



## SOF 2017 Conference Held in Chicago

by Bill Boyle, Alex McNeil, Earl Showerman, James Warren and Hank Whittmore

About ninety SOF members and guests convened last month for the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship's annual conference, held for the first time in Chicago. In addition to the usual presentations of papers, conference goers also had the opportunity to see an unusual version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, as well as a new full-length video on the authorship debate created by SOF member Robin Phillips.

### Day One: Thursday, October 12

Most sessions were held in the spacious Kasbeer Hall of the Loyola University Corboy Law Center in downtown Chicago. The first speaker was **Sabrina Feldman**, author of two books, *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare* (2011) and *Thomas Sackville and the Shakespearean Glass Slipper* (2015). She spoke on "William Shakespeare, the Shakespeare Apocrypha and the Shakespearean Bad Quartos." According to title page evidence and other evidence, William Shakespeare wrote, adapted, or co-authored around a dozen surviving plays which are usually assigned to the "Shakespeare Apocrypha": *The Taming of A Shrew*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, *Fair Em*, *Lochrine*, *Mucedorus*, *The*

*Merry Devil of Edmonton*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *The Puritan*, *The London Prodigal*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *The Birth of Merlin*, and *Double Falsehood or Cardenio*. These plays were evidently accepted as authentic Shakespeare plays by contemporaries, even though they weren't printed in the First Folio. Shakespeare was also credited with writing a number of so-called "bad quartos," shorter and poetically inferior versions of six canonical plays. Why was the Stratford actor credited during and after his lifetime with writing two separate bodies of work? Feldman theorizes that two different men were writing under the name "William Shakespeare"—one a legitimate playwright, the other a front man for an aristocratic poet. Feldman focused on two apocryphal plays, *The Taming of A Shrew* and *Mucedorus*. First published anonymously in 1594, *A Shrew* was most likely written around 1589, according to Feldman, who identified a number of passages that plagiarized Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* and *Tamburlaine*. Thomas Nashe complained about poets with no more than a grammar school education who devoted themselves to "the servile imitation of vain-glorious tragedians." Feldman provided

(Continued on p. 27)



Left to right: Bill Camarinos, Susana Maggi, Kathleen Wilson, Bill Boyle, James Warren  
[All conference photos by Catherine Hatinguais]

## From the President:

### State of the Organization

Dear SOF Members,

The following information is taken from reports given at the SOF's Membership Meeting in Chicago on October 14, 2017. If you'd like full copies of the reports, contact me at [info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org](mailto:info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org).

#### Looney Headstone

One of our major, unexpected projects this year was to raise funds for a headstone for John Thomas Looney and his wife, Elizabeth, who, we learned from their grandson, had no headstone on their grave. Once we let our membership know that the defining force behind the Oxfordian movement was buried in an unmarked grave, our members responded quickly. We raised over \$3,000 for the headstone in a matter of days. Very well done! It was one of the most exciting, inspiring events of the year for me, and I was very proud of our membership for coming through on this. We are happy to announce that the headstone is now complete. It is pictured on page 3. Congratulations to every one of you who contributed to this project.

#### Video Contest

One of our new, experimental projects this year has been the "Who Wrote Shakespeare?" Video Contest. It turned out to be very successful, and we plan to continue it in the future. We asked contestants to create a three-minute video on the topic "Who Wrote Shakespeare?" The contest was open for submissions for three months, after which our panel of judges chose eight videos that were considered worthy of the finals. Then the videos were posted on our website, where members of the public could vote for their favorites. The contest was advertised online, primarily through Facebook.

The eight finalists' videos attracted a total of 13,420 views in the voting period of the contest. On September 1, 2017 (first day of voting), the SOF website received the highest number of views in its history in a single day—2,745 views (the previous best was April 25, 2016, with 1,138 views). In the month of September 2017, during which we ran the voting, the SOF website had its highest number of views in one month—over 20,000. The previous high for one month was about 14,000 for April 2016 (400th anniversary of the Stratford man's death).

Lowell Widmer won the first prize of \$1,000; Robin Phillips won the second prize of \$500; and Christopher Carolan won the third prize of \$250. All finalists won a

### The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Published quarterly by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466-0083. <https://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 an annual scholarly journal, *The Oxfordian*.

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  
**Don Rubin**, First Vice President & Outreach Committee Chair  
**Julie Sandys Bianchi**, Second Vice President & P.R. Committee Chair  
**Thomas Rucker**, Treasurer

**Bryan Wildenthal**, Secretary  
**Richard Joyrich**, Conference Committee Chair  
**Joan Leon**, Fundraising Committee Chair  
**Wally Hurst**  
**James Warren**

Newsletter editor: Alex McNeil ([newsletter@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org](mailto: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.

Printed by Minuteman Press, West Newton, MA. © 2017 by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship



2018 membership to the SOF. You can view the winning videos at:

[shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/winners-announced-2017-video-contest/](http://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/winners-announced-2017-video-contest/).

### Board of Trustees

At the Membership Meeting, Don Rubin, Wally Hurst, and Julie Sandys Bianchi were elected to three-year terms on the Board of Trustees—Don and Wally to their second terms, and Julie (who finished out Cheryl Eagan-Donovan's term) to her first full term. I was elected to a fourth one-year term as President; next year I will be term-limited out of office, so someone else will have to step up and take over the reins of the organization (any volunteers?). After the conference, the Board members chose the remaining officers as follows: Don Rubin, First



Recently completed headstone of John Thomas and Elizabeth Looney, Saltwell Cemetery, Gateshead, in northeast England.

Vice President; Julie Sandys Bianchi, Second Vice President; Tom Rucker, Treasurer; Bryan Wildenthal, Secretary.

### Financial matters

Our end-of-the year financial report for 2016 shows that the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship continued to operate in the black in 2016, with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$5,273.63. This would not be possible without your membership dues, which totaled \$24,042 in 2016, and your donations, which totaled \$33,148. In the Fall 2016 newsletter, I explained the status of the SOF's endowment. Back in the mid-1990s, 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 – only the interest earned by the fund could be spent. The exact amount donated to the endowment over the years was \$57,342.70. Since last year, we have put the endowment money in a separate account where it is earning as much as could reasonably be expected in these days of low interest rates.

### No dues increase for 2018. Renew Now!

We have decided *not* to increase membership dues for 2018. Dues will stay at the same level that they have been for 2015, 2016, and 2017. Your 2017 membership expires on December 31, but please don't wait until then to renew. The sooner you renew, the better able we will be to make plans for 2018.

And please encourage friends and family who are interested in the SAQ to learn about and join the SOF! We need to bring more new people into the organization. Don't forget that you can give one-year gift memberships to friends and family who have not been members before for as little as \$35. This is a great way to nurture their interest in the SAQ. Total membership for 2017 was 410, which is slightly down from 2016 – all the more reason for you to renew your membership soon and possibly buy a gift membership for a friend. You can renew and buy gift memberships on our website or by using the mail-in form included in this newsletter.

### Communications

**The Oxfordian.** Chris Pannell recently published *The Oxfordian 19*, his third volume as editor, and he has again done a wonderful job! Members may download articles online or may buy a paperback copy from Amazon (see separate article, page 5).

**Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter.** Alex McNeil continues to do an excellent job with the newsletter. 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. Please write up

your story on how you became an Oxfordian and send it, along with your picture, to [info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org](mailto:info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org).

**Website.** Jennifer Newton continues to keep our beautiful website humming. It has averaged about 10,000 views per month, and in the last year has been viewed in 147 countries (top five, in order: U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, Germany). So we are reaching many people and our reach is international!

### Is Shakespeare Dead? at the Mark Twain House

As you may have read in the summer *Newsletter*, I visited the Mark Twain House & Museum in Hartford, Connecticut, in June. When I learned that the bookstore did not have Mark Twain's hilarious anti-Stratfordian spoof, *Is Shakespeare Dead?*, I asked the SOF Board to send copies of the book to the bookstore. The books have been on display in the bookstore, and an Oxfordian has taken pictures of them and posted them on Facebook.

### Planned Giving

We hope you will remember the SOF in your estate plans. If you want to invest in promoting the Oxfordian cause, the SOF is the best investment that you can make. The SOF is legally dedicated to the Oxfordian cause and the SAQ, and any money that you donate or bequeath to the SOF will help bring this truth to light. Oxfordians who have donated to other organizations that were not legally required to promote Oxfordianism have been disappointed to find that their donations were not always used as promised. Several members of the SOF Board, including myself, have made provisions for the SOF in their estate plans. Please consider doing the same.

### 2018 Conference in Oakland

Thanks to Richard Joyrich and Don Rubin, as well as the entire Conference Committee, for making the 2017 Chicago Conference such a success! Our next conference will be in Oakland, California, October 11-14, 2018. Details will appear on our website and in the next *Newsletter*. In the meantime, please mark those dates on your calendar.

### 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 SOF 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](mailto: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



# SHAKESPEARE

---

## OXFORD FELLOWSHIP

### **Celebrating More Than 60 Years of Bringing Truth to Light! Join the SOF or Renew Your Membership for 2018 Now!**

**Basic Membership: \$44.** Gives you 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:** Gives you 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 gives you 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:** If you have renewed for 2018, you 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 \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Payment \$** \_\_\_\_\_  **Check enclosed**  **Visa**  **MasterCard**  **Amex**

(For Canadian members who pay by check, please pay in U.S. funds.)

**Card Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Exp. Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **CVV (Security Code on back of card)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature (if using credit card)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Member Name(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**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.)



## What's the News?

### Volume 19 of *The Oxfordian* Published



Volume 19 of the SOF annual journal *The Oxfordian* is now available for purchase at Amazon.com, and an online version can be accessed free of charge by members at the SOF website. It contains seven articles of original scholarship and research, a Q&A with Oxfordian

Hank Whittemore, a reprint of a 1941 article by J. Thomas Looney, and five reviews.

Perhaps the most significant of the reviews is a refutation of the claims recently made by the editors of the new edition of Shakespeare's works by Oxford University Press (OUP), that Shakespeare worked with numerous co-authors and that many plays are collaborative works. In "All That Is Shakespeare Melts into Thin Air," Michael Dudley, Gary Goldstein and Shelly Maycock review *The New Oxford Shakespeare Authorship Companion*, edited by Gary Taylor and Gabriel Egan, published by OUP earlier this year. "The central claim by OUP editors—that William Shakespeare had eleven co-authors for seventeen of the plays in the canon—has been refuted in our study," said Goldstein. "This radical new edition of the Bard is based mostly on stylometric studies conducted by computer engineers who measured the relative frequency of function words such as 'of', 'by' and 'from' in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays to determine an author's identity."

The new OUP edition also attempts to significantly expand the canon of plays attributed to Shakespeare. For centuries, the consensus among literary scholars was that the Bard wrote thirty-six plays and co-authored *The Two Noble Kinsmen* with John Fletcher. The new OUP edition seeks to increase that number to forty-four, adding co-authored plays *Edward III*, *Arden of Faversham*, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *The History of Cardenio*, *Sejanus*, *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Sir Thomas More*.

Focusing on the stylometric research conducted at the University of Pennsylvania, Dudley, Goldstein and Maycock emphasize that one defect of the analysis,

"which the lead author (Segarra) admits to but perhaps doesn't fully recognize, exists at the core of their argument: their study is incomplete. They claim that the author of *Henry VI* could only be Christopher Marlowe or George Peele; then they say it is not possible to compare Marlowe with Peele. According to Segarra, 'If you had to pick two [candidates], then you would go for Marlowe and Peele, but in the latter's case, we don't have a large enough sample to fully train the classifier.'"

The review in *The Oxfordian* also advises against the ambiguity inherent in computer-aided stylometric studies: "We are now asked to accept the conclusions of self-described 'information scientists' and their computers: the problem is that computers must be fed with data that can be incomplete or inaccurate, or skewed to produce the answer which academics wish to put forward. This is critical not only because the vocabulary of English was increasing exponentially during the Elizabethan period, but was changing in more fundamental matters, such as pronouns, possessives, punctuation, and verb forms."

Dudley, Goldstein and Maycock examine the stylometric test for feminine endings. 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. In the Shakespeare canon, the percentage of feminine endings trended upward during the author's writing career, from figures as low as 5% or 6% (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *1 Henry IV*) to as high as 33% in some later plays (*The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*). Thus, it is unlikely that the frequency of feminine endings in any particular play can be used as a test to rule out, or rule in, Shakespeare's authorship.

As for the OUP assertion of co-authors, no contemporary ever suggested that there was more than one writer for any of Shakespeare's plays before *Two Noble Kinsmen* in 1634, certainly not Jonson, or Heminges and Condell in the 1623 *First Folio*. Indeed, the OUP editors ignore additional contemporary evidence by theater producer Philip Henslowe, who recorded two payments in his diary to Ben Jonson for additions to Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, dated 25 September 1601 and 22 June 1602. The OUP editors instead ascribe authorship of these 1602 additions to Shakespeare and Heywood.

A news release about the review was distributed by *The Oxfordian* editor Chris Pannell to major publications, including *The Review of English Studies*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Newsletter*, *Renaissance Quarterly*, and the arts editors of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. SOF president Tom Regnier also forwarded copies of the review to senior OUP editors in the U.S., Canada and Great Britain.

## Horatio Society Meets in Berkeley

The Horatio Society, a local Oxfordian group of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, met on August 20, 2017, at the King Yen Restaurant in Berkeley, California. About thirty persons attended (a few others couldn't make it because they'd journeyed to Oregon for the solar eclipse).

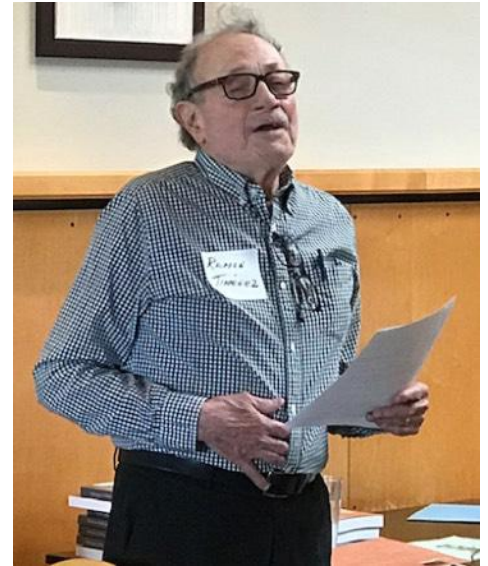
John Hamill, former SOF President, greeted the attendees and explained the purpose of the group, which is to discuss Shakespeare Authorship issues, and that this was the first meeting of the whole group in years. Everyone introduced themselves and many took the opportunity to reveal how they got involved in the authorship controversy. Hamill talked about the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, the upcoming annual conference in Chicago in October, and the Research Grant Program (see conference article, page 1). He mentioned the debate in London, scheduled for September 21, between Stratfordian scholar Sir Jonathan Bate and DVS Chairman Alexander Waugh (see article, page 9). Hamill also brought up the possibility of having the 2018 SOF Conference in the Bay Area, and everyone seemed eager to help.

Katherine Chiljan spoke about John Ward, who moved to Stratford-upon-Avon in late 1662 to take his post as church vicar. Almost immediately, Ward made notations about Shakespeare in his diary, two of which were original: that Shakespeare had a £1000 yearly allowance to supply the stage with plays, and that he died after a "merry meeting" with writers Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson. Since no known Shakespeare biography existed at the time (beyond a sparse paragraph in Fuller's *Worthies*), Ward's statements should be treated seriously.

The supposed £1000 annuity was so enormous that only the government could have paid it. The only known dramatist to receive a grant of this size was Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, although the reason for it was unspecified. The "Shakespeare" in the drinking bout with Drayton and Jonson could have been the Stratford Man; Shakespeare's physician son-in-law, John Hall, once treated Drayton, and Drayton frequented the Stratford area. Jonson presumably knew the Stratford Man since he satirized him in at least one play, a portrayal even Shakespeare academics accept. A kernel of truth about the Stratford Man's character may be contained in a legend first recorded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: Shakespeare goes to nearby Bidford for heavy drinking, and on his way back, falls asleep under a crabapple tree. Interestingly, Shakespeare's comedy, *The Taming of the Shrew*, opens with a drunken man "before an alehouse" in the country; the drunkard later mentions two towns near Stratford-upon-Avon.

Oddly, Ward's notations about Shakespeare stopped five months after his Stratford move, although he continued his diary for another nineteen years. This raises the possibility that Ward soon came to doubt the great author's association with Stratford.

Ramon Jiménez devoted his portion of the program to describing the book he has just completed. *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship: A New Analysis of the Earliest Plays by the Real Shakespeare*, will provide the evidence and make the argument that five anonymous plays performed during Elizabeth's reign were written by Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, and belong in the Shakespeare canon (see following News Note). *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth, The True Tragedy of Richard the Third, The Troublesome*



Ramon Jiménez



Marti Litchman and Ugo Baldassari



John Hamill, Katherine Chiljan, Ramon Jiménez, and Ugo Baldassari





Katherine Chiljan

*Reign of John, The Taming of a Shrew* and *King Leir* are Oxford's first versions of plays in the canon that bear nearly identical names.

Ugo Baldassari and his friend Marti Litchman presented a few scenes of his play, *Shaking Spears*. Baldassari has set out to spread the Oxfordian message to a wider audience, using one of Edward de Vere's most favored forms of entertainment, a stage play—more specifically, a romantic comedy. The play is set in two time periods, Elizabethan and Contemporary, which are intertwined throughout. The unifying locus is London's Bishopsgate area, the site of Fisher's Folly (Silexedra), de Vere's prodigious hothouse of artistic activity during the 1580s, and a trendy neighborhood today. At Silexedra, the Earl of Oxford regales his bohemian cohorts with stories from his recent trip to the Continent while preparing entertainments for the Court—where he is headed for big trouble. Meanwhile, in modern London, two cronies, a famous Oxfordian actor and an eminent Stratfordian professor, debate their points of view. Both of them head towards crises of conscience, as the discovery of a “smoking gun” manuscript draws them into a harrowing detective chase.

Afterwards, Ramon Jiménez and Joan Leon invited all to come over to their house, a few blocks away, for appetizers and drinks. About fifteen people met at the house and continued the discussion. Hopefully we will have another Horatio Society meeting in a few months.

(Contributed by John Hamill)

### Ramon Jiménez To Publish Book on Anonymous Plays

Historian Ramon Jiménez has completed a book on five anonymous Elizabethan plays entitled *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship: A New Analysis of the Earliest Plays by the Real Shakespeare*. Jiménez offers literary, theatrical and historical evidence to show how these anonymous dramas, performed during Elizabeth's reign, were written by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and properly belong in the Shakespeare canon. The book will be published by McFarland & Company in mid-2018.

