



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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In the Footsteps of Vere and Roe (Part One)

by Robert Prechter

“There’s one place left we need to see: Italy,” I said to my wife, Robin. I added that my plan was for us to go after I retired, to which she responded, “So, never?”

Three months later I got a request to speak in Milan on October 13, 2017, at an international financial conference. I had pretty much sworn off speaking, but this opportunity was too good to pass up. My biggest concern was that the trip would have to take place in the first half of October, which has a history of being a volatile time for stock prices, and since financial analysis is my business, I could not afford to miss anything important. But with iPad and hotspot, I figured I’d be OK.

I asked our travel agent if there were any non-stop flights from Atlanta to anywhere in northern Italy. He said, “They all cease when the summer is over. The last flight would be to Venice on Friday, September 29.” I told him to put us on it.

We mapped out a journey to six cities over fifteen days that would allow us to visit the key spots in northern Italy about which Richard Paul Roe wrote in *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*. We also tagged the various tourist meccas along the way. This article is about the Shakespeare spots, but one can hardly doubt that Shakespeare would have visited the prominent castles, basilicas, cathedrals, towers and bridges of each city that tourists still seek out today.

Roe’s book does not always specify street names and exact locations, and he lacks photos of certain sites. This article aims to remedy that situation for anyone wishing to venture along the same route.

Venice

The first thing we did Saturday morning in Venice was to wend our way to the old Jewish ghetto area and locate Shylock’s penthouse from *The Merchant of Venice*. The portico is exceptionally well preserved, and behind the second arch from the left, at #2912 Cannaregio, is the entrance to an old moneylending facility, a pawn shop named the Banco Rosso, now a small museum. The wide square affords terrific photographs. The apartments are privately owned with modern interiors, so we saw little reason to try to visit them. On the outside, your imagination can quickly transport you back four and a half centuries. Roe has an excellent color picture of Shylock’s apartment and the arches to its left.

On Sunday we toured the buildings on the Piazza San Marco, including the Palazzo Ducale, or Duke’s Palace, also called the Doge’s Palace, where Shakespeare would have visited, if not stayed. Right in front of it, a bit toward the left when facing the water, is where Portia landed after setting off from the Tranect. The old port is not there anymore, but rows of tourist gondolas along the Riva degli Schiavoni offer some feel for the bustle of the place back in the day. Because we were traveling by train, we were unable to visit Villa Foscari, Portia’s Belmont home, on the

Brenta Canal. Someone should provide clear directions to it, as Roe does not.

On Monday we shifted plays to *Othello* and retraced



(Continued on p. 24)

From the President:

Oxfordians in Action

Dear SOF Members,

As this issue of the *Newsletter* reveals, the SOF continues to support numerous activities designed to strengthen and promote the case for Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as the true “Shakespeare”:

Research Grant Program

Our Research Grant Program now enters its fifth year, and again we will offer matching funds to your contributions, bolstered by a gift from the Joe W. and Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation. This program assists our researchers, who are uncovering piece after piece of evidence corroborating Oxford’s status as Shakespeare. For further information, see page 5 of this newsletter.

New *Oxfordian* Editor

Gary Goldstein, former editor of the *Elizabethan Review* and former managing editor of *Brief Chronicles*, has been appointed the new Editor of our flagship journal, *The Oxfordian*. We are happy to have an editor of Gary’s caliber and experience in this role. Gary is currently hard at work putting together the 20th edition of *The Oxfordian*,

which will be published in the fall. Article submissions may be sent to him at oxfordian@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org. See page 6.

Authorship Book Series

The SOF has also started an exciting new project, a series of books on the authorship question to be edited by one of our foremost Oxfordian scholars, Dr. Roger Stritmatter. Each book in the series, which will be available on Amazon, will cover a single topic related to the authorship question and will contain articles by different authors related to that subject. The first volume in the series, expected to be published in the fall, will compare the poetry of Edward de Vere to poetry published under the name “William Shakespeare.” We will let you know by newsletter, website, and social media when new volumes are available. See page 6.

Oxfordian Documentary

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan’s stunning documentary on Oxford in Italy, *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*, made its festival debut at the Independent Film Festival Boston on April 29. The film features renowned Shakespearean scholars, actors, and directors, including Sir Derek Jacobi (multiple award-winning actor and director), Sir Mark Rylance (Oscar and Tony winner), Tina Packer, Diane Paulus, Roger Stritmatter, and others. The authorship question continues to invade the mainstream! See page 6.

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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

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

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

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Second Annual “Who Wrote Shakespeare?” Video Contest

The SOF’s second annual “Who Wrote Shakespeare?” Video Contest opened for submissions on May 1, 2018. Contestants are invited to create a three-minute video that supports reasonable doubt about the authorship question, with the top three videos receiving prizes of \$1,000; \$500; and \$250. Our judges will pick the finalists, and then voting will be open to the public to choose the top three winners. Last year, the contest brought thousands of viewers to our website. We hope to reach many more people through this year’s contest. See the complete contest rules on our website at <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/sof-video-contest/>. The last day to submit a video is July 31. See page 13.

Website Projects

In the last newsletter, I mentioned three major website projects that the SOF has been working on. Two of the three have been unveiled: First was Steven Steinburg’s devastating critique of Jonathan Bate’s performance in his authorship debate against Alexander Waugh. Steinburg’s article is available at: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/post-truth-world-sir-jonathan-bate/>. We also published Steinburg’s demystifying of Elizabethan grammar schools at <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/fake-truth-the-language-of-professional-shakespeare-scholarship/>. (Be on the lookout for another, even more controversial, website article by Steinburg in the near future.)

Second, we published on our website, in pdf format, all 43 newsletters published by the American branch of the Shakespeare Fellowship, the first Oxfordian organization in America, between 1939 and 1948. This is a precious resource for the study of early authorship research and the history of the Oxfordian movement. See our website at: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/publications/the-shakespeare-fellowship-american-news-letter-quarterly-1939-1948/>. See page 10. We hope that the third project mentioned in our last newsletter, a comparison of Oxford’s poems to Shakespeare’s, will be online soon. This will serve as a prelude to the first

volume in our Oxfordian book series, described above, edited by Roger Stritmatter.

Preserving Our Oxfordian Heritage

As our posting of the Shakespeare Fellowship newsletters from the World War II era demonstrates, the SOF is devoted to preserving and making available past authorship research, especially that done by Oxfordians. Please read the article on page 22 of this newsletter from our Data Preservation Committee. If you have or know of important authorship data that the SOF can help to preserve, please let us know!

Oakland Conference, October 11-14

Our annual conference, this year in Oakland, California, October 11 though 14, will feature a debate on the identity of the “Dark Lady” of the Sonnets among Oxfordians Katherine Chiljan, John Hamill, and Hank Whittemore. Other conference speakers will include Kevin Gilvary, author of *The Fictional Lives of Shakespeare* (2018), and David Rains Wallace, author of *Shakespeare’s Wilderness* (2017). Proposals for papers are now being accepted through August 1. For information on how to register and make hotel reservations for the conference, see our Winter 2018 newsletter (or page 14 of this newsletter), or visit our website at: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2018-sof-conference/>.

Nominations Committee Report

In accordance with the SOF Bylaws, I will be term-limited out of the SOF presidency (and, coincidentally, term-limited off the SOF Board of Trustees) at the Oakland conference. Fortunately, our Nominations Committee, consisting of Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, Joan Leon, and Don Rubin, has diligently found a slate of qualified candidates to fill the presidency and to fill those slots on the Board that will be vacated at the conference. See the Nominations Committee Report on page 11. It has been an honor to serve you as SOF president since 2014, and I wish great success to the next president and the next Board of Trustees.

Tom Regnier, President

LETTERS

As always, the Winter 2018 *Newsletter* is excellent. Among other things, it prompted me to call up Google Maps and search for Saltwell Cemetery [see “‘Shakespeare’ Identified Centennial Progress Update,” page 9 of Winter issue]. And indeed it is listed in the Google Maps database and a click on the link within Google Maps will take you there.

Might we not have one of our “techie” members contact Google and have the Looney gravesite

identified, and linked to a few pictures of it? I think that would be a very nice touch.

Many thanks for considering this.

Russell Thayer Bullitt
West Chester, PA

Richard Whalen's analysis of *Hamlet* ("Hamlet's Sources and Influences, and Its 'Forerunners' by Oxford," Winter 2018 issue) is the nail in the coffin of the Stratfordian delusion. I can't imagine a Stratfordian reading it and still being a Stratfordian at the end.

Robert Fowler
Los Angeles, CA

In the Winter 2018 *Newsletter*, Richard Whalen traces *Hamlet* back to possible prototypes that may be Edward de Vere's youthful work. Such juvenilia, if that is the exact word, may include the play *Horestes*. Whalen writes: "Oxfordian scholarship has overlooked the possibility that *Horestes* was a *Hamlet* forerunner by Oxford, except for Earl Showerman's 2008 report that the late Elisabeth Sears told him about a lecture by Seltzer that she attended. It was probably the basis for Seltzer's 1977 article."

I admire Mr. Whalen's scholarly thoroughness and devotion to our cause. In this case, though, I think I can identify two Oxfordian scholars who—possibly inspired by Seltzer—did not overlook the possibility he mentions. Whalen has named one of them. A now out-of-print book, *Oxford's Revenge: Shakespeare's Dramatic Development from Agamemnon to Hamlet*, was authored by Stephanie Caruana and Elisabeth Sears in 1989, and that book was the fruit of at least one article on *Horestes* (if memory serves) in Ms. Caruana's short-lived Oxfordian journal, *Spear-Shaker Review*.

Tom Goff
Carmichael, CA

Congratulations and thanks to Richard Whalen for his fine work in researching and writing up the Introduction to the Oxfordian edition of *Hamlet*, as published in the Winter 2018 issue of the *Newsletter*. It should prove to be yet another strong argument in favor of the Oxfordian thesis that Edward de Vere was the true author of the Shakespeare canon, and that *Hamlet* was the work of the author's lifetime, drawing, as always, as much on his own life as any source material, and undoubtedly written and rewritten over many years.

Whalen writes that "Oxfordian scholarship has overlooked the possibility that *Horestes* was a *Hamlet* forerunner by Oxford, except for Earl Showerman's 2008 report that the late Elisabeth Sears told him about a lecture by Seltzer that she attended. It was probably the basis for Seltzer's 1977 article." In fact, Sears was so inspired by Seltzer's talk (given at the Bread Loaf School of English in Middlebury, Vermont, date not recorded) that she went on to do her own modern English transliteration of the original 1567 *Horestes* quarto. An unpublished manuscript of her transliteration, with an eighteen-page introduction (citing Seltzer's talk), was distributed to attendees at the Shakespeare Oxford

Society November 1988 conference in Richmond, Virginia. The title page included a byline for the play: "By Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, writing under the pseudonym 'John Pickering.'" The play was also staged at the conference, with "stage directions" by Leslie Anne Dressler.

The following year *Horestes* was included in Chapter 3 ("From Agamemmon to Horestes") and Chapter 4 ("From Horestes to Locrine") of *Oxford's Revenge*, a short book (99 pages) by Sears and Stephanie Caruana that put forward the thesis that Oxford wrote many unattributed works over his lifetime, and that he was always writing about himself and his concerns. The book, now out of print, was distributed to attendees of the 1989 SOS conference in New Orleans, with further copies sold in the 1990s. In the two chapters touching on *Horestes* the authors clearly state that they consider Edward de Vere to be the true author. Seltzer's edition of the play is cited in the bibliography under "Pickering, John."

This is an important part of our Oxfordian history that should not be overlooked.

Bill Boyle
Somerville, MA

[Richard Whalen responds]

Yes, I should have included Stephanie Caruana and the 99-page limited edition booklet that she co-authored with Elisabeth Sears and self-published as a "draft" in 1989, and that suggests at one point (probably for the first time) Oxford's possible authorship of *Horestes*. My thanks to Tom Goff and Bill Boyle for their kind words and for the correction, which will be reflected in my forthcoming Oxfordian edition of *Hamlet*.

I was very interested in Ren Draya's discussion of Gertrude's guilt in her article, "The Three Queens of *Hamlet*," in the Winter 2018 issue. The article points out the ultimately inconclusive evidence that Gertrude knew about King Hamlet's murder and yet proceeded to marry the murderer, and, what had never occurred to me, that she was present when Ophelia died, and yet did nothing to save her.

The article does not mention the Queen's possible guilt regarding the murder of her own son. In other words, did Gertrude know that Claudius was planning to have Hamlet poisoned either by Laertes or by Claudius himself at the fencing tournament, and yet did nothing to try to stop it until it was too late? The critical passage is at the end of Act IV, where Claudius is advising Laertes on how to kill Hamlet, and suddenly the Queen appears: "When in your motion you are hot and dry/ As make your bouts more violent to that end/ And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him/ A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,/ If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,/ Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?/ [Enter QUEEN] How now, sweet Queen!"

The question is whether the Queen entered without hearing any of this, or whether she did overhear at least some of it, perhaps waiting unnoticed at some distance in the wings—behind an arras, so to speak—and, having heard enough, “entered” and made her presence known.

In assessing the possibility that Gertrude had knowledge of her husband’s intent to poison Hamlet, it may be useful to consider an extremely similar scene in *King John* where the inferences of guilt, though, again, ultimately inconclusive, are substantially greater. In Act III, Scene iii, King John is telling Hubert, none too subtly, to kill his prisoner, the young Arthur, the legitimate king and King John’s nephew—the precise relationship between the would-be poisoner and poisonee in Act IV, Scene vii of *Hamlet*. Though styled—and treated in almost all respects—as John’s queen, Elinor is actually the King’s mother, as well as grandmother to young Arthur. She is present on stage during the entire conversation. What is more, almost immediately after the most incriminating part of that conversation, Elinor exclaims to her son, “My blessing go with thee!”

And yet the evidence, in my opinion, is not conclusive that Elinor in fact was aware of what her son was planning. Not only is Elinor present at the beginning of the scene (as well as at the end), but so is Arthur. If it

is difficult to imagine John ordering the murder of his nephew in front of Queen Elinor, it is almost impossible to imagine it in front of Arthur himself. I have never seen *King John* performed, but it seems more likely that, while Elinor and Arthur were both on stage during the conversation about murder, Arthur, and perhaps Elinor as well, were not able to hear it.

In both these scenes from *King John* and *Hamlet*, the Queen, at the very least, witnessed her King in intense private conversation with a man who had the means (Hubert) or the strong motive (Laertes) to kill her close relative. If she was unaware of what they were discussing, was she not at least curious? I would submit that in both cases the Bard was trying to suggest that the Queen *may* have known, and probably at least *should* have known, about the King’s intent to murder her very close relative, and, of course, did nothing to prevent it from actually occurring.

Charles C. Baylor
Topeka, Kansas



Apply for a Grant from the SOF’s Research Program by October 31

Once again this year, the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will provide \$10,000 to match your donations to the Research Grant Program, aided by a generous gift from the Joe W. & Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation. The SOF hopes to have a total of \$20,000 to distribute in research grants through this year’s program. The matching funds will come into play when triggered by contributions from you, our members and friends, thus doubling the power of your donations.

Authorship researchers are strongly encouraged to apply for research grants. The deadline for applications is **October 31, 2018**. Winners will be announced in early 2019. **Please see the rules** for applying on the SOF website at <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shakespeare-oxford-fellowship-research-grant-program/>

Researchers funded by the SOF Research Grant Program are finding documents and other evidence that strengthen the case that Edward de Vere is the author of the Shakespearean canon. Among the findings of last year’s research grants are five documents signed by or related to Edward de Vere that have been gathering dust for centuries in Italian archives. Will one or more of these documents be a

key to opening up the mystery? We don’t know, but future research grants may tell us.

