problems with his father or an authority figure. Firstly, conflicts caused by the absence of a father, as with Hamlet's uncle-father tension and his possible oedipal complex and with the disputed patrimony of Don Pedro and his bastard brother in *Much Ado About Nothing*. One of the most powerful images in both plays is that of the suffocating or hypocritical father figure. Perhaps one of Shakespeare's most vivid patriarchs, Polonius is ostensibly a slightly tottering but loving father, dispensing wise advice to his children in a speech that remains a model of guidance. Nevertheless, the resounding impression of Polonius is negative: he is not only a sycophant to royalty and unbearably dull, but he is also cruelly hypocritical. Despite telling Laertes "to thine own self be true," he hires Reynaldo to clandestinely gather information about his son's activities and represses Ophelia, first forbidding her love for Hamlet then using her as bait for the prince.

In some ways, Leonato, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, mirrors Polonius. Although he seems to be more caring about his daughter, Hero, than Polonius is about Ophelia, Leonato's violent outburst of rage against his slandered daughter shows that his relationship with Hero is often oppressive, as well. Although Leonato finally comes to believe his daughter innocent, he shows that he considers his daughter something of a puppet, as when he tells her in Act II, Scene 1 that, if Don Pedro "do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer" (62-3). The aged, controlling, and faithless father figure, recurrent in the two plays, hints at patriarchal issues in Shakespeare's experiences.

Another recurring motif in the two plays is that of women rejected for betrayals both real and imagined, hinting at tempestuous romantic involvements

within Shakespeare's personal history. Both plays contain scenes in which a man casts off or brutally scolds a woman close to him due to a perceived infidelity or disloyalty. In *Hamlet*, the famous "Get thee to a nunnery!" scene (Act III, Scene 1) shows Hamlet savagely breaking his ties with Ophelia for her part in trapping him. A similar scene, although less of a rejection

Finally, through attitudes towards women expressed in his plays, it seems extremely self-evident that Shakespeare was male. Although many of his female characters are sympathetic and realistic, there is little in his writing to suggest a feminine perspective from the playwright.

Furthermore, the way in which the audience seems to be set up to sympathize with leading male personages like Hamlet, in addition to the general writing style and content, indicate that Shakespeare was indeed a man. From many aspects of Shakespeare's writing, his personality, background, and knowledge base emerge to the discerning reader.

than a scolding, occurs when the Prince of Denmark brutally admonishes his mother for her perceived betrayal of the late King Hamlet. One of the central plot points of *Much Ado About Nothing* is Claudio's denunciation of Hero at their wedding for her alleged infidelity. The bitterness of these scenes and their ability to make

audiences cringe even today suggests that Shakespeare had experienced such situations in his own life. Additionally, both *Hamlet* and *Claudio*, while rejecting the women that they have some form of love for, tend to generalize and tirade about the fallen women in general or the evils of the feminine sex. Through the extremely potent rejection scenes in *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, readers can deduce that Shakespeare himself was probably involved in similar romantic circumstances.

Shakespeare, as a consummate actor and man of the theater, is revealed through the actions and speeches of the characters. Despite being a work concerning the machinations and troubles among a royal family, *Hamlet* is a work in which the characters do an unusual amount of "play acting." Hamlet feigns madness, both Ophelia and Gertrude attempt to maintain composure with men concealed behind tapestries, and Claudius hides his guilt for most of the play. Additionally, Shakespeare utilizes Hamlet as the ultimate mouthpiece for his own advice on the art of drama when the prince directs the players, "For anything so o'erdone is—from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold the mirror up to nature" (3.2.19-22).

Additionally, *Much Ado About Nothing*, while entirely genuine and filled with round characters, has a distinctly theatrical atmosphere in its plot devices. Furthermore, many of its majorly memorable moments take place in front of "audiences" within the play, such as the two wedding scenes. These spectators add to the potential dramatic impact; Hero's denunciation is all the more horrifying because of the shocked wedding party and Beatrice and Benedick's revelations of their love becomes more amusingly self-conscious due to the public present. *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* are inherently theatrical plays, with many classical features of 16th century works and much of the dramatic flair and panache of their creator.

