THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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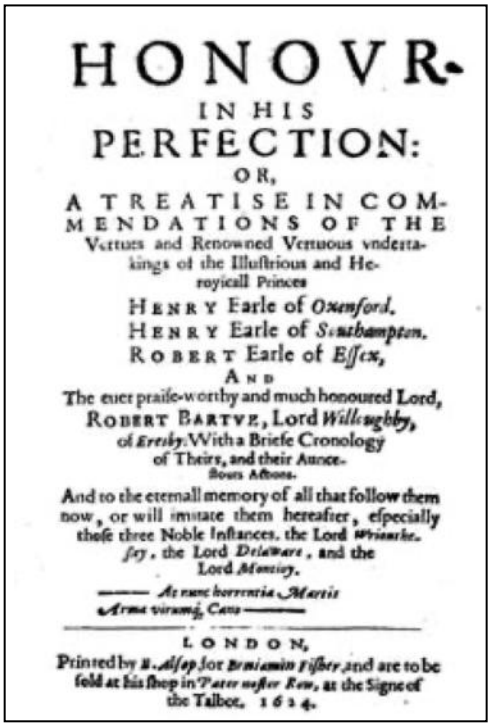
A Vere of "great Vertue" Wrote the Shakespeare Plays

by Katherine Chiljan

Using innuendo and inference, Gervase Markham revealed that "William Shakespeare" was the 17th Earl of Oxford's pen name, and that lies contained in the First Folio injured him. This remarkable commentary—the Folio's first criticism in print—was unknown until Heidi Jannsch, in the *De Vere Society Newsletter,*[1] analyzed the paragraph directly following a well-known passage about Oxford. This paper will hopefully add further insights. (Note: bolded words and underscores are added for emphasis.)

In the 1590s Markham (c. 1568-1637) was a soldier, serving under the 3rd Earl of Southampton and the 2nd Earl of Essex,[2] and an author, with eight books published. Shortly after the disastrous 1601 Essex Rebellion, Markham left the military, married, and moved to the country, where he focused on farming and writing, mostly on practical topics.

Markham's *Honour in His Perfection* (1624) is a "treatise" about the earls of Oxford, Southampton, Essex, and barons Willoughby. In the Oxford section,



HONOVR
IN HIS
PERFECTION:
OR,
A TREATISE IN COMMENDATIONS OF THE
Vertues and Renowned Vertuous vndertakings of the Illustrious and Heroyicall Princes
HENRY Earle of *Oxenford.*
HENRY Earle of *Southampton.*
ROBERT Earle of *Essex,*
AND
The euer praise-worthy and much honoured Lord,
ROBERT BARTVE, Lord *Willoughby,*
of *Eresby*: With a Briefe Cronology of Theirs, and their Auncestours Actions.
And to the eternall memory of all that follow them now, or will imitate them hereafter, especially those three Noble Instances, the Lord *Wrisothesley*, the Lord *Delaware*, and the Lord *Montioy*.
—— *At nunc horrentia Martis*
Arma virumq; Cano ——
LONDON,
Printed by *B. Alsop* for *Benjamin Fisher*, and are to be sold at his shop in *Pater noster Row*, at the Signe of the Talbot. 1624.

Markham called the 17th Earl "upright and honest," "holy and Religious," "magnanimous," and noted that he honored England while in Europe (i.e., his 1575-76 grand tour). Markham said that Oxford's almsgiving to the poor was well known, as well as his "bounty" to "Religion and Learning." Conspicuously absent, however, was notice of Oxford's literary and dramatic activity. Despite this, Markham's paragraph (pp. 16-17) was Oxford's longest printed tribute since his 1604 death.

The Omitted Vere

The paragraph that followed (pp. 17-18) mentions Oxford's first cousins, the valiant soldier-brothers Sir Francis Vere and Sir Horace Vere. Their military accomplishments in Europe are so famous that "Vere cannot be omitted" in historical chronicles; then Markham noted one troubling exception:

> *Vere* cannot be omitted: only in that Story there is one pretty secret or mystery which I cannot let pass untouched, because it brings many difficulties or doubts into the mind of an ignorant Reader; and that is, the mistaking of names. . . .

Markham's puzzling language compels closer reading. Without mentioning the title, Markham says there is a book ("that Story") that *does* omit Vere and contains "one pretty secret or mystery" problematic to the unknowing reader; that "secret or mystery" is "the mistaking of names," which Markham attempts to clarify:

> the mistaking of names, for the Author of that Work binds himself too strictly to the Scripture phrase, which is to make one name to contain another; as the name *Adam* to contain the name *Eva* also, and the word *man* to contain the word *woman* also;

Markham refers to an unidentified Scripture phrase "which is to make one name to contain another." The examples he cites, "Adam" containing the name "Eva" and "man" containing the word "woman," are inapposite,

(Continued on p. 10)

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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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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From the President

Hello SOF Members!

2021 is continuing to work well for us. We are having some successes, even though we are still operating under COVID-19 restrictions. It seems that in the post-pandemic future, we will have a combination of in-person conferences and Zoom conferences; fortunately, the Zoom programs reach a bigger audience. As I reported last time, we, like the De Vere Society in England, and the Shakespeare Authorship Trust, are now having our meetings and conferences on Zoom. In this issue you will find more details about our upcoming Annual Membership Meeting and Conference to be held 'virtually' on Zoom in early October. No one has to travel to a conference location in order to attend the meeting and ask questions. The Shakespeare Authorship Question is now something we can all pursue from our homes!

As we did in connection with our Spring Symposium, we will again have a Donation/Fundraising and Membership Drive in combination with the October Conference. We will have special gifts available to encourage donations. I want to thank Ben August, one of the members of the SOF Board of Trustees, once again for donating so many beautiful gifts for this effort. In addition, Bonner Cutting, another of our Trustees, has also donated items that are of special value to our Oxfordian friends. Only limited quantities of these gifts will be available, so don't miss out! Complete details will be announced in the next few weeks.

We are still working on improving our website, but it will take a few more months. We need to improve our social media presence — Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Podcast, etc. Social media is the way to reach lager audiences and inform them that there is a Shakespeare Authorship Question!

An additional surprise this year is that we have been contacted by a fellow Oxfordian in Chile, who inquired about adding Spanish subtitles to our video presentations. He has started with Tom Regnier's video on "Shakespeare and the Law." That video is now available on our website with Spanish subtitles. He is also working on translating the groundbreaking *"Shakespeare" Identified* book by J. Thomas Looney into Spanish. This will make our research available to the Spanish-speaking world. It is an exciting new development! We are also looking into adding German and French subtitles to our videos, and perhaps we will add other languages in the future.

As I mentioned before, we are also starting to plan events to commemorate the First Folio's 400th anniversary in 2023. We have created a new Committee for this purpose. This is another opportunity to inform the public about the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

We cannot let the Stratfordians again twist this event to accommodate their version of reality, and ensnare more people into their fantasy of an illiterate merchant from Stratford-upon-Avon becoming the most brilliant writer in the English language.

Finally, I must inform you that my three-term limit as President of the SOF arrives in October of this year. I had been President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society for several years before we merged into one group, and then became the first President of the unified Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship in 2013. Tom Regnier, who assisted me in the unification, succeeded me as SOF President, and I again became President in 2018. I want to thank everyone who has supported the SOF over the years—members, Boards of Trustees, Committee Chairs, contractors and especially all of our numerous volunteers. We are where we are because of our joint effort to promote Edward de Vere as the true author of the works of Shakespeare. We still have much to do to convince the world, but we are getting there. It is hard, but not impossible, to overcome an entrenched lie. We need to follow the inspiration of the founder of the Oxfordian revelation, J. Thomas Looney, and keep searching and revealing facts so that we can overturn the myth of the Stratfordians.

Thank you, members, once again for your support of the SOF and all of its activities. Please help us carry this message to the world by becoming a member and please add your donations. Any amount is appreciated. We need funding to continue our many activities.

If you have a question about any of our activities, please contact me at info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.

John Hamill, President

From the Editor

I hope you'll agree that there's an interesting array of articles in this issue. Katherine Chiljan's article, "A Vere of 'great Vertue' Wrote the Shakespeare Plays" (page 1), expands on two previous articles, one by Roger Stritmatter in the Spring 2020 of the *Newsletter*, the other by Heidi Jannsch in the January 2017 issue of the *De Vere Society Newsletter*.

There are not one, not two, but three short articles (page 16) on one of the most tantalizing (and elusive) clues to Oxford's authorship: a reference in 1732 to the existence of a manuscript titled "A pleasant Conceit of *Vere* Earl of *Oxford*, discontented at the Rising of a mean Gentleman in the *English* Court, *circa* MDLXXX." Is this a reference to an early (1580) version of *Twelfth Night*? Might this manuscript still exist?

There's a lively back-and-forth between Peter Dickson and Alexander Waugh about the statue of Shakespeare erected at Westminster Abbey in 1740 (page 19). Dickson argues that the statue was largely financed by the efforts of Theophilus Cibber, a staunch supporter of the man from Stratford in the early years of "Bardolatry," and that its completion in 1740 has no special significance; Waugh argues the opposite, that persons with Masonic ties who knew of the Bard's true identity designed the statue, and that "1740" is of significance. I wonder if there's actually some common ground between Dickson and Waugh. Is it not possible that "Bardolator" Theophilus Cibber did play a leading role in getting a Shakespeare statue put up in Westminster Abbey, but (unbeknownst to Cibber) the people who actually designed the monument embedded clues in it pointing to another author?

There's an article by Gabriel Ready offering an explanation why *Troilus and Cressida* is included in the 1623 First Folio (page 14). Tom Townsend writes about Thomas Vicars (page 23). Michael Hyde explores boars, blue and white (page 25). And there's an article from two members of the SOF's Data Presevation Committee (page 21).

Finally, speaking of data preservation, James Warren's newest book has just been published. *Shakespeare Revolutionized: The First Hundred Years of J. Thomas Looney's "Shakespeare" Identified* is a comprehensive (765-page) overview of the Oxfordian movement since its birth in 1920, and of academia's reaction to it. Jim Warren is truly an indefatigable researcher; he made several trips to the UK, spending time at several libraries and archives, and with Looney's grandson. The book is chock full of information, much of which will be new to Oxfordians, whether they're new to the movement or old hands. It's available for **purchase**.

To me, the most valuable lesson from *Shakespeare Revolutionized* is the realization that many of the issues that Oxfordians are divided about have been with us almost from the inception of the movement in 1920. For example, whether it's enough to show that Oxford was Shakespeare without also explaining why his authorship was masked and how it was accomplished — this divide was noted as early as 1923. Or the meaning of the Sonnets — theories that the Fair Youth was the child of the Poet (whether by the Queen or by some other high-born woman) were being developed by the early 1930s, if not earlier. Are we closer to consensus on these topics now? It's hard to say, which is why it's important to keep these discussions going.

A full review of *Shakespeare Revolutionized* will appear in the next issue of the *Newsletter*. In the meantime, if you read this issue carefully, you'll find a chance to win a free copy of it!

Alex McNeil, Editor

Letters

I have a suggestion for the *Newsletter*, which I have subscribed to for many years (including the newsletters of its predecessors)—that you encourage extended discussion and debate about Shakespeare/Oxford's religion. What prompts this suggestion is reading two articles in your Spring issue which, in making rather casual statements regarding the bard's religion, assume diametrically opposite positions regarding his religion—one, that the bard was Catholic and the other that he was anti-Catholic—with each apparently assuming without further discussion that the reader will just accept that position.

In Patrick Sullivan's review of *Images in an Antique Book* by Vivienne Robertson, he writes, "After noting that the Church of England had outlawed the concept of Purgatory, Robertson asks a perceptive question: 'How did Shakespeare manage to insert such a crucial reference into his play [*Hamlet*] and escape the attentions of the authorities?' Oxfordians might have a ready answer for that." I agree. Oxford's high rank might have allowed him to get away with such political incorrectness, but what the citation almost unavoidably implies, with no further discussion, is that the author of *Hamlet* was a Catholic or secret Catholic willing to take considerable risks for his faith.

On the other hand, in his review of *North by Shakespeare* by Michael Blanding, a book which claims that Thomas North was the true author of the Shakespearean canon, Michael Hyde writes, "I have doubts about assigning *Henry VIII* to Thomas North at all," given that North, according to Hyde, was a "devout Catholic." He continues, "Let us recall the strident anti-Catholicism of Shakespeare's canonical *King John* …." I don't believe that *King John* was anti-Catholic at all, much less stridently so. Quite the opposite. The title character reconciles with Rome by the end of the play. It seems rather that the bard is holding up King John as a model for his own sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, who also has a history of anti-Catholicism (including certain infamous deeds such as having her cousin killed), to show her how easy and satisfying such an accommodation could be.

But, regardless of my opinions on the subject, there obviously are many Oxfordians like Mr. Hyde who think otherwise, and an extended discussion might be fruitful both for Oxfordians and for others.

Charles Baylor
Topeka, Kansas

Congratulations to Earnest Moncrieff on his "Falstaff—Unmasked" (*Newsletter*, Winter 2021 issue), which seems to unmask quite credibly the real-life inspiration for Falstaff; it could easily have been Dudley, Earl of Leicester. We know that, at about the time of the Lowlands Wars against the Spanish, Elizabeth was prone to twit Leicester about his increasing girth, in stark contrast to the lithe young "Robin" he'd been decades earlier (could the boy Robin Dudley have "crept into any alderman's thumb-ring?" See *I Henry IV,* II.4).

Evidently, it wasn't enough for Edward de Vere to have pilloried Leicester in the latter's guise of Claudius in *Hamlet*: that play was meant to make art and vengeful sport of Leicester's love for drink and rumored use of poison. In his *Henriad,* de Vere could now add irresponsible generalship (the poor starveling soldiers dispatched as cannon fodder!), bribery and embezzlement of government funds, among other sins. The rotund Sir John is a credible facsimile, lightly disguised, of the scheming but incompetent Leicester, who for all we know may have been cowardly. I remember Charlton Ogburn's identifying Falstaff as one of the company of nobles, though "never more than knight." The reduction in rank may signify de Vere's contempt for Leicester as merely a knight of the carpet, not of the sword.

As was her wont, the great Oxfordian scholar Ruth Loyd Miller came very close to the mark, noting de Vere's possible use of Sir John Smythe's manuscript *Collections and Observations relating to the condition of Spain* during his residence there. (Miller was also drawing upon research by Hilda Amphlett; see Miller's edition of Eva Turner Clark's *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays,* 701-705.) This manuscript could easily be known to de Vere, who was raised in Lord Burghley's household; Smythe was in contact with Burghley.

