

***Titus Andronicus*, the Psalms, and Edward de Vere's Bible.**

Richard M. Waugaman

Edward de Vere marked 20 psalms in the Sternhold and Hopkins *Whole Book of Psalms* (WBP) that was bound with his Geneva Bible. These 20 psalms are proving to be a treasure trove of hitherto undiscovered Shakespearean source material. A study of the influence of Psalms 6 and 65 on *Titus Andronicus* illustrates the significance of these psalms for our deeper understanding of Shakespeare's texts. The marked psalms thus lend support to previous evidence that de Vere wrote the works of Shakespeare.

Titus Andronicus has elicited increasing critical interest since it was finally admitted into the Shakespearean canon. E. Eugene Giddens has shown that this ostensibly pagan play alludes to

the Book of Genesis in its ritual action—"I believe that the number of unusual events and themes occurring both in *Titus* and Genesis demonstrates a link, whether conscious or not on the author's part, between them."¹ I extend Giddens's thesis by demonstrating dense allusions to Psalms 6 and 65² in *Titus Andronicus*. These allusions strengthen the claims of Giddens and other critics who have discerned biblical echoes in *Titus Andronicus*.

At least two translations of the Psalms are echoed in *Titus Andronicus*—the Genevan, and the WBP.³ The Geneva Bible is widely accepted as the translation that most influenced Shakespeare's works. Richmond Noble thought most of Shakespeare's allusions to the psalms were to the Coverdale translation, that was included in the Book of Common Prayer.⁴ However, WBP was extremely popular in the Elizabethan era and beyond; it went through some 1,000 editions.⁵

Preliminary discoveries suggest the WBP psalms were more influential on Shakespeare's work than were the Coverdale or Genevan translations of the psalms.⁶ These discoveries illuminate many passages in Shakespeare. Lady Macbeth's "Out, damned spot" speech has striking allusions to the WBP Psalm 51, the chief penitential psalm, highlighting the gulf between her lack of remorse and the state of contrition

required to receive God's forgiveness in Christian theology. Sonnet 21's "So is it not with me as with that Muse" alludes repeatedly to the WBP Psalm 8, which implies that the rival Muse in this sonnet is none other than the Psalmist, traditionally King David.

In addition to their significant role in our interpretations of many passages in Shakespeare's works, the WBP Psalms as source material for Shakespeare have intriguing implications for the debate as to the authorship of Shakespeare's works. Edward de Vere, who has received increasing attention as a candidate for the authorship of Shakespeare's works, marked 20 psalms in the WBP Psalter bound at the end of his Geneva Bible. It was by researching these 20 psalms that I have discovered many previously unknown biblical sources for *The Rape of Lucrece*, the Sonnets, and the plays of "Shakespeare." I will return to the topic of authorship later in this paper. The WBP Psalms remain important sources for Shakespeare, even if stalwart supporters of the traditional author choose to reject the "Oxfordian" hypothesis that de Vere, Earl of Oxford, used Shakespeare of Stratford as a front man and pseudonym.⁷

From an historical perspective, David Bevington speaks of *Titus Andronicus*'s "interest in a kind of composite of Roman history."⁸ He cites E.M.W. Tillyard's observation that the theme of civil war links *Titus Andronicus* with Shakespeare's history plays. Allusions to Psalms 6 and 65 in *Titus Andronicus* suggest a further historical element in 4th century C.E. Rome—these echoes of

the Judeo-Christian Book of Psalms remind us that Emperor Constantine helped make Christianity the predominant Roman religion in the early 4th century.

In addition to their pivotal significance for our interpretations of many passages in Shakespeare's works, the WBP Psalms as source material for Shakespeare have intriguing implications for the debate as to the authorship of Shakespeare's works.

Further, allusions to Psalms

6 and 65 offer an implicit subtext that underscores the connection with Shakespeare's history plays. Most of the allusions to the WBP psalms that I have identified so far are in fact in the history plays and in *Titus Andronicus*.⁹

Some critics have noticed the biblical allusions in *Titus*. Maurice Hunt says of such critics, "In their view, Shakespeare weaves a mysterious Christian Providence through the play's events."¹⁰ Clifford Chalmers Huffman, for example, identifies Lucius as playing a providential role—"his joining forces with the Goths represents the fulfillment of Christian goals to spread the faith to the outside world."¹¹ Hunt argues that "Shakespeare introduces the more tender virtues associated with Christianity into this late Roman world as values that Romans fail to appreciate or adopt."¹² Hunt finds Christian iconography in the clown's peace offering to Saturninus of two pigeons. Hunt points out that pigeons or doves symbolize the Holy Ghost. And the clown greets Saturninus in the name of "God and Saint Steven" (IV.iv.42). Saint Steven was the Christian church's first martyr.

Hunt believes Shakespeare's early audiences would have seen divine Providence in the outcome of *Titus*. "By comparing Lucius to Aeneas, Marcus unintentionally converts a tragic pattern of art into a redemptive legend" (p. 214). The character of Lucius was

added by Shakespeare; he was not present in the source material. Titus's grandson Lucius is implicitly compared with the first Christian king of England, another Lucius. The many allusions to Psalms 6 and 65 in *Titus* serve to underscore the Judeo-Christian themes in the play.

According to Kolin, "The practice of conflating literary authorities to destabilize Rome's cultural authority pervades the play for [Heather] James."¹³ The additional allusions to the psalms accentuate James's point. Grace S. West notes that many of the play's characters "make a display of their knowledge of Roman poetry," including Ovid, Seneca, Horace, and Virgil.¹⁴ Eugene M. Waith observes that the play also quotes or alludes to many proverbs. Echoes of the psalms constitute an additional but contrasting level of literary allusion in the play. Naomi Conn Liebler "argues that the play distorts

and confuses rituals that usually function to protect society."¹⁵ There is a special horror when images we usually associate with consolation and redemption are instead perverted into stains of depravity.