Through readings of both plays, another aspect of Shakespeare that becomes clear is the fact that their author was not only incredibly well versed in writing, but

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(Keys, cont. from p. 23)

also was a man of considerable experience in both music and sport. In *Hamlet*, songs written by Shakespeare are used to great effect, from Hamlet's outburst of exultation, "Why let the stricken deer go weep" (II.2.265) to Ophelia's exquisitely tragic verses, to the Gravedigger's macabre ditty. *Much Ado About Nothing*, too, contains original songs which betray Shakespeare's expertise in lyrical verse, intended to be sung. The "Sigh no more, ladies," verses in Act II, Scene 3 stand in contrast in mood and meter to Claudio's mournful song to Hero's tomb, showing Shakespeare's facility for music. Shakespeare's knowledge of sports of his time period is also present in the plays. In *Hamlet*, the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes is a great example of how physical arts can be integrated into theater for maximum dramatic impact. Shakespeare's understanding of the rules of the game, although the match is not described at length, becomes clear to the reader as well. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, there are references to sports, too. For example, Benedick alludes to horsemanship when he quips, "I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer" (I.I.135-6). In both plays, different traits demonstrate special talents of the Bard for combining both music and competitive sports with the theater.

Other important facets of the playwright that can be gleaned from *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* are his sense of humor, his interest in Italy, and further proof of his gender. Shakespeare's writing includes many types of hilarity, from the pinnacle of intellectual wit to the most base of wordplay. Omnivorous in his appetite for jokes, the author ranges widely in *Hamlet*. For example, the prince's absurd wordplay with Polonius and his morbid description of how a king may go through the guts of a beggar are each darkly, and cerebrally comedic. Yet, Hamlet also has the capacity to be crude as with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern or when he says to Ophelia, "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?" or "Did you think I meant country matters?" (3.2.110-5). In *Much Ado About Nothing*, the phenomenon is the same, from the philosophically clever

arguments of Leonato with Antonio about Leonato's anguish to Beatrice's sexually suggestive puns in describing her ideal husband, "With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse" (II. 1.13-14).

Shakespeare shows an attention toward Italy with the references to Gonzago in *Hamlet* and the setting of *Much Ado*

Close analysis of just two of Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, reveals a multi-faceted portrait of the playwright. A member of the upper classes, as all evidence would suggest, he was at ease with the masses, as well. He had been well-educated in a staggering breadth of fields, from astronomy to botany, as his many allusions would indicate. The Bard, it can be inferred, had lived through turbulent familial struggles, probably with a domineering father figure, and most likely believed himself betrayed by a woman at some point in his life.

About Nothing. Finally, through attitudes toward women expressed in his plays, it seems self-evident that Shakespeare was male. Although many of his female characters are sympathetic and realistic, there is little in his writing to suggest a feminine perspective from the playwright.

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(Anonymous, cont. from p. 20)

from the period are [falsely viewed as] far inferior to those of known authors" (10-11).

North comments that E.K.'s epistle in Edmund Spenser's 1579 *The Shepheard's Calender* begins with the words "uncouth, unkissed." North does so in order to link these words with the "passive obscurity"(52) of anonymous authorship. Shakespeare is credited with coining some 314 words that begin with "un-"; in

North makes the crucial observation that nature seems to abhor an authorship vacuum.

Scholars of the early modern period lose interest in anonymous works. This leads them to correctly attribute, misattribute, or ignore them. "Much anonymous literature from the first two centuries of print has been assigned a conjectural author or forgotten..."

Anonymous texts from the period are [falsely viewed as] far inferior to those of known authors" (10-11).

his letters, de Vere seems to have coined "unacquaint," "underage," and "unsettled." E.K.'s epistle coined the word "unstayed" 11 years before the first use noted in the OED. E.K. also coined "unheedie" in his gloss of a subsequent poem later in the book. In the epistle, E.K. coined two additional words: *scholion* and *quidam*. Such word usage and coining link E.K. with Shakespeare/de Vere. Mike Hyde (2009) recently reviewed previous evidence supporting the identification of E.K. as de Vere. North inadvertently draws attention to further data that support this attribution.

North titles her second chapter "Ignoto and the Book Industry." Her title alludes to the fascinating story that two

poems in the 1600 *England's Helicon* were initially attributed to Walter Raleigh and Fulke Greville, respectively; but cancel slips were glued over each name, replacing them with "Ignoto." Once more, North innocently draws attention to that pseudonym, which I believe was de Vere's alone.

