



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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Is This a Portrait of Oxford?

by Katherine Chiljan

Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), stands at a window inside a building at St. John's College, Cambridge University. This is my view of a 17th-century painting discovered this year. Auctioned online through NYElizabeth.com, it was titled "Portrait of a Gentleman," and attributed to an unknown "English Old Master." The sitter is older; he has thinning curly reddish-brown hair with slight gray at the temple. His eyes are brown with a touch of yellow, like those in the Welbeck Abbey and Dr. Harley portraits of Oxford. There is some resemblance to the Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare (i.e., Oxford), with the soulful eyes and rosy cheeks.

The picture came from an estate north of London which had owned it for many years; it had been purchased in the 1950s from a London art gallery. Although advertised as oil on wood panel, the small painting (8 x 11 inches) is actually canvas transferred onto a solid block of wood; the reverse side is stamped "Dimes & Elam," a London art supplier active from 1845 to 1856.¹

The sitter wears a white ruff and a half-sleeved red robe lined with brown fur. His right hand is shown, the left partially tucked inside the robe. The brown wall behind him may be wood paneling. Through the window is a building's façade, covering a substantial portion of the painting; surely it had special meaning to the sitter. Neither King's Place (later Brooke House), Oxford's residence when he died, nor Hedingham Castle, where he was born, resemble this building.

The red robe could be an identifying clue. On July 7, 1603, Oxford, as the Lord Great Chamberlain of England, requested forty yards of crimson velvet from the Lord Steward to make robes to wear for King James I's coronation:

And that he [Oxford] may take and have all his fees, profits, and advantages due to this office as he and his ancestors before him have been used to on the day of Coronation. That is to say, forty yards of crimson velvet for the said Earl's robes for that day.²

Presumably, Oxford received the material and made the robes. (At Oxford's first Parliament, in 1563, he wore "robes of scarlet with 3 rows of miniver," i.e., white fur.³) James I was crowned on July 25, 1603, at Westminster Abbey, but early images of it are unlike the building in the painting; the same for Parliament, Whitehall and Hampton Court.

Gentlemen wearing red robes with half sleeves appear in 16th and 17th-century portraits of aldermen and lord mayors – but these offices are inapplicable to



"Portrait of a Gentleman" or a portrait of the Earl of Oxford?

(Continued on p. 26)

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*.

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship was formed in 2013 when the Shakespeare Oxford Society, founded in 1957, and the Shakespeare Fellowship, founded in 2001, united to form a single organization. Dues, grants and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

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

Alex McNeil, Newsletter editor: (newsletter@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org)

Jill McNeil, Newsletter layout

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President's Column

We have a bunch of exciting events for members coming up in the next few months. Trustee Ben August has gathered a cast of actors for a new monthly Zoom series, “**The Blue Boar Tavern**,” where arguments and theories and jokes never stop. The opening cast includes Bonner Miller Cutting, Richard Waugaman, Earl Showerman, Jonathan Dixon, and Hank Whittemore. The doors swing open (virtually, of course) in March. Ben has a few topics set to go, but if you’d like the gang to start commenting on others (like, how do I eat peanuts through a computer screen?), let me know (bob@ShakespeareOxfordFellowship.org). **There’s a two-tankard minimum.**

A new center-of-the-webpage column has debuted. It’s called “**The SOF Interviews**.” These will be unedited interviews with Oxfordians who have published new books, or done new and significant research. I started these thirty- to forty-minute talks because I have been impressed with the geyser of material that comes from the pens (or computer printers) of Oxfordians and I wanted to capture it in a user-friendly way.

Michael Delahoyde was up first, with a very interesting discussion regarding his new edition of *Twelfth Night*, from an Oxfordian perspective. Rick

Waugaman is next, with a doctor’s analysis of the impact of a serious jousting incident on King Henry VIII’s weight gain and personality changes (spoiler alert: a fully-armored horse fell on him and he was unconscious for two hours). Other researchers who’ve been interviewed include Ramon Jiménez in connection with his new book, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*; Jim Warren, the master chronicler of the modern Oxfordian movement and his book, *Shakespeare Revolutionized*; and Roger Stritmatter, who talks about the new edition of *The Shakespeare Authorship Sourcebook*.

Membership. I have been looking over the membership lists. I don’t want to get hung up on numbers, but we had approximately 500 members at the end of 2021. That’s an increase over the previous year and that’s good. Can we get to 1,000 – or 5,000? By the way, in 2021 we had members in forty-four states and the District of Columbia, six Canadian provinces and fourteen other countries. The six states with no current members are Alaska, Idaho, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Dakota and West Virginia. So if you know people in those states, bring ’em in!

Bob Meyers, President

Letters

While reading the last scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I came across what Theseus said just before the *Pyramus and Thisbe* fiasco:

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practised accent in their fears
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Is it possible that a playwright of modest social origins could have imagined something like this out of sheer “genius”? It's not something likely to be related over a pint at a tavern. It seems more like a personal, firsthand experience that could only have been written by a high-ranking VIP who had lived it. I am curious to know if anyone else has commented on this passage.

Bill Glaser
San Diego, CA

In a letter in the Summer 2021 issue, Ramon Jiménez wondered about which version of Plutarch's *Lives* Oxford might have read — was it Amyot's French translation or North's English translation? Since Oxford spent eight years of his childhood with Sir Thomas Smith, he would have been familiar with Smith's several versions of Plutarch, which he owned in Latin, Greek, and French. They are all listed in his 1566 Library List, published by John Strype in his *Life of Sir Thomas Smith* (1698).

Stephanie Hopkins Hughes
Nyack, NY

In two recent “Don't Quill the Messenger” podcasts Bonner Miller Cutting and Dorothea Dickerman offered fresh insights into *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. Among Edward de Vere's printed texts these two narrative poems were: (1) the most polished, most rhetorical and the most widely sold; (2) the best edited and printed; and (3) the first, and perhaps only, Shakespeare quartos printed with de Vere's permission and oversight.

Both poems contain dedications by “William Shakespeare” to Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton. Oxfordians for a century have mined each poem for its unique context and topical character allusions and allegories. The range of such characters include de Vere himself, Queen Elizabeth, Southampton, Robert Dudley, Philip Sidney and Anne Cecil. Classic de Vere themes include honor, dishonor, shame, lust, procreation and bastardy. Steven Sabel, producer and host of “Don't Quill the Messenger,” rightfully praises the rich, undervalued dramatic content of both works. *Venus* is a steamy tragicomedy. *Lucrece* is unrelenting tragedy: its pathos can make grown men cry.

Both poems deserve spoken readings with a narrator and two principals. I urge the SOF to engage Steven Sabel to edit, cast and video-record dramatic readings that are visually punctuated by artwork from Titian and others. Ideally these presentations could be posted on the SOF website in time for the 2022 conference. I have earmarked a donation to the SOF for this purpose.

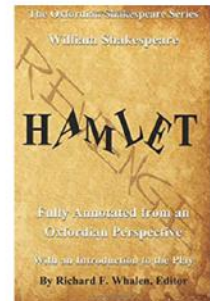
Meanwhile, listen to the “Quill” podcasts and read these startling poems!

Earnest Moncrieff
Columbia, VA

Advertisement

Have you read *Hamlet* lately?

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



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

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

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

The University of British Columbia recently acquired a copy of the First Folio, which is now on display at the Vancouver Art Gallery. I attended a webinar on it in late January, and, when invited to send in questions afterwards, emailed this enquiry:

Subject: The First Folio

Have you considered acknowledging the rather good and rather extensive scholarship on the subject of this folio by proponents of the 17th Earl of Oxford's authorship? Or do you simply reject the thesis out of hand without even reading any of their writings? It would be a real triumph for both the Vancouver Art Gallery and the University of British Columbia to be the first institutions to offer open debate on the question. The Oxfordians I know are not only learned, but courteous and funny. That cannot be said about the Stratfordians. The intellectual closed-mindedness that the academy shows in this area makes me ashamed to be associated with it.

Here is my question: if we entertain the possibility that the name William Shakespeare could be a pseudonym, how do we know who is being referred to when the name is used? Scholarship documents the ubiquitous use of pseudonyms among most literary people in the Elizabethan era.

I don't hold out much hope, but it would be a wonderful thing for the presence of this folio to allow, and even promote, open debate.

Dr. Virginia Evans
Vancouver, BC

In the Fall 2021 *Newsletter* lists of recommended books, I was dismayed to see one of the best books I've read about the Shakespeare authorship issue not included on anyone's list. *I Come to Bury Shakspeare* by Steven Steinburg is not only written in a lucid and entertaining way, but is a well organized and totally convincing dissection of the Stratford mythology with outstanding sections on the Stratford Grammar School and the standard chronology. Other than Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, this is the one book I can point to that cemented my commitment to Oxford as Shakespeare.

Howard Schumann
Vancouver, BC

Correction

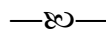
In the list of "Most Frequently Recommended" books in the Fall 2021 issue (page 20), *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt? Exposing an Industry in Denial* (2013, edited by John Shahan & Alexander Waugh) should have been included, as it appeared on five lists. We regret the omission.



Advertisement

RENAISSANCE MAN: *The World of Thomas Watson*

by Ian Johnson. Revised edition



THOMAS WATSON WAS SECRETARY TO
EDWARD DE VERE, SEVENTEENTH EARL OF OXFORD.

Sociable and witty, he was the epitome of "Renaissance man": classical scholar, linguist, poet, playwright, musician, thinker, cosmologist, traveller, a man of intense curiosity. He was also a government agent.

"... an important study for all Oxfordians as it gives so much insight into a close associate of Edward de Vere as well as the artistic life of the court and the capital during the 1580s."

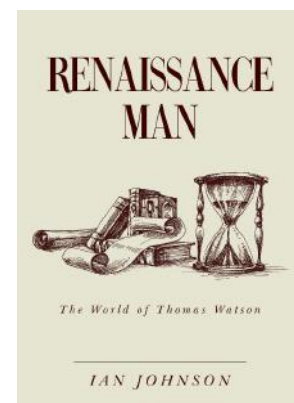
Kevin Gilvary, DE VERE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER January 2021

"Ian Johnson has produced what is likely to be the most complete and accurate life of Thomas Watson, the Elizabethan poet, that we will ever have."

Warren Hope, THE OXFORDIAN 2021

"Being guided into Thomas Watson's world by this steady, intelligent hand is a pleasure, and *Renaissance Man* will be a key text on the writer for some time to come."

Joanna Labon, MARLOWE SOCIETY UK NEWSLETTER, September 2020



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What's the News?

First Folio Papers to Highlight SOF's International Spring Symposium on April 9

Two major papers on the First Folio will highlight the SOF's free international Spring Symposium on April 9, 2022. It will take place on Zoom, beginning at noon (US Eastern Time) and will run some five hours with a thirty-minute break.

The two Folio papers will be presented by scholars Katherine Chiljan and Roger Stritmatter. Both Chiljan and Stritmatter are veteran presenters and among the SOF's top researchers.

Chiljan's paper, which will open the program, introduces the First Folio and the many intriguing issues it raises for authorship doubters generally and for Oxfordians in particular. Stritmatter's paper will look specifically at "Poetic Form as Code" in the Folio.

Other speakers will be SOF's resident historian James Warren, filmmaker Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, scholar Michael Delahoyde and independent researcher Robert Prechter. A special "Authorship 101" presentation will be given by *Newsletter* editor Alex McNeil during the second session and SOF Trustee Ben August will offer up a preview of "The Blue Boar Tavern," a new Zoom presentation which will be offered exclusively to SOF members.

Warren, author of the recent volumes *Shakespeare Revolutionized* and *Shakespeare Investigated* will be speaking about a number of new publishing projects he is working on while Eagan-Donovan, who received an SOF Research Grant last year, will discuss what she found on her trip to London.

Prof. Delahoyde will present a paper about his current project, an Oxfordian edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, and Prechter will examine what is known about the sixteenth-century writer Thomas Nashe and will explore whether Nashe actually existed.

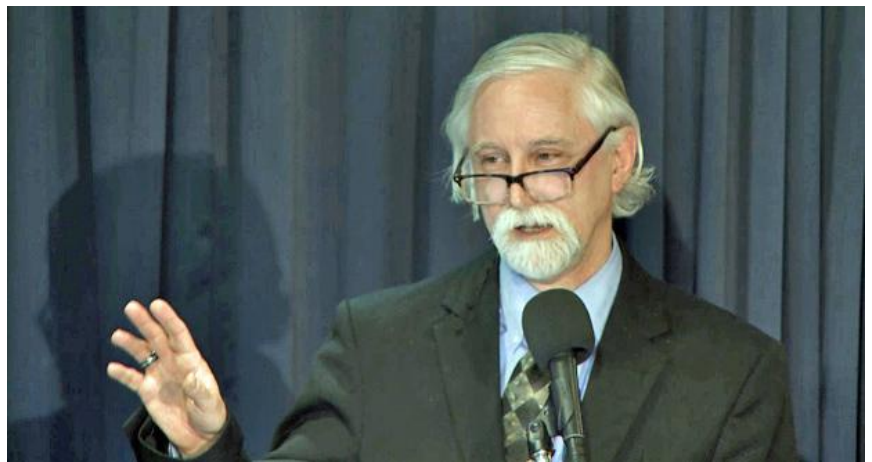
Former SOF President John Hamill will host the first session; SOF Vice President and Conference Chair Don Rubin will host the second session. Each session will last about two hours and fifteen minutes, with a thirty-minute break between them.

The SOF's free spring symposium program was launched in 2021. For the record, the date was chosen because it is the closest weekend date to Edward de Vere's 472nd birthday on April 12, 2022. Further information about registration and a detailed schedule will soon be available on the SOF website. A program will be emailed in advance to everyone registering.

"This is an opportunity to reach out to both a national and an international audience," said SOF President Bob Meyers. "We have papers for scholars and papers for people new to the authorship. Everyone will get a real sense of the kind of work we do on an ongoing basis. The two major papers on the First Folio will actually kick off an eighteen-month focus by SOF on that subject leading up to its 400th anniversary in November 2023."



Katherine Chiljan



Roger Stritmatter

The SOF will also be holding its next – and twice-postponed — in-person conference in Ashland, Oregon, from September 22 to 25, 2022 (see page 8).

SOF's Ben August in *The New York Times*

On November 8, 2021, the *New York Times* ran an article, "Why We All Care About Labor Coverage Now" by its media columnist, Ben Smith (an online version appeared a day earlier).

By "labor coverage" Smith was referring to the *Chief-Leader*, a publication that focuses on New York City's civil servants. Founded in 1897, the *Chief-Leader* had "been following the downward trajectories of the newspaper industry and the labor movement."



