



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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Whittemore Keynotes; McNeil and Altrocchi Honored at Madison SOF Conference

by Howard Schumann

The first authorship conference sponsored by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship was held at the Overture Center in Madison, Wisconsin, from September 11 to 14, 2014. The keynote address was presented by Hank Whittemore. The Oxfordian of the Year award was given to Alex McNeil, *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* editor and former president of the Shakespeare Fellowship. An Oxfordian Achievement Award was given to Paul Altrocchi, MD.

McNeil's award was presented by former SOF President John Hamill and President Tom Regnier. Hamill said that McNeil had helped make the 2013 unification of the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society a "reality." Regnier lauded him as the "conscience of the movement and one of its rocks." Accepting the award, McNeil thanked Hamill and Regnier for their leadership in effecting the merger. He said that he is optimistic about the future even though "there is little consensus about all aspects." His advice to attendees was "there should always be a shred of doubt. Don't think you know everything."

Altrocchi's award was presented by Hank Whittemore, who praised Altrocchi as a physician, artist, and indomitable seeker of truth. Altrocchi is a former trustee of the Shakespeare Fellowship, and has written or cowritten several books on the Authorship Question. Whittemore observed that Altrocchi was being honored "for his years of diligent research, his sharply written papers, several books, and one novel." Altrocchi's latest Oxfordian project is a series of ten anthologies featuring the best of Oxfordian research from 1965 to the present. The series is titled *Building the Case for Edward de Vere as Shakespeare* – available from Amazon.com. In his remarks, Altrocchi wryly predicted the war against the Stratfordians will be won "one funeral at a time."

One of the highlights of the conference was a visit to the Lockwood Farm near Spring Green to see the American Players Theatre's outstanding production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. It was a chilly night but a great opportunity not only to see a beautifully performed play, but also to discuss Shakespeare with the Director of Education for the APT, David Daniel.



Paul Altrocchi, MD

Daniel stated that APT has performed *Romeo and Juliet* seven times and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* eleven times. Daniel said that he tells new actors to "speak loud and mean it." According to Daniel, "language is a potent tool." "Fill those words," he said, "so audiences can go 'Oh!' and understand the metaphor."

100 Reasons for Oxford's Authorship of Shakespeare's Works

In his keynote talk, author, playwright and professional actor Hank Whittemore discussed the "100 Reasons" why Edward de Vere was Shakespeare, as detailed here: <http://hankwhittemore.wordpress.com>.

Whittemore discussed how his blog started by chance and how his very modest goals grew into a major undertaking of research and writing—in effect, a new investigation into the case for Oxford that involved

(Continued on page 22)

From the President's Office:

Dear Members,

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship has now completed its first year as a unified organization under its new name, after the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship joined forces. As the newly elected President, I'm writing to keep you informed about developments in the organization's activities.

As you may be aware from our recent emails and newsletter, the SOF has been considering how to restructure its dues in light of the increasing costs of printing the newsletter and journals. Many of you responded, either by email or in the discussion that we held at the annual business meeting, to our concerns about the future of print publications at the SOF. Your comments were very constructive and enlightening. Many of you said you were willing to receive all publications in electronic form; many others strongly prefer print. We plan to keep making our publications available to all members in **both** forms, although, naturally, printed versions will cost more.

Our new dues structure for individual members will consist of two levels: first, a Basic Membership that includes access to all SOF publications, journals and newsletters, in electronic form. Basic Members will pay \$44 in dues and will be full members, with all voting

rights and member privileges, such as discounts for conference attendance. The second level, starting at \$69 a year for U.S. residents, will include, in addition, printed copies of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* mailed to your home four times a year. Family memberships are also available, which include voting rights for two people at the same address.

Additionally, you may buy introductory gift memberships at a discounted rate for friends and family whose interest in the Oxfordian theory you would like to encourage. Your friends will receive the printed newsletter for a year. This is a wonderful way to foster interest in the authorship question and the SOF. Details of all the membership categories are enclosed with this issue. Please renew as soon as you can, either by mail or on our website. Your early renewal of your membership for 2015 helps us to finalize our plans for the coming year that much sooner.

We will continue to publish both of our excellent journals, *Brief Chronicles* and *The Oxfordian*, on an annual basis. These will be available online in electronic form to all members. Printed copies will be available during 2015 for those who wish to buy them as a separate purchase. We'll provide details on how to obtain these when the time comes.

In other news, our next annual conference will be in Ashland, Oregon, September 24-27, 2015. The

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The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to investigating the Shakespeare authorship question and disseminating the evidence that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), is the true author of the poems and plays written under the pseudonym "William Shakespeare."

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship pursues its mission by supporting research, educational and scholarly initiatives, annual conferences, website and social media, and by publishing this Newsletter and two annual scholarly journals, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*.

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship was formed in 2013 when the Shakespeare Oxford Society, founded in 1957, and the Shakespeare Fellowship, founded in 2001, united to form a single organization. Dues, grants and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

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Articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items of interest to the Shakespeare Oxfordian community are welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. As provided in the bylaws, "The conferences, publications, and other educational projects of the Fellowship will be open forums for all aspects of the Oxfordian theory of authorship."

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belonged to the company. Plays were fairly frequently revised by someone other than the original author, in which case the revising author(s) was paid for his services; all the while, the play remained property of the company.

With regard to the intended meaning of the annotation “leass,” there is no way to definitively determine the mind of the annotator, but the question that it raises gives us hope that something more definitive will be discovered: some contemporary thought Shakspeare’s authorship of the Shakespeare canon was false!

Mr. Danler makes some good Oxfordian points in his final three paragraphs, particularly in the final paragraph. I congratulate Mr. Danler for his efforts, and I want him to know how rewarding it is to know we have a fellow Oxfordian in Austria!

Frank Davis
Jacksonville, FL

For this year’s conference the choice of Madison was an inspired one, and the event unfolded more like a festival than a conference. The beautiful Overture Center for the Arts in downtown Madison was a cheerful, state-of-the-art facility. On day one, there was a music ensemble performing in the lobby, which served as an overture to the conference. The screening of an excellent new Oxfordian documentary film was on the agenda for day two. A “field trip” to the American Players Theatre in nearby Spring Green was on the docket for day three. Many of the conference participants enjoyed breakfast at Michelangelo’s Coffee House. This was a four-day immersion into the high culture of the Renaissance!

The conference presentations themselves covered an enormous range of topics, demonstrating that there are always new insights deriving from careful consideration of the authorship question. The thoughtful research apparent in the conference papers revealed that through critical examination of old assumptions, it is possible for us to set the historical record straight about the most important matter concerning the author Shakespeare: his true identity. Mark Twain summed it up in his inimitable style when he observed that “loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul in this world—and never will.” It was clear that the conference participants had a genuine passion for authorship studies, and there was a friendly, supportive environment apparent in the warmth and camaraderie of the registrants.

However, there was room for improvement in those presentations that exceeded the announced time limits. From the perspective of audience members, we have a

mental mindset in preparing to concentrate for forty-five minutes or an hour at a stretch. If the talk exceeds the anticipated time limit, the speakers’ words will have diminishing returns for the listeners. On a practical note, one of our luncheons was delayed due to an over-extended talk, which was discourteous to the staff who prepared the meal. In another instance, people were gearing up for the trip to Spring Green when a presentation exceeded the time limit. One of the ongoing criticisms about us from the Stratfordians is that we are “amateurs.” The best way to combat that perception is to be role models of scholarly decorum. That includes the courtesy of respecting the guidelines for presentations.

In the final analysis, a conference is only as good as the professionalism of the participants. And we can always strive for higher standards, especially when it comes to consideration of our audience members. As always, the author of Shakespeare’s plays and poems provides us with wisdom on this matter: “Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain.”

James Norwood
St. Paul, MN

I have reread—with renewed appreciation—Roger Stritmatter’s insightful review of *AKA Shakespeare: A Scientific Approach to the Authorship Question* (Spring 2014). The next time my four characters meet together, I shall urge them to be a little less “Carmelly.” But whether they will comply is anyone’s guess.

There were two algebraic typos. The equation did not come out as intended: it should read:
(the standard form of Laplace’s rule of succession).

$$P = \frac{n+1}{N+2}$$

The second typo is on p. 21, at the end of the second paragraph. Claudia’s probability for Oxford should read:

$$1 - 5 \cdot 10^{-6}$$

which probably could have been expressed more comprehensibly as:

$$0.999995$$

I gather that some readers ask how one can assign a probability to a subjective judgment. There is a useful *gedanken* (thought) experiment that can help.

Imagine, for instance, that you are trying to set a probability upon the statement “Stratford was lame at one time in his life.” Let us denote that by $P(S_lame)$. Now imagine that a *deus ex machina* arrives in the form of an ET stepping out of a flying saucer, and suppose that the ET is 500 years old, and knows exactly whether

or not Stratford was ever lame. The ET offers you a choice: You can either receive \$10,000 if Stratford was in fact once lame, or you can receive \$10,000 if you are successful in a lottery that he proposes.

If the lottery is such that you know you have only one chance in a thousand of winning ($P = 0.001$), you might decide to go with the Stratford-lame option. This would mean that your subjective probability $P(S_lame)$ is bigger than 0.001.

However, if the lottery is such that you know you have nine chances in ten ($P = 0.9$) of winning, you would

probably go with the lottery. This would mean that your subjective probability $P(S_lame)$ is less than 0.9.

For P somewhere between 0.001 and 0.9, there would be a value of P such that it was a toss-up whether to go with the Stratford-lame option or the lottery. That value of P is your estimate of the probability that Stratford was once lame.

Peter Sturrock
Palo Alto, CA



What's the News?

***The Oxfordian*: Michael Egan Steps Down; New Editor to be Named**

As we announced recently at the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship conference in Madison, Dr. Michael Egan has stepped down as editor of our eminent journal, *The Oxfordian*, after completing the editing and publishing of volume 16.

We thank Dr. Egan for his outstanding work as editor of the most recent six volumes of *The Oxfordian*. John Hamill, immediate past President of the SOF, praised Dr. Egan for maintaining *The Oxfordian* as a "respected journal" with a "solid reputation for scholarship." William Niederkorn, formerly of the *New York Times*, called *The Oxfordian* "the best American academic journal covering the authorship question." Dr. Egan also served commendably as editor of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* from 2010 to 2013. We thank Dr. Egan for his service and wish him the greatest success in his future activities.

In the meantime, the SOF is in search of a new editor for *The Oxfordian*. As we went to press, our search committee was sifting through the applications it has received. The committee expected to make a recommendation to the SOF Board within a short time.

2015 Conference to Return to Oregon

In January 2014, following the departure of Professor Dan Wright, founder of the SARC, I received a call from the administration of Concordia University in Portland, home of the Richard and Jane Roe Shakespeare Authorship Research Center (SARC), about the possibility of continuing the annual spring conference and summer seminar in 2014. As a fifteen-year attendee at the Concordia programs, I knew how important they

have been to the authorship community, and how my own development has been profoundly influenced by the scholars Professor Wright attracted to his programs. Supported by the SOF Board, I agreed to organize the 2014 conference and seminar, both of which were successful due to the active participation of many of our members and the superb teaching skills of Roger Stritmatter.

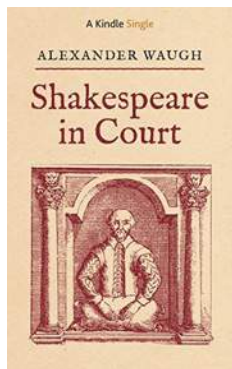
Unfortunately for the Oxfordian cause, the Concordia administration has yet to obtain the necessary funding to support further programs, and has not interviewed candidates to replace Professor Wright. Disappointing as this may be, Oregon will still host the most important program of the upcoming year, as the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will hold its 2015 annual conference and membership meeting in Ashland, home of the Tony Award-winning Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), from Thursday, September 24 through Sunday, September 27. This represents the third Shakespeare Authorship Conference in Ashland since 2005. Group rates of \$139-169/night for rooms at the Ashland Springs Hotel and the Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites will be available for conference attendees.

Past conferences in Ashland have usually attracted 100 or more Oxfordians. In that expectation, 100 tickets each for productions of *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Pericles*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, directed by OSF Artistic Director Bill Rauch, have been reserved for our group. The package of tickets to all three plays will be \$100 for our discounted group order. Theater ticket orders and conference registration information will be posted after the first of the year.

For information on the complete program of Oregon Shakespeare Festival productions go to: <https://osfashland.org/>. The 2015 fall program includes *Guys and Dolls*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, *Sweat*, *The Happiest Song Plays Last* and *Head Over Heels*.

The goal of SOF conferences is to address specific challenges in the Shakespeare authorship debate. For 2015, papers are being solicited that engage the three Shakespeare plays being presented during the conference, as well as those that report on the SOF research grants being awarded this fall (see news note below). A call for papers will soon be posted. Please consider joining our colleagues in Ashland in September in what promises to be a thoroughly delightful and unique educational opportunity.

- Earl Showerman



Alexander Waugh's *Shakespeare in Court* Getting Noticed

Alexander Waugh's new e-book, *Shakespeare in Court*, is deservedly beginning to get some attention. Waugh previewed the book at the SOF Conference in Madison in September (see separate story in this issue). The first part of the book is an essay by Waugh, taking the

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to task over its claims that the properties it owns in Stratford-upon-Avon were actually connected to Will Shakspeare or Anne Hathaway. The second part is a trial, where witnesses are cross-examined.

We were delighted to see that *Shakespeare in Court* received a very positive review in Waugh's own country. Writing in the *London Express* on October 27, Robert Gore-Langton confessed that he put his skepticism aside and was "beginning to think the anti-Shakespeare cranks might just have a point." Gore-Langton gave a succinct (and accurate) summary of the lack of evidence to support the Shakspeare claim: "He never claimed to be a writer, he left no record of any education or foreign travel (with which the plays are chockful) and he wasn't known to court or literary circles. His family never once mentioned his amazing achievements, no copies of his plays were kept, no manuscripts, no memorabilia. There is no evidence that he ever owned a book or could write anything. All we have by him are six scraggly signatures spelling his name several different ways. His parents—his father was a glover or a butcher—were illiterate as were probably his brothers and sisters, none of whom did jobs that required any schooling."

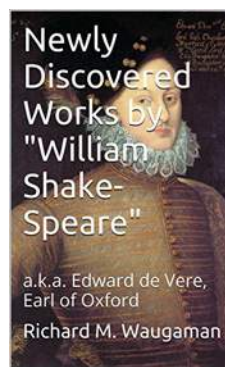
Noting that Waugh is a proponent of the "Oxfordian" theory, Gore-Langton wrote that "Oxford is a prime candidate: he was an epic boozing toff and a poet and patron of a theatre company.... He was taught by the English translator of the Roman poet Ovid, Shakespeare's favourite source material. His poet uncle was the inventor of the Shakespearean sonnet form and the three dedicatees of Shakespeare's works were

First SOF Research Grants Awarded

The first research grants awarded by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship have been announced. Former SOF President John Hamill, who chaired the committee that reviewed the grant proposals, stated that the committee was pleased to be able to fund three proposals, each of which promises "the possibility of exciting new finds to help solve the authorship mystery." One award was made to Professor Roger Stritmatter, editor of *Brief Chronicles*, for research into a book that may have been annotated by Edward de Vere. Another award was made to Professor Michael Delahoyde, managing editor of *Brief Chronicles*, for research to be conducted in a few northern Italian archives. A third award has also been made, but at the request of the recipient it will be announced later. Further details on the awards will appear on the SOF website and in future issues of this newsletter.

proposed as husbands for Oxford's three daughters." That's a good succinct summary of the case, too. Gore-Langton went on to note that Oxford died before plays such as *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* came to the stage, but opined that they "could of course have been staged posthumously." Perhaps more importantly, he went on to say, "But even if it wasn't Oxford, doubt about the authorship is to my mind justified." He concluded with a promise: "I for one will approach the Shakespeare deniers without the dismissive sneer I used to."

