

The 17th Earl of Oxford and the Occult

by Richard Malim

The Renaissance provoked a profound dissatisfaction with European theology and its conceptions of man and the universe; in response, contemporary philosophers thought it possible to provide a more satisfactory solution to the questions raised. They were attracted by the cosmos afforded by the works of Hermes Trismegistus, believed to have originated 3,000 years earlier with Egyptian mysticism, essentially an amalgam of Pharaonic, Mosaic, Christian and Neoplatonic thought and revelation. They were led first by Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), then by Giordano Bruno (1548–1600). In England, the principal disciple was John Dee (1527–1609).

The Hermetic tradition involved a complicated cosmos with variations, including study of the occult among the advanced class of thinkers. The question therefore arises as to the extent to which Shakespeare was influenced by these developments. The answer, according to Frances Yates¹ (1964, 269) and other modern critics, is that this influence was considerable, and they point to the practice of magic in Shakespeare's plays, especially the magus Prospero in *The Tempest*. Not everyone in Elizabethan times accepted this proposition, and in contrast to the Yates view, I believe that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford was its opponent. I believe his view was ultimately corroborated by the total refutation by Isaac Casaubon in 1614 of the Hermes Trismegistus school as a first century sub-Christian creation.

In this essay I plan to refute the idea that Oxford owed any substantial element of his thought to the Hermeticists such as Ficino and Bruno. This

contention depends on disproving two orthodox ideas. First is the belief that certain late plays by Shakespeare must be dated after 1604, the year that Oxford died. The second is the misdating the composition of *Love's Labour's Lost* because orthodox scholars have overlooked topical allusions in *LLL* and misinterpreted the Hermeticist ideas in it, the better to lend credence to their dating the Shakespeare canon from 1590 to 1612.

Giordano Bruno in Brief

In April 1583, on the recommendation of the French King Henry III, Giordano Bruno, while posing as a Catholic priest, took up residence with the French Ambassador in London for two-and-a-half years. Bruno wrote some of his works there in addition to being a spy for Sir Francis Walsingham's secret service. He also involved himself in the cultural and philosophical discussions of the day. Eventually he was caught by the Inquisition, which convicted and then burned him in Rome in 1600. He became a hero to the secular arm of the fight for Italian unity in the 19th Century, both for his martyrdom and the content of those works.² While he is widely credited with two outstanding post-Renaissance revelations, that of the infinity of the universe and of religious toleration, the route by which he reached those conclusions requires careful examination so that his role as an influence on Oxford-Shakespeare can be properly examined.

Bruno saw himself as the high point of the Hermetic Tradition, almost the founder of a new religion. The Hermetic Tradition is that body of work which the Renaissance mistakenly dated to a period pre-Moses and based in Egypt, where two works, *Asclepius* and *the Corpus Hermeticum*, surfaced sometime after 100 AD in Egypt. They were ascribed to an Egyptian priest named Hermes Trismegistus, and Renaissance philosophers believed they were a digest of the earliest pristine religious thought of the Egyptians, mixed with Classical Greek philosophy, an idea supported by early Christian saints such as Lactantius (c. 250–325) and Augustine (354–430). Lactantius saw these writings as a prophecy of the coming of Christ, but Augustine attacked those elements which are incompatible with orthodox Christianity. In the middle of the 15th Century these writings came into the hands of

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the Florentine philosopher and astrologer Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), who translated, wrote and lectured upon them. They became the last word in scholarship and philosophic appreciation, along with the increased interest in magic and astrology, for the next 150 years.

Some of the more outlandish magical elements were beginning to lose a wide following by 1550. Bruno, however, became a recognized authority on the philosophy, and his free-thinking attitude caused him to leave his native Italy and take refuge with the Court of the French King Henry III (1574–89). He rose in favor with the King, who was anxious not to fall too far out of favor with Queen Elizabeth, and sent him with some unspecified objective to stay with the French Ambassador in London. He lectured at Oxford University but offended his hosts by plagiarizing too much from Ficino. Yates points out that his philosophical work looks back to Ficino's pre-Copernican non-scientific approach; he is something of a retrograde figure (Yates 1964 174). He seems to dispense with much Christian thinking but preaches a form of religious Hermeticism based on good works and toleration. It is this toleration of free-thinking thought and speech for which he is justly remembered (Yates 1964, 433ff).

It was Bruno's religious views that brought him to the stake in 1600 (Yates 1964, 388ff), not his views on innumerable worlds or on the movement of the earth. It was these views rather than any scientific rigor which caused him to decide on the infinity of the cosmos. Similarly, it was not the love doctrines of Christianity which made him stand for toleration, liberty of person, opinion and speech, but his own Hermetic interpretation. Thus, by his private exploration of Hermeticism did Bruno reach his conclusions, and the divorce from divinity sealed his death.

Giordano Bruno and his modern interpreters confront scholars with particularly strong challenges, led by Frances Yates, who suggested that Shakespeare owes a considerable debt to Bruno. So that the problem can be properly analyzed, the following timeline should be noted:

1578–1581: Oxfordian dating of *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*³

1580: Oxford's exposure of Catholic plotters in open Court

1582: Bruno's comedy *Il Candelaio* published in Paris

1583, April: Bruno arrives in London

1583, November: Arrest and exposure of the Earl of Throckmorton

1584, Ash Wednesday: The Supper—*La Cena de le Ceneri*—is written

1584: Bruno's *La Cena de le Ceneri*, *De la Causa* and *Spaccio* are published in London

1585: *De Gli Eroici Furori* is published in London

1585, September: Bruno leaves London

Bruno's Relationship with Shakespeare's Works

To state the problem simply, the dramas of Shakespeare did not have much of a connection to those of Bruno or Bruno's works were influenced by Shakespeare—or Shakespeare rewrote his plays after their initial production in response to Bruno's novels and plays.

For our argument, it is therefore vital to establish a date for the earliest version of *Love's Labour's Lost*. While orthodoxy maintains the play was first composed in the mid-1590s and revised in 1598 with publication of the first quarto, Professor of Theater Felicia Londré has proposed a date of 1578 based on internal and external evidence.