But, as Smith noted, the *Chief-Leader* was recently purchased by Ben August, who happens to be on the SOF Board of Trustees and chairs its Membership/Fundraising Committee. Smith described Ben August as "an unlikely steward of a publication whose nearly 30,000 subscribers are almost entirely New York City municipal workers. He made his fortune several years ago selling a human resource services company he had built. Since then, he has devoted himself to his vineyard in Napa Valley and a nonprofit group that investigates who really wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare. Mr. August believes it was probably Edward de Vere, the 17th earl of Oxford, and named a wine, Earl 17, in his honor." What is most interesting about this is that it is stated matter-of-factly, with no snide remarks about "who really wrote the plays."

Smith continued: "Mr. August is also passionate about the subjects covered by *The Chief*. Asked why he had bought the paper, he told me, 'Labor is underrepresented, organized labor might be making a comeback, and I would like to fan those flames if at all possible.'" Smith noted August's plans to double the size of the paper's staff and to further expand its coverage to

national labor matters, especially in view of the current efforts to unionize at businesses such as Amazon and Uber.

The article concluded: "Mr. August, the new owner, said he's planning to run the paper as a business, and sees a growing market, as well as a mission. 'I want to support the unions in their efforts to involve employees and workers in what they can do when they organize,' he said."

Hedingham Castle Receives Grant for Repairs and Restoration

We reported earlier that the owners of Hedingham Castle, the seat of the de Vere family, were seeking aid toward maintenance and restoration of the property ("Hedingham Castle Restoration Project," *Newsletter*, Summer 2021). According to bbc.com, in December 2021 the owners received a grant of £117,000 (about \$158,000) from the Historic Houses Foundation for that work.

The current owners, Jason and Demetra Lindsay, expressed gratitude for the award and planned to use it for "urgent repairs," including work on the foundation of the "lost Tudor Great Tower." The Tudor Tower was built in the late 1490s by John, the 13th Earl of Oxford; the original castle dates to the 1100s.

The Historic Houses Foundation made the grant from a fund it manages for the purpose of supporting historic properties which have lost income due to the pandemic.

Demetra Lindsay added, "It is also of significant



heritage importance that our team of specialist workmen are here and training new masons to pass down the skills required to continue to protect these buildings for visitors. We have been able to turn the devastation of Covid on our business into a positive silver lining for history."

J. T. Looney Papers Now at University of London

The papers of J. Thomas Looney, entrusted to Jim Warren three years ago by Alan Bodell, Looney's grandson, have now been transferred to the Special Collections Section of the Senate House Library, University of London, where they will be preserved, protected and available for scholars to examine.

The papers consist of 386 items totaling some 1,940 pages. Among them are copies of some of Looney's hard-to-find published articles and letters, a dozen or so short manuscripts in varying stages of completion and many pages of notes, as well as much correspondence on Oxfordian and Positivist matters. Also in the cache is Looney's personal copy of his edition of *The Poems of Edward de Vere*, with extensive handwritten notes on many pages. Although this collection comprises only a fraction of what would have been in Looney's possession at the time of his death, it is nonetheless a goldmine of information about the first decades of the Oxfordian era.

The papers came to light early in 2019, seventy-five years after Looney's death, when Kathryn Sharpe, Chair of the SOF's Data Preservation Committee, which is tasked with finding and preserving important Oxfordian materials, asked Alan Bodell if he had any papers of his grandfather's beyond the photographs he had already shared with her. He initially thought not, but in looking through a desk in the attic he found the papers. Bodell passed them on to Jim Warren in June 2019, when Warren visited him and his daughter.

Warren and SOF Vice President Don Rubin (representing the Board of Trustees) selected the Senate House Library as the repository for the papers for several reasons: its central location; its reading room is very secure and well-monitored so that papers cannot go missing; and it already houses the Katharine E. Eggar Archives, with its twenty-eight boxes of Oxfordian materials, including thirty letters from Looney to Eggar, thus resulting in both sides of the Looney-Eggar correspondence being housed in the same place.

Jim Warren said that he drew heavily on Looney's papers when writing his history of the Oxfordian movement, *Shakespeare Revolutionized*. He added, "I was heavy-hearted at letting go of the papers — I didn't keep even one of them — but know it's best that they move to their new home in the Senate House Library, where they will be protected and others can access them."

SOF to Pursue the Truth Behind the Publication of Shakespeare's First Folio

The publication of Shakespeare's First Folio on November 8, 1623, is an occasion of great significance for all lovers of Shakespeare, but it is especially meaningful for Oxfordians, who find in the collection many clues pointing to the identity of the author, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Plans are underway for the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship to celebrate the 400th anniversary of this seminal event throughout 2022 and 2023 with special articles, lectures, events, and a new book focused on the First Folio from the Oxfordian point of view.

The SOF aims to stand in the gap left by Stratfordians in their obsessive focus on actors John Heminge and Henry Condell as the supposed instigators of the First Folio. Instead, the spotlight will be on the true prime movers: Ben Jonson, the Herbert brothers (William, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, and Philip, 1st Earl of Montgomery), and Susan Vere (daughter of Edward de Vere and wife of Philip Herbert), showing how they point directly to Edward de Vere as the author. The stage for publication of the First Folio will be set by placing it in the complex political context of its times. The overarching accomplishments of the Shakespeare canon first brought together in the First Folio will be identified and the acclaim these accomplishments richly deserve refocused on the true author.

Activities will be organized by the Fellowship's new First Folio 400 Committee. The campaign will be launched at the virtual Spring Symposium on April 9, 2022, with the unveiling of a dedicated FF400 Web Page on the SOF website. Scholar and author Katherine Chiljan will give an introductory lecture on the First Folio at the Spring Symposium, and Roger Stritmatter will focus on the poetic form of the Folio's prefatory material (see page 5). The SOF's 2022 Video Contest will be themed on the First Folio.

The First Folio 400 Committee is chaired by Linda Bullard, and its members are Bonner Miller Cutting, Julie Bianchi, Roger Stritmatter, Shelly Maycock, Ron Roffel, and SOF president Bob Meyers, *ex officio*.

Ashland, Here We Come! SOF Fall Conference Details Announced

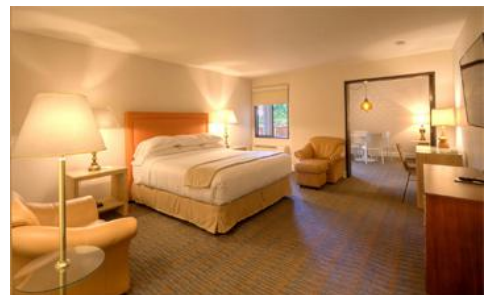
The Conference Committee is pleased to announce details of hotel and ticket reservations for the SOF annual conference in Ashland, Oregon, from Thursday, September 22, through Sunday, September 25, 2022.

The Committee has contracted with the [Ashland Hills Hotel and Suites](#) for discounted guest rooms at the following rates for September 21-25: \$139 per night for a King room; \$149 per night for Premium King and Queen-Queen rooms; and \$159 per night for King Suites and Double-Double suites. These rates extend to one day before and one day after the conference, and are for single or double occupancy; there is a \$10 a night charge for each additional person in a room. Rates do not include taxes, which amount to about twelve per cent. The hotel offers a free continental breakfast and free Wifi to guests.

Reservations must be made by August 22, after which rooms will be released for general sale. To make a reservation you can call the hotel directly at (855) 482-8310 or go online. Be sure to reference the group booking for the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship if you book by phone. To book online go to [ashlandhillshotel.com](#) and use 240854 in the Group ID field.

Ashland is home to the [Oregon Shakespeare Festival](#), which has two works from the canon in its 2022 season: *The Tempest* and *King John*. The Committee has secured group discount tickets at \$67.50 each for the evening performance of *The Tempest* on Friday, September 23. Attendees will be responsible for arranging their own transportation to the theater, which is 3.5 miles from the hotel. Taxis are available. We are not arranging tickets for *King John* because the performance times conflict with the Conference program.

Details on registering for the Conference and on the Conference program will be announced in upcoming issues of the *Newsletter* and on our SOF website.



Book News

SOF Publishes *The Shakespeare Authorship Sourcebook*

The Shakespeare Authorship Sourcebook, published by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship under the editorship of Roger Stritmatter, represents the coordinated efforts of a group of writers, editors, publishers, proofreaders, and designers who came together to create this 490-page omnibus volume aimed specifically at teachers and students. It has sections on History, “Stories from the Trenches,” Working with the Text, Alternative Candidates, Visual Aids and Research Tools, Critical Thinking, Oxfordian readings of *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, “The Dance of Sources and Biography,” Shakespeare and Education, and Special topic articles on the Warwickshire Dialect, Shakespeare’s Knowledge of the Law, and the Chronology of the Plays. The book contains readings of a range of difficulty, from ninth grade to graduate school. Dedicated to Lynne Kositsky and Ginger Renner, two authorship pioneers, the book also includes an homage to Delia Bacon.

A preliminary version was published in 2019. This expanded and corrected 2021 edition is now [available from Amazon](#) for \$34.99. It includes many full-color illustrations, detailed subject bibliographies, reviews of major online authorship sites, and testimony from more than sixty famous authorship doubters (see example at right).

A section on Visual Rhetorical Analysis invites students to undertake semiotic analyses of contemporary documents in the debate to examine their assumptions and postulates. Other illustrations convey the basis for doubt through visual means, as in Lucinda Foulke’s graphic introducing the section on Visual Aids and Research Tools (see right).

SOF members are encouraged to review the book on Amazon or in periodicals to which they contribute. Comments may be sent to Rstritmatter@coppin.edu.

THE SHAKESPEARE

AUTHORSHIP SOURCEBOOK

A Resource for Educators and Students
Roger Stritmatter, PhD



Keanu Reeves

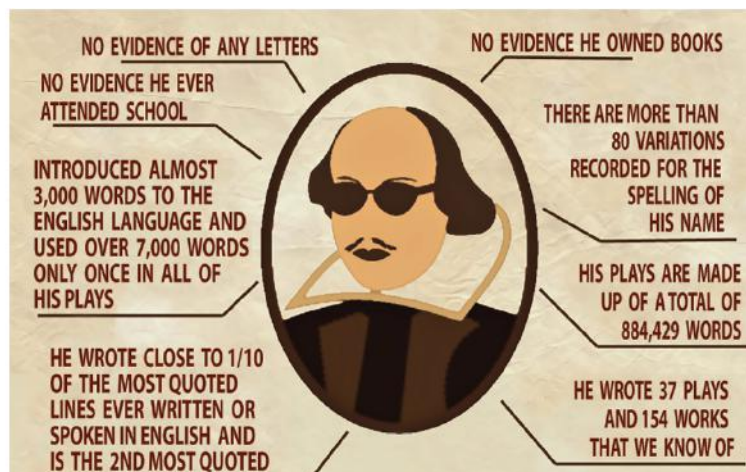


Q. If you could time travel to any period in time, when would it be and why?

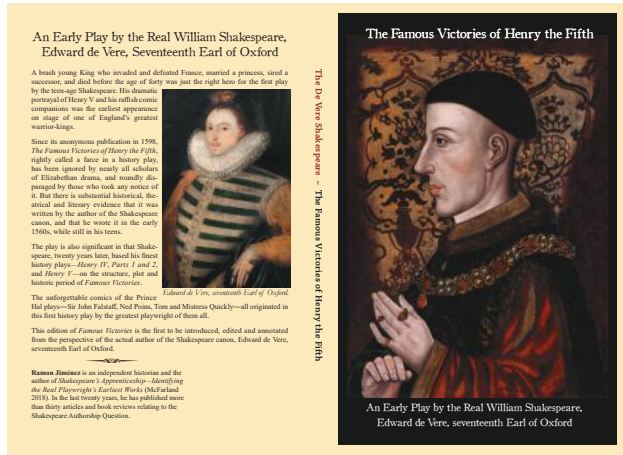
A. I've always wanted to know growing up who really wrote the plays of Shakespeare. So I want to be there at that moment when “Shakespeare” Shakespeare writing *Hamlet* because I don't think it was “William Shakespeare.” I'm an Edward de Vereian... The Earl of Oxford...so I'd like to be there, 1600s, Shakespeare writing *Hamlet*.

—“Keanu Reeves Plays With Puppies While Answering Fan Questions.” The video was stamped 12,650,654 views•May 17, 2019 (per 11/8/2019).

Keanu Reeves is a Canadian actor and musician who has starred in numerous high profile movies and series, including *My Private Idaho* (1991) and *The Matrix* (1999). Before that Reeves turned down a lead role in *Speed 2: Cruise Control*—giving up an offered \$11 million check—in favor of touring with his band and playing the title role in the 1995 Manitoba Theatre Centre production of *Hamlet* in Winnipeg.



An Oxfordian Edition of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*



A new edition of the anonymous history play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, the first to be edited from the perspective of the actual author of the Shakespeare canon, Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, has just been published by Ramon Jiménez, and is now available on Amazon.com for \$20. Designed by Lucinda Foulke, this edition includes essays on the Shakespeare authorship question and the author of the canon, and a lengthy introduction to the play. Hundreds of accompanying textual annotations define words, clarify language and relate the text to subsequent Shakespeare plays.

It would be hard to find another important literary composition that has been as ill-treated by orthodox scholars as this short, fast-moving work that is rightly called a farce in a history play. Since its anonymous publication in 1598, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* has been ignored by nearly all scholars of Elizabethan drama, and roundly disparaged by those who took any notice of it. It has not only been misattributed or declared anonymous, it has been misdated by more than twenty years, and its substantial influence minimized or dismissed entirely. But there is considerable historical, theatrical and literary evidence that it was written by the author of the Shakespeare canon, and that he wrote it in the early 1560s, while still in his teens.

A brash young King who invaded and defeated France, married a princess, sired a successor, and died before the age of forty was just the right hero for the first play by the teenage Shakespeare. His dramatic portrayal of Henry V and his raffish comic companions was the earliest appearance on stage of one of England's greatest warrior-kings.

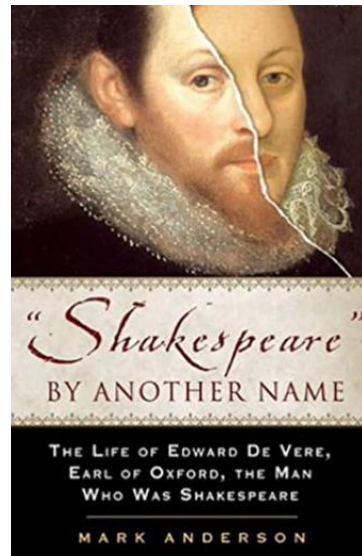
What is most striking about the play is that Oxford, twenty years later, based his finest history plays—*Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*, and *Henry V*—on the structure, plot,

characters and historical period of *Famous Victories*. The unforgettable comics of the Prince Hal plays—Sir John Falstaff, Ned Poins, Tom and Mistress Quickly—all originated in this first history play by the author of the world's most illustrious dramatic canon.

