Letters

September 5, 2010

To the Editor:

The case for Edward de Vere as author of the *Arte of English Poesie* is untenable. The traditional attributions to George Puttenham offered by Sir John Harington in 1590 and Edmund Bolton in his *Hypercritica* in 1610 remain convincing and contemporary. As Steven May asserts in his article on "George Puttenham's Lewd and Illicit Career" (2008), Harington's letter to Richard Field remains the "strongest evidence for Puttenham's authorship of the *Arte*," as he specifically requests that Field print his new translation of Ariosto "in the same print that Putnam's book ys." Puttenham himself died within two years of the publication of the *Arte* in 1589 via Richard Field, so his not claiming it as his work proves nothing either way and many of his other self-stated works remain lost. The *Arte* itself is replete with self references and self quotations to several of the works usually ascribed to Puttenham, especially his "Partheniades" which he dedicated and presented to Queen Elizabeth in 1579. The *Arte* is again written to and for Queen Elizabeth and her ladies in a highly personal manner as was the "Partheniades" quoted throughout (see May above). The author of the *Arte* tells us repeatedly that he wrote "Partheniades," so to displace Puttenham in the *Arte* is also to claim that de Vere wrote the former poem in 1579, for which there is no evidence.

De Vere obtained his pension from the Queen in 1586, while the author of the *Arte* is implicitly seeking new patronage still in 1589. May informs us that Puttenham had received two properties in reversion in 1588, evidently for his essay justifying the execution of Mary Queen of Scots which was published in 1587. It appears that Puttenham was seeking more courtly favors, as he repeatedly and extravagantly praises the Queen in the *Arte*: "your Majesty (my most gracious Soveraigne) ...to all the world for this one and thirty years space of your glorious raigne)." Since Elizabeth's accession in 1558, the author emphasizes, he has been a totally loyal subject, an emphasis he repeats for her Father, Henry VIII, in several other passages which indicate that he was living during that period of Tudor rule as well. This would rule out de Vere, born in 1550 under the reign of Edward VI.

No evidence is offered for speculations that the Queen saw and encouraged an early draft of the *Arte* or that de Vere published early verse in the *Paradise of Dainty Devices* in 1575 in order to win his license to travel to Europe in that year. No evidence is offered to identify or to discuss other pseudonyms used by de Vere, or other anonymous works by de Vere. Most importantly Waugaman does not offer a fresh reading of the *Arte* or comment on its numerous self references and self quotations, personal anecdotes, and biographical tidbits. One example is the claim of having presented to Edward VI when "we were eighteen years of age an eclogue titled 'Elpine' (p. 89)." Edward VI died in 1553, when Edward de Vere was three years old, so the reference to being "eighteen years" is to the period of his reign, 1547-1553.

As more than two thirds of the *Arte* is a catalog of classical rhetorical figures, there should be notice of the discussion of figures in other known or suspected works by De Vere—his letters, the comments and notes of E. K. to the *Shephearde's Calendar* and the mention of the figures of repetition by the annotator of Watson's *Hekatompathia* published in 1582. The verbal coinages and parallels to Shakespeare texts found in the *Arte* merely establish its contemporaneity with literary works of the 1580s and the 1590s. Uses of imagery and number patterns are a commonplace of the period, not specific to de Vere or to Shakespeare. The belated few words about methodology in any investigations of authorship are too little too late—the case for de Vere as author of the *Arte* is not made here on any basis and does not square with biographical facts as cited above. Lastly the attempts to cast doubt on the scholarship of Marcy North, Steven May, Charles W. Willis, and the recent 2007 edition of the Arte by Frank Whigham and Wayne Rebhorn are diversionary and avoid the central problem of rereading the *Arte* and connecting its text to de Vere.

None of the pages about literary deceptions, concealments and red herrings establish anything about de Vere or the *Arte*. Indeed, the most quoted passages in "Arte" mentioning de Vere as first among dramatists are pleas for the noblemen of Elizabeth's court to sign and to acknowledge their literary works. Other references to de Vere in the Arte such as the full quotation and attribution of his "Cupide" poem (p.111 in the Gutenberg online editon) are clearly third party references, and make it plain that the *Arte* is being written by another author than de Vere. Again the author is naming de Vere in order to urge him to acknowledge rather than conceal more of his evidently numerous works.