The full story of Ignoto has never been told. "Ignoto" is Latin (and Italian) for "unknown." Before 1590, Early English Books Online (EEBO) lists its use in English exclusively in the phrase "Ignoto Deo," from the book of Acts in the New Testament. St. Paul said the Athenians had statues dedicated to their various gods, and one statue dedicated "to the unknown God," or "Ignoto Deo." Now, what Elizabethan author had the hubris to quote God's "I am that I am" in a letter and in a sonnet? Perhaps the same author who identified himself with "the unknown God" in one of his pseudonyms.

In 1590, Edmund Spenser's third dedicatory sonnet in *The Faerie Queene* was addressed to the Earl of Oxford. It included a reference to "Envy's poisonous bite." (The Latin proverb "Virtutis comes invidia" taught that "Envy is the companion of excellence.") Similarly, one of the prior commendatory poems refers to "a mind with envy fraught" and to "free my mind from envy's touch." That poem is signed "Ignoto." This was the *first* use of the pseudonym Ignoto.

In 1589, *The Arte of English Poesie* was published anonymously. I have argued (seminar paper at Shakespeare Association of America, April 9, 2009) that the author was none other than de Vere. In 1591, on the second page of the preface to his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando*, Sir John Harington wrote of the author of the *Arte* as 'that unknown Godfather... our Ignoto.' Was Harington implying that the same person wrote the *Arte* and the dedicatory poem to *The Faerie Queene*? Indeed, I believe he was.

On the preceding page, Harington writes:

'I must arm myself with the best defensive weapons I can, and if I happen to give a blow now and then in mine own defense, and as good fencers use to ward and strike at once, I must crave pardon of course, seeing our law allows that it is done *se defendo*.'

Why this fencing trope? I suspect this was a transparent allusion to one of the most lurid of the many scandals that marked de Vere's notorious life. While living as William Cecil's ward, de Vere killed an under-cook with his fencing sword in 1567, at the age of 17. He would have been executed for this capital offense if he had been found guilty. The future Lord Burghley assisted in his legal defense, which led to de Vere being found innocent. The patently absurd legal outcome was that

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the under-cook was found to have been trying to commit suicide with de Vere's sword. The record stated that de Vere was acting in self-defense: *se defendo*. This was not a common phrase in literary works. In fact, Harington's use of it in the above quotation is the first one cited in EEBO. And the phrase 'se offendendo' in the discussion of Ophelia's death, in *Hamlet* 5.1.9 has been linked by Oxfordians with the same story.

North cites Ruth Hughey's belief that Sir John Harington had "inside information about Oxford's authorship" (178) of one poem in the commonplace book of poems known as the Arundel Harington Manuscript. I suspect Harington similarly

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had inside information about de Vere's authorship of the *Arte*, and his identity as E.K. as well. Harington's fencing reference seems to be a snide *ad hominem* allusion to de Vere's past scandals, in preparation for comparing the *Arte* unfavorably with Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poetry*. The fact that Harington favors Sidney over the *Arte* is consistent with Harington knowing de Vere wrote the *Arte*, since de Vere's longstanding feud with Sidney would have polarized their associates. Sidney's engagement with Burghley's daughter was broken when Burghley found a more promising match in his ward de Vere. Years later, Sidney and de Vere had their famous tennis court quarrel.

In Harington's 1596 *An Apologie*, he again speaks of "this ignoto." Two pages later, he mentions Richard III. Four pages after that, he cites "the rules of taming a shrew." Three pages later, he writes of riding "like a hotspurre." I wonder if Harington was hinting that he knew about the Shakespearean plays that Ignoto was writing.

There are only 16 poems Elizabethan poems signed "Ignoto"; an additional four were published in 1614. J. Thomas Looney was the first to attribute the Ignoto poems in *England's Helicon* to de Vere. Hyder Rollins attributes four poems from the 1614 second edition of *England's Helicon* to Ignoto. One of these 1614 poems has a direct connection with de Vere. It is the poems titled "The Shepherds Slumber." The 1585-90 Harleian Manuscript has been called the most extensive surviving anthology of Elizabethan courtier verse. Its number 7392, folio 51, has a 28-line earlier version of "The Shepherds Slumber" that is signed "L ox." which, as Rollins acknowledges, referred to "Lord Oxford." This is crucial archival evidence supporting the hypothesis that Ignoto and de Vere were one and the same poet.