“Shakespeare” by Another Name: New Edition Planned

by Mark Anderson

In 2005, Gotham Books published “*Shakespeare*” by *Another Name*, my literary biography of Edward de Vere. In the nearly seventeen years since then, it has aged, sometimes gracefully, sometimes not. I have been touched by and am so grateful for all the kind words and generous word-of-mouth over the years, not least of which is seeing it in the recent survey of leading Oxfordians’ most recommended titles (“Books, Books, Books!” *Newsletter*, Fall 2021, pp. 11-20). While I am flattered and thrilled that *SBAN* has found its way to



thousands of readers, I also see its many shortcomings and first attempts at things that I hope to do better next time.

That next time is now. I resolve this year to begin researching, compiling and writing a second edition, a full rewrite and reconsideration of everything in the first edition. Or nearly everything—sorry, Stratfordian wags, but the odds-on favorite for alternative, post-Stratfordian Bard

remains Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

I’m hoping you can help. I’d like to try crowdsourcing some portion of the proofreading and feedback stage that begins the process of compiling a second edition. I have set up a dedicated email address for anyone who would like to provide constructive feedback on “*Shakespeare*” by *Another Name*: SBAN.2nd.edition@protonmail.com. Please send your errata, desiderata, feedback, and suggestions for revisions—and please, wherever possible, tie your feedback to page numbers or passages from the text of any of the versions: hardback (2005), paperback (2006) or e-book (2011). Such specificity will help me to track and index (and I hope ultimately address) your

points. All feedback incorporated into the second edition will be recognized in its acknowledgments.

I don't expect to complete this second edition in 2022, but I request that feedback be submitted, if possible, by the end of April, so that I can begin mapping out all the new directions and research opportunities for this top-to-bottom rewrite of the literary biography of the

man who was "Shakespeare." Thank you, Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, eVer so much!



In Memoriam: George R. Anderson (1934-2021)

George R. Anderson, chair of the 1996 Shakespeare Oxford Society annual conference in Minneapolis, and dedicatee of "*Shakespeare*" by *Another Name*, passed away in St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 8, 2021. He was 87 years old. His loving family and friends across the years (including son Mark and wife Catherine Wengler) were with him in his final days as he bid farewell after a decade-long struggle with Parkinson's disease.

George (known to grandkids as "Granders") was an innovator with a sharp and questioning mind and was known to friends, colleagues and family as a kind and generous man. He was born in Burlington, Iowa, in 1934 to a father who'd served in World War I and a mother who'd survived the 1918 influenza epidemic. An inspirational uncle bought grade-school-aged George a chemistry set, which he later credited with sparking his fascination with the physical sciences. Majoring in math and chemistry, he graduated from Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, in 1956. He earned a PhD in physical chemistry from the University of Iowa in 1961.

As professor and research scientist, George's work and teaching over the years included appointments at DuPont, Swarthmore College, the University of Groningen, Wesleyan University, Bowdoin College, the University of Minnesota and the Pillsbury Company. George loved both pure and applied chemistry, making contributions to the study of infrared spectroscopy and the physical dynamics of water as well as securing patents toward the invention of microwave popcorn and microwave dough crispers (e.g., pizza). In 2000, he also developed a 3D reimagining of the periodic table of the elements that educators have praised for its intuitive elegance.

Since traveling to Stratford-upon-Avon in the 1980s and finding the traditional myths around Shakespeare wanting, George had harbored doubts about Will Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon's claim to the traditionally attributed canon of plays and poems.

So when son Mark reported to him in 1993 about the alternative case for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford — and the recent discovery of de Vere's Geneva Bible at the Folger Shakespeare Library — George reawakened a dormant interest in the Shakespeare Authorship Question. He began attending Shakespeare Oxford Society conferences and local "Oxford Day" dinners at the Harvard Faculty Club in Cambridge, Mass., every April.

As chair of the 1996 Shakespeare Oxford Society conference, George coordinated regional media coverage and public outreach events that included an authorship debate and a public forum about de Vere's Geneva Bible at a prominent church and cultural landmark near downtown Minneapolis.

To nearly his last breath, George expressed his belief in the importance of truth and ethics in contemporary life. His political convictions and his love of the humanities, philosophy and baseball connected him always with the world. He often sought Shakespearean precedents for remarkable moments in life and in the news, such as de Vere's observation, from his personal letters, that "Time cannot make that false which was once true."



Photo by Penny Leveritt

Who Wrote George Peele's "Only Extant Letter"?

by Robert Prechter

Oxfordians have long suspected that the Cecils destroyed documents and letters that might have revealed Oxford's clandestine literary and theatrical services to the Crown. There is—as far as I can determine—a single, solitary exception.

On January 17, 1596, George Peele sent to Lord Burghley a newly polished version of his earlier-composed, blank-verse poem *A Tale of Troy*. In a cover letter,¹ Peele says that, because he is too ill to travel, he is having the packet delivered by “this simple messenger, my eldest daughter and necessities servant.”

Orthodoxy has presumed that an actual George Peele wrote the poem and composed the letter. There is no record that Peele had daughters, but Oxford did. If Oxford wrote or dictated Peele's letter, it would have been delivered by Oxford's “eldest daughter,” Elizabeth, and Burghley would have been greeted at the door by his own granddaughter. The conspiracy between Burghley's son-in-law and his granddaughter would have been well crafted for the old man's amusement. Several circumstances fit that proposal.

Peele's salutation is “*Salve, Parens Patriae,*” meaning roughly “Greetings, patriarch of the nation.” But *Parens* may also be translated as *grandfather* (“**parens** (2) -entis c. [a parent]; sometimes [**grandfather**, or ancestor; author, cause, origin]”²), thus making the word a clever choice if delivered by young Elizabeth Vere.

Statements in the letter reflect Oxford's condition at that time. Oxford's letter of August 7, 1595, begins, “I most hartely thanke youre Lordship for youre desyre to knowe of my helthe which is not so good.” Compatibly, Peele's cover letter says he cannot deliver the packet himself due to “Longe sicknes havinge so enfeebled me.” Peele says that “necessitie” requires him to appoint a courier because he could not travel. Four years later, in June 1599, Oxford explains in a letter to Elizabeth that he must communicate through others because “I could not travell up and downe my selfe.”³ It sounds like the same person.

The circumstances of young Elizabeth Vere and her father's association at the time of Peele's letter are compatible with the proposition that she delivered the packet. On January 26, 1595, Elizabeth married William Stanley, the 6th Earl of Derby. She was lodged with her father and stepmother throughout that month: “soon after the wedding the Earl of Oxford was staying with the newly married couple in Cannon Row,”⁴ where, according to one of the Earl's own letters,⁵ he was again lodging that summer. By early August, Oxford had retired to Hackney,

“comminge hether from Chaninge Roo,” as he writes to Burghley. Oxford's daughter must have accompanied him to Hackney, because in a letter written to Burghley on August 7, 1595, Oxford says, “my daughter hathe put her trust in me, bothe to remember youre Lordship and her husband. . . .” His statement further reveals that Elizabeth's husband had stayed behind with Burghley. The proposed scenario requires—quite neatly—that five months later, after the Christmas holidays, on January 17, 1596, Elizabeth returned to her husband, traveling from Hackney to Cecil House (or Theobalds) bearing her father's letter. How fun it would have been for Elizabeth Vere, then twenty years old, to entertain the household by showing up at grandpa's door with the gift and the accompanying clever note.

Scholars have referred to Peele's missive as “a pathetic begging letter,”⁶ but it is nothing of the sort. The tone is playful. Peele wishes “to present your widsome with this small manuell” as a gift and asks Burghley to “Receive it . . . as a schollers duties significacon.” There is no request for patronage.

This is a heartwarming story. Is it true?

Oxford's Handwriting Matches Peele's

To whom does the letter's handwriting belong—the actual George Peele or the Earl of Oxford? There is no body of handwriting from an actual George Peele. All we can test is whether the handwriting matches Oxford's.

A book from 1932 titled *Literary Autographs, 1550-1650*⁷ presents handwriting samples from 100 literary personages of the Elizabethan era. It reproduces Peele's letter to Burghley and a scrap from a manuscript, “the only one of Peele's to survive,”⁸ of *Anglorum Feriae*, which was discovered “in 1909 among the papers in the lodgings of the President of St. John's, Oxford.”⁹ The book also reproduces two letters from the Earl of Oxford about two decades apart. I compared the handwriting in Peele's two items with that in Oxford's two letters. To expand the investigation, I examined copies of all manuscript pages of *Anglorum Feriae* available on the British Library website.

I have reproduced four items for reference. Figure 1 shows Peele's letter and a scrap from the manuscript of Peele's *Anglorum Feriae*. Figure 2 shows a full page from the manuscript of *Anglorum Feriae*. Figures 3 and 4 are Oxford's letters of October 31, 1572, and July 7, 1594, respectively.

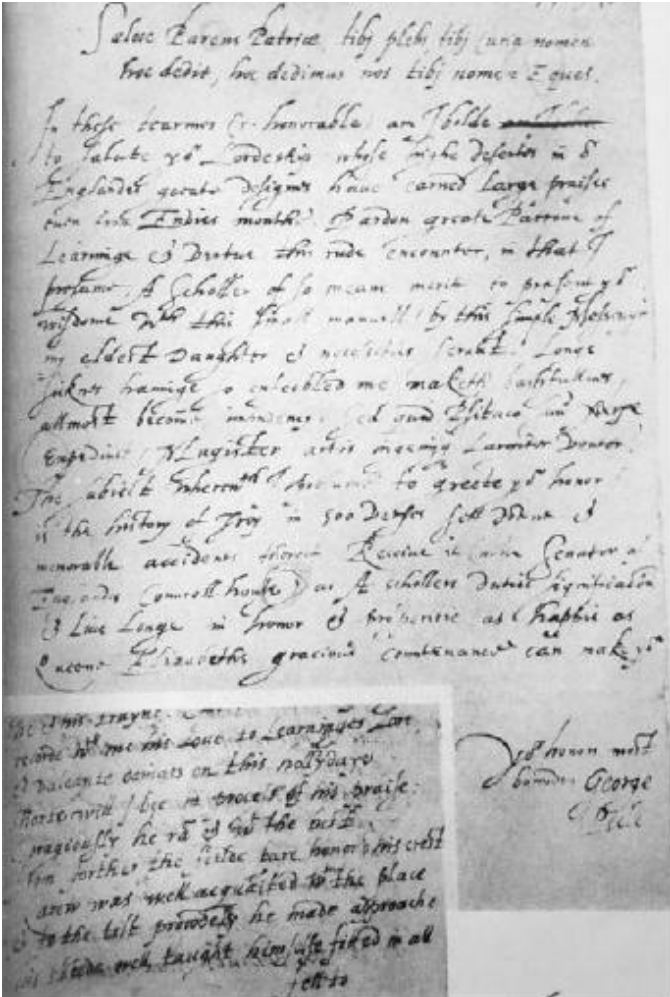


Figure 1: Peele's letter of 1596 with an insert from the manuscript of Anglorum Ferae