The second and somewhat disconnected section of Waugaman's article is more interesting, and begins a useful examination of the "Ignoto" or unknown god pseudonym found in twenty or more Elizabethan poems. Yes, the commendatory poem signed "Ignoto" in the prefatory material to Spenser's *Faerie Queene* may very well by by de Vere. I would be fascinated by a fuller study of the various "Ignoto" poems of the period and an accounting of the various Ignoto references. We could buttress the already promising attributions made by Looney, Hyder Rollins, and others of de Vere as the "Ignoto" of poems in *England's Helicon* (1600) and other works. However, Sir John Harington's private reference to "Putnams book" in his 1590 letter to Richard Field the printer is not superseded by his describing the author of the *Arte* as "that unknown Godfather…our Ignoto" in his 1591 public about-to-be printed preface to his "Ariosto." Harington was careful only to mention his knowledge of the authorship of the Arte by naming "Putnams book" in his private letter to Field in 1590, not in his published preface to his own book a year later in 1591.

Mike Hyde

Response from Richard Waugaman

To the Editor:

In response to Mike Hyde, four centuries of tradition tell us that a certain person is known to have been the author of a work of Elizabethan literature. This “knowledge” gradually becomes inextricably intertwined with our understanding of that work of literature, bringing the printed words to life, as we form assumptions about the literary composition and its connections with the life of the author. These connections need not be extensive or definitively validated. Nevertheless, they help anchor the text in the real world of its author. All is well. Then along comes someone who tries to upset what we know. He claims that our traditional attribution is in error. And the error is alleged to be a deliberate effort by the work’s actual author to mislead contemporaries and future generations into thinking someone other than the true author wrote this work. Naturally, the forces of authority and the defenders of tradition will repudiate anyone who tries to separate us from our beliefs.

This trouble-maker in this case would be J. Thomas Looney, who infuriated the defenders of the traditional author of Shakespeare’s works. In the present case, though, I have a different Elizabethan work in mind. I have been asked to respond to Michael Hyde’s thoughtful comments on my contention that the *Arte of English Poesie* was written by Edward de Vere. Of course, I am no J. Thomas Looney, and I do not claim that the *Arte* rivals the Shakespearean canon in artistic importance. Nevertheless, I begin with this comparison because the issues are not only parallel, but intimately related.

Most Shakespeare scholars—and the many people who still trust the authority of those scholars—all reject Looney’s attribution of the canon to de Vere. Few of them will take seriously my attribution of the *Arte* to de Vere. However, those of us who recognize the likelihood of de Vere’s authorship of Shakespeare’s works will be more open-minded about who wrote the *Arte*. Oxfordians (and other ‘anti-Stratfordians’) already accept the evidence that Shakespeare of Stratford was deliberately chosen as a front-man for the true author of the canon. So the works were not anonymous in the narrow sense of lacking the name of an ostensible author. Nor were they pseudonymous in the narrow sense of having an imaginary author’s name. The people behind the publication of the First Folio of 1623, in particular, took some pains to construct a false myth about a real person who supposedly wrote these works. It is safe to assume that de Vere played a central role in this deception. I believe he practiced a similar deception with his authorship of the commentary of ‘E.K.’ in *The Shephearde’s Calender*. The slender thread on which the traditional attribution of the Arte hangs is John Harington’s 1590 letter to Richard Field. Why is it so far-fetched to imagine that de Vere played some role in a deliberate effort to falsely attribute the *Arte* to George Puttenham, just as he did with the attribution of his Shakespeare canon to the man from Stratford?

A frequent assumption about anonymous or pseudonymous authors is that they hope to be discovered and given credit for their works. Such an author would be likely to sprinkle his or her works with reliable clues as to his or her real identity. But what if de Vere wanted his authorship to remain concealed? In that case, we can reasonably expect that he planted false clues about his identity in the *Arte*. I am not certain that Hyde has fully considered this possibility, since I gather that he takes the "self references and self quotations" of the *Arte* at face value, despite the efforts of my article to question this very assumption.

There is often an insidious and unrecognized circularity in false authorship attributions. For example, traditional scholars routinely assume Shakespeare must have attended the grammar school in Stratford, and that it must have had a fine curriculum. I hope we will not emulate them as we re-examine authorship of the *Arte*. Hyde writes that, "The author of the *Arte* tells us repeatedly that he wrote *Partheniades*, so to displace Puttenham [as author of] the *Arte* is also to claim that de Vere wrote the former poem in 1579 for which there is no evidence." This reasoning seems circular, because it assumes the very point in contention—namely, authorship of the *Arte*. It is not logical to assume the authorship of *Partheniades* has been proven because the anonymous author of the *Arte* says he wrote it. As I noted in my article, I am unaware of any independent evidence that attributes these poems to Puttenham. They are anonymous. Those who challenge the traditional authorship of Shakespeare's works are held to a different standard of evidence from the traditional theory. This double standard represents an abuse of the authority of tradition. But it is so widespread because of the weakness of the traditional case. We need to avoid it.