Numerous internal references point to 1578 as the original date of composition [of *LLL*] and this is corroborated by the external evidence that *The Double Maske: The Maske of Amasones* and *A Maske of Knights* was presented at court on 11 January 1579 to honor the French envoy Simier... Described in the records of the Court Revels as 'an entertainment in imitation of a tournament between six ladies and a like number of gentlemen who surrendered to them,' *The Double Maske* may well have been the Ur-*Love's Labour's Lost*.... Of the internal evidence most compelling is the fact that Euphuism—of which *Love's Labour's Lost* is considered to be a textbook example—was a courtly fad in 1578–79, and even a year or so later the play's witticisms and in-jokes about that linguistic affectation among members of the court would have been quite stale. (5–6)

Londré further notes that, earlier in 1578, the Queen had made a progress during which Thomas Churchyard presented a pageant of Nine Worthies, apparently just as ineptly as the one we see in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Investigating the relationship between Bruno and Shakespeare, John Arthos maintains that the ideas of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Love's Labour's Lost* are closer to Neoplatonism than to Bruno's and are agreeable to Christian spirituality (97). We see in these plays a more complex use of ideas for comic purposes than in any other preceding English work or in any of the ancient comedies. Moreover, Arthos considers that only Bruno's *Il Candelaio* can match the early Shakespeare plays in this respect (50).

Arthos was constrained in his analysis by the orthodox Shakespeare dating scheme, which places composition of the early plays some 15 years later than the dates proposed by Oxfordian scholars. The logical implication of his analysis is that Bruno amplified what he found in Shakespeare further in *Il Candelaio*, but that Oxford-Shakespeare then developed a fuller conception in his later plays. When examined in light of the dating schedule above, this impression may be considerably strengthened.

While Shakespeare has a reputation for plagiarism, according to orthodox scholars, I have tried to demonstrate (Malim 2011 169) that, in fact, Elizabethan writers borrowed from him because the original composition of the plays took place 15 years before the orthodox dating scheme. Significantly, Bruno also has a well-established reputation for plagiarism. In particular, he was expelled from Oxford University for the extensive plagiarism of the Neoplatonist Ficino in his lectures at the university during the summer of 1583.

On this point, it is instructive to consult Arthos: “However revolutionary his meanings Bruno continually conceived his work as courtly entertainment, and the emblems and the dramatizing were designed with such an audience in mind. This aspect of his work seems also to have interested Shakespeare in the composition of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*” (102).

Yet it is worth noting that, unlike Oxford, at the times of their publication in Italian, Bruno had no court to entertain. I would say that it was Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*—possibly the play with the least popular appeal as opposed to its popularity at Court for the next generation—that interested Bruno. For example, the use of the word “dialogue” in Armado’s undertaking to entertain the King: “Will you hear the dialogue the two learned men have compiled, in praise of the owl and the cuckoo?” (V.ii.873–4) illustrates the point. Bruno’s use of the term is analogous to Shakespeare’s, who uses “dialogue” on at least five other occasions, and Arthos (88) adds that the particular dialogue has elements of form as well as of substance in common with the verse dialogue that concludes the *De Gli Eroici Furori*, which might be imitation again.

Oxfordians depart from the orthodox arguments for dating by using the internal evidence of topical allusions. When Astrophil in Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* (1581) (74) asserts, “I am no pick-purse of another’s wit” he is clearly borrowing Berowne’s accusation that his fellows are “pick-purses in love” (IV.iii.207), and the sonnet sequence ends in imitation (in this and other instances) of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* in an open-ended fashion.

Recently, orthodox scholars such as Professor Richard Dutton have concluded that Shakespeare’s works likely began as Court entertainments (Dutton, *passim*), noting that, “Pleasing the aristocratic, and especially the courtly, audience was always their [Lord Chamberlain’s Men] first concern. Everything else was, by definition, secondary” (16).

One further comment from Arthos: “It is difficult, and often, I suppose, it will remain impossible to say that at such and such a point Shakespeare is at one with Bruno.... One thing is evident, that his thought is as complex and subtle as his poetry, *he is thinking for himself* [my emphasis], his conclusions are his own.” (170–1). On this basis, it is likely that Shakespeare was an original thinker and therefore open to being plagiarized.

For these reasons, it is more likely that Bruno's later works copy from Shakespeare's earlier plays than that Shakespeare's earlier works were rewritten by borrowing from Bruno.

Bruno may have read a manuscript version of *Love's Labour's Lost* prior to 1583 while he was still in France, though it is unlikely. In his other career in England he wrote in French, making mistakes appropriate to an Italian. However, Bruno was encouraged to go to England by the King of France himself and, as he sets *Cena* in London, it is reasonable to infer that he had a working knowledge of English by 1584. At the same time, there is no evidence to date that Bruno attended a public or private theatre or met with Oxford.

Bruno was resident at the French Embassy in London from 1583–85 and, in fact, was an excommunicated priest. Virulently anti-papist, he served as a spy for Sir Francis Walsingham and his revelations contributed to the uncovering of the Throckmorton Plot. As such, he was associating through the French Ambassador with the Roman Catholic elements who were later covert supporters of the Throckmorton plot, i.e. Lord Henry Howard (afterwards Earl of Northampton) and his nephew Charles Arundell.⁴ Bruno's major literary friend appears to have been Sir Philip Sidney, who was not a friend of Oxford given that he was the Earl of Leicester's nephew and a hero of the Puritan faction. Sidney's political and religious views might therefore appeal more to Bruno than those of the more liberal Oxford-Shakespeare. Sidney's great friend and supporter was Fulke Greville, the ostensible host in *Cena*.⁵

While it is possible that *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Love's Labour's Lost* were rewritten in the light of Bruno's works, unless there is supporting evidence of such rewriting, this hypothesis has no validity. As the consensus is that there was an intellectual relationship between the authors, we contend that Shakespeare is the author who influenced Bruno.

We must recognize that the orthodox consensus holds that *Love's Labour's Lost* shows a profound obligation to *Spaccio* and that it would take a seismic shift for any student of Bruno or Shakespeare to consider the reverse. Arthos is a strong supporter of Yates's view (84–100). He quotes (101) the translation of Bruno's "adaptation" (Arthos' word for plagiarization) of *Il Vendemmiatore* Stanza 5 by Tansillo (1510–68). In Bruno's works there are apparently several examples of such borrowings from Tansillo—not all acknowledged (Singer I n.13). Tansillo is also introduced as one of his characters by Bruno in *De Gli Eroici Furori* to express the reasoning of Valentine that the hero is only perfected when he is by his lady-love (*TGV*, III.I.170–184, Arthos 136). I repeat here my core belief that Shakespeare was an original thinker, and thus more likely to have been the precursor rather than the imitator.