The plays examined are: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*; *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*; *The Troublesome Reign of King John*; *The Taming of a Shrew*; and *King Leir*. Jiménez contends that these are Oxford's first versions of plays in the Shakespeare canon that bear nearly identical names, and that each is strikingly similar in terms of plot and cast to its canonical counterpart. Four of the five have strong connections to de Vere personally, and for all five there is convincing evidence that they were first composed during the 1560s, though the dialogue in each has been entirely rewritten.

To date virtually all scholars and editors of Shakespeare have ignored, disputed, or disparaged the idea that Shakespeare had anything to do with the creation of any of these plays, which are generally omitted from collections of Shakespearean apocrypha. Instead, the

traditional consensus is that the Bard was aware of these works (which must have been written by other unknown hands) and chose to borrow from them as he crafted his own new plays. This book aims to overturn centuries of neglect and misunderstanding.

A graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, Jiménez has published two books on the Roman Republic: *Caesar Against the Celts* (1996, 2009) and *Caesar Against Rome: The Great Roman Civil War* (2000). He has been a frequent speaker at SOF conferences and a contributor to *The Oxfordian* and this *Newsletter*.

McFarland & Company is an academic publisher headquartered in North Carolina, now in its 38<sup>th</sup> year. It has previously published four other titles by Oxfordian scholars that have gained acceptance by libraries in the U.S. and elsewhere: *The Shakespeare Controversy* by Warren Hope and Kim Holston (1992, 2009); *De Vere as Shakespeare* by William Farina (2005); *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of Shakespeare* by Richard Malim (2011); and *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare's The Tempest* by Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky (2013).

(Contributed by Gary Goldstein)



## Third Book of Oxford's Disappears after Sotheby's Auction

The third known book of the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford's to surface in 400 years has disappeared after its purchase by an anonymous buyer. In December of 2015, the auction house Sotheby's sold a copy of *The Histories* by Herodotus, published in Venice in 1565, bearing the crest of the Earl of Oxford on the front cover stamped in gold.



Sotheby's estimated the sale price to be in the \$2,500-3,500 range, but the book ultimately went for \$8,750. I contacted the book department director and requested that a researcher from the SOF be permitted access to the book for scholarly purposes. After two months I was informed that the buyer had refused to respond to the request. The buyer—individual or institution—remains anonymous.

The book is not listed in the Folger Library catalog. The library has two other known books previously owned by Oxford: his Geneva Bible and the Italian edition of *History of Italy* by Francesco Guicciardini. These were purchased by the Folger in 1925 and 1975, respectively, so the Folger clearly is seeking material once owned by the Earl of Oxford for its collection.

Considering the high sales price and with the buyer's refusal to respond to Sotheby's communication about scholarly access, one wonders whether the buyer's motive was to take the book out of scholarly reach.

Sotheby's sale catalog stated that the book came from the collection of Robert S. Pirie, and provided the following information:

Herodotus

HERODOTO HALICARNASEO HISTORICO  
DELLE GUERRE DE GRECI ET DE PERSI...  
VENICE: GIOVANNI BARILETTO, 1565

8vo (6 x 4 inches). Printer's device on title-page, woodcut initials, manuscript ownership inscriptions on title-page; title-page nearly loose, some stains, wormhole on upper margin of the first third of the volume. Contemporary Oxford binding: brown calf with gilt crest of the Earl of Oxford, gilt fleurons in corners; first endpapers lacking, scratch on upper panel, joint fragile, spine and extremities rubbed.

PROVENANCE

Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (armorial binding) — Sir Thomas Berkeley (?) (ex-dono on title page "Th. Burkelei (?) ex-dono illustriss Ed Comitiss Oxon" and Latin motto: "Nec temere nec timide") — Sir John Berkeley (?) (signature on second leaf) — Unidentified signature on title, dated "1719."

Acquisition: H.D. Lyon.

(Contributed by Gary Goldstein)

## Shakespeare Authorship Coalition Responds to Italian Professor

John Shahan, Chairman of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, has responded privately to Professor of English Shaul Bassi after the Italian expert on Shakespeare publicly assailed the legitimacy of the Shakespeare authorship issue in his recent book, *Shakespeare's Italy and Italy's Shakespeare*.

As reported in the Summer 2017 issue of the *Newsletter*, Bassi dismissed the evidence marshaled by Richard Roe in his book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, that Shakespeare had visited Italy and was fluent in Italian, without actually refuting any of Roe's claims. As for authorship "deniers," Bassi wrote that "the struggle against conspiracy theorists cannot be won by accumulating more biographical details in the face of a barrage of weird conjectures...." Bassi cited with approval the Wells-Edmondson book *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* (2013) as refuting the case for alternative authors.

Shahan sent Bassi a detailed letter along with a copy of the book, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* (2013, 2016) in response to the professor's polemic in the hopes of engaging him on the authorship issue. Bassi teaches English at Ca'Forscari University in Venice, and is the author of three books on Shakespeare.

## Noemi Magri's Book Now on Kindle

Noemi Magri's seminal book, *Such Fruits Out of Italy: The Italian Renaissance in Shakespeare's Plays and Poems*, was first published in paperback in 2014 by the German publisher Verlag Laugwitz. A Kindle edition is now available on Amazon.com for just \$7.20. The paperback version is also still available.

Upon its publication, Warren Hope, professor of English at the University of the Sciences, stated that, "Noemi Magri's combination of a detailed first-hand knowledge of Italian geography, architecture, art, and history with a cool-headed, rigorous approach to scholarship results in the kind of dazzling criticism that is rare in Shakespeare studies. She is unlike those traditional Shakespeare scholars who, as she says, 'rejoice' in finding factual errors in Shakespeare. Instead, she rejoices in finding the reality that is behind Shakespeare's work. Her identification of the actual paintings described in the Induction to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* is a tour de force, but her whole book crackles with the passion of discovery. It is not to be missed."

A key feature of the book, which took fifteen years for Magri to complete, are the extensive "Notes and Bibliographies" citing Shakespeare experts from Italy, Germany, Great Britain and the United States.

(Contributed by Gary Goldstein)

## Alexander Waugh vs. Sir Jonathan Bate: “Who wrote Shakespeare?” (The Emmanuel Centre, London, September 21, 2017)

by Eddi Jolly

In the foyer there was an excited buzz, and familiar faces—Sir Derek Jacobi, Sir Mark Rylance, quite a few members of the De Vere Society—and a real sense of anticipation. After all, this was the first open debate in Britain about whether there exists a genuine case for questioning the authorship. A big event! At the door was a questionnaire: “Do you believe Shakespeare wrote the plays? Or someone else? Or don’t know?”

Three hundred of us sat down and listened as Hermione Eyre, novelist, television critic and interviewer, introduced this “explosive” and “radical” subject. She gave a warm introduction to Sir Jonathan Bate, a distinguished Shakespeare scholar, mentioning in particular his 1995 Arden edition of *Titus Andronicus*. Then she turned to Alexander Waugh, who, she explained, was in demand around the world to talk about Edward De Vere, and was the editor of the forty-three volume works of his grandfather, Evelyn Waugh.

Waugh then had fifteen minutes to summarise his case that Will Shakspeare of Stratford did not write the plays. He warmly thanked his “handsome friend Sir Jonathan”—seated next to his own “scrofulous” self—for agreeing to engage in a debate; many literature scholars are unable to do so, living in a university world where such discussion is effectively censored. Indeed, studying literature requires a set of skills about texts, not about history or evidence. Waugh said that it was difficult to find a historian or lawyer who, on the available evidence, believed in Shakspeare (a distinction made to separate the Stratford man from the playwright) as the author.

Waugh argued that it was necessary to look back at the time up to a generation after de Vere’s death to find pointers that the name “Shakespeare” was indeed a pseudonym, derived from Pallas Athene, because it wasn’t possible for de Vere to be open about his authorship. Waugh quoted a number of Elizabethans and early Jacobean, like John Weever, William Covell and others (including one as late as 1636) who mentioned that English earl who wrote plays. He referenced the book he is writing with an “American professor” who considers finding contemporary allusions to a non-Shakspeare authorship is rather like “shooting fish in a barrel.”

Next, Waugh considered the typography of Ben Jonson’s paean to the author at the front of the 1623 First Folio, “To my beloved the Author,” with the actual name (Shakespeare) in smaller print. The *author*, not the *name*, is important. He mentioned Jonson’s use of the phrase “sweet swan of Avon,” noting that, since there are seven Avons in England, it need not refer to the Stratford one, particularly since “Avon” was also used to denote Hampton Court, where many plays were staged for court,

as William Camden knew. Further, Jonson places the author with his contemporaries, like Kyd, who was writing when the man from Stratford had “barely a hair upon his chin.”

Waugh also reminded us that Jonson is generally acknowledged as the author of many of the other dedications in the First Folio. Waugh drew attention to Francis Meres (1598) and his lists of playwrights. It is possible to use these lists to establish who knew whom at the time, to discover the nexus of relationships—except for one, Shakspeare. This absence of evidence may be taken as evidence that there wasn’t a playwright whose actual name was Shakespeare.

Waugh’s breathless, informed and lively presentation gave the audience a flood of reasons why Shakspeare wasn’t Shakespeare. Hermione Eyre intervened, commented on the vast amount of evidence, including the beginning of a demolition of the dedications in the First Folio, and turned to his opponent.

Sir Jonathan Bate referred to the evening as a debate, and asked whether we were prepared to listen to evidence, change our minds, and not be swayed by coincidences and conspiracies. Today, he began, we have a “post-truth” world and “cultists.” Perhaps they were pursuing a lost cause, but it added to the gaiety of the world. He asked us to beware Waugh and his ilk, whom he characterised as contrarians who loved an earl.

Bate alluded to one of the nineteenth century doubters, Delia Bacon, who ended up in a lunatic asylum, and who favoured Francis Bacon (why, he asked—did sharing the name explain her preference?). He listed a good fifteen other persons who have been proposed as the author, concluding with Queen Elizabeth. Why do doubters consistently propose an aristocrat? Biographers of the eighteenth century found Shakespeare’s life rather a bore, and in the nineteenth century wanted a glamorous author, like Lord Byron. Instead, Shakespeare (Bate did not distinguish between Shakespeare the author and the Stratford resident) was grammar school educated, and did not go to university. But there is the will, which leaves three mourning rings to three leading actors in his (Shakespeare’s) theatre company.

On his tomb Shakespeare is lauded as a great writer in a dedication which has been copied by pilgrims to Stratford. His monument shows him with pen and paper. Jonson tells us about Shakespeare’s writing techniques, as do others like Beaumont and Meres.

Bate conceded that “anti-Stratfordians” will ask where are the manuscripts. But manuscripts of plays of the time haven’t survived, bar a collaborative piece (*Sir Thomas More*). Handwriting experts have compared one





Alexander Waugh, moderator Hermione Eyre, and Sir Jonathan Bate

hand in that with Shakespeare's signatures, and with 250 writers of the time, and six features match only Shakespeare's signatures. There are also two "servile" letters written to the earl of Southampton (i.e., the dedications to *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*). As for the theory that an aristocrat would be afraid to be associated with a theatre company, that is "absurd." De Vere did after all have an acting company.

As for books, literary contemporaries like Marston and Beaumont didn't leave books in their wills. That was not unusual. Yes, some plays are set in Italy. Two are set in Venice, with no mention of a canal. Jonson and Webster didn't go to Italy, but refer accurately to two locations there. And what about the platform at Elsinore? Two members of Shakespeare's company, including Will Kempe, went there, and could have told him about it. Shakespeare wasn't good at presenting aristocrats—after all, Capulet wouldn't have been down in the kitchen organising the servants. Instead, Shakespeare was knowledgeable about wool and leather, from his upbringing in Stratford, and there are references to these in the plays. He was above all a countryman—look at the way the countryside is portrayed in *The Winter's Tale*. Shakespeare was the only playwright at the time to write about Warwickshire.

As for the earl of Oxford, he died in 1604. In 1608 the first indoor playhouses were being built, so in the late

plays there are five-act divisions so candles can be relit.

We should be grateful for one development which has been brought about by anti-Stratfordians, said Bate. Elliot and Valenza are useful statisticians whose analyses identify linguistic fingerprints in the plays. Computer examinations of Shakespeare's writing and that of others at the time, including the earl of Oxford's, establish clearly that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare, and have indicated the contributions Peele made, too.

Hermione Eyre commented that there was plenty of evidence for Shakespeare's authorship, such as his "Hand D" in the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript, and the use of dialect in the plays (a member of the audience reminded her that Bate hadn't mentioned that). And there were good points about the monument. She then invited Alexander Waugh to respond.

Waugh thanked Bate, and turned to the references to Italy. It is amazing that the playwright is familiar with Italian and French and had knowledge of these languages. Shakespeare is not praised as a great wit on his monument—Jonson didn't get these things wrong, and is telling us that Shakespeare is buried in Westminster Abbey. No one expressed doubt before the mid-eighteenth century? Not true, and he gave several examples from earlier dates.

Actually, said Waugh, we haven't discussed whether Shakespeare could write. Jane Cox of the Public Record Office has determined that the signatures are not all in the

same hand. How can “Hand D” possibly be established as Shakspeare’s when the entire sample of letters comes from disputed signatures? And how odd that Shakspeare’s father was illiterate, Shakspeare supposedly literate, but his daughters were illiterate. A remarkable 360-degree change over three generations! Candles and five-act plays? The convention of five-act plays derives from Seneca; John Lyly was writing them, too. Candles can last as long as the maker wants them to. Warwickshire dialect words? Distinguished scholar Ros Barber has demonstrated that words hitherto cited as Warwickshire ones were used elsewhere at the time.

Both Waugh and Bate agreed that much more time is needed to adequately explore the question. Waugh urged the audience to go online and look up the facts.

Jonathan Bate then gave his response, commenting that Waugh said some curious things, and that early plays didn’t have five acts. As for the signatures, the one on the Mountjoy-Belott deposition has never been challenged, and he referred to a particular characteristic not found in the other 250 writers of the time (an *a/u* distinction). And when Waugh cites Covell, his reference is nonsense; the “Oxford” there refers to the town, not the man. He commented on the anti-Stratfordian fallacy; in Elizabethan and Jacobean times Shakespeare’s plays weren’t played or admired as much as Jonson’s or Beaumont and Fletcher’s. Why couldn’t it be accepted that an actor wrote for his fellow actors?

Furthermore, Bate was unaware of any historian except William Rubenstein who doubted the authorship. He invited the audience to go online and read 102 reasons against Oxford’s candidacy at Oxfraud.com.

Before inviting questions from the audience, Hermione Eyre announced that the entrance poll had shown 78 thought Shakespeare wrote the plays, 107 thought someone else did, and 86 were “don’t knows.” The last group was of most interest to her. She tried unsuccessfully to find someone in the audience who thought Bacon wrote the plays.

The first question was about the existence of evidence of the Stratford man receiving a grammar school education. Bate pointed out that his father had been on the town council, which would have permitted him to send his son to school for free. There is a scene in *Merry Wives* with a Welsh schoolteacher, and there had been one in Shakespeare’s time in Stratford. He conceded there was no surviving roll giving pupils’ names. Waugh replied that there was no evidence of education; if you believed in Shakespeare, then you have to believe he went to school. But, argued Bate, Digges refers to him as a writer, and no one refers to Webster as a writer. Waugh responded that Henslowe paid Webster for a play, which showed he was a writer.

The second questioner opined that neither party had scored a knockout punch. Were we moving to an epoch when we could discuss this without *ad hominem* attacks?

The next question was about the date of de Vere’s death. Waugh said he would speak to that, but with a heavy

heart, as this debate was about Shakespeare, not de Vere. He offered his hosts (the How to Academy) a talk about where de Vere was buried in Westminster Abbey, and pointed out that court plays were constantly revised and updated. Bate said he was disconcerted by the Oxfordians’ position on collaboration with Fletcher. He added that de Vere’s poems were dreadful, poems which Alexander immediately defended.

The fourth question was about the sonnets, which seemed to the speaker to be “raw” and “personal.” Bate had characterised them as an “exercise,” but in the speaker’s opinion poems were always personal. Bate saw this as a tricky question. People wrote many sonnets in Elizabethan times, it was something one had in one’s repertoire. No doubt many sonnet sequences did arise from particular circumstances. The sonnets are a mystery. It was interesting that in the 1640s when they were reprinted the gender was changed in some. Shakespeare did have a bisexual nature; the sonnets were above all a debate about love. Waugh saw the sonnets as contributing to the writer telling us “Shakespeare” was a pseudonym. The writer was preoccupied with Ovid, and the concept of the body metamorphosing after death. As for “My name is Will,” that was “fatuous.” Tennyson hadn’t written “My name is Alf,” nor Spenser “My name is Ed.” Bate added, almost as fatuous as “I Ben Jonson”?

Who is Shakespeare if not the man from Stratford? Waugh brushed that question aside; tonight was about whether Shakspeare was a writer or not. The questioner persisted; if he was born, married and buried as Shakspeare, aren’t you saying he was using a pseudonym himself? Bate commented on the inconsistency in spellings in those days, and the playfulness of punning on *shake spear*, even on his coat of arms. There he was seen as a “player,” but Camden said he came from a distinguished family, and saw him as the greatest writer. Waugh reminded us that the literary name was frequently hyphenated, that it alluded to Pallas Athene, patron saint of playwrights, and that we should see the actor and the playwright separately.

The next question was about how Shakespeare wrote women’s roles so well, and how did the speakers reconcile Shakespeare’s daughters not writing, when women in the plays could write? Bate said it was not uncommon at the time to use signs rather than signatures, and there was a comment on Susanna’s tomb about how she had great wit, that is, intelligence. Waugh pointed out how proud Prospero was in educating his daughter, Miranda, and what an extraordinary pedigree Shakspeare’s family had: three generations—illiterate, literate, and illiterate again.

Question seven was how Enoch Powell had noted that Hemminge’s and Condell’s names were interlineated in the will; Powell was from a poor background and would not be biased in favour of an earl. Bate conceded that there were interlineations in the will, but that was unproblematic. Waugh saw it as interlineation, without endorsement, and was concerned about being too absolute about the will. He thought Hamnet Sadler’s signature had been overwritten as “Hamlet”; Bate saw “Hamnet” and “Hamlet” as



interchangeable in Stratford.

Next was a challenge to Waugh. The questioner thought the debate was about who wrote Shakespeare, and, seeing that Waugh was a leading Oxfordian, said he'd chickened out by not giving his argument, and that the case for Oxford was weak. Waugh replied that he hadn't known who would be in the audience, and would very happy to do an Oxford debate. Bate responded that the De Vere Society was out in force, with books for sale in the foyer. Waugh insisted that the idea was to challenge the authorship; Bate insisted one could only do that with evidence.

Hermione Eyre invited them both to sum up in three minutes.