Alexander Waugh's *Shakespeare in Court* is available for \$2.99 at www.amazon.com.



Richard Waugaman Announces New Book

Richard Waugaman has published a new e-book, *Newly Discovered Works by "William Shakespeare," a.k.a. Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford*. In it he argues that *The Art of English Poesie* (1589), the most important "Elizabethan guide to rhetoric—the art of writing well—was probably written by de Vere."

He also attributes several anonymous poems from the era to de Vere.

A frequent contributor to these pages, Dr. Waugaman is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Faculty Expert on Shakespeare for Media Contacts at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. His new e-book is available for \$1.99 at www.amazon.com.

Harvey as Dogberry

by Robert R. Prechter, Jr.

Gabriel Harvey penned a complaint about the Earl of Oxford in his Latin poem, “Speculum Tuscanismi,” written in 1579 and published within *Three proper, and wittie, familiar Letters* in 1580. Around the same time, “Gabriel Harvey wrote in 1579 to the poet Spenser, complaining that his friends were (figuratively speaking) thrusting him ‘on the stage to make tryall of his extemporal faculty and to play Wylson’s or Tarleton’s parte.’” (Grosart, ed., *The Works of Gabriel Harvey*. Vol. 1. London: Hasell, Watson and Viney, Ltd., 1884, p.125). These two complaints may be related.

Thomas Nashe charged that Harvey was caricatured in a college play titled *Pedantius*, which was acted in 1581. Various scholars have proposed that Harvey was lampooned on stage in other plays, including Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labor’s Lost*.

Did Shakespeare mock Harvey in another play? While reading Harvey’s *Pierces Supererogation*, I found the following lines over a span of four pages:

“[C]hristen me a duncce, a fool, an idiot, a dolt, a good-cap, an ass [emphasis in the original]... If I be an ass, I have company enough, and if I be an ass, I have favour to be installed in such company.... If I be an ass, what asses were those courteous friends.... I were indeed a notorious insensate ass in case I should...utterly abandon mine own credit.... by the leave of God I will prove myself no ass.”

In Shakespeare’s *Much Ado about Nothing*, a villain, frustrated over the antics of the constable, Dogberry, shouts, “Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.” Dogberry immediately laments the absence of the Sexton and bellows,

“O that he were here to write me down—an ass! But, masters, remember, that I am an ass.... O, that I had been writ down—an ass.” (IV,ii) He reminds the authorities, “Moreover, sir...this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass...and, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass” (V,i) [emphases in original].

The last line, typically shouted, always gets a laugh. In Shakespeare’s day, the laugh might have been much bigger if some audience members understood that Dogberry was parodying Harvey’s repeated protests over having been called an ass.

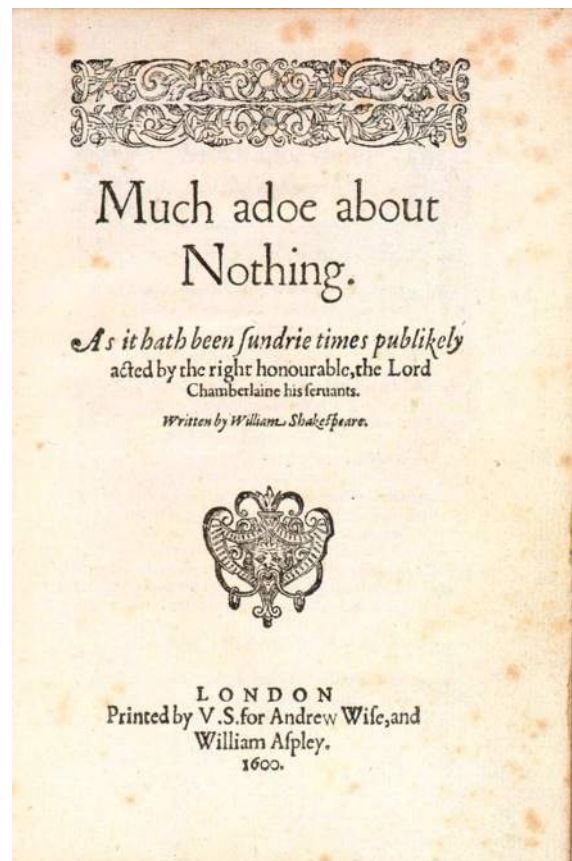
Dogberry’s exchange with the governor in Act III, Scene v, could well be a caricature of Harvey’s oratorical pretensions and famously tiresome verbosity. At one point Dogberry says, “if I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.” The governor replies, “All thy tediousness on me, ah?”

Dogberry also levels a seemingly irrelevant charge that happens to fit the Earl of Oxford. Referring to the villains he advises,

“And also, the watch heard them talk of one Deformed: they say he wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God’s name, the which he hath used so long and never paid that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God’s sake: pray you, examine him upon that point.” (V,i)

Chronic indebtedness by a third party is small matter compared to the charges against the villains, so the line gets a laugh for that reason. But if it also caricatures Harvey’s real-life complaints about the indebted Earl of Oxford—the unnamed “one Deformed”—it may have had a stronger comic effect back in the day.

Upon noting these connections, I thought I had found something new. But it turns out the initial observation is over 100 years old. In the 19th century Harvard scholar James Lowell, writing about Edmund Spenser, made the following comment about Gabriel Harvey in a footnote: “Yet the reiteration of emphasis with which he insists on all the world’s knowing that Nash had called him an ass, probably gave Shakespeare the hint for one of the most comic touches in the character of Dogberry” (J.R. Lowell, “Spenser,” *The North American Review* 120.247 [1875]: 334-394, p. 348fn). His observation seems to have escaped general observation, but it is useful in providing yet another link between Oxford, who was at odds with Harvey, and Shakespeare, who seems to have taken up his cause.





SHAKESPEARE

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“Authorship Appeal” Held at Stratford, Ontario, in October Presumption in Favor of Shakspere “Not Rebutted”

by Alex McNeil

A widely publicized “Authorship Appeal” was presented at the Stratford Festival in Stratford, Ontario, on Saturday morning, October 4, 2014. A packed house of 700 heard arguments from two prominent Canadian lawyers presented to a five-judge panel headed by Beverley McLachlin, Chief Justice of Canada. The event was live-streamed and was recorded by CBC Radio.

Much credit should go to SOF Trustee Don Rubin, Professor of Theatre at York University in Toronto, for helping frame the event so that both sides of the Shakespeare Authorship Question were fairly presented. As originally planned by the Stratford Festival organizers, the event was going to be a lighthearted treatment of the issue with no input from anti-Stratfordians. Thanks to the efforts of Rubin and other Oxfordians, that idea was scrapped in favor of a presentation much like a moot court. The question to be decided was, as one of the judges phrased it, whether there exists “sufficient evidence to refute the claim that Shakespeare [of Stratford] was the principal author of the canon.”

The program was introduced by Anita Gaffney, the Festival’s executive director, who observed that “the idea of debate springs naturally” from Shakespeare’s works. She introduced the two attorneys: Guy Pratte of Borden Ladner Gervais, LLP, Canada’s largest law firm, who represented the “petitioner,” challenging the Stratfordian claim, and Sheila Block of Torys LLP, another prominent Canadian firm, who represented the “respondent,” Shakspere of Stratford (attorney Pratte was officially representing the Earl of Oxford as the petitioner, though the case for Oxford was not actually presented; the focus of the event was on challenging Shakspere’s claim). Gaffney then introduced the five panelists: Chief Justice McLachlin, Judges Robert Sharpe and Eileen Gillese of the Court of Appeal for Ontario, attorney Tricia Jackson (also of Torys LLP) and actor Colm Feore, who would be playing the title role in *King Lear* at the Festival later in the day.

The proceedings began in an unusual way—with an appearance by Will Shakspere himself. Or rather an appearance by Antoni Cimolino, the Festival’s artistic director, in period costume as Shakspere, who submitted himself to cross-examination by Pratte. Pratte focused first on the spelling of the name, noting that Shakspere himself never spelled it “Shakespeare.” He pointed out that there is no evidence that Shakspere attended school, that he ever owned or borrowed a book, and that no manuscripts exist. He noted that the extant records concerning Shakspere have nothing to do with a literary



Don Rubin

career. He showed the witness a copy of the Droeshout engraving in the First Folio, to which Cimolino replied, “It’s a terrible picture.” Pratte then contrasted the Droeshout portrait with the Chandos portrait, which obviously shows a different person. There was intentional humor here, as the subject in both portraits has little hair, while Cimolino had a full head of hair. Cimolino was also able to add a few comments here and there, including his explanation that “this romantic idea of authorship was not something we had; we were practical people in the theater. We needed to put on a show.”

After Cimolino left the stage, each attorney made a 12- to 15-minute argument to the five-member panel of judges. Going first, Attorney Block made her argument for the respondent. She argued that there were many contemporary references to the author Shakespeare, and that the “best eyewitness” was “rival dramatist Ben Jonson.” She characterized Jonson as a “narcissist,” and said that he had “no motive to lie” when he expressed his admiration of Shakespeare, first to Drummond in 1619 and later in the 1623 First Folio. Block then rehearsed many of the usual arguments made in support of the Stratford man: that authorship doubts first surfaced in 1856, that Shakespeare “lived in an era of legalisms and litigiousness” (citing a 1913 study that claimed that other dramatists used more legalisms than Shakespeare); that it wasn’t necessary for him to have visited Italy (“Tolkien never went to Middle Earth”); that his knowledge of geography was spotty (citing the “seacoast in Bohemia” and a reference in *Taming of the Shrew* to a sailmaker who lived in a landlocked town). She cited a number of well-known literary figures who *didn’t* like Shakespeare

to counter the claim that Shakespeare's works are transcendent. She cited the vast amount of bawdiness and vulgarities in the works in support of the playwright's commoner origin, asserting that rival authorship candidates like Bacon and Oxford didn't "knock about with lowlives like actors." As to Shakspeare's known biography, she referred to an entry by Katherine Loomis in the *Gale Dictionary of Literary Biography* with some "300 documents, pages of documents connected with Shakespeare" (it was unclear whether she meant 300 documents or 300 pages). She then enumerated seven connections between Shakspeare and the works of Shakespeare:

- (1) the death of Shakspeare's young son Hamnet and the grief expressed by Constance in *King John* over the loss of a child;
- (2) a drowning in the River Avon in 1569 and the death of Ophelia in *Hamlet*;
- (3) the reference in *Taming of the Shrew* to standard Latin grammars used in schools;
- (4) that education at the local schools was "relentless," and that the curriculum would have exposed Shakspeare to what he needed to know about the classical writers;
- (5) admitting that she was asking for an "inference" to be drawn, she noted that in 1575 the Earl of Leicester staged a nineteen-day celebration for the Queen not far from Stratford-upon-Avon, that Will Shakspeare's father may have taken him there, and that it "could have made a profound impression" on him;
- (6) in *Measure for Measure* Claudio is jailed for impregnating an unmarried woman, and Shakspeare married the pregnant Anne Hathaway in 1582;
- (7) that Oxford died in 1604, but *Macbeth* and *The Tempest* were inspired by later events (as to *The Tempest*, Block claimed that Shakspeare actually knew several of the colonists who were stranded in the 1609 shipwreck off Bermuda).

Finally, Block recited a few lines of Oxford's early poetry, stating that it wasn't very good and cannot be compared with Shakespeare's verse.

Guy Pratte then made his argument for the petitioner. He did not counter Block's specific points other than to note that she was relying on 400-year-old hearsay from Ben Jonson (Block's "best eyewitness"), who was known as a "master of equivocation." He again stressed the difference in the spelling of the names Shakspeare and Shakespeare, and that the Droeshout engraving is not a likeness of Shakespeare. Pratte then asked the panel to "assume for a moment that we don't know who wrote the plays and we try to assess the evidence to see whether or not it is foolish to claim that there might be some doubt about that." He reminded the panel that none of the facts we "really know" about Shakspeare point to a

writer, that there is no record that he ever claimed to be a writer, that his family members never claimed he was a writer, that no letters of his are known to exist, and that no notice was taken of his death. Turning to Attorney Block's list of connections between Shakspeare and the canon, Pratte cited *Contested Will*, where James Shapiro sharply criticized those who attempt to find biographical parallels. Summing up, Pratte asked the panel to "set aside whatever idea of authorship you may have had when you walked in these hallowed halls, and that you assess the claim made on behalf of Shakspeare of Stratford based on evidence, not speculation. If I have persuaded you only to do that, I will have succeeded in my real mission" to show that courts, like the theater, are places "where we can question our most profound beliefs."

Chief Justice McLachlin then asked each of her four co-panelists to comment. Attorney Jackson (who works for the same law firm as the respondent's attorney, Sheila Block) opined that the matter is a classic illustration of the maxim that "absence of evidence is not the same as evidence of absence," and assumed that over the course of 400 years many records have been lost or destroyed. In a similar vein, she observed that any applicable statutes of limitation would operate to bar such a claim, now being made so long after the events in question. She thought it was "perhaps unfair" for a court of law to be asked to resolve the authorship dispute, but noted that there exist many important questions for historians to continue to examine.

Justice Sharpe commended both attorneys, saying that he'd now gained "a clear picture" of the authorship debate. He also observed that "it can be no accident that Shakespeare mentions lawyers more than any other profession."

Actor Colm Feore, though he refrained from rendering a decision, could barely conceal his distaste for the authorship issue ("I'm slightly more prejudiced," he confessed). He chose to point out what he considered to be "fundamentals," confidently asserting that Shakespeare had no interest in being seen as a writer. He was "a theater professional" who was in it "for the money." He was not interested in publishing his plays; instead, he wrote them to make money so that he could retire back to Stratford-upon-Avon as soon as he could. He didn't care about "his literary legacy." Feore stated that a man from a small town with a modest education could still be a genius, and compared Shakspeare with Kenneth Branagh, a "plumber's son" from Belfast who made a name for himself.

Justice Gillese read her lengthy remarks, which obviously had been written before the event. She commended the attorneys and Antoni Cimolino, who had appeared as Shakspeare. After noting that the answer to the authorship question is "not a foregone conclusion," she turned to specific points. She was unswayed by the argument pointing out the differences between the names

Shakspeare and Shakespeare. She criticized the petitioner's attorney for not putting forth a coherent theory of who wrote the plays, if it was not Shakspeare. "No sooner is one possible candidate disqualified than another is suggested as a replacement," she said. [It was unclear from the format of the event whether making the case for a specific alternate candidate would have been permitted, or was even contemplated.] Gillese also cited the claim that doubts about authorship didn't surface until 1856. She chastised the respondent's attorney for not acknowledging evidence of Shakespeare's collaborating with other writers, which to her "undermines [the respondent's] position." She added that proponents of Shakspeare also need to "confront the inferences to be drawn from [his known] character and background." "Does the fact that Shakspeare was a commoner, a moneylender and an avaricious hoarder of grain mean that he was incapable of imagining the worlds created within his plays?" Finally, like Attorney Jackson, she alluded to the statutes of limitations, stating that she might prefer to avoid rendering a decision by dismissing the case on that ground.

Chief Justice McLachlin delivered the final remarks. She sarcastically thanked her four co-panelists for "their conclusions, unhelpful as they may be." She then summarized the evidence for the petitioner (who argued against Shakspeare as author), characterizing it as "based on several, what I would say are, rather dubious arguments." She too dismissed the argument about the spellings of the names, noting that her own name had been misspelled on a seating list the previous evening. As to the argument (if indeed it was ever made) that someone from a small town couldn't have risen to such heights, she noted that she came from a small town in Alberta, and had a "mediocre" education; "I had nothing going for me," she recalled. She then noted that "we all have doubt." As a jurist, she stated that she took "great solace" in the legal concept of burden of proof. In this case, she stated that there exists a "presumption" of Shakspeare's authorship, based on centuries of "erudition." Thus, "It is the burden, regrettably, on Mr. Pratte and his client [the petitioner] to rebut that presumption, and I must, like my colleagues, find that the evidence remains unclear. In that circumstance, the presumption is not rebutted." In closing, she cited Oliver Wendell Holmes's observation that "certainty is an illusion and repose is not the destiny of man."