Likewise, there is orthodox authority for suggesting that *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (not published until 1601) owes some debt to Bruno's *De Gli Eroici Furori* (1585), but there seems no reason why the latter could not be another example of Bruno borrowing from Oxford (Honigmann 161 n.1).

It is in *Love's Labour's Lost*, with its topical references to the 1578–81 period that the practicalities of Bruno's philosophy come under scrutiny. Here I believe the writer is advancing the scientific method, mocking the Bruno school of ideal study (to which the king and three courtiers have sworn themselves) in the mouth of Berowne, the alter ego of Oxford:

As painfully to pore upon a book
 To seek the light of truth while truth the while
 Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look.
 Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile;
 Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
 Study me how to please the eye indeed
 By fixing it upon a fairer eye,
 Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his deed.
 And give him light that he was blinded by. [i.e. look directly at the
 evidence]
 Study is like the heavens' glorious sun,
 That will not be searched with saucy looks.
 Small have continual plodders ever won
 Save base authority from others' books [A cut at Bruno's use of Ficino]
 These earthly godfathers of heavens' lights
 That give a name to every fixed star
 Have no more profit of their shining nights
 Than those who walk and wot not what they are.
 Too much to know is to know naught but fame,
 And every godfather can give a name. [i.e. this type of study is
 pointless in light of the science of astronomy]
 (I.i.74–93)

Yates (1964, 390–1) relies for support for the seriousness that Shakespeare plagiarized Bruno with these six lines:

For valour, is not love a Hercules,
 Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
 Subtle as Sphinx, as sweet and musical
 As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair,
 And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
 Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.
 (IV.iii.316–321)

I believe that Yates goes astray by taking those lines out of context. The four students have all been unmasked as madly in love with four ladies, and all in breach of their oaths. Berowne produces a splendid argument against the validity and binding nature of the original oaths, but not one which would appeal either to mainstream Christianity or to Bruno:

Consider first what you did swear unto:
To fast, to study, and to see no woman—
Flat treason 'gainst the kingly state of youth.
Say, can you fast? Your stomachs are too young,
And abstinence engenders maladies.
Oh, we have made a vow to study, lords,
And in that vow have forsworn *our books*; [my italics—see l. 328 below]
For when you my liege, or you, or you [Berowne's three fellow-students]
In leaden contemplation have found out
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes
Of beauty's tutors have enriched you with?
Other slow arts entirely keep the brain,
And therefore, finding barren practisers,
Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil.
But love first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain
(*ibid.* 289–304)

Then follows the sublime passage on the power of love (including the lines Yates deploys), but then, in conclusion, derides the Bruno astro-magical deliberations:

From women's eyes this doctrine I derive.
They sparkle with the right Promethean fire.
They are the books, the arts, the academes [the contrast]
That show, contain, and nourish all the world,
Else none at all in aught proves excellent...
(*ibid.* 326–330)

Berowne concludes that it is religious to forswear the original oaths. By including in his explanation the passage Yates quotes, Oxford is making a mockery not only of the practice of swearing religious oaths, but also the philosophic attitudes and conclusions that Bruno wished to preach. While Oxfordians date *Love's Labour's Lost* from internal political events and references to an earlier period of 1578–81, and there was no indication that Bruno would be coming to England, Oxford likely revised the play to counter Bruno's ideas after the publication of *Cena* in 1584. While the politics in *Love's Labour's Lost* follows developments in France in the earlier

period and the relations between Henry of Navarre (afterwards Henry IV) and his wife, the philosophic element is close to the attitude of Henry III, the protector of Bruno, and his philosophic interests; they are sent up by Oxford in the play along with other contemporary literary (Euphuistic) fads.

Bruno also dedicated two of his later works to Oxford's literary opponent, Philip Sidney. This is particularly odd since the attitude of Sidney and his friends was opposed to Bruno's: they were humanists, science-based, and modern in outlook save in the adherence to grammar-based literature. Sidney had been tutored by John Dee and would have been familiar with, if unsympathetic to it

as a strict Protestant, the idea of occult religions. However, the Sidney circle was opposed to Oxford's liberal attitude to literature and especially grammar, and it was perhaps this aspect which made them more acceptable as allies for Bruno against Oxford-Torquato. Indeed, Sidney appears to have spent some time translating the Huguenot leader Philippe Du Plessis Mornay's *De la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne* (1581), which contains a large element of Hermeticism from a Protestant perspective, but without the magical elements favored by Bruno.⁶ Fulke Greville's hagiography of Sidney does not contain any evidence of Sidney's support of Bruno's more radical ideas. Moreover, both Greville and Sidney are shown as present at *La Cena*, with Greville as the host.



Portrait of John Dee painted when Dee was 67. Currently in the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford, England.

La Cena De Ceneri (The Ash Wednesday Supper)

With that in mind, we can consider *La Cena de le Ceneri*, and the role in it of Bruno's principal critic, Torquato. However, it is clear from the useful introduction in Gosselin and Lerner's translation of *La Cena* that Bruno was less interested in defending Copernicus than in using his vision of the universe as a basis for his own theories of the unity of Man and of Man with God—in which the idea of infinity of space (perhaps borrowed from Thomas Digges) is a component. In promoting these ideas he is dismissive of those University men, such as the one he calls Nundinio, who support the original earth-centric vision of Aristotle and Ptolemy; and of those who

support Copernicus more closely and accurately than he does himself, such as Torquato. In fact, I consider Torquato to be a caricature of the 17th Earl of Oxford.

Bruno's previous editors make no effort to identify the real-life models of either Nundinio or Torquato, who are portrayed as pedants from Oxford University. The university receives a hostile portrait from Bruno, whom it might suit to link Oxford the Earl with the university because Bruno was accused of plagiarism when he lectured there in 1583 and chased back to the shelter of the French Embassy in London.⁷

In the Third Dialogue of *La Cena*, in which Teofilo (Bruno himself) reports to his friends in the third person the conversation he has had with Nundinio, Bruno has no difficulty in disposing of the pedant's earth-centric views. In the Fourth he has more problems with Torquato.