Bate said that all the plays had a distinctive linguistic register; the authorship debate had been good at getting work done on this. The first person to question the authorship had been J. T. Looney in 1920, who'd impressionistically thought de Vere's poems were like the plays, but since Looney, the plays' distinctive linguistic fingerprint has become evident from computer analysis. We are still discovering who wrote what. Of the 600 surviving plays of the time, the only ones to mention Warwickshire are by the Warwickshire man. The debate had been good, but he had no doubt Shakespeare of Stratford was the true author.

Waugh said that the playwright used 31,000 words, only twenty-one of which were supposedly found in Warwickshire, but Ros Barber has shown that those words were used before Shakespeare, and not necessarily in

Warwickshire. He noted that Bate brought up Looney. He cited Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry James, Orson Welles, Sir Mark Rylance, Sir Derek Jacobi, Sir John Gielgud, and Ted Hughes, all of whom expressed doubts the traditional authorship attribution, as well some Justices of the United States Supreme Court. He appealed to those with independent minds to be independent thinkers, too.

Hermione Eyre asked for a show of hands, and declared that perhaps ten "don't knows" had moved towards Shakespeare, and ten to "someone else." She ended the debate on this "moment of concord."

A "moment of concord"? My reading of the show of hands was that more voters had moved towards "someone else" as the author of the plays. However, this was a friendly, animated debate, with a thoroughly attentive audience, sharp questions, occasional intakes of breath, and generous applause for each speaker. It gave a public airing to a subject which has been underground for a long time. There was extensive trading of evidence and inference, generosity from each speaker, and a considerable body of knowledge displayed. There was honest and thoughtful discussion, and the subject is out in the open. This is a major achievement.

[Editor's note: The video of the debate is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HglmgdJ5L6o&sns=fb>]



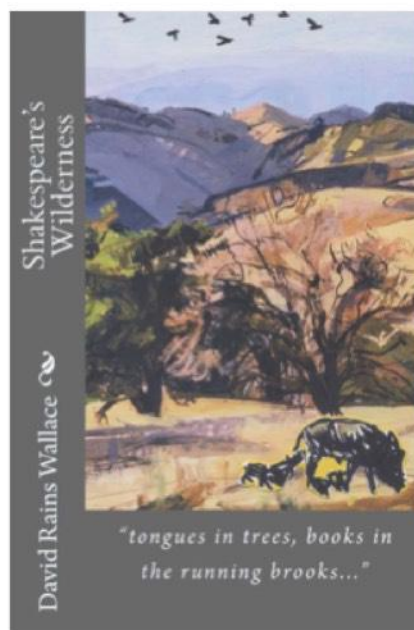
Advertisement

## Shakespeare's Wilderness

By David Rains Wallace

Shakespeare is often praised for his love and understanding of nature. Less has been written about how he acquired those qualities. Biographers assume they arose from a youth in the countryside around Stratford on Avon. Yet relatively few Shakespeare works are set in the English Midlands' tamed farmland. More are set in wild places: Scottish heaths, Welsh mountains, a Balkan seacoast, a desert island.

Did Shakespeare imagine the wild places in his works? Or did he experience them?



Available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) at \$15.95

"I thoroughly enjoyed *Shakespeare's Wilderness*.... Its summary of the evidence against Shakespeare, and for Oxford, was as concise and evenhanded as I've seen."

- Ramon Jiménez

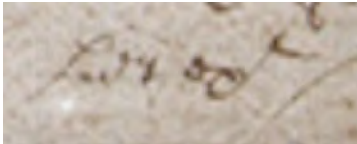
"In his masterpiece of a hybrid work of literary criticism and natural history... Wallace has seized on a bronco of a thesis statement, and he's masterfully following it through the entire Western Canon.... *Shakespeare's Wilderness* is also the most comprehensive post-Stratfordian response to one of the most ambitious and enigmatic works of Stratfordian literary criticism: Ted Hughes's 1992 book, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*."

- Mark Anderson

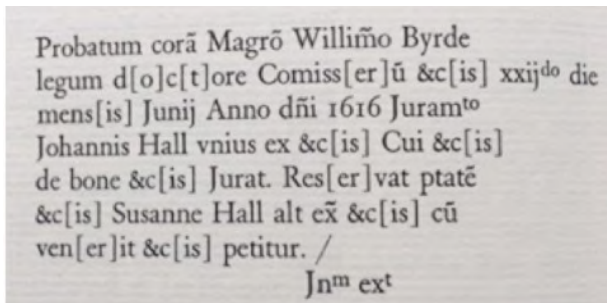
## Brevity and the Soul of Witlessness

by Julie Sandys Bianchi

Recently, De Vere Society President Alexander Waugh raised the question to online readers of an Oxfordian Facebook Page concerning the relative prevalence in other Jacobean will records of what appears to be a “squiggle” at the very end of Stratford-Shakespeare’s will transcribed as ‘Jn<sup>m</sup> ext’ in B Roland Lewis’s *The Shakespeare Documents* (vol. 2 p. 480).<sup>1</sup>



[Figure 1. Snipped Google Image of Shakspeare’s original will probate “squiggle.”]



[Figure 2. Digital image of B. Roland Lewis’s transcription of Shakspeare’s will probate statement, courtesy of Alexander Waugh]

Having studied lots of old English documents in over forty years of genealogy research, I was puzzled. I had *never* seen such an abbreviation on the pages of any antique will affiliated with my Sandys family and its vast collateral lines. I googled the purported abbreviation “Jn<sup>m</sup> ext” as well as “In<sup>m</sup> ext” (since the letters *J* and *I* often appeared written identically), but of the multitude of English will records accessible online, I found references only to Shakspeare’s will. My search result was akin to the phenomenon of looking up the meaning of an unknown word in the dictionary and finding the same word being used to define itself.

Waugh questioned if “E.K. Chambers and others”<sup>2</sup> had correctly interpreted the meaning of their (apparently unique) transcription when they pronounced it as having been an abbreviation for “inventorium exhibitum”—a phrase which Stratfordian apologist Scott McCrea over a century later translated from the Latin to mean “inventory attached.”<sup>3</sup> But those suggested interpretations of the scribbled initials made no sense to me either, because inventories, as a function of Roman law rather than canon law,<sup>4</sup> were not typically attached to wills, but were

completed after the wills had been entered for administration under probate. Rather than being recorded in the Administrative Acts or Probate Books customarily reserved for wills, inventories were recorded in Ex Officio Act Books.<sup>5</sup>

From 1529 to 1782 it was a legal obligation of the executor to compile a probate inventory of the deceased’s personal or moveable goods, assets and chattels, not including real estate or land. The assessors compiled a detailed listing of the entire contents of the deceased’s dwelling with the estimated value of each item. The objective of the exercise was to ensure that any unpaid debts owing at death could be paid. The inventories form part of the probate records and have survived in great numbers.<sup>6</sup>

McCrea’s 2005 interpretation of the Latin phrase “Inventorium exhibitum” as meaning “inventory attached” should also have been baffling to other contemporary translators of Latin, since the spelling “inventorium” is not in current use, nor was in during the 1600s. In further online discussion about the mysterious “squiggle,” Dr. Roger Stritmatter determined—with the aid of his medieval Latin dictionary—that the correct spelling of the entire phrase after the Middle Ages would have been “inventarium exhibitum.”<sup>7</sup> Apparently, Chambers and others had somehow revived, and McCrea had copied, the extinct spelling of a Latin word by substituting an *o* for an *a*. And by Googling, one can see that this pair of Latin words together indeed was used to reference a will inventory.

For the generous-hearted, E.K. Chambers and his minions might be forgiven for first publishing and repeating their anachronistic spelling, if that is all they had done in broadcasting their versions of “fake news.” The florid handwriting style known as the secretary hand, used to record Elizabethan and early Jacobean wills on crumbling parchment, is often difficult to read. Having been employed for over a century by the time it was applied to the making and administering of the will of William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon in 1616, individual variations had infiltrated the handwriting style to the degree that several constructions for each letter of the secretary hand can be found in early 17<sup>th</sup> century documents.

When deciphering the handwriting of English wills of the time, the chief strategy used by modern readers is first to search the copy for common articles and prepositions as well as for lexiconic words or any of the predictable jargon of will: *will*, personal pronouns, the county of residence, relationship titles (*loving wife, oldest son, said servant, executor, executrix*), religious and burial terms (*Almighty, Christ, soul, bury*), along with standard testamentary expressions like *I give and bequeath, ordain this, or set my hand*. Then, the shape of the letters used to form the recognizable words can be employed to establish an alphabet of the writer’s unique penmanship in order to



decode names and unusual or unfamiliar words in the rest of the document.

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century probate notices one also finds routinely worded notations in Latin scrawled onto the bottom of wills by a Registrar of Probate or his official scribe (both offices were appointed by the Ecclesiastical Court). The word choices are typically so repetitive that it does not require extensive schooling in Latin to interpret them: the title *Probatum*, the name of the city in which the will is being probated, the month and year of the probate, the occupations of the Registrars such as *Magro*, *Magisterio* and *Militis*, as well as the common religious/calendar expression *Anno Domini*—all can be used to establish a written alphabet unique to the person wielding the pen.

After Chambers and Lewis and their ilk first drafted their mistaken spelling and erroneous decoding of the squiggled notation—without the convenience of online searching that McCrea had access to but apparently failed to use—any of these august historians could have followed tried and true scholarly tradition by taking time before publishing to cross-check their pronouncements by culling physically through old documents, probate records, and will books. Had they done so, they would not have had to look far to see that it was rare to find the phrase “inventarium exhibitum” written directly on a will itself. Citing as evidence my own cache of three dozen wills from 1570 to 1732 in the Prerogative of Canterbury—none of them have those words written on them.

Also, Chambers and Lewis and McCrea et al would have learned that the phrase “inventarium exhibitum” (regardless of spelling) had nothing at all to do with an inventory being attached to a will. Instead, it was applied as part of a reference to the total assessed monetary value of the inventory of the testator’s worldly items and cash, minus what was owed by the estate at the time of death. It was part of a financial receipt rather than an indication of a list of items.

But most importantly, these hapless Stratfordian researchers would have found no evidence that the phrase “inventarium exhibitum” was ever abbreviated. Even if the phrase would somehow have been reduced to a smudge, one would expect to see, based on other wills from the era, that there would have been alongside the illegible smudge a *numerical value* regarding the financial assessment of the estate, or some marginal notation on the will as to why no such assessment was being made.

Here are the online mentions I netted while surfing the internet on October 22, 2017—these scant four entries nearly drowning in a sea of digitized references clogged with Chambers-through-McCrea-inspired Stratfordiana mentioning William Shakespeare’s will:

A 1634 will administration of one “Richard Adams of Cleobury Mortimer in the County of Salop” that included “*Salvo Jure cuiuscumque etc. et exhibit Inventarium extendens ad summam £24 12d*”<sup>8</sup>

wardus Hart de fletching p’d Glover et Sam<sup>l</sup> Astie de Lew  
*Inventarium exhibitum* extendit ad sumam £8 17s. 7d.

[Figure 3. Snip from 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1718 administration of will of Mary Awcock of Fletching County Sussex<sup>9</sup>]

DE THE ACT BOOK, HOWEVER, IS THE CUSTOMARY  
1: ‘Eium *Inventarium Exhibitum* 22 li’, whi

[Figure 4. Snip of a marginal note from the 1677 will of Wenceslaus Hollar “which would seem to mean the widow’s assessment of her husband’s estate.”<sup>10</sup>]

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Administratio cum testimonio<br>de bonis non emanavit<br>mense Augusti 1680.                              | } Londonii<br><i>Inventarium exhibitum</i><br>Blasii<br>Sheldon xiii |
| Administration, with evidence<br>of the goods not administered,<br>issued in the month of August<br>1680. | } London,<br>Inventory Exhibited<br>Blasius,<br>Sheldon xiii.        |

[Figure 5. Snipped image with English translation of probate administration of the September 12, 1676 will of Richard Wyseman of Middlesex.<sup>11</sup>]

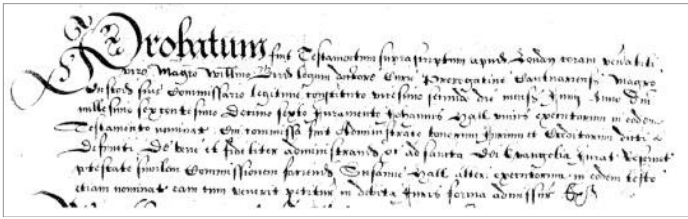
If the squiggle at the bottom of Shakspeare’s original will does not represent an abbreviation for “Inventarium Exhibitum,” what does the mark really mean?

The first part of the answer is that the probate inscription is only half squiggle. The first part of it actually forms a routine ecclesiastical probate *word*; it is followed by three carelessly scrawled letters. I will tackle the two parts separately.

A will was deemed lawfully *probated* (meaning “proved”) once the executor named in the will (or a lawfully appointed substitute executor) appeared before the official Registrar of Wills, placed his or her hand on a Bible, and swore to the veracity of the document. “Without probate of the will or letters of administration, neither executor nor administrator could take any steps in any other court of law, for the executor’s proof of his title and the administrator’s title itself could only be given by the Ecclesiastical Court.”<sup>12</sup>

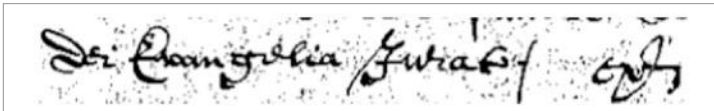
After witnessing the sworn testimony of the executor, the Registrar recorded his validation of the will on the document. This was usually done by writing “*Dei Evangelia jurat*.” Sometimes other language was used, such as the longer “*Strand eadem ad Sancta Dei Evangelia jurat*” or the single word “*Jurat*.” *Jurat* is not always written as the last complete word of the probate document; if it is not, it usually can be found in the text somewhere else, such as in the neatly transcribed and elaborate version of Shakspeare’s will that was entered at some unspecified

later date in the records of the Prerogative of Canterbury. See line 6 in Figure 6.

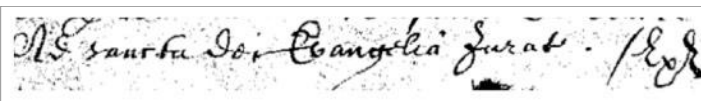


[Figure 6.]

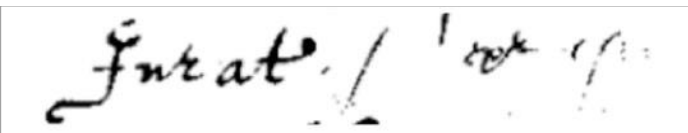
Thus, the initials “Jn<sup>m</sup>,” which the Stratfordians have claimed is an abbreviation for “inventarium,” is actually an abbreviation for “Jurat.”



[Figure 7. Snipped from a will entered in the Prerogative of Canterbury 1621]



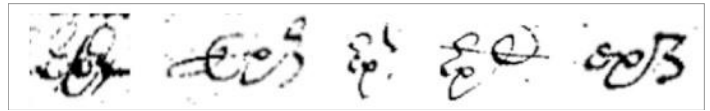
[Figure 8. Snipped from a will entered in the Prerogative of Canterbury 1642]



[Figure 9. Snipped from a will entered in the Prerogative of Canterbury 1608]

“A **jurat** (through legal French from Latin *juratum*, ‘sworn’, from *jurare*, ‘to swear’) is a clause at the foot of an affidavit showing when, where, and before whom the actual oath was sworn or affirmation was made.”<sup>13</sup> The examples above also show that a slash is usually drawn between the word “Jurat” and the final flourish. (It is curious, and unusual, that the slash is missing from Shakspeare’s reformed POC will copy.) On the right side of the slash lies the second half of the messy writing that triggered Waugh’s question. In most wills it appears added as almost an afterthought and; sometimes there is a blank space following the slash. Notably, the last marks on the page are not necessarily penned in the same hand, or with the same weight of ink, as the rest of the Probate statement. In the case of Shakspeare’s original will, the writer ignored the slash and made his routine scribble on the left side of it. This jumble of lettering, deciphered as “ex<sup>t</sup>” by the Strats,

is not an abbreviation of “exhibitum.” What it does signify is entirely mundane.



[Figure 10. Samples from 17th century Prerogative of Canterbury wills]

Once the ceremonial probate formalities were nearing their end, the Registrar performed the secretarial function of jotting the letters *EXR*—the common abbreviation for Executor<sup>14</sup>—serving as his indication that the document had been presented to him by the person lawfully designated to do so, and that the requisite swearing had been completed. Depending on whether the Registrar had penned the entire probate entry himself or left it to his assigned scribe, the dashed off initials *EXR* (or sometimes the idiosyncratic variants *EXE* or *EXT*), are found written in the vicinity of the slash mark as the last entry on nearly every will in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Prerogative of Canterbury—the same ecclesiastical clearinghouse that was the employer of the same Registrar who proved Shakspeare’s scruffy will—the “Magrō” William Byrd. The notation is so common that it is inexplicable that the Stratfordians’ misinterpretation has persisted for so long.

As a final note of interest, according to Professor Alan Nelson,<sup>15</sup> in August 1578 both Oxford and Sidney accompanied the Queen to Saffron Walden, which was not only the hometown of Gabriel Harvey but of the young man who became the Registrar of Shakspeare’s will. William Byrd would have been seventeen at the time.

- Alexander Waugh, in a thread initiated by him on Orthodoxfordians Facebook Page (October 21, 2017).
- Waugh quoting E.K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of the Facts and Problems* (Clarendon Press, 1930), 174.
- Waugh quoting Scott McCrea, *The Case for Shakespeare: The End of the Authorship Question* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005) 148.
- <https://www.genguide.co.uk/source/wills-and-inheritance-amp-letters-of-administration-admons-pre-1858-land-amp-property/32/>.
- Eugene A. Haertle, “Probate Courts,” *Marquette Law Review*, Vol. 45 (1962), 548.
- See note 4, *supra*.
- Dr. Roger Stritmatter, in a thread initiated by Alexander Waugh on Orthodoxfordians Facebook Page (October 21, 2017).
- [http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~uktranscriptions/Cleobury\\_Salop.htm](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~uktranscriptions/Cleobury_Salop.htm).
- [https://archive.org/stream/visitationofengl03inhowa/visitationofengl03inhowa\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/visitationofengl03inhowa/visitationofengl03inhowa_djvu.txt).
- Richard Pennington, *A descriptive Catalogue of the Etched Work of Wenceslaus Hollar 1607-1677* (Cambridge U. Press, 1982), appendix.



- <sup>11</sup> Sir Thomas Longmore, *Richard Wiseman, Surgeon and Sergeant-surgeon to Charles II: A Biographical Study* (Ballentine Press, 1891), 189.
- <sup>12</sup> Haertle, 547.
- <sup>13</sup> Alexander Mansfield Burrill, *A Law Dictionary and Glossary (2nd ed.)* (Baker, Voorhis, 1867), 110.
- <sup>14</sup> Robert K. Barnhart, ed., *The Barnhart Abbreviations Dictionary* (John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 93-94.