But I agree with Moncrieff that Smythe may not quite fit the figure of Falstaff; pluming himself as a military expert (something Falstaff does not do), Smythe is supposed to have warned Burghley "of the danger of forming an army of men of the baser sorts." Falstaff, conceivably like Smythe, starts by press-ganging "good householders, yeomen's sons…[and] contracted bachelors…." Some of this raw material may become good soldiers; but Sir John then exchanges these worthies, who have "bought their services" for "slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth," and we may speculate how much money has crossed Sir John's palm. Are these unsoldierly poor unfortunates not "men of the baser sorts"?

Anyhow, kudos to Earnest Moncrieff for disposing of the notion of the lovable Falstaff, more likable rogue and charmer than scoundrel, often played for sympathy or as a veritable Father Christmas. When the freshly crowned Hal finally rebukes and banishes Sir John, we are allowed some sympathy, perhaps; for all his venality, Sir John probably does love Hal. But as an equivalent of the Vice, no mere fallible rascal but a genuine comic villain, Falstaff richly deserves the comeuppance he gets, courtesy of Edward de Vere. Since it would appear Mr.

Moncrieff has fingered the right culprit behind Falstaff, it only remains to follow the trail of cucumber sandwich crumbs and unmask this most important "Earnest."

Tom Goff
Carmichael, California

In Mike Hyde's comprehensive review of Michael Blanding's *North by Shakespeare* (*Newsletter,* Spring 2021), there is a clue that further research into Oxford's source for certain words and phrases in his Roman plays would be fruitful. For many decades, critics and editors of Shakespeare plays have routinely ascribed details and language in *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar* and other plays to Thomas North's English version of *Plutarch's Lives*, which he published in 1579. But, as Hyde points out, North didn't translate Plutarch directly; he translated Jacques Amyot's French version of Plutarch, which was published in 1569. It is well known that in 1569, at the age of eighteen, Oxford purchased a Geneva Bible, a Chaucer and a copy of *Plutarch's Lives,* almost certainly Amyot's recent translation. The first two were important influences and sources for Shakespeare's plays. Why not Amyot?

We know that Oxford was competent in French at an early age, so it makes sense that he would use Amyot to access Plutarch. But I am not aware of any attempt to ascertain if Oxford's use of Plutarch was based on Amyot's French version or on North's English one. Stratfordian scholars have not pursued this question because they have been reluctant to claim that Shakespeare was competent in French, and it is much easier to declare that he used North.

Which version of Plutarch Oxford used would be a worthy research project for an Oxfordian scholar who is familiar with Renaissance French. Such research might produce another building block in the structure of evidence that Oxford was Shakespeare.

Ramon Jiménez
Berkeley, California

My son Adam was very ill and lived with me during the last several months of his life. Even though he obviously knew that my wife (Lynne Kositsky) and I were both involved in the SOF, he never questioned our "sanity," but was never moved to delve deeply into the question of authorship. As his illness progressed, he could no longer read and I began reading to him. I read him parts of Roger Stritmatter's dissertation on Oxford's Geneva Bible, all of Bonner Miller Cutting's *A Necessary Mischief*, most of Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*, and *many* articles from past issues of *The Oxfordian* and the *Newsletter*.

Adam's overall reaction was amazement at the overwhelming, overpowering evidence dismissing Will Shakspere as "The Bard," and revealing Edward de Vere as William Shakespeare, the great playwright and poet. Because of the intensity of our discussions and what were to him revelations, I'd like to suggest a completely different tactical approach to the so-called Shakespeare Authorship Question.

It seems to me that we have achieved what Delia Bacon and J.T. Looney set in motion. We have proved, beyond doubt, that the man from Stratford did not write the plays, and we have proved, beyond doubt, that Edward de Vere did. I don't think anyone within the movement would disagree. So why do we continue to refer to it as the Shakespeare Authorship "Question"? There is no longer a question. It's been resolved. Why don't we take the offensive and just announce it? Hold a press conference, make a big hullabaloo, have a celebration! The revolution has succeeded!

So, what's the next step? What happens after our successful overthrow of the orthodox position?

As we have seen with the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and the Arab Spring in Egypt, when there is no Plan B the revolutionaries begin to quarrel amongst themselves ("beheading" each other), ultimately destroying any chance of a permanent and hoped-for change and often ending up with a similar or identical orthodoxy (all that joy and all those deaths for naught).

I fear that that is what is happening to the Oxfordian movement now. I do not understand the seemingly irrepressible need for some (many?) of our members to tie up all "loose ends" with a neat and tidy ribbon. We will never know what the "author intended" when he wrote the Sonnets, who the Dark Lady was, who the rival poet was, why de Vere was given 1000 pounds a year by the Queen and yet never awarded the Order of the Garter, why there is no will, why de Vere knew his name was to be obliterated, and so on. To pursue these questions is not only *futile* but *unnecessary,* and inevitably leads to the kind of speculation that we detest when it comes from the Stratfordians.

There is no point arguing with the likes of Edmondson, Wells, Shapiro, et al. They will never be convinced. Let's ignore them and carry on the work of bringing the "good news" to libraries, history professors, lawyers, English profs (if we must) and high schools, with a strong emphasis on educating the younger generation. That is where the future lies.

Michael Kositsky
St. Catherines, Ontario

What's the News?

SOF Annual Meeting and Fall Conference Will Again Be Virtual

Despite everyone's hopes to meet in person in 2021, the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Board of Trustees has decided to make this year's SOF Annual Conference a virtual event once again. There will be two Zoom events: the SOF Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 2, and a seminar with papers and a panel will take place on October 8 and 9. Both events will be free of charge. Zoom registration details will be announced over the coming weeks.

Annual Meeting: The October 2 Annual Meeting is for SOF members only, who will be able to attend that session via special Zoom link. It will include a report from outgoing SOF President John Hamill, committee reports, financial statements, plans for the coming year, and the election of a new President and Trustees.

Fall Seminar: The Zoom seminar is open to all. It will start with a two-hour session on Friday evening, October 8, from 7:00 to 9:00 PM (EDT). In response to requests from many of our new members, this session will be an "Authorship 101" event, hosted by Bob Meyers from Washington, DC. It is intended to provide an overview of the subject along with reasons why the true author was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. It will feature the late Tom Regnier's popular video introducing the topic. It will also include a presentation by John Shahan, founder of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, about the SAC's online Declaration of Reasonable Doubt.

The seminar will continue on Saturday, October 9, with two three-hour sessions—12:00 noon to 3:00 PM (EDT), hosted by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan from Boston, and 5:00 to 8:00 PM (EDT), hosted by Professor Emeritus (and Conference Committee chair) Don Rubin from Toronto. The sessions will include papers by a number of SOF researchers, along with a panel discussion about the recent book, *North by Shakespeare: A Rogue Scholar's Quest for the Truth Behind the Bard's Work* (reviewed in the Spring 2021 *Newsletter*); panelists will include Michael Blanding (the book's author), Dennis McCarthy (the "rogue scholar" of the book), Bryan H. Wildenthal and Bob Meyers. Other confirmed speakers include Katherine Chiljan, Michael Delahoyde, Michael Dudley, Earl Showerman, Roger Stritmatter, James Warren, Elisabeth Waugaman and Richard Waugaman, Additional speakers will be announced in the coming weeks by the Conference Committee's programming co-chairs, Bonner Miller Cutting and Cheryl Eagan-Donovan.

The Saturday sessions will also include showings of the finalists in the 2021 SOF Video Contest and will announce the Video Contest winners and the 2021 Oxfordian of the Year. A number of special gifts will also be available to anyone making donations at specific levels to the SOF starting on October 2.

The Board of Trustees has announced that every effort will be made to hold next year's Annual Conference in person (with a live feed for those unable to physically attend), on September 22–25, 2022, in Ashland, Oregon.

Fundraising Appeal, New Member Drive to Begin October 2 With Gifts Galore

In conjunction with this fall's free online Symposium on October 8 and 9, the SOF will be holding a special Fundraising Appeal and New Membership Drive starting October 2; it will conclude on October 31.

This appeal will include an array of thank-you gifts at different levels—from $75 to $750—including books, paintings and prints connected to Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and the de Vere family seat at Hedingham Castle in Essex. A list of available thank-you gifts and details about them will be announced on the SOF website.

"We wholeheartedly thank all our members, new and old, and are always appreciative of our donors," said SOF President John Hamill. "Everyone's generosity allows us to keep the organization's events, research, and outreach programs going. We are especially grateful at this time to SOF Trustees Ben August and Bonner Miller Cutting, who personally donated several of the gifts."

A special promotion for new members, offering a one-time discount on annual dues, will also begin at the same time. Details will follow.

From the Board of Trustees

Earl Showerman

In late May, SOF Trustee (and Secretary) Earl Showerman sustained serious injuries in a bicycle accident near his home in Jacksonville, Oregon. In order to concentrate on his recovery, he resigned from the Board in early June. His term of office would have expired in October of this year.

As provided under the SOF bylaws, the Board of Trustees appointed Don Rubin to fill the vacancy created by the resignation. Rubin had previously been nominated to a three-year term commencing in October 2021, so he is joining the Board of Trustees a few months sooner than anticipated.

The Board of Trustees also appointed current Trustee Bonner Miller Cutting to be Acting Secretary until new officers are selected after the 2021 Annual Meeting.

Earl Showerman expects to make a full recovery, though it will take some time. The Board—and all Oxfordians—look forward to his expected return to the field in October during the SOF Zoom Symposium, at which he plans to present a paper.

Update from the SOF Nominations Committee

In the last issue of the *Newsletter* the Nominations Committee announced that three persons had been nominated for three-year terms to the SOF Board of Trustees. After the *Newsletter* had gone to press, Theresa Lauricella withdrew her nomination, having decided that she does not plan to seek another term. The Nominations Committee then announced that Dorothea Dickerman will be added to the slate of nominations for a three-year term on the SOF Board of Trustees (Don Rubin and Tom Woosnam are the other persons nominated for terms on the Board of Trustees).

Dorothea Dickerman

Dorothea Dickerman recently retired as a partner from a thirty-four-year career practicing commercial real estate law in a major international law firm. In her professional capacity, she negotiated billions of dollars of deals for high-profile projects, including the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC, and the World Trade Center in New York City. She earned her JD from the University of Chicago Law School. A double major in English and Political Science, her BA was awarded *summa cum laude* by Amherst College, with additional English departmental prizes.

Dorothea started asking whether Will of Stratford really wrote the Shakespeare Canon when she was ten years old after listening to Old Vic recordings of several of the plays. The works revealed that the author's social position, education and life experiences were significantly at odds with the traditional biography. Since her retirement from the practice of law, she has focused on researching and writing about Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, and learning Italian and brushing up on her Latin to assist that effort. She has been a podcast guest twice on the *Don't Quill the Messenger* series ("For the Love of Shakespeare" aired February 17, 2021, and "The Italian Job" aired November 11, 2020) and delivered a Zoom talk entitled "The First Thing We Do, Let's *Convince* All the Lawyers" at the SOF's Spring Symposium in 2021.

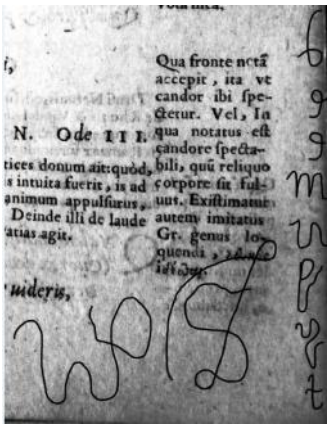
"Anybody But Oxford" Department:

Canadian Professor Claims He's Found "World's Most Valuable Book" Once Owned by Shakespeare

The Toronto *Globe & Mail* reported on May 25, 2021, that a Canadian academic has uncovered a book that was actually owned by William Shakespeare. The book is a copy of Horace's *Odes*, published in 1575. It was brought to the attention of Professor Robert Weir at the University of Windsor (Ontario) in 2016 by a private collector.

Weir was led to his conclusion by finding the faded signature of "Anne Oxford" (Anne Cecil, wife of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford) in the book, next to part of an ode that she quoted in her 1583 sonnet, written after the death of her infant son. Apparently, the book had been washed long ago, possibly in 1731 when it was rebound, and signatures and other markings had faded. Weir used digital imaging and ultraviolet light to reveal the annotations. He also claims to have found Shakespeare's initials in the book.

Weir's "working hypothesis is that Shakespeare may have acquired the book from the Earl of Oxford . . . and that this may have happened during Shakespeare's so-called lost years of 1585 to 1592. He believes the earliest annotations may have already been present when Shakespeare got his hands on it, acting as a sort of roadmap and alerting the playwright, whose Latin was not first-rate, to the best parts."



Weir further maintains that the annotations are consistent with Shakespeare's borrowings from Horace. "I think to a large extent the smoking gun is that the pattern of borrowings is corroborated by the visible annotations," Weir said. "It's a bit like getting Al Capone on tax evasion. It's not colourful, it's not glamorous, it's not sexy, but it is more objectively provable."

Interestingly, Professor Weir is not in the English department, but is in the Classics department. Apparently, it never occurred to him to consider (a) that the 1575 book actually belonged to Edward de Vere, (b) that the "earliest annotations" were not made for the benefit of someone else, but rather by and for de Vere himself; or (c) that the scrawled "WS" may have been added much later.

New Book on AI Discusses SAQ

In his new book, *Artificial Intelligence/Human Intelligence: An Indissoluble Nexus*, Richard J. Wallace explores the relationship between machine intelligence (often called Artificial Intelligence, or AI) and human intelligence. Toward the end of the book he also manages to discuss, even if briefly, the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

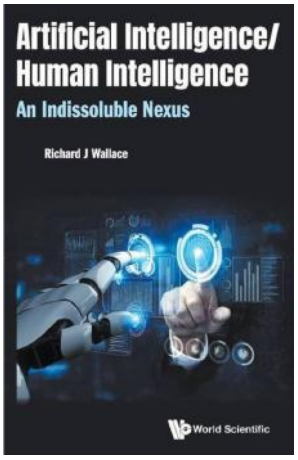
Wallace, who has worked for more than twenty years at University College Cork (Ireland) and its Cork Constraint Computation Centre/Insight Centre for Data Analytics, brings an insider's perspective to AI. He says upfront that "[M]odern computer science, and in particular artificial intelligence, is one the most extraordinary areas that one could ever hope to work in. . . . We really are dissecting intelligent action and studying systems that we have put together from simpler elements and that exhibit intelligence. . . . [an] extraordinary expansion of human awareness."

Wallace asks what "intelligence" is and formulates a definition in which he views machine intelligence as an artificial aid to human intelligence, with the two forming a "seamless web." In one early chapter he explains, in comprehensible terms, how two well-known AI systems actually worked: "Deep Blue," the chess-playing computer that defeated world champion Garry Kasparov in a six-game match in 1997, and "Watson," the question-answering computer system that defeated two human champions on the TV show *Jeopardy!* in 2011.

Later chapters examine the nature and varieties of intelligence, logic, symbol systems and (Wallace's specialty) "constraint satisfaction problems." The latter area is familiar to us; when we correctly solve a sudoku puzzle we are using constraint satisfaction protocols.