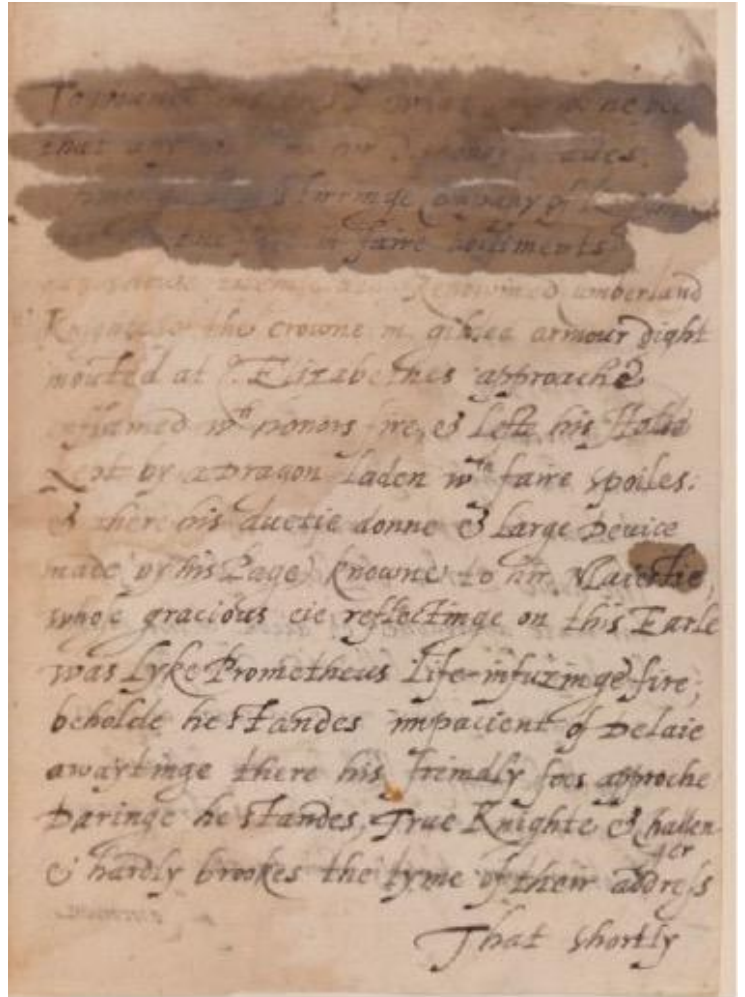


Figure 2: A page from Peele's manuscript of Anglorum Ferae

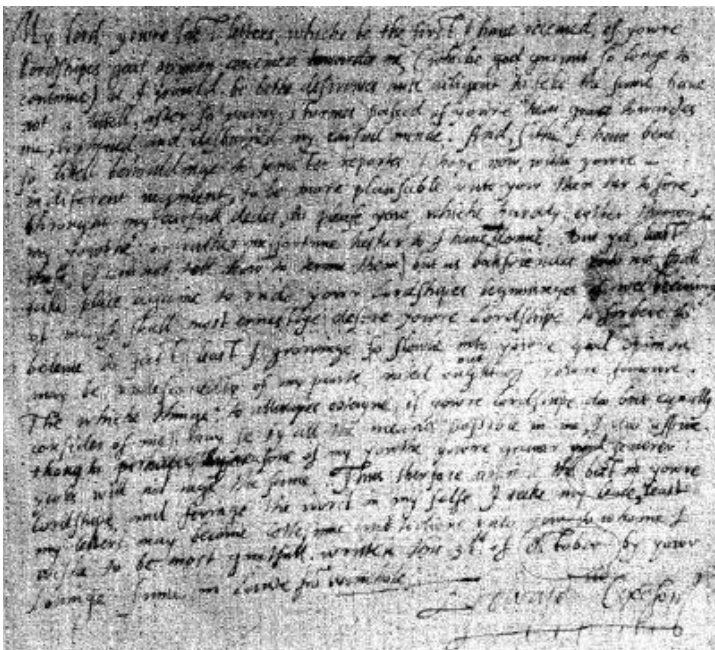


Figure 3: Earl of Oxford's letter dated October 31, 1572

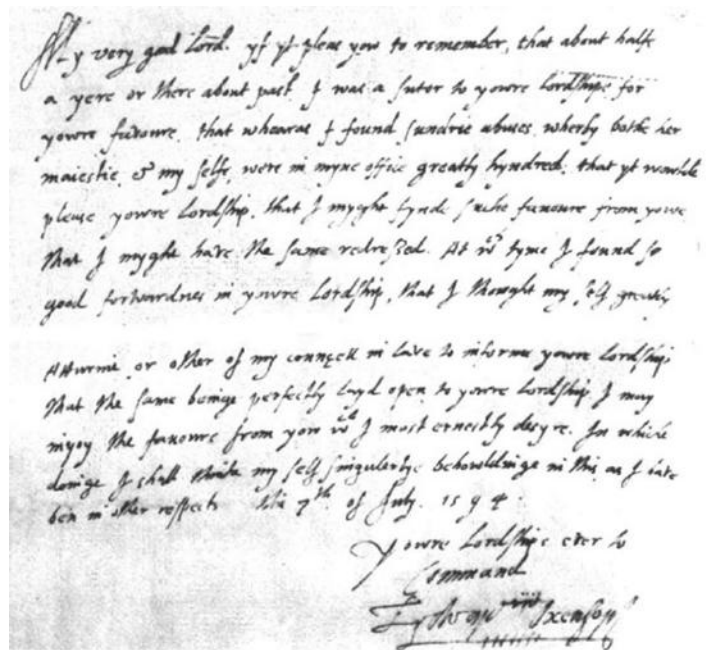


Figure 4: Earl of Oxford's letter dated July 7, 1594

Comparing handwriting is not an easy task. For one thing, handwriting from the same person can be dramatically different at different times in life. Several samples in *Literary Autographs* bear out that fact, because at first glance many letters by the same person appear quite dissimilar. Additionally, many writers of the time cultivated both a formal and an informal writing style, depending upon the purpose of the composition. Even among our samples, the handwriting from Peele's *Anglorum Feriae* is less formal than that in Peele's purported letter, and the overall look of Oxford's two missives, with twenty-two years between them, is somewhat different as well.

Yet these observations restrict the certainty of conclusions only when writing looks *different*. Closely matching instances are another matter. In the case at hand, Oxford seems to have had certain unusual, if not unique, handwriting habits that he maintained throughout his life, such as his distinctive upper-case *E*'s, *L*'s and *T*'s, all three of which are boldly on display in both examples of George Peele's writing.

If there is one letter of the alphabet whose expression Oxford would have specially crafted from a young age, it is the capital letter *E* starting his signature and title: Edward, Earl of Oxford. And what a beautiful construction it is: Elaborate yet masculine, it is nearly unique in the entire book of Elizabethan handwriting. As Oxford does with *Edward*, Peele's letter uses the fancy *E* when citing grand subjects, such as *Elizabeth* and *England*. (Two of Peele's other *E*'s are less stylish.)

Study Figure 5, which shows *E*'s from other notables' handwriting, as displayed throughout *Literary Autographs*. Observe the substantial variety of expression among them and how much they differ from each other.

Randomly Selected Es from 1550-1650



Figure 5

Now look at Figure 6, which displays five *E*'s: one from Oxford's letter of 1572, one from Oxford's letter of 1594, and three from Peele's letter of 1596. Observe the comparatively elaborate style of Oxford's and Peele's *E*'s as compared to those in Figure 5. In Figure 5, there is only one other like them (row 5, column 2).

See if you can tell which of the *E*'s in Figure 6 are Oxford's and which are Peele's. I can't do it, because for all practical purposes, they are identical.

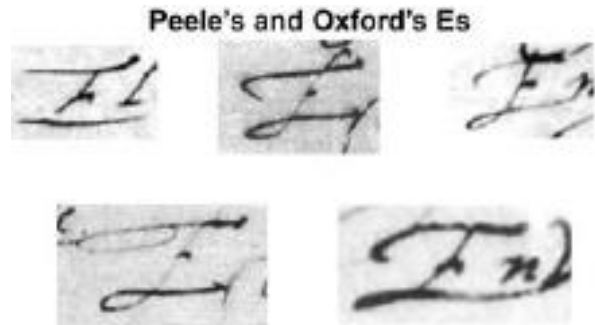


Figure 6

(In case you were wondering, successive *E*'s belong to Peele, Oxford, Peele, Oxford and Peele.)

Most people write a capital *L* with the same style of stroke—either curly or angular—at both the top and bottom. In the writing samples to which I have access, Henry Chettle, Anthony Munday, John Lyly, Ben Jonson, William Stanley, William Cavendish, George Gascoigne, Abraham Fraunce, George Herbert, Edward Hoby and Queen Elizabeth all use the curly form throughout the character, most of them especially at the bottom, and Nicholas Udall renders an *L* that is angular at the top and bottom.

Oxford and Peele, however, form their capital *L*'s identically in an unusual way, with a curly top and angular bottom. Figure 7 shows ten examples, three from Oxford's 1572 letter, two from his 1594 letter, three from Peele's 1596 letter and two from his *Anglorum Feriae* manuscript.

Peele's and Oxford's Ls



Figure 7

Roger Ascham, Thomas Lodge and Thomas Kyd each produced at least one *L* that looks like Peele’s and Oxford’s, but they did not do so habitually.

Oxford and Peele also share the unusual quirk of often using a capital *T* in the middle or at the end of a word, especially when that *T* follows an *s*. This quirk is not exclusive to them, as I find examples in Thomas Kyd’s, Abraham Fraunce’s and George Turberville’s handwriting. But none of the other above-mentioned writers’ samples exhibit it, nor do those of John Marston or Mary Sidney, nor does any writer seem to make a habit of doing so except Turberville. As Figure 8 shows, the similarity of the *T*’s used by Peele and Oxford is striking.



Figure 8

The three letters ending the word *eldesT* in Peele’s letter are identical to those ending *crest* in Peele’s manuscript. These two words are presented successively in Figure 8. In short, whoever wrote Peele’s letter wrote his manuscript as well.

No other writer whose work appears in *Literary Autographs* shares two of those handwriting quirks, much less all three of them. If you look carefully at Peele’s and Oxford’s writing, you will find that their lower-case *e*’s, *b*’s and *l*’s are also the same. Another shared feature is their rigid adherence to horizontal

linearity, as if their papers had invisible lines to which they were conforming.

The cumulative effect of the similarities in the two sets of writing, especially as opposed to the writing of their contemporaries, indicates that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, handwrote both the manuscript of *Anglorum Ferae* and “Peele’s only extant letter.”¹⁰

There is one more record of Peele’s handwriting. A receipt from the University of Oxford dated May 26, 1583, shows that “George Peele” was paid £20 (an amount equal to \$10,000 in today’s money) “in respect of the playes and entertaynemt of the palatine laskie,” the Polish count. Biographers have concluded that the payment is a director’s or technical director’s fee. On the handwritten receipt, within the line, “Received by me George Peele the xxvjth day of May,” the name “George Peele” is written in a different hand and at a different slope, indicating that it was inserted (see Figure 9). (It seems the clerk did not know which Voice Oxford planned to credit for the task.

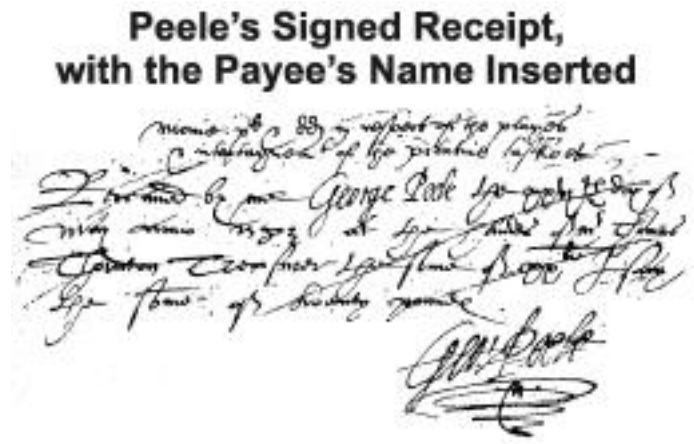


Figure 9

Figure 10 shows that the signature on Peele’s letter in Figure 2 is by the same hand as the inserted “George Peele” and the signature “Geo. Peele” on the receipt shown in Figure 10. All letters are identically rendered except the *l* in the letter’s signature, which is nevertheless similar.



Figure 10

If Oxford wrote Peele's letter, he also signed for George Peele's expenses relating to William Gager's production of *Dido* and *Rivales* in 1583. Is there any connection between Oxford and those plays?

There is. As Clark¹¹ noted of Shakespeare's most autobiographical play, *Hamlet* (II.ii) recalls Gager's production fondly, musing, "The play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general.... One speech in it I chiefly loved; 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido...." The play, as *Hamlet* notes, entertained a general (one from caviar country) but not the general public ("the million"). We can be positive that Will Shaksper did not attend that play, because he was in Stratford-upon-Avon at the time, and no one would have let him into the halls of the university to see it anyway. What we have, then, in *Hamlet*, is Shakespeare reminiscing about a play on the same subject and acted under the same circumstance as Peele's production for Gager.

That Oxford filled in Peele's name and then signed for him severely dampens the possibility that an actual George Peele was present for the event. We are left with no evidence that he was.

Why This Particular Gift?

In 1596, William Warner completed his blank-verse epic of twelve "Bookes" titled *Albions England*, which covers England's history from the time of Noah up to Elizabeth. My book *Oxford's Voices* argues that Oxford is the author. It also conjectures that the first four books of *Albions England*, completed in 1586, might have been the impetus for the Queen's decision to pay Oxford his annual stipend, which started that year.

This article is too short to present my case in that regard, but consider this: The only portion of England's history Warner did not versify is the story of Troy, the city that — according to legend — produced England's founder, Brute, the grandson of Aeneas. Peele's *A Tale of Troy* conveniently fills in the missing portion, and only the missing portion, of Warner's verse history.

Why would Oxford choose an improved treatment of that particular book as a gift to his father-in-law? Its connection to *Albions England* suggests that it might have been a thank-you for Burghley's negotiations with Queen Elizabeth favoring Oxford's annuity. The gift, as Peele wrote, "signifies a scholar's duty" to his benefactor. His gift says, in essence, "Here is the rest of the verse history that helped you champion me as Elizabeth's poet."

Musings

This article notes that George Peele left no body of correspondence. I think the reason is that, although a George Peele may have existed, George Peele the author did not. He was a persona of the Earl of Oxford.

The reason I investigated Peele's handwriting is that I knew what I was looking for. Peele's orthodox

biography is highly suspect, and his purported literary achievements fit into the continuum of Oxford's Voices.

This discovery is important because it establishes with hard evidence that in real life the Earl of Oxford played roles as literary personas. Shakespeare was one of them. George Peele was another.

On September 6, 1596, Oxford was again staying with the Derbys. "[He] wrote from Canon Row ... to Cecil"¹² as follows: "The wrightinge which I have ys in the contrye [Hackney], for I hadd suche care thereof as I carried yt with me in a lyttell deske" Did Oxford compose Peele's letter on that desk? Did he revise *Hamlet* on it?

Peele's letter is unique in exposing the fact that Oxford operated under others' names. Why, then, does the letter still exist? Burghley must have cherished this clever correspondence with its impish method of delivery and figured that no one would ever link it to Oxford. If so, he miscalculated.

[Robert Prechter is Executive Director of the Socionomics Institute, a social-causality research organization, and President of Elliott Wave International, a financial forecasting firm. He has written numerous articles for Oxfordian publications. This article is excerpted from the George Peele chapter in his most recent work, *Oxford's Voices* (oxfordvoices.com), in which he argues that Edward de Vere wrote under many other names during his literary career. See *Newsletter*, Fall 2021, p. 21.]

Endnotes:

- ¹ For the full text, see Ashley, Leonard R.N., *George Peele*, Twayne Publishers, Inc., New York (1970), 37-38.
- ² University of Notre Dame, *Latin Dictionary and Grammar Aid*, <https://archives.nd.edu/latgramm.html>
- ³ Earl of Oxford, letter to Queen Elizabeth, June 1599, as quoted in Nelson, *Cecil Papers 71/26 (bifolium, 287mm x 195mm, folded unevenly)*, *Oxford to Elizabeth; June 1599*, <http://www.leadbetter.cc/nelson/TINLETTTS/990600B.html>.
- ⁴ Anderson, Verily, *The DeVeres of Castle Hedingham*, Terence Dalton, Ltd., Lavenham, Suffolk (1993), 227.
- ⁵ Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, EPM Publications, McLean, VA (1984), 741.
- ⁶ Ashley, p. 80.
- ⁷ Greg, W.W. (ed.), *English Literary Autographs: 1550-1650*, Oxford UP (1932).
- ⁸ Horne, David H. (ed.), *The Life and Minor Works of George Peele*, Yale UP (1952), 178.
- ⁹ Id. at 165.
- ¹⁰ Ashley, p. 38.
- ¹¹ Clark, Eva Turner, *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays* (1931), 3rd ed., Kennikat Press, New York (1974), 154.
- ¹² Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*, Liverpool UP (2003), 359.



“Sweet Swan” of Stratford? Not Necessarily So!

by Ron Roffel

Sweet swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear

The above lines (lines 71 and 72 of Ben Jonson’s encomium to Shakespeare in the First Folio) directly address the writer and appear to praise him. The consensus among scholars is that the phrase “Sweet Swan of Avon” is a complement to the writer. I believe the words can be read in a different way: they are an oath and allude to what Jonson and the editors had triumphed over. To my knowledge the lines have not been interpreted like this. I see them in the larger context of the publishing, social, and political climate. Everything from the period must be seen in that context and this is no different.

Alexander Waugh has stated that “Sweet Swan of Avon” does not necessarily describe the man from Stratford. In summary, he argues that during Jonson’s time poets were described often as swans, so Jonson is following the current fashion. Additionally, “Avon” could refer to any of several rivers in England that bear the name, or to Hampton Court Palace, where plays were performed for Queen Elizabeth and King James (“Avon” was a poetical name for Hampton Court).

In the context of the First Folio, which presents *plays* and not geography, the latter reference is more apt. Furthermore, the playhouse/hall would have been recognized as Avon by many courtiers who were the audience for the Folio, more so than any of the rivers.