What can we glean about Torquato from *La Cena*? For one, he speaks Latin well, and Oxford was fluent in both Latin and Italian, according to the 17-year-old Italian choirboy Orazio Cuoco, who lived with Oxford in England for 11 months during 1576–77. I note that Bruno-Teofilo and he do not converse in Italian or English, no doubt because Bruno's English (he denies he has any, but he allows one of his English friends to suggest he is faking his ignorance) and the Italian of the others present might be defective or non-existent. Torquato is a Doctor, a learned gentleman of good reputation and *qualificato* (to enter these discussions): "Well-bred, obliging and polite?"

Torquato "wore two sparkling chains of gold around his neck."⁸ "Did they (Nundinio and Torquato) seem to know Greek?" Teofilo replies "And beer." It is suggested that this is not only a reference to the Greek language but to a familiarity with Greek wines as well as beer. As his contemporary, Thomas Nashe, publicly averred in 1593, Oxford was a connoisseur of good beer.⁹ A knowledge of Greek wines at the time could only be obtained by a traveler who visited the region, as Oxford did in Italy during 1575–6. In reply to a question about their appearance, Torquato "looked like the *amostante* [an Arabian viceroy] of the Goddess of Reputation," which is either a joke or a suggestion of high birth or status.

In his Prefatory Epistle, Bruno introduces Torquato as a person "who knows neither how to dispute nor how to question to the point.... By virtue of his impudence and arrogance, he appears to the most ignorant as being more learned than Doctor Nundinio.... I truly regret the existence of this part of the dialogue [i.e. the Fourth Dialogue]." As well he might, because it cannot be concealed that in terms of astronomy, Torquato humiliates him.

Bruno expounds on the infinity of the Universe in *La Cena de le Ceneri*, Fourth Dialogue:

He [Teofilo—the Bruno figure]...made his affirmation that the universe is infinite; that it consists of an immense ethereal region; that it is like a vast sky of space in whose bosom are the heavenly bodies..., that the moon, the sun, and innumerable bodies are in this ethereal region, and the earth also...

Bruno then veers off into an exposition of his philosophical apologia, and rapidly falls out with the English doctor Oxford-Torquato. “Ad rem, ad rem” says Torquato, i.e. “Come back to the point,” because Oxford has a full grasp of contemporary advances in astronomy. In essence, Torquato wants Bruno to explain his view of Copernicus. Bruno reveals himself to be deficient in Copernicus’ theory relative to heliocentrism. Frances Yates suggested earlier influences, but the progress of Copernicus’ theory in England lies principally with the 1576 publication of Leonard (d. 1559) and Thomas Digges’s (c.1546–95) *Perfit Description*, which details their own advance from Copernicus to a physically infinite universe filled with stars like the sun. The elder Digges also invented “the perspective trunk,” apparently a rudimentary telescope.

“Domine,” (“my lord”) says Bruno-Teophilus to Oxford-Torquato (Cena Dialogue IV, 183) where they converse in Latin. In his summaries in Italian, Bruno calls him brother (187) and speaks of Oxford as an old man (188), but these Bruno speeches smack of *ex post facto* justification. Bruno opposed Oxford because Oxford was a scientist-logician: his philosophy was based on logical thought and not divine inspiration. It suited Bruno to call him a pedant for his approach and, particularly inappropriately (233), to smear him as a humanist grammarian pedant.

When Torquato is called on in the Fourth Dialogue, there is a splendid and funny caricature of him in majesty preparing to speak, which includes the significant phrase, “arranged the velvet *beretta* on his head.” The translator suggests that this was the badge of Oxford professors, though perhaps it was the high aristocrat’s little round skullcap. The English Noble looks down his nose at Bruno who was only two years older and inquires in Latin, “Then you are that father and leader of the philosophers?” Bruno replies that he is. They then launch into a discussion about the relationship of the planets and the earth, in which Torquato endeavors to make Bruno stick to the Copernican point. But Bruno is not interested because he wants to propose his new philosophy using Copernicus as his evidence, at which Torquato says, “He is sailing to Antycira,” i.e., the lunatic asylum. Bruno counters by saying it is Torquato who is mad and prepares to depart. Some at the table suggest that

it is Bruno who is being rude. As a result, Bruno, “who makes a practice of vanquishing in courtesy those who could easily surpass him in other things changed his mind,” says that he could no more hate Torquato than he could hate his younger self, which is why “I pity you and pray God that... at least he would make you aware that you are blind.” One wonders if this is not all invention: the great noble’s reaction is not recorded.

Instead Torquato says, “As if he wanted to bring forth a very noble demonstration, asked with august majesty: ‘Where is the apogee of the sun?’” Torquato had to repeat the question and, with no adequate reply, sometime after drew, first “a straight line through the middle... [of the piece of paper] from one side to the other. Then in the center he drew a circle of which the aforementioned line, passing through the center, was the diameter. Inside one semi-circle he wrote *Terra* and within the other *Sol*.” In both semicircles he then puts in seven concentric semicircles: at the top of the *Terra* semicircles he writes *Ptolemaus*, and outside the *Sol* semicircles *Copernicus*. Bruno asks him what he meant to do with something known even to children, and Torquato tells him, “See, be quiet and learn: I will teach you Ptolemy and Copernicus.” Bruno answered that when one is learning to write the alphabet, he shows bad judgment in wanting to teach grammar to someone who knows more than himself. Bruno reproduces a drawing but from the text it is clear his reproduction is not of the drawing by Torquato. Torquato drew in the earth, writing in a “beautiful hand *Terra*” and on an epicycle (i.e., a smaller circle having its center on the circumference of a larger circle) the moon.

Bruno tries to make out that the earth was drawn on the same epicycle as the moon and not with its center on the third semicircle from the sun. The translators point out that Bruno’s error arises from a poor French translation which he had clearly read, not from the Latin of Copernicus clearly read by Torquato, the 1566 edition of which was in Lord Burghley’s library and available to Oxford while he was Burghley’s ward (Malim 2004; Jolly 27). Bruno and his fictional sycophants try to make out that Torquato was in error, and Bruno tells his supper audience: “I care little about Copernicus, and little care I whether you or others understand him. I just want to tell you one thing: before you come to teach me some other time, study harder.” The other guests confirm Torquato’s interpretation, reducing Bruno to laughter by way of cover. Smitho, Bruno’s probably fictitious English colleague, says Torquato erred because he had looked at the pictures in Copernicus without reading the chapters. But even if he had read them, he did not understand them.