In his next-to-last chapter Wallace examines two "case studies," both of which involve "intellectual controversies." One has come and gone: the "Y2K" controversy of the late 1990s. Because many computers used only a two-digit field for the current year, it was feared that they would be unable to distinguish between the years 1900 and 2000, and that chaos might ensue. Some press reports hyped the danger of massive power failures, grounded transportation systems, hospital disasters, and perhaps even a worldwide economic depression. Wallace shows, as we all now know, that the hype was just that; most experts predicted few, if any, serious problems (but they didn't get the publicity that the doomsayers did), and "countries that had not done anything to prepare for the Y2K event fared no worse than the United States. . . ."

Wallace then moves on to the SAQ. After introducing it succinctly in a few hundred words, he notes, "That all this is not mere foolishness can be shown quite easily. There are dozens of anomalies, discrepancies and startling omissions in the evidence which should give any unbiased cogitator cause for reflection." Citing Diana Price's book, *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*, he points to the lack of connections between Shakespeare and any of his literary contemporaries; citing Richard Roe's book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, he argues that Shakespeare was "familiar with many specific locales in Italy"; he notes several anomalies in the Droeshout engraving in the 1623 First Folio; and so on. He levels criticism on both sides (more toward the Stratfordian side, to be sure) before stating that "in this area of discourse the orthodox account is to my mind preposterous" and that "views that contradict the dominant one have been marginalized." He believes that AI can be put to use in this area — not in the limited area of word and phrase comparisons ("stylometrics"), but rather in "improving the level of discourse through assessment of arguments, credibility of evidence, etc."



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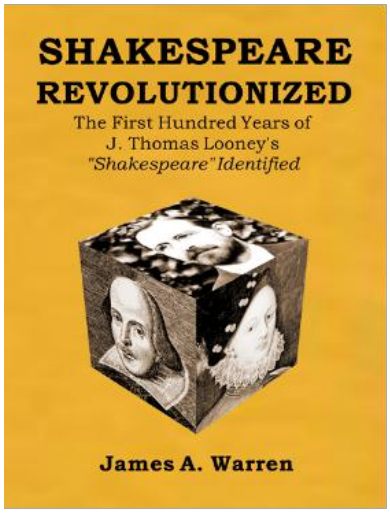
Shakespeare Revolutionized

The First Hundred Years of J. Thomas Looney's *"Shakespeare" Identified*

By JAMES A. WARREN

That "William Shakespeare" was the author of *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and many other much-loved plays is the greatest deception in literary history. ***Shakespeare Revolutionized*** tells the fascinating story of the discovery one hundred years ago of the real author—Edward de Vere, the highest ranking earl in Queen Elizabeth I's court—and explains why it matters: knowing Shakespeare's real identity revolutionizes understanding of "Shakespeare's" plays and poems and the conditions in which they were created, and shows the real author's critical role in launching what became known as the English Renaissance.



The book explains why the deception was perpetrated and why it lasted for more than 300 years, and chronicles the influence of the Oxfordian idea on public opinion, on academia and on the development of an Oxfordian movement over the past century. It shows why many Shakespeare scholars today resist examining the Oxfordian claim even as the idea becomes the unacknowledged nucleus around which much of their work revolves.

This book will revolutionize the understanding of all readers willing to approach the Shakespeare authorship question with an open mind.

Published by Veritas Publications Pap., 7 x 10 in., 784 pages
Available at amazon.com, $40

Hedingham Castle Restoration Project

Hedingham Castle, the seat of the de Veres, is currently owned by the Lindsay family, who are descendants of the de Veres. Much of the 900-year-old Norman Keep is still standing, and is a popular tourist attraction.

During recent projects around the Estate, the family uncovered some ancient foundations and brickwork, near the bottom of the bailey of the Keep, of what was the Tudor Castle, a slightly later red brick building built by John, the 13th Earl of Oxford, in 1498 prior to the visit of King Henry VII. This imposing building to the west of the Keep would have housed a chapel, hall, bakehouse, kitchen and pantries, as well as the home of the Earl of Oxford. These have now all gone, but many of the materials have been used again, some in the church tower in the village of Castle Hedingham, and some in the mansion house.

The remaining brickwork is in desperate need of consolidation, to stop any further erosion and collapse and to preserve what is left so that an archaeological investigation can be carried out to find out more about these fascinating ruins. It is evident that the foundations extend further below and outwards from the brickwork that is currently visible. The owners want to uncover these fully and learn more about this building, which was once the main house of the estate. They believe that the two octagonal sections that are visible may possibly have been stairwells of the castle. They are hopeful that the investigation might offer some clues about the floorplan of the building.

Donations toward this project are welcome. https://www.gofundme.com/f/hedinghams-tudor-castle-restoration-project?qid=51c6462603add37a08abedbdcc534029

15th century addition is visible at left of Norman Keep

(Continued from p. 1)

as neither is literally possible. Markham apparently is describing counterparts, or *associative* names or words. This is confirmed in Markham's next example:

> the word *woman* also; and so the Author speaking of many notable and famous exploits fortunately performed, delivers you peradventure but [merely] the name of *Nassau*, or the *Dutch*, and such like; whereas in truth and true meaning, the name of *Vere* should ever be included within them, & the sense so read, the Story is perfect.

Markham is saying that merely mentioning "Nassau, or the Dutch" regarding "notable and famous exploits fortunately performed" assumes Vere's participation, but a "perfect" understanding would require inclusion of Vere's name.

These examples imply that some contemporaries associated a different name—the mistaken one—with Vere, and that only the mistaken name was used in the Vere-omitted book. Even though Vere is implicit in the mistaken name, "Vere should ever be included" for clarity, asserts Markham. As Jannsch noted, Markham could have easily remedied the situation by citing the faulty book's title and the mistaken name. Not doing so suggests that his complaint was *not* about an uncredited Vere military exploit, but about something else, *especially since no Vere soldier was known to have an associative name*. Markham's unwillingness to let the Vere omission "pass untouched" indicates that the faulty book was a recent publication.

The Omitted Vere was an Author

In calling attention to the Vere omission, Markham says he does not mean to "derogate anything from" that "excellent Prince," a "Soldier unparallel'd":

> the Story is perfect. I speak not this to derogate [lessen, disparage] anything from the excellencies of that most excellent Prince to whose Vertues I could willingly fall down & become a bond-slave; for the whole World must allow him a Soldier unparallel'd, and a Prince of infinite merit:

Appearing in the treatise's Vere section, the "Prince" inferred is Henry de Vere, 18th Earl of Oxford, a soldier; he is one of the "heroical princes" named on *Honour*'s title page, and is called "great Prince" in the next paragraph. The uncredited Vere, therefore, personally involved the 18th Earl, and Markham's plea to correct the Vere omission could somehow disparage him.

Still speaking in the first person, Markham explains his objection to the Vere omission:

> a Prince of infinite merit: but only to shew that the least spark of Vertue which is, cannot choose but repine [complain] when it finds a great Vertue injur'd by a pen whose blanching [lying] might make the whole World forgetful.

The omitted Vere is now characterized as "a great Vertue," and in comparison Markham is "the least spark of Vertue which is." Virtue is an ability or skill that both he and the omitted Vere share, in different degrees. As no Vere soldier had a counterpart name, Markham could not be speaking of martial skill. "Vertue," therefore, must have meant writing skill,[3] i.e., Markham is saying that he's a lesser author than the omitted Vere; this is supported in *Honour*'s dedication, where Markham downplayed his writing ability, calling his treatise an "Imperfit offer" of the four families' "excellencies," and that, undoubtedly, a future "Pen" will do better.

> do not imagine it is a Chronicle of all their Noble Actions, far be it from my weakness to aim at a Work of such merit: let it suffice it is but an Essay or Imperfit offer of those excellencies, which no doubt, will hereafter draw a Pen of Immortality to crown them.

In addition, Markham employed "the least spark of" in the context of writing (p. 21):

> Truth is my Mistress, and though I can write nothing which can equal the least spark of fire within him. . . .

Markham's self-described writing ability as "the least spark of Vertue which is" means that "a great Vertue" is a writer of greatness. The Vere-omitted book, therefore, was of Vere's authorship, and the mistaken name his *pen name*. Up until 1624, the only known Vere author was the 17th Earl of Oxford, lauded in the previous paragraph. Oxford was a poet-playwright known to write anonymously,[4] a social convention for those of rank and nobility, as creative writing was considered frivolous, even déclassé. Consequently, while alive, Oxford would not have wanted open credit for his works.

Markham indirectly confirmed that "a great Vertue" was the 17th Earl by saying that the airing of his complaint about Vere's omission in the book, presumably of his poetry or plays, was not meant to "derogate" the 18th Earl, his son. Markham had no wish to tarnish the 18th Earl's reputation by exposing his late father's literary activities, but he also knew that a nobleman's writing could be openly attributed and published *after* death without stigma.

The Vere Book is the First Folio

The 17th Earl of Oxford was also the only Vere known to have an associative name. For decades, contemporaries hinted he was "William Shakespeare." For example, Edmund Spenser's "Aetion" in 1591:

> A gentler shepherd [poet] may nowhere be found:
> Whose Muse full of high thoughts invention,
> Doth like himself Heroically sound.[5]

Excerpt from Markham's *Honour in his Perfection* (1624), pages 16-19, in modern spelling. The passage in bold (added) is the subject of this paper.

Descend but to the noble Father [17th Earl of Oxford] of this princely *Oxford* now living [18th Earl of Oxford], and you shall find, that although the blessed arms of *Peace,* in the blessed days of the ever blessed *Elizabeth,* did so fold and embrace our Kingdom about, that every valiant arm for want of employment, lay as it were manacled and fettered from the use of weapon; yet this Nobleman breaks off his Gyves [fetters], and both in *Italy, France,* and other Nations, did more Honor to this Kingdom than all that have traveled since he took his journey to heaven. It were infinite to speak of his infinite expense, the infinite number of his attendants, or the infinite house he kept to feed all people; were his precedent now to be followed by all of his rank, the Pope might hang himself for an English Papist; discontentment would not feed our enemies Armies, nor would there be either a Gentleman or Scholar to make a Mass-Priest or a Jesuit; that he was upright and honest in all his dealings the few debts he left behind him to clog his survivors, were safe pledges; and that he was holy and Religious the Chapels and Churches he did frequent, and from whence no occasion could draw him; the alms he gave (which at this day would not only feed the poor, but the great man's family also) and the bounty which Religion and Learning daily took from him, are Trumpets so loud, that all ears know them; so that I conclude, and say of him, as the ever memorable Queen *Elizabeth* said of Sir *Charles Blount*, Lord *Montjoy*, and after Earl of *Devonshire*, that he was *Honestus, Pietas, & Magnanimus.*

What shall I speak of the two famous wonders of our Land, the ever memorable Sir *Francis Vere* deceased; and Sir *Horace Vere* now living, his noble brother: to speak of one action, were to draw thousands into my remembrance; or to name one place, were to lay the Map of almost all Europe before me: and therefore I will refer you to the Chronicles of *Spain* and *Portugal,* where as long as there stands a *Cales,* or abides an Island of the *Azores,* you shall see a *Vere* in a Soldiers Triumph. Look in many of the views of France, and there you shall find *Vere* armed: see the Stories of the dissentions in *Germany,* and there you shall find *Vere* struggling with *Honour*; nay, look in all that hath been written in the *Netherlands,* within the compass of the longest memory now living, and believe it in every page, in every action, ***Vere* cannot be omitted: only in that Story there is one pretty secret or mystery which I cannot let pass untouched, because it brings many difficulties or doubts into the mind of an ignorant Reader; and that is, the mistaking of names, for the Author of that Work binds himself too strictly to the Scripture phrase, which is to make one name to contain another; as the name *Adam* to contain the name *Eua* also, and the word *man* to contain the word *woman* also; and so the Author speaking of many notable and famous exploits fortunately performed, delivers you peradventure but the name of *Nassau,* or the *Dutch,* and such like; whereas in truth and true meaning, the name of *Vere* should ever be included within them, & the sense so read, the Story is perfect. I speak not this to derogate anything from the excellencies of that most excellent Prince to whose Vertues I could willingly fall down & become a bond-slave; for the whole World must allow him a Soldier unparallel'd, and a Prince of infinite merit: but only to shew that the least spark of Vertue which is, cannot choose but repine when it finds a great Vertue injur'd by a pen whose blanching might make the whole World forgetful.**

Lastly, thou shalt not need to read, but with thy finger point at the life of the now [18th] Earl of *Oxford,* of whom but to speak reasonable truths (such is the poison of Envy) every good word would be accounted flattery, and to speak anything contrary to goodness, Truth herself would swear it were mere Falsehood; Therefore I will forbear his Chronicle, and only say thus, that his Cradle did point him out a Soldier; for he brought that spirit with him into the World, and that spirit he hath still nourish'd; for divide his Age into three parts, and I think two of them have been bestowed on Foreign Nations; neither hath he let slip any occasion (how great or low soever) which might put him into action, he hath hung about the neck of his noble Kinsman like a rich Jewel, and the one hath so adorned the other, the one with Counsel, the other with obedience; the one shewing what to do, the other doing what was fit to be done, that if there be a hope whereon mortality may build, there is none more strong, than that we have of this Nobleman. Go on then great Prince in this brave career of *Honour,* and fix for thine object the designs of thy famous Ancestor; and as he restored the lost House of *Lancaster*; so I Prophesy, if thou beest not the head, yet thou wilt be the right arm to the body which shall bring back again to the royal owner the now wasted *Palatinate.*

Now for a Conclusion to this Noble House, Know thou whatsoever thou art which shalt read this discourse, that allbe I nominate here but four Earls, and the first in the day of *Henry* the sixth; yet there have been of the name of *Vere* eighteen Earls of *Oxford*; of which the first, *Aubery Vere* was created Earl of *Oxford,* and High Chamberlain of England, to him and his heirs males forever, in the days of *Henry* the first, who was son to *William* the Conqueror, which is Honor almost as early as could be; for before the Conquest there is no certainty any of Honor hereditary in this Land: and thus they have successively followed till this day.

A "Heroically" sounding name fits "Shakespeare," i.e., spear-shaking. Aetion's muse is "full of high thoughts invention," descriptive of Shakespeare's art. "A gentler shepherd may nowhere be found" means that Aetion has the highest social standing among poets, which uniquely suited Oxford.

Another example is "Gentle Master William" in Thomas Nashe's dedication of *Strange News* (1592), who is called "the most copious Carminist of our time," i.e., a prolific gentleman-poet named William. His "dudgeon dagger" hinted at "spear" in "Shakespeare." He is Nashe's "verie friend"—a Vere allusion—and an "infinite Maecenas," i.e., a generous patron ("infinite" was repeatedly used in Markham's passage about Oxford). These roundabout comments were the closest that the authors could come to saying, without repercussion, that "William Shakespeare" was Oxford.

