



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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2016 SOF Conference Comes to Boston

by Alex McNeil, Earl Showerman, James Warren and Hank Whittemore

The 2016 Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship annual conference was held at the Boston Marriott Newton Hotel in Newton, Mass., from November 3 to 6. Close to 100 persons attended the several sessions at the Marriott. Other planned activities included a guided tour of a new Shakespeare exhibit at the Boston Public Library, a production of *Hamlet* by the Actors' Shakespeare Project, and a presentation of Lynne and Michael Kositsky's new musical play, *A Question of Will*. Several attendees stayed in town for another day to attend a special screening of Cheryl Eagan-Donovan's Oxfordian documentary film, *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*, at the Boston Public Library on Monday, November 7.

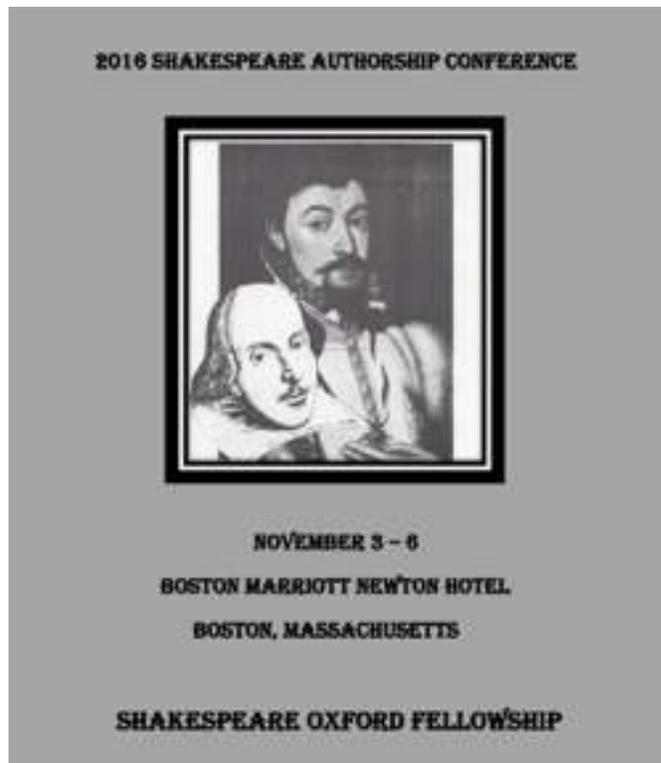
Day One: Thursday, November 3

Following welcoming remarks from SOF President Tom Regnier and Conference Committee Chair Richard Joyrich, **Shelly Maycock** gave the first presentation. In "Branding the Author: Assessing the Folger First Folio Tour," she reminded the audience that, as a library receiving public funding, the Folger Shakespeare Library "should be neutral [on the authorship question] . . . but that was not the case" in connection with its widely publicized 2016 traveling exhibit, "First Folio! The Book That Gave Us Shakespeare." She explained that she would, post-tour, strengthen the thesis of her *Brief Chronicles* article on this subject, and call for the Folger to take a less biased stance. In January 2016 Maycock spoke with Folger director Michael Witmore, who told her that Oxfordians need to

publish in peer-reviewed journals. Maycock replied that Oxfordians are effectively "locked out" of mainstream journals, including the Folger's own *Shakespeare Quarterly*. Maycock did state that the Folger staff has always been helpful to Oxfordian researchers. She opined that the Folger tour staff could "do the right thing" when asked about the authorship question and refer interested persons to experts, "but they don't." She believes that this attitude is contrary to Henry Clay Folger's stated intention, which was simply "to study Shakespeare." Although his wife, Emily, was a committed Stratfordian, it is not clear that Henry had made up his mind. His biographer, Stephen Grant, claims that he "harbored no doubts," but that

assertion is based on a single comment Henry is said to have made to a book dealer that his interest in Bacon (as an alternate candidate) had ended. The Folger Library's copy of Esther Singleton's *A Shakespeare Garden* (1922) is personally inscribed to Henry, and the Library came into possession of the manuscript of her later pro-Oxford time travel novel, *Shakespearean Fantasias: Adventures in the Fourth Dimension* (Henry Folger sent copies of the book to several friends). Maycock further noted that the Folger editions of Shakespeare plays contain language critical of the authorship question, and that on its web site, the Library states that "The documents that exist for the facts of Shakespeare's life tie him inextricably to

the plays and poems that bear his name." Maycock suggested that the Folger has violated the American



(Continued on page 18)

From the President:

State of the Organization

The following information is taken from a much longer report that I gave at the SOF Membership Meeting in Boston on November 5, 2016. If you'd like a copy of the full report, contact me at info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.

Major Developments Since the Last Conference

As many of you recall, this organization became known as the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship in October 2013 when the Shakespeare Oxford Society united with the Shakespeare Fellowship to form a single group. The newly named and unified group is now prospering and accomplishing things that the two predecessor organizations could not do.

For example, we had a \$415 deficit at the end of 2014, our first full year as a unified organization. In 2015, however, we made some important adjustments and ended the year with a \$26,253 surplus. The move from conventional printing of our journals to print-on-demand has greatly lowered our expenses. This enabled us in 2016 to supplement our matching funds for the Research Grant Program, to fund an Outreach Program, to pay for website

maintenance, and to keep dues stable from 2015 to 2017. We are staying on budget for 2016 and expect our financial situation to remain bright, especially if our end-of-the-year fundraising goes well.

Board of Trustees

Jim Warren joined the SOF Board in the last year, and he has been a terrific asset to the organization. He handles the online accounting and membership database and has given valuable service to the SOF as a member of several committees, including the "Shakespeare" Identified Centennial Committee.

At the conference, the Board said goodbye to Michael Morse, who was instrumental in the unification of the SOS and SF and was the first Treasurer of the unified organization. We're sure Michael will continue to pursue important SAQ research. Best wishes to you, Michael, and thank you for your service.

Stepping into Michael's shoes on the Board of Trustees is law professor Bryan Wildenthal. Bryan has chaired the First Folio Committee and spearheaded the creation of the excellent SOF brochure that was handed out at stops on the Folger's First Folio tour. Welcome, Bryan!

Membership and Donations

The SOF's total membership for 2016 was 426 members.

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Published quarterly by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466-0083.

www.ShakespeareOxfordFellowship.org.

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.

TRUSTEES:

Tom Regnier, President & Communications Committee Chair

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Joan Leon, Fundraising Committee Chair

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, Finance Committee Chair

James Warren

Bryan Wildenthal

Newsletter editor: Alex McNeil (newsletter@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org)

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."

Advertising Rates: \$100 for full page, \$60 for half-page, \$35 for quarter-page.

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Please renew for 2017 as soon as you can, if you haven't already done so. This helps us firm up our plans for next year. There is no increase in dues for 2017, and there is a new **free** online access for students. See the article about membership on page 7. Renew online or by mailing in the membership form that is enclosed with this newsletter.

Also, please make a donation of whatever size you can afford when you renew. Recently, we mailed a letter to our members stressing that if we are to keep expanding, we must keep our fundraising strong. And we *must* keep expanding in order to stand up strong against the entrenched Stratfordian establishment.

Communications

The Oxfordian: Chris Pannell published *The Oxfordian 18*, his second volume as editor, and he has again done a wonderful job! It is available to members on our website or in print from Amazon.

Brief Chronicles: Volume 7 will soon be available. I must report, however, with some sadness, that Dr. Roger Stritmatter has decided to step down as editor of *Brief Chronicles*. Roger needs more time to work on his scholarly projects. While we feel the loss of his contributions to *Brief Chronicles*, I am sure that Roger's continued research will amplify the already considerable evidence for Oxford.

After Roger resigned, the SOF Board decided, reluctantly, to suspend publication of *Brief Chronicles*. As Roger was the driving force behind the special style and character of *Brief Chronicles*, we did not feel that we could continue to sustain a second journal without him.

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter: Alex McNeil has continued to do an excellent job with the newsletter this year. A couple of issues had to be expanded to 36 pages to accommodate all the news. About three-quarters of our members choose to pay extra for their membership so that they can receive the printed newsletter.

How I Became an Oxfordian: Bob Meyers, President Emeritus of the National Press Foundation, conceived of this project, which he continues to edit. Since late last year, we have published on our website (with links to Facebook, Twitter, and other social media) over forty essays by Oxfordians, telling their stories about how they came to see the light. This series has proved very popular (and inspiring), receiving many enthusiastic comments from readers.

Website: Our website has been getting almost 10,000 views per month, 29% of them from outside the U.S. and Canada. So we are reaching many people and our reach is international.

Outreach

The Outreach Committee came into being this year in response to calls from our membership for the SOF to be more proactive in trying to reach out to a larger public and particularly to young people. Outreach was given a \$5,000 budget.

It helped fund: the non-Stratfordian 400th anniversary event in Toronto in April 2016, the making of promotional CDs for high schools in connection with Lynne and Michael Kositsky's new musical play for young people, *A Question of Will* (see page 30), and the mailing of the special First Folio volume of *Brief Chronicles* to directors at libraries and museums that hosted the Folger First Folio tour.

The Committee plans to launch a video contest in January 2017 to find the best three-minute video on the authorship question. First prize will be \$1,000.

Speakers Bureau

The SOF has established a Speakers Bureau, with more than thirty persons in the U.S. and Canada, and a few in Europe, who are ready and able to give introductory talks on the SAQ. Our website has a Speakers Bureau page listing all the speakers and letting people know how they can contact us if they'd like to hear a talk on the SAQ. Look for it under "Discover Shakespeare" on the menu bar of the website.

Data Preservation Committee

This new committee, chaired by Kathryn Sharpe, is looking into ways to ensure that independent Oxfordian blogs and websites remain in existence after their creators are no longer able to maintain them. We have been looking into types of legal agreements that could enable this kind of passing of the torch.

Endowment

The SOF has an endowment, made up of contributions that were donated to us in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Back in the mid-90s, the Board decided to create a special endowment fund to ensure the organization's continued existence. Money donated to the fund could not be spent by the organization—we could only spend the interest earned by the fund. A total of \$57,342.70 was raised for the endowment. That plan seemed like a good idea when it was conceived, at a time when interest rates were much higher than they are now. Today, however, interest rates are vanishingly small. Still, we have a fiduciary duty to follow the instructions of those who donated to the endowment. We are putting the endowment money in a separate account and are looking for safe ways to make it work harder for us in these days of very low interest rates.

Insurance

The legal fees that would be necessary to defend even a frivolous lawsuit against the SOF could wipe out a large portion of our assets, and perhaps threaten our continued existence. Therefore, the SOF has purchased insurance. If we should be sued, the insurance company would be responsible for our legal defense and for paying any judgment that might be levied against us. We have purchased general liability insurance, directors & officers insurance (in case someone sues us over decisions made by the Board of Trustees), and internet liability insurance. Most nonprofit organizations have these types of insurance. This action helps ensure our

continued existence as an organization.

What You Can Do

There are many ways, large and small, that you can help the movement. Talk to your friends about the authorship question. Encourage them to see a video or read a book on the subject. Give an SOF gift membership to an interested friend. Renew your

membership. Donate whatever you can afford to the SOF. Volunteer for the Speakers Bureau, or to help with the website, or to help organize the conference. Please contact me at info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org if you would like to help out the SOF as a volunteer.

Thanks for all you do to help bring the truth to light!

– Tom Regnier, President

2015 Financial Report

Here is a brief summary of the SOF's financial picture as of the end of 2015.

Total Assets (As of Dec. 31, 2015)	\$201,326.25
Income & Expenses (Jan.-Dec. 2015)	
Total Income	\$92,804.04
Total Expenses	<u>\$66,551.23</u>
Net Surplus	\$26,252.81

The SOF had a deficit of about \$400 at the end of 2014. In 2015, we had a *surplus* of over \$26,000. This result was due primarily to increased contributions and memberships, and decreased costs, especially for publications. The funds have been allocated to support the mission of the organization in the 2016 budget.

Submitted by:

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, Finance Committee Chair
(For a complete copy of the 2015 Financial Report, send an email request to info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org)

Letters to the Editor

In his article “End of an Oxfordian Era on the Supreme Court?” Professor Bryan H. Wildenthal celebrates the late Justice Antonin Scalia’s “patriotism, his dedication to public service, his intellectual brilliance, and his sheer love of family, life, and literature,” and calls him “a man of deeply abiding religious faith who loved the ancient traditions of the Catholic Church.” What is left out of the picture, however, is the harm that some of Scalia’s “controversial” opinions have done to women and minorities and to the health of the political, cultural, and social landscape in the U.S. Sorry, being an Oxfordian (as wonderful as it may be) is just not enough to lionize this man.

While his appointment may have heralded a “golden age of Oxfordianism,” it did little to further the causes of women and minority rights or the health of our political system. On abortion rights, his desire to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and his dissenting opinion in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, where he argued the state could make abortion illegal for the same reasons it would outlaw bigamy were a blatant attack on women’s rights. On homosexuality and LGBT rights, in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Supreme Court decided that same-sex couples have the right to get married. Scalia dissented from the opinion of the court, noting its possible socially adverse effect on society.

In his dissent in *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down anti-sodomy laws, he argued, more or less, that the state could make laws against homosexuality for the same reasons it would have an interest in outlawing murder or bestiality. “Many Americans do not want persons who openly engage in homosexual conduct as partners in their business, as scoutmasters for their children, as teachers in their children’s schools, or as boarders in their home,” he

wrote. “They view this as protecting themselves and their families from a lifestyle that they believe to be immoral and destructive.”

In *Romer v. Evans*, Scalia compared homosexuals to polygamists and even murderers: “Of course it is our moral heritage,” he said, “that one should not hate any human being or class of human beings, but I had thought that one could consider certain conduct reprehensible — murder, for example, or polygamy, or cruelty to animals —and could exhibit even ‘animus’ toward such conduct. Surely that is the only sort of ‘animus’ at issue here: moral disapproval of homosexual conduct.”

On capital punishment he said, “You want to have a fair death penalty? You kill; you die. That’s fair.” He was all right with torture as long as it was used to extract information, not as a punishment. Anyone who argued otherwise was merely being “self righteous.” On affirmative action, he suggested that black students would be better served at “less advanced” schools, and perhaps most importantly, his vote opened up the floodgates for the pollution of our political process by corporate money in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.

In that case the Supreme Court decided that corporations are people and can donate unlimited amounts of money to SuperPACs, which are used to influence political elections. In *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, the Supreme Court decided that private businesses can be exempted from certain laws on religious grounds. Justice Scalia voted with the majority opinion. In *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Supreme Court struck down parts of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a decision considered by many to be an attack on the civil liberties of black voters. Scalia said, in 2013 in a speech at the University of California Washington Center, the following: “Whenever a society adopts racial entitlements, it is very difficult to

get out of them through the normal political processes.” Oxfordian or not, saying that Scalia was a brilliant leader who made controversial decisions says nothing about the character of those decisions or the effect they had on the body politic.