When I first encountered the phrase “Sweet Swan of Avon” I was struck by how much it read like an oath, not a description. My research reveals that, because of a 1606 statute regarding the use of the name of the deity in plays, “the censor tried to excise all oaths, and sometimes . . . had difficulty in deciding how strong a degree of affirmation was permissible” (Gildersleeve 90). This is evidence that my idea may be correct. There is more.

Prior to his involvement with the Shakespeare Folio Jonson had run afoul of the censors: “The Jonson Folio of 1616 . . . exhibits such substitutions as ‘Belive me’ for ‘By Jesu’” (Gildersleeve 128). He had been imprisoned over *The Isle of Dogs* scandal, so I think the phrase could be read with the 1606 legislation in mind. He did not want to be in trouble again, so he substituted “sweet swan” for “By Jesu” or something along that line.

Oaths: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

W.W. Greg edited the 1910 Tudor and Stuart Library quarto edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for Oxford

University Press; in an appendix Greg provided a table of major oaths in the quarto compared to those in the Folio. More than sixty religious-based oaths in the quarto were either omitted or changed to less offensive expressions that censors would accept. For example, “begar,” a slang contraction of “by god,” became “be gar,” “by-gar” or “by gar” (Greg liv). This reinforces my new interpretation of line 71 presented below.

This was either self-censorship on Jonson’s part or it was ordered by Henry Herbert, the zealous Master of the Revels. Whichever the case, I believe a comparison of oaths in other previously published plays to their counterparts in the Folio will reveal more examples of censorship.

My conclusion is therefore sound: Jonson’s “sweet Swan of Avon” is a substitute for some more expletive oath which he could not use due to the 1606 statute banning their use in plays. Jonson wanted to express his frustration with the printing process and how long it took for the Folio to be published. His “oath” is ambiguous enough that it could be read two ways: as praise of the poet and as a mild oath on how difficult it was to put the book together.

Before we return to lines 71 and 72, another clue to the Earl of Oxford is in the line number for “Sweet Swan of Avon,” which has stared us in the face for centuries: reversed, the number 71 becomes 17. Like many hints, clues, and puzzles, this is an important needle in the literary haystack which is the front matter of the First Folio.

What’s in a letter? Everything!

Let’s look at Lines 71-72 exactly as they were printed in the First Folio:

*Sweet Swan of Auon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,*

Scholars have seen “our waters” in line 72 as a reference to the river, supposedly Stratford’s Avon, but I believe Jonson is referring here to allegorical waters which stand for the publication of the book. “Our waters” is a metaphor for Jonson’s own 1616 folio collection *and* the fact he got both books published. We need to understand this before we can truly reinterpret line 71.

Unlike most scholars, I read the seventh word in line 71 not as “sight,” but as “fight.” At first glance the letter s in “sight” looks like a proper archaic long s, albeit it is

not the same as the “Sweet Swan” letters. I believe Jonson intended people to also read the word as “fight.”

In line 68, just three lines above, the word “true-filed” is used.

In his well corned, and true-filed lines :

The *f* in “true-filed” and the *s* in “sight,” both of which are followed by the letter *i*, are so similar that they look as if they are the same letter.

.filed sight

Rapidly scanning Jonson’s poem, readers could easily mistake the *s* in “sight” for an *f*. The brain would interpret the letter wrong because it appears on the same line as the upper-case letter *S*’s in “Sweet Swan.” That is exactly what I did one day, which led me to reinterpret the word and the two lines.

The alignment of the words “filed” and “sight” are also factors in seeing the *s* as an *f*. The two words are aligned on top of each other, though separated by two lines.

*In his well corned, and true-filed lines :
In each of which, he seemes to shake a Lance,
As brandish’t at the eyes of Ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Auon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appeare,*

A counterargument is that the word “shake,” which begins with a long *s*, comes between “filed” and “sight,” but there is a crucial difference: “filed” and “sight” are beside lower-case *i*’s, whereas the *s* in “shake” has an *h* next to it. The two letters—*i* and *h*—cannot be mistaken for each other. But the long *s* and *f* can, because each is followed by a lower-case *i*.

Lines 71 and 72 make sense whichever way one reads the word. If interpreted as “sight,” Jonson is telling people that the sight of the Folio is amazing. If interpreted the as “fight,” then he is describing the long process of getting the Folio printed and published.

“Our waters”

We have four ways to see “our waters” in relation to the new word “fight”:

1. The “fight” is the struggle to get the manuscripts printed properly with “scarce a blot on his letters,” so that the texts of the “maim’d and deform’d” quartos could now be “healed.”
2. It was the “fight” to collect manuscripts of plays, including those which were not in print or had not yet been performed.
3. The “fight” was to convince investors to put money into the risky book whose large size was reserved formerly for more important subjects like theology, history, natural science, and exploration.
4. The “fight” is a reference to the order that William Herbert gave to printers in May 1619 and again in 1622 to cease printing any of the plays in the King’s Men’s repertoire, primarily those of “Shakespeare.”

From 1609 until 1612, no new plays by Shakespeare had been published on orders of the Lord Chamberlain, Thomas Howard, 1st Earl of Suffolk. Willoughby (126-127) says that the order was “tyrannical and even dishonest,” that the government was imposing undue censorship onto the plays.

But what if Howard’s order was an attempt to prevent poor copies of the plays from getting into circulation, perhaps made at the bequest of William or Philip Herbert, in anticipation of the time when they would be printed as the writer intended? They may also have feared that the controversial pro-Tudor content of the history plays would place the publishers and patrons under suspicion of sedition or at least harboring leanings in that direction during a critical time in King James’s reign: the Spanish Marriage Crisis.

An indication this is true is found in the letter Herbert sent while he was Lord Chamberlain to the Stationers’ Company on 3 May 1619, “directing that none of the plays owned by the King’s Men should be printed without their consent” (Willoughby 137). This was in response to the publication of several quartos by Thomas Pavier in the same year. Preventing publishers from issuing pirated works is a way to ensure that the best texts (or perhaps those least subject to censure) would be issued for publication later on; who but the owners of the original manuscripts would want that?

William Herbert issued a further letter to the Stationers’ Company on 3 March 1622 because several printers *had* published more quartos after 1619 (Willoughby 169). The order had to be reissued again by his brother Philip Herbert (now Lord Chamberlain) in 1637, in which he refers to the previous letters by William:

the master and wardens of the company of printers and stationers were advised by my brother to take notice thereof, and to take order for the stay of any further impression of any of the playes or interludes of his majesties servants without their consents: which being a caution given with such respect, and grounded on such weighty reasons, both for his majesties service and particular interest of the players... that none bee suffered to be printed untill the assent of their majesties’ said servants . . . in writing under the hand of John Lowen, and Joseph Taylor, for the king’s servants, and of Christopher

Beeston...or other such persons as shall from time to time have the *direction* of these companies.... (Shipherd 599; emphasis in original)

The order adds that if printers needed any “further authority” to publish plays in the possession of the King’s Men, they were to go directly to the Lord Chamberlain and he would take care of the matter on their behalf.

The peculiar thing about these orders is that they were directed only to the King’s Men. Other companies may have had copies of some of the plays, had they been acted by them beforehand or sold between companies, but the King’s Men were the subject of the cessation order. Three successive Lord Chamberlains saw fit to prevent publishers from printing pirated versions of works which were then allegedly only in the hands of the King’s Men, indicating there was something different about the plays they owned, something which had *political* significance.

This was, therefore, the “fight” Jonson is referring to in line 71. It was the fight to prevent unauthorized copies of the plays from being printed which may have put everyone involved in jeopardy. It was the fight to protect publishers and printers who could have been given future commissions to print the plays as the author had intended. “Our waters” could easily be a metaphor for the folio size of the book *and* the fact that it was finally in print.

Conclusion

For centuries, “Sweet Swan of Avon” has been interpreted as Ben Jonson’s praise of the writer known as Shakespeare. It can be read that way, but Jonson was adhering to King James’s orders from 1606 that playwrights not use religious oaths in their work. I contend that the phrase is an oath that was meant to convey how difficult it was to publish the First Folio. Jonson was being cheeky and wanted to see how far he could push the boundaries of ambiguity.

The word “sight” in the same line is another way in which Jonson pushed the limits of ambiguity. The word could mean a spectacle, but it could also be read as “fight,” since it was difficult to collect the Folio’s manuscripts, then print and publish the book.

could not have written the canon. The idea stuck until he read Charles Beauclerk’s *Shakespeare’s Lost Kingdom* and discovered a more viable candidate for the author in Edward de Vere. An independent researcher into the Oxfordian theory since 2017, he lives in western Canada with his wife, Daria Skibington-Roffel, and four cats. He is currently finishing a book on secrets he may have uncovered in the First Folio. “Sweet Swan of Stratford” is his first published paper.]

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[Ron Roffel earned a BA in General Studies from the University of Calgary and a Library Technician diploma from SAIT Polytechnic in the last third of the previous century. He became aware of the Shakespeare Authorship Question while attending an undergraduate course on Shakespeare after the instructor offhandedly said that some scholars thought that a glovemaker’s son



My Kindle Told Me It Was Edward de Vere (Part One)

by Michael Hyde

Who Translated Ovid?

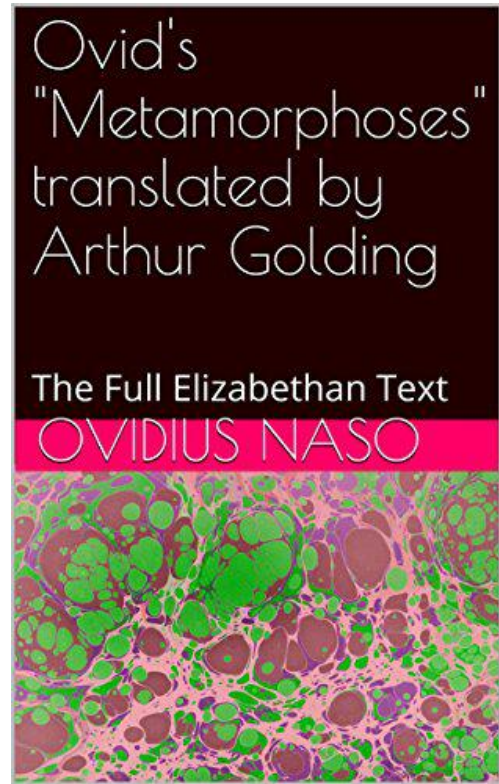
I recently paid \$4.99 for the Kindle version of John Sandbach's edition of Arthur Golding's English translation of the fifteen books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. When I clicked on "purchase," here's what popped up: "This famous translation of The Metamorphoses is the one that was read by William Shakespeare. Arthur Golding (b. 1536) was the Uncle of Edward de Vere the seventeenth Earl of Oxford [who] many believe was the true identity of Shakespeare." This helps to parse one of the several direct and telling references to Ovid found in the Shakespeare canon:

Titus: Lucius, what book is that she [Lavinia] tosseth so?

Boy: Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphosis, My mother gave it me ... (*Titus Andronicus*, 4.1.41-43)

"My mother"? When did she give the book? Was *The Metamorphoses* really a book that Elizabethans gave to their children? Was the racy sexy poetry of Ovid taught to schoolboys in grammar schools? Let's try to shed some light on these questions.

1. The "Boy" in the above passage is young Lucius. His mother was the wife of Lucius, eldest son of Titus, but she is not a character in the play.
2. Unquestionably (see Jonathan Bate, Sidney Lee et al. below), Ovid—in both Latin and in Arthur Golding's English translation—was mother's milk to the Shakespeare author; he knew Golding's translation by heart.
3. Translating and sightreading Ovid in Latin was a favorite method for centuries to achieve fluency in reading, writing and even speaking Latin; both Anne Cecil (first wife of Edward de Vere) and Queen Elizabeth were fluent in Latin.
4. A few lines before the above passage, the cultured literary Roman matron Cornelia is described by Marcus: "Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care/ Read to her sons than she [Lavinia?] hath read to thee/Sweet poetry...."
5. We may infer that Lavinia, older sister of young Lucius, had read the "sweet poetry" of Ovid to her brother, instead of his absent mother.
6. Edward de Vere's Mother was Margery Golding; she was half-sister to Arthur Golding, but I believe that "my mother" is not a literal autobiographical



- reference. Why not? She had hastily remarried Charles Tyrell in 1562 after the death of Earl John, 16th Earl of Oxford. Twelve-year-old Edward was sent immediately as a ward of court to live at Cecil House in London, where Arthur Golding was residing while working on his famous Ovid and Caesar translations. Golding acted as young Edward's tutor as well as his accountant. Edward was also following William Cecil's demanding curriculum, which included writing exercises in Latin and French, supervised by Golding himself.
7. Louis Thorn Golding, Arthur's lineal descendant, actually proposes that Arthur was instructing young Edward as early as 1555/6 (*An Elizabethan Puritan*, p. 30), which could have easily occurred as the Golding family residence at Belchamp St. Paul was only four miles from Castle Hedingham.
 8. Golding published the first four books of his Ovid translation in 1565, completing and publishing all fifteen books in 1567. Golding did his job while working with young Edward, tutoring him in Latin and French. But who could have known then that Cecil's noble ward would grow up to be the man whom Oxfordians believe is Shakespeare?

9. The Goldings had for decades lived in Belchamp St. Paul, near the ancestral de Vere estate, Castle Hedingham. Henry Golding, Arthur's older brother, had been steward of manors and estates for the 16th Earl John. I amplify those close family connections below.
10. Arthur Golding had intended to dedicate his translations of Justin's *Trogus Pompeius*, to the 16th Earl John; it was ultimately dedicated to young Edward after 1562, when he had become the 17th Earl of Oxford while resident at Cecil House as a ward.
11. Coincidentally, Arthur Golding's father had died when Arthur was eleven; Cecil perhaps was well aware of this when he appointed Golding as "receiver" for newly orphaned twelve-year-old Edward in 1562.
12. Arthur Golding leaped into print to defend the marriage of his half-sister Margery to Earl John when the June 1563 lawsuit alleging bigamy was filed by Lady Kathryn (oldest daughter of Earl John and Edward's half-sister) and her husband, Sir Edward Windsor. The suit was stayed (see Jane Greatorex's well-documented pamphlet on 16th Earl gleaned from local Essex and London archives, as well as her explanation of Golding's remarkable petition). Had the suit been successful, Edward de

Vere might have been deemed illegitimate and lost his entire inheritance to the Windsors.

13. Arthur kept up his ties to the Vere family. In 1567 he signed the dedication to his completed translation of all fifteen books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* from Barwicke, one of the de Vere family manors near White Colne in Essex.

