



# The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter



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Membership Renewal 2013  
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## Hamill and Regnier Call for Unity

To: Members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship.

From: John Hamill and Tom Regnier, Presidents, SOS and SF.

As you probably know, the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship are the leading Oxfordian organizations in the United States. For eight years, the two groups have held joint annual conferences on the Shakespeare authorship question, with an emphasis on the candidacy of Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, as the true author. Because the missions of the two groups are so closely aligned, we have often considered whether we should join forces as a single organization, dedicated to spreading the Oxfordian message in the U.S. and beyond. This year, we have had a series of talks about unifying the two groups. We discussed the differences we would have to overcome to create a single Oxfordian group in the U.S. After much discussion, we found that our differences could be reconciled. We drew up a "Notice of Intent" (see page 2), which is a non-binding guideline of how we would accomplish unification.

The Notice of Intent has been approved by the Boards of Trustees of both the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship. We believe that the two groups can work more efficiently and harmoniously as one group. Both Boards recommend the name "Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship" as the name of the new organization. The new name is meant to pay tribute to the two groups from which the new organization springs by combining their names. (Members are welcome, however, to suggest other names.) A great deal still has to be done before unification is finalized. First of all, we want to hear the responses from you, our members. Please read the Notice of Intent (page 2) and share with us your comments, suggestions, reservations, and your objections, if any. Before unification can be final, we have to work out a more detailed Plan of Unification and have a final vote by our members. We will need a two-thirds majority from the memberships of both organizations for unification to take place. Your input is important at this time because we want to accomplish it in a way that will best serve the needs of our members.

Please send your comments promptly to either John Hamill, hamillx@pacbell.net, or Tom Regnier, thomas.regnier@gmail.com.

## SOS and SF Propose Unity

### NOTICE OF INTENT

This is a Notice of Intent (NOI) between the Shakespeare Oxford Society (“SOS”) and the Shakespeare Fellowship (“SF”) to unify into a single entity. This is not a binding agreement, but only a notice of general intent and a broad outline of the means of unification. The organizations expect to produce a more detailed and binding final agreement, a Plan of Unification (POU), approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT) and memberships of each organization, which will more fully delineate the details before unification becomes final.

The reasons for the unification of our two organizations are many. One overriding motivation is to save costs from duplication of efforts so that the unified organization can devote more resources to promote research and outreach. Also, since the two organizations share the same Oxfordian goal, the existence of two organizations is confusing to potential recruits and wasteful of effort. In a hostile Stratfordian world, since nothing divides us, we would do better to stand together.

The steps for unification will be accomplished by the SOS filing a “Doing Business As” (DBA) – [new operational name], a proposed POU approved by the BOT of each organization, and the SF will thereafter dissolve. At present, the organizations agree that unification will occur under the following circumstances:

1. The unified organization will be called by a new operational name, “Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship” (“SOF”), unless the memberships of both organizations approve another operational name. The name, “Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship,” is meant to pay tribute to the two organizations from which the new organization springs, knowing that the word “Fellowship” has a distinguished pedigree in the Oxfordian movement and that the original Shakespeare Fellowship in England boasted Thomas Looney and George Greenwood as officers and that the American branch had Dr. Louis P. Benezet and Eva Turner Clark.

We also believe that the word “fellowship,” defined as “a group of people meeting to pursue a shared interest or aim,” describes the kind of group we hope to have. The unified organization will retain the SOS articles of incorporation and its corporate name for purposes of the 501 (c)(3) non-profit tax status, but will register a “DBA” (“Doing Business As”) for the “Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship,” or whatever name the members shall prefer.

The SOS will make a separate filing of a “DBA” certificate so it can operate under a different name. (For example: Daimler-Benz ‘DBA’: Mercedes Benz, Federated Department Stores ‘DBA’: Macy’s, Deutsche Telekom ‘DBA’: T-Mobile.) The unified organization would be SOS, Inc., DBA the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship.

2. This Notice of Intent, after approval by the BOTs of the SOS and SF, will be published to the memberships of both groups by mail, email, newsletter, and/or website publication so that the members may make comments, suggestions, or objections regarding the general plan as outlined in the NOI. Once the POU is finalized and approved by the BOTs of the SOS and SF, the members of each organization will be asked to approve the POU by mail ballot, which approval by 2/3 majority vote of each voting membership shall be necessary to finalize the unification.

Members of the SOS and SF at the time of unification will automatically become members of the SOF. The renewal dates and dues of their memberships will be determined by the POU, on a common annual basis. Every effort will be made to keep dues at or near their current level. The SF will satisfy or provide for the payment of all of its liabilities and then transfer to the SOF all of its net assets, including cash balances, tangible assets, intellectual property, etc.

3. The SOF will publish a single newsletter, and to the extent possible the newsletter will be published quarterly. The editor(s) of the newsletter will be chosen by the BOT and will work “at will.” Should the new bylaws provide for a Publications Committee, the Chair of the Committee may make suggestions to the editors, but

the editors will have final say on editorial matters.

4. The SOF will publish both of the scholarly journals currently published by the SOS and SF, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*. *The Oxfordian* will continue to be published once a year in hard copy and be sent free to full members. *Brief*

*Chronicles* will remain a free online journal accessible to all. The current editors of the two journals will remain as they are at present and will work “at will.” The editors will be compensated, and the budget for editors’ salaries will be the same for *The Oxfordian* as for *Brief Chronicles*. Future journal editors will be chosen by the BOT and will work “at will.” Should the new bylaws provide for a Publications Committee, the Chair of the Committee may make suggestions to the editors, but the editors will have final say on editorial matters.

5. The POU will present a balanced budget and revenues that identify specific ways to substantially reduce administrative expenses and enhance funding for research, publications, website support, and educational programs. The POU will show that the operations of each of SF and SOS generate sufficient funds to cover its ex-

penses, and that the BOT of the unified organization will ensure that it will have enough funding to meet its annual financial obligations.

6. The POU will present a new set of bylaws for the unified organization. A committee of members from the SF and SOS will examine the bylaws of the two groups and decide which

bylaws of either group have been most workable and may also offer suggestions for new bylaws. These bylaws will be attached to the POU as an exhibit and will be subject to the approval of the members of both organizations. Assuming that the SOS and SF BOTs approve the bylaws changes, the new bylaws will take effect when the BOT of the SOF assumes control of the unified organization.

7. Once unification takes place, and until the next general membership meeting in 2014, the unified organization will be managed by a board of trustees identified in the POU. The POU will identify a new BOT with an odd number of members (probably nine), with the current SOS and SF Boards appointing the members. The

SOS will appoint one member more than the SF. The new bylaws, identified in the POU, will set forth the offices. The POU will identify by name who will be president and serve as officers. The list of these board members and office holders must be approved by the current BOTs of both

**Key Provisions**

- The unified organization will be called the *Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship* (SOF).
- The SOF will retain the SOS articles of incorporation and its corporate name for purposes of the 501(c)(3) non-profit tax status, but will register DBA the “Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship,”
- Members of each organization will be asked to approve a Plan of Unification (POU) by mail ballot, a 2/3 majority of each voting membership being necessary to finalize the unification.
- The SOF will publish a single quarterly newsletter, the annual *Oxfordian* and the online *Brief Chronicles*.
- The SF website will become the website for the unified organization.
- The POU will present a balanced budget and identify ways to reduce expenses and enhance funding for research, publications, website support, and educational programs.
- The POU will propose a new set of bylaws.
- Until the AGM 2014, the SOF will be managed by a BOT with an odd number of members. The SOS will appoint one member more than the SF.
- The POU will identify by name the SOF president and officers. These must be approved by the current BOTs of both organizations.

organizations. The new bylaws will identify the process by which the membership will elect BOT members and officers after the first year.

8. Once the POU (including operational name change) is approved by both BOTs and the memberships of both organizations, and (1) the SOS has received a certificate or date-stamped copy of the DBA filed with appropriate New York authorities setting forth the operational name of the unified organization agreed to by the memberships, and (2) SF has filed articles of dissolution and begun the dissolution process in good faith, then the unification will take place either at the 2013 joint conference in Toronto (currently scheduled for October 17-20), or, if all the aforementioned preconditions have not been met at that time, at an appropriate date in 2013 or 2014, which date shall be approved by the BOTs of the SOS and SF. At that time, the new BOT and officers will assume control of the unified organization.

9. The SF website, which the SF plans to upgrade in 2013, will become the website for the unified organization. Content from the current SOS website will be made available on the unified organization's website in such a way as to be easily searchable by members and others interested in the Shakespeare Authorship Question. The current URLs of the SOS and SF will be programmed to redirect to the unified organization website. The current SOS Facebook page will become the SOF Facebook page. The unified organization will take steps to hire a part-time, compensated webmaster, who will manage and coordinate the website, the Facebook page, and any other social media that the organization may utilize.