Bendnarz (2007) recently drew attention to the fact that two poems signed "W. Shakespeare" in the 1599 *Passionate Pilgrim* were re-attributed to "Ignoto" in the 1600 *England's Helicon* as "The unknown Sheapheerds complaint" and "Another of the same Sheepheard." So, in this case, there is a first link between "Shakespeare" and "Ignoto."

Two further examples of Ignoto poems in the 1601 *Loves Martyr* may be crucial in linking Ignoto, de Vere, and "Shakespeare." The six-line poem 'The first' is printed above the eight-line poem 'The Burning.' Below the second poem is the subscription (or signature) "Ignoto." What follows on the next three pages is the poem "Let the bird of loudest lay" (also known as "The Phoenix and the Turtle"). It lacks a title—only its last section has a title ("Threnos"). It is signed "Shake-speare." This sequence of 1601 poems seems to signal that Ignoto and Shake-speare are one and the same person. If so, the many references to two becoming one in "Let the bird of loudest lay" would refer, among other things, to these two pseudonyms that de Vere used. There are some 14 key words in these two Ignoto poems that are also used in the "Shake-speare" poem, further linking them together.

North mentions de Vere when she notes that his presence in the 1591 *Brittons Bowre of Delights* as "E. of Ox.," among "the scarcity of other ascriptions makes the Earl of Oxford's contribution seem especially important" (72). She writes that such initials "combine the best of identity and discretion" (72); such initials

"seem poised between naming and anonymity, gesturing to but not completing the identification process" (73). North says that de Vere's father-in-law, Lord Burghley, is known to have published propaganda anonymously.

In her 1999 article on the *Arte*, North names de Vere as one of the Elizabethan poets whose attributed work is so scarce because of "the courtiers' fashion of limiting readership through close manuscript circulation" (8). She next notes that "Whether poems are extant or common today is hardly an accurate measure of their effectiveness in early court circles" (8). This conclusion is consistent with the high esteem in which de Vere's contemporaries held his poetry, plays and interludes, despite the paucity of the former and the absence of the latter in what has survived under his name.

If de Vere's contemporaries knew of his authorship, would they not have identified him in the historical record? North addresses this question indirectly in speculating that some Elizabethan compilers of anonymous poetry, such as John Lilliat, knew the identity of an anonymous poet, but chose to respect that anonymity rather than violate it.

There is a story about a man who reacted with great humility to any recognition he received. A friend rebuked him acerbically-- "You're not important enough to be humble." Similarly, North explains that only courtiers who were "important enough" could succeed with the ploy of anonymous authorship. She (1999) writes of anonymity's "double-edged function as concealer and revealer, its potential to lead to fame or to obscurity," and she links this with "the *Arte*'s ambiguous depiction of anonymity as a mark of social status, one that paradoxically must be visible in order to be effective" (2). She feels certain that the anonymous author takes pleasure from the intricacies of the revelation of concealed names. He "works by the assumption that devices which alter or conceal a name say more about the historical person, not less... The disguising of the name points to an identity which is potentially more revealing than a proper name" (13).

Oxfordians are in North's debt for her scholarly exploration of Elizabethan anonymity, including that of our Ignoto. If only she had been willing to address "Shake-speare" as the most famous example of her topic!

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(Plutarch, cont. from p. 11)

ity to make powerful enemies, and he was assassinated on orders of Lysander. His relationship with Timon was reported thus in North's Plutarch: "Timon, surnamed Misanthropos went straight to him (Alcibiades) and took his hand, and said: 'O, thou dost well my Son, I can thee thank, that thou goest on, and climbest up still: for if ever thou be in authority, wo be unto those that follow thee, for they are utterly undone.' When they heard these words, those that stood by fell to laughing, others reviled Timon." Alcibiades, like Cleon, was attacked by the comic playwright Eupolis, and also appears as a fictional character several of Plato's dialogues.

Apemantus is mentioned in Plutarch as Timon's only companion, "who was of the same sort of temper, and was an imitator of Timon's way of life." In Shakespeare, Apemantus is depicted as a churlish, misanthropic philosopher who insults his generous host and has several witty exchanges with the rich Timon. He argues that mankind is ultimately untrustworthy, and that Timon's friends care only about their patron's money. Later, when Timon has withdrawn to his cave, Apemantus visits him to accuse Timon of copying the philosopher's ideals.