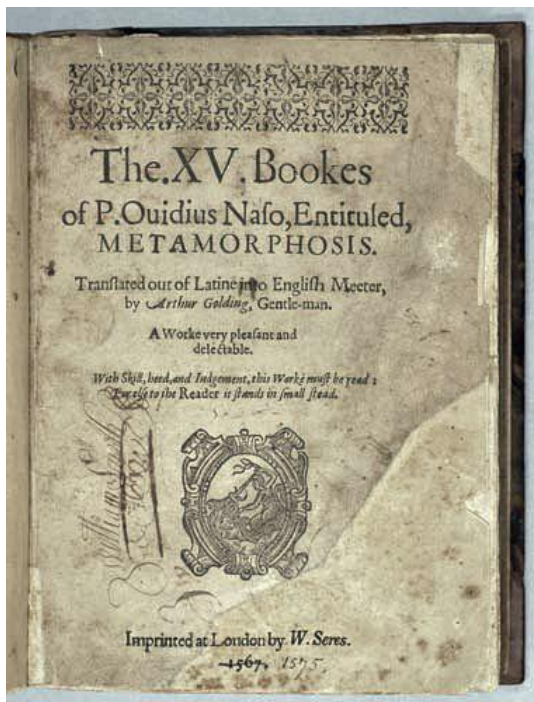
The logical inference I draw from digesting all these facts is that young Edward de Vere was literally soaked in Golding's translations of Ovid, thanks to being tutored by him possibly as early as 1556, and more importantly from 1562 to 1564 — just when Golding completed his translation of the first four books of *The Metamorphoses*. Golding's 1563 petition in the case brought by Lady Kathryn strongly defends his nephew and tutee, Edward, as well as his half-sister Margery. What better illustrates Golding's concern and closeness to them?

Edward de Vere is thus the best candidate in Elizabethan letters to have the near verbatim knowledge of Golding's Ovid translation that is characteristic of the Shakespeare author. Young Edward was in the right place at the right time. If indeed my Kindle message was right, then the likeliest giver of a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to Edward de Vere — either in Latin or in English, or perhaps both — was Golding himself no later than 1565. Gilvary (338) cites Bullough, who credits both Ovid's Latin and Golding's English translations as key sources for *Titus Andronicus*, the first Shakespeare play to reach print in 1594.

Jonathan Bate and the Stratford Grammar School

In *Titus Andronicus*, Titus himself directly quotes from Book One of *Metamorphoses* — "Terras Astrea reliquit." This reference occurs in Act 4, scene 3, not long after young Lucius's "my mother" speech two scenes earlier. Titus is pursuing justice and revenge for his murdered sons. Thus, the Shakespeare author portrays his own characters (young Lucius, Titus, Lavinia) as quoting or referring to Ovid throughout the play, and the action of the play itself is patterned on the Tereus-Philomela rape narrative of Book Six of the *Metamorphoses*.

Jonathan Bate and other orthodox Stratfordians often observe that all fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses* are sources in the Shakespeare canon. The Occam's razor conclusion is that Uncle Arthur Golding, not Edward de Vere's mother (who was also Golding's half-sister), was the giver of both his knowledge of Ovid and his own English translation to his teenage pupil, Edward de Vere, who became "Shakespeare" in 1593. A baker's dozen of the footnotes in the Arden edition of *Titus* edited by Bate refer to the Golding translation, culminating in the Astrea quotation above. I believe that Golding is more the true



Title page of Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1567)

source of Ovid in the canon, not whatever Latin text may have been available.

Bate masterfully weaves references to Golding into his narrative as well. For example, in Chapter Two he observes that “Golding, with not inconsiderable ingenuity, peeled off the narrative skin and found hidden ‘inner’ moral meanings in [Ovid].” In Chapter Five, he continues this argument: “In Golding’s moralization, ‘The snares of Mars and Venus will bring to light/ The secret sinnes that folk commit in corners only at night.’” We think of Edward de Vere and Anne Vavasour, and of the Duke of “dark corners” in *Measure for Measure*!

In Chapter Three Bate calls young Lucius’s speech about Ovid as “the most self-consciously literary moment in all Shakespeare,” and the use of Ovid’s book as a stage prop as “the play’s most significant source.”

Both Bate and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust attribute the Shakespeare author’s knowledge of Ovid to William of Stratford’s grammar school education. Bate admits there is no direct evidence for this claim as the records are lost for any dates that Will Shakspeare might have attended the school. He relies heavily upon T.W. Baldwin’s *Small Latine Lesse Greeke* for his claims. On its website the Birthplace Trust itself states Will’s schooling and education as if it were a proven fact, and says that he would have studied classical authors, “particularly Ovid.”

The lengthy erudite rejoinder to these claims by Oxfordian Robin Fox does not totally disagree (see Fox’s 2008 article in *The Oxfordian*), but digs much deeper into the issues. Rather, Fox raises doubts, as do I, about whether this supposed grammar school education at the new King’s Free School could equal or compete with the private tutoring of children of the nobility, as in the case of Edward de Vere’s 1562-1564 stay in Cecil House with Golding. Fox notes that the 15th Earl of Oxford, Edward’s grandfather, started a Free Grammar School in nearby Earls Colne, Essex. In his summary he makes his only mention of “pedantic private teachers... perhaps Oxford’s learned uncle, Arthur Golding, the translator of Ovid” as if Golding were a *commedia dell’arte* figure like Holofernes. Fox ends by saying that this kind of learning “was even more available from the kind of private tuition that was given the little Prince Edward [i.e., Edward VI] and his young nobleman namesake, Edward de Vere.”

My vote for Shakespeare’s knowledge and use of Ovid is with private tuition versus free grammar schools, with Edward de Vere as pupil and Golding as tutor — versus Stratford and Will, even assuming that Will Shakspeare attended school. Still, we must quote Bate’s own words for his claims about the Stratford grammar school: “Shakespeare’s ideal spectator would have shared the dramatist’s own grammar school education”

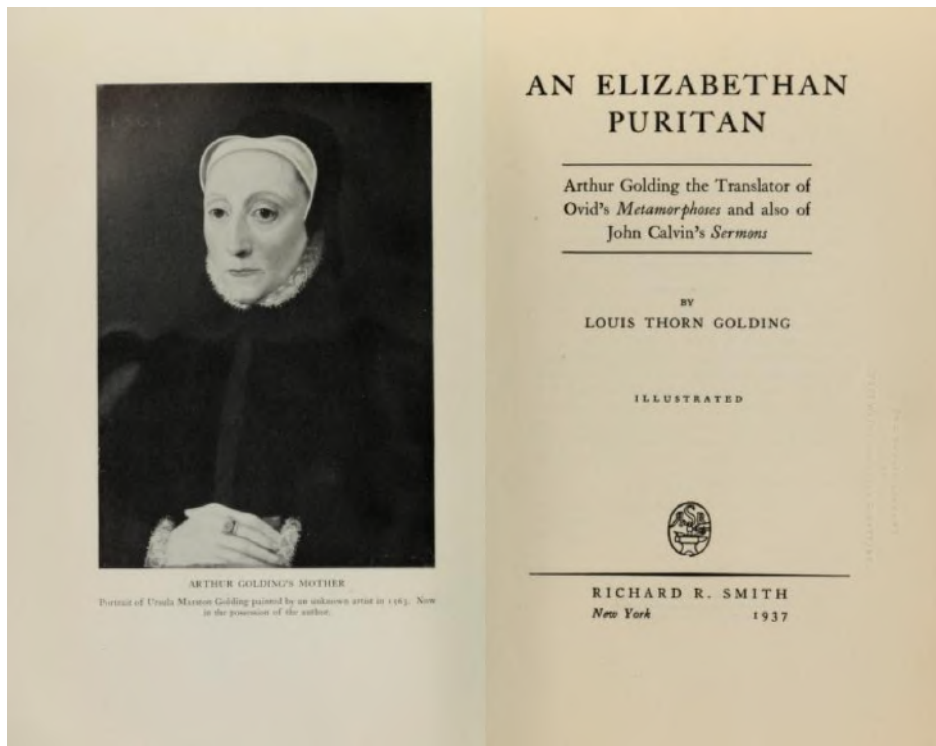
(Chapter One). This is extended to a new claim for *Titus Andronicus* in Chapter Three: “By virtue of their reading and imitation of Ovid . . . the characters in the play come to resemble students in grammar school and university.” We know which grammar school he means, but wonder which university? Is this tongue in cheek? While Bate’s entire book on Shakespeare and Ovid are the best critical readings available of Ovidian sources in Shakespeare’s poems and plays, his claims for young Will at Stratford Grammar School and *Titus Andronicus*’s characters as grammarians are inadmissible as reliable evidence.

Biographers of Edward de Vere and Golding’s Ovid
De Vere’s biographers offer mixed opinions on the importance of the Vere-Golding connections. By far the most useful and stunning prequel to my argument is Mark Anderson’s discussion in “*Shakespeare*” *By Another Name* (pp. 25-27). He first states that “Cecil was in the market for tutors to advance de Vere’s knowledge of French,” presumably as training suitable for a future courtier and diplomat. Amazingly, we actually have a letter written by young Edward in fluent French, from August 1563, which Anderson translates in full. The gist is that Edward urges “his foster father Cecil to mind his own business.”

Incidentally, the Englished letter that Anderson presents contains six uses of the rhetorical figure of hendiadys, beginning with “humanity and courtesy,” then “great love and singular affection,” and ending with “ordered and commanded.” I cite these because counting up instances of hendiadys in Golding’s Ovid and in de Vere’s letters is the basis of Richard Waugaman’s 2018 *Oxfordian* article, which asserts that de Vere himself was the translator of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* published in 1567. I submit that the 1563 letter shows that de Vere was practicing his Latinate locutions in several languages, thanks to his tutor Golding. The figure of hendiadys is often recognized in the Latin poetry of Virgil as well as of Ovid, and Golding as translator absorbed and utilized the figure as well.

While Anderson initially acknowledges “who de Vere’s new tutors were is uncertain,” he immediately proposes the “one (most) likely candidate . . . [is] the legal defender of de Vere’s legitimacy, his uncle Arthur Golding.” Anderson’s endnote informs us that Arthur Golding’s modern biographer is none other than a lineal descendant, Louis Thorn Golding (sometimes hereafter referred to as Thorn Golding), who published *An Elizabethan Puritan* in 1937.

Thorn Golding was an editor, a publisher, and a careful researcher. For example, one genealogy website notes that he rejected John Golding of Virginia as a family member, the latter having moved from Massachusetts to Virginia in 1651: “However, the great Golding historian Louis Thorn Golding dismissed any



Title page of *An Elizabethan Puritan* by Louis Thorn Golding (1937)

connection after having paid for research into the Rev. William Golding's life and even traveling to England to do research in the 1930s" (Genealogy.com, 12).

It appears to me that Thorn Golding had to verify his own ancestry, and did so even if he paid for it — this was long before Ancestry.com! The true accurate genealogy of our Arthur Golding is available today in a document I cite below under "Powys-Lybbe Forebears," which exhaustively traces the lineage and descendants of John Golding, Arthur's father (d. 1547).

Louis Thorn Golding emphatically states that "[Arthur] Golding served as tutor to his nephew Edward, the seventeenth earl of Oxford during the years in which he was ward of court to Lord Burghley at Cecil House" (Anderson, 438). I am hugely grateful to Anderson for his voluminous endnotes, as I would not have known otherwise of Thorn Golding or of *An Elizabethan Puritan*, which underlies much of my conviction about Arthur Golding as de Vere's receiver, tutor, defender, and family friend. Moreover, the original of *An Elizabethan Puritan* contains an insert (pasted into the copy I borrowed): "to this work the author has devoted years of research in public and private records of England and made frequent visits to the East Anglian countryside where Golding was born."

Anderson seems to accept his own surmise, with which I totally agree, that "Golding was probably teaching between nine and ten in the mornings and two and three in the afternoons. Latin was Golding's

subject . . ." (26). To this I would add law, as Golding was legally trained and de Vere soon became a law student at the Inns of Court. This is all part of the "long foreground" of the education of Edward de Vere as the Shakespeare poet, as first proposed by J.T. Looney in 1920. In short, we have firsthand evidence for de Vere receiving instruction in Latin from the foremost Elizabethan translator of Latin, Arthur Golding, at the very time when Golding was immersed in translating Ovid, 1562-1564.

Which evidence is stronger—Jonathan Bate's discussion of the routine of the Stratford Grammar school (perhaps ten to fifteen years later) as the education of young Will Shakspeare in the classics, or the documented facts of these two years (and more) in Cecil House when de Vere was tutored by Golding himself in Latin and Ovid?

De Vere biographer Alan Nelson was perhaps all too aware of Golding's eminence as the premier Elizabethan translator of Latin at the same time that Golding was retained by Cecil to tutor his new ward at Cecil House. Nelson's bias is displayed as he insists, "Oxford's language was not the language of Shakespeare . . . of [educated] Londoners" (66). Yet he still admits that young de Vere was never passionate for hunting (23), "being more attracted to such literary endeavors as were practiced by his half-uncle Arthur Golding." Thank you, Professor Nelson, for making our case, however unwittingly! Cleverly, in his index Nelson omits any mention of either Ovid or the *Metamorphoses*, as that might have strayed too close to the years 1562-1564 when Golding was translating Ovid while tutoring young Edward. He only allows that, as an *impubes* pupil at Queens College, Cambridge, nine-year-old Edward was exposed to "such studies as were set for him . . . above all . . . to the mastery of Latin prose and verse" (24).

Though Nelson's references to the Golding family of Essex are brief, they are very helpful in showing the Vere/Golding family ties:

- Thomas and Roger Golding in 1548 witnessed the Duke of Somerset's outrageous £6,000 bond agreement forced upon 16th Earl John of Oxford as a mechanism to "acquire the Oxford estates." (17).
- The clandestine marriage of the 16th Earl John to Arthur's half-sister Margery Golding of Belchamp St. Paul thwarted Somerset (18).

- Thomas and Henry Golding served as witnesses to twelve-year-old Edward's marriage contract to either Elizabeth or Mary Hastings, one of the last acts of the 16th Earl as he rearranged his estates.
- Henry Golding, Arthur's brother, who had been 16th Earl John's overseer of estates, is named (along with Countess Margery) among the executors of the 16th Earl's will. The other executors were the Duke of Norfolk and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. It is notable that the 16th Earl named two Goldings to counterbalance the two nobles.
- Nelson attacks Oxford's Latin grammar and usages(66-67), probably to suggest that Golding's tutoring in Latin was to no avail. Why? Exposing Oxford's weaknesses in Latin grammar would disqualify him as the translator/collaborator with Golding of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and hence shatter any case for Oxford as having been the true Shakespeare author.