*John Hamill*

President, Shakespeare Oxford Society

*Tom Regnier*

President, Shakespeare Fellowship

**Agreed upon by the Boards of Trustees of the SOS and SF and signed by the Presidents of the two organizations, 18 March 2013.**

## Historic Unification Conference Book for Toronto Now!

*Richard Joyrich*

**T**he Ninth Annual Joint SOS/SF Conference will be held in Toronto, Ontario, October 17-20, 2013. The conference is supported by the Theatre and Drama Departments of York University and the University of Guelph.

The conference site is the Metropolitan Hotel, located in the heart of downtown Toronto and within walking distance of all major tourist attractions, shopping and restaurant areas. The hotel rate (which will be available up to three days before and after the conference) is \$135/night. You can book by calling 800-668-6600 or by email [reservations@tor.metropolitan.com](mailto:reservations@tor.metropolitan.com) and mentioning Reservation ID 269-931.

Alternatively, just mention the Shakespeare Oxford Society or the Shakespeare Fellowship.



The conference program is still in the planning stage, but it will include a public debate on the authorship question, the showing of at least one new film on the authorship question, and the opportunity for a group trip to Stratford, Ontario, to see Tony Award-winning actor Brian Bedford in *The Merchant of Venice* at the internationally acclaimed Stratford Shakespeare Festival. For further details, see page 13.

This will be the second time we have held an Authorship Conference in Canada (we were in Stratford in 2000). It will be a wonderful opportunity for everyone. Don't forget your passport!



## Newsletter Stifles Debate!

Dear Editor:

Your editorial, "Time to Catch our Breath" (Winter 2013), is well intended to be a way of advancing the notion that Oxford is the author known as "William Shakespeare." Yet your advice that Oxfordians close ranks and stop the Prince Tudor arguments is both naïve, misdirected and will not move any Stratfordian one millimeter closer to acknowledging that Oxford is the Author. Moreover, your plea is more or less an attempt to stifle debate, stop free inquiry and stifle those supporting the Prince Tudor theory.

### Stratfordians are Greedy Leftists

Stratfordians have a large financial stake in the man from Stratford position including academic careers that have staked their reputation on the Stratford man and the mother lode of money that comes into Stratford-on-Avon and various Stratfordian enterprises. Further, those supporting the man from Stratford are almost to a person left-wing egalitarians. The man from Stratford is their ideal proletarian hero, the untutored genius who could know the inside of the Elizabethan court through the magic of creative genius. It has been and continues to be foolish to think that they are going to change their opinions one iota if PT theory disappeared tomorrow.

Sir, you also seem to be completely unaware that the idea that it is not "politic" to advance the idea that either Oxford had a child with Elizabeth or that Oxford was the son of Elizabeth has been advocated for years. When I began my research in 1998, the stalwart Oxfordians maintained not that it could not be true that Oxford was the son of the Queen, but that it should not be published even though it might be true. This is the stifling of academic freedom.

There have been four paradigm-smashing advances in Oxfordian theory. The first was

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Delia Bacon's, who advanced the notion that the works were created inside the castle walls, not from without. The second was J. Thomas Looney's discovery of the Earl of the Oxford as the author. The third was Charlton and Betty Ogburn's assertion that Oxford and Elizabeth had a son (PT I). And the fourth is my assertion that the question is not "Who was Shakespeare?" but "Who was Oxford?" The answer to that is "the son of the Queen." (PT 2).

Paradigms don't end because the old guard switches sides. As Max Planck noted, "Old physicists don't change their theories. They die first." This is equally true of Oxfordians as they cling to the ancient notion of Oxford as the son of John de Vere. Rather, old theories die because they are no longer as useful as the new theory. The orthodox "noble Earl of Oxford" theory works very well in proving that he was Shakespeare, but it gets one only that far. So, if Oxfordians want to continue to pile more rocks of evidence upon the mountain of evidence that Oxford is Shakespeare, they can continue to do so under this theory.

However, the orthodox theory does not get one very far in explaining the history of the period or giving any insight into the motivation of the author in writing the works. It doesn't explain why Shakespeare always writes as the Prince, King or Heir Apparent and is never concerned with the likes of the lower levels of the English aristocracy.

### Historical Conundrums

Neither does it explain very well many of the conundrums of English history. For example, why was Essex so easily accepted as a possible king? And why was he executed but not Southampton? PT theory provides plausible answers to these questions. Just as in medicine with the germ theory, plate tectonics with continental drift, and atomic theory with a probabilistic atomic world, the more adventurous spirits forge ahead and the old guard is left behind.

The additional question is what are the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship about anyway? Are they public relations and advocacy organizations for a particular point of view? Or are they scholarship organizations investigating the authorship issue open to all points of view? Your editorial is advocating they are public relations organiza-

tions responsible for presenting Oxford in the best possible light to persuade non-believing Stratfordians.

As I stated above, that is impossible and further the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition is well prepared and dedicated to the cause of changing minds.

### PT Rules!

Or perhaps Oxfordians might close ranks and admit that PT Rules and the notion of Oxford as the son of John de Vere is dead. Or at least no one is defending it. Rather they are simply saying, "I don't believe in PT," but they are not saying that the evidence for John de Vere as father is better or more convincing. They are just digging in their heels for the old order.

Quite frankly my dear, who cares what they think?

Sir, you may be well intentioned to advance the notion of Oxford as Shakespeare, but you considerably miss the mark when you do this by attempting to stifle debate and free inquiry.

*Paul Streitz*

Author, *Oxford: Son of Queen Elizabeth I*

### Streitz Opposed PT on Phaeton

Dear Editor:

**T**hanks for taking a stand against PT. Paul Streitz is clearly wrong when he says:

When I began my research in 1998, the stalwart Oxfordians maintained not that it could not be true that Oxford was the son of the Queen, but that it should not be published even though it might be true.

Paul Streitz was on Phaeton when I investigated the PT claims over a two-year period, and examined every piece of "evidence" PT theorists put forward, and established that there was nothing to any of the alleged "evidence," and that the PT theory was a belief, not a theory supported by a scintilla of actual evidence.

For most of that time, Paul Streitz was strongly against PT on Phaeton. Then he somehow got involved with Betty Sears and

Hank Whittlemore, and suddenly all three were jointly promoting PT.

He seems to have either forgotten these facts, or is deliberately misrepresenting them. I still have the emails on my home computer.

*Nina Green*

## Streitz Not Prepared for Debate

Dear Editor:

In your Winter 2012 book review section you came out in favor of Pointon's excellent approach, criticized me for adopting a sub-PT approach when I suggested that Oxford was Southampton's father, and then praised Katherine Chiljan's PT section in her book.

In my own defense, my records show that I was corresponding with Mark Anderson in 2000 and Ron Hess in 2002, and had a long discussion with Sir Ian McGeoch before he presented his paper to the DVS in 2005.

I take the view that Oxford's paternal relationship to Southampton explains the tone of the sonnets in a way that is not matched for effectiveness by any other version.

Certainly Streitz is clearly not prepared to meet any of the "orthodox" Oxfordian arguments (my book p. 269 n. 30).

*Richard Malim*

## Shuttleworth Commends Editorial

Dear Editor:

I am delighted with your editorial, "Time to Catch our Breath." Certainly the PT proponents have a right to theorize, but without a shred of evidence their theory remains only speculation and, I believe a destructive theory at that. Given the realities of the court, the closeness with which Elizabeth was observed, the diary and letter-writing proclivities of the age, the political and religious pressures she faced, the probabilities of PT 1 or 2 shrink to insignificance. At least with the Oxfordian argument, significant evidence, however circumstantial,

makes for a strong, persuasive case for the Earl's authorship. No such buttressing evidence seems to me to support the PTers. In my view, they have done a real disservice to the fundamental argument for de Vere.

Thank you for taking such a stance, even knowing you will incur some wrathful responses.

*Jack M. Shuttleworth, Ph. D*  
Professor of English, Emeritus  
United States Air Force Academy  
Long-time Oxfordian

## Shakespeare the Narcissist

Dear Editor:

For many years after my research into *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, I put my thoughts together in a book which I did not publish. The simple reason was that while the plot was clear to me, I had to know why after four hundred years nobody had figured out what I had, that Shakespeare's poems were written by a very clever young man talking to his own Image in his own perfect pool, his mirror, just as if he were a new Narcissus out of Ovid. And true to his creativity, he added a new ripple in the pool, his dark lady, *The Passionate Pilgrim* from Paradise, the fickle maid of *A Lover's Complaint*.

There it is, and there they are, all the characters of the sonnets, under the direction of the bard, playing the young man, who gave life to his young heir in the mirror, the alter ego, and both tricked by the machinations of a very jealous "fickle maid," the Mighty Muse of *A Lover's Complaint* and the *Sonnets*. All of them gave each other their hearts, their passion, all of them reacting jealously, from broken love affairs.

