



Does the 17th Earl of Oxford “lieth buried in Westminster”?

by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan and Bonner Miller Cutting

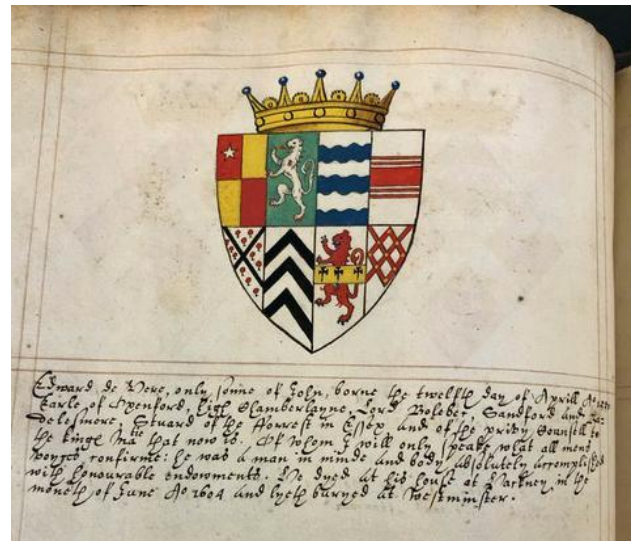
[Editor’s Note: This article is part of Cheryl Eagan-Donovan’s report from her trip to England supported by a research grant from the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship.]

A handwritten manuscript about the Vere family, archived at the British Library, contains a striking comment about the final resting place of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. Composed by Percival Golding, it contains “the Armes, Honours, Matches and Issues of the ancient and illustrious Family of Veer.” Although most of the information about the de Vere family can be found in other sources, this document contains the first known reference—and possibly the most significant indication—that the 17th Earl of Oxford “lieth buried in Westminster.”

This manuscript was previously held in the College of Heralds, where it was catalogued as the Vincent Manuscript #445. It was acquired by Robert Harley in the early 18th century and is now MSS 4189 archived in the British Library’s Harleian collection. In an early *Shakespeare Fellowship Newsletter*, B.M. Ward reported that Percy Allen had discovered it.

The document itself is undated, but Ward noted that it was written during the reign of King James I “sometime between 1604 and 1625.”¹ In this paper, we will try to narrow down the year of the manuscript’s composition and explore the credibility of its author as a witness to Oxford’s place of burial.²

In remarks about this document, Charlton Ogburn, Jr., said that Percival Golding “was certainly in a position to know the facts” (765). He was the youngest



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son of Arthur Golding, the half-brother of Edward de Vere’s mother, Marjorie Golding. This made him Edward de Vere’s first cousin, a position of familial consanguinity that was important in early modern England. Henry, the 18th Earl of Oxford, was his second cousin. As Percival mentions in his dedication, he was “well known” to John Vere, the oldest of the Vere brothers known as the “fighting Veres.” It is clear that the document is intended by Percival to be something of a calling card to introduce himself to Sir Horatio Vere, the famous general from the military branch of the Vere family.

Below is our transcription of the manuscript with original spellings and punctuation. Only those words with “y” thorns are modernized. Words with unusually archaic spellings are elucidated in brackets.

The Armes, Honours, Matches, and Issues of the auncient and illustrious family of Veer./ Described in the honourable progeny of the Earles of Oxenford & other branches thereof from the first Originall to the present tyme./ Together with a genealogicall deduction of this noble family from the

(Continued on p. 18)

**First Contested
SOF Election**

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The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to investigating the Shakespeare authorship question and disseminating the evidence that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), is the true author of the poems and plays written under the pseudonym "William Shakespeare."

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship pursues its mission by supporting research, educational and scholarly initiatives, annual conferences, website and social media, and by publishing this Newsletter and an annual scholarly journal, *The Oxfordian*.

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Letters

I enjoyed reading Eddi Jolly's excellent article, "Shakespeare's Beehive?" in the Spring 2022 issue of the *Newsletter*. However, the engraving reproduced on page 14 is of the wrong Thomas Smith. There were two notable men by that name at the time. The one mentioned in the article is the first Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577), a politician, scholar, author of the 1568 work on orthography of English language, and the scholar with whom Edward de Vere lived in his youth. The second Sir Thomas Smith (1568-1625, surname also spelled Smithe, Smyth, and Smythe) was a famous merchant, one of the directors of the Muscovy Company, the first director of the East India Company, the treasurer of the Virginia Company and James I's envoy to Russia in 1604-5.

Rima Greenhill
 San Francisco, CA

[Thanks for pointing out the error. The fault was not Eddi Jolly's, but ours. We were looking for some artwork to accompany the article and inadvertently selected an image of the wrong Sir Thomas. To the right is an image of the correct Sir Thomas. – Ed.]



Michael Hyde is right to suggest that I don't care much for Puritans of the Elizabethan age ("My Kindle Told Me It Was Edward de Vere (Part Two)," *Newsletter*, Spring 2022). I am not against religion per se, however, but with religiously motivated attempts to repress the arts and entertainment.

Hyde quotes me as referring to Oxford's maternal uncle Arthur Golding as an "uptight" Puritan. I was thinking, for example, of the latter's prose discourse arguing that the 1580 earthquake was part of God's punishment for the wickedness of the age. I was thinking of how, in that tract, he cited the quake as heavenly retribution for desecration of the Sabbath by public performances of stage plays on Sundays.

Oxfordians have suggested that, based on the Shakespearean works alone, researchers in their wildest dreams would never have decided that William Shakspeare of Stratford was the author. I also suggest that, based solely on the English version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that became Shakespeare's favorite classical source, scholars never would have decided that Golding was the translator. Oxford's uncle was indeed a major translator, but he concentrated almost exclusively on religious works and histories.

My feeling is that the young prodigy Edward de Vere had a rollicking good time translating that Ovidian masterpiece at Cecil House, where Puritan Arthur Golding was his receiver and tutor; I also believe that his guardian, William Cecil, tried to protect him (given his future role at court) by enlisting Golding to put his own name on that translation containing the "sweet witty soul of Ovid" destined to live within "mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare."

Hank Whittemore
Nyack, NY

I read Michael Hyde's "My Kindle Told Me It Was Edward de Vere (Part Two)" (*Newsletter*, Spring 2022) with interest. Hyde does a good job in sorting through the arguments for and against Edward de Vere as the principal translator of *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, in the 1567 edition credited to Arthur Golding. Reading through the modern Paul Dry edition of the Golding *Metamorphoses*, I can see that Charlton Ogburn, in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, likely overstated the case for the teenage De Vere as the lead translator.

Ogburn finds traces of de Vere's hand, basing his argument partly on poet-critic John Frederick Nims's Introduction. When Nims comments on Golding's "tremendous gusto" in the "rough-and-tumble verses" of Book Eight's boar hunt, told "with the zest of a

sportscaster," Ogburn, understandably, is right there. But Ogburn lets other comments go unanswered. Nims informs us how often Golding pads his fourteeners, while Ovid's Latin is more often concise and musical. If the boy de Vere's hand shows in the Golding translation, is it in the way the "English Ovid" could translate "so successfully out of Latin"? As when the Latin has a young girl, "turbatis ... capillis," rendered a "frizzle-topped wench"? Some of the "racy" bits do sound like juvenile verbal horseplay. But I wonder why such words as "throatboll," "belk," "yesk," and "gnoor," which Nims finds colorful, don't appear in the mature Shakespeare canon ("ensue" does appear fifteen times, as does "pooke," i.e., Puck).

Now that we're reasonably sure that Edward de Vere wrote the awkward but lusty *Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* by 1567—the year the Golding Ovid was issued—it wouldn't be too outlandish if the boy translated Ovid with his right hand and penned the *Famous Victories* with his left, so to speak—and dramatic composition would quickly expose even a young genius's stylistic lapses. But Hyde sensibly favors J. T. Looney's idea, "mutual influence of uncle and nephew"—all we need to demonstrate that de Vere has what Will Shakspeare lacks: a family connection with the named translator. I like how Hyde investigates Louis Thorn Golding's apparent flirtation with the Oxford theory. Hyde might have mentioned just two more interesting points: that Arthur Golding's death in 1606 found him heavily in debt (like uncle, like nephew?) and his mother, Ursula Marston, was connected by family to the playwright John Marston as well as to the de Veres, as Nina Green shows in her *Edward de Vere Newsletter #44*.

Tom Goff
Carmichael, CA

Again, wonderful job [on the Spring 2022 issue]. Before my eyesight wanes completely I would like to pass on a few words. As an Oxfordian supporter and believer of a half-century or so, let me repeat:

All efforts will always remain circumstantial. Period. The jury has been in session now for at least a couple hundred years while the judges come and go. It's long past time to declare in our favor and close the case. Any effort to reopen the case by opponents having no evidence fails all tests and will be denied. Thanks to all scholarship, case closed. I can now finally rest in peace.

Roland Caldwell
Venice, FL



What's the News?

Photo of Katharine Eggar Discovered

In the “Tales from the Archives” column in the last issue of the *Newsletter* (Spring 2022, p. 29), Renee Euchner and Kathryn Sharpe noted the contributions of early Oxfordian researcher Katharine E. Eggar, who was active in the movement from 1921 until her death in 1961. However, they (and we) regretted that no photo of Eggar could be found; even indefatigable Oxfordian researcher Jim Warren was doubtful that one existed. We offered a prize to the first person to locate her photo.

SOF member Tom Goff promptly came to the rescue, discovering a photo of her on YouTube.com. As noted in the “Tales from the Archives” column, Katharine Eggar was an accomplished pianist and composer. This information led Goff to find her photo “linked to an extremely rare YouTube performance of her ‘Idyll for Flute and Piano.’ The performance is quite fine, and displays the fine technical finish she gave her compositions, befitting a pioneer British woman composer. The happy accident of finding her picture—through an Italian source—may be owing to increased interest in early modern woman composers; Eggar is mentioned in at least one recent book as a trailblazer.”

Goff chose as his prize a copy of John Milnes Baker’s short introductory book, *The Case for Edward de Vere as the Real William Shakespeare*.



Richard Malim’s New Book



Richard Malim’s most recent book, *Shakespeare’s Revolution*, was published in late June of this year. It was written in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of J. Thomas Looney’s “Shakespeare” *Identified*. In his book Malim castigates academia for its refusal to treat the Shakespeare Authorship Question seriously, and (as per

the book description on Amazon) “launches a torpedo at academia’s ramshackle position in logic and establishes the unassailable debt that all of us owe to the author’s towering achievement in a vast field covering human psychology, politics, economics and literature.” The 450-page book is available in hardback, paperback and electronic editions.

A retired solicitor, Richard Malim served as Secretary of the De Vere Society for fifteen years. His previous book, *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of “Shakespeare”*: *The Literary Life of Edward de Vere in Context*, was published by McFarland & Co. in 2012. He was general editor of *Great Oxford: Essays on the Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, 1550-1604* (Parapress, 2004). In addition, he has written more than 100 articles and letters on the SAQ, many of which appeared in the *De Vere Society Newsletter*.

Historic Oxford-Related Property Offered for Sale

It was widely reported in July that Colne Priory, a property associated with the de Vere family for centuries, was being offered for sale; the asking price for the 24-acre estate was £7 million (about 8.4 million in US dollars). It is located in Earls Colne, a village in the town of Colchester in Essex.



The original priory no longer exists. The centerpiece of the property is a 14,000-square-foot house built in 1825 in the Gothic revival style. The house contains a billiards room and a gym. There is a separate guest or staff house (formerly a chapel). There is also an outdoor swimming pool, tennis court, equestrian facilities, gardens, and a gazebo.

Colne Priory was founded around the year 1111 by Aubrey de Vere and his wife, Beatrice. Aubrey moved to the priory in 1112 and died soon after. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s, the property was granted by the crown to John de Vere, 15th Earl of Oxford. Many of the Earls of Oxford were buried there, though the tombs were moved in the 1930s to St. Stephen's Chapel near Bures in Suffolk.

Ashland 2022: The Conference Is On! Papers, Panels and a Debate About the Future

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship's upcoming Annual Conference in Ashland, Oregon, will feature fourteen new papers on the authorship (including two for newcomers), three fascinating panels (including one on films), and a debate between authorship heavyweights James Warren and John Shahan about how to best strategize the Shakespeare Authorship Question (SAQ) in the years ahead.

The Conference will begin on Thursday, September 22, and will conclude on Sunday, September 25, with the SOF's Annual Meeting, followed by an Awards Banquet. Registration is now open on the SOF website:

<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2022-annual-conference/>.

For the first time, the Conference will also be live-streamed internationally, meaning that for a cost of \$99, all four days of the event will be open to anyone anywhere in the world to view.

"This is our first live Conference since 2019 at the Mark Twain House in Hartford," said Conference Chair and SOF Vice-President Don Rubin. "Because many people are still a bit nervous about traveling, we've decided to make everything that's happening in person also be available to an even larger audience through live-stream. That said, we also expect a good crowd to be attending live. With almost two months to go, we have close to sixty members already booked in person. People really do want to get together again and share ideas face-to-face.

"Another first for us will be that some of the speakers (those unable to attend in person) will be presenting via video. We have kept the number of such presentations to no more than a couple per day. But it seemed important to offer this as another way to further extend attendance and participation to those who for one reason or another—age, cost, travel issues—felt more comfortable presenting this way. All these elements—Zoom, live-streaming, video—offer us new opportunities and we want to take full advantage of them."

Information on how to live-stream the Conference will be announced soon on the SOF website.

Among the speakers in Ashland will be frequent presenters Bonner Cutting ("The Portrait That Time Forgot"), Michael Delahoyde ("Subtler Scents in Oxford's *The Taming of the Shrew*"), John Hamill ("Is Southampton the Key to the Authorship Question?") and Cheryl Eagan-Donovan ("Henslowe, Alleyn, Burbage and Shakespeare").

Three new speakers will discuss issues connected to Oxford from female perspectives: Kristin Bundesen ("Oxford's Women"), Dorothea Dickerman ("The Roar of the Mouse: Anne Cecil de Vere and What She Tells Us About Shakespeare") and Sundra Malcolm ("The Complaint in *A Lover's Complaint*"). Tom Woosnam and Tom Townsend will give talks on Thursday aimed at those new to the issues (Woosnam on "Teaching the Authorship" and Townsend on "Finding the True Shakespeare").

Three papers will look at issues connected to the First Folio, whose 400th anniversary will be celebrated in 2023. These will include Canadian scholar Gabriel Ready's "A Short History of Fixing"; Ernest Rehder's "Objectives and Limitations of the First Folio"; and Shelly Maycock's "Folger and the First Folio: An Update."

University of Winnipeg librarian Michael Dudley, working with Bill Boyle and Catherine Hatinguais, will present a joint paper called "Tongue-tied By Authority,"



A NEW SEASON AWAKENS

an examination of ways to reform the Library of Congress's antiquated subject headings relating to the SAQ.

The three panel discussions will focus on Oxfordian issues through different lenses: one with actors from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *The Tempest* (Conference attendees will have the opportunity to see the OSF's production of *The Tempest* on Friday night, September 23; tickets can be purchased at a special rate); another with four Oxfordian filmmakers (Lisa and Laura Wilson, Robin Phillips and Cheryl Eagan-Donovan) discussing their own works and how film can be used in the authorship debate; and another led by Earl Showerman and Roger Stritmatter, built around the OSF production of *The Tempest*.

