

The Other W.S., William Stanley, Sixth Earl of Derby

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In the following, I hope to provide a reasonable summary of the evidence that I believe points to William Stanley, the sixth earl of Derby, as the author of the works generally attributed to Shakespeare. I do not intend, of course, to present all the material here, but do hope to give a reasonable history of the Derbyite conviction, and in so doing point to some of the sources, compilers, and interpreters of this information, and then bring it up to date with recent discoveries and publications. Beginning with the referenced works, I believe the interested reader will find much to flesh-out the skeleton sketched here.



William Stanley, Sixth Earl of Derby

There are good reasons for suspecting that the traditional assignation of the authorship of Shakespeare's works is misplaced. These are based on statements made about the works at the time of their appearance, evidence concerning the traditional candidate, and inferences derived from the works themselves. There are also good reasons for suspecting the true author to be William Stanley, the sixth earl of Derby. Some of these, too, are based on statements made about the author of the works, and inferences derived from the works themselves. And some are based on evidence concerning William Stanley.

None of the statements, evidence, or inferences is conclusive—for Stanley or anyone else—or there would be no controversy. The case for Derby is made by examining the available material and attempting to weight it appropriately, assigning, for example, less weight to inferences drawn from the plays by a Derbyite—where there must be a natural bias toward interpreting the evidence in support of Derby—and more weight to a contemporary's comments about the author, or to modern research by a non-Derbyite scholar. Nonetheless, we should not disallow the speculations of Derbyite authors—after all, who else examines the works in-depth from the point-of-view of Derby as author?—but the case must be largely established without this. It is, I believe, in the accumulation of all significant material, properly weighted, on all candidates, that the case for William Stanley becomes ultimately convincing.

I do not hold with those who consider questions regarding the identity of the author of Shakespeare's works to be a uniquely modern development. I think questions about the author are more or less contemporaneous with the appearance of the works. They may begin, in print at least, with comments made by a playwright, Robert Greene (not the later and more famous 'upstart crow' quote

But by your leave Gentlemen, some over curious will carp and say that if I were not beyond, I would not be so bold to teach my betters their duty, and to show them the Sun that have brighter eyes than myself, well Diogenes told Alexander of his folly and yet he was not a King. Others will flout and overread every line with a frump, and say 'tis scurvie, when they themselves are such scabbed Jades that they are like to die of the fashion, but if they come to write or publish any thing in print, it is either distilled out of ballads or borrowed of Theological poets, which for their calling and gravity, being loath to have any profane pamphlets pass under their hand, get some other Batillus to set his name to their verses: Thus is the asse made proud by this under hand brokery. And he that can not write true English without the help of Clerks of parish Churches, will needs make himself the father of interludes. O 'tis a jolly matter when a man has a familiar style and can endite a whole year and never be beholding to art? but to bring scripture to prove any thing he says, and kill it dead with the text in a trifling subject of love, I tell you is no small piece of cunning. As for example two lovers on the stage arguing one another of unkindness, his Mistress runs over him with this canonical sentence, A man's conscience is a thousand witnesses, and her knight again excuses himself with that saying of the Apostle, Love covereth the multitude of sins.

Most of us are familiar with Greene's comments in which he refers to someone, believed to be the man from Stratford, as an 'upstart crow.' But the passage just quoted is from an earlier publication, *Farewell to Folly*, and it also has some interesting things to say. He claims there is someone, due to their 'calling and gravity' when they 'write or publish any thing in print'... 'get some other Batillus to set his name to their verses.'

We hear precious little about this except from the anti-Stratfordians, and Greene's statements seem especially well-suited to the proponents of a frontman for a noble author. In fact, they may especially favor one candidate in particular, William Stanley. When Greene is dismissing a particular 'text in a trifling subject of love', he is likely referring to *Fair 'Em*. This play is one of those perennial candidates for an early Shakespeare drama unrecognized in the general canon, and a later Derbyite will make an interesting case for its association with William Stanley. But I get ahead of myself, and merely want to point out here that the authorship question is not a recent one.

Today, the authorship controversy is widely considered to have begun with Delia Bacon and her advocacy of Francis Bacon as the author of the works. Her ideas attracted proponents and opponents and soon other candidates were proposed as well.