To put it plainly, the bard loved a woman, sexually, the Muse of Tragedy, (as he did all the girls). She told us in *A Lover's Complaint* that "sorrow had power over her" (74) and he told us that he was a very young man who had not yet started to shave, "small show of man was yet upon his chin" (92). The same age as Narcissus.



This young Narcissus was also in love with himself, (the goddess Nemesis punished him for his self-love) which should be enough for anyone who knows the story to realize that there is no bisexuality involved, if a man is in love with himself. There's the rub, no pun intended. It is a complete mystery to me why others, including yourself, repeat what no one has yet understood all these years. I know that if those who have not made a study of all the poetry in *The Book Known As Q*, they will not know the meaning of "A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass." (Sonnet 5.10)

I was shocked to see that you wrote the following very ambiguous, negative sentence in the *Winter 2013 Newsletter*, about the *Sonnets*:

The idea that most of them are not about deep passion, jealousy, the author's manifest bisexuality and related musings on Time itself is, in my view, simply insupportable. This is not of course an unconventional position—most readers agree.

I think you should have made a more positive statement of your belief of what they do say. I hope this brief note will change your mind, or at least read what I hope will set your outlook on the straight path to Oxfordianism, and realize that the Bard was the 17th Earl of Oxford, he gave birth to his heir, his alter ego in the 18th sonnet's couplet.

But there is no mention of Oxford, or Southampton, just about the son of the river god, Cephissus and the naiad, Liriope, Lord Narcissus, called *Will*, who fools around with aristocratic women. They can reward him with "The Diamond," as the fickle maid tells us in *A Lover's Complaint*, "why 'twas beautifull and hard," (211)—speaking of needing evidence.

As far as I am concerned, those who read the *Sonnets* and count words don't count because they don't understand, and never see or respond to what has been written in the poetry. For instance, do those counters know that an earl is the equivalent of a count who has a Countess for a wife. What, Earless, deaf?

Shakespeare is still waiting for them to get all the punch lines. And I am poking their ribs.

Here's just a few of them, and there are plenty, everywhere, but, unfortunately, some only see, humbuggery.

If thou couldst answer this fair child of mine  
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse  
Proving his beauty by succession thine.

—Sonnet 2, 10-12

or the subtlety of

Me thinks no face so gracious is as mine,  
No shape so true, no truth of such account.

—Sonnet 62, 5-6

Take it from there. I know from your love

of the Bard and logic, you will understand what is needed to save Oxfordianism, the truth about the

***We have got to get rid of the Southampton homoeroticism that's crippling us.***

*Sonnets*. Something Mr. Looney would appreciate, if I could only tell him, is that instead of agreeing with the "authorities" thus,

In our conclusion that these *Sonnets* were addressed to Southampton, we have the full support of the great majority of authorities on the subject.

—T. J. Looney, *Shakespeare Identified*, p 374.

We have got to get rid of the Southampton homoeroticism that's crippling us. I hope that this will help. Give us your best to do it.

*Sid Lubow*

***Richard II and the Essex Rebellion***

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed the Spring/Summer 2012 newsletter. I agree there was likely no *Richard II* or any other play performance orchestrated by the Essex faction on the literal "eve" of the 1601 confrontation and that the "evidence" of this was fabricated.

I do suspect that *Richard III* was agitprop performed during the closing years of the 16th century, and Robert Cecil would credit it to the Essex faction.

*Carl Sterling*



## Dating *Macbeth*

A commonplace for dating *Macbeth* after Edward de Vere's death in 1604 are the references to "equivocation" in II.iii. The porter says,

Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an *equivocator*, that could swear in both the scales against either scale, who committed *treason* enough for God's sake, yet could not *equivocate* to heaven. O, come in, *equivocator*.

At least as early as James Malone (1741-1812), commentators have assumed that this passage referred to the Gunpowder Plot of 1606.\* The notes in the Folger edition comment:

Jesuits were charged with equivocation, and many scholars see this passage as referring to the 1606 trial and execution for treason of a Jesuit, Father Garnett, whose defense included the claim that, by the doctrine of equivocation, a lie is not a lie if the speaker intended a second, true meaning by his words (62).

The Wikipedia article on *Macbeth* (February 21, 2013), states:

The vast majority of critics think the play was written in 1606 in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot because of possible internal allusions to the 1605 plot and its ensuing trials...Particularly, the Porter's speech in

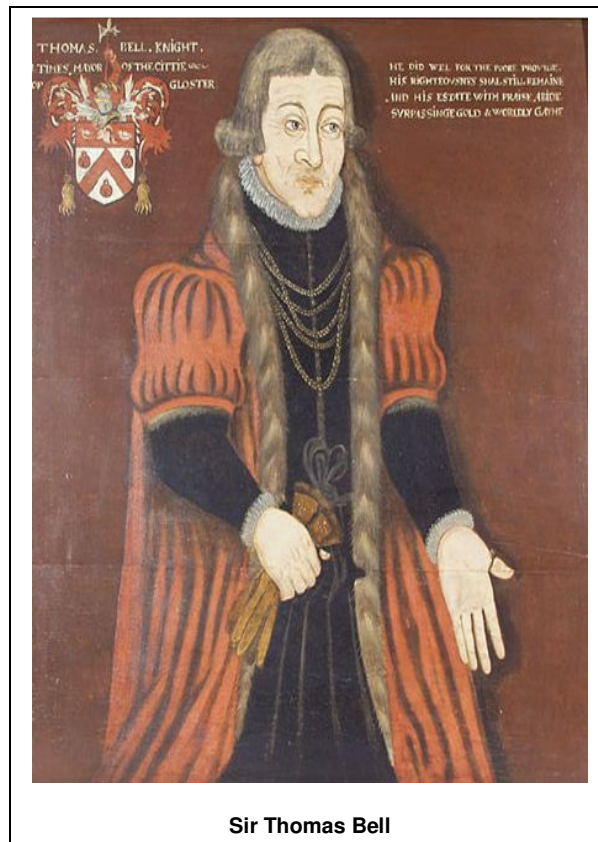
which he welcomes an "equivocator" to hell has been argued to be an allusion to the trial of the Jesuit Henry Garnet on 28 March, 1606 and his execution on 3 May, 1606, with "equivocator" referring to Garnet's defence of "equivocation." [The article then mentions earlier references to equivocation in 1583 and 1584.] But the porter says that the equivocator "committed treason enough for God's sake" (II.ii.1.9-10), which specifically connects equivocation and treason and ties it to the Jesuit belief that equivocation was only lawful when used "for God's sake," strengthening the allusion to Garnet.

Gary Taylor agrees: "The reference to equivocation coupled with treason [in *Macbeth*] very probably alludes to the trial of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators.◇

### Thomas Bell

So undermining this rationale for dating *Macbeth* after de Vere's death requires finding earlier possible sources for those features of the play. Thomas Bell (c. 1551-c.1610) provides them. Bell had been a Roman Catholic priest, but he later became a Protestant reformer. Even as a Catholic, he was critical of the Jesuits, and incurred the disfavor of the Jesuit Henry Garnet, who wrote two tracts trying to refute Bell. In the

1580s he worked subversively for the Catholic Church in the north of England, under the alias "Thomas Burton." In 1592, however, Bell turned on the Roman Catholic Church, offering to help



Sir Thomas Bell

\* To their credit, Charles and Mary Clarke, in their 1864-68 edition of *The Plays of Shakespeare* (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin), dispute Malone's theory, since they believe Jesuits were called equivocators before 1606. They do not, however, cite Thomas Bell. The Oxfordian William Farina points out that "highly visible public trials involving the issue of equivocation occurred several times during Queen Elizabeth's reign" (*De Vere as Shakespeare: An Oxfordian Reading of the Canon* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005, 190). Farina does not mention Bell either.

◇ Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (eds.): *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007) p. 384.

δ This paragraph is indebted to Alexandra Walsham's ODNB biography of Bell.

the Protestant authorities. In 1593, with Burghley's approval, he commenced publishing what would become a dozen anti-papist books. The best known was *The Anatomie of Popish Tyrannie* (1603). For his services to the crown, Elizabeth awarded him £50 a year, which King James continued.

Bell notes in his preface to *The Anatomie* (October, 1602) that he writes to warn against Jesuit plots against Queen Elizabeth. He reminds his readers that the Jesuits have already tried to remove James from the Scottish throne, so his book is also relevant to England's new king. The Jesuits are "linked inseparably with treason" (folio A3, recto). Bell refers repeatedly to Jesuit "equivocation," linking it to their treasonous plots: "Though they [Jesuits] *swear*, men will not believe them" (36).

The 19-year-old John Chastell tried to "murder his Sovereign," instigated by Jesuits to think this was "the ready way to heaven" (46). Bell also spells out several Jesuit preconditions that "make equivocation lawful" (folio B3, recto). Is there any special significance to these references—"equivocation," "treason," "swear," "to heaven"—being put in the mouth of the Porter? In Preamble V, Bell makes fun of the "upstart... newly hatched" Jesuits for their pretentiousness. They fail to distinguish priests from lay brothers as other orders do and call them "religious fathers... though they be but *porters* or door-keepers" (5). Lest we miss that allusion, the Porter in *Macbeth* uses the word "porter" three times in his brief speech.