Several Oxfordians were in the audience. Lynne and Michael Kositsky stated that they were "rather disappointed with the event as there were no Shakespeare specialists speaking, and none on the 'jury.' An excellent debate would have had one lawyer speaking for Shakespeare and another for Oxford so the two could be compared. But the format as to whether William of Stratford wrote the canon simply did not allow for another candidate to be investigated." Linda Theil said her response was "gratitude, relief and

satisfaction. I was grateful to Guy Pratte for his openness to doubt and to Don Rubin for helping him to prepare. I was relieved because Pratte's unwillingness to play buffo created an atmosphere that eliminated outright anti-Strat bashing. I was satisfied because the people on that stage represented the peak of power and prestige in the Canadian legal community and they treated the question of Shakespeare authorship with consideration and respect. As one who has heard Stratford Festival communications director David Prosser say studying Shakespeare authorship is like studying 'holocaust denial,' I thought the Authorship Appeal was a breakthrough for authorship skeptics."

As reported by Linda Theil on the SOF website, SOF Trustee Don Rubin stated that the outcome was not as good as he'd hoped, nor as bad as he'd feared. "I was pleased that the Chief Justice's final statement was that there are no certainties. I think the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust people can't be happy with that. They believe there is absolutely no doubt and doubt was certainly raised." Rubin also stated that he and Pratte are discussing the possibility of the Stratford Festival hosting a "full-blown trial—along the lines proposed by John Shahan and the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition—in 2016."

The live-stream of the October 4 event can be found online. A link is on the SOF website: <http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/rubin-pleased-by-stratford-moot-court/>



From the Editor

This issue of the Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter is a pretty full one, so I'll just mention two things:

1. I was delighted to be named Oxfordian of the Year for 2014. To be on a list of awardees that includes such persons as former US Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens is truly an honor. Brick by brick, fact by fact, the case for Oxford as the real Shakespeare is being built and is getting noticed; the Stratfordian apologists can't just stick their heads in the sand and hope it goes away. Each of us needs to do what we can. If getting a quarterly newsletter out and managing the office helps the cause, then I'm making a contribution. Thank you to the SOF Board of Trustees!
2. On the last page of the Summer 2014 issue, I asked readers to submit answers to the following riddle: How many Oxfordians does it take to change a light bulb? So far I've received one response. Please send me some more, and I'll run them in the next issue.

Alex McNeil

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Book Reviews

Such Fruits Out of Italy: The Italian Renaissance in Shakespeare's Plays and Poems

by Noemi Magri; Essays edited and introduction by Gary Goldstein
(Laugwitz Verlag, Buchholz, Germany, 2014, 300 pages)

Reviewed by William Ray

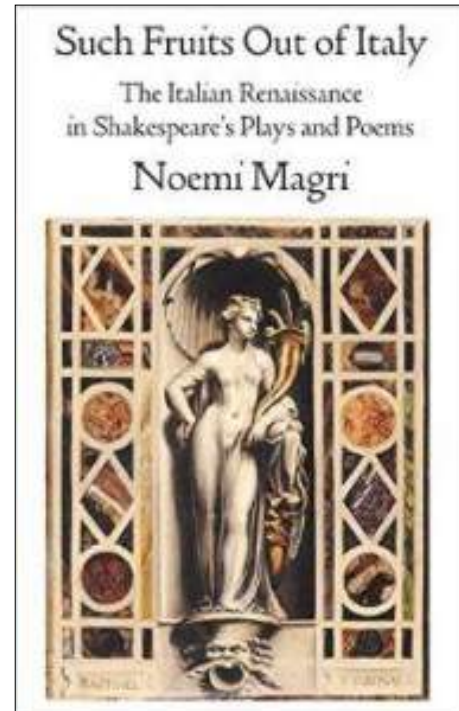
The late, much-mourned Noemi Magri was admirably prepared for Shakespeare scholarship, possessing a mastery of Italian, Latin and English, familiarity with Greek, and a thorough knowledge of Renaissance history and art. This memorial collection of her essays remains as a testament to her skills and courage in that controversial, error-prone field of learning. Gary Goldstein and the Laugwitz publishers deserve commendation for making the essays available in a single volume at a modest cost. The illustrations are felicitous and the complete notes and bibliographies very helpful for further study.

I

The greatest resistance to Oxfordian conclusions bears on the issue of credibility. What does it take to persuade believers in an established system to doubt their first assumptions? The strengths of Dr. Magri's approach are specificity and its corollary, verifiability. The abstract theory, a downfall of Shakespearean scholarship, is absent from her work. Thus it represents to the reader important evidence no rational mind could discount.

Reading these pages, one proceeds along a fine-linked chain of references, deductions, and influences that establish, for example, that Titian's Barbarini version of "Venus and Adonis" had to have been Shakespeare's source for a critical scene of his 1593 epyllion. After a number of connections established by comparative analysis, the stinger of her argument is that this version of the painting stood in the Master's studio in Venice. Titian was evidently visited there by Oxford in 1575-76, as was the custom for foreign personages of high rank while absorbing glories of the Italian Renaissance.

She suggests in an aside that the Titian's vivid visual depiction of emotion may have inspired Oxford to become a painter himself—in words. From the vantage point of this insight, I venture to say that the ensuing *Venus and Adonis* became the first lifelike allegory/autobiography of English, even all modern, literature. This descriptive style may have been Oxford's "invention," of which *V&A* was the first heir, created in light of the sensuously human artistic depictions of myths and gods so characteristic of Italian Renaissance art. It was different from his earlier known writing.



Another major subject of Dr. Magri was Giulio Romano, the Mantuan master of lifelike art—so lifelike that it seemed more real than ordinary perception expected. Romano's statue of Ippola Castiglione, the courtier's wife, was painted after it was sculpted; it is the model for the statue of Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*. Romano's frescoes of the Trojan War were sufficiently compelling that "Shakespeare" made fulsome reference to them in *Lucrece* (lines 1394-1450).

That these artists represented the full range of human emotion, virtues, temptations, and vices constituted a revolution in perception. It is highly plausible that Oxford transferred the revolution into verbal portraiture and description. *Venus and Adonis* became a sensation, went through several editions, and made "Shakespeare" not only a name, but a symbol for a new consciousness and evolutionary change.

The induction scene of *The Taming of the Shrew* also convinced Dr. Magri that the author must have gone to Italy, to have so closely described the three "wanton" paintings. She compared the "Cytherea" description in the play to Penni's "Venus and the Rose"; the "Io" description to Corregio's "Io"; and the "Apollo and Daphne" narrative to the anonymous "Apollo and Daphne" now in Casa Vasari, Arezzo. In addition to showing points of similarity between the respective paintings and the verses, she established that all three paintings were available to Oxford during his travels.

II

The issue of "Shakespeare" in Italy returned to the fore in late 2011 with the publication of Richard P. Roe's book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*. Both he and

Dr. Magri had been working on this aspect of the Shakespeare authorship controversy for years. Her essay about *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* confirmed everything he wrote. Both she and Grillo (and before them Violet M. Jeffrey in 1932) antedated the most recent episode of establishing, deductively, the author Shakespeare's physical presence in the Mediterranean. No one ever came close to claiming Shakspeare of Stratford went there.

On a particular point loudly touted in Oxfraud.com—that canals in Italy were for commercial and military transport but not for passenger traffic as alluded to in *Two Gentlemen*—just the opposite is established. The reader can see from the engraving on p. 135 in *Such Fruits Out of Italy* how uninformed the Oxfraud assertion is.

Dr. Magri cites an old Italian source that, in the sixteenth century, there were forty-nine *burghieri* (guides of a type of small passenger ship) on the Adige. They had their own trade guild. The connecting canals were integral to the water transport system linking the Adige and the Po. Valentine's words in the play refer to that very route.

The discussion of *The Merchant of Venice* strengthens the point. The Shakespeare author saw, experienced, participated in, enjoyed, admired, and memorialized life in northern Italy, with the canal system an integral aspect of daily life. A brief example will do to show eyewitness knowledge. "Shakespeare" was supposedly wrong referring to an "Emperor" in Milan (there is a tangential remark, "attends the Emperor and his court," in the play). The solution is that the title pertains to Spanish, not Italian, royal hierarchy, in accordance with Spanish rule over Milan in the 1570s.

The upshot of Dr. Magri's studies is both simple and enlightening. Oxford's fidelity to the truth was so thorough that he would not cheapen a work of literary art with imaginary geography or topography. He was temperamentally faithful to Nature and the eternal Past. The accuracy of the physical and cultural descriptions should not be a surprise. Only the unbridgeable gap between Shakspeare as author of the Italian plays created massive error.

I have touched on a few main essays and will only advert to a number of others:

- *All's Well That Ends Well*, set in France and Florence, is substantiated in detail. The questioned shrine at Jaques de Grand is just San Giacomo Maggiore.
- The route from Venice to Sicily by galley, coasting the eastern Adriatic, was the usual route because of its favorable weather, winds, and currents.
- Othello's house in the narrow Sagittary (*vicus Sagittarius*, now known as the Frezzaria) stood on a street existing then and still trafficked today.

- Hamlet alluded to Gonzago in the play-within-a-play to expose Claudius as an assassin. The Duke of Urbino, associated with the Gonzago family, had died in the same way as the fictional Hamlet's father. This was not known in England, but was common knowledge in the high courts of Italy.
- The trial in *The Merchant of Venice* is a precise replica of 1570s Venetian law and procedures. It differed in virtually every detail from the English legal system.
- Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britannia* contains a title-page giveaway about whom Peacham considered the Minerva (Mind) of the Age: de Vere. He wrote nothing of Shakespeare. Dr. Magri translated and interpreted its anagrammatic Latin message.

III

Finally, in several places Dr. Magri took on Dr. Alan Nelson, whose biography of Oxford, *Monstrous Adversary*, has been called by critic William Niederkorn "one of the most bilious biographies ever written." Contrary to decorous custom among Oxfordians in conferences, Dr. Magri showed Nelson to be an incompetent historian and dishonest arguer. This was most clearly demonstrated in her reprise of Nelson's work regarding the Cuoco hearing (the Venetian Inquisition). According to the 1581 Arundel-Howard libels, immoral relations had occurred between Oxford and the young countertenor whom he had brought back from Italy. Nelson considered Oxford's enemies' testimony wholly correct, and he committed numerous errors and misjudgments translating the Inquisition texts in Latin and Venetian-Italian. Cuoco's testimony did *not* corroborate the Arundel-Howard position. The question for the historian then is, did the treacherous aristocrats have credibility? It seems irrefutable that they did not, being themselves suspected of treason, a charge advanced by Oxford, their former friend. The outlandishness of their other slanders about him is additional reason for doubt. Dealing with another document, Nelson even spelled the youth's name wrong. Dr. Magri, perfectly fluent in the languages, corrected additional errors. She made no comment regarding the utter irresponsibility of an historian asserting the worst about his subject on insufficient grounds, then ignoring evidence to the contrary from a primary character witness.

I mention this to contrast her meticulous, cumulative, painstaking approach to knowledge with the biased results she analyzed in Nelson's book. By cleaving to verifiable fact with personal integrity and professional skill, she opened a way for truth, which has not been either questioned or countermanded since she wrote her essays. Nelson's biography is out of print.



William Shakespeare & Others, Collaborative Plays

Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, eds. (with Jan Sewell and Will Sharpe)
Palgrave Macmillan, 2013 (782 pages).

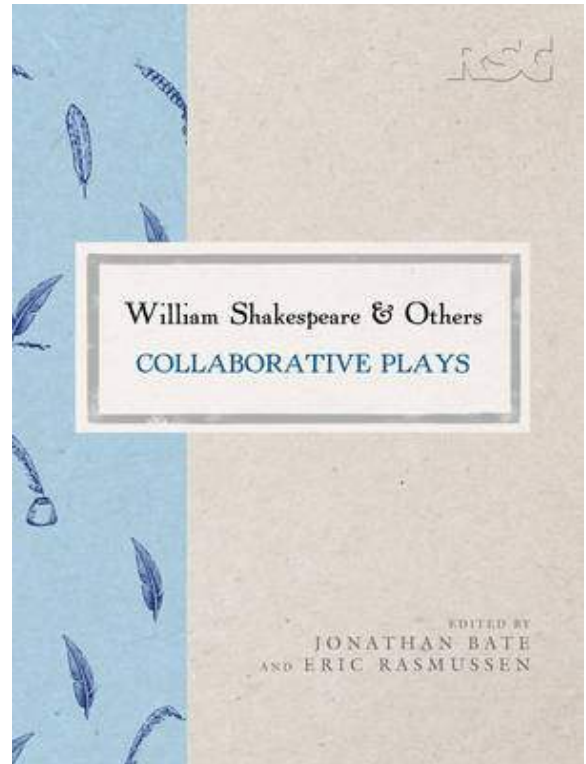
Reviewed by Ramon Jiménez

In 2007 the Royal Shakespeare Company issued its edition of the “Complete Works” of Shakespeare, consisting of modernized texts of the plays in Shakespeare’s 1623 First Folio, plus *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Richard Whalen reviewed that collection in the Summer 2007 issue of this newsletter. The present companion volume contains modernized texts of ten plays that were *not* in the First Folio, although some of them made it into the Third and Fourth Folios. At least four had previously been published over Shakespeare’s name or initials, but most were anonymous. Eight were originally published between 1595 and 1608. *Double Falsehood*, Lewis Theobald’s alleged adaptation of the lost play *Cardenio*, was published in 1728, and *Sir Thomas More* appeared in 1844. Each copiously annotated text is introduced by a short essay.

According to the editors, some of the plays are “very likely,” and others are “highly unlikely,” to have been partly by Shakespeare, but they are not sure. And that is the message of this collection—they don’t know.

The book jacket declares that this is “the first edition for over a hundred years of the fascinatingly varied body of plays that has become known as ‘The Shakespeare Apocrypha,’” but the claim is wrong on two counts. Overlooked is William Kozlenko’s nearly identical collection of eleven apocryphal plays, published in 1974. And despite their claim to have published “The Shakespeare Apocrypha,” the editors have omitted at least five other anonymous plays from the period for which there is much better evidence that they belong in the Shakespeare canon than any in the present collection.

Those five plays—*The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, *The Troublesome Reign of John*, *The Taming of a Shrew* and *King Leir*—are not even included in their list of “Plays Excluded From This Edition.” Four are dismissed in a single paragraph as “sources” (*Famous Victories* and *King Leir*) or as bearing a “close but baffling relationship” to First Folio plays (*The Taming of a Shrew* and *Troublesome Reign*). The fifth, *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, Shakespeare’s first attempt at the story and a prime example of Shakespearean “apocrypha,” is not mentioned at all. For two or three of these plays, full-scale scholarly studies, most of them by Stratfordian scholars, have been published that place them firmly in the Shakespeare canon. But none of those studies is included in the list of “Selected Further Reading.”



The editors also dismiss, in two paragraphs each, *Edmund Ironside* and *Thomas of Woodstock* (also known as *1 Richard II*), two anonymous plays that have robust claims for inclusion in the canon. Eric Sams made the strongest possible argument for *Edmund Ironside* more than twenty-five years ago. The editors give three reasons for rejecting his claim: his “alienation of many critics with the self-righteousness of his prose”; his “compelling parallels” between *Ironside* and the canon are taken from *Titus Andronicus*, *Edward III* and *Henry VI, Part I*—“plays dogged with co-authorship controversies”; and his dating the play to 1588, which Gary Taylor has pronounced “certainly not certain, and probably not probable.”