The Conference will be held at the Ashland Springs

Hotel. A limited number of rooms have been reserved in advance at special rates and should be booked as soon as possible. The conference fee of \$275 includes all sessions, three film showings, a wine and cheese reception on the Thursday, buffet lunches on Friday and Saturday, the closing banquet on Sunday and coffee/refreshment breaks throughout. This fee reflects a \$25 discount for SOF members (check the website for details). For complete information, use the link in the second paragraph of this article.

Any hotel rooms not booked in advance must be turned back to the hotel in September. Please reserve your room and register as soon as possible to avoid being shut out and/or paying higher fees. The SOF must commit to real for food and space by September 1. See you in Ashland!

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan's Oxfordian Documentary Film to Stream in UK

Filmmaker (and SOF member) Cheryl Eagan-Donovan informs us that her documentary film, *Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Name* (formerly titled *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*), will begin streaming on Sky TV UK in September 2022. This is the result of a global production deal that Eagan-Donovan's production company, Controversy Films, made with Gravitas Ventures.

"We are thrilled to be working with the team at Gravitas on the worldwide distribution of the film," Eagan-Donovan explained. "They have been excellent partners for the US and Canadian releases of the film *Nothing Is Truer than Truth*, which has been renamed *Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Name* for the international market." The new title comes from a line spoken by Sir Derek Jacobi in the film.



[aka Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Name]

Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Name focuses on Edward de Vere's travels to Venice and throughout Italy in 1575-76, where he discovered *commedia dell'arte* and collected many of the experiences that are echoed throughout the works of Shakespeare. The film argues that de Vere's bisexuality is the reason for the pseudonym "Shakespeare."

Filmed in Venice, Verona, Mantua, Padua, and Brenta, Italy, at sites visited by De Vere and the settings for *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the film features award-winning actors and directors, including Sir Derek Jacobi, Mark Rylance, Diane Paulus, and

Tina Packer.

Eagan-Donovan's film has been screened at previous SOF conferences, and will again be presented at the 2022 Conference in Ashland, Oregon.

Book Reviews

Hank Whittemore, *The Living Record: Shakespeare, Succession, and the Sonnets* (416 pp., GMJ Global Media, 2021; \$29.95, available at amazon.com)

Reviewed by Dorothea Dickerman

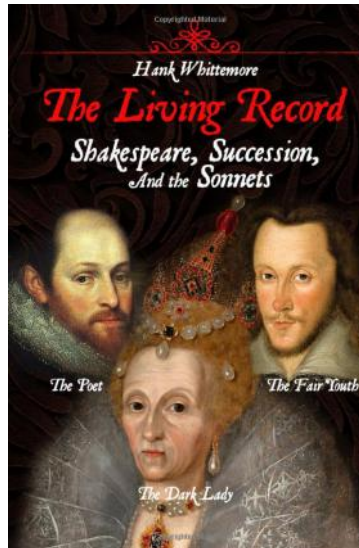
“Literature is always history, but history—the events captured and pinned to a textuality—is not always literature.” - Cirilo Bautista

The line between literature and history is finer than you think. Some great works of literature, despite not having been written as history, are the way we know what happened. Even though we discount the intervention of the gods, we know from the *Iliad*, a poem of 15,693 lines, where Troy existed and that a series of great battles on its surrounding plains ultimately destroyed the city. *The Diary of Anne Frank* continues each year to give readers a history lesson on the lives and deaths of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe from the eyewitness perspective of a teenage girl recording those key years’ events in her diary.

So it is with *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*. They, too, are a historical record in the form of a diary of 154 sonnets published in 1609, written to preserve the record of major events between 1593 to 1603 in Tudor England, although many readers attempt to understand them (or dismiss them) as mere romantic love poetry.

In his newest book, *The Living Record: Shakespeare, Succession, and the Sonnets*, Hank Whittemore has resurrected *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* as the work was designed to be read by its maker: as a unified masterpiece, an eyewitness account of highly political and personally heartbreaking contemporary Tudor history as it unfolded, day by day; in effect, a political diary in poetry. In the process, Whittemore has made reading and understanding the Sonnets both easier and more pleasurable and has shown convincingly that only Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, could be the author.

Whittemore has been researching and writing on the Shakespeare Authorship Question for over three decades. He knows how to dig for evidence for a story. He also knows, like an accomplished actor on stage with a dynamite script, how to tell the story in a way that makes it a page-turner. The skills he brings are those he learned as a print journalist (including over 100 articles published in *Parade* magazine), a TV documentary producer (for which he won two Emmys), an author of fiction (including a best-seller), and a



professional actor. *The Living Record* is the fifth of Whittemore’s books about the Bard and his Canon; it is a worthy successor to his most recent efforts, *100 Reasons Shakespeare was the Earl of Oxford* (2017) and *Twelve Years in the Life of Shakespeare* (2012).

Orthodox Shakespeare scholars abhor the notion of any historical context for the Canon because a study of the history makes it so obvious that the author could not possibly be Will of Stratford. Stratfordians prefer that all the works remain only works of literature, with plot lines mysteriously untethered to any historical political reality. They simply cannot grasp that a

correct historical context points toward Oxford as the author known as “William Shakespeare.” It also destroys the playing field for Stratfordians’ favorite parlor game: imagining what Shakespeare “must have” meant, read or personally experienced in order to have written a particular play or poem.

Modern directors of the plays often set these “timeless stories” in more recent times and different countries, and interject modern politics into them; the Bard himself did much the same thing, using ancient, European and pre-Elizabethan English courts as historical stage sets to entertain his Tudor audiences with allusions to contemporary personalities and politics that were obvious to educated playgoers. Shakespeare wasn’t writing about historical Troy and Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida* any more than he was writing about 15th-century England and the real Richard III in *Richard III*. Elizabethan politics provided as much, if not more, firepower to a story. But without the fig leaves of historical times and foreign settings, what the Bard wrote was often treasonous—reason enough for a pseudonym. Since the author could never be located, there was no body to be imprisoned, racked and executed.

Having the correct historical and political context is doubly important for the Sonnets. To modern readers they are the most unfathomable and puzzling of Shakespeare’s works. Sustaining the focus to read them takes real intellectual effort and requires greater feats of association than seeing a play on a stage. Myriad interpretations exist, any one of which may make sense for one or some of the poems, but almost all interpretations collapse in a tangle of inconsistencies when applied to the entire sonnet series.

Common explanations of the meaning of the

Sonnets typically pick one sonnet, or a handful of them, and dress them in finery as heterosexual or homosexual romantic love poetry, suggesting that Shakespeare must have been a woman, or gay, or bisexual, because the poet “loves” the “Fair Youth.” These explanations never consider that the relationship between the Bard and the young man might be that of father and son, and thus the type of “love” expressed is parental/paternal love rather than romantic/erotic love. Other critics with the stamina to read as far as the so-called “Dark Lady” sonnets have proposed various women (usually noblewomen) as the object of the poet’s rage and desire. They stretch mightily to explain why their candidate appears in the same work as the so-called “Fair Youth” and the so-called “Rival Poet,” when none of those three terms ever appears in the Sonnets. They were coined during the intervening four centuries by earlier critics grappling to explain the Sonnets.

Imagine selecting a single speech or scene from any of Shakespeare’s plays to perform this same trick. That speech or scene has its own internal beauty and meaning; but it is impossible to extrapolate from it alone the play’s entire plot, all its characters’ actions, inner motivations and relationships to each other, its arc and the reason the playwright wrote it. Yet the Sonnets are continually subjected to this same untethered and piecemeal treatment.

Like the speeches and soliloquies in the plays, the Bard undeniably constructed each Sonnet for an individual purpose and set it very precisely within a single *magnum opus*. Ascertaining the meaning of the unified larger work, *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, requires a consistent context, or “spine” (as Whittemore calls it) for all 154 sonnets without exception. The meaning of each sonnet must be weighed equally with the others. We may not pick and choose those that suit a particular narrative or theory and thereby declare victory over the meaning of the whole while ignoring other sonnets that do not fit the desired scenario. Lost in our own maze of largely romantic imaginings, we fail to see that the Sonnets are a journal of the heart-stopping politics of determining who would succeed a Queen who would not name her successor, told from behind the scenes by a major participant.

Pairing the entirety of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* with historical events along a time line, *The Living Record* provides a single spine for the entire work and reveals that Oxford, and only Oxford, could have written it.

Subtitled “A Compact Version of *The Monument*,” *The Living Record* distills Whittemore’s 861-page exegesis *The Monument* (published in 2005 and 2008) into something less than half as large. Whittemore recognized *The Monument*’s shortcomings and sought to make the subject more approachable and user-friendly. He divides *The Living Record* into three sections. Section I contains a synopsis of the relevant

history, the actions of the individuals involved and the consequences of Queen Elizabeth’s continual refusal to name her successor. It also sketches out how delicate and difficult a task the Bard undertook to reveal the relationship among the Sonnets’ dedicatee (Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton), the Queen and himself without overtly committing treason.

In Section I Whittemore shows that the collection is a diary of actual events. It begins with the poet/father urgently advising, lecturing, even pleading with his beloved son to secure his rights to inherit his mother’s throne by marrying and producing his own heir. Then follows the father’s agony as the young man makes disastrous choices (as parents know that young men often do) which land him in the Tower for insurrection and treason following the Essex Rebellion of 1601. After a trial at which the father, due to his rank, must join the jury that (unanimously) finds his son guilty of treason, the plot line of the Sonnets takes us into the dark years of the father’s personal hell, where a powerful enemy (Robert Cecil) secures the execution, one by one, of other men involved in the fiasco.

Meanwhile, the father excoriates the aging Queen for breaking her own sacred oaths to father and son. As she hesitates to sign the young man’s death warrant, the father pleads with her to spare their son’s life. The Sonnets later explain the son’s parentage. The storyline follows the father as he cuts a deal with his enemy to let someone else succeed to the English throne (which is itself another treason for father, son and enemy alike). To save his son’s life, the father agrees that neither he nor his son will press a claim to the throne (another treason), a sacrifice for which he profusely begs his son for forgiveness. He also sacrifices, perhaps forever, his own identities as the father and as the author of the works published under the pseudonym “William Shake-speare” because the pseudonym serves to obscure the relationship between him and his son. Unless the Sonnets are read as he intended, as a “message in a bottle” (Whittemore’s phrase), the author’s reputation and name will go down in history as infamous and obscure.

Although at the time he was writing each Sonnet the Bard had no idea what the end of the story would be, he was aware that the stakes were, quite literally, life and death, including for himself. But he arranged their presentation for publication in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* in a particular pattern, as a geometric monument (imitating those of stone and brass), indicating that they are meant to be read as a single *magnum opus* and leaving the biggest punches until the end. Whittemore points out that there are twenty-six introductory Sonnets (1-26) written to Southampton before the Essex Rebellion as paternal instruction and twenty-six closing Sonnets (127-152) written to or about the Queen and her dark deeds after

Southampton's arrest in February 1601. These two sets literally surround a central "century," a then-popular structure of exactly 100 sonnets (27-126) written on Southampton's trial, imprisonment and eventual release. A final coda of two sonnets (153-154) explains his conception and birth.

The order of presentation that Shakespeare chose for his readers was: (1) the twenty-six sonnets of paternal advice; (2) the century outlining the disaster of the Rebellion and Southampton's trial, condemnation and imprisonment; (3) the twenty-six sonnets to and about the Queen, and (4) the coda on Southampton's conception and birth. Although the chronological order of actual events was section (4), followed by section (1), then sections (2) and (3) happening somewhat simultaneously, the reader cannot understand the significance of sections (3) and (4) without having first read sections (1) and (2) to learn the historical context that the Bard needs the reader to know. He was ever a master storyteller.

In addition, the poet created a double meaning, political and apolitical, for each sonnet, what Whittemore calls a "stencil," likening it to M.C. Escher's famous woodcut print of birds and fishes, *Sky and Water*; where every stroke contributes to an intentional double image. This was a necessary disguise. The book, the author and the dedicatee would not otherwise survive both Elizabeth's reign (when it was written) and James's reign (when it was published), for all of it was treason. The author arranged for his book to be sent into the future after his death, hoping that someday it would be decoded and understood as eyewitness history cloaked in literature.

Whittemore's great gift to us, and to Oxford, is that decoding and understanding. What makes *The Living Record* so readable is that Whittemore pairs and corroborates each sonnet with the contemporary political history of the very year, the very month, and often the very day, on which it was written. Between each sonnet he intersperses in chronological order references to applicable historical events, other relevant literary works, primary sources, correspondence, law, commentary and facts about Oxford's life to give readers context for each individual sonnet while explaining the overall structure of the collection. The result is that readers become absorbed in the nail-biting unfolding of a political narrative while they share the poet's personal pride or despair in reaction to those actual events—all in real time. We feel Oxford's tension and anxiety as circumstances beyond his control go horribly wrong and he must face potential disaster. We understand exactly why he chooses to trade what he dreads to lose (his name) in order to save what he dreads even

more to lose (his son). In effect, Whittemore guides us sonnet by sonnet through a time-traveling metaverse adventure with Oxford as he lived through those ten critical years.

Section I also provides a reliable timeline of events during those years of Oxford's life and succinct origins and descriptions of the terms and phrases that Oxfordians frequently use about the backstory of the Sonnets, such as "Prince Tudor" or "Dynastic Succession" (discussed conceptually as early as the 1930s by Percy Allen and further developed in the 1950s by Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn). Enigmas that have puzzled critics for centuries, such as why the Bard says that "three winters" have passed, exactly what the poet's disgrace was, and why the Sonnets abound with legal terms, are all explained.

In Section II Whittemore takes readers on a deep dive into the drama of Oxford's internal journey exactly as it unfolded. Through Whittemore's method of pairing of each sonnet with each day's chronological events, readers enter Oxford's mind as his emotions thrash him. "Shake-speare" ceases to be some elusive genius. He becomes a flesh and blood man torn apart as he realizes that to save his son's life, he must allow the pseudonym he created to take credit in the future for the work of Edward de Vere, who must now become invisible and disassociated from his works and from his son, Henry Wriothsley. They can no longer publicly acknowledge each other. Realizing Oxford's prescience about the issue we face today—how the pseudonym "William Shakespeare," a "no body" with no history of having learnt his craft, springs full grown as a genius poet to strike Edward de Vere a death blow—is an amazing moment in this book: "Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write/ Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead" (Sonnet 86, 5-6).

For readers who want to know what happened in the end and how we come to possess the Sonnets today, Section III provides a concise explanation of the fates of the Earl of Southampton, the Bard and the Sonnets themselves. The book's index is also a useful research tool for quick reference to names of individuals or lesser-known poems, plays and phrases. The bibliography reflects Whittemore's years of reading the work of other Oxfordians and traditional scholars.

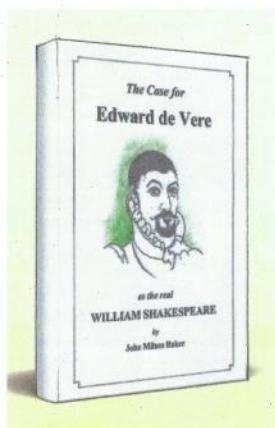
Finally, *The Living Record* follows Whittemore's personal story along his path to decode the poet's true purpose. This labor of years involved reading thirty-five editions of the Sonnets, and hundreds of other books and articles expressing many points of view about them, while Whittemore worked on projects in the sciences and film. After dead-ends and retracing

his own steps more than once, Whittemore formulated his conclusions about the Sonnets while writing a book on scientific visualization. The code in each strand of DNA led him to understand the Bard's diary in code, his message in a bottle floating on the sea of time, waiting for someone to figure it out.