Bell unwittingly help us refute one of the claims that some plays of Shakespeare were written after de Vere's death in 1604. Stratfordian scholars surely would have brought Bell's book to our attention, were they not so wedded to their misguided authorship theory that scotomatizes\* their vision of the author and his works.

Richard Waugaman, M.D.

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\* We had to look it up too! It's a psychoanalytic term meaning the ability to delete or forget a traumatic event. Dr Frank Davis glosses: "It 'blots out' their vision. A scotoma is a blind spot in one's vision."—Ed.

## Editorial

### *England and Saint George!*

The Newsletter strongly endorses the *Notice of Intent* and other actions taken by the leaderships of the SOS and the SF to bring about organizational unity. Members on both sides are encouraged to quickly and fully express their support.

Truth to tell, it was never clear to us why there were two identical organizations in the first place. That history is long and well forgotten. Now is the time to look forward. A major and unquestionably decisive battle looms ahead.

### *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*

This issue of the NL appears almost coincidentally with the publication of *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*, the first really big offensive in the Counter-Reformation. The drawing together of Oxfordian ranks before this onslaught is a wise and necessary measure.

Fortunately, we know exactly their points of attack—David Kathman on Shakespeare's rich Warwickshire language, for example, or Carol Rutter on the marvels of provincial Classical education in rural England, ca. 1570.

But fortunately too we know how to answer them—detail for detail and fact for fact. The Stratfordian case only stands if you don't examine its foundations or brickwork too closely. The playwright's Warwickshire vocabulary is actually almost non-existent, while the claim that the Stratford Grammar School somehow produced Harvard classical scholars is patently absurd and too clearly special pleading. Again Oxfordians have recent research to draw upon, such as Robin Fox's masterly exposition and analysis of Elizabethan education.

### **God for Harry!**

We are of course outnumbered and out-financed, but like Henry V at Agincourt, our cause being just and our quarrel honorable, the coming fight is one we relish. The new material of our recent research—the fresh insights—the momentum of history—and, let's face it, commonsense itself—are all on our side.

## Why the Shakespeare Authorship Question Matters

Authorship advocates are often faced with the challenge, “Who cares who wrote the plays? Why does it matter? We have the poetry and that’s what counts.”

The answer is that correctly identifying the author means reading his plays and poems correctly, that is, in their proper personal and social contexts. Wilfred Owen is not to be understood without reference to the Great War. Solzhenitsyn and Stalin are tragically, ironically, bound together forever. And Shakespeare, though he may be for all time, was of an age as well. An Elizabethan aristocrat to his core—a liberal and humanitarian one, to be sure—he was as relentlessly a product of his ethos and genetics as any of us.

### Shock and Awe

The contrast with the money-grubbing grain hoarder from Stratford could not be sharper. Now fresh research out of the University of Aberystwyth paints an even more unattractive picture than before. Noting that Shakespeare died a rich man and one of the biggest landowners in Warwickshire, Dr Jayne Archer of the English Department and two distinguished colleagues, Professors Richard Turley and Howard Thomas, set out to investigate the Bard’s “other life” as the owner of “arable farmland and pasture at a time when Europe was suffering famines.” Their research is due to be presented at the Hay literary festival in May.

What this trio found has set the world agog, with newspapers internationally stunned by their revelations. A typical example is *The Daily Mail* report on the next page (with acknowledgments and thanks).

Based on new but unspecified “documents in the court and tax archives,” the Aberystwyth researchers claim in a recent interview with the London *Sunday Times* that Shakespeare apparently led two contradictory lives—brilliant poet and ruthless businessman. They are particularly struck by the difference between his avarice and the deep compassion for the poor shown in the plays he was writing at the same time.

Archer and her colleagues are at a loss to

explain the incongruity. The simple solution, that we’re dealing with two individuals, not one morally bipolar sociopathic genius, does not cross their minds. Such are the blinkers of established paradigms.

So far no one is disputing the Aberystwyth data. A nervous letter to the Shaksper listserv from Sylvia Morris notes dismissively that news of the poet’s ruthless business practices is old hat. That’s neither true nor quite the point, however, which is that there are multiple contradictions, amounting to rank hypocrisy, between how Shakespeare lived and what he apparently wrote. Examples include *King Lear* (1606) and *Coriolanus* (1607), with their eloquent pleas for the houseless and the hungry, composed while he was secretly hoarding grain, malt and barley “for resale at inflated prices to neighbors and local tradesmen.” This same Shakespeare wrote:

O, I have ta'en  
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just.  
...So distribution should undo excess,  
And each man have enough.

The Stratfordian response has been one of bewilderment and lame exculpation. These plays must then be acts of conscience, they claim—he felt bad about being so bad and sought to relieve his guilt in poetry. Besides—the rationalizations continue—only economic insecurity “drove him to dodge taxes, illegally hoard [food] and act as a moneylender.”

Shakespeare as Shylock—now that’s a thought. Any absurdity will do to keep the fiction intact. Prof. Jonathan Bate, now provost of Worcester College, Oxford, welcomes the new research with feigned equanimity as “a valuable service in setting Shakespeare’s work in the context of the famines and food shortages of the period.”

Note the subtle spin. As Trinculo says, “this is no fish, but an islander that hath lately suffer’d by a thunderbolt!”

## The Daily Mail

### RESEARCHERS AT ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY SAY PLAYWRIGHT HAD ‘ANOTHER LIFE’

**Was Shakespeare a tax dodger? Bard was ‘ruthless businessman who exploited famine and faced jail for cheating revenue’**

**Plays like *Coriolanus* and *King Lear* may have been reflection of guilty conscience**

**Unsavory character: New academic research has suggested William Shakespeare exploited the poor and dodged taxes**

*Daily Mail Reporter*

**W**illiam Shakespeare was threatened with prison for dodging tax and illegally hoarding food to sell on at inflated prices, new research has revealed. An academic study looking into Shakespeare’s “other life” as one of Warwickshire’s biggest landowners has uncovered a less than savoury side to Britain’s greatest playwright.

The allegation he exploited famine has also led to suggestions that his *Coriolanus*, for years regarded as a plea for the starving poor, was in fact his way of trying to expunge a guilty conscience.

Jayne Archer, a researcher in Renaissance literature at Aberystwyth University, said in the *Sunday Times*: “There was another side to Shakespeare besides the brilliant playwright—as a ruthless businessman who did all he could to avoid taxes, maximise profits at others’ expense and exploit the vulnerable—while also writing plays about their plight to entertain them.

“Shakespeare is remembered as a playwright, but there was no copyright then and no sense that his plays could generate future income. That drove him to dodge taxes, illegally hoard [food] and act as a money-lender. He had two surviving daughters and would have seen himself as providing for them, but he was acting illegally and undermining the government’s attempts to feed people.”

*Coriolanus* depicts a famine created and exploited by rich merchants and politicians to maximize the price of food and includes the lines: “They ne’er cared for us yet: suffer us to famish, and their store-houses crammed with grain.”

It has now emerged that as Shakespeare wrote the play at the height of the 1607 food riots, he was himself hoarding grain. As one of the biggest landowners in Warwickshire, he was ideally placed to push prices up and then sell at the top of the market.

Ms Archer worked with Richard Marggraf Turley, a professor in the department, and Howard Thomas, a professor of plant science, to study Shakespeare’s life as a businessman and owner of arable farmland and pasture at a time when Europe was suffering famines.

They found documents in the court and tax archives showing he was repeatedly dragged before the courts and fined for illegally stockpiling food and was threatened with jail for evading tax payments.

In a paper, the academics wrote: “Over a 15-year period Shakespeare purchased and stored grain, malt and barley for resale at inflated prices to neighbors and local tradesmen.

“In February 1598 he was prosecuted for holding 80 bushels of malt or corn during a time of shortage. He pursued those who could not pay

him in full for these staples and used the profits to further his own money-lending activities.

“Profits were channeled into land purchases. He also acquired tithes on local produce, including ‘corn, grain and hay’, allowing him to cream off the profits from others’ manual work.

“By combining both illegal and legal activities, Shakespeare was able to retire in 1613 as the largest property owner in his home town, Stratford-upon-Avon. His profits—minus a few fines for illegal hoarding and tax evasion—meant he had a working life of just 24 years.”

Shakespeare’s experience as a rich landowner at a time of famine may be reflected in plays such as *King Lear*, which depicts an ageing monarch trying to divide his lands, and the food they produce, between his daughters.

Professor Jonathan Bate, the Shakespeare scholar and provost of Worcester College, Oxford, said Archer and her colleagues had performed a valuable service in setting Shakespeare’s work in the context of the famines and food shortages of the period.