Such a cavalier rejection of Sams’ work is not only incorrect on the face of it, but suggests pettiness and mendacity. Anyone reading Sams’ book finds that dozens of his parallels are taken from such plays as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II* and *Richard III*, about which there are no “co-authorship controversies.” And the editors ignore Sams’ 160-page essay describing dozens of distinctive images and image clusters, metaphors, symbols, and other rhetorical and dramatic devices that appear in *Edmund Ironside* and in canonical Shakespeare plays. Taylor’s glib remark about the date is also unsupportable. Since Shakespeare scholars have been unable to securely date the composition of *any* Shakespeare play, there is no rationale for his rejection of 1588 or earlier for the composition of *Ironside*. This is especially true from the Oxfordian point of view. If the author of the canon wrote *Ironside*, he did so very early

in his career, and it is inconceivable that Oxford began writing plays in his late thirties.

In the case of *Thomas of Woodstock*, the editors do cite Michael Egan's "major study" of the play, but reject his mountain of multifaceted evidence of Shakespeare's authorship in favor of "extremely convincing stylometric parallels" supplied by MacDonald P. Jackson, and "twenty discrete rejections" of Shakespeare's style supplied by the discredited Ward Elliot and Robert Valenza. Three other stylometric analyses (by Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, John Baker, and Louis Ule) that tend to support Shakespeare's authorship are mentioned but dismissed; those studies are not listed in "Selected Further Reading."

Why would the editors choose to omit six or eight plays for which substantial scholarly arguments for inclusion in the canon have recently been made? There are at least three reasons. The first is that Stratfordian scholars are extremely reluctant to push against the weight of tradition and add plays to the accepted canon. In the 300 years of serious Shakespearean criticism, only four plays have garnered enough support to be grudgingly accepted by most Stratfordian scholars, and three of them—*Pericles*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Edward III*—are considered collaborations. Although the fourth, *Double Falsehood*, was added to the Arden series in 2010, no one knows if it's an adaptation, a collaboration or an elaborate forgery.

The second reason is that admitting such anonymous plays as *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* and *The Taming of a Shrew* to the canon would severely distort the orthodox chronology and require Shakespeare's playwriting career to begin uncomfortably early. For instance, *Famous Victories* was on the London stage no later than the spring of 1587, and so would have to have been written within a year or so of the birth of William Shakespeare's twins in Stratford in February 1585. And since the canonical *The Taming of the Shrew* is customarily dated to 1589-90, the date of an earlier anonymous *Shrew* by William would almost have to be in the mid-1580s, if not earlier.

The third reason that scholars are reluctant to add these anonymous plays to the canon is that the quality of verse and characterization in them is, for the most part, below the level of those in the plays in the First Folio. This is undeniable; the explanation for it is that these plays (except for *Thomas of Woodstock*) appear to be among Shakespeare's earliest, several of them being obvious juvenilia. (The editors do not mention that, aside from *Famous Victories*, the plotting and construction of them is exceptional, an observation made by most Stratfordian scholars who have written about them.) On the other hand, they admit that "Shakespeare was a daring and experimental writer, shifting genres, moods and poetic textures and styles throughout his career; his verse habits, for instance, fluctuate and morph

surprisingly at different phases of his work." Yet they choose to ignore these characteristics when evaluating the stylistic differences between these anonymous plays and those in the Shakespeare canon.

Despite the editors' reliance on stylometry, Will Sharpe, in his essay in the book on "Authorship and Attribution," devotes several pages to warnings about its pitfalls, shortcomings and inconsistencies. He mentions writers imitating, borrowing from or revising another's work, as well as interference by professional scribes and compositors as potential contaminants of linguistic comparisons. He refers to "the notoriously tricky foundations of 'internal evidence'" and "the friable nature of stylometric testing." Besides the shaky ground underlying stylometry, there are the writers themselves, some of whom can be "an enemy to the statistician." Sharpe quotes a recent essay on authorship studies that identified John Dryden, "whose stylistic repertoire exhibits unusual versatility," and Edmund Waller, "whose work changes radically over a long career," as writers for whom "the task is at its most difficult."

Authorship Doubting and Collaboration

As is now common in books produced by Stratfordian academics, there is the usual dismissive reference to the Authorship Question. Sharpe admits that "Shakespeare . . . is authorial dark matter, absent from his writing and from historical record to an extraordinary degree," and blames this for "opening the door . . . to the phenomenon of authorship doubting, the bizarrely widespread belief . . . in a shadowy, ideally aristocratic figure masked behind the famous Shakespeare mugshot."

But it is Sharpe himself, and his Stratfordian colleagues, who have introduced a bizarre phenomenon — "collaboration," a type of selective authorship doubting that picks apart plays and even scenes and passages, and assigns them to less talented dramatists. The claim is that for two decades or so Shakespeare collaborated with other working dramatists, some older (Peele), some younger (Nashe, Wilkins, Fletcher, Middleton), to produce half a dozen plays, such as *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Henry VIII*, etc., in the accepted canon. The oldest of these alleged collaborators, George Peele (bap. 1556), was still working on his MA at Oxford in 1578, when de Vere was entertaining the Queen at court with "dramatic devices." The youngest, Fletcher, was born a year later.

The premise behind the book, and behind most claims of collaboration, is that the author of the canon was a "working dramatist" who "initially made his mark in the London theatre world as a 'fixer up' of other men's plays." (They cite the warning in Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* as evidence for this.) The idea of a newcomer "fixing up" plays of working dramatists is strange enough, but to those of us convinced by the

evidence of Oxford's authorship, the idea of the premier earl of England working (for whom?) to "fix up" plays for the public theater is even stranger.

Besides omitting several anonymous plays that have been attributed to Shakespeare by modern scholars, *William Shakespeare & Others* includes four plays—*A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *The London Prodigal*, *Lochrine* and *Thomas Lord Cromwell*—that the editors think "highly unlikely to almost impossible" that they "contain Shakespeare's writing." Why would they include plays that hardly anyone thinks are Shakespeare's? In the case of *The London Prodigal*, for instance, the editors write that "the smart attribution money" is on either Dekker or Fletcher, and that "Stylometric work most strongly favors John Fletcher."

The editors seem to agree with several critics who attribute *Lochrine* to Charles Tilney, on the strength of a note, discovered by John Payne Collier, written on the 1595 quarto by Sir George Buc that identified Tilney as the author. But Tilney was executed in 1586, at age twenty-five, as one of the Babington conspirators, and nothing in his biography suggests that he wrote plays. Sharpe cites Elliot and Valenza's stylometric tests that "argue strongly against" Shakespeare's authorship of *Lochrine*. But he acknowledges that Jonathan Hope's "sociolinguistic analysis suggests the play is probably not collaborative." Hope's actual conclusion is that "only Shakespeare, Marlow, or Dekker can be considered serious candidates for its authorship" (*The Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays* 127).

Sharpe doesn't mention Hope's principal conclusion—that Elizabethan dramatists' birth dates can be approximated by comparing their use of certain "auxiliary" words and constructions that gradually disappeared from the language during the latter half of the sixteenth century. The less a dramatist used them, the later in the period he was born. In what he called "a very powerful authorship tool," Hope found that for five of the six playwrights he studied, their use of "auxiliary" words and constructions correlated with their actual birth order. But for the sixth, Shakespeare, his analysis indicated a birth date nearly twenty years before 1564.

The editors' academic peers are not thrilled with the collection. In *The Shakespeare Newsletter*, Larry Weiss suggested that five of the ten plays shouldn't be there, and deplored the book's fact-checking, proofreading and inconsistencies. Gary Taylor made identical complaints in *The Washington Post*, accusing the editors of omitting appropriate plays and of "confusingly" mixing and mislabeling those they include. In her review in the

Times Literary Supplement, Lois Potter was more positive, but added "ironically" that the collection "contains good editions of three plays in which Shakespeare had absolutely no hand."

It seems that academics of the Stratfordian stripe are getting weary of their own scholarship. Because there is nothing more to be said in the way of William Shaksper's biography, and because every Folio play has been scrutinized and analyzed down to the level of minutiae, they have turned their attention to collaboration, a promising new field of research. But their reliance on stylometrics and other types of internal evidence has led them into a thicket of contradictory data and conflicting conclusions. For the most part, they have failed to recognize the importance of Shakespeare's nearly obsessive habit of revising his own plays, which is the main reason for the uneven writing in some of them. And they have pointedly refused, for the most unscholarly reasons, to look closely at the anonymous plays that appear to be his juvenilia.

For its supposed additions to the canon, as well as its blatant omissions, *William Shakespeare & Others* must be considered a setback for Shakespearean scholarship.



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2014 SOF CONFERENCE – MEMBER SURVEY

[On a 1-to-9 scale, indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. “1” indicates strongest disagreement, “9” indicates strongest agreement.]

AUTHORSHIP

- 1a. Edward de Vere is the principal author of the Shakespeare Canon.
- 1b. Someone else (not de Vere or Shakspeare of Stratford) is the principal author of the Shakespeare Canon.
2. The Canon was written by several authors under de Vere’s general “supervision.”
3. William Shakspeare of Stratford wrote no literary works.
4. Shakspeare of Stratford served as a literary “front man” for the true author(s).
5. De Vere’s authorship role was widely known in his literary community.
6. De Vere’s authorship role was widely known in Queen Elizabeth’s court.
- 7a. De Vere himself did not wish his authorship role to be known even after his death.
- 7b. De Vere’s posthumous literary anonymity was arranged by his children and by Pembroke and Montgomery, with help from Ben Jonson.
- 7c. De Vere’s literary anonymity was imposed by the State.

EDWARD DE VERE, 17TH EARL OF OXFORD

- 8a. He was the natural son of the 16th Earl and Margery Golding.
- 8b. He was the natural son of Princess (later Queen) Elizabeth.
9. The 16th Earl died of natural causes in 1562.
10. Edward was the biological father of his wife’s (Anne Cecil’s) first child in 1576.
11. Edward had a sexual relationship with Queen Elizabeth.
12. The 1000-pound annual grant to him in 1586 was made in connection with his literary activities.
13. Edward did not die in 1604, but lived on for several more years.
14. He is buried in Westminster Abbey.
15. He wrote many other literary works which are not attributed to him.

HENRY WRIOTHESLEY, THIRD EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

16. He was the natural son of the 2nd Earl and his wife.
- 17a. He was the son of Queen Elizabeth.
- 17b. He was the son of Edward de Vere.
- 17c. He was the son of Edward de Vere and the Queen.
- 17d. He was the object of Edward de Vere’s homosexual infatuation, not his son.
18. The dedications to him in Venus and Adonis and Lucrece were for political reasons as much as, if not more than, literary reasons
19. He is the “Mr. W. H.” to whom the Sonnets are dedicated.
20. De Vere played a key role in sparing Southampton’s life after the latter’s conviction for the Essex Rebellion.

THE SONNETS

21. The Sonnets are published more or less (or entirely) in correct order.
22. The Sonnet Dedication is some sort of anagram or word puzzle.
23. The “Fair Youth” is Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton.
- 24a. The “Dark Lady” is Queen Elizabeth.
- 24b. The “Dark Lady” is Emilia Bassanio.
- 24c. The “Dark Lady” is Elizabeth Trentham, Oxford’s second wife.
- 24d. The “Dark Lady” is someone else.
- 25a. The principal story of the Sonnets is concerned with homosexual love and romance among real persons.
- 25b. The principal story of the Sonnets is concerned with heterosexual love and romance among real persons.
- 25c. The principal story of the Sonnets is concerned with both homosexual and heterosexual love and romance among real persons.
26. The principal story of the Sonnets is about politics and succession.
27. The Sonnets are just literary works and aren’t “about” anything.
28. We don’t yet know what the Sonnets are about.

MISCELLANEOUS

29. The illustration on the title page of Minerva Britanna (the hand behind the curtain) is an allusion to the authorship issue.
30. The publication of the Folio was organized by de Vere’s children and Pembroke and Montgomery, with Ben Jonson’s assistance.
31. Many academics privately harbor doubt about the case for Shakspeare of Stratford as author, but won’t publicly admit it.



Survey Says

by Alex McNeil

Attendees at this year's Annual Conference were invited to fill out a survey (see opposite page), soliciting their views and opinions on various aspects of the Authorship Question. It asked respondents to indicate, on a nine-point scale, their level of agreement or disagreement with each of 43 statements, arranged in several topics. A response of 7, 8 or 9 indicated agreement with a particular statement, a response of 1, 2 or 3 indicated disagreement, and a response of 4, 5 or 6 indicated uncertainty. The same survey was used at the 2011 Joint SOS/SF Conference in Washington, DC, and a substantially similar one was first used at the 2008 Joint Conference in White Plains, NY. As one would expect, the results of the 2014 survey are generally consistent with those of 2011 and 2008; however, in about one-quarter of the statements, the median response in 2014 was significantly different from prior surveys. This year, 36 surveys were completed.

Areas of Greatest Consensus

This group consists of ten statements where the weighted median response was 8.0 or greater, or 2.0 or less, indicating a high degree of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement. It should come as no surprise that the statement with the strongest consensus was that Edward de Vere is the principal author of the Shakespeare canon (Statement #1A on the survey). The median was 9; only one respondent disagreed and only one indicated uncertainty. There was almost as strong agreement with Statement #3, that Shakspeare of Stratford wrote no literary works (median 9, with two disagreeing and two uncertain). There was strong disagreement with Statement #27, that the *Sonnets* aren't "about" anything (median 1.3, with two agreeing and one uncertain), and strong disagreement with Statement #1B, that someone other than de Vere or Shakspeare wrote the canon (median 1.5, with two agreeing and one uncertain).

Strong consensuses were also reported on six other statements:

- Statement #30, that the First Folio publication was organized by de Vere's children, by Pembroke and Montgomery, with help from Ben Jonson (median 8.3, with two disagreeing and three uncertain).
- Statement #23, that the Fair Youth of the *Sonnets* is Henry Wriothesley (median 8.1, with one disagreeing and eight uncertain).

- Statement #13, disagreeing with the statement that de Vere did not die in 1604 (median 1.9, with five agreeing and six uncertain).
- Statement #8A, that Edward de Vere was the natural son of the 16th Earl of Oxford and Margery Golding (median 8, with six disagreeing and eight uncertain).
- Statement #8B, disagreeing with the statement that Edward de Vere was the son of Princess Elizabeth (median 2, with five agreeing and six uncertain).
- Statement #29, that the title page illustration in *Minerva Britanna* alludes to the authorship issue (median 8, with one disagreeing and six uncertain).

Areas of Significant Consensus

This group includes twelve statements where the median response was between 7 and 7.9, or between 2.1 and 3. On these statements most respondents expressed either agreement or disagreement (usually less strongly than in the first group), but more uncertainty was reported than for the first group of statements:

- Statement #12, that de Vere's thousand-pound annuity was made in connection with his literary activities (median 7.6, with three disagreeing and eight uncertain).
- Statement #20, that de Vere played a key role in sparing Southampton's life after his 1601 treason conviction (median 7.6, with two disagreeing and seven uncertain).
- Statement #6, that de Vere's authorship role was well known in Elizabeth's court (median 7.5, with two disagreeing and five uncertain).
- Statement #24C, disagreeing with the statement that Elizabeth Trentham is the Dark Lady of the *Sonnets* (median 2.5, with five agreeing and eleven uncertain).
- Statement #31, that many academics privately harbor doubt about Shakspeare (median 7.3, with two disagreeing and seven uncertain).
- Statement #2, disagreeing with the statement that several authors wrote the canon under de Vere's general supervision (median 2.8, with three agreeing and four uncertain).
- Statement #15, that de Vere wrote many other works not attributed to him (median 7.2, with two disagreeing and eleven uncertain).
- Statement #21, that the *Sonnets* are published in correct order (median 7.1, with three disagreeing and twelve uncertain).
- Statement #5, that de Vere's authorship role was widely known in the literary community (median 7, with one disagreeing and ten uncertain).
- Statement #7B, that de Vere's posthumous literary anonymity was arranged by his children and Pembroke and Montgomery, assisted by Ben Jonson (median 7, with six disagreeing and eight uncertain).
- Statement #7C, that his literary anonymity was state-imposed (median 7, with five disagreeing and ten uncertain).