In addition to the research in archives in Italy, a current grantee is exploring volumes donated by a de Vere relative to the Bodleian Library at Oxford University, another grantee is searching the College of Arms archives in London, and a third, public records offices throughout England. We’re eager to learn what they find and how their explorations can guide us to other potentially fruitful avenues of research and analysis.

The SOF’s research program is truly an extraordinary endeavor. We’ve done it because no other organization has shown an interest—and it would never be possible except for the passionate interest of you, our members and friends, present and past. **You can donate** to the Research Grant Program by filling out the insert included in this newsletter and mailing it with your check or credit card information to: SOF, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466 or by donating securely online at <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/product/research-grant-fund/>

The SOF thanks you for helping to bring the truth to light through your support of this program.



SHAKESPEARE

OXFORD FELLOWSHIP

Together We Are Uncovering the Mystery of the Shakespeare Authorship!

Please make your gift today to fund the next round of grants

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The SOF's research program is truly an extraordinary endeavor. We've done it because no other organization has shown an interest – and it would never be possible except for the passionate interest of you, our members and friends, present and past. Fortunately, you are providing the core funding and the SOF is matching it with funds from bequests, deferred gifts and other donations.

The SOF once again will provide up to \$10,000 in matching funds. This doubles the impact of your donation. The SOF has recently received another gift from the Joe W. & Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation, which it will use for that purpose.

Thank you! John Hamill, Chair, Research Grant Program

DONATE TODAY! Use this form to pay by check or credit card, or go online to: shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org (click on "Donate" on the Menu Bar, then select "Research Grant Fund" from the drop-down menu).

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What's the News?

Goldstein Named Editor of *The Oxfordian*

As was announced on the SOF website in February, Gary Goldstein has been named Editor of the SOF's annual journal, *The Oxfordian*. He succeeds Chris Pannell, who stepped down in January after serving as Editor since 2014.



Goldstein has previous experience with similar publications. He founded *The Elizabethan Review*, a peer-reviewed journal on the English Renaissance that was published from 1993 to 2001. From 2009 to 2011 he served as managing editor of *Brief Chronicles*, the *Oxfordian* journal published by the Shakespeare Fellowship.

In 2016 he published a book, *Reflections on the True Shakespeare* (Verlag Uwe Laugwitz, www.laugwitz.com), a collection of twenty of his writings on various aspects of the authorship question (reviewed in the Fall 2016 issue of the *Newsletter*).

Goldstein has an M.A. from New York University. He was co-producer of "Uncovering Shakespeare," a television program that focused on the Shakespeare authorship question and was moderated by William F. Buckley, Jr.

Goldstein has stated that *The Oxfordian's* intellectual stature is evidenced by the number of libraries which now catalog it as an electronic journal, the fact that it is indexed by the two foremost English bibliographies, and that a third is interested in doing so. As Editor, he hopes to further expand the journal's reach. Article submissions for *The Oxfordian*, Volume 20, which will be published in the fall of 2018, may be sent by email to Gary at oxfordian@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.

The Oxfordian was founded by Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, who served as Editor from 1998 to 2007. Dr. Michael Egan was Editor from 2009 to 2014.

Stritmatter to Edit *Oxfordian* Book Series for SOF

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will initiate the publication of a series of books on the Shakespeare Authorship Question, edited by Dr. Roger Stritmatter, Professor of Humanities at Coppin State University in Baltimore. Each book in the series will embrace a single topic related to the authorship question and will contain

articles by various authors related to that subject. The books will be available for sale on Amazon.

The first volume in the series, expected to be published in the fall of 2018, will compare the poetry of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, to poetry published under the name "William Shakespeare." The topic of the second volume will be Teaching the Shakespeare Authorship Question. Subjects of future volumes will be announced approximately two years ahead of the anticipated publication dates. If you wish to submit an article on either topic, or discuss possible articles related to either topic, please email Professor Stritmatter at stritmatter24@hotmail.com.

SOF president Tom Regnier said, "We are pleased to announce this project, which we believe is a perfect fit for Dr. Roger Stritmatter's unique set of skills. Anyone who has read his special edition of the *Brief Chronicles* journal on the First Folio knows that Roger is a master at selecting and synthesizing the top scholarship in a particular area of authorship research. Roger's groundbreaking dissertation on correlations between Biblical passages in Shakespeare's works and Edward de Vere's handwritten notations in his Geneva Bible earned him the first-ever Ph.D. awarded for the study of the Shakespeare authorship question. His book on the dating of *The Tempest*, co-authored with Lynne Kositsky, dismantled the Stratfordian argument that the play could not have been written by Edward de Vere. Roger's

interests and skills are among the widest-ranging of active authorship scholars. We in the *Oxfordian* movement look forward to enjoying the fruits of this effort."

Stay tuned for further news on this exciting project.



Nothing Is Truer Than Truth Has Official Premiere at IFFBoston

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan's documentary film about Edward de Vere, *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*, had its official premiere on Sunday afternoon, April 29, as part of the Independent Film Festival Boston (IFFBoston). A capacity crowd watched with interest, and many persons stayed for a brief Q&A session afterward. Eagan-Donovan writes: "It was an honor for us to premiere at the Independent Film Festival Boston (<http://iffboston.org>). This was their sixteenth year bringing



great films from around the country to Boston. It was also very special to premiere at the historic [Brattle Theatre](#) in Cambridge, where Shakespeare was performed for many years before it became a movie house, and where I have been a member for years. We had a full house including many SOF members and Oxfordians: Alex McNeil, Hank Whittmore, Ted Story, Bill Boyle, Charles Boyle, Catherine Hatinguais, Susanna Magri, Professor Annie Pluto, and Don Nelson.” Also in attendance were the film’s editor, Zimo Huang, associate producer Vicki Oleskey and production assistant Brianna Costa.

Some Oxfordians have seen earlier versions of *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth* at annual conferences (including Boston in November 2016) and at other screenings. The final version contains a full score of original music (by Katy Jarzewski) and some new material, including an interview with Alexander Waugh at Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey in which he outlines his persuasive case that the real Shakespeare—Edward de Vere—is buried there.

Nothing Is Truer Than Truth will be shown at the Rosendale Theatre in Rosendale, New York, on May 22 and 23. Eagan-Donovan stated that she is working on a distribution deal and planning additional screenings at theaters, libraries, and universities around the country. Members should contact her at eagandonovan@verizon.net to schedule screenings.

Researcher Finds Annotated *Hamlet* Source Text, Immediately Concludes Annotator May Have Been “Shakespeare”

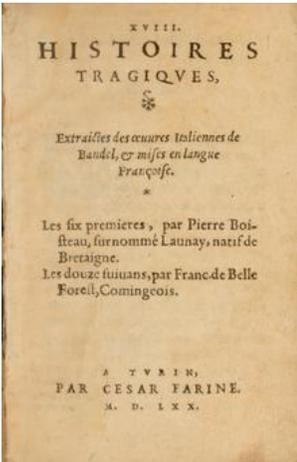
In a recent article, *The Guardian* reported in March that researcher-writer John Casson found a copy of Belleforest’s *Histoires Tragiques*—long acknowledged as a principal source of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*—in the British Library that contains six faded ink annotations. Casson told *The Guardian*: “[T]he annotations were mainly on the Hamlet section [of the Belleforest book]. It’s only one section of an entire book. . . . The ink is faded. It’s clearly ancient ink, which may be why these annotations weren’t noticed earlier. . . . It is extraordinarily rare to find a source book for Shakespeare’s plays with notes on. This is virtually unique.” Casson said that three of the annotated passages deal with the question of pretending to be mad. Casson acknowledged that the annotations were not dated, but believes that they were written before 1601, when he believes *Hamlet* was written.

As *The Guardian* reported, Casson is a proponent of the Neville theory—that Sir Henry Neville (1564-1615) was the real Shakespeare. His book, *Sir Henry Neville Was Shakespeare: The Evidence*, was published in 2016. Casson believes that Neville himself “could have” made the annotations, citing similarities between the γ symbols in the Belleforest book to Neville’s known use of the Greek Υ . Casson briefly outlined the weakness of the Stratfordian claim: “William from Stratford has the backing of the mass of academic authority [as the author of the plays], they’re so used to it, and challenging it is academic death or danger to your reputation. . . . There are no letters from William of Stratford. His parents were illiterate, his daughters were illiterate: how do you become the greatest writer ever when your family are illiterate? . . . His daughters lived into the 1660s and never said anything about their father being a writer. There’s a real sense the man doesn’t fit.”

Casson’s argument was, of course, summarily dismissed by prominent Stratfordian Sir Brian Vickers: “This is the usual snobbery, and ignorance. They are unaware that the Elizabethan grammar school was an intense crash course in reading and writing Latin verse, prose, and plays—the bigger schools often acted plays by Terence in the original As for ‘experience of life’, there are a few blank years between his leaving Stratford and starting as an actor in the early 1590s where he might have travelled. In any case, London was full of books, he read widely, and he evidently had a receptive memory. Having acted in plays written in blank verse, lyrics and prose, he knew the conventions of drama from the inside. Above all, he had a great imagination, and didn’t need to

have been to Venice to write *The Merchant of Venice*, or *Othello*. What's most dispiriting about these anti-Stratfordians is their denial of Shakespeare's creative imagination."

We wonder if this is another example of wishful thinking, or perhaps wishful attribution? In other words,



Belleforest's translation of the "Amleth" story

one finds a copy of a book that Shakespeare used as a source and wants to believe that it had to have been the same copy that Shakespeare owned. See "From

the Editor: Alvearie Interesting..." in the Spring 2014 *Newsletter*, where we reported on the claims of two American book dealers that their copy of John Baret's 1580 *Alvearie* was annotated by Shakespeare himself.

Moreover, it's not clear from *The Guardian* article exactly how many of the six annotations in the Belleforest book appeared in the Hamlet section, nor is it clear how

similar are the y's in the annotations to Neville's Greek Y's. What is the provenance of the Belleforest book now in the British Library? How do we know it didn't belong to someone else (like maybe Oxford)? As for Sir Brian Vickers's utterly predictable response, we note first that Vickers himself has his own problems with the Shakespeare academic establishment (see p. 31 of this issue). Second, we're getting awfully tired of hearing about the superb education offered by Elizabethan grammar schools. That myth, largely concocted by T.W. Baldwin in a two-volume 1944 book and accepted blindly by mainstream academics ever since, has been debunked, most recently by Steven Steinburg on our website: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/stratfordians-mythical-grammar-school-debunked-by-steinburg/>. Third, we're tired of hearing that anti-Stratfordians don't believe that the real Shakespeare had any creative imagination—that claim itself is a creative imagination.

On the Road with Julie Sandys Bianchi

There's nothing like a long road trip to rechannel one's thinking. While winding through the Natchez Trace recently, I was musing about how the educational experience the shoemaker's son Christopher Marlowe received at Kings School Canterbury is offered as an equivalent example of the quality of education Shakespeare would have received at Stratford-upon-Avon's Grammar School. It seemed to me that a 16th-century grammar school that had cultivated a writer like Marlowe would also have produced other celebrated graduates who had thrived in that educational environment. In the same way

the Westminster School under Camden had incubated so many geniuses, Kings School Canterbury and the Stratford-upon-Avon grammar school ought to have had other success stories.

When I finally was able to connect to the internet, I checked out the online Alumni Cantabrigiensis and the Alumni Oxonienses databases and searched for students of either university who also were recorded as having attended school in Stratford-upon-Avon anytime during (and after) Shakespeare's conceivable school years: 1569-1599.

Are you surprised that in the schools' records there were NO students of either university who named Stratford-upon-Avon as their hometown, or for whom there is record of their having attended the grammar school in Stratford-upon-Avon during the last third of the 16th century?

Conversely, lots of young men went to university from Marlowe's Kings School of Canterbury. Besides Marlowe, at least three of those King School students born in the 16th century achieved notoriety—Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork (1566-1643), William Harvey (1578-1657), and John Tradescant the Elder (1570s-1638).

New Play Commissioned About Shakespeare and Southampton

The Guardian also reported in March that a new play has been commissioned which "will delve into mysterious relationship between the Bard and his cross-dressing aristocratic patron Henry Wriothesley," Third Earl of Southampton. The play was commissioned by Samuel Hodges, artistic director of the Nuffield theater in Southampton, and is being written by Nick Dear. It is expected to premiere in September of this year.

Hodges and Dear of course take for granted that Southampton was the patron of the man from Stratford. They admit that little is known about their relationship, but accept that possibility that the two had an affair in 1592-93, "when Shakespeare left a plague-ravaged London and began writing longform poetry and sonnets," and that the first two written works bearing the name William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*—both dedicated to Southampton—emerged from it.

The Guardian wrote that "rather than exploring one single line of thinking about Shakespeare and the earl," Hodges and Dear "would embrace the speculation, presenting the 'multiple realities' about what could have happened between them, and the impact the relationship had both on Shakespeare's work and life." Dear added: "All the information about their relationship is so speculative that I thought: why insist on one given reality—why not propose something which might have multiple realities and embrace the fact it is conjecture?"

Conjecture indeed.

Horatio Society Meets in the Napa Valley

About forty Horatio Society members and other authorship skeptics were welcomed by Ben and Simi August on January 28, 2018, at their spectacular “Castle” vineyard in Napa, California, for an afternoon of wine, lunch, speakers and videos. John Hamill urged attendees to become members of the SOF, and to donate to the Research Grant Program. Coleen Moriarty, a recipient of an SOF research grant, spoke briefly about her ongoing research in Italy before Hamill introduced the speakers.

Peter Sturrock, retired Stanford astrophysicist and author of *AKA Shakespeare: A Scientific Approach to the Authorship Question*, spoke on “The Hidden Text in the Dedication of the Sonnets.” He explained that in scientific research one tries to assess each piece of evidence numerically. In the case of cryptograms, we can ask, “What is the probability that this message has appeared by chance?” If the answer is a very small number, one can take the evidence seriously. If there are two or more hidden messages, one can multiply the probabilities.

According to Sturrock, John Rollett found that the probability that the name “HENRY” appeared by chance in a cryptogram in the dedication to the Sonnets is one in 1,000. The probability that the name WRIOTHESLEY appeared by chance is approximately one in 100,000. Hence, the probability of finding both names in the dedication is approximately one in 100 million. Sturrock stated that the dedication provides us with the strongest evidence that Edward de Vere is the hidden writer we know as Shakespeare.

Patrick McCarthy spoke about Hamlet’s relationships with Polonius and Ophelia in the light of Oxford’s connections with William Cecil and his daughter Anne. He also discussed the *Hales v. Petit* case in terms of its role in the graveyard scene and the related themes of homicide and inheritance integral to the play. His presentation was made in the context of his article, “Hamlet’s Intent,” in the Winter 2017 issue of the *Newsletter*.

David Rains Wallace, author of *Shakespeare’s Wilderness* (reviewed in the Summer 2017 issue of the *Newsletter*), cited the ancient Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* as an example of wild mythology. Its tale of a bear-man hero (Beowulf, i.e., bee wolf, or bear) fighting with bear-like monsters may reach back to the bear totemism that prevailed in Europe for as long as 80,000 years. In *Beowulf* the bear-monster’s wilderness is portrayed as evil, but it is powerful, and it contains values: in this case, a magic sword.