Hyde believes that my article's "attempts to cast doubt on the scholarship of Marcy North, Steven May, Charles W. Willis, and... Frank Whigham and Wayne Rebhorn are diversionary..." I hope I will be permitted to disagree with other scholars when I feel I have grounds for doing so, and when my disagreement with them is central to the thesis of my article. As it happens, my agreement with North outweighs our differences. North has launched a cogent challenge against traditional Elizabethan authorship assumptions. Her book has not received the serious attention that it deserves. North rejects the attribution of the to Puttenham,[1] which is endorsed by May, Whigham, and Rebhorn. I assume that all of them would reject Willis's attribution of the works of Shakespeare to Puttenham. So readers should not be misled into assuming that these five scholars agree among themselves.

Hyde believes that the *Arte*'s references to de Vere prove that he could not have been the author, as these references are in the third person. But writing of himself in the third person would be an obvious ploy if de Vere wished to conceal his authorship. As with Shakespeare scholars who rest their traditional belief on the supposed authority of the First Folio, textual evidence is taken at face value, ignoring plentiful signs that Elizabethans delighted in deceit. North finds in the *Arte* a subtle and complex discussion of the courtier's art of deception. She believes we have not sufficiently appreciated the implications of deception in the anonymity of the *Arte*. As I wrote, "North shows compellingly that the author of the *Arte*, by remaining anonymous, added further layers of complexity to the contradictory advice he gave to the reader about literary anonymity" (emphasis added). So I do not join Hyde in taking at face value the *Arte*'s advice that authors should sign their works.

Hyde writes, "No evidence is offered for speculations… that de Vere published early verse in the *Paradise of Daintie Devises*…in order to win his license to travel to Europe.'[2] Due to space limitations, I was not able to rehearse the evidence of my 2007 article, which attributes this poem to de Vere. The poem is titled, "A young Gentleman, willing to travel into forreygne partes, being intreated to staie in England: Wrote as followeth." It is published immediately after three poems signed by de Vere with his initials, "E.O." Its rhyme scheme is like the first two: ABABCC. The Arte especially favors such six-verse stanzas as being "very pleasant to the eare" (80).

After de Vere defied the Queen and tried to visit the Continent without her permission in 1574, an anonymous report said, "The desire of travel is not yet quenched in [de Vere], though he dare not make any motion unto Her Majesty that he may with her favor accomplish the said desire" (quoted in Anderson, 72). As I wrote in 2007,[3] "Even 'intreated' in the title speaks volumes. The Queen gave commands—she did not entreat" (21). I speculated that this poem was only published in 1585 because "de Vere had to choose his battles with the Queen, since he repeatedly pushed her too far by his defiance. Publishing this poem any sooner might have rubbed her face in a public reminder of his unauthorized trip to Flanders, along with his other acts of insubordination" (21). I speculated that de Vere left this poem anonymous, "suggesting a compromise between conflicting wishes to make it public, but to avoid angering the Queen. It is instructive to notice and ponder such examples of de Vere playing with anonymity, moving back and forth across the line of identifying himself to his readers" (21).

Hyde says that if de Vere wrote the *Arte*, "there should be notice of the discussion of figures [of rhetoric] in other known or suspected works by de Vere." Hyde asks, for example, why we do not find allusions to classical rhetorical figures in E.K.'s glosses on *The Shepthearde's Calender.* Excessive certainty about authorship creates blind spots for contradictory evidence. I gather Hyde has not noticed the many parallels between the explicit discussion of rhetoric in the *Arte* and that in E.K.'s commentary, which uses several of the same classical rhetorical terms that are 'Englished' in the *Arte*.

In the commentary on January, E.K. refers to "Epanorthosis"[4] and "Paronomasia."[5] In February, we find "a certaine Icon or Hypotyposis"; the *Arte* speaks of "your figure of icon, or Resemblance by Imagery and Portrait"; it calls hypotyposis "the Counterfeit Representation." The glosses on March include "Periphrasis." This term was also used by the Arte, which translates it as "the Figure of Ambage,"[6] and links periphrasis with "dissimulation." It illustrates this rhetorical figure with an excerpt of a poem the author wrote. He explains that the poem indirectly means "her Majesty's person, which we would seem to hide, leaving her name unspoken, to the intent the reader should guess at it; nevertheless upon [consideration] the matter did so manifestly disclose it, as any simple judgment might easily perceive by whom it was meant." The author may be alluding indirectly to his self-concealment when he criticizes poets who "blabbed out" what they should have dealt with more “discreetly” by ambage, so that “now there remaineth for the reader somewhat to study and guess upon.”

