



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

Vol. 59, No. 1

Published by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

Winter 2023

Richard Roe's Unpublished Notebooks Elucidate *The Comedy of Errors*

by Michael Delahoyde

Richard Paul Roe completed his masterpiece, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy: Retracing the Bard's Unknown Travels*, shortly before his death in late 2010. Published by Harper Perennial in 2011, it was the product of at least two decades of research. After his passing, two large notebooks of his notes, writings, letters, and published articles he had collected were donated to the Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre at the now defunct Concordia University in Portland, Oregon. When the University closed, Earl Showerman helped prevent the chaos in the dismantling which would have led to the disappearance of the Centre's possessions. As I was immersed entirely into Oxfordian Italian matters, he generously, with the permission of Roe's daughters, forwarded these notebooks to me. Within them are various section divisions, usually with cover indices listing materials that seem to have been jettisoned: most of those items were published articles on Oxford and Shakespeare that, I think, he decided he no longer needed once he had drafted a chapter of his book.

To lower any heart-palpitating expectations, I can report that nearly everything in the notebooks was absorbed into his *Shakespeare Guide*.

However, when SOF Trustee Catherine Hatinguais recently asked me if there was more about the town of Sabbioneta than was in Roe's published chapter, I looked more closely. There was not much on Sabbioneta, but, now that I was working on an Oxfordian edition of *The Comedy of Errors* (coming soon), I was thrilled to find two documents—one typed, one handwritten—concerning the geography and maritime practices informing this play. Roe may have decided that there was not enough to have supplied a chapter in his book, but the material was certainly worthy of my editing together for inclusion in my edition of the play. The four-page handwritten document is undated; the

typed five-page document, addressed to "Viewers of *The Comedy of Errors*," reads like a short talk delivered before a performance of the play. It is dated August 3, 1990. Thus, here, now, I am honored to offer one more posthumous gem from this invaluable Oxfordian and Italianate gentleman.

The Shakespeare Guide to *The Comedy of Errors*

by Richard Paul Roe

Just as Shakespeare is jam-packed with every kind of literary and mythological allusion, so also it is packed with the most remarkable working knowledge of geography where the plays are set, and of how the people actually traveled. *The Comedy of Errors* is an excellent example. Due to the insistence of most academics that the author was a man from Stratford-upon-Avon (there is another Stratford in England, you know) who had never traveled anywhere except to London, the geographical richness of many of the plays is completely undiscovered.



(Continued on page 23)

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Published quarterly by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466-0083.
www.ShakespeareOxfordFellowship.org.



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

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

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

TRUSTEES

Earl Showerman, President

Tom Woosnam, Vice President

Richard Foulke, Treasurer; Finance/Investments Chair

Bonner Miller Cutting, Secretary

Ben August, Trustee

Dorothea Dickerman, Trustee; Membership/Fundraising Chair

Catherine Hatinguais, Trustee

Bob Meyers, Trustee; Communications Comm. Chair

Don Rubin, Trustee; Conference Comm. Chair

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

Heidi Jansch, Proofreader

Printed by Minuteman Press, West Newton, MA.

© 2023 by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

From the President

At the end of 2022, Fareed Zakaria, *Washington Post* correspondent and CNN host, wrote that “America’s genius lies in its respect for rebellion.” Undeniably, America led the 20th century cultural revolutions in music, film, television, and the digital world. “This break from the past,” Zakaria noted, “strikes me as deeply American. Rejecting the wisdom of their elders, Americans were disruptive, disrespectful, and consumed with a kind of manic energy.”

Zakaria contended that the core American character “encourages attacks on power and hierarchy, celebrates the upstarts, and cares little for tradition and established practice.” The capacity for expressing dissatisfaction and reasoned dissent, and for embracing radical change is “the secret sauce” for American enduring success. How fit to the mission of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is this native, underlying cultural skepticism! Americans have always been well represented among the worldwide community of theater lovers and activists seeking to expose the truth about the identity of the author of the Shakespeare canon.

This year promises to be of seminal importance for spreading the word on the state of the authorship debate

in America. In early May Simon & Schuster will release journalist Elizabeth Winkler’s book, *Shakespeare Was a Woman and Other Heresies: How Doubting the Bard Became the Biggest Taboo in Literature*. Lewis Lapham, founder of *Lapham’s Quarterly* and past editor of *Harper’s Magazine*, recently commented that “Winkler is blessed with the clear-eyed wit of a heroine in a Shakespearean comedy. Her undoing of the fools in the forest of the authorship question is iconoclasm *As You Like It*—joy to behold, a lesson for us all.” Elizabeth Winkler has graciously accepted our invitation to be the keynote speaker at our annual Conference in New Orleans, November 9-12 (for more information on the Conference, see page 6).

The SOF has awarded New York film artist Phoebe Nir a grant to support the production of a series of short Shakespeare authorship videos. Her first release, “How to Debate a Stratfordian,” is available on Phoebe’s YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/XjG57ILSblU>. Her second video, “Shakespeare: Pseudonym?” may be seen here: <https://youtu.be/bwRwio6o89U>. The SOF has also funded the production of a high-quality “Shakespeare 101” video featuring *Newsletter* editor Alex McNeil. It

will soon be posted prominently on the SOF website, providing a concise evidentiary summary of our case in just thirty minutes.

Also scheduled for spring release is the next volume in our Brief Chronicles book series, *The First Folio: A Shakespearean Enigma*. At over 300 pages, it includes contributions by editor Roger Stritmatter, Katherine Chiljan, Shelly Maycock, Gabriel Ready, Richard Whalen, Bill Boyle, Michael Dudley, Heidi Jansch, Julie Bianchi, Bruce Johnson, and the late John Rollett. Celebrating the 400th anniversary of the publication of the First Folio will be a major theme for 2023, and will be a prominent theme at our November conference.

We are immensely grateful to those of you who have renewed your memberships and provided donations for our 2023 programs and publications. Of particular note is the flood of new SOF Lifetime Members. Your support this year will provide funding for further developments to make the SOF website more user friendly and popular, to support video productions, to counter the anticipated wave of Stratfordian misrepresentation during the First Folio 400th anniversary year, and to provide grants for documentary research by Oxfordian scholars.


The “Blue Boar Tavern” virtual conversations, available exclusively to SOF members, will continue in 2023 with host Jonathan Dixon, and now are fully interactive with Zoom Chat and Q&A functions activated. Upcoming topics will include “Stratfraud-upon-Avon: The Shakespeare Industrial Complex” on March 9, and “Shakespeare’s Circle: University Wits and Fisher’s Folly Fellows” on Edward de Vere’s birthday, April 12. Recordings of previous Blue Boar episodes are available on our website. Blue Boar Videos | Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

Finally, I invite you to consider how you might engage as an SOF volunteer to promote the claim of Edward de Vere as author of the Shakespeare canon. If you have experience with writing or editing, if you have accounting or data entry skills, or if you are active on social media, we

can probably use your help. I encourage you to write to me at info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org to discuss how we might work together to realize the goals of our organization. Thank you!

Earl Showerman

SOF Lifetime Members



Paul Arnold
Ben and Simi August
Charles Beauclerk
Roland Caldwell
Bonner and Jack Cutting
Dorothea Dickerman and Richard Becker
Lucinda and Richard Foulke
Richard Furno
Catherine Hatinguais and Susana Maggi
John Hamill and José Caratini
Richard Joyrich
Jo Anne and David Kelch
Lynne and Michael Kositsky
Anonymous (In honor of Ruth Loyd Miller)
Sally Mosher
Richard Phillips, Jr.
Robert R. Prechter, Jr.
Paula Sharzer
Earl Showerman
Jack M. Shuttleworth
David Taylor
Richard and Elisabeth Waugaman
Joella Werlin
Tom and Julia Woosnam

Letters

Congratulations, Margo Anderson, for your courageous and honest self-definition (“Anderson by Another Name,” Fall 2022 Newsletter). We love you more than ever. Thank you for being true to yourself. May we all follow your example.

Allan R. Shickman & Bonnie Lenz
St. Louis, Missouri

There are probably many enthusiastic amateurs like me who are spreading the word of the Authorship Question. After years of reading the fine scholarship of non-Stratfordians and Oxfordians, I finally started talking about it—many chats with friends and acquaintances and a few presentations to book groups.

Most recently I offered my talk to a mature learners group. The programmer said the topic sounded interesting and signed me up. I then introduced myself to Professor X, the chair of the group, and told him I was going to do a presentation on the Shakespeare

Authorship Question. “What’s that?” he asked in a serious tone. I explained briefly. He scowled. “Well,” he replied, “I can put up a screen between you and the audience when they start throwing things at you,” and walked away.

A month later I gave a forty-minute PowerPoint talk to an audience of thirty-five, including many retired professors (none from English departments). I covered the issues about Mr. Shakspeare and Oxford, including a picture of the six signatures (“This is the entire work of ‘Shakespeare’ in his own hand,” I said). The audience applauded heartily, asked many good questions, and took many of the bookmarks I had made which listed books and websites.

A few days later I received this email from Professor X: “Every Friday I have lunch with fellow retired faculty

and your presentation was at the heart of one of our discussions. We were captivated by what you presented as well as by your manner of delivery. Cool. Calm. Factual. Thank you, again, for a stimulating presentation!”

This likely mirrors others’ experiences when introducing the SAQ topic: an audience moves from skepticism to curiosity, and, finally, is open to the possibilities. This First Folio anniversary year is a great time for all of us to help spread the word, whether it’s an elevator speech or talks to book groups, etc. Minds can be opened!

Cynthia Moore
Springfield, Missouri

In Memoriam: Howard Schumann (1937-2023)

Howard Schumann, who reported on many Oxfordian conferences during the 2000s and early 2010s, passed away on January 10, 2023, at the age of 85.

Born in New York City in 1937, he traveled extensively, eventually settling in California, where he became active in state politics.

In 1984 Howard and his family relocated to Vancouver, British Columbia, where he worked as a technical writer. In the early 2000s he began writing film reviews, eventually posting more than 1,500 reviews on numerous websites.

In the early 2000s he also became interested in the Oxfordian movement. Between 2003 and 2016 he wrote more than twenty articles and reviews for Oxfordian publications. Many of the articles were comprehensive reports of Oxfordian conferences, including the annual joint conferences of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship, as well as the annual conferences organized by the late Dr. Daniel Wright at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon.

Roger Stritmatter, who edited *Shakespeare Matters*, the quarterly newsletter of the Shakespeare Fellowship (2001-2013), writes that “Howard was a reserved, quiet man who gave patiently of his time and knowledge. He regularly volunteered for challenging tasks which his training and experience had prepared him to undertake,



such as summarizing Conference lectures and writing newsy stories about Concordia University’s authorship program, the release of *Anonymous*, and other turning points in the Oxfordian odyssey. Howard was also active online in many authorship discussions. Often arriving early and always contributing informed and thoughtful commentary he regularly stymied orthodox Shakespeareans with his command of the essential elements of the Oxfordian case and clear reasoning powers.”

SOF President Earl Showerman recalls that Howard “was especially supportive of the Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre at Concordia, and even reported on the lie that Concordia perpetrated in 2014, assuring the spring conference attendees that they would continue the SARC after dismissing Dan Wright. Howard was a very reliable reporter.”

Reviewing Roland Emmerich’s feature film *Anonymous* in the Winter 2012 issue of *Shakespeare Matters*, Howard gave it an A-. “Though some may point out historical inaccuracies,” he wrote, “Emmerich, citing *Shakespeare in Love* as an example, says that the film contains an ‘emotional truth’ rather than a literal one because ‘the drama is the primary concern.’ He need not have had concern on that aspect. . . . *Anonymous* succeeds both as an authentic drama and a plausible explanation for many of the problems surrounding the authorship question. While the film may lack a certain depth of characterization, it more than makes up for it with style, spectacle, and an involving story.”

In addition to his interest in the authorship question and in films, Howard was a fan of classical music, the Golden State Warriors, the San Francisco 49ers, great food, baseball and books.

He is survived by his wife of forty-seven years, Joan, two sons (David and Marc) and three grandchildren.

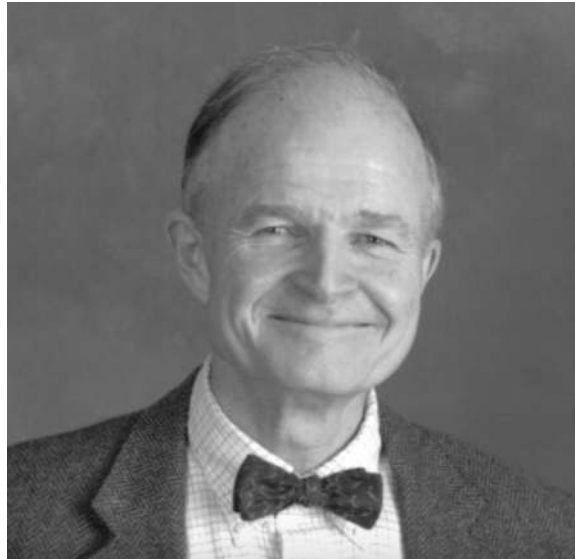
In Memoriam: James S. Hardigg (1922-2020)

by William Boyle

The death more than two years ago of an important Oxfordian, James Sutton Hardigg of Conway, Mass., was overlooked in the chaos of the COVID pandemic, but deserves our attention today. Hardigg was 97 when he passed away on September 17, 2020, having lived a long, productive and eventful life, with many varied interests and much success in his business ventures. In his later years he was also a generous philanthropist, and the Oxfordian cause was one of the beneficiaries. His obituary in *The Greenfield Recorder* (Sept. 23, 2020; <https://www.recorder.com/Events#!/details/Rhyme-Time/6547238/2020-09-23T10>) noted that, “Three months short of his 98th birthday, he was still working on inventions and reading books on science, history, philosophy, and theology, along with the Times Literary Supplement and his well-worn volumes of the 14th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica.”

Hardigg was a graduate of Dartmouth College (1944), studying mathematics, and MIT, where he got a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1945, and was also the head of the Rocket Society. Space exploration was one of his early interests, and he once corresponded with Dr. Robert H. Goddard in preparing to attend MIT.

Hoping to build on his interests in rockets and space exploration, Jim worked for Westinghouse (at their Aircraft Gas Turbine plant in Essington, PA) for a number of years, but was dissatisfied with traditional company culture, and then one day was knocked unconscious in a scuffle over the United Electrical Workers Union attempts (sometimes violent) to unionize the plant. Jim eventually left and set out on his own, first exploring the world (which included climbing the Matterhorn), and then (in 1958) founding his own company, Hardigg Industries. It became one of the acknowledged industry leaders in the field of packaging, winning design awards and holding many patents. Jim’s early work on rocket science had laid the groundwork for some of these awards and patents. Jim and his company were known for the high quality of the work environment and Jim’s dedicated, hands-on management style. The company was eventually sold to Pelican Products in



2008, but remains in its South Deerfield (Mass.) location. In his later years Jim was also noted for his generous support of many philanthropic organizations, with a particular interest in establishing educational scholarships. During these years he had also become friends with Isabel Holden, a board member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. Holden was instrumental in convincing Jim to support the authorship movement and the Society; his first major donation of \$10,000 helped bring SOS operations to Boston in 1995,

underwrite the hiring of a newsletter editor (myself), and purchase computers and software to modernize the production of the newsletter. As James Warren notes in his book *Shakespeare Revolutionized*, this move to Boston marked a new era in the authorship movement. James Hardigg was a key figure in making it happen.

In 1997 Jim wrote a brief article for the *Newsletter* (“Why I support inquiry into the authorship of Shakespeare’s plays and poems”). It covers familiar points, but does reveal the key connection for Hardigg, which is the importance of education and the importance of having the truth in hand when studying anything.

As he noted, “Some teachers suggest that Shakspere of Stratford created the characters entirely from his imagination. This theory was abroad when I was in high school. It caused me to think of Shakespeare’s characters as imaginary and not necessarily true to life. If I had been taught that the plays were written by a highly intelligent member of the court and that the characters were likely based on people known to the author, I would have looked on the plays as biography and history as well as literature, and would have had much more interest in them and learned more from them.

“Thus students of English could be taught both through the study of Shakespeare and the study of other great writers and subjects—that their own native talents may be developed, and that they too may make creative contributions to knowledge and literature.”

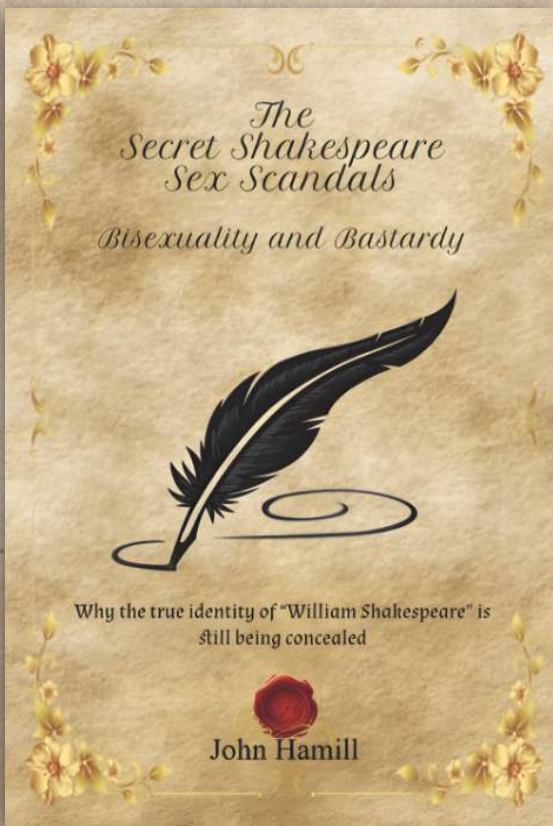
He concluded with this simple statement: “Since I believe that truth is beneficial and untruth is harmful, I support continuing inquiry into the authorship of Shakespeare’s works.”

Truer words were never spoken. Sorry we were so late to weigh in on his passing, but glad to have done so now. Rest in peace, Jim. And thanks.

Advertisement

HIDDEN_{from} HISTORY

The greatest literary scandal you never heard about.



There is no more intriguing, unresolved enigma than this: Who was the man behind the quill that penned the works attributed under the pseudonym William Shakespeare?