Shakespeare’s wilderness is also powerful and valuable. In *The Winter’s Tale*, a bear in the “Bohemian desert” saves the infant Perdita by eating the courtier who exposes her, leading to the redemption of her parents’ kingdom. Shakespeare differs from the *Beowulf* bard in that he likes wilderness. He sees it as a deserved refuge for wild animals. In several of his plays good characters



Ugo Baldassari and Marti Litchman

escape from civilized evil by going to the wilderness. This attitude seems foreign to the businessman of Stratfordian dogma, but less so to a man who served in a Scottish border military campaign, crossed the Alps twice, and may have sailed down the “Bohemian” Balkan coast. That the thirteen-year-old Edward de Vere’s tutor was Lawrence Nowell, then owner of the only known manuscript of *Beowulf*, seems relevant.

In his presentation, “Too Little Care: Shakespeare and the Stratford Enclosures,” David Gowdey, editor of *Secret Whispers, Searching for the Truth of Shakespeare*, described William Shakespeare’s reaction to the crisis that developed in England when local property owners began to enclose their land. Hundreds of thousands of tenant farmers and farm workers lost their livelihoods and were thrown into abject poverty. The rich who chose to enclose their lands faced condemnation throughout England, and were described by a contemporary as “despoilers of towns, ruiners of commonwealths, occasioners of beggary.” The writer behind *As You Like It* and *King Lear* passionately took the side of the characters living in the fields, and opposed the rich villains of the play who had put them there. But when the enclosure crisis reached Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakespeare took a different stand. He stood to lose income if the enclosure went through. He signed an agreement that protected him against any loss of income, in exchange for not opposing the enclosure.

Ugo Baldassari and Marti Litchman read a scene from Baldassari’s new play, *Shaking Spears*, a romantic comedy focusing on the Authorship Question. The play is set in two time periods, Elizabethan and Contemporary, which are intertwined throughout the arc of the action. The unifying locus is London’s Bishopsgate area—the site of Fisher’s Folly (Silextra), de Vere’s hothouse of artistic activity during the 1580s—and a trendy neighborhood today. At Silextra, 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. But the discovery of a “smoking gun” manuscript draws them into a harrowing chase.

At the end of the presentations, Ben August offered a taste of his excellent estate produced wine, 17th Earl, to the group. Then the three winning short videos from the “Who Wrote Shakespeare?” Video Contest were shown—Lowell Widmer’s “The Obvious Shakespeare,” Robin Phillips’s “Who Wrote Shakespeare?” and Christopher Carolan’s “Shakespeare Out of Bounds.”

[Reported by John Hamill and Ramon Jiménez]

Oxfordian Presentations in Seattle

On March 13, 2018, local Oxfordians in Seattle sponsored a discussion of *The Merchant of Venice* at Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum, a venue that describes itself as “a gathering place for books and the people who love them.” The event preceded a production of the play by the Seattle Shakespeare Company, which opened a week later.

The speakers were Dr. Earl Showerman and Prof. Michael Delahoyde. Showerman presented many reasons why Gaspar Ribeiro, a sixteenth-century Portuguese Jew living in Venice—and forced to convert to Christianity—was likely the model for Shylock. Showerman added that he believes Edward de Vere, seventeenth earl of Oxford, who was based in Venice for several months in 1575-76, was the true Shakespeare. De Vere and Ribeiro attended the same church in Venice, and de Vere probably knew Ribeiro. Even if he didn’t, Ribeiro’s reputation in the Venice and Jewish community was well known during the time.

Showerman pointed out various similarities between Ribeiro’s life and plot points in the play. Ribeiro’s daughter eloped with a Christian, taking her father’s ducats, just as Jessica, Shylock’s daughter, elopes with Shylock’s money and jewels. Perhaps the most striking parallel concerns their manner of speaking: Ribeiro repeated words and phrases as someone with dementia might do, just as Shylock frequently repeats words and phrases. [Note: Showerman’s article on this topic, “Shakespeare’s Shylock and the Strange Case of Gaspar Ribeiro,” appeared in the Summer 2011 issue of *Shakespeare Matters*.]

Professor Delahoyde insightfully integrated the art of sixteenth-century Venice with the play. He believes *The Merchant of Venice* should be viewed from different perspectives. He demonstrated that Venetian painting often showed several perspectives of the same scene from different vantage points. In the play, while Shylock appears to be a villain, Antonio and Portia are villains to him. In the trial scene, Portia asks Shylock for mercy, but

offers none to Shylock. Both the Jewish and the Christian religions endorse mercy, but no one does in the play. To paraphrase a critic of the play: In *The Merchant of Venice* we see everyone behaving badly. [Note: Delahoyde’s article on this topic, “Shakespeare’s Perspective Art,” appeared in the Summer 2014 issue of the *Newsletter*.]

The presentations were followed by a lively and interesting Q&A session. Many questions and comments centered on how the true author of Shakespeare—the man from Stratford or Edward de Vere—could have known these intimate details of characters and ambience in Venice.

Special thanks should be given to Seattle Oxfordian Joella Werlin, who played a leading role in organizing the event. Werlin also assisted in arranging for Earl Showerman to speak to another group on the previous day. On March 12, Showerman gave a ninety-minute presentation at the University of Washington Seattle campus. In “Shylock in Shakespeare’s Venice: A Different Perspective,” Showerman addressed “what difference might it make to learn that the characters and setting of *Merchant of Venice* were inspired by Shakespeare’s personal experience of 16th century Venice, and not from books and reports he heard at the Mermaid Tavern in London, as most scholars would maintain?” This event was sponsored by the Access Student Resource Group at UW.

[Contributed by Tom Townsend and Earl Showerman.]

Oxfordian Newsletters from WWII Era Now on SOF Website

As announced on the SOF website in April, newsletters from the earliest Oxfordian organization in the U.S. are now [available on the SOF website](#) for free viewing and download in searchable pdf format. The newsletters were published between 1939 and 1948 by the American branch of the Shakespeare Fellowship. The original Shakespeare Fellowship was founded in England in 1922, and its membership included J.T. Looney, the discoverer of the Oxfordian theory, and George Greenwood, an attorney, member of Parliament, and brilliant analyst of Shakespeare’s legal knowledge. Its purpose was to explore the Shakespeare authorship question. It had an international membership, with most members in England and the U.S.

Although the organization was originally comprised of members supporting various candidates as the true “Shakespeare,” it eventually became a predominantly Oxfordian group. When it suspended operations in England in 1939 due to the advent of World War II, three American Oxfordian pioneers—Eva Turner Clark, Charles Wisner Barrell and Louis Bénédet—founded the American Shakespeare Fellowship to carry the torch of Oxfordianism during that troubled time.

All forty-three issues of the *News Letter* published by the American Shakespeare Fellowship from 1939 to 1948—almost 600 pages in total—have been posted on the SOF website. These publications provide an inside view of the history of the first Oxfordian organization in the U.S. and also contain fascinating early research and analysis about the authorship question by Clark, Barrell, and Bénézet, as well as other Oxfordians.

You can view or download them by following [this link](#). The webpage lists all the articles that are in each issue.

President Tom Regnier said, “The SOF is proud to make these historically important newsletters from the earliest Oxfordian organization in America freely available to the world. We hope this will facilitate further research into the Oxfordian theory and also help provide a look into the development of the movement. The posting of these newsletters is a step toward the SOF’s long-range goal of ensuring that Oxfordian research materials are preserved for and available to future generations.”

The SOF is grateful to the following persons for their assistance: Eddy Nix for providing copies of the bulk of the newsletters, James Warren for cataloguing them through his *Index to Oxfordian Publications*, and Erik Eisenman for doing much of the editing, optimizing, and posting of the pdf documents. The SOF also thanks Jennifer Newton, Lucinda Foulke, Mark Andre Alexander, and the SOF’s Data Preservation Committee for their help and advice.

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News Letter

The SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP

—AMERICAN BRANCH—

VOL. 1

DECEMBER, 1939

NO. 1

To Members of The Shakespeare Fellowship:

With the July number of THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP NEWS-LETTER, there was enclosed a brief statement to the effect that Captain B. M. Ward (Reserve Officer, K. D. Gds) had been notified that he would shortly be called up for military duties. The statement further said that Mr. Percy Allen had kindly consented to carry on as Honorary Secretary of the Fellowship until the Annual General Meeting in London, when a new Honorary Secretary would be elected.

Events have moved with great rapidity since the July NEWS-LETTER was issued and all of England’s men and women have been mobilized for war emergencies. In view of this stern fact, Mr. Allen has issued the following statement:

“With the concurrence of our President, it has been decided, regretfully, that the activities of THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP be suspended until further notice. Members’ Subscriptions, normally due November next, need not be sent; but the Acting Hon. Sec. will be pleased to receive any sums that members voluntarily forward to him, towards the reserve funds of the FELLOWSHIP. It is intended to continue publication of the NEWS-LETTER, delivery of lectures, etc., as soon as international circumstances permit. (Signed) Acting Hon. Sec. Percy Allen, 99, Corringham Road, London, N.W. 11.”

Knowledge of the temporary suspension of the activities of THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP, together with the lamentable circumstances which have forced this decision, has been received by American members of the FELLOWSHIP with sorrow and concern.

The interest that has been aroused in the question of the authorship of the Shakespeare Plays must not be allowed to sleep—it will not die—for

lack of a publication to keep members of the Fellowship informed of what is transpiring in the way of research in the field.

The example of the officers of THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP; whose untiring devotion to the literary problem for the solution of which the society was organized, has been an inspiration to members on this side of the Atlantic. As a tribute to these officers and to the cause for which they stand, it is the desire of the American members of the FELLOWSHIP to “carry on.”

Toward this end, a meeting was called for November 10th of those members of the society living in this country. At this meeting THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP (American Branch) was organized and the following officers were elected: President, Dr. Louis P. Bénézet; Vice-Presidents, James Stewart Cushman and Mrs. Eva Turner Clark; Secretary and Treasurer, Charles Wisner Barrell. The chief objects of the American Branch will be research in the field of Shakespearean literature and history, with special attention to the claims made for the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford as author of the Plays, and the publication of the bi-monthly NEWS-LETTER, by means of which members may be kept informed of what is going on in the field.

The officers of the American Branch hope they may have the co-operation of all American members and that those members of THE SHAKESPEARE FELLOWSHIP in England who are free to do so in such troublous times will keep us informed of developments there in the field of our literary problem.

—Eva Turner Clark

NEW YORK CITY, U. S. A.
November 21, 1939

Report of the Nominations Committee

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Nominations Committee is pleased to present the SOF membership with a slate of three outstanding candidates to stand for election for three-year terms on the Board of Trustees at the annual membership meeting October 11-14 in Oakland, California. The Nominations Committee is also responsible for nominating a trustee of the SOF Board for the office of President.

Nominations to the Board and to the office of President may also be initiated by written petition of at least ten members in good standing, so long as the petition is submitted to the Nominations Committee by August 15, 2018, which is the required sixty days before the annual meeting. Petitions may be sent to drubin@yorku.ca or to P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA, 02466.

The results of the Board election will be posted on the SOF website immediately after the annual meeting and reported in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*.

Nominee for a three-year term to the SOF Board and for a one-year term as President:

John Hamill is a former President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. He retired from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in San Francisco as a project manager in 2010. He attended the University of Puerto Rico, California State University, and the University of California at Davis. He has a Masters in Historical Geography and is an independent scholar who has written frequently for *The Oxfordian* and the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*. When the Shakespeare Oxford Society

merged with the Shakespeare Fellowship in 2013 to become the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, he became the newly-named organization's first president. He received a special award from the SOF in 2016 for his roles in unifying the two organizations and establishing the Research Grant Program.

Nominees for three-year terms to the SOF Board:

Earl Showerman, M.D., has been a patron of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for over forty years. He began his personal study of Shakespeare after retiring from medical practice fifteen years ago. He has published numerous peer-reviewed articles on Shakespeare's use of Greek drama sources and the playwright's remarkable medical knowledge. Over the past decade he has taught a series of Shakespeare authorship classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute of Southern Oregon University. He is a graduate of Harvard College and University of Michigan Medical School. In 2012, he presented the keynote address to the Shakespearean Authorship Trust (SAT) Conference in London. He is an associate of the SAT and a former president and trustee of the Shakespeare Fellowship.

James Warren is nominated for a second consecutive three-year term. He was a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of State for more than twenty years, during which he served in public diplomacy positions at American embassies in eight countries, mostly in Asia. He later served as Executive Director of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) and then as Regional Director for Southeast Asia for the Institute of International Education (IIE). He is the editor of *An Index to Oxfordian Publications*, and has given presentations at several Oxfordian conferences. He is the author of *Summer Storm*, a novel with an Oxfordian theme.

Many thanks!

Leaving the Board of Trustees is **Tom Regnier**, who has served the maximum two consecutive three-year terms as a trustee. For the last four years, he has served as SOF President.

Richard Joyrich, who is also completing his second consecutive three-year term as a trustee, is also leaving the Board; he has been instrumental in planning our annual conferences. The SOF thanks both of them for their dedicated service.

The 2018 Nominations Committee consists of Don Rubin (chair), Cheryl Eagan-Donovan and Joan Leon.

SAQ Class Taught at University of New Mexico

On April 16, 2018, Daniel Steven Crafts offered a one-session course on the Shakespeare Authorship Question at the University of New Mexico Extension program in Albuquerque. It was described as follows in the course catalog: "That the man from Stratford wrote the poems and plays we attribute to 'Shakespeare' is simply a hypothesis. One that stands on shaky legs indeed. A careful examination of the facts indicates that this is [a] very complicated subject and by no means one that can be lightly dismissed. More and more genuine research is appearing and the list of signers of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt grows continually."

Crafts reported to us that this was the second time he had offered the course. "The first time I found myself virtually 'preaching to choir' as nearly everyone was familiar with the subject and merely wanted to see if I had new information. This time there was more curiosity. I had changed my presentation slightly, reflecting a few new discoveries and reading more of the hilarious Mark Twain essay—always guaranteed to get laughs. The first half of the two-hour class focused on the man from Stratford, including my introduction to the problem, a 1974 syndicated newspaper column by Sydney J. Harris taking to task the traditional story by posing twenty unanswered questions. The remaining hour examined the case for Edward de Vere. I included two short videos from Alexander Waugh's Youtube channel. Response from those in attendance was most gratifying.

"But there was a marvelous surprise waiting for me. Attending the class, having driven down from Santa Fe, was Jonathan Dixon. After class he presented to me his 2005 paper, 'While counterfeit supposes bleared thine eyne....,' which documents contemporary sources saying that noblemen (plural!), especially university student noblemen wishing to publish their work, use front men. This was common practice! I was stunned to read this. Why has no one picked up on this significant discovery? Among the sources cited by Dixon were Robert Greene's *Farewell to Folly* (1591), Henry Crosse's *Vertues Common-wealth* (1603), and George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie*, in which he cites de Vere, but begins with 'very many notable gentlemen.'" Dixon's article, delivered at the Shakespeare Fellowship conference in 2004, was published in *Shakespeare Matters* (Winter 2005 issue).

