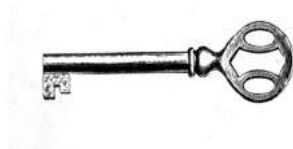


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Cover Photograph: Janice Jackson

The front cover is an interior view of the balcony at the restored Globe Theatre in London (circa 2013).

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A better explanation of the performance and printing history of *Henry V* is that lines 22-34 of the Act 5 Chorus do not refer to Essex at all, and were not written in 1599, but at least fifteen years earlier, when the Folio version of [the play] was first seen by an Elizabethan audience. . . . This passage . . . is much more appropriate to events earlier in Elizabeth's reign – before the Irish revolt of the 1590s – when there were two serious uprisings in Ireland known as the First and the Second Desmond Rebellions.

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While Hamlet is talking to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the second act, prior to the arrival onstage of the visiting Players, Polonius enters to deliver news of their coming. Hamlet then taunts Polonius, calling the old man “Jephthah” and referring to his “one faire daughter and no more, the which he loued passing well” (2.2.349-350). The incident occupies less than a dozen lines and on the surface, appears trivial. However, in Shakespeare's plays, what appears to be trivial is sometimes significant. Who was Jephthah, and why would Hamlet compare Polonius to him?

3. Sc(e)acan, Shack, and Shakespeare

by Eddi Jolly. 41

Changes in semantics, pronunciation, and spelling during the period of Early Modern English (1500-1650) are of particular interest to those interested in ‘Shakspere’ and ‘Shakespeare’ One of the changes in Middle English was that some short vowels were lengthened. Baugh gives the example of the Old English infinitive *bacan*, which became Middle English *baken*, modern *to bake*. Other words which shared the sound change of *bacan* include *tacan*, modern *to take*; *sc(e)acan*, *to shake*; and the noun *nama*, *name*. Part of the change to modern pronunciations took place during what is called the Great Vowel Shift, generally seen as occurring between 1400 and 1600, but there were later vowel changes too.

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We know that Oxford incurred an injury to his knee on a Venetian galley in 1575 during his stay in Italy. In September 1575, an Italian banker wrote from Venice: “God be thanked, for now last [lately] coming from Genoa his lordship found himself somewhat altered by reason of the extreme heats: and before [earlier] his Lordship hurt his knee in one of the Venetian galleys . . .” A Venetian galley would only have been used on a sea voyage, not a canal or river journey. Possibly, de Vere made a trip to the free city state of Ragusa (its Italian name) or Dubrovnik (its Croatian name). If so, he could have seen for himself a culture and location that he would later use as background for *Twelfth Night*.

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One might feel for the plight of the youth who entered Cecil’s magnificent London house in 1562. Even the brightest of twelve-year-olds would be no match for . . . William Cecil, a man who commanded the Privy Council, the Court of Wards, and the Treasury. Because of wardship, Edward de Vere accrued backbreaking debts and entered into a disastrous marriage. In the end, he lost everything: property, children, and his reputation. . . . Burghley himself wrote “The greatest possession that any man can have is honor, good name, and good will of many and of the best sort” – sentiments that Shakespeare ascribes to Iago.

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[In] Verona, our bus stopped briefly near Porta Palio to allow us to see Romeo’s sycamore grove. I asked our Italian guide – just to be sure – if those trees . . . through the bus windows were the famous sycamore trees. She answered bluntly: “No, those are plane trees. Sycamores are a different species.” Once I recovered from my surprise, I started thinking . . . Are there really two different tree species, each with its own unique name? Or is there only one species of tree, but with two different names, depending on the region or the era? . . . To get to the root of this problem, we first had to get to the leaves. . . . Little did I know how far this modest inquiry would lead.

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The Oxfordian thesis has forced us into areas of psychology, biography and history – English, continental, and literary . . . [because of] the issue of Shakespeare’s identity Seeking the truth about the author of the western world’s most important and influential literary canon has required that we examine the facts surrounding the production of other literary works at the time, facts that demonstrate that the Stratford biography is not the only one rife with anomalies. Although Christopher Marlowe’s biography holds together far better than most, his death remains as much a mystery as Shakespeare’s identity. Could these two mysteries be related?

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[Some] principal questions about the Sonnets are the identities of the fair youth, the dark lady, and the rival poet . . . The most often proposed rival poets are George Chapman and Christopher Marlowe, but the arguments for them are thin; even weaker cases have been offered for virtually every other contemporary professional poet. . . . Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, was . . . intelligent, handsome, athletic, improvident, charming, a generous patron of writers . . . He was also the best friend and hero of the youthful third Earl of Southampton. He was also a poet whose talent was admired by his contemporaries.

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Shakespeare's preoccupation with his own aging, a physical decay destined to end in death, gives by itself an impression of such melancholy that we are bound to consider whether he may have had a depressive illness. Scholars have repeatedly emphasized the world-weariness, the despair of human kind and the self-contempt that inspire so much of the poetry and the action of such plays as *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Timon of Athens*. Some (Chambers, for instance) think of the possibility of a nervous breakdown. The *Sonnets* are a record which can help us to a partial answer of whether the poet was ever in worse case than merely very miserable, or whether, in fact, he had a mental illness.

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