Titus Andronicus is famously a revenge tragedy (or perhaps a satire of revenge tragedies). Jessica Lange, who played Tamora in Julie Taymor's film version of the play, summed up its prominent biblical dimension when she quoted the Bible, "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord."¹⁶ That is, the play problematizes human usurpation of God's role in administering justice and revenge.

Robert Alter notes that Psalm 6 is a prayer of supplication, offered when the psalmist fears he is on the verge of death. Alter says the psalmist interprets his physical illness as a sign of God's chastisement. He appeals to God by reminding God that the dead are silent, and are thus unable to praise God (Titus, as his sons' bodies are laid to rest, says "Here... no noise, but silence and eternal sleep" [I.i,154-55]). Alter writes, "Now, somewhat surprisingly, enemies appear. The most plausible way to understand their introduction in the poem is that the



The Death of Chiron and Demetrius, V.ii.

supplicant imagines that malicious enemies are exulting over his deathly illness."¹⁷ The psalmist threatens that, because God has heard his prayer, the psalmist's enemies will now suffer. The same Hebrew words are used to describe their immanent suffering as

were applied to the psalmist's woes earlier in the psalm. By the end of the psalm, God restores the supplicant to health, while his enemies are now punished.

I assume Shakespeare had complex reasons for alluding to Psalm 6 so often in *Titus Andronicus*. Psalm 6 contains the theme of revenge, embedded in a complex sequence of events. The reference to the silence of the dead connects with silence in *Titus Andronicus*, such as Lavinia's being silenced when Tamora's sons cut out her tongue.

A marginal gloss on the Genevan Psalm 6 is relevant to the story of Titus—"God sendeth comfort and boldness in affliction, that we may triumph over our enemies" (Psalm 6:8, note *e*). Similarly, the next note promises, "When the wicked think that the godly shall perish, God delivereth them suddenly and destroyeth their enemies" (Psalm 6:10, note *f*).

The Genevan Psalm 65 begins "O God, praise waiteth for thee in Zion, and unto thee shall the *vow* be performed." 65:3 begins, "Wicked *deeds* have prevailed against me." "*Deeds*" are described in Titus with several pejorative adjectives—bloody, abominable, heinous, accursed, deadly, and damned accursed. Titus's sacrifice of Alarbus in I.1 enacts the performance of Titus's *vow* of revenge.

Allusions to Psalms 6 and 65

Naseeb Shaheen notes that "Almost half of the biblical references in *Titus* are to Job, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations."¹⁸ Shaheen examines Titus's speech in 1,1,148-56, and discusses possible biblical sources in Job, Ecclesiastes, and Psalm 115 for the words "rest," "chances," "envy," and "silence." Shaheen does not list Psalms 6 or 65 as sources for *Titus Andronicus*, nor does he find a biblical source for "let Andronicus/ Make this his latest farewell to their [his sons'] *souls*" (1,1,148-49). The Geneva 6:4 has "Return, O Lord: deliver my *soul*: save me for thy mercy's sake." The WBP 6:4 includes "my silly *soul* up take." All three passages associate actual or threatened death with the word "soul."

Nor does Shaheen find a biblical source for "swells" and "noise" in those nine lines. The WBP Psalm 65:7 is "The *swelling* seas thou dost assuage, and make their streams full still/ Thou dost restrain the people's rage, and rule them at thy will." And the Geneva version of that same verse is "He appeaseth the *noise* of the seas and the *noise* of the waves thereof, and the tumults of the people." "Here are no storms" in 1,1,154 negates the visual and auditory associations to the "*noise* of the seas and ...the waves." Lavinia's subsequent speech to Titus (I.i.157-64) includes "fame" from 6:10, "tears" from 6:6, and "hand" from 6:9; it also includes "bless" from 65:11.

In discussing II.iii.277, Shaheen finds a biblical source for "elder tree," but he does not give a biblical source for the word "pit," which is repeated 11 times in the play; it also appears in the words "pity," "pitiful," and "pitiless." I would argue that Psalm 6 is in fact a crucial source for this word in *Titus*. 6:5 is "For why? No man among the dead, remembreth thee one whit:/ Or who shall worship thee, O Lord, in the infernal *pit*?"

Shaheen cites V.ii.191, and speculates that "*earth*" and "her *increase*" is borrowed from Psalm 67:6. In addition, those words are also found in the WBP Psalm 65:9—"When that the *earth* is chapped and dry, and thirsteth more and more,/ Then with thy

drops thou dost apply, and much *increase* her store.” “Increase” is used with the same meaning in 65:13; “earth” is used five other times in Psalm 65 and its Argument.

Shaheen gives the Geneva Psalm 7:16-17 as a likely source for III.i.273, though Shaheen agrees with Noble that “The [Coverdale] Psalter is the version of the Psalms that his plays generally reflect” (p. 503). This is the only line in *Titus* for which Shaheen gives a likely source in the Psalms, and for which I have not also found a source in Psalm 65. As Shaheen weighs the different possible sources for Shakespeare’s language, he sometimes admits that Shakespeare may have “combined elements from [different] sources” (509). We are all prone to engaging in misleading false dichotomies, so I would emphasize the likelihood that Shakespeare was always synthesizing multiple influences in what he wrote. One example is his having combined “swelling” from the WBP Psalm 65:7 with “noise” from the Geneva version of that same verse in *Titus* I.i.153-55.