The Living Record does not purport to be the most definitive and complete discussion of every aspect of the Sonnets. It leaves plenty of room for additions by future scholars, which Whittemore encourages. Readers may disagree with some of his definitions of key words, or add their own (for example, I substitute "Vere" for "fair" throughout). But there is no doubt that in *The Living Record*, Whittemore has done what

Oxford in Sonnet 81 hoped someone "not yet created" would do: show effectively that Oxford's "gentle verses" are meant to be "o'er read" as a single work, an eyewitness "monument" to the historical events suppressed in their own time and to his son, who should have been King of England. Oxford designed an exquisite literary time capsule to keep his verses alive for 400 years until Whittemore gave them "breath" to reveal the story that will keep you on the edge of your seat from beginning to end.

Advertisement



The Case for Edward de Vere as the real William Shakespeare

by longtime Oxfordian **John Milnes Baker**

Excellent overview of Oxfordian theory

Baker has done a great service to Shakespeare authorship enthusiasts by concisely summarizing the key facts in the life of Edward de Vere and why he is likely the true author behind the "Shakespeare" pseudonym. - **Bryan H. Wildenthal**

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An excellent introduction to the evidence for Edward de Vere as the author of the Shakespeare canon. . . . Baker presents the facts in a fluent narrative that is easily accessible to people who are new to the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

- **Bonner Miller Cutting**

The De Vere Society (UK)

We need more of these texts that are designed to rebut a particular main stream work, and this booklet offers an intriguing model of how to do it. - **Alice Crampin**

The Clarion Review stated:

The book's objective is not to examine every aspect of the de Vere theory in detail, but to condense that material and present its essentials. In service of accomplishing that goal, it includes a thorough list of references and additional reading suggestions for those interested in learning more.

Available from Amazon for \$10.99

For more information, google
"John Milnes Baker Shakespeare"

Ramon Jiménez, editor, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth: An Early Play by the Real William Shakespeare, Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford* (De Vere Society Publications, 2022, \$20)

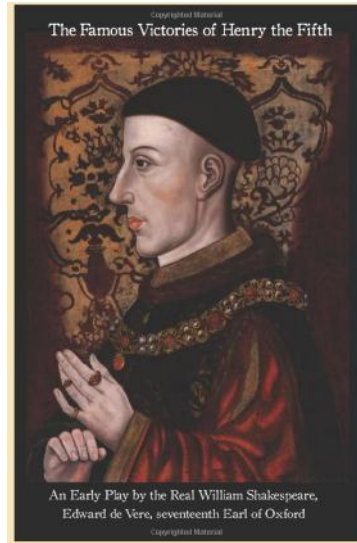
Reviewed by Michael Hyde

Has Ramon Jiménez finally proven that Edward de Vere alias Shakespeare actually wrote *Famous Victories* (*FV*) for the Queen's Men players, not only before its performances in the mid-1580s, but as early as 1562-1564 in his teenage years? Three vital Shakespeare authorship questions are asked and resoundingly answered in his new edition of *Famous Victories*:

1. What is the best evidence for a teenage Edward de Vere as the play's author?
2. Why did young Edward falsify, exaggerate and glorify the character of Richard de Vere, 11th Earl of Oxford, in his historical dramatization of the Battle of Agincourt in 1415?
3. How do we o'erleap the years between the performances of *Famous Victories* on the English stage in the pre-Armada years to the writing and performing of the canonical play *Henry the Fifth*, first published anonymously in 1600?

As Jiménez stresses, "the earliest surviving evidence of *FV*" is found in Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* (1592), which celebrates King Henry the Fifth "as represented on stage" defeating the French (52). Yet the standard academic discussion of the Queen's Men performing *Famous Victories* (by McMillin and MacLean) totally dodges any issues of authorship by relying only on title page attributions and by vaguely suggesting, without evidence, that young Will of Stratford-upon-Avon might somehow have seen the Queen's Men performing in their provincial tours and joined them as a performer.

In fact, we do have four useful verified dating references for *FV*. First is Nashe in 1592 (see above). Next, we know that William Knell, the original actor who played Hal, was killed by a fellow actor in a tavern brawl in July 1587. His teenage widow, Rebecca Knell, subsequently married Queen's Men actor John Heminges in March 1588—yes, the John Heminges of the actors' list in the First Folio. William of Stratford is nowhere to be found in 1587-1588! Lastly, in his eponymous *Tarleton's Jestes* published in 1600, Tarleton himself (d. 1588) lets us in on the joke of how he was boxed on the ear as Lord Chief Justice by Prince Hal in *FV*, even as he



doubled one of the play's clowns (possibly Derrick, who is the play's precursor to Falstaff).

We also have the virtual certainty, as Jiménez observes, that the title of *FV* is reworded from the title of the third chapter of Edward Hall's 1548 chronicle history of England, "The Victorious Acts of King Henry the Fifth," which discusses the battles of Harfleur, Caen, Rouen, Troyes, and, most of all, Agincourt. Jiménez's evidence easily supports a date of composition for *FV* as early as the mid-1560s with Hall's chronicle as a source, long before the creation of the Queen's Men in 1583.

It appears to me that the exaggerated heroic portrayal of 11th Earl of Oxford, Richard de Vere, is an attempt to whitewash the ancestral stain to the House of Oxford, left by the ruined reputation of the 9th Earl of Oxford, Duke of Ireland (1362-1392). Shakespeare also skips the 10th Earl of Oxford, Aubrey de Vere (acceded 1392, d. 1400), who had a modestly successful career, despite the disgrace and early death of his older brother, Robert. Aubrey was Steward of the royal forest of Havering in Essex (1360); he was knighted and made constable of Wallingford Castle in 1367; he was employed by Edward III as an ambassador to France, and in 1381 made a member of Privy Council as Chamberlain of the Royal Household. But he lost status and offices after Robert's inglorious defeat at the battle of Radcote Bridge in 1387. Worse, Robert was attainted and stripped of lands and titles by the Merciless Parliament in 1388. The stain and disgrace of Robert's career was enhanced by his rumored role as the minion and male lover of Richard II. His flight to Belgium and being gored to death by a wild boar in Louvain were scandals for the teetering Oxford earldom. Meanwhile, Richard, the future 11th Earl, was only nine years old in 1392, and could not accede until 10th Earl Aubrey's death in 1400.

Yet, as Jiménez explains (64), in *FV* the 11th Earl becomes the "principal" counselor of two monarchs, Henry IV and Henry V. Historically he was still a teenager, though he was likely a playfellow and schoolmate of Hal at Court during these years. Oddly, he is also the same 11th Earl of Oxford who is most unhistorically beheaded at the order of Bolingbroke, due to his participation in the Southampton Plot in Act Five of *Richard II*—in its quarto editions, though not in the First Folio of 1623. Instead, the 11th Earl Richard, like young Edward de Vere, became a Ward of Court under Richard II, and did not obtain his livery until 21 December 1406. Wiki drily observes that at this time the Earldom of Oxford was "the poorest member of the English higher nobility."

If my suggestions are correct about the difficulties faced by the 10th and 11th Earls of Oxford, especially

after the Earldom was stripped of lands and titles by the Merciless Parliament in 1388, then the 11th Earl's emergence in *FV* as a warrior and a counselor to two monarchs elevates his status well before the Battle of Agincourt. It is another fillip of actual chronicle history by teenage author Edward de Vere—in fact the 11th Earl was in command of English archers at Agincourt. In *FV* he asks for the “va-ward” or vanguard, which goes to Richard of York instead, the only English noble (in *FV*) killed in the fighting. As a lucky survivor, we can assume that 11th Earl Richard de Vere was rewarded by his former playmate for his numerous services to two kings of England in *FV*! Strangely, he disappears in the canonical Shakespeare versions of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*; in *Henry V* the Chorus speaks in his stead. I wonder if Edward de Vere finally whitewashed the stain and disgrace of 9th Earl Robert—the only Oxford to briefly have a Dukedom (albeit in Ireland)—by erasing these ancestors in the canon?

As I complete this review of Ramon Jiménez's efforts to insist upon the importance of *Famous Victories* to the Shakespeare canon, I note a multitude of supporting details and observations that he has gleaned from numerous sources. Each attests and bolsters his case for de Vere's authorship of both *FV* and the canonical history plays *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, and *Henry V*:

1. de Vere had access to Livio's unpublished *Vita Henrici Quinti*, with its killer detail of Hal's “cloak so full of needles” in the libraries of both Sir Thomas Smith and William Cecil (57);
2. 11th Earl Richard “speaks only to Henry IV or to Prince Hal” in the Court scenes, emphasizing his high rank (43-44);
3. “[*FV*] is the first appearance of an Earl of Oxford in any play, but he is the only English aristocrat in *FV* who is entirely absent from all the Prince Hal plays” (*Oxfordian*, vol. 22, p. 23);
4. B.M. Ward's 1928 article which dates *FV* to 1574 as written by Edward de Vere, “based... on two striking features... the unduly prominent role of the historically obscure eleventh Earl of Oxford,” and “the parallels between the Gadshill robbery in *FV* and that committed by three of Oxford's servants in 1573” (id. at 29);
5. The details and dates of the references to *FV* in Nashe (1592), and in *Tarleton's Jests* (1611 ed.), where William Knell (d. 1587) plays Hal; and teenage Edward's studies of histories and chronicles while living in Cecil House in the 1560s, which led to his “writing dramatizations of history for the entertainment of others” (id. at 31);

6. The conclusion that “evidence detailed above demonstrates that *FV* was written in the early 1560s... while [Edward de Vere] was still in his early teens and living in the London house of William Cecil as a ward of the Court” (id. at 38).

This edition includes an Introduction and extensive notes and glosses. Jiménez demonstrates that *FV* foreshadows many of the most beloved scenes in canonical Shakespeare. These include the character Jockey (aka Falstaff) and Hal robbing the King's agents at Gads Hill; the King's lamentations over Hal's carousing with low company; Prince Hal repenting and reforming his ways as he returns the crown to his father in the Jerusalem room death scene; Hal (as Henry V) rejecting the “tun of tennis balls” and joining his “great navy” to France and Harfleur; Hal's naming his most famous victory, the Battle of Agincourt, after the hillside “castle near adjoining to our camp”; Hal's wooing Lady Katherine (presumably in French) in scene 18 before becoming “heir and regent of France” in scene 20; and so on.

In sum, teenager Edward de Vere reinvented historical drama in *Famous Victories*, which he revived for the stage and the Queen's Men in the pre-Armada years of 1583 to 1587. *FV* strikes one patriotic chord after another for nationalistic English audiences facing the threat of Spain, by recalling Agincourt and English conquests in France. These famous victories at Harfleur and Agincourt may have inspired Elizabeth's famous address at Tilbury!

Thanks to Ramon Jiménez, we Oxfordians have for the first time a “true” reliable and readable text of *FV* that showcases young Edward de Vere's first history play and his future as the Shakespeare author of ten history plays named after seven Kings of England.

Whatever you do, buy (and read) this book!

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Scott McMillin & Sally-Beth MacLean. *The Queen's Men and their Plays*. Cambridge University Press, UK; repr. 1999.



Richard J. Wallace, *Aspects of the SAQ*
(Charleston, SC, Palmetto, 2022)

Reviewed by Michael St. Clair

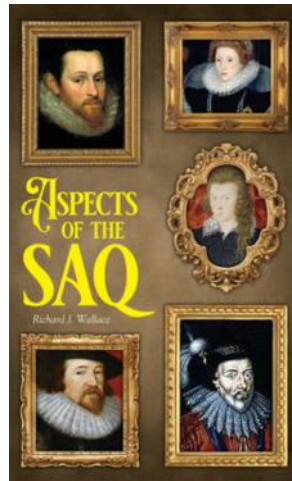
Richard Wallace is largely inside the tent of anti-Stratfordians with regard to the Shakespeare Authorship Question (SAQ). A scientist, he worked in the fields of psychology and, more recently, computer science. In his previous book, *Artificial Intelligence/Human Intelligence: An Indissoluble Nexus*, he touched on the authorship question within a larger discussion of the relationship between machine intelligence and human intelligence (see *Newsletter*, Summer 2021, p. 8).

In his new book he goes more deeply into the SAQ, offering six essays that delve into the murky depths of various topics that are discussed by those who share anti-Stratfordian views. He believes that “non-Stratfordian studies are currently in need of critical assessment, especially with the recent proliferation of questionable speculations based on evidence that is both slight and highly ambiguous” (viii). “This is particularly true,” he argues, about “certain theses, such as the claim that Shaksper was a front-man.... [I]n some respects, non-Stratfordian studies now exhibit many of the same features as the mainstream accounts which are centered around the gentleman from Stratford” (viii). His main interest “stems from the realization that there is an SAQ—and that what I take to be an obviously false narrative concerning the life of Shakespeare has held sway for nearly 400 years” (ix).

Wallace’s first essay launches into the question of whether Shaksper of Stratford was a “front-man,” i.e., a willing and active accomplice in a scheme to attach his name to the works, or whether he was “the victim . . . of identity theft” (1). Wallace raises the critical questions of why the first plays were published anonymously, years before the name Shakespeare was attached to them. And why were the first printed versions of many of the plays in such corrupted form? Would this be so if there was a more competent, well-organized conduit from author to publisher? And why the great silence; where is the evidence?

Wallace succinctly notes the silence of family and friends in Stratford as to any writing by Shaksper, Shaksper’s probable illiteracy, his coat-of-arms petition, references made by Ben Jonson (including the Sogliardo character in Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humour*) and references in other works to Aristonymus and Terence.

Wallace is troubled by the fact that, following the Essex Rebellion of 1601, Shaksper was never



questioned. “If the [authorities] were so anxious to get to the bottom of the rebellion and to root out any and all who were involved,” he asks, “then why didn’t they question Shaksper, the purported author of the play meant to signal the rebellion?” (6). This is certainly a question that the Stratfordians have failed to answer satisfactorily, but Wallace finds it a problem for non-Strats, too. “Knowing that he was a front-man,” he maintains, “doesn’t make it any less likely that they would have wanted to interrogate him to gain any information he might have” (ibid.). I disagree. I find it entirely consistent with the front-man theory that the authorities

ignored Shaksper, especially if those at the very top of the government knew exactly who the playwright really was. Who knows—maybe some in the chain of command did want to question the supposed author Shaksper, but were ordered by higher-ups not to follow up?

Wallace suggests that it’s possible that we have “no good explanation as to why the ‘plotters’ settled upon the man from Stratford as a stand-in for the author Shakespeare. In fact, we will probably never know for certain” (20). But, on balance, he opines that Shaksper’s apparent connection to the London theatrical scene and the similarity of his name to “William Shakespeare” “would seem sufficient conditions for making use of him in a scheme to deflect attention away from the real author...” (21).

Energy picks up in Essay Two, in which Wallace argues for parts or even whole “Stanley” plays in the Shakespeare *oeuvre*. His foil is John M. Rollett’s book, *William Stanley as Shakespeare* (McFarland, 2015). Apparently, Rollett developed his thesis on the basis of an acrostic derived from the page of the First Folio that lists the principal actors who performed in Shakespeare’s plays, a name or near-name that was determined to be “Stenley” (*sic*). Wallace does not accept Rollett’s thesis that William Stanley was the man behind the Shakespeare mask, but he does make a good case that possibly at least two plays, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Cymbeline*, may be in whole or part the work of Stanley.