Howard Schumann
Vancouver, BC

This responds to footnote 13 in Part II of C.V. Berney’s thoughtful *Cymbeline* study, published in issues of Fall 2015 and Winter 2016. Berney’s 2016 footnote quotes Posthumus’s lurid envisioning of his cuckolding by Imogen with Iachimo: “Perchance he spoke not, but like a full-acorn’d boar, a German one, cried ‘O!’ and mounted;...” (Act II). Then the footnote continues: “The boar was a feature of the Oxford family crest (‘O’), but why a German one?”

Murray M. Schwartz’s August 25, 2005, “Between Fantasy and Imagination: A Psychological Exploration of *Cymbeline*,” *PsyArt: An Online Journal for the Psychological Study of the Arts* (http://www.psyartjournal.com/article/show/m_schwartz-shakespeare_and psychoanalysis) quotes the Act II passage in context. Schwartz notes: “‘Full-acorned’ means full-testicled, and the word ‘German’ may be a pun on ‘germen,’ the male seed.” Here Schwartz, the scholar of Shakespeare and psychoanalysis, drops his own footnote. It opens: “‘German’ also means ‘blood relation,’ which makes the boar a part of the family. Cf. *Othello*, I.i.112-113....”

1. Suppose Oxford indeed is the playwright flagging himself with “boar” and “O.” Then language from Schwartz hints Oxford knowingly associates himself with a somehow ballsy (full-testicled) and fertile (germen) fellow (Iachimo) engendered in the imagination of the playwright’s own fictional character (Posthumus). Quere, whether in *Cymbeline* of post-1581 Oxford brazens out his humiliation of imprisonment in the Tower upon the

1581 birth of Anne Vavasour’s baby Edward Veer (Oxford’s conspicuous bastard, by betraying Burghley’s daughter adulterously). If Oxford thus were the “boar, a German one,” then knowing audiences could recall Oxford’s 1580 adultery spawning his “blood relation”: Edward Veer. Oxford truly would be the boar germane (closely related) to the play wherein Posthumus speaks: Oxford wrote Posthumus’s words.

2. How far might such speculation extend? The “full-acorn’d boar” might be well-testicled plus well-fed, boars eating acorns: Earl of Oxford Edward de Vere knew hunger through rumor alone. However, why else might a lusty boar be full-acorned? What ties to testicles? The penis’s head is the glans. Picture an erect penis presenting an engorged head: full glans-ed. That glans is so named from the Latin *glans* for acorn. Supposing such subtle subtext, 1582’s “full-acorned boar” Oxford depicted himself a 1580 horny stud. Yet, what playwright possibly so sensed (subconsciously or consciously) the penis in the acorn? Not any playwright possessed of small Latin.
3. Berney understands Oxford in *Cymbeline* to be intensely hostile to Henry VII, the posthumous son of Edmund Tudor. Berney quotes Iachimo’s statement (I.4.14-17) suggesting that marriage of Posthumus/Henry Tudor with a King’s daughter validated each man’s claim to the crown rather more through the princess than in his own right. Berney continues: “I think that we must consider the possibility that the Author is deliberately taunting Henry VII about his advantageous marriage.” Authorial self-identification with mouthpiece-Iachimo as derider of Henry VII’s self-promoting marriage renders more credible hypothesized Oxonian self-identification with Iachimo painted as lusty ladykiller, German and all.

George Steven Swan
Greensboro, NC

What’s the News?

SOF Announces Winners of 2016 Research Grant Program

As reported previously on our website, the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship’s Research Grant Program Selection Committee has awarded grants to research projects by four deserving individuals from three countries: Eddi Jolly of the U.K., Nina Green of Canada, and Michael Delahoyde and Coleen Moriarty of the U.S. The Committee had the sum of \$20,000 available for grants in 2016—\$10,000 from donations and \$10,000 in

matching funds. This is the third award for Professor Delahoyde and Ms. Moriarty, who have unearthed some Oxfordian treasures in the Venetian archives. Following are the subject matter, amounts, and descriptions of each winning researcher’s proposed project:

Eddi Jolly, Ph.D., received an award of \$2,540 to determine if Edward de Vere is mentioned in any records in Paris. By 1575 he is already known to have bought literary texts; he is twenty-five years old and thought to be already



writing. Jolly will search the Parisian records to discover if there are any pertaining to de Vere's stays in Paris, whom he might have met, and what he might have done while there. In England we can demonstrate he was writing poetry and was a patron and supporter of writers in early adulthood; it would be valuable to establish whether there are any records demonstrating that he was associating with French writers, too. Research is expected to take place at the Bibliothèque Nationale. This institution exists on four separate sites in Paris.

Nina Green received an award of \$2,500, and will pursue three areas of research. First, she will try to determine whether the College of Arms has any documents pertaining to the Earls of Oxford during the period 1500-1650, including funeral certificates, and to obtain digitized images of these documents for further Oxfordian research. Second, she plans to resolve as many outstanding issues as possible concerning the three draft grants of arms to the Shaksper family. Third, she seeks to resolve as many issues as possible concerning the newly rediscovered document with the words, "Shakespeare the player by Garter" (see Summer 2016 issue of the *Newsletter*) as well as other closely-related manuscripts at the College of Arms, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the Bodleian Library.



Coleen Moriarty and **Michael Delahoyde** (pictured above) received an award of \$13,000 to continue research on Oxford in Italian archives. This is their third award. In 2014 they discovered in Venice a new Oxford signature on a document in which he requested to see secret rooms in the Doge's palace. Then they found that Oxford, after entering into Italy, seems to have left no trace in all the ambassadorial and bureaucratic documents where we should be reading of him. With indications now that Oxford liked to travel incognito and had diplomatic instructions from the English court to carry out, they have more work to accomplish in Venice, and will target their

next archival explorations to the northern Italian cities of Siena, Ferrara, Milan, and Padua. They are determined to solve the case of the vanishing de Vere.

Earl Showerman Speaks on SAQ to College Class

Dr. Earl Showerman traveled to Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, to speak to a group of students on October 20. The talk was organized by theatre arts professor Christopher Harris, who is conducting a class on the authorship question, critically examining various theories for and against the candidacy of William Shakespeare of Stratford, as well as trying to understand the culture of dismissiveness towards those who attempt to ask "the question" and want to learn more. Showerman said, "The reading list Chris Harris required for his Shakespeare Authorship seminar included Diana Price, Hope and Holston's *Shakespeare Controversy*, and *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* and *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*, so I knew his students would be receptive to all I could give them in ninety minutes. That one of them took up my offer to serve as research consultant and called me within hours to inquire of the relationship between Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones over *Hamlet* and the Shakespeare attribution proved that my trip had been very worthwhile."

Delving into the medical knowledge displayed within the Shakespeare canon, Showerman gave the class extensive and meticulous breakdowns of the many characters within a variety of Shakespeare plays who display accurate (and even "cutting edge") medical knowledge for the time, as well as detailing the sources of the knowledge. Showerman then took questions from the class, which addressed topics ranging from who had access to the medical sources, to which candidates more closely aligned with his conclusions. Here are some the responses from the students:

- "Earl Showerman's lecture was super informative and applicable to our class. I appreciated his obvious knowledge of the subject, as well as his delivery. I also really appreciated that he presented all of his evidence first, and then expanded upon it to explain why he feels that the Oxfordian theory is the most enticing to him."
- "Dr. Showerman's lecture was particularly eye opening in its use of the text as a tie to historical documents. For a man whose life we know so little about, the best alternative to speculation is the study of the historical context of the era in which he created his art. Doctor Showerman exemplifies this strategy in his work; he not only points out the lines of Shakespeare's text that would have required medical knowledge, but he shows us exactly where—books, medical practitioners, scholars—that knowledge would have come from."
- "While we have heard a lot about the vastness and depth of Shakespeare's knowledge, Dr. Showerman's

writings and presentation filled in the particulars for me and gave more detail on the issue, expanding even upon what we had read before and adding some of his own specifically Oxfordian perspective.”
Bravo!

New Stratford-upon-Avon Monopoly Game

Earlier this year it was announced that a new version of the classic board game Monopoly would be produced with a Stratford-upon-Avon theme. In a public vote, some twenty-four locations competed to be the favored West Midlands location for the new edition. Stratford-upon-Avon received 37.2% of the votes, narrowly edging out Shrewsbury, which received 36.1%. Royal Leamington Spa, Gloucester, and Warwick finished third, fourth and fifth. No doubt the fact that 2016 is the 400th anniversary of the death of Stratford grain merchant Will Shakspeare was a deciding factor—who would have thought that there were so many grain merchant devotees? Members of the public were invited to nominate locations from Stratford-upon-Avon to be the featured properties, and to suggest themed Chance and Community Chest cards. The four railroads (depicted as railway stations in the London edition of Monopoly) were to be travel-related squares on the gameboard. It’s too bad Oxfordians didn’t know about this—we could have campaigned to have the “Jail” square replaced by “Castle Hedingham,” and the opposite corner square, and all the Chance cards, could have said “Go to Castle Hedingham (where you’ll find the real Shakespeare).”

No Dues Increase for 2017! Renew Your Membership Early!

There will be no increase in SOF membership dues for 2017. In fact, there will be a decrease in one particular category (students, see below). Now is a great time to renew your membership for 2017, in which we will be celebrating our organization’s 60th anniversary! We expect the good news on authorship to keep coming during 2017, and we hope you will continue to be a part of this effort to resolve the greatest literary mystery of all time.

There has been an increase in the costs of printing and mailing the quarterly newsletter in the last two years, but the SOF has decided that we can absorb these modest cost increases without raising dues, at least through 2017. This is due, in large part, to the generosity of our donors, who have responded admirably to our recent appeals for donations. Thanks to all of you who have joined or contributed to the SOF for your kindness and your loyalty!

Your 2016 annual membership is still valid through December 31, 2016. But you don’t have to wait until 2017 to renew! You can renew now at the membership page on our website (click on “Join Us” on the menu bar near the top of the website), where you can also purchase gift memberships for interested friends who are new to the SOF. You may also join or renew by mailing in the membership form inserted in this newsletter with your check or credit card information.

Whether you are renewing or joining for the first time, please do so as soon as possible because early renewals help the SOF finalize its plans for the coming year that much sooner.

NEW STUDENT RATE: In order to introduce more young people to the fascinating world of the Shakespeare Authorship Question, the SOF is now offering **free** online access to students with a current student ID and an email account from an educational institution (such as an .edu account). To take advantage of this offer, just send an email from your educational account to membership@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org asking for free student membership and attaching a photocopy (jpg, png, etc.) of your current student ID. You will receive a password that will give you online access to recent publications that are only available to members. Unfortunately, we cannot offer the printed newsletter free to students, as the student rates for Newsletter Membership (see our website or the inserted form) are necessary to cover our printing and mailing costs.

Please help us continue our quest to Bring the Truth to Light in 2017. Join or renew now!



Stritmatter & Kositsky Book Receives Favorable Mainstream Notice

As first reported by Richard Waugaman, M.D., on the SOF website a few weeks ago, a book by two noted Oxfordians has received favorable comment in a mainstream publication. The book is *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare’s The Tempest*, by Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky, published by McFarland & Co. in late 2013. The mainstream publication is the 2015 edition of *The Year’s Work in English Studies*, published by Oxford University Press. OUP describes *The Year’s Work in English Studies* as

“**the** qualitative narrative bibliographical review of scholarly work on English language and literatures written in English. It is the largest and most comprehensive work of its kind and the oldest evaluative work of literary criticism. *The Year’s Work in English Studies* does not merely offer annotated or enumerated bibliography entries, but provides expert, critical commentary supplied for every book covered.” Each of the annual editions of *Year’s Work* is divided into several large sections, including one on Shakespeare. In recent



SHAKESPEARE

OXFORD FELLOWSHIP

The Excitement Continues! Don't Miss It!

It's Time to Join the SOF or Renew Your Membership for 2017!

Basic Membership: \$44. Includes electronic access to all of our journals and newsletters, discounts on conference registration, and all other rights of membership, including the right to vote for members of the Board of Trustees.

Newsletter Membership: Includes all the members' rights listed above, and four printed issues of the quarterly *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* sent to your home.

\$69 (U.S.) **\$74 (Canada)** **\$84 (other countries)**

Family Membership: This membership category includes all members' rights for two persons living in the same household. **\$59 (Basic)**

Family Membership plus newsletter (four issues printed and mailed):

\$84 (U.S.) **\$89 (Canada)** **\$99 (other countries)**

Student Online Access: **FREE**

Student Newsletter Memberships: **\$35 (U.S./Canada)** **\$45 (other countries)**

(Students: From your school email account, please send a photo of your student ID to membership@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.)

Introductory Gift Memberships: Members who have renewed for 2017 may give introductory one-year gift memberships that include the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (four issues printed and mailed) to friends and family who have never been members of the SOF or its predecessor organizations. Please send us the names, addresses, and emails (if available) of the persons you would like to receive the newsletter. (You may use the back of this sheet or enclose additional sheets.)

\$35 (U.S./Canada) **\$45 (other countries)** (amount based on recipient's residence)

We ask you please to make a donation in addition to your dues. Your generosity covers a major portion of the costs to operate the Fellowship and publish our materials. In the past, members' donations have sustained our organization. Your donations help support new projects, such as research grants and outreach, which only exist through the generous help of our members and friends.

Donation \$ _____

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JOIN OR RENEW TODAY!

By mail: Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466-0083

Online: shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org (Click on "Join Us" on the Menu Bar.)

years the Shakespeare section has been compiled by [Sheilagh Ilona O'Brien](#), a Ph.D. candidate in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland.

Here's the full excerpt (with citations omitted):

Moving beyond discussions of the influence of medieval romance or style on Shakespeare's late plays, *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* dominate the remaining works to be reviewed. Lynne Kositsky and Roger A. Stritmatter had already presented a 2007 article in *The Review of English Studies* on the origins of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the influence of William Strachey's *True Reportory*. They have now expanded upon that work significantly in their book *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare's The Tempest*. Kositsky and Stritmatter point to the lack of evidence that Shakespeare was familiar with Strachey's account, the very different setting in which Shakespeare sets his shipwrecked survivors, and, most significantly, the nature of Strachey's *True Reportory* as a "highly literary document, which incorporates material from a wide range of historical and literary sources."

The problematic dating of Strachey's letter, and the question of whether it influenced other publications on the Bermuda shipwreck and *The Tempest*, or if instead it was composed in its published form some time after the other accounts and the play, is the central theme of chapter 19, "The Myth of Strachey's Influence." It is here that Kositsky and Stritmatter's forensic examination of the evidence reaches its height. They argue that "Shakespearian traditionalists" such as Alden

Vaughan and Tom Reedy are relying on supposition and assumption when they discuss the intertextual references as evidence without an examination of the historical probability that Strachey might have composed his account later than 1609.

In a stinging attack on the assumptions underlying Vaughan's and Reedy's works, Kositsky and Stritmatter point to the lack of evidence for any version of Strachey's account prior to Shakespeare writing *The Tempest*, and the very problematic assumption that the letter, if it did exist, was available to Shakespeare in manuscript form. They also cite the extensive evidence for Strachey's plagiarism from other sources, and the potential for the noted intertextuality between *The Tempest* and Strachey to actually be in the other direction, with Strachey copying from either the play or a mutual source. While the argument is well made, it suffers, like its opponents, from a lack of definitive evidence. However, the questions raised about the "orthodox" approach are significant, and suggest a number of problems for previous examinations of *The Tempest*, which were grounded in the idea that Strachey was one of Shakespeare's sources. No doubt Kositsky and Stritmatter's informative and well-written work will spark renewed debate and discussion of this topic.