To summarize, Nelson sneers at de Vere's Latin, deliberately omits specifics about Golding and Ovid in the 1560s, and any association with the well-known facts of the Shakespeare author's word-for-word intimate knowledge of Golding's English translation of 1567.

Oxfordians on Arthur Golding, Ovid and Edward de Vere: Barrell and Waugaman

In recent years Oxfordian commentary on Golding's Ovid and de Vere has been preoccupied with Arthur Golding as a Puritan and (to me) the red herring issue of his Puritanism disqualifying him as having translated Ovid. Our modern labeling and upbraiding Golding as a "Puritan" who was therefore unable to appreciate and to translate the erotic, naughty, mischievous poetry of Ovid is both illogical and unhistorical.

The English Puritan movement was about purifying and reforming the Anglican church, its liturgies and ceremonies in what became known, after Elizabeth's accession in 1558, as the Elizabethan Religious Settlement. Above all it was staunchly Protestant and militantly anti-Catholic. It was not prudish or anti-sexual. Its primary focus was promoting the serious personal (Protestant) reading of the Geneva Bible published by English Protestant exiles in Calvin's Geneva in 1560 under the leadership of such Marian exiles as William Whittingham and Anthony Gilby, who supervised the English translations from French of both the New and Old Testaments.

Yes, this is the selfsame Geneva Bible regarded by Shakespeare scholars as the foremost Bible used and quoted throughout the Shakespeare canon. It is the same Bible (second edition) that Edward de Vere ordered from a London bookseller in 1570, which resides today in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. It would also have been the version (if not the edition) from the

French of the Geneva Bible used by Puritan Arthur Golding as he translated Calvin's sermons, the Psalms, and other religious works into English throughout his career of thirty-plus years as a translator. Surely we ought not accuse Edward de Vere of "Puritanism" or of being "Puritanical" for having ordered and annotated his own Geneva Bible. Nor should we reject the biographical fact of Arthur Golding's having translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses*? Indeed it appears that Edward de Vere was influenced by his Uncle Arthur when ordering a Geneva Bible five years after their sojourn in Cecil House!

As an Oxfordian who grew up Presbyterian, I can vouch for having been raised in a strict moral environment, without prudishness or so-called Puritanism in matters of physical and sexual functions. Just as Puritans wanted to purify the Church of England from lingering vestiges of Roman Catholicism, so Presbyterians wanted to experience directly the Divine without intercession as part of a religious community which stressed personal Bible reading and Scriptures. I studied and recited the Bible in communicants' classes. Here in Massachusetts we are often reminded of our Pilgrim forebears, who were in fact English Puritans seeking a freer mode of worship. The Massachusetts Bay Colony of the 1620s and Governor John Winthrop were Puritans.

The epithet Puritan dates from the 1560s, the very decade we are discussing here. William Cecil, Matthew Parker, Bishops Whitgift and Grindal, Francis Walsingham and many at the English Court in the 1560s were all Puritans — so it is hardly surprising that young Edward de Vere purchased his own Geneva Bible, whose annotations have been thoroughly researched and discussed by Roger Stritmatter in his doctoral dissertation at the University of Massachusetts. (I strongly recommend the Stritmatter-Anderson article cited below for convincing proof that the annotations in de Vere's Bible at the Folger are indeed by its original owner, Edward de Vere.)

Louis Thorn Golding honestly discusses the issue of Golding as a "Puritan" translator of Ovid in its religious context: "His translation of the first four books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (in 1565) . . . was not without an inward struggle between the scholar and the puritan in him. Conscience stood at his elbow while he wrote. He was of that considerable body of Protestants whose advocacy and practice of purity gave them that name [in the 1560s]. . . . To such a man, the morals or the lack of morals, in the *Metamorphoses* must have come as a shock. To the scholar on the other hand, Ovid's lively tales must have been fascinating" (*An Elizabethan Puritan*, p. 48).

Thorn Golding includes both of the lengthy moralistic prefaces to Arthur Golding's 1565 and 1567 translations as appendices, in which he acknowledges and defends his moralistic approach to the erotic poetry

of Ovid. The prefaces have been misunderstood by Stratfordians and Oxfordians. Even Sam Saunders admits that they were written by Golding; he offers a collaborative scheme with Golding as the writer of the prefaces and de Vere as the real translator of Ovid's poems. But a close reading of the fourteeners of the prefaces and the *Metamorphoses* itself assures me that Golding the moralist and Golding the translator are one and the same.

The best early Oxfordian appraisal of Golding's ties to de Vere remains that of Charles Wisner Barrell in 1940. His essay is actually a laudatory review of Louis Thorn Golding's biography of his ancestor, *An Elizabethan Puritan*, sticking to the Golding family roots and the ties to the Veres in Essex. He argues that the "surprising anomaly" (4) of a Calvinist and Puritan such as Golding being the translator of the "sensuous measures of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*" is typical of the Elizabethan age and its "seemingly contradictory personalities." Barrell is echoing Thorn Golding, who admitted: "It has been a surprise to many that so stern a puritan as Golding later showed himself to be, should have translated the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid" (33).

As the sixth of eleven children, and as the father of eight children, "Puritan" Golding was accustomed to pregnant young mothers—it is difficult to be squeamish growing up in a large family, as I can testify. Barrell then offers Lee's appraisal of Golding's "rendering of Ovid" as the best of its day and as crucial to the virtual copying of Golding that occurs in the Shakespeare canon.

The "seemingly contradictory" union of Puritanism and Ovidianism that we find in the Shakespeare author is a legacy of de Vere's family connection to Arthur Golding. Barrell states the core of our argument:

Arthur Golding was not only the uncle of Edward de Vere but his companion and adviser for some time after the twelve year old peer lost his father and, as a Royal Ward, took up his residence in the household of Sir William Cecil . . . (while) Golding worked upon his translations of the Latin poet . . . printed in 1564 and 1567 (p. 8).

This is biographical fact, affirmed by Arthur Golding's lineal descendant. This is the context of Golding's dedication to de Vere in Justin's *History of Troglodytes Pompeius* in 1564, quoted in full by Barrell, which asks de Vere to accept his translation, admiring "how earnest a desire your honour hath naturally graffed in you to read, peruse, and communicate with others as well the histories of ancient times, and things done long ago . . ." (12). Again note the graceful, even ornate, use of hendiadys in Golding's dedication. Barrell then culls a baker's dozen of quotes from Shakespeare that illustrate the poet's close knowledge and frequent use of Golding's *Troglodytes Pompeius*!

While I respectfully disagree with Richard Waugaman's two articles claiming that de Vere, not

Arthur Golding, wrote both a 1569 commendatory poem (which actually bears the initials "A.G.") and the earlier Ovid translations, I emphasize that Waugaman's arguments have merit for Oxfordians to ponder. First, the title of one article—"Did Edward de Vere Translate Ovid's *Metamorphoses*?"—poses the issue as an interrogatory. We have to take a stand and back up our convictions. Whether our answer is yes or no, the importance of the Golding-Vere-Shakespeare connections is massively consequential to the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

Understandably, Waugaman has already answered yes as to the following question: "What difference does it make if de Vere translated Ovid[?] . . . If de Vere was the translator, it strengthens his claim to have written the works of Shakespeare . . . if de Vere translated Ovid as an adolescent. . . ." He dismisses the orthodox acceptance of Golding as the foremost Elizabethan translator of Ovid as a "flawed misconception" or as an outright misattribution.

I stress again that Waugaman's challenge to orthodoxy is a wake-up call to take the Golding-Vere-Shakespeare connections much more seriously than many Oxfordians have done. I urge rereading Waugaman's argument for de Vere as the hidden or secret adolescent translator of Ovid. The puerile and unprofessional aspersions of Waugaman on Oxfraud.com and on Amazon are truly contemptible, and they do not address the real issues of the Golding-Vere-Shakespeare connections.

Whether one agrees with Waugaman or with me (and orthodoxy) as to de Vere having been an expert qualified translator of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, we nevertheless arrive at the more important and truly telling conclusion: The precocious teenage de Vere in the 1560s foreshadows the Shakespeare poet during his years of tutoring in Latin, French and the Law at Cecil House. Likewise the usages of hendiadys that I have noted in Golding, and that Waugaman catalogues as his *prima facie* evidence, point to the same conclusion: young Edward de Vere was trained in classical rhetoric in the 1560s and employed that training when composing the Shakespeare plays and poems!

[Part Two of this article will appear in the Spring 2022 issue of the *Newsletter*.]



(Portrait - continued from p. 1)

Oxford.⁴ Judges wore red robes; early images of Gray's Inn, however, the law society that Oxford had attended, do not match the painting's building.

Academics wore robes, so I looked for early images of Oxford's alma mater, St. John's College, Cambridge, and found a match. Coming through the First Court's main entrance, one faces the western range building. The left side of it, as shown in David Loggan's book, *Cantabrigia Illustrata* (1690),⁵ resembles the painting's facade, with the same crenellated walls ("battlemented parapet")⁶ and decorative molding topping the windows, like serified letter *T*'s (see Image 1). Much of this facade is original, according to a 1907 college history.⁷

In the painting, eight windows (two rows of four), and a long vertical pipe can be discerned; Loggan's engraving shows nine windows, with a door below one of them, and three short pipes. John Hammond's sketch of St. John's College, made in February 1592, shows eight windows and no door, as in the painting (see Image 2).⁸ Loggan's engraving shows horizontal molding above the upper row of windows, with spaced decorations (possibly gargoyle heads); the painting shows horizontal molding in the same spot (and another one above the lower row of windows), with spaced blobs of paint, presumably representing decorations. Loggan's engraving has gabled windows on the roof, not shown in the painting; Hammond's sketch also omits them. Loggan's and Hammond's images did not include four chimneys atop the building that are present in the painting. The painting's building is creamish color, unlike today's red brick; perhaps it was then overpainted.

The building in the painting appears at the sitter's right, indicating that he is inside an adjacent building, which would occur in a quadrangle like St. John's, where the western and southern range buildings form a right angle. Notably, the entire southern range building held two floors of chambers.⁹ Looking at the view through the southern range windows from the inside, one could theoretically pinpoint where Oxford was standing – that is, if they were not restructured when the façade was refaced in 1772.¹⁰

Rules of academic dress existed for scholars, holders of master's degrees, doctorates, etc.¹¹ Loggan's book illustrated a few examples, under the heading "Academic dress in the University of Cambridge to be worn in respect of rank, degree, or office, whether in private life or in public assemblies."¹² Presumably, if alumnus Earl of Oxford visited the campus, he would have worn a university gown; scarlet befitted someone with a higher



Image 1: First Court, St. John's College, Cambridge (detail), from David Loggan's *Cantabrigia Illustrata* (1690)

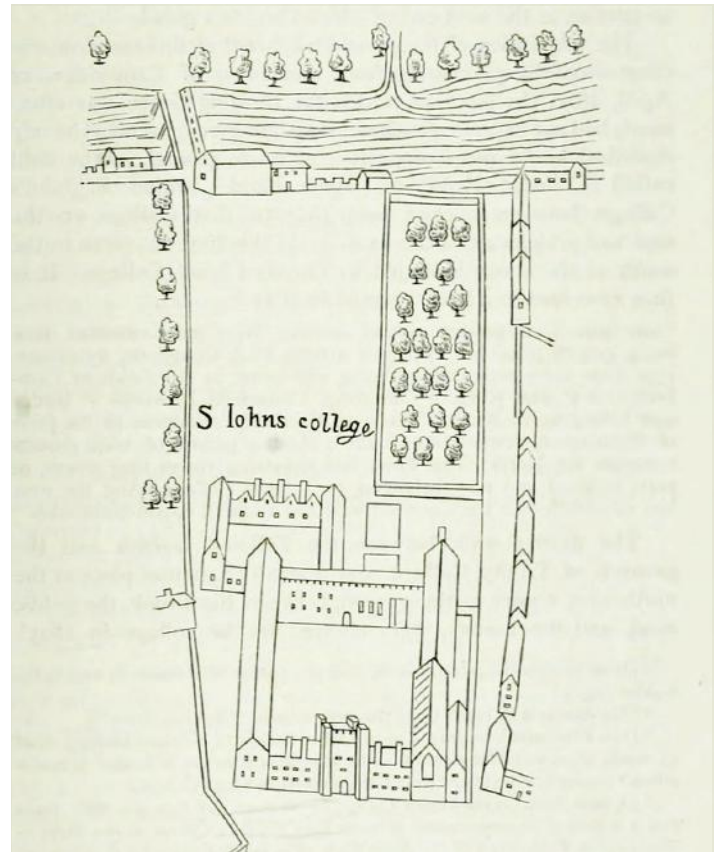


Image 2: John Hammond's sketch of St. John's College, Cambridge, 1592 (Bodleian Library, Oxford), as seen in *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge* (see note 8). See Tim Rawle, *Cambridge Architecture* (London, 1985, Plate III), for the completed version.

academic degree or social rank, and fur lining indicated wealth or importance.

The long black garment or coat worn underneath the red robe is an unusual design for the period, with its knotted buttons and wide horizontal buttonholes, embroidered with goldish thread; they run down the center of the garment and on the cuffs. A portion of the sitter's left wrist and cuff appear blackened out, or overpainting may have smeared over time.

Oxford and Education

A portrait of an older 17th century English gentleman resembling Oxford, possibly garbed in university dress, who faces a wall resembling early images of St. John's College, Cambridge, strongly suggests Oxford visiting his alma mater. A much earlier post-graduation visit to Cambridge University by the earl was noted by author and academic Gabriel Harvey:

[I]n the prime of his [Oxford's] gallantest youth, he bestowed Angels upon me in Christ's College in Cambridge, and otherwise vouchsafed me many gracious favours at the affectionate commendation of my cousin, M[r]. Thomas Smith, the son of Sir Thomas, shortly after Colonel of the Ardes in Ireland.¹³

Harvey claimed that while he attended Christ's College (1566 to 1570), Oxford "bestowed Angels" upon him – English gold coins showing Archangel Michael killing a dragon. Oxford had attended Cambridge in 1558, and received a bachelor's degree in 1564; he was awarded a master's degree at Oxford University in 1566.

Gervase Markham mentioned Oxford's "bounty" to "Learning" in *Honour in his Perfection* (1624):

[T]he alms he gave (which at this day would not only feed the poor, but the great man's family also) and the bounty which Religion and Learning daily took from him, are Trumpets so loud, that all ears know them; [p. 17]

Oxford's interest in history, religion, medicine, music, and other subjects is reflected in the dozens of books dedicated to him, works he likely patronized. He also employed, as secretaries, authors John Lyly and Anthony Munday.