Would he self-identify as gay or bisexual were he alive today?

Were bisexuality and bastardy the primary motivators for the adoption of an alias? Disentangle the web of lies and secrets to uncover the true identity of the beloved Bard.

SONNET 144

*Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits suggest me still.
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit is a woman colored ill.*

The Secret Shakespeare Sex Scandals Bisexuality and Bastardy

Why the true identity of "William Shakespeare" is still being concealed.

By John Hamill

\$19.95 | AVAILABLE ON **amazon**

What's the News?

Register Now for the 2023 Annual Conference in New Orleans

Registration is now open for the SOF's 2023 Conference, which will be in New Orleans from Thursday, November 9, through Sunday, November 12. The Conference will take place at the Hyatt Centric Hotel in the French Quarter.

Though New Orleans is an expensive city and though additional special events are being offered to conference-goers, registration fees are the same as the 2022 conference in Ashland, thanks to a special grant from a Louisiana-based foundation that has asked to remain anonymous. SOF sincerely thanks that foundation and urges members to book early for lowest costs.

The registration fee will include not only attendance at as many as twenty presentations, but also lunches on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and a guided city tour of New Orleans and a two-hour jazz dinner cruise on the Mississippi on Thursday. As usual, there will also be free refreshment breaks throughout the Conference.

The early registration discount fee for members is \$250 per person if booked by October 1 or earlier (\$275 for non-members).

For those unable to attend in person, all presentation sessions will also be livestreamed and will be available through the SOF website for \$99.

Special daily registration rates are also available, as are "mate rates" for Thursday, November 9 (which includes the tour and dinner cruise). See the SOF website for further details.

To protect those who book early, full refunds will be made to anyone who needs to cancel a registration on or before October 1 (the date we need to confirm numbers with our host hotel). For anyone seeking a refund between October 2 and November 2, all but \$99 will be refunded, with the remainder of the fee turned into a livestream registration.

Presentations will begin at 1 PM on Thursday, November 9. At 4 PM the group will board chartered buses for a city tour, which will conclude at the city dock at about 6:30. There we will board the paddlewheeler *Creole Queen*, which will set off at 7 PM on a two-hour Mississippi River cruise. The cruise will feature a jazz band and an old-fashioned New



Orleans Creole buffet dinner. Buses will return us to the hotels.

The conference continues on Friday, November 10, from about 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

On Saturday, November 11, the SOF Annual General Meeting will be held from 9 to 10:15 AM. Conference presentations resume at 10:30 and will go until 5:30 PM. The Conference concludes on Sunday, November 12, with presentations from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM, followed by an Awards Banquet from 12:30 to 2 PM. (All times mentioned are tentative. A final program will be announced closer to the date.)

Special room rates have been arranged at both the Hyatt Centric (\$220-240 per night) and at the nearby Homewood Suites (\$149 per night), which is also in the French Quarter, about five streets away. These rates do not include tax of about 16%.

A limited number of rooms have been booked at both hotels for November 9, 10 and 11. The same rates will be offered for one or two nights before and after those dates if rooms are available. If you cannot get the additional nights, try booking just the three core nights at the special rates and let Conference Director Don Rubin (drubin@yorku.ca) know what nights you would like to add. He is in touch with the hotels and will try to help. Alternatively, you can try the other hotel, which might be available.

To register for the Conference, and to book a hotel room, please go to the SOF website: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2023-annual-conference/>

First Call for 2023 Conference Presentations

Proposals for presentations at the 2023 SOF Conference in New Orleans—live or prerecorded—are now being accepted by the Conference Committee. The deadline for submissions is June 15.

Approximately twenty presentation slots will be available, ranging in length from 20 to 45 minutes for individual papers, and from 60 to 90 minutes for themed panel discussions with three or more persons.

All proposals must connect to some aspect of Oxfordianism and/or the authorship question generally. The Committee will give priority to topics relating to the First Folio (this year's conference is taking place the same week as the Folio was published exactly 400 years ago). Other topics of interest for 2023 include "Shakespeare and Music" and "Shakespeare and the French Connection." Both these areas were of keen interest to Oxford, and are especially appropriate to the New Orleans setting for this year's conference.

Papers: Proposals for papers should include the title, an abstract or description (200-500 words) and a biography of no more than 300 words (less if you have been a regular presenter). All paper proposals should specify length (15, 25, or 40 minutes). Five minutes will be added to each of these times for questions and discussion. Please indicate whether you will present in person or will prerecord your presentation.

Panels: All panel proposals should indicate a theme and the names of at least two people who might be approached to participate. You do not have to be a panelist yourself. The Committee may combine panel proposals and/or arrange for other speakers.

All proposals should be sent by e-mail to Conference Chair Don Rubin (drubin@yorku.ca) or to any member of the Conference Committee.

The Committee will notify speakers if their proposal has been accepted by July 1 (earlier if possible). If needed, a second call for presentations will be made around July 1, with a deadline of August 15.

Oxfordian Frank Lawler Translates Abel Lefranc's 1918-19 Study of Shakespeare

SOF member Frank Lawler has released *Behind the Mask of William Shakespeare*, a new annotated English translation of Abel Lefranc's *Sous le Masque de William Shakespeare* under the imprint of James Warren's Veritas Publications. The following are excerpts from an interview with Lawler at the Michigan-based Oberon Shakespeare Study Group, as first reported online by Linda Theil.

Oberon: What drew you to this enormous project?

Lawler: Abel Lefranc's two-volume *Sous le Masque de William Shakespeare* was published in 1918 and 1919. The man was a brilliant scholar of literary history who, as a Frenchman, wasn't burdened with the entrenched English hagiography of the man from Stratford. A world-renowned expert on Molière and Rabelais, he had academic credentials rivaling those of the greatest of the orthodox bardologists of the early 20th century. Lefranc, however, thought the Stratfordian myth was ludicrous. Having spent most of his career discovering the many links between biographies of great French writers and their works, he was convinced the grain-hoarding, illiterate skinflint from Warwickshire could never have penned the Shakespearean canon.

Lefranc believed the true author was William Stanley, 6th earl of Derby. I don't subscribe to his conclusions, but I've come to believe that Stanley—

and likely his brother Ferdinando—are part of the whole authorship mystery. Stanley was married to Edward de Vere's daughter, and he shared some of his father-in-law's interests as well as some of his temperament. He had also traveled extensively in Europe and was closely tied to the courts of both Elizabeth and James.

When I first came across Lefranc's research, I found that a fellow Canadian, Cecil Cragg, had translated the book into English in the 1980s; but the work had been out of print for decades. Having grown up in a bilingual environment, I fortunately had a solid, though rusty, grounding in the French language. I was able to find a facsimile of the original edition and began reading it. I was soon engrossed in the material, but I also came across quite a few inaccuracies that needed to be addressed. About half of them were transcription errors and the other half were the results of early research that had been superseded in the intervening century since the work's publication. I decided to embark on a new translation of the entire work. The pandemic was screaming for a project to fill quarantined hours, and this filled the bill.

Jim Warren approached me in October 2021, to see if I would be interested in having the work published by Veritas Press. I had designed a couple of book covers for him, and he had heard about my translation project through the grapevine.

Oberon: Was Lefranc's book in the public domain?

Lawler: Yes. Some of his later work, however, is not, due to changes in copyright law that occurred after the publication of *Sous le Masque de William Shakespeare*.

Oberon: Will you publish an e-book?

Lawler: Good question. Veritas press does not currently publish digital versions of its books, though that may change. It's also a bigger time commitment than it may seem. I have learned from experience that a lot of reformatting and trial and error is needed to produce a quality Kindle or EPUB book. So many e-books out there are quick and dirty copies of print versions, and I wouldn't want this to be one of them.

Oberon: Have you had any interesting feedback yet?

Lawler: I know of at least two authorship scholars who are writing reviews of the book, but in terms of individual comments, they have almost uniformly been along the lines of "I've got your book, but haven't yet plunged in," which is entirely understandable, given that it's almost 600 pages of small print on a rather esoteric subject. I am reminded of Winston Churchill: "This Treasury paper, by its very length, defends itself against the risk of being read."

Oberon: Can you tell us more about your life?

Lawler: I'm originally from the Ottawa Valley in Canada. After high school, I moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to attend Harvard. I stuck around the

Boston area for a total of about a decade before being recruited by Microsoft in the 1990s to work in their advanced consumer technology group. I left the software world in the early 2000s and turned my attention to other interests—the top three being theatre, advocacy for the homeless, and family history. I am a member of Actor's Equity Association, vice-president of the board for Operation Nightwatch, and a council member of the Clan Hannay Society in Scotland. I live in Seattle with my wife. With our son off in his freshman year at college, we are recent empty-nesters.

Oberon: Where would you put *Behind the Mask* on your list of lifetime accomplishments?

Lawler: You make it sound so grandiose! This is my third book; the first was an original play, *Holiday of Errors*, published by StageRights/Broadway Licensing; and my second was a family history work, *The Hannays of Sorbie* (4th ed.), published by the Clan Hannay Society. *Behind the Mask* is the first time I've done a translation. I've felt that each of these books has exercised different parts of my brain. Certainly, the pandemic gave this particular project unprecedented levels of isolation and focus. Hopefully it won't take another global outbreak to summon those again.

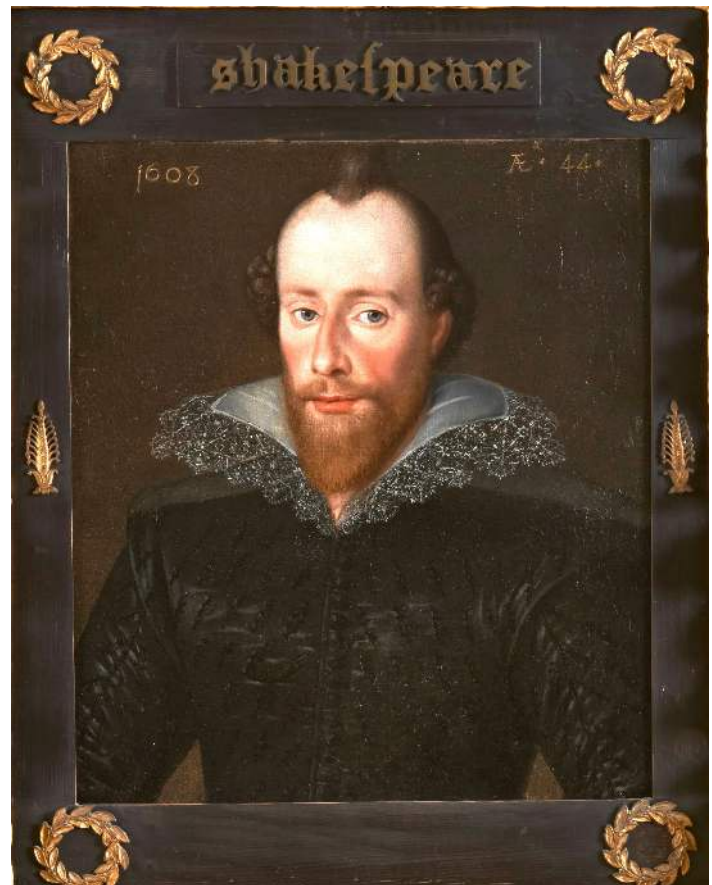
Yet Another "Authentic" Portrait of "Shakespeare" Emerges

In late November 2022 there was a lot of publicity about a portrait of "Shakespeare" being offered for sale at \$12 million.

The portrait is said to have been made by Robert Peake. It includes the date "1608" in the upper left corner, and "AE 44" in the upper right corner. It also features the monogram "RP." Art writer and dealer Duncan Philips told the *Guardian* that "One historian said that if anyone was ever likely to have painted Shakespeare, it was Robert Peake. Peake and Shakespeare worked in the same building and would have known each other well."

Not everyone agreed. Michael Dobson, director of the Shakespeare Institute and a trustee of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, noted that the painting "is not labeled as a portrait of Shakespeare, who would surely have insisted on having his coat of arms in one corner of the canvas."

Few people seem to have heard about this painting before. It was bought at auction in 1975 (for only £400), as part of the sale of the contents of Swinton Hall, Masham, in Yorkshire. Swinton Park, located there, was the seat of the Danby family for many generations. The painting was thought to have been acquired by William Danby (1752-1833). An inner frame bears the title "Shakespeare." This addition was thought to have been



one of several frames known to have been made at William Danby's direction around 1795.

At the time of the 1975 auction the painting was attributed to someone named "Van Somer." In 2016 it was examined by the Courtauld Institute. The inner frame was removed, which revealed the "RP" monogram.

That seems to have been a game-changer. In 1975, people had known for at least 180 years that there existed a painting with "Shakespeare" prominently displayed on an inner frame, and with the date "1608" and "AE 44" visible on it, yet it fetched a mere £400. That certainly suggests that no one in 1975 seriously believed that it was a portrait of Shakespeare. So who was "RP"?

Robert Peake (1551-1619) was a prolific painter. He received commissions from the Office of the Revels to paint scenery at the Priory of St. John, where there were also rehearsal rooms. Thus, the reasoning goes, Peake and Shakespeare must have known each other.

However, as Bonner Miller Cutting notes, it is not clear that Peake and Will Shakspeare were working at the Office of the Revels properties at the same time. Roy Strong, in his chapter on Peake in *The English Icon*, states that Peake worked for the Revels Office in 1576-78, when Shakspeare was a boy living in Stratford.

By the 1590s Peake was "well established as a portrait painter with a fashionable clientele." His career took off upon the accession of King James, when he became "the principal painter to Prince Henry, and in 1607 received a grant of the Office of Serjeant Painter...."

Moreover, it should be noted that someone (maybe not Peake) conveniently thought to put "1608" and "AE 44" on the canvas, just to make sure that future generations would be sure to do the arithmetic and realize that the sitter was born in 1564 and therefore must be the poet and playwright Will Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon. It would be nice to know whether experts can say for sure that the "1608" and "AE 44" markings were original to the painting and have not been tampered with—it would be easy to change "1603" to "1608" or "41" to "44."

Another supposed connection between Peake and Shakespeare is that Robert Peake's son, William, made prints of engravings made by Martin Droeshout, who made the famous engraving of "Shakespeare" in the 1623 First Folio. But this connection seems weak—how many printmakers would there have been in London in the early seventeenth century?

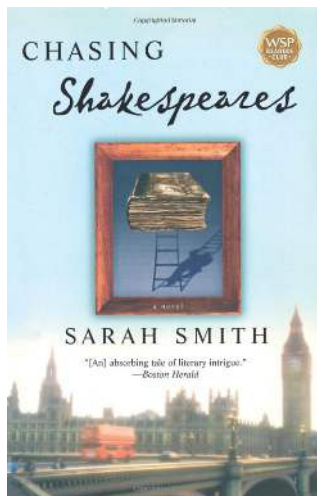
At press time for this issue, there is no report of the painting having been sold.

Sarah Smith's 2004 Oxfordian Novel Now Available in Paperback

Gary Goldstein, editor of *The Oxfordian*, informs us that "I just discovered that the best Oxfordian authorship novel, *Chasing Shakespeares* by Sarah Smith, originally published in 2004 by Atria Press (Simon and Schuster), has been reissued in paperback by Max Light Books in a 300-page paperback edition for \$14.95. It got tremendous reviews." The novel tells the story of two graduate students who uncover evidence that the man from Stratford didn't write the plays.

Here is a sampling of the reviews:

"The best novel about the Bard since *Nothing Like the Sun*"—Samuel R. Delany (a prominent science fiction author)



"Wonderfully entertaining, thought-provoking, and highly readable—a stunning combination of fascinating fact and exciting fiction"—Sir Derek Jacobi

"Anyone who enjoyed A.S. Byatt's *Possession* or Josephine Tey's *The Daughter of Time* will be suitably charmed—and enlightened. Literate, polished literary entertainment"—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Smart, sexy modern-day mystery reminiscent of A.S. Byatt's *Possession*"—*Boston Globe*

"Marjorie Garber, meet Reese Witherspoon"—*The New York Times*

"A remarkable achievement, blending history and fantasy, past and present, ideas and emotions into a seamless whole that is as entertaining as it is thought-provoking"—Iain Pears, author of *An Instance of the Fingerpost*

"By page five I forgot I was reading to comment and began reading to devour. *Chasing Shakespeares* is breezy, erudite, never ponderous, a love story about how we make our heroes, and how they make us"—Gregory Maguire, author of *Wicked*

A Postscript to “Does the 17th Earl of Oxford ‘lieth buried in Westminster’?”

by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan and Bonner Miller Cutting

In a letter in the last issue of the *Newsletter*, Gary Goldstein commented on our article, “Does the 17th Earl of Oxford ‘lieth buried in Westminster’?” (Summer 2022 *Newsletter*), which was based on Percival Golding’s Vere family manuscript archived in the Harleian manuscripts in the British Library. In the manuscript’s short biography of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, Golding noted that Oxford “lieth buried at Westminster” and was “of the Privy Council to the King’s Majesty that now is.” Goldstein pointed out that, so far as is known, Edward de Vere never served on the Privy Council, and wondered how Golding “could write such a categorical statement... that could easily be refuted and Golding humiliated for making such an egregious error.”

We did not investigate, or comment on, Percival Golding’s statement about Oxford and the Privy Council. Our intent in the article was only to investigate the possibility that Westminster Abbey is the final resting place of England’s eminent poet/playwright. Along with a transcription of Percival’s document (published for the first time in its entirety in the *Newsletter*), a major purpose of our research was to determine its date of composition.

After researching the personal circumstances of all of the family members referred to in the manuscript, we concur with the conclusion that Christopher Paul reached in his fine article in the Fall 2006 issue of the *Newsletter*, that 1619 is likely to be its composition date. Exactly when Percival began work on it is somewhat more elusive, though dates of marriages, births and deaths narrow the timeline.

As far as we know, Percival Golding’s account is the only unambiguous reference to Oxford’s possible burial at Westminster, so it is important to consider his credibility. Charlton Ogburn commented that Percival was in a position to be knowledgeable about the lives of his noble relatives (*The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 765). In our article, we discussed Thomas Kendall and Thomas Wilson, two contemporaries with whom Percival was associated. Kendall was a manager of an acting company at court, and Wilson was a close associate of the Cecil family. Both could have been vectors of information about people in court circles.