In Essay Three Wallace discusses whether we should take seriously the idea that Oxford and Elizabeth had a child who was raised as the Earl of Southampton—i.e., the Prince Tudor (or Dynastic Succession) Hypothesis. Wallace displays admirable knowledge of many of the facets of this issue, including reproductions of portraits of some of the possible historical figures, such as Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, at different periods of his life. He invites us to compare

them to those of the Countess of Southampton (Henry's mother, if he were her true son) and Queen Elizabeth. Wallace concludes that it is "an intriguing idea that demands serious consideration," but that it also "remains a far-fetched speculation, with some telling arguments against it" (68).

Essay Four is a long book review of Margrethe (Eddi) Jolly's *The First Two Quartos of Hamlet. A New View of the Origins and Relationship of the Texts* (McFarland, 2014). Wallace reviews carefully and exhaustively the texts of the different versions of the play. He carefully notes oddities, especially the fact that two vastly different versions of the play appeared in print within a space of a year or two. The latter version of *Hamlet*, known as Quarto 2 or Q2 and published in 1604-05, has 1,500 more lines than the earlier version, Q1, published in 1603. Although the *Hamlet* text in the First Folio (F1, 1623) is closer to Q2 than to Q1, the length of the play has been reduced by some 200 lines, and there are numerous differences in wordings. Wallace's discussion ranges over many twists and turns; for example, Q1, the earliest version, was unknown before the nineteenth century, having been discovered in 1823 in a personal collection. There exist hypotheses as to why Q1 is not only shorter but also seems less substantial; some suggest that it's a memorial reconstruction of the original, possibly made by an actor; it's also possible that the author himself continued to revise his play, continually altering and polishing. Hence, much ink has been spilled by and about editors of Shakespeare's plays seeking to resolve "a difficult and perhaps insolvable problem: how does one decide on a definitive version of the play" (71).

Wallace very much appreciates Jolly's analysis of these issues and, indeed, compares her work with other recent contributions on this knotty subject, including Laurie Maguire's *Shakespearean Suspect Texts* (1996) and Paul Menzer's *The Hamlets* (2008). He finds Jolly's demonstration that Q1 follows the tale of *Amleth* (published in French in 1576) more closely than Q2 to be "the most compelling and well worked out account that I have read" (82-83). He finds that she "makes her case that Q1 cannot be an abridgment of Q2" (88). Wallace is sharp and acute in his discussion of corruptions in Q1 and believes that it was a playhouse version, with Q2 printed within a year. He cogently brings the discussion back to the SAQ, and concludes that we don't know, and probably never will know, exactly how the plays got from the pen of the author to the printed quartos.

Essay Five is entitled "Why I am a Baconian," a sly reference to Delia Bacon, who published *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded* in 1857. Her thesis was that the Shakespeare corpus was the collective effort of a "little clique of disappointed and defeated politicians who undertook to head and organize a popular

opposition against the government and were compelled to retreat from that enterprise" (117). Wallace applauds Bacon's perception that "it is what Shakespeare represents that is of primary importance.... [I]n this respect she was far ahead of her time—and is still ahead of most Shakespeare scholars both orthodox and unorthodox" (143-144).

Wallace's Sixth and concluding essay is about Shakespeare as a "Brand Name." Wallace claims "there are many reasons to think that the Shakespeare plays we have were written by various authors. 'Shakespeare' in other words is an umbrella term, a 'big tent' covering the activity of many hands.... [T]his is one more reason for anti-Stratfordians to step back and reassess what it is that they are actually trying to do. For, clearly, the authorship of the Shakespeare plays encompasses a menagerie of writers, making it all the more difficult to establish the relation to any one individual to this body of work.... [O]ne will probably have to go beyond any individual and consider an entire intellectual and social milieu... to conclude that the enigmatic figure found on the title page of the First Folio is, after all... a portrait that depicts no living man at all" (148).

Maybe it is time to rethink the "group" theory (or perhaps the group theory with Oxford as the head writer or leading voice), which was one of the ideas promulgated by some of the earliest Oxfordian researchers in the 1920s. It helps explain a lot of things, such as Shakespeare's enormous vocabulary, the differences in the quality of the plays (or among the acts of a particular play). We can be virtually certain that Oxford himself revised his own works over time; why can't we suppose that he left some works unfinished, or only partly revised, at the time of his death, and that others were tasked with completing them?

Aspects of the SAQ is a short book, only 150 pages, and in a way it asks more questions than it answers. But that's OK—Wallace wants to get us thinking critically about our own individual slants on aspects of the SAQ. As he says more than once, there are questions to which we will probably never have satisfactory answers. But we should still continue to discuss them.



Special Section: SOF Election

To Members of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship from Bob Meyers, president:

As you may know, we will soon hold our first contested election for president of the organization, with Earl Showerman being opposed by Steven Sabel. Here is the process and how it will work.

This is how we got here

The Nominations Committee (chaired by Bonner Miller Cutting, with members Cheryl Eagan-Donovan and Joan Leon) proposed Earl Showerman, Richard Foulke and Ben August to stand for new three-year board terms, with Earl (a former board member) also to stand for a one-year term as president. That is standard procedure.

The Bylaws read that someone who wants to run for office but is not nominated by the Committee can do so by filing a petition with at least ten signatures from members. SOF currently has about 500 members. Steven Sabel, an SOF member and the host of the “Don’t Quill the Messenger” podcast, submitted a petition with thirty signatures. The podcast was sponsored by SOF and Steven was paid for his efforts. We sought to extend the contract but were unable to.

In his April 27 podcast Steven announced his intention to run for president.

Now we are in new territory—a contested election. Guided by Alex McNeil, former administrator of the Massachusetts Appeals Court, and Bryan H. Wildenthal, a law professor and scholar in San Diego, rules and guidelines were developed. They did a fabulous job.

Recently I asked both Earl and Steven to prepare 850-word documents giving their backgrounds and what they would do if elected. I also requested headshots. Their statements and photos appear on the following pages. (The same material is also being sent to SOF members via email.)

Have We Got a Ballot for You!

Every dues-paying member on the SOF enrollment list as of July 25, 2022, is eligible to vote. By mid-to-late August you will be sent a ballot envelope. LOOK FOR IT. The envelope will contain a ballot, instruction sheet, and a return envelope. Do not try to copy the ballot. It is professionally produced and seeking to replicate it will invalidate it.

Only Earl and Steven’s names and pictures will be appear on the ballot. Mark the ballot for one of them. Put it in the return envelope. STAMP AND SEAL THE ENVELOPE (we have members all over the world and the postage for each of them will vary). The envelopes MUST be received at the Auburndale post office box by September 20. Ballots received in Auburndale after that date will not be counted.

Counting the Ballots

The ballots will be OPENED AND COUNTED on Sunday, September 25, during the Annual General Meeting. Three vote counters, or “tellers,” will open the envelopes and tally the votes. Steven and Earl have each been asked to designate a teller, and the SOF will designate the third one. We are trying to find an open space at the hotel where the counting can be done so that it is visible to all, but we may not know that until we arrive.

I will declare the winner within the 10AM-12 noon time frame allocated for the Annual General Meeting, and then invite the winner to speak.

Earl Showerman:



Biography

In asking for your support for the office of President of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship (SOF), I'd like to tell you about my education and professional background. I'm an honors graduate of Harvard College ('66) and the University of Michigan Medical School ('70), served in the Indian Health

Service, and practiced emergency medicine in Oregon for 30 years. My fascination with Shakespeare has been inspired by decades of attending productions at the award-winning Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Since retirement 20 years ago, I have immersed myself in Shakespeare studies and have become a dedicated investigator of the authorship challenge and frequent presenter at authorship conferences. Now, with the endorsement of the SOF Nominations Committee, I am seeking election as your next SOF President.

Qualifications

My qualifications for a leadership position in the SOF include years of service on the Board of the Shakespeare Fellowship, as its President from 2009-12, and as Secretary of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship from 2019-21. For 15 years I have been an active member of the Conference Committee, and chaired three authorship conferences and as many summer seminars in Ashland, Oregon. While I have contributed a number of peer-reviewed papers for *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*, and a chapter on Shakespeare's medical knowledge in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt? Exposing an Industry in Denial*, my chief engagement with the authorship challenge has been as an educator and organizer.

Since 2010, I have been associated with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Southern Oregon University (OLLI@SOU), where I have taught an annual course on the "State-of-the-Debate" over the Shakespeare authorship. My association with OLLI was instrumental in arranging for filmmaker screenings of *Last Will. & Testament* and *Nothing Is Truer than Truth* on the SOU campus, and in sponsoring a community forum of British Shakespeare authorship scholars in 2015.

I enjoy collegial relationships with the current members of the SOF Board, and have a long history of working collaboratively with the editors of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles* book series, as well as authorship filmmakers. Further, I have been invited to speak at

programs sponsored by the De Vere Society, the Shakespearean Authorship Trust, and the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable.

While I have donated much time and energy to support SOF projects, I have also helped to raise funds for various initiatives, including a mass mailing of *Brief Chronicles I* (2009) to over 1,000 members of the Modern Language Association (MLA). My personal research interests have focused on exploring the question of Shakespeare's knowledge of ancient Greek drama, which has received favorable attention in several mainstream publications.

If I am elected President of the SOF for the coming year, my plan would include raising funds for another mass mailing of Professor Roger Stritmatter's forthcoming *Brief Chronicles* edition, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the publication of the First Folio, to selected MLA members who teach Shakespeare. I would also seek to promote SOF funding for a Social Media Grant program for independent producers, such as Phoebe Nir (@phoebe_devere) on TikTok, and for search engine optimization of Oxfordian publications and videos.

I offer my candidacy for the SOF presidency, not as an untested candidate, but one with a proven track record facilitating the cooperative efforts of our outstanding team of teachers, writers, editors, filmmakers and media mavens, who have dedicated their time and talent to furthering the Shakespeare Authorship Question. I have found that my capabilities as a spokesperson for the SOF have been enhanced by years of working in a dramatic field of medicine, learning to navigate critical health crises, and expressing myself in credible fashion to my patients and their families. These communication skills are essential to maximizing our effectiveness in support of the endeavors of the professional and volunteer agents in the SOF.

From a personal standpoint, engaging in a leadership role on the SOF Board would deepen my commitment to our colleagues after a year of recovery from a serious bike accident that disabled me for months and obliged me to retire from the Board last year. I have previously served on the boards of regional healthcare and environmental organizations, but the enduring and passionate dedication of activist Oxfordians is truly extraordinary. It is an inspiration that instills delight, meaning, and purpose to those of us who love Shakespeare's works and want to know the author.

It has been a privilege to witness, at close hand, the amazing progress that has been made in recent decades to bring the Earl of Oxford's claim to the canon to far wider audiences. I will continue to support web-based access to the scholarship and video presentations that are paramount in outreach to new audiences. If elected

(Continued on p. 18)

Steven Sabel:



Dearest Fellow Members:
It is my honor and privilege to participate in this democratic process. I am humbled by the number of members who chose to sign my petition for office. I am told by SOF historians that I am the first candidate for SOF office to ever be advanced by a petition from the membership. In that truth, I have already won. Thank you!

If you'd like to learn more about my Shakespearean and producer/management credits, please visit:
<https://www.roguevalleyshakespeare.com/about>.

If I am elected president of this organization, I promise to forward the following proposals and actions to the agenda of the Board of Trustees, encourage vigorous debate, strong deliberation, and hopefully successful majority votes of approval that will change the face of the organization and the Oxfordian movement.

- Development of a comprehensive and professional five-year plan of operations to include specific attainable goals and a plan to achieve them.
- Structured capital campaigns with specific fundraising goals to achieve specific agreed upon expenditures for the advancement of the organization.
- Comprehensive Marketing Calendar structured around planned publication release dates, organizational activities, and major events.
- Comprehensive Public Relations and Marketing plan to include full organic, earned, and paid social media and digital advertising, media outreach, influencer connections, and regular inspiration for user-generated content.
- Creation of a Social Media committee to help monitor and respond to social media content, inspire user-generated content, and develop a greater social following.
- Reinstitution and promotion of Tom Regnier's Speakers Bureau to include a regular schedule of public Zoom and/or YouTube presentations; assistance with booking speakers in their own area of residence; and the recruitment of new members to become presenters in areas where we are underrepresented.
- Development of a Resources Page on our website where members can use a code to access materials such as PowerPoint presentation templates, printable handouts, information sheets, brochures, lesson plans, etc., to help them become grass roots presenters in their communities.
- Greater investment in our Education Outreach Committee to fully fund their endeavors, including the offering of free live Zoom lectures to classrooms, providing curriculum, lesson plans, and teacher assistance/training.
- Full analysis of accomplishments, successes, and failures of the current Research Grant Program and a healthy discussion of how to better use those resources to achieve more for the organization.
- Review and cleaning of outdated Bylaws to include stronger and clearer definitions of roles and duties of board members and committees, following established best practices.
- Establishment of specific and published criteria for presenter inclusion in our symposia and conferences and inclusion in social media promotion and YouTube posting criteria, rather than the current arbitrary method of favoritism that now exists in this area of the organization.
- Full analysis of membership location data to identify areas where we have an established foothold of members near to major metropolitan cities to strategically choose annual conference locations based on potential success, rather than locations where elite members wish to vacation.
- Polling of the membership as to which of the most membership-populated areas members wish to travel to for the annual conference to boost attendance numbers and garner more attention.
- Comprehensive conference location outreach plans for connecting with area chambers of commerce (conferences equal money for local businesses), schools, service clubs, government representatives, libraries, and media outlets.
- The selection of at least one annual debate topic that members of the organization find themselves on opposite sides of—to be studied and discussed through Zoom or YouTube events, the quarterly newsletter, and as a highlight of the annual conference.
- Monthly reports from the president about the progress of the BOT and each month's board minutes—including recommendations by committees, and vote totals on those recommendations—posted in a members-only accessible archive on the website.
- Comprehensive summary of discussions held, actions taken, funds raised, monies spent, goals met, struggles faced by the organization included in every quarterly newsletter—Greater Transparency on all levels!

Through all of this, it is my hope that our organization can shed its longstanding identity as a private and exclusive club of a stagnant number of members, and instead become a very inclusive professionally managed and operated nonprofit

(Continued on p. 18)

Earl Showerman *(continued)*

President of the SOF, I pledge to work diligently with our highly creative staff, board, volunteers, and members to make 2023 a memorable year in the Oxfordian movement. "Reach what you cannot," wrote my favorite Greek writer, Nikos Kazantzakis. That expression has become my personal philosophy regarding the attribution of the Shakespeare canon, and I will endeavor to provide the leadership that brings us closer together to reach that prodigious goal.



Steven Sabel *(continued)*

powerhouse of grass roots education about the importance of the many facets of the Shakespeare Authorship Question that our numbers may grow exponentially.

Vote for me to open the minds of those who are new to the discovery; those who have not been corrupted by the mythology; those without power in the "Halls of Academia," but with the power of popular public opinion.