- Statement #19, that Southampton is “Mr. W.H.,” the dedicatee of the *Sonnets* (median 7, with five disagreeing and nine uncertain).

Areas Without Consensus

The final group—the largest, with 21 statements—includes those where the median was between 3.1 and 6.9, indicating neither general agreement nor general disagreement. These statements reflect either a plurality of “uncertain” responses or significant numbers of responses expressing agreement and disagreement with a particular statement (i.e., divergent views held by significant numbers of respondents). I’ve divided this large group into two subgroups. The first subgroup are those with medians between 6 and 6.9 or between 3.1 and 4:

- Statement #26, that the principal story of the *Sonnets* is of politics and succession (median 6.5; sixteen respondents agreed, while nine disagreed and seven were uncertain).
- Statement #24B, that the Dark Lady is Emilia Bassanio (median 3.5; nineteen disagreed, one agreed and thirteen were uncertain).
- Statement #17C, that Henry Wriothesley was the son of de Vere and Queen Elizabeth (median 3.5; seventeen disagreed, eleven agreed, six were uncertain).
- Statement #17A, that Wriothesley was the son of the Queen (median 4; seventeen disagreed, eleven agreed, seven were uncertain).
- Statement #17D, that Wriothesley was the object of de Vere’s homosexual infatuation (median 4; fifteen disagreed, seven agreed, ten were uncertain).
- Statement #18, that the *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* dedications to Wriothesley were for political reasons (median 6; eighteen agreed, seven disagreed, ten were uncertain).
- Statement #24A, that the Dark Lady is Queen Elizabeth (median 6; twelve agreed, eleven disagreed, eleven were uncertain).
- Statement #24D, that the Dark Lady is someone other than the Queen, Emilia Bassanio or Elizabeth Trentham (median 4; fourteen disagreed, eight agreed, seven were uncertain).
- Statement #25A, that the principal story of the *Sonnets* is about homosexual love (median 4; fourteen disagreed, nine agreed, ten were uncertain).
- Statement #25B, that the principal *Sonnets* story is about heterosexual love (median 6; sixteen agreed, twelve disagreed, six were uncertain).
- Statement #25C, that the principal *Sonnets* story is about both heterosexual and homosexual love (median 6; sixteen agreed, eleven disagreed, eight were uncertain).

The second subgroup consists of those with medians closest to the exact middle:

- Statement #4, that Shakspeare was a literary “front man” (median 5.5; fourteen agreed, nine disagreed, eleven were uncertain).
- Statement #7A, that de Vere did not want his authorship role known even after his death (median 4.5; eleven agreed, eleven disagreed, eleven were uncertain. The weighted median tilts slightly toward disagreement, because those who disagreed did so more strongly than those who agreed).
- Statement #9, that the 16th Earl of Oxford died of natural causes (median 5; eight agreed, four disagreed, twenty-four were uncertain. This question elicited by far the largest number of “uncertain” responses).
- Statement #10, that de Vere was the biological father of Elizabeth Vere (median 5.5; fourteen agreed, three disagreed, nineteen were uncertain).
- Statement #11, that de Vere had a sexual relationship with the Queen (median 5; thirteen agreed, eleven disagreed, twelve were uncertain).
- Statement #14, that de Vere is buried in Westminster Abbey (median 5; eleven disagreed, seven agreed, eighteen were uncertain).
- Statement #16, that Henry Wriothesley was the biological son of the Second Earl of Southampton and his wife (median 5; twelve agreed, eleven disagreed, eleven were uncertain).
- Statement #17B, that Wriothesley was the son of de Vere (median 5.5; fourteen agreed, eleven disagreed, ten were uncertain).
- Statement #22, the *Sonnets* dedication is an anagram or word puzzle (median 5.5; fifteen agreed, six disagreed, twelve were uncertain).
- Statement #28, that we don’t yet know what the *Sonnets* are really about (median 4.5; fifteen disagreed, eleven agreed, eight were uncertain).

Analysis

The results of the 2014 survey show some significant changes from 2011. In general, the 2014 results show greater uncertainty on many aspects of the Authorship Question. In 2011, responses to eleven of the 43 statements fell within the “Areas of Greatest Consensus” (indicating median responses at one end or the other of the nine-point scale). In 2014 only seven statements fell into this category. Additionally, for eleven of the 43 statements, the median shifted by 1.0 or more; in eight of those cases the shift was away from consensus.

In five cases the median shifted by 2.0 or more. The biggest shift was seen in Statement #4—whether Shakspeare of Stratford served as a literary “front man.”

In 2011 the median was 8.3, placing it squarely in the area of greatest consensus. In 2014 the median dropped to 5.5, placing it now in the area of least consensus. Another big shift was seen in Statement #17C—whether Henry Wriothesley was the son of de Vere and Queen Elizabeth. In 2011 the median was 6.1 (within the uncertain group, but tilting toward agreement). In 2014 the median was 3.5 (still within the uncertain group, but now tilting toward disagreement). A similar, but slightly smaller, shift occurred in a related statement (#17A, which said only that he was the son of Elizabeth), where the median shifted from 6.2 in 2011 to 4 in 2014.

Views also changed on whether de Vere and Queen Elizabeth had a sexual relationship (Statement #11). In 2011 the median response to that statement was 7.4, indicating substantial agreement. In 2014 the median dropped to 5, with the respondents almost evenly split among agreement, disagreement and uncertainty. As to whether de Vere had a homosexual infatuation with Henry Wriothesley (Statement #17D), the median shifted from 1.8 in 2011 (indicating significant disagreement with the statement) to 4.0 in 2014 (indicating uncertainty, tilting slightly toward disagreement).

For six statements the median shifted between 1.0 and 1.9. For the notion that de Vere lived beyond 1604 (#13), the median shifted toward consensus, from 3.5 in 2011 to 1.9 in 2014 (indicating significant disagreement with the statement). As to the identity of the Dark Lady in the *Sonnets*, for Emilia Bassanio (#24B) the median shifted from 2.0 in 2011 (disagreement) to 3.5 in 2014 (tilting toward uncertainty). For Queen Elizabeth as the Dark Lady (#24A), the median shifted from 4.6 in 2011 (uncertainty, tilting very slightly toward disagreement) to 6.0 in 2014 (still uncertainty, but now tilting toward agreement).

For Statement #15 (de Vere wrote many other literary works), the median stayed within the area of general agreement, but dropped from 8.3 in 2011 to 7.2 in 2014. As to whether de Vere was Henry Wriothesley's father (Statement #17B), the median dropped from 6.5 to 5.5, indicating greater uncertainty. And, as to whether we yet know what the *Sonnets* are really about, the median increased from 3.5 in 2011 to 4.5 in 2014, again indicating greater uncertainty.

Summary

Assuming that the number of respondents (36) constituted a large enough sample to be statistically valid, it appears that Oxfordians are in general agreement about the broad outlines of the Authorship Question, but are not in agreement (and show less agreement than in previous years) about several of the particulars.

Authorship: There was a strong consensus that Oxford alone is the principal author of the Shakespeare canon, that his role was widely known in court and in

literary circles, and that his anonymity was probably state-imposed and was perpetuated by his children and others. There was uncertainty about whether Oxford himself wanted his role to be revealed after his death.

Oxford's Biography: There was strong consensus that he was the son of the 16th Earl and his wife, that the 1586 annuity was made in connection with literary activities, that he wrote many other literary works, and that he died in 1604. There was much uncertainty about whether the 16th earl died of natural causes, about whether Oxford was the biological father of Elizabeth Vere and whether he is buried in Westminster Abbey. There were very divergent opinions on whether he had a sexual relationship with the Queen. There was no agreement on whether Will Shakspeare was a "front man" for Oxford's authorship.

Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton: There was less consensus about him. There was agreement that Oxford played a role in sparing his life after his treason conviction, and that he is the "Mr. W.H." to whom the *Sonnets* are dedicated. Everything else is unclear—who his real parents were, whether he had a homosexual relationship with Oxford, and whether the 1593 and 1594 dedications to him from "William Shakespeare" were for political reasons.

The *Sonnets*: There was substantial agreement only on a few matters. They were published in correct order; the Fair Youth is Southampton; and they aren't just literary exercises. As to other matters there was no agreement. The leading candidate for the Dark Lady is Queen Elizabeth, but her "score" of 6 is well within the range of uncertainty; she was trailed (in declining order) by "someone else," Emilia Bassanio and Elizabeth Trentham, all scoring at 4 or less. The leading explanation of the real story of the *Sonnets* is "politics and succession" (6.5), which narrowly edged "heterosexual love" and "heterosexual and homosexual love" (both at 6). Trailing were "we don't yet know" and that the real story is (only) homosexual love, at 4.5 and 4, respectively. There was no consensus about whether the Dedication is an anagram or word puzzle.

Other matters: There was substantial agreement on all three—that the *Minerva Britanna* title page alludes to authorship; that the publication of the First Folio was engineered by Oxford's daughters, Pembroke, Montgomery and Ben Jonson; and (perhaps ever hopefully) that many academics privately harbor doubt about the case for Shakspeare of Stratford as author.



AVAILABLE AGAIN:**Back Issues of Our Annual Journals****BRIEF CHRONICLES:
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL
OF AUTHORSHIP STUDIES**

Vol. I (287 pp., 2009) – Winifred Frazer on censorship; Richard Waugaman on the psychology of the authorship question; Nina Green on Oxford's finances; Robert Detobel & K.C. Ligon on Francis Meres; Earl Showerman on *Much Ado about Nothing*; Peter Moore on time in *Macbeth*; Michael Delahoyde on *Titus Andronicus*; Bonner Cutting on Shakspeare's will; Sky Gilbert on "Olivier's feminine Hamlet"; Roger Stritmatter & Lynne Kositsky on *The Tempest*.

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[Vol. III (2011) is not available]

Vol. IV (141 pp., 2012-13) – Kevin Gilvary on Hall's and Holinshed's *Chronicles*; Katherine Chiljan on *Love's Martyr*; Thomas Regnier on succession law; Richard Whalen on *Macbeth's* witches; Richard Waugaman on Biblical sources for Sonnets 24 and 33 and Henry VIII; Roger Stritmatter on triangular numbers in *Minerva Britanna*; Bonner Miller Cutting on identifying a portrait of Lady Susan Vere.

Vol. V (216 pp., 2014) – Michael Dudley on "decolonizing" the authorship question; Alex McNeil on the "outlier" sonnets; Richard Waugaman on the theme of betrayal; Richard Whalen on *Macbeth*; Michael Delahoyde on lyric poetry from Chaucer to Shakespeare; Jacob Hughes on the characters in *King John* and *Troublesome Raigne*; Stuart Nettleton on Bayesian interrogation methods to determine authorship; Michael Wainwright on logic in *Troilus and Cressida*; Sky Gilbert on Shakespeare as euphuist.

THE OXFORDIAN

Vol. 1 (108 pp., 1998) – Nina Green on Spenser's "E.K."; James Fitzgerald on Shakespeare, Oxford and "a Pedlar"; Sally Mosher on William Byrd's "Battle"; Roger Stritmatter on Oxford's *Cardanus* dedication; Daniel Wright on Oxford's education; Ron Hess on the bard in cyberspace.

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Vol. 3 (124 pp., 2000) – Eddi Jolly on Burghley's library; Stephanie Hopkins Hughes on Sir Thomas Smith; Frank Davis on Shakespeare's medical knowledge; Nina Green on Arthur Brooke; Elliott & Valenza respond to Hess (see vol. 2); Joel Hurtsfield on Burghley and the Court of Wards.

Vol. 4 (168 pp., 2001) – Robert Detobel on authorial rights (part I); Peter Usher on astronomy in *Hamlet*; Mark Alexander on Shakespeare's legal knowledge; Richard Desper on the Howard-Arundel feud; Sally Hazelton Llewellyn on psychology and the authorship question.

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Vol. 6 (166 pp., 2003) – Ramon Jiménez on *Edmond Ironside*; Fran Gidley on *The Book of Sir Thomas More*; Richard Whalen on Shakespeare in Scotland; Stephanie Hopkins Hughes on the Countess of Pembroke; Peter Dickson on whether Shakespeare was Catholic.

Vol. 7 (176 pp., 2004) – Christopher Paul on Oxford's death; Robert Detobel on the suicide hypothesis; Earl Showerman on *Orestes* and *Hamlet*; Ramon Jiménez on *The True Tragedy of Richard III*; Gary Goldstein on the theater and propaganda.

Vol. 8 (162 pp., 2005) – Richard Whalen on the Stratford bust; John Hamill on Shakespeare's sexuality; Ron Hess on "Another Rare Dreame"; Kevin Gilvary on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Peter Usher on Hamlet's love letter; Paul Altrocchi on searching for the "smoking gun."

Vol. 9 (154 pp., 2006) – Rima Greenhill on *Loves Labours Lost* and Russia; Ruth Loyd Miller on forsworn oaths in *Loves Labours Lost*; Michael Delahoyde on *Lucrece* and "Sala di Troia"; Eric Miller on dating Sonnet 107; Roger Stritmatter on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Christopher Paul on misreading Oxford; John Shahan & Richard Whalen rebut Elliott & Valenza.

Vol. 10 (178 pp., 2007) – Roger Stritmatter & Lynne Kositsky on dating *The Tempest*; Sam Saunders on the odds in Hamlet's wager; Michael Egan on *Richard II, part 1* (aka *Thomas of Woodstock*); Earl Showerman on *The Winter's Tale*; Richard Whalen on dating any Shakespeare plays after 1604; Carl Caruso on *Hamlet*; Robert Prechter, Jr., on whether Oxford was first published in 1560; George Swan on *The Woman's Prize*; Elliott & Valenza reply to Shahan & Whalen (see vol. 9).

Vol. 11 (274 pp., 2009) – "Open Forum" on authorship with David Kathman on Shakespeare of Stratford as Shakespeare; Peter Farey on Marlowe; Ramon Jiménez on Oxford; John Hudson on Amelia Lanier; John Raithel on William Stanley; and a response by Stephanie Hopkins Hughes. Also, Robin Fox on the grammar school; Earl Showerman on Shakespeare and Sophocles; Frank Davis on *Groatsworth*; Michael Egan on *Richard II, part 1*; Shahan & Whalen reply to Elliott & Valenza (see vols. 9-10).

Vol. 12 (184 pp., 2010) – Keir Cutler on why Shakespeare didn't write Shakespeare; Ramon Jiménez on *The Troublesome Raigne of John*; Robin Fox on Shakespeare's knowledge of grammar schools; P.D. McIntosh on dating *Coriolanus*; Marie Merkel on *Titus Andronicus*; Macdonald Jackson replies to Michael Egan (see vol. 11); Derran Charlton on *The Taming of the Shrew*; Sabrina Feldman on Sackville as Shakespeare; Elliott & Valenza vs. Shahan & Whalen (see vols. 9-11).

Vol. 13 (168 pp., 2011) – Robin Fox on Oxford's lawsuits and *Timon*; Richard Waugaman on *Titus Andronicus* and the Psalms; Ramon Jiménez on dating *The Merchant of Venice*; Bonner Cutting on the "second-best bed"; Kevin Gilvary on dating *The Contention*; Frank Davis on the "learned" and "unlearned" Shakespeare; Lamberto Tassinari on John Florio; Ron Hess on whether Shakespeare had a literary mentor; Sabrina Feldman replies to Hess.

Vol. 14 (194 pp., 2012) – John Shahan responds to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust; Ramon Jiménez on *The Taming of the Shrew(s)*; Katherine Chiljan on *The Passionate Pilgrim*; Derran Charlton on Giordano Bruno; William Rubinstein on Henry Neville as Shakespeare; John Hamill on *Willobie His Avis*; Robert Prechter, Jr., on verse parallels between Oxford and Shakespeare.