In 1593 Gabriel Harvey inferred that Shakespeare was a pen name in his *Pierce's Supererogation*. Harvey had delayed publication due to the sensation caused by Shakespeare's poem, *Venus and Adonis*, fearing it would get overlooked:

> who can conceive small hope of any possible account, or regard of mine own discourses, were that fair body of the sweetest Venus in Print, as it is redoubtably armed with the compleat harness of the bravest Minerva. When his [Shakespeare's] necessary defense hath sufficiently acleared him. . . . [115]

Venus and Adonis is "armed" with "harness" of Minerva —the goddess who erupted from Jupiter's head fully armed and shaking her spear. The pseudonym "William Shakespeare," therefore, is the great author's armor and "necessary defense" for the poem. (The great author himself called the poem "the first heir of my invention," i.e., the first work published with his invented name.) Earlier, in 1578, Harvey had exhorted Oxford to put aside writing and focus upon military matters, including a Latin phrase that could translate as "thy will shakes speares.'[6] The recently published Vere-authored book that had omitted Vere's name, therefore, was the collected plays of "William Shakespeare": the First Folio, registered in November 1623. Although some knew that "Shakespeare" was a pseudonym, or was synonymous with Oxford, Markham was concerned that the Folio's omission of Vere would cause "an ignorant Reader" to believe the pseudonym was his actual name.

But the Folio's "pretty secret or mystery" concerned not only the mistaking of names, but also *the mistaking of men*—the deliberate confusing of the great author with a theater financier from Stratford-upon-Avon christened William Shakspere. Otherwise, if "Shakespeare" were simply Vere's counterpart name, why would "Stratford moniment" and "Sweet Swan of Avon" appear in the Folio's prefatory pages, slyly associating him with Stratford-upon-Avon? Why would the title page feature a portrait *not* of Oxford?

With this understanding, Markham was calling out "the Author" of the Folio's "blanching" and "mistaking of names":

> the mistaking of names, for the Author of that Work [First Folio] binds himself too strictly to the Scripture phrase, which is to make one name to contain another. . . . … the least spark of Vertue which is [i.e., Markham], cannot choose but repine [complain] when it finds a great Vertue [i.e., Oxford] injur'd by a pen whose blanching [lying] might make the whole World forgetful.

As used above, "Author" refers *not* to the great author Shakespeare, but rather to the person who authored, or *authorized*, the Folio's prefatory pages which contained the "blanching" or lying about him. A likely candidate is Ben Jonson, who wrote at least four preface pieces: two signed poems and the two letters signed by actors Heminges and Condell (long accepted by scholars as Jonson's hand). Markham saw the whole Folio fraud and could not let it pass without expressing his discontent. Markham and Jonson evidently knew one other, but were not friendly: in 1619, Jonson told William Drummond that Markham was not among the "Faithfull" poets, but "a base fellow …."[7]

Jannsch ingeniously found an anagram of "Shakespear" within "t**he least spark**," fulfilling Markham's clue about making "one name to contain another." This, however, would be a name within a phrase—a phrase summarizing Markham's inferior writing talent. "Vere" is contained in "William Shakespeare," allowing that the letter *W* was often printed as two *V*s (**V**Villiam Shakesp**eare)**, but that would leave many leftover letters. "**Ver**tu**e**" contains "Vere," but is a name within a word. Perhaps Markham's clue was neither an anagram nor a biblical reference. The "Scripture phrase" meant was simply "William Shakespeare," the First Folio being his scripture/writing —i.e., Jonson "binds himself too strictly" to Oxford's pseudonym in the Folio.

Conclusion

Markham's *Honour in his Perfection* covertly revealed that a writer of greatness, a Vere, was injured by a recent publication that neglected to mention his name, crediting only an associative name as its author. Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the only known Vere author, and some in the literary world knew that "William Shakespeare" was his pseudonym. Markham, therefore, was directing his comments at the recently published First Folio.

Markham was evidently appalled that this tremendous tribute to the dramatist-earl—three dozen Shakespeare plays in print—left out his real name *nineteen years after his death*. As an author himself, Markham felt compelled to express his discontent ("repine"), as the omission "might make the whole World forgetful" of Oxford's incomparable literary achievement. Furthermore, the Folio's preface insinuated that William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon was the great author, which likely further rankled Markham— "one pretty secret or mystery which I cannot pass untouched" ("pretty" in the sense of crafty or cunning). Markham accused a lying "pen" for this misattribution of authorship, hinting at Ben Jonson, a major contributor to the Folio's preface.

Markham's veiled statements indicated his trepidation in directly noting the Vere injustice (and *Honour* bore only his initials). Previous authors, like William Barksted in 1607, and M.L. of *Envy's Scourge* circa 1609, also covertly pleaded that the late Shakespeare's works be credited to his actual name, otherwise, his authorship would be lost to posterity.[8] Oblique comments about Shakespeare were common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, often couched in descriptive names, like Nashe's "Gentle Master William" and John Davies of Hereford's "English Terence." Open commentary was apparently forbidden as late as 1640: "*Shake-speare* we must be silent in thy praise" (*Wits Recreations*, no. 25); this anonymous writer, however, *was* praising Shakespeare, but *not using his real name*— another testament that "Shakespeare" was a pen name.

Markham alluded to Shakespeare in previous works but carefully avoided the name; for instance, his 1595 verse addressed to the 3rd Earl of Southampton:

> Thou glorious Laurel [Southampton] of the Muses hill,
> Whose eyes doth crown the most victorious pen [Shakespeare],
> Bright Lamp of Virtue [Southampton], in whose [Shakespeare's] sacred skill,
> Lives all the bliss of ears-enchanting men … [9]

Southampton's eyes "crown the most victorious pen"—a clear allusion to Shakespeare's sonnets, as several expounded upon the Fair Youth's beautiful eyes; Markham, therefore, identified him with Southampton. In *Honour* (p. 21), Markham wrote that for "many years" he "daily saw" Southampton (his likely source for accessing the then unpublished sonnets); if true, then he "could have been in a position to know the details about the Shakespeare authorship ruse," as Jannsch noted.[10] In Markham and Lewis Machin's play, *The Dumb Knight* (published 1608), a character reads aloud lines from Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, calling it the "best book in the world" (3.4); the title is mentioned, but not the author. Even in his unpublished manuscript, *Newe Metamorphosis* (c. 1610-12), Markham related an anecdote about Shakespeare giving his initials only:

> Is love in wives good, not in husbands too [?]
> why do men swear they love then, when they woo?
> it seems 'tis true that W.S. said
> when once he heard one courting of a Maid
> "Believe not thou Men's feigned flatteries,
> Lovers will tell a bushel-full of Lies."[11] [quotation marks added]

Markham's lauding of the 3rd Earl of Southampton, his son, James, Lord Wriothesley, and the 18th Earl of Oxford in *Honour* was prescient, as all three died in the Netherlands within a year of its publication. Markham made no further tributes to them, and *Honour* never saw a second edition.

[Katherine Chiljan has studied the authorship question since the 1984 TV debate between Charlton Ogburn and a Shakespeare professor on *Firing Line*. Her book, *Shakespeare Suppressed: The Uncensored Truth About Shakespeare and His Works* (2011, reprinted 2016), was inspired by a Shakespeare professor who insulted Anti-Stratfordians on national television; it earned her an award for distinguished scholarship from Concordia University, Portland, Oregon. In 2003, Chiljan appeared with the late Joseph Sobran and Ron Hess in an authorship debate at the Smithsonian Institution. She edited the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, published anthologies on Oxford's letters and dedication letters to him, and contributed to *Contested Year* (2016).]

Endnotes:

1. Heidi Jannsch, "One Pretty Secret: Gervase Markham Reveals Shakespeare's Identity," *De Vere Society Newsletter*, January 2017. Also see Roger Stritmatter, "Gervase Markham's Honour in his Perfection (1624), Matthew 6:1-4, and the Authorship Question," *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, vol. 56, issue 2 (Spring 2020).
2. Lesel Dawson, "The Earl of Essex and the Trials of History: Gervase Markham's 'The Dumbe Knight,'" *Review of English Studies*, New Series, vol. 53, No. 211 (August 2002), 348.
3. *OED*, virtue (noun, 6a), "Superiority or excellence in a particular sphere; ability, merit, or distinction." A 1579 example: "I trust the reasonable Readers will look for no other vertue of writing at my hands, but only the simple shewing of the truth …" (William Fulke, *D. Heskins, D. Sanders, and M. Rastel, accounted among their faction three pillars*, STC 11433).
4. "And in her Majesty's time that now is are sprung up another crew of courtly makers, noblemen and gentlemen of her Majesty's own servants, who have written excellently well as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest, of which number is first that noble gentleman Edward, Earl of Oxford." Anonymous, *Art of English Poesie* (1589).
5. Edmund Spenser, *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, lines 445-447. Although first printed in 1595, *Colin Clout's* dedication was dated 1591.
6. Andrew Hannas, "Gabriel Harvey and the Genesis of William Shakespeare," *Shakespeare-Oxford Newsletter*, vol. 29, no. 1b (Winter 1993), 3-5. Harvey's speech was published in *Gratulationes Valdinenses*, 1578 (STC 12901).
7. *Ben Jonson, Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden, 1619*, ed. G.B. Harrison, London (1923), 8. Jonson said that Markham "was not of the number of the Faithfull. i.[e.] Poets[,] and but a base fellow that such were Day and Midleton."
8. Katherine Chiljan, *Shakespeare Suppressed: The Uncensored Truth about Shakespeare and his Works*, Faire Editions, San Francisco, 2016 (2nd edition), 260-263.
9. Gervase Markham, *The Most Honorable Tragedy of Sir Richard Grinvile, Knight*, 1595, lines 1-4 (STC 17385).
10. Jannsch, 14.
11. J. M., Gent., *The Newe Metamorphosis, or A Feast of Fancy, or Poetical Legends*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 96 (British Museum Additional MS 14,824-14,826).

A Prologue Arm'd: The Printing of *Troilus and Cressida* in the First Folio

by Gabriel Ready

The Catalogue of Shakespeare's First Folio credits *Coriolanus* with beginning the Tragedies section, and it would have remained in its privileged position if not for a radical shift in England's foreign policy in late 1623. *Coriolanus* features a great Romish general who is unfaithful to Rome, but then reconciles by concluding a peace treaty before dying a hero's death, uttering the words "though I cannot make true wars,/ I'll frame convenient peace." Not coincidentally, a similar narrative movement occurs in *King John* and *Cymbeline*, other plays with the privilege of being framing plays in the First Folio (*King John* starts the Histories section and *Cymbeline* ends the Tragedies section). The symbolic trajectory of *King John*, *Coriolanus* and *Cymbeline* is virtually identical, aspiring towards a restored relationship with Rome. One would think that reconciliation with Rome was an important theme for the publishing agents of the First Folio. Though *Cymbeline*'s inclusion in Tragedies is suspect from a genre classification perspective, the importance of its position in connection with the Spanish Match was expounded on by Roger Stritmatter in his excellent article, "Publish We this Peace" (*Newsetter* 34:3, Fall 1998, pp. 16-17, reprinted in *Brief Chronicles, The 1623 Shakespeare First Folio: A Minority Report* [2016], 111-115).

The Spanish Match was an Anglo-Spanish alliance that was supposed to end in a dynastic marriage between King James I's son, Prince Charles, and Infanta María Anna, the daughter of Philip III of Spain. At the time foreign policy and confessional politics in England were inextricably intertwined and Protestant-Catholic polarization a fact of life. James sought conciliation between a fervent Protestant Parliament, or "Patriots," and those welcoming a Catholic revival, the mainstays of a so-called "Spanish" party. Predictably, the Patriots were strongly opposed to the Spanish Match, Spain being a surrogate of Rome and the Pope. In parallel with negotiating the Anglo-Spanish marriage treaty, a conflict had broken out on the continent between the Catholic Holy Roman Empire and the Protestant Palatinate. English sympathies lay with James's daughter, Elizabeth of Bohemia, consort of Frederick V, Elector Palatine. Resisting calls to arms, the pacific James wanted to leverage his alliance with Catholic Spain, believing it the most peaceful means to restoring the Palatinate to Elizabeth and Frederick.

To the great surprise of all, Prince Charles and the court favorite, the Duke of Buckingham, traveled incognito to Madrid in February 1623 with the intent of bringing the Infanta María home and negotiating a favorable settlement in Bohemia. The gambit backfired dramatically as other concessions were added to the Spanish terms—a papal dispensation from Rome would not allow the Infanta María to leave Spanish soil until other demands had been met, which included relaxing English penal laws against Catholics (Brennan P. Pursell, "The End of the Spanish Match," *Historical Journal* 45 (2002), 699-726, at 707). The Prince and Buckingham returned home on 5 October 1623 without any advancement on the question of Bohemia, and worse, no bride. After the Madrid humiliation, the two turned against the Spanish. Fancying themselves Protestant defenders now, they lobbied for war, which required the setting up of a new Parliament in early 1624, precisely when the First Folio volume would be put up for sale at the Hispanic-oriented bookshop run by Edward Blount.

The best evidence that the framing plays for each section of the Folio were being used to signal the direction of English foreign policy was the abrupt removal, and later reinsertion, of the play *Troilus and Cressida*. Today, Tragedies do not begin with *Coriolanus*, as was originally conceived by Jaggard and the publishing agents. The original plan was that *Troilus and Cressida* would follow *Romeo and Juliet*, but the typesetting in early summer 1623 was suspended after three sheets. Conventional scholarship assumes that there was a conflict over copyright, and that it was only in the final days before the book went on sale that Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount secured the rights to *Troilus and Cressida* and quickly printed it, dropping the play in at the beginning of the Tragedies section. Apparently, they found a lost Prologue, too, and inserted it as well. This "just so" story is pure speculation (Charlton Hinman, *The Printing and Proof-reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, 2 Vols. [1963]; see I:177, 351, 361; II:281-282).