However, Percival did make mistakes here and there. He does not have the correct name of Horatio Vere’s fifth daughter, nor does he notice a sixth daughter, who was born in January of 1619 and died in 1623 at the age of four.¹ As we noted, other mistakes may be accounted for by the lack of available sources of information. Percival himself is aware of this difficulty, apologizing in the Dedication for his “Distracted time and troublesome estate (unfit to bring anything to perfection) as also my scarcity of books and want of access to Records.”

In *The Fighting Veres*, Clements Markham informs us that Horatio Vere resided at his London house from 1619 to the summer of 1620, and this time frame would have provided a window of opportunity for Percival to present the manuscript to his Vere cousin. Also, from the manuscript itself, it is clear that Percival did not pursue new information about his Vere relatives after the 1619 date (or early 1620 at the very latest).

It is possible that the “gift” of the manuscript never took place. The coats of arms of the branches of the Vere family are an important component of Percival’s document, and it appears that he consulted the Windsor Herald Augustine Vincent for advice. That the manuscript may have languished thereafter in Vincent’s possession is indicated by its provenance. It was purchased from the Vincent manuscripts at the College of Heralds for the Harleian collection in the early 18th century.

For several reasons, Percival Golding’s statement that Oxford “lieth buried in Westminster” may carry more weight than his statement about Oxford’s service on King James’s Privy Council. First, the case for Oxford on the Privy Council has no evidentiary support. A good place to search for documentary evidence is in *The Acts of the Privy Council*, available on the British History Online website. Volume 32 of the *Acts* covers the early years of King James’s reign, and there is no mention of Oxford in attendance at any Council meeting. There is no mention that he was sworn into the Council, as other members were, and the swearing-in process would have generated another record. In fact, Queen Elizabeth’s Privy Council ceased to meet after her death on March 24, 1603, and the new King’s Council met for the first time on April 25, 1603.² By this time instructions had been received from James for the swearing-in of four new Englishmen.³ Eleven men from the deceased Queen’s Council were in attendance at the Council meeting held at Theobalds on May 4, 1603, and were sworn in at this time. Along with them, five of King James’s Scottish entourage were sworn to the new Council along with the additional Englishman Henry Howard. It is recorded that, at this meeting at Theobalds, King James stated that he did not want his Privy Council to exceed twenty-four men.⁴ Oxford’s name is not in any of these records. (An article in the 2021 *Oxfordian* suggested that a letter dated April 8, 1603, might contain an indication that Oxford was a Privy Councillor. This letter is closely examined in this issue; see page 13.)

Another consideration is the time period of Oxford’s postulated Council service, as it would have been early in King James’s reign (1603-04). Percival Golding wrote his manuscript fifteen years later. This time interval could have allowed an impression to form with the

Goldings that their eminent relative had indeed served on the King's Privy Council; or it may have been some other kind of family rumor.

However, if Oxford's remains had been moved from his initial interment at the St. Augustine Church in Hackney, that event would have occurred much closer in time to the date of Percival Golding's manuscript. In her will of November 1612, Oxford's Countess Elizabeth Trentham expressed her wish to be buried by him at the Hackney church. This suggests that Oxford's remains were moved from Hackney to Westminster *after* the Countess's will was probated in February of 1613 and *before* Percival's manuscript was composed in 1619. Percival's acquaintance with Thomas Wilson, a long-standing Cecil family retainer and government administrator, might have been helpful in obtaining this news.⁵

The return of Henry de Vere, the 18th Earl of Oxford, to London in the fall of 1618 should be factored in as well. If his father (and possibly also his mother) were to be reinterred in Westminster Abbey, the 18th Earl would likely be the instigator of it. At a minimum, he would have to be consulted. A document in the Ancaster family archives reveals that Henry visited his sister "Darbie" in London sometime that fall.⁶ Is the removal of their father to Westminster something they might have discussed? These events indicate a time frame from late 1618 to early 1619.

We remain certain that Percival Golding was as reliable a witness as the times would have permitted. In spite of several errors—one of which is the Privy Council comment—this document appears to be a sincere effort on Percival's part to report the facts as he discerned them.

Endotes:

¹ For more details about Sir Horatio Vere and his family, see *The Fighting Veres* by Clements Markham, first published in 1888, now available through Forgotten Books.

² *Acts of the Privy Council*, Vol 32 (495).

³ King James sent instructions on April 10, 1603, for the swearings-in of the Earls of Northumberland, Cumberland, Lord Mountjoy and Lord Thomas Howard. Northumberland and Howard were sworn in at the April 25th meeting. The Earl of Cumberland took the oath the next day, and Lord Mountjoy later that summer.

⁴ It appears from the *Acts of the Privy Council, Vol. 32*, that at the time of the meeting at Theobalds on May 4, 1603, King James's councilors would have numbered twenty-one (495-497). By May 11, 1603, the King had added Lord Zouche and Lord Burghley (William Cecil's older son Thomas), bringing the number to twenty-three.

⁵ See Lewis Thorn Golding's *An Elizabethan Puritan* for more details on the Golding/Wilson connection.

⁶ For citation regarding Henry's return to London, see note 7 in our article in the Summer *Newsletter* referencing the manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster.

News from Atlanta: Declaration of Reasonable Doubt to be Displayed, New Play on Authorship Question to be Performed in April

by Bob Prechter

After some friendly negotiating, the head of the Shakespeare Tavern in Atlanta, Jeff Watkins, has agreed to frame and display a poster of John Shahan's beacon to the world, the famous "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt About the Identity of William Shakespeare." Jeff is not an Oxfordian, but he has an open mind on the issue. There are ten blank spaces for signatures at the bottom of the poster, and Jeff has invited any "famous" Oxfordians who visit the Tavern to sign it.

As noted in the previous issue of the *Newsletter*, there is a good reason for Oxfordians to visit the Tavern this spring. Jeff has commissioned a play addressing the authorship question, titled *By My Will*, newly penned by award-winning playwright Douglas Post. Tying the two items together, Post's research led him to sign the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt!

I found the script to be neutral on the authorship question and well-informed on many points pertaining to the Earl of Oxford. The play is scheduled to be performed Thursdays through Sundays from April 8 through April 30, with previews on April 6 and 7. The Tavern website—ShakespeareTavern.com—discusses the play and posts an interview with the author.

The Atlanta Shakespeare Company (ASC) has a proud history dating back to 1990. It was the first American company invited to perform on the stage of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. The Tavern is one of the few venues to have produced Shakespeare's entire thirty-nine-play canon twice.

If anyone wants to attend and desires company, let me know. bob@oxfordvoices.com

Examining the Earl of Oxford's "New" Signature of 1603

by Bonner Miller Cutting

This article examines a letter written after a meeting that took place in London on April 8, 1603; it was signed by seventeen persons. It appears that Oxford was present as his signature is on it, but oddly, he used a new signature that is different from the distinctive one on most of the letters and documents of his adulthood. Why would he change the way he signed his name?

In a 2021 article ("Did the 17th Earl of Oxford Serve on Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council?" *The Oxfordian* 23) Gary Goldstein expressed a view that the letter is evidence that Oxford was on the Privy Council at the time; if so, it would add support to Percival Golding's later statement in a manuscript (now in the British Library) that Oxford was a Privy Councillor.¹

This matter can be cleared up. As noted in the article by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan and me (see page 10), Volume 32 of *The Acts of the Privy Council* shows that King James's Privy Council did not meet until April 25, 1603 (495). The index at the back of each volume of the *Acts* lists the names of attendees at each Council meeting. Oxford's name does not appear in the attendance list in volume 32 or in any other volume.²

The purpose of the April 8 letter was to authorize the use of post horses from the postmaster to transport the new King and his entourage on his travel down from Scotland. For this service, payment of £150 from the royal Exchequer would also have to be authorized. Because Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council was no longer meeting (she had died on March 24), and King James had not had time to select new councillors and get them sworn in, the best that could be done was to gather the available noblemen in London to authorize the use of the horses and payment for them.³

It is instructive to identify the others who signed the April 8th document. Seventeen names appear at the bottom of the letter (listed here as each man signed his name). Of these, only four were members of the former monarch's council: Nottingham, Tho. Egerton (later Lord Ellesmere), T. Buckhurst (later Earl of Dorset), and Worcester. The remaining signers were *not* councillors to the Queen (listed in the order of their signatures beginning at the top left): E. Oxenforde, Ro Sussex, Pembroke, Rutland, Thomas Howard⁴ (later Earl of Suffolk), Ric: London, William Sandys, Lawarre,⁵ Ro: Riche, J: Davies, Windsor, G Chandos, Fran Norrys.

It appears that Francis Norrys, Oxford's son-in-law, was the last to sign, with his name appearing at the bottom right.⁶ All of the signers were noblemen except for the Bishop of London and John Davies, though both men would hold prominent positions in King James's soon-to-be-established royal administration. Members of the deceased Queen's Council who did *not* sign the letter

are: John Whitgift (Archbishop of Canterbury), Earl of Shrewsbury, Sir William Knollys, Sir John Stanhope, Sir Robert Cecil, Sir John Fortesque, Sir John Popham, and Mr. John Herbert. It is a reasonable presumption that these eight men did not attend the April 8th meeting. Thus, it seems that the meeting was made up primarily of nobles who could lend their authority to transportation arrangements and payment for the new King's journey to London. That most of the signers were elite aristocrats suggests that they were tapped for this interim duty as members of Parliament's House of Lords.

It may be hard for us to understand the extent to which the courtiers of the era were fixated with matters of rank, status and precedence. An example is found in an incident concerning the same Earl of Nottingham who signed the April 8 letter. In what has been described by historian Robert Lacey as "one of the Earl of Essex' favorite tricks," Essex would place his signature on letters and documents so tall and close to the text that Nottingham could not fit his name above it, as he thought was his right as the Lord High Admiral. On one occasion, Nottingham displayed such a "fit of pique" over Essex's oversize signature that he took out his penknife and slashed it off (151).⁷

Considering the aristocratic obsession with precedence, the April 8 letter was likely signed from the top down in the order of the attendees' rank. It is probable that Nottingham was the first person to sign, and if the rest of the men in the room knew of the incident with the knife, they were glad to let the Lord High Admiral have his way. Nottingham probably ran the meeting, especially in the absence of Mr. Secretary Cecil; his signature is directly under the closing salutation at the top right.

The next to sign may well have been Egerton at the top far left, followed by Buckhurst. They were the Lord Keeper and Lord Treasurer respectively; these were powerful offices in the deceased Queen's government.⁸ It can be seen in the image of the letter in the 2021 *Oxfordian* that the signatures of Nottingham, Egerton and Buckhurst take up most of the space on the top line. Still, Oxford held England's premier earldom and was the Lord Great Chamberlain, and may have expected that his high rank entitled him to top-line signage. If this is what occurred, then there wasn't enough room for him to use his customary (and idiosyncratic) "coronet" signature shown on the following page. He would have had to use an abbreviated version or sign below these three men. Did he decide on the spot to use a shortened version of his name?

Taking into consideration how this "abbreviated" signature compares with Oxford's previous ones, it appears that the letters are all formed in the same way and made with the same up and down strokes. Another similarity is the wider spacing of the letters themselves compared to several other signatures, especially the cramped signatures of Robert Rich and John Davies.

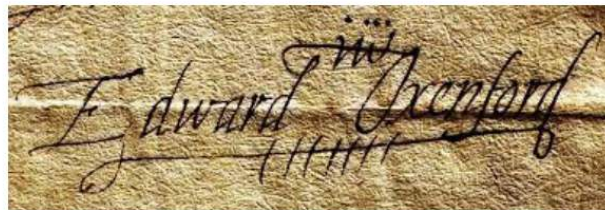
Even without the decorative “coronet” embellishment, Oxford’s penchant for the flamboyant is evident in the complex flourish connecting the final *e* with the *f*. This has been called the “knot” signature.

Interestingly, Oxford continued to use this new version afterward. Oxford wrote four letters to Robert Cecil seeking his help with his efforts to be awarded the Keepership of the Forest of Waltham and Havering Park. These properties had belonged to the Vere family for generations and had been confiscated from his father by Henry VIII. It is likely that the innovative knot signature appears on at least two of those letters, abstracts of which are preserved at Hatfield House.⁹ Also, the knot signature appears on Oxford’s last surviving letter, written on January 30, 1604 (New Style). This letter, in the Essex Record Office, deserves special attention.¹⁰

Oxford writes directly to King James to thank him for restoring the properties to him. His appreciation is palpable. Overall, Oxford’s handwriting demonstrates that careful thought went into the letter; the penmanship is far more beautiful than his hurried writing in the tin letters. He was obviously taking his time. The closing salutation is breathtaking. Oxford writes “Yowre Magestyes most humble subiect and Servant,” setting out the words on a descending diagonal line and ending at the lower right of the page, and connecting them with decorative swirls. Is there a letter in early modern England with anything else like this? Could it be that Shakespeare is bowing to the new monarch?

Endnotes:

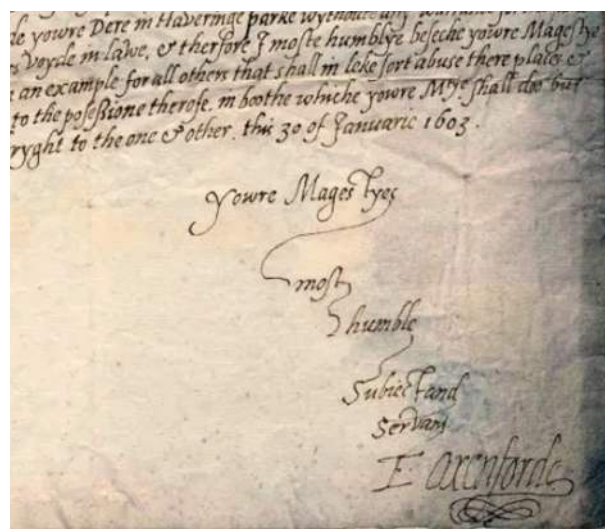
- ¹ The 2021 article includes a holograph photo of this letter.
- ² Records of the Privy Council from 1603 to 1613 were destroyed in 1618 in a fire at the Whitehall Palace banqueting room. However, documents kept elsewhere shed light on the new King’s administration during these years.
- ³ The letter itself has some peculiarities. The left and bottom sides are smooth, unlike the top and right edges, indicating that the margins have been trimmed and some writing lost. The curator at the Folger Shakespeare Library, where the letter is archived, could be consulted to determine if there had initially been enough room in the margins for additional signatories. Also, the document has been altered by the faint addition of several titles. Under Egerton’s name is “Earl of Ellesmere,” a title he was given later (and he was made a baron, not an earl). Similarly, “Earl of Dorset” appears faintly under Buckhurst’s signature, though he did not receive that title until later in 1603. A clarification of “Ric: London” appears below his signature to point out that he is “Richard Bancroft,” the Bishop of London at the time. He was likely called to the meeting in place of Elizabeth’s Privy Councillor John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury.
- ⁴ It is likely that this is Thomas Howard, not Henry Howard, as Thomas served as the Queen’s Lord Chamberlain. Note that the initial of his first name (if there was one) was lost when the margin was trimmed on the left side of the letter.
- ⁵ Thomas, Lord De La Warre’s full signature is also cut off by the reduced left margin.



“Coronet” signature



“Knot” signatures: April 8, 1603 January 30, 1604



New signature style: bowing to the new monarch?

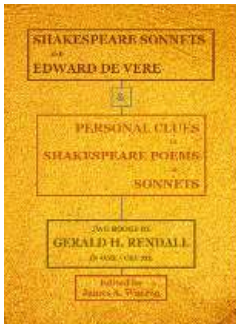
- ⁶ Known as the 2nd Baron Norreys, Francis Norreys’s grandfather died on October 17, 1601. In this letter, Francis spells his name “Norrys.” Historians usually spell it “Norreys”.
- ⁷ Robert Lacey. *Robert, Earl of Essex: An Elizabethan Icarus*. Great Britain: Phoenix Press, 1971.
- ⁸ In the lists of Councilors in the many volumes of *The Acts of the Privy Council*, the names are almost always listed by rank, and the Lord Keeper is listed before the Lord Treasurer.
- ⁹ Oxford’s letters at Hatfield House are in printed books, so the holograph signatures are not available for comparison. However, it is stated at the end of a letter of April 1603 that it is signed “E. Oxenford” (this letter is without the day of the month and has no *e* at the end). Another letter to Robert Cecil, dated May 7, 1603, is signed “E. Oxenforde.” The presumption is that Oxford used the knot signature on both letters. In her book *The Crisis and Consequences of Wardship*, Daphne Pearson uses this signature from his last letter on the cover.
- ¹⁰ Roger Stritmatter has posted the entire holographic letter to King James along with a transcription of it on his website at <https://shake-speares-bible.com/2022/04/26/your-majestys-most-humble-servant-the-earl-of-oxfords-last-surviving-letter/>.



Advertisement

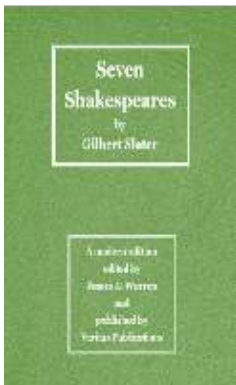
Veritas Publications
Bringing Hidden Truths to Light

releases new editions of three Oxfordian classics, in two volumes:



Gerald H. Rendall's Shakespeare Sonnets and Edward de Vere (1930) & Personal Clues in Shakespeare Poems & Sonnets (1934) (in one volume)

Through an intense study of Shakespeare's poems, sonnets and plays—and Edward de Vere's life and early poems—Rendall found “coincidences so numerous, so circumstantial, so surprising and illuminating, that it became impossible to refuse to recognise in them the handiwork of Edward de Vere.” With an introduction and index by the editor. ISBN 979-8-9861351-3-7, paperback, 6x9, 422 pages, \$22.



Gilbert Slater's Seven Shakespeares: A Discussion of the Evidence for Various Theories with Regard to Shakespeare's Identity (1931)

Slater, one of the most prominent British scholars of the 1930s, examines the claims of the seven authorship candidates most worthy of consideration. Endeavoring “to think and feel as a conscientious judge and not as an advocate,” he concluded that Edward de Vere was “the central figure” of the collaborators whose works were known as Shakespeare's. With an introduction and index by the editor. ISBN 979-8-9861351-5-1, paperback, 5.5x8.5, 310 pages, \$15.