Geneva Bible

Ann Haaker (cited in Giddens) notes that “The imagery [of the pit scene in II.iii] is rich with Christian symbols.”¹⁹ H. Bellyse Baildon, editor of the 1904 Arden edition of *Titus*, doubted that this scene was even written by Shakespeare, since he found it so inferior. In fact, this scene contains several allusions to Psalms 6 and 65. The word “pit” occurs in the WBP version of 6:5— “For why? No man among the dead, remembreth thee one whit:/ Or who shall worship thee, O Lord, in the infernal *pit*.”

Although the pit is never called “infernal” in *Titus*, related

adjectives describe a “abhorred pit,” a “loathsome pit,” a “detested, dark, blood-drinking pit,” and a “sulphurous pit.” In the Bible, a pit can be a well; conversely, it can be a place of death (and thus a synonym for hell).

Act II.iii contains other crucial echoes of the Psalms. These allusions shock the listener with the appalling incongruity between the brutal mayhem of the play, and the consoling message of the psalm.²⁰ Psalm 65 is a major source for this scene—especially for Quintus’s words to Martius after he falls into the notorious “pit,” (which word is conversely the central allusion to Psalm 6):

What, art thou *fallen*?—What *subtle* hole is this, (65:3)
 Whose *mouth* is *cover*’d with rude-growing briers, (2 Sam. 17:19)
 Upon whose leaves are *drops* of new-shed blood (65:11)
 As fresh as *morning*’s *dew distilled* on flowers? (65:8,12)

A very fatal place is seems to me.
 Speak, brother, hast thou hurt thee with the *fall*? (65:3)

“Drop” is found in Psalm 65 in both the WBP and Geneva versions. By contrast, “Fall” “distill,” “morn,” and “dew,” occur only in the WBP Psalm 65, not in the Geneva version. This speech begins by alluding to the psalm’s “Our wicked life so far exceeds, that we should *fall* therein.” “Fall” thus alludes to sin, and distantly to the edenic Fall of Man. The other allusions to Psalm 65 in this passage are startling in their incongruity, comparing the drops of the slain Bassianus’s blood to morning dew. Psalm 65 explains that God in his goodness provides rain to the thirsty earth. 65:11 states “With wheat thou dost her furrows fill, whereby her clods do fall:/ Thy drops to her thou dost distill, and bless her fruit withal.” The state itself functions as a sort of character in *Titus Andronicus*, as in many of Shakespeare’s tragedies and history plays. Allusions to Psalm 65 may provide reassurance that God’s mercy will continue to nurture the Roman state.

“Subtle” in “what *subtle* hole is this?” is a loaded word. It is used three times in *Titus*. It was applied earlier to Tamora. Its early modern meaning was clever, crafty, and cunning. It thus links the pit with Tamora’s cunning treachery. The Geneva Bible also uses “subtle” three times. One instance is in 2 Samuel 13:3—“But Amnon had a friend called Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David’s brother: and Jonadab was a very subtle man.” The next verse includes, “Then Amnon answered him, I love Tamar my brother Absalom’s sister.” Tamora’s name echoes Tamar; the use of “subtle” underscores this link. Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar, as Lavinia was raped by Tamora’s surviving sons Chiron and Demetrius. After raping her, Amnon “hated her [Tamar] exceedingly” (2 Samuel 13:15), paralleling Chiron and Demetrius’s brutal treatment of Lavinia after they raped her.

A different Tamar appears in Genesis 38. Her husband Er was slain by God because of his wickedness.²¹ (Her Er erred, one might say.) Er’s younger brother Onan then famously refused his father’s order to impregnate Tamar, so God “slew him also” (Genesis 38:10). Tamar later disguised herself as a whore and was then impregnated by Judah, her father-in-law. Her disguise involved taking off her “widow’s garments”—like the “mourning weeds” that are referred to twice in *Titus Andronicus*. Her plot was so successful partly because she asked Judah for a “pledge”—collateral to secure the payment he promised for her sexual favors. “Pledge” is used twice in Genesis 38:17-18. “Pledge” is used in the same sense three times in *Titus Andronicus*.

There is further evidence that Shakespeare was also thinking of this Genesis Tamar—Tamora, in I.i.456, says to Saturninus, “Lest the people...take Titus’ part./ And so supplant you for ingratitude,/ Which Rome reputes to be a *heinous sin*.”²² Marginal note “L” in the Geneva Bible at Genesis 38 says of Tamar and Judah, “Their *heinous sin* was signified by this monstrous birth” of the twin brothers Pharez and Zara. Genesis 38:28-30, adjoining this marginal note, uses “his hand” four times—another connection with *Titus Andronicus*.

Another biblical echo comes from some verses de Vere underlined in 2 Samuel 17, describing how Jonathan and Ahimaaz hid from Absalom in a well. “And the wife took

and spread a *covering* over the well's *mouth*, and spread ground corn thereon, that the thing should not be known" (2 Samuel 17:19; one of the verses that de Vere underlined in its entirety). De Vere characteristically reverses his biblical source—a place of concealment for safety becomes a fatal trap, "Whose *mouth* is also *covered* with rude-growing briars" (II.iii.199).