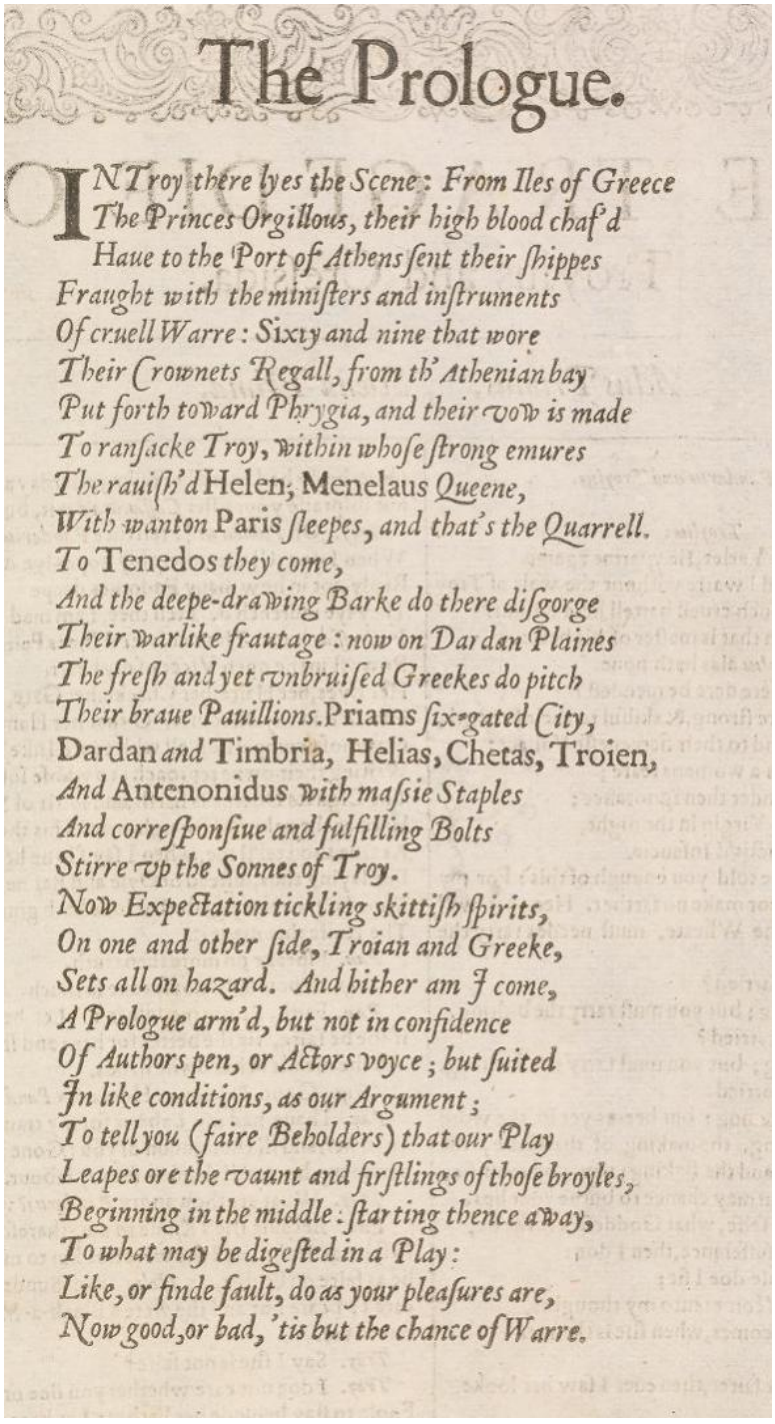
In a post-Stratfordian paradigm, ascribing irregularities in printing to difficulties in obtaining copyright is much less persuasive, especially considering that the Earl of Pembroke, William Herbert, was also the Lord Chamberlain. In his official capacity as Lord Chamberlain, Pembroke had some say over what plays were printed and when. We are forced to reconsider the problem of printing *Troilus* anew: Why was it removed in the first place, only to be reinserted a few months later, and, most importantly, in a more privileged position as a framing play, beginning the Tragedies section?

As with the other framing plays, we need to pay special attention to the story the play tells, its characters, themes and motifs, for it is in the story that we find a possible explanation. It seems that *Troilus*'s overt cynicism and jaundiced anti-romanticism were too eerily similar, too easily misread as negative commentary on Prince Charles's chivalric adventure in Madrid. Perhaps after printing the first sheets the publishing agents

developed sober second thoughts. Or perhaps word came from an even higher authority than the Lord Chamberlain (or what Leo Kirschbaum refers to as "authority above authority" in his *Shakespeare and the Stationers*)—persons close to the King or perhaps the King himself—who felt the play's inclusion would be inappropriate in a collection of plays celebrating the prospective marriage of Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta. After all, *Troilus* is a story of hope and vows of love that are hastily replaced by the hope and vow of revenge. While the publishing agents had an eye on printing all of the canonical works, publishing *Troilus* had become too risky in early summer 1623. What if political necessity triggered its removal from the press sometime in the months between April and July 1623 (Hinman, I:363), when negotiations between Spain and England had reached a frenzied pitch, when even the slightest flinch was registered by spies and interlopers, followed months later by its reinsertion as a framing play (and therefore a demonic parody of the failed Spanish Match)? Perhaps the oddities of the Folio printing of *Troilus* reflect the seismic shift in policy occurring in 1623.

Not to be overlooked is the so-called sudden discovery of the "Prologue arm'd" which was printed after another small delay. The phrase "not in confidence/ Of authors pen" (lines 23-24) strongly suggests that the Prologue may be by another pen other than Shakespeare's. The most likely candidate to have written it is Ben Jonson, who had also written "An armed Prologue" for his *The Poetaster* (1602). And how convenient that the words could be used as a message to Spain circa December 1623 and early 1624. Curiously, the Prologue itself does not mention either of the title characters; contrast this prologue with the one in *Romeo and Juliet* that explicitly alludes to the title characters five times in fourteen lines. The implication is that the *Troilus* prologue is not "mere padding," as Charlton Hinman would have it (I:38).

The final line of the Prologue reads: "Now good, or bad, 'tis but the chance of Warre" (line 31). The phrase "chance of war" is curious indeed for the context of this play, considering the Trojan War is in its seventh year as the play begins. What the *Troilus* Prologue manages to do is communicate the political news of the moment, sending Spain an ominous warning indeed. The original Folio design had wanted to frame a convenient peace, whereas this new "framing play" refocuses on war and saber rattling, or perhaps we should say spear-shaking.



The Prologue.

IN Troy there lyes the Scene: From Iles of Greece
The Princes Orgillous, their high blood chaf'd
Haue to the Port of Athens sent their ſhippes
Fraught with the miniſters and inſtruments
Of cruell Warre: Sixty and nine that wore
Their Crownets Regall, from th'Athenian bay
Put forth toward Phrygia, and their vow is made
To ranſacke Troy, within whoſe ſtrong emures
The rauiſh'd Helen, Menelaus Queene,
With wanton Paris ſleepes, and that's the Quarrell.
To Tenedos they come,
And the deepe-drawing Barke do there diſgorge
Their warlike frautage: now on Dardan Plaines
The freſh and yet vnbruiſed Greekes do pitch
Their braue Pauillions. Priams ſix-gated City,
Dardan and Timbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien,
And Antenonidus with maſsie Staples
And correſponſiue and fulfilling Bolts
Stirre vp the Sonnes of Troy.
Now Expectation tickling skittiſh ſpirits,
On one and other ſide, Troian and Greeke,
Sets all on hazard. And hither am I come,
A Prologue arm'd, but not in confidence
Of Authors pen, or Actors voyce; but ſuited
In like conditions, as our Argument;
To tell you (faire Beholders) that our Play
Leapes ore the vaunt and firſtlings of thoſe broyles,
Beginning in the middle: ſtarting thence away,
To what may be digeſted in a Play:
Like, or finde fault, do as your pleaſures are,
Now good, or bad, 'tis but the chance of Warre.

[Gabriel Ready is an independent researcher who lives in Ottawa, Ontario. His most recent work, "Model of Disorder" (2020), published on Humanities Commons, assessed the sequential disposition of the preliminary pages in all surviving copies of the First Folio using census data and digital copies, concluding that the optional design of the volume's front matter reflected the political instability of England circa 1623-24. Relatedly, his article "The Production of the First Folio Reconsidered" will appear in Volume 23 of *The Oxfordian*. He has a BA and MA in English Literature.]

Edward de Vere's Lost Playscript

by Stewart Wilcox

In 1607 a London clergyman named Abraham Fleming visited his brother Samuel, a rector in Leicestershire. At his brother's home Abraham became ill and died. He was buried in the St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Bottesfield.

Among Abraham's possessions was his collection of manuscripts. It came to be called *MSS Flemingii*, and was mostly the works of other authors. This collection reappeared more than 100 years later near Melton Mobray and then vanished. It probably included one of de Vere's early playscripts.

In Elizabethan and Jacobean times reading and writing were fairly rare skills; poor men who could read and write often derived a living from writing or working as secretaries for richer people. They jocularly called themselves "scriveners."

One such scrivener was Abraham Fleming. As a writer he is perhaps best known for his translation of "Of Englishe Dogges" by John Caius. In brief, Abraham was a proof corrector, indexer, translator and editor, and was considered a third-rate author of pamphlets and poetry. He also collected manuscripts, many of them unpublished. For a time, Abraham was a servant and/or protégé of de Vere. During his time with de Vere he seemed to have functioned as an amanuensis, so who better to have access to one of his master's plays and perhaps have squirreled away a draft copy?

In 1732, more than a hundred years after Abraham Fleming died, another Leicestershire rector who was also an antiquarian, the Reverend Francis Peck, listed most of the seventy-five-item content of Abraham's manuscript collection which he then claimed to own.

Below is the most interesting item in Peck's list:

> MS. Manu Flemingi. XXIII. A pleasant Conceit of Vere Earl of Oxford, discontented at the Rising of a mean Gentleman in the English Court, circa MDLXXX.

We know that in 1580 Sir Christopher Hatton was a rising star in Elizabeth's Court and that he and de Vere did not get along. Is this "pleasant conceit" an early version of *Twelfth Night*?

The *MSS Flemingii* listing appeared at the end of Volume 1 of the first edition of Peck's published manuscript collection, *Desiderata Curiosa*; Peck promised to publish all the manuscripts of *MSS Flemingii* in his second volume.

He never did. Peck died in 1743 in Leicestershire; his library was auctioned off in Lincolnshire after his widow, Anne, died in Harlaxton around 1758. The collection never resurfaced. What happened to it? Was it destroyed? Was it auctioned off or sold, and if so, who would have bought it and where would it reside now if it still existed?

One hope would be that another local antiquarian or country gentleman acquired it for his library, and there, just possibly, it remains, tucked away on a library shelf or boxed up in a country house attic in North East England, waiting to be rediscovered; perhaps the Holy Grail of the Oxfordian movement, proving with finality de Vere's authorship of a recognized Shakespeare play.

That prompts me to ask two questions:

1. Is there an Oxfordian in England prepared to take up the challenge of identifying old country houses in, say, a fifty-mile radius of Harlaxton and contacting the owners with hope of examining any store of manuscripts they may have?
2. If there is such a person, is there any way we could fund him or her?

These are not public records. Any search would require a lot of diplomatic negotiation with country house owners and a thorough audit of manuscripts in the houses' libraries and storage spaces.

[Stewart Wilcox spent most of his working life in the IT industry in the UK. He had no great interest in IT, but says it was just a way to earn enough money to put a large family through private school and college. He traveled extensively as a young man, and wrote a book about one of his adventures to India called *Two Men in a Van*. A voracious reader, he stopped reading fiction in his fifties to devote his time to non-fiction; he stumbled upon the Oxfordian theory when he read Mark Anderson's book, *"Shakespeare" by Another Name*. Stewart now lives in the US with his American wife and daughter; among his current interests are tornados, one of which he hopes to see before, or maybe when, he expires.]

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'A pleasant Conceit' and a Coincidence?

by Eddi Jolly

[Editor's note: Longtime Oxfordian Eddi Jolly lives in England. In 2020 she received a Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Research Grant to examine Public Record Offices and libraries in England for books and documents "that might shed light on Oxford's life or activities, and in particular to learn more about the "Flemingii mss." In the following two articles she reports on her work so far.]

Who wrote the play titles and summaries found in the Stationers' Register and upon the title pages of plays in the Elizabethan and early Jacobean era? The playwrights themselves? The printers? The booksellers? Whoever it was, there is often an element of puffery, language which

is clearly used for conative purposes. Sometimes the promotion of the play employs complimentary adjectives and noun phrases ("pytthy,"[1] "lamentable,"[2] "merye playe"[3]), but often the main selling point lies in post-modification, with a clause or sentence that tells us one or more of the following: who has played it, before whom, where, and when. *Hamlet* offers one example of this:

> As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere …[4]

And *Mucedorus* has:

> A most pleasant Comedie … as it was acted before the Kings Maiestie at White-hall on shroue-Sunday night. By his Highness Seruants …[5]

The advertisement at the back of volume I of Francis Peck's *Desiderate Curiosa* (1732) includes the tantalizing description of a text, possibly a play:

> XXIII A pleasant Conceit of *Vere* Earl of *Oxford*, discontented at the Rising of a mean Gentleman in the *English* Court, *circa* MDLXXX.

The collocation "pleasant Conceit" isn't common today. Nor, as far as I'm aware, was it common in the early eighteenth century. But "pleasant conceit[s]" and/or "conceited" are not uncommon in descriptions of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. The collocation may then not be Francis Peck's choice of phrase, but rather that of an Elizabethan, perhaps Edward de Vere himself.

The *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* gives "pleasant" a number of meanings: "agreeable," "humorous, jocular, facetious; merry, gay," and "amusing, laughable, ridiculous, funny." It illustrates these with quotations from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century (*inter alia*). "Conceit" derives from the verb "conceive," denoting "that which is conceived in the mind," and in this context probably "fancy, imagination," even "gaiety of imagination." The collocation therefore means something like "an amusing piece of imaginative writing." The two words appear separately quite frequently in play titles or descriptions. Thus for example in 1585 we find:

> Fidele and Fortuno. The deceits in Loue: excellently discoursed in a very **pleasant** and fine **conceited** Comoedie … [6]

But "pleasant conceit[ed]" occurs much less frequently, as we can see from the play titles and descriptions listed by E.K. Chambers, in entries from the Stationers' Register and from title pages, in *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (*WS*), vol. I, and in *The Elizabethan Stage* (*ES*), vol. IV. Indeed, if the Peck advertisement's reference to c. 1580 is correct, that use of the collocation is earlier than any Chambers gives. In chronological order, we find seven examples:

Date	Title/descriptor	Source
c. 1580	A **pleasant Conceit** of *Vere* Earl of *Oxford*	(Peck)
1594	A **Pleasant Conceited** Historie, called The taming of a Shrew[7] ('pleasant' retained in 1631 edition)	*WS* 322 (*WS* 323)
1595	A **pleasant Conceited** Comedie, called, A Knack to know an honest Man …	*ES* 24
1598	A **Pleasant Conceited** Comedie Called, Loues labors lost ('pleasant' retained in 1631 edition)	*WS* 331 (*WS* 332)
1599	A **pleasant Conceyted** Comedie of George a Greene	*ES* 15
1602 18th Jan.	An excellent and **pleasant conceited** commedie of Sir John Faustof and the mery wyves of Windesor A most **pleasant** and excellent **conceited** … (Q1) … a **pleasant conceited** comedie (head title) … Most **pleasant** and excellent **conceited** Comedy … (Q2, 1619)	*WS* 426
1602	A **pleasant conceited** Comedie, Wherein is shewed how a man may chuse a good Wife from a bad …	*ES* 19

Is it coincidental that the collocation is used in the description Peck gives, and in three "Shakespearean" titles (if indeed *A Shrew* is "Shakespearean"[7])? Is it also coincidental that, shortly after the respective successes of *A Shrew*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Merry Wives*, someone else now chooses to use the same collocation (for *A Knack to Know* in 1595, *George a Greene* in 1599, and *How a Man May Choose* in 1602[8])?