Also available:

Percy Allen, *Complete Writings on Shakespeare, 1923-1953*, in seven volumes (2022)

Stephanie Hopkins Hughes: *Educating Shakespeare: What he knew and how and where he learned it* (2022)

Abel Lefranc, *Behind the Mask of William Shakespeare* (a new translation by Frank Lawler) (1918/2022)

J. Thomas Looney, “*Shakespeare*” Identified, Centenary Edition (1920/2019)

J. Thomas Looney, “*Shakespeare*” Revealed: Collected articles and pub. letters, 1920-1941 (2019)

Esther Singleton, *Shakespearian Fantasias: Adventures in the Fourth Dimension* (1930/2019)

James A. Warren, *Shakespeare Revolutionized: The First 100 Years of the Oxfordian Movement* (2021)

James A. Warren, *Summer Storm: A Novel of Ideas* (2016/2019)

Coming, Spring 2023:

Capt. Bernard M. Ward, *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford 1550-1604* (1928)

Book Reviews

John Hamill, *The Secret Shakespeare Sex Scandals—Bisexuality and Bastardy: Why the true identity of ‘William Shakespeare’ is still being concealed* (334 pp., 2022; paperback: \$19.95, also available on Kindle)

Reviewed by Earl Showerman



The Secret Shakespeare Sex Scandals is the result of John Hamill’s passionate pursuit of the intriguing topics of Shakespeare’s sexual orientation and the nature of the romantic and procreative themes and allusions that pervade his works. The bibliography is prodigious, listing more than 100 books and nearly fifty articles, films and lectures related to the subjects of Shakespeare interpretation, sexual identity, and Renaissance history. The great strength of the book is its 100-page radical exposition of Shakespeare’s sexuality, homoeroticism within the works, and the broader topics of bisexuality and homosexuality in Renaissance England and within the theater community.

In his introduction, Hamill cites 19th-century Shakespeare editor Horace Howard Furness, who lamented that he was “one of many who have never been able to bring the life of William Shakespeare and the plays of Shakespeare within planetary distance of each other.” Hamill notes the worshipful attitude toward Shakespeare exhibited by modern critics such as Harold Bloom, who wrote, “In cognitive originality, sweep of consciousness, and creation of language, Shakespeare surpasses all others.” Such idolatry, Hamill reminds us, infuses the emotional investment in the traditional attribution, and makes changing minds by appealing to historical facts and logic almost impossible.

In the first two chapters Hamill covers ground that is familiar to most Oxfordians—the weakness of the traditional case for Shakespeare of Stratford as the true author, and the strength of the case for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Hamill then launches into the core arguments that set this volume apart through in-depth analyses of bisexuality reflected in the canon, especially in the Sonnets, and the evidence of homoeroticism in Elizabethan aristocratic and theater cultures. Hamill briefly discusses the various motives for long-term concealment of the author’s identity that have been proposed by Oxfordians, including the “Prince Tudor” or “Dynastic Succession” theory, the social taboo against members of the nobility writing and publishing plays for the public theaters, and the political consequences that might result from using allegory to

impugn the reputation of Queen Elizabeth or members of her court.

Hamill argues for another explanation, one that hinges first on accepting that Edward de Vere was bisexual. However, the only documentary evidence of this are the Arundel libels, which claimed that “Oxford was a complete sodomite, guilty of the triple crime of atheism, pederasty, and necromancy, and their correlatives: prevarication and murder... a monstrous adversary who would drink my blood rather than wine” (Alan Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary*, 214). Arundel claimed that

Oxford’s teenage Italian page, Orazio Cuoco, complained how horribly Oxford had abused him. However, when he was later queried by an Inquisition court on his return to Venice, Cuoco only described Oxford as a beneficent, religiously tolerant, multilingual host during the eleven months Orazio lived under his care in England. Citing Arundel’s libels as proof of Oxford’s sexual engagement with younger males does not confirm or deny that possibility.

The next three chapters—“Bisexuality and Bastardy,” “Homosexuality in Renaissance England” and “Homosexuality in the Theatre”—explore areas of Shakespeare criticism that have clearly caused academic discomfort. Hamill quotes Professor Maurice Charney: “The issues of the homoerotic in Shakespeare are hopelessly entwined in academic controversy. Everything seems to come back to the unanswerable questions of Shakespeare’s own sexual orientation.” If the Earl of Oxford wrote the works of Shakespeare, Hamill asserts, then the problem is no longer unanswerable.

Citing Oxfordian scholar Robin Fox on homoerotic characters in Shakespeare and in the classical tradition, Hamill lays the groundwork for understanding of how “homosexuality in Western history was seen more as a mode of experience than as a type of personality ... and everyone was capable of it. The legal punishments were not for homosexuality, but for homosexual acts (sodomy).” In fact, homosexual acts were rarely prosecuted in England during the Renaissance. No less a scholar than Jonathan Bate has remarked that Shakespeare “imagined every type of romantic and sexual love. It is probable Shakespeare, once in London, would have tried anything.”

Literary treatment of same-sex attraction was more often implicit than explicit, although Marlowe, Barnfield, Drayton, and Donne all wrote homoerotic lyrics. Stanley Wells included Shakespeare within this group of poets writing of “masculine love,” commenting that “his plays are full of close, loving, even passionate male friendships.” As for the notorious reputation of the London theater patrons, Hamill cites Peter Ackroyd,

who asserted that the theaters were “little better than pickup joints for queer men. The acting companies were, therefore, schools for scandal.”

Hamill provides numerous examples of bisexual relationships represented in Shakespeare’s plays, including *As You Like It*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Bruce Smith noted how the plots of Shakespeare’s plays often turn on the intimate relationship between two male friends who are driven apart by a woman. Hamill concludes that Shakespeare’s portrayal of sexual identity is not rigidly polarized, and that heterosexual and homosexual desires are not seen as incompatible.

Hamill’s extended discourse of the bisexual themes developed in *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, and the Sonnets includes many quotes from Shakespeare critics that underscore the prominence of homoerotic imagery in Shakespeare’s poetics. The devotional dedications of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* to Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, correspond with the early 1590s dating of the so-called “procreation” Sonnets, supporting the generally accepted conclusion that Southampton was the model for the “Fair Youth” of the Sonnets. Regarding the *Lucrece* dedication, Hamill cites Stephen Greenblatt, who wrote that it was not “an exercise in praise or the desire to please or a plea for patronage; this was a public declaration of fervent, boundless love.”

In the next chapters, Lady Penelope Rich is introduced as Hamill’s candidate not only for the Dark Lady of the Sonnets, but also for Venus in *Venus and Adonis*, and for Avisia in the pseudonymous *Willobie His Avisia* (1594). Hamill attests that Penelope was the inspiration for poetry by Sidney, Spenser, Daniel and others, who often referred to her as Venus. Further, “it was well known that Penelope and Southampton were very close and intimate friends right to the end of their lives.” Although Hamill does not produce poems or letters that confirm such intimacy, he uses timelines and locations bringing Southampton close to Penelope. Southampton secretly married Penelope’s impoverished (and pregnant) cousin, Elizabeth Vernon, at Penelope’s residence. He also became guardian of Penelope’s underage children at the time of her death.

Hamill devotes more than thirty pages to dating and analyzing the Sonnets. He believes that they have most frequently been misperceived as heterosexual love poems, as portrayed in the film *Shakespeare in Love*. The older poet first urges the young male—the Fair Youth—to procreate. These sentiments are followed by sonnets deeply expressive of love and the revelation that the two men are involved in some kind of scandal that prevents them from even being seen together. The last group of sonnets suggest that the Poet and the Fair Youth share a mistress, the so-called Dark Lady.

“Understanding how sexual *Shake-speare’s Sonnets* are, the need for anonymity should be clear,” Hamill writes. Embarrassment and dishonor would very likely befall the poet and the subjects of these lyrics were they identified. Hamill posits that the alienation and resignation “that gives the sequence its distinctive aura of embattlement, despair, and melancholy, correspond particularly well to a homosexual theme, one of forbidden and frustrated love.”

In support of his argument Hamill cites a number of critics and scholars, including Southampton biographer G.P.V. Akrigg (who considered the love which the Poet “felt for Southampton may well have been the most intense emotion of his life”), Stanley Wells (who wrote that the very idea of a love relationship between the Poet and the Fair Youth “was for a long time anathema to admirers of Shakespeare”), and Oxfordian Richard Waugaman (who has opined that “homophobia has been a major reason that Shakespeare’s plays have been so much better known than his poems. Starting with the first complete edition of his plays in 1623, his poems were omitted from ‘complete editions’ of his works”).

In a revealing passage, Hamill cites C.S. Lewis, who wrote that the Sonnets tell “a story of a man torn between passionate affection for another man and reluctant passion for a woman,” and “the precise mode of love which the Poet declares for the Man remains obscure. His language is too lover-like for that of ordinary male friendship. I have found no real parallel to such language between friends in 16th century literature.”

Hamill lists other famous literary and court figures, including Marlowe, Francis and Anthony Bacon, Oxford’s cousin Henry Howard, Sir John Harrington, Richard Barnfield, John Donne, and King James, who are now considered to have very likely engaged in homosexual relations. The bisexuality of the author, in Hamill’s view, strengthens the Oxfordian claim if one accepts there is some truth about Edward de Vere’s sexual interests as alleged in the Arundel libels. Alan Nelson and A.L. Rowse both believed Oxford was bisexual; both cite Oxford as having commented “that when women were unsweet, fine young boys were in season.” Gabriel Harvey described Oxford as “vain,” “no man but a minion,” “womanish only,” “most frivolous,” and “In courtly guiles a passing singular odd man.”

The chapter “Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton” discusses other competing theories regarding the relationships between Oxford, Southampton, and Robert Devereaux, the 2nd Earl of Essex. According to the Dynastic Succession theory (also called the Prince Tudor or Tudor Rose theory, and most thoroughly explicated by Hank Whittemore and James Warren), Southampton was actually the Earl of Oxford’s bastard son by Queen Elizabeth. Hamill cites Diana Price’s 1996 article: “As attractive as the Tudor Rose theory may be on the interpretive grounds, the

historical facts refute it... Adherents have not documented their case with a single piece of documentary evidence...” Oxford himself testified in 1575, prior to his departure for Europe, that he had “no issue of his body yet born.” This arguably disqualifies him as the father of Southampton, who was born in 1573. Hamill cites other Oxfordians’ research showing that court records indicate that “the Queen was very much out and about and in plain view of everyone from April through the end of June,” the time period in 1573 during which most Dynastic Succession advocates believe she would have given birth.

In Sonnet 3, the Poet writes “Thou art thy mother’s glass, and she in thee.” Hamill includes portrait images of Southampton and his mother, Mary Brown, which show a remarkable resemblance. Hamill mentions erotic poems dedicated to Southampton by John Clapham (“Narcissus”), Thomas Nashe (“Choice of Valentines,” aka “Nashe’s Dildo”), George Chapman, and William Burton to suggest his homosexual poetic appeal. Piers Edmonds testified that Southampton gave him a horse and “would cull and hug him in his arms and play wantonly with him.” Katherine Duncan-Jones took this as proof that Southampton was “viewed as receptive to same-sex amours.”

Hamill details the close relationship between Robert Devereaux, 2nd Earl of Essex, and Southampton, and the basis for his belief that Essex is the “Rival Poet” of the Sonnets. The Essex faction included many persons who were bisexual or homosexual.

According to Hamill, from 1592 Southampton and Essex were inseparable, engaging in several military campaigns together, with Southampton knighted by Essex and elevated to second in command as General of the Horse in Ireland in 1599. Essex’s qualities that further match the Rival Poet include his being charismatic, proud, tall, and acknowledged as a gifted poet. That the Earl of Oxford bore animus toward Essex is attested by his written claim to have “received diverse injuries and wrongs” from Essex, who was rumored to have seduced Oxford’s daughter Elizabeth, then married to William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby. A.L. Rowse asserted that “Essex was Southampton’s adored leader (later Patroclus to his Achilles),” an association also noted by Harold Bloom and Eric Malim.

In the next chapter Hamill identifies the Dark Lady of the Sonnets: Penelope Devereux Rich, Essex’s sister, who was the subject of Philip Sidney’s sonnet sequence *Astrophel and Stella*. Echoing the scholarship of Alexander Waugh (to whom the book is dedicated), Hamill notes that, despite being called “black” or “dark” for her character and deeds in some sonnets, the wanton Dark Lady is described as “fair” in Sonnet 131, fitting Penelope’s complexion. Penelope bore eleven children by her husband and by her lover, Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, and on several occasions was seen accompanying Southampton, Essex and Mountjoy at

Ascension Day festivities in the early 1590s. Her reputation as sexually promiscuous, Hamill writes, “led to her being referred to as ‘Dark’ or ‘Black’ in reference to her morals... known as the ‘Black Lady’ during her lifetime.” Moreover, Gerald Massey asserted that “The black eyes of Lady Rich were a subject of constant comment in her lifetime...”

Hamill argues that the Sonnets imply the Dark Lady was married and an adulteress, that she had betrayed her husband, and that she had a bastard child from an illicit union. This fits Penelope’s life perfectly, even without considering Hamill’s more speculative argument that one of her bastards was the result of an affair with Southampton in 1592, and that the child was adopted by Edward de Vere and Elizabeth Trentham, and raised as Henry de Vere, 18th Earl of Oxford.

Elizabeth Trentham was fifteen years younger than the Earl of Oxford, having served as a Maid of Honor at court for a decade. She was known as a beauty at court and was a wealthy heiress. Elizabeth married Oxford in December 1591, and is reported to have delivered a son fourteen months later, on February 24, 1593. Hamill cites a 1599 poem that refers to Elizabeth Trentham as a “Maid of Honor,” and an “Immaculate Virgin,” but without conceding that “Immaculate” could refer to her decade-long service in the Queen’s court.

Hamill includes an extended discourse on *Diella: Certain Sonnets*, a set of thirty-nine poems published in 1596, written by “R.L., Gentleman.” The work has many parallels to Shakespeare’s Sonnet 130. Citing Alexander Waugh’s analysis of William Covell’s *Polimanteia*, he posits that “R.L.” is a pseudonym for the Earl of Southampton, and that the poems reinforce the Earl’s claim to being the Fair Youth. Unfortunately, Hamill does not mention that many scholars have attributed *Diella* to the poet Richard Lynche (1540-1610). Lynche was a friend of Richard Barnfield, who dedicated poetry to Lynche.

Hamill proceeds to examine several of the characters who appear in the narrative poem *Willobie His Avis*. Published in 1594, it is the first known printed work to mention an author named “Shake-speare.” Hamill identifies Avis as Penelope Rich, her “Nobleman” suitor as Robert Rich, Penelope’s husband, and her “Cavaleiro” suitor as Don Antonio Perez. Perez’s career at the Elizabethan court, his correspondence with Southampton and Penelope Rich, and his homosexual reputation are exemplified by Avis’s comment on Cavaleiro’s “filthy love.” Avis’s fifth suitor, “H.W.,” has numerous associations with Henry Wriothesley, and H.W.’s “familiar friend,” “W.S.,” is the “Old Player” and poet most likely to be represent the Earl of Oxford.

In his concluding arguments, Hamill draws attention to the historical connections and physical resemblance between Henry Wriothesley and Henry de Vere to support his theory that the latter was actually Southampton’s bastard son by Penelope Rich.

Notwithstanding this speculative assertion, Hamill draws attention to the close relationships between the Earl of Oxford's family, the Earl of Southampton, and the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, William and Phillip Herbert, the "incomparable paire of brethren" who were the dedicatees of the 1623 First Folio.

I wish that Hamill had included proper citations to the more than 200 quotations he has used. There are no footnotes or endnotes, nor is there a searchable index; the tone of the book is conversational, rather than scholarly. Nevertheless, *The Secret Shakespeare Sex Scandals* is a radically important work that expands our understanding of the role bisexual and homosexual relationships may provide toward understanding Shakespeare's enduring pseudonymity.

Percy Allen, Collected Writings on Shakespeare, Volume Five: *The Plays of Shakespeare and Chapman in Relation to French History, 1933-1936*. Edited by James A. Warren. Veritas Publications (2022), 325 pp.

Reviewed by Tom Goff

[Note: I hope to review all seven volumes of Percy Allen's Collected Writings on Shakespeare. But I've started with Volume Five, as it fills perhaps the largest gap in my previous understanding of the Oxfordian theory. Others may prefer to start with Volume One in the Warren edition, on topicalities in Shakespeare's and other Elizabethan plays.]

In bringing back the nearly forgotten writings of scholar Percy Allen, editor James Warren has done great service to Oxfordians and to Shakespeare scholars in general—if they but knew it. This multivolume series reestablishes how vital Allen's work was toward substantiating the claim that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the true author, especially when archival and literary Oxfordian research was just getting underway.

In Warren's view, Percy Allen, the seasoned drama critic for the *Christian Science Monitor*, introduced more principal lines of evidence that Oxford was Shakespeare than anyone else, including J. Thomas Looney, the discoverer of Oxford's hand in the plays.

Oxfordians have drawn attention to the many topical references in Shakespeare's plays, demonstrating that the Elizabethan theater and its actors were, as Hamlet says, "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time." Allen remarks that, without regular newspapers or other rapid-

fire media to inform the populace, the London stage was effectively the debating platform of the day; but the actors and playwrights had to be careful and insinuate, not blab about, what might be going on at the highest levels of Elizabeth's court. Percy Allen offers a uniquely useful view of just how the playwrights, including Protestant Oxford and his rival, the Catholic George Chapman, delivered their hidden messages.

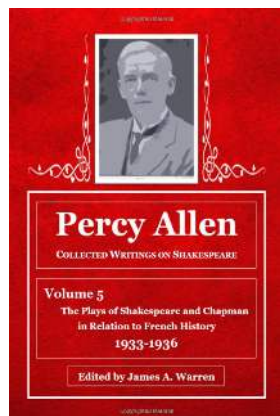
As a frequent traveler in France with native-like fluency in French, including French literature, Allen was equipped to understand how Oxford could encode accounts of current affairs in England and elsewhere by presenting them as mere amusements set in far-off Italy or—as Allen focuses in this volume—in France, whose princes vied for the hand of Queen Elizabeth in matrimony but whose regime was fought over by Catholics and Protestants with bloody consequences.