The 2015 edition of *The Year's Work in English Studies*, and the nine previous ones, are available free online: http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/ywes/shakespeare-400-chapters.html. The 2016 volume, and pre-2006 volumes, require a subscription.

Book Reviews

W. R. Streitberger, *The Masters of the Revels and Elizabeth I's Court Theatre*, 2016, 319 pp., Oxford U. Press, New York, NY, \$70.00-\$99.00 via Amazon.

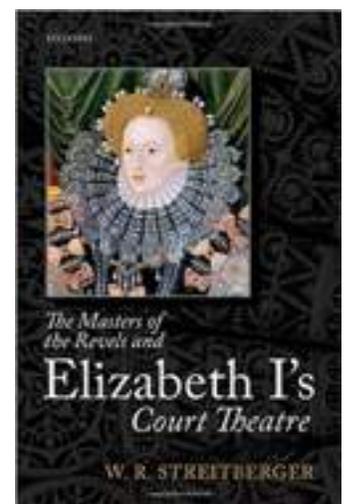
Reviewed by W. Ron Hess

The Office of the Revels is a complex subject, and as voluminous as the evidence is, there are gaps through which many a theory can be driven. W.R. Streitberger, Professor of English and faculty member in the interdisciplinary program in Textual Studies at the University of Washington, often gets immersed in details, which can be expected from his details-driven sources. A major one was Albert Feuillerat's *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* (1908, republished 1963; available as a free .pdf download from the Internet). Nevertheless,

Streitberger is able to hold the reader's attention; it's certainly a fascinating and essential topic for our Oxfordian cause.

In the 1998 movie *Shakespeare in Love* Sir Edmund Tilney (played by the always enjoyable Simon Callow) was the feckless factotum who was publicly loudly berated by Queen Elizabeth (Dame Judith Dench) as she improbably emerged from the Globe theatre's audience to save

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* from being shut down (according to the plot, this was because Tilney had been made jealous by the Bard's poetical wooing of his favorite prostitute). In that light might we assume that



the Mastership of the Revels was a silly one-man enterprise of little importance except to beleaguered actors? No. In fact, the office was created by Henry VIII as an extension of his Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber (those he trusted the most). The Masters later serving under Elizabeth were as follows:

1. Sir Thomas Cawarden (a carryover from Queen Mary's regime), 1558-59;
2. Sir Thomas Benger, 1559-72 (died in office, his mishandling of expenses led to an inquiry by the Privy Council after his death and to reforms);
3. An interregnum (1572-79) when Benger's assistant, commoner Thomas Blagrove, served as Acting Master, closely supervised by Lord Chamberlain Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex;
4. Sir Edmund Tilney, 1579-1610 (in 1608 his nephew and successor Sir George Buc effectively took over; since Buc's critical annotations are in the margins of the c.1598 *Sir Thomas More* manuscript fragment, Buc may have been reviewing and censoring prospective plays well back into the Elizabethan era).

Continuing until the Restoration:

5. Sir George Buc, 1610-22; Buc had been a Stationer, and contributed a dedicatory poem to Thomas Watson in *Hekatompathia* (1582), a book dedicated to our 17th Earl of Oxford. This led Alan Nelson to declare that Oxford was patron of a "literary circle" (*Monstrous Adversary*, 287). Although Nelson didn't say so, this would have meant that Buc was in Oxford's circle!
6. After a brief skip, the Mastership was held by Sir Henry Herbert (cousin of the "incomparable paire of brethren" of *FI*, and thus an Oxford in-law) from 1623 to at least 1666. The duties were expanded to censorship of all books, in addition to plays. This may have had great bearing on the 1623 Folio project, and the later "Stratfordian myth."

Streitberger's greatest strength is his explaining how Tilney was increasingly charged with responsibility to control and censor playhouses, plays, and acting troupes. The original process during Henry VIII's reign was that the Revels were to be the monarch's "gift" to the Court and to privileged commoners for certain "high seasons," such as the twelve days of Christmas. Later, under Sussex's term as Lord Chamberlain (1573-83, during which he was a political mentor to Oxford), the number of playhouses, troupes, and plays proliferated, and the power of influencing public opinion (or, more importantly, opinion at Court) was recognized. This led to competition between the troupes of the Lord Chamberlain and his allies and those of his competitors in the Privy Council (principally the Earls of Leicester and Warwick). Extant plays can often be analyzed to show their underlying political messages; for example, Sussex, Burghley and their allies (including Oxford) promoted a foreign marriage for the Queen, and their opponents promoted "the Virgin Queen" mythology. Thus, *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex* (1559, piratically published 1565) advocated the Queen's marriage in order

to avoid the fate of King Gorboduc—having the kingdom fracture under civil war. Hidden messages were usually subtle, but sometimes as unsubtle as the marriage themes celebrated in what later became Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Streitberger's narrative gains strength through his comprehensive description of Sussex's role in the development of the office of Master of the Revels, and the groundwork for formation of The Queen's Men acting troupe under Tilney. In 1572 these three officers all died: Benger, the Lord Treasurer, and the Lord Chamberlain. All had been happy to delegate their offices to subordinates, which fostered corruption and excess. And so the Privy Council offices were taken over by Burghley and Sussex, two hands-on administrators who obsessed over details and expenses. Blagrove continued his earlier duties, although at times he seemed to believe he would be more than just Acting Master. Sussex always controlled the Revels and associated offices (such as Robes) because they were part of the Chamberlain's responsibility for the Queen's household and progresses. Particularly in times of great pomp and state, such as the 1579-81 visitation and marital suit of Francis, Duc d'Anjou and Alençon, we can expect that Sussex would have conferred with and relied upon the Lord Great Chamberlain, our 17th Earl of Oxford.

In addition to being the Queen's close relative, Sussex was one of her most competent military commanders, diplomats, and Privy Councilors. He had led a mission to Vienna in 1567-68 to try to negotiate the Queen's marriage into the Imperial family (during which he took with him 100 "Gentlemen retainers," which I believe may have included young Oxford, his tutor Laurence Nowell, and his uncle Arthur Golding, among others); aside from his earlier military successes in Scotland and Ireland, in 1569-70 he suppressed the Northern Rebellion and led a brief incursion into southern Scotland (which Oxford participated in, along with others later important in Elizabethan theater history).

Elsewhere I've theorized that in order to be competitive with the troupes of Leicester and Warwick, Sussex saw a need for an expanded and more competent Lord Chamberlain's group, requiring higher quality playcrafting, and thus a need for someone like Oxford to write such works. I've argued that the plays later attributed to "Shake-speare" were originated for the Lord Chamberlain's Men of the 1570s, not that of the 1590s. In volumes I and II of *The Dark Side of Shakespeare* (2002, 2003), I laid out evidence that each Shakespeare play has within it a core of allusions to the 1570s bogeyman, Don Juan of Austria, the one man then capable of pulling off an audacious invasion of England, until he died of the plague or was assassinated in October 1578 (one of the two men executed for Don Juan's death was Egremont Radcliffe, half-brother of Sussex, although Oxford had Denny the Frenchman and at least one other assassin actually enrolled in Don Juan's Namur

garrison at that time). Each of the Bard's plays, I maintain, celebrate aspects of Oxford's adventures with, and "victory" over, Don Juan, and were originally written for viewing by Sussex and his circle before they were allowed to find other audiences.

It would be nice to claim that Streitberger's book specifically validates my theories, but alas that isn't so. However, he deals well with the centrality of Oxford's mentor, Sussex, in the development of the office of Master of the Revels into a key institution that affected what we now know as "Shake-speare's" plays. Streitberger took the bare bones about Sussex from Feuillerat's massive collection of documents and put flesh and substance onto it. I don't think any of his findings necessarily contradict my theories, and I do think they help to explain the "why" behind his details. I highly recommend that the "well-equipped Oxfordian" buy or borrow this book (I borrowed a copy from a nearby University Research Library).

All this leads to a fascinating question: During Sussex's regime and shortly thereafter (1570s to early 1580s), did Oxford have a servant working in the Revels Office? Here's my take on it.

Looking in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for a biography of Thomas Blagrave (d. 1590, Acting Master of the Revels 1572-79) and finding none, I came across a brief one at Wikipedia. It includes this astounding statement, perhaps inserted or modified by an overenthusiastic Oxfordian: "Acting as Master of the Revels from 1573-9 [Blagrave] was assisted by John Drawater, a servant of the Earl of Oxford, with whom he had a court battle in the early 1590s."

I suggest a more accurate wording: "Blagrave had as his servant John Drawater (or Draywater), who would serve the 17th Earl of Oxford in the early 1590s, when he was charged by Oxford with embezzling properties owned or leased by Oxford, and selling them to third parties."

Drawater was also mentioned in another item on the web (www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol10/pp131-133) concerning Oxford's Earls Colne property. Feuillerat describes him as "Blagrave's servant," and lists him on numerous pages in connection with the Revels Office, e.g., in 1571, 1577 (oddly alongside of a "John Davyes," is this Sir John Davies?), by which time Sussex's deteriorating health had caused him to turn over many Lord Chamberlain's duties to his deputy, a second cousin of Oxford and the Queen, Charles Howard, Lord Howard of Effingham (when it may be that Oxford was relied on for overseeing Revels plays); Drawater is last noted by Feuillaerat in 1584/5, which, coincidentally, is about when Oxford's lease of Blackfriars Theatre ended. I've seen Drawater given a date of death of "either 1597 or 1598," but no formal biography.

There is more about Drawater that needs to be noted. In 1595-96 was published Sir Lewis Lewkenor's *A discourse of the vsage of the English fugitiues, by the Spaniard*, printed by Thomas Scarlet "for John Drawater," and, according to the Early English Books Online transcript from the Short Title Catalogue: "This edition was printed without author's permission—STC." Lewkenor's book had been piratically published, i.e., stolen. The Wikipedia biography of publisher William Ponsonby states, "In 1595 Ponsonby tried to register ownership of Lewes Lewkenor's *The Estate of English fugitives under the King of Spain and his ministers* but the edition was printed [sic], possibly piratically, by John Drawater, assistant to Thomas Blagrave Master of the Revels" (likely a confusion, since Blagrave hadn't been Acting Master since 1579, and had died in 1590). Drawater was not listed elsewhere as a member of the Stationers Company, so this appears to mean that he had stolen the text from Lewkenor or was acting as middleman for someone who had.

The printer, Thomas Scarlet, was a notoriously "unruly" Stationer, having printed some of the Marprelate Tracts in 1591, for which he was punished by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The STC suggests that Scarlet printed the undated (probably c. 1595) *Epigrammes and Elegies by J.D. and C.M.* (Sir John Davies and the late Christopher Marlowe), with the two sections separated by a few stanzas of very peculiar poetry, likely drawing official ire for satirizing the Queen. Even more mysterious, in June 1599 the book was listed by the Archbishop to be burned alongside such books as *Willobie His Avis* (where "Avisa" used the Queen's motto, "Always the Same"). So, *Epigrammes* was published by 1599, when it was ordered burned. Without the incendiary middle verses, it was republished as *All Ovids Elegies* in 1602-03, again c.1630 and c. 1640, each time using false imprints of "Middleborough" in the Netherlands. But the real kicker is that the same book appears to have been entered in the Stationers Register on 3 January 1599/0 as "a book called *Amours* by J.D. with certen o[th]yr sonnetes by W.S.," where *Amours* was a book of elegies famously by Ovid (the part translated by Marlowe), and "W.S." is taken by some to be Shakespeare.

As to the diplomat and translator Sir Lewis Lewkenor (c. 1556-1626), Stuart Gillespie's 2001 *Shakespeare's Books* (278) claims that his 1599 translation of *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice* gave the Bard all he needed to know to write about the Venice of *Othello*, including particulars about "Othello's defence against the charge of witchcraft." Unless, of course, the Bard had actually visited and lived in Venice, as Oxford had in 1575-76.

To answer my question, I've not seen evidence that John Drawater was a servant of Oxford before the early 1590s, although I strongly suspect that Sussex and

Oxford were closely cooperating in affairs related to the disposing of properties, which may have required the talents of a willing thief, as Drawater appears to have become. As I read the documents on Nina Green's website, it occurred to me that maybe "Drawater" was merely providing "plausible deniability" for Oxford, such that properties leased from the Crown could be disposed of, leaving Oxford free to deny having sold them; he and Drawater might have shared a modest profit from bilking others, without having to turn such profits over to Oxford's many creditors, including the crown itself.

There's one last curiosity, for what it's worth: *Oxen* are used to *draw* wagons and other cargo, and they cross *water* at a *ford*. Could Drawater be a front or pseudonym for Oxen+ford? If it were a mere pseudonym, Drawater would have been rather hard to locate and arrest for illegal property sales, wouldn't he? Maybe so, not likely. But is this really much different from "Shake-speare," when we note that Oxford's Bolbec crest had a lion brandishing a lance, or "shaking a spear"? And there were hidden matters to be concealed about an almost certainly illiterate actor-cum-playwright, weren't there?

Reflections on the True Shakespeare

By Gary Goldstein

Laugwitz Verlag, Buchholz, Germany, 2016

Reviewed by James A. Warren

In his introduction to this collection of twenty of his articles, Gary Goldstein notes that the lack of documentary evidence supporting Edward de Vere's authorship of the works attributed to William Shakespeare is the key factor enabling Stratfordians to maintain their belief in authorship by the man from Stratford. But he also notes the powerful case based on circumstantial evidence that can be made in support of de Vere's authorship, and therein lies the value of this collection. Each of its articles (as well as the introduction and the short but interesting biography of Edward de Vere) provides additional pieces of circumstantial evidence that strengthen the case.

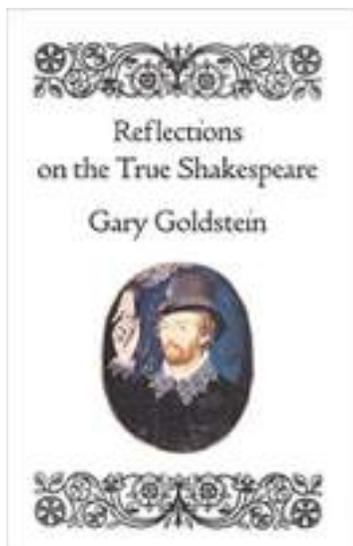
Goldstein rightly points out the value of—indeed, the necessity of—moving beyond “the confines of a purely

literary framework” to approach the authorship question from one that is multidisciplinary and draws on knowledge of the “revolutionary changes” taking place in economics, politics and law, as well as theater and poetry, in the remarkable historical period known as the English Renaissance. “If we are to evaluate *Hamlet* holistically,” he writes, “we must achieve an understanding of the psychology of sixteenth century England.” We must “widen our horizons” to focus on it “not only through the language and poetics of English, but [also] through Catholic theology, the Court politics of London, the Anglo-Spanish War, and the philosophy of feudalism.”