In II.iii.193, Aaron speaks of the loathsome pit. Quintus replies, "*My sight* is very *dull*, what e'er it bodes." His words allude to Psalm 6:7, "*My sight* is dim and waxeth old, with anguish of mine heart,/ For fear of those that be my foes, and would my soul subvert." For an audience who knew the psalms well, Quintus's words would signal the danger he was in, through the allusion to the related words from Psalm 6. Naturally, some significant allusions to Psalm 6 paraphrase rather than quote its wording. For example, Titus has told Tamora when she disguises herself as Revenge, "I am not mad, I know thee well enough" (V.ii.21). This negation contrasts with "My soul is troubled very sore, and vexed vehemently" (6:3). Act III.i, contains dense allusions to both Psalms 6 and 65. Titus is pleading with the tribunes to spare his sons Martius and Quintus from execution, which has been ordered due to Aaron's treachery. Titus entreats,

<i>Hear me, grave fathers! Noble tribunes, stay!</i>	(Psalm 6:8,9)
For <i>pity</i> of mine age, whose youth was spent	(6:5)
In dangerous wars whilst you securely slept;	
For all my blood in Rome's great quarrel shed,	
For <i>all the frosty nights</i> that I have watch'd,	(6:6)
And for these bitter <i>tears</i> which now you see	(6:6)
Fill the aged wrinkles in my cheeks,	
Be <i>pitiful</i> to my condemned sons,	(6:5)
Whose <i>souls</i> is not corrupted as 'tis thought.	(6:3,4)
For two and twenty sons I never <i>wept</i> ,	(Geneva Psalm 6:8)
Because they died in honor's lofty <u>bed</u> .	(6:6)

Each highlighted word is found in Psalm 6, some of them only in the WBP version. The explicit verbal echoes are accompanied by broader thematic parallels. These allusions outline an implicit dialogue between the two texts, adding deeper levels of meaning to Titus's words. As a result, Titus is not only entreating the tribunes, asking for their mercy on behalf of his condemned sons. He is also standing in the shadow of the psalmist, when he entreated God's mercy in the face of God's wrath. The psalmist offers two rationales: first, God should be merciful, especially in view of the psalmist's age, suffering, and tearful, sincere contrition. Secondly, the psalmist appeals to God's love of praise, and reminds God that the dead "in the infernal pit" can no longer worship God. The psalm ends by rejoicing in God's forgiveness. Ironically, before directly affirming that he has been forgiven, the psalmist turns from fearing his foes to threatening them that now God will defend the psalmist and "will soon defame, and suddenly confound them all, to their rebuke and shame."

By echoing the words and themes of Psalm 6, Titus is implicitly trying to appeal to biblical precedent, flattering the tribunes by comparing them to God, and suggesting that

they can fulfill their divine role by enacting God's forgiveness—of Titus's sons. Further, the biblical allusion adds the implicit wish that the tribunes will now use their power to side with Titus against his enemies. However, Titus blatantly fails to adhere to the precedent of Psalm 6. Where it states, "Oh save me not for my deserts,"²³ but for thy mercy's sake," Titus boastfully reminds the tribunes of just how great his deserts are. Whereas it is the psalmist who says "All the night long I wash my bed, with tears of my complaint,"²⁴ Titus reminds the tribunes that it was they who "securely slept," while Titus stayed awake—"For all the frosty nights that I have watch'd [note the play on 'washed']."

Following Titus's speech, the stage directions state that "Andronicus lieth down, and the Judges pass by him." By lying down, Titus is non-verbally enacting Psalm 6:6—"All the night long I wash my bed, with tears of my complaint." As the tribunes walk by in silence, he realizes that his strategy has failed. So often, Shakespeare's biblical echoes serve to underscore an ironic failure of the world of the play to conform to its biblical model.

After the tribunes silently pass him by, Titus continues entreating them. But he now modifies his rhetorical strategy, and in so doing shifts his biblical allusions to Psalm 65 (with some overlapping references to Psalm 6 remaining). The significance of this shift seems to reflect his regressive response to the narcissistic humiliation of having his initial entreaties ignored. Rather than continue addressing the unmoved tribunes, Titus speaks to Earth. In his subsequent echoes of Psalm 65, Titus subtly shifts his position from supplicant to that of God himself. He continues—

For these, tribunes, in the dust I write	
My <i>heart's</i> languor, and my <i>soul's</i> sad <i>tears</i> :	(6:7,3,6)
Let my <i>tears</i> stanch ²⁵	
<i>the earth's</i> dry appetite,	(6:6;65:9)
My sons' sweet blood will make it shame and blush.	(6:10)
O <i>earth</i> , I will befriend thee more with <i>rain</i> ,	(65:12; Gn.65:10)
That shall <i>distill</i> from these two ancient urns,	(65:11,12)
That youthful April shall with all his <i>show'rs</i> .	(65:6)
In summer's drought I'll <i>drop</i> upon thee still,	(65:12)
In winter with warm <i>tears</i> I'll melt the snow,	(6:6)
And keep eternal <i>spring</i> -time on thy face,	(65:10)
So thou refuse to drink my dear sons' blood.	

In writing in the dust, Titus evokes Jesus. In John 8:3-11, the scribes and Pharisees tried to trap Jesus into defying the Law and showing mercy to a woman who was condemned for adultery. "But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground" (8:6). He then said, "Let him that is among you without sin, cast the first stone at her." "And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground" (8:8). Jesus, unlike Titus, was able to save the condemned person's life with this strategy.

"My *heart's* languor" recalls 6:7's "anguish of mine *heart*." "My *soul's* sad *tears*" recalls 6:6's "*tears* of my complaint." Titus's subsequent words repeatedly echo tropes

from 65:9-14 that portray God as generously watering “the earth [that] is chapped and dry.” But rather than the rain of Psalm 65, Titus offers the tears of Psalm 6. His motive is to persuade the earth to accept his tears in lieu of his son’s blood to quench its thirst.