## The Stratford (Shakespeare) Festival

**T**he Festival was founded as the Stratford Shakespearean Festival of Canada by Tom Patterson, a native of the town who wanted to revitalize its economy by creating a celebration dedicated to the works of the world’s greatest poet-playwright.

Patterson achieved his goal, and the Stratford Shakespearean Festival became a legal entity on October 31, 1952. Sir Tyrone Guthrie agreed to be its founding Artistic Director. Interestingly enough, as Richard Joyrich notes in an email (thanks, Rich!), Guthrie said in an April, 1962 interview for *New York Times Magazine*:

But what if it turns out, as it just possibly might, that William Shakespeare of Stratford was not the author of the plays ascribed to him? There is a theory, advanced by reputable scholars, seriously and, in my opinion, plausibly, that Shakespeare merely lent his

name as a cover for the literary activities of another person.

Guthrie went on: “If, by some terrible chance, this theory should be proved, then straightaway Stratford’s tourist status would dwindle.”

### Sir Alec Guinness

On July 13, 1953, Sir Alec Guinness spoke the opening lines of the first play produced at the festival: “Now is the winter of our discontent / Made glorious summer by this son of York.”

That initial performance took place in a giant tent on the banks of the River Avon. The season lasted six weeks and comprised two plays: *Richard III* and *All’s Well That Ends Well*. In the second year the playbill included Stratford’s first non-Shakespeare play, *Oedipus Rex*.

### Festival Theatre

The Festival Theatre, designed to resemble a tent in memory of those first performances,



Shakespeare Festival Theater

opened in 1957. Its thrust stage was conceived by Tanya Moiseiwitsch, recalling both a classic Greek amphitheatre and Shakespeare’s Globe. It has become a model for other new stages in North America and Great Britain.

The Stratford Festival, formerly known as the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, is an internationally-recognized annual celebration running annually from April to November.

For information about the upcoming season, visit <http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/>.





## Macbeth without Ambition

Richard Whalen (ed.): *William Shakespeare: Macbeth, Fully Annotated from an Oxfordian Perspective* (Second Edition Revised and Expanded) *With an Essay on "Acting Macbeth" by Derek Jacobi.* (Llumina Press, 2013)

In a press release introducing his new edition of *Macbeth*, Richard Whalen says that his objectives include showing “what an Oxfordian edition of a play looks like.” As one might expect, what follows is committed, well argued and distinct among conventional editions. It’s a well-considered text packaged—contextualized might be the better word—in a framework of Oxfordian references and comments.

The cover announces that this *Macbeth* is fully annotated “from an Oxfordian perspective,” and indeed it is, almost line by line, with the notes clearly presented facing the text. The semantic is unmistakable: Whalen’s commentary declines to be relegated to the back or even the foot of the page. In reality, his *Macbeth* is a scholarly essay with a very long quote—the entire play. But its first purpose is to establish de Vere’s authorship, and to this extent it succeeds. The few cavils we have will be reviewed in a moment.

### An Elizabethan Play

Whalen is a long-time Oxfordian who has taken a particular interest in dating the plays’ compos-

ition. This is a critical question, since several acknowledged Shakespeare dramas were, according to the traditional view, written after Oxford’s death in 1604. Among them was *Macbeth*, usually assigned to ca.1606, an apparently unanswerable datum eliminating the earl’s candidacy.

Whalen takes the question head on. An appendix, “Dating the Composition of *Macbeth*,” sets out the case against a Jacobean play and in favor of one much earlier, 1583-4. The key piece of evidence, and it is very compelling, is that in 1583 a vessel called *The Tiger* set off on a well-publicized commercial venture to Aleppo. On board were men of consequence carrying letters from Queen Elizabeth herself to the Emperors of China and Mughal (southern India). *Macbeth*’s witches refer to it: “Her husband’s to Aleppo gone, master of the *Tiger*” (I.iii.7). The reference to a long-forgotten event would have made little sense in 1605-6, but send a chill down Elizabethan spines.

Another conventional dating reference is the foiled Gunpowder Plot of 1605, with its objective of Scottish regicide. But again Whalen rejects the argument, noting the attempted scale—the whole of parliament and the court—and its public and religious dimensions. He proposes instead that *Macbeth*’s true political inspiration was the successful assassination of Lord Darnley (1567), the King of Scotland, consort to and victim of his wife, Mary Queen of Scots. Whalen also shows that the practice of “equivocation,” again often invoked by Stratfordians, was

around in the 1580s too. There is thus nothing indisputably Jacobean about this play.

Finally, Whalen confronts the conventional reading that *Macbeth* was meant as a kind of coronation compliment to James I by acknowledging the dangers of witchcraft (a known interest of his). An even greater royal service is the way the play establishes the legitimacy of his lineage (in the “line of kings” scene).

Whalen counters that James would not have welcomed the portrayal of witches on stage, nor liked the dramatization of a Scottish king being assassinated.

### Sources

Whalen is also effective in tracing the plot’s sources, showing that their very obscurity suggests Oxford’s presence. He observes that the author must have known Scotland at first hand, an argument similar to Roe’s case for Shakespeare in Italy. It is well known of course that the 19-year old Oxford traveled to Scotland with Lord Lennox when he took over as Regent in 1569—James VI, Queen Mary’s son and heir, was barely 13 months old at the time of her abdication. The geographic and climatic detail the play includes are persuasive, as is its occasional recourse to Scottish vernacular and prominent use of the legal doctrine of “double trust.” This recently adopted provision (in 1583) governed the rights and responsibilities of hosts and their guests—a typically Shakespearean anachronism. *Macbeth*’s “He’s here in double trust,” invokes it in a famous soliloquy.

One need hardly add that there is even less evidence of Shakespeare of Stratford visiting Scotland than there is of his having toured Tuscany.

Also among Whalen’s Oxfordian data are the play’s many references to aristocratic sports and pastimes, e.g., falconing. These he carefully documents, observing that de Vere by definition would have been acquainted with them, while the glover’s son by definition would have not.

De Vere would likely also know what a high-level court conspiracy looked and sounded like. He shows his familiarity again in *Julius Caesar* when Brutus perfectly captures *Macbeth*’s nightmare:

Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is

Like a phantasma or a hideous dream.  
The genius and the mortal instruments  
Are then in council, and the state of man,  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection.

—II.i.93-99

These instances accumulate, along with further evidence revealing the author’s first-hand familiarity with Scotland and Scottish culture. Among other things, he is aware of the difference between Scottish and English witches, another arcane distinction Shakespeare, as Whalen points out, was unlikely to have known.

Whalen clinches his case by noting that *Macbeth*’s chief source is not Holinshed, as most Stratfordians claim, but an obscure translation of Hector Boece’s *Historia Gentis Scotorum* (*History of the Scottish People*) by one William Stewart. Written in almost impenetrable Scots vernacular, Stewart’s translation, *Cronicles of Scotland*, contained many of the play’s most famous elements, including the role and nature of Lady *Macbeth*. In Holinshed, she’s barely mentioned.

For Authorialists—those interested in the SAQ—the importance of Stewart’s hand-written manuscript is that it went unpublished until the 19th century. Until then it was in the private possession of the nobility—the very Lennox family whose earl the young de Vere accompanied to Edinburgh. Almost unavoidably accessible to him, it was of course completely inaccessible to Shakespeare, who would never even have heard of it, never mind secured permission to read it. Nonetheless the author of Shakespeare’s Scottish play obviously knew the MS very well, and drew upon it.

Stratfordian critics who are aware of the Stewart-*Macbeth* connection are completely bewildered by the evidence. Dover Wilson, cited by Whalen, gives up in despair:

Somehow or other [Shakespeare] seems to have become acquainted with William Stewart’s *Cronicles of Scotland*...Did Shakespeare read it in Edinburgh? But enough of guessing!

### A Different Emphasis

Whalen’s Oxfordian reading of the play leads to some interesting new emphases. Among them is greater attention to the thanes, and especially Ross. More than “an attendant lord...to start a



scene or two,” as Eliot puts it in *Prufrock*, in Whalen’s view Ross is the arch court intriguer, a kind of Scots Iago. He lies to Duncan about Cawdor, bringing down an innocent man. He helps to urge Macbeth on (Whalen makes him Banquo’s notoriously mysterious Third Murderer). At the end he adroitly switches sides, the eternal Machiavel. Lennox, another barely regarded walk-on, is really the play’s “observer commentator.”

Less persuasive, in our view, is Whalen’s perhaps deliberately provocative contention that Macbeth himself lacks ambition. Whalen notes,

He’s reluctant to seize the throne by assassination and fearful of the consequences. Macbeth has a different problem and from that flows a very different view of his role and actions in the play.

This Macbeth is driven by external forces merely, such as the ambiguous witches, the Thane of Ross and Lady Macbeth. Yet surely, one protests, he admits at I.vii.25-8, in a speech neither quoted nor contested by Whalen,

I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself,  
And falls on th’other.