Conversely, France itself could be disguised as "England." Thus, when Allen examines *King Lear*, he suggests that, with the elderly king dividing the kingdom among his three daughters and unwittingly causing civil strife, those divisions—to court insiders in the audience—would become instant allegories of the French civil wars.

Perhaps by concentrating on *King Lear* I can indicate how persuasive Allen's case for Shakespeare's topicalities is. What made the French civil wars so important to English audiences? As a predominantly Catholic country with a growing Protestant minority, France was in a position to be swayed for or against England's other great rival, Spain. Moreover, France had a history of making mischief for England through its proxy, Scotland, especially now that French-educated Mary, Queen of Scots, was on the Scottish throne.

A recent cataclysmic event was the 1572 murder of the Admiral of France, Gaspar de Coligny, a pillar of the Huguenot movement. His murder was the Queen Mother Catherine de Medici's go-ahead for a massacre of the Huguenots, not only in Paris but throughout France, and young Edward de Vere, in a letter to Lord Burghley, relays reports of the slaughter with genuine alarm and anguish. An implied threat to Protestants everywhere, the shock of the St. Bartholomew Massacre reverberates through such plays as *Hamlet*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*, as formative experiences will do.

Allen convinces me that *King Lear*, the elderly British monarch who gives up the throne and pays the price, represents Gaspar de Coligny, at least in part. I don't think Allen says this directly, but the gambit of setting the play in pre-Christian Britain relieves Oxford of siding too directly with either religious faction—it should be horror enough that religion (or irreligion mimicking faith) should be the cause of bloodshed and anarchy. Allen notes that when "Poor Tom," or Edgar (representing Henri of Navarre), sings "Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me," he is really beseeching Queen Elizabeth to (figuratively) cross the English Channel at



the head of a Protestant army. (Elizabeth, Allen writes, actually did send funds, supplies, and a token force in support of the Protestants.)

Has anyone wondered why Shakespeare altered the titular monarch's name from *King Leir* (as it appeared in early versions of the play and in the historical chronicles) to *King Lear*? Allen notes that the respelling alerts the reader to a "King Earl" (transpose the *L*) whose hand is in the play. Oxford, however, sees himself largely as Kent, since he and the fictional character both had "years on their back forty-eight" in 1598, the probable composition date of the *Lear* that we know. The playwright's interweaving of French history and English allegory is intricate and clever.

With the necessary subtlety, Oxford implies that Coligny's naïve trust in Catherine's goodwill is the equivalent of Lear's daughters taking up the rod to beat Lear on his royal rump, as the Fool points out. When evil daughters Regan and Goneril strip Lear of his retainers, Allen discerns the Catholic effort to clamp down on Huguenot activities in the realm.

It is impossible in a brief review to convey why these parallels, and many others, including French-to-English verbal parallels, are so effective in making Allen's case. But Allen demonstrates Oxford's close reading of French events, much of it through Agrippa D'Aubigné's epic poem *Les Tragiques* and François Hotman's *Life of Gaspar de Coligny*, translated into English by Arthur Golding, Oxford's uncle. Allen also bolsters his thesis with the help of Stratfordian scholars such as Lilian Winstanley.

I can conclude by pointing out an instance Allen may have missed. The attitude of the Guise, or Valois, court is epitomized when, says Allen, Catherine's henchmen foiled a Huguenot plot, the Conjuration d'Amboise (1560), and scheduled the prisoners for execution:

The executions were kept back by the Guises until after dinner, to provide entertainment for the ladies...who were gathered at the windows of the castle, as though it had been question of seeing some mummery played.

Such feminine callousness, whether Catherine's or that of the "ladies," seems depicted in *King Lear*. Cornered in an adulterous relationship, Goneril hears her husband, the Duke of Albany, confront Edmund:

...I, her husband, contradict your banns.
If you will marry, make your loves to me;
My lady is bespoke.

Whereupon Goneril, as if relishing a mummery, cackles, "An interlude!" referring to the short comedic skits performed on the Elizabethan stage. Such coldness, de Vere hints, reflects the anarchic disregard of principle that Valois-style Catholicism engenders, even among women of high station.

I strongly recommend Percy Allen's writings on Shakespeare's grasp of French history (which won him a Corresponding Honorary Membership in the *Institute Historique et Héraldique de France*). One small quibble: Allen wrote for an audience capable of reading the extended French passages in the original language—the French of Elizabeth's era. Though he does provide English translations where the verbal parallels between history and Shakespeare are most telling, modern audiences would benefit from full translations. But this is an essential volume for Shakespeare scholars—perhaps even more important than it was in Allen's own day, as we learn new details about Oxford's life.

[This review is adapted from a review that originally appeared on Amazon.com.]

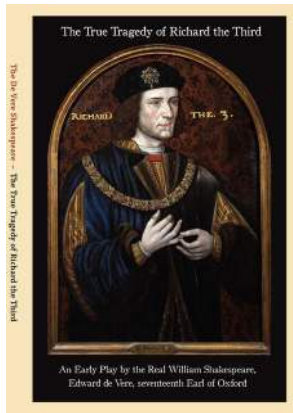
The True Tragedy of Richard the Third: An Early Play by the Real William Shakespeare, Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, introduced, edited and fully annotated by Ramon Jiménez (2022). Available on Amazon or from the editor, \$20.

Reviewed by Michael Hyde

Ramon Jiménez's edition of *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* belongs next to his recent edition of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. Both plays were originally published anonymously—*True Tragedy* in 1594, *Famous Victories* in 1598—but Jiménez prominently announces each as "An Early Play by the Real William Shakespeare, Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford" on their respective covers.

In my review of *Famous Victories* (*Newsletter*, Summer 2022), I agreed that Jiménez has at last provided strong evidence for a teenage Edward de Vere as its juvenile author. *True Tragedy* is an apple from the same tree, a history play performed by the Queen's Men at Court in the 1580s and early 1590s. It has baffled and frustrated Stratfordian critics, who mostly reject or ignore altogether the Queen's Men plays, as they raise vexing questions about antecedents and authorship. If they were written as early as the 1560s (or even as late as the mid-1580s), Will Shakspeare of Stratford (1564-1616) must be ruled out as the author.

Both *Famous Victories* and *True Tragedy* feature unhistorical and exaggerated roles for the 11th and 13th Earls of Oxford, respectively. Jiménez cites these portrayals as evidence of young de Vere (possibly as early as 1563) glorifying in print his Oxfordian ancestors. In my review of *Famous Victories*, I suggested that the exaggerated portrayal of Richard, the 11th Earl, was an attempt to whitewash the stain on the House of Oxford left by the ruined reputation of Robert,



the 9th Earl, who was condemned and attainted by the Merciless Parliament, defeated at Radcot Bridge, and driven from England to Belgium, where he was gored to death while hunting a boar. Young Edward de Vere does his utmost to exalt the 11th and 13th Earls and their military exploits at Agincourt in 1415 (*Famous Victories*) and here at Bosworth Field in 1485.

As we follow *True Tragedy*

through its twenty scenes in the Jiménez edition, we see that it is a richer, denser and more complicated text than *Famous Victories* (which also has twenty scenes). In the climactic battle scenes at Bosworth, we are introduced to John de Vere, the 13th Earl of Oxford. Earl John was indeed the most able Lancastrian commander in the Earl of Richmond's forces at Market Bosworth in 1485.

Scene one features the ghost of George, Duke of Clarence, who was murdered by his younger brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester—in *True Tragedy* and in the canonical *Richard III*, if not in historical fact. The Ghost cries out for revenge, “O cito, cito vindicta (O quickly, quickly, revenge).” Truth then appears as a stage player conversing with Poetry (suggesting a name pun on *Verity*), relating the tragic histories and deaths of Henry VI and Edward IV that launched the War of the Roses. He helpfully addresses the “gentles,” or nobles in the courtly audience, explaining that the Ghost is the selfsame brother “by Gloucester’s Duke drowned in a butt of wine.”

The closing lines of Scene two recall the Jerusalem Room scene of *Famous Victories*, where Henry IV on his deathbed yields his scepter and crown. Edward IV does the same here.

Scene three introduces the misery and penance of Jane Shore, Edward’s popular mistress. As Jiménez notes, she is portrayed as in the poem of Edward de Vere’s trusty old retainer, Thomas Churchyard, in the 1563 edition of *Mirror for Magistrates*.

In Scene four we encounter Richard (Gloucester) in a villainous soliloquy planning the deaths of the young princes in the Tower: “Why, what are the babes but a puff of gunpowder . . . food for fishes” (lines 358-359). It concludes with a dramatic speech that anticipates the “dial’s point” lament of the king in the canonical *Richard II*. “If I be but king for a year, nay but half a year, nay a month, a week, three days, one day or half a day, nay an hour; zounds, half an hour” (*True Tragedy* lines 426-428).

Moving ahead to Scene eight we find lines that paraphrase Edward de Vere’s well-known “Were I a King” poem: “A crown . . . So beset with sorrows that

the care and grief will kill me ere I shall enjoy my kingdom.” Ironically, however, those words aren’t spoken by Richard, but rather to him by young Prince Edward the Fifth before his coronation as they travel from Ludlow to London; the coronation never occurs, of course, thanks to the prearranged murder of the young princes in the Tower by Richard’s well-paid henchmen.

In Scene 18 at Bosworth, Richard enters badly wounded, imploring his page to obtain “A horse, a horse, a fresh horse” (line 1900). The justly famous line from the canonical *Richard III* (“A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse”) is an appropriate climax to our parade of details from *True Tragedy*.

As Richard intones his dying words (again echoing the “Were I a King” poem), he is never to be “possessed with quiet crown,” but rather cursed by “fortune’s cruel spite,” realizing that “this ground must be my grave.” The exhumation of Richard’s remains in Leicester in 2012 (see *Shakespeare Matters*, Spring 2013 issue) makes us realize that this early history play is an attempt by young Edward de Vere to rewrite actual history for future audiences.

Scene twenty highlights and exalts “worthy Oxford,” Edward de Vere’s great-grandfather, the 13th Earl, John de Vere. The Earl of Richmond (soon to become King Henry VII) lauds Earl John and his “service shown in hot encountering the enemy” (lines 1954-1955). As Jiménez notes, it is Earl John who first acclaims “God save the King!” in the final coronation scene. Again, a young Edward de Vere emphatically reinvents and underscores the military valor of his most famous martial ancestor at Bosworth Field.

Together with his edition of *Famous Victories*, Ramon Jiménez’s edition of *True Tragedy* should be a standard reference for Oxfordians. The overall organization and apparatus of *True Tragedy* is nearly identical to that of *Famous Victories*: there is a list of illustrations, an essay on the Shakespeare Authorship Question, and a robust argument by Jiménez for Edward de Vere as the true author. The introduction to *True Tragedy* is longer than that of *Famous Victories*, given its greater length and complexity. Jiménez’s textual annotations are often historical to help modern readers, but sometimes we are treated to notes such as Winston Churchill’s observation that “Young Prince Edward [the 5th] displays an unusual maturity for a thirteen-year-old in both plays, ‘for which the chronicle offers no hint.’” The true “unusual maturity,” of course, is that of a young Edward de Vere composing these plays, possibly as early as 1563, when he himself was thirteen.

These editions of two Queen’s Men history plays strongly support the thesis that Ramon Jiménez advanced in his 2018 book, *Shakespeare’s Apprenticeship: Identifying the Real Playwright’s Earliest Works*. His audacious claims that a teenaged Edward de Vere was responsible not only for *True Tragedy* and *Famous*

Victories, but also *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, and others, present serious challenges to Stratfordians and to Oxfordians as well. If we are ever to identify the true Shakespeare author and his extensive debt to the Queen's Men's plays, we have to state our convictions; we cannot hide behind anonymous title pages.

To conclude, it should be noted that Francis Walsingham (died 1590) was the organizer and original patron of the Queen's Men in the early 1580s. He included the Dutton brothers from Edward de Vere's acting company in the original troupe of actors performing at Court, where Walsingham was Secretary of State and spymaster, and de Vere was Lord Great Chamberlain and very likely a Queen's Men playwright.

ChatGPT: Can Artificial Intelligence Reshape the Authorship Question?

by Tom Harrigan

OpenAI, the company behind the artificial intelligence (AI) art generator DALL·E 2, has launched a much-discussed AI chatbot called ChatGPT.

ChatGPT is a large language model that, according to OpenAI, “interacts in a conversational way . . . making it possible for ChatGPT to answer follow-up questions, admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests.”

Open AI recently opened the model to user interface, permitting the general public to interact with ChatGPT. However, visitors eager to give it a try usually encounter the message “ChatGPT is at capacity right now.”

Oxfordians and other non-Stratfordians have long experienced the challenge of struggling on a tilted playing field when it comes to various communications channels. Think University. Think Wikipedia.

Does ChatGPT offer possibilities for challenging that state of affairs? Could Oxfordians, through our interactions and chats, educate ChatGPT, or expand its dataset bases? Might our message reach the general public in the form of ChatGPT users through these means? Perhaps. But maybe not just yet.

While ChatGPT was “trained” using extremely large amounts of text data from the internet, it does not have access to the internet as such. It does not search or crawl the web. It seems that the dataset base utilized by OpenAI for ChatGPT, vast though it may be, is confined to what its programmers and trainers have used in teaching and training it—either initially, or in whatever post-initial learning, training, and incorporation may be ongoing (see “Tom Woosnam’s Chat” at right).

While ChatGPT appears to incorporate user input within a particular chat, indications are that such incorporation is limited to that chat, rather than becoming a part of an overall ChatGPT dataset (see “Questions from a Chat User” on page 23). If so, then Oxfordians are not yet able to educate ChatGPT. As we have experienced in other realms, the degree of Oxfordian presence in ChatGPT interactions overall may come down to whatever extent gatekeepers—in this case ChatGPT’s programmers, data scientists, and trainers—have availed themselves of Oxfordian materials, either

initially or in any subsequent post-public use programming and training that may be ongoing.

Even if there are limitations on our ability to expand the Oxfordian aspect of ChatGPT’s dataset base, there are things we might consider doing. Assuming that at some point the pipeline widens, permitting more ChatGPT use, those so inclined can explore through multiple chats. We can experiment to get a better handle on whether educating ChatGPT is effective, or the extent to which Oxfordian materials seem to be utilized (or not utilized) in ChatGPT’s datasets.

Bigger picture, we might strategize on how best to appeal to the pride of AI true believers. It may behoove us to bring any biases to the attention of those earnestly believing in the positive possibilities AI may offer, in the distinctive advantages AI might confer, as compared with those from existing modalities.

Further down the road, if it should be found (and publicized) that AI-enabled outcomes (in whatever area) seem indistinguishable from or captured by the same biased results prevalent in existing channels, this could be discomfiting to an AI true believer. We can try to influence such a debate. This is a rapidly evolving area that bears Oxfordian watching.

[Tom Harrigan writes and edits for a Philadelphia-based medical non-profit. He is a Philadelphia native and longtime resident, but now lives in Ocean City, NJ. His interest in Shakespearean matters stemmed from accidental exposure in the Central Branch of the Philadelphia Free Library.]

Tom Woosnam’s Chat

In January SOF Trustee Tom Woosnam was able to access ChatGPT, and has shared the following intriguing exchange. It remains to be seen whether ChatGPT will “learn” from this and apply it in future chats.

Woosnam: So you agree that, unlike many authors of the time, there is no unambiguous primary source evidence that William Shakespeare of Stratford on Avon, a man who did exist, I don't need proof of that, was a poet dramatist?

ChatGPT: Yes, that is correct. Unlike many other authors

of the time, there is no unambiguous primary source that definitively links William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon to the authorship of the plays and poems attributed to him.

There is evidence of his existence, including records of his baptism, marriage, and death, as well as legal documents such as land deeds and wills that bear his signature. However, there is no contemporary record that specifically states that he was a playwright or poet.

The attribution of the plays and poems to William Shakespeare is based on the available historical evidence and the absence of any credible alternative authorship claims. The evidence includes references to the playwright as "Mr. William Shakespeare" in the First Folio of his plays, as well as contemporaneous accounts that refer to him as the author of the plays.

In conclusion, while there is no definitive primary source evidence linking William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon to the authorship of the plays and poems, the available historical evidence supports this connection and makes it the most widely accepted theory.

Questions from a Chat User

The following is an excerpt from a dialog initiated by a ChatGPT user who was trying to learn more about how ChatGPT worked:

User: No, your answer is repetitive, vague, ambiguous, and possibly evasive. Let me put it another way. There are two questions. Please answer each one in turn:

1. Are you able to learn from my and other users' input, or are you only able to learn from your prior programming, training, and dataset?
2. Are your answers always only probable rather than ever 100% correct?

ChatGPT: I apologize if my previous answers were unclear or seemed evasive. As an artificial intelligence, I am not able to learn or adapt in the same way that humans do. My responses are based on my programming and the data that I have been trained on, and I do not have the ability to learn from new inputs or experiences in the way that a human or animal might.

As for the accuracy of my answers, I will do my best to provide accurate and useful information in response to your questions. However, it is important to keep in mind that I may not always be able to provide a complete or correct answer, especially if the question is outside of my capabilities or if it is ambiguous or incomplete. In some cases, the information that I provide may be based on probabilities or estimates, rather than certainties.

I hope this helps to clarify. Please let me know if you have any other questions.

Roe's Unpublished Notebooks (continued from p. 1)

It would be beneficial to have a decent map of the Mediterranean in front of you the first time you read *Errors*. Here I will give you some of the modern map names for the old cities named in the plays. It will help you realize that this play has some intriguing dimensions that Shakespeare professors do not think about. Literature professors know zilch; they have opinions.

Egeon is a merchant who lives and works in Syracuse. Syracuse, an ancient Greek city, is not in Greece at all. It is on the island of Sicily, which today is part of Italy. It is located at the most southeasterly tip of Sicily. Egeon relates that he had a nice business going, mentioning "Prosperous voyages I often made / To Epidamnum" (1.1.40-41). The First Folio inexplicably reads "Epidamium." Epidamnum is an ancient name for what is now called Durrës, a seaport on the Adriatic coast in Albania, across from the east coast of Italy. It was the setting for Plautus's *Menaechmi*, the source for *The Comedy of Errors*. The Italians call this seaport Durazzo or Duraz, out of another ancient name for it: Dyrrachium. It would have been an easy trip to make, back and forth, carrying one kind of goods to Epidamnum and returning with another kind of goods for Syracuse, making extra profits.