If we structure our plans and goals correctly, raising specific funds for specific outcomes, increasing our transparency, and embracing ALL those who have curiosity; welcoming them to the discussion, we will see a new wave of inquiry at every important level, beginning with school-age children who will one day become the Oxfordian scholars of the future.

Learn more about the consistency of my positions by reading this interview conducted of me by Bob Meyers in the 2019 Winter *Newsletter*: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/wp-content/uploads/SO-Newsletter-Winter-2019.pdf>



Is Oxford Buried in Westminster Abbey? (continued from p. 1)

bloud of twelve Forreine Princes viz: three Emperours, three Kings, three Dukes & three Earles, conveyed through the principall houses of Christendome./ Gathered out of History, Recordes, & other Monuments of Antiquity. By Persivall Goulding./

DEDICATION

In all humane learning mans mynde is mored with a twofold respect the one of proffitt in application, the other of pleasure in contemplation; and by theis the Choyse of our studyes is generally directed in both, the study of Antiquities and genealogy hath by the best Judgements bene always approved: & worthily as without *which* the most profitable studyes become unprofitable, if being the right hand of history, the key of Chronology, and a necessary handmayde to Divinity, knitting together in fast Linkes the scattered members of truth and teaching by infallible rules the right knowledge and distinction of tymes places, and persons, in *which* the life of history consisteth, and by *which* great light is given to the understandinge of Divine relations. The holy scripture in sundry places Commendeth unto us the preservations of Antiquities, and aboundeth in examples of Genealogy: How exactly are the dayes of the first fathers numbred, the wives and children of the Kings recorded, and the whole generacons of the Jewes according to their severall trybes and families Described? Undoubtably not a love for these tymes and people in particuler, but likewise for Imitacon of us that come after; *which* may always fynd

matter of much use in observing the Lives of our Ancestors; whose virtues wee should Embrase, as our proper inheretance, whose vices we should hate for Disgracing our fathers; whose birthright, and honor are to us a great Blessing and advantage, and though not to be boasted of not to be Despised; as our Saviour Christ who though he vouchsafed to be borne of meanest parentes, yet came of the Royall trybe of Judah, and from the noblest persons of the house of Jacob; showing that nobility is not to be Regected [rejected]; but virtue preferred. In this study having sometymes bene Conversant according to my slender skill I have out of former Collections intended for a greater worke gathered the genealogy of Veer (the name *which* of all other I am most bound to honor) and Drest [dressed] in theis homely ornamentes of myne owne fashioning taken occasion to offer the same unto you, not as a publike worke to patronize, but as a testimony of particuler affection; unto *which* boldnes my cheife inducementes were theis; first the love and duty *which* not I alone, but many of my auncestors, as humble wellwishers have longe borne, to the honourable house of Oxenford; whereof yours being a most eminent branch I presume but rather my present would not prove ungratefull. Next myne owne earnest desire by some acceptable meanes to make myself knowne unto you, being a neare neighbour, and though a stranger to yourself, yet heretofore well knowne and not a little beholding to your worthy brother Mr. John Veer. Lastly to show some frute (though barren and unripe) of my

travellles before employed this way *which* tended to a compleat Collection of the nobility of England, but interrupted by crosse accidentes and layd aside longe since If theis shall suffize to warrant my bold enterprise, and together with my small paynes give you any tast of Content I have abtayned the cheife end I aymed at. For the worke itself I must crave pardon of omission and ymperfection (thinges incident to all workes of this kind) but principally of error *which* Comonly cleaveth to the steptes [steps] of those that trace the pathes of Antiquity; *which* notwithstanding by the best markes I could I have endeavoured to shunne; observing this generall caution; not to affirm upon coniecture [conjecture], nor to decide without authority I could & happily should have furnishtye the severall titles of the Earles, with more particulars, as well of their lives & actions as of their landes and honors; wherein I confesse my purpose hath bene much abridged; but my Distracted tyme and troublesome estate (unfit to bring any thinge to perfection) as also my scarcity of books, & want accesse to Recordes, I hope shall make my Apology In excuse of all other unworthynes Desiring you to take knowledge of the affection wherewith I offer it. I humbly Commend this gifte to your good acceptance, and myself to your service./ P. G.

Dorothy Daughter of Rafe Nevill Earle of Westmorland, first wife of John Earle of Oxenford the sixt. [sixteenth]. Margaret Daughter of John Golding Esquire, second wife of John Earle of Oxenford. She was afterward married to Charles Tyrell Esquire. Issue by the first match Katherine sole Daughter of John Earle of Oxenford and Dorothy his first wife, married to Edward Lord Windsore, and was mother of Frederick Lord Windsore *which* dyed *without* issue, and Henry Lord Windsore his brother, who by Anne his wife Daughter of Sir Thomas Kivet knight, was father of Thomas Lord Windsore now living, which married Katherine Daughter of the Earl of Morceston and hath issue.³

Issue by the seacond match
Edward de Vere Earle of Oxenford
Mary first wife of Peregrine Berty the late noble and worthy Lord Willoughby of Eresby; and Seacondly of Sir Eustace Hart knight, and is yet living. She had issue by her first husband, Robert now Lord Willoughby of Eresby, Sir Peregrine Berty knight, Roger, Henry and Vere Also a daughter named Katherine, late wife of Sir Lewis Watson knight, but Dyed *without* issue.

Edward De Vere, only sonne of John, Borne the twelfth day of Aprill & was Earle of Oxenford, High Chamberlayne, Lord Bolebec, Sandford and Belesmere, Stuard of the Forrest in Essex and of the Privy Counsell to the kings *Majes^{tie}* that now is. Of whom I will only

speake what all mens voyces confirme: he was a man in minde and body absolutely accomplished with honourable endowments. He dyed at his house at Hackney in the moneth of June Ao 1604 and lyeth buried at Westminster.

Anne daughter of William Cecill Lord Burghleigh high Treasurer of England first wife of Edward Earle of Oxenford. She lyeth buried by her mother Lady Mildred Burghleigh at Westminster.

Elizabeth daughter of Thomas Trentham of Trentham in the County of Stafford Esquire, second wife of Edward Earle of Oxenford.

Issue by the first match.

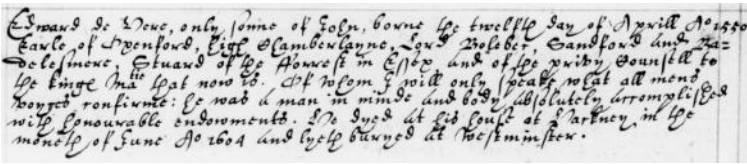
1. Elizabeth Countesse of derby, wife of William Earle of Derby now living by whom she hath issue James Lord Stanley her oldest sonne, and Robert his brother, both living: Anne married to Sir Henry Portman knight, and Elizabeth deceased.
2. Brigit Lady Norreis, wife of Francis now Lord Norreis of Ricot.
3. Susan Countess of Montgomery wife of Sir Phillip Herbert knight created Earle of Montgomey by King James Ao

Henry Veer now Earle of Oxenford./
Henry De Vere now Earle of Oxenford, high Chamberlayne of England Lord Bolebec Sandford and Badesmere etc In whose noble nature and generous Disposicion, [disposition] the lively image of his Ancestors virtues is expressed.

Sir Horatio Veer Knight Leiwetenant generall of the Englishe forces in the Lowe Countreys and Governor of the English Army there, 4th sonne of Geffrey de Veer who was younger sonne to John de Veer the fyfte of that name earle of Oxenford married Mary daughter to sir John Tracy of Todington in the County of Gloucester wife to Sir Horatio Veer Knight by whom he hath Issue Elizabeth, Mary, Katherin, Anne, and Margarett./ [End of transcription.]

When was the manuscript composed?

As our intent is to narrow down the time of the manuscript's composition from the wide dating range suggested by Ward, all the biographical information in the manuscript has been compared with other historical records. It is not in doubt that Sir Horatio Vere is the intended recipient of Percival's genealogical tract. In the dedication, Percival directly addresses Sir Horatio as "Sir" and "you." This indicates that the manuscript was written before July 1625, when Horatio was made Barron Vere of Tilbury; at that point, Sir Horatio would have been properly addressed as "your lordship."



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Percival notices John Vere, the oldest of the four Vere brothers, as “your worthy brother Mr. John Vere.” This suggests that John is still living, otherwise Percival might have written something to suggest that John was deceased—perhaps calling him “your late brother of worthy memory.” As John died in 1624, we can date the manuscript to an earlier time when John was still living. The manuscript does not mention another brother, Sir Francis Vere, one of the most important English generals in the Low Countries. Sir Francis had died in 1609, indicating a composition date after his death.

For the purposes of dating, the most helpful biographical facts are the names of Sir Horatio’s five daughters and the marriage of Anne Stanley, Elizabeth Vere Stanley’s daughter. Checking the dates of the births of Horatio’s daughters in Clements Markham’s *The Fighting Veres*, we find that Horatio was married in 1607 and four of his daughters were born between 1610 and 1614, when he was soldiering in the Netherlands (380-381).⁴ A fifth daughter was born on his return to England in 1616.⁵ This fact puts the earliest possible date after 1616 (the terminus a quo). A sixth daughter, Susan, was born in 1619, and she died in 1623. Thus, Horatio had exactly five living daughters during two time frames: from 1616 until 1619, and again after 1623. However, it is possible that Percival did not know about the sixth daughter; the birth of another female child—after a long string of female children—might not have been particularly newsworthy in London. Therefore, the omission of a sixth daughter does not necessarily rule out a possible later composition date between 1619 and 1623. Fortunately, another family event provides a terminus ad quem (the latest possible composition date) for the creation of this document.

In the information about Elizabeth Vere’s marriage to the Earl of Derby, Percival states that Elizabeth’s only surviving daughter, Anne Stanley, was married to Sir Henry Portman, knight. Anne married Portman in 1615, but Portman died in February 1621. *Percival does not mention that Portman had died.* Anne Stanley Portman remarried soon thereafter: by November of 1621 she had become the wife of Robert Kerr, a prominent courtier in King James’s court. Kerr, who would eventually become the Earl of Ancrum, also had close ties to the London literary community.⁶ It could be expected that the marriage of the only daughter of the Earl of Derby to a successful courtier would have been information bandied about London. Thus there is strong evidence that this

manuscript was in existence before Portman’s death early in 1621.

However, something suggests an even earlier terminus ad quem. Percival recognizes Bridget Vere, Oxford’s middle daughter, as “wife of Francis now Lord Norries of Ricot.” Francis Norris was made Earl of Berkshire on January 28, 1621 (1620 old style), which means that Bridget (Percival’s cousin) would then be a countess. Again, Percival does mention it. Percival should have been aware of his Vere cousin’s elevation in status, and this suggests a latest possible date of 1620.

The dates of births, deaths and marriages in the families of Oxford’s two sisters—Katherine, Lady Windsor and Mary, Lady Willoughby—are consistent with a dating range between 1616 and 1620. It is noteworthy, however, that Henry de Vere, the 18th Earl of Oxford, is called the “High Chamberlain of England.” This title was hereditary and it became his upon the death of his father in 1604. But Henry was a minor at that time and spent several years traveling on the continent after his mother’s death in 1612. It is probable that during these years, other people performed the duties of this office. Henry returned to London sometime in 1618,⁷ and apparently secured the responsibilities and benefits of the High Chamberlain office in 1619.⁸ This suggests the possibility that Percival’s manuscript may have been composed after Henry’s return.

Another consideration in determining the composition date is the whereabouts of its intended recipient, Sir Horatio Vere, who had spent many years fighting Spain in the Low Countries. According to Markham, Horatio was living at his London home near the Exchange at the time of the birth of his fifth daughter in January of 1616, but by the summer of 1616, he was back at the Hague inspecting the English troops (381, 386). Though Markham does not provide exact dates, he states that Horatio had a “long residence in Holland” during this time of truce between the Dutch and the Spanish. In the summer of 1618, Horatio was appointed governor of Utrecht and was living there with Lady Vere (392). *He was back in England in 1619, once again residing at his London home, until the summer of 1620.* This eighteen-month period is the most likely time frame for Percival to have had an opportunity to make the acquaintance of his cousin, the man considered to be “the ablest military officer then living” (397). In July 1620 Horatio resumed his command of King James’s forces defending the Palatinate. He would not return to England until late in 1623.

We find the internal evidence from the biographical information in the text consistent with a composition date of 1619/20, and this date is further supported by the availability of Horatio Vere in London. This would indicate that Oxford’s body was removed from the Church of St. Augustine in Hackney and reburied in

Westminster Abbey sometime after the death of his countess Elizabeth Trentham in 1613 and before 1619.

Is Percival Golding a reliable witness?

One last matter needs to be discussed. As noted earlier, Charlton Ogburn thought that Percival Golding was in a position to be knowledgeable about his noble relatives. Two contemporaneous sources bear out Percival's associations with people who were engaged in significant activities in London and at court. In the Honigmann and Brock book *Playhouse Wills*, we find that Percival was a legatee and the first of four witnesses to the last will and testament of Thomas Kendall, a partner in the Children of the Chapel acting company. This company was also known as the Children of the Queen's Revels (247).⁹ In this will, dated June 8, 1608, Kendall leaves a gold ring worth 20s "to my friend Mr. Percivall Golding" (79-80). This puts Percival in direct contact with a notable person involved in the London theatrical world.

Additionally, Percival had business interests with a man who, in turn, was a close associate of the Cecil family. In his 20th century biography of Arthur Golding, Louis Thorn Golding tracks Percival's dealings with Thomas Wilson, a government administrator (137-144). Wilson spent his life in the service of the Cecils, having been an "intelligencer" early in his career in the Cecil/Walsingham spy network on the continent. After the death of Lord Burghley in 1598, Wilson served Burghley's son, Robert Cecil, in many offices and capacities, among them the oversight of the construction of Hatfield House.¹⁰

Only two days after Arthur Golding's death on May 15, 1606, a copyright was issued to Percival and Wilson to republish seventeen of Golding's most important translations. Because this copyright was issued to both men, Wilson has occasionally been credited as a collaborator with Arthur Golding. Noting that Percival must have been "forced to make such a bargain" with Wilson, Thorn Golding writes that this is "a perfectly ridiculous statement as Wilson was but five years old when the first four books of the *Metamorphoses* and the *Commentaries of Caesar* were published" (141).

More unfortunate involvement with Wilson was to follow. In 1615, both Wilson and Percival were sued for rent on a house on the Strand owned by one Boyden. Boyden had leased the house to Wilson and Wilson had sublet it to Percival, "his friend and one with whom he had had much dealing" (143). In response to the suit, Percival claimed that he had paid the rent to Wilson, but apparently Wilson had not forwarded the money to Boyden.

For our purposes, the record of this legal kerfuffle, as well as the bequest in the theater manager's will, show Percival Golding's connections to people involved in theatrical and government activities in London. These connections support his credibility, as he appears to be

well positioned in London social circles to have the information that his first cousin, the Earl of Oxford, "lieth buried" in Westminster Abbey.

¹ B.M. Ward. "Is Oxford Buried in Westminster" in the *Shakespeare Fellowship Newsletter*, No 3 (May 1937). In 1952, Sir Anthony Richard Wagner published *The Records and Collections of the College of Arms*, giving an account of the history of the Heralds' archives in which this document was among the 260 manuscripts in the collection of the Windsor Herald, Augustine Vincent (d. 1626). Vincent's *Memoirs* were published in 1827, having been collected by the antiquarian Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas. It is recently reprinted by Forgotten Books.

