From the Editor

Expanding the Canon

by Gary Goldstein

The lead article in last year's issue by Dr. Waugaman posed the question: was Edward de Vere the real translator of the 1567 version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*? Dr. Waugaman had good reason for investigating whether the 17th Earl of Oxford had translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses* given that W.E. Buckley in 1882 referred to a statement by the English literary antiquary Thomas Coxeter (1689-1747): "Oxford was said by Coxeter to have translated Ovid, which would connect him with Narcissus, but no one has ever seen his Ovid."

Besides the unique doubling of vowels used in de Vere's private letters and the Golding translation of *Metamorphoses*, what impressed me is the extent to which de Vere, like "Golding" and Shakespeare, used alliteration and hendiadys, often in the same line. In de Vere's signed early poetry, particularly in the 1576 collection, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, I found additional examples of this unique combination of poetic techniques using Dr. Waugaman's methodology.

Dr. Waugaman noted that de Vere was ridiculed for the excessive alliteration in his early signed poetry; and that one finds the same profusion of alliteration in the "Golding" translation of Ovid. The professor pointed to the "w" sound, which is repeated seven times in "The wonted weight was from the Waine, the which they well did wot" (Ovid, Book II, 212). De Vere mimicked this same alliterative sound in his poem, "Care and Disappointment": "Thus like a woeful wight I wove the web of woe." I then discovered that de Vere played upon the "w" sound and combined it with hendiadys in his poem,

"Love Compared to a Tennis Play":

> Which hath Sir Argus' hundred eyes, wherewith to watch and pry
> The Fault wherewith fifteen is lost is want of wit and sense.

I encountered the same preference for integrating alliteration and hendiadys in other de Vere poems, such as "Reason and Affection": "A slavish smith of rude and rascal race," as well as, "That with the careful culver climbs the worn and withered tree," from "Care and Disappointment."

Of course, de Vere also employed hendiadys in his poetry without alliteration, as in "Love and Antagonism": "She is my joy, she is my care and woe." Also, in "What Cunning Can Express":

> Heaven pictured in her face
> Doth promise joy and grace

When added to the weight of evidence presented in Dr. Waugaman's paper, I can state with confidence that the English translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in 1565-67 can be added to the Shakespeare canon.

With the same scholarly assurance, we can now add five hitherto anonymous Elizabethan plays to the Shakespeare *oevre*—like the Ovid translation, these represent Shakespeare's juvenilia. I am referring to the compelling study by Ramon Jiménez of five anonymous plays which he ascribes to Shakespeare in his book, *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship* (McFarland, 2018).

Three histories, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, and *The Troublesome Reign of John*; a comedy, *The Taming of a Shrew*; and a romance, *King Leir*, are considered anonymous products of the Elizabethan stage. The Bard transformed them into the plays that bear nearly identical titles. Indeed, each play is strikingly similar to its canonical counterpart in terms of structure, plot and cast, though the texts were entirely rewritten.

Using historical, theatrical and literary evidence, Jiménez shows how de Vere revised and updated these early dramatic efforts and recreated them as *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King John*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *King Lear*.

In short, two Oxfordian researchers have significantly expanded the boundaries of the Shakespeare canon. The quality of Jiménez's scholarship has already been acknowledged by university librarians throughout the US, with Yale, Stanford, Notre Dame, and UC Berkeley stocking the book, along with Duke, New York University and the Folger Library. At the same time, Dr. Waugaman's paper has been forwarded to British and American academics with an interest in the Golding translation of *Metamorphoses*.

Key to the scholarship of Waugaman and Jiménez is their insight that Shakespeare revisited his early works as a mature poet and dramatist. Shakespeare was not a plagiarist, as many orthodox experts maintain, nor a frequent

collaborator, as the compilers of the 2017 Oxford University edition of the canon assert. He was a frequent reviser of his own work, often revealed by the topical allusions that populate the plays from different periods of the era, but also to Shakespeare's penchant for amending earlier ideas and language, revisions that are always carefully worked out.