- <sup>15</sup> Alan H. Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward De Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford* (Liverpool University Press, 2003), 195.



## Shakspeare's Will and (Missing) Inventory

by Harry Campbell

Orthodox Shakespeare biographers have mostly tended to ignore the awkward fact that the will of Stratford's William Shakspeare mentions no books; in reaction to the bewilderment of the anti-Stratfordians, a few have suggested that books would have been listed only in the inventory (which is now conveniently missing), not in the will. Authorship doubters have been at a bit of a loss when it comes to a response about the missing books. Relying only on supposition, it is difficult to argue that they would have, or should have, been explicitly bequeathed in the will, if Shakspeare indeed owned any. It seems logical that books would have been considered among the most valued possessions for someone who made his living and reputation as a prominent writer, and therefore important enough, both monetarily and sentimentally, to mention them and bestow them on some deserving person. But, essentially, it has come down to a difference of opinions. Orthodoxy explains it by relying on the missing inventory, and anti-Strats see their absence from the will as further proof that Shakspeare was not the author Shakespeare.

It is, of course, possible that after making an otherwise detailed list of specific bequests, the Stratford man—if he was Shakespeare—simply lumped all of his most precious and valuable literary possessions in with the final bequest to his daughter and son-in-law: “All the Rest of my goodes chattels leases plate jewels & household stuffe whatsoever...” This was standard language in wills of the period, used to sum up the remaining miscellaneous belongings of low sentimental value and therefore not explicitly bequeathed elsewhere in the will. However, it is absurdly unlikely that the author Shakespeare would have considered his literary properties no more significant than his “household stuffe.”

This might help. In her book *Stratford-Upon-Avon Inventories 1538-1699* (Dugdale Society Publications, in association with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 2002) editor Jeanne Jones demonstrates that those rare individuals in the Stratford vicinity who possessed substantial collections of books and other possessions characteristic of intellectual or artistic sensibilities, were, in fact, very likely

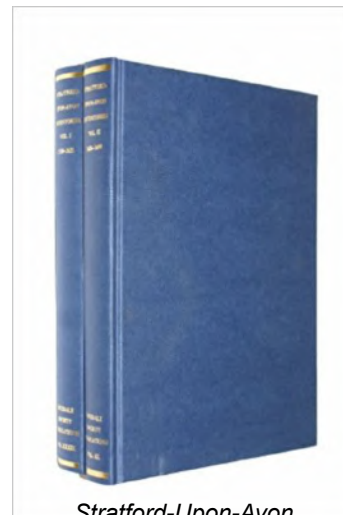
to bestow them specifically in their wills, *in addition to* listing their values in the inventories. (And, not surprisingly, valuations on the inventories also demonstrate that books were by far the most valuable movable assets of the estates.) Of the 346 inventories that still exist in several repositories and transcribed here, with the editor's notes regarding associated wills, only ten list books. Here are summaries of the five most substantial collections:

Entry 17: John Bretchgirdle, vicar, 1565: Books valued at £10. Editor notes that this is almost half his total wealth, and in his will, the books were specifically left to friends and godsons.

Entry 126: John Marshall, clerk/curate, 1608: Inventory lists 271 books *by title*, all of which were given in his will to his sons, to be divided according to their various interests. One book was bequeathed by title, along with two other titles not included in the inventory, to other individuals.

Entry 170: Leanard Kempson, gentleman, 1625: Several musical instruments and music books, plus a Bible and books. Editor Jones notes that the inventory is not accompanied by a will, so it is not known “to whom these personal treasures were left,” her implication being that *normally* they would have been given specifically to someone in the will.

Entry 269: John Ward, vicar: “Bookes in the studye” (valued at £25) were listed as part of his large estate, and went to beneficiaries in



*Stratford-Upon-Avon  
Inventories 1538-1699*

Northamptonshire. No more specific info is given. (This is the same John Ward who mentioned in his diary several anecdotes about the late W.S.) The actual will is entirely a list of generous monetary bequests, ending with “all the rest and residue” of his estate (this would include his books) bequeathed to his brother Thomas Ward.

Entry 272: Josiah Simcox, clerk/vicar, 1682: His desk and books, valued at £20, went to his wife along with his entire estate, except £5 left to his father. (Editor Jones believes that Simcox made a nuncupative, or oral, will, as no written will is referred to.)

None of this proves that Shakspeare did or did not possess a collection of books. Nevertheless, it appears unlikely that if books—rare personal treasures in Stratford—had been listed in the inventory (perhaps by title!) that they would not also have been mentioned in the will.

It also proves that James Shapiro is incorrect in his assertion that it is anti-Stratfordians who are unfamiliar with the “conventions” of Elizabethan wills and inventories, i.e., that books would have been listed only in the inventory. Rather, it would seem Shapiro and other orthodox writers who make such claims are the ones who

are unfamiliar with the conventions. In fact, it proves that they are dead wrong! The more conventional practice would have been to meticulously confer items such as books directly and specifically in the will.

I strongly recommend this two-volume set as an invaluable source in arguments regarding the absence of books. This issue has been a low hurdle anti-Strats have had to bypass. Perhaps now this obstacle can be leapt over, or entirely removed.

[Harry Campbell is the Book and Paper Conservator at The Ohio State University Libraries, a lifelong admirer of the works of Shakespeare, and a signatory to the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition’s Declaration of Reasonable Doubt.]



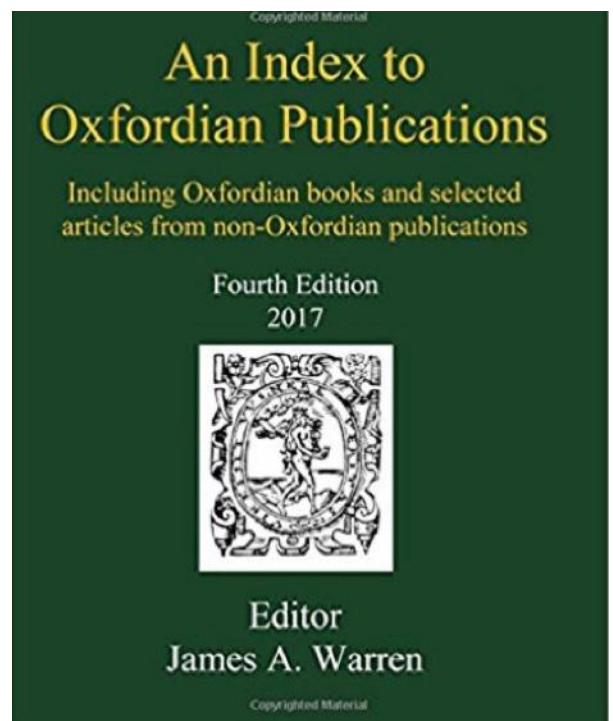
#### Advertisement

### **NOW AVAILABLE!**

### ***An Index to Oxfordian Publications, Fourth Edition***

The Fourth Edition includes more than two thousand new listings, for a total of more than 9,000 entries covering practically all Oxfordian publications—newsletters and journals—over the past 97 years. It also lists more than 2,600 Oxfordian entries from close to 500 non-Oxfordian publications that have reviewed and commented on the idea that Oxford was Shakespeare.

Among the many new features in the Fourth Edition are a chronological listing of the first 660 overt references in print to Oxford as Shakespeare (all from the 1920s and 1930s), and a chronological listing of 700 non-publication Oxfordian events that have taken place since 1920. Equally important are reading lists for John Thomas Looney, Percy Allen, and the Ogburn Family that include everything they wrote about the Oxfordian idea and everything said by others about them. A final section includes more than 500 books, both non-fiction and fiction, of special interest to Oxfordians.



## Book Review

**Hannibal Hamlin, *The Bible in Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 2013)**

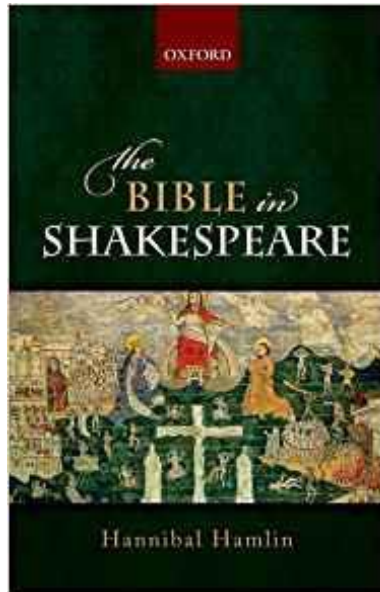
Reviewed by Richard M. Waugaman, M.D.

Hannibal Hamlin is one of a relatively small group of Shakespeare scholars who take a strong interest in the influence of the Bible on Shakespeare's works. He wrote this book to offer the first "full-length critical study of Shakespeare's practice of biblical allusion and the implications of biblical allusion for our understanding of the plays" (p. 2; Hamlin does not discuss the Sonnets or the two long poems). Hamlin is an outstanding scholar, and his book should do much to revive interest in Shakespeare and the Bible. This is naturally of special importance to Oxfordians, since Roger Stritmatter has shown conclusively that the marginalia in Oxford's Bible link it to the Shakespeare canon. Hamlin agrees with other scholars that it was the Geneva translation that most influenced Shakespeare's works. He correctly speculates that Shakespeare's reading included the printed marginal commentary in the Geneva Bible. In fact, Oxford underlined some of that commentary in his copy.

So the Oxfordian reader will be eager to discover what Hamlin has to say in his book about Stritmatter's findings. Disappointingly, not a single word. Nevertheless, Hamlin's book does much to advance the Oxfordian theory, albeit inadvertently.

I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with Hamlin some ten years ago, during his two years of full-time fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Since I was also doing research there on Shakespeare and the Bible, I asked him what he thought of Oxford's Geneva Bible. His answer stopped me in my tracks—"I find the authorship debate depressing." More on that later in this review.

Hamlin has agreed with me that most Shakespeare scholars show little interest in the influence of the Bible on Shakespeare. Oxford's Bible is close to being our smoking gun, since it constitutes better evidence than anything the Stratfordians have on their side. The more interest Hamlin generates in Shakespeare and the Bible, the more opportunities we have for demonstrating the hundreds of connections between Shakespeare's echoes of the Bible and marked passages in Oxford's copy of it.



In an idealistic spirit, Hamlin explains that his book is for the educated general reader, since he hopes to deepen our understanding of Shakespeare by reintroducing the sort of biblical literacy that Elizabethan audiences possessed. Shakespeare's biblical allusions then "add an entire level of significance to a speech or a scene, evoking a biblical context that interacts with the dramatic context in the mind of the reader or audience member to produce meaning" (335). "Biblical allusions were preeminently recognizable [in Shakespeare's day], they tapped into the audience's deepest concerns, and they thus proved one of the most effective devices in Shakespeare's rhetorical toolbox for engaging his audience and enriching the significance of his plays" (123).

Very much like Oxford himself, Hamlin is also writing for a scholarly audience, which, one hopes, may have the biblical literacy of the general Elizabethan audience. Among other things, he hopes to settle some textual debates by introducing the relevance of specific biblical allusions. Hamlin maintains that the Bible's importance to understanding Shakespeare's works ranks ahead of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and Plutarch's *Lives*—his other primary literary sources.

I learned a great deal from Hamlin's book. For example, I had never realized just how much of the wording of services in the Book of Common Prayer is "a pastiche of biblical texts" (41). Nor did I realize how widely Shakespeare read contemporary religious books, which constituted "by far the majority of publications before and during Shakespeare's lifetime" (33). My understanding of the ferocity of resistance to post-Stratfordian authorship theories was deepened by learning that, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was widely believed that "Shakespeare had somehow tapped directly into God's revelation, and that his works provided wisdom and spiritual knowledge equivalent to the Bible" (49), "leading in the most extreme cases to...deification" (56). This form of bardolatry led to a backlash that includes the present lack of interest in Shakespeare's ubiquitous intertextuality with the Bible. I also deepened my understanding of the several plays Hamlin explores, in view of the deep connections he shows with specific biblical passages and stories.

Hamlin convincingly shows that Shakespeare frequently uses his biblical allusions to increase the complexity of his plays, often showing an ironic disjunction between biblical antecedents and the characters in his dramas. Since these allusions "sometimes may seem almost blasphemous" (85), they are often subversive of conventional religious beliefs.

In his book, Hamlin was kind enough to cite my 2009 *Notes & Queries* article on the *Whole Book of Psalms* as Shakespeare's primary source for psalm allusions. Hamlin does not agree, but instead concurs with Naseeb Shaheen that the Coverdale translation is "almost always" his psalm source (17). Naturally, Hamlin does not mention that I am an Oxfordian, and that I discovered these



sources for Shakespeare. Hamlin states, without any evidence, “these [metrical] psalms he almost certainly heard by singing them and hearing them sung” (18). No, Oxford owned a copy of these musical psalms. I showed Oxford’s copy to Beth Quitslund, a scholar of the *Whole Book of Psalms* whom Hamlin cites and admires. She told me she had never seen a copy of that book that showed such strong interest on the part of an early reader of it. This was after she had examined many other early copies in several research libraries. I await with interest what she will write about this topic in her forthcoming, two-volume critical edition of the *Whole Book of Psalms*.

In closing his book, Hamlin admits that it is not an exhaustive survey of the topic. He cites the Sonnets as “an especially rich ground for exploring biblical allusion” (336). Hamlin is far more correct than he realizes. Not only did he leave the Sonnets out of his book, he failed to devote even a single sentence to Oxford’s Geneva Bible, and its explosive implications for biblical allusions in Shakespeare, not to mention Shakespeare’s true identity. In pondering this omission as I read Hamlin’s book, I sensed that Hamlin’s mental picture of Shakespeare the author is deliberately murky. He announces early in the book that he will not speculate about Shakespeare’s religious beliefs.

But his avoidance of “the man Shakespeare” goes much further. The author does a sort of disappearing act. That allows Hamlin to speculate freely about the many, many religious books that are relevant to Shakespeare’s plays, without claiming that Shakespeare actually read any of them. It allows him to state as fact that “much of Shakespeare’s experience of biblical exegesis, as well as theology, came from sermons,” rather than from his own reading (36). It allows him to place special emphasis on Arthur Golding’s translations of Ovid and of Calvin and Golding’s prefaces to his translations, and to speculate that Golding’s religious translations “may have had a specific appeal” to Shakespeare (35), without pondering the fact that Golding was Oxford’s uncle, and the possible source of one of Oxford’s allonyms. Most importantly, it allows Hamlin to write his book without challenging the Stratfordian groupthink that has placed Oxford’s Bible off limits, as radioactive (or as kryptonite?).

One notices what then fills the void left by the missing author. Instead of a plausible list of Oxford’s reading, we are told about Mystery Plays the young merchant of Stratford *might* have seen. We read about Elizabethan tapestries based on biblical stories that he *might* have seen. We are even told of a Doom painting about the Apocalypse in a Stratford church that was obliterated the year before Shakspeare’s birth, but which his father *might* have described to him. Reading fine Stratfordian scholars such as Hamlin, one is often struck by this disconnect between their usual powers of reasoning and such unscholarly speculations, as they compensate for having blindly chosen the wrong man as author.

I now return to some personal observations. For several years, I served as co-chair of a monthly Shakespeare group at the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C. Hamlin accepted my invitation to speak to our group on Shakespeare and the Bible in September 2008. It gave me a chance to introduce him to Roger Stritmatter. As I wrote to Hamlin the following day, “It was a pleasure to get to introduce you to Roger Stritmatter. Our views on authorship are controversial, of course, but his knowledge of Shakespeare and the Bible is profound. He was ABD [‘all but dissertation’] in anthropology when he heard there was some doubt about Shakespeare’s identity. That topic so seized his interest that he earned a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the Univ. of Mass. His research on STC 2106 [Oxford’s Geneva Bible] has been written up in the New York Times by William Niederkorn. (I suspect his background in anthropology, and mine in psychoanalysis, give us different perspectives on the group psychology of authorship beliefs).” Hannibal’s reply did not address these remarks on the authorship question.

I went back over my exchanges of emails with Hamlin in preparing this review. I noticed that he never addressed the authorship question in any of his replies, the few times I brought it up. But he did speak up on my behalf in a 2014 internet discussion on Hardy Cook’s Shaksper listserv. Trevor Nunn was quoted as saying Shakespeare is far more important than the Bible. I replied that this is a false dichotomy, given that “the most neglected literary source for Shakespeare’s works is the Bible.” Tom Reedy flatly disagreed with me, posting “I don’t recall any Shakespeare play or poem based on a Biblical story.” Several scholars then disagreed with Reedy, Hamlin among them.

I was pleased that Hamlin publicly replied to Reedy by saying, “It is true, I agree, that Shakespeare’s biblical, and more broadly religious, sources are underappreciated compared to Hall and Holinshed, Ovid, Plutarch, and the Classics, or various secular literary works. Studies of Shakespeare’s reading almost invariably omit religious works, which made up perhaps the majority of printed books in the period.... I don’t think he had to pick up the Bible, since (a) a good deal of it was in his head, and (b) it was likely open on his desk all the time.”

Everyone will learn from Hamlin’s fine book. We can only hope that someday he will look at Oxford’s Bible, and rethink everything he has written on *The Bible in Shakespeare*.



## Shakespeare Dictionaries: A Marching Forest of Sources and Opportunities

by W. Ron Hess, assisted by Ren Draya, Ph.D., and Jan Scheffer, Ph.D.

**Abstract:** This article briefly surveys a growing number of accessible “Shakespeare Dictionaries” that have emerged over the past century, each of them using alphabetical “dictionary” or “glossary” formats. Increasingly in the past two decades these “dictionaries” take the form of several hundred mini-essays in order exploring a specialized topic related to the Bard’s knowledge or use of language. In particular, the Arden Shakespeare Dictionaries series is discussed, and aspects potentially favoring iconoclastic use of these sources for unorthodox conclusions are noted.

### Has Bardology gone beserk?

I’ve often mused about whether “the great Shakespeare” would have been half so great if other gifted contemporaries had each been idolized nearly as much as the Bard has been in the past two centuries. Imagine if a series of over a dozen weighty tomes about, let’s say, Samuel Daniel (England’s Poet Laureate from 1599 to 1619), each originally priced in the \$300 range (and thus aimed at the research library market), were to be republished in relatively inexpensive trade paperback form, covering topics like the following: Daniel’s Sexual Language, Daniel’s Legal Language, Women in Daniel, Daniel’s Insults, Daniel In Medicine, Daniel’s Non-Standard English, etc. On top of all that, how about massive tomes devoted to Concordances of Daniel’s words, phrases, etc.? Wouldn’t all that be excessive, and perhaps overly biased toward lionizing “the Great Daniel”? Wouldn’t it be elevating a pioneering but flawed poet to a level beyond his intrinsic worth? True, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and who’s to say that there aren’t enough Daniel worshippers worldwide to financially justify such excess, even if the artistic merit was not so compelling? In reality, publishers and professors have realized that there is simply less interest and financial gain for books about any of Shakespeare’s contemporaries than there are about Shakespeare—which makes it circular, as exposure generates interest and more exposure, creating need for more specialists in academia, and thus more classes, more students, more books, more revenue, etc. And where there are classes and books, there is a need for more—and increasingly specialized—dictionaries, glossaries, and concordances!