² Several references dating from 1651 to 1674 that indicate the possibility of Shakespeare's burial at Westminster. More information can be found in the forthcoming *New Shakespeare Allusion Book: Literary Allusions to Shakespeare, 1584-1786 From Historical Principles*, selected, compiled and annotated by Alexander Waugh and Roger Stritmatter.

³ She was the daughter of the Earl of Somerset. This comment contains a peculiar mistake, as there is no Earl of Morceston.

⁴ For more information, see Clements R. Markham's *The Fighting Veres* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888). This book has been recently republished by Franklin Classics.

⁵ Percival apparently did not have the correct name of Horatio's 5th daughter, thinking her name to be Margaret. Markham gives her name as Dorothy (452).

⁶ John Donne was among Kerr's literary friends, and Donne bequeathed his own portrait to Kerr in his will. Robert Chambers, *A biographical dictionary of eminent Scotsmen*, Volume 3, Blackie and Son (1840), 315-316.

⁷ In the correspondence of the Earl of Ancaster is a note that "The Earl of Oxford cums to Lundon this night and lyes at his sisters the Countesse of Darbie her hoose" (394). From internal references, this visit occurred in the fall of 1618. The letter does not indicate the purpose of the visit, but it provides the opportunity for the 18th Earl to discuss family matters with his sibling. Historical Manuscripts Commission: *Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster*. Dublin: His Majesties Stationery Office, 1907.

⁸ Christopher Paul provides a similar discussion for the dates of the Golding manuscript, noting that Henry, the 18th Earl, resumed his duties as Lord Great Chamberlain in May of 1619. However, Paul goes on to say that "Golding's reference cannot confidently post date that since Earl Henry was referred to as LGC in many earlier documents regardless of this fact" (20). Christopher Paul, "R.I.P.: Bulbeck Bites the Dust," *Newsletter*, Vol 42:3 (Fall 2006), at 20 n.8.

⁹ E.A.J. Honigmann & Susan Brock, eds. *Playhouse Wills, 1558-1642*. Manchester University Press, 1993.

¹⁰ For more information, see the biography of Thomas Wilson in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XXI, Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee, eds. Oxford University Press (1968), 607-609.



George Peele's Personal Note from Shakespeare

by Robert R. Prechter

In "Who Wrote George Peele's 'Only Extant Letter'?" (Newsletter, Winter 2022) I proposed that that the gift note addressed to Lord Burghley and purportedly signed by George Peele in January 1596—reproduced¹ here as Figure 1—was in fact written by the Earl of Oxford. This article proposes that it was also composed by Shakespeare.

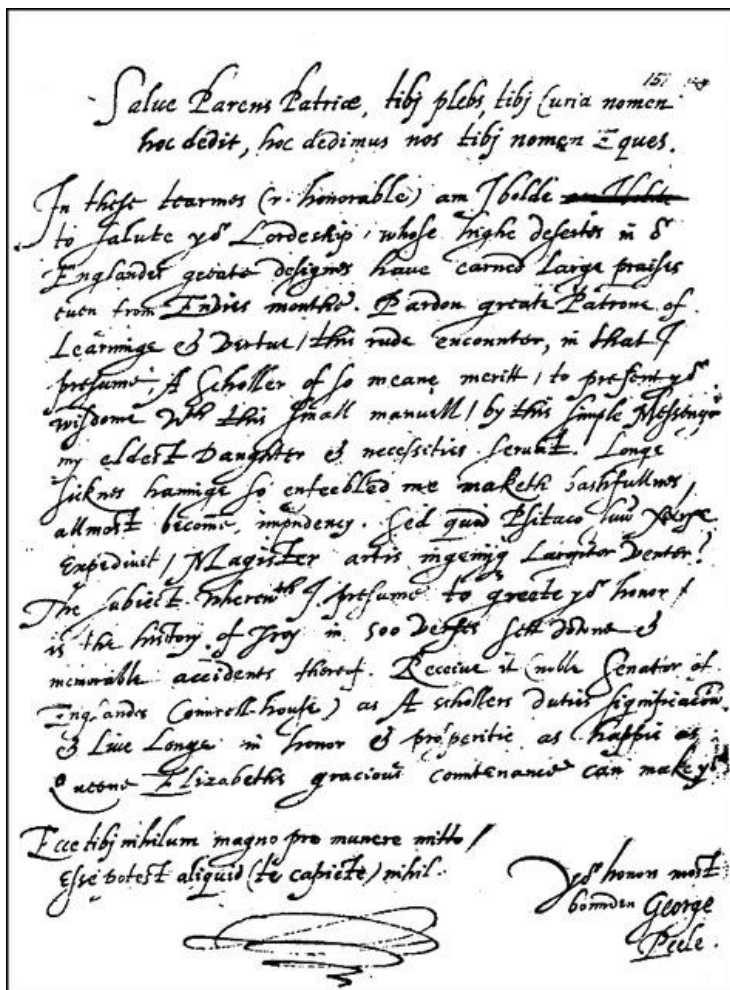


Figure 1

Peele's note is brief. Even if Shakespeare wrote it, one would hardly expect every line to echo passages from the Bard's works. But that is just what we find.

The following matches do not present merely occasional usages of like terms, but rather markedly similar texts and constructions. Let's examine them in turn:

Peele: "In these tearmes...am I bolde to salute your Lordeship"

Shakespeare: "...Makes me the bolder to salute my king/ With ruder terms" (2 Henry VI I.i)

Peele: "r. honorable...your...highe desertes"

Shakespeare: "honors on your high desertes" (Richard III I.iii)

Peele: "Englandes greate designes"

Shakespeare: "our greate designs" (Antony and Cleopatra II.ii); "no greate designs" (Richard III III.iv)

Peele: "earned large praises"

Shakespeare: "earned praise" (Pericles IV.Pro)

Peele: "even from Envies mouth"

Shakespeare: "above pale envy's threatening reach" (Titus Andronicus II.i); "envy's reach" (Merchant of Venice IV.i); "envy's hand" (Richard II I.ii) [personification]

Peele: "Pardon greate Patrone...this rude encounter"

Shakespeare: "Apollo, pardon/ My great profanenes" (The Winter's Tale III.ii)

Peele: "Patrone of learninge & vertue"

Shakespeare: "patron of virtue" (Titus Andronicus I.i)

Peele: "rude encounter"

Shakespeare: "this rude place we live in. Well encounter'd" (Cymbeline III.vi)

Peele: "so meane merit"

Shakespeare: "so meane condition" (2 Henry VI V.i)

Peele: "to present your wisdom with"

Shakespeare: "confine him where/ Your wisdom best shall think" (Hamlet III.i)

Peele: "this simple Messenger"

Shakespeare: "this distemper'd messenger" (All's Well That Ends Well I.iii); "this churlish messenger" (Twelfth Night II.ii)

Peele: "necessities servant"

Shakespeare: "necessity's sharp pinch" (King Lear II.iv) (personification)

Peele: "Longe sicknes...me"

Shakespeare: "my long sickness" (Timon of Athens V.i)

Peele: "bashfulness"

Shakespeare: "bashfulness" (A Midsummer Night's Dream III.ii)

Peele: "impudency"

Shakespeare: "impudency" (Love's Labour's Lost V.i)

Peele: "presume to greete"

Shakespeare: "presume to [verb]" (six times)

Peele: "sett downe"

Shakespeare: "set down" (44 times)

Peele: "memorable accidents" (meaning "incidents")

Shakespeare: "These happen'd accidents" (The Tempest V.i); "future accidents" (1 Henry VI V.iii);

"this night's accidents" (A Midsummer Night's Dream IV.i) (each with a preceding adjective)

Peele: "Receive it..."

Shakespeare: "Receive it from me" (Cymbeline III.i);

Othello III.iii); “Receive it friendly” (*Cymbeline* III.v) (each begins a sentence)

Peele: “duties significacion”

Shakespeare: “duty’s rites” (*Richard II* IV.i); “duty’s sake” (*Two Gentlemen of Verona* III.i)

Peele: “live longe in honor & prosperitie”

Shakespeare: “For which live long to thank both heaven and me” (*All’s Well That Ends Well* IV.ii)

(both lines are in iambic pentameter; they could form a rhymed couplet)

Peele: “Queen Elizabeths gracious countenance”

Shakespeare: “his neigh is like the bidding of a monarch and his countenance enforces homage” (*Henry V* III.vii)

Peele: “Yor honors most bounden”

Shakespeare: “I rest much bounden to you; fare you well.” (*As You Like It* I.ii)

(in both instances, the speaker takes his leave)

Peele’s dual lines of Latin and Greek may be translated as follows:

But what parrot’s “Vale!” succinctly expressed, “The belly is the teacher of the arts and the bestower of wit”?

The Greek word equating to the exclamation *Vale* in Latin, meaning “be well” or “be strong,” was used in archaic English to mean “farewell.”²² Peele’s Latin precept “was observed by the Roman satirist Aulus Persius Flaccus.”²³ It is expressed in English as “Necessity is the mother of invention.”²⁴ Peele implies that poverty prompted his effort. Who else couples *parrot* with a Latin quotation? See for yourself:

Shakespeare: Mistress, “*respice finem*,” respect your end; or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, ‘beware the rope’s-end.’ (*The Comedy of Errors* IV.iv)

Even the idea behind Peele’s concluding Latin couplet,

Ecce tibi nihilum magno pro munere mitto

Esse potest aliquid (se capiete) nihil,

which I have translated as follows, shows up in Shakespeare:

Peele: Lo! I send you nothing great as a gift/

Something it may be, take it as nothing.

Shakespeare: “That nothing-gift” (*Cymbeline* III.vi)

That is an impressive set of correspondences.

Figure 2 is a reproduction of W.W. Greg’s⁵ rendition of the text of the body of Peele’s letter. I have highlighted the passages linked to Shakespeare. As you can see, the letter echoes the Bard through and through. Most words in the unhighlighted portions show up in Shakespeare, too, but are not particularly special. We even linked the concluding Latin couplet, which Greg’s page omits, to the Bard.

The Shakespearean expressions in Peele’s note are even denser than those of the Earl of Oxford’s own youthful song lyrics,⁶ and for a good reason: Oxford was

no more than fifteen when he wrote his lyrics; but when he wrote Peele’s poem he was age forty-five, by which time he had incorporated many of his finest poetic expressions into **Shakespeare**’s plays.

In short, Shakespeare wrote George Peele’s letter. As shown in my previous article, Oxford wrote Peele’s letter. As Oxfordians have demonstrated, Shakespeare is Oxford. So, Peele is Oxford, too.

In these tearmes (r. honorable) am J bolde [am J bolde]
to falute yo^r Lordeship/whose highe desertes in o^r
Englandes greate designes haue earned large praifes
euen from Envies mouthes. Pardon greate Patrone of
learninge & vertue / this rude encounter, in that J
prefume, A Scholler of fo meane meritt / to present yo^r
widome wth this small manuell / by this simple Mefsenger
my eldest Daughter & necessities seruāt. Longe
ficknes hauinge fo enfeebled me maketh bashfullnes
almost become impudency. Sed quid Pfitaco fuū xafpe
expediuit / Magister artis ingenijq; largitor venter ?
The subiect wherewth J prefume to greete yo^r honor /
is the history of Troy in 500 verfes sett downe &
memorable accidents thereof. Receiue it (noble Senator of
Englandes Councill-houfe) as A schollers duties significaçon
& liue longe in honor & prosperitie as happie as
Queene Elizabeths gracious countenance can make yo^r

Figure 2

Observe that in the final line of the note, Peele spells *you* as *yow*. Oxford does the same thing in his letters.

George Peele Could Not Have Written the Note

We can go beyond demonstrating that Oxford wrote Peele’s note and that Shakespeare wrote it. We can show that Peele almost certainly could *not* have written it.

The writer says that his *eldest* daughter would deliver the note and gift to Lord Burghley. My previous article observed that the circumstances pertaining to Oxford, Burghley and Elizabeth Vere at the time are neatly compatible with the scenario that Oxford wrote Peele’s letter and that his daughter Elizabeth delivered it to her grandfather. The use of the word *eldest*, as opposed to *elder*, indicates that the writer had more than two daughters. Oxford had three, and in the summer of 1595 the eldest, Elizabeth, had been staying with him at Hackney while her husband stayed behind with Burghley. In January 1596 she was twenty years old, a

reasonable age for a woman who might travel and serve as a courier.

What we know of George Peele, in contrast, is *incompatible* with the assumption that he wrote the note. Virtually nothing is known of George Peele's circumstances at any time in his life, much less at the time of the letter's composition. But there is a pertinent fact from earlier years.

George's father, James Peele, kept records of his family's major events within the books of Christ's Church Hospital, the school for poor children and orphans for which he clerked. Horne's diagram⁷ (see Figure 3) summarizes James's records of family events pertaining to his five children, the spouses of four of them, and fourteen grandchildren by three of them. For George, there is only a blank where children might be, indicating that James never recorded a child for George.

James died on December 30, 1585.⁸ The last family event he recorded occurred on April 7, 1583. Presumably, had there been any significant events in the ensuing two and a half years, James would have recorded them. So, we may conclude that George and his wife, who married in 1580, produced no children at least through their first five to six years of marriage, which in turn implies, especially in those days, that they were on the path toward a childless marriage.

Even if one were inclined to try to rescue the orthodox story by proposing that George and his wife suddenly started producing children one after another in 1586, and that all of them were daughters—a 1-in-8 probability—the eldest would have been only nine years old in January 1596, hardly an age to be making crosstown deliveries.

Why, then, have biographers confidently stated, "Peele did have daughters by his first marriage (to Anne Christian of Oxford)...?"⁹ Answer: They have assumed from the reference to "my eldest daughter" in the 1596 note that Peele had daughters, so they gave them to him.

Shakespeare Wrote George Peele's Poems, Too
George Peele's *Anglorum Ferae*, available only in manuscript, celebrates the noble assemblage at a tilt held on November 17, 1595, in honor of the 37th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession. The poem begins,

Descende ye sacred daughters of King Jove
Apollo spreade thy sparklinge wings to mounte,
And trye some lightsome sweete Castalean springs,
That warble to their silver winding waves,
Making softe musick in their gentle glyde.

These five opening lines sound Shakespearean, but are they Shakespeare? Let's examine them:

Peele bids Apollo, "spreade thy sparklinge wings"
Shakespeare speaks of a king whose "arms spread wider than a dragon's wings." (1 *Henry VI* I.i)

Peele: "wings to mounte"
Shakespeare: "mount with wings" (*Richard III* V.iii)

Peele bids "Apollo" to try "Castalean springs"
If you search *Shakespeare*'s plays and poems, you will not find this language. But you will find it in the dedication to Southampton in *Venus and Adonis*, which begins with a pair of Latin lines that include these words: "Apollo/ Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua."

Peele: "silver...waves"
Shakespeare: "silver waves" (*The Comedy of Errors* III.ii)

Peele: "waves...in their gentle glide"
Shakespeare: The current that with gentle murmur glides" (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* II.vii)

All five of those parallels occur in just four lines of text.