Timon was a renowned misanthrope; Plutarch's description of him in the 'Life of Antony' fits Shakespeare's character well: "This Timon was a citizen of Athens, and lived much about the Peloponnesian war, as may be seen in the comedies of Aristophanes and Plato, in which he is ridiculed as hater and enemy of mankind. He avoided and repelled the approaches of everyone, but embraced with kisses and the greatest show of affection Alcibiades, then in his hot youth. And when Apemantus was astonished, and demanded the reason, he replied that he knew this young man would one day do infinite mischief to the Athenians." In Timon's only speech to the assembly reported by Plutarch, he says: "Ye men of Athens, I have a little plot of ground, and in it grows a fig tree, on

which many citizens have been pleased to hang themselves; and now, having resolved to build in that place, I wish to announce it publicly, that any of you who may be desirous may go and hang yourselves before I cut it down."

Lucullus may have served for the model for the character of Timon in Act I. Plutarch reports that "almost all Asia regarded him as their savior from the intolerable miseries which they were suffering from Roman money lenders and revenue farmers." Lucullus retired early to seek a life of epicurean pleasure, for which he was ridiculed by Crassus and Pompey. He was called "Xerxes in a gown" by the Stoics and provided elaborate amusements at his sumptuous villas with their gardens, baths, sculptures, and exquisite art. Lucullus was fluent in both Greek and Latin and incurred great expense collecting books.

Latin Character Names: According to Shakespeare editor H.J. Oliver, "From...North's *Lives*, Shakespeare seems to have remembered most of the Latin names, which somewhat incongruously, he gives to the Athenians in Timon. The names Ventidius, Flavius and Philotus occur in the 'Life of Antony'; Lucilius, Servilius and Hortensius in the 'Life of Brutus'. Varro, Lucullus, Flaminius, Sempronius and Caphis the playwright chose elsewhere in *Lives*."

Conclusion

Shakespeare effectively historicized his fictional characters in a number of his dramas by selecting famous names from *Plutarch's Lives* and other ancient sources. His knowledge of Plutarch's tome was phenomenal, and his nomenclature adoptions have been a largely unrecognized aspect of Shakespeare's debt to the Greek historian's writings. According to T.J.B. Spencer, *Plutarch's Lives* was the playwright's most serious undertaking "of

(Continued on p. 28)

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(Plutarch, cont. from p. 27)

a bookish kind,” and in his nomenclature he was no less adept in using *Lives* than in his development of plot and characterization recognized by numerous scholars. Shakespeare editors over the past 100 years have largely failed to recognize how subtle and almost universally appropriate these historic personalities fit our playwright’s fictional characters.

For Oxfordians, Shakespeare’s extensive Plutarchian nomenclature should come as no surprise, but serve rather as yet another piece of evidence pointing to an author who is brilliantly and self-consciously literary, weaving a complex web of historic and mythic personalities into his Greek dramas. The Earl of Oxford purchased Amyot’s French translation of *Plutarch’s Lives* in 1569 and William Cecil’s library held three different continental editions of *Plutarch’s Lives*, including two Latin ones. Plutarch would likely have been a lifelong interest of Edward de Vere’s, given his classical education and numerous literary dedications. That Shakespeare loved Greek literature is confirmed by his use of Greek character names adapted from Plutarch in historicizing his dramas. One could call this theory “old historicism” but it seems to be our playwright’s prerogative.

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(Shakespeare’s Shoe, cont. from p. 3)

what they seem.” Richmond Crinkley, writing in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1985, diagnosed the predicate of Shermer’s belief as a “bizarre mutant racism”

(518), proceeding from the premise that anti-Stratfordians are “lesser breeds before the law” (518). These unfortunates, in Shermer’s breezy and condescending synopsis of the last twenty-five years, are now “back again.” He has not read them. He does not understand them. But he’ll be happy to tell you all about it.

In his review of Charlton Ogburn’s *Mysterious William Shakespeare* (1984) Crinkley, then Director of Educational Programs at the Folger Shakespeare Library, commented that “if the intellectual standards of Shakespeare scholarship quoted in such embarrassing abundance by Mr. Ogburn are representative, then it is not just authorship about which we have to worried.”

Regrettably, Mr. Shermer’s August *Scientific American* editorial proves, 25 years after Mr. Ogburn’s book, that the “powers that be,” still have not learned the lesson of Mr. Crinkley’s critique. Shakespeare’s shoe is still missing. Stratford-upon-Avon is still the birthplace of the Great and Powerful Wizard of Stratford. And that little man you see behind the curtain is not Michael Shermer. He’s much taller than that.

— Ed

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