Their exchange shows Bruno to be incompetent as an astronomer. Astronomy, however, was not his principal interest; it was his hermetic cosmology. While as *Cena* shows Oxford and Bruno fell out over the exposition of Copernicus, their real parting was over Bruno’s philosophic approach, which

Oxford thought obvious nonsense. “He is sailing to Anticyra” i.e., “he is off to the lunatic asylum” is Oxford-Torquato’s recorded comment in *Cena*.

Nundinio and Torquato then leave, having saluted the other guests but ignoring Bruno. Bruno states that the other guests apologized for their alleged rudeness, which sounds like further face-saving on the part of Bruno.

In the commentary on the discussion with Nundinio in the Third Dialogue, Nundinio asserted that Copernicus held that the earth for practical purposes did not move, with which Bruno says Torquato agreed: “of all of Copernicus (although I can believe he had paged them through from cover to cover), he remembered only the names of the author, the book, and the printer, the place where it was printed, the year and the number of quires and pages: and because he was not ignorant of grammar he understood a certain prefatory epistle which was added by I know not what conceited and ignorant ass...” Torquato is there reported by Bruno’s colleague Frulla as losing his temper and insulting Bruno—perhaps he was contemptuous of Bruno’s philosophic position as it relied on his defective interpretation of Copernicus. Bruno is, however, the first to disclose in print the incompetence of this prefatory epistle (not written by Copernicus), but his own incompetence in answering Torquato is clearly revealed.

The man with the necklaces can thus be linked to Oxford, and with that the further references to the scholar-aristocrat (with expertise in beer). Allied to Shakespeare’s literary relationship to Bruno, Bruno’s description of Torquato is clear enough. But we can add the astronomical competence shown in the plays and the personal demeanor even where presented by Bruno, to whom he is clearly an academic adversary. He appears as an opponent who must be reduced to the status of pedant. Men such as Thomas Digges and John Dee might be suggested as the template for Torquato until the attitude of the caricature is taken into account: then the likelihood of Oxford’s identification can be shown.

Resolving Bruno’s Relationship with Shakespeare

Arthos shows that in the endings of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (say 1581) and *Eroici Furori* (1585), “there is a kind of stand-off, a truce between opposing views,” where there is “a remarkable concurrence in at least one conclusion, time and nature have it within their power to bring to fruition what humans in themselves cannot” (86). At the end of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* there are the songs of the dialogue between Hiems and Ver (Winter and Spring). Bruno follows this device with a final dialogue between Jove representing supernatural truth and Neptune nature. Oxford’s point throughout the play is the rejection of strained and labored abstractions which Bruno wants to introduce. This is why Bruno specifically labels Torquato a pedant: this is Bruno’s

term for those who deny his view: “good-for-nothings who...with prejudice to [i.e. placing too much weight on] customs and human life, offer us words and dreams” (Arthos 101; quoting translation of *Spaccio* 1584). Moreover, he equates Torquato with Manfurio, the Holofernes character in *Il Candelaio*. Equally obvious is that Oxford uses ideas for comic dramatic purposes in *Comedy of Errors*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. This practice is imitated, matched or even surpassed by Bruno in the later *Il Candelaio* 1582 (Arthos 99), as he seeks to employ the theatrical element to illuminate his views on the cosmos.

Arthos provides a detailed commentary on the use of Neoplatonism by Shakespeare and Bruno. It is clear that Oxford’s applications of scientific thought in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and elsewhere do not agree with those of Bruno. As Arthos describes it, “It is difficult, and often, I suppose, to say that at such and such a point Shakespeare is at one with Bruno.... One thing is evident, that his thought is as complex and subtle as his poetry, he is thinking for himself, his conclusions are his own” (170). One of the mysteries of Shakespeare scholarship is why and how these matters could have been studied by the teenage Shakspere from Stratford-upon-Avon. The evidence is that Oxford had studied Neoplatonism before Bruno appeared in London.

The Influence of Dr. John Dee

The principal authority in England of philosophical thought derived from Hermes Trismegistus was John Dee (1527–1609). Although he was a brilliant mathematician, his interests also extended into studies of the occult and philosophy. He advised Queen Elizabeth and her government not only on an auspicious day for her coronation but, more particularly, on navigation and cartography, having studied with Gabriel Mercator. He produced his own Hermetic treatise in 1564 and his interest by 1580 turned exclusively to this area, specifically in the magical practice of scrying, i.e, attempting to communicate with angels to ascertain the mysteries of the cosmos.

There was a personal connection, however, between Dee and Oxford. In 1592 Dee wrote in his autobiography (*Compendious Rehearsal*) that he kept in his possession and to his credit, “The honorable Erle of Oxford his favorable letters Anno 1570” (Nelson 58). There was yet another connection: in 1584 Oxford became a shareholder in The Colleagues of the Fellowship for the Discovery of the North West Passage, along with Adrian Gilbert, John Dee and Walter Raleigh. Thus, Oxford was knowledgeable about Dee’s ideas on mathematics and cartography.

In 1582, however, Dee met the confidence man Edward Kelley. Dee was well known at Court and met Bruno after the latter’s foray to Oxford in the company of the Polish Count Albert Laski. And so, in 1583, Laski persuaded Dee

and Kelley to travel to Poland to obtain patronage. By 1589 Dee, who never claimed success at scrying, returned to England. In his absence his reputation and support at Court had suffered, but he continued his studies and became an authority in cryptography, as well as keeping in contact with his Court-based supporters (Parry 238ff). Finally, in 1595 he gained a preference and was appointed Dean of Christ's College Manchester (afterwards Manchester Cathedral). He appears to have been frequently in London at least from 1601 on. Oxford's respect for Dee seems to have been restricted to his scientific expertise in the fields of cryptography and mathematics. Certainly after 1590 there is no evidence that Oxford had any sympathy for alchemy, and his attitude, if not his approach, would be the same as Ben Jonson's in the latter's play *The Alchemist* (1610).

Indeed, Oxford portrayed occult practices in the Shakespeare plays in a negative light. In a pointed rebuke of conjuring spirits (including the devil) in Act Three, scene one, of *1 Henry IV*, we find this fiery exchange:

Glendower: I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
 Hotspur: Why, so can I, or so can any man; But will they come when you do call for them?
 Glendower: Why, I can teach you, cousin, to command the Devil.
 Hotspur: And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the Devil
 By telling truth: tell truth, and shame the Devil.
 If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither,
 And I'll be sworn I've power to shame him hence.
 O, while you live, tell truth, and shame the Devil!