Goldstein's articles do just that by approaching Oxford's authorship via an impressively wide variety of subjects, including Shakespeare's knowledge of courtly pursuits such as falconry, his use of the Essex dialect rather than the Warwickshire dialect spoken in Stratford, and his examination of whether Nicholas Hilliard portrayed Oxford and Queen Elizabeth in one of his *impresas*, or miniature portraits. Especially interesting is the article, building on Ramon Jiménez's work, showing the influence of John Bale's play *King Johan* on Shakespeare's *King John*. That the earlier play had been commissioned of Bale by Edward de Vere's father, the 16th Earl of Oxford, that it was available only in manuscript, and that it had hadn't been staged after the early 1560s, all serve to strengthen ties between Edward de Vere and Shakespeare's works.

Equally interesting is the article on the epistemology of the Shakespeare authorship issue, in which Goldstein highlights Hugh Trevor-Roper's observation that the plays show “the sensibility and philosophical outlook of an aristocrat pervaded with nostalgia for the past and gloom about the future. In Trevor-Roper's analysis, Shakespeare the dramatist supported the feudal social order, detested the Puritans, hated rebellion in all its forms, and tended to ignore God in the canon because he was a cultural aristocrat who was unquestioning in his social and religious conservatism.” These attitudes arise naturally out of the life of Edward de Vere, the holder of the oldest title in the kingdom; they are completely out of place in the life of a grain merchant from a small isolated agricultural community.

Particularly important are the two articles examining Shakespeare's involvement in the use of the stage for propaganda during Elizabeth's reign. Goldstein first establishes the difficult economic, political and social conditions that existed in the second half of Elizabeth's reign even apart from the threat of war with Spain. Elizabeth “found herself caught between the past and the future; the past as represented by the old aristocracy, still Catholic and continental in culture if no longer in belief, still powerful enough to do harm, and exceedingly angry and frustrated by its losses; the future by the upwardly mobile energetic new middle class merchants and traders, eager to reform everything from government to



religion. These too were angry and frustrated, in their case by the long-standing powers and privileges that they were forced to pay for with their taxes and in which they did not share nearly so much as they desired.”

Given those difficulties, Elizabeth and her government needed to use every means available to keep the population united in support of her reign and the looming war with Spain, and to suppress discontent. The public stage was a critical forum in that effort. “The theater had functioned as an instrument of state propaganda from the very start of Elizabeth’s reign in 1558,” Goldstein writes. Only the “recently-created commercial theater, free of the concerns of the pulpit, could deliver a message liberally sauced with humor and drama directly to a public not yet able to obtain information from the printed page. Theater was the medium that worked.” Goldstein draws on the work of historian Lily Campbell to show “the systematic political uses to which the history plays of Shakespeare, in particular, were designed: ‘Each of the Shakespeare histories serves a special purpose in elucidating a political problem of Elizabeth’s day and in bringing to bear upon this problem the accepted political philosophy of the Tudors.’”

All this shows that Shakespeare was a man of the court as well as the theater, further tying de Vere to Shakespeare’s works. He not only held the position of Lord Great Chamberlain in her majesty’s court and thus had an interest in, and inside knowledge of, political developments, but was also extensively involved with the theater, maintaining two troupes of actors in the 1580s and leasing the Blackfriars Theater. Goldstein ties all this together by citing historian Reavely Gair’s conclusion that “the Earl of Oxford employed both the medium of theater and his secretary, John Lyly, for the express purpose of commenting upon political and social matters.”

With those articles—and the others in this collection—Goldstein assembles brick after brick to strengthen the case for Edward de Vere as Shakespeare. He then goes on to show the importance of a correct understanding of the authorship of Shakespeare’s plays for understanding the wider history of the era. “A Shakespeare different from the one we know,” he writes, “provides us with an entirely different understanding of the development and history of English literature and theater, and revises our knowledge of the cultural politics of Elizabethan England. Should the Earl of Oxford be accepted as Shakespeare, the entire canon of plays will be transformed, from a series of brilliant yet superficial public entertainments to ambitious dramas on the crises facing the Elizabethan state In addition, the ten plays set in Italy and France will finally be perceived as the dramatist’s lifelong effort to transplant the Renaissance culture of Europe into England through the public stage. Instead of imaginative displays of wit by a

provincial genius to amuse a variety of publics, Shakespeare’s dramatic efforts will be seen originating in the personal experiences and observations of a highly educated aristocrat who lived at the apex of Elizabethan society.”

In his final essay, “Future Directions,” Goldstein quotes Professor Georges Lambin’s conclusion that the “Shakespeare mystery” will “be definitely resolved” only when the issue “escape[s] the somewhat narrow and jealous competence of the exclusive specialist in literary studies . . . and [when] historians and the geographers (and others) . . . intensively undertake this problem.” Will *Reflections on the True Shakespeare*, which approaches the authorship question from so many varied literary, artistic, and historical perspectives, be the straw that breaks the academic camel’s back? Will it be the final factor sparking academia’s paradigm shift to acceptance of Oxford’s authorship? Probably not. More likely is that academia will ignore Goldstein’s important book, just as it has ignored those of John Thomas Looney, Diana Price, Roger Stritmatter, Mark Anderson, Richard Roe and so many others. “Professional scholars in academia,” Goldstein concludes, “will refuse to reassess their position unless forced to by documentary evidence.” In the absence of any such rock-solid evidence, Oxfordians may have to accept the continued existence of “two Shakespeares in the public mind—one in academia, the other outside it.”

Reflections on the True Shakespeare is the fourth in a series of collections compiled and edited by Gary Goldstein and published by Laugwitz Verlag. The first three gathered together articles by Peter R. Moore, Noemi Magri and Robin Fox. All Oxfordians should be grateful to Goldstein and Uwe Laugwitz for their work in making the substantive research of these four top independent scholars readily available.



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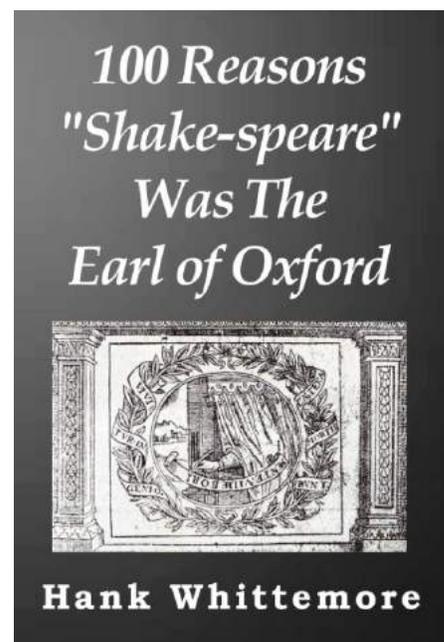
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[Editor's note: In what may be the most important Shakespeare-related development of 2016, the editors of the New Oxford Shakespeare announced in October that their new editions will now attribute seventeen Shakespeare plays to Shakespeare and collaborators, some of them identified (e.g., Marlowe and Middleton) and some unknown. Moreover, their version of the canon will contain some 44 plays. The new additions (some of which were included in previous Oxford editions) include *All Is True*, *Arden of Faversham*, *Cardenio*, *Edward III*, *Love's Labour's Won* (perhaps this is just an alternate title assigned to one of the comedies already in the canon), *Sejanus*, *Sir Thomas More*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Four separate New Oxford Shakespeare editions will be published. The *New Oxford Shakespeare Online* is already available (though a subscription is needed to access it). Three print editions are also being produced: The *Modern Critical Edition* is available now, the *Critical Reference Edition* is expected in December, and the *Authorship Companion* is expected in early 2017.

An announcement of this significance merits two articles. One, by Richard Malim and Gary Goldstein, sheds light on the methodology used by the editors to arrive at their conclusions of multiple authors; the other, by Bill Boyle, considers what all of this means for the Oxfordian movement.]

Stylometrics:

The Imperial Computer Takes Center Stage

by Richard Malim and Gary Goldstein

With the publication of the New Oxford Shakespeare in October 2016, some prominent elements of orthodox scholarship have committed their intellectual reputation to the methodology of stylometrics and to a group theory of collaboration. Evidence of collaboration between Shakespeare and a living contemporary, based on new computer studies of language use, is being proposed by OUP for seventeen of the forty-four plays that they claim now represent the Shakespeare canon. Christopher Marlowe is now claimed as co-author of *Henry VI, parts 1, 2 and 3*, and Thomas Middleton as co-author of *All's Well That Ends Well*.

We are now asked to accept the conclusions of self-described “information scientists” and their computers. The problem, of course, is that computers must be fed with data that can be incomplete or inaccurate, or can be skewed to produce the answer that academics wish to put forward. To our knowledge, no known writings of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, were used in these language studies, and thus Oxford was not considered as author or co-author in this new edition. Even if OUP had considered Oxford's literary work, it would be too early a data sample because most of Oxford's verse predates the Shakespeare canon by fifteen years. This is critical, not only because the vocabulary of English was increasing exponentially during this period, but also because it was changing in more fundamental matters, including pronouns, possessives, punctuation, and verb forms.

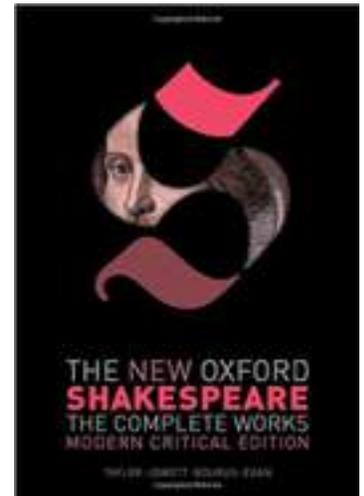
For example, take the stylometric test for feminine endings. As Peter Moore noted in his analysis of the findings of Claremont McKenna's Shakespeare Clinic Study: “Oxford has virtually no feminine lines, while about 10% of Shakespeare's lines are feminine. Clearly Oxford mismatches Shakespeare, but that is to be expected if the

The Long Goodbye

by Bill Boyle

In an autumn filled with surprises (the Cubs won the World Series, Donald Trump won the presidency), those of us engaged in the Shakespeare authorship debate were treated to a special surprise of our own. In late October the Oxford University Press announced that the 2016-17 edition of *The New Oxford Shakespeare* would include Christopher Marlowe as a cowriter/collaborator of the three parts of *Henry VI*. In addition, the editors (Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bouros, and Gabriel Egan) announced that the anonymous play *Arden of Faversham* would also be included as a collaboration between Shakespeare and an unknown author. To put it mildly, all this is something of a bombshell for both Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians, but for different reasons. For Stratfordians, this latest development continues a decades-long transformation of the old Shakespeare into a cowriter amidst an increasing cast of other cowriters—a development not universally accepted among the mainstream. For anti-Stratfordians, especially Oxfordians, the real subtext may well be that Stratfordians are, in fact, saying goodbye to Stratford and to Shakspeare, and preparing for an inevitable moment not too far in the future when Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, finally enters the picture.

The methodology by which the editors arrived at their conclusion was based on stylometrics, the computerized system of comparing of texts from various authors seeking to find common word usages that would relate the texts, and



(Stylometrics - continued)

time factor is considered. Poetry in that period first sought to achieve regularity of meter and then moved toward studied irregularity. This trend is found in sixteenth century English poetry in general, in dramatic verse in the second half of the century, and in Shakespeare's works. Feminine lines are a form of irregularity, and so we should not expect to find as many in Oxford's youthful poetry as in Shakespeare's mature poetry."

While Francis Meres in 1598 named Shakespeare and twenty-one other contemporary authors in *Palladis Tamia*, none of the others had any known contact with Shakespeare. The stylometric element relies on, as a basis, the idea that the bulk of any particular play was written as a one-off endeavour and/or at one finite time after 1589; stylometric tests do not consider the clear evidence of revisions by the same author over time.

Any suggested dates prior to 1589 for the original version of a play can now be ignored by the editors, and, with them, any inference that the style examples from these original versions may well have been adopted into the works of much younger writers. However, their defective judgment makes not the slightest difference to the contention that the first versions of many of the plays were in fact written in the 1580s or earlier.

Moreover, no contemporary ever suggested that there was more than one writer of any of Shakespeare's plays before *Two Noble Kinsmen* (if that play is to be considered for the canon) in 1634. In the 1623 First Folio, no one—*not* Jonson, *not* Hemmings, *not* Condell—said anything about, or even hinted at, collaboration.

One of the principal editors of the new OUP editions, Professor Gary Taylor, has obviously forgotten what he originally wrote regarding the basis of stylometrics and, with it, collaboration theory: "Revisionism insists that texts are made; they become—they do not flash instantaneously into perfect and unalterable being. Over a certain period, an author makes a text; during a later period, in response to internal and external stimuli, the author remakes the same text and the revised text results from a kind of posthumous collaboration between a deceased younger self and a living older self."

To properly evaluate these new language use studies, three Oxfordians—Wayne Shore, Ramon Jiménez and Gary Goldstein—will undertake a detailed analysis of OUP's methodology and seek to publish their findings in a peer-reviewed journal.

*(The Long Goodbye - continued)*

seeking differences in word usages within the same text that would indicate the work of two different people. This is the latest in a series of decisions by mainstream Shakespeare scholars over the last two or three decades to redefine the Shakespeare canon, especially through the use of stylometric studies (*Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* [2013], edited by John Shahan and Alexander Waugh, has an entire appendix on this important subject which provides a good background for anyone wishing to fully understand this latest development).

As *The New York Times* reported, "This is the first time that a major edition of Shakespeare's works has listed Shakespeare's colleague and rival as a co-author on these works." *The Times* added that "the *Henry VI* plays have long been believed to be the work of more than one author. Names floated by scholars in addition to Marlowe's include Robert Greene and George Peele." Editor Gary Taylor is also quoted, saying, "The exact nature of the playwrights' collaboration cannot be certain," but "they did not necessarily work together in person." It was in 2005, *The Times* notes, that OUP had attributed two plays of disputed authorship (*The Reign of Edward III* and *Sir Thomas More*) to Shakespeare. Another instance of the Oxford University Press leading the charge to redefine the Shakespeare canon occurred in 1986, when they included the poem "Shall I fly" as being by Shakespeare; some other publishers of Shakespeare went along, but most recent editions of Shakespeare do not include it.

In an interview with *The Guardian* Taylor stated, "The Orthodox view was that Shakespeare didn't collaborate at all. When the *Oxford Shakespeare* in 1986 proposed that eight plays of Shakespeare contained writing by other writers some people were outraged." He added, "In 1986 eight of 39 plays were identified on their title pages as collaborative ... [Now], in 2016, 17 of 44 plays are identified." *The Guardian* adds that there is a "difficulty in that the majority of plays written in the 1570s and 1580s have not survived and are known only from their titles [and that] much of what does survive is anonymous." That observation, I should note, cuts right to the heart of the problems inherent in comparing styles and word usages, and in attributing surviving texts to a particular author, when there remain real questions about who actually wrote what and when they wrote it.