Traditional scholars of the period have recently concurred in this assessment. Professor Richard Dutton in *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist* (Oxford UP, 2016) concludes that:

> the multiple states of so many of the [Shakespeare] texts actually offer us significant insights…. That is because, in my view, many of the differences are of Shakespeare's own making, the results of revising his own works. That claim would have seemed unexceptionable to Alexander Pope and other editors of Shakespeare in the 18th century. Since then, however, it has often ranked as heresy in influential editorial circles, where it was long an article of faith that he did not change his texts once he completed them…. Scholars these days are less certain about this. (Preface, vii-viii)

Moreover, a new book by John Kerrigan entitled *Shakespeare's Originality* (Oxford UP 2018), was reviewed in the April 2018 issue of *The New Criterion* by Paul Dean, a British critic, who summed up the professor's case the same way:

> Furthermore—I would say crucially—we now recognize that one of the most important Shakespeare sources is Shakespeare himself, who constantly revisited and reworked his previous plays.

This key re-discovery will direct more Shakespeareans to confront this question: how did the traditional Shakespeare revise his own work over time when he had so little time in which to do it? The query leads us to the integrity of the standard Shakespeare chronology, still set between 1590 and 1613, initially proposed by Sir E.K. Chambers in 1930. As Peter Moore noted in a monograph on the Shakespeare chronology, nearly every scholarly authority of the dating issue agrees that Chambers' dates are too late, yet those dates still stand.

This chronology compels Shakespeare to be a frenetic writer, generating two plays a year and thus leaving him no time with which to revise earlier work. And yet the quartos published during Shakespeare's life constantly refer to revised plays. As Mr. Jiménez notes in his book, fifteen quartos of six plays bore such phrases as "newly corrected," "newly augmented," "amended" or "enlarged" on their title pages. In her study, *Revising Shakespeare*, Grace Ioppolo concludes that Shakespeare substantially revised all eight plays of the two tetralogies.

It is a miracle to have a self-taught provincial genius become the greatest poet-playwright in the Western World; it is another miracle to have this

person rewrite his own work when he is generating double the standard work output over a 23-year period.

When orthodox scholars of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods acknowledge this contradiction, they will finally see the numerous topical allusions covering a 30-year period which permeate the cannon. Why would Shakespeare allude to seriously outdated events, such as the 1572 massacre of Huguenots in Paris (*Macbeth*), or the 1578-79 literary fad of Euphuism (*Love's Labor's Lost*) or the 1580 earthquake in England (*Romeo and Juliet*), or the 1588-89 publication of the Martin Mar-prelate pamphlets (*As You Like It*), when the theater depends on successfully engaging its audiences with the most current events? It is a bedrock principle of theatrical practice that outdated allusions on stage are unable to connect with a general audience's personal memories and, thus, would guarantee commercial failure.

The presence of topical allusions in the canon that were outdated by the 1590s and 1600s represent objective theatrical evidence that Shakespeare had originally written the plays much earlier than the traditional chronology would have us believe. That orthodox experts have refused to investigate this aspect of the historical evidence embedded in the plays demonstrates the intellectual terror that has paralyzed the Shakespeare establishment for four hundred years.

For those who doubt the modern relevance of Shakespeare's political acumen, I recommend reading columnist Kevin Williamson's interpretation of *Coriolanus* for insight into the public behavior of people on social media in his short article, "Vile Garlands," in *National Review* magazine. Go here for the article: https://www.nationalreview.com/2019/01/twitter-mobs-perils-of-public-life/

For this issue of *The Oxfordian*, I have chosen two articles to reprint from another source: one from the Spring 2019 issue of *Critical Stages Journal* by Professor of English Luke Prodromou, detailing how and why he became a doubter of the traditional author of the Shakespeare canon, and a second from the Winter 2018-19 issue of the same journal by this editor, showing how an Oxfordian authorship changes the way the plays can be produced to recover the author's original intent for modern audiences.

The Prodromou essay was written in response to the Special Authorship Issue of *Critical Stages*, which demonstrates that the controversial subject of "who wrote Shakespeare?" is still generating genuine debate among academics. The second is my detailed response to the one question posed by every theatre professional who has considered the relevance of the Shakespeare authorship question: how does it change the way I produce the plays? While the textual scholarship of Shakespeare is vital, we need to admit that Shakespeare lives on in the modern world through his dramatic works. Ultimately, he, and they, will live or die on stage.