In April, we find “Calliope, one of the nine Muses. Other[s] say, that shee is the Goddesse of Rhetorick”[7] (emphasis added). May includes “a careful Hyperbaton,” which the Arte calls “the Trespasser.” The *Arte* warns that this figure is often used in a “foul and intolerable” manner, which may explain why E.K. qualifies Spenser’s use of it as “careful.” May also explains a passage as being “an Epiphonema,” which the Arte calls “the Surclose of Consenting Close.” July offers “Synecdochen,” called “Synecdoche, or the Figure of Quick Conceit” in the *Arte*, which says “it encumbers the mind with a certain imagination what it may be that is meant, and not expressed.” Again, we may think of the self-concealment of the author. October offers “An Ironical Sarcasmus, spoken in derision,” which the Arte calls “the Bitter Taunt... when we deride” (emphasis added). I hope this evidence will satisfy Hyde that E.K. shared with the author of the *Arte* a deep interest in explicating terms of rhetoric to his readers.

Hyde is silent on the earlier identification of E.K. as Spenser’s friend Edmund Kirke. Most Spenser scholars now assume E.K. was probably just a fiction invented by Spenser himself. They sometimes react to any remaining doubts about the identity of E.K. with the time-honored evasion, “What difference would it make anyway?” It does make a difference if de Vere deliberately concealed his authorship behind the initials of Spenser’s close college friend Edmund Kirke. It would increase the likelihood that de Vere played a role in what may have been Harington’s similarly deliberate false attribution of the Arte to “Putnam.” Further, it would make a world of difference to the question of who wrote Shakespeare’s canon. Is there any textual evidence in *The Shephearde’s Calender* that E.K. concerned himself with concealed authorship? Indeed, there is. In fact, the very first of E.K.’s glosses concerns the name Colin Cloute—“a name not greatly used, and yet have I sene a Poesie of M. Skeletons under that title. But indeede the word Colin is Frenche, and used of the French Poete Marot... Under which name this Poete (i.e., the anonymous author of *The Shephearde’s Calender*) secretly shadowed (obscured, concealed) himself, as sometime did Virgil under the name of Tityrus” (emphasis added). Is this first gloss E.K.’s way of alerting careful readers to the possibility of self-concealment on E.K.’s part? Perhaps so.The self-concealment of an author also appears in E.K.’s comments on September. There, he says that Gabriel Harvey sometimes wrote “under counterfayt names.”

Naturally, I am pleased that Hyde shares my excitement about further research on the Ignoto poems. I am grateful to Michael Hyde for his close reading of my essay, and for this opportunity to strengthen the case my article makes for de Vere’s authorship of the *Arte of English Poesie*.

A young Gentleman willing to travell into forreygne partes,
being intreated to staie in England: Wrote
as followeth.

Who seekes the way to winne renowne,
Or flieth with winges of high desire
Who seekes to weare the Lawrell crowne,
Or hath the minde that would aspire,
Let him his native soyle eschewe
Let him goe range[8] and seeke anewe.

Eche hautie[9] heart is well contente,
With every chaunce that shall betide
No happe[10] can hinder his intent.
He steadfast standes though Fortune slide:
The Sunne saith he doth shine aswell
Abroad as earst[11] where I did dwell.

In chaunge of streames each fish can live,
Eache fowle content with every ayre:
The noble minde eache where can thrive,
And not be drownd in deepe dispayre.
Wherefore I iudge all landes alike
To hautie heartes that Fortune seeke.

To tosse the Seas some thinkes a toyle,
Some thinke it straunge abroad to rome,
Some thinke it griefe to leave their soyle
Their parentes, kinsfolkes, and their home.
Thinke so who list, I like it not,
I must abroad to trye my Lott.

Who lust at home at carte to drudge
And carcke and care[12] for worldly trashe:[13]
With buckled shooe let him goe trudge,
Instead of launce a whip to swash.
A minde thats base himselfe will showe,
A carrion sweete to feede a Crowe,

If *Iason* of that minde had binne,
Or[14] wandring Prince that came from *Greece*
The golden fleece had binne to winne,
And Pryams Troy had byn in blisse,
Though dead in deedes and clad in clay,
Their woorthie Fame will nere decay.