In a National Public Radio interview, Taylor said that "The conclusion that Marlowe [is being] credited as co-author is partly based on a combination of new and old research." He cited 2009 studies by Hugh Craig and Arthur Kinney that analyzed vocabulary from the *Henry VI* plays and compared it to plays known to have been written by Marlowe, and a 2015 article by John Nance analyzing the prose of *Henry VI, part 2*.

Not surprisingly, the press coverage of the OUP announcement has afforded some commentators another opportunity to include the usual derogatory comments about the Shakespeare authorship debate, and to assert that the adoption of Christopher Marlowe into the official canon in no way affects it. However, there have been more nuanced

reactions. For example, in NPR's coverage (on its website) we find this response:

The addition of Marlowe's name to the *Henry VI* plays does not settle the question of Shakespearean authorship. Carol Rutter, a professor of Shakespeare and performance studies at the University of Warwick, told the BBC, "It will still be open for people to make up their own minds. I don't think [Oxford University Press] putting their brand mark on an attribution settles the issue for most people."

Rutter told the BBC, "I believe Shakespeare collaborated with all kinds of people ... but I would be very surprised if Marlowe was one of them."

Although she disagrees with the conclusion reached by Taylor and his co-editors, she told the BBC she thinks the discussion of authorship is good for Shakespearean scholarship. "We have really stopped thinking about the richness of the writing experience in the early modern theater, and by crediting Marlowe, people like Gary Taylor are making us attend to that," she said.

And, at the end of the NPR website report, there is a prominent hyperlink titled "The Real Shakespeare? Evidence Points to an Earl," which takes readers to a podcast of the July 4, 2008, *All Things Considered* broadcast on the authorship debate, featuring Mark Rylance, Charles Beauclerk, Mark Anderson and Prof. Daniel Wright. The audio clip concludes with a quote from Justice John Paul Stevens: "[If asked today] I'd say it definitely was Oxford." It was clearly NPR's choice to include this clip at the end of the story, and we can only wonder (gratefully) why.

Initial Oxfordian reaction to the OUP announcement is that it's more of the same—that mainstream Shakespeare scholarship, under continuing (if unacknowledged) pressure from the authorship movement, is trying to redefine and reinvent Shakespeare to maintain the Stratford story while introducing other writers into that story as co-authors to explain how he did it. Throughout all of the publicity surrounding this announcement, the one name that continually doesn't appear is Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

As Oxfordians Gary Goldstein and Richard Malim have observed (see accompanying article), "To our knowledge, no known writings of [Oxford] were used in these language studies, and thus Oxford was not considered as author or co-author in this new edition."



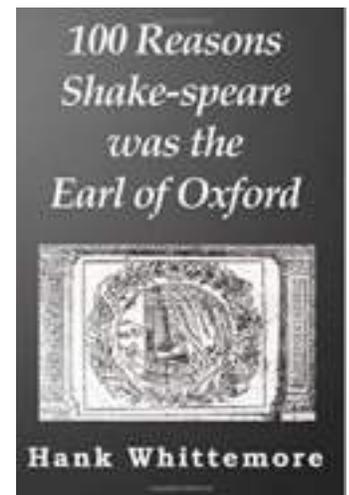
Prof. Carol Rutter

They further note that using 1589 as the cutoff year used in the study—thus removing any writing and/or drafts predating 1589 from consideration—is a flawed decision. They write, "However, their defective judgment makes not the slightest difference to the contention that the first versions of many of the plays were in fact written in the 1580s or earlier." Goldstein and Malim promise to review the methodology that led to the OUP Marlowe attribution and report on it sometime in 2017.

What Oxfordians should take away from all this is, that by embracing Marlowe as a co-author, mainstream scholars have now taken the authorship debate back into the 1580s. Whether they realize it or not, they have opened the door wide to serious consideration of the Earl of Oxford as one of the possible authors involved in the Shakespeare canon. This is, I believe, inescapable. Whereas past attribution studies, such as *Funeral Elegy* in the late 1990s, had Shakespeare involved in writing post-1604 material (which would therefore exclude Oxford), the proposition that Marlowe was a collaborator in the 1580s leaves Oxford alive and well, and tantalizingly close to Marlowe and most of the other writers of that decade. He organized and funded the original Blackfriars Theatre in the early 1580s, involving George Peele and John Lyly, and owned Fisher's Folly in the theater district of London in the late 1580s, where he undoubtedly was involved with the University Wits and with writers such as Marlowe, Nashe, and Munday (the latter was also his secretary), all of them apparently involved in the writing of war propaganda plays.

That this new announcement comes now is interesting for another reason. Simultaneous with the OUP announcement in October was the publication of Hank Whittemore's *100 Reasons Shakespeare was the Earl of Oxford*, which includes a nine-page chapter on Marlowe and Shakespeare, and how the circumstantial evidence points to the involvement of Oxford with the University Wits and playwriting in the late 1580s, which would include Marlowe. Based on earlier scholarship, it has been generally accepted for a number of years that Marlowe must have been a spy in these years, under the direction of Walsingham, beginning perhaps as early as 1585.

Whittemore notes that Oxford's annual £1000 grant, which began in 1586, was paid from intelligence funds. While the grant document itself states that no accounting of what Oxford was doing is to be made, contemporary



circumstances make it likely that it was for his activities in organizing and managing the production of war propaganda plays at a time of great peril from an imminent Spanish attack on England. This is what B.M. Ward concluded when he first discovered the grant in the 1920s, and there is no reason today to deviate from that conclusion.

A week later, at the 2016 SOF Conference, Bonner Miller Cutting spoke in detail about this same grant, and showed an image of the original warrant (the first time anyone had seen it). She noted that the wording was similar to other grants made for intelligence work; she believes that the possibility that the grant was simply to give Oxford money “to maintain him” (as some have suggested) cannot be supported. Oxford *must have* been performing a service for the state. Cutting’s conclusion is that the payments to Oxford did, in fact, constitute a state secret. One similar payment even went to Robert Cecil in 1588 for services which, like Oxford’s, were not to be documented or even asked about.

The upshot of all this is that it presents a great opportunity for Oxfordians. We should, I believe, use this Marlowe attribution/connection to open up the whole issue of Oxford’s activities in the 1580s in the theater, in writing, and in providing intelligence service for the government. Oxford can be seen not only as the mentor and director to a number of writers, but also, at least in the case of Marlowe, perhaps as one-half of *the* classic relationship in spying: an agent (Marlowe) and his handler (Oxford).

Some at the conference felt that Oxfordians should be wary of the collaboration announcement, and should be wary of relating Marlowe to Oxford, since there is no direct evidence that they ever met. I think that would be a mistake, and that we should forge ahead and accept that the Oxford University Press has found a relationship between Marlowe and the author of the Shakespeare canon. Then, adding in the £1000 grant to Oxford and the fact that both Oxford and Marlowe were paid agents of the government, we could go on to refashion the entire authorship debate into an exciting, provocative political issue that is too much for anyone to pass up. Thanks to Bonner Cutting’s research, the intelligence link to Oxford now seems solid, and should be exploited.

Furthermore, the fact that nearly all the mainstream discussion surrounding the Marlowe announcement excludes even mentioning Oxford can itself be exploited. Given the circumstantial evidence of Fisher’s Folly and the University Wits in the late 1580s, the Blackfriars in the early 1580s, the numerous dedications to Oxford throughout the decade, and other references to him and his writing (e.g., the 1589 *Arte of English Poesie*) he should, at the very least, be *mentioned*. The omission becomes glaring, and shows just how important Oxford really is in any full story of the 1580s, and how scared mainstream scholars are to even bring him up. Who knows where that might lead?



Bonner Miller Cutting

OUP has also announced that the new Shakespeare collection will include the play *Arden of Faversham*, crediting it to Shakespeare and an unknown cowriter. Following the Boston screening of Cheryl Eagan-Donovan’s new film about Oxford, *Nothing Is Truer than Truth*, the day after the conference, a student asked about the Marlowe attribution. SOF member Earl Showerman responded that, by including *Arden of Faversham* in the Shakespeare canon, OUP had introduced what may be a direct connection to the Earl of Oxford. This is because some of the scholarship on *Arden of Faversham* (e.g., A. C. Swinburne and Oxfordians such as Richard Malim) indicates that it is probably derived from the play *Murderous Michael*, which was performed by the Earl of Oxford’s players in 1579.

So, all in all, Oxfordians should consider the OUP’s decision to announce collaboration as a tremendous opportunity to bring Oxford into the picture, and even go on the offensive. Our Stratfordian friends may have opened a Pandora’s Box by embracing Marlowe, thereby embracing the entire decade of the 1580s, when Oxford was alive and well, writing, publishing, and working for the Crown. Maybe it’s no mistake, but just one more step in saying goodbye to Stratford—recall the Folger Shakespeare Library’s 2014 conference, “The Problem of Biography,” with its admission that most Shakespeare biographies are speculations based on few facts. Now here they are, slowly but surely taking Shakespeare studies back in time, into London, and straight into the heart of the English government and English politics, where they belong.



(2016 Conference - continued from page 1)

Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" concerning neutrality, as well as the American Alliance of Museums' "Code of Ethics for Museums."

Julie Sandys Bianchi spoke next. Her talk, "The Influence of Card Play on the Production of the First Folio: Jonson Reveals His Hand," was inspired by a discussion with other Oxfordians about the similarity of the Droeshout "Shakespeare" Folio image to the joker in a deck of cards. Disappointed to learn that the joker card is a 19th century American invention, she nevertheless continued her research into card history and discovered a raft of largely unnoticed references to cards and card games in the First Folio. For example, in Ben Jonson's "To the Reader," the words "face," "put," "cut," "hit," "drawn," "brasse," "surpasse," "strife" and "out-doo" all have connotations with card play. Turning to the Droeshout illustration itself, Bianchi pointed out that popular Jacobean card games named Doublet, Piquet and Whisk were all referenced in the image by the jacket worn by the sitter, the spike-shaped pleats on the collar, and the iconic collar itself. (Whisk is the ancestor of the modern card game of whist.) The stubble on the sitter's chin also suggests an allusion to "New-cut," another card game. She noted that King James specifically tolerated card playing throughout the kingdom, and that prior to 1628 most English commoners used cheap imported cards, while elaborate custom-made decks were used by the wealthy. She cited popular Italian pastimes called "Tarocchi Appropriati," in which persons played for amusement and poets actively competed with each other in improvising sonnets based on decks of twenty-two picture cards called "Carte da Trionfi" (it is easy to imagine 25-year-old Edward de Vere reveling in such an activity). These cards were added to older decks and "triumphed" over the suited cards in bid play (hence the term "trionfi," which eventually became "trump" in English). The newer Italian cards also were the forerunners of the modern tarot card deck. Bianchi then suggested that the arrangement of plays in the First Folio is "thematically influenced" by the 22-card Italian "trump" series. For example, *The Tempest* is the first play in the Folio. The first trump card was the Mountebank, a male figure who manipulates the elements (the modern analog card is the magician). The second play is *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which would correspond to the second card, the Papessa (female pope); the plot of *TGV* involves women dressing as men. Bianchi established parallels between the fourteen comedies and the first fourteen trump cards. Disregarding the history plays, she further argued that the tragedies can be aligned with the remaining eight cards of the Italian pack, with some being used more than once.

In "Shakespeare and Spiritual Philosophy (Derived from Neoplatonism)," **Priscilla Costello** submitted that



Shelly Maycock

Pythagorean, Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophical teachings are stronger influences on Shakespeare than is generally thought, especially in terms of cosmology, numbers, music, and the concept of the immortality and immateriality of the soul. Shakespeare draws more on these concepts than on Christian ideas, choosing to hold up the "mirror of drama to nature," unlike Milton, Dante, Spenser and others. Costello argued that Shakespeare's dominant theme of appearance versus reality is based on the Platonic concept of the perfect versus the imperfect, or "what is and what is not." This is perhaps most evident in *Twelfth Night*, where some 314 questions are asked by the characters, each of whom is trying to determine what *is*. She discussed the Neoplatonic idea of the "ladder of creation" or "great chain of being," which was adapted by Christian theologians without the Neoplatonic idea of the spheres of the planets. In the latter, the moon, because its appearance changes, is the boundary between the perfect and the imperfect. Costello pointed out that, in his "what a piece of work is man" speech, Hamlet says "How noble in reason," and does not refer to the Christian tenet of faith. Asking the obvious question of how the author might have come across all these ideas (many of which had not yet been translated into English), Costello reminded her audience that Edward de Vere's early tutor, Thomas Smith, was called "a modern Plato," that de Vere is known to have purchased something by Plato in 1569, that William Cecil's impressive library contained many works in Latin and Greek, and that Dr. John Dee had an even larger library, including the complete works of Plato and Aristotle.

Tom Townsend spoke on "De Vere's Lesser Legacy: The Legal Concept of Equity." Townsend's inspiration was Falstaff's line in *1 Henry IV*, "There's no equity stirring." Some traditional scholars have argued that Falstaff is referring to the legal concept of equity, and Townsend agrees. He reviewed the history of the English legal system, which by Queen Elizabeth's time had developed two judicial entities, the Courts of Common Pleas and the Chancery Courts; in simple terms, Common Pleas courts

could “mitigate the rigor of common law” by considering ideas of mercy and fairness, or “equity.” Shakespeare is very interested in the concept of legal equity, and explored it in depth in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*. In the former, Shylock specifically asks for “judgment,” employing a common-law term used in Common Pleas courts. Portia asks Shylock for mercy (because the Venetian courts could not introduce equitable concepts on their own, it was up to the litigant to suggest mitigation), but he refuses; Portia then shows no mercy toward him. In the latter play, which Townsend sees as employing “fanatical worship of the letter of the law,” Claudio is sentenced to death when a long-ignored statute is suddenly enforced. Isabella represents the idea of equity. As to how Shakespeare acquired such detailed knowledge, some traditionalists speculate that the Stratford man knew William Lambarde (1536-1601), a legal scholar who was appointed a master of chancery in 1592; this connection is supported by an alleged seventh “Shakespeare” signature on a copy of Lambarde’s book *Archaiologia*, but this signature is now considered a forgery. On the other hand, Lambarde was close friends with Laurence Nowell, one of Edward de Vere’s tutors, and lived for a time at Cecil House. Moreover, William Cecil’s extensive library (to which de Vere had access) included Aristotle’s *Ethics*, which discusses the idea of legal equity. Finally, Townsend reported that in 1616, King James ordered that when the Common Pleas and Chancery Courts were in conflict, “equity shall prevail”; Townsend suggested that James’s exposure to these ideas through Shakespeare’s works may have influenced his ruling.