The Case for Derby

It wasn't until 1891 that James Greenstreet first advanced the case for William Stanley, sixth earl of Derby. Greenstreet was a researcher, an authority on heraldry, and a scholar who had contributed research to Halliwell-Phillips, then writing his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*.

In 1891, Greenstreet published excerpts from two letters he had come across in his research, both from George Fenner and dated June 30, 1599. In nearly identical language they



House of Derby, Coat of Arms

identified William Stanley as a writer of plays. For example, in the letter to his correspondent in Antwerp, Fenner said, 'Therle of Darby is is busyed only in penning comedies for the commoun players.'¹

To find such a clear reference to an unknown playwright, one moreover intimately connected with

Lord Strange, whose players are generally associated with Shakespeare's first works, suggested to Greenstreet a new candidate for Shakespearean authorship, and his further researches quickly proved supportive.

Even in this first article, Greenstreet, after a brief summary of Stanley's life and travels up to his becoming earl in 1594, focuses on the character of Stanley's tutor and traveling companion, Richard Lloyd, and apparent connections with the character Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*. In that play, the schoolmaster (named after the tutor of Gargantua in the works of Rabelais²) presents, or rather attempts to present, a masque called *The Nine Worthies*. Greenstreet discovered that Lloyd, two years after setting off for France with Stanley, published his own *Nine Worthies*. Shakespeare's Holofernes appears remarkably parallel to Richard Lloyd's.

Greenstreet found further support from the commentary on *Love's Labour's Lost* in Charles Knight's *Shakespere*:

In this manuscript of... a Chester pageant ...the Four Seasons concludes the representation of The Nine Worthies. Shakespeare must have seen such an exhibition, and have thence derived the songs of Ver and Hiems.³

Chester was the town most associated with the Derbys in the Renaissance, and

to which William eventually retired. They held various official positions there over the years, and were known to attend pageants and the like.

Greenstreet was on a roll, and we almost feel his excitement as he attaches a postscript to his first article:

While the foregoing is passing through the press, I have been enabled to identify [Lloyd's] handwriting...with that of one, dated 20th June, 1610, addressed to King James I. and his Parliament, which accompanies a treatise by the said Lloyd, written in English, but interspersed here and there with Latin, like the conversation of Holofernes in the play.⁴

Within the following year, before his early death in 1892, Greenstreet went on to produce two more articles on Stanley as Shakespeare. 'Further Notices of William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, K. G., as a Poet and Dramatist,' begins: 'Now that further interest in the 6th Earl of Derby has been aroused...' It notes some particulars from the *Derby Household Books* between 1587 and 1590, which frequently mentions traveling players performing at notable residences, including those of Derby, the Earl of Leicester, the Queen, and the Earl of Essex.⁵

There are also references simply to players, for example 'at night the Players played.' These latter are likely references to the more familiar players of the 4th Earl of Derby's company, or possibly one of his son's, Ferdinando, Lord Strange, or William himself. Greenstreet also found interesting the frequent attendance of Sir Edward Fitton, whose daughter has often been proposed as the 'dark lady' of the *Sonnets*.

Greenstreet goes on to indicate parallels between Stanley and the plays, and concludes with a promise to draw our attention to some curious differences between the First and Second Folios of Shakespeare's works, differences naturally disqualifying all other candidates for the authorship due to the unlikelihood, if not the impossibility, of their having been involved.

In his final article in *The Genealogist*, 'Testimonies Against the Accepted Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays,' the 'late Mr. James Greenstreet' does indeed remark on the Second Folio, as well as on Robert Greene in a manner similar to the discussion above. He also reviews two selections from Spenser traditionally believed to refer to Shakespeare.

Regarding the Second Folio, Greenstreet points out the many improvements over the First, going well beyond, for instance, such modernizations as substituting the 'u' where the old 'v' had served. The examples he provides include:

First Folio: on four postures...

Second Folio: on four pasterns... (*Henry V*, III.vii)

First Folio: But poor a thousand crowns...

Second Folio: But a poor thousand crowns... (*As You Like It*, I.i)

First Folio: It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night,

Second Folio: Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night, (*Romeo and Juliet*, I.v)

First Folio: Your words I catch, sweet Hermia...

Second Folio: Your words, I'd catch, sweet Hermia

(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

Changes range from correction of meaning to poetic improvement, and were generally adopted by subsequent editions. Someone was involved with improving the publication of the plays from the First Folio and quarto publications. As the Second Folio was published in 1632, other major candidates were long dead, and Stanley still had 10 years to live and could have had a hand in it.