1. E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage (ES)* (Oxford: OUP, 1923), vol. IV, p. 1.
2. *ES*, p. 26.
3. *ES*, p. 1.
4. E.K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (*WS*) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), vol. I, p. 408.
5. *ES,* p. 34.
6. *ES,* p. 13.
7. There is still no agreement about the relationship of *A Shrew* to *The Shrew*; *A Shrew* may be an early draft, an abridgement, or a weak memorial reconstruction of *The Shrew*, for instance. The two do show unmistakable similarities.
8. Respectively, anon, Robert Greene, and possibly John Heywood. Cf. *ES*.

In Pursuit of "A pleasant conceit…"

by Eddi Jolly

My research visit to Lincolnshire and Leicestershire in search of "A pleasant conceit…," one of Abraham Fleming's manuscripts, has added a very small number of minor details to the likely paper trail for this manuscript.

The "pleasant conceit" is recorded as dating to 1580. Since the term is used to describe six Jacobethan plays, three being Shakespeare's, it may be a play text. It must have come into Abraham's hands between 1580 (its date of composition or acquisition), and 1607, the date of his death. Abraham spent most of his time in the London area, but was with his older brother Samuel at Bottesford, perhaps for a long visit, when he died. Samuel was rector at Bottesford from 1581 to 1620; he was chaplain to four earls of Rutland. He had a bridge and a hospital built in Bottesford, and was of sufficient status to have his brother's burial plaque placed before the altar, amidst the Manners family memorial monuments.

It is not known where Abraham's manuscripts were at his death. He had amassed them in his preparation for supplementing the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, published in 1587. It may be that Abraham had them with him at his death in Bottesford.

In 1732 Francis Peck had some sixty of Abraham's manuscripts, when Peck published *Desiderata Curiosa*. He therefore had acquired those manuscripts before that date. He was a rector at Godeby, about forty miles from Bottesford.

After Peck died in 1743, his papers were bought by Sir Thomas Cave, who lived about twenty miles away. Some of Peck's papers are still held by the Cave (now Braye) family, bound in four volumes, with some of his papers also in a fifth volume. The binding took place in 1880. The "pleasant conceit" is not included; these bound papers are history notes in Peck's handwriting.

However, at some point the antiquary John Nichols had access to the Peck's papers, by then in the hands of the Cave/Braye family. It is recorded that:

> [Peck's] collections were, however, used by John Nichols in his History of Leicestershire… a miscellaneous collection of notes left in the Braye mss, but presumably Nichols kept the more valuable part of the collection.[1]

Exactly what Nichols found or used is not known. Like Peck, Nichols did visit Bottesford. He also referenced Peck, both in his notes and on the proofs of his own *History of Leicestershire*. Nichols was interested both in history and literary matters; he published books on the history of Leicestershire and on literary anecdotes, and at his death was preparing one on literary anecdotes from the time of James I. But on 8 February 1808 a fire took place in Nichols's offices, destroying "volumes of the *History of Leicestershire* and the *Literary Anecdotes*," amongst other books.

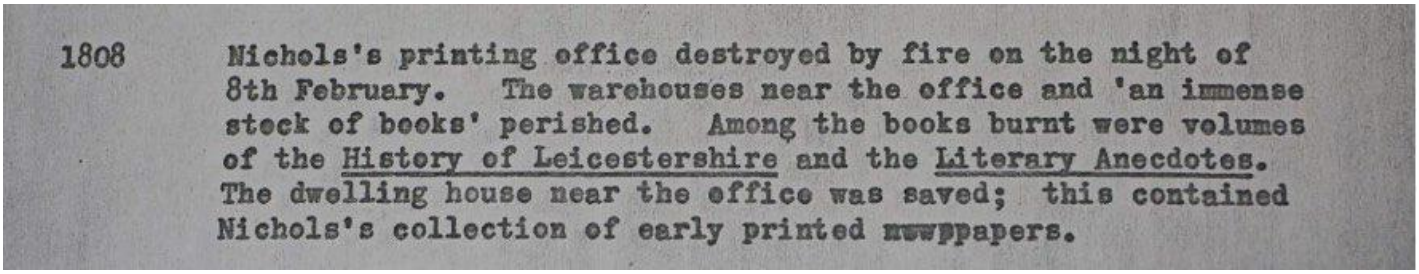
The image below is from documents held at Leicester Public Record Office (PRO); the fire is mentioned in other documents there.

Julian Pooley's paper[2] on Nichols tells us that Nichols issued *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth* (four volumes), about the Elizabethan court. Pooley also reports on the sales of his books and papers by Sotheby's in 1828, 1843 and 1864. Some of John Nichols's papers and books were part of Gough Nichols's library and manuscripts, sold in 1874, 1879 and 1929, and were part of Mary Anne Nichols's collection, sold in 1951.

The "pleasant conceit" might be referenced in *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth* (1823) if (1) John Nichols had found and retained it when he initially used the Cave/Braye papers which constituted the papers Peck left at his death, and (2) it was not consumed in the 1808 fire. And there is a chance that Sotheby's sales catalogues may reference the "pleasant conceit."

Endnotes:

1. Leicestershire Public Record Office: 23D57. 1 (32).
2. "'A Laborious and Truly Useful Gentleman': Mapping the Networks of John Nichols (1745-1826). Printer, Antiquary and Biographer," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 38 No. 4 (2015).


1808 Nichols's printing office destroyed by fire on the night of 8th February. The warehouses near the office and 'an immense stock of books' perished. Among the books burnt were volumes of the History of Leicestershire and the Literary Anecdotes. The dwelling house near the office was saved; this contained Nichols's collection of early printed newppapers.

The Shakespeare Statue in Westminster Abbey

by Peter W. Dickson

Alexander Waugh has recently claimed that the impetus and secret purpose behind the Shakespeare statue in Westminster Abbey has something to do with Oxford: namely, that the statue is telling us that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the true Bard and lies buried there as hinted, according to Waugh, in the inscription beneath the Shakespeare bust in the church at Stratford-upon-Avon.

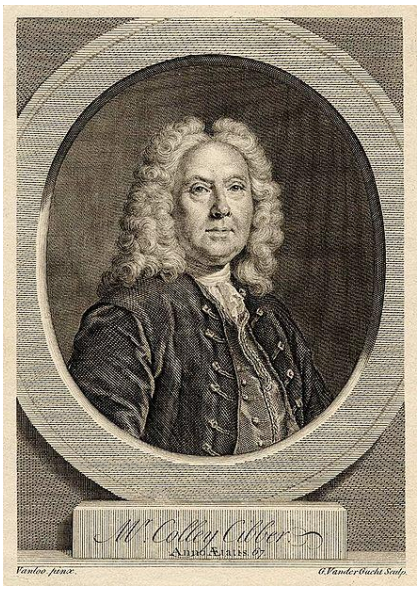
The truth is that the creation and placement of the Abbey statue was a strong expression of the Bardolatry relating to the tradition surrounding the alleged Stratfordian Bard. Neither the Abbey statue nor the inscription below the bust in Stratford have anything to do with Oxford.

Serious scholars know this to be true because Theophilus Cibber (1703-1758), an actor and the son of the dramatist and poet laureate Colley Cibber (1671-1757), states in his book *The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1753) that the impetus for the Abbey statue began with a decision to raise money for it via profits from a performance of *Julius Caesar* at the Drury Lane Theater on April 28, 1738. That performance was sponsored by the Shakespeare Ladies Club, which was formed in 1736; it testifies to the growing cult of Bardolatry in London.

This theater (originally and officially known as Theater Royal) was purchased by Colley Cibber in 1709, the same year that Nicholas Rowe published his edition of Shakespeare's works, which contained the first significant attempt to offer a published account of the life and career of the alleged Stratfordian Bard (see entries for Drury Lane Theater and for the two Cibbers in *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*, 1966).

There was without question a synergism between this high-profile, Cibber-owned theater and Rowe's Shakespeare edition-cum-biography because, during the next few decades, the Drury Lane Theater became the primary venue through which the cult of Bardolatry emerged; this had begun long before David Garrick joined it as an actor in the 1740s, eventually becoming its co-manager in 1747.

It is also no mere coincidence that Colley's son Theophilus recycled what Rowe had to say about the life of the Stratfordian Bard in his book. In this regard, Theophilus (unlike Webb, Puttenham, Meres and Peacham, and some writers in the 1700s) does not mention Oxford in his long list of prominent Elizabethan era literary figures. Oxfordianism was not "rampant" in these centuries, as Waugh has claimed, but Oxford's status as a noteworthy literary figure did not die out with Peacham's *The Complete Gentleman* (1622). It survived down through the eighteenth century, despite Cibber's omission. For a comprehensive account of this topic, see my article, "Bardolatry and Oxford's Literary Reputation



Colley Cibber, Nicholas Rowe, and Theophilus Cibber

This trio was the Triumvirate which crystallized the Stratfordian Orthodoxy and promoted Bardolatry in the early 1700s, long before David Garrick, whom the Cibbers hired as an actor in the 1740s.

in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" (*Newsletter*, Winter 2021; this was a revised version of my article from the Fall 1998 *Newsletter*).

There was never any connection between the Shakespeare statue in Westminster Abbey and Oxford. There is no reason to accept claims for such a connection because the statue was erected in 1740 by making much ado about the alleged Oxfordian significance of the numbers "17" and "40." The Abbey statue was dedicated on January 29, 1741 (1740 under the Julian calendar then in effect); the Latin inscription above it states that it was erected 124 years after the death of Shakespeare, a clear link to Shakspere of Stratford, who died in 1616.

Some have claimed that Oxford was the correspondent known as "40" in a series of highly sensitive letters exchanged toward the end of Elizabeth's reign between King James of Scotland and several high-ranking Englishmen (all of whom used numbers rather than their names). However, there is no evidence to support this claim. This secret correspondence was masterminded by Henry Howard, Oxford's mortal enemy, and it is impossible to believe that Howard would have permitted Oxford to be part of this select group. Thus, this "40" cipher cannot be relied on as having a connection to Oxford. (A new edition of these pivotal letters was published in 2018 and is available via Amazon.com: *The Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil with James VI. King of Scotland*; it had only been published twice previously, in 1766 and 1887.) The debate among Oxfordians about the significance of the number 40—a number which Waugh cites in favor of his theory—deserves fuller discussion in a subsequent issue.

After 100 years of effort the Oxfordian movement needs to cleanse itself of bogus claims and false narratives (also known as fake history) offered to support Oxford's candidacy if it wants to make real progress in the struggle against the Stratfordian orthodoxy.

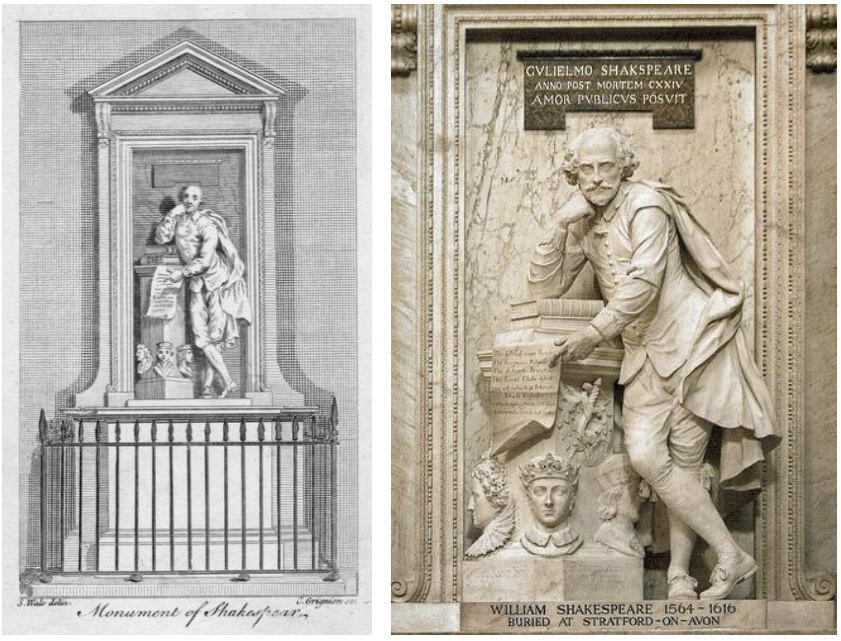
"Real Progress" in 1740

by Alexander Waugh

Peter Dickson is correct when he states that the erection of the Shakespeare monument at Westminster Abbey was intended as a "strong expression of Bardolatry." Indeed, all statues of writers are expressions of idolatry, which is why they are erected. The case of the Westminster monument is made more interesting by the fact that "William Shakespeare" is a pseudonym and the principal movers in setting it up — Freemasons Lord Burlington, Alexander Pope, Richard Meade and William Kent — were aware of this. When prominent Freemasons of the seventeenth century such as Sir John Denham and Samuel Short publicly attest to Shakespeare's burial at Westminster we should pay heed, not dismiss their evidence as error.

The Latin inscription on the Westminster Abbey monument is capable of more than one translation. I argue that the ambiguous language may be translated as "124 years after *a* death Public Love buried this man using the name William Shakespeare." I.e., "Public Love" is being deluded in its attempted memorialization of a pseudonymous poet whose false front died 124 years earlier. That is why Shakespeare points to a scroll stating that "all Shall Dissolve" and "Leave not a wreck behind."

To understand why 1740 (MDCCXL) is carved upon the monument itself, why Shakespeare originally stood above seventeen spears and still stands to this day in the shape of "4X" (i.e., forty), and why he points to a scroll with "17" and "4T" delineated in its top and left edges, the scholar must enter the proto-Masonic mind. In



The Shakespeare monument: engraving showing its original 17-spear railing, and as it now stands, without railing and with bottom inscription added in 1977.

particular, the scholar must try to enter the mind of John Dee, who urged all wise and worthy men to "be led upward toward the conceiving of *Numbers* absolutely that at length we may be able to find the number of our owne name gloriously exemplified and registered in the booke of *Trinitie* most blessed and eternal" (preface to *Euclid's Elements*, 1570).