The Peele Family Tree: No Daughters Recorded for George

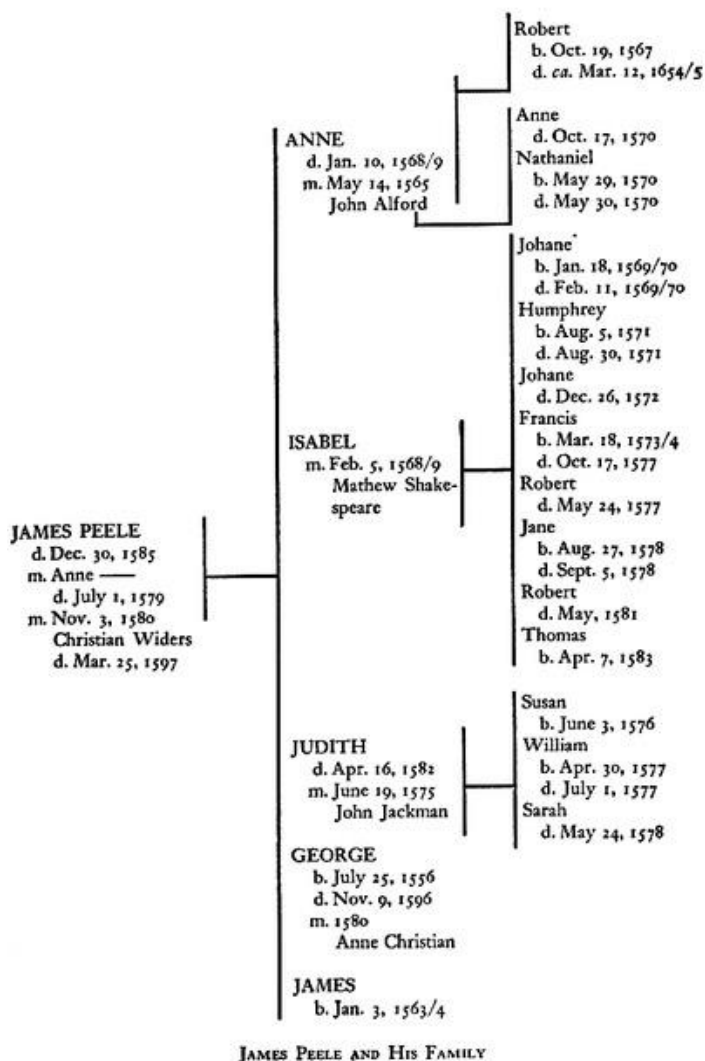


Figure 3

As with Peele's note, this is not a list of incidental terms but of nearly identical thoughts. And once again, they pour forth in a flood. Such parallels continue throughout the rest of the poem and within Peele's other poems as well.

The Pen Is as Revealing as the Spear

My previous article demonstrated that Oxford's handwriting is strikingly similar to Peele's, notably in cases where their letter forms differ from those of most other writers featured in Greg's book. The similarities are especially impressive given the differences between the plainer writing of Oxford's business letters and the fancier writing of Peele's high poetry and his grandly composed gift note. The boxes shown in Figure 4 display four additional letter formations, drawn from Peele's *Anglorum Feriae* manuscript and two of Oxford's handwritten letters, dated October 31, 1572, and July 7, 1594.

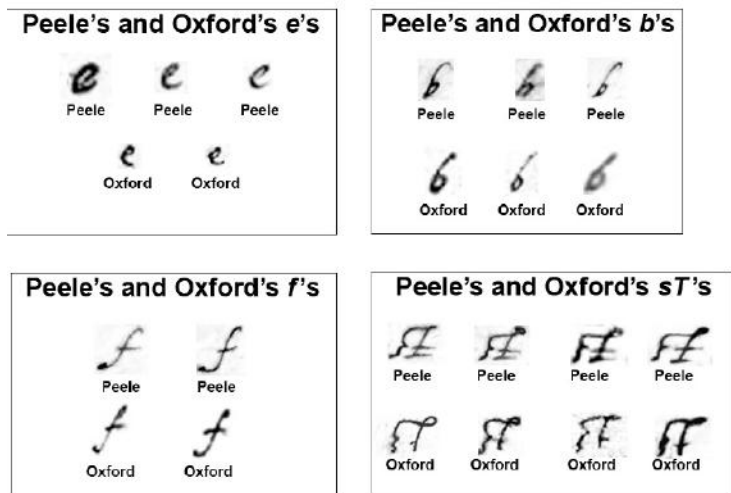


Figure 4

But there is more to handwriting than letters. Glance back at Figure 1; in the bottom left corner Peele concludes his note with a tornado-shaped flourish. The same flourish appears below Peele's signature on the receipt he signed at the University of Oxford in 1583 (discussed in detail in the previous article). If an actual George Peele wrote the note and signed the receipt, surely his expressive doodle would be unique to him, right? It isn't.

Oxfordian Jonathan Foss¹⁰ noticed that someone else drew the same type of expressive swirl beneath his personal signature, namely the Earl of Oxford. His "1575 signature [was] found in the Venetian archive attached to

a petition that the Council of Ten grant him permission to see the secret chambers in the Doge's Palace where he could view paintings by Veronese, Tintoretto, and other Renaissance masters."¹¹ The document was discovered in 2015 by Michael Delahoyde and his research partner Coleen Moriarty. The full picture is shown in Figure 5. Notice Oxford's distinctive, telltale capital *E*, rendered here twice, which matches Peele's usage as well as Oxford's from his letters, as displayed in the previous article.

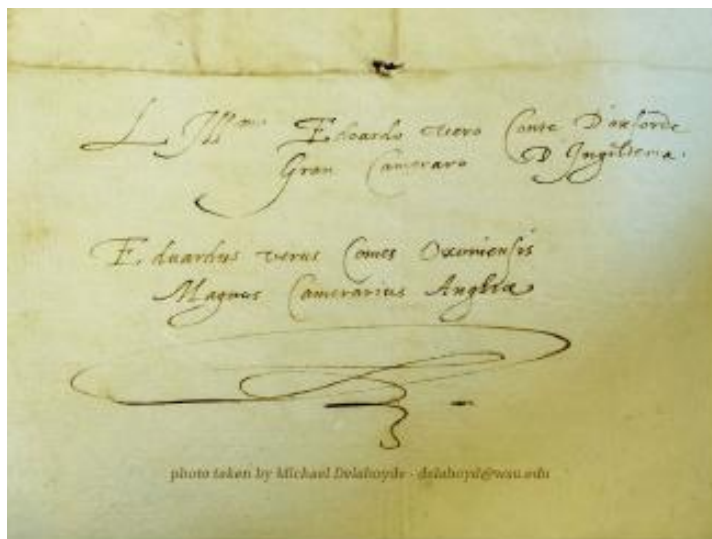


Figure 5

So, the flourish is unique, all right—to the Earl of Oxford. Figure 6 shows all three images, from 1575, 1583 and 1596, a span of twenty-one years.

To conclude, the Earl of Oxford handwrote his name and title at Venice in 1575, George Peele's signature on the receipt of 1583 and Peele's letter to Lord Burghley of 1596. Because scholars agree—correctly—that the handwriting on the note is the same as that on the manuscript, we have further confirmed that Oxford also handwrote Peele's *Anglorum Feriae*, dated 1595.

A Genuine Smoking Gun

A dream of Oxfordians is that someone will discover a manuscript, in Oxford's hand, of a play or poem by Shakespeare. It hasn't happened yet.

We do, however, have something of matching quality: a manuscript, in Oxford's hand, of a narrative poem titled *Anglorum Feriae, Englandes Hollydayes*, signed in the name of George Peele. The manuscript attests to the fact that Oxford wrote literature under at least one cover name, which is what Oxfordians have long argued he did under the name Shakespeare.

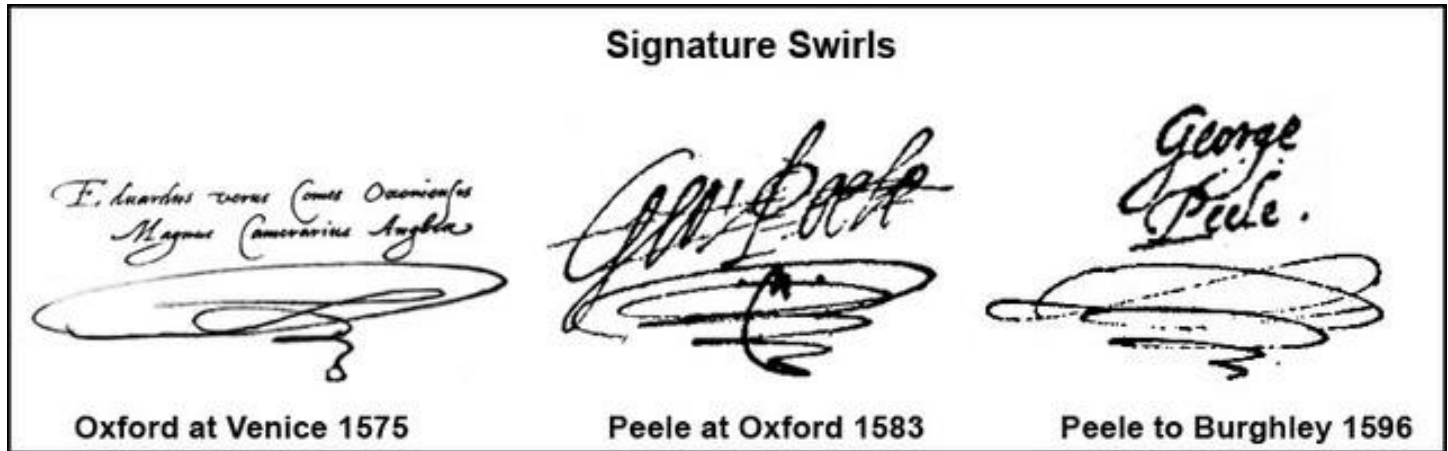


Figure 6

[This article is excerpted from the George Peele chapter of *Oxford's Voices* (oxfordvoices.com). Prechter's video presentation to the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable offers additional evidence that George Peele was a Voice of the Earl of Oxford. It is posted on YouTube under the title, "George Peele, His Only Surviving Letter."]

References:

- ¹ British Museum, Lansdowne 99, No.54, as published in David H. Horne, *The Life and Minor Works of George Peele*, Yale University Press (1952), 106.
² "Vale," English Dictionary, lexico.com.
³ Moderator Ww Ww, "LT-Idioms-Latin," lyricstranslate.com.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ W.W. Greg, ed. *English Literary Autographs: 1550-1650*. Oxford University Press (1932).

⁶ Robert Prechter. "Verse Parallels between Oxford and Shakespeare," *The Oxfordian*, Vol. 14 (2012), 148-155. Roger Stritmatter, ed. *The Poems of Edward de Vere...and the Shakespeare Question*. Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship (2019).

⁷ Horne, 21.

⁸ Horne, 20.

⁹ Charles Nicholl. *A Cup of News—The Life of Thomas Nashe*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (1984), 57.

¹⁰ Jonathan Foss, email June 10, 2022.

¹¹ Michael Delahoyde, email June 14, 2022.

Fencing with the Folger: a "Tale from the Archives"

by Terry Deer

"Several reasons, attributable to ignorance or snobbery, or both, may account for the zealous effort to disprove Shakespeare's authorship of his plays."¹

The above was written by Dr. Louis B. Wright during his tenure as Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library (1948-1968). Having encountered other examples of Dr. Wright's invective, I wanted to know more about the relationship between Oxfordians and the Folger. Has it always been a minefield of *ad hominem* attacks?

For answers, I turned to Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (soarcat.com), the search engine established in 2005 and managed, via the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library (NESOL), by Bill Boyle, Catherine Hatinguais, and others. A search under "Folger" brings up ninety-two records. These articles include newspaper clippings and excerpts from publications such as the *American Bar Association*

Journal, but the majority were published in Oxfordian newsletters and journals, archived at <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/publications/>.

Over the years, Oxfordians have had a great deal to say about the Folger. The earliest references came from the Shakespeare Fellowship (US), including a brief note on research materials at the Folger (April 1941) and a letter from Flodden Heron, a correspondent of J.T. Looney, suggesting the Folger add the term "(a pseudonym)" after the word "Shakespeare" in all its printed materials (December 1941). In October 1944, contributor Phyllis Carrington praised the Folger's research facilities and collection, with no mention of the authorship controversy.

In subsequent decades many Oxfordians have publicly praised the Folger, pointing to the library's value to researchers and reminding readers, as Richard Whalen did, that the quarrel is not with the Folger, but

with “influential Stratfordian academics.”²

One of those academics was Dr. Wright. His writings reveal an entrenched antipathy toward authorship doubters, surely representing the nadir of Oxfordian-Folger relations. Dr. Wright took full advantage of the cachet of his position as Director to sneer at doubters. He couldn’t even announce his retirement without taking a jab at them: “Especially to my successor I happily bequeath all of those earnest, humorless, evangelistic souls who want to convert others to the belief that somebody else, almost anybody else, wrote Shakespeare’s plays.”³ Nor was he above inserting his personal opinions into official Folger publications. Reviews of “The Authorship of Shakespeare,” a Folger pamphlet, and of Dr. Wright’s introductions to the Folger General Reader’s Shakespeare series, appeared in the Shakespeare Oxford Society newsletters of March 31 and June 30, 1970. In them, editor Richard C. Horne, Jr., took the Folger to task for giving Dr. Wright a forum to air his inflammatory language.

This concern remained unaddressed at least through the following nine years, until no less a person than Charlton Ogburn, Jr., noted that the Shakespeare editions on sale at the Folger in 1979 still carried Dr. Wright’s introductions, in which doubters are described as naïve, ignorant, and perverse.⁴ Ogburn, magnanimous in praise of the Folger’s advances under Dr. Wright, nevertheless greeted with relief the “changed attitude toward Shakespearean heterodoxy”⁵ he detected in Dr. O.B. Hardison, Jr., who inherited the directorship and all those “humorless” skeptics.

In the early 2000s, Barbara Burris and others reported on the Folger’s controversial mishandling of the Ashbourne portrait and efforts to establish its provenance and subject, a series worthy of a separate article.

Recent years may have seen a slight move toward *détente*. As early as 1999, John Hamill was startled to hear a Folger docent report that the Library “does not have a position on the authorship issue,”⁶ an assertion confirmed by then Reference Librarian Georgianna Ziegler. More recently, Folger Directors Gail Kern Paster and Michael Witmore have upheld the Folger’s neutrality. Shelly Maycock met Dr. Witmore at the kickoff reception for the 2016 First Folio tour, where he again emphasized the library’s neutral stance. However, as Maycock pointed out in an article published in a special volume of *Brief Chronicles* that focused on the First Folio, such claims ring hollow when compared with the library’s actions. For example, the Folger vetted local scholars—presumably to confirm their

orthodoxy—before approving them as speakers on the Folio tour and omitted from its promotional materials relevant information that might have given rise to speculation about authorship.⁷

Perhaps it’s too much to expect the academic administrators of the Folger to open their minds to evidence against the Stratford candidate’s authorship, but it’s a sad comedown from the stance of the library’s founder. Henry Clay Folger was, for a time, a Baconian, and perhaps late in life an Oxfordian. He was delighted by Esther Singleton’s Oxfordian novel, *Shakespearean Fantasias*, buying copies for friends and negotiating to acquire the manuscript; he also purchased Edward de Vere’s Geneva Bible for his library. Would that Dr. Witmore might profit by his example. Still, hope remains. Ten years ago, Richard Waugaman spotted the following on the Folger website: “If the current consensus on the authorship of the plays and poems is ever overturned, it will be because new and extraordinary evidence is discovered. The Folger Shakespeare Library is the most likely place for such an unlikely discovery.”⁸

Endnotes:

1. Dr. Louis B. Wright, “Shakespeare for Everyman,” *The English Journal* 53:4 (1964), 231.
2. Richard Whalen, “Letter: Response to Lincoln Cain’s Letter: Folger Library Is Open to All Researchers,” *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* 31:4 (1995), 22.
3. Richard C. Horne, Jr. (editor), “Letter,” *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* 5:2 (1968), 1.
4. Charlton Ogburn, Jr., “Henry Clay Folger’s Memorial,” *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* 15:2 (1979), 4.
5. Id. at 2.
6. William Boyle (editor), “News from the Folger Shakespeare Library,” *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* 36:2 (2000), 4.
7. Shelly Maycock, “Branding the Author: Feigned Authorship Neutrality and the Folger Folio Tour,” *Brief Chronicles* 7 (Special Issue, 2016), 6–9.
8. “The Folger Library: Choosing Its Words Carefully,” *Shakespeare Matters* 11:2 (2012), 5.