Also in this final article, Greenstreet discussed two references often regarded as by Spenser to Shakespeare. They have particular bearing on Stanley. The first is from *The Tears of the Muses*:

and the man whom Nature selfe had made
to mock herselfe and Truth to imitate
with kindly counter under mimic shade,
our pleasant Willy, Ah! is dead of late;
with whom all joy and jolly meriment
is also deaded and in doleur drent.⁶

Spenser is bemoaning the fall in quality of theatrical productions, and that one 'gentle spirit' in particular is not presently contributing. The reference to 'Willy' may well be a reference to Shakespeare, and 'our pleasant Willy' (emphasis added) may be more than a general statement of inclusion.

The Tears of the Muses was dedicated to none other than William's sister-in-law, Alyce Spencer (Ferdinando, Lord Strange's wife), to whom Edmund Spenser believed himself related, as he notes in his *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*:

Ne lesse paiseworthyie are the sister three,
The honor of the noble familie:
Of which I meanest boast my selfe to be,
And most that vnto them I am so nie:
Phyllis, Charyllis, and sweet Amaryllis.⁷

These are generally recognized as the three daughters of John Spencer, and Alyce is identified with Amaryllis here and elsewhere in the poem.⁸ This gives greater immediacy to Spenser's 'our pleasant Willy'.

Of course there is more even in these three short articles, and if I have lingered long over the contributions of Greenstreet it is because he was the first Derbyite and is thus naturally of some interest in this discussion; and also because in his few short articles he shows many of the approaches and several of the actual instances that will continue to be drawn upon by the Derbyites. I will now more briefly summarize several of their works.

Abel Lefranc

It was not until over 30 years after Greenstreet's death that another researcher was to publish his contribution to the case for William Stanley. This time it was a French professor of Renaissance studies at the College de France, Abel Lefranc.⁹

To Lefranc, the air of familiarity with the court of Navarre in *Love's Labour's Lost* required an author on the scene and one familiar with the principals involved. He found many correspondences between Lloyd's *Nine Worthies* and the masque in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and even reminiscent lines:

In *The Nine Worthies* we read:

This puissant prince and conqueror bare in his shield a Lyon or,
Wich sitting in a chaire bent a battel axe in his paw argent.¹⁰

and in *Love's Labour's Lost*:

Your lion, that holds his poll-axe sitting on a close-stool, will be given to Ajax.¹¹

He also takes up and expands other themes, both those introduced by Greenstreet and discoveries of his own, including the Spenser references noted above, and the various associations in the plays with the historical earls of Derby. These include the prominence of the Stanley family in the plays themselves, as well as references in the plays to the Pentecost plays of Chester.

Lefranc also considered the dedication of John Donne's *Six Holy Sonnets* to an 'E. of D.' proposing that they were dedicated to the Earl of Derby. This possibility was furthered recently. The dedication is significant to the authorship question because Donne refers to the dedicatee's 'fatherly yet lusty rhyme' of which 'these songs are their fruit', and additional indications of the poetic mastery of the 'E. of D.'

Lefranc's additional speculations interpreting the plays based on the assumption that Derby is the author make interesting reading for a Derbyite, but I find such speculations—so common among anti-Stratfordians—only persuasive when one is convinced the author has been found, and hence unconvincing to people of a different persuasion. They seem typically confusing to new investigators who may simply find themselves believing now one, now another candidate depending on whose speculations they are reading.

R. M. Lucas

Lefranc in turn inspired Richard M. Lucas, whose *Shakespeare's Vital Secret*, published in 1937, further promoted the case for William Stanley.¹² Among other unique contributions, Lucas seems to have been the first to associate the Hand D of *The Book of Sir Thomas More* with the handwriting of William Stanley.

Lucas entertains many new and exciting themes, introducing John Marston's apparent comments on a Knight-of-the-Garter Shakespeare in his allusion to *Troilus and Cressida* in his *Histriomastix*:

Enter Troilus and Cressida Troy:
Come Cressida, my cresset light,
Thy face doth shine both day and night,
Behold, behold, thy garter blue
[missing line]
Thy knight his valiant elboe wears
that When he shakes his furious Speare
The foe in shivering fearfull sort,
may lay him down in death to snort.¹³

Stanley is the only candidate who was a Knight of the Garter, wearing 'thy garter blue'.