Daniel Steven Crafts is an award-winning composer of operas, symphonies, concertos, large orchestral works and a subgenre of opera known as "Gonzo Opera," as well as "Bury My Name," a two-act theater work for narrator, singer and piano, which explores the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

University of London's Online Authorship Question Course

The world's first MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on the Shakespeare Authorship Question, produced by the University of London and hosted by Coursera, was launched on February 19, 2018. It was organized and developed by Ros Barber. The free course, called "Introduction to Who Wrote Shakespeare," was almost a year in the planning and making, and includes interviews with leading doubters including Sir Mark Rylance, Professor William Leahy, and Alexander Waugh. The course is deliberately designed to be "candidate-neutral," explained Barber. "It's focused purely on the arguments for and against the Stratford man."

The course description reads: "This MOOC explores critical thinking, and the interpretation of texts, through the Shakespeare authorship question. Using doubt about Shakespeare's authorship as our playground, we will explore the key concept of authorship attribution, while developing skills in literary analysis, interpretation, and argument. Through forensic exploration of key texts, by both Shakespeare and other writers of the period, you will learn why Shakespeare's authorship is questioned, and what evidence is cited on both sides of the debate."

Ros Barber reported on the reaction so far: "As is usual for a new MOOC there were some teething problems (laughably inaccurate automatically-generated transcripts, less than perfect quiz questions). What was unusual for a new MOOC was the great quantity of bile

thrown in the direction of the teaching staff and their university. But this is the Shakespeare authorship question, and so predictably feelings were running high. The English department at Goldsmiths has fielded several complaints about the course, but since it passed the University of London's strict quality control procedures, it is being defended in the name of academic freedom.

"The MOOC's discussion forum was swiftly occupied and dominated by the ultra-Stratfordians from Oxfraud.com. So far (and the course is on its third four-week iteration) the key members of this group have consistently re-registered to bestow their authoritative (and often sarcastic) opinions on any learners who venture to express doubt in that space.

"The forum, fortunately, is only incidental to the course, which is structured chiefly around video content. I'm currently adding additional textual material answering various Stratfordian objections and counter-arguments raised on the forum. When the objections are extracted from the bile, they are useful to us, in that they engage with the details and help us to move the arguments on.

"The MOOC will keep running every four weeks for the foreseeable future. Even experienced and knowledgeable anti-Stratfordians are finding it useful. If you're interested, do register (coursera.org/learn/Shakespeare)."



2018 Video Contest

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship's second annual "Who Wrote Shakespeare?" Video Contest is accepting submissions now through July 31, 2018! First prize: \$1,000, second prize: \$500, third prize: \$250.

The mission of the "Who Wrote Shakespeare?" Video Contest is to promote evidence that supports reasonable doubt about the Shakespeare authorship and encourages its discussion. Videos by up to sixteen Finalists will be available for public voting, which we hope will arouse even more interest in authorship. Share this link with your friends by email and social media: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/sof-video-contest/>

Videos must be **no more than three minutes** in length and must address the Shakespeare authorship question in an innovative and original way.

The deadline for submissions is July 31, 2018. Finalists will be announced on September 1, 2018, and their videos will be available for public viewing and voting from September 1 to October 1, 2018. The winners will be announced publicly on the SOF website and at the SOF conference in Oakland on October 14, 2018.

For Complete Contest Rules and to Enter, click on this link: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/sof-video-contest/>



SOF 2018 Conference Update; Call for Papers (Deadline August 1)

The 2018 Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conference will be held from Thursday, October 11, to Sunday, October 14, 2018, at the Marriott Oakland City Center Hotel in Oakland, California.

Accommodations

We have reserved a block of rooms at the Marriott Oakland City Center (1001 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94607). Room rates at the Marriott have a published rate of over \$350 a night. SOF, however, is offering conference attendees a significantly reduced rate of **\$149 per night** plus tax (single or double room). This rate is \$30/night less than the room rate at our recent conference in Chicago. The conference itself will take place at the hotel in the ballroom and the Skyline Room on the top floor of the hotel.

Our rate also includes in-room Wi-Fi for \$1 a night (usually \$9.95). For anyone joining the Marriott Rewards program (it is free to join), even the \$1 a night charge will be waived. We recommend that you join Marriott Rewards online when booking (or you can do it when you check in). If you are interested in staying an extra night, you can get the same rate for the night of October 14 as well.

The Marriott is well located and may easily be reached from either the San Francisco or Oakland airports by BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit).

Room reservations are available now by phone or through its website and can be changed or canceled up to a week before the conference. Marriott's special group reservation line is 877-901-6632. They will ask you which city you are booking for and the name of the group. Or go to the SOF website and click on "Conference"; then click on "Registration" in the drop-down menu. Because the special rate covers single or double rooms, the online reservation may show only one person booked even if the room is being booked for two people. Not to worry. If you book a room, the rate will be good for two.

Conference Registration

A full conference registration includes all conference materials, numerous coffee/tea/Danish breaks over the four days, a buffet lunch on Saturday, and the closing awards luncheon on Sunday. Daily rates are also available.

The full conference registration fee is **\$250** for SOF members who register by **August 31** and **\$275** for SOF members registering after that date. The full conference fee for non-members is \$275 for registration by August 31 and \$300 after that date. Daily fees are \$75/day and an extra Sunday luncheon can be purchased for \$40.

Registration is available now on the SOF website. <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2018-sof-conference/>. Further details on the program agenda will appear on the SOF website.

Call for Papers

The program committee has received a number of proposals. **The deadline for paper proposals for this year's conference is August 1, 2018.** Among the approved proposals is a debate among three Oxfordian scholars—Katherine Chiljan, John Hamill, and Hank Whittemore—over the identity of the Dark Lady of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Other featured speakers will include Kevin Gilvary, author of *The Fictional Lives of Shakespeare* (2018) (see review, page 30 of this issue), and David Rains Wallace, author of *Shakespeare's Wilderness* (2017) (see review, Summer 2017 issue of the *Newsletter*).

Proposals should be 100-300 words in length and sent to Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net. Proposals that address the topics listed below will be given preference:

- Legitimization of the SAQ in academia, in secondary education, and with the media.
- Deficiencies in the traditional attribution of authorship with a focus on the abundance of erudition and rare sources manifest in the Shakespeare canon (Shakespeare's familiarity with Italy; his Latin, Greek, Italian, French, and Spanish languages; his knowledge of music, law, history, medicine, military and nautical terms, etc.).
- Revelations of Oxford's life (or another candidate's life) that support his authorship of the Shakespeare canon, including new documentary discoveries, new interpretation of documents or literary works that affect authorship, Shakespeare characters that relate to Oxford's biography (e.g., William Cecil/Polonius in *Hamlet*), new facts on Oxford's travel, education, books, and connections, or new dating of a play or poem.
- Historical information relevant to the SAQ and/or people of the era with literary, theatrical, political or social relevance to the Shakespeare canon, Oxford, or Shakespeare of Stratford (e.g. Jonson, Southampton, Essex).

Presentations customarily should be designed to be delivered in 30 to 45 minutes, including time for questions and answers. Proposals submitted by members of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, De Vere Society, or other Shakespeare-related educational institutions will be given special consideration in selecting conference papers.



An Oxfordian Looks into Henslowe's Diary

by Ramon Jiménez

The account book of theater financier Philip Henslowe, commonly called Henslowe's Diary, is the single most valuable document relating to the theater business surviving from early modern England. It includes an intermittent, but unusually specific, account of performance dates and receipts for plays, as well as records of loans and payments to playwrights, and other financial transactions that Henslowe made during the last decade of Elizabeth's reign. It may surprise some that in its extraordinary detail it tends to support the argument of those, especially those Oxfordians, who dispute the Stratfordian theory of authorship.

Henslowe had his Rose theater built in Southwark in 1587, and in 1591 began recording hundreds of transactions relating to its operations and expenses. During the approximately twenty years that the theater was open, he hosted half a dozen playing companies, and advanced payments to more than twenty playwrights, including Jonson, Dekker, Drayton and Webster. Although Henslowe financed the staging of several Shakespeare plays, the name never appears in the Diary.

Of special interest are the number of play titles found in the Diary. Of the 280 plays mentioned, 90% (251) have perished, that is, no texts survive (Carson 67-68). Even more startling is the claim made by G. E. Bentley that about 60% (170) of the plays would be totally unknown except for their appearance in the Diary (15-16).

Seven plays with Shakespearean titles are mentioned in the Diary between the spring of 1591 and June of 1596—*Henry VI*, *Titus Andronicus*, *King Lear*, *The Taming of a Shrew*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Hamlet* and *Henry V*.

harey the vj was performed fifteen times between March 1591 and January 1593, but no part number was specified. Most scholars agree that this was one of the canonical *Henry VI* plays that appeared in the First Folio. The first performance, on March 3, was annotated with the word "ne" (Foakes 16-20). In his edition of the Diary in 1908, W. W. Greg suggested that this annotation, which appears before the titles of about 65 of the plays mentioned in the Diary, might mean that it was a new play or a newly-revised one (*Diary* 2:148). This explanation is accepted by most scholars. A slight variant was proposed by E. K. Chambers in 1923—that the letters stood for "n[ew] e[n]terlude]" (2:141 n.1). But two other interpretations have since been proposed.

In 1991, Winifred Frazer suggested that the annotation indicated that the play was performed at the Newington Butts playhouse, about a mile south of the Rose, which Henslowe occasionally leased when his theater hosted



another attraction, such as bear baiting (34-35). Purpose-built in the late 1570s, the Newington Butts playhouse was until 1587 the only theater south of the Thames, and remained in operation until the late 1590s. Theater historian Herbert Berry has speculated that when the Earl of Oxford's Men re-formed in 1580 under John and Lawrence Dutton, they did so at Newington Butts.¹

In his new edition of the Diary in 2002, R. A. Foakes observed that "the takings for these performances [those marked 'ne'] were always high," and that "either a higher charge was made to spectators at these plays or they attracted much larger audiences" (xxxiv). In 2003, Diana Price proposed that Henslowe's "ne" stood for "2" or "twice," that is, that the admission charged for these performances was twice the customary one (62-78). Each of the three theories has a certain logic, but also a weakness, and none of them satisfactorily answers the question. But for the present purpose a final explanation is not necessary.

titus & ondronicus was performed five times between January 1593 and June 1594, the first performance, on January 24, being annotated with the word "ne." The last two performances, on June 5 and 12, are recorded as taking place at the Newington Butts playhouse (Foakes 21-22). Most scholars also agree that this was the canonical play, although most assert that it was not new in 1594. Oxfordians generally agree that these two titles, *harey the vj* and *titus & ondronicus*, refer to canonical Shakespeare plays, but they cannot have been new plays in the 1590s.

the tamynge of A shrowe was performed a single time in June 1594 (Foakes 22). This is generally considered to be the anonymous *Shrew* play that was printed in 1598. The canonical *The Taming of the Shrew* was not printed until it appeared in the First Folio.

kinge leare was performed twice in Henslowe's Rose theater in April 1594, during the tenancy of the Queen's Men and the Earl of Sussex's Men (Foakes 21). It is certainly the anonymous *The moste famous Chronicle Historie of Leire kinge of England and his Three Daughters* that was registered the following month by Edward White, co-publisher of Q1 of *Titus Andronicus* earlier in the year. There is no extant copy of a quarto proceeding from this entry, and it is likely that none was printed. Both Chambers (4.17) and Greg (*Diary* 2.162) assert that it was not a new play at that time, but neither gives a reason for thinking so. The anonymous *Leir* was not printed until 1605, and its title page indicated that it had been "diverse and sundry times lately acted," suggesting that the play had been revived

almost ten years after its performances in 1594. Of the five copies that survive, one was published in facsimile by John S. Farmer in 1910. In his introduction, he wrote, "The traces (almost obliterated) of writing on the title page are . . . 'first written by Mr. William Shakespeare.'" He added, "This note is devoid of authority," but offered no reason or explanation. The canonical *King Lear* was registered in 1607 and Q1, the "Pied Bull" Quarto, published the next year. *King Lear* was the fifth of Shakespeare's plays to bear the spelling "Shak-speare" or "Shake-speare" on its title page, there being more than twenty such quartos in all.²

In papers published in 2012 and 2013, I supplied substantial evidence that these two anonymous plays, *The Taming of a Shrew* and *King Leir*, were Oxford's first versions of the canonical plays bearing nearly identical titles.³ Orthodox scholars are nearly unanimous in rejecting these claims, nor do all Oxfordians agree with them.

Troilus and Cressida, Hamlet, and Harey the V—Lost Plays, or Are They?

The play title *Troilus and Cressida* occurs four times in the Diary, albeit in various spellings. The first appearance, in January 1594, recorded a payment of £4.10s to a Richard Vickers. Neither the identity of Richard Vickers nor the reason for this payment is known. Another reference to him, in 1595, appears in the production expenses section of the Diary in connection with "wares," so it is likely that he was a tradesman of some kind (Foakes 118, 191).

The remaining three appearances of this title are records of advances to playwrights Henry Chettle and Thomas Dekker in the spring of 1599. Two of the advances, totaling £4, were made in April. In the entry for the third, made on May 26 for 30 shillings, the title *troyells & creseda* has been crossed out and *the tragedie of Agamemnon* has been interlined. The next entry in the Diary, a payment of £3.5s on May 30 to the same two playwrights, reads "in fulle payment of their Booke called *the tragedie of Agamemnone*." Lastly, on June 3 Henslowe paid a fee of 7 shillings to "the m^r of Revelles" for the licensing of "A Boocke called *the tragedie of Agamemnon*" (Foakes 106, 107, 121).

Most scholars consider these entries to refer to two lost plays by Chettle and Dekker (Carson 82-84; Greg, *Diary* 2.202; Gurr 244). But another interpretation would be that the playwrights were revising an existing play, and then composing a new one or possibly a sequel, as suggested by Geoffrey Bullough (6.84). Supporting this theory is a manuscript (British Library MS Add. 10449, f. 5) containing five fragments of prompters' "plots" of plays staged by the Admiral's Men, all of which are "written in two columns on paper mounted on pasteboard, and have a hole cut near the top to enable their being hung on a peg in the playhouse" (Greg, *Henslowe Papers*

129). One fragment contains thirteen scenes of a play about Troilus and Cressida. This fragment, which Foakes dates to April 1599 (329), includes the names of the characters in the play, all but one of whom appear in the canonical *Troilus and Cressida* (Coghill 88, 213). The actors' names in the fragment have been identified with actors associated with the Admiral's Men between 1597 and 1602 (Foakes 329)⁴.

Moreover, as Bullough determined, the fragment reveals associations with the canonical *Troilus and Cressida*, as well as traces of several scenes in that play:

- Both plays make use of several Trojan narratives, including Homer, Caxton and Chaucer.
- In both plays, the "story interweaves love and war, and the bedding of Troilus and Cressida occurs at the middle of the play."
- Both contain conference scenes.
- In both plays the death of Patroclus is set later than in the sources, and is not dramatized.
- Both contain scenes in which Achilles is entreated by the Greeks to join the battle.
- Both seem to have balanced Troilus and Cressida against Paris and Helen.
- Both include a confrontation between Troilus and Diomed before the battle between Achilles and Hector.
- Both contain scenes in which the Greeks rejoice at the death of Hector.

According to Bullough, "Shakespeare's piece owed something . . . to Dekker and Chettle's potboiler, which anticipated not only the general lay-out of his material but also several of his most important scenes." He suggested that Shakespeare "wished to do better than Chettle and Dekker" ("Lost 'Troilus'" 38-40).