This describes his motion in the play. Its message is not just that murder corrupts but that royal murder corrupts absolutely. Kill a legitimate monarch—as opposed to his tyrannical usurper—and your conscience will come and get you. Lady Macbeth commits suicide and, Whalen suggests, along with Sir Derek Jacobi, so does her husband in his final encounter with Macduff. It’s hard to disagree more. Macbeth playing the Roman fool fatally undercuts the irony of Macduff’s birth, and once again turns Macbeth—see Ross, above—into Othello.

Some of Whalen’s other editorial decisions seem equally debatable. He finds the witches occasionally “comical,” and unpersuasively suggests that Lady Macbeth “in a fit of compassion” may have sent the messenger to warn Lady Macduff. Elsewhere he gives “We have scorched the snake, not killed it” (III.ii.21), rather than the more conventional “scotched,” to pin something down.

While *scorched* remains defensible, 1.iii.97-8, “As thick as tale/Can post with post” is not. This unedited First Folio rendering does not make sense and was long ago emended by Rowe to “as thick as hail / Came post with post.” *Came* for *can* is justified but *hail* for *tale* is not, since in Elizabethan English “as thick as Tale” meant “as fast as the spoken word,” while to speak quickly was expressed proverbially as “to talk post.”

The correct edit is surely “As thick as tale / [Came] post with post,” supplemented by an explanatory note.

### Sir Derek Jacobi

One cannot leave this challenging and provocative edition without saying something of its afterword, “Acting Macbeth,” by Sir Derek Jacobi. It’s an honor to Whalen and the Oxfordian movement generally that the great actor endorses this edition, especially as his statement will be consulted by future Macbeths struggling with what he describes as an emotionally and psychologically exhausting part. What is most touching about Jacobi’s remarks is their diffidence, together with his willingness to self-criticize. We all wish we’d seen him in the role.

“Acting Macbeth” is a nice way to round off a masterly performance. Both Whalen and Jacobi deserve loud “Bravos!”

## Brilliantly Unreadable

Alan William Green: *I Shakespeare: Unanimous or Anonymous?* (Shakespeare Publishing, Los Angeles 2011)

**A**lan Green’s *I Shakespeare* is brilliant, spectacular, ingenious, meticulously planned and presented. It is also large, lavishly and gorgeously illustrated, beautifully bound and printed and totally unreadable.

The first warning shot is when we discover that this is not just one book but two. Flip it over and you find a second volume, a kind of mirror version or evil twin of the first. Where Book 1 has a white cover with a gold crucifixion, Book 2 is its shiny black counterpart, the crucifix device reversed and, as D.H. Lawrence said of

bats, disgustingly upside down. So this is God versus Satan.

Book 1 is dedicated to proving the Oxfordian contention about the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. Successive chapters introduce the problem, outline the debate and then—consistent with Green's quirkiness—suddenly give way to an affirmative Preface by Prof. Michael Delahoyde.

This is followed by the author's prologue, or interlogue, "Under a Shakespeare Moon: All the World's a Phase We're Going Through." It is printed over a gorgeous color photograph of an American astronaut apparently floating above the moon. Green's statement turns out to be theatrical in every sense: the book is divided into two acts with subsidiary scenes, yes, just like a play.

This is what we mean when we say *I Shakespeare* is unreadable. It is so prettily presented with colorful call-outs and detailed "scenery" creatively designed and supported by witty puns and observations, that it becomes virtually impossible, under normal reading conditions, to follow the main thought of the text. It's like being continually pestered by an amusing child while trying to read Hegel.

Sometimes less is more and in this case that's probably true.

### Codes and Codas

As we work our way from Act 1, Scene 1, it becomes apparent that Green is a code enthusiast, one who believes the authorship puzzle can be resolved by acrostical analyses of the crude poetry on Shakespeare's tomb ("Good friend for Jesus' sake forebear," etc.), the admonition, "Stay Passenger..." and the like. Needless to say, the famous dedication to the Sonnets also comes in for discussion with words and letters colorfully highlighted to arrive at the desired reading.

Green finally gets into a long and complicated discussion of Rosicrucianism and it was at this point, we confess, that we stopped reading with attention and started to skim. The argument becomes so exhaustive and exhaustingly complex, with multiple graphics on each page, that the skeptical mind gives up.

So unfortunately this very serious and lovingly designed book turns into little more than a coffee table resident, attractive to flip through

momentarily, but completely unrivetting, despite its challenging content. It is a paradox, a variation perhaps of what Edward Tufte in *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (1983) called "chartjunk." This is where the visual over-complexity of a presentation distracts from and then drowns out the core information.

The ultimate turn off about Green's book, at least for us, is that it's conceived and executed as a lecture course, overly didactic and too ingenious by half, with each chapter requiring the student/reader to review its contents in the form of a quiz. Points are awarded for being right. If you skip a quiz you might miss an important piece of information required for the next step.

It becomes extremely annoying. After a while I wanted to strangle the teacher (nice guy though he is).

### This is Hell

When we get to the middle of the book we find its Mephistophelian counterpart coming at us the other way. The Intermission, continuing Green's theater analogy, announces itself as a colorful center spread ("refreshments served in your kitchen") and then perversely advises us not to cheat by reversing the book and entering (presumably) into Hell. This is what one calls a mixed message.

Brave as Odysseus we descended anyway, despite the fact that the black-cover crucifix is printed *reverso*, like St Paul. Moreover we survived the inferno with our souls intact—Satan's kingdom turns out to be very like the Almighty's, full of acrostic puzzles, quotes from Shakespeare, and multiple graphics in scintillating color.

It's visually gorgeous and seductive and presented in Green's characteristically obscure, joshing way. The following example fully illustrates his idiosyncratic style:

Speaking of coincidence then, did Edward de Vere just *happen* to die on June 24th, 1604, to match what was needed for the codes to work both ways? That would be, let's see...*twenty years to the day* after the angel, AVE, delivered the entire Enochian Tables to John Dee. Which would make it a 365:1 coincidence ...times 20?

And so on. What is he saying, or worse still, implying, about de Vere's death—that it was

some sort of ghoulish coincidence or even a murder? No satisfactory answer is the stern reply.

When we finally get to the end of Book 2 we are confronted with a double-page challenge laid out over a picture of Shakespeare's tomb:

Be a Part of History...Solve the Mystery!  
To Be or...Not to Be  
Opened ?  
Cast your vote now at  
[www.tobeornottobe.org](http://www.tobeornottobe.org)

Green believes that the Stratford tomb conceals the ultimate secret of the authorship dispute and should be opened:

The important point is we may now have the answer to the entire riddle—written in Shakespeare's own hand—in what he calls A LIVING PAGE inside the Altar at Holy Trinity Church.

Green follows this with a firm statement, also attractively designed on a full glossy page, proclaiming *The Public's Right to Know*.

Thus his drama climaxes. It is followed by photographic curtain calls for all the actors, especially of course the author himself.

The applause dies away. The house lights go up and the audience departs. Green's lovely poem, mute as a globed fruit, lies unreadably on the coffee table.

## The Fell Incensed Points of Mighty Opposites

Warren Hope and Kim Holston: *The Shakespeare Controversy: An Analysis of the Authorship Theories* (McFarland & Co., 2009 2nd edition.)

**T**his thorough and effective study of the history of the authorship question would serve well as a basic text book for an introductory college course. Originally published in 1992 and now augmented and updated, among its most useful features is a 90-page "Chronological Annotated Bibliography," listing and summarizing the major contributions to the debate 1728-2008.

The book itself takes the reader chapter by chapter systematically through the contributions of Delia Bacon, Mark Twain, Sir George Greenwood, Frank Harris, and others, climaxing, since this is ultimately an Oxfordian book, in the work of J. Thomas Looney. Along the way Hope and Holston acknowledge cryptogrammist Ignatius Donnelly, Henry James and his short story "The Birthplace," and also find time to glance at some of the minor candidates, like Rutland and Derby.

This is all useful enough but additionally—and it is very welcome—the book's latter half addresses the current state of play, best described as the fell incensed points of mighty opposites. Stratfordian and anti-Stratfordian, with Oxford in the vanguard, confront one another over an increasingly bitter divide. The outcome, according to *The Shakespeare Controversy*, is still uncertain, though the authors' expectation is that Oxford will ultimately prevail.

### Hard-Eyed Objectivity

Among the qualities that make *The Shakespeare Controversy* a good introduction is its hard-eyed (though not impolite) objectivity when it comes to discussing historic contributions. Thus the authors praise Delia Bacon's insights—"she soars up with a brilliant fish flopping in her beak"—but also note tactfully that "her style serves to promote thought rather than convey information."

Bacon of course was not a Baconian. The SAQ was secondary to her exposition of the plays. "The question of the authorship of the great philosophic poems," she wrote, "is an incidental question and is incidentally treated here."