Vol. 15 (156 pp., 2013) – Carolyn Morris on Joseph Hall and Ben Jonson identifying Shakespeare; Ramon Jiménez on the two *Lear* plays; Mike A'Dair on Prince Tudor; Michael Delahoyde on *The Two Noble Kinsmen*; Stephanie Hopkins Hughes on *The Tempest*.

Vol. 16 (103 pp., 2014) – "The Oxfordian Mind": Chettle, *Groatsworth*; Meres, *Palladis Tamia*; Hawthorne and Delia Bacon; Twain and Greenwood on Shakespeare and the law; Looney, "Discovering Edward de Vere"; Eva Turner Clark, "Who Was Shakespeare"; Dorothy & Charlton Ogburn, "This Star of England"; Richard Roe, "The Playwright in Italy"; Robin Fox on grammar school education; Alexander Waugh on "Sweet Swan of Avon."

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SOF Conference (cont. from p. 1)

revisiting many familiar topics, gaining new insights while simultaneously trying to communicate to the widest possible audience. He then outlined the strengths and weaknesses of his “reasons” compiled for Edward de Vere’s authorship, citing his debt to all the work done by past and current Oxfordians. Of course, Whittemore was able to discuss only a few of his 100 Reasons.

In Reason Number One ([Oxford, like Hamlet, brought plays to Court](#)) he stated that “Hamlet brings players and a play to court, to catch the conscience of the king,” noting that this is how Shakespeare and his plays evolved—first at court, then the private theater, then the public theater—and that performances at the private and public playhouses could serve as dress rehearsals for court performances.

Reason Number Two involved a piece of evidence that had struck him early on—that [Golding, Translator of Ovid, was Oxford’s Uncle](#). In that post Whittemore quoted Sidney Lee in his biography of 1898: “The influence of Ovid was apparent throughout Shakespeare’s earliest literary work, poetic and dramatic. His closest adaptations of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* often reflect the phraseology of the popular English version by Arthur Golding issued between 1565 and 1567.”

Reason Number Three ([Oxford Promoted The Courtier, Model for Hamlet](#)) cited that Oxford, at age twenty-two, published a Latin version of Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano, The Book of the Courtier*, a book that described the qualities of the ideal prince or courtier.

[For a discussion of all 100 reasons, see <http://hankwhittemore.wordpress.com/category/hanks-100-reasons-why-oxford-was-shakespeare-the-list-to-date/>]

Grafting Texts to Create New Strains - Rhetorical Keys to Concealed Authorship

The conference’s first presenter was Shelly Maycock, English Instructor at Virginia Tech. Maycock spoke about one of Ben Jonson’s *First Folio* allusions, the opening of his elegy or encomium for Shakespeare. Maycock first asked whether the phrase she cited can be considered an allusion and/or an “intertextual” connection. She noted that the modern term “intertextuality,” coined in 1966, blurs author intentionality. The post-structuralist concept of intertextuality was meant to free texts from dependence on authority or authors.

Maycock explained, however, that the term has been misused “to deny texts their human origin” or agency, and that it can be applied to Jonson’s rhetorical methods in the encomium if the proper contexts are established. Maycock noted that Jonson’s compositions operate through a concept synonymous with intertextuality, in that he followed Greek and Roman tradition of weaving allusions to other writers into all of his writing. She also explained that early modern authors’ references to other

works were facilitated by “commonplace books” that were widely used.

Commonplacing was a part of their classical rhetorical training. She noted that the encomium also contains an allusion to Sonnet 18, so Jonson provides at least one other allusion to Shakespeare. This echoes also how Shakespeare reshaped his source material and wove it into his texts. There is ambiguity, Maycock asserted, as to Jonson’s genre, i.e., whether it is elegy, paradoxical encomium or mock triumphal poem. Most likely, however, he was employing shades of all three. She argued that the duplicity that the allusion refers to in *Richard III* rhetorically masks both Jonson’s indignation about the front man and his tribute to the hidden author of the works.

She cited the key context—the *First Folio*’s publication during the time when Henry de Vere, the 18th Earl of Oxford, was imprisoned for criticizing Prince Charles’ proposed marriage to the Spanish Infanta. Thus, Jonson had a dual purpose in producing the Folio for Pembroke and the Patriot Earls as both honor and political speech. Maycock concluded by discussing the politics that necessitated Jonson’s levels of ambiguity, citing Annabel Patterson’s arguments that Elizabethan and Jacobean censorship functioned through unrecorded relationships between writers and power figures.

Such relationships developed between writers and regimes based on the value of authors as vital gauges of public opinion and fears that harsh censorship could martyr authors. Writers like Jonson walked a tightrope, complying with and pushing the censorship envelope. Maycock argued that Jonson used this system to refer covertly to Oxford, to promote the works as exemplary English culture, and to persuade James I to free the son of the Great Author.

Untangling Elizabethan Roots: A Genealogical Approach to the Authorship Question

Independent researcher Julie Sandys Bianchi spoke on the subject, “Untangling Elizabethan Roots: A Genealogical Approach to the Authorship Question.” In searching for her family tree, Bianchi developed a strategy for locating historical material. Her main interest was in finding living relatives of Edward de Vere. According to Bianchi, the arsenal of potential proof is not always neatly catalogued or housed in a famous collection but is widely dispersed, and may be hiding in the family history haunts of genealogy hobbyists.

Bianchi suggested that one of the first places to look is family files stored in libraries. In addition to primary documents, these files may contain information about people close to the individual or family such as biographers, places, collateral relatives, etc. She mentioned that genetics is the “new frontier” and discussed different DNA tests that can be used to

determine relationships. The best test, she said, is to dig up the bones if you are sure the genealogical record is sound.

In addition to extracting DNA segment samples from the saliva of living human beings, there are three types of DNA tests sold that are designed for laymen genetic-genealogists. Y-DNA testing can trace the genetic fingerprint of a father passed to his son through the sex chromosomes. Mitochondrial DNA is passed from a mother to her children and is a unique genetic identifier of the mother. It is great for genealogy purposes because it is hardly subject to mutation. It is estimated, however, that this test can only provide genetic information going back 250 years, though there is dispute about that estimate. Autosomal DNA describes DNA which is inherited from the autosomal chromosomes. One pair of the 23 chromosomes determines sex. The other 22 pairs are called the autosomes. According to Bianchi, autosomal test results can demonstrate matching DNA, but because they are sample-based tests, they cannot account for the genetic material that has not been tested and is the reason why DNA testing of a caliber less than a complete genome map cannot be used to disprove theories such as the Prince Tudor theories.

In conclusion, Bianchi declared that an important research goal would be to document the known and suspected descendant lineages of the Elizabethans of interest to us, as well as everyone within their orbits. After that has been achieved, the living descendants of those persons should be contacted to see if they possess any records that might be of significance.

Mark Twain and ‘Shake-Speare’: Soul Mates

James Norwood, former professor of humanities and the performing arts at the University of Minnesota, said that the underlying mission of American author and humorist Mark Twain was to challenge the status quo and expose sacred cows. Norwood, whose paper was titled “Mark Twain and ‘Shake-Speare’: Soul Mates,” told the conference that Twain was a “truth-teller” who derided sham and attacked superstitions. According to Norwood, the release of two volumes of a three-volume autobiography of Mark Twain in 2010 and 2013 signals a fresh perspective on Twain’s creative process that will be enhanced when the final volume is published.

The work is relevant to understand why Twain felt a spiritual bond with “Shake-Speare.” Norwood stated that Twain wrote from direct personal experience—from reality, not imagination, and cited poets and artists such as Petrarch, Donatello and Michelangelo as similarly creating images in their own likeness. Like Cervantes, Twain, especially in his most acclaimed novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, drew from his own life experience in Missouri and from working on the Mississippi River as



John Hamill, Tom Regnier, Alex McNeil

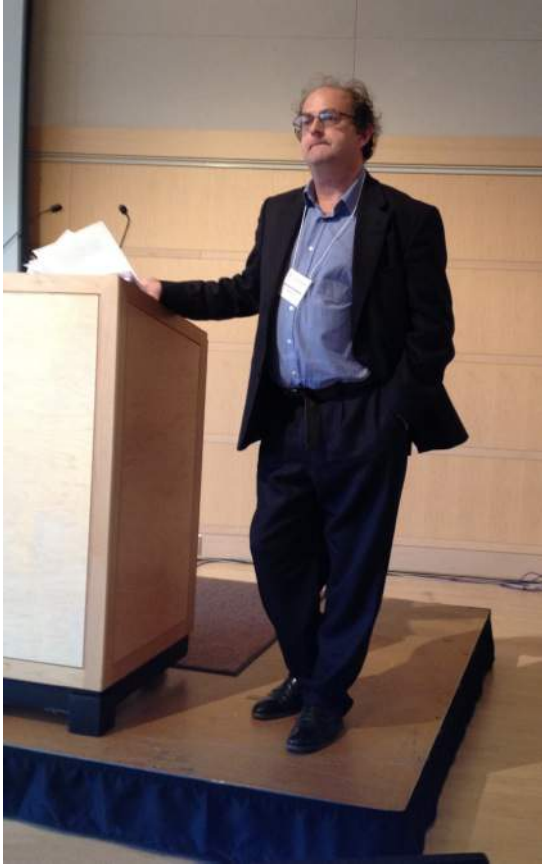
a riverboat pilot. The novel “discovers the soul of the people.”

Sadly, according to Norwood, Twain’s work has been marginalized due to “offensive” language and is no longer widely taught in higher education. An irreverent critic of the culture of Europe, Twain published a collection of his travel dispatches called *The Innocents Abroad*. In it he confessed that he used to worship Michelangelo but he did not want him for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, saying that it seems as if he designed everything in Italy except for the leaning tower of Pisa. For Twain, “the eternal bore designed the Eternal City.” Twain did, however, have great respect for England and received an honorary doctorate from Oxford University in 1907.

He was a Shakespeare doubter who did not find the accepted story of Shakespeare to be credible and insisted on the publication of his book, *Is Shakespeare Dead?*, against the urgings of his biographer. Norwood asserted that Twain recognized a pseudonym when he saw one and knew the world of Shakespeare was one of royalty, an elitist world, whereas the man from Stratford was a third-rate actor who never wrote a line. As Twain himself identified with Shakespeare’s character Prospero late in his life, Mark Twain and the true author William Shakespeare were soulmates.

Looney’s “Shakespeare Identified” Centennial Brainstorm

Linda Theil, a retired journalist and former newsletter editor for Shakespeare Oxford Society, reminded the conference of the centennial of the 1920 publication of J. Thomas Looney’s *Shakespeare Identified*, the first to identify Edward de Vere as the author of the Shakespeare canon. The SOF Board of Trustees has appointed a committee to plan a yearlong celebration for 2020 to highlight Looney’s achievement.



Alexander Waugh

Theil solicited suggestions on the best way to celebrate the centennial. Comments may be sent to 2020.looney@gmail.com. Progress can be followed on the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship page on Facebook, and on Twitter under the @ShakeOxFellows handle, where news of the centennial will be highlighted as #2020looney.

In a later talk, “Every Power That Moves—Using Mobile Tech to Advance SOF Goals,” Theil discussed how the SOF can effectively utilize the resources of the Internet. She said that important work can get done with a Smartphone and by using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Mobile Media, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn, and YouTube to promote the Oxfordian point of view. These tools will allow the SOF to create its own network. After Theil’s talk, a panel consisting of Jennifer Newton, Eddy Nix and Tom Regnier discussed ways that the SOF can attract new people, not just communicate with supporters.

Did Oxford Use a “Secretary” Hand as Well as His “Italic” Hand?

The first presenter on Saturday was independent researcher and author W. Ron Hess, who asked, “Did

Oxford Use a ‘Secretary’ Hand?” The answer is relevant to the authorship question. Hess told the conference that in 2013 an auction house declared that William Shakespeare was the author of the *The Spanish Tragedy* (publ. 1592) based on a comparison of the “Secretary” hand used in a manuscript of that play with Shakespeare’s six known signatures and with the last three pages of the manuscript play *Sir Thomas More*, known as “Hand D.”

Hess’s analysis (assisted by Alan Tarica) of Shakspeare’s signatures agreed with other sources (e.g., Jane Cox in 1985) that none of them match each other, let alone Hand D. Thus, Hess doubted the soundness of the attribution of *Spanish Tragedy* to Shakespeare, since only the last of the three signatures in Shakspeare’s will is legible among his six signatures. Hess stated that he and Tarica had discovered that, in 1925, handwriting expert Muriel St. Clare Byrne had said “practically everybody” literate wrote with a Secretary hand, and that relatively few Elizabethans used the newer “Italic” (or “Italianate”) hand.

There were apparently two glaring exceptions: William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and his son-in-law, the 17th Earl of Oxford, for whom scholars recognize only Italic handwriting examples. However, Tarica discovered documents concerning Oxford’s financial affairs that used a Secretary hand, and even a case of Oxford’s Italic with interspersed snippets of Secretary hand. Tarica suggested that the same hand, if used over decades, would more likely have been Oxford’s own hand than that of a clerk; according to Hess, that would have particularly been true for post-1583 examples, when Oxford was so financially distressed that he had dismissed nearly all of his family’s servants. Since neither Hess nor Tarica count themselves as “experts” in Elizabethan hands, they hope that their discoveries can be reviewed by objective experts.

Hess mentioned three of the best candidates: The January 22, 1580/1 joust manuscript by Oxford as “the Knight of the Tree of the Sunne” affronting the Earl of Arundel’s “Callophisus”; a June 1590 document signed by Burghley, but written in a Secretary hand reasonably matching the jousting hand, which deals with disposition of some of Oxford’s property; and a c.1595 letter written by Oxford about his schemes concerning Cornish tin mines in his usual Italic, but with columns of numbers and interspersed Secretarial characters.

Many other specimens have been discovered by Tarica, including a surprising suggestion that one of the three applications for the Shakspeare coat of arms was in the suspect hand. If validated, that would suggest that Oxford personally helped to create the authorship deception, beginning with “gentleman status” for his intended front man. Hess and Tarica made other discoveries of note, including various “nom de notaire” symbols, among which are “WSS” (Will Shake-Speare?) squiggles on the obverse of at least eight of Oxford’s letters.

“Deceptive Displacements” and the Shakespeare Authorship Question

London-based psychotherapist and literary scholar Heward Wilkinson (<http://hewardwilkinson.co.uk/psychotherapy-writings>) then spoke on the topic, “‘If this be Error and upon Me Proved’: ‘Deceptive Displacements’ and the Shakespeare Authorship Question.” According to Wilkinson, the Shakespeare authorship question is one of many historic deceptions that include the story of Joan of Arc, and James, the brother of Jesus. This wider context helps our understanding of what happened in the Shakespeare phenomenon.

Wilkinson began by relating how he once got off, without realizing it, at the wrong train station, and unconsciously convinced himself by drastic mental contortions, that he *had* gotten off at the expected station. “I did have an odd uneasy, slightly uncanny, disconcerting, feeling, to be sure. Then I saw the design and view of the station car park, totally different as it was. Only then I had a big ‘aha,’ I ‘clicked.’ Yes! I had got out at the wrong station! Clearly, I had a brief temporary delusion and my feeling of unease was due to the discrepancy between the believed perception and the actual perception.”

To Wilkinson the story is a metaphor for how we (both individuals and civilizations) create our world in light of our desires, habits and expectations. Shakespeare himself, in his multilayered poetic, gives us a model. For example, in *Macbeth* (1.7) he enacts and realizes the capacity to recognize and express time’s being created moment by moment, in which different futures and different possibilities are being created, which themselves create us. He then invoked Julian Jaynes’ theory of the “Bicameral Mind,” in which Jaynes argues that the emergence of reflexive consciousness as we know it is as recent as 3,500 years ago, and was preceded by a mode of mentality much more based in visionary hallucinatory processes, which Jaynes calls the “bicameral mind.”