Although it is not clear whether the payments to Chettle and Dekker were for one play or two, for a new composition or a revision, the list of identical characters' names and identical elements in the "plot" fragment suggest that the first two advances made to them, in April, refer to the play we know as Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. Payments for new plays at this time were generally about £6 or £7 (Greg, *Henslowe's Diary* 2:126-127). The performance listings in the Diary end in 1597, and the play does not appear in them.

What is considered to be the canonical *Troilus and Cressida* was registered in February 1603, as performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and again in 1609. In neither case was an author named, and in the second instance there was no performance information. A Quarto was printed in 1609 that exists in two states. On the title page of the first is the statement "As it was acted by the Kings Maiesties servants at the Globe. Written by William Shakespeare." On the title page of the second, the same author is named, but performance information is absent (Palmer 1-2). It is in the second state that the

notorious epistle appears, titled “A never writer, to an ever reader. News.” The epistle not only connects the play convincingly to Edward de Vere, but also asserts that it was never staged—“never stayl’d with the Stage, never clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulgar”—thus contradicting the claims about the play’s performance. This has led to the general agreement among scholars that Shakespeare’s original version was intended for and performed at the Inns of Court or some private theater.⁵ The orthodox date for its composition is the early 1600s.

Several scholars have found other hands in the play (Robertson 114-116; Bullough 6.84), especially as regards the Prologue and Epilogue—supporting the idea that Chettle and Dekker were revising an existing play. In his Arden edition of 1982, Kenneth Palmer alluded to “the wide variety of styles in the play” (19). Among its several printings, it was described as a history, a comedy and a tragedy. The early Oxfordians—Looney, Clark, the senior Ogburns and Ogburn, Jr.—all considered Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* to be the play performed at court in December 1584 by the Earl of Oxford’s Boys under the title *Agamemnon and Ulysses*.⁶

Considering this maze of contradictory facts, it is impossible to be confident about who wrote or revised what play or plays, or when they were written and performed. But it seems highly unlikely that the *Troilus and Cressida* on which Chettle and Dekker worked in 1599 was different from the one attributed to William Shakespeare just four years later that treated the same classical legend—with a nearly identical cast and with the identical title.

Henslowe recorded a single performance of *hamlet*, on June 9, 1594, at the Newington Butts playhouse, and his share was only 8 shillings (Foakes 21). Because of the widespread doubts that Shakespeare could have written it so early in his career, Frederick Boas dubbed it the *Ur Hamlet* in 1901 (viii). Most scholars agree that it was an early version of the Hamlet story because of comments by Thomas Nashe, who referred to “whole Hamlets” in 1589, and by Thomas Lodge, who, in 1596, referred to “ye ghost which cried so miserably at ye theater like an oysterwife, ‘Hamlet, revenge.’”⁷ This is the play that Edmund Malone attributed to Thomas Kyd, an attribution that has been widely accepted. But an influential minority think that it was by Shakespeare himself, an early version of his most famous play.⁸ They don’t dispute the date—1589. To some of us, the idea that Shakespeare of Stratford wrote a *Hamlet* in 1589 is nearly as unbelievable as the idea that he wrote it at all.

Beginning in late 1595, Henslowe recorded performances by the Admiral’s Men of *harey the v* more than a dozen times during the following eight months (Foakes 33-37). The first record was preceded by “ne.” Both E. K. Chambers (4:17) and J. H. Walter (xxxvii) described these entries as referring to “the new play of ‘harey the V.’” Malone, however, thought that the entries referred to *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, and

recorded his opinion on the flyleaf of the Bodleian Library copy of the play (Daniel v-vi). Both Geoffrey Bullough and John Dover Wilson contend that Henslowe’s *harey the v* was not *Famous Victories*. Nor do they think it was Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, but neither they, nor Chambers, nor Walter, offer any explanation for what was clearly a popular play (Bullough, *Narrative* 4:167, n. 2; Wilson, “Origins” 2). They and virtually all orthodox scholars insist that the first reference to the canonical *Henry V* appeared in the Stationers’ Register on August 4, 1600.

In an appendix titled “Playhouse Inventories Now Lost,” Foakes printed seven inventories of “properties, costumes and play-books” belonging to the Admiral’s Men that were found “in a bundle of loose papers” at Dulwich College. In an inventory taken on March 10, 1598, there are entries for “Harey the fyftes dublet,” “Harey the fyftes vellet gowne” and for “j payer of hosse for the Dowlfen.” In another inventory taken on March 13, 1598, there are entries for “Harye the v. velvet gowne” and “Harye the v. satten dublet, layd with gowld lace” (Foakes 316-323). In several modern editions of *Henry V* (Walter xxxvii; Craik 9-10; Gurr, ed., *King Henry V* 226; Taylor, ed., *Henry V* 3-4), and in several lists of lost plays (Chambers 4.398-404; Sibley 73; Griffin 150-151; Knutson, *et al.*), these records of *harey the v* are either mentioned but not explained or discussed, or not mentioned at all.

There appears to be no explanation for Philip Henslowe’s multiple references to performances of a play with the title *harey the v*, except that it was Shakespeare’s play in either its Quarto or Folio form. It seems that orthodox scholars are prepared to accept the titles *Henry VI* and *Titus Andronicus* as referring to Shakespeare’s canonical plays, and the titles *King Lear* and *The Taming of a Shrew* as referring to the extant anonymous plays with those titles. But they insist that the entries for the titles *Troilus and Cressida*, *Hamlet* and *Henry V* are not Shakespeare plays, but “lost” plays by authors, unknown or conjectural. Considering academia’s pretensions to objectivity and literary expertise, these claims strike me as “fake scholarship,” a blatant disregard of documentary evidence that contradicts the Stratfordian theory. But even a cursory look into Henslowe’s Diary belies these claims, and tends to support the Oxfordian position that the pseudonymous Shakespeare wrote *Troilus and Cressida*, *Hamlet* and *Henry V* years earlier than the orthodox dates.

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Endnotes

- 1 Wickham, Berry & Ingram 320-321.
- 2 The Quartos are *Richard III*, Q2, Q4-Q8; *Richard II*, Q2-Q5; *1 Henry IV*, Q2-Q9; *Hamlet*, Q1; *King Lear*, Q1, Q2 and Q3 (1655).
- 3 "The Playwright's Progress: Edward de Vere and the two Shrew Plays," *The Oxfordian*. v. 14 (2012), 47-73, and "The Two Lear Plays: How Shakespeare Transformed His First Romance into His Last Tragedy." *The Oxfordian*. v. 15 (2013), 27-73.
- 4 A transcript of the fragment can be found in Bullough (6.220-221) and at *The Lost Plays Database*.
- 5 Taylor, "Troilus and Cressida" 103, 120-121, 131 n.13; Nosworthy 81; Ioppolo 149, 154. In Neville Coghill's opinion, the play's first performance was at the Globe in 1602/3 and only subsequently, in 1608, at "one of the Inns of Court" (78).
- 6 Looney 261-265; Clark 449; Ogburn & Ogburn, ch. 47; Ogburn, Jr. 679-680.
- 7 Nashe in his Epistle to Robert Greene's *Menaphon*; Lodge in *Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse*.
- 8 Alexander (162), Sams (121-123), Bloom (xiii. 339), and Duncan-Jones (188-189).



New Source for Shakespeare Leads to the Same Old Problems

by Bill Boyle

In February one of the more interesting items in the recent parade of Shakespeare authorship stories coming from the mainstream broke in the *New York Times* with the headline “Plagiarism Software Unveils a New Source for 11 of Shakespeare’s Plays.” The article began, “For years scholars have debated what inspired William Shakespeare’s writings.” The occasion for the story was the publication of these findings in a new edition of *A Brief Discourse of Rebellion & Rebels* by Elizabethan era diplomat George North, edited by Dennis McCarthy and June Schlueter.

The story is of the rediscovery of a long-lost 1579 manuscript in the British Library, acquired in 1933, several years after it had first been listed for sale in an auction catalog. It was filed away under an obscure shelf mark, and might have remained buried forever except for the marvels of online searching. An amateur Shakespeare scholar, Dennis McCarthy, came across the original 1927 auction catalog listing while doing online searches for connections between Thomas North, translator of *Plutarch’s Lives*, and Shakespeare. McCarthy was especially intrigued by an accompanying annotation in the catalog. As McCarthy himself tells it (in a podcast interview conducted by Barbara Bogaev, broadcast March 20 on the Folger Shakespeare Library website):

I was searching for possible sources for Shakespeare connected to the North family. And I was looking through auction books and came across a notice of this manuscript, which was up for sale in 1927. They even noted that you should compare the passages on Jack Cade with those in *Henry VI, Part 2*. And, remarkably, no one had done that. I think if other scholars had come across it, they just would think there’s no way it could have been a source, there’s no other notice of this work anywhere else. And I immediately wrote June [Schlueter]. I said, “June, we have to find this.”

Folger Shakespeare Library Director Michael Witmore’s introduction to the podcast provides more background:

[McCarthy and Schlueter] used WCopyfind, a piece of software that’s usually used to detect plagiarism, on a nearly 450-year old unpublished manuscript called *A Brief Discourse of Rebellion and Rebels* by a man named George North. They say this is where Shakespeare got the details for the death of Jack Cade in *Henry VI*, the idea for the description of dogs in *Macbeth*, the topsy-turvy world that the Fool talks about in *King Lear*, and more.

The software works by looking for collocated words—words that appear in two different sources, and in identical order. When they used the software to compare North’s manuscript and Shakespeare’s plays, they found multiple passages that matched each other. When they had the program review the 60,000 printed works in EEBO—the Early English Books Online database—they couldn’t find any other source from before the time Shakespeare was writing that exhibited the same parallels.

The *Times* story, and others around the world in the following weeks, have concentrated on the most telling of these matches, namely the opening soliloquy from *Richard III* (“Now is the winter of our discontent”), the description of rebel Jack Cade in *Henry VI Part II*, the description of dogs in *MacBeth*, the comparisons of bees and the universe in *Henry V*, and the Fool in *Lear* describing a prophecy from Merlin. In each instance the parallels are not simply the usual word matches that computerized stylometric studies have yielded (with their use of statistics to make the case of a match), but exhibit rather a deeper and richer correspondence of usages and meanings. This deeper layer of matches makes this discovery different, and perhaps as compelling as the headlines have said.

“If it proves to be what they say it is, it is a once in a generation—or several generations—find,” Folger Director Witmore said in the *Times* article. Prof. David Bevington (University of Chicago) wrote in a prepublication review, “it is a revelation for the sheer number of correlations with the plays, eclipsed only by the chronicles of Holinshed and Hall and *Plutarch’s Lives*.”

What makes this story about Shakespeare’s sources most interesting is the heretofore “unknown” factor of the manuscript, plus what the matches between it and Shakespeare reveal. The examples most cited in the news stories concern how the author (whoever he was) made use of existing historical materials and to what extent he made them uniquely his own through his creative process. The *Times* article (and most of the others that followed) used the word “plagiarism” in the headlines and leads, following naturally from the fact that the software used was designed to uncover plagiarism. So at first blush this would seem to be yet another instance of new Shakespeare scholarship diminishing the author, just as recent collaboration theories now assign some Shakespeare text to others.

The extended Folger interview with McCarthy and Schlueter gets into this important question. McCarthy himself feels that the “plagiarism” tagline is misleading, if not downright wrong. He feels that what has been

revealed is not plagiarism, but rather a genuine glimpse into the creative process. On a mainstream online discussion forum this point was raised several times by posters, one noting that “this was a typical Shakespearean practice, that is, borrowing and reworking words and ideas from passages authored by other writers.”

In the Folger podcast McCarthy discusses the word matches between the manuscript and Richard III’s soliloquy):

So to do that with the first four words, and then hit again with the next four words, it’s that unlikely. So it’s not by chance that Shakespeare’s using these terms, and is thinking with these words, and has shaped his passage with those words. He’s clearly echoing [the] prior passage. Not plagiarizing, as some have said. This is clearly a rewritten passage by Shakespeare, and is clearly a much more beautiful passage by Shakespeare. But he’s been inspired by that original text.

Later in the interview Bogaev returns to the topic of “plagiarism”:

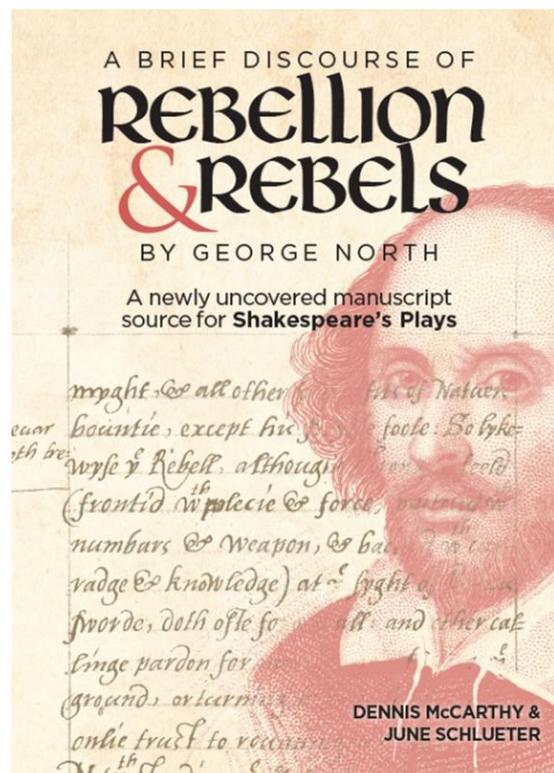
[W]hen I first read the *New York Times* article, it made me think that every time we hear about Shakespeare’s inspirations, or Shakespeare borrowing from other works, that it raises this question of whether it changes our idea of what kind of genius Shakespeare was. And perhaps people hear how you two are using plagiarism software to identify these source texts, and other scholars, and they might think, “Oh, what, was Shakespeare cheating somehow?” So what do you think the takeaway is here for how we should think of Shakespeare and his artistic process?

June Schlueter answers:

I would say it was very much like the artistic process of other playwrights at the time. That is, if there was material there that you could mine, that you could be inspired by, then, by all means, put it to good use. I’m glad you asked the question about plagiarism though, because it’s unfortunate that the software is called “plagiarism software.” It doesn’t detect plagiarism. I mean, it identifies parallel words, and phrases, and word collocations, and parallel passages, but it takes the literary mind to process all of this and to decide just how original the work is or how derivative the work is, and then to ask, “Well, does it matter?” I believe it was *The Telegraph* in London that said, “So Shakespeare plagiarized. So what?” There was no such thing as plagiarism in Shakespeare’s time.

Even with careful answers about “making use of” or “better use of” existing sources, the example that most strongly suggests that Shakespeare copied directly from a unique source is the description of Jack Cade’s death that appears in *Brief Discourse*. Shakespeare’s description has been discussed for years, with a consensus that Shakespeare must have “invented” it from his “imagination.” The play’s description of Cade being dragged through the streets by his heels, and his corpse left to rot in public, does not appear in any known printed source. McCarthy explains:

[E]ven after we had found that clearly Shakespeare is using George North’s manuscript for his own death scene of Jack Cade, once you run it through plagiarism software you find things. Like, for example, Jack Cade in George North’s manuscript is left for carrion crows and worms’ meat. “To eat meat, flesh, and foul,” is the line. And this plagiarism software just immediately jumped to York’s line in *Henry VI, Part 2*, just a scene or two later, “And made a prey for carrion kites and crows.” And clearly “For carrion crows and worms’ meat” was echoed. Shakespeare’s not only using the exact same death for Jack Cade, he then echoes that exact line. And that’s something I would have never noticed myself without plagiarism software. There’s a number of other lines that make it very clear, that jump out, and that help you find other passages that, at least, I would have missed had I not used the software.