In the first of two presentations, **Peter Dickson** discussed “The Great Debate: Was Shakespeare a Secret Catholic?” Dickson noted that, beginning in the 1890s, Sidney Lee was responsible for suppressing any suggestion that Shakespeare was homosexual or was a crypto-Catholic. The idea of a Catholic bard was anathema, given the triumph of Protestantism in England. E.K. Chambers began to break ranks, based on some biographical tidbits, but there was no serious challenge to the orthodox position until at least 1985, after which Gary Taylor, E.A.J. Honigmann, Eamon Duffy and Ian Wilson (among others) began to develop the idea of a Catholic Bard. A conference was held in Lancashire in 1999 on the topic. In 2003 the BBC financed Michael Wood’s documentary program and book, which were partial to the Catholic claim. In 2008 Stanley Wells organized a conference to rebut the claim. In 2011 the Vatican even joined the fray, denouncing Roland Emmerich’s film *Anonymous* and announcing that the true Bard was indeed Catholic; in 2014 the Vatican issued a postage stamp in Shakespeare’s honor. Dickson then reviewed the biographical evidence of Shakspeare of Stratford that supports the notion that he was Catholic: e.g., during Elizabeth’s reign, Catholicism remained fairly strong in Warwickshire; Shakspeare

purchased New Place in 1597 from a crypto-Catholic (Dickson asked why Shakspeare would have needed such a large house at the time, when he only had two living children); in 1613, Shakspeare purchased the Blackfriars Gatehouse in London, a well-known hideout for Catholics. But the problem with all this, as Dickson demonstrated, is that Shakespeare the playwright does not advance a Catholic theology; his favorite Bible is the (Protestant) Geneva Bible; he does not condemn suicide. To Dickson, this forces orthodox biographers (at least those who believe he was Catholic) to “quarantine” the writer from his family, resulting in, as Dickson put it, “a stalemate. . . a fatal contradiction between the literary works and the incumbent Bard as he really was.”

Bill Camarinos summarized the famous 1987 moot court, “Who Wrote Shakespeare?” held at American University Washington College of Law in the nation’s capital. A panel of three U.S. Supreme Court Justices (Brennan, Blackmun and Stevens) considered the question, with two WCL faculty members arguing the cases for Oxford and Shakspeare of Stratford. As most of us know, the panel ruled in favor of the Stratford man. “But we won, actually,” Camarinos said, because of the large amount of publicity generated by the event. Camarinos observed that, in the ensuing twenty-nine years, a great deal of new evidence, most of it supporting the Oxford side, has been unearthed which warrants a re-examination of the question. The 1987 event was the brainchild of Washington, D.C., businessman David Lloyd Kreeger. Camarinos reports that his son, Peter Kreeger, has expressed interest in a second moot court. The event could be held, say, in 2020 (the centennial of John Thomas Looney’s “*Shakespeare Identified*”) or 2023 (the 400th anniversary of the First Folio).

With that the session ended. After an opening reception elsewhere in the hotel, one group of people assembled to rehearse *A Question of Will* while another group reconvened to watch a video of the full 1987 moot court.

Day Two: Friday, November 4

The program commenced with **Heward Wilkinson’s** presentation on “Secrets and the Shakespeare Authorship,” exploring the question of how can one tell if a prominent person is harboring serious secrecy, which may only be indirectly perceived from their writings, and how there is a general tendency to shrink from the confounding inference when the material cries out in credible associations. That Shakespeare’s writings symbolically reflect the education and life experiences of Edward de Vere is a foregone conclusion Oxfordians embrace. As a parallel case, Wilkinson examined clues from Kimberley Cornish’s book, *The Jew of Linz*, that a similar political “deep secrecy” was revealed in the later writings of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Cornish speculated that Wittgenstein may have been the recruiter of the “Cambridge Five” Soviet spies. As evidence of



Julie Sandys Bianchi



Bonner Miller Cutting



Peter Dickson asks a question



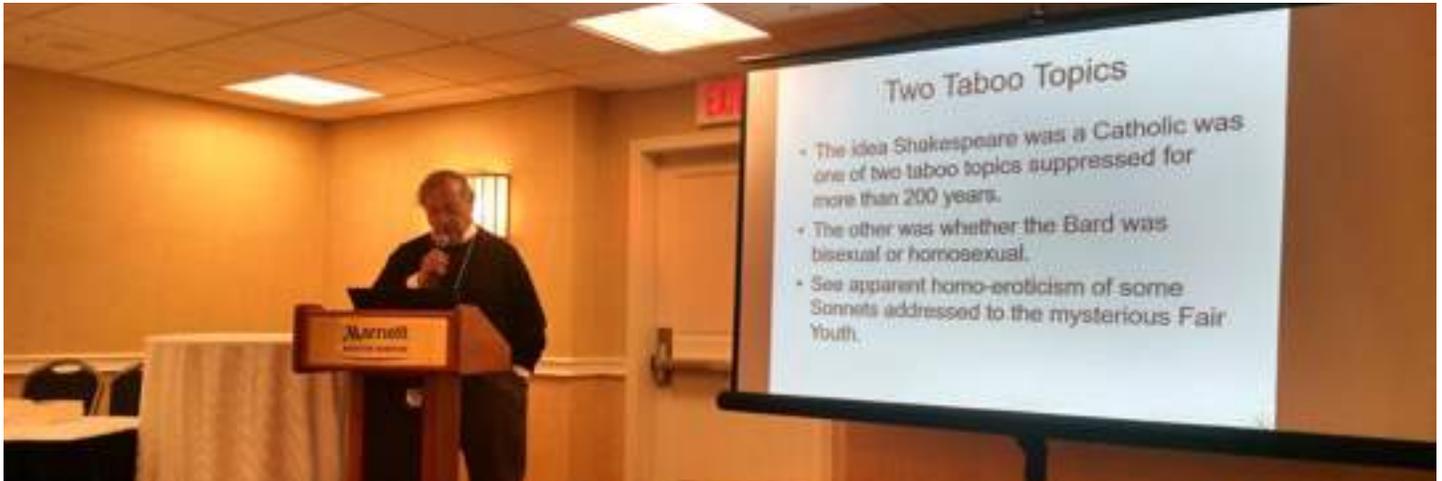
Christopher Carolan



Earl Showerman



Priscilla Costello



Peter Dickson



Heward Wilkinson



John Hamill



John Hamill

Wittgenstein's involvement, Wilkinson cited the extraordinary offer of a philosophy professorship in the U.S.S.R. that the Soviets made to him in 1935. Wilkinson suggested that, in *Philosophical Investigations* (published two years after Wittgenstein's death), the philosopher "created an enactive drama" that could be interpreted as a parable or metaphor. Wilkinson identified common features in the habits of both "Shakespeare" and Wittgenstein: signs of deep philosophical conflict, cognitive dissonance, cryptic and indirect communication, deep ambiguity, and "Negative Capability," the capacity of being in uncertainties and mysteries without reaching after fact or reason. "Cognitive dissonance is tragic conflict in Shakespeare, madness-inducing, as we see evolving in play after play of the mature Shakespeare, and in the *Sonnets*. In Wittgenstein, too, it is endless circling around a maddening cluster of dilemmas, to which diverse, and contradictory, responses are repeatedly attempted." Like Oxford, Wittgenstein was born into great wealth, which he sacrificed during his career to support the arts and provide for his family. He was a war hero, charismatic, reportedly bisexual, and connected to the Soviet recruits through the Apostles Society of Trinity College Cambridge. As the case lies with Oxford, one of Wittgenstein's biographers wrote, "Much of his life will remain forever unknown to his closest friends."

SOF Research Grants: **John Hamill** delivered an update on the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grant program for 2016 (see article, page 5). **Bonner Miller Cutting** delivered a report from 2014 grant recipient John Lavendoski on his research into the historical references to canals that connected the Adige and Po rivers in northern Italy, in confirmation of Richard Paul Roe's claims. Lavendoski's research into the Italian archives convinced him that period maps and additional extant documents confirm Roe's original work, and that no less than three separate canals linked the two rivers. Further, Lavendoski maintains that the physical design of boats depicted at the Verona *Ponte delle Navi*, "with their shallow drafts, hinged masts, and removable sails," matches well the descriptions in Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. **Roger Stritmatter**, who also received a 2014 research grant, reported on the handwriting analysis of a copy of the 1563 edition of Seneca's tragedies that may have been annotated by the Earl of Oxford. The pages of this Latin edition have several hundred underlined passages, ninety-four in Latin and seventeen in Greek. Stritmatter reviewed principles of forensic handwriting analysis and the significance of natural and systematic variations of letters, providing numerous examples, and emphasizing the importance of sample size. The significance of the marginalia was also presented as reflecting passages within the Shakespeare canon. Many scholars have recognized the influence of Seneca's tragedies in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Earl Showerman spoke next on "1584: Shakespeare's Greek Satires of Misanthropy and War." The Earl of Oxford's boys company performed John Lyly's *Sappho and Phao* and *Campaspe*, as well as the anonymous play *The History of Agamemnon and Ulysses*, at court in 1583-84. Several literary works published in 1584 make reference to characters in these dramas. William Warner's euphuistic novel *Syrinx* refers to Lyly's Diogenes from *Campaspe* as the "Sinopian cynic," to Apollo's "coy prophetess" (clearly Cassandra, a likely character in a Trojan War drama), and to an Athenian misanthrope, "or man-hater biting on the stage," suggesting Shakespeare's *Timon*. Showerman found that Robert Greene's 1584 euphuistic novel, *Gwydonius: The Card of Fancy*, which was dedicated to the Earl of Oxford, also makes similar allusions: to *Timon*, to several Trojan War characters (including *Troilus*, *Cressida*, *Agamemnon* and *Ulysses*), and to *Diogenes*, *Appelles*, and *Alexander*, major characters from Lyly's *Campaspe*. William Warner accused Robert Greene of having plagiarized *Syrinx* in a later edition of his novel. Greene has been found to have plagiarized his own *Mamillia* (1583) and *Pettie's Palace of Pleasure* (1576) in writing *Gwydonius*, and was very much in debt to Warner's *Syrinx* and his *Albion's England* (1586) in writing *Pandosto* and *Menophon*. *Gwydonius* curiously also contains passages of paternal advice that echo Lord Burghley's *Certain Precepts for the Well Ordering of a Man's Life*, early manuscripts of which were dated to 1584. Interpretations of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* and *Troilus and Cressida* as allegorical satires reflecting the Earl of Oxford's personal and political situations circa 1584 provide a radical departure from traditional scholarship. A decade of prodigal excess, his long exile from court, the death of his firstborn son, and the collapse of his fortunes in 1583-84 all provide a plausible motive for Oxford to employ the conventions of Aristophanic political satire in writing *Timon*. Showerman concluded by suggesting that *Troilus and Cressida* was written to reflect the moral wasteland of war and conflicting political factions as a critical satire of members of the Elizabethan court in the run-up to war with Spain.

In "Penelope, Henry, Edward and Elizabeth: An Elizabethan Quadrangle," **John Hamill** presented literary evidence to support Alexander's Waugh's discovery that Penelope Rich, sister of the Earl of Essex, was *Avisa* in *Willobie His Avisa*, and, by extension, the "Dark Lady" of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Shakespeare scholars have generally accepted that the Earl of Southampton is the "Fair Youth" of the sonnets, and Oxfordians Mark Anderson and Peter Moore have both argued that the Earl of Essex is the "Rival Poet." Hamill argued that Penelope Rich is a better candidate for the "Dark Lady" than Elizabeth Trentham, Oxford's second wife. Penelope had dark eyes, dark hair, dressed in black, adorned her bedroom in black, and was arguably "the most famous adulteress of her day." Philip Sidney

referred to her as a “Black Lady” in his 1580s sonnet collection, *Astrophil and Stella*. Hamill posited that Penelope was the actual mother of Oxford’s son and heir, Henry de Vere, by citing historical evidence raising doubts about Elizabeth Trentham’s pregnancy, and tracing events and publications in 1593 and 1594 that suggest Penelope Rich and the Earl of Southampton had entered into a sexual liaison. *Willobie His Avis* (1594) contains the first published mention of “Shake-speare”; Hamill sees it likely as a parody of Shakespeare’s *Rape of Lucrece*, which was published just four months previously. Many circumstances of Penelope Rich’s life match with Avis, a woman who likewise had been married for ten years and who is pursued by two lovers. Hamill identified a number of characters from the Essex circle as being represented in *Willobie His Avis*, including Penelope, Lord Rich, Lord Mountjoy, the Earl of Southampton, and Antonio Perez.

In her paper, “A Sufficient Warrant – A Closer Look at Oxford’s Annuity,” **Bonner Miller Cutting** noted that on June 26, 1586, Queen Elizabeth signed a Privy Seal Warrant Dormant in which she instructed her Exchequer to pay £1,000 annually to her “right trusty and well beloved Cousin the Earl of Oxford.” This large monetary gift from the parsimonious Queen to her supposedly extravagant courtier, which continued for eighteen years (even after Elizabeth’s death), has been largely ignored by historians. That this document was commented upon only once in the 17th century and then forgotten until its rediscovery in 1928 by Bernard Ward is odd, given that the annuity was to continue indefinitely; the inclusion of a non-accountability clause made it all the more of an anomaly. No purpose for the award is stated. In 1693, historian Edmund Bohn speculated that it was made “so that one of the most illustrious houses of her kingdom might not suffer want.” Typically, an English Earl would incur £5,000 in annual expenses, according to historian Lawrence Stone, who further states that customarily “the queen gave that which cost her nothing.” Preferments and monopolies were her primary means of providing beneficence. However, Cutting listed the many offices, properties, and monopolies that Elizabeth continually denied Oxford. The implications of this grant have yet to be fully explored; new research may contribute to our understanding of these payments to the Earl of Oxford from the Royal Exchequer, an office under severe stress due to the expenses of the Spanish war and the conflicts in Ireland and the Low Countries over the entire period. Specifically, Cutting maintained that the non-accountability clause in the warrant implies that Edward de Vere is not to be held accountable for what he is doing with this money, that he is protected by the queen and is “immune” in the eyes of government authorities. Justice John Paul Stevens and Mark Anderson, among others, have noted that Shakespeare’s history plays support the legitimacy of the Tudor dynasty, which, Cutting concluded, would be worthy service to render to the Queen, “an insecure woman who ruled a vulnerable

country in a dangerous time with three ongoing wars.” Cutting described a similar Privy Seal Warrant annuity of £800 to Robert Cecil, also with a non-accountability clause. In conclusion, Cutting suggested that “Oxford’s annuity was a state secret to be guarded at every step along the way. The Queen has put another layer of secrecy around Edward de Vere and whatever the monetary gift was all about.”

