

## *From the Editor:*

### The Oxfordian Hypothesis Gains Academic Acceptance

by Gary Goldstein

The year 2020 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of J. Thomas Looney’s revolutionary book on the authorship—“*Shakespeare*” *Identified in Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford*. At the same time, the movement can take enormous pride in celebrating a seminal advance: academic publication of Oxfordian research in Canada, Great Britain and the United States for the first time.

Since the authorship of the Shakespeare canon is primarily an intellectual endeavor, the key audience for the issue is the scholarly community in academia, though the theater world also plays a key role as modern-day interpreters of Shakespeare’s 400-year-old corpus.

Honor of place belongs to Palgrave Macmillan for bringing out Michael Wainwright’s book, *The Rational Shakespeare: Peter Ramus, Edward de Vere, and the Question of Authorship*, in 2018, the first published by an academic press that lays out the case for Edward de Vere as the real Shakespeare—and how that transforms our understanding of the plays. Equally important are the author’s bona fides: Wainwright is Associate Lecturer of English and Honorary Research Associate at Royal Holloway, University of London. His previous monographs include *Darwin and Faulkner’s Novels: Evolution and Southern Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), *Toward a Sociobiological Hermeneutic* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and *Game Theory and Postwar American Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Palgrave Macmillan describes *The Real Shakespeare* as an examination of “William Shakespeare’s rationality from a Ramist perspective, linking that examination to the leading intellectuals of late humanism, and extending those links to the life of Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford. The application to Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets of a game-theoretic hermeneutic, an interpretive approach that Ramism suggests but ultimately evades, strengthens these connections in further supporting the Oxfordian answer to the question of Shakespearean authorship.”

According to the World Catalog of Libraries, the Wainwright book can be found in 150 university libraries in 16 countries, an indication of the subject matter’s growing importance to academics worldwide.

In the United States this year, Cornell University Press published Harvard scholar Don Ostrowski’s book, *Who Wrote That? Authorship Controversies from Moses to Sholokhov*, in Kindle, paperback and hardcover editions. Using Moses, *Analects* of Confucius, the *Secret Gospel of Mark*, Abelard and Heloise, the *Compendium of Chronicles*, Rashid al-Din, William Shakespeare, Prince Andrei Kurbskii, James Macpherson, and Mikhail Sholokov, Ostrowski presents historical and literary evidence in nine cases over the past 2,500 years in an attempt to determine the true authorship of each. In a lengthy chapter on Shakespeare, Ostrowski positively compares the evidence for the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford versus William Shaksper of Stratford as the true author of the Shakespeare canon. To date, 133 libraries in 12 countries stock the book.

Like Wainwright, Ostrowski is an instructor and scholar at a leading university: Research Advisor in the Social Sciences and Lecturer in History at Harvard University’s Extension School. He is also author of more than 150 publications, including his edition of *The Pověst vremennykh lét [Tale of Bygone Years]*, which received the Early Slavic Studies Association Award for Distinguished Scholarship.

A third book by an academic that posits Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford as the true Shakespeare is *Shakespeare Beyond Science: When Poetry Was the World*, published this autumn by Guernica Editions. The author is Sky Gilbert, Professor of English and Theater at the University of Guelph in Canada, who also is an award-winning playwright and novelist as well as a published poet.

Gilbert’s argument is that Oxford was a medievalist who employed rhetoric in his plays and poems as propounded by the ancient Greek philosopher Hermogenes. In an essay published in this issue of *The Oxfordian*, he describes Shakespeare’s intellectual position in light of the evolving spirit of the age: “Shakespeare dared to align himself with a point of view that was in danger of becoming anachronistic. His work was the aesthetic personification of an old, romantic world order that was reluctantly giving way to a new, more pragmatic one, and he waged a valiant, passionate final crusade in the name of medieval rhetoric and chivalry.”

To judge the scholarly achievement of each author, please consult the reviews of all three books in this issue of *The Oxfordian*.

Equally important is the scholarship in Ramon Jiménez's monograph published in this issue, an effort which demonstrates that the anonymous play *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* was actually Shakespeare's first play. A highly detailed presentation employing historical, theatrical and literary evidence, Jiménez's case should compel literary historians to identify Shakespeare as the author of the play and reassess the consensus that Shakespeare did not revise and enlarge upon his early works throughout his career.

Along with these signal achievements is the appearance of new information on J. Thomas Looney and his works recently discovered by independent researcher James Warren—unpublished articles, previously “lost” letters and other data that enlarge the scope of Looney's case for Oxford. Indeed, we are proud to publish five letters by Looney from British journals that defend a crucial part of his literary evidence: the similarity in vocabulary, theme and method of Oxford's early poetry in comparison with Shakespeare's mature work.

Dr. Richard Waugaman delves into Shakespeare's dramatic methodology of using real-life models for communicating to various audiences, including the Queen, in *1 and 2 Henry IV*, investigating whether the comic figure of Sir John Falstaff was based mostly on King Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father.

In “Calgreyhounds and the First Folios of Jonson and Shakespeare,” Michael Hyde examines an entirely different piece of contemporary evidence: the use of heraldry and its emblems in the published works of Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare. In his paper, Hyde seeks to determine if the unique use of calgreyhounds by the 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Earls of Oxford—and their presence in the First Folios of Jonson and Shakespeare—implies that Jonson and the Herbert brothers employed a visual piece of evidence that points to the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford as the real Shakespeare.

I have chosen to reprint two articles in this issue for their evidentiary value, the first from the Spring 2012 issue of *Shakespeare Matters* by Professor Jack Goldstone on the true meaning of the Stratford monument's Latin inscription. The second paper is from the Summer 2015 issue of *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* by Professor Emeritus Andrew Crider on which “Shakespeare” was profiled by Ben Jonson in his memoirs. The Goldstone article reveals the subtle methodology employed for the Shakespeare “cover-up” as applied to the funerary monument in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford. Crider's paper examines whether Ben Jonson's *De Shakespeare Nostrati* is actually a profile of Edward de Vere, based upon the individual psychologies of de Vere and Shakspeare revealed in their biographies.