Lucius tells his father that his words are in vain, since the tribunes do not hear him. Titus replies,

Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones,
 Who, though they cannot answer my distress,
 Yet in some sort are better than the tribunes,
 For that they will not intercept my tale.
 When I do *weep*, they humbly at my feet (Gen. 6:8)
 Receive my *tears*, and seem to *weep* with me, (6:6; Gen. 6:8)
 And were they but attired in *grave* weeds, (Gen. 6:5)
 Rome could afford no tribunes like to these.
 A stone is soft as *wax*, tribunes more hard than stones; (6:6)
 A stone is silent, and offendeth not,
 And tribunes with their tongues doom men to *death*. (6: Argument)

Titus then asks his son, “But wherefore stand’st thou with thy weapon drawn?”
 Lucius replies,

To rescue my two brothers from their death, (6: Argument)
 For which attempt the judges have pronounc’d
 My everlasting doom of banishment. (6: Argument)

In V.ii17-42, the dialogue between Titus and Tamora is especially rich in allusions to Psalm 6. Shakespeare’s characters reflect their attitudes toward one another by matching or not matching forms of speech—“you” or “thou” in mode of address; finishing or not finishing their interlocutor’s incomplete line of iambic pentameter. In this dialogue, Titus begins echoing Psalm 6, and Tamora, attempting to disguise herself as Revenge, humors Titus by echoing the same psalm. Titus uses the following words from Psalm 6: grace, my hand, grief [“grievous” in the psalm], and night. Tamora outdoes Titus by using nine additional words from Psalm 6: enemy, infernal, working [“work” in the psalm], foes, death [from the argument of Psalm 6], couch [only in the Genevan Psalm 6], for fear, and quake. Her allusions to Psalm 6 fittingly transform its message of divine intervention into diabolical, pagan vengeance—“I am Revenge, sent from th’ *infernal* kingdom/ To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind,/ By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes... I will find them out/ And in their ears tell them my dreadful name,/ Revenge, which makes the foul offender *quake*” (V.ii.30-33, 38-40; cf. 6:2, 5, and 10). Titus responds by repeating her use of “enemies,” as though submitting to Tamora’s influence and joining with her in this allusion.

In his final words to Tamora, pretending to be mad and thus conceding that she is indeed Revenge and not Tamora, he says “but we worldly men/ Have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes” (V.ii.65-66). This paraphrase of “My sight is dim...” aptly brings to mind

the subsequent words of 6:7—”... and waxeth old, with anguish of mine heart,/ For fear of those that be my foes, and would my soul subvert.” Critics have disagreed as to whether Titus was truly mad at this point, or only feigning madness. Titus’s echo of 6:7 signals to the audience that he still knows Tamora is his foe who would his soul subvert, and thus helps support his sanity. This example also illustrates the wider range of allusions to the psalms, even when the echo is a paraphrase that does not use the same words as the psalm.

Later, in Titus’s horrifying murder of his own daughter Lavinia in V.iii, Titus again alludes to the Geneva 65:1. Titus cites an earlier precedent for killing one’s raped daughter, then says “For me, most wretched, to *perform* the like./ Die, die, Lavinia, and thy *shame* with thee” (V.ii.45-46).

The WBP Psalm 6 also contributes to this scene. Its final verse (10) is “And now my foes that vexed me, the Lord will soon defame,/ And suddenly

Later, in Titus’s horrifying murder of his own daughter Lavinia in V.iii, he again alludes to the Geneva 65:1.

confound them all, to their rebuke and *shame*.” That verse in fact captures what is about to happen next—in short order (“suddenly”), Titus stabs Tamora; the Emperor Saturninus kills Titus; and Titus’s son Lucius then kills Saturninus. As he kills Saturninus, Lucius says “Can the son’s *eye* behold his father bleed?/ There’s meed for meed, *death* for a *deadly* deed!” (V.iii.65-66). The Geneva 6:7 is “Mine *eye* is dimmed for despite, and sunk in because of all mine enemies.” Its 6:5 begins “For in *death* there is no remembrance of thee.” And the WBP 6:5 begins “For why? No man among the *dead* remembreth thee one whit.”

Both translations have “*tears*” in verse 6; the Geneva verse 8 is “Away from me all ye workers of iniquity: for the Lord hath heard the voice of my *weeping*.” Aemilius introduces Lucius to the assembled crowd with “Here’s Rome’s young captain, let him tell the tale./ While I stand by and *weep* to hear him speak” (V.iii.94-95). Lucius then says “The gates shut on me, and turn’d me *weeping* out” in 105. He speaks of “our father’s *tears*” in 101, and of “my true *tears*” in 107.

Authorship Implications

Edward de Vere’s Geneva Bible is owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library. Archival records document that de Vere purchase this Bible in 1570. It contains hundreds of manuscript annotations. Roger Stritmatter showed that these annotated passages are often those that are echoed in the works of Shakespeare.²⁶ Using Stritmatter’s data, I helped demonstrate a surprisingly strong connection between Shakespeare’s and de Vere’s interest in specific verses. There are 450 biblical verses that Shakespeare cited only once; only 13 percent of these verses are marked in de Vere’s Bible. But among the 160 verses Shakespeare cited four times, de Vere marked 27 percent of these. There are even eight verses that Shakespeare cited six times—de Vere marked 88 percent of these.²⁷