The Worth of Wriothesley

by Richard Kennedy

However the man's name might have been spoken, we do know how it was spelled. A simple refitting of the surname yields the word *worth*, a slightly hacked anagram, hardly better than an orthographic pun. Therefore, in penning a tribute to the man, the play was to speak of the man's "worth." The label was well-known. Most of the following examples can be found in Charlotte Stopes's *The life of Henry third earl of Southampton* (1922).

- *You **WORTHY** seeme, right **WORTHY** Lord to mee.* (Henry Lok, 1597)
- *In the behalf of my dearest and most **WORTHY** friend...* (Henry Howard)
- *I made her see what a certain pillar and bulk she had to lean on in having so noble and **WORTHY** a son.* (Earl of Essex, 1597)
- *Your greatest enemies...are forced to confess you to be more **WORTHY** of the place you hold but for • higher and more **WORTHY** respects...* (Charles Danvers, 1599)
- *The most **WORTHY** gentleman that lives...men of your **WORTH** and behavior...The more you grace your **WORTH**....It is therefore strange to us, we knowing his **WORTH**...* (Henry Howard, 1599)
- *Helde deare in your favour whose **WORTHY** kindness....* (Penelope Riche, 1599)
- *But to conclude all wordy disputations (**WORTHY** rather of women than of men of war)...* (Lord Gray of Wilton, 1600)
- *I know you to be very **WORTHY**...* (Earl of Nottingham, 1599)
- *Right honorable and most **WORTHY** Earle....* (Edward Blount, 1589)
- *But yet thy **WORTH** dost wrest from what...* (John Davies of Hereford, 1603)
- *The strength and forces of his **WORTHINESSE**...* (Samuel Daniel, 1603)
- *I ought to be no stranger to thy **WORTH**...* (George Wither, 1616)
- *When after ages shall record thy **WORTH**....* (Joshua Sylvester, 1615)
- *The death of the **WORTHY** Earl of Southampton...* (The Queen of Bohemia, 1624)
- *The death of the most **WORTHY** Earl of Southampton* (Sir Thomas Roe, 1624)
- *His Globe of **WORTH**, and eke his Vertues brave....* (Fra. Beale, 1624)
- *At once Two Noble Persons of such **WORTH**...* (Ar. Price)
- *...and **WORTHY** Image of his Vertues...of more **WORTH**...* (Anon., 1624)
- *To those great **WORTHIES**,: the Earle of Southampton and his Sonne, which lately deceased in the Low-Countries.* (W. Jones, *Tears of the Isle of Wight*, 1624)

These findings were offered at the old Concordia discussion group in Portland, Oregon (2006, I believe it was), probably vanished by now. My intention was to track the word "worth" in some significant texts to discover and guess if the writer might be coding a comment on the Earl of Southampton, always and still a fugitive figure afoot on the ground of our questing. Perhaps there would be a print on that ground, perhaps there might be a telling echo of that single word. Yet it's a common word. Many writers might declare the "worth" of this or that great man of the day, especially so if they were penning an epitaph.

The Book of Elizabethan Verse, edited by William S. Braithwaite (1908), can be read online. From pages 652 to 683, Braithwaite studies examples of the solemn poetry of elegies and epitaphs. The poets who set themselves upon this weeping task include Peele, Spenser, Beaumont, Jonson, Wither, Dekker, Ford, Raleigh and William Drummond, among many others.

I was expecting to find the "worth" of the deceased to be a familiar tribute. But in the thirty pages given in that anthology to honor the celebrated dead, no one, in any of those poems, mentions the word **worth** or any cognate of it in their praising of the dearly departed.



Henry Wriothesley (1573-1625),
3rd Earl of Southampton

This small orthographic byname for Henry Wriothesley remained in use for a couple of decades. Once a fresh little tuck, the conceit was well-worn when *Shake-separes Sonnets* was published in 1609. It would be plain to the literati of the day that the word, taken in a likely context, was a glyph for naming the Earl of Southampton. The likely context of the case offered here would be that the “onlie begetter” of the *Sonnets*, going by the initials of “Mr. W.H.” was Henry Wriothesley.

Sonnet 37: *Take all my comfort of thy **WORTH** and truth.*

Sonnet 38: *Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in **WORTH***

Sonnet 39: *O, how thy **WORTH** with manners may I sing...When thou art all the better part of me?*

Sonnet 48: *Most **WORTH** of comfort, now my greatest grief, Thou, best of dearest and mine only care,*

Sonnet 52: *Blessed are you, whose **WORTHINESS** gives scope, being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.*

Sonnet 60: *And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand, Praising thy **WORTH** despite his cruel hand.*

Sonnet 70: *Thy **WORTH** the greater, being woo'd of time;*

Sonnet 80: *But since your **WORTH**, wide as the ocean is,*

Sonnet 82: *Finding thy **WORTH** a limit past my praise,*

Sonnet 87: *Thyself thou gavest, thy own **WORTH** then not knowing,*

Sonnet 106: *They had not skill enough your **WORTH** to sing...*

Hank Whittemore discusses these same “worth” sonnets in his 2005 book, *The Monument*. The book will remain a classic in authorship studies. His remarkable dissection (if you will) of these poems rivals a Da Vinci illustration laying open to view the muscle, bone, sinew, and nerve of the human body, our mortal machine. Under the touch of Whittemore’s hand, Shakespeare’s sonnets are likewise pieced apart, line by line and word by word. Cutting to the quick of the matter, Whittemore discovers that there is a ghost in the machine.

Understand, then, as Whittemore chances to tell us, the “worth” word is not a mere gaming on the name of Wriothesley, but in the context of the *Sonnets* it was a ghostly allusion, rightly recognized, that **WORTH** equals **ROYAL BLOOD**.

[Richard Kennedy has written several books, including *Amy’s Eyes*, *The Porcelain Man*, and *The Boxcar at the Center of the Universe*. A longtime Oxfordian, he lives in Oregon.]



The Blue Boar Tavern is a lively, sometimes irreverent, gathering of Oxfordians and others over a pint to talk about their favorite non-author (hint: initials are WS) and favorite actual author (EdeV).

The tavern convenes monthly and can be entered by all SOF members. Come to the Blue Boar and share a pint with regulars Bonner Cutting, Earl Showerman, Hank Whittemore, Tom Woosnam, and bartender Jonathan Dixon! <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/the-blue-boar-tavern/>

Unfinished Oxfordian Research into Venetian Art

by Michael Delahoyde

How embarrassing.

In *Shakespeare Revolutionized*, James Warren generously characterized as “sensational” the discovery we made the first year we received the first SOF research grant: “Michael Delahoyde and Coleen Moriarty recently uncovered a document in Venice giving the Earl of Oxford access to the Doge’s private quarters in order to see the works of art displayed there” (531). Warren then laments: “What was academia’s response? It had no response. This should be a further wake-up call, if one is needed, about academia’s refusal to see what it doesn’t want to see” (532). I confess a belief, though, that I am primarily responsible, or the one irresponsible, for our discovery not finding or gaining traction. The several subsequent whirlwind summers of Italian archival research and then, each time, organizing and presenting our discoveries while crafting another grant proposal for the following year(s) meant that I never found the time to follow up on the implications of that first and best jackpot.

What I mean is that with the knowledge that Oxford wanted and was granted permission to view the secret chambers of the Consiglio dei dieci in the Doge’s Palace, we have yet to pinpoint what works of art were contained there in 1575 and subsequently could account for certain details in the Shakespeare works—instances akin to the famous “bonnet” on Adonis appearing only in the 16th-century painting at Titian’s studio in Venice, and referenced in Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*.

On our last afternoon in Italy that year, we made the discovery of Oxford’s signatures in Italian and Latin attached to the notice of a petition to Venice’s Council of Ten, which translated reads:

1575 --- day 27 --- June

In the meeting with the heads of the Council of X
That to signore Eduardo Count of Oxforde[,] Great
Chamberlain of England[,] let be shown the
chambers of arms of our Council of X and the places
of sanctuary.

Beneath is the record of unanimous approval.

We had visited the Doge’s Palace the previous day but did not realize how vital seeing the no-longer-secret chambers would become. Remote research on what artworks existed there in 1575 has proven extremely difficult, a difficulty compounded by the ravages of fires in 1574 and 1577, and of Napoleon much later, which blur the record. We returned on a focused mission the following year and took many more photos, even of placards identifying the works we were viewing with

their dates of origin. Happily, many works, though taken or destroyed, were replaced with copies, often by the original artists. And although artists of particular interest include Veronese, Zelotti, Aliense, and Tintoretto, it is still especially difficult to reconstruct with certainty a listing of what Oxford would have seen in 1575.

I can, nevertheless, provide here one connection that initially may seem very tenuous, but which may demonstrate Oxford’s uncanny multidisciplinary insightfulness concerning aesthetics, social values, economics, and subtleties in cultural self-promotion. Various Italian cities in the Shakespeare plays share the new Early Modern commercial pride, but individually they are nuanced or inflected slightly differently. Fierce rivalry between “Two households, both alike in dignity” in the Verona of *Romeo and Juliet* (Pro.1) does not end even after the tragedy, when the competition between houses turns into attempting to outdo the other in terms of conspicuous ostentation: self-congratulatory announcements of erecting for each of the dead lovers a statue “of pure gold” (5.3.299).

This attitude in Verona is not the same as the mercantile crassness of the Padua in *The Taming of the Shrew*, where, despite Baptista’s chivalric-sounding pronouncement “‘Tis deeds must win the prize” (2.1.342), those “deeds” amount to bringing the greatest number of possessions to the marriage; that suitor will “achieve” (1.1.156, 1.1.219) the “treasure” (2.1.32): Baptista’s daughter. Petruchio gets away with bizarre, even insane, behavior because he can beat the Paduans at their own game, never explaining why he’s leaving town maybe an hour after meeting his soon-to-be bride nor at his own wedding reception, but merely by invoking a sacred name: “my business asketh haste,/And every day I cannot come to woo” (2.1.114-115); “Make it no wonder, if you knew my business,/You would entreat me rather go than stay” (3.2.191-192). This is also the Padua where it’s not what you know, it’s whom you know. When initially asked to introduce himself, he announces, “Petruchio is my name, Antonio’s son,/A man well known throughout all Italy” (2.1.68-69). I think many readers here know about my adoration of Italy and will therefore believe that I intend no ethnic stereotyping if I ask: Isn’t Antonio the most common Italian male name ever (or at least for the proprietor of every privately owned pizzeria in the US during the past hundred years)? But Petruchio gets away with this absurd pseudo-credential due to his swaggering self-confident demeanor and his awareness of the Paduans’ cheesy value system.

Finally, unlike the crass zeal for name and possessions in Shakespeare’s Padua, in his and in the

actual Venice even today, one detects an almost aesthetic appreciation for the glamor of wealth. The economic *sprezzatura*—the casual confidence—in *The Merchant of Venice* emerges in (another!) Antonio insisting that he is not fretting about his ships and his entering into the crazy bond. Lack of money makes the world go round, but no matter: Bassanio, who already is indebted to Antonio, is granted more money to woo his “lady richly left” (1.1.161). Antonio, though, must borrow from Shylock, who also doesn’t have the money and must borrow from one “of my tribe,” presumably the creepy psychological tormentor Tubal. In a city reveling in its own wealth, no one has any money. It’s a merry-go-round of debt. At the end, though, all the complacent faux-Christians thrive in their wealth, leisure, and insulated privilege. They do not stoop to concern themselves with vulgar cash any more than necessary; Bassanio married into wealth, but glosses it over by calling Portia a “golden fleece” that he has won (1.1.170, 3.2.241). As in the odd version of the story of King Midas and the golden touch in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, emphasis is not placed directly on the cash value but on the beauty of lustrous gold.

At the start of that final Shylockless act, Lorenzo instructs Jessica, “Look how the floor of heaven/Is thick laid with patens of bright gold” (5.1.58-59). It comes off initially as a romantically poetic view of the night sky, with the stars appearing as little golden disks. Now observe this painting by Paolo Veronese, titled *Juno Showering Gifts on Venetia* (commissioned in 1553 when Veronese was twenty-five years old), aka *Juno Showering Grace upon Venice*. (I distinctly see ducats, but “Grace” is a tasteful euphemism.) The work rejoices in Lady Venice’s goddess-given affluence in the form of physical patens of gold from the sky—actual coins. Yet the piece somehow transcends the potentially implicit vulgarity of thinking in these monetary terms. It is a celebration of pride in the glories of wealth. Yes, a subtle difference, or slightly different spin; but Oxford detected it when he saw this painting in the Doge’s Palace and, I think, captured it in that Venetian evening moment in *Merchant*.

My hope is that I will find the time (the inspiration is not in question) to dig further into a process of certifying what works of art Oxford would have seen in the Palazzo Ducale in 1575 and to explore possible connections with the Shakespeare canon. A Tarquin and Lucretia painted in 1571 was there. We know there were a number of pieces devoted to the Adoration of the Magi; are there *Twelfth Night* connections? One of



Paolo Veronese, *Juno Showering Gifts on Venetia*

those wise men, or kings, was usually presented as dark-skinned; can we find a Moor in Venice?

Currently I am preparing an Oxfordian edition of *The Comedy of Errors* in collaboration with Jennifer Newton, and one of *The Merchant of Venice*. I'm participating in three book clubs, two of which have read my recent edition of *Twelfth Night*. (My thanks again to the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable.) And I'm preparing presentations for the SOF, the DVS, and for other events. So it's always a bit dismaying, but at this time not inappropriate, for spellcheck to want to turn my name into "delayed." I long to return to the art, to Italy, and to this project. In the meantime, I welcome (safe) contact from anyone intrigued and interested in helping follow onwards with this interdisciplinary project. Warning: highly addictive.

Works Consulted:

Michael Delahoyde & Coleen Moriarty, "New Evidence of Oxford in Venice." *Newsletter* 52.1 (Winter 2016): 1, 29-32.

James A. Warren, *Shakespeare Revolutionized*. Cary, NC: Veritas Publications (2021).

This just in:



Tom Goff has unearthed a second photograph of early Oxfordian Katharine Eggar (see page 4). In this photo (taken from the Spring/Summer 2011 issue of *Women in Music*), Eggar is on the right, together with Marion Scott (left) and Liza Lehmann (center). The three were among the founders of The Society of Women Musicians in England in 1911.

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