DENNIS MCCARTHY & JUNE SCHLUETER

An equally important question, of course, is how the Stratford man (if he were the true author) got his hands on this manuscript. Any speculation about it is a reach—a big reach—no matter how one approaches it. McCarthy addresses it in the podcast:

That is the important question. It's always possible that it was circulated in manuscript and that Shakespeare had access to it. Again, it's possible that Shakespeare could have been with the Queen's Men, for example, at the time, in the 1580s, who visited Kirtling Hall. And it's possible Shakespeare could've made use of the library at that point and even copied it. And there's also the possibility of an indirect source.

For Oxfordians, all of this may prove to be yet another instance of mainstream scholarship making our case. Assuming that the correspondences between the North document and Shakespeare hold up, there simply is no good explanation of how the Stratford man got access to an unpublished manuscript, written when he was fifteen, that must have been kept in an aristocratic household. The only recourse that mainstream academics have is the tired and familiar one: "It's possible," "he must have," etc.

Edward de Vere, on the other hand, was twenty-nine in 1579 and was already writing, sponsoring other writers and creating entertainments for the court. His potential access to North (or North's to him) is clear and uncomplicated. Recall that McCarthy mentions the possibility of an "indirect source," i.e., that the "author" of *Henry VI* did not get the Cade lines directly from North, but rather from some intermediate person or document (circa 1580s?) which was based on access to North. For Stratfordians, it quickly gets complicated. Enter the "Ur" something-or-other.

Another interesting connection has been identified by Nina Green, as reported on the private Oxfordian forum Phaeton. Green examined the will of Edward, Lord North (Baron North, 1504-1564), and found that it mentions Thomas North as his son and as the translator of *Plutarch's Lives*, but that it does not mention a George North. In the *Times* article McCarthy states that George North lived at Kirtling Hall near Cambridge, which is the estate of Baron North (father of Thomas), and that he wrote *A Brief Discourse* while living there. So it would appear that there is some connection between George North and this North family.

This possible connection to the North family gets very interesting, based on what Green found in Baron North's DNB entry: "[I]n 1551 he approved the execution of his stepdaughter Alice, nee Brigandine, for the murder of her husband, North's former assistant clerk

of the parliament, Thomas Arden." That murder is dramatized in *Arden of Faversham* (printed anonymously in 1592), a play now included as "likely" by Shakespeare in last year's greatly expanded Oxford University Press's Oxford Shakespeare (see "Oxford University Press Espouses Group Theory" and my article, "The Long Goodbye," in the Fall 2016 issue of the *Newsletter*).

In *Shakespeare By Another Name* Mark Anderson noted *Arden* and its possible connection to Edward de Vere: "*The History of Murderous Michael* [performed at Whitehall in March 1579] was probably later revised and reprinted (in 1592) as the anonymous Elizabethan drama *Arden of Faversham*. *Arden* is based on a true story about a wife who conspires to kill her husband with the treacherous assistance of a servant named Michael" (148). *Murderous Michael* was performed by Oxford's players; many Oxfordians consider both plays to be the same, and that its original performance in 1579 was likely the work of Edward de Vere, or work produced under his supervision as the rising impresario of modern English drama in the late 1570s and onward.

So, a major news story that starts out being all about Shakespeare, his sources and mainstream scholarship, ends up asking more authorship questions than it answers (How did Shakespeare get access to it? Is it plagiarism?). Meanwhile, Oxfordians can look at the same facts—the year 1579, the *Brief Discourse* manuscript, the North family, etc.—add to them *Arden of Faversham* (just "canonized"), *Murderous Michael*, plays and masques at Whitehall, writers and translators and patrons, etc., and see one obvious common denominator: Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, the man just back from Italy, who would one day adopt the name "Shake-speare," and would draw on everything he had ever experienced, read, or written about in his whole life.

In Shakespeare studies there is nothing like having the right man as your Shakespeare. Having Edward de Vere as Shakespeare resolves many loose ends (old and new), including this one, the mystery of the connections between *A Brief Discourse* and the works of Shakespeare.



Preserving the Oxfordian Past to Ensure an Oxfordian Future: The Mission of the Data Preservation Committee (DPC)

by Catherine Hatinguais

The Oxfordian movement is now one hundred years old. It is time to take stock of our history and to document it, to consolidate the results of the work of past researchers in one easily accessible database and to ensure the transmission of today's knowledge to the next generation.

As years, then decades, go by and people die, all institutions experience loss, not only the inevitable personal loss of friends and colleagues, but also the avoidable loss of institutional memory and accumulated knowledge. Oxfordians haven't been spared in that respect. In the absence of a central repository and of practical and legal mechanisms to allow the transmission of documents from one generation of scholars to the next, information—sometimes crucial to our mission—gets lost. A heartbreaking example of this is the loss of the research papers of Charles Wisner Barrell, which were taken to the dump by his heirs after his death, precluding, for example, further inquiry into his investigation of the Ashbourne portrait and its restoration by the Folger Shakespeare Library, and who knows what else? While private arrangements are sometimes made for one Oxfordian to inherit the papers of another, these documents often remain unknown or inaccessible to others—a less than ideal situation: one researcher remains unaware of the work already done by his predecessors and ends up plowing the same furrow, another misses a lead or tip that might have redirected her inquiry to more fruitful quarters. We can ill afford this duplication of effort.

To fight back against this erosion of knowledge, the SOF established the Data Preservation Committee (DPC) in 2016, chaired by Kathryn Sharpe. Its mission is, broadly, (1) to inventory, collect and preserve the documents punctuating the evolution of the Oxfordian movement and its various institutions since its inception, in order to record its internal history; and (2) to encourage Oxfordian researchers to make arrangements during their lifetimes to ensure the survival and accessibility of their work and research material to future scholars.

So far, the DPC has identified four main tasks:

- Create a legal framework by which creators and owners of significantly important Oxfordian websites and blogs could, if they and the SOF so wish, hand over the maintenance of their sites to the SOF once they are no longer able to do it themselves. A contract between the SOF and the owner specifies the conditions and commitments of both parties concerning the future of the website. Several persons have expressed an interest in this procedure. Lead: Tom Regnier.
- Support the development of the Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (SOAR) database (<http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/home.php>). This library

catalog, created and populated by Bill Boyle since 2008 and enriched by the content of Jim Warren's *Index to Oxfordian Publications*, aims to facilitate the work of researchers by gathering in one place **all** articles published *by* Oxfordians and by others *about* Oxfordian personalities, events and arguments, and either storing them within the database itself or pointing the reader to the original source on the Internet whenever possible. Beyond published articles, we also hope to make accessible through SOAR photos, letters, and papers of interest to historians and scholars. Leads: Bill Boyle and Jim Warren.

- Launch a preliminary inventory of miscellaneous documents and research materials presently held in private hands to get an idea of what riches are out there, with a view at a later stage to offer their owners the possibility of scanning their collections, or parts thereof, to make them accessible to other researchers, either by posting them in SOAR and/or the SOF website or by setting up a mechanism for a more restricted access. We are exploring the feasibility of creating a legal framework for the transfer of those hardcopy or electronic holdings to the SOF archives, should the present owners wish to so ensure their legacy. The first step in this inventory is the dissemination to our members of a form (see opposite page) similar to those commonly used by universities and research centers. Leads: Michael Dudley and Catherine Hatinguais.
- Keep the SOF membership regularly informed of the DPC's progress through the *Newsletter*.

How you can help

We encourage those of you who haven't already done so to start thinking about your legacy and preparing to safeguard your most valuable Oxfordian materials. Take stock of the materials you own and consider what value they have and how they will be preserved. You might want to handle historical documents differently from your research materials.

Oxfordian history: Do you have letters from prominent Oxfordians? Early records from Oxfordian organizations? Manuscripts of unpublished Oxfordian articles? Photos and videos taken at Oxfordian events? Copies of early Oxfordian publications that are not available online? If you are willing to let us know what historical materials you own, please **respond to the inventory included in this Newsletter and send it to the SOF Data Preservation Committee** (for contact info, see below). At a later stage the DPC intends to explore with respondents which items of mutual interest you might be willing to scan and share with the SOF archives and under what conditions. This will contribute

Inventory of Oxfordian Materials — 2018

Please let SOF's Data Preservation Committee know what you have and how you plan to preserve it.

(1) Name:

Phone numbers: Cell _____ Home _____

Email:

Mailing address:

(2) Describe the subject areas to which your records relate.

- Oxfordian authors (Ogburn, Ward, etc.)
- Oxfordian events (conferences, debates, etc.)
- Oxfordian research and scholarship (original notes and manuscripts, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

(3) Describe the types of records:

- Minutes of meetings, conference reports
- Audio and visual materials (videos, PowerPoint presentations, etc.)
- Correspondence (including emails) with Oxfordian luminaries, historians, specialists, others
- Published or unpublished manuscripts of articles and books
- Speeches, lectures, talks
- Letters to the editor
- Photographs of family, friends, and contemporaries, or of historical places.
- Albums, scrapbooks
- Legal documents
- Genealogical information
- Oral histories, memoirs/reminiscences
- Memorabilia
- Diaries and journals
- Blog
- Website
- Research materials
- Other (please specify)

(4) If you have research materials, we understand you might wish to keep them and their topics private, but we encourage you to consider how to preserve them for the future.

Have you arranged (e.g. in your will) to ensure the survival and accessibility of your research materials? (such as logs, notebooks, drafts, correspondence, hard-to-find articles or books, translated documents, etc.)

- Yes
- No, but I am planning to
- No, and I have no plan to do so

(5) If you answered yes to (4) above, would you be willing to inform the SOF of these arrangements?

- Yes
- No

(6) If you answered yes to (5) above, do you wish the SOF to contact you about it?

- Yes
- No

to the SOF's efforts to document our movement's history.

Oxfordian scholarship:

Have you gathered over years of sleuthing (or have you inherited from a fellow Oxfordian) logs, notebooks, drafts, correspondence, hard-to-find articles or books, translated documents? If you have any of these research materials, what are your plans for them? Have you made arrangements (e.g., in your will) to ensure that those do not end up at the dump when you are gone and that they remain, or become, accessible to future researchers? If you choose to leave them to a trusted heir, please consider **informing the DPC of the content of your holdings and of any arrangement you may have made regarding their accessibility to researchers.** Alternatively, you might prefer to donate them to the archives of our common institution, the SOF, so that you can be sure that what you have learned during your lifetime can reach future Oxfordians. Either way, don't let the local dump devour your life's work.

Where to send the completed inventories:

They can be scanned and emailed to catherine.hatinguais@gmail.com (please specify "SOF-DPC inventories" in the subject line). Alternatively, hard copies can be mailed to The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466 USA.

Thank you!

Vere and Roe (continued from page 1)

Othello and Desdemona's steps. Using Roe's unannotated map, we eventually located the spot where Desdemona's gondola landed. People are still embarking from gondolas there all day long. Then we followed the hasty couple's path through the alleyway to Calle Frezzeria, where Othello escorted Desdemona to a house. The streets and buildings are just as they were then, except for some storefronts at street level. The feeling of being back in time is palpable. Roe's book provides no photograph of the alley leading from Desdemona's landing place to Calle Frezzeria or of the landing place itself, so I have included one of each (**photos 1 and 2**).

To get there: It is fun to walk in Venice, since cars are disallowed in most areas. But navigating by map is a miserable experience due to the winding streets, the changing names and the occasionally missing street signs. If you want to get around mostly error-free, use a maps app. Get a map of Venezia on which the districts are clearly delineated. To get to Shylock's place, locate the district called Cannaregio. Your destination is the Campo Ghetto Nuovo, a lovely square with only two street entrances, one being Calle Ghetto Vecchio, the other called Calle Farnese on the tourist map and Calesele street on Google Maps. Follow your map app to get there and back.

Roe doesn't provide specific directions to Desdemona's landing place. It took some poking around to locate it. The best way to get there is to follow signs, which are all around Venice, to Piazza St. Marco, which you are going to want to visit anyway. Standing in the Piazza with your back to the water, walk left along the street called Piazza St. Marco until you meet Calle Frezzeria, a street four blocks long. Turn right and walk three blocks. One of these houses is where Othello spirited Desdemona. Turn right when you see an

exceptionally narrow alleyway. It's called Calle S. Zorzi (presumably named after a member of the family of the 50th Doge of Venice, Marino Zorzi, who ruled in 1311-1312), but there is no street sign. This alley leads you to Fondamenta Orseolo, the walkway beside the Rio Orseolo canal. To your right is the Basino Orseolo, a wide part of the water where gondolas turn around, which was of normal width in the 1500s. Across the canal is the Hotel Cavaletto. Directly in front of you is a green sign reading, "Servizio Gondole Racino Orseolo." To your left is the landing where Desdemona disembarked. Alternatively, if you decide to walk the full four blocks up Calle Frezzeria, the last right turn takes you toward a pedestrian bridge over the canal, just before which you can turn right and walk along Fondamenta Orseolo to arrive at the same spot.

Padua

On Tuesday we took a train to Padua, where *The Taming of the Shrew* takes place. Our first goal was to find three places: Lucentio, Tranio and Biondello's landing place on the canal that today is called the Navigio Interno; the nearby hostel that may have been Lucentio's "lodging"; and Saint Luke's Church, in which Kate and Bianca's respective marriages take place. Once again, Roe gives enough information to find these places, but not specific directions.

The visit was well worth it. By contrasting the maps from the 1200s and 1718 reproduced in Roe's book with modern-day details of the site, it becomes easy to identify the travelers' arrival spot. We walked westward down the south side of the canal and imagined the old setting. Roe provides color photos of the hostel and the church but only a black-and-white of the landing place, so I have included a color close-up (**photo 3**) and one from further



1. Approach to Desdemona's Landing Place, Venice



2. Desdemona's Landing Place, Venice



3. Site of Lucentio's Landing Place, Padua



4: Bridge Adjacent to the Porta Site, Padua

west that includes the adjacent bridge called Ponte San Gregorio Barbarigo (**photo 4**). Lucentio and his companions arrived from the east, drifted under the bridge and pulled over at the Porto, or landing place, on the north bank, which is the side adjacent to the old city center, a few yards west of the bridge. Today, the rear of homes on Via 20 Settembre stand just a few feet beyond the embankment. A sign on a wall indicates that the bridge was built of wood in 1210 and reconstructed of stone in 1489, in the form it was when Shakespeare visited. The version standing today dates from 1717. The “lodging” to which Lucentio referred is presumably the building on the other side of the canal that in the 1500s was a hostel. It is a yellowish-beige, four-story building, on the bottom of which are three archways. Later in the play, Bianca’s and Kate’s marriages take place at a church called Saint Luke’s. That church is noted “St. Luca” on old maps, and a renovated version stands on the very same site. The building currently stands behind locked gates, so we couldn’t go in. A plaque on the building is dated 1655, and another is dated 1815.

According to the old maps in Roe’s book, the bridge’s longstanding original name was Ponte di Santa Maria d’Avanzo. The bridge led to a gated entrance to the city, a Porta, of the same name, which by 1717 was gone. These structures were named after a building located about a hundred yards south of the bridge that began as a medieval monastery and was reconstructed in 1436 and expanded in 1535 to become the Chiesa di Santa Maria in Vanzo, which is still standing today. (You can find a photo of it online.)