De Vere’s Geneva Bible is the “smoking gun” that greatly strengthens the abundant evidence that de Vere was in all likelihood the pseudonymous author of Shakespeare’s works. The case for the traditional author is much weaker than many realize. Significant

interest in the life story of the author only began after David Garrick's 1769 "Stratford Jubilee" led to Shakespeare's apotheosis as a secular deity, filling the void that the latter stages of the Enlightenment left by undermining traditional religious belief in many intellectuals. As serious archival research failed to turn up any documents that supported the authorship claim of Shakespeare of Stratford, W.H. Ireland, then John Payne Collier made up for this lack by forging the missing records. They were each highly successful until their forgeries were exposed. Only a few years later, the first serious challenges to the traditional author were published. Pathological group dynamics then led scholars seriously astray, as they displaced their rage for having been duped by the forgeries onto anyone who dared to challenge their authorship orthodoxy. Contemporary references to the name were in all likelihood references to the pseudonym that began appearing in 1593. What we know about the traditional Shakespeare from the historical record shows no connections with a literary career. The long history of *ad hominem* attacks on anyone who challenges traditional beliefs about who wrote Shakespeare have grown more vicious, more frequent, and more desperate as the traditional authorship case has been collapsing. Once we become better acquainted with the weakness of orthodox evidence, these *ad hominem* attacks become more understandable.

George Greenwood (1908) and Diana Price (2001) ably review the evidence against the traditional authorship theory.²⁸ Thomas Looney (1920), Charlton Ogburn (1984), Joseph Sobran (1997), and Mark Anderson (2005) all establish the credibility of de Vere's claim as the author of Shakespeare's works.²⁹

We have abundant evidence that de Vere was regarded by his contemporaries as one of the best of the Elizabethan courtier poets; that a few of his contemporaries knew he wrote anonymously; that he sponsored theatrical companies most of his life; and that he was regarded as one of the best Elizabethan authors of comedies. There are hundreds of connections between the content of the plays and poems of Shakespeare and the documented facts of de Vere's life. But, we still do not know with certainty why he wrote under a pseudonym. This crucial but missing piece of evidence is a major reason de Vere is not yet more widely accepted as Shakespeare.

In all likelihood, there were multiple internal and external reasons for his using a pseudonym.³⁰ Most books published in 16th century England did not include the author's name. They were published anonymously, or with a pseudonym. Among the possible reasons for this tradition was the controversial nature of a book. Many authors in the era were punished for offending those in power. Even Ben Jonson was tortured for one of his plays. Most Elizabethan nobility did not publish poetry under their names during their lifetimes. The world of the theater was held in some disrepute. De Vere/Shakespeare's history plays put the Tudor monarchs in the best possible light; their propaganda value may have been enhanced by attributing them to a commoner. In addition, my study of the psychology of pseudonymity offers many examples of writers whose creativity seemed to flourish when their authorship was concealed. If de Vere used one pseudonym, he probably disguised other writings as well. For example, I have recently published articles attributing two anonymous 1585 poems to de Vere/Shakespeare.³¹

Even reputable Shakespeare scholars such as Stephen Greenblatt have begun blurring the distinction between the known facts and speculative conjectures about the life of the alleged author. For example, Greenblatt writes misleadingly that the dedications of the long poems (*Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*) “are the only such documents from Shakespeare’s hand.”³² A trusting reader might falsely assume Greenblatt means “in Shakespeare’s handwriting.” There has been *no* new evidence linking “Hand D” in one manuscript page of the play *Sir Thomas More* with Shakespeare. Nevertheless, the Royal Shakespeare Company 2007 edition of the complete plays of Shakespeare now makes the unsupported claim that this page *is* in Shakespeare’s handwriting (not that it “might be”). The claim is speculative, because the only samples we have that may *possibly* be in his handwriting are six signatures—but even the highly respected Shakespeare scholar Samuel Schoenbaum eventually admitted that each signature is different, and each even used different spelling. So it cannot be known with certainty that any of these signatures is genuine, much less that the manuscript in question is in Shakespeare’s handwriting. (In fact, some of its spelling idiosyncrasies are consistent with those of de Vere’s letters.) Stritmatter’s Chapter 27 concerns WBP. It reproduces four of the manicules (pointing hands) that are drawn in the margin next to 14 psalms (there are also manicules next to the Athanasius listing of five additional psalms)³³. Stritmatter notes that some psalms that Shaheen identified as sources for Shakespeare are marked in de Vere’s WBP. Stritmatter concludes that “Should there turn out to be a correlation of any kind between these references [in Shakespeare’s works] and the markings found in de Vere’s Sternhold and Hopkins, it would constitute a level of confirmation of the present thesis [that de Vere wrote Shakespeare’s works] involving a multiplication of several independent factors which would be almost beyond belief” (225). Stritmatter then describes some fascinating details linking an allusion to WBP in *Merry Wives of Windsor* to two manicules in de Vere’s WBP.

There is an important but largely covert religious dimension to the controversy over so-called “heretical” challenges to the traditional author. H. Bellyse Baildon edited the 1904 Arden edition of *Titus*. Tellingly, he argues that “anti-Stratfordian” views are an instance of a larger contemporary phenomenon of skepticism. He maintains that authorship heretics are religious agnostics. He warns that those who deny religious miracles are also likely to doubt Shakespeare’s genius. Baildon ingenuously voices directly what I regard as a now more covert sentiment toward non-Stratfordian truth-seekers.

The discovery of WBP as a crucial but virtually unknown treasure trove of Shakespearean sources owes everything to the hypothesis that de Vere wrote the works of Shakespeare. It was de Vere’s annotations of 20 WBP psalms³⁴ that drew my attention to them, and then allowed many discoveries of significant sources in them. I expect that many more discoveries remain to be made, linking these and other WBP psalms to Shakespeare’s works. My familiarity with Stritmatter’s research on de Vere’s Bible, and my own immersion in it, strengthened my conviction that the Bible is an even more important source for Shakespeare than we have yet realized. Especially those passages (such as *Titus* II.iii.198-205 and III.i.1-51) that have obvious allusions to one biblical

source are likely to have allusions to other biblical sources as well.