Sky Gilbert’s paper, “A Pagan Play about Language: Challenging the Traditional Dating of *Macbeth*,” concluded the day’s plenary session. Gilbert argued that “*Macbeth* is a play about language based on a medieval cosmology in which Christianity and pagan mysticism exist side by side.” The notion that *Macbeth* was written in 1606, as asserted by Henry N. Paul in *The Royal Play of Macbeth* (1971), puts it outside the Earl of Oxford’s lifetime. Many scholars agree with Paul, who sees *Macbeth* as an anti-superstitious Christian morality drama linked with the 1605 Gunpowder Plot. According to Gilbert, Paul used a complex and unconvincing argument that *Macbeth* was written for King James who, after writing his treatise on witches, *Daemonology* (1597), became skeptical of the existence of witches. Gilbert further noted that *Daemonology* was most likely written in opposition to Reginald Scot’s skeptical treatise, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584). As testament to Paul’s misperception, King James exhibited continued concern about the supernatural in that he never abandoned the persecution of witches. Gilbert proposed an alternative take on Shakespeare’s vision of the supernatural in Thomas Nashe’s *Terrors of the Night* (1594), which offers a “metaphysical worldview in which spirits, witches, and devils are taken for granted, much the same way as they are in *Macbeth*.” Gilbert’s presentation argued that Nashe’s cosmology, balancing Christianity and superstition, matches the Scottish Play’s universe far more closely. Henry Paul was certain that *Macbeth’s* references to “equivocation” refer to the treasonous Catholic Henry Garnet, who was involved in the Gunpowder Plot. However, those references could just as easily allude to the poet Southwell, a Catholic whose treason trial occurred in 1595. As Gilbert put it, “Paul shares two unfortunate tendencies with modern scholars: the habit of assuming a traditional Christian cosmology is the foundation for Shakespeare’s work, and the urge to wax poetic about Shakespeare’s inner life.” *Macbeth* is, however, a play about equivocation, which is mentioned five times in the Porter’s comic monologue and once by Macbeth in relation to the pronouncements of the witches. The penultimate equivocators, Gilbert reminded his audience, are the witches: “They are ‘imperfect speakers’ in the sense that what they say is both true and false at the same time.” “Equivocation” is really about the uncertainty of language. Gilbert suggested that Shakespeare’s use of equivocation references Navarrus (1491-1586), a philosopher whose works would have surely been in the library of the learned Earl of Oxford. Navarrus wrote of equivocation



Members of the Oxford Street Players



The Cast of *A Question of Will*



Tom Regnier (Edward de Vere)



Wally Hurst (Will Shakspeare) and Roger Stritmatter (Burbage)



Bob Meyers



Earl Showerman, Mark Anderson, Tom Regnier, Cheryl Eagan-Donovan



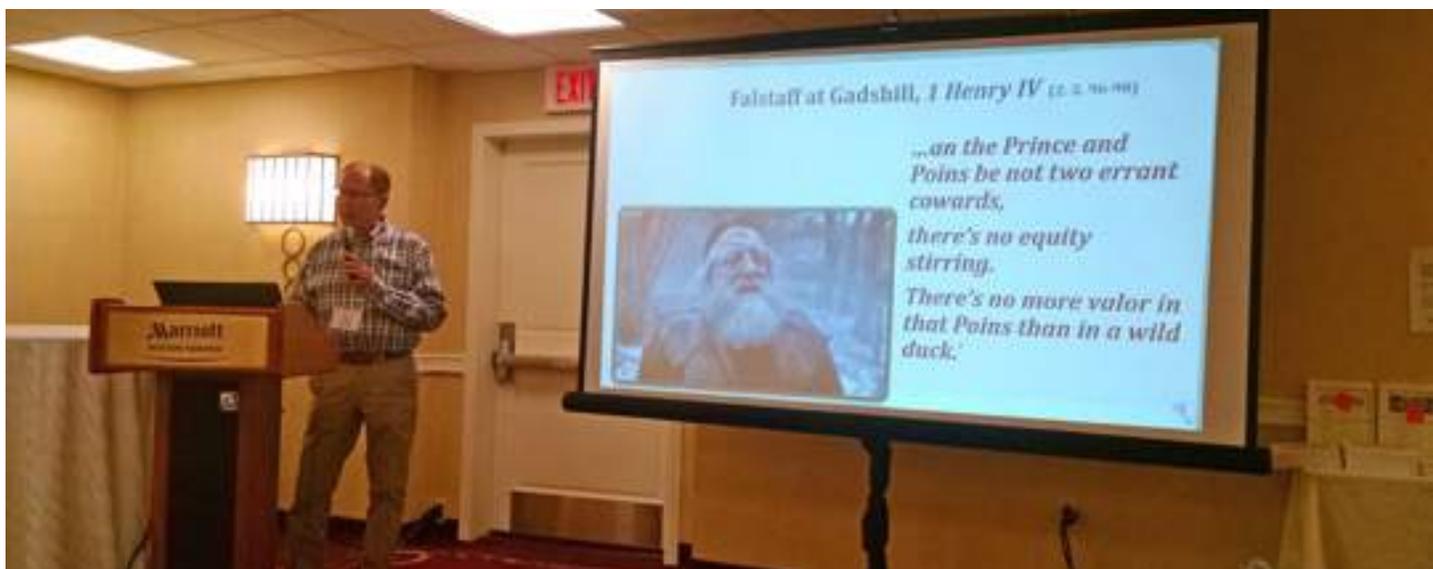
Sky Gilbert



Ramon Jiménez



Wally Hurst



Tom Townsend

in the context of the instability of meaning in proposing that “language is itself fundamentally equivocal, meaning perpetually uncertain, and communication difficult and ambiguous.” In conclusion, Gilbert said, “An analysis of *Macbeth* that ignores Shakespeare’s attitude to language is ignoring Shakespeare’s perhaps greatest and most revolutionary theory of all: that language is an ambiguous and dangerous—yet mysteriously revealing—lie.”

The Friday presentations ended early to allow attendees enough time to travel to the Boston Public Library for a guided tour of its Shakespeare exhibit, “All the City’s a Stage.” (This exhibit is not connected to the Folger Library’s traveling exhibit, “First Folio! The Book That Gave Us Shakespeare.”) The BPL owns an impressive Shakespeare collection, the nucleus of which is the 12,000-volume collection acquired in 1873 from the estate of Thomas Pennant Barton. Barton lived in Philadelphia and began his collection in 1834; the BPL purchased it for \$34,000—significantly less than its appraised value—because it promised to keep it intact. Among the highlights of the BPL collection are some 45 quartos, as well as copies of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Folios. One interesting part of the exhibit was a section entitled “Conspiracies and Codes,” which our guide said was very popular with visitors. It was clear that someone at the BPL had done their homework, as it included a copy of William Covell’s *Polimanteia* opened to the page with the lines “*Oxford* thou maist extoll thy courte-deare-verse” and the printed marginal note that includes “*Sweet Shak-speare*,” which Alexander Waugh identified in 2013 as suggesting a direct Oxford/de Vere-Shakespeare connection (see *Shakespeare Matters*, Fall 2013, p. 5).

Afterward, most of the group attended the Actors’ Shakespeare Project’s performance of *Hamlet* at the historic Church of the Covenant in Boston’s Back Bay. Truth be told, the production was largely disappointing. The chief problem was acoustic—the actors’ voices reverberated off the church walls to such an extent that it was difficult to understand them. Furthermore, the large space was occupied by a cast of only eight actors, most of whom played two or three roles. This must have been confusing to viewers who were not already familiar with the play.

Day Three: Saturday, November 5

Anne Elezabeth Pluto led a very interesting session highlighting the accomplishments of the Oxford Street Players of Lesley University in Cambridge, MA, which has produced more than twenty-three Shakespeare plays since 1993, all from an Oxfordian perspective. Pluto uses Richard Whalen’s book, *Shakespeare: Who Was He?*, to introduce the authorship issue to the students in her course on producing and performing Shakespeare. She was accompanied by three student actors from the Oxford Street Players—Christen DiBiase, Riva Foss and Alexandria Lowther—who performed two short scenes

from *Twelfth Night*. They exhibited remarkably clear pronunciation, an accomplishment Pluto attributes to using Kristin Linklater’s vocal coaching techniques. During the discussion following the performance, Pluto emphasized the importance of theatrical performances, which provide moments no one ever forgets due to drama’s ability to transform pain into beauty. She also explained her process of helping actors find the core of their character by returning to Shakespeare’s text—a practice that also helps her, as an actor in other productions, reign in directors who want to turn plays into spectacles in ways unrelated to Shakespeare’s intentions.

In his talk, “Authorship Attitudes and Allusions: 1750-1830,” **Christopher Carolan** highlighted four literary works, all little-known today, that contain references to the Shakespeare authorship question. In the first, the 1759 farce *High Life Below Stairs*, one character asks “Who wrote Shikspur?,” a question that became a popular joke in the 1760s, and, Carolan speculates, might have led to the Stratford-upon-Avon corporation’s aggressive mustering of its commercial forces to mount the Shakespeare jubilee of 1769. Two other literary works from the 18th century bear similar titles: David Garrick’s 1775 farce, *Bon Ton, High Life Above Stairs*, and an anonymous satirical pamphlet titled *Low Life Above Stairs*, also from 1759. All three works allude to the disgrace of a nobleman. The three main characters in *Low Life* are Elizabeth, the Duchess of Lovesport; Lord Lawless; and Sir William Sycophant, who resemble three key players in the effort to hide Oxford’s authorship. Even more interesting is Elizabeth telling Lord Lawless that “when I desired you to take this disguise, I never once dreamt you would have carried things so far; if I had, I should never have approved.” The fourth work is an 1826 edition of *High Life Below Stairs*, with critical remarks that shed further light on attitudes toward the authorship of Shakespeare’s works at that time.

Historian **Peter Dickson** introduced new findings contained in his just-released book, *Bardgate II: Shakespeare, Catholicism and the Politics of the First Folio*, which built on discoveries in his earlier volume, *Bardgate: Shake-speare and the Royalists Who Stole the Bard* (2011). Both advance his argument that political factors influenced the compilation of the First Folio; this process was a complex helical intertwining of Oxford’s literary legacy with that of the two Stanley brothers—Ferdinando and William—especially after the latter, the presumptive heir to the English throne, married Oxford’s oldest daughter in January, 1595. Dickson noted that the eight actors listed in the First Folio below Richard Burbage were all members of Ferdinando’s company, Lord Strange’s Men, and were not members of Oxford’s companies. Dickson reported that in 1602 Ferdinando’s nineteen-year-old daughter, Frances Stanley, owned a nearly complete collection of the printed Shakespeare quartos, which cannot be said of the child of any other

authorial candidate. Dickson briefly reprised his previous talk on the dispute among Stratfordians about the crypto-Catholicism of Shakspeare of Stratford. He identified the political impetus behind the sudden rush in late 1621 to collect and publish the Shakespeare plays. His essay, "Shakespeare's First Folio: A Response to the Tyranny of Buckingham and the Spanish Marriage Crisis of 1621-1623," and other chapters in *Bardgate II* reinforce his argument that the Folio project was not an innocent literary enterprise insulated from that crisis, but was instead directly involved as the crisis threatened to tear the nation apart in the face of the real prospect of the restoration of Catholicism via an ill-advised dynastic union with Spain. Dickson also noted new evidence relating to the Folio and earlier Shakespearean quartos that point to a Stanley dimension to the canon.

Roger Stritmatter began the afternoon session with "The Shakespeare Illusions—From *Greene's Groatworth of Wit* (1592) to Meres's *Palladis Tamia* (1598)." Stritmatter chose the noun "illusions" intentionally, to draw attention to the fact that many of the literary allusions to Shakespeare are indeed to an illusion. Stritmatter and Alexander Waugh are collaborating on a book of Shakespeare allusions. Such books are not new; the first one, Clement Mansfield Ingleby's *The Shakspeare Allusion-Book*, was first published in 1874, and listed 228 allusions between 1592 and 1693. A second edition (on which Ingleby was assisted by Ms. L. Toulmin Smith) appeared in 1874, with 356 allusions. A revised and reordered third edition, put together by John Munro, appeared in 1909, adding 130 more allusions. Stritmatter focused on what are generally considered by orthodox scholars as the two most important early allusions to Shakespeare: *Greene's Groatworth of Wit* (1592, with its references to an "upstart crow," a "Johanes factotum" who fancies himself the only "shake-scene in the country," etc.) and Meres's *Palladis Tamia* (1598, in which Meres mentions him nine times and lists twelve plays by Shakespeare, only six of which had been published). The orthodox certainty that Greene's reference is unmistakably to Shakespeare dates to the early 1700s. But Stritmatter, citing recent research by Katherine Chiljan and others, demonstrated that Greene's description fits Edward Alleyn far better than Shakespeare (even if the Stratford man was in London as early as 1592). Alleyn was a famous and charismatic actor who was also a manager and a businessman (thus fitting the "Johanes factotum" sobriquet); Greene had previously attacked him in print and was in the middle of another dispute with him in 1592. Turning to Meres, Stritmatter stated that his 1598 work puts "the name Shakespeare on the map as a literary author of dramas." In 1598 Shakespeare's name begins to appear on quarto editions of plays. Examining *Palladis Tamia* more closely, Stritmatter pointed out that Meres's discussion of writers takes up only sixteen pages of a 300-page work. Meres was well known as a mathematician and numerologist. His method of listing

ancient and modern writers merits special scrutiny, as Meres used "some kind of symmetry" in his lists. And, in the section in which Meres cites both Oxford and Shakespeare as "best for comedy," he lists seventeen contemporary writers alongside only sixteen ancient ones, strongly suggesting that there's an extra name in the longer list, and that the superfluity is Shakespeare. Stritmatter calls Meres "the first Oxfordian."

Ramon Jiménez's presentation, "An Evening in the Cockpit: New Evidence of an Early Date for *Henry V*," reprised his lead article in *The Oxfordian* 18. There are numerous historical references to a drama about Henry V going back to 1592. Remarkably, the Folio text included nearly twice as many lines as the three quartos published between 1600 and 1619, and included three previously unpublished long, choric speeches. The Act V Chorus refers to "the general of our gracious Empress... from Ireland coming bringing rebellion broachéd on his sword...." Scholarly consensus has been that the "general" alludes to Robert Devereaux, the Earl of Essex, sent to Ireland in 1599, but who returned in disrepute just six months later, and who was executed in 1601 at the same time two quarto editions of *Henry V* were being published. Jiménez argued that the Earl of Essex would be the last person Oxford would want to glamorize for a deed he did not do, namely succeed in Ireland, and that far likelier, the "general" refers to Sir Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth, who became her commanding general to Ireland in 1582. Butler was aligned with Cecil and Sussex, and would have met Edward de Vere in 1566 when they both received degrees at Oxford. In November 1583, Butler beheaded the last of the rebel Desmond brothers and sent his head to Elizabeth at court. After staring at it for hours, Elizabeth "had it mounted on a pole and placed on London Bridge." Butler returned to England in May 1584, leading Jiménez to conclude that *Henry V* was written between November 1583 and May 1584. "What more gracious compliment could Oxford have paid to a fellow earl, whom he had known since boyhood, than to allude to his service to Queen Elizabeth in connection with Henry V's conquest of France?" Further, Jiménez suggested, the prologue, long choruses and epilogue better suit performances at court and private venues than at public theaters, and that the prologue line, "Can this cockpit hold the vasty fields of France?" is a specific topical allusion to a theatrical "Cockpit" built by Henry VIII at Whitehall Palace. Jiménez described it as a two-story square building with a quasi-circular space and tiered seating where cockfights occurred. The Revels accounts record that King James I witnessed plays there; Edmund Malone believed that Elizabeth saw performances there as well. The Queen was in residence at Whitehall from December 1583 to April 1584; during that period the Queen's Men, the Children of the Chapel, and the Earl of Oxford's Men all performed at court, each on several occasions. Jiménez concluded, "The words of the Chorus



James Warren



Earl Showerman presents
Oxfordian of the Year Award
to Tom Regnier



Earl Showerman presents
Special Award to
John Hamill

suggest that the audience was an aristocratic one, very likely a royal one. Phrases in the Chorus referring to a confined circular space and to a ‘cockpit’ suggest that the Cockpit at Whitehall was the venue for what was likely the royal premiere of *Henry V*.”