Lucas also introduces the powerful argument of references by John Davies of Hereford, Stanley's writing teacher. This is from his *Scourge of Folly*:

To our English Terence, Mr. Will: Shake-speare:
Some say good Will (which I in sport do sing)
Had'st thou not plaid some Kingly parts in sport,
Thou had'st bin a companion for a King;
And beene a King among the meaner sort.
Some others raile; but, raile as they think fit,
Thou hast no rayling, but a raigning Wit;
And honesty thou sow'st which they do reape;
So, to increase their Stocke which they do keepe.

'Will' was the name Stanley went by ('Will Derby'), and was also used by Shakespeare to refer to himself in his sonnets. Additionally we find reference to the possibility of Will being a king, a real possibility only for Derby among the candidates.

Davies also has the marginal notes 'W.S. R.B.' next to the text in two of his books which are often thought to refer to Shakespeare. Stratfordians say they refer to the man from Stratford and Richard Burbage, but I think they refer to William Stanley and Robert Browne, the leader of Derby's Men, with whom they form a better fit. And, of course, the initials provide a perfect way for Davies to identify

who he is speaking of for those ‘in the know’, while keeping up the front.

And in the first known reference to Shakespeare (‘and Shakespeare paints poore Lucrece rape’) in the anonymous *Willobie his Avis*, Lucas points out the fit between the ‘W.S.’ in that poem and a nobleman Shakespeare.¹⁴

Finally, Lucas notes the epitaph for Thomas Stanley, William’s uncle, rumored as early as 1660 to be written by Shakespeare:

Not monumental stone preserves our fame,
Nor skye-aspiring pyramids our name;
The memory of him for whom this stands
Shall outlive marble and defacer’s hands;
When all to Time’s consumption shall be given,
Stanley, for whom this stands shall stand in heaven.¹⁵

A. W. Titherley

The work of the preceding authors was next taken up in *Shakespeare’s Identity* by A. W. Titherley, a retired chemist. Titherley’s extensive research and the general collection of the arguments advanced thus far make his book the single most useful work on the Stanley candidacy.¹⁶

Titherley provides a detailed analysis of Shakespeare’s spelling and word usage and its relationship to the Lancashire/Chester spellings and word usage at the time. He provides an in-depth analysis of the handwriting of the ‘Hand D’ of *The Book of Sir Thomas More* and its relationship with the handwriting of William Stanley, supplying a ‘detailed comparison, which...unfortunately involves tedious reading and close attention to minutiae, warranted only by the gravity of the issue.’ The book includes copies of Hand D and Derby’s hand to aid in following the discussion, and much additional information on this issue.

Titherley introduces another Stanley family epitaph, this time for William’s son Robert:

To say a STANLEY lyes here, that a lone
Were Epitaph enough noe brass noe stone
Noe glorious Tombe, noe monumentall Hearse,
Noe gilded Trophy or lamp labourd Verse
Can dignifie his Graue or sett it forth
Like the Immortal fame of his owne Worth
Then reader fixe not here but quitt this Roome
And flye to Abram’s bossome theres his Tombe
There rests his Soule & for his other parts
They are imbalm’d & lodg’d in good mens harts
A brauer monument of Stone or Lyme,
Noe Arte can rayse for this shall out last tyme¹⁷

He also discusses the close association of Stanley with Sir John Salisbury, his ‘brother’¹⁸, the dedicatee of the collection containing Shakespeare’s ‘The Phoenix and the Turtle.’ He discusses many canonical poems and plays, and makes some very interesting examinations of early works sometimes attributed to Shakespeare, including *Fair ’Em* and *Mucedorus*.

Fair ’Em has additional interest, because it is to this play that Robert Greene alluded in the selection above, referring to a work ‘distilled out of ballads’ in which ‘two lovers on the stage arguing one another of unkindness’ and ‘A man’s conscience is a thousand witnesses.’