The worthies nyne[15] that weare[16] of mightes,[17]

By travaile wanne immortal prayse:
If they had lived like Carpet knightes,[18]
(Consuming ydely) all their dayes,
Their prayses had with them bene dead,
Where now abroad their Fame is spread.

Richard M. Waugaman, M.D.

Endnotes

[1] North made this clear in a personal communication on April 9, 2009.

[2] A clarification—I wrote about a poem first included in the *Paradise* in *1585*, speculating that de Vere wrote it in 1574 or 1575. Hyde erroneously gives the year of publication as 1575.

[3] The article on this poem is available at http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/Newsletter/NewsletterMain.htm

Since only a difficult to decipher facsimile of the poem is reprinted in that article, its full text is included here as a Table.

[4] A rhetorical figure in which a word is recalled, then replaced with a more correct one.

[5] The first use of this word recorded by EEBO; a rhetorical term for wordplay, punning.

[6] Indirect modes of speech.

[7] My subtitle is a rhetorical question, of course.

[8] Wander freely.

[9] High-minded; aspiring; lofty.

[10] Fortune; luck; chance.

[11] Formerly.

[12] To be in a troubled state of mind; "care and carkes" appears in another unsigned poem in the 1596 edition ("He renounceth all the affects of Love")

[13] One meaning is an old worn out shoe-- cf. buckled [bent up or wrinkled] shoe in the next line.

[14] Rather than.

[15] Since the 14th century, three pagans, three Jews, and three Christians who embodied the ideal of chivalry; they were a popular subject for Renaissance masques, as satirized in *Loves Labours Lost*.

[16] To display a heraldic charge on one's shield; to have as a quality; to endure over time.

[17] Mighty or virtuous works, commanding influence; "of might" occurs in *As You Like It*, III v. 82.

[18] Those who remain at court and fail to prove their valor in battle.

December 2010

To the Editor:

I would like to congratulate Christopher Paul for the extraordinary research and analysis informing his article “The 17th Earl of Oxford’s ‘Office’ Illuminated” in Volume II of Brief Chronicles. He argues persuasively that Edward de Vere’s references on July 7, 1594, to his unspecified “office” had no connection with the thousand-pound annuity that Queen Elizabeth had granted him on June 26, 1586. This connection has been a longstanding assumption by Oxfordian writers who, in addition, have linked Oxford’s annuity to his dramatic writings and patronage of writers and actors.

On the other hand, I submit that it’s not only still possible but even probable that Oxford’s annuity served as a means of “indirectly” reimbursing him for his theatrical activities during wartime.

In the first place, it stands to reason that he privately paid for expenses during the 1570s related to the Chamberlain’s Men under Lord Sussex and during the 1580s related to Oxford’s Boys (plus a combination of children’s companies known from 1586 as the Paul’s Boys) and the Queen’s Men – the latter to which Oxford apparently contributed the most important of his adult players, including the brothers John and Laurence Dutton. Presumably in addition were personal expenses in relation to the so-called University Wits, the circle of writers under Oxford’s patronage during the 1580s. These included his secretary John Lyly, Anthony Munday, Thomas Watson, Robert Greene and Angel Day, all of whom dedicated books to Oxford.

The earl needed no “office” to carry out such activities; and in granting the annuity to him, Elizabeth had no need to specify reasons for his impoverishment. Furthermore, to perceive some wider context for the annuity, we need not deny that the queen herself had played a significant role in his financial downfall. Oxford himself, in his letter to Robert Cecil on February 2, 1601, referred to “my youth, time and fortune spent in [Elizabeth’s] court, adding thereto Her Majesty’s favors and promises, which drew me on without any mistrust, the more to presume in mine own expenses” – an elaborate way of recalling that he had made payments out of his own pocket, with the understanding and expectation that Elizabeth would reimburse him by some means.

One aspect of such a wider context is the sheer size of his annuity in relation to the amounts of other grants. In his documentary biography *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, 1550-1604: from Contemporary Documents* (1928), B. M. Ward reports: “If we omit the large grants made for political reasons to the King of Scots, it will be seen that the grant to the Earl of Oxford is larger than any of the other grants or annuities, with the exception of the sum of 1,200 pounds a year paid to Sir John Stanhope, the Master of the Posts, ‘for ordinary charges.’”