Shakespeare's mockery of conjuring was followed in *King Lear* by an equally spirited attack on astrology by Edmund.

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeit of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and traitors by spherical pre-dominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whore-master man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's Tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardising. Edgar—(Edgar enters) and pat on 's cue he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy. My cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. Oh, these eclipses do portend these divisions! Fa, sol, la, mi. (I.ii)

Evidence of Oxford's scientific mindset is confirmed by physicist Hanno Wember, who concludes that Shakespeare displays an "extensive and sophisticated knowledge of astronomy" (35) throughout the canon. Using *King Lear* as an example:

When Edmund ironically mentions the "dragon's tail" (I.ii.58), this is no malapropism of a known constellation (Draco/dragon), but the correct astronomical expression for the descending node of the lunar orbit, a decisive reference point for the occurrence of an eclipse.

The whole Edmund soliloquy is a searing critique of astrology, which is made to look ridiculous, and this at a time when famous scientists such as Cardano and Dee were still seeking to establish a scientific foundation for the field. Edmund puts different things together: A constellation—Ursa Major—and a reference point like a node. But a well informed listener will know that "Dragon's Tail" does not refer to a constellation. To put a "nativity under Ursa Major" is of course intentional nonsense, as the Great Bear is not a part of the zodiac, but it is appropriate when used ironically by Edmund. (39)

And in that most autobiographical of Shakespeare's works, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, we find the author openly reject the occult practice of astrology and embrace the science of astronomy in Sonnet XIV.

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck;
And yet methinks I have Astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;

To emphasize that commitment, Oxford uses the discipline of astronomy throughout the canon. In Act One, scene three of *Troilus and Cressida*, for example, we find a profound insight about natural law itself.

Ulysses: The Heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
 Observe degree, priority, and place,
 Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
 Office, and custom, in all line of order.

John Candee Dean describes this speech in scientific terms: "Shakespeare here exhibits a true sense of the orderly invariability of nature's laws, as announced about 40 years after his death by the French philosopher Descartes, who was the first to declare nature's laws to be unchangeable" (400). Descartes, of course, was not only a philosopher, but a mathematician and scientist.

According to Wember, examples from four other plays further confirm Shakespeare's superb knowledge and open support of astrophysics.

In many regards Shakespeare had a better knowledge of the relationship between the moon and the tides than his distinguished contemporary Galileo (1564–1642), who tried to explain the tides by the two motions of the earth, correlating to the day and the year. This was an erroneous explanation for ebb and flow. But while Galileo refused to acknowledge any tidal influence of the moon, Bernardo knew better, referring to the moon as "...the moist star Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands" (*Hamlet*, I.i.135).

To Prince Hal, likewise, the moon commands the tides:

The fortune of us that are moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea,
being governed as the sea is by the moon.... Now in as low an ebb as
the foot of the ladder, and by and by in as high a flow as the ridge of
the gallows.
(*1 Henry IV*, I.ii.10)

As it does for Camillo: "...you may as well Forbid the sea for to obey the moon." (*Winter's Tale*, I.ii.497)

Shakespeare was also aware of the major difficulty of describing the precise orbit of Mars—an unsolved astronomical problem in his day:

Mars his true moving, even as in the heavens,
So in the earth, to this day is not known.
(*1 Henry VI*, I.ii.3)

It was only in 1609 that Johannes Kepler (1571–1642) solved the problem on the basis of Tycho Brahe's (1546–1601) observational data (*Astronomia Nova, Physica Coelestris, tradita commentariis de Motibus Stellae Martis*). Kepler proved "Mars true moving in the heavens" to be an elliptical path. (33–34)

The Testimony of *The Tempest*

On his return to England in 1589, Dee was likely disappointed at the lack of enthusiasm in his philosophic approach. Shortly after 1593, I believe, came the appearance of *The Tempest*, described by Yates as "the supreme example of the magical philosophy" presented by Shakespeare in those last plays. This is evidenced by date when we consider the warrant entry in the Privy Council records of a payment of £20, ostensibly for a performance of *Comedy of Errors* allegedly before the Court on December 28, 1594.¹⁰

To ascertain a more likely scenario for the entry, and see what may have actually happened, we should turn to *Gesta Grayorum*, a record of entertainments and social events pertaining to the *Christmas Revels 1594–5* of the lawyers at Gray’s Inn. This was printed from the original records some 80 years later, where there is further evidence of Oxford’s attitude. The young lawyers had elected for the Christmas Revels one of their number as ruler, entitled the Prince of *Purpoole* (the name of their Gray’s Inn “State”). An entertainment was laid on for the Ambassador of the Emperor of *Templaria* (as the Inner Temple twin “State” was called). The most distinguished and well-connected student at Gray’s Inn would be the Earl of Oxford who matriculated there in February 1567 at the age of 16, and as Puttenham’s “best for Comedy,” the ideal person to provide an appropriate entertainment, with his record both for writing but also for actual production. The *Gesta Grayorum* of 1594–5 is also solid evidence that *The Tempest* was written by 1594, because it contains a clear self-caricature by Oxford himself as Prospero, making out that the alterations in the hall of Gray’s Inn for the production of *Comedy of Errors* were all an illusion, similar to those in *The Tempest*. Unfortunately, there was a riot and the Prince of Purpoole wanted to try the guilty progenitor. The Account proceeds:

The next Night upon this Occasion, we preferred Judgments thick and threefold, which were read publicly by the Clerk of the Crown, all being against a *Sorcerer or Conjurer* that was supposed to be the Cause of that confused Inconvenience. Therein was contained, How he caused the Stage to be built, and Scaffolds to be reared to the top of the House, to increase Expectation. Also how he had caused divers Ladies and Gentlewomen, and others of good Condition, to be invited to our Sports; also our dearest Friend, the State of *Templaria*, to be disgraced, and disappointed of their kind Entertainment, deserved and intended. Also he caused Throngs and Tumults, Crowds and Outrages, to disturb our whole Proceedings. And Lastly, that he had foisted a Company of base and common Fellows [the Lord Chamberlain’s Men!], to make up Disorders with a Play of Errors and Confusions; and that Night had gained to us Discredit, and it self a Nick-name of Errors. All of which were against the Crown and Dignity of our Sovereign Lord, the Prince of *Purpoole*.