Deceptive displacements are rooted in the experience of phenomena that are transitional between pure visionary experience, and those ostensibly based in the explicit rational consciousness of a particular age. Wilkinson described examples of cultural amnesia and concealment associated with historical events, such as the character and acts of Joan of Arc. Drawing on Robert Eisenman’s work, *James the Brother of Jesus*, Wilkinson noted that James’ role was airbrushed out of history as the leader of Jewish Christianity after the death of Jesus and displaced by Paul of Tarsus, who set the template for Christianity for 2000 years. Such massive historic deceptive displacements provide precedent for the Shakespeare authorship deceptive displacement.

The claim that “conspiracy theories” are by definition based on paranoia is a classic modern example of the effect of a deceptive displacement, one which has

originated from the official story and alleged coverup of the Kennedy assassination. Poe’s extraordinary tale *The Purloined Letter* evokes two successive situations where a theft takes place, “in plain view” of a letter. Like *The Purloined Letter*, the JFK assassination, and the role of James the Brother of Jesus, Wilkinson asserted that the solution to the Shakespeare authorship question “lies in plain view,” there for all to see in the First Folio.

Sisyphus and the Globe: Turning (on) the Media

Don Rubin, former chair of the Department of Theatre at York University in Toronto, spoke on “Sisyphus and the Globe: Turning (on) the Media.” He discussed the hardships facing anyone who tries to generate positive media interest in the Authorship Question. His primary position was that an important battle is being waged against the media on the authorship question. Noting that most professional journalists were trained in traditional English departments, Rubin explained that the “battle” is being fought against people whose minds are closed because of pre-existing bias or by ignorance about the issue. Recounting his skirmishes before the 2013 Toronto Conference with the youthful theater critic of *The Globe and Mail* (who had decided that the authorship issue would be an easy target), Rubin asserted that his attempts to gain positive reportage failed by most normal measures, but did generate huge coverage for the authorship issue in general. [Further details about Rubin’s efforts may be found in the Spring 2014 issue of this newsletter – ed.]

Three Words to Think About

The next presenter, Alexander Waugh, author and co-editor (with John Shahan) of *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*, identified three vitally important words for discussion: “Shakespeare,” “Birthplace” and “Trust.” The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) is the name of the English charity that has run the various Shakespeare-related museums in and around Stratford-upon-Avon since 1847. In his talk, Waugh looked at the basis of evidence for the historical claims that the SBT makes about its properties and explores the relevance of these claims to the Trust’s “expert authority” on the Shakespeare authorship question.

According to Waugh, the SBT, which has been identified by the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition as the “chief enemy,” claims to have hosted 26 million visitors over the years and takes in over £8.5 million annually. Its leaders are Stanley Wells, Honorary President, and the cleric Paul Edmondson, who is the “Head of Knowledge and Research” and is the co-author with Wells of *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt*. Edmondson’s view is that is not acceptable to challenge expert authority and labels

Oxfordians as “mad, snobs, leeches, parasites, blood suckers and Shakespeare haters.” The SBT has been offered £40,000 to engage in a mock trial, but their response is that their “position is clear and well known”; however, Waugh asserted that we need to ask questions and cross-examine.

Waugh then provided some of the history of SBT, showing that records do not indicate in which house Shakespeare was actually born and that their claims of identifying the birth house are specious. Other false identifications include Anne Hathaway’s Cottage and Gardens, Hall’s Croft (originally Hall Croft, now said by the SBT to be the home of Shakespeare’s daughter Susanna Hall and her husband), and Arden’s Farm, where Shakespeare’s mother Mary Arden was allegedly born. Since “tradition” says they were born or lived there, the SBT’s position is “let’s not disturb the belief.” Anyone who challenges the substance of these claims, according to Waugh, is treated with utmost contempt.

“Idle Hours” in Historical Context

German scholar Hanno Wember delivered a paper written by Robert Detobel, titled “Idle Hours in Historical Context.” It examined how we can develop a more accurate understanding of historical events. If we judge them by today’s standards, he said, we run the risk of misinterpretation. The evolution of the feudal system of the Middle Ages into the court system of the 16th century left many social rules unchanged for the aristocracy. Looking back some 400 years before the time of Shakespeare can therefore provide information about how the behavior of an Elizabethan aristocrat should be interpreted.

Wember began by examining *Knight on Horse*, a portrait of the Middle High German knight and poet Hartmann von Aue. He introduced the courtly romance into German literature, including such works as *Poor Henry* (1190) and *Ywain* (1203), but we know little else about him. We can learn, however, from the literature of his time that writing and reading books was considered a trivial pastime for the nobility, something to be done only in their “idle hours.”

According to Wember, the pursuit of learning was for the clergy; for the aristocracy, only military skills were important. For a knight who was a member of the aristocracy, it was not necessary to be able to write stories or poems. Italian Renaissance author Baldassare Castiglione’s concept of “sprezzatura” in *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) is defined by the author as “a certain nonchalance, so as to conceal all art and make whatever one does or says appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it.” It is the ability of the courtier to display “an easy facility in accomplishing difficult actions which hides the conscious effort that went into them.”

Wember then cited the 1593 dedication to *Venus and Adonis*, where the author “vows to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honored you with some graver labor,” an indication that he belongs to the aristocracy. According to Castiglione, the feudal system had changed, with the ideal knight now replaced by the perfect courtier. Some continuity was recognizable, however, as the prime function of the courtier was still a military one. English diplomat and scholar Thomas Elyot stressed that an aristocrat should be honest, learned and skillful in the arts, but that literature should be done only in leisure hours. Shakespeare reflected this in *Henry V*, writing that “we are the makers of manners.” Thus, behaving in an honest manner especially matters.

In that period, prestige depended on spending at least £1,000 a year and Wember noted that Edward de Vere in 1586 received an annual grant of £1,000 from Queen Elizabeth, one of only three peers who received such a generous grant. Referring to the Earl of Oxford and the coverup of his name, Wember concluded by pointing out that the “stigma of print” existed for aristocratic writers and the use of anonymity and pseudonyms was respected. The mere mention of an author’s true name was an offense, i.e., a breach of a social taboo, because it would deny the author his aristocratic status.

“Six Characters in Search of an Author”

Ramon Jiménez explored the origins of six distinctively Shakespearean characters, three major and three minor, who appeared in a half dozen canonical plays—*1 & 2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *King John*. Each of them—Sir John Falstaff, Edward Poins, Mistress Quickly, Petruchio, Christopher Sly and the Bastard Philip Faulconbridge—had a literary ancestor in one of three anonymous plays performed and published in the 1590s.

Sir John Falstaff, who appears in *1 & 2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*, is an amalgam of two comics, Sir John Oldcastle and Derick, from *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. Edward Poins, a companion of Falstaff in the same plays, is identical to the Ned Poins in *Famous Victories*. Mistress Quickly, who exchanges insults with Falstaff, had her origins in Mistress Cobbler, also in *Famous Victories*. Christopher Sly and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* first appeared in the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew*, the former with the same name, and the latter as Ferando, the shrew-tamer.

The Bastard Philip Faulconbridge, a major character in *King John*, is identical to the major character with the same name in the anonymous *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*, first published in 1591. The 2nd and 3rd quartos of *Troublesome Reign* bore the name or initials of William Shakespeare on their title pages. Jiménez has previously published convincing evidence that the three anonymous plays were all early versions of

canonical plays that Oxford later rewrote, retaining substantially identical plots and nearly all the same characters.

Oxford's authorship of the two *Shrew* plays, the first set in Athens and featuring Greek characters, and the second set in Padua, featuring Italian characters and numerous Italian allusions, suggests that he wrote the former before traveling to Italy and the latter within a year or two of visiting Padua in November 1575. Further evidence is Richard Roe's discovery of the location of the opening scene in *The Taming of the Shrew* at a specific spot on the bank of Padua's inner canal.

In addition, the "three wanton pictures" described in *The Shrew* (Ind.ii.49-60) have been identified with a high degree of certainty. During the 1570s they could be seen at three places that Oxford visited—Florence, Mantua and Fontainebleau. Oxford's first *Shrew* play, *Taming of a Shrew*, can be dated to early 1567, just after the source play for the subplot, *Supposes*, was first performed at Gray's Inn. Oxford lived less than a mile from Gray's Inn, and began his studies there in February 1567. The origins of six distinctively Shakespearean characters in these anonymous plays are further evidence that the author of the Shakespeare canon, the 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote these three plays as well.

Wardship in Early Modern England and Its Impact on Edward de Vere

Author and independent researcher Bonner Miller Cutting continued the conference with a paper titled "Evermore in Subjection: Wardship in Early Modern England and Its Impact on Edward de Vere." According to Cutting, the wardship system that existed in Tudor England began in the 11th century when the King gave large grants of land for military service known as "knight service" and controlled a child's upbringing if the landowner died. Though wardship ended in 1646, William and Robert Cecil had been masters of the Court of Wards for fifty years, retaining control over the lives of many other families. It is estimated that they sold the wardships of more than 3,000 young people to wealthy landowners. [Further details of Cutting's paper may be found in the Spring 2014 issue of this newsletter – ed.]

By the Numbers: *Palladis Tamia* and the Shakespeare Question

Roger Stritmatter, Associate Professor of Humanities and Literary Studies at Coppin State University in Baltimore, spoke on the subject "By the Numbers: *Palladis Tamia* and the Shakespeare Question." Among the documents most often cited in support of the orthodox view of Shakespeare is "Comparative Discourse of our English Poets, with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets,"

a chapter in Francis Meres' *Palladis Tamia: Wits treasury being the second part of Wits common wealth* (1598). Stritmatter's paper is an extension of a 2009 article by Robert Detobel and K.C. Ligon, who first pointed out textual discrepancies in *Palladis Tamia*.

In its most famous passage, Meres provides unique testimony to Shakespeare's authorship of at least a dozen



Eddy Nix and Earl Showermann

plays, confirming—so it might seem—that he was widely recognized as a dramatic playwright and poet by 1598. Only six of these plays had been published by then, all anonymously. Stritmatter pointed out that 1598, the year *Palladis Tamia* was published, was also the year that William Cecil died and the year that the name "William Shakespeare" first appeared on a play quarto.

According to Stritmatter, *Palladis Tamia* was strongly influenced by numerology and was "constructed on numerical scaffolding." Following up on the work of Detobel and Ligon, Stritmatter argued that the book is organized according to a classical structure and numerical pattern that reflects Meres' theme that "two is better than one." Every paragraph observes symmetry and the numbers in each category are designed to match an equal number of English and classical or continental writers—except for the paragraph containing both the names "Shakespeare" and "Edward, Earl of Oxford," as Detobel and Ligon observed. They concluded that the English list must contain an extra name, one not needed for numerical symmetry, and postulated that it must be "Shakespeare."

Stritmatter analyzed the specific order of names in the passage and determined that "Shakespeare" is paired with the obscure Greek comedian "Aristonymous" (meaning *aristocratic name*). According to Stritmatter, Meres' method reveals not only an intentional discrepancy in the count on the English side (leading one to guess that the

two redundant names were Shakespeare and Oxford), but actually specifies that the names meant to be read together (so as to constitute one person, thus making the two sides equal in number) were “Shakespeare” and “Edward, Earl of Oxford.”

This is communicated by a clever triangulation involving both location and meaning. By position, the marker “Aristonymous” (*the aristocratic name*) is connected to “Shakespeare” (they are seventh in each of Meres’ lists). By semantics, however, “Aristonymous” is related to Oxford—the only “aristocratic name” on the English side.

Nothing Truer Than Truth

Director Cheryl Eagan-Donovan introduced the finished version of her film, *Nothing is Truer than Truth*, based on Mark Anderson’s book *Shakespeare by Another Name*. Shot at the locations visited by de Vere during his trip to Italy in 1575-76 and at Castle Hedingham, it focuses on the sixteen-month period when de Vere traveled the Continent from his home base in Venice, complementing the recent book by Richard Paul Roe, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*.

Eagan-Donovan uses graphic animation, travel footage, extant portraits, filmed performances of the plays and interviews with renowned Shakespeare academics and artists. According to her, the premise of bisexuality in the film supports a view of Shakespeare as a complex person who struggled with issues of identity, but also as someone who possessed the ability to sublimate his own “self” and create multi-dimensional, truly human characters.

Eagan-Donovan contends that the author’s bisexuality offers an explanation for the use of the pseudonym “Shake-speare,” both during the author’s life and after his death, and for the continued refusal of academia to accept de Vere as Shakespeare. According to the director, “The film reveals de Vere’s epic life story and introduces a brilliant, troubled, charming man.... No film has looked at the sexuality of Shakespeare and the themes found throughout the canon as key to understanding the author’s identity.”

Sabbioneta, Italy: An Intersection of Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and Edward de Vere?

Walter (Wally) Hurst, Director of Drama and Theater Studies at Louisburg College, discussed the Italian theater with reference to the commedia dell’arte and the city of Sabbioneta in the Lombardy region of northern Italy. Because one-third of Shakespeare’s plays are set in Italy and sixteen of them have their roots in Italian fiction, Italian scholars have concluded that Shakespeare must

have visited Italy, read books on Italy, or met John Florio. There is, however, no evidence for any of those.

Hurst distinguished between commedia dell’arte and commedia erudita. Erudita had a single setting for a play, unlike dell’arte, which was distinguished by traveling troupes of players. Erudita plays used scripts written in Latin or Italian and were performed for the nobility, usually by nonprofessional actors. Sources included the comedies of the Roman dramatists Plautus and Terence and works of the 14th-century Italian humanist Giovanni Boccaccio.

Italian literature provided the bases for the lively and entertaining theater of commedia dell’arte.

Commedia dell’arte consisted of improvisation performed by professional actors who played stock characters such as the *zanni*, the madcap servant or servants that were the distinguishing element of the genre, and the elderly *vecchi*, usually self-important, pretentious, tyrannical, and prone to judgmental and long-winded speeches. Another set of characters, the Pairs of Lovers, is evident in the characters of Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Hurst speculated that Shakespeare drafted this play before he went to Italy, and revised it after he returned, keeping the basic Greek setting but adding “Italian embellishments.”

Sabbioneta was founded and designed by warrior, scholar and architect Vespasiano I Gonzaga in the late 16th century. Known for its complex geometry and irregular street patterns, the city is oriented towards the Ducal Palace. In addition to the Palace (now the Town Hall), the city contains such historic structures as the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Crowned, the Incoronata (formerly St. Nicholas Church), the Jewish ghetto and temple, the Galleria degli Antichi (“Gallery of the Ancient”), and the Teatro all’antica designed by Vincenzo Scamozzi, the first standalone indoor theater in the world. It was an “ideal” city built for arts, culture, and scholarship. Hurst expressed hope that scholars may find the true author of the Shakespeare canon in the records of Sabbioneta.

Oxford’s Early Errors

Now full clinical professor in the English Department at Washington State University and managing editor of *Brief Chronicles*, Michael Delahoyde spoke on “Oxford’s Early Errors.” The canonical Shakespeare play *The Comedy of Errors* probably originated in a court entertainment titled *The Historie of Error*, performed in 1577. *The Comedy of Errors* tells the story of two sets of identical twins who were accidentally separated at birth. Antipholus of Syracuse and his servant, Dromio of Syracuse, arrive in Ephesus, which turns out to be the home of their twin brothers, Antipholus of Ephesus and his servant, Dromio of Ephesus.

When the Syracusans encounter the friends and families of their twins, a series of wild mishaps based on mistaken identities leads to wrongful beatings, a near-seduction, the arrest of Antipholus of Ephesus, and false accusations of infidelity, theft, madness and demonic possession. Delahoyde summarized the evidence that it is a very early play: its shift of styles and its similarity to early Shakespeare comedies, with their immaturity and absence of character depth, youthful exuberance, and the fact that the Greek settings show little knowledge of Greece.