No matter how overdone or overhyped Shakespeare has been (if he is overrated at all), he was undoubtedly a great poet-playwright, with interests, peculiarities, and a milieu well worth studying intensively. And so, dictionaries celebrating and analyzing those traits have been developed for over a century. Here is a representative sample:

1) One of the earliest (1822) was the tome by clergyman-philologist Robert Nares, republished by Halliwell-Phillipps after 1859 in many two-volume editions as *A glossary; or, Collection of words,*

*phrases, names, and allusions to customs, proverbs, etc., which have been thought to require illustration in the works of English authors, particularly Shakespeare and his contemporaries* (Library of Congress call number PE1667 .N3), for which text or .pdf forms of the 1888 edition are downloadable for free at <https://archive.org/details/glossaryorcollec01nareuoft>;

- 2) Several editions (between 1874 and 1974) of *Shakespeare Lexicon and Quotation Dictionary* by Alexander Schmidt, edited by Gregor Sarrazin (PR2892 .S4); it has over 1,455 pages in two volumes; a free 1901 edition download is at [https://archive.org/details/Shakespearelexic01schm\\_201303](https://archive.org/details/Shakespearelexic01schm_201303), and inexpensive used copies can be had from Amazon.com;
- 3) Several editions (between 1911 and 1986) of *A Shakespeare Glossary* by C.T. Onions (PR2892 .O5); a free 1911 edition download is at <https://archive.org/details/shakespearegloss00oniuoft>;
- 4) *A Shakespeare Companion* (1952) by F.E. Halliday (PR2892 .H2; a handy resource!);
- 5) Several editions (1953-1961) of *Everyman’s Dictionary of Shakespeare Quotations*, edited by D.C. Browning (PR2768 .B73);
- 6) *The Penguin Shakespeare Dictionary* (1994), edited by Sandra Clark (PR2892 .S417);
- 7) *Shakespeare’s Sexual Language: A Glossary* (1997), edited by Gordon Williams (PR2892.W55);
- 8) *The Arden Dictionary of Shakespeare Quotations* (1999), edited by Jane Armstrong (PR2892 .A69);
- 9) *Shakespeare’s Words: A Glossary & Language Companion* (2002) by David Crystal and Ben Crystal (father and son), with preface by Stanley Wells (PR2892 .C78);
- 10) *All Things Shakespeare: An Encyclopedia of Shakespeare’s World* by Kirstin Olsen (2002, two volumes, 805 pages, PR2892 .O56); this is a wonderful update and expansion of the focus used in 1952 by Halliday.

There have been many other tomes in dictionary, glossary, or concordance forms. In short, our cup runneth over with Shakespeare dictionaries two decades ago.

### The Marching Arden Forest

Regarding the 1994 and 1999 items cited above, they're not listed as among the Arden Shakespeare Dictionaries series, yet they do seem to date back to when the series began. Some of the series titles may have existed earlier under different publishers (now under Bloomsbury, earlier under Continuum, Athlone, and perhaps others). The series' general editor is Sandra Clark, Ph.D. (Professor Emeritus, Birkbeck College, University of London); it has a standard format, with some minor variations. Each has several hundred topics listed alphabetically and is made up of mini-essays with sources and references to earlier studies.

Below is the series as of early 2017 (with LOC # or ISBN #), plus a few others not in the series that are nevertheless in "dictionary" format, and they are growing like a weedy Arden forest on the march from Birnam to Dunsinane:

- 11) *Military Language in Shakespeare* by Charles Edelman (2000) (PR3069 .M5 E33);
- 12) *Shakespeare's Legal Language* by B.J. & Mary Sokol (2000) (PR3028 .S65);
- 13) *Shakespeare's Theatre* by Hugh Macrae Richmond (2002) (PR3095 .R53)
- 14) *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources* by Stuart Gillespie (2004) (PR2952 .G55);
- 15) *Shakespeare's Non-Standard English* by N.F. Blake (2004) (PR2892 .B56);
- 16) *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary* by Christopher R. Wilson and Michaela Calore (2005) (PR3034 .W55);
- 17) *Shakespeare's Religious Language: A Dictionary* by Rudolph C. Hassel (2005) (PR2892 .H37);
- 18) *Women in Shakespeare: A Dictionary* by Alison Findlay (2010) (PR2892 .F56);
- 19) *Shakespeare and the Language of Food* by Joan Fitzpatrick (2011) (PR3069 .F64);
- 20) *Class and Society in Shakespeare* by Paul Innes (2014) (PR3024 .I56);
- 21) *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary* by Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra (2014) (PR3004 .G557);
- 22) *Shakespeare's Medical Language: A Dictionary* by Sujata Iyengar (2014) (PR2892 .I94);
- 23) *Shakespeare's Plants and Gardens* by Vivian Thomas and Nicki Faircloth (2016) (PR3041 .T56);
- 24) *Shakespeare's Political and Economic Language* by Vivian Thomas (2015) (PR2892 .T46);
- 25) *Shakespeare's Insults: A Pragmatic Dictionary* by Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin (2016) (PR2892 .V64);
- 26) *Shakespeare and National Identity* by Christopher Ivic (2017) (ISBN 9781472525833);
- 27) *Shakespeare and Visual Culture* by Armelle Sabatier (2017) (ISBN 9781472568052);
- 28) *Shakespeare and Domestic Life* by Sandra Clark (2018) (ISBN 1472581806).

No doubt the series won't end here, and even if Dr. Clark can't imagine them, other folks may be able to devise future additions to the series. See the website at [www.bloomsbury.com/us/series/arden-shakespeare-dictionaries/](http://www.bloomsbury.com/us/series/arden-shakespeare-dictionaries/) for a description of current plans. Most of the titles should be available at any university or research library, but if you badly need a certain title and can't locate it, contact me. Warning: most titles cost well over \$100 in hardback, though some are available in paperback.

### Responding to the Marching Forest—Axing with Reviews

The first way to respond to the marching forest of Shakespeare dictionaries is for iconoclasts to prepare reviews of each dictionary as it emerges, to point to strengths that can be capitalized on by iconoclastic views, weaknesses in which the dictionary under review has failed to address matters which support iconoclasm, and generally "give a contrary view," albeit a scrupulously truthful one. Many journals won't entertain "negative" reviews, so be careful in phraseology and criticism. The object should be to produce a review that might be acceptable to such mainstream journals as *Renaissance Quarterly* or *Shakespeare Studies*, one which scores solid points without overly betraying any iconoclastic overreach. Such a review may gather nothing but rejections, but at least the effort will have been made before resorting to publication in an iconoclastic journal. For purposes of this exercise, Dr. Ren Draya has agreed to review C. R. Wilson's *Music in Shakespeare: a Dictionary* (2005, reprinted 2007 by Continuum). Drawing on a vast assembly of Elizabethan music texts and articles, Draya will note such things as the influence of the French Pleiade poets on music through their academic movement, and the influence of the Italian poets' adoption of Platonism and creation of their own academic movement, even to the rediscovery in the Court of the Medicis of the original Platonism and its emphasis on the balances and synchrony of the Greek lyre. Draya will note the degree to which Wilson's dictionary succeeds in representing the many Elizabethan musical instruments alluded to in Shakespeare's works; she will give fair praise for Wilson's successes, as well as noting his failures.



### Missing Trees from the Arden Forest

The fundamental object of each of the many dictionaries has always been to tell our modern world how the Bard thought, as much as possible in his own words. It's ingenious—the more ways we devise to display and analyze Shakespeare's words, the more tools and clues we have to his personality and outlook on life. For orthodox scholars, that provides more ways by which they can rationalize that the literary Shakespeare matches their preferred setting and personality of the man from Stratford-on-Avon. Conversely, unorthodox iconoclasts are provided with more ways by which they can rationalize that he did not match the Stratford man. So far, only the orthodox have been playing this game successfully.

Could it be that unorthodox scholars have been overlooking prime opportunities to plant a few trees of their own and show the world that they too can paint the Bard in his own words? I believe so, and suggest a few of the many potential "Missing Trees" that could conceivably be added to the Arden Forest, or to a Rival Forest of someone else's devising:

*Shakespeare's Noble Attributes, A Dictionary* (drawing on the many indications throughout the plays that the Bard preferred to present the world through noble eyes and knew firsthand the perquisites and obligations of nobility, including those of a courtier-poet, such as "the stigma of print");

*Shakespeare's Travels in France and Italy, A Dictionary* (drawing from books such as A. Lambin's 1962 *Voyages de Shakespear* and Richard Roe's 2011 *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, which show that the Bard was uncannily detailed and accurate about his descriptions of continental locales, customs, and people);

*Shakespeare's Multi-Lingual Mentality, A Dictionary* (drawing on the many indications that the Bard knew French, Italian, Greek, perhaps some Spanish and Yiddish, and various languages and dialects of the British Isles, including a surprising amount of Old English [pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon] available in Elizabethan times only in a c.1567 MS dictionary compiled for William Cecil, Lord Burghley, by Lawrence Nowell and his assistant, William Lambardy);

*Shakespeare's Medical Radicalism, A Dictionary* (drawing from articles by Dr. Frank Davis, Dr. Earl Showerman, and me, among many other sources, which demonstrate that the Bard's medicine focused most specifically on the novel idea of medicine based on proto-scientific observations derived from alchemy);

*Shakespeare's Platonism, A Dictionary* (see discussion below).

There are, of course, a number of similar dictionaries that iconoclasts could develop. Each should roughly follow the format used in the Arden series. As a prerequisite I suggest establishing the credentials of those who would participate in the planned dictionary, and to arrange for several Ph.D.'s to participate. One way is to do an anthology on a subject broadly related to the targeted Shakespeare Dictionary topic, drawing in several authors, each writing one or more contributions to it, and, wherever possible, having one of the Ph.D.'s collaborate on each article, perhaps by assigning separate sections to each collaborator. Another road to establishing credentials might be to first develop a detailed outline of a major article or small book on the desired subject, then prepare a draft bibliography and index for it, drawing on bibliographies and indices used in the major sources. A rigorous effort should then be made to get the article or book published by a mainline journal or publisher (for the latter, Greenwood Press might be a good start), and this is where the credentials become essential. Once the article/book is published, then an expanded bibliography and index should be drawn up for the projected dictionary, followed by developing a preface, introduction, and a representative sample section for circulation to publishers. Again, the object is to avoid easy detection of iconoclastic overreach.

As an example of such an approach, Dr. Jan Scheffer of Utrecht, the Netherlands, and I are collaborating on a two-pronged attack:

a) *Shakespeare and Platonism, A Dictionary* which will explore the fruit of many works which tie Shakespeare, his French and Italian predecessors and contemporaries, and even his English contemporaries such as Spenser, to the Greek influences of Plato and his "disciples," as passed down to the Renaissance through various routes. This topic overlaps the above listed "Travels" and "Multilingual" topics. And, since Platonism was not a philosophy easily accessible by the lower classes, it even touches on the "Noble Attributes" topic. In short, this dictionary, if ever published, will be the cream of all dictionaries about the Bard. Dr. Scheffer, a retired psychiatrist, will be contributing a brief analysis of the psychological state of extremely intelligent, even extremely Christian, poets who would choose to adopt fanciful Greco-Roman mythology as a medium for metaphors about the human condition and a wide range of other exercises that their native languages could not convey as elegantly as the Greek, Latin, and Italian geniuses who were worshipped in the latter half of the 16th century.

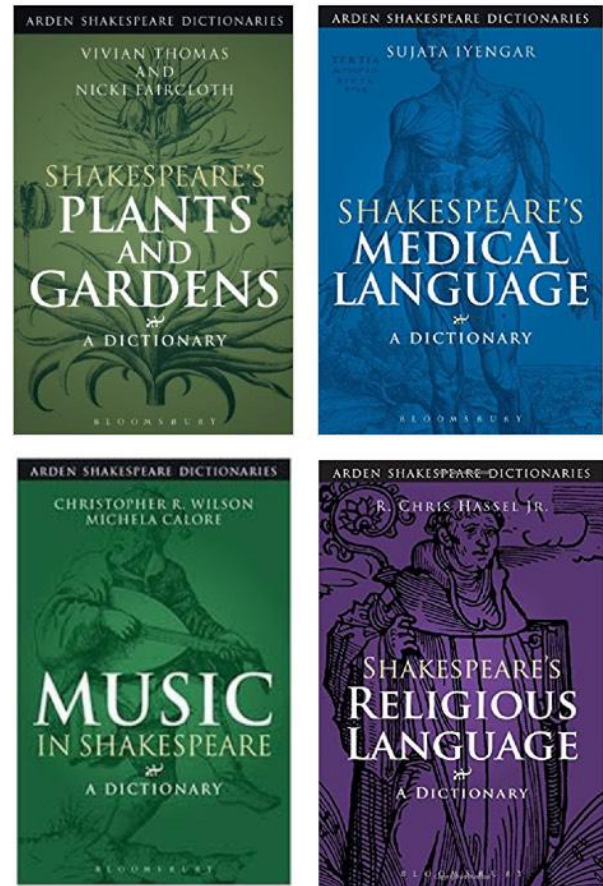
b) *Shakespeare's Sonnets, Platonism, and Desportes* would be a long article or short book, long enough to feature a first-ever English translation of all 146 of

the sonnets included in the 1573-83 *Amours de Diane* by Philippe Desportes, the French Poet Laureate from 1575 to his death in 1606. Depending on whether it is an article or book, it may also include a discussion of “John Soowthern’s” 1584 *Pandora, or the Musike of his mistress Diane* and “H.C.’s” [Henry Constable?] 1592 *Diana* sonnets, both of which were heavily influenced by Desportes’s *Diane* sonnets, even to the point of paraphrasing them and falsely attributing them to courtiers (e.g., Pandora’s works attributed to the Countess of Oxford and to “Her Majesty” are merely paraphrase translations from *Diane*). A surprising number of other Elizabethan sonneteers drew on paraphrase translations of Desportes, including some whose anthologies featured works later attributed to “Shakespeare.”

And why not? After Desportes succeeded Pierre Ronsard, “the Prince of Poets,” as Poet Laureate of France, for most of Shakespeare’s adulthood, Desportes was the premiere representative of the French language at its best. It only made sense that Shakespeare would have wished to package his own sonnets (only a few more than Desportes’s 146), interspersed with longer poetry (as had been the format of *Diane*), and patriotically prepare his own heavily Platonistic set of poetry—putting the best that the English language could provide up against the best that he thought the French could generate. How was he to know that, like his own works, opinions about the works of Ronsard, Du Bellay, Desportes, Montaigne, etc., would vary? Today few study Desportes, and his borrowing from the Italians is not well respected, but scholars are far more forgiving of his contemporaries for much the same foibles, while criticism of Shakespeare for his many “plagiarisms” is taken for a mark of “genius” by many.

### Conclusion—Making Lumber from Trees

Iconoclasts should embrace dealing with the marching forest because, from its timber, a bountiful harvest of constructive materials can be gleaned. Each of the dictionaries in the Arden series has blind spots that can be exploited. For example, Charles Edelman’s *Military Language in Shakespeare* (2000) unwittingly contributes to the notion that the Bard was well acquainted with the rarefied art of jousting, since much of what is described as “military language” actually derived from the joust. For another, Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin’s *Shakespeare’s Insults* (2016) demonstrates that the Bard could “slum” among the lower sort, but when it came to explicit language about sexuality and the lower side of life, he chose only words that might tickle, but still pass through to, more refined ears, rather than stooping to crudities. You can see where this is pointing: Shakespeare wrote his autobiography in the form of a multitudinous forest of dictionaries, each displaying him more accurately than



Samples the Arden Shakespeare Dictionaries series

just the words in his works could explicate. But dictionaries must be assembled by latter-day compilers, and each compiler has his or her sets of biases and opinions.

Do iconoclasts really want only orthodox scholars to be writing those dictionaries which define Shakespeare’s life and personality so well? Or can they instead join in the fun, showing what the Bard was really like, what he knew, the influences upon him and his art, and why a broader vision of the man helps to inform the readers of his works?

Ron Hess ([BEORNSHall@earthlink.net](mailto:BEORNSHall@earthlink.net)) is an independent scholar of the Elizabethan era, a retired civil servant who has an M.S. in Computer Sciences and has taught IT Security at various schools, including Johns Hopkins University Graduate School of Business. Dr. Ren Draya is Professor of English and Communications at Blackburn College, Carlinville, Illinois. Dr. Jan Scheffer is a retired Psychiatrist of the Pieter Baan Institute, Utrecht, The Netherlands, who writes articles in various fields of interest.



## TV Review

### **Will Power: Portrait of a Natural Wit**

#### **A Review of the 10-Part TNT Series**

by James Norwood

In Stratford-upon-Avon, the youthful writer Will Shakeshaft walks out on his family, leaving his wife Anne and their three children in the care of his father. Will has his sights set on London, where he will doggedly pursue his fortune as an aspiring playwright. After recounting the racy legend of Queen Mab to his young son, whom he addresses as “Prince Hamnet,” Will leaves town with a completed play in his hip pocket and as the biggest deadbeat dad in provincial Tudor England.

Such is the beginning of the ten-part series *Will* that aired on the TNT cable network in the summer of 2017. Clearly inspired by the popular film *Shakespeare in Love*, the creators of *Will* seek to dramatize how, in a historical epoch with minimal room for social mobility, a social climber with limited educational background could have enthralled audiences in London with the timeless and multifaceted canon of the Shakespearean plays. To view this series is to understand precisely why the received biography of Shakespeare is fatally dissociated from the aristocratic tenor of the plays and the classical subject matter that infuses Shakespeare’s magisterial works.

In an interview for *The New York Times*, Sarah Aubrey, TNT’s executive vice president of original programming, indicated that she read the pilot script of *Will* and instantly felt a connection with the project’s “conceit,” which she describes as “the classic story of a young man coming to a big city with nothing but his talent and moxie.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, Aubrey was invoking the core foundation of all conventional Shakespeare biographies: the Horatio Alger myth.