As an aside, a few steps down Riviera Tiso Camposanpiero is an excellent white-tablecloth dinner restaurant called Ai Navigli. If you go, be sure to take in the scene of the bridge at night. If you visit Padua, do not leave without viewing the Giatto frescoes at the Scrovegni Chapel and touring the Basilica di Sant’Antonio, one of the finest cathedrals anywhere and our personal favorite.

To get there: The old center of Padua is surrounded

on three sides by waterways and on the east side by an avenue named Riviera Tito Livio. At the south end of this area is a road called Via 20 Settembre (the street sign denotes it Venti Settembre), which parallels a canal called the Navigio Interno, the southernmost city waterway. The only crossing, which is at the center of the canal to the south, is the Ponte San Gregorio Barbarigo. That’s where you want to go. Stand on the bridge facing west and look down and to your right. That’s the spot the travelers landed. Then look directly to your left, and you will see, across the street on the right-hand corner of Via del Seminario and Riviera Tiso Camposanpiero, the old hostel. The adjacent buildings to its right—both about the same color—have only two archways and aren’t as tall. Don’t be fooled by signs reading “Ostello Citta’ di Padova,” as they point toward a modern-day youth hostel a few blocks away.

Next, walk past the north end of the bridge and turn right onto Via 20 Settembre. Go about two and a half blocks until you see on the left a coral-colored building, smaller than the other buildings and set back from the road. That’s the reconstructed Saint Luke’s church.

Verona

On Wednesday, we hopped a train to Verona. We toured Juliet’s purported house, visited the site of Romeo’s purported house, and toured Juliet’s purported tomb at the former San Francesco al Corso, the Saint Francis Monastery, home of Friar Laurence. Although many skeptics say these sites do not pertain to an actual Romeo and Juliet, Roe gives reasons why there is a good chance these sites and artifacts are representative of actual sites and events, if not genuine. The only aspect of Juliet’s house that is out of place is the balcony. Although it is a genuine medieval balcony, it is reported that in 1936 the government removed it from another building and installed it here to increase tourism. This physical inaccuracy stems from a conceptual inaccuracy, the myth that a balcony is integral to the play. Shakespeare mentions no balcony, only a window, fitting the original look of the building.

I omit photos of these places, as they are widely available online. Search on “Juliet’s house, interior” to see how finely a wealthy city family was living in 1302. You won’t miss anything by skipping Romeo’s house, as all you will see is a sign on a wall. Juliet’s tomb is well worth a visit, because adjacent to it is a fine and quite substantial frescoes museum, the Museo degli Affreschi.

Whether or not these tourist sites are genuine, we can certainly take as genuine Shakespeare’s firsthand knowledge of the place. As Roe recounted, the Bard mentions two key sites: Saint Peter’s Church, where Juliet was to marry County Paris, and a grove of sycamores just west of the city where, as Benvolio reports in Act I, the lovesick Romeo had been wandering in the dark earlier that morning and on many previous mornings. (Might Shakespeare have chosen that species of tree—pronounced sick-amore—for the sake of a pun?)

On Thursday, we found Saint Peter's Church, San Pietro Incarnario. Roe's book provides black-and-white photos of the church, whose renovations have changed its appearance. He mentions its original medieval bell tower but does not show it, so I include **photo 5**, which does.

Late that afternoon, we made our way past the Porta Palio, one of the gates to the city, and found the sycamores that Roe located with much excitement. It was early fall, and these very tall trees, quite handily, were shedding leaves. We went online to check the shape of a sycamore leaf, and indeed the shape in the image was identical to that of the leaf we held in our hands (**photo 6**). A turn to the right affords a fine tour of trees, grass and ancient walls, where Romeo, and therefore Shakespeare, probably strolled (**photo 7**).

To get there: Anyone can point you to Juliet's house, Romeo's house and Juliet's tomb, and the maps all show them. The tomb is a long way from the houses. What you need to know about Verona is how to arrange your sightseeing. A good plan is to segment your touring. In one segment, visit the Piazza Erbe, Juliet's house and Romeo's house and then cross the Ponte Nuovo to spend two hours walking and climbing around the Giardino Giusti, a 16th-century estate's sanctuary, which many tourists miss but which Shakespeare would no doubt have visited. On another walk, visit Juliet's tomb, its adjacent museum, and Saint Peter's Church, San Pietro Incarnario, which is located at #2 Piazzetta San Pietro

Incarnario, just off Stradone Maffei, two blocks east of the Roman Arena, a popular tourist site that you may also want to visit. If you walk partway down Stradone San Fermo, you can catch a glimpse, from behind, of the church's medieval bell tower. At another time, spend a good two hours touring the unforgettable Castelvecchio, then stroll southwest down Stradone Porta Palio to the Porta Palio. The sycamores are right behind it. Be sure to wander toward the right where you will find grassy knolls and ancient yet well-preserved walls.

Florence

On Friday, we took a high-speed train to Florence. It was time to mind-meld with *All's Well That Ends Well*. Our main goal was to locate the spot where Helena and the Widow watched Bertram and his fellow soldiers march across a bridge over the Arno river into the city. Roe's book identifies the Piazza Carlo Goldoni, a few yards upriver from the Ponte alla Carraia, as the place where the characters were standing. They express worry that the troops might cross at the next bridge toward the east, Ponte S. Trinita. Roe explains that tired troops were unlikely to cross the river on routes that would take them to the city center but rather at Ponte alla Carraia, which would lead them to the Fortezzo do Basso, the massive military facility to the northwest of the city. The Franciscan palmer's lodge—the Saint Francis—to which the Widow directs Helena, stands west of the Piazza



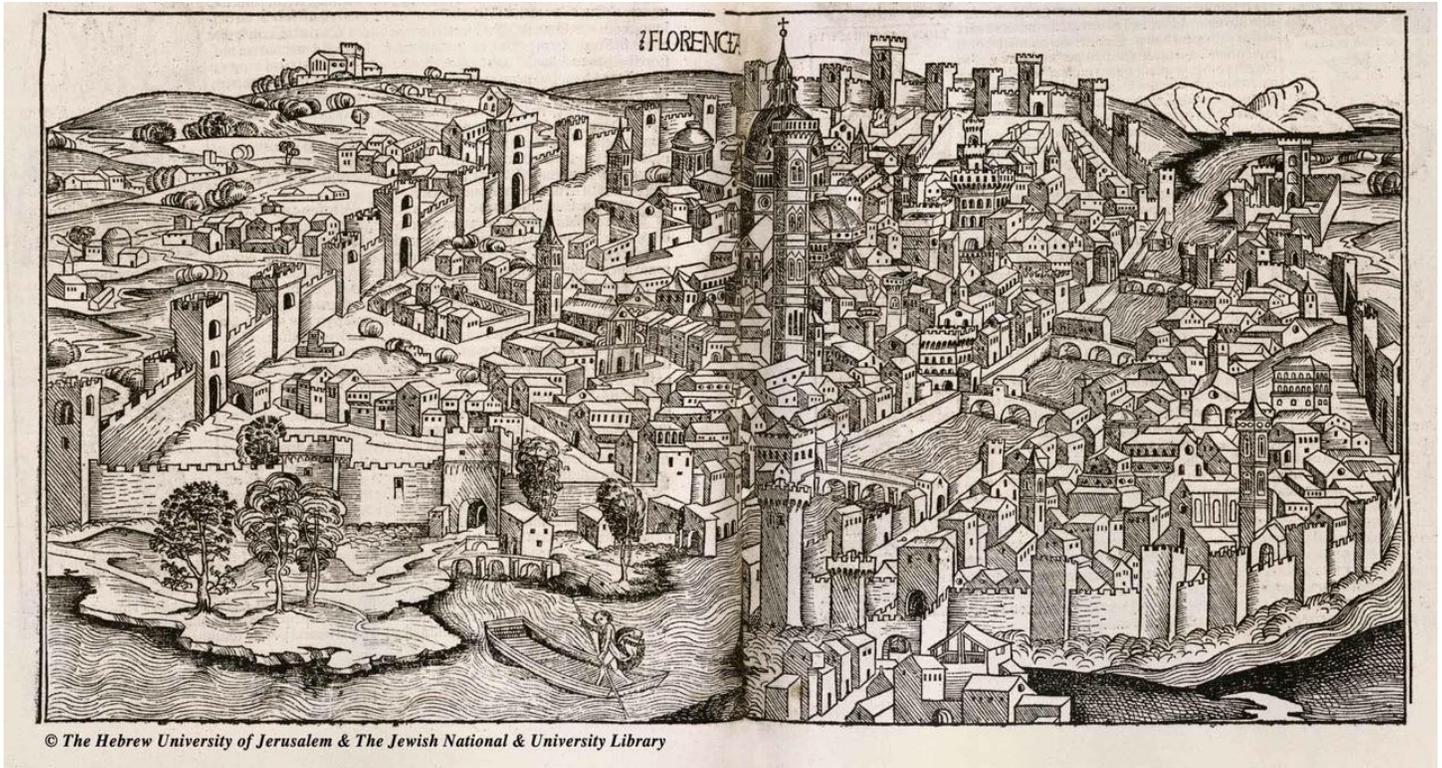
5: Saint Peter's Church Bell Tower, Verona



6: Sycamore Leaves, Verona



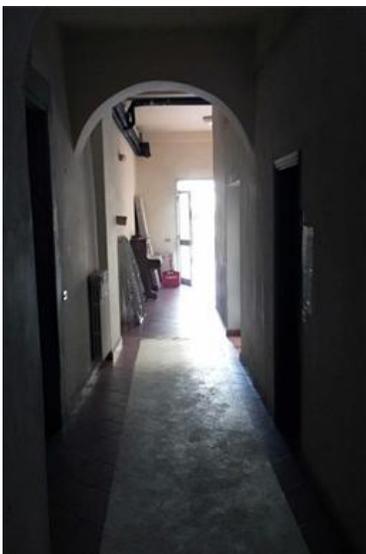
7: Ruins Near the Sycamores at Porta Palio, Verona



8: 1489 Map of Florence, Showing the Port (Bottom, Left of Center)

Goldoni, on Via Borgo Ognissanti, just past the Piazza Ognissanti, which four centuries ago was en route to the Port, or vessels' landing place, to which the Widow refers in the play and which is clearly depicted as lying just outside the city wall on maps of Florence dating from the late 1400s (**photo 8**). As with hotels near airports and train stations, it was a natural spot for travelers' lodging. Roe's book provides a color photo of the entrance of the building and a close-up of the crossed-arms symbol of the Franciscans above the door in relief. When we arrived

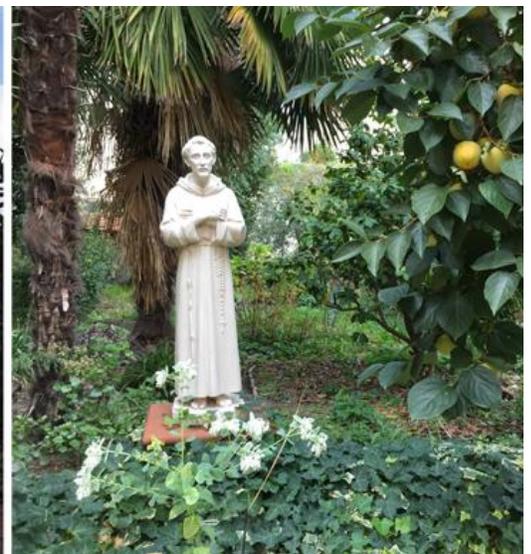
there, I was at first disappointed that construction scaffolding covered the front of the building, since it would not allow a pristine photo. But the activity at the site turned out to provide a terrific opportunity, as the front door stood open to allow workers in and out. I slipped through it and down the corridor (**photo 9**) to a rear courtyard (**photo 10**), where I took several photos, including one of the resident statue of Saint Francis (**photo 11**). A priest's habit hanging on a coat hanger beneath an archway indicated that the facility is still active.



9: Corridor of St. Francis, Florence



10: Courtyard of St. Francis, Florence



11: Garden with Statue of St. Francis, Florence

One evening I came across an identical crossed-arms symbol in relief, indicating a Franciscan facility, on a wall about a block east of Ponte Vecchio. To qualify as an alternate spot where the characters could have been standing, that area would have to have been near a Port in 1570s. The lack of detail on available old maps obscures the answer to that question, but they depict nothing like the obvious Port shown at the spot Roe identified.

To get there: Your destination is the Piazza Goldoni, which is marked on all city maps. It is adjacent to the Ponte alla Carraia, the westernmost of four bridges that link to the city center. Six streets meet there. Find the one marked Borgo Ognissanti, which is toward the west a block off the river. Roe figured out that the crowd of expectant onlookers in the play are standing beside the route linking the Ponte alla Carraia to Via de Fossi, the presumed course of the returning soldiers. As Roe observed, the most likely corners—given the Widow’s statement that the pilgrims’ lodge is “here” by the Port rather than “over there” by the Port—are where Borgo

Ognissanti meets the Piazza, the spot on the route closest to the lodge.

Next, walk west on Borgo Ognissanti for one and a half blocks until you see on the right a standard yellow-colored building but with an arched entrance made of grey stone and the Franciscan crossed-arms symbol above the door. That’s the lodge about which Helena inquired.

[Part Two of this article will appear in the next issue.]



From *The Love Boat* to Lodz: My Chance Encounter with Ted Lange

by Patricia Carrelli

I recently attended a Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable in Beverly Hills led by Carole Sue Lipman. The topic was “Jewels in the Time of Shakespeare,” presented by Sally Mosher, which was quite interesting. Just before the program started, the gentleman who sat next to me happened to mention that he was going to Lodz, Poland, in a few weeks. He was planning to attend a unique ceremony there to honor a Shakespearean actor on the 150th anniversary of his death. After hearing about the trip when he returned, my new friend and I thought your readers might enjoy some historical background for his visit.

The actor to be celebrated was Ira Aldridge (1807-1867). Though many people may have never heard of him, his story is compelling. He was born a free black man in New York City in 1807. His father was a preacher who encouraged his son at an early age to appreciate education and the theater. After a brief classical education at the African Free School in New York (founded by Alexander Hamilton and John Jay), Aldridge participated in the African Grove Theater. He was able to secure a job as valet to the English actor Henry Wallack. He traveled with Wallack to London in 1824 and soon was able to get small parts on stage. At first, Aldridge’s acting reviews were not very good. However, he persisted, improved, and eventually became well known in the London theater. He accomplished the seemingly impossible feat of becoming the first black actor to perform on a Covent

Garden stage as the title character in *Othello*. He was even occasionally referred to as “The Black Kean,” after the noted English actor Edmund Kean. Aldridge became the manager of a theater in Coventry, England, helping to revive the struggling company. Later in his career, in a strange reversal, he wore wigs and white greasepaint to play roles like Richard III and Shylock. He toured Prussia and Russia playing the title role in *King Lear*. Tragically, but perhaps fittingly for an actor, Ira Aldridge died in Lodz while on tour at the age of 60.

My new friend, the man who told me about Ira Aldridge, is actor-writer-director Ted Lange, perhaps best known to American audiences for his role as bartender Isaac Washington in the hit TV series *The Love Boat*. Lange told me that as a young black man himself, his high school drama teacher first introduced him to the universality of Shakespeare’s characters by creatively using the music of Miles Davis to accompany some of the poetry in *Macbeth*. Later in his career, Lange read the book *Ira Aldridge: The Negro Tragedian* and used it to write and direct a play about Aldridge’s life called *Born a Unicorn*. Two songwriters joined his team, and in 1981 they opened their production in Los Angeles with a seven-piece band and a fine company of dancers and singers.