In addition to displaying an attitude of a privileged young aristocrat, *The Comedy of Errors* contains several thematic and stylistic connections to a few poems of Edward de Vere, as author J. Thomas Looney originally noted. Other Oxfordians have noted incidental and fleeting topical allusions: to a French political strife, maybe to Queen Elizabeth, and perhaps to Christopher Hatton in its resemblance to his depiction as Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. Mark Anderson offers the most substantial but speculative perspective, proposing that Oxford in the play is processing his ambivalence about his marriage to Anne Cecil.

Delahoyde asked, however, whether Anne ever mattered that much to Oxford or his art until his later guilt became apparent. He is convinced that a more thorough Oxfordian reading of this play can illuminate why de Vere, even this early, was thinking in terms of his own identity split, represented especially in the twin Antipholuses and with the emphasis on Antipholus of Syracuse finding himself in alien territory, i.e., Ephesus (Oxford changed the setting to Ephesus, which was associated with the virgin goddess Diana, and therefore with Queen Elizabeth's court).

This outsider Antipholus is fascinated by his twin's wife's sister, who acts as a kind of lady-in-waiting. Oxford may be thinking in other additional terms, but the main twins' perspective is that of one person who is split at court, as Oxford was in the late 1570s between the Queen and Anne Vavasour, his new captivating mistress.

Much Ado about Hercules' Labors of Love

In his talk, Earl Showerman again explored the influence of the Greek mythological hero in the Shakespeare canon. According to Showerman, Shakespeare's forty-plus allusions to Hercules represent a wide reading of Greek sources, both translated and untranslated, that included Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Lucian, Plutarch, Virgil, Diodorus, Apollodorus, Ovid and Seneca.

Showerman began with a review of Hercules' qualities and characteristics. Classical literature represented Hercules in heroic, epic, and tragic narratives as well as in comic and satiric literature. His heroic qualities included strength, courage, intelligence, eloquence and rage. Plutarch reported that both Alexander

the Great and Mark Antony claimed to be descendants of Hercules and were known to model themselves after Hercules. Later, the French court was closely identified with Hercules in emblems, paintings, tapestries and literature.

According to author Eugene Waith (1962), "Though his savage anger is at times almost brutal, he is capable of great devotion, is dedicated to a heroic ideal, and is regarded as a benefactor of humanity." However, Hercules was also the most popular character in the satires of the tragedy festival stage and appeared as a character in several of Aristophanes' comedies. Showerman lists Hercules' "satiric" qualities as an excessive appetite for food, drink, sex and cross-dressing, "everything too much." Besides Shakespeare, Herculean-type heroes also appear in the works of Marlowe, Chapman and Dryden.

Herculean allusions abound in Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Lost*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (where Benedick is an archetypal comedic Herculean hero), *Antony and Cleopatra* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Hercules allusions in *Much Ado About Nothing* are the key to understanding how this comedy may have been the play *Love's Labors Wonne* listed by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598). Hercules is referred to six times in *Love's Labours Lost*, where he is even represented as a baby by the page Mote in the Pageant of the Nine Worthies.

Allusions to Hercules in *Much Ado* clearly link the comedy to Euripides' tragicomedy *Alceste*, where the hero frees the Queen from Death and returns her to her bereaved husband, reflecting a dramaturgy much like the final scenes of *Much Ado* and *The Winter's Tale*. While the Earl of Oxford was not directly compared to Hercules, he was compared to Hercules' descendant Alexander the Great in no less than six literary dedications, from such writers as Arthur Golding, John Lyly, Robert Greene, Thomas Watson and Angel Day.

Sweet Swan

Author Alexander Waugh returned for his second talk, "Sweet Swan," an important look at Ben Jonson's First Folio reference to William Shakespeare as the "Sweet Swan of Avon," a reference almost universally thought to refer to the river that runs through Stratford in Warwickshire. It is, according to Waugh, the first time in history that Shakespeare is identified as the actor-manager businessman from Stratford-upon-Avon.

Waugh discounted claims made by some Oxfordians that the reference may have been to one of the properties of Edward de Vere, the manor of Bilton, near Rugby in Warwickshire, also "on the Avon." Waugh stated that Bilton is situated at least 3.5 kilometers from the river and Oxford never lived there. Nonetheless, Waugh suggested that readers of Jonson's poem have every reason to suspect a double meaning since "Jonson was a master of

poetic ambiguity” and, whenever he warns his readers not to misinterpret his true meaning, we should take him at his word. Analyzing the lines immediately following the reference, Waugh noted that the “Sweet Swan of Avon” made “flights” on the banks of the Thames greatly pleasing to Queen Elizabeth and her successor, King James; thus, Jonson is referring to stage performances of Shakespeare’s plays.

Since neither monarch ever attended a public theater, the Globe, Hope, Rose and Swan must be ruled out. Many of Shakespeare’s plays were performed at Court; the grandest and most frequently used site for those performances was the Great Hall at Hampton Court, where Queen Elizabeth mounted festivals of plays annually from 1572. When James I came to the throne in 1603, he chose Hampton Court over all his royal palaces as the best venue for dramatic entertainment. James visited Hampton Court five times in the first half-year of his reign and had no fewer than thirty plays presented there over the 1603-04 Christmastide season, including, it is believed, several by Shakespeare.

Waugh revealed that Jonson’s close friend, mentor and tutor, William Camden in his *Brittania*, published in 1607, quotes six lines by the historian John Leland, about Hampton Court in a chapter entitled “Trinobantes.” Camden’s 1610 English translation revealed that Leland referred to Hampton Court as “a stately place for rare and glorious shows,” and that it was known by the name of Avon, an abbreviation of the Celtic-Roman name “Avondunum” (meaning “fort on a river”). Waugh stated that Jonson was a voracious reader, and that we may be certain then that he knew Leland, both the *Genethliacon* of 1543 and the famous poem *Swan Song* (1545).

According to Waugh, this etymology was supported by Raphael Holinshed, who wrote in his *Chronicles* (1586) that “we now pronounce Hampton for Avondune.” Edward de Vere’s tutor Laurence Nowell also knew of this connection, as did Henry Peacham, who alluded to Hampton Court in his *Minerva Britannia* (1612). Anti-Stratfordian John Weever certainly spotted it, because he copied both Leland’s Latin poem and Camden’s translation verbatim into his account of Hampton Court in *Ancient Funeral Monuments* (1631).

Thus it appears that the name “Avon,” referring to Hampton Court, was commonly known among the educated men and women of Jonson’s day. Adding this to what is already known about Jonson and the First Folio, Waugh concluded that we may safely assume that he was commissioned to edit the First Folio without revealing the true identity of its author.

The Use of State Power to Hide de Vere’s Authorship

James Warren, winner of the *Vero Nihil Verius* Award at the 2013 Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre Conference for his *An Index of Oxfordian Publications*, talked about “The Use of State Power in the Effort to

Hide Edward de Vere’s Authorship of the Works Attributed to ‘William Shake-speare.’” Warren cited reasons for concluding that the effort to hide de Vere’s authorship during his lifetime and shortly thereafter was so extensive that it could have been undertaken only through the use of state power. Drawing on the work of Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, he noted that many documents that would support de Vere’s authorship are no longer in existence.

Warren asserted the reasons for believing that those documents did not disappear by accident and that Oxford himself could not have destroyed all of them. Only two choices are possible: either Edward de Vere was not the author, or state power was used to hide his authorship. [Further details of James Warren’s presentation may be found in the Spring 2014 issue of this newsletter. – Ed.]

The Shakespeare Mask

Newton Frohlich, former attorney and author of the novels *1492: The World of Christopher Columbus* and *The Shakespeare Mask*, spoke on the subject, “Writing *The Shakespeare Mask*—The Novelist’s Choices.” Frohlich said that his newest novel, *The Shakespeare Mask*, is an attempt to broaden and deepen the understanding of the authorship question and make clear why the Earl of Oxford is the leading contender for creating the works of Shakespeare. By telling the personal story of the Earl of Oxford in vivid and imaginative detail, fleshing out the bare bones of historical facts, Frohlich said that his novel creates a more engaging Oxford than has hitherto been portrayed.

Frohlich asserted that while the Stratford myth is attractive since “everyone loves a miracle,” more revealing is Oxford’s superior education and the wide learning of his first tutor Sir Thomas Smith, as described in detail in Stephanie Hopkins Hughes’ blog, politicworm (www.politicworm.com). According to Frohlich, Oxford’s fears that his outspokenness would block his advancement forced him to shroud his authorship in anonymity, fears that were realized when his guardian William Cecil took a strong stand against his being an independent thinker.

According to Frohlich, *The Shakespeare Mask* elaborates on what is meant by Oxford being a “favorite” of the queen, explores the significance of his relationship with Venetian courtesan Virginia Padoanna as it pertains to the creation of the Shakespeare plays set in Italy, discusses the emotional effect of his father’s death (whom he believed was murdered), and dramatizes the importance of Oxford’s ownership of a company of players to tour England at a crucial moment in history. *The Shakespeare Mask* also analyzes Oxford’s relationship with Emilia Bassano who, according to Frohlich, is acknowledged even by Stratfordians to be the “Dark Lady” of the sonnets.

Shakespeare's Numbers—English Metrical Verse and How It Is Spoken Onstage

James McGrath, who has BA in Film and Theatre from Hunter College, has been working for a number of years on rectifying the way Shakespeare's verse is spoken onstage. Currently working on a screenplay about Edward de Vere, *What You Will*, and a book of sonnets, McGrath spoke on the topic "Shakespeare's Numbers—English Metrical Verse and How It Is Spoken Onstage." According to the presenter, for hundreds of years, actors have been delivering Shakespeare's verse on stage in iambic pentameter, even though Shakespeare's verse is not written in iambic pentameter but in metrical verse.

McGrath said that "speaking in iambic pentameter" is a poetical affectation whose net effect is to render the delivery less truly dramatic, and to make the speech more difficult to understand by creating a "white noise" of artificial stresses. Lines could mean different things depending on the accenting, for example, the soliloquy "To be or not to be" is much more understandable and easy to follow if read metrically. This conundrum is explained by examining carefully what the author (or authors) of the metrical works had to say about the verse, to arrive at the realization that it is meant to be spoken on stage metrically, naturally and dramatically.

Scholars have been trying unsuccessfully for a long time to explain an odd group of writings from the approximate years 1570-1602 that describe a mysterious verse called English metrical verse. The most common term associated with this verse is "failed experiment." However, detailed examination of these writings, whose core group is comprised of Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570), Webbe's *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), the anonymous *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), and Champion's *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602), which includes a description of metrical verse, reveal the Earl of Oxford as the central figure behind metrical verse, and it is not a failed experiment but a description of Shakespeare's blank verse.

McGrath also looked at Samuel Daniel's role in identifying Oxford as the true author of *Observation in the Art of English Poesie*, and as the owner of the term "numbers," which Shakespeare used to describe his own verse.

"What's Hecuba to Him?" Connecting Life and Drama in *Hamlet*

Teacher and long-time Oxfordian Ron Halstead spoke on the subject "What's Hecuba to Him?" Connecting Life and Drama in *Hamlet*." Hamlet asks the question, "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,/ That he should weep for her" after the First Player has recited the speech describing the slaying of the King of Troy by the son of Achilles, which is witnessed by Hecuba. The speech ends

with the actor with "Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect" as he describes Hecuba's grief. In the soliloquy that follows, Hamlet concentrates on his own grief rather than the emotion shown by the player. Hamlet has chosen the speech and has directed the actor to "Come to Hecuba."

Similar use of the story of Hecuba's suffering is seen in *The Rape of Lucrece* when Lucrece seeks out the image of Hecuba in a painting of the Fall of Troy. That the Earl of Oxford could have seen such a painting in Italy has long been advanced as evidence of Oxfordian authorship. More recently the hesitation of Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, in killing Priam has been addressed as an addition to the story as told by Ovid and Virgil.

In his book *Daemonic Figures: Shakespeare and the Question of Conscience*, Ned Lukacher identifies the probable source for the hesitation in Euripides' *Hecuba*. He argues that Shakespeare had access to the Greek text. The hesitation of Pyrrhus occurs in Euripides' play when Pyrrhus is about to slay Hecuba's daughter, Polyxena, as a sacrifice commanded by the ghost of Achilles.

The seemingly offhand reference to Polonius as "Jephthah" just before the Player's speech is seen to provide further context to Hamlet's question, when the story from the Geneva Bible is compared to Euripides' play. According to Halstead, the author's use of the story of the Fall of Troy, of the revenge by Pyrrhus of his father Achilles' death, and Hecuba's despair after the slaughter of King Priam, provide clues to the identity of the true author of *Hamlet*.

Hamlet and the Law of Homicide: The Life of the Mind in Law and Art

Attorney Tom Regnier, newly elected President of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, spoke on the subject, "Hamlet and the Law of Homicide: The Life of the Mind in Law and Art." According to Regnier, Shakespeare was aware of changes in the law during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. In the field of criminal law an evolution took place away from the medieval view of law, which focused entirely on the accused's actions, to the modern view, which also takes into account a perpetrator's state of mind. This development paralleled what was happening in Shakespeare's art: a greater emphasis on the inner life of the character than was seen in earlier literature.

Regnier contrasted medieval law, which held that the inner thoughts of man should not be tried, with the modern view, which requires malice aforethought (expressed or implied) in order to convict a person of murder. Under the medieval rule, a killing was not a crime if the victim had forfeited the law's protection. For example, if the victim was a highway robber or an escaping prisoner, he was not "the king's lawful subject," and killing him was not a crime. If the victim *was* the king's lawful subject, however, then any killing would be

a crime even if it was as a result of an accident or self-defense (often, however, in the case of self-defense, the convicted person asked for and received a pardon).

The modern rule holds that the defendant's state of mind, as well as his actions, must be considered. Was the killing a "cold-blooded" or "premeditated," killing? If so, then it was murder. If it was done as a sudden act of rage, it was manslaughter, not murder. Accidents, killing in self-defense, and killing by an insane person were no longer considered murder. Stabbing an unarmed person was presumed to be a premeditated act, however, as was willful killing by poisoning.

Regnier examined the law of homicide and the closely related law of suicide as it applied to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He discussed legal aspects of Hamlet's feigned madness, the killing of Polonius, the duel between Hamlet and Laertes, the use of poison as a tool for murder, Hamlet's ultimate killing of Claudius (murder or manslaughter?), and whether the death of Ophelia was an accident, suicide, or insanity.

Though Hamlet feigns madness and plots revenge for Claudius' treachery in killing his father and marrying his mother, his accidental killing of Polonius could be defended in a modern court as innocence by reason of insanity. Under the medieval rule, however, the killing of Polonius (even if he was standing behind an arras) would be murder because Polonius was still the king's lawful subject. Under the modern rule, it would be judged to be murder if there was malice aforethought, but manslaughter if the killing was done in a sudden passion.

Regnier noted that, under ecclesiastical law, which reflected the medieval view, Ophelia's drowning would have been considered suicide and Christian burial would have been denied. Under the common law, however, if her suicide was considered to be a result of insanity, she would have been entitled to a Christian burial, and her grave would be "straight," i.e., in an east-west alignment. The Church, however, would only allow a minimal Christian burial ceremony, without all the trappings that would be included in the full ceremony.

At the end, Regnier contrasted a passage from Saxo Grammaticus' source story on *Hamlet* (c. 1185) to Claudius' soliloquy in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as a demonstration of Shakespeare's more penetrating analysis of the human mind. Shakespeare may not have actually invented the human being, but he went deeper than anyone before him, and perhaps since, in delving into the human psyche.

To conclude the conference, Earl Showerman informed the conference that the 2015 SOF Conference will again be held in Ashland, Oregon, where several Shakespearean plays will be available for the participants to see at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.



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