Baldon provides a bit of oral history that is consistent with de Vere's authorship of *Titus Andronicus*. Baldon is deeply disappointed in Edmund Malone for doubting that Shakespeare wrote *Titus Andronicus*. So he chastizes Malone for accepting too gullibly a legend recounted by "one Ravenscroft" about 70 years after Shakespeare's death. Ravenscroft claimed, "I have been told by some anciently conversant with the stage, that it [Titus] was not originally his [i.e., Shakespeare's], but brought by a private³⁵ author to be acted, and he only gave some master touches to one or two of the principal characters" (xxii). I suspect that this constitutes the remnant of some oral history that corroborates the Oxfordian hypothesis³⁶ that de Vere was in fact the "private author" who brought his works to Shakespeare, to use the latter as his public front man and pseudonym.

Table 1 Psalm 6

Argument: When David by his sins hath provoked God's wrath, and now felt not only his hand against him, but also conceived the horrors of death everlasting: he desired forgiveness, bewailing that if God took him away in his indignation, he should lack occasion to praise him as he was wont to do whilst he was amongst men. Then suddenly feeling God's mercy, he sharply rebuketh his enemies, which rejoiceth in his affliction.

1. Lord in thy wrath reprove me not though I deserve thine ire: Nor yet correct me in thy rage, O Lorde I thee desire.
2. For I am weak: therefore, O Lord, of mercy me forbear, and heal me Lord: for why, thou knowest my bones do quake for fear.
3. My soul is troubled very sore, and vexed vehemently,
But Lord how long wilt thou delay, to cure my misery?
4. Lord, turn thee to thy wonted grace, my silly soul up take:
Oh save me not for my deserts, but for thy mercies sake.
5. For why? no man among the dead, remembreth thee one whit:
Or who shall worship thee, O Lord, in the infernal pit?
6. So grievous is my plaint and moan, that I wax wondrous faint:
All the night long I wash my bed, with tears of my complaint.
7. My sight is dim and waxeth old, with anguish of mine heart,
For fear of those that be my foes, and would my soul subvert.
8. But now away from me all ye that work iniquity,
For why? the Lord hath heard the voice, of my complaint and cry.
9. He heard not only the request, and prayer of my heart:
But it received at my hand, and took it in good part.
10. And now my foes that vexed me, the Lord will soone defame,
And suddenly confound them all, to their rebuke and shame.

Table 2 Psalms 65

A praise and thanksgiving unto God by the faithful, who are signified by Sion and Jerusalem, for the choosing, preservation and governance of them, and for plentiful blessings poured forth upon all the earth.

1. Thy praise alone, O lord, doth reign, in Sion thine own hill:
their vowes to thee they do maintain, & their behests fulfil.
2. For that thou dost their prayer hear, and dost thereto agree:
Thy people all both far and near, with trust shall come to thee.
3. Our wicked life so far exceeds, that we should fall therein:
But Lord forgive our great misdeeds, and purge us from our sin.
4. The man is blessed whom thou dost choose, within thy court to dwell:
Thy house and temple he shall use, with pleasures, that excel.
5. Of thy great justice heare us God, our health of thee doth rise:
The hope of all the earth abroad, and the sea coasts likewise.
6. With strength thou art beset about, and compassed with thy power:
thou makest the mountains strong and stout, to stand in every shower.
7. The swelling seas thou dost assuage, and make their streams full still:
Thou dost restrain the people's rage, and rule them at thy will.
8. The folk that dwell full far on earth, shall dread thy signs to see:
which morn and even in great mirth, do pass with praise to thee.
9. When that the earth is chopped and dry, and thirsteth more and more.
Then with thy drops thou dost apply, and much increase her store.
10. The flood of God doth overstow [overflow], and so doth cause to spring:
The seed and corn which men do sow, for he doth guide the thing.
11. With wete thou dost her furrows fill, where by her clods do fall:
Thy drops to her thou dost distill, and bless her fruit withal.
12. Thou deckest the earth of thy good grace, with fair and pleasant crop:
Thy clouds distill her dew apace, great plenty they do drop.
13. Wherby the desert shal begin, full great increase to bring:
The little hills shal joy therein, much fruit in them shall spring.
14. In places plaine the flock she feed, and cover all the earth:
The valleys with corn shall so exceed, that men shall sing for mirth.

Notes

¹ E. Eugene Giddens, 'The Genesis of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*,' *Literature and Theology* 12 (1998) p. 342.

² See Tables.

³ Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins, *The Whole Booke of Psalme. Collected into Englishe Metre.* (London, 1565). Available on EEBO, or at cgmusic.com.

⁴ Richmond Noble, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge.* (New York: 1935).

⁵ Rikvah Zim, *English Metrical Psalms: Poetry as Praise and Prayer, 1535-1601.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987),

⁶ Richard M. Waugaman, 'The Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter is a major source for the works of Shakespeare.' *Notes & Queries* 56:595-604, 2009; 'Psalm Echoes in Shakespeare's *I Henry VI*, *Richard II*, and *Edward III*.' *Notes & Queries* 57:359-364, 2010. Available at www.oxfreudian.com.

⁷ I will follow convention and continue to refer to the author as Shakespeare.