Of course, the “rags-to-riches” Horatio Alger world of poetic justice is the default mode dialed up in all orthodox biographies of Shakespeare. But does the Horatio Alger “conceit” ring true over the course of the ten episodes of *Will*? And does it shed light on Shakespeare’s creative process in writing for the theater, based on the sketchy traditional biography that informs the teleplay?

Paul Edmondson, the head of research for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, had a positive response to *Will*, as he praised the series: “We’ve got an opportunist and we’ve got somebody who for a modern age is charting a rise to celebrity. And this is very empowering. Will’s having to use very much all of his wit to produce this stuff. He’s not a natural genius, which I quite admire the program for showing.”<sup>2</sup>

In his convoluted synopsis, Edmondson unwittingly reveals a critical problem with the traditional biography of Shakespeare. Contrary to all appearances from the

plays and the poems, the Stratford man was not a “natural genius” because the facts of his life run contrary to what should be at the core of an educated, aristocratic genius in Elizabethan England. And, like so many other Renaissance artists, Shakespeare was arguably not writing for money or celebrity, but out of the depths of his soul, a truth that is lost on the producers of *Will*. The essence of artistic genius is so twisted in this series that the viewer loses touch with the actual period in which the story is set and with the principal question of how this author wrote an incandescent body of literature. At least Edmondson is accurate on one point when he alludes to a primary source from one of the contemporaries of William of Stratford, who was described as follows: “He was a natural wit.”<sup>3</sup>

And where actually did the natural wit’s talent come from, as depicted in the TNT series? Throughout the ten episodes, Will is vigilantly listening for catchy phrases on the streets of London that he may pilfer for use in his plays. Those members of the public theater audience that constitute the groundlings somehow come up with turns of phrase like “the milk of human kindness,” “love is madness,” “you must be cruel to be kind,” and (from one of his fellow actors) “strutted his hour upon the stage.” The quick-thinking wit scribbles down the phrases, recognizing instantly that he can use them in his plays! For the screenwriters, the great wellspring of Shakespeare’s language came not from the author’s erudition and love of wordplay, but from a scavenger hunt for epigrams spoken by others.

A pattern that emerges in the series is the depiction of the protagonist struggling to come up with ideas for plays. After penning a clunker that the theater company refuses to produce, Will seeks the advice of young Alice Burbage, the fictionalized daughter of theater proprietor James Burbage. Alice suggests that Will ought to read books that might provide the springboard for his stories. She then leads the impoverished Will by the hand to the London bookstalls, where she steals a volume that contains an Italian romance that will be the basis for the play *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

In another instance where our hero is suffering from “writer’s block,” actor Richard Burbage effortlessly pulls a copy of the English historical chronicles of Raphael Holinshed from his lodging and hands it to Will with the suggestion that he write a series of plays on King Henry VI.

The program does not make clear how such an expensive, limited edition volume as Holinshed’s *Chronicles* would be floating around in a low-rent rooming house of Elizabethan London. At a defining moment in the series, Will’s friend Kit Marlowe asks his fellow writer about his next project. But Will shrugs his shoulders, clueless as always for ideas for his plays.

Having exhausted their options to portray any natural gifts of the literary genius of Shakespeare, the filmmakers resort to a subplot that virtually takes over





the miniseries and relegates Will Shakeshaft to a supernumerary in the series. In the first episode, Will is identified as “Shakeshaft,” a name that had appeared in the will of one Alexander Hoghton of Lea, Lancashire. As the will makes reference to a bequest of musical instruments and play costumes, Stratfordians have occasionally surmised that William Shakspeare of Stratford had worked as a tutor and actor in the employ of Hoghton during the so-called lost years of the 1580s. Many of the prominent families in Lancashire were Catholic, and it has been suggested that Hoghton Tower was a sanctuary for papists. Building on speculation about the Stratford teenager’s life story during the lost years (of which nothing is known), the filmmakers develop the premise that young Will was an actor in a wealthy family household of Catholic recusants in Lancashire.

In later episodes, it becomes clear that Will is a genuine Catholic with a connection to the historical figure of Robert Southwell, a Jesuit priest and the author of poems and political pamphlets that sought to promote a Catholic revival in England. In *Will*, Southwell serves as personal confessor to Alice Burbage and playwright Kit Marlowe, as well as to Will Shakeshaft himself. But there is nothing in the historical record to suggest that Southwell was intent on saving the souls of members of the theater community of London. To the contrary, he was primarily ministering to the elites, who offered him sanctuary in secret hiding places in their homes. Starting in 1586, Southwell was successful in moving around to various safe houses with Father Garnet, but Francis Walsingham’s spy agency caught up with him, and he was arrested in 1592.

Writer and filmmaker Michael Wood argued for the existence of familial ties between Southwell and William Shakspeare of Stratford, by tracing the genealogy of the Arden clan. In his book *In Search of Shakespeare* (2003), written in conjunction with his earlier television series, Wood cites a letter written by Southwell with the heading, “To My Worthy Good Cosen [i.e, Cousin]

Master W.S.”<sup>4</sup> In the printing history of the document, the initials “W.S.” first appeared in the edition of the letter brought out in 1616, the precise time of the death of the man from Stratford. But the letter was originally composed prior to the arrest and torture of Southwell in 1592 and did not include the letters “W.S.” at that time. Based on the letter, Southwell recognized no later than 1592 that the author “W.S.” was a far superior poet to Southwell himself. But in the orthodox Shakespearean biography, the Stratford man would have only been starting his writing career at this time. As a novice, how could his authorial prowess have been acknowledged at this early date by Southwell or anyone else?

Southwell himself knew through experience the vital importance of using a pseudonym; none of his writings were published under his name. But the evidence suggests that by 1592, the author “Shakespeare” knew the writings of Southwell, and Southwell was similarly familiar with the poetry of “Shakespeare,” specifically, the content of the narrative poem *Venus and Adonis*, which would not be published until 1593.

In a prefatory address attached to his poem “Saint Peter’s Complaint,” written shortly before his arrest in 1592, Southwell wrote that “the finest wits are stilling Venus’ rose... playing with pagan toys.”<sup>5</sup> The “pagan toys” allusion is likely a nod to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* that was both the basis of *Venus and Adonis* and the favorite classical resource used in Shakespeare’s plays.

Wood even raises the possibility that Southwell might have read *Venus and Adonis* in draft form while residing in the home of the Earl of Southampton.<sup>6</sup> A close examination of Southwell’s family tree indicates that Southwell was indeed a relative of the Earl of Southampton. As observed by Wood, “Southwell had Hampshire family connections, too, and his track as a hunted man naturally led to the Southamptons at Tichfield.”<sup>7</sup>

Wood’s deep-seated belief in the theory of Southampton as Shakespeare’s patron clouds his vision, as he refuses to consider the possibility that the author of

*Venus and Adonis* had adopted the name of William Shakespeare (W.S.) as a pseudonym. Here is but one of the numerous instances where, on the surface, it appears as though documentary evidence related to a figure like Southwell may have a bearing on William Shakspeare of Stratford, but, on a deeper level, the paper trail leads back to the tightly-knit circle of the Earl of Oxford.

The best scene in the ten episodes of *Will* is the staging of a Shakespearean play in an aristocratic setting apart from the London theaters. This comes in Episode 7. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is written for and performed in an aristocratic household. The *mise-en-scène* and the intimate connection with the elitist audience had the genuine look and feel of a play by Shakespeare. Even the moment when Will speaks the epilogue, breaking the fourth wall to address the aristocratic couple, seemed convincing. Whereas the numerous scenes in the large-scale public playhouse seemed forced and artificial, often resembling a modern rock concert, the staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in an intimate, aristocratic space appeared lifelike and perfectly in sync with the rhythms of Shakespeare's play. Here the screenwriters had apparently conducted a limited amount of research to learn that the earliest recorded performance of this play occurred as part of the festivities surrounding an Elizabethan aristocratic wedding, specifically that of Sir Thomas Heneage and the widow Countess of Southampton on May 2, 1594, at Copped Hall, or possibly the wedding of Elizabeth de Vere to the Earl of Derby on January 26, 1595. Once again, the careful research into the history of a Shakespearean text leads back to the coterie of the Earl of Oxford.

The season finale of *Will* aired September 4, 2017; on the following day, the show was canceled by TNT. The ratings were extremely low throughout the ten-week run, averaging only 392,000 viewers per week. The premiere on July 10 drew the largest audience of 633,000. For purposes of comparison with other programs around this time, the opening episode of the seventh season of HBO's *Game of Thrones* drew 16.1 million viewers, and the televised parole hearing of O. J. Simpson drew 14 million. By the middle of the series, the TNT executives were clearly in punt mode when they shifted the program from prime time to 11 PM. Over the course of the ten episodes, *Will* was in a steady freefall, with the final episode attracting an audience of only 307,000.<sup>8</sup> Interested viewers may currently stream the series from a range of venues.

The making of *Will* involved the collaboration of a number of talented film artists. The series creator, Craig Pearce, has served in a longstanding capacity as a writer for filmmaker Baz Luhrmann. Pearce adapted Shakespeare's play for the 1996 film *Romeo + Juliet*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. Four of the episodes were directed by Shekhar Kapur, who has brought to the screen the visually stunning *Elizabeth*

films, starring Cate Blanchett. The acting company was led by two winsome performers, Laurie Davidson as Will and Olivia DeJonge as Alice.

Unfortunately, the able cast and technical team could not salvage an inherently flawed concept and a teleplay that, over ten hours, offered a portrait of Shakespeare that was the rough equivalent in the film medium of the Droeshout engraving in the visual arts. In an interview with *The New York Times*, series creator Pearce is described as one who "firmly believes that Shakespeare wrote the plays attributed to him. Any contrary theory 'is just bonkers.'" With tunnel vision for the orthodox biography, Pearce places himself in the unenviable position of trying to fit a square peg into a round hole in depicting the life story of one of the greatest authors in world literature. The Shakespeare that is presented in this series is one who succeeds through the sheer force of "Will power." But the soaring spirit of the author's creative genius is never brought to life.

[James Norwood, Ph.D., taught humanities and the performing arts for twenty-six years at the University of Minnesota. For a decade, he taught a semester course on the Shakespeare authorship question. He wrote the foreword to the paperback edition of Charles Beauclerk's *Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom*, served as a consultant for the documentary film *Last Will. & Testament*, and is the author of "Mark Twain and 'Shake-Speare': Soul Mates," which appears on the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship website.]

- <sup>1</sup> Alexis Soloski, "'Will' on TNT: A Punk-Rock Shakespeare, Striving and Stage-Diving in the Big City," *The New York Times* (June 28, 2017): <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/28/arts/television/will-shakespeare-tnt-still-star-crossed.html?mcubz=0>
- <sup>2</sup> Melanie McFarland, "Fact or Fiction? A Shakespeare Expert Takes on TNT's 'Will'" *Salon*, July 17, 2017 <http://www.salon.com/2017/07/17/fact-or-fiction-a-shakespeare-expert-takes-on-tnts-will/>
- <sup>3</sup> Eric Sams, *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years, 1564-94* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 202, n. 83.
- <sup>4</sup> Michael Wood, *In Search of Shakespeare* (BBC Books: 2007), 154.
- <sup>5</sup> Richard Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare: Studies in Theatre, Religion and Resistance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 126.
- <sup>6</sup> Wood, 153.
- <sup>7</sup> Wood, 151.
- <sup>8</sup> "TV Series Finale—Cancelled & Renewed TV Shows": <https://tvseriesfinale.com/tv-show/will-season-one-ratings/>
- <sup>9</sup> Soloski.



*2017 Conference Report (continued from page 1)*

further examples of plagiarized passages from other bad quartos and apocryphal plays. “Given this history, when Greene urged Marlowe, Nashe, and Peele in 1592 not to share any of their future plays with the untrustworthy players because the upstart crow Shake-scene had been beautifying his bombastic works with feathers stolen from their plays, how likely is it that Greene had the Bard in mind? Isn’t it more likely that he meant to attack the pilfering author of the Shakespeare apocrypha?”

**James Warren**, editor of *An Index to Oxfordian Publications* and author of the Oxfordian novel *Summer Storm*, spoke on “Public Awareness of the Oxfordian Claim: What the Record Shows.” A century ago no one thought that that Earl of Oxford wrote the works attributed to William Shakespeare, but now millions of people have heard of him and many believe him to be the author of the canon. In preparing the fourth edition of *An Index to Oxfordian Publications*, Warren reviewed tens of thousands of articles in the popular press and documented just how extensively the idea of de Vere’s authorship has been publicized since 1920. The fourth edition includes citations to all current and past Oxfordian publications, plus 2,600 articles in the general media, a catalog of over 700 Oxfordian events, and a chronological list of the first 660 references in print to Oxford’s claim to the authorship. Warren also discovered a dozen unknown or long-ignored letters by J. Thomas Looney, including a reply to critics of his book, *Shakespeare Identified*: “Hamlet, it will be remembered, utters a rhyme in reference to his step-father which ought to have finished with the word ‘ass.’ Instead, however, he pauses, and substitutes the word ‘pajock,’ a term of contempt for a peacock. Our scholarly Shakespeareans have written much in seeking a reasonable explanation of the substitution, but not with much success. When, however, it is remembered that Oxford’s step-father was Sir Charles Tyrrel, and that the peacock’s tail is the distinctive feature in the Tyrrel crest, the obscurity disappears under the new theory of authorship.” The dramatic increase in Oxfordian publications and references to de Vere in non-Oxfordian publications in recent decades, Warren submits, had increased the pressure on academia to address the authorship problem. Certainly the most successful campaign sponsored by the Shakespeare Oxford Society was Charles Burford’s speaking tour in the early 1990s, which resulted in a doubling of the SOS membership to almost 700. In 1999, Alan Nelson and Gail Kern Paster bemoaned in *The Shakespeare Quarterly* that “[e]stablishment Shakespeareans . . . are losing the public debate over the ‘authorship question.’”

The next speaker was **William Boyle**, librarian, editor and publisher who has been involved in the authorship debate for over 35 years. Boyle is the creator of the Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (SOAR), a catalog and database of Shakespeare

authorship related materials, maintained by his New England Shakespeare Oxford Library. <http://opac.libraryworld.com/cgi-bin/opac.pl?command=signin&libraryname=SOAR> (see Summer 2017 *Newsletter*). He also edits and publishes authorship-related books through Forever Press. SOAR was founded in 2007. “The original idea was to have an online index to the major research articles published in all Oxfordian publications since the 1920s. Two years later, James Warren shared with me his work on creating a complete index to all these publications. . . . We joined forces and SOAR exploded from an index with 500 entries to a full catalog with 3,800, and has continued to grow. Although much of the basic work of identifying and indexing all past Oxfordian print publications has been accomplished, our attention will turn to enhancing current entries with abstracts and excerpts, adding standardized subject tags to each entry, and adding a wider range of materials to the catalog, such as original documents and letters from the 16th and 17th century, blogs and websites, and original articles published digitally.” SOAR not only identifies authorship-related resources, but also provides online links if a resource is available on the internet. For items that are not yet digitized, the library owns hard copies of everything listed in the catalog, and can provide copies to library members and SOAR subscribers. Boyle demonstrated how searching in SOAR provides readers with subject access to articles, including several about the anonymous sonnet collection titled *Emaricdulfe* and *Willobie his Avis*. Boyle stressed that much more work remains to be done, especially on subject access.

**Andrew Crider**, Ph.D., emeritus professor of psychology at Williams College, spoke on “Edward de Vere and the Psychology of Creativity.” Crider has published extensively in the areas of psychophysiology and psychopathology and is co-author of *Psychology*, an introductory textbook. He focused on three topics: convergent vs. divergent thinking; the “ten-year rule” of dedicated preparation; and personality traits of creative individuals. Convergent thinking is the process by which one retrieves information from long-term memory acquired both through personal experience and didactic education. Highly creative people typically have high IQs, but this does not fully explain creative accomplishment. Creativity also requires competence in divergent thinking, a process of generating solutions to problems by which low probability associations are incorporated into novel ideas or images. Crider gave examples of divergent word associations and suggested that Edward de Vere exemplified high levels of both convergent and divergent thinking. Crider recounted examples of the “ten-year rule” of dedicated, intense preparation as a necessary prerequisite to creative accomplishment, citing the reflections by Mozart and Michelangelo on the long years of hard work needed to achieve their success. Biographies of painters,



composers, poets, scientists and chess players consistently show that their subjects required at least a decade of sustained engagement in their respective fields before creating their first acclaimed work. Applying the rule to Edward de Vere's biography, specifically the decade following his return from Italy in 1576, Crider cited the contemporaneous evidence provided by William Webbe, who extolled de Vere's skill in what he called "the devices of poetry" and again three years later in *The Art of English Poesie* (1589), which explicitly praised de Vere's interludes and comedies. Crider discussed three key personality traits of highly creative individuals: openness to experience; independence and autonomy; and unconventionality. "Open individuals are intellectually curious, lead active fantasy lives, and are drawn to poetry, music, and art." Autonomy/independence is associated with a high degree of self-confidence and a zeal to prevail in one's creative endeavors. Creative artists in particular tend not to be dutiful, reliable, orderly, or cooperative, but are skeptical, unpredictable, disorganized, and even disreputable. They are impatient with convention and reject social constraints on their freedom of thought and action. Crider reminded us that Oxford had a wide range of interests; "he was an athlete, dancer, musician, poet, playwright, polyglot, foreign traveler, seaman, soldier, lawyer, courtier, and bohemian. A preference for autonomy would appear to characterize the last dozen or so years of de Vere's life. To say that de Vere was unconventional would be an understatement. He was perfectly capable, for example, of sassing the Queen, of ignoring her requests, and of carrying on an illicit affair with one of her ladies-in-waiting.... The life and character of Edward de Vere strongly exemplify the qualities psychologists associate with eminent creativity."