As he did a few years later with his familiar ‘up-start Crow, beautified with our feathers,’ Greene is accusing someone of being the front man of a writer of plays. Could they be the same man? Titherley brings much to support the idea that it was an early play written by Stanley/Shakespeare, including the use of Northern *s*-plurals and dialect, and the presence in the play of a frequent Stanley family household guest and associate of William, Sir Edmund Trafford. *Fair ’Em* was first performed by the troupe of William’s brother, Ferdinando, Lord Strange.¹⁹

A. J. Evans

Roughly contemporaneous with Titherley’s work was *Shakespeare’s Magic Circle*, a highly readable summary by A. J. Evans,²⁰ which promoted Stanley as the main figure in a group that included several well-known candidates as the authors of the works. Perhaps most striking is the chapter in which he examines all contemporaneous allusions to Shakespeare that seem to give some indications regarding the author, rather than just referring to one or more of the works. It provides a telling argument for Stanley.

Others

After this, there seems to have been little done in the way of publications dedicated to the Stanley candidacy, although it has been included in summary style in numerous books on the controversy in general. This is unfortunate, but no doubt temporary, as a growing body of evidence implicates Stanley ever more deeply in the theater of the time, evidence unknown to the earlier Derbyite authors but very much in line with their ideas on Stanley as Shakespeare.

New Evidence

The modern case for William Stanley as the author of the works of Shakespeare began, as we have seen, with Greenstreet’s discovery of letters identifying Stanley as a writer of plays for the ‘commoun players’. This naturally led to investigations into the life of William Stanley, It became obvious to these early investigators that Stanley was closely involved in drama (Titherley referred to him as a ‘drama fanatic’).

The evidence went well beyond the perhaps not unusual exposure of a noble to drama at home and his support of a troupe of players. It included, in addition to the letters found by Greenstreet, a letter, among too few letters thus far unearthed, to the mayor of Chester urging him to allow some traveling players to play ('use their quality'):

This Company being my Lord of Harforth his men and having been with me, whose return and abode for this Christmas tyme I expect, I am to desire that if their occasion be to come to the city that you will permit them to use their quality.²¹

And a letter from his wife, Elizabeth, to Robert Cecil:

Good uncle, being importuned by my Lord to entreat your favor that his man Browne with his company may not be barred their accustomed playing in main-tainance wherof they have consumed the better part of their substance, if so vain a matter shall not seem troublesome to you, I could desire that your furtherance might be a means to uphold them for that my Lord taking delight in them it will keep him from more prodigal courses and make your credit prevail with him in a greater matter for my good. So commending my best love to you I take my leave
Your most loving niece
E. Derby²²

While I know of no recent researches dedicated to William Stanley, research into the Stanley family and the earls of Derby continues, and continues to note William's theatrical interests.²³ Research on Shakespeare, however, continues to provide new and interesting material.

In 1954, Leslie Hotson in his *The First Night of Twelfth Night*²⁴ brought renewed attention to the fact that on Twelfth Night, January 6, 1601, one or more plays were performed at court, which was attended at the time by an actual Duke Orsino.

Hotson came to the perhaps obvious conclusion that Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* with its Duke Orsino was first performed then and there. Hotson found additional support for this idea in that the Chamberlain's Men performed at court that day. But Derby's Men also performed, and Derby himself was present and participating in festivities. Which troupe performed any particular play is unknown, but Derby's Men can no longer be so easily dismissed as they were even so recently as in Hotson's day. We will see they were not the 'minor troupe' he supposed. Indeed, as they were performing at court at this time, his dismissal of them seems unwarranted even without modern evidence—presumably Elizabeth did not entertain minor troupes.

Interest has also been added to another appearance of Derby's Men at court, this time on January 1, 1601, because on that date the children players, Paul's Boys,

also performed at court. It was not known until recently that William Stanley had financed the re-emergence of the Paul's Boys.²⁵ Note again, that the earl seems more than a little involved in theatrical interests.

The Paul's Boys connection adds increased interest to John Marston, and the words of his mentioned above in which he seems to refer to Shakespeare as a Knight of the Garter. Marston was writing plays for Paul's Boys at the time of their financing by William Stanley.²⁶ The simultaneous attendance of Marston, John Donne, and William Stanley at Lincoln's Inn²⁷

gains in significance because Donne has been identified as an associate of the house of Stanley as early as the mid-

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1580s, and a traveling companion of William to France (see below). The apparent references to Shakespeare by Donne and Marston now begin to connect in their common association in a likely William Stanley circle. They knew Stanley well, and they presumably knew Shakespeare, and it was their very allusions, before these connections to Stanley were known, that seem to Derbyites to point to Stanley as Shakespeare.