I explain how Oxford conceived the number of his own name registered in the Trinity using '17 40' and its pun '17 4T' in a YouTube video entitled "The Divinity of Man." The importance of this number to Oxford is evidenced by the frequency of its use in contemporary allusions to him and to Shakespeare. We find it, for instance, indicated in the name "VVilliam Shakespeare," in Oxford's elaborate signature, in the carved pattern on his tomb at Hackney and on the Stratford Shakespeare monument. It is prominently registered by the typography of the dedication to *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and in the dedication to *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609); it provides the structural underpinning to the *Sonnets* edition and to Ben Jonson's great encomium to Shakespeare of 1623; it is exemplified in the last words of Hamlet as printed in the First Folio. Early writers who knew and understood the connection of Shakespeare/Oxford to 1740/4T include Covell, Porter, Meres, Bodenham, Bolton, Jonson, Drayton, Heywood, Bancroft, Turner, Holland, Warren, Davenport and Sheppard. These connections are not related to whether Oxford was the person who used "40" in the secret correspondence with King James.

I am pleased to say that several learned Oxfordian scholars are now independently pursuing this fascinating and fruitful line of inquiry and that many Stratfordians and Baconians have, to my certain knowledge, joined the Oxfordian side on account of it.

From the Data Preservation Committee

Abstracts and Grief Chronicles
by Terry Deer and Renee Euchner (proud members of SOF's Data Preservation Committee since January 2021)

If one man could write *Hamlet*, clocking in at 30,557 words, surely two SOF newbies could write 100-word abstracts! That was our thinking when we agreed to abstract and subject-tag all the articles in two valuable journals — Gary Goldstein's *The Elizabethan Review* (1993-1999) and Nina Green's *Edward de Vere Newsletter* (1989-1994) — for the Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (SOAR) free online database. Maintained by the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library (www.shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org), SOAR can be accessed using links on the library's home page, the SOF home page, or at www.soarcat.com.

Thanks to the efforts of Bill Boyle, Jim Warren, and Catherine Hatinguais, the database already had 8300+ entries when we joined the Data Preservation Committee. With our help, surely the entries would SOAR to 9,000 in no time! Eight months later, we have —um—8310+ entries. But we are not deterred! Luckily, this is the perfect committee and ideal assignment to enhance our nascent knowledge. As Catherine Hatinguais aptly told us: "Working on data preservation will quickly expose you to a wide range of Oxfordian information. It's the best way to learn." Truer words were never spoken. We are learning by the seats of our pants, but connections are lighting our brains.

Terry Deer: I've been an Oxfordian for many years, but a latecomer to the SOF. I knew nothing about the Data Preservation Committee (DPC) before Kathryn Sharpe, our gallant chair, warmly invited me to join. Helping to catalog Oxfordian publications is my way of taking up the cudgels for the cause. In addition, I'm learning about the period and accumulating heavy ammunition for the next time my older sister and I come to blows on the authorship question.

Renee Euchner: Before I attended the 2019 Ashland SOF seminar and finally put aside Marlowe, Bacon, or a dozen other folks I kept contemplating as the bard, I thought I alone had to duck mudslinging while studying the authorship question. I was overwhelmed with new information, yet didn't realize how much more I needed to learn. Oxford was a name I had heard in passing, but I couldn't recollect how or where.

Terry: Amen to being overwhelmed. I'm a former librarian; I thought this would be a simple assignment. Ha! Much of the Oxfordian research in *The Elizabethan Review* is amazingly complex and has brought me to grief more than once. My biggest challenge so far has been to condense Gerald Downs's eighteen-page article, "A Reconsideration of Heywood's Allusion to Shakespeare" (*ER*, vol. 1:2, Fall 1993) to 100 words or less. It about broke my brain. I needed a highlighter, several readings, and a glass of Scotch to grasp the argument.

Renee: It's no exaggeration to say I spent several weeks reading the first few Nina Green articles. Each *Edward de Vere Newsletter* contains one complex data-packed article, so the first ten issues took months to complete. While reading about *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, I was constantly Googling unfamiliar terms (apocryphal, for one), historical figures (Thomas Howard), books (*Arte of English Poesie*), and historical events (insurrection in Norfolk). Then I'd sit in shock. How would I even begin to process this information? (I could have used a Scotch, too.)

Terry: The appeal of joining a group with the dry title of "data preservation" might not be obvious. This

committee is anything but dry; DPC meetings are lively and enlightening. We are making connections with friendly, smart people and contributing to the important work of safeguarding and improving access to the huge pool of Oxfordian research.

Renee: The associations can be daunting. Kathryn Sharpe was so right when she said, "Nina Green is all about connections." And now I'm making connections of my own. Two of my favorite "Aha!" moments happened while I was walking and relistening to *The Shakespeare Underground* podcasts by fellow DPC member (and SOF website manager) Jennifer Newton and co-host Allan Armstrong. Allan told the audience, "It's likely you've never heard of *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*." Ooh, ooh! But I have! I shot my hand up in the air, to no one in particular, causing a woman walking toward me to grab her youngster's hand and quickly cross the street.

Terry: Those Eureka moments are a benefit of doing this work, aren't they?

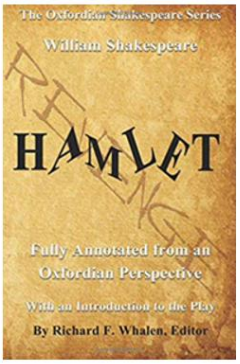
Renee: I was so enthralled, I kept listening—and had another Eureka moment an hour later, listening again to Jennifer's interview with the late Tom Regnier on *Hamlet* and the law. I recognized both of their voices immediately. Tom casually mentioned Oxford in the conversation. Subconsciously, that name stuck with me. I'm sure that's the first time I'd heard the name "Oxford." How I became an Oxfordian was prompted by a podcast.

Terry: Me too! What led me to SOF was an episode of Steven Sabel's *Don't Quill the Messenger* podcast series. Here's another connection: Richard Desper's statistical approach to *The Winter's Tale* (*ER*, vol. 1:2, Fall 1993) lists fourteen correlations between the play and Oxford's life; too many for coincidence. One of them gave me chills. The French translation of the title is "le Conte D'Hiver" (literally, "the tale of winter"). Read it aloud, and the connection to "the Comte [French for Count, or Earl] de Vere" becomes obvious.

Having introduced ourselves, here's our pledge: We'll continue panning for Oxfordian gold in the archives and report back with more connections—and announce the winner of our contest: We amended the title of this article from what play? Win a free copy of Jim Warren's new book, *Shakespeare Revolutionized,* if you've read this far and you're the first to correctly identify the play, act/scene/line, and speaker/listener. Email Renee: renee.euchner@gmail.com.

Advertisement

Have you read *Hamlet* lately?



It's the most famous play in the world, although the Stratfordian commentators call it "enigmatic" and don't know what to make of it. But *Hamlet* makes perfect sense and great entertainment, including its surprise ending, when read knowing all the details showing that it was written by Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

For its illuminating details and many insights get the fully annotated Oxfordian edition of *Hamlet* with its enlightening Introduction by Richard F. Whalen, the edition's editor (and general editor and publisher of the Oxfordian Shakespeare Series) with Jack Shuttleworth, who is chairman emeritus of the English department at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Then get Whalen's editions of *Macbeth* and *Othello* (with Professor Ren Draya) for their Oxfordian insights and details, some quite surprising. Did you realize that Macbeth is not at all ambitious for the throne of Scotland and that Othello the Moor is not a heroic, noble figure but a boasting, swashbuckling, credulous fool?

For paperback copies, search Amazon books with the name of the play and Whalen. (Kindle editions do not—yet—work for the play text and line notes on facing pages.)

[Terry Deer, a writer, storyteller, and former librarian, lives in central Florida. She was unaware of the authorship controversy until 1985, when a review led her to Charlton Ogburn's biography of Oxford and resulted in immediate conversion. She became a member of SOF in 2020. She has since joined the De Vere Society (UK). Renee Euchner, a former medical writer and editor, lives in San Jose, California. She had doubts about the Stratford man since the 1970s, followed the Marlowe path in 2000, and finally discovered Oxford in 2019. "Now it all makes sense," she reports.]

Thomas Vicars Shows Us "Shakespeare" is a Pseudonym

by Thomas L. Townsend

Thomas Vicars (c.1590-c.1641) received a BA and subsequently an MA after attending Oxford University.[1] Both degrees concentrated in classical languages, Greek and Latin.

As befits his surname, he became a vicar. To be clear, all vicars in early Jacobean England were in a difficult position, just as they had been during the Elizabethan era. They were required to be completely honest all the time. Of course, the vocation of vicars demands consistent honesty. This was not simply a matter of conscience, but had also been mandated by the late Queen Elizabeth I.[2] Further, vicars were required to answer to the ecclesiastical courts. Their sermons were censored, as well as anything else they wrote; in other words, their speech was controlled.[3] King James I, like Queen Elizabeth I before him, was the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.[4] He was the highest-ranking member of the Church, above Cardinals, Bishops, and finally vicars. Having the King as the ultimate overseer would be stressful for anyone.

In 1624 Thomas Vicars published the second edition of his Manual of Rhetoric, *Χειραγωγια: Manductio ad artem rhetoricam*. In it (and in the previous edition in 1621) he cited Geoffrey Chaucer, Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton and George Withers as English poets worthy of commendation. He did not mention Shakespeare. Bear in mind that Shakespeare's First Folio had been published just one year earlier.[5] As Vicars was concentrating on poets, it's possible that he may not have seen it. Nevertheless, Shakespeare remained a well-liked and popular English poet in the 1620s. Shakespeare's two long poems, Venus and Adonis (1593) and The Rape of Lucrece (1594), were remarkably successful, resulting in sixteen additional printings by 1640.[6] Further, Shakespeare's Sonnets had been published in 1609, and was another major poetic work which Vicars undoubtedly knew.[7] Why didn't Vicars include Shakespeare in his work concerning outstanding English poets? It can't be because he merely forgot. It's peculiar, at the very least.

Vicars expanded his list in the third edition of his Manual of Rhetoric, published in 1628. He wrote in Latin, "*Istis annumerandos censeo, celebrem illus poetam quo a quassatione & hasta nomen habet, Ioan Davisium, & cognominem meum, poetam pium & doctum Ioan Vicarium" ("To these, I think, should be added that well-known poet who takes his name from shaking and spear, John Davies, and a pious and learned poet who shares my surname, John Vicars."*).[8] In this enigmatic manner he adds Shakespeare's name.

By obscuring the name Shakespeare, his noble overseers should provide their approval—presumably they would not see any difference. But the strange arrangement of words allows Vicars to be honest regarding what he actually knows about Shakespeare. Such an unusual display indicates that he intentionally doesn't want to use the exact name Shakespeare. He evidently knew that the name was a pseudonym and was indicating this with his circumlocution.

Let us consider two counterarguments:

1. Because the name Shakespeare cannot be translated into Latin, Thomas Vicars elected to split the Shakespeare name into its phonetic components. Vicars was Latinizing the Shakespeare name.[9] His actions were obvious and straightforward.
2. It is irrelevant that it took Vicars until the third edition of his book to include Shakespeare in his list of noteworthy English poets.

Therefore, Thomas Vicars is not indicating that Shakespeare was a pseudonym. He is implying the Stratford Man was Shakespeare. This is additional proof for the Stratford Man.

But, from his university education Thomas Vicars knew the conventions for converting untranslatable names into Latin. His education would have taught him that Latin was in a state of fluctuation. Vicars saw the continued rise of Protestantism helped by the printing press. A dark shadow had fallen over the use of Latin because of its association with the old Catholic mass. Moreover, many new words had been imported into the English vernacular, thanks to the Inkhorn Controversy. All this led to the decline of Latin's use, alongside the ascent of the English language. The educated classes as well as clerics were, however, still expected to know Latin.[10]

Rigorous Latinization of names was largely performed through the Middle Ages, such as dividing a name into parts or using phonetic sounds.[11] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Latinization was principally used by scribes, who used familiar Latin translations for names.[12]

There were two methods for rendering untranslatable English names into Latin: (1) use the English name just-as-is, with no Latinization; (2) add a standardized suffix (often *um* or *ium*) to the English name. Vicars does this with several English poets, such as *Galfridum Chaucerum*, *Edmundum Specerum* and *Georgium Withersium*.[13]

Vicars's book includes passages in English, Latin and Greek. Thus, Vicars uses "Michael Drayton" when discussing him in a paragraph written in English, and "Michaelem Draytonium" in a section written in Latin.[14]

If Vicars had only been concerned about transforming Shakespeare's name to Latin, he could have used a standardized Latin suffix to render it Shakespearum. Or, if he had wished, he would have written an English paragraph about Shakespeare. Nonetheless, it took him some time to develop a procedure to indicate that Shakespeare was a pseudonym without overtly saying so; the method he developed enabled him to observe his vow of honesty and avoid trouble with the ecclesiastical courts and any other powerful interests. While his peculiar method appears to have worked, his adaptation of the name Shakespeare doesn't conform to any known pattern (at that time) of writing someone's name in Latin, or for that matter in English.

It should also be noted that, in his book, Vicars always gave English poets' first names as well as their surnames. No exceptions—well, not quite. When Vicars wrote of "that well-known poet who takes his name from shaking and spear…" ("celebrem illus poetam quo a quassatione & hasta nomen habet…"), he provided no first name. The Stratford Man's first name —William— was easily translated into Latin as *Guiliamus*.[15] By providing only a last name in phonetic components he is again signaling this poet is using a pseudonym and, as such, was not a real person.

Finally, it is highly illogical, perhaps unthinkable, that one would divide the surname of a real person into its phonetic components and then translate it, as Vicars did. Anyone thinking of a particular individual thinks specifically about that person and not about their name, much less its components. That person's name is simply a set of sounds that others memorize.[16] For example: no one would write of me as "that person who takes his name from the end-of-the-town." That's not my name; it's Townsend. No one would recognize these components as an aspect of my name. Further, there is a type of "respect" accorded to others' names, and this would have included Vicars's esteem and adoration for the names of his noteworthy poets.

In summary, if the Stratford Man were Shakespeare, Vicars would either add a paragraph in English, as he did for Michael Drayton, or Latinize the Shakespeare name with a standardized suffix; he would also have incorporated his first name, William. Instead, he separated the name into its phonetic components and translated them into Latin and omitted the first name. But pseudonyms don't behave like real names; they are simply words. And as such he had no problem putting this pseudonym into its components. The pseudonym is not a real person; it is a disguise for someone who most frequently doesn't want others to know his or her true identity. Therefore, Thomas Vicars is revealing that Shakespeare was a pseudonym; maybe he knew the identity of the poet using this pseudonym. Sadly, he was not at liberty to tell us.

[Tom Townsend has been studying, researching, and presenting the Shakespeare Authorship Question for almost thirty-five years. He has attended and presented at Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conferences. He is a frequent participant in the monthly meetings of the Seattle Oxford Society and the Oberon Shakespeare Study Group. Before this, he was a researcher for many years and was Director of Consumer Insights for a large advertising agency.]