Within this context the amount of Oxford’s grant is extraordinary. Stanhope was a strong ally of Robert Cecil, who appointed him Master of the Posts in 1590, the same year his 1,200-pound grant was awarded. When Cecil became Principal Secretary in 1596, he influenced the queen to make Stanhope a Knight and to appoint him as Treasurer of the Chamber. The next highest grant, after Oxford's 1,000 pounds, was the 800-pound annuity given to Cecil in 1596, a few months after he became Secretary; and this money was in fact for secret-service activities. The next-highest grant was 400 pounds.

A second aspect of a wider context is that, if the queen really wanted to help Oxford financially, she could have given him income-producing gifts of properties or even monopolies such as the farm of the sweet wines granted to Essex. That she gave him outright cash would seem yet another anomaly.

A third aspect of such a context is that, aside from Henry Lee's annuity of 400 pounds as Master of the Armoury in 1580 – a key position, given the likelihood of war – there were no other such payments from the Exchequer (except for Oxford's grant) during the rest of that decade; and after Stanhope received his grant in 1590, the next one came in 1594. Therefore Oxford's grant was the largest made to any nobleman up to the time the Queen signed the privy seal warrant; and aside from the grant to Stanhope, none were anywhere near as large for the rest of the reign.

A fourth aspect of the context is that war with Spain became official in 1584, perhaps explaining why no other such grants were made until after the victory over the armada in 1588. One might ask why the queen would agree to such a large outlay of cash to Oxford at that dangerous time (1586) when the great invasion (the "Enterprise") had become not just a probability but a certainty. What would the restoration of any nobleman's financial stability be worth if England itself were conquered?

It was Sir Francis Walsingham, head of the information network developed by William Cecil Lord Burghley, who instructed the Master of the Revels to appoint the Queen's Men in 1583 – precisely as part of his secret service activities. The formation of this new company under the special patronage of Elizabeth "should be regarded particularly in connection with the intelligence system," according to Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean in *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (1998). The reason is "not because the Queen's Men were spies, but because Walsingham used licensed travelers of various kinds to give the impression of an extensive court influence within which the actual size and constitution of the spy system could not be detected."

"Walsingham certainly made use of writers," McMillan and MacLean also report, naming among others Munday and Watson, two of those mentioned above as enjoying Oxford's patronage. It would seem no coincidence that Lord Burghley wrote a letter on June 21, 1586, to Secretary Walsingham and asked him in passing if he had been able to speak with Queen Elizabeth in Oxford's favor; and just five days later she signed the Privy Seal Warrant authorizing the earl's grant of annuity.

("The Queen's Men were formed to spread Protestant and royalist propaganda through a divided realm and to close a breach within radical Protestantism," the same writers claim, adding, "This resulted in a repertory based on English themes. The English history play came to prominence through this motive." Examples cited are *The Famous Victories of Henry V, The True Tragedy of Richard III* and *King Leir*. "The plots of no fewer than six of Shakespeare's known plays are closely related to the plots of plays performed by the Queen's Men," McMillan and MacLean report, leading them to cautiously wonder whether Shakespeare could have been a Queen's Man in his early career.)

Conyers Read reports in *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth* (1967) that the spymaster was "severely handicapped by the close-fisted policy of Elizabeth." Tracing the fiscal side of the secret service is not easy, Read continues, adding, "The money appears to have been paid out of the treasury to Walsingham by warrants of the Privy Seal 'for such purposes as the Queen shall appoint.' A great deal of money was drawn from the treasury under such vague warrants as these … The first record of anything like a regular allowance to Walsingham for purposes of secret service appears in July 1582, when he was granted 750 pounds a year to be paid in quarterly payments" – the same schedule of payments, from the same source, as for Oxford's grant.

The payments to Walsingham for secret service started increasing in 1585. He was granted a regular allowance in June 1588 of 2,000 pounds annually – "a large amount of money in the later sixteenth century," Read reports, adding, "The fact that Elizabeth, for all her cheese-paring, was willing to invest so much in secret service shows how important she conceived it to be. No doubt it was efficient. Elizabeth was the last person in the world to spend two thousand pounds unless she could see an adequate return."

After the armada victory, Walsingham's allowance for secret service was reduced to 1,200 pounds a year. Given that Oxford's 1,000-pound annuity would continue until his death in 1604 (altogether spanning eighteen years until the Anglo-Spanish War officially ended), it would still seem to require a much better explanation than the one left to us on the official record.

Hank Whittemore
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