Next, **Sky Gilbert**, Professor at The School of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph, spoke on "Shakespeare/Foucault: The Case of the Disappearing Author." Gilbert noted that the details of Shakespeare's creative life are a mystery, although Stratfordians have indulged irresponsibly in biographical approaches to the canon. In transcending personal opinion, the critics claim, Shakespeare expressed universal truths. Keats coined the term "negative capability" to describe this phenomenon as "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." Harold Bloom also has viewed Shakespeare's work as significantly impersonal. Gilbert suggested that the significance of Shakespeare's "disappearance" as author may be understood in comparison to the life and work of Michel Foucault, the preeminent French philosopher of the 20th century. "Fascinatingly, they utilized similar rhetorical strategies to deal with the scandals that constituted their personal lives. Both were obsessed with language. Both were dedicated to erasing the author; and their very dedication to this reveals something about

themselves. For it seems entirely possible that writers like Foucault and Shakespeare were passionately devoted to the project of erasing the author precisely because they had so very much to hide. Harold Bloom's notion of the impossibility of finding Shakespeare in his works resembles the views about the death of the author that characterize Foucault and his disciples: the New Historicists." Bloom disparages New Historicism for promoting a political stance in Shakespeare's plays through anecdotes of English Renaissance history, but his conclusions about the necessary invisibility of the author reflect Foucault's famous "Death of the Author." Bloom sees Shakespeare's dramatic characters, not his poetry, as the defining feature of his brilliance. In contrast, Foucault believed that language and style were more important than content, that "writing of our day has freed itself from the necessity of expression; it refers only to itself, yet is not restricted to the confines of interiority." Foucault's biographer, James Miller, suggested that Foucault's abstruse style is evidence that the author was hiding something from his readers, and that he was complicit in the effort to make himself disappear. Why Foucault would contrive to hide himself may be answered by Miller that, before he died of AIDS, Foucault began to explore sadomasochistic sexual practices. Similarly, Edward de Vere had numerous reasons to turn his audiences and readers away from his personal life. He managed to waste his princely fortune, and had a reputation as a sensualist who indulged in scandalous sexual relationships. As a youth, he may even have murdered a servant. Gilbert gave an in-depth interpretation of *The Tempest*, noting that it is critical to deconstruct the interpretation of Prospero as a kindly, patriarchal figure because of his hostility toward the shipwrecked party and his merciless treatment of Caliban. *The Tempest* thus represents a paradox: "Not only is Prospero both an evil manipulator and a creator of beauty, language in *The Tempest* is treated as both beautiful and evil as a significant portion of Prospero's power seems to lie in his mastery over language. Beautiful words, beautiful dramatic scenes created by the artist, all in the service of persuasion—is this right or wrong? He cares little for truth; the shipwreck does not threaten life and limb—it must merely *appear* that it shall, Ferdinand is not a spy, nor is he dead, there is no harpy; the banquet vanishes. Shakespeare was very aware of the tension between truth and persuasion, and very conscious that the language of the poet has the supreme ability to persuade." Shakespeare's work teaches us to distrust language and art, while simultaneously reveling in words. Gilbert concluded that this may be a key to understanding Shakespeare's personality and identity. "Shakespeare's perilous art—like Prospero's—dazzles us and makes him disappear, because of its compelling and flawless artifice. The magician/artist will only reappear if we stand apart from his art enough to see clearly the battle in his plays over the paradox that is the very

foundation of art; that art is not reality, and yet, dangerously in the hands of magician/artist, seems to be.”

The final presentation of the day was by **Julie Sandys Bianchi**, who has worked for a number of repertory companies and is a trustee of the SOF. She led a participatory session on “Crafting the Elevator Speech,” the commonly used sales tactic of quick communication and strategic use of lures and targeted language. In trying to persuade newcomers to embrace the idea of questioning Shakespeare authorship, reasonable doubters typically resort to intellectual logic. “Yet marketing analytics have demonstrated that tugging at the strings of a would-be buyer’s heart, going for their gut, or targeting their sense of economic value are the three most reliable types of hooks to use when introducing a new product to the marketplace.” Guided by Marieke S. Bianchi, VP of Marketing and Strategic Partnerships for Warner Music Group Nashville, we practiced writing commentaries focused on three strategies. Rather than use elegant language that would appeal to the Brain, we were directed to address issues that would target other “organs”: the Heart, the Stomach, or the Pocketbook. Below are some of the statements that emerged.

#### **The Heart:**

“Do you really think the real author would let his children be illiterate?”

“I am intoxicated by Shakespeare’s works. They feed the soul. There is a real human being behind them, and discerning that person (or persons) drives my passion.”

“I have spent twenty-five years studying the history of the question and passionately believe that we are only beginning to understand the real Shakespeare.”

“Hamlet is Shakespeare’s self-portrait, but the figure he painted is that of Edward de Vere.”

#### **The Stomach:**

“William Shakespeare fooled you. He could not write. No letters, no manuscripts, only six lousy signatures.”

“Shaksper was a tight-fisted, mean-spirited businessman.”

“Why is Shakespeare the only English playwright to fill his plays with French nobody could understand?”

“It is truly upsetting to consider how academia has foisted a myth on us around the genius of Shakespeare to explain how an uneducated man from a rural backwater could have written the magnificent works of Shakespeare.”

“No one who knew Shaksper thought he was a writer.”

#### **The Pocketbook**

“Why didn’t Shaksper cash in? He died without publishing half of his plays.”

“The man from Stratford was very rich [and] lived in a mansion house over 12,000 square feet, yet, there is no record that Shaksper ever bought a book.”

“The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust makes millions on tourists from a bogus author.”

“Why does academia *not* want you to know the truth?”

“Why did Queen Elizabeth I give the Earl of Oxford £1000 per year?”

#### **Day Two: Friday, October 13**

**Heward Wilkinson** introduced us to “Detective Inspector Hamlet.” Noting the popularity of detective novels (Agatha Christie has sold over one billion copies), Wilkinson suggested that Shakespeare’s play is actually a detective story, anticipating the development of the detective genre by more than 200 years. Like Christie’s Miss Marple or Poe’s Inspector Dupin, Shakespeare’s Hamlet finds himself investigating a murder. He goes through the typical process of finding clues, developing and testing hypotheses, and, finally, solving the crime. Citing Charlton Ogburn, Jr., Wilkinson sees *Hamlet* as a “psychological realist drama,” noting the text’s emphasis on the corporeal reality of the ghost, coupled with the ambiguity that the ghost shows no concern for Prince Hamlet. The ghost demands revenge (a plot device consistent with traditional revenge sagas that is stressed more heavily in the First Quarto of the play), but Hamlet struggles with this idea. “Hamlet as detective is caught in the ambiguity,” said Wilkinson. Indeed, the scene in the play in which Hamlet realizes that he can’t take revenge is one that is often left out by modern editors in the various composite editions of *Hamlet* that now exist. Wilkinson also discussed the modern literary criticism ideas of postmodernism and deconstruction. He reminded us that, when Hamlet inserts text for the actors to recite in the play-within-a-play, he’s telling us that he is the author.

**John Hamill**, chair of the SOF Research Grant Committee, gave an update on research grants. John Lavendoski, who received a grant in 2014 to study the extent of canals in Northern Italy, is optimistic about having an article (co-authored with an Italian scientist) published in an Italian journal. Roger Stritmatter, who received a 2014 grant to study whether the handwritten marginal notes in a copy of a Seneca play are in Oxford’s hand, reported that no definitive analysis has been made yet, but that he is hopeful of making further progress. Nina Green, who received a 2016 grant to find any record of a funeral for Oxford, reported that, so far, her efforts at the College of Heralds have been unsuccessful, mainly because their records are largely uncatalogued and because officials at the College are not primarily interested in historical matters. Eddi Jolly, who received a 2016 grant to try to find records of Oxford in Paris, reported that her efforts have also been unsuccessful so far, although she did locate in the Public Record Office a letter written (in French) to Oxford from his nephew.

**Michael Delahoyde** and **Coleen Moriarty**, who received grants in 2014, 2015 and 2016 to look for records of Oxford in the Venice area, spoke next, providing a further update (see “New Evidence of Oxford in Venice,” *Newsletter* 52:1 [Winter 2016], and “Vanishing Vere in Venice,” *Newsletter* 53:2 [Spring 2017]). Recapping their first trip to Venice in 2015, they stated that they relied on Rawdon Brown’s *Calendar of State Papers 1202-1675*, an index of matters relating to Venetian-English matters compiled in the late 19th century. They soon realized that it was incomplete and unreliable. For example, they located the letter that Brown had indexed stating that Oxford arrived in Venice by March 12, 1575, but they found it contained more lavish praise of Oxford than what Brown had excerpted. As reported here in 2016, their most exciting find was the signed request by Oxford to the Council of Ten for access to certain chambers, probably to see the artwork there. Delahoyde and Moriarty stressed that many documents are uncatalogued, that many are in poor condition, that the restoration process is slow, and that great diplomacy was needed to gain access to these papers. In 2016 the two researchers traveled to Venice, Milan and Mantua, but did not find any documents specifically related to Oxford. They stated that they had expected to find more items, as documentation exists of visits to these cities by other Englishmen. They wondered whether Oxford was arriving in Italy at a quasi-ambassadorial level (there was no official English ambassador to Venice between 1568 and 1604). They also believe that documents may exist in private collections that have not been accessed by anyone.

In “Antonio Perez, Penelope Rich and Avisia,” **John Hamill** sought to strengthen the case for Penelope Rich as the main character of *Willobie His Avisia* and, by extension, as the “Dark Lady” of the Sonnets. First published in 1594, *Willobie His Avisia* tells the tale of a “chaste and constant wife” who is pursued by six suitors, two of whom are known by the initials “W.S.” and “H.W.” *Willobie His Avisia* is also noteworthy because it is the first book to mention the name of “Shakespeare” as a writer, leading many critics to deduce that “W.S.” is William Shakespeare and “H.W.” is Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton. Hamill had earlier identified Don Antonio Perez of Spain (1540-1611) as a third suitor, Cavaleiro. Hamill was informed by Alexander Waugh that Perez knew and had corresponded with Penelope Rich (1563-1607), and did further research on her, learning that she was the sister of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, was involved in an adultery scandal in 1594, and was partial to the color black (said to have black eyes, dressed in black, and had a black bedroom). Perez had earlier been a secretary to King Philip of Spain, but parted ways with him and landed in England in June 1593, where he was welcomed. Perez lived in Essex’s house for a time, and wrote at least five letters to Penelope Rich (including a bizarre one in which he

offered to have gloves made for her from his own skin). He almost certainly knew Oxford as well, as he attended the wedding of Oxford’s daughter in 1595. By 1596, however, he seemed to have fallen out of favor in England. Hamill believes that Perez was also the inspiration for the characters of Iago in *Othello* and Don Armado in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

**Michelle Stelting** spoke on “A Sail-maker in Bergamo: Special Knowledge in *Taming of the Shrew*.” She began by discussing the several paintings mentioned in the induction scene of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and noted that they are allusions to real paintings that were on display on the Continent during the 1570s, when Oxford visited. Moving on in the play, she observed that the best way to travel from Venice to Padua (where *Shrew* is set) would be by boat, not by land. She noted that the wedding follows Italian customs, not English ones. The reference to “a sail-maker from Bergamo” is accurate. Even though Bergamo is quite far from the sea, it was known for the quality of the sails that were made there. Stelting then explored the Italian commedia dell’arte tradition of improvised skits using stock characters, and noted the striking parallels between the main characters of *Shrew* and the stock characters and scenes of commedia dell’arte. Tranio, for example, is much like the stock character Harlequin; moreover, Bergamo is the traditional home of Harlequin. Further, the stock scenes such as master vs. servant, age vs. youth, mistaken identities and feigned madness are all mirrored in *Shrew*. Although Italian players had visited England in 1574 and again in 1576-78, and may have performed commedia dell’arte, it is highly unlikely that Will Shakspeare of Stratford (barely in his teens in 1578) would have seen them.

The first speakers after lunch were **Ron Hess**, **Ren Draya** and **Jan Scheffer**, who discussed “How to Approach a Growing Number of Shakespeare Dictionaries” (see also separate article, page 20). Ron Hess briefly surveyed the large number of Shakespeare-related “Dictionaries” that have been published, including a series of subject-specific “dictionaries” published by Bloomsbury Press. Ren Draya reviewed one of them, *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*, by Christopher Wilson and Michela Calore (2005). “It’s a dictionary in that terms are listed alphabetically,” she noted, but added that it is really a compendium of musical terms that were used in Shakespeare’s time, rather than a listing, or analysis, of the actual musical pieces or songs that appear in Shakespeare’s works. She stated that it is “not succinct,” and that it does not list songs from each play. A real Shakespeare musical dictionary “should celebrate . . . that we have an author who was very interested in music,” and who uses it in every one of his comedies and tragedies, especially in *Twelfth Night*, where songs are tailored to characters. Turning the discussion to Shakespeare and Platonism, Hess yielded the floor to Jan Scheffer, who stated that he



is planning an article on the widespread adoption of classical tropes and stories by 16th-century poets, who, of course, were living in a devoutly Christian world. Why did they find it necessary to turn to myths? This could be the genesis of a more comprehensive “dictionary” on the subject.

The next speaker was **Geir Uthaug**, a Norwegian writer who has been interested in the authorship question for seventeen years. He stated that the question is not well known in Norway, but that there was a successful event in Oslo in 2016, sponsored by the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, at which the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt was produced and was signed by many persons. Uthaug then read a letter from Gösta Friberg and Helena Brodin Friberg, who wrote *Täcknamn Shakespeare: Edward de Veres Hemliga Liv (Code Name Shakespeare: Edward de Vere's Secret Life)*, published in Swedish in 2006; they had attended the Oslo event in 2016. They stated that they were unaware of the authorship question until the 1980s, but were soon hooked. They read extensively and contacted several Oxfordians. “We felt we needed to do something in our own language,” they said. “We sought to portray the political and cultural” events of the time, especially as they related to Queen Elizabeth and Willam Cecil. Their book received a favorable review in Gotenborg, followed by a negative review in Stockholm. This led to a televised debate, and more importantly, it stirred sales. A paperback edition followed. Eventually, they gave some twenty-five lectures throughout the country.

The day’s final speaker was **Alexander Waugh**, who led a fast-paced examination of the title page and the dedication page to the 1609 quarto of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. He reminded us that people of the time were obsessed with letters and numbers, as they believed that God created the universe using numbers and geometry. Thus, the letter *I* had significance as the number 1, the letter *I* (or the letter *J*), and the first person pronoun. *X* had significance as the Roman numeral for 10 and for “Christos,” or Christ. *IX* could be interpreted as the Roman numeral for 9 and as *JC*, the initials of Jesus Christ. The letter *T* had significance as the Greek *tau* and as a symbol of the cross (many early images show Christ crucified on a T-shaped cross). It is also the symbol of the trinity, as it has three points. And so on. Waugh then turned to the *Sonnets* dedication page, with its odd layout of (mostly) capital letters. He recalled John Rollett’s 1998 analysis that showed the layout as a series of three upside-down triangles of six, two and four lines respectively. This suggested to Rollett the presence of a 6-2-4 pattern, a suggestion strengthened by the fact that the name “Edward de Vere” is itself a 6-2-4 pattern. Rollett found that, by reading the dedication words in a 6-2-4 sequence, it yielded “THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER” in part, followed by “THE FORTH.” Although the first phrase made eminent sense to Oxfordians (i.e.

that “E. Ver” wrote the sonnets), the addition of “THE FORTH” was perplexing. Waugh, however, suggested adding one more item to the sequence: “T,” i.e., the second *T* in the initials immediately below the dedication itself. De Vere, Waugh argued, is indeed the “fourth T,” in that his code name in letters to King James of Scotland was “40,” or “four T.” The new emphasis on the letter *T* further suggested to Waugh that he place the individual letters of the dedication in a grid containing nineteen columns, as *tau* is the nineteenth letter of the Greek alphabet and there are exactly nineteen *T*s in the dedication (Rollett had used an eighteen-column grid, with some interesting results). Waugh then dazzled the audience with an array of findings, including one that states that de Vere is buried in “South Cross Ile St Peters” (Westminster Abbey was previously known as St. Peter's, and Poets Corner is in the South Cross Aisle), and a pattern that shows the floor plan of Westminster Abbey. Turning to the *Sonnets* title page, using some of Alan Green’s recent findings, Waugh submitted that Oxford’s grave is located in the exact spot where the Shakespeare monument now stands in Westminster Abbey. Curiously, that monument was erected in 1740, a year pregnant with symbolism: “17” for Oxford as the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of his line, and “40” suggesting his code name. Waugh also shows other discoveries within the *Sonnets* Dedication, including an indication that the de Vere line ended with Edward. If Waugh’s findings are correct, it means that a master cryptographer was employed to create such a work, and Waugh posited that it was John Dee. However, Waugh believes that de Vere’s remains were not moved to Westminster until about 1619, some fifteen years after his death. John Dee died in 1608 or 1609, suggesting to Waugh that plans to rebury de Vere had been made at least a decade earlier. Waugh also speculates that the Aspley version of the *Sonnets*, though dated 1609, may not have been published until 1619. [Editor’s note: a



Bonner Cutting, John Hamill, Alexander Waugh

video of Alexander Waugh's later presentation on this topic at the Shakespeare Authorship Trust Conference may be found on YouTube.com:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGiq\\_u48Rec&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGiq_u48Rec&feature=youtu.be)

After dinner a number of the group took in a performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* presented by the Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier (see review, page 35).

### Day Three: Saturday, October 14

In "State Power and Shakespeare" **Dr. Donald Miller** argued that the Prince Tudor theory (i.e., that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Southampton was the son of Oxford and Elizabeth) and the Monument Theory (that the main story of the Shakespeare sonnets is the 1601 Essex Rebellion and its aftermath) provide the best answer to a key problem in the authorship debate, one stated by U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens at the 1987 Moot Court in Washington, DC: "Oxfordians really have not yet put together a concise, coherent theory that they are prepared to defend, in all respects." Both theories are set forth and explained by Hank Whittemore in his 2005 book, *The Monument*. Miller submitted that the two theories explain how and why the authorship problem first arose in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century (because of the politics of succession), and how and why it could have continued for so long (because it was imposed by state power). Miller referenced some details of the Essex Rebellion, such as the punishments meted out to many of the conspirators (six executions, and fines for everyone), compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Southampton's unique fate (spared execution, never paid a fine, and granted a full pardon after Elizabeth's death), all under the watchful eyes of the Cecils (William and his son Robert). He made a case that the English Civil War of the 1640s had its roots in the Tudor government's failure to arrange an English successor to Elizabeth, and in the installation of the Stuarts instead. He also discussed how only state power could have continued the authorship coverup for centuries. Miller stated: "I am convinced in my study of this subject that this theory [Prince Tudor] is more likely than not true. The Sonnets are an autobiographical account of this real-life event. De Vere hides the true story of the Sonnets under a veil of coded special words, somewhat like the enigma code in World War II." He concluded by stating: "Future generations, I predict, will celebrate three pivotal years on Shakespeare: 1623, when the First Folio was published; 1920, when Thomas Looney identified its true author; and 2005, when Hank Whittemore deciphered the Sonnets and unveiled the real-life Elizabethan truth of state power and Shakespeare."