In “Two Latin Dedications to Oxford by Munday and Greene,” **Ron Hess** noted that both Anthony Munday’s 1579 *Mirroure of Mutability* and Robert Greene’s 1584 *Gwydonius The carde of fancie* contain Latin dedications to an unnamed dedicatee in addition to the better known English dedications to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. Hess has concluded that both Latin dedications were also written for Oxford and that they reveal information about him not generally known. The Latin *Mirroure* dedication is a wistful paean to a tired traveler after an overseas mission, which fitted both Oxford in 1576 and Munday in 1579, after each had returned from Italy. More importantly, what Hess believes is a one-letter typographical error, if “corrected,” transforms the dedication into a description of Oxford as “a lover of Pallas Athena (the Spear-shaker),” and the poem itself into Oxford’s Mediterranean odyssey. The second dedication in Greene’s *Gwydonius* uses a “triple entendre” play on the word *vere*, which in Latin meant “green” or “youth,” or Oxford’s surname meaning “truth.” This wordplay hints broadly of an Elizabethan poet who had to choose between court and public performances of his works. The acrostics and multiple-entendre in the dedication may show that Oxford enjoyed word puzzles that involved faux-obscure meanings and hidden stories. Hess speculates that because neither Munday nor Greene was noted for his knowledge of Latin, both poems may have been composed by Oxford.

“Vanishing Vere in Venice”: **Michael Delahoyde**, clinical professor of English at Washington State University, and independent researcher **Coleen Moriarty** presented (by Skype) an update on their continuing quest in Italy for documentary evidence of de Vere’s presence there in 1575-76. With help from SOF research grants, Delahoyde and Moriarty will spend a third consecutive summer in Italy in 2017, focusing on the archives of cultural centers in places such as Venice and Mantua. (As previously reported, the pair has already discovered Oxford’s signature on documents in Venice dated June 27, 1575, showing he requested and received legal access to artworks unavailable for public viewing. See *Newsletter*, Winter 2016.) Delahoyde described a growing network of individuals willing and able to assist them in Italy, adding that the Shakespeare Authorship Question is “getting more attention” in the country.

That concluded the day’s presentations. Some attendees had to leave to rehearse their parts for the evening’s presentation of *A Question of Will* (see sidebar). Others stayed to watch, or participate, in a round of “Oxfordian Jeopardy!” emceed by **Alex McNeil**. Three three-person teams actually competed.

During the second round, the team consisting of Scott Fanning, Ramon Jiménez, and Heidi Jansch surged ahead and won.

They were the only team to provide the correct response in Final Jeopardy (the category was “Stage Roles” and the answer was: “John Wilkes Booth said this tragedy role was his favorite.” The correct response: “What is Brutus?”).

Day Four: Sunday, November 6

“Playing ‘Hardball’ with the Authorship Issue: Practical Politics and the Rules of the Game as We Go ‘Ever Forward’”: **Wally Hurst**, director of the Norris Theatre at Louisburg College (NC), set forth the premise that many Oxfordians are “incapable, or unwilling, or just plain afraid” to share evidence of Edward de Vere’s authorship with a broader audience. Warning that Oxfordians “must arm ourselves to fight this fight,” he used principles outlined in Chris Matthews’s 1988 book *Hardball* for applying practical knowledge of politics to debates with Stratfordians. The key is finding ways to “fight fair” while scoring points and raising public awareness of the issue and its importance. For example, Hurst reminded his audience that “You don’t have to attend every argument you’re invited to.” We can identify fallacies such as circular reasoning and point out *ad hominem* attacks; we should “leave no shot unanswered” when, for example, we are called snobs for advocating de Vere’s authorship. We can acknowledge common problems: “Yes, we too hate that there is so little evidence about the author.” Hurst also reminded us that “We can learn to speak only when it improves the silence. Otherwise, let them bury themselves.”

“Motivating Stratfordians to Examine the Evidence in Support of Edward de Vere’s Authorship”: Drawing upon his diplomatic experience as a former foreign service officer with the State Department, as well as new research, **James Warren** presented “the unity of truth”—the idea that valid knowledge in one field is also valid in other fields—as a tool for Oxfordians to use to persuade Stratfordians to examine the evidence for de Vere’s authorship. He suggested that knowledge from psychology, history, general literary criticism, and other fields can be applied when presenting Oxfordian evidence. Warren outlined ways of applying “psychological pressure on those within academia” by realizing that “all fields of intellectual inquiry are interconnected” and that Oxfordians can “use knowledge from one field to say what works and what doesn’t,” within a broader view comprising an interdisciplinary approach. For example, studies in educational development show that the kind of genius exhibited by Shakespeare requires a “resource-rich environment” early in life (a description of de Vere’s childhood experience, but not that of Shakespeare of Stratford) and we can fairly ask, “Are we to believe that these findings apply to all geniuses except for this one?” Also, among many other points, we could alert scholars in other fields

to get “riled up” over the abundance of such fallacies in traditional Shakespeare studies.

Longtime journalist **Bob Meyers** (and editor of the popular SOF website feature “How I Became an Oxfordian”) spoke on “How to Respond to Negative or Scornful Articles AND How to Proactively Develop Relationships with Journalists.” Meyers demonstrated how to “deconstruct articles” about Oxford and to prepare letters to the editor that “have a chance of getting printed.” Meyers stressed the importance of addressing the letter to the highest-ranking editor of the publication, rather than to the reporter or to the section editor. Meyers spoke of ways to develop good relations with journalists who “might be in positions to write accurate stories in the future.” Using as an example a 2014 *Washington Post* article that was both negative and scornful, he suggested productive ways of responding. “Don’t argue the truth of the Oxford case,” he counseled. “Instead, bring up points raised in the article and focus on the writer’s standards of research. Don’t attack the reporter; instead, raise questions to show how his points don’t work.” With the right tone, avoiding accusations, “Sometimes we can advance public knowledge.”

Publications Panel: **Dr. Roger Stritmatter**, editor of *Brief Chronicles*, reported that three articles in the journal have been reprinted by major academic publications. He also announced that he was stepping down as editor to devote more time to other projects (see “From the President,” page 3 of this issue). **Chris Pannell**, editor of *The Oxfordian*, said he focuses on “shorter and easier” articles that can “go around academia” to reach a wider audience of “serious and broadly educated” readers. **Alex McNeil**, editor of the quarterly *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, emphasized that topicality is a priority for publication. When putting an issue together, he gives priority to recent developments in Oxford or Shakespeare studies, letters to the editor, and reviews of recently published books. SOF President **Tom Regnier** reminded conference members that the SOF website can publish new articles as well as reprint others.

Keynote address: **Dr. Roger Stritmatter**, Professor of Humanities and Literature at Coppin State University, delivered a revised and updated version of his wide-ranging 1991 essay, “Repression of Freud: De Vere, Deconstruction and Its Discontents,” originally written when Stritmatter was a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Relying on psychoanalysis, he surveyed various strategies used against Oxfordian evidence during the past decades. Such conscious or unconscious tactics have included deconstructionism; one orthodox scholar admitted to him that “people have a strong, if irrational resistance, to having the poet actually *known*.” Some orthodox critics have therefore skirted around the evidence to portray Oxfordians as “victims of a self-created oedipal ‘family romance’” based on Freudian psychology—i.e., a supposedly emotional need to find a flesh-and-blood author/father figure. Meanwhile, traditional scholars have

increasingly felt anxiety over the lack of a real individual “to go with the author’s footprint.” A strong theme of Stritmatter’s historical survey was Freud’s unwavering support of Oxford’s authorship, based on his reading of J. Thomas Looney’s “*Shakespeare Identified* (1920). He noted that the contribution to an eventual paradigm change made by the founder of psychoanalysis is “more important than perhaps we recognize.”

Afterward, **Earl Showerman** presented a special award to **John Hamill**, acknowledging his work in 2013 toward the unification of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship, and his leadership in administering the SOF Research Grant Program. Showerman then presented the Oxfordian of the Year award to SOF President **Tom Regnier**, in recognition of his work with John Hamill toward unification and of his work in helping to establish a larger online presence for the SOF (website, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) and in increasing its membership.

A Question of Will at SOF Conference

by John Shahan

Another conference highlight was the Saturday evening performance of *A Question of Will*, a musical play about the Earl of Oxford based on Lynne Kositsky’s popular children’s novel of the same title, with songs and lyrics by Lynne’s husband, composer Michael Kositsky. An award-winning Canadian poet and author of children’s and young adult literature, Lynne is a prominent Oxfordian, and many of us were already familiar with her novel. So it was a real treat to see it performed as a musical play, with all of the roles played by SOF members who were attending the conference. In brief, the main character—a high school Shakespeare student (played by Maria Hurst, who filled in on short notice)—is transported back to Elizabethan times, gets involved in the rough-and-tumble London theater scene, and becomes a “boy” actor in the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, where she learns that Shakspeare (well played by Wally Hurst) isn’t actually a playwright, but rather a front for a reclusive nobleman living in Hackney, Edward de Vere, to whom she becomes a messenger. Along the way she meets Ben Jonson and shady characters from competing companies who try to steal Oxford’s plays for themselves. She also encounters Queen Elizabeth, portrayed brilliantly by Sky Gilbert, who directed the play. Another highlight was Tom Regnier’s performance as the Earl of Oxford, including an impressive vocal solo of one of Michael Kositsky’s songs. I won’t say how it ends, except to say that it ends well. It’s a romp, at times as hilarious as the commoners performing Pyramus and Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The music is excellent. We all wish Lynne and Michael well in their efforts to use it to help spread the word about Oxford among students.

Problems with Matrix Ciphers

by David Moffat

The search for matrix ciphers hidden within Elizabethan texts has long been a popular pastime stimulated by the knowledge that ciphers were frequently employed during that era.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how matrix cyphers are made, then use this knowledge to explore some of the problems encountered when encoding or decoding them. We will also note a few problems encountered when trying to identify the existence of matrix ciphers.

Definition

A matrix cipher is a text such that when its letters are copied row by row into a suitable matrix shape, at least one column of the matrix contains a message. The purpose of the text is to convey, yet hide, the message, while the purpose of the matrix is to provide a systematic way to reveal it.

How to Make a Matrix Cipher

Knowledge of how a matrix cipher is made tells us what to expect when we encounter a text suspected of containing one. These are the steps we will follow to show how a matrix cipher can be constructed:

1. Choose a message to be hidden.
2. Choose a matrix size into which the message will fit vertically.
3. Draw the matrix on paper, and enter the message into it in one or more columns.
4. “Straighten” the matrix (which is mostly empty) into one long line.
5. Devise a neutral text that interpolates the message.
6. Copy out the text and punctuate it.

The last step produces the final text that anyone can view, yet not know that it contains a hidden message.

An Example

First, let our message be “BRINGMONEY” (no word spaces allowed).

As this is a message of ten characters, it will fit in a matrix column of ten rows, so let us choose to use a matrix that is ten rows high and, say, six columns wide. The five extra columns should leave enough space to interpolate a text.

Enter the message into any one of the columns of the matrix. We chose the right column, so our result so far looks like this:

```

- - - - - B
- - - - - R
- - - - - I
- - - - - N
- - - - - G
- - - - - M
- - - - - O
- - - - - N
- - - - - E
- - - - - Y
    
```

The dashes represent spaces for the interpolated text. When we straighten out the matrix (by copying row after row, keeping the spaces for the interpolated text), we get this:

_____ B _____ R _____ I _____ N (and so on, up to) _____ Y

Next, we fill in the blanks with a meaningful text that incorporates the letters of the message. We do not, however, include punctuation symbols or word spaces—just letters. Our (somewhat silly) text would then look like this:

i m i n a B i g h u r R y f o r d I n n e r a N d

Now, putting the rows under one another again, we have a matrix that looks like this:

```

I M I N A B
I G H U R R
Y F O R D I
N N E R A N
D S O D O G
E T A H A M
A T S I X O
R S E V E N
T R Y P L E
A S E T R Y
    
```

You can see the message plainly in the last column. Finally, we punctuate and space the text that anyone can see, but which hides our message:

I'm in a big hurry for dinner, and so do get a ham at six (or seven?). Try. Please try.

There we have the steps by which we can create a message hidden in an innocuous seeming text.

Decoding a Matrix Cipher

To decipher a text containing a matrix cipher we need to determine the size of the matrix (more about this later), lay out an empty matrix of that size, and arrange the letters of the text into the rows, omitting punctuation and word spaces. Then we look for a coherent message among the columns of the matrix. In essence, we reverse the steps by which it was created.

Problems with Matrix Ciphers

The most difficult step in preparing a matrix cipher is interpolating the text into the matrix after setting up the message. There are two kinds of difficulty. One is to produce a meaningful text that fits the context in which it will be found. The other is to find a way to tell the intended recipient(s) that the text is indeed a cipher, and to subtly convey the size of the intended matrix.

If a text is not directly identified as a cipher, then it would have to identify itself, perhaps through an abrupt change of subject or style, or perhaps by expressing its identity metaphorically. Similarly, the size of the matrix needs to be conveyed. Our example includes sixty characters; its shape could be 3 by 20, 4 by 15, 5 by 12, 6 by 10, etc.

If the cipher text is part of a larger document, we have to know how much of the document is pertinent. As it happens, the smaller the matrix, the harder it is to devise the text that hides the message, while the larger the matrix, the harder it is to identify the message, because extraneous words will appear by coincidence.

The problems of deciphering are generally the inverse of the problems of construction. One is to be able to recognize that a text is in fact a matrix cypher, and another is to discover the size of the intended matrix. In our example, we blatantly included two numbers in the text (one of which—"seven"—is irrelevant to the deciphering process). The recipient might count the text letters and see that there are sixty, then note that "six" (a word in our text) goes into sixty ten times, and thus try a 6 by 10 and a 10 by 6 matrix.

The point is that the cipher "works" if the intended recipient, and nobody else, is aware that it is a cipher and knows the dimensions of the matrix. We are at a distinct disadvantage if we are not the intended recipients.

Some Significant Expectations

Now we can explore some of the expectations we must have when we encounter and try to decipher a matrix cipher. First and foremost, since cipher construction begins with a coherent message only, we can expect to obtain a coherent message when we decipher it. That is, there is no reason to expect unnecessarily broken words, incomplete words, or words with wrong or extra letters. Any claimed decipherment with those faults is suspect.

Second, since the next step in the construction was to select a *matrix* that will fit the message nicely, a decipherment in which the rows are different lengths, or in which the rows are not aligned from top to bottom, is also suspect.

Third, we should be able to enter the text straight into the chosen matrix from left to right and top to bottom. Otherwise, the solution is suspect.

Finally, messages are answers to questions. We cannot legitimately make up the questions ourselves, then expect to find answers to them.

Conclusion

Knowledge of how matrix ciphers are constructed and deciphered gives us guidelines for assessing whether or not a text is in fact a cipher. We see now that decipherment cannot be forced by juggling text into matrices, or by juggling word fragments within them. Foreknowledge is the best way to identify texts containing ciphers.



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