Everyone concerned was to give evidence, and:

Upon whose aforesaid Indictments, the Prisoner was arraigned at the Bar, being brought thither by the Lieutenant of the Tower (for at one time the Stocks were graced with that Name) and the Sherriff impanelled a jury of Twenty Four Gentlemen, that were to give their Verdict upon the Evidence given. The Prisoner appealed to the Prince

his Excellency for Justice and humbly desired, that it would please His Highness to understand the Truth of the Matter by his Supplication, which he had ready to be offered to the Master of Requests. The Prince gave leave to the Master of Requests, that he should read the Petition [this form of words I believe covers the actual participation of the Sorcerer]; wherein was a Disclosure of all the Knavery and Juggling of the [‘State’s’] Attorney and Sollicitor, which had brought all this Law-stuff on purpose to blind the Eyes of his Excellency, and all the honourable Court there, going about to make them think, that those things which they all saw and preceived [sic] sensibly to be in very deed done, and actually performed, were nothing else but vain Illusions, Fancies, Dreams and *Enchantments*, and to be wrought and compassed by Means of a poor harmless Wretch, that never heard of such great Matters in all his life: Whereas the very Fault was in the Negligence of the Prince’s Council, Lords and Officers of State, that had the Rule of the Roast, and by whose Advice the Commonwealth was so soundly mis-governed. To prove these things to be true, he brought divers Instances of great Absurdities committed by the greatest; and made such Allegations, as could not be denied.

So, who was the unnamed *Sorcerer or Conjuror*, the alleged Cause? *Gesta Grayorum* includes a list of all the parts played by the lawyers, including The Lord High Admiral played by Richard Cecil, Burghley’s grandson. No one is listed as “the Sorcerer,” yet he must have been able to pull rank to put up the stage and grandstands, invite the Great and Good, be the cause of the “Tumults and Outrages,” and the foisting of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men on the Revels.

As the most distinguished alumnus of Gray’s Inn, he would naturally be a guest of the Prince of Purpoole, but he is not named among those who come to the Prince’s apology-masque performed later in the week. For the recorder of *Gesta Grayorum*, it would be easier and less fraught to keep the Sorcerer anonymous. He is not named among the Prince’s courtiers at the start of the written account, nor is his role mentioned, unlike those of all the other courtiers. Oxford wrote both *Comedy of Errors* and *The Tempest*.

Dee would certainly take no part in the parodying of his own ideas. However, Dee’s modern biographer Glyn Parry thought the Conjuror was John Dee. Parry states in a 2012 paper that we can “definitely identify Dee as the ‘conjurer’ associated with the fictional, atheistical ‘School of Night’ associated with Raleigh” (Parry 480).¹¹ I believe the Sorcerer to be Oxford, given the attitude of the author of *Gesta Grayorum* towards him. Why call him a Sorcerer? I suggest that his appearance was associated in the minds of those present with that of Prospero in a recent production of *The Tempest*, where

most of the action, including the actual tempest, the shipwreck and the banquet, are illusions perpetrated by the master-sorcerer Oxford-Prospero: in sum, a parody of *The Tempest* delivered by the author himself, which to have impact has to be instantly recognizable by a large section of the audience.

Indeed, I think Oxford at times was parodying his own role of dramatist as Prospero in *The Tempest*:

I perceive that these lords
At this encounter do so much admire
That they devour their reason, and scarce think
Their eyes do office of truth, these words
Are natural breath. But howso'er you have
Been jostled of your senses, know for certain
That I am Prospero
(V.155–161)

These our actors
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, thin air...
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with sleep. Sir, I am vexed.
Bear with my weakness. My old brain is troubled.
Be not disturbed with my infirmity.
(IV.148–50, 155–160)

Notwithstanding the apparent rough treatment of Dee's ideas, I think Oxford had a considerable respect for Dee's talents generally, putting aside the caricature as presented to a group of young lawyers as a Christmas entertainment.

Besides John Dee and Oxford himself, Oxford's portrayal of Prospero may be based on yet another source, this from the realm of politics: Lord Prospero Visconti of the ducal family at Milan (1543–1592).¹²

According to historian E.H. Gombrich, a Latin poem by J.M. Toscanus to Lord Prospero Visconti of Milan is "a poem about the member of a ducal family who had exchanged military power against the domain of the Muses..."

Now since the wheel of fortuna has turned, it carried—oh villainy—
their [Visconti] realm into the abyss. You, Prospero of the noble
blood of the Dukes, serve the Muses, the most noble of activities.
(185)

A contemporary account of Prospero Visconti's library described that "precious and most copious library that contained books on every science and profession, among them books in the Longobardic language written on the bark of trees or fibres" (189). This contemporary reference is precisely what Prospero says twice in *The Tempest*: "Me, poor man, my library was dukedom large enough" and "volumes that I prize about my dukedom."

Intriguingly, the poem only appeared on page 272 of an anthology of Latin poetry published in Paris in 1576. The anthology itself is dedicated to Prospero Visconti.

Conclusions

My argument is in contrast to current philosophical trends in Shakespeare studies. However, one critic writes: "But it may be noted that Renaissance commonplaces about heroic Neoplatonism are *often* [my emphasis] mocked by Shakespeare as hollow poses. Insincerity taunts vaunted intentions to pursue the 'contemplative mode' in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Richard II* and *Measure for Measure*" (Sokol 214 n.7). This assessment is supported by Arthos: "as I see it Shakespeare always keeps the distance between the immanent and the transcendent [i.e. the divine immanent]. Bruno had failed to do this..." (229 n.8).

Books have been written in an effort to show Shakespeare's personal views. If we view him as a supreme ironist, believing in nothing in religious or philosophic terms, we can understand the cast of mind that can exclaim, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason.... And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?" (*Hamlet* II, ii, 306, 310), and can assert that life "...is a tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" (*Macbeth* V.v.25–7).

The man with the twisted necklace, be it ribbon in the Marcus Ghaeraedts portrait or the metallic one worn in Bruno's portrait of him as Torquato, can thus be shown to be linked to Oxford, and with that the further references to the scholar-aristocrat.