**Bryan Wildenthal's** presentation on "Early Authorship Doubts" focused on the important issue of whether there were any questions among Elizabethans at the time about the identity of the author "Shakespeare." Stratfordians always emphasize that there were no such

doubts (i.e., that his contemporaries always "knew" that Shakspeare of Stratford wrote Shakespeare). For example, Sir Stanley Wells in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt* (2013) confidently states "No one expressed doubt"; Jonathan Bate in *The Genius of Shakespeare* (1997) avers that "No one in [Shakspeare's] lifetime or ... 200 years after his death expressed the slightest doubt about his authorship." Wildenthal said that is demonstrably untrue, and it is important that Oxfordians understand the fact that there were doubts, and use that fact in the authorship debate. Indeed, doubts and questions about Shakespeare's true identity started appearing more than thirty years before the first documented source (the First Folio, 1623) suggested any linkage to William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon. And doubts continued to be raised after 1623. Among the many examples are Nashe's 1589 reference to an early *Hamlet*, the Parnassus plays (c. 1600), Cuthbert Burbage referring to "Shakspeare as among the deserving men players" in 1635 (i.e., as an actor, not an author), and Thomas Vicars in 1624 referring to "that famous poet who takes his name from 'shaking' and 'spear.'" Wildenthal urged Oxfordians to reframe the authorship debate by replacing the old view (that Stratfordian orthodoxy came first, followed centuries later by doubts) with a new view, that Authorship doubts and anonymity came first; "Stratfordianism" only arrived with the First Folio in 1623, and then grew *more than a generation later*. Thus a new "paradigm" about authorship doubt would look like this:

- The Early Authorship Doubt Era (at least 30 years, 1592 [or earlier] to 1623).
- The Stratfordian Era (233 years, 1623-1856): Launched by the First Folio.
- The Baconian Era (64 years, 1856-1920): Early modern doubts and an alternative author.
- The Oxfordian Era (1920-present): *We're living in it now!*

**Bonner Cutting's** presentation on "Edward de Vere's Tin Letters" covered some ground that was not covered in William Plumer Fowler's 1986 book, *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters*. These letters have generally been thought to be not as interesting as Oxford's more personal correspondence. There are twenty-eight letters in total, spanning almost five years. Cutting focused on eight archived in the Ellesmere manuscripts collection at the Huntington Library and six in the Public Records Office, as transcriptions of them were available to Cutting through the work of her mother, Ruth Loyd Miller, who had been working at one time with Fowler on transcribing them. The letters span approximately five years. It appears that Oxford's first petition for the tin monopoly was in March of 1594. He pushed his suit hard in the spring of 1595. Lord Burghley wrote a harsh letter on June 16, 1595, to end Oxford's suit, but Oxford wrote again a few weeks later and renewed his interest a year or two later in the Ellesmere letters, which apparently date from 1596 to 1598. In October 1599 the Queen awarded



Hank Whittemore, 2017 Oxfordian of the Year

the tin monopoly to the mining engineer Sir Bevis Bulmer (and later to Sir Walter Raleigh). Significantly, there is one final letter in 1598 to the Queen herself (Ellesmere 2338) in which Oxford sums up his past pleas and arguments, and, as Cutting noted, presses his case without obsequiousness or restraint, while also demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the law. All the letters deal with the business of tin and the big money to be made in transporting it out of the country. As Oxford points out, much “mischief” occurs in each step of the exporting process, with middlemen taking a cut or putting their thumbs on the scale, so to speak. Interestingly, all the letters are posted on Professor Alan Nelson’s website, where he has transcribed them with Oxford’s original spelling; Nelson characterizes them as “utilitarian” and “dull reading.” Archaic spellings make them less accessible, but, in his transcriptions, Nelson has managed to make them even more difficult to follow. For example, one impressive Shakespearean parallel occurs in PRO SP12/252, when Oxford writes, “yet since I have engaged myself so far in Her Majesty’s service, to bring the truth to light....” This quote parallels *Rape of Lucrece*: “Times glory... and bring truth to light.” But in Nelson’s transcript we read: “to bringe the trwithe too [=to] lyght.” Cutting notes that in the original letter it is clear that there is no letter *i* in “trwithe.” The correct rendering should be “trwth,” which any casual reader would easily recognize as “truth.” Cutting focused on comparing rare words (occurring less than ten times in the Shakespeare canon) with words in the letters. Among the significant parallels she found are “set awork,” “juggle,” “incurred the danger [of a statute],” “obscurement,” and “starting hole.” In the 1598 letter to the Queen, Oxford uses three Shakespeare rare words in the same sentence: “*And as for the Detriment which it importeth to your Majesty, it concerns your whole profit which is to redound unto you by this commodity.*” This letter ends, Cutting noted, with an almost “musical” line:

“*But thus it is, and so must be, if she let her gift proceed.*”

During lunch, SOF President Tom Regnier presented the 2017 Oxfordian of the Year Award to **Hank Whittemore**. Whittemore was honored for his ongoing work in the authorship area and for his 2016 book, *100 Reasons Shake-speare Was the Earl of Oxford* (reviewed in the Winter 2017 issue of the *Newsletter*). That book grew out of a blog that Whittemore wrote over several years in which he outlined his reasons for believing Edward de Vere to be the true author. Whittemore is also the author of *The Monument* (2005), an in-depth analysis of Shake-speares Sonnets, and a smaller companion work, *Shakespeare’s Son and His Sonnets*.

**Richard (Rick) Waugaman, M.D.**, delivered the luncheon address, “An Oxfreudian in Academia: Reflections on Entering the Mainstream,” drawing upon his experiences as a psychoanalyst researching, writing and speaking about the authorship question and the Oxfordian theory. He said that one of the “great benefits” of keeping up with mainstream Shakespearean literature is that it “frequently, if inadvertently, helps our cause”—for example, an article in *The Shakespeare Quarterly* confirming that “Hand D” in the play *Sir Thomas More* is not that of the Stratford man. Although most of us are “comfortable being outliers,” Waugaman said, we should not give up on “trying to change mainstream public opinion” about the authorship. Many of us have been able to bypass the diehard Stratfordian scholars and “speak to the far larger group of people outside English departments who love the works of Shakespeare,” he said, adding, “I believe we’re succeeding in that effort.” Signs that more people are aware of the debate over who wrote the works constitute “a major victory” for us. Waugaman, who has published on Shakespeare issues in mainstream journals for almost fifteen years, said his writings usually require “some degree of self-censorship” of Oxfordian views, but added that this also offers “the sort of experience that Elizabethan playwrights had, given the risks of offending state power,” so that “one learns to write between the lines.” In his reviews in *Renaissance Quarterly*, for example, “I only hint at my Oxfordian opinion,” to avoid jeopardizing the editor’s position at the journal. In a review of *Reading Shakespeare* by Steve Sohmer, he cited the author’s disagreement that the Sonnets are purely a work of the imagination and quoted him as writing that it is “extraordinary that anyone would try to separate the author from the literary text.” Waugaman ended by recommending that “all English departments” be abolished and replaced with departments of comparative literature, to avoid “impoverishing our deeper understanding of the creative process, not to mention confusing the question of who wrote Shakespeare.”

**Wally Hurst**, director of the Norris Theatre at Louisburg College, began his talk with a quote from Voltaire: “To learn who rules over you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticize.” Hurst presented a strong case that the American Association of University



Professors (AAUP), whose motto is “Academic Freedom for a Free Society,” is “violating its own code of ethics” by allowing its Shakespeare “experts” to block consideration of the authorship question. Based in Washington, D.C., the AAUP has 47,000 members on more than 500 local campuses nationwide; therefore, Hurst said, it is a “potentially powerful ally for us as we seek to enlist the help of ‘hidden’ authorship doubters who are now in ‘mainstream’ colleges and universities.” While academic freedom is not a legal concept, he said, it means that students must be able “to inquire and explore” and that faculty members are free “to teach and communicate ideas without being targeted for repression or job loss or imprisonment.” By refusing to explore the question of Shakespearean authorship, however, most orthodox academics are “imprisoning the minds of not only their own intellects, but of their hundreds of thousands of students, who are not learning critical thinking” when it comes the relationship of the Shakespeare works to the author’s life. “In fact, they are strongly discouraged” from this line of inquiry. Noting that authorities in repressive regimes have always sought “to control societies by controlling scholars,” he said Oxfordians who are also professors might well launch a “campaign” to enlist the AAUP in fair treatment of the Shakespeare Authorship Question, based on its own stated mission to protect academic freedom. Then, he concluded, we can “set free” the professors who are still “imprisoned by an outdated belief system.”

Writer and filmmaker **Cheryl Eagan-Donovan** spoke about how in 1920 J. Thomas Looney in “*Shakespeare Identified*” drew a portrait of the author based on a list of specific characteristics drawn from the plays and poetry. She pointed out that Looney found the *Sonnets* to be of special significance, because that form has been the primary vehicle for “the expression of the most intimate thoughts and feelings” of poets generally. Eagan-Donovan noted that Looney emphasized that the opening sonnets are “addressed to a young man, and express a tenderness which is probably without parallel in the recorded expressions of emotional attachment of one man to another.” This observation, along with the British schoolmaster’s insight that Shakespeare had “conflicted feelings” toward women, were “the critical factors” leading to her personal discovery of Oxford as the true author. They also led to her recognition that both the content and the form of the earl’s poetry are related to his sexuality. The title of her talk, “Looney, the Lively Lark, and Ganymede,” refers not only to the man who first identified Oxford as Shakespeare, but also to the Roman version of the Greek god Ganymede, which “focused much on the homoerotic aspects” of the myth, and the earl’s poem “The lively lark stretched forth her wing,” which describes a chance meeting in the “meads” (meadow) with a

knight whose name is “Desire”—lines that to Eagan-Donovan are clearly homosexual in tone. Noting that the sonnets focused on “adoration for a young man” are followed by a much shorter series of “cynical and wounded sonnets centering on the figure of a ‘dark lady,’” she finds that the key to Oxford’s authorship is his sexuality. Eagan-Donovan concluded with a plea to “continue to seek the seeds of Shakespeare in de Vere’s poetry and to introduce the work to our students and our colleagues.”

**Tom Regnier**, SOF president, gave an entertaining and illuminating history of the organization in honor of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It began with Francis Carmody as the founding president in 1957 of the group originally known as Ereve (“de Vere” spelled backwards) that became the Shakespeare Oxford Society two years later. Regnier noted several other early pioneers and leaders, including Peter Sammartino, Richard Horne, Charlton Ogburn Jr., Gordon Cyr, Ruth and Judge Minos Miller, Elisabeth Sears, John Price, Richard Whalen, Charles Beauclerk. Regnier touched on some of our organization’s “highlights, successes, and travails,” the latter including the 2001 split into two organizations and the unification process that culminated in the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship joining together again in 2013 to form the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. Regnier also gave an overview of the organization’s more recent “goals and accomplishments” along with its “possible future.” He said the group’s 2016 assets were \$212,000, compared to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust’s assets of \$35 million; nevertheless, the SOF website now records some 10,000 views per month from people in 147 countries. With the quarterly *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* edited by Alex McNeil, the annual journal *The Oxfordian* edited by Chris Pannell, the ongoing Research Grant Program, the “*How I Became an Oxfordian*” series edited by Bob Meyers, a new Speakers Bureau, video contest, and other such programs, not to mention the annual conferences in different venues around the country, clearly the SOF is positioned to continue and expand its mission in support of replacing William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon with Edward de Vere as the true author of the



Tom Regnier portrays Launce from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Shakespeare works.

**Earl Showerman, M.D.**, shared some of his experiences as a teacher since 2008 of Shakespeare authorship-related subjects at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Southern Oregon University. Focusing on the 2017 curriculum for his 12-hour course spread over six weeks, he showed the value of such teachings by sharing some student reactions: “Studying the Shakespeare authorship challenge has immensely increased my appreciation of the plays, and it is a delicious mystery”; “I was challenged to think beyond early teachings and established beliefs”; “You have opened up a new world to me that will last for the rest of my life—priceless.” Showerman outlined the course: (1) Introduction and Shakespeare’s Greater Greek; (2) Shakespeare and Italy; (3) Shakespeare’s Histories and Politics; (4) Shakespeare’s Sonnets & “Tabloid Theories”; (5) Shakespeare Illusions: From Robert Greene’s *Groatsworth of Witte* to Francis Meres’s *Palladis Tamia*—Roger Stritmatter; and (6) *100 Reasons Shakespeare was the Earl of Oxford* by Hank Whittemore. For the course Showerman also includes online articles and video presentations, as well as a list of books related to general authorship issues and Oxfordian biography, criticism and fiction. The students’ reactions to the course complemented Showerman’s opening quotes from the poem “To Be a Slave of Intensity” by Kabir, the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Indian mystic poet. In it Kabir exhorts his readers to “plunge into the truth” and proclaims that the “intensity” of the longing and search for truth is what does all the necessary work. Showerman concluded that this same intensity is the real and lasting value of Shakespeare studies in lifelong learning.

The day concluded with a pageant: several attendees, dressed in Elizabethan-era costumes, introduced the similarly-costumed **Robin Phillips**. A professional writer, singer and actress, Phillips hosted the premiere showing of her full-length video about the authorship question, “O Mistress Mine: The Secrets, Lies, Loves & Wives of Edward de Vere—the REAL Shake-speare!” As Phillips explained, she became interested in the SAQ in mid-2016 after seeing Roland Emmerich’s film *Anonymus*. That led to her putting together a one-woman show about the issue (first presented in McLean, Virginia, in November 2016), and, subsequently, to this video with its professional editing, sound, props and costumes.

#### Day Four: Sunday, October 15

In “Shakespeare’s Education and Evidence of Western Spiritual Philosophy in the Plays (Shakespeare and Spiritual Philosophy),” **Priscilla Costello** discussed Shakespeare’s education and evidence of Western spiritual philosophy in the plays. She identified ideas and attitudes in the plays that could only have been learned through an education available to a courtier who had traveled in Europe and participated in court life and the culture of his time. That Shakespeare’s works reveal a

### A New *Shrew*

Reviewed by Ren Draya

On a beautiful autumn evening, Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship conference attendees were treated to an unusual staging of *The Taming of the Shrew*: an all-women cast. It worked! And it worked brilliantly.

“My goal for this show is to make people laugh,” said Chicago Shakespeare Theater’s Director Barbara Gaines. She succeeded beyond what I had expected. Yes, we laughed at the classic battle of the sexes, but we were aware of deeper themes and relationships than most *Shrew* stagings ever reveal.

Shakespeare’s Christopher Sly Induction was replaced by a suffragette frame story written by Ron West. Set in a Chicago women’s club in 1919, the frame was developed effectively, with different characters representing different reactions and approaches to the fight for the right to vote. *Shrew* was interrupted a number of times, often with early 20<sup>th</sup> century songs done *a cappella*, the lovely female voices a poignant counter to the conflicts and farce of Signoir Baptista’s daughters’ quest for mates. In both plots, the acting was flawless—confident, convincing.

As to the depth in this production, I was struck with the way Gaines’s directorial choices made me think about the theme of identity. The basic question of “Who are you?” runs through the Shakespeare canon, and his frequent use of disguise complicates the answers.

We know that in Oxford’s time young boys played women’s roles (Rosalind, Celia, Viola, etc.) and dressed as females. Often, the plots led women to disguise themselves as young men—a comical and titillating transformation for audiences. So, the Chicago version simply makes us think in a new way about an old dramatic device. Women shed their skirts and dressed as men. As a result, we saw more vulnerability in Kate, more bravado in Petruchio. We saw the way these two “raging fires” need to trust each other and, ultimately, love each other. And we were shown a most radical, hopeful truth: people can change. Kudos all around to CST.

familiarity with Western spiritual philosophy from classical times—something that was not part of the grammar school curriculum—is an important reason for doubting that Shakespeare’s works could have been written by someone who came from a small, isolated agricultural community.

**Elisabeth Pearson Waugaman** then gave an interesting talk on “French Cultural Influence on Shakespeare,” showing how deeply he was influenced by the French Renaissance. She noted a disconnect in traditional scholarship. On one hand, many orthodox academics recognize that Shakespeare read Montaigne in French (as documented by Travis Williams) and that he was influenced by tragedies written in French that were untranslated (as documented by Richard Hillman). On

the other hand, orthodox academics don't bother explaining (or even asking) how he could have acquired that language ability and knowledge of French literature. She went on to show how choosing to sidestep this disconnect—by dumbing down Shakespeare's knowledge to the level that the grammar-school-educated Shaksper could have had—has given way to the current movement to attribute the plays to multiple authors, with "Shakespeare's" vast knowledge now deemed to have been contributed by others. That sleight of hand will become increasingly untenable, Waugaman concluded, as the French/English linguistic, historical, and political relationships that reverberate throughout Shakespeare's works become more widely recognized.

In "Leveraging the Shakespeare Allusion Book," **Roger Stritmatter** provided an update on *The New Shakespeare Allusion Book*, a reference book of over 700 pages that he and Alexander Waugh are preparing for publication in 2018. The book contains more than 180 allusions made between 1584 and 1786 to the writer Shakespeare or to his works. Each allusion is carefully and comprehensively contextualized and its discussion in the secondary literature is summarized. The vast majority of these allusions, Stritmatter stated, exhibit clear evidence that their respective authors were well aware that the "Shakespeare" name was a pseudonym. A large number of the allusions, employing early modern techniques of literal indirection, also reveal a clear

understanding by their makers that the real author of the works was indeed Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. No comparable resource brings the Oxfordian case to an academic as well as a popular readership. Stritmatter also discussed and sought ideas from the audience about how the book can best be used to gain further support for the idea that Oxford was Shakespeare.



#### In This Issue:

|   |    |
|---|----|
| SOF 2017 Conference Report  | 1  |
| From the President  | 2  |
| What's the News?  | 5  |
| Debate: Alexander Waugh v. Sir Jonathan Bate:<br>"Who wrote Shakespeare?" | 9  |
| Brevity and the Soul of Witlessness                                       | 13 |
| Shaksper's Inventory  | 16 |
| Book Review: <i>The Bible in Shakespeare</i>                              | 18 |
| Shakespeare Dictionaries  | 20 |
| TV Review: <i>Will</i>  | 24 |

#### Advertisement

## *Summer Storm: A Novel of Ideas*

Pity university literature professor Alan Fernwood. His life is turned upside down during the eleven weeks of the summer term as he discovers that much of what he had thought was true, isn't. His investigations reveal that William Shakespeare didn't write the works attributed to him. Then his efforts to promote recognition of the true author, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, show just how mistaken he was about the security of his job.

Newspaper columnist Elvin Alvarez faces similar complications as he investigates the issue of how significantly human activities affect the Earth's climate. Further complicating matters are Alan's relationship with the bewitching Amelia Mai and Elvin's with the delightful Delilah Fernwood, Alan's daughter. They and other characters ask themselves and each other how it is possible to know anything – a subject, a person, or, most important of all, what we should do right now, at this particular moment, in this unique set of circumstances.

And along the way, Alan and the students in his Summer Shakespeare Seminar find much of relevance in Shakespeare's plays for those living in the world today.

Available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) \$15



**"An assured and surprisingly gripping tale about the perils of ideological conformity. . . . Even readers familiar with the [authorship] controversy will learn something in this intellectually fast-paced telling."** - Kirkus Reviews