Endnotes:

1. *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lee, Vol. 58 (1899), 299-300.
2. *Injunctions Given by the Queens Majesty, 1559*, Injunction No. 7, p. 3. Early English Books Online.
3. James Shapiro, 1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare (HarperCollins, 2005), xvi.
4. See *Church Settlement*: Supreme Governor of the Church of England — Wikipedia Republished // WIKI 2
5. Stephen Greenblatt, Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare, W.W. Norton & Co. (2004), 18.
6. https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/blogs/shakespeares-venus-and-adonis/
7. Diana Price, Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography, Greenwood Press (2001), 153-154.
8. Fred Schurink, "An Unnoticed Early Reference to Shakespeare," *Notes & Queries* (March 2006), 72-74. See also: "From a Never Writer....News: The Famous Poet 'Shakes His Spear,'" *Shakespeare Matters* (Summer 2006); Nina Green, *Thomas Vicars*, Phaeton blog posting, 6 June 2016; Donald Frederick Nelson, "Schurink's Discovery of a Century," *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (Spring 2008), 10-11.
9. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latinisation_of_names.
10. Andrea Di Giovanni, *Latin in English 1500-1800* (2003). http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~cpercy/courses/6362DiGiovanni1.htm
11. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latinisation_of_names, especially the section *Historic Background*.
12. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Latinised_names.
13. Thomas Vicars, *Manductio ad artem rhetoricam*, 70.
14. Ibid.
15. In common Latin usage for name "William" during Elizabeth's Reign, see: https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/life/childhood/index.html
16. I have performed substantial nomenclature research and have consistently obtained the result discussed here.

The Badge of the Blue Boar and Edward de Vere

by Michael Hyde

Strangely, there is no Blue Boar (a symbol associated with the Earls of Oxford) nor any White Boar (the heraldic device of Richard III) to be found in the Shakespeare canon. One might at least have expected references to the White Boar in either *Henry VI, Part 3* or *Richard III*, especially during the climactic battle scenes at Bosworth. The dramatist could have referred to the blue boar badges worn by the Lancastrians of Earl John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford, or of Richard III and the Yorkists wearing his white boar emblem.

Instead, we are assaulted by the destructive "bloody boar" who destroys crops and lands, and ravishes wives and daughters. "Bloody thou art and bloody will be thy end" (*R3*, 4.4), as the Duchess forewarns Richard himself. The hideous threatening imagery of Richard III as the "bloody boar" is utterly biased, an un-historically negative portrayal of Richard III—see the images on this page of Richard's white boar emblem and his motto, *Loyaultie me Lie* (loyalty binds me). In addition, consider the passionate and partisan defense of Richard penned long after by 1619 (in draft)—written by George Buck (sometimes spelled Buc), Master of the Revels from 1607-1622.

In *The History and the Life and Reigne of Richard the Third* Buck offered an oddly unreliable counter-narrative to the Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard III. Buck makes no mention whatsoever of Shakespeare's play, nor does he mention the White Boar/Gloucester's seizure of 13th Earl John's lands as soon as 1471 after the Battle of Barnet —as Gloucester accumulated more of the Vere lands and revenues. Buck does describe Earl

John's utterly pathological hatred of Edward IV, but omits the minor detail that it was Edward IV who had executed the 12th Earl and his eldest son (Earl John's brother Aubrey) on Tower Hill in February 1462 (Ross, Part 2, pp. 48 ff).

Buck's motive is transparently ancestral and political. He tells of "my Ancestours specially to that unfortunate Bucke and his Children who withered with the White Rose . . . bearing an Ancient and Hereditary love the to the House of York" (1647 ed., pp. 67-68, Kincaid edition). Alan Nelson quotes from Buck on the second page of *Monstrous Adversary*, his biography of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, saying that "Sir George Buc . . . had interviewed [the 17th Earl] on at least one occasion," and had written favorably of him as "a devout and magnificent and a very learned and religious nobleman. . . . [H]e was a Vere in deed as in name, vere nobilis. For he was verily and truly noble . . . a most noble Vere (Kincaid ed., p. 170)." This playful punning on *Vere-very-truly* is characteristic of Edward de Vere himself and suggests that he was Buck's source.

But neither Buck nor Nelson are showering praise on the 17th Earl, as we show below. Nelson's vindictive motive in quoting Buck is soon manifested, in order to jibe at the 17th Earl as one who contrived "to decay and waste and lose an old earldom." Buck retails, and Nelson treats as gospel, a local Hedingham hermit's prophecy that the Vere earldom would be destroyed in three generations. In the Kincaid edition, this prophecy clearly relates to the 13th Earl, not to Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl: "his Earldom was utterly dissipated . . . in much shorter time than his lifetime . . . all this within less than threescore yeares after the death of the said Earle John" (169-170).

In full context the reason for this prophecy/curse on

the House of Vere is Earl John the 13th having been "severe against Perkin" (sic-Warbeck the Pretender), who was at last put to death by Henry VII in 1499 after several escape attempts (1647 ed., p. 74). Buck believed the false claim of Perkin that he was the younger son Richard of Edward IV, and thus the legitimate Yorkist heir to the Crown. Indeed, one of his Buck ancestors was beheaded two days after the battle of Bosworth in 1485 —adding revenge to Buck's motives.

Neither Buck nor Nelson are trustworthy historians of the de Vere family, concerned as each is with his own vengeful motives. Nelson skims over the interesting question for Oxfordians of the date when Buck evidently did a viva voce interview with Edward de Vere as a source for his own pro-Yorkist history of Richard the Third? This interview probably took place in either 1603 or 1604—in any case before de Vere's death (24 June 1604). Was de Vere himself the source of the tale of old hermit and his dire prophecy of the loss of the Oxford Earldom by the 1570s after the 13th Earl's death?

Boar References in Shakespeare and Nashe

We offer below a clearer narrative starting with Shakespeare and his boars, followed by accounts of Edward de Vere as the Blue Boar, and of the motives of the 17th Earl himself seeking literary revenge against the Yorkist Kings who nearly succeeded in eliminating the Vere family line before Bosworth.

We do have three contemporaneous literary references to boars in 1592 and 1593, two in Shakespeare works and one in Nashe's dedication of *Strange News* to the "blue boar in Spittle," *aka* Edward de Vere (Green, p. 5; Barrell n. 37). *Richard III* is regarded by Stratfordians and some Oxfordians as an early play in the 1590s completing the first tetralogy, following the three parts of *Henry VI* (in the First Folio). The "bloody boar" and his fierce ambition to seize the Crown are revealed through speeches in *Henry VI, Part 3* (1.2.33, 3.2.195). Stratfordians date *Henry VI* to 1590-1591 (Gilvary). Nashe's work was composed by late 1592 and is dated 12 January 1593 in the Stationers' Register (see Nina Green's summary). *Venus and Adonis* —with its dedication signed "William Shakespeare"— was published by the spring of 1593.

The linking reference between the "bloody boar" of *Richard III* and the murderous "severe" boar of *Venus and Adonis* (or perhaps vice versa) is Nashe's closing address to de Vere, the blue boar of either Bethlehem or Blackfriars Hospital (Barrell). The question arises as to how closely de Vere and Nashe may have shared or collaborated at this time. Did they do more together than engage in the drinking bout at the Steelyard preceding Greene's death? If so, de Vere knew that he was referred to in print as the "blue boar in the Spittle" within months of the invention of the "boar" references in *Richard III* and *Venus and Adonis*—and of the disputed vague "Shake-scene" reference in *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1592).

Some Oxfordians see the "bloody boar" in *Venus and Adonis* as an image of Edward de Vere. The key passage reads, "When as I met the boar, that bloody beast/Which knows no pity, but is still severe." Is the "bloody beast" of Ovid and mythology a precursor or an echo of the "bloody boar" of *Richard III*? Is this pitiless boar a mythical counterpart to Aubrey the Grim, by legend (not fact) the fiercest Crusader among the ancestors of Edward de Vere, historically the first Earl of Oxford? "This Albry for his greatnes of stature and sterne looke was named Albry the Grymme" (Hanna & Edwards, pp. 24-26, who translate the Latin *albericus aper* as a Vere pun, "fierce boar"). Is there a pun in the odd locution "still severe"? Perhaps the phrase parses best as *semper* or always *se-Vere*—a Latinate reflexive, Vere himself.

The Blue Boar and the Earls of Oxford

Below is the best-known image of the blue boar in the heraldry of the Earls of Oxford—the mounted warrior

knight with blue boars on both his helmet and that of his charger—and the Vere molet or star on his steed's caparison. I invite Oxfordian readers to correctly identify this image and any others. Which Earl of Oxford is displayed? Wikitree identifies the rider as Hugh de Vere (1210-1263), the 4th Earl. The blue boar is said to feature in the arms and heraldry of the Veres from the 1st Earl, Aubrey the Grim, to the 17th Earl, Edward de Vere. But these images date back only to the 4th Earl. Is there another authorship candidate besides Edward de Vere who could be the veiled object of these 1590s references

to literary boars? Our answer to this question begins with the "blew bore," Earl John the 13th Earl of Oxford, whose ancestry is traced in the Rotheley poem found in the flyleaf of the Ellesmere Chaucer.

The 200-line poem is replete with "bore" references. The first is to "lusty Veer, whom I liken to a bore." This boar "standeth styfe . . . strong as a maste." The description alters to a "bore of grace" whose pur(e) verite" is by the poet colored "azure." Thereafter Rotheley traces the ancestry of the "blew bore" and its "most trywste lineage" to Aubrey the Gryme, whose slaying of a Saracen knight allegedly in the first Crusade results in his obtaining the "blewe bore" device and thereby creating the "armys of the old ancestrye" of the Veres. If the Rotheley poem could be dated 1483-1485, the poet may be hinting that the 13th Earl John, his very "blewe bore," will soon return to defeat the White Boar in battle.

Rotheley narrates family legend, but is not fact. As Hanna & Edwards conclude, Aubrey the Grim did indeed win new arms "by slaying the Saracen champion who bore the device" (23). But this device contained only the silver mullet. As Rotheley says, these were "quarterly goulles and gooolde, and in the chief quarter, a molet v. poynte sylvere. . . ." Leland (c. 1530) concurs that the silver mullet and a St. George cross were obtained during the Crusades. But there is no boar supporter: as we learned from Marty Hyatt (*Newsletter*, Fall 2019, page 1, summarizing his talk at the SOF Annual Conference, "A Mullet Is Born") sources like Leland in 1530 are "riddled with errors," so we look forward to his modernized version of the Rotheley poem to supplement that provided by Hanna & Edwards.

John, the 13th Earl, thus became both the military hero of Bosworth and the famous Blue Boar of English pub signs. Even today such signs are featured at pubs like the Blue Boar Inn of Aldbourne, Wiltshire. As Cynthia Moore wrote in her online posting on English pub signs: "Another couple of popular names for pubs in England are the White Boar and Blue Boar. The White Boar was the personal cognizance of King Richard III and pub signs would have had a painted white boar and the white rose of York. Legend has it that after Richard III was killed at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, all the pubs called the White Boar were hastily renamed the Blue Boar. The Blue Boar was the badge of the de Veres who were Earls of Oxford, and had been supporters of Henry Tudor and hence on the winning side."

Legend or fact? But "hastily renamed" may not be that much of a stretch, given Earl John's role as commander for Henry VII at Bosworth, and his ascendancy as "The Foremost Man of the Kingdom" from 1485 to his death in 1513 (Ross, passim). Even if we do not have the Blue Boar challenging and defeating the White Boar at Bosworth in the Shakespeare canon, we have English pub signs reminding of this military history dating from 1485 to the 1590s. They also remind of Richard III, the de Vere ancestry of Edward de Vere, and his role as the "pottle-pot patron" of Nashe at the Steelyard. Incidentally, the history of old pubs in England is also a matter of intense disputation—the two leading claimants being Ye Olde Fighting Cocks (founded in 763, St. Albans, Hertfordshire) and The Old Ferry Boat Inn (founded in 560, Holywell, Cambridgeshire). See oldest.org/food/-pubs-england/. The evidence for each claim is the pub's own promotion!

Hanna states (21) that Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* in the British Library (MS Harley 3862), owned by 13th Earl John, "bears the earl's arms." He continues (22), "In Rotheley's account, Vere is supporter to the family arms, the blue boar (true blue, of course)." The attestation of the 13th Earl's self-representation as the blue boar can be found in Ross (208-209). After quoting the Rotheley poem and observing its puns on Latin *verres* for boar and Vere, he notes, "In the inventory of his goods there were a number of expensive items incorporating the blue boar badge."

These items were still in the inventory of the 16th Earl of Oxford, as attested by his will of December 1552: "There was a 'Sparvar of Estate of red satten powdered with blewe bores & Letters and my olde Lordes armes'" (Nelson 20). Nelson is actually helpful in this instance, reminding us parenthetically that "(the blue boar was the earldom's symbol)." "Sparvar" in Nelson's full quotation refers to a bed-canopy. Thus we can surmise that young Edward de Vere, growing up in rural Essex in the 1550s, was literally surrounded by familial blue boar items at Hedingham—inherited from the 13th and 15th Earls as well as from his father.

The cover page of Robert Brazil's *Edward de Vere and the Shakespeare Printers* features the full coat of arms of the 16th and 17th Earls of Oxford, with a blue boar supporter on the right side of the full shield. Brazil shows us additional cover pages of the Vere arms and the blue boar from works dated in the 1570s (27 & 115). All but one of Edward de Vere's blue boar heraldic references date to the 1570s and 1580s. The last known reference to Edward de Vere as the blue boar is from Thomas Nashe in 1592 as we have seen above, describing his patron and friend de Vere as "the blue boar in the Spittle."

Even the smugly boastful anti-Oxfordian tract of Frederick A. Keller, titled *Spearing the Wild Blue Boar* (2009), overlooks or is unaware of the blue boar and "severe" boar references of the early 1590s. Keller has not heard the last word from partisans of the Blue Boar or of the vengeful portrayal of the "bloody boar" Richard III by the Shakespeare author—which ignores Richard's actual heraldic device of the White Boar.

Charles Dickens, who may have been an early but ambivalent authorship doubter (see Dickens entry at doubtsaboutwill.org/ past_doubters), returns Pip to his

home village to dine and to lodge at the classy, opulent Blue Boar Inn instead of the Jolly Bargeman. Today any tourist can visit a Blue Boar inn or pub near both Stratford-upon-Avon and Leicester, the latter near the car park where Richard III's skeleton was exhumed a few years ago.

Thanks to pub signs all over England (right), the Blue and White Boars are with us still today. It is my contention that we cannot understand either the historical or literary White and Blue Boars of England without understanding the heraldic military and the popular English pub versions of their one and only fatal encounter at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. Then we can grasp why the Shakespeare author—like the Veres and the Earls of Oxford with their Blue Boar heraldry—was so utterly committed to the house of Lancaster and to the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, whose forces defeated and slew the White Boar at Bosworth.

[Michael Hyde is a frequent contributor to Oxfordian publications. His most recent article, a review of the new book *North By Shakespeare,* appeared in the Spring 2021 issue of the *Newsletter*.]

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