Derby's Men

Among the more recent discoveries concerning William Stanley is the increasing number of dates in which we find Derby's Men active. Earlier authors spoke of 1617 as the last of the known plays of Derby's Men, but since then many more performances have come to light, both up to this time and well after. We now have records of performances by William's acting troupe for more than four decades, from the time of his becoming Earl in 1594 to at least 1637, five years before his death.

Part of the earlier lack of information was no doubt due to the stress of historical research on drama performed in London, and Derby's Men were active there only when Derby himself was active there. The years around 1600 were seen then as now as the time Derby was most active in London drama, only now it is known he was much more active there than previously thought.

In later years, when William was in Lancashire and Chester, it is that area where we find most of the records of Derby's Men. It is largely due to research conducted throughout England by the *Records of Early English Drama* (REED) that we begin to get the more complete picture.²⁸

One curious incident occurred in 1632 in Warrington, about 10 miles from Derby's Knowsley estate. Nine men were arrested for performing a play in an ale house during the time reserved for divine services. The play was *Henry VIII*. We don't know who the players were but if not Derby's Men directly, it at least

speaks to the activity of drama in Stanley's home area.

The Boar's Head, Whitechapel

Recent research by Herbert Berry²⁹ has uncovered much of interest regarding a playhouse called the Boar's Head, just outside of London in Whitechapel:

Of all the playhouses built outside the City to escape the day-to-day control of the Lord Mayor and his aldermen, that in the Boar's Head was by far the closest to the City. It was also in several ways the third theatrical enterprise in the brightest day of English theatre.³⁰

The Boar's Head playhouse, outside the city and without, at first, a licensed company, has been largely unknown to historians. Berry though discovered many interesting facts regarding it in his search of various record offices for information regarding the construction and revision of the playhouse, its players and managers, and general history.

In 1599, Robert Browne, leader of Derby's Men, held the lease and consequent control of the playhouse. It was to Robert Browne that the Countess of Derby was referring to in her letter to Robert Cecil above. They were playing at the Boar's Head which, like The Globe, opened that season. With acting at court and with increasing success at the Boar's Head, Derby's Men were deeply involved in the dramatic activities of the time.

Future Research

Research continues to bolster the Stanley case. Investigations, for example, into the *The Book of Sir Thomas More* strengthen the case for a Shakespearian autograph. I have mixed feelings about the lack of investigation into the handwriting aspect, however. The similarities to Derby's hand are far more obvious than to those of any other candidate, and I fear that once the Stratfordians fully realize their candidate did not write Hand D, research into it may dry up. I suspect that the belief that it is the hand of the man from Stratford encourages wider research than would otherwise be undertaken. So I happily observe the process for as long as it can continue.

Research into *The Book of Sir Thomas More* thus fortunately continues unabated. One recent researcher focused on the stage and company that would be required to play it, and concluded Lord Strange's Men the most likely.³¹

Another recent researcher, E. A. J. Honigmann, concerns himself with the Lancashire connections of Shakespeare in an effort to discern what Shakespeare was doing in his 'lost years.'³² These are, of course, Shakespeare's unknown and formative years, from which he seems to emerge in some kind of association with Lord Strange's Men. The Lancashire connection, so supportive of the Stanley candidacy, is little dealt with, so Honigmann's attention is most welcome, albeit

in unintended support of a different candidate.

That *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written for the wedding of William Stanley and Elizabeth de Vere has long been conjectured, and it is part of Honigmann's case for his hybrid man from Stratford/Lancashire.

Honigmann draws on much that we have already discussed, including Davies, Spenser, the epitaphs, and 'The Phoenix and the Turtle.' He touches on the history

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plays in which 'Shakespeare rearranged history so as to make Stanley's [the first earl of Derby's] services to the incoming Tudor dynasty seem more momentous than they

really were.'³³ Other researchers into the history plays also spotlight Shakespeare's use of poetic license in favoring the Stanley family over the historical facts.³⁴

Francis Yates contributed a great deal of work regarding the Renaissance and various aspects of the occult interests which colored it, and pointed out the strong contrast of Jonson's [alchemist] and Shakespeare's Prospero and their strong association with the Elizabethan magus John Dee,³⁵ a friend of William Stanley's.³⁶

Recent research into John Donne by Dennis Flynn also proves interesting, connecting him more closely with William Stanley and his circle, including membership in the Stanley family household in the 1580s and travels with William in France.³⁷ Perhaps particularly interesting is Flynn's conclusions on the 'E. of D.' dedication discussed above. Flynn point out an earlier version of the dedication, to 'L. of D.' which was then changed to 'E. of D.' at the time the dedication to William Stanley as Lord of Derby would have changed to become Earl of Derby.