In the comedy *Return from Parnassus, Part 1* (c. 1599), character Gullio, a pretentious gentleman, brags that he maintains poets, and "bountifully" rewards students who praise him during Oxford University visits:

[I] also maintain other poetical spirits, that live upon my trenchers [wooden dishes]; I cannot come to my inn in Oxford without a dozen congratulatory orations, made by Genus and Species and his ragged

companions. I reward the poor ergoes most bountifully ... [3.1]

Gullio ineptly quotes Shakespeare's lines, and implies that he authored them.¹⁴ Gullio's pretense, therefore, gives insights about the true Shakespeare, i.e., the 17th Earl of Oxford — that he supported poets and students, and that during his university visits students congratulated him with speeches. Interestingly, the three Parnassus plays debuted at St. John's College, Cambridge (c. 1598-1602), and contain numerous Shakespeare allusions.

Conclusion

The 17th Earl of Oxford, the true Shakespeare, was evidently portrayed at St. John's College, Cambridge, displaying his interest in academia until the end of his life. Did an admiring student or faculty member request a sitting, or did Oxford commission the painting? Perhaps on one occasion Oxford donated money, books, or manuscripts to the college, and this painting commemorated it. Or possibly the occasion marked a performance of his tragedy, *Hamlet* – the 1603 edition's title page noted performances at Oxford and Cambridge universities. Few details of Oxford's later years are known; possibly they were scrubbed by his enemies. If Oxford's red robe was fashioned from a portion of the crimson velvet requested for James I's coronation day, then the portrait was made less than a year before his death, and was possibly his very last. If readers have other suggestions for the building's identity, I would be pleased to know them (faireditions@earthlink.net).

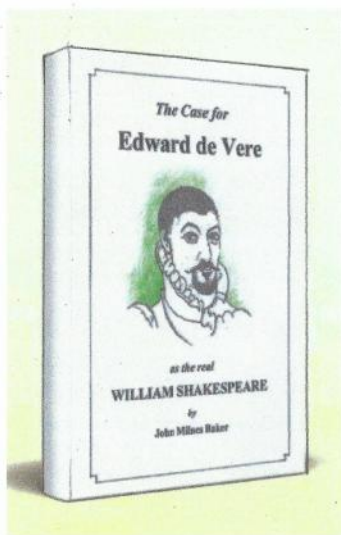
Endnotes:

1. National Portrait Gallery, British artists' suppliers, 1650-1950 (entry, "Cowan and Waring"). <https://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/directory-of-suppliers/>.
2. B.M. Ward, *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) from Contemporary Documents*, London, 1928, reprint, 1979, p. 346.
3. Alan H. Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary, The Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*, Liverpool Univ. Press, 2003, p. 37.
4. Portrait examples of 16th and 17th century English gentlemen wearing short-sleeved robes: (1) Sir Lionel Duckett (d. 1587), alderman of Aldersgate, sheriff and Lord Mayor of London, Mercer's company, London; (2) Thomas Anguish (1538/9-1617), Lord Mayor of Norwich, Norwich Civic Portrait Collection; (3) William Robinson (d. 1614), MP and Lord Mayor of York, Merchant Adventurers' Hall, York; (4) Christopher Wise (c.1566-1628), Lord Mayor of Totnes (1605-06 & 1621-22) by Nicholas Hilliard, Totnes Elizabethan House Museum, Devon. A judge's red robes can be seen in a portrait dated 1598, Bonham's, *Old Master Paintings*, London, October 25, 2017, lot 7.

5. *Cantabrigia Illustrata* by David Loggan (first published in 1690), ed. J.W. Clark, Cambridge, 1905, Chapter 26.
6. *Ibid*, Chapter 27.
7. Robert Forsyth Scott, *St. John's College, Cambridge*, London, 1907, p. 4.
8. *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge, and of the Colleges of Cambridge and Eton* by Robert Willis, ed. John Willis Clark, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1886, vol. 2, p. 237 (figure 5).
9. *Id.* at 239.
10. *Id.* at 317-318.
11. W.N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *A History of Academical Dress in Europe, until the end of the eighteenth century*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1963, Greenwood Press reprint, Westport CT, 1978. Noted on p. 113 is that Lord Burghley, Cambridge's chancellor, issued a 1588 mandate for graduates to wear square caps.
12. *Cantabrigia Illustrata*, ed. Clark, Chapter 7.
13. Gabriel Harvey, *Four letters, and certain sonnets*, 1592, p. 21 (STC 12900). "Master Thomas Smith" was probably Thomas Smith (1547-1573), illegitimate son of Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577); he "served as an officer in Ireland about 1568" (Christopher Maginn, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*).
14. Katherine Chiljan, *Shakespeare Suppressed: The Uncensored Truth about Shakespeare and his Works*, Faire Editions, San Francisco, 2011, p. 214.



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Lifelong Learning and the Shakespeare Authorship Question

by Earl Showerman

The centenary of J. Thomas Looney's "*Shakespeare Identified*" was celebrated on both coasts on March 4, 2020; first during an SOF Symposium at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, and later at the [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute](#) of Southern Oregon University (OLLI@SOU) and Omar's Restaurant, where twenty-five celebrants from my Shakespeare authorship class enjoyed refreshments while getting reports from our operatives across America. This was the last class of my six-week 2020 course at OLLI, "Shakespeare Identified & Shakespeare Suppressed," which focused on readings from James Warren's Centenary Edition of "*Shakespeare Identified*" and Katherine Chiljan's outstanding book, *Shakespeare Suppressed*.

For the past decade I have been teaching Shakespeare authorship courses at OLLI. In 2020, more than thirty members signed up for the course, which included a detailed review of J.T. Looney's sources and his methodology in profiling "Shakespeare." The similarities between his model for Shakespeare — a well-educated, eccentric aristocrat of recognized poetic genius and theatrical connections — and the life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as presented by Sir Sidney Lee in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (1898), are remarkable. Further, Oxford's documented interest in classical literature, Italy, aristocratic sports, and improvidence in money matters fit Looney's criteria perfectly.

In the spring of 2021 I had the good fortune of co-teaching an eight-hour, four-week class at OLLI on *Shakespeare's Sonnets* with Susan Stitham, a retired English teacher, past president of OLLI, and a most enthusiastic and popular instructor in a program that serves over 1,000 seniors in Southern Oregon. She became an agnostic on the Shakespeare authorship question after taking one of the authorship courses at OLLI, and reached out because of her interest in teaching the sonnets for the first time with an expanded view of Elizabethan personalities and politics. We agreed to divide the interpretive opportunities, with me providing historical and authorship-related context.

W.H. Auden's cautionary opinion that "more nonsense has been talked and written, more intellectual and emotional energy expended in vain, on the sonnets of Shakespeare than on any other literary work in the world" did not stop us from titling our course, "Shakespeare's Sonnets: Windows to the Soul." Here is the course description from the OLLI catalog: "From the publication of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets in 1609, readers have eagerly searched the texts for clues to the life of the poet and the identities of his 'fair youth,' 'dark lady,' and 'rival

poet.' In this course, we will look at a number of the sonnets both as free-standing intricate poems, and as elements in a complex and ambiguous personal story." More than forty-five seniors signed up for the Zoom program, and participation and responses were outstanding.

Each class included readings and interpretations of a group of sonnets connected to the class theme. I prepared PowerPoint slides for each session that highlighted relevant topics, including the history of the English sonnet, the publication anomalies, the mysterious dedication, contemporary commentaries, dating, and parallels to Shakespeare's lyric poetry. Individual sessions on the identity of the "fair youth," the "rival poet" and the "dark lady" were conducted, presenting evidence for various candidates. Supplementary readings included Oxfordian articles on the sonnets by Eliot Slater and Peter Moore, as well as materials collected from the scholarship of Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, Michael Delahoyde, Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, and Richard Waugaman.

Online video resources were also promoted, including two Oxfordian documentaries available on Amazon Prime, both of which were previously screened at OLLI@SOU: *Nothing Is Truer than Truth* (2018) and *Last Will. & Testament* (2011). Links were provided to the video of the debate on the identity of the Dark Lady at the 2018 SOF Annual Conference with Hank Whittemore, Katherine Chiljan and John Hamill, and to the 2021 SOF Spring Symposium. Links were also posted to Hank Whittemore's presentation, "Shakespeare's Final Tragedy and His Triumphant Rebirth," at the 2019 Shakespearean Authorship Trust Conference, and to John Hamill's recent Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable presentation on Penelope Rich as the "dark lady." Finally, students were encouraged to watch Keir Cutler's YouTube recording of his adaptation of Mark Twain's satire, *Is Shakespeare Dead?*

Diana Roome, who has taken several Shakespeare authorship courses in recent years, wrote this about the sonnets class: "Thank you for putting together this marvelous class, with your two intriguingly different perspectives and approaches. The last class was almost mind-blowing. The intensity of feeling in those dark lady sonnets is almost explosive, and I was reminded of an essay I read decades ago, which compared structure in poetry with the structure of crystals. One can instinctively understand that the tighter the structure, the more durable it will be. Shakespeare's constant assertion that his poems will outlast emotions, people, and time seems to reflect his understanding that what happens in the physical world

happens in the metaphysical one too. I'll be spending much more time with those sonnets from now on, so thank you again."

Similarly, students at the 2020 OLLI Shakespeare authorship class were directed to view the videos of James Warren's conference presentations on the SOF YouTube channel. My one critique of Looney's arguments was his dismissing *The Tempest* as being "un-Shakespearean" in an attempt to dissociate Shakespeare from this romance due to the widely accepted composition date of 1610, which would have clearly disqualified Oxford as the author. This presented the opportunity to refer the class to the ["Dating Shakespeare's Plays" website](#) edited by Kevin Gilvary, and to summarize arguments developed by Roger Stritmatter, Lynne Kositsky and Richard Malim, establishing a basis for considering *The Tempest* as having been written before the court revels season of 1604 and originally produced as "The Spanish Maze."

The 2020 winter course included reviewing and summarizing selected arguments from Katherine Chiljan's superb book, *Shakespeare Suppressed* (2011). Her deconstruction of the traditional interpretation of *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1592) that identifies Will Shakspeare as "the upstart crow" took up an entire class session. The evidence Chiljan presents clearly identifies Greene's target as the actor and entrepreneur Edward Alleyn, not Shakspeare. The class also focused on several of the "too early allusions" cited by Chiljan in *Shakespeare Suppressed*. Participants were encouraged view videos of several of Chiljan's conference presentations on the SOF YouTube channel. The final class session was on Shakespeare and politics, including the politics of the Shakespeare authorship challenge and the reaction of academia to this imminent threat of authorship skepticism going viral.

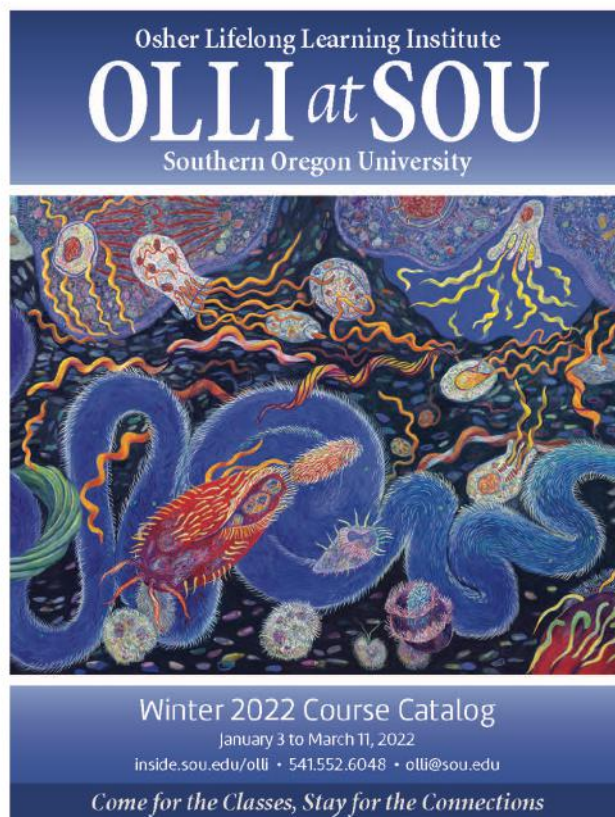
The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship has become more engaged than ever in reaching out to secondary school and college educators, and providing regional support through its speakers' bureau. I commend these initiatives, and have myself presented at regional Rotary Clubs, high schools, libraries, and universities on the Shakespeare authorship question. None of these groups, however, have shown the hunger to know Oxford as Shakespeare more eagerly than the "senior" students at OLLI, who have learned to love Shakespeare, and who have the curiosity and liberty to return year after year for the past decade for state-of-the-debate courses on the SAQ. Having a world-class Shakespeare theatre nearby makes for an animated classroom experience, and several company members of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival have come to my classes to discuss their roles in current productions.

Other OLLI courses I have taught over the past decade have included readings from John Shahan and Alexander Waugh's *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*

Exposing and Industry in Denial (2013), Hank Whittemore's *100 Reasons Shake-speare was the Earl of Oxford* (2016), Richard Roe's *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* (2011), and Steven Steinburg's *I Come to Bury Shakspeare* (2013). OLLI classrooms are internet connected, so it is easy to present videos from SOF conferences and other sources.

Teaching the Oxfordian theory to secondary school and university age students may guarantee a future where skepticism of the traditional narrative gains a degree of respect, but writers and teachers may find their most appreciative and enthusiastic fans to be those who had a lifetime to learn to love Shakespeare and to discern truth from fiction in modern culture. The availability of high quality documentary videos and presentations from conferences in both the US and UK has made teaching the SAQ far more interesting and sustainable in recent years. I encourage SOF members of retirement age to find and join lifelong learning programs in their regions, and to make the bold move to teach a course on the SAQ using these newly available resources.

[Earl Showerman is a retired physician who practiced emergency medicine for more than thirty years. A former president of the Shakespeare Fellowship, he is a regular presenter at SOF conferences and has written numerous articles for Oxfordian publications, several of which deal with Shakespeare's knowledge of Greek. He is also a patron of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.]



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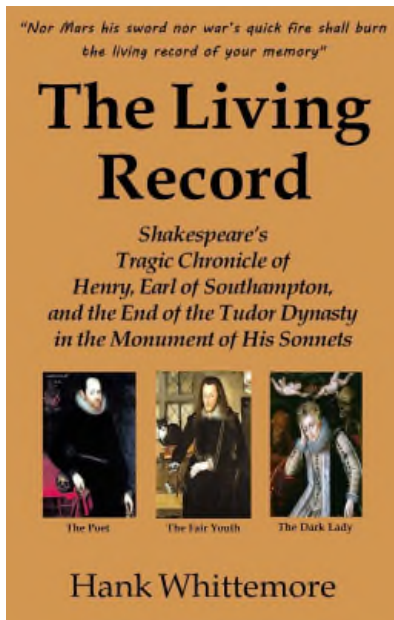
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