Following a recent revival of Lange’s play, a Shakespearean scholar and head of the British Commonwealth Studies Department at the University of

Lodz in Poland contacted him. They were eager for him to speak about Ira Aldridge and his legacy as the first African-American man to appear on the English stage; Lange accepted the invitation. Programs and posters from his play *Born a Unicorn* were featured along with an exhibit of other Aldridge memorabilia. Short biographical films connected with Aldridge’s experiences on stage were shown. In addition, the American Ambassador to Poland was in attendance; he and Lange were interviewed on Polish television.

Following the events in Poland, Lange flew to London to meet with Oku Ekpenyong, who was instrumental in having a portrait of Ira Aldridge hung at the Old Vic Theatre. Aldridge had performed there in the 1800s, so she wanted to honor him alongside other luminous performers at the Old Vic whose portraits are prominently displayed. The painting the British Museum provided to the Old Vic was of Aldridge playing the Shakespearean role of Aaron from *Titus Andronicus*. Thanks to Ekpenyong’s perseverance and dedication, it marked the first time that a black man’s portrait would be on display at that historic venue.

Ted Lange pointed out that it would be almost eighty years before another black actor, Paul Robeson, would perform the part of *Othello* on stage in England. The acclaimed British actress Peggy Ashcroft was his Desdemona. However, several film versions of *Othello* have been made with white actors in blackface such as

Orson Welles (1952), Sir Laurence Olivier (1965), and Sir Anthony Hopkins (1981). Lange himself played the role in a version that he directed, which was presented at the Inner City Cultural Center of Los Angeles in 1989, and was also filmed. Six years later, in 1995, Laurence Fishburne became the first black actor to star in a major film production of *Othello*. Lange’s interest in that play continues. He recently won the prestigious NAACP Award for Best Play of 2017, *The Prequel to Othello, the Cause My Soul*.

So, my serendipitous chat with a fellow Shakespearean proved yet again that you can meet some remarkable new people and learn fascinating stories as you celebrate a shared curiosity about the Bard, his plays, and the people who have performed in them.

[Patricia Carrelli is a retired international educator who taught in Asia for nineteen years. She currently resides in Southern California with her husband of fifty-one years. She has been an Oxfordian for almost a decade.]



Poster from *Othello* with Ira Aldridge circa 1850, Folger Library



Portrait of Aldridge as Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* from the Old Vic



Ted Lange at Ira Aldridge’s grave in Lodz, Poland, 2017

Book Review

***The Fictional Lives of Shakespeare* by Kevin Gilvary, Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group) (2017), 246 pp., \$149.95 (when on sale \$119.96), Hardback and e-Book.**

Reviewed by W. Ron Hess

Until now, we anti-Stratfordians have lacked a single source book to recommend unreservedly to outsiders that covers all the bases about the weaknesses and shams that constitute the “Stratfordian Myth,” but doesn’t tilt toward any of our many subgroups (e.g., Oxfordian, Baconian, Groupist). At long last we do. In *The Fictional Lives of Shakespeare*, Kevin Gilvary even includes a very helpful summary of “The Records” (Appendix A), which helps sort out much of the extraneous detail from those few facts which contribute to a real Bard biography.

Even worse, we’ve not had a sober book written to be used in a college curriculum for a semester-long class. Indeed, it would make for a great graduate level class to contrast and compare *The Fictional Lives of Shakespeare* with any of the well-known “standard” biographies of the Bard, such as Samuel Schoenbaum’s *Shakespeare’s Lives*, Schoenbaum’s *William Shakespeare, A Documentary Life* (a folio-sized commentary with photostats of virtually everything which every biographer normally only quotes or paraphrases), Stanley Wells’s *Shakespeare: For All Time*, etc.

Gilvary deliberately chose to take a non-denominational tack in this book. As he explained, “I have always seen the Shakespeare Authorship Question as a two-step argument. Firstly, the ordinary Shakespeare lover needs to be convinced (not just informed) that there is an Authorship Question. And this is where I have been working. Secondly, when Shakespeare lovers graduate into authorship skeptics, then and only then is it worth presenting the arguments for Oxford’s claim.” Of course, we know Gilvary from his Oxfordian works, including *Dating Shakespeare’s Plays: A Critical Review of the Evidence* (2010, Parapress Ltd.). So this new book, based on his 2015 Ph.D. thesis, has the potential to do our cause great credit, but only if it turns out to be a financial success for Routledge, its greatly respected academic publisher. Concerning that goal, it seems to me

that its expensive price tag (typical of college-level books) could be an impediment. Since a scholastic book will hardly be read unless it is first reviewed by the mainstream scholastic journals (*Renaissance Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Studies*, *Notes & Queries*, etc.), I’m surprised that as yet Routledge hasn’t lured accredited scholars into submitting reviews of this book to appropriate journals.

“Modern biographies of William Shakespeare abound; however, close scrutiny of the surviving records clearly show that there is insufficient material for a cradle to grave account of his life, that most of what is written

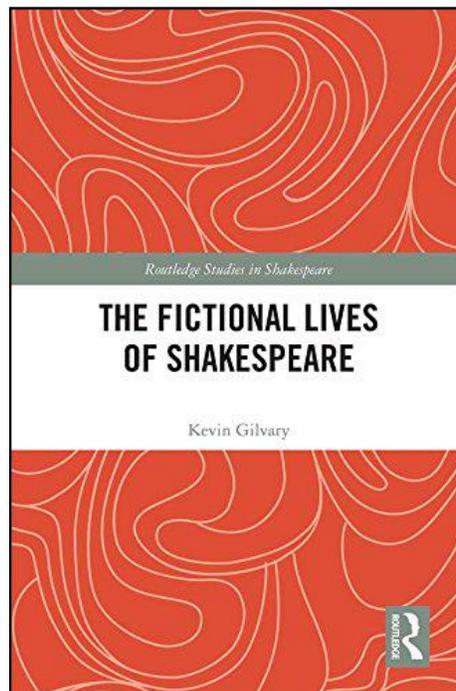
about him cannot be verified from primary sources, and that Shakespearean biography did not attain scholarly or academic respectability until long after Samuel Schoenbaum published *William Shakespeare, A Documentary Life* in 1975.” After reading Gilvary’s book (indeed, even after reading Schoenbaum’s two books), the reader may ask when a respectable Bard biography has ever been written by an orthodox scholar. Recent efforts have resorted too much to what Gilvary calls “biografiction,” involving “contextual description and speculation in order to appear like a Life of Shakespeare” (e.g., Stephen Greenblatt’s highly popular *Will in the World*). Most Shakespeare biographers make things up and pass them off as factual, or they report as true “traditions” that have never been verified (e.g., reflexively assuming that the famous references to the

“upstart crow” and “Shake-scene” in *Greene’s Groatsworth of Wit* must be to Shakespeare, a claim that Gilvary satisfactorily dismisses).

Two of Gilvary’s chapters—“Inventing a Patron” and “Inventing a Rival” (about Ben Jonson)—are particularly informative. In the first, Gilvary quotes a rare case of Stratfordian honesty, this one from Jonathan Bate:

How likely is it that so great a figure as an earl would have allowed a player and a play-maker of lower middle-class origins, however talented and successful he may have been, sufficient access to achieve the kind of intense intimacy that the sonnets purport to describe?” (*The Soul of the Age*, 2008, pp. 221-222).

That statement should deflate postulations of a personal relationship between the traditional Bard and Henry Wriothesley (or any other noble). In the second, Gilvary provides a chart with three columns: “Seneca’s



Controversiae,” “Translations of Seneca,” and “Jonson on Shakespeare,” showing that often-quoted key comments that Jonson made about the Bard in his *Timber or Discoveries* (published 1641 posthumously) were actually paraphrases of Seneca. This goes toward exploding the “Jonson as rival” convention used in so many biographies to manufacture spurious tidbits of Bard biography.

There is much more to be impressed by in this book, but to save space I’ll mention that I was particularly impressed by the four Appendices: the extant Shakespeare Records (mentioned above), Rowe’s Biography of Shakespeare, Jonson’s Censure of the English Poets, and Some Scenarios of Shakespeare as Co-Author as conceived by both Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians. Indeed, I’ve floated just such a theory about Thomas Sackville as a likely literary mentor and possible co-author of at least some of the Bard’s Sonnets (“Did Shakespeare Have a Literary Mentor?” *The Oxfordian* vol. 13 [2011]).

A Challenge to Oxfordians: We have a special obligation to do what we can to foster the success of this breakthrough new book. Even if the names de Vere or Oxford are deliberately not listed in its index (nor is

Ogburn in its bibliography), *The Fictional Lives of Shakespeare* is designed to deflate the Stratfordian myth, and particularly Schoenbaum’s sarcastic take on all anti-Stratfordians. It wonderfully complements the efforts of John Shahan’s Shakespeare Authorship Coalition in promulgating the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt (<https://doubtaboutwill.org/>). Yes, \$149.95 is quite a bit of money (the electronic version carries the same price). But from time to time Routledge offers a 20% discount on the hardback edition, so it can be had for \$120. It’s worth checking the publisher’s website periodically: <https://www.routledge.com/The-Fictional-Lives-of-Shakespeare/Gilvary/p/book/9780815394433>. One can, of course, order the book and then donate it to a local college, a university or a library.

Another issue is whether or not those who have academic credentials will be willing to get the book, read it, and then submit favorable reviews to prime academic journals. If this book fails, in a very real sense our Oxfordian cause fails. This is a prime opportunity for each anti-Stratfordian to put our money, and effort, where our mouths are.



Sir Brian Vickers Looking for Publisher

by Alex McNeil

According to a recent article by Richard Lea in *The Guardian*, noted Shakespeare scholar Sir Brian Vickers has found himself in the academic doghouse and was forced to put an ad in the *Times Literary Supplement* seeking a publisher for his planned edition of the complete works of Thomas Kyd. Having already been turned down by three publishers, Vickers blames “people associated with the New Oxford Shakespeare” for damaging his “reputation as a scholar ... by a string of hostile reviews.”

The feud goes back at least to 2008, when Vickers published his findings that Kyd was the author of three anonymous plays, based in part on Vickers’s use of anti-plagiarism software to detect word patterns and usages. His method was summarily dismissed by Gary Taylor, one of the editors of the New Oxford Shakespeare, as “useless.” According to Vickers, “The New Oxford Shakespeare group ... have repeated their disparaging remarks about my ‘method’ so often that other scholars, who know little about authorship attribution studies, know that I have been often attacked, and there’s ‘no smoke without fire’ . . . Other scholars have accepted my claims for a new and much larger Kyd canon, but the New Oxford Shakespeare have been doing their best to discredit them, and they seem to be succeeding. I do feel a bit desperate.”

Things escalated in 2016, with the publication of Vickers’s book *The One King Lear*. In it he examined the differences between the 1608 Quarto and 1623 Folio versions of *King Lear* (each has lines and cuts that the other doesn’t), and challenged the prevailing orthodox consensus (championed by Taylor and many others) that the latter version is a revision of the former, made by Shakespeare (or possibly by someone else) in light of theatrical performance. Vickers’s contention is that neither version is truly authorial. He attributes the state of the 1608 Quarto to the printer, who, Vickers claims, underestimated how much paper he’d need and had to make cuts to make the text fit. As for the Folio version, Vickers sees the new lines not as new, but as having existed in a pre-1608 version (an “ur-*Lear*,” so to speak), and further argues that “it is impossible to believe” that Shakespeare himself was responsible for the cuts in the Folio version. Vickers swung back at his orthodox critics in the book, suggesting that Gary Taylor “has lost contact with the play and should seek some other occupation.”

The One King Lear received savage reviews. In a lengthy review in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Holger Syme castigated it as “riddled with basic methodological errors, factual blunders, conceptual non-sequiturs, and vituperative ad hominem attacks. It is a book that should never have been printed in its present

form. . . . Harvard University Press seems to have set scholarly standards aside in putting Vickers's tome into print. . . ." And that was just the first paragraph. Syme went on to show how Vickers misrepresented the views of those whom he claims support his point. Turning to Vickers's technical argument that the Quarto printer made cuts to save space, Syme pointed out that the 1608 Quarto actually contains quite a bit of blank space, and that an extra line of type could have been added to most of the book's pages—i.e., the printer had enough paper to enable him to print the full text.

Reviewing *The One King Lear* in *Modern Philology*, Eric Rasmussen noted first that "Vickers cites my work with approval in this book. Moreover, as it happens, I tend to agree with him that the absence of lines from the Folio text of *Lear* is probably the result of attempts to reduce overall playing time, rather than evidence of authorial revision. But even those who might be sympathetic to Vickers's project of challenging some tenets of the revisionist theory will be disappointed by the surprisingly poor scholarship on display here." Rasmussen found that Vickers "has a tendency to misrepresent previous scholarship" and ignores "pertinent information" he'd solicited from other scholars. "There is so much wrong with this book that a string-cite of its errors could well exceed the limits of a scholarly review," Rasmussen wrote. He went on to cite several factual errors before concluding: "Shame on Harvard University Press."

Interviewed by *The Guardian* for its recent article, Taylor summed up: "Brian's approach to Shakespeare is that there is only one proper way to interpret him—Brian's. The New Oxford Shakespeare, by contrast, is a collaborative edition, and its critical introductions give readers many possible approaches: 1950s approaches such as Brian's—who is quoted on a number of occasions—but also theatrical, historical, political, formalist, feminist, cinematic, psychological, and eco-critical interpretations. For Brian, Shakespeare is fuel for angry, narcissistic monologues. For us, Shakespeare inspires thousands of fascinating conversations."

Vickers responded that the issue "is one of scholarly judgment, but also of headline-seeking, power and prestige. My position is that, as a great artist, Shakespeare should not be parcelled off to other writers or saddled with plays that he did not write, such as *Arden of Faversham*—especially not by such shoddy and bogus scholarly methods."

There is much irony in all of this. Battles between academics are, of course, nothing new. But it is interesting that in 2008, after Vickers used computer software to help find Thomas Kyd's writings, Gary Taylor dismissed his method as "useless." Less than a decade later, Taylor and his New Oxford Shakespeare co-editors proudly announced the hitherto-undetected hands of numerous Shakespeare collaborators in a canon that includes several new plays—all discovered thanks to computer software (see "Oxford University Press Espouses Group Theory of Authorship," *Newsletter*, Fall 2016; Michael Dudley, Gary Goldstein & Shelly Maycock, review of *The New Oxford Shakespeare Authorship Companion*, "All That Is Shakespeare Melts into Air," *The Oxfordian* vol. 19, 195-208 [2017]). Nor is Gary Taylor known for his tact. Readers may recall that in 2014, when Taylor took over as editor of *Memoria di Shakespeare, A Journal of Shakespeare Studies*, he wasted little time in rejecting an article by Oxfordian Dr. Richard Waugaman that had been accepted for publication by the previous editors. Taylor sneeringly informed Dr. Waugaman that "change is due to my own involvement in the volume," which was "conditional on rejection of certain contributions, like yours, which seem to me profoundly unscholarly. . . . I simply find your reasoning, and your evidence, as unconvincing as those of Holocaust deniers, and other conspiracy theorists. . ." ("Waugaman Published in One Mainstream Journal, Rejected by Another," *Newsletter*, Summer 2014).

We would remind Sir Brian Vickers that there's always Print-on-Demand. . . .



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