Nevertheless Bacon's contribution was profound and, in retrospect, deeply historic. "She must be read," Hope and Holston somewhat ruefully observe, "in her annoying, illuminating entirety."

### From the Crypt

Interestingly, Hope and Holston rescue the abolitionist William Douglass O'Connor from relative literary obscurity as the first American, other than Hawthorne, to publicly support Delia Bacon. It was also O'Connor who got Whitman interested in the authorship question, leading to his famous flash of insight in *November Boughs* (1888) that Shakespeare's plays were most likely written by one of the "wolfish earls" in

Elizabeth's court. Later the authors discuss the importance of Twain's *Is Shakespeare Dead?* an amusing yet penetrating statement well known to most readers of this journal. They summarize:

Twain combined the techniques of the courtroom with the humor, irony, and sarcasm of the polemicist but for a reason Delia Bacon would have understood. He wanted to establish the boundary between knowledge and faith; and he felt humanity degraded itself and caused itself severe problems, when it pretended to know what it merely believed. A culture based on this kind of self-deception merited and received his scorn.

Hope and Holston's discussion of the "great cryptogrammatist" Ignatius Donnelly is perhaps the most questionable chapter in their book, though they are aware of it and thus make a good case for his inclusion. It was Donnelly, they claim, who first recognized the extent of Shakespeare's vast learning (at a time when he was reflexively regarded as Milton's autodidactical warbler) and noticed how "un-Warwick-like" his language was. It was Donnelly too who pointed out that Heminges and Condell's preface to the First Folio blatantly lies about the collection's use of "true original copies"—for example, *Hamlet's* quartos are often better than the Folio version and many of their lines and speeches are now routinely included in the official text.

On the other hand, Donnelly was a cryptogrammatist who found decipherable references in the plays (as he argued) to their real author, Sir Francis Bacon. Hope and Holston are obviously unimpressed with this, but acknowledge Donnelly as someone who did much to undermine the standard Stratfordian position. "In fact," they write,

if he had modestly limited himself to that effort he would have rendered the doddering figure of the Stratford citizen a knockout blow.

The authors note that as a result of Donnelly's work—despite having lost his way among the cryptogrammatical thickets—

faith in the Stratford legend was permanently shaken and a solution to the authorship question was closer than ever before.

### Turning Points

A chapter on Henry James and his Stratford-centered short story, "The Birthplace," provides an opportunity to discuss the puzzling ambiguities surrounding Shakespeare's monument in Holy Trinity Church.

Hope and Holston of course also quote James's famous remark about the "divine William" being "the biggest and most successful" literary fraud ever perpetrated. They make it clear that this was not a casual thought by a mind that, as T.S. Eliot put it, "was so fine no idea could violate it." On the contrary, James had obviously reflected on the matter. Interestingly, he did not become a Baconian, though at the time the divine Francis was the only game in town. Instead James added to the debate in his typically convoluted way:

I find it almost as impossible to conceive that Bacon wrote the plays as to conceive that the man from Stratford, as we know the man from Stratford, did.

In retrospect it was a turning point in the SAQ. If not Bacon, who?

### Edward de Vere

Henry James' skepticism found a partial answer in the logical and objective reasoning evinced by Sir George Greenwood. Dispassionate scientism was among the great attorney's signal contributions to the matter, in Hope and Holston's opinion. Greenwood's *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* (1908) ruthlessly examined the evidence and "raised the level of the debate."

Greenwood was followed by Samuel Butler, who seminally understood that the Sonnets were "a series of unguarded letters written in verse." Butler's analysis, assigning them to ca. 1585, called into doubt their traditional dating, and thus "Shakespeare's" dating generally. Although a Stratfordian, in Butler's hands Shakespeare remained a mysterious, unknown and perhaps unknowable figure.

Frank Harris's *The Man Shakespeare* (1909), tried to give faces and identities to the sonnets' mysterious actors and personalities. In his view, Mr W.H. was William Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke (of course a sponsor of the First Folio). The Dark Lady was Mary Fitton, one of the queen's maids of honor. Also in Har-

ris's view, Herbert was the Rival Poet, "the basis for Shakespeare's tragedy."

The center of *The Shakespeare Controversy* is also close to the heart of its concerns: the case for Oxford. After quickly reviewing and dismissing the candidacies of "Marlowe, Rutland, Derby, and so on," the authors turn to J.T. Looney and in a masterful chapter outline an adventure of discovery too well known by Newsletter readers to bear repetition.

Having cleared the ground, Hope and Holston are now ready to make an updated case for Edward de Vere (though in the end they rather disingenuously present themselves as agnostics). They do it in a well-balanced and even-tempered way, "on the one hand but on the other," moving steadily towards the conclusion that the seventeenth earl is our man.

Among the pieces of data which they highlight, and whose importance is often overlooked, is the testimony of Thomasina Heminge Ostler (Heminge's own daughter), who in an October 1615 suit against her father over theater income, noted that his colleague "Willelum Shakespeare" was already dead. The Stratford man of course lived until April 1616, so Thomasina was either wrong or she knew something. Hope and Holston ironically remark that the playwright's traditionalist biographers, like S. Schoenbaum, quietly ignore Mrs Heminge Ostler's apparently anomalous testimony.

### Oxford's Challenge

At this point *The Shakespeare Controversy* comes into its own. Chapter 9, "The Growing Oxfordian Challenge," reviews evidence familiar to Newsletter readers, including the story of the moot court, Justice John Paul Stevens' opinion and the impact of Frontline's "The Shakespeare Mystery." Hope and Holston conclude that these pivotal moments

raised serious questions about what counts as evidence, how a writer's biography relates to his or her work, and the nature of genius, with a large, mass audience. It is likely that [they] sent many people back to texts and performances of Shakespeare's plays. But [they] also sent large numbers of students into college classrooms with questions about the authorship of Shakespeare's works. Stratfordians felt compelled to respond.

An assessment of "The Stratfordian Response" follows, describing the work of J.Q. Adams, Irving Matus, Alan H. Nelson and others. The authors note that despite personal attacks and arguments over facts and their interpretation, nothing has "stopped or stymied the Oxfordians, but rather generated yet more research and publications."

### The Rest is Scholarship

Hope and Holston's dénouement is called "The Rest is Scholarship" and its title sub-quotes "A crown's worth of good interpretation." Their main point is that the issue is still undecided—"there has been no discovery or argument that has settled the question."

As Oxfordians, however, the authors concentrate upon the likelihood of de Vere's ultimate acceptance as the true author of Shakespeare's works. They recognize that the case so far, no matter how persuasive, remains circumstantial,

a collection of facts that when fitted together point in a persuasive way toward what seems the truth.

They also understand that there are missing links, including "how [Oxford] spent his time and how he spent his money."

Hope and Holston are encouragingly impressed by the integrity of Oxfordian scholarship, exemplified by Nina Green's hesitations over Roger Stritmatter's analysis of de Vere's Geneva Bible, arguably the most important contribution to the debate in the past 20 years. Green is of course an Oxfordian, but a scholar first.

"What is positive about this argument," the authors write,

is that it is not partisan. Nina Green is as critical of Roger Stritmatter as she is of Daphne Pearson—and others will no doubt be critical of her. It is in this way that errors will be caught and corrected, and the truth will eventually emerge: the rest is scholarship.

Students working their way through this text, and presumably reading for themselves the pivotal statements discussed, would come away with a reasonably sound understanding of the issues and where their resolution currently stands. This is not a hotly partisan book de-

signed to recruit readers to the Oxfordian banner. Students would certainly get the idea that of all the pretenders to Shakespeare's kingdom Oxford is the likeliest successor. On the other hand, the debate is ongoing and, like any good narrative, promises many an interesting twist ahead.

## Prince Tudor Three

Mike A'Dair: *Four Essays on the Shakespeare Question* (Verisimilitude Press 2012)

This is a great book, half of the time. It opens promisingly with two well-written and factually grounded chapters setting out in point form the cases against Shakespeare and for Oxford. Each of the "Fifty-five Questions about William Shakespeare" and "Fifty-One Arguments in Favor of Edward de Vere as the Author" is numbered, memo-style, and its contents crisply summarized. Comprising about half this short but powerful book, these two chapters set out the basic anti-Stratfordian/Oxfordian contention in almost unanswerable terms.

### PT 1 and PT 2

However, the direction changes in part two (essays 3 and 4), which begins enigmatically enough with the promise to "lift the shadow" over Edward de Vere's life. That shadow turns out to be a rather fantastic twist, in this reviewer's opinion, on what are known as the PT 1 and PT 2 ("Prince Tudor") theories, themselves highly contentious. In essence, these related propositions are that both Edward de Vere (whose identity as Shakespeare is assumed) and Henry Wriothesley, the third earl of Southampton, were the bastard children of Queen Elizabeth I (PT 1). Some advocates contend that in addition de Vere was Wriothesley's father (incestuously conceived with their mother, the queen) and then later an incestuous homosexual half-brother-child seducer (PT 2).