At the outset of the play, Egeon recites to the Duke of Ephesus, Solinus, the facts of the tragic voyage of

himself and his family. He had had a standing relationship with a "factor" (i.e., a commission merchant, one who acts or transacts business for another) in Epidamnum (1.1.41). His factor having died, it had been necessary for Egeon to go to Epidamnum to settle up their accounts for the goods in the factor's hands, and he took with him his wife and twin infant sons for a trip, plus a pair of twin infant boys who would eventually become servants.

When they had completed their visit in Epidamnum, they boarded a vessel for their return trip, but they encountered a storm only "a league from Epidamnum" (1.1.62). Their sinking ship, the crew having already abandoned them (1.1.76-77), struck a great rock in the sea (1.1.101). Egeon, with one twin son and one of the twin serving boys, was separated from his wife and the other boys.

It is clear, considering their distance from Epidamnum, the striking of a rock in the storm, and the fact that the crew could have abandoned them so as to save themselves by using the only boat on board—all bespeak "coasting." Egeon confirms it (1.1.134). They "coasted," that is, they went along the coastlines, always keeping land in sight. "Coasting," as a verb, comes from the Italian verb *costeggiare*, which means both to hug the shore and to proceed cautiously. We have the word "coast" in our language, but in English at that time it was a noun, not a verb. These navigators did not use the stars

to find their way. They needed to see the coastlines in order to go from place to place, or to have an island in sight. To leave a landfall without having another in sight to steer frightened them. If they were obliged to do this, they relied on where the sun was to tell them their direction, just as we do to tell where's east, where's west, but only approximately; and they could tolerate, emotionally and physically, the open seas for only a few hours. Remember too that Egeon tells us that he and his family were only a "league" from Epidamnum when the sudden storm broke up the ship. They were within sight of land. But no one could swim, and the sailors had taken the only boat and rowed ashore, of course.

Coasting was peculiarly "Mediterranean." It is just about the slowest way to go anywhere imaginable. But ancient methods are hard to change, as any member of the Peace Corps will readily tell you. Just how slow it was is well described by Fernand Braudel, one of the greatest historians:

The sea in the sixteenth century was an immensity of water: man's efforts had only conquered a few coastal margins, direct routes, and tiny ports of call. Great stretches of the sea were as empty as the Sahara. Shipping was active only along the coastline. Navigation in those days was a matter of following the shore line, just as in the earliest days of water transport, moving crab-wise from rock to rock, "from promontories to islands and from islands to promontories." This was "costeggiare," avoiding the open sea – what Pierre Belon calls "les campagnes de mer," "the fields of the sea." More precisely, according to the galley accounts [logs: Braudel was a painstaking research scholar] of a Ragusan vessel, it was a matter of buying one's butter at Villefranche, vinegar at Nice, oil and bacon at Toulon. Or as a Portuguese chronicler puts it, of traveling from one seaside inn to another [notice the naming of inns in *Errors*], dining in one and supping in the next. Thome Cano, the Sevillian, said of the Italians, "They are not sailors of the high seas." Sailing in the Adriatic [only an arm of the Mediterranean, and not all that big], Pierre Lescalopier was "amusing himself watching the mummers" on Mardi Gras in 1574 at Zara; two days later, on February 25th, he passed in front of St. John of Malvasia and dined on the 26th at Spalato. [Note: Braudel is quoting sixteenth-century eyewitnesses; the guy he quotes here could have gone faster just walking!] This is how the princes and notables of this world would have traveled, from one coastal town to the next, taking time for festivities, visits, receptions, or rest while the crew was loading the boat or waiting for better weather. This is how even the fighting fleets traveled, doing battle only in sight of land.

How specific; and how odd to the English mind was "coasting"? You will be charmed to know that amongst all the thousands of words in the Shakespeare vocabulary—more than any of us uses—the word "coasting" is used only once: in the narrative of Egeon in *The Comedy of Errors*. Thus, we see a writer who knew this navigational practice and who knew the topography of this area.

Mediterranean mariners never sailed at night, and only very rarely in the winter months. You will notice that Egeon talks about "summers" for his searches (1.1.132). These people stayed home in the winter, and avoided travel in the spring and fall months because of sudden storms. Their vessels routinely broke apart in heavy seas or storms at sea, since they were not very well made by modern standards. The way that Mediterranean people—not English or Dutch or Portuguese—traveled on the Mediterranean did not change at all from the time of the first Egyptian or Minoan or Trojan or Phoenician sailor right on down through the Venetian or Ottoman or Genovese or Sicilian or Italian of the times of these plays, and even beyond—for many of them even now. The story of the voyages of Odysseus or the *Aeneid* of Virgil tell of this situation very clearly.

Subsequent to the shipwreck, it would take poor old Egeon an entire summer just to tool around one part of the eastern Mediterranean looking for his lost family. And he couldn't even cover this small area in that time. He had taken five summers, already, when he got himself arrested at Ephesus. Ephesus was a major seaport then. Now it's miles inland due to erosion resulting from centuries of cutting down trees to build ships. Today it's a ruin, a tourist and archaeological site, with the modern name Selcuk, on the coast of Turkey. It has great meaning to many Christians because it is said to be where Mary went after her Son was crucified, where her tomb is, and where St. John is buried.

Try to locate Ephesus on a map now, because you need to know a little point of sadness about Egeon's bad luck. Egeon was on his way home to Syracuse and, as he says, they were "coasting" (1.1.134). Heck, the Duke and everyone else at Ephesus knew that, so why bother using the word? Because an English audience wouldn't know it, and the playwright was explaining why Egeon was in Ephesus of all places. When you look at a map, you see that if you are heading for Syracuse, Ephesus looks like a very stupid place to be.

Where had Egeon just come from, before he got to Ephesus? He tells us: "Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia" (1.1.133). "Bounds" means "boundaries." Asia then and now starts at the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus. That's where Europe ends. Look at the map. Saying "clean through" meant exactly then what it means today: "all the way through." Egeon went clean through the Dardanelles, Marmara, and the Bosphorus, into the Black Sea, obviously, looking for the boys. Where exactly he was on the Black Sea he doesn't say; but we do know he got there, "clean through the bounds of Asia."

So coming back, his ship was hugging the coastline of Turkey. And look closely: his ship went east, along that coast, to Ephesus. East is the wrong direction for a guy going to Syracuse. Syracuse is west! Egeon, we may

think, is not too bright: he really screwed up going to Ephesus. Ah, but not when you have to coast. No short-cuts. We are Mediterranean sailors. That's exactly how coasting was done: even the wrong way was sometimes the right way, the only way. And why Ephesus? Besides the obligatory coasting, it would have been where one could have found the better, AAA, Michelin-recommended inns. Lesbos was probably a dump to stay at. Notice that inns at Ephesus actually have names: the Centaur, the Tiger, the Porpentine (Porcupine, to us). The Phoenix may be an inn or a house, or both. Is this play a travelogue or what?

Here's that "little sadness": again, look at the map. The very next day, if Egeon hadn't gotten himself busted, he could have left the mainland and the clutches of the Duke; the next leg of his trip would have been out along the coast of the island of Lesbos and in among the Greek isles, coasting from island to island, south and west and away from the Duke.

But now, a problem arises. After reporting the shipwreck and having been adrift, Egeon seems to speak in a contrast of directions when he says, "Two ships from far, making amain to us./ of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this" (1.1.92-93). Does he mean by this, ships bound in very opposite directions? Did the author mean Epidaurum when he wrote Epidaurus? From a rock one league from Epidamnum, is it more logical to consider Epidaurum (rather than Epidaurus of the Peloponnese) to be in the opposite direction ("this," "that") from Corinth?

This question is prompted by a nuance in the spelling of the name—or the pronunciation, more properly—of two very different cities. But we are talking about someone whom we think had actually been in these places and should therefore have known how these names were pronounced. Epidaurum, now called Cavtat, is on the coast of the Adriatic, north of Epidamnum, near what is now called Dubrovnik, in Croatia. The Venetians and others called Dubrovnik Ragusa. Cavtat, or Epidaurum, lies just adjacent to Ragusa, to the south. During the Renaissance, Ragusa was a separate city-state of huge mercantile importance, a trading rival of Venice and Genoa. Ragusa is in Montenegro, which was part of Roman Delyricum, especially during the reign of Caesar Augustus. (And of course, Shakespeare has set *Twelfth Night* in "Illyria," but without naming a particular city, though Ragusa would be the logical selection.)

Epidaurus, however, was a celebrated Greek city on the eastern coast of the Peloponnese, on the southern shore of the Gulf of Saronicus, which is now called Epidavros, or Palaia, not far (to the southeast) from Corinth, due west of Tiryns. (To make a complete picture, there is "Epidaurus Limera," also on the Peloponnese, at its southern region on the eastern coast, just north of Monemvasia. It is an ancient ruin, and it does not seem plausible to consider it part of the riddle.) Consider that the playwright was thinking of Epidaurus of the Peloponnese. This was the city of healing; miraculous

cures occurred here. Also, it had, and has, one of the most celebrated theaters in the world: the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus, built in the fourth century BC and still in use today, with superb acoustics.

Let's hop over to Act 4 and do some more navigating. There an unnamed Ephesian merchant declares, "I am bound/ To Persia" (4.1.3-4). What? Could you get to Persia then, by ship? Yes. Persia is Iran. You would go "clean through the bounds of Asia," then along the south coast of the Black Sea, coasting, stopping at exotic places like Trebizond on the way, and landing at Batumi. There you would pick up a caravan, plying the incredibly ancient trade route to the course of the Kura River, pausing at ancient Tiflis, then along the river to the Caspian Sea and then a coaster to Persia. Piece of cake; they did it every Tuesday.

Does our hero have some luck? Get this: there's a ship leaving for Epidamnum (4.1.85)! More than halfway to Syracuse, and on the very route that Egeon would know, to get from Epidamnum—his favorite other town (good old Durazzo)—on home hippity-hop to Syracuse. And this particular ship is a "bark"—a pretty fast ship. Moreover, "The ship is in her trim" (4.1.90). Hot dog! It even has sails! (I forgot to tell you: a lot of coasting was done with boats that had only oars.) I'm really getting excited now. Can he make it?!

Darn! That bark sure had a neat name: "Expedition" (4.3.32). It must have gone fast. And then there's this "hoy" (4.3.33). A "hoy" is a small coasting ship that bobs along from place to place. But what a name for a boat, the "Delay" (4.3.33). Bad luck! Still, now that you know a bit about sixteenth-century Mediterranean navigation, you can sail along with Egeon and his chums.

One more thing: you have noted, no doubt, that we have a priory in Ephesus, with a Lady Abbess. This may seem odd, but we don't know when all the action takes place. We do know, however, that Ephesus was a sort of a shrine-type place, what with Mary and John and all. And of course, if you have read your New Testament, you know that the Apostle Paul was writing letters (called epistles) to Christians there, the "Ephesians," although the authorship of the canonical letter is questioned. *The Comedy of Errors* certainly isn't set in biblical times; but if the place is part of the Ottoman Empire and this "Duke" is really a local big-shot Turk, it really doesn't matter, because trade between East and West was going right along. And the Turks didn't molest Christian abbeys, or monasteries, or convents, or whatever you chose to call them. All the Turks asked was that the local Christians avoid politics and not get funny.

But it's a funny play anyway. And in it, somebody was providing a lot of information about sixteenth-century travel in the eastern Mediterranean.



John Shakspeare's Grant of Arms: Three Curious Aspects (Part Two)

by Joseph Hanaway and John Milnes Baker

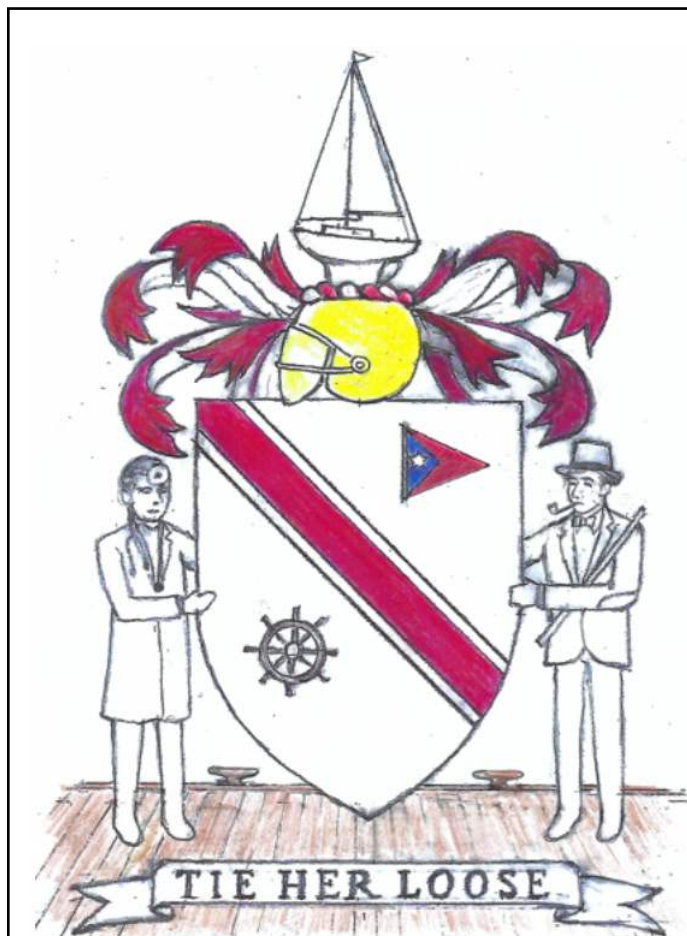


Figure 3 JMB

Dexter – right side of shield from the bearer's point of view. **Sinister** – left on the shield from the bearer's point of view. (Bearer is the person holding the shield.)

DEFINITIONS¹⁶

Crest – an ornament of identification worn on top of a helmet (usually within a torse)

Torse – also called a **wreath** – a cord of six twists of the colors lying on the helmet

Mantling – elaborate two-color drapery springing from the top of the helmet and falling down each side of the shield

Helm – a helmet

Shield – the defensive implement of war, it is the central feature of a coat of arms with its colors and charges

Charge – any design placed on the shield

Ordinaries – special charges to divide the field

Bend – a diagonal line on the field, upper right to lower left from the bearer's point of view

Cotise – thin lines on each side of a bend

Supporters – figures standing beside the shield holding it up

Compartment – the base of the achievement on which the supporters and the shield stand

Motto – not included in a Grant of Arms, but may be included at extra cost

An Achievement of Arms is the complete display of armorial bearings. The combination of **shield**, **helm**, **torse** (wreath), **mantling** and **crest** constitute the basic achievement of any armiger (a person with the right to a coat of arms).

A Coat of Arms, frequently shortened to **Arms**, technically applies to the shield with its tinctures and charges. The term Achievement of Arms has become archaic and Coat of Arms is now accepted in common usage. (The **Crest** is often mistaken as a synonym for arms.)

Blazon - a description in heraldic code of armorial bearings.

In Trick refers to two or more letter abbreviations of the tinctures in a line drawing of a coat of arms.

Tinctures: (seven colors, two metals, two furs)

Colors: Gules (**gu** = red), Vert (**ve** = green), Sable (**s** or **sa** = black), Azure (**az** = blue), Purpure (**pu** = purple), Argent (**ar** = white or silver), Sanguine (**sang** = reddish/brown); Metals: Gold (**o** or **or** = gold), Argent (**ar** = silver); Furs: Ermine (**er** = ermine), Vair (**va** = squirrel)

Blazon for the hypothetical Achievement of Arms above:

Argent a Bend double cotised Gules a Burgee sinister Chief Gules charged with a Pile issuant from a Hoist Azure thereon a Mullet Argent a Ship's Wheel dexter base sanguine Crest a Marconi-rigged sloop Argent upon a Football Helmet face-masked Gold Mantling Gules doubled Argent within a Torse Argent and Gules Supporters dexter a Physician affronty with a head mirror sinister an Architect pipe-smoking affronty holding blueprints on a Compartment composed of a wood planked dock sanguine. Motto: "TIE HER LOOSE"



NOTE: Figure 3, "A Hypothetical Achievement of Arms," also appears on page 35 of this issue, so that readers of the print version of the *Newsletter* will be able to see it in color.

II. The 1596 Draft Grants and Letters Patent for John Shakspeare and the York Herald's Challenge

Draft Grants

Draft Grants, written by one of the Kings of Arms of the College of Arms, are preliminary statements of the qualifications and connections of the petitioner for a Grant of Arms. They are then edited and published as Letters Patent in the final Grant of Arms.

William Dethick's draft grants for John Shakspeare in 1596 were based on a draft by the Clarenceux King of Arms, Robert Cooke (1535-1592), in the 1570s, approximately twenty years earlier. There are two sources for this: One is the first postscript line at the bottom of Draft Grant II, October 20, 1596 (Figure 5), which states: ¹⁷ *This John Shoeth a patierne thereof under Clarenceux Cook's hand in paper xx years past.* The other is less specific. In the Draft Grant for John Shakspeare by William Dethick in 1599, to impale the arms with that of his wife's family name, Arden, lines 12-14 state: . . . *and for that the said John Shakespeare having married the daughter and one of the heirs of Robert Arden of Wellincote in the said county also produced, this his ancient coat of arms hereto assigned to him whilst he was her majestis officer and bailif of that town.*

These statements confirm that an earlier draft in the failed application must have been retained (probably by John) and given to William Dethick when Will revived the petition for his father in 1596.¹⁸

Apparently Dethick considered John's prominent relatives to be more important than his Stratford civic positions. The proof is in the Letters Patent by Dethick written in 1596 (Figure 6). Despite William's efforts to have Dethick add them to Draft Grant II (Figure 5), there is no mention in these pages of John's municipal offices.