But let us end by turning aside from matters controversial, and look instead at a more peaceful scene, when William Stanley, the sixth earl of Derby, whatever may have been his accomplishments, repaired to the sides of the river Dee:

His house in Watergate was something of a literary and musical centre: in 1624 he allowed Francis Pilkington of Chester to include in his book of madrigals a pavan—a slow, stately dance—which he, William, had composed for the orpharion, an instrument resembling a large lute. Other members of his family did not burn with the enthusiasm which William showed for everything to do with the stage, but they were not necessarily uninterested.³⁸

And

By the time Charles I had succeeded to the throne in 1625, Earl William had virtually retired to Bidston and his Chester home, Stanley House in Watergate. He had

no wish to concern himself with the tensions developing between the King and his people. He preferred to read and write, watch plays, and listen to music.³⁹

Notes

- ¹ The three Greenstreet articles appeared in 'The Genealogist' in 1891 and 1892. Greenstreet found the letters referring to Stanley in State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, vol. 271, No. 34.
- ² Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare, the Invention of the Human*. Riverhead Books, 1998, p. 132.
- ³ Knight, Charles. *The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakspeare*. George Routledge & Sons, 1867, p. 128.
- ⁴ 'The Genealogist', London, 1891.
- ⁵ Raines, F. R. ed. *Remains Historical and Literary*. Vol. 31. Chetham Society, 1853.
- ⁶ Bear, Risa, ed. 'The Tears of the Muses.' *Renascense Editions*, University of Oregon. February 1996. <<http://www.uoregon.edu/~rbear/muses.html>>.
- ⁷ Bear, Risa, ed. 'Colin Clout's Come Home Againe.' *Renascense Editions*, University of Oregon. 1995. <<http://www.uoregon.edu/~rbear/colin.html>>.
- ⁸ See, for example, Brydges, Egerton. *The Poetical Works of John Milton*. Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1855, p. xxxii, and *The Shorter Poems of John Milton*. Macmillan and Company, 1898, p. 168.
- ⁹ Lefranc, Abel. *Under the Mask of William Shakespeare*, trans. by Cecil Cragg. Merlin Books, 1988.
- ¹⁰ Lefranc p. 239.
- ¹¹ Evans, G. Blakemore, et al., eds. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.
- ¹² Lucas, Richard MacDonald. *Shakespeare's Vital Secret*. Rydal Press, 1937.
- ¹³ Quoted by Lucas, p. 53.
- ¹⁴ Lucas, Richard MacDonald. *Shakespeare's Vital Secret*. Rydal Press, 1937, p. 115.
- ¹⁵ Lucas pp. 215-216. This ascription to Shakespeare appeared in Sir William Dugdale's *Visitation of Shropshire*, 1664. A 1640 reference to the epitaph is also made in Father Henry More's *History of the English Provinces of the Society of Jesus* referring to it as an 'epitaph Shakespeare wrote', *The Poems: Variorum Shakespeare*, 1938, appendix 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'.
- ¹⁶ Titherley, A. W. *Shakespeare's Identity*. Wykeham Press, 1952.
- ¹⁷ Titherley p. 53.
- ¹⁸ Titherley p. 163.
- ¹⁹ 'sundrietimes publicly acted in the honourable citie of London, by the right honourable the Lord Strange his seruaunts' is on the title page of Q1.
- ²⁰ Evans, A. J. *Shakespeare's Magic Circle*. Associated Booksellers, 1956.
- ²¹ George, David, ed. *Records of Early English Drama: Lancashire*. University of Toronto Press, 1991.
- ²² Berry, Herbert. *The Boar's Head Playhouse*. Folger Books, 1986, p. 34.
- ²³ See, for example, Bagley, J. J. *The Earls of Derby*. Sidgwick & Jackson, 1985, pp. 71, 76. As far as I know, the most current compilation of Derbyite material is at my Web site,

<<http://www.rahul.net/raithel/Derby>>

²⁴ Hotson, Leslie. *The First Night of Twelfth Night*. Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954.

²⁵ 'My Lord Darby hath put up the playes of the children in Pawles to his great paines and charge.' Gurr, Andrew. *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*. Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 339.

²⁶ Gurr, Andrew. *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*. Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 340.

²⁷ Flynn, Dennis. 'Awry and Squint'. *The John Donne Journal*, volume 7, 1988.

²⁸ Records of Early English Drama, University of Toronto.

²⁹ Berry. Berry comments regarding Browne: 'His sponsor, the earl, seems to have taken drama more seriously than any of the other noble sponsors of theatrical companies and was notably placed to do so.' p. 34.

³⁰ Berry p. 11.

³¹ McMillin, Scott. *The Elizabethan Theatre and The Book of Sir Thomas More*. Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 134.

³² Honigmann, E. A. J. *Shakespeare: The Lost Years*. Manchester University Press, 1985.

³³ Honigmann, p. 63.

³⁴ Saccio, Peter. *Shakespeare's English Kings: History, Chronicle, and Drama*. Oxford University Press, 1977. For example, Saccio writes of one of Stanley's ancestors: 'Shakespeare makes of this enormously powerful and wealthy man a patriotic and patriarchal figure of great probity and dignity: he is 'old John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster.' In this the playwright departs from his source Holinshed, who, with far greater historical accuracy, depicts Gaunt as a contentious and ambitious baron.'

³⁵ Yates, Frances A. *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, p. 95.

³⁶ Dee's association with William are found in entries in Dee's diaries. See, for example, Smith, Charlotte Fell. *John Dee 1527-1608*. Constable and Company, 1909, pp. 259-260.

³⁷ Flynn, Dennis. *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility*. Indiana University Press, 1995.

³⁸ Bagley, J.J. *The Earls of Derby*. Sidgwick & Jackson, 1985, p. 76.

³⁹ Bagley, p. 71.

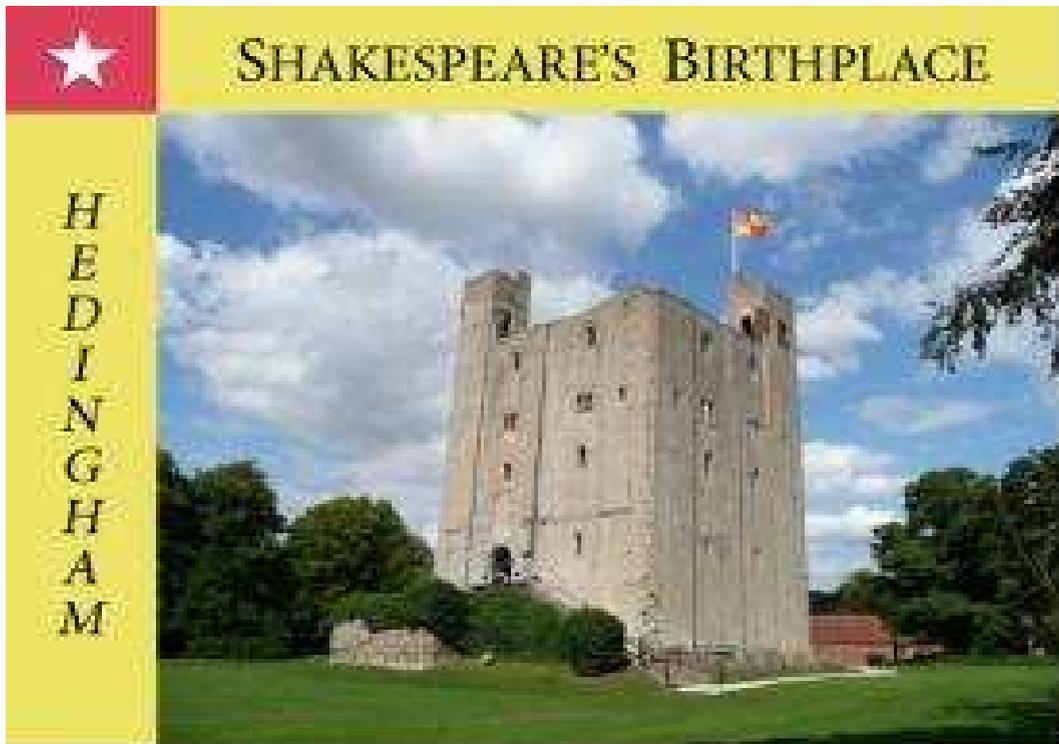


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