This story, so the argument goes, is celebrated in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. It's a minority view, but its adherents believe in it passionately. And who are we, ourselves a minority, to judge minorities? Our responsibilities reflect our demands: to look at the evidence fairly.

In "Lifting the Shadow," which begins part two, A'Dair's case is presented as before in a series of short, numbered points. It emerges from the first nine or ten, which describe de Vere's early years and his subsequent career at court, that he had "a special relationship with Queen Elizabeth." This is proved by the way she otherwise inexplicably indulged him.

After a moment A'Dair comes clean: he thinks that de Vere was one of the queen's bastard children. Let's put this contention in its starkest and most dubious form: Queen Elizabeth I was Shakespeare's secret mother.

A'Dair then gets to what we might call the Prince Tudor Three (PT 3) theory: Elizabeth arranged for the assassination of Edward's father John de Vere. Later Lord Burghley, perhaps with the queen's sanction, tried to murder Edward, his son-in-law and father of his grandchild (or maybe the product of his own incestuous relationship with his daughter Anne, Oxford's wife—see below).

So now we have the following fantastic scenario: Shakespeare was Elizabeth I's bastard child, her incestuous lover and father of their illegitimate and unacknowledged son, his own half-brother Henry Wriothesley. Later Shakespeare/Oxford seduced young Henry while having an affair with a Dark Lady, maybe Anne Vavasour, who eventually dumped the father and ran off with the son. Shakespeare, i.e., de Vere, then wrote all about it in bitterly lustful homosexual sonnets he circulated among his friends at court.

All this intrigue and absurdity was for reasons of state affecting the Succession. For good measure—see below—A'Dair throws in the truly outrageous suggestion that William Cecil, Lord Burghley, had a deliberately incestuous encounter with his own daughter, Anne Vere, Oxford's wife, and fathered by her yet another illegitimate child which he tried to pass off as Edward's, again for succession reasons. It is true that Anne and Oxford separated for a while over his belief that she was pregnant by another man, though they later reconciled.

To be fair, this incredible narrative is not entirely an article of faith with A'Dair but a matter of documentary record, at least by his less-than-rigorous standards. Drawing on Paul Streitz's *Oxford: Son of Queen Elizabeth* (2008), A'Dair concludes reasonably enough that John de Vere,

the 16th earl of Oxford, was indeed Edward's father. The question is whether his mother was, as purported, Margery Golding, John's wife, or Her Majesty herself. A'Dair's conclusion is the latter, thus translating the sixteenth earl of Oxford, an almost forgotten figure, into the historically most significant of all Elizabeth's paramours.

As we have noted, Prince Tudor theorists rely heavily on the Sonnets, unwarrantedly imposing—in our opinion—references to the Succession question upon love and social metaphors. A'Dair follows suit. As with other PT theorists, many of whom take their cue from the persuasive Hank Whittemore, expressions of male homosexual love and eroticism are transformed into political discourse.

A'Dair's contribution is to discover further support for what we could call "successionism" among the plays and long poems, specifically *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Venus and Adonis*. Successionism is the reduction of almost everything ambiguous in Shakespeare to the question of who was to follow Elizabeth I on the throne. It's the intellectual equivalent of possessing a hammer—because the Succession issue was of course increasingly important as Elizabeth aged—and finding nails everywhere.

The level of argument A'Dair produces in support of his successionist analysis hardly does him justice. He's an intelligent and articulate writer but loses his sense of evidence entirely. Everything pivots on questionable references and even worse puns. Quoting Oberon on his dispute with Titania about the changeling boy, he writes:

These lines suggest that Titania (which is an Ovidian variation of Diana, which is [a] poetic name for Queen Elizabeth) has a changeling child, sought by Oberon, who is King of the Fairies, which could mean king of the Veries, or king of the Veres.

Well, yes, it could but in literary-critical terms this is completely illicit reasoning. It offers nothing but supposition, opinion and guesswork. Could have, would have, might, perhaps, possibly—they won't do, especially when the conclusions are so astonishing and, let's say it, wildly improbable. The absence of evidence in this case is indeed evidence of absence.

Similar distorted reasoning allows A'Dair to discover support in *Venus and Adonis*. His case hinges on a highly questionable reading of the poem's conclusion, as Venus clasps to her bosom the purple flower sprung from Adonis's blood. It is, she says, his "next of blood" and thus deserves to rest upon her breast and be constantly loved (ll. 1171-1188).

But A'Dair, almost perversely, takes the phrase "next of blood" not to mean relationship, the next closest thing, but in its sense of inheritance. It can only signify, he says,

that the little flower is next in line for Venus's throne. The little flower has become next of blood after the death of Adonis, who was the flower's father. That means that, while Adonis was alive he himself was "next of blood." That means that Adonis was Venus's son.

It means nothing of the sort. Venus, a goddess but not a queen, possessed neither throne nor offspring. A'Dair gets himself all knotted up about this, noting that his gloss has absolutely nothing to do with the evident meaning of Ovid's tale. Instead of logically recognizing that he must be off the right track, he wonders why Shakespeare so warped Ovid's narrative, and so pointlessly. He is completely bewildered by it:

But what is remarkable is Shakespeare doesn't make anything of this revelation. It is like an atomic bomb going off on a planet without an atmosphere: we see the blast but we don't feel it and we can't hear it. The obscure revelation that Venus is Adonis's mother sheds no light on the characters or the situation of the poem.

That's because it has nothing to do with them, of course. But this does not deter A'Dair in the least. He takes the irrelevance and transforms it by sheer effrontery into relevance, will he, nill he. The very fact that there is no evidence turns out to be "a clandestine clue" to the revelation that Shakespeare was Elizabeth's illegitimate child, and *Venus and Adonis* another political allegory, like the *Sonnets* consumed with the Succession issue:

Venus is Elizabeth, Adonis is de Vere and the little purple flower is Southampton, their son, to whom the poem was dedicated.



A'Dair engagingly admits that "there is no hard evidence to support this theory...worse, the historical evidence contradicts my theory of the parentage of Edward de Vere."

But he cleaves to it nonetheless on the basis of what he claims are "circumstantial evidence and logic." This allows him to conclude with head-spinning perversity that "the historical record must be wrong."

J.M. Keynes once famously remarked, in an early version of Bayes' Law, that when the facts changed his opinions changed, adding rhetorically: "What do you do?" A'Dair would answer: "Ignore the facts because they must be wrong."

This granted, it remains only for the story's bizarre conclusion to be deduced from more "circumstantial evidence and logic." Lord Burghley, de Vere's father-in-law and the queen's most powerful councilor, impregnated his own daughter Anne while Oxford was on his famous Italian tour.

It seems that in Elizabethan England family members couldn't keep their hands off one another. A'Dair further claims that de Vere's illegitimate half-brother, child and incestuous seducee, Mr W.H., Henry Wriothesley, had sex with de Vere's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, that is, his step-grand-mother, and by her sired Henry Vere, who thus almost literally became his own granpaw, like the song. (Technically, his own step-great-grandfather.) This is proved by the crushing evidence that no sonnets refer to Henry.

### Ingenious Explanation

It's a shameful and complex soap opera which A'Dair then turns into an ingenious explanation for one of the hardest conundrums in the Oxfordian hypothesis: Why the cover up? Why did Oxford never acknowledge his plays and poems but instead allow the pseudonymous Shakespeare to take the credit? Partly because of the intrigue and perverse sexuality characterizing his life—all had to be concealed. But more than that, the threat posed by "Henry Tudor [*sic*] Vere, who should have ascended to the throne in April 1603 as King Henry IX of England" overrode all other considerations.

Successionism triumphs again. A'Dair claims that in the perceived interests of the state, the monarchy and history itself, de Vere was disappeared by the likes of Robert Cecil, leaving

behind a cache of 36 published and unpublished plays, 154 sonnets, two long erotic poems and some apocrypha. Twenty years after his death the plays were set free as the First Folio.

Mike A'Dair is a sharp and polished writer, brutally honest in his recognition that all history, existing documents and commonsense itself are against him. Yet he persists with his self-admittedly unproven and improbable fantasy.

There is something seductive in the PT 1, PT 2 and now PT 3 theories that's a siren song to certain Oxfordians. The consequence is a massive intellectual shipwreck like the second pair of A'Dair's *Four Essays on the Shakespeare Question*.

## BOT News and Comments

*Joan Leon*

### Essay Competition

The results of the 2012 High School Essay contest are in. The judges were impressed by the level of interest and the quality of the work submitted. Selecting the best was a pleasantly difficult task. Congratulations to First Prize winner **Jacob Karlsson Lagerros**, a 17-year-old student from Stockholm, Sweden, Second Prize winner **Rachel Woods**, Franklin, TN, and Third Prize winner **Haley Holman**, Mead, WA. We hope to publish these essays in the next Newsletter.

### Membership Renewal

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