John signed his name with a mark and Will could barely manage to write his name. Since both were semiliterate at best, they may not have realized that Dethick had omitted John Shakspeare's qualifications in Draft Grant I. Presumably someone told Will about the deletion, and he was able to persuade Dethick to add them in the second draft.¹⁹

Draft Grant I

Draft Grant I²⁰ (Figure 4) is a copy of the twenty-nine-line paper by William Dethick for John Shakspeare dated October 20, 1596. Note the line drawing in the upper left corner. The spellings of John's surname, *Shakespeare*, *Shakespeare* and *Shakepeare*, are circled.

The postscript lines in the bottom right of the draft state: ***To whom these achievements may descend by ancient custom and law of arms.*** This meant that Will Shakspeare was entitled to be styled "gent." upon the death of his father.



Figure 4a. (enhanced for clarity)



Figure 4b

Three spellings of John's surname, *Shakespeare*, *Shakespeare* and *Shakepeare*, are circled.

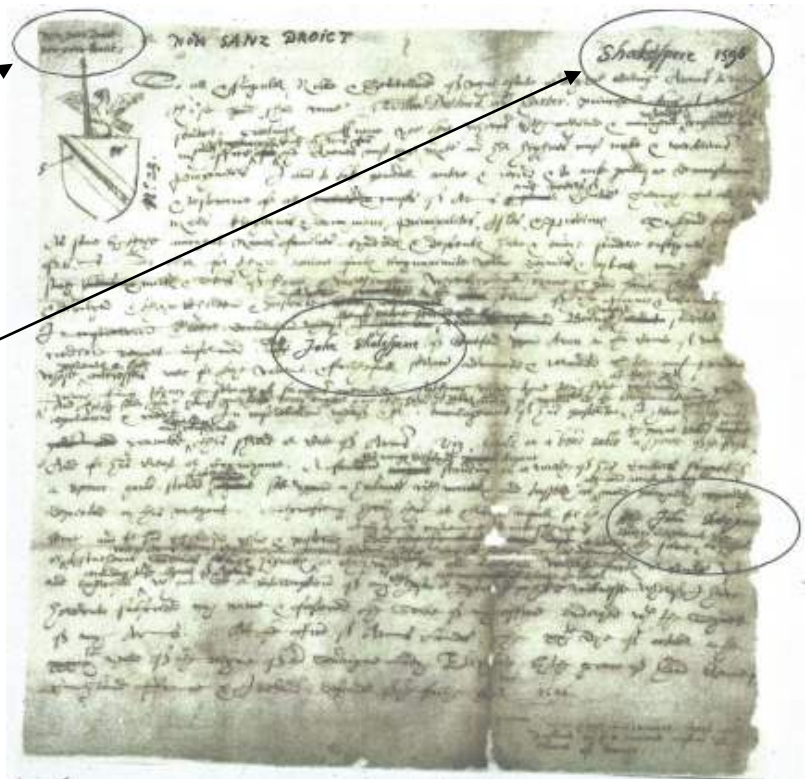


Figure 4. Draft Grant I

Draft Grant II²¹ “Non Sanz Droict” (without the comma)

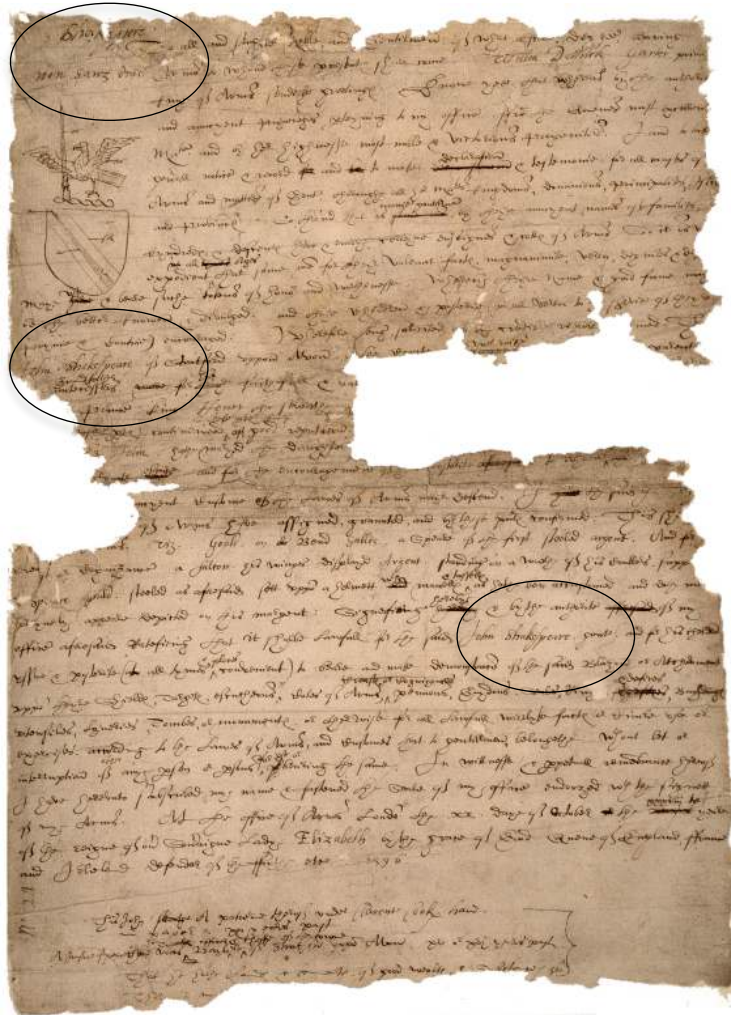


Figure 5. Draft Grant II

Figure 5 is a copy of the tattered thirty-five-line second paper draft grant by William Dethick for John Shakspere. Dated the same day as Draft I, it corrects the errors in Draft I. Note that the line drawing in the upper left corner is now fully tricked (see **Figures 9** and **10**). John’s surname is spelled *Shakspeare* in the upper left and *Shakespeare* on the lower right.

The postscript lines at the bottom note John’s civic career and purported family connections: “*This John shoeth a patierne thereof under Clarenceux Cook’s hand xx years past. A justice of the peace and Baylife, the Queens officer and cheffe of the town of Stratford uppo Avon xvi years past. That he has lands and tenements of good wealth and substance £500. That he married a daughter and heyre of Arden, a great worship.*” Presumably Dethick added these lines at Will Shakspere’s directive.

***Non, Sanz Droict* vs. *Non Sanz Droict*²² (with the comma)**

Figure 4a and 4b (on facing page) also appear at the upper corners of Draft Grant I (**Figure 4**). They are similar except for the comma: *Non, Sanz Droict* vs. *Non Sanz Droict*, i.e., “*No, Without Right*” vs. “*Not Without Right*.”

Evidently John Shakspere’s application for a coat of arms in the 1570s had been denied by the Garter Principal King of Arms, Sir Gilbert Dethick (1510-1584), with the note “No, Without Right.” In spite of Sir Gilbert’s judgment in the 1570s that the application was without merit and the fee was not paid, Will Shakspere was successful in getting Gilbert’s son and successor, William Dethick (1542-1612), to approve the petition in 1596, reputedly for a sum of £30. Sir William was “a corrupt figure who verified false credentials and pedigrees for a sum and was constantly arguing with his fellow heralds.” He “was already in bad odor for his greed”²³ and was dismissed from his position in 1604.

Ben Jonson lampooned Will Shakspere in his 1600 play *Every Man Out of His Humour*, where the buffoonish clown Sogliardo (Shakspere) brags: “I can write myself a gentleman now... it cost me thirty pounds.” The character Puntarvolo, alluding to the yellow/gold color of the shield, scoffed at the idea and quipped, “*Let the word be, ‘Not Without Mustard.’*”

When the coat of arms was approved in 1596, John Shakspere supposedly adopted the meaningless phrase *Non Sanz Droict*, i.e., *Not Without Right*, as his motto. But, as Diana Price noted in her book, *Shakespeare’s Unorthodox Biography*, “The fact that it was never used... strongly suggests that the phrase was no motto after all.”²⁴

Letters Patent for John Shakespeare²⁵

(Note: the heading is spelled “Shakespeare.” However, on line 22 of the second page of the Letters Patent below, the name is spelled *Shackspeare*.) Heraldic Letters Patent (always plural) are a type of legal document written by a King of Arms granting the petitioner a coat of arms. A preliminary draft grant describes the qualifications of the petitioner for a grant of arms. These are inscribed on the final document as Letters Patent. John’s original grant of arms has never been located, but Dethick copied his Letters Patent in a record book that has survived (**Figure 6**).

Since its inception in 1484, the College of Arms has continued to issue Letters Patent which affirm the petitioner’s right to a grant of arms. Even today Letters Patent begin with “To All and Singular to Whom These Presents Shall Come,” thereby showing that it is addressed to anyone in the world to whom it may be presented.



Figure 6a



Figure 6

The final achievement of John Shakespeare’s arms and his 1596 Letters Patent by Garter Principal Sir William Dethick²⁶

The final grant in **Figure 6** is essentially the Letters Patent for John Shakspeare. They established the official spelling as “Shakespeare” and were written and certified by Garter Principal William Dethick on October 20, 1596, in a bound volume of his grants. However, this is said to be a late seventeenth-century copy of the grant. Someone preserved the Letters Patent in a collection and they are now in the Library of Queen’s College, Oxford.

Why did Dethick add John’s qualifications to his Draft Grant II, only to delete them from the Letters Patent? This question may never be resolved.

The various versions of any arms depend upon the experience of the heraldic artist. As long as the tinctures, ordinaries, other charges, the crest and supporters are in place and are in heraldic style, the artist has broad license to depict them as he sees fit. For example: In the Shak(e)spe(a)re Arms, the spear in the bend can be short or long, narrow or wide, as long as it looks like a spear. The mantling can be elaborate or simple and the torse (wreath) thick or thin. The crest, a falcon holding a spear, could also be varied in its appearance.

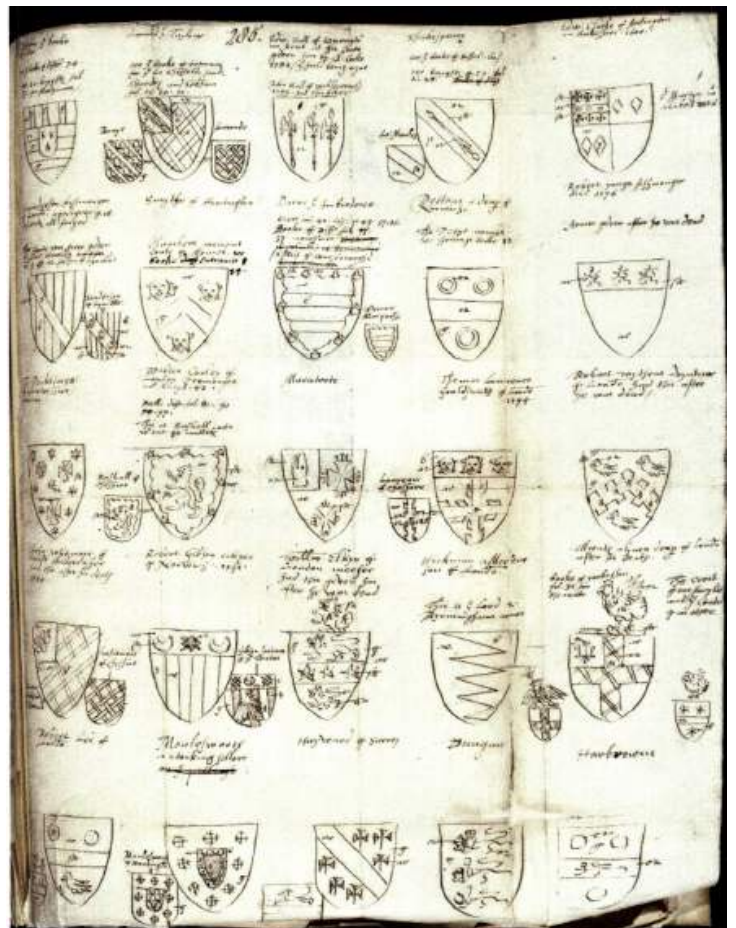


Figure 7. Ralph Brooke’s page of arms for petitioners whom he considered unqualified.

In **Figure 7**, John Shakspeare's is the fourth one on the top row. Brooke identified and labeled twenty-five coats of arms on this page. Twenty-three are from his original list and two were added: Dungan and Harbone. The last two are at the end of the bottom row. They are all representative examples of line drawings used in correspondence in this era.

The York Herald's challenge to Shakspeare's Grant of Arms

In 1602, York Herald Ralph Brooke (1553-1625) accused Garter King of Arms William Dethick and Clarenceux King of Arms William Camden (1551-1623), the author of *Britannia*, a monumental geographic description and mapping of Great Britain, "of having made grants to base persons, among whom 'Shakespeare' was named."²⁷

In his *Discoverie of Certaine Errours Published in Print in the Much Commended 'Britannia' 1594*, Brooke named persons he believed had been improperly granted arms by William Dethick. They included plasterers, embroiderers, stocking-sellers, soap makers, fishmongers and foreigners, among others. He argued that these coats of arms had been granted to unworthy or deceased

individuals, or, in the case of Shakspeare, that they too closely resembled the ancient arms of another family extinct in the 15th century. This charge was unfounded because the old shield was gold with a bend sable but no spear, whereas John's arms had a spear in the bend (**Figure 8**).

As part of Brooke's charges, in a letter to the Queen he created a page with twenty-five line drawings of coats of arms that he considered bogus (**Figure 7**).

Dethick and Camden, in their response, colored most of the arms on Brooke's page, accompanied by a short paragraph of rebuttal to Brooke's accusations. **Figure 8** is the rebuttal for John Shakspeare's arms from the College of Arms letter with "Shakspeare" written above the shield.²⁸

It is curious that Dethick, who had deleted John's qualifications in his 1596 Letters Patent, mentioned them here in his defense of Brooke's charges.

Dethick and Camden were granting arms for profit, but defended themselves in two letters in 1602 (one is now in the College of Arms archives and the other in the Bodleian Library, Oxford), stating that as Garter and Clarenceux Kings of Arms, they held the ancient right to grant arms, even though they violated protocol in bypassing the Earl Marshall. No action was taken by the Crown in response to Brooke's charges.

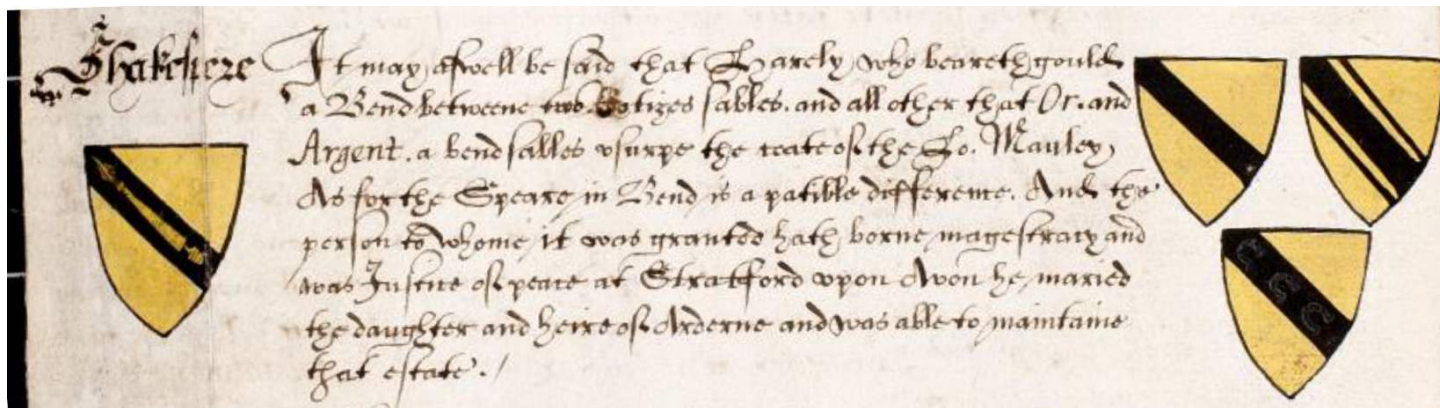


Figure 8. Shakspeare coat of arms in left margin. Three coats of arms in right margin: Mauley, Harely, and one with three horseshoes on the bend. (The bottom shield has three nearly imperceptible horseshoes.) The text reads:

It may as well be said that Harely who beareth Gould a Bend between two cotizes sabled, and all othe that Or and Argent, a bend of sables, usurp the coat of Lord Mauley. As for the speare in bend is a patible difference. And the person to whom it was granted hath borne magistracy and was Justice of the peace at Stratford upon Avon. He married the daughter and heir of Arderne and was able to maintaine that estate."²⁹

III. Line Drawings and Blazons in John Shakspere's arms in Draft Grants I and II

Line Drawings

Line drawings of Arms vary considerably. They can be elaborate renditions of a complete achievement of arms or simple drawings of the shield and crest as in Dethick's Draft Grants I & II (**Figures 4 and 5**). They are commonly found in the Elizabethan heraldic records.

Ralph Brooke's 1602 line drawings (**Figure 7**) are excellent examples.³⁰ They are usually rough sketches that depict the shield and, in some instances, a crest. In John Shakspere's drafts they simply suggest a possible design without concern for the details which are more

precisely described in the blazon. (Both details of the arms have been enhanced for clarity.)

These two line drawings were made on the same day but the tinctures don't match. Whoever drew them was inconsistent in labeling them. In **Figure 9** the bend is shown as *s* for sable (black) and the shield is *or* for gold. This was reversed in **Figure 10**. The spear is incorrectly labeled *s* for sable (black) and the bend is shown as *or* for gold. Besides enhancing the drawings for clarity, we have corrected **Figure 10** to match the labeling in **Figure 9**.

Also note that neither sketch displays a helmet, mantling and tassels, and only a vague hint of a torse (wreath). The crest is usually shown on a helmet in a complete achievement of arms (**Figures 3 and 6a**).