Allied to Shakespeare's literary relationship to Bruno, Bruno's description of Torquato is specific, and we can add the astronomical competence shown in the plays and the demeanor, even where presented by Bruno, to whom he is clearly a most dangerous academic opponent. Men such as Thomas Digges and John Dee might be suggested as the template for Torquato until the attitude of the caricature—with the clues about him and of Bruno himself towards him—are taken into account: then the proof of Oxford's identification can be shown.

Endnotes

1. Yates 1964: 269. Much of this summary of Hermeticism and related questions is taken from Yates.
2. For Bruno's career, particularly as a spy, see Bossy. However, Bossy claims that, 124n. 57: "He (Bruno) cannot have read *Love's Labour's Lost* III, i". He provides a translation from the original *Spaccio*, "Yet (the boat) seemed to move, hurrying slowly as if it were made of lead". In La Cena the boat "with its festina lente seemed as heavy as lead" (Second Dialogue). The Shakespearean quotation reads, "As swift as lead" (line 52). I believe the decrepit rowers in the boat are caricatures of Henry Howard and Charles Arundell, supporters of the Catholic Throckmorton plot, and as such the enemies of the covert anti-Catholic Bruno.
3. The dating of these plays is taken from the research of Eva Turner Clark (*Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays*), Felicia Londré (*Love's Labor's Lost: Critical Essays*), and Kevin Gilvary (*Dating Shakespeare's Plays*).
4. A significant topical allusion for dating *Much Ado About Nothing*. The ineptness of Arundell and Howard in libeling Oxford is dramatized in the Dogberry/Verges caricatures in Act Three, scene three.
5. The Arden Shakespeare's third edition of *LLL* glides over the French connection to the post-1576 period (Oxford visited the French Court in 1575 and 1576 on his way to and from Italy) in its attempt to establish Shakespeare's debt to Sidney, without understanding that the references demonstrate the reverse scenario: it was Sidney who borrowed from Shakespeare. The editor suggests that the principal source of the plot is a 1586 translation of Pierre de la Primaudaye's *L'Academie Française*, published in the French original in 1577. I am indebted to E.M. Jolly's essay, "Shakespeare and the French Connection" (De Vere Society Newsletter, April 2015, 13ff)
6. The translation, published in 1587, was finished by Oxford's uncle Arthur Golding, the purported producer of Oxford's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in 1565 and 1567. See Richard Waugaman, "Did Edward de Vere Translate Ovid's *Metamorphoses*?" *The Oxfordian* 2018, 7–26.
7. George Abbot, later Archbishop of Canterbury, gives an account of Bruno at Oxford (Yates 1964, 229), otherwise his stay in England attracts

very little attention other than publication of some of his works and his account in *La Cena de le Ceneri*. There is, however, one reference to Bruno in the highly commendatory preface by NW to the young Samuel Daniel's translation entitled *The Worthy Tract of Paulo Jovio, in 1585 (Imprese Militare e Amorose)*. Significantly, this was written just after the jousting at the anniversary of the Queen's accession celebrations in late 1584, where Oxford, newly restored to favor, was successful. NW writes, "You cannot forget that which Nolanus [Bruno] (that man of infinite titles among other phantasticall toys) truly noted *by chaunce* in our Scholes that with the help of translations, al Sciences had their offspring, and in my judgment it is true," and concludes, "From Oxenford this xx of November [1584] Yours NW." I emphasize the middle syllable in the spelling since that is how Oxford signed his private letters: Edward Oxenford. This is additional evidence (*phantasticall toys*) of Oxford's opinion matching that of Torquato.

8. The identification of Torquato as Oxford is supported by the Marcus Ghaeraedts portrait of the Earl, which shows Oxford with a twisted ribbon round his neck, and by the pseudonym Torquatus, given to him by his supporter, playwright John Marston. The name Torquatus was taken up by Marston in his 1599 edition of *The Scourge of Villainy Corrected*. The principal reference is in the Preface, "To those that seem judiciall perusers.... For whose unseasoned pallate I wrote the first Satyre in some places too obscure, in all places mislyking me. Yet when by some scurvy chance it shall come into the late perfumed fist of judiciall Torquatus.... I know he will vouchsafe it, some of his new-minted epithets when in my conscience he understands not the least part of it [understands every last part of it]. From thence proceeds his judgment." Note that Oxford presented a pair of perfumed gloves to Queen Elizabeth in 1576 upon his return from Italy. According to John Stow in his *Annales*, Queen Elizabeth was so delighted with the scent on the gloves that "for many years afterward, it was called the Earl of Oxford's perfume" (868). Also see De Vere Society Newsletter, January 2015.
9. The contemporary allusion is in Nashe's *Epistle Dedicatorie to Strange News* (1592): "I am bold, instead of new wine, to carouse to you a cup of news, which if your worship (according to your wonted Chaucerism) shall accept in good part, I'll be your daily orator to pray that that pure sanguine complexion of yours may never be famished with pot-lucke, and that you may taste till your last gasp, and live to see the confusion of your special enemies, Small Beer and Grammar rules." Three references in the plays are set out in Malim 2011, 282 n. 11.

10. See my article, *Oxford The Comedian*, in the De Vere Society Newsletter, October 2018, 15ff. Here (27) is a much better explanation for the reference to Shakespeare as one of the recipients of £20 from the Treasurer of the Court Chamber for a non-existent performance before the Queen on 27th December 1594. I suspect that it was a ruse by Oxford to help him pay for the expenses of the Gesta Grayorum entertainments.
11. Parry calls *The School of Night* “fictional” yet it is Shakespeare’s fiction (*Love’s Labour’s Lost*, IV.iii.251). Parry had clearly not read the account of the informal investigation commissioned by the Privy Council into Raleigh’s activities (“The School of Atheism”) at Sherborne Castle in Dorset, carried out at Wolfeton Hall near Cerne Abbas, where Raleigh wanted the local vicar who recorded the conversations to justify contentions as to the existence of God and the soul. The vicar summarizes them with no mention of alchemy nor any conjuror (Lloyd 254ff). Whether Raleigh and Dee had any relationship after Dee’s return to England is not confirmed: indeed, they were both in disgrace and a positive hindrance to each other for any rehabilitation (Parry 232).
12. Gombrich’s thesis has been taken up most perceptively by Katherine Chiljan—see her paper in the previous volume of *The Oxfordian*.

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