⁸ in Philip C. Kolin (ed.), *Titus Andronicus: Critical Essays* (New York: Garland, 1995), p. 369

- ⁹ As well as in the Sonnets and *The Rape of Lucrece*.
- ¹⁰ Maurice Hunt, 'Compelling Art in *Titus Andronicus*,' *Studies in English Literature* 28 (1988) p. 205.
- ¹¹ In Kolin, p. 35.
- ¹² In Hunt, p. 204.
- ¹³ In Kolin, p. 21.
- ¹⁴ G. Harold Metz, *Shakespeare's Earliest Tragedy* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1996), p. 82.
- ¹⁵ In Giddens, p. 348.
- ¹⁶ In an interview on the 1999 film's DVD; or, in the Geneva Bible, 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord' (Romans 12:19).
- ¹⁷ Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms* (New York: Norton, 2007), p. 16.
- ¹⁸ Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Plays* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1999), p. 498.
- ¹⁹ In Giddens, p. 349.
- ²⁰ More accurately, allusions to the psalms would have registered with and shocked contemporary audiences, who knew the psalms well.
- ²¹ Dorothea Kehler (cited in Giddens, 342) suggested this Tamar as a possible biblical source for Tamora.
- ²² One of only two times that Shakespeare uses this phrase.
- ²³ This sense of 'desert' as 'merit' is used six times in *Titus*, more than in any other play.
- ²⁴ In *Richard II*, just before Northumberland admonishes Richard to confess his 'grievous' crimes, Richard is yielding his crown. He says, 'With mine own tears I wash away my balm,/ With mine own hands I give away my crown' (IV,1,207-8). This concentrated allusion to four of six consecutive words in the psalm underscores Richard's innocence as he is losing his throne and is about to lose his life. I give this example to illustrate the rich potential of exploring further allusions to WBP in Shakespeare's works.
- ²⁵ The only use of 'staunch' as a verb in Shakespeare. It can mean to quench thirst, or to stop the flow of blood. It recalls the word's only use in the Geneva Bible, in Luke 8:44, involving the woman whose menstrual bleeding was 'stanced' once she touched Jesus's garment. Thus, it is a brilliant use of a single word that expresses Titus's wish that his tears might quench the earth's thirst, and thus prevent the flow of his sons' blood.
- ²⁶ Roger A. Stritmatter, A., *The Marginalia of Edward Vere's Geneva Bible: Providential Discovery, Literary Reasoning, and Historical Consequence*. (Northampton, MA: Oxenford Press, 2001).
- ²⁷ Richard M. Waugaman, 'The pseudonymous author of Shakespeare's works,' *Princeton Alumni Weekly Online*, March 19, 2008, at http://www.princeton.edu/paw/web_exclusives/plus/plus_031908wegeman.html
- ²⁸ George G. Greenwood, G. G. (1908). *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press; Diana Price, *Shakespeare's Unauthorized Biography: New Evidence of an Authorship Problem*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001).
- ²⁹ J. Thomas Looney, "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*. (London: Cecil Palmer; also New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1920).
Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*. (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1984).
Joseph Sobran, *Alias Shakespeare: Solving the Greatest Literary Mystery of All Time*. (New York: The Free Press, 1997).
Mark Anderson, *Shakespeare by Another Name: A Biography of Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, the Man Who Was Shakespeare*. (New York: Gotham Books, 2005).
- ³⁰ Marcy North, *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002) has highlighted the ubiquity of anonymity and pseudonymity in the early modern period. Robert J. Griffin, *The Faces of Anonymity: Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publication from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) and John Mullan, *Anonymity: A Secret History of English Literature* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007) have extended her

study to later periods, showing that our assumption that most books are signed by their actual authors is a 20th century development.

³¹ Richard M. Waugaman, 'A wanderlust poem, newly attributed to Edward de Vere,' *Shakespeare Matters* 7(2007), pp. 21-23; 'A snail poem, newly attributed to Edward de Vere,' *Shakespeare Matters* 7(2008), pp. 6-11. Available at www.oxfreudian.com.


³² Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. (New York: Norton, 2004).

³³ See Stritmatter (2001) for some photographs of these manicules. Each is distinctively different. The larger ones such as the manicule pointing to Psalm 146, are up to 2 cm. in height (including the long cuffs hanging from the wrists). The five in the Treatise of Athanasius are smaller. Those drawn in the inner margin next to the binding are necessarily more cramped; one of these depicts a left hand, using the thumb rather than the index finger to point at the psalm.

³⁴ The following WBP psalms have marginal manicules: 6, 12, 25, 30, 51, 61, 65, 66, 67, 77, 103, 137, 139, and 146. Psalm 31 is marked with a bracket. Psalm 130 is marked with a large 'C' with a dot between its right sides. Further, there are smaller manicules next to the following psalm summaries in the Treatise of Athanasius, which is bound just before de Vere's WBP psalms: 8, 11, 15, 23, and 59.

³⁵ 'Private' can mean secret or concealed. It might have the further connotation of someone of private means.

³⁶ The enduring Shakespearean theatrical superstition that saying a certain proper name aloud will bring tragic results may have originated from a taboo against speaking de Vere's name aloud in connection with his pseudonymous works.



OXFORDIAN WRITER'S GUIDE

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL ENTRIES IN
WORD 2003 FORMAT, IF POSSIBLE,
TO DRMICHAEELEGAN@COMCAST.NET

SINGLE SPACE TIMES ROMAN 12 PT

NO DOUBLE SPACING BETWEEN
PARAGRAPHS OR SENTENCES

DOUBLE QUOTES FOR IN-SENTENCE QUOTES
LONG QUOTES 11 PT TIMES ROMAN, OFF SET
END NOTES ONLY, ARABIC NUMERALS

JPEGS WELCOME 300 PX

PLAY REFERENCES I.ii.3-4

ARTICLES 5,000-10,000 WORDS,
NEGOTIABLE

INCLUDE BRIEF AUTHOR'S BIO

YEARLY DEADLINE JULY 31