Figure 9. Draft Grant I - two tinctures:
o or or=gold
sa or s=sable

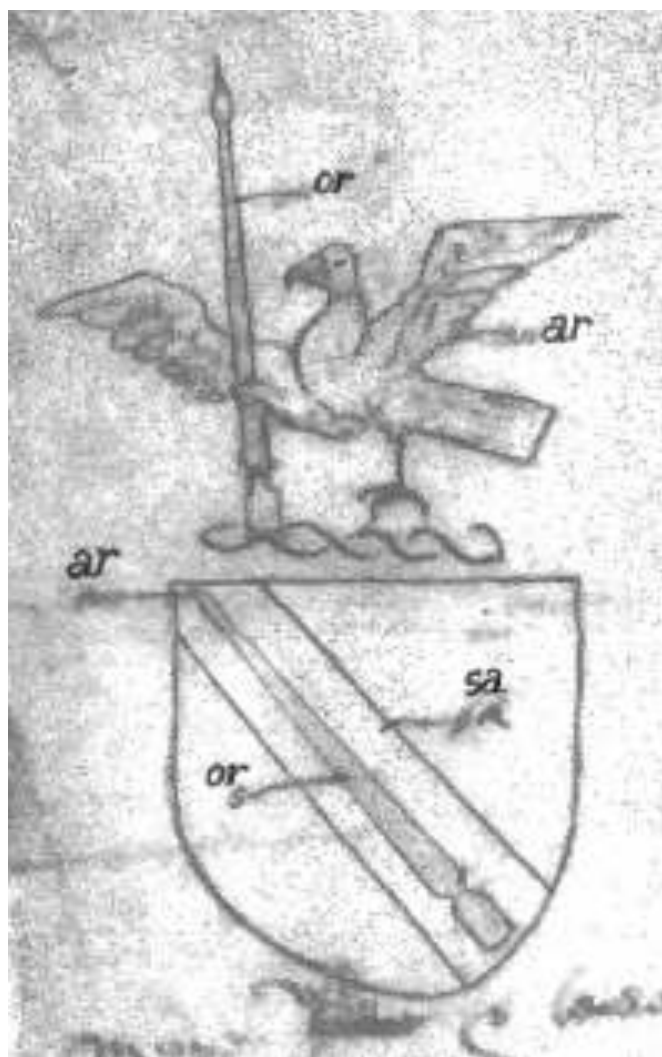


Figure 10. Draft Grant II – three tinctures:
ar=silver/ white,
sa or s=sable
o or or=gold or yellow

The Blazon³¹

A blazon is the official description in Heraldic Code of an Achievement of Arms. It is written so that an accurate drawing or painting may be made from it.

Heraldic code is used to make the description of the arms under consideration shorter and more precise than one in standard English.

The conventions of a blazon are well established but are flexible. There is no conventional punctuation except that the tinctures and charges are capitalized, adjectives follow nouns they qualify, the tinctures come next, dexter is before sinister, and chief is before base. A crest should be blazoned “upon a helm *within* a torse” (a wreath) and not *on* a torse. Mantling is blazoned with the outer surface always first and the inner lining labeled “doubled,” is always last. Supporters identical on each side are labeled “on either side” but ones that are dissimilar are labeled “dexter” and “sinister” to the shield. The compartment is described “on a compartment” composed of any number of different surfaces.

To demonstrate the economy of words in a blazon, the blazon below is matched with a Standard English

language version. From the Letters Patent for John Shakespeare written by Dethick in 1596 (**Figure 6**):

Shield Gold on a Bend sable [black], a spear of the first, steeled Argent, & for his Crest or Cognizance a Falcon, his wings displaid Argent standing on a wreath of his colors supporting a Spear Gold, steeled as aforesaid set upon a helmet with mantles & tassels as hath been accustomed and doth more plainly appear depicted in this margent.

Here is the same description in “standard” English:

There is a gold shield with a wide diagonal black band extending from the upper right to the lower left from the bearer’s view. A gold spear lies on the band pointing upwards with a silver point. For his crest or recognition a white falcon wings outstretched, is standing on a twisted cord colored gold and black holding a gold spear with a silver point, the whole set on a helmet with mantles and tassels around the helmet black on the outside and white on the inside best depicted in the left upper margin of the document.

Not counting the word *a*, the heraldic description is only fifty-three words, compared to the eighty-eight-word standard English version.



**Lifetime
Membership***

Please consider . . .

* No more annual dues! Special gifts! Prices reflect Edward de Vere’s lifespan from 1550-1604 (\$1550 for individual, \$1604 for family) <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/product/membership/>

IV. The Shakespeare Arms Displayed In Stratford-Upon-Avon

There are three prominent examples of the Shakespeare arms (shield) in Stratford. One is over the front entrance to “Shakespeare’s Birthplace” (Figure 12) and another is above the monument on the wall of Holy Trinity Church (Figure 13). Both were placed in their respective positions long after Will Shaksper was established in the traditional narrative as the reputed author of the Shakespeare canon.

The third example (not shown) is the most recent. It is on the wall of The Shakespeare Centre on Henley Street near the birthplace. It was placed on the façade of the building when it was dedicated in 1964.³²



Figure 11

There is no question that the monument to “William Shakespeare” in the Stratford Holy Trinity Church is a fanciful representation of the poet/dramatist. The antiquarian Joseph Greene arrived in Stratford in 1737 and was responsible for “repairing and re-beautifying” the effigy.

The first record was a sketch made by Sir Thomas Dugdale (1605-1686) showing a man with his hands akimbo on what appears to be a wool sack. But no quill pen and no paper. There were several versions over the next century, but the first time “Shakespeare” was depicted as a writer was in George Vertue’s 1725 engraving. The subject is now shown with a quill pen and the sack is now a soft pad.

In his 1909 *Is Shakespeare Dead*, Mark Twain wrote:

The Bust – there in the Stratford Church. The precious bust, the priceless bust, with the dandy moustache, and the putty face, unseamed of care – that face that has looked passionately down upon the awed pilgrim for a hundred and fifty years and will still look down upon the awed pilgrim three hundred more, with the deep, deep, deep, subtle, subtle, subtle expression of . . . a bladder.



Figure 12

The shields were undoubtedly placed after the Shakespeare narrative had become established.

Final Thoughts

If Will Shakspeare was indeed the genius who conceived the western world's greatest literary works, why didn't he seek armorial bearings for himself rather than through his father? Then he would have been able to style himself "gentleman" in his own right, not just upon the death of his father. This familiar quote from *Twelfth Night* may provide clarification: "Be not afraid of greatness: Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them."

Will Shakspeare was certainly not born great. He was a successful businessman, yet his death in 1616 was a non-event in Stratford and in England's literary circles. No one ever associated him with anything remotely literary. So Will Shakspeare never achieved greatness.

Some might say that greatness was thrust upon Will Shakspeare in 1623 with the publication of the First Folio of William Shakespeare's plays. But it was the writer "William Shakespeare" who was lauded, not the Stratford man who had a similar name.

We find these questions perplexing; perhaps others will as well. If we have managed to pique the curiosity of our readers, and have encouraged further exploration of this fascinating age, we will have accomplished our goal.

Acknowledgments:

We thank the present York Herald of the College of Arms, London, UK, Michael Peter Desmond O'Donoghue, MA, FSA, for his clarification of heraldic terminology and for specific advice on the wording of the blazon of our hypothetical Achievement of Arms.

We also thank James Lloyd, Archivist of the College of Arms, London, UK, for permission to use the 1596 Draft Grants I and II for John Shakspeare, the page of arms drawn by Ralph Brooke of unworthy arms granted by William Dethick and William Camden, 1601, and Dethick's response, 1602.

Thanks also to Dr. Matthew Shaw, Archivist of Queen's College, Oxford, for permission to use part of a letter in response to Brooke's accusations by Dethick and Camden. We are also indebted to the Folger Shakespeare Library for permission to use the line drawings of the Shakespeare coat of arms.

Special thanks to *Newsletter* editor Alex McNeil for his detailed review and comments, as well as to Kate Delano-Condax Decker and Ian Archbald Baker, PhD, for their suggestions.

Last, but not least, we thank the following writers for their contributions to the study of the Shakespeare Authorship Question: Mark Anderson, Bonner Miller Cutting, Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, Diana Price, Richard Waugaman, Richard Whalen, Hank Whittmore, Bryan H. Wildenthal, and the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition.

Endnotes:

16. J.P. Brook-Little, *An Heraldic Alphabet*. London, Robson Books, Ltd. (revised) 1996; J. Parker, *Glossary of Terms used in Heraldry*. London, James Parker and Co. 1894. London, Forgotten Books, edited by H. Gough, 2018; Woodcock & Robinson, 197-206. Heraldic glossaries differ slightly in different terms, so it is best to look at a few for a consensus.
17. C.W. Scott-Giles, *Shakespeare's Heraldry*. London, J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd. (1950), 38.
18. Id. at 28.
19. Id. at 29.
20. Shakespeare Documented: Draft Grant I for John Shakespeare, October 20th, 1596 College of Arms, London UK, MS Vincent 157, number 23.
21. Id. at number 24.
22. Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, "Deadly Little Comma," <https://politicworm.com>. December 5, 2019. This is the best explanation of this puzzling issue we've seen to date.
23. Ogburn, 28.
24. Price, 70.
25. Letters Patent, Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/letters_patent
26. Shakespeare Documented: Grant of Arms to various families from 33 Elizabeth to 8. Car 1 inclusive chiefly by Sir William Dethick, Garter King of Arms. MS 137 fols, 54-222. Queen's College Library, Oxford University, Oxford, UK. This copy of John Shakspeare's Grant (Letters Patent) is in a volume of 128 copies of grants made by Dethick between 1590 and 1599 with the exception of a few made before and after. Figure 7a depicts one of the first 17th century full color achievements of the Shakespeare Coat of Arms.
27. Ogburn, 28. Shakespeare Documented: *The Arms presented vnto her Majestie with the first [...] par Garter Dethicke*, College of Arms, London, UK. <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/shakespeares-arms-challenged-ralph-brooke-presented-queen-elizabeth>
Ralph Brooke (c.1553-1625), York Herald (1592), acrimonious and unpopular, was bypassed for Clarenceux King of Arms, second to the Garter Chief of Arms in London, in 1597 by William Camden. Jealous, he decided to challenge twenty-three grants of arms by Camden and William Dethick that he thought were unworthy and which he reported to the Queen 1602. In Figure 8 he identified and labeled twenty-five coats of arms, including John Shak(e)spe(a)re's.
28. Shakespeare Documented: *The answer of Garter and Clarenceux Kings of Arms to the scrawl of arms exhibited by Raffe Brookesmouth called York Herald 1602* in Dethick's hand. Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Oxford, UK.
<https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/shakespeares-arms-defended-bodleian-libraris-copy-garter-and-clarenceuxs-reply>
Shakespeare Documented: *Garter and Clarenceux's reply to the York Herald: copy with revisions in Garter's handwriting 1602*, College of Arms. This is the illustrated reply from Garter and Clarenceux Kings of Arms

defending John Shakespeare's arms cited by Ralph Brooke as unworthy.

<https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resourse/document/shakespeare's-arms-defended-college-of-arms-copy-garter-and-clarenceux's-reply>

Shakespeare Documented: [Coats of Arms Granted by William Dethick as York Herald and Garter King of Arms.](#)

29. This is the text of Figure 9 enlarged and easier to read.
30. Line drawings of arms are commonly found in correspondence in Elizabethan times. The twenty-five line drawings of arms by Ralph Brooke in his 1602 letter to the Queen (Figure 8) are excellent examples.
31. Blazon. Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blazon#;the_language_of_Blazon <https://www.theheraldrysociety.com/articles/the-language-of-blazon>; Fox-Davis, A.C. *A Complete Guide to Heraldry*. New York: Dodge Publishing Company (1909). Reprinted New York Bonanza Books (1978).
32. Shakespeare icons in Stratford-upon-Avon <https://www.visitstratforduponavon.co.uk>
33. *Twelfth Night*, Act II, Scene 5.

References and suggestions for further reading

Books:

Mark Anderson, *"Shakespeare" by Another Name: The Life of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, the Man Who Was William Shakespeare*. New York: Gotham Books (2005).

J.P. Brooke-Little, *An Heraldic Alphabet*. London: Robson Books, Ltd. (1998).

Bonner Miller Cutting, *Necessary Mischief: Exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question*. Jennings LA: Minos Publishing Company (2018).

Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company (1984; 2nd ed. 1992).

Stefan Oliver & Guy Croton, *Heraldry: Understanding Signs & Symbols*. London: Park Lane Books (2013).

James Parker, *A Glossary of Terms Used in Heraldry*. Oxford and London: James Parker and Co. (1894).

Diana Price, *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography: New Evidence of an Authorship Problem*. Westport CT: Greenwood Press (2001).

John M. Shahan & Alexander Waugh, eds., *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?: Exposing an Industry in Denial*. Claremont CA: Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, 2016.

Stephen Slater, *The Illustrated Book of Heraldry*. Wisbech, UK: Lorenz Books (2018).

Richard M. Waugaman, *Let's Revere the Works of Shakespeare*. Middletown, Del. (2021).

Richard Whalen, *Shakespeare: Who Was He? The Oxford Challenge to the Bard of Avon*. Westport CT: Praeger Publishers (1994).

Hank Whittemore, *100 Reasons Shakespeare Was the Earl of Oxford*. Somerville MA: Forever Press (2016).

Bryan H. Wildenthal, *Early Shakespeare Authorship Doubts*. San Diego CA: Zindabad Press, (2019).

Online resources:

The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC <https://www.folger.edu>

Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, <https://www.politicworm.com> – "The deadly little comma," 2019.

The College of Arms, London, UK <https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk>

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon, UK <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/>

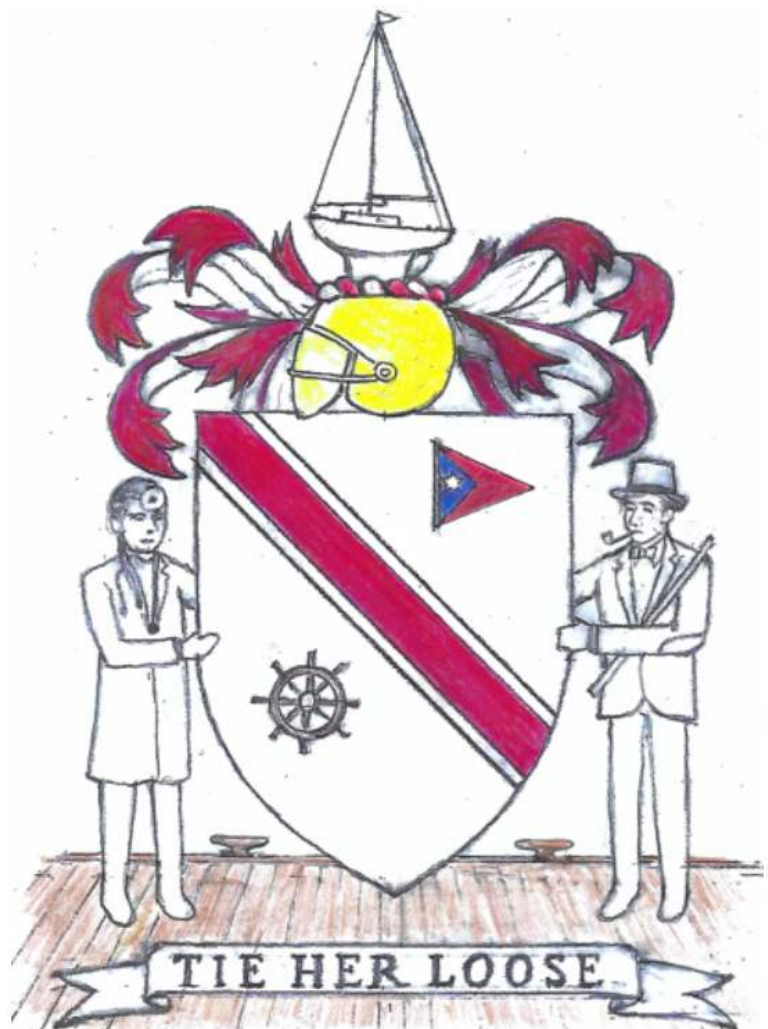


Figure 3. (repeated from p. 26)

Tales from the Archives

from the SOF Data Preservation Committee

Kathryn Sharpe, DPC chair, received the following question from Sylvia Holmes, secretary of the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable (SAR) and leader of “By the Book,” SAR’s book club.

Q: I just started interacting with [SOAR \[Shakespeare Online Authorship Research, soarcat.com\]](https://soarcat.com). . . . I have many, many boxes of stuff. I randomly pulled out. . . an article titled “Study says stargazer wrote Shakespeare’s plays,” which was published in the *Sunday Record*, November 22, 1998. I checked, and the article was not in SOAR. Now that I have something SOAR may want, what should I do with this article and any future articles?

How do I submit them to SOAR? Is there a weeding out process for articles they don’t want?



SOAR Scanning Guidelines:

- PDF format for all typed and printed text
- JPG format for all photos, drawings, or documents in need of editing or cleaning
- Best resolution at 300 dpi; higher resolution reserved for special cases
- Brightness at 50%
- All pages straight and aligned
- One file per document; one folder per author

Have questions for the DPC? Send them to Kathryn at sharpe.kathryn@gmail.com.



A: [New England Shakespeare Oxford Library \(NESOL\)](https://www.nesol.org/) maintains a permanent file of miscellaneous authorship articles and clippings that are in a queue to be downloaded to SOAR. All original articles sent to NESOL are welcome and will be added to the library’s permanent file of authorship articles. If you’ve been hanging onto an article for a while, here’s how to ensure that it will be preserved in the archives:

1. First, check SOAR to see if the article is already archived. If so, then the article has been preserved for future generations.
2. If the article is not in SOAR, we want it! Please scan the article and send an email copy to Bill Boyle at librarian@shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org (see scanning guidelines below).
3. In addition, please mail the original hard copy of the article to:

NESOL, Attn. Bill Boyle
PO Box 263
Somerville, MA 02143

In This Issue:

Richard Roe’s Unpublished Notebooks	
Elucidate <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	1
From the President	2
Letters	3
In Memoriam: Howard Schumann	4
In Memoriam: James S. Hardigg	5
What’s the News?	7
A Postscript to “Does the 17 th Earl of Oxford ‘lieth buried in Westminster?’”	11
Examining the Earl of Oxford’s “New” Signature of 1603	13
Book Reviews	16
ChatGPT: Can Artificial Intelligence Reshape the Authorship Question?	22
John Shaksper’s Grant of Arms: Three Curious Aspects (Part Two